

THE SCHOOL OF JEWELRY ARTS

WITH THE SUPPORT OF VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

PRESENTS

THE FABULOUS DESTINY of TAVERNIER'S DIAMONDS

From the Great Mogul to the Sun King

A HISTORICAL RECONSTITUTION
OF 20 EXCEPTIONAL DIAMONDS
ACQUIRED BY LOUIS XIV.



MUSÉUM
NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE





THE FABULOUS DESTINY OF TAVERNIER'S DIAMONDS
From the Great Mogul to the Sun King

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CATALOGUE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF GUILLAUME GLORIEUX

University Professor, Director of Education and Research at L'ÉCOLE, School of
Jewelry Arts, with the support of Van Cleef & Arpels

2018

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AHEAD OF HIS TIME,
TAVERNIER COULD WELL
HAVE PROVIDED AN ANSWER
TO VICTOR HUGO'S QUESTION:
"TRAVELER,
WHAT DO YOU WANT?"
"I WANT TO SEE".**

Although nobody can say what has become of them, everyone knows how magnificent they were. Abraham Bosse, who executed an engraved portrait of the diamonds in 1670, refers to them using a simple but explicit superlative : "the most beautiful". This is the story of the diamonds acquired by Louis XIV from the travelling merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) in 1668, told through the exhibition organized by L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts, with the support of Van Cleef & Arpels. A fabulous story based on a journey from the Mogul Empire of India and the diamond mines of Golkonda to France under the reign of the Sun King and the Château de Versailles, a journey made along the trade routes connecting East to West. Amongst the several thousand diamonds brought from India by Tavernier and offered to the Sun King in 1668, twenty stood out for their breathtaking beauty. They all disappeared in the 19th century, with the exception of the Blue Diamond, but are brought back to life here through the exhibition.

The reproduction of these twenty exceptional stones—revealed here for the first time—is the fruit of a scientific collaboration between François Farges, Professor of Mineralogy at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Patrick Dubuc, Master Gem Cutter, and L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts. Such a result would not have been possible without this multidisciplinary approach, combining archival research, ancient images and the use of some of today's most cutting-edge technology.

A broad-based vision of knowledge is one of the core values at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts. Established in 2012, the school initiates the public into the savoir faire of jewelry-making techniques, the world of precious stones, and the history of jewelry through the various classes, conferences and exhibitions on offer, both in Paris and around the world. By supporting research and enabling the reproduction of the 'twenty most beautiful diamonds' that once belonged to Louis XIV, the school confirms its desire to contribute not only to the dissemination of jewelry culture, but also to the transmission of knowledge and expertise.

The presentation of these diamond replicas is an important occasion for several reasons. Firstly, the exhibition reveals the Mughal cut of the 17th century, eclipsed by the European cut and since forgotten: it highlights their beauty, uniqueness and distinguishing characteristics. It also allows us to understand Louis XIV's fascination with the exceptional splendor of these stones, of which he became the owner in late 1668. Finally, the exhibition illustrates the relationships that were being forged at that time between East and West, in a Europe with a passion for foreign and exotic cultures.

The exhibition at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts takes the visitor on a journey to the world of diamonds and to an epoch of cultural exchange. A tireless traveler, ahead of his time, Tavernier could well have provided an answer to Victor Hugo's question: "Traveler, what do you want ?" "I want to see". The exhibition and the accompanying catalogue allow the public to discover the splendor of these twenty lost diamonds, which were amongst some of the most beautiful ever acquired by Louis XIV.

MARIE VALLANET-DELHOM,
President of L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts

THE REPRODUCTION OF TAVERNIER'S 'TWENTY MOST BEAUTIFUL DIAMONDS' ACQUIRED BY LOUIS XIV IN 1668

FRANÇOIS FARGES

Professor of Mineralogy at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, member of the Institut Universitaire de France

In the fall of 1668, merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (*ill. 1*) returned from his sixth voyage to the Orient¹. The tireless explorer, already 63 years of age, had traveled over 30,000 kilometers, between ports and caravanserais since his departure from Paris in 1663 (approximately 240,000 kilometers over the course of his lifetime or half the distance from the Earth to the Moon !). His coffers contained precious silks and countless quantities of Oriental art objects, eagerly sought after by the aristocracy for their cabinets of curiosities. And perfectly hidden amidst the precious bales of silk from China, were hundreds of diamonds as had never been seen before: Mughal roses, pendeloques, 'lasque' (flat) diamonds and stones in their natural state. The diamonds served to reveal the wealth of Imperial India, and included a rare blue diamond of over 115 carats (23 g): this gemstone remains the most beautiful blue diamond ever discovered to date².

Louis XIV would immediately buy over a thousand of these diamonds to symbolize the opulence of his court: they were his preferred instruments of power. Amongst these stood out twenty diamonds, more remarkable than all the others, which Tavernier immortalized in a print that would be republished in *The Six Voyages of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier* (*Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*), one of the best-selling books in Paris of the Grand Siècle. This engraving is more than likely the one found at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (*ill. 2*)³, a hypothesis confirmed by the remarks of an English contemporary in 1674⁴.

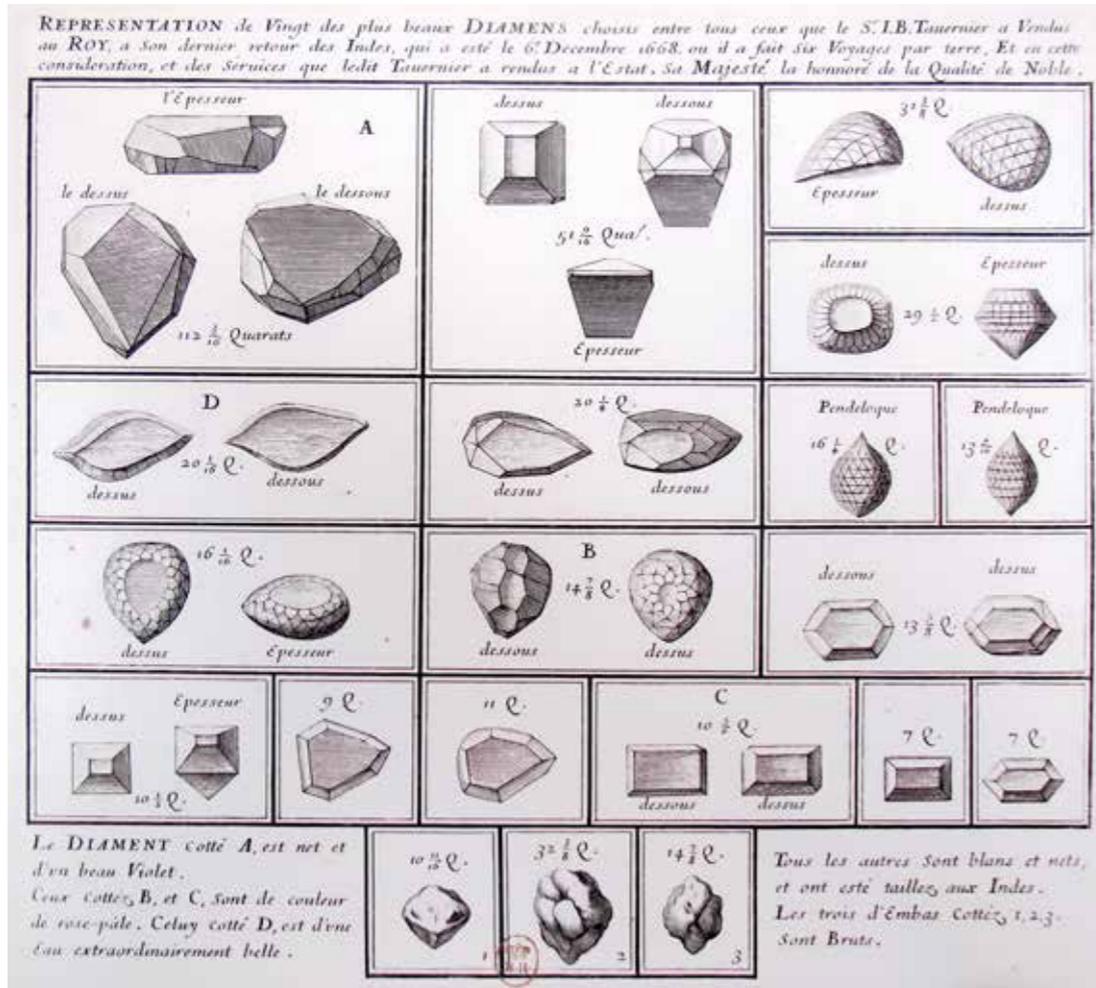
ill. 1. David K. Ehrenstrahl (1628-1698), *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier of Aubonne* (1688, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum). This large portrait of Tavernier was re-discovered during this study: the traveler—visibly tired—is depicted by the painter in a very realistic fashion while passing through Sweden in 1688, one year before his death in Russia. © Swedish Royal Collections, Linn Ahlgren / Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

¹ C. Joret, 'Jean-Baptiste Tavernier: écuyer, baron d'Aubonne, chambellan du Grand Électeur', Paris, 1886.²F. Farges, 'Les grands diamants de la Couronne de François Ier à Louis XVI' in *Versalia*, no. 16, 2014, pp 55-78.

³ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Department of Engravings and Photography, French, 30 res., Duplessis no. 1065.

⁴ Anonymous, 'A note about some unusual diamonds' in *Philosophical Transactions*, no. 9, 1674, p. 26.





Over time, these diamonds would be re-cut, lost, forgotten, or stolen: to date, France has preserved nothing of this extraordinary heritage. With the exception of an original engraving by the great Abraham Bosse (1602-1676), which was long ignored. We also uncovered a never before seen inventory of the diamonds sold by Tavernier to Louis XIV, dated July 1, 1669⁵. This document, written by Jean Pittan the Younger (c 1617-1676), jeweler to the king, provides us with information heretofore unknown, allowing us to considerably refine our description of these diamonds. By comparing this document to Tavernier's descriptions in his invoice, we can see the difference of opinion between Tavernier, an old man of his time, and Pittan, the King's jeweler, both busy and business-like, then held in great esteem by the court. If Tavernier describes the color of the large diamond as 'of a beautiful blue', his preference was clearly for a colorless diamond of much more modest dimensions, which he judged to be of an 'extraordinarily beautiful clarity', in other words, perfectly colorless and without defects. For Pittan on the other hand, the real masterpiece was the large blue diamond that he describes as a paragon. History gives reason to the latter: since that time, no mine has ever delivered a beautiful blue diamond of this caliber, despite the discovery of some fabulous mines in Africa, Siberia, Brazil, Canada and Australia, which together have produced, since the 19th century, thousands of carats of diamonds of 'extraordinarily beautiful clarity'.

But these recently rediscovered valuable archives, as informative as they may be, do not allow us to understand these jewels as Tavernier apprehended them: an engraving cannot render the fundamental characteristics of a gem: its carats, color, clarity and cut. The reproduction of these mythical precious stones allows us not only to be transported back in time to the lost splendor of the opulent Indo-Mogul Empire, but also to imagine the delight of the Sun King when Tavernier presented him with these jewels, the fruit of an oriental savoir-faire which no longer really exists.

ill. 2. Abraham Bosse, Representation of twenty of the most beautiful diamonds... (circa 1670).

Engraving published in *The Six Voyages of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, Paris, 1676. Image: François Farges © BnF,

30 a. (1065)

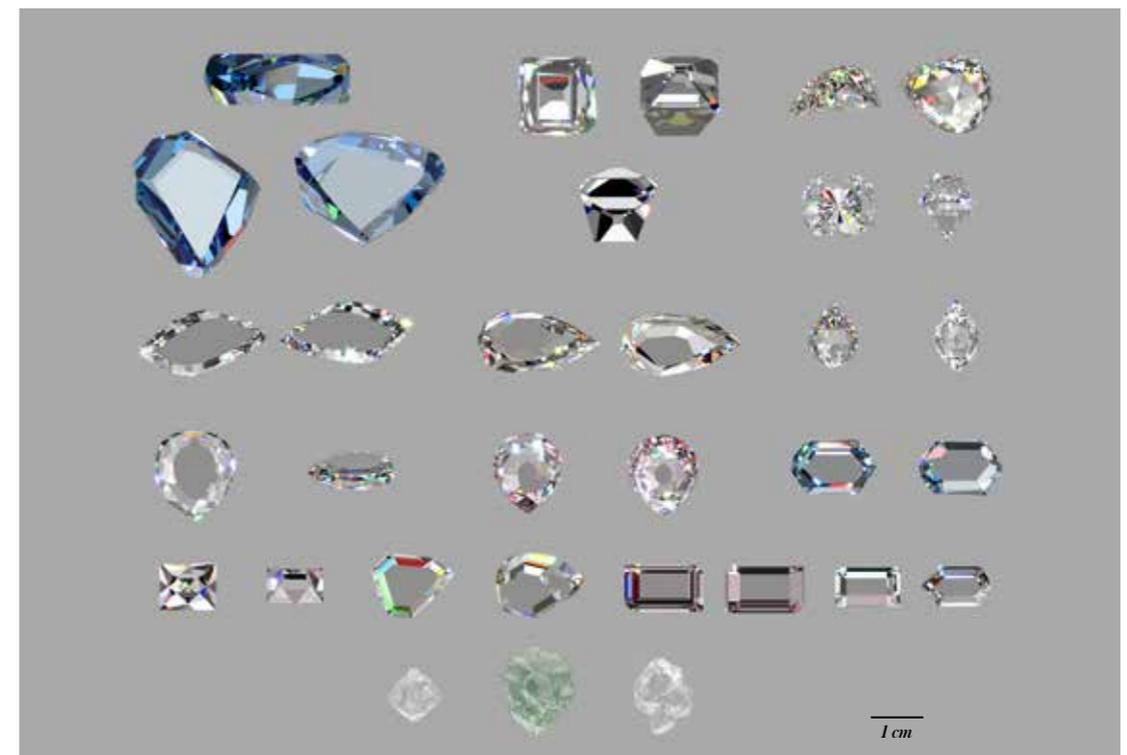
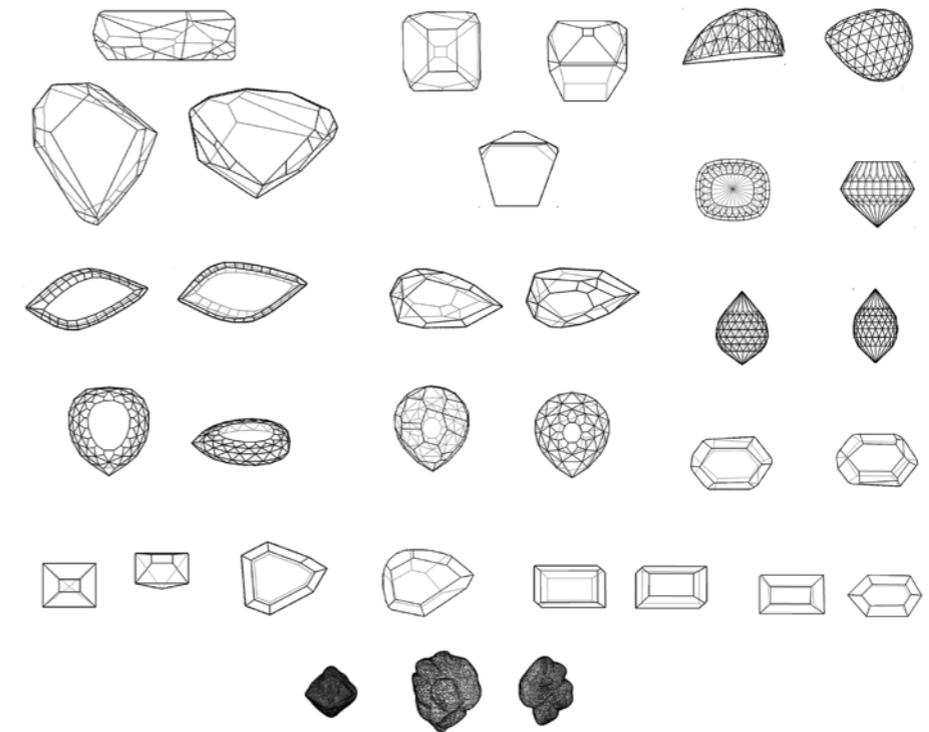
⁵ La Courneuve, Archives diplomatiques, 2040, p. 5 and 6.

SIMULATIONS

A variety of 3D modeling software⁶ was used by Patrick Dubuc—a master faceter from Quebec, and recipient of a prestigious North American lapidary award—to construct the three-dimensional planes or design of each stone (*ill. 3*). A laser scanner from the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (SURFACUS Laboratory) digitized the hand-made sculptures of the three natural diamonds (seen at the bottom of the engraving). Based on the study of all of these models, it appeared that the engraving was more than likely drawn to scale, thereby allowing us to know the exact dimensions of the stones. If the thickness of a diamond was not indicated or not visible, this information was found by computer, thanks to the known weight of each gem. Then, thanks to precise photorealistic renderings, I was able to reproduce in real colors the appearance of these diamonds as they were when Abraham Bosse had sketched them, when Tavernier had collected them, and when Louis XIV had acquired them (*ill. 3*).

ill. 3. At the top, the engraving by Abraham Bosse, digitized in 3D format, on a scale of 1 cm. Below, the photorealistic simulation of the engraving, taking into account information regarding the color of the stones found in the royal archives : note the colored diamonds: blue (× 2), pink (× 2), brownish (× 2) and green (× 1).

Photo: François Farges © Van Cleef & Arpels SA



⁶ GemCAD used for the 3D construction and DiamCalc for the photorealistic renderings.

RECREATION

Seventeen of these computer models were then cut in Cubic Zirconia by Patrick Dubuc (*ill. 4*). The three natural diamonds were sculpted in resin, then scanned and printed in 3D format, using an epoxy resin. These two materials faithfully reproduce the brilliance of cut and natural diamonds, respectively.

Colorization is especially problematic. Zirconia possesses hues that are noticeably different from diamonds, especially blue. The blue of diamonds is often a cold steely-blue, with very few warm shades, especially red. The blue of Zirconia on the other hand, is very warm: veering towards violet. The replicas of Tavernier's Blue Diamond to date were too dark and too violet. Therefore, we were forced to innovate. History had revealed the Washington Hope Diamond to be Tavernier's Blue Diamond and we therefore measured the color of this American diamond and tested different colorization methods. We are indebted to John Hatleberg, a New York-based expert lapidary, Jeffrey E. Post of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, and Azotics (Rochester, Minnesota) for allowing hundreds of colorization tests that finally allowed us to obtain a very satisfactory result with regard to the Hope Diamond. A result so perfect that an expert could no longer distinguish the copy from the original with the naked eye. On this basis, Tavernier's Blue Diamond, initially cut in a colorless Zirconia, was colorized in the same way, yielding a highly comparable result with regard to the computer simulations. The other replicas were too weakly colored in their mass to have been colorized: we kept them colorless, except for two diamonds referred to as 'pale pink', which were cut in a pink Zirconia yielding, in contrast to the blues, a good rendering of this type of fancy diamond.



ill. 4. Various stages in the cutting of the replicas. Images: Patrick Dubuc.

TAVERNIER'S HERITAGE



Apart from the large blue diamond recut in 1672 (then stolen in 1792 to be recut again around 1812⁷), no other diamond has been found from this fabulous collection. In the 1980s, a marquise diamond weighing 13.6 carats believed to be Tavernier's Diamond No. 5, was found: it was even called the 'Eye of Tavernier'. By chance, we discovered a cast of this stone (that is currently not available). The comparison with the simulations however, allowed us to invalidate the hypothesis that this marquise diamond was Tavernier's Diamond No. 5. The thickness of the marquise proved to be incompatible with the faceting of the 1668 diamond.

Two sets of the replica diamonds were made, each presenting the twenty reproductions (*ill. 5*). The first box went to the collection of replicas at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts, for educational purposes. The second box will be donated to the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle to enrich the national collections of mineralogy, gemology and art objects.



ill. 5. At the top, the twenty replicas executed between 2015 and 2017 and presented according to the layout and style of the 17th-century engraving. Below, the two sets created by L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts, seen closed and open.

Image : François Farges © Van Cleef & Arpels SA

⁷ See note 2.



J. Hainzelman,
Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier in Oriental Costume,
Les Six Voyages, 1713 edition.
Library of L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts

JEAN-BAPTISTE TAVERNIER (1605-1689): THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A LEGENDARY DIAMOND MERCHANT

CÉCILE LUGAND

PhD student at the University of Rennes II and at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts (with the support of Van Cleef & Arpels)

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689), a French adventurer who left for Asia in 1631, is one of the major figures of the Grand Siècle. His voyages to Asia—six in total and the accounts of which he published in 1676¹—bear witness to his formidable longevity and his innate ability to cope with the most incredible and dangerous of situations. Nevertheless, our understanding of this figure should not be limited to his writings alone, however interesting they may be. Beyond his qualities as a storyteller, Tavernier was first and foremost a merchant of precious stones and other curiosities that he brought back from his travels. Colored stones, pearls, items of jewelry and gold, but especially diamonds from the famous Golkonda mines in India, are examples of the opulent goods bought and sold by the merchant on each one of his journeys.

The prestigious sales of diamonds made upon his return to Europe after each voyage, his incredible travel stories, and his personality, sometimes considered as eccentric—as may be seen in the depiction of the traveler in oriental costume at Versailles in late 1668—have all contributed to the enduring interest in this unusual traveler for over three centuries. However, the reality of Tavernier's life remains largely unknown and the main events of his existence are all too often distorted. This leads us to ask the question: who really was Jean-Baptiste Tavernier?

A man of his time, playing a major role in the forging of relations between East and West during the creation of the various East India companies, a witness to social change and the great socio-political conflicts of the 17th century, Tavernier's trajectory mirrors the evolution of the Grand Siècle and the particularities of this time. In these pages, we attempt to restore the legacy left by this important figure who can be said to provide the key to understanding the history of jewelry and precious stone trade.

¹ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier qu'il a fait en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes*, Paris, 1676, 2 vol.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY VOYAGES

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was born in Paris in 1605. The son of Gabriel Tavernier, a Protestant who had emigrated from Northern Europe at the end of the 16th century, and Suzanne Tonnelier, his wife, Tavernier's childhood was marked by the influence of his father, engraver emeritus, recognized by the court of King Louis XIII. It was probably in his father's shop that the young man became quickly preoccupied by the 'design of going to see some of the countries depicted to me in the Maps, at which I never grew tired of looking'². Such was Tavernier's longing to travel that in 1623, he left the family home to embark on a first voyage of discovery across Europe. A formative experience, thanks to fortuitous meetings and the in-depth observation of the trading system in Europe's largest commercial centers, such as Amsterdam and Venice, these years were essential in shaping Tavernier's character and experience on the ground. While in Regensburg, Bavaria, during the summer of 1630, a decisive encounter would influence the young man's future. François Leclerc du Tremblay, also known as Father Joseph (1577-1638), an influential advisor to Cardinal Richelieu, made Tavernier an offer that he couldn't refuse: the task of accompanying two Capuchin missionaries on their journey to Constantinople. The intrepid young Tavernier accepted immediately: 'having no intention of returning to Italy & wanting to see new countries'³.

² J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, Paris, 1713, The Author's Intent, p. 7

³ *Ibid.*, The Author's Intent, p. 14

⁴ *Ibid.*, The Author's Intent, p. 22

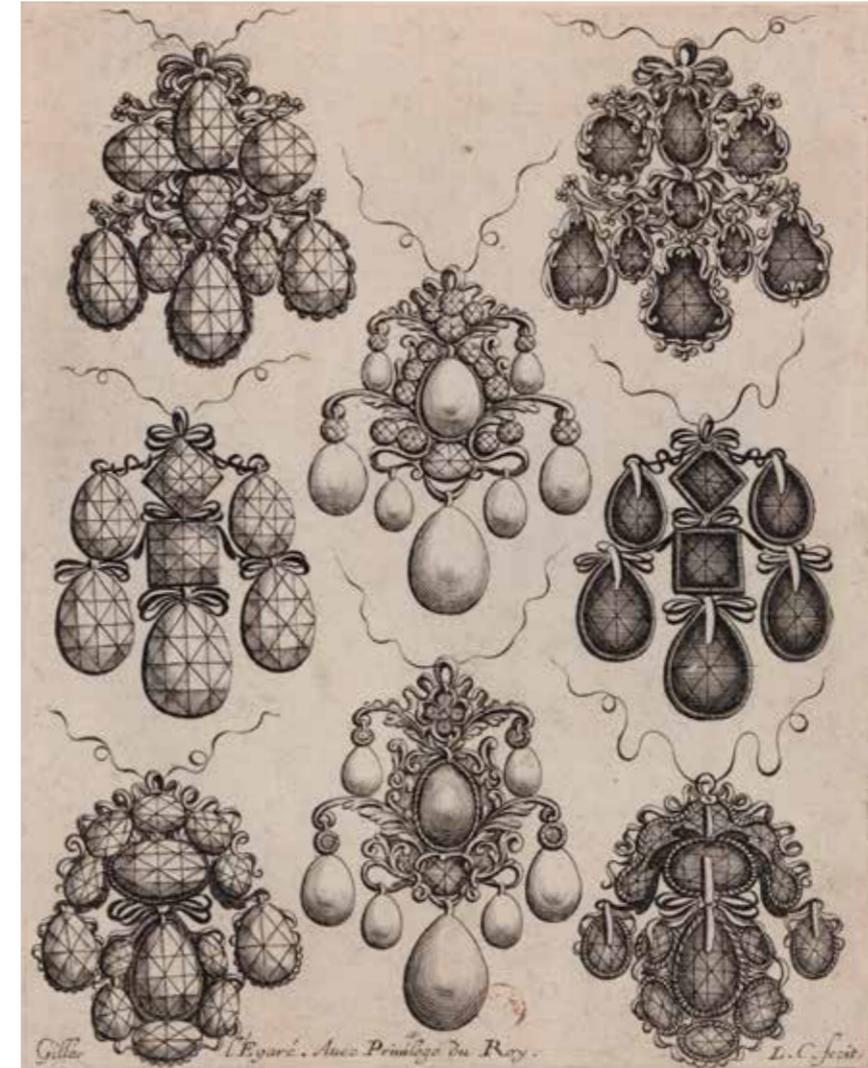
⁵ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, Paris, 1676, p. 388.

While in Constantinople, the traveler finally took leave of his two companions in order to focus on his initial objective: 'For me, who had another journey in mind and wanted to see Persia, I stayed in Constantinople from month to month in the hope that a Caravan, as I was led to believe, would soon arrive'⁴. In March 1632, Tavernier set foot in Isfahan for the first time, the 'capital of all Persia [...] where the King usually holds his Court'⁵. Tavernier's fascination was such that from this date, he would never stop travelling.

Up until the return of his sixth voyage in 1668, the merchant frantically organized one expedition after another to the East, succeeding with each successive voyage in outdoing the prestigious treasures brought back on previous trips.

A VARIED TRADING CAREER

Each time he returned from Asia, his cargoes aroused curiosity, envy and fascination. The destinations of each of his voyages were diverse and eclectic, and proved the ease with which Tavernier mastered the art of trading. The traveler supplied, amongst others, the powerful Cardinal de Mazarin with diamonds that would enrich his fabulous collections. Upon the cardinal's death in 1661, his collections were bequeathed to the young king of France, Louis XIV⁶. Tavernier also sold directly, or through large Parisian fairs, to jewelers close to the Crown, stones that would be cut in the European fashion and mounted on beautiful jewelry or ornaments⁷. To the great scholars and curious-minded individuals of the day, he also brought back rare objects of all kinds, namely medals and other rarities⁸ that would find pride of place in their cabinets of curiosities. The examples are endless and prove the importance of this merchant, a figure who was often envied and frequently criticized⁹.



Gilles Légaré, *Livre des ouvrages d'orfèvrerie*
(*Book of goldsmithery works*) 1663.

Source: galica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

⁶ P. Raphaël du Mans, Ch. Schefer (Ed.), 'Mémoire et relation d'un voyageur qui a esté en Perse et Arménie...' in *Estat de la Perse en 1660*, Paris, 1890, p. 352.

⁷ BnF, Z Thois-y-87 (p. 249), 1663, Factum of the case that is to plead the Hotel's Requests for Messire Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, ... Baron d'Aubonne, plaintiff, against the children and heirs of Chardin and his wife, defendants.

⁸ 'M. le Duc d'Orléans had entrusted him with the purchase of diamonds and other precious stones', Abbé Prevost, 'Voyages de Tavernier en Hinfoustan' in *Histoire Générale des Voyages*. Paris: 1746, vol. X, p. 179.

⁹ 'Tavernier speaks more like a merchant than a philosopher, and is interested only in the great trade routes and diamonds'. Voltaire in *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (*An Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations from the Reign of Charlemagne to the Age of Louis XIV*) Paris, Garnier, 1963. According to the Abbé de Longuerue, who knew Tavernier well, the explorer 'knew everything about stones; but little about much else. He had no spirit or knowledge of any kind whatsoever.' L. Dufour de Longuerue in *Opuscules*, vol. 2. Paris, 1784, p. 29.

However, it is probably because of his personal ties with the sovereigns of a wide range of countries that Tavernier's name aroused mostly admiration. With each voyage, he succeeded in integrating the close entourage of the most omnipotent kings and emperors of the planet: Shah-Abbas II (1632-1666), sovereign of the Persian Empire; Aurangzeb (1618-1707), the Great Mogul reigning over the rich lands of northern India; Louis XIV (1638-1715), the Sun King whose opulent reign dazzled the entire world. All of them welcomed Jean-Baptiste Tavernier into their sumptuous worlds, inaccessible to many of his contemporaries, and all recognized in him the obvious qualities of a merchant and gentleman. During his various travels, the merchant enjoyed the immense honor of witnessing the rich collections of all of these sovereigns, particularly the Great Mogul, Aurangzeb's jewel collections, which he described with great precision in his travelogues¹⁰. An experience that proves his special status: he was probably one of the rare Europeans to have had the privilege of viewing this remarkable collection.

In addition to his trading activities, it was his art of living, his perfect knowledge and mastery of both Eastern and Western customs that made him an outstanding actor. The mission entrusted to him to bear the news of the birth of the heir to the throne of France, Louis XIV, to the Orient, in September 1638, is a revealing example of his status as an ambassador¹¹. The significant role played by Tavernier in these times of developing relations between East and West should not be underestimated.



H. Causé, *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, July 1689
BnF, Engraving and Photography Department
Reserve P-QB-201 (65).

Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

¹⁰ Abbé Prévost, 'Des voyages de Tavernier en Hindoustan' in *Histoire Générale des Voyages*. Paris, 1746, vol. X, pp 159-161.

¹¹ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, Paris, 1676, p. 124.

SPLENDOR AND DECADENCE

Adored by the French court, praised by his contemporaries on his return from his expedition in December 1668, thanks to his prestigious sale to Louis XIV of over a thousand gem stones, worth around 800,000 livres¹², Tavernier was finally knighted by letters patent in early 1669 because of the 'good and pleasant services that have been rendered ... by our beloved Jean-Baptiste Tavernier'¹³. Shortly thereafter, the adventurer acquired the barony of Aubonne, in the canton of Vaud in Switzerland, where he would write the accounts of his travels in the early 1670s, thanks to the pen of Samuel Chappuzeau (1625-1701), an author and also a member of the Reformed Church, whom he had known for a long time. Aubonne was also the place where our adventurer, who had become an amateur yet astute collector over the course of his voyages, exhibited his personal collection of objects brought back from the Orient: enamels dating from the 16th and 17th centuries 'often dated and signed by master enamellers'¹⁴, but also 'fine stones and Indian objects'¹⁵.

Until the early 1680s, Tavernier enjoyed a peaceful retirement between Paris and Aubonne, while retaining control of his business in the Orient, now managed by his nephew, Pierre Tavernier, who had accompanied him on his sixth expedition to Asia¹⁶.

However, this period of stability would not last. The betrayal of his nephew who hijacked Tavernier's shipments in the East¹⁷ and the politico-religious events leading to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685 led Tavernier to consider an ultimate journey to Asia. At the beginning of 1687, like hundreds of thousands of Protestants at the time, the aging merchant fled France and took to the road for the last time with the intention of travelling to Persia via a route he had not yet explored: northern Europe and Muscovy.

Despite the recognition he enjoyed in his lifetime, Tavernier disappeared into oblivion and total indifference. While attempting to reach his beloved Orient for the last time, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier died near Moscow in 1689. He was now almost 85 years old and had travelled over 240,000 km throughout his lifetime.

¹² F. Farges, P. Dubuc & M. Vallanet-Delhom, « Restitution des « vingt plus beaux diamants » de Tavernier vendus à Louis XIV. Partie 1 : Les nouvelles découvertes », *Revue de l'Association Française de Gemmologie*, n° 200, juin 2017, p. 23-30.

¹³ Archives Nationales, Maison du Roi, O/1/13, p. 2, February 1669. Bestowal of a title to Jean-Baptiste Tavernier.

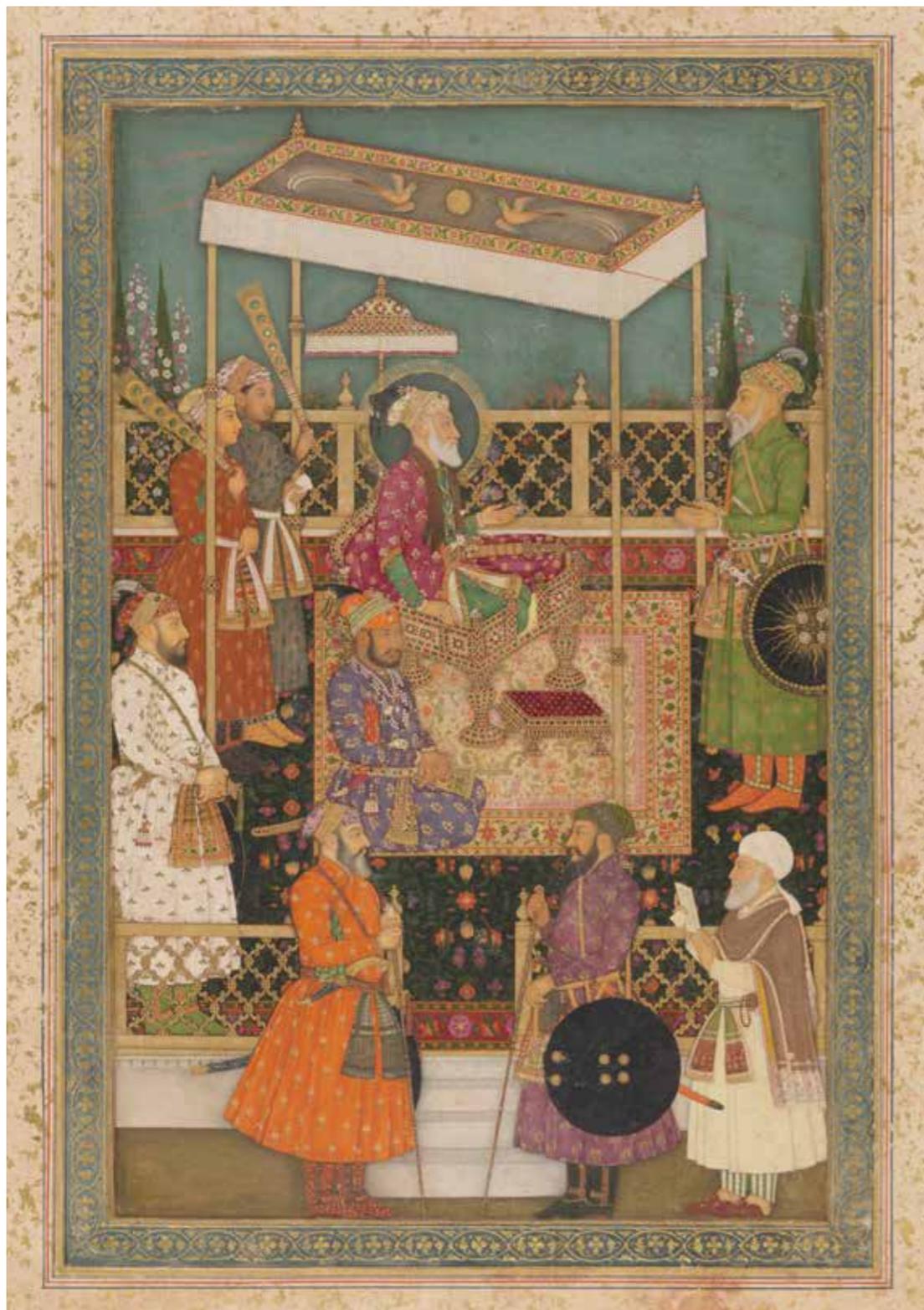
¹⁴ M. Beyssi-Cassan, *Le métier d'émailleur à Limoges*, Limoges, 2006, p. 359.

¹⁵ E. Bonnaffé, *Les collectionneurs de l'ancienne France*, Paris, 1873, p. 62.

¹⁶ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*. Third Book. Paris, 1713, p. 264

¹⁷ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, Paris, 1713, Advice to the reader.

¹⁸ *Mercure Galant*, February 1690, p. 155.



ill. 1. Audience of the Emperor Aurangzeb, page from the Shuja' al-Daula, attributed to Bhawani Das, Mughal school (circa 1707-1712, CBL In 34.7 © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin)

TAVERNIER AT THE COURT OF THE GREAT MOGUL

AMINA OKADA

General Curator, Musée national des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier traveled to Turkey, Persia and India to find pearls and gems for the Grand Dukes of Tuscany and Louis XIV—in 1668, the Sun King purchased three million's worth of precious stones, and the following year he knighted the illustrious traveler and diamond merchant. The Frenchman was a privileged witness to the splendor of the Mughal Empire, which had been burning brightly for nearly a century. From 1638 to 1668, Tavernier's six voyages brought him to India under the reign of two Mughal emperors, the Emperor Shah Jahan (who reigned from 1628 to 1658) and his son and successor, Emperor Aurangzeb (in power from 1658 to 1707). The adventurer was therefore a spectator of the pomp and opulence of an empire, which at that time, was at its zenith (*ill. 1*).

During his successive stays, Tavernier saw Delhi adorn itself with a number of impressive monuments built by its ruler Shah Jahan, who was enamored with architecture and gemstones. These monuments included the Red Fort (built between 1638 and 1649) and the great mosque of Delhi, the Jama Masjid (completed in 1656), the biggest in India. But Tavernier also visited Agra when the construction of the Taj Mahal was nearing completion. The Taj Mahal was the famous mausoleum that the Emperor Shah Jahan had built to house the funerary remains of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who had died at an early age in 1631 (*ill. 2*). The emperor would also be buried there upon his death in 1666. 'Of all the tombs seen in Agra,' wrote Tavernier, 'that of Chagehan's wife is the most superb. [...] I witnessed the beginning and completion of this great work, which required twenty-two years, and twenty thousand men who worked incessantly to finish it, at what can only be imagined to be an excessive cost. [...] Cha-gehan had begun building his tomb on the other side of the river; but the war with his sons interrupted this plan, and Aureng-zeb, the current ruler, did not care to finish it¹. Tavernier, unwittingly echoing unfounded rumors, probably gleaned from the markets and bazaars of the city, contributed to spreading the romantic legend of a second Taj Mahal, which was said to be in black marble, and that the inconsolable emperor intended to make this his tomb, opposite the mausoleum in white marble, housing the remains of his beloved wife. Due perhaps to the critical success of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's book, *The Six Voyages ... in Turkey, Persia and India* (1676), the legend of a 'second Taj' spread and was exaggerated by many travelers to India in the wake of the great jeweler, and continues, even today, to inspire romantic souls.

¹J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier... en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes*. Paris, 1679, Book One, p. 76.

In 1657, the Emperor Shah Jahan fell seriously ill and a war of fratricidal succession broke out between his four sons, who sensing, albeit wrongly, the demise of their father the sovereign, vied to succeed him on the throne. After defeating and killing his three rivals, Aurangzeb proclaimed himself emperor and hastened to imprison his father in Agra Fort. The most decadent of the Mughal emperors was therefore condemned to live out his days in solitude and destitution, held prisoner by his own son in the glorious palace of his ancestors. On these years of captivity of the deposed emperor and on the shaky relations maintained with his successor, Tavernier relates an anecdote which, if true, is most edifying. When Aurangzeb insisted that his father entrust him with some of his jewels to wear during his coronation ceremony, Shah Jahan, furious, replied that he preferred to destroy, with his own hands, these emblematic gems rather than to hand them over to his successor: 'Cha-gehan, in his prison, took Aureng-zeb's request for an insult and flew into such a rage that he spent several days senseless, and very nearly died. In his excess of grief, he asked several times for a pestle and mortar, saying that he wanted to crush his jewels and pearls, so that Aureng-zeb would never get them. But Begum-Saheb, his oldest daughter, who had never abandoned him, threw herself at his feet, and prevented him from doing so...'².

And yet, according to Tavernier, the Emperor Aurangzeb did not share his father's all-consuming passion for gems and jewels: 'King Aureng-zeb has very little curiosity for jewels, and [...] likes gold and silver much better'³. But the austere sovereign was none the less the heir and repository of the immense treasure of gold, precious stones and jewels from the collections and trophies of all the sultans and rajas defeated by the Mughal armies; an immense quantity of loot taken from besieged fortresses, and heavy tributes in gold and gems imposed on the vanquished. Enriched from century to century and from reign to reign, the treasure of the Great Moguls was filled with priceless gems and unheard-of jewels, the quantity and beauty of which exceeded reason. During the first years of the reign of Emperor Jahangir (in power from 1605 to 1627), two European travelers, Johannes De Laët and merchant and adventurer William Hawkins, undertook an inventory of this immense treasure, in an effort to evaluate the number, weight and value of the gems, as well as the imperial regalia: ceremonial weapons with handles enriched with precious stones, tableware embellished with emeralds and rubies, and even thrones of gold and silver, studded with jewels. Overwhelmed by the sheer amount of jewelry he had to inventory, William Hawkins decided to detail certain items in his list, not with a specific number, but rather with a terse yet revealing comment: 'in infinite number'.

² *Ibid.*, Book Two, p. 262.

³ *Ibid.*, Book One, p. 93.

Undoubtedly, it was in his capacity as a renowned jeweler that Tavernier was allowed by Aurangzeb the remarkable privilege of being able to examine some of these unparalleled gems preserved in the imperial treasury. The jeweler evokes at length that memorable day of November 1665 when the emperor called him to show him, 'by a special grace that he had never bestowed upon any other Frenchman', some of the most extraordinary gems that one could imagine: 'As soon as I arrived at the Court, the two Brokers of the King's Jewels, of whom I have spoken elsewhere, accompanied me to his Majesty, and after having given him the usual salute, they led me to a small chamber at one of the ends of the Hall where the King sat on his throne, from where he could see us. I discovered in this chamber Akel-kan, Chief Keeper of Jewels, who upon seeing us, ordered four of the King's Eunuchs to go and fetch the jewels, which were brought in in two large wooden chests, laced with gold leaves, covered with small specially made rugs, one in red velvet, the other in embroidered green velvet. After they had been displayed, and all the pieces had been counted three times, a list was made by three writers who were also present. The Indian people do all things with great circumspection and patience, and when they see someone acting hastily or becoming angry, they look at him without a word and laugh at him as if he were a strange creature'⁴.

In addition to the war trophies and booty, the Mughal Treasury was regularly added to with presents that the nobles and dignitaries were required to make to the emperor in the various circumstances, festivals, celebrations and ceremonies that punctuated court life. The most spectacular of these solemn celebrations was undoubtedly the royal weighing ceremony (Tuladan), which took place during the celebration of the emperor's birthday (julus). Once again, Tavernier was the privileged witness to these splendid festivities, where all of the pomp and magnificence of the Mughal court were given free rein: '...I was a spectator of this great festival which began on the fourth of November and lasted five days. It was on the occasion of the King's birthday that he was traditionally weighed; and if it so happened that he weighed more than the preceding year, the celebrations were even greater. Once he had been weighed, he sat on the richest of thrones of which I will speak to you anon, and then all the illustrious members of the Kingdom came to greet him and give him presents. The Ladies of the Court also gave him gifts, and he received even more from all the Governors of the Provinces, and other Great Lords. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, gold and silver, as well as rich carpets, gold and silver brocades, other fabrics, elephants, camels and horses; on that day the King received more than thirty million livres of gifts'⁵.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Book Two, p. 277-278.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Book Two, p. 267.

'The richest of thrones' referred to by Tavernier, and on which the Emperor Aurangzeb sat once he had been weighed, was none other than the famous Peacock Throne, the most ornate of all the Mughal thrones (ill. 2). Commissioned by the Emperor Shah Jahan on the first day of his reign, on February 4, 1628, and completed in 1635, it was first called the Takht-i-Murassa, or 'Throne of Jewels' because of the impressive quantity of precious stones with which it was sumptuously adorned. In enameled gold, inlaid with several hundred diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls, crowned with two peacocks also in enameled gold encrusted with gems, this throne, whose beauty was unrivaled, was the work of Sa'idai Gilani,

a highly skilled goldsmith and lapidary, as well as a renowned poet and calligrapher who was active during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and to whom the Emperor Jahangir had conferred in 1620, the flattering title of Bibadal Khan ('The Incomparable'), as a tribute to his exceptional skill. It took seven years for Bibadal Khan to execute the 'Throne of Jewels', in the same gold that Shah Jahan had enshrined the finest jewels of the imperial treasury. On March 22, 1635, before the incredulous eyes of the entire court, therein assembled, Shah Jahan took his place for the first time on the throne that had finally been completed and sparkled like a thousand lights.



ill. 2. *The Emperor Shah Jahan on the Peacock Throne*, from a page of a manuscript of the *Padshahnama*, by 'Abid, 17th century Mughal school, ink, watercolors and gold on paper (19th century, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art).
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image of the MMA

When in November 1665, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier had the privilege of closely examining the Peacock Throne, where the Emperor Aurangzeb sat, he counted nearly 108 Balas rubies weighing from one hundred to two hundred carats, some 160 emeralds ranging from thirty to sixty carats, as well as some remarkable pearls: 'The bottom of the sky is fully covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all around; and above the sky, which is made of a four-sided vault, we see a Peacock with a raised tail made of blue sapphires and other colored stones, the enameled gold body is encrusted with some jewels, and a large ruby lies in front of the stomach, from which hangs a pear-shaped pearl of about fifty carats, of a yellowish hue. On both sides of the Peacock, there is a large bouquet the same height as the bird, made of several kinds of enameled gold flowers with some jewels'⁶. Tavernier goes on to elaborate on the extraordinary pear-shaped pearl of fifty carats: 'It is the biggest pearl I have seen at the Court of the Great Mogul. It hangs from the neck of a peacock made of precious stones and dangles to the stomach, and this peacock crowns the great throne'⁷. It is rather curious however, that Tavernier in his description of the Peacock Throne, describes only one of these birds at the top of the throne, whereas in his chronicle on the reign of the Emperor Shah Jahan, Abdul Hamid Lahori mentions two peacocks erected on either side of a tree made from precious stones. Furthermore, François Bernier in the account of his journey to the Great Mogul's court, also evokes 'two peacocks, covered with precious stones and pearls'⁸. Be that as it may, today nothing remains of this fabulous and now legendary throne. A symbol for over a century of the splendor of the Great Mughals, the Peacock Throne was taken in 1739 by the Persian Nadir Shah who, after defeating the Mughals at the Battle of Karnal, appropriated their immense

wealth and pillaged the city of Delhi. Dismantled by the successors of Nadir Shah who removed and dispersed the gems of which it was made, the Peacock Throne is now merely a memory, imperfectly preserved in rare miniatures and some contradictory descriptions that offer a pale and fallacious reflection of its true splendor.

Tavernier's testimony, as well as that of his compatriot and contemporary François Bernier, offers an invaluable insight into the wealth and magnificence of the Mughal court in the 17th century. But Tavernier's story becomes exceptional in that it not only refers to Agra or Delhi, but also to Golkonda and its famous diamond mines which he visited in 1645. The description he gives in Book Two of his *Travels* is an indispensable document on the extraction of gems, concessions, and the working conditions in the mines; the diamond trading system and the rights owed to the sovereign. Aware of the importance of his testimony, Tavernier, with a legitimate pride, does not hesitate to remind the reader that he was 'the first European to have opened to the French the doors of these mines, which are the only places on earth where one can find diamonds'⁹, ignoring or forgetting that in the 1620s, Englishman William Methwold, an administrator with the British East India Company had beaten him by being the first to discover the diamond-rich lands of Kollur, on the outskirts of Golkonda.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 269-270.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Book Two, p. 377.

⁸ F. Bernier, *Voyage dans les Etats du Grand Mogol*, (reprint), Paris, 1981, p. 202.

⁹ *Les Six voyages...*, Book Two, p. 326.

p. 30 and p.31. *Tavernier's travel map in Europe, Turkey and in Persia* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Map and Plan Department). Source : gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

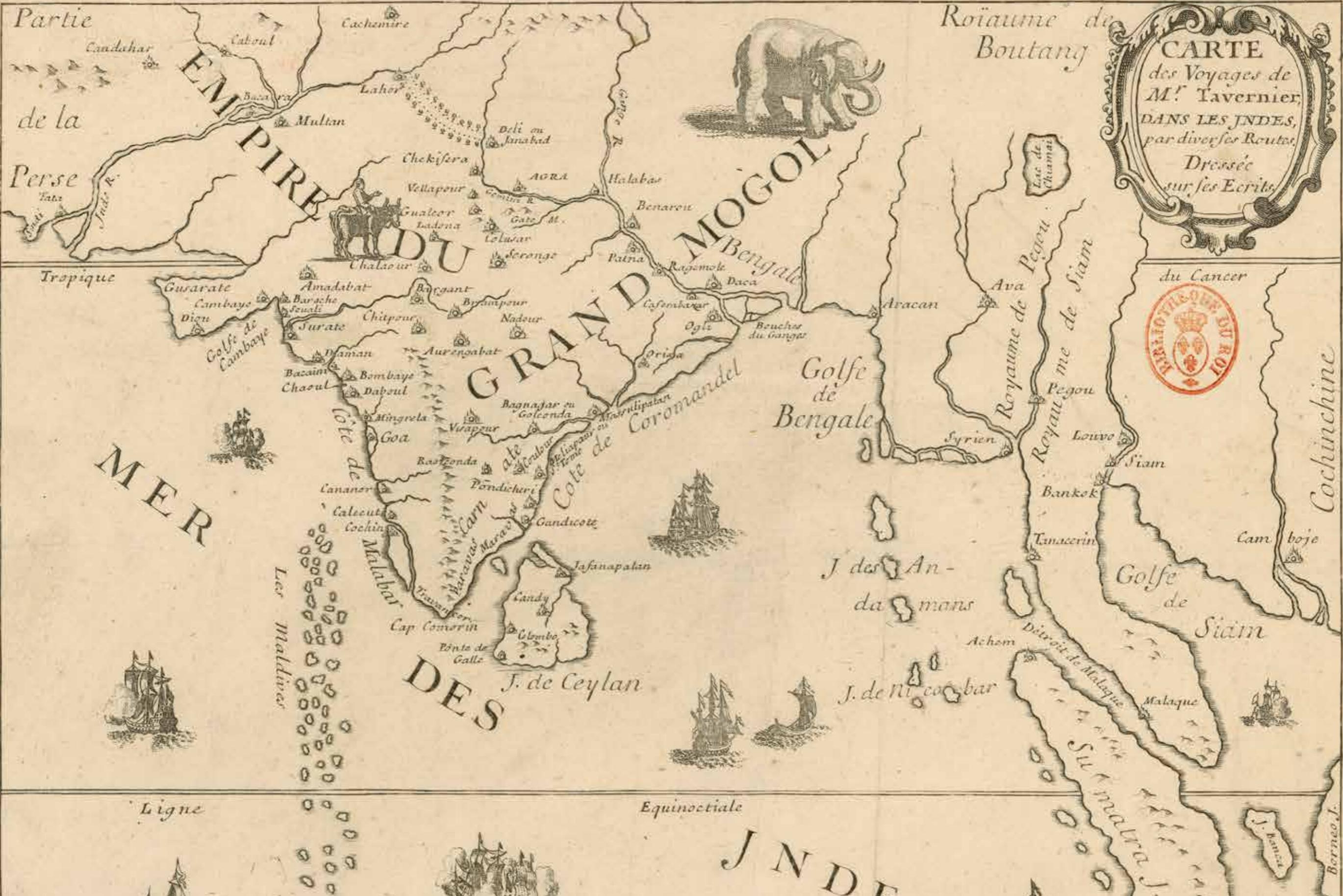
p. 32 and p.33. *Tavernier's travel map in India, through various itineraries, drawn upon his writings*.

(Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Map and Plan Department). Source : gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.



CARTE DES VOYAGES
de Monsieur Tavernier,
En Europe, en Turquie et en Perse.





CARTE
 des Voyages de
 M. Tavernier,
 DANS LES INDES,
 par diverses Routes.
 Dressée
 sur ses Ecrits.



du Cancer

Equinoctiale

Ligne

J N D E S

MER

EMPIRE
 DU
 GRAND
 MOGOL

DES
 INDES

Royaume de
 Boutang

Partie
 de la
 Perse



Cochinchine

Golfe de
 Siam

Golfe de
 Bengale

J des An-
 da mans

J. de Ni-
 coobar

Royaume de
 Pegou

Droit de
 Malaque

Su-
 maltra

Golfe de
 Cambaye

Les
 Maldives

Cote de
 Malabar

Cote de
 Coromandel

J. de Ceylan

Cam-
 boje

Borneo



A FASCINATION WITH THE ORIENT IN THE 17TH CENTURY

GUILLAUME GLORIEUX

University Professor, Director of Education and Research at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts, with the support of Van Cleef & Arpels

The six voyages made by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) to Turkey, Persia and India between 1630 and 1668 reflect Europe's growing interest in the East. Many people in the 17th century had an immense curiosity for other cultures: this curiosity was connected in part to an aesthetic desire for new decoration, different objects, colors, perfumes and forms, in short, an exoticism of sensations, at times futile, but it can also be read as a philosophical curiosity for other forms of morality and governance.

The exotic fascinated, intrigued, and aroused the curiosity of men, while fueling their imagination with images of luxury and voluptuousness. During the Grand Siècle, France prided itself on exoticism.

The phenomenon is a major feature in the history of taste in the 17th century, a veritable trend, which intensified over the years. It fed on the diplomatic and commercial relations that were then being woven between East and West. It was also expressed through the penchant for foreign travel.

THE GROWING POPULARITY OF EXOTICISM

The taste for objects coming from or evoking exotic worlds doesn't date from the 17th century. The Far East had been especially attractive to Europeans since Marco Polo recounted in 1298 the splendors of China in his *Book of the Marvels of the World*. However, this fascination grew considerably in the 17th century, both in practice and in the imagination.

The vogue for the exotic was manifested first in the fields of furniture and the decorative arts. Imported mainly from China, furniture and art objects seduced a European public through their strangeness, that is to say their distant provenance and their singular character. Lacquered furniture became a feature of fashionable interiors: Madame de Sévigné wrote her letters on a Chinese lacquered desk (now housed in the Musée Carnavalet¹, *ill.* 1) and Cardinal Mazarin surrounded himself with a luxurious set of lacquered cabinets, 'Chinese-style' rugs and sumptuous fabrics, including 'four whole pieces of Chinese gold pattern brocade', according to the inventory of his property drawn up in 1653².

¹ This is the writing desk that Madame de Sévigné had at the Château des Rochers (in Vitré, Ille-et-Vilaine). The Musée Carnavalet also has a lacquered inkwell coming from the collection of the Marquise.

² Exh. cat. *Trafic d'influences. Meubles de laque et goût extrême-oriental aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1989, p. 14. See also E. Bonnaffé, *Les collectionneurs de l'ancienne France*. Paris: 1873, p. 52 and P. Michel, Mazarin, *prince des collectionneurs: les collections et l'ameublement du cardinal Mazarin, 1602-1661*, Paris, 1999.



ill. 1. Writing desk of Madame de Sévigné, pine, Chinese lacquer,
H: 100 cm, L: 94 cm; W: 53 cm (Paris, Musée Carnavalet)
© Philippe Joffre / Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet

The fashion for exotic objects soon spread to the court. A study of the royal inventories during the reign of Louis XIV confirms the importance of Chinese objects at Versailles, especially lacquered items: in the logbook of the Crown's Furniture, drafted between 1666 and 1672, 'Chinese lacquered' furniture can be seen from the very first pages and we find at Versailles, amongst others, 'a beautiful screen of twelve leaves in a lacquered green and gold background, representing flowers, terraces, trees and birds from China, in various colors, with a black border decorated with gold vases and flowers of many colors, with silver birds and golden dragons'³. As for Chinese and Japanese porcelain, it was massively popular with amateur collectors (*ill.* 2). The fascination which porcelain exerted was commensurate with the mystery surrounding it. Jealously guarded by the Chinese for nearly a millennium, the secret of its fabrication would only be uncovered by Westerners at the beginning of the next century⁴. Added to this, were countless objects that were especially popular with the French: fans, Indiennes fabrics (until their prohibition by Louis XIV in 1686), silks, muslins, cloisonné enamels, porcelain magots (grotesque oriental figurines), terracotta pagodas (statuettes representing a Chinese figure), as well as trays and lacquerware.



ill. 2. Decorative vase with flowers and animals
(Kangxi period (1662-1722),
Paris, Musée Guimet – Musée national des arts asiatiques)
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (MNAAG, Paris) /
Thierry Ollivier)

³ Logbook of the Crown's Furniture, cited in the exhibition catalogue *Trafic d'influences*, 1989, p. 14.

⁴ On porcelain imported from China, see M. Beurdeley, *Porcelaine de la Compagnie des Indes*, Fribourg, 1962. More generally, on Westerners' taste for 'chinoiseries' and the influence of these on European creation, see M. Jarry, *Chinoiseries : le rayonnement du goût chinois sur les arts décoratifs des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècle*. Fribourg: 1981.

The taste for exoticism also extended to the world of literature: Molière introduced his famous Mamamouchi scene in *The Bourgeois Gentleman* in 1670; Antoine Galland provided the first French translation of the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* in 1704, and in 1721, Montesquieu published his *Persian Letters*. The latter work perfectly captures the French state of mind of the epoch, as seen in the famous letter XXX: 'Oh! Ah! A Persian, is he? Most amazing! However can anybody be a Persian?' Music was also influenced: even before the Turkish ceremony of *The Bourgeois Gentleman* was transformed into a ballet by Lully, Charles Tessier composed at the beginning of the 17th century, 'Turkish' songs and Étienne Moulinié introduced around 1650 oriental-style harmonies in one of his court tunes, the *Song of the wandering Jew*.

Exoticism was equally evident in everyday life through the consumption of spices, coffee and tea—privileged for their therapeutic properties. The first cafe opened its doors in Paris in 1686, opposite the theatre of the Comédie-Française on the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain (current-day Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie). It was called Le Procope. What was known as 'arabesque liqueur' at that time was consumed in public. The cafe quickly became a convivial venue, very popular with Parisians.

Paradoxically, while exoticism was fashionable, the term itself did not yet exist in the French language in the 17th century. More evocative names, such as 'turqueries, chinoiseries' and later 'russeries' were preferred. The absence of a precise and clearly defined term allows the contemporary reader to note two points about the concept of exoticism. Firstly, its geographical boundaries. These were far from precise: exoticism applied to many countries in the Far East (China, Japan), the Middle East (Persia, Turkey), Africa, but also America, Russia, and even Spain. As for conceptual boundaries, these were even more ambiguous and it would be very difficult to find a convincing definition in texts from the 17th century. In general, few writers or critics expressed an opinion with regard to this fashion.

How then should the term exoticism be understood today? In the 17th century, exoticism meant first and foremost a change of scenery, with all the attractions and fears that this implied. It indicated a distant and mysterious elsewhere, a place of uncertain boundaries, where landscapes, costumes, customs, and architecture were different. It also referred to other political, social, philosophical and religious systems, which could, on occasion, serve as a discreet criticism of the French regime. Finally, exoticism was not only that which we discovered (through tales of travels and engravings), but also what we imagined. The reality of the Orient had as its double an imaginary Orient, whose place—for the French—was just as important, if not more so.

DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

Ambassadors from distant countries visiting France aroused great curiosity and contributed to maintaining the taste for exoticism. For anyone unable to see the visitors, the *Mercurie galant* published detailed accounts of their activities (ill. 3 and 4) and Parisian print publishers edited popular images, representing the highlights of their stay in France. The reception of these ambassadors took the form of a special ceremony at the Palace of Versailles, in the Throne Room or on rare occasions in the Hall of Mirrors.

During his personal reign, Louis XIV made a great effort to strengthen ties with several Eastern countries, giving rise to visits from foreign delegations to Paris, all of which generated much interest and curiosity amongst the public. One of the most sensational visits was that of the ambassadors of Siam (a kingdom that is today part of Thailand) to the French court in 1686: the visit left a lasting impression both for the brilliance of the ceremony organized at Versailles and the refined exoticism of the Siamese delegation. It was even more memorable in that the king of Siam had sent the most beautiful furniture from his palace: cabinets, chests, tables, writing desks and screens, along with his delegation, in order to impress the Sun King and his court⁵.

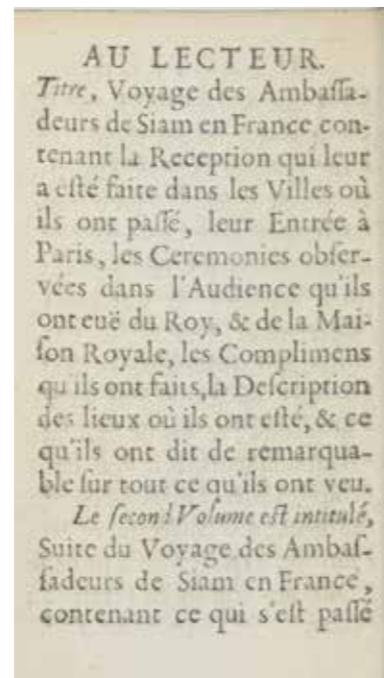
ill. 3. Title page of the *Mercurie galant*, November 1686 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

ill. 4. Page from the *Mercurie galant*, November 1686 recounting the visit of the Siamese ambassadors to France (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

⁵ On the Siamese delegation and the interest they generated, see B. Rondot, 'L'ambassade du Siam, 1686' in exh. cat. 1682-1785, under the direction of D. Kisluk-Grosheide et B. Rondot, Versailles, 2017, pp 150-157.



In 1715, towards the end of his life, Louis XIV received with great pomp the extraordinary ambassador of the king of Persia, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. A painting attributed to Nicolas de Largillière captures this moment, *Reception by Louis XIV of Mehemet Reza Bey, Ambassador of the King of Persia, 19 February 1715* (Versailles, Musée national du Château de Versailles et de Trianon, ill. 5). The artist emphasizes the shimmering fabrics of the Persian coats and the splendor of the courtiers' attire; however, he does not represent the king in his black cloak embroidered with Crown diamonds, worth 12,500 livres. Mehemet Reza Bey's visit to France had quite the impact: the Persian ambassador and his delegation would become a much talked-about topic amongst high society in both Paris and Versailles⁶.

However, it was mainly through trade that France had access to distant and foreign worlds. Commerce with China, Japan and the 'Indies' was organized around the creation of the French East India Company (Compagnie des Indes), which was founded relatively late compared to other European countries. As early as 1602 for example, the United Provinces of The Netherlands founded the Dutch East India Company (known by its initials, the V.O.C.). This was soon followed by England with the East India Company in 1613, and Portugal in 1628⁷. It wasn't until 1664 that Colbert founded the French East India Company, but it did not become active until 1698, when the first ship was chartered. This was the beginning of exotic journeys that would inspire Baudelaire a century and a half later: 'Just as in other times we set out for China, / Our eyes fixed on the open sea, hair

in the wind' (*The Voyage*). Two full years were needed at that time to complete the voyage. On their return, the boats docked in Nantes and in the newly built port of Lorient, exclusively devoted to trade with the East. Indeed, at that time Lorient was written 'l'Orient' in the French.

On arrival, the goods were unloaded on the docks and sold by auction. The main buyers were wholesale merchants, who resold the goods to retail merchants in the major French cities. In Paris, we find references to specialized merchants in the *Livre commode des adresses de Paris* (*Useful Book of Parisian Addresses*), published by Abraham du Pradel in 1692⁸, much to the satisfaction of amateurs who liked to decorate their homes with exotic objects. This was the birth of trading with China, which saw goods imported from the Far East to adorn the homes of the Parisian elite.

⁶ É. Benjamin, 'L'ambassade perse, 1715' in exh. cat. *Visiteurs de Versailles*, op. cit., pp 170-173.

⁷ M. Beurdeley, op. cit., pp 105-107 summarized the history of French trade with China during the 17th and 18th centuries, and in particular the birth and development of the French East India Company. On the different trading companies established in Europe, P. Haudrère and G. Le Bouëdec provide an excellent summary in their book published in Rennes in 1999, *Les Compagnies des Indes*, republished in 2015. See also P. Haudrère, *Les compagnies des Indes orientales. Trois siècles de rencontres entre Orientaux et Occidentaux (1600-1858)*, Paris, 2006.

⁸ A. du Pradel, *Livre commode des adresses de Paris*, Paris, 1692, pp 68-69.

THE TASTE FOR TRAVEL

The taste for travel, which grew in the 17th century, also gave rise to an increasing interest in exoticism. The editorial genre of the travelogue enjoyed great success and helped the public to discover distant countries, with an almost ethnographic approach.

In addition to Tavernier and the account of his travels to the Orient, first published in 1676⁹ and republished on numerous occasions—the most visible sign of its success—many of Tavernier's contemporaries undertook similar long journeys to the Far East and up to the borders of Russia.

François Bernier (1620-1688), doctor and philosopher, travelled in the Orient from 1656 to 1669. He crossed through Palestine, visited Egypt and spent several years in India. On his return journey, he travelled through Persia and Turkey. Bernier recounted his rich experiences in his travelogue, published in 1671¹⁰. The diplomat Laurent d'Arvieux (1635-1702) was the author of memoirs that introduced France to the customs and morals of the Turks and Arabs of the Middle East in the second half of the 17th century. Jean de Thévenot (1633-1667), merchant and introducer of the coffee bean to Paris, was also the author of several travelogues about North Africa, the Middle East and India. The son of a jeweler and a jeweler himself, Jean Chardin (1643-1713) went to Persia and India in 1665 to buy diamonds and stayed for five years with the King of Persia, who took him under his protection. He resumed his travels in 1671, and embarked on a journey that led him to Smyrna (current-day Izmir), Constantinople, Crimea, the

Caucasus and Georgia, and finally to Isfahan, where he would live for four years (from 1673 to 1677), and India. Back in Europe in 1680, he worked on his travelogue, which he published in 1686¹¹.

The tradition continued on into the next century. Botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708) wrote an account of his voyage to what was then called the Levant, an expedition commissioned by Louis XIV so as to increase scientific knowledge in terms of the region's natural history and geography (this account was published after his death in 1717). The man of letters Jean de La Roque (1661-1745) published no less than three travelogues about his journeys to Arabia¹³, Syria and Lebanon¹⁴, and Palestine¹⁵. His accounts contained valuable observations on the manners and customs of the people and the architectural remains, especially the Roman ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon.

Most of the journeys with a diplomatic, cultural, scientific or commercial purpose gave rise to the publication of accounts relating in book form, the many adventures experienced by their authors. These travelogues, often filled with great detail, fueled Europe's fascination for the East. In turn real and fantasized, near and far, the Orient, was also an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists, in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, with Delacroix as one of the main representatives of Orientalism.



ill. 5. Nicolas de Largillière (attributed to), *Reception by Louis XIV of Mehemet Reza Bey, Ambassador of the King of Persia, 19 February 1715* (1715, Versailles, Musée national du Château de Versailles et de Trianon).

Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot

⁹ J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six voyages*. Paris: 1676, 2 vol.

¹⁰ F. Bernier, *Voyage dans les États du Grand Mogol*. Paris: 1671.

¹¹ J. Chardin, *Journal du voyage du chevalier Chardin en Perse*. Paris: 1686.

¹² J. Pitton de Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant fait par ordre du roi*. Paris, 1717, 2 vol.

¹³ J. de La Roque, *Voyage dans l'Arabie heureuse, fait de 1708 à 1710, par l'Océan-Oriental et le détroit de la mer Rouge, avec la relation d'un Voyage fait du port de Moka à la cour d'Yémen, de 1711 à 1713*. Paris, 1716.

¹⁴ J. de La Roque, *Voyage en Syrie et au mont Liban*. Paris, 1722.

¹⁵ J. de La Roque, *Voyage fait, par ordre du roi, dans la Palestine, vers le grand-émir, chef de princes arabes du désert, followed by la Description de l'Arabie, faite par le sultan Ismaël Abulfeda*. Paris, 1717.

THE DIAMONDS OF LOUIS XIV

FRANÇOIS FARGES

Professor of Mineralogy at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, member of the Institut Universitaire de France



ill. 1. René-Antoine Houasse, *Portrait of Louis XIV on horseback* (circa 1679, Versailles,

Musée national du Château de Versailles et de Trianon). One of the rare representations of the jewels of the French Crown : on the hat can be seen a brooch, possibly inlaid with Tavernier's diamond no. 2. © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles)



ill. 2. Replicas of the eighteen Mazarin diamonds bequeathed to Louis XIV for the Crown's Collection. Paris, MNHN. Author's image © MNHN.

In her study on the subject, Michèle Bimbenet-Privat quotes from the outset a relevant fact that has unfortunately remained little known by our contemporaries: 'To say that Louis XIV passionately loved diamonds would be a veritable understatement'. The historian goes on to cite the numerous descriptions of the king's clothes embellished with jewels, which his contemporaries, from Dangeau to Saint Simon, surely took great pleasure in describing (*ill. 1*). The king's adoring sycophants reinforced royal power by praising the king with a thousand superlatives, each more extraordinary than the next: the sovereign's glittering clothes were 'a marvelous thing to behold', their beauty surpassed only by their financial value: 'twelve million of diamonds' (this may be read as 'in diamonds'). The bankers were reassured, Colbert was doing a remarkable job officiating over the royal manufactures and the countries of Europe knew that these treasures could be used as security in case of necessity.

Louis XIV undoubtedly inherited his passion for diamonds from Mazarin, who acquired a large portion of the diamonds of the English crown after the fall of Charles I (*ill. 2*). In all, the powerful cardinal had accumulated, amongst a host of other valuables, eighteen large diamonds which he bequeathed to the young king on his death. These were used as capital for the Crown's collection of jewels, which Henri III had catastrophically alienated during his religious wars. This collection or fund had not been properly reconstituted by Henri IV and Louis XIII. Mazarin's collection included table-cut diamonds such as the 'Mirror of Portugal', double roses such as the 'Grand Sancy' and pierced pendeloques such as the Mazarins 5 and 6 (see *ill. 2*). His collection also included what are nowadays known as 'light fancy' diamonds—slightly pinkish, yellowish or brownish in color—a style currently in fashion.

¹ M. Bimbenet-Privat, 'Les pierreries de Louis XIV, objets de collection et instruments politiques' in *Mémoires et documents de l'École des chartes*, no. 69, 2003, pp 81-96.



Today, record books of Louis XIV's jewels attest to rather 'modest' purchases in the early years of the young king's reign², with the exception of the sublime large diamond from the House of Guise (33 carats), acquired in 1665. Following the death of his mother, Anne of Austria, the following year however, the king no longer limited his spending. Invoices, diplomatic gifts in the form of portrait miniatures ('boîtes à portrait'), sumptuously decorated with precious stones according to the social status of the recipient (*ill. 3*)³, as well as the countless gifts of ornate jewelry presented by the king to his entourage, particularly to the princes and princesses to whom he was related by blood, are all examples of the royals' insatiable appetite for diamonds, rubies, sapphires, pearls and emeralds, to cite the most valuable gemstones⁴. Indeed, the Sun King's passion for diamonds and other stones generated great rivalry between Parisian jewelry workshops, now in competition with each other for the king's favor.

ill. 3. The Louvre portrait miniature (obverse, reverse), possibly by Pittan (1668, Paris, Musée du Louvre). The miniature is inlaid with approximately 20 carats of fancy diamonds (yellows, greens, browns) where the masterful setting à paillons makes them appear colorless (see note 3). Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Jean-Gilles Berizzi

² La Courneuve, Archives diplomatiques, 2045 et seq.

³ Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. OA12480; M. Bimbenet-Privat and F. Farges, *La boîte à portrait de Louis XIV*, Paris, 2015.

⁴ The inventories also refer, albeit sporadically to amethysts and opals, peridot, topaz and zircon.

THE ARTISTS

The king surrounded himself with the best jewelers and merchant-dealers or 'subcontractors' who used and abused their privileges. Upon Louis XIV's accession to the throne, François Lescot provided him with a diamond-studded cross of the chivalric Order of the Holy Ghost. Lescot also contributed to providing portrait miniatures adorned with diamonds 'by order and for the service of the king' to certain emissaries, whom the French court sought to influence. Various other jewelers also worked with and for the French Court. However, it was the 'Pittan clan' who enabled the sovereign to accelerate production with an avalanche of portrait miniatures and jewels, provided at a much faster pace than their colleagues and more importantly, at a better price, thereby trouncing any competition and eventually leading to the removal of the Tessier de Montarsy family from the list of appointed royal suppliers⁵. The dynastic triad of the 'Pittan' family included the grandfather Jean or Jehan, known as 'the Elder' (until 1663, the date of his death), the father Jean, called 'the Younger' ('jeweler to the king' and 'intendant of the king's jewels'), as well as his wife Suzanne and their son Nicolas (also dubbed 'jeweler to the king' in 1670). The other major accomplishment of the Pittan family was to have overseen, if not faceted themselves, the re-cutting of the large blue diamond brought back by Tavernier in 1668, and sold to the king for the equivalent of 150 kilograms of gold at that time (*ill. 4*)⁶.

ill. 4. Simulations of the re-faceting of Louis XIV's large blue diamond purchased from Tavernier (top) and its gold inset of 1673 (below). Photo: François Farges © MNHN

⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Mélanges Colbert (compilation of jewelry invoices from 1662 to 1681).

⁶ B. Morel, *Les joyaux de la couronne de France*, Paris, 1988. Its current value is estimated at around one billion euros.



Finished in the summer of 1672 and inlaid with gold on an 'enameled stick from behind'⁷, the diamond seemed to be a new type of art object, wholly extraordinary and totally atypical, which the king, apparently, did not wear on his person, unlike the other diamonds in his possession. The gem was set on a pin that allowed for the easier manipulation of the stone as an object of naturalistic curiosity. Thanks to 3D models⁸, we have deduced that the 'French Blue' generated some unusual optical illusions. At its center, could be seen a seven-rayed sun, sending its light to the seven planets (not seen), floating in a hard and sparkling dark blue stone, dotted with shards of light. In other words, the diamond was an emblem of Louis XIV's power and influence: the gold sun represented the court and the stone's brilliance, the universe studded with stars. In short, the 'French Blue' was an instrument of power, faceted in the image of the Sun King, and in the colors of the French monarchy, azure and gold. Better still, like Galileo and Descartes, the king adopted the heliocentric theory of the solar system in order to reinforce his Gallicanism by demarcating himself from the Vatican. A sublime political project in the form of a diamond that encapsulated the essence of its owner's identity. Since that time, no one has created, or even imagined such subtle jewels: the feat remains unheard of today.



ill. 5. Louis XIV and pink-colored diamonds: the Peach Blossom ('Fleur de Pêcher') and the pink fived-sided 'Cinq Pans', renamed 'Hortensia' under the Empire. Replicas in pink Zirconia, on a scale of 1 cm. Photo: François Farges © MNHN

Based on our current understanding, Pittan did not facet any other of Tavernier's diamonds. Understandably so. For if Tavernier's gems proved to be magnificent Mughal cuts, their re-cutting in the European style was somewhat problematic: they were either too thick (diamond no. 2) or too thin (almost all of the other stones). Only the three pendeloques (diamonds no. 8 and 9) reflected the tastes of the day and were deemed unnecessary for re-cutting. The diamonds brought back by Daniel Bazu, Tavernier's Dutch companion on his sixth voyage, were more 'productive': they were much easier to facet. Other beautiful diamonds continued to enter the royal collections, more than likely the Hortensia (*ill. 5*)⁹. Pittan delivered, via a subcontractor, the magnificent chest in gold filigree, destined to 'hold all of the finery' of Louis XIV, i.e., his jewels.¹⁰



However, an unexpected incident soon interrupted this well-oiled system of supply and demand. Jean Pittan died in strange circumstances in 1676, after six months of total inactivity for the Crown. His successor, Louis Alvarez, supplied some fine diamonds from 1677 onward, but mainly a large quantity of small stones that were of no great interest, apart from being used as gifts for Louis XIV's diplomatic relations. Unlike Pittan, Alvarez embarked upon the re-faceting of Tavernier's diamond no. 2 with a rather predictable result: Alvarez lacked the skills required for a brilliant cut, and the thickness of the resulting stone yielded a 'cloudy' shine after its re-faceting¹¹, reminiscent of a rough diamond! In other words, ten carats had been wasted for nothing. The stone was nevertheless inserted in the king's hat pin or brooch, but was surrounded by seven other large diamonds in order to create a dazzling effect (*ill. 1*). Due to a lack of competitors, the Tessier de Montarsy family were once again appointed official suppliers to the Crown, with the privilege appointed to the son of the family. However, this signaled the decline of the diamond under Louis XIV. With the loss of expertise in the brilliant cut represented by Pittan's death, twenty years of innovation and creativity had come to an end. Apart from the sublime Peach Blossom ('Fleur de Pêcher') Diamond (a light pink of about 25 carats, *ill. 5*), no other 'great stones' would enter the royal collection. This exception however, serves only to confirm the *modus operandi* of the time: this diamond had been bought at a low price in London in 1683¹².

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) finally convinced France's few remaining lapidaries to leave the country. Those working in the trade were mostly of Protestant denomination. London then took up the mantle as Europe's diamond capital. From then on, it seemed as if France were forced to pay twice for the Revocation: the loss of skills generated by the departure of its expert lapidaries resulted in expensive purchases abroad. When a huge 426-carat diamond arrived in London in 1704, it was cut into a lavish 140.62-carat brilliant. When it was presented to Louis XIV in 1712, he was unable to purchase it due a lack of funds caused by his ruinous War of the Spanish Succession. The diamond was finally bought at a price from the English by Philippe of Orléans in 1717. Since then, this so-called 'Regent' Diamond has been the pride of the French nation which, during the reign of the Sun King, had created the first brilliant cut in history, the great blue diamond, stolen in 1792. However, the blue diamond's splendor has been tarnished by history: between the Revocation of 1685, its theft in 1792 and sale in 1887, orchestrated by the Third Republic, in a scandalous attempt to liquidate four centuries of unique French savoir-faire. The Zirconia replicas serve to fill the void, as best they can—a void generated by a succession of quintessentially French catastrophes.

⁷ Paris, Archives nationales, O1 3360, chapitre 1, item 2.

⁸ F. Farges, J. Vinson, J. Rehr et J. E. Post, « The rediscovery of the 'French Blue' diamond », *Europhysics News*, n° 43, 2012, p. 22-25.

⁹ Our research has not confirmed that it was provided by Alvarez in 1679 as indicated by its label at the Louvre.

¹⁰ Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS 159. Formerly known as Anne of Austria's chest: M. Bimbenet-Privat and E. Plé, 'Le coffre des pierreries de Louis XIV' in *La Revue des musées de France, Revue du Louvre*, 2014, no. 3, pp 63-72.

¹¹ See note 7.

¹² Farges F., 'Les grands diamants de la Couronne de François I^{er} à Louis XVI' in *Versalia*, 2014, no. 16, pp 55-78.

THE DIAMOND, BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

FRANÇOIS FARGES

Professor of Mineralogy at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, member of the Institut Universitaire de France



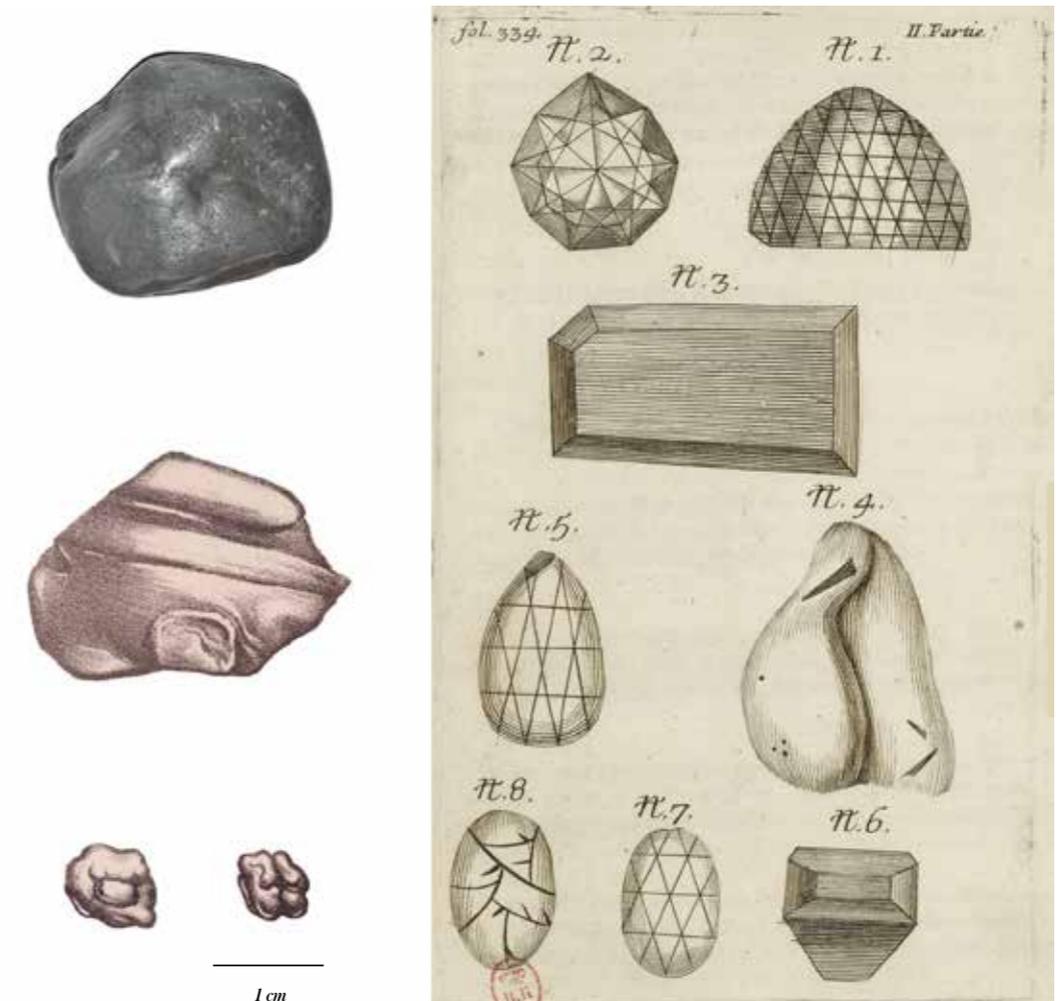
ill. 1. Marco Polo's mythical 'Valley of Diamonds' and its mountain circled by eagles, explored by Sinbad in *The Thousand and One Nights*. Photo: François Farges.

'Golkonda'—the name alone is enough to excite any diamond enthusiast. Familiar to French speakers and, moreover, easily pronounceable for an oriental place name, this word seems to have been a common one for centuries, 'French' almost. But it also contains the spices of its 'orientality'. The mysteries of Asia, from Sinbad to Marco Polo, from the sand swept caravanserais to the indiscreet mashrabiyya, the fabulous riches of Mughal India conjure up images of distant lands where the way of thinking is so different from our own, where the sun heats the fertile lands that produce countless and unimaginable precious stones. Golkonda is more prosaically a fortress town close to Hyderabad, India's most central city (*ill. 1*). Diamond mines were numerous in this region, as large as half of France.

FROM THE DECCAN MINES TO MUGHAL DIAMONDS

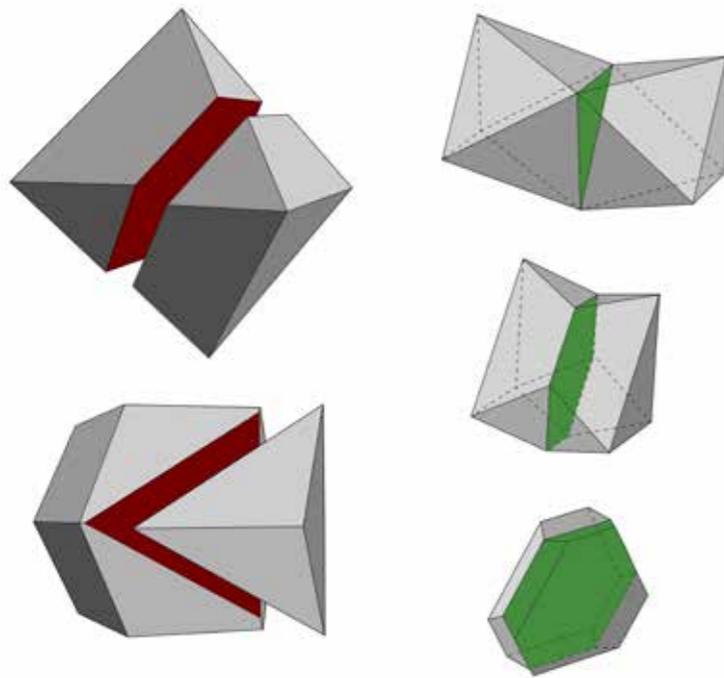
Diamonds were harvested in India from ancient times before the activity of mining fully developed in the 17th century, particularly in Kollur (*ill. 1*). These stones were initially used as tools (to chisel and polish) due to their great hardness, and it wasn't until the European 14th century that polishing became generalized and more complex. If India has produced a total of several hundred kilograms of diamonds, almost nothing is known about the diamonds harvested by miners of old. Only a handful of images (*ill. 2*) allows us to get an idea of this mineral spewed from the depths of the Earth over a billion years ago. Their shapes were usually ovoid and very rounded. More rarely, crystals of an octahedral shape were documented: at that time, they were called '*à pointe naïve*'.

¹ F. Farges, 'Diamonds of the French Crown Jewels: an instrumentation between Orient and Occident', in *Facets of Mankind* (under publication, 2018).



ill. 2. Some examples of rough diamonds from India (left and no. 4 on the right) accompanied by different Mughal cuts (right) with a European flavor, like the 'Grand Mughal' (no. 1), Tavernier's Great Table diamond (no. 3), a double rose (no. 5), a great table (no. 6) and a demi-rose (no. 7). The scale is 1 cm (see note 2 for details).

Photo : François Farges © NHM - MNHN - BNF



ill. 3. On the left, the principle of diamond cleavage: the cleavage plane is indicated in red. There are seven other planes parallel to the facets of the octahedron (left, top). On the left at the bottom, this same cleavage can be seen in another crystal (rhombododecahedron). On the right, we see the phenomenon of crystal twinning in which two octahedrons are joined by means of a common surface (in green). In the most extreme cases, the join forms a large, fairly flat triangular volume. The resulting crystal therefore has two large series of cleavages drastically increasing the risk of damaging the stone if re-cut at a future date.

Photo: François Farges © MNHN

The great talent of the Mughal lapidaries or faceters, according to Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, was their skill at cleaving a diamond (*ill. 3*, left). Cleavage is a kind of plane of weakness in a diamond, despite the fact that the diamond is the hardest natural mineral. However, this mineral possesses an ‘Achilles’ heel’ of sorts: these planes are identified easily by a faceter and they enable him/her—where the required gestures have been mastered—to cleave or cut a diamond in two, by means of a simple and sudden blow with a hammer. If this technique—an extremely delicate one—was the forte of Mughal lapidaries, Tavernier also reports that the polishing of these stones on the other hand, was much less mastered. The traveler details the imperfections of the grindstones used in the Deccan region that yielded a final polish that was much less brilliant than in Europe.

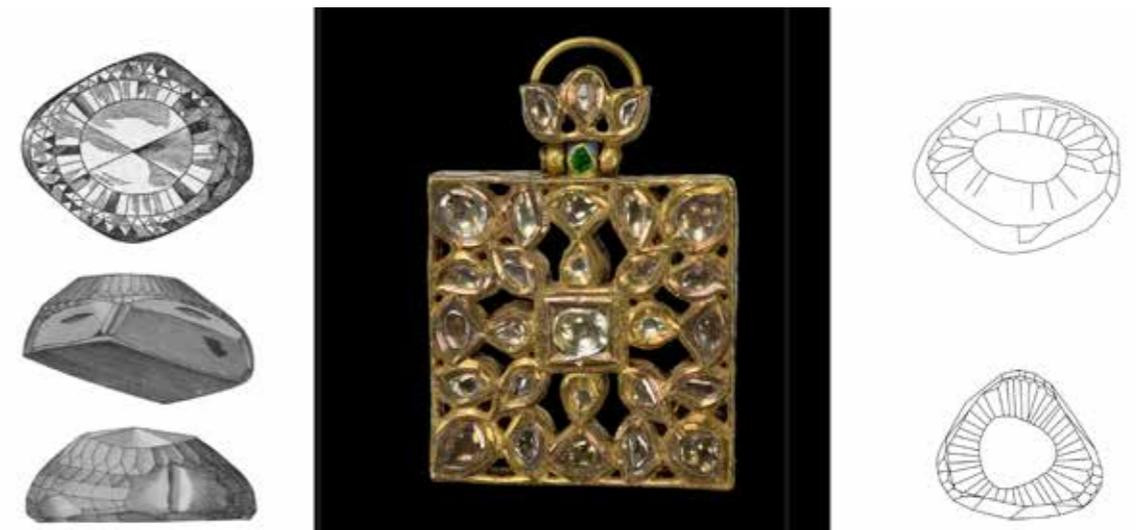
India therefore, quickly specialized in the mastery of cleavage at the expense of polishing (we can surmise that it was the opposite in Europe). The vast majority of ‘rough diamonds’ were cut into slices—according to the cleavage planes—at the point of the internal defects making it easy to plane on the cleaved fragments to make them disappear. The diamond cutters added some peripheral facets to accentuate the stones’ brilliance. For these techniques, there were no precise rules, other than retaining the volume of the stone in as much as possible in order to minimize the loss of precious carats in an ulterior re-cut. These so-called ‘lasque’ facets could be found in the vast majority of Indo-Mughal jewelry enriched with diamonds.

²J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, Paris, 1676, vol. II, p. 294.

SPARKLING INDIANS

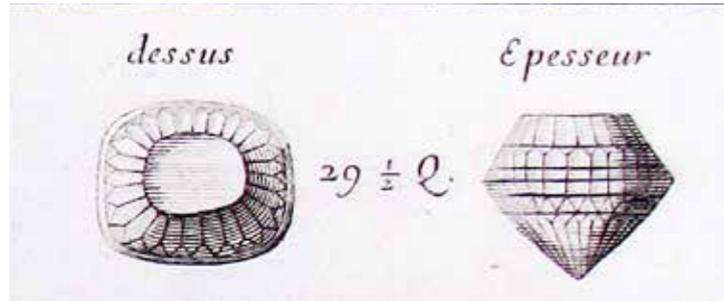
Most of the diamonds brought back by Tavernier were cut in this fashion. There were also more complex ways of faceting, for example simple roses (a kind of faceted cabochon) or double roses (pendeloques or briolettes). In general, Indian diamonds were ‘pointing upwards’, meaning that their large facet served as the base when inserting the stone into a piece of jewelry. The so-called ‘Grand Mogul’ diamond was faceted in this way (*ill. 2*, right, no. 1). But its excellent symmetry—if we are to trust the rather awkward drawing by Tavernier—betrays the European identity of its creator: Hortensio Borgio, originally from Venice who worked in the service of the Mughal Emperor. As for the ‘Shah of Russia’ or ‘Tavernier’s Great Table’ (*ill. 2*, right, no. 3), these magnificent diamonds were much more asymmetrical, demonstrating a purely Mughal aesthetic.

Often ignored in the West, they are called bullandi, parab, polki and villandi and are indeed, little known. The diversity of the names of these different Mughal cuts is as rich as the languages punctuating the Indian subcontinent. However, the star remains the ‘Mughal Rose’, or villandi, which is a complex facetage based on a simple rose design, where the upper section is flatter and defined by large cuts (see *ill. 4*). The most extraordinary example of this is the Koh-i-Noor (approximately 186 carats before its catastrophic reshaping in 1852). These diamonds were designed to be inset on their large basal facet like the ‘Orlov’ diamonds (189.6 ct) of the grand scepter of the imperial crown of Russia and the ‘Taj-i-Mah’ (115.0 ct) of the Iranian jewels in Tehran which have, thankfully, never been recut. In contrast, the Nassak (89 ct) was re-faceted ‘according to a modern design’ like the Koh-i-Noor.



ill. 4. Examples of Mughal roses: on the left, the Koh-i-Noor (186 carats) from various angles (before its reshaping in the 19th century where it would lose much of its brilliance); in the center a pendant (17th century) where the five middle stones and four corner stones are cut in roses (about 3 carats altogether), and on the right, the Taj-i-Mah (jewels of the Iranian Crown in Tehran) and the Nassak (89 carats) before its reshaping in the 20th century, transforming it into another modern brilliant cut.

Photo / drawings: François Farges © MNHN



ill. 5. The sublime fourth diamond of Tavernier, possibly a unique Indo-European combination, lost since the seventeenth century. Photo : François Farges © BnF, Engraving, 30 a. (1065)

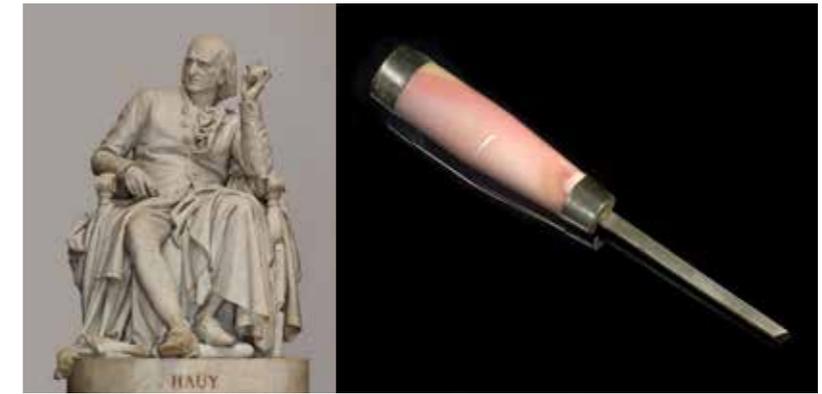
On the other hand, Indian diamonds with a pointed base were rare, except in the case of pendeloques. Tavernier's diamond number four was one of these exceptions (*ill. 5*). In fact, this absolute marvel of faceting was a kind of 'rare' combination between a Mughal Rose and a European cut (with a smaller table). It is worth remembering that many European artists worked at the court of the Great Mogul, including the Venetian Hortensio Borgio, as well as a certain Augustin Hiriart of Bordeaux, who worked on one of the Mughal Emperor's seven thrones.

One would like to imagine Tavernier's fourth diamond as one of the forerunners of a 'modern diamond à la mode indienne'. Its facet arrangements were a real success, an absolute wonder. A prime example of craftsmanship! More than 260 facets on a stone already weighing twenty carats, facets whose dimensions were, on average, less than one millimeter each. The price of such hard work is invaluable. No other example of this type of cut is known.

GETTING RID OF 'TWINS'

The Indo-Mughals, as expert as they were in the cleavage of diamonds, also knew that some crystals were much more delicate to work with than others, especially those with a triangular shape. In effect, these stones are an ensemble of two crystals called twins in mineralogy (*ill. 3*, right). Compared to diamonds 'à la pointe naïve', twinned crystals have twice as many planes of weakness, which makes them much more difficult and fragile to cut. These crystals were often left to Europeans who had no choice but to buy these rough diamonds in India for trading in Europe.

This is perhaps one of the reasons that led European lapidaries to refine their polishing techniques from the end of the 15th century onwards. Much later, when crystallography was becoming increasingly popular during the Enlightenment and particularly so in Paris, René-Just Haüy became the specialist in mineral cleavage at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris (*ill. 6*). The secrets of diamonds would be methodically revealed by this 'cristalloclast' professor who succeeded in understanding internal cleavage planes and how they worked, as well as the phenomenon of twinning with regard to many minerals, including the diamond. Many lapidaries attended his classes in order to master the cleavage of these complex crystals.



ill. 6. René-Just Haüy, father of modern gemology (monumental statue of Isidore Hippolyte Brion, 1863) and his burin (7 cm long) used to cleave minerals. Paris, MNHN. Photo : François Farges ©MNHN

Soon, India was 'inundated' with commands for these diamonds she was so reluctant to cut: they were frequently seen in post-Mughal jewelry, especially that of the great Maharajahs of the 19th century. Other advances in mineralogy, crystallography and polishing techniques, combined with the unparalleled contribution of 'electricity' would eventually allow Europe to assume its status as the world leader in diamonds by the end of the 19th century. Unfortunately, many Indo-Mughal diamonds were then recut in the style of the modern brilliant cut: sadly, the poetic Mughal Roses were the victims of this techno-commercial standardization, from the Koh-i-Noor to the Nassak.

Nowadays, advances in the history of the arts and sciences have made it possible to uncover the particularities of each culture, of each technique, but also of the various examples of hybridization that have given rise to some truly magnificent 'cultural chimeras', such as Tavernier's fourth diamond. Perhaps this diamond has been preserved somewhere... In the meantime, its Parisian reproduction, created thanks to the input of Patrick Dubuc in Quebec, may be said to be a new tribute to the Orient, following in the example of Augustin, Hortensio, Jean-Baptiste and many others who had been allowed to glimpse its beauty, a beauty we have unfairly forgotten.

DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHTS (IN DIAMOND EQUIVALENT) OF THE REPLICAS



N°1
Indicated weight (old cts): 112.2
Weight (modern cts): 115.4
Width (mm): 35.7
Height (mm): 26.9
Thickness (mm): 11.9
Faceting: lasque



N°2
Indicated weight (old cts): 51.6
Weight (modern cts): 53.0
Width (mm): 18.4
Height (mm): 18.0
Thickness (mm): 17.4
Faceting: knob



N°3
Indicated weight (old cts): 31.4
Weight (modern cts): 32.3
Width (mm): 22.1
Height (mm): 18.1
Thickness (mm): 11.8
Faceting: single rose



N°4
Indicated weight (old cts): 29.5
Weight (modern cts): 30.3
Width (mm): 17.5
Height (mm): 14.6
Thickness (mm): 15.6
Faceting: pendeloque and Mughal rose



N°5
Indicated weight (old cts): 20.1
Weight (modern cts): 20.6
Width (mm): 31,7
Height (mm): 14,5
Thickness (mm): 4.9
Faceting: lasque



N°6
Indicated weight (old cts): 20.2
Weight (modern cts): 20.8
Width (mm): 29.0
Height (mm): 14.7
Thickness (mm): 5.7
Faceting: lasque



N°7
Indicated weight (old cts): 16.2
Weight (modern cts): 16.7
Width (mm): 12.1
Height (mm): 16.2
Thickness (mm): 11.9
Faceting: pendeloque/briolette



N°8
Indicated weight (old cts): 13.6
Weight (modern cts): 13.9
Width (mm): 10.6
Height (mm): 17.6
Thickness (mm): 10.4
Faceting: pendeloque/briolette



N°9
Indicated weight (old cts): 16.1
Weight (modern cts): 16.5
Width (mm): 18.8
Height (mm): 21.0
Thickness (mm): 3.7
Faceting: stellar/lasque



N°10
Indicated weight (old cts): 14.9
Weight (modern cts): 15.3
Width (mm): 16.4
Height (mm): 18.8
Thickness (mm): 5.7
Faceting: stellar/lasque

1 cm



N°11

Indicated weight (old carats): 13.6
Weight (modern cts): 14.0
Width (mm): 19.7
Height (mm): 12.9
Thickness (mm): 5.3
Faceting: lasque



N°12

Indicated weight (old carats): 10.5
Weight (modern cts): 10.8
Width (mm): 13.4
Height (mm): 11.0
Thickness (mm): 10.7
Faceting: knob



N°17

Indicated weight (old carats): 7.0
Weight (modern cts): 7.2
Width (mm): 16.5
Height (mm): 9.4
Thickness (mm): 4.9
Faceting: lasque



N°13

Indicated weight (old carats): 9.0
Weight (modern cts): 9.2
Width (mm): 19.8
Height (mm): 14.6
Thickness (mm): 3.5
Faceting: lasque



N°14

Indicated weight (old carats): 11.0
Weight (modern cts): 11.3
Width (mm): 20.9
Height (mm): 15.2
Thickness (mm): 4.2
Faceting: lasque



N°19

Indicated weight (old carats): 32.4
Weight (modern cts): 33.3
Width (mm): 12.9
Height (mm): 19.7
Thickness (mm): 16.8
Natural diamond



N°16

Indicated weight (old carats): 7.0
Weight (modern cts): 7.2
Width (mm): 15.5
Height (mm): 9.2
Thickness (mm): 4.4
Faceting: lasque



N°18

Indicated weight (old carats): 10.6
Weight (modern cts): 10.9
Width (mm): 13.0
Height (mm): 11.2
Thickness (mm): 9.6
Natural diamond



N°15

Indicated weight (old carats): 10.8
Weight (modern cts): 11.1
Width (mm): 18.6
Height (mm): 11.0
Thickness (mm): 4.4
Faceting: lasque



N°20

Indicated weight (old carats): 14.9
Weight (modern cts): 15.3
Width (mm): 8.4
Height (mm): 17.0
Thickness (mm): 13.3
Natural diamond

1 cm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK PATRICK DUBUC (QUÉBEC, CANADA) FOR THE CONCEPTION AND FACETTAGE OF THE REPLICAS; JOHN HATLEBERG (NEW YORK, USA) AND JEFFREY E. POST (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, USA) FOR THEIR HELP IN OBTAINING THE BLUE COLOR OF THE LARGE DIAMOND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AZOTIC COMPANY (ROCHESTER, USA). THANKS ALSO TO FRANTZ JULLIEN AND DELPHINE BRABANT (SURFACUS PLATFORM, MNHN) FOR THEIR HELP WITH THE SCAN OF THE THREE POLYMER MODELS; MICHÈLE BIMBENET-PRIVAT, ANNE DION-TENENBAUM AND JANNIC DURAND (DEPARTMENT OF ART OBJECTS AT THE MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PARIS) FOR ALLOWING US TO WORK ON THEIR HISTORIC MODELS OF DIAMONDS; PAULINE CHOUGNET AND CAROLINE VRAND FROM THE ETCHINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT AT THE BNF, PARIS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE; THE STAFF AT THE ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (LA COURNEUVE), AS WELL AS FRÉDÉRIC GILBERT-ZINCK (L'ÉCOLE, SCHOOL OF JEWELRY ARTS), JEAN-MARC FILLON AND MARTIN STROUK (VAN CLEEF & ARPELS) FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PROJECT.

L'ÉCOLE, SCHOOL OF JEWELRY ARTS



