

Indian Elephants in Medieval Art and Arms

An Exploration in Four Parts

By Lady Leah of Schattentor

Inspired by TRM, Vladimir and Petranella

Master Owen Alun, and THL Orlaith Ballach Ingen F.lain

The Part that is First

ELEPHANTS IN LATE PERIOD ART

Late vs. Early Period Elephant Decoration

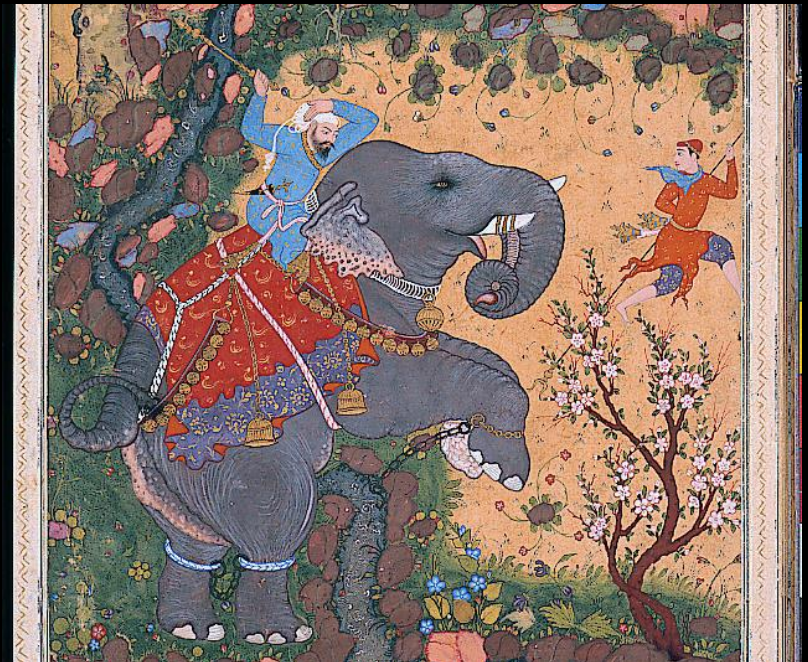
Early-Mid Period (2nd – 13th Century)

- Collars, necklaces, girth, headpieces with fringe
- Bells, tassels, etc.



Late Period (16th Century)

- Similar headpiece and other accessories
- Emphasis more on the blanket, less on the fringes
- Bells still present

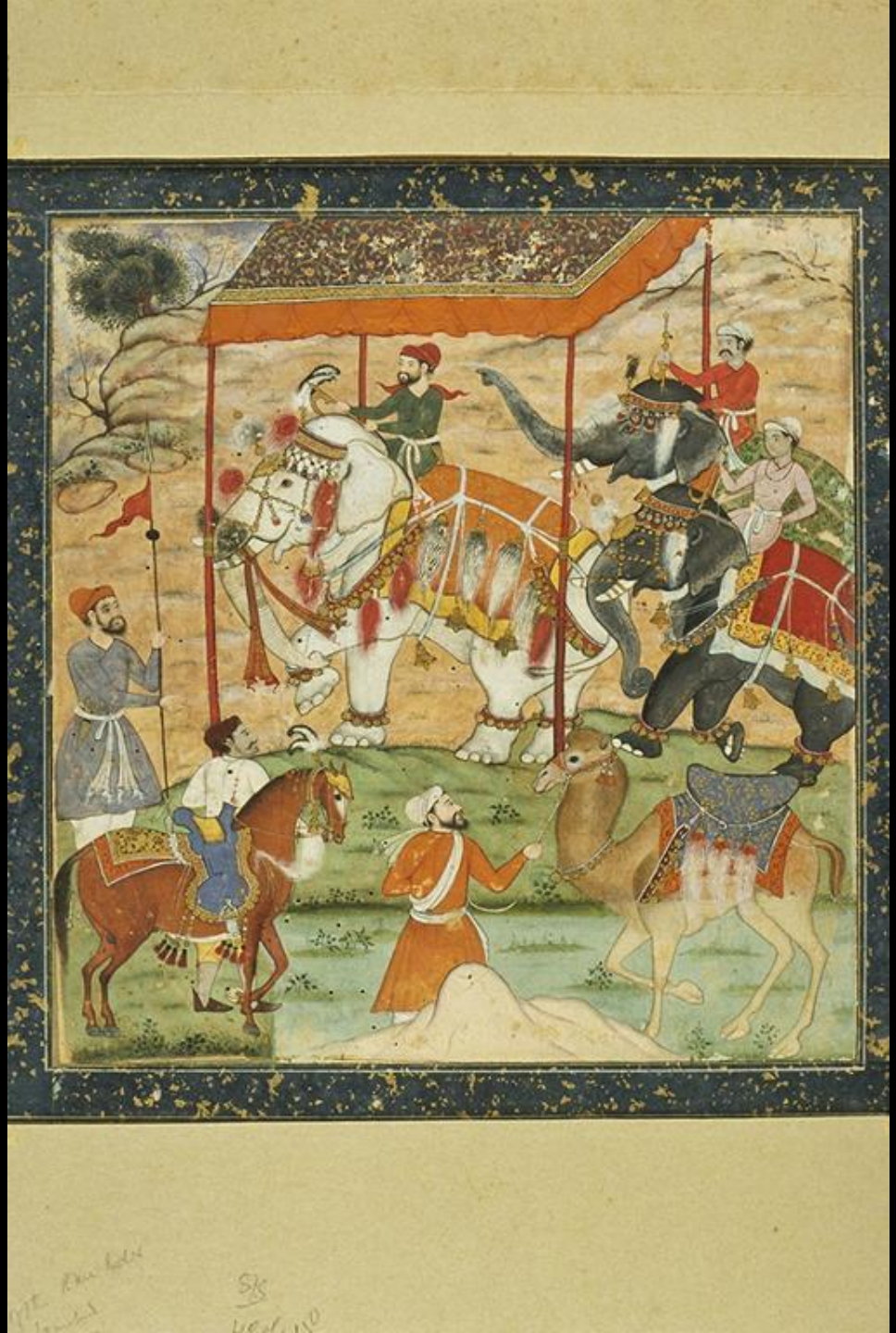


“White Elephant”

c. 1580

Set 38. Bharat Kala Bhavan I: Early
Mughal Paintings

Banaras Hindu University



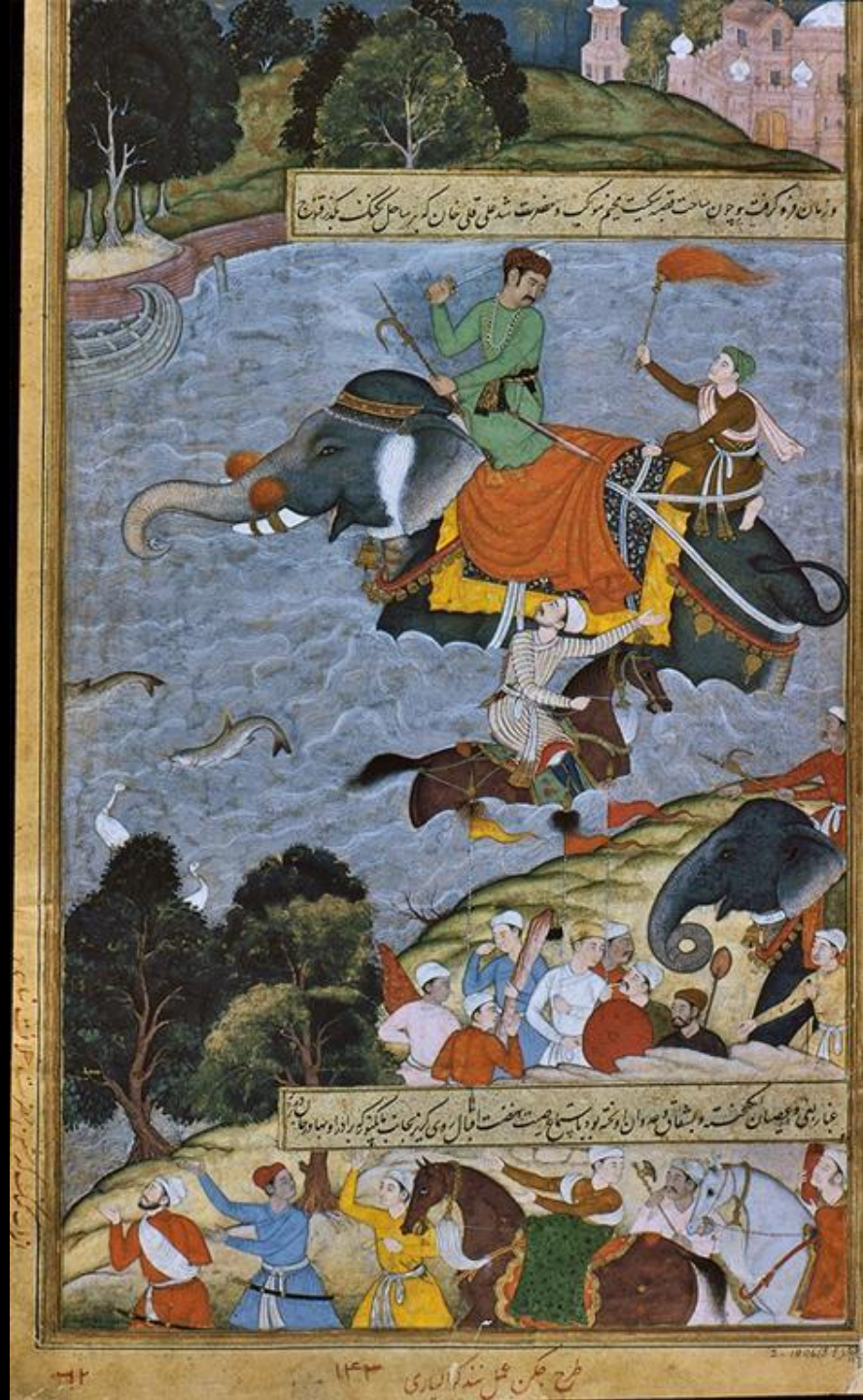
**“Akbar crosses the Ganges on
his elephant Udiya in pursuit
of Ali Quli Khan in 1567”**

Akbar-Nama, Folio 58

c. 1590-1595

Pakistan or India

Victoria and Albert Museum



“Elephant and Mahout”

c. 1595-1600

Seattle Art Museum



“Ibrahim Adil Shah Riding and Elephant”

c. 1595-1600

Private Collection

American Council for Southern Asian
Art Collection



The Part that is the Second

ELEPHANTS OF THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE – 12TH CENTURY; BELUR, INDIA



Frieze at the base of the Chennakesava
Temple of Belur



Detail of frieze



Detail of frieze



Detail of frieze



Detail of frieze



Detail of frieze



Relief of warriors and elephant













The Part that is the Third

THE MUGHAL ARMORED ELEPHANT OF LEEDS, PLUS A FEW OTHER PACHYDERMS WITH A PUNCH

c. 1600
Housed by the Royal Armouries
Museum in Leeds, UK

Believed to be the most
complete set of elephant
armor

Brought to England in 1801 by
Lady Clive; supposedly
captured at the Battle of
Plassey in 1757

The armor is made up of a
head piece, throat piece, and
three side pieces

Featured in a History Channel
program about the Mughal
Empire:

<http://tinyurl.com/7tfdxaw>





Detail of rug,
presumably for rider
comfort?





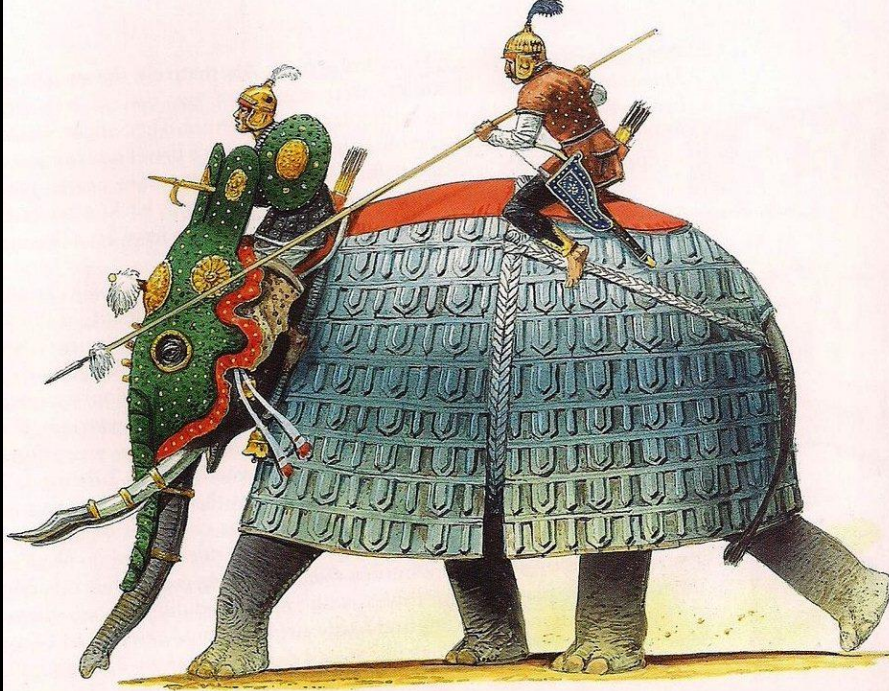
Detail of stamped plates; three sheets tied together



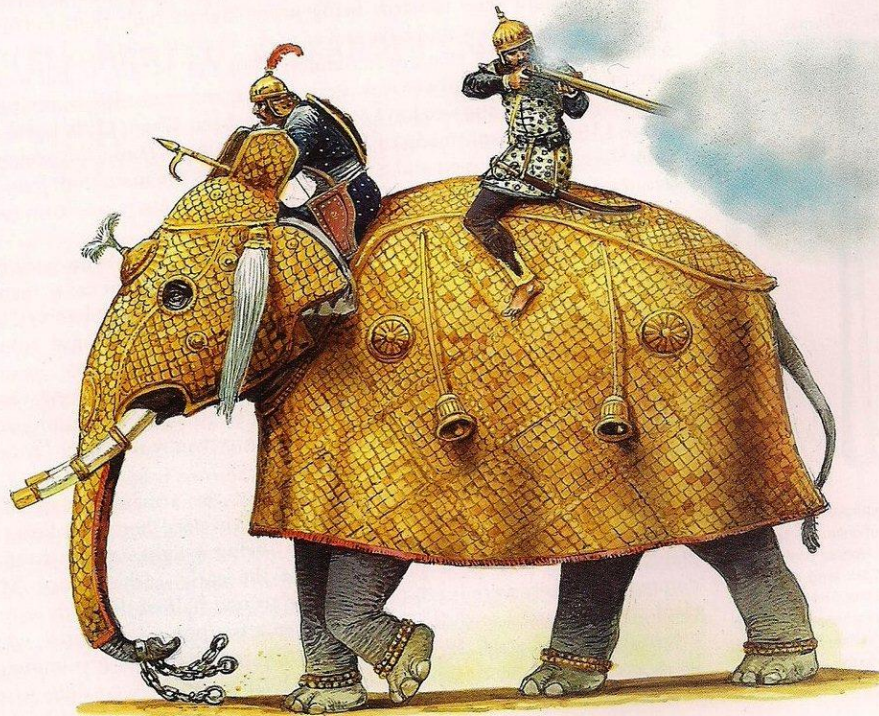
Cotton fabric for the elephant's comfort; three sheets discernable, presumably attached to plates with ties seen in previous slide.

Detail of rear





Contemporary Illustration





c. 1700



Not real!

According to the display text at the Stratford Armouries, where this beast is housed, this armor was designed and built by armorurer Terry English, whose work you can see in films such as *Aliens*, *Batman & Robin*, *Excalibur*, and *Gladiator*.

The Part that is the Fourth and Last

MINIATURE ELEPHANTS FOR THEIR ROYAL MAJESTIES



Male and female elephants, with marker for size reference.



Female elephant (with baby!) with headdress and neck-bells.



Female elephant



Female elephant



Male elephant with under-armor coat



Better view of baby



Male elephant with coat, from front



Male elephant with coat



Female elephant headdress



Armor pieces – lined cotton, pre-lining.



Armor – faceplate. The look of the period armor is replicated using embroidery.



The armor has ribbon sewn into the lining so that it can be slipped on/tied.



My husband constructing a pen for the elephants.



The pen halfway through construction.



The pen constructed



My husband going the extra mile and painting the wooden trim



Better view of the trim

We lined the pen with grass – because it seemed like a good idea when you’re dealing with elephants.

This picture also shows the finished coat, armor, and rider’s blanket. They’re Northshield Elephants, after all.





Sorry for the blurry – this was taken in a car on the way to the event.



Presenting the elephants to Their Majesties Vladimir and Petranella

To the King and Queen of Northshield, Greetings from your loyal subject Owen Alun, currently residing at the Court of Hopsala in the land of Vnde.

Word has come even to these far shores that His Majesty Vladimir wishes to behold "Elephants, a breeding pair"

It is ever the pleasure of loyal subjects to serve the crown, and knowing of this desire I and my house are pleased to present the same to his Majesty as a personal tribute for his private possession, on the occasion of his retirement from the throne, knowing that they will serve him well in his new estate.

May the kingdom grow and prosper; may these gifts serve him well, as he has served the people well, as I continue to serve. For my heart lives in the northlands, until I shall return again.

Master Owen's missive to TRM concerning the pachyderms.