

King of the World

The Mughal Imperial Narrative under Shah Jahan

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Introduction

The Mughal Empire was perhaps the most spectacular of the three early modern Islamic empires. This grand realm reached its apex under the dynasty's fifth ruler Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658). At this point it was one of the richest states in the world, a center of trade and culture, with one of the most diverse populations of the time, and all answered to the emperor. Such mastery over such a domain is all the more impressive when one considers the dynasty's humble origins. An exiled Central Asian prince forced from his ancestral lands by a new rising tribal confederation who eventually turned to India to sate his ambitions. Yet over the course of the next century they managed to create an empire that produced such wonders as the Taj Mahal.

There are of course many reasons behind this remarkable transformation. However one of the most definitive was the success the Mughals had in crafting their narrative of rule. Faced with a diverse population they had to find a way to appear appealing to as many groups as possible. In doing so they were fortunate to be able to claim descent of both Temür and Genghis Khan. Two figures who had such success in crafting their imperial narratives, they had become near mythical in status. In this thesis I shall examine the development of the Mughal narrative of rule under Shah Jahan. His reign is often seen as a turning point from the heterodoxy of his grandfather Akbar the Great (r. 1556-1605) to the increasing religious orthodoxy and oppression of his son Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707). The fifth Mughal's reign was the dynasty's apex, after which came to long and slow decline until its end in 1854.

Yet despite this pivotal role little attention has been paid to the fifth Great Mughal. This is doubly strange as he was a man who, like his predecessors, was keenly aware of his place in history. The whole dynast took pains to secure their place in the chronicles of the world. Perhaps this was a result of their traumatic origins as fleeing their ancestral Central Asian homeland. The dynasty's founder and Shah Jahan's great-great-grandfather Babur (r. 1526-1530) had written his memoirs in the *Baburnama*, giving a clear and revealing account of his life and the road that led him to the subcontinent. Although Akbar, the third emperor and the one who made the Mughals truly an imperial dynasty, was unable to write his own memoirs, he worked

closely with his friend and official historian Abu Faz'l (d. 1602) in writing the history of his reign. Jahangir, Shah Jahan's father and predecessor, followed in the footsteps of his great-grandfather and wrote his memoirs, eventually handing them out as manuals of kingship.

Upon his ascension, the details of which follow below, Shah Jahan wasted little time in starting his own historiographical project. In doing so he followed the example of his grandfather Akbar and commissioned a number of poets and prose writers to record the chronicles of his reign. These works, which he ordered to be bound in volumes each covering ten years of rule, were known as the *Padshah Nama* (Chronicle of the Emperor). Although Shah Jahan did not write them himself, he was deeply involved with their production. He checked everything that was written and selected which miniatures were included in the official manuscript.

The first writer to complete a whole volume was Mirza Amina Qazwini, who had been appointed in the eighth regnal year. He managed to write the volume of the first ten years of rule and begin the groundwork for the second volume. Unfortunately for the intrepid Qazwini the emperor abruptly decided in his tenth regnal year that the empire would no longer follow the Persian solar calendar. Rather it would follow the Islamic lunar calendar. No reason is given in the histories behind this decision, indeed any sign of the sudden change was carefully obscured. It has been suggested that Shah Jahan made the decision out of a sense of religious orthodoxy. The solar calendar had long been seen as an essentially heathen practice by orthodox scholars.¹

Shortly after this change Qazwini was dismissed from his post as court historian. The task was given instead to Shaikh 'Abd al-Hamid Lahori, a master of the grandiose prose style popularized by Abdul Faz'l's *Akbarnama*. The earlier writings were to be revised and rewritten in this new style. As before the writings were checked, though apparently no longer by the emperor himself. Lahori would continue his work until his declining health would prevent him from doing so in 1653. At which point the task was taken up by a pupil of his.² Unfortunately much of the work has been lost. There are only a few copies left, one of which is the Windsor manuscript

¹ W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of 'Inayat Khan: An Abridged History of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, Compiled by his Royal Librarian* (New York 1990), xv-xx.

² Ibidem xx-xxiii.

which consists of only about a third of the records, covering the first ten years of rule and which I have used here.³

After the death of Lahori other poets and writers took up the position of court historian. The large number of writers, as well as the demands made by Shah Jahan, meant that by the thirtieth regnal year the narrative of the chronicles was almost completely lost. At this point Inayat Khan undertook the task of creating order in the histories and make them more accessible. For this reason he abridged them. This work, as he stressed in his prologue, was not meant as an independent history. He even titled it *Mulakhkhas* which translates to The Abridgment. However it soon became known as the *Shah Jahan Nama* (Chronicle of the King of the World). Although it passes over much of the information available in the original chronicle it nevertheless works to give an oversight of what a contemporary writer considered the most important incidents.⁴ The *Shah Jahan Nama* was translated into English in the nineteenth century by A.R. Fuller.

Although these histories are perhaps the most obvious expressions of Shah Jahan's narrative of rule, he was also an avid builder with a deep and abiding interest in architecture. Accordingly when his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, died he build her a grand mausoleum that to this day is known as the Taj Mahal. In classic Mughal style Shah Jahan ensured that the massive complex would not only be a worthy final resting place for his beloved wife, but also a grand statement of the his imperial narrative of rule. Construction of the mausoleum began soon after Mumtaz's death in 1632 and did not end until 1653. Although these days it is the central mausoleum which receives the most attention, at the time it was conceived as a complex which fitted into Agra's urban context. By reading the Taj the same way, as a whole, it reveals how this world and the next were viewed in Shah Jahan's imperial narrative.

Here I shall analyze Shah Jahan's imperial narrative on the basis of these two sources: *Padshahnama* and the Taj Mahal. I have chosen to do so for a number of reasons. Firstly both of these were expressions of the imperial narrative which were closely monitored by Shah Jahan. They were as personal a source we have from the reserved emperor. Secondly the two contrast nicely with each other. As an official

³ The Windsor manuscript will henceforth be referred to as the *Padshahnama* clarity's sake.

⁴ Ibidem xv-xxiv.

chronicle the *Padshahnama* was expected to be used as a propaganda piece. This meant that the impact of it as an expression of the imperial narrative could be limited. The Taj on the other hand was a tomb, a controversial building in both Islamic and Indian tradition as we shall see below. By making this into an expression of the imperial narrative Shah Jahan showed that nothing was beyond its grasp and by extension his own. Thus the impact of the Taj could be much greater.

Before we consider the fifth Mughal emperor's narrative however it is important to make note of the resources available to him and the challenges he faced. For these reasons the first three sections will strive to give some context to the development of his imperial narrative. In the first section I shall give a short summation of some of the challenges that confronted the Mughals in governing the diverse subcontinent. These ranged from a diverse populace to India's ecological borders. In section two the development of the Mughal narrative of rule from Babur onwards will be discussed. There we will look at the ways Shah Jahan's predecessors worked to cement Mughal domination over the empire. Section three will be a short biography of Shah Jahan, before he ascended the throne and was known as prince Khurram. The challenges he faced during this period played a crucial role in the development of his later imperial narrative, which will be the focus of the fourth section.

Mughal India

One of the things which make the Mughal empire such an attractive subject for study is the sheer romanticism of its origins. An exiled prince forced to flee from his homeland by barbarian invaders, who manages to rebuild his fortunes in a strange and exotic land. In reality of course there is more to the story, which sadly falls outside the purview of this thesis. However the essence of it is correct. Babur was in dire straits when he entered the Indian stage, basically exiled from his homeland in Transoxiana by the rising Uzbek confederacy. He turned to India as the only place where his imperial ambitions could be fulfilled, even admitting as much in his memoirs

However the conquest of such a strange land from such a position presented challenges, some of which will be discussed here. The first of these challenges concerns empires and the way they presented themselves through narratives to their subjects. Secondly there were unique ecological circumstances which provided a near endless supply of borders and frontiers which had to be crossed and overcome.

Empire

Today the most recognizable political unit is the nation state. A state which represents one people and whose claims to sovereignty is derived from them. In many cases this claim is underpinned by a popular vote, in theory if not in practice. It should be clear that the Mughal empire was not a nation state, but indeed an empire consisting of numerous ethnic and cultural groups ruled by an absolutist emperor supported by a cadre of aristocracy. They claimed their sovereignty not on the basis of representing anyone, but on the unique qualities inherent in the Mughal dynasty which made it the only choice suitable for rule.

In short they made use of a different 'narrative of rule'. Though the Mughals were no strangers to the use of violence or coercion to impose their rule, such methods have limited effectiveness over longer periods of time. Instead they, like other autocratic rulers, justified their authority through other means. By producing a number of narratives which presented them as the only safe choice to govern. The

Mughals were of course not alone in their use of such narratives, every state has done so, and continues to do so, even the most progressive nation-states.

For the Mughal empire however such narratives were of even greater importance, due to the many different groups they had to bind to their rule. The Mughal's subjects were not only Indian Hindu's, but also Afghans, Persians, Turanis, and other Central Asian peoples. Even their Muslim subjects were divided between Sunni and Shi'ites as well as those who had recently converted and those whose families had long been Muslim. These many different groups meant that the Mughals had to present themselves in such a way that they did not exclude anyone from their imperial system. The challenge this posed goes some way as to explain the interest each Mughal ruler took in his personal narrative of rule, and also explains the open and corporate nature of the empire under the Great Mughals.

The Indian Subcontinent

In his memoirs Babur himself commented on the strange surroundings he and his men encountered as soon as they found themselves in 'Hind'. India's ecology and climate is shaped by the fact that it is the meeting point between the large arid zone which dominates north Africa and stretches to China and the monsoon climates which typify much of South East Asia. As pointed out by Jos Gommans in his book *Mughal Warfare* the interior of the subcontinent is a continuation of the arid zone, while its shores are influenced by the monsoon. This means that for all the strangeness of the subcontinent, its interior was familiar enough to the Mughals and their followers that they could traverse it quickly. Much like the Inner Asian steppes these arid zones functioned as highways which connected the three main sedentary centers of civilization in northern India; Lahore, Delhi, and Agra, each of which would function as the Mughal capital at different points in time.⁵

Contrasting these arid regions which were so complimentary to the Mughal way of life, were the wetter areas subject to the monsoon. These offered a much more limiting and visible frontier than the wide open spaces of the savannah. Where the arid regions offered the fodder and space needed for the raising of warhorses and dromedaries, the monsoon areas were unable to sustain large amounts of war animals. With the notable exception of the elephant which was found in the wetter

⁵ Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* (London 2002) 8-15.

jungles. Instead of the pastoral lifestyle of the arid region with which the Mughals were familiar, agriculture in the monsoon areas was based on the sedentary rice paddies which required near constant supervision.⁶

Like the multiethnic nature of the empire these contrasts offered the Mughals different resources as much as they posed different challenges. The arid zone provided the empire with warhorses and other pack animals such as dromedaries. Its peasantry also often sought to augment their income with military service after the harvest season ended in October. They were therefore an excellent source of irregular troops which could be called upon at the start of a campaign and disbanded at the end of it. In the wetter regions the peasants were bound to the soil as there could be as many as three harvests a year. Such an occupation with the cultivation of land meant that they were much less able to enlist in military service. Instead a smaller professionalized class of soldiers developed which provided military service in these parts of the subcontinent.⁷

These different societies required different approaches. As shall be explained below the *mansabdar* system of the Mughals succeeded in binding most everyone in imperial service. How they were inducted depended for a large part on their origin and standing which was determined by their ecological circumstances. In the arid regions, which were characterized by a greater mobility both in distance and socially, the Mughals would have had little difficulty in attracting a warrior aristocracy. The situation there was not much different than that of the Central Asian steppes from which the dynasty hailed.

In the more settled societies however the Mughals had to contend with entrenched local landholders, the *zamindars*. Although Gommans argues that even the most settled of these zamindars were close enough to the frontier that they could never truly rest on their laurels and retained characteristics of their nomadic warrior cousins, they were different enough to prove challenging for Mughal overlordship as he also acknowledges.⁸ The zamindars managed to leverage their power on the local level in a number of privileges and resist Mughal attempts to dislodge them

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Ibidem 40 and 68-69.

from their power base. They could do so as the imperial administration was forced to rely on them for the collection of revenue in those areas it found difficult to penetrate.⁹

In summation the Mughal empire had to rely on narratives of rule which could appeal to a wide range of people. Not only because they were a foreign dynasty, but also because of their multiethnic and multicultural subjects. Furthermore they also had to contend with a number of contrasting societies formed by the ecological duality of the Indian subcontinent. The need to appeal to so many different peoples and, sometimes contradictory, interests led each Mughal to be highly aware of and involved with their own narrative of rule.

These narratives of rule were used to rationalize the rule of the emperor. At times they were accompanied by practical measures, including, but not limited to, violence and coercion. Nor were the Mughals necessarily insincere in their use of narratives. They lived in a world which was much bigger and more open to human influence than today. There was a power to these narratives which could be called upon by acting them out. This shall be further explained in the next section where I shall take a closer look at the different narratives employed to appeal to the different subjects of the Mughals.

⁹ S. Nurul Hassan 'Zamindars under the Mughals' in: Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Mughal State 1526-1730* (Delhi 1998) 284-298, 284-285.

The Mughal Narrative of Rule

Although the Mughal empire was founded by Babur, he never considered himself anything other than a Timurid prince. The Mughal imperial narrative did not really take shape until Akbar who centralized the state and gave it many of its defining characteristics. In doing so he made use of the Timurid dynastic narrative inherited from his grandfather as well as the efforts to elevate the position of emperor by his father Humayun. Akbar also drew on wider developments such as the approaching millennial year of Islam and the religious expectations it carried.

This section shall focus on the aspects of the Mughal dynastic narrative which were especially poignant for Shah Jahan, namely the position of the emperor in the empire, the appropriation of religious authority, the use of King Solomon as a model for rule, and the assertion of the imperial narrative on reality. Special attention will be paid to the way such narratives were developed and employed by the Mughals. For narratives of rule were not just thought up, but the result of a complex combination of chance, context, and the personality of the emperor.

The Position of the Emperor

As pointed out above the romanticized tale of Babur as a vagabond prince who conquers a new realm in a distant land, is not very viable. By the time he arrived in India as a conqueror he had been the king of Kabul for a number of years. This small but prosperous kingdom provided him with the resources needed to defeat the Delhi sultanate. Nevertheless there had been a time, before he conquered Kabul, that Babur truly had been a vagabond, little more than a robber baron with only a tent and the clothes on his back. Before that he had held Samarkand, the premier holding of the Timurids and the city from which Temür himself had ruled.

These reversals of fortune can partly be laid at the rise of the Uzbeks who during Babur's lifetime drove him and his family from their ancestral homeland. More fundamentally however it was the result of the position of rulers in the Timurid political system. Although Temür, through his conquests and personal might had become a ruler beyond reproach, infighting had deteriorated the position of his descendants. Although only Timurids could rule they were unable to break the power

of their nobles. The loyalty of the begs, those tribal leaders who gave the Timurid princes their military power, was always fluid. They had to be enticed with promises of riches and prestige.¹⁰

As noted above it was not before Akbar that this first among equals position changed. Humayun, the second Mughal emperor, had tried to enhance his position in a similar manner but circumstance, misfortune, and perhaps his own character had stopped him from succeeding. However in those steps he did take, such as the organization of the imperial service in three branches based on the traditional duties of a Central Asian Islamic ruler and the imposition of a ranking system on the nobility based on the alchemical levels of purity of gold, he showed a great deal of inventiveness.¹¹ In the end though Humayun lacked the material resources and authority to take the central position he envisioned for himself as emperor.

Despite his failure Humayun provided his son Akbar with a vision of the rightful position of the emperor and a foundation from which he could build to achieve this goal. But it would take time before the young emperor could take this place. When Humayun died in 1556 after falling from a stone staircase in his rush to answer the summons for midday prayers, Akbar was only thirteen years of age. For this reason a regent, the powerful Shia Afghani noble Bairam Khan, was appointed. As the emperor matured however he came into conflict with his strict and overbearing regent and conspired with a group of Turani noblemen who counted his foster brother Adham Khan amongst their number.¹²

Ethnic and religious tension underlay the power struggle, with the Turanis no longer willing to submit to the alien Bairam Khan. In 1560 Akbar and the conspirators managed to remove the regent from power and he accepted temporary exile in the form of a pilgrimage to Mecca. Unfortunately he was murdered by an old enemy the following year before he could leave. Power now fell into the hands of the Turani nobles with whom Akbar had conspired, in particular Adham Khan and his mother, the emperor's former wet-nurse.¹³

¹⁰ Munis D. Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719* (New York 2012) 55.

¹¹ A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York 2012) loc 3009-3044.

¹² John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge 1993) 14-16.

¹³ Idem.

They used their power to enrich themselves with the spoils of a campaign against the sultan of Malwa. When Adham Khan returned however he overstepped the bounds of his authority with fatal consequences. Upon hearing that Akbar had appointed another to the coveted post of chief minister, he murdered the man the emperor had installed and went to confront Akbar with his sword still drawn. In response the young emperor managed to overcome his erstwhile foster brother and threw him from a terrace into the palace courtyard; twice, dragging him up once when it became clear that the first fall had failed to kill Adham.¹⁴

These early episodes of having to deal with ambitious noblemen who tried to succeed at the cost of his own power, as well as the tribulations of his father at the hands of powerful nobles played a formative role on the young emperor's later rule. He began to look for ways to curb the power of his nobles and exalt the position of emperor above all others. In order to do so he needed not only to enhance the imperial narrative, but also reinforce it with practical measures. Luckily Akbar's dynastic past offered him the means to do both.

The first and most vital challenge which confronted Akbar was to realize his ritual position as the center of the empire in actual practice. As noted above the first steps in this direction had been made by Humayun who transformed the imperial court practices from the informal and fairly egalitarian atmosphere of Babur to a more hierarchical and ritual system which suited his character and the needs of the empire better.

Humayun divided the administration of the empire into three branches, whose duties were based on the three traditional duties of a sovereign in the Perso-Islamic tradition: politics, religion, and 'entertainment'. Each of these groups was given two days in which their duty dominated court business, with the seventh day changing as the needs of the moment dictated.¹⁵ This scheme allowed the emperor to control access to his person. Access to the emperor was important for in the new social order propagated by him and his historian and ideologue Ghiyas Muhammad Kwandamir (d. c. 1537) the emperor stood at a lonely height as the new khalif while traditional Islamic scholars, the Mullahs, were placed beneath both worldly and

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* loc. 2954.

spiritual, i.e.: Sufi, aristocracy.¹⁶ The religious connotations of this new social order will be further discussed below. Here it suffices to say that the new order signaled a clear break with the mode of rule employed by Babur.

Last of the developments instituted by Humayun which would be used by Akbar was the imposition of a ranking system upon the nobility. This twelve tiered ranking system was based on the different levels of purity of gold in alchemy. It not only reinforced the emperor's unrivaled position as only he held the rank of purest gold, but also further regulated access to his person. The rank of a noble determined his position at court and the distance between him and the emperor, both physically and metaphorically.¹⁷

Where Humayun failed with these developments was attaching to them a practical benefit. This was the great success of Akbar who did manage to combine his father's ideals of a new social order with practical measures. Sadly a complete oversight of the bureaucratic reforms undertaken by the third emperor to make himself the center of the empire not only in name but also in practice is beyond the scope of this thesis. The most important and relevant measure for this study however was the institution of the mansabdari system from 1573 onwards.¹⁸

This system, which has its origins in the practices of both Temür and Genghis Khan, was aimed at destroying the independent power of the empire's nobles. In it each and every noble was given a numbered rank, much like they had under Humayun, however this time this rank not only signaled how much he was regarded by the emperor, but also his pay. From 1595 onward this rank was expressed in a pair of ranks the *zat* and *sawar*. The first of these determined the noble's pay and his comparative status, while the second determined how many armored horsemen he had to keep ready at the emperor's beck and call.¹⁹

The great strength of this system was that it made service to the emperor the sole method of advancement. Honor was no longer to be found in independent prowess and success, but in service to the emperor. This greatly decreased the independent tendencies of the empire's nobles. Its corporate and flexible nature proved another

¹⁶ Ibidem loc. 2863-2871.

¹⁷ Ibidem loc. 3000.

¹⁸ Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* 84-85.

¹⁹ Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* (London 2006) 28.

boon for the Mughals. From the beginning the system was used to enlist the services of formerly independent warlords and regional powers.²⁰ Once they had been enlisted into the system they could advance on the basis of merit, and as their pay was from then on dependent on the emperor extraction from the system without incurring great losses was nearly impossible. Thus the mansabdar system, backed by other financial and bureaucratic reforms brought an end to the independent power bases of many imperial nobles and secured the central position of the emperor.

The second problem that Akbar had to contend with was the Timurid mode of succession. According to the traditions common amongst the nomadic Mongol and Turkic tribes from whom the Timurids descended each and every male relative of a ruler had a claim on his holdings. Although there was a slight preference for the eldest son to succeed a father, in practice it meant little when an uncle or younger brother could gather sufficient support to challenge him. Such wars were particularly common because of the tradition of giving princes semi-autonomous appanages to rule. From these holdings the claimants could build a power base in order to usurp their overlord. As they drew their power from one region of a realm, such succession struggles often became bitter civil wars.²¹

Babur's conquest of India however had provided the dynasty with a clean break in their history so that he could take on this perennial problem. After he had conquered Kabul Babur offered his court as a refuge for all his surviving dynasty's members. Although this move was probably, at least in part, inspired by concern for his family and the dignity of the Timurid line as he claims in his memoirs, it also made him the de facto head of the dynasty and prevented rival sovereigns from using his family members to challenge his rule.

Babur used his authority as the savior of the Timurid line to put his sons in the political spotlight at the expense of his other male relatives. Through these measures he attempted to make the Mughals a 'stem dynasty' in which authority could only devolve downwards towards a ruler's sons.²² Such a succession scheme would greatly limit the number of rival claimants and ensure that those who did have a

²⁰ Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* 84-85.

²¹ Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 158.

²² *Ibidem* 25-26.

legitimate claim that could threaten the rule of the overlord would likely be younger and less influential than the reigning emperor.

Babur was successful enough that when he died in 1530 the throne passed to his son Humayun without great incident, despite concerns if the eldest prince could stand up to the pressures of rule. Babur himself expressed concern about the bookish withdrawn Humayun at times and in 1528 chastised his son that „solitude is a flaw in kingship.”²³ These concerns would prove well founded when in 1540 Humayun was driven from the throne by the warlord Sher Khan, and forced to flee towards the court of the Persian Shah where he had to submit himself in order to secure his life and assistance from the Shah in reclaiming his throne.

However Humayun’s problem was not solely the result of any character flaw on his part, and which he tried to address in any case, but was also the result of his father’s failure to bring an end to the appanage system. Despite always favoring Humayun Babur did not neglect his other three sons and made sure that each of them had holdings from which they could draw support and resources.²⁴ This division of the empire meant that the second Mughal emperor’s power, especially without the extraordinary charisma that came with being a successful conqueror, was limited. It did not take long for Mirza Kamran (1509-1557), Babur’s second son, to declare his virtual independence from his elder brother’s rule. In this way Humayun was denied access to the valuable resources of the western parts of the empire, including Kabul, which could have helped him resist other challenges.²⁵

The question must be asked if this succession scheme was the cause for so much grief, why then did they Timurids persist in using it for more than a century? The answer is off course that the system had its advantages. The spreading of claims across all male relatives of a sovereign meant that the most skillful man would succeed, or at the very least the one with the most support amongst the nobles. This not only suited the nobility well, who would thus have to be placated, but also ensured that the dynasty would remain healthy and vigorous. Furthermore by granting all their sons virtually independent holdings, rulers could be assured that all their sons would at least have some support. It was also expected that the princes

²³ Ibidem 52.

²⁴ Ibidem 25-26.

²⁵ Richards, *The Mughal Empire* 9.

would use their power and influence in a region to establish a web of allegiances and loyalty that would ultimately strengthen central authority.

Nevertheless in 1585 Akbar brought a definitive end to the old system. That was the year in which his brother Mirza Hakim died of alcohol poisoning and Akbar incorporated his princely appanage of Kabul into the empire. Three years before Akbar had already changed the relationship between him and his brother when his second son, the twelve year old Murad, had defeated Hakim in punitive campaign. The campaign had been ordered by Akbar to punish his half-brother for invading India. The victory of nephew over uncle cemented the new imperial hierarchy in which succession politics would be focused solely on the sovereign's sons.²⁶

In the decades before Akbar had already taken steps to limit the threat from more distant kinsmen, either by co-opting them politically, imprisoning them, or even having them killed.²⁷ After 1585 no Mughal prince until the reign of Aurangzeb would be granted an appanage in which they could build an independent power base. Like the nobles the princes would have to win acclaim and resources through service to the emperor. This greatly changed the way princely politics worked. Without an appanage in which to build an independent power base, Mughal princes had to forge new webs of loyalty and allegiance on which they could call in the case of a succession struggle.

The easiest way to build such a web of allegiance was by taking an oppositional position towards the imperial court which allowed a prince to draw those disaffected with the current regime to him. Such a tactic was employed by prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir, as relations between him and his father broke down in the 1590's. A decade earlier these dissenters had found a safe haven in Kabul under Mirza Hakim.²⁸

As the empire continued on its course towards war between Salim and his imperial father at the end of the sixteenth century, the prince began seeking support from three important and overlapping groups: political opponents of Akbar, outsiders to the Mughal imperial system, and those who were entrenched in key social political

²⁶ Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 29.

²⁷ *Idem*.

²⁸ *Ibidem* 137-138.

networks.²⁹ A prince needed to appeal to these dissenters because of his need for followers, which in the appanage free system had grown large indeed. Without a holding to fall back on, and with a succession struggle all but guaranteed on the death of an emperor, the princes were put in a position in which the only options were either to succeed or face imprisonment and, in the worse case, death at the hands of their father or brother.

However should a prince succeed in taking the throne this oppositional position offered a new challenge. Namely now to handle the memory of their predecessor. Salim chose on his succession of Akbar, to step away from his earlier oppositional position and embrace his role as Akbar's heir. This he did to share in his father's grand aura and charisma.³⁰ It also helped to erase some of the disruption caused by his conflict with his father. Tragically not all of Jahangir's successors would take the same steps to reconcile themselves with their predecessors which would greatly damage Mughal dynastic prestige in later years.

Nevertheless the measures taken by Akbar in these early decades of his reign ensured that the emperor became the center of the Mughal imperial system. All authority and prestige could now only flow from him. Off course these practical measures were supported by an enhancement of the imperial narrative in which the emperor's prestige and power rose accordingly. How Akbar and his successors accomplished this will be discussed below.

The Appropriation of Religious Authority

The easiest and most obvious way for the Mughals to enhance their dynastic narrative into a truly imperial one, was the appropriation of another narrative with a strong authoritarian bend, religion. As with mansabdar system this tool had been used before in the Mughal's dynastic history. Temür had consciously adopted a personage which contained elements of that of a Sufi saint as had several other rulers of the line. These saints had played an important part in the spreading of Islam through the Central Asian heartlands of the Timurids in the fourteenth century, which had influenced the religious development of the area. People experienced Islam not

²⁹ Ibidem 149-150.

³⁰ Corinne Lefèvre, 'Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India: The Imperial Discourse of Jahangir (R. 1605-1627)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 50.4 (2007) 469.

through religious texts or sermons but through the mediation of holy men. Spiritual power was something concrete and embodied.³¹

Thus it became relatively easy for kings to infuse their own bodies with spiritual power. From the beginning the Sufi saints had both clashed with and depended on worldly authority. Religion shaped and was shaped by royal tastes and rituals. Temür was noted for having a cult like following amongst his soldiers who looked to him for guidance and were noteworthy in their insolent denial of Islam.³² The primary template for the Islamic warrior saint who embodied both worldly prowess and religious authority however was Ali ibn Abi Tali (d. 661), the son in law of the prophet and according to the Shi'ites' claim the true heir to his power.³³

In doing so he replaced the earlier template for the perfect king, Genghis Khan whose descendants still ruled much of Central-Asia at the time of Temür. Although Genghis Khan had gifted these descendants the right to rule, they had in time converted to Islam and as such his attractiveness as a model of kingship was greatly devalued. Nevertheless Temür was careful not to offend the Chingids while building his own narrative of rule. Rather than try to surpass their dynastic prestige and charisma, Temür chose to co-opt it by marrying into the line and taking for himself the title *Gurgan*, meaning son-in-law.³⁴ A similar tactic would later be used by the Uzbek invaders in Babur's time who expelled the Timurid princes from Central Asia, but did their best to marry Timurid women.

By following the Ali template for rulership Temür was able to combine not only appropriate sacral authority, but also establish a cult of personality which was transcultural. The armies of Temür consisted of Chagatay Turks, Mongols, Persians, Turani, and other ethnic groups. By emphasizing a bond between himself and his followers as their spiritual master, sometimes in defiance to Islamic mores, Temür was able to establish a personal loyalty which transcended ethnic and religious differences.³⁵ Although there is no evidence that this practice continued under later Timurid princes, it was resurrected on a grand scale by Akbar.

³¹ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* loc. 317-320.

³² Ibidem loc. 904.

³³ Ibidem loc. 986.

³⁴ Ibidem loc. 870.

³⁵ Ibidem loc. 1096.

With the help of his biographer and ideologue Abu Faz'l Akbar built upon the foundations left to him by his father. This attempt at 'sacred kingship' had a strong transgressive element, as it had under Temür and Humayun.³⁶ In his biography, the *Akbarnama*, a claim by Temür was repeated that their line had its origins in the immaculate conception of the mongol princess Alanquva.³⁷ Where before however it had been the spirit of a descendant of Ali's who helped the princess conceive, in the *Akbarnama* it was a divine light which manifested itself fully through Akbar.³⁸

These claims and the supernatural aura they gave to the third Mughal emperor fitted well with the general mood of Islam in the sixteenth century. With the millennial year of the religion coming, there was a general expectation that the *mahdi*, the promised messiah, would come usher Islam towards a new, and perhaps its final, age.³⁹ Claims of being this mahdi were made by a number of people throughout the sixteenth century, amongst whom the Safavid shahs of Iran. Although Akbar himself did not go quite as far in his own claims, he did assert his status as the *mujaddid*, or renewer, of the second millennium. The traditions of these mujaddids, who would appear every century in order to renew or revise Islam, had been a largely unproblematic tradition. It was a lesser claim to sacrality than that of the mahdi.⁴⁰

Nor did Akbar borrow solely from the Islam of his forefathers. He also looked to the traditions of his subjects and made one Indian ritual in particular an important feature of his imperial narrative. This was the *darshan* tradition in which a ruler presented himself for viewing to his subjects. The tradition had its origins in Hindu religious rituals in which an artifact was presented on certain dates so that its divinity might be observed. Before the coming of the Mughals it had already been used by secular Hindu rulers to bolster their prestige.⁴¹ A similar practice had begun under

³⁶ Ibidem loc. 2971.

³⁷ Ibidem loc. 1025

³⁸ Richards, *The Mughal Empire* 45-46.

³⁹ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* loc. 349.

⁴⁰ Ibidem loc. 3380-3384.

⁴¹ Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire* (London 2012) 142.

Humayun who would hide his face behind a veil. Upon its his courtiers would cry „manifestation [of the divine light].”⁴²

However it shows the active inventiveness of Akbar that he managed to fit the practice so well into the demands of Timurid rulership, which demanded access to a sovereign by his subordinates. By framing this access in the darshan ritual Akbar made it only possible if at the same time his nobles recognized him as the premier religious authority in the empire. Akbar would use this position to not only reach out to his muslims subjects, but all his subjects regardless of religion. Out of this desire to forge trans-religious connections with multiple identities within the empire grew one of his most ambitious intellectual projects: the *Din-i Ilahi*, or the Divine Faith. This ideological experiment grew from Akbar’s habit of having priests, religious scholars, and other holy men debate and discuss their faiths in his presence. It was meant to combine the best elements of all the religions in the Mughal empire and thus promote an end to religious strife. Although it never succeeded in becoming a popular religion, Akbar enrolled a number of noblemen as his disciples in the new faith.⁴³

Although the Divine Faith itself does not seem to have survived its progenitor for long, the practice for the emperor to enroll nobles as his disciples did. Jahangir was noted as fitting several of his subordinates with small portraits of himself that could be hung from the turban and marked the person as having a special relationship with the emperor. Amongst those initiated was the English ambassador, and drinking companion of the emperor, sir Thomas Roe, who described the experience in his memoirs.⁴⁴ What was important to the emperors from Humayun to Jahangir was to engage all their subjects regardless of their religious affiliations. In doing so they would strengthen the position of the emperor, whilst at the same time fulfilling one of the greatest duties of a Timurid ruler: the dispensation of justice.⁴⁵

⁴² Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* 2789.

⁴³ J.F. Richards, 'The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir' in: Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Mughal Sate 1526-1730* (Delhi 1998) 126-167, 150-152.

⁴⁴ Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch, and Wheeler Thackston (eds.), *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (1997) 92.

⁴⁵ Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity* 145-146.

The basis for this most important duty of Timurid prince came from a thirteenth century treatise, the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*. It was originally written for the Ismaili rulers of thirteenth century Iran, but upon the Mongol conquest it was quickly adapted to the needs of the new sovereigns. The text defined justice not as the punishment of misdeeds, but rather the balancing between the, sometimes conflicting, interests of the different groups within a ruler's domain.⁴⁶ Thus ensuring peace and tranquility. In Akbar's theory of sovereignty, as laid out in the *Akbarnama*, his success in balancing out the different religious groups in the empire according to this principle was the second reason why he deserved to rule. It flowed from the first reason which was his exalted lineage.⁴⁷

This desire to be seen as an arbitrator neutral in all things religious was continued by later emperors. Jahangir's ambivalence towards Islam was well recorded, as was his interest in Christianity. Such was his stance that it was said that he was „more attached to Christ than to Mohammed and was a Moor in name only”.⁴⁸ Missionaries held out hope that the fourth Mughal ruler could be convinced to convert. In truth there was little chance of that, as doing so would alienate every one of his subjects. Evidence of this can be seen when he forced, or allowed, three nephews to convert. Although the occasion was celebrated with a procession through the capital and a symbolic renaming of the three men,⁴⁹ it is likely that the conversion was meant by Jahangir to exclude his nephews from the imperial succession as it would severely hinder their ability to build support in the imperial system.⁵⁰ Considering Jahangir's strained relationship with much of his family and his work to further streamline the imperial succession this latter explanation seems very likely indeed.

Jahangir thus seems to have surrendered religion in order to be more relatable to all his subjects. A fact which was also commented on by contemporaries, especially European visitors to the subcontinent.⁵¹ However either due to inclination or

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 142-143.

⁴⁸ Beach et al, *King of the World* 59.

⁴⁹ Harban Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Oxford 2004) 19-20.

⁵⁰ Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 33.

⁵¹ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* 20.

circumstance, the fourth Mughal emperor never went as far as his father in the latter's unorthodoxy. Although he continued to make use of the grand religious modes of rule of Akbar, for whatever reason there was no attempt by Jahangir or any other emperor to restart or emulate the Divine Faith. The fourth emperor seems not to have shared his father's interest in metaphysics or religion. Nor did he have a right hand man like Abu Faz'l who he could trust with such a project. The lack of popular appeal of the project might have been the most compelling reason. Most likely it was a combination of these reasons, as well as the fact it proved unnecessary.

Disinterest worked just as well.

However this disinterest towards religion did not translate to a surrender of the universalist implications of Akbar's millennial project. This became clear when prince Salim took the regnal name Jahangir, which translates to 'World Seizer', upon his coronation. He was the first of the Mughal emperors to make use of a regnal name, although the practice was not unknown to them. Jahangir also tried to enhance his universalist pretensions by adopting the mold of king Solomon.

In the Islamic tradition Solomon was a prophet king noted for his mastery over both the physical world and that of the *djinn*, as well as his ability to bring peace and justice to the land.⁵² These roles and abilities made him a very attractive model for Jahangir who sought to be both the secular and spiritual master of his followers and ensure that through justice peace was preserved in the empire. Shah Jahan would further build on the link his father had forged between the prophet king and the Mughal emperor and would expand it by involving architecture, which will be discussed in a later section.

Asserted Realities

Once Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir had decided on their imperial narratives they had to find suitable ways to express them. The imperial narratives of the Mughal emperors were not merely fables to justify their rule, they were whole cosmological orders that had to be imposed on the world. Like other imperial dynasties the Mughals had a number of options to accomplish this. Though, perhaps because of their origins as strangers in a strange land, they seemed to go further than many

⁵² Sarit Shaley-Eyni, 'Solomon. his Demons and Jongleurs: the Meeting of Islamic, Judaic and Christian Culture', *Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 18:2 (2006) 145-160, 145-148.

other early modern sovereigns. Not merely content to express the new order, the Mughals worked hard to make it a reality through architecture, city planning, art, and rituals. This section shall take a closer look at the ways in which the Mughal emperors before Shah Jahan tried to assert their new reality onto the Indian subcontinent.

From the very beginning the Mughals tried to transform India. One of the bitterest complaints Babur had, was the lack of formal gardens in the Timurid style. These gardens were not only the primarily place of rest and leisure for the Timurids, but also carried deep connotations of order which were important to the dynasty. Babur's complaint was not merely the result of homesickness to his lost homelands, but a deep and nuanced statement about the condition of the country he had come to the conquer.⁵³ His subsequent construction of a garden was not only a way for him to battle his homesickness but to impose order on the strange land, much like a ruler had to impose order on the whole of his domain.⁵⁴

The narrative of bringing order to India was tied into the new imperial hierarchy in which the emperor was to take a central position. Through this central position he would be able to dispense justice and through this justice order would be imposed. However there was also a strong possessive element to this narrative. In order to make the dispensation of justice and imposition of order possible, the emperor had to take possession of the world. A good example of how these different elements of the imperial narrative were expressed is Fatehpur Sikri, the capital Akbar began building in 1571.⁵⁵

With uniform architecture and the entire city planned according to the needs of centralized rule, Fatehpur offered a clear indication of Akbar's ambitions in regards to the position of the emperor as well as other elements of the imperial narrative. Its battlements were red, the imperial color, and indicated the emperor's responsibility for the defense of the empire and its citizens. The grand mosque of the city, as well as the tomb of the Sufi saint Shaikh Salim Chishty, were incorporated into the

⁵³ Stephen F. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises; Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1438-1530)* (Leiden 2004) 185-186.

⁵⁴ Ibidem 289.

⁵⁵ J.F. Richards, 'The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir' 131-133.

imperial palace, showing Akbar's spiritual ambitions, although they remained routed in Islam for the moment.⁵⁶

After 1585 however the emperor abandoned the city in order to move closer to the battlefields in his struggle against rebels in the Hindu Kush. Following this move Akbar would not return. Instead he would adopt a wandering lifestyle, moving from hotbed to hotbed so that his imperial presence could lent weight and morale to his subordinates. The imperial camp, modeled on the principles which were first used in Fatehpur Sikri became the true capital of the empire.⁵⁷

Although the abandonment of a project of such magnitude as the building of an entire city may seem strange, it does have a certain sense if one considers the wider implications. By making the imperial camp the capital, Akbar further brought power and prestige into his hands. The capital, which in a way represented the empire, was bound to his person. Where he went the camp, and the order it represented went, with him. In this way Akbar avoided having a site which could become an independent source of power and prestige. Although it might seems strange to think of a city as having power, there are numerous examples in which possession of a city meant possession of the wider realm. Samarkand the old capital of Temür had gained such a status and much energy was wasted by the Timurids in squabbling over the city. Early medieval Toledo in Spain and Reims in France are others examples of such city's with a certain special power.

In this wandering lifestyle Jahangir would follow his father's example. Although frequently resting in one of the grand imperial cities, Jahangir moved often, sometimes in accordance with the seasons other times as his father had done to oversee the latest crisis. However a second dimension was added to the emperor's wanderings. Jahangir would not only impose order, but also take possession of the lands in a symbolic yet important way. Although the fourth Mughal emperor lacked his predecessor interest in religion and metaphysics this was matched by an equal interest in the physical world. He was a deeply sensual man who gloried in the beauty of his realm and avidly collected its riches.⁵⁸ He never failed to record the

⁵⁶ Idem.

⁵⁷ Ibidem 136-137.

⁵⁸ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* 101.

worth of the offerings presented to him and expressed his imperial narrative in far more material terms than Akbar had.

This material dimension of Jahangir's imperial narrative also found expression in another way. Wherever the fourth emperor went a thorough, if not always systematic, quantification of the land followed. Unusual samples of local flora and fauna were measured and weighed, censuses were undertaken.⁵⁹ These acts of measuring and giving a numerical expression to his domain were a very real way for Jahangir to take possession of his realm. In doing so he combined the two narratives of possession and order. He brought the wild and strange lands of India back to clear simple numbers, which could easily be ordered.

These narratives of the emperor as a bringer of order and the taking of possession of the realm, were perhaps the most performative of the Mughal imperial narratives. However there were other ways to assert the reality they were meant to convey. As noted above not only did the Mughals seek to make the emperor the center of the empire, but they also sought to imbue him with sacral authority. Of course this authority had a strong performative element. Both Humayun and Akbar were deeply invested in the proper execution of court rituals which were important to establish their more than human status. In this section I wish to focus on a few other ways these narratives were expressed.

First there was architecture, I have already mentioned the building of a new capital under Akbar in an attempt to make clear the emperor's central position in a tactile manner. However the appropriation of sacral authority can also be seen in the buildings the Mughals left behind, mainly their tombs. One of the most noticeable breaks between the Mughal imperial narrative and that of their Timurids forefathers can be found in the differences between the tombs of Babur and Humayun.

Babur's tomb in Kabul was built according to the demands of Islamic tradition. Small and minimalistic with the cenotaph exposed to the open sky, the grave is not likely to elicit feelings of reverence in anyone who looks upon it. Humayun's tomb on the other hand is a monumental structure, build in red and white stone, crowned with an ostentatious white dome. These were colors of empire and godliness respectively. It was built by Akbar to inspire reverence in those who looked upon it and became a popular pilgrims site. In this way Humayun's tomb was much closer to that of Temür

⁵⁹ Corinne Lefèvre, 'Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India' 476-477.

himself,⁶⁰ which makes sense considering both were engaged in the construction of an imperial narrative and both made use of appropriated religious authority in doing so.

At the same time Humayun's tomb is meant to eclipse that of Temür. Its floor plan was based on one which was frequently used by a number of Islamic sovereigns and dynasties, known as the *hash bihisht* or 'eight paradises' design. The design, which consists of a square divided into nine parts, was meant to link the building to paradise which in the Islamic traditions generally had eight levels and heaven nine vaults. In Humayun's tomb the plan was mirrored four times, so that the four copies formed part of one larger whole.⁶¹

Architecture was not the only way the imperial narrative was asserted by Humayun's tomb. It was also stressed in the language which was used to describe it. A visit to it was called *ziyarat* (pilgrimage) and was not complete without the *tawaf*, a ritual circumference, and the distribution of alms.⁶² Through these action as well as the magnificence and language of the building itself the reality of the imperial narrative was asserted. In the tomb lay not only the body of a might secular sovereign, but also that of a holy man.

Nor was it only the physical world which could be transformed through such practices. The spiritual world too could be shaped and used by the Mughals through the use of art. Above I have briefly discussed the use of the Solomonic model of kingship by Jahangir. Here I will briefly discuss the way the fourth Mughal emperor used art to fulfill the tropes of the model. For this we have to look at the murals in his palace in Lahore, which were rediscovered in 1980.

What makes these murals of interest to this thesis is the naturalistic style in which they were depicted. This style was an European import which is noteworthy of itself and speaks not only of Jahangir's interest in European art, but also his universalist ambitions. By incorporating the strange art style into his imperial artwork he again

⁶⁰ Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* 85.

⁶¹ Ibidem 26-27.

⁶² Ebba Koch, 'The Delhi of the Mughals Prior to Shahjahanabad as Reflected in the Patterns of Imperial Visit', in: Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (Oxford 2001) 163-182, 176.

took possession of it in a way which exemplified how the Mughals' reach was symbolically extended beyond the Indian subcontinent.

However of greater interest is the result of the combination of the naturalistic style with the murals content. The murals were meant to express the story of Solomon's mastery over both the material world and that of the djinn. In the naturalistic style these spirits appeared so lifelike that one European observer wondered if they did not frighten the women.⁶³ By painting the spirits in the European style, which mimicked life much more closely than the stylized Islamic styles, Jahangir had given a 'body' to these supernatural beings. Here we see almost an inversion of the process with which the Mughal emperor's had appropriated religious authority. Rather than infusing a body with supernatural power, as Akbar had done, a supernatural power was embodied.

The embodiment of Jahangir's angels through the use of European art is typical of the way the Mughals worked in asserting their reality. In the preceding century his predecessors Humayun and Akbar as well as, to a much lesser extent, Babur had worked to assert their version of reality, their imperial narrative, onto India. In doing so they were guided by both their dynastic pasts and the demands of emperorship in India and showed a surprising amount of pragmatism.

⁶³ Ebba Koch, 'Jahangir and the Angels', in Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology* (Oxford 2001) 12-37, 29-31.

Prince Khurram

Shah Jahan ascended the Mughal throne on the fourteenth of february 1628 at the age of thirty seven. However even before this momentous occasion the fifth Mughal emperor, who had been known as prince Khurram, had already lived an eventful life which will be detailed in this section. I have done so because just like the political and ecological make-up of the Indian subcontinent had an influence on the development of the Mughal imperial narrative so did the character and experiences of its emperors. Above we have seen how the early tribulations of Akbar's reign convinced the third emperor of the necessity of concentrating power in his hands. The way in which he did so, by appropriating religious authority based on his (semi-)divine lineage and his kingly attributes were tied to his restless and highly inquisitive character.

Unlike his own father Shah Jahan had at the time of his succession reconciled himself with his predecessor. However this did not mean that his path to the throne was without obstacles. He found his nemesis at court in the shape Jahangir's powerful first wife Nur Jahan (1577-1645). As with his father and grandfather this early conflict would leave its mark not only on the emperor's character, but also on his mode of rule. It is for this reason that this section will deal with the conflict between prince and empress as well as other early shaping forces, before we continue with the narrative of rule adopted by Shah Jahan as emperor.

Empress and Prince

Nur Jahan was originally Mehrunnissa, the daughter of a Persian immigrant who had won an important position as keeper of the imperial palace in Agra during Akbar's reign. She was born during the dangerous journey from the Iranian plateau to the subcontinent. By the time she wed prince Salim in 1611 she was already a widow. Her first husband had been a Persian soldier, whose prowess earned him the name Sher Afghan, 'Tiger Slayer'. Despite this marriage Mehrunnissa caught the eye of then prince Salim, who is recorded to have lusted after her.⁶⁴ Nevertheless the

⁶⁴ Diana and Michael Preston, *The Taj Mahal: Passion and Genius at the Heart of the Mughal Empire* (New York 2007) 47-48.

emperor would have to wait four years after the death of her husband, before he could wed her himself. After the wedding Jahangir gave her the title Nur Mahal, 'Light of the Palace', and in 1616 he would grant her even greater honors by naming her Nur Jahan, 'Light of the World'.⁶⁵

At first Nur Jahan was one of Khurram's greatest allies at the imperial court. The two worked together to eliminate Khurram's older brother Khusrau, who although blinded for an earlier insurrection, remained a sympathetic figure for many. There are reports that the prince recovered some limited vision afterwards so that he could technically still rule.⁶⁶ Through pressure from both Khurram and Nur Jahan Khusrau was placed in the care of the empress' brother, Asaf Khan, in 1616 despite protests of Jahangir's own mother.⁶⁷

The alliance between Khurram and his step-mother had been sealed four years earlier on the tenth of May 1612, when the prince married Arjumand Banu, Asaf Khan's daughter.⁶⁸ It was she who would become known as Mumtaz Mahal and for whom the fifth Mughal emperor would construct the great Taj Mahal. While this alliance between empress and prince stood the empire remained at peace. Within a few years however their ambitions would collide and Khurram would be forced into the position of the rebellious prince.

Upon reaching the throne Jahangir preferred to leave the frequent campaigns which were such a crucial part of the Mughal imperial system to his sons and subordinates. With Khurram's star on the rise, it was only logically that the prince would take a leading role in the empire's military efforts. Without a semiautonomous appanage from which to extract resources, taking such a leading role in service of the crown was the only way for an imperial claimant to gather the necessary prestige and authority to be a viable choice for successor. So in 1613 when Jahangir announced a campaign in order to „subjugate the accursed Rana Amar Singh, who was the leader of the Rajas of Hind (Mewar)”, Khurram was called upon to take command.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Ibidem 62-63.

⁶⁶ Ibidem 55.

⁶⁷ Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 34-35.

⁶⁸ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 63.

⁶⁹ W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 6.

Within two years, during which time Khurram's second daughter Jahanara (1614-1681) was born, the prince succeeded „with the force of the arm of fortune” in bringing the Rana „under the yoke of obedience”.⁷⁰ With this victory, won through prodigious application of violence against the countryside and a lenient stance during negotiations, the crown prince had succeeded where his father had not. Akbar had ordered Jahangir to subjugate the rana two times and each time the then prince had failed.⁷¹ In recognition of this deed Jahangir augmented Khurram's rank with 3.000, promoting him to a mansab of 15.000.⁷²

The following year 1616 would be a fateful one for the prince as he lost one daughter to small-pox, but was blessed by the birth of his second son named by Jahangir, Sultan Shah Shuja (1616-1661). It was also the year that he and his step-mother would gain a great victory over Khusrau when he was remanded to the custody of Asaf Khan as noted above. Furthermore Jahangir took an unprecedented step by granting his son the title Shah, so that from this point on he was to be addressed as Shah Khurram. Together with this new title his mansab was increased to 20.000 and he was given the command of the campaign to conquer the recalcitrant Deccan sultanates south of the empire.⁷³

These unique honors and exaltation of Khurram showed a new step in the Mughal inheritance scheme in which the reigning emperor took measures to appoint his successor. During the struggle between Akbar and Jahangir, the former had already made overtures that signified his desire to have Khusrau succeed instead of his surviving son. However he had never gone as far as Jahangir did in 1616. The title Shah had a clear connotation of sovereignty, which cannot have escaped contemporaries. The English ambassador to the Mughal court, Roe, commented that all were in awe of the prince when he received command of the armies, more so than they were of the emperor.⁷⁴ Although Khurram remained in imperial service he stood far above others.

⁷⁰ Idem.

⁷¹ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 75-76.

⁷² Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 6.

⁷³ Ibidem 6-7.

⁷⁴ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 78.

Conflict

In hindsight 1616 can be seen as the high point in the relations between the prince and his step-mother. With Khusrau neutralized, Nur Jahan's influence at court ever growing, and Khurram elevated above all others there was little the two could offer each other anymore. Although the peace would be kept for another six years, their ambitions would eventually clash and bring the prince in conflict with the imperial establishment. While Khurram continued to gain glory and accolades by completing the Deccan campaign within a year,⁷⁵ Nur Jahan's hold on Jahangir continued to grow.

The true extent of Nur Jahan's role in the conflict between prince and emperor is hard to measure. Like with most women in power she became a convenient scapegoat on which various ails could be blamed by both contemporaries and later, male, chroniclers. It is notable that the *Shah Jahan Nama* of Inayat Khan, a summary of the official court chronicle, makes no mention of Nur Jahan instead referring to a „group of people at court whose coin of sincerity was impure and who had been suffering from the torture of jealousy for a long time due to the esteem and overflowing favors that the Emperor had bestowed upon [Shah Khurram]”.⁷⁶ However as noted by Faruqi the emperors and their biographers took some pains to represent an image of continuity and harmony in the imperial family. Any words of strife between father and son were swept under the rug or blamed on deceivers intent on disrupting the natural affection between them.⁷⁷ With this in mind the omission of Nur Jahan in the official chronicle can be a sign that her role in the conflict between Khurram and his father was smaller than the traditional narrative supposed, or that it was too great for comfort and had to be concealed.

We do know however that Nur Jahan's power was great indeed. As the emperor's health deteriorated due to alcohol and drug abuse, she fussed over him while at the same time deploying her own talents in governing the empire. With Jahangir falling into dotage the empress began issuing orders independently signing them with both the emperor's name and her own. Coins were struck in her name. Both of these were traditional signs of sovereignty. The only such right which was denied to her

⁷⁵ Ibidem 80.

⁷⁶ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 10.

⁷⁷ Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 188-189.

was having the friday prayers read in her name which would have confirmed her as the true sovereign of the empire.⁷⁸

In the meantime there was more troubling news from the Deccan when the men who Shah Khurram had defeated years before were violating the agreements reached on their surrender and seized Ahmadnagar. Khurram was the only viable choice to lead the expedition and was dispatched to the highlands in december of 1620. As before the prince achieved victory within a few months and extracted tribute from the repentant rulers with a worth of about 4 million rupees.⁷⁹ At court however things were also moving towards a climax. Jahangir had once again fallen ill and Khurram's brother the ever drunken Parvez had rushed to their father's bedside as a dutiful, and hopeful, son ought. Khurram, and his wife, meanwhile were stuck in the south unable to influence matters at court.

As noted above the alliance between Nur Jahan and her stepson had become strained in the years following the neutralization of Khusrau. Neither of them was willing to step aside for the other. So in order to maintain her position at court the empress began looking for another successor of Jahangir. Someone through whom she could act as she did now. In order to secure such a replacement the empress had one powerful tool at her disposable, a bride, Ladli Begum, her only child by her first marriage.

She had at first tried to marry Ladli to Khusrau, which shows the enduring power of princes as possible attractors of loyalty, but he had refused, reportedly out of loyalty to his first wife who had shared his miseries with him.⁸⁰ This might explain why Khurram bargained for his elder brother to be given into his custody before departing to the Deccan in 1619. It would place at least one rival piece in his hands. The fact that Khusrau died shortly after Ladli was married to prince Shahriyar, Khurram's youngest brother, makes this all the more likely.⁸¹ The death of Jahangir's unfortunate eldest son was hardly mentioned in his diary, and the *Shah Jahan Nama* merely states: „Prince Khusrau, who was in the custody of His Majesty [Shah Jahan], also got deliverance from the prison of existence and instead became confined in the

⁷⁸ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 87-88.

⁷⁹ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 9-10.

⁸⁰ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 88-89.

⁸¹ Ibidem 88-90.

prison of non-existence.”⁸² Although it was never proven, it was widely believed that Khurram had his elder brother murdered.⁸³

Political intrigue and maneuvering such as this were important in the post appanage system, as Khurram now saw his whole future as emperor threatened and lacked an appanage to fall back on should he be passed over.⁸⁴ With a new threat appearing in the form of Shah Abbas, whose forces had begun to encroach on the empire’s western frontier, things came to a head. Khurram was recalled to be dispatched against the Persian ruler. While en route however relations between emperor and prince broke down. Jahangir had apparently been informed of the suspicions against Khurram regarding Khusrau’s death, while at the same time the prince saw his support at court vanish as Nur strengthened her grip on the government. Her place had been further elevated with the death of her father, Itimad-ud-daula, who had served as Jahangir’s chief minister. His extensive lands now became the empress’ property.⁸⁵

Khurram who had received no new honors for his second victory in the Deccan, sought to secure his place as Jahangir’s successor by making „certain suggestions”,⁸⁶ namely that he would be given sole command of the expedition against Shah Abbas as well as governorship of the Punjab and the great fortress Ranthambhor in Rajasthan where he could secure his household. The emperor declined these suggestions, and noted that he could read the traces of disloyalty from them. Command of the campaign against Shah Abbas was given to Shahriyar, which of course delighted Nur Jahan.⁸⁷ From this point on, although Inayat Khan is purposefully obtuse on the matter, Khurram can be said to be in open conflict against the imperial court.

⁸² Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 10.

⁸³ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 93-94.

⁸⁴ Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 187.

⁸⁵ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 97.

⁸⁶ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 10.

⁸⁷ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 96-98.

„[The] fire of intrigue and disturbance kept burning in Hind for the next four or five years”,⁸⁸ is how the *Shah Jahan Nama* describes the conflict. It does not go any further in its descriptions save for recording the movements of the prince and his court as they did their best to avoid imperial power. Shah Khurram’s first step was to move to Agra, in hopes of seizing the treasury collected to finance the western campaign. However he failed to capture the fort where the treasure was kept, and although his forces plundered the city he had lost his prize and instead turned to confront the imperial forces.⁸⁹

On the twenty-ninth of march 1623 the imperial and princely forces met in battle and Shah Khurram was dealt a surprising defeat. Following the loss he and his supporters were forced to retreat, first south and then east towards Bengal. There he defeated and killed the imperial governor before usurping authority. Here in the rich eastern province which had once been denied to his elder brother Khusrau, the prince began consolidating his power over the next year. In order to do so he made full use of the capabilities of the princely court. He had when he was still in favor worked hard to place as many of his followers in strategic positions as he could.⁹⁰ These loyalists were able to divert a number of revenue streams towards the wayward prince as well as provide his armies with munitions and other supplies.⁹¹

For the next three years Khurram’s position within the empire was uncertain. He tried several times to repair relations with his father and in april 1626 seemed to have some success when he sent his third son Aurangzeb to court. Nevertheless the *Shah Jahan Nama* records that despite this he conquered part of the estates of his brother Shahriyar shortly thereafter.⁹² Although the conflict between the prince and the imperial court must have certainly been destructive in those places where fighting occurred, the empire as a whole seems to have suffered little under it. This can partly be explained by Khurram’s unwillingness to antagonize Jahangir more than absolutely necessary for his own survival. However equally important was the flexibility of the Mughal imperial system. Such was its resilience that it was capable of

⁸⁸ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 11.

⁸⁹ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 99.

⁹⁰ Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 115.

⁹¹ Ibidem 209.

⁹² Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 11.

supporting both the emperor and his disgraced son as long as neither forced the issue.

Interlude

In the meantime a third player had entered the imperial stage. Mahabat Khan (d. 1634), the general who had worked with prince Parvez (1589-1626) to pursue Khurram during the height of his rebellion. As the general established and enhanced his ties with the alcoholic prince his growing power became a thorn in the side of the empress. Accordingly she began to plot against him. Once the general became aware of this he decided to plead his case before the emperor himself.⁹³

In march 1626 the Khan approached the imperial camp to do so, but when his envoy was arrested and flogged it confirmed the general's worst fears. So in desperation he swept into the camp at the head of his four thousand Rajput riders. There he found it halfway disassembled with the bulk of the army, as well as the treasury, and other essential equipment already across a river. Quickly he ordered half his men to secure the boat bridge, while he marched with some others towards the imperial tents and secured the emperor, who was escorted back to the khan's camp.⁹⁴

An attack across the river led by Asaf Khan, the empress' brother, was beaten back and Mahabat Khan succeeded in his coup, almost by accident. Mahabat's uncertainty can be read in his insistence that he remained the emperor's loyal servant and the pains he took to project an image of normality. Long gone were the days in which just anyone could take power. Over the next several months Nur focused her attentions on reacquiring power from the general and she gained her chance in november as the imperial camp made its way from Kabul to Lahore. Near the Jhelum river where Mahabat Khan had seized the emperor before, Jahangir told the general that he would like to inspect the empress' cavalry. He suggested that Mahabat and his forces marched ahead lest an argument and bloodshed might ensue between the two parties. Mahabat Khan, who was likely glad for an excuse to

⁹³ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 105.

⁹⁴ Ibidem 106-107.

extract himself from his precarious position, complied and, once he deemed the distance between him and the imperial camp great enough, fled.⁹⁵

Although this months long episode ultimately had little impact on the direction of Mughal history, indeed the *Shah Jahan Nama* does not even mention it, or the larger imperial system it does illustrate how far the Mughal imperial narrative had come. Unlike his grandfather, Humayun, Jahangir had little to fear from a powerful nobleman who had managed to seize de facto power. Not once did the general make any attempt to usurp the emperor's power, instead taking great pains to project an image of normality with himself as the emperor's loyal servant unjustly aggrieved by the machinations of the empress. Even if the emperor did not take an active part in the governing of the empire he had become too important a symbol to discard. The events of the months between march and november 1626 show the great success of Akbar's and Jahangir's efforts to shape the Mughal imperial narrative around the person of the emperor as the embodiment of imperial authority.

Khurram's ascension

The conflict between Nur Jahan and Khurram entered its final stage in november 1627 when the emperor fell ill while returning from Kashmir to Lahore. He died in a way station sixty years of age. With Khurram far away from the capital it was up to Asaf Khan to secure his son-in-law's ascension to the throne. In a move that blindsided his sister, he quickly crowned Dawar Bakhsh, son of the late prince Khusrau, as emperor on the grounds that „[his removal] could later be effected through a simple stratagem”, while at the same time a messenger was despatched to Khurram with Asaf Khan's seal to appraise the prince of the situation.⁹⁶

In Lahore Shahriyar also wasted little time and quickly declared himself emperor. He raised an army with money from the imperial treasury to defend his claim,⁹⁷ but his forces were quickly defeated by the experienced men of Asaf Khan. The prince fled to Lahore's fortress which fell shortly thereafter. Shahriyar was brought before Asaf Khan and blinded. Dawar Bakhsh was enthroned and order restored.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibidem 107-110.

⁹⁶ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 12-13.

⁹⁷ Preston, *The Taj Mahal* 113.

⁹⁸ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 13.

Asaf Khan's messenger reached Khurram on the 28th of november 1627, who, after the customary two or three days of mourning, made his move with all due haste. He dispatched messages to the grandees of the empire extolling them to support his claim to the throne and promising rewards to those who would. Afterwards he began marching towards Agra which could serve as an impromptu capital. At the same time he send word to Asaf Khan that Dawar Basksh was no longer necessary and could be eliminated together with the other princes imprisoned in Lahore.⁹⁹

Before entering Agra Khurram arrived at Ajmer where he paid his respect to the tomb of the Sufi saint Shaikh Mu'in al-Din Chishty, one of the Mughals patron saints. Thus reinforcing the ties between the two dynasties. Then on 14 february 1628, a date chosen for its auspicious connection to both Akbar and Babur, „His Majesty, the Refuge of the Caliphate, the Shadow of God, rode out from the graceful house of his principdom in the company of fortune and prosperity and proceeded to the Akbarabad fort. He honored and illuminated the royal palace with the effulgence of his august presence; and at the predetermined and propitious hour, he ascended the throne of Caliphate and sovereignty with auspiciousness and fortune. Throughout the realm, the heads of pulpits and the faces of newly struck coins, and likewise the imperial farmans, obtained new brightness and immeasurable decoration through the recitation and adornment of His Majesty's celebrated name and glorious new titles: ABU'L MUZAFFAR SHIHAB AL-DIAN MUHAMMAD, SAHIB-I-QIRAN-I-SANI, SHAH JAHAN PADSHAH GHAZI [sic].”¹⁰⁰

Having finally succeeded his father on the throne and outmaneuvering his stepmother, Shah Jahan was free to begin the business of ruling the empire. As with other emperors his experiences as a prince would have a formative influence on his future reign. In order to prevent the successional strife he had had to weather, he did his best to make the succession as clear as possible within the Mughal system. He would heap favor and rewards upon his eldest son Dara Shikoh while keeping him close at court. Unfortunately this plan would backfire and only serve to intensify the inevitable princely conflict.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibidem 13-14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem 14-17.

¹⁰¹ Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire* 38-39.

Other measures were also taken in order to secure his rule. Like his great-grandfather Humayun, Shah Jahan seems to have lacked his father's geniality. He had a more reserved personality, to the point that Roe described him as keeping „so Constance a gravity, never smiling nor in face showing any respect or difference of men; but mingled with extreme Pride and Contempt for all [sic].”¹⁰² The *Shah Jahan Nama* even records a celebration where Shah Jahan left early to his apartments in order „to avoid the dense crowds that thronged the assembly.”¹⁰³ It seemed that the fifth Mughal emperor was a man who had times preferred his own company and found conversing with the crowds of the empire tiring.

As discussed above this was not a desirable trait in a Mughal emperor and the fact that such an act was recorded meant that it was noteworthy even if Inayat Khan was careful to avoid any overt criticism in his wording. Although the power of the emperor had grown and his position was certainly more secure than it had been under Humayun it was still primarily a social responsibility and personal charisma remained an important attribute for any sovereign. Jahangir, for all his supposed other faults as ruler, understood this all too well and worked hard to foster personal bonds with his nobles. This was one reason for the continuation of the disciple system created by Akbar.

Rather than try to emulate his father or grandfather, Shah Jahan did his best to secure his position by projecting an image of perfect rulership. It was for this reason that he took such a personal interest in the history of his reign as we shall see below. Like Humayun he also formalized much of the court rituals in order to elevate himself above his nobles. This formalization would have a strong impact on Mughal architecture, such as the Taj Mahal.¹⁰⁴ Unlike his great-grandfather Shah Jahan succeeded for the most part in his objectives. Although his reign knew the same tribulations that were common for all Mughal rulers, he himself was never seriously challenged until the rebellion of his son Aurangzeb in 1657.

¹⁰² Beach et al., *King of the World* 122.

¹⁰³ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 84.

¹⁰⁴ Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* 83.

The King of the World

Like most Mughal emperors Shah Jahan wasted little time in establishing his own narrative of rule. This was important considering the manner of his succession. The first step in this can already be seen in the recitation of the new emperor's name and titles. Not only did Shah Jahan follow his father's example in choosing a regnal name but he also made claim to the titles *ghazi* and *sahib-i-qiran*. In this section I shall elaborate on the importance of these titles and the way the fifth Mughal emperor chose to express his narrative of rule.

Ghazi

In the conventional history of the Mughal empire Shah Jahan's reign is often framed as a prologue to that of his son Aurangzeb in which the first steps were taken towards a more Islamic character for the empire. While I personally think this is a much too determinist view, it cannot be denied that the fifth Mughal emperor placed more emphasis on his religious identity as a Sunni muslim, especially when compared to his father and grandfather. The reasons for this are unclear. Often people simply point to the emperor's character and as I have argued before this did play an important part in the formulation of the narrative of rule. However if one takes a closer look at the steps taken by Shah Jahan it becomes clear that while the imperial narrative did indeed taken on a more Islamic coat, it continued to function in much the same way as it had under previous emperors. The Mughal empire lost very little of its open and corporate character. It seems that the position of the emperor had grown strong enough that the fifth Mughal sovereign was able to give more room to his personal beliefs.

Following his coronation one of the first orders of Shah Jahan was the abolishment of the need for men to prostrate themselves before the emperor.¹⁰⁵ This practice had been instituted under Akbar and raised controversy with the more traditional Muslims who believed such reverence should be reserved for Allah.¹⁰⁶ While it might very well be true that the emperor agreed with these sentiments and

¹⁰⁵ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 18.

¹⁰⁶ Richards, *The Mughal Empire* 48.

sought to bring a stop to it from his own personal devotion, the fact that he was able to do so speaks volumes about the success of the Mughal imperial system. The prostration had been a sign of extreme submission calculated to impress on everyone the elevated position of Akbar. However by the time of Shah Jahan such overt signs of submission were apparently no longer necessary. The elevated position of the emperor had become self evident.

The adoption of the title ghazi, which meant holy warrior, by the emperor and the destruction of Hindu temples have also often been mentioned as evidence of Shah Jahan's more orthodox turn. However it should be noted that the Mughals were no strangers to the rhetoric of the ghazi in their imperial narrative. Babur upon entering India had attempted to give the enterprise additional luster by taking on the guise of a ghazi.¹⁰⁷ Such phrases were at times repeated by successive emperors when they went to war against those of a different religion or had to deal with rebellious Hindus. Furthermore there was a longstanding connection between ghazi and sufi identities. Many early Sufi saints had fought besides ghazis on Islam's frontiers and many of these warriors considered themselves disciples of these great spiritual warriors for Islam.¹⁰⁸ We have already seen how Ali served as a model for the perfect warrior saint during Temür's time.

The adoption of the title ghazi can thus also be seen as a claim to this spiritual power, much like the appropriation of Sufi saint accruements had been under Akbar and Jahangir. Considering that Shah Jahan had first won renown as his father's chief general and the continued focus on the empire's military endeavors throughout the *Shah Jahan Nama*, the use of the ghazi title takes on a much less orthodox color. Rather than signifying Shah Jahan as a holy warrior of Islam, it might merely signify the emperor's martial abilities and the spiritual power captured therein. In much the same way the rajput identity seems to have been not an exclusively Hindu one, even though it is often identified as such.¹⁰⁹ So again although the adoption of the title ghazi indeed have Islamic connotations, it fitted well into the Mughal imperial narrative and did not disrupt its functions.

¹⁰⁷ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* 18.

¹⁰⁸ Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* 45.

¹⁰⁹ Norman P. Ziegler, 'Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties During the Mughal Period' in: Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (eds.), *The Mughal State* (Delhi 1998) 168-210, 202.

The same goes for the destruction of 'idol temples', which was indeed ordered by Shah Jahan, but not until his sixth regnal year. In the *Shah Jahan Nama* it is recorded:

The infidel consuming monarch, who is the guardian of true religion, had ... commanded that at Banaras and throughout the entire imperial dominion, wheresoever idol-temples had been recently built, they should be razed to the ground. Accordingly, in these days it was reported from the province of Allahabad that 70 had been demolished at Banaras alone.¹¹⁰

Unlike other cases in which hindu temples had been destroyed this order came unprovoked. The clause that only recently build idol-temples should be targeted was conform Islamic law which protects ancient sites of worship. Although this did not prevent the emperor from razing the ancient temple at Anantnag in Kashmir, after which the town was renamed Islamabad.¹¹¹ However if these actions indicated an increasing religious intolerance from the emperor, they did little to disrupt the functioning of empire. The *Shah Jahan Nama* makes no mention of any unrest following the emperor's decree, nor do any other sources which I have been able to uncover.

Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction

Instead Shah Jahan's religious orthodoxy should be seen as less a step away from Akbar than a step towards Temür. As stated before the Mughals continued to see themselves as Timurids, even after the reformations of Akbar. Shah Jahan especially felt a connection to the dynasty's progenitor. References towards Temür were such an important part of fifth Mughal emperor's narrative of rule that there is sometimes talk about a Timurid renaissance during his reign.¹¹² From the very beginning of his reign Shah Jahan emphasized his Timurid heritage, literally as amongst the titles which he claimed at his coronation was Sahib-i Qiran. This title, which translates to 'Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction', referenced a title given to Temür,

¹¹⁰ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 90.

¹¹¹ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* 24.

¹¹² Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises* 335.

probably posthumously in an attempt by his descendants to further increase the prestige of their dynastic founder.¹¹³ Furthermore the official visual chronicle of Shah Jahan, the *Padshahnama*, opened with a front piece on which Temür presented the imperial crown to Shah Jahan.¹¹⁴

In viewing Shah Jahan's imperial narrative as a throwback to the dynasty's Timurid past the adoption of the title Sahib-i Qiran is the most telling practice. Much like the adoption of the Solomonic archetype by Jahangir, which was maintained and augmented by Shah Jahan as shall be discussed below, the emulation of Temür as the first Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction was an attempt to channel his charisma directly into Shah Jahan.¹¹⁵ The fourteenth century conqueror had of course always been honored as the progenitor of the Mughal line. But Shah Jahan seems to have gone further in his reverence for his ancestor. Like Akbar, he not only looked to Temür for inspiration but actively sought ways in which he could give meaning to the link he forged between them.

For the Lord of the Conjunction was not an empty title but held great symbolic power. It had its origins in pre-Islamic Persia and initially referred to the someone born under a conjunction of Venus and Jupiter. It was believed that such folk had the power to shape an age, much like the mujaddid but on a grander scale. Where the mujaddid was merely a renewer of Islam, the Lord of the Conjunction had more universalistic connotations. Moin calls both millennial beings and both drew on the millennial expectations of sixteenth century Islam. Both titles held in them a sense that the bearer would shape the world or coming age to his vision.

The appropriation of the title by Shah Jahan, and on some occasions his fore bearers, says much of their universalistic aspirations. In the wider political context of the early modern Islamic world it was a way for the fifth Mughal emperor to claim precedence over his fellow Islamic emperors: the Ottoman sultan and Safavid shah. It was perhaps this precedence which gave Shah Jahan the presumption to advise sultan Mehmed IV on treatment for a pestilence which had apparently ravaged Istanbul.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity* 9.

¹¹⁴ Beach et al, *King of the World* 25.

¹¹⁵ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* loc. 642-655.

¹¹⁶ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 500.

The idea of the emperor as physician guarding the health of his domain is a common enough trope. However in taking such a role in regards to the distant realm of Rum, and thus interfering in the sovereign affairs of a co-emperor, he was overstepping the bounds of the trope, but such presumptions fell perfectly within his purview as the Lord of the Conjunction. This is one, very explicit, example of Shah Jahan using the power of the title. It would be much more important however in his struggles with the Persian shah.

The Mughals had had a contentious relationship with the Safavids. Although they had helped both Babur and Humayun in their early struggles, they had demanded a high price for their assistance. The first two Mughal emperors had been forced to, at least nominally, convert to Shiism and accept the shah as their overlord. Although this dominance had had little practical limitations, it was still a dynastic stain which proved difficult for the Mughals to ignore. Especially when the two dynasties came to clash over the old Mughal heartlands.

For much like the adoption of the ghazi title, this too was a way for Shah Jahan to connect closer with the Timurid past of his forefathers. This resurgent interest began under his father, Jahangir, who also expressed some interest in the dynasty's founder.¹¹⁷ Temür remained an attractive, and to the Mughals vital model of rule. Under Akbar the Mughals' descent from him had become a cornerstone of the imperial narrative. Its likely that the emphasis on his Timurid descent was another maneuver designed by Shah Jahan to augment his imperial presence while taking in consideration his, at times awkward, social conduct.

In march 1638 he received an offer of loyalty from the governor of Qandahar. The province had been „for a long period in the possession of the servants of this eternal government” until Shah 'Abbas had conquered it on Jahangir. Now developments in the Persian capital had unnerved the governor of that place enough that he sought the Mughal emperor's protection. The governor of Kabul, reinforced with troops under the command of Shah Shuja, moved to strengthen the city and protect it from the Shah's reprisals.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Lisa Balabanlilar, 'Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent', *Journal of World History* (2007 18:1) 8-9.

¹¹⁸ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 221-224.

The tug of war that ensued in the following years was not merely a struggle for land, but also a defining moment for the dynasty. The expeditions sent out by the emperor to the far western frontier stretched the logistical capabilities of the empire requiring enormous investments in both material and manpower. However it was a prize Shah Jahan was willing to pay. For although the Timurid heartlands were not especially rich, doubly so when compared to the subcontinent, they nevertheless represented a great prize for the Mughals. Like the Lord of the Conjunction title they provided a vital link to their past, to the very foundation of their imperial narrative.

Ultimately the old heartlands proved too far for the empire's reach. More importantly however they proved too alien for the Mughal troops and officers. When questioned why he had left Balkh, prince Murad Baksh, who had been given command of the expedition said in an ironic reversal of his forefather's Babur's complains that the climate was too strange.¹¹⁹ He and his men, who supported their prince, reported to the emperor that they „[were] dreading the hardship of passing a winter in that climate.”¹²⁰

This alienation was perhaps the best evidence that although the Timurids continued to be a source of inspiration and charisma for the Mughals they had become their own beast as Lisa Balabanlilar argues in her article 'Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent'. Samarkand, the great city of Temür, remained an evocative dream for the Mughals, but by Shah Jahan's reign it was a dream they were forced to give up. Perhaps it was this realization which prompted the fifth Mughal emperor to increase the emphasis on this aspect of the dynastic narrative. At the same time it might explain some of the decisions of his successor as they had to confront the reality that India was their destiny as Samarkand had not been.

Shah Jahan as King of the World

Above we have seen how Jahangir made use of a naturalistic European painting style to bring the djinn of the Solomonic narrative closer to life. Shah Jahan did something similar in using naturalistic imagery to evoke paradise. Such a naturalistic representation of floral images was unique among the three great early modern

¹¹⁹ Balabanlilar, 'The Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction' 39.

¹²⁰ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 356.

Islamic empires.¹²¹ Even more interesting is the way these representation departed from the European herbals which inspired them. For rather than simply copying natural occurring flowers, the artists of Shah Jahan modified their images to fit the imperial narrative.¹²² This showed a new development in the way the imperial narrative was expressed. Where Jahangir had limited the use of European art style in bringing one aspect of his imperial narrative closer, Shah Jahan modified the style itself to his vision.

The use of European art styles was not the only thing that Shah Jahan kept from the imperial narrative of his father. He also continued making use of the Solomonic narrative Jahangir had linked to the dynasty. The fifth Mughal emperor presented the mythical king as another Sahib-i Qiran, much like he had done with Temür. This link was emphasized in one place in particular, namely the audience halls constructed by Shah Jahan for the use of his public audiences. These darshan audiences had first been instituted by Akbar and under Shah Jahan they took on new importance. It has already been mentioned that the court under him became even more formal. The new audience halls which he ordered upon his ascension to the throne were part of this project.

They provided the nobles a place to stand during the darshan ritual and helped each in finding their position according to their rank. The audience halls also worked to further the power of the ritual. They were constructed according to the model of the ruins of Persepolis. These were believed to be the audience halls of the ancient Iranian kings to whom the fifth Mughal emperor was connected through the Lord of the Conjunction title. However the new audience halls also provided architectural nods to mosques in the construction of the wide central aisle. Unlike in a mosque however where this aisle is oriented towards Mecca, here it focused on the *jharoka*, the viewing window where the emperor appeared during the darshan.¹²³

As the literal frame through which the emperor was perceived this *jharoka* performed a vital role in the ritual. It was the final note in the darshan ritual's narrative and for this reason alone it was draped in symbolism. First and foremost amongst these decorations were floral images which had become the most important

¹²¹ Ibidem 217.

¹²² Ibidem 218.

¹²³ Ibidem 67-68.

decorative motive during Shah Jahan's reign. They decorated not only the window but also the interior of the audience hall and served to present the hall as a garden pavilion and through this connection to the celebrated Mughal gardens to paradise. More importantly however the jharoka and its throne contained numerous references to king Solomon.¹²⁴

These references mostly took the shape of human and animal figures which intruded on paradisaical scenes. Considering the strong iconoclastic leanings of traditional Islam, the inclusion of such figures are noteworthy. They serve to further demonstrate that the Shah Jahan may have been more orthodox than his predecessors, but he was still first and foremost a Mughal emperor who happily drew on any number of sources for his imperial narrative. Unlike his father however who seemed to have stressed the dual mastery of Solomon over both the spiritual and material world, Shah Jahan seems to have used the Solomonic narrative mainly to highlight his supreme sense of justice.¹²⁵

This shift in emphasis was illustrated by introducing Orphic scenes and symbols to the throne's decorations. Although there is no reference in Mughal writing to the myths starring the fabled musician, the basic narrative of a man able to subdue all animals through sound was known in the wider Islamic world through cultural osmosis. Either through a pictorial tradition where it was Aflatun, Plato, who created a wondrous machine capable of dominating all the animals of the world, or through the figure of king David who in the Jewish, and later Islamic, traditions had often been identified with Orpheus. In this latter adaptation he was often also connected to the ancient kings of Iran and other Lords of the Conjunction.¹²⁶

These connections between narrative, tropes, symbols, and archetypes were all an important part of the whole. Although to a modern reader it may seem an uncoordinated mess it fitted well in early modern and medieval conceptions about copying and mimicking. A part could stand for the whole and project its full power.¹²⁷ Nor was each symbol limited to one meaning. In this way the use of the Orphic

¹²⁴ Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus: The Pietre Dura Decoration and the Programme of the Throne in the Hall of Public Audiences at the Red Fort in Delhi* (Graz 1998) 23-24.

¹²⁵ Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus* 24-25.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem* 29-30.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem* 26.

narrative of domination of wild animals was not only a narrative about the subjugation of nature or chaos. But it also worked as a link that further tied the throne to Solomon and other Lords of the Conjunction. These links also gave new meanings to the scene. Especially in the Mughal tradition where it became a symbol for the emperor's divine justice.

The placement of the scene at the jharoka, the focal point of the newly constructed audience hall, shows its importance in Shah Jahan's imperial narrative. The importance of a ruler's justice in the Mughal and Timurid narratives of rule have been discussed above. Under Shah Jahan this quality was brought to the forefront and made both the literal and metaphorical center of the narrative. The supreme sense of justice of the emperor which was so great as to compel lion and lamb to sleep peacefully at his feet, was connected to all other elements of the imperial narrative. It was expressed not only in the audience halls or other architectural forms, but in much of the imagery surrounding the fifth Mughal emperor.

Shah Jahan, Imperial Author

In this section I shall analyze Shah Jahan's efforts to disperse his narrative of rule as an imperial author through the medium of miniature paintings produced by the imperial workshops. I shall do this by analyzing a number of miniatures from the Windsor copy of the *Padshahanama*. This is one of the last surviving example of the grand historiographical project of the first ten years of the fifth emperor's rule.¹²⁸ The work was catalogued in 1997 by Milo Beach and Ebba Koch, with Wheeler M. Thackston providing translations for some of the passages, in the book *The King of the World: The Padshahanama: An Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* which I have used here.

Mughal Miniatures

Before we continue to the actual miniatures however it should be noted that Shah Jahan was not the first Mughal emperor to make use of miniature paintings to express his narrative of rule. As so often with the dynasty the practice can be traced to at least his grandfather Akbar. It is interesting to note that, much as with the larger imperial narrative, each of the emperors clearly left their own mark on the style of painting during their reign. This provides not only a crucial insight in the character of each emperor, but also shows the close attention they paid to their representation. Akbar, for instance, is almost always depicted as a man of action taking charge and generally full of movement. This fits well with his general character and the near endless energy he was known for. Under Jahangir, who as noted above had a deep and abiding interest in nature, the paintings became far more naturalistic, while he himself was rarely represented in an active position. Rather he was shown observing nature or conversing with holy men and scholars.¹²⁹

Under Shah Jahan this development continued. Like his father he was rarely depicted in action himself, though there are numerous miniatures in his *Padshahnama* devoted to the actions of his officers. Instead the archetypal scene for the fifth Mughal emperor seems to have been the *darbar* scene of which there are

¹²⁸ Beach et al, *The King of the World*, 15.

¹²⁹ *Ibidem* 118-119.

eleven in the surviving Windsor manuscript, as well as a few others which seem to have followed the general themes from these scenes. The emphasis on this official court audience was fitting for for the fifth Mughal emperor under whom there was a stringent formalization of court rituals. This was even given physical expression in the miniatures as figures became stiffer and more stylized, though still recognizable.

Such official court scenes were however not the only type of miniatures created under the fifth Mughal emperor. In fact there are four broad genres which can be recognized in Shah Jahani painting. The first are the darbar or other court scenes mentioned above. If we compare such scenes from Jahangir's time with later Shah Jahani illustrations a clear development can be seen. The growing formalization of the court under Shah Jahan was given physical expression by a growing stiffness and stylization of the persons depicted in those scenes. Although the naturalism of Jahangir was not totally abandoned it was relegated to those of lesser rank or those who stood outside the Mughal imperial system. Which considering the universalistic aspirations of the system meant that they were basically non-entities, with some notable exceptions as we shall see below. This was a way to reinforce the formal court protocols which required stillness from those in attendance. Such a change might seem strange when earlier naturalism was used to depict angels and other creatures considered greater than man. However this trend continued, likely because such things did fall outside the purview of the Mughal imperial system.

Then there are the allegorical portraits. Although nearly all depictions of the emperor contained allegorical elements, generally in the form of a halo to emphasize his spiritual power, there was still a place for more fantastical images meant to convey the whole, or at least the most important points, of the imperial narrative. These are in many ways the miniatures most easily read as expressions of the narrative for obvious reasons. The miniatures of these genres can be roughly separated into two categories. The first are 'globe portraits' which show the emperor standing or holding a globe signifying his universalistic claims. These types of portraits came into vogue under Jahangir following the introduction of the globe by Europeans. The second are 'inheritance portraits' which were used to underscore the emperor's right to rule through inheritance. These portraits were apparently a new development of Shah Jahani painting. They show the emperor receiving sovereignty from an important ancestors, generally Temür or Akbar.

The third are action scenes. As noted above Shah Jahan rarely represented himself as these scenes, mostly showing how his subordinates carried out his orders. However there are a few examples which do show the emperor in more active positions, generally hunting. These hunts were an important activity for sovereigns since the days of Genghis Khan who conceived of it as a military exercise. So much emphasis was placed on these hunts that they were even used to settle disputes over military deployments.¹³⁰ As the Mughal established themselves in India, the hunts gained a more symbolic meaning. The hunting of lions and tigers became a royal prerogative and its success or failure became a portent for the whole empire.¹³¹ As Roe noted "the escape of [the lion is] portentous of infinite evil to the state."¹³²

The final genre of Mughal miniatures of the Shah Jahani period were intimate scenes showing the emperor or his attendants in more unguarded moments. They generally show scenes of life either outside palace, such as in military camps, or from deep within the emperor's private quarters, where he feasted with his wives and attendants. Although a few such paintings are known from Jahangir's time, Shah Jahan's more formal mode of rule and generally more reserved character means that there are no miniatures of this kind included in the *Padshahnama*. They are thus ignored for the purpose of this thesis.

Of course a divide such as this is primarily a tool for analysis and there can be a significant amount of overlap. For instance nearly all depictions of the emperor included an allegorical element in the shape of a halo which signified his spiritual power. Nevertheless there are enough common differences in each type that such a division will be useful.

The opening Illustrations of the *Padshahnama*

It is sadly outside the scope of this thesis to make a full analysis of all the illustrations in the *Padshahnama*. However as one of only two surviving historical records from the day, and the only which comes with illustrations, it must still be considered in depth. I have chosen to make a selection of those illustrations which I have found

¹³⁰ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises* 212.

¹³¹ Beach et al, *The King of the World* 73

¹³² *Ibidem* 110.

most interesting or rewarding, either because they include notable elements of the imperial narrative or due to other points of interest. Those illustrations I have chosen are included in the appendix.

The manuscript opens with a double page spread of a geometric Persian style sun images called *shamsa*. Such opening imagery was standard for chronicles like the *Padshahnama*. There is little to be said about the images, other than that they show the great emphasis which was placed on solar and light imagery. The placement of such images at the start of a manuscript or album meant that it was intended for a royal patron.¹³³ It is therefore interesting to note that both these miniatures as well as the next ones were likely meant for another project and only added to the Windsor copy at a later date as can be seen from the fact that the folio's had to be trimmed to fit into the copy.¹³⁴

The same goes for the next set of illustrations the first of which is painted on the same folio as the second *shamsa*. These images are an example of what I have deemed 'inheritance portraits'. They show Timur on the right handing a crown to his distant descendant Shah Jahan who raises a hand ready to accept it. By opening with these portraits Shah Jahan made a great statement about his own imperial narrative. Much like the taking of the Second Lord of the Conjunction title it served to underscore the importance placed by the fifth Mughal emperor on his great forefather. Only here it is made even more explicit with Shah Jahan directly accepting sovereignty from Temür in the shape of a crown.

Keeping this in mind there are a few things to note about the composition. First there is the fact that despite being the source of sovereignty Temür is depicted as lower in rank than Shah Jahan. Both rulers sit on bed like thrones, however that of Shah Jahan is much more ornate than that of his forefather. It is also covered with floral imagery which became the favored method of ornamentation during Shah Jahan's reign. In contrast the decorations on Temür's throne are dominated by geometric shapes which at this point had been relegated to floor decorations

Their inclusion here may be because such ornamentation were favored in Temür's time. Thus their inclusion here may not be meant as a slight against the warlord, but rather a way to place the portrait in its proper time. If this was the case however the

¹³³ Ibidem 24.

¹³⁴ Ibidem 18-19.

floral ornamentation on the rug beneath the emperor and the pillow behind him ought to be questioned.

More damning are the lack of a halo around Temür's head, although the back rest of his throne makes for a similar effect, and the fact he was shown quarter profile instead of en profile. The lack of a halo which was used to represent the emperor's spiritual power and religious authority, might be due to Temür sometimes less than savory religious practices. Considering the importance of the warlord to the dynasty in general and Shah Jahan in particular there is little reason to assume that they weren't aware of his transgressions.

Although as noted above the three quarter profile had been used under Jahangir, to indicate the supernatural, in the Shah Jahani period its use especially in the depiction of courtiers and other imperial grandees, began to change. As we shall see with the darbar scenes below, as the court became more formalized and rigid so did the depictions of those closest to the emperor. The dynamism and naturalism which had characterized the miniatures of Akbar and Jahangir were relegated to the lower ranks who stood far away from the imperial presence and were somewhat outside the imperial system.

This might explain why Temür was depicted so differently from Shah Jahan. So as to make it clear that he stood outside the Mughal imperial system. Nevertheless such an exclusion is note worthy in and off itself. It tells us much about the mores and conventions of Mughal imagery. If the depiction was not meant to disparage the progenitor of the Mughal line, which considering Shah Jahan's fascination and emulation of his titles is unlikely, than the warlord's positioning must have been the result of the artist's decision to represent him, truthfully, as outside the Mughal imperial system. Considering the Mughal insistence on projecting an image of dynastic continuity this is noteworthy.¹³⁵ it shows that they cared more about representing things in their proper place and time than adhering to conventions of style.

The Prince's Accomplishments

Following the opening images there are a number of illustrations which recall Shah Jahan's accomplishments when he was still prince Khurram. These follow the

¹³⁵ Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 189-191.

general Shah Jahani principle of not showing the emperor in action. Rather focus is placed on the accolades the prince received for his victories. This is in line with the general tone of the fifth emperor's imperial narrative which concerned itself mostly with his accomplishments and much less with how these accomplishments came to be. These are not the only miniatures that deal with events from Shah Jahan's youth, the rest are presented as flashbacks in the narrative and we will come to them in time.

The most focus is placed on prince Khurram's victory over the Rajput ruler Amar Singh of Mewar, which is depicted in illustrations 6 and 7 as a double spread. The victory was immortalized as the moment the prince receives the Rana's surrender and accepts him into the imperial fold. As this was the most powerful of the Rajput kingdoms its victory was indeed noteworthy enough for the emperor to celebrate in his official chronicle with three miniatures.¹³⁶ These miniature mostly depict fairly standard variants on the darbar scene and thus they are not worth analyzing here fully, though there are a few things to note.

The first is the discrepancy between the visual and textual sources concerning the surrender of Amar Singh. Both the *Jahangirnama* and the *Padshahnama* speak highly of the Rana's dignity and status as he entered the imperial fold. His surrender is framed as more or less voluntary. The miniatures however are much more explicit, and most likely honest, about the Rana's position. At the moment of his surrender on illustration 6 of the *Padshahnama* he is placed in a clearly subservient position. He bows to the haloed prince who, sitting on a grand throne, looks down on the hindu sovereign as he embraces him. An imperial servant has his hands on the Rana's back clearly coercing him.

This discrepancy can best be explained by the difference in conventions between the visual and textual sources. We have noted above that the Mughal miniaturists wanted their images to be read truthfully, even allegorical paintings such as the portrait of Temür handing Shah Jahan the imperial crown. In doing so they were able to circumvent some of the conventions of the Mughal imperial narrative. In the Temür example this meant depicting the dynasty's honored progenitor as outside the

¹³⁶ A third one is included which depicts Jahangir receiving Shah Jahan on his return from Mewar. As it offers little of interest for this thesis I have not included it here.

Mughal imperial system. Here the artist ignored the universalistic tones which pervaded Shah Jahan's historical writings.

The second thing to note in the chronicle is the double spread which immediately follows, illustrations 8-9. These illustrations represent Khurram's successes in the Deccani campaign. The illustrations depict the return of the prince following his victory. This event was remarkable for an unprecedented breach in protocol when the emperor rose from his throne to embrace his victorious son.¹³⁷ It is this moment which the artist chose to illustrate. This in and of itself is not strange, such a breach of protocol was noteworthy and worth illustrating. However as he did so he also revealed much about the way the position of the emperor had evolved over the course of a century of Mughal reign.

As can be seen on the illustrations, there is a blank space in the darbar scenes beneath the jharokha where the emperor sat. Often this space was filled with allegorical images declaring the emperor's universalistic sovereignty. In illustration 8 however, the one where Jahangir has stepped of his throne, the images are of disharmony and civil strife, rendered as graffiti, easily missed. A fat mullah extorts money from the populace, a soldier beats a worker while an official merely watches on. Although Ebba Koch, who analyzed the image in the catalogue believes the images to be a reference to the coming strife between Jahangir and his son,¹³⁸ I have a different theory.

Namely that these images illustrate the success and perhaps fragility of the Mughal imperial narrative. Their meaning is clear, without the emperor in his proper place, that is to say the throne or jharokha window unrest and disharmony threaten the realm. This was obviously a triumph for the Mughal imperial narrative and the culmination of the project begun under Akbar. The emperor had been accepted as a vital part of the functioning and well being of the empire. At the same time however it shows the restrictions of such a vital and central position. In this case the, understandable, exuberance of Jahangir and his pride in his son, led him to abandon his post and damn his subjects.

In fact if we consider that the fourth Mughal emperor's indolence and weakness became a well known trope to explain how his wife took control of the government

¹³⁷ Beach et al, *The King of the World* 35.

¹³⁸ Ibidem 166-167

and cause his son to rebel, both explanations might be fitting. Jahangir leaving his place as emperor was responsible for Khurram's later rebelliousness. Whatever the case the graffiti highlights the importance of protocol at the imperial court and how even the smallest detail can be used to reveal much about the imperial narrative.

Shah Jahan as Emperor

After the miniatures of Shah Jahan's accomplishments as prince they move immediately to his enthronement in 1628. In doing so they follow the Mughal tradition of obscuring any signs of the dynastic strife which was such an important facet of Mughal history. Nor is any mention made of Shah Jahan's unfortunate nephew Dawar Bashksh, who was murdered after having played his part as stop gap emperor.¹³⁹ This showing of familial harmony was further enhanced by the moment which was chosen to illustrate Shah Jahan's victory, namely when he received his three oldest sons and their maternal grandfather Asaf Khan during his inauguration at Agra. This was illustrated by a large double spread, illustrations 10 and 11 of the *Padshahnama*. Illustration 10 shows the emperor embracing his eldest and favored son, Dara Shikoh, while the others look on from the left. They stand on the same level as the throne and emperor. This was a singular honor for Asaf Khan and showed how much he was considered kin by the imperial family.

Besides this honored position for the emperor's father-in-law, the illustration is a fairly typical darbar scene. Nevertheless I think it worth while to take a few moments to study the miniature as the first in the official history which presented Shah Jahan as emperor. For this reason it contained many of the important points of the new imperial narrative while also keeping to the conventions of the darbar scene which at this point were being established. Because of this the illustration stands out in a number of ways.

The steps the painter, known as Bichtir, took to tie the miniature to Shah Jahani architecture is one of the ways it stood out. He did so by adhering to a number of principles of the building style, most importantly the ever present concern for symmetry. This is especially apparent in the wall behind the throne. Here we find the traditional floral decorations of Shah Jahani architecture, which are rendered in a triadic division. This was central element of the style, whose precise function and

¹³⁹ Begley and Desai, *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 12.

shape will be explained in the section on the Taj Mahal. Here they work to draw the eye to the center of the image, towards the emperor and other expressions of his imperial narrative.

The same care for symmetry is evident in the audience which is positioned as symmetrically as possible without it seeming forced. All audience members, with the exception of some in the foreground, are focused on the emperor as he pulls his hair close. As with the graffiti on the previous illustration the artist has made use of the conventions of these darbar scenes to make a point about the emperor's position in the empire, although with more subtlety here. By focusing on Shah Jahan as the center of the image he reinforced the central position of the emperor. This becomes even more important when we realize that the audience is not made up of random figures, but recognizable people, especially those closest to the emperor who are most enraptured by him.

Another thing to note is the inclusion of a element which is rarely present in other darbar scenes. Mainly that most quintessential of Indian royal symbols the elephant. Although elephants were regularly included in depictions of parades and military engagements they were much more rarely used in a more allegorical sense, as symbols of kingship and sovereignty. Here they are included as the stools on which the royal fly swatters stand. Although these were perhaps not the most prestigious places for such royal animals, they are prominent. Considering the miniature was done by Bichtir, a painter renowned for his attention detail and the truthfulness of his paintings it is likely that the stool were truly used.

Their inclusion here might mean a desire by the new emperor to impress his regality on all his subjects. Alternatively their placement as the stools for fly swatters could be a sneer at the traditional Indian royal symbols. This second interpretation might be the most attractive as Bichtir, who came from a prominent Hindu family, gave especially the left elephant a somewhat baleful look in his eyes. It also fitted well into the more orthodox image that Shah Jahan tried to project at times. Though as I noted above he never truly abandoned the heterogenic character of the empire, he did take steps to limit the outward representations of those elements that had their origin in pre-Mughal India. This could also explain why elephants do not return in any of the other darbar scenes.

Whatever the case their inclusion remains noteworthy. Besides these elements there are a few others. Beneath the throne the traditional Orphic scene has been restored from the earlier disruption when Jahangir left his throne. There are a few additions there which did not appear in earlier works. First it depicts a lion sleeping with a lamb, although this was the standard Orphic scene and had been used since Jahangir first introduced the motive, it had not always been included in the sub-throne images. Focus had always been more on the globe which in the new configuration was pushed into the background.

This development fitted in the general evolution of the imperial narrative from Jahangir to Shah Jahan. Where the fourth Mughal emperor had been the World Seizer, who took possession of the world and sheltered it, the fifth was the King of the World, who held dominion over it through his supreme sense of justice. It was this justice which took center stage in Shah Jahan's imperial narrative and was expressed through the image of the predator, generally a lion, sleeping with his prey, generally a sheep or lamb.

Further reference to the emperor's justice can be found in the cord decorated with bells which hangs above the animals. This was a reference to the cord in the red fort which was placed there by Akbar. Through this cord, which could be rung from outside, the emperor's subjects could ask for an audience and explain their grievances to him. In doing so he fulfilled one of the most important conditions of kingship in the Turkic and Persian traditions, namely accessibility.¹⁴⁰ Considering the growing formalization of the imperial court during and after Akbar's reign the cord remained a symbol of the dynasty's beginnings and the more informal court of Babur, where such accessibility was more feasible. Thus it remained an important symbol of imperial justice and would appear intermittently as such in expression of the imperial narrative.

A new addition to the Orphic scene were the two mullah's standing to the sides of the central post, looking at it admiringly. The appearance of these orthodox scholars on the Orphic scene was certainly a new development, but they quickly became a standard motif of such compositions. They are present in a number of other miniatures, both in the *Padshahnama* and other sources. Each time they are connected with the Orphic scene. As the scene was meant to represent Shah

¹⁴⁰ Beach et al, *The King of the World* 191.

Jahan's dominion over the world through his justice and the harmony and peace that followed it the admittance of other persons in the scene is remarkable.

Their introduction had to be handled with care, or it might seem that they were the ones responsible for the peace and harmony. Such conclusions were of course not possible when the scene was considered as part of the wider Mughal imperial narrative, but this was no reason not to be careful. There there was no room for a source of justice other than the emperor, except perhaps God who always worked through the mortal sovereign. For this reason care had to be taken with the position of the figures. Here as in other depictions they are situated carefully to the sides, a place reserved for things of lesser importance. Their stance was also taken into consideration. They are always depicted as passive observers looking admiringly at the peace

The question then still remains why they were included in the scene. It is likely that this was another manifestation of the new orthodox cloak that Shah Jahan seems to have thrown over some aspects of his reign. By including the religious scholars he not only reinforced the bond between emperor and religious establishment, he also defined it. Although they had recovered some of their authority since Humayun and Akbar had worked to curb independent spiritual power, they were still clearly subservient to the emperor. At best their place here can be seen as stewards or guide's marveling at the good works of the emperor, but ready to steer him right when he goes awry. Not that they could ever be depicted doing so off course.

Alternatively the men's posing can be seen as begging or supplicating. In which case their position becomes more that of supplicants or students, waiting for the emperor's grace to shine on them. In which case little much less had changed from Shah Jahan's grandfather's time. However considering the religious orthodoxy of the fifth Mughal emperor such a blatant reinforcement of his grandfather's presumptions regarding traditional religious authority is unlikely. At this point the spiritual power of the emperor had been established enough to withstand any possible rivalry from the mullahs. Therefore there was little need to place them in such an obviously inferior position.

The second illustration of the double spread, 11, showed the courtyard at the same time as illustration 10. As in the previous miniature the central focus of the

audience is the emperor, which means that they are turned to the right as the chronicle was originally read right to left. In the image itself however center stage is taken by two saddled, but unriden horses, presumably those of two of the new emperor's visitors. In front of the horses stand a number of noblemen. Like their fellows in illustration 10 their posture is stiff, although already their portrait is less formalized than those furthest from the emperor on the previous miniature. From the left an elephant appears preceded by a standard-bearer and curiously a matchlock man without his weapon.

In the background behind the horses a second row of nobles and soldiers can be seen. To the right stand eight imperial mace bearers and to the left three matchlock men this time with their weapons. Although they like everyone are facing the emperor they are noticeably more animated talking amongst themselves and glancing at each other. A group of nobles behind is even less focused on the emperor. Finally furthest in the distance in an open tower a group of musicians are enthusiastically playing their instruments. Although the scene contains little in the way of allegory or overt symbolism like the preceding miniature, it does offer a good summation of the use of stylization and naturalism as it was used in Shah Jahani painting. We can clearly see the people becoming more natural as they are placed further from the emperor and become lesser in rank. Eventually the musicians are given a somewhat sketch like appearance. Their details are rough, but they are ripe with movement and energy.

The conventions which are shown in these illustrations are generally followed in the rest of the darbar scenes. The strict protocol of these occasions and the conventions with which these protocols were depicted meant that there could be little variation between the different scenes, except for some key details which mark the occasion. Besides these illustration, which make up the majority of the images in the *Padshahnama*, there is one other way the emperor was routinely depicted: hunting. Above I have noted the importances of these hunts as portents of the imperial state. It's therefore not strange that Shah Jahan would chose to represent himself engaged in this activity. There are three illustrations which show the emperor hunting, 30, 33, and 46. The first of these depicts an episode from the emperor's days as a prince and will be discussed below. The other two I will briefly touch upon here.

The first simply entitled 'Shah Jahan hunting' and is one the illustrations which does not conform to the text accompanying it. The text concerns a hunt in 1634 but consider that Shah Jahan was illustrated with a grey beard the miniature likely depicts an event after 1640. Composition wise the most interesting thing to note is probably the stunning vista of the hunting ground. It plays with perspective and colors in ways which are alas beyond me.

The miniature shows Shah Jahan, accompanied by Dara Shikoh, a few nobles, and some huntsmen, preparing to take a shot at a group of watering antelopes. It is early morning with the sun just beginning to rise. The emperor and his entourage would have likely taken up position some time before, so as to lie in wait for the animals to come to the pond. They would have likely been driven there by other huntsmen before dawn to ensure that the emperor and his companions had enough sport. Such hunting techniques had been used since Akbar and proven effective as less involved and dangerous affairs than the lion hunt or the war like hunt practiced by the Mongols.¹⁴¹

As the Mughals settled into India such logistical considerations became more and more important. This becomes even more apparent in the second illustration, number 46 entitled 'Shah Jahan hunting lions at Burhanpur', which shows a lion pair with cubs corralled by the use of a net while the emperor and his sons advance towards them on elephant. The danger of the hunt seem to have been minimized as much as possible, a scene such as depicted on illustration 30 was unlikely to occur here.

This use of the net was a Shah Jahani innovation,¹⁴² but it fitted into the wider development of hunting becoming more sedate. The Mughal dynasty as whole had at this point lost many of the trappings of their nomadic heritage, though they were still glorying in a few others. As they settled themselves in India the daring which at times had characterized Mughal princes came to be seen more and more a needless risk rather than a chance to prove their worth.

Compositionally the illustrations is mostly interesting in how it managed to emulate a number of darbar scene conventions within the hunting scene. The net is used to separate the imperial family from those lesser in rank, much like the railing

¹⁴¹ Ibidem 193.

¹⁴² Ibidem 210.

denotes the inner circle at court in the darbar scenes. Furthermore the elephants are placed according to a number of darbar scene conventions. The emperor is, as always, shown in the middle with a halo. Below him, in the second most prominent place, is the elephant which carries Dara Shikoh. The elephant above in the background, but still fully visible carries Shah Shuja. Lastly Aurangzeb the perennial problem child was partially obstructed from view by Dara Shikoh and his elephant. The importance of this representation of the three princes will become clearer below.

The Imperial Family

The subject of the imperial family is an interesting one in the *Padshahnama*, as it's probably the one which was most influenced by the real life developments. As we will see below the way familial relations were depicted was strongly influenced by real life developments. This is especially true in the case of the imperial princes, most notably Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb. As Shah Jahan's oldest son and favored heir, Dara Shikoh received the lion's share of attention in the official chronicle. However the emperor could not deny the accomplishments of this third son Aurangzeb even as relations between them cooled. In this section I shall examine how the imperial narrative accommodated these deeply personal relationships. For this I shall focus on illustrations 14, 21-22, 23-24, 25-26, 27-28, 29, 30, and 43. The fact that thirteen of the forty-six illustrations in the work have to deal with the imperial family should give an idea about the importance of this issue.

Shah Jahan's treatment of his sons was greatly influenced by his own relationship with his father. Although he had started as the favored son and obvious heir, he had eventually turned against Jahangir when he felt this position threatened. In order to avoid any such feelings and rebelliousness from his sons, Shah Jahan never allowed any ambiguity over whom was to succeed him. However far from securing the succession his parental favoritism mainly worked to inflame relations between the princes.¹⁴³

The problem was exacerbated because the emperor refused to let his eldest son leave the imperial court and win prestige for his accomplishments like he himself had done. This allowed the third son Aurangzeb, to gain renown as the most competent princely commander. Rather than endear himself to the emperor however, these

¹⁴³ Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 39.

successes seem to have strained their relationship. He was always put behind his eldest brother both in rank and in honor. This must have stung Aurangzeb. Although Shah Jahan was unable to ignore the third prince's accomplishments he was careful to always frame them according to Aurangzeb's unfavored position.

Of the thirteen illustrations selected above more than half concern the grand wedding of Dara Shikoh. While such attention to the wedding fitted well with the heir's importance to his father, it can, and should, also be viewed as an homage to Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan's beloved first wife had lain the groundwork for the wedding, but died unexpectedly in 1631 before the actual arrangements could begin. Her death had a profound impact on the emperor. The wedding preparations became the responsibility of the oldest surviving imperial child and Shah Jahan's favorite Jahanara.¹⁴⁴

With regards to composition these seven illustrations are unfortunately amongst the least impressive in the chronicle. 14 and 25-26 all follow the darbar scene conventions as established in earlier miniatures, while the rest mostly depict scenes as they presumably happened with little room for artistic freedom or visual metaphor, beyond the standard conventions of Mughal miniature painting. What is most remarkable about the miniatures, other than their heavy presence in the manuscript, is the grandeur they convey.

Especially in illustrations 14 and 21-22 which deal with the wedding presents for Dara Shikoh, opulence takes center stage. In the first of these, which as noted above fitted in the darbar genre, about half the attending noble are crowded out by the presents. These are represented here by golden plates, vases decorated with jewels, and expensive rugs. Even the jharokha has been decorated with gold details. The double spread of illustrations 21-22, which shows the presents of 14 being delivered, is if possible even more extravagant in depicting the riches. This is probably due to the greater freedom such an action scene allowed the artist as well as the greater space due to working with a double spread.

Although as in other paintings the more important people are stiff and formalized, the illustrations contain enough people to give the scene a sense of life. One can almost hear the clamor as the elephants and musicians made their way to the imperial palace. This verisimilitude was reinforced by the care the artist took in

¹⁴⁴ Beach et al, *The King of the World* 46.

remaining true to reality. The written description of the procession matches with the visual and the grandees mentioned in the writing can be identified. Furthermore the background contains a number of details from the Agra riverfront.

Much the same can be said of illustrations 25-26 and 27-28, they are notable for the accuracy of their depictions, but contain only the most basic elements of the imperial narrative. That is not to say that such elements were absent or that the ceremonies they depict were devoid of symbolism, but that in these cases such things were of secondary importance. Of note is the far more humble wedding procession of Shah Suja in the second pair of illustrations, cementing the extravagance of Dara Shikoh's wedding. Considering the grouping of the images it seems unlikely that this was a coincidence.

The other illustrations that I have chosen to consider here concern Aurangzeb and his place in the imperial narrative of his father. Illustration 29, entitled, 'Prince Awrangzeb facing a maddened elephant named Sudhaka', is an interesting piece for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that it neatly sums up the problems the third prince posed for his father's ambitions. The miniature depicts an episode in which an elephant fight went awry in 1633. This resulted in a maddened elephant storming towards the young prince. Aurangzeb responded in kind leveling his spear as he and his horse confronted the great beast.

The inclusion of the episode in the *Padshahnama* shows that Shah Jahan and the court appreciated the remarkable bravery of the third prince in standing his ground. Especially when his brothers, who were also present, froze in fear. By his actions Aurangzeb had shown himself to possess the most royal attributes. This becomes especially obvious when one considers the following the illustration in which depicts a similar episode of Shah Jahan's youth.

This piece, entitled 'Prince Khurram attacking a lion', depicts an ill fated lion hunt in 1610 during which one of the great beasts managed to attack a favored courtier of Jahangir. In order to save the man Khurram managed to land a blow on the lion with his sword, the moment of which is depicted here. His bravery was noted both by contemporaries and in his father's journal. The moment became a pivotal part of Shah Jahan's imperial narrative as the moment in which the prince showed he was worthy of rule.

The similarities between the events of 1610 and 1633 must have been obvious to not only Shah Jahan, but almost everyone who was familiar with both tales. Considering the threat Aurangzeb eventually became for Dara Shikoh's succession and the clear disfavor with which Shah Jahan treated him this posed a problem. How the emperor chose to address this problem is interesting. Rather than try to deny Aurangzeb's bravery, which would be impossible and probably only reflect badly on him. Shah Jahan attempted to overawe it by placing his own, apparently more impressive, confrontation with a wild animal directly after the episode. By overawing his son's victory he reinforced his authority and his choice of successor.

Besides the placement of the miniature in the *Padshahnama* its composition is also interesting, as it is one of the few pieces in which the emperor is present but not the focus of the piece. Instead he sits on his horse in the upper left corner. As is typical he is depicted not especially active. He does not race to his son's assistance instead commanding his courtiers to do so. This could be another motive chosen to reinforce the emperor's authority. Shah Jahan did not need to face the beast himself. He had the power and right to send others to do so.

The piece that follows in contrast does show the emperor, then still prince Khurram, in action, hacking at the lion who savaged Anup Singh. If we compare the composition of this piece with the previous one there are number of key differences that seem to reinforce my earlier observations. Unlike Aurangzeb in the previous picture prince Khurram is depicted here as already haloed and on par with his father the then emperor Jahangir. Part of this, especially considering some compositional elements such as everyone being the same size regardless of rank, can be explained by the Mughal tradition of painting scenes from the past in the appropriate style. As the lion incident took place during the reign of Jahangir it was painted in the style of that time. This means that a lot of the Shah Jahani conventions regarding rank were ignored.

The other major difference is the fact that Khurram is already haloed. This could also be a stylistic choice. The halo seems to appear and disappear around the future emperor when he is depicted as prince. This occurs seemingly at random, though there is a small prevalence for the halo in situations where Khurram enjoys some measure of authority. Seen in that light the appearance of the halo here is probably

an allusion to the role the episode gained in Shah Jahan's imperial narrative as proof of his suitability as emperor.

The fact that such a halo does not appear in the previous miniature around Aurangzeb is not surprising, merely another sign that Shah Jahan did not regard his third son as a suitable successor. The signs of disfavor reach their apex in the last of the illustrations I have selected here. Like the first illustrations it pertains to a princely wedding, this time of Aurangzeb. As was traditional the emperor chose this moment to honor his son. However there was an important difference between the depiction of this moment and the others discussed above.

Illustration 43 shows prince Aurangzeb appearing before his father the emperor and moving towards the jharoka. This is a stark difference with the other times the imperial princes are shown at court. Even in this picture we can see Dara Shikoh and Shah Shuja standing to the left of the emperor on the same level as him. That Aurangzeb was depicted here as a supplicant or courtier of the emperor, and not even a high one at that considering that he stands outside the railing which separated the high nobles from the others, can have been nothing else but a deliberate snub against the prince.

Much like the surrender of the Rana of Mewar, which has been discussed above, there seems to be some discrepancy between the visual and textual records. In both the *Padshahama* and *Shah Jahan Nama* text, no mention is made of the difficulty posed by the third prince. Instead the text merely mentions that Shah Jahan "[embraced Aurangzeb] with the warmest affections, [showering] numerous tokens of his love and tender regard on him."¹⁴⁵ As with the earlier illustrations this seems to be an example how some things which had to be muffled in the textual sources for the sake of the imperial narrative were made more explicit in the visual sources.

In conclusion the *Padshahnama* offers an interesting, and sometimes conflicting, image of the imperial family. While it took care to present the family as unified and at the height of splendor and wealth, it could not totally ignore some of the rumblings that it. Most importantly of course was the problem posed by the succession. As Aurangzeb's political prominence grew through his successes in subduing both the Deccan and other assignments Shah Jahan's insistence on Dara Shikoh as his heir became more and more untenable. Though the *Padshahnama* only covers the first

¹⁴⁵ Begley and Desai (eds.), *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* 206.

third of Shah Jahan three decades of rule these tensions, which would exploded in open warfare by 1657, were already visible.

The Taj Mahal

Miniatures such as those discussed above were not the only way however in which the imperial narrative was expressed. If the narrative was to be accepted by the populace. If it was to become common knowledge. It had to be heard by as many people as possible, not only those who would read the official chronicles. There were many different ways it could and was expressed. Shah Jahan chose to focus primarily on architecture. This choice of medium was understandable as it fitted the message well. Much like the naturalistic projects of his father, building projects were ways for the emperor to take possession of a land and to make it bend to his will. What better way to express the narrative which named him King of the World.

However Shah Jahan went even further than that. Much like the court rituals that were formalized during his rule, he used his architecture to assert the reality of the imperial narrative. By adhering to a number of principles the buildings were marked as spaces in which only the imperial narrative could be enacted. In this way it was imposed on the real world. Even buildings that served no practical political function were used in such a manner.

This brings us to the subject of this last section: the Taj Mahal. Of the numerous buildings raised by the fifth Mughal emperor the Taj is widely recognized as the greatest and rightly so. Construction of the grand grave complex began in 1632, a year after Shah Jahan's beloved first wife Mumtaz Mahal died. The project took nearly twenty years to complete and when it was finished it became an icon not only to the deceased but of the power and wealth of the Mughal dynasty. Despite this most people are ignorant of the larger function the complex fulfilled as an assertion of the imperial narrative of Shah Jahan. By analyzing the parts of the complex that still stand today, as well as the complex as a whole, I will attempt to show what exactly the grand building was.

The Complex

Before we analyze the Taj as an expression of Shah Jahan's imperial narrative it would be useful to consider the complex's structure. For this I will lean heavily on the work of Ebba Koch, who has studied the building intensively as well as other

expression of Mughal Art. She has argued for the importance of seeing the Taj not just as it has survived the past centuries, but also the way it originally stood namely as a riverfront garden and an integral part of the city. The importance of gardens to the Mughals has been explained in a previous section. The riverfront garden was a step away from earlier Timurid gardens which were built around a center. In time the banks of the Yamuna river which flows through Agra became nearly exclusively populated with such gardens.¹⁴⁶

The oldest of these, which still survives to this day was built, or at the very least restored, during the reign of Jahangir by his wife and Shah Jahan's nemesis Nur Jahan. The building shows that the formal arrangement of the riverfront garden was not yet established and would not be until the construction of the Taj Mahal itself. Earlier designs were based on the gardens built by Babur and earlier Timurids. These were known as *chahar bagh*. The design consisted of a square divided into four parts by axial pathways, with each part further divided into eight smaller squares. At the center of the garden stood a building, such as a pavilion or tomb but also on occasion a pool. This central building had a highly charged symbolic meaning.¹⁴⁷

From this form the Mughals developed the riverfront garden for the needs of life on the Indo-Gangetic plain. It was an adoption of an earlier development from Kabul and Afghanistan. These gardens were no longer square but rectangular in shape and build on the slope of mountains in a number of terraces. They made use of the springs and lively streams that were plentiful in the mountains there. On the Indo-Gangetic plain however the main source of water and refreshment was a broad and slow river. Thus it was here that the garden focused on. The rectangular shape of the Afghani terraced garden was maintained, although the main building was no longer placed in the center but near the river on a large oblong platform. In this way it could take advantage of the refreshments offered by the waterfront. Besides the main building, on the corners of the complex, would be towers. The garden itself would be on the other side of the main building stretching away from the river.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* 29-31.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem 24.

¹⁴⁸ Idem.

There were also a number of variations on this standard formation which marked the Taj Mahal as something special. Like the grand tomb of Humayun, the basic formation was multiplied though in this case only twice. This duplication of the basic design served a number of goals. First it offered a simple way to enlarge the design according to the central principles of Shah Jahani architecture. The most important and recurring of these was a bilateral symmetry along a central axis on which the most important features of the structure were placed. These were then flanked by two identical elements in a triadic division. In order to maintain the general shape of the riverfront garden a length wise duplication was the only possibility.¹⁴⁹

Thus the Taj can be divided into four major sections, from north to south they are: the riverfront terrace on which stands the actual tomb; the garden; the *Jilaukhana* or forecourt; and the Bazaar which is today mostly swallowed up by the city.¹⁵⁰ Taken together the sections can be read as narrative detailing Mumtaz's, or anyone's, journey through life to paradise.¹⁵¹ Here the first two sections, which together form one blueprint of a riverfront garden, represent heaven or paradise, while the last two, which form the second riverfront garden, represent the mortal realm. Considering the place of the garden in the Mughal worldview and the imperial narrative of Shah Jahan, such a reading becomes not only possible but indeed likely.

Consider the fact that for the Mughals, as for the Timurids the garden was the primary living space. Gardens were how the Mughals perceived and shaped the world. Thus the use of garden models to represent both this world and the next was not strange to them. It was how they conceived either. Other evidence of this is the fact that the forecourt buildings, which separated the mortal world from paradise, were given imperial trappings meant to evoke the imperial palace in Agra.¹⁵² This fitted well into the Shah Jahan's imperial narrative. His use of religious authority has been discussed above. The formation of the Taj Mahal complex merely gave physical expression to these claims. The connection between gate and palace was not only reinforced through architectural touches, but also with a number of practices. The south side of the forecourts northern wall was a place for alms to be

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem 103-105.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem 112.

¹⁵¹ See Appendix 2: Plan of the Taj Mahal.

¹⁵² Ibidem 118.

distributed on Shah Jahan's behalf during the rainy seasons. Like before here too decorations were used to evoke the imperial palace.¹⁵³

Thus it is my contention that the Taj Mahal not only represented the final resting place of Mumtaz Mahal, but was also a grand expression of the imperial narrative. Within the complex's walls, especially once one stepped through the forecourt, you were no longer in the normal world. Rather you were inside the imperial narrative. Through architecture, planning and art, Shah Jahan sought to transform the space inside the Taj Mahal. To form it to his own vision. In short he sought to assert his reality as his forefathers had done. How he did so will be discussed below.

The Jilaukhana

To this day the Taj Mahal is generally approached from the south side, through the bazaar to the Jilaukhana, or forecourt, to the garden and mausoleum. If we are to read the complex in the way it was intended it is advisable we do the same. However the bazaar is today swallowed up by the city and near impossible to discern, although its outline can still be seen on satellite photo's. A true analysis of the bazaar is thus sadly impossible and we therefore move on directly to the forecourt. This was the place where visitors to the Taj would dismount from their horses or elephants. Such a place had become important in the increasingly formalized court rituals of Shah Jahan, which held that all who approached the emperor had to do so on foot. Thus forecourts such as this were an innovation of Shah Jahani architecture.¹⁵⁴

At the moment however the building itself is of greater interest than its function. We should take a closer look at what the forecourt represented, the imperial palace. This becomes clear when one only looks at the material used in the construction of the main gate towards the garden and the court's northern wall: red sandstone. It has been noted before that the use of red was an imperial prerogative, allowed only to the emperor and any who he deemed worthy of the honor. Not even princes were allowed to have red accommodations unless they were given dispensation.

And there were other architectural touches which were used to bind the forecourt to the imperial palace. The *Khawasspurass*, where the tomb's attendants lived, consisted of two smaller courtyards in the north east and west of the forecourt. They

¹⁵³ Ibidem 134-135.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem 116.

were build according to the dimensions of the wings of Shah Jahan's palace, especially the *banana*, or women's quarters. There is also the use of the baluster columns which were an important expression of the Shah Jahani world order and were used in other imperial building projects. The Jilaukhana was further tied to the imperial palace by the inclusion of two subsidiary tombs for two wives of Shah Jahan.¹⁵⁵ There are no names recorded on these tombs as it had been tradition since Akbar's time to disguise the identities of imperial wives in order to protect their honor as well as the dignity and sanctuary of the palace's women quarters.¹⁵⁶

The grandest and most important structure of the forecourt is the Great Gate (*darwaza-i ruaza*) which offers entrance to the garden beyond. It offers an introduction to the imperial architecture used beyond that point. Like the rest of the buildings it is build from red sandstone, though its facade also includes white marble elements. Here we see the combination of imperial and religious authority. The importance of red as an imperial color has already been noticed. White had a similar meaning in Hindu traditions where it was reserved for the buildings of Brahmins. The color had been appropriated by the Mughal imperial idiom who continued to use it to express their spiritual power.¹⁵⁷ This use of white would be repeated in the main building itself.

The Garden

After passing through the great gate of the Jilaukhana, a visitor would enter the gardens. Which was considered the heart and soul of the complex. One description in Shah Jahan's palace in Delhi stated that it was „to the buildings what the soul is to the body, and the lamp to an assembly.”¹⁵⁸ As with all Mughal gardens it was strictly organized according to Shah Jahan's principles of architecture. It was divided into four large squares by two cross axial pathways which led to a central pool. Through the middle of these pathways flowed a shallow canal (*nahr*), which contained a line

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem 118-120.

¹⁵⁶ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* 129.

¹⁵⁷ Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* 215.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem 137.

of fountains. The canal was framed by a narrow sandstone path and ornamental borders with geometrical patterns, before transitioning to the main walkways.¹⁵⁹

The four squares were further divided by smaller walkways in sixteen sub quadrants. Such divisions fitted well into the Mughal garden formation and its duplications scheme as seen in the complex's overall plan. It was in the sub quadrants that the actual flowers were planted, although it is no longer possible to know exactly what was original planted there. The sources, both European and Mughal, are remarkably silent on this score.¹⁶⁰

I think this silence is interesting for it reveals much of how the Mughals conceived of paradise. They found its organization more important than earthly beauty. We have seen above how Shah Jahan made use of floral imagery in expressing his imperial narrative. This makes the silence of his writers on the flowers in the grandest garden he ever put down seem all the stranger. However as was discussed above the floral images he made us of were not limited to the real thing, but full of invention. The Mughals were not blind to earthly beauty, far from it, but it was organization and order which they found truly divine. This was not only the case when it came to structures or objects, but for the entire Mughal world view. Bringing order, their order, to the world was the dynasty's grand mission and Shah Jahan had done his best to succeed here in the ultimate representation of paradise.

The Mausoleum

The Mausoleum was off course the central building of the complex, its climax as it were. Before I continue with the analysis of the building however I shall briefly describe the riverfront terraces on which it stands. They are the most ambitious of their type in Mughal history. They work to elevate the mausoleum above the earth. Color is again used to establish a hierarchy, with the lower terrace build from red sand stone as most of the buildings in the complex with white decorations. The second platform however is made from the same white marble as the mausoleum itself.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Idem.

¹⁶⁰ Ibidem 138.

¹⁶¹ Ibidem 144-148.

Besides the color's significance as a symbol for religious authority it also helped give the mausoleum an otherworldly appearance. The white marble is luminous and seems to change color throughout the day. For this reason it has been likened to a cloud by Mughal poets; one of whom, named Kalim, wrote:

It is a [piece of] heaven of the colour of dawn's bright face,
Because from top to bottom and inside out is of marble

Nay, not marble: because of its translucent color (*abu-u-rang*)
The eye can mistake it for a cloud.¹⁶²

This noticeable changing of the mausoleum's appearance during the day helped off course in the presentation of the mausoleum as an otherworldly structure. For this was ultimately how the Taj Mahal, and especially the mausoleum, were to be seen: as Mumtaz's heavenly resting place brought to earth. This was emphasized not only through the color of the mausoleum, but also its construction.

On the outside the building the flowery decorations continue. Besides these there are also large bands of *sulus* script which frame the mausoleum's monumental porches. The texts themselves are passages of the Quran referencing to the End of Days and the Last Judgement, fitting the building's eschatological program.¹⁶³

The mausoleum further shares the marble terrace with four minarets, which stand independent from the main building on the terrace's corners. These were at the time fairly a new addition to Mughal architecture.¹⁶⁴ Their inclusion might be seen as a result of the fifth emperor's more orthodox religious leanings. Off course they also helped to increase the sacrality of the building, being an identifying marker of the traditional Islamic place of worship. Yet it is telling that the minarets are placed not beside the mosque which stands to the mausoleum's side, but at the higher level of the tomb.

The two side buildings, the mosque and an assembly hall, are the last elements of the complex's final section. Unlike the minarets they do not share the tomb's white

¹⁶² Kalim, *Padshahnama*, fol. 164a, margin, trans. E. Koch; cf. trans. Begley and Desai 1989, p. 82.

¹⁶³ Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* 156-158.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibidem* 180.

marble terrace, resting instead on the lower, larger red one. This alone speaks volume about their relative importance in the complex and its narrative. Between the two the mosque is clearly of greater importance as it sets the tone. The assembly hall, or *mihman khana*, was most likely merely included to serve as a counterpoint to the mosque and preserve the complex's symmetry. At the same time it must be said that neither building was left unfinished. Each is completed according to the principles of Shah Jahani architecture, organized in a sub-tripartite system.¹⁶⁵

Still however the buildings must bow to the needs of the larger complex. So it is that despite the mosque's clear religious function it is mainly constructed of the red sandstone with only the domes and some of the facade made of white marble. In its floor plan the mosque follows the example of the standard type established by the Delhi sultanate which the Mughals continued to use. Both buildings have three white domes. This was an architectural feature that had traditionally been reserved for mosques in Islamic architecture. Their inclusion in several tombs, including that of Humayun and the Taj Mahal, had been a source of controversy. It was a symbol of heaven and ostentation. It was exactly this ambivalence which made it attractive to several of the Mughal emperors.¹⁶⁶ Its inclusion in the Taj Mahal is another example of Shah Jahan preferring to augment the spiritual power of himself and his family over traditional religious sentiment.

The Tomb Chambers

Returning to the mausoleum we come to both the physical and symbolic endpoint of the structure and its narrative: the tomb chamber. Like the mausoleum had been the endpoint for the outside complex, the tomb chamber was the climax of the mausoleum. It stands as a perfect octagon, its eight sides as always referring to the eight levels of paradise. The floor is covered in the geometrical designs. The walls are covered with Qur'anic verses again referencing the Last Judgement and paradise. Flower, arranged in a triadic formation with one center flower flanked by two identical other flowers don the walls. Unlike the floral decorations on the outside of the building these stand in vases.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Ibidem 181-182.

¹⁶⁶ Ibidem 85.

¹⁶⁷ Ibidem 166.

Their placement in the tomb chamber, the cumulative endpoint of the complex, tells us that these were more highly valued than their single cousins on the outside of the building. Like much of the floral imagery of the Mughals the vases too were adaptations from European examples. It must perhaps be stressed at this point that the continued use of European art forms by the Mughals was in no way a reflection of their appreciation of Europe itself. Their continued use was simply the pragmatic adoption of imagery that fitted the Mughals' imperial narrative well. A vase filled with flowers had a long history there. Furthermore it also appealed to the Mughals Indian subjects, to whom the vases bore a resemblance to the pot with overflowing plants, *purna-ghata*, an ancient symbol of prosperity and well-being much like the European cornucopia.¹⁶⁸

In the center of the room stand the two cenotaphs, as the actual bodies of empress and emperor are laid down in the basement. From the composition it is clear that Shah Jahan was interned more than thirty years after his wife. Where Mumtaz's cenotaph stands in the absolute center of the chamber, his sits awkwardly besides her disrupting the floor patterns. The screen surrounding the two cenotaphs is octantal, a smaller version of the room itself and another example of multiplication to increase the power of a symbol.¹⁶⁹

Floral imagery dominates again both on the screen and on the cenotaphs. Unlike other examples however these were not hewn out, but rather inlaid with semi-precious stones. This technique known as *pietre dure* was like the floral imagery itself a European technique adopted by the Mughals who called it *parchin kari*. Special attention was paid to these decorations and the everlasting images were considered superior to their counterparts in nature.

...

Those red and yellow flowers that dispel the heart's grief
are entirely [made] of carnelian ('*aqiq*) and amber (*kahruba*).

When of such stones the surface of a tomb is made
the deceased will [want to] clasp the flower pictures

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem 219.

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem 167.

to her heart.¹⁷⁰

...

These lines by the poet Kalim show not only the objective of the floral images, to emulate paradise, but also show why such decorations were considered better than the real thing. Unlike normal flowers which fade and die these images, who make up with color what they lack in smell, are eternal. The capturing of flowers in the semi-precious stone was a way for the images and thus their observers to be brought closer to paradise. After all paradise was unending, so any depiction or symbol that was as well was that much closer to the ideal.

There is one major difference between the cenotaphs. Where the cenotaph of Mumtaz is decorated with a number of Qur'anic verses these are missing from Shah Jahan's. The only text instead is an epitaph which reads: „This is the sacred grave of his Most Exalted Majesty, Dweller in Paradise, Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction, Shah Jahan Padshah; may it ever be fragrant! The year 1076 [AD 1666].”¹⁷¹ The lack of holy text adorning the public resting place of the fifth Mughal emperor may be a deliberate move by his son and successor Aurangzeb.

The succession struggle which brought Shah Jahan's third son to the throne has been noted for its viscousness. As Aurangzeb's own imperial narrative held his rebellion necessary in order to safeguard the religious orthodoxy of the empire from his brother Dara Shikoh and, to a lesser degree, Shah Jahan himself; he might have felt it unwise to allow his father's public grave to give any indication of religious orthodoxy. It is possible that for much the same reason, the epitaph makes no mention of Shah Jahan's ghazi title. Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction was safe to be included because for all of its charisma, it remained an originally heathen title whose inclusion did not go against Aurangzeb's own imperial narrative.

It is even more telling that the title is included in the epitaph on the second cenotaph which covers the emperor actual grave. This second cenotaph sits in a lower tomb chamber accessible from the main tomb chamber. It is similar to the

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem 170.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem 171.

cenotaph in the main chamber, although slightly less decorated. Here Shah Jahan's epitaph is more elaborate than the one on the public cenotaph above. It reads:

This is the illuminated grave and sacred resting place of the emperor, dignified as Rizwan, residing in Eternity, His Majesty, heaven his abode in [the celestial realm of] Illiyun, Dweller in Paradise (*Firdaus Ashiyani*) [posthumous title of Shah Jahan], the Second Sahib-i Qiran, Shah Jahan, Padshah Ghazi [Warrior for the Faith]; may it be sanctified and may Paradise become his abode. He travelled from this world to the banquet hall of eternity on the night of the twenty-sixth of the month of Rajab, in the year one thousand and seventy-six Hijiry [31 January AD 1666].¹⁷²

¹⁷² Ibidem 174-175.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to examine the development of the Mughal imperial narrative during the reign of its fifth emperor Shah Jahan. I wanted to pay special attention to how much the emperor was indeed the author of the imperial narrative and how practical political circumstance and developments influenced the imperial narrative. In order to do so the thesis began by sketching out the challenges the Mughals had to face when they expanded their influence over the subcontinent. Central to these were the varied climates and ecologies of India. These different environments meant that roughly two sorts of societies developed. In the drier areas there lived nomadic tribes of pastoralists. While in the those areas influenced by the monsoon more settled and hierarchal sedentary societies grew. In order to maintain control over their lands the Mughals had to find a way to make themselves appealing to both groups, who often had contrary needs and desires.

In this case the Mughal were lucky as they inherited the varied and deeply pragmatic narrative of rule from their Timurid forefathers. They, especially Akbar, managed to build on this narrative to create an imperial system in which the emperor was placed at the absolute center, both in practice and symbolically. They did so by making use of the Timurid and Indian requirements that a ruler was accessible and visible to his people. In taking control of the avenues of approach, Akbar managed to elevate his position above his nobles and make it virtually unassailable. The third emperor did this by emphasizing his spiritual power and appropriating religious authority. Again this was an adaption of earlier practices. Temür had already discovered the effectiveness of religious and spiritual charisma in inspiring the loyalty of a diverse group of followers. Akbar happily made use of the warlord's grand claims regarding their bloodline as well as Indian religious practices which had already been appropriated by indigenous secular rulers.

For the most part however the imperial narrative as it evolved under Akbar was still a personal affair. Akbar, not necessarily the position of emperor, was its focus. It were his personal qualities which asserted the reality of the narrative. After his son ascended to the throne under the regnal name Jahangir this was no longer viable. Though not as indolent and weak a ruler as generally supposed the fourth Mughal

emperor still missed many of the qualities that had allowed his father to transform the Mughal state to an empire. For this reason the position of the emperor as supreme sovereign of not only the physical but also the spiritual world was emphasized. This narrative was asserted not only through practices such as the quantification of the natural world, but also through the arts such as painting and to a smaller extent architecture.

This material assertion of the imperial narrative was not an entirely new development. Indeed Akbar's ill fated capital Fatehpur Sikri was perhaps the most ambitious of such projects, but it received new emphasis in Jahangir's reign and became the primary way in which the imperial narrative continued to evolve. This development was sparked in part by the growing influx of European art which was well received for its realistic depictions of plant and animal life. The new art style was appropriated by the imperial narrative where it was used to render the spiritual world. The marked differences between the new style and traditional Mughal techniques clearly marked the spirits as otherworldly.

In both Akbar's and Jahangir's case the development of the imperial narrative was clearly marked by the emperors' experiences and personalities. Akbar who had had to contend with a number of powerful nobles during the early parts of his reign and had seen his own father deposed, became focused on making the emperor's position unassailable. He did so by emphasizing his impressive intellect and near endless energy. This can be seen for instance in the miniatures of his reign where the emperor is always depicted as an active person. Jahangir, in contrast, mostly had to contend with the narrative as left to him by his father and their contentious relationship during the later years of Akbar's reign. A more sedate personality as well as an abiding interest in nature led him to position himself as Akbar's heir and focus on his sovereignty over both the physical and spiritual world.

In much the same way the early struggles of Shah Jahan, as prince Khurram, shaped the development of the imperial narrative. Shah Jahan was a reserved figure who lacked his grandfather's ability to sweep others with him or his father's geniality. Accordingly the emperor focused much more on formal protocol and etiquette. This helped to limit the power of favorites and other persons close to the emperor. In this way he avoided the trap that had ensnared both Akbar, in his younger years, and Jahangir, in later life, where a favorite gathered so much authority that they

effectively held the reigns of government. Considering that one such favorite, Jahangir's first wife Nur Jahan, had become Shah Jahan's chief obstacle on his path to the imperial throne such caution was not unreasonable.

For perhaps much the same reasons Shah Jahan was extremely involved in the projection and dispersal of his imperial image. Apparently aware that he missed some of the social graces of his predecessors he became deeply involved with the official histories of his reign at least in his first ten years of rule. This interest in history was not a new development. Babur himself had written his memoirs, as had Shah Jahan's father who seems to have thought of them as an instruction to rule. The works of Akbar's court historian and chief ideologue Abu Faz'l had formed the basis for his imperial narrative. As with the other elements of his narrative of rule Shah Jahan seems to have avoided a too personal a touch. For this reason he followed his grandfather's lead in appointing a court historian who was responsible for the chronicle of the reign.

These chronicles were as much a visual record as they were a textual one. In fact as we have seen the visuals, in the form of miniatures, were often more frank than the text which was coaxed in the poetic language that had been popularized by Abu Faz'l. In this language, which presupposed the natural sovereignty of Shah Jahan over the world, many of the subtleties and realities of politics were obscured. This tension becomes particularly clear in the depiction of prince Aurangzeb. Although the textual sources were always careful to present the imperial family in harmony, the miniatures made the unfavored position of the emperor's third son clear. These discrepancies illustrate the tensions that existed between the imperial narrative, in which Shah Jahan was possessed of the ultimate justice as the supreme sovereign, and the political reality of a ruling father wary of the ambitions of his younger but very capable son.

What then were the most striking elements of Shah Jahan's imperial narrative? It has often been maintained that under him the Mughal empire took the first steps towards Islamic orthodoxy. To what an extent this is true is hard to judge. It can safely be said that the fifth emperor was more orthodox in his religious beliefs than his two immediate predecessors. Akbar had had little use of the religious establishment in his quest to secure the emperor's position. Indeed as a rival power group he took steps to limit their influence. Jahangir meanwhile was remarkably

irreligious, perhaps out of an unwillingness to be seen favoring one religious group above others. However it must be said that this orthodoxy had little impact on the functioning of either the empire or the narrative. Shah Jahan saw no contradiction between his supreme power both spiritual and secular and Islam.

This becomes clear when one looks at the depictions of mullahs in Shah Jahan's allegorical portraits where he is positioned together with a globe. Those portraits provided a short hand of the imperial narrative. The introduction of the mullah's into the Orphic scene, which formed a crucial part of these miniatures, was a new development of Shah Jahan's reign. These scenes were meant to illustrate the peace which was made possible through the emperor's exalted sense of justice. While the religious scholars' inclusion meant a recognition that they had been previously denied, they were still depicted as passive observers and admirers of the emperor's accomplishment. Religious orthodoxy remained firmly under the thumb of the imperial narrative.

This was further reinforced in other representations of Shah Jahan's sovereignty. As noted above his right to rule was presented as a result of his sense of justice which would assure peace and harmony throughout the land. In the *Padshahnama* however the opening pages offer another explanation as they open with a double spread in which Temür hands Shah Jahan a crown, symbolizing his right to rule. Considering the emperor's close involvement with the chronicle it is telling that he chose these images. It is in some ways a throwback to Akbar who considered his divine lineage the sole source of his right to rule. Of course the two explanations were not mutually exclusive. Akbar himself explained his powers, which included an infallible sense of justice, as a result of his exalted lineage. Although Shah Jahan makes no explicit mention of this connection it is unlikely that he saw the two as separate. He had the right to rule because of his supreme sense of justice, which was handed down to him by his forefathers.

I have spoken here mostly of the continuities within the imperial narrative, but a development also implies changes. The question must then be asked how much did the imperial narrative really change during Shah Jahan's reign. Above I addressed the purported increase in orthodoxy which amounted to little more than window dressing. Other changes were much the same. The fact was that because Shah

Jahan ruled over a relatively stable time period there was little need to change the imperial narrative. Both it and the empire it supported, functioned extremely well.

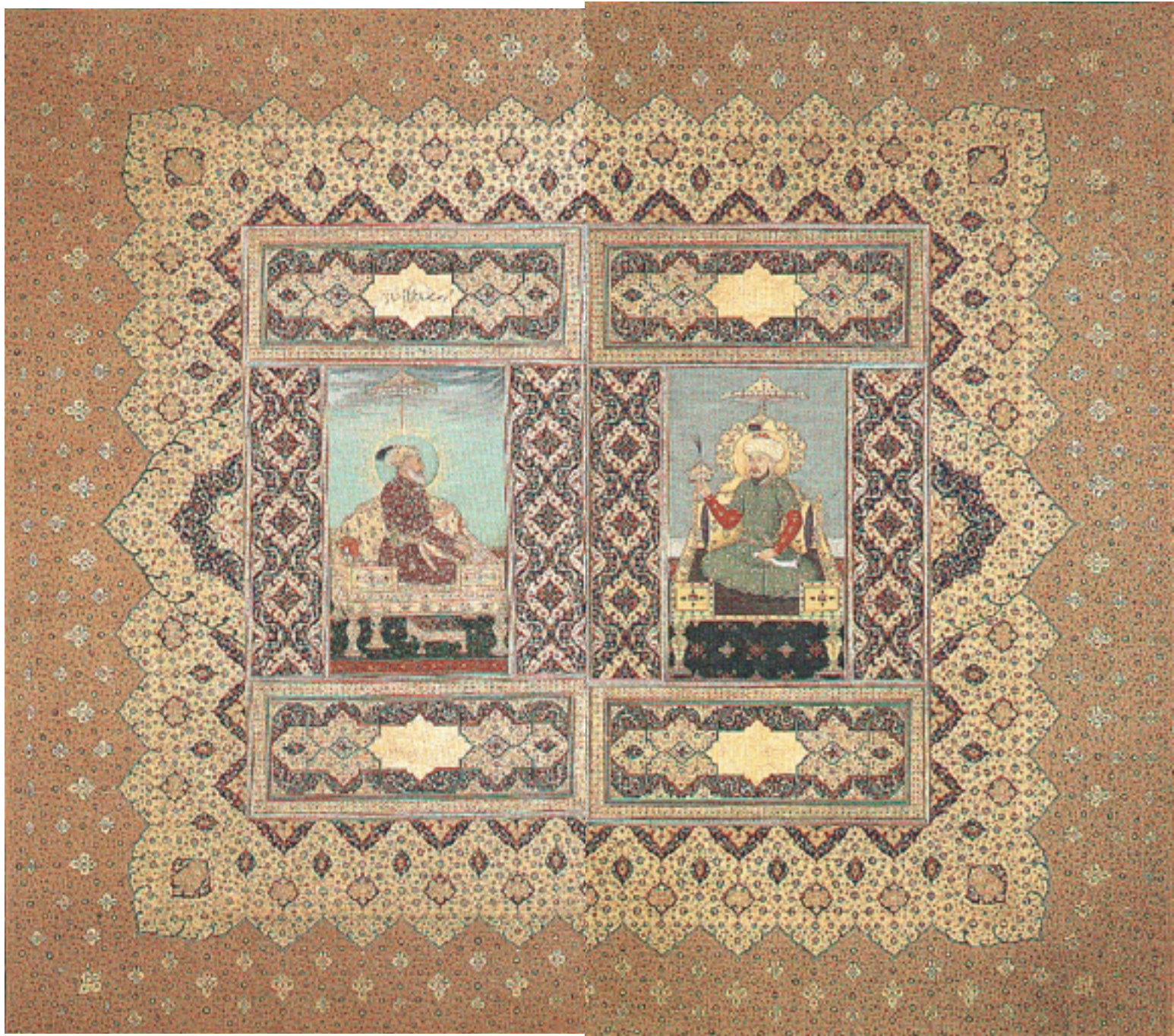
What it did do during the fifth emperor's reign was grow. Of the six great Mughals Shah Jahan was perhaps the blandest, with neither the great foibles or strengths that distinguished some of his kinsmen. In this sense he brought little to the imperial narrative, no great advantages that were to be exalted nor weaknesses to be obscured. Because of this the emperor and his cohorts could focus on spreading and imposing the imperial narrative throughout the empire. He could truly begin asserting the narrative as reality. This, as much as his character, was likely a reason for the growing formalization of the court. Shah Jahan sought to give real meaning to his regnal name by shaping the empire to the imperial narrative. Even his stubborn favoritism regarding his sons can be seen in this light and showcases the problems with such an approach to statecraft.

Another example of this assertion of the imperial narrative as reality can be found in the Taj Mahal. As the epitome of Shah Jahani architecture it sought to create a space in which the imperial narrative was the only possible reality. By choosing a tomb for this he showed that no space was beyond the scope of the narrative. Furthermore the building stood with one foot in this world and with the other in the next. Not only because it was a tomb, but also because it was made to resemble the final heavenly resting place of Mumtaz Mahal through architecture. By thus making the tomb one of the greatest expressions of his imperial narrative Shah Jahan expanded his sovereignty over both worlds.

This then was the greatest achievement of Shah Jahan in regards to the Mughal imperial narrative. Under him it became larger and more assertive so that those places which fell directly under the emperor's gaze, the court and Taj Mahal became spaces in which the imperial narrative shaped reality. However this growth of also meant that any tensions between it and the political reality of the empire became greater. An example of this can be seen with the treatment of the imperial princes in the *Padshahnama* and would become the reason for the eventual collapse of much of the imperial system during the latter days of Aurangzeb's reign. As Shah Jahan's successor he unsuccessfully tried to realize the Mughal rhetoric of universal sovereignty. In doing so the last Great Mughal ignored the practical limits of his empire leading to its eventual collapse.

Appendix 1: Temür and Shah Jahan

Illustration 3 & 4 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 2: The submission of Rana Amar Singh of Mewar to Prince Khurram

Illustrations 6 & 7 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 3: Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Deccan

Illustrations 8 & 9 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 4: Shah Jahan receives his three eldest sons and Asaf Khan during his accession ceremonies

Illustrations 10 & 11 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 5: Prince Khurram attacking a lion

Illustration 30 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 6: Shah Jahan Hunting

Illustration 33 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 7: Shah Jahan hunting lions at Burhanpur

Illustration 46 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 8: The presentation of Prince Dara-Shikoh's wedding gifts



Illustration 14 of the *Padshahnama*

Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 9: The delivery of presents for Prince Dara-Shikoh's wedding

Illustrations 21 & 22 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 10: The wedding procession of Prince Dara-Shikoh

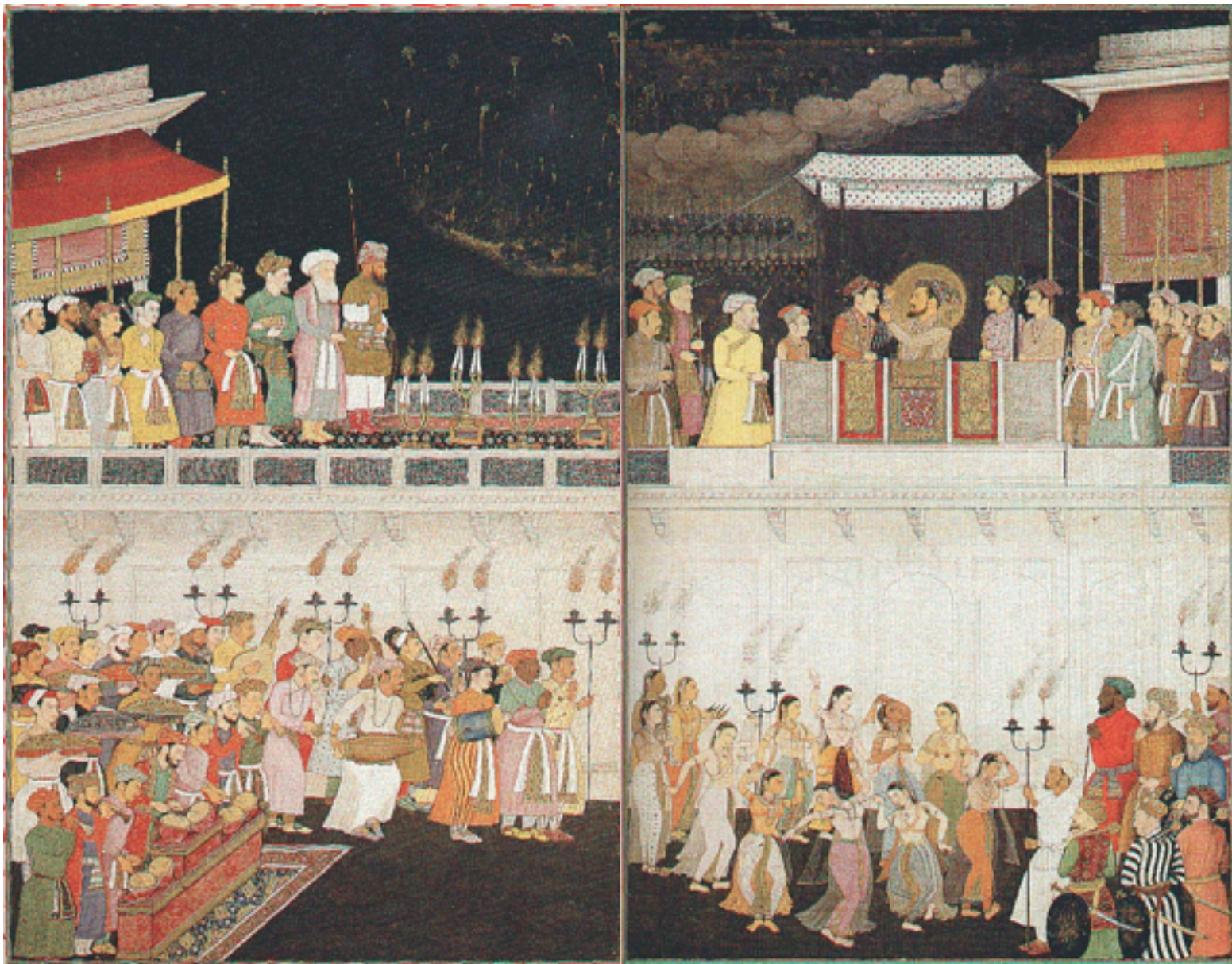
Illustrations 23 & 24 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 11: Shah Jahan honoring Prince Dara-Shikoh at his wedding

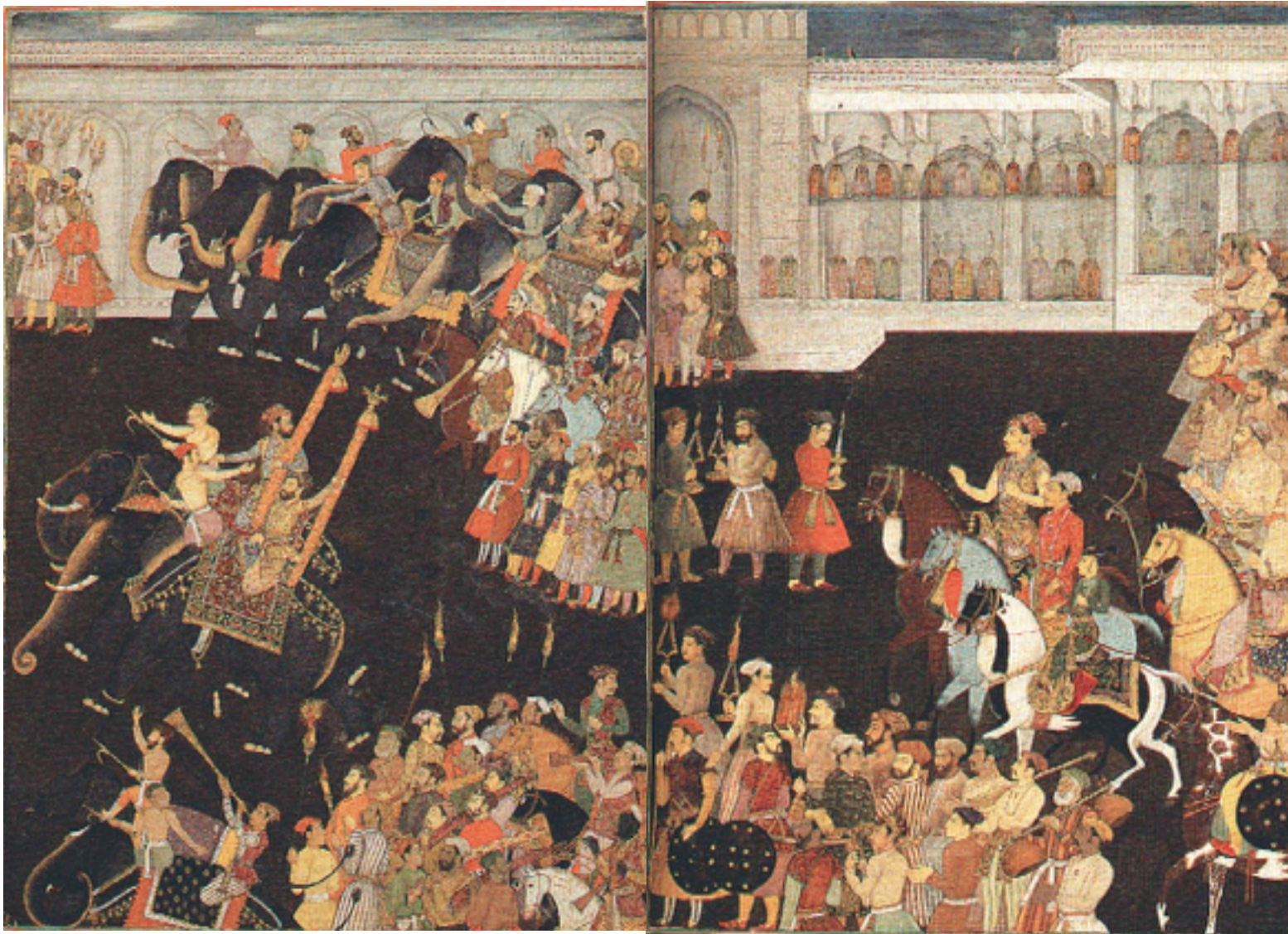
Illustrations 25 & 26 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 12: The wedding procession of Prince Shah-Shuja'

Illustrations 27 & 28 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 13: Prince Awrangzeb facing a maddened elephant named Sudhakar

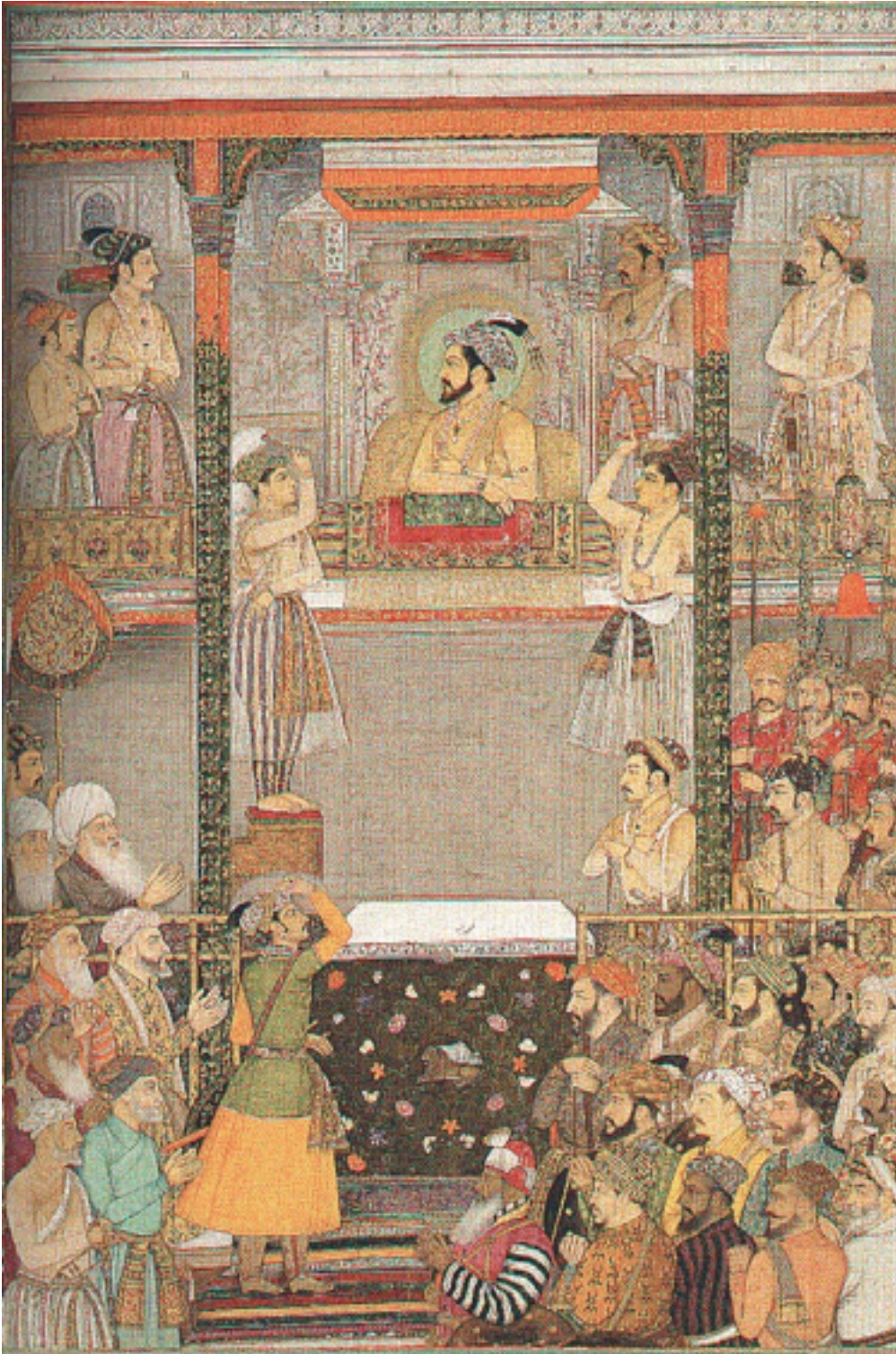


Illustration 29 of the *Padshahnama*

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prince_Aurangzeb_%28Aurangzeb_%29_facing_a_maddened_elephant_named_Sudhakar_%287_June_1633%29.jpg?uselang=nl

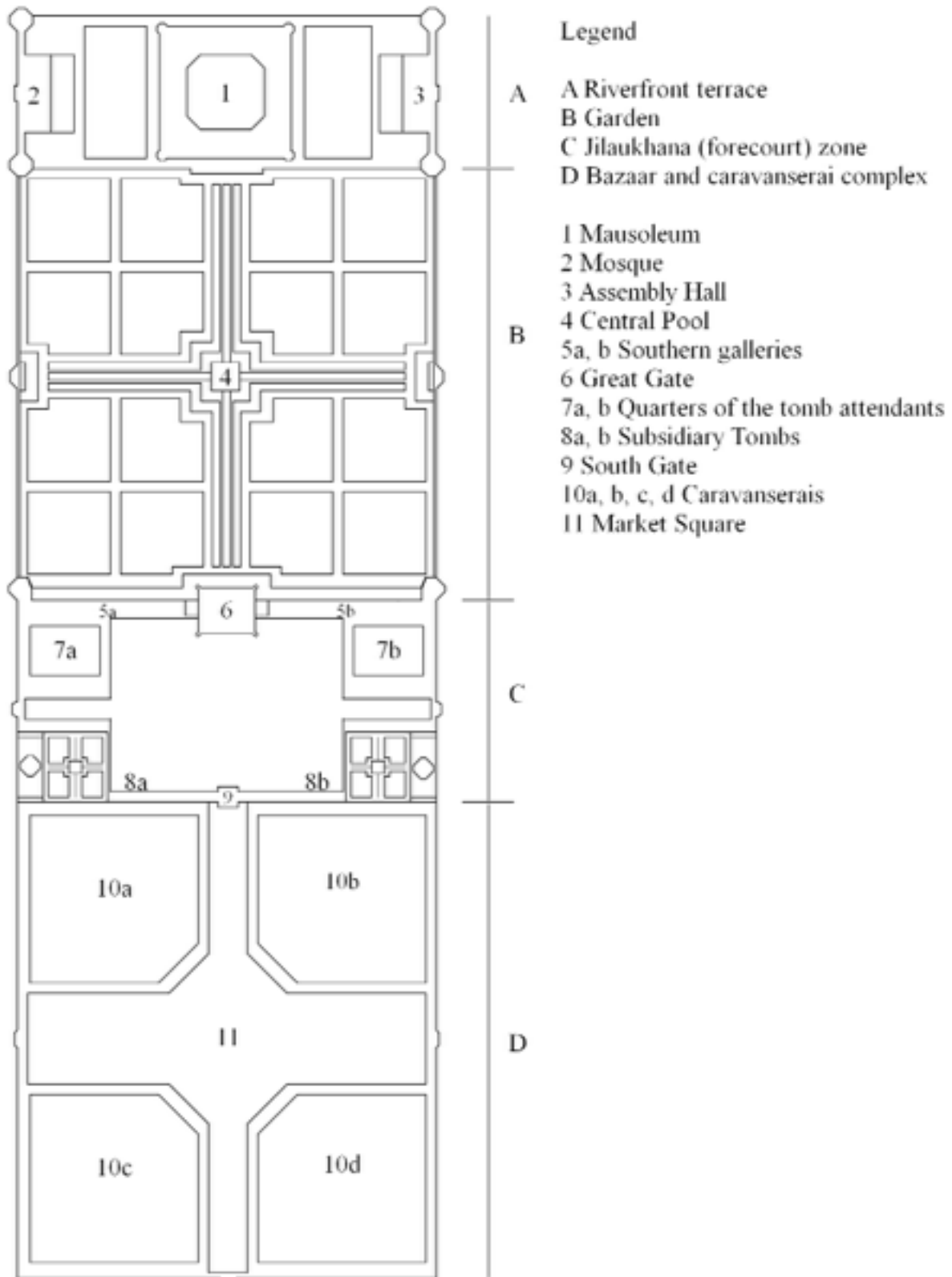
Appendix 14: Shah Jahan honoring the Prince Awrangzeb at Agra before his wedding

Illustration 45 of the *Padshahnama*



Source: <http://www.history.upenn.edu/coursepages/hist188/list.html>

Appendix 15: Plan of the Taj Mahal



Based on plans found in Ebba Koch's *The Complete Taj Mahal* on page 112

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