

themselves in his place. When even Māham Anagah became alienated from Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Khān, she had no difficulty in drawing her son Adham Khān, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Khān, and Mu'nīm Khān into a conspiracy against him. It succeeded, as Adham Khān and two of his retainers murdered Akbar's foster-father in open court on 16 May 1562 (12 Ramaẓān 969). The sovereign was so enraged at the murder that he struck Adham Khān with his own fist and ordered his execution. The other conspirators fled; Māham Anagah died of grief forty days later. From this time on, no single group or faction dominated Mughal bar had considerable freedom of action, and used it.¹⁵

THE BEGINNING OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Akbar began extending his authority as soon as he began to rule without a regent. After the murder of Shams al-dīn Muḥammad Khān, he appointed a eunuch named Khwājah Phūl Malik, who had had administrative responsibilities under Salīm Sūr, to take charge of the imperial finances, with the title I'imād Khān. At this time, the imperial government received little revenue from the provinces because the governors diverted what they collected to their own households and followers. In the vocabulary of Mughal administration, there was little *khālīṣah*, land whose revenue went into the central treasury. I'imād Khān increased revenues and reduced both expenditures and official extortion. Though it receives little attention in the chronicles and modern historians have ignored it, his appointment had significant implications. In pastoral confederations, tribal governors had effective control over all the revenues of their provinces. I'imād Khān's programme thus conflicted with Chaghatay political expectations. None of the Mughal historians connect this initiative with the Uzbek revolt which began two years later, but a connection may exist.¹⁶

¹⁵ A.N., 2:173-8/268-75; T.A., 2:158-9, M.T., 2:52-4/49-52; Srivastava, *Akbar*, 1:62-5.

¹⁶ A.N., 2:178-9/276; M.T., 2:65/63-4. On I'imād Khān, see M.U., 1:88-90/708-9. There is no mention of I'imād Khān's appointment in the T.A., and, surprisingly Srivastava, *Akbar*, Smith, *Akbar*, and Qureshi, *Akbar* all neglect to mention his role. Iqtidar Alam Khan mentions this initiative in *The Political Biography of a Mughal Noble, Mu'nīm Khan Khan-i-Khanan, 1497-1575* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973), p. xviii.

A second stage of administrative reform began with the appointment of Muzaḥfar Khān Turbatī as *wazīr* in 1564 (971). He had begun his career as Bayrām Khān's *diwān* and served as the imperial *diwān-buyūtāt* (administrator of the imperial workshops) before his appointment as *wazīr*. He recommended the appointment of Shaykh 'Abd al-Nabī as *ṣadr* to assert more control over revenue grants. He also ordered a new revenue settlement for the empire, replacing that of Bayrām Khān's time which had become obsolete and subject to abuse. Abū al-Faẓl regards the new settlement as a definite improvement, though still imperfect. Most importantly, Muzaḥfar Khān promulgated a regulation fixing the number of troops each mansabdar should support and how much those troops should be paid.¹⁷ This important step towards the mansabdari system, instituted in the spring of 1564 (971), indicates a formal shift in the status of Mughal officers. They ceased to be chieftains with their own followers and became cogs in the imperial machinery, maintaining troops for their masters. The regulation did not, of course, produce immediate changes either in relationships between mansabdars and their followers, or in the self-perception of mansabdars. But it revealed Akbar's political agenda. In doing so, it may have precipitated the Uzbek revolt.

4.3 THE CHISHTI CONNECTION

Few developments in the early part of Akbar's reign suggest that he intended to alter the Timūrid doctrine of kingship. A. L. Srivastava emphasizes the importance of the announcement in 1562 (969) of a ban on the enslaving of the families of enemy soldiers. Only Abū al-Faẓl reports this proclamation, and the results he attributed to it, 'the wild and rebellious inhabitants of India placed the ring of devotion in the ear of obedience,' did not happen. Abū al-Faẓl may have fabricated the proclamation. If he did not, it probably had little significance.¹⁸

¹⁷ A.A., 1:198-9/279-80; A.N., 2:197-8/305-7, 248/374, 270/402-3, M.T., 2:66/64-5; M.U. 3:221-7/359-64. Abū al-Faẓl's specific description of Muzaḥfar Khān's accomplishments as *wazīr* places him in the tradition of the circle of justice: 'He managed in a proper manner the operations of Treasury, which is the capital stock of sovereignty, the improvement of the peasantry, and the control of the army....'

¹⁸ A.N., 2:159-60/246-7; Srivastava, *Akbar*, 1:58-60. The decree makes no reference to ending forced conversion to Islam, though Srivastava says it does.

Although it played no part in the final Akbari constitution, Akbar sought to add to his prestige and broaden support for his rule by displaying reverence for the saints of the Chishtī Sufi order. The Chishtīyyah were the most prestigious Sufi *silsilah* in the subcontinent and represented the universalist aspect of Islam, including a willingness to learn from Hindu teachers and teach Hindu devotees. The tombs of Mu'in al-Din Chishtī at Ajmer and his spiritual successor Nizām al-Din Awliya' in Delhi were major pilgrimage sites for both Hindus and Muslims. Akbar began regular pilgrimages to the tomb of Mu'in al-Din at Ajmer in 1562 (969), beginning a lasting association with the Chishtī *silsilah*.¹⁹ The tombs of Sufi saints had great importance both in Indo-Muslim piety and in the spread of Islam in the subcontinent, for the *barakah* (spiritual charisma) of the saint was transferred to his tomb. Devotion to the saint could thus produce miracles.²⁰ Akbar apparently sought to co-opt some of the surplus *barakah*.

Abū al-Faḥl attributes Akbar's first pilgrimage to spiritual curiosity piqued by hearing some minstrels singing the praise of the Khwājah.²¹ Akbar visited Ajmer ten times between 1562 (969) and 1579 (988).²² He extended his connection with the Chishtīyyah to the living in 1569 (977), when he visited Mu'in al-Din Chishtī's spiritual successor, Shaykh Salīm Chishtī, of the village of Sikri. He was seeking the saint's intercession for the birth of a son to one of the Rajput wives, who was pregnant. With or without such intercession, the daughter of Rājā Bihārā Mal gave birth to the future Jahāngir on 30 August 1569 (16 Rabi' II 977) at Sikri. Akbar made a pilgrimage to Ajmer in gratitude. Akbar's second son Murād was also born at Sikri the next year and the

¹⁹ On the Chishtīyyah, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 344–51; Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, 2 vols., (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978–83), 1:114–89, 2:264–318; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 64–5.

²⁰ Richard M. Eaton, 'Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India', in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), p. 117.

²¹ A.N., 2:154–6/237–40.

²² A.N., 2:324/477, 349–51/510–11, 356–7/516–17, 364–5/530, 3:44–63/65–91, 79–81/111–13, 110–55/153–220, 164–5/233–4, 185–259/212–13/298–9, 250–1/361–3, 275–9/402–6.

following year construction of a new capital at Sikri began.²³

In addition to their involvement in the birth of Akbar's heirs, Abū al-Faḥl claims that the Chishtī saints recognized his sovereignty and spiritual insight. Akbar intended to make a pilgrimage on foot to Ajmer in 1568 (975). On his way, he received word from the custodians of the shrine that the saint had appeared to them in a vision. The apparition told them to dissuade Akbar from going on foot, since the ruler's spiritual insight exceeded what the saint could provide.²⁴ If Abū al-Faḥl's claim reflects what was alleged in 1568 (975) and is not his own invention, it shows that Akbar used his devotion to the Chishtīyyah to support his claim to spiritual insight and charisma of his own. Although Abū al-Faḥl does not put the relationship with the Chishtīyyah in his elaboration of Akbar's status, it probably helped to spread the belief in Akbar's position as spiritual teacher and sovereign.²⁵

4.4 THE REVOLT OF MIRZĀ SHARAF AL-DĪN ḤUSAYN AHRĀRĪ

Mirzā Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn Ahrārī was a great-grandson of Khwājah 'Ubaydullah Ahrār and thus a member of a Sufi family with great prestige among the Chaghatays.²⁶ His maternal grandmother was Timūrid princess and in 1560 (967) he had married Akbar's half-sister Bakhshī Bānū Begum. He had jāgirs near Ajmer and Nagaur and the exalted title of Amīr al-Umara' when, in October 1562 (Safar 970), he fled from court to his jāgirs. None of the chroniclers explains his departure beyond saying that he developed groundless suspicions of Akbar after his own father Khwājah Mu'in al-Dīn came to court from Kashgar. Flight from court meant revolt. Akbar sent Bayrām Khān nephew Ḥusayn Qulī Khān, who later received the title Khān-i Jahān against the rebel. The imperial expedition occupied Mirzā Sharaf:

²³ A.N., 2:343–48/502–8, 365/530–1.

²⁴ A.N., 2:324/477.

²⁵ J. F. Richards, 'The Formation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. idem, South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin Madison 3 (Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin-Madison South Asian Studies, 1978), pp. 256–8, is the first historian to examine the Chishtī connection in the context of political doctrine.

²⁶ On this family, see Trimingham, *Orders*, pp. 92–5; Schimmel, *Dimensions*, p. 365.

Din's jagirs without difficulty. He fled to Jalaur and joined Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī, who had just returned from Mecca. The two rebels decided that Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī would proceed to Kabul and get control of Mirzā Muḥammad Hakim as a figurehead against Akbar. The imperial forces prevented Mirzā Sharaf al-Dīn from making much headway against the Mughal regime. Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī's intrigues in Kabul eventually ended in his own death.²⁷

Both Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī and Mirzā Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn perceived themselves as Ṭīmūrid officers deserving of the highest level of status and influence. Dissatisfied with what they received or could expect from Akbar, they chose to resist him. Their opposition to Akbar took place too early to be a result of his political innovations. Iqtidar Alam Khan asserts that Chaghatay officers showed little enthusiasm in operations against the two rebels while the 'Persian' officers like Ḥusayn Qulī Khān were enthusiastic. The text he cites; however, refers to a minor mutiny by some Chaghatay and Badakhshī troopers in the contingents of Aḥmad Beg and Iskandar Beg, relatives of Ḥusayn Qulī Khān. It thus does not support his point.²⁸

4.5 AKBAR, DELHI, AGRA, AND FATHPUR SIKRI

The dismissal of Shaykh Gadā'ī Kambu as *ṣadr* along with Bayrām Khān interfered with Mughal efforts to develop a positive relationship with the Muslim notables of Hindustan, i.e. of Delhi. According to Bada'ūnī, Akbar attempted to establish marriage alliances with the leading Muslim families of the city in 1563 (971). He married the wife of one Shaykh 'Abd al-Wāsi, who divorced her at his request and departed for the Deccan, and sought to make other marriages as well. During a pilgrimage to the tomb of Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' in Delhi, on 12 January 1564 (27 Jumādā I 971), Akbar was wounded by an arrow. The injury was not serious and the assassin was slain on the spot. Abū al-Faḍl attributes the attempt to Shāh Abū al-Ma'ālī and Mirzā Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn Ahrārī, but Bada'ūnī states that the resentment of the

²⁷ A.N., 2:198–200/308–11, 202/314, 204–7/316–21; M.T., 2:59–60/57–9; T.A., 2:164–5; M.U. 3:232–8/808–12; Srivastava, *Akbar*, 1:70–3.

²⁸ A.N., 2:199/200–310; Iqtidar Alam Khan, 'The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of his Religious Policy', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1968) p. 31.

notables towards Akbar's attempts to conscript their women led to the incident.²⁹ Bada'ūnī's version explains Akbar's decision to abandon Delhi. J. F. Richards, the first historian to explain the significance of Akbar's establishment of new capitals, writes:³⁰

For two and a half centuries, Delhi had been the unassailable redoubt, the refuge for Indian Muslims and the seat of the Sultans of Hindustan. By moving... to Agra, and later to... Fatehpur Sikri... Akbar reduced existing associations of legitimate rulership with Delhi. Neither Akbar nor a possible rebel could henceforth claim the imperial throne by virtue of possession of the citadels, the palaces, or the active support of the volatile population of the old imperial city.

Akbar abandoned Delhi and modified the political idea which Delhi had represented. It goes far beyond the evidence to suggest that Akbar set aside the idea of justifying his position as a Muslim ruler when he ended his effort to establish ties with the groups most interested in this form of legitimacy. The hostility of the Muslim notables of Delhi must, however, have affected Akbar's attitude towards the Muslim establishment.

Akbar's imperial construction programme began in 1565 (972) with the Agra fort, which took four years to complete. The building of Fatehpur Sikri began in 1571 (979), but Akbar reportedly had decided to build there two years earlier, when Jahāngir was born.³¹ Historically and geographically, Agra was the logical alternative to Delhi; Akbar's massive citadel—fortified city—there stated, if nothing else, his intention to create a new imperial structure. The decision to build at Sikri meant something more, an attempt to incorporate the Chishtī *barakah* into his imperial prestige.³² The construction of an entirely new city, in a new and uniform architectural style with a distinctive ground plan focused on the *ḥarūkā*, *ḍiwān-i khāss*, and *ḍiwān-i 'am*—the focal points of the royal routine, put the establishment of a new form of kingship in stone.³³ The buildings of Fatehpur Sikri, and the surviving

²⁹ A.N., 2:201–2/312–13; M.T., 2:60–2/59–61.

³⁰ Richards, *Formation*, p. 255.

³¹ A.N., 2:246–7/372–3, 365/531–6; M.T., 2:108–9/112.

³² Richards, 'Formation', pp. 255–6.

³³ I discuss these three structures in the section on court rituals in the next chapter.

Akbari structure inside the Agra fort, known as the Jahāngiri Mahal, represent a deliberate synthesis of Hindu and Indo-Muslim architectural styles into a distinctively Akbari form. The new style made a conscious political statement. It was not a random mixture of styles nor the product of a merging of Hindu and Muslim craft traditions.³⁴ The Akbari synthesis in architectural style stated, and thus adumbrated, the mature Mughal constitution, which combined Muslim and Hindu elements in a new political order which derived its unity and underlying pattern from the sovereign. The construction of Fatehpur Sikri thus reveals that Akbar had defined the central aspects of his programme in the early 1570s (1580s), although the new political and administrative pattern was not complete for another decade.

4.6 THE UZBEG REVOLT

The Uzbek revolt represented the beginning of Chaghatay opposition to Akbar's political agenda. The appointment of Muza'fār Khān and his proposals indicated that the young emperor did not intend to

³⁴ See Oleg Grabar, *The Architecture of Power: Palaces, Cradles and Fortifications*, in George Michell, *Architecture of the Islamic World* (New York: William Morrow, 1978) pp. 48–9, 72; Gary Martin, 'Key Monuments of Islamic Architecture: the Subcontinent', *ibid.*, pp. 265–6, 271; Gavin Hambly, *Cities of Medieval India* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 63, 74; Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi and Vincent John Adams Flynn, *Fatehpur Sikri* (Bombay: Taraporevala, 1975), pp. 16, 25, 32–3, 37, 39, 48, 59–64, 66–9, 73–5, 85–6. The references in Rizvi and Flynn are descriptions of individual buildings; they do not interpret the style of the city as a whole or discuss its political significance. Their descriptions of Hindu, Jain, and Iranian influences do not help the reader decide if the style is eclectic or synthetic, perhaps because the authors do not understand the distinction. Some observers consider the style eclectic. My view is derived from that of Michael Willis in an informal slide presentation in 1977. I do not know if he ever published his views. I found that I agreed with him when I visited Agra and Fatehpur Sikri in 1983. Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971), discusses the conception of cities as ceremonial complexes and cosmological symbols. The combination of his approach with the detailed archaeological studies now being done at Fatehpur Sikri by R. C. Gaur, Jamal Siddiqui, and K. K. Muhammed would dramatically enhance our understanding of Akbar's political programme. Both the plan and the style of the city require further study. For Wheatley's general approach, see xiii–xiv. He discusses cities as ceremonial centres on pp. 225–40, 477–82. On p. 225, he writes, 'Operationally, they were instruments for the creation of political, social, economic, and sacred space at the same time as they were symbols of cosmic, social and moral order.'

satisfy his father's Chaghatay adherents. But the Uzbek clan, not the Chaghatays as a group, opposed Akbar. The Uzbegs were a family of Shaybanī Uzbegs (i.e. descendants of Chingiz Khān through his son Juchi and grandson Shayban), who had entered Humāyūn's service. Iqtidar Alam perceives the Uzbegs as a clan, or extended family of officers. Their behaviour, however, suggests they were a tribe, i.e. a ruling clan with a people attached to it, not just a family.³⁵ Khān-i Zamān 'Alī Qulī Khān was one of the leading Chaghatay officers and effective chief of the clan, though Ibrāhīm Khān was actually the senior member. Akbar's regulations would have severed the connection between the Uzbek officers and their hereditary followers, giving the Uzbegs a special motivation to oppose the new rules.

Akbar's struggle with the Uzbegs began with a confrontation with 'Abdullah Khān Uzbek, a step-brother of Khān-i Zamān's uncle.³⁶ He led the Mughal re-occupation of Malwa in 1562 (969) and became governor of the province. In the late spring of 1564 (972) Akbar became suspicious of him. Abū al-Faiz suggests that 'Abdullah Khān intended to revolt; Badā'uni refers to a financial offence, possibly a refusal to forward *pishkash*. Akbar proceeded towards Malwa in July, 1564 (Zū al-Hijjah 972), in spite of the monsoon. He apparently intended to treat 'Abdullah Khān as he had Adham Khān and Khān-i Zamān three years earlier, to obtain his personal submission and the rectification of the fault in question. He twice sent emissaries to bring 'Abdullah Khān to court, offering to leave him in office and unpunished, as Mun'im Khān desired. 'Abdullah Khān again refused to accept Akbar's mercy as genuine. On 6 August (27 Zū al-Hijjah) Akbar's advance guard clashed with and defeated 'Abdullah Khān's forces. 'Abdullah Khān eventually escaped to Gujarat. Akbar returned to Agra after appointing Qarā Bahādur Khān governor of Malwa.³⁷

³⁵ For Iqtidar Alam Khān's view, see *Biography*, p. xvii.

³⁶ For this relationship, see T.H.A., 87, 244; A.N., 1:142/319; Iqtidar Alam Khān *Biography*, p. 74.

³⁷ Qarā Bahādur Khān was a cousin of Mirzā Haydar Gurgan, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Rashidī*, and had been a servant of Mirzā Kāmran. M.U. 3:48–50/2:492–3. For the whole incident, A.N., 2:221–35/341–56, M.T., 2:67–8/66–8; T.A., 2:171–4; T.Q., 124–7; M.U., 2:764–9/1:82–4; *Srivastava, Akbar*, 1:85–7; Iqtidar Alam Khān *Biography*, pp. 77–8. Nizam al-Din Ahmad mentions only one attempt at negotiation and names Muqim Khān as Akbar's representative. I assume Muqim Khān was the

their own power—i.e. that of the central government—within them. For this reason, I submit that Akbar examined and resumed revenue grants primarily for fiscal and administrative reasons, not as a religious purge.⁴⁵

The issue of Akbar's alleged hostility to Islam cannot be separated from the question of the Din-i Illahi. J. H. Qureshi states that Akbar punished the 'orthodox' ulama for refusing to serve as missionaries for his own new faith, the Din-i Illahi. S. A. A. Rizvi and J. F. Richards have invalidated this argument by showing that the Din-i Illahi was not a new religion but a sort of Sufi order focused on Akbar.⁴⁶ Din-i Illahi did not replace Islam as Akbar's sovereign cult; *sulh-i kull* (general peace) did. The political meanings of *sulh-i kull*, Din-i Illahi, and of Akbar's personal religious observances are among the topics of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

The Akbari Constitution

The complex array of tacit and explicit beliefs and assumptions which made up the Mughal constitution evolved slowly. In a sense, each individual in the Mughal system had his own view of the constitution, modified by his view of his own place in the structure. The constitution which was Mughal in the restricted sense found expression in the rituals of the Mughal court and the writings of Abū al-Faẓl.¹

6.1 COURT RITUALS

Court rituals had a central place in Mughal politics and society. Sir Thomas Roe discussed Jahāngir's court, but his comments apply to Akbar's reign as well:

This course is unchangeable, unless sickness or drink prevent yt; which must be known, for as all his subjects are slaves, so he in a kynd of reciprocal bondage, for he is tyed to observe these howres and customes so precisely that if hee were unseene one day and noe sufficient reason rendred, the people would mutinie; two days noe reason can excuse, but that he must consent to open his doores and bee seene by some to satisfye others.²

¹ I use the term constitution with the specific meaning described on p. 14 of the introduction.

² Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), pp. 86-7.

⁴⁵ Although the circumstances differed enormously, the Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's 'White Revolution' also involved expanding state power and influence at the cost of land revenue for the ulama.

⁴⁶ Qureshi, *Akbar*, pp. 134-70, esp. pp. 161-62. Rizvi, *Intellectual*, pp. 374-437; Richards, 'Formation', pp. 267-71.

Without the rituals which surrounded it, Mughal sovereignty did not exist. The nature of the rituals propounded the nature of sovereignty. To begin with ordinary court routines, Abū al-Faẓl and Roe describe the routines of Akbar and Jahāngir in similar form. Akbar began his day with personal religious devotions, and then came to the *ḥarūkā*, the famous small balcony from which Akbar showed himself to the general public. The general population, 'soldiers, merchants, peasants, tradespeople and other professions,' gathered at dawn in order to see him.³ Jahāngir also began his public day by visiting the *ḥarūkā*.⁴ The custom was called *ḥarūkā darshan*. *Darshan*, literally seeing, is a basic feature of the interaction between Hindu spiritual teachers and their disciples.⁵ The individuals who received *darshan* acknowledged the sovereign by performing the *kurnish*, the placement of the palm of the right hand on the forehead and bending the head downwards. The *kurnish* 'signifies that the saluter has placed his head (which is the seat of the senses and the mind) into the hand of humility, giving it to the royal assembly as a present, and has made himself in obedience ready for any service that may be required of him.'⁶

From the *ḥarūkā*, Akbar went to the *diwān-i khāṣṣ ḡ am* (hall of public audience). There he conducted the primary business of his office, giving justice in criminal and civil matters, including official misconduct, and examining the merits of officers. Various functionaries presented reports and made requests. The ruler's visits to the hall of public audience were called *darbār* (usually transliterated *darbar*). Abū al-Faẓl describes the time in the *diwān-i khāṣṣ ḡ am* as the second occasion during the day 'when people of all classes can satisfy their hearts with the light of [Akbar's] countenance.'⁷ The responsibility of the king to make himself accessible to all persons for the redress of grievances is an important part of the Iranian tradition of kingship.⁸ The beating of a drum announced

³ A.A., I: 155/164-5.

⁴ Roe, *Embassy*, pp. 84-7.

⁵ Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree* (London: Oxford University Press), p. 366.

⁶ A.A., I: 166/167.

⁷ A.A., I: 155/165.

⁸ E.g. Abū 'Alī Ḥasan Tūsī, *Siyyāsāt-nāmah* or *Ṣiyār al-Mulūk*, ed. H. Darke (Tehran: B.T.N.K., 1962), trans. H. Darke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 13-14. See also J. R. Perry, 'Justice for the Underprivileged: the

Akbar's presence in the audience hall. Abū al-Faẓl describes what occurs as follows:

His Majesty's sons and grandchildren, the grandees of the Court, and all other men who have admittance, attend to make the *kurnish* and remain standing in their proper places. Learned men of renown and skilful mechanics pay their respects; the *darughas* and *bitikchīs*... set forth their several wants; and the officers of justice give their reports.

Akbar dealt with all the matters presented to him and, if he desired, viewed wrestlers, other pugilists, tumblers, jugglers, or musicians.⁹

The men who attended each *darbār* stood in a particular arrangement. Salim, the eldest prince, stood one to four yards from the throne, or sat two to eight yards from it. Murād stood from one and a half to six yards away or sat three to twelve yards away, as did Dānyāl, but the younger prince sometimes was permitted to come closer. Akbar frequently permitted his grandsons to be even closer to him. The highest ranking officers, 'worthy of the spiritual guidance of His Majesty,' came after the princes in proximity, standing within three to fifteen yards and sitting within five to twenty yards of him. The next two groups of officers began at a distance of three and a half and then at ten or twelve and a half yards from the throne. Others attending the *darbār* stood further away, in the proper arrangement. On one side stood the mansabdars, *ahadīs*, and others charged with holding of the *qūr* (literally quiver), the selection of the ruler's weapons held in readiness. Abū al-Faẓl does not state just how many men and weapons were involved, but says that 'every four of them carry four quivers, four bows, four swords, four shields; and beside which they take up lances, spears, axes, pointed axes, *piyāzi* war-clubs, sticks, bullets, bows, pestles and a footstool....'¹⁰

Ombudsman Tradition of Iran', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37 (1978): 203-15; Lambton, 'Justice'.

⁹ A.A., I: 156/166.

¹⁰ A.A., I: 157, 188/116, 169. Abū al-Faẓl states that others stood in *yasal*, which Blochman defines as the wing of an army, but Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, 4 vols., Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission, vols. 16, 19-21 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963-1975), 4:82-92, gives the general meaning of

Persons attended the *darbār* for spiritual guidance, medical assistance, or resolution of personal or familial problems. But most outsiders sought some form of patronage, employment as a soldier or elsewhere in the imperial establishment. Senior officers brought forward their friends for whom they sought employment.¹¹ Although Abū al-Faḍl does not mention it directly, officers coming to court had audience at the *darbār*, promotions and appointments were announced, and mansab-dars and others presented and received gifts on these occasions.

The royal throne, as the centrepiece of the *darbār*, deserves attention. The ruler sat above the assembly, on a platform, pile of cushions or throne, called a *masnad*. Akbar's thrones (*awrang*) were platforms, normally hexagonal, either made of precious metals or inlaid with precious stones, with an umbrella (*chhatra*), above them.¹² Later thrones became more elaborate, reaching their final form with the famous Peacock Throne.¹³ Akbar used two other insignia of royalty at the *darbār*, the *sayā-bān* (the Persian word for shadow with an occupational suffix) or *aṣṭab-gir* (literally sun taker), an oval or circular parasol, and the *kawākabab*, a polished metal ball suspended from a long pole. Abū al-Faḍl specifies that only Akbar used these insignia.¹⁴

The discrimination among different strata of individuals extended to the forms of prostration to the emperor. Deeper prostration meant higher status. Above *kurnish* was *taslim* (literally submission). It began with placing the back of the right hand on the ground, 'and raising it gently till the person stands erect, when he puts the palm of his hand upon the crown of his head, which pleasing mode of salutation signifies that he is ready to give himself as offering.' Upon being given permission to leave court, being presented to the ruler for the first time, or receiving a mansab, jāgir, robe of honour, elephant, or horse, the person being

ordering, specifically of an army, a procession or of a government. I have followed his definition. Abū al-Faḍl's statements are negative in form, but Blochman's positive translation does retain the meaning.

¹¹ A.A., 1:157-8/169-70. This passage makes clear that some private soldiers who served under mansabdars passed through the imperial establishment. *Abadis* were private cavalry soldiers who served the ruler directly.

¹² A.A., 1:45/52 and plate VII; Abdul Aziz, 'Thrones, Chairs and Seats Used by Indian Mughals', *Journal of Indian History* 16 (1937): 186-8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-225.

¹⁴ A.A., 1:45/52, 1:118-19/116.

honoured made three *taslims*; on lesser occasions like being paid or receiving a lesser gift, only one *taslim* was required. The highest form of submission, the *sjdah*, was not used in the hall of public audience.¹⁵

Returning to the royal routine, Akbar spent roughly four hours in the *darbār* before going into the harem to deal with the business of its inhabitants. He also inspected the animals of the imperial stables and dealt with related issues at this time of day. He then took lunch and a siesta. A. L. Srivastava states that Akbar held a private *darbār*—a session in the *divān-i khaṣṣ* or *ghuslkhānah*—after the siesta, and after a second rest he returned to the private audience hall for discussions with Sufis, philosophers, and historians, but his authorities do not explain the afternoon activities.¹⁶ According to Roe, Jahāngir watched an elephant fight after the morning *darbār*, went into the harem for his siesta, and then held an afternoon *darbār* and, after supper, went into the *ghuslkhānah*, so Srivastava is probably correct.¹⁷

The *divān-i khaṣṣ* was a special, private court, which only princes and the highest officials, and the spiritual followers of the ruler, attended. Rather than *kurnish* or *taslim*, they performed the complete prostration (*sjdah*).¹⁸

Naturally the routine varied during travel and on special occasions. Abū al-Faḍl reports that heavy commitments forced Akbar to rotate specific duties on different days.¹⁹ When Akbar came forth from the capital, to hunt or for other purposes, he and his party proceeded ahead of the men transporting the *qūr*, which was accompanied by elephant in all their trappings, flags, camels, carriages, *kawākababs*, drums, and other imperial insignia. In addition to the sovereign's insignia, five flags or standards accompanied the *qūr*, wrapped in scarlet cloth but unfurled only in battle or for festivals. The ensigns included two type of yak tail standards, the *chatrtūq* and the *tumantūq*.²⁰

¹⁵ A.A., 1:156-7/167-8.

¹⁶ A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar*, 2nd ed. 3 vols. (Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala, 1972), 2:28-3; A.A., 1:154-6/164-5; A.N., 3:257/372-3.

¹⁷ Roe, *Embassy*, pp. 84-7.

¹⁸ A.A., 1:157/167-8. I discuss the issue of spiritual guidance in the section on Akbar spiritual guide.

¹⁹ A.N., 3:717/1069.

²⁰ A.A., 1:45/52, 116/117-18. The Turkish word *tūq* means yak or horsetail standard (Doerfer, *Elemente*, 2:618-22); *chatr* is the same word as used for the imperial umbrella.

The Mughals had three major festivals a year: the solar and lunar birthdays of the monarch and Nawruz, the Iranian new year on the vernal equinox. The Mughals used the solar Illahi calendar for administrative and court purposes. On his birthdays, the monarch had himself weighed against various commodities. On the solar birthday, they were gold, mercury, silk, perfumes, copper, *rūb-i tūtīyā* (probably pewter), drugs, ghee, iron, rice-milk, seven grains and salt, in order of cost. On the lunar birthday, they were silver, tin, cloth, lead, fruits, mustard oil, and vegetables. The commodities weighed were distributed as charity.²¹ The imperial princes were also weighed on their birthdays. Called *wazn* in Persian, from the Arabic root pertaining to weight, the weighing ceremony is a common practice among Hindus even in the twentieth century, but its precise significance in Mughal times is unclear. Abū al-Faḥl describes the purpose of the weighing as gaining good fortune and making an opportunity to distribute charity.

In response to the usurpation of imperial prerogatives by Islām Khān Chishtī, governor of Bengal, in 1612 (1020), Jahāngīr promulgated a regulation listing imperial prerogatives forbidden to governors. We have three versions of the list, Jahāngīr's own in the *Tūzūk-i Jahāngīrī*, Mirzā Nathan's in the *Bahārīstān-i Ghaybī*, and a report in the later *Mir'at-i Ahmadi*. The *Mir'at-i Ahmadi* specifies that the regulations applied especially to princes. The list helps to put the customs of the *darbār* in context. Governors could not construct a *ḡharūkā*, hold *darbārs* of their own, compel men to perform *taslim*, or require imperial officers to remain standing in their presence, or to mount guard duty. They could not require imperial officers to do obeisance to their gifts as they did to imperial gifts, or give titles to their own servants. The list also states that governors should not have a kettledrum beaten in front

and *tumār* the Mongol word for ten thousand, and thus a corps of ten thousand men. William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls* (London: n.p., 1903; reprint ed., New Delhi: Eurasia, 1962), pp. 31–4, does not give concrete descriptions of either these ensigns—or perhaps more accurately whisks. I speculate that the *chartrūq* was an Indian version and the *tumārūq* was a central Asian form. I have had access to a chapter draft by Bernard S. Cohn, 'The Mughal, Court Rituals, and the Theory of Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', which has been extremely useful in composing this section.

²¹ A.A., 1:197/276–7; T.J., pp. 45–6/1:78. Roe, *Embassy*, pp. 378–9. On the *nawruz* celebration, see Roe, *Embassy*, pp. 125–7.

of them on expeditions or stage elephant fights.²² The *ḡharūkā*, demanding *taslim* and *ṣijdah*, viewing elephant fights, the customs surrounding the *qūr*, requiring mansabdars to stand, the use of the *chartr*, *sayā-bān*, and *kawkabāh*, and the specific forms of other symbols made Mughal sovereignty palpable.²³

Different elements of the symbolic package reveal various aspects of the Mughal constitution. The umbrella had been a symbol of kingship in India for a millennium. The umbrella serves two purposes: it gives physical form to the function of the sovereign as *axis mundi* and separates the radiance of the sun from that of the sovereign.²⁴ The physical arrangements of the *darbār*, focused on the sovereign, mirrors his status as the heart of the society. Because the king determines the ranks and posts of his officers, he gives order to the society. The inclusion of the princes among the subordinates of the imperial focus of sovereignty, rather than as secondary foci, demonstrates the repudiation of collective sovereignty. The different forms of submission—bowing—show that the degree of subordination to the sovereign determined the individual's status in the Mughal hierarchy; the deeper the bow the higher the position and the greater the proximity to the ruler. The *ḡharūkā* and the provision of the *ṣijdah* for the spiritual disciples of the ruler demonstrates that Akbar posed as—or was perceived as—a spiritual guide.

6.2 ABŪ AL-FAḤL'S DOCTRINE OF SOVEREIGNTY AND SOCIETY

In the *Akbar-nāmah*, especially its most famous component, the *Āyīn-i Akbarī*, Abū al-Faḥl explains the political and social order which

²² T. J., p. 117/1:205; Mirzā Nathan, *Bahārīstān-i Ghaybī*, ed. and trans. M. I. Borah, 2 vols. (Gauhati: Government of Assam, 1936), 1:213–14; M.A.G., 1:190; M.U., 1:118–20/692–3; J. F. Richards, 'The Formation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir', in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. idem., South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin Madison 3 (Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin-Madison: South Asian Studies, 1978), p. 257 mentions Islām Khān's usurpation of imperial prerogatives, citing Sir Jadunath Sarkar, ed., *History of Bengal, Muslim Period, 1200–1750* (reprint ed., Patna: 1973), p. 282 as his source. I assume that Sarkar's information comes from the M.U.

²³ Cohn, 'Rituals', makes a similar statement.

²⁴ Ronald Inden explained the second function to me.