

Transcultural Dynamics of Asia and Europe: Mobility, Negotiation and transformation. Joint Symposium & 9th Next-Generation Global Workshop, Kyoto, 26 – 27 September 2016.

**From India to Spain, and Back Again:
A Connected History of Advice Literature**

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The Jesuit missions to the Timurid Mughal court of India began in 1580, and flourished between 1595 and 1615 under Jerome Xavier (d. 1617), who headed the third mission at the courts of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and his successor Jahangir (r.1605-1627). These encounters have been studied as the consummate example of a cultural, and primarily religious, Islamo-Christian confrontation – a collision of two worlds, and the competing interests of their attendant Mughal and Spanish-Portuguese Empires.¹ The encounter’s historical fate has been as it were sealed by the missions’ resounding failure to convert the population, an attempt which had in vain proceeded by attempting to first persuade the Muslim emperors of the superiority of Biblical divine law, inspired by a profound misreading of Mughal religious eclecticism as a serious interest in apostasy.² This failure was compounded by the gradual but irreversible eclipsing of the Portuguese-Spanish imperial

¹ For a comprehensive account of the competing interests of the Mughal and Portuguese empires in India see Jorge Flores, *Nas Margens Do Hindustão: O Estado Da Índia E a Expansão Mongol Ca. 1570-1640* (Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra / Coimbra University Press, 2015).

² On Jesuit misapprehensions and misreadings of Mughal motives see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Frank Disputations: Catholics and Muslims in the Court of Jahangir (1608-11),” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46, no. 4 (2009): 457–511; and more recently Audrey Truschke, “Deceptive Familiarity: European Perceptions of Access at the Mughal Court,” in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400-1750*, ed. Sebastiaan Derks and Dries Raeymaekers, vol. 8, *Rulers & Elites: Comparative Studies in Governance* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 65–102; for a broader discussion of the possibility of cross-cultural and inter-imperial (mis)understanding see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Par-Delà L’incommensurabilité: Pour Une Histoire Connectée Des Empires Aux Temps Modernes,” *Revue D’histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 54, no. 5 (2007): 34–53.

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fortunes on the subcontinent by the British. The Jesuit role in the missionary and imperial undulations of these two empires and religions, as manifested at the Mughal court in Agra, was often overtly political, with Fathers acting not only as representatives of the Viceroy in Goa but, on other occasions, of the Mughal Emperor himself. The political realities of the day, however, also shaped the missionary effort itself; the forms this effort took, and the light it cast on the figure of the missionary as a member of the courtly elite.

The Jesuits had relied on a wide range of strategies to make the proposition of ruling not as a Muslim, but as a Christian king, as attractive as possible. This famously included the provision of European Christian paintings, whose iconography resonated powerfully with the Mughal emperors' own pretensions to millenarian messianic rule. The fascination was such that paintings of Jesus and Mary came to surround Jahangir's imperial throne in order to underscore the prophetic nature of the king, tracing his origins to the mythical, Mary-like virgin birth of the first Timurid (Akbar and Jahangir had given their mothers the titles *Maryam-Makānī* ('she who dwells with Mary') and *Maryam-uz-Zamānī* ('Mary of the age'), respectively).

But there was another avenue of collaboration, which until recently had remained virtually unstudied. As patrons of elaborate translation projects, including the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, Akbar and Jahangir commissioned the production of Christian religious literature in Persian, and assigned a trusted Mughal scholar and historian, Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahori, to learn Latin and assist Jerome Xavier in the composition and translation of these. In line with the Jesuits' capacity as missionaries, that collaboration focused exclusively on religious literature, and in at least one case – a Life of Christ which Akbar entitled *Mir'āt al-quds* ('Holy Mirror') – the efforts found great success, albeit not in the intended, strictly missionary sense.³ Rather than being appreciated as revealed religious truth, this and other books were considered by the Mughals to be

³ Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Mir'āt Al-Quds (Mirror of Holiness): A Life of Christ for Emperor Akbar: A Commentary on Father Jerome Xavier's Text and the Miniatures of Cleveland Museum of Art, Acc. No. 2005.145*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

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rather like edifying works of history, such as those often written by Muslim scholars, including clerics.⁴ Not unlike the Jesuits' strategy in China, where acceptance at court was considered to depend on successfully assuming the role of China's most respected class, the scholar-literati, Xavier's literary projects – along with his astronomical objects, mathematical knowledge, and participation in courtly debates – worked as bridges among politics, religion and art. It is the apparently political, or secular subject and role, which Xavier proposed, and in some ways consummated that will interest us in this paper.

As a book of political advice drawing on Christian, Muslim, even non-Abrahamic examples from Portugal and Greece to Iran and the Malabar coast, the final and least studied Persian literary project that Xavier produced for the Mughal emperor – entitled *Directorio de Reys*, and commonly referred to as *Adab al-saltanat* – is strikingly different from those that preceded it. Despite its apparent allure – to my knowledge it is the only known example of a European work of advice literature for a Muslim king, at least for the so-called medieval and early-modern periods – the two known manuscripts of this work have been languishing in European libraries for centuries, with only preliminary observations issued by a handful of scholars. Nonetheless, there has of late been a renewed interest in, and reconception of the Mughal-Jesuit encounter, including by some of the most innovative historians writing today on early-modern South Asia in a global context.⁵ As an

⁴ See Abdus Sattar ibn-i Qasim Lahori, *Majalis-I Jahangiri: Report of Night Assemblies at the Court of Nur Al-Din Jahangir, From 24 Rajab 1017 to 19 Ramadan 1020 A.H. / 24 October 1608 to 15 November 1611 A.D.*, ed. Arif Naushahi and Mo'een Nizami (Tehran: Miras-i Maktub, 2006).

⁵ Preliminary observations on the SOAS manuscript and an outline of its contents, but no analysis, are provided in Adel Sidarus, "A Western Mirror of Princes for an Eastern Potentate: The Adab Al-Saltanat by Jerome Xavier SJ for the Mogul Emperor," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 63, no. 1–2 (2011): 73–98; a more substantive engagement with a number of passages, in light of the *Majalis-i Jahangiri* can be found in Corinne Lefèvre, "Le Livre En Acte à La Cour Moghole : Le Cas Des Littératures Historique et Religieuse D'après Le Majālis-I Jahāngīrī (1608-1611)," ed. Nalini Balbir and Maria Szuppe, *Eurasian Studies* XII, no. Scribes and Readers in Iranian, Indian and Central Asian Manuscript Traditions (2014): 297–324; a dedicated study is forthcoming in a chapter by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, to which I have not had access: Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Mediterranean Exemplars: Jesuit Political Lessons for a Mughal Emperor," in *Orientalizing Machiavelli: Western Political Thought, Islam and the East*, ed. Lucio Biasiori and Giuseppe Marocci, (forthcoming); the connected history of books underlying Jesuit political advice to the Mughal emperor is taken up in Uroš Zver, "The Alexander Romance and

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event, the Xavier's book has profound implications for our current understanding of cross-cultural encounters at the Mughal court, and the Christian missionary's instrumentalization of broadly, cross-culturally shared ideals of kingship. The *Directorio*, as I will refer to it, thus becomes a meeting place for Mughal pretensions to universal imperial rule, and a missionary's attempt to fashion himself as a secular authority by introducing 'new' elements to a shared pool of historical exempla. He did so with a work that appears to transcend the quagmire of that patent opposition between 'Islam' and 'Christianity' which had constrained the mission's playing field, and the efforts of contemporary scholarship to understand the historical encounter.

This paper is an attempt to scratch the surface of one of the contexts which allowed the *Directorio* to stand so close both to the Indo-Persian world it addressed, and the Mediterranean-European tradition from which its author emerged: a deeply connected history of books of advice on kingship. The ability of a mirror for princes from the pen of a Navarrese Jesuit to resonate with the genre of political advice on Muslim kingship in India, is not simply the consequence of the coming together, in a kind of historic cross-cultural encounter, of visionary, eclectic men of tolerance. It has been the state of the field to portray the Jesuit accommodationists from Ricci to Nobili as bridges defying the irreducible difference between civilizations clashing, the incommensurability of disparate worlds colliding. However, none of their translational achievements (I use translational not just in the linguistic, but cultural, and religious sense) would have been possible if it were not for existence of shared conceptual, and ideational pools -- harbours of meaning in which their ships of translation could dock. The continuum which existed between shared vocabulary, and strange or foreign ideas, was mirrored by an actual continuum of local micro-métissages from the Pacific to the Mediterranean, and beyond. After all, the most geographically distant exponents of this continuum were separated by nothing more than a chain -- broken at times, but a reconstituting itself in new ways -- of intermediary neighbors, transmitters

Jesuit Political Advice at the Mughal Court: A Connected History of Books," *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, Special Issue on Jesuits and Mughal India, (forthcoming).

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and translators. When Ricci proffered his book on friendship to his Chinese patron, the maxims may have carried the heading of Western knowledge, but the subject (in his case ‘friendship’ or ‘fellowship’) had been discussed among the Ming learned literati for decades, making it possible for Ricci’s work to be assimilated into an exiting discourse. His book found correspondence with existing works such as Zhang Jusheng’s *The Emperor’s Mirror* (*Dijian Tusho*, completed in 1573), an illustrated textbook on rulership for the nine-year-old Wanli emperor, who had succeeded to the Ming Throne in 1572.

In spite of the fact that the popularization of the mirror for princes genre in the sixteenth century in Europe, especially in the aftermath of Machiavelli’s *Prince*, which unleashed a intense, and hugely consequential debate of principles of governance across the continent, and the subsequent tendency to understand the moral principles (and examples) of those debates as essentially European inventions to be exported the world over for the betterment of humanity, the mirror of princes genre is in fact the site of a deep connection between the supposedly dissociated traditions of Europe, and its ‘Ultimate Other’, the ostensible cradle of Oriental Despotism, the Indian subcontinent. One source of this connection is the ancient Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, composed between between 100 and 500, and incorporating many order fables. One of Europe’s most influential mirrors for princes, John of Capua’s *Directorium Vitae Humanae* (c. 1270), and the exceedingly popular fifteenth century Persian-language *Anwar-i Suhayli* by Husain ibn Ali al-Waiz Kashifi and its abridged edition by Akbar’s chief ideologue Abu’l Fazl, the *‘Iyari Danish* (1587-8), are both based on Hebrew and Persian translations of the same the eighth-century Arabic translation of the *Panchatantra*, Abdallah ibn al-Maqaffa’s *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, itself based on a Pahlavi translation of a Sanskrit original.

In Spain, the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* circulated not only in Arabic, but also as a translation of De Capua’s latin version, the *Directorium*, under the title *Exemplario contra los engaños y peligros de mundo*. The latter was published repeatedly in the decades preceding Jerome Xavier’s education in Alcalá de Henares and Toledo, with at least fifteen editions published between 1493 and 1547 in

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Zaragoza, Burgos and Sevilla.⁶ An old-Spanish translation directly from the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna* under the name *Calila e Dimna* had already been produced at the court of Alfonso X in Toledo in 1261 as part of the king's famous vernacular translation project. Xavier refers to this project in the *Directorio*, recording the slew of Oriental languages from which translations were made and the lavish resources provided to the scholars doing the work.⁷ Xavier's description of the kingly ideal, here embodied by Alfonso X, of patronising the work of scholar translators from near and far, and working in different languages, mirrors the policies of Akbar and Jahangir themselves, with the production of beautifully decorated translations of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, or indeed the *Panchatantra*. The various European recensions of the *Panchatantra*'s Arabic translation, the *Kalila wa Dimna*, had by the end of the seventeenth century been rendered into Italian, German, Danish, Dutch, Yiddish, French, English, Czech, Old Slavonic as well as Spanish. These works, with roots in Indian lore, inspired a slew of key books in the European canon, from *Conde Lucanor* and *Don Quixote*, to the *Canterbury Tales*, *Decameron* and La Fontaine's *Fables*.

In the Muslims world, its circulation was equally impressive, with manuscripts 'made in more places and periods than any other literary text ever produced in the Muslim world ... from India and Central Asia, in the East, to Syria and Egypt in the West.'⁸ The corpus of about ninety Persian manuscripts produced from the thirteenth century onward, like their Spanish analogues, trace their origin to Ibn al-Muqaffa's Arabic translation of a Pahlavi version. Crucial for our purpose are Husain Wa'iz al-Kashifi's *Anwar-i Suhayli*, an ornate Persian text produced for the Sultan Husayn Bayqara of Herat, and subject to repeated editions at the Mughal court, including a copy in 1570. Further copies of the *Anwar-i Suhayli* was produced in the imperial workshop immediately after Xavier's arrival at the Mughal court in 1596-7, and under Jahangir between 1605

⁶ In Zaragoza by Pablo Huros in 1493 and 1494, and Jorge Coci in 1509, 1515, 1521 and 1531, as well as Bartolomé de Nájera in 1547; in Burgos by Fadrique de Basilea in 1498 and 1499; and in Sevilla by Juan Cromberger in 1534, 1537 and 1541, and Jácome Cromberger in 1545 and 1546. Alexander S. Wilkinson, ed., *Libros Ibéricos: Libros Publicados En Español O Portugués O En La Península Iberica Antes de 1601* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 91.

⁷ Jerome Xavier, S.J., "Directorio de Reys" (Agra, 1609), f. 24v, Ms. 2015, Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome.

⁸ Ernst J. Grube, "Introduction," in *A Mirror for Princes from India, Illustrated Versions of the Kalilah Wa Dimnah, Anvar-I Suhayli, Iyar-I Danish, and Humayun Nameh*, ed. Ernst J. Grube (Bombay: Marg, 1991), 2.

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and 1611. Similarly, copies of the *Iyar-I Danish*, Abu'l Fazl's reworking of the *Anwari-i Suhayli* into an abbreviated, more accessible style, were already being produced before 1600. But a copy was also produced in 1609, the very year Xavier completed his *Directorio*. What is more, The *Mau-izah-i Jahangiri*, one of the most important contemporary mirrors for princes produced for Jahangir (1612-13), contains many verbatim passages from Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrallah Persian version of the *Khalila wa Dimna* or Kashifi's *Anwar-i Suhayli*.⁹

These works lay out a powerful model that would become a mainstay in mirrors for princes. It concerns that of a scholar and sage (Burzoy), well-regarded and patronized by the king (Khusrau Anushirwan), who travels to the distant land of India to find books on the art of statecraft. In these books, there are mountains which in truth are sages and scholars, shrubs which are seeds of God's wisdom, and medicines which are books of counsel and learning, and the dead to be brought to life who are in effect the ignorant who need enlightenment. This secret knowledge is a treasure to be brought by sages like Burzoy from the distant land of India, and its books of wisdom rendered into Persian. Thus Xavier, in the guise of a scholar and sage, takes on the cloak of a Navarrese Burzoy, esteemed and patronized by Jahangir, by issuing a book that reports on the sages and scholars of the past, conveying kernels of wisdom plucked from the hand of God himself, all for the enlightenment of an audience hitherto ignorant of these stories. Like Burzoy, he carries the secret knowledge of statecraft from distant lands, but instead of carrying forth from India, he brings them to her. Both scholars translate their books of wisdom into Persian for their king's benefit; one from the 'language of India,' the other from the language of Europe (Latin).

Alejandro and Iskander

In the end, however, the *Directorio* draws most copiously on the strength of another body of stories to ensure its currency in Mughal political language: the *Alexander Romance*. For roughly the two

⁹ Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800*, 75.

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millennia preceding the composition of the *Directorio* readers between the subcontinent and the Mediterranean shared a pool of complex networks of interrelated texts in a vast array of languages which which has been referred to as the Ancient Novel. For roughly the two millennia preceding the composition of the *Directorio* readers between the subcontinent and the Mediterranean shared a pool of complex networks of interrelated texts in a vast array of languages which as been referred to as the Ancient Novel.¹⁰ From the thirteenth century onwards, we see that Spanish romance novels begin to show a clear influence of Arabo-Islamic culture.¹¹ It is marked by the genre of doctrinal and moral advice, and examples of proper conduct, typical of *adab*. One of its characteristics was its function as an encyclopaedic collection of knowledge for the adornment of the spirit; an objective Xavier himself states clearly in passages of the *Directorio* quoted above. ‘Spirit’ here is not necessarily meant in the religious sense, and it is an ambiguity skilfully exploited by Jesuits who acted as confessors to kings, in ways that resemble counsellors to kings.

At Spanish courts, these books accelerated a secular curriculum. Indeed, the first literary writings in these courts, often based on ‘oriental’ examples, constitute the first European philosophical works in the mirror for princes genre – which in the Spanish case is referred to as the *espejo* genre – in any vernacular language. In effect, the entire *espejo* genre as Xavier would have come to know it in mid-sixteenth century Spain draws its life-blood from Muslim roots. *Adab* normatively codified certain aspects of culture, including what it means to be an ideal Muslim king, whose moral qualities were now transposed beyond Islam. One excellent example of this Christian-Arab symbiosis of genre is the compilation of mirrors known as *Livre de Saviesa*.¹² However, the mirror with by far the most impressive diffusion was the *Poridat de las poridades*,¹³ which first appeared in Spanish in the middle of the thirteenth century, at the end of the reign of Fernando III

¹⁰ Daniel L. Selden, “Mapping the Alexander Romance,” in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East* (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing & Groningen University Library, 2012), 33–5.

¹¹ Rafael Ramón Guerrero, “El Pseudo-Aristóteles árabe Y La Literatura Didáctico-Moral Hispana: Del Sirr Al-Asrar a La Poridad de Las Poridades,” in *Pensamiento Medieval Hispano : Homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, ed. Jose María Soto Rábanos, vol. 2 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, CSIC, 1998), 1041.

¹² J.M. Sola-Solé, *El Llibre de Doctrina Del Rei Jaume d’Aragó* (Barcelona: Hispam, 1977).

¹³ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Poridat de Las Poridades*, ed. Lloyd A. Kasten (Madrid: Seminario de Estudios Medievales Españoles de la Universidad de Wisconsin, 1957).

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or the beginning of Alfonso X. The *Poridat de las poridades* was a translation of Aristotle's *Secretum Secretorum*, and, as such held a major role for Alexander. Along with St. Augustine's *City of God*, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, taking the form of a letter from Aristotle to Alexander while he was engaged in conquering Persia, is the major source of influence on medieval western mirrors. The latin *Secretum* is itself a translation of the *Kitab al-asrar*, found in a remote temple by a ninth to early tenth century Christian translator at the service of Muhammad al-Nasir (the fourth Almohad caliph from 1199-1213). We may recall that Marcos Dobelio, the Kurdish-Syrian librarian at the Escorial, had relied on the *Kitab al-asrar* in his treatise on the falsity of the Lead Books.

In another instance of framing political advice as sourcing ideas from the subcontinent, and perhaps influenced by the reverberations of the *Panchatantra* itself, Aristotle explains that he has learned the secrets of his trade from India and the rules of governance and the power of counsel from the Persians.¹⁴ In addition to the Latin and Arabic recensions, Spain of Jerome Xavier's time could rely on Spanish translations such as the fourteenth century *Secreto de los Secretos* by the Navarrese-Aragonese Juan Fernández de Heredia. Numerous edition of the *Secretum* had been published during the first half of the sixteenth century, including *Secreta Secretorum* by Tripolitanus Philippus in Salamanca in 1495, followed by *Utilissimus liber Aristotelis de secretis secretorum* in Burgos by Adrés de Burgos in 1505 and again in 1526, but also *De mundo seu de cosmographia libers unus ad Alexandrum* in Alcalá de Henares in 1538.¹⁵

The Arabo-Islamic Alexander of Pseudo-Callisthenes, the earliest version of the *Alexander Romance*, in the so-called *Hadith Dhi'l-Qarnayn* – also known in its Spanish recension as *Leyenda de Alejandro*¹⁶ – and several versions of the *Qissat Dhi'l-Qarnayn* by Abu 'Abd al-Malik (al-

¹⁴ Giles of Rome, *Giles of Rome's On Ecclesiastical Power: A Medieval Theory of World Government*, ed. R.W. Dyson (Columbia University Press, 2004), 247–67.

¹⁵ Wilkinson, *Libros Ibéricos: Libros Publicados En Español O Portugués O En La Península Iberica Antes de 1601*, 45–6.

¹⁶ Emilio García Gómez, *Un texto árabe occidental de la leyenda de Alejandro: según el manuscrito Ár. 27 de la biblioteca de la junta para ampliación de estudios* (Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, 1929).

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Malshuni), in Arabic and al-Jamiado. All of these texts only partially represent Pseudo-Callisthenes.¹⁷ In these books, Alexander had a standing as a sage and philosopher, as is made clear in another example of a Spanish version, the thirteenth century *Libro de Alexandre*: ‘King Alexander, treasure of heroism, arc of wisdom, exemplar of nobility ... as the king was wise and literate, he was very ingenious, a well-adorned master, he was a good philosopher, a consummate teacher, he was well-adorned with all virtues.’¹⁸

The Islamic tradition has its own way of tying Alexander into the fabric of its legends, histories and religion. Besides Aristotle, Plato and Hippocrates, he is associated with Muslim holy men like Loqman, Khizr and Elias; and, while Xavier repurposes him for a Jesuit-missionary role, his missions had previously included the conversion of all peoples to Islam; it is prophesied that he will one day be called *Dhi'l-Qarnayn* (the two-horned, piercing the East with one horn, the West with the other); he visits the tomb of Adam, and Mecca (where he built the wall of the *Ka'ba*) and Jerusalem and hears a prophecy of the life of Mohammed; has a conversation with the *simorgh* (the benevolent Iranian flying dragon); and is compared with Solomon.¹⁹ The stories about him which were often included in courtly books, mirrors for princes, were of interest to both powerful and minor sovereigns for the mixture of political advice and cosmographical information that could inspire or even support their ambitions of expansion. Nezami explains this very clearly in his dedication to the Seljuk prince of Mosul, ‘Izz al-din Mas’ud ibn Arslan, at the end of the *Eqbalname*, ‘Book of Fortune’, the second volume of his *Eskandernama*, where he describes the Alexander Romance as a guide ‘opening [for the king] the door of the seven countries, as a sign of victory.’²⁰

¹⁷ Faustina C.W. Doufekar-Aerts, “King Midas’ Ears on Alexander’s Head: In Search of the Afro-Asiatic Alexander Cycle,” in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Richard, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton, Ancient Narrative, Supplementum 15 (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing & Groningen University Library, 2012), 65.

¹⁸ J. Cañas, ed., *Libro de Alexandre* (Madrid: Catédra, 1988), vv. 1557, 2160.

¹⁹ Stoneman, Richard, “Persian Aspects of the Romance Tradition,” in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Stoneman, Richard, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton, Ancient Narrative, Supplementum 15 (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing & Groningen University Library, 2012), 15.

²⁰ Mario Casari, “The King Explorer: A Cosmographic Approach to the Persian Alexander,” in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Richard, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton, Ancient Narrative,

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Alexander appears over forty times in the *Directorio*.²¹ In some ways he is the ideal candidate for Xavier's project which requires religious ambiguity while exploiting the crucial commonality of Islam and Christianity: monotheism. In his quest for consummate knowledge, Alexander exchanges letters across the Ganges with the naked Brahmins, who admonish him to abandon his polytheistic ways, and 'serve the one God, who alone reigns in heaven. Not only in Christian, Judaic, and Islamic versions of the text does Alexander emerge a monotheist, but also in recensions that are non-Abrahamic too.²²

The Mughal Alexander

Alexander was the protagonist of many of the books most popular at the Mughal court. Even where Alexander does not play an explicit part, his stories reemerge in new and ever different guises, such as the talking trees in *Amir Hamza* or *Vis o Ramin*. The wonderstone that loses power when covered in dust is found in the Qur'an, but also in Sa'di's *Gulestan* and *Bustan* and Tarsusi's *Darab-nameh*.²³ Ferdawsi's *Shahname*, Nizami's *Iskandernama* (*Sharafnameh* and *Eghbalnameh*), Amir Khosrau Dehlawi's *A'ina-ye Eskandari* which forms part of his *Khamsa*, Jami's *Haft Orang*, and *Eskandarnama* by Nezami-e Ganjavi, all these are books which were read out aloud to the Mughal emperor, a spectacle Xavier may well have observed on more than one occasion.

The 'King and the Hermit' theme in Mughal painting, which was based on the model of Alexander visiting the sage Plato in his cave, painted by the great master Behzad for the Timurid ruler Husayn Mirza Bayqara in Herat in 1494, and intended for an *Iskandarnama* by Nizami, reached new levels of popularity under Jahangir. It served as a blueprint for Govardhan's famous

Supplementum 15 (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing & Groningen University Library, 2012), 176–7. 18th century map drawn in India with Persian and Devanagiri writing representing Alexander's legendary exploits, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Museum für Islamische Kunst.

²¹ Xavier, S.J., "Directorio de Reys," f. 4r, 12r, 14r–14v, 15v, 53r–53v, 73r, 76v, 78r–78v, 80v–81v, 88v, 90v, 93v–94r, 95v–96r, 97r–97v, 99r–99v, 101r, 104r, 105r, 131r, 132v, 160v, 164r, 185r, 200v–202r, 205r, 208v–209r, 210r, 215v, 218v–219r, 224v, 230r–230v, 240v, 245v–246r.

²² Selden, "Mapping the Alexander Romance," 39.

²³ Stoneman, Richard, "Persian Aspects of the Romance Tradition," 4.

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painting of Jahangir visiting the yogi Jadrup.²⁴ In the original painting, the figure of Alexander resembles a portrait of the Sultan Bayqara, but under Jahangir, the emperor has subsumed the figure of Alexander entirely.²⁵ The idea of the perfect emperor as needing to rely not only on philosophers, but ascetics – a role Xavier himself attempts to assume – had been laid out in Nizami's *Iskandarnama*.

Alexander, as the founder of the ancestral Mughal city of Samarkand, was precedential also in his conquest of India, though for the Mughals he did so as a Persian emperor. But it was also the continuity of Indo-Islamic rule that led successive Muslim kings, such as Ala' al-Din Khalji, had already called themselves 'the Second Alexander,' both in coinage and in the Friday sermons in the congregational mosque.²⁶ Moreover, Alexander, like Jahangir, was the emperor of science and knowledge par excellence. As Owen Cornwall has noted, 'the cosmopolitanism of the emperor and the philosopher were intimately connected, for the universal knowledge of the philosophers appeared to explain and therefore justify his universal rule.' In the Persian epics popular at the Mughal court, Alexander is portrayed as able to 'negotiate cultural difference within his empire through science and technology.'²⁷ This of course extended to the preeminent science of the age, astronomy, with the Delhi Sultan Feroz Shah (1351-1388) placing Alexander's supposed invention, the astrolabe, on a pillar in the middle of Ferozabad.

At the time of the *Directorio*'s composition, Jahangir was engaged in the biggest architectural project of his reign, a monument that to this day remains the biggest sepulchral complex in South Asia. The mausoleum of his father Akbar was the site of a political statement expressed through extraordinary artistic innovation, elevated to the monumental scale of a dynastic imperial tomb. Adorning the main gate of the mausoleum, located at Sikandra near Agra, Jahangir

²⁴ Dipanwita Donde, "The Mughal Sikander: Influence of the Romance of Alexander on Mughal Manuscript Painting" (International Conference on Greek Studies: An Asian Perspective, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2014).

²⁵ Eleanor Sims, Boris Il'ich Marshak, and Ernst J. Grube, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and Its Sources* (Yale University Press, 2002), 55.

²⁶ Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, 44.

²⁷ Owen Cornwall, "Alexander and the Persian Cosmopolis, 1000-1500" (PhD, Columbia University, n.d.), 102–103.

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had the following inscription engraved: Jahangir has the ‘grandeur of Darius, the Triumphs of Alexander ... and the splendour of Sulaiman,’ adding that ‘the fame of his dispensation of Justice has reached the highest heavens.’²⁸ Furthermore, as Azfar Moin has shown, the title adopted by Akbar, Jahangir and their successor Shah Jahan in commemoration of their ancestor Timur, Sahib-Qiran (‘Lord of Auspicious [planetary] Conjunction’) is astrologically associated with the ‘world conqueror Alexander, the Two-Horned.’²⁹ Cornwall has now shown this was derived from Nizami’s *Khamsa*.

In the *Shahname* by Ferdowsi, after visiting the Ka‘ba, Alexander led his troops to Egypt. Queen Qeydafeh (Candace) sent a spy to make a portrait of him. Alexander came to Qeydafeh’s court disguised as his ambassador, but the queen recognised him and he had to admit his true identity. In his report of nightly assemblies at Jahangir’s court, the *Majalis-i Jahangiri*, Abdus Sattar records a discussion of a similar anecdote regarding Alexander the Great entering the enemy encampment. In that anecdote, Alexander had entered Darius’ encampment in disguise and, as with Qeydafeh, had barely made it out alive. Jahangir commented that this was reckless. But Xavier cast the hero in a different light in his book.³⁰ True to his promise of new material, he provides a different example of the masquerading Alexander. Here Alexander is in the position of providing a service to another monarch, and the lesson is the usefulness of treating kings in accordance with their position. Those who are rulers themselves, are not exempted from this moral. But the example has the added benefit of another layer, which is the portrait of Alexander, revealing his true identity.

The Image and the Mirror

Pictures, and more specifically the portrait, was imbued with rich symbolism in Mughal political language. ‘What we call form leads us to recognise a body,’ Abu’l Fazl had written of pictures, and

²⁸ E.W. Smith, *Akbar’s Tomb, Sikandarah Near Agra, Described and Illustrated*, ASINIS 35 (Allahabad: Superintendent Government Press, United Provinces, 1909), 33–34; For an interpretation of the tomb’s iconographic program see Zver, ‘King, Sufi and Messiah: The Tomb of Mughal Emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605).’

²⁹ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*; Cornwall, ‘Alexander and the Persian Cosmopolis, 1000-1500,’ See also Cornwall 92–93.

³⁰ Xavier, S.J., ‘Directorio de Reys,’ f. 40r.

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‘the body itself leads us to what we call a notion, an idea.’³¹ Images, including portraits of the self, or mirror-images, conveyed a meaning, typically a hidden one. In Persian culture the author Khvandamir, read at the Mughal court, had written about God as the *naqqash-i azal* (‘the immortal painter’) and his creation as ‘an album with heaven as its leaves.’³² Xavier’s discourse, quoted in the previous chapter, on internal moral refinement as the only thing worthy of external revelation, was echoed in descriptions of Akbar himself in the Akbarnama as the ‘lord of the World, depicter of the external, revealer of the internal.’ The mirror, then, was the truth-revealing picture above all others. A life-sized portrait of Jahangir, from 1617 has an inscription that reads: ‘When he sees his lustrous likeness, it is as if the excellent king is looking at a mirror [...] whoever sees his image becomes an image worshipper, whether a dervish who cultivates virtues, or a king.’³³ European art was considered to be especially accomplished in this sense. ‘A picture leads to the form it represents and his leads to the meaning just as the shape of a line leads one to letters and words and from there the sense can be found out. Although in general they make pictures of material appearances, the European masters express with rare forms many meanings of the creation and thus they lead those who see only the outside of things to the place of real truth.’³⁴ This description by Abu’l Fazl is taken up almost verbatim by Xavier in his *A’ine-ye Haqq Nama* (‘Truth-Revealing Mirror’).³⁵ The notion of books of advice on kingship as mirrors that guide the king to self-correction is of course explicit in the genre’s name, but it nevertheless merited reiteration, including in medieval Spain, of the mirror as the ultimate metaphor for knowledge.³⁶ Xavier himself writes in the *Directorio* that the ‘beauty of the mirror is not that it should be studded with diamonds but that

³¹ Abu’l Fazl, *A’in-I Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, D.C. Phillott, and H.S. Jarrett (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1997), vols. I, 96–97.

³² Minissale, *Images of Thought*, 240.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 172.

³⁴ Abu’l Fazl, *A’in-I Akbari*, ed. H. Blochmann, vol. I (Calcutta, 1872); the translation is from Ebba Koch, “Jahangir as Francis Bacon’s Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 19, no. 3 (2009): 293–338.

³⁵ Jerome Xavier, S.J., “Āyine-Ye Haqq-Numā” 1609, 282r, Harley 5478, BL; the translation is from Gauvin Alexander Bailey, “The Truth-Showing Mirror: Jesuit Catechism and the Arts in Mughal India,” in *The Jesuits. Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley, S.J. et al., vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 388.

³⁶ Alfonso X, *Setenario*, ed. K.H. Vanderford (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Filologia, 1945), 25.

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the reflection is like a real person.³⁷ We have seen above that the need to know and be true to oneself as fundamental to his exhortation to self-correction, or self-improvement.

Alexander provides fertile ground for the symbolically rich theme of images, appearances, revealed truth, and knowledge, as the coordinates of discovering the key to ideal kingship. It does not mean, however, that the metaphor is always employed to praise the patron. Alexander may have represented ideal of kingship Jahangir and Xavier could agree on, but the World-conqueror could not shield Jahangir from reproach for what Xavier considered mortal sins of kingship. The status of Jahangir as the Messianic Renewer, Lord of the New Age, a second Timur, and indeed a second Alexander, were highly ritualised in courtly literature, art, and ceremony that identified Jahangir with the sun, and saw him worshipped as his celestial analogue. Given the status of the sun as the supreme authority, and source of prosperity and equity in the philosophy prevalent at court, these ritualised beliefs imbued the emperor with a level of divinity that made many of his Muslim contemporaries uncomfortable. Xavier was aware of the anxiety this provoked, and used the language of painting and Alexander to make the point.³⁸

Using the example of Alexander's painter Apelles, Xavier extolls his hyper-realistic paintings of pigeons and fruit that looked just like the real thing, and uses this as a metaphor for the worship of Alexander as an earthly sun and god. Xavier moves from the power of painting, to the patronage of artists and the realism of their paintings. Under Jahangir, realism had become a distinguishing feature of imperial production, with nature studies of strange new animals like turkeys or zebras by his painter Mansur still consider among the great masterpieces of the period. Jahangir himself too a keen interest in painting technique and boasted of being able to discern which one of his painters had painted which part of a miniature, just by looking at it. Jahangir's and Akbar's identification with the sun was given new symbolic meaning in paintings like *Jahangir's Dream* by Abul Hassan showing Jahangir, superimposed on a giant sun and standing on a globe

³⁷ Xavier, S.J., "Directorio de Reys," 61v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 13r–13v.

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embracing his rival Persian emperor Abbas I. The tokens of loyalty to Alexander mirror the miniature images of Akbar and Jahangir worn by the disciples (*murids*) of their Sufi-styled restricted spiritual circles. The comparison to Alexander's usurpation of divinity stands as a cautionary tale for the emperor with boldly publicised messianic pretensions. The criticism is not based on the claim's falsity or its Christian opposite or alternative, but on a universal notion that deception by claiming divinity is opposed to the rules of proper kingship and can have mortal consequences.³⁹ According to Xavier, Akbar and Jahangir greatly enjoyed this adoration and were assiduous in the rituals, which he had to attend.⁴⁰ Yet, Alexander (and thus Jahangir) is allowed to save face, or at any rate retain the status of an ideal king – the greatest, perhaps, of all – in spite of committing errors and giving into human, all to human, temptations. It is not without reason that Xavier makes reference to the sun in his introduction, but subordinates it to knowledge. Only knowledge can dispel the apprehensions that can lead to foolishly usurping the place of God.

Conclusion

The *adab* as Xavier had been able to witness it firsthand in courtly assemblies during the composition of the *Directorio*, reflected a highly conservative moral system, emphasizing social hierarchy.⁴¹ The Christian interventions and religious books were seriously debated, but ultimately relegated to the category of 'history.' The mission was patently dependent on the political exigencies of its Portuguese and Mughal masters. Sacred iconography the mission had brought to court, had been put to ulterior, worldly uses. Xavier himself had reached the conclusion that 'it was not possible to get into the Muslims' head or heart.' He feels isolated and forgotten, as his old friends do not write. 'My occupation is going and coming to the King, and throwing the bate in the water hoping the fish will bite.'⁴² The *Directorio* is an unusual, unconventional attempt, because it is made in desperation. Loyola had offered a way out of the dark. To use the enemy's own evil

³⁹ Xavier, S.J., September 8, 1595, f. 25.

⁴⁰ Ibid., f. 27v, 28–29.

⁴¹ Lefèvre, "Le Livre En Acte à La Cour Moghole : Le Cas Des Littératures Historique et Religieuse D'après Le Majālis-I Jahāngīrī (1608-1611)," 311.

⁴² Alcázar, S.J., *Chrono-Historia de La Compañía de Jesús de La Provincia de Toledo*, 210.

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stratagem to win him over. Enter though ‘the other’s door, and leave through your own.’⁴³ Was this a way to assimilate Loyola’s four pillars of activity into existing Mughal discourse? Abul Fazl tells us the imperial library is divided into separate sections for prose, poetry, and works in Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmiri and Arabic, from which books are read to the emperor each night. There has hardly been a famous book that has not been read during these sessions – indeed many are read repeatedly -- or historical, scientific or philosophical questions the emperor has not learned of.⁴⁴ Was there no room for a beguiling Alexandrine whisper, entreating the emperor to dream of a sacred future ‘for the greater Glory of God’? What Plato had been to Dionysus, Aristotle to Alexander, Solon to Sparta, Seneca to Nero, could Xavier not offer this service to his King of the Age, Jahangir?⁴⁵

Xavier’s work has many recognizable similarities to the *akhlaq* tradition as championed by Tusi, but that is not to say that the *Directorio* does not resonate with images and ideas of other major works, such as Ghazali’s *Nasihah al-Muluk*, with his emphasis on ‘justice’ as the principle guiding the king’s duties, of knowledge as the supreme virtue of kings (following Aristotle), or indeed the iconography of divine effulgence as an expression of the king’s enlightened mind, so popular in Mughal imperial ideology. But Ghazali’s narrow juridical conception of *shari’a* puts daylight between his and Xavier’s program.⁴⁶

Xavier recounts another story, this time of Alexander’s prophesied conquest of the ‘East’. For this he turns to Josephus, and his *Antiquities of the Jews*.⁴⁷ Josephus had written about Alexander leaving Greece after a dream in which a holy man had exhorted him to set forth to conquer Persia. In Jerusalem, Alexander recognises Jaddua, the high priest of Jerusalem, as the face in his dream, and relents in his demands for surrender. Josephus then included Alexander being

⁴³ Young, *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 51.

⁴⁴ Abu’l Fazl, *A’in-I Akbari*, 1997, vols. I, 109–110.

⁴⁵ Xavier, S.J., “Directorio de Reys,” f. 3r.

⁴⁶ Muhammad bin Hamid Ghazali, *Nasihah Al-Muluk [Counsel for Kings]*, ed. Jalal Homai, trans. F.R.C. Bagley (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 45–7.

⁴⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston, 1981.

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acquainted with the Book of Daniel, which Alexander understood to confirm the prophesicy of his impending conquest over the Persians. In Xavier's hands, the anecdote acquires new meaning.⁴⁸

Rather than just being shown the book of Daniel and granting privileges to the Jews in gratitude, Xavier has Alexander carry the book with him in celebration, 'on his way to India.' These appear to be Xavier's own adaptations, for I have not been able to discover an alternative source to the *Antiquities*, which makes no reference either to Alexander's adoption of the holy book, nor India as its destination. But if Alexander's world-conquest was granted by the God of the Jews, and paved his way to take India, could Jahangir as the 'Second Alexander' now ruling India, could the overtures of the Jesuit *padaryan-e firang* (European Fathers) not have be the work of some prophetic mechanism, an auspicious conjunction of a king and his advisor? Xavier appears to have hoped so, but just as Ghazali's *Nisihat al-Muluk*, Fakhr-i Muddabir's *Adab al-Harb wa'l-Shuja'a* and Ziya al-Din Barani's *Fatawa'i Jahandari*, ultimately lost traction in the 'hostile and infidel' context of India, so the *Directorio* vanished into the dusty bowls of European archives. The authors of those Persian mirrors had appealed to the Mughal across time and religious obstacle, and other limitations, which ultimately proved unsurmountable to rulers such as Akbar and Jahangir, who were forging their own brand of sacred kingship, transcending the sectarian ties that bind and constrain.

The *Directorio* does not appeal for men of religion, or various religions to be welcomed at court and entertained in discussion. Nor is it religious tolerance, or the importance of religious counsel that he is seeking to impress. Rather, it is spiritual guidance in the form a worldly king of erudite knowledge of history and moral philosophy, and a request to be admitted into the circle of wise men whose contribution to the empire is their scholarship. It is an appeal where the religious illusions would ultimately give way to illusions of a different kind.

Locating the Jahangiri ideal of an empire as paradisiacal garden of peace and prosperity,

⁴⁸ Xavier, S.J., "Directorio de Reys," f. 11r-11v.

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in Alexander's Perso-Hellenic world, Xavier warns of the crucial need to patronise scholars and wise men, like himself, if the arts and sciences, and thus the empire, are to flourish.⁴⁹ But, as it happens, the sciences under Jahangir showed no sign of slowing down, even as the Jesuit fortunes declined. Indeed, painting and portraiture, continued to flourish in the 1610s, as indeed did Jahangir's self-fashioning as a naturalist, whose systematising mind established order in the variegated landscape of his empire. A landscape, notably, in where the sun was setting on the Jesuit enterprise, its attempts at 'political conversion' fast receding into oblivion. It must have been with a certain sense of despair and melancholy for the Spain in which an intellectual interest in Islamo-Arabic culture did not preclude the religious triumph of the Catholic Church, that Xavier wrote to Aquaviva about San Vicente Ferrer's conversions of many Muslims in Spain, in Cordoba, Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia.

According to Abdus Sattar himself, the *Majalis-i Jahangiri*, the source for *adab* concurrent but far more consequential compared to the *Directorio*, is effectively a *mal'fuzat*, a genre typically denoting a record of the sayings of a Sufi *Pir*, or spiritual guide, to his disciples.⁵⁰ The activity of Sufic *Pirs* in the wider Persianate world took on a preeminently political character, adducing their spiritual authority for political purposes. But it also had the ability to imbue political ideas with the cultural eclecticism so characteristic of Indo-Persian Sufism. The fortunes and ambitions of kings and Sufis were thus often intertwined with kings, including Akbar and Jahangir casting themselves as Sufic guides, while Sufic *Pirs* took up arms to seize worldly power.

Perhaps the *Directorio* could only have succeeded if Xavier had given more currency to his patron's project of spiritual leadership and sacred kingship. For that – the Jesuit confessor would have had to don the cloak of his host's disciple. Xavier's entire literary opus and tenure at court had

⁴⁹ Ibid., f. 50v, 52v.

⁵⁰ Abdus Sattar ibn-i Qasim Lahori, *Majalis-i Jahangiri: Report of Night Assemblies at the Court of Nur Al-Din Jahangir, From 24 Rajab 1017 to 19 Ramadan 1020 A.H. / 24 October 1608 to 15 November 1611 A.D.*, 1–2, 113–114.

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been unstable, a constant renegotiation of terms, going so far as to act, eventually, as the Mughal emperor's diplomatic representative in a peace treaty with the Portuguese. But for the protégé of Saint Aemilian, self-fashioning as a Sufic *murid* remained a bridge too far.