TRADITION, TRANSPLANTATION, TRANSFORMATION:
CENTRAL ASIA IN THE MAKING OF THE
MUGHAL EMPIRE

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Mughal India and Timurid Central Asia

Adapted from M. Brand and G.D. Lowry, Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory, 1986, p. 10.
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Abstract

The Mughal empire in India (1526-1858) was founded when Babur, a Central Asian prince, defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at the battle of Panipat. Through his father Babur was descended from Timur, the founder of the Timurid empire, which had existed from around 1370 until 1507. Through his mother he was descended from Chinggiz Khan. Babur and his followers transplanted their Turco-Mongolian heritage into an Indian setting.

The Central Asian association with the Mughal empire did not end with the death of Babur; it continued in a multiplicity of ways. This thesis is an analysis - as wide-ranging as possible - of the role of Central Asia in the formation and ongoing functioning of the Mughal empire. The study commences with a brief chronological sketch of the period, which is followed by a discussion of the important themes of the thesis: the interaction between nomadic and sedentary institutions, the evolution of empires, and the influence of the Indian environment. The following chapters discuss these themes with reference to the key institutions of the Central Asian and the Mughal empires: the army which initially conquered and then controlled each empire's territory; the sovereign and sovereign's court which administered this territory; the religious and cultural institutions which underpinned imperial rule, and the capital city which coordinated the empire and epitomised the integral features of these institutions.

This thesis argues that the Central Asian influence in the Mughal empire was evident throughout the Mughal period. It contends, however, that the Central Asian traditions which originated in a nomadic society underwent a considerable degree of transformation in India, because Central Asian institutions in their indigenous form proved unsuited to the purposes of later Mughal polities where the aim was to rule an agrarian-revenue based empire. Symbolically, the Central Asian tradition remained important, but practically it was in many respects superseded. Many Central Asian traditions became recast in a more Indian mould; Persian and indigenous Indo-Muslim influences were also significant. Nevertheless, for all the change, many aspects of Timurid tradition remained and were maintained. Historical links were reinforced by continuing contacts with Central Asia. So, ultimately, the Central Asian influence in the Mughal Empire became a more diverse amalgam of past and present Central Asian institutions. Thus Central Asia was in many respects both the creator of and a continuing contributor to Mughal rule.
I: Introduction: The Indo-Turanian Interface

Great empires have commanded a privileged place in history. Whether enjoying a period of ascendency, or in the process of decline, they have played a pivotal role in world history. The rise and fall of great empires has had significant repercussions both within and far beyond their territories. The rise of a new empire has been seen as the beginning of a new epoch; the decline of an empire has given other contenders a chance to impose their sovereignty upon their newly established realms. The arrival of a new empire has not necessarily meant a complete departure from all that has gone before. There have often been many elements of continuity between different empires, continuities which could be articulated through the imperial ideology, and also through either adopting or adapting various practices of previous empires. This thesis sets out to analyse the nature of such continuities between empires, in particular those between the Timurid Empire of Central Asia (c.1370-1506) and the Mughal Empire of India (1526-1858). As a prelude to this analysis, we must begin with a brief chronological overview of the period under consideration.

* * * * *

Timur (c.1330-1405), better known to western readers as Tamerlane, founded the Timurid Empire, which, at its peak in the early fifteenth century, included the territories of Transoxiana, Afghanistan, northern India, Iran, Syria, Anatolia, and much of the Russian Steppe. Timur was born near the town of Kesh, in his native province of Transoxiana (also known as Turan), situated between the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers. After an early career as a sheep-stealer, he fought for ten years (1360-70) to establish himself as leader of the Ulus Chaghatay, the western section of what was formerly the Chaghadayid Khanate. Timur was an outstanding military strategist and a shrewd political leader who commanded a loyal personal following that transcended tribal loyalties. These skills enabled him to defeat his main rival, Amir Husayn, and thus begin

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1 The contemporary chronicles differ as to Timur’s date of birth. Ibn Arabshah wrote that Timur was almost eighty at the time of his death. Ibn Arabshah, Tamerlane the Great Amir, translated by J. Sanders, 1936, p. 295. Ibn Khaldun believed Timur to be between 60 and 70 when he visited him during the siege of Damascus in 1401. Walter Fischel, Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane, 1952, p. 47. The birthdate of 1335-36 given in many Timurid histories does not appear in the material from Timur’s lifetime. The Zafarnama of Nizam-al-Din Shami (1404), the contemporary chronicler of Timur, offers no birthdate. Beatrice Forbes Manz suggests that the birthdate of 1335-36 which many ascribe to Timur was an invention of later chroniclers, with the purpose of making Timur’s birthdate coincide with the death of Abu Said, the last of the II Khans, thus positing Timur as the rightful successor to the II Khanids. Manz, “Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty”, Iranian Studies, 21, 1-2, (1988), p. 113.
his conquests. As a ruler he personalised as much power as possible; otherwise he delegated responsibility among a small group of trusted followers.²

The death of Timur in 1405 resulted in a vigorously contested succession dispute. Shah Rukh emerged victorious after four years of fighting, marching into Samarkand unopposed in 1409, and thus beginning his reign of thirty-eight years (1409-47). Shah Rukh was able to keep the greater part of the empire intact, with the exception of some areas of eastern Persia, where the rebellions of the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu began the process of external secessions which would increasingly constrict the Timurid realm.³ He was regarded as a devout Muslim ruler, who strictly enforced Islamic rule. His son Ulugh Beg ruled Samarkand more or less independently of his father. Ulugh Beg’s reign was noted for its cultural achievements, especially in astrology. He was murdered by his son in 1449, in one act of a protracted war of succession ultimately won by Abu Said.

Abu Said reigned (1457-69) over a constricted realm of Khorasan, Turkestan, Qunduz, and some of Northern Afghanistan. He was the last Timurid sovereign to rule over both Khorasan and Transoxiana. He was executed in 1469 after he had been captured by Uzun Hasan, the leader of the Aq-Qoyunlu. After the death of Abu Said, the Timurid Empire split into three parts. Abu Said’s son, Ahmad, ruled Transoxiana, Umar Shaykh ruled Ferghana, and Husain Baiqara ruled Khorasan. The reign of Husain Baiqara in Khorasan (1469-1506) is often regarded as the high point of Timurid culture. His capital, Herat, was regarded as one of the foremost cities in the world. The empire itself was, however, militarily weak, and Shibani Khan, whose rise clearly demonstrated the extent of nomadic secessions from the Timurid Empire, ended Timurid rule in Central Asia with his takeover of Herat in 1507. The Timurids were never to reconquer their ancestral lands. It would be left to a young Timurid prince, Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur, the son of Umar Shaykh who had formerly ruled the region of Ferghana, to re-establish Timurid rule in India’s distant domains.

The Uzbeks, who superseded the Timurids in Central Asia, were descendants of Chingiz Khan’s son Jochi, once leader of the Golden Horde, who were based in the Russian territory known as the Dasht-i Qipchaq. In many ways they were akin to the Timurids. As Joseph Fletcher noted “the shift from Timurids to Uzbeks was largely the symbolic one of dynastic name and a few practices and customs at the top.”⁴
most part the Uzbek era was one of prolonged periods of political instability. After Shibani Khan's death the Uzbek territories dissolved into five warring realms. Abdullah Khan Uzbek (r. 1556-98) incorporated most of the Uzbek territories under his command. Abdullah Khan achieved a position of some influence in foreign affairs: Akbar, the then Mughal emperor in India, sent several envoys to his court. Abdullah Khan's victories, however, were confined within Central Asia and he never achieved widespread dominion. Unlike Timur, who fought against minor dynasties such as the Jalayirids and the Muzaffarids, the Uzbeks were bordered by major dynasties, such as the Safavids and the Mughals. Abdullah Khan could not hope to defeat both of these powers, and neither wished to ally itself with him against the other in a full scale conflict. After the death of Abdullah Khan in 1598 Central Asia dissolved into many unstable realms.

The mantle of Timurid rule was assumed by a warrior prince, Babur (1483-1530). He was a direct descendant of Timur on his father's side. On his mother's side he was a descendant of Chinggiz. He campaigned for much of his life in Central Asia, and his vivid memoirs are an unsurpassed account of those days. He conquered Samarkand three times, first in 1494, when he was aged twelve, then in 1500, and again in 1511. He campaigned against the Lodis dynasty, the last of those Delhi Sultans who had ruled northern India intermittently for several hundred years. During his fifth expedition into India Babur defeated the Afghan leader, Ibrahim Lodi, at the Battle of Panipat in 1526. The following year he repulsed the army of the Hindu general Rana Sanga at Khanwa. His empire now extended from Badakhshan and Kabul - in modern day Afghanistan - through the Punjab, and the Indo-Gangetic plain, to the edges of Bengal. It was known as the Mughal (sometimes written as "Moghul" or "Mughul") Empire. This term is inaccurate. Moghul is the Turkish spelling of "Mongol" (Mughal being a Persian rendering of Mongol), and the founder of the Mughal empire, Babur, regarded himself as a Timurid Turk. "Moghul" is a term more accurately applied to the inhabitants of Moghulistan in Central Asia. However we shall adhere to the convention of using the word "Mughal" to describe the empire which Babur founded. In order to avoid confusion we shall refer to the inhabitants of Moghulistan as Moghuls, and the region they inhabited as Moghulistan.

Babur was not able to enjoy the fruits of his endeavours for long, however, as he died in 1530. But the dynasty he established was far more permanent; it lasted until 1858.

5 Babur, Babur Nama, translated by A.S. Beveridge, reprinted 1969. All subsequent references to Babur's memoirs refer to this edition unless otherwise stated.
6 Some assert that Babur made six expeditions into India; they include an aborted mission he made in 1507 as one of these. Mohibul Hasan, Babur: Founder of the Mughal Empire in India, 1985, p. 48.
7 Moghulistan refers to the area between the Jaxartes river and the Tien Shan mountains. The majority of its inhabitants were of Mongol descent, hence its name. It was the eastern part of Chaghatay's realm. Timur allied himself with the Moghuls by marrying the daughter of a Moghul chieftain.
when Bahadur Shah was exiled by the British to Rangoon. Humayun, Babur's eldest son, acceded without struggle. But, although he was a courageous soldier, he was of an indolent disposition, and he was also bedevilled by a traitorous brother. He added Malwa and Gujarat to the empire in 1534-35. But they were soon lost, as was the remainder of his empire in the years 1537-1540. He was forced to flee to Persia. Sher Shah, the Afghan warlord who displaced him, proved a very able leader. His son, Islam Shah, fought a losing battle for eight years as the fratricidal nature of Afghan politics reasserted itself. Upon Islam Shah's death there was chronic disorder, with a succession of inconsequential rulers occupying the throne. Humayun, who had rebuilt his forces with Persian help, was therefore able to reclaim his empire, ending a fifteen-year interregnum. He died within six months of his return (1556), the result of a fall down his library steps.

Akbar (b. 1542) then commenced his long reign (1556-1605). In the first four years the empire was ruled through a regent, Bayram Khan; Akbar then assumed personal command. Akbar soon extended the boundaries of the Mughal Empire. In 1568-69 he captured the fortresses of Chitor and Ramthambor, thus securing his left flank; in 1573 he reclaimed Gujarat; from 1574-76 he subdued the province of Bengal. He then conquered Kashmir in 1586, Orissa in 1592 and Sind in 1596. In the closing years of his reign he began the southern expansion that was to prove so troublesome to the Mughal emperors, invading the Deccan Kingdoms of Berar, Khandesh, and Ahmadnagar. He introduced the Mansabdari system - a system of ranking administrators - which remained the administrative blueprint of the Mughals, albeit in altered form, throughout their reign. He was regarded as the foremost exponent of the religious tolerance which many have considered one of the hallmarks of the Mughal empire, a policy which some believe was later discarded by his great-grandson Aurangzeb.

On the death of Akbar, his eldest son Sultan Salim assumed the throne and the title Jahangir (world-seizer). This title was something of a misnomer, as Jahangir's reign (1605-27) was notable more for its consolidation of the empire than for its minimal conquests (such as the Deccan Kingdom of Ahmadnagar). His reign was, however, noted as a fine period for Indian painting. Whereas Akbar's reign was regarded in some circles as one of religious apostasy, Jahangir's was perceived by some as one of religious apathy. He was a capable administrator, although he possessed a cruel streak which

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8 The details of the end of the Mughal dynasty are too complex to be covered here. Percival Spear's *Twilight of the Mughals*, 1951, provides a good overview of the later period.


10 Badauni considered Hakim Humayun had "successfully turned the Emperor [Akbar] from Islam and led him to reject inspiration, prophethship the miracles of the prophet and of the saints". Badauni, *Muntakhab at Tawarikh*, Vol. 2, p. 214. This interpretation has been questioned by some later historians, such as Aziz Ahmad, "Akbar, Heretic or Apostate?", in *Studies in Islamic Culture in an Indian Environment*. The English Ambassador Thomas Roe believed that Jahangir was "content with all religions", *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India*, ed. W. Foster, 1926, Vol. 1, p. 314.
was partially the result of his alcoholism and addiction to opium, a weakness he shared with his grandfather. Nevertheless, when assessing Jahangir’s reign, the fact that he kept the empire together should not be underrated in the light of his grandfather’s legacy.

After a bloody accession Shah Jahan embarked upon a reign of unrivalled splendour (1628-58). His rule saw some remarkable achievements in architecture, such as the Taj Mahal, and a revival of imperialist dreams. The attempted reconquest of Central Asia, which was initially touted as a rightful reclamation of the Mughals’ ancestral homelands, has been seen by historians as an ignominious instance of imperialist impotence.11 The abject failure of this campaign had repercussions elsewhere. Qandahar, which had been lost in 1622, was recaptured in 1638, only to be lost finally in 1649. There were, however, limited gains in the south. The remainder of the Deccan Kingdoms were subdued in 1632, but the campaigns initiated against Bijapur and Golkonda in the 1650’s were not concluded until 1686 and 1687 respectively.

Shah Jahan’s reign was ended by his son, Aurangzeb, who took advantage of a period when his father was indisposed to defeat his brothers in a bitter war of accession after which he imprisoned his father. His reign (1658-1707) was one of similarly forthright rule. As we have noted, he has been vilified by some as a religious bigot, but he was a capable administrator who took an active personal interest in the empire’s affairs. His reign has also been represented as signalling the beginning of the end for the Mughal empire. For even though the Mughal empire attained its territorial peak during his reign, his critics argue that his inconclusive campaigns against the Marathas (1678-1707) both crippled the empire financially and symbolised the diminishing control of the imperial forces upon India.12

The view that meaningful imperial control ended with Aurangzeb’s reign is questionable. Bahadur Shah, who defeated his fraternal contenders for the Mughal throne, achieved a good deal in his short reign (1707-1712). He negotiated a settlement with the Marathas and neutralized both the Rajputs and the Punjab Sikhs. Historians such as C.A. Bayly and Muzaffar Alam have convincingly shown the need to reassess the assertion that the eighteenth century was a period of inexorable imperial decline.13 They point to improving economic conditions in the provinces as an indication that, although

11 Sir Jadunath Sarkar wrote that if “Shahjahan really hoped to conquer and rule Central Asia with a force from India... he was dreaming vain dreams...The Indian troops detested service in that far off land of hill and desert...The occupation of that poor, inhospitable and savage country meant only banishment from home and country and ceaseless fights and watching against a tireless and slippery enemy.” Sarkar, History of Aurangzib, Vol. 1, p. 91, cited in R.C. Varma, “Mughal Imperialism in Transoxiana”, Islamic Culture, 22, 3, (1948), p. 254.
12 Ishwari Prasad wrote “the prolonged wars in the Deccan had drained the resources of the empire and even after 25 years continued warfare the resistance of the Marathas was not broken.” Prasad, India in the Eighteenth Century, 1973, p. 1.
the nature of Mughal authority had been forcibly redefined, this did not necessarily signal an irrevocable process of decline.\textsuperscript{14} There was a prolonged leadership dispute after the death of Bahadur Shah, but Muhammad Shah reigned for 29 years (1719-48), during which time India suffered the sack of Delhi by the Persian raider Nadir Shah in 1739, and repelled an Afghan Invasion in 1748. Kabul was lost to Nadir Shah in 1739. Sind, Gujarat and Surat were lost in 1750; four years later Awadh and the Punjab fell.

For the most part, this thesis is concerned with Central Asian and Mughal relations during the era of the so-called "Great Mughals", that is, from Babur to Aurangzeb. Nevertheless the discussion will not be confined within a strict chronological prescription; where relevant it will analyse the reigns of the later Mughals, especially in relation to the nature of the decline that occurred in the eighteenth century. To lay down a precise period of study would be arbitrary, and thus negate the intention of the study to assess the historical problems involved in a broad manner.

* * * * *

Although the Timurid and Mughal empires existed in different eras and in different lands, there were nevertheless points of continuity between them. Apart from the genealogical connections previously mentioned, there continued to be important cultural and political links which produced a discernible Central Asian influence on the Mughal Empire, an influence which was apparent at the beginning and which remained important in many aspects of Mughal history. This thesis seeks to illuminate these continuities. This means that there will be a good deal of comparison between the institutions of Central Asia and the Mughal empire. But in order to understand what the Mughals retained of their Central Asian heritage, and what they continued to gain from it, it is necessary to consider the other side of the coin and indicate the aspects of Central Asia that did not perpetuate themselves in Mughal India. This helps us to a fuller understanding of the reasons why some aspects of Central Asian society could be transplanted and why some had to remain behind. Initially this thesis began as a comparative study of Central Asia and Mughal India with a view to assessing the extent to which the Central Asian, and, in particular, Timurid, traditions were perpetuated in Mughal India. It soon became necessary to widen the focus of the study in order to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the continuities between Central Asia and Mughal India. In order to explain the nature of the Central Asian tradition, and the extent of its transplantation, it was also considered necessary to analyse the transformation that the Central Asian aspect of Mughal India underwent in response to its adopted homeland. As we shall see, this approach allows many wider themes to be addressed.

Although it has been indicated that the thesis intends to take a broad approach, the

\textsuperscript{14} In Bayly's view "the eighteenth century saw not so much the decline of the ruling elite, but its transformation and the ascent of inferior social groups to overt political power." Ibid, p. 9. Muzaffar Alam argues that while, in the eighteenth century "there was chaos and anarchy in some regions, an emerging political order tended to be constituted in the form of virtually independent principalities, which nevertheless continued broadly within the Mughal framework." Alam, \textit{The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab 1707-48}, 1986, p. 1.
main focus of the study will be on the significance of the Timurid empire in Mughal history. Nevertheless the study will not be confined solely to Central Asia in periods of Timurid strength. It will take into account the continuing influence of Central Asia upon the Mughal Empire, even after the Timurid empire had declined. Central Asia did not play an important role in history only when it was politically and militarily strong. On the contrary, the decline of empire in Central Asia had significant repercussions elsewhere. Unrest inside Central Asia after the decline of the Timurids forced many Central Asians to look elsewhere for a place to live and to gain a living. India offered one such place. It had always been a land which had attracted fortune seekers from around much of the known world and the Mughal period was no exception. Irrespective of the political situation within Central Asia, India always attracted those who, for whatever reason, sought opportunities elsewhere. Central Asian expatriates reinforced the Central Asian links with India that had already been forged through exports of cultural traditions and commodities.

In order to study the historical problems this thesis is concerned with, we shall analyse the continuities between the important institutions of imperial rule. The word "institutions" is interpreted, for the purposes of this study, in a broad sense. It refers to the components of a society that account for the unique shape and character of its social order. Ira Lapidus has written "an institution encompasses at once an activity, a pattern of social relations, and a set of mental constructs."15 This study proposes to focus on the four major institutions that made up the Timurid political machine; the army, the court, the culture, and the capital city. These institutions Timur used respectively for the conquest, control, cultivation and coordination of his empire. The thesis endeavours to assess the extent to which they were transplanted into Mughal India, the purposes these institutions served, and the role they played in both the shaping and the maintaining of the respective empires. For the purposes of coherence, these institutions will be considered separately, but there was in fact a considerable degree of overlap between them - as there is a necessary interaction between the key institutions of any society - and this makes it essential to consider the role of the component parts in determining the makeup of the whole. Where relevant, such areas of overlap will be indicated throughout, and in the conclusion it is hoped that an overall picture of Central Asian influence in the Mughal Empire can be drawn, both in the comparative sense of general similarities, and as an assessment of the specific continuities between Central Asia and the Mughal empire. But although it is intended to adopt a broad approach, this study does not claim to have evaluated all aspects of Central Asian influence in Mughal history.

Having identified the four major institutions of the Timurid empire we must now consider briefly their significance for the purposes of this study. The army was of vital importance as a means of conquest and control. Conquest enhanced imperial prestige, neutralised potential opponents and could be a useful source of treasure. Secondly, the army served as a means by which the sovereign could reward his followers, by appointing them to leadership positions. The army was also an important means of administrative control, both for the purposes of law and order and for revenue collection.

The second institution that will be discussed is the sovereign's court. For the purposes of this thesis the word "court" describes the place where the sovereign, the sovereign's family, their servants, the civilian and military officials and the sovereign's preferred courtly companions - for example scholars and philosophers - congregated. The court was mostly located within the capital city, but it could also be a mobile institution. The imperial ideology was shaped and also supported by cultural institutions. These institutions will be analysed in two chapters: one on the role of Islam in Central Asia and Mughal India, the other on the significance of culture as prestige advertising. Although they will be considered separately these forms of culture had a common aim, that of binding the elite together. To achieve this, the imperial culture integrated foreign elements within this cultural framework to reflect the inclusive nature of the empire. The fifth chapter will focus on the capital city. Samarkand was Timur's cultural showpiece; it was material proof of the glory and wealth of the Timurid Empire. The capital cities of Mughal India, such as Fatehpur Sikri and Shahjahanabad, were similarly noted for their splendour. The capital city represented an ideal type of the imperial vision.

These four major institutions dictated the framework within which a number of important historical agents operated. Commerce and revenue collection are examples. Financial considerations ranked very high among the priorities of Central Asian and Indian rulers. If an empire could not command sufficient financial resources to maintain its armies and finance its administrative expenses it became very vulnerable. Central Asia and India had well developed trading areas, in particular the Central Asian cities of Samarkand and Herat, and the Indian provinces of Bengal and Gujarat, particularly in the later part of the period, were very important economically. The methods the Timurid and Mughal empires adopted to solve their financial problems help to explain many aspects of their institutions. They will be discussed where relevant throughout the study. A chapter on the army will examine the role the army played in safeguarding trade and as a collecting agent of the imperial treasuries. The chapter on the court will assess revenue collection and administration, and trading at the imperial level. The chapters on culture will evaluate the social infrastructure - for example the jizyah - a Muslim tax on non-believers - which determined the nature of trading and revenue policy. The chapter on the capital city will analyse the financial and commercial role of urban centres.

In analysing such questions it is important to keep in mind from the beginning some significant overall themes that will recur throughout the study. One important theme in this thesis is the interaction between nomadic and sedentary societies. A study of Central Asian influence in the Mughal Empire offers an excellent case study of the intersection of a primarily nomadic and a primarily sedentary society. History offers many cases of nomadic polities transplanting themselves to other lands, and engendering settled orders. The Yuan Empire of the Mongols in China was the predecessor to the Ming and Ching; the Ottoman empire arose out of the dissolution of the Mongol Il-Khanate. In these cases it is possible to see how nomadic institutions of rule became increasingly sedentarized. A study of the Central Asian influence upon the Mughal Empire offers a case study of the transplantation of the institutions of a nomadic and pastoral confederation into an area
where they evolved into the institutions of what has been regarded as a classic example of a centralized, bureaucratic, agrarian-revenue-based empire. Before proceeding into any depth with these discussions, however, it is necessary to make some qualifications. It is important to clarify the extent to which the Timurid Empire can be regarded as a nomadic polity, and the extent to which the Mughal Empire can be regarded as a centralized, bureaucratic, agrarian-revenue-based empire.

While the Mongol and Timurid periods were similar in that they were eras of nomadic ascendancy, the differences between the nomadic and sedentary worlds were far less evident in the Timurid era, particularly the later Timurid era. Timur's native territory, the Ulus Chaghatay, contained much brackish marshland suited only to nomadism. This was particularly so in the eastern section, Moghulistan, where only a few oases could support settlements.\(^{16}\) But, although much of the population was nomadic, the tribe's territory also contained the important cities of Samarkand and Herat. As Central Asia receives little rainfall, sedentary life was sustainable only in oasis towns such as Samarkand and Herat. The oasis agriculture and trading exchanges, both local and long-distance, that such oasis towns allowed, provided the economic lifeblood of the area. Control over the long distance trade that provided much of the finance necessary to maintain steppe empires was another very important economic priority. Without such control of this trade there would have been an economic downturn in the settled areas which were such an important source of revenue. In Timur's time it was impossible to rule Central Asia by giving primacy to nomadic interests at the expense of the settled population. The nomadic world was the main agent of conquest, but the settled world became an increasingly important vehicle for sustaining these conquests. Timur's strength was that he realized this and devised a system of rule beneficial to both parties.

The Mughal Empire has been regarded by many historians as a prime example of a centralized bureaucracy administering an agrarian-revenue based empire.\(^{17}\) Here again, however, qualifications may have to be made. Athar Ali, commenting on the longevity of the empire, wrote of "an extreme systematization of administration".\(^{18}\) Athar Ali has, for the most part convincingly, pointed out the extent to which the Mughal polity sought, and for the most part succeeded in achieving, the aim of a centralized administration. But

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\(^{17}\) Ibn Hasan, in his classic work *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 1932, asserted that "Akbar established uniform systems and institutions throughout the country under the direct control of the capital." Hasan, p. 356. Hasan went on to say "the structure established by Akbar and the spirit which guided its internal working were loyally maintained by his immediate successors and every branch received fresh vigour under Shah Jahan." Ibid., p. 351. But Hasan believed that the "first and greatest defect of the system was its over-centralization and its dependence upon the person of the monarch." Ibid., p. 358.

recently some historians such as Chetan Singh and Muzaffar Alam have queried the interpretation of what has sometimes been called the "Aligarh School". According to Chetan Singh "the high degree of Mughal centralization, so commonly an assumption among medievalists, might yet turn out to be an illusion." Muzaffar Alam's work has indicated that, in some respects, the Mughal nobility increasingly usurped the authority of its supposed master, the imperial court. Historians such as Chetan Singh and Muzaffar Alam do not deny the existence of an ideal of centralization among the rulers of the Mughal Empire, nor do they deny the paramount authority of the emperor. They have, however, convincingly queried the extent to which the Mughal theory of administration was applied in practice, particularly in provincial administration.

Another qualification which may have to be made is the extent to which the Mughal empire can be regarded as an agrarian-revenue based empire. On the one hand it must be acknowledged that the jama - the assessed level of land revenue - represented practically the entire income of the empire. On the other hand, some historians have questioned the extent to which the territory controlled by the Mughals was integrated into an "agrarian system". While contemporary accounts claimed that practically all of India was cultivated, studies based on Mughal records indicate that the gross cultivated area in Akbar's reign was around fifty-three to fifty-five per cent of the gross cultivation in 1919. This suggests that many areas of Mughal India were uncultivated and consequently that a significant section of the population did not rely on agricultural cultivation for their living, and were thus outside the agrarian-revenue based structure of Mughal rule. Such groups relied on a mixture of migratory pastoralism and plunder for their living. Certain elements of some tribes such as the Jats and Bhattis were integrated into the agrarian systems, but some sections of these tribes remained semi-nomadic.

Overall in the Mughal period the growth of commercialised agriculture under the Mughals encouraged such groups to become integrated into the agrarian system, but it is perhaps significant that many of these tribes resisted the imposition of Mughal overlordship and played a significant role in the decline of central authority in the eighteenth century. Thus the Mughal polity should not be seen a a monolithic structure that extracted revenue from all areas within its bounds at all times, nor did it incorporate all of the population under its auspices. Nevertheless, while it is important to acknowledge the limitations upon Mughal control, it must also be acknowledged that agrarian-revenue was the financial base of the empire, and that there was an increasing absorption of non-sedentary social formations into the sedentary community in the Mughal period.

The evolution of empire is another broad theme with which the thesis is concerned. In particular, we are concerned with how the rulers of the central Asian and Mughal

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21 Ibid., pp. 66-69.
empires confronted the difficulties that arose when a conquering force needed to adapt itself to becoming a ruling order. This problem had to be confronted in both Central Asia and Mughal India. In this phase of empire building it was important to reward those who had aided the conquest of the realm. It was also important to have some system of collecting revenue to sustain the expense of maintaining the empire. The problem of ruling people of different cultures, some of whom were unwilling to cooperate with the new order, had also to be considered, as did the position of the existing élite. The conquering party had to ensure that it did not present other contenders for power with the opportunity to do what the conquerors had done—assume the mantle of power—either by peaceful or forcible means. Once a ruling order had been established, it became the responsibility of those who succeeded the founders of the empire to consolidate the control of the empire, and adapt it to the changing times. One way this was done was by elevating the image of the sovereign. In the interests of longevity, the ruling élite endeavoured to be seen as legitimate, worthy rulers. These problems, which confront all ruling orders, are a central theme of the thesis.

When assessing the evolution of empire, then, it is important to concentrate upon the leaders first, because they frequently have the power to shape the empire in their image. But rulers do not operate within a vacuum. An autocrat can control anything, but not everything. In Central Asia and India the ruler had widespread powers. Common to both countries was an elevated leadership of undisputed paramount authority. But these individuals, irrespective of the extent of their individual powers, could not do everything. Consequently they had to delegate authority to their subordinates while, at the same time, imposing checks upon their autonomy, so as to prevent the emergence of independent centres of power that could supersede the imperial throne in importance. Authority was delegated through the four institutions covered by this study: the army, the court, the capital city, and through various forms of culture. These acted as mechanisms of imperial authority. It is important to acknowledge, however, that these mechanisms allowed some groups to exert pressure upon the centre. As the empire evolved, these institutions had to adapt in response to the changing nature of the empire. But they existed in the empires from the beginning to the end. The Timurid empire was based around its army to protect its territories, the court which supervised the various operations of empire, the city that served as a seat for the court and its operations, and a common culture that gave its élite members a shared identity. The same was true of the Mughal empire. As it evolved the nature of some of the institutions was forced to change, especially in later years. Yet at its end, as seen in the "Mutiny" of 1857, the Mughal Empire could still command and rally troops to its cause, its court rituals continued, it remained a central part of the capital city, and retained a distinct culture. This study concerns itself with the development, and redefinition, of these institutions from their point of origin, as part of the ongoing evolution of empire.

Dissipation of empire is an inevitable outcome of evolution. Empires are transient entities; they have periods of ascendancy, but ultimately they are faced with decline. Some empires have a longer shelf life than others, but all have an expiry date. The challenge of
maintaining imperial authority in the face of difficult times inevitably befalls some rulers. Any empire that rules over conquered territory faces the inherent possibility that those subjugated by imperial authority may later wish to secede from it, particularly if they have the martial wherewithal to realise this wish. This occurred in Central Asia, where the territories of Persia and Azerbaijan opted to reassert their own sovereignty, and in Mughal India, where the Marathas in the West, and the Afghans, with Persian assistance in the north, sought to reassert provincial autonomy. In the later periods of both the Timurid and Mughal Empires, former claims of universal dominion had to be reconciled with the empire's decreasing authority. Thus both empires were forced to cope with this common problem. The implications of political decline for the institutions of the empire will be discussed where relevant throughout the text, before their overall significance is analysed as a preface to the conclusion. It is important to consider the influence of decline, because ultimately both the Timurid and Mughal empires fell as a result of external secessions coupled with internal disorder. Furthermore, as we shall see, there is some evidence of both indirect and direct connections between decline in Central Asia and decline in Mughal India.

These questions cannot be satisfactorily discussed without giving due consideration to the problems of assessing and evaluating societies of the past. This thesis is concerned with evaluating the nature of Central Asian influence upon Mughal India, within a broad comparative framework that enables discussion of specific points of continuity. It seeks to identify what were, in this respect, the agents of historical causality. While it is intended to adopt a broad approach, there is, nevertheless, a tendency to concentrate upon the élite. We may recognise the deficiencies of a "top heavy" approach to history, insofar as it gives an exaggerated emphasis to the actions of a few, and ignores the everyday world of the multitudes. But is important to note that in the period under review the élite leadership was of crucial importance, and had widespread powers. Notwithstanding the qualifications provided by Chetan Singh and Muzaftar Alam it still has to be said that strong rulers in Central Asia and Mughal India, such as Timur and Akbar, were exceedingly powerful and influential individuals, in senses perhaps not always appreciated today.

Like all historical inquiry, this thesis will be based upon an examination of the primary and secondary material available. Regrettably, because of the constraints of time, and the writer's deficiencies in languages, not all such sources have been able to be used. Nevertheless an attempt has been made to use the available material to its best advantage, while remaining mindful of the problem of its historical veracity and indeed of problems of translation from the original into English. As previously mentioned, these materials are mainly recorded lives of the élite, written either by the leaders themselves or by court officials. Travellers' accounts offer a broader picture, but it is important to be

23 The reliability of some English translations of works concerning Central Asia and Mughal India has been questioned. For example one version of Jahangir's autobiography is regarded as spurious, this being the *Memoirs of the Emperor Jahanguir*, translated by David Price, 1829, reprinted 1968. A more reliable translation is the *Tazuk-I Jahangiri or Memoirs of Jahangir*, translated by Alexander Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, first published 1909-14, reprinted January 1968.
mindful of the fact that those travellers were not always aware of the subtleties of the cultures they observed. It is also important to be aware that the translations of the court records, and to a lesser extent the travellers' accounts, are not always wholly reliable. These problems mean that such sources must be used carefully: they do not necessarily invalidate their use. However, while historical sources are important as the foundation for historical inquiry, they are not a tap people can turn on and witness the flow of history. The study of history is an interactive process between the historian's insight and the materials available on the topic under investigation. It is the writer who conceptualises the topic, and, on that basis, decides what to make of the information available.

Having considered the nature of the sources and secondary material upon which this thesis is based, it is appropriate here to reflect upon what historians over the years have written about the Central Asian influence upon the Mughal empire. The contemporary records mostly refer to Central Asia as the birthplace of Babur, their revered founder. Aside from that, however, Central Asia is not regarded as being overly important to the empire. For the most part this is true of subsequent accounts of Mughal India, which see little post-Babur Central Asian influence upon India. Mohibbul Hasan neatly summed up these views of Babur's successors: they were, he says, "cut off from their Central Asian background and assimilated to Indo-Persian culture."24 It is undeniable that the Central Asian institutions of the Mughal founders were, in some cases, extensively redefined by their transplantation into India, and it is true that the Mughal rulers incorporated many aspects of Hindu and Persian culture into many aspects of society. We shall not neglect these influences, since they go a considerable way towards explaining why some aspects of Central Asian tradition were not maintained. This thesis intends to provide a more rounded picture of the Mughal empire, however, by illustrating the continuing influence of the Central Asian connection.

Some historians writing on the Central Asian connections with the Mughal empire have done so mainly to dissociate the Mughal empire with what they perceive as the "uncivilised" nature of Central Asian society. In particular, the Central Asian origins of the Mughal empire are associated with barbarism, especially the massacres carried out by the Mongols and Timur (such accounts almost invariably overlook similar actions in India). E. Denison Ross encapsulated these views when he wrote of Babur "inheriting a savagery common to all the Mongols and Turks."25 It could be argued that some writers have viewed the Central Asian influence as something of a redundant hangover which was curable by a longer acquaintance with India. Hasan, albeit more subtly than some, expressed this sentiment: "Unfortunately Babur lived in this country for too short a period to have been able to adapt himself to its ways. He failed to get rid of the memory of the land of his forefathers."26 Thus, even where the Central Asian connections have been mentioned, it has often been as a preamble to a glorious succession of Indian-born rulers, the underlying message being that by virtue of its more refined culture India was able to

24 Mohibbul Hasan, p. 203.
26 Mohibbul Hasan, p. 203.
civilise its barbarian conquerors. The cultural snobbery exhibited by some authors in this respect results from a natural wish to elevate high culture above military conquest (particularly conquest achieved through brutal means) on the yardstick by which empires are judged. From a human viewpoint this is laudable enough, insofar as it gives prominence to what are regarded as life's more ennobling pursuits. Again, however, this does not allow the whole historical picture to be drawn. As Simone Weil noted "brutality, violence, and inhumanity have an immense prestige that schoolbooks hide from children, that grown men do not admit, but that everyone bows before."²⁷ The same is true of great conquerors, inasmuch as everyone bows before them and respects their accomplishments, if not their methods. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the influence of cultural snobbery, can, if unchecked, result in an unbalanced version of history.

There are few works which concern themselves with evaluating the Central Asian influence in the Mughal empire in a broad sense. For the most part the literature on this issue is concerned with specific problems.²⁸ There are, however, works which discuss Central Asian influence in general terms, relating it to other influences upon the empire. Athar Ali's work, for example, shows the fortunes of the Central Asians within the Mughal bureaucratic hierarchy in the context of providing an overall view of the Mughal administrative system.²⁹ To a considerable extent the lack of comprehensive accounts of the Mughal inheritance from Central Asia can be attributed to the fact that such an inheritance has not been widely acknowledged. The Mughals are, rightly enough, seen as an Indian dynasty, and are considered in that context. The Mughal empire had a great impact upon India, and it is this enormous subject that has received the attention of historians - and justifiably so, for the Mughal era was of immense importance in Indian history. Regrettably, the Central Asian aspect has, for the most part, been sidelined in the historical writing as a narrative preamble. This thesis endeavours to make some contribution towards a reassessment of this view.

²⁸ Examples of these works include: I.A. Khan "The Turco-Mongol Theory of Kingship", Medieval India: a Miscellany, Vol. 2, 1972, pp. 8-18, and Abdur Rahim, "Mughal Relations with Central Asia", Islamic Culture,11, 1, (1937), concluded 11, 2, (1937). I.A. Khan's work assesses the extent to which the Turco-Mongol model of kingship was useful as a source of legitimation in Indian society. Abdur Rahim's article provides an overview of Mughal diplomatic relations with Central Asia.
II: The Army: Agent of Conquest; Instrument of Control

In Central Asia and Mughal India, the army performed a pivotal role in actualising imperial aspirations. It was the institution entrusted with the process of realizing dreams of imperial dominion. It also served an important role in the process of control which allowed dreams of imperial rule to be a continuing reality. In this chapter we shall analyse the role of the army in Central Asia and Mughal India in relation to these functions of conquest and control. In particular, we shall analyse the key components of the Central Asian army; and the transformation that resulted from its transplantation into an Indian environment. To begin with, we shall consider the process of conquest in Central Asia and Mughal India. We shall then discuss the component parts of the respective armies and assess the practical implications of this on the battlefield. Finally, we shall evaluate the wider role performed by the army as a means of social control.

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The structure of the army and its social role was, to a considerable degree, determined by the political agenda of the ruling élite. An assessment of the military activity of any polity illuminates many aspects of its political agenda. The Timurid, Uzbek and Mughal Empires aimed to incorporate as much territory as practicable within their jurisdiction. In practice these ambitions were constrained by the contemporary strength of the empires relative to that of their neighbours. Nevertheless, the history of the empires indicates their expansionist aspirations, if not always their expansionist achievements.

This tradition of expansionism, shared between the Timurid and Mughal empires, stemmed from their shared Turco-Mongolian heritage. Timur's conceptualisation of the world owed much to Chingissid history and mythology, as did that of the Timurids' successors, the Uzbeks, who were descended from the house of Chinggiz's son Jochi.1 As we shall see, Timur saw himself as a restorer of the Chingissid world order. Babur was a descendant of Chinggiz on his mother's side, and from Timur on his father's side. Although Babur does not make many direct references to Chinggiz, it does appear that he identified more with the militarism of his Mughal relations than he did with the Timurid Mirzas at Husain Baiqara's court.2 While Babur enjoyed the

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1 For a good overview of Timur's inheritance from Turco-Mongolian traditions see Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, pp. 2-12. See also Joseph Fletcher, "Bloody Tanistry: Authority and Succession in the Ottoman, Indian Muslim, and Later Chinese Empires", pp. 16-22.

2 For an account of Babur's interactions with his relations see Maria Eva Subtelny, "Babur's Rival Relations, a Study in Kinship and Conflict in 15th-16th Century Central Asia", Der Islam, 66, 1, (1989), pp. 102-118.
companionship of his Timurid cousins, he criticised their military ineptitude.3

The empires of Central Asia and India, although inspired by a shared tradition, evolved in different ways. Whereas the Timurid empire reached its apogee under its founder, the Mughal empire expanded steadily for over a century and a half. Timur began his conquests after he defeated Amir Husayn in 1370.4 By the mid 1380's Timur held Transoxiana, Khurasan, Afghanistan, Sistan and most of Mazandaran. From 1385-88 he campaigned in Persia - taking Tabriz, Tiflis and Fars - and raided Georgia. From 1392-96 he embarked upon his five year campaign in the west in which he conquered the Golden Horde, and again attacked Georgia. In 1398 he turned his attention southward, across the Hindu Kush, and sacked Delhi. In 1401 he seized Damascus, after which the Ottoman leader was taken into captivity. In 1403 he concluded terms in Georgia. Only through his death in 1405 did China escape capture. His successors could not equal these feats. Shah Rukh defeated the Qara-Qoyunlu and marched into Tabriz in 1421 and 1429. On both occasions the Qara Qoyunlu regained control and the Timurids began to lose control of Western Persia.5 The succession war, following Shah Rukh's death, meant that the eventual victor Abu Said ruled a constricted realm consisting of Khurasan and Transoxiana. Despite this, he still endeavoured to conquer the former Timurid lands of Western Persia. In the reign of Husain Baiqara the Timurids remained within Khurasan, they were content to concentrate upon their cultural life.6

While the Timurid campaigns were trans-continental, the Mughal army was employed mostly in the sub-continent. Babur's victory at the battle of Panipat in 1526 laid the foundation of Mughal rule in the area called Hindustan, which became the heart of the Mughal empire. In Babur's lifetime the Mughal empire encompassed modern day Pakistan, and most of Afghanistan and the Indo-gangetic plain to the borders of Bengal. It was a much smaller domain than that which Timur conquered, but in contrast to the Timurid empire, it expanded over time. Babur's successors cumulatively increased the empire's territory until the end of Aurangzeb's reign, although there were a few hiccups along the way (such as Humayun losing the empire to the Afghan Sher Shah). Nevertheless, the expansion of the Mughal Empire was a slow process. It was not until Humayun's successor, Akbar, conquered Bengal in 1579, twenty-three years into his

3 In Babur's view "the Mirzas were good enough as company and in social matters, in conversation and parties, but they were strangers to war, strategy, equipment, bold fight and encounter." Babur, p. 300.

4 Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, pp. 42-82, offers a concise account of Timur's career. Hilda Hookham, Tamarlan: The Conqueror, 1962, offers a lengthier chronicle of Timur's life. Ibn Arabshah's work contains many accounts of Timur's campaigns. Ibn Arabshah was captured by Timur at the age of twelve, and is critical of Timur's cruelty; nevertheless his account is a valuable historical record. Clavijo, the Spanish Ambassador to Timur's court, wrote a detailed account of many aspects of Central Asia, including Timur's army.

5 R. Gonzalez De Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane, translated by Guy Le Strange, 1928.

6 According to Babur, Husain Baiqara, with 60 men, defeated a force of 3000 led by Muhammad Ali, Pay master of Abu Said, in 866 A.H. But Babur goes on to say that, "this was his one outstanding feat of arms", Babur, p. 259.
reign, that the Mughal Empire expanded outside the boundaries of Hindustan. Subsequently Akbar conquered the territories of Kashmir (1586), Sind and Baluchistan (1595). He then commenced the Mughal attempts at conquering the Deccan region. Campaigns in the Deccan were an ongoing feature of Mughal rule. Even in the reign of Aurangzeb, when the empire reached its furthest territorial extent, the Deccan region was not fully integrated into the Mughal empire. Furthermore, it is significant that some historians have blamed the decline of the empire on this expansion.⁷

To a considerable extent the different chronological patterns of expansion were dictated by the political exigencies of the time. Timur's conquests were, to an extent, a reflection of the divisions within the lands he attacked. Timur defeated relatively weak local dynasties such as the Sabzawars (1381), the Muzaffarids (1392), and the Jalayirids (c. 1393). To the east China maintained an isolationist policy towards Central Asia, something which remained unaltered until the advent of the Ch'ing in 1644. The Mughals, by contrast, were bordered by a united Safavid Persia, the Ottomans were well established, and, as we shall see, Central Asia remained stronger than some contemporary observers believed. Moreover the Mughals needed a stable Persia on their border to act as a check upon the Afghan and Central Asian raiders. For this reason the Mughals and the Safavids did not fight any pitched battles against each other, although there were points of contention between the two - in particular, the question of the ownership of Qandahar, which changed hands frequently during the period.⁸ There was also the question of the Safavids' support of some of the Deccan kingdoms, especially Bijapur.⁹ Thus the Timurids, like their Mongol predecessors, were a supreme dynasty among many smaller ones. The Mughals, by contrast, were one established empire amongst many.

The different patterns of conquest in the Central Asian and Mughal empires reflected the different political priorities of their rulers. Moreover they reflect the extent to which the character of the Timurid army changed after its transplantation to the Indian environment. Timur's conquests were in many ways inspired by the Mongols, but his motives differed in some respects from Central Asian traditions.¹⁰ The Mongol

⁷ Jadunath Sarkar wrote: "Aurangzib, like the boa constrictor, had swallowed more than he could digest. It was impossible for him to take possession of all the provinces of the newly annexed kingdoms and at the same time to suppress the Marathas." Jadunath Sarkar, Studies in Aurangzeb's Reign, 1933, pp. 17-18, cited in Satish Chandra, "The Deccan Policy of the Mughals-A Reappraisal", Indian Historical Review, 4, 2, (1978), pt. 1, p. 326.

⁸ Qandahar was conquered by Babur in 1522. Tahmasp briefly reconquered it, but it remained in Mughal hands from 1538 until 1558 when it was again lost to the Persians. The Mughals regained Qandahar in 1593, taking advantage of Uzbek pressure upon Persia, and they retained it until 1622 when Shah Abbas recaptured it in a surprise attack. Shah Jahan reconquered it in 1638, only to lose it again in 1649. Expeditions sent by Shah Jahan in 1652 and Aurangzeb in 1688, failed to recapture Qandahar. J.N. Sarkar, "India and Iran in the Medieval Period: A Bird's Eye View", Indo-Iranica, 26, 2-3, (1974), pp. 6-9.


¹⁰ Timur, for example, presented his Iranian campaign as, among other things, a Chinggisid restoration,
conquests were motivated in part by Chingiz's desire to fulfil the destiny he believed heaven had offered him, and in part because he had to campaign ceaselessly if he was to retain the support of the military aristocracy. They also stemmed from the fact that in Central Asia all male members of the chiefly house were considered to have an equal hereditary claim to power. Therefore heredity was an insufficient basis for legitimacy as a tribal, let alone a supra-tribal, leader. Conquest was held to be a source of legitimacy, as it proved the martial merit of the leadership candidates. Timur's invasions owed something to these traditions, but they also reflected the necessity to serve the demands of the nomadic and sedentary communities. Like Chingiz, Timur was aware that war beyond home frontiers satisfied the demands of the military leaders. It also enabled Timur to control the long distance trade that sustained the sedentary world, which in turn sustained his armies. It kept the military class, who were from nomadic areas, occupied outside Transoxiana; thus, while they were serving Timur's interests by neutralising political opponents, they were at the same time unable to pose a challenge to him in his homeland.

It is important to qualify the term "conquest", for Timur did not always annex the lands he conquered. His campaigns reflected many different motives. When he defeated Muhammad Ibn Tughluq in India, for example, he did not seek to annex India; he contented himself with raiding Delhi, and collecting a huge haul of booty. Sometimes his campaigns were motivated by economic priorities. It has been suggested that when he attacked the Golden Horde, his purpose was to redirect the flow of trade through Samarkand, not to conquer the lands of the Horde. When he did incorporate new territory within his empire, it was with a specific purpose in mind. His occupation of Persia was based on a number of motives. He wanted to redirect the wealth of Persia into Samarkand. Moreover, he wanted to incorporate some aspects of Persian culture into his élite culture.

In Timur's reign plunder became an organised method of boosting the treasury's


13 Manz, "The Ulus Chaghatay Before and After Timur's Rise to Power", p. 86.

14 Timur was master of the village known as the Iron Gates in the region of Samarkand, which was a village on the only route by which one could travel up to Samarkand from India, and vice versa. When he defeated the Golden Horde, he gained control of the Iron Gates at Derbend, which controlled access from Persia to Tartary. Clavijo, the Spanish Ambassador to Timur's court, wrote, "Between these Gates of Samarqand and those gates of Derbend indeed is a distance of at least 1500 leagues and of this great territory, as you must know, Timur is lord." Clavijo, p. 205.

15 *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 6, p. 54.
coffers. He gave his opponents the option of surrendering, both to spare his own troops and prevent further reprisals.\textsuperscript{16} When a town fell, all entrances would be sealed off completely to prevent the town's treasure being removed and to prevent outsiders raiding.\textsuperscript{17} The muhassils (tax-collectors) of the supreme divan or sometimes the amirs (commanders) themselves would consult the tax registers, and accompanied by torturers would make house to house searches, and amass a pile of booty.\textsuperscript{18} An inventory of this was taken by the scribes and after the amirs had taken their share it would be dispatched to the capital. Plunder was allowed only after a specific signal had been given.\textsuperscript{19} Timur strictly enforced this rule, confiscating all illegally obtained goods, and punishing the malefactors severely.\textsuperscript{20} If the defenders of a city resisted, Timur could be merciless in exacting retribution, especially if his envoys had been harmed. On the other hand, if Timur considered a city to be of economic importance, then sometimes it would not be harmed, even if it had resisted fiercely. Such an example occurred in 1381, when Timur decided against sacking Herat after it had vigorously resisted his forces. He opted to impose a hefty ransom on the city and later ensured he appropriated a considerable share of the revenues generated by the commerce of that city.\textsuperscript{21} Pyramids of skulls were erected from the heads of the slain outside cities that had resisted. These acted as a warning to other cities not to resist.\textsuperscript{22} This particular practice continued in Mughal

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\item[16] Peaceful surrender was not necessarily a guarantee against desecration. According to Ibn Arabshah, after Timur promised immunity to the inhabitants of Sistan "he laid the city waste, leaving in it not a tree or a wall and destroyed it utterly." Ibn Arabshah, p. 23. Clavijo cites another alleged example of this in the village of Pegarich whose inhabitants gave Timur 3000 aspers on the understanding that this would save their churches from destruction. Timur accepted the money, but nevertheless ordered the destruction of the churches. Clavijo, p. 138.
\item[17] Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 53.
\item[18] The aftermath of the siege of Damascus in 1401 illustrates the thoroughness with which Timur sought plunder. He first demanded a Mal-i Aman - a surety levy - of 10,000,000 dinars. When this was delivered to him, he claimed that because of a difference in accounting, only 3,000,000 dinars had been paid and there were still 7,000,000 dinars outstanding. To meet this demand, he ordered the confiscation of the money, baggage, weapons left in Damascus by the Sultan and his nobles; the money of merchants who had departed; all the animals within the city (12,000 were subsequently surrendered); and all arms and weapons within the city. Having taken possession of this, Timur demanded lists of all the dwellings within the city and instructed his amirs to extract money from these dwellings and their inhabitants. This resulted in a period of widespread torture which lasted nineteen days. Following this, the city was opened to Timur's followers for plunder. Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus in 1401, translated by Walter Fischel, 1952, pp. 93-97.
\item[19] Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 54.
\item[20] Ibn Arabshah remarked, "But if anyone molested another before the granting of license...he punished him with loss of position and life." Ibn Arabshah, p. 162.
\item[22] Hafiz-i Abru, a Persian historian, counted twenty-eight such pyramids, each consisting of 1500 skulls. Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 55.
\end{footnotes}
India.\textsuperscript{23} The Mughals' desire to be rulers, and not raiders, must be taken into account when assessing their different pattern of campaigning, and consequently the change in character between the Central Asian and Mughal armies. There had been several raiding expeditions from Central Asia before the advent of the Mughals.\textsuperscript{24} None of these raids, however, resulted in the imposition of a new government upon India. To a point, this can be attributed to the fact that the expeditions were primarily for the purpose of plundering, but similar expeditions resulted in more permanent Mongol rule elsewhere, such as with the Il-Khans in Persia. After the demise of the Mongols the raids continued. Timur's Indian campaign had a devastating effect upon some areas.\textsuperscript{25} Nevertheless the effects of the raids were absorbed, and the Central Asian raiders invariably returned to their homelands. The Mughals reversed the trend of Central Asians, appearing only as raiders, but they had to make considerable alterations to Central Asian practices to do so. To a considerable extent, the longevity of the Mughals' reign in India can be attributed to the fact that they managed to utilise their army first to conquer their realm, and second (and perhaps more importantly) to control the greater part of their territory. This was not as important in Central Asia, where Imperial rule did not depend upon maintaining control of all conquered territory. As we shall see, however, the nature of the empire the Mughals administered required a much higher level of control.

While the Mughals welcomed the treasure campaigning could provide, ultimately their primary objective was to rule, and not to raid. In contrast to the Central Asian tradition, they made a conscious attempt to incorporate within the framework of their empire all the territory they had subjugated. The administrative framework required to oversee this meant a far greater degree of bureaucratisation. Not only did the army have to conquer land, it had to retain it. Consequently the army was, for the most part, used to maintain control over the provincial areas. If it was unable to do this the empire's financial base could have been undermined. Furthermore, in contrast to the situation in Central Asia, the Mughal military aristocracy did not regard constant campaigning as an important priority. It was more important for the Mughals to retain a measure of control over their territories, and to make service in the Mughal hierarchy an attractive proposition. Under the mansabdari system it was the nobility who bore the financial cost

\textsuperscript{23} Babur, for example, had a pyramid of skulls erected after his victory over Rana Sanga. Babur, \textit{Babur Nama}, p. 576. Abdullah Firoz Jang, in the reign of Shah Jahan is said to have boasted that he had dismembered 200,000 heads, and could place them in two rows from Agra to Patna. Dirk Kolff, \textit{Naukar Rajput and Sepoy}, 1990, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{24} In 1241 the Mongols sacked Lahore causing a good deal of damage; similar raids occurred in 1257; 1258; 1288; in 1296 there were five raids by various Mongol leaders upon India; in 1351 the Mongols raided after the succession of Firoz Shah; in his reign another raid was launched in 1358. See The \textit{Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi}, by Yaliya Bin Ahmad Bin Abdullah Sirhindi, translated by H. Beveridge, reprinted 1986, pp. 28, 36, 51, 121,132.

\textsuperscript{25} Sirhindi alleges 50,000 people were massacred at Loni (seven miles northwest of Delhi). He goes on to say, "After the departure of Timur, the vicinity of Delhi, and all those places which his army had passed through were visited by pestilence and famine....For a couple of months Delhi presented a scene of Desolation and woe." Ibid., p. 171, and p. 173.
of campaigning because they could be required to supply contingents for imperial campaigns.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, in Akbar's reign measures were taken to ensure that the nobility surrendered all captured treasure to the imperial treasury.\textsuperscript{27} The Mughals control was based upon their monopoly of the award of rights for the collection of agrarian revenue. This required, basically, local superiority, not en masse campaigning.

The Mughals did not, however, abandon the imperialist ambitions of their Central Asian ancestors. Conquest was a form of legitimacy for the Mughals in India, particularly when they were trying to re-establish their authority after the Afghan interregnum. The strength of the Mughal army, as demonstrated by their subjugation of the provinces, gave them legitimacy as the supreme authority in India, a position they retained well into the eighteenth century, despite the territorial unrest. Because local rulers depended upon the emperor's patronage for their position, it was in their interests to keep the Mughals in power. While there were, at some times, and in some places, trouble spots which resisted their claims to overlordship, the Mughals were seldom faced with the problem of fighting a large, coordinated, coalition of forces. So long as the Imperial army, in concert with the armies of the regional zamindars, was able to maintain sufficient strength to assure itself of local superiority in these areas, imperial paramountcy would not be threatened. Even in these cases it is important to note that the Mughals were not necessarily fighting against any one ethnic group or clan, \textit{per se}; rather, they were fighting factions within these groups, who, for various reasons, resisted incorporation within the imperial structure. The Mughals established themselves as a paramount authority superior to any one of the regionalised contenders for Indian power, be it the Rajputs or the Marathas. The Mughals did not have to be strong enough to defeat all of these opponents because such adversaries were unlikely to form alliances against them. This allowed the Mughals to divide and conquer individual groups by supporting rival contenders for regional power within India.

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The differences in the military history of Central Asia and Mughal India go some way towards explaining the change in character the Timurid army underwent after its transplantation from Central Asia into Mughal India. Some of the component parts of the Central Asian army and strategy were retained, but the different priorities of the rulers dictated that the Timurid army had to adapt itself markedly to the Indian environment. The priority given to conquering land, and establishing the Mughals as a paramount

\textsuperscript{26} Under the mansabdari system each official - known as a mansabdar - received an assignment of land from which they were entitled to collect a certain sum of revenue. In return for this right they were expected to maintain a certain number of troops. Mansabdars had two ranks: the first was known as a Zat Rank, at first this indicated the number of troops the mansabdar was expected to maintain, but for the greater part of the Mughal period it was a hierarchical indication of rank. The second type of rank was called the Suwar, this rank indicated the size of the contingent the mansabdar was expected to maintain, although in later periods it became a base figure and the mansabdar only had to maintain a certain fraction of the nominal number. The mansabdari system will be discussed at greater detail in Ch. 1, p. 37 and in the chapter on the court.

\textsuperscript{27} Douglas Streusand, \textit{The Formation of the Mughal Empire}, 1989, pp. 86-87.
authority above the other factions competing for power in India; resulted in a preference on the part of the Mughals for a more static type of warfare. In Central Asia, as we have seen, the emphasis was placed upon a mobile army for the purposes of campaigning, whether it be to protect trade interests, obtain booty, or suppress potential opponents. In the period when the Mughals were seeking to impose their authority upon India, their Central Asian traditions proved helpful. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 because of his superior use of tactics, coupled with his artillery, and his mounted archers, which easily defeated the numerically superior forces of Ibrahim Lodi. Once established as rulers within Hindustan, however, the Mughal armies underwent a substantial change. Faced with the challenge of establishing themselves as a paramount authority superior to any one of the other traditions of kingship within India, the Mughal army had to adapt itself to fighting localised battles, against such opponents as the Bijapuris, the Karnatakas, or the Jats. Furthermore once they established their hegemony over these groups the army took on more of a defensive role. Because they had established themselves as the supreme authority within India, it followed that their opponents had to come to them; in Central Asia, on the other hand, Timur had to seek out potential opponents, such as the Golden Horde, and destroy them.

The cavalry was one branch of the Central Asian army that the Mughals retained more or less in its Central Asian fashion. Their superiority over their opponents in this respect gave them a vital advantage over many of their opponents when they were asserting their authority within India. The strike force of the Central Asian armies was the armoured knight, mounted upon a top-class horse.28 The Timurids themselves demonstrated the effectiveness of this in India, when Timur routed a fully armed elephant corps of Muhammad Ibn Tughluq. The cavalry remained an important part of the Mughal army throughout their reign. Babur's mounted archers proved decisive at the battle of Panipat. The superiority of the cavalry over the elephant was further demonstrated at Tukaroi in 1567, when an Afghan elephant charge broke through the centre of the Mughal defences, but the mounted archers on the flanks inflicted such heavy casualties that the attack faltered. The élite personnel of the Mughal cavalry were known as the Ahadis. They were of aristocratic background and were appointed directly by the sovereign.29 They were expected to have their own horses when they joined the army,

28 The exact numbers of cavalry used by Timur are difficult to ascertain; such estimates as are available give varying accounts, and it is probable that some contain a good degree of exaggeration. The information available does indicate a trend of steady expansion over time. Clavijo suggests that in his early days Timur had a following of around 300 horsemen. Clavijo, p. 211. Muhammad Haidar writes that when Timur allied himself with Amir Husayn against the Moghuls of Mughulistan, that he commanded a force of 2,000, which defeated a force of 50,000 led by Tughluk Sulduz. Approximately a decade later, in 1375, Timur sent 30,000 horsemen against Mughulistan in his third expedition against that region. Muhammad Haidar, pp. 24 and 44. In the 1930's a monument was discovered on the banks of the Sari-su river in Kazakhstan which said that the Sultan of Turan [Timur] had come with an army of 200,000 against the king of Bulgharia (Tokhtamish). Timur's force in India was approximately 90,000 strong. Hookham, pp. 132 and 189.

29 It is difficult to calculate precisely the number of Ahadis employed by the imperial household. Abul Fazl gives the number at 12,000. Pelasct, a Dutch traveller estimated that there were 4441 in the imperial service at
but later these were supplied. In Mughal India the mounted archers were especially important and since many of them were recruited from Central Asia they represented an important connection between Mughal India and that area. Bernier writes that they could shoot six arrows before a European musketeer could fire twice. The mounted archers could repulse any cavalry or infantry attack, inflicting heavy casualties at minimal loss. Skilled mounted archers required much training, and in India they were very difficult to replace. Because of the relative paucity of horses in India there were few social groups in India who were trained in the arts of horse-riding and bow-fighting.

The Mughals devoted a considerable sum of their money toward maintaining the numbers and quality of their cavalry. The Mughals could command considerable numbers of horses. Lahori gives the number of horsemen in 1647 reign at 200,000. Shah Jahan sent approximately 38,000 horses against Balkh and Badakhshan in 1645, in concert with 10,000 soldiers. Both Thevenot and Careri recorded that Aurangzeb was believed to command around 300,000 horsemen. Even though this figure is probably too high, it is perhaps important that Aurangzeb was believed by many to possess a large army. 100,000 horsemen usually accompanied the royal encampment, and the number of horsemen Aurangzeb could have called upon at any one time is unlikely to have significantly exceeded this. According to one estimate based on the figures in the A’ln-i Akbari, nearly fifty-five per cent of the war budget was spent on war animals, of which about half went to the upkeep of horses. The imperial cavalry claimed approximately twenty-four per cent of the budget.

The transformation of the Timurid army in India cannot be adequately understood without reference to several aspects of equine history. Timur controlled considerable numbers of horses, although in his time it was the heavy horse of Iranian origins, rather than the steppe ponies used by the Mongols, that was the major fighting weapon. The

Akbar’s death. Lahori, writing in 1647, listed the number of Ahadis as 7,000. Moosvi, p. 225.


Of the 200,000 horsemen in Mughal service in 1647, 185,000 were maintained by the mansabdars, 7,000 were Ahadis and the mansabdars themselves comprised the remaining 8,000. Lahori, Padshahnama, Bb. Ind., II, 715 cited in Habib, “Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India”, Journal of Economic History, 29, 1, (1969), p. 56.

Inayat Khan gives the numbers involved as follows: Main body, 12,000 horsemen, 2,000 soldiers; Right Wing and Left Wing, 6000 horsemen and 1000 soldiers each; Vanguard, 12,000 horsemen, 2,000 soldiers; Rearguard, 2000 horsemen. Inayat Khan, The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan, An Abridged History of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, Compiled by his Royal Librarian, ed. W.A Begley and Z.A. Desai,1990, p. 335.

Thevenot, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri: Being the third part of the travels of M.de Thevenot into the Levant and the Third Part of a Voyage Around the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, ed. Surendranath Sen, 1949, pp. 6 and 245.

Bernier, p. 380.

Moosvi, pp. 273 and 245.

Ibid., p. 273.
big Iranian horses were capable of carrying an armoured knight into battle, while being protected by armour themselves. To ride these horses into combat, Timur could call upon large numbers of nomadic horsemen, trained since childhood to be expert at horse riding and the use of bows and arrows.\(^{38}\) His ability to shape this raw material into an ordered force distinguished him as a military figure. Horses were plentiful in Central Asia. At one time the Mongol empire controlled about half of the world's supply of horses.\(^{39}\) The Spanish ambassador Clavijo reported passing imperial studs in both desert and uninhabited areas along the route he was travelling.\(^{40}\)

The use of cavalry in Mughal India was constrained by a number of factors. First, with the exception of some northern provinces, India is an inhospitable country for horses. Consequently once they had established themselves in Gujarat the Mughals had a monopoly of the supply of Indian war horses, and the ports through which the other horses were imported. A second point, related to this, is that in contrast to Central Asia, the horse was a cultural icon in India. They were not used as draught animals, that task being given to bullocks.\(^{41}\) In Central Asia the horses were a source of food for the soldiers, as well as being an important means of communication, and because of their easy availability, horses were expendable.\(^{42}\) In India, ownership of a pure-bred horse was a symbol of status.\(^{43}\) The prices paid for horses in India were four times greater than those in England.\(^{44}\) The ownership of top grade horses by the Mughal nobles gave the imperial forces further prestige. Although horses could be bred in Marwar, Kutch, and the Punjab, these horses were usually considered second rate.\(^{45}\) In Persia, the winter snow and spring rain produced grasses which provided rich feed for the horses and gave them a high blood temperature and elastic nerves. Such climactic conditions could not be replicated in India.\(^{46}\) The best breeding grounds for horses were the Arabian peninsula; Iran; and Central Asia. Given the paucity of top grade horses in India, the Mughals were forced to import top quality horses from these

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\(^{38}\) Clavijo noted, "Thus marching at the head of his people Timur has accomplished great deeds and gained many victories, for the [Tartars] are a very valiant folk, fine horsemen, very skilful at shooting with the bow and exceedingly hardy." Clavijo, p. 191.


\(^{40}\) Clavijo noted that men known as Yamehis were appointed to oversee these studs, which were stationed at the regular staging posts along the main route. Clavijo, p. 177.


\(^{42}\) Clavijo noted the ability of the nomadic troops to survive on the milk of their horses. Clavijo reported that riders carrying Imperial orders at top speed would ride their horses until those horses died, whereupon they would strip the skin off them and sell them by the side of the road. Clavijo, pp. 180 and 191.

\(^{43}\) Chaudhuri, p. 277.


\(^{45}\) Chaudhuri, p. 278.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 280.
lands.\textsuperscript{47} This was a longstanding tradition; Ibn Battuta had found evidence of nomadic Turks breeding horses for sale in the Indian markets.\textsuperscript{48} Horses from the Ili Valley of Ferghanah, Babur's home province, were regularly exported to India and Chinese Turkestan. Abul Fazl wrote that "droves after droves arrive from Turan and Iran and there are nowadays twelve thousand in the stables of his majesty."\textsuperscript{49} Manucci, who visited in the reign of Aurangzeb, observed that the bulk of the Mughal horses came from Bakh and Bukhara. It is possible that this was one of the motives for Shah Jahan's campaigns in Balkh and Badakhshan. Manucci's observations seem to suggest that the imperial stables were approximately the same size in Aurangzeb's reign as they had been in Akbar's reign.\textsuperscript{50} The best horses, however, soon degenerated in Indian conditions, and for that reason the Mughal cavalry was never equal of its northern neighbours.\textsuperscript{51} Nevertheless, within the bounds of India the Mughal cavalry was, for the most part, a force to be reckoned with. Thus, in two ways the horse is a common feature in Central Asian and Indian history: it was important in the armies of both areas, and as a commodity that continued the links between the two countries.

If the importance of the cavalry is an example of the transplantation of Central Asian military practices into Mughal India, the use of the elephant is, in many ways, indicative of the transformation the Central Asian army underwent in Mughal India. When Timur invaded India in 1398 his chroniclers were impressed by the Indian war elephants.\textsuperscript{52} In an early encounter in his Indian campaign, Timur was defeated by an elephant charge led by Muhammad Ibn Tughluq. Next time they fought, Timur marshalled a squadron of camels, put a load of dry grass atop them and sent them against the elephants. When the camels got close to the elephants he set fire to the grass, and the elephants, terrified of fire, fled.\textsuperscript{53} Once they had established themselves in India, the

\textsuperscript{47} An indication of the importance of imported horses can be gauged by Moores's estimate, based on figures in Akbar's reign, that seventy-six per cent of the horses in imperial service were imported. Moores, p. 274.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibn Battuta saw evidence of this as early as the 14th century; he found nomadic pastoralists breeding horses for sale in India. Ibid. Horses were also a common gift from Central Asian and Innian delegations.

\textsuperscript{49} Abul Fazl, A'in-i Akbari, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{50} "Most of the horses used by the Mogul come from the regions of Balkh, Bukhara and Kabul. Thence come every year more than one hundred thousand, and on them the King makes a great profit by the duty he imposes. At the crossing of the Indus alone a payment of twenty five percent on their value is made. The best are chosen for the king's service, the usual number taken being about twelve thousand...These horses are called Turki, they are courageous in war, can stand much fatigue, and never forsake their masters until death." Nicolao Manucci, Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708, translated with introduction and notes by William Irvine, Vol. 2, reprinted Calcutta, 1965, p. 366. Thevenot recorded that 60, 000 horses were purchased from the Uzbek's every year in Kabul. Thevenot, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{51} Chaudhuri, p. 282.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibn Arabshah wrote, "They built on each elephant towe armed with shields, and filled each tower with soldiers...and they hung from them bells which might put to flight the fiercest foe, and fastened to their trunks the finest swords." He went on to claim,"...and those elephants seemed in the battle like the forest walking with the lions or like castles running with their soldiers." Ibn Arabshah, p. 96.
Mughals made considerable use of elephants, which were used in combat, as a beast of burden, and for show. This was one factor that hindered the mobility of their army. Babur and Humayun do not mention elephants very much when dealing with military matters, but subsequent Mughal emperors employed considerable numbers of elephants. Sometimes they were armoured and led into combat, but they were mainly used to carry nobles and to move artillery. It was common for the generals to march into battle atop splendidly decorated elephants. The elephants' use in combat was limited by their tendency to become frightened at the sound of artillery fire, and run amok among the troops. They were occasionally employed as battering rams against stubborn defences, but here too their usefulness was limited by their predisposition towards turning on those who had unleashed them if they were wounded.

While the cavalry was equally important to the armies of Central Asia and India, artillery was much more important in Mughal India. The emphasis in steppe warfare was upon mobility, more than it was on set-piece battles. There is little information on artillery during the reign of the Timurids. Timur's artillery was not especially sophisticated; the artillery weapons they had were of Chinese design, which was not very advanced. Clavijo reported that Timur imported Ottoman gunsmiths to remedy this deficiency. The Timurid artillery was mainly employed in sieges. Even when employed in siegework the artillery of the time was seldom able to break through well constructed forts. Its main purpose appears to have been to frighten the enemy cavalry.

The more static type of warfare in India meant an increased role for the artillery. In part, as we shall see, this was necessitated by the number of forts in India. The changed role also indicated a preference for set-piece battles. The Mughal artillery has rightly received credit for many of the Mughals' victories. But it is important to qualify this

53 Clavijo, p. 255.
54 Abul Fazl praised the elephant saying: "It adds materially to the pomp of a king and to the success of a conqueror." Abul Fazl, A'in-i Akbari, p. 123.
55 Abul Fazl gives the number of elephants in imperial service in Akbar's reign as around 5000 during the muster. Ibid., p. 223.
57 Ibid., p. 178.
58 Clavijo, p. 288.
59 Muin al-Din Natanz reported that fire throwing weapons were used at the siege of Urgench. Nizam al-Din Shami boasted the prowess of the Timurid artillery compared with the Indian gunners, but this is more a reflection on the poor state of Indian artillery at the time, and the glorificatory nature of the chronicles, than an indication of the sophistication of the Timurid artillery. Hookham, p. 62. Ibn Khaldun writes that during the siege of Damascus, Timur "erected against it catapults, naphtha guns, ballistas and breschers, and within a few days sixty catapults and other similar engines were set against it." Ibn Khaldun, p. 38. As the campaign against Syria was one of Timur's major expeditions, it is unlikely that the number of artillery pieces was significantly larger in any of his other battles.
observation by noting some of the artillery's technical deficiencies, and a number of practical constraints, which, to some extent, hindered its usefulness in combat. The Mughal artillery was never, technologically speaking, very advanced. Babur devotes some attention to the construction of a mortar, but notes that at one time he had to dissuade its designer from committing suicide after some teething difficulties.61 The Mughals' use of artillery increased with the development of bronze casting in the early part of the sixteenth century.62 Within thirty to eighty years, cannon was in widespread use by the Mughals and the Afghans.63 Yet the heavy guns of the Mughal army were used more as showpieces of imperial splendour, than actual weapons. They were given names such as "Aurangbar" - strength of the throne - which indicated their ornamental function the Mughal Army.64 Due to the deficiencies in technology, these weapons were rather unsafe at times, a situation compounded by the paucity of well-trained indigenous artillers men in the Mughal army. This was illustrated during the siege of Qandahar in 1656, when the Indian artillersmen overcharged some of their weapons causing them to explode.65 Moreover the big guns of the Mughal artillery were very immobile. For example, in 1712, during the contest for the vacant throne between the sons of Bahadur Shah, it took 250 oxen, assisted by six elephants, ten days to transport a gun between five to six kilometres.66 Given this immobility it is unsurprising that big guns were rarely used in open warfare, being reserved for sieges. Once the cavalry had advanced beyond the range of the artillery, cannon were of no practical value. And if the army should be faced with defeat these weapons had to be abandoned to the enemy. Thus the necessity for greater use of artillery hindered the mobility of the Mughal army.

One of the most important transformations the Timurid army underwent in the Mughal era was the inclusion of massed numbers of artillery to complement the mounted archers. This enabled the centre of the Mughal army to repel the attacks of the enemy forces, but it also meant that the Mughal army lost some mobility as compared with its Timurid predecessor. Moreover as the artillery became increasingly important, this resulted in a preference for set piece battles; the Mughals were superior in this respect to

61 Babur, Babur Nama, p. 536.
63 At the battle of Qandahar in 1540 Humayun had 700 carriages carrying guns, each drawn by four pairs of bullocks, accompanied by twenty-one carriages carrying weapons which each fired shots weighing 5000 Makhabs. Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat, The Tarikh-i Rashidi Being A History of the Moghuls of Moghulistan, translated by E. Denison Ross. reprinted 1970, p. 474.
65 According to Jadunath Sarkar, "the Persian artillery was as excellent as the Mughal was inefficient. The Indian gunners were bad marksmen and their fire produced no effect on the walls. Some of Aurangzeb's men were so ignorant that they overcharged two of his big guns with powder, forcing them to burst, five large pieces of cannon remained which were insufficient to breach the walls in two places." Jadunath Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, Vol. 1, p. 128, cited in Phul, Armies of the Great Mughals, p. 85.
66 Irvine, p. 119, see also pp. 120-23.
many of their opponents. In this regard the light artillery was of far greater practical value in combat than the heavy guns. They were often bound together in large numbers to form the first line of defence to prevent the enemy forces charging through the line and murdering the gunners. Babur used these tactics at the battle of Panipat. 67 This was the first use in India of cannon in an open battle, as opposed to a siege. The light guns were often placed at the centre of the front line with the cavalry on the wings, their main targets being the enemy cavalry and infantry advancing on the centre. In addition to their light guns the Mughals made use of rockets - Ban - carried on carts towed by bullocks. This was one of the few continuities between Central Asian and Mughal artillery as rockets had also been used in Central Asia. As military weapons their effectiveness was hindered by the fact that they were very inaccurate, and they would sometimes turn back on those who fired them. 68 Despite the inaccuracy of the rockets, the noise they made could frighten enemy cavalry. 69 Furthermore, because they were usually fired in large numbers, if the rockets reached their intended target, the effect was devastating. 70

The cavalry and artillery were the elite arms of the Central Asian and Mughal armies. In both armies the infantry performed subordinate roles. The Mughal infantry was not as prestigious, or as well-rewarded, a part of their army as the cavalry or the artillery. 71 But its importance cannot be under-estimated. The tendency towards set piece battles dictated by the importance of artillery, the use of the army as a means of displaying imperial prestige, and the numbers of fortifications in India meant that large numbers of infantry served with the Mughals. The available evidence suggests that the infantry were more numerous in the Mughal army than they had been in Central Asia. 72 And, for that matter, the size of the Mughal armies was also large in comparison with their European counterparts. 73 The numbers of infantry in Mughal service expanded considerably over time. Babur is estimated to have had 10,000 soldiers at Panipat. 74 Abul Fazl gave the

67 Babur, p. 469.
68 Irvine, p. 150.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 151.
71 Bernier wrote that "the footsoldiers receive the smallest pay; and to be sure, the musketeers cut a sorry figure at the best of times." Bernier gives their pay at twenty rupees per month, Bernier, p. 217. See also Careri, p. 244.
72 It is difficult to assess with any exactitude the numbers of infantry that served under Timur. Al Hafiz al Kharizmi is reported as saying that 800,000 names were written in the roll of Timur's army. Ibn Arabshah, p. 125. This does seem a rather high estimate. According to Ibn al-Furat the "strength of the whole army of Timur amounted to 240,000, including 30,000 fighters." It is not clear whether the term "fighters" indicated the actual fighting force. Ibn Khaldun, p. 116. The estimate of Ibn al-Furat is possibly more accurate as it is closer to the numbers given earlier for the cavalry, although the numbers in Timur's army at any one time appear to have been fluid.
74 Muhammad Haidar gives the numbers of Babur's forces at 10,000, and those of Ibrahim Lodi at more than 100,000. Babur's memoirs concurs with this. Muhammad Haidar, p. 358. cf. with Babur, p. 468.
strength of the Mughal Army in Akbar's reign at 342,196 horsemen and 4,039,097 infantry.\textsuperscript{75} Such data as are available for the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan seem to indicate a lesser number of troops serving in the imperial service in comparison to Akbar's reign.\textsuperscript{76} Phul suggests that Aurangzeb had 299,000 cavalry and 598,000 infantry.\textsuperscript{77} Furthermore, the Mughal infantry were far more numerous in the provincial armies than in the Imperial armies.\textsuperscript{78} Despite the large nominal size of the Mughal infantry, it was not always a dominant force in battle. Their are several important reasons for this. First, the Mughal infantry were unregimented. Troopers joined the banner of whoever was prepared to pay for them, accordingly the regiments were of widely varying size and quality.\textsuperscript{79} For example, armour was worn only by those who could afford it. Nor was the technical standard of their equipment of a high quality. The matchlocks of the Mughal Infantry were not of the highest quality, being imitations of European designs. Authentic European models were prized possessions of the wealthiest nobles.\textsuperscript{80} The more sophisticated flintlocks were rarely used in India.

The integration of many ethnicities, under the auspices of the army was evident in the Mughal Empire just as it had been in Central Asia. Timur incorporated many captured troops of all ranks and backgrounds into his army.\textsuperscript{81} Those troops who owed Timur service in return for their lives being spared were subordinated to loyal commanders.\textsuperscript{82} They were used as a reserve army of troops, subordinate to the Ulus Chaghatai, the élite

\textsuperscript{75} Kolff, p. 3. This figure has been the subject of dispute. Kolff considers it a more a census of the potential soldier market than an accurate list. Some, like Phul, suggest the figures are creditable, based on provincial numbers of troops, although Phul does not show what proportion of this number could be considered actual fighting soldiers. Phul, p. 129. In this respect Kolff's scepticism appears to have valid grounds.

\textsuperscript{76} Lahori gives the number of infantry in 1647 at 40,000. This probably represented the effective strength of the infantry in Imperial service. Lahori, Padshahnama, Bib. Ind., II, 715 cited in Habib, "Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India", p. 56.

\textsuperscript{77} Phul's figure, which is estimated from the observations of Bernier and Catrou, can only be regarded as an approximation of the strength of the Mughal army, not an arithmetically precise estimate. Phul, p. 133.

\textsuperscript{78} Lal Koli of Gujarat (d. 1615), for example had 2-3000 horsemen, and 12,000 foot soldiers in his contingent. When he was called to assist Shah Jahan in 1624, the Ujjainiya Raja of Bhojpur had 5000 horsemen, and 20,000 footsoldiers. Kolff, p. 25. Bernier, writing in Aurangzeb's reign, gave a similar account, "The army in the provinces differs in nothing from that about the kings person, except in its superior numbers." He estimated the numbers in the imperial household at c. 15,000, and the total at between 200,000-300,000, although he emphasises that he does not know how many of these were actual fighting troops. Bernier, pp. 217 and 219.

\textsuperscript{79} Irvine, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{80} Irvine, p. 104.

\textsuperscript{81} In characteristically colourful language Ibn Arabshah noted the ethnic diversity of Timur's army: "There were men of Turan, warriors of Iran, leopards of Turkistan...Mongol vultures...scorpions of Shahrizar...to these were added hyena cubs of slaves, and whelps of Turkomaus and rabble and followers of ravening dogs of base Arabs, and goats of Persians, and crowds of idolators and profane." Ibn Arabshah, p. 117.

\textsuperscript{82} Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, p. 105.
fighting force of Timur's army. The nomadic forces on the fringes of his empire, in the Golden Horde and Moghulistan, were not as well integrated into his army as they could easily evade punishment. Peasants were conscripted for short term use, although there were examples of their being used abroad. For example, some Khurasanian peasants took part in the sack of Delhi. Moreover the troops of the Timurid armies were not all male. Ibn Arabshah mentions women taking part in battle in Delhi. By contrast, the Mughal army does not appear to have employed women in a combat role. The Mughals, too, had an army made up of many different groups. The armed peasantry made up the bulk of India's infantry. Rajput soldiers (sometimes referred to as Naukars), which we shall discuss in more detail in the following section, were only some of the non-Muslim troops in the Mughal Army. Such tribes as the Bundelahs and Baksariyas comprised most of the Mughal infantry. Many Central Asians also served in the Mughal army, their pay exceeded that of their Indian counterparts by about forty per cent, which attests to the esteem in which they were held. Many personnel of the artillery branch were of Portuguese extraction.

In Central Asia and India there was a large pool of professional soldiers available to those who could afford to pay for them. When Timur defeated Amir Husayn he assumed control of the Qaraunas, a large group of soldiers from south of the Oxus river: northeastern Khurasan, the regions of Qunduz, Baghlun, Kabul and Qandahar. When he assumed control of these troops he ensured his military superiority over the Ulus Chaghatay. As the nomads became increasingly disenchanted with Timurid overlordship and seceded from the empire, the Timurid control over these resources receded accordingly. Thus the empire steadily decreased in size, beginning with the loss of western Persia and Azerbaijan through the rebellions of the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu dynasties, and ending with the rule of the Uzbeks.

Professional soldiers were as important a resource in Mughal India, as they were in Central Asia. But the relationship between the soldiers and their masters was on more of an equal footing in India than it had been in Central Asia. In Central Asia the loyalty of the troops was maintained through a considerable amount of coercion, inasmuch as these troops often owed Timur service for sparing their lives. There was a large pool of professional soldiers in India who fought for their living. The Rajputs were one such

83 Ibid., p. 98.
84 "There were also in his army many women who mingled in the mêlée of battle and in fierce conflict and strove with men and fought with brave warriors, and overcame mighty heroes in combat with the thrust of the spear, the blow of the sword, and shooting of arrows." Ibn Arabshah, p. 324.
85 Kolf, p. 21.
86 Ibid., p. 120.
87 Turanian soldiers and cavalry (Turran being the area of Central Asia west of the Oxus) were paid almost 40 per cent more than their Hindustani counterparts. Phul, p. 109
89 Many professional soldiers supported families "it is difficult to find in the Mogol's army, a soldier who is not married, who has not wife, children servants and slaves depending upon him for support." Bernier, p. 221.
group, a warrior-like order in search of patronage, and marriage alliances; in this sense they were similar to the Qaraunas of Central Asia. The Mughals could offer both of these, and, in Akbar’s reign they did so to such an extent that the Rajputs became increasingly absorbed into the Mughal hierarchy. Rajput is a generic term. Literally it means "son of a king", but in India it was a generic name for the north Indian military class. Akbar made excellent use of the Rajput principle of sagai - alliance by marriage. He forged alliances with Rajput families by marrying a Rajput princess, but whereas in previous times marriage was an exchange between equals in position and wealth, Akbar transformed it into a master-subordinate relationship, by virtue of the elevated position he projected of himself as emperor. He also offered patronage. Nahir Khan, who was a descendant of Silhadi, rose to a rank of 3000/2000 in Jahangir's reign. Furthermore although he fought against Shah Jahan in 1623, that monarch raised him to a rank of 5000/5000 in 1627. In 1629 he maintained 15,000 horsemen when he raided the Deccan. The Rajputs continued to serve the Mughals in the reign of Aurangzeb. Integration such as this was assisted by a number of factors. The ulama, who had orchestrated several massacres of the Rajputs in Sher Shah's reign, were marginalised in Akbar's reign. The Mughals' relationships with the Marathas represented the paradigm for Mughal rule. The Mughals exploited the Rajput factionalism to gain overall supremacy, as their support was a prerequisite to a successful candidacy. The Rajputs, for their part, used Mughal suzerainty to further their own leadership quarrels. The Rajput delegates to the Mughal court could officially disavow rebellious sons, while secretly encouraging them to improve their own standing. The nobles achieved their own limited ends, the Mughals retained overall control. The English followed the Mughal example in respect of Rajput recruitment. In 1684 they were allowed to raise two standing companies of Rajputs in Bengal. The ability of the English to attract considerable numbers of mercenary troops was no small factor in their eventual control of India.

The emperor could if necessary call on these naukars - professional soldiers - to boost his army. But this option was in effect available to all those with money. When the diminishing income of the court diminished the attractiveness of service in the Mughal army to such soldiers, the difficulties of Imperial decline were further exacerbated. The drawback with using these troops was that they were not loyal to any one master. They were prepared to serve under anybody who would reward them for their services. Silhadi the Rajput leader withdrew from an alliance he had entered into with the Hindu warlord Rana Sanga before the battle of Khanwa; this was a significant factor in the

90 The rank 3000/2000 indicated that his Zat rank, which indicated his position within the hierarchy was 3000 - a high position. The Sawar rank of 2000 indicated the size of the contingent he was expected to maintain (although checks on this were allegedly rather slack in Jahangir's reign). Kolff, p. 112.
91 Ibid., p. 113.
92 Ibid.
93 Bernier, p. 40.
94 Kolff, p. 176.
latter's defeat. In 1574 the Ujjainiya leader Galpat, who had been won over by Munim Khan in 1568-69, made the decisive breakthrough during the siege of Patna. But he later rebelled and drove the Mughals out of the Ujjainiya area, and subsequently fled to a remote stronghold. He was never captured. The nobles who offered the greatest rewards attracted the best practitioners of the craft. However, despite the considerable material rewards offered to these soldiers, they were not however in a position of great power within the military hierarchy. Their positions were not as secure as those of the mansabdars. The fear that these mercenary soldiers could desert was one of the reasons why the Mughal army was paid in arrears: the commanders feared that such troops would lose the incentive to fight if they were paid up front. Arrears of pay resulted in frequent mutinies amongst troops that had not been paid. This is one possible explanation why so many battles in India ended if one side sensed their leader had died. Such an explanation provides one of the reasons why Dara Shukoh lost at the battle of Samugarh. It became the practice for the leader of the army to be mounted on an elephant so that his soldiers could see that he was alive. If he was dead, the soldiers would flee irrespective of the state of the battle. When the British learnt of this they trained their cannon on the commander's elephant and gained many successes using this method.

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Having analysed the transformation in the composition of the Mughal army, we shall now evaluate the implications for combat of these developments. First we shall discuss siegework, a prevalent feature of warfare in India. The Mughals had to adapt some of their tactics of siegework, owing to the strength of many Indian forts. In Central Asia the strategy for capturing forts revolved around encircling them, cutting off their supply lines and weakening the defenders of the fort by successive attacks. Sometimes Timur's cunning allowed forts to be taken. When besieging the fort of Kamakh, bordered on one side by the river Euphrates, and by a wide valley and a cliff on the other side, he rolled stones down into the valley, and reduced the fort. If possible, however, Timur endeavoured to avoid sieges because the strength of the Timurid army lay in open combat. Timur used threats of savage reprisals to try to coerce those besieged to surrender. He would offer to spare the lives of those within if they surrendered peacefully; if they did not, savage reprisals often followed. But military action was usually taken as a last resort. The armies of Timur were experts in the use of terror to subdue opponents. When the tales of their massacres became more widely known, most of their opponents opted for surrender, or to pay a sum of ransom money rather than face attack.

95 Ibid., p. 95.
96 Kolff, pp. 165-66.
97 Irvine, p. 13.
98 Bernier, p. 54. See also Manucci, Vol. 1, p. 269.
99 Irvine, p. 235.
100 Ibn Arabshah, p. 174.
The Mughals found it necessary to take a more tentative approach to siegecraft than their Central Asian ancestors. In part this was forced by the sheer numbers of forts in India. Manucci estimated that there were 380 forts in the Deccan, Bijapur and Golconda regions. There were a further 100 forts in Northern India. The tactics for a successful siege centered around starving forts into submission more than reducing the forts by forcible means. Whereas the Timurids preferred to use terror to try to persuade the defenders of forts to surrender, the carrot was preferred to the stick in Mughal India. The Mughals preferred to offer commandants of forts generous settlements within the Mughal hierarchy: the sooner an opposing commander surrendered, the better the position would be. These tactics contributed to more sieges being won through treachery than through any effects the fighting may have had. The Siege of Chitor (in the Agra region) in 1567 exemplified the pattern of Mughal siegecraft. Chitor was reputed to be the greatest fort in Hindustan. It was situated on a ridge that was about five kilometres long, 1100 metres wide and 122 metres above the surrounding plain. On 20 October when the siege commenced, an attempt to storm the fort failed. Akbar ordered a twenty-five pound gun to be cast on the spot, because of the time that would have been involved sending the heavy weapons from Delhi or Agra. However, it was not the gun but a mine which breached the fort. The Mughals again attempted an advance but were thwarted; although the advance was halted the defenders then evacuated the fort.

The strength of the Indian forts justified this reluctance to attack. Fortifications were far more advanced in the Mughal period than they were in the Timurid era. Forts in Mughal India were either situated on hills, like those at Chitor and Ranthambor, or they were built on a plain atop an artificially created mount. One fort in Ahmadnagar forts was surrounded by impenetrable bamboo, while others had prickly pear hedges grown around their perimeter which were impossible to set alight owing to the sap produced by the hedges. The taking of forts was therefore a protracted process. The siege of Chitor (1567-68) occupied Akbar's army for four months; in 1620 Jahangir besieged Kangra for an equivalent period; the siege of Daulatabad (1633) lasted for three and a half months; while Aurangzeb's siege of Bijapur (1685-86) lasted almost one and a half years. Such tactics, however, suited the Mughals in the long run. Although they could not always take forts by storm, they could capture them if they were patient, thus preserving the

102 When Ram Chand, the Commandant of the fort of Kalinjar, submitted, he was granted a jagir at Arail in Allahabad, in addition to his existing principality. Such arrangements were often made. Streusand, pp. 63 and 65.
103 Irvine, p. 271.
104 Streusand, p. 58.
105 The Mughal era was one where fortifications were considerably improved the world over. In the Hundred years war between England and France, for example siegecraft was repeatedly unable to overcome strong defences. Ibid., p. 51.
106 Irvine, p. 262.
lives of their troops, while still being able to claim victory. The Mughals' weaknesses in siegecraft, however, meant that they could not seriously challenge the more heavily fortified empires abroad. But they could retain supremacy within most of their empire. Yet the importance of siegecraft in Mughal India required large numbers of forces to remain static for long periods. This led to the Mughal army losing a great deal of the mobility of its Central Asian predecessors.

The decrease in the mobility of the empire was, as we have seen, partly caused by the increased use of artillery, the greater numbers of infantry, and the number of fortifications in India. But the structure of the Mughal army must also be taken into account when seeking to answer this question. Central Asian armies were better equipped than their Mughal counterparts. Their nomadic soldiers were well versed in the art of improvising essentials on the march, and they were easily mobilised. They would feed their horses wheat, rice, or millet instead of barley without loss of performance. Timur would not tell his armies where they were going until the last possible moment, which prevented enemy foreknowledge of their movements.107

It must be said, too, that the mansabdari system, which was developed for the purposes of administering a predominantly sedentary empire, was not suited to rapid mobilisation of troops, or to providing large numbers of quality soldiers. One of the difficulties in calculating the strength of the numbers of actual fighting in the Mughal armies is the great numbers of hangers-on which accompanied the Mughal armies. Furthermore, the commitment of the soldiers was also subject to considerable variation.108 Such armies, dependent upon their leader for pay, could be unruely in defeat.109 Although in theory there were very large numbers of troops under the control of the emperor, these could not be mobilised with any great speed. Mansabdars were expected to produce their required number of troops only upon inspection or upon imperial decree. Akbar strongly enforced the mansabdari system to ensure that the mansabdars maintained their quota of troops, but his successors allowed such checks to lapse.110 Given the unregulated organisation of the Mughal infantry, the cumbersome nature of their heavy artillery, and the imperial adornments accompanying the encampments, the Mughal army was seldom able to advance with any great speed. During the reign of Akbar there were some notable examples of rapid marches. In 1573 Akbar's forces marched the 966 kilometres from Fatehpur Sikri to Ahmedabad in nine days.111 Such feats were, however, the exception rather than the rule in his time. In 1558 it took Akbar twenty-one days to march from Delhi to

107 Ibn Arabshah, pp. 302 and 317.
108 Manucci wrote of the battle of Samugarh, "I saw in this action, as in so many others...that the only soldiers who fought were those well to the front." Manucci, Vol. 2, p. 266.
109 Bernier wrote, "These immense armies frequently perform great feats; but when thrown into confusion it is impossible to restore them to discipline." Bernier, p. 55.
110 By the seventeenth century, as we shall see in the following chapter, the mansab numbers ceased to indicate the numbers of troops the mansabdars were expected to maintain, they became indications of rank.
Agra. The rate of progress did not increase in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. It took Jahangir two months and nineteen days to cover the 466 kilometres from Mandu to Ajmer. In the eighteenth century Aurangzeb's sons marched at a rate of sixteen to twenty-two kilometres per day during the succession war. There were always delays in making a start. Often marching would not begin until the astrologers had set a date; if it were not possible to advance on these dates a false start would be made in the hope of cheating fate. The royal establishments, although mobile, were cumbersome affairs. When Aurangzeb sought to march through Kashmir in 1665 he endeavoured to reduce the Mughal encampment to a minimum, and employed an officer to enforce this. Nevertheless it still required 15,000 porters to carry the royal establishment, on the relatively easy journey to Kashmir. The Pathans in the northwest inflicted several crushing defeats upon the Mughals during the Yusufzai rising 1586-89, and later on in Aurangzeb's reign. In the west the superior mobility of the Marathas enabled them to outpace the Mughals for the last twenty years of Aurangzeb's reign.

The Mughal battle array was derived from Central Asia, but it was altered to include the "Indian" accretions into the Mughal army. There it was headed by the advance guard, behind which followed the advance forces of the left wing and right wing; in Mughal India it was the artillery which followed the advance guard. The major forces of the left wing, the centre, and the right wing, followed, although in Mughal India there was an advance of centre guard. Despite their common battle array, the armies were fundamentally different in battle plans. The Timurids of Central Asia preferred to fight offensive battles. The Mughals' greatest successes came from fighting defensively. Babur's victory at Panipat was essentially a defensive battle. Babur tried a night attack, but this proved abortive and Humayun had to cover the retreat. Babur let Ibrahim Lodi attack his heavily defended centre, and then ordered his flank forces to wheel to the rear of Ibrahim Lodi's forces. He had learnt this manoeuvre from the Uzbeks. The Mughal artillery frightened Ibrahim's elephants, causing them to turn and trample on their now surrounded soldiers. The limited mobility of the Mughal army, in spite of their large numbers of cavalry, meant they were best suited to static battles in relatively open country so they could use their artillery and troopers to the best effect.

The extent to which the Mughal army lost the mobility which had characterised their Central Asian predecessors was made evident in Shah Jahan's campaign against Balkh and Badakhshan. When the Mughals tried to transplant their Indian style of fighting back to their ancestral homelands it had only limited success. Shah Jahan's forces were relatively untroubled to secure the forts of Ghori and Kaghmar in the initial phase of their attempted reclamation of Balkh and Badakhshan in 1646. But after some initial victories, including twelve lakhs of treasure captured from the fortress of Balkh, their situation

114 Irvine, p. 219.
115 Ibid., p. 202. See also Bernier, p. 161. Although astrologers were employed in Central Asia, Timur would not be bound by their advice if he considered that it was contrary to the best interests of his military strategy.
became tenuous. They retained their control over the fortifications, and defeated the Altmans (the Uzbekhs had by this time been displaced by the Astrakhanids) in several set-piece battles, but they could not transfer their military institutions of rule successfully into Central Asia. The Altman raiders were able to raid and then retreat with impunity. At the battle of Talikhan a storm wet the gunpowder of the Mughal artillery, and prevented the matchlockmen from firing their weapons, while the cavalry were outmanoeuvred by a force of 10-12,000. The Mughals could not divide and conquer, as they had done in India, because several important Altman leaders, such as Atish Qalmaq, refused to join them. Their predicament was magnified by the desertion of many Rajput troops. This inability to defeat the Altmans prevented the Mughals from extracting a profitable revenue from the population. The Mughal army, which had become adapted to a sedentary environment, was unable to adapt itself to a land where their attempts to reproduce the agrarian revenue-based empire were resisted. The resulting loss of mobility had repercussions in the west of India as well. When the Mughals were confronted with a mobile enemy, such as the Marathas, they were unable to inflict a mortal blow on them. The Marathas whittled away at Mughal authority for many years before taking advantage of the collapse of the Mughals under the weight of provincial rebellions.

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In addition to its role as the major agent of conquest, the army played an important role as a means of control. Dirk Kolff argues that "the Mughal army can never be made into a neat category of research outside the context of North Indian society". As a general observation on the army this is as valid in Central Asia as it is for Mughal India. The army had an important role as a means of control in Central Asia and India, but the specific mechanisms used to achieve this control were different.

Timur appointed some of his amirs as provincial commanders. Often these were young princes and they were under the auspices of senior officials. They were given enough troops to quell small scale rebellions, but insufficient to establish an independent powerbase. The Mughal mansabdari system was designed to enhance the authority of the centre, unlike the soyrughal system in Central Asia which, in some respects, was a response to the declining strength of the Timurid army. The Mughals sought overall control over land administration, while at the same time devolving the responsibility for

117 Inayat Khan, p. 350.
118 Ibid., p. 378.
119 Ibid., p. 369.
120 Ibid., p. 371.
121 Inayat Khan wrote: "although the servants of the crown had zealously attempted to console the peasantry in Balkh and Badakhshan by giving them seed and helping them plough and till their fields, yet because of the inroads of the Altmans, most of the grain and crops had been destroyed and the populous places were desolated. Consequently owing to the dearth of provisions and scarcity of grain, the commanders of the army and the chiefs of the soldiery became extremely disgusted and averse to remaining any longer in the country." Ibid., p. 394.
122 Kolff, p. 2.
everyday law enforcement, and suppression of revolt, to the provinces. We shall discuss the mansabdari system in greater detail in the chapter on the court, but it is nevertheless important to note here the relevance of the mansabdari system to the army. In this system mansabdars were granted assignments of land (jagir), from which they were entitled to collect revenue, according to their rank. The mansabdar had to maintain sufficient troops to control his assignment so that he could obtain the revenue upon which his livelihood depended, and by doing so the mansabdar indirectly ensured that the territory remained under Imperial control. The system had inbuilt checks and balances on the mansabdars; it offered them a source of revenue and a limited amount of power, but, in theory at least, they were frequently reassigned so they were unable to establish independent centres of power from the empire. While the mansabdar needed to maintain a sufficient number of troops to enforce the collection of revenue assessments, a check was placed on troop numbers by making the mansabdar responsible for the cost of maintaining them. The closer the mansabdar came to reaching his given quota of troops and horsemen, the more money he had to pay out, and thus the less money left over for himself.

For the most part the Mughal Army was geared towards controlling territory, rather than fighting extended campaigns. There was more bureaucratisation within the Mughal army than had occurred in Central Asia where the Chaghatay army enjoyed a higher status than the predominantly Persian bureaucracy. A list of prohibitions ordered by Jahangir offers an illustration of the increased role of the army in administration, and indirectly the effect this had on the military role of the army. The prohibitions included edicts such as: provincial governors and generals were not to keep Amirs waiting at court; they were debarred from conferring titles upon servants; they could not force Islam upon anyone; they were not to make the servants of the state bow before them; no drums were to be beaten as they moved about; they could not make royal servants walk in their retinue; they could not fix official seals on their letters addressed to royal servants.123 The prohibitions were designed to assert the paramount authority of the Mughal court, and in particular the emperor. This is reflected in the procedural prohibitions concerning the place of officers at court and the restrictions on drum playing. The document is effectively an assertion of the place of the army officers within the Mughal hierarchy, and indicates an institution used for the purposes of control.

As an extension of their administrative responsibilities, the army was frequently used as a means of enforcing law and order. Looting was a shared problem in Central Asia and India. Raiding was part of the nomadic way of life; city dwellers and travellers always had to be on guard against raiders. Ultimately it was a problem that proved insoluble in both empires. Raiding was difficult to prevent because the culprits could easily evade punishment by fleeing into remote country. One of the reasons for the wealth of Timur's empire is that he conquered so much territory that raiders ran out of places in which to hide. As the Empire contracted, however, it became increasingly vulnerable to raiders. The Uzbeks sacked Samarkand in 1448 during the succession dispute after Shah Rukh's death. In Abu Said's reign the Uzbeks and the Moghuls of Moghulistan were

able to raid virtually unchallenged. Husain Baiqara was reluctant to take any form of action against the Uzbeks. A similar pattern is evident in the Mughal empire: in both cases the loss of mobility in the army occurred due to a combination of neglect and sedentarisation which allowed mobile opponents to whittle away at the strength of the centre.

This type of raiding - dacoity as it was called - was an ongoing problem in Mughal India. There was a large armed peasantry constantly seeking to supplement their income though theft. As had happened in Central Asia, many of these groups, such as the Jats and Bhattis, were nomadic, or more accurately, some sections of these tribes adopted a nomadic lifestyle. Babur noted "if one go into Hindustan the Jats and Gujarars always pour down in countless hordes from hill and plain for loot in bullock and buffalo." The leaders of these peasant and tribal groups commanded considerable numbers of troops. Manucci noted that the Bhattis could field 6,000 cavalry against the Mughals. Peter Mundy, an English traveller, hired a convoy of twenty-five soldiers, twenty-two footmen and three horsemen to protect his caravan as he travelled between Surat, Agra and Patna in 1632-33. He also employed 440 armed Jats, Baluchis, carters and cameleers. After the battle of Panipat in 1761 the Marathas were robbed by the resident brigands. Thus raiding was as prevalent and presented as serious a challenge to imperial authority in Mughal India, as it had done in Central Asia.

The Mughal army was in the forefront of the measures taken to curb dacoity. One of their methods was savage reprisals. Akbar ordered that 30,000 peasants be executed for assisting the defenders of the fort of Chitor. Many peasants were forcibly enslaved and sold to buyers in Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Abdullah Khan Firuz-Jang, an immigrant Uzbek, was a leading figure in this policy. He is reported to have transported 200,000 women and children of the chauhan rajas to Iran where they were sold. The Mughals also promoted sedentarism among the nomadic tribes, with a

125 Babur, p. 454.
127 Kolff, p. 4.
128 In the Price version of Jahangir's memoirs, Jahangir is alleged to have said, "I am compelled to observe with whatever regret, that notwithstanding the frequent and sanguinary executions which have been dealt among the people of Hindustan, the number of turbulent and disaffected never seems to diminish...there is scarcely a province in the empire in which, either in battle or by the sword of the executioner, five and six hundred thousand human beings have not, at various periods fallen victim to this fatal disposition to discontent and turbulence. So that in Hindustan there never existed a period of complete repose." Jahangir, Memoirs of Jahangir, ed. Price p. 225-26, cited in Kolff, p. 14. There must be an element of doubt about the veracity of this statement. Kolff gives more credence to this version of Jahangir's memoirs than most historians, who regard them as garbled and inaccurate. Kolff, however, asserts that the Tuzuk-i Jahangiri is a sanitised version of Jahangir's reign edited by his court officials, and that the Price version offers a clearer description of Jahangir as a man.
view to ensuring the dominance of settled agriculture.\textsuperscript{131} But it has to be added that the Mughals efforts to demilitarise the armed peasantry were constrained by the fact that the eradication of the peasantry would have undermined the agrarian revenue base which was the financial underpinning of the empire. The Mughals, as we have seen, sought to incorporate peasant groups such as the Barha Sayyids, the Grasiyas, and the Kolis within their army.\textsuperscript{132} They also sought to incorporate nomadic tribes into their structure by negotiating settlements.\textsuperscript{133} The army performed an important role in enforcing these settlements: the Mughals found that detaining the sardars of some tribes as hostages stopped these tribes raiding.\textsuperscript{134} Thus although the Mughals endeavoured to move away from Central Asian traditions by endeavouring to rule a centrally administered agrarian-revenue based empire, they were forced to confront the same difficulties that had beset their Timurid predecessors. Ultimately they could not find a solution.

In Central Asia and Mughal India, the sovereign made service in the army a possible avenue for advancement. Although the army appeared to many as an institution administering punishment, it was, for many, a source of great reward. These rewards allowed the sovereign to retain the loyalty of the top levels in the hierarchy, while not compromising the power upon which his sovereignty was based. In Central Asia and India the sovereigns were the source of claims to power. Timur insisted that favours could be dispensed only with his authorisation. He appointed his military commanders, he made some posts hereditary, (and left some posts open to merit), he controlled the élite group of his army. Timur granted his favourites postings in the best areas, but the deliberately overlapping nature of his administration meant they would not have much power. The Mughal Empire retained the practice of making the sovereign the sole source of rewards, but it also developed an elaborate series of honours, to advertise the power of the emperor, and the splendour of his court. Those who received these rewards owed them to their leader; the giving of gifts thus reinforced the subaltern relationship between the emperor and the subjects. There were many rewards, prestigious in nature but politically meaningless, that the emperor could dispense. These included rewards such as: Khilat (a robe of honour), the right to play kettledrums when the emperor was on the march, the right to fly different ensigns, Mahi-o-Maralib (the privilege of being borne on elephants in a retinue).\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{130} Kolff, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{131} Chetan Singh writes: "By the late sixteenth century, however, it would have been extremely difficult for nomadic tribal groups to subordinate agriculturists. The most significant reason for this was that an expanding and vigorous Mughal state took upon itself the task of safeguarding sedentary society on account of the land revenue it obtained from the latter. " Chetan Singh,"Conformity and Conflict: Tribes and the 'Agrarian System' of Mughal India", p. 335.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., pp. 325-40.
\textsuperscript{133} For example, the Mughals concluded a settlement with the Nahmardi tribe in Sind whereby they agreed to stop plundering, in return for trading privileges. Sunita Zaidi, "The Mughal State and Tribes in Seventeenth Century Sind", \textit{Indian Economic and Social History Review}, 26, 3, (1989), p. 349.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 361.
Mughals advertised their Central Asian heritage through some of these awards. One of these ensigns was the pattern of what had been the battle flag of Timur when he defeated Amir Husayn, his main rival for the leadership of the Ulus Chaghatay.136 Another ensign featured dragon faces, which were given to Timur during his raid on India.137 These awards suggest a conscious Mughal attempt to recall the great exploits of their Timurid forbears and in so doing reinforce their own aura. The use of the ensign Timur obtained during his raid on India possibly indicates an attempt by the Mughals to point to their historical links with India before Babur's victory at Panipat, the underlying implication being that as the descendants of Timur they were the worthy successors to the tradition of Timurid rule in India. By implication this associated the Mughals with the glorious military career of Timur, whose conquests symbolised a martial tradition that the Mughals did not have.

We have seen, then, that the adaptations the Mughals made to the military practices of their Central Asian forbears allowed them to establish themselves as rulers of India, and remain there for several centuries. This was something none of the previous Central Asian raiders had done. The Mongols were able to mount several punitive raiding expeditions, and Timur's sack of Delhi proved the destructive power of the Central Asian armies. None of these raids, however, resulted in imperial rule. Partly this was due to the fact that they were undertaken as raiding expeditions, but it also indicated that in its then form, the Central Asian army was not suited to the task of ruling India. The Mughals made good use of their Central Asian martial skills when establishing their realm. But they were able to adapt their army to the demands of ruling in India. They kept the basic form of the Central Asian army intact, but made some significant changes to its structure.

From Central Asia, the Mughals kept the basic battle array: the cavalry remained an important branch of the army, and the army continued to incorporate many ethnicities under its auspices. A number of additions were made to this structure in response to the Indian environment. The numbers of infantry substantially increased, especially in the provinces. The artillery was much more important in India than it had been in Central Asia. In part this was due to improvements in technology, and in part it was brought about by several important features of the Indian environment. The first was the large number of forts within India. The second was the use of the army as a means of advertising the might of Imperial rule - hence considerable resources were devoted to producing heavy guns that were of little practical use in combat. The third feature was the fact that the Mughal artillery was superior to that of their opponents within India, and this gave them an edge in their quest to assert themselves as the supreme authority within India.

To an extent these changes resulted from administering an agrarian revenue-based empire, as the Mughals did, as opposed to ruling a Central Asian empire funded by the plunder obtained by the nomadic army on the one hand, and funded by the sedentary

135 Irvine, p. 30.
136 Ibid., p. 32.
137 Ibid.
community. In the Mughal empire control over the territory was as important a priority as conquest. It was important for the army to safeguard the territory that was the financial lifeblood of the empire. Consequently it was geared towards more of an administrative and defensive role. The Mughals did endeavour to extend their hegemony, but this was primarily to increase the amount of land they could award as jagirs, and secondly to punish those who challenged the Mughals' monopoly over the rights to grant revenue collection in these areas.

Another important reason for the changes made to the Mughal army was the different conceptions of conquest that existed in the two empires. In Central Asian tradition it was important to keep the army constantly occupied on campaign. With all male heirs of the leading clan having an equal claim to legitimacy, conquest was an important means of retaining the support of the military aristocracy. Timur accordingly kept his army constantly on campaign; this kept the empire financially buoyant, and reinforced his authority as leader. During the reign of Husain Baiqara, the Timurids attempted to move away from this system, preferring instead to promote their cultural achievements. But they could not find a workable substitute for the traditional model. Their cultural prestige could not compensate for their military weakness, especially against a powerful enemy such as the Uzbeks. Nor was it an adequate basis for legitimacy by itself, especially given the financial strife of the empire. The Mughals, however, found such a formula. They retained the Central Asian aspects of their army that were suited to conquering their new realm, but they did not make large scale campaigning a continuing priority. They did not campaign against established powers such as Persia in a full-scale conflict, and they were embarrassed when they attempted to reconquer part of Central Asia. They sought to establish themselves as the supreme authority among the many candidates within India. To establish their authority in this regard the Mughals adopted a policy of divide and conquer, which meant that their army did not have to be larger than the sum total of all their opposition. It had to be superior only to the factions it fought. Thus a considerable section of the Rajput community was incorporated into the Mughal hierarchy. Such an approach did not require campaigning on a scale equivalent to the Central Asian conquests. Moreover the Mughal nobility as a whole did not apply pressure to the emperor to remain constantly on campaign, because the Mughals made the nobility financially responsible for providing the troops to do so. At the same time the emperors retained a significant imperial force at the centre to act as a check upon the ambitions of local commanders.

Ultimately these changes to the Mughal army meant it lost its mobility, which had been the prime asset of the Central Asian armies. The mobility of Timur's nomadic horsemen, coupled with their military skill, and Timur's shrewd strategy, made them an unbeatable force. The Mughal army, however, lost this ability. In Central Asia the army was the sovereign's strike force; in Mughal India it became the sovereign's showpiece. The imperial encampment became encumbered with great numbers of "hangers-on". The increase in the importance of the artillery hindered their rate of progress as their heavy weapons were very cumbersome. Furthermore all the imperial adornments that
accompanied the Mughal armies had to be transported by draught animals, such as bullocks, and the lumbering elephants, whereas in Central Asia the nomadic troops were able to transport themselves at pace with a minimum of equipment. Within the confines of the Mughal empire, this lack of mobility was not an insurmountable difficulty. The Mughal forces could usually be assured of victory against the local potentates. Moreover, because they controlled the regions with the greatest concentration of horses in India - Gujarat, Marwar and Kutch - the Mughals were often more mobile than these opponents. It was when the Mughals were confronted by challenges from outside their empire that their lack of mobility proved a debilitating handicap. The Altmans in Central Asia, the forces of Nadir Shah and the Marathas were able to outmanoeuvre an increasingly inefficient and cumbersome Mughal army. The cumulative effect of these raids, coupled with similar unrest in the northwest, saw Mughal imperial authority collapse as the provincial areas seceded. This, together with the intrigues at the imperial court led to the supersession of Mughal rule by similar types of groups who had caused the demise of the Timurids.

Given the changes necessitated by the Indian environment, and the nature of the empire the Mughals presided over, the Central Asian army could only be a point of origin for the Mughals, not an ongoing architectonic feature. Central Asia supplied the basic framework, but many additions were made to the infrastructure. These changes enhanced the ability of the army to control territory and quell insubordination, but it ultimately compromised its usefulness in combat.
III: The Court: The Institution of Sovereignty and Administration

There is an ancient Chinese saying which observes that "though the empire can be conquered from horseback, it cannot be ruled from horseback." ("t'ien-hsia sui te-chih ma-shang, pu-koi ma shang chih"). If the army was the institution through which the territory that comprised an empire was conquered, then it was the sovereign and the sovereign's court which decided how the empire would be controlled. The imperial court was the setting where the ruler, and the ruling élite, their families, and their retainers administered the realm. We must make the point again that the term "court" does not necessarily imply a fixed entity as the court could function in the capital city or in an imperial encampment. This chapter is an analysis of the structure and method of government in Central Asia and Mughal India. In particular, we shall be concerned with what the rulers' courts of Mughal India changed, and what they retained, from their Central Asian ancestry. We shall begin our discussion of the court by analysing its apex, the sovereign. We shall then assess the continuities and discontinuities between the respective courts. In the third section we shall evaluate the extent to which the Central Asian administrative practices were transplanted to Mughal India, and the adaptation they underwent during the Mughal's tenure in India. We shall then examine the continuing contact between the courts of Central Asia and Mughal India.

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In order to understand the way in which the court presided over the empire, it is necessary to consider the way in which the empires were founded. This allows us to see the assets the rulers and their courts had at the inception of the empire, and thus what they could retain, and what had to be changed. Leadership in the Timurid polities of Central Asia and India was always a challenging task. Power was much easier to gain than it was to maintain. The Timurid and Mughal empires existed in lands where there were many powerful groups resentful of paramount authority which impinged upon local autonomy. Both empires were established in lands where there were always many contenders for leadership. This meant that aspiring rulers were forced into alliances with other contenders for power at some stage in their campaigns and this in turn raised the problem of reconciling the rival ambitions of the parties in event of a successful bid for leadership. In order to gain control of any tribal group, one had to go outside of it.

In Central Asia, Timur had to overcome the traditional resentment of the tribal aristocracy toward those who asserted authority over them. In his bid for control over the Ulus Chaghatai he initially relied upon his personal following, which he had built up from his days as a sheep-stealer. As his own forces were too small he made alliances

1 Manz, "The Ulus Chaghatai Before and After Temür's Rise to Power: The Transformation from Tribal
with other contenders. The most important among these alliances was that with Amir Husayn, the leader of the Qara'unas, who controlled the largest contingent of troops in the tribe. When this alliance outlived its usefulness, Timur turned on Amir Husayn and defeated him. This ensured his control over the Ulus Chaghatay by virtue of his superior troop numbers. The tribal chiefs could no longer threaten him since they commanded only their own, sometimes disloyal, armies. In light of the reputation Timur later acquired for savage cruelty, it is important to note that he did not punish those tribes which deserted. Punishing such tribes was unproductive in the long term. In fact, his main rival, Amir Husayn, had contributed to his downfall with his ill-judged execution of the brother of the Khuttalani amir Khaykusaw.

The Central Asian method of empire-building proved successful in an Indian environment. Babur's rise to power in India shared several characteristics with his Central Asian practices. Babur began campaigning in India at the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodi, who led a section of Afghan chieftains dissatisfied with the then Lodi ruler, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. Babur accepted the invitation because the Afghan chieftains were strong in the strategically important regions of Punjab, Sind, Malwa, Gujarat and Bihar. But, after experiencing some difficulties with traitorous Afghan chieftains, he ensured that when Ibrahim Lodi was defeated that it was he, and he alone, who held the reins of authority. In India, as in Central Asia, Babur was challenged by certain elements of the Indian nobility which resented paramount leadership. But whereas in Central Asia Babur had fought against nomadic warrior groups, such as the Uzbeks and the Moghuls of Moghulistan, in India he was confronted by opposition from local rulers of various ethnicities, such as the Hindu warlord Rana Sanga, whose forces included a section of the Afghan nobility opposed to Mughal rule. Like many of his Central Asian predecessors, Babur seldom punished those who had deserted him, or those who had not resisted too fiercely. Partly, this reflected the magnanimous side of his character, but it also reflected his pragmatism. It was expected that groups would look to protect their own interests first, and it was much better to include former rivals under ones own command, where their activities could, at the very least, be monitored, rather than have them plotting the ruler's downfall. As we shall see, this policy enabled the Mughals to incorporate...


2 The Qara'unas were a clan of military troops of obscure origin. It is, however, known that they were descended from a group of Mongol troops dispatched to guard the hordes of India and Kashmir. They are also reported as serving in Persia with the Il-Khanate. They were centred around Qanduz. Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, pp. 159-61.

3 Manz, "The Ulus Chaghatay Before and After Temür's Rise to Power: The Transformation from Tribal Federation to Army of Conquest", p. 93.

4 Mohibbul Hasan, p. 56.

many former opponents within their hierarchy in a mutually profitable manner.

The transition from a conquering order into a ruling polity was a critical stage in the development of the Central Asian and Mughal empires. The founders of the empires, Timur, Babur, and Akbar (for the purposes of this chapter, Akbar is considered a founder of the empire, as he came to power only one year after the end of the Afghan interregnum), had to find some basis upon which they could legitimate their rule. This enabled them to both reward their supporters and also to adapt themselves to ruling the lands they had conquered.

Consequently, one important priority of the Mughal court during the transition from a conquering order into a ruling polity, was to enhance the prestige of the sovereign, and in so doing counter the claims of rival factions. This required some basis upon which the court could legitimate the sovereign's rule. In Central Asia and Mughal India the claim to legitimacy took a number of forms. It could be made on the basis of heredity, on the basis of a divine mandate, and it could arise out of a cult of personality. Most leaders claimed legitimacy on all of these levels. In doing so they sought to give themselves as broad a base of support as possible.

Timur's claims to legitimacy were limited because he was not a descendant of Chinggis Khan and therefore did not assume the supreme Mongol titles of khan and khaqaan. In order to attain legitimacy as a ruler over the Mongolian population, and in particular their military class, it was therefore necessary to rule in the name of a Chinggisid khan. The position of puppet khan was not solely for the benefit of the Turco-Mongolian population, Timur also impressed the status of the Khan upon foreign visitors. The first of Timur's puppet khans was Suyurghatmish, who was succeeded by his son, Sultan Mahmud, upon his death. When Sultan Mahmud died Timur did not bother to replace him, but continued issuing coins in his name. Shah Rukh dispensed with the Khan because he wanted to distinguish himself from Chinggisid traditions and instead be seen as an Islamic ruler. But the position of puppet khan was maintained in Ulugh Beg's court. Abu Said dispensed with the position of puppet khan altogether, and sent Yunus Khan to his former territory of Moghulistan, thus ending the formal Chinggisid connections with the Timurid empire.

The Mughals used both their Timurid and Chinggisid descent as a source of legitimacy. Babur based his claim to legitimacy on his Turco-Mongolian heritage. As a direct descendant of Timur he laid claim to leading a Timurid restoration.

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7 Ibn Khaldun reported Timur as saying, "I myself am only the representative of the sovereign on the throne [As for the King himself] here he is" whereupon Timur made a gesture towards a row of men, among whom the khan was standing up. *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus in 1401*, p. 37. Clavijo also mentioned the role of the Khan, *Clavijo*, p. 221.

8 Muhammad Haidar, p. 83.

9 Babur told a council of his begs in Kabul, "Strangers and Foes such as Shaibaq [Shibani Khan] and the Auzbegs are in possession of all the countries once held by Timur beg's descendants; even where Turks and in
death of Husain Baiqara on 4 May 1506 he could legitimately claim to be the most senior member of the Timurid Household. When he was in Kabul he adopted the Iranian title padshah, which no previous Timurid ruler had assumed. After 1526 Babur assumed the title of khaqan, the supreme Mongol title. Thus Babur conferred upon himself the supreme titles of the nomadic Chinggisid and the settled Irano-Islamic world. It could, then, be argued that Babur began the process of elevating the prestige of the emperor, which, as we shall see, was an integral part of Mughal sovereignty. So while Babur was, for the most part, a Timurid ruler, he was not averse to claiming a mandate from other sources of legitimacy. Babur's successors all used Timur's name as a source of legitimacy. All of the Great Mughals ordered that the names of their great ancestors, back to Timur, be inscribed on their great seal.

Mythological claims concerning the act of birth were another a means of legitimating the rule of several Central Asian and Mughal sovereigns. Ibn Arabshah purported that on the night Timur was born a helmet fluttered in the air, fell to the earth and shattered, and live coals flew about like hot ashes. The Mughal chronicles of Akbar's birth, written by Abul Fazl, the official chronicler of his reign, were directed towards elevating the image of the emperor by presenting him as a semi-divine figure, thus reinforcing the position of the emperor as the king of kings, the paramount authority. Abul Fazl's account of Akbar's birth drew upon some elements of Chinggisid mythology, and Abul Fazl's concept of divine light. Akbar's birth was mentioned in the context of a discussion of Alanqua, the mythical Mongol goddess, the mother of Chinggiz in Mongol mythology. Abul Fazl also claimed that light was seen from the brows of Akbar's birth mother while she was pregnant. He contended that this signalled the birth of a great one, and that God sometimes forewarned people of such events.

The rulers of Central Asia and India sought legitimacy from metaphysical, as well as temporal, sources. Timur, like Chinggis, pointed to his military success as proof of divine approval of his authority. They were both leaders who had risen from a part Chaghatais survive in corners and border-lands, they have all joined the Auzbeg, willingly or with coercion; one remains, I myself in Kabul. " Babur, p. 340.

11 Mohibbul Hasan, p. 162. I.A. Khan believes this was an effort by Babur to revive some Chinggisid traditions, but Mohibbul Hasan plays down the importance of this. "The Turco-Mongol Theory of Kingship, in Medieval India: A Miscellany, Vol. 2, p. 15.
15 Ibid., p. 43.
16 Ibid., p. 40.
17 In a letter to the Sultan of Shiraz and Persian Iraq, Timur wrote "God Almighty has appointed me lord over you." Ibn Arabshah, p. 27.
relatively lowly aristocratic background to supreme authority. In his early years Chinggiz had often been in mortal danger, while Timur was a sheep-stealer in his youth, and was reported nearly to have lost his life doing so on one occasion. Because he had risen from such a seemingly unpromising position to be supreme head of an enormous empire, Timur claimed a celestial mandate as a basis for his rule. He assumed the title Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction. Some of the Mughal emperors presented themselves as successors to this title.

The Central Asian connections were, however, of limited use to the Mughals as a source of legitimacy, for while appeals to Turco-Mongolian traditions were meaningful in Central Asia, where many of the groups shared a common heritage, these conditions did not exist in India. Furthermore, the Mughals' hereditary ties were linked with rulers beyond the subcontinent. And, for the most part, the Central Asian connections with Mughal India had been as raiders and not as rulers. We have seen in the previous chapter that the Mongols had regularly raided India. Timur himself had raided India in 1398 but he did not annex any territory. Instead he appointed Khizr Khan as ruler. There were, however, some instances where Central Asia acted as an ally of Indian polities as opposed to being an adversary. Furthermore, such examples suggest that the Timurid name offered a source of legitimacy in India before Babur's invasion. Shah Rukh established friendly relations with Sultan Hoshang Shah of Malwa, who acknowledged the latter's suzerainty and sought his assistance against Sultan Ahmad Shah of Gujarat. Shah Rukh declined the offer but he did send an embassy. In 1467 there was an exchange of embassies between Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa and Abu Said. This appears to have ended Timurid diplomatic exchanges with the Indian polities. But while in some


19 This title was based upon astrological projections concerning the tenth conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, expected to occur in the year Muslim year 766 A.H. This conjunction was said by the preacher of Constantine Abu Ali Ibn Badis, to point "to a powerful one who would arise in the northeast region of a desert people, tent dwellers, who will triumph over kingdoms, overturn governments, and become masters of most of the inhabited world." It was predicted that it would be widespread in the Muslim year 784 A.H. The Jewish astrologer, Ibn Zarzar, at the Frank court, and the Sufis of the Maghrib, also believed these predictions. Ibn Khaldun, pp. 35-36.

20 Abul Fazl hints at an association with Timur. He writes about the "Horoscope of the Lord of the Conjunction", cites the Zafarnama, the official chronicle of Timur's victory, and goes on to write that Akbar's horoscope was superior to that of Timur. Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama Vol. 1, pp. 79-80. Jahangir "...the date of the accession when prosperity placed his head at the feet of the Sahib Qirm-i Sani (Lord of the Auspicious Planetary Conjunction)." Tuzuk-i Jahangiri, p. 12. Shah Jahan added the phrase Sahib-i-Qiran i Sani - Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction, to his titles, effectively proclaiming himself as a second Timur. Inayat Khan, p. xvii.


22 Ibid., p. 110.
cases the Timurid name was recognised as a source of legitimacy within India, such recognition was localised. It does not appear to have had widespread appeal among either the Hindu or Muslim communities. In Mughal India there were many boundaries of caste and class - such as those between the Rajputs, the Marathas, and the Persians - all within the same hierarchy and under the auspices of the same empire. During the early years of the Mughal reign, when Akbar was seeking to consolidate the Mughal restoration, claims to legitimacy were made on as broad a basis as possible. Akbar was portrayed as more than a consolidator of the Timurid polity in India; he was presented as the founder of a new dynasty in his own right. Elevating the image of royalty itself was part of this process. This was epitomised in the writings of Abul Fazl, who wrote "royalty is a light emanating from God." Legitimacy was claimed on the basis that the Mughals were supreme rulers, kings, and because of this they had a divine mandate.

One aspect of their Timurid heritage the Mughals did retain was a sometimes rather nominal adherence to Islamic practices. Babur was descended from a long line of Sunni Muslim rulers, and his successors, despite some experimentation by Akbar, maintained a formal, though not always devout, adherence to Sunni tenets. We shall elaborate upon the significance of Islam in a later chapter, but for the moment it is important to note that the context of Islamic rule in Central Asia and Mughal India was fundamentally different. The Central Asian sovereigns ruled over predominantly Muslim lands. The Mughal emperors were Muslim rulers of a predominantly non-Muslim land. The rulers of Central Asia and Mughal India seldom claimed Islam as their sole source of legitimacy. Islam emphasises obedience to God, rather than to human leaders. Accordingly the rulers of the respective empires integrated their nominal position as Islamic rulers with other sources of legitimation. Timur drew upon both Turco-Mongolian and Muslim traditions when it suited him. When he sought an alliance with the Tartars against the Muslim Ottomans, he appealed to the Turco-Mongolian ancestry the Timurids and the Tartars shared. His campaigns against the Kings of Georgia, and the Shi’ite Sayyids of Mazanderan, were presented as Islamic restorations. The occasional posturing as an Islamic leader did not prevent him sacking many Muslim shrines and killing many Muslims in his campaigns. The Mughals, claimed an Islamic mandate for their rule. But Islam was not the only metaphysical authority form whom they claimed support. The position of emperor was portrayed as an almost metaphysical source of authority. Through such measures as the Divine Faith, and the Mahzar of 1579, which we shall discuss at greater length in a later chapter, Akbar portrayed his decrees as emanating from a near-divine figure. The later emperors did not maintain the Mahzar of 1579 or the Divine Faith, but they promulgated the same vision of the emperor.

The rulers, and their courts, sought a wider base of legitimacy than hereditary and metaphysical grounds. With the assistance of their court officials they sought to create a

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23 Abul Fazl, *A’im-i Akbari*, p. 3.
24 Ibn Arabshah, p. 178.
25 In his sack of Damascus for example, plunder was taken from from pious foundations and many Muslims were killed. Ibn Khaldun, pp. 93-94.
cult of personality around themselves, to enhance their aura. Timur fostered his own cult of personality. He portrayed himself as an all-knowing sovereign. He had his spies find out details of the local population, and would then tour these areas, asking as to the welfare of certain citizens. Some local people were unaware that Timur knew of these details through his spies, and thus believed Timur to be all-knowing. Timur made no effort to hide his early exploits as a livestock thief, although the official histories pass over this phase of his life. This was part of the image he sought to project, that of a great conqueror who had achieved his successes despite difficult early times, by sheer force of personal genius. In government, as opposed to campaigning, Timur also liked to project the image of himself as a just ruler who kept the interests of the people close to his heart. In many cases he instructed his army to rebuild the cities they had destroyed, and he undertook the construction of new buildings and agricultural works. He investigated claims of abuses from his officials and made it widely known when he ordered punishments for corrupt officials. In 1404, for example, Qub al-Din Qurami, head of the Shiraz diwan was imprisoned and tortured for extortion of the population. That same year he ordered the execution three members of the diwan in Samarkand, two for administrative abuses, one for mistakes made in the construction of a mosque.

The cult of personality was as important a part of Mughal sovereignty as it had been in Central Asia. This was especially so in the reign of Akbar, whose courtiers went to considerable lengths to project him as an all-knowing, divinely favoured emperor. The precedent set by Akbar remained the basis for Mughal imperial iconography throughout their rule. And, as we shall see, it was this imperial aura which allowed the Mughal emperors to retain a certain degree of political influence in the later period of their reign, even in the face of a territorially declining empire. Through such iconography, the emperors sought to reinforce their claim as the supreme source of all claims to advancement, and legitimacy. In order to emphasise the semi-divine status in which Akbar was enshrined, there were no references, either officially or unofficially, to any improper actions in Akbar's early years. The chronicles of Akbar's reign present an image of a semi-divine sovereign, who performed great deeds from the moment of his birth. Abul Fazl projected Akbar as the latest in a line of great historical figures, spanning fifty-two generations who possessed extraordinary qualities. The emperor

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26 Ibn Arabshah, p. 301.
27 For example, Timur volunteered this information to Ibn Khaldun. Ibn Khaldun, p. 47.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., p. 115.
31 In one of these stories, Akbar is said to have grappled with a serpent at the age of eight months, and seized its tail, thus protecting his nurse. Abul Fazl even provides an account of Akbar's circumcision, claiming that "...the custom of circumcision as applied to the new growth of fortune's garden, and fresh offshoot of the palm of long and grandeur was made an occasion for the enrichment of mankind." Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. 1, pp. 385 and 483.
32 For a list of these people see Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. 1, pp. 143-45.
was promoted as being greater than a king, as there were many local potentates in India. The emperor was differentiated from these rulers on the basis of his semi-divine qualities. Akbar did not use these claims as a pretext for limiting contact with his officials and his subjects. Rather, he portrayed himself as a ruler who used his divinely inspired wisdom for the benefit of his people. He did not portray himself as a remote ascetic, who possessed great wisdom but was irrelevant in the day to day functioning of the secular world. The Mughal emperors too, ensured that they were seen to be just rulers. Shah Jahan reputedly "kept his eye on his officials, punishing them rigorously when they fell short in their duty. This was one reason he kept at his court an official with several baskets full of poisonous snakes."33

To reinforce the rulers' bonds with their subjects, the Mughal emperors went to considerable lengths to make the sovereign visible. They frequently travelled to the provinces to renew in person the bond between the emperor and the local mansabdars. On average the Mughal emperors spent nearly forty per cent of their time away from the capital.34 In some respects this was a continuity from Central Asian tradition insofar as Timur had spent most of his life on campaign. But Timur's travels normally had a specifically military purpose, as opposed to showing-the-flag visits to his provincial territories. As the Mughal empire expanded territorially under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, the emperors became increasingly peripatetic. In the first half of the period 1556-1707 (the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb), Akbar and Jahangir respectively spent twenty and twenty-seven percent of their reigns away from the capital.35 In the second half of this period under the Emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb the equivalent figure rose to forty-five and sixty-nine per cent respectively.36

Claims to legitimacy were of limited use unless the empire could demonstrate its financial legitimacy. The court was an important institution insofar as it was the repository for the hoarded treasure that legitimated imperial rule and underwrote imperial expenditure in Central Asia and India. Kolff has written that in India hoarded treasure was as important a source of legitimacy as the Khutba - the official Friday sermon read in the monarch's name, or the sikka, the right to have the monarch's name printed on the coinage.37 The same could be said for Central Asia. The wealth amassed at the imperial court attracted allies. As we saw in the chapter on the Army, treasure was eagerly sought after by the Timurids on their campaigns. The redistribution of treasure had both financial and symbolic significance. It was always gratefully received, it proved the creditworthiness of the empire, and it symbolised the superseding of the vanquished. Distributing the treasure of a conquered foe reinforced the claims on power, being physical proof of the defeat of a rival contender. Baburdevotes some time in his memoirs

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Kolff, p. 68.
to explaining how he divided up his horde of captured treasure after the battle of Panipat. Included among the recipients were "various relations in Samarkand, Khurasan, Kashghar and Iraq and holy men in Samarkand, Khurasan, Mecca and Madina." The Mughals captured an immense amount of treasure after Hemu was defeated at the battle of Panipat in 1556. The English Ambassador Thomas Roe was very impressed with the riches at the Mughal court and advised that jewels were the best present to give to the Mughal emperors.

Rulers in both Central Asia and Mughal India used coinage to articulate their claims for legitimacy. Coins were struck in the name of the sovereign, and were part of the iconography of imperial rule. Timur had his coins issued in the name of his puppet khan. He had his own seal of three circles. Babur called his coins Shahrukhiyas as a means of associating himself with his Timurid past. Babur may have wanted to assert the Islamic element of his rule in so doing for Shah Rukh was regarded as an exemplary Islamic Monarch; thus his name was one way of impressing upon the population of Hindustan that their predominantly non-muslim land was ruled by a Muslim. Akbar had Allah u Akbar - God is Great - inscribed on his coins. Its literal meaning was identifiably Muslim on one level, but it also embellished the name of the ruler. When Haji Ibrahim suggested to Akbar that he might like to change the inscription, to remove its ambiguity, he was rebuked. There were three types of coins in the Mughal empire: the gold muhr, the silver rupee, and the copper dam, or paisa. There was even a special ceremonial coin in the Mughal empire - the muhr, which was made of almost pure gold.

One of the greatest difficulties of maintaining an empire in Central Asia was the tendency for the death of each ruler to be followed by a succession dispute. It will be recalled that in Central Asia all male heirs were considered to have a legitimate claim upon

38 Babur, pp. 522-23.
39 Ibid.
40 According to Badauni "treasure and stores to such an amount that even fancy is powerless to imagine it, were taken as spoil. And Pir Muhammad Khan, and Husain Khan...pursued the fugitives from Delhi, and passing from Alwar they came up to the wife of Hemun, who had with her elephants laden with gold. She...left the gold behind, the greater part of which the rustics of Bajwara seized; still the part which fell into the hands of the army of the faithful was so great that they gave it away by shieldfuls, and "Nizar-i Zarka" "scattering of gold pieces" was found to give the date 964. And on the road which the Queen took, there had fallen such quantities of coins and ingots of gold, that for many a year travellers and passers by used to find them. In this manner the treasures of Sher Shah and Aslim Shah and Aduli had amassed through a number of years were dissipated.

42 Ibn Ambahah, p. 295.
43 Mohibbul Hasan, p. 158.
46 Ibid., p. 477.
the throne. These succession disputes had a debilitating effect upon the Timurid empire. Whereas in Inner Asia the succession disputes did not seriously damage the nomadic economy, in the Timurid empire the succession wars involved the sedentary world and the areas of oasis agriculture. Therefore they had a very disruptive effect on the economy because even when a successful candidate emerged from the fighting, he did not have the economic base necessary to reconstruct the empire in its entirety. There were also frequent rebellions by Timurid princes.\footnote{For example Timur's third son, Miranshah, is widely believed to have revolted against his father. John E. Woods, "Turco-Iranica II: Notes on a Timurid Decree of 1396/798", \textit{Journal of Near Eastern Studies}, 43, 4, (1984), pp. 333-35.}

The scale of Timur's conquests and the extent to which he personalised authority meant that there was a great power vacuum after his death. Shah Rukh was the eventual victor, but he was unable to maintain the empire in its entirety. After the savage conflict following his death the Timurid realm of Abu Said consisted of little more than the territories of Khurasan and Transoxiana. Upon his death the empire split into three parts: Transoxiana, which was ruled by his son, Ahmad; Khurasan, which was ruled by Husain Baiqara; and Ferghana, which was ruled by Babur's father, Umar Shaykh. The succession disputes symbolised wider conflicts than those resulting from the personal ambitions of princes. They reflected the conflict between the different factions within the empire. On the one hand this conflict indicated the dissatisfaction of the nomads with the professionalisation of war and with subordination of nomadic independence to a sedentarised court. On the other hand it was also an expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the settled community with the heavy taxes placed upon them by the imperial authorities. Husain Baiqara was defeated by the Uzbeks: a nomadic group who had formerly been controlled by Timur, but who had become dissatisfied with life under Timurid suzerainty.

The Mughal emperors managed to check the effects of this tradition in India. The succession disputes in the Mughal empire did not prove as debilitating to the Mughal dynasty as they did to the Timurids. They did not undermine the powerbase of the empire: the monopoly of the imperial court to award the right to collect agrarian revenue within the empire. Akbar attempted to move away from the Central Asian legacy as a ruler, by bureaucratising the empire at the expense of the Muslim military élite, in particular the Chaghatay amirs. By abolishing hereditary appointments, and making promotion dependent upon the emperor, Akbar took power away from the military aristocracy; thus they were not able to participate to any great extent in the succession disputes that did occur. In contrast to Central Asia where the succession conflicts reflected a conflict among different sections of society, in the Mughal empire such disputes were largely contained within the context of family squabbles. The Mughal princes had a considerable degree of independence.\footnote{According to Bernier the sons of Shah Jahan: Sultan Shuja, Dara Shukoh, Aurangzeb, and Murad Bakhsh, after being assigned their territories, "acted in every respect as independent sovereigns." Bernier, p. 15.} The tradition of princely rebellions also continued. Akbar's son and successor, Jahangir, rebelled against him but was
forgiven. Jahangir was forced to blind the rebellious prince Khusrau. Shah Jahan spent the last years of Jahangir's reign in rebellion and upon his accession he put all rival members of his family to death. His third son, Aurangzeb, imprisoned him when he fell ill. For the most part, the Mughal succession disputes reflected the natural ambition of princes to become kings, and the vested interests of the candidates supporters. The conflict between Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb is a possible exception to this, in that Dara Shukoh represented Muslim liberalism and Aurangzeb depicted himself as an upholder of Muslim orthodoxy.

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Powerful as the sovereigns were, they did not operate in a vacuum. They were at the head of the court, an institution which was, at least in theory, at the ruler's disposal to administer the empire according to the ruler's decrees. In order to understand the Central Asian influence upon the Mughal court, we must consider several important factors. The composition of the court, the rituals that accompanied court procedure, and the relationships between the court officials.

The composition of the Timurid and Mughal courts was largely determined by the priorities of each leader. Timur could not call on any tradition of centralized authority as he rose to power within a decentralized tribal confederation. As the founder of a new empire he had the opportunity to mould the court in his own image (although in practice he incorporated many earlier Turco-Mongolian traditions). He opted to make his court a place where he could reward his trusted followers with materially comfortable positions; at the same time he ensured that the lack of a formalized hierarchy would act against such individuals attaining too much actual power. He personalized rule as far as was possible. He preferred to rule through individual people, such as his ministers, Maulana Qutbuddin, Khwaja Abdulmalik, and Khwaja Abdullawa, and not through a systematic structure.\(^49\) This arrangement suited the aims of both parties. It was a prestigious and materially rewarding position for the knights, and the ruler did not have to surrender any formal power to this group. The ruler could accept and reject the advice of the grand secretariat as he wished, while giving an outward appearance of decisions made by consensus. In any case, because positions on the grand secretariat were given to the rulers' personal favourites, it was unlikely that the rulers' demands would be refused.

Some of the most influential people within the Timurid courts were not from the military or bureaucratic élites at all. They were part of the cultural élite. Timur's court was of great importance as a cultural centre. Timur liked to engage in conversation with his scholar officials, and, although he was illiterate, Timur liked to be read to. Thus his court included people like Maulana Abul, the reader of tomes and annals, and Maulana Abdul Malik, who could simultaneously compose poetry and play a game of chess. Timur was interested in science, in particular, astronomy. He asked Ibn Khaldun many questions about his birthplace, and had him write an account of it.\(^50\) He held conversations with representatives of many different religions there, such as Khwaja Mahomed of Bokhara, and Maulana Sad-ad-din Taftazani, reputedly great interpreters of

\(^{49}\) Ibn Arabshah, p. 312.

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
the Quran.\textsuperscript{51} Timur always sought to impose his personality upon those present during these conversations.\textsuperscript{52}

For the most part, the courts of Timur's successors followed his model, although as the empire became more sedentarised they began to take on more of a bureaucratic aspect. In the later Timurid period the structure of the court became more formalized. In the reign of Husain Baiqara, what had formerly been a collection of Amirs became the General State council - divan-i buzurg-i amarat. Thus the Timurid court had several functions: it was a place where the sovereign could discuss affairs of state with his trusted followers, a place where the sovereign would meet important dignitaries, a gathering of the cultural elite, and the headquarters of the imperial household. In this respect it was similar to that of the Mughal emperors.

Yet as the Mughal court evolved it became substantially different from that of its Timurid ancestors. Unlike the Timurid courts which were essentially a congregation of the ruler's intimates, there was a more pronounced hierarchical structure in the Mughal court. In Akbar's reign, for example, the people who assisted the emperor at his court were divided into four groups, each one reflecting a particular dimension of royalty.\textsuperscript{53} These were: the nuyman-i daulat - the nobles of state - the high ranking mansabdars headed by the emperor's deputy, the vakil; the auliya-i nursat - the friends of victory - who were headed by the divan and comprised those who dealt with state funds; the ashabi-i subhat - companions of the emperor, leading scholars and spiritual figures; and the arhab-i khidmat - the servants of the emperor and the imperial household.\textsuperscript{54} Whereas in Central Asia Timur had preferred to keep formal organization to a minimum, thereby enhancing the dependence of his subjects upon him as a person. The Mughals, by contrast, made the system more formalized; by elevating the position of emperor they hoped that all their officials at all levels would regard themselves as servants of the emperor. As the emperor's officials were the paramount authority over many different groups it was necessary to ensure that the loyalty of their servants was to the ruler, rather than to an official above them.

Not only did Mughal emperors endeavour to make their officials view themselves as servants of the emperor, it could also be argued that they promulgated a comparable relationship with the multifarious tribal groups within India. As supreme overlords of India the Mughals established themselves as the arbiters of legitimacy in the provincial squabbles. In 1623 Jahangir raised Bir Singh Deo to the position of Maharaja of the Rajputs.\textsuperscript{55} This implicitly asserted the Mughals' position as the ultimate arbiters of legitimacy in India. They could claim this in part because of the exalted status they claimed for the emperor, and in part because the ruling pedigree that their Timurid heritage

\textsuperscript{51} Ibn Arbstah, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibn Khaldun described Timur as "highly intelligent and very perspicacious, addicted to debate and argumentation about what he knows and also what he does not know;" Ibn Khaldun, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{53} Abul Fazl, A'in-i Akbari, p.4.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., pp. 4-7.
\textsuperscript{55} Kolff, p. 128.
gave them. What the Mughals gave on the one hand, they reserved the right to remove with the other. Some time later, the successor of Bir Singh Deo, Jujhar Singh, rebelled. Shah Jahan defeated him in battle, and ordered a large part of the large temple of Chaturbhuja, which Bir Singh Deo had erected to be pulled down.56

It was not only the composition of the court that changed; so too did its character. In order to re-establish Mughal sovereignty in India, Akbar had to adapt his empire to the Indian environment. When Humayun reconquered India in 1555 most of his nobility were Chaghatays (those members of the Mughal service who came from the former territories of the Ulus Chaghatay - that is to say Moghulistan and Transoxiana), the two other major groups being sedentary bureaucrats, mostly Iranian, and Turkmen Safavis.57 Therefore the court, in its component parts, was at this stage essentially similar to the composition of the Timurid court. But in Akbar's reign it was the Central Asian elements, especially the Chaghatays, which suffered when he sought to make the empire more inclusive by increasing the Hindu, Indo-Muslim, and Rajput numbers in the nobility.58 Moreover, in Akbar's reign the character of the court underwent a number of changes: the first from a pastoral confederation headed by an emperor into that of a centrally administered agrarian empire, before becoming a synthesis of the two systems later in his reign.

In this period (c. 1560-80), Akbar, and his advisers at court, appreciated that the Timurid inheritance would need to be significantly transformed if Mughal rule was to survive in India. In many senses this era represents the triumph of the court faction favouring centralization, which included ministers such as Todar Mal and Muzaffar Khan, over those who favoured provincial autonomy, such as Khan-i Zaman. Many of the essential ingredients of Timurid ideological doctrine - the claim to a divine mandate to rule, and nominal adherence to Islamic standards, coupled with a cult of personality centered around the person of the sovereign - were maintained in Akbar's reign. But, on the other hand, Akbar's reign also saw the development of an centralised administrative system, as opposed to a series of fiefdoms presided over by a master warlord, was added to the imperial framework. These reforms were contrary to the wishes of many of the Chaghatay amirs who had helped regain the empire and wanted to see the empire divided up into a series of fiefs in Timurid tradition.59 Akbar's reign also saw an attempt to

56 Kolff, p. 142.
57 In 1555 the Turanians comprised fifty-three per cent of the nobility (and since many such as Munim Beg Khan were left behind in Afghanistan. I. A. Khan believes the actual numbers were higher); Persians constituted thirty-one per cent. I. A. Khan, "The Nobility Under Akbar and the Development of his Religious Policy", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1-2, (1968), p. 35.
58 In 1555 Turanis had comprised fifty-three per cent of the nobility, in the period 1575-95 they comprised about thirty-five per cent. In 1555 there were no Rajputs in Mughal service, in the period 1575-95 they comprised sixteen per cent of the nobility. In the period 1565-75, the Indo-Muslims comprised fourteen per cent of the total numbers, but only nine per cent of those with ranks of 500 and above. During the next twenty years they almost doubled their representation in the top category, they comprised sixteen per cent of those above 1,000, and eighteen per cent of those 500 and above. Ibid., p. 35.
59 The Mughal administrative measures of this era had no precedent in Central Asia. The so-called Institutes
emulate the example of Sher Shah's centralizing reforms. Humayun had allowed a considerable degree of provincial autonomy which had allowed some of his governors to join the revolts against him. This, coupled with his own indolence, had allowed the empire to disintegrate. Conversely, Sher Shah's successor, Islam Shah, had been unable to maintain his father's system because he had pushed too aggressively in the direction of centralization. Akbar's reforms passed through a number of stages. In 1564 Muzaffar Khan Turbati was appointed wazir. He instituted regulations designed to ensure that the mansabdars maintained a certain number of troops, and appointed a sadr to control revenue grants. The most important reforms occurred in the 1570's. Around 1574 Akbar decided to put the bulk of his service on cash salaries because of abuses in the mansabdari system.

These centralizing reforms in Akbar's reign represented an attempt to find a workable medium between, on the one hand, the representatives of Central Asian practices who had helped restore the Mughal polity in its adopted country, and on the other hand, the centralizing reforms implemented by Sher Shah. Moreover it also sought to meet the need to integrate the many rivals for local power within India into a common administrative framework. These two aims were achieved through the imperial monopoly over the awarding of rights to collect agrarian revenue. The need for an administrative framework at the centre to oversee this process meant that, in contrast to Central Asia, there was a greatly increased bureaucratic component in the Mughal court. The role of financial officials in particular was greatly enhanced. This was one reason for an increase in the number of Persians and Indo-Muslims in the nobility, and a decrease in the number of Chaghatays. The Persians had the bureaucratic skills necessary, as they had in the Timurid empire, while many Hindus proved themselves very quick learners. Moreover, as we saw in the chapter on the army, Akbar became aware of the need to incorporate elements of the Hindustani armed population, amongst which the Rajputs were prominent, into his empire. The strategy of dividing and conquering the militaristic elements of Indian society meant that they needed to be incorporated within the Mughal hierarchy. The Persians administrative skills were required, so it had to be the Chaghatays - the Central Asians - who were displaced. Their background was that of specialist warriors; this did not necessarily mean that they lacked administrative and bureaucratic skills, rather that they came from a background where a governor ruled a specific area, and positions were hereditary, not subject to imperial interference.

These initiatives implemented by Akbar and advocated by his financial officials, which sought to move away from Central Asian traditions, were challenged by a section of the Chaghatai nobility. These revolts began when Abdullah Khan rebelled in 1564. Khan-i Zaman offered more serious resistance when he besieged the fort of Manikar. He accepted a pardon on the basis that he remain north of the ganges, but he broke two such

*of Timur, purportedly a Timurid administrative manual, are not mentioned in the Al'in-i Akbari, not even in the historical essay on taxation. Nor is there is any evidence that Todar Mal ever used them. W.H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, reprinted 1968, p. 258.

60 Streusand, p. 99.
agreements before being killed in battle. The first phase of these revolts were quelled in 1567. But further rebellions would occur. In 1580 Chaghatay officers stationed in Bengal and Bihar revolted. In Bihar, a Fatwa was issued against Akbar, and a revolt against him was ordered. It is important to note that these revolts did not represent a Chaghatay - Mughal feud per se. Many Chaghatay Amirs fought under the Mughal banner against the rebels. The revolts reflected the concerns of a section of the Chaghatay nobility who had been posted to the periphery of the empire and resented the centralizing reforms over provincial dominions. Akbar's religious policies provided a pretext for this action, but the revolts reflected more the dissatisfaction of some elements of the regional nobility with fiscal reforms, rather than concern with religious experimentation. More specifically, the revolts represented a reaction against some side-effects of Akbar's reforms - in particular overzealous enforcement of the regulations relating to branding, the required numbers of troops, and the payment of arrears. The abolition of Jagirs had deprived them of a source of revenue. These reforms were instigated by Khwaja Shah Mansur Shirazi, the recently-appointed wazir. He reduced additional allowances to officers serving in Bengal. The jagirdars found it difficult to cope with this situation. One solution they tried to adopt was to collect excess revenue. Muzaffar Khan, the vakil (emperor's aide-de camp), ordered this to be repaid to the imperial treasuries. Shirazi was made the scapegoat for these rebellions, it did not help matters that he had fallen foul of powerful ministers such as Todar Mal. He was dismissed from his post on the basis of false documents which purported impropriety on his part, and was hanged in 1581.

Thus, ultimately Akbar reimposed his authority upon the realm, but he had also to make some concessions after so doing. He had posted the Chaghatays to the periphery of the empire, partly because they did not form part of his plans for centralisation, partly because he wanted to use their martial ability on the northwest frontier. Marginalised to the periphery, and yet still subject to imperial constraints, the Chaghatay rebels attempted to reassert provincial autonomy in the Mughal empire, but Akbar staved off their challenge. Akbar and his ministers modified their efforts at centralising reforms after these revolts. The new head of the diwan, Shahbaz Khan, restored the jagir system in 1580. The empire was divided into twelve provinces, each of which was under the command of a governor. The powers of these governors were, however restricted, for example they commanded mansabgars only when the army was mobilised. But although some modifications were made to the administrative system, the underlying tenet that loyalty was owed directly to the emperor was still maintained. Some contentious regulations, such as those pertaining to Dagh (horse branding) remained, they were less rigorously

61 Streusand, p. 100.
62 Ibid., p. 155.
63 In the rebellion of 1580-81 for example thirty-three Turanis fought on the side of the rebels, twenty-eight fought on the imperial side and five were neutral. I.A. Khan, "The Nobility Under Akbar and the Development of his Religious Policy, 1560-80", p. 36.
64 Streusand, p. 167.
65 Ibid.
enforced. The later part of Akbar's reign saw a compromise in the administrative system: although the mansabdars were to be regularly reassigned, they were unlikely to be expelled from the service. In return they had to come as close as practicable to meeting their obligations. Akbar for his part made promotions on merit and thus kept all classes loyal. Thus the Central Asian traditions asserted themselves against centralizing reform. As had occurred in Central Asia, the provinces revolted against the central authorities. A compromise system was reached. Akbar came up with an imperial framework that suited the centre and the provinces. This was something the Timurids had been unable to achieve.

The Central Asian component of the Mughal court continued its numerical decline after Akbar's reign. Turanians continued to serve in the Mughal hierarchy, albeit in lesser numbers. By the time of Aurangzeb's reign the Turanian component was severely reduced. In the period 1658-78 they comprised about fourteen per cent of the nobles; from 1679-1707 they comprised only twelve and a half per cent.66 The Persians were by now the best established of the foreign mansabdars. They comprised twenty-eight per cent of the mansabdars in the period 1658-78.67 From 1679-1707 this proportion was reduced to twenty-one per cent but they remained the dominant foreign group.68 This indicates the extent to which the Mughal polity had changed in composition.

But although the Turanian numbers within the nobility decreased, they did not lose their influence entirely. They remained an important faction at the Mughal court until at least the mid-eighteenth century. At the end of Aurangzeb's reign there were two powerful factions in the court. One was led by Zulfiqar Khan and Asaf Khan, who were of Persian descent. The other faction was led by a Turanian, Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jung, who had come to India in 1668-69; it included his son Chin Qilich khan (later known as Nizam-ul-Mulk) and Muhammad Amin Khan.69 The rivalry between these two groups, who maintained a distinctive identity even though many of them had been in India for generations, was the focal point for Mughal court politics after the death of Aurangzeb until the reign of the emperor Farrukhsiyar (1713-19).70 Chin Qilich Khan moved against the Barha Sayyids, a group of Hindustani nobles who were effectively ruling India, claiming that they were subverting Timurid rule and pursuing anti-Islamic policies.71 So while the Central Asian numbers in the nobility may have decreased, it must be acknowledged that they remained an influential group.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, one might argue, as a generalization, that the more Indianised the empire became, the less it was suited to the Turanian nobility. The Persians could maintain a relatively strong position because they were seen as essentially civilised. The Chaghatays had served their purpose in conquering the territory of the empire; their abilities in that area were acknowledged, but their skills were not as

67 Ibid., p. 19.
68 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p.10.
71 Ibid., p. 157.
important once the Mughal army became primarily an instrument of control, not of conquest. The army was required to put down rebellions and incorporate new provinces, not to campaign against dynasties beyond the sub-continent such as the Ottomans or Safavids. The cavalry remained important throughout the Mughal reign, as we have seen, but the artillery increased in prestige, and this made for a more immobile army. Again there was a lesser role for the Chaghatais because of this. The Chaghatai officers were prominent and well rewarded among the cavalry, but the artillery tended to be dominated by Portuguese and indigenous troops. Furthermore, the increasingly static style of warfare adopted by the Mughal army tended to negate the effectiveness of the cavalry.

In the eyes of some courtiers, the increased bureaucratisation of the empire indicated that the Mughal empire was more advanced than its usurpers in Central Asia, and its Safavid neighbours. Abul Fazl recorded that in contemporary Iran and Turan only one treasurer was appointed, with the result that the accounts were confused, whereas in India twelve treasurers were needed to oversee the imperial finances, a further nine for overseeing cash payments, and three for overseeing the imperial supply of jewellery. Furthermore there were separate treasuries kept for each of the 100 imperial workshops. Abul Fazl's figures, naturally are disputable, but for the purposes of this study, what is important is that Abul Fazl felt the need to emphasise explicitly the bureaucratic component of the Mughal empire, with the implication that this made it superior to its Uzbek and Safavid neighbours.

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In addition to serving as the administrative nerve centre of the empire the court served to reinforce the authority of the ruler through a carefully-cultivated set of rituals. The Mughal Court maintained some elements of Central Asian tradition, but, it also incorporated some Indian influences. It appears that, in the main, Timurid court rituals were conducted according to Mongol tradition. Nevertheless, although some Turco-Mongolian traditions were maintained, obeisances were made to Timur himself and not the Chinggisid puppet khan. Clavijo, a Spanish ambassador to Timur's court, records says that when he and his fellow ambassadors visited Timur they had to bow before him, put their right knee upon the ground, cross arms over their breast, advance one step and repeat the process. Sometimes as a sign of favour, visitors were allowed to touch the ruler, for example Timur then extended his hand to Ibn Khaldun who kissed it, after which Timur bade him to sit down.

The Mughal court rituals were geared towards enhancing the imperial aura. They did not echo any one tradition, rather they were an amalgam of Central Asian, Hindu, and

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibn Arabshah, p. 299.
76 Ibn Khaldun, p. 31.
Muslim practices. Some Central Asian court rituals were maintained in India. Babur maintained Mongol ceremonial practices, in the keeping with the practices of his relatives in Moghulistan. When Mirza Sulaiman, the ruler of Badakhshan, visited the Mughal Court Akbar revived the Chaghatai custom of the troops dining at the royal tables spread around the audience hall, but ceased this practice after his departure. Jahangir recorded that the rebellious prince Khusrau was brought before him according to Chinggisid custom and that the greetings from young to old at the Mughal court were conducted in the Timurid and Mongol fashion. Such continuities were, however, the exception and not the rule. The changes instituted in Akbar's reign for the purposes of enforcing the loyalty of officials to the emperor meant that few identifiably Central Asian practices were evident at the Mughal court.

The Mughal court developed a distinct set of rituals in keeping with the transformation the Mughal polity underwent in Akbar's reign. The daily routine of the Mughal emperors was clearly regulated, so as always to present the emperor in as formalised a manner as possible. Borrowing from Hindu tradition, the emperors would appear each morning on the balcony of the palace - the Jharoka-i-darshan - before their subjects. Symbolically this ceremony represented the emperor making himself available to the people. It was necessary for the emperor to show he was in command. (As we have noted in the chapter on the army, a similar situation existed within the Mughal army, where troops would flee if they believed their leader had died). The leader needed to be seen to be in command. After the emperor had appeared on the balcony people could attend the hall of public audience where he could be seen dispensing justice, hearing the requests of the people and reviewing those in imperial service. All mansabdars, when they were inducted, had to appear before the emperor. Mansabdars in the provinces had to report annually to the court, and the duties of guarding the imperial household were shared between mansabdars. Through this process advancement was made dependent on the emperor. Making the mansabdars appear physically before the emperor was another means of reinforcing the master-servant relationships the Mughals sought to cultivate with their officials. After lunch, a private court was convened where the emperor would confer with his ministers. These ceremonies were restricted to the imperial court; governors could not hold their own durbars.

79 Jahangir, Vol. 1, pp. 68 and 76.
The precise order maintained in the court ceremonies was complemented by the layout of the imperial court, which conformed to the hierarchical order dictated by the emperor, and in so doing reinforced the emperors own authority. The seating arrangements at the court were made on a hierarchical basis. The eldest prince was allowed to sit the closest to the emperor, the younger princes sat further away.\(^{83}\) Next in preference were the favourite nobles, who were required to stand at a distance of three to five yards away from Akbar, and to be five to twenty yards from him when seated. They were followed by the senior nobles; the other ranks, indeed all others, stood in the yasal.\(^{84}\) Roe mentions comparable arrangements at Jahangir's court.\(^{85}\) In the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, rails were introduced to demarcate seating areas. Manucci noted that, at a distance of one pace away from the emperor's throne, there was a gold railing, through which none could enter but the emperor. The area where the great nobles were seated was surrounded by a silver railing; the section where the officials of lesser rank were seated was enclosed by a vermillion railing.\(^{86}\)

The rituals of the Mughal court were as carefully planned as the daily routine of the emperors. Again, they owed little to Central Asian tradition, or most other traditions for that matter. Rather, they were developed for the purpose of raising the prestige of the sovereign. Abul Fazl, unsurprisingly, credits Akbar with devising the forms of prostration.\(^{87}\) Akbar ordered those appearing before the court to perform the kornish - the placing of the palm of the right hand upon the forehead, which was then bent downwards.\(^{88}\) Another form of salutation was the taslim, which required the placing of the back of the right hand on the ground, raising it gently until the person was upright, whereupon he placed the palm of the hand upon the crown of their head which symbolised he was ready to give themselves as an offering.\(^{89}\) These rituals were intended to reinforce the master - servant (or perhaps more accurately the Sufi style pir-murid relationship embodied in Chishti doctrine) prescribed by Mughal court doctrine. All those attending court had to make obeisances to the emperor, the different ranks had to perform different types of obeisance. A mansabdar receiving a jagir, a robe of honour or an elephant had to perform three taslims.\(^{90}\) On other occasions only one was required. Initially Akbar's disciples in the Divine Faith were required to prostrate themselves, but this led to objections from the Ulema, so the policy was discontinued.\(^{91}\)

Another important function of the Mughal court was the conferment of titles. Here

\(^{83}\) Abul Fazl, \textit{A'in-i Akbari}, p. 169.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{87}\) Abul Fazl, \textit{A'in-i Akbari}, p. 167.
\(^{88}\) Ibid.
\(^{90}\) Abul Fazl, \textit{A'in-i Akbari}, p. 167.
\(^{91}\) Ibid., p. 168.
again some Central Asian traditions were maintained, but there was also an element of Indianization. Titles such as Amir and Bahadur were conferred in Timur's reign, but they were purposely ill-defined. The Mughal system, from the time of Akbar, was clearly delineated. We have noted in the chapter on the army that honours could be symbolic, such as titles conferred upon people; or Khilats - robes of honour, divided into five grades - which were presented to everyone who appeared at court. Some of the symbolic titles were of Hindu origin, such as the right to play kettledrums, elephant and fly whisks. It must also be said that on other occasions the honours given were meaningful, such as the increases in rank. The system of honours in the Mughal court allowed the rulers to reward people according to a scale. This meant they could maintain a ranking system among the various parties at their court, rewarding them according to a scale that indicated their worth to the empire, and the emperor. The act of conferring these titles further emphasised the paramount authority of the sovereign, especially because, in theory at least all such awards had to have the emperor's assent. The position of the keeper of the seal indicated the nature of the changes between the Timurid and Mughal courts. The keeper of the seal was an important position in the Mughal court as it controlled access to the sovereign. But it had been rendered largely powerless under Timur because such a personage did not follow Timur on campaign. Thus the role of the Muhirdar under Timur was little more than that of a glorified butler at the sovereign's court.

The imperial Harem was an important feature of court life in the Central Asian and Mughal empires. It had a universalistic significance, being an integral element of Muslim kingship and also important in Hindu mythology, which regarded the idea of a ruler growing past potency as inimical to kingship. Abul Fazl estimated the harem to be more than 5000 strong in Akbar's reign, and each member had her own official apartment. This number increased during the reign of Aurangzeb to the extent that it required 2000 servants for its needs. The use of marriage alliances to enhance the legitimacy of the sovereign was apparent in both empires, and women served many roles. For the most part these were ceremonial roles, intended to further the prestige of the empire. Noble women were present at the important ceremonies of state. All eight of Timur's wives, resplendent in their most exquisite finery, met the Spanish Ambassadors. Timur's chief wife wore an outer robe of red silk embroidered with gold, which had a long train held up by fifteen assistants. Friar Manrique, a visitor to Shah Jahan's court, wrote

92 Manz, The Rise and Rule of Timur, p. 175.
93 Irvine, p. 31.
94 Mumtaz Mahal, for example, was the keeper of the seal in Shah Jahan's reign and she was one of the most powerful people in the Mughal court. Lahori, Padshahnama, cited in Inayat Khan, p. 570.
95 Manz, The Rise and Rule of Timur, p. 111.
96 Abul Fazl, A'in-I Akbari, p. 46.
98 Clavijo, p. 258-60.
of how Shah Jahan's entrance was preceded by a train of beauties; the dinner was served by women.¹⁰⁰ Women from Central Asia were employed in the Mughal Service to guard the imperial Harem; they were often presented as gifts in the trading embassies.¹⁰¹ The imperial marriages also reflected something of the political agenda of the ruler. Timur married Amir Husayn's widow; this allowed him to assume the Chinggizid title of guregen - son in law - which gave him precedence over the Turkish Amirs.¹⁰² The Mughals also used marriage to further their legitimacy. Akbar married the daughter of Raja Bijarah Mal in 1562, becoming the first Timurid to marry a Rajput princess, and in so doing he established one of the Mughals' most enduring alliances.

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Having considered the basis upon which the sovereigns based their claims to rule, and the context in which they exercised this rule, we shall now proceed to an assessment of the continuities between the administrative systems of the Central Asian and Mughal empires. In order to assess the extent to which the Timurid administrative institutions were transplanted into India, it is important to identify their salient features.

Timur showed no interest in creating a new system of administration, he preferred to manipulate existing systems to his advantage. Former rulers who had submitted peacefully were normally reinstated.¹⁰³ Timur's administration was patterned on Turco-Mongolian tradition. Government was loosely divided into four types of office: provincial offices, central government offices, court offices, and military offices. Administration was divided into two spheres: the Turco-Mongolian sphere, and the sedentary, predominantly Persian, sphere. The Chaghatays held the military honours and the court offices. The sedentary officials controlled tax collection, financial affairs and local government. The Persians, as a rule, held inferior positions. The expression "Talik Mizaj" - "Persian-natured" - had a pejorative connotation.¹⁰⁴ Persians were punished more readily for abuses than Chaghatays were. They were excluded from reconstruction work carried out by the Chaghatays following campaigns, to prevent them from enhancing their public standing.¹⁰⁵ Most of the provinces in the Timurid empire were administered by princes, under the aegis of an experienced amir.¹⁰⁶ Many of these governors were Barlas amirs from Timur's own tribe.¹⁰⁷ By giving them provincial postings he acted against possible threats of insubordination from within his own tribe.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 259.
¹⁰⁴ Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, p. 114.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 116.
¹⁰⁶ Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 92.
¹⁰⁷ Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, p. 120.
The fietherolders were not taxed, but they were allowed to tax the local population. Each was assisted by a daraghha who commanded the local militia and oversaw reconstruction work in new territories.\textsuperscript{108} The diwan-i ala was the central divan, and accompanied Timur on campaign. It was responsible for collecting taxes, and registering ransom money, and was predominantly staffed by Persians. The diwan-i buzurg, controlled by Chaghatays, was a court of law for the Chaghatay nobility.

In Central Asia (and, as we shall see, in Mughal India) the everyday functioning of the administration did not necessarily conform to the official structure. Manz cautions against interpreting the nature of Timur's administration at face value.\textsuperscript{109} She points out that there was both a formal and an informal administrative system. At the formal level it was an administrative system used for that purpose. At an informal level it was a means to control the élite, a priority as important as the formal level. In practice there was no clear distinction between civil and military affairs. As the largest institution, the army inevitably had an important role in administration. Because Timur was constantly conquering new territories they were inextricably intertwined. The overlap in administrative duties between the army and settled spheres was a deliberate move by Timur to place a check on the army's power. By making the army cooperate with civilian officials he prevented army leaders establishing complete control over their fiefdoms. Chaghatay amirs and Persian diwan officials shared the responsibility of collecting and registering the Mal-i aman - ransom money. The diwan-i ala was formally assigned to registering ransom money, but on campaign the Chaghatay officials assisted the diwan in these duties.\textsuperscript{110} With so few positions giving their holders a clear mandate it was difficult for officials to use their positions to create an independent powerbase.

The Mughal administrative system contained several important departures from Central Asian tradition. Information on Babur's administration is scarce.\textsuperscript{111} From the limited information available it appears that under Babur's administration, the Mughals offered little that was new in administration. He is considered to have retained the Lodi system of assessing and collecting revenue.\textsuperscript{112} Assignments of territory - iqta - were granted to his followers.\textsuperscript{113} The assignees were allowed to collect the revenue from their

\textsuperscript{108} Manz, \textit{The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane}, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 108.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 110.

\textsuperscript{111} Babur had little to say about his system of administration in his memoirs which concentrate mainly on his military career and his descriptions of flora and fauna. Perhaps the very lack of information on administration in his memoirs and the contemporary literature indicates that he did not rate it very highly as a priority. Mohibbul Hasan, Ch. 11, offers a good interpretation of Babur's administration, on the basis of the available material.

\textsuperscript{112} Mohibbul Hasan, p. 171.

\textsuperscript{113} Some historians disagree with Mohibbul Hasan's assessment of Babur's administrative system. Radhey Shyam contends that Babur made a large number of assignments to his begs, as well as to large number of Afghans. Furthermore he contends that Babur's system of administration was different from that of the Lodis, that Babur also made arrangements for khalisa - the payment of land revenue directly into the Central Treasury,
land and from these earnings they paid a set amount of tribute to the court. Babur did retain some aspects of Timurid administration. In the Timurid tradition, Babur was the chief executive, judicial, and military head of the empire. He retained the Timurid tradition of a General Council of Wazirs, and prominent nobles. He also had an inner council of trusted advisers to whom he delegated the everyday administration as he saw fit. The most senior of these was Mir Amir Khalifa, who had been with Babur since his youth in Ferghana.\footnote{6}{Mohibbul Hasan, p. 163.} The position of shaqawal - the chief scribe at court, who was also used in an intelligence gathering capacity - was another Central Asian tradition that continued in Babur's court. Babur's empire was divided in to approximately twenty sarkars, which were further subdivided into parganas.\footnote{7}{Ibid., p. 168.} The Hakims (those in charge of a sarkar), and the Shiqdars (those in charge of a pargana) were either Turks or Mongols, who, like Babur, had been displaced from Central Asia by the rise of the Uzbeks.\footnote{8}{Ibid., p. 168.} These officials were subject to transfer, as their Timurid counterparts had been. Some Timurid nomenclature was maintained in Babur's reign, but the numbers of such ranks were not maintained. In contrast to the reigns of Chinggis and Timur effective strength fell below nominal strength.\footnote{9}{W. H. Moreland, "Rank (Mansab) in the Mogul State Service", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, (1936), p. 649.} So while some Timurid practices were maintained, Mughal administration was, in some respects, becoming more Indianised in Babur's reign.

In the reign of Akbar the Mughal administrative system was further transformed from its Central Asian heritage. Unlike the Timurid system of overlapping positions, ranks and responsibilities were clearly defined by the courtly decrees. It was the administrative system of the Afghan warlord Sher Shah, rather than traditional Central Asian practice, that was adopted in Akbar's reign. Sher Shah had abolished hereditary succession in public positions; he had made his administration a meritocracy, largely made up of his personal followers. Thus he achieved a considerable degree of administrative centralisation. In 1542 he reintroduced the practice of branding horses that Alauddin Khalji had instituted in the fourteenth century.\footnote{10}{Kolff, p. 42.} As the Mughals would later do, Sher Shah had acted as a paramount authority. His financial base was his captured supply of treasure, which ensured his creditworthiness, helped to rally people around him, and enabled him to maintain his armed forces.\footnote{11}{Ibid., p. 46.} Despite his policy of centralisation
Sher Shah was pragmatic enough to realise that he could not control India alone. Sher Shah's administrative system needed the Zamindars to maintain local law and order and collect revenue. The Zamindars needed him; he was their protector, the basis of their legitimacy.

Akbar adopted many of the practices of Sher Shah, but he also made some significant alterations to them. From Sher Shah's reign he borrowed the system of horse-branding (1572). But he went a step further than Sher Shah by instituting Chehra - descriptive rolls - upon which details of the appearances of each of the nobles' contingents were collated, as a further counter to cheating. The mansabdars were given a rank. At the beginning of Akbar's reign the rank they were given indicated the size of the troop contingent - jagir - they were expected to maintain. Payment could be in cash - Naqd - or more commonly in kind - the right to collect a sum of the revenues. There was a Zat rank, which was intended to provide for the upkeep of the mansabdar and his family. The Suwar was to pay for the contingent. The ranks of Zat and Suwar, which indicated respectively the number of troops and horsemen they were required to maintain, became indicators of rank and salary from near the end of Akbar's rule. We must make the point again, that in this system, loyalty was owed directly to the emperor. Mansabdars did not command other mansabdars.

While Akbar borrowed some elements of Sher Shah's administrative system, he can still be regarded as an innovator in that he implemented a system that at once gave the emperor control over the appointment and advancement of his administrators, while allowing the administrators a semi-autonomous position with a source of income. Overall Sher Shah's system had more to offer Akbar than the Central Asian tradition. The Central Asian tradition did not offer any precedent for the centralization of the empire Akbar sought, a centralization that would enable the court to maintain control over the empire, and prevent rebellions in the provinces by making the centre militarily superior, and economically necessary to the provinces. Timur's rule was personalized; it was not, strictly speaking, centralized, as the provincial governors rarely appeared at the imperial court, and the financial branch was essentially an auditor of the imperial treasury.

Akbar's administrative system was retained in essentially unaltered form for the duration of Mughal rule. The departure from Central Asian practices which began in Akbar's reign was thus continued by his successors. But in practice the centre's influence over the provinces was redefined through changes to the system. As we shall see, this led to a devolving of authority to the provinces, a reversion, in some senses to Central Asian tradition. In Jahangir's reign a new rank was introduced, Du aspa - Sih aspa rank, which stipulated an additional number of horses that a mansabdar was required to maintain. The numerical value of the rank did not necessarily indicate the income a

121 This rank appeared as an addition to Suwar rank. For example, a rank of 4000/4000/2000 indicated that the personal rank was 4,000, the cavalry contingent (or the proportion of the cavalry contingent) required was 4000 plus another 2000 cavalrymen over and above the number stipulated by the Suwar rank. Thus Du aspa - Sih aspa rank did not increase the numerical value of the rank. Ibid., p. 43.
mansabdar could expect to collect. There was a difference between the actual - *hasil* - and the nominal - *jama* - yield of jagirs. As a result of this the jagirdars' salaries were indicated on a monthly scale, as they might yield the equivalent of only a few months' pay. The same applied to Naqdi salaries; these were often paid at only eight-monthly or four-monthly rates. The salaries paid on the basis of Suwars were gradually reduced over the period from Akbar to Aurangzeb. But this did not seriously affect the nobles' real income, as they were not required to maintain their full contingents after Akbar's reign. Whereas in Akbar's reign enforcement of troop quotas had been strict, in Jahangir's reign the checks on numbers slackened. Thus Shah Jahan acceded to an empire where the army was larger than the treasury could pay for, but whose effective numbers were small. In the reign of Shah Jahan the difference between nominal and actual numbers was officially acknowledged. Shah Jahan retained the nominal ranks, but made these ranks a relative measure of the contingents that the mansabdars were required to upkeep. Moreland suggests that it was Shah Jahan, himself, who devised these measures. Mansabdars within Hindustan were expected to muster horsemen equivalent to one third of their Suwar rank. If they were posted outside the province, they were expected to produce a quarter of their contingent upon inspection. If they were posted to the territories of Balkh and Badakhshan, they were expected to muster one fifth of their designated rank. Aurangzeb appears to have continued Shah Jahan's administrative practices.

The Mughal imperial structure dictated that a hierarchical framework was necessary to establish the standing of the various factions competing for power and prestige within the Mughal polity. The emperor's sole control of patronage ensured his supreme authority. More centralization was required to realize this aim; hence the departure from Central Asian traditions in this respect, but some aspects of the Central Asian administrative system could serve the purposes of the Mughal emperors. The aspects of the Central Asian traditions that were adopted tended to be those which served the purposes of reinforcing the supreme authority of the Mughal emperor.

One of these aspects was the transfer of provincial officials. Timur periodically reassigned his provincial governors. In the Mughal Empire this process was formalised; in Timur's realm it was not. Athar Ali has rightly pointed out the importance of the Mughal administrative system as a means of realizing revenue, but it could also be said that in the Mughal empire the administrative system was geared as much towards controlling the élite as it was towards administrative efficiency. An example of this can be seen in the limited tenure given to jagirdars. These on average were granted for no more than three or four years, after which the jagirs were reassigned. But this was not always

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123 W. H. Moreland, "Rank (Mansab) in the Mogul State Service", p. 652.
124 Ibid., p. 653.
125 Ibid., p. 655.
127 Moreland, "Rank (Mansab) in the Mogul State Service", p. 660.
evident in practice. Transfers of people did not always mean a new person came to the region. Many officials were never removed from a region as such; moreover, some people were reappointed to the same position twice.\textsuperscript{128} Local expertise was also seen as important in some cases.\textsuperscript{129} The position of Faujdar was ambiguous. It could involve both civilian and military responsibilities.\textsuperscript{130} Transferring jagirdars every few years involved a great deal of effort both on the part of the jagirdars and the bureaucrats who had to oversee the process. It was nevertheless felt to be worth the effort by the Mughal emperors because it was an important means of controlling the nobility.

Another aspect of Central Asian tradition which survived in the Mughal Empire was the abolition of hereditary authority that occurred as part of imperial rule in Central Asia and Mughal India. This came about as part of the rulers' desire to establish their own authority, and not have the representatives of the old order granted positions as of right. Timur had made the government a meritocracy. For the most part hereditary offices were abolished. The only exceptions to this were people appointed to the posts of Amir, Bahadur, and Tovachi. Because there were usually several candidates for these positions, Timur could still control who held them. Like Timur, Akbar sought to make the administrative system of his empire a meritocracy, in order to hinder the hereditary rulers from establishing an independent powerbase. As the empires evolved, however, measures to check this slackened. Heredity, as a factor in appointments did not disappear. From 1658-78, forty-four per cent of the mansabdars with ranks greater than 1000 were khanazads (sons of great amirs), and fifty-seven per cent of the great Amirs were khanazads.\textsuperscript{131} Thus aristocratic parentage was still of help to those seeking advancement within the official system.

The Mughal administration retained the Timurid emphasis upon imperial control over captured treasure. The appropriation of captured treasure by the emperor for the imperial exchequer reflected a greater degree of bureaucratisation, and the exaltation of the authority of the emperor. In the Timurid Empire the finance officers' main role was keeping a tally of captured booty, (and the Amirs were allowed to keep a good portion of the treasure for themselves); but it will be recalled that Akbar had insisted that captured booty should be delivered to the imperial treasuries. Thus Akbar enriched the imperial treasury, and asserted his own authority. Consequently, the role of the financial officials at court became more important. Reserves of gold bullion were an especially important financial consideration in the Mughal empire, as India had limited precious metal reserves of its own, and receipts from plunder decreased. When imports of gold were restricted it became increasingly difficult for the Mughals to finance their administration.\textsuperscript{132}

The Mughals maintained the Timurid practice of overlapping areas of responsibility

\textsuperscript{128} For example Quli Khan Turi, Said Khan Bahadur, and Lashkhar Khan, all served two terms in Multan. Chetan Singh, "Centre and Periphery in the Mughal State", p. 306.

\textsuperscript{129} For example Bihari Mal served two terms as a Diwan, one in Lahore, the other in Multan. Ibid., p. 307.

\textsuperscript{130} Todar Mal, for example, was the Diwan, Amir and Faujdar of Sirhind. Ibid., p. 316.

\textsuperscript{131} Stephen Blake, Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1991, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{132} C.A. Bayly, "State and Economy in India Over Seven Hundred Years", Economic History Review, 38, 4, (1985), p. 588.
in provincial government. Despite the specific designation of ranks and responsibilities, there were few clear cut lines of authority in Mughal government. Provincial governors had their authority undercut by the finance office and the chief military official. They could not withdraw money without the assent of the finance office. Their troop contingents were inspected by the Bakhshi. At the sub-provincial level the army captain was responsible for protecting the villagers from abuses at the hands of the tax collectors. The purpose of this system of overlapping authority was similar in Central Asia and India: it was to prevent any one group establishing autonomous control at provincial level. Such a system enhanced the authority of the emperor as it made him the ultimate arbiter of any ambiguities that resulted. Thus, while the sovereign delegated control of certain specific parts, it was the sovereign who retained control over the whole.

The devolving of administrative responsibility to the provinces led to a certain amount of friction in Central Asia and in Mughal India. At times the increased power of the treasurers did cause a considerable degree of tension between the representatives of imperial power on one hand, and, on the other hand provincial administrators who resented restrictions on their autonomy. This tension was especially evident as a response to two phenomena identifiable in both Empires: overzealous enforcement of imperial decrees, and friction resulting from the increase in grants of free land - soyurghals - that occurred as the empires evolved.

In Timur's time the provincial governors were largely left unmolested. There are few records of any soyurghals being dispensed in Timur's reign. In the reigns of Shah Rukh and Abu Said there was an increase in the number of these grants, but it was during the reign Husain Baiqara that grants of this type snowballed.\(^{133}\) The soyurghals were exempt from taxes, and were autonomous, financially and judicially, from central government. Initially they were given out as rewards, but they became increasingly common awards as imperial power declined and financial rewards became too expensive for the imperial courts to finance. Holders of soyurghals could grant Vakils - religious foundations - these had fiscal immunity as well. The net result of this was a marked decrease in incoming revenue to the central treasury. In an attempt to compensate for this loss of revenue, extraordinary taxes were levied on the towns, and this led to revolts.\(^{134}\)

In 1472 Majd Al-Din was appointed by Husain Baiqara to remedy these ills. His position, in keeping with Timurid practice, was ill-defined; he was not the vizier; but he had extensive financial authority within Khurasan.\(^{135}\) His first term was successful insofar as it resulted in the rectification of many administrative abuses, but his authority was resented by some of the Turkic military elite, in particular Ali Shir Navai, who had

\(^{133}\) An indication of the extent to which this occurred can be gauged from the fact that Husain Baiqara had to appoint three sads, where there had previously been one, to oversee these grants. Maria Eva Subtelny, "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage Under The Later Timurids", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20, 4, 1988, p. 482.

\(^{134}\) In 1470 a general capitation tax was levelled on Herat twice in one year, *ibid.*, p. 486.

\(^{135}\) Maria Eva Subtelny, "Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period", *Iranian Studies*, 21, 1-2, 1988, p. 133.
him deposed in 1478. (In 1487 he was reappointed for a second term when Ali Shir Navai was forced to leave Herat). During his tenure of three years he curtailed the privileges of the soyurghal holders, in particular their practice of levying extraordinary taxes against their subjects. Fearful that they would lose their privileged positions, the Turkic élite sought the removal of Majd Al-Din. Husain Bāiqara resisted these demands for three years, but acceded when the Turkic Amirs threatened mass revolt. Thus the opponents of centralization prevailed against the financial branch of the court.

This phenomenon reasserted itself in Mughal India. Although administration in the Mughal Empire was decentralised insofar as the responsibility for governing land was given to mansabdars who oversaw the collection of revenue from these areas, it was the central administration that acted as a watchdog and auditing agency over these provincial officials. This necessitated a much greater bureaucratic component in central administration. Thus the office of diwan became far more important and assumed far greater power than it had previously. When one of Akbar's treasurers, Shirazi became overzealous in enforcing a crackdown on mansabdars having their required number of troops, a revolt ensued. In the end, as we have seen, Shirazi was executed, framed by a conspiracy of mansabdars who were alienated by these measures. Thus although there was an ideal of centralized authority over financial affairs in the Mughal empire, there were, in practice a number of constraints upon this.

The Mughal equivalent of soyurghals was known as mudad-i maash. They were given to scholars, ascetics, destitutes, and some of those who had declined imperial service. The holders of such land did not have proprietary rights over the land, only the right to collect revenue. In 1690 Aurangzeb made mudad-i maash postings hereditary. The position of holders of mudad-i maash was resented by some of the zamindars who saw them as rivals. The conflict between the zamindars and the mudad-i maash represented one aspect of the conflict between the court and the provinces. There was an ongoing dialectic between imperial authority and provincial autonomy in the Mughal empire.

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Despite the attempts at centralising reform, the provinces ultimately regained supremacy over the centre. In the Timurid empire the nomadic warrior groups became increasingly dissatisfied with Timurid suzerainty and rebelled against the Timurids. The settled communities, too, became increasingly resentful of the taxes. This resulted in the inexorable decline of the Timurid empire. A comparable pattern is evident in the Mughal empire, where the measures instituted to control the provinces, were, in the long run,
unable to cope with the pressures from the provinces, a process which ultimately led to a decentralisation of Mughal rule.

Indeed, recent research has suggested that the Mughal provinces always retained a degree of autonomy, and that this autonomy progressively increased. The work of Muzaffar Alam on the regions of the Punjab and the Awadh in the eighteenth century has been very important in this respect. It has shown that these regions became increasingly independent of the court, but that the court, and in particular the emperor, remained important as the ultimate arbiter of factional disputes. As the Mughals' power declined over their territories, the nobles in the provinces sought increased powers to cope with the zamindari revolts, as they could not rely on help from a militarily powerless centre. Muzaffar Alam believes that the zamindars' rise was based upon the increase in their fortunes resulting from some good agricultural yields. In particular they wanted longer tenures and control over both land and troops. Because they were divided amongst themselves, and seldom allied themselves with others, the zamindars could not by themselves overthrow the Mughal court. But they could successfully raid and then retreat, confident of escaping punishment from imperial authorities.

The court tried to solve these problems by reasserting imperial authority as a source of advancement, but lacked the territorial and political stability to substantiate these claims. Some nobles were able to defy court orders to transfer. Some of the nobles misappropriated revenue. Moreover the emperor's court became bedeviled by factionalism to the point where the nobles and not the emperor dominated imperial appointments. This exacerbated local tension. Thus the court began to act as a destabilising, rather than a stabilising, agent.

141 Chhabele Das, the agent of Raja Jai Singh at court, commented "the provision of army requires money, but money is not to be seen anywhere." Alam, p. 27. In Lahore all merchants were levied twice in 1711 to make up for shortfalls in the Imperial finances. Ibid., p. 190.

142 There was an aggregate increase of eighty five percent in the Jana - assessed revenues - in Awadh from the time of the A'in-i Akbari, until c. 1755. It appears that the hasil - realised revenue - was came to a reasonable proportion of this figure this figure. Alam, p. 103. In the Punjab the revenues doubled from the time of the A'in-i Akbari to Aurangzeb's reign. It should be noted, however, that Athar Ali has queried the reliability of these figures. See M. Athar Ali, "Recent Theories of Decline in Eighteenth Century India", Indian Historical Review, 13, 1-2, (1986), pp. 103-04.

143 Chhabele Ram, was allowed to govern both Awadh, and Allahabad. p. 66. The jagirdars, as well as the nobles sought increased tenures, Anwar ud-Din maintained his jagir and faujdari post in Gopamau for nine years. This was one example among many in a trend towards longer term jagirs, formally known as Jagir-i-Mahal-i Watan. Ibid., p. 128.

144 Abd us-Samad Khan defied an order to to leave the governorship of the Punjab for Kabul in 1724. He only left when he was offered the governorship of Multan, presently his son controlled the Punjab. Ibid., p. 290.

145 Zafar Khan, the Bakhshi of the Ahadis, misappropriated half of the Rs, 12, 00, 000 entrusted to him each month for the emoluments of the army. Ibid., p. 46.

146 For example, in the reign of Muhammad Shah, no Mansab could be gained without a bribe to Ali Ahmad Khan, who looked after the confirming orders.
The result of this devolution of power was the emergence of what Muzaffar Alam has called successor states, which arose as a response to the regional problems of the Mughals. These were essentially run by the local governors, who made their own appointments. The administrative structure of these states followed the Mughal model. They reached a compromise with the zamindars by acceding to their demands as Mughal control over their provinces declined. With increased autonomy, assessments on the land of zamindars and mudad-i maash holders were levied, but they were light assessments. Despite the increase in provincial autonomy the imperial court remained important as a source of paramount authority. The Mughal court still offered nobles a source of advancement. Thus Burhan-ul Mulk, governor of Awadh, and Nizam-ul Mulk supported the emperor during Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi in 1739. This meant he had to develop connections at the imperial court to retain his hold on power. In 1736 these connections allowed him to obtain the governorship of Allahabad, in addition to his existing one of Awadh, for a peshkash of Rs, 15,00,000. Thus autonomy was devolved to the provinces, although the emperor's formal assent remained an important part of this process. Moreover, while the emperor did not have full control over some provinces, he generally had some control over the provinces surrounding the recalcitrant provinces; thus, until the mid-eighteenth century, forces loyal to the emperor could still control most of the territory most of the time. So while the nature of imperial rule was forcibly redefined by the increased power in the provinces, central authority, although it was redefined, was not repudiated.

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The influence of Central Asia upon the Mughal Empire did not end with the demise of the Timurid dynasty at the hands of the Uzbek Shibani Khan, in 1507. We shall now evaluate the continuing contact between the Central Asian and Mughal courts. In their relations with Central Asia, the Mughals were dealing with a polity similar to that of their Timurid ancestors. They were both nomadic polities, albeit nomadic polities with extensive associations with the sedentary world. They shared a common origin in Mongol history. The Timurids came from the territory ruled by Chinggiz's son Chaghatay; the Uzbeks from the territory of the Golden Horde, the former dominions of Jochi, another son of Chinggiz. As we have seen, the fact that the Uzbeks were bordered by established powers - the Safavid Empire in Persia, the Mughal Empire in India, and the Ming Dynasty in China - prevented them from expanding beyond Central Asia. Accordingly their frequent wars occurred in their own lands. This brought about a steady decrease in their own assets. Most of Timur's campaigns, however, were in foreign lands, and transferred the negative effects of war elsewhere. Nevertheless in the reign of Abdullah Khan (1556-98) Central Asia regained a degree of cohesion; it was again influential as an active participant in international politics. The rulers of India were much

147 Alam, p. 73.
148 Ibid., p. 260.
149 Fletcher, "Bloody Tanistry: Authority and Succession in the Ottoman, Indian Muslim, and Later Chinese Empires", p. 16.
affected by this changed situation.

Central Asia retained a continuing allure for the Mughal emperors, many of whom harboured dreams of reconquering those lands. Babur was unable to reconquer his ancestral homelands. The conquest of Hindustan occupied him for many years. After the battle of Khanwa he contemplated a reinvasion of Central Asia. Humayun, however, who was ordered to prepare for such a mission, instead left Badakhshan for Babur's court. The rise of Abdullah Khan prevented any prospect of Humayun reclaiming Transoxiana. In India, however, the Surid order which had ousted him so ignominiously was near collapse. Consequently Humayun was able to topple the tottering Surids, and re-establish the Timurid polity in an Indian environment.

In Akbar's reign, which largely coincided with the reign of Abdullah Khan Uzbek, there was considerable contact between the Mughal and Uzbek courts. Central Asia was in a position actively to influence Mughal policy. Embassies were exchanged in 1572, 1577, 1578, 1580, 1585, and 1586. These embassies indicated the importance of Central Asia as a third party in the power-struggle between the Mughals and the Safavids. Many attempts were made to forge a mutually beneficial Persian policy. Such an arrangement proved practically impossible, owing to the conflicting priorities of the Uzbeks and Mughals. The Mughals' policy was determined to a considerable degree by the demands of ruling a predominantly sedentary empire. The Mughals preferred a stable Persia on their border. Generally speaking their priority had to be the establishment of supremacy within the subcontinent, not beyond it. Without a strong Persia, the Mughals' attempts to incorporate as much of India as possible into their empire and their agrarian bureaucracy could have been thwarted by the need to contend with raiders from the northwest, who were enough of a handful in any case. The more aggressive stance of the Uzbeks, on the other hand, reflected the expansionist traditions of Central Asia, where it was necessary for the nomadic rulers to campaign ceaselessly to retain the support of their military classes, and to maintain their own position.

The conflicting priorities, coupled with the mutual distrust between the Mughals and the Uzbeks, meant that a Mughal - Central Asian alliance failed to materialise. In 1577 Abdullah Khan sent another embassy to Akbar, appealing to him to join him in an invasion of Persia, to liberate Iraq, Khurasan and Fars. Akbar declined the offer, stressing his friendship with the Safavids. In 1578 Akbar intimated that he considered a division of Persia possible, ostensibly because of the need to restore order in Persia. At this time Abdullah Khan controlled Khurasan, and Akbar hoped to gain Qandahar and Zamindawar as a reward for his neutrality. This scheme never came to fruition. Akbar believed that Abdullah Khan had broken the provisions of the agreement by continuing his encouragement to the rebels on the North West frontier. For his part,

150 Babur is reported to have said, "when the affairs of Hindustan, which are near settlement, shall be finished, we shall leave these faithful servants and ourselves visit our hereditary kingdoms. It is proper that all the servants of these countries should make preparations for the expedition and await the arrival of the Imperial army." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 1, p. 270.
151 Abdur Rahim, "Mughal Relations with Central Asia", Islamic Culture, 11, 1, (1937), p. 82.
152 Ibid.
Abdullah Khan was concerned by Akbar's continued presence in the Indus, which appeared to him to indicate that Akbar was considering a flanking attack. This was unlikely at that time, although there is some evidence to suggest that Akbar did harbour plans to invade Central Asia. The Safavid reassertion of power, and the civil war in Transoxiana after Abdullah Khan's death in 1598, appeared to offer such an opportunity. But at that time Akbar was at that time engaged in quelling revolts in India, and he was forced to concentrate upon consolidating his existing realm, as opposed to invading his ancestral realm.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Mughals regarded an active Central Asia as more of a threat than a strong Persia. Abdullah Khan attacked Badakhshan in 1585, and Balkh in 1586, when the Safavids were fighting the Ottomans. Akbar was perturbed and moved his forces to Attock. Abdullah Khan, compounded Akbar's difficulties by encouraging the tribesmen of the North-West frontier to rebel. The Mughals feared that, if Abdullah Khan obtained Balkh, Badakhshan, and Khurasan, the stability of the region could be destroyed. They regarded Balkh and Badakhshan as important buffer states, protecting India from the Central Asian raids the Mughals' Timurid and Mongol ancestors had undertaken. Significantly, Abdullah Khan subsequently sent an envoy to inform Akbar that the object of his attack was to be Khurasan and not India.

The religious factor must also be taken into consideration when evaluating foreign relations between the two polities. There was some religious tension between Central Asia and Mughal India, in that Abdullah Khan posed as the champion of Muslim orthodoxy against the liberalism being promulgated at Akbar's court. Abdullah Khan threatened to cut off diplomatic relations with the Mughals as a result of Akbar's religious experimentation.

In order to understand the religious issues raised in this context, it is necessary to understand the political priorities of the rulers. In 1585 Akbar sent a long letter to the Uzbek court, in which he emphatically denied claims that he was an apostate. This has been seen by some as a revealing statement on Akbar's personal beliefs. This may have been true at the religious level, but at the political level the letter was, to an extent, political posturing. At that time Abdullah Khan was trying to assert his authority over Akbar, so he could invade Khurasan unworried by fears of a Mughal assault upon his flanks. Thus, as he had done before, he presented his attack on Persia as a restoration of orthodox Islam, as opposed to the Safavids' Shi'ism. In the Uzbeks' campaign to reclaim Khurasan, there was widespread destruction of Shi'ite monuments and Abdullah Khan had defended this action claiming that it was the right of the Sunnis to plunder unbelievers. By suggesting this, Abdullah Khan was implying that he was a restorer

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153 Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 3. Jahangir corroborates this claim in his memoirs: "The conquest of Transoxiana was always in the pure mind of my revered father, though every time he determined upon it, things occurred to prevent it." Jahangir, p. 26.

154 Rahim, p. 86.


of Islamic authority. Akbar's reply was the act of a ruler seeking to assert his sovereignty. Akbar felt the need to assert himself as the arbiter of cultural legitimacy; someone who purported to be the "Khedive of the age", could not allow this status to be undermined, particularly by an usurper in his ancestral lands.

Central Asia never regained the unity it had had under Abdullah Khan. The Mughal court responded to this situation first by ignoring Central Asia, and then taking an active role in the reign of Shah Jahan. in some senses the loss of political power increased the Mughals' interest in Central Asia. Although Jahangir expressed the hope that he would one day incorporate Central Asia within the Mughal empire, he took no action to achieve this.158 There was no contact with the Central Asian courts until 1621 when the mother of Imam Quli, the ruler of Bukhara, sent a letter of friendship to Nur Jahan, which Nur Jahan reciprocated in 1622.159 Shah Jahan was the most ambitious of the Mughal emperors in his hopes of reconquering Central Asia. Initially he maintained contact with Central Asia; later he sought to reclaim Balkh and Badakhshan. Relations were, at first, peaceful. In 1629 Imam Quli apologised for an attack by his brother on Kabul, to which Shah Jahan replied by sending presents worth one and a half lakh of rupees.160 But Imam Quli's successor, Nazr Muhammad, was a less able ruler than his predecessor and he soon faced widespread revolts against his rule. In the light of these developments, Shah Jahan, who had just completed a successful annexation of some territory in the Deccan, began his attempted reconquest of Central Asia.

In the Balkh and Badakhshan campaign the initial phase of conquest was relatively easy; control, as so often happened in Central Asia, was much more difficult. In 1645 the forts of Ghorband and Kahmard were captured. Afterwards Nazr Muhammad was offered a vassal position, but he fled to Persia. The city of Balkh was plundered, and jewellery valued at twelve million rupees, 2500 horses, and 300 camels were seized.161 When Shah Jahan heard the news that Balkh had been taken he ordered great celebrations which lasted eight days.162 Prince Murad Bakhsh was appointed commander of Balkh, but the Central Asian lifestyle did not appeal to him and he sought to return to India. Shah Jahan appointed Bahadur Khan in charge of Balkh, and preparations were made to print coins in Shah Jahan's name in Balkh.163 Uzbek raiding parties proved troublesome to the Mughals, the Uzbek raiders being able to escape the Mughal army. On April 7 1647 the then Prince Aurangzeb was sent to reinforce Balkh, and although harassed by raiding parties he made his destination.164 Under his leadership the Mughals held their territory.

158 Jahangir proclaimed his intention to "start for my hereditary territories, especially as at this time there was no permanent ruler in that region." Such an action, however, never eventuated. Jahangir, p. 26.
159 Rahim, p. 92.
162 Inayat Khan, p. 353.
163 Varna, p. 260.
164 Ibid., p. 261.
But despite Aurangzeb's efforts the Mughal forces soon returned to India. Nazr Muhammad, reinforced by Persian troops, returned to the region, and Aurangzeb, faced with a rebellious population on the one hand, and troops wanting to return home on the other hand, was forced to conclude peace with him. In the two years of occupation the Mughals were able to realise only between one fourth and one sixth of their revenue demands, while their expenses were sixteen times greater. During their return to India the Mughals lost a great deal of their equipment. This left the attempted reconquest of Central Asia on the deficit side of the ledger.

So the Central Asian polity that had been transplanted to India was ultimately rejected by its ancestral regions. The transplantation of the Timurids to India had seen their army lose the mobility that was necessary for military success in Central Asia. The Mughals were confronted by the problems their Timurid forbears had experienced. Ultimately they were no more successful at solving them. The added complication of a strong Persia providing security for their vanquished foes, and sponsoring their restoration, was something no Timurid had ever had to contend with. Shah Jahan, in Central Asian tradition, would have retreated, and waited for another opportunity. Given the demands of administering an Indian empire this was not possible.

Shah Jahan's attempted reconquest of Central Asia demonstrates the nature and degree of the continuing importance of Central Asia to the Mughal Empire. The Mughals' ancestral dominions remained an important touchstone for the emperors. It is significant that a ruler such as Shah Jahan, whose reign had seen such marvellous achievements as the Taj Mahal and the construction of a new capital, Shahjahanabad, felt that his achievements were incomplete until he had reconquered some of his former territory. In part the Central Asian campaign can be explained as the action of an ambitious monarch, to take advantage of the political weakness of a neighbouring state. Possibly it also indicates a belief that Central Asia still had something to offer the Mughals. In some senses reclaiming their hereditary kingdoms offered the Mughal emperors a link with the one great tradition their empire did not have: a tradition of being trans-continental conquerors on a scale equal to Chingiz and Timur. The Mughal Empire had cultural splendour, impressive capital cities, an opulent court life, but it did not have a record of really extensive conquest, irrespective of the boast of the courtiers. A reconquest of Central Asia, however, would have put the Mughal Empire, and Shah Jahan, in particular, on an equivalent footing to Timur. The empire would have been based on trans-continental conquest rather than merely a conquest of most of the sub-continent. An invasion of Central Asia, such as that conducted by Shah Jahan, was something no


\[166\] Sir Jadunath Sarkar offered the following economic assessment of the Mughal expedition: 'the Indian treasury spent crores of rupees in two years and realised from the conquered country a revenue of 22 and a half lakhs only. Not an inch of territory was annexed, no dynasty changed, and no enemy replaced by an ally on the throne of Bakh. The grain stored in Bakh fort worth 5 lakhs and provisions in other forts were all abandoned to the Bokharians besides rs. 50,000 in cash presented to Nazr Muhammad's grandsons and rs. 22,000 to envoys.' *Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I, p. 112. cited in Varma, p. 263.
previous Mughal emperor had been able to achieve. Previous rulers had gained victories on the sub-continent, but not trans-continental victories. None had been able to conquer Central Asia. Babur had been ejected from Central Asia before coming to India; Humayun had temporarily been ejected from India; Akbar had been preoccupied with re-establishing Mughal rule; Jahangir had been too indolent. Thus the reconquest of Central Asia offered Shah Jahan an opportunity to achieve a unique position in Mughal history. Not even Akbar had been able to undertake such a reconquest. Akbar had built his own capital city, something Shah Jahan had also done, He was renowned for his court life, as was Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan had endeavoured to match Akbar in all areas, the reconquest of Central Asia offered him a chance to outdo him. But Shah Jahan failed in this respect.

In the reign of Aurangzeb Central Asian ambassadors performed an important role in establishing Aurangzeb's credentials as a ruler. In 1558, envoys from Subhan Quli, the ruler of Balkh, were the first ambassadors to visit Aurangzeb after his succession. Aurangzeb welcomed this embassy because it came at a time when he was seeking recognition as emperor from other Muslim rulers after deposing his father from the throne. Bernier, who witnessed the reception of the embassy, recorded that the ambassadors from Balkh performed the Salam, an important Islamic symbol of submission. A later ambassador from Balkh, Ibrahim Beg, was granted an audience with Aurangzeb a matter of days after he reached India, whereas the Dutch and French ambassadors were kept waiting for several months before appearing before the emperor. Aurangzeb was reputedly so generous early in his reign that minor states of Central Asia sent embassies to his court. Aurangzeb sought alliances with these rulers in the hope of reconquering Qandahar, and in general weakening the Safavid dynasty. His desire for this was rooted not in any dreams of northern expansion, but rather in his desire to weaken the Safavid support for the Deccan kingdoms. In 1675 Abdullah Khan Changezi, the King of Kashghar who fled after being ousted in a coup, was received with great honours by Aurangzeb in a mosque - so that both parties could be seated and thus protocol would not be compromised. Thus even at a time when its political power was considerably weakened, Mughal political relations with Central Asia were of considerable symbolic significance in enhancing the legitimacy of Mughal rule.

The transplantation of the Timurid court to India was realised in its basic forms, but that court underwent substantial alterations during its tenure in India. From their Central Asian heritage the Mughals retained the essential structure of a court headed by a

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167 G.Z. Refai, "Foreign Embassies to Aurangzeb’s Court at Delhi, 1661-65", in R. E. Frykenberg ed. Delhi Through the Ages, p. 193.
168 Bernier, p. 117.
169 Refai, p. 193.
170 For example, Khwaja Ahmad, the envoy of Abdul Aziz, the King of Bukhara, was sent home with a rub estimated at Rs, 40, 000, a robe of honour and Rs 120, 000. Refai, p. 164. See also Rahim, p. 197.
sovereign, who legitimated his rule by claims of a divine mandate, an outward adherence to Islamic law, and a consciously created cult of personality. They retained some characteristics of the Timurid court, such as the cultural debates, and the military component. To this they added their own increased bureaucratic component, which ultimately meant that the numbers of Central Asians in the nobility declined. They retained the sovereign as overall head of the administration, but placed an apparently hierarchical administration beneath this. In political relations, they retained their ambition for expansion, but for the most part they channelled it into localised, not continental, ventures.

There is a multiplicity of explanations for these changes. In part the changes from Central Asian traditions in the Mughal court can be explained by the fact that, as we have seen, the Mughals aspired to rule a centrally-controlled, agrarian revenue-based empire. If the imperial paradigm in this respect was not necessarily achieved in practice, (and as we have seen, the practice did not always conform to the stipulated structure), its continuing status as the imperial ideal dictated that the Mughal court would be different in composition, and character from its Central Asian counterpart. The bureaucratisation necessary to oversee such an empire meant that the financial component of the court assumed a greater significance than it had in Central Asia, where the financial branches of the court were more of an auditing agency. The increase in bureaucratisation also meant an increase in the number of Persians, and the indigenous population, within the bureaucratic sector, as Central Asians were not highly represented in these areas.

At the apex of the court, the Central Asian traditions of sovereignty were adapted in response to the Indian environment. The Mughal emperor's were enshrined in an elaborate mythology, based, some of which was based upon their Central Asian heritage, some of which was not. The Mughal emperors pointed to their links with Timur, and Chinggiz as part of their imperial aura. But the Central Asian traditions of sovereignty were not, in themselves a sufficient basis of legitimization for rule in India. In Central Asia, where many of the territories shared a Turco-Mongolian tradition, such claims were widely recognized. In India, where there were many rival factions, sharply divided upon caste, clan, and territorial lines, such a tradition did not, in itself, appeal to a broad section of the population. In response to this the Mughals elevated the position of emperor. By elevating the position of emperor, and royalty, the Mughals ensured they did not appeal to the wide range of groups within their empire on the basis of any one tradition; rather, they promoted themselves as being worthy of support because of the fact that they represented royalty in all its glory. The Mughals buttressed these ethereal concepts at a practical level by offering considerable rewards to those within their hierarchy. These rewards were dispensed by a sovereign who was elevated to the status of a semi-divine king of kings, descended from a great tradition in Central Asia, but who now ruled solely for the benefit of the Mughal Empire.

The adaptations made to the apex of the court dictated that the remainder of the court structure in Mughal India underwent a substantial change from its Timurid traditions. In a land where there were many factions, representing many different ethnic, local and social, groups competing for power, the emperor was established as the paramount authority
above all of these. The character, as well as the composition of the court were dictated by this. The Timurid traditions of decentralised rule and vague titles, were incompatible with this system as they did not give sufficient control to the person of the emperor. The mansabdari system reinforced the paramount authority of the Mughal emperor as the sole person who could confer these awards. Moreover with its clearly defined system of grades, coupled with the imperial lists of honours, the mansabdari system offered the emperor a means of ranking the various parties at his court. The elaborate court rituals, which were more formalised than their Timurid traditions, further emphasised the imperial ideology, with their emphasis on the master-servant relationship that the Mughals sought to inculcate into their bureaucracy. The tradition of the Timurid court incorporating the cultural élite was retained in Mughal India, for practical considerations, and, again, because it allowed the emperor to demonstrate his paramount authority by being the facilitator of these discussions.

The Mughals' administrative practices were for a number of reasons substantially different from those of Central Asia. The Mughals needed to maintain a degree of central control if they were not to suffer the fate of the Timurids and be bedevilled by external secessions. In this respect, their Timurid heritage was of little benefit. Timur's rule offered a precedent of personalised rule, not a precedent of centralized rule. The later Timurid court saw a victory for the opponents of centralization. The rule of Sher Shah, however, did offer a precedent of centralization. Akbar adopted many of the administrative practices of Sher Shah's court, as opposed to the Central Asian practices. Nevertheless those elements of Timurid administration which did further centralization, and thus the authority of the emperor, survived in Mughal India.

In the beginning, the Mughals followed Timur's practice of making the government a meritocracy, as this ensured that positions would be filled by those who owed their positions to the sovereign, and offered all groups an incentive to further their aspirations at the court. The Mughals also retained Timur's practice of frequently transferring officials, as this too reinforced imperial authority, but they incorporated this practice within the framework of their mansabdari and jagirdari system, which reflected the agrarian revenue base of the Mughal empire.

Ultimately, however, central authority was contested in both empires, and in both cases it ultimately led to the empires' demise. The Timurids lost the support of the nomadic population by professionalising warfare, and by their failure to incorporate the nomadic groups on the edges of their empire into their realm. Tribes such as the Qara-Qoyunlu, the Aq-Qoyunlu and the Uzbeks took advantage of the instability caused by the succession disputes (an inherently destructive Central Asian tradition) and the dissatisfaction of the sedentary community with the Timurids owing to the high taxes, led some of them first to secede from the Timurid Empire, and subsequently to supersede the Timurids as the rulers of Transoxiana. In the Mughal empire, the provinces ultimately triumphed over the centre, with the Marathas, the Afghans, and the Persian Nadir Shah all contributing further to the breakdown of central authority. Much earlier, Akbar had been forced to make concessions to provincial autonomy, after a rebellion against his
centralizing reforms had been led by a section of the Central Asian elements within the empire. His successors maintained the synthesized system for a long tenure, but later it fell to the process of provincial secessions, as evidenced by the successor states identified by Muzaffar Alam. Nevertheless the Timurid polity in India enjoyed a longer reign than its hereditary ancestors. In its prototype version, which resembled its Central Asian form it was unsuited to ruling an Indian empire. But in its modified guise it formed the basis for a lasting polity. To a considerable extent, this is attributable to the fact that the court of the Mughals, by virtue of the elevated status given to the emperor as a paramount authority, was still able to offer something indispensable to those seeking power in India: a source of legitimacy. The Mughals could afford to concede control over both land and troops in some areas, and retain their position, because in the emperor and his court was offered a supreme source of authority. The Timurids could not do this, because in Central Asia their opponents had the strength to conquer them in their own right.

The fruitless expedition of Shah Jahan into Central Asia illustrates an important point. The Mughals had solved the problems of Control, but they had not solved the problems of conquest. The Central Asian rulers in the Timurid, Uzbek and Astrakhanid periods, by contrast, had solved the problem of conquest - even in a weak period of their history they prevailed over the Mughal invasion - but they did not, in the long term, solve the problem of control. In many senses this is unsurprising. The fact that the Timurids collapsed is not remarkable in itself; in fact it is remarkable that they lasted as long as they did. The history of Central Asia offers many examples of rapid conquest being followed by an equally rapid loss of control. The Uzbek, Muhammad Shabani Khan, conquered the entire Timurid ancestral realm, but he lost it within four years. Thus the fact that the Timurids lasted over a century is in the context of Central Asian history a noteworthy achievement. Moreover the fact that their court could, with many alterations, but still retaining its basic form, be the basis for an empire that retained control over India for more than two centuries, is a further testament to its qualities.
IV: The Role of Islam

Religion can offer rulers a justification for their actions; it can also provide a pretext for rebellion against those same rulers. In Central Asia and Mughal India religion acted as a rallying-call for action, both for and against imperial rule. We have seen in the chapter on the court that most sovereigns of the Timurid and Mughal empires formally espoused Islamic practices. In this chapter we shall identify which aspects of Islamic culture in Central Asia were transplanted to Mughal India. We shall then consider the transformation that these elements of Central Asian Islamic culture underwent in an Indian environment. The role of Islam will be analysed at a number of levels. First, we shall consider the international context of Islamic rule in Central Asia and Mughal India. We shall then analyse the role of Islam at the imperial level. This will be followed by an assessment of the significance of what has been called "Folk Islam", in particular the dervish orders such as the Naqshbandiyya, which affords an opportunity to analyse an aspect of Central Asian popular culture that was exported to India. Finally we shall examine Islamic society during the periods of imperial decline.

In order to understand the transfer of some forms of Islamic culture from Central Asia into Mughal India, it is necessary to consider how the Islamic character of these areas was shaped by certain important trends in Islamic history. Several important distinctions can be drawn between the nature of Islamic rule in the Timurid and Mughal periods. First, it is necessary to consider the position of Islam in the world in the respective eras. Whereas the Timurid empire was in existence whilst Islam, internationally speaking, was in a rebuilding stage, the Mughal empire coincided with a great period of Islamic expansion, from 1500-1800, a period which saw two other great Muslim empires to the fore: the Ottoman empire of Constantinople, and the Safavid empire of Isfahan. It is also important to consider the position of Islam in the respective societies. In Central Asia, Islam gained a firm hold over most of the population. In India, however, although Muslim rulers ruled much of North India for over three centuries, Islam did not replace Hinduism as the predominant religion. As a result of these developments Islam became the religion of the majority of people in Central Asia and Muslims remained a religious minority within India.

Central Asia had an important role in many of these developments in Islamic history, developments which cannot be adequately understood without reference to the area. The Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century had seen many Islamic civilisations under non-Muslim rule. The Mongol power was symbolised by the sack of Baghdad in 1258, which destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate, the central institution of Sunni Islam. The
sedentary polities of the Abbasids and Sung China were powerless against the nomadic Mongols, given cohesion by the Ordo system and led by a political grandmaster, Chinggis Khan. Ultimately, the Muslim subjects converted their Mongol masters. Islam spread from the sedentary to the nomadic world; it gained a new constituency. As we shall see, the Dervish orders broadened the appeal of Islam with their emphasis on community living, and the fact that they were untainted by collaboration with infidels as the previous Muslim elite had been. The decline of Mongol rule in Central Asia did not hinder the spread of Islam; on the contrary it helped it to expand, and there was a strong Central Asian influence in this expansion. The Pax Mongolica had allowed the pilgrimage centres to thrive under Mongol rule, and these connections saw the establishment of some Muslim empires, such as the Jalayirids and the Muzaffarids, as Mongol control weakened.

Just as Central Asia was an important agent in the historical spread of Islam, so too was it influential in shaping Islamic rule in India. The decline of the Timurids had a significant causal role in shaping the global context of Islamic rule in the Mughal period. Their decline saw the Timurids lose their Persian territories to the Aq-Qoyunlu. Ultimately, the Timurids' loss was the Safavids' gain. The Safavids defeated the Aq-Qoyunlu and their founder, Shah Ismail, introduced Shi'ism as the state religion. The Shi'ism of the Safavids added another dimension to the Islamic character of the region. Shah Ismail failed in strikes against the Ottomans in Anatolia and was unable to follow up his victory against Shibani Khan in Herat, so he settled in Iran. The Iranian influence soon began to dominate the Shi'ite influence. But the potential for Shi'ite action always added an edge to Safavid-Mughal relations. Meanwhile Islam in Central Asia retained its Sunni orthodoxy. The successors of the Timurids, the Uzbeks, who were descended from the house of Jochi, adopted Islam as their state religion. As we have seen in the chapter on the court, Abdullah Khan, tried to appeal to Akbar to fight the Safavids on account of their Shi'ism, thus presenting himself as an upholder of Islamic orthodoxy. Central Asia, of course, also gave India the Mughals who continued to uphold the Sunni Orthodoxy of Babur. Thus Central Asia gave India another Muslim ruling dynasty, and influenced the nature of Islamic rule among the Mughals' neighbours.

Before analysing the Central Asian influence upon the role of Islam in Mughal India, we must concern ourselves with the Islamic element in Timurid rule. We must make the point again that Timur continued in the tradition of the Great Khans of the Mongols, in that he tolerated all religions, while not allowing his actions to be governed by any specific religious code. He met with holy men of different creeds, while not consistently identifying himself with any one of them. As we have seen in the chapter on the court, he was prepared to pose as a Muslim warrior when it suited him. His religious

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1 It is difficult to identify Timur with any one religion, as he was rather eclectic in his approach to religion. Ibn Khaldun wrote, "Some attribute to him heresy because they note his preference for the (house of Ali) still others attribute to him the employment of magic and sorcery, but in all this there is nothing; it is simply that he is highly intelligent and very perspicacious", Ibn Khaldun, p. 47.
pragmatism is further demonstrated by the fact that sometimes he claimed to be an
upholder both Sunni rule while on other occasions he appeared in the guise of a Shi`ite
warrior. In his campaign against the Georgians he posed as a fighter for the cause of Ali,
while he attacked Khurasan ostensibly to restore Sunni orthodoxy.2 Despite his
campaigns against Muslims, Timur was nevertheless given formal legitimacy by the
Shaykh-al Islam (chief jurisconsult) of Samarkand.3 His court included Muslim
scholar-theologians such as Sa`d al-Din Taftazani, a famed theological scholar, who
published works such as the Miftah al-ulum - an instrumental science of literature.4
Later, followers of Taftazani would emigrated to India to escape the repression of
rationalist thought that occurred in the reign of Abdulla Khan.

The extent of Islamic devotion among the Timurid rulers varied. Islam became the
official religion in Shah Rukh's reign and remained so for the duration of Timurid rule.
Shah Rukh was the most devout Muslim ruler of the Timurid era.5 He wanted to appear
as an upholder of Islamic law and the Perso-Islamic model of Islamic rule and passed
several laws to that end.6 The extent to which these measures were implemented is
unclear. Ibn Arabshah was one who was sceptical of Shah Rukh's religious reforms.
Shah Rukh still campaigned, but his campaigns were for defensive purposes, such as
punishing nomadic raiders and rebellious princes, rather than offensive actions. Sunni
Islam was promoted as a means to make the empire cohere. It also enabled Shah Rukh to
pass off various forms of taxation under the guise of religious levies. The rigorous
application of Islamic rule in the Timurid empire, however, remained localised. Shah Rukh's
son, Ulugh Beg, ruled Samarkand for forty years, maintaining many aspects of
Turco-Mongolian tradition, while at the same time fostering Islamic learning.7 Despite
his patronage of Muslim learning and many Islamic structures. Ulugh Beg remained a
suspect ruler in the eyes of many clergy.8 His insistence on the Tamgha - a trade and
industry tax - was especially unpopular, such taxes were seen to indicate a lack of
piety.9 Husain Baiqara's reign was noted for its Bohemian living, nevertheless he
professed to be a Sunni monarch throughout his reign: Babur believed that there might not
have been one day when he did not drink after the mid-day prayers.10 Babur suggests
that Husain Baiqara may at one time have held Shi`ite convictions, but Ali Shir Navai
counseled him to maintain orthodox law, which he did.11 So Sunni Islam remained the

3 Ira M. Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies, p. 280.
5 For example Shah Rukh had readers of the Quran visit his court four times a week. The hadith on the
restorer of the faith who is said to appear every thousand years was applied to him. Barthold, p. 113.
6 The muftis, those who enforced Islamic law, were given unprecedented powers in Shah Rukh's reign,
such as the right to enter the houses of the nobles and dispose of wine. ibid.
7 Jamshid, the great mathematician, praised Ulugh Beg as "a most learned Sultan". Barthold, p. 83.
8 ibid., p. 126.
9 ibid., p. 128.
10 Babur, p. 259.
professed religion of the Timurids for the greater part of the fifteenth century

The political demise of the Timurids did not result in the demise of Islamic rule in Central Asia. To enhance their claims as legitimate rulers over the Islamic sedentary empire that the Central Asian polity had begun to resemble under the later Timurids, the Uzbekns adopted the outward symbols of Islamic rule. Muhammad Shibani Khan adopted the title *imam-az-zaman va khalifat ar-ahman* - "the Imam of his own age, and the vice-regent of God on earth", while Fazlullah's *Mihman-nama-yi Bukhara* was a tome which grounded the legitimacy of Uzbek rule in various hadith.12

The founder of the Mughal Empire maintained the religion of his Timurid predecessors. Babur, having been ejected from his ancestral regions, sought a kingdom where he might re-establish Timurid rule. He reclaimed Samarkand under Shi'i auspices, but his adoption of Shi'ism cost him popular support.13 Resuming his Sunni identity, he turned his attention southward and conquered Kabul, but this location was too provincial for him, so he marched on India. Despite his temporary adoption of Shi'ism, Babur was not a religious opportunist. From his memoirs it is apparent that Babur had a very strong belief that God was guiding his destiny. His renunciation of wine before the battle of Khanwa, and his remission of the tamgha at the same time, indicate that Babur saw benefits in presenting himself as an upholder of Islam.14 He also observed Mongol practices which did not contradict the Shari'a, and so he transplanted into India a combination of the Timurid state religion and Turco-Mongolian tradition.15 Whereas the Timurid rulers had become increasingly sedentarised in the manner of the predominantly Iranian settled population of Khurasan, the Moghuls of Moghulistan - which, it will be recalled, was the eastern section of the former dominions of Chaghatai - had preserved their nomadic traditions. Babur was a representative of these two worlds; this accounts for the mixture of Moghul and Timurid traditions he sought to perpetuate. His successor Humayun also reigned as an orthodox Muslim ruler, although, like his father, there was a time when he had to pay nominal respect to Shi'ism (when he was in

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11 Babur, p. 258.
13 Muhammad Haidar wrote of the disappointment of the citizens of Samarkand when Babur continued to profess Shi'ism after his victory, "the Emperor did not feel able to dispense with the aid and support of Shah Ismail...On this account the people of Mavara-un Nahr ceased to feel that intense longing for the emperor which they had entertained when he was absent - their regard for him was at an end." Muhammad Haidar, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, p. 246.
14 Shaikh Zain's Faram gave us the drinking cups and "dashed them in pieces as, God willing will be dashed the gods of the idolaters." Babur, pp. 554-55.
15 Babur gives elaborate accounts of Chinggizid rituals in his memoirs and a graphic picture of himself in Moghul dress, "my younger khan dada bestowed upon me arms of his own and one of his own special horses saddled, and a Mughul head to foot dress, - a Mughul cap...When, [Babur was] adorned in the way described... Khwaja Abu-I -makaram asked, "Who is this honoured sultan," and till I spoke did not recognize me." ibid. pp. 159-61.
exile at the Safavid court). His great general Bairam Khan, who became Akbar’s regent, was a Shia.

The tenets of Sunnism, which Babur and Humayun had upheld in India, underwent a considerable degree of modification in Akbar’s reign. Akbar instigated his own pantheistic court religion, possibly in an attempt to overcome sectarianism, possibly as part of the intellectual odyssey he was perpetually engaged in. He went one step further in his eclecticism than did Timur and the Great Khans: he set up his own court cult. Akbar’s religious experimentation was not a rejection of Islam, nor did it represent a complete departure from Central Asian traditions. It could be argued that some Central Asian elements were evident in his religious policy. The Divine Faith, with its underlying theme of universal tolerance (sulh-i kull), was essentially the traditional Turco-Mongolian policy of religious toleration cleverly couched in pantheistic verbiage and conjugated with bombastic rhetoric concerning Akbar. It was more of a court cult than a religion in its own right since it did not have a priesthood, nor a book.16 It merely listed ten virtues and it had only a few rituals. It was never promulgated as an alternative religion, its number of adherents being given as eighteen. It was, rather, an assertion of Akbar’s supreme authority.17 Badauni believed the Central Asian heritage of the Mughals acted as a precedent for Akbar’s religious experimentation.18 Thus there is some evidence to suggest that, although Akbar’s reign saw a move away from Central Asian tradition in many respects, on occasions the Timurid heritage of the Mughals still offered a source of legitimacy. Badauni’s scepticism suggests that not all members of the Indo-Muslim élite were prepared to accept Central Asian Islamic tradition as a valid precedent in an Indian administration.

The religious policy of Akbar represented, amongst other things, an attempt to lessen the political power of the Ulema. Akbar’s religious policy was part of a wider programme to achieve this end, as we shall see, the desire to marginalise the Ulema was one of the motives behind the decision to move the capital city from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri. In 1579 Akbar issued the Mahzār, a decree which enabled him to interpret the Quran in the event of scholarly discord, so as to circumvent the strictures of the Ulema, some of whom opposed his religious eclecticism.19 Some conservative Muslims believed Akbar sought

17 Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbārī, p. 219.
18 "In this year [987 A.H.] the Emperor was anxious to unite in his person the spiritual as well as the secular headships, for he held it to be an insufferable burden to subordinate to anyone, as he had heard that the Prophet (God be gracious to him and give him peace!), and his lawful successors, and some of the most powerful kings such as, Amir Timur Cahibquran, and Mirza Ulugh Beg-i-Gurgan, and several others had themselves read the Khutbah, he resolved to do the same, apparently in order to imitate their example, but in reality to appear in public as the mujahid of the age." Badauni said Akbar began to stammer and tremble when he was reading the Khutbah and that he handed over the duties of Imam to Hafiz Muhammad Amin, the court Khatib. Badauni, Vol. 2, 1976, p. 276.
19 The decree read: "should therefore in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mutahids are at variance, and his majesty in his penetrating wisdom and clear understanding be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation...any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and issue a decree
to deprecate Islam. Badauni charged that it was the Sufis at Akbar’s court who were responsible for his modification of Muslim tenets. Akbar’s actions sought to remove the ultimate legal power from those who might have sought to negate his reforms. Akbar did not reject Islam, he rejected the representatives of the conservative elements of Islam. It is interesting to note that Badauni, a vocal critic of the liberal Muslims, was also critical of the Ulema. Akbar’s personal curiosity must also be recognised as an important influence. There was a great deal of input from the religious figures at the court, but the religious policy always remained subordinate to Akbar’s plans.

The modifications made to Sunnism as the imperial religion did not survive Akbar’s reign. Jahangir and Shah Jahan ruled as orthodox Sunni rulers; for the most part they continued to exercise a degree of tolerance. Some historians have regarded Aurangzeb’s reign as representing a departure from the religious policy of previous Mughal emperors. In contrast to the reign of Akbar, the reign of Aurangzeb has been characterised by some historians as that of a bigoted monarch, who rejected the tolerance shown by the previous rulers in favour of seeking to create an Islamic state in India. These views cannot be accepted uncritically. Aurangzeb regarded himself as a defender of the faith, and sought to appear as a devout Muslim, but it is questionable whether he wished to impose Islamic rule over all India. Political motivations help to explain many aspects of his religious policy. Whereas Akbar tried to use the mystical orders of Islam to enhance his personal standing, Aurangzeb sought support through the orthodox style. Some accounts allege that Aurangzeb used Timur as a source of legitimacy for his actions in acceding the throne. Another example of this was the iq-i qurban festival where the Chief Qazi would recount the names of all Mughal and Timurid rulers beginning with Timur before commencing a panegyric on the virtues of the reigning emperor. His reputation as a bigoted ruler is based on several actions during the early years of his reign, in particular the period 1666-1685, when he appealed to the Muslim Deccan rulers to join him against

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20 Badauni alleged that Akbar had a "design of annulling the statutes and ordinances of Islam." Badauni, Vol. 2, p. 279.
22 Sharma, p. 35.
23 Ishwari Prasad contends that Aurangzeb was, "bigoted and suspicious by nature", and that he,"...looked upon religious toleration as an act of folly and sin", Prasad, India in the Eighteenth Century, p. 1.
24 Manucci quoted Aurangzeb as comparing his accession to the throne with Timur’s campaign against Sultan Bayezit: "The great Taimur-i-Lang...was a rare and magnificent exemplar of these fine qualities [love of justice]. For it may well be said, nothing except love of justice and of virtue forced him into the war he undertook against Bayazid...Every body knew that it was the cries of the afflicted and innocent that put arms into his hands....I may well assert without flattering myself overmuch...that they are the same motives which have hitherto impelled me. Yes the fear of seeing the Mahometan religion oppressed in Hindustan if my brother Dara had ascended the throne." Manucci, Vol. 3, p. 243.
the Marathas. He reimposed the Jizyah, the tax on non-believers, which some historians see as proof of his religious bigotry. But there are more convincing explanations for this action: firstly the unemployment among the Muslim theological classes, which the tax partially rectified, secondly the need to raise revenue for his campaigns. Moreover the tax did not apply throughout India for the duration of Aurangzeb’s rule. His tax was removed in the Deccan in 1704, after its enforcement led to several abuses. Isolated actions such as the destruction of temples have also been presented as evidence of his bigotry, but these actions are more convincingly explained by political motives. Nor were Hindus excluded from the nobility in Aurangzeb’s reign. Even when Aurangzeb was campaigning against the Marathas, they constituted one-sixth of the Mughal officeholders.

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Having analysed the nature of Sunni rule in Central Asia and Mughal India, we shall now evaluate the significance of the Sufi connections between Central Asia and Mughal India. The dervish orders of Central Asia afford an important example of a continuing Central Asian influence in Mughal India. Their role in their home territory must concern us first. Historically, the dervish orders had played an important role at the popular level. After the Mongol conquests the dervishes became the upholders of Islam. Many believed that the Ulema had tainted themselves through their collaboration with the Mongols; thus the dervish orders assumed the role of protectors of the Muslim faith. The dervish orders had no hesitation in involving themselves in political activity. They did not draw a distinction between the religious and the political worlds; they saw them as interconnected, and sought control over temporal institutions to promote their spiritual authority. These mystical orders were concerned with practical issues of community living, and had a profound distaste for what they regarded as the esoteric theological points scoring among the ulema. They gained a broad appeal in Central Asia, both by virtue of their commitment to everyday living and the mystical accomplishments of their leading holy men.

The Naqshbandiyya rose to become the most important of the Sufi orders during the Timurid era. This order had originated in Central Asia, its adherents following the doctrine of their teachers, known as Khwajaqan - "the masters". They emphasised submission to God, and the Sunnah of his messenger, which they believed must be relived by virtue of a tranquil inner state and worthy deeds. They combined theological

26 Satish Chandra, "Religious Policy of Aurangzeb During the Later Part of his Reign - Some Considerations", Indian Historical Review, 13, 1-2, (1986-87), pp. 91, 94.
27 Aurangzeb seldom ordered temples to be destroyed, the only prominent case in his time being when he ordered Hamiduddin Khan Bahadur to demolish a temple in Bijapur in 1698. Satish Chandra "Religious Policy of Aurangzeb During the Later Part of his Reign", p. 91.
29 Barthold, p. 115.
conservatism and proselytising zeal with political activism; a combination which gave them a widespread appeal. The movement took its name from Baha ad-Din Naqshband, who was born in the village of Qasr-i Hindudan near the city of Bukhara in 1318. Significantly, their power became widespread amongst the nomadic and sedentary populations. The Khwajagari, who espoused a form of mental prayer known as dhikr-i khafi, were spread among the sedentary Iranian population; and the Yasawiyya movement, which stressed dhikr-i jahi - vocal prayer - proselytised in the nomadic world.31 Timur needed the support of the ulema to enhance his legitimacy among the religious élite, but he also sought the blessing of the dervish leaders. The support of these holy men was an integral part of Timur's claims to legitimacy.32 The Tirmidh Shaykhs were forgiven for participating in a revolt against Timur in 1371, and from that point on were his constant companions.33 Timur was buried next to Sayyid Baraka, who had become his chief spiritual adviser in 1370.34

After the death of Timur, the dervish orders extended their sphere of influence, as representatives of popular opinion, yet increasingly gaining followers among the Timurid leadership. Khwaja Ahrar was the dominant dervish personage in Timurid history. Furthermore, as we shall see, many of the Central Asian visitors to the Mughal court followed his teachings, and the Mughal histories recorded when any visitor had genealogical links with Khwaja Ahrar. Khwaja Ahrar (d. 1490), spread the Naqshbandiya faith throughout Central Asia. He played an important role in Abu Said's accession to the Timurid throne.35 Abu Said (r. 1457-69) proclaimed himself a pir of Khwaja Ahrar. Khwaja Ahrar exercised a considerable degree of influence in politics.36 After Abu Said transferred his capital from Samarkand to Herat, Khwaja Ahrar was the virtual ruler of Transoxiana for four decades.37 Sultan Ahmad, who ruled in Samarkand after the death of Abu Said, was also a disciple of Khwaja Ahrar and accorded him a great deal of respect.38 Khwaja Ahrar's significance extends beyond Transoxianian history. The spread of the Naqshbandiya beyond Transoxiana is to a considerable degree

32 Ibn Arabshah wrote that Timur visited Shamsuddin Fakhri, an old man greatly respected in the areas of politics and religion. He later reported Timur as saying, "Whatever empire I have gained, and whatever forts I have stormed are due to the intercession of Sheikh Shamsuddin Fakhri and the zeal of Sheikh Zeinuddin Khwafi, and I have not won success except by the aid of Said Baraka."., Ibn Arabshah, pp. 2 and 5.
33 Barhold, p. 19.
34 ibid.
35 ibid., p. 117.
36 For example, at Khwaja Ahrar's request, Abu Said ordered that not more than one third of the land tax should be levied before the harvest. Cambridge Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 1, p. 148a.
37 ibid., p. 168.
38 Babur described Sultan Ahmad as "a true believer; pure in the faith...He was a disciple of his highness Khwaja Ubaidul-lah [Ahrar] his instructor in religion and the strengthener of his faith...He was just and as his Highness the Khwaja was there, accompanying him step by step, most of his affairs found lawful settlement." Babur, pp. 33 - 34.
attributable to him. His thirty-three disciples spread the Naqshbandiyya doctrine abroad, 
their efforts being particularly successful in Persia and Herat, where Sa`d ad-Din 
Kashghari gained a number of important followers, including the renowned scholar 
Shaykh, Babur’s father, was also a disciple of Khwaja Ahrar. Babur himself claimed 
that Khwaja Ahrar appeared to him in a vision and predicted he would take Samarkand, 
which he did shortly after in 1500.

Ultimately the dervish community withdrew its support from the Timurid empire. 
There had been friction between them and the Timurid polity since Timur’s death, and the 
loss of dervish support was of considerable significance in the decline of the Timurid 
empire. The dervish leaders became the representatives of the ordinary citizens who were 
disenchanted with bearing the fiscal burden of supporting the conspicuous consumption, 
religious indifference, and rarefied life of the Timurid elite. Ulugh Beg had several 
clashes with dervish leaders. He sought to project himself as a scholar prince, something 
which was in contradiction to the dervishes’ beliefs, as they opposed all book 
learning. Ulugh Beg, however, recognised the importance of the dervishes, and he 
erected a shelter for their benefit in Bukhara. The tensions came to a head in the late 
Timurid era. The vast increase of soyurghal grants awarded in the reign of Husain 
Baiqara placed a severe financial strain on the Central Diwan. Extraordinary taxes were 
levied on the local citizens to make up for the shortfall in revenue. In Herat, a general 
capitation tax was levied several times within two years. This caused a revolt among 
the local populace in 1470. Conditions were not any easier for those living under the 
Soyurghal holders. There were no restrictions on the levels of taxation which Soyurghal 
holders could impose on their subjects. People living on Soyurghal lands were also 
extected to pay extraordinary taxes to cover banquets, feasts and so forth; and could also 
be asked to provide taxes such as Nauruzi (presents given on religious festival; and 
Salamana (presents offered for congratulations). Corvée labour could also be 
demanded. These harsh conditions led to a considerable degree of popular resentment 
against the Timurid elite. Conditions in Herat were mirrored in Samarkand, where Sultan 
Mahmud briefly replaced Sultan Ahmad as ruler and, according to Babur oppressed 
followers of Khwaja Ahrar. This widespread discontent provided a fertile grounds for 
dervish support.

We must now assess the Islamic connections between Central Asia and Mughal

39 Algar, p. 139.
40 Babur, p. 15.
41 ibid., p. 132.
42 Barthold, p. 115.
43 ibid., p. 122.
44 Subtelny, "Socio-Economic Basis of Patronage Under the Later Timurids", pp. 485-87, and "Centralizing 
Reform and Its Opponents in the Late Timurid Era", p. 130.
45 Babur, p. 41.
India. Many Central Asian Muslims visited India throughout the Mughal period. The reign of Abdullah Khan saw a crackdown on scholar theologians. Consequently some of these Muslim scholars sought refuge at the Mughal court. Central Asian holy men, in particular those of the dervish orders, were afforded considerable respect in Mughal imperial literature. By associating themselves with the dervishes the Mughals reinforced their claim to legitimacy in several ways. The mysticism of these orders enhanced the supernatural aura the Mughal emperors sought to project of themselves. Furthermore the Naqshbandiyya represented a tangible link with the Mughals' Central Asian heritage, and they were one of the few Sufi orders who actively sought political associations. Abul Fazl tells the story of how Humayun drew an omen from boots presented to him by a dervish, that Turkestan was the head of the world, Khurasan the breast and Hindustan the foot. This is linked with a tale of a dervish, who had placed a breast bone of a sheep before Timur shortly before he conquered Khurasan. Thus Humayun is represented as having the support of the dervishes Timur had maintained, as well as having the spiritual insight to draw his own conclusions. Abul Fazl also mentions that the ancestors of Shaykh Ali Beg Jalair, who made a decisive breakthrough in Humayun victory against Maldeo, were of Timurid descent.

Symbolically the continuing contact between Central Asian Muslims and the Mughal court was of considerable significance. Abul Fazl went to considerable lengths in the Akbar Nama, to record the genealogical connections of the Central Asian visitors to Mughal India. This aspect of Central Asia was explicitly alluded to because it implied that Mughal India had become the place where the spiritual representatives of the Mughals' former kingdoms preferred to visit. In his description of the visit of the Kashghari ambassadors in 1556, Abul Fazl listed in full the Naqshbandiyya links of Khwaja Abdul Bari, whom Humayun had sent to Kashghar, and who now returned bearing condolences for Humayun’s death. Central Asian holy men are reported as visiting Akbar's court to participate in the religious discussions held there. Another Central

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46 One of these visitors was Qazi Abul Maali, the spiritual successor and son in law of the Governor of Bukhara. "It was on his account that Abdullah Khan, the king of Turan put a stop to the study of logic and dialectics and expelled Mulla - Isamud-din of Isfarain with his vile pupils from Transoxiana." Badauni, Vol. 3, p. 210. Some pupils of Isam ud'din such as Maulana Sa' id and Hafiz-i Kumaki also visited the Mughal court. Badauni, Vol. 3, pp. 212-13.
47 ibid., Vol. 1, p. 612. The incident Abul Fazl referred to occurred at Andhkok in 1381 when Baba Sangu, who was widely regarded as a saint, threw a raw breastbone before Timur. Timur interpreted this to mean that God was delivering Khurasan,"the breast of the Surface of the earth", into his hands. Barthold, p. 20.
48 The account of Shaykh Jalair's ancestors says that they "were of hereditary devotion and loyalty from the time of the upraising of the standards of glory of his majesty Sahib Qiran." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, p. 379.
49 Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, pp. 36-37.
50 "During this year [1560] a large number of aspirants left their homes and came to prostrate themselves at the threshold of fortune, being attracted by the justice and liberality of the Khedive of the age." Khwaja Abdu Shahid, a descendant of Khwaja Ahrar is among those listed. His genealogy is given. Ibid., p. 195.
Asian visitor to the Mughal court, Maulana Sa‘id Turkistani, the leading holy man of Transoxiana, was respected by Abul Fazl for his inward knowledge. Khwaja Mu‘in of Kashghar, a descendant of Khwaja Ahrar, was described as "kissing the Shahinshah’s carpet" in his visit to the Mughal court. Abul Fazl also notes the career of Khwaja Ahrar’s ancestor Khwaja Khawind Mahmud, a widely travelled preacher who had been at Babur’s court. The Mughal court is portrayed as the place where the real loyalties of the dervishes and holy men of the world lie. But while central Asian holy men were very much respected at the Mughal court, they were not allowed to dictate matters of policy. Khwaja Abd-ul Shahid, who was a grandson of Khwaja Ahrar, twice attempted to intercede on behalf of a noble Mirza Sharuf-ud-din whom Akbar had imprisoned. Akbar refused Khwaja Abd-ul Shahid’s request that he free the Mirza. This incident indicates the nature of the connections between Central Asian holy men and Mughal India; they were welcomed because the tradition they represented enhanced the Mughal’s prestige, they did not actively influence the direction of Islamic thought in India.

The visits of Central Asian holy men continued throughout the Mughal period. Jahangir mentions several visits from Central Asian holy men in his memoirs. These visits were also recorded in such a way as to imply that the Mughals retained some sense of their Central Asian identity. A letter from Khwaja Hasan, a dervish from Transoxiana, expressed devotion to the Mughal family and pointed out the traditional ties the dervishes had with the Mughals, especially Babur. By mentioning this letter Jahangir projected the Mughals as spiritual leaders, not only in India, but also beyond India. There was also an underlying implication that the devotion expressed by the dervishes to the Mughals - who, as representatives of a leading religious order, spoke for the Central Asian populace generally - meant that the Mughals were still the spiritual, if not the physical, rulers of Central Asia. Jahangir recorded seemingly trivial actions, such as that of Khwaja Hasan, a Naqshbandiyya leader, giving Jahangir his own fish teeth, to demonstrate that he had the holy men of Transoxiana in his service. The explicit recording of the genealogical connections of the Central Asian visitors to the Mughal court demonstrates a continuing connection between Central Asia and Mughal India. It might be argued that the explicit references to the genealogical connections indicate that the Mughals saw themselves as the spiritual, albeit exiled, rulers of Central Asia.

52 The visit of Khwaja Mu‘in is discussed when Abul Fazl relates how Akbar’s success attracted an increasing number of visitors. Ibid., pp. 300-03.
54 Jahangir records visits from Khwaja Qasim and from Khwaja Nu‘in ud-Din from Transoxiana around 1615, when he is recorded as bringing 15 horses as a gift. Jahangir, Vol. 1, pp. 267, 289, 303.
55 “As at this time I was much inclined to parti-coloured veined teeth, the great Amirs exerted themselves greatly to looking out for them...Abdul Aziz k. Naqshbandi sent a servant in the name of Abdu-lah with a letter to Khwaja Hasan and Khwaja Abdur Rahim, ss. Khwaja Kalan Jaybari, who are today the leading holy men of Transoxiana, containing a request for these things.” Khwaja Hasan sent the tooth immediately. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 166.
The emigration of many followers of the Naqshbandiya order to India is an example of a continuing Central Asian cultural influence upon the Mughal Empire. The demise of the Timurid standards in Central Asia was in an indirect manner responsible for the export of the Naqshbandiya to Mughal India. The deteriorating political situation in Central Asia posed a considerable threat to the continued survival of the Naqshbandiya, many of whom had died when the Safavids sacked Herat, and the political situation within Central Asia remained unstable. Given the persecutions of the Safavids, the instability in Central Asia, the remoteness of the Ottomans, and the insularity of the Ming Empire in China, India, with its longstanding tradition of orthodox Muslim rule, appeared the best option for Central Asian refugees. Khwaja Ahrar’s sons were not able to influence the Uzbeks as they had the Timurids. Ahmad Khwajagi Khasan emigrated to India, but he fell foul of Humayun in 1531.56 Khwaja Islam, his son, opted to remain in Central Asia, where he acquired immense waqf properties in Bukhara, and later became the kingmaker behind Abdullah Khan.57

The Naqshbandiya involved themselves in Mughal politics, just as they had done in the Timurid empire. Nizami considers that the Naqshbandiya were the only religious order in India that considered it proper, and indeed necessary, to establish contact with the ruling court.58 Khwaja Baqibillah (d. 1603), one of the emigrant Central Asian Naqshbandiya, gained a number of followers at Akbar’s court, the most important among them being Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). Sirhindi has often been regarded as among the most vehement opponents of Akbar’s religious policy. He disparaged the spiritualism of the Hindus.59 He supported the jizyah because he believed it was necessary to humiliate Hindus at every opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of Islam.60 He wrote letters to those in the Mughal court whom he believed could diminish the Hindu role in Muslim politics.61 But the strong measures that he advocated against Hindus were not carried out in the reigns of either Akbar or Jahangir.62 Thus, it has been questioned how much influence Sirhindi had at the court. But it must also be acknowledged that while his influence at the imperial court is open to dispute, it cannot be denied that Sirhindi enjoyed considerable popular support in India.63

It has also been suggested that Sirhindi played an important role in Jahangir’s

56 Adshad, p. 237.
57 ibid.
59 Sirhindi was, for example, critical of Hindu asceticism, because it was performed outside the Quranic frame of reference, and thus represented human, and not spiritual leanings. Y. Friedmann, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of his thought and a Study of his Image in the Eyes of Posterity, 1971, p. 72.
60 ibid., p. 73.
61 These letters were the most strongly anti Hindu in tone of Sirhindi’s letters. ibid., p. 74.
62 Friedmann, pp. 80-81.
63 Nizami, "Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics", p. 47.
accession to power. But if this was so, Jahangir’s lack of action against the Hindus displeased Sirhindi as much as Akbar’s alleged lack of action had done. Sirhindi was imprisoned by Jahangir on account of his “pretentiousness” in 1619. His reputation in high circles did not survive long after his death. He rated only a short mention in the *Tabaqat-i Shah Jahani* by Muhammad Sadiq. On December 1 1679, Aurangzeb placed a ban on the study of Sirhindi’s letters. Posterity in Mughal India mostly regarded Sirhindi as one who was disrespectful of the prophet Muhammad. His letters to the Mughal emperors were unknown by his defenders in the late seventeenth century, which indicates that their importance has been exaggerated.

Many Naqshbandiyya with no connections with Sirhindi or his successors continued to emigrate from Central Asia into India. Simon Digby has demonstrated this with his study of the Naqshbandi community in Aurangabad. His study focuses upon two Naqshbandi Shaykhs: Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir, who came to India in 1675 and founded a Takya (outpost) at Aurangabad. The members of this community were mainly Transoxanian immigrants, most of whom had attended a Maktab - children’s school. Thus they were brought up in the Central Asian fashion which forged and instilled a lasting sense of identity into them. Their twenty-four Khalifas were also of Central Asian descent. Although they emigrated to India, the community never forgot about Central Asia, which was referred to as ”Wilayat” - the country. They did not seek to make Indian converts and there is no record of any non-Muslims being converted. Their ministry was directed at their fellow Central Asians, who they felt were in danger of becoming Indianised and losing their identity.

Although the Naqshbandi Shaykhs did not gain widespread support, they did secure positions of influence within the Mughal provincial government. Baba Palangposh became a spiritual advisor to the governor of Aurangabad, Ghazi al-Din, reaching the rank of 7000. He accompanied Ghazi al Din in his campaigns, along with a retinue of 150-200 dervishes. He collected a great deal of money from all sources, including Ghazi al-Din. Baba Musafir became a respected figure within the local community.

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64 Nizami, “Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics”, p. 47.
65 Sirhindi was subsequently released after a year in jail. Jahangir wrote of his release: “On this day, Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind, who had for some time been placed in the prison of correction on account of his pretentiousness...was released...He justly represented that his punishment had really been a valuable lesson to him, and that his desire was to wait on me.” Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 161.
66 ibid., p. 102.
67 ibid., p. 94.
68 Muhammad Beg who defended Sirhindi made no reference to the letters. Ibid., p. 101.
69 Digby’s study was based on a document called the *Malfuzat i-Naqshbandiya*, a chronicle of Baba Palangposh, and Baba Musafir, two Naqshbandiyya Shaykhs, and twenty four of their Khalifas (deputies). Simon Digby, “The Naqshbandis in the Deccan in the late Seventeenth Century and early Eighteenth century: Baba Palangposh, Baba Musafir, and their adherents”, *Table Ronde sur les Naqshbandis*, 1985, p. 4.
70 ibid., p. 13.
71 ibid., p. 15.
Nizam ul-Mulk is said to have asked him in 1707 whom he should support in the succession dispute after Aurangzeb’s death. He correctly predicted that Bahadur Shah would win. Many dervishes made the journey from Balkh to Aurangabad when they learnt of the exploits of Baba Palangposh and Baba Musafir. A well developed network of Takyas and Aq Sarays evolved, providing accommodation for up to 70 -100 faqirs. Ultimately, however, the Takya dwindled as the two Babas and many of the community were of an elderly age, and there were few young replacements. The deteriorating political situation in the eighteenth century discouraged would be travellers. Furthermore, whereas Sirhind had provided the Muslim élite in Akbar’s reign with a determined Islamic advocate and a network of supporters, the Aurangabad community could not offer the educated Muslim élite anything. They were foreigners representing a foreign form of culture.

A Naqshbanqiyya leader Shah Wali Allah (1702-62) was a very important figure in eighteenth century Delhi. He supported the Mughals as he believed their conquest of India represented proof of a divine mandate for their rule. He was, however, critical of the rule of Safdar Jang, where many claims were made on the treasury by those performing no duty. In particular he wanted an end put to the Jats, and to this end proposed an increase in the amount of Khalisa land. His frustration with the ruling élite led him to ask Ahmad Shah Abdali to fight a jihad against the Marathas, and liberate the Muslims. Thus in Mughal India, albeit to a lesser extent than in Central Asia, the dervish orders continued to represent what they believed to be the interests of the people and withdrew their support from the leadership.

The Naqshbandiyya were a Central Asian cultural export that influenced many areas of Indian society. Its diffusion into India, however, was for the most part attributable to Indians, especially to people such as Sirhind, and not to Central Asians. The influence the Naqshbandiyya were able to achieve in India can be attributed to their willingness to involve themselves politically, whether at the Imperial court, as with Sirhind, or in regional politics, as did the leaders of the Aurangabad community. While some charismatic individuals attained a considerable degree of influence, the Naqshbandiyya as a whole never had the political influence in India that they had had in Central Asia. Their theological conservatism did not suit the religious inclusiveness promoted in Akbar’s reign, nor did it gain much support at the popular level for, unlike the Chishti order, the Naqshbandiyya made few, if any, concessions to the predominantly Hindu population. In the reigns of Akbar’s successors the Naqshbandiyya remained marginalised in its local strongholds. With its emphasis upon everyday practicalities and its hostility to esoteric debate it was of little benefit to the Muslim élite in the theological debates that took place at court. Naqshbandiyya influence was cited as a legitimating tradition from Central Asia,

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72 When he refused Palangposh a donation, Ghazi al-din lost his next battle, he later repeated. Digby, p. 17.
73 ibid., p. 24.
74 ibid., p. 35.
but it was with the tradition, not the Naqshbandiyya movement itself, that the Mughals sought to associate themselves. The Mughal emperors had no need to rely on the Naqshbandiyya appeal to the citizens through their supernatural powers, as this function was performed by the more identifiably Indian Chishtiyah.

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Akbar’s relationship with the Chishti order affords valuable insights into the imperial agenda. Akbar associated himself most closely with the religious orders that supported the mystical, inclusive, side of his rule. The Chishtiyah were the pre-eminent Sufi silsila in India. Like the Naqshbandiyya they had come to India from Central Asia.76 A succession of great Chishti Shaykhs had been in Delhi, and there were great celebrations on the Chishti festivals. Nizam al-Din Auliya was a renowned Shaykh, who, in the reign of Muhammad ibn Tughluq, spurned the attention of politicians and preferred to care for the local citizens. The Chishtiyah embodied the mystical and inclusive values Akbar sought to promote. They held that the Barakah - the spiritual power of the saints - could be transmitted from the tombs. Furthermore, the Chishtiyah represented the ideal of toleration and universalism which Akbar was seeking to promote. They were willing to learn from Hindu teachers and would accept Hindu devotees.77 Therefore, in microcosm the Chishtiyah embodied the Akbari formula for the empire. Akbar’s association with these saints began when he visited Shaykh Salim Chishti, who correctly predicted the birth of Jahangir.78 For fourteen years (1572-86) Akbar’s capital city, Fatehpur Sikri, was near the Shaykh’s tomb. Between 1569 and 1579 Akbar made ten visits to Mu'in al-Din Chishti’s shrine at Ajmer.79 Abul Fazl claimed that Akbar’s authority and spiritual wisdom were explicitly acknowledged by Chishti leaders.80

Akbar’s successors maintained the links with the Chishtiyah. The Chishti order was something identifiably Muslim whose festivals also held some significance for the non-Muslim population. Here was something from Central Asia which had become identifiably and uniquely Indian. In Akbar’s reign the association had considerable

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76 Abul Fazl includes an account of Mu’in al-Din Chishti and his successors in the Akbar-Nama, Vol. 2, p. 238.
78 Salim Chishti was listed as a second class Shaykh - that is those who were considered to have great knowledge in their hearts. Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbari, p. 609.
79 Streusand, p. 90.
80 Abul Fazl claimed that the following incident occurred on 28 February 1568 when Akbar was stopped on route to Ajmer, "When he reached the town of Mandal, Shaguna Qarwal, who had gone in advance to Ajmir and had conveyed the good news of His Majesty’s approach, came quickly and brought representations from the ascetic hermits of the shrine to the effect that his holiness the Khwaja had appeared in a vision and had announced that the spiritual and temporal king had, from the feelings of religion and righteous endeavour formed the intention of visiting the shrine of his humble self on foot and had directed them to restrain the caravan conductors of Truth’s way from his design by every means in their power. "If he knew the amount of his own spirituality he would not bestow a glance on me the sitter in the dust of the path of studentship." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, p. 477.
symbolic value, as it demonstrated the Mughals' commitment to Indian traditions. Moreover, the emperors used their connections with the Chishtiyyah to articulate various characteristics of their reign: at the same time as they were continuing an imperial tradition, their association with the Chishtiyyah served to contextualise the various emperors within that imperial tradition. For Jahangir it offered an association with the glories of his father's reign. Jahangir often visited the Shrines of Chishti saints, especially the shrine of Khwaja Mu'in ud-Din. In his memoirs Jahangir claimed to have inherited the mantle of Shaykh Salim Chishti. Shaykh Salim is alleged to have said that he would die on the day when Jahangir, then prince Salim, committed a verse to memory. On one level Jahangir proclaimed his intimate association with Shaykh Salim Chishti. But there was also an underlying implication on Jahangir's part that he held the power of life and death over even the most revered human beings. Shah Jahan did not make as many visits to the Shrine of Mu'in ud-Din as Akbar did, nevertheless his visits were in keeping with the theme of his reign, the celebration of past glories, and the promotion of the contemporary age as one of still greater splendour.

Shah Jahan first visited the shrine in 1628, and, foreshadowing the tenor of his reign, ordered that a mosque be constructed to the west of the dome of the tomb of Mu'in ud-Din. His first visit as Emperor was in 1636, when he inspected the mosque he had ordered built. He is recorded as making further visits in 1643 and 1654. His visits are linked with those of Akbar and Jahangir, placing Shah Jahan alongside the emperors associated with the empire's glory. The visits came to express the refinement of Shah Jahan's reign. Khwaja Mu'in ud-Din is described as a "leader of the caravan of virtuous and revered men." Aurangzeb is also recorded as visiting the Chishti saints, his association with them being represented as a homage for his victories.

It could be argued that many Islamic institutions from Central Asia of both an elite

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81 Jahangir wrote of himself as an ear-bored slave of Mu'in ud-Din. Tuzuk-i Jahangiri, Vol. 1, p. 267. Jahangir claimed that in the course of one visit to Ajmer he visited the mausoleum of Khwaja Mu'in ud-Din 9 times. Jahangir, Vol. 1, p. 341. See also Vol. 1, p. 297 for Jahangir's account of visiting Mu'in ud-Dins shrine upon his regnal anniversary.
82 Jahangir wrote: "When... [Akbar] came he said: "the promised time of union has come, and I must take leave of you." Taking his turban from his head he placed it on mine and said: "We have made Sultan Salim our successor and have made him over to God, the protector and preserver." Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 77.
84 The mosque is recorded as costing 40,000 rupees. Ibid., p. 195.
85 "The reigning dynasty had always entertained particular reverence for the sacred and revered resting place of Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (may his holy tomb be purified), so much so that both the preceding Emperor's Akbar and Jahangir had several times made the pious procession around the revered shrine. Accordingly it now occurred to his majesty's gracious mind to make another pilgrimage to that glorious sepulcher." Ibid., p. 303.
86 ibid., p. 501.
87 Aurangzeb visited this shrine after his victory over Dara Shukoh at Deonai. Ibid, p. 558.
and popular variety, were transplanted into Mughal India. The model of Islamic kingship was retained and Mughal India also received a continuing influx of Central Asian Muslims, mainly holy men and travelling dervishes. Some of these institutions were substantially modified in India and survived; some did not make the transition.

Some of these transplanted Central Asian Islamic institutions proved malleable in the face of the specific demands of an Indian environment. This ensured their survival, but also meant that they lost some of their Central Asian character. The limitations of Islam as a means of promoting imperial authority, in particular, its emphasis upon submission to God rather than to man, meant that in both empires it was complemented by a cult of personality concerning the sovereign. In Central Asia this focused on the great triumphs of the rulers, such as Chinggiz and Timur. This was necessary to enhance their legitimacy, as their conquests were seen to prove their claims to divine authority. In Mughal India, the same end was achieved through different means. Royalty itself became the focus of exaltation. It was important to be viewed as a good upholder of Islamic law; but being seen to be a worthy ruler per se, by the predominantly non-Muslim population, was far more important. Thus the Mughal court concentrated upon making the ruler appear an august, almost-infallible, character. Some Central Asian traditions were retained to assist this such as the Turco-Mongolian tradition of religious toleration. But such traditions as survived were not expressed in a Central Asian form; they represented the new vision of imperial authority, which recognised the claims of a cross-section of certain élites.

But although the Islamic aspect of imperial rule may, in some cases, have been nominal, and in some cases it was modified, it was not insignificant. It was important for rulers in Central Asia and Mughal India to retain Islamic support, if possible at all levels, or, at the very least, among the important sections of the Muslim community. Timur lost the support of some Islamic leaders because of his massacres, but he also supported popular Islam in the form of the Shaykhs. The political setbacks of the later Timurid era, did, however, make the loss of Muslim support more important. The Timurids lost the support of the dervish orders, by making them fund their effete culture without commensurate reward, while the nomadic population saw no reason to fight for a polity that no longer represented their interests. The later Timurids were presented with an insoluble dilemma. They lacked the economic base to run an Islamic sedentary state since they had decentralised the necessary financial base to the Soyurghal holders; nor could they pose as defenders of the dervish orders, because their elite culture celebrated conspicuous consumption. Ultimately these weaknesses allowed the non-Muslim Uzbeks to conquer the Timurids and it is significant that they too adopted many features of Islamic culture as a source of legitimacy.

The Mughals endeavoured to maintain the support of the majority of the Sunni community. Islam may have been a minority religion within India, but this did not undermine its importance. The Central Asian influence was evident in calls for orthodoxy as well as universalism. Rizvi has suggested that the administrative, social and cultural institutions of the Mughals led to two divergent attitudes: those of a conciliatory
group, followers of Akbar and Sulh-i Kull on the one hand, and Orthodox Sunnis, who believed in military force and wanted a Central Asian type monarch on the other hand. The Ulema wanted a Central Asian type of monarch, and, when they failed to get one, those of orthodox Sunnis withdrew their support from the empire.

Islam as a basis for militarism had mixed success in Mughal India. Aurangzeb tried to use Islam as a tool to conquer his opponents, but the Islamic appeal was not supported by adequate political or financial incentives. Irrespective of their religious policy, all Mughal emperors recognised the importance of Islam to the imperial culture. Irrespective of their theological standpoint, all the Mughal rulers endeavoured to use the various orders and institutions of Islam to underwrite the contemporary imperial ideology. While actively associating themselves with Islam, they endeavoured to dictate the agenda it articulated.

Some of the mystical orders of Central Asian Islam also transplanted themselves to Mughal India in their basic form. They did not have a significant impact in Indian society however. Like many Central Asian exports which retained their original form, they were unable to integrate within Indian society. Although they could exercise a degree of local influence, they were not integrated within the Mughal religious élite. Central Asian Muslim personages were welcomed, along with many others to participate in discussions at the Mughal court, but with a few exceptions they rarely exercised significant power. Those with distinguished genealogies reinforced the Mughals prestige through their association with their glorious heritage Nor was it necessary for the Mughals to mollify the dervish orders. The Mughals preferred to associate themselves with an Indianised Central asian export, the Chishtiyyah, which afforded the Mughal rulers an opportunity to associate themselves with a longstanding tradition of Indian mysticism. Moreover it was a muslim tradition which had come to incorporate many elements of Indian society, a microcosm of what the Mughals hoped to achieve in the empire at large.

Overall, then, it may be said that while Central Asian Islamic institutions may not have been dominant agents in determining the nature of Islamic rule and culture in Mughal India, they did represent an important and occasionally influential connection between Central Asia and Mughal India throughout our period.

88 S.A.A. Rizvi, Shah Wali-Allah and His Times, p. 394.
V: Culture as Prestige Advertising: The Importance of Symbols

The sovereignty of the court in Central Asia and Mughal India was reinforced by a consciously-created infrastructure of imperial symbols. In this chapter we shall consider the extent to which the Central Asian symbols of imperial rule were transplanted to Mughal India. In particular we shall be considering the role of culture as a form of prestige advertising through which the imperial court endeavoured to promote an image of imperial splendour. This was especially important in an age where there were no mass media. The chapter will analyse the significance of architecture, the visual arts, the official literature and the courtly procedures in articulating an idealised image of the empire to the populace. We shall be concerned especially with the transplantation of élite culture from Central Asia to Mughal India and the transformation it underwent in an Indian environment. We shall also analyse the importance of culture as an expression of the imperial ideology. To this end, we shall assess the interrelationship between the symbols of imperial rule and the political agenda of the rulers.

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In order to understand the transfer of culture from Central Asia to Mughal India, it is necessary to consider the beginnings of Timurid culture in Timur's reign. Timur's reign saw the promulgation of a distinct élite culture which performed an integral role, buttressing the Timurid imperial edifice throughout the empire's history. Its form changed over time, but it was always an identifiable entity in the Timurid era. As we shall see, such a phenomenon was also apparent in Mughal India. Timur patronised this culture for the benefit of the cultural élite so that their works would be produced under the imperial auspices. The cultural élite was concentrated in the capital city, where they produced the imperial iconography which was disseminated to the citizens at large. Timur established an imperial culture that was clearly distinct from that which had gone before him. After his successors built upon this base, they decentralised the artistic community, so that the art and architecture which was developed in Samarkand could be emulated throughout the empire. By establishing this élite culture, Timur sought to cultivate a distinctively Timurid imperial ideology with which the élite could identify, and which would impress upon the general populace the majesty of the empire. In addition to such factors as heredity, claims to a celestial mandate, Islamic traditions, and a cult of personality around the sovereign (which we have discussed in previous chapters), the imperial iconography was an important medium through which the imperial court asserted its legitimacy to rule.

Timurid culture was geared towards emphasising the splendour of the kingdom, so grandeur and size were emphasised. Timurid architectural, literary and pictorial forms
represented an eclectic combination of many influences, in particular that of the captured artisans who were brought to Samarkand. The end-product of these influences was a distinctively Timurid, yet recognizably Islamic, culture. The Timurid and Islamic elements were not mutually exclusive; rather, they were complementary. Collectively they were the integral ideological components underpinning the imperial cultural institutions.

Architecture was the most prominent medium of prestige advertising in both Central Asia and Mughal India. Its significance in Central Asia must concern us first. For the Timurids, architecture provided physical proof of the achievements of the dynasty and, the more imposing such architecture, the better it served the purposes of projecting an aura of imperial splendour. The monumental structures of such cities as Samarkand and Herat represented an emphatic expression of the Timurids' control over their realm. Buildings in these cities were large, and, from the imperial point of view, it was important that they were perceived to be so.¹ Height was equated with the power and splendour of the ruler. One of the most imposing monuments of Timur's reign was the Gur-i Amir, built around 1401-04 in Samarkand. The height from the ground to the tip of the exterior dome was 37 metres.² The interior was as ostentatious as the exterior, being elaborately decorated with red, blue and gold onyx tiles. The entrance portal, the part of the building seen by the majority of passers-by, became a prominent feature in many Timurid structures. Nizam al-Din Shami wrote that the Aq Saray (White Palace), built at Shahr-i Sabz from 1379-96, was visible at a distance of seven farsakhs (forty-two kilometres).³ Its entrance portal was twenty-one metres wide and forty-nine metres high.⁴ Clavijo estimated that the courtyard was three hundred paces in width, and considered the craftsmanship was on a par with that of Paris.⁵

The emphasis upon size continued throughout the Timurid era. Babur asserted that the dome of the monastery Ulugh Beg erected in Samarkand was among the largest of its

¹ Ibn Arabshah alleges that when Timur first saw an Indian style mosque erected at his request, he ordered that its builder, Muhammad Jalah, be put to death, because the mosque was lower than a college his chief wife had constructed. Ibn Arabshah, p. 222. Clavijo tells a story that Timur ordered all the churches in Arzinjan to be destroyed as they were higher than the local mosques. Clavijo, p. 130.

² The work of Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber has been especially important in this field. Their recent publication, The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan, is based upon an exhaustive examination of preceding literature, supplemented by first-hand verification of the structures concerned. It offers a comprehensive overview of Timurid structures in Persia and Transoxiana, complemented by a detailed structural analysis of their forms. Source for height of Gur Amir, Golombek and Wilber, p. 261.

³ Ibid., p. 205.

⁴ The surviving works of the Timurid era were collated in a recent exhibition held at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C., and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The project was the result of a collaborative effort between American and Russian experts, and included on-site photography and research. The resulting material has been published in a book by Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, entitled Timur and the Princely Vision. For reference to the entrance portal see Lentz and Lowry, 1989, p. 43.

⁵ Clavijo, pp. 208-09.
type in the world, and Babur wrote over half a century after it had been constructed. The Musalla Ensemble, built in Herat under the auspices of Gauhar Shad, Shah Rukh's chief wife, between 1417 and 1438, consisted of a rectangular Madrasah and the masjid-i jami, the "musalla". The facade of the masjid-i jami was twenty-four metres tall, as was the iwan-i maqsura. There minarets of this structure were thirty-seven metres tall. Husain Baiqara ordered that a madrasah be constructed adjacent to this site. This was finished in 1492-93. It had four towering minarets, each fifty-five metres high. The exterior dimensions of the building measured 99.90 by 90.05 metres. These buildings were elaborately decorated with glazed-tile patterns featuring Islamic motifs.

The monumentality of Timurid architecture was enhanced by several architectural features. The soaring domes, geometric patterns, and intersecting vaulting arches along with the sequences of arch, kite, and ribbed pendentives, gave many Timurid buildings an appearance of upward motion that was meant to evoke ethereal connotations of celestial beneficence. The transverse vaults preceded the soaring domes, which were decorated with stellar patterns, evoking the cosmic dimensions of Timurid mythology, as expressed in Timur's title "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction". The metaphysical allusions of Timurid architecture were enhanced by the geometrical symmetry of the Timurid buildings. This was achieved by basing the buildings' design around a single generative unit, such as the dome or entrance portal, and making the remainder of the building proportionate to this. Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid al Kashi, a leading Timurid mathematician, devoted one chapter of his "Key to Arithmetic" to a study of curved forms in architecture. This demonstrates the extent to which the skills of the various members of the Timurid cultural élite were harnessed to further the imperial glory. The geometric harmonization gave a unity to Timurid architecture which was enhanced by the fact that most of the Timurid works were free standing, and meant to be viewed in isolation, even when they were one part of a conglomeration of such forms. Although there were marked differences within the forms of Timurid architecture, its geometric harmonization gave it a distinct identity.

In the Timurid empire, even impermanent structures such as tents were statements of

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6 "Among Aulugh Beg Mirza's buildings are a college and a monastery. The dome of the monastery is very large, few so large are shown in the world." Babur, p. 78.
7 Golombek and Wilber, pp. 303-04.
8 Ibid., p. 305.
9 Golombek and Wilber, p. 315.
10 Ibid.
11 See Golombek and Wilber, Ch. 4; see also Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, Ch. 15.
12 For a detailed discussion of the significance of geometry in Timurid architecture see Golombek and Wilber, Ch. 7.
13 Ibid., p. 152. For an account of Jamshid's overall accomplishments see Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, pp. 568-76.
14 For example, the Registan constructed by Ulugh Beg in Samarkand consisted of a mosque, a madrasah and a khanaqah, each of which faced a central square. Nevertheless each structure is a unique entity.
prestige advertising. Clavijo attended an audience with Timur inside a large four-cornered tent called the Sarapardeh, of which each side was 100 paces long, the height was equivalent to three long lances, and its ceiling was supported by poles (each made up of three sections) so as to form a dome.\textsuperscript{15} Outside the walls of this tent were low galleries supported by masts.\textsuperscript{16} The exterior walls of this tent were made of interwoven bands of white, black and yellow silk cloth; the interior walls were lined with crimson tapestry, while at each of the corners four eagles were depicted.\textsuperscript{17} Possibly these tents sought to echo Timur's Turco-Mongolian heritage, inasmuch as Timur sought a symbolic association with the Mongol conquests to compensate for his lack of hereditary Chinggisid connections.\textsuperscript{18} By holding some audiences in such tents, Timur may have been acknowledging the continuing importance of the nomadic population, and its tradition. Timur had harnessed this tradition more successfully than any Central Asian ruler for almost a century, resulting in an emphatic resurgence of Central Asian primacy. It appears the use of such tents continued throughout the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{19}

There was a considerable Persian influence in Timurid architecture, and, some have said, in Mughal architecture. Therefore it is necessary to consider briefly what Timurid architecture owes to Persian traditions, and what it owes to other influences. Several features of Timurid architecture, such as the double dome of the Gur-i Amir, were of Persian origin.\textsuperscript{20} The Gur-i Amir has an inscription on the portal which ascribes its design to Muhammad bin Mahmud al-banna al-Isfahani; this explains the similarity of the tilework with the Isfahan region of Persia.\textsuperscript{21} The Timurid structures were essentially upscaled versions of earlier Persian structures, with various Transoxianian characteristics intermeshed with the prototypical Persianate forms.\textsuperscript{22} The squinch arch used in Persia was refined in the Timurid empire by the introduction of ribbed arches between the eight shoulders of the octagon.\textsuperscript{23} The Transoxianian elements are evident in the use of painted

\textsuperscript{15} Clavijo, p. 238. The normal length of a war lance at that time was about eleven feet. This was a standard measurement, so the tent would have been about thirty feet in height. Peter Andrews, "The Tents of Timur: An Examination on the Reports of the Quriltay at Samarqand 1404", in \textit{Arts of the Eurasian Steppelands}, ed. Philip Denwood, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, No. 7, London, (1977), p. 150.

\textsuperscript{16} Clavijo, p. 238.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 239.

\textsuperscript{18} The setting in which Clavijo saw the tents he described was a \textit{Khuriltai} - a form of grand assembly - which Timur held in autumn 1404 in the plain outside Samarkand known as Kan-i gil, or the claypit. The assembly was held to celebrate Timur's victories in the east, and the wedding of six of his grandsons. This was the same site where Hülegü had held his reception in 1255. Andrews, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{19} A \textit{Khamsa of Nizami}, dated between 1410-20, has pictures of a structure similar to the tent Timur has described. Ibid., p. 167.

\textsuperscript{20} The double dome was developed in Persia in the fourteenth century. It gave a balancing effect to the larger dome and spatial harmony to the building's interior. \textit{Cambridge History of Iran}, Vol. 6, p. 738.

\textsuperscript{21} Golombok and Wilber, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Cambridge History of Iran}, Vol. 6, p. 744.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
tiles, which predated similar large-scale use in Persia by two centuries. There is some evidence of an Indian influence in the masjid-i jami of Samarkand, which is made of stone, and not brick, the material most commonly used in Central Asia. Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi records that stone-gravers from Hindustan were among the craftsmen employed in the construction of the masjid-i jami. Although Timurid architecture was strongly influenced by other traditions, in particular the Persian tradition, it can be considered a distinct entity in its own right. For even though many of the parts were borrowed, the intermeshing of these parts was done under Timurid auspices, for Timurid purposes, and occurred for the most part in the Timurid capital cities, or the Imperial workshop.

Islamic culture was an important determinant in the forms of many Timurid structures, as it was of course, in Timurid culture generally. It could be argued, however, that the spiritual dimensions of Timurid structures were subordinate to their temporal purposes. Timurid culture was basically secular, and while there was an Islamic component in some of its parts, these parts were subordinated to the end goal of promoting the imperial splendour. In the Timurid empire the great Islamic structures were intended to be political, as well as religious, statements. On the one hand they reflected the Islamic element of Timurid sovereignty which was a pretext for many of Timur's campaigns. On the other hand their design, in particular their dimensions, served the purpose of prestige advertising. These purposes were not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, from the imperial perspective they were complementary. The Mosque of Bibi Khanum in Samarkand, built between 1398-1405, was an imposing Islamic structure that advertised the presence of both Islam, and the Timurids, in Samarkand. Its entrance portal was nineteen metres tall. Clavijo recorded that Timur ordered the entrance portal rebuilt because he believed it was too low. He was carried to the construction site

24 Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 744.
25 Ibn Arabshah suggests that Timur ordered a mosque to be built for him in the fashion of one he had seen in India: "Its vault was beautifully built and it was adorned with white marble." Ibn Arabshah, p. 222.
26 Sharaf al-Din Yazdi wrote: "Two hundred men worked inside the masjid itself, such as the stone-gravers of Azerbaycan, Fars and Hindustan." He goes on to mention the use of "95 elephants, the likeness of mountains, which had been sent from Hindustan to Samarqand, all of them were used to draw the enormous stones." Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, Zafarnama, Vol. 2, pp. 144-47, ed. Muhammad Abbasi, 1957-58, cited in Golombek, Wilson, pp. 258-59.
27 The Zafarnama of Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi prefaces his account of the construction of the masjid-i jami of Samarkand with a discussion of Timur's Indian campaign, which he presents as an Islamic crusade: "his Excellence, the Lord of the Conjunction of the Planets - who with the help of God, during the campaign against Hindustan had been occupied with destroying temples of the pagans and the disobedient and with ruining the fire-temples [The temples of the Parseis] and temples of the unbelievers - resolved, and "the intention is better than the deed," to build in Samarqand a Friday masjid with pinacles that rise their head to the heavens." Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, Zafarnama, Vol. 2, p. 147, ed. Muhammad Abbasi, 1957-58, cited in Golombek and Wilber, p. 258.
28 Ibid., p. 256. See pp. 255-260 contains an excellent analysis of this structure.
every morning in his litter where he would spur the workers on.\textsuperscript{30} The Iwan Screen in front of the tiled dome of the sanctuary was thirty metres high.\textsuperscript{31} Its inner courtyard measured sixty metres by ninety metres.\textsuperscript{32} It displayed Quranic inscriptions which had a political, as well as a religious, message.\textsuperscript{33} According to Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi: "In each of the four corners is a minaret, whose head is directed towards the heavens proclaiming: "Our monuments will tell about us!" [which minaret] reaches to the four corners of the world. And the grating sound of the great door which is composed of the seven elements will call the men of the seven climes to the Dar al Salam - Islam."\textsuperscript{34} Thus the masjid-i jami was presented as a structure which would proclaim the glory of the Timurids to the world, and as a consequence call people to Islam, with an underlying implication that this would make Samarkand the Islamic capital of the world.

Timur patronised Islamic culture in its popular, as well as its orthodox manifestations, erecting structures for all sections of the Muslim population. If the masjid-i jami of Samarkand represented Timur's recognition of Islamic orthodoxy, the development of the Shah-i Zinda was an acknowledgement, on Timur's part, of the importance of folk Islam. According to a legend in some Islamic cults, the Shah-i Zinda was the resting place of the revered saint Qusam bin Abbas, who was led there by the prophet Khizr. By patronising this type of construction either in his own right, or through the agency of his wives, Timur associated his empire with both the elite and popular branches of the Islamic religion. Patronage of Islamic structures continued throughout the reign of the Timurids. Shah Rukh greatly expanded the Shrine of Imam Riza at Meshed which had been a popular tomb since the tenth century. Among the 135 buildings Ali Shir Navai patronised in Husain Baiqara's reign were twenty mosques, seven Khanaqahs and one Madrassa.\textsuperscript{35}

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The Mughals, like the Timurids, were prolific builders, and these structures were an important part of the prestige advertising inherent in Mughal rule.\textsuperscript{36} But while the Mughals erected many buildings, few Mughal structures were modelled specifically on Central Asian designs. To some degree this can be explained as a result of practical

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Clavijo, p. 280. This was apparently not uncommon as Timur is also reputed to have ordered that the doorway of the mausoleum erected in memory of his son Jahangir at Kesh be rebuilt for a similar reason. Ibid., p. 207.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Golombek and Wilber, p. 256.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Lentz and Lowry, p. 36.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Babur wrote of the masjid-i jami of Samarkand: "Round its frontal arch is inscribed in letters large enough to be read two miles away, the Quran verse, Wa az yerfa Ibrahim al Qaws'id ali akhara " and Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundations of the house saying Lord! accept to from us, for Thou art he who knowest". Babur, p. 77.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Yazdi, \textit{Zafarnama}, Vol. 2, p. 147, ed. Muhammad Abbasi, cited in Golombek and Wilber, p. 258.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Lentz and Lowry, p. 255.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Abul Fazl wrote: "mighty fortresses have been raised, which protect the timid, frighten the rebellious, and please the obedient." Abul Fazl, \textit{A' in-i Akbari}, p. 232.
\end{itemize}
considerations, but political motives were of equal importance. Akbar’s reign, as we saw in the chapter on the court, witnessed the transformation of the Mughal polity into one that was ruled primarily by Indians, and not emigrant Central Asian amirs. The Central Asian element of the Mughal nobility decreased in both numbers and position during Akbar’s reign; the revolts of the 1580’s saw some concessions to the disaffected Central Asian element, but they did not halt the overall trend of a diminishing Central Asian component in the Mughal ranks. The change in the political agenda was mirrored by concurrent changes to the imperial culture. With the increase in the numbers of Rajputs and Indo-Muslims in the nobility, there was a marked "Indianisation" of the Mughal élite culture. This had widespread implications for the Central Asian influence in the élite culture, and architecture was no exception. Central Asian structures in their Central Asian forms would not have served the aims of promoting the Mughals as rulers of India with an administration made up of a cross-section of the Indian élite. As a generalization it may be said that whereas many Central Asian principles in architecture were retained in Mughal India, Central Asian practices were for the most part discontinued, unless their use directly enhanced imperial prestige.

There were echoes of Timurid architecture in Mughal India, but for the most part they were rather muted echoes. Babur disliked the lack of symmetry and form in Indian design, coming as he did from Central Asia, where the Timurids (following Islamic fiat) had made geometric forms an important feature of their art. Babur ordered that many gardens be laid, and at one point he had 680 stonemasons working on his projects in Agra alone. Mughal structures soon began to take on an Indian aspect. In part, the change in architectural forms was dictated by the Indian environment. In the Persian tradition, which formed the basis for many aspects of Timurid architecture, brick was the main material used in construction. But brick was rarely used in India, nor was the glazed tile decoration which had beautified the exterior of many Central Asian forms. In India, early attempts at glazed tile decoration were superseded by the growing ascendency of marble as the chief construction material. The Chini-Ka Rauza at Agra is the best example of tile decoration in India. It featured geometric designs in blue, green and orange on the front. The tomb of Asaf Khan, at Shahdara near Lahore, was another such structure. Such buildings were few and far between in Mughal India, however. Marble had been rarely used in Central Asia, its use in such buildings as the Madrasa of Ulugh Beg representing the influence of Indian traditions upon Central Asia. But in India, marble and red sandstone were the most commonly used materials.

The progressive Indianisation of the Mughal structures was concomitant with the political changes made by Akbar to the Mughal administrative structure. In order to consolidate the Mughal restoration, architecture increasingly incorporated Indian traditions, to project the Mughals as Indian rulers. As a consequence, Central Asian forms

37 Babur believed that the Indian residences had "no charm, air, regularity or symmetry". Babur, p. 519.
38 Ibid., p. 520.
became assimilated with Indian influences. One obvious Hindu influence in Mughal architecture was the Jharoka-i darshan, the balcony where the emperors presented themselves to the people; this was integrated with Persian influences in the form of the string tied to the balcony on which subjects could put letters.\textsuperscript{41} The symbiosis of Hindu and Muslim traditions, then, was a constantly evolving phenomenon in Mughal architecture, as it was in many aspects of Mughal culture generally. There had been an ongoing dialectic since Muslim rule began in India. This dialectic did not preclude there being Central Asian influence upon Mughal architecture, but it did shape the context in which such influences interacted with existing forms. While Central Asian practices with regard to construction materials and some architectural forms were discontinued, some principles of Timurid architecture which enhanced imperial prestige were retained. One such principle was geometric harmonisation, which gave a form and coherence to the Mughal structures which enhanced their role as imperial showpieces.

Other characteristics of Timurid architecture, such as ostentatious entrance portals, were evident in Mughal architecture, but their execution was markedly different. Like the Timurid portals they were intended as a highly visible signifier of the Imperial presence, but they articulated a different agenda. The entrance to the fort Akbar had constructed at Agra in 1565 had an imposing monument known as the Delhi Gate, outside of which were placed two free standing stone elephants, symbolising, so it has been said, the Indianisation of the Mughals.\textsuperscript{42} The gateway featured a design depicting a composite animal with the tail of a lion, the ears of a horse, the mouth, tusks and trunk, of an elephant doing battle with seven elephants.\textsuperscript{43} Fabulous animals were an ancient Indian tradition. They were portrayed on some seals in the Indus Valley art - around 3200 B.C. to 2800 B.C.\textsuperscript{44} This design identified the Mughals with Indian tradition, but it was part of a structure that symbolised the new Mughal order. The incorporation of Indian tradition was possibly an attempt to cultivate favour amongst the local population in the early years of the Mughal restoration; it also foreshadowed the policy of religious toleration to the predominantly non-Muslim population. At the same time as the Delhi Gate of Agra fort symbolised the Indianisation of the Mughals, it was also a show piece proclaiming Akbar's power over the local mansabdars. It was produced by Indian artisans who were subordinated to the Mughal rulers. Aurangzeb ordered the elephants to be pulled down in 1669, but he did not interfere with the fabulous animals.

The influence of Indianisation was also evident in the incorporation of certain Indo-Muslim traditions into Mughal architecture. The Islamic structures in Mughal India differed in many respects from their Timurid counterparts. To a considerable extent this can be attributed to the influence of previous Indo-Muslim architecture, especially that of

\textsuperscript{41} H. Goetz, "The Central Asian Mausoleum in India", p. 17.


\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 42.
the Delhi Sultanate period. This was, arguably, a more important source of Islamic architectural influence in Mughal architecture than Perso-Turanian traditions. The Mughals endeavoured to identify themselves with Delhi sultanate tradition, in so doing representing the Mughals as heirs to the tradition of Muslim rule in India. But Humayun’s tomb, and many other Mughal structures, were on a much larger scale than those constructed in the Sultanate period: while the Mughals wanted to associate themselves with previous Muslim rulers, through the scale of their construction they intimated that they saw their empire as a far grander entity than those of the Sayyid or Lodi era. The specific forms of Mughal Islamic structures changed as a result of this. The central dome of such buildings, which had been an important Persian-influenced feature of Timurid structures, was altered in Mughal architecture. Mughal domes, such as those the Jami Masjid of Shahjahanabad, were flatter, less prominent than in Timurid structures such as the Gur-i Amir. The entrance iwans were usually made the focus of attention in Mughal buildings, thus the visual effect of the domes was diminished. Here, it may be necessary to make some qualifications, for there is some evidence that origins of the Sultanate architecture owe something to Central Asia.45

The Islamic architecture of Mughal India was shaped by the religious context of Islam in Indian society. Patronage of Islamic structures asserted the Muslim identity of the Mughals in a predominantly non-Muslim country, and it helped maintain the support of the ulama. The buildings were impressive structures, in lands where the majority of the population lived in very simple dwellings.46 Moreover, the Friday mosque was the place where the sermon was read in the name of the monarch. This sermon was an important symbol of Muslim rule in India: when, in the early eighteenth century, Bahadur Shah endeavoured to change its form, there was considerable protest.47 Furthermore,

45 Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani’s mausoleum in Bidar, built in 1404, has the same decoration and calligraphy inside the dome as does the Gur-i Amir. There is an inscription attributing the design to Mohammad ibn Mahmud of Isfahan. M. Abdulla Chughtai, “What India Owes to Central Asia in Islamic Architecture”, Islamic Culture, 8, (1934), p. 56.

46 Thevenot noted the disparity between the rich and the poor dwellings in Agra, "...those of the commoner sort of people are but straw." He made similar remarks of Shahjahanabad, "The ordinary houses are but of Earth and Canes" Thevenot pp. 49, 60. Indian Travels of M. de Thevenot and Careri into the Levant and the Third Part of a Voyage Around the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, ed. Surendrananth Sen. Bernier wrote, "most towns in Hindustan are made up of earth, mud and other wretched materials...there is no city or town which, if it be not already ruined and deserted, does not bear evident marks of approaching decay." Bernier, p. 227.

47 Bahadur Shah ordered that the form of Khutba recited in Aurangzeb’s reign be changed. There was widespread dissent about this among the Sunni population who objected to what they perceived as the Shi’i elements in the new form. For several months the Khutba was not read at Lahore, Delhi, and Ahmadabad. In August 1711, Bahadur Shah visited Lahore where he held an audience with Hajji Yar Muhammad and attempted to convince him of the correctness of the new Khutba. He was unsuccessful and the citizens of Lahore besieged the mosque where the audience was being held. On 2 October the traditional Khutba was restored. Rizvi, Shah Wali Allah and his Times, p. 114.
 unlike some of the great buildings of the Imperial court, the religious buildings were open
to the public. Their religious purposes, were, however, subordinate to their primary
purpose, that of imperial advertising. When Akbar shifted his capital to Fatehpur Sikri, it
was the great mosque that dominated the new city.\textsuperscript{48} It was built near the highest point
of the ridge, and measured 133.60 metres on the north and south sides, and 165.20
metres on the east and west sides.\textsuperscript{49} The entrance portal, the Badshahi Darwaza was
13.28 metres wide and 18.59 metres high.\textsuperscript{50} The great gateway of the mosque, the
Buland Darwaza, is the greatest monumental construction of Akbar’s reign. The breadth
of its archways is eleven metres, its fifteen metres in length, and forty-eight yards
high.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, it stands atop thirty-two steps which one must ascend before
entering.\textsuperscript{52} Its scale is an emphatic assertion of Akbar’s authority, and of the change in
Indian politics his move to Fatehpur Sikri symbolised. The architecture of the
mosque contains a number of Hindu forms, a recognition of the fact that the country was
predominantly Hindu. It is probable that the Hindu construction workers had a significant
influence in this too. The outward form is Islamic but the domes of the side-chapels are
supported on Hindu-style corbels, rather than on the Islamic style squinches that had been
used in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{53} The ceiling column is supported by elongated Hindu-style
columns.\textsuperscript{54} The syncretization of Hindu and Muslim traditions symbolised the wider
political agenda that was the aspiration of the Akbari reforms. This can also be seen in
later Islamic structures such as the Jami Masjid of Shahjahanabad. Like the mosque of
Fatehpur Sikri, it was an elevated structure, being situated on top of a feature in the centre
of Delhi. Bernier counted between twenty five and thirty steps leading up to the
mosque.\textsuperscript{55} Bernier compared this work favourably with European designs.\textsuperscript{56}

The transformation in architecture is amply illustrated by the Mughal form of the
Islamic mausoleum. Like the Timurids, the Mughals developed a characteristic style of
mausoleum. The external form of the Mughal tombs differed from Timurid tradition, but
the underlying ideal of associating the ruler with Islamic personages of widespread appeal
was maintained. The Central Asian mausoleum, a potent vehicle for expression in Central
Asia (as exemplified by such structures as the Shah-i Zinda), underwent a considerable
redefinition in India. Humayun’s tomb, designed by a Persian architect, Mirak Mirza

\textsuperscript{48} Jahangir rated this mosque as “One of the greatest monuments of my father’s reign….There is nothing like
this mosque in any other country.” Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{49} V.J.A Flynn and S.A.A. Rizvi, \textit{Fatehpur Sikri}, 1975, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Tillotson, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Bernier, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{56} Bernier, who was critical of many aspects of Mughal India, effusively praised this building: "every part
appears well contrived, properly executed, and correctly proportioned, I am satisfied that even in Paris a church
erected after the model of this temple would be admired". Ibid.
Ghiyas, and built in the 1560’s at the site of Din Panah, his old capital city just outside Delhi, is an important exemplar of these trends. With its high entrance arches, its prominent dome and its sharpness of form, it has obvious echoes of Timurid architecture. Furthermore, like many Timurid tombs, such as the Ishrat Khaneh in Samarkand, the principle entrance of the tomb is set in a Central Asian style charbagh garden (which we shall discuss shortly). Hoag suggests that another feature of Timurid architecture, a mian saray - a place which separated the female and male sections of Muslim structures - was incorporated within Humayun’s tomb. Nevertheless a number of features from Indo-Muslim and Hindu traditions militate against labelling Humayun’s tomb a Timurid structure. Many of its specific forms, such as the use of the octagon and prominent entrance iwans, were seen in fifteenth-century Sayyid and Lodi architecture. And its form stresses its width, and not its height; it was height that was such a distinctive feature of Central Asian architecture. Several Hindu features were integrated with the Perso-Islamic design of Humayun’s tomb; for example Hindu-style chattris - domed "kiosks" - surround the central dome.

The reign of Shah Jahan saw another stage in the fusion of Hindu and Muslim architectural traditions. The great structures of this era combined the monumentality and symmetry of the Perso-Turanian architecture with the subtle forms of Hindu styles. Decoration of a refined nature became an important component in the architecture of his reign. The sandstone structures of Akbar’s reign were embellished with inlaid rows of precious stones. The Islamic mausoleum reached its aesthetic peak in the Taj Mahal. But it is an exaggeration to say that the Taj derivative of any one structure, or even of the Timurid style per se. Its octagonal form suggests an Indo-Muslim influence. The Hindu influence can be seen in the chajjas below the lesser domes, and metal finials surrounding the domes. Some Central Asian elements were included: the sole entrance to the Charbagh was from the south. A more subtle connection has been discerned in the broad staircase descending from the tripartite ante-chamber at the southern entrance, to the crypt, in exactly the same manner as the Ishrat Khaneh in Samarkand. The Taj also followed Timurid principles is in its monumentality. Its total height exceeds 73 metres. Nevertheless, for all its monumentality, it is a more subtle construction than the Timurid mausoleums; while it does not have their striking, glowing colours, its marble gives it an

58 Tillotson, *Maghal India*, 1990, p. 44. It has been questioned whether octagonal forms can be considered a distinctively Indo-Muslim feature. Hoag suggests that the plan of fusion of four octagons in Humayun’s tomb is reminiscent of the tomb of Khwajah Naur at Balkh. On the other hand, whether this indicates a direct connection between Central Asian and Maghal architecture, or merely a similarity remains difficult to resolve.
59 Tillotson, p. 46.
60 Ibid., p. 95.
61 Hoag, p. 247.
62 Tillotson, p. 96.
ethereal purity. But it does embody the ideals of the Timurid mausoleums inasmuch as it is an imposing symbol of imperial splendour. The geometric harmonisation evident in the Timurid structures was one of the keynote features of the Taj Mahal. Ustad Ahmad Lahori, the probable architect of the Taj Mahal, was an expert in geometry and astronomy. The height at the apex of the dome is fifty-nine metres, almost identical to the perimeter of the octagonal hall which measures only twenty centimetres less. Much of the structure appears to have been based around a single generative unit, something which, as we saw, was true of many Timurid structures. It is difficult to pinpoint this as a direct "carryover" from Timurid tradition, but when one considers the Timurid echoes of the Taj Mahal it seems possible that the Timurid tradition had at least some influence in this regard. The important generative unit appears to be the diameter of the circle contained within the central Octagonal Hall. Consequently the Taj Mahal appears to conform to the geometrical proportion called the Golden Section, which dictates that the proportion of the shorter part to the longer part be equivalent to the ratio of five to eight.

If the reign of Shah Jahan saw Mughal architecture reach the height of its splendour, the period following his death saw a retreat to orthodoxy. But this retreat was followed by something of a formulaic emancipation. The Bibi-Ka-Rauza of Aurangabad has been called a copy of the Taj, and its basic concept is obviously derivative of that structure. But it is important for its incorporation of the Deccani influence. The vertical orientation is more marked than in previous Indian designs of its type. The Mughal political decline brought about a freeing up of cultural forms, as it had done in Central Asia. It has been claimed that, to an extent, this new freedom was to be found in world architecture in general at this time. The political decline of the Mughals resulted in a change in the tenor of the Mughal architecture. Faced with political decline, the late Mughal period saw an attempt to revive memories of their glorious past. It has been suggested that the tomb

63 For a detailed study of this see H.I.S. Kanwar, "Harmonious proportions of the Taj Mahal", Islamic Culture, 49, 1, (1975), pp. 1-21.
64 The identity of the architect of the Taj Mahal has been the subject of some debate. Vereneoe, Austin de Bordeaux, and Isa Effendi are among the personages suggested. Laftullah Mandis, author of the Diwan-i Muhandis suggested Ustad Ahmad Lahori was the architect. This book was hidden as it contained verses in favour of Dara Shukoh. The Badshahnama mentions Makramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim in connection with the Taj Mahal, but is not explicit on whether or not they were the superintendents of construction, or had any role in designing the building. H.I.S. Kanwar, "Ustad Ahmad Lahori", Islamic Culture, 48, 1, (1974), pp. 11-13, and p. 26.
66 Ibid., p. 9.
67 For example the measurement from the central arch of the mausoleum above the base, to its width, is sixty-eight feet and three inches, to forty-two feet and three inches, i.e. eight to five. Ibid., p. 18.
68 Goetz, "The Central Asian Mausoleum in India", p. 422.
of Safdar Jang was an attempt to revive the Central Asian style of mausoleum in India. But the Qudsia Bagh epitomised the changing tenor of Mughal architecture from royal pomp to royal playfulness.\textsuperscript{70} It was built by a dancing girl who became an empress and attained a mansab of 50,000.\textsuperscript{71} Its vegetal patterns are evocative of both Hindu and Muslim traditions. Its balconies are adorned with motifs of Hindu flower wreaths.

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Gardens were a shared form of prestige advertising in Central Asia and Mughal India. The Timurids had a penchant for embellishing the prestigious buildings of their great cities with magnificent gardens. They had a wider purpose than embellishing the grand structures: they were intended to embellish the Imperial image per se, through their prestige value and their use as a gallery for displaying works of imperial art. Timur laid out two great gardens in Samarkand, the Bagh-i Balandi to the east of the town, and the Bagh-i Dilkusha. Timur erected a great Kiosk in the Bagh-i Dilkusha after his Indian campaign, where he displayed pictures of his victories in Hindustan.\textsuperscript{72} According to Ibn Arabshah the gardens in one of Timur's suburban palaces, the Takhta Qarauna palace, were so vast that a horse lost within them was not found for six months.\textsuperscript{73} Ulugh Beg laid out the Bagh-i Maidan (garden of the plain) on the fringe of the Kohik upland outside Samarkand; in the middle of this garden he erected the Chihil Sultan, a building with forty pillars, and four turrets on its four corner towers.\textsuperscript{74} In a garden beyond this he made a great stone throne, which Babur estimated as being thirteen to fourteen metres long, seven metres wide, and one metre high.\textsuperscript{75} The gardens of Herat were still larger and more numerous than those of Samarkand.\textsuperscript{76} Babur saw the Bagh-i Safed (White Garden) in Herat, which contained a Shah Nishin (which was similar to the Jharoka-i Darshan, from which the Mughal emperors presented themselves in the morning), and a large room where the Timurid ruler Abu Said displayed pictures of his campaigns.\textsuperscript{77}

While there were few stylistic similarities between Central Asian and Mughal structures, the gardens adorning the Mughal empire were very largely based on the Central Asian style. However, the Central Asian influence in Indian gardens existed before the advent of the Mughals: the construction of a garden in Gujarat in the Sultanate period was entrusted to a great architect of Khurasan because the local artisans did not have the requisite qualities.\textsuperscript{78} Many of the Mughal emperors had gardens constructed.

\textsuperscript{70} Goetz, "The Qudsia Bagh: Key to Late Mughal Architecture", \textit{Islamic Culture}, 26, 2, (1952), p. 142.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 135.
\textsuperscript{72} Babur, p. 78. See also Ibn Arabshah, pp. 309-10.
\textsuperscript{73} The veracity of this story is unprovable, but it gives an indication as to the size of the Timurid gardens. Ibn Arabshah, p. 310.
\textsuperscript{74} Babur, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{76} Contemporary sources listed more than thirty gardens in Herat. Many of these were of a substantial size: for example, the Bagh-i-Jahau Ar'i had at least 12 buildings within its bounds. Golombek and Wilber, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{77} Babur, p. 302.
\textsuperscript{78} M. Abdulla Chuughtai, "What India Owes to Central Asia in Islamic Architecture", \textit{Islamic Culture}, 8,
Babur introduced the Charbagh scheme - the Central Asian form of garden - into Mughal India, and it was continued throughout the Mughal rule. The Charbagh scheme was a foursquare pattern around a central structure, which could take the form of a water tank, or a tower. The lack of symmetry in the gardens of Hindustan was something Babur singled out for criticism. He ordered that a Charbagh be laid out at Agra soon after his victory over Rana Sanga, a fact inscribed upon the stone in the form of a chronogram. His account of the construction of this garden indicates he saw it as a significant step towards imposing Mughal authority upon India. The order and symmetry embodied in the Charbagh symbolised the pattern Babur hoped to establish in India. Gardens also associated the Mughals with that part of Muslim tradition which evokes images of the Gardens of Paradise. In addition to their Perso-Islamic and Turco-Mongolian associations foursquare gardens were also compatible with some elements of Hindu mythology. The foursquare pattern encapsulated the Hindu world view of a Holy land in which from Mount Meru came four great fertilising streams flowing east and west. Again, however, a Central Asian export was modified to suit Indian requirements. One modification of Central Asian traditions in India was the enclosure of gardens. This was partly motivated by the desire for privacy, as the garden was the place where the emperors liked to frolic with their harem. The imperial harem was zealously protected from the public gaze in Mughal India. No expense was spared on these gardens. Jahangir estimated the cost of the Nur Manzil at Rs. 200,000. A large well was also constructed outside this garden from which thirty-two pairs of bullocks continuously drew water. The gardens of Shah Jahan's reign were on a characteristically grandiose scale. The Hayat Bakhsh, and Mahtab Bagh were the main gardens. They contained four big channels each six yards wide; the central pond had forty-nine fountains inside, and 112 all around. The main garden in


80 "One of the defects of Hindustan being its lack of running waters, it kept coming into my mind that waters should be made to flow wherever I might settle down, also that grounds should be laid out in an orderly and symmetrical way." Babur, p. 531.

81 Ibid., p. 533.

82 Babur saw Charbagh gardens as symbolic of order. "Then in that charmless and disorderly Hind, plots of garden were laid out with order and symmetry, with suitable borders and parterres in every corner, and in every border rose and narcissus in perfect arrangement." Ibid., p. 532.

83 Babur mentions that he also ordered that Gardens be constructed at Dulpur, Sikri, and Gwalior. Ibid., pp. 606, 581, 607.


85 Ibid., p. 113.

86 Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 76.

87 Ibid.
Shahjahanabad was constructed in 1650, north of the Chandni Chawk, by Jahanara Begum; it was designed to counter the hot and dusty weather of Delhi.\textsuperscript{89} Kashmir was the site of the most famous Mughal gardens; the emperors would go there on their retreats. The nobles also constructed gardens. Asaf Khan laid the Nishat Bagh Garden of Gladness in Kashmir, which surpassed all other designs. Reputedly Shah Jahan coveted the garden so much that when Asaf Khan did not offer it to him, he ordered that the water supply be cut off.\textsuperscript{90}

The ideology of Imperial rule was expressed through literary, visual, and ceremonial symbols in conjunction with the architectural forms we have discussed. If architecture was the most public form of prestige advertising insofar as it was intended to be seen by the citizens in a public setting, the role of the imperial arts, literature and ceremonial symbols was a more subtle one. They represented a codified form of the imperial ideology for the purposes of creating an élite culture which reinforced the imperial structure while at the same time providing rewards for those who created the élite culture. The symbols of art, literature and ceremony complemented the more prominent architectural institutions we have discussed in the previous section. Collectively they were mutually reinforcing elements of the élite culture. To a considerable extent the intended audience for the visual and literary arts and the symbols of the imperial court was the élite section of the population, but, as we shall see, they were also intended for the general population.

Because of the different political and cultural environments in Central Asia and Mughal India, the symbols of imperial rule were in many respects dissimilar; the Central Asian élite culture Babur and Humayun had transplanted was not maintained in its Central Asian form. While many of the integral characteristics of Timurid culture were maintained, some of the outward trappings of Central Asian culture were discontinued. There continued to be allusions to Central Asia, but few continuations of Central Asian traditions in their indigenous forms. This did not mean an absence of Central Asian influence, but it did mean a redefinition of Central Asian influence. The result was a diffusion of the Mughals' Central Asian legacy. Rather than being an entity in its own right, Central Asian culture was integrated with other entities. This could take an explicit form, or it could take an implicit form. It is necessary to recall the Mughal imperial agenda, and especially (as in the case of architecture), the In particular, as we have seen from our discussion of architecture, the Akbari reforms were of great significance in this respect. This is not to suggest that the Imperial court dictated all forms of élite culture at all times, but it did shape the context in which that culture was created.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{91} The A'in-i Akbari divides people into four types: warriors, who were like fire; merchants, who were like earth; the learned; who were like water; and labourers who were like the earth. The learned were regarded as companions of the king - ornaments of the court. Abul Fazl, A'in-i Akbari, pp. 4-5.
Visual and calligraphic art was an important aspect of the imperial culture in Central Asia and Mughal India. The art and calligraphy of the Timurids echoed the aggrandisement of their empire as seen in the Timurid structures. Timur wanted works of an artistic style and scale befitting the ruler of a vast empire. In Timur’s reign the visual arts emphasised the regal and martial aspects of Timur’s rule. According to Ibn Arabshah the paintings commissioned by Timur were representations of him leading victorious campaigns, presiding wisely at his court and conferring with envoys. In its early period Timurid art depicted the ruler in an idealised fashion. Timur was represented in the centre of pictures depicting him hunting or feasting. These pictures consisted of one or two main figures, with extraneous details eliminated, set against a brilliant gold background. Timurid renderings of such works as the Shahnama of Firdausi were very formalised productions. A copy of the Shahnama, attributed to Muhammad Juki, and dating from 1444, was an outstanding example of the Timurid period, with its vivid paintings and idealized backgrounds giving it an ethereal sense of seductive charm.

This work later found its way into the hands of the Mughal emperors where it became a treasured item of Mughal memorabilia. In the reign of Husain Bahlul there was a shift in artistic direction to a reduced number of paintings of higher quality. Painting became more naturalistic, the range of themes expanded beyond portraying Timurid princes in various guises of martial splendour, and sage demeanour. It became more retrospective, an attempt to explore beneath the idealized picture of court life embodied in previous painting. The period saw a fascination with mysticism, as seen in works such as "The Seduction of Yusuf", a traditional tale of a male who evades a siren copied, by Bustan of Sa’di in 1488.

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92 One artisan Umar al-Aqta presented a microscopic Quran to Timur who refused the work because of its small size. But when Umar produced a massive copy of the Quran, Timur richly rewarded him. Vladimir Minorsky, Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi, 1959, p. 64, cited in Lentz and Lowry, p. 45.

93 Ibn Arabshah writes about the art within Timur’s palaces: “in some of these palaces he had depicted his assemblies and his own likeness...representations of his battles and sieges and his conversation with kings, amirs, lords wise men, magnates, and sultans offering homage to him from every side... and battles in India, Dasht and Persia and how he gained victory and how his enemy was scattered and driven to flight; and the likeness of his sons and grandsons, amirs and soldiers and his public feasts...and many other things which happened in his realms during his life which were shown in series...and he omitted or exaggerated none of these things; and therein, he intended, that those who knew not his affairs, should see them as though present.” Ibn Arabshah, p. 310.

94 The most distinctive example of this style comes from the book A Collection of Epics, by Muhammad ibn Sa’id al-Dari copied in 1398 at Shinz. Lentz and Lowry, p. 52.

95 Ibid., pp. 126, 127, 133, 134, 158, 179, 321, 338.

96 All the Mughal Emperors from Babur to Aurangzeb affixed their seals to this work. Babur’s seal included the title qurkani - son-in-law, which Timur had adopted. Shah Jahan styled his seal to read "Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction", an implication that Shah Jahan had assumed Timur’s mantle. Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, Akbar’s India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory, 1986, p. 17.
These forms were developed under the imperial auspices, in particular in the Kitabkhana, which functioned as the royal library but had a wider and more significant role as an imperial workshop. This institution performed an important role in distilling a distinctive Timurid culture, and as we shall see it performed a similar role in Mughal India. It was greatly expanded from Timur's time as a result of the increasing adoption of sedentary ruling traditions under Shah Rukh, themselves perpetuated in the reign of Husain Baiqara. One of its most famous achievements was the development of the Khurasanian calligraphic style, based on the Nasta'aliq script developed by Sultan Ali Mashhadi. These gained widespread fame. According to Muhammad Haidar a library devoid of these works was considered worthless.98

The visual arts of Mughal India drew selectively on Timurid forms. There were some definite connections, in particular the Mughal school of miniatures, which was based on the work of Bihzad, and there were some works which celebrated the Timurids, but Mughal art acquired a distinctively Indian character with the passage of time. The paintings of the Hamza-nama, a version of the celebrated Arab epic about the legendary personage Hamza, written from 1567 to 1582, contained 1004 illustrated pages in its twelve volumes; these were based on the Bihzad School of Central Asia.99 Their execution, however, indicated a degree of Indian influence. The imperial studios in Akbar’s reign had five Muslim and thirteen Hindu artists.100 The layout and function of these imperial studios were based on those of the Kitabkhana. A number of Central Asian calligraphers were employed in the productions which displayed the Mughal miniatures. Among them was the illustrious Mawlana Mir Ali of Herat, a practitioner of the Nasta’aliq script which had been an important product of the Timurid Kitabkhana, as an important influence in Mughal calligraphy.101 The subject matter of the Mughal miniatures was essentially similar to that of the Central Asian school. The Mughal miniatures depicted the imperial history in an ennobling manner. A typical example is the painting by Govardhan which shows Akbar receiving the first book of the Akbar Nama from Abul Fazl. Akbar is depicted in the customary manner of Indo-Islamic painting, receiving his courtiers from the cushion throne.102

Central Asia was represented in a symbolic manner in some Mughal art. The Tarikh-i khindan i Timuriyya (sometimes known as the Timurnama) - completed around 1592 - was a noted collection of miniatures from Akbar’s reign.103 It was a collaborative

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97 Lentz and Lowry, p. 293.
99 Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbari, p. 115.
100 Jagdish N. Sarkar, p. 45.
101 Abul Fazl writes that Mawlana Mir Ali of Herat,"brought his art to perfection by imitating the writing of Sultan Ali of Mashhad. The new method, which he established, is proof of his genius; he has left many masterpieces." Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbari, p. 108.
102 The painting was presented in 1596. C.A. Bayly, ed. The Raj: India and the British 1600-1947, 1991, p. 41.
effort produced by a number of artists, and sometimes more than one artist worked on individual works. It was designed as a sketchbook of Timurid history. The first miniature depicts Timur as a child playing with his associates and assuming the position of sovereign. The work culminates in the birth of Akbar, and this sketch is a remarkable composition. Its upper section depicts the birth of Akbar. The baby Akbar is shown in the arms of a nurse with a high conical Tatar hat, implying that Akbar is a child of the steppes tradition, the background shows the rejoicing throughout the palace and the news being conveyed to Humayun. The intent of this work was to associate the Mughals with Central Asia as symbolic of a grand heritage, rather than as a model for contemporary inspiration. The symbolic association with the Timurids as promoted through works of this type was nevertheless an important part of Mughal elite culture, as it reinforced the image of the Mughals as part of a great conquering tradition that extended beyond their conquest of India. It acted as a warning to the rebelliously inclined members of the nobility, that revolt against the Mughals would result in battle against the dynastic military might that had conquered Hindustan, and, by association, the great conquerors of Central Asia. Some other works on Central Asia were copied and illustrated in Akbar's reign. Abul Fazl lists the Zafarnama of Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, and the Chingiznama, among the works illustrated by the imperial artists.

In Jahangir's reign, some features of European and Hindu art became incorporated into Mughal painting. This meant that the Central Asian influence became further diluted. It had supplied the starting point for much of Mughal art, and many Central Asian practitioners had successfully joined the fortune seekers at the Mughal court. But the Mughal Imperial style of painting became devoted to the aggrandisement of the emperor; this was epitomised in Jahangir's reign. Like Husain Baiqara, Jahangir preferred to use a small group of master painters, as opposed to the many calligraphers Akbar employed. Jahangir placed great store on his knowledge of painting. He commissioned a large number of portraits of the Imperial Family, important dignitaries, court figures, religious and cultural leaders. The portraits were in most cases full length standing portraits. Jahangir's mentions that Nadir uz Zaman, who drew the frontispiece to the Jahangirnama, was of Central Asian descent. Abdur Rahim of Herat, sometimes known

104 Bmand and Lowry, p. 72.
105 Ibid., pp.76 and 91.
106 Jahangir claimed, "my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought before me, either of deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such an artist." Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 20.
107 For example Jahangir had himself painted with religious figures such as Gosain Jadup, a sufi ascetic (as Akbar had done). M. Abdullah Chaghatai, "Emperor Jahangir's Interviews with Gosain Jadrup and His Portraits", Islamic Culture, 36, 2, (1962), pp. 119-28.
108 Jahangir lavished great praise on his work, "His work was perfect, and his picture one of the chef's d'oeuvre of the age. At the present time he has no rival or equal. If at this day the Masters Abdul Hayy and Bihzad
simply as Abdur Rahim, appears to have been at the court of Jahangir until at least 1616, when the Ma’athir-i Rahimi, was written.\footnote{109} An important development in Jahangir’s reign was the depiction of the emperor with a halo, in a style reminescent of Italian paintings. This reflected the Christian influence in Mughal painting. The halo was used in European, Turkish, as well as Hindu art; thus, depicting the Mughal emperors with haloes around their heads had cognitive significance among many ethnicities. The halo aggrandised the emperors, since only the emperor could be depicted with a halo. Even Aurangzeb, the most orthodox of the Mughal emperors, retained the halo in art.

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Throughout the rule of the Timurids, their official literature of the Timurids devoted a great deal of attention to Timur, whose accomplishments and personality were an ongoing theme in the official histories of the Timurid era. Furthermore, as was the case with most court literature, Timurid literature set out to glorify the ruler and enhance the imperial prestige. The Zafarnama (book of victory) of Nazimuddin Ali Shami, written in 1404, in Persian, is the most important official history written in Timur’s reign.\footnote{110} This work was the basis for the official literature of Timur’s reign. The later works that appeared with the same name were based upon this work, but were written for the purpose of promoting their patron’s greatness, and association with Timur. There was an implication that by associating the contemporary ruler with Timur his worthiness to rule was enhanced.

The Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, completed around 1425, was written in a bombastic style replete with colourful rhetoric. Several aspects of Timurid history are modified in keeping with the Islamic theme of Shah Rukh’s reign. Shah Rukh is introduced as the Mujaddid - renewer of faith - promised by Muhammad at the beginning of each century.\footnote{111} Yazdi makes no mention of Suyurghatnish, or Sultan Mahmud, the Chingizid puppet khan in whose name Timur ruled.\footnote{112} He also recorded Timur and his wives visiting four times as many shrines as they had done in Shami’s version.\footnote{113} As the strength of the Empire declined earlier works were reissued so as to associate the

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\footnote{110} The Zafarnama of Nizam al-Din Shami is the only surviving work from Timur’s reign. Another work known to have been composed in Timur’s time is Ghiyath al-Din Ali Yazdi’s \textit{Ruz-name-yi Ghaznavat-i Hindustan}. The exact date of its publication is uncertain. Its focus was the Indian campaign, which occupied 160 of its 207 pages. Possibly it was commissioned to reinforce the Timuride claims to as a Crusade against a predominantly non-Muslim country. John Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography", \textit{Journal of Near Eastern Studies}, 46, 2, (1987), pp. 83 and 94.

\footnote{111} Ibid.

\footnote{112} Ibid., p. 104.

\footnote{113} Ibid., p. 105
contemporary rulers with their grand past under Timur. In the reign of Husain Baiqara there were six copies of Shami’s Zafarnama, and thirty copies of Yazdi’s Zafarnama were produced.\(^{114}\) As had happened in the reign of Shah Rukh, these reissues of the Zafarnama were not exact replicas of the original. They were deliberate modifications of these books with the intent of affirming Husain Baiqara’s claims to Timur’s territories. Coinciding with these reissues was a consciously promoted Turkic renaissance. In the middle period of Timurid history Persian became the court language in the Timurid empire at the expense of Turki, whose connections with the steppe traditions were incompatible with the urbane, Irano-Islamic theme of the Shahrukhian era.\(^{115}\) In 1499 Ali Sher Navai endeavoured to reverse this trend, and wrote a work asserting the superiority of Turki as a literary language.\(^{116}\) By promoting writing in Turki, Husain Baiqara and Mir Ali Sher Navai sought to recall the great days of the military conquests.\(^{117}\)

The presentation of the founders of the empire was a significant difference in Central Asian and Mughal literature. Mughal literature did not emphasise the importance of founder of the empire to nearly the same extent as did Timurid literature. Babur was always referred to respectfully as the founder, and some of his works were translated. Nevertheless, the official literature of Mughal India emphasised the achievements of the current emperor, with Babur, and to an extent even Akbar, being presented as those who provided the foundation upon which the glory of the later Mughal structure was built, rather than as figures whose role represented an unequalled golden age. Genealogical links were an important part of official literature insofar as they presented the current ruler as part of a great tradition, but the focus of Mughal literature was on the glories of the contemporary age, rather than an earlier glorious past. To an extent this can be attributed to the change in environment. In Central Asia, the founders of the great empires had a potent personal mythology associated with them that was a useful source of legitimacy for aspiring contenders to power. The names of Chinggiz and Timur were important sources of legitimacy long after their death. For all his power, Timur always acknowledged the importance of Chinggisid tradition. The Timurids continued to refer to Timur, as it was his reign that saw the Timurids at their most politically assertive.

In Mughal India, however, it was the position of emperor itself that was elevated. Great emphasis was also placed on the personality of the ruler, but it was the position of emperor, as much as the personality involved that contributed to the aura of the sovereign. Emperors with forceful personalities, such as Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb incorporated their own cult of personality into the official literature: Akbar was represented as the perfect man who had established the Mughals in India, Shah Jahan was depicted as the great empire builder and Aurangzeb was portrayed as the indefatigable upholder of the Islamic faith. Important as these qualities were, the fact that they were

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\(^{114}\) Lentz and Lowry, p. 262.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., p. 162.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., p. 271.

\(^{117}\) Babur praised Navai’s poetical ability, "Ali Sher Beg had no match. For as long as verse has been written in the Turki tongue nobody has written so much nor so well as he." Babur, p. 271.
those of the emperors (seen as a semi-divine personage anyway), was the most important factor the official literature cited in favour of the legitimacy of Mughal kingship. This meant that even when the Mughal empire was ruled by emperors with less forceful personalities, the mythology associated with the exalted status of the emperor allowed the imperial court to retain some degree of influence, even at a time when the political power of the Mughal court was under serious threat from provincial unrest and factionalism among the nobles at court.

The place of Central Asia in Mughal literature is exemplified by several works produced in Akbar’s reign. Abul Fazl was the dominant figure at Akbar’s court, his; A’in-i Akbari and Akbar Nama, were masterly examples of royal propaganda. Its influence extends even to modern scholarship, where many scholars, although sceptical of some details, have nevertheless accepted the all-knowing, all-powerful, great man Akbar as existing in fact. Abul Fazl’s magnum opus the Akbar Nama clearly marks the change in the Mughals’ perception of Central Asia that occurred in Akbar’s reign. Whereas Babur saw himself as a Central Asian ruler-in-exile, with India a consolation prize for the loss of his beloved homelands, the Akbar Nama is more selective in its praise of Central Asia. It emphasises the Mughals’ hereditary connections with Central Asia, but does so in the context of asserting the legitimacy of the Mughals as rulers of India; it does not see Central Asian practices as a paradigm to be aspired to, or indeed as a type of continuing influence in Mughal rule. So the Akbar Nama exalts the Mughals’ Central Asian heritage, but not always Central Asia per se. Abul Fazl refers to the Zafarnama in connection with genealogical claims. The ten pages given to describing Timur are, however, of a mediocre quality. While acknowledging the greatness of the Timurids, Abul Fazl portrays them as great antecedents to a more splendid glory. Akbar did not forget his Central Asian heritage, however: he ordered that the memoirs of Babur be published.

At the request of Abul Fazl, Gulbadam Begum wrote an important record of Humayun and Babur’s lives, and the early part of Akbar’s life.

Abul Fazl’s works were written by a leading member of the nobility, for the nobility, The Akbar Nama reminds its readers of the Central Asian heritage of the Mughals, but emphasises their entrenchment in India. Abul Fazl depicts the careers of Babur and Humayun as stepping stones towards the Mughals becoming firmly enconsed as rulers of India. In the Akbar Nama the exploits of Babur and Humayun are compared with their hereditary ancestors but are presented as excelling those of their Central Asian forbears. Babur’s decisive victory at Panipat is contrasted with Timur’s difficulties on his...
Indian campaign in 1398, and it is suggested that he faced a more marked numerical disadvantage than Timur. Moreover, unlike Timur, Babur is presented as a ruler, and not a raider. Abul Fazl glosses over the dislike of Hindustan Babur had pronounced in his memoirs. He concentrates on Babur's desire to be an Indian ruler, citing Babur's rousing speech to his begs who wanted to return to Kabul for the summer months. He also stresses the cultural achievements of Babur, possibly to contrast this refinement with the brutality of some of the Central Asian personages. He also omits any mention of Babur's temporary adoption of Shi'ism. Humayun's life is depicted as a transitional phase, whereby the Mughals endeavoured to consolidate themselves as rulers of India, but through traitorism were expelled from those lands. He records Humayun as receiving a great reception in Herat, but he presents Humayun's journey through Central Asia, and in particular the loss of Balkh through disloyalty, as a watershed where Humayun came to the realisation that his destiny lay in India. Thus Babur and Humayun are presented as laying the foundation for the great era that was to follow, the reign of Akbar. Their significance is that they made the reign of Akbar possible, not that they contributed in a material way to its ultimate success. And the fact that Akbar succeeded in establishing Mughal rule, where two illustrious predecessors had been unable to do so, by implication added further lustre to his achievements.

Akbar is presented by Abul Fazl as the ruler who established the Mughals as rulers of India. Central Asian connections are mentioned, but in such a way that they glorify Akbar more so than his ancestors. Akbar's horoscope is described as superior to that of Timur. Abul Fazl also sought to link Akbar with the celestial claims of Timur. He describes a comet in 1578, that lasted eighty-three days, and relates a tale of a similar phenomenon in 1400, which Timur interpreted as signalling the need to strike against the armies of the east. The link between Central Asia and Mughal India is also made in military history. Akbar's victory over Hemū is compared with Timur's victory in India, in particular the fact that Akbar had captured over 1500 elephants as compared with

122 Also mentioned are the expeditions of previous Muslim rulers of India, Sultan Mahmud and Ghiyas ud-Din. Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 1, pp. 244-45.
123 Ibid., pp. 251-52.
124 Abul Fazl praises the Babur Nama as "an Institute for all earthly sovereigns and a manual for teaching right thoughts and proper ideas". He also praises Babur's versification of Khwaja Ahmad's Risala i waadhiya as "a pearl from the ocean of knowledge". Ibid., p. 278.
125 Abul Fazl presents the loss of Balkh as proof that God had decreed the Mughals future would be in India and not in Central Asia. "For had this disaster not occurred, the work of the helpless ones of India would have been hindered by the undertaking of the conquest of Transoxiana; and the settling in order of those lands which are a haven for the pilgrims of the seven climes had sunk under the veil of delay." Ibid., p. 549.
126 "The present powerful and holy horoscope excels that of the Lord of Conjunction in that this majestic planet is in his house of exaltation Capricornus...This signifies glory and greatness, lofty rank, victory and dominion, and that yet his glory will be greater and better from his youth upwards. Ibid., p. 79. The claim is repeated on p. 124.
Timur’s 120, again associating Akbar with Central Asian tradition, but making Akbar one level above this tradition. Genealogical connections are also made explicit. In his account of the visit of Sultan Qoresh of Kashghar to the encampment in July 1589, Abul Fazl gives one sentence to describing the visit, but devotes six paragraphs to an extended account of the Sultan’s genealogy, which he could trace as far back as Chinggiz. He emphasises their connections with Babur and his relations. In effect, it could be argued that Abul Fazl is implying that the visitors from Central Asia were associating with the true representatives of Central Asia. By the end of the Akbar Nama the transition from Central Asia to Mughal India is made to appear complete. A little later Abul Fazl recounts how Akbar considered mounting an invasion of Central Asia to be led by Jahangir, but the future ruler was reluctant to lead such an expedition because of his attachment to India. Ultimately Akbar himself is presented as deciding against proceeding with the invasion because of the ostensibly humane nature of the Mughal empire. Akbar is credited with having a premonition of the turmoil that enveloped Central Asia after Abdullah Khan’s death; this implies that he, a transplanted Timurid, still had a greater insight into Central Asian affairs, than the Timurids successors did.

The redefinition of the Central Asian heritage was also apparent in the ceremonial symbols of Imperial rule. Symbols such as court regalia, entertainments, and food served an important purpose in underlining the imperial philosophy. Some Central Asian practices remained in Mughal court life, but there was also a progressive Indianisation. Food separated people in India, where there were many more dietary prohibitions than there were in Central Asia. Babur and Humayun appear to have dined in the central Asian fashion, where mutton and fruit were the staple dishes. This changed in Akbar’s reign, Akbar ate little meat, expressing a belief that one should not make oneself a tomb of animal flesh, which suggests the influence of Hinduism. But he maintained some Chinggisid customs such as taking his meal with his courtiers on festive days, Central Asian fruits, which Babur particularly missed, were imported into India. Jahangir

130 According to Abul Fazl “that pleasure-loving youth, on account of the foolishness of flatterers, could not ween his heart from India.” Ibid., p. 1102.
131 Akbar is alleged to have said: “Now that Turan is a seat of Turmoil, how does an expedition there agree with our humanity? It is far better that an able ambassador be sent to offer condolences, and speak words of counsel.” Ibid., pp. 1102-03.
132 Ibid., p. 1108.
135 Ibid., p. 224.
136 Ibid., p. 226.
professed to be particularly fond of, them, too, while Bernier wrote of a flourishing fruit market in Delhi.137

The changing pattern of Mughal dress was another expression of Indianisation. Babur and Humayun wore the Central Asian style Jamah type coat.138 This had long sleeves, and reached down to the ankles and sleeves. Akbar’s reign transformed the pattern of dress, just as it transformed so much else. By divesting himself of Central Asian clothing in favour of Indian dress Akbar underlined the change in direction his reign represented. During Akbar’s reign there was a distinct change in the fashion of the harem, which adopted a more Indian aspect, something in keeping with Akbar’s reign as a whole. In the pre-Akbar period the dress of the Imperial harem was based on the fashions of Khurasan and Central Asia, but now Rajput style garments became more prominent.139 The use of Central Asian clothing became increasingly ceremonial. The Takawchiyah, a Rajput style garment, became very popular during his reign.140 Akbar combined some of the features of the Jamah with this garment by increasing its length, and dispensing with the slits.

Although many Central Asian symbols of rule were altered in the consolidation of Mughal rule, some Central Asian customs were maintained. The imperial hunts were an important facet of court life in both empires. In Central Asian tradition the hunt was where basic military strategy was taught. It also bonded together the armed forces and made the respective levels work together. The Mughal style of hunting was modelled on the Central Asian style. Ibn Arabshah recorded that on Timur’s hunts the prey were reduced to shaking before their execution by the beating of drums.141 Abul Fazl gives a comparable description of the mode of hunting in the A’in-i Akbari. But while the hunts themselves were a continuation of the Mughal tradition, they were recorded in such a way as to suggest a more refined purpose than that of hunting in Central Asia. Abul Fazl asserted that while outwardly Akbar may have been hunting, inwardly he was keeping close to the divine truth.142 Hunts were also portrayed as intelligence gathering missions.143 The

137 Jahangir mentions receiving pomegranates from Khurasan, which he rated above those from Kabul and Badakhshan. He also recorded receiving grapes and apples from Samarkand, and melons from Herat. On another occasion he wrote, "my tongue fails me in giving thanks to Allah for this." Jahangir, pp. 270, 350, 423, Vol. 1. Bernier reported of Delhi that, "It contains many shops which during the summer are well supplied with dry fruit from Persia, Balk, Bokhara and Samarkand", Bernier, p. 249.
141 Ibn Arabshah, p. 308.
142 "The Khedive of the World always employed himself in various kinds of hunting and other diversions so that a spectator might suppose that nothing but these amusements touched the hem of his heart. His Majesty always conducts himself outwardly with reference to the creature, and inwardly with reference to God." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, p. 368.
143 "The sublime thought of the wise Khedive in the enjoyment of hunting is that he may, without the awe inspired by the royal majesty, and without the intervention of prattlers - whose skirts are mostly stained with
Central Asian link was obfuscated in Abul Fazl’s work; he attributes the best forms of hunting to Akbar’s inventiveness.\(^{144}\)

The Mughals adopted some Indian amusements such as the board game of Chaupar, which could be played for up to three months.\(^{145}\) The Mughals also sought to associate themselves with distinctly Indian symbols, such as elephant fights. The right to stage elephant fights was the exclusive privilege of the emperor. Elephant fights also had considerable popular appeal. They were staged in front of the Jharoka-i darshan to allow the emperor to watch from a suitably elevated pedestal.\(^{146}\) They were staged five times a week in Jahangir’s reign and twice a week in the reign of Shah Jahan.\(^{147}\) Bernier saw elephant fights in his travels during Aurangzeb’s reign, and reported that they were watched by the nobility and populace alike.\(^{148}\)

While the Central Asian ancestry of the Mughals was not, by itself, an adequate basis for ruling in India, Timurid memorabilia were nevertheless of some symbolic importance in the Mughal court. They offered them an association with a great martial and mystical heritage which they could use to buttress their own claims to rule. Many Mughal emperors made a conscious effort to associate themselves with their Timurid past. Abul Fazl records that an extract from the Zafarnama, where Timur expounded on the need to work together, was read aloud at the victory party after Humayun’s forces had captured the fort of Campanir.\(^{149}\) Among the many historical figures to whom Abul Fazl traced Akbar’s lineage was the mythical Mongol princess Alanqua, whose name is inscribed as one of Timur’s forbears in the Gur-i Amir. Alanqua is also credited with conceiving Chinggiz; so Abul Fazl associated Akbar with the Mongol and Turkic sides of Babur’s lineage. Jahangir constantly searched for Timurid memorabilia. When he acquired a ruby engraved with the name of Ulugh Beg, he ordered that his own name be inscribed below that of Ulugh Beg. He also ordered that his and Akbar’s names be inscribed upon a famous white jade jug that once belonged to Ulugh Beg.\(^{150}\) In his memoirs he mentioned receiving a picture of Timur’s battle with Tokhtamish Khan, in 1391, from Khan

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\(^{144}\) Abul Fazl is credited with innovation; “all excellent modes of hunting are the invention of his majesty.” Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbari, p. 296.

\(^{145}\) Abul Fazl, A’in-i Akbari, p. 316. Some found this game irritating. “The Lord of wisdom under the guise of sport did serious work and was testing of men’s qualities. One day Mozaffar Khan, on account of the intoxication of the world and his small capacity, behaved in a savage and rustic manner in consequence of having lost many games and of having been long in the presence. H.M. cast him off from the pinnacle of confidence and sent him on pilgrimage in order that by playing the game of unimportance and of exile, his unsound condition might be amended.” Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, pp. 534-35.


\(^{147}\) Ibid.

\(^{148}\) Bernier, pp. 277-79.


\(^{150}\) Jahangir, Vol. 1. p. 46.
Alam.  

On another occasion, he was sent a picture, purportedly of Timur which he dismissed as a fake.  

Shah Jahan was conscious of his Central Asian heritage. He, too, inscribed his name on the jug of Ulugh Beg, styling himself as the "Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction". It should be noted again that Timur had called himself the "First Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction". Therefore, Shah Jahan was effectively promoting himself as the successor to Timur's mantle. Shah Jahan also dispatched funds to Samarkand for the upkeep of the Gur-i Amir. In 1637-38 Mir Abu Talib Husayni Turbati presented what he purported to be a Persian translation of Timur’s biography to Shah Jahan. He alleged he had translated this from a Turkish manuscript found in Yemen. The authenticity of this work, entitled the Mafuzat al-Timuri, is rather dubious. It is obviously derivative of the Zafarnama of Sharaf al Din Ali Yazdi, and it is more likely that this work was a so-called "mirror" for princes. Irrespective of its authenticity, the fact that Turbati produced the work at all, and believed it would be accepted by the court, illustrates the continuing importance of the Timurid tradition to the Mughal rulers. The Zafarnama was mentioned as one of the works Shah Jahan had read to him as he went to sleep. The legend of the peacock throne, purported to have been begun by Timur was circulated. This exemplifies the Central Asian legacy in the Mughal Imperial tradition. The throne symbolises the Timurid mantle the Mughals claimed to have inherited. They associated themselves with Timurid tradition, but placed themselves on a still higher plane, as indicated by their symbolically sitting on top of the former Timurid throne.  

Aurangzeb is said to have chastened Shah Jahan for his reaction to his imprisonment by citing the example of Timur’s treatment of Sultan Bayezit.  

151 "As for the beautiful and costly things that the Khan Alam brought....was the picture of Sahib Qiran [Timur] with Tuqtamiah khan, and the likenesses of him and his glorious children and the great amirs who had the good fortune to be with him in that fight and near each figure was written whose portrait it was. In this picture there were 240 figures. The painter had written his name as Khalil Mirza Shahrukh. The work was very complete and grand, and resembled greatly the paintbrush of Ustad Bihzad. If the name of the painter had not been written the work would have been believed to be his...This precious relic had been obtained from the illustrious library of Shah Ismail." Jahangir, Vol. 2, p. 116.  

152 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 154.  

153 Lentz and Lowry, p. 321.  

154 Ibid., p. 323.  


156 Lahori, Padshahnama, cited in Inayat Khan, p. 573.  

157 Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Travels in India, translated by V. Ball, reprinted 1976, p. 384. See also Bernier, p. 269.  

158 According to Bernier Aurangzeb said "our great ancestor Ikbar, anxious that his successors should exercise their power with mildness discretion and wisdom, recommended to their serious attention in the excellent memoirs left behind him, a fine characteristic of Mir-Timur." He mentioned how Timur had laughed when Bayezit was brought before him, "I looked at thy countenance rendered unsightly by an eye; and then considering that i myself a miserable cripple, was led into a train of reflections which provoked me to laughter.
himself symbolically in the role of Timur, with Shah Jahan the deposed Sultan. But having associated himself with the legend of Timur on the one hand, Aurangzeb then qualified the association with Timur in the concluding stanza, where he defended his lack of military activity at that time by emphasising the importance of ruling and not raiding.  

Language was the medium which articulated both the verbal and visual aspects of Imperial iconography. Persian was the official language of the Mughals. It has to be added, then, that there was a clearly discernible Persian influence in many aspects of Mughal Imperial culture, as there had been in Timurid culture. Timurid and Mughal culture cannot be analysed without careful reference to the Persian influence. The Persian language was perhaps the most important factor in the Persian contribution. Persian was the court language in Central Asia. There Persian language was considered a high form of culture. There are a number of possible reasons why the Mughals retained Persian. It was the language of a country long seen a a place of cultural refinement; it was an identifiably Muslim language; it continued their link with the Timurid empire, where it had traditionally been the written language of the bureaucrats. It offered a retainable aspect of Central Asian culture since Persian bureaucrats, and their Hindu and Indo-Muslim proteges, were an essential part of the infrastructure supporting the attempted centralization of Akbar’s reign. Hindus wanting to advance in the administration learnt Persian. Rajah Todar Mal made persian the language of accounts. The departure from the Central Asian system of administration, and the resultant increase in the bureaucratic component of the Mughal court, established Persian in a position of considerable influence. Thus a shift away from one aspect of Central Asian tradition could still involve an increased role for other aspects of the same tradition which were suited to the new order. For that is what to quite a considerable extent Persian was in Mughal India: an aspect of the Central Asian heritage.

The development of the Timurid élite culture and several features of later Mughal culture cannot be explained without reference to socio-economic conditions of the time. In some respects the territorial decline of the Timurid empire was an indirect cause of the

What can there be within the circle of a crown, " I asked "which ought to inspire Kings with inordinate self esteem, since heaven bestows the bauble upon such mortals." Bernier, p. 168.

159 Aurangzeb complained to Shah Jahan "you seem to think that I ought to devote less time and attention to measures which I conceive essential to the consolidation and security of the kingdom, and that it would become to devise and execute plans of aggrandisement. I am indeed far from denying that conquests ought to distinguish the reign of a great Monarch, and that I should disgrace the blood of the great Timur our honoured progenitor, if I did not seek to extend the bounds of my present territories....I wish you to recollect that the greatest conquerors are not always the greatest Kings. The nations of the earth have often been subjugated by mere uncivilised barbarians, and the most extensive conquests have in a few short years crumbled to pieces. He is the truly great King who makes it the chief business of his life to govern his subjects with equity." Ibid.

cultural upsurge of the period. As their empire contracted the Timurids sought to cement their reputations as the ultimate arbiters of cultural tastes. They relinquished their military supremacy and tried to compensate for this by promoting their cultural prestige. With the decline of the political power of the empire, the amirs seeking to build up their support in the power struggles could not attract the support of the military élite by promises of large hauls of booty, as had happened in Timur's reign. Consequently they held out the incentive of soyrghals - tax free grants of land which were autonomous from Central government. In Central Asia there was an upsurge in the granting of soyrghals in the reign of Husain Baiqara.  

Many members of the Timurid élite, such as Abd al-Rahman Jami, held such privileges. Ali Shir Navai was the most important patron of the late Timurid period. Muhammad Haidar, author of the Tarikh-i Rashidi, estimated Ali Shir Navai's daily income from his estates at 18,000 Shahrukhiyas. This figure is probably inflated but it does indicate that Ali Shir Navai had a considerable income, that since he was exempt from taxation he was able to spend that income as he wished, and that a great deal of his income went towards artistic patronage. Babur listed Bihzad and Shah Muzaffar, and Qul-i Muhammad the lute player, among his retainers. The exemption from requirements to pay tax meant the Soyrghal owners spent the money on themselves, building monuments, patronising poets and generally indulging in forms of conspicuous consumption.

In the long term the Timurids were unable to sustain their substitution of cultural legitimacy for martial legitimacy as a basis for rule. The increase in the grants of Soyrghals, upon which much of what has been described as the Timurid renaissance was based, resulted in a diminishing of central authority. As we saw in the chapter on the court, when a treasurer, Khwaja Majd al-Din, attempted to curb these grants, Husain Baiqara was forced to depose him. The tax concessions which made the increase in cultural patronage possible whittled away at the financial base of the empire. The Timurids were unable to make the superstructure of the empire - in the sense of culture - the basis of their rule, at the expense of the military and fiscal traditions which had formed

161 Most of the Soyrghals took the form of Vaqf - religious endowments. Those who converted their soyrghals into vaqf safeguarded it for their descendants. According to Khvandamir, the number of these became so great that two or three people had to be appointed to the post of sadr to oversee them. Maria Eva Subtelny, "Socio-Economic Basis of Patronage Under the Later Timurids", International Journal of Middle East Studies, 20, 4, (1988), p. 483.
162 Jami was exempt from paying taxes to the central treasury, he had the right to collect revenues from his land grant for himself, nor did he have to pay the tithe, basic land tax, or any personal tax. Ibid., p. 484.
163 Babur wrote of Ali Shir Navai: "No such patron or protector of men of parts and accomplishments is known. Nor has one such been heard of as appearing." Babur, p. 271.
165 Fakhr Harati wrote, "So many matchless and excellent calligraphers, singers, painters, gilders, artists, writers, composers of enigmas, and poets thrived under his patronage that it is not known whether as many have ever been in evidence at any other time" Ibid., p. 492.
166 Babur, p. 271.
its base. While trying to adopt more of the Iranian-sedentary style of rule, they had conceded a considerable portion of the financial basis, upon which such a style of rule was based, to financially independent court favourites. Without the financial, military, and political substance to substantiate the claims of Cultural prestige, the empire became vulnerable to the Uzbeks, who had the necessary martial superiority, and adopted many Timurid cultural traditions as part of their superstructure.

The demise of the Timurids did not result in their culture disappearing from Central Asia. On the contrary it resulted in a dissemination of Timurid culture to Persia and India. When the Safavids sacked Herat in 1510 after defeating Shibani Khan, many of the contents of the Timurid library at Herat were moved to Tabriz. The Uzbeks adopted some elements of Timurid culture to bolster their cultural prestige and to distance themselves from the steppe traditions of their ancestors in the Golden Horde. At the turn of the sixteenth century the word Uzbek meant "uncouth". Yet Shibani Khan, although portrayed in a somewhat unflattering manner by Babur, studied the Quran, Sufism, and wrote some verses. He also had a history of his exploits written in the Timurid fashion, the Shibani-nama by Bannai. The defeat of Shibani Khan by the Safavid Shah Ismail, and the repression of cultural life that at first followed, resulted in an emigration of the former Timurid cultural elite to Transoxiana (which the Uzbeks still controlled), Western Iran, and India. Consequently many Timurid poets from Husain Baigara's reign, such as Vasifi, served in the Uzbek courts. The Uzbeks were especially interested in the esoteric, refined trappings of the late Timurid period, such as the majlis, the esoteric forum for the recitation and criticism of literary matters. A Bukharan miniature school evolved which was based on the Bihzad school. Some of its works found their way to the Mughal court. Around 1567-68 a Bukharan copy of the Gulistan of Sadi copied by Mir Ali al-Husayni, was presented to the Mughal court. It contained thirteen miniatures in the Bukharan fashion and seven were added by Mughal artists. The addition of the Mughal prints exemplifies the redefinition of Central Asian history that occurred in Mughal India. The Central Asian heritage was valued, but first it had to serve the purpose of validating Mughal rule.

It might be argued that certain features of Mughal institutions allowed imperial rule

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167 Brand and Lowry, p. 87.
169 Babur asserted that "Shibaq Khan, after taking Herat (Herat) behaved badly". He goes on to make a number of assertions to substantiate this claim: "His own illiteracy not forbidding, he instructed in the exposition of the Quran Qazi Ikhliyar and Muhammad Mir Yusuf, two of the celebrated and highly skilled mullahs of Herat; he took a pen and corrected the handwriting of Mulla Sultan Ali of Mashhad (the noted calligrapher), and the drawing of Bihzad; and every few days when he had composed some tasteless couplet, he would have it read from the Char-su." Babur, p. 329.
170 There was another Shibani-Nama written in Turki by Muhammad Saldi, Subtelny, "Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia", p. 146.
171 Ibid., pp. 138-45.
172 Brand and Lowry, p. 94.
to survive political reversals in a way that had not been possible in Central Asia. Muzaффar Alam’s work has shown that the imperial court remained important even when effective power and prosperity was devolving to the provinces in the eighteenth century. By maintaining the nominal authority of the emperor as the source of all claims to advancement - something which the ēlite culture played an integral role in reinforcing - the Mughals were able to make themselves indispensable, whereas the Timurids had not made themselves indispensable. The trappings of court culture, the literature, and the prestige advertising gave the Mughal royalty an aura that they retained after some political developments suggested otherwise.

The modifications the Mughals made to Central Asian institutions established a stronger infrastructure for the ēlite culture than that which had existed in Central Asia. The Uzbeks survived for a time, through combining their military force to substantiate their claims to cultural refinement, which was based on Timurid culture. But after the death of Abdullah Khan, the empire ceased to be an effective political force. The damage caused by the internecine conflict had prevented the Uzbek’s establishing a lasting base of financial power, so, after their great leader died, the edifice proved unsustainable. By contrast the Mughals agrarian-revenue base gave them a source of substantiation to their claims. Even when they had to surrender some of their authority to demands for provincial autonomy, their court remained the venue where the various factions of the nobility fought out their struggle. The emperors retreated from public life, but maintained the outward trappings of their royal pageantry.

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When the evidence has been considered, it can be argued that the transplantation of Central Asian culture into Mughal India was not a uniform process. We have seen that some specific aspects of Timurid culture which reinforced the imperial ideology were maintained, but Central Asian culture was rarely transplanted to Mughal India in its Central Asian form. The rejection of the prototype Mughal empire of Babur and Humayun saw the ēlite culture change in response to political developments in Akbar’s reign such as the introduction of a considerable degree of centralization in the administrative system and the Indianisation of the nobility. The monarch who presided over this system was promoted as a supreme ruler, one descended from a great Central Asian tradition, but who had now established himself as an Indian ruler. The Akbari reforms, and the subsequent Akbari compromise, defined the role Central Asian culture played in the Mughal empire in Akbar’s reign and to a considerable extent thereafter. The sporadic revolts between 1564 and 1580 indicated that some vestiges of Central Asianism remained in Mughal India. The revolts made it apparent that the Mughals’ Central Asian heritage could not be ignored while a substantial section of the Mughal nobility was still composed of Central Asians and, perhaps more importantly, while the Central Asian tradition retained an allure for many of the nobility. It became apparent in Akbar’s reign that the Mughals needed to maintain some form of connection with Central Asian traditions. The nature of these connections took a symbolic form, rather than a verbatim adoption of Timurid culture. The cultural symbols of the Mughals glorified their Central Asian heritage, but it presented this much-heralded tradition as the hereditary progenitor
of a still greater glory; the Mughal Empire in India, not as a paradigm to be aspired to under Mughal rule. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the main source of continuing Central Asian culture in Mughal India was, in fact, at the popular level - as seen in the emigration of Central Asian dervish orders, such as the Naqshabandiyya.

The nature of sovereignty in Mughal India dictated many aspects of what was retained and what was discarded from Central Asia. In order to make such substantial changes to the political and social structure, which to an extent involved a transformation of the Central Asian model, it was necessary to enhance the legitimacy of the sovereign. Thus Royalty, as well as the hereditary prestige offered by the Central Asian links, was exalted in its own right as a source of legitimacy. We have seen in the previous chapter that Akbar, assisted by his courtiers, projected himself as the spiritual guide of the people while this transformation was taking place. It is important to emphasise that the claims made about the emperor were not vain boasts undertaken solely for the purposes of flattery. There was an undeniable element of flattery in many of the Mughal works, especially the panegyrics of Abul Fazl. But the exaltation of the emperor through media such as art, literature and ceremonial symbols was a vital support of the imperial structure. The emperor was raised upon a pedestal of unadulterated awe so that he would be perceived as the supreme ruler of the many potentates within India. The élite culture changed markedly in response to these developments, which although altered in some respects over the decades, continued to form the basis for Mughal rule. Hereditary tradition, in its Central Asian form, could not offer an adequate basis of legitimacy by itself for ruling in India, since it represented a claim to paramount authority based upon a Turco-Mongolian tradition that had, for the most part, previously entered in Indian history in the form of raiders. The Central Asian traditions needed to be integrated with recognizably Indian elements, if they were to be of use in providing legitimation for Mughal rule. Mughal rule also needed a universalistic appeal to further its acceptance by as broad a cross section of the population as possible. The priority for Imperial patronage was directed towards works which would reflect the "Indianisation" that Akbar sought to project in the élite culture, while at the same time enhancing the prestige of the position of emperor. So while some changes were made in response to the Indian environment which had rejected the ruling élite of Akbar's father, the granting and the form of these concessions was made dependent upon the imperial prerogative.

The nature of the Indian "environment", in particular the Mughal nobility, is another important explanation for the transformation that Central Asian cultural institutions underwent in Mughal India. The Central Asian culture of Babur could not be transplanted to Mughal India and retain the requisite cognitive significance among its intended Indian audience. Timurid culture was shaped in an environment where the majority of the population had an empathy with Islamic culture and Turco-Mongolian traditions. This state of affairs did not exist in India, where the predominant religion was

173 Abul Fazl wrote: "He now is the spiritual guide of the nation, and sees in the performance of this duty a means of pleasing God. He has now opened the gate that leads to the right path and satisfies the thirst of all those who wander about panting for truth" Abul Fazl, A'in-i Akbārī, p. 72.
Hinduism in its myriad manifestations. In addition to Hinduism, there were many other long-established religions, such as Zoroastrianism in India. Therefore a solely Islamic, or a solely Central Asian, culture could not fulfil its original purpose in binding the élite together through a shared culture, particularly when the élite became increasingly Indianized. The syncretization of Indian forms with selected symbols of Central Asian tradition represented in microcosm the wider Mughal political agenda. The Mughals promulgated an image of themselves as representatives of a great conquering tradition; they maintained selected features of Timurid ideology to reinforce their paramount authority, but they devolved local authority to an increasingly Indian nobility.

Because of the need for an inclusive élite culture, many Central Asian cultural traditions were altered in Mughal India. But although Timurid culture was not transplanted in its indigenous form, many of its underlying principles were maintained in Mughal India. The architecture retained the monumentality and geometric harmonization characteristic of Timurid architecture, as these helped to promote the Mughal splendour. The external forms became Indianized, but the inherent motivations were similar to those of the Timurids. The principle of an inclusive élite culture remained. In Timurid times this had been the result of a deliberate effort to concentrate artisans from captured areas within the confines of the capital city, and subsequently devolve them to the provinces; but in Mughal India this came about as a result of the ability of the court to attract notables from within and without India. The result was an élite culture that was, for the most part, different in composition, but similar in conception, to that of Central Asia. Hindu, and, to a lesser extent, Persian and European influences combined to give Mughal culture a different form from that which it had had in Timurid times. It did, however, conform to the Timurid conception of an élite culture insofar as the artisans were subordinated to promoting the Imperial splendour. Moreover, the Mughals maintained the Kitabkhana from Timurid tradition; the Kitabkhana afforded the artisans a place to practise their crafts while at the same time ensuring that the Imperial court would decide how the respective works would fit into the Imperial culture as a collective entity.

Some Central Asian traditions were, however, maintained in their original forms. But such traditions served as passive symbols which enshrined Mughal authority, as opposed to being an expression of an active Central Asian influence in Mughal culture. The Mughals used their Central Asian tradition as a source of imperial legitimacy, which further enhanced popular awe of the emperor. In many senses this object dictated which aspects of Central Asian culture could be maintained in Mughal India. Those aspects of Central Asian culture which lent themselves to adaptation as symbols of the imperial aura were maintained. This was seen in varying degrees in the pictorial depictions of the Timurids in memorabilia such as the jade jug of Ulugh Beg and in imperial literature which included extensive accounts of genealogy. Hunting was continued but was refined as a display of dynastic virility. These symbols reinforced the semi-divine image attributed to the Mughal emperors, who used them to promote themselves as having an unassailable position atop the many localised contenders for political power in India.

The Central Asian influence was primarily symbolic, but this does not mean it was insignificant. The aura of Mughal rule rested on a carefully-crafted set of imperial
symbols. These were an integral part of the empire, for the Mughal court represented only the superstructure, and not the base, of the empire. Much of the responsibility for everyday administration was devolved to the mansabdars in the provinces. They were periodically reassigned, and had to report occasionally to the court, but, as they were away from the court most of the time, it was important that a culture be developed that could project the authority of the emperor to the provinces. Given this state of affairs it was important that the élite culture make the emperor appear an indispensable source of authority at all levels of society. The Mughal emperors had to assert their authority over many different creeds because they employed many different ethnicities. They sought to make all servants loyal to the emperor, and the imposition of this form of relationship - even if it was not always carried out to the extent claimed - required an imperial culture which could promote the emperor as the supreme authority atop the imperial structure. The emperors, from their position at the head of this structure, sought to enhance their appeal at the base level. The physical symbols of the empire, such as the great monuments, the more subtle visual symbols, such as the regalia, the literature and the visual arts, all contributed to such a structure. The religious symbols, in particular the Chishti celebrations, and the celebrations of the Nauroz festival, associated the Mughal rule with popular culture. The symbols of the élite culture, as seen in the court ceremonies, projected the emperor as the paramount authority, and consequently made the emperor an indispensable source of approval for advancement within the nobility. The army provided the military substantiation for these claims and the court provided a setting for their display. The retention of some Timurid forms in the Mughal symbols was therefore of considerable importance in Mughal rule, because Mughal rule was heavily dependent upon symbolism. The modifications made to the Central Asian cultural traditions in India were essentially those necessary to enhance its bureaucratization and universalism in the Indian environment.

The reasons for these changes, and their ramifications, illustrate some important general points about the transplantation of Central Asian institutions. There was some degree of commonality between the later Timurid court and the Mughal court. The glorious past represented by Timur was a source of legitimacy in both empires. The reign of Husain Baiqara saw a celebration of Timur's conquests, while Aurangzeb cited the example of Timur's treatment of Sultan Bayezit as a justification of the imprisonment of Shah Jahan. But the Mughal adaptation of Timurid culture proved longer-lasting than its Timurid predecessor. To a considerable extent this can be attributed to the aforementioned political developments, and the long-term ramifications of the Akbari compromise, but other explanations also suggest themselves. It seems that despite the increasing sedentarisation of Timurid culture, it contained some inherent drawbacks as an élite culture in both Central Asia and Mughal India. The later Timurids under Husain Baiqara attempted to use their cultural legitimacy in the manner of the Mughals. They attained a level of splendour that was equivalent to the Mughal court, but they did not have the sophistication of structure, nor did they have the political substance of the Mughal court. It could indeed be said of the late Timurid court that the "brilliant exterior
masked an insubstantial core.\textsuperscript{174} The Mughals on the other hand were able to substantiate their bombastic claims with a foundation of political and military ascendancy. This was possible because the Mughal élite culture, unlike that of its late Timurid counterpart, was able to attract the support of the strongest factions, without alienating those upon whose support the empire rested. The Mughals were able to implement the Timurid principles for a longer period in practice, because of their ability to sustain the support of the agrarian revenue-collecting nobility who supported the imperial structure.

\textsuperscript{174} Lentz and Lowry, p. 299.
VI: The Capital City: A Microcosm of Imperial Institutions

The capital city incorporated - and to a considerable extent epitomised - elements of all the institutions of imperial rule we have discussed in the previous chapters. K.N. Chaudhuri has written: "The image of the city extends beyond the city itself, to its articulation in precise and distinct ways, to the abstract concept of the state, government, society, and economic activities."¹ This was true for both Central Asia and Mughal India. The capital city coordinated the deployment of the army and served as a military arsenal. The court sought to make the capital city into an ideal type of the imperial vision. Hence, there were, for example, important Islamic elements in the capitals of both Central Asia and Mughal India. In the formative period of both the Timurid and Mughal empires, the capital city developed the distinct élité culture that cultivated an image of splendour around the then fledgling empire, it then exported this culture throughout the empire. In this chapter we shall be concerned with the role of the capital city in Central Asia and Mughal India. This means that there will be a good deal of comparison between the respective capital cities, comparison which is necessary because it illuminates the underlying reasons for the continuities and discontinuities in the character of the capital cities of Central Asia and Mughal India. In the first section we shall analyse the importance of the location of the capital city from the geographical, the strategic and the political perspective. We shall then evaluate the interrelationship between the capital cities and the institutions we have discussed in the previous chapters.

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The geographical characteristics of the capital city in Central Asia and Mughal India illustrate many of the important qualities of the capital city in nomadic and sedentary societies. Large urban sites required a support system of economic, social and political institutions beyond the bounds of the city. Hence in order to understand the importance of the Central Asian and Mughal capital cities it is necessary to look at the geographical, political and social structures that underpinned them.²

As we have seen, Turkestan - the area including Transoxiana and Moghulistan - was an arid region which received little rainfall. Therefore oasis cities like Samarkand and Herat played a pivotal role in Central Asia. They possessed the water supply necessary to sustain large settlements.³ Oasis agriculture was an indispensable source of foodstuffs

² Ibid., p. 341.
³ The economic base of Samarkand was able to sustain seven tunans (divisions of 10,000 troops) from
for the city. The nomadic world was no less dependent upon the oases than the settled world. Their trade with the settled world gave them the specialised goods, such as handicrafts and spices, that the nomadic lifestyle could not provide. In Timur's time there was considerable contact between the nomadic and sedentary worlds, and control of the oasis cities was an essential prerequisite for any group that wanted to establish themselves in power. The revenue collected from the commercial activities within the city and the taxation levies from city peoples was the financial base of the Central Asian empires, since it was practically difficult to collect such money from the nomadic population. This meant that Samarkand and Herat were always important centres, irrespective of whether or not they were, at a particular time, the capital city.

The importance of the oasis cities of Central Asia was enhanced by their status as the commercial lifeblood of the region. Samarkand and Herat occupied important positions along the trade routes that allowed goods from the west to pass through Central Asia, into China and vice versa. Samarkand was a pivot for trade from all directions: for the north-south trade from Tartary to India, and the east-west trade, from Arabian and Ottoman traders, to China. Samarkand also exported a considerable quantity of goods, much of which accompanied the embassies to the Chinese court. Herat lay midway between Transoxiana and Khurasan, the two halves of Timur's empire, and it commanded the access to the easiest route between them. The other road, via Merv, went through waterless desert. Traders of all nationalities passed through these cities. The trading centres of these cities were an extension of the prestige advertising we have discussed in the previous chapter. Timur ordered that a road be constructed through the middle of Samarkand with a long line of bazaars on either side. Control of the revenues resulting from this trade was vitally important for the rulers of any Central Asian empire.

The decline of the central land route had an adverse effect upon the strength of Central Asia, and consequently upon the cities of Samarkand and Herat. The volume of trade passing along this route declined in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; in part as a result of the increased use of sea routes, but perhaps more importantly because of the dissension in Central Asia as the Uzbeks fought against the Safavids and amongst themselves. Matters did not improve in the first half of the eighteenth century. From

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Timur's time, until the eighteenth century. This made it an important centre from the military point of view. Barthold, Vol. 2. p. 9.

4 In the period from 1433-1500, embassies were departing from Turfan and Samarkand to China one year in every four. Adshead, p. 196.

5 This is attested to by Clavijo: "The markets of Samarkand are amply stored with merchandise imported from distant and foreign countries. From Russia and Tartary come leathers and linens, from Cathay silk stuffs that are the finest in the whole world". Nutmegs, cloves and cinnamon were brought from India. Clavijo, p. 288. See also Babur, p. 81.

6 Clavijo, p. 278. Many buildings were pulled down to make way for this road. Two great lords were appointed to oversee this task and were threatened with death if the work was unsatisfactory or delayed.

7 From 1600-43, which coincided with the era of the Astrakhanids, there were three embassies to China from Hami and Turfan, and only one from Samarkand. Adshead, p. 196.
1650 to 1750 only Turfan, an oasis town on the Chinese border, had any contact with China.\(^8\) Samarkand declined dramatically over this period, although the Central Land route showed signs of recovery in the second half of the eighteenth century.

While there were periods when the volume of trade declined, situating the capital in the most prosperous city allowed the revenue, and taxation receipts from these activities to benefit the economic life, and central treasuries of the capital city. The imperial court was keen to display a picture of a financially thriving, strategically significant, and culturally thriving city to foreign traders and ambassadors.

The transplantation of Timurid rule from Central Asia into India saw the physical environment of the capital city undergo a significant change. Whereas the Timurid empire existed in a primarily nomadic region, in conjunction with the oasis agriculture, the Mughal empire existed in a predominantly sedentary environment. These differences were also evident in the character of the respective administrative systems: there was a far greater emphasis upon bureaucratisation and centralisation in Mughal India than there had been in the Timurid empire. These fundamental differences led to a change in several of the criteria for the location of a capital city. In India there were no oasis towns which needed to be controlled if the empire was to survive. Thus there could be greater fluidity in the location of the capital city. In Babur's reign Agra was the capital. There were three capital cities in Akbar's reign: Agra (1556-72), Fatehpur Sikri (1572-85), and Lahore (1585-98). The capital city reverted to Agra in the reign of Jahangir and for the first ten years of Shah Jahan's reign, after which it was transferred to Delhi (and given the name Shahjahanabad). In Mughal India the city needed to be part of a centralised empire that allowed collection of revenue. There was a symbiotic relationship between the capital city, the empire, and the ecology of the land. The longest lasting capital cities, Delhi and Agra, were situated amidst productive agricultural regions. The hinterland north of Delhi was rich with alluvial soil from which the surrounding granaries in normal years could feed the capital city, which was inflated in size by the presence of the court and its associated paraphernalia.

The main centres of Mughal imperial rule, Agra and Delhi, were situated in areas of strategic and commercial importance. Like the Timurid capitals, they were centres which contenders for paramount authority aspired to control. At the same time they were centres which provided a sustainable economic and political base which allowed those who had paramount military and political authority to coordinate opposition to their rivals. The treasure contained within the capital cities of India made their control an important priority for any invader.\(^9\) In Akbar's reign the storehouse for the imperial treasure was sited in Agra.\(^10\) It continued to perform in this capacity in the reign of Aurangzeb, when it received the riches coming from Bengal.\(^11\) As we saw in the chapter on culture, the Agra

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\(^8\) Adshead, p. 264.

\(^9\) Babur wrote that the treasure of the Lodis was kept in Agra and Delhi, and when this was used, the nobility had to contribute some of their allowance for maintaining troops. Babur, p. 617.


fort was an imposing one, and, from the architectural point of view, one of the most important Mughal monuments of Akbar's reign.12 It was during the reign of Jahangir that Agra expanded most markedly, something the emperor boasted of in his memoirs.13 Jahangir said of Agra: "In the number of its buildings it is equal to several cities of Iraq, Khurasan, and Mawara'an nahr [Transoxiana] put together." It is possible that Jahangir was implying that because the Mughals had larger capital cities they were therefore superior to those nations.14 There were, however, a number of drawbacks to Agra as a location for the capital city, and ultimately these drawbacks, in conjunction with the political agenda of Shah Jahan, resulted in the transfer of the Mughal capital to Delhi in 1648. First, Agra was not a well-organised city. Bernier states that there were four or five major routes in Agra, each one running parallel to the river with a gate at each side.15 Moreover, the city was not laid out in a compact, easily defended manner. Rather, it was located in a long line (on both sides of the river) and while there was a wall around the imperial palace, there was no wall around the city.16 Furthermore the Yamuna river was eating away at structures along the river's edge and the city was becoming overcrowded.

Delhi embodied all the qualities necessary for the capital of an agrarian-revenue based empire, with a considerable degree of administrative centralisation, which coordinated a composite nobility. The construction of a new capital city was in keeping with the tenor of Shah Jahan's reign, which was noted for its architectural achievements. The Delhi region afforded the new city a number of advantages as an imperial capital. The location of Delhi had certain strategic advantages. It guarded the corridors between the Salt Range and the West Punjab, as well as the Himalaya and the Rajasthan desert - both of which were favoured routes of northwestern invaders. The Yamuna line also gave access to the Gangetic plain, and, through the cities of Agra and Bhopal, offered access to central and western India. From a Delhi base, the empire was close enough to the northwest to be able to deal with whatever troubles, internal or external that might arise; while still being in a position that enabled the empire to expand to the south, east or west. Delhi also served as a useful commercial centre, something which was used to enhance its financial standing and prestige as an imperial centre. Shahjahanabad featured a main commercial avenue that was 1520 yards long, 40 yards wide altogether incorporating 1560 shops and porticoes.17 The "canal of paradise" ran down the centre of this street, which was also

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12 According to Badauni Agra Fort was 40 guz in height, 10 guz in breadth, with a trench ten yards deep. He asserted "the like of that fortress can scarcely be shown in any other district." Badauni, Vol. 2, p. 75.

13 According to Jahangir the construction of Agra cost 35 lakhs of rupees. He goes on to give its equivalent cost in the Persian and Turanian currencies: 115,000 toman in the persian coinage, or 10,500,000 in the Turani currency. Jahangir, Vol. 1, p. 3.

14 Ibid.

15 Bernier, p. 285

lined with trees. Effective imperial rule in India was reliant upon control of six major cities, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Patna, Burhanpur, and Ahmadabad. Delhi and Agra were situated around the centre of this group of cities. The Mughals' control over these cities for the greater part of two centuries enabled them to control India. Athar Ali has suggested that one factor in the declining political power of the Mughal court was the amount of surplus agrarian revenue going to urban towns instead of to Delhi.

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Having considered the significance of the location of the capital, we shall now examine its relationship with the institutions we have discussed in the previous chapters. In both Central Asia and Mughal India there was a considerable degree of interaction within the capital city between the institutions of the army, the court, the Islamic element, the prestige advertising and the symbols of imperial rule. They were all interdependent upon each other. But it can probably be said that the army was somewhat less reliant upon the capital city than were other institutions, as it did not need to be directed from the capital city. The army was a mobile institution, and there was a considerable degree of autonomy at the tactical level within the army. The finer points of military operations could not be directed from a faraway capital city. In the Timurid empire the best military leaders found themselves often on campaign, far away from the capital city. The same also applied in Mughal India. In Mughal India the capital city exercised some control over the mansabdars inasmuch as they were required to attend court periodically. They did not, however, rely on the capital for their income, which they received from their assignments.

Although in some ways the army could campaign and conduct provincial administration independently of central authority, the army was reliant upon the capital city as a warehouse for its personnel, booty, and matériel. The army needed a place to return to after its campaigns, a location where the treasure captured on campaign could be safely stored. The ruler could maintain a reserve of troops within the capital which could be kept under close supervision or used as a precautionary measure against rebellions in the provinces. In this sense the capital city was of considerable importance as a military arsenal. This was true for both Central Asia and Mughal India. The capital city was often a fortified city. In 1370 Timur ordered a wall to be built around Samarkand. Herat, the other Timurid capital, was also a walled town. There was a stone wall twenty seven feet high, twelve feet thick, and almost four miles long around Shahjahanabad.

18 Chaudhuri, p. 364. By controlling these cities, and securing the northwest frontier by controlling Kabul and Qandahar, the Mughals set a stable platform for their rule. When they lost any one of these key cities, such as Qandahar, the Mughals became vulnerable. That Qandahar changed hands many times in Indo-Persian relations in our period indicates that the rulers of the Safavid and Mughal empires appreciated this fact.
20 There were many revolts in urban areas in Central Asia and India. According to Chaudhuri, twenty-eight of the thirty rebellions in Akbar's reign occurred in towns. Chaudhuri, p. 364.
Thus, while in some respects the army did not necessarily need the capital city, the capital city certainly needed the army. The capital cities of Central Asia and Mughal India housed strong military contingents. There were also large contingents of troops deployed in the capital cities. In 1650 the palace fortress in Shahjahanabad contained approximately 57,000 people. This included 10,000 cavalrymen and 10,000 artillerymen. In Mughal India it was necessary to have some city where large forces could be kept in reserve, because rulers in India had to contend with a very large armed peasantry. Control over some provincial areas, particularly in northwest areas, was severely contested. Therefore, for imperial rule to be credible, it needed a strong base in the towns to emphasise the strength of the empire.

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If the army was an institution that was to an extent independent of the capital city, the court was the institution most dependent upon the capital city. The capital cities of Central Asia, and especially, Mughal India, were the administrative nerve centres of their empires. Although it proved necessary to devolve some power to the provinces, the court placed great store on the capital city as the paramount centre of authority. The location and setting of the imperial court, combined with the wealth of the capital city to make it an important centre. In Central Asia the strategic importance of the capital cities made them significant even though much of the specific responsibility for administration was decentralised to provincial governors. The imperial treasuries located in the capital city were the repositories for the wealth of the empire. The treasuries allowed the Timurids to reward their supporters. Foreign embassies were another source of prestige and income for the capital city. The reception of embassies facilitated a good deal of trade, while the pomp and ceremony involved demonstrated that the ruler was important (that is, it had a certain legitimating function. When the empire became more vulnerable to raiders, the control of the capital city was compromised.

The capital city in the Timurid empire was not always the administrative capital of the empire. In the reign of Shah Rukh, Herat and Samarkand operated, in some respects, as twin capitals. Although Herat was Shah Rukh's capital, his chief military leader and finance minister, did not have subordinates in Samarkand. It appears as if the military and financial affairs of the city were left in the hands of Ulugh Beg. Ulugh Beg himself made only five visits to Shah Rukh's court in the latter's thirty-eight year reign (1411-49); that is in 1414, 1417, 1422, 1425, and 1434. When the Timurids sent embassies to China in 1413 they were sent from both Herat and Samarkand and when foreign emissaries visited, they went to both courts. Herat was the capital insofar as coins in

22 Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 86.
23 Ibid. Similar figures are given for Aurangzeb's reign. Manucci estimated 50,000 horsemen were garrisoned at Delhi, along with 20,000 Rajput infantry. Manucci, Vol. 2, p. 397.
24 Barthold, Vol. 2, p. 84.
25 Ibid., p. 83.
Samarkand were printed in Shah Rukh's name, although Samarkand still retained a considerable degree of political and cultural autonomy.

The Mughals retained the essential qualities of the Timurid capitals as a venue for the court. However, the changes made to the character of the Timurid court in the Mughal India meant that the court performed an even more important role coordinating imperial rule. To an extent this is attributable to the larger bureaucratic component of the Mughal court. Under the Mughal system, in theory at least, all appointments of mansabdars, and all conferrals of honours could be done only by the emperor himself. Furthermore, mansabdars had to report in person to the emperor once a year. Thus there was a constant influx of nobility to the capital city. So, in many respects, the capital city in Mughal India could be regarded as the administrative regulator of the empire. The capital city was not, however, completely dominant in the financial sphere. Surat became the treasure house of the Mughal empire and its bankers financed trade in cities such as Delhi, Agra, Bijapur and Golkonda. There was an imperial mint at Surat, established near the end of Akbar's reign, which dealt with wealthy individuals as opposed to the various groups who sought favours from the court.

Because of the need to assert the primacy of the emperor as the source of all claims to authority, the devolution of administrative autonomy to provincial officials was less commonplace than it had been in the Timurid empire. No city in Mughal India had the degree of autonomy that Herat had in Shah Rukh's reign. Control of day to day actions and revenue collection was devolved to the provinces, with the imperial court in the capital controlling the appointments to the administration of such local responsibilities. The bureaucracy required to oversee the administrative structure inflated the size of the imperial court and, consequently, the capital city to a far greater extent than had occurred in the Timurid empire. It also attracted many fortune seekers, from the nobility, the merchant classes and the religious community, which further inflated its size. In this way the Mughals ensured that the important power was concentrated in the capital city. It was crucial that the Mughals be secure in the nerve centre of the empire, and to a considerable extent this explains why Mughal governmental systematization endeavoured to make the capital city dominant in the administrative and financial spheres. There might be occasional revolts in the provinces, but provided these were suppressed before they became too widespread, the imperial court could use its own resources and coordinate action against provincial unrest.

As well as being the administrative centre, the capital city had a wider significance as an institution used to enhance the legitimacy of the sovereign. Not only was it the stage for the elaborate court ceremonies which enhanced the prestige of the emperor, the capital city itself was an expression of the emperor's aura. The location and character of the capital cities reveals a good deal about the political agenda of the Mughal rulers. Three shifts of capital cities, in particular, are worth noting: the shift from Agra to Fatehpur

27 Chaudhuri, p. 341.
28 Om Prakash, "On Coinage in Mughal India", p. 486.
Sikri in 1572; the shift from Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore in 1585, and the shift from Agra to Shahjahanabad in 1648. These shifts, sometimes directly, at other times indirectly, also have some bearing upon the question of the Central Asian influence in Mughal India. Akbar's decision to move his capital from Akbar to Fatehpur Sikri was an assertion of his authority, and signalled his vision of the Mughal empire. The village of Sikri was connected with the victory that saw the founding of the Mughal empire. Babar had defended his flank with the village of Sikri during the battle of Khanwa. Akbar made it the centre where the political and administrative foundations of the empire were laid. The palace he constructed contained places such as the Ibadat Khana, where up to forty favourites would discuss various issues during the night. Fatehpur Sikri reinforced his political reforms and acted as a catalyst for religious experimentation by moving the seat of imperial authority away from the established centre of power in Agra, hence blunting the influence of the ulema and its association with his former regent Bayram Khan. One part of the new order the shift to Fatehpur Sikri represented was the move away from several Central Asian practices, as seen in the centralizing reforms of the 1570's which departed from the decentralised provincial governorships of Central Asia. The incorporation of a number of Hindu elements was another sign of the political agenda in Akbar's reign.

If the transfer of the capital city form Agra to Fatehpur Sikri symbolised Akbar's assertion of his own authority, the transfer of the capital city to Lahore represented a reaction to the hostility some elements of the nobility felt towards the Akbari reforms. There was an important Central Asian connection in this regard. The transfer of the capital city from Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore was, in part, a response to the revolts among a section of the Central Asian nobility, coupled with tension caused by rebels on the northwest frontier who were encouraged to rebel by Abdullah Khan. There were also at

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29 Abul Fazl suggested the making of Fatehpur Sikri symbolised the strength of Akbar's reign, "Among the dominion increasing events was the making of Sikri...into a great city. As the Khedive of the World is an architect of the spiritual and physical world... Now that his standards had arrived at this place his former design was pressed forward and an order was issued that the superintendents of affairs should erect lofty buildings for the special use of the Shahinshah." Thus, "In a short time there was a great city and there were charming places benevolent institutions such as Khanqas, schools and baths were also constructed, and a large stone bazaar was built. Beautiful gardens were made in the vicinity. A great place of concourse was brought together such as might move the envy of the world." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, pp. 530-31. See also Badauni, Vol. 2, p. 112.

30 Babur, p. 548.

31 Flynn and Rizvi, p. 27.

32 Abul Fazl, albeit rather obliquely, acknowledged the revolts as the reasons for the shift: "Inasmuch as the dominions are extensive, and the soldiery numerous, as cupidity increases daily, right thinking diminishing, the courageous and vertical not to be found, the false and flattering plentiful, the wicked contrivers in troops, and the acute and just thinking scarce, there soon comes a great rift in affairs and evil grows prevalent. Therefore it is that the world's lord every now and then augments his circumspection and implants new freshness to the garden of the state. Accordingly at the time he, from brilliance and foresight and the quest of truth, erected a new palace of administration." Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 3, p. 598.
this time fears, on both sides, of invasions - something which prevented any prospect of Central Asia and Mughal India working together. While the shift to Fatehpur Sikri had, in part, symbolised the shift away from many traditions of Central Asia, the move to Lahore was, in part, a response to a reassertion of Central Asian authority. Thus, in an indirect and direct form, Central Asian influence was evident in the siting of the Mughal court in the critical period of the consolidation of Mughal rule.

The change of capital city from Agra to Shahjahanabad can be interpreted in a similar way. We have seen that there were a number of practical considerations in making the move, but there were also some important issues of sovereignty involved. By constructing his own grand capital city Shah Jahan was asserting his standing as a Mughal sovereign. Only by constructing his own capital could he outdo Akbar. Siting his capital in Delhi helped to establish his credentials as an Indian ruler. Delhi had had a long association with both Hindu and Muslim rulers, in particular the previous Muslim rulers of India. Shahjahanabad represented in many ways the Mughal empire at its peak. It symbolised the wealth of the court and the nobility.

The increasing tendency of the Mughal emperors to spend time away from the throne in the imperial encampment is another dynamic worthy of consideration. It demonstrated not only that the "capital city" could be mobile (albeit at a slow rate) but also that the institutions and components of the sedentary administration always had to accompany such movements. The imperial encampment represents a continuity between Central Asia and Mughal India. It was employed in both empires. Clavijo wrote of having an audience with Timur on one occasion in an encampment outside of Samarkand. He estimated that there were 50,000 tents pitched in this encampment. These tents were carefully arranged according to the status of each clan. Outside the imperial encampment there were 20,000 tents pitched in the manner of streets, which included all the trades. The imperial encampment reinforced Timur's association with the nomadic world, and it was an imposing reminder of the strength of the empire.

The imperial encampment was a Central Asian tradition that was retained throughout Mughal rule. It served the purposes of prestige advertising as well as reinforcing the centralised nature of Mughal rule though bringing a replica of the imperial court to the provinces. Abul Fazl mentions a large tent called the Gulal-bar, a grand enclosure which was never less than 100 yards square, in the middle of which was a chubin raoti, adjoined by a Saraparda - chief tent. It also contained a two storied pavilion where he appeared each morning to the nobility. It required a great many animals for its transportation.

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34 Clavijo, p. 274.
36 According to Clavijo each artisan had a designated place, "thus every craft and art needful for supply was to be found throughout the camp, and each trade was in its appointed street of the great Horde." Ibid.
38 In Akbar's reign the imperial encampment required 100 elephants, 500 camels, 400 carts and 1,000 bearers.
The imperial Seraglio, Audience Hall and Naqara Khana extended over 1530 yards. A great deal of treasure, along with the official records, accompanied the encampment. The paraphernalia of the court were also taken along so that all the functions of the imperial court could be carried out. A substantial military contingent was taken to protect the encampment and project an image of the imperial might. Many merchants accompanied the encampment, in exactly the same way as had happened in the Timurid empire.

As the Mughal emperors became more peripatetic, the imperial encampment became part of what may be termed a programme of government by travelling roadshow. The emperor and the great nobles marched with two sets of tents, so that when one set was in use, the other would be used the next day. Bernier wrote of Aurangzeb's encampment: "You will easily conceive that there is something very striking in these royal quarters and that this vast assemblage of red tents, placed in the centre of a numerous army produces a brilliant effect when seen from some neighbouring eminence." The magnificent interior of these tents placed the imperial throne in a position of great splendour. Careri wrote that the throne in Aurangzeb's tent was sited on a square place four spans above the ground enclosed with silver bannisters two spans high. Six spans further in the middle was another place raised a span higher. At the angles were four poles reaching the top of the tents. This was where the throne was, square of gilt wood; a

for its transportation. Ibid., p. 49. Writing in Aurangzeb's reign, Manucci estimated that 200 camels and fifty elephants were set aside for moving the Royal tents alone. Manucci, Vol. 2, p. 62 .

39 Ibid.

40 According to Manucci, 200 camels, each one loaded with silver rupees to a weight of 480 pounds and another 100 camels, each loaded with 480 pounds of gold coins, accompanied the camp. So too did 150 camels carrying the tents for hunting tigers. Furthermore, "the Royal office of record also was there, for the original records always accompany the court, and this required eighty camels, thirty elephants and twenty carts loaded with the registers and papers of account of the empire." Manucci, Vol. 2, p. 62.

41 50 camels, carrying 100 cases of sampa - robes of honour, along with thirty elephants loaded with special arms and jewels came along with the camp. Manucci, Vol. 2, pp. 63-64.

42 Manucci estimated that 8000 cavaliers marched on the right wing, 8000 on the left wing and mounted huntsmen at the rear. Ibid.

43 Manucci commented: "All I will say is that it looks like a great city travelling from place to place for there are wanting neither bazaars, nor shops, nor markets nor sports, nor pastimes, nor gold, nor silver in short, all that could be looked for in a flourishing city is to be found in this camp." Ibid, p. 69.

44 Aurangzeb, for example, had a choice of three different palaquins, or five elephants with litter to travel on. 9 elephants with flags flying travelled in front of the emperor. The emperor was followed by horsemen bearing the imperial weaponry, 24 horsemen playing trumpets, pipes, and kettledrums. To their rear came elephants bearing the royal standards displaying Muslim inscriptions such as. "Augmentor and Conservator of the faith", "God is one and Muhammad Just." Ibid. pp. 63-65.


46 Bernier, p. 365.

47 Careri, p. 220.
silver foot stool was used to get up to it. Bernier estimated the circumference of the imperial encampment at two and a half leagues. The Am-Kas, the main tent was elevated above the rest; its outside was covered with red cloth. The monarch’s tent was always the focal point of the camp. Even when the court visited the provinces, people still had to visit the court. And the court ceremonies in the encampment followed the procedure used in the capital city. Thus the Mughal emperors were able to display the imperial model to the provinces, and present themselves to their subjects in the way they wished to be seen. The encampment acted as a beacon for those seeking the favour of the court, just as it did in the capital city. The emperor would enter the encampment by a different route each time, to receive presents from different nobles to the value of at least twenty to twenty five golden rupees.

Although the increased use of the imperial encampment demonstrated that the court did not necessarily have to be located within the bounds of a city, it was often the case in Mughal India that the capital city could not do without having a court. In its heyday Fatehpur Sikri had a bazaar 800 metres long where traders from all parts of the world sold considerable quantities of silk, precious stones and pearls. But Fatehpur became a ghost town almost immediately upon the departure of the court, whose presence had artificially inflated it to a size unsustainable in its absence. Ralph Fitch, travelling through the city in 1610 (twenty-five years after it had been abandoned as the capital city) noted that it was ruined and deserted, and that someone standing within would "little think he were within the walls of a city." This was testimony to the importance of the imperial household in the local economy. Blake suggests that in the capital cities of Agra and Shahjahanabad seventy-five percent of the population either belonged to or were dependent upon the imperial household for their livelihood. The court was such an important provider of income that many citizens accompanied the court when it moved away in the imperial encampment. Shahjahanabad, in 1650, had a population of about 375,000.

48 Careri, p. 220.
49 Bernier, p 367. Careri estimated the circumference of Aurangzeb’s encampment he visited at 30 miles.
50 Careri, p. 218.
51 Bernier, p. 362.
52 Bernier remarked "the Am-kas is elevated above every other tent because it is the landmark by which the order and disposition of the whole army is regulated." Ibid., p. 365.
53 Ibid., p. 365.
54 Flynn and Rizvi, Fatehpur Sikri, p. 17.
55 Tillotson, Mughal India, p. 104.
56 Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 103.
57 Thevenot, who visited India in the mid-seventeenth century, remarked: “I have been told that it appears to be a desert when the King is absent. This will not seem strange if we consider that the court of the Great Mogul..."
But this population dwindled dramatically to around 62,000 - 65,000, less than a sixth of its usual size, when Aurangzeb took the imperial encampment into the Deccan. Thus, as an institution, the Mughal capital city depended greatly upon the court for its economic viability—much more than was the case in the Timurid cities of Samarkand and Herat, which retained their importance even when they were not the capital city.

The capital cities of Central Asia and Mughal India reflected, to varying degrees, the Islamic element of the imperial ideology. The Registan in Samarkand, and the Musalla complex erected on the outskirts of Herat are examples of this. The best theological scholars and the most influential ulema were always concentrated around the capital cities. Sayyid Baraka, Timur's chief spiritual adviser, and close companion, lived in Samarkand, and Timur later ordered that he be buried next to him in the Gur-i Amir. Samarkand and Herat were places where the religious elite, rather than the leaders of popular religions, were concentrated. It was Bukhara that was the capital of popular religion in Central Asia, the Naqshbandiyya being particularly strong there.

In the reign of Shah Rukh the capital city symbolised the tension between the zealous ulema on the one hand, and the festivities of Turco-Mongolian tradition on the other hand. Shah Rukh sought to make Herat into a model Islamic city and zealously enforced prohibitions. He hoped that by doing so he would reduce the sectarian strife in the empire and regain the support of the ulema, some of whom had been alienated by Timur's massacres in Muslim countries. The court of Ulugh Beg in Samarkand—which as we have seen was virtually independent of Herat—became the pleasure centre of the Timurid Empire. No restrictions were applied to the drinking of wine. One muhtasib who had the temerity to upbraid Ulugh Beg was told: "You have won fame through your descent from the Sayyids and your learning, and have attained old age. Apparently you also wish to attain martyrdom and therefore utter rude words, but I shall not grant you your wish." Later Samarkand became a noted dervish centre; Khwaja Ahmar, the important Naqshbanadi religious figure, exercised a great deal of control in Transoxiana for almost four decades from around 1450-90.

Just as the Mughals retained the Sunni element of Timurid kingship, so too did the

[Aurangzeb] is very numerous because the great men of Empire are always all there, who have vast retinues because there servants cost them little in Diet and Cloaths, that the court is attended by above thirty five thousand horse and ten or twelve thousand foot, which may be called an armyand that every soldier has his wife, Children and Servants; who for the most part are married also, and have a great many Children as well as Masters. If to these we add all the drudges and rasally People which Courts and Armies draw after them and then the great number of merchants and trading people who are obliged to stick to them because in that Country there is no Trade or Money to be got but at Court."Indian Travels of Thevenot, p. 60.

58 Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 67.
59 Thevenot said of Delhi, "that Town is no great matter when the king is not there; and if there have been four hundred thousand Men in it when he was there, there hardly remains the sixth part in his absence."

Thevenot, p. 61.
60 Barthold, Ulugh Beg, p. 19.
capital cities retain its role as the arbiter of the imperial religion. The Muslim element in the capital cities of Mughal India was evident at a number of levels: the Muslim theologians of Mughal India tended to be concentrated around the capital city, and the mystical elements of Islam were also used to enhance the prestige of the ruler. This is evident in the choice of Fatehpur Sikri as Akbar's capital. Akbar, worried by his inability to conceive a male heir, visited a Muslim divine, Shaykh Salim, who lived at the top of a hill in Sikri. He correctly predicted that one of Akbar's princesses was pregnant. Akbar ordered the pregnant Rajput princess to live near the Shaikh. Soon after, in 1569, a son named Salim, later to become the Emperor Jahangir, was born. Akbar was impressed and ordered that a mosque and a palace be constructed in the area. Subsequently a city was constructed and given the name Fatehpur Sikri (city of victory). The structures of this city were designed in keeping with Akbar's principle of Sulh-i Kull, universal tolerance. This was seen in buildings such as the Ibadat Khana, which Akbar ordered built in 1575 "for the adornment of the spiritual kingdom." Here representatives from all religions would discuss theological issues. The assembly was divided into four sections; in the eastern chamber were great leaders and high officers; in the southern compartment were the scientists; in the western section were those of high lineage who practised auspicious arts, and in the northern section there were the visionary Sufis.

The transfer of the capital city to Delhi in the reign of Shah Jahan represented an assertion of the Muslim identity of the Mughal rulers, while at the same time the design of the city saw a synthesizing of Hindu and Muslim traditions. Delhi had long been an important Muslim religious centre and some believed it to be the seat of the great sultans, the centre of the circle of Islam which was believed to enclose the centre of the earth. It had a tradition as the capital of the previous Indian Muslim dynasties from 1206 to 1506. Delhi also had connections with early Mughal emperors. Babur had the Khutbah read in his name in the Delhi congregational mosque to associate himself with the previous Muslim rulers. Humayun did not consider his reconquest complete until he had reclaimed Delhi - where he constructed his capital Din Panah. Akbar had opted for a new capital city at Fatehpur Sikri, away from the conservative section of the Muslim community. Shah Jahan's restoration of Delhi, then, hinted at a return to orthodoxy which, some have argued, he pursued in the initial period of his reign before continuing to exercise religious tolerance. And as a Muslim ruling dynasty in a predominantly non-Muslim country it afforded the Mughals a place where the long-standing Muslim

62 "Inasmuch as his exalted sons had taken their birth in Sikri and the God-Knowing spirit of Shaikh Selim had taken possession thereof, his holy heart desired to give outward splendour to this spot which possessed spiritual grandeur", Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Vol. 2, p. 530.
64 Ibid., pp. 158-59.
66 Babur, p. 475.
67 Sharma, p. 119.
tradition offered a reasonable degree of security and support. Delhi contained many important Muslim monuments, such as the tomb of Nizam al-Din Auliya (d. 1324-25), a Shaykh of the Chishti order who was famous for his assistance to the poor, and who had a considerable degree of influence during the reigns of Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad Ibn Tughluq (1325-51). The celebrations at the tombs of these saints were an important aspect of life in Delhi for both the Muslim and non-Muslim sections of the community. Both women and men participated in these ceremonies. These ceremonies in Shahjahanabad adopted an increasingly devotional aspect.68

The design of Shahjahanabad synthesized elements of Hindu and Muslim tradition in the same way that much of the architecture of Shah Jahan's reign did (for example the Taj Mahal). A mixture of Hindu and Muslim practices was evident in the building of Shahjahanabad. Shah Jahan's household astrologer specified the date, hour, and second of the laying of the corner stone of the city.69 A lark was sacrificed and the bodies of executed criminals were put in the trenches around the cornerstones in order to give the city a soul.70 The Hindu influence can be seen in the street plan, which seems to have followed the designs of the Vastu Sastras. The Rasai, the epistles of the Brothers of Purity (written by a group of Tenth century Shi'i), also appear to have been influential in the design.71 These peoples believed that man lived best in an environment that physically resembled the human form. The city plan followed this pattern. The Central Palace represented the head; it grew towards the central bazaar, which in turn grew towards the Jami Masjid, representing the heart.72 Thus Shahjahanabad was a predominantly Hindu city governed by Muslims, making the capital city a microcosm of the empire at large. Shahjahanabad was also considered to be more than a capital of India; it was regarded as the capital of the world, at both a temporal and a metaphysical level. In the metaphysical sense, it was seen as a meeting place of the sacred, a nodal point between heaven and hell - something that was part of Hindu mythology.73

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The capital city in Central Asia and Mughal India was the most ostentatious exemplar of what we have already described as "culture as prestige advertising" in an age where there were no mass media. To a considerable extent this fact can be attributed to the need to make the city, which housed the imperial throne, stand out from the others, and the fact that the cities chosen to be the capital tended, for the most part, to be important centres in their own right. But there were also other factors which must be considered. Any analysis of the capital city must take into account the metaphysical, as well as the physical, qualities that some capital cities were believed to have. For both pragmatic and personal reasons the capital city was very close to the ruler's heart. It was often seen as a

68 Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 151.
69 Ibid., p. 29.
70 Ibid., p.130.
71 Ibid., pp. 32 and 34.
72 Ibid., p. 35.
73 Blake, Shahjahanabad, p. 29.
place where, somehow, the whole was greater than the sum of the parts.

Samarkand exemplified this phenomenon, being an exalted city for the founders of the Timurid and Mughal empires. We have seen that, strategically and economically speaking, it was very important. However it also had an ethereal presence about it which gave it an immense prestige. Timur went to extraordinary lengths to make it the most impressive city in the world - an allure it kept for over a century. By doing so he underlined his authority as a ruler over the sedentary world and turned Samarkand into a showpiece of imperial splendour. This grandeur resulted from a deliberate process of concentrating the cultural resources of the empire in Samarkand. Skilled artisans were one of the few groups of people who, with reasonable confidence, could expect to be spared the massacres that often occurred after cities were captured by Timur's armies. These artisans were deported to Samarkand to work in the Timurid service. This was one of the means by which Timur hoped to establish a monopoly of Islamic intelligence in his empire. Timur also hoped that Samarkand would be a leading centre of culture - the leading centre, in fact, as well as a leading centre of trade. Samarkand had a special allure for the founder of the Mughal Empire. Babur believed that, "few towns in the whole habitable world are so pleasant as Samarkand." Babur's desire to conquer Samarkand had many valid strategic reasons, but at another level, it was something akin to a spiritual crusade. Without occupying Samarkand, he did not feel he could fully assume Timur's mantle.

The capital city gave the ruler an opportunity to construct within the confines of the city an ideal type of what he believed the empire should be like. The rulers of the Timurid and Mughal Empires devoted a considerable sum of their resources towards the building and maintenance of their capital cities. Timur, after a brief flirtation with his birthplace, Shahr-i Sabz, endeavoured to make Samarkand the most splendid city in the world. He undertook a great programme of construction in Samarkand. He built a wall around the city; he ordered that a bazaar be constructed in the middle of the city; he constructed great buildings and palaces such as the Gur-i Amir there; he made it a repository for the treasure captured on campaign. He named the suburbs of the city after other great cities of

74 The Zafarnama records that Timur ordered that all stonemasons captured in the sack of Delhi should be spared for building a mosque in Samarkand. Zafarnama of Shams al-Din Ali Yazdi cited in H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, The History of India as told by its Own Historians, Vol. 3, p. 504.
75 Ibn Arabahah writes that Timur "took from Damascus learned men and craftsmen and all who excelled in any art, the most skilled weavers, tailors, shoe-makers carpenters, makers of head coverings, farriers, painters bow-makers, falconers in short, craftsmen of every kind." He goes on to say: "Likewise his Amirs and Lords took an infinite multitude of lawyers, theologians, of men who knew the Koran from memory, and learned men, craftsmen, workmen, slaves, women, boys and girls, and in the same way acted each man of his army great and small, master and slave." Ibn Arabahah, pp. 161-62. See also Clavijo, pp. 287-88.
76 Babur, p. 74. Babur gives an eloquent description of Samarkand, pp. 74-86.
77 Babur records that Timur tried hard to make Kesh into a great city, but it lacked the facilities of Samarkand. Nevertheless he had some fine buildings built there, such as his great arched hall of which Babur asserted, "Few arches so fine can be seen in the world." Babur, p. 83.
the world, such as Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus. This not only promoted Samarkand as being on an equal footing with these cities; the fact that they were all incorporated within the walls of one city suggested that Samarkand was, in fact, greater than all of them.

This programme of construction was not undertaken solely for the purpose of boosting Timur's ego and enhancing his legitimacy as a ruler. Such "advertising" was aimed at all levels of society. It impressed overseas dignitaries like Clavijo, giving them a sense of the strength of the empire. It impressed upon aristocratic figures the strength of their ruler, and it gave the ordinary inhabitants of the city a chance to share in the glory of the imperial conquests. Most of Timur's palaces and their surrounding gardens were open to the population when Timur was away on campaign. They were decorated with pictures of Timur, his princes and his campaigns; thus the buildings of the capital city served as a means of conveying to the people the triumphs of their ruler abroad. As we have mentioned in the chapter on culture, these were idealized paintings; none of the brutal massacres that occurred on the campaigns were depicted. Timur cleverly manipulated the various institutions within the capital city to ensure that he would be seen as he wanted to be seen.

In the reign of Husain Baiqara, Herat epitomised the prestige advertising of the conspicuous consumption that characterised the late Timurid era. The splendours of Herat advertised the pretensions of the later Timurid as the arbiters of cultural legitimacy in Central Asia. After visiting Husain Baiqara's court, Babur commented that "the whole habitable world has not such a town as Heri had become under Sultan Husain Mirza, whose orders and efforts had increased its splendour and beauty as ten to one, rather, as twenty to one". Timurid art and architecture reached great heights in this period, and the court life was unparalleled. Mir Ali Sher Navai was a great patron, who patronised great art. Although the Timurid empire was in the process of being broken up by secessions from outside, this did not unduly trouble the élite of Herat. Babur, who visited the court of Husain Baiqara not long before its fall, commented: "When he once had in his hands such a town as Heri, his only affair by day and night was with comfort and pleasure, nor was there a man of his who did not take his ease." Husain Baiqara expanded the cultural role of Herat, making it the centre of the Timurid renaissance. The Ikhlasiyya complex, patronised by Ali Shir Navai, was the most ostentatious example of the developments of this era. It extended over 18.5 acres of land. It included the Qudsiyya mosque, the Ikhlasiyya Madrasah, the Khalasiyyah Khanaqah, a hospital, a bath and a Quran reciter. It was a religious endowment which served as an educational

78 "The richness and abundance of this capital and its district is such as is indeed a wonder to behold", Clavijo, p. 287.
79 Babur, p. 300.
80 Babur considered that Herat was "Full of learned and matchless men." Babur, p. 283.
81 Babur, p. 261.
and charitable foundation. Around 1500, there were seven professors teaching in the complex, only one fewer than in Husain Baiqara's mosque.\textsuperscript{83} It epitomised the conspicuous consumption of the late Timurid era. It was typical of many properties in this era in that because it was a religious endowment it paid no tax.

The prestige advertising aspect of the Timurid capitals was equally evident in Mughal India. Fatehpur Sikri was intended as a comprehensive statement of Akbar's political maturity. The palace at Fatehpur Sikri was placed atop a hill. A massive mosque was erected. The nobility followed the lead of the emperor and Fatehpur Sikri was modelled in Akbar's image, not the Muslim image.\textsuperscript{84} Its new style of architecture synthesized Hindu and Muslim traditions, representing the inclusiveness of Akbar's reign, and at the same time exalting Akbar himself by acting as a splendid and imposing expression of this vision. In the reign of Shah Jahan Delhi developed into an important cultural centre, because of the art and architecture which flourished greatly under patronage. It included such noted structures as the Jami-Masjid and the Red Fort. The Jami Masjid was sited atop a hill in a prominent position. The Chandni Chowk - the main business district - led up to it. Although Aurangzeb opted to reduce cultural patronage, princesses such as Jahanara Begum and her daughter Zeb-un Nisa continued to patronise art in Delhi.\textsuperscript{85} Great festivals were held in the capital each year to commemorate such occasions as the emperor's birthday and the nauroz - the Persian new year. These ceremonies saw the emperor distribute gifts to nobles and citizens alike.

If the construction of new cities was a notable feature of the Central Asian and Mughal empires, so too was the reconstruction of cities. Timur saw to it that the cities he sacked during his campaigns were reconstructed and Shah Rukh did the same at Meshed. Care was always taken by the later Timurids to maintain Timur's buildings. Often they would link themselves to their descendants by adding to the great buildings or monuments of their predecessors. The rulers of the Mughal empire were similar in this respect. Shah Jahan, regarded as the foremost builder of the Mughal empire, not only constructed cities such as Shahjahanabad, and monuments like the Taj Mahal, but also maintained the works of his predecessors. He replaced many of Akbar's buildings, such as the palace fortress at Agra. He rebuilt Jahangir's hall of private audience in the same city, and added a king's tower to it, with a hall of forty pillars. In this way he identified himself with his predecessor, while at the same time imposing his vision of architecture upon the past. In this way, too, he acknowledged the importance of history, while also articulating the new vision of architecture his reign represented.

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When all is said it has to be admitted that while the capital city in Mughal India contained many of the inherent characteristics of the Timurid capitals, the specific qualities of these cities were, in many respects, fundamentally altered. The capital city in Mughal India retained its role as a resource base to provide the military force necessary to assert

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 84.

\textsuperscript{84} J. F. Richards, "The Formation of Imperial Authority Under Akbar and Jahangir", p. 262.

\textsuperscript{85} Chandra, "Cultural and Political Role of Delhi", in Frykenberg ed. Delhi Through the Ages, p. 208.
the power of the court over the provinces. The presence of the Mughal court tended to inflate the capital's importance to a greater extent than in Central Asia. So when the court left the capital city the resulting decline was far greater than occurred in Central Asia. The Mughal capitals, like their Timurid forbears, provided a splendid setting for the throne; they sustained the burden of the imperial household and impressed the authority of the court over all sections of the population. Furthermore, there was an identifiably Muslim element in both the Mughal and Timurid capitals. But the Islamic element tended to be more pronounced in Central Asia than in predominantly non-Muslim India. In both Central Asia and Mughal India the capital city was the pre-eminent example of prestige advertising, a panoramic billboard for the symbols of imperial rule. The capital city acted as a theatre for the promulgation of the imperial vision at all levels. It housed the cultural élite of the empire. It acted as a medium for the expression of the royal vision to the general public in a myriad of forms: the monumental structures; the court rituals; the visits of overseas dignitaries and important nobles. It was one place where, with sufficient resources, the sovereign could be all things to all people and promote an image of imperial splendour in a way that could not be replicated in the empire at large. It acted as a paradigm for the empire at large to aspire to. But the specific forms of this "advertising" were different.

The nature of the continuities and discontinuities between the capital cities of Central Asia and Mughal India was dictated by a number of factors. One of these was the change in environment from an empire based on nomadic pastoralism and long-distance trade to one situated in a predominantly sedentary setting and administered by a protobureaucratic regime. The army, it is true, retained its importance because it was necessary in both settings. In Central Asia it was essential to safeguard the economic bulwark of the empire against nomadic incursions, for which reasons the capitals were heavily defended. In Mughal India the challenges to central authority also necessitated a large garrison, first to act as a base from which the court could assert its authority over the provinces, and also because the army in Mughal India was, as we have seen, used mainly for the purposes of control and for show. The Mughal court was a much enlarged version of the Timurid courts, something largely attributable to the bureaucratic structure necessary to oversee provincial revenue collection and the courtly paraphernalia necessary to elevate the prestige of the emperor as the supreme source of authority over such grants. Thus the Mughal court inflated the capital city to a far greater degree than had occurred in the Timurid empire. This inflation also made the capital city more dependent upon the court, resulting in the dramatic emptying of the cities in the court's absence. The imperial encampment was retained in Mughal India because it enhanced the structures of imperial rule. It served as a means whereby the court could transfer itself in all its glory to the provinces and maintain the master-servant relationship that was an integral part of Mughal rule. At the same time it projected an image of the imperial splendour and symbolically associated the Mughals with the conquering tradition of their nomadic descendants.

The phenomenon of Indianization was, of course, an important influence in determining the nature of Central Asian influence in the Mughal capital. The Muslim
element of the Mughal cities was not as pronounced as it had been in Central Asia, where
the ruling élite patronised a proliferation of Islamic structures to reinforce their claims as
worthy rulers. Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and Shahjahanabad contained many Islamic
structures, but the forms of these were synthesized with Hindu patterns. As the seats of
Muslims who ruled over a predominantly non-Muslim country, the Mughal capitals were
more universalistic in their religious accoutrements. There were elements of Hindu and
Muslim design in both Fatehpur Sikri and Shahjahanabad. The capital cities reflected the
agenda of a polity which wished to rule over many sections of the Indian people and did
so through a nobility made up of a cross-section of Indians. Timur sought to make
Samarkand the Islamic capital of the world; the Mughals sought to make their capitals the
spiritual centre of the world. But the basic principle of the capital city as the definitive
display of prestige advertising remained intact. It allowed the court to conduct its
association with all levels of society on its own terms, in an environment created to show
its supreme splendour. Shahjahanabad shared the same conception as Samarkand; it
served the same purpose as a symbol of imperial authority, and it also had some of the
supernatural allure of that city. But it was not simply a replica of Samarkand.

The attributes we have discussed are, to an extent, to be found in all capitals,
inasmuch as all capital cities endeavour to portray the ruling elite in the best possible
light. But there was some evidence to suggest that Central Asia acted as a form of role
model for the Mughals. The personalisation of the capital city by the sovereign is one
element of this. Braudel has suggested that by comparison with France, the capital city
in Mughal India was indisputably the emperors town, being completely dependent upon
the imperial court for its livelihood. For Timur, the city of Samarkand was a city
where he could exhibit to all and sundry the glories of his campaigns. For Shah Rukh,
his works in the city of Herat established his credentials as an upright Muslim ruler, and
his social controls which he carried out within the city reinforced this assertion. Ulugh
Beg projected Samarkand as a centre of pleasure, and also of enquiry - it was the
rationalists' capital of the Timurid empire. Husain Baiqara made Herat his own city; it
became synonymous with his vision of the idyllic lifestyle an imperial court should lead,
and the art of the period reflected this vision. The same could have been said of Mughal
capital cities. Agra was important to Babur as the place where he had re-established
Timurid rule in an old Muslim town. Fatehpur Sikri, with its innovative combination of
Hindu and Muslim designs, was Akbar's statement that his reign constituted a new era in
Mughal rule, an era of inclusion for all races and religions. The movement to Lahore was
Akbar's concession that not everyone shared this vision. Shahjahanabad signalled the
ultimate synthesis of Hindu and Muslim designs within the one city. It also represented
Shah Jahan attempting to outdo his grandfather Akbar, and to construct a city uniquely his
own.

In the later period of Mughal rule authority was largely contained within the capital
city, or more specifically the court. As the political strength of the empire declined

86 Braudel, contrasting the emptying of Delhi in the absence of the court with contemporary France remarked:
"can we imagine Paris following Louis XIV during his journey to the Metz in 1744?" Fernand Braudel,
effective imperial control outside the bounds of the city was severely limited. But it is, perhaps, significant that Mughal rule proved sustainable, albeit in an increasingly symbolic manner, within the capital. The bombast and pageantry of the Mughal court continued to give the Mughal capital some form of power and the assent of the emperor was an important source of legitimacy in the provinces.\(^7\) This indicates the extent to which the Mughal capitals were, to a considerable extent, self-contained empires in their own right. The Mughals had achieved this through inflating the Central Asian court, and consequently the capital city, a process which, as a corollary, exalted the prestige of the emperor. There was an element of self-sustainability in the Mughal capital city. In the eighteenth century this was not sufficient to retain meaningful imperial control against the strong challenges from provincial potentates, but it did allow continued control of the stamp of imperial authority.

\(^7\) Spear, \textit{Twilight of the Mughals}, p. 9.
VII: Epilogue and Conclusion

We have seen that the salient features, and some specific aspects of, Timurid imperial institutions were transplanted into Mughal India, as were a myriad of Central Asian personages, practices, and products. Ultimately, the transfer of Timurid rule from a predominantly nomadic society to a primarily sedentary empire, and the concomitant demands of that transition - a transition from a conquering order into a ruling polity - together with the nature of the Indian environment, meant that the transplantation of such institutions preceded, and foreshadowed, a considerable degree of transformation in India. This transformation did not preclude the continuation of a Central Asian influence in Mughal India, occasionally in its original Central Asian form, but in the main there was a transfer of symbolic forms and of certain key concepts. Having analysed, in the foregoing chapters, the extent to which the individual strands of the institutional fabric of the Timurid empire were transplanted into Mughal India, we must endeavour, finally, to combine the collective threads into a coherent composition. To this end we shall shortly evaluate the Central Asian influence in the Mughal Empire in relation to the themes we identified in the introduction, which, it will be recalled, were the dialectic between the nomadic and sedentary worlds and the evolution of empire. But first we must bring together our thoughts on the process of decline. In the preceding chapters we have focused upon the formation and the consolidation of the Timurid and Mughal Empires. We shall now briefly focus upon the fragmentation of the respective empires, so that we can consider the Central Asian influence in the Mughal empire in all stages of that empire's developmental cycle.

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If studying the formation and consolidation of the empires indicates their areas of strength, then a study of decline reveals how sustainable these achievements were and helps us to identify what aspects of the institutions may have weakened the imperial structure.

First, it must be said that neither the decline of the Timurid empire nor the decline of the Mughal empire was necessarily a surprising occurrence. It is inevitable that all empires eventually become outmoded and that none can make themselves indispensable indefinitely. Indeed, given the history of many steppe empires, it is remarkable that the Timurid empire lasted as long as it did. When analysing the process of decline in relation to the Timurid empire, it is important to qualify the term "decline" by emphasising that it is not a generic prescription for all aspects of Timurid society. The decline of the Timurids was not a uniform phenomenon among all the institutions of the empire. Territorially speaking, the Timurid empire began to decline in the reign of Shah Rukh. This was the
result of increasingly strong external challenges from groups such as the Turkmens, dynasties - the Qara Qoyunlu and the Aq-Qoyunlu - the Uzbeks, and the Moghuls of Moghulistan. Internal rebellions by several of the Timurid princes provided another challenge to Timurid rule. The conjunction of internal and external pressures prevented the Timurid empire from re-establishing political primacy. These difficulties were exacerbated by the disorder after Shah Rukh's death. This left the Timurids vulnerable to raiders, something which was exemplified by the Uzbeks' sack of Samarqand in 1448. Matters did not improve with the accession and subsequent reign of Abu Said. The bitterly contested succession dispute after Shah Rukh's death, inasmuch as it destroyed a good deal of the economic base of the empire, left the eventual victor with insufficient resources for the expansion necessary for steppe empires. For a time Abu Said reunited the territories of Khurasan and Transoxiana, but, when he attempted the conquests necessary to satisfy his followers, he was defeated by the Aq Qoyunlu leader Uzun Hasan. Subsequently all the Persian territories of the Timurids were finally lost. Moreover, in Abu Said's reign, the Uzbeks and the Moghulstan Mughals had been able to raid with impunity. The political decentralisation, or perhaps more accurately fragmentation, of the Timurid empire occurred after Abu Said's death. Husain Baiqara, the most famous of the Timurid rulers in this period, retained political control over Khurasan until his death in 1506. But he could not be persuaded to wage preventative campaigns against the onslaught of Uzbek power.

The territorial decline of the Timurid empire, then, can be dated from around the middle of Shah Rukh's reign. But the loss of territory and the resulting loss of political power and imperial prestige did not entail the collapse of all the Timurid institutions. The army certainly declined in effectiveness, but the Turkic military aristocracy retained their privileged position in the Timurid hierarchy. The Timurid court, too, retained power of a sort over its territories, even if this power became increasingly decentralised as a result of the increase in Soyurghal grants. The cultural institutions of the Timurid empire continued to develop unabated in spite of the loss of Timurid military supremacy. Islam retained its primacy at all levels. The dervish orders gained markedly in strength, both within and without the Timurid empire. Under Khwaja Ahrar they effectively controlled Samarqand for virtually the second half of the fifteenth century. The symbols of imperial rule, such as architecture, the literary and pictorial arts, and the elaborate imperial paraphernalia, were also maintained in the face of political decline. The reign of Ulugh Beg in Samarkand saw a flourishing of scientific research and an opulent court life in the face of repeated Uzbek raids. Husain Baiqara's rule in Herat saw an unrivalled upsurge in cultural splendour at the élite level, but, as Maria Eva Subtelny has shown, this was achieved by compromising the financial position of the central treasury. The capital

1 Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 6, p. 119.
2 Babur, p. 260.
cities, as we have seen, retained their importance throughout the Timurid era, and also for some of the Uzbek era. Thus the institutions of the Timurid empire were affected to varying degrees by the process of decline.

While the process of Timurid decline was not a uniform one, the magnificent cultural achievements could not sustain the empire; they were not a substitute for the loss of military power or the decreasing revenue of the imperial treasuries. The Timurids were superseded by the nomadic Uzbeks, who conquered the late Timurid attempt at a more sedentary type of empire. It will be recalled that the Uzbeks adopted some of the symbolic trappings of sedentary rule, but they did not adopt the structural features of sedentary rule, largely because, with the exception of the reign of Abdullah Khan, Central Asia was rarely united under one ruler for any great period of time. Thus although the successors of the Timurids had, for a time, the military substance to support their demands, they did not have any mechanism to perpetuate this strength after the death of a great ruler.

For a time, the Mughal empire threatened to follow the Timurid pattern of decline. After the death of the great founder, Babur, the same processes of regional unrest occurred: the Afghan nobility who had followed Sher Shah were the leaders in this. Internal dissensions led by Humayun's brothers saw the Mughal emperor go into exile. As we have seen, Akbar, initially assisted by his regent Bairam Khan, and later by ministers such as Rajah Todar Mal, negated the destructive aspects of Central Asian tradition which had seen his father expelled from India. The Central Asians lost their numerically dominant position within the nobility in favour of Indian groups. It might be argued, then, that certain Central Asian characteristics that had led to the temporary demise of the Mughals had an indirect influence in what proved to be the more stable formula arrived at in the subsequent Mughal restoration under Akbar.

The final decline of the Mughal empire mirrored many aspects of the Timurids' demise. There were shared problems of external secessions, coupled with internal dissensions, and financial woes in the imperial treasury. Moreover the pattern of decline was not a universal one in all regions at all times. The decline of the Mughal Empire has occupied the attention of historians to a far greater extent than has the fall of the Timurid empire; there have been many historical autopsies performed upon the Mughal empire. Communal, structural and political factors have been put forward to explain the Mughal decline. Some have regarded the religious policy of Aurangzeb as the catalyst for the decline. It is charged that Aurangzeb's southern campaign and some of his legislation alienated the Hindu population, resulting in the attempts led by Hindu armies, such as the Marathas, to overthrow the Mughal regime. Such an explanation is not wholly convincing. It is undeniable that a considerable section of the Hindu population revolted against the Mughals, but so too did many Muslims. Furthermore, Rajput troops continued loyally in Mughal service throughout the reign of Aurangzeb. Some historians, such as Satish Chandra and Irfan Habib, have attributed the downfall of the Mughal Empire to structural deficiencies. Chandra asserted that the mansabdari and jagirdari systems had broke down by the end of Aurangzeb's reign. In his view this was shown by the

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4 Sharma, p. 215.
5 Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court 1707-40, p. xlix.
increasing friction in the relationship between the jagirdars, zamindars and resident cultivators. In the opinion of Irfan Habib the system of revenue collection in the Mughal Empire was inherently flawed, inasmuch as it encouraged the nobility to extract the maximum amount of revenue. Hence the peasantry were overtaxed, and driven to revolt. Habib argued that the Mughal system lacked any effective mechanism for checking the rapacity of the nobility. He contended that the process of transferring jagirs encouraged the nobility to set high rates of assessment that overburdened the peasantry, and in the long run the agrarian base of the empire, because the nobility did not have to concern themselves with the long term implications of overtaxing the peasantry. Such structural explanations have been challenged by some historians, who lay much more emphasis on the rise (in a way which they claim was largely unrelated to the empire's fiscal problems) of provincial centres of power. Central Asia had some role in this, for it was a series of tribal movements in the Herat-Qandahar region around 1710 which began the incursions from the northwest which culminated in the expeditions of Nadir Shah. More recently, Muzaffar Alam has shown how the strategically important Awadh and Punjab regions were lost to effective imperial control because the regional elites found that their interests were best served by appropriating as much political power as possible to themselves.

Equally important, (though, historiographically speaking, somewhat neglected) observations, can also be made as a result of an analysis of Mughal cultural institutions. As had happened in the Timurid empire, Mughal culture continued to flourish in the face of political decline. Yet continuing cultural splendour was not enough; it could be argued that in many senses the Mughal empire was becoming outmoded. The decline of the Mughals coincided with the decline of the other great Muslim empires of the period, the Safavid empire and the Ottoman empire. The breakup of the three Islamic empires at the same time has occasioned some comment. Several important trends have been discerned. Demographically-speaking Europe's population increased at more than twice the rate of India's. Towns greatly expanded in Europe, but not in India. Athar Ali argues that this deprived the Mughals of a possible safety valve for the agrarian crisis that occurred in the eighteenth century. And Europe became the centre of world commerce between 1500 and 1700; this had adverse repercussions for Indian trade. Technologically, the Mughals had been superseded by developments overseas; they did not keep pace with the improvements in technology, showing little interest in European developments.

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8 Ibid., p. 320.
9 C.A. Bayly, "India and West Asia c. 1700-1830", *Asian Affairs*, 19, 1, 1988, pp. 6-7.
11 By 1700 thirteen per cent of people in England and Wales were living in towns of 5000 and above. This figure had not been reached in India in 1901. Ibid., p. 389.
12 Ibid., p. 390.
13 See Ahsan Jan Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture (A.D. 1498-1707)*,
artillery, for example was obsolete by international standards and was comprehensively outperformed by British weapons. The élite culture had produced many of the glories of the Mughal reign, but it had neglected to promote intellectual and scientific inquiry. Because the Mughals had become outmoded technologically, they did not make themselves indispensable militarily, and this role was usurped. Their survival can be attributed to the fact that many believed they were indispensable politically, albeit in a rubber-stamping fashion.

When analysing the decline of the Mughal empire it is important to acknowledge the existence of divergent points of view. The problematic nature of diagnosing its decline is exacerbated by the fact that not all historians are agreed as to the seriousness of the maladies that bedeviled the Mughal empire. While some have regarded the process of decline as symptomatic of a terminal illness which ultimately ended imperial authority; others have sought to qualify the extent of the affliction, arguing that in some senses the Mughal empire was a regenerative organism - or perhaps a series of recuperative organisms - whose properties have not received recognition in previous accounts. In contrast, the classical view held that the death of Aurangzeb marked the effective end of Mughal rule; the period after this was one of anarchy and unchecked decline. The battle of Plassey in 1757 was held to signal the next phase in India history, that of British rule.

Not all historians, however, have equated political decline with the loss of political influence and an end to prosperity. Muzaffar Alam sees the eighteenth century as a period where certain regional groups rose to power, but remained, nominally at least, within the institutional framework of the Mughal empire. Alam has argued that there was prosperity in some provincial areas. He argues, further, that provincial successor states emerged as a result of the inability of the Mughal institutions to cope with regional unrest. The army was ineffective against raiders. The decrees of the court were irregularly enforced,

1982. See also Irfan Habib, "Technology and Barriers to Social Change in Mughal India", Indian Historical Review, 17, 1, (1980).
14 C.A. Bayly believes that "studies of the regional principalities of Bengal, Hydembad and Awadh suggest that the turbulent events of the century heralded not the final dissolution of the Mughal polity as much as the emergence of regional dynastic rulers who initiated new cycles of growth and regeneration." Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870, p. 36. See also C.A. Bayly, Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (The New Cambridge History of India), Vol. 2, pt. 1.
15 Commenting on the disorder in the Mughal empire in the closing period of Aurangzeb's reign and the period thereafter Habib wrote: "The period which follows [the eighteenth century] does not offer an edifying spectacle: the gates were opened to reckless rapine, anarchy and foreign conquest." Habib, Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 351.
16 Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughals, p. 13.
17 Alam calculated that the assessed revenue of the Awadh region c. 1755 had doubled since the time of the writing of the A’in-i Akbari (1595). Alam, p. 103. Athar Ali has questioned whether these figures indicated economic growth, since they were undoubtedly cancelled out by increases in prices. Athar Ali, "Recent Theories of Decline in Eighteenth Century India", Indian Historical Review, p. 104.
the culture became increasingly insular and the capital city became isolated. Despite these difficulties Alam believes that the successor states in the Punjab and the Awadh regions experienced economic growth during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{18} C.A. Bayly views the eighteenth century as a period where certain zamindars and Hindu clan leaders were able to appropriate revenue for themselves without Mughal overlordship. Thus more compact domains were built up in core areas of agricultural prosperity.\textsuperscript{19} These views, which constitute something of a revision, though certainly not a rejection, of the work of the Aligarh historians, perform an important task in qualifying the extent of Mughal decline, but there remain issues which such accounts leave unresolved. The decline of effective Mughal authority, authority which had extracted a considerable amount of revenue (at times, in theory at least, about forty percent of the value of produce), the loss of the revenue caused by the consumption of imperial household and nobility in the main Mughal cities, must have had repercussions for the economic welfare of India in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{20} The individual zamindars who rose to power may have been stronger than Mughal power in their local area, but they did not have the unified force of the Mughal empire, which, to an extent, accounts for their vulnerability to raiders.\textsuperscript{21} The extent of regional prosperity at a time of the weakening of central authority must, therefore, be acknowledged as indicating a considerable degree of decline.

The debate on Mughal decline, then, has essentially revolved around the issue of the extent to which the Mughal structure was a centralized bureaucracy. And it has to be emphasized that this question, in turn, is to a considerable extent a question about the degree to which certain Central Asian "nomadic" traditions of decentralization were superseded in the Indian environment. Those historians who have assumed the existence of a considerable degree of centralization have regarded the period after Aurangzeb's death as spelling the end of Mughal control because it was in this period that what have been regarded as the classical features of the Mughal state broke down. In the view of the historians of the Aligarh School these trends are in marked departure from the much higher degree of centralization that characterised the reigns of the so-called "Great Mughals". However, for those recent historians who have queried the extent of Mughal central authority, even in the empire's heyday, the events of the eighteenth century represent not so much the decline of central authority as the reshaping of that authority in different forms. Because they view Mughal rule as more indirect than previously assumed, the changes of the eighteenth century are seen not so much as the definitive end to Mughal authority as a continuation of the devolution of effective power to certain powerful provincial leaders, some of whom operated under Mughal auspices, some of whom did not. This process had been occurring for quite some time. Furthermore, it

\textsuperscript{18} Alam, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{19} Bayly, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{20} Athar Ali makes this point strongly See, "Recent Theories of Decline in Eighteenth Century India", p. 105.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 107.
might be argued that the potential for its occurrence had always been there since the Mughals' Central Asian days. In many respects the protagonists on both sides are answering different questions. It is agreed on all sides that the extent of central authority declined, but it has been questioned whether such decline occurred equally in all areas throughout the duration of the eighteenth century.

Ultimately the survival of the Mughals became essentially symbolic, just as, in some senses, the Timurid traditions had been continued in symbolic form in Mughal India. The Mughals' political power had declined because it was increasingly possible for various groups to gain rewards from the imperial court, and from outside the court, without having to conform to the commands of the emperor. The Mughals lost the support of those upon whom their political survival depended. Nevertheless, although Mughal rule became increasingly symbolic, it did not become immediately superfluous. The emperor, nominally at least, continued to be an ultimate source of claims to authority and the supreme arbiter of legitimacy as late as the nineteenth century.22

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Having followed the theme of the life cycle of the empires through to their natural conclusion, we must now attempt a synthesis of our overall findings in this study. The transformation of Central Asian institutions cannot be explained by any one factor: a multicausal explanation is necessary. But we can begin by saying that although the Timurids enforced their authority through a primarily nomadic military aristocracy, they had a close association with the sedentary world. Therefore many of their institutions were adaptable to ruling over settled lands as well as steppe lands. So a partial basis for Mughal rule in India had, in some respects, been laid in Central Asia. But in India the nomadic conquering polity, in order to survive and expand, had to become increasingly assimilated to the society of the peoples it conquered, and to adapt. The Yuan empire underwent a similar change in China, as did the II-Khans in Persia.

Some elements of nomadic armies were maintained in Mughal India. The Mughal army maintained large numbers of cavalry, as its Central Asian predecessors had done. But the Mughal army was primarily designed to fight set-piece battles rather than to strike out beyond the subcontinent. The priorities of the Mughal army were dictated around safeguarding the revenue-yielding terrain that was the basis of the Mughal empire. So long as the Mughal emperors controlled this source of income, they could rightfully consider themselves to be rulers of Hindustan. The Mughal court also showed considerable evidence of the influence of sedentarisation. The Mughal court retained the basic structure of its Timurid predecessor, but this structure was inflated by the addition of a significant bureaucratic component which was necessary to administer the mansabdari system. The bureaucracy, itself an important aspect of sedentary rule, was enlarged to bring about the process of administrative centralization, which represented a further departure from Central Asian, and in particular, nomadic traditions. Centralization was an important paradigm in Mughal rule as it served to concentrate power in the hands of the imperial court, and, in particular, the emperor who was promoted as the supreme King above all others in India. The programme of centralization led to a

22 Spear, Twilight of the Mughuls, p. 9.
revolt by some of the Central Asian nobility, who resented the regulations imposed by the central authority, but although such a revolt resulted in some concessions to the administrative reforms, centralization remained enshrined in Mughal administrative policy.

The élite culture celebrated the nomadic origins of the Mughals in pictorial commemorations and some imperial pastimes, such as hunting. The imperial encampment was another important symbol of the Mughals' nomadic origins which was retained as a parade-type float for Mughal rule. But nomadic culture was confined to a symbolic role in Mughal culture, just as Central Asia became largely confined to a symbolic role in Mughal India generally. It did not play an active role in Mughal élite culture. The capital city in Mughal India became a refuge for the court; thus its site could change more frequently than in Central Asia, where the capital city provided the economic base which allowed the sending of the nomadic troops on campaign. It can be seen, then, that the transition from nomadic conquering order to rulers of a settled empire, a change incorporating a considerable degree of centralization, resulted in substantial modifications to many Central Asian institutions.

Not all changes to Central Asian institutions, however, can be explained through the transplantation of a polity from a predominantly nomadic to a primarily agrarian society. A study of the transformation of Timurid institutions under Mughal rule cannot be made without reference to India itself, and the agrarian base of Indian society was only one agent of change. The process of Indianization transcended some aspects of Central Asian tradition and transformed others. It was not a uniform process, nor was it a universal one. It was a constantly evolving phenomenon.

Although many aspects of central Asian tradition had been useful in expediting the transplantation of Mughal rule to India, not all of these traditions survived the transformation of the Mughal empire that occurred in the reign of Akbar. We have seen throughout this study that Akbar's reign - in particular the 1570's - is the first, and perhaps the most important, period of the Indianization of Mughal rule. The army had to adapt itself to the demands of ruling India, or, more specifically, the challenge of the large armed peasantry within India. This saw a much greater infantry component in the Mughal army, as the Mughals had to fight against provincial rajahs and zamindars who could raise large forces against Mughal rule. These challenges saw the Mughals attempt to incorporate some of the "armed peasantry" within their army, the most notable example of this being the Rajputs, who served the Mughals loyally throughout their rule. The court, again, had to adapt itself in a way that made it markedly different from its Central Asian tradition. In India there were many different groups led by many petty rulers competing for power and resources. To meet these challenges, the reign of Akbar saw a comprehensive set of measures implemented to exalt the emperor as the supreme sovereign over the many petty kings. This resulted in the adaptation of Central Asian traditions. The Turco-Mongolian tradition did not, by itself, give the Mughals legitimacy as rulers over an Indian empire. It enabled them to allude to a great tradition, the tradition of forbears who had conquered India previously, but the Mughals developed their own
symbols of legitimacy, their own institutions for ruling India, and made the nobility more inclusive. The policy of employing Indians to rule Indians, which began in Akbar's reign, meant that the Central Asian numbers in the nobility diminished.

In Mughal times Central Asian culture, in its elite and popular manifestations, also underwent a marked transformation in response to the influence of Indianization. This is seen in the symbols of imperial rule. The elite culture of Central Asia was adapted to exalting the authority of an Indian emperor and the physical and ideological structures developed accordingly. Mughal architecture retained echoes of Timurid tradition, but incorporated elements of Indo-Muslim and Hindu architecture alongside these. The Timurid traditions did not retain their meaning in an environment where the majority of the population did not have a firsthand acquaintance with Turco-Mongolian tradition. The Mughal pictorial and literary arts, also, became increasingly Indian in form. For the most part they retained only hints of the Mughals' Central Asian background. The symbols of rule at the imperial court, such as the courtly paraphernalia, dress and so forth, also became increasingly Indianized, although Timurid memorabilia retained an exalted position in the Mughal possessions.

The capital city epitomised the process of Indianization as it epitomised so much else. In Akbar's reign Fatehpur Sikri articulated the new vision of imperial rule. The Islamic element of Mughal rule represented a continuity from Central Asia insofar as there was a nominally Sunni Islamic component in kingship in both empires. Here again, however, the Indian environment performed an important role. The Mughals, who represented a minority religion in India, widened the ruling ideology to include the Hindu population. The religious policy of the Mughals continued the religious tolerance of Central Asian rulers, but articulated it in an Indian fashion. Again, Akbar's reign was an important watershed in this respect. His adaptation of the traditional Mongol religious tolerance into the more pantheist Suh-i Kuh - universal tolerance - was the ideological platform upon which the nobility was changed so as to incorporate more members of the Hindu élite. At the popular level the Mughals endeavoured to associate themselves with those religious orders and celebrations which were felt to possess a universalistic appeal; hence the Mughals' association with the Chishtiyyah. Few aspects of Central Asian Islam survived in Mughal India. As we have seen, many members of the Naqshbandiyya ventured into India. Some obtained important positions at the imperial court, others set up local communities. Ultimately, however, the Naqshbandiyya played a minimal role in Indian politics, outside of a few isolated cases, and their communities dwindled because, for the most part, they made little effort to adapt themselves to their new environment.

Important as was the "Indianization" of Central Asian traditions and Mughal rule in general during Akbar's period, the process was by no means confined to his reign. On the contrary, the dialectic between Indian and Central Asian traditions continued throughout the Mughal period, particularly in the reign of Shah Jahan. This was especially evident in the culture of his reign. Works such as the Taj Mahal represented the high point of the synthesis between Hindu and Muslim architectural traditions. The Timurid harmonization and monumentality was evident in the Taj Mahal, and the dome echoed some of the great Timurid structures, but the Taj was an undeniably Indian
monument. In many ways this summed up the Central Asian influence in the Mughal empire. The Central Asian heritage of the Mughals was evident in symbolic form, as were the underlying concepts, but the specific form was Indian. This was also seen in the capital city of Shahjahanabad, which synthesized Hindu and Muslim designs in the same way as the architecture of Shah Jahan's reign had done. It paralleled the greatness of Samarkand in its conception, but it was Shah Jahan's creation. But while, on the one hand, the process of Indianization saw the Central Asian culture undergo major alterations, on the other hand Shah Jahan's invasion of Balkh and Badakhshan suggests that, for all the Indianization of Timurid institutions, Central Asia itself retained a continuing allure for the Mughal rulers - an allure that transcended the fact that it was over a century since the exiled Timurid polity had come to India.

The process of Indianization manifested itself quite distinctly in the concept of kingship. The core features of Timurid kingship - a supreme monarch who legitimated his rule through claims of a supernatural mandate - who professed to be an upholder of Islamic standards and a constantly promoted cult of personality - were maintained in Mughal India. The image of royalty, and kingship in particular, was exalted to a far higher degree in Mughal India than it had been in Central Asia. We have seen that this was partly to project the Mughal emperor as the supreme king above the many petty potentates in India, but it had a wider significance than that. In the ideology of Mughal Kingship the emperor was the source of all claims to advancement, and, to reinforce this, people were encouraged, through the symbols of imperial rule, to regard the emperor as their master. This promulgation of the pir-murid relationship between the emperor and the citizens was an all-embracing formula designed to maintain the loyalty of noble and commoner alike. The institutions of Timurid rule were adapted to fit this pattern. The aspects of Central Asian rule which enhanced the authority of the emperor were retained; those unsuited to this demand were discarded. It could be argued that the court religion in Akbar's reign - the Divine Faith - was a more elaborate version of the religious tolerance of the Mongol Great Khans and of the Timurid rulers. The elaborate court rituals further reinforced the authority of the emperor. The Central Asian heritage offered a source of legitimacy for Mughal rule, but by itself it was not necessarily a greater source of legitimacy than any of its rivals within India.

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Our discussion of the transformation of Central Asian institutions in relation to some dominant themes of change enables us to analyze the overall significance of the processes we have identified. The developments we have discussed suggest that the transplantation of Central Asian institutions, ideas and traditions was most evident in symbolic forms and in the transfer of the inherent concepts of Timurid institutions, if not always in their specific forms. Central Asian institutions in their Central Asian form were, for the most part, unsustainable in Mughal India without substantial alterations. We have seen that extensive modifications were made to the structure of institutions such as the army, the court, the position of Islam in society, and to the alterations to Central Asian architectural, literary and pictorial forms. Some aspects of Central Asian tradition were maintained
within these institutions, but in many respects they lost their Central Asian character. Thus it was that Central Asian traditions survived mainly in symbolic form, such as the genealogical inscriptions on the great seal of the Mughal emperors.

We must make the point again that in the final analysis these changes suggest that, in the long term, the Central Asian institutions, which served a nomadic military élite ruling over nomadic and settled peoples, were unsuited to the consolidation of the Mughal rule in what became its classical form: where the nobility, composed of many different social groups, extracted revenue from agrarian production, within the framework established and maintained by the central bureaucracy. The institutions of Central Asia were, on the whole, far more useful in the transplantation of Timurid rule than they were in the subsequent transition from a conquering to a ruling order. In the process of transplantation, the Central Asian cavalry gave the Mughals a decisive edge in their first battles in India. Babur’s Chinggisid and Timurid pedigree gave him legitimacy as a conqueror. Orthodox Sunnism, which Babur retained from his Timurid heritage, enabled the Mughals to present themselves as Islamic warriors. The outwardly Islamic, but basically secular, Central Asian élite culture proved adaptable to India. In the transformation, as we have seen, many of the administrative and martial aspects of the Central Asian élite culture were modified because they needed to be adapted to a sedentary empire, and because of the demands of the Indian environment. It could be argued, then, that Central Asia could not offer a sufficiently developed infrastructure for the type of empire the Mughals sought to establish in India. This is not to imply that in the Central Asian context there were any inherent deficiencies in the Central Asian institutions themselves. Rather, it is to suggest that, despite the increased contact between the nomadic and sedentary environments since Mongol times, the nomadic institutions still needed a considerable degree of modification if they were to be transplanted into a non-nomadic society. The long reign of the Mughals indicates how successful the transformation was, how adaptable the Timurid institutions were, and also how the sedentary world was increasing in supremacy in the Mughal period.

In the preceding discussion, we have focused on the changes made to Central Asian institutions in Mughal India. It is now appropriate to examine the question of Central Asian contact with Mughal India. The institutions of Central Asian rule underwent a considerable degree of adaptation, but there were other important Central Asian connections with Mughal India. First there was the emigration of many Central Asians to India, rich and poor alike. We have seen that the Central Asians formed a distinct element within the nobility, which, although it decreased numerically, retained a considerable degree of importance as a faction in the Mughal court. There were also many Central Asians serving in all ranks within the Mughal army. Central Asian immigrants were also influential in the civilian world. Many Central Asian holy men are recorded as visiting the Mughal court, while we have seen that many representatives of Central Asian Sufism were attracted to India. Central Asian traders, also, continued the links between Central Asia and Mughal India.

Central Asia, whether active or passive in international affairs, had continuing connections with India throughout the Mughal period. Diplomatic exchanges between
India and the Uzbeks, their successors the Astrakhanids, and the rulers of Moghulistan occurred throughout the Mughal era. These diplomatic exchanges were not solely "showing-the-flag" visits between respective rulers. Central Asia played an important role in determining Mughal foreign policy. This is particularly true of relations between the Mughals and the Safavids, which cannot be fully explained without reference to Central Asia. In times of strength Central Asia sometimes took the initiative in this sphere. Abdullah Khan several times tried to entice Akbar into fighting against the Safavids. Later, when Central Asia was weaker, Jahangir tried to form an alliance with the Astrakhanids after Shah Abbas reclaimed Qandahar. Sometimes Central Asia involved itself directly in Mughal affairs. Balkh and Badakhshan were made into buffer states, but they were frequently in a state of disorder, and provided as much of a destabilising force as they did a bulwark against Persian intervention. Abdullah Khan encouraged discord on the Mughal's northwest frontier, and Nazr Muhammed tried to move against Kabul at the beginning of Shah Jahan's reign. Later, Shah Jahan moved against Balkh and Badakhshan himself, in an ill-fated campaign. If Central Asia was strong, the Mughals had to contend with a powerful neighbour on their border and adjust their policy accordingly (such as when Akbar moved his capital to Lahore). When Central Asia was passive in world affairs the Mughals had to pay closer attention to Persia, while still guarding their borders against Central Asian raiders.

Given the interchange of personnel and commodities between Central Asia and Mughal India, and the interaction in foreign relations, it is not surprising that there was also an exchange of certain ideas between Central Asia and Mughal India. Many of the conceptual ideas of Central Asian rule were evident in Mughal India. As in Central Asia, no rule of primogeniture was established and all male members of the ruling household regarded themselves as having an equal claim to the throne. Consequently there were numerous instances of princely rebellions in Mughal India; there were also succession disputes in the Central Asian fashion. The succession disputes in Mughal India did not prove as debilitating as they had in Central Asia, but they were as bitterly contested. There was a desire for expansion on the part of the Mughal rulers, as there had been in Central Asia, and it was the precedent of their Central Asian heritage, in particular the conquests of Timur, that inspired some of the Mughals' expeditions. Throughout their rule the Mughals were seeking to expand their hegemony. The desire for new territories was by no means the only motive; nevertheless the idea that conquest proved the true merit of a ruler, which had been prevalent in Central Asia, was an important motivation behind Mughal policy. The legacy of Timur was enshrined in the symbolism of Mughal rule. Timurid institutions were much modified, but the achievements of Timur were aggrandised in Mughal culture. The achievements of the Mughal rulers were, if anything, further aggrandised, but the deeds of Timur remained an important part of the imperial iconography. Partly this was because by linking themselves with Timur the Mughals enhanced their own image, but it was also an acknowledgement that the Mughals had not matched the great conquests of Timur. So they opted to associate themselves with the Timurid legacy, which was the next best thing.
It is hoped that this thesis has shown the benefits of taking a comprehensive approach to the study of history. It is not suggested that all historical study should necessarily follow the same pattern, for many unnecessary disputes have been caused in history by an insistence that there is only one setting that should be used for the historical telescope. There are many levels at which history can be studied. Moreover many disputes have arisen through different questions being asked about the same historical materials, and, unsurprisingly, this has led to different perspectives. This thesis has attempted to answer the basic question of the importance of Central Asia in the Mughal empire through an overview of changes in the institutional framework. Central Asia performed an important role in both the formation, and the ongoing functioning, of the Mughal empire. Many institutions of Central Asia were reshaped in the making of the Mughal Image, but it was not a one-way process. At the very least it can be said that through its practices, its personages, its products and its precepts Central Asia performed an important role, both within the structure of the Mughal Empire and, without, as an influential neighbour.
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