

**Books as Objects of Exchange:
A Study of Cross-Cultural Interaction and Connected
Systems between the Mughals and Ottomans**

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The study of diplomatic relations between the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals has always been the mainstay of historical research in this region, blanketing the existence of local channels of cross-cultural interactions and acculturation. Scholars like Naimur Rahman Farooqi, Stephen Dale, and Ashraf Razi have underscored the diplomatic connections between the Islamic empires of South Asia and the Middle East and used this to gloss over the cultural dimensions in their interactions.¹⁴¹ These empires stretched from the Balkans and North Africa in the West, to the Bay of Bengal in the East. They created an imperial cultural zone with

¹⁴¹ ‘The time for the diplomatic ties between the Mughals and the Ottomans ranges from 1556-1748. The year 1556 marks the time when the first official letter was written by the Mughal ruler Humayun to the Ottoman Sultan and the year 1748 is the year when the last Ottoman embassy to the Mughal court left Shahjahanabad.’ Naimur Rahman Farooqi, *A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1989) 1:12-13. Ashraf Razi, ‘Turkey-Pakistan Political Relations,’ *The Eurasia Studies Society Journal* (2013). Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

commonalities within the diverse traditions of the broader Islamic world.

The Mughal empire was founded by Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur in 1526.¹⁴² Babur was a ruler of the Turkicized Chagatai Khanate (1225-1680) from Central Asia who defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi, in the First Battle of Panipat to establish the Mughal empire. The Safavid dynasty controlled the territory that comprises present-day Iran. It was founded in 1501 and lasted until 1736. The son and successor of Babur, Humayun (r. 1530-1540; 1555-1556) sought refuge in the Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576). The history of the Ottoman principality dates to circa 1300, two hundred years before the Safavid and Mughal empires developed. The Ottoman principality came into existence during the disintegration of the Byzantine or the eastern Roman empire, and scholars often describe the Ottomans as the ‘Romans of the Muslim world.’¹⁴³ The Ottomans outlasted their Safavid and Mughal counterparts and survived beyond the third decade of the eighteenth century essentially intact because they reorganized their military and tax system at the provincial level.

These empires sought legitimacy from pre-Islamic Iranian, Roman, and Turko-Mongolian traditions of kingship and were more concerned with security, longevity, and prosperity than pleasing the religious classes. This at times brought them into conflict with

¹⁴² All dates used in this article are Common Era (CE) unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁴³ Cemal Kafadar, *Between the Two Worlds, The Construction of Ottoman State* (London: University of California Press), 118-150.

clerics who believed in strict adherence to Islamic law (*Shariat*) for governance.¹⁴⁴ In *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Mughals and Safavids*, Douglas Streusand argues that the ‘empires of the gunpowder era’ shared political, military, and administrative backgrounds. The monarchs of the three empires were successful in establishing more centralized, secure, and enduring polities than their predecessors due to their pragmatic decision making.

The state structures of these empires have been described as ‘gunpowder empires,’ ‘patrimonial-bureaucratic,’ and ‘early modern.’¹⁴⁵ One of the reasons

¹⁴⁴ For reference to the Turko-Mongol tradition of kingship, Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (eds.), *Themes in Indian History: The Mughal State 1526-1750* (OUP, 1998).

¹⁴⁵ Stephen P. Blake, ‘The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals,’ *The Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no.1 (Nov., 1979): 77-80. ‘The concept of the patrimonial-bureaucratic state was given by Stephen Blake for understanding the state structure of the early medieval empire. Blake’s patrimonial-bureaucratic structure is based on Max Weber’s model of the patrimonial state. In this structure, the lords and the princes extend their authority beyond their household to extra household subjects. Thus, the authority is extended from personal affairs to professional affairs.’ Marshall G.S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, The Gunpowder Empire and Modern Times*. Vol. 3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974). The term ‘gunpowder empires’ was coined by Marshall Hodgson and his University of Chicago colleague William H. McNeill. The concept of gunpowder empire implies a fundamental similarity among the three polities of the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavids. McNeill argues that such states were able to monopolize firearms and weapons to unite and assert control over larger territories. Gunpowder empire is a convenient classification that facilitates comparison and contrast between these empires, but over a period of time it has been criticized by scholars like Douglas E.

for the dominance of the Ottomans over others in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the use of firearms, including: artillery for sieges, muskets in the field, and the adoption of *tabor jangi* (tanks). Babur used Ottoman warfare tactics to defeat Ibrahim Lodhi in the Battle of Panipat in 1526.¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, some of his reputed gunners and musketeers, like Mustafa Rumi, were Ottoman Turks.¹⁴⁷

In his text, Streusand vividly explains how military organization, weapons tactics, and prevailing political ideology played a significant role in unifying an empire. Even though these empires shared a common religion and history that traces back to Central Asia, they developed unique solutions to their local spatial concerns. The French physician and traveler Francois Bernier (who came to India to the court of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb) notices the similarity in the Mughal *Jagir* and the Ottoman *Timar* systems. The *Timar* and *Jagir* were both forms of salary through land-revenue assignments.¹⁴⁸ Secondly, the role of an Ottoman private soldier (*sipahi*) is comparable to the position of a Mughal military commander (*mansabdar*).¹⁴⁹

Analysis of the political, economic, and cultural backdrop of the pre-Mongol Islamic world explains the subsequent emergence of the Ottomans, Mughals, and

Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals* (London: Routledge; Taylor and Francis Group, 2018).

¹⁴⁶ Wheeler M. Thackston, *The Baburnamah: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor* (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), 322-332.

¹⁴⁷ Thackston, *The Baburnamah*, 144.

¹⁴⁸ Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires*, 291.

¹⁴⁹ Streusand, *Islamic Gunpowder Empires*, 291-292.

Safavids. The founding monarchs of these empires, Osman in Anatolia, Isma'il in early sixteenth-century Iran, and Babur in India, were of Turkish background. Stephen Dale traced the common heritage of these rulers in *The Muslim Empires of the Ottoman, Safavids, and Mughals*, and argues that these monarchs spoke some form of Central Asian Turkish as their native language. Other commonalities included the influence of Sufi saints, particularly the idea of Ibn al Arabi's *Wahadat-ul-Wujud*, literally meaning the 'unity of existence' or 'unity of being'. Rulers from all three empires patronized not only *madrasas* and *masjids*, but also Sufi shrines. Other commonalities include knowledge of the Persian language and self-portrayal as *Ghazis* (warriors of faith). Nevertheless, the geographical and cultural settings of the empires differed.

In the case of the Indian subcontinent, its isolation from the rest of the world was removed after the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi in early twelfth century (1206-1526). The sultans of Delhi not only maintained relations with the Caliphal authority in Baghdad and Cairo, but also had linkages Qarachil and Khorasan, located in present day Iran and Afghanistan respectively. The Ottoman influence had preceded the Mughals in India, particularly on the western coast of the subcontinent (Gujarati Sultanate) and the Deccan region (Bahmani Sultanate). Sultan Muhammad Shah Bahman (r. 1463-1482) was the first ruler of the subcontinent to exchange diplomatic missions with the Ottomans, followed by the Muzaffarids of Gujarat. These rulers recognized the Ottoman sultan as 'Khalifa on the Earth' (Commander of the Faithful). After the Portuguese

occupation on the west coast of India, the Muzaffarids of Gujarat formed an anti-Portuguese alliance with the help of the Ottoman sultan. The port in Gujarat was not only significant for conducting trade with the west, but was the only port for the pilgrimage to Mecca from the Indian subcontinent. The Portuguese politico-militaristic approach in the Arabian Sea waters disrupted hajj traffic, thereby making the alliance necessary. The partnership between the rulers of Gujarat and Ottoman Turkey was supposed to oust the Portuguese and enhance the diplomatic and cultural relations between the empires.

During the reign of Mughal emperor Humayun, Ottoman Sultan Suleyman ‘The Magnificent’ ordered several naval expeditions to Gujarat to check the Portuguese advancements in the Arabian Sea and on the west coast of India.¹⁵⁰ Admiral Sidi Ali Reis and his army were re-routed and later escaped to Turkey overland. Sidi Ali Reis thereby became the first unofficial Turkish Ambassador to visit the Mughal Empire. In addition to being an admiral, he was also a poet who wrote the treatise *Mir’ātü’l-Memālik* (Mirror of Kingdoms) and composed *Ghazals*¹⁵¹ in the style of Amir Khusrau

¹⁵⁰ Farooqi, *A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations*, 144-173.

¹⁵¹ ‘Ghazals are short poems consisting of rhyming couplets called *Sher* or *Bayt*. The couplets end with the same rhyming pattern and are expected to have same meter. A ghazals rhyming pattern is described as AA, BA, CA, DA.’ Further references to Persian meter system can be found in Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Bethesda, 1994) and Heinrich Ferdinand Blochmann, *Prosody of the Persians according to Saifî, Jami, and Other Writers* (Calcutta, 1872).

Dehalvi.¹⁵² He boasted that he never stopped hoping to see Gujarat and Ormuz join the Ottoman realm.¹⁵³ His book provides evidence that 200 Ottoman gunners joined Sultan Ahmed of Gujarat to crush the rebellion of Nasir-ul-Mulk.¹⁵⁴ However, after Emperor Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1572, no further negotiations were carried out. On the contrary, Emperor Akbar tacitly accepted the Portuguese presence on the Indian Coast, which in turn highlighted the lack of political pragmatism and diplomatic acumen on the side of the monarch.¹⁵⁵

The Ottomans were also reputed to be expert gunners and musketeers, employed in the Sultanate of Gujarat. Some famous names include Rumi Khan, Safar Khudawand, and Rajab Khudawand Khan, who held dominant positions and wielded considerable influence in

¹⁵² Muhammad Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press), 1-5; Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusrau - The Poet of Sultans and Sufis* (Oxford: One World Publication, 2009), 38-39. Amir Khusrau became one of the significant names in the new literary current that came to the forefront during the Delhi Sultanate period (1206-1526). He was a poet, writer, linguist and a devotee of Nizam-ud-din Awliya, who wrote under the patronage of several rulers and nobles. His persona represented a fine mixture of medieval culture. Since Khusrau's origin was both Turkish and Indian, he bridged the gap between the two cultures and this would be reflected in his writings.

¹⁵³ A. Vambery, *The Travels and Adventures of Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia during the years 1553-1556* (Lahore: Al Biruni Publications, 1979), 119.

¹⁵⁴ Vambery, *The Travels and Adventures of Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali*, 120.

¹⁵⁵ Farooqi, *A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations*, 144-173.

Gujarat.¹⁵⁶ According to the historian Ferishte, Rajab Khan built the castle of Surat, fortifying it in the Turkish architectural fashion. The Mughals did not follow a consistent policy towards the Ottomans and the nature of Mughal-Ottoman interaction varied with each successive monarch. Nonetheless, the interaction between the Mughals and Ottomans was higher during the sixteenth century as compared to later periods. While Humayun was in Tabriz in the first half of the sixteenth century, Jauhar Aftabchi (Humayun's personal valet) mentions that he sent compliments to the sultan via two Ottoman Turks and used this opportunity to negotiate ties with the Ottomans.¹⁵⁷ The Turkish Archives contains evidence that Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) wrote letters to the Ottoman rulers and inventories indicate that Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-1748) sent gifts.

In addition, Francis Robinson opines in his article 'Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems' that connective knowledge systems, as evident in the *madrassa* curriculum of three empires and production of the manuscripts in religious centers, further explains that traveling religious scholars also played a significant role in the exchange of ideas and texts.¹⁵⁸ The

¹⁵⁶ Vambery, *The Travels and Adventures of Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali*, 125.

¹⁵⁷ Farooqi, *A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations*, 50; Najaf Haider, 'The Composition and Circulation of Mughal Chronicles,' *Indian Horizons* 62, no. 4 (2015): 46-48.

¹⁵⁸ Francis Robinson, 'Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems,' *Journal of Islamic Studies* (1997): 155; Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton, 1986).

need to find a suitable patron and safety from oppression motivated the scholars' journey. The *madrasas* in the three empires adopted the same text and sometimes used similar commentaries and annotations. Analyzing the channels these scholars took not only validates study of textual circulation and material exchange, but also provide reasons for the shared spiritual ideas between the empires. Robinson concludes that one of the inferences that emerges by comparing *madrasa* curriculums from the three empires is the similar element of inspiration drawn from thirteenth and fourteenth century scholarship in Iran and Central Asia. The Sunni Mughal and Ottoman empires drew from similar sources for textual commentary and *madrasa* curriculum—both were influenced by two great rivals from the court of Timur: Sa'd al-Din Taftāzāni (d. 1389) and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (d. 1413).¹⁵⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century their influence can be seen in works published in Istanbul, Tehran, Delhi, and Lucknow.¹⁶⁰ Trade networks from the west coast may have also played a significant role in this process. This suggests that the interaction between the Ottomans and the Mughals was much more than mere diplomatic ties. By far, the Topkapi and Istanbul Museums and archives remain an unexploited source for understanding such cultural encounters.

The availability of Persian manuscripts produced in the Indian subcontinent at the Topkapi Saray Museum, indicate that books made their way into Ottoman Turkey

¹⁵⁹ Robinson, 'Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals,' 155; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 260.

¹⁶⁰ Robinson, 'Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals,' 155.

through various channels. It is interesting to note that these manuscripts were acquired from the Safavids as war booty and gifts and were not commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan. The presence of Khusrau's works in the Ottoman realm in large numbers indicates that they were preferred texts deliberately acquired from the Safavids. Because of the geographical location of the Safavid Empire, it formed a vital link in interactions between the Mughals and Ottomans. Any discussion of Mughal-Ottoman cultural connections must include exploration of the role of the Safavids.

Manuscript Circulation and Reception

Due to the difficulty in tracing the distribution of manuscripts, the circulation and readership of text has not been adequately explored. The colophon, which is the writer's imprint and is located at the beginning or end of a text, provides information about the patron, the copyist, and to whom the text was gifted, as well as the region where it was commissioned. As Filiz Çagman points out in his work, tracing the histories of books can be done by examining the impressions from the seals and records of ownership found in the inner lining of texts.¹⁶¹ This section brings to forefront manuscripts produced in the Safavid and Mughal realms that eventually made their way to Ottoman Turkey in the sixteenth century. Collections of manuscripts from the Ottoman Empire and its various imperial libraries survive in three institutions in present-day Istanbul, namely the

¹⁶¹ Filiz Çagman and Zeren Tanindi, 'Remarks on Some Manuscripts from the Topkapi Palace Treasury in the Context of Ottoman-Safavid Relations,' *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 131-132.

Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Istanbul University Library, and Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum. The Persian catalogue of these museums brings to light the works of Amir Khusrau Dehlavi. Khusrau's work from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries remains one of the best-preserved Persian classics in the imperial Ottoman collection.¹⁶² This indicates that among the various Persian texts read and circulated in the literary circles of the Ottomans and Safavids, Khusrau gained a popular place. Scholars have also attested to the popularity of Khusrau in the Timurid and Uzbek realm. In one such instance, Babur notes in his memoirs that the Timurid Prince Hilali (d. 1529-1530) had memorized couplets of both Khusrau and Nizami.¹⁶³ These books were acquired during several raiding expeditions carried out in the Safavid realm, as well as through trading networks, diplomatic gifts, and war booty. The portability and mobility of books meant that they circulated not only within the spaces of the imperial palace, but also beyond. For example, sultans often brought their favorite books on royal outings to suburban palaces and on military campaigns.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Lale Uluc, 'Comments on the Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's Work's: Manuscripts from the Imperial Ottoman Treasury.' In *Historiography in Indo-Persian Literature*, ed. Chander Shekhar (Department of Persian, Delhi University, 2009), 27-55. Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapi Saray Kütüphanesi Farsca Yazmalar katalogum* (Istanbul: Topkapi Saray Museum, 1961).

¹⁶³ Uluc, 'Comments on the Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's Work's,' 26.

¹⁶⁴ Gülrü Necipoglu, *The Spatial Organization of Knowledge in Ottoman Palace Library: An Encyclopaedic Collection and its Inventory*. Vol. 1, *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of Ottoman Palace Library (1502/03-1503/04)*, *Muqarnas* 14 (Brill Academic Publication, Sept. 26, 2019).

In many cases, the ruler himself is responsible for the wide circulation of a text. For instance, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) recorded the events of his twelve regnal years and ordered the folios of the prospective *Jahangirnama* to be bound into a book and circulated.¹⁶⁵ In a similar instance during the reign of the third Mughal ruler Akbar (r. 1556-1605), a secret diary criticizing Akbar called the *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* and written by Abdul Qadir Badayuni, was widely circulated. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, rulers of Iran, Turkey, and Mughal India employed many calligraphers, painters, illuminators, and binders to produce sumptuous volumes for their libraries. The commissioning of books that bore royal seals and titles was a sign of status and power. This further encouraged book collection in which the rulers appropriated texts from each other's library. In fact, maintaining a private library was a favorite avocation of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal rulers. The collection of texts in the Topkapi Museum library is attributed to Ottoman-Safavid political relations and the increasing war between the two empires.¹⁶⁶

In the case of the Mughal Empire, all books were manuscripts embellished and decorated by hand and as a result there was a large market for writing and copying texts, a fact observed by a seventeenth century Englishman in Gujarat.¹⁶⁷ It is significant that the patronage for a book's production, including its illustrations, was not just limited to the ruling elites, as the nobility was also involved in the

¹⁶⁵ Najaf Haider, 'The Composition and Circulation of Mughal Chronicles,' *Indian Horizons* 62, no.4 (2015): 46-48.

¹⁶⁶ Çagman and Tanindi, 'Remarks on Some Manuscripts,' 133.

¹⁶⁷ Çagman and Tanindi, 'Remarks on Some Manuscripts,' 48.

process. In its early years, the Ottoman court avidly collected Timurid literary works in Chagatai Turkish, as well as in Persian.¹⁶⁸ In *Translators and Translation*, Gottfried Hagen argues that Timurid literature was translated as quickly as two years after its composition.

In Ottoman Turkey, as in Safavid Iran and Mughal India, the patronage for book production lay with those who were wealthy enough to support the scribes, painters, and calligraphers, such as the sultan and the nobles.¹⁶⁹ The Ottoman Imperial Library has a rich collection of Khusrau's work, which includes fourteen of the poet's *Khamsa* (Quintet); eleven of which are full works with the twelfth one bound alongside the *Khamsa* of Nizami.¹⁷⁰ The Topkapi Saray includes illustrated copies of three of Khusrau's works: *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan*, *Qiran-us Sadayn*, and *Nuh Siphir*.¹⁷¹ The availability of the works of Khusrau over other authors undoubtedly stresses that it was a deliberate choice.

Duwal Rani Khizr Khan

The following section focuses on the manuscript copies of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* from the sixteenth century. The text *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* is a historical romantic *masnawi* which is based on the love story of Khizr Khan (the heir apparent of Alauddin Khilji) and Duwal Rani

¹⁶⁸ For reference to the Timurids see Stephen Frederic Dale, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. Vol. 8, *The Legacy of the Timurids* (1998).

¹⁶⁹ Norah M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and its Influence on the Arts of India and Turkey* (University of Texas Press, 1984), 133.

¹⁷⁰ Uluc, 'Comments on the Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's Work's,' 29.

¹⁷¹ Uluc, 'Comments on the Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's Work's,' 30.

(the Gujarati princess).¹⁷² Various other names have also been assigned to this *masnawi* including: *Ashiqqa*, *Ishqiyah*, *Manshur-i Shahi*, *Khazir Khani - Duwal Devi*, and *Qisa-i-Khazir Khani*. In the poem, the son of Alauddin Khilji and heir apparent of the Khilji dynasty falls in love with a Gujarati Princess Duwal Rani (daughter of Rai Karan Vaghela of Gujarat).¹⁷³ They marry, but are separated when Khizr Khan falls from favor. Later in the poem, Khizr Khan is incarcerated in the fort of Gwalior and then murdered by his brother along with Duwal Rani. As a historical *masnawi*,¹⁷⁴ *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* provides insight into the life of medieval royalty, court politics, the war of succession, and marriage ceremonies; thereby highlighting different shades of the courtly life of the Sultans of Delhi.

The sudden production and circulation of the text *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* in the late fifteenth and early

¹⁷² Sharma, *Amir Khusrau*, 59-60; Michael Boris Bednar, 'The Content and the form in Amir Khusraw's Duwal Rani Va Khizr Khan,' *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (September 2013): 27. *Masnawi* is a narrative poetry which developed in Persia. This style was adopted in Persia in place of panegyric ode or *qasidah* and it usually dealt with epic and romantic legends from past history, taken up to address issues of concern specifically from authors' own time. However, Khusrau's *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* is based on events and characters contemporary to his time. The *masnawi* follows the rhyme scheme of AA/BB/CC/DD.

¹⁷³ For references to the text *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan*, see Jaganlal Gupta, *Nagari Pracharini Patrika*. Vol. 11, *Deval Devi and Khizr Khan* (Banaras, 1933); Mohammad Habib, *Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi* (Bombay, 1927). In *Lifetimes and Works of Amir Khusrau Dehlavi*, ed. Zoe Ansari (New Delhi: Nation Amir Khusrau Society, 1975).

¹⁷⁴ Rashid Ahmad Salim (ed.) and intro. by K.A Nizami, *Duwal Rani-Yi Khizr Khan* (1988), 36-42.

sixteenth century underlines the popularity of this work at the same time in three empires. The earliest available manuscript, dated 1497, belongs to the library of Hakim-Oghlu Ali Pasha, who was grand vizier under the Ottoman Sultans Mahmud I and Othman III in the early eighteenth century. Other manuscripts include the Aya Sufiyah Library and Punjab University Library manuscripts, transcribed in 1511. According to their colophon, these manuscripts were commissioned in the Indian subcontinent and made their way to the Ottoman realm. The British Museum collection, entitled *Kulliyat-i Khusrau*, is dated 1517 and includes three whole-page miniatures produced in the Safavid realm.¹⁷⁵ The Salar Jung manuscript bears the date 1523, and the copy in the National Museum (New Delhi) is dated 1568. The National Museum (India) manuscript is of historical importance because decades after Akbar commissioned this manuscript, the Safavids commissioned the same text in 1584.¹⁷⁶ This manuscript bears two whole-page miniatures that are discussed at length in the next section.

As mentioned in the *Indian Collection: Descriptive Catalogue*, the colophon of this manuscript indicates the name of the scribe and the date of commissioning: “The miserable wretch, the sinner, Sultan Bayazid, son of Mir Nizam known as Dawri, dated Muharram 976 (=1568).”¹⁷⁷ According to the seals on the book, it was present in the library during the reign of two Moghul emperors, Shah

¹⁷⁵ Charles Rieu, *A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscript in the British Museum* (1881).

¹⁷⁶ *Manuscript of Indian Collection Descriptive Catalogue* (New Delhi, 1964), 96.

¹⁷⁷ *Manuscript of Indian Collection Descriptive Catalogue*, 96.

Jahan and Aurangzeb. Earlier, it belonged to a prestigious lady of the imperial family, Salima Sultan Begum, who was the granddaughter of Emperor Babur and the wife of Emperor Akbar.¹⁷⁸ Akbar commissioned this text in the early decades of his reign.

The Topkapi Saray manuscript of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan*, which includes six illustrations, is dated 1584 and also discussed in the following section. It is same manuscript that was commissioned by the Safavids and was probably gifted to the Ottoman Sultan. Another manuscript dated 1586 and preserved in the Bankipore Collection (Patna, India) is significant because the colophon describes its writing as coming at the insistence of Shihab-ud Din Ahmad Khan (who was the governor of Gujarat during the reign of Akbar) at Ahmadabad.¹⁷⁹ The writer of the manuscript was Husayn bin Alf-al-Husayni. This manuscript was corrected and completed under the supervision of the poet Waqui. Muhammad Sharif Waqui was originally from Nishapur in the Safavid Empire and came to India during the reign of Emperor Akbar.¹⁸⁰ He was in the service of Shihab-ud din Ahmad Khan.¹⁸¹ This indicates that the Safavid Empire and

¹⁷⁸ Stuart Cary Welch, *India Art And Culture, 1300-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 141.

¹⁷⁹ Maulavi Abdul Muqtadir, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscript in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore* (The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1908).

¹⁸⁰ M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire, Awards of Ranks, Offices and Titles to the Mughal Nobility, 1574-1568* (CAS, Aligarh Muslim University, 1985).

¹⁸¹ Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, 114. Although, ‘Shihab-ud Din Ahmad Khan was governor of Allahabad, not Ahmadabad’ this supports the claim that the governors of provinces were patronizing

the Mughal Empire had well established cultural linkages and they both commissioned texts by Khusrau within two years of each other.

Another instance from the Mughal Empire indicates the gifting of texts to slaves. For instance, a rare work on history of Bengal *Bahristan-i Ghaibi*, which is preserved in a single manuscript in the national library of France, was given by the owner to his manumitted slaves as a parting gift, as evident from its colophon.¹⁸² Analysis highlights that cross-cultural encounters were not limited to actors at the state level. In fact, nobility at the provincial level, religious scholars, and slaves also played an important role in textual circulation and production.

Hatice Aynur points out that in the 1700s and 1800s there were three major literary currents in the Ottoman world: the so-called Indian style (*sebk-i hindi*); that of the poets associated with Nabi; and finally the type of writing favored by authors wishing to bring literary expression closer to contemporary speech.¹⁸³ Representatives of the first current include Fehîm-i Kadîm (1627–1648) and Nesâtî; Nabi himself and Rami Mehmed Pasa represent the second current; as to the third current, the most brilliant name is surely Nedîm.¹⁸⁴ The popularity of *sebk-i hindi* (a genre of Persian poetry writing associated with Khusrau) as one of the literary currents in the seventeenth century Ottoman

manuscript production.

¹⁸² Najaf Haider, 'The Composition and Circulation of Mughal Chronicles,' *Indian Horizons* 62, no. 4 (2015): 48.

¹⁸³ Hatice Aynur, 'Ottoman Literature.' In *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3:481-520.

¹⁸⁴ Aynur, 'Ottoman Literature,' 492.

realm indicate that works of Khusrau were not just collected, but also read. This is further evidenced by the availability of ten manuscripts of the same text being produced in sixteenth century. Similarly, a novelty of the eighteenth century Ottoman literary world was the emergence of biographical collections on dervishes and sheikhs—sometimes discussing them individually and sometimes as part of larger biographical dictionaries also encompassing scholars.¹⁸⁵ This trend is very similar to the development of a genre of biographical Sufi literature called *Tazkirah* from the Awadh region in the eighteenth century.

Khusrau initially wrote the text in the reign of Alauddin Khilji sometime around 1315 for his son and heir apparent Khizr Khan. During the reign of Sultan Mubarak Khilji (r. 1316-1320, Successor of Alauddin Khilji) 319 more verses were added.¹⁸⁶ However, it is intriguing to note that most of the manuscript copies of this *masnawi* belonged to the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even though the text was written in the early fourteenth century, it did not initially circulate widely, which is evident from its absence in any of the contemporary or near contemporary writers' accounts. For instance, early medieval writers of the Delhi Sultanate like Zia-ud-din Barani, Shams-i Siraj Afif, Isami, and Ibn Batuta do not mention the text *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* or the events in the text. It was not until the sixteenth century that it became popular and was widely commissioned and circulated in the three empires.

¹⁸⁵ Aynur, 'Ottoman Literature,' 485.

¹⁸⁶ Rashid Ahmad Salim (ed.) and intro. by K.A. Nizami, *Duwal Rani-Yi Khizr Khan* (1988), 36-42.

Patronage for book production, calligraphy, illuminations, and illustrations increased during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. His regnal era was considered a golden age of Ottoman culture. The sultan spoke Chagatai Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, and was an accomplished poet. Perhaps, for this reason, poetry was a popular court art that the sultan encouraged and patronized. This further explains the reason for the popularity of Khusrau, even though there is no record of how Khusrau was received by the Ottoman court. Nonetheless, historian Mustafa Ali, who wrote his text *Epic Deeds of Artists* in Baghdad, records the names of artists who migrated from the peripheral areas of the Indian subcontinent to the Turkoman and Safavid realms. Some of the artists recorded in this text include Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir, a scribe by profession under Mir Ali of Herat; Dervish Muhammad of Kashmir, a calligrapher; and Muhammad Qasim Mawlana Munshi, a scribe.¹⁸⁷ It seems plausible that some of these artists from the peripheral areas of Hindustan might have made their way to Ottoman Turkey. In fact, as stated in a Turkish manuscript catalogue, one of the artists, Fahr-ad Din Sirazli, immigrated to India and joined Akbar Shah's palace.¹⁸⁸ The Rieu Catalogue states the artist died in

¹⁸⁷ Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapi Saray Kütüphanesi Farsca Yazmalar Katalogum* (Istanbul: Istanbul Topkapi Saray Museum, 1961); Esra Akin-Kivanç, *Mustafa Ali's Epic Deeds of Artists: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Ottoman Text about the Calligraphers and Painters of the Islamic World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 114.

¹⁸⁸ Kivanç, *Mustafa Ali's Epic Deeds of Artists*; Farsca Yazmalar Katalogum, 305 E.H, 2045, 116.

1621.¹⁸⁹ The Turkish manuscript catalogues also bring to light manuscript copies of *Tarikh-i-Akbari* preserved in the Ottoman libraries.¹⁹⁰ The types of materials used for calligraphy and illumination can be seen as examples of cultural connectivity, as with those made of Indian silk paper. This establishes that materials of cultural production were also procured from the Indian subcontinent.

Further research into the realm of material culture will open a whole new world for historical analysis. Research on codicology, materiality, marginalia, and colophons will not only shed light on production, circulation, and reception but highlight the readership, librarianship, and collecting practices in the medieval Islamic empires. The inventory at Topkapi Saray carries the potentiality to make wider contributions in the field of manuscript and catalogue history. In addition, there is potential to explore in greater depth similarities in illustrative traditions. Unlike the Timurid and Turkoman institution of *Kitābkhāna* which was believed to have a combined treasury and library for storing books and a book workshop for copying and producing texts, the Ottoman royal library in the inner treasury was spatially separate from, yet institutionally connected to, the court scriptorium (*nakkāshāne*).¹⁹¹ The cultural horizon of the Ottoman palace

¹⁸⁹ Rieu, *A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscript in the British Museum*.

¹⁹⁰ Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapi Saray Kütüphanesi Farsca Yazmalar Katalogum* (Istanbul: Istanbul Topkapi Saray Museum, 1961), 116.

¹⁹¹ Necipoglu, *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of Ottoman Palace Library*.

library expanded with textual circulation, movement of scholars, artists, poets, calligraphers and binders from Timurid, Turkoman, and Mamluk realms.

Description of the Illustrated Manuscripts of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* Commissioned Under the Mughals and Safavids

Safavid Iran saw a strong tradition of painting and book production, which left an imprint on the contemporary empires of the Timurids and Ottomans. Besides the system of patronage and diplomatic exchange, maintaining intellectuals at the court who produced texts and illustrations remained a common feature of the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid empires. Safavid Iran set the standard for excellence against which all the works were judged. For instance, Mughal scholars mention works of Safavid artists such as the paintings of Bihzad and the calligraphy of Sultan Ali Mashhadi.¹⁹² Safavid Iran also borrowed illustrations of Mughal and Ottoman dynastic histories.

Following is a list of eight illustrations found in two *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* manuscripts. The first two illustrations are found in a manuscript commissioned by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1567.¹⁹³ The last six are from a manuscript commissioned by the Safavid ruler in 1584.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Priscilla P. Soucek, 'Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformation,' *Muqarnas* 4 (Brill Publications).

¹⁹³ Copies are available in the National Museum (L.53.217), New Delhi.

¹⁹⁴ MS, *Topkapi Saray* (TSMK H. 684), Istanbul.

- Fiery Horse Being Brought in Front of Khizr Khan - Court Scene
- Khizr Khan and Duwal Di Enthroned and Honored by Angelic Visitors
- Mi'raj of the Prophet - fol.7v
- The Battle between the Armies of Khizr Khan and Qutlugh Khwaja - fol. 27v
- The Capture of the Castle During the Conquest of India - fol.32r
- Khizr Khan at a Banquet After the Conquest of India - fol.35r
- Khizr Khan and Duwal Rani Make Love - fol.88r
- Khizr Khan Being Entertained - fol.114r

The first two miniature paintings commissioned by Akbar show similarities with the expansive style of Akbar's *Hamza-Namah* series. The *Hamza-Namah* centers on the story of Amir Hamza, an uncle of prophet Muhammad who wanted to convert the world to Islam. The manuscript consisted of fourteen volumes, each with one hundred illustrations of relatively large size (about 27 inches high and 20 inches wide).¹⁹⁵ The *Hamza-Namah* series does not contain a contemporary colophon or date. The earliest manuscript with such an inscription is the *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* manuscript produced in 1568.¹⁹⁶

Stuart Cary Welch in *India Art And Culture, 1300-1900* argues that in both illustrations from the Mughal text, the hero, Khizr Khan, is depicted in Mughal settings,

¹⁹⁵ Milo Cleveland Beach, *Themes in Indian History: The New Cambridge History of India: Mughal and Rajput Paintings* (Cambridge University Press, March, 2008), 27.

¹⁹⁶ Beach, *Themes in Indian History*, 28.

characterizations are portraitlike, and often verge on caricature.¹⁹⁷ The portraits are very similar to those found in *Hamza-Namah*. Both Welch and Bonnie C. Wade include the image ‘Khizr Khan and Duwal Di Enthroned and Honored by Angelic Visitors’ in their books (See Figure 1). Wade describes the illustration as the wedding scene of Duwal Rani and Khizr Khan in her work *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art and Culture in Mughal India*.¹⁹⁸ This painting shows the couple together and Duwal Rani and other female dancers wearing angel wings. The male musicians in the illustration are playing the *harp* (stringed instrument), *daf* (Persian and Arabic frame drum), and *na’i* (Pan flute).¹⁹⁹ The artist’s fairy world is similar to depictions in paintings at the Safavid court. In addition, the illustration draws on symbolism relating to divinity by giving Duwal Rani the wings of an angel. The imagery relating to divinity was a pronounced element in both Mughal and Ottoman paintings. Images were understood to have multi-layered meanings giving the illustrations a power to render tangible vision and create a space for depicting utopia. Symbolism in paintings provided sustenance to the concept of a future utopia that the monarch wished to project.

¹⁹⁷ Beach, *Themes in Indian History*, 154.

¹⁹⁸ For references to the paintings of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* see Fig. 56, plate xx in Jeremiah Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library Publishing Division, 1982) and Fig. 92, in Welch, *India Art and Culture, 1300-1900*.

¹⁹⁹ Bonnie C. Wade, *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art and Culture in Mughal India* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 20-21.

The figures and architectural forms of the two illustrations from the manuscript commissioned by Akbar have Mughal characteristics. The pavilion shows combined Rajasthani and Islamic influence, which was in vogue during the time of Akbar. Both the paintings are in the *Bokhara* tradition, and the illuminations and margins closely resemble the near-contemporary manuscript *Gulistan*.²⁰⁰ *Gulistan* has a double margin painted exclusively within the separate panel. Usually, there are paintings within the margins as well. The illustrations commissioned by Akbar also bear an ‘*unwan*,’ which is an illumination that surrounds the text panel in blue or beige with a gold marginal design. These illustrations are significant because while they thematically draw on Safavid influence, the style is Mughal in character, especially the landscape, coloring details, human figures and architecture. For example, in Figure 2, ‘Fiery Horse Being Brought in Front of Khizr Khan - Court Scene,’ the arabesque with one leg extended backwards at a right angle, the torso bent forward, and the arms outstretched with one forward and the other backwards, is associated with the Mughal style. Milo Beach in *Early Mughal Paintings*, mentions that the new Mughal interest in action is apparent in details such as a rearing horse and flowing garments. However, the depictions are less dramatic than those of the *Hamza-Namah*.²⁰¹ Since these paintings were commissioned in the early years of Akbar’s reign, they appear less intense than others in the *Hamza-Namah* collection.

²⁰⁰ Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 86.

²⁰¹ Beach, *Early Mughal Paintings*, 67-68.



Figure 1: Khizr Khan and Duwal Di Enthroned and Honored by Angelic Visitors. Published in Jeremiah P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library Publishing Division, 1982), Plate XX 56 ff.28b and Stuart Cary Welch, *India Art and Culture (1300-1600)*, 153-154. Manuscript copy in National Museum, New Delhi, India (L 53.217)



Figure 2: Court Scene: Fiery Horse being brought in front of Khizr Khan
Published in Milo Cleveland Beach, *Themes in Indian History: The New Cambridge History of India: Mughal and Rajput Paintings*, Cambridge University Press (March, 2008), 32.

The remaining six illustrations are found in a manuscript commissioned by the Safavids and copied by Muhammad Sharif al-Husaini al-Ishfahani in 1584. This manuscript displays an illuminated heading at the beginning of the text with high-quality binding, lacquer-painted covers, and leather doubles.²⁰² The lacquer-painted cover indicates a new direction in the decoration of Safavid-lacquered bindings. The Safavid manuscript of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* shares a close resemblance in its binding quality and outer cover to an earlier Safavid court copy of *Yusuf and*

²⁰² Chander Shekhar (ed.), *Historiography in Indo-Persian Literature* (Department of Persian, Delhi University, 2009), 60.

Zulaikha written by Jami, dated 1525.²⁰³ The wars that took place between the Safavids and Ottoman empires did not lead to destruction of royal or commercial workshops and the best manuscripts were taken to the conqueror's library or kept in the treasury. As Zeren Tanindi notes in her work, unbound manuscripts were bound according to the taste of the patron.²⁰⁴

The illustration 'The *Mi'raj* of the prophet' is included in a section of the manuscript that runs over 92 couplets, in which Khusrau describes the voyage of the prophet from the earth to heaven on the night of power, i.e., *Shab-e-Qadr*.²⁰⁵ 'The Battle between the Armies of Khizr Khan and Qutlugh Khwaja' is an illustration depicting a battle scene.²⁰⁶ Apart from these two illustrations, romance is the central theme of the other four images in the Safavid manuscript and include picturesque presentations of erotic activities.

²⁰³ Uluc, 'Comments on the Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's Work's,' 29.

'Jami was a Persian poet who belonged to the *Naqshabandi* order of Sufism and was known for his achievements as a scholar and a writer of Sufi literature.'

²⁰⁴ Zeren Tanindi, 'Additions to Illustrated Manuscript in Ottoman Workshops,' *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 147.

²⁰⁵ Rashid Ahmad Salim (ed.) and intro. by K.A. Nizami, *Duval Rani-Yi Khizr Khan* (1988), 9-12.

²⁰⁶ Though Khusrau and other contemporary writers of the Delhi Sultanate like Zia-ud din Barani have mentioned the battle in their text, it is impossible that the armies of Khizr Khan led the battle. Khizr Khan never became the ruling monarch and, as such, the armies belonged to Sultan Alauddin Khilji. Additionally, while discussing the battle, Khusrau does not mention Khizr Khan's name, so this seems to be mislabelled depiction. For reference see, Ishtiaq Ahmed zilli (trans.), *Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi* (Primus, 2015).

Another manuscript of *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan* which is preserved in the British Museum, dated 1574, is written in gold *nastaliq* (calligraphic hand used in Persian writing which was popular in India, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan). This version has gold-ruled margins and headings, and contains three whole pages of miniatures. It is unknown if any of Khusrau's texts were transcribed in the Ottoman realm, but there are instances where illustrations were added to unfinished manuscripts in the Ottoman *nakkashane* (royal painting workshop).²⁰⁷

Conclusion

The Mughal Empire was land-based with the port of Gujarat being used only for the Hajj traffic, fostering a commonly held belief that Mughals maintained few overseas ties. In addition, the diplomatic policies of the Mughals towards the other contemporary Islamic empires seem rather precarious. While there is evidence of regular diplomatic and cultural exchange with the Safavid Empire, attempts at forging alliances with the Ottoman rulers only took place in times of political need. Both the Ottomans and Mughals were Sunni Muslims, and while they attempted to maintain diplomatic ties, they were also competing for the claims of Caliphal authority. Although Mughals were never assertive about their claim on the Caliphate, they also barely acknowledged the Ottoman Sultan as *Khalifa* (Commander of the Faithful). Insight into the illustrative traditions of the Mughal *Akbarnamah* and Ottoman *Suleymanamah* establishes similarities in depictions of the monarch. In both

²⁰⁷ Tanindi, 'Additions to Illustrated Manuscript in Ottoman Workshops.'

illustrative traditions, attempts were made to re-affirm the image of the monarch as a world sovereign by portraying them as the Persian hero from the *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings), leading armies into battles, hunting, and holding an audience. However, despite cultural similarities and connectivity in the sixteenth century, attempts were made at developing independent identities to legitimize their position against the other. In the case of the Ottomans, there was an increasing anxiousness to proclaim their Turkish tribal lineage and distinctiveness from other powers in the region. However, there remains much to be explored in terms of their connectedness by analyzing visual and material culture.

There are several reasons why scholars fail to notice cultural connections between the Ottomans and the Mughals. The earlier historiography on visual and material culture was written in the language of traditional art, which was designed to understand traditions rather than connective systems. A study of the court consumption patterns of the Islamic empires, circulation of manuscripts, and development of imperial libraries provides an insight into the passions for collecting an increasing number of books. An examination of variegated networks broadens the possibility of interaction from other channels. For instance, royal ladies of Akbar's harem, like Gulbadan Begum and Salima Sultan Begum, expressed their desire to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁰⁸ They left Fatehpur Sikri for Mecca in 1575 and returned from the Hajj in 1581. Their presence in Hijaz would have facilitated cultural interactions between both the empires. In addition, the ladies were writers and they

²⁰⁸ George S.A. Ranking (trans.), *Muntakhawb-ut Tawarikh*. Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers).

maintained private libraries. As a result, there is a possibility that books of Indian origin found their way to the Ottoman Empire during their travels. Given the popularity of Khusrau in the Ottoman realm, it seems reasonable to conclude that some exchange of literature and art may have taken place.