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(Dept of Islamic Studies)

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Narrative Pattern and Genre in
Hagiographic Life Writing:
Comparative Perspectives from
Asia to Europe



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The Creation of a Saint Emperor: Retracing Narrative Strategies of Mughal Legitimation and Representation in *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* by ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī (ca. 1608–11)

by
Anna Kollatz

I. Introduction

Narrative texts¹ can serve as media of self-perception and self-insurance, even as means to find or create a “self”, for grown homogenous cultures², as well as for cultural and religious heterogeneous societies that contain differing cultural or religious orientations. For the Persian language, the *Shahnāma* by Firdausī is perhaps the most impressive example of a narrative text in which the self-perception and -orientation of a whole culture is discussed. Also, hagiographic texts provide the possibility to reflect, recount, and by this, strengthen cultural as well as religious orientations and therefore can be interpreted as means of cultural and social self-perception and self-insurance. While telling stories, whether they are presented as “true” or as fictional example, ruptures and discontinuities can be discussed, and new consensus can be established. By analyzing hagiographic works written in the context of heterogeneous cultural entities, we can gain an insight into the strategies used to discuss (or even disregard) and solve differences, and to provide stable self-orientation for the members of a cultural or religious diverse society. Culture in the sense of interaction and negotiation of social and mental material becomes observable through research on specific cultural standards and values, basic convictions and creeds, and points of view that are inherent in the texts and lead the author’s work like a *hidden agenda*, whether the author is aware of this or not. The methods of narratological analysis allow

¹ My analysis is based on the definition of narrative texts by Weber (1998).

² Nünning/Sommer (2004) define culture as “interaction of material, social and mental phenomena in a certain society”.

us to reveal the above-mentioned leading convictions and also the writer's intentions and the strategies used to communicate them to the readers. In this sense, narrative texts also show the way cultures deal (or dealt) with their own inherent heterogeneity.

In this contribution, I will concentrate on the text *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* by 'Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī, written on behalf of the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1569–1627) during the initial years of his regency. This text, recently rediscovered and edited (Naushāhī/Nizāmī 2006) allows to get an insight into the self-perception and self-representation of the Mughal dynasty in analyzing contents, narrative techniques, and motives used by the author. After giving a short introduction into the historical and social background of the author, a description of the source's formal, and thematic characteristics, I will focus on the narrative strategies used in *Majālis*. The text is obviously written to communicate a certain *hidden agenda* (i.e. legitimacy of rule, creation of group-identity, propaganda for the emperor). Notably the representation of Jahāngīr as a spiritual and temporal sovereign (*pādishāh-i haqīqī wa majāzī*), inspired and elected by God is a specific objective of the text. Starting from this presupposition, examples will be analyzed which illustrate the narrative strategies used in the text. In the course of this, three levels of analysis have to be considered. On a first level, the research is focused on the contents of the source (What does the author tell?). On a second level, the form of presentation will be analyzed (How does he present his contents? Which strategies of narration does he use?) Finally, on a third level, the relation between intentions of the text (its *hidden agenda*) and the use of certain narrative strategies will be examined. An additional question concerning the methods has to be kept in mind. The text analyzed belongs to a non-occidental³ tradition of literature. While working with categories of structuralist narratological categories to describe the author's ways of narration, I have to question whether these categories fit to the characteristic narrative strategies of the text. The toolbox of structuralist narratological categories has to be enlarged and adapted to the characteristics of the text.

³ I use the term "non-occidental" only to accentuate the fact that my source does not belong to the canon of "occidental" texts used in the main as base for the development of narratological methods. It is not intended to define a closed corpus of texts.

II. Historical Background

The Mughal Empire represents an interesting special case of cultural heterogeneity in the history of Islamic rules and dynasties. In Mughal India, an Islamic dynasty from Turco-Iranian offspring ruled over an extreme variety of ethnic and religious entities, while Islam itself remained a minority religion. At the court, in the military service and in the northern parts of the Empire (today's Afghanistan, Pakistan) large Muslim communities can be located. A strong Iranian community that migrated from the Safavid Empire under Shāh 'Abbās to the Mughal Empire has to particularly be mentioned. Within the Muslim population, the great influence of Sūfī orders and mystical interpretations of Islam left its mark and built to a certain extent bridges between mystical Islam and Indian religious thought. Besides these Islamic groups, the main population of the Empire as well as a great number of tributary nobles from Indian offspring adhered to Indian denominations like Hindu religions, Jainism, Sikhism, and bhakti-groups. Furthermore, minority groups of Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians were present in the Empire and also at the court. Against this background of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state, religious policy and legitimacy of the dynasty was important for the maintenance of rule. The emperors had to integrate the differing groups and to create a unifying identity beyond the religious and ethnic borders to prevent conflicts and to secure their own position. In this pursuit, Jalāl al-dīn Akbar's (1542–1605) system of administration of nobles both at the court and in the provinces (*mansab*) and the *dīn-i ilāhī* have been interpreted as political tools for the unification and control of nobles and as means to consolidate the bonds between the emperor and nobles (Richards 1998, 129). The *Mansab*-system served as a unifying container which integrated every ambitious person, whether Raja, lineage chief or Muslim aristocrat migrated from Iran, into a new self-image of servant of the emperor. Personal wealth and glory slid into the background while the honor of being a servant of the emperor became the most important aspect of self-identification (Richards 1998, *ibid.*). Besides changes in administration, as well the way of dealing with the religious diversity in the empire can be interpreted as a means of legitimacy and creation of identity. The syncretic *dīn-i ilāhī* installed by Akbar in 1582 was a melting pot of Islamic (mainly Sūfī), Hindu, and Zoroastrian ideas, connected with parts of the Iranian concept of kingship (particularly the idea of *farr-i izādī*, a heavenly light distinguishing a king; represented by a nimbus). It united elements of religious practice from Hindu origin (e.g. the

veneration of Akbar as God of the sun) as well as from Zoroastrian (e.g. the veneration of fire) offspring (Franke 2005). The organization of the *din-i ilāhī* was shaped according to the model of Sūfī orders. It represented the emperor as a sovereign inspired by God and spiritual master (*Pīr*) of his adherents and prescribed to its adherents to go through the four stages of *ikhhlāṣ* (i.e. to devote possession, honor, life and religion to their master, the emperor) similar to the *tariqa* of Sūfī orders. This organization and orientation towards the emperor as both worldly and religious center generated a selected bond between the emperor as spiritual master and the Nobles as his adherents (*murīdūn*) and thus evoked a certain group identity within the innermost circles of power at the court. The *Akbarnāma*, written by Abū l-Faḥr al-ʿAllāmī on behalf of Akbar, served as an integrating text and as a fundament of legitimacy of rule and formation of identity. In contrast to his father Akbar, Jahāngīr has been judged as a weaker emperor, who was distinguished majorly by his love for opium and women and his sometimes cruel way to deal with his subjects. This distorted image results partially from tendentious research, influenced either by colonialist or Marxist thoughts. The Mughal Empire frequently was shown as a backward state and has been characterized as a prime example for the Marxist concept of Asian despotic rule (see Alam/Subrahmanyam (ed.) 2011, S. 3–22). Only in the last few years, a reconsideration of Jahāngīr's rule and his person started. The publications of Lefèvre (Levèvre 2007b; 2010a) and Franke (Franke 2005) have to be mentioned here. As for Akbar's time in the *Akbarnāma*, the struggle for integration and building of an integrating identity found also expression in the texts written at the Mughal court under Jahāngīr's reign. Besides Jahāngīr's own work, the *Jahāngīrnāma*, *Majālis-i Jahāngīri* by ʿAbd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī reveals a welcome addition to the corpus of sources from Jahāngīr's time and will help to broaden the reconsideration of the time. The text provides new information concerning the courtly life as well as the person of the emperor and, above all, illustrates in a lively way the dealing with religious diversity and multi-ethnicity at the court as well as in the country. Particularly interesting is the closeness of the *din-i ilāhī* to Sūfī concepts which is illustrated in *Majālis*. While for Akbar, religious practices from outside the Islamic canon and a weakening of Islamic impact at the court seem to have been central (Franke, 2005), *Majālis* evokes a *din-i ilāhī* oriented strongly on Sūfī examples.

III. Historical contextualization of author and work

In the previous paragraph, I have outlined basic characteristics of the court system and religious policy in the Mughal Empire under Akbar and Jahāngīr. These circumstances also shaped the life of ‘Abd al-Sattār and his dependencies in the courtly milieu. In particular, his relation to the emperor and his position in the court hierarchy are important factors that affected his work for he, as he himself relates, wrote on behalf of Emperor Jahāngīr (*Majālis*, 2f.) The sole preserved manuscript of *Majālis* does not contend a front page and therefore does not reveal the original title of the work and its author’s full name (Naushāhī/Niḏāmī 2006). Prior to a consideration of the author’s social rank at the court and his interdependencies, his person has to be verified. The author of *Majālis* does not give his name, nor at the beginning neither at the end of his text. Instead of presenting himself by name, he uses through his whole work self-abasing titles like *in kamtarīn-i murīdān* (this lowest of disciples [of Jahāngīr]) or *in kohtarīn-i majlisīyān* (this most humble of participants [of the emperor’s assembly]), which show the reader the essential elements of his attitude towards Jahāngīr: First, by lowering himself, he emphasizes the emperors’ highness, second, by mentioning his status as a *majlisī*, a participant at the most high assembly of the emperor, he shows his status as member of higher ranks at the court and finally, he highlights his elect status as *murīd*, disciple of the *dīn-i ilāhī*, who acknowledges Jahāngīr not only as his worldly sovereign, but also as spiritual guide (*pīr*). Only in chapter 10 we find for the first time the name ‘Abd al-Sattār, and in the following chapter 11 it becomes clear that ‘Abd al-Sattār must be the author’s name:

“He [Jahāngīr] asked: ‘Abd al-Sattār, by whom is this poem? I answered: [...]” (*Majālis*, 23)

In the 39th chapter, the author makes explicitly clear, who he is:

“God knows, that I, who is ‘Abd al-Sattār, was very astonished.” (*Majālis*, 96)

Although ‘Abd al-Sattār is often called by his name throughout the work, his full name, the fathers’ name, or titles are never mentioned. However, certain indications allow to conclude that ‘Abd al-Sattār must be the same ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī, whose name can be found in some other works of that

time. ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī worked together with the Jesuit Jerôme Xavier (d. 1617), the Superior of the third Jesuit mission at the Mughal court, who dedicated several works on Christian themes to the emperors Akbar and Jahāngīr (see Franke 2005). He is mentioned in these works as coauthor or translator from Portuguese to Persian. The most important hint to the author’s identity is his deep knowledge of Christianity one can derive from his disputes reproduced in *Majālis*. Particularly in the assemblies No. 14 and 29 (*Majālis*, 29 ff., 70ff.), the author plays a prominent role and shows the reader his ability to refute all Christian arguments by giving a large account of his dispute with the Jesuit. Second, in the 14th assembly Jahāngīr remembers how ‘Abd al-Sattār recited “*stories of the Prophet Jesus, which he has translated into Persian together with the Fathers*” (*Majālis*, 34). This can be seen as a reference to the writings ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī produced together with the Jesuits. The spiritual handbook presented to Jahāngīr by the father in the 14th chapter of *Majālis* (*Majālis*, 29–37) might be *Fuente de Vida*, one of Jerôme Xavier’s central works (see Camps 1957). Furthermore, Naushāhī and Nizāmī suppose a deep friendship between the author and Jerôme Xavier, arguing that the authors’ deep knowledge of Christian theology lets the fathers hope to be able to convert ‘Abd al-Sattār to Christianity (Naushāhī/Nizāmī 2006, 25). Indeed, in the 29th assembly, the author recounts how Father Jerôme asked for the permission to convert ‘Abd al-Sattār. While Jahāngīr grants the right to freedom of religion also in this special case, the author strongly rejects the fathers’ request (*Majālis*, 71).

On the basis of the above-mentioned arguments, and because we don’t know any other person named ‘Abd al-Sattār at the Mughal court at this time, the author can be considered as identical to ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī. Date and place of birth, and even the date of death of ‘Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī remain unknown. Only little information about him can be derived from the sources as he plays only a small role in Mughal texts from the court. The main information is provided by his own texts, *Samra al-falāsafa* (see Nooraninejad 2009) and *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*.

In the foreword of his work *Samra al-falāsafa*, ‘Abd al-Sattār provides information about himself and his family’s background (Nooraninejad 2009). Here, the historian Muḥammad Qāsim Hindu Shāh Firishta (d. 1033/1623) is given as father of ‘Abd al-Sattār. This is also supported by Nabi Hadi (Hadi 1995, 28 f., 181f.), while Nizāmī and Naushāhī doubt this detail (Naushāhī/Nizāmī 2006, p. 26). Hadi knows Bijapur as place of birth of ‘Abd al-Sattār (Hadi 1995, 28f.), while Naushāhī and Nizāmī tend to interpret ‘Abd

al-Sattārs emphatic words about Lahore as a sign for him to be a child of that town (Naushāhī/Niẓāmī 2006, p. 26). Naushāhī and Niẓāmī try to deduce ‘Abd al-Sattārs age from certain passages in *Majālis*. They interpret the words “*shast-i irādat shudan*” as “*being in service for 60 years*” (Naushāhī/Niẓāmī 2006, 47). The editors are right to claim that the Persian word *shast* means 60, but in a second meaning, *shast* is also the name of the medallions Akbar and later Jahāngīr bestowed on their servants when making them adherents to the *dīn-i ilāhī* (Franke 2005, 191). *Shast-i irādat* therefore has to be translated as “medallion of discipleship” and is not related to the author’s age which remains unknown. To estimate the author’s social rank at the court, it is however much more valuable to know that Jahāngīr honored him by making him a member of the *dīn-i ilāhī*. ‘Abd al-Sattār came to the Mughal court during Akbar’s reign, and served as a historian and translator. In *Samra al-falāsafa*, he reports how Akbar ordered him to learn the “Frankish language” (*zabān-i firang*) and to study religion and history of the Europeans (Noora-ninejad 2009, 120). Thus, he studied under the supervision of Father Jérôme Xavier. Hereafter began a cooperation of ‘Abd al-Sattār and Xavier, the fruit of which were certain works on Christianity and the life of Jesus Christ and the apostles (see Camps 1957).

While mentions of ‘Abd al-Sattār’s literary work are absent from Mughal sources (except his own work), he himself is mentioned in the *Jahāngīrnāma* twice: Once the emperor gives an elephant to ‘Abd al-Sattār (Rogers; Beveridge (Ed.) 2001, vol. 1, 389), and on occasion of the new year festivals of the 14th year after Jahāngīr’s accession, ‘Abd al-Sattār presents an autograph of Humāyūn Pādishāh to Jahāngīr (Rogers; Beveridge (Ed.) 2001, vol. 2, 82). Almost every chapter of *Majālis* contains references to the author. Out of the description of Jahāngīr’s nightly assemblies becomes evident that the author must have been a kind of reader for the emperor. He recites accounts on different historical themes (e.g. on Saladin, *Majālis*, 3; on the life and time of different Sūfī shaikhs, *Majālis*, 16) and also has to review books in order to decide whether they should be written for the court library or not (*Majālis*, 90). In the course of a multitude of assemblies, the emperor calls for ‘Abd al-Sattār and often shows his appreciation for the author’s knowledge in various fields of scholarship. Moreover, from the whole composition of *Majālis* can be developed that the author must have had considerable knowledge in the fields a classic Muslim scholar had to master (poetry, theology, history, philosophy etc.). To sum up, from his self-representation in his own work and from the small number of reference to him in other sources it can be deduced

that the author belonged to a privileged group at the court, even though he certainly did not belong to the highest circles.

IV. Analysis

As mentioned above, *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* is preserved in a unique copy held in private hand in Pakistan (Naushāhī/Nizāmī 2006). Fortunately there is a very delicate edition by Naushāhī and Nizāmī to be worked with. The title *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* is given to the text by the editors. While working with the source, it should be kept in mind that its original title remains unknown. The text presents itself as a protocol of nightly assemblies at the Mughal court (*majālis*) under the Emperor Jahāngīr. It covers the time from 24 Rajab 1017 to 19 Ramazān 1020 A.H./24. October 1608 to 15 November 1611 A.D. The author stopped his work only when Jahāngīr started his own autobiographic work, the *Jahāngīrnāma* (*Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*).⁴ The work is divided in chapters which represent dated protocols. At the head of every chapter, the author gives the respective date according to the hijrī era as well as in years of government counted from the ascension of Jahāngīr. This dating paragraph is standardized and also contains a stereotype praise of the emperor, supplemented by a description of the fortunate courtiers venerating their emperor. The chapters vary in length. They are very short assemblies which only contain one thematic unit, while other assemblies also deal with a wider range of themes. In these assemblies, the conversation wanders from one content to the other, usually without any visible interrelation. Changes of content are often marked by leaps in time. The author gives summaries as well as dialogues represented in vivid direct speech.⁵ He leads the reader by announcing leaps in time or elisions, and analepsis are used to link the actual conversation with previous assemblies. Thus the narrative's location in space and time and its coherency can easily be understood by the reader. Apart from the reproduction of conversations and short explanations within the text, the author does

⁴ Beveridge, Rogers (Ed.) 2001: *The Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, Lahore.

⁵ The Persian language does not possess a distinction of direct and indirect speech like other Indo-German languages do. In *Majālis*, individual speech is introduced with the particle *ki*, followed either by direct (i.e. first person singular, present tense) or indirect (i.e. third person singular or plural (for the emperor *pluralis majestatis*), preterite or past tense) representation of speech. These two forms are also mixed in dialogues.

not give further information concerning the historical background or incidents of the respective date. The language of the text is deeply rooted in the language code of the Mughal court. Every chapter begins with a praise of the emperor and the text is interspersed with more or less standardized phrases of praise and special courtly termini. The author's language contains standardized phrases, e.g. in prefacing direct speech: Direct speech of the emperor is usually introduced with "*(ān haẓrat) farmūdand*" ((His Majesty) deigned to say [lit.: commanded]); direct speech of other persons is introduced with the construction "*(X) 'arẓe dāshte kard ki*" ((X) presented: [...]).

The author himself acts in two ways: First, as the author, he gives background information (e.g. information concerning prominent persons, details about parts of the country, explanations of termini). He also adds instructive details which explain the court ceremony to readers not acquainted to it. Moreover, he expresses his opinion by judging the arguments of persons in disputes as well as the points of view or stories discussed. Second, 'Abd al-Sattār takes part as an acting person in the assemblies. He is often called by the emperor to read out poetry or pieces from books (historiographical, theological, philosophical works) he presented to Jahāngīr in his position as reader. Furthermore, Jahāngīr calls for him to participate in disputes concerned with religious questions (i.e. disputes with the Jesuits, discussions of shari'a-questions) and seems to appreciate his opinion. In sum, the author can be characterized as the first-person narrator. The character of the narration can be described as mainly autodiegetic and corresponds with the characteristics of *telling* described by Percy Lubbock (Lubbock 1921, 62 ff.). However, the chapters also contain larger sections of dialogues which add to the narrative mimetic traits. As autodiegetic narrator, the author tells solely from his personal point of view and does not relate thoughts or aims of other characters. Only at a few points of the narration, he lets the reader know his presumptions about e.g. the motives of action of certain characters. Thus, following Genette (Genette [1972] 1980, 188–89), we can describe his point of view as internally focalized.

The content of every single assembly is amazingly diverse. Poetry, politics, courtly events, discussion of strange events or miraculous things or persons etc. alternate with religious disputations, presentation of gifts both for and from the emperor, hunting tales etc. The occupation with stories from the lives of Sūfi shaikhs play a prominent role, especially shaikhs from the Indian

Chishtiyya.⁶ The text also contains the discussion of supernatural events (e.g. animals with human voices, miracles worked by Shaikhs or other inspired persons). Most supernatural events are related to in retrospective or embedded in the interpretation of dreams, so one can conclude that the author aims at handling the supernatural with care and not to step out of rational consideration, which is of great importance in the text.

The central character in the work is Emperor Jahāngīr. The author clearly defines his intention to write down Jahāngīr's wisdom and spiritual guidance for the sake of himself and other adherents and in doing so to immortalize Jahāngīr as both extraordinary spiritual authority and omnipotent monarch. 'Abd al-Sattār describes in *Majālis* his motivation to write the text, observing that adherents of great Shaikhs always have written down the teachings and morals of their spiritual guides:

“He [the lowest of adherents, i.e. the author] thought to himself: “The Pīrs who possess right guidance bestow on their adherents, at the beginning of their work for the purification of their inner thoughts (bāṭin) and internal adjustment, forty [exercises].⁷ Because of the great desire of the worship of God and the multitude of occupations concerning the administration of this workshop [the world], when does this Pīr, the possessor of the throne, the world-protecting pādishāh, find the time and the possibility to devote himself to different things [...]?” (Majālis, 2)

Following the Sūfī example, 'Abd al-Sattār intends to write a textbook of Jahāngīr's teachings to use it as guideline for himself and for other *seekers of the truth*.⁸ He relates how he asked for permission to do so:

⁶ The order has been introduced to India by Khwāja Mu'īn al-dīn Čishtī in the 12th century. While the order possessed a central structure in the time from 1200 to the middle of the 14th century, it later broke into manifold local centers (14th–15th centuries). Though one of the principles of the order was to avoid contact with kings, the tombs and khānaqāhs of the order were highly esteemed and often visited by the Mughal emperors. (see Nizāmī, K.A., Čishtiyya, Franke 2005.)

⁷ The practice of *Čilla*, i.e. forty days of exercise to purify thoughts and soul, belongs to the practices adopted by Čishtī and other Sūfī orders.

⁸ The author calls the adherents of the *dīn-i ilāhī* “*Ṭālibān-i taḥqīq*”.

“At a suitable time, I presented my intention to the ear of the Holiest [i.e. Jahāngīr] in this way: “Long live his Majesty! Ḥasan Sajjizī⁹ has written down the assemblies of his own Pīr, the King of Shaikhs [sulṭān al-mashāʾikh] Niẓām al-dīn Badaʿūnī.¹⁰ This lowest of the adherents also would like to write down everything that is mentioned in the nightly assemblies of His Majesty – who is both the world-protecting Pādishāh and the world-seizing Pīr [lit: pīr-i jahāngīr] – to make it the fundament of eternal joy for himself and his contemporaries.”” (Majālis, 2)

Out of the aforementioned characteristics of the text and the author’s way to narrate, I derive several hypotheses regarding the intentions behind the composition of *Majālis*: The text has a function of legitimacy of authority. To fulfill this function, the emperor is represented as elected by God and as inspired spiritual guide. Moreover, his ideal virtues as grace, justice, wisdom, rational mind etc. are put into focus. The text also meets a function of propaganda for the emperor outlining his generosity towards everybody, both noble and common people, and emphasizing his just rule. The author explicitly notes down his intention to create a book of spiritual guidance for adherents of the *dīn-i ilāhī* similar to directive works developed in Sūfī orders. The narration follows this ideal and contains a diversity of narrative material designed to give advice concerning moral, ethics, religious and daily life etc.

Legitimacy and Propaganda

To convince the reader and to make him truly believe in what the text transports, the author may use different strategies of narration. First, he can use

⁹ Ḥasan Sajjizī Dehlavī, adherent of Niẓām al-dīn Badaʿūnī. In 707/1307, he started to write *Fawāʾid al-fuʾād*, in which he records the dicta of Niẓām al-dīn. This work served as example for the emergence of the *malʿūzāt* genre. (see Nizami, K.A. “Malʿūzāt.” Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2012.)

¹⁰ Niẓām al-dīn Badaʿūnī (born ca. 640–1/1243–4 in Badaun (Uttar Pradesh), died 8 Rabiʿ II 725/3 April 1325 in Dehli) He came from a Bukharan family migrated to India and was a student of Shaikh Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i Shakar, who made him his successor at the head of the Čishtiyya order. Under Niẓām al-dīn, the order spread across the whole subcontinent. His tomb in Delhi was an important center of pilgrimage and was regularly visited by the Mughal emperors. (see Nizami, K.A. “Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ.” Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2012). *Majālis* contains many references to the shaikh.

assertive narration which makes the reader believe in the facts presented just because the author writes “*mit behauptender Kraft.*” Either the author himself deeply believes in the truth of his statements and therefore does not feel the need to give evidence, or he uses the power of asserting sentences which by a kind of suggestive force push the reader to believe in. An even stronger suggestive power can be achieved by repetition and by frequently weaving the message in the text without enhancing it, so that the message becomes constantly present and therefore common to the reader.

The language code of the Mughal code, similar to that of e.g. Sūfi writings, provides standard phrases of suggestion concerning the social rank or status of persons referred to. According to these forms of representation, almost every reference to Jahāngīr in *Majālis* includes a short allusion to his elevated status as emperor and religious guide or a formal standardized hint to his ideal virtues. Every simple mention of the emperor serves to underline his status, for he commonly is referred to as *aqdas* (the Most Holy). Furthermore, the introduction of speech representation follows standard formulations. To introduce Jahāngīr’s words, the author uses the phrase “*out of the Most Holy (Saint; Blessed) Tongue flew [...].*” When mentioning Jahāngīr, the author often adds apothetic titles which call ideal virtues of Jahāngīr in mind. Thus, the emperor is connected with appositions like *pādishāh-i inṣāf-dūst* (the Pādishāh who loves justice), *pādishāh-i raushan-jān* (the Pādishāh with the luminous soul), *qibla-yi dīn wa duniyā* (the direction of prayer for religion and world). In using these short appositions and the standard introduction of speech very often in the text, the author fosters a basic connotation of the emperor with his asserted ideal and holy virtues. These characteristics mainly are virtues like justice, kindness, grace, wisdom which are widely recognized as ideal virtues for rulers in the Persian-Islamic tradition and promoted in advice literature from different ages. They are put together with characteristics commonly attributed to specialists for the contact with the transcendental as holy men or Sūfi shaikhs. To this section of characteristics belong qualities like a spiritual enlightened soul (*raushan-jān*), the love for prayer and the veneration of God, and finally the special quality to be the *qibla-yi dīn wa duniyā*, that is, to be the direction of prayer towards which everything and everybody, both in worldly and in spiritual things, is oriented – in short: to be the center of both worlds. As shown below, the author highlights more central attributes, for example the divine inspiration claimed for Jahāngīr, by using a broad range of narrative tools.

Also other characters in the text are combined with standard designations and a standard introduction of speech. As mentioned above, the author designates himself as *in kamtarin-i muridan* (this lowest of disciples) or *in kohtarin-i majlisiyan* (this most humble of participants [of the Most High assembly]) and in doing so makes clear his devote attitude towards the emperor. While for his own person, he chooses this direct and constant way of self-abasement, other characters are referred to by their proper names and their devotion to the emperor is shown by different narrative tools. In introduction of speech representation, the standard phrase for disciples or in general for visitors of the emperor's assembly, is "(x) presented to the Most Holy (to the Most Holy Ear)." Also here, the semi-divine status of the emperor is woven in the text in a subtle way and fosters the connotation of Jahāngīr with the asserted characteristics.

Now turning to one of the most significant characteristics attributed to Jahāngīr, namely his being divinely inspired. In his introduction already, the author denominates Jahāngīr as *ān maẓhar-i asrār-ūlāhī* (that revelation of divine secrets; *Majālis*, 2.). Again, he uses the way of assertive narration in form of attribution of a characteristic without giving evidence or proves for his claim. The reader thus receives the impression that Jahāngīr's being inspired by God is a well-known and irrefutable fact that nobody would question. The inference "if everybody knows that and nobody questions it, it must be true" can achieve its impact and add the reader to the believing mass. Jahāngīr's divine inspiration is also recalled to mind at the end of disputations or after the emperor has given a statement or a striking analysis or explanation for any phenomenon. In this context, the emperor's sayings are presented as brilliant and perfect. It is characteristic that the author uses insertions or parenthesis within a sentence that furthermore evokes the courtier's praise and admiration to Jahāngīr. A striking example for this narrative tool can be found in the very first assembly of *Majālis*. After recounting Jahāngīr's explanation of the evil that might originate from remarriage of widows without observing a waiting period prescribed in Islam (*'idda*), the author explains:

"Because they [the courtiers] heard these high words which had been [spoken] due to the strengthening by the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ-i qudus*) (sic!) and by divine inspiration, all attendees (*majlisiyan*) put their faces down to the ground and owing to the justice, [they] refreshed their tongues by praising and praying." (*Majālis*, 4)

While the assertive narration can be characterized as a direct way of ascription, the author also uses indirect strategies of persuasion. In our example, he first claims Jahāngīr's divine inspiration as a given and irrefutable fact and then strengthens his claim by giving a double indirect evidence for its truth. The assertion of divine inspiration is inserted in a sentence describing the praise and veneration of the attendees of Jahāngīr's *darbār*. The author thus presents to the reader a large group of eye-witnesses who heard and estimated the emperor's words as divinely inspired. To be able to present eye-witnesses by itself is a strong corroborative argument, but beyond that, the author refers to a group of particular high social status. The reader acquainted to the Mughal court must have known that the attendees in the *majlis* are a selected group of the highest officials and learned scholars from different countries and that even a reader not familiar with the customs of that specific court must be able to derive from his general knowledge on imperial courts that regular attendees in the audience of an emperor are high ranked, and therefore commonly estimated as reliable reference. Relating the praise and adoration of Jahāngīr by this highly estimated group meets thus an even stronger function of affirmation than an ordinary eye-witness could ever provide. Moreover, the indirect character of the affirmation leaves it to the reader to find out its inherent meaning. Thus, the reader is assured by his own consideration and there is no necessity to confide in the claims of a more or less unknown author. Hence, the author combines two strategies of affirmation in one sentence.

Besides the narrative tools used by the author, his choice of term in the quoted sentence is highly remarkable. His reference to the *rūḥ-i qudus* (lit. holy spirit) might reveal the impact of his studies under the Jesuit fathers at the court had on 'Abd al-Sattār. While the entity of transmission for divine revelation in Islam normally is archangel Gabriel (*jibrīl*) and also names like *rūḥ al-amīn* or, in Persian *sūfī* writings, even *simurgh* are used for the denomination of spiritual entities of transmission between God and the human searching for him, the term *rūḥ-i qudus* obviously is borrowed from Christian sources and thus allows a glance on the state of syncretic tendencies at the Mughal court. In chapter 5, the author again refers to the *rūḥ-i qudus* in combination with a highly esteemed and valuable institution in Islam, namely the *sunna* of prophet Muḥammad:

“The Holy Spirit (rūh-i qudus) spoke from the tongue of the Most Holy [i.e. Jahāngīr] in the sense of the hadīth-i ṣaḥīḥ “Your deeds are your regents.”” (Majālis, 8)

The words of Jahāngīr are here confirmed by two authorities no other institution can surpass in reliance: The author shows Jahāngīr as a vessel of God’s message who does not speak by himself but is directed by the holy spirit. So Jahāngīr’s words have to be understood as revelation of God’s will. It has to be questioned whether the author uses the term *rūh-i qudus* to denominate an entity of transmission of divine revelation similar to the *rūh al-amīn* in Islamic writings, or whether he understands it as synonym to God analogical to the Christian use of the term Holy Spirit (as one part of the Trinity) which might have come to the vocabulary and theological understanding of ‘Abd al-Sattār during his studies and collaboration with the Jesuits. The second interpretation assumed, the form of revelation alluded to here is even more valuable compared to the revelation of the Qur’an to the Prophet Muḥammad. While the prophet obtained the revelations from archangel Gabriel, Jahāngīr is presented as under direct influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the reader must suppose a very strong bond between God and the emperor. Moreover, Jahāngīr’s words are also confirmed, by relating them to a second proof of genuine truth. After having quoted Jahāngīr’s judgment on the respective question, ‘Abd al-Sattār states that the emperor’s words agree to a *ḥadīth-i ṣaḥīḥ*, that is, to an authentic tradition of words or actions of the prophet Muḥammad. Jahāngīr’s words thus become verified also by a proof provided by the canonical literature of Islam and by a prophetic word.

Accordingly, the author refers to Jahāngīr in the 2nd assembly as “*mazhar-i asrār-ilāhi*” (the revelation of divine secrets; *Majālis*, 2). Rule and dicta thus are detached to a certain extent from the worldly sphere and elevated into the rank of divine actions. But the emperor should not be interpreted as a puppet solely reproducing supernatural orders. The author also shows him as endowed by the ability of recognizing the right and true way of judgment or behavior by himself. In the 53th assembly, we find a phrase that reveals the author’s concept of Jahāngīr being omniscient:

“And because he had found, due to the inherent light of the Most Holy which God the Exalted has made the sign of His Selected from eternity a parte ante (*rūz-i azal*),¹¹ [...]” (*Majālis*, 133)

This short part of a sentence provides the following information: (1) *Jahāngīr* is the Most Holy. (2) He is endowed with an inherent light created by God. (3) He is God’s elected. (4) The inherent light is a sign of this election and provides him with omniscience. (5) The inherent light has been created exclusively for *Jahāngīr* and is eternal a parte ante.

(1) This apposition is, as has already been shown, a central feature repeated again and again throughout the whole text, usually without any further description of qualities connected to. Out of our example, one can conclude certain characteristics that the author obviously judges as constitutional for *Jahāngīr*’s being the Most Holy, namely points (2) to (5).

The idea of an inherent light which distinguishes the right ruler originates from the Iranian concept of *farr(ah)* or *khwarnā* which has been reflected as *farr-i izzādī* in *Firdausī*’s *Shāhnāme* and later in legitimate writings after the advent of the Mongol rule (see *EIA*, *farr(ah)* i, ii). While the concept is nearly absent in the writings of Perso-Islamic court literature, it became revitalized in Mughal India, where Akbar and Abū l-Faẓl inserted it in their legitimate concept of rule and in the *dīn-i ilāhī* (Franke 2005). According to the old Iranian concept, the *farr* is a sign of kingship which wanders from one designated ruler to the other. It can be taken away or get lost when its holder strays away from the righteous path. When absent from a holder, the *farr* is kept in lake *Vouroukasha* (*EIA*, *farr(ah)* ii). Our example from *Majālis* contains some differences between the old Iranian concept and the concept of inherent light represented in the text. Like the *farr*, *Jahāngīr*’s inherent light is a sign of his royalty, which is part of his being God’s elected. But unlike in the *farr* concept, the light has been created by God exclusively for *Jahāngīr*, so it has to be understood as a personal feature of *Jahāngīr* and not as a general means of designation that wanders from king to king. Moreover, the inherent light has been created ex eternity a parte ante (*rūz-i azal*). In claiming this, *Jahāngīr*’s person and rule is associated indirectly with the concept of a universal plan

¹¹ In opposition to *abad*, *azal* as terminus technicus in philosophy and theology represents the eternity without beginning and temporal origin. See Arnaldez, R. “*Ḳīdam*.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2011.

of creation prior to everything. Taking for granted the claimed status of being without temporal origin, the inherent light of the emperor is put into a row with the orthodox Islamic concept of the Qur'ān as *kalām* (*logos*) which is interpreted as being without temporal origin. The inherent light is further described as the sign of Jahāngīr's elect status. Thus, the reader has to conclude that the divine selection of the emperor and his reign have been predetermined from eternity a parte ante. In postulating this indirectly, 'Abd al-Sattār claims the strongest religious legitimacy of rule one can imagine.

Besides the representation of Jahāngīr as divinely inspired, the text also contains references to ideal virtues ascribed to Jahāngīr. The emperor is characterized as endowed with perfect characteristics which make his rule extremely desirable for his subjects. As for the divine inspiration, the references to ideal virtues also are represented in direct assertive narration and fostered by steady repetition. The assertion of ideal virtues either is inserted in the text using epithets like the aforementioned *pādishāh-i inṣāf-dūst* (the pādishāh who loves justice) or illustrated by the account of anecdotes belonging to the events of the respective assembly. Which are the most striking virtues ascribed to Jahāngīr? As mentioned above, we can constata a mixture of virtues recognized as ideal for rulers in the Persian-Islamic tradition and characteristics of specialists for the contact with the transcendental. Additionally, we find some characteristics which can be derived from particular Mughal habits or traditions and which, to some extent, can be traced back to Indian religious concepts like the ideal of vegetarianism. Above all, Jahāngīr is depicted as a righteous, just and merciful emperor. Besides the direct assertion already described, these virtues repeatedly are highlighted by contrasting Jahāngīr's behavior with cruel kinds of punishment executed by other rulers or with unjust rule in general. In the 84th assembly, Jahāngīr rejects Dayānat Khān¹² who applies for release of an official imprisoned "*because he had taken away the eyesight of a slave of God in the province (ṣūba) of Bihār.*" (*Majālis*, 206). The emperor makes clear why he will show no mercy towards this person:

"Out of the blessed tongue flew: "Dayānat Ḥān! He injured a creature of God. We recognize that as a severe sin. To punish such a person belongs to the duties of sovereignty." (*Majālis*, 206)

¹² Dayānat Khān Qāsīm Beg, Amīr of Jahāngīr's time. In the 8th year of regency, he was appointed reviser of petitions (*'arṣ mokarrir*). In *Majālis*, he is shown as a person with questionable character and is often criticized by Jahāngīr. (see Beveridge; Prasad (2003), vol. 1, 483f.)

Jahāngīr further on declares that punishments which include the mutilation of persons have been prohibited since the first day of his rule. He even threatens his close confidants Dayānat Khān and Abū l-Ḥasan with punishment if further cases of mutilation would happen. In this account, the author demonstrates three crucial attributes of Jahāngīr and his rule: Above all, the reader has to recognize Jahāngīr's deep devotion and fear of God. In Jahāngīr's view as depicted by 'Abd al-Sattār, nobody – even not the emperor himself – has got the right to injure a creature of God. The author thus manifests the emperor's respect for God the creator as well as for the world and its inhabitants (both human and animals). In the same time, the author also points out the justice of the emperor who is represented as servant of God's creation aware of his duties and responsibility for it towards the creator. His justice is also highlighted in showing Jahāngīr as a ruler before whom every person has got equal rights. Being ready to punish a high official severely to prevent injustice against his lower subjects, he is shown as emperor who does not treat his subjects with regard to their respective rank. After the account, the author inserts a sentence of praise into his text and thereby underlines the characteristics he wanted to highlight with his account:

“Praise to God! How perfect and complete has God the creator of the world created the holy character of His elected, which high amount of benevolence is inherent in him, for no kind of mutilation for no reason may be executed to the world and the dwellers in it.” (Majālis, 206)

'Abd al-Sattār thus combines the strategy of indirect persuasion by narrating an example with the direct form of assertive narration and ascription of virtues. In this example, Jahāngīr's benevolence and justice thus is contrasted by the unjust and sinful behavior of his official. Contrast as a narrative tool is also used in differentiation from other rulers, in particular from Shāh 'Abbās Safavī, who is shown as the personification of unjust rule and cruelty towards his subjects. In the 22nd assembly, the author describes how a man recently fled from Iran because he has been blinded by Shāh 'Abbās is presented to Jahāngīr. The emperor inquires his profession, his origin and the reason why he has been punished so cruelly. We then find the following passage:

“After that, the conversation turned to the severe punishments of the Shāh and his heart of stone (*sang-deli*). It was recorded that he

does not show any consideration in injuring the perfect creatures of the creator. Some, he deprives from their nose and others from their ears, and a lot of things belonging to this subject were related. After that, he [i.e. Jahāngīr] turned towards Khān-i A‘zam¹³ and said: “In Allāhabād, a punishment in such a base manner has been executed against somebody in Our most holy presence. The same day, an oath has been vowed to God by Myself that nevermore this kind of punishment shall be executed against a servant of God. Thus, in those five years [of regency] never has been sentenced mutilation against anybody, which kind of crime he would have committed. We hope that by the God of heavens and earth, for thousands of years [people] will abide by that.” (Majālis, 55f.)

Shāh ‘Abbās serves here as the negative counterpart of Jahāngīr: The author ascribes to him “*a heart of stone*” using the strategy of assertive narration this time to point out negative characteristics. The author then sums up the following conversation with the short information “*a lot of things related to this*”, that is, to the cruelty and lack of consideration of Shāh ‘Abbās. He indirectly makes the reader believe in the asserted cruelty without giving provable evidence, relying in the suggestive power of his authority as reliable eye-witness of the assembly. The short summary moreover suggests a long conversation on the subject, in particular because the author makes explicit that *a lot of* examples for the Shāh’s cruelty were given. Again, the authoritative power of the whole assembly of nobles is used to persuade the reader. In contrast to the negative picture of Shāh ‘Abbās, Jahāngīr is shown as a compassionate and pious emperor. He vows an oath to God not to allow cruel punishments after he was present at the execution of a mutilation. Indirectly, compassion with the mutilated, humanity, and respect for the perfect creation become obvious. While Shāh ‘Abbās is shown as someone injuring people steadily, the author makes explicit that since the accession of Jahāngīr, nobody has been punished in this way on the emperor’s initiative. To emphasize compassion and benevolence of Jahāngīr, the author repeats through the whole work short accounts of Jahāngīr pardoning incarcerated persons, treating them in a friendly way and presenting them with money and goods (e.g. the release of Taqiyā-yi Shoshtari’s brother, *Majālis*, p. 265). It has to be mentioned that

¹³ Khān-i A‘zam, Mīrzā ‘Azīz Koka (d. 1033/1623–4) Amīr, foster brother of Akbar and intimate to him, held high positions under Jahāngīr as well. (see Beveridge; Prasad (2003), vol. 1, 319f.)

cruelty is in most parts of the text dealt with as something evil. But as part of the duties of a just ruler, it becomes legalized, at least for Jahāngīr: In the 103th assembly, when the courtiers stand thunderstruck because Jahāngīr commands to torture a denouncer, the emperor explains his ulterior movements and reveals that in torturing the witness, a false testimony will become evident and the denounced will be released. The author then relates:

“When they [i.e. the courtiers] heard these high words which came of intrinsic clearness and from enlightened mind, this group, which had descended to turmoil because of this sentence, refreshed the tongue with prayer and praise. Murtaẓā Khān¹⁴ said: “Because the Pādishāh’s intention is oriented towards justice and righteousness, God is in all circumstances the protector of his concerns. Nothing will happen that is outside of the measure of law and justice of his verdict. He immediately reveals everything that is to the people’s benefit.” (Majālis, 254–55)

In contrast to the cruel punishments of Shāh ‘Abbās, the author claims Jahāngīr to be enlightened by God to such an extent that he even can command apparent cruelties which in reality serve justice and follow ulterior movements that cannot be understood by ordinary people, not even by his courtiers. Cruelty thus is measured subjectively: For ordinary men or as causeless extreme it is to be assessed as negative, while Jahāngīr as God’s elected and enlightened ruler can differentiate between causeless cruelty – which he never would permit – and apparent cruelty which in reality serves the right and justice in his empire. Thus, the author elevates Jahāngīr another time and simultaneously degrades Shāh ‘Abbās who is not estimated as enlightened and therefore has to be judged as ruler of lower rank than Jahāngīr. In addition to virtues esteemed as ideal for rulers, *Majālis* also contains passages which ascribe Jahāngīr abilities and virtues usually connected to persons with special contact to the spiritual world (like shaikhs, holy men etc.). This also includes accounts which suggest supernatural capabilities of Jahāngīr. Jahāngīr’s characteristics that imply a special access to the supernatural are represented in a way different to the narrative strategies already described. The author here does not use the strategy of assertive narration or direct as-

¹⁴ Murtaẓā Khān Shaikh Farīd Bukharī (d. 1025/1616–17). Served at the court under Akbar and Jahāngīr, held high ranks such as governor of different provinces (*ṣūbeh-dār*). (see Beveridge; Prasad (2003), vol. 1, 521f.)

cription. He rather is committed to deal with them on a level separated from the provable and events that can be explained rationally. ‘Abd al-Sattār has to attempt a balancing act between his task to present Jahāngīr as spiritually endowed and a tendency towards rationalism at the court which also shines through the lines of *Majālis*. To treat the supernatural on a separated level, he mostly refers to it in the context of interpretation of dreams. One example can be found in the 23th assembly, when Jahāngīr tells a dream and requests for an interpretation. In his dream, he meets a man of greenish color, dressed in white, who is sitting in a place and giving advice to the people. When Jahāngīr approaches in a respectful manner and asks for advice, the green man answers:

“What is it that you do not possess, so that I could guide you towards it? God the Most High has given everything to you!” (*Majālis*, 58)

When Jahāngīr asks for his name, the green man repeatedly rejects this request. In Islamic context, the greenish man can only be interpreted as *al-Khiṣr* (the Green), a mythical figure wandering through time and space and giving advice to extraordinary persons. *Al-Khiṣr* usually is interpreted as the Seal of the friends of God (i.e. the leader of the Saints, see Franke P. 2000, Wensinck 2012). To meet him and to talk to him itself is a strong indication of being especially endowed. The author of *Majālis* goes beyond this and lets *Khiṣr* admit his not being able to give advice to Jahāngīr. The dream thus does not only claim again Jahāngīr’s elect status and his being created as an omniscient and omnipotent being. It also points out that Jahāngīr’s nature is superior to the knowledge and endowment of a highly esteemed, well known holy person who acknowledges this fact when calling himself “*the poorest of the poor*” in contrast to Jahāngīr called “*the highest of high*” (*Majālis*, 58). By quoting *al-Khiṣr*, the author relies on a witness who must, because of his status as a saint, assess much better than any human how elevated the status of the emperor is. Again, persuasion based on an authoritative instance is used to convince the reader. Simultaneously, the author also uses strategies to protect his argumentation with the supernatural against challenge from a rational position. First, as already mentioned, he puts his account in the frame of a dream. So no irrational exaggeration and storytelling can be reproached to him because dreams or visions might contain irrational parts. Second, he does not directly claim the green man to be *al-Khiṣr*, but keeps his identity in the dark. In doing so, the author gives a touch of mystery to the story and at

the same time prevents refutation. Similar to this, *Majālis* contents some additional accounts in which Jahāngīr meets a saint or a shaikh and is treated by him as especially endowed by God. These accounts basing on persuasion by authoritative instances have to be assessed as belonging to a legitimate strategy of power and rule.

Another example for the association of the emperor with the supernatural is to be found in the 39th assembly (*Majālis*, 93f.). The author dedicated the whole assembly to an account of a miracle worked by the emperor's name. The chapter starts with a long, detailed reproduction of the event which the author gives in direct speech of "one of the attendees" (*Majālis*, 93): In the province Multan, an old *pīr* has been set to prison by the governor (*faujdār*)¹⁵ because people accused him to have stolen from the treasury. To make him admit the crime, the governor orders a ferocious elephant to be rushed on the accused. When the elephant is approaching, the *pīr* talks to him, saying:

"Oh elephant! Do you possess the sovereignty of the just pādīshāh Jahāngīr, so that you wage war against me, who is helpless, before having listened to me?" (*Majālis*, 93)

When hearing the emperor's name, the elephant suddenly stops and by no way can be rushed again towards the accused. When an old woman asks the elephant in the emperor's name to kill the *pīr* if he is guilty, the elephant again does not move, so that the crowd becomes convinced of his innocence. In narrating the central event of the miracle twice, the author also encourages his reader to believe in the event. The account is constructed according to the principle of steady rise of tension and is based on the use of two main narrative tools. First, the author uses contrasting representation to make clear the role of the involved figures. He describes an opposition between the *faujdār*, who acts as *bad guy*, and the old *pīr*, who represents the good and devout subject protected by the emperor and contrasts the helpless state of the accused *pīr* with the *faujdār* and the description of the furious elephant, which is through the whole account characterized by the use of appositions which confirm his being highly dangerous. The *faujdār* then is characterized as distracted and overstrained with the responsibility of finding out the truth:

¹⁵ *Faujdār*: Commander of a territory responsible for the maintain of law and order (see *Apparatus*, XXV).

“[...] And Taj Khan [the *faujdār*], because he was in the state of solving and verification, and because the trustworthiness of this region – whether out of hostility or out of suspicion – had led him believe [in their suspicions], became more and more distressed.” (Majālis, 93)

To confirm the truth of his narration, the narrator calls to witness a broad range of persons:

“Some few hundreds of people present at that place, low and high, women and men, were set in commotion by watching this remarkable event. Even the *bakhshī* of Punjāb¹⁶ and the *Kotwāl* of Lāhōre¹⁷ were present at that place.” (Majālis, 94)

The antithetic enumeration of people (“low and high, women and men”) makes the reader realize that witnesses from all classes have seen the event and believe in its truth. This impersonal group of witnesses is completed with two high-ranked officials who, in the further course of the account, are called to the court to confirm the event personally before the emperor (Majālis, 94). The enumeration of such a high number of eye-witnesses gives the event an appearance of irrefutability and indirectly makes the high power of Jahāngīr’s name evident. In the second half of the chapter, the author turns to a description of the discussion held in the assembly after the account. It is highly interesting that despite of the confirmation of several eye-witnesses, the emperor rejects to believe in the effect of his name:

“[...] that majesty did not take notice of it and out of boundless sobriety and abundant patience – he, who says after having drunk entire oceans “Have I grown?” – did not believe in it or did not want his intrinsic greatness, which continually do ascribe to him the commanders of the ascetics, to become obviously.” (Majālis, 94)

The author in one sentence gives an explanation for the emperor’s skepticism and again underlines his exceptional character. But why does the emperor refuse to believe in this miracle performed in his name? On a conceptual

¹⁶ *Punjāb*: Province in the north-west of the Mughal Empire, important cities Lahore and Multan (today Pakistan). See Schwartzberg 1992, 46). The *Bakhshī* of a province was the treasurer in charge of the *mansab* payments (Apparatus, XXV).

¹⁷ *Kotwāl*: Commander of a town (see Bosworth, C.E. 2012).

level, the refusal might spring from different sources: On the one hand, in the Sūfī context, performing miracles is considered as a sign of a mere mediocre state of spirituality. For instance, in Dehlavī's *Fawā'id*, Shaikh Nizām al-dīn Auliya¹⁸ identifies miracles as reserved for poor Sūfīs, while in his point of view the real ascetic does not need miracles to prove his elevated spiritual state. The shaikh argues in *Fawā'id*, that the power of performing miracles (*karamāt*) should be concealed by the saints, because God ordered them to do so and because the power of performing *karamāt* represents an early stage on the spiritual path (*ṭarīqa*) to God. Remaining at that stage would mean not to progress on the way to God (Lawrence/Nizāmi 1992, 217f.). Refusing a miracle thus might be seen in the context of representing the emperor as a perfect spiritual man. On the other hand, modesty is one of the virtues propagated by the catholic ethical teachings present in the writings of the Jesuit Jérôme Xavier (see Camps 1957) and forms a part of the ethical positions the Jesuits deployed at the Mughal court since the time of Akbar. We therefore have to keep in mind the possibility of Christian influence on the ethical concepts at the court. A third reason for Jahāngīr's refusal might be found in the high appreciation of rational thought at the court, which also shimmers through the lines of *Majālis* as a whole. In refusing the miracle, the emperor stays on the firm foundation of rational mind and cannot be accused of presumption. Finally, as narrative strategy, the repeated refusal allows the author to particularize the great number of eye-witnesses several times and thus to give his account an appearance of high credibility.

Particular Mughal values

Some of the characteristics ascribed to Jahāngīr in *Majālis* have to be rated as related to the special religious situation in the empire which I outlined in the introduction. Although Hindu religious practices and thought do not play a prominent role in the text – most religious debates are held between Muslim scholars – Hindu values like vegetarianism are propagated in the text. In the 51st assembly, we find two stories illustrating the attitude towards creatures characteristic for the representation of the emperor in *Majālis*. After the introductory dating section and a short report of Jahāngīr ordering the translation of an Arabic book for his library, the author turns to the end of the assembly:

¹⁸ Nizām al-dīn Bada'ūnī, see footnote 10.

“At the end of the assembly, He [Jahāngīr] turned towards Muṣṭafā Khān Qazwīnī¹⁹ and said: “Mīr! Some unfortunate doctors reported yesterday to the Holiest Pādīshāh: “The sparrow’s brain, according to medical reasons and also by experience, is wholesome for the fertility. We hope for good benefits if His Majesty would consume fifty to sixty sparrow’s brains a day.” We answered with good fortune: “You have got the same heart as the sparrow. The same body, the same eye, the same soul you have – and we all have – have also got the sparrows. How could one deprive so many creatures of their lives? Only a vile soul would do so. Structure an outward appearance of the sparrow’s heart are the same like ours and even a [starved] human is better than sacrificing so many souls for the pleasure of the own desire (nafs).” He spoke these words full of warmth and compassion with all his heart two or three times. Because it came from his heart, it touched the hearts and thus all were deeply moved. Hereafter, he said: “When I was a prince and I was 14 to 15 years old, we went for a walk at Golkina while we were slightly drunk by wine. Golkina is a village near Kabul, which His Majesty whose place is in paradise [Bābur] said about:

Oh beautiful time of youth, oh days of enjoyment,
when we lived at Golkina with some drinking companions

This verse came to his tongue several times. Because of the drunkenness and exhilaration of cup and wine, appetite for Kabāb grew. The blessed view fell on a flock of sheep, in which were three or four suckling lambs. One of them was caught and brought following a high sign. Lālā Bīg²⁰ took it, held the knife at its throat and guided it three or four times over the carotid artery without any success. He was not able to hurt it. But the lamb cried, like it is usual, two or three times. When the mother heard these cries, she hastened towards it and born

¹⁹ Muṣṭafā Khān, Mīr Ziyā al-dīn Qazwīnī: From Iranian (saifī) origin. 1014 (1605–06) he reached the *mansab* of 1000 zāt; 1025 (1616–17), Jahāngīr bestowed on him the title Muṣṭafā Khān. (*Tuzuk*, 11, 178.)

²⁰ Lālā Bīg Kābulī (d. 1017/1608). A slave-born servant of Mīrzā Ḥakīm, entered the service of Akbar, who made him over to Prince Salīm (the later emperor Jahāngīr). During Jahāngīr’s reign the emperor honored him with the title “Jahāngīr Qūlī Khān” and raised him to high positions. (see Beveridge; Prasad (2003), vol. 1, 728f.)

down by anxiety, she did not mind for her own life. Feeling compassion because of her grief and sorrow, We ordered to set the lamb free and it started to suckle from the mothers teats full of desire. We learned a lesson from seeing the divine protection, the mothers comfort and the desire of the lamb. Afterwards, we took another lamb older than six months. The very same Lālā Big took the same knife, held it at the throat and only by putting it on, it cut and finished its work. From that day, we banned slaughtering and consumption of kids and lambs younger than five months from our mind, and We used great care in its prohibition.” (Majālis, 127–28)

This paragraph is one of the longest sections reproducing direct speech of Jahāngīr. The account the author places on the emperors’ lips is divided in two parts representing two different incidents. Starting from a recent event, the emperor illustrates his point by reference to a story from his youth. In doing so, it is shown to the reader that Jahāngīr’s attitude towards the protection of life is a continuous one, persisting since his early years. In the first part of the account, this attitude is justified with a perception of creation that claims an equal status of all creatures when equating outward appearance as well as the soul of animals with these of humans. This equality is underlined by the use of an anaphoric enumeration of features (“*The same body, the same eye, the same soul [...]*” [*hamān tan, hamān čashm, hamān jān*]) which at the same time includes a climax starting from the outward appearance and culminating in the equation of the animal and human soul. The statement gains in importance even by the choice of the animal concerned with: The sparrow as a very small and unspectacular animal benefits from the same esteem as human beings. Moreover, the emperor is presented as appreciating the sparrow as equal to himself in specifying “*The same body, the same eye, the same soul you have – and we all have – have also got the sparrows*”. Thus, a paradoxical contrast between one of the weakest creatures and the emperor, who is represented throughout the whole text as the most elevated representative of God on earth (as God’s shadow (*zill-i ilāhī*)), is used to emphasize the claimed equality of all creatures in the most powerful way possible. The respect for the life of creatures then is underlined by rhetorical questions that do not leave the possibility of questioning the claim for the reader. Slaughtering animals is rejected strongly and presented as a work only vile persons (*jān-i shūm*) can do, so that the reader must not even think about questioning the claim. After a repetition of the main argument in other words, it is strength-

ened once more when the emperor says “*even a [starved] human is better than sacrificing so many souls for the pleasure of the own desire (nafs).*” Here again it becomes clear that the life of animals is considered as equal to human life.

After the reproduction of the emperor’s speech, the author renders his account more precisely and evokes a sentimental atmosphere describing the emperor’s words as warmly spoken from the heart. Again, the reaction of the audience is described to give evidence and to evoke a feeling of sentimental movement also in the reader. The second part of the paragraph is introduced by a short sentence on *Golkina*, the place of action. The author now presents a retrospective account in which the emperor tells how he learned, in his early life, to respect the life of creatures. He thus lets the reader understand the origin of the emperor’s attitude towards the animal and, at the same time, makes the reader know that this attitude evolves from Jahāngīr’s personal understanding when he lets him state: “*We learned a lesson from seeing the divine protection, the mothers comfort and the desire of the lamb.*” As in the first story, the plot is about a very high and powerful human, the Pādishāh, who wants to kill a weak and helpless animal, the lamb, for his personal enjoyment. While in the first story, the emperor already knows about his duty to protect all creatures, he in the course of the second part is confronted with a situation that teaches him to protect the life of weak creatures. Aside from the compassion he feels for the mother’s grief and his respect for her being with her child, the author now makes the most striking point in invoking a divine sign. He does not stop his account after the miraculous fail of slaughter, but continues in telling that a few minutes later, used on an older animal, the same knife smoothly cut through the flesh of the poor creature. Thus, the author tries to deliver an evidence for the miracle being a real intervention by God and shows his efforts to make his points on the highest level of trustworthiness possible. While in the last example, respect for the life of creatures is propagated without direct connection to Hindu ideals, we also find paragraphs in which the emperor explains Hindu traditions or even defends them against criticism. The following example can be found in the 7th assembly, when the courtiers have gathered after the occurrence of a lunar eclipse:

“The conversation turned to the ablutions (ghusl) the Hindu sages (dāniyān-i hunūd) had resolved on for lunar as well as for solar eclipses. Some of the Muslims started to chide them, saying: “These people from the Deccan by themselves are quite fine, but this is not advantageous at all and it is unfounded!” The erudite Pādishāh an-

swered: “Also the Muslims have called for prayer and supplication in this time. Therefore the following notion came to the imperial thought: A group which calls for ablutions is, as it were, convinced that in that time, which is a time of miraculous warning and of prayer and supplication for high and low, it would be better for the humans to be chaste, because chastity from both spiritual and physical impurity belongs to the conditions of worship. And also the sacrifices (*taṣadduq*) they give after the ablutions indicate that they took an example from the state of the celestials, reduced their love of the world and dissolved a part from themselves. The occupation of governing the world (*īn kārkhāne*) remains at its place.” When they heard these highly symbolic words, everybody made his tongue fresh by praising and praying and they threw their heads to the ground:

Till dawn has not broken at night
 For those who do not love dawn, dawn shall always be like night
 Those who do love dawn, fortune shall embrace
 Shall the wheel of fortune the malevolent erase.” (Majālis, 13–14)

The argumentation is amazingly simple and remarkable at the same time. The emperor puts the Muslim and Hindu rituals held on the occasion of the eclipse on the same level without any justification or discussion. To put it simply, his argumentation takes for granted that Muslim and Hindu rituals may be compared on an equal basis. The rituals of both groups are justified not by argumentation out of a religious background (e.g. out of revealed scriptures, religious legal texts), but following a rational pattern of argumentation: In a first step, the emperor shows that the Muslims criticizing the Hindu ritual actually are doing the same when calling for ablutions. By this, he *a priori* puts Hindu and Muslim religion on the same level – he deals with both as equal religious phenomenons. In the second step of argumentation, he provides an explication for this phenomenon, starting from the mystical ideal of rejection of the world and chasteness from both spiritual and physical impurity. He, for both religions, states that these two ideals are to be seen as the moving causes behind the respective rituals and that their pursuit arises from observing the ideal of “celestial” pureness. It is important to state, that Muslim termini (*ghusl*, *taṣadduq*) are equally applied on the religious actions performed by the Hindu groups. Therefore, the poem at the end of the paragraph is not chosen deliberately: “dawn” and “night” have to be read as metaphors for

the mystic states (*ḥāl*) of *qabḍ* and *baṣṭ*.²¹ With this allusion to Sūfī thought, the author links the preceding discussion on religious equality and tolerance to the mystic basis of the *dīn-i ilāhī* and to Jahāngīr's state as spiritual leader (*pīr-i murshid rāhnemā*).

Creating a book of spiritual guidance

One further central characteristic of hagiographies mentioned above is the supply of spiritual guidance. In *Majalis*, the author explicitly notes down his purpose of creating a book of spiritual guidance:

“He [the lowest of adherents, i.e. the author] thought to himself: “The Pīrs [spiritual leaders of Sūfī orders] who possess right guidance bestow on their adherents, at the beginning of their work for the purification of their inner thoughts (*bāṭin*) and internal adjustment, forty [exercises].²² Because of the great desire of the worship of God and the multitude of occupations concerning the administration of this workshop [the world], when does this Pīr, the possessor of the throne, the world-protecting Pādishāh, find the time and the possibility to devote himself to different things? This is why I am happy to shoulder this auspicious task.” Therefore I took an oath to note down forty assemblies of the Pādishāh and Pīr, if the heavens would abet, [and afterwards] arrange forty exercises for the grades (*marātib*) of the high beatitude. At a suitable time, I presented my intention to the ear of the Holiest [i.e. Jahāngīr] in this way: “Long live his Majesty! Ḥasan Sajjizī has written down the assemblies of his own Pīr, the King of Shaikhs (*suṭṭān al-mashā'ikh*) Nizām al-dīn Bada'ūnī. This lowest of the adherents also would like to write down everything that is mentioned in the nightly assemblies of His Majesty – who is both the world-protecting Pādishāh and the world-seizing Pīr (lit:

²¹ *Qabḍ* is one of the stages of spiritual development in Sūfī Islam (*ḥāl*). It is characterized as feeling of contraction or sadness at the sight of divine majesty and severity. In contrast, *baṣṭ* is a state of involuntary joy, exaltation etc. granted by God. See Lings, *Ḳabḍ* ii, in: “Ḳabḍ.” Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2012.

²² The practice of *Āilla*, i.e. forty days of exercise to purify thoughts and soul, belongs to the practices adopted by Āishtī and other Sūfī orders.

pīr-i jahāngīr) – to make it the fundament of eternal joy for himself and his contemporaries.”” (Majālis, 2)

First, we can state that in this paragraph of the introduction as well as in *Majālis* as a whole, Jahāngīr is presented as *Pīr*, *Pīr-i jahāngīr*. Here, the author emphasizes the emperor’s feature of being a spiritual leader (of his subdues in general or at least of the members of the *dīn-i ilāhī*). Drawing on the textual tradition of the *Sūfī* heritage, ‘Abd al-Sattār decides to write a book of spiritual guidance like adherents of *Sūfī* shaikhs have done it before for their respective teachers. The author names a work by Ḥasan Sajjīzī narrating the *dicta* of Shaikh Niẓām al-dīn Bada’ūnī as model for his own project. This work, entitled *Fawā’id al-fu’ād* is assessed as the first representative of *malfuẓāt* literature on the subcontinent and as model for the development of the whole *malfuẓāt* literature, which genre mainly developed in India after the initial work of Ḥasan Sajjīzī (Nizāmī K.A. 2012). *Malfuẓāt* (sing. *malfūẓ*) writings narrate the teachings of spiritual leaders in the form of dated protocols of assemblies held with adherents. Ernst enumerates certain characteristic features such as (1) The texts consist of mostly dated protocols giving the teachings of the respective shaikh in dialogue form; (2) The authors are contemporaries of the shaikh presented and note down from memory after having attended an assembly; (3) The authors usually claim their writings to be revised and authorized by the shaikh; (4) The authors select the topics dealt with and give interpretations of the teachings. Ernst distinguishes between *original* and *retrospective malfuẓāt* (Ernst 2004, 65), defining works as *Fawā’id* written by adherents during the lifetime of the respective spiritual leader as *original*, while he classifies *retrospective malfuẓāt* as inauthentic, arguing the latter to be written by authors not contemporary to the shaikhs in retrospective. He furthermore states that the *retrospective malfuẓāt* differ from the features characteristic for *original malfuẓāt* (Ernst 2004, 78). *Majālis* matches, as I have shown in this contribution, with all the four characteristics given by Ernst. With regard to the form, the text is made up of dated protocols, furthermore the author is a contemporary to his subject Jahāngīr, he selects and interprets the topics and finally, shows indirectly that his writings were revised by Jahāngīr:

“[...] After I had presented some of my scripts to the Holiest [i.e. Jahāngīr], the pādishāh with the luminous heart said with his blessed

tongue: “You should also mention the reason for Khān-i Khanān’s arrival and the lack of imperial kindness towards him!” (Majālis, 114)

The author thus obviously borrowed formal characteristics from the *malḡūzāt* genre to write down his own book of guidance for his spiritual leader Jahāngīr. Also regarding the content, similarities can be stated: As has been shown above, the text aims at propagating ethics and rules for life (eg. the way to deal with animals). Other parts of the texts deal with specific features of the court milieu, although here too, rules of righteous behavior are discussed. In further research on the text, it has therefore to be questioned whether *Majālis* also shows structures parallel to courtly instructive literature (*Fürstenspiegel*).

As for the guidance provided in *Majālis*, the author uses anecdotes or examples out of which spiritual directives as well as rules and norms for everyday life can be derived. The author usually also gives an explanation of the respective anecdote or integrates the interpretation in an ensuing discussion, an approach which is also present in *Fawā'id*. The passage on Hindu rites cited above is one example for this strategy of narration. Here, after a short, but vivid reproduction showing the prejudiced view of the Muslim courtiers, the author continues with relating Jahāngīr’s reaction and explanation which he assesses as “*highly symbolic*.” In this case, the author leaves the interpretation of the paragraph to the reader and does not give his own (or the emperor’s) explanations. As he concludes the paragraph with a poem related to mystic concepts, we can derive that the paragraph as a whole has to be interpreted in relation to the Sūfī components present in the *dīn-i ilāhī*. The paragraph thus refers indirectly to the principle of *ṣulḡ-i kull*, the universal freedom of religion granted by the emperor in Mughal India, which calls the people to tolerance towards every religious denomination present in the empire and makes clear that from the ruler’s side, the different dominions are considered to be equal. Norms and values are also given in dialogue form. For instance, in chapter 87, we find the following paragraph, dealing with the badness of prodigality and the good deed of giving alms:

“After two astronomical hours had passed, the conversation turned to the fact that, under Jahāngīr’s reign, high-ranked Amirs and other court officials had built large manors and magnificent buildings wor-

thy of remark at the bank of river Jūn.²³ Because the Blessed [i.e. Jahāngīr] is interested in architecture, he talked to every single one of them personally. When he heard, that even I'tibār Khān²⁴ had built a large manor, he asked: "Why did the eunuch (khwāja-sarā)²⁵ spend that much gold for buildings made of clay? He has no son on whom he can entail these manors, so it would be better, with such a large amount of gold, to build a manor of hearts. He should better give it with his own hands to the poor and weak during his lifetime." Hilāl Khān,²⁶ another eunuch, answered: "A page of the royal court (ghulām) passes everything he possesses to his lord and master. Everything we own, buildings and gardens, belongs to our Majesty, for He is our worldly master (khudā-ye majāzī-ye mā ast)."²⁷ He [i.e. Jahāngīr] answered: "We do not withdraw anything from anybody, even if he is a page and slave bought by gold. Why do they not give for the servants of God, so that God is pleased and satisfied with them?" Many of these and similar words of instruction and advice came from the tongue of the Most Holy." (Majālis, 215)

The account is divided into two parts: In the first one, the author leads to the topic and reproduces the "right guidance" in direct speech of the emperor.

²³ The river Yamūna, at the bank of which the capitals Delhi and Agra are situated. The Yamūna is the largest tributary river of the Ganges and flows into it near Varanasi (Benares).

²⁴ He was one of the confidants of Jahāngīr and was in his service from very early years on. During his lifetime, he reached highest ranks in the military service. He was charged with the surveillance of Prince Khusraw after his uprising and his incarceration in Agra. In his late years, I'tibār Khān became *ṣubedār* (like *ḥākim* and some other titles: governor of a province) of Agra. He died 1032 (1622–23) in the office of *ḥākim* of Agra. (Maathīr I, p. 704–705; Apparatus J390–J1372.)

²⁵ *Khwāja-sarā* (lit. master of the palace): Eunuchs in charge of the private rooms (*ḥaram-sarāy*) in the palace.

²⁶ Hilāl Khān (Khwāja Hilāl) was an eunuch originally in the service of Qāsim Khan Namakin and came to the service of Jahāngīr in his early reign. He was *Mīr Tuzuk* and built in the town of Rankatta a small fort, which he named *Hilālabād*. He also built a manor in Agra. (*Ma'athīr II*, p. 68).

²⁷ *khudā* (from *khud*=self, and *āy*= coming; according to others related to *S. svadatta*=self-given, i.e. self-created), God; master, owner (Steingass, 448): It is doubtful whether the term has been used, regarding the emperor, in the first or second meaning. At least, even when translated as *master*, one should be aware of a certain connotation. However, because we do not have, until now, any proof of Jahāngīr claiming the status of a godlike being, the translator chose here the second meaning.

The paragraph is one of the rare passages in *Majālis*, in which a normative guideline uttered by the emperor is justified by religious argumentation. The second part starts with *Hilāl Khān*'s interjection, which allows the author to repeat the guideline a second time after having inserted in the dialogue an indirect reference of Jahāngīr's kindness and grace, when mentioning that the emperor does not claim any possession of his pages for himself. The paragraph ends with a summarizing remark which prolongs the dialogue virtually, when stating that "*Many of these and similar words of instruction and advice came from the tongue of the Most Holy.*" This strategy is typical for *Majālis* and is often used by the author to extend the effect of the accounts given before.

V. Conclusion

The aim of this contribution was to analyze narrative strategies used in *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* by 'Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī to communicate in his writing a *hidden agenda* taking aim at legitimacy of rule and creation of a group identity among the different social, ethnic and religious groups at the court. By this analysis, we were able to gain an insight on how an author situated at the Mughal court during the Jahāngīrī period, dealt with questions of social and religious heterogeneity in the empire, and into which strategies he used to create a certain representation of the ruling dynasty as well as a certain self-perception for his society. The leading interests behind the author's text correspond to constituent characteristics of hagiographic texts as I outlined them in my working definition: These texts are about historical persons or, at least, present their main characters as historical. The persons portrayed are often shown as endowed with supernatural deeds like performing miracles, being in contact with transcendental powers. As for the form, hagiographic texts are written or oral diegetics and contain narrative elements. The functions of hagiographies reach from propaganda (for a certain religious denomination as well as for religious legitimate rule etc.) to legitimacy of (religious as well as secular) authority and the transmission of it, the supporting, creating and transmitting of group identity and the provision of spiritual guidance for a certain group of e.g. adherents. Through the analysis of chosen, not representative parts of the text, I showed characteristic elements of the author's way of narration. Drawing a conclusion, we have to bear in mind that *Majālis* as a whole contains much more textual material

and includes thematic as well as formal aspects that have not been taken into consideration in this contribution.

Is *Majālis* a hagiography? This question of genre theory for this singular text from the Mughal Empire cannot be answered sufficiently based on the analysis of few chosen examples from the text. To answer the question, other different aspects, such as the stylistic and formal dependence on *malḡūzāt* texts and other genres dominant in Mughal court literature have to be considered. Especially the dependence on *malḡūzāt* literature from the subcontinent and a deeper analysis of the way Sūfī elements are introduced will provide insight into the religious, but also political dimensions of the text. Nevertheless, the results of the analysis presented in this contribution allow a first interim result and a preliminary genre classification of the text. *Majālis* contains all the features outlined as characteristic for hagiographic writing and therefore can at least be judged as a text with hagiographic components. Further research on the text will allow to answer the question whether the following preliminary results can be confirmed for the whole text or whether the text also contains elements from different origin. For the further comparison of *Majālis* with other hagiographic texts from different cultural contexts, it will be helpful to isolate the narrative strategies the author uses in *Majālis* to fulfill the functions of legitimacy, right guidance and formation of a group identity.

To draw a conclusion, I will therefore sum up the narrative strategies found in the course of this contribution, connecting them with the functions they are used to fulfill. One of the most striking stylistic characteristics in *Majālis* is the continuous use of post positive attributes put after the name or title of Jahāngīr to illustrate his asserted characteristics. The author uses such attributes to emphasize the virtues or characteristics of Jahāngīr dealt with in the respective paragraph. In other words, the attributes are chosen according to the respective characteristic or virtue represented in the paragraph: In an anecdote showing Jahāngīr's just rule or judgement, he is entitled as *pādishāh-i inṣāf-dūst* (the pādishāh who loves justice), while in paragraphs dealing with the emperor's spiritual enlightenment, he is entitled *pādishāh-i raushan-jān* (the pādishāh with the enlightened soul). Additionally to this specific use, attributes are also added by default to almost every mention of the emperor, especially to highlight his actions or sayings. The steady repetition as well as the position after the name let the attributes appear like parts of the name or as honorary title. In constantly repeating the attributes and as a matter of course, the author imprints the respective assertions into the reader's mind and accomplishes by that a *direct persuasion* of the reader. As

the author uses post positive attributes without any proof of their truth, this narrative tool might be counted as a form of *assertive narration*.

Besides this form of *direct persuasion*, the author also uses *indirect strategies* of persuasion. Comparisons of Jahāngīr with well-known persons of the time or emperors from the past are used to contrast Jahāngīr's perfection as emperor as well as as spiritual leader with deficient properties of other rulers. Here, the author counts on the power of judgment of his readers, who are thought to develop, based on the given comparisons and stories, their own picture of Jahāngīr's perfect character. In most cases, after such indirect passages, the author adds clarifying sentences, either giving his own interpretation and explanation or directing the reader's judgment by giving an eulogy that underlines the positive virtues asserted.

Another essential part of 'Abd al-Sattār's style of narration is the quotation of eye-witnesses. First, he himself being participant and therefore an eye-witness of Jahāngīr's *majālis*, forms the basic legitimacy of his own writing and serves as proof of his objective and true reporting. The author valorizes his status as an eye-witness in mentioning in many passages of the text that the emperor appointed him as recorder for the conversations and controlled his writings. Moreover, he refers to the high esteem Jahāngīr holds in him. Referring to eye-witnesses here fulfills a function of creating credibility for the author himself. Furthermore, other persons are called to witness, either in the context of the nightly assemblies or in connection with events from the past (e.g. from the time of Akbar) or with incidents happened in a province. For example, the author often puts his directions for interpretation mentioned above into sentences describing the courtiers admiring and praising the emperor and his sayings. He thus uses the indirect persuasive function of calling courtiers as eye-witnesses for the credibility of the related incident or as example for reverence that has to be owed to a related action or dictum of the emperor. This indirect persuasive function of eye-witnesses gains higher effect when an authoritative element is added to it. In citing social high-ranking persons from the court or from the administration for example or as witness, the author creates a better acceptance of the inherent message. This form of authoritative persuasion of the reader becomes even more effective also through the calling of supernatural, commonly known instances such as central figures of the Islamic mythology or even God himself to witness. Reference to the transcendental as proof of the truth is often used in *Majālis* and has therefore to be assessed as integral part of the narrative strategy of the author.

As for the choice of content, I first have to state that the wide range of topics dealt with in *Majālis* cannot be analyzed in a small contribution. To get a complete picture, further research on the text has to be done. I therefore concentrated on topics related to legitimacy and representative strategies. Central for the legitimacy of rule is an argumentation with divine election: First and foremost, Jahāngīr is presented as directly elected by God and chosen for the rule since the very beginning of the world. He moreover is represented as the *ẓill-i ilāhī* (the shade of God) and thus as God's first representative on earth. Additionally to this relatively common legitimacy, Jahāngīr is also presented as endowed with supernatural deeds and as spiritually inspired by God. His status as spiritual leader for his subdues (*pīr wa murshid rāhnemā*) and as shaikh of the *dīn-i ilāhī* also belongs to the legitimate strategies based on spiritual argumentation and at the same time points to the endeavor at creating a certain communality for the different religious denominations under the umbrella of the Mughal rule. The legitimacy with spiritual arguments is displayed in post positive attributes as well as in anecdotes or examples with inherent normative instructions which are explained in dialogues or in interpretations given by the author.

Besides the legitimacy with spiritual arguments, a second characteristic part is the representation of Jahāngīr as a perfect ruler. Anecdotes and examples as well as short statements are used to exemplify ideal virtues of the emperor (such as perfect justice, grace, eruditeness etc.). To the representation of Jahāngīr as a righteous ruler also belong paragraphs, in which unlawful or unethical behavior of other rulers, either from the past or contemporary sovereigns, are criticized. By the differentiation from unlawful behaving rulers, the asserted righteousness of Jahāngīr becomes more bright shining and in the same, the author clarifies the superiority of Jahāngīr over other Islamic rulers. Especially the comparison with Shāh 'Abbās Safavī as contemporary and neighbor of the Mughal Empire is used to differentiate from cruelty towards subdues and from religious unlawful behavior. This differentiation on the one hand promises a high degree of acceptance and understanding, particularly from the community of Iranians migrated to the Mughal Empire. On the other hand, it also has to be judged, in the context of confrontation with the Safavid Empire in questions of demarcation and predominance in the region, as politically relevant.

Spiritual guidance is provided through telling anecdotes dealing with diverse subjects that transport interline normative directives. The anecdotes stem from different backgrounds (e.g. anecdotes about shaikhs, learned peo-

ple, courtiers, as well as anecdotes from the past or fables including speaking animals) and, just as anecdotes illustrating Jahāngīr's virtues, mostly are followed by an interpreting sentence or dialogue. This indirect way of providing guidance is similar to the narrative strategy used in *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* by Ḥasan Dehlawī (see Lawrence/Nizāmī 1992).

Finally, we have to ask in which way *Majālis* may create or support a group identity among the adherents of Jahāngīr. The text itself contains rarely allusions to this subject. Only the concentration on the inner circle of courtiers admitted to the nightly circles in front of the emperor and the steady repetition of sentences and phrases praising the fortune and elected status of those admitted to this position may be seen as a means of supporting a certain self-perception among the courtiers. As *Majālis* is preserved as a unique manuscript, we can only speculate on the spread of the text in its time and therefore have no possibility to furnish reliable particulars on the readership the text was addressed to. Nevertheless, it is possible that *Majālis* was thought to be distributed among high-ranking courtiers to foster their commitment to the ruling sovereign and to create an identity of honorable servants of the dynasty, as it was the case with the *Akbarnāma* or later on the *Jahāngīrnāma*.

In conclusion, we can state that with *Majālis*, a highly interesting text with at least strong hagiographic elements has come to us. Further research on the text has to answer the genre question more detailed to determine whether *Majālis* should be judged as hagiography or whether the text belongs to some kind of hybrid genre located between hagiographic spiritual literature like the *malfūzāt* and other religious writings and court texts like advising literature (*Fürstenspiegel*) and the characteristic Mughal genre of (auto) biographies of emperors.

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