

# The Walrus and the Emperor: Materials, Miracles, and Memory in the Early Modern Persian Cosmopolis

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In 1619 CE, the Mughal Emperor Nur al-Din Muhammad Salim (1569-1627), known by his regnal title Jahangir,<sup>1</sup> received a peculiar gift.<sup>2</sup> As he recorded in his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, his brother had sent him a dagger with a hilt fashioned from a “fish’s tooth.”<sup>3</sup> This brother was not Jahangir’s biological sibling, but was instead Shah Abbas (1571-1629), ruler of the neighboring Persian Safavid Empire. A term of diplomatic endearment, “brother” also highlighted Abbas’s perceived junior status as younger ruler. Prior to this, Jahangir had commissioned allegorical paintings depicting Abbas standing meekly on a lamb while the larger Jahangir embraced him magnanimously from a point of prominence atop a lion.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the two men--and their respective animals--were painted as giants hovering over the globe highlighted both a Mughal acknowledgment of Shah Abbas’s legitimacy and an assertion of Jahangir’s superiority. Beyond seniority and sovereign superiority, this artistic propaganda also emphasized Jahangir’s claims to universal kingship and authority. The unexpected gift of the dagger, however, cut through Jahangir’s universalist dreams, as its hilt, “a fish’s tooth spotted with black,” was carved from a material Jahangir had never encountered before.<sup>5</sup> Not only that, but the material originated in a place--the subarctic--that Jahangir did not even know existed. Such zoological posturing was a common diplomatic device: Abbas’s gift was a direct response to Jahangir’s gift, sent three years earlier, of hundreds of rare animals that had been presented by Mughal ambassadors in a spectacular ceremony.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the dagger was sent by a ruler

considered by Jahangir to be his lesser and presented in a public display by the Safavid ambassador, challenged Jahangir's claims to universal kingship in front of his own court.

The dagger with its mysterious hilt, meant as a diplomatic display of Safavid splendor, struck Jahangir with wonder. He marveled that his "younger brother," cast as a political inferior in Jahangir's imperial imagination, had access to some unknown part of the world where such wondrous fish resided. What Jahangir considered to be a fish tooth would have been something quite different in our modern zoological taxonomy. The fish was actually a walrus and its tooth was a tusk likely carried by merchants from the distant Chukchi Peninsula along the Pacific Ocean in northeast Asia.<sup>7</sup> It was difficult for Jahangir to imagine such a creature, let alone its frigid habitat. Descriptions of unfamiliar animals like the walrus, which were generally limited to second-hand oral or written reports, thus lent themselves to a common ecological trope: unseen animals from equally unseen climes were imagined as something more familiar; the walrus, a marine mammal, thus became a fish.<sup>8</sup>



Image 1: "Allegorical representation of Emperor Jahangir and Shah Abbas of Persia from the St. Petersburg Album," Abu'l Hasan, Mughal India ca 1618. Source: In the Public Domain, see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abu%27l\\_\\_The\\_St.\\_Petersburg\\_Album\\_Allegorical\\_representation\\_of\\_Emperor\\_Jahangir\\_and\\_Shah\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abu%27l__The_St._Petersburg_Album_Allegorical_representation_of_Emperor_Jahangir_and_Shah_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

This article narrates the journey of another walrus tusk, carried by a Central Asian Sufi, or Muslim mystic, to the court of Jahangir in response to the emperor's subsequent fascination with all things walrus. Unpacking various accounts of this journey reveals different complexities: the complexity of materials, like the marine ivory that assumed different symbolic meanings, and the complexity of individuals, like the Sufi who assumed different social and political roles. This complexity is framed against a Persian cosmopolis, a constellation of connected cities across pre and early modern Persia, Central Asia, and South Asia or, more accurately, *Iran*, *Turan*, and *Hindustan*, as these regions were imagined by Persian-language authors, poets, and geographers.<sup>9</sup> Shared registers of the Persian language, modes of religious expression, symbols of sovereignty, aesthetic standards, and codes of idealized social behavior allowed for a fluid movement of people, materials, and ideas across the three regions. The story of the walrus tusk is narrated to reveal the various meanings this material created within the world of emperors, diplomats, mystics, and merchants.

Tracing the journey of one such walrus tusk across the seventeenth-century Mughal, Safavid, and Uzbek empires, this article also demonstrates how diplomatic, mystical, and mercantile roles were often played by the same person. In these Islamicate political spaces, Sufis mobilized their great influence as sacred figures to assume these complex roles. Though popularly misconstrued by modern audiences as being completely removed from the realms of politics and commerce, Sufis like those from the Naqshbandi *tariqa*, or order, actively engaged in commerce, as well as other worldly activities including politics, diplomacy, and war.<sup>10</sup> The Naqshbandi Sufi network was rooted in urban mercantile communities across Transoxiana and Khorasan and contemporary Sufi authors referred to it as a “*tariqa* of merchants.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, rather than eschewing wealth and commercial activity, Naqshbandis not only tolerated trade and agriculture but actively partook in it. The fifteenth-century Sufi master Khwaja Ubayd Allah Ahrar and the sixteenth-century master Khwaja Islam Juybari, for example, held thousands of acres of land and scores of shops and caravanserais while also holding immense political influence at the Turco-Mongol courts of Timurid and Shibanid rulers.<sup>12</sup> From representing overtaxed peasants to mediating conflicts between rival princes, Sufis like Khwaja Ahrar and Khwaja Juybari became synonymous with Timurid and Shibanid statehood.<sup>13</sup> Hagiographers, who wrote about the lives of these Sufis with ritualistic reverence, regarded this economic and political influence not merely as a function of the Sufi masters' worldly skills but also as reflections of their larger *karamat*, or miraculous powers. The political and economic lives of the seventeenth-century Khwajas Hasan and Abd al-Rahim outlined in this article similarly did not hinder them from conducting their primary duties as Sufi masters: performing miracles, initiating *murids* or disciples to the *tariqa*, training them to perform Naqshbandi rituals, and functioning as intermediaries in the disciples' pursuit of a close spiritual connection with the divine. Their economic and political agency was in fact welcomed and

celebrated by Mughal emperors like Jahangir, who carefully maintained a nostalgia for the Central Asian empire of their Timurid ancestors and its Naqshbandi Sufis.<sup>14</sup>

This story of emperors, Sufis, and walrus tusks is set against the backdrop of a world exploring new connections in what historians have termed an early modern period.<sup>15</sup> Lying on the cusp of the European and Chinese Ages of Discovery, the rise of new Turco-Persian successors to the Timurid and Byzantine Empires,<sup>16</sup> and the first Islamic *hijri* millennium, Jahangir's India was connected to the rest of the world in multiple new ways. Starting with the Dutch East India Company in 1602 and the English East India Company in 1608, various European trading companies had arrived in Hindustan to procure black pepper, textiles, indigo, and saltpeter.<sup>17</sup> The stability provided by various states of which the Mughal Empire was most prominent had caused the various regional economies to flourish.<sup>18</sup> Coupled with the European discovery of new seafaring and navigational technologies and a new European spirit of exploration supported by rich sovereigns, this aforementioned expansion of the Hindustani economy drew in these trading companies. In addition to attracting European trading companies via sea, Jahangir's policies abolishing commercial taxes and improving trade infrastructure had also attracted an increased overland and maritime traffic of merchants from Turan and Iran.<sup>19</sup> These increased mercantile connections between Hindustan, Iran, and Turan and onwards to the Muscovite and Ottoman Empires catalyzed an existing trade in fabrics, indigo, horses, paper, sugar, spices, fruit, and slaves.<sup>20</sup> Within this institutional environment conducive to transregional trade, Indian merchant firms most notably those owned and managed by the Multani Khatri diaspora spread out across Eurasia.<sup>21</sup> The sharing of a vast global space by several such merchant communities also offering financial services-- Karimi, Multani, Jewish, Venetian, and Armenian to name a few--coupled with the relative safety of having trade routes pass through large stable empires allowed for a transcontinental system of borrowing, investment and travel to distant markets.<sup>22</sup> In addition to being connected to markets all over Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean, the Hindustani economy was also linked to the more distant commercial spaces of Western Europe and the Americas via the transoceanic trade controlled by European companies who also carried goods for the Mughal state. This thorough integration with what John F. Richards has termed a "true world economy" introduced new goods that are now staples in modern South Asian cuisines and cultures but had been unheard of across the premodern periods.<sup>23</sup> The cultivation of New World crops like maize and tobacco, for example, spread across early modern South Asia almost instantly, with other crops like potato and red chili being adopted later.<sup>24</sup> These indirect connections to the recently colonized Americas turned Hindustan and China, both major economies, into the final destination for silver mined in Spanish Mexico.<sup>25</sup> This glut of silver, though inflationary, led to circulation of coinage and contributed to a faster growth of the Hindustani economy. Goods and currency

weren't the only things being circulated within this increasingly connected "true world economy;" a host of itinerant peoples moving along these same networks also carried and spread ideas, beliefs, technologies, and fashions.



Image 2: "Emperor Jahangir receiving an Officer" Rembrandt van Rijn, ca 1656-61. Source: In the Public Domain, see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt\\_Emperor\\_Jahangir\\_receiving\\_an\\_Officer,\\_Gg,2.263.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_Emperor_Jahangir_receiving_an_Officer,_Gg,2.263.jpg)

## The Tusk

As mentioned above, Shah Abbas's extraordinary gift did more than just pique Jahangir's curiosity; it also challenged his claims to universal rulership by asserting Safavid superiority over the Mughals in terms of worldly knowledge and reach. To maintain his claims of superiority, Jahangir needed more of this strange and beautiful material. Craftsmen in Mughal imperial workshops could then carve the tusks into ornate dagger hilts under Jahangir's own supervision. Daggers in Jahangir's and Shah

Abbas's world were valued beyond their practical utility as tools or weapons. As beautifully crafted pieces that melded the artisanal skills of master metallurgists and the most meticulous jewelers, daggers were worn in political spaces as spectacularly visible symbols of power. Mostly seen and perhaps only seldom used, they were the mark of an exalted social status at the Mughal court, as Jahangir gifted the finest daggers from his personal workshop to his highest ranking and favorite officials.<sup>26</sup> They were cast and ornamented in various regional and foreign designs that were indicative of the emperor's own tastes. This created an aesthetic standard for the imperial elite and the design of daggers displayed their wearers' close connections to the emperor. Imperial gifts such as these strengthened the loyalty of Mughal officials, called *mansabdars*, towards the emperor, as the ornate daggers reflective of the emperor's own aesthetic tastes instilled a sense of pride in serving him.<sup>27</sup>



Image 3: "Mughal dagger with walrus ivory hilt," Mughal India, ca. 18<sup>th</sup> c. Source: Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication, see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dagger\\_\(Jambiya\)\\_MET\\_LC-36\\_25\\_665-005.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dagger_(Jambiya)_MET_LC-36_25_665-005.jpg)

In addition to this aesthetic symbolism, other factors informed the choice of material for dagger hilts. In the complex worldviews of the premodern world, certain materials were believed to have properties beyond those considered scientific today. For example, early Islamic medical treatises claimed that jade would strengthen the stomach, cure jaundice, protect against poison, ensure victory in battle, and perhaps even stop lightning.<sup>28</sup> As a result, a hilt constructed from jade was believed to transfer

these protections to the individual carrying the dagger. Like jade-hilted daggers that detected and protected against poison, those hilted with walrus ivory developed supernatural associations, specifically with the rapid healing of wounds.<sup>29</sup>

Noting Jahangir's sudden interest in walrus ivory, Mughal officers scrambled to acquire this fashionable new material in the hopes of gaining favor with the emperor. Such favor helped officials get promoted to higher ranks within the tiered *mansabdari* system of administration. The Persian cosmopolis eased the transregional movement of people and materials, meaning that imperial officers were generally connected to greater networks beyond Mughal Hindustan. Abd al-Aziz Khan Naqshbandi was one such *mansabdar*, who was a Turani or Central Asian immigrant to the Mughal court as well as a member of the Juybari branch of the Naqshbandi Sufis. Based in Turan, this network of merchant mystics held vast political and economic influence on account of its close connections to ruling Bukharan dynasties and its control of the trans-Asian caravan trade. Fully aware of their ability to procure rare materials from across Eurasia, Abd al-Aziz wrote to his influential relatives and fellow Sufis in Bukhara: the brothers Khwaja Hasan Juybari and Khwaja Abd al-Rahim Juybari.<sup>30</sup> The scions of the Juybari Sufi line, they were the most influential Naqshbandis in seventeenth-century Central Asia, known for their political influence, vast landholdings, and far-reaching merchant caravans.

While a modern observer might find such hazy distinctions between political, economic, and religious roles puzzling, within the Persianate milieu this multiplicity of social roles would have been far from incongruous or contradictory. Complexities of the sort exemplified the roles played by kings, nobles, and Sufis alike. While modern readers almost invariably expect premodern kings and nobles to hold great political and economic influence, they are far less likely to hold the same expectations of Sufis, who are often popularly portrayed as wandering mystics who eschew all material interests. The historical reality of Naqshbandi Sufis like the Juybaris in pre and early modern Central and South Asia was far removed from this popular image. The Naqshbandis had been actively engaged in trade and empire building ever since Khwaja Ahrar had allied himself with the Timurid state in the mid-fifteenth century. The Juybaris of Central Asia, another group of Naqshbandis, followed the Ahrari precedent and attached themselves to the Timurid's Uzbek successors, the Shibanids. Revered by the powerful Uzbek ruler Abdullah Khan II, Khwaja Islam Juybari and his son Khwaja Sa'd Kalan accrued great influence across Central Asia and beyond. This influence was passed on to Khwaja Sa'd's sons: Khwaja Hasan Juybari and Khwaja Abd al-Rahim Juybari, whom--to get back to our story--Abd al-Aziz addressed with his pleas for walrus tusk.

With numerous caravans travelling far and wide across Eurasia and caravanserais hosting merchants from the farthest climes, the Juybari Sufis swiftly secured a walrus tusk for Abd al-Aziz in 1620, the year after Jahangir first discovered the material.<sup>31</sup> Sent from Central Asia by the most venerated of Sufis, this tusk acquired

complex material meanings when it arrived at the Mughal court. For his part, Jahangir was extremely pleased with the gift, not only because it was “perfect” and “exceedingly delicate,” but also because it arrived from the fabled Central Asian lands of his Timurid ancestors.<sup>32</sup> As emperor, Jahangir championed several different claims to sovereign power including a divine bestowal of kingship and descent from the fourteenth-century ruler Timur to legitimize his rule.<sup>33</sup> This imperial nostalgia for the empire of Timur, with its capital in Samarqand, privileged Central Asia in Mughal dynastic cartography.<sup>34</sup> Though none of the Mughals had ruled in Central Asia since Jahangir’s great-grandfather Babur’s flight from advancing Uzbek armies, the region still held a special status in imperial memory.



Image 4: “Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings, from the St. Petersburg album” Bichitr, Mughal India ca 1615-18. Source: In the Public Domain, see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bichitr\\_Jahangir\\_Preferri%20ng\\_a\\_Sufi\\_Shaikh\\_to\\_Kings\\_from\\_the\\_St.\\_Petersburg\\_album\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bichitr_Jahangir_Preferri%20ng_a_Sufi_Shaikh_to_Kings_from_the_St._Petersburg_album_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

In addition to being a treasured gift from Central Asia, the tusk was equally cherished as a blessed gift from the Naqshbandis. A long history of association between the Timurids and the Naqshbandis had created a lasting connection between state and



tariqa. Jahangir's Timurid ancestors had derived much-needed political legitimacy via this symbiosis with a popularly venerated Sufi tariqa. Gifts from Sufis, like this walrus tusk, were also believed to be imbued with *baraka*, or divine blessings. Jahangir was a firm believer in the *baraka* that emanated from all Sufis, not just the Central Asian Naqshbandis, and considered such blessings to be necessary for political stability in his empire. In the case of this gift, the *baraka* flowed from God into the walrus tusk via the intercession of the Juybari Khwajas. The tusk thus simultaneously took on new material, metaphysical, and nostalgic roles expressed in a vocabulary of aesthetics, politics, and spirituality shared across the Persian cosmopolis.

### The Sufi

In the previous year (1619), Jahangir's son Prince Khurram had also gifted him a walrus tusk.<sup>35</sup> Mottled with specks of black like the marine-ivory hilted dagger gifted by the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas earlier, the gift greatly pleased Jahangir. The tusk also acquired political meaning in the hands of Khurram who had grown close to his father since his eldest brother and erstwhile heir apparent Khusrau Mirza's failed rebellion. While this gift publicly symbolized Khurram's new role as the heir apparent to the Mughal nobility, its utility was short-lived. With Khurram's own rebellion in 1622, the tusk soon lost all value as a symbol of familial amity and political unity.

Reports of Khurram's rebellion eventually arrived as the court of the Ashtarkhanid Uzbeks in Bukhara. This dynasty, having supplanted the preceding Shibaniid Uzbek dynasty in 1599, regarded the Safavid expansion towards Khorasan (roughly present-day Afghanistan), especially the Uzbek-ruled city of Balkh with sudden and all-encompassing dread. Though the Uzbek state considered the Mughal Empire a rival and would contest the latter's control over Kabul and Qandahar several times, the Safavids presented a far more palpable and immediate threat. The news of a major rebellion in the Mughal Empire added greatly to the Uzbek state's worries. The Ashtarkhanid Uzbek ruler, Imam Quli Khan, considered Jahangir a likely ally who could help thwart the more rapid eastward expansion of the Safavids. Imam Quli realized that a Mughal state busy with a civil war raging at the heart of the empire may not devote resources to the defense of a more distant Khorasan. Concerned by these developments, he eventually dispatched Khwaja Abd al-Rahim Juybari in 1626 as an emissary to the Mughal court to bring an end to the rebellion while forging a new Uzbek-Mughal alliance. As mentioned previously, Khwaja Abd al-Rahim and his brother Khwaja Hasan had already sent a walrus tusk with their blessings to Jahangir. Revered in both empires as a prominent Sufi, Abd al-Rahim was the perfect ambassador.

Abd al-Rahim believed that ending disputes between the descendants of Timur, including the Mughals, was incumbent upon him as a Naqshbandi Sufi.<sup>36</sup> Though a Sufi from the Juybari lineage and not the Ahrari one, he was following a tradition established

by Khwaja Ahrar. As a spiritual guide to the Timurid dynasty, Ahrar would intercede during Timurid civil wars in fifteenth-century Central Asia. Believed to have miraculous powers and reported to have even summoned angels to rout a rival prince's army, Ahrar would regularly mediate between warring Timurids.<sup>37</sup> After almost completely stamping out the Ahrari presence in Central Asia in their purge of the Timurid state, the new Shibanid rulers soon realized the vital role of Naqshbandi Sufis in legitimizing new dynasties such as their own. The Shibanids therefore stopped their persecution of the Ahraris but this delayed action was not enough to restore the tariqa's presence in Central Asia; many had fled to the new South Asian Mughal Empire of the Timurids. Greatly requiring spiritual patronage as a new and barely legitimate dynasty, Shibanid rulers extended political patronage to another branch of the popular Naqshbandi tariqa: the Juybaris. Though the Shibanids were eventually overthrown by Ashtarkhanid dynasty, the Juybaris retained their close connections to the new Uzbek state. As another new dynasty, the Ashtarkhanids were cognizant of the necessity to associate with a popular tariqa to gain acceptance among their imperial subjects.<sup>38</sup>

As a scion of this extremely influential line of Juybari Sufis, Abd al-Rahim held sufficient political authority to assume the role of an ambassador and speak on behalf of the Uzbek ruler, Imam Quli.<sup>39</sup> He also knew that he would not be turned away. Influenced by earlier Naqshbandi Sufis like Khwaja Ahrar, Abd al-Rahim assumed a similar role as mediator, acting as a spiritual and political guide to both Jahangir and Khurram. Aware of the symbolic power of gifts, Khwaja Abd al-Rahim packed many for his journey to Jahangir's court: "Black fox (pelts), ... porcelain, good camels, fleet-footed horses, hardy mules, ... ornately decorated books, finely drawn albums" and, mostly importantly, "(walrus) teeth."<sup>40</sup> Having already sent a fine walrus tusk to Jahangir several years earlier, the Khwaja clearly knew of the emperor's material preferences. Abd al-Rahim also carefully chose the other gifts mentioned. Many of the albums and books packed as gifts had been created for the lavish Timurid courts of fifteenth-century Herat and Samarqand. These ornately copied and vividly illustrated works were colorful reminders of the glory of the Central Asian empire of Jahangir's ancestors. Appealing to Jahangir's nostalgia for the empire of the Timurids, these gifts were meant to remind the emperor that the inhabitants of Central Asia still treasured the glory of his dynastic ancestors. Along with the tusk, these gifts were meant to charm the emperor into accepting a Mughal-Uzbek alliance. The splendor of these gifts even made an impression on the visiting director of the Dutch West India Company, Johannes de Laet who remarked that "the king (i.e., Jahangir) is said to have never received an embassy bearing richer gifts."<sup>41</sup>

Upon arriving at Jahangir's court in Lahore with these gifts, Abd al-Rahim was received by the emperor himself. Narrated in hagiographies and traveler's accounts, the meeting was inundated with symbolic displays of both power and reverence. Central Asian Naqshbandi hagiographers stress that Jahangir stood up from his throne to

welcome Abd al-Rahim.<sup>42</sup> An otherwise mundane act, standing becomes a powerful political performance when doing so from a throne. Standing and hence alighting from his throne was a powerful gesture Jahangir reserved for the most important of guests. In this instance, he made a special exception because of Abd al-Rahim's status as a Naqshbandi from the lands of his ancestors. This demonstration of reverence was also directed at his courtiers, many of whom were Muslims of Central Asian heritage.<sup>43</sup> Beyond all expectations, Jahangir did not limit himself to simply standing to receive the Khwaja, but also stepped down from his throne and offered it to Abd al-Rahim. Abd al-Rahim was also excused from the compulsory prostrations to Jahangir that were mandatory for everyone else appearing in the emperor's court. Seating the Sufi on his throne, Jahangir sent a compelling message to his Turani officers. These officers, who had felt alienated by the previous Mughal Emperor Akbar's dissociation from Naqshbandi Sufis, must have felt reassured by this gesture. Though Jahangir generally projected his absolute sovereignty over all his subjects, Muslim or not, in this instance he sent a specific signal to the Turanis with his ritualistic manner of welcoming the Khwaja: like his Timurid ancestors in Turan, he too considered kingship as a divinely bestowed gift to be shared with Sufis. While Jahangir had previously displayed his association with Sufis, often in the form of imaginative art, it was limited to those from the South Asian Chishti tariqa. Here he was making a physical exhibition of similar affection albeit for a group of Sufis who had not received such reverence at the Mughal court for the past half century. According to the Central Asian poet Mutribi Samarqandi, who was present at Jahangir's court, the emperor referred to the Sufi as an "elder brother."<sup>44</sup>

This diplomatic exchange, while seemingly spontaneous, was actually highly ritualized. Jahangir's words and actions were carefully informed by an older tradition of Sufi *adab*, or code of conduct, ubiquitous across the Persian cosmopolis. Jahangir's offering of his throne and his meticulously framed speech demonstrating his reverence were all part of behaviors expected of Sufi disciples. This performative discipleship to a Sufi master, however, acquired additional complexity in the Mughal court. Because of the Mughals' longstanding relationship with Sufism and Sufis, Jahangir, in addition to being an emperor, had also taken on the role of a Sufi master upon assuming the throne decades earlier. Within the elaborate structure of sacred sovereignty constructed by his father Akbar, the emperor was a divinely chosen ruler. In this context, imperial officers pledged their loyalty to the emperor by acknowledging him as their Sufi master through rituals gleaned from older Sufi traditions. Though Jahangir spoke and acted in a manner becoming of Khwaja Abd al-Rahim's disciple, he did not formally pledge this discipleship. Instead, he navigated these complex political and spiritual roles by offering his son, Prince Shahrayar, as a disciple to the Khwaja.<sup>45</sup> In this manner, Jahangir simultaneously retained his status as absolute sovereign to his own officers, shared sovereignty with a Naqshbandi Sufi, and also venerated that Sufi in the manner

expected of a descendant of Timur. Most importantly, by offering his own son as a disciple to Abd al-Rahim, Jahangir acknowledged the spiritual sovereignty of the Sufi without losing any of his own. This symbolic gesture additionally demonstrated Jahangir's current preference for Shahrayar over Khurram as a successor to all present.

Khwaja Abd al-Rahim's navigation of such spiritual, political, and material complexity greatly increased the probability of the diplomatic mission's success. Aware of the great significance of a walrus tooth and other gifts given by a Sufi such as himself, Abd al-Rahim followed the presentation of his various gifts with some basic demands. He delivered Imam Quli's message of friendship, requesting an alliance with the Mughal Empire, but also demanded the release of a Mughal prisoner, Abdullah Khan Firuz Jang who was a descendant of Khwaja Ahrar.<sup>46</sup> Jahangir agreed to both demands as Abd al-Rahim's exalted position as well as his gifts including greatly coveted walrus teeth left the emperor with no choice. Using familial terms to express his diplomatic rapport as he had in the case of Shah Abbas, Jahangir referred to the younger Imam Quli as his son immediately assuming a position of diplomatic seniority.

Though Jahangir was greatly moved by the Khwaja's arrival and the diplomatic message he carried, in the end, he was not able to fully commit to Imam Quli's request for an alliance. The military conflict with Khurram had not abated, and Jahangir had lost de facto authority to other family members and *mansabdars*. The matter of a Mughal-Uzbek alliance was further complicated by Jahangir's death later that year. Like his father, Prince Khurram, having now become the Emperor Shah Jahan, expressed great devotion to Khwaja Abd al-Rahim and treated him with the utmost respect. Though Shah Jahan had planned to send a formal reply affirming a Mughal-Uzbek alliance with Abd al-Rahim, the Khwaja too passed away in 1628. Instead, Shah Jahan's affirmative response accompanied the Khwaja's body, which was conveyed with a somber deference back to the Uzbek capital of Bukhara.

### **A Connected World: Implications for Pedagogy**

When pieced together, these episodes reveal the intersections of material, spiritual, and political experience in the Persian cosmopolis of the Mughal, Uzbek and Safavid empires. The accompanying analysis also untangles the complex lives of individuals who simultaneously assumed the roles of emperors, Sufis, merchants, and diplomats. Both materials and individuals took on different meanings informed by a Persianate ritual vocabulary shared between diplomatic, spiritual, commercial, and imperial spaces. Furthermore, nostalgia for the empire of Timur and the Naqshbandi tariqa not only underscored interactions between Hindustani emperors and Turani Sufis, but also furnished the symbolism exhibited by the tusk with deeper historical significance. By engaging with a diverse set of primary sources, this article demonstrates how modern audiences may combine critical readings of material, visual, and textual sources to

better imagine bygone ideas of sovereign power and spiritual authority across the unfamiliar but connected geographies of the premodern and early modern worlds.

Presenting a diverse range of primary sources, this article thus reveals the complexities and connections that defined the early modern world. When read in a classroom, it additionally provides students with the opportunity to shed many incorrect assumptions formed via the experience of living in a modern world where nation-statehood, centralized political control and rigid borders are the norm. Read as part of this process of unlearning, the article demonstrates how the pre and early modern worlds were far more connected than modern readers may have assumed. Imagining this space beyond the restrictions placed by modern borders and national identities, students are prompted to understand the various kinds of organic connections experienced by people in the past. The interconnectedness of this early modern world is also explored beyond the mere physical displacement of travel: the ubiquity of *adab* and reverence for Sufis across the larger Islamicate world, the procurement of exotic materials like marine ivory from distant climes, the extensive adoption of Chinese occult and medicinal knowledge in Perso-Islamic societies, and even the borrowing of modes of zoological imagining exemplified with the very literal Persian names for walrus tusks--*dandan-i mahi* or “fish teeth” morphologically mirroring the synonymous Latin *dentibus piscium*, Turkic *baliq tishi* and Russian *ryb'i zubi*.

In addition to helping students imagine the early modern world as a connected space, this article also elicits an engagement with the “messiness” of the premodern. In contrast to clearly defined modern borders, epistemic categories, and national identities, the article reveals a world where neat distinctions between spaces, roles, identities, and categories normalized in the modern world did not exist. This pre and early modern complexity is observable in the example of indistinct and shifting border zones between the Safavid, Mughal and Bukharan states. It is also evident in the complex lives of Jahangir and Khwaja Abd al-Rahim; both emperor and Sufi master claimed simultaneous mastery over nebulous political, sacred, and economic domains. This complexity is also present in the composite universal sovereignties of emperors drawing from various sovereignty traditions to appeal to different subject communities. This messiness also gives way to a “lumpiness” where an emperor’s sovereign authority as a sarco-political ruler is far from uniform across their empire.<sup>47</sup> As demonstrated in the article, lumpy sovereign authority may be negotiated and even shared by the odd Sufi via displays of sacred and political power in the language of *adab* i.e., highly ritualized codes of conduct. Finally, the novel zoological taxonomy categorizing the walrus as a kind of fish but also drawing on occult knowledge reveals more epistemic nebulosity. For a modern audience, the example of the walrus here may appear contradictory as it reveals the lack of any epistemic division between empirical and occult knowledge in the pre and early modern worlds.

Constructing a narrative around walrus ivory as an object, this article also prompts its audience to view material sources as texts. When studied in a classroom like written sources, such material objects may be unpacked to identify audiences, narratives, styles, and symbols. In the examples described in the article, walrus tusks were carefully shaped into dagger hilts to send powerful messages to specific audiences. As we have inferred from the analysis presented, such tusks and daggers displayed a Sufi's sacred aura even in the presence of great emperors, displayed an emperor's magnanimity towards subjects, or projected an empire's wealth and power in diplomatic exchanges. The specific styles of daggers developed in imperial workshops, especially those of the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, created deliberate associations between aesthetic forms and the visible sovereign power of individual rulers. Styles, materials, performances of sovereign authority and ideas of the occult values attached to objects were also not static.

The three activities appended to this article allow for an engagement with the themes of connectivity and complexity, as well as the use of material sources. Instructors are free to tinker with the activities as they deem best.

## Appendix – Classroom Activities

### Activity 1

The following activity encourages students to critically “read” material sources, in this case daggers with marine ivory hilts.

1. Have the class open a web browser and experiment searching for relevant objects held in museums and other collections by mixing and matching the following terms: walrus ivory, marine ivory, narwhal, fish, tooth, tusk, dagger, *khanjar*, *chilinum*, *kard*, Ottoman, Mughal, Safavid, Qajar, Russian, and Ming e.g. “Safavid Walrus Ivory kard.”
2. Have each student select a favorite object and answer the following questions: Where is the object currently held (i.e., what museum/collection)? Where is it originally from? Do we know who it was commissioned for? Do we know who made it? What do we know about those people? What materials and possible techniques were used to create it? What do we know about the context of this object/image’s creation and use? What purpose did it serve?
3. Have the students make groups and note down similarities (stylistic, aesthetic, material, locational) between their chosen objects. Do they notice the existence of any broad cosmopolitan/transregional styles across several regions? Can they chart the spread of the style using dates and locations mentioned in captions for the objects? Who do they think carried these stylistic preferences (in the form of objects but also the materials and skills required to manufacture them) across these regions? Do they conversely see the emergence of any local/regional styles? Can these regional styles be correlated with the rule of any particular ruler? If so, what are the possible reasons for such a correlation? What kinds of symbolism can the students notice? What meanings may these symbols have carried for their respective audiences?

**Activity 2**

Khwaja Islam Juybari's great grandson and Abd al-Rahim's great nephew Muhammad Talib, wrote a Persian-language hagiography describing the lives of his esteemed great grandfather and his descendants. As a hagiography, or a saintly biography emphasizing the sacred character of its subjects, the work highlights the esteemed status of Juybari Naqshbandi Sufi masters in Central Asian society but also in the courts of Muslim rulers like those of the Shibanids, Ashtarkhanids and the Mughals. It also stresses the miraculous aspect of the Sufi masters' lives while presenting their immense political and economic influence as divine blessing. The following excerpt is a concise list of cities where Khwaja Islam owned farmland, shops, caravanserais, and other properties:

*“Two thousand head of cattle, not including the servants and workers (who cared for them) owned by him roamed (the land). Naming every farm would make (this account) very long. The complete details are such that in Bukhara and (its) seven districts, Miankalat, Nur, Samarqand, Tashkent, Siram, Turkestan, Akhsikat, Nasaf, Hisar, Tirmiz, Qabadyan, Badakhshan, Vakhsh, the “Mother of Cities” Balkh, the capital of the Sultanate at Herat, the “Glory of the World Merv, Murghab, Jahja, Mahna, Mashhad, in all the territory of Khurasan, even in the cities of Iraq, he had properties and goods. And in all four directions and...in all regions and all cities, he was blessed with an abundance of grain from [his agriculture].”<sup>48</sup>*

1. Have the students plot the listed cities/regions on a blank map of Asia.
2. Using a historical atlas, have students roughly outline the borders of all late-sixteenth century empires/major states relevant to the regions listed in the excerpt.
3. Have students select a city, either in a group or individually. Opening a web browser, have them search for brief histories of the city. Was it a center of trade? Is it still known for any historic shrines?
4. Going back to the map, have students circle each plotted city if it was a center of commerce. They should circle it another color if it was a center of pilgrimage. Cities should be circled concentrically in both colors if the city held both sacred and economic importance.
5. Ask the students if they see any overlap between this sacred and economic network? Where is it strongest? Who do they think travelled between the various network nodes and why? Why would a Sufi master own various kinds of property along this network? Is the distinction between a worldly



activity like trade and a spiritual activity like pilgrimage clear in this space? What can be inferred about political and religious authority by looking at the overlay of the network across the political borders drawn earlier?

### **Activity 3**

This exercise is designed to teach basic critical reading skills required for studying primary source texts as an academic historian would. It introduces students to some basic critical reading tools used to gauge bias in such sources. The following are excerpts from different primary sources describing various aspects of the life of Khwaja Abd al-Rahim's father, the supremely influential Naqshbandi Sufi master Khwaja Islam Juybari (d. 1563). Students should read each excerpt carefully and answer the given questions either in the form of individual written responses or group discussions.

#### ***The traveler Anthony Jenkinson's account of Khwaja Islam Juybar***

During his career as representative of the English Muscovy Trading Company and Queen Elizabeth I in Muscovy (present-day Moscow), Anthony Jenkinson embarked on four major journeys from that city. On the first of these journeys in 1558, Jenkinson travelled to the Shibanid Uzbek capital of Bukhara. Earning the ire of the Bukharan state, Jenkinson soon returned to Muscovy. He however noted his brief experiences as a traveler to the city within letters that he sent to company officials in London.

*“There is a metropolitan [Sufi master] in this Boghar (Bukhara) who causeth this lawe to be so streightly kept, and he is more obeyed then the King, and will depose the king and place another at his will and pleasure as hee did by this king that raigned at our being there, and his predecessour, by the meanes of the saide Metropolitane: for hee betrayed him and in the night slewe him in his chamber, who was a prince that loued all Christians as well.”<sup>49</sup>*

#### ***An excerpt from a poem by Abd al Rahman Jami (1414-1492).***

The Naqshbandi Sufi and Timurid poet Abd al-Rahman Jami prefaced his epic poem *Yusuf va Zulaykha* with a shorter poem venerating his Sufi master Khwaja Ubayd Allah Ahrar (d.1490). This poem served to not only praise Khwaja Ahrar's piety but also justified his vast holdings of land and other economic assets. An example of divine reward for his pious ways, the Khwaja's wealth was also justified via his great sense of charity towards society. The connection between Khwaja Ahrar's wealth and his piety in this poem was so strong that the poem was used by the Bukharan biographer and historian Hafiz Tanish in his sixteenth-century chronicle of the Shibanid Uzbek court to

praise and justify the wealth of Khwaja Islam and his son Khwaja Sa'd (d. 1589) as one minor facet of their widely celebrated piety:

*“The Caesar of Rome himself or even the King of China,  
Would but harvest grain from his blessed field.  
Look to heaven, and its scattered stars;  
They are the chaff from this heavenly yield  
All prospered from his wealth  
and shone bright in the shade of his shield”*<sup>50</sup>

***Excerpt from the official history of Abd Allah Khan II, the Abdallahnama.***

Attached to the court of the Shibanid Uzbek ruler Abd Allah Khan II, the historian Hafiz Tanish Bukhari composed an official history of the khan's reign. Titled *Sharafnama-yi shahi* or the *Abdallahnama*, the work is a major source for the history of Abd Allah Khan's reign. Given the Khan's closeness to his *Shaykh al-Islam* and adviser, the Naqshbandi Sufi Khwaja Islam Juybar, the history also narrates details about the Khwaja's presence at court:

*“(The Uzbek ruler Abd Allah Khan) out of devotion and (in order) to live a life of a true faqir, (gifted) His Eminence (Khwaja Islam) a residence among fertile farmland. Yet he (Khwaja Islam) was not able to accept this gift and accepted only an infertile piece of land. When a few irrigation canals were dug and water passed through them, the land blossomed and received new life. Currently, the farms owned by His Eminence number are in the thousands and are (practically) countless.”*<sup>51</sup>

***General Questions.***

Who are the authors of these excerpts? What kind of writing of theirs is quoted here? What are the possible reasons for the composition of these works? Do any of the sources seem to be **intentional sources** i.e., written with the explicit intent to record history for a future audience? How does this affect bias in a source? Was each author **authoritative** i.e., were they able to witness the recorded events themselves and is their reporting based on first-hand knowledge? Was each author **competent** i.e., did they have a nuanced understanding of the cultural, political, economic and social importance of the events and personalities described? Are the authors **trustworthy** i.e., do they have any reason to possibly falsify, omit, add or exaggerate details? Why are these questions important for historians?

**Questions about Anthony Jenkinson's account.**

How does Jenkinson describe Khwaja Islam's social position and political status in Bukhara? What words does he use and why? Can we take Jenkinson for his word? What difficulties would he have possibly faced as an English traveler trying to make sense of both the Bukharan political system and of Sufism? Why do you think he mentions Christianity in his letter?

**Questions about Jami's poem.**

Why would Jami mention the rulers of Rome and China for a Persian-speaking audience in the fifteenth-century? Do you think the description of both kings working in the fields is a literal account or does it symbolize something? Why do you think he mentions Khwaja Ahrar's wealth in a poem praising the Khwaja for his piety? Why would Hafiz Tanish al-Bukhari reuse the same poem for Khwaja Islam, a different Sufi, a century later? Can Jami's poem be read complementarily with Jenkinson's account? Based on these verses, can you guess why the Naqshbandi Sufi tariqa was popular among rural farmworkers and urban merchants?

**Questions about al-Bukhari's history.**

Why does the author mention Khwaja Islam's miraculous success at agriculture in an official history celebrating Abd Allah Khan's reign as sovereign of the Bukharan Khanate? Is there any connection between the Khan's political patronage and the Khwaja's sacred status? How would Abd Allah Khan possibly benefit from a public association with a famous Sufi? Khwaja Islam, as well as his family and Sufi tariqa, were known by the Persian epithet *juybar* meaning "irrigation canal;" how does that detail seem important in this excerpt?

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Mughal India to unpack complex imaginings of sovereignty. He is also writing an article revealing the narrative tropes about Sufi jade mining monopolies in sixteenth-century Kashghar furnished in Mughal historical writing. He is additionally co-authoring a critical translation of the Persian-language hagiography and mahoutry manual, the *Gajrajnama*, and collaborating with art historians at The Louvre to develop a typography of Mughal chitanum daggers. His most recent article, “The Medieval Khwājagān and the Early Naqshbandīyya” was published in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History Press.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Persian for “World Seizer.” From the words *jahan* or “world” and *gir*, the present stem of *giriftan* or “to take.” The emperor was born Muhammad Nur al-Din; Jahangir was his regnal title.

<sup>2</sup> Though the Mughals referred to themselves as either Timurids or Gurkanis (from the Mongol *kuregen*; lit. “son-in-law”), this article will refer to them by the exonym used by the Gurkani’s Deccani rivals and popularized in early European travel and diplomatic literature: The Mughals, which comes from the Persian word for “Mongol.”

<sup>3</sup> Nur ad-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri or The Memoirs of Jahangir*, ed. Henry Beveridge, trans. Alexander Rogers (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1914), 2:94.

<sup>4</sup> Abu'l Hasan, *Allegorical representation of Emperor Jahangir and Shah Abbas of Persia from the St. Petersburg Album*, ca 1618, opaque watercolor, ink, silver and gold on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1945.9a>.

Called *dad va dam*, this visual symbolism represented the universal sovereign's control over the forces of nature, as well as their duty to bring order to chaos via provision of justice. See Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (Delhi: OUP, 2001), 115-126.

<sup>5</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2:94.

<sup>6</sup> Detailed in Sharon E Littlefield, "The Object in the Gift: Embassies of Jahangir and Shah Abbas" PhD. Diss., (University of Minnesota, 1999), 26-29, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/304542821>.

<sup>7</sup> Valerie Hansen, "International Gifting and the Kitan World, 907-1125," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 43 (2013): 273-302.

<sup>8</sup> Though this article explains Persian usage of "fish tooth," earlier Chinese and Russian writing had already been using the term for walrus tusk; the earliest known Chinese source using the term is from the eighth century. See Berthold Laufer and Paul Pelliot, "Arabic and Chinese Trade in Walrus and Narwhal Ivory" *T'oung Pao* 14 , no. 3 (1913): 337-343.

<sup>9</sup> A concept rooted in the works of Sheldon Pollock but greatly developed in recent scholarship. For some representative works see: Sheldon Pollock, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, A.D. 300–1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology," in J.E.M. Houben, ed., *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 197-248; Juan Cole, "Iranian Culture and South Asia, in *Iran and the Surrounding World : Interactions in Culture and Cultural politics*, eds. Nikki R. Keddie and Rudolph P. Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 15-35; Sunil Sharma, "Redrawing the Boundaries of 'Ajam in Early Modern Persian Literary Histories," in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, eds. A. Amanat and F. Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 51-64; Manan Asif, *The Loss of Hindustan: The Invention of India* (Cambridge MA: HUP, 2020), Mana Kia, *Persianate Selves : Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press; 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Aspects explored extensively in recent scholarship. For an introduction to these varied social, political, and economic experiences across history, see: Alexandre Papas, ed. *Sufi Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Transoxiana, literally “the Land beyond the Oxus,” is the historic region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes rivers in Central Asia. It corresponds to eastern Uzbekistan, western Tajikistan, southern Kazakhstan, northwestern Turkmenistan and southern Kyrgyzstan. Khorasan is another historical region roughly corresponding with Afghanistan and northeastern Iran.

For the observation on the Naqhsbandi tariqa, see MS IVANRUz 516 iv, *Malfūzāt Ahrārī*, fol. 116a.

<sup>12</sup> The Timurid Empire was founded by the Turco-Mongol conqueror Timur (1336-1405). It stretched across the regions corresponding to modern-day Turkey, the south Caucasus, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Pakistan and Northern India. Though it shrunk greatly during the reigns of Timur’s successors over the fifteenth century, the empire was inordinately influential as it set cultural, political, architectural, and aesthetic standards for the rest of the Persianate World. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia had been overthrown by the Shibaniid dynasty of the Uzbeks, another Turco-Mongol people.

<sup>13</sup> An assertion made by the author in his unpublished dissertation. See Ali Gibran Siddiqui, “The Naqshbandiyya after Khwaja Ahrar: Networks of Trade in Central and South Asia” (Phd. Diss, The Ohio State University, 2016), OhioLINK ETD.

<sup>14</sup> For more on Mughal connections with various Central Asian branches of the Naqshbandi tariqa see Richard Foltz, “The Central Asian Naqshbandī Connections of the Mughal Emperors,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* (1996): 229–39.

<sup>15</sup> John F. Richards outlines six process defining the early modern period: the creation of global sea passages, the rise of a true world economy, the growth of large stable states, the intensification of land use, and the diffusion of new technology See John F. Richards, “Early Modern India and World History.” *Journal of World History* (1997): 197-209.

<sup>16</sup> Despite a long history of usage in both scholarly and popular writing, Stephen Dale eschews the terms “gunpowder empire” and “early modern empire” for “patrimonial bureaucratic empire” in describing the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal states. “Gunpowder empire” was first used by Marshall Hodgson to posit that the broad experiences of all three empires were shaped by their near simultaneous adoption of advanced gunpowder technology. While some relatively recent scholarship, most notably that of Douglas Streusand has employed the gunpowder empire framework, the field has also experienced a shift away from the model. Explaining his avoidance of the term, Dale points out that any major structural changes stemming from the adoption of gunpowder cannot be justified in the Mughal and Safavid contexts. Dale also considers the term “early modern empire” problematic as many features identifying an early modern world can be found in other periods as well. See Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans Safavids and Mughals* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5-6; Douglas E. Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires : Ottomans Safavids and Mughals* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 2011); Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization Vol. 3: the Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1977).

<sup>17</sup> John F. Richards, *The New Cambridge History of India, the Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 196-98.

<sup>18</sup> Najaf Haider, “Precious Metal Flows and Currency Circulation in the Mughal Empire,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (1996): 300.

<sup>19</sup> Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans : A Dynastic Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550-1702* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 445-46.

<sup>20</sup> Scott C. Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and Its Trade 1550-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 49-82.

<sup>21</sup> Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia*, 101-112.

<sup>22</sup> Haider, “Precious Metal Flows,” 300-304

<sup>23</sup> Richards, “Early Modern India,” 199.

<sup>24</sup> Richards, “Early Modern India,” 207-8

<sup>25</sup> John F. Richards, ed., *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), 22-23.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart Gordon points out that daggers were also visible symbols of emperors' legitimacy. As symbols of rank and prestige, daggers were suitable gifts for only the highest-ranking princes and *mansabdars*. See Stewart Gordon, "Robes of Honour: A Transactional Kingly Ceremony." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 33, no. 3 (1996): 234; 241.

<sup>27</sup>A mansabdar was a fiscal-military officer in the tiered Mughal administrative system where a higher rank was not only a symbol of prestige but also ensured a higher salary, or tax collection rights of more choice pieces of land, and command over a larger number of troops. For more detailed definitions, alternate terms, older systems of revenue assignment and etymologies please see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556-1707* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), 257-58. For Abul Fazl's explanation of *mansabdari* see Abul Fazl Allami, *The Ain-i akbari* vol.1, ed. D.C. Philliot, trans. H. Blochmann, (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1927), 247-49. Such gifts reinforced the master-disciple relationship between emperors and their *mansabdars*, ensuring the loyalty of the latter. John F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir," in *The Mughal State 1526-1750*, eds. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: OUP, 1998), 157-67.

<sup>28</sup> A.S Melikian-Chiravani, "Precious and Semi-Precious Stones in Iranian Culture Chapter I. Early Iranian Jade," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 11 (1997): 129-132.

<sup>29</sup> Possibly because Chinese Taoist scholars ascribed an antivenomous quality to the similar looking rhinoceros horn. See Laufer, 323.

<sup>30</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2:166.

<sup>31</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2:166.

<sup>32</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2:166.

<sup>33</sup> Lisa Balabanlilar has addressed the place of the Timurid Empire and Central Asia in Mughal imperial memory. See Balabanlilar, "Dynastic memory and the Genealogical Cult" in *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 37-70.

<sup>34</sup> Now in modern Uzbekistan, Samarqand was the imperial capital of Timur and his successors. The Timurids carefully constructed Samarqand to project Timurid imperial power through its distinct architecture. As a center of power and culture, the city served as a model for the capitals and imperial architecture of later dynasties in the eastern Islamic world. Both Jahangir and his son Shah Jahan regarded a conquest of Samarqand as the ultimate aim of their military ambitions for Central Asia.



<sup>35</sup> Jahangir was overjoyed with this gift and even composed a single verse in his memoirs to mark the occasion: “Thy Time is happy in that thou hast made mine happy.” Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2:996.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Talib, *Matlab ut-talibin*, ed. Ghulam Karimov (Tashkent: Movarounnahr Nashriyot, 2012), 234.

<sup>37</sup> Jürgen Paul, “The Khwajagan in Herat During Shahrukh’s Reign,” in Ilker E. Binbas and Nurten Kilic-Schubel, eds., *Horizons of the World :Festschrift for Isenbike Togan* (Istanbul: Ithaki, 2012), 239-41.

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that while both tariqa and the state generally supported each other, rulers and Sufis also challenged the other’s authority and shifted their patronage to other branches of the tariqa and rival members of the ruling dynasty respectively. For an episode where the Uzbek ruler Imam Quli banished Khwaja Abd al-Rahim for supporting his rival Wali Muhammad and shifted his patronage from Abd al-Rahim’s Juybari Naqshbandi tariqa to the Dehpidi Naqhsbandi tariqa see Burton, *The Bukharans*, 132; 135.

<sup>39</sup> He had previously negotiated with Shah Abbas on Imam Quli’s behalf. See Burton, *The Bukharans*, 160; 163.

<sup>40</sup> Talib, *Matlab ut-talibin*, 235.

<sup>41</sup> Joannes de Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol a Translation of the Laet's "Description of India and Fragment of Indian History,"* trans. John Sommervell Hoyland and ed. S. N Banerjee (Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala, 1928), 236

<sup>42</sup> Talib, *Matlab ut-talibin*, 237-38.

<sup>43</sup> Turan was an important source of manpower, and prestige, for the Mughal Empire. Many Turani poets, scholars, artists, and soldiers were thus welcomed at the Mughal court. See Richard Foltz, “Central Asians in the Administration of the Mughal Empire,” *Journal of Asian History* 31, no. 2 (1997): 139–54.

<sup>44</sup> Mutribi al-Asamm al-Samarqandi, *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir* (Bibliotheca Iranica, Cost Mesa, Calif., U.S.A.: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 79.

<sup>45</sup> Talib, *Matlab ut-talibin*, 238.

<sup>46</sup> Imam Quli’s letter has been published, albeit untranslated, in Khwaja Kamgar Husayni, *Ma'asir-i Jahangiri: A Contemporary Account of Jahangir*, ed. Azra Alavi (Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1978), 469-475.

<sup>47</sup> A concept introduced and developed by Lauren Benton, lumpiness has been applied to systems of law in scholarly writing. I have borrowed the term to explain the uneven acceptance of sovereign power across pre and early modern states. See Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 80. Cited in Nandini Chatterjee *Negotiating Mughal Law: A Family of Landlords Across Three Indian Empires* (Cambridge UK: CUP, 2020), 5.

<sup>48</sup> Translated from Talib, *Matlab ut-talibin*, 89.

<sup>49</sup> E. Delmar Morgan and C. H. Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen with Some Account of the First Intercourse of the English with Russia and Central Asia, by Way of the Caspian Sea*, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 2:83-84.

<sup>50</sup> Translated from *Yusuf wa Zulaykha* (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore, 1891-2): 9 and Hafiz Tanish al-Bukhari, *Abdulloxnoma: Sharafnomayi Shoxi* (Tashkent: Sharq Nashriyot Matbaa Kontseri Bosh Taxriryati, 1999), 1:83.

<sup>51</sup> Translated from al-Bukhari, *Abdulloxnoma* 1: 83.