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

Ankita Choudhary

McGill University

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 Farooqui, 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

commonalities within the diverse traditions of the broader Islamic world.

The Mughal empire was founded by Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur in 1526.\textsuperscript{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.’\textsuperscript{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

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

\textsuperscript{143} Cemal Kafadar, \textit{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. 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.’ One of the reasons

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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.\footnote{Thackston, The Baburnamah, 144.} Interestingly, some of his reputed gunners and musketeers, like Mustafa Rumi, were Ottoman Turks.\footnote{Thackston, The Baburnamah, 144.}

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.\footnote{Streusand, Islamic Gunpowder Empires, 291-292.} Secondly, the role of an Ottoman private soldier (sipahi) is comparable to the position of a Mughal military commander (mansabdar).\footnote{Streusand, Islamic Gunpowder Empires, 291-292.}

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

\footnote{Streusand, Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals (London: Routledge; Taylor and Francis Group, 2018).}
\footnote{Streusand, Islamic Gunpowder Empires, 291.}
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.\(^\text{150}\) 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 \textit{Mir’ātü'l-Memālik} (Mirror of Kingdoms) and composed \textit{Ghazals}\(^\text{151}\) in the style of Amir Khusrau

\(^{150}\) Farooqi, \textit{A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations}, 144-173.

\(^{151}\) ‘Ghazals are short poems consisting of rhyming couplets called \textit{Sher} or \textit{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, \textit{A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry} (Bethesda, 1994) and Heinrich Ferdinand Blochmann, \textit{Prosody of the Persians according to Saifi, Jami, and Other Writers} (Calcutta, 1872).
Dehalvi. He boasted that he never stopped hoping to see Gujarat andOrmuz join the Ottoman realm. His book provides evidence that 200 Ottoman gunners joined Sultan Ahmed of Gujarat to crush the rebellion of Nasir-ul-Mulk. 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.

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.
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. 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 madrasa 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. The

156 Vambery, The Travels and Adventures of Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali, 125.
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 Taftāzānī (d. 1389) and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (d. 1413). By the end of the nineteenth century their influence can be seen in works published in Istanbul, Tehran, Delhi, and Lucknow. 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

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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

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. 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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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

166  Çagman and Tanindi, ‘Remarks on Some Manuscripts,’ 133.
process. In its early years, the Ottoman court avidly collected Timurid literary works in Chagatai Turkish, as well as in Persian. 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. 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. The Topkapi Saray includes illustrated copies of three of Khusrau’s works: *Duwal Rani Khizr Khan, Qiran-us Sadayn*, and *Nuh Siphir*. 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

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(the Gujarati princess). Various other names have also been assigned to this masnawi including: Ashiga, Ishqiyyah, 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). 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, 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

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172 Sharma, Amir Khusrau, 59-60; Michael Boris Bednar, ‘The Content and the form in Amir Khusraw’s Duval 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.


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. 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. 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).” According to the seals on the book, it was present in the library during the reign of two Moghul emperors, Shah

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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. 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. The writer of the manuscript was Husayn bin Alf-al-Husayni. This manuscript was corrected and completed under the supervision of the poet Waqi. Muhammad Sharif Waqui was originally from Nishapur in the Safavid Empire and came to India during the reign of Emperor Akbar. He was in the service of Shihab-ud din Ahmad Khan. 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 Muqtaadir, 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 *Bahrستان-i Ghaiби*, 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. 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 hindи*); 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. 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 Nedîм. The popularity of *sebk-i hindи* (a genre of
Persian poetry writing associated with Khusrau) as one of
the literary currents in the seventeenth century Ottoman

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182 Najaf Haider, ‘The Composition and Circulation of Mughal
183 Hatice Aynur, ‘Ottoman Literature.’ In *The Cambridge History of
Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi
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.

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\(^{185}\) Aynur, ‘Ottoman Literature,’ 485.

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


The Turkish manuscript catalogues also bring to light manuscript copies of *Tarikh-i-Akbari* preserved in the Ottoman libraries. 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*). The cultural horizon of the Ottoman palace

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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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{193} The last six are from a manuscript commissioned by the Safavid ruler in 1584.\textsuperscript{194}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{192} Priscilla P. Soucek, ‘Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformation,’ *Muqarnas* 4 (Brill Publications).
\item \textsuperscript{193} Copies are available in the National Museum (L.53.217), New Delhi.
\item \textsuperscript{194} MS, *Topkapi Saray* (TSMK H. 684), Istanbul.
\end{itemize}
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,

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\(^{195}\) 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*.

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*.\textsuperscript{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*.\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{200} Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 86.
\textsuperscript{201} Beach, *Early Mughal Paintings*, 67-68.
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

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\(^{202}\) Chander Shekhar (ed.), *Historiography in Indo-Persian Literature* (Department of Persian, Delhi University, 2009), 60.
Zulaikha written by Jami, dated 1525. 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 at 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.

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*. ‘The Battle between the Armies of Khizr Khan and Qutlugh Khwaja’ is an illustration depicting a battle scene. 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.

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204 Zeren Tanindi, ‘Additions to Illustrated Manuscript in Ottoman Workshops,’ *Mugarnas* 17 (2000): 147.
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 *nakkaskhane* (royal painting workshop).

**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 *Khalifā* (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

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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. 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

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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.