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Matthias Becher, Elke Brüggen und Stephan Conermann

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Anna Kollatz

Before the End: Legitimation and Succession Quarrel from the Perspective of Nūr Jahān

Abstract

The 'Fatḥnāma-yi Nūr Jahān' uses characteristics of good rule, as they appear in the Mughal sources, to represent the main characters in the narrative and classify them as 'good' or 'bad.' This chapter strives to examine the narrative use of the virtues of rulership in this text against the backdrop of the imminent transition from Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627) to Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–1658). The ruler and his wife appear as models of ideal virtues, while the contrasting character Mahābat Khān portrays all the negative qualities a man can only imagine. These negative qualities are derived from the catalogue of ideal virtues as inversions into the negative. While the text is not primarily written to represent the goodness of the ruler, it clearly pursues the goal of showing his wife Nūr Jahān in a particularly good light. Nūr Jahān, therefore, also shows ideal virtues of rulership and other such positive qualities, such as her love for the ruler. Her representation as gifted with ideal virtues of rulership also partly results from the fact that Nūr Jahān is closely associated with the highly-idealized Jahāngīr, a fact which can support her position during and after his reign. The purpose of this narrative maneuver is to allow Nūr Jahān and her party to place their own candidate in a good position to succeed to the throne before the end of Jahāngīr's (r. 1605–1627) reign or during the posthumous succession struggle. Virtues of rulership thus serve not only as a means of representation, but are also actively used in the narrative in order to subtly guide the reader towards a positive perception of Nur Jahan and her party. The constant reference to the character's virtues is just one narrative strategy among many used by Kāmī Shīrāzī in the 'Fatḥnāma'. Storyline and narrative strategies jointly result in a text that may well have been used for both propaganda and self-assurance purposes.

1. Introduction

As Munis Faruqui states in his seminal book on Mughal princes, "at no point between Babur's and Awrangzīb's reigns did the Mughals ever clearly articulate a system of imperial succession, and Mughal succession would remain relatively

open ended [...]".[1] Even if we concentrate on this period of approximately 200 years (1526–1707), a period that is often cited as the time of the Great Mughals, one transition of rule hardly resembled the other.[2] Thus, it seems impossible to speak of a transition that was 'usual', as well as to deduce a 'rule' for transitions of power, as they are so individual in character that they are all worth a closer look, although perhaps not as 'unusual' or 'usual' cases, but rather as 'peculiar' ones. From the perspective of European succession systems, the succession from Jahāngīr to Shāh Jahān and the premature succession quarrel may appear 'unusual', but from a 'Mughal' point of view, the situation itself is far less 'unusual' than the source this article focuses on. The 'Fatḥnāma-yi Nūr Jahān' is currently the only known source from the Mughal period in which a woman, the Mughal empress Nūr Jahān (1577–1645), claims her right to participate in the determination of the succession and legitimates her active role in the conduct of the conflict over power.[3] The objective of this article is to show how qualities attributed to (male) rulers in Mughal court literature are used to legitimize its patroness and her activity as a supporter of both her husband, the current but weakened ruler Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627), and his third son Shahriyār, who is her favorite candidate for succession.

Due to the transdisciplinary approach of this volume, the first part of this article briefly introduces the rather open, conflict-generating succession system that was common in the Mughal empire. It also discusses the current state of research on the chosen historical 'unusual' case. After having presented the main

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1 Munis D. FARUQUI, Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719, Cambridge/New York 2012, 235.

2 After the founder of the Mughal dynasty, Bābur (r. 1526–1530) had died, Mughal superiority in the Northern subcontinent was challenged during the time of his son and successor Humāyūn (r. 1530–1540 and 1555–1556), who temporarily lost the realm. After he restored Mughal superiority during the last years of his life, the realm witnessed a period of stability and expansion during the reigns of his four successors, Akbar (r. 1556–1605), Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1527), Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–1657), and Awrangzīb (r. 1657–1707). After Awrangzīb's death, however, lasting succession struggles, the beginnings of colonial influences, and rising regional powers led the Northern subcontinent into a transitional period in which the Mughal ruler's influence continuously decreased. While the Mughal empire was officially in power until 1857, when the last Mughal emperor was deposed in favor of Queen Victoria, then styled Empress of India, the political power of the Mughal throne had long before faded away. The time period from approximately 1526–1707 is often called the time of the 'Great Mughals', as it was a period of relative stability and wealth in comparison to later periods.

3 Nūr Jahān's unusual life has received much interest from scholars and the general public. While she has long been presented as the woman who seduced her husband Jahāngīr and took away his imperial power (for this interpretation, see e. g. Ellison B. FINDLY, Nūr Jahān: Empress of Mughal India, Oxford 1993). Only in recent years, after this account of Jahāngīr had been questioned and reconsidered, also Nūr Jahān received new scholarly interest that led to a more balanced reconsideration of her role. See e. g. the recent biography by Ruby LAL, Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan, New York 2018.

source for the analysis and its historical context, the main part of the article will then focus on a comparative study of the ideal ruler's characteristics that formed a basic part of textual representation and legitimation in the Mughal empire. The analysis will first evaluate characteristics attributed to Jahāngīr in court historiographies from his time. The set of characteristics will then be compared to the representation of key characters in Kamī Shirazī's 'Fatḥnāma'. In conclusion, I will argue that the 'Fatḥnāma' is, to date, the only textual account of legitimation strategies that were meant not to support an actual pretender to the throne, but that were actually a part of a positioning process for a possible successor. This unusual text was meant, first and foremost, to prepare and secure Nūr Jahān's influence on the transition of power, and thus her position at court, after the approaching death of her husband, the emperor Jahāngīr.

2.   Are There 'Usual' and 'Unusual' Cases in Mughal Succession?

Munis Faruqui postulates that the Mughals "determinedly refused to institute clearly articulated rules of succession" from the beginning of their presence on the Northern subcontinent until 1719, when for the first time, an "ordered succession system" was put into effect.[4] While European travelers and historians identified this 'lack' of regulations as a possible reason for the Mughal "failure" and the onset of British colonial rule,[5] the open succession system that the Mughal dynasty used was unquestioned by contemporary imperial historians.[6] Derived from Turco-Mongol ideas, the Mughals brought this open succession system from their central Asian homelands. Similar to other Turkic dynasties, Mughal rule was not based on a single-personal concept that stipulated that succession depend on the very person of a ruler and thus his offspring. Instead, rule was rooted in a number of possible successors, identified by loosely-defined kinship relationships. Any male relative of an emperor was equally fit for succession in this system, including the emperor's brothers, uncles, or even cousins. Ultimately, each of the first five Mughal rulers was succeeded by one of his sons. However, one should be careful not to infer a specific 'rule' from this. On the contrary, every Mughal ruler developed his own plans and ideas for how to prepare and settle the question of his succession. Throughout the time period considered here, many distant male relatives of the current ruler remained potential heirs to the throne.

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4 FARUQUI 2012, 2.

5 Ibid., 3.

6 See ibid., 3.

The first transition of power from Bābur, the founder of the Mughal realm on the subcontinent, to his son Humāyūn is an 'unusual' case in this respect. Of his three sons, Bābur chose Humāyūn as *primus inter pares* to rule the entire Indian territory, while the remaining brothers had to accept Humāyūn's sovereignty and received fewer lands. Though there were attempts to legitimize Humāyūn's designation as heir to the throne by claims of divine judgment,[7] these attempts did not secure his position as the new sovereign. After his accession to the throne, Humāyūn had to defend his position against his two brothers in a yearlong struggle.

The fourth Mughal emperor, Jahāngīr, also had a difficult ascent to the throne. During his time as a prince, Jahāngīr had positioned himself against his father Akbar by maintaining a counter court in Allāhabād for five years.[8] Akbar meanwhile, favored his grandson, Prince Khusraw, Jahāngīr's eldest son, and planned to install him as his successor.[9] It was only shortly before Akbar's death, after the harem had intervened, that Akbar and Jahāngīr made their peace and Jahāngīr was presented as the official successor to the throne. Shortly after his ascension, however, Jahāngīr faced princely rebellion himself. In 1606, his son Khusraw tried to forcibly gain the position his grandfather had prepared him for over the past years.[10] Conflict, therefore, seems to have been part of the 'usual' process of succession of rule in the Mughal Empire.[11] The transition from Ja-

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7 As, for example, presented by Humāyūn's sister Gulbadan Bīgum. See Gulbadan Bīgum, Aḥvāl-i Humāyūn Pādshāh. Humāyūn-nāma (History of Emperor Humāyūn), Ms. London, British Library, Or. 166, www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_166 (15.03.2019). The text has been edited and translated by Wheeler Thackston. See Humāyūn, Three Memoirs of Humáyun, ed. and trans. by Wheeler M. THACKSTON (Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions Series 11), Costa Mesa 2009. On Gulbadan's presentation of the succession quarrel, see Taymiya R. ZAMAN, Instructive Memory: An Analysis of Auto/Biographical Writing in Early Mughal India, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 54,5 (2011), 677–700; Ruby LAL, Rethinking Mughal India: Challenge of a Princess' Memoir, in: Economic and Political Weekly 38,1 (2003), 53–65.

8 During his rebellion from 1599 to 1604, Prince Salīm, the future Jahāngīr, built a fully-fledged counter court in Allāhabād (in the modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The city's name was changed to Prayagraj by the Modi administration in 2018). Salīm patronized arts and literature in a manner similar to the central court of his father's, using written and painted texts to legitimize and represent his claim of power. Moreover, he used these rebellious years to build up networks and gain supporters. See FARUQUI 2012, 30–32, 149–152 (network building, esp. 147–148 for Salīm's relation to the harem), and especially 158–161 for his Allāhabād counter court.

9 See ibid., 30–31, 83–84; Ruby LAL, Historicizing the Harem: The Challenge of a Princess's Memoir, in: Feminist Studies 30,3 (2004), 590–616.

10 Jahāngīr describes the rebellion and fighting his own son in the 'Jahāngīrnāma'. Cf. Jahāngīr, The Jahāngīrnama: Memoirs of Jahāngīr, Emperor of India, ed. and trans. by Wheeler M. THACKSTON, New York 1999, 48–61 (subsequently abbreviated as Jahāngīrnāma).

11 FARUQUI 2012 shows that princely rebellion and rivalry added to the development of multifold political relations, especially towards minority groups, see e. g. ibid., 158–162.

hāngīr to his son Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–1658) is no exception. Two years of crisis –
obviously caused by the emperor's illness – preceded Jahāngīr's death. His three
sons, or rather, their supporting networks, were working to position their can-
didates in the best possible way as early as two years before the emperor's death.
The premature succession quarrel, along with older conflicts between the parties
at the court, finally led to the kidnapping of the emperor by Mahābat Khān, a
former intimate of Jahāngīr, who fell out of the emperor's favor after a conflict
with Nūr Jahān.[12]

This article is not about the reconstruction of a potential 'historical reality.'
The chosen case, the events before the end of Jahāngīr's reign, are the subject of a
master narrative, which dates back to the British-colonial assessment of Mughal
history, but persist until today. The narrative is based on a highly-questionable
positivistic and selective reading of sources which, like the 'Fatḥnāma', are highly
charged and judgmental. While the 'Fatḥnāma' celebrates Nur Jahan as a heroine,
the sources used to underpin this master narrative, all of which originated in the
time of Shāh Jahan or even later, assess Jahāngīr and Nūr Jahān critically, and
sometimes negatively. Shortly summarized, Nūr Jahān has been widely viewed as
a power-hungry woman who first seduced and then used her weak husband
Jahāngīr for her own purposes. Corinne Lefèvre's groundbreaking study "Re-
covering a Missing Voice"[13] was the first to note the need for a revision of the
image of Jahāngīr, immediately making a major contribution to this topic. As
Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam stated in their much-quoted in-
troduction to "Writing the Mughal World",[14] Mughal studies have only experi-
enced a "belated cultural turn for a few years."[15] Studies and translations used as

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12 On Mahābat Khān, see below 233–234.
13 Corinne LEFÈVRE, Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India: The Imperial Discourse of
Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627) in His Memoirs, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the
Orient 50,4 (2007), 452–489. For the master narrative on Nūr Jahān subjugating Jahāngīr, see
Corinne LEFÈVRE, Comment un "conquérant du monde" devint l'esclave d'une femme.
L'historiographie de l'empereur moghol Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627), in: Stéphane BENOIST et al.
(eds.), Mémoires partagées, mémoires disputées. Écriture et réécriture de l'histoire, Metz
2010, 93–118. Further works by Corinne Lefèvre have corrected the notion of Jahāngīr, see
e. g. Corinne LEFÈVRE, State-Building and the Management of Diversity in India (Thirteenth
to Seventeenth Centuries), in: The Medieval History Journal 16,2 (2014), 425–447. For further
reassessment of the *jahāngīrī* period, see e. g. Heike FRANKE, Akbar und Ǧahāngīr. Un-
tersuchungen zur politischen und religiösen Legitimation in Text und Bild (Bonner Islam-
studien 12), Schenefeld/Bonn 2005; Muzaffar ALAM/Sanjay SUBRAHMANYAM, Frank Dis-
putations: Catholics and Muslims in the Court of Jahāngīr (1608–11), in: Indian Economic &
Social History Review 46,4 (2009), 457–511; Anna KOLLATZ, Inspiration und Tradition.
Strategien zur Beherrschung von Diversität am Mogulhof und ihre Darstellung in Maǧālis-i
Ǧahāngīrī (ca. 1608–11) von 'Abd al-Sattār b. Qāsim Lāhōrī (Narratio Aliena? 8), Berlin 2016.
14 Muzaffar ALAM/Sanjay SUBRAHMANYAM (eds.), Writing the Mughal World: Studies on
Culture and Politics, New York 2011, 1–32.
15 Ibid., 31.

a basis for the historical narrative regarding the Mughals thus far are problematic in several respects. First, they were shaped by strong political or ideological agendas (British colonial, Marxist, Hindu national in public perception in India of the present time),[16] and second, the sources were read and translated very selectively in order to subsequently be interpreted positivistically and transferred into a scholarly narrative of history as 'historical truth.' It was from this background that the master narrative on Nūr Jahān originated, as depicted, for example, in the monograph by Findly.[17] A critical revision of these sources, however, with their narrativity and agenda in mind, is a desideratum that would go beyond the scope of this contribution. There will therefore be no synopsis of the 'historical processes' behind the source examined here. This article is by no means a correction of the previous image of Nūr Jahān/Jahāngīr. Instead, it aims to uncover narrative strategies contemporary sources made use of and which – unconsciously – can obviously influence the reader so strongly that the implied evaluations carry on through various media even centuries later.

In the following, I refer exclusively to the course of events, as the source in question specifies. On this basis, the first part of the article will briefly summarize the historical context of the pre-mature succession quarrel, the historical characters involved, and the background from which the source originated. The use of characteristics ascribed to ideal rulers in Shīrāzī's narrative will be studied with the example of Jahāngīr. Two examples of foil characters will then follow. While Mahābat Khān is clearly designed as a negative foil, which is used to contrast the emperor's ideal character and thereby stress his superiority, Nūr Jahān as the (intended) patron of our source is clearly described in a positive manner. The narrative places her next, if not equal, to the emperor himself and thereby contributes to her legitimation as a valuable player in the succession quarrel.

3.   Historical Context: The Sources

This article aims at analyzing narrative ways of making sense out of the situation described above in a contemporary source, Kāmī Shīrāzī's 'Fathnāma-yi Nūr Jahān' ('Book on Nūr Jahān's Victory').[18] This text was written during or at least very shortly after the events to which it refers. It differs in several ways from the other sources – most of them later court historiographies – that report on the

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16 See ibid., 9–15.
17 FINDLY 1993.
18 For information on the manuscript situation, see below, 232, n. 22. For this article, I used the Rampur edition: Kāmī Shīrāzī, Waqa-i-us-Zaman (Fath Nama-i-Nūr Jahān Begam): A Contemporary Account of Jahāngīr, ed. and trans. by W. H. SIDDIQI, Rampur, UP 2003 (subsequently abbreviated as Fathnāma).

events.[19] First, the 'Fatḥnāma' is not historiography or memoir in prose format, but instead written in *mathnavī* form.[20] Apart from short introductions, which each reflect the subject matter of the following chapter, its language is metrically bound. Secondly, the text does not address the current or future ruler. Instead, the author repeatedly states that he has dedicated his work to Nūr Jahān, Jahāngīr's main wife. He also claims to have presented the work in her audience. This has a considerable influence on the message of the text. While Jahāngīr and his wife – the (intended) patroness – are stylized into ideal, wise, and heroic characters, the author uses his version of the events to make Nūr Jahān's opponent in the succession controversy appear as poorly as possible. This applies both to her archenemy Mahābat Khān and to her brother Āsaf Khān. Interestingly, in Kāmī Shīrāzī's account of the events, the later heir to the throne, Shāh Jahān, does not play a significant role in the succession controversy.

As is the case with so many other Mughal period authors, there is frighteningly little known on the author of 'Fatḥnāma', Kāmī Shīrāzī, sometimes known as Mullā. The important dates in his life including his year of death, remain unknown, although his name (*nisba*), Shīrāzī, suggests that he was an immigrant from Iran. Before joining the Mughal court, Kāmī Shīrāzī had spent time in Golconda at the court of Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh (r. 1580–1612).[21] There,

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19 As Wheeler M. Thackston stated in the preface to his translation of Jahāngīr's memoirs, "as was virtually customary for Mughal emperors, Jahāngīr's reign began and ended with family trouble". Wheeler M. THACKSTON, Translator's Preface, in: Jahāngīr, The Jahāngīrnama: Memoirs of Jahāngīr, Emperor of India, ed. and trans. by Wheeler M. THACKSTON, New York 1999, IX–XXV, esp. XXV. It is no wonder that his death, and the succession quarrel that ended with Shāh Jahān's enthronement on January 23, 1628 in Agra, have been remembered from the perspective of the 'winner' – his son and successor Shāh Jahān. Even the 'Jahāngīrnāma' has a narrative that carefully avoids favoring Jahāngīr, Nūr Jahān, or their allies. The text, however, is not part of the sections that were authored by Jahāngīr personally (those ending in the accounts of the year 1622). Due to his illness, Jahāngīr left this description of events until 1624 to his secretary Mu'tamad Khān. This co-authored section is followed by an appendix by Muḥammad Hadī, who completed the account for the years following Jahāngīr's death until October 1627 (cf. Jahāngīrnāma, 3, n. 2, Hadī's preface 3–18, Hadī's appendix 420–460). His account is closer to later descriptions, such as those in Shāh Jahānī court chronicles like the 'Pādshāhnāma' ('Book of the Ruler') by 'Abdul Ḥamīd Lāhūrī, than to the text in question here. See 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Lahūrī, Pādshāhnāma, eds. 'Abdul R. MAWLAWĪ/Kabīr al-Dīn A. MAWLAWĪ, 3 vols., Calcutta 1867.

20 The *mathnavī* is one of the most widespread poetic forms in Persian. With its rather free meter that allows hemistiches of varying length, and its many-rhyme pattern that allows changing the rhyme every second line (aa-bb-cc-...), the form has been widely used for epic and didactic verse. See J[ohannes] T. P. de BRUIJN/B[arbara] FLEMMING/Munibur RAHMAN, Mathnawī, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0709 (12.02.2019).

21 He was the fourth ruler of the Quṭb Shāhī dynasty. Based in their residence city and fort at Golconda, the Quṭb Shāhīs dominated the eastern Deccan plateau. After having gained de facto independence from their former overlords at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the

Kāmī Shīrāzī composed poems for the ruler himself as well as for several nobles. After the death of Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh, the author left Golconda and tried to enter into new patronage relationships around the Mughal court. In addition to a collection of poetry (*divān*), Kāmī Shīrāzī also produced a comprehensive text under the title 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān' ('The Events of the Time'), which contains reports on its contemporary history. According to the Ms. Rampur's colophon, our source, the 'Fatḥnāma,' seems to be an extract from the 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān,' though the European manuscript catalogues list 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān' and 'Fatḥnāma' as parallel titles of the same text.[22] The Rampur manuscript seems to contain beautiful writing and decoration and only includes the *mathnavī* on Mahābat Khān's rebellion.[23] It thus appears to be a representative copy of Shīrāzī's account of Nūr Jahān's role in the premature succession controversy. The Ms. Rampur's colophon provides further information on the writing context:

> "[…] To commemorate these special events, I have taken this little work from (my) book 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān', which contains wonderful and strange stories. I have presented it in the audience (*mulāzamat*) of Bīgum Pādshāh, the excellent deputy (or: the deputy of the excellent), who is able to stop the sun and the universe, who is the highest refuge of both worlds – may Allāh keep her forever. The drums and fanfares of this Fatḥnāma, which is the forerunner of all Fatḥnāmas of great rulers, may sound loud and it may be a topic of conversation in every meeting and at every celebration."[24]

Dedicated explicitly to Jahāngīr's main wife, the text refers to Nūr Jahān as *Bīgum Pādshāh*, which can be understood as "wife of the ruler", but also as "lady ruler".

Quṭb Shāhī dynasty maintained rule until the territory was conquered by a Mughal army in 1687, and annexed. The Quṭb Shāhī court was a center of literature and learning that patronized a composite culture shaped by the integration of various Indic (Telugu, Dakhni) and Persian influences in literature, architecture, and painting. See Richard M. EATON, Ḳuṭb Shāhī, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4584 (03.07.2018).

22 Edgar BLOCHET, Catalogue des Manuscripts Persanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale, 4 vols., vol. 3, Paris 1905, no. 1874 and 1875. See also D. N. MARSHALL, Mughals in India: A Bibliographical Survey of Manuscripts, London/New York 1967, 240, no. 846, and Charles A. STOREY, Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey. Section 2, 3 vols., vol. 3: History of India, London 1939, 563–564, no. 719. No catalogues mention the Rampur manuscript, which I unfortunately was unable to consult in original for this article. Both Paris manuscripts have the same version of the larger 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān', including the story on Mahābat Khān's rebellion as preserved in the Rampur manuscript entitled 'Vaqāʾiʿ al-zamān/Fatḥnāma Nūr Jahān'. Cf. W. H. SIDDIQI, Introduction, in: Kāmī Shīrāzī, Waqa-i-us-Zaman (Fath Nama-i-Nūr Jahān Begam): A Contemporary Account of Jahāngīr, ed. and trans. by W. H. SIDDIQI, Rampur, UP 2003, VI–VIII. Only a comparative reading of the three manuscripts could show whether the content and scope of the works are the same. For the time being, I rely on the edition based on Ms. Rampur in my further argumentation.

23 See ibid., VIII.

24 Fatḥnāma, 271.

We will come back to her representation later. The colophon gives the date of origin as 1035 h. sh. (i. e. solar years after the hijra, the migration of the prophet Muḥammad from Mekka to Medina in 622, corresponding with 1625/1626 CE), the same year in which the considered events took place.

4.   Initial Situation Following the 'Fatḥnāma': Dramatis Personae

Jahāngīr is the unquestioned Mughal emperor in 1625/1626, the years the events presented by Kāmī Shirazī begin. We find Jahāngīr travelling from Delhi to Lahore in modern-day Pakistan, accompanied by his mobile court and the army.[25] The court is on its way to the ruler's summer resort in Kashmir. Jahāngīr travels with his main wife Nūr Jahān, whose daughter from her first marriage is engaged to one of the three sons of the emperor, Prince Shahriyār. Another central character is Nūr Jahān's brother Aṣaf Khān. As a brother, he supports his sister. At the same time, however, he stands loyal to Prince Shāh Jahān as his father-in-law. While Nūr Jahān will support her son-in-law Shahriyār's claim to the throne in the future development of the events, Aṣaf Khān will oppose her, supporting Shahriyār's brother Shāh Jahān instead. However, our source does not yet seem to realize this conflict of interest between sister and brother, or, if it was aware of it, is silent on the matter. In any case, Kāmī Shīrāzī presents Aṣaf Khān as a military leader loyal to both his sister and Jahāngīr. It is only when the events turn disastrous and possibly dangerous for him does Āsaf Khān leave his sister and emperor Jahāngīr, who are then captured and abducted by Mahābat Khān.

Little 'independent' information is available on Mahābat Khān, who figures as the despicable villain in our source. Mughal biographic dictionaries like the 'Maʾāthir al-ʿumarā'' ('Accounts on the Emirs')[26] describe his eventful career as follows: Mahābat Khān Zamāna Bīg (d. 1634) came from a Sayyid family from Shīrāz, and reached the Mughal Court during the reign of Akbar. He first entered the service of Prince Salīm (the future Jahāngīr) in a rather low position. After the accession of Jahāngīr, Zamāna Bīg still held a rather low rank, but became one of

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25 Both Delhi and Lahore were used as residential cities by Jahāngīr.

26 ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Shāhnavāz Khān Awrangābādī, The Maāthir-ul-umarā: Being Biographies of the Muḥammadan and Hindu Officers of the Timurid Sovereigns of India from 1500 to about 1780 A. D., eds. Henry BEVERIDGE/Baini PRASHAD (Bibliotheca Indica Series 202), 2 vols., vol. 2, Calcutta 2003, 9–28. For further information on Mahābat Khān, see Mohammed ATHAR ALI, The Apparatus of Empire: Awards of Ranks, Offices and Titles to the Mughal Nobility, New Delhi 1985, s. v. Mahābat Khān Zamāna Bēg; Mohammed ATHAR ALI, Mahābat Khān, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4771 (04.07.2018).

Jahāngīr's closest confidants and was given the title Mahābat Khān in 1605/1606. By 1615, he managed to reach the highest ranks and was appointed governor of the Deccan, a large plateau in western and southern India. The tide turned for Mahābat in 1617, when his rank was sensitively downgraded and he was sent to Kabul in modern-day Afghanistan, not allowed to return to the court for several years. This banishment, which was disguised as a governorate, is credited to Nūr Jahān's intrigue in the myth-filled master narrative mentioned above. It was not until 1622 that Mahābat Khān was called back to court to defeat a rebellion instigated by Prince Khurram (the future ruler under his throne name Shāh Jahān), which he succeeded in doing. However, this did not stop Mahābat Khān from later going over to Shāh Jahān's side, thus stabbing his 'old enemy' Nūr Jahān in the back in the succession quarrel discussed in this article.

In fact, Mahābat Khān intervened in the events at a point in time decisive both for maintaining the power of the sick ruler Jahāngīr and for setting the course in the question of succession. According to Kāmī Shīrāzī, Mahābat Khān kidnapped Jahāngīr and thus violated all rules of loyalty (khidma), dooming himself in the process:

> "He opened many ways to the emperor's enemies / piling one misdeed on the other / He picked up the salt of misdeed / and finally fell into a well dug by himself [...] / He drew the sword against himself / and cut off his head with his own hands."[27]

Mahābat Khān drew on an army of rajputs,[28] whom Kāmī Shīrāzī presents as cruel devils in human form.[29] On the other side, the imperial army, fighting Mahābat's troops on behalf of the emperor, are presented as brave and noble. Jahāngīr's third son, Prince Parvīz, gets caught between the two sides. In Kāmī Shīrāzī's version, Mahābat Khān leads the prince, who once was devoted to his father, to disobedience. However, since Prince Parvīz dies a natural death before the question of succession becomes more acute, he appears in the narrative only as a minor character. Although rather euphemistic, Shīrāzī's narrative betrays the tragic end of the story. After Jahāngīr is in the control of his kidnapper, Nūr Jahān's attempt to free him fails, although she is backed by the Mughal army, her brother, and additional noblemen. While trying to cross the river that separates

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27 Fatḥnāma, 113.
28 The origin and ethnic definition of rajputs has been topic to long discussions in academia. The term Rajput, sanskr. raja-putra ("son of a king") emerged in sixteent-century India and denotes a variety of castes, kin bodies, and local groups who share a claim of genealogical decent from warrior castes (kshatriya). Rajput in Mughal India became a collective term denoting families and clans that ruled the princely states in Rajasthan and beyond. Rajputs thus became important partners for the Mughal rulers, participating in Mughal admin-istration and military service, see e. g. Catherine B. ASHER/Cynthia TALBOT, India Before Europe, Cambridge 2006, 99.
29 See e. g. Fatḥnāma, 126, 136.

their camp from that of the enemy, Nūr Jahān's supporters suffer severe casualties and have to stop the attack. Āsaf Khān flees and leaves his sister, with Jahāngīr, in the hands of Mahābat Khān. Only some time later will the ruling couple succeed in freeing themselves from captivity again. While Jahāngīr dies shortly after these events, our source does not mention his death.

5.   Characteristics as a Narrative Tool: Contemporary Sources

Today, we can only reconstruct the ruler's and the other characters' image from preserved written and pictorial sources. Before analyzing the use of positive characteristics ascribed to Jahāngīr in Shīrāzī's narrative, we must consider the characteristics attributed to him in legitimating texts from his time. The following inventory is supposed to be based only on contemporary depictions of Jahāngīr. That is why I limit myself to two sources: The 'Jahāngīrnāma', or 'Tuzūk-i Jahāngīrī' ('Book on Jahāngīr', or 'Jahāngīr's Orders'), which is usually classified as Jahāngīr's memories or something similar,[30] and the 'Majālis-i Jahāngīrī' ('Evening Assemblies of Jahāngīr').[31] The first source describes Jahāngīr's reign in chronological order, starting with his accession to the throne, and is arranged according to years of government. The ruler himself is considered to be the author until the seventeenth year of government. Afterwards, his secretary Muʿtamad Khān[32] continued the writing. A third section of the 'Jahāngīrnāma' was added by Muḥammad Hadī[33] considerably later and covers the period from the nineteenth year of government to the end of Jahāngīr's reign. The first section, however, must also be considered a product of multiple authorship. Intertextual references to the second source named here, the 'Majālis-i Jahāngīrī' by ʿAbd al-Saṭṭār b. Qāsim Lāhūrī, can be proven. Parts of the latter text

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30 The most comprehensive discussion of the text and its context can be found in Thackston 1999, IX–XXV. On the (auto-)biographic genre of memoirs written by members of the dynasty, see Stephen Dale, Autobiography and Biography: The Turco-Mongol Case. Bābur, Haydar Mīrzā, Gulbadan Begim and Jahāngīr, in: Louise Marlow (ed.), The Rhetoric of Biography: Narrating Lives in Persianate Societies (Ilex Series 4), Boston, MA 2011, 89–105.

31 Further sources from the period support the findings given below, see e. g. the regional history by Mīrzā Nathān, a text sent to court by a *manṣabdār* serving in remote peripheries of the realm (Mīrzā Nathān, Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī: A History of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa During the Reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān, ed. and trans. by Moayyidul I. Borah/Suryya K. Bhuyan, Gauhati 1936.) The author uses his account of the conquests of Bengal and other lands to show his faithful devotion to the ruler and mystical leader Jahāngīr. Although written far from court, the text uses similar narrative strategies as the texts written at court.

32 Cf. Jahāngīrnāma, 3, n. 2.

33 See 231, n. 19.

served as source material for the 'Jahāngīrnāma'.[34] Furthermore, the text also contains references to a group of *manṣabdārs*[35] among the ruler's confidants who were entrusted with edits, material collection, and selection of source material for the imperial writing project.[36]

The second source, 'Majālis-i Jahāngīrī' by ʿAbd al-Saṭṭār b. Qāsim Lāhūrī, was edited in 2006 from the only manuscript preserved at that time.[37] Since its publication, the 'Majālis' has become a very prominent text in research on Jahāngīr.[38] The text aims at showing the ruler as the center of the temporal world and the world beyond, thus as the center of the universe.[39] The ruler's attributes used by ʿAbd al-Saṭṭār in the 'Majālis' can be considered components of the

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34 Cf. Anna KOLLATZ, Kompilation als Wandlungsprozess. Von Maǧālis-i Ǧahāngīrī zum Ǧahāngīrnāma, in: Stephan CONERMANN (ed.), Innovation oder Plagiat? Kompilationstechniken in der Vormoderne (Narratio Aliena? 4), Berlin 2015, 75–126. See also ALAM/SUBRAHMANYAM 2009.

35 The *manṣabdār* system opened career possibilities to individuals of diverse creeds and ethnicities; skilled individuals were introduced into court service and commonly incorporated into the body of servants (*khudamā*) or metaphorically labelled as slaves (*bandagān*) of the emperor. Most commonly designated as *manṣabdārān* (those who have a *manṣab*), they were at least formally styled as a homogenous group. This system provided an organizational structure for the elites working in administration and in the military system, classifying the individuals in a system of military ranks (*manṣabs*) that provided a common identification basis and a hierarchy that – at least theoretically – disregarded ethnic or religious differences. It integrated local nobilities, immigrants, Indics, Muslims, and even Europeans into a functional and meritocratic elite defined as servants of the emperor. The system institutionalized personal relationships between the emperor and his *khudamā* without differentiating between members of the diverse groups. See Stephen P. BLAKE, The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals, in: Journal of Asian Studies 39,1 (1979), 77–94. Blake interpreted the system as patrimonial-bureaucratic in the Weberian sense. See also John F. RICHARDS, The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir, in: Muzaffar ALAM/Sanjay SUBRAHMANYAM (eds.), The Mughal State 1526–1750 (Oxford in India Readings: Themes in Indian History), Oxford/New Delhi 1998, 126–167, esp. 128–129 for the integrative function of the military hierarchy.

36 Cf. KOLLATZ 2017, 339–340.

37 For a description of the manuscript and its localization, see ʿArif NAWSHĀHĪ/Muʿīn NIẒĀMĪ, Muqaddima, in: ʿAbd al-Saṭṭār b. Qāsim Lāhūrī, Maǧālis-i Ǧahāngīrī. Majlishā-yi shabāna-i darbār-i Nūr al-Dīn Ǧahāngīr az 24 rajab-i 1017 tā 19 ramaḍān-i 1020 h. q., eds. ʿArif NAWSHĀHĪ/Muʿīn NIẒĀMĪ, Tihrān 2006, 23–75 (This edition will subsequently be abbreviated as Majālis). The manuscript is unfortunately no longer localizable.

38 This text has served as main source for several books and articles, e. g. ALAM/SUBRAHMANYAM 2009; LEFÈVRE 2007, 2010, 2014; KOLLATZ 2015, 2017, and Anna KOLLATZ, The Creation of a Saint Emperor: Retracing Narrative Strategies of Mughal Legitimation and Representation in Majālis-i Jahāngīrī by ʿAbd al-Saṭṭār b. Qāsim Lāhūrī (ca. 1608–11), in: Stephan CONERMANN/Jim RHEINGANS (eds.), Narrative Pattern and Genre in Hagiographic Life Writing: Comparative Perspectives from Asia to Europe (Narratio Aliena? 7), Berlin 2013, 227–266. Research is ongoing, including several translation projects at Indian universities.

39 Cf. KOLLATZ 2013.

rulership narrative in the early reign of Jahāngīr.[40] The first part of 'Ja-hāngīrnāma' and the 'Majālis' are the reference texts used here to draw a rough picture of the qualities used to characterize Jahāngīr in contemporary sources.

6. Jahāngīr's Characteristics in Contemporary Court Historiographies

The vaste majority of Mughal period historiographies, with the exception of the 'Muntakhab al-tavarīkh' ('Collections of History') by Badaʿ ūnī,[41] were written in the context of patronage relationships between authors and rulers. Even works not commissioned directly were usually drafted for presentation at court. This is why authors tried to integrate common legitimation patterns into their texts and to combine them with their own note or a specific focus.[42] In some cases, we even find characteristics that appear problematic to today's readers but were considered positive by the contemporaries. For example, Jahāngīr openly describes his consumption of alcohol and opium in the 'Jahāngīrnāma'.[43] While the consumption of intoxicants by noble or ordinary people is criticized in the 'Majālis', for example,[44] this behavior seems to be at least partly normal for rulers, and was perhaps even viewed as positive by some. When analyzing the personal characteristics of rulers, especially in transcultural comparisons such as those in this volume, it is therefore always necessary to critically question one's own implicit assessment of these qualities. Otherwise, this appraisal can easily be distorted. There is no evidence of critique against the ruler in sources from the Jahāngīr period. On the contrary, possible points of criticism are anticipated, addressed,

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40 The text breaks off during Ramadan 1020 h. sh./November 1611, which corresponds to the sixth regnal year.

41 ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Badāʿūnī, Muntakhab al-tawārīkh of Abd al-Qādir Bin-i-Malúk Sháh al Badáoní, eds. W[illiam] N. Lees/Munshi A. Ali (Bibliotheca Indica 51), Calcutta 1865. The historiography on Akbar's reign is known for criticizing Akbar's religious integrative policies. The author wrote independently, and the text is considered the only historiographic account of Akbar's time that was not commissioned by the court. See Peter Hardy, Badāʿūnī, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0990 (04.07.2018).

42 However, as Ali Anooshahr has shown, gender roles and the representation of Humāyūn also included the representation of negative characteristics or 'faults'. See Ali Anooshahr, The King Who Would Be Man: The Gender Roles of the Warrior King in Early Mughal History, in: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series 18,3 (2008), 327–340.

43 Cf. Jahāngīr giving exact data on his consumption of alcohol and opium in the 'Jahāngīrnāma': Jahāngīr, The Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī: Memoirs of Jahāngīr, ed. and trans. by Henry Beveridge/Alexander Rogers, Delhi 1968, 310.

44 Cf. Kollatz 2017, 490.

and narratively invalidated in the 'Majālis'.[45] The narratives in 'Jahāngīrnāma' and 'Majālis', as well as in additional sources from the time, use similar positive characteristics to describe the emperor.

The qualities ascribed to Jahāngīr may be divided into two analytical categories. The first category consists of personal characteristics that are clearly linked to the respective individual ruler, while the next category discusses qualities characterizing the ruler and his position on an abstract level. These abstract qualities relate to rulership in general. They are not attributed to the respective ruler by virtue of his personal constitution, but by virtue of his office and his election. These abstract characteristics were not only attributed to Jahangir, but to other Mughal rulers as well. Many of these attributes have been studied in the context of Mughal legitimation, and thus shall only be mentioned briefly in order to illustrate the categories necessary for the transcultural comparison sought in this volume.[46]

All sources strongly claim divine election as basic legitimation of rule. The emperor is thus described as *ẓill-i ilāhī* ("the shadow of God") or *barguzīda-yi ilāhī* ("God's elect"). *Ẓill-i ilāhī* was also used outside the Mughal empire.[47] Secondly, rulers were also believed to possess the good fortune of a ruler (*pādshāh-i dawlat va iqbāl*). This idea originates from pre-Islamic Persian concepts of rule and is often associated with the image of divine light (*farr-i īzādī*), which, in the Persian book of kings, the 'Shāhnāma', for example, marks the true ruler. The textual representation of the good fortune of the ruler is connected in iconography with nimbus or veils of light. Additional attributes, however, seem to be

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45 Cf. KOLLATZ. 2017, 157–164; Anna KOLLATZ, Contextualizing the Majālis, in: Ebba KOCH/Ali ANOOSHAHR (eds.), The Mughal Empire from Jahāngīr to Shāh Jahān, Mumbai 2019, 40–53.

46 Mughal legitimation strategies are a comparatively well-studied topic. Most studies concentrate on one aspect, such as the dynastic imperial identity or cosmic and millennial ideals. See e. g. Lisa BALABANLILAR, Imperial Identity in Mughal India: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern Central Asia (Library of South Asian History and Culture 1), London 2012; A. Azfar MOIN, The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam (South Asia Across the Disciplines) New York 2012; Ali ANOOSHAHR, On the Imperial Discourse of the Delhi Sultanate and Early Mughal India, in: Journal of Persianate Studies 7,2 (2014), 157–176. A. Azfar Moin is currently working on a larger project targeting the cosmological aspects of Mughal legitimation.

47 This apposition is found in diverse contexts, such as with the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan (d. 1478), who was styled *ẓill-allāh*, or the Ottomans, who used the title *ẓill Allāh fī l-arḍ*. See Andrew J. NEWMAN, Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire (Library of Middle East History), London 2012, 10; Itzchak WEISMANN/Fruma ZACHS (eds.), Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh (The Library of Ottoman Studies 8), London/New York 2005, 21. For the use in India, see e. g. a 1496 inscription from Mandu, written on marbled Iranian paper, that praises the sultan of Malwa Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khaljī (1469–1500) as *ḥaḍrat khilāfat-panāh ẓill-i ilāhī sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khaljī*, see Navina N. HAIDAR/Marika SARDAR, Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and Fantasy, New Haven, CT/London 2015, 160, cat. no. 72.

specifically 'adapted' to Mughal strategies of legitimation. The emperor figures as the absolute center of not only his realm, but also of all of creation. This includes his central position in both worlds and is, of course, strongly connected to a concept of divine election.

While *pādshāh-i jahānkishā* or *jahāngīr* ("the ruler who conquers or seizes the world") may be read as applying to this world only, attributes such as *pādshāh-i dīn va dunyā* ("the ruler over religion and world") or *qibla-yi dīn va dunyā* ("the direction of prayer for religion and world") clearly claim the ruler's central position in both worlds. The *qibla* is the Islamic direction of prayer that centers all Muslims of the world on a central point, namely Mecca, during prayer times. By attributing the position of *qibla* to the ruler, he is placed at the center of all religious and also secular concerns. It is particularly remarkable that it is not a place – the capital, for example – that is elevated to the new *qibla*, but the person of the ruler. The ruler is thus stylized in his physicality as the center of the empire and the world, no matter where he is located.

In the epithet *pādshāh-i ṣūrat va maʿānī* ("the ruler of *ṣūrat* and *maʿānī*"), which was often applied to both Jahāngīr and Akbar, a ruler's position as lord over secular and transcendent spheres is emphasized even more than the aforementioned attributes. The dual *ṣūrat* and *maʿānī* is a complex concept referring to the worldly and transcendent spheres. In Arabic and Persian translations of Greek philosophy, the Greek term *noéma* (in the sense of Platonian ideas) was rendered as *maʿānī*.[48] Sufic writings, in turn, used it to refer to the 'hidden' or 'higher sense' behind creation, which may only be dismantled by inspired persons following the Mystic Path.[49] While the concept thus goes beyond the duality of the two worlds, it also includes hidden spheres in both worlds that are closed to common people. Attributed to the ruler, this phrase styles him as universal and encompassing all spheres of creation – in short, as *jahān-gīr*.[50]

The attributes mentioned are of course discussed in a positive manner also in the text in question here. The central claim of seizing the world even found its way to the throne name of the former prince Salīm, who styled himself "Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn va l-Dunyā Jahāngīr Pādshāh Ghāzī". It is worth taking a closer look at

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48 See Cornelis H. M. VERSTEEGH/Oliver LEAMAN/Jamaleddine BENCHEIKH, Maʿnā, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0659 (05.06.2018).

49 See FRANKE 2005, 232–250.

50 In miniature painting, motifs such as globes and maps are widely used to display this attribute. See for instance 'Jahāngīr Holding a Globe' from the Minto Album, ca. 1620, by Bichitr and 'Jahāngīr Shooting Dāliddar', ca. 1620, by Abū l-Ḥasan. Both are published and analyzed in FRANKE 2005, 320 (fig. 13), 312–318 (fig. 16). See also Ebba KOCH, The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 55,2/3 (2012), 547–580. On the representation of Mughal emperors as Millennial kings, see MOIN 2012.

this name. The name not only contains the epithet *Jahāngīr* ("the world-seizer"), but also the phrase *Nūr al-Dīn va l-Dunyā* ("the light of religion and world"). This metaphor is a defining part of Mughal representation of rule. The emperors are stylized as the sun, which stands at the center of the universe. Around them, their subjects gather like the planets,[51] with the emperors warming these subjects and keeping them alive as the sun does. The 'Majālis' states, "The Sun of Religion and Fortune (*aftāb-i dīn va dawlat*, i.e. the emperor) shone forth on the frozen ones."[52] The metaphor is not only found in texts, but is represented in miniature painting by nimbus or veils of light that flow around the head of the ruler, or occasionally around his entire body.[53]

Although all Mughal rulers have the epithet *Ghāzī* ("conqueror", especially a conqueror who seizes land from the infidel and thereby helps spread the word of Islam)[54] in their throne names, the quality of being an active fighter for the expansion of Islamic territories plays practically no role in the rhetoric of the legitimation of rule in the Mughal Empire. The texts also describe Jahāngīr (as well as his predecessors and successors) as having impeccable skills in dealing with the different types of weapons and cavalry. These skills are not exemplified in war reports, however, but in descriptions of playful exercises such as a competition in archery at court, where every hit makes silver roses float to the floor,[55]

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51 This feature is represented as early as in Humāyūn's time, for example in his celestial carpet. Cf. Eva ORTHMANN, Sonne, Mond und Sterne. Kosmologie und Astrologie in der Inszenierung von Herrschaft unter Humayun, in: Lorenz KORN/EAD./Florian SCHWARZ (eds.), Die Grenzen der Welt. Arabica et Iranica ad honorem Heinz Gaube, Wiesbaden 2008, 297–306; and Eva ORTHMANN, Ideology and State-Building: Humayun's Search for Legitimacy in a Hindu-Muslim Environment, in: Vasudha DALMIA/Munis FARUQUI (eds.), Religious Interactions in Mughal India, New Delhi 2015, 3–29.

52 Majālis, 23.

53 Both halo and veils of light are described in the textual sources and are attributed not only to Jahāngīr, but also to Shāh Jahān (cf. Majālis, 29 for Jahāngīr), Chandra Bhān Brahmān, Chahār Chaman, ed. Syed M. JAʿFARĪ, Delhi 2007, 92. The imperial presence is equated to a 'munificent light' shining on those who present their gifts to the emperor. Light symbolism is even stronger in miniature painting, as may be observed in the miniatures cited above and in most miniatures showing a Mughal emperor. Veils of light, for example, surround Awrangzīb (r. 1658–1707) in a miniature from the St. Petersburg Album: 'Aurangzeb in a Shaft of Light', attributed to Hunhar, ca. 1660 (detached album folio with painting), Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase Charles Lang Freer Endowment. See e. g. Milo C. BEACH, The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court, Washington/Ahmedabad 2012, cat. 22 G, 134–135. The St. Petersburg Album is available in facsimile edition: Elena KOSTIOUKOVITCH (ed.), The St. Petersburg Muraqqaʿ: Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the 16th through the 18th Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by ʿImād al-Ḥasanī, Milan 1996.

54 Originally describing someone who has taken part in a *ghazwa*, a raid against infidels (i.e. non-Islamic) people, *Ghāzī* has become part of the title of sultans. See Irène MÉLIKOFF, Ghāzī, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition Online, www.dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2489 (12.02.2019).

55 Majālis, 159.

or in the context of hunting reports often told and retold.[56] While these reports testify to the ruler's extraordinary physical fitness, his capabilities as an active warrior are never mentioned in the context of military conflicts or connected to fighting the infidels. In this regard, the sources examined here differ significantly from the conceptions to be found, for example, in the texts of the Sultanate period.[57]

The third central characteristic attributed to Jahāngīr is his simultaneous practice of two 'full-time jobs'. As ruler and mystical guide (*pādshāh va pīr*), he is not only responsible for the political stability and just administration of his territory, but also assumes the role of a specialist in contact with the transcendent (*murshid rāhnimā*) for his subjects. Those whom he accepts into his courtly order, he guides on the right path to mystical knowledge and union with God. The 'Majālis' believes this characteristic to be the most important.[58] The attributes are interconnected, sometimes even interdependent on each other. Furthermore, attributes on the meta-level are connected to ruling principles of Mughal policy and to the personal attributes ascribed to Jahāngīr. As for the ruler's tolerance (*bī-taʿaṣṣubī*) towards each sect or minority group in his realm, this attribute is closely related to both of the above-mentioned attributes *murshid rāhnimā* and *pādshāh va pīr*. Both describe the 'job' Jahāngīr is doing in the context of the two ruling principles, the *dīn-i ilāhī* that served as an integrating factor at court, promoting *bī-taʿaṣṣubī* ("tolerance") among the courtiers, and the *ṣulḥ-i kull* ("universal peace") that on the one hand guaranteed religious freedom and, on the other hand, was the result of *bī-taʿaṣṣubī*.[59]

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56 Cf. ibid., 160, 164, where Jahāngīr talks about having tracked an antelope on foot for several hours.

57 In connection with this, cf. this volume's chapter by Florian Saalfeld on the Sultanate period, where both warrior capabilities and fights against infidels are mentioned, esp. 86–87.

58 Cf. KOLLATZ 2013, 237–259 and KOLLATZ 2015, esp. 182–204.

59 The *ṣulḥ-i kull* (universal peace) was a central pillar of Mughal religious and integrative policies, which culminated in Akbar's *dīn-i ilāhī*, an imperial order shaped following the example of Sufi brotherhoods. The emperor took on the role of the spiritual guide of his noble followers, who were instructed to live in peace and tolerance (*bī-taʿaṣṣubī*) towards each religion. This principle granted free exercise of faith to all religions present in the empire (and could occasionally be suspended for political reasons, such as in the conflict with the Portuguese Goa, when Jahangir drastically curtailed the rights of Portuguese Jesuits in his empire). See FRANKE 2005, 271. The concept has recently been re-interpreted in the sense of 'absolute civility' by Rajeev KINRA, Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility: The Global Historical Legacy of Mughal Ṣulḥ-i Kull, in: The Medieval History Journal 16,2 (2013), 251–295. For the *dīn-i ilāhi*, see also Stephan CONERMANN, Südasien und der Indische Ozean, in: Wolfgang REINHARD/Akira IRIYE/Peter C. PERDUE (eds.), Geschichte der Welt, 6 Bde., Bd. 3: 1350–1750. Weltreiche und Weltmeere, München 2014, 369–510, esp. 399–401. Corinne Lefèvre recently published the first modern-time monograph on Jahāngīr: Corinne LEFÈVRE, Pouvoir impérial et élites dans l'Inde moghole de Jahāngīr (1605–1627), Paris 2017a.

Some attributes, therefore, may also be interpreted as both individual char-
acteristics of the ruler and abstract ideals of rulership. One central characteristic
that is attributed not only to Jahāngīr but to all Mughal rulers is justice (*inṣāf*),
which is in no way inferior to divine choice and inspiration. On the contrary, the
divine election of Jahāngīr is sometimes presented as a consequence of his
personal justice.[60] The ruler's justice is inextricably linked to his inclusive reli-
gious policy. His relation to his subjects is thereby equated to the relationship
between God and men:

> "Just as the Creator with all his creatures does not turn away his gracious and guiding
> gaze from anyone, so we (Jahāngīr) have closed our eyes to schools of law and ethnic
> groups and look at all the creatures of God with gracious and protective eyes."[61]

In the narrative, the countless attributes either directly refer to Jahāngīr's justice
or evoke his personal qualities that emanate from justice, which are then often
exemplified in anecdotes. Direct references to justice include phrases such as
pādshāh-i inṣāf-dūst ("the ruler who loves justice") or *pādshāh-i ḥaqq-dūst* ("the
ruler who loves truth" or "who knows justice").[62] Indirect references may refer to
his capacity as a defender of the just order; he would then be *pādshāh-i ʿadālat-
gustār ẓālim-gudāz* ("the ruler who spreads justice and quashes tyrants") or,
conversely, *pādshāh-i darvīsh-pirist* or *ʿajīz-parvar* etc. ("the ruler who cares for
the poor, the weak, etc."). Both attributes include the protection of the realm and
its inhabitants against enemies from the outside and injustice arising from the
administration.

This concept of protection is most impressively represented by the 'chain of
justice' that Jahāngīr had installed at the outer gate of his courts. This chain (at
least in theory) would allow every inhabitant to directly access the ruler to ask for
justice.[63] Justice, in turn, is closely linked to the attribute of knowledge, or even
omniscience. The latter can be found in the attribute *pādshāh-i rawshan-jān*
("ruler with enlightened soul"), which illustrates a special characteristic of the
ruler granted by God. The ruler is thus not only presented as chosen to rule, but

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60 Cf. KOLLATZ 2017, 137–142.

61 Majālis, 78.

62 *Ḥaqq* covers a wide semantic field in Persian and Arabic, to which both "truth" and "justice"
    belong, cf. Francis J. STEINGASS, A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary: Including the
    Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature. Being Johnson and Ri-
    chardson's Persian, Arabic, and English Dictionary, Beirut 1975, s. v. *ḥaqq*, 424l–425l.

63 The chain of justice is an indispensable part of representation in miniatures. The 'Ja-
    hāngīrnāma' counts it among the innovations Jahāngīr introduced right after his ascension,
    cf. Jahāngīrnāma, 24. It is one of the most prominent symbols of Mughal rulership used in
    miniature painting, see for instance 'Jahāngīr shooting Dāliddar', 'Jahāngīr in the *jharōka*',
    from a Jahāngīrnāma, by Abū l-Ḥasan, today in the Sadruddin Agha Khan Collection (Both
    published in FRANKE 2005, figs. 15, 16).

also as endowed with special knowledge that is only accessible to inspired rulers for this purpose. However, the ruler is also presented as personally taught, as someone who seeks to clarify phenomena or processes given through knowledge and research, which is shown in the phrases *pādshāh-i dānā* ("learned ruler") and *pādshāh-i taḥqīq-dūst* ("ruler willing to examine"). In the connection of justice and scholarship, attributes such as *pādshāh qadar-dān* ("ruler who can recognize the appropriate reaction in every case and situation") arise. The Persian word *qadar* applies to everyday ruling tasks, such as appropriate conversation at court or deciding whether a nobleman should be promoted. But knowing the right *qadar*, thus being able to react properly in every situation, is also central in the fight against unjust enemies, in jurisprudence, and in dealing with the poor. Finally, *qadar-dānī* also strives to show the ruler as taking appropriate care of each of his servants (*pādshāh-i banda-parvar*).[64] He is a *pādshāh-i karīm-tabʿ* ("a generous ruler"), but also personally *mihrabān* ("friendly", "amicable") and at times even humorous (*shikufta*). In total, all attributes display ideal characteristics of a ruler and allow him to appear as a perfect man (*insān-i kāmil*).[65]

7. Jahāngīr in the 'Fatḥnāma'

The source examined here may be read as an example of narrative embellishment of an 'unusual' and perhaps even critical situation. The narrative does not omit the description of dangerous and, seen from the perspective of legitimation, unthinkable situations such as the emperor being abducted by force. The author even uses drastic words to show the rebel's savagery. Taken as a whole, however, the text does not appear as an account of chaos and rebellion. It clearly is directed towards showing the emperor, and by this, also his wife, as a superior institution who can control even the most perilous situations. The narrative combines drastic reports of the rebel's atrocity with highly idealized descriptions of both Jahāngīr and Nūr Jahān. The text begins with a short prose introduction which discusses most of the ideal ruler's virtues discussed above:

> "In praise of the ruler Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr Pādshāh Ghāzī, who resembles Jām and Sulaymān, who maintains a court [whose members are] as numerous as the stars and who protects the creatures – may God preserve his dominion forever."[66]

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64 Cf. Majālis, 144 and many other passages in this work. *Banda-parvarī* is described in this text to show the ruler's gratitude and generosity towards excellent servants as well as to display his forgiveness towards all kinds of rebels or reluctant servants.

65 On the Mughal emperor as perfect man, see FRANKE 2005, 319.

66 Fatḥnāma, 95. The English translation given in the Rampur edition is quite exact, but occasionally omits parts of the text. This introduction, for example, is simply transferred to a

The most central attributes used to idealize the emperor in this text appear in those few lines: A comparison of Jahāngīr with the great ancient Iranian king Jām and the Koranic Solomon represents Jahāngīr as the embodiment of ideal ruler's virtues, while the important position of the emperor at the center of both his realm and the world is introduced by referring to two attributes at once: First, the text speaks of a very large royal court, where the members are arranged concentrically, and by that hierarchically, around their ruler. Second, the universe metaphor indirectly refers to the equation of the ruler with the sun at the center of the universe. The text furthermore refers to the emperor's role as protector of his realm. The mere mention of his name, however, is sufficient for identifying additional attributes, which have been largely described as references to overarching Mughal legitimizing strategies: The *laqab* (honorific name) Nūr al-Dīn ("light of religion") claims the emperor's superiority to religious doctrines of any kind and his ability to 'enlighten' his realm by solving interdenominational conflicts thanks to his 'imperial ratio'.[67] His throne-name Jahāngīr ("world-seizer") again refers to the claim of centrality, and, at the same time, to the claim of ruling the entire world.[68]

The first verse of the following *masnavī* declares the ruler's justice and his claim to rule the entire world: "In the age of the righteous ruler (*pādshāh*); the just lord protecting the seven climates."[69] Further verses follow in which central insignia of rulership are described, namely rulers' light (*farr-i dārā*), the ruler's distinguishing sunshade (*chatr-i pādshāhī*), and the chain of justice mentioned above (*zanjīr*). The first chapter attributes the following properties to Jahāngīr:

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shortened title "In Praise of Jahāngīr". The translations in this article are all my own, even if they occasionally correspond to the translation given in the edition.

67 For the 'imperial ratio', see Kollatz 2015, 257–258.

68 Both metaphors and the legitimating concepts have been discussed in textual and pictorial representations, mostly with the example of Akbar. Among the most influential contributions are Moin 2012; A. Azfar Moin, Islam and the Millennium: Sacred Kingship and Popular Imagination in Early Modern India and Iran, PhD Diss. University of Michigan 2010; Corinne Lefèvre, Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian Connections: The Majalis-i Jahangiri (1608–11) and the Socio-Intellectual History of the Mughal 'ulama, in: The Indian Economic & Social History Review 54,3 (2017b), 317–338; Franke 2005; and ead., Emperors of Ṣūrat and Maʿnī: Jahangir and Shah Jahan as Temporal and Spiritual Rulers, in: Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World 31 (2014), 123–149, and in several collective volumes, e. g. Corinne Lefèvre/Ines Zupanov/Jorge Flores, Cosmopolitismes en Asie du Sud. Sources, itinéraires, langues (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle) (Collection Puruṣārtha, 33), Paris 2015; Vasudha Dalmia/Munis Faruqui (eds.), Religious Interactions in Mughal India, New Delhi 2015. For legitimation concepts, see Richards 1998.

69 Fatḥnāma, 95.

Attribute	Mentions
divine light	4
regality	3
Good fortune	3
justice	3
fights tyrants	2
universal rule	2
victorious	1
protector of the subdued	1
splendid court	1
splendid festivities	1
perfection	1
descent from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib	1

The abstract attributes of rulership described above, such as divine light, regality, good fortune, universal rule, and the 'hinge' justice, are clearly greater in number. The characteristics that are mentioned only once correlate with the intended message of the narrative. In the following example, different attributes of rulership (universal rule, perfection, splendid court, fighting tyrants) are linked together, which reinforces the individual claims:

> "The heads of the country (*sarān-i mulk*) rub their heads at his feet / and testify to their inferiority / He is so perfect / that neither Darius nor Alexander can hold a candle to him / His festivals never lacked wine and music / even when he marched against his enemies / His nights were more pleasant than days / he always conquered his enemies."[70]

The strategy becomes particularly visible when qualities such as "lord over a spectacular court" and "victory over the enemies" are combined: A ruler who can provide his entourage with extravagant feasts even on (successful) war campaigns must truly be greater and more powerful than anyone else. It is worth mentioning that these claims are not found in the main body of our text. There is no account of splendid feasts in the text, for instance. Instead, the narrative relies on the mere enumeration of idealized characteristics and qualities of the emperor. This additive strategy alternates with verses of praise that read like superficial promotion slogans: "The world does not know a king like him / time never saw one so fortunate as him."[71] The text thus reacts to the precarious situation of the (intended) patroness, as well as to the generally uncertain situation during the succession dispute. In response to this contingency experience, a narrative is built that asserts stability and security in a most striking way. Possible quarrels

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70 Fatḥnāma, 95.

71 Ibid., 95.

regarding the succession of power appear downright absurd before the radiant image of Jahāngīr provided in the introduction.

Ideal characteristics appear with almost every mention of Jahāngīr's name and actions in the narrative parts of the poem. Two cases deserve special attention here. First, let us examine the way Kāmī Shīrāzī presents Jahāngīr's performance in critical situations. As previously demonstrated, the author constructs a narrative of stability that is meant to hide the critical situation during and after Jahāngīr's capture by Mahābat Khān. It must have been particularly difficult for the author to maintain this narrative of stability in those parts of the texts that report on the actual act of kidnapping. The respective verses can certainly be described as dramatic, and our author does not fail to stage the lack of decency and simply brutal behavior of Mahābat Khān and his *rajput*s. But even in the face of a militia violently penetrating the innermost premises of the court, a militia who assassinates every loyal servant who stands in its way, the Jahāngīr presented to Kāmī Shīrāzī's readers remains noble, thoughtful, and calm. Kāmī Shīrāzī reports of the former confidant Mahābat Khān forcibly gaining access to the ruler and forcing him to accompany him at gunpoint. The narrative alternates between direct speech and the narrator's speech, thus allowing the reader a close-up view of the situation. Nevertheless, the author takes the reader through his personal comments and the use of judgmental adjectives and adverbs in his description of Mahābat and his 'bloodthirsty' *rajput*s. The narrative shows Mahābat violating even basic rules of courtly behavior and deviously trying to present himself as a devoted servant.

> "He hastened on to the ruler / and began to argue with the confidants / So he stood upright before the throne, / made his voice sound penitent and looked down / The ruler awoke by his voice / and noticed his men's disturbance / From his malice and treachery, the *shāh* was much displeased / and thought about arresting him and putting him in prison / But as it was a perilous situation / he did not reveal his feelings and plans."[72]

The strategy our text uses here is the strategy of contrast. Against the backdrop of a rather drastic description of Mahābat Khān's unruliness, the last two verses suffice to underline Jahāngīr's kingly behavior. The author also describes the kidnapping in a similar manner: It appears that initially, Jahāngīr voluntarily follows his former confidant, but is soon robbed of control of his mount. He recognizes Mahābat Khān's intentions only when the latter pours flattery upon him after having the emperor forced into his army camp: "When the ruler became aware of his behavior and attitude / he was very angered by his [Mahābat

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72 Fatḥnāma, 131.

Khān's] misconduct / But for it was a perilous situation / the ruler did not show (his anger) at that moment."[73]

The negative characterization of Mahābat Khān will be discussed soon, but let us first look at how Jahāngīr is portrayed in this situation. Here, we find a ruler who is distinguished by two qualities: He can realistically assess a dangerous situation, and he can remain calm. The first scene resembles the biblical story of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, in which Jesus is only awakened by the fear and excitement of his disciples. Shīrāzī likewise presents his reader with a ruler who is not even be disturbed by an enemy army. Of course, his staying calm could also be interpreted negatively. The ruler sleeps through a brutal attack on his camp and is unable to fight the attacker off afterwards. The text, however, seems to strive to present the ruler as favorably as possible in this difficult situation. This is why, for example, Shīrāzī returns to the perils Jahāngīr finds himself in as the real cause for the emperor's passivity. Some thirty verses later, the same pattern is repeated. When a troop of *rajputs* forcibly board a boat with which Jahāngīr had tried to flee, and kill his boatman, the text claims Jahāngīr stays calm and does not confront them out of "kindness and royal conduct".[74] According to Shīrāzī's implied argument, both situations only turned out well because of the ruler's foresight and calm. Both characteristics may be subsumed under *qadar-dānī*, the ability to assess a situation correctly and to react accordingly, as explained above. These qualities allow Jahāngīr to return to his own camp and from there, despite Mahābat's brutal behavior, to contact and instruct his loyal servants on the other side of the river.

New characteristics appear in parts of the text dealing with Jahāngīr's relationship with Nūr Jahān. There is almost no mention of personal relationships between husband and wife in the official sources from Jahāngīr's time. The 'Jahāngīrnāma', for instance, only mentions Nūr Jahān in the context of court ceremonial, when she offers presents to nobles and receives her new honorable name, Nūr Jahān, from her husband.[75] Jahāngīr also mentions her outstanding skills in hunting,[76] and her participation in court ceremonies.[77] In no place, however, does the text refer to her as his beloved wife, for instance. The 'Fath-nāma', seems to address a less public readership than the 'Jahāngīrnāma', or than an official chronicle. Kāmī Shīrāzī is thus able to include references to what might be described as romantic love *avant la lettre*. Following the narrative, when Jahāngīr returns to his court (still persecuted and controlled by Mahābat Khān),

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73 Fathnāma, 129.

74 Ibid., 137.

75 See Jahāngīr (trans. BEVERIDGE/ROGERS), 319.

76 See ibid., 348, 375.

77 See ibid. (trans. BEVERIDGE/ROGERS), 277–278. Nūr Jahān takes part in the ceremonies held after the defeat of Rana Sanga, whose son is taken to court and treated as an honorable guest.

he finds his wife has fled to the other side of the river. The author interprets all measures taken by the emperor, including an attempt of flight using a small boat (see above), as a result of his yearning for his beloved wife: "When he sat on the world-encompassing (*jahāngīrī*) throne / his heart was much grieved at the separation from Bīgum."[78] The text even gives a fictional message from the emperor to Nūr Jahān: "Tell her 'Without you my joy has withered like a rose / your absence stabs my robes like a thorn.'"[79]

This emotional side ascribed to Jahāngīr should not be considered as one of the idealized characteristics of rulership. While the grief of separation serves to explain the emperor's passivity in the example mentioned above, the love for his wife is merely addressed to ameliorate Nūr Jahān's position in the narrative and beyond. Shīrāzī thus uses the representation of one character, namely Jahāngīr, to indirectly highlight another, namely Nūr Jahān. This way of underlining her status is one of the more subtle and delicate narrative tools Kāmī Shīrāzī uses in his 'Fatḥnāma'.

8.   Foil Characters in the 'Fatḥnāma': Mahābat Khān, The 'Villain', and Nūr Jahān, The 'Loving Heroine'

One of the most striking narrative strategies in our source is the use of foil characters to highlight the most important messages of the text. Mahābat Khān, the villain, is introduced directly after the praising of the emperor discussed above and a short biographical presentation of Kāmī Shīrāzī himself. The author emphasizes his personal gratitude to the ruler, who first awakened in him the ability to write poems and express himself elegantly. The source exclusively presents positive actions and characteristics in this section, until we reach the end. Then, directly after the author's declarations of his personal loyalty towards the emperor, a passage follows that describes Mahābat Khān's behavior and fate, which could not be more contradictory to Kāmī Shīrāzī's self-description. Here, Mahābat Khān, the anti-hero, is shown in black tones:

"When Mahābat Khān was expelled from the court / the ruler's mind (*khāṭir*) abandoned him completely / The service (*khidma*) with which he had been awarded / namely that he was the commander of the army of Prince Parvīz Ghāzī / He did not accomplish the task the sovereign had required of him. / Out of malevolence other interests arose in his heart / At first he made quite an effort / but then he began to act shortsightedly [...] /

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78 Fatḥnāma, 133.
79 Ibid.

He never even followed those rebels. / so he brought the world into turmoil [...] / Therefore, the ruler became upset/ and infinitely enraged with his behavior."[80]

The description of Mahābat Khān does not mention his former closeness to the ruler. Instead, Mahābat Khān's transgressions, in particular his negligence in the fulfillment of his tasks, are used to illustrate his negative character. The text refers here to an understanding of 'service against benevolence', which Jürgen Paul recently described with the example of Seljuk Iran under the terms *khidma* and *niʿma*.[81] Our text also uses the term *khidma* ("service"). While Mughal sources often depict the rulers dispersing *niʿma* ("beneficence"), *miḥrabānī* ("kindness"), and in particular gifts (*niʿma, inʿām, marḥama*) to their loyal 'servants' (administrative and military specialists classified in the *manṣabdār*[82] system), our source provides a single answer to the bad behavior of a servant: The ruler's wrath (*ghaẓab, qahr*). The earlier 'Majālis' state that hardly any human being could survive once the "fire of the ruler's wrath, which is a messenger of death and like the wrath of God"[83] has hit him. The ruler's grace and mercy save the poor sinner who had aroused Jahāngīr's wrath in the 'Majālis'.[84] For Mahābat Khān, Kāmī Shīrāzī draws a less hopeful picture. His misdeeds, especially his military failure, are interpreted as the result of personal malice and neglect of duty: "His spirit was packed with impurity to such an extent / that the stars revealed his evilness."[85]

On the linguistic level as well, the confrontation between a positively-described ruler and the negatively-illustrated Mahābat Khān cannot be overlooked. Similar to quotations of direct speech (see above), the verse is now designed as a fictional quotation from the discharge document Mahābat Khān received from the court. Here, the typical diction of the Mughal Court is directly opposed to Mahābat Khān's poor behavior. Very condensed in verse, the fictional quotation represents the emperor's superiority. It stands against the reaction of Mahābat. The author not only denounces his courtly behavior, but denounces his human behavior as well by comparing him to a poisonous snake:

"Āsaf Khān was ordered to write a letter of dismissal / for Mahābat immediately / 'Since you neglected this mission / you will now be dismissed and must drink the cup of misfortune' / When, on the orders of the emperor who keeps the world moving / these

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80 Fatḥnāma, 101–102.
81 See Jürgen PAUL, Lokale und imperiale Herrschaft im Iran des 12. Jahrhunderts. Herrschaftspraxis und Konzepte (Iran–Turan 13), Wiesbaden 2016, passim.
82 See 236, n. 35.
83 Majālis, 104.
84 See ibid., 104. For an analysis of this account, see KOLLATZ 2017 and KOLLATZ 2013.
85 Fatḥnāma, 105.

orders were sent to that Khān / He writhed like a poisonous snake / and began to think of only himself."[86]

The following description could refer to Mahābat Khān as well as to his aide Arab Dast-Ghayb, a minor character who is shown as breaking his loyalty towards the emperor and defecting to Mahābat's side. It again underlines how negatively Mahābat Khān and those loyal to him are represented. However, Arab Dast-Ghayb is not only delineated by virtues opposite to those of the ruler. Mahābat Khān's actions also produce exactly the opposite of what Jahāngīr is capable of generating as a good ruler. While the emperor is described – on both an abstract and personal level – as creating order, providing protection, and ultimately creating peace, Mahābat generates turmoil and even discord between Muslims (*fitna*). The contrast is further deepened by a list of negative characteristics that are diametrically opposed to the rulers' characteristics discussed above. Similar to Jahāngīr's characterization in the introduction, the text simply states: "With his shortsightedness and false play / he became haughty and proud / He set the world in turmoil / he sowed the seed of fitna / He was the personification of malice, hostility, and ill will / he ruined the world."[87]

The author finally attributes Mahābat Khān's fate to his own faults. Through continued disobedience, Mahābat lost his *khidma* connection to the ruler and thus destroyed his very basis of existence, the *ni'ma* provided by the ruler: "He has torn his own breast / with his own hand he has chopped off his head."[88] The rebellion against the temporal sovereign Jahāngīr is considered equal to disobedience towards God. Thus, Mahābat Khān is stylized as the villain par excellence in the Mughal Empire: "A rebel before God, a cursed man before his own Lord / he became an example of malice in his time."[89]

The last verse equates disobedience, negligence, or betrayal towards the ruler with rebellion towards the creator. The offences threaten or even destroy the existence of the offender, both in a worldly and supra-worldly dimension. The negative foil character thus not only serves to underline the characteristics ascribed to the ruler, but also has the function of linking the story, which is more action-oriented, to superordinate concepts.

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86 Fatḥnāma, 103.
87 Ibid., 113.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 115.

9.   Nūr Jahān – Foil Character, Protagonist, Patron?

Both the intratextual character of Nūr Jahān and the historical wife of the ruler, whom our author names as the addressee, if not the patron of his writing project, are interwoven with the narrative in many ways. In the last section of this article, the characterization of Nūr Jahān will be examined. Is she a foil character who assists in the representation of Jahāngīr, or is she the actual main character in this text? This analysis of her presentation also leads us to finally examine the intended agenda of the 'Fatḥnāma'. The narrative construction, and in particular the representation of the main characters, suggests that the text is less about legitimation of power in a precarious situation or about the advantageous representation of an actually unimaginable situation; instead the 'Fatḥnāma' can be read as advertising, as propaganda, which is directed towards those able to influence political decisions in the time period after Jahāngīr's reign has ended. It is intended to help to position its patroness in the succession quarrel. The manner in which Nūr Jahān is praised and characterized in the 'Fatḥnāma' supports this thesis. In the introduction of this article, we mentioned that the name Bīgum Pādishāh can be understood as "ruler's wife", but also as "lady ruler". In the dedication, however, the author equates her status quite explicitly with that of the ruler:

> "I have presented it [the 'Fatḥnāma'] in the audience (mulāzamat) of Bīgum Pādshāh, the excellent deputy [or: the deputy of the excellent], who is able to stop the sun and the universe, who is the highest refuge of both worlds – may Allāh keep her forever."[90]

This dedication is puzzling at first: Whose deputy (navvāb) is Nūr Jahān described as here? The text is not explicit, but it may be assumed that the ruler's wife is presented as his potential representative. However, the following attributes almost describe both of them as equals. The text does not use the same phrases usually attributed to the ruler in Mughal sources. Nevertheless, khūrshīd-iḥtijāb gardūn-qabāb refers to the dominating quality of universal, that is, all-embracing rule dominating the entire universe. Thereby, the texts describes Nūr Jahān as having one of the most central and exclusive ruler's qualities. She is also presented as ʿālamiyān-i maʾāb, the highest refuge for all world dwellers. Thus, the dedication in the colophon attributes the same protective role to the ruler's wife, which otherwise lists the ruler as a "destroyer of tyrants" and "protector of the oppressed". We may therefore view the narration as an attempt to make Nūr Jahān appear as a person capable of rule, that served to present her as positively as possible and to highlight her 'unusual' capabilities. Writing of her activity during the attempts to free the kidnapped ruler from the control of Mahābat Khān, the

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90 Fatḥnāma, 271.

text especially emphasizes well-known ruling qualities, which are usually only attributed to (male) rulers: centrality, strength, knowledge, and perfection. Among those qualities mentioned, the strength and knowledge of the Bīgum are particularly stressed and exemplified in verses on her bravery in battle and her capable military command, as well as verses on clever decisions and wise advice to the ruler. The presentation of a female character in this way is not common in Mughal historiographic texts. Compared to the 'Jahāngīrnāma' – in which Nūr Jahān only appears rarely – her representation in the 'Fatḥnāma' must be viewed as 'unusual' for its time.

In addition to these ruling qualities, Nūr Jahān is also represented in an emotional manner that emphasizes her closeness to and love for the ruler. From the relevant passages in the text, the Bīgum appears before the reader as a wife who not only feels concern for her beloved husband and sadness about their separation, but also understands herself to be an inseparable part of his existence. Shirazī in turn uses the stylistic element of fictional speech to introduce the reader to the narrative. Direct speech also allows him to subtly describe the characters, instead of openly attributing certain qualities to them. First, he quotes the messenger who informs Jahāngīr about Nūr Jahāns escape: "'Bīgum has crossed the river in an elephant canopy / but the separation from you has made her shed tears of blood' […]."[91]

Contrary to the command of the ruler, Nūr Jahān decides to not return to him at first. Instead, she remains on the safe side of the river to work with the army to prepare for the ruler's liberation. Her motives are reflected in a long fictional monologue, which can only be quoted here in parts. The monologue also re-introduces the negative foil character of Mahābat Khān, who is held responsible for the situation and in turn denied his human aspect:

> "'How can I be separated from the emperor / it is anomalous to separate the soul from the body'[92] […] / 'Oh God! May nobody be obliged to see the face of the rapacious beast [i.e. Mahābat] / even his good works are bad / Otherwise, my soul would be next to the emperor / God is my witness! / If I do not hurry towards you now, oh my trusted companion / forgive me for staying behind / For you know the burning desire of my heart / I do not wish to live without you for a single breath'."[93]

Similar to the attributes listed in the colophon, the narrative uses the emotional characterization of Bīgum to put her on a similar level with the ruler. Both Jahāngīr and his wife appear as an inseparable entity, a unity of body and soul. This representation emphasizes the painful separation of the two characters. Additionally, Nūr Jahān is also made an integral part of the ruler's *corpus po-*

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91 Fatḥnāma, 133.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 135.

liticum, not only as part of the peripheral executive organs, but as part of his innermost personality. The patroness of the 'Fatḥnāma' is thus again located in the absolute center of the realm. Nevertheless, the character does not appear as presumptuous, as she also shows deep reverence towards her husband in his role as ruler. Thus, even during the kidnapping situation, she follows the court ceremony, which requires her to receive a message from the ruler with the same honors as when meeting him personally:

> "When Sādiq Khān brought the emperor's message / Bīgum's heart was filled with sorrow and grief / Her face touched the ground, showing respect to the emperor / she instantly performed all the ceremonies showing her servitude (*bandagī*)."[94]

Finally, Nūr Jahān's military action appears as a logical consequence of her affection and closeness to the ruler. As with the character of Jahāngīr, her failure is not much discussed and is indirectly explained by Āsaf Khān's betrayal.

10.   Conclusion: What Purpose Did the 'Fatḥnāma' Serve for Nūr Jahān?

Legitimation is certainly a core motivation of the 'Fatḥnāma', but the text's main objective is not to legitimize the current ruler Jahāngīr. On the contrary, Jahāngīr's representation seems to serve only as a basis or support for the actual legitimation concerns pursued by the text. The author obviously makes efforts to embellish the threatening and 'unusual' situation in which emperor and empress find themselves, and to show their actions as actions that are as worthy of regality as possible. The special focus of the narration is the character of Nūr Jahān and her position close to the ruler. In anticipation of an inevitable succession dispute, an attempt is made to position Nūr Jahān as promisingly as possible by equating her, or at least closely associating her, with the last legitimate ruler. The text uses well-known ruling characteristics and attributes that are usually associated with (male) Mughal rulers to illustrate Nūr Jahān and Jahāngīr in a positive manner. In some cases, this is done very boldly through epithets, while in others it is done more subtly through fictitious dialogues. We also find the narrating voice evaluating and explaining the character's actions. The negative foil character Mahābat Khān allows the reader to contrast him with the emperor and his wife, which additionally reinforces this positive representation of the protagonists. The negative foil is also oriented towards ideal conceptions of rule, which are turned into the blatant opposite for the representation of Mahābat Khān. Thus both the character and its historical entourage are devalued. The text even dis-

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94 Fatḥnāma, 133.

tinguishes between the positive-humane side of the ruler and the negative-bestial side of the rebel. Whether or not the text was meant to influence contemporary events or simply to comfort the defeated Nūr Jahān, it shows that narratives at least have the potential to influence politically-unclear situations. In this case, the narrative could be used as a tool to discredit a supporter of Shāh Jahān who opposes Nūr Jahān's favorite throne pretender. The text therefore not only acts on a narrative level, but also clearly shows the underlying desire to influence the succession to the throne.

However, the 'Fatḥnāma' does not indicate that the premature succession quarrel was considered as an 'unusual' situation. This evaluation is a modern one, triggered by our observational perspective. Nevertheless, the source itself can be regarded as an 'unusual' case, as it is the only known example of a woman, in this case the Mughal Empress Nūr Jahān, actively intervening in a succession quarrel and having this intervention legitimized in text form. In addition to its patroness Nūr Jahān, its author Kāmī Shirazī is vital for exploring the *Sitz im Leben* of the 'Fatḥnāma'.[95] It is of secondary importance whether Shirazī wrote his *mathnavī* on direct behalf of the empress or simply intended to present it to her. In either case, the author had to take into account both the current situation of his (intended) patron and her aims and agendas – her *Sitz im Leben* – and to adjust his narrative to it. Nūr Jahān as (intended) patron thus stands behind the text, influencing either directly or indirectly the way Shirazī presents her. The text must therefore be read as the product of dual influence. While the author Shirazī is dependent on Nūr Jahān's benevolence, the patroness also depends on him as an influencer, whose writing may shape her reputation both in that moment of history and in future.

Why, therefore might Nūr Jahān have needed a text such as the 'Fatḥnāma' in 1625/1626? As long as Jahāngīr was alive, Nūr Jahān enjoyed a rather secure position as his main wife, a position from which she successfully expelled in-fluential nobles like Mahābat Khān. Examples such as Jahāngīr's mother, Ma-

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95 *Sitz im Leben* refers to the historical and social context of the author, but it might also include some formative situations, traumatic experiences, or religious and ethical persuasions. Exploring the *Sitz im Leben*, the historical and social conditions that determine form, content, and agenda of a text or a motif under research, figures among the central aims of textual exegesis. Cf. Sönke FINNERN, Narratologie und biblische Exegese. Eine integrative Methode der Erzählanalyse und ihr Ertrag am Beispiel von Matthäus 28 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 285), Tübingen 2010, 20, n. 68; Helmut UTZSCHNEIDER/Stefan A. NITSCHE, Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung. Eine Methodenlehre zur Exegese des Alten Testaments, Gütersloh 2001, 116–121. Similarly referring to the historical author's intentions and agendas, Gerd Althoff uses the term *causa scribendi*. Gerd ALTHOFF, Causa scribendi und Darstellungsabsichten. Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde und andere Beispiele, in: Michael BORGOLTE/Herrad SPILLING (eds.), Litterae Medii Aevi. Festschrift für Johanne Autenrieth zu ihrem 65. Geburtstag. Sigmaringen 1988, 117–133.

riam-i Zamānī, show that emperor's widows managed to hold influential positions at court even after their husband's death. This was usually possible as it was one of their sons who followed his father to the throne. Nūr Jahān, however, had no son with the emperor. She therefore needed different methods to keep her position, or, at the very least, to prevent what eventually happened to her anyway: loss of reputation and exile far from the court. Nūr Jahān's strategy to keep her position after Jahāngīr's approaching death was obviously to marry her daughter to the future emperor. This is why she became one of the key players in the succession conflict, siding with her son-in-law Shahriyār and competing to place him in the line of succession as advantageously as possible. At the time Shīrāzī is writing, his patron is not only empress, but also the rival to her former ally Shāh Jahān, who is supported by her brother Āsaf Khān and her enemy Mahābat Khān. Struggling to secure her social standing, Nūr Jahān thus needed to prove her loyalty towards the dynasty and, more importantly, her ability to solve situations as critical as the kidnapping of an emperor. Her undertaking required support by 'good press', which may well be the reason for commissioning an 'unusual' text such as Shirazī's 'Fatḥnāma'.

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