

Cultures of Food and Gastronomy in Mughal and post-Mughal India

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vorgelegt von:

Divya Narayanan

Erstgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Gita Dharampal-Frick

Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Hans Harder

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Abbreviations

Libraries and Archives

APGOML: Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscript Library and Research Centre, Hyderabad, India (This library now falls under the jurisdiction of the newly created state of Telangana. The fate of its collections is currently not known).

BL: British Library

BNF: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Bodl.: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Oxford

IO: India Office (Part of the British Library's manuscript collections)

NAI: National Archives of India, New Delhi

NMC: Noor Microfilm Centre, New Delhi

NMI: National Museum of India, New Delhi

RAS: Royal Asiatic Society, London

SJML: Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad, India

SBB: Staatsbibliothek, Berlin

Etymology

Ar.: Word of Arabic origin

Hin. / Urd.: Word of Hindi or Urdu origin (transliteration usually follows the Perso-Arabic-Urdu script)

Pers.: Word of Persian origin

Sans.: Word of Sanskrit origin

Tur.: Word of Turkish origin

Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Persian words follows the system used by Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to be met with in Persian Literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892).

The transliteration of Hindi and Urdu words follows the system used by John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1884).

The following exceptions have been made to the above rules:

1. I have generally retained the commonly used spellings of person and place names in current use. Thus, for example: Fatehpur Sikri instead of Fathpūr Sīkrī. I have adopted a similar policy for certain standardised terms. Thus, for instance: Mughal instead of Muḡhul, Sultan instead of Sulṭān and Unani instead of Yūnānī.
2. Spellings and transliterations in quotations from primary and secondary sources for which I do not have access to the original Persian, Turkish, Arabic or Hindi texts have been retained as in the cited source or translation.
3. Spellings in cited book and article titles have been retained as in the original.

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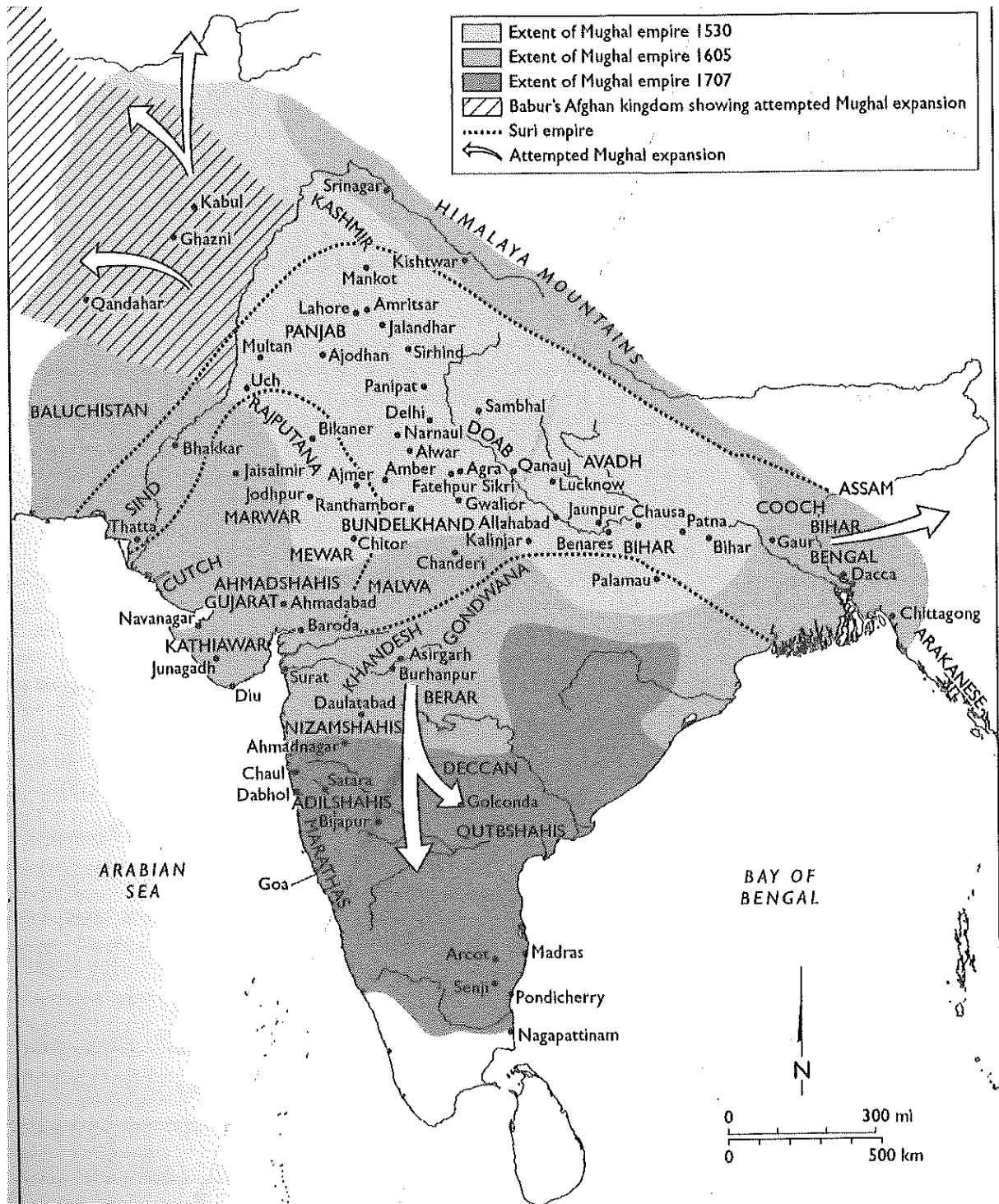
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[Source: Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. xvii]

Introduction

“Food is a many-splendored thing, central to biological and social life”, writes Carole Counihan in her book, *The Anthropology of Food and Body*.¹ Historical and anthropological studies of ‘foodways’² provide a crucial window to the intricacies of social interactions, political articulations, cultural consciousness, and mental as well as emotional structures. Yet, food culture remains a grossly understudied theme in Indian history; this is a lacuna I hope to address in this dissertation. My intention is to examine the dynamics of food cultures and ideas of connoisseurship in urban Mughal and post-Mughal India, i.e. from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries.³ These spatial and temporal margins are meant to be broad boundary markers and do not serve as rigid fences of barbed wire. The geographical focus of this dissertation refers to the lands that came under Mughal hegemony during this period, which naturally included a significant portion of the Indian subcontinent (see map I). But for a greater part of its history, Mughal influence was largely concentrated in the north, and among certain population groups.

There are reasons why I have chosen to focus this dissertation on urban centres. Firstly, the sources of the period were largely produced and circulated within cities, and thus arguably had an urban bias in terms of their focus and content. Secondly, cities and towns were the locus of much food-related discourse and activity that has largely gone unexplored. Cities were the sites where food was retailed in bazaars, where people drank in taverns, where cookbooks were written for the benefit of the literate elite, and where *ḥakīms* (physicians) wrote prescriptions on what should or should not be consumed. They were also the sites where displays and contestations of political power happened most conspicuously. In

¹ Carole Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 6.

² The term ‘foodways’, widely used in academic Food Studies, refers to the totality of various aspects pertaining to the relationship between food and human beings. This includes dietary habits, culinary patterns, socio-economic factors shaping food patterns, the psychological aspects of food consumption and political symbolisms of food. It is this variety of themes that, for instance, form the research focus of the peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal *Food and Foodways: Explorations in the History and Culture of Human Nourishment*, (Taylor and Francis, first volume published in 1985).

³ The Mughal dynasty formally ended only in 1857, with the exile of the last titular Emperor, Bahādur Shāh Z̤af̤r. Thus, in one sense, practically the entire period under study might be designated as ‘Mughal’. However, Mughal power was very weak from the eighteenth century onwards, and was reduced eventually to a mere symbolic presence.

addition, and most significantly, it is important to remember that Mughal influence was, to a large extent, most noticeable and palpable in urban areas.⁴

I begin this Introduction with a brief overview of the historiography on this subject and the sources that form the base of my dissertation. I will also outline some of the methodological considerations that have guided me in choosing and analysing source material. A separate section will be devoted to giving a background on general themes related to geography, agriculture and diet that will facilitate a better understanding of my discussion in the subsequent chapters. I shall also comment briefly on the transcultural and cross-cultural scope of my research. Finally, a chapter outline will give a preview of the themes and questions with which this dissertation shall engage.

Historiography: Guiding Lights and Gaping Holes

There are remarkably few notable works on the history of food in South Asia. K. T. Achaya's *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* presents a fairly competent historical survey from prehistory to the present.⁵ S. P. Sangar's *Food and Drinks in Mughal India* draws on published material in Persian, English and 'Hindi',⁶ but is a very dry and descriptive account amounting to little more than a virtual catalogue of references to foods and beverages from the sources of the period.⁷ Om Prakash's book *Food and Drinks in Ancient India* is a descriptive survey of food history focussing on the early centuries of Indian history.⁸ There is

⁴ In very broad and approximate terms, the relative strength of Mughal influence and authority may be conceptualised as being broken up into three zones: the cities, the villages and finally the forests, wastelands and unsubdued regions. The Mughals themselves divided their territories into the organised territory of *ra'īyatī* or revenue paying areas under imperial regulation (*zabt*) and secondly the regions which had not been subdued and did not pay revenue or were tribal areas (*mawās*) [See Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 21; Iqtidar Alam Khan, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval India* (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2008), pp. 100-101]. All these zones interacted with Mughal power, but in a mediated fashion. Most of the Mughal *manṣabdārs* (rank-holders in the imperial administration) lived in cities, and this is where what might be (in a very loose sense) known as 'Mughal culture' flourished. In rural areas, Mughal power was both mediated and contested by a chain of intermediary landowners or *zamīndārs*. For work on *zamīndārs* and the Mughal state, see, for instance, S. Nurul Hasan, "The Position of the Zamindars in the Mughal Empire", *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 1, no. 4 (April-June 1964); Stanley J. Tambiah, "What Did Bernier Actually Say? Profiling the Mughal Empire", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 32, no. 2 (1998).

⁵ K. T. Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁶ The language that I designate here and throughout my dissertation as 'Hindi' had a very different existence from the forms of spoken and written language recognised as 'Hindi' today. 'Hindī' or 'Hindūstānī' was merely the umbrella term used in most Persian sources to refer to a wide variety of dialects. Some studies also refer to the(se) language(s) as 'Hindawī', but this is not the term that appears to be favoured in early modern Persian works.

⁷ Satya Prakash Sangar, *Food and Drinks in Mughal India* (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1999).

⁸ Om Prakash, *Food and Drinks in Ancient India (from Earliest Times to c. 1200 A. D.)* (New Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1961).

also a slim volume with same title by Rajendralala Mitra.⁹ It is divided into three chapters: “beef in ancient India”, “spirituous drinks in ancient India” and “a picnic in ancient India”. The last chapter contains a description of a picnic from the Harivañśa Parva of the Mahābhārata.¹⁰ The book is embellished with many citations from Sanskrit texts, but is again largely descriptive in nature. With regard to more recent centuries of Indian history, we have Elizabeth Collingham’s *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*¹¹ and Cecilia Leong-Salobir’s *Food Culture in Colonial Asia*.¹² Both works study colonial cuisine and largely draw on English sources. Leong-Salobir’s analysis is based both on India and the Malayan archipelago, but a considerable volume of her sources and evidence is South Asian.

While historical works are paltry, anthropological studies by scholars such as R. S. Khare and Arjun Appadurai as well as analyses of Sanskrit texts by Patrick Olivelle have made valuable contributions to our understanding of food and society.¹³ Francis Zimmermann’s *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats* is a structuralist account of the taxonomic logic of Ayurvedic texts with reference to underlying ecological concepts. Within this framework, it studies the representation of animal foods in Sanskrit medical treatises.¹⁴ There are also works on the history of vegetarianism, beef eating and cow veneration in India, notably D. N. Jha’s *Myth of the Holy Cow*¹⁵ and Ludwig Alsdorf’s *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien*, translated as *The History of Vegetarianism and Cow-Veneration in India*.¹⁶

⁹ Rajendralala Mitra, *Food and Drinks in Ancient India: Based on Original Sanskrit Sources* (New Delhi: Indigo Books, 2007).

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 95-122.

¹¹ Elizabeth Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹² Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹³ R. S. Khare, *Hindu Hearth and Home* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1976); Patrick Olivelle, “From Feast to Fast: Food and the Indian Ascetic”, in *Rules and Remedies in Classical Indian Law, Panels of the VIIIth World Sanskrit Conference*, Vol. 9, ed. Julia Leslie (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), pp. 17-36; Patrick Olivelle, “Food for Thought: Dietary Regulations and Social Organization in Ancient India” [2001 Gonda Lecture. Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (URL: www.knaw.nl/publicaties/pdf/20021013.pdf)]; Patrick Olivelle, “Abhakshya and Abhojya: An Exploration in Dietary Language”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 2 (2002), pp. 345-354; Patrick Olivelle, “Food in India”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 23 (1995), pp. 367-380; Arjun Appadurai, “Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia”, *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 3, Symbolism and Cognition (1981), pp. 494-511; “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988), pp. 3-24.

¹⁴ Francis Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1987).

¹⁵ D. N. Jha, *The Myth of the Holy Cow* (London and New York: Verso, 2002) [Originally published as *Holy Cow: Beef in Indian Dietary Traditions* (New Delhi: Matrix Books, 2001)].

¹⁶ Ludwig Alsdorf, *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien* (Abhandlung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1961, Nr. 6) (Wiesbaden: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, 1962); Alsdorf, *The History of Vegetarianism and Cow-Veneration in India*, trans. Bal Patil, rev. Nichola Hayton, edited with additional notes, a bibliography and four appendices by Willem Bollée (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

There exists a far richer corpus of work focussed on early modern Europe, the central Arab lands and Ottoman Turkey. These include works by David Waines and Manuela Marin drawing on Arabic sources and Ken Albala's notable work on food in early modern Europe.¹⁷ I would like to make particular mention of Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's *Accounting for Taste* and Stephen Mennell's *All Manners of Food*, which I have extensively drawn on in formulating my analysis of various aspects of cuisine and food culture.¹⁸ Food has had a notable place in Ottoman studies, covering almost every aspect from the royal kitchen to the common table and urban coffeehouses.¹⁹ Other significant works on themes such as culinary anthropology, medical history and anthropology, as well as the history and anthropology of wine will be introduced in greater detail in the chapters to come.

What the above discussion illustrates is clear: works on diet and food culture that combine both historical and anthropological methods of analysis are somewhat lacking. Moreover, there has hardly been any use made of the rich archives of Persian manuscripts available on topics pertaining to food, including cookbooks as well as dietetic and pharmacological treatises. The possibilities of using food as a lens to study societies of the past are richly illustrated by the wealth of works on the food cultures of other parts of the world, particularly Europe.²⁰ I have drawn inspiration from many such works that are duly acknowledged in my dissertation. However, analytical approaches need to be suitably modified given the nature of source material available in the early modern South Asian context. I will now briefly outline the major categories of sources that I have used in this dissertation, as well as discuss some methodological questions pertaining to their analysis.

¹⁷ David Waines, "Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture", *Medical History* 43, no. 2 (April 1999), pp. 228-240; Manuela Marin and David Waines, "The Balanced Way: Food for Pleasure and Health in Medieval Islam", *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 4 (1998), pp. 123-132; Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003); Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002); Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

¹⁹ See for instance, Amy Singer, ed., *Starting with Food: Culinary Approaches to Ottoman History* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishing Inc., 2011); Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem*, Albany (NY: State University of New York Press, 2002); Amy Singer, "Serving Up Charity: The Ottoman Public Kitchen", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35, no. 3 (Winter, 2005), pp. 481-500; Tulay Artan, "Aspects of the Ottoman Elite's Food Consumption: Looking for 'Staples', 'Luxuries' and 'Delicacies' in a Changing Century", in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction*, ed. Donald Quataert (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 107-200; Uğur Kömeçoğlu, "The Publicness and Sociabilities of the Ottoman Coffeehouse", *The Public* 12, no. 2 (2005) pp. 5-22.

²⁰ For one survey of relevant works see Priscilla Ferguson, "Eating Orders: Markets, Menus and Meals", *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (September 2005), pp. 679-700.

Sources and Methodologies

A history of food culture, such as is envisaged here, calls for careful exegetic analysis of a wide variety of sources. Persian histories, gazettes, chronicles, biographical dictionaries and memoirs such as *Bāburnāma*, *Humāyūnnāma*, *Tazkira-i Humāyūn u Akbar*, *Akbarnāma*, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh*, *Jahāngīrnāma*, *Shāhjahānnāma* and the *Ma'āşiru-l Umarā'* form the backbone of any work on Mughal history. A number of Persian culinary manuals are available, mostly in manuscript form. These include the *Ni^cmatnāma*, *Khwān-i Ni^cmat*, *Nuskha-i-Shāhjahānī* and *Risāla dar Bayān-i-Aṭ^cima*. The corpus of medical manuscripts with a focus on food and dietetics is voluminous. Notable texts that I will discuss include *Fawā'id al-Insān*, *Dastūru-l Aṭibbā*, *Alfāz-i Adwīya*, *Khulāṣatu-l Mujarrabāt*, *Tālīf-i Sharīfī*, *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* and *Māydat al-Rizā*. In the category of Persian travel literature, Ānand Rām Mukhlīṣ's *Safarnāma-i Mukhlīṣ* is rich with descriptions of menus and meals. Ānand Rām also wrote the *Mir³ātu-l Iṣṭilāḥ*, an encyclopaedic dictionary that offers some information on life in Shāhjahānābād during the eighteenth century. Apart from this there are Persian texts on agriculture, such as the *Kitāb-i Zirā^cat*. Among sources in various dialects of old Hindi, the *rasoī khāsā* or 'royal kitchen and store records' shed light on the Rajput kitchen. The autobiographical work *Ardhakathānaka* of the sixteenth-seventeenth century Jain merchant Banārasīdās offers us a unique view on life during this period from the perspective of a town dweller. Another crucial set of sources consists of European material, including travelogues, trading records, personal papers, expenditure accounts and other miscellaneous documents. Miniature paintings and iconography are visual sources, the analysis of which can yield insights into the social meanings and representation of food. Finally, I have also used studies drawing on archaeological evidence and city plans, in order to interpret the manner in which food was ordered within urban spaces.

Having a set of sources in hand is one thing; interpreting them is another matter altogether. Here the historian is often confronted with difficult methodological questions. Such problems are particularly pertinent for anyone concerned with studying food habits or material culture. Must the sources be merely regarded as conveying discourses in the post-modernist sense, or can the 'information' contained in them on foods and diets be trusted? In other words, can a history of food be anything other than a study of representation? I would argue in favour of a balanced, nuanced view, similar to that advocated by Sanjay Subrahmanyam. To quote him:

...I have attempted to argue that a number of interpretational strategies are available to us today, that allow us on the one hand to

avoid the pitfalls of the ‘diagonal’ reading techniques that I have lightly caricatured at the outset, without necessarily falling into the trap of the type of textual analysis that focuses exclusively on the author rather than his ostensible subject.²¹

All sources convey discourses, and must thus be seen as ‘representing’ a certain bias. Yet even fiction, however imaginative, is based to some extent on reality. Stitching together actual traces from the past into a coherent narrative is where history writing emerges as an art.²² It can never fully capture the bygone to any real extent. But it can piece together a partial story of the past, naturally tilted towards the areas where the sources of the period shed light.²³ With regard to food history, I may illustrate some of the interpretative challenges confronted by historians through the aid of a hypothetical example. If a Persian source describes a recipe that includes white potatoes, this surely indicates that this vegetable was known in some way to the author of the text. However, it tells us nothing about where such potatoes may have been sourced, or how widely available they were. These questions may, to some extent, be answered with reference to the context of the text itself and the nature of its description. The historian must then take into account the sum total of all available evidence pertaining to the potato before offering conclusions on its availability.

A related issue concerns the elite bias of early modern sources. Most of my sources are in Persian and this naturally means that they reflect the worldview of a certain linguistic and cultural universe that may not have accorded with the reality of most of the subcontinent. To some extent, I have tried to correct this by including as many European and vernacular sources as possible, but the problem remains nevertheless. Thus, I have attempted to exercise great caution and prudence in interpreting the sources, reading them against the grain

²¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 20. Subrahmanyam’s observations were made while analysing the use and value of the European archive in Indian history, but I believe that they merit broader application for variety of sources and contexts.

²² For discussions on the nature of History and the historian’s craft see, for instance, R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (reprinted) (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); E. H. Carr, *What is History?* Second Edition, ed. R. W. Davies (Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press, 1986); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Lewis Mink, “Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument”, in *The History and Narrative Reader* ed. Geoffrey Roberts (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 211-220; Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artefact”, in *ibid*, pp. 221-236; Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984 (Vol. I), 1985 (Vol. II), 1988 (Vol. III)]; Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997); Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* Second Edition (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

²³ Here I am reminded of an Akbar-Birbal story (although many versions of this tale exist in different cultures), which tells of Birbal going out in search of six fools on the orders of Akbar. One of the fools is a man Birbal encounters searching for something. When questioned, the man reveals that he had lost his ring in the darkness. But since there was no point looking for it in the darkness, he was searching where there was light! In some sense, all historians are like Birbal’s fool.

wherever possible. This history does disproportionately tell the story of the Indo-Persian ecumene. But that does not mean that it is a tale only of these elite actors, since they did not live in a vacuum. In situating the stories of the Indo-Persian elite I have also, at various points, touched upon the lives of plebeians and women. As the analyses in this dissertation will show, absences are often pregnant with meaning, and the marginalisation of various groups in the sources is itself evidence that the historian must take into account.

Another question that must be considered concerns the literary conventions of Persian sources, which guide their representation of events, objects and experiences. Most Persian texts share certain conventions, such as stylistic exaggeration, the use of elaborate metaphors and honorifics as well as the placing of narratives against a linear concept of time. The use of exaggeration and other stylistic tropes is particularly noticeable in descriptions of feasts found in Persian histories and chronicles, and these should thus not be read literally or uncritically.

As far as spatial and temporal imaginations are concerned, Stephan Conermann has argued that Mughal chronicles contained an underlying narrative of Islamic continuity in the face of dissonances and change, with various strategies to integrate or account for India's non-Islamic histories and cultures. The ultimate aim was to historiographically weave the *Kontingenzerfahrungen* (an analytical concept borrowed from Jörn Rüsen) of Muslims in India into a meaningful space-time continuum.²⁴ It remains a question, however, as to whether Conermann is sufficiently sensitive to the diverse nature of Indo-Persian socio-cultural spaces, or whether he exaggerates the Islamic core of Mughal historiography.²⁵ This is a complex issue, which deserves further research and commentary. Nevertheless, for the immediate purposes of this dissertation, it is pertinent to note that descriptions of food in

²⁴ Stephan Conermann, *Historiography als Sinnstiftung: Indo-persische Geschichtsschreibung während der Mogulzeit (932-1118/1516-1707)* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2002), pp. 205-277. According to the underlying analytical concept borrowed from Rüsen, 'Kontingenzerfahrungen' refers to the experience of various breaks, discontinuities and irritations (*Kontingenz*), which in the task of history writing must be integrated into a whole, so to derive meaning for life in the present and the future (ibid, pp. 205-206). In Conermann's account, the experience of Mughal historiographers, in belonging to a small Muslim minority situated in a non-Muslim majority land, forms a core element of such 'Kontingenz'. The strategies to account for the subcontinent's non-Islamic cultural heritage might also, according to Conermann, include completely focussing on the world of the author's small Islamic community. This is what he refers to as an "unconscious narraowing of perception" visible, for instance, in the accounts of Gulbadan Begam, Bāyazīd Bayāt and Jauhar Āftābchī (see ibid, p. 273). Of course, Conermann is not insensitive to the fact that the 'Muslims' who wrote and read the literature that he discusses were a small component of the Muslim population in India as a whole. My above paraphrase of Conermann's arguments is constrained by limitations of space, and it is not my intention to overlook the nuances of his discussions.

²⁵ Conermann does not entirely ignore fact that the world of Indo-Persian literature was a composite space, including several Hindu writers, an aspect that he acknowledges and incorporates into his thesis through a discussion of Īsardās Nāgar's *Futuḥāt-i Ālamgīrī* (ibid, pp. 217-225). The question I raise has to do with his apparent foregrounding of the 'Islamic' roots and characteristics of Mughal historiography. My intention here is to flag this issue for further academic debate.

Indo-Persian texts bore political and social meanings, and therefore must be seen as being integrated into their narrative continuity and ideological subtext(s) as significant components of the whole.

Despite recurring patterns in Indo-Persian historical literature, the historian is also confronted by considerable diversity. Memoirs such as the *Bāburnāma* and *Jahāngīrnāma* have a different logic and style than the stater *Akbarnāma*, which is not particularly concerned with gastronomic details. The memoirs are particularly rich in descriptions of food and meals as well as personal opinions on gustatory experiences. In these sources, the references to food are not merely ‘incidental’, but occupy a prominent position in the narrative. Gender and class also play an influencing role in the shaping of narratives. Thus, the accounts of Gulbadan Begam, Jauhar Āftābchī and Bāyazīd Bayāt use simpler language and are ‘earthier’ than the more prosaic conventional histories. This is to a great extent because Turkish, rather than Persian, was the mother tongue of these three authors. Gulbadan was a member of the harem and the other two did not belong to the elite class of the Persian educated. To take a different example, the literary structure and content of Badāʿūnī’s *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh* was deeply influenced by the author’s bitterness and angst at Emperor Akbar’s ‘un-Islamic’ ideas and politics as well as by his own lack of professional success under the latter’s rule. Thus, each Persian text needs to be read bearing in mind its own history and internal dynamic.

In discussing literary conventions it is important to note that even texts such as cookbooks and medical treatises – which are not narratives in the classical sense – display certain stylistic patterns that are evident in the arrangement of their contents and techniques of description. This is crucial to understanding the manner in which food was viewed and represented, and I will be paying particular attention to these elements when employing these texts as sources.

A fourth methodological question regards the use of temporal and social categories. Terms such as ‘medieval’, ‘early modern’, ‘pre-modern’ and ‘precolonial’ reflect artificial divisions of time that carry the burden of various biases of interpretation.²⁶ I have used some of these terms out of compulsion, since the invention or construction of categories is an inevitable occupational hazard for the historian. Nevertheless, I must note here that I am

²⁶ See for instance, Harbans Mukhia, “‘Medieval India’: An Alien Conceptual Hegemony?”, *The Medieval History Journal* 1, no. 1 (April 1998), pp. 91-105; Richard Eaton, “(Re)imag(in)ing Otherness: A Postmortem for the Postmodern in India”, *Journal of World History* 11, no. 1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 69-70. While Mukhia problematises the concept of ‘medieval’, Eaton argues that the categories of ‘precolonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ privilege the colonial period as a dividing line in Indian History.

aware of the slippery nature of these temporal classifications. The term ‘Mughal India’ is similarly problematic, since it cannot be accurately defined either in geographical or in political terms. Nevertheless, if understood in a fluid sense, it serves as a useful shorthand for a reality that cannot otherwise be linguistically captured. The term ‘Mughal Empire’ begs various questions as to what an ‘empire’ is. When I use the term, I mean it in the sense of a loose, shifting political entity rather than of a tightly knit, centralised structure.²⁷ Another term that I have used is ‘Islamicate’, which denotes – after Marshall Hodgson – cultural artefacts and phenomena associated with Muslims, but not necessarily connected with the religion of Islam.²⁸ Isolating the purely ‘religious’ from the ‘socio-cultural’ remains problematic, but this term is nevertheless useful in being able to accommodate and capture a broader range of cultural phenomena than the religiously oriented appellation ‘Islamic’.

Social categories such as ‘caste’, ‘class’ and ‘gender’ are similarly problematic. These classifications did not exist during the period under study in the same sense as understood today. There is always the implicit danger that we might unwittingly impose current interpretations of these concepts on the past. However, this does not necessarily invalidate them as terms of analysis, since the historian can attempt to contextualise these terms as reflecting a certain reality within a particular space-time continuum, with all the usual provisos concerning source and perspective bias. The fact that language does not represent any fixed relationship with its object must be acknowledged, but so must the point that the existence of the past is not entirely dependent on the categories used to describe them.²⁹ It is known that differentiations of income, social and ritual status as well as asymmetries of political power had a historical existence, as did disparities in social prerogatives and resource access between the genders. The historian has to find ways to analyse these phenomena while avoiding anachronism as far as possible.

An additional problem that I have encountered concerns that of dating. Many manuscripts and texts are of uncertain date, or may contain material lifted from a work of earlier provenance. In these situations, internal evidence may provide some clues. Above all, caution must be exercised in interpreting these sources. Specifics on how I have dated and used such materials are discussed at the appropriate places in the chapters that follow.

²⁷ For an overview of the various debates concerning the nature of state and empire in the Mughal context, see Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, pp. 2-32.

²⁸ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 1: The Classical Age of Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 58-59.

²⁹ See the discussion in Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, pp. 241-270.

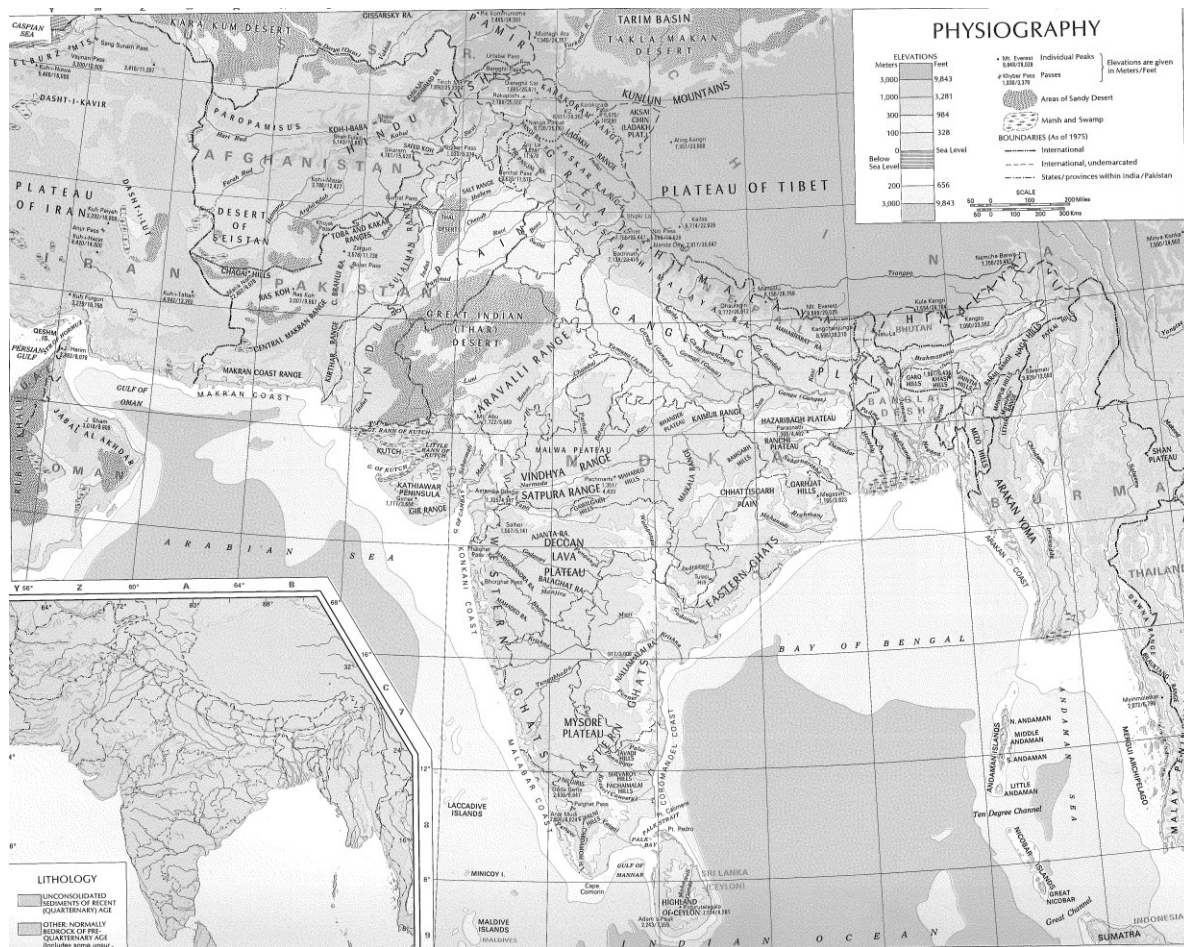
I intend this dissertation to be an interdisciplinary investigation, both in terms of its aims as well as its scope. Food is a bio-cultural phenomenon, and it is thus inevitable that the multifarious factors that affect food consumption and culture require different tools of analysis and approaches. It is partly my intention in this dissertation to demonstrate the futility of rigid disciplinary boundaries, at least in the context of academic food studies.

I now move on to give a short account on themes related to crop cultivation and dietary habits that will provide a material basis for the rest of my dissertation.

General Background: Geography, Agriculture and Diet

The Indian subcontinent is a space of vast geographical diversity (see map II). Most of the subcontinent lies in the so-called tropical and sub-tropical zones, with the northern part of the subcontinent being largely sub-tropical. The climate and geography of much of northern South Asia is dominated by the towering presence of the Himalayan ranges. Rich alluvial soils brought down by rivers originating in the Himalayan mountain glaciers make the northern plains fertile for cultivation.

The main agricultural seasons are in the summer or monsoon and in the winter, culminating respectively in the autumn (*kharīf*) and spring (*rabi*^c) harvests. The Indus and Gangetic plains are the main productive sites of this part of the subcontinent. To the northwest lies the Thar Desert, and large areas of the central and peninsular parts of the subcontinent are plateau lands. These include the Malwa, Chotanagpur and Deccan plateaus. A series of mountain ranges including the Vindhya and Satpura mark a sort of rough boundary between the northern part of the subcontinent and peninsular India. Along the coast lie largely fertile plains, bounded by the mountain ranges of the Eastern and Western Ghats.



Map II: The Indian Subcontinent: Physical Features

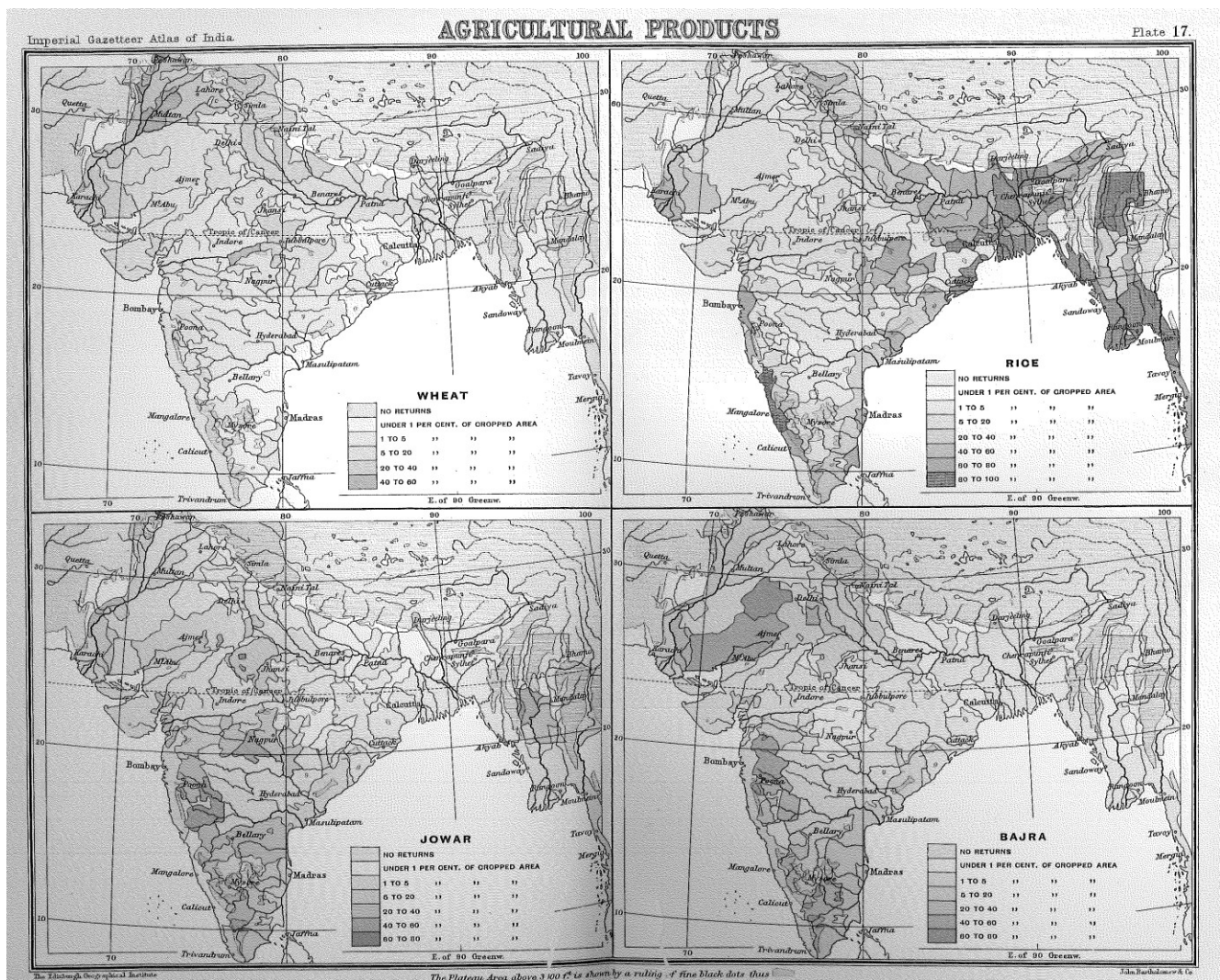
[Source: Joseph E. Schwartzberg (ed.) *A Historical Atlas of South Asia* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press), 1978, p. 3, Plate I.B.1]

Major staple crops included rice (Pers. *birinj*; Hin. *chāwal*; *Oryza sativa*), wheat (Pers. *gandum*; Hin. *gehūn*; genus *Triticum*) and millets such as *juwār* (genus *Sorghum*) and *bājra* (pearl millet; *Pennisetum glaucum*). Rice was generally cultivated in the *kharīf* season and wheat in the *rabī* season. Rice normally requires a higher level of moisture and irrigation than wheat. There were various varieties of rice cultivated in different parts of the subcontinent, some cheaper than others. Millets were usually cultivated in the *kharīf* season, and were by and large regarded as food for the poor.³⁰ We do not have sufficient data to construct a cartographical account of agriculture during this period, since the earliest maps for the major staple crops are available only from the first decade of the twentieth century (see map III).

There were also various lentil, pulse and legume crops as well as vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices. The varieties of pulses and lentils known on the subcontinent and mentioned

³⁰ This account of crops is based on my reading of various sources of the period.

in the sources of the period include *arhar* (*Cajanus cajan*), *mūṅg* (*Vigna radiata*), *masūr* (*Lens culinaris*) and *urad* (*Vigna mungo*). The vegetables recorded include onions, turnips, spinach and various other greens (*sāg*), carrots, aubergines, sweet potatoes, bitter gourd (*karelā*), ridged gourd (*torī*) and snake gourd (*chachindā*). Fruits included mangoes, pineapples, plantains, pomegranates, oranges, sugarcane, jackfruit, custard apples, pears and guavas. Various varieties of melons, apples, plums, quinces, figs and other dried fruits were also brought in from areas such as Kabul, Bokhara and Central Asia.³¹ The different kinds of fruits and vegetables as well as other foods mentioned in the sources of the period will be referred to again at various points in this dissertation, as I discuss the contents of cookbooks, recipes and dietetic texts.



Map III: The Indian Subcontinent: Major Staple Crops, Early 20th Century

[Source: William Stevenson Meyer et. al., *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXVI – Atlas, New Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), Plate 17]

³¹ This account of pulses, vegetables and fruits of the period is based on my reading of various early modern sources.

The meats consumed included mutton, goat's meat, venison and many types of fowl, such as chickens, pigeons, partridges, quails and varieties of waterfowl such as geese and duck. Wild fowl and game birds also find mention in the sources of the period. Beef as well as pork were eaten, albeit subject to restrictions among certain communities. Caste Hindus abjured the flesh of the cow and swine's flesh was forbidden to Muslims. Buffalo meat appears to have been a common substitute for beef. Mutton was more expensive than goat's flesh, which is why the latter was more commonly consumed.³²

Most of the major spices such as clove, cardamom, pepper, mace, nutmeg, ginger and turmeric were sourced from the Malabar Coast in South India and from various Southeast Asian islands. Saffron came from Kashmir. Spices such as coriander and cumin were probably cultivated in various parts of the subcontinent.³³ In the seventeenth century, the Dutch had managed to establish a monopoly in the trade of some spices.³⁴

Sugar in India was processed from sugarcane and was available at various levels of processing i.e. jaggery (*gur*), red sugar, sugar candy and powdered white sugar. Milk and various milk products including yoghurt, ghee and butter were also a fairly conspicuous part

³² The list of meats given here has been collected from detailed as well as stray references in a number of sources. One example would be Edward Terry's description of the food items available in India. See Terry's description in William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, [London (inter alia): Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921], pp. 296-297. Another source is Babur's description in his memoirs of the fauna of India, see Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, ed. and trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), pp. 335-344. This description, however, is concerned with describing the fauna of India as such and is not exclusively concerned with animals whose meat was consumed. Nevertheless, Babur does make comments on the meats of some of these birds, animals and fish. Ways of catching wild fowl are described by John Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat, in the Year 1689*, ed. H. G. Rawlinson (London: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1929), p. 162. The accounts of Ānand Rām 'Muḥliṣ' and Emperor Jahāngīr frequently mention game animals and birds being cooked and eaten [See Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Muḥammad Hāshim (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1980); *Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, in association with the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1999); Ānand Rām 'Muḥliṣ', *Safarnāma-i Muḥliṣ*, ed. Saiyid Aẓhar 'Alī (Rampur: Hindustan Press, 1946). Specific references from Jahāngīr's and Ānand Rām's accounts are cited and discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation "A culture of connoisseurship" under the section "cuisine and connoisseurship in Indo-Persian culture" on pp. 64-69. Apart from this, cookbooks and medical texts of the period are also sources on meats eaten. Cf. Divya Narayanan, "A Culture of Food: Aspects of Dietary Habits and Consumption in the Urban Centres of North-West India Between the Sixteenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries" (MPhil dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2006), p. 20.

³³ For more on the origins of various spices, see Andrew Dalby, *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000). I have based the above account of spices on this book as well as on my reading of various early modern sources. George Watt writes of cumin that it is "more or less cultivated in most provinces of India, except perhaps Bengal and Assam" [George Watt, *A Dictionary of Economic Products of India*, Vol. II (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1889), p. 642]. Similarly, coriander is said to have been a "cultivated plant found all over India" (ibid, p. 568).

³⁴ Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740* (Copenhagen: Danish Science Press and The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), pp. 91-111.

of the diet in many parts of northern India.³⁵ Genetic studies have indicated that the incidence of lactase persistence is generally higher in the northwest of the subcontinent and tends to decrease as one moves in a south-easterly direction. The higher prevalence likely coincides with the historical occurrence of herder populations.³⁶

A key question pertains to the prevalence of vegetarianism or the complete abjuration of meat. Vegetarianism was largely a practice of ‘upper castes’ such as Brahmins and Banias as well as certain other communities such as the Jains. It was also sometimes adopted by other ‘castes’ or communities in imitation of the ‘upper castes’, a process that the sociologist M. N. Srinivas termed ‘Sanskritization’.³⁷ However, the evidence suggests that those belonging to the ‘lower castes’ or the meaner sections of society could not have afforded much meat.³⁸ Francisco Pelsaert, writing in the seventeenth century, comments that “they know little of the taste of meat”.³⁹ And Francois Bernier (also in the seventeenth century) tells us that grains and pulses were the “ordinary aliment not only of the Gentiles, who never eat meat, but of the lower class of *Mohematens*, and a considerable portion of the military”.⁴⁰ The evidence of these foreign travellers should be treated with a little bit of caution, since they were likely to paint an exotic portrait of India.⁴¹ In presenting a picture of the rare and unusual to their home audience, these writers were probably inclined to exaggerate the prevalence of vegetarianism on the subcontinent. Nevertheless, their statements suggest that the urban poor whom they encountered did not eat much meat.

At the same time, the lower sections of society were also less fastidious about the abjuration of any category of food. For instance, Mahtā Īsardās Nāgar says of the Satnāmīs

³⁵ This information is once again based on my reading of various sources of the period. For more detail on the major food groups and data on their prices see my MPhil dissertation “A Culture of Food”, pp. 9-42. Parts of the above account on various food groups during the medieval and early modern periods is based on material presented in my MPhil dissertation.

³⁶ Irene Gallego Romero et al., “Herders of Indian and European Cattle Share their Predominant Allele for Lactase Persistence”, *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 29, no. 1 (2012), pp. 249-260; Janaki Babu et al., “Frequency of Lactose Malabsorption among Healthy Southern and Northern Indian Populations by Genetic Analysis and Lactose Hydrogen Breath and Tolerance Tests”, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 91, no. 1 (2010), pp. 140-146.

³⁷ For an exposition on the term ‘Sanskritization’, see M. N. Srinivas, “A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization”, *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (August 1956), pp. 486-496.

³⁸ Narayanan, “A Culture of Food”, pp. 20-23. The sparse data on meat prices in urban areas available from various sources for the early modern period suggests that meat would have been an occasional indulgence for the poor.

³⁹ Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*, trans. W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., 1925), p. 60.

⁴⁰ Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, trans. Irving Brock, rev. Archibald Constable (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company, 1891), p. 249.

⁴¹ For a discussion of portrayals of India in early modern European accounts, see Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India, 1600-1800* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).

that they ate “pork and other disgusting things”.⁴² This statement obviously reflected the prejudiced view of a Mughal loyalist regarding the Satnāmīs’ diet.⁴³ Abha Singh has pointed out that there is no justification for meat-eating in the Satnāmī scripture, and that this might simply have arisen because the Satnāmīs admitted members of the menial classes into their fold.⁴⁴ It may be noted that current Indian census data estimate the prevalence of vegetarianism as being practiced by around a quarter of the population.⁴⁵

I have above examined some of the factors that influenced food culture and diet. But it is also necessary to contextualise the concept of ‘culture’ and highlight the importance of cross-cultural and transcultural perspectives, which will be given particular attention in this dissertation.

Food in a Cross-Cultural and Transcultural Context

Cultural history and anthropology involve the use of slippery concepts. Merely identifying a ‘culture’ to study is a problematic issue. In this dissertation, I have focussed on Mughal India as a cultural zone that I believe has meaningful value. Nevertheless, this geographical and cultural space – such as it was – was also home to various ‘sub-cultures’. At the same time, it interacted with other cultures and geographical zones through trade, political relations and cultural exchange. I also speak of the ‘Indo-Persian ecumene’, which was a significant aspect of Mughal culture and polity.⁴⁶ This covered a large and diverse geographical zone in South Asia, Iran and parts of Central Asia whose Persian speaking elites shared a common linguistic heritage that became a vehicle for cultural intercourse. This once again makes a clear-cut definition of ‘culture’, and of what constitutes the ‘transcultural’, complicated. In this dissertation, I will at various points, discuss the manner in which food cultures interacted. This requires some explanation.

⁴² Cited in Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Interpretation* (London: Wimbledon Publishing Company, 2002), p. 245.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Abha Singh, “The Satnamis and their Rebellion” (paper presented to the Indian History Congress at AGND University Amritsar, 1985. Mimeograph in the volume of *Aligarh Papers* for the session, pp. 1-23). Cf. Narayanan, “A Culture of Food”, pp. 79-80, for a previous version of this discussion on the prevalence of meat eating and vegetarianism.

⁴⁵ See http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/baseline/baseline2004.pdf [accessed 05.04.2014]. Since this is based on self-reported data, the definition of vegetarianism is not clear. It may be possible that there is an element of under-reporting in terms of the prevalence of non-vegetarianism, given its association with ‘impurity’. See also Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Persian was arguably the most significant language of government and high learning in the Mughal Empire. The Persian literate elites maintained cultural links with other Persian speaking lands. I will pay particular attention to this cultural milieu in the chapters to come.

The object of writing a transcultural history is not to neglect local histories. Rather, it is to acknowledge that even the local is linked in various ways to the global. As Madeleine Herren-Oesch and Martin Rüesch put it:

With the requirement that history should present a global picture, but aware of local schemes of interpretation, the academic community provides several analytical concepts, namely *entanglement*, *hybridity*, *intersectionality*, and *transculturality*. Useful for creating a global approach, each of these concepts challenges well-established ordering principles, but primarily the territoriality of history that is deeply embedded in the historical narrative of the nation.⁴⁷

Herren-Oesch and Rüesch also note in the above quote that the writing of a transcultural history renders geographical boundaries fluid. Thus, although this is primarily a South Asian history, some of the texts and contexts that it deals with have origins in regions such as Iran or Central Asia. In chapter 3, I take up questions pertaining to the introduction of New World vegetables into South Asia via Europe. This brings several geographical spaces and actors from various cultures into the historical narrative. Transculturality has often been conceptualised with reference to the study of ‘modern’ and even ‘postcolonial’ histories, but in fact, the early modern world was teeming with intercultural interactions. Goods, ideas, as well as economic and political instruments moved across vast spaces, guided both by ocean currents as well as overland routes. Food interactions were particularly transcultural in nature. For many centuries, the spice trade brought aromatic and pungent flavours to elite European tables. Colonialism brought the tomato to European, and later to Asian shores. The spread of Islam acted as a catalyst for the transference of many cultural artefacts, including food recipes. These are only a few examples of the ways in which food crossed boundaries of continents, empires and cultures.

Transculturality may also have shifting meanings and contexts, as long as some element of ‘border crossing’ is involved.⁴⁸ For instance, in this dissertation, I examine the manner in which wine culture travelled across the Persian-speaking world – from Iran to India. But I also discuss ‘border crossings’ within the Indian subcontinent, for instance between the Mughals and the Rajputs. Here, the Rajputs have a shifting identity: at one level they may be seen as a part of the Mughal elite. Yet, they also had distinct social and cultural identities, as well as a geographical homeland. Thus, their food interactions with the other Mughal notables are a point of historical interest.

⁴⁷ Madeleine Herren and Martin Rüesch, *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources* (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2012), p. 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

My dissertation involves both ‘transcultural’ and ‘cross-cultural’ history. Transcultural history involves border crossing of the kind discussed above. Cross-cultural history, on the other hand, involves a comparative approach. Normally, transcultural history eschews cross-cultural comparison⁴⁹ and the two kinds of history writing run like parallel lines. The comparative approach, however, has several advantages. It can highlight varying responses to similar cultural stimuli produced under different political, social and economic conditions. And it does so without requiring any evidence of ‘border crossing’. The comparative approach renders diverse cultural phenomena comprehensible by contextualising them. In this dissertation, I compare the Mughal context at various points with those existing in the Ottoman Empire, Şafawid and Qājār Iran as well as early modern Europe.

The problem faced by this approach is that various cultures and geographical zones produce different kinds of sources, leading to variant kinds of history writing. This sometimes makes comparisons difficult. For this reason, I have only undertaken comparisons where sufficient published material on similar phenomena exists. Apart from the occasional paucity of comparable data, there is no particular reason why the transcultural and cross-cultural approaches cannot go hand-in-hand. The comparative approach has been a particularly useful device for food anthropologists and historians as shown, for instance, by Jack Goody and Stephen Mennell.⁵⁰

With regard to the Mughal context, well-designed transcultural and cross-cultural approaches also highlight the many interconnections between the Mughal, Şafawid and Ottoman Empires, without ignoring their variant contexts. Long neglected, recent historiography is only beginning to pay attention to these shared historical elements.⁵¹ As Lisa Balabanlilar complains “(c)ontemporary studies of India’s Mughal dynasty, however, long dominated by nationalist, sectarian and ideological agendas, typically present the Mughals as

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 6, 65.

⁵⁰ Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Mennell, *All Manners of Food*.

⁵¹ See in particular, Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London and New York: I. B. Taurus and Co. Ltd., 2012); Stephen P. Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman Empires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “A Tale of Three Empires: Mughals, Ottomans, and Habsburgs in a Comparative Context”, *Common Knowledge* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 66-92. There are a couple of earlier instances of such scholarship that are notable: Francis Robinson, “Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997), pp. 151-184; Gülru Necipoğlu, “Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces”, *Ars Orientalis* 23, Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces (1993), pp. 303-342.

a singularly Indian phenomenon, politically and culturally isolated on the subcontinent.”⁵² In fact, Mughal history cannot be properly comprehended without due attention paid to its Turco-Mongol pedigree and Persian links. This dissertation is firmly rooted in South Asian soil, and does not pretend to be a broad study spanning continents and empires. But it is not inattentive to the Central Asian, Turkic and Persian roots and associations of the Mughal Empire.

Themes and Questions in this Dissertation: Chapter-Wise Exposition

My research has aimed at addressing three major questions: what were the meanings attributed to food and drink in the period under study, and how did these change and evolve? What were the cultural contexts that shaped Mughal understandings of food and gastronomy? And finally, what was the nature of dietary change in early modern India and what were the factors influencing it? Of course, no history of food – particularly one covering such a large geographical area and temporal zone – can be comprehensive, but I have nevertheless attempted to analyse a significant volume of evidence concerning food cultures and dietary patterns in Mughal India. I present the fruits of my investigations in five thematically oriented chapters.

Chapter 1 will analyse the place of food in the Mughal cultural world from birth to maturation. It will examine the manner in which feasting traditions evolved as Mughal instruments of legitimacy were sought to be asserted. I will also map out food within the precincts of the Mughal city, with a view to analysing the manner in which food ideologies were reflected in the physical loci of urban spaces. The role of food gifts in the Mughal political and social sphere will also be discussed. Finally, I will end with a cross-cultural comparative study of the role of food in Mughal polity with that of feasting and food gifting traditions in other early modern cultures.

Chapter 2 will examine the culture of connoisseurship and gastronomy in the Indo-Persian ecumene. It will also survey Indo-Persian cookbooks of the period and analyse aspects of gender and food culture in the Mughal social world.

Chapter 3 will examine aspects of diet and cuisine in Mughal and post-Mughal India. It will begin with a survey of anthropological approaches to the study of cuisine, and then go on to look at the range of food dishes and recipes available to us from the sources of the

⁵² Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, p. 1.

period. The aim will be to analyse the manner in which food recipes evolve as well as to examine the links between class and diet. I will also analyse the nature of culinary transformation on the subcontinent with reference to the absorption of three New World vegetables, viz. tomatoes, potatoes and chillies into Indian diets. I will conclude with general observations regarding lessons to be gained for the historical and anthropological analysis of cuisines.

Chapter 4 will deal with the relationship between food and medicine in Mughal India. My intention is to particularly focus on Indo-Persian dietetic and pharmacological texts, but I shall also include anecdotal evidence from the sources regarding actual dietetic practices during the period under study. I will analyse the taxonomy of foods and drugs in Persian medical texts and the manner in which this reflected early modern ideas about food. I shall also examine some of the social and institutional factors governing the practice of dietetics.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the place of wine in the Mughal cultural world. It closely follows the analysis of feasting traditions discussed in chapter 1, since it deals in a similar manner with the evolution of drinking customs. Among the themes examined in this chapter are medical views of wine, the relationship between food and wine in the Indo-Persian ecumene and the role of gender in convivial drinking practices.

As would be clear from the above exposé, this is not only a history of food and drink, but also of politics and society. Past diets and food cultures are of course worthy of study in and of themselves, but they are also looms on which one may weave tales of many hues. Our tale begins at the Emperor's table.

Chapter 1

The Emperor's Table: Food, Culture and Power

Introduction

This chapter will examine the role of food in the symbolisms of power and status in the Mughal Empire. My analysis here will build upon several previous studies on Mughal court culture, instruments of power and the nature of the Mughal state. I shall examine the channels through which food symbolisms were conveyed, and how these may be interpreted within the context of imperial legitimisation and expressions of social rank. These include feasts and banquets, the gifting of food items, and the sharing of food in convivial situations.

I shall argue that the evolution of imperial articulations of power by successive emperors of the Mughal Empire was accompanied by distinctive shifts in food customs and feasting traditions. Ideas about food also occupied a key place in ideologies of imperial legitimisation. I will analyse the manner in which the attempts to assert a stronger imperial presence under Akbar led to changes in food articulations at the Mughal court. I will show that these changes engendered a separation of food spaces between the genders, as well as the development of stricter and more circumscribed forms of food etiquette and feasting customs. All these were aimed at placing the person of the Mughal emperor above the other notables of the realm. I shall also demonstrate the manner in which these imperial food articulations may be read in the urban spaces of Mughal cities.

The first section of this chapter will examine food articulations and their relation to political symbolisms and power assertions in the Mughal context. My analysis will particularly deal with issues of gender in the symbolisms of power engendered by such food behaviours and locutions. The next section will attempt to situate the symbolisms of food within the larger socio-cultural context of the Mughal cityscape. The third section will look at the social meanings embedded in the gifting and sharing of food. This will include analyses of certain consumables that played ritual and symbolic roles, such as fruits, hunted meats and the betel leaf. In the final section, I will undertake a comparative analysis between feasting and gifting traditions in the Mughal Empire and similar practices in other parts of the early modern world, the objective being a more nuanced location of the specific processes and trajectories that led to the evolution of Mughal food practices.

Food, Gender and Space: Articulations of Imperial Power

In 1526, the army of Bābur defeated that of Ibrāhīm Lodī in the first Battle of Panipat, an event that is traditionally seen as marking the beginning of the Mughal Empire. The memoirs of the dynasty's founder – penned in Chagh̡tā'ī Turkī – are a key source for the early years of the Mughal dynasty. Bābur's memoirs are commonly referred to as the *Bāburnāma*, but the originally intended title was probably *Waqā'i* (Events).⁵³ The memoirs have an easy and flowing narrative style, punctuated by numerous observations on cityscapes, flora and fauna as well as people and their customs. The *Bāburnāma* contains rich descriptions of food and feasting traditions within the Central Asian social context that Bābur originally hailed from, as well as his encounters with Indian food and dining customs. It has been pointed out that the social and cultural milieu portrayed in Bābur's memoirs reveal a patriarchal society that was moving away from a more peripatetic and permissive culture to a relatively more urbanised and Persianate cultural ethos.⁵⁴ The social spaces of men and women also began to separate, creating what Ruby Lal calls a 'homosocial' environment.⁵⁵

Even so, Bābur's socio-cultural context engendered far greater freedom in social intercourse and a higher degree of conviviality than what came to be the norm as the Mughal Empire matured.⁵⁶ Relative to the high Mughal period, there was a greater degree of permissiveness and freedom with regard to homosexuality and women's participation in social intercourse. Meals were often shared with women. For instance, Bābur on one occasion mentions having dined with his sister, K̡hadīja Begam.⁵⁷ However, as the Mughal Empire grew and instruments of legitimacy developed, this relatively permissible and convivial culture of food and drink was to change. The nature of this metamorphosis forms the backbone of the arguments that I put forward in this chapter.

Bābur was succeeded on the Mughal throne by his eldest son Humāyūn (r. 1530-1540, 1555-1556), whose reign was marked by constant fratricidal struggle as well as by the loss and recovery of domain. Displaced by the Afghan Sher Shāh Sūrī in 1540, Humāyūn spent a considerable period of time in exile, as a mere titular emperor. This fractious political situation meant that social customs and symbolisms, and in particular, the political praxes of food were in a state of flux. Lal suggests that Humāyūn's reign witnessed an increased

⁵³ Stephen F. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Bābur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 23, footnote 25.

⁵⁴ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, p. 462; Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 69-70, 74-78.

⁵⁵ Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, p. 44.

⁵⁷ Bābur, *The Baburnama*, p. 226.

emphasis on royal etiquette, including a shift in the role of food symbolism.⁵⁸ She in particular refers to an incident recorded in the account of Bāyazīd Bayāt regarding an act of impropriety committed by Mirzā Yādgār Nāṣir, who was a son of Bābur’s half-brother, Mirzā Nāṣir.⁵⁹ The whole account of Humāyūn’s charge against the Yādgār Nāṣir was as follows:

During the conquest of Champaner we had entered the treasury and commanded that no one enter the palace without explicit orders. You, without orders, went in and sent greetings via a *bakāwal* (steward / cook) who was bringing us food. We put treasures of every description on a tray and sent it to you with food. You took it upon yourself to pick up one coin from the tray and give all the rest to the *bakāwal*. This act was impolite (*be-adabī*) according to the etiquette of kings (*tora-i pādishāhī*).⁶⁰

This incident, while only tangentially linked to food, does illustrate a concern with etiquette and the preservation of kingly honour and propriety. While these concepts were not new in the Timurid imagination, they probably began to be emphasised to a greater degree.

If we analyse the evidence from the three major accounts of Humāyūn’s reign (of Gulbadan Begam, Jauhar Āftābchī and Bāyazīd Bayāt), what emerges is a partial shift towards a more rigidly articulated dining etiquette, which apparently also involved a gradual but incomplete separation of spaces between men and women. Writing from the recesses of the harem, Gulbadan Begam offers a unique perspective of the participation of women in Mughal court life during the reigns of Bābur and Humāyūn. Describing a banquet held in 1534 to commemorate a riverside construction project, Gulbadan describes the seating arrangement thus:

His Majesty the Pādishāh and Āka Jānam sat on a cushion in front of the throne, and on Āka Jānam’s right sat her aunts, the daughters of Sulṭān-Abūsa’īd Mirzā: Fakhr-i Jahān Begam, Badī’uljamāl Begam, Āq Begam, Sulṭānbakht Begam, Gauharshād Begam and Kḥadīja Sulṭān Begam. On another cushion sat our aunts, who are the sisters of his Majesty, Firdaus Makānī, Shahrbanū Begam and Yādgār Sulṭān Begam...⁶¹

Apart from these, Gulbadan also records the names of a number of other women attendees. That men and women shared space and broke bread together in the above banquet description suggests that food spaces were still not particularly gender segregated. Following this

⁵⁸ Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, pp. 92-99, esp. p. 96.

⁵⁹ For the geneology, see Wheeler M. Thackston, ed. and trans., *Three Memoirs of Hodayun* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2009), p. xviii.

⁶⁰ Bāyazīd Bayāt, “Tārīkh-i Humāyūn”, in *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, Persian text, p. 35, translation, p. 25. Thackston’s translation has been retained.

⁶¹ Gulbadan Begam, “Humāyūnnāma”, in *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. I, Persian text, p. 20, translation, pp. 20-21.

banquet, another banquet was held to celebrate Mirzā Hindāl's wedding. On this occasion too, Gulbadan records the names of several women attendees.⁶²

An instance recorded by Bāyazīd Bayāt dating to a decade later, however, suggests that there may have been a gradual separation of spaces by the 1540s. During Humāyūn's Badakhshan campaign, Bāyazīd describes the preparation of *bughrā* (vegetable stew made with noodles).⁶³ In this case, the share of the women was taken into the harem, wherein Humāyūn himself proceeded. The rest was distributed separately among the court notables.⁶⁴

Although Bābur was the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, it is his grandson, Akbar, who is generally credited with building the Mughal State. Akbar's officer, confidant, and chief ideologue, Abū-l Faḏl wrote the *Akbarnāma* – a magnum opus chronicle – that portrayed Akbar's reign as the pinnacle of civilization and Akbar himself as the Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmil*), in terms borrowed from the Andalusian Ṣūfī philosopher Ibn al-°Arabī (1165-1240).⁶⁵

The last volume of the *Akbarnāma* is the *Ā°īn-i Akbarī*, which is a sort of gazette of information on the Empire, but which cannot be read as a compilation of data alone. The ideological framework that informs the rest of the *Akbarnāma* also suffuses the *Ā°īn*. The *Ā°īn-i Akbarī* covers a range of subjects pertaining to the Empire, including the imperial household, army, administration, agriculture, taxation, the workhouses, animal stables, coinage, and amusements. The structure and style of the *Ā°īn-i Akbarī* tells us a lot about its ideological framework and about the role of food in the symbolism of imperial legitimacy that the *Ā°īn* seeks to outline. The text is divided into five books: the first book is on the imperial household; the second is on the army, the third on the imperial administration and the fourth book on the belief systems of the Hindus. The last book comprises of a collection of sayings attributed to Akbar, a conclusion and a brief notice on Abū-l Faḏl himself.⁶⁶ As Stephen Blake

⁶² Ibid, Persian text, p. 21, translation, p. 22.

⁶³ For translation of the word *bughrā*, see Thackston, ed. and trans., *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, Vol. II, p. 179.

⁶⁴ Bāyazīd Bayāt, "Tārīkh-i Humāyūn", in *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, Persian text, p. 42, translation, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁵ Abū-l Faḏl °Allāmī, *Akbarnāma*, Vol. I, ed. Maulawī °Abdu-r-Raḥīm (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1877, Vol. II Fasciculus I, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1876); *Akbar Nāma of Abu-l-Faḏl*, Vols. I, II, III, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1993) (first published, 1902-1939); Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign: With Special Reference to Abu'l Faḏl (1556-1605)* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1975), pp. 352-273; Conermann, *Historiography als Sinnstiftung*, pp. 159-173; Iqtidar Alam Khan, "Akbar's Personality Traits and World Outlook: A Critical Reappraisal", *Social Scientist* 20, no. 9/10 (Sep. - Oct. 1992), pp. 16-30.

⁶⁶ Abū-l Faḏl °Allāmī, *Ā°īn-i Akbarī*, ed. H. Blochmann (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arab-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1993) (reprint of the 1872 Calcutta edition) (Vol. I in two parts); *The Ā°īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. H. Blochmann, ed. D. C. Phillot (reprint) (Calcutta: The Asiatic

has observed, the design of the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī* represents a radiation of power, authority and charisma from the focus of its attention: Emperor Akbar.⁶⁷ Thus, the imperial household is at the centre of the Empire, and is a microcosm of it. This, according to Blake, is a classic feature of what he terms as ‘patrimonial-bureaucratic’ state-systems, which combine aspects of imperial paternalism with the considerable armies and government machineries characteristic of large empires.⁶⁸

Blake points out that in the first book of the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī* (on the Household), matters concerning the domestic sphere – the harem, the wardrobe and the kitchen – coexist with matters of wider significance to the empire and its functioning, such as the horse and elephant stables, matters pertaining to building and construction, the imperial mint, the state arsenal, and departments of the treasury.⁶⁹ It would thus be problematic to draw a distinction between the domestic and the public-political in the context of the Mughal Empire. The public-political was seen as an extension of the patrimonial domain of the domestic, and equally, the domestic played an important role as a theatre and a site for the staging of Mughal power. In this context, the kitchen was more than a place of food preparation for the imperial household, and it is no wonder that an entire section is devoted to it. In addition, the *Āʿīn* also has sections dealing with the Beverage Department (*ābdār khāna*), the prices of food items in the bazaar and on fruits.⁷⁰ These should not be seen as random insertions, but as reflective of the manner in which the realm of the imperial household extended into the bazaar and the empire beyond.

Abū-l Faḥl’s discourse on food in the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī* drew on a multitude of sources, and primarily sought to convey messages of status and power. In the *āʿīn-i maṭbakh*, which deals with the imperial kitchen, Abū-l Faḥl writes an explanation of the role of food in the Emperor’s life, which is worth quoting at length:

His Majesty brings his foresight to bear even on this [kitchen] department, and has given many wise regulations for it; nor can reason be given why he should not do so, as the equilibrium of temperament (*iʿtidāl-i mizāj*) the strength of the body (*tawānāʿī-i tan*), the capability of receiving external and internal grace, and the acquisition

Society, 1993); Vols. II & III, trans. H. S. Jarrett, corrected and further annotated by Jadunath Sarkar (reprint) (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1993).

⁶⁷ Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639-1739* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 20-24.

⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 17-20. Blake acknowledges drawing heavily on Max Weber’s ideas concerning the patrimonial state (p. 17).

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Abū-l Faḥl, *Āʿīn -i Akbarī*, ed. Blochmann, Vol. I, pp. 51-82; *The Āʿīn -i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 57-78.

of worldly and religious advantages, depend ultimately on proper care being shown for appropriate (*munāsib*) food. This knowledge distinguishes man from beasts, with whom, as far as mere eating is concerned, he stands upon the same level. If his Majesty did not possess so lofty a mind, so great a comprehension, so universal a kindness, he would have chosen the path of solitude, and given up sleep and food altogether. Even now, when he has taken upon himself the temporal and spiritual leadership of the people, the question, “what dinner has been prepared today?” never passes his tongue. In the course of twenty-four hours his Majesty eats but once, and leaves off before he is fully satisfied. Neither is there any fixed time for his meal, but the servants have always things so far ready, that in the space of an hour after the order has been given, a hundred dishes are served up...⁷¹

Later, while describing the workings of the Imperial kitchen, he goes on to say:

Cooks from all countries (*pazandagān-i har kishwar*) prepare a variety of dishes from all kinds of grains, vegetables, meats, oils, sweets and carrots (or potherbs?)⁷² of various colours.

Every day such dishes are prepared as the notables (*buzurgān*) can scarcely command at their feasts, from which you can infer how exquisite the dishes are which are prepared for his Majesty.⁷³

In the quotation above, Abū-l Fazl makes a point about the Emperor’s keen interest in the affairs of the kitchen. However, this was not based on a lust for food, but on an understanding of the role of food in man’s physical and moral life. Abū-l Fazl’s discourse here also bears the influence of humoral medicine and concepts of ‘balance’, which were central to diet, health, and the human condition. He describes how the Emperor is detached in his attitude to food, and austere in his consumption. And yet, he does not fail to proclaim that “every day such dishes are prepared as the notables can scarcely command at their feasts”. In other words, the grandeur of the Emperor’s table is emphasised to symbolise his power over the notables of the realm. Both the images of austerity and of lavishness are used to symbolise aspects of the Emperor’s charisma: his saintly detachment from consumption, as well as the power to

⁷¹ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 52-53, *The Ā’in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Philot, p. 59.

⁷² Blochmann’s edition (*Ā’in-i Akbarī*, ed. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 53) has *hawīj* or H-W-Y-J. On the other hand Syed Ahmed Khan’s lithographed edition has rice or *birinj* (B-R-N-J). See Abū-l Fazl °Allāmī, *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, ed. Syed Ahmed Khan (Aligarh: Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh Muslim University, 2005), p. 41. B-R-N-J is also noted as an alternate spelling in one of the manuscripts. Two others carry the meaningless H-W-N-J (See *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, ed. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 53, footnote 8). An alternative reading to carrots would be ‘potherbs’ ‘seasonings’, ‘sweets’ or ‘dainties’. These are the meanings given by Steingass for the alternate spelling H-W-Y-J. See Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to be met with in Persian Literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892), p. 434 [Available online at: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/steingass/>].

⁷³ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, ed. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 53; *The Ā’in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Philot, p. 60.

command unparalleled grandeur at the table. Abū-l Faẓl's claims of opulence are lent support by the account of Fr. Monserrate:

His table is very sumptuous, generally consisting of more than forty courses served in great dishes. These are brought into the royal dining hall covered and wrapped in linen cloths, which are tied up and sealed by the cook, for fear of poison. They are carried by youths to the door of the dining hall, other servants walking ahead and the master-of-the-household following. Here they are taken over by eunuchs, who hand them to the serving girls who wait on the royal table. He is accustomed to dine in private, except on the occasion of a public banquet. He dines alone, reclining on an ordinary couch, which is covered with silken rugs and cushions stuffed with the fine down of some foreign plant.⁷⁴

Apart from evocations of grandeur, what is striking about this description is the manner in which the Emperor dined alone, surrounded by a wealth of culinary delights. Elaborate ceremonies accompanied the daily ritual of the meal. It is also significant to note the role and place of women in this act. The dining space of the emperor was separated from the harem in the sense that the emperor normally did not dine with his ladies. Yet, female attendants added to the spectacle of the scene. They were not the emperor's companions in the act of dining but merely served as part of the grandiose décor.

Abū-l Faẓl's exposition on food can be traced to another important source: the thirteenth century Persian treatise on ethics, the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī.⁷⁵ As noted by Muzaffar Alam, this text played an influential role in the formulation of the ideology of Empire under Akbar, and became recommended reading for imperial officials.⁷⁶ However, the centrality of such discourses to the performance of consumption and ideas of food has not been examined. These instruments of legitimacy have generally not been given the importance they deserve in extant studies on Mughal instruments of power.

The ethical arguments in the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* revolve around ideas of balance, harmony and equilibrium. According to Ṭūsī, there are three levels of meaning at which the

⁷⁴ Fr. Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annotated S. N. Banerjee (New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1992) (originally published, 1922), p. 199.

⁷⁵ Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. G. M. Wickens (Florence, KY: Taylor and Francis, 2012); Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* Vol. I (bakḥsh-i auwal), *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* Vol. I (bakḥsh-i auwal), ed. Adīb Tihirānī, Tehran: Jāwīdān Publications, Hijrī Kḥwurdhī 1346.

⁷⁶ Muzaffar Alam, *Languages of Political Islam 1200-1800* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004), pp. 50-69. See also Akbar's instructions contained in his *dastūru-l 'amal* or circular addressed to his officers: Abū-l Faẓl 'Allāmī, *Inshā'-i Abū-l Faẓl*, Calcutta, 1810, URL: <http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10219499.html> (accessed 12.12.2013), p. 65; *Mukātabāt-i 'Allāmī (Inshā'-i Abū-l Faẓl)*, trans. Mansura Haider (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers and Indian Council of Historical Research, 1998), p. 79.

soul may be understood: the vegetable (*nabātī*), animal (*haiwānī*) and human (*insānī*).⁷⁷ The nutritive faculty (*quwwat-i ghāziya*) is one of the three vegetable faculties, and thus is counted amongst the base instincts of feeding and self-care.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the human soul is distinguished from the others by the faculty of rationality (*quwwat-i nuṭq* or the power of speech or articulation).⁷⁹ It is here that Ṭūsī links the idea of discernment to that of balance, since the intelligent and discerning person takes care to ensure that he consumes food for the equilibrium of temperament (*i^ctidāl-i mizāj*) and the maintenance of life (*qawām-i ḥayāt*).⁸⁰ Ṭūsī also articulates the capacity of a person to attain perfection, and in this state he becomes the vice-regent of God (*khalīfa-i khudā³ ta^cālī*).⁸¹

Drawing on well-established works on ethics such as the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, Abū-l Faḥr was able to articulate claims to power and legitimacy on behalf of Emperor Akbar. The language and sense of Abū-l Faḥr's exposition closely matches that of Ṭūsī's text, using identical expressions such as 'equilibrium of temperament' (*i^ctidāl-i mizāj*), and linking this concept to human discernment, humoral balance and ultimately to food as a key expression of these characteristics. This must be seen as part of Abū-l Faḥr's attempt to root imperial legitimacy in the personal charisma of Emperor Akbar.⁸² The symbolism of food played a key role in the construction of this ideology of legitimacy and power.

Akbar's movement towards a meatless diet must also be viewed within the context of these discourses of legitimacy and power. Praising the Emperor's abstinence, Abū-l Faḥr notes that:

The loving heart of His Majesty finds no pleasure in cruelty and the causing of hurt. He is ever sparing of the lives of his subjects and ever gracious. And he abstains [so much] from meat (*az ghīzā-i gosht parhez āwarad*), that whole months pass away without his touching any animal food, which, though prized by most, is nothing thought of by the sage. His sublime nature cares little for worldly pleasures. In the course of twenty-four hours, he partakes of no more than one meal. He delights in spending his time in performing whatever is necessary and important. He reposes a little in the evening, and again for a short time in the morning, but his sleep looks more like waking.⁸³

⁷⁷ Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, pp. 41-42; *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 23.

⁷⁸ Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 42; *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 23.

⁷⁹ Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 42; *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 24.

⁸⁰ Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 56; *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 43.

⁸¹ Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 52; *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 38.

⁸² In formulating this analysis, I have benefitted from verbal discussions with Prof. Harbans Mukhia. However, responsibility for any shortcomings or errors in interpretation remains my own.

⁸³ Abū-l Faḥr, *Ā³in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 154; *The Ā³in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 164.

From the above quote, it is clear that abstinence from meat appears articulated within an overall context of temperance and asceticism. Akbar participates in the world and partakes of its pleasures superficially, but in reality his mind is focussed on higher matters and spiritual contemplation. Often, Abū-l Faḥl asserts that the Emperor would be even more parsimonious in partaking of worldly pleasures, but is conscious that his existence among the more worldly makes this unfeasible. For instance, in discussing Akbar's days of abstinence from meat (*ṣūfiyāna*) Abū-l Faḥl tells us that:

His Majesty cares very little for meat, and often expresses himself to this effect [lit. is brought forth from his jewel-like tongue]. It is indeed from ignorance and cruelty that, although various kinds of food are obtainable, men are bent on injuring living creatures, and lending a ready hand in killing and eating them. None seems to have an eye for the beauty inherent in the prevention of cruelty but makes himself a tomb for animals. If his Majesty had not the burden of the world on his shoulders, he would at once totally abstain from meat; and now it is his intention to quit it by degrees, conforming, however, a little to the spirit of the age.⁸⁴

Here, Abū-l Faḥl underlines Akbar's sense of compassion towards all living creatures, which is in concurrence with his image as a benevolent patriarch of the realm. Secondly, he underscores the Emperor's disinterest in worldly pleasures that distract from his higher spiritual and moral goals. But thirdly, and importantly, Abū-l Faḥl suggests that Akbar makes concessions to the temporal existence within which he discharges the role of paternal sovereign. Thus, he does not quit meat entirely, but in degrees so as to conform to the "spirit of the age".

In this sense, Abū-l Faḥl's legitimising articulations on food bear a close parallel to his discourses on hunting. Like food and feasting, hunting also played the role of a theatre where the performative aspects of power and status were staged. Also, like food it was at least superficially associated with pleasure. Hunting also explicitly involved the killing of animals – which, bearing in mind his discourse on meat – required additional justification on the part of Abū-l Faḥl. Akbar hunted a lot, and the *Akbarnāma* makes constant references to his hunting expeditions.⁸⁵ Both in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, as well as on numerous occasions in the

⁸⁴ Abū-l Faḥl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 59; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 64. Blochmann's translation has been adopted here.

⁸⁵ As in the case of many early modern regimes, hunting not only served to symbolise kingly power, but also served as fertile ground for the training of armed forces. Hunting also allowed the emperor to make contact with subjects in different parts of the empire, thus further cementing his power and legitimacy. For a comment on the emperor's hunting habits, and an instance of a chase, see Abū-l Faḥl, *Akbarnāma*, Vol. II, ed. Maulawī °Abdu-r-Raḥīm, p. 244; *The Akbar Nāma of Abu-l-Faḥl*, Vol. II, trans. H. Beveridge, pp. 368-369.

main text of the *Akbarnāma*, Abū-l Faḏl repeats certain ideological justifications for the act of hunting that resonate with his discourse on food. In the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Abū-l Faḏl states that:

Superficial, worldly observers see in killing an animal a sort of pleasure, and in their ignorance stride about, as if senseless, on the field of their passions. But deep inquirers see in hunting a means of acquisition of knowledge, and the temple of their worship derives from it a peculiar lustre. This is the case with His Majesty...On account of these higher reasons, His Majesty indulges in the chase, and shows himself quite enamoured of it. Short-sighted and shallow observers think that his Majesty has no other object in view but hunting; but those with wisdom and foresight know his true aims.⁸⁶

Feasting, like hunting, provided an opportunity for displays of splendour and power. In both cases, Abū-l Faḏl emphasises the hidden and higher purposes of the Emperor, as well as his disinterest in superficial pleasures.

As part of his efforts to anchor imperial legitimacy around his own personal charisma, Akbar instituted a discipleship (*irādat*) to whose ranks only a select few were admitted. This reiterated Akbar's position as a spiritual guide as well as being a wielder of temporal power.⁸⁷ Certain prescribed food practices were an inherent part of admittance into this hallowed circle. These are laid out by Abū-l Faḏl in the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī* as follows:

...It is also ordered by His Majesty that, instead of the meal (*āsh*) usually given in remembrance of a man after his death, [each disciple] should prepare a feast during his lifetime, and thus gather provisions for his last journey. [Each disciple] is to give a party (*anjuman*) every year on his birthday, and arrange a sumptuous banquet (*khwān-i gūnāgūn-i niʿmat*). He is to bestow alms, and thus prepare provisions for the long journey; and also in accordance with the sacred prescription (*āʿīn-i muqaddas*) should endeavour to abstain from meat-eating. They may allow others to eat flesh without touching it themselves; but during the month of their birth they are not even to approach meat. Nor shall members go near anything that they themselves have slain; nor eat of it. Neither shall they make use of the same vessels (*ham kāsaḡī nakunand*) with butchers, fishers and bird-catchers...⁸⁸

The preparation of feasts by members of Akbar's circle of disciples served to signify and cement their membership of this exclusive group. Akbar apparently posed this practice in counter to the usual custom of preparing funereal or memorial feasts. This should be read as

⁸⁶ Abū-l Faḏl, *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 204; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 292.

⁸⁷ This is especially outlined by Abū-l Faḏl in a section entitled *āʿīn-i rahnamūnī* (on guidance). See *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 158-161; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 170-176.

⁸⁸ Abū-l Faḏl, *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 161; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 175-176.

part of his efforts to create a new order of beliefs and observances that focussed on deifying life and its regeneration. In a similar vein, the Emperor had also prescribed the performing of ablution prior to sexual intercourse rather than after, in counter to the usual Islamic practice that saw semen as productive of a state of impurity. Akbar reportedly argued instead that it was the origin of life, and of all that was good and pure.⁸⁹ This association of the Emperor with life and purity was accompanied by an attempt to distance and purge all that was considered impure. For instance, the purpose of marriage for most men was proclaimed to be the procreation of life. Thus, the disciples of the Emperor were also instructed “not to cohabit with pregnant, old and barren women, or with girls under the age of puberty.”⁹⁰ Prostitutes were pushed to special quarters outside the city, and homosexuality was sought to be discouraged.⁹¹ This was in contrast to the freer expressions of homosexual love that are evident in Bābur’s memoirs. The new Akbarī dispensation, as articulated by Abū-l Faḥl, thus sought to ‘cleanse’ the Mughal imperium of ‘pollutants’ such as homosexuality, meat-eating and non-procreative sex.

The link between food and sex here is not surprising. Both involve bodily contact with the outside world, and thus acutely attract the risk of pollution. Food, in fact, involves far greater intimacy with foreign substances that are directly ingested into the body. It is not clear if subcontinental beliefs regarding purity and pollution played a role in the development of Akbar’s attitudes towards food and sex, but this is possible. It is certainly probable that his engagement with vegetarianism were influenced by various Hindu and Jain beliefs. As per the evidence of Badāʿūnī, particular disdain was reserved for beef. Medical ideas about the effects of food on the human body were also apparently brought to play in this.⁹² As Badāʿūnī tells us:

He [Akbar] prohibited the killing of cows and the eating of their flesh, because the Hindus venerate them greatly, and regard their dung as pure. Instead of cows, fine men were slaughtered. Physicians

⁸⁹ Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Kingdom, Household and Body: History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar”, *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007) pp. 889–923, esp. p. 914. I have benefitted from O’Hanlon’s analysis of the use of *Akhlāqī* literature and the creation of a masculinised ethos under Akbar in formulating my own arguments in this chapter.

⁹⁰ Abū-l Faḥl, *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 161; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 176.

⁹¹ O’Hanlon, “Kingdom, Household and Body: History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar”, pp. 913, 917

⁹² These ideas were of relatively recent origin and were probably influenced by Brahmanical thought. Most Sanskrit medical texts contain descriptions of the benefits of meat. Only after Brahmanical prohibitions on beef made their appearance, did doubts begin to be expressed on the medical qualities of beef. Even after this, Sanskrit medical texts continued to include some indications and medical uses of beef. For a detailed discussion of this theme, see Narayanan, “A Culture of Food”, pp. 102-104.

confirmed that in Medicine, beef is regarded as productive of various kinds of diseases and as being difficult of digestion.⁹³

Badā'ūnī's statements are obviously tinged with prejudice, but they nevertheless represent a mirror image of Abū-l Fazl's testimony. Medical ideas, ethics, spiritual ideals and concepts of imperium were fused in the ideologies of power sought to be articulated by Akbar and his ideologue, Abū-l Fazl.

The ideology of Empire represented by Abū-l Fazl's discourse also engendered a separation of spaces between men and women.⁹⁴ Under Akbar, a new regime of distance and hierarchy was created, wherein the harem became a distinct and separate food space. Feasting and the sharing of meals now became more gender-exclusive. The demarcation of the harem as a separate food space meant that the staging of power and status in the form of feasts in Mughal court circles became a predominantly male affair. The scarcity of source material makes it difficult for us to peer into the harem to decipher the manner in which food meanings developed within these closed confines under the new Akbarī dispensation. However, it seems that there continued to be some limited, controlled interaction between the food worlds of the harem and the male-oriented Mughal court. Speaking of the Emperor's meatless fast days, Abū-l Fazl tells us: "Whenever long fasts are ended, the first dishes of meat come dressed from the apartments of Maryam Makānī [Hamīda Bānū Begam, Akbar's mother], after that from the other *begams*, the princes, and select intimates (*barkhī nazdīkān*)."⁹⁵ This statement indicates that while men and women no longer shared food space in the same way, it was nevertheless considered important to maintain contact between the harem and the larger world of the Mughal court through the medium of food. The probable symbolic importance of dressed meats coming from the apartments of prominent members of the harem was that it served to link the worlds of the harem to the body of the Emperor. In a similar vein, food also came from the homes of the princes and major notables of the Empire. On a usual basis, however, Abū-l Fazl claims that food earmarked for the purpose was supplied separately to the seraglio, commencing in the morning and continuing till night.⁹⁶

⁹³ °Abdu-l Qādir ibn-i Mulūk Shāh Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, ed. Capt. W. N. Lees and Munshi Ahmad Ali (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1865), p. 261; *Muntakhabu't Tawārīkh*, Vol. II – The Reign of Akbar, 963-1004 A.H, trans. W. H. Lowe (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1924), p. 268. Lowe's translation thoroughly revised.

⁹⁴ Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, pp. 155-166.

⁹⁵ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 59-60; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 65.

⁹⁶ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 53; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 59.

Akbar was followed by his son and successor, Jahāngīr, in the observance of meatless days and the promulgation of slaughter prohibitions. As he notes in his memoirs: “On Thursdays and Sundays I don’t eat meat – Thursday because it is the day of my accession, and Sunday, my exalted father’s birthday, because he venerated it greatly.”⁹⁷ Jahāngīr’s successors were less enthusiastic about the observance of meatless days, but slaughter prohibitions on various pretexts continued nevertheless.⁹⁸

Displays of grandeur at the table persisted and became even more elaborate under Akbar’s successors. The evidence suggests that banquets played a key role in cementing bonds between the emperor and the notables of the Mughal Empire. Under Akbar’s successors feasting rituals seem not to have necessarily maintained the same level of gender segregation as had been the case under Akbar. Nevertheless, banquets were held with the strictest of etiquette and order, and were often accompanied by the ritual of gift-giving. Manrique describes one such occasion:

During this visit the Princes and Nobles of the Court presented rich, sumptuous gifts, which I believe must be the real motive for this visit, seeing the avarice of Mogols generally, and especially of the Barbarian monarch I am describing. So as soon as these presentations were over, he returned at once to his Palace, where he gave a copious feast or splendid Memane, or Banquet as we call it, in a handsome, pleasant hall. When they arrived there the terrestrial tables were already prepared, and when all were seated in their proper places, according to precedence and dignity, the eunuchs at once commenced to bring in various appetizing viands. At the end of this function, the banquet concluded, the Emperor Corrombo [K̲h̲urram, or Shāhjahān] retired to a richly decorated private chamber adorned with all the most precious and valued products of the world.⁹⁹

Key notables in turn hosted the emperor to banquets. On another occasion, Manrique describes a grand feast hosted by Āṣaf K̲h̲ān in honour of Emperor Shāhjahān (who was the former’s son-in-law).¹⁰⁰ The banquet-hall was luxuriously decorated, and the food served in “rich golden dishes”.¹⁰¹ The victuals, brought in by eunuchs, were served to the Emperor by handing them to “two most lovely damsels who knelt on each side of the Emperor”.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzūk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 175; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 185.

⁹⁸ See Narayanan, “A Culture of Food”, pp. 86-91 for a detailed discussion. For instance, several foreign travellers record that orders for slaughter prohibitions on certain days, in certain areas or on certain animals were passed on the demands of communities that were traditionally vegetarian.

⁹⁹ Fray Sebastian Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique, 1629-1643, A Translation of the Itenerario de las Misiones Orientales* with Introduction and Notes by Col. C. Eckford Luard, assisted by Father H. Horton, Vol. II (Oxford: Haklyut Society, 1927) p. 201.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-229.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 218.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Manrique admits to being “astonished and surprised to see so much polite usage and good order in practice amongst such Barbarians....”¹⁰³ As with Fr. Monserrate’s description of Akbar’s meal-times, elaborate rituals of etiquette were given prime importance, and women served as decorative set-pieces that enhanced the attractive value of the scene. On this occasion, Shāhjahān’s mother-in-law and daughter¹⁰⁴ also accompanied him to the feast. When the Emperor invited the former to be seated by his right side, this was reportedly considered a rare honour by her husband (Āṣaf K̲h̲ān) and grandchildren.¹⁰⁵ This suggests that important women of the court were present at least in some family banquets under Akbar’s successors, but their participation—relative to the early Mughal period—appears to have been rather constrained by etiquette.

Mughal notables often engaged in parallel and competitive displays of lavishness at the table. When Sir Thomas Roe (who was ambassador at the court of Jahāngīr between 1615 and 1619) was entertained by Mīr Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain (a prominent Jahāngīrī notable),¹⁰⁶ he imagined the feast laid out before him – consisting of “dishes of divers sorts, reasons [raisins], amonds [almonds], pistachoes and fruit” to have been the “dinner” (a meal taken earlier in the day, rather than in the evening).¹⁰⁷ However, when Roe was about to leave after partaking of that meal, his host reminded him that he (Roe) had promised to sup with him and that what had yet been served was only “a collation”.¹⁰⁸ Another array of dishes made up the supper, consisting of “salletts and meat rost, fryed, boylde, and diverse rises [rices]”.¹⁰⁹

Badā’ūnī relates an incident that occurred when Bairām K̲h̲ān had once gone on a hunting expedition with Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān. Bairām K̲h̲ān asked his private purveyors if there were any stores of food. Badā’ūnī narrates that-

Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān on the spur of the moment (*dar hāl*) said: “If you be pleased to alight, whatever may be at hand shall be served.” So the K̲h̲ān-i K̲h̲ānān [Bairām K̲h̲ān] with his suite alighted under a tree, and three thousand drinking cups and seven hundred porcelain dishes

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 218.

¹⁰⁴ This was probably Jahānāra Begam, who was an important member of the harem, See *ibid*, p. 216, footnote 11. Jahānāra Begam was also Āṣaf K̲h̲ān’s granddaughter.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 216.

¹⁰⁶ For brief biographical details on Mīr Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain, see Foster’s notice in Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India 1615-19, As Narrated in his Journal and Correspondence*, ed. William Foster, New and Revised Edition (London, Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 209, footnote 2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 212. Roe had evidently arrived at his host’s place in the morning (see *ibid*, p. 211).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 213.

of various colours were brought out from the travelling stores (*rikāb khāna*) of Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān.¹¹⁰

The above description of the feast that Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān was able to conjure up at the “spur of the moment” from his travelling stores probably has its fair share of hyperbole. Badāʿūnī intended to illustrate the level of opulence that Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān had achieved. But the narrative illustrates the manner in which food acted as a symbol of opulence, even before the Mughal Empire had entered its mature phase. In fact, Badāʿūnī further narrates that Pīr Muḥammad K̲h̲ān’s display of culinary opulence caused Bairām K̲h̲ān to become envious, and eventually led to the former’s downfall.¹¹¹ Badāʿūnī’s description (itself written during the reign of Akbar) is meant to evoke a sense of awe in the reader, and food here emerges as a surrogate for status and wealth.

The symbolism and imagery of food also had a physical location: that of the Mughal city. Thus, it is necessary to examine the broader cultural context of the early modern urban space in order to locate and understand the import of food symbolism in the Mughal context.

Food and the Mughal Cityscape

Reflections of the relationship between the symbolism of food and the socio-political sphere can be read into the landscape of the Mughal city. Analysing the significance of the loci where food was bought, sold, consumed and shared in Mughal cities enables a better comprehension of the manner in which food acted as a signifier within the urban landscape. My analysis of food and the Mughal cityscape in this section will particularly focus on Shāhjahānābād and Fatehpur Sikri.

Taking the imperial city of Shāhjahānābād as a case study, Blake has suggested that its layout and design may be read as a reflection of the patrimonial vision of the Mughal Empire, with the Emperor at the locus of the imperial city, and the city itself as a microcosm of the empire.¹¹² My discussion here will chart out the manner in which food occupied multiple sites within the cityscape: from private kitchens to the bazaar. Nevertheless, there were certain sites whose association with the preparation, sale and consumption of food and drink were marked by particular designations and served specific practical and symbolic purposes.

¹¹⁰ Badāʿūnī, *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, ed. Lees and Ahmad Ali, p. 26; *Muntakhabu-t-Tawārīkh*, Vol. II – The Reign of Akbar, 963-1004 A.H., trans. and ed. Lowe, p. 19. Lowe’s translation has been retained, with slight alteration in punctuation.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India*, p. 25.

Built during the years 1651-1658, the walled city of Shāhjahānābād sprawled over approximately 1500 acres.¹¹³ The main structures within the city walls included the palace-fortress (the *qil'ca mubāarak* or Auspicious Fortress), the main congregational mosque (*jāmi' masjid*), the main bazaar (which eventually came to be known as Chāndnī Chawk or Silver Square) and the mansions of numerous notables of the empire (see Figure 1.1). The walled city was surrounded by a suburban area that was also well populated.¹¹⁴ Blake explains the manner in which the city could be envisioned as a man, with the palace-fortress as the head, the central bazaar as the backbone and the Jāmi' Masjid as the heart. Smaller streets represented ribs knotting themselves into the backbone of the main bazaar.¹¹⁵ There were many suburbs outside the walls of the city, which served as living space for the surplus population that could not be accommodated within the walls of Shāhjahānābād, as well as supply points for many of the city's needs.¹¹⁶ All these parts of the city, including the suburbs, had their unique association with, and contribution to, the food life of the city.

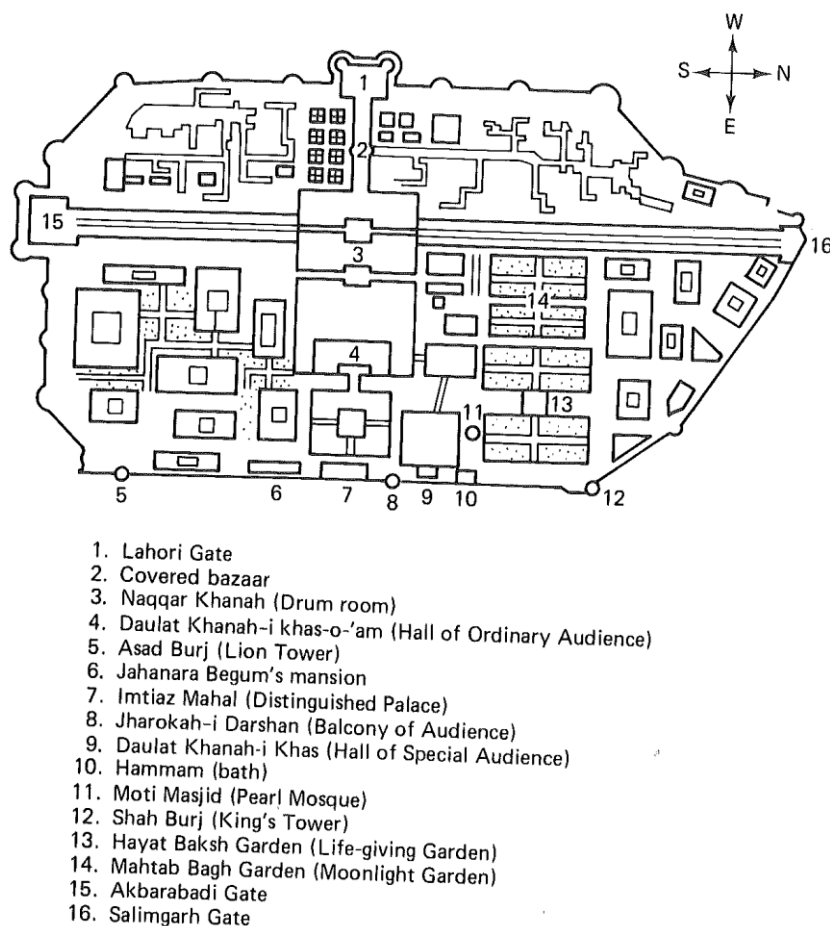


Figure 1.1: Shāhjahānābād Palace-Fortress

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 31-66.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 54-66.

The first locus of food in the city was in the central nerve of the city, the bazaar. The main bazaar in Shāhjahānābād ran from the Lāhorī gate of the palace-fortress to the Fathpūrī Masjid.¹¹⁷ Among the items sold in the small covered rooms that lined the sides of the bazaar were also items of cooked food, such as spiced *kabābs* (kebabs; skewered or roast meat).¹¹⁸ Outside the Akbarābādī gate of the fort was another bazaar constructed by Sa°dullah K̲h̲ān.¹¹⁹ According to Dargāh Qūlī K̲h̲ān, a prominent Hyderabadī notable who travelled in Delhi during the years 1737-41, a variety of foods were sold in this bazaar as well.¹²⁰ Apart from these three bazaars, shops and stalls were located throughout the city, and presumably, food items were on sale in some of these.¹²¹

Qahwa khānas or coffeehouses were another attraction of Shāhjahānābād. Writing in the eighteenth century, Ānand Rām ‘Muk̲h̲liṣ’,¹²² describes his acquaintance with a couple of *qahwa khānas* in Chāndnī Chawk as follows:

Qahwa-house is a place where people sit and make merry and drink it [coffee]. Only qahwa [coffee] for qahwa-khana (coffee-house) is used in the verses of many poets. It is said that in Vilayat (Middle East and Central Asia) there are numerous qahwa-houses, very elegant and graceful. High nobles go and make merry there. Meetings of men of taste, eloquent persons, poets, men like nightingales assemble there twice a day. In Shahjahanabad there are one or two shops in Chandni Chawk where the elite retire, and engage themselves in reciting poems and eloquent conversation, and take a cup of qahwa at great cost. According to Mukhlis, I also used to go there during my youth, and enjoyed the company of these people. While my other friends used to take qahwa in the market, my servants used to prepare it in my house and I took it with them.¹²³

Ānand Rām’s description suggests that while coffeehouses were among the delights that Shāhjahānābād had to offer, they were not prevalent enough to sustain a coffeehouse culture in a Habermasian sense.¹²⁴ Dargāh Qulī K̲h̲ān, on the other hand, records the existence of

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 55.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 56.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 57.

¹²⁰ Dargāh Qulī K̲h̲ān, *Muraqqa-e-Dehli: The Mughal Capital in Muhammad Shah’s Time*, trans. Chander Shekhar and Shama Mitra Chenoy (Delhi: Deputy Publications, 1989), p. 23.

¹²¹ Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India*, p. 57. See also Bernier’s account of food, both raw and cooked, sold in the bazaars of Delhi: Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, pp. 248-252, also referenced in chapter 3 of this dissertation “Cuisine and the lives of recipes” under the section “menus, techniques and tools: meals explored”, pp. 105-106.

¹²² Ānand Rām will be introduced in greater detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation “A culture of connoisseurship” under the first section entitled “cuisine and connoisseurship in Indo-Persian culture”, pp. 67-69.

¹²³ Ānand Rām “Muk̲h̲liṣ”, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Medieval India: Mirat-ul-Istilah*, trans. Tasneem Ahmad (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1993), pp. 223-224.

¹²⁴ The German philosopher, historian and sociologist Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929) argued that the eighteenth century in Europe witnessed a burgeoning culture of debate, discussion and political critique among the

many *qahwa khānas* “where eloquent poets are to be found reciting their verses and eliciting praise from those present”.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, there is little evidence of *qahwa khānas* in Delhi emerging as centres of political discourse or of intellectual debate. Contemporary cities in the Asian Islamic world witnessed a far more significant burgeoning of coffeehouses that engendered a distinctive culture of intellectual discourse and exchange. This was particularly the case in the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁶ Muṣṭafá Naʿīmā, an Ottoman court historian records that:

At that time [in 1633] coffee and tobacco were neither more nor less than a pretext for assembling; a crowd good-for-nothings [*sic*] was forever meeting in coffee-houses...where they would spend their time criticising and disparaging the great and the authorities, waste their breath discussing imperial interests connected with affairs of state, dismissals and appointments, fallings out and reconciliation, and so they would gossip and lie.¹²⁷

The lack of a similar role for coffeehouses in Mughal India meant that the state had little angst over these institutions, and unlike in the Ottoman Empire,¹²⁸ made little attempt to ban or regulate these establishments. Perhaps by the time coffeehouses became common in Delhi – in the eighteenth century – the political atmosphere was already too dispersed and uncertain as to attract any kind of effective official control.

Apart from food that occupied the public spaces of the bazaar, it was also located within the more private space of domestic kitchens. The mansions of the well off had separately designated kitchen spaces. And yet, as Blake’s analysis of a selection of Mughal era mansions at Shāhjahānābād shows, kitchens and bakeries were often located along the courtyard, thus marking them as spaces that lay in the intermediate zone between the outdoors and indoors.¹²⁹

The third locus of food in the urban landscape of Shāhjahānābād lay in its suburbs (see Figure 1.2). As Blake points out, about fifty per cent of the population lived in the suburbs, and these areas represented key nodal points in the social and economic life of the city.¹³⁰ What was probably the largest suburb, Pahārganj, was the site of the principal grain market.

bourgeoisie, which he viewed as the rise of a new ‘public sphere’. Coffeehouses and salons emerged as key sites of this new social phenomenon. See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1990), esp. pp. 86-107. Among more recent reviews of Habermas’s thought and legacy, see Andreas Gestrich, “The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate”, *German History* 24, no. 3 (2006), pp. 413-430.

¹²⁵ Dargāh Qulī Khān, *Muraqqa-e-Dehli*, p. 25.

¹²⁶ Selma Akyazici Özkoçak, “Coffeehouses: Rethinking the Public and Private in Early Modern Istanbul”, *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 6 (Sept. 2007), pp. 965-986.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 974.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India*, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Many of the wholesale grain merchants lived in the suburban areas of Patparganj and Shāhdara. Another suburb, Rakabganj, was so named because its principal inhabitants were supposed to be in the “household or stirrup (*rikāb*) of the emperor”.¹³¹ Blake also points out that yet another suburb was Sabzīmāndī, which as the name suggests, may have been the principal vegetable market of the city.¹³² Thus, the suburbs served as radial points for the supply of raw food materials to the city.

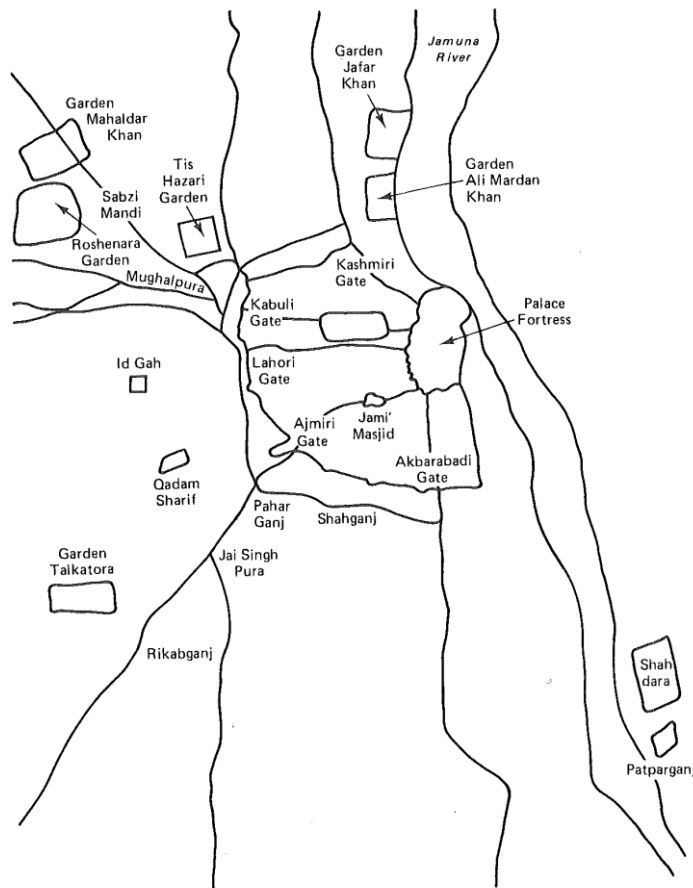


Figure 1.2: Suburbs of Shāhjahānābād, 1739

It is argued here that the loci of food in the cityscape of Shāhjahānābād represented a diffuse patchwork, where food points could be found in every part of the city and its outlying regions. The loci for the most conspicuous preparation and sale of food were concentrated in the centre of the city, where its main bazaars and great mansions were located. Thus, the centres of imperial power display were also the sites where food was most visibly bought, sold and consumed. But it was present in less visible ways throughout the city. The suburbs acted as focal points for the supply of raw food material to the main city.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 58.

¹³² Ibid, p. 60.

Studies of Fatehpur Sikri have mostly focussed on the palace-complex rather than on the larger cityscape as a whole.¹³³ Nevertheless, an analysis of some of the findings that have come out of research on this sandstone city reveals much about the manner in which the evolution of food practices in Akbar’s reign may be architecturally located. One location of food in Fatehpur Sikri that has been identified by Athar Abbas Rizvi is the ‘*ābdārkhāna* and fruit store’ where supplies of food and beverages for the emperor were stored.¹³⁴ This was located to the west of the structure called the *hujra-i anūptalāo* (see Figure 1.3). It thus enjoyed a fairly central location within the imperial palace-complex.

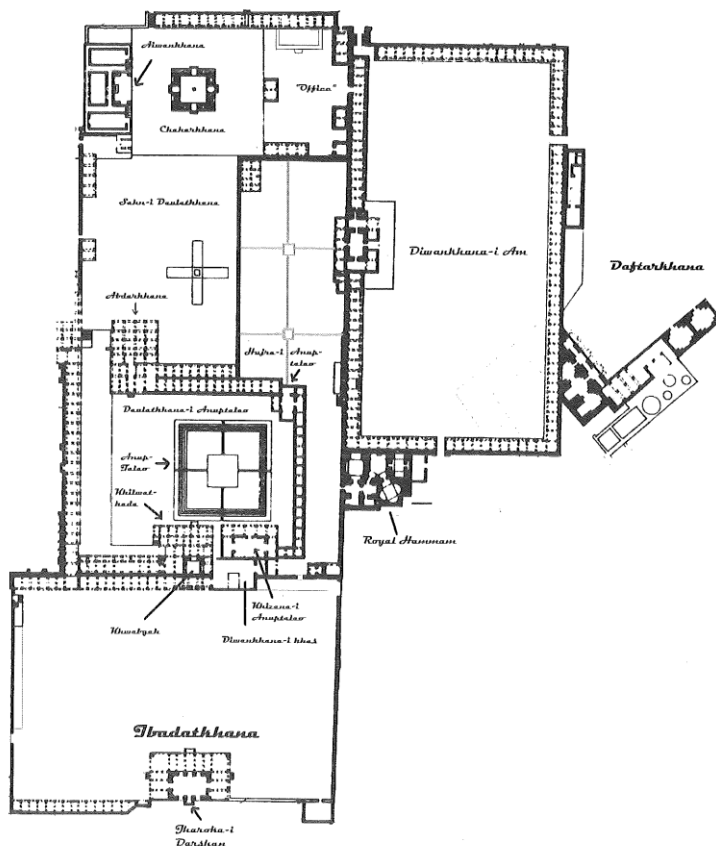


Figure 1.3: The *daulatkhāna*, Fatehpur Sikri (note the location of the *ābdārkhāna*)

Another locus of food was the emperor’s dining hall. Ali Nadeem Rezavi identifies the location of this room with the structure popularly known as ‘Sunaharā Makān’ or ‘Maryam’s quarters’.¹³⁵ This structure, as Rezavi points out, though outside the *daulatkhāna* was not yet

¹³³ See for instance, Michael Brand and Glenn Lowry, ed., *Fatehpur Sikri* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987); Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹³⁴ Cited in Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited*, p. 61.

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp. 64-65.

a part of the *ḥaramsarā* or women's quarters (see Figure 1.4).¹³⁶ It provided access to both the harem and *daulatkhāna*. This structure was also close to the *ābdārkhāna*. If this identification is correct, then this would be where the emperor dined alone: close to the harem and yet outside it. This hall, as Rezavi points out, was cordoned off from the women's quarters, although it could be visited by members of the seraglio.¹³⁷ The room was located between the spaces where affairs of state were conducted, and the private quarters of the women's apartments. Thus, both literally as well as figuratively, its location would appear to have been at the interstices of the public and the private. These are, indeed, problematic distinctions in the Mughal context, where the household seamlessly blended with the state. The dining hall of the emperor was symbolically at the very epicentre of this edifice. It was richly decorated with murals of male and female figures that embodied indigenous, Persian and European influences. Many of the paintings depict court scenes, hunting and battle scenes as well as polo games.¹³⁸ Such depictions served to highlight the imperial nature of the room and conveyed messages of heroism and power.¹³⁹ These painted scenes would have perfectly complemented the messages of status and power that were broadcast by the Emperor's dining spectacle itself.

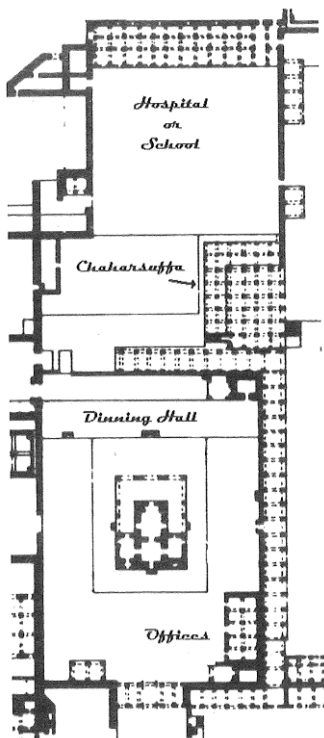


Figure 1.4: Location of the dining hall, Fatehpur Sikri

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 65.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 65.

¹³⁹ Rizvi and Flynn suggest that these depictions may have been from the *Hamzanāma* or a similar work. Cited in Ibid.

Rezavi identifies the kitchen (*maṭbakḥ*) as located down a flight of stairs from a chamber on the ceiling of the *daulatkhāna-i ʿām*, which was located on the north-eastern corner of the quadrangle that presumably housed the offices of the *daulatkhāna-i khāṣ* (figure 1.5). He further speculates that the chamber on top of the *daulatkhāna-i ʿām* was associated with the kitchen establishment, and may have served as the office of the *daroghā-i maṭbakḥ* (superintendent of the kitchen establishment) to seal the victuals prior to serving them.¹⁴⁰ From a practical point of view, this meant that the kitchen establishment was located close to the dining hall and not too far from the *ābdārkhāna*, where the beverage and fruit stores were kept. In the houses of most notables, the *maṭbakḥ* and *ābdārkhāna* were located in the women’s quarters (*zanānkhāna*).¹⁴¹ However in the case of the imperial place, it seems to have been located outside the harem. It lay close to both the bureaucratic and administrative offices of the *daulatkhāna*, as well as to the emperor’s dining hall – evocative of the fuzzy nature of ‘public’ and ‘household’ spaces, and also probably of the symbolic role of food as a ‘link’ in this configuration.

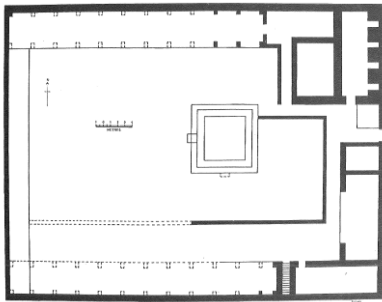


Figure 1.5: The *maṭbakḥ* (kitchen establishment) at Fatehpur Sikri

Excavations at Fatehpur Sikri have also revealed a series of structures that appear to be office-cum residences (*yātishkhāna*, lit. guard room).¹⁴² On the basis of its location, the one near the kitchen has been identified as the *yātishkhāna-i daroghā-i maṭbakḥ*, or the *yātishkhāna* of the kitchen superintendent (see Figure 1.6). This structure contained four cooking platforms (*bhaṭṭīs*), which used wood as fuel.¹⁴³ A staircase adjacent to this room led to the *daulatkhāna-i ʿām*, from where Rezavi notes that food must have been supplied to the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 77.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 95.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 94.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 106.

palaces. An inscription identifies the building as the *yātishkḥāna-i Muḥammad Bāqir Sufrachī*. This structure contains no residential features.¹⁴⁴

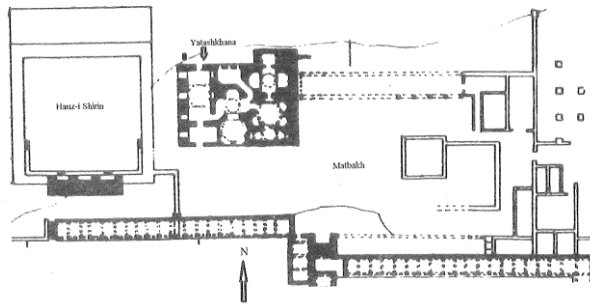


Figure 1.6: Yātishkḥāna-i Muḥammad Bāqir Sufrachī (Note the location of the *maṭbakh* or kitchen)

All these structures were part of the elaborate kitchen establishment of the imperial palace, which served both practical as well as symbolic purposes. Abū-l Faḏl writes of the regimented fashion in which the imperial kitchen was supposed to have functioned:

Trustworthy and experienced people are appointed for this work and all competent servants of the court are resolved to perform well whatever service they have undertaken. Their head is assisted by the *nāẓim-i kul* himself. His Majesty has assigned to this exalted man (*farohīda mard*) the affairs of state (*shughl-i salṭanat*), but especially this important work [of the imperial kitchen]. Notwithstanding all this, his Majesty is not unmindful of keeping a vigil (*dīdbānī*) [on the workings of the kitchen]. He makes a zealous and sincere man the *mīr bakāwal*, upon whose insight and propriety the success of the department depends, and appoints several impeccable persons [lit. impeccable gems] to assist him. There are apart from these, stewards (*bakāwal*)¹⁴⁵, and also persons of fortunate character appointed as treasurers for the cash and stores as well as a clever writer...

...The servants of the palace again taste the food, and arrange the dishes on the tablecloth; and when after sometime his Majesty commences to dine, the table servants sit opposite him in attendance; first the share of the dervishes is set apart, when his Majesty commences with milk or yoghurt. After he has dined, he prostates himself in prayer. The *mīr bakāwal* is always in attendance. The

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁴⁵ 'Bakāwal' might also be translated as 'cook' or 'head-cook'. See John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1884) [Available online at: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/platts/>], p. 159; °Alī Akbar Dihkḥudā, *Lughatnāma* (in 14 vols.), ed. Ja'far Shahīdī and Muḥammad Mu'īn (Tehran: Mu'assasa-i Intishārāt u Chāp-i Dānishgāh-i Tihārān, 1993-94), p. 4263. Blochmann's translation has 'tasters' [*The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 60]. However, 'cook' is unlikely to be the original meaning of the word in the text, since the terms used for 'cooks' in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* are *pazandagān* (plural) and *bāwarchī*, whereas *bakāwal* appears as a separate term. See Abū-l Faḏl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 54.

dishes are taken away according to the above list. Some victuals are also kept half ready, should they be called for.¹⁴⁶

Irrespective of whether Abū-l Fazl's statement represents hyperbole or not, it underscores the ideological basis of the physical layout of the kitchen establishment at Fatehpur Sikri. Abū-l Fazl makes it a point to note that the *nāẓim-i kul*, normally in charge of matters relating to the affairs of state, was also given responsibilities pertaining to this department. This again suggests the manner in which the state and the household were fused, a fact that is starkly manifested in spatial terms in the plan of Fatehpur Sikri. The elaborate efficiency of the imperial kitchen as described by Abū-l Fazl above serves to highlight the prestige and importance of this department as a central aspect of the imperial household and state establishment.

Another notable feature of Mughal cities and their environs were the presence of fruit orchards. Mughal emperors made significant efforts to plant orchards, and in particular, to introduce foreign and exotic fruits to the subcontinent. Bābur, who missed the fruits of his native land, recorded in his memoirs that he had made efforts to plant melons and grapes in Agra's Hasht Bihisht garden. He writes that he was "particularly pleased that melons and grapes could turn out so well in Hindustan."¹⁴⁷ Likewise, Abū-l Fazl writes in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* that:

His Majesty looks upon fruits as one of the greatest gifts of the Creator, and pays much attention to them. The horticulturalists of Iran and Tūrān have, therefore, settled here, and the cultivation of trees is in a flourishing state. Melons and grapes have become very plentiful and excellent; and water-melons, peaches, almonds, pistachios, pomegranates, etc. are everywhere to be found.¹⁴⁸

Akbar's horticultural efforts are also noted and appreciated by his son Jahāngīr, who writes: "during the reign of his Majesty 'Arsh Āshyānī [Akbar], most fruits of the *wilāyat* [Central Asia and Iran] that were not in India were introduced."¹⁴⁹ He notes that melons, mangoes and other fruits of good quality were grown in Agra and its vicinity, and adds that several

¹⁴⁶ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 53-55. *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 58-60. The *Ā'in-i Akbarī* was completed when the imperial court had moved to Lahore, but its ideological arguments and claims are still relevant here.

¹⁴⁷ Bābur, *The Baburnama*, p. 458.

¹⁴⁸ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 67; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 68. Blochmann's translation has been adopted here.

¹⁴⁹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzūk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 4; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 24. Thackston's translation has been adopted here.

thousand *anānās* (pineapple), a fruit “to be found in the Frank’s ports” were annually cultivated in Agra’s Gulafshān garden.¹⁵⁰

The elite continued to have an interest in horticulture beyond the life of the Empire. A deed of bequest document (*waqfnāma*) dated 1 Zū al-ḥijja 1221 AH (9 February 1807) from Hyderabad illustrates the continued significance of fruits trees in the suburbs of major cities, as well as the property interests of elite women in some of these horticultural investments. The document is executed by Mīr Mubārak °Alī, son of Mīr Jīwan, on behalf of his client Zeb al-Nisā° Begam, daughter of Mīr Rustam °Alī and wife of Nawāb Mīr °Ālam Bahādur. This legal document states that the executor’s client had purchased a certain amount of land in the suburb of village °Aṭāpūr in *ḥawelī* Hyderabad, *sarkār* Muḥammad Nagar in the *ṣūba* (province) of Hyderabad, which contained (among other things) a rice-field (*shālī zār*), wells (*chāh-hā*) and mango trees (*ashjār-i amba*). Of this land, the executor’s client wished to bequest a certain amount for public welfare and charitable purposes.¹⁵¹

The interest of the elite in horticulture went beyond its mere investment value. As will be seen in the next section on gift-giving, fruits had a special cultural, and often by extension, political significance. Of these, fruits of foreign origin were usually held to be exotic and rare, which increased their value. The seventeenth century French traveler Francois Bernier writes that despite the high cost of these fruits, “...nothing is considered so great a treat; it forms the chief expense of the *Omrahs* [notables], and I have frequently known my *Agah* [Dānishmand Kḥān] spend twenty crowns on fruit for his breakfast.”¹⁵² However, some Indian fruits, such as the mango, were highly esteemed as well. The cultivation of fruits in the orchards and gardens of major cities and their suburbs was considered a notable enhancement of the landscape by the Mughal emperors, and this was probably emulated by the elite of the empire.

The manner in which food may be mapped out on the space of the city is reflective of the many aspects of political and social life that are touched by food. Importantly, the plans of cities built by Mughal emperors echoed their ideologies of legitimisation. Even the suburbs, with their key role in the cities’ food supply lines were an important aspect of this radiating food map. Fruit orchards were a manifestation of Mughal attempts to bring the desirable and the exotic to the neighbourhoods of their cities. While the ideology of Empire may be read in

¹⁵⁰ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 4; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 24. Thackston’s translation has been adopted here.

¹⁵¹ Waqfnāma - Hyderabad Acc. No. NAI 2536/1, Document at the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁵² Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 249. This and a few other references cited in this section were previously discussed in Narayanan. “A Culture of Food”, pp. 54-58.

the very stones of Mughal cities, its underlying traditions were also visible in customs of feasting and gift-giving. These will be examined in the next section.

Gift-Giving¹⁵³ and the Political Symbolism of Food

He [Āṣaf K̄hān] invited mee to dinner some dayes after (but naming none), where he promised to be merry and drinck wyne with me as a curtesye. So I took leave. About two howers after he sent his steward with 20 musk-mellons for his first present. *Doubtlesse they suppose our felicitye lyes in the palate, for all that I ever received was eatable and drinkable—yet no aurum potabile.*¹⁵⁴

Thomas Roe's frustrated comment quoted above illustrates the routine manner in which food items were gifted, as well as his inability to fathom the true significance of these practices. To some extent, it is also possible that Roe's complaints were intended to provide a justification to his European audience for his own failures in negotiating the arena of diplomatic gift-giving at the Mughal court.¹⁵⁵

In a letter to Sir Thomas Smythe dated 15 February 1616, Roe complains of his travails in negotiating Mughal gift-giving traditions:

...for I have eaven stript my selfe of all my best, eaven wearing implements, to stopp gapps; and yet noe man hath presented mee with any thing but hoggs flesh, goates and sheepe, no, not the valewe of one *pice*...¹⁵⁶

What Roe did not seem to realise was that the value of food as gift items went far beyond their actual cost or material value. Food when gifted, shared and presented carried certain meanings that drew their significance from a variety of sources, which will be examined in greater detail in this section.

¹⁵³ There is no significant work on food gifts in the Mughal context. However, for general discussions of Mughal gift-giving traditions, see Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 100-106; Kim Siebenhüner, "Approaching Diplomatic and Courtly Gift-Giving in Europe and Mughal India: Shared Practices and Cultural Diversity", *The Medieval History Journal* 16, no. 2 (October 2013), pp. 525-546.

¹⁵⁴ Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* [1926 edition], p. 152. Italics added.

¹⁵⁵ Siebenhüner, "Approaching Diplomatic and Courtly Gift-Giving in Europe and Mughal India: Shared Practices and Cultural Diversity", p. 533, argues that Roe's problem was not an unfamiliarity with diplomatic gift-giving practices around the world, but that his employer, the English East India Company "was an economic enterprise that invested too little in symbolic communication with the Mughal court". In her article as a whole (ibid, pp. 525-546), Siebenhüner argues that gift-giving traditions were common to social interactions and the negotiation of power differentials both in Europe and in Asia, but that since Mughal *manṣabdārs* – unlike the European nobility – did not have hereditary privileges, they were more dependent on their patrons, and an elaborate system of gifts developed from this circumstance.

¹⁵⁶ Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* [1926 edition], p. 117.

Mughal traditions of convivial feasting and gift-giving were a confluence of various traditions: Timurid, Persian as well as various other customary practices indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. The gifting and sharing of food could at various times convey messages of friendship and goodwill, or of status and power. The location, occasion, the mode of presentation of a food and the nature of the food item itself – all had a bearing on the messages conveyed and the socio-political symbolism engendered. The identity and social status of the giver and receiver were also crucial to the construction of these meanings.

In the early chronicles of the Mughal Empire covering the reigns of Bābur and Humāyūn, we already come across several instances where food is served, shared, gifted or presented. A striking instance of the importance of food in political intercourse within the Indo-Iranian cultural ecumene may be noticed in an alleged copy of the edict (*farmān*) issued by Shāh Ṭahmāsp I of Iran to the Governor of Herat concerning the arrangements to be made in order to welcome Humāyūn. What is striking about this *farmān* is the detailed attention that it devotes to food and feasting arrangements. Specific instructions appear to be issued as to the dishes to be served to Humāyūn's party. For instance, at one point the *farmān* dictates that:

Every day have *halwā* and delicious beverages with white bread (*nān-hā-i safed*) kneaded with oil and milk and containing caraway seeds, poppy seeds and nuts – the addition of which makes bread fine and wholesome (*laṭīf o nāfi*^c) – prepared and delivered to the emperor, to the members of his retinue and to the servants of the court...when they arrive have served rose sherbet prepared with lemon syrup and chilled with ice and snow. After the sherbet have served marmalades of Mashhad apples, watermelon, plums etc. with white-flour breads (*nān-hā-i safed maida*) made in accordance with prior instructions, and try to have all beverages passed before the emperor's sight, and have them mixed with rose-water and ambergris so that they will taste and smell good. Serve five hundred dishes of various foods everyday.¹⁵⁷

The above description is clearly full of hyperbole and cannot be taken literally. But apart from the probable purchase that this document may have had at the time of Humāyūn's sojourn, it is equally or perhaps more important to note what it meant for the readers of the histories composed in Akbar's time in which this *farmān* is reproduced. A copy of this document appears in Bāyazīd's account, and is reproduced in almost identical form in the *Akbarnāma*.¹⁵⁸ The reproduction of this document seeks to recount a history where the Shāh

¹⁵⁷ Bāyazīd Bayāt, "Tārīkh-i Humāyūn", in *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, Persian text, p. 8, translation, p. 5.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, translation, p. 4, translator's footnote no.1.

of Iran treated Humāyūn as a great sovereign and eagerly offered him assistance to regain his kingdom. In this narrative, food plays a key role as a signifier of the elaborate hospitality laid out by the Persian emperor in honour of Humāyūn, and thus highlights the latter's importance. This served an important dynastic purpose in legitimising the Mughal Empire that Akbar was attempting to place on firmer foundations. The elaborate and hyperbolic description of the food items in the above quotation may have served the purpose of emphasising the Persian emperor's hospitality in its own time. But its reproduction in Akbar's reign was an attempt to brush over the stains on dynastic honour caused by the Humāyūn's defeat to Sher Shāh in 1540. The emphasis on bread made from white flour, expensive aromatics such as ambergris, as well as the exaggerated reference to "five hundred dishes of various foods" to be served everyday to Humāyūn and his party would have been read and understood in this context.

Certain foods had a particular significance. Both Timurid and Indian traditions appear to have placed a high value on sugar and fruit presented as gifts. Jauhar Āftābchī tells us that when Humāyūn was in the territory of Māldeo on the frontier of Jaisalmer and sent him a *farmān* (edict) asking for help, the latter apologised and sent a bit of fruit, but no assistance was forthcoming.¹⁵⁹ Such symbolic uses of fruit seem endemic in the sources. It is again Jauhar's account that informs us that when Shāh Ḥusain Mirzā wanted a truce with the emperor, he sent some sugar and fruit.¹⁶⁰ On another occasion, he tells us, Humāyūn sent a horse, a robe and a cone of sugar to his brother Kāmran as recompense for a slight.¹⁶¹ Roe reports that following his entertainment by Jamāl al-Dīn, his host gave him a present "as is the manner when one is envited" consisting of "five cases of sugar candy dressed with muscke, and one lofe of most fine sugar white as snow, about 50 *li*. weight: desiering mee to accept of 100 of such against my goeing".¹⁶² This traditional parting gift – consisting of something sweet and valuable – was once again representative of goodwill and friendship.

From the above instances, it is apparent that fruit was associated with sugar and sweetness.¹⁶³ The symbolic messages it conveyed were those of goodwill, recompense or amelioration. It could act as a gesture of friendship and truce, or as a symbol of apology. In

¹⁵⁹ Jauhar Āftābchī, "Tadhkiratu l-wāqī'āt", in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. I, Persian text, p. 120, translation, p. 105.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, Persian text, p. 131, translation, p. 114.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, Persian text, p. 172, translation, p. 143.

¹⁶² Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* [1926 edition], p. 213.

¹⁶³ Unfortunately, there exist no systematic studies devoted to analysing the significance of sugar and sweetness in gift-giving traditions. In contemporary South Asia, sweets are often distributed on festive or joyous occasions. Sugar, sweets, fresh fruit as well as dry fruit are placed before deities as offerings, and are also presented to guests, hosts, neighbours, friends and superiors. Sweetness is thus associated with celebration, auspiciousness and goodwill.

the case of the ruler of Māldeo sending fruit to Humāyūn, the gift was evidently meant to sweeten a message that otherwise offered no succour. Bāyazīd recounts an incident when one K̤h̤wājā Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd was sent Kolāb melons and grapes to assuage hurt feelings.¹⁶⁴ The kind of fruit sent as a gift also had a bearing on its symbolic value. Expensive foreign fruit and esteemed varieties were more valued and respected. They lent greater weight to the symbolic message they were meant to convey.

Many instances of the presentation of fruit as gifts later in the history of the Mughal Empire may also be culled from the sources. For instance, we may once again allow Roe to bear testimony:

At night Etiman-Dowlett [I^ctimād-ud-Daulah], father of Asaph Chan [Āṣaf K̤h̤ān] and Normall [Nūrmaḥal] sent me a basquet of muskemillions with this complement, that they came from the hands of the Queene his daughter, whose servant was the bearer.¹⁶⁵

Other contemporary witnesses relate similar instances. For instance, Tavernier informs us that:

...before my departure, he [Shāyista K̤h̤ān] sent me a large basketful of apples. It was one of six which Shāhjahān had sent to him; they had come from the Kingdom of Kashmir, and there was also a large Persian melon in the basket. All taken together might value for 100 rupees, and I presented them to the wife of the Dutch Commander.¹⁶⁶

Both the content and the language of the above passage exhibit the high value that fruits held both in terms of actual price and the manner in which they were esteemed. The tone of Tavernier's description, the detail with which he describes the gift, and particularly the very cost of the fruits presented suggest that all these factors contributed to the estimation of a gift. While gifts of food were not esteemed merely for their material worth, the high cost of a particular gift did also have a bearing on its symbolic value. Much the same aspect concerning the high estimation of fruits as gifts, both for their monetary and exotic value is found in the following statement of Manrique-

His [Āṣaf K̤h̤ān's] favours were added to by his sending me, two days later, to the house in which I lodged, a present of magnificent and highly valued fruit, amongst which were two huge Persian melons, which had been brought from three hundred leagues distant, and as being rarities and also fruit of unusually fine flavour, were worth twenty to thirty rupees. These eatables were accompanied by a purse

¹⁶⁴ Bāyazīd Bayāt, "Tārīkh-i Humāyūn", in *Three Memoirs of Homyun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, Persian text, p. 80, translation, pp. 62.

¹⁶⁵ Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* [1926 edition], p. 150.

¹⁶⁶ Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. V. Ball, ed. William Crooke [2 vols. bound in one] (New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2000) (first published, London, 1925), Vol. I, pp. 18-19.

of three hundred rupees, which is equal to one hundred and fifty pesos.¹⁶⁷

Apart from fruits, hunted meats also had a particular significance when presented as gifts. The meanings that they carried, however, were slightly different. The sources of the reign of Jahāngīr – the consummate hunter – are particularly revealing in this respect. Roe, for instance, tells us of an instance when Jahāngīr gave him a very fat wild boar to eat saying that “he kyld it with his owne hand, and that therefor I [i.e. Roe] should eate it merrilye and make good cheare.”¹⁶⁸ On another occasion, during a meeting with Jahāngīr, he narrates that the Emperor, “having venison of divers sorts before him” presented him (Roe) with half a stag, saying that he (Roe) should eat half the stag, and see the other half bestowed on his (Jahāngīr’s) wives, as Jahāngīr had killed this stag himself.¹⁶⁹ The fact that an animal was killed by Jahāngīr himself clearly made the gift a valuable one – something that Roe did not quite understand. Other instances from the *Jahāngīrnāma* suggest something similar. The meat of animals hunted by Jahāngīr were cooked and fed to the needy. On one occasion, Jahāngīr ordered that the meat of a hunted *nīlgāv* (Hin. *nīlgāy*; antelope of the species *Boselaphus tragocamelus*) be cooked as food for the poor. Almost two hundred people reportedly gathered to eat the meat, and Jahāngīr adds that he distributed money amongst them with his own hands.¹⁷⁰ This act of benevolence not only had the advantage of turning hunting into something of a virtuous act, but also fits into a familiar pattern through which Mughal emperors traditionally bestowed their beneficence. For instance, a *khil‘at* was a robe that had been ritually worn by the emperor before being granted to someone as a mark of favour.¹⁷¹ The meat of an animal killed by the Emperor may have fulfilled a similar role. Apart from this, the act of distributing food also recalls subcontinental traditions of *dān* or ritual charity. Supporting evidence for this comes from a Mughal miniature (ca. 1620 or later) that depicts Jahāngīr dispensing food at Ajmer. The painting shows a number of poor men and women receiving food under the Emperor’s watchful eye.¹⁷²

Other items that were particularly valued as gifts included wine and the betel leaf. The particular significance of wine as a gift and as a symbol in Mughal cultural discourse will be

¹⁶⁷ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643*, Vol. II, p. 211.

¹⁶⁸ Roe, *The Embassy of Thomas Roe to India* [1926 edition], p. 220. Jahāngīr demanded the tusks back because (according to Roe) the boar had been of a very large size.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 352.

¹⁷⁰ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 145; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 153.

¹⁷¹ On the role of the *khil‘at*, see the essays in Stewart Gordon, ed., *Robes of Honour: Khil‘at in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁷² *Jahāngīr dispensing food at Ajmer*, The Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, 29.6257, reproduced in *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston p. 154.

analysed in chapter 5. Here, I will focus on some of the salient aspects of the betel leaf's cultural history and its significance as an item of gift within the Mughal context.

The betel leaf comes from the betel vine (*Piper betle*), which belongs to the same family as black pepper. In South Asia, the leaves are often prepared with a variety of condiments such as sliced areca nut, slaked lime, coriander, clove, aniseed, cardamom, gold and silver.¹⁷³ In early modern Persian sources, it is referred to either as *pān* (Hindi) or *tambūl*. The *Fawā'id al-Insān* (1590) explains that the latter name is Arabic in origin and has variant spellings (*tambūl* or *tāmūl* or *tāmbūl*).¹⁷⁴ Most probably, the Arabic name was derived from Tamil as a result of trade links between peninsular India and the Arab lands. The late seventeenth century English traveller John Fryer suggests that the betel nut was an important South Indian item of export to Surat, and we may assume that it thence found its way to the northern part of the subcontinent.¹⁷⁵ The betel leaf was also supposed to possess various medicinal qualities. The *Fawā'id al-Insān* mentions the betel leaf's refreshing qualities. The text also notes that it strengthens the roots of teeth (*beḵḵ-i dandān az ān shawad muḵkam*) as well as increasing gladness and reducing sadness (*farah afzāyad wa bekāhad ḡham*).¹⁷⁶ Abū-l-Faḏl says of the betel leaf:

The eating of the leaf renders the breath agreeable, and repasts odorous. It strengthens the gums, and makes the hungry satisfied, and the satisfied hungry.¹⁷⁷

The offering of betel leaves conveyed various messages that were of significance in the Mughal cultural realm. The social significance of the betel leaf is apparent from the description of the Englishman Peter Mundy dating from 1632: "There is noe vesitt, banquetts, without it, with which they passe away the tyme, as with Tobaccoe in England; but this is very wholesome, sweet in smell, and stronge in Taste. To Strangers, it is most comonly given att partinge, soe that when they send for Paane, it is a sign of dispeedinge, or that it is time to be gon."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ P. Guha, "Betel Leaf: The Neglected Green Gold of India", *Journal of Human Ecology* 19, no. 2 (2006), p. 87. List of condiments based on contemporary observations.

¹⁷⁴ MS "Fawā'id al-Insān", microfilm no. 26-10, Hakim Zillur Rahman Collection, Noor Microfilm Centre (NMC), New Delhi. MS bears pagination in Persian numerals, which are cited in the footnotes that follow. Here, see p. 1.

¹⁷⁵ John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years Travels Begun 1672 and Finished 1681* (London: R. I. Chisewell, 1698), p. 52.

¹⁷⁶ "Fawā'id al-Insān", microfilm NMC no. 26-10, p. 112.

¹⁷⁷ Abū-l-Faḏl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I ed. Blochmann, p. 80; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 77. Blochmann's translation has been adopted here.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia*, Vol. II, ed. Richard Temple (London: Haklyut Society, 1914), pp. 96-97.

As Mundy's description suggests, the betel leaf was particularly favoured by the well off, and was often elaborately prepared with numerous condiments. It played a particularly significant role at social events, with Mundy noting that it was often offered as a parting gift. Manucci provides a similar account of this herb and also notes its social uses. He states that the betel leaf is "very medicinal and is eaten by everybody in India".¹⁷⁹ He also mentions that the chewing of betel leaves was very popular among women in India who were "unable to remain many minutes without having it in their mouths".¹⁸⁰ Of the social uses of the betel leaf, Manucci writes:

It is an exceedingly common practice in India to offer *betel* leaf by way of politeness, chiefly among the great men, who, when anyone pays them a visit, offer betel at the time of leaving as a mark of goodwill, and of the estimation in which they hold the person who is visiting them. It would be a great piece of rudeness to refuse it.¹⁸¹

Bernier writes that the betel leaf, after having undergone some preparation is given as a mark of royal favour.¹⁸² Manrique narrates the manner in which Āṣaf K̄hān presented him with the betel leaf accompanied by much ceremony with his own hand, which as Manrique was later informed, was considered to be a "rare and highly esteemed favour".¹⁸³ Jauhar Āftābchī records that Humāyūn offered betel leaves to eleven people who came to pay homage to him following his brother Kāmṛān's surrender.¹⁸⁴ Thus, it acted as a symbol of their accepting the authority of Humāyūn over themselves. In discussing the symbolism of the betel leaf, David Curley notes that in common with other gifts of honour, royal gifts of the betel leaf symbolised participation in an asymmetrical process by which a ruler 'marked' the bodies of his subjects, in the process both honouring them as well as subordinating them. However, the specific property of the betel leaf as a gift was that it also involved a voluntary 'taking up' of the betel leaf, thus implying at least a theoretical possibility of the offering being refused. This would symbolise turning down the authority of the ruler.¹⁸⁵

Extant works have noted the important role played by gift-giving in Mughal etiquette and ceremony. As Harbans Mukhia explains, while the giving and receiving of gifts was already a part of Timurid tradition, this had not been obligatory. It was Akbar who

¹⁷⁹ Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogol India 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. I (London: John Murray, 1907), p. 63.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 364.

¹⁸³ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique*, Vol. II, p. 209.

¹⁸⁴ Jauhar Āftābchī, "Tadhkiratu l-wāqī'āt", in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. I, Persian text, p. 191, translation, p. 156.

¹⁸⁵ David L. Curley, "Voluntary Relationships and Royal Gifts of *Pān* in Mughal Bengal", in *Robes of Honour: Khil'at in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India*, ed. Gordon, p. 51.

systematised gift-giving and made it mandatory for anyone bearing a petition to present a gift. This evolution represented a systematisation of symbolic status differentiation at the Mughal Court.¹⁸⁶

However, little to no attention has been paid to the meanings and role of food as gifts in Mughal court culture. A strong case can be made that food gifts represented a unique subset within Mughal gift-giving traditions.¹⁸⁷ This was partly because of the inherently perishable nature of food. The material value of a food item given as a gift may have been significant at the moment of its presentation, but became a mere memory soon after. Nevertheless, the symbolism of food given as gifts had its own significance, which depended on the nature of the food item being gifted as well as on the occasion. As has been discussed above, fruits, hunted meats and the betel leaf each carried their own set of symbolic meanings that fit the occasion on which the gift was made and received. It may also be argued that food represented a certain intimacy between the giver and the receiver, since food is taken into the body and eventually becomes a part of the receiver's person. The manner in which the gifting of food items evolved must be seen in context of the overall development of Mughal ideologies of legitimisation and the practices they entailed. In the final section, I will attempt to contextualise the role of food practices in the construction of political ideologies both in Mughal India and in other parts of the medieval and early modern world.

Food, Ideology and the State: The Mughal Empire in Cross-Cultural Context

Although dedicated studies of the symbolism of food in the construction of royal ideologies are few and far between, there is a trickle of useful analyses that aid a cross-cultural understanding of the kind that I have proposed above. Firstly, extant studies have shown the importance of certain foods as status markers in hierarchical societies, and particularly in those with evolved state systems. For instance, Ken Albala shows in his book *Food in Early Modern Europe* that spices and venison conveyed messages of status, power and wealth in the early modern European context because of their cost and exclusivity.¹⁸⁸ Spices could only be afforded by the wealthy, and only the nobility enjoyed the leisure and

¹⁸⁶ Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁷ For arguments on the uniqueness of food gifts see C. M. Woolgar, "Gifts of Food in Late Medieval England", *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 1 (2011), pp. 6-18.

¹⁸⁸ Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 16, 64.

legal rights to hunt the game from which venison was obtained.¹⁸⁹ This is similar to what has been illustrated above in the Mughal context with reference to feasting and gift-giving.

Of course, every cultural context produces its own set of ‘luxury’ and ‘exclusive’ foods that engender specific meanings of status and power. Felicity Heal, in analysing the phenomenon of food gifts among noble and gentry households in early modern England, sees it as a means of understanding the nature of local political relationships.¹⁹⁰ Unlike the Mughal case, food gifts in early modern England did not play a significant role in court life.¹⁹¹ They never acquired the relatively codified character that they did in the Mughal Empire from Akbar’s time onwards. Nevertheless, there are similarities between food gifts in the early modern English context and in Mughal India. As in the Mughal case, Heal underlines that food gifts are different in that their social value far outweighs their material value. She concludes that food gifts were crucial in articulating relationships and in providing for wants that could not be satisfied by the market.¹⁹² Certain fruits and meats were particularly valued as gifts by the English elite. Venison was a status-food that enjoyed particular esteem as a gift.¹⁹³ Thus, as in the Mughal case, specific foods emerged as favoured gifts. Christopher Woolgar’s examination of food gifts in late medieval England reinforces many of Heal’s observations and ultimately leads to the conclusion that food gifts played a crucial role in cementing social relationships, which cannot be accounted for by the value of individual gifts alone. Woolgar points out the food gifts were prevalent at all levels of society, and that small gifts are often omitted from the historical record.¹⁹⁴

In her book *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France*, Natalie Zemon Davis writes that food was the primary component of the gift traffic among villagers of the same status.¹⁹⁵ This included items such as fruits and vegetables from the women’s gardens, cakes, honey, extra fish from the catch or a rabbit.¹⁹⁶ However, food also recorded a significant presence in the gift registers of gentry and noble households; these were received both from social subordinates as well as from those of comparable social rank. Such gifts included wine, boar,

¹⁸⁹ Ibid: on spices (p. 16); on venison (p. 64).

¹⁹⁰ Felicity Heal, “Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England”, *Past and Present* 199, no. 1 (May 2008) pp. 41-70, esp. p. 45.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 70.

¹⁹² Ibid, p. 70.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 57.

¹⁹⁴ Woolgar, “Gifts of Food in Late Medieval England”.

¹⁹⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 34.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

kid, venison and fruits.¹⁹⁷ Food items also figured prominently among the gifts exchanged by city neighbours, wine being a particularly common gift.¹⁹⁸ Davis analyses the manner in which gifts of all kinds mediated and oiled social relations both within and across levels of social hierarchy.¹⁹⁹ However, despite her anecdotes being peppered with instances of food gifts, she does not analyse their specific meanings and significance. Nevertheless, her account does illustrate the differential ways in which food gifts flowed between social equals and in situations of social hierarchy. That social status was crucial in determining the meaning and symbolism of a food gift is probably universal, and is certainly in evidence in the gifting customs of the Mughal court.

The other major and related aspect that has been discussed in this chapter pertains to the evolution of distinct food practices as part of a concerted effort to develop an exclusive imperial ideology of power. In the Mughal case, this involved a movement away from a *ghaza*²⁰⁰ ethos of conviviality and communal feasting to more tightly restricted and sequestered feasting customs in the high Mughal period. This may be compared to a similar progression, albeit with some notable distinctions in the Ottoman case.²⁰¹ Kjetil Fosshagen has noted the shift in feasting customs as part of his analysis of power and its ideological framework in the Ottoman context.²⁰² Fosshagen's analysis is based on a synthesis of past studies of the Ottoman Empire rather than on original research. Based on these, he concludes that the early Ottoman polity was primarily an inclusive tribal polity, with continuities from earlier Central Asian traditions.²⁰³ As the early Ottoman state developed, it integrated aspects of its original tribal polity with bureaucratic state structures derived from the Byzantine and early Islamic states.²⁰⁴ Parallel with this development came a shift in feasting customs. Under the earlier tribal polity, the sultan was merely first among equals. Accordingly, sultans or nomadic leaders hosted large communal meals, and shared their booty according to specific

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 35, 40, 41.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 35.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, see esp. p. 42.

²⁰⁰ The term *ghaza* represents holy war, and those who engaged in such wars were *ghāzīs*. But in a tribal-like social context, a *ghaza* ethos engendered a social group or collective that engaged in raid and plunder, and shared the spoils. The ideological basis of *ghaza* warfare should not be underestimated, but economic and social factors also played an important role in its survival and maintenance.

²⁰¹ A similar comparison with respect to Bābur's time and the early Ottomans is also made in Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, p. 44.

²⁰² Kjetil Fosshagen, "The Perfect Sovereign: The Sacralized Power of the Ottoman Sultan", in Knut M. Rio and Olaf H. Smedal, *Hierarchy: Persistence and Transformation in Social Formations* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 183-210.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 187.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 189.

tribal norms.²⁰⁵ The development of the mature Ottoman Empire represented a marriage of the personal and the bureaucratic forms of power, which entailed a progression to very different forms of royal etiquette and feasting customs.

Drawing on Max Weber's concept of 'sultanism' as a particularly strong form of patrimonialism, Fosshagen suggests that the Ottoman model was based on a 'sacralisation' of the sultan's power.²⁰⁶ In ritual terms, this meant an isolation of the sultan in place of the older convivial sharing of space.²⁰⁷ Communal banquets continued, but with significant changes that were aimed at highlighting the power differential between the sultan and the other attendees. The high officials and soldiers who were invited to the banquet gathered in the middle court to show their loyalty to the sultan. The latter did not actually appear before them, but remained hidden behind a latticed window from where he watched the proceedings. As Fosshagen notes: "The egalitarian redistributive ritual of nomadic origin thus continued, while the sultan withdrew from direct social exchange."²⁰⁸ Thus, the Ottoman model retained the tribal communal meal, but emphasised the exclusivity of the sultan's power by placing a distance between him and the elite of the empire.

A comparative analysis between the Ottoman and Mughal histories of feasting is revealing. The Mughal Empire witnessed a similar progression from a *ghaza*-oriented culture of conviviality and shared space to an ethos where the power and exclusive identity of the *pādishāh* or *shāhanshāh* (emperor) was emphasised. As pointed out by Cemal Kafadar, the Ottoman rulers did not abandon their devotion to the principle of *ghaza*; rather, the identity of the ruler was no longer pegged around his role as a *ghāzī*, but rather as a sultan with sole authority over the reins of the state.²⁰⁹ The theatrical nature of feasting proceedings, however, differed somewhat in the Ottoman and Mughal cases. Mughal feasting traditions developed such that the emperor became the sole focus of the feast. This was particularly the case under Akbar, who usually dined alone surrounded by paraphernalia of accoutrements and an elaborate etiquette. Unlike the Ottoman case, there was no need for the Mughal emperor to isolate himself behind a latticed window. He *was* the be all and end all of the feasting ritual. Thus, while the ideological sources of legitimisation may have differed between the Ottoman

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 195.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 197, 200-206.

²⁰⁷ Ottoman structures and traditions of power also found architectural expression in their palaces. For a general discussion of Ottoman palaces, see Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 76-88.

²⁰⁸ Fosshagen, "The Perfect Sovereign: The Sacralized Power of the Ottoman Sultan", p. 203.

²⁰⁹ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 152.

and Mughal cases, there were similarities of development that resulted in somewhat comparable expressions of ritual and etiquette. The deliberate attempts at power assertion through the medium of feasting in the Mughal case did not remain uncontested however. As has been noted above, Mughal notables indulged in parallel and competitive displays of grandeur at the table. Thus, every component of the Mughal establishment participated in, and engaged with, the cultural ethos of feasting that emphasised status and power in very specific ways.

Thus, it emerges from the above brief cross-cultural analysis that the Mughal Empire represented a particularly evolved case of food symbolism in social and court life as well as in political symbolism. Both in the spheres of gift-giving as well as in feasting, food emerged as a key symbol of political discourse. Parallel instances of similar developments and phenomena can be cited from the European and Ottoman contexts. But the specific food customs that developed through the history of the Mughal Empire must be viewed in context of the struggle between the relatively more egalitarian early Timurid ethos and attempts by successive Mughal emperors to build a more exclusive imperial identity. Gift-giving and feasting traditions drew on an amalgam of Timurid, Persian and Indian sources, but it was the Mughal political context that gave them form and meaning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the manner in which food – in its various forms – aided and mediated expressions of status, power and imperial legitimisation in the Mughal Empire. There were various facets of these locutions, all of which must be placed and understood within the urban context where they found expression. It was the Mughal city that was the site of these displays and conspicuous contestations of power, and thus the physical space of the city is an integral aspect of the food narrative that I have attempted to deconstruct here.

In the first part of this chapter, I traced the manner in which the evolution of Mughal political and social structures from a more egalitarian *ghaza*-orientation to being pegged around an imperial ideal was accompanied by alterations in food customs. This primarily involved a moving away from greater levels of conviviality towards more rigid forms of etiquette and tighter restrictions on the sharing of space. This, in particular, engendered a separation of the genders: whereas under Bābur, men and women shared food space to a considerable degree, this eventually became relatively more restricted. The imperial traditions

forged under Akbar emphasised the unique personality of the Emperor and removed him from free and open social interaction both with the women of the harem, and with other notables of the Empire. Akbar's courtier, confidant and chief ideologue, Abū-l Fazl, constructed his ideological legitimisation of the Mughal imperium based on a political philosophy that drew on the writings of thinkers such as Ibn al-ʿArabī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. Food played an important role in this narrative. As a Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmil*), the emperor maintained a saintly austerity in his consumption of food; yet as emperor, his power was symbolised by the grandeur of his table. However, this discourse did not go unchallenged, as the Mughal *umarāʾ* often engaged in competitive displays of lavishness at the table. Under Akbar's successors, spatial segregation appears not always to have been as sharply demarcated, but highly rigid and circumscribed norms of etiquette were nevertheless enforced. Banquets appear to have been a key instrument for the forging and maintenance of ties between the emperor and key notables of the Empire.

The second section of this chapter attempted to map out food onto urban spaces of the Mughal Empire in order to evolve an understanding of the socio-cultural and political role of food in the Mughal city, as well as its political symbolism in architectural displays of imperial power. I particularly focussed on two Mughal cities for which adequate material in the form of extant studies is available for the construction of an analysis: Shāhjahānābād and Fatehpur Sikri. In the case of Shāhjahānābād, the presence of food could be located all over the city, but in different roles and forms. Its most conspicuous presence was in the central parts of the city – the core of the Mughal imperial building project – and in particular in the main bazaars. The second locus was in private residences, and most notably in the great mansions where the kitchens often occupied an intermediate space between indoors and outdoors. The third locus, though less conspicuous, was no less important to the food life of the city: this consisted of the wholesale supply points in the suburbs that catered to the city's food needs. In the case of Fatehpur Sikri, I have attempted to analyse the manner in which the location of the imperial kitchen, dining hall, storehouses and other offices related to the kitchen establishment can be read as a political document reflecting the Mughal ideology of empire. I have suggested that the urban plan of Fatehpur Sikri shows the manner in which distinct food spaces were created within the palace-complex that highlighted the power and prestige of the Mughal emperor. The other aspect of Mughal cities that I drew attention to was the presence of fruit orchards in the suburbs of key urban centres. These were developed through the particularly diligent efforts of successive Mughal emperors and symbolised not only their interest in the exotic, but also the high estimation of certain fruits in the Mughal and Indo-Persian cultural

imagination. This emerges as even more significant when seen in the light of the role played by fruits in Mughal gift-giving traditions.

The third section of this chapter looked at the symbolism of food gifts in Mughal culture. In particular, I examined three categories of food gifts: fruits, hunted meats and the betel leaf. I argued that food gifts had a distinct significance all of their own because of their perishable nature as well as on account of their implied intimacy. But each category of food gifts also had its own peculiar set of meanings. Fruit was associated with sugar and sweetness; it usually symbolised goodwill or amelioration. It also often accompanied messages of truce and apologies. I have suggested that hunted meats carried connotations resembling the intimate honour of the *khil'at* (robe of honour). The social meanings of the betel leaf as a symbol of royal favour, or as an honour for a guest are well-documented in the extant scholarly literature, and may be illustrated with numerous anecdotes from early modern sources.

The final section of this chapter constructed a cross-cultural comparative analysis of feasting and gift-giving traditions, looking in particular at case studies from early modern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. With regard to gift-giving, it has been seen that despite many similarities in the broad roles of food gifts as mediators of social relations, their particular functions within the Mughal context were distinct. This may be traced to the Mughal inheritance of various gift-giving traditions: Timurid, Persian and Indian. It was also a result of the evolution of distinct Mughal customs of etiquette and social norms. I have also compared the development of Mughal feasting traditions to those of the Ottoman Empire. My main argument here is that despite certain differences in form and character, there were distinct similarities in the Mughal and Ottoman trajectories of socio-political progression from a *ghaza*-centred ethos to an imperial narrative of power. This was accompanied by a shift away from conviviality to exclusivity in feasting that was meant to underline the unique charisma and power of the ruler. There were, of course, some key differences in the specificities of high Mughal and Ottoman feasting traditions, each reflecting a particular historical locus and context.

Accompanying the evolution of Mughal feasting and gift-giving traditions was a well-developed sense of elite connoisseurship. This owed much to past Indo-Persian cultural traditions, but also drew particular sustenance from the Mughal political context. Persian cookbooks emerged as the written repositories of these gastronomic traditions, and many in this genre were produced during the period under study. It is to this cultural phenomenon of

food connoisseurship – and its socio-political and cultural contexts – that I turn to in the next chapter.

Maps/City Plan Credits

Figure 1: Gordon Sanderson, “Shāhjahān’s Fort, Delhi”, *Archaeological Survey of India: Annual Report, 1911-12*, plate 11, reproduced from Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India*, p. 37

Figure 2: Reproduced from Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India*, p. 59

Figure 3: Reproduced From Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited*, p. 58 (after Attilio Petruccioli)

Figure 4: Reproduced From Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited*, p. 64 (after Petruccioli)

Figure 5: Reproduced From Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited*, p. 83

Figure 6: Reproduced From Rezavi, *Fatehpur Sikri Revisited*, p. 106

Chapter 2

A Culture of Connoisseurship

Introduction

In the last chapter, I discussed the manner in which Abū-l Faḏl's discourse on food in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* may be located within various strands of Islamicate and Indo-Persian cultural and intellectual traditions. In Abū-l Faḏl's ideas, the influence of humoral concepts of balance may be discerned, as well as the idea that dietary practices may be seen as a mirror of human character. In this chapter, I will argue that there existed a strong and distinctive tradition of gastronomy and connoisseurship in Indo-Persian culture, and that this may be characterised as patron-consumer oriented in nature.

The first section will examine concepts such as 'taste' and 'connoisseurship', and critically interrogate anthropological conceptualisations of "cuisine" with particular reference to the Mughal and early modern Indian context. This will be followed by a discussion of Indo-Persian cookbooks and the manner in which they reflect the gastronomic ethos of their cultural environment. Finally, an attempt will be made to examine the broader socio-political paradigms of these cultural phenomena, with particular reference to gender.

Cuisine and Connoisseurship in Indo-Persian Culture

'Taste' is a bio-cultural phenomenon. Available evidence suggests that human beings are primed to appreciate certain flavours and dislike others. Experiments first conducted by J. E. Steiner in the 1970s (and replicated since then) have shown that neonates display a preference for the sweet taste, and a general aversion to sourness and bitterness.²¹⁰ Most evidence, however, suggests that culture and environment play a relatively stronger role in

²¹⁰ See for instance, J. E. Steiner, "Discussion Paper: Innate, Discriminative Human Facial Expressions to Taste and Smell Stimulation", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 237 (September 1974), pp. 229-233; Diana Rosenstein and Harriet Oster, "Differential Facial Responses to Four Basic Tastes in Newborns", *Child Development* 59, no. 6 (Dec., 1988), pp. 1555-1568; J. E. Steiner, "Taste-Induced Facial Expressions in Apes and Humans", *Human Evolution* 10, no. 2 (1995), pp. 97-105. The object of these experiments was to test neonatal responses to gustatory stimulation before exposure to feeding of any sort.

shaping taste than biological predisposition. Foods such as coffee and chillies are generally considered acquired tastes, and yet have been embraced by many food cultures.²¹¹

Taste is thus more than just a physical experience; it occurs within a shared cultural space. The term ‘taste’ is applied not only to food, but also to the fine arts, architecture, literature, music and décor. In the context of cuisine, it pertains not only to a physiological sensation, but also to commonly held standards of appreciation and connoisseurship as applied to food. This has important social bearings, since taste acts as a marker of class and sophistication. Unpacking the ideational patterns of gastronomy thus yields clues about the interplay between social dynamics and their cultural articulations.

The concept of taste in Indo-Persian literature (Ar. *zauq*) also includes both generic and specific connotations. The term *zauq* itself refers to taste in both an exclusive as well as a general sense, and includes the appreciation or lust for the good things in life including food, music, poetry, art, nature and hunting. It thus pertains not only to the taste of the tongue, but also to pleasure and experience. Thus, the symbolism of the *nom de plume* assumed by the famous Urdu poet Shaikh Ibrāhīm Muḥammad ‘Zauq’ (1789-1854) should be understood in this context. On the other hand, the Arabic cognate, *zā’iqā* usually refers to taste in the more specific sense of the flavour(s) of food. Like the concept of *rasa* in Sanskrit literature, the ideational representations of the word *zauq* extend across a broad range of meanings from physical taste to the aesthetics of poetry.²¹² Unlike the *rasa* concept, however, the term *zauq* was not the subject of an elaborate and self-conscious philosophical discourse on taste and aesthetics. Nevertheless, the notions of connoisseurship represented by it are implicit in Indo-Persian literature.

In this chapter, Mughal understandings of taste and connoisseurship will be analysed through an examination of Indo-Persian literature. As repositories of past culinary cultures, cookbooks are naturally a significant aspect of this narrative. However, other sources such as the *Jahāngīrnāma* (memoirs of Emperor Jahāngīr) and the travelogue of an eighteenth century gentleman, Ānand Rām ‘Muḥliṣ’ will enable a contextualisation of the gastronomic sensibilities excavated from my analysis of culinary manuals.

²¹¹ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, pp. 1-2; Paul Rozin and T. A. Vollmecke, “Food Likes and Dislikes”, *Annual Review of Nutrition* 6, no. 1 (1986), pp. 433-456. In the case of coffee, the presence of the stimulant caffeine almost certainly plays an important role in taste acquisition.

²¹² See S. C. Pande, *The Concept of Rasa: With Special Reference to Abhinavagupta* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study and New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2009); Wallace Dace, “The Concept of ‘Rasa’ in Sanskrit Dramatic Theory”, *Educational Theatre Journal* 15, no. 3 (1963), pp. 249-254.

Connoisseurship implies the existence of shared aesthetic standards, norms and values that are embedded within existent social and political structures. In culinary terms, connoisseurship draws on ideas of ‘taste’ and ‘discernment’, which shape the cultural norms by which the flavours and appeal of a food item are judged. It is thus intimately tied up with the concept of cuisine itself, since the latter also presupposes the existence of shared standards that form the basis of recipes textually memorialised in cookbooks.

The extant anthropological literature on the subject does not speak in one voice with respect to defining the concept of ‘cuisine’. However, there is agreement on differentiating it from mere food preparation or cooking practices, since cuisine predicates a collective cultural understanding of taste. For Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, cuisine is “the code that structures the practice of food and allows us to discuss and to represent taste”.²¹³ Ferguson goes on to draw out certain conditions that a set of culinary practices must fulfil in order to qualify as a cuisine:

A more or less coherent repertory of culinary preparations, usually structured by the products at hand, becomes a true cuisine only when its status as a repertory becomes apparent. That is, culinary preparations become a cuisine when, and only when, the preparations are articulated and formalized, and enter the public domain.²¹⁴

According to this conceptualisation, a cuisine comes into being when a set of individuated culinary practices becomes the subject of a collective discourse. This necessarily entails the formalisation of shared understandings of taste.

Other definitions of cuisine are more specific, and prescribe more stringent criteria for the label of ‘cuisine’ to apply. Thus, Michael Freeman enlists three factors as being essential to the development of cuisine: “the availability of ingredients, many sophisticated consumers, and cooks and diners free from conventions of region and ritual”.²¹⁵ In addition, he characterises cuisine as being a product of attitudes that give primacy to the pleasure of consuming food, rather than to any ritualistic significance.²¹⁶ This appears to be a very narrow definition that focuses exclusively on elite consumption. For Sidney Mintz, Freeman’s definition actually describes *haute* cuisine. Mintz’s own understanding of cuisine sees it as tied to a region, with access to a particular set of ingredients that are determined by the geography, climate and history of the territory. Since *haute* cuisine is not bound by such

²¹³ Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, p. 18.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 19.

²¹⁵ Michael Freeman, “Sung”, in *Food Culture in Chinese History: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. K. C. Chang (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 141-176, quotation from p. 145.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 145.

constraints in the sourcing of ingredients, Mintz asserts that it must fall into a separate category.²¹⁷

In trying to collate the common and most applicable elements of these definitions of ‘cuisine’, two important features may be selected. Firstly, as Ferguson’s definition points out, cuisine formalises shared understandings of taste within the public domain. Secondly, as against Mintz’s absolute differentiation of cuisine from *haute* cuisine, a more fluid distinction should be adopted: one that sees *haute* cuisine as a subset of cuisine, and in constant interaction with its culinary environment. In this chapter, I argue that the cuisine represented by Indo-Persian texts was, by all definitions, both a true cuisine and an *haute* cuisine. It was engendered within a cultural space that produced highly articulate discourses on taste and gastronomy, which were patron-oriented. It was the patron-connoisseur who set standards of taste, which went beyond individual understandings of the flavours of particular food items. As shall be seen in this chapter, the elite consumer was at the forefront of gastronomic discourse and cooking was the subject of anonymous standardisation, not individual creativity. If any innovation is recognised in the sources, it is on the part of the patron, not the cook. Thus, it was not the art of cooking that was given prominence in the Indo-Persian literature of the period, but the *art of tasting*.

The sophisticated culinary culture represented in Indo-Persian literature drew on an eclectic diversity of sources from the local and the ‘vulgar’ to the global. Yet, it was very specific in setting standards of taste and appreciation. I will also argue that the development of this very specific brand of patron-consumer oriented connoisseurship entailed a gendering of food discourse by masculinising the narratives of taste in cookbooks, miniature paintings and other gastronomic expressions.

The articulations of taste and connoisseurship in the *Jahāngīrnāma* clearly bring these aspects out.²¹⁸ Jahāngīr prided himself on being a connoisseur of art and self-consciously articulated his claims to refinement of taste.²¹⁹ This extended to the sphere of gastronomy as well. On numerous occasions throughout his memoirs, Jahāngīr makes observations on the taste of various foods that he samples. Since Jahāngīr’s pronouncements on taste are oft cited in the literature on art and connoisseurship in Mughal India, it would be instructive to analyse his food-related observations at some length. These will then be contextualised with reference

²¹⁷ Sidney Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 1996), pp. 99, 101.

²¹⁸ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, *passim*; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, *passim*.

²¹⁹ Jahāngīr famously claimed that he could distinguish the artists who had painted different parts of a portrait: Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, pp. 266-267; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 268.

to other voices from the corpus of Indo-Persian sources available to us for the early modern period.

Jahāngīr's peripatetic lifestyle and adventurous appetite allowed him plenty of opportunity to exercise his taste buds on a variety of meats, fish and fruit. His penchant for close observation and recording of various matters of interest has left us with detailed descriptions of his gustatory experiences. The hunt – which was also an activity that Jahāngīr pursued with the zeal of a connoisseur – was an engaged experience. Meats obtained from the hunt were frequently sampled and their flavours described at length. In his memoirs, Jahāngīr often mentions ordering a hunted animal to be cooked in a particular style in order to sample its taste, as in one instance when he ordered his cooks to prepare a *dopiyāza* (a dressed meat dish with a base of fried onions) out of the meat of a *nīlgāv* doe that he had hunted. The result was pronounced as being “quite delicate and delicious”.²²⁰ Jahāngīr's gastronomic experiments with hunted meats, however, went beyond merely noting the appealing taste of a particular variety of flesh. It often consisted of measured comparisons and specific observations, as in the following instance:

The meat of the large *būdāna* quail the people of India call *ghaghar* is better than that of the small kind of *būdāna* that is used in cock fights. I similarly compared the meat of a fat kid with that of a calf. The kid was delicious and tasty. Purely as an experiment I ordered them both cooked in the same manner so that a real discerning comparison could be made. Therefore it is recorded.²²¹

In fact, as with his claims to art connoisseurship, Jahāngīr quite self-consciously articulates his distinction as a discerning gastronome. On one occasion, in comparing the flavours of various species of fish, he makes the following observations:

Since I am very fond of fish, all sorts of good fish are brought to me. The best fish in Hindūstān is the *rohū*, and after that, the *barīn*. Both have scales, and they resemble each other in shape and form. Not everyone could easily tell them apart. There is also only a slight difference in their flesh, and *only a person with refined taste (ṣāhib-i zā'iqā-i 'ālī)* could discover that the taste of the *rohū* is a little better.²²²

²²⁰ *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 422; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 405. *Nīlgāv* is spelt in the text as *nīlagāv*, but I have retained the standard spelling here.

²²¹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 428; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 411. The text has K-H-A-K-W instead of *ghaggar*, but I have retained Thackston's reading, since it makes more sense.

²²² Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 434; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 416. Thackston's translation slightly modified. Italics added.

Refinement of taste was thus the exclusive preserve of a few, as Jahāngīr expressly states. It was the quality that elevated the culinary opinions of a connoisseur onto a higher plane of distinction. It was not merely an *opinion* about the flavours of a particular food, but an *assertion* of authoritative expertise. The word for ‘taste’ used here (*zā’iqa*) evidently pertains to the ability to discern fine distinctions between the flavours of the various species of fish. The expression of these opinions was also characterised by a concern for precision and measurement. This is apparent from another comment that Jahāngīr makes about the *rohū* (carp fish), which was apparently his favourite fish: “The best kind of fish to be had here [in Ahmadabad] is called *arabiyat*, and the fishermen repeatedly caught it for me. Without exaggeration, it is tastier and better than other kinds of fish available in this land, but it is not as tasty as the *rohū* fish. On a scale on which *rohū* is ten, it would be nine, or even eight.”²²³

Jahāngīr’s comments on the flavours of various fruits mirrors the attention to detail and concerns with evocative description and comparison that characterise his observations on meats. He was particularly fond of mangoes, and on one occasion narrates the following:

Around this time many mangoes were brought to the imperial fruits storage house from all over the Deccan, Burhanpur, Gujarat, and the Malwa countryside. Although this area is renowned for its good mangoes, it cannot hold a candle to those other regions for large sweet mangoes with few strings. More than once I ordered mangoes weighed in my presence. They came to a *ser* and a quarter, sometimes even more. Anyway, for juiciness (*khwushābī*), tastiness (*lazzat u chāshnī*), and digestibility (*kam ṣiqṭī*), the mangoes of Chaprāmau in Agra vicinity are the best of this or any other area in Hindūstān.²²⁴

In the above quote, we note the same concern with comparison, measurement, and attention to detail that has been noted earlier as a significant marker of self-consciously “refined” gastronomic discourse. Here, Jahāngīr judges varieties of mangoes by a certain very specific set of measures that he enumerates: juiciness, stringiness, flavour and digestibility. His preference for a particular variety is unambiguous, as is the clarity and confidence of his pronouncements on the relative qualities of the mangoes. Similar conclusions may be drawn from an analysis of his observations on other fruits, such as apples:

Mahābat Kḥān had sent apples from Bangash by post. They arrived fresh and tasted very good. I enjoyed eating them very much, for they were beyond comparison with the best apples I ate in Kabul or the

²²³ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 239; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 242. Thackston’s translation slightly modified.

²²⁴ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 215; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 220. Text has Chīrāmau instead of Chaprāmau, but I have used Thackston’s reading here. Thackston’s translation of the passage also retained.

Samarqand apples that are sent every year. In sweetness, delicacy and taste, they have no equal. Until now, no apples so fine had ever been seen. They say that in upper Bangash next to Lashkar Dara there is a village called Shalozān, and in that village there are trees of these apples. No matter how hard they have tried they haven't been able to get them to grow so well anywhere else. I gave Saiyid Ḥasan, my brother Shāh ʿAbbās's ambassador, a taste of these apples to find out if there were any better in Persia [ʿIrāq] or not. He said that in all of Iran the apples of Isfahan were outstanding, and the best of them were as good as these.²²⁵

Apart from the qualitative assessments of the fruit, what is also notable in the above statement is the interest that Jahāngīr displays in finding out if better apples could be found in Persia than in his own realm. This should be viewed in the light of Iran's image as the cultural metropole, an object of admiration and emulation as well as of rivalry.

An examination of the *Safarnāma* (travelogue) of Ānand Rām 'Muḫḫliṣ' serves to add corroborative detail and texture to our analysis of food ideas in Indo-Persian texts.²²⁶ Ānand Rām was a well-bread gentleman, who lived much of his life in Shāhjahānābād. He belonged to the Khatri community, was well educated, and wrote under the *takḥalluṣ* (*nom de plumé*) of 'Muḫḫliṣ', meaning servitor. A prolific writer, he composed *dīwāns* (poetic compilations), a cultural dictionary (*Mirātu-l Iṣṭilāḥ*), a history (*Badāʿī-ī Waqāʿī*), *Hangāma-ī ʿIshq* (a prose retelling of the love legend of Hīr Rānjhā) and the *Safarnāma-ī Muḫḫliṣ*, which formed a part of the *Badāʿī-ī Waqāʿī* and which will serve as my main source in this analysis.²²⁷ In his *Safarnāma*, Ānand Rām describes the Mughal Emperor Muḥammad Shāh's expedition to Garḥ Muktesar against ʿAlī Muḥammad Kḥān Rohilla.²²⁸ Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have discussed this text in detail, highlighting its salient aspects as a travelogue and situating it within its socio-political context. As they point out, Ānand Rām was not travelling through a distant land, and thus his account is much less concerned with detailed descriptions of places or of 'curiosities and wonders' (*ʿajāʿib u gharāʿib*) of the kind that usually peppered Indo-Persian travel literature during the early modern period.²²⁹ They

²²⁵ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-ī Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 314-315; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 310. Text has Shagr Dara instead of Lashkar Dara, but I have again retained Thackston's reading of this name. Thackston's translation of the passage, though, has been slightly modified.

²²⁶ Ānand Rām, *Safarnāma-ī Muḫḫliṣ*.

²²⁷ Nabi Hadī, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1995), p. 434.

²²⁸ See Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Discovering the Familiar: Notes on the Travel-Account of Anand Ram Mukhlis, 1745", *South Asia Research* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1996), pp. 131-154, for biographical details on Ānand Rām.

²²⁹ Ibid. See also, Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) for a survey of Persian travel literature.

also make note of Ānand Rām’s constant “gastronomic preoccupations” throughout the text.²³⁰

Ānand Rām’s *Safarnāma* offers detailed descriptions of his meals, which seamlessly blend what may be simplistically considered as ‘high’ and ‘low’ cuisine. A catalogue of Ānand Rām’s meals illustrates this. Early on in the narrative, he mentions eating a meal of *khichrī* (a dish of rice and pulses) and *dopiyāza*, which had been cooked without spice (*be maṣālih*).²³¹ In fact, foods such as *khichrī*, *nān* (bread), as well as seasonal gourds and greens are mentioned throughout the narrative, alone or alongside richer preparations such as meat *dopiyāzas*.²³² As was not uncommon among members of his class, hunting expeditions often turned into occasions of gastronomic experimentation with hunted meats. Thus, Ānand Rām narrates an incident where he was on a hunt with a group of close associates. They hunted nine *durrāj* (partridge) and one *charz* (bustard or other game bird).²³³ Some of these were given to others, with four *durrāj* and one *charz* remaining. Ānand Rām ordered that a *dampukht* (a style of slow cooking in a sealed pot) be prepared of the *durrāj*, and a *dopiyāza* of the *charz*. He remarks on this occasion that “it is well known that the flesh of the *charz* is best fowl meat”, adding that they were plentiful in that area on the banks of the river Ganga.²³⁴ In his interest and appreciation of hunted meats, Ānand Rām shared in a cultural tradition of connoisseurship that has been discussed earlier in the context of the emperor Jahāngīr, although he is less evocative than the latter.

There are other occasions on which Ānand Rām expresses appreciation of game meats. During a meal at the house of one Ḥātim °Alī K̄hān, a *rān* (cut of leg meat between the buttocks and the knee) of venison (*āhū*) was served.²³⁵ Ānand Rām mentions the cook by name: a Laćchī Rām whom he describes as being hard of hearing. The meat was prepared fresh in front of the guests, and Ānand Rām describes the result as a resounding success. Ānand Rām sent his host a verse in appreciation, referring to the latter’s house with the laudatory appellation “abode of prosperity” (*k̄hāna ābād*).²³⁶ This is a rare mention of a cook

²³⁰ Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Discovering the Familiar: Notes on the Travel-Account of Anand Ram Mukhlis, 1745”, p. 146.

²³¹ Ānand Rām, *Safarnāma-i Mukhlis*, p. 14.

²³² See *ibid*, for instance, for references of: p. 55 – *karelā* (bitter gourd), p. 57 – *pūrī* (fried bread), *khichrī* (rice and pulse dish) pp. 62, 58 – *pakoṛī* (batter fried snacks).

²³³ For other possible bird species that might correspond to the names *durrāj* and *charz*, see Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, pp. 391, 506.

²³⁴ Ānand Rām, *Safarnāma-i Mukhlis*, p. 26.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 54

²³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 54

and his work in the sources of the period. Even here, Ānand Rām appears to have been more interested in appreciating the hospitality of Ḥātīm ʿAlī K̲h̲ān than the talents of the cook.

Ānand Rām’s articulation of connoisseurship is also expressed in his description of fruits. In one instance, he purchased a watermelon (*tarbūz*) and had a drink made out of its juice, flavoured with rose, ambergris and a little sugar candy. He is highly appreciative of the end product.²³⁷ Again, in his description of the town of Sambhal, he writes that “in all four directions, as far as the eye can see, are mango trees with heads touching the skies.”²³⁸ He goes on to describe how there was not a branch without the burden of fruit (*hīch shāk̲h̲ī be šamar nabūda*).²³⁹

There are a few points about Ānand Rām’s sense of connoisseurship that may be gleaned from the instances cited. As Alam and Subrahmanyam point out, Ānand Rām emerges in this text as someone who “loves the good things in life, notably food”.²⁴⁰ The frequency with which food themes appear in his narrative is testament to this. In a couple of instances cited above, he either suggests specific cooking styles (for the *charz* and *durrāj*), or innovates recipes (for example, with the watermelon drink). In all instances, he expresses his opinions on the taste of the food quite strongly, even using poetry as a device to express his appreciation for good food. Jahāngīr displays a more finely tuned and confidently articulated sense of connoisseurship, while Ānand Rām’s sense of gastronomy is relatively simpler and earthier. However, as has been seen, both draw on a common cultural store of food tropes and markers of taste. Both record instances of them innovating recipes or giving orders for meats to be cooked according a specific style. Thus, they emerge singularly as the purveyors of taste and culinary creativity.

Gastronomic connoisseurship found poetic expression as well. This is notable in some Persian compositions devoted to culinary appreciation both in India and in Iran. The genre of gastronomic poetry itself is far from peculiar to Persian literature. Medieval Arabic compositions in this genre are known, and ancient Greek poetic gastronomy was particularly sophisticated and copious.²⁴¹ The most well known Persian gastronomic poet was Faḵr al-

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 92.

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 45.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Discovering the Familiar: Notes on the Travel-Account of Anand Ram Mukhlis, 1745”, p. 142.

²⁴¹ Geert Jan Van Gelder, “Muwasir Al-Warraq and the Beginnings of Arabic Gastronomic Poetry”, *Journal of Semetic Studies* 35, no. 2 (Autumn 1991), pp. 309-327.

Dīn Aḥmad-i Ḥallāj Shīrāzī (d. 1424/1427/1456)²⁴², also known by his pen name Abū Ishāq, or Bushāq-i Aṭ'ima 'Foods'. His poetry parodied the works of famous Persian Ṣūfī poets using food dishes and gastronomic imagery as tropes. However, his poetry did not mark the beginning of a trend, and remained a unique instance of its kind.²⁴³ A slightly different example of gastronomic poetry comes from the early modern Indian context, and is thus of greater relevance to us. This is the *Shakaristān-i Kḥayāl*, or 'Confectionary of Imagination' of Mīr 'Abdu-l Wāḥid Bilgrāmī (d. 1721).²⁴⁴ For this poetic compilation, the author adopted the *nom de plume* of 'zauqī' or 'the connoisseur'. This pseudonym reflected the general sense of taste, appreciation and connoisseurship encompassed by the term *zauq* in Indo-Persian literature. The poems in this collection are not parodies after the fashion of Bushāq's poetic compositions, but poems describing and eulogising sweetmeats, of which the author expresses a great fondness.²⁴⁵ The text was later lithographed by the Nawal Kishor Press in 1882, with an eighteenth century cookbook called the *Kḥwān-i Ni'amat* inscribed on the marginalia. This cookbook will be discussed later in this chapter. Gastronomic poetry in Persian did not attain the prolificacy of wine poetry, and in this sense the *Shakaristān-i Kḥayāl* is unique. But it may be located within broader traditions that employ gastronomic imagery to signify divine bounty and ethereal pleasures. Many Ṣūfī prose and poetic compositions bear titles such as *Nān u Ḥalwā* (Bread and Pudding), *Kḥwān-i Pur Ni'amat* (Table full of Bounties), and *Kḥwān-i Ni'amat* (Table of Bounties), although these texts have nothing to do with food.²⁴⁶

Little attention is paid in these food narratives to the cooks who actually prepared the dishes, and whose names are rarely considered worthy of mention. The discourses of taste are entirely centred on the person of the connoisseur and on his ability to appreciate food with discerning skill and expertise. A rare reference to the actual identities of individual cooks and their skills comes from the *Ruq'at-i 'Ālamgīrī*, a collection of Aurangzeb's (r. 1658-1707) personal letters. In a letter to his son, Mu'azzam, Aurangzeb writes:

Exalted son, I remember the savour of your 'khichidi' and 'biryani' during the winter. Truly the 'kabuli' cooked by Islam Khan does not

²⁴² Jan Rypka et al., *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), p. 273.

²⁴³ Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda, 1998), pp. 164-170; Maulānā Abū Ishāq Ḥallāj, *Dīwān-i Aṭ'ima* (Istanbul: Chāpkhāna-i Abū al-Ziyya, Hijrī Kḥwāshedī, 1302).

²⁴⁴ Mīr "Zauqī" Bilgrāmī, *Kḥwān-i Ni'amat wa Shakaristān-i Kḥayāl* (Lucknow: Munshī Nawal Kishor Press, 1882). See also the Khuda Bakhsh Library (Patna) catalogue of Persian manuscripts, Vol. 32, pp. 122-123, no. 2178, online at: <http://kblibrary.bih.nic.in/Vol32/Bp122.htm>, continued <http://kblibrary.bih.nic.in/Vol32/Bp123.htm> [accessed 16.07.2012].

²⁴⁵ "Zauqī" Bilgrāmī, *Kḥwān-i Ni'amat wa Shakaristān-i Kḥayāl*.

²⁴⁶ The *Nān u Ḥalwā* and *Kḥwān-i Ni'amat* are poetic compositions, while the *Kḥwān-i Pur Ni'amat* may be classified under the *mal'fūzāt* genre (texts recording conversations or assemblies of Ṣūfī saints).

surpass them (in point of relish and savour). I wanted to have from you (in my service) Saliman, who cooks ‘biryani’; but you did not allow him to serve as my cook. If you happen to find a pupil of his, skilful in the art of cookery, you will send him to me.²⁴⁷

The above quote displays awareness of the differential skills of individual cooks, and mentions two by name. Aurangzeb’s own food discourse centred largely on simplicity and asceticism rather than on connoisseurship, although he does admit in this very letter to retaining a fondness for the pleasures of the table.²⁴⁸ It must also borne in mind that this quote appears in a specific functional context.

This patron-centred sense of culinary connoisseurship may be situated within the larger context of Mughal traditions of aesthetic appreciation. Scholarship on Mughal art connoisseurship has attempted to delineate the relative significance of individual artists’ styles and the patron’s eye in the construction of aesthetic standards. The recognition of authorship, artistic merit and signature styles in Mughal miniatures was offset by the compositional nature of Mughal art. Paintings were often the work of multiple artists, and thus the role of the patron in the construction of art pieces and in assigning value to them was significant. John Seyller has argued that there indeed existed a very sophisticated Mughal ‘code’ of connoisseurship, very similar to that employed by art connoisseurs in contemporary times. The artistic worth of paintings was measured according to a rigorous set of parameters, and numeric values were often assigned to paintings according to an established ranking system.²⁴⁹ If we compare Mughal culinary connoisseurship with Mughal art appreciation traditions, certain similarities are found. In both, the role of the patron was significant, and both boasted of an elaborate grammar of aesthetic or gastronomic appreciation. However, the role of the patron was much more pivotal in the case of culinary connoisseurship. Whereas the role of Mughal artists was recognised and their names recorded, cooks are virtually absent from Mughal gastronomic narratives. The Mughal penchant for graded assessments and measurements apparently pervaded diverse spheres of aesthetic appreciation, from painting to food.

The second point that needs to be emphasised here is that although the sense of connoisseurship reflected in Indo-Persian texts emphasised sophistication, discernment and distinction, this did not amount to an absolute separation of ‘elite’ from ‘popular’ cuisine. This emerges from the narratives of both Jahāngīr and Ānand Rām ‘Mukhlīṣ’. The same

²⁴⁷ Jamshid Bilimoria, trans., *Ruka‘at-i Alamgiri or Letters of Aurangzeb* (Bombay: Luzac & Co., 1908), p. 12.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁴⁹ John Seyller, “A Mughal Code of Connoisseurship”, *Muqarnas* 17 (2000), pp. 177-202.

sophisticated appreciation of food that was applied to a *dopiyāza* could also be brought to bear on a simple dish of *khichrī*. There is no sense of these simple foods being excluded from the realm of elite tables; they were in fact inseparable from the menu of foods that are described in our Persian sources. Socially and economically, the different strata of society in early modern India were often vastly separated. But culturally – at least in terms of diet and cuisine – there was much that cut across these divisions.

Indo-Persian cookbooks provide ample support to my thesis of a patron-connoisseur oriented food culture. It is to these sources that I shall now turn my attention. I will begin with the *Ni^cmatnāma*, a late fifteenth / early sixteenth century single copy manuscript, which is unique in bearing miniature paintings. Later cookbooks from the Mughal era and beyond usually appear in multiple manuscript copies.

Indo-Persian Cookbooks: An Analytical Survey

Cookbooks are an essential manifestation of a cuisine. The recording, codification, and memorialisation of food recipes reflect the self-consciousness of a culinary culture, without which connoisseurship cannot materialise. As Ferguson notes, “cuisine cannot exist without food; nor can it survive without words.”²⁵⁰ This does not mean however, that cookbooks are an undifferentiated mass of coded cultural information; they vary greatly in style, content and context. The following survey of Indo-Persian cookbooks illustrates the nature of this diversity, but it is also indicative of underlying commonalities that are reflective of culturally shared concepts of taste and gastronomy. Secondly, culinary manuals were not merely practical guides, but often played an aspirational role for their audience. They reflected, in many ways, the normative relationship that the creators and audience of these texts had with food.

The *Ni^cmatnāma* was prepared under the aegis of the Sultans of Mandu, and is the earliest Indo-Persian cookbook that has come down to us. Norah Titley has translated its only available copy, which is in the possession of the British Library.²⁵¹ The edition has been enhanced with a translator’s introduction, colour plates, and a facsimile of the entire MS. The *Ni^cmatnāma* MS consists of two parts, and as Titley notes, appears to have been started under

²⁵⁰ Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, p. 19.

²⁵¹ Norah M. Titley, trans., *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu: The Sultan’s Book of Delights* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005). The facsimile MS has multiple foliation notations in English and Persian. My citations follow the same English foliation system used by Titley.

the patronage of Gḥiyāṣ Shāh and the completed under Nāṣir Shāh.²⁵² The text is illustrated with miniature paintings in Persian style, also incorporating Indian elements. All the miniatures depict Sultan Gḥiyāṣ Shāh at the centre of their narrative. This culinary manual is unique in being thus illustrated, and my analysis will focus on both text and image.

The manuscript, as it has come down to us, begins abruptly and without a preface. It is highly unlikely that it might have ever had a listing of contents, as no chapters are found in the text itself. While most Indo-Persian cookery books of the period begin with detailing recipes for breads, the *Ni^cmatnāma* begins with a few recipes for *sambūsas* (*samosas* or savoury stuffed and fried pasties).²⁵³ In fact, throughout the text, the arrangement of recipes seems to follow no particular order. Nor does there seem to be any concept of courses, as sweetmeats are freely interspersed with savoury dishes. This was partly a stylistic aspect of arrangement, but may have also reflected the manner in which the sweet and savoury elements of cuisine were often not clearly demarcated from each other. I will discuss this aspect in greater detail in the next chapter.

The recipes described show an Indic, and in particular a strong western and central Indian influence. Notable instances include dishes such as *kaṛhī* (a yoghurt or sour milk based dish combined with chickpea flour), *khichṛī*, *pīccha* (a dish prepared by adding ingredients to the surplus water that is left in the pot after cooking rice or other grains), *bhāt* (cooked rice, often with other ingredients added), *bhrat* (mash), *phāṭ* (split pulse), *khaṇḍawī* (swollen parched grain), *pūrī* (fried bread), *chapātī* (flatbread baked on an iron girdle), *bhūjī* (fried vegetables), *achār* (or *āchār*; pickles) and *rābarī* (dish normally made with thickened milk).²⁵⁴ In particular, chickpeas or chickpea flour were significant ingredients in many of these recipes. Many of the sweetmeats described in the text, such as *phīnī* (a fried sweetmeat made from flour), *khājā* (another fried sweetmeat made from flour), *ladḍū* (a sweetmeat shaped like balls) and *khīr* (a sweet dish consisting of sweetened milk, with other ingredients added), also reflect a local or subcontinental culinary heritage.²⁵⁵ At the same time, there are also recipes with Iranian or Central Asian influences or origins such as *palīv* (*pulā³o*, or a dish

²⁵² Titley, “Introduction”, *The Ni^cmatnama Manuscript*, pp. xii, second part begins on facsimile MSS f. 162v. It is titled *Kitāb-i Ni^cmatnāma-i Nāṣirshāhī* with the following sub-inscription: *wa ‘Iṭr̄nāma wa tarkīb-i kh̄wushbū⁷i-hā wa tarkīb-i chūwa* (and *‘Iṭr̄nāma* or text of perfumes and the methods of perfuming).

²⁵³ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript*, facsimile MS, ff. 1v-5r, translation (“The Book of Delights”), pp. 3-4. *Sambūsa* is usually pronounced as *sambosa*, but here I have retained the spelling used in this MS.

²⁵⁴ See for instance, *Ibid*, MS f. 13r-v, translation p. 16; MS f. 31v, translation p. 17; MS f. 42v-43r, translation p. 22; MS ff. 51v-52r, translation p. 26; MS f. 55v, translation p. 27; MS f. 58r, translation, p. 29; MS f. 67v, translation, p. 33; MS ff. 75r-77v, translation p. 37; MS f. 116r-v, translation, p. 58; MS f. 134r, translation, p. 67. See also, MS f. 142r, translation p. 70, for the medicinal qualities of *bhāt*. See MS f. 143r, translation p. 71, for the medicinal qualities of *achār* or pickles (here spelt as *āchāl*).

²⁵⁵ See *ibid*, MS ff. 10r-11r, translation, pp. 6-7; MS f. 14v, translation, p. 9; MS f. 149v, translation, p. 74.

with rice, meat and other ingredients), *sīkh* (skewered meat or fish), *yakhni* (spiced meat broth), *shūrbā*²⁵⁶ (soup or broth), *kabāb*, *kūfta*²⁵⁷ (meatballs), and as previously mentioned, *sambūsas*.²⁵⁸ This cookbook is unique in the variety of meats employed in its recipes, including mountain sheep, beef, rabbit, partridges, quail, kid, chicken and pigeon. Spices included exotic aromatics such as camphor, musk, rosewater and ambergris. As Norah Titley points out, the prescribed quantities of such potent aromatics as camphor were very small. Their importance was probably symbolic, in representing wealth and splendour.

An analysis of content and style reveals much about the cultural subtext of the cookbook. There is no list of ingredients given at the start of each recipe, and measurements are only seldom included. The lack of precision in detailing recipes is made up for by an expressed appreciation for their gastronomic worth, which is articulated at the end of many recipe descriptions by straightforward statements such as “it is delicious” or “it is very delicious” or “it is very delicious and good” (*lazīz ast* or *bisyār lazīz ast* or *bisyār lazīz u khūb bāshad* or *khwushmaza bāshad*).²⁵⁹ The personality of the patron Sultan looms large over the text. Many of the recipes begin with the words “another of the recipes of Gh̄iyāṣ Shāh is”.²⁶⁰ The second part of the text similarly contains references to Nāṣir Shah.²⁶¹ While the patron enjoys an obviously central place in the text, the figure of the cook is conspicuously absent. Even the author of the text is not mentioned, a common feature of Indo-Persian cookbooks. The *Ni^cmatnāma* thus offers strong evidence for the existence of an elite patron-oriented culture of connoisseurship. Another aspect of the text that may be related to such a cultural location of the patron-connoisseur is the manner in which recipes for aphrodisiacs, perfumes, medicines, household remedies, and advice for the hunt are randomly inserted into the text, seamlessly intermingling with food recipes.²⁶² Medical prescriptions included remedies for

²⁵⁶ Usually pronounced and transliterated in the Indian context as *shorbā*, but I have retained the MS spelling here.

²⁵⁷ Normally, *kofta*, but spelt in this MS as *kūfta*.

²⁵⁸ See for instance, MS ff. 1v-5r, translation, pp. 3-4; MS ff. 18r-v, translation, p. 11; MS ff. 20v-21v, translation, p. 12; MS f. 24r, translation, p. 13; MS ff. 73v-74r, translation, p. 36; MS f. 77v, translation, p. 37; MS f. 78r, translation, p. 38; MS f. 135r, translation, pp. 67-68; MS f. 179v, p. 88. Note that there are no firm boundaries between ‘foreign’ and ‘indigenous foods’, since this text for example details recipes for fish *kabābs* in the *rūstā³i* or village style (MS f. 20v-21r, translation, p. 12). *Rūstā³i* is usually pronounced *roṣtā³i* in the Indian context, but is written with a *pesh* indicating a long U in the *Ni^cmatnāma* MS. Hence, I have preferred to use the spelling *rūstā³i* here.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, *passim*, for instance see facsimile MS ff. 2r-v, 4r, 5r, 5v.

²⁶⁰ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript*, facsimile MS, *passim*.

²⁶¹ For instance, the last but one recipe in the MS begins with the words “the method for the rice of Nāṣirshāhī, Eternal Ruler and Sulṭān”, in ibid, facsimile MS, f. 195r, translation, p. 94.

²⁶² See for instance, advice on not eating fish with milk, in ibid, facsimile MS, f. 80r, translation, p. 39, for instances of other recipes, see MS ff. 84r-90r, translation, pp. 41-46. For advice on hunting, see MS ff. 156r-159v, translation, pp. 77-79. There are many recipes for perfumes, including MS ff. 155r, translation p. 77 and MS ff. 162r-175v, translation pp. 80-86. This section is from the *Ni^cmatnāma-i Nāṣirshāhī wa ‘Iṭr-nāma*. With

such conditions as impotence, fevers and itches. The medical qualities of some of the foods and recipes are also included, as are some warnings of the ill effects of some foods or food combinations. There is a section describing the medical indications and contra-indications of *pān* or *tambūl* (betel leaf), as well as the proper way to prepare and savour it.²⁶³ The text also warns against eating fish together with milk, yoghurt or aubergines, and includes a list of foods that may and may not be safely consumed along with milk.²⁶⁴ Such an association of food with household, lifestyle and physical well being may be seen as evidence of the text revolving around the interests of the patron, rather than around those of a specialist cook. It also highlights the often close association between cookbooks and pharmacopeia, itself a reflection of the intersection between food and medicine. The porosity and ill-definition of the boundaries between culinary manuals and medical texts during the early modern period is further brought home by a somewhat later (possibly Mughal, as Titley notes) cataloguing inscription on the manuscript frontpiece in clear *nasta'liq* hand: *kitāb-i Ni^cmatnāma dar ṭibb be khaṭ-i naskh* or “the *Ni^cmatnāma* text on medicine in *naskh* hand.”²⁶⁵

An analysis of the miniature paintings in the *Ni^cmatnāma* also lends strength to the patron-connoisseur theory. As Titley points out, they are strongly influenced by the Persian style originating in Shiraz, but become progressively more indigenised in style and content through the course of the manuscript.²⁶⁶ Thus, while the sketching, colouring, illustrative patterns and perspective are grounded in the Persian style, the miniatures are frequently embellished with Indian clothing and background elements.²⁶⁷ The paintings are descriptive in nature, depicting a scene where some act is in progress, often involving the Sultan supervising the preparation of food. At other times, food is being served or shared, and again, Gḥiyāṣ Shāh is at the centre of the depiction. Consistent with both the Persian and Indian miniature

regard to the arrangement of recipes, there is often a bunching of certain food recipes or prescriptions together. For instance, several recipes for *samosas*, *khichrī* or aphrodisiacs appear together. But other recipes are inserted in between and more recipes for same category of food dishes or medical and aphrodisiacal prescriptions may reappear at another point in the text.

²⁶³ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript*, facsimile MS, ff. 99v-102r, translation, pp. 50-51.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, facsimile MS, ff. 80v-81r, 82r-v, translation, pp. 39, 40. The meaning of this passage is slightly obscure. After listing items that cannot be eaten along with fish (milk, aubergines and yoghurt), the MS goes on to list other items without explanation, such as salt, sour oranges, flour, rice and so forth. Titley notes that this presumably constitutes a list of items that may be eaten with dairy foods. This, indeed, seems the most likely reading. The idea of the consumption of fish and milk together being contraindicated is common to many cultures. It is also mentioned by Avicenna in his *Canon*. See Eric Silla “‘After Fish, Milk Do Not Wish’: Recurring Ideas in a Global Culture”, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 36, Cahier 144, Mélanges maliens (1996), pp. 613-624.

²⁶⁵ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript*, facsimile MS, f. 1r, “Introduction”, p. xii.

²⁶⁶ Titley, “Introduction”, in *ibid*, p. xi.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, facsimile MS, ff. 4v, 5r, 6v, 8v, 11r, 14r, 18r, 23r, 25v, 29r, 32r, 35v, 40v, 44v, 51r, 54r, 66r, 71v, 79v, 76r, 83v, 88v, 91v, 94r, 98r, 100v, 103v, 111v, 118v, 115v, 121v, 124v, 129v, 133v, 136v, 144v, 147r, 153v, 157r, 159v, 165v, 168v, 171v, 174v, 177v, 180v, 183v, 186v, 189v, 192v. See also, Titley, “Introduction”, in *ibid*, p. xi.

styles of the period, the paintings usually – though not invariably – abjure the use of perspective so as to render the details of carpets, upholstery and other aspects of the background scene conspicuous.²⁶⁸ When the techniques of perspective *are* employed, this usually has the effect of making the contents of pots and pans invisible. Thus, the depictions of the food dishes themselves are often vague and lacking in clarity, and are frequently hidden from view inside sealed woks or cauldrons²⁶⁹ (see illustrations 2.1 and 2.2). Even on the few occasions where the food being prepared is visible, as in the miniature apparently depicting *sambūsas*, the illustration and details are vague (see illustration 2.3).²⁷⁰ The relation of the miniatures to the text is also revealing. The paintings are inserted on certain pages, bounded by text on two or three sides. They often illustrate a scene that bears some relevance to the text on the page, although this is not always the case.²⁷¹ Often, the depictions are so vague, that it is hard to be certain as to whether they are indeed connected to the recipes described on the same or corresponding folio.²⁷² Titley has drawn attention to the fact that some of the miniatures (especially early on in the manuscript) bear small inscriptions, which she interprets as possibly being pointers for the artists.²⁷³ However, not all miniatures bear such an inscription, and there are no captions or written descriptions.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ Ibid, facsimile MS.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. See esp, facsimile MS, ff. 18r, 23r, 29r, 25v, 32r, 35v, 40v, 44v, 51r, 54r, 66r, 71v, 76r, 115v, 186v, 189v.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, facsimile MS, f. 83v.

²⁷¹ Titley, “Introduction” in *ibid*, p. xi. See also, facsimile MS, *passim*.

²⁷² For instance, see *ibid*, facsimile MS f. 51r. The folio on which the painting appears does not bear any small inscription. The folio itself carries a description of a recipe for *karhī* – a dish prepared with chickpea flour and sour or fermented milk (see also Titley, “Description of the Miniatures”, in *ibid*, p. xvii. On this basis, Titley captions the miniature as “*karhī* being prepared”. However, the painting only depicts a man holding a ladle in front of a small sealed pot mounted over what appears to be some sort of a stove. The focus of the painting is otherwise Ḡhīyāṣ Shāh himself, and the scenic background. It is thus not certain that the painting necessarily depicts the preparation of *karhī*, although this is possible.

²⁷³ Titley, “Introduction”, in *ibid*, p. xi.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. See also facsimile MS, *passim*.

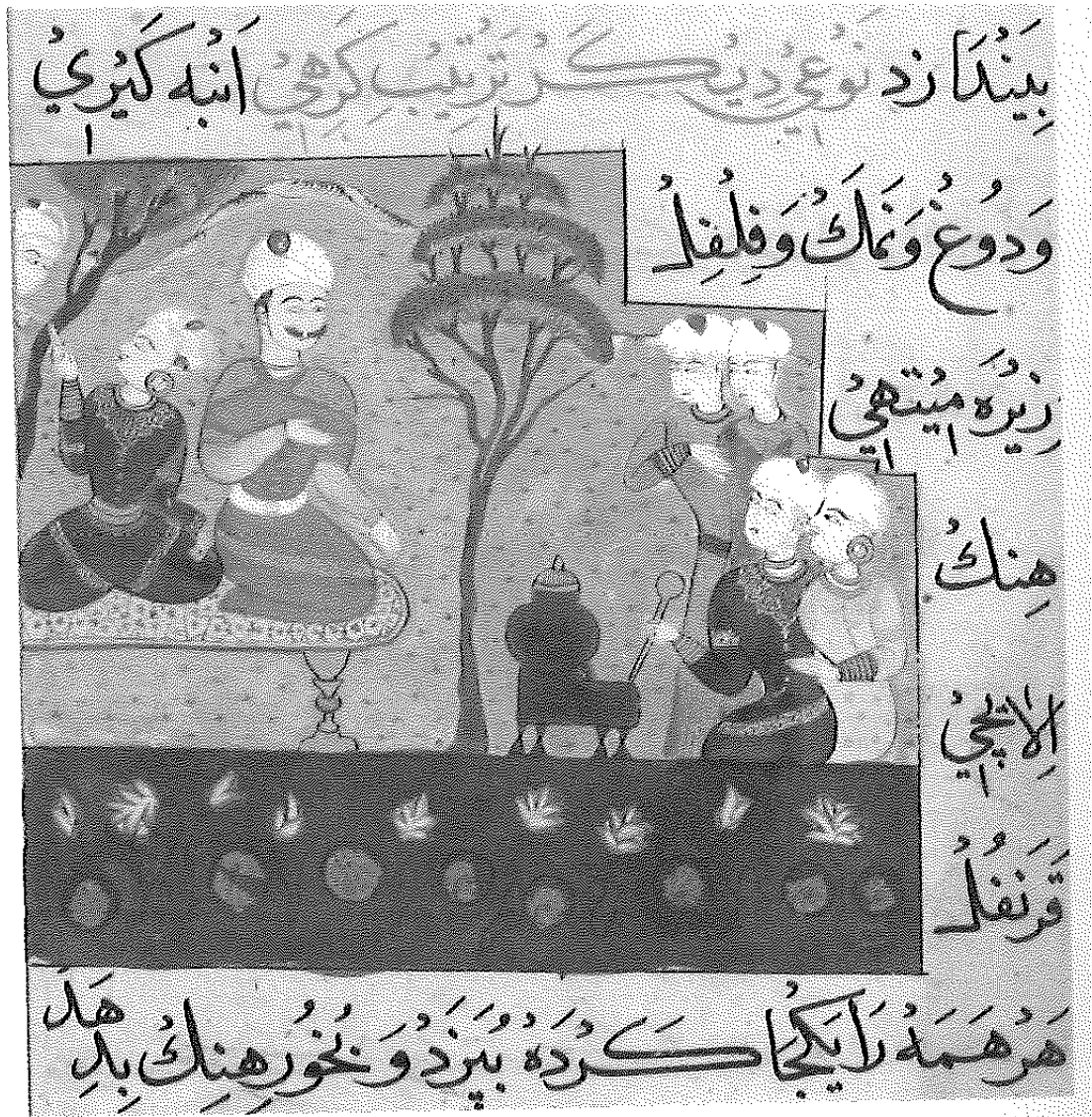


Illustration 2.1: © The British Library Board, IO Islamic 149, f. 51r: Miniature from a section of the manuscript dealing with *karhī*. Note Sulṭān Ghīyāṣ Shah at the centre of the depiction.

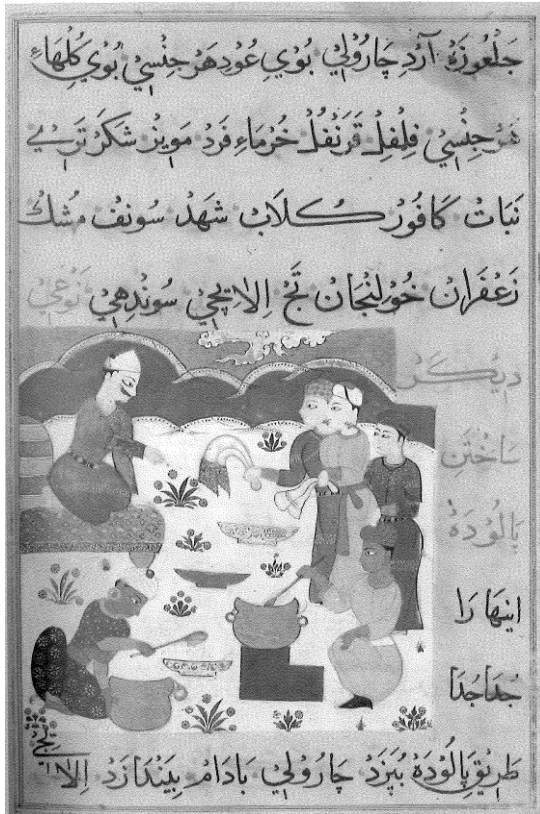


Illustration 2.2: © The British Library Board, IO Islamic 149, f. 115v: Miniature from a section dealing with *halwā* and *pālūda* (sweet beverage often made with flour, honey and water: Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian English Dictionary*, p. 233)

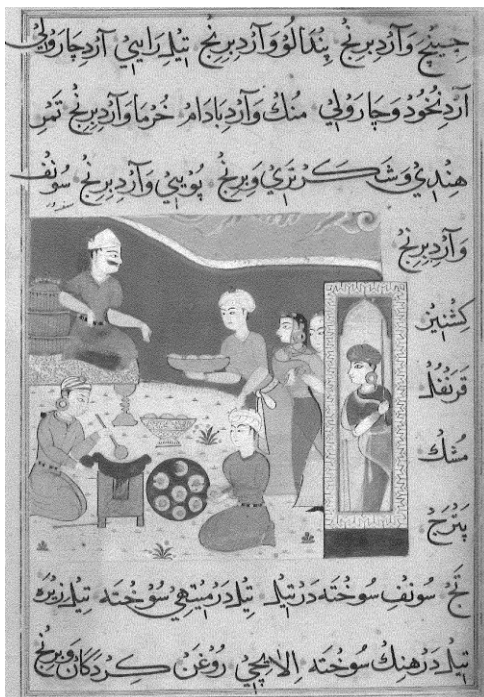


Illustration 2.3: © The British Library Board, IO Islamic 149, f. 83v: There is a small inscription “*sambūsa*” above the painting on the top left corner. This section of the manuscript deals with *baḡa* (fried cakes usually made with pulses or chickpea flour and various spices)

The relative marginalisation of the details of food items themselves is a result of the descriptive style of these miniatures, with the patron-connoisseur sultan at the centre of the visual description. The object of the paintings is to depict *scenes in action*, rather than the likeness of dishes whose recipes are described in the text. Scenes with cooks at work, or where the raw materials of food are being procured or processed or where food is being served, highlight the ‘lives of foods’ within the life of the patron-connoisseur. It may be surmised that the lack of precision in the textual description of recipes finds its visual counterpart in the paucity of detail and clarity that characterises the depiction of food in the miniature paintings of the *Ni^cmatnāma*. Thus, the text cannot merely be seen as an illustrated chronicle of recipes for practical use. It is a recipe book that centres its cultural locus on the world of the connoisseur-patron, which is at once domestic as well as public-political.

Some final observations on the *Ni^cmatnāma* are in order, before we move on. The cultural background of the *Ni^cmatnāma* combines broader Indo-Iranian and Islamicate cultural influences with regional ones. The recipes themselves are grounded in the regional context of the Mandu Sultanate, and the language of the text betrays this contextualisation, with many Hindi words being used throughout the text. The paintings, though in the Persian style, also contain Indian elements. The text may be seen as legitimising the Sultan’s charismatic power, by placing him at the centre of the text as patron-connoisseur and gastronome supreme. Through its situation both within broader Islamicate contexts and local Indian ones, the text draws on multiple fonts of legitimisation.

The only other collection of recipes that has come down to us from the sixteenth century is the section on ‘recipes’ from the imperial kitchen (*Ā³īn-i Maṣāliḥ*), in the *Ā³īn-i Akbarī* (1595). In this, the recipes are divided into three categories (1) where no meat is used (*ṣūfiyāna*) (2) where meat and rice are used, and (3) meats with spices.²⁷⁵ The notable aspect about these so-called recipes is that only the ingredients, quantities and servings are listed against the title of each dish; no method of preparation is given. However, recipe variations are sometimes noted.²⁷⁶ These ‘recipes’ seem to reflect Abū-l Faḏl’s general purpose and thrust in talking about food in the *Ā³īn-i Akbarī*. His main object in this section is to lay down a standardised record of some dishes cooked in the imperial kitchen. Unlike some other Indo-Persian cookbooks, he is scrupulous in listing the quantities of ingredients required for each

²⁷⁵ Abū-l Faḏl, *Ā³īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 55-58; *The Ā³īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 61-64.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. For instance, for *shūr birinj*, which is among the *ṣūfiyāna* or meatless dishes, the text notes that some make it with few or no spices. Others make it with salt and meat (instead of with sugar candy). See Abū-l Faḏl, *Ā³īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 55; *The Ā³īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, pp. 61-62.

recipe. He even mentions the serving size in each case, a practice that was not followed in Persian cookbooks. Yet, the absence of any actual description of the recipes indicates that he is only concerned with giving the reader an idea of the variety of dishes cooked for the Emperor, and of the kinds of resources and stores that went into their preparation. In chapter 1, I examined Abū-l Faẓl's discourse on food in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* text, and in particular his use of food to symbolise Emperor Akbar's spiritual charisma and temporal power.²⁷⁷ The recipe section of the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, in inventorying the dishes cooked in the imperial kitchen, plays a part in this narrative.

If the *Ni'matnāma* placed the Sultan in the position of chief patron-connoisseur, the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* imagines the Emperor as a saintly ruler surrounded by wealth and power, yet not distracted by these accoutrements. Food plays multiple roles in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, caught as it is between these dual narratives of austerity and plenty. In Akbar, a sagacious appreciation of the spiritual-moral qualities of food was combined with an aura of power and wealth, represented by the lavish feasts that were turned out of his kitchen. Thus, although the ideational background of the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* differs from that of the *Ni'matnāma*, it nevertheless places the patron-ruler at the centre of its food narrative in ways that seek to legitimise his power and charisma.

A number of cookbooks have come down to us from the period between the seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. A selection of cookbooks from this period will be taken up for analysis, which will enable certain conclusions to be drawn regarding how these culinary manuals should be read as historical sources, and on what they can tell us about the culture of food and consumption that prevailed amongst their audience.

Many Indo-Persian cookbooks produced during the early modern period do not bear an in-text date of composition or author's name. Instead, individual manuscript copies carry a colophon or transcription date, usually marked at the end of the text. Occasionally, the name of the scribe is recorded. Often, the same text appears in multiple copies under different titles and even with some variation in content. The fluid and alliterative nature of cookbook manuscripts reflects the social context in which they were produced as cultural artefacts.

One significant text from this period is the *Nusk̄ha-i Shāhjahānī* or the *Nān u Namak*.²⁷⁸ It begins with a simple statement to the effect that it records the recipes of dishes

²⁷⁷ See pp. 24-32 in this dissertation.

²⁷⁸ There are many copies of this text available. The British Library copy (MS IO Islamic 2798) is entitled "Nān u Namak". The colophon of the Madras copy bears the title "Nusk̄ha-i Shāhjahānī", published as Saiyid Muḥammed Faẓlullah Ṣāhib, ed., *Nusk̄ha-i Shāhjahānī* (Madras: Government Oriental Manuscripts Library,

prepared in Emperor Shāhjahān's (r. 1627-1658) kitchen (*dastūr-i puḡhtan-i aṭīma ke dar sarkār-i pādishāh shāhjahān ma'ahu wazn be amal āmad*). However, no author or date of composition is recorded. It contains ten chapters, on breads (*nān-hā*), pottages (*āsh-hā*), *qalīyas* and *dopiyāzas* (dressed meat dishes), *bhartas* (also *bhurta*; mashes), *zerbiryāns* (a kind of layered rice-based dish), *pulā'o*²⁷⁹, *kabābs*, *harīsas* (savoury porridge), *shishrangas* and *khāgīnas* (omelette), and *khichṛī*. The last chapter covers jams (*murabbā*), *achār*, *pūrī*, sweets (*shīrīnī*), warm pudding (*halwā*) and finally some basic recipes for yoghurt, the preparation of Indian curd cheese (*panīr*) and for the colouring of butter and dough.²⁸⁰ The description of recipes begins on the first page without any further preface.²⁸¹ The text ostensibly draws its importance from a declared association with the Mughal Emperor Shāhjahān (r. 1627-1658), claiming to draw on the culinary repertoire of his kitchen. There is no mention of professional cooks or those involved in compiling the text.

A notable aspect of this text, which we find repeated in many other treatises of the period, is the deriving of recipe titles from the names of people. These include *nān-i Bāqir Kḥānī* (or *bāqirḥānī*; bread of the style of Bāqir Kḥān)²⁸², *zerbiryān-i Nūрмаḥalī* (*zerbiryān* of the style of Nūрмаḥal), *pulā'o-i qabūlī Mahābat Kḥānī* (*qabūlī pulā'o*²⁸³ of the style of Mahābat Kḥān) *pulā'o Shāhjahānī* (*pulā'o* of the style of Shāhjahān) and *qabūlī Islām Kḥānī* (*qabūlī* of the style of Islām Kḥān).²⁸⁴ All these names refer to persons of high rank and prestige. Their connections with the dishes are not clear at all. Sometimes, the precise identities of these persons may not be traceable. However, it is possible to conclude that the names appearing in these cookbooks were not those of cooks or chefs; rather they belonged to notables and members of the imperial Mughal household.

1956). According to the editor, the Madras MS is catalogued D.No.526 and is dated 1263 AH. Another MS from Aligarh Muslim University (MS 98) is entitled "Alwān-i Ni'mat". The Salar Jung Museum and Library in Hyderabad (henceforth, SJML) also holds a copy of this text ("Dastūr-i Puḡhtan-i Aṭīma", Ṭabāḡhī 4, Acc. No. 1430). The citations here are taken from the published Madras text.

²⁷⁹ Spellings and pronunciations of this word can vary. Steingass transliterates this at various points as *palāv*, *pilāv*, *pilāv* or *pulāv* (see Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, pp. 254, 999, 1063, 1169, 1529). Some MSS indicate the *hamza* or *pesh*. Others do not. One MS even uses *pūlav* / *pūlav'o* (P-W-L-A-W) [MS Salar Jung Ṭabāḡhī 3, Acc. No. 1429, p. 1]. For the sake of uniformity, I have usually preferred John Platt's transliteration *pulā'o* for use in the context of Indian cookbooks. See Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English*, p. 267.

²⁸⁰ *Nusḡha-i Shāhjahānī*. See list of contents on p. 1.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² This is still a popular preparation, and there are many origin myths in circulation. However, it is not possible to ascertain with any certainty the real origins of the dish, or whom it actually may have been associated with.

²⁸³ *Qabūlī* or *qabūlī pulā'o* are a category of rice dishes, where the rice is cooked in a *yakhni* or spiced meat broth.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 2-3, 36, 41-42, 45-46, 57-58.

Some recipe titles derive from ostensible places or cultures of origin, such as *qalīya Shīrāzī* (Shiraz style *qalīya* or sauce based dish), *zērbiryān-i Rūmī* (Ottoman style *zērbiryān*), *Shīrāzī pulā'o* (*pulā'o*, Shiraz style), *ḥalwā-i Rūmī* (Ottoman style *ḥalwā*)²⁸⁵ and *ḥalwā-i Firangī* (European style *ḥalwā*).²⁸⁶ This suggests that notions of constructed geographical identity, provenance and authenticity were among the significant markers of cuisine. Other recipe titles draw on the cooking techniques employed in their preparation, for instance, *dampukht* and *zērbiryān*. The construction of recipe titles deriving from ingredients, cooking techniques, important persons, and places or cultures provide hints to the social understanding of cookery and gastronomy.

Another seventeenth century text that should be taken note of here is the *Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū'ī*.²⁸⁷ It is not a cookbook alone, but contains chapters on various themes such as perfumes (*ʿaṭariyāt*), electuaries (*ma'jūniyāt*), ointments (*marāham*), sweetmeats and drinks (*ḥalwāyāt u ashriba*), food dishes (*aṭ'ima*), the making of wax and wax candles (*dar qarṣ-i mom wa sham'ī-i mom wa mom-i jāma*), the construction of buildings and gardens (*dar sākhṭan-i 'imārāt u bāgh*), the colouring of paper etc. (*dar rang-hā-i alwān az kāghaz wa ghaira*), the equipment of camel and elephant stables etc. (*dar asbāb-i shutrkḥāna u filkḥāna wa ghaira*), the arsenal (*qūr khāna*), library and pen stands etc. (*kitābkḥāna wa qalamdān wa ghaira*), fireworks (*ātishbāzī*), auspicious and inauspicious days, cutting of trees and bathing [*ayām-i sa'd u naḥs (wa) darakht burīdan wa ghasl kardan*], games (*bāzīhā*), weights, (*auzān*), mathematics, chess, the affairs of garrisons and the measurement of land [*ḥisāb (wa) shaṭranj wa ḥaqīqat-i mamālik-i maḥrūsa wa jarīb*]). This text is again without attribution.²⁸⁸ It bears a colophon date of Sha'bān 1109 AH, which corresponds to c.1698, but Irfan Habib has dated the text to the first twenty years of Shāhjahān's reign.²⁸⁹ The topics covered by this text – at once dealing both with household and military matters – once again show how the private-domestic was intertwined with the public-military in the lives of the *umarā'* (notables). The chapter on food is divided into two sections (*faṣl*), one covering “recipes from the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*”, which reproduces the recipe section of the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, specifying the measures in Akbarī weights.²⁹⁰ The second section “on miscellaneous dishes” (*dar aṭ'ima-i*

²⁸⁵ *Halwā* is spelt in some places in the printed text of the *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī* as *ḥalwa*, but I have retained the standard spelling here.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 17-18, 36-37, 66, 118,

²⁸⁷ “Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū'ī”, MS BL IO Islamic 828.

²⁸⁸ See table of contexts on Ibid, ff. 1v-3r.

²⁸⁹ Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Second, Revised Edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 488.

²⁹⁰ The first section on dishes from the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* is in “Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū'ī”, MS BL IO Islamic 828, ff. 96r-102r.

mutafarriqa) prescribes recipe measures in Shāhjahānī weights.²⁹¹ Like many other Indo-Persian cookbooks, it also includes recipes named after notables, such as *nān-i sarkār-i Shāh Zāhīr al-Dīn* (bread of the establishment of Shāh Zāhīr al-Dīn), *maṣāliḥ kabāb-i sarkār-i Nawāb Ḥikmat Panāh Ḥakīm Jīw* or spiced kebab from the establishment of Nawāb Ḥikmat Panāh, *sholā-i sarkār-i Shāh Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad* (*sholā* – a dish with rice, meat and beetroots – of the establishment of Shāh Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad), and (various) spiced dishes from the establishment of Kḥān Zamān (*maṣāliḥ ta^cm az sarkār-i Kḥān Zamān*). The last set of dishes includes recipes for *qalīya*, *pulā^o*, *sholā*, *maṣāliḥ achār-i shalgham wa ghaira* (spiced pickles of turnips etc). For most of these recipes, only the ingredients and quantities are listed, following the style of the *Ā^oin-i Akbarī*.²⁹² Although in the *Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū^o*, food recipes are only a small part of a much larger corpus, it is illustrative of the place of food recipes in the world of the Mughal and Persianate elite. Like the *Ni^cmatnāma*, it covers a wide variety of themes of interest to *umarā^o* households: from perfumes and ointments to food, the decorative arts, of entertainment and the provisioning of stables. All this places food as an integral part of the life of Mughal notables, as part of an ensemble that blurred the boundaries between the household and the public military-political spheres. Aesthetics are here standardised in a manual as a tool for the proper expression of taste, wealth and power.

Another significant cookbook – variously known as *Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt* or *Alwān-i Ni^cmat* or *Kḥwān-i Alwān-i Ni^cmat*²⁹³ probably derives from the reign of Aurangzeb (r. 1656-1707) or somewhat later, since it refers to ^cĀlamgīrī weights.²⁹⁴ In any case, it can date to no later than 1765, which is the colophon date on the British Library MS.²⁹⁵ The text itself bears the title *Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt*, which I will use here.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Ibid, ff. 102r-103v. For the values of various weights under different Mughal emperors, see Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp. 420-431. For instance, the *man-i Akbarī* was valued at 25.11 kg, whereas the *man-i Shāhjahānī* equalled 33.48 kg.

²⁹² Second section (on miscellaneous dishes) is in “Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū^o”, MS BL IO Islamic 828, ff. 102r-103v.

²⁹³ MS NMI “Alwān i-Ni^cmat”, S.No. 145, Acc. No. 96.479. This National Museum of India (NMI) manuscript is titled “Alwān-i Ni^cmat” in the catalogue and the colophon. I will cite from the National Museum’s MS in this dissertation, but I will henceforth use the title “Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt”, which occurs in the preface of the text. Other MSS of this text include MS BL Add. 17959 (under the title “Kḥwān-i Alwān-i Ni^cmat”) and “Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt”, MS APGOML Mutafarriqāt no. 210.

²⁹⁴ “Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt”, MS NMI S.No. 145, Acc. No. 96.479, f.55v. As Habib notes, Aurangzeb did not introduce a new *man*. It remained valued at 40 *dāms* (copper coins) to a *ser*, as assigned by Shāhjahān. However, on account of the issuance of newer, lighter *dāms*, the rate of exchange between the *dām* and the *ser* changed to 43 *dāms*, and later to 44 *dāms* to a *ser*. These new weights were designated as ‘^cĀlamgīrī’ weights, despite no intended change in their value. Unfortunately, the exact dates for these changes are not known, and therefore the text cannot be dated with any greater precision on the basis of this evidence. See Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp. 421-423.

²⁹⁵ MS BL Add. 17959.

²⁹⁶ See “Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt”, MS NMI S.No. 145, Acc. No. 96.479, f.2r.

It is divided into 40 *bābs* (chapters) with each *bāb* devoted to a particular category of dishes.²⁹⁷ The first chapter is on various varieties of breads (*nān* and *kulcha*) and subsequent chapters deal with *qalīyas* and *dopiyāzas*, *bhartas*, *kabābs*, *khichrī*, *zerbiryāns*, *achār* and various sweetmeats.²⁹⁸

The preface of this text offers advice on the proper manner of consuming food, and on the etiquette of eating and drinking.²⁹⁹ However, this is not seen as deriving merely from prevalent fashions or social norms. Rather, the text draws on the authority of the Qurʾān, and in particular the *ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions), in proffering its advice on such matters as washing hands, saying ‘bismillah’ (in the name of God) before meals, not eating too much, eating slowly without making much noise, and not criticising food in front of one’s hosts. Other instructions include the injunction that hosts must have their guests’ hands washed, to not be fastidious and eat what is available, to concentrate on one’s own food and not to cast one’s eyes on the food of others, and to eat as well as serve food with the right hand only.³⁰⁰ The *Kḥulāṣat* is unique among Indo-Persian cookbooks in drawing on religious traditions in this manner. In itself, it calls into question any easy classification of the cookery book as entirely secular. It is tempting to speculate that this orientation may be attributable to the text’s probable composition in Aurangzeb’s reign. However, in the absence of any dedication or attribution, this remains a tenuous conclusion to draw. In any case, following a preface replete with pious references, the rest of the text describes recipes in the usual fashion.

Despite the text’s religious orientation at the outset, it shares many aspects common to the Persian cookbooks of the period, including the listing of recipes named after prominent personages. Instances include *nān-i Bāqir Kḥānī* (bread of the style of Bāqir Kḥān), *nān-i Asad Kḥānī* (bread of the style of Asad Kḥān) *khaṇḍawī-i Shāhjahānī* (savoury cakes of the style of Shāhjahān), *(zer)biryān-i Nūрмаḥālī* (*zerbiryān* of the style of Nūрмаḥāl) and *sholā*

²⁹⁷ Ibid, preface on ff. 1v-5v, list of contents on ff. 5v-6r.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, ff. 5v-6r and rest of MS. The full list of contents includes chapters on the following categories of dishes: breads (*nān-hā*), *qalīya* and *dopiyāza*, varieties of greens (*sāg*), *bharta*, pulses and lentils (*dāl*) *zerbiryān*, varieties of *khaṇḍawī* (savoury cakes made with pulse or gram flour) and other Indian sauce-based dishes (*sālan-hā-i hindī*), *khichrī*, *sholā* (dish usually with rice and meat, pulses and various vegetables), *kulthī* (a kind of sweet, sticky rice dish), *thūlī* (a thick sweet dish with flour and milk), *ṭāhīrī* (another kind of rice and meat dish), *ḥalīm* (savoury porridge) and *kashk* (gruel with wheat and meat), *āsh*, *bara* (or *baṛa*: sort of fried cakes or dumplings), *jughrāt wa sikharn* (yoghurt based dishes), *shīrbirinj* (sweet dish made with rice and milk), *firmī* (sweet dish made with thickened milk and rice or rice flour) *fālūda* (a kind of flummery cut into small pieces and dunked in sherbet) and *panbhatta* (made with rice that is fried and soaked in water and then added to a sherbet), *sambosa*, *pūrī*, *gulgula* (sweet dumplings made with a thick batter) and *khajūr* (also a kind of sweet dumpling), *malīda* (sweet powdery mixture made of dough), *shīrīnī*, *murabbā*, *achār* as well as a chapter on shelling coriander and pepper, sweetening bitter butter or oil, and other basic recipes.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, ff. 2r-5v.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

*khichrī-i Jahāngīrī*³⁰¹ (*sholā khichrī* of the style of Jahāngīr).³⁰² The text also carries recipes for special kinds of *khichrī* prepared on the day of °*āshūrā* (the tenth day of Muḥarram on the Islamic calendar) and in honour of certain Ṣūfī saints.³⁰³ Two of these recipes contain meat, and one specifies that beef be used. One contains no meat, but uses sugar.³⁰⁴ The combination of white sugar with mungbean pulses (*mūng*) and fried onions is an instance of sweet and savoury flavours being combined in a single dish – something that is noticed frequently in Indo-Persian cookbooks. Some recipes were named after supposed places or cultures of origin, such as *qalīya Shīrāzī* (Shiraz style *qalīya*), *dopiyāza Shīrāzī* (Shiraz style *dopiyāza*) and *dopiyāza Muḡhalī* (Mongol style *dopiyāza*).³⁰⁵

There is some uncertainty regarding a cookbook called the *Kḥwān-i Ni°mat*, which is attributed to Ni°mat Kḥān °Ālī, a notable of Aurangzeb’s reign (1658-1707). Various archives around the world house cookbook manuscripts entitled *Kḥwān-i Ni°mat*, all of which vary quite widely in terms of content.³⁰⁶ Yet, they are attributed in the catalogues – sometimes speculatively – to Ni°mat Kḥān °Ālī, in the absence of any other author identification. The evidence indicates that these are misattributions based on mistaken identity, due to a confusion regarding the title ‘Kḥwān-i Ni°mat’. The only manuscript containing an in-text attribution that I am aware of is in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.³⁰⁷ This manuscript bears no date or colophon inscription to indicate provenance. The text is introduced with the following line: *nuskḥa-hā-i jamī° aṭ°ima ke Ni°mat Kḥān °Ālī tālīf namūda musammī be Kḥwān-i Ni°mat karda* (compiled recipes of foods which Ni°mat Kḥān °Ālī wrote titled *Kḥwān-i Ni°mat*). This is an indirect attribution of purported original authorship. Such an attribution is inconsistent with the typical style of first-person identification by an eminent author. After this simple line of introduction, the text goes on to describe a number of recipes commonly found in Indo-Persian cookbooks of this period. These include many of the usual recipes for various varieties of breads, *qalīyas*, *dopiyāzas*, *bhartas*, *kabābs*, rice dishes such as *ṭāhirīs*, *pulā°os*, *zerbiryāns*, and *khichrīs*, as well as *khāgīnas*, *achārs*, and *ḥalwās*.³⁰⁸

Some cookbooks bridged the divide between the categories of ‘book’ and ‘notebook’, the first being a formal production meant for distribution and the latter consisting of informal

³⁰¹ *Sholā khichrī* is a dish prepared with rice, meat and pulses.

³⁰² “Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt”, MS NMI S.No. 145, Acc. No. 96.479, ff. 6v, 31r, 32r, 47r.

³⁰³ Ibid, ff. 45r-45v.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, f. 45r (°*āshūrā*), f. 45v.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, ff. 11v, 12v.

³⁰⁶ See for instance, MS BL Add. 16871, ff.295-344; MS BL IO Islamic 2362.

³⁰⁷ “Kḥwān-i Ni°mat” of Ni°mat Kḥān °Ālī, MS SBB Or. Oct. 98.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, *passim*.

notes or information for limited circulation. One such cookbook is a slim manuscript from the British Library of uncertain date.³⁰⁹ This text begins without any preface or invocation; the first page is not even headed with the common invocation ‘bismillah’. Unusually for an early modern Persian cookbook, it begins with describing recipes for various kinds of *khichrī*.³¹⁰ This is followed by chapters dealing with dishes such as *bhartas*, *kaṛhī* with *baṛī* (dish with a chickpea flour base served with fried dumplings) *dāls* (pulses and lentils), *chaṭnī* (chutney), *sāg* (greens) and *achār*.³¹¹ Thus, the recipes described in this book are far simpler and inexpensive compared to those in the cookbooks discussed earlier. The dishes are also all vegetarian. Meatless recipes here are indicative not of any religious proscription, but of the inexpensive nature of the ingredients. The unpretentious character of this cookbook is also reflected in its rough-hewn style and lack of organisation. However, the description of simple and common dishes such as *khichrī*, *dāl*, *sāg*, and *chaṭnī* is common to Indo-Persian cookbooks across the board, as is the use of both Hindi and Persian words. Thus, not all Indo-Persian cookbooks dealt with the fare of elite tables, nor were they so far removed from the culinary worlds of the ‘common folk’.

There were also cookbooks that were specialised in their content. A copy of one such cookbook, titled *Alwān-i Ni^cmat* and transcribed in 1275 AH (c.1858/59) is dedicated to recipes of sweetmeats.³¹² These include varieties of sweet breads such as *nān khaṭā^ṭī* (crisp bread, like a biscuit), sweet *pūrīs*, sweet *samosas* (or *saṃbosas*), *laḍḍū* and *ḥalwā*. The cookbook introduces each recipe with a line of praise: for instance *saṃbosa-i yak tuhī dam dāda* (*samosa* with a pocket cooked on *dam*³¹³)³¹⁴ is declared as being among the famous and well-known sweets (*ke az jumla-i shīrīnī-hā-i mashhūra wa ^cām bāshad*); *pūrī dam dāda bādāmī* (almond *pūrīs* cooked on *dam*) is said to be among the delicious and excellent sweetmeats (*az shīrīnī-hā-i khwushmaza u khūb u ^cumda ast*) and *nān khaṭā^ṭī bādāmī* (almond *nān khaṭā^ṭī*)³¹⁵ is noted for being rare and delicious (*ke az nuskhā-hā-i nau-i kamyāb u khwushmaza ast*).³¹⁶ In this manner, the cookbook not only expresses appreciation of taste with regard to the recipes it contains, but also advertises itself for carrying them.

³⁰⁹ Untitled MS BL IO Islamic 717. Like many of the Persian manuscripts housed in the British Library, this was originally among the collections of the East India Company library. It is not certain how or when the Company library acquired it, but it obviously dated to no later than the mid-nineteenth century.

³¹⁰ Ibid, f. 1v.

³¹¹ Ibid, whole text. There is no list of contents.

³¹² “Alwān-i Ni^cmat”, MS APGOML Mutaffariqāt no. 208.

³¹³ “*Dam dādan*” usually refers to a style of slow cooking in a sealed container.

³¹⁴ Single pocket baked *samosas*.

³¹⁵ Almond crisp bread.

³¹⁶ “Alwān-i Ni^cmat”, MS APGOML Mutaffariqāt no. 208, *passim*.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the production of cookbooks in much the same vein. Many of these were not particularly voluminous, but appear to have served essentially the same cultural purpose in terms of reflecting the prestige of the elite patron. One cookbook that claims to derive its recipes from a royal or notable kitchen is the *Nuskha-hā-i Khwān-i Ni‘mat*, also titled *Nuskha-i Aqsām-i Ta‘māt* on the colophon.³¹⁷ The manuscript bears a colophon date of 12th Jumādā al-Awwal in the 25th year of Shāh ‘Ālam’s reign, which corresponds to 15th April 1783.³¹⁸ The colophon notation also states that the manuscript was prepared at Murshidabad under the governorship (*ṣūbadārī*) of Nawāb Mubārak al-Duwal, son of the late Nawāb J‘afar ‘Alī Kḥān.³¹⁹ The opening line of the manuscript states that it records recipes from the establishment of Ghulām Husain Kḥānṣāhib, son of Nawāb ‘Āzam Kḥānṣāhib (*nuskha-hā-i Khwān-i Ni‘mat az sarkār-i Nawāb Ghulām Husain Kḥānṣāhib pisar-i Nawāb ‘Āzam Kḥānṣāhib naql girafṭa shud*).³²⁰ The manuscript begins with recipes for pickles and jam (*murabbā*) of fruits such as pineapple (*anānās*), orange (*turunj*) and lemon (*līmū*). It then goes on to describe a medley of recipes for various kinds of *ḥalwā*, *pulā‘o*, *zerbiryān*, *firnī* (rice and milk pudding), *āsh* (pottages), *qalīyas* and *dopiyāzas*, *saḃbosa*, *kābabs* and *nān*. The arrangement of recipes, beginning with pickles and preserves, is unusual. Recipes for sweet and savoury dishes are also interspersed with each other, and there appears to be no particular rationale to their ordering.³²¹

Another cookbook from this period that claims to derive its recipes from the kitchen of a notable is a text entitled *Khwān-i Ni‘mat* (again without author). This text purports to describe recipes from the kitchen of Nawāb Qāsim ‘Alī Kḥān.³²² This is the same cookbook that was later inscribed on the marginalia of the *Shakaristān-i Khayāl* lithographed by the Nawal Kishor Press. The first page of the text describes the nature of its contents as follows: *ṣifat-i pukht-i ta‘m az maṭbakh-i khāṣ-i Amīr-i ‘Uẓām Nawāb Qāsim ‘Alī Kḥān Jang Bahādur intikhāb namūda* [cooking regulations of dishes selected from the esteemed kitchen of Amīr-i ‘Uẓām (the great notable / Lord) Nawāb Qāsim ‘Alī Kḥān Jang Bahādur].³²³ The identity of

³¹⁷ MS Bodl. Ouseley 69, ff. 718r-739r.

³¹⁸ Ibid, f. 739r. Since this text is probably a single copy manuscript, the manuscript transcription date would correspond to the date of composition of the text. See also Edward Sachau and Hermann Ethe, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pashtu manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Part I: The Persian Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), col. 772, catalogue no. 1241, for the date conversion.

³¹⁹ MS Bodl. Ouseley 69, f. 739r.

³²⁰ Ibid, f. 718r. Ethe and Sachau in the Bodleian Library catalogue (*Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pashtu Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Part I: The Persian Manuscripts*, col. 772, catalogue no. 1241) interpret this sentence as meaning that Nawāb Ghulām Husain authored the text, but this is unlikely.

³²¹ MS Bodl. Ouseley 69, ff. 718r-739r.

³²² MS “Khwān-i Ni‘mat”, microfilm NMC no. 276-2.

³²³ Ibid, f. 1v; *Shakaristān-i Khayāl wa Khwān-i Ni‘mat*, p. 2.

this Nawāb Qāsim °Alī K̲h̲ān cannot be ascertained with certainty, but almost definitely refers to a member of the Indo-Persian elite in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.³²⁴ The text thus dates to this period.

This cookbook contains recipes such as *yakhnī pulā'o* (meat broth *pulā'o*), *pulā'o sāda* (plain *pulā'o*), *khichrī biryān* (fried *khichrī*), *qorma sāda* (a spiced meat dish), *achār-i līmūn kāghazī* ('paper-like' lemon pickle), *achār-i aṃba* (mango pickle), *chaṭnī*, *murabbā-i aṃba* (mango jam), *bāqir̲kh̲ānī* (a rich layered bread), *shīrmāl* (a rich leavened bread prepared with milk and spices) *nān-i tāftān* (a kind of flavoured flatbread), *pūrī*, *khajūr khāṣa* (sweet dumplings or cakes), *gulgula* (sweet dumplings made with a thick batter), *yakhnī sāda* (spiced meat broth), *shakar pāra* (sweet flour-based snack), *laḍḍū-i māsh yā'nī mūng* (round sweetmeats made of mungbean pulse), *murabbā-i seb* (apple jam), *murabbā-i tamrhindī* (tamarind jam), *nān khāṭā'ī*, *qalīya aṃba* (mango *qalīya*), *muza'far pulā'o*, *ḥalwā-i zardak* (carrot *ḥalwā*), *kabāb-i sāda* (ordinary kebab) *kabāb-i māhī bar sīkh* (skewered fish kebab) and *khāgīna*.³²⁵ This assortment of dishes is not particularly different from that of most Indo-Persian cookbooks. As with many other cookbooks, sweet and savoury dishes jostle with each other in this compilation.

There is some evidence of authorship ascription from the eighteenth century onwards. During this period, along with the production of new cookbooks, the copying of older culinary manuals continued. Often, recipes were copied and reproduced from various older sources. An example of this is a text that exists in the form of two unique manuscript volumes at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, entitled *Alwān-i Ni'mat* by Ḥājī Qambar.³²⁶ The manuscript is undated, but can be assigned a rough date with internal evidence. The text reproduces some recipes from older cookbooks. Its style, with a detailed index including page numbers at the end of the text suggests a later origin, as does the use of alphabets to indicate hard sounds such as 'ṭ'. Since this is apparently a unique copy, such evidence is significant. It also

³²⁴ However, there are a couple of possibilities. It may refer to the son of Nawāb Sālār Jang Nishapūrī, who in turn was the brother-in-law of Āṣaf-ud-Daulah (1748-1797) – the ruler of Awadh between 1775 and 1797. Aḥmad Bihbahānī (d. 1819), who travelled in India between 1805 and 1809 claims to have met this Nawāb Qāsim °Alī K̲h̲ān, son of Nawāb Sālār Jang. See Aḥmad Bihbahānī, *India in the Early 19th Century: An Iranian's Travel Account, Translation of Mir'at ul-Ahwal-i Jahan Numa*, trans. A. F. Haider (Patna: Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, 1996), p. 167. See also Amir Hasan, *Vanishing Culture of Lucknow* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1990), p. 79, where Nawāb Qāsim °Alī K̲h̲ān and his father Nawāb Sālār Jang are introduced as "reputed gentleman musicians". Nawāb Qāsim °Alī K̲h̲ān's son Nawāb Ḥusain °Alī K̲h̲ān was the author of another cookbook *Majmū' al-Ta'm*, discussed below in this chapter (pp. 90-91). Another possible identification would be with Mīr Qāsim, who was Nawāb of Bengal between 1760 and 1763.

³²⁵ MS "K̲h̲wān-i Ni'mat", microfilm NMC no. 276-2, *passim*; *Shakaristān-i Khayāl wa Khwān-i Ni'mat, passim*.

³²⁶ Ḥājī Qambar, "Alwān-i Ni'mat", MSS SBB Sprenger 2001 and Sprenger 2002. The foliation followed here is the English foliation, as the Persian foliation is flawed. There is writing only on the recto of the folios.

prescribes the use of red chillies.³²⁷ The profile of this culinary manual is thus consistent with that of cookbooks dating to between the later part of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries.

The manuscript begins with a preface, in which the author identifies himself as Ḥājī Qambar, and states that he compiled various (*mutafarraqa*) recipes in this book. The title chosen by the author himself and given in the preface is *Alwān-i Ni^cmat*.³²⁸ The text is divided into ten chapters, which are listed at the end of the preface. It carries recipes for breads (*nān-hā*), kebabs (*kabāb-hā*), rice preparations (*pulā^o u khichrī wa ghaira*), varieties of spiced meat dishes such as *dopiyāzas* and *qaliyas*, pottages etc. (*āsh wa ghaira*), puddings and similar preparations (*ḥalwāt u mānand-i ān*), sweetmeats (*shīrīnī wa ghaira*), jams (*murabbā-hā*), and lastly, pickles and similar preparations (*achār u mānand-i ān*).³²⁹ The text also has a detailed table of contents at the end of its second volume, although there are some inconsistencies in its compilation.³³⁰ A study of the recipe descriptions suggests that many of the recipes may have been lifted from prior cookbooks. Careful comparison indeed reveals that many recipes in Ḥājī Qambar’s *Alwān-i Ni^cmat* are identical to those in the *Khulāṣat-i Makūlāt u Mashrūbāt*, discussed above, and have been lifted without a change in vocabulary.³³¹

The growing presence of Europeans in India from the eighteenth century onwards spawned various streams of culinary interaction. One aspect of these cross-cultural interactions consists of a few instances that we have of cookbooks that facilitated such culinary cross-pollination. This included cookbooks on Indian food for Europeans, and another cookbook that translated recipes for European dishes into Persian, probably for an elite Indian audience. A cookbook in the former category is the *Risāla dar bayān-i aṭ^cima u aghziya lazīza*.³³² This was written for “Captain Parkson (or Packson?) Ṣāhib Bahādur”, apparently because he liked Indian food.³³³ This is a short MS – of a mere thirteen folios – and contains a total of thirty-one recipes. The recipes are typical of an elite kitchen, and include descriptions of dishes such as *yakhnī*, *pulā^o*, *khichrī*, *zerbiryān*, *dopiyāza*, *sālan* (a sauce based dish with meat and vegetables), *kabāb*, *pūrī* (stuffed fried bread), almond *ḥalwā*,

³²⁷ MS SBB Sprenger 2002, ff. 310-11.

³²⁸ MS SBB Sprenger 2001, ff. 1r.

³²⁹ MS SBB Sprenger 2001, ff. 1r-2r.

³³⁰ The list of contents is on the last few folios of MS SBB Sprenger 2002, which bears dual foliation systems.

³³¹ Compare with “*Khulāṣat-i Makūlāt u Mashrūbāt*”, MS NMI S.No. 145, Acc. No. 96.479, discussed above in this chapter (pp. 83-85).

³³² “*Risāla Dar Bayān-i Aṭ^cima u Aghziya Lazīza*”, MS RAS Codrington/Reade 213.

³³³ *Ibid.*, f. 1v. Name is spelt P-A-K-S-N. I am unable to identify the person.

achār, *shīrmāl tanūrī* (a rich, oven baked bread with cream and spices), sweet and savoury *dahī bara* (spiced yoghurt with dumplings), rice and milk pudding, *shīr fālūda* (a kind of flummery made of milk and starch, cut into small pieces and dunked in syrup), and *chaṭnī*.³³⁴ In the recipe titles, some of the dishes are described as ‘light’ (*sabuk*), or ‘heavy’ (*sangīn*).³³⁵ There is no order to the arrangement of recipes, and even desserts and sweetmeats are inserted randomly among descriptions of savoury dishes. Some of the recipe titles make reference to “Muḥammad Shāhī”, which indicates that the text was probably either contemporaneous to the Mughal Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719-1748) or was written shortly after his reign.³³⁶ In most respects – style as well as content – the *Risāla dar bayān-i aṭ‘ima* is typical of most Indo-Persian recipe books of the period. Being written for an Englishmen did little to change this.

The *Majmū‘ al-Ta‘m* is another ‘crossover’ cookbook that offers an instance of culinary and cultural cross-pollination during this period. According to the preface of this cookbook, it was written specifically for the English East India Company resident at Lucknow (*rizīdant-i dārulsulṭanat-i Lakhnau*) Mārdant Rikiṭs Šāhib Bahādur (or Mordaunt Ricketts, Esquire, in the English translation).³³⁷ The author of the text self-identifies himself as Ḥusain ‘Alī Kḥān, son of Nawāb Qāsim ‘Alī Kḥān, son of Nawāb Sālār Jang Bahādur, and the text is dated 3rd Jumādā al-Šānī 1241 AH (or 12 January 1826 CE). The unique character of this particular manuscript is that it is bound with an English translation. The translation was probably prepared so that the English resident could read it himself, suggesting that the text was not merely a symbolic gift of ornamental value alone.³³⁸ In explaining the reason for his writing this text, Ḥusain ‘Alī writes that the British resident had requested him to write various recipes for him that the former had access to (*ba īn za‘īf farmūdand ki nuskhā-hā-i pukḥtan-i ta‘m-i shīrīn u namkīn wa achārāt u murabb‘āt shumā rā daryāft hastand barāy mā ham chand nuskhā-hā-i ‘ajā‘ib u gharā‘ib nivishṭa dahand*: he said to this weakling that you have in your possession, recipes for sweet and savoury dishes as well as pickles and jams. Please write down some of these strange and wondrous recipes for me also).³³⁹ Upon returning home after this conversation, Ḥusain ‘Alī explains, he set about collecting recipes

³³⁴ Ibid, ff. 1r-13r.

³³⁵ For instance, “very heavy *yakhnī pulā‘o* (*yakhnī pulā‘o bisyār sangīn*)” on Ibid, f. 1r and “light *kabāb pulā‘o*” (*kabāb pulā‘o sabuk*) on Ibid, f. 3v.

³³⁶ Ibid, ff. 1r, 2r.

³³⁷ “*Majmū‘ al-Ta‘m*”, MS BNF Supplément Persan 1878. The Persian original has the name as M-A-R-D-N-Ṭ R-K-Ṭ-S, with Urdu alphabet notation for the hard ‘ṭ’ sound.

³³⁸ The translation is written on thick course paper, while the original text is written in clear, elegant *nasta‘līq* on thin, smooth paper. Both sets of pages are gilded and bound together. Thus, it seems that the translation was probably prepared shortly after the original and bound together with it, for the benefit of the English resident.

³³⁹ “*Majmū‘ al-Ta‘m*”, MS BNF Supplément Persan 1878, f. 2r.

cooked in his own household to record in this cookbook. The text is divided into eight chapters on the following types of dishes: savoury *pulā'os*, sweet *pulā'os* (sweet rice often with dry fruits and other such ingredients), various types of *sālans*, sweetmeats such as *firnī*, *māqūti* (a kind of thickened and flavoured syrup), *fālūda* (a kind of flummery cut into small pieces and dunked in syrup), *panbhatta* (sweet dish made of pounded rice in a sugar syrup) and *dulma* (sweetened pounded rice), breads (*nān-hā*), puddings (*ḥalwājāt*), jams (*murabbājāt*) and pickles and chutneys (*achārāt wa chaṭnī*).³⁴⁰ In this cookbook, as in the previous ones surveyed, the household cooks remain anonymous. Although this cookbook represents a rare instance where the author identifies himself, this identification is clearly made as a self-conscious elite connoisseur.

Aspects of this text reflect the incorporation of European cultural elements. In particular, time measurements in its recipes combine Indian and European styles. In the Persian original, both *gharī* and minute counts are used for preparation and cooking times – often in combination.³⁴¹ A comparison of the Persian original of this text with its English translation also yields some crucial insights into the linguistic and cultural transference of food recipes between different contexts and milieus. In the translation, the format and arrangement of recipes is altered as per the European style, with ingredients and quantities listed in tabular form at the beginning of each recipe. At the same time, measuring units (*ser* and *dām*) are transferred unaltered from the original. But there are also some fundamental alterations in the rendition of these recipes from Persian to English. Recipe titles are sometimes changed to more familiar nomenclatures. Thus, the *sālan* of the Persian original is changed to ‘curry’, the latter being a term that is not to be found in contemporary Indo-Persian cookbooks. However, words such as *maṣāliḥ* (spice mix) and *ghī* (ghee or clarified butter) are retained in the translation.³⁴² This reflects the extent to which many Indian words had entered the English culinary lexicon at this time, and were at least familiar to the English who were resident in India.

Another cookbook that carried the seeds of culinary cross-pollination is a Persian translation of an unknown English cookbook.³⁴³ The Persian text is entitled *Nuskḥa-i Ni'amat*

³⁴⁰ Ibid, f. 2r (list of contents in the Persian text) and *passim*.

³⁴¹ Ibid. For instance, one recipe (recipe no. 25 in the MS) requires garlic, ginger and dry coriander to be fried in oil for a quarter *gharī* and six minutes (*tā pā'o gharī wa shish mināṭ biryān kunad*). The word minute is written in the Persian text as M-N-Ṭ, with a hard sound Urdu alphabet used for the T. In the English version, this is translated as “8 minutes”, which is equivalent to a quarter *gharī*, but omits the additional six minutes mentioned in the original.

³⁴² The translation also retains the names of certain ingredients, such as *kishnīz* (coriander).

³⁴³ “Nuskḥa-i Ni'amat Kḥān”, MS BL OR 2028.

Khān on the subscript and is dated 1801.³⁴⁴ This culinary manual appears to have been translated for an Indian audience, with the object of acquainting them with European foods. The translator’s preface begins with an invocation saying that God had created foods and drinks for every race of people from his treasure trove.³⁴⁵ The translator goes on to state that he, Shaikh Hankā Ghāfrullah of Muzaffarpur, had obtained an English book detailing recipes for various foods and drinks from his master.³⁴⁶ The Persian rendition of the English text was made with the help of the polyglot (*zabān dānī*) Wāriṣ °Alī Karātī.³⁴⁷ The text also explains the motive behind the preparation of this translation: so that the recipes contained in it may become popular among the gentlemanly class.³⁴⁸ This manuscript details some typical European dishes: recipes for tomato soup, vegetable soup, mock turtle soup and hare soup; entrées such as beef fillet, various kinds of stew, steak and mutton chop, mashed potatoes, and macaroni; as well as desserts such as apple dumplings, tartlets, and Shrewsbury cake.³⁴⁹ But it also has multiple recipes for mulligatawny soup, and makes reference to ‘curry’ (*kārī*) and ‘curry powder’.³⁵⁰ This is notable since these terms were unknown in contemporary Indo-Persian cookbooks. The original English version of this cookbook is not traceable, and thus a comprehensive comparative analysis of the two versions is not possible. Nevertheless, it is significant that the translation makes use of indigenous measures of weight (such as *ser* and *chaṭānk*) as well as of time (*gharī*), which would indicate a genuine effort to make the text usable within the Indian context, rather than merely being intended as an item of novel or curious interest.³⁵¹

A comparative analysis of the cookbooks discussed above make some aspects clear. For instance, certain common characteristics have been brought out in the foregoing discussion. The naming of recipes after prominent personages, the use of Hindi words and recipes drawn from a diverse variety of sources as well as the intermingling of sweet and savoury dishes are some of these salient features. At the same time, it is clear that the texts vary according to the time and context of their composition. The *Ni°matnāma* differs in many ways from later texts composed from the seventeenth onwards. In terms of vocabulary content, it was rooted in the Central Indian region where the text was composed. Its literary

³⁴⁴ Ibid, f. 15r. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace the English original.

³⁴⁵ Ibid, f. 13v.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, f. 14v.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, f. 15r.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, f. 14r.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, *passim*. See also the list of contents on ff. 1r-13r.

³⁵⁰ There are recipes for curries on ibid, ff. 192r-196r. For a reference to curry powder, see f. 16v (*kārī pūḍar yā°nī sufūf-i kārī*) in a recipe for mulligatawny soup. “Curry” and “curry powder” find no mention in Indo-Persian texts.

³⁵¹ Ibid, *passim*, but see for instance ff. 16r, 17r, 18r.

and artistic style can be compared with the somewhat contemporaneous Mandu text *Miftah al-Fazula*, a fifteenth century Persian dictionary, similarly illustrated with miniatures as the *Ni^cmatnāma*.³⁵² Yet the *Ni^cmatnāma* shares certain features with later cookbooks, such as its focus on the patron-connoisseur. Texts from the eighteenth century onwards also betray some differences such as author attribution and the influence of limited European presence in India.

The texts examined above are also differentiated in terms of their compositional style. Some consist more or less of a bland compilation of recipes, while others such as the *Ni^cmatnāma* and the sweetmeat cookbook, *Alwan i-Ni^cmat* contain words in praise of the recipes they carry. Some derive their legitimacy from a claimed association with a royal or notable kitchen, while others do not do so explicitly. The *K̄hulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt* has a preface with religious references, which is absent in other cookbooks. Nevertheless, what is common in all these culinary manuals is the prominence of the elite consumer and the apparent absence of the cook.

The cultural space that Persian cookbooks occupied and represented was an exclusive one. The section below will examine some of the key social implications of this cultural phenomenon.

Gendered Food Discourses

In this section, I will argue that while women were actively involved in the production, processing and serving of food, they were absent from the gastronomic discourses of the period. This was a natural corollary to the centrality of the elite patron-connoisseur in discourses of taste, as well as of the absence of women from many of the public spaces where food was cooked and eaten. Professional cooks who operated outside the domestic sphere were almost invariably men, as were the elite consumers who ultimately defined standards of taste and connoisseurship. This is what I term as the ‘masculinisation of food discourse’.

The involvement of women in food production and processing within the domestic sphere is generally considered a fact, and can be sufficiently documented and substantiated. Women were actively engaged in agriculture, dairying and food preparation, where the boundaries between the domestic and the professional were blurred. Folk songs possibly of medieval or early modern provenance from Mathura and Vrindavan, gathered and studied by Lily Mukherjee, suggest that women of the locality were often engaged in supplying milk,

³⁵² “Miftah al-Fazula”, MS BL OR 3299.

butter and yoghurt in their neighbourhood.³⁵³ A British Army officer, Lt. Col. Francis Skelly, relates an anecdote concerning an Indian girl bringing a cooked meal for her husband, who was a soldier. The narration appears in a letter dated 25th August 1790 reporting on progress in the campaign against Ṭīpū Sulṭān.³⁵⁴ This anecdote would appear to suggest that even serving soldiers might have, at times, depended on the domestic culinary services of their wives.

Although instances of women in full-time professional employment as cooks are not to be found, in some instances women did cook for a fee. In his *Tazkiratu-l-Mulūk* (completed in 1608-12), the Iranian traveller Rafī^c al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Shīrazī notes the presence of women innkeepers, who on occasion also cooked food for their patrons:

In this country, a *bhatiyari* is one who...[break in the original text] on roads used by people at every *farsakh* or half *farsakh*, notables of this country have founded and left behind *sarais*, where persons of the caste of *bhatiyaras* reside so that whenever the travellers arrive, they can on payment stay there and give provisions for food to the *bhatiyari* who then cooks the food according to their taste and takes her wage.³⁵⁵

This evidence is corroborated by the travelogue of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who in his description of *sarāys* or inns, notes that men and women sold flour, rice, butter and vegetables, and made it their business to prepare bread and cook rice.³⁵⁶

Some scholars have speculated on women's roles in the creation of cuisine. Jack Goody argues that from very early times, the great courts of Europe and the Mediterranean employed male cooks who brought over women's recipes from the domestic realm into the royal courts.³⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Shirin Mahdavi has argued that Iranian (or Persian) cuisine in its present form has its roots in the Ṣafawid period, when the declaration of Shi^cism as the

³⁵³ Lily Mukherjee, "Social Life in Mathura and Vrindavan in the Medieval Ages", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Kurukshetra, 1982, pp. 325-331, esp. p. 327.

³⁵⁴ Letter among the Francis Skelly Papers, MSS BL Eur D877/5 (pp. 1-40). See ff. 26-28 (pp. 1-6 of letter). Skelly was in the 74th Highland Regiment of the British Army. According to his description in this letter, "the advanced guard, they fired several shots at us, one of which struck so near a young Indian girl, who was carrying a young soldier's Dinner upon her head, that it almost covered her with the dust it rained." He goes on to describe how the girl continued to carry the food despite this. However, for some reason that is not exactly clear, the meal was eventually lost, and the soldier got angry with his wife. Skelly reports that he gave the girl a "Pagoda" (a coin made of precious metal). The girl immediately handed the coin over to her husband "as a peace offering". This apparently appeased the soldier, who then ordered his wife "to cook him another Currie".

³⁵⁵ Shirin Moosvi, ed. and trans., *Episodes in the Life of Akbar: Contemporary Records and Reminiscences* (New Delhi: National Book Trust), 1994, p. 29.

³⁵⁶ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. I, p. 45.

³⁵⁷ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, p. 101.

official religion led to the confinement of women.³⁵⁸ Affluent and middle class women, now unable to actively engage in public spaces, spent their time experimenting in the kitchen. This, according to Mahdavi, led to the development of intricate and elaborate recipes. In support of her thesis, she cites the evidence of European travellers.³⁵⁹ Tracing the social trajectory of Iranian (*haute*) cuisine historically, Mahdavi concludes:

The Safavid and Qajar eras reversed the tradition found under the °Abbasids. During the °Abbasids [*sic*] the peasant recipes were taken by the male court cooks and elaborated upon, whereas with the rise of the new middle class and the seclusion of women the court recipes were taken and elaborated upon by women of all walks of life.³⁶⁰

Mahdavi's speculations require the support of greater research and elaboration, but they do provide leads towards the direction that such explorations may take. The collective evidence from various sources suggests that while court cuisine in Europe and Asia may have been male-dominated, it did draw on domestic sources, and ultimately also on the culinary repertoire of women.

From a cross-cultural perspective, it appears that gender often emerged as a marker of hierarchy and power in sophisticated culinary cultures. The corollary of this was that women's involvement in the process of culinary creation tended to be undervalued. As Ferguson notes in the case of early modern France:

However mightily scullery maids labored to get extravagant dinners on the table, women had only the most ancillary role in the aristocratic kitchen run on the military model, where cooks (male) worked under the orders of Officers. The Officer of the kitchen (*Officier de Cuisine*), later head of the kitchen (*Chef de Cuisine*), was in charge of all the actual cooking, while the Officer of the mouth (*Officier de bouche*) or steward (*maitre de hotel*) supervised supplies and cold preparations, including desserts.³⁶¹

Ferguson is not the only scholar to draw attention to the military associations of the court kitchen – and by extension – affluent kitchens in general. Mennell speculates that the origin of the court not as a domestic household, but as a military establishment, was a probable cause for the association of male cooks with court cuisine. He argues in favour of the likelihood that

³⁵⁸ Shirin Mahdavi, "Women, Shi'ism, and Cuisine in Iran", in *Women, Religion, and Culture in Iran*, ed. Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), pp. 10-26.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 22.

³⁶¹ Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, p. 135.

men always served as cooks with armies, and that their function in court kitchens emerged as an extension of that role.³⁶²

In the Mughal context, professional cooks in full-time employment were invariably men. Thus, whenever cooking, cooks or food dishes are discussed in Indo-Persian sources, they usually deal with food being eaten and served in spaces occupied by men, both elite and plebeian. However, as has been shown through the course of this chapter, it was the elite patron-connoisseur who delineated standards of taste. Professional cooks did not occupy a status high enough to merit a place in the food discourses of the period. Thus – as has been seen – one often encounters recipes named after prominent notables, rather than after cooks.

Indo-Persian cookbooks thus represented an *haute* cuisine completely devoid of the institution of the creative chef. It was the elite gastronome, who through his cultivated sense of taste, presented himself as a lynchpin of this culinary universe. In Chapter 1, I discussed the manner in which the elaboration of Mughal imperial ideology led to the creation of more elaborate dining practices, and in particular to the separation of female domesticity from masculine public spaces. Although not without exceptions, complexities and challenges, the general movement from conviviality to exclusivity was accompanied by the flowering of a sophisticated high Mughal culinary culture that usually centred on male-exclusive spaces.

Conclusion

The Indo-Persian elite – with a shared language and literary heritage, as well as access to a variety of ingredients – developed an *haute* cuisine that engendered a highly developed sense of gastronomy and connoisseurship. This found its manifestation in cookbooks, where recipes were codified and reproduced. Standards of culinary taste were also articulated and reinforced in histories, chronicles, memoirs, and travelogues. In fact, almost any food-related statement was imbued with cultural sensibilities pertaining to taste.

Furthermore, class and gender distinctions found distinct expression in the gastronomic culture of the Indo-Persian elite. At the apex of its articulation was the elite patron-connoisseur, inevitably male. It was he who set standards of taste. Cooks are seldom mentioned by name in the literature of the period, and the authors of cookbooks are only rarely identified. This is in contrast to medical texts, which were usually dated and ascribed.

³⁶² Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, p. 201.

The inescapable conclusion is that this contrast is linked to the difference in social status between cooks and doctors.

Despite some issues of precise dating and ascription, the cookbooks surveyed above are valuable sources of the food culture within which they were produced. They tell us not only about ingredients, cooking techniques, and the material culture of the kitchen, but also about worldviews surrounding dining and cuisine. For instance, recipes were often named after notables rather than after cooks, and this is reflective of the prominent role of the patron-connoisseur. Cookbooks often associated themselves with a ruler or other prominent personage, purporting to detail recipes from his kitchen. And yet, the authors of these recipes remain as obscure as that of the cookbooks themselves.

The world of the Indo-Persian connoisseur bore a distinct gendered character. This was a natural corollary of the status of the elite male patron-connoisseur at the apex of the gastronomic edifice. Women, as has been seen, played an important role in the production and processing of food. From a deeper historical and sociological perspective, women's contributions to the development of cuisine are significant. But their representation in gastronomic discourse is conspicuous by its absence. The association of women with the household and men with the public-political sphere found its culinary manifestation in the sexual division of labour between the roles of the professional and domestic cook.

As a concluding note, it is instructive to compare the Indian context as analysed above with European (and particularly French) culinary cultures in the early modern period.³⁶³ There are many similarities, such as the association of men with professional cooking, and the development of distinctions in taste as a part of gastronomic discourse. However, in the Indian context the figure of the 'chef' as an artist and innovator was absent. Indo-Persian and Mughal culinary discourse had place only for the sophisticated consumer, and not for the creative cook.

³⁶³ There are many differences between culinary cultures that fall under the broad umbrella of 'European'. However, French *haute* cuisine emerged as the cuisine of choice for the affluent classes in many parts of Europe. In England, national, class and gender hierarchies were often fused as a result, with affluent cuisine being largely French, and cooked by male (French) chefs.

Chapter 3

Cuisine and the Lives of Recipes

Introduction

In the last chapter, I examined prevalent concepts of connoisseurship and gastronomy in early modern India, and located cookbooks within a cultural universe that engendered certain food values. In this chapter, I will discuss aspects of cuisine and food recipes, as well as the dynamics of cultural flow engendered by these. Apart from examining ingredients and cooking methods, I will also analyse the manner in which these recipes circulated and evolved. This would involve looking at cultural interactions as well as the absorption of New World vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes and chillies into Indian diets. Analysing the patterns that characterised the circulation of food recipes across cultural zones, an attempt will be made to evolve a theoretical framework to understand such culinary interactions. In particular, cultural exchanges between the Indian subcontinent and Europe as well as the Islamicate world played a significant role in the evolution of food cultures during the period under study. In researching culinary evolution, I will not rely on cookbooks alone; other kinds of source material including memoirs, chronicles, medical texts, agricultural manuals and contemporary documents will also be tapped into.

The first section of this chapter will discuss theoretical approaches to studying cuisine, the nature of sources available for this and issues pertaining to their interpretation. The next section shall deal with the nature of ingredients used, cooking methods and their sources as well as influences. Finally, I will examine the manner in which the evolution and circulation of food recipes and culinary cultures may be linked up with broader socio-cultural patterns and agricultural developments. This includes a discussion on the absorption of vegetables from the New World. The manner in which income levels and social affiliation influenced dietary habits and culinary culture as well as the circulation of cuisine across classes and groups will also be examined.

Analysing Cuisine: Structuralism and Beyond

In the previous chapter, some key theoretical discussions pertaining to the definition of the concepts of ‘cuisine’ and ‘haute cuisine’ were discussed. In this chapter, a more detailed examination of various anthropological methodologies pertaining to the analysis of cuisine is presented as a prelude to our discussion of culinary developments in the early modern South Asian context.

The anthropological analysis of cuisine was lent considerable impetus by the works of Claude Lévi Strauss (1908-2009). Lévi Strauss saw the relationship between culinary units as being analogous to the semiological relationship between sounds and words in linguistic analysis. His comparative analysis of English and French food in *Structural Anthropology* made use of the concept of ‘gusteme’ as the elemental building block of cuisine, which was a direct correlate of the linguistic concept of ‘phoneme’.³⁶⁴ This analysis was based on a series of oppositions: *endogenous/exogenous*, *central/peripheral*, *marked/not marked*. Each opposition was marked in a table with a plus or a minus sign to indicate its importance within the cuisine’s structure. Thus, the comparison between English and French cuisine looked as follows:

	ENGLISH CUISINE	FRENCH CUISINE
endogenous/exogenous	+	–
central/peripheral	+	–
marked/not marked	–	+

Figure 3.1

(Source: Lévi Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, p. 86)

What this in effect meant was that in English cuisine, the main dishes are prepared from indigenous (or endogenous) ingredients, in a relatively bland fashion, and surrounded by more exotic, strongly flavoured (marked) sides, such as tea, fruitcake, orange marmalade and port wine.³⁶⁵ In French cuisine, on the other hand, the endogenous/exogenous and central/peripheral oppositions did not apply.³⁶⁶ As Mennell has noted, Lévi Strauss’s interpretation

³⁶⁴ Claude Lévi Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1963), p. 86.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

may be read as a more sophisticated, academic version of a Frenchman’s prejudiced view of English food: tasteless main dishes washed down with port wine and marmalade.³⁶⁷

In another famous essay on the ‘culinary triangle’, Lévi Strauss replaced units of taste with states of rawness and cooking as the basic building blocks of his analysis. The various states in which food appeared and the relationship between them were represented in the form of a culinary triangle, wherein food processed through the elements of air and water took on various states of grilled, roasted, smoked or boiled. Each of these states represented a measure of proximity or distance from nature. For instance, the raw state was closest to nature (represented by a minus sign), while boiling (represented by a plus sign) is more closely associated with human culture.³⁶⁸ The separation between the smoked and the roasted correlated with the degree to which air was used. Similarly, the boiled was differentiated from the roasted by the involvement of water in the cooking process. The boundary between nature and culture could be either parallel to the axis of air or to the axis of water. Accordingly, the roasted and the smoked would be on the side of nature and the boiled on the side of culture (as per means), or the roasted and the boiled would be on the side of nature and the smoked on the side of culture (as per results). Lévi Strauss represented this diagrammatically as follows:

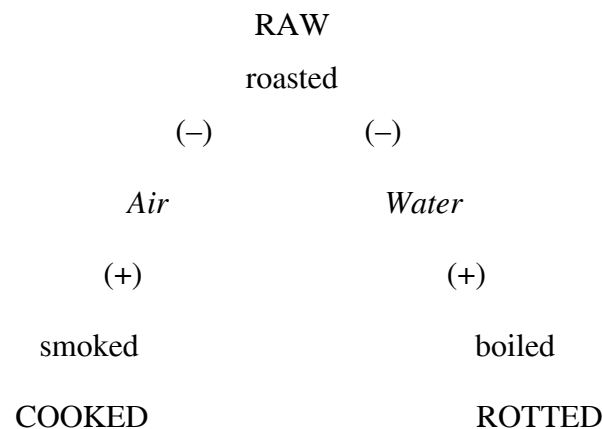


Figure 3.2

(Source: Lévi Strauss, “Culinary Triangle”, p. 42)

While differing in their methods and approaches, basic elements of Lévi Strauss’s structural approach were adopted by Roland Barthes and Mary Douglas. These scholars – as well as others who followed the structural analysis approach – studied cuisine through the

³⁶⁷ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, p. 8.

³⁶⁸ Claude Lévi Strauss, “Culinary Triangle”, republished in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, Second Edition (New York and London: Routledge, 2008) (first published 1997), pp. 36-43.

lens of metaphors and terms of analyses such as ‘structure’, ‘code’, ‘grammar’ and ‘system’. The symbolisms of food, of meals and of recipes were seen as encoded in fixed and structured ways, minimising the fluidity and complexities of food cultures and cuisine. This is apparent, for instance, when Barthes argues:

No doubt, food is, anthropologically speaking (though very much in the abstract), the first need; but ever since man has ceased living off wild berries, this need has been highly structured. Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food. For the fact that there is communication is proven, not by the more or less vague consciousness that its users may have of it, but by the ease with which all the facts concerning food form a structure analogous to other systems of communication... (i)n other words, it would be a matter of separating the significant from the insignificant and then of reconstructing the differential system of signification by constructing, if I may be permitted to use such a metaphor, *a veritable grammar of foods*.³⁶⁹

If Barthes saw the ‘psychosociology’ of food as reducible to a grammatical structure of symbolisms, Douglas saw food signifiers as elemental aspects of a structured understanding of food culture.³⁷⁰ She too uses the metaphor of language and grammar to frame her analysis of social meanings embedded in food practices, arguing that food categories ‘encode social events’.³⁷¹ Douglas analysed what she perceived as sets of meanings engendered in a hierarchy of meals during the day and throughout the year. Each meal marked a certain phase of day, season or life, with all its attendant meanings. Between the cycle of daily meals and meals marking rites of passage, encoded meanings may be read. The same applies to a single meal: within every meal, each course and each dish has a certain place within a well-defined cosmos of meanings.³⁷²

Within the context of South Asian studies, Zimmerman’s monograph *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats* also analysed idealised versions of Indian meals in structuralist terms. In a chapter entitled “Logic and Cuisine”, Zimmerman argues that in every Indian meal, rice or bread is at the centre and vegetables and meat in the form of curries and fricassees occupy peripheral positions. This ‘logic’, Zimmermann goes on to assert, also guides the cataloguing of cereals and seasonings (*vyañjana*) – composed of meats, fruits and vegetables – in

³⁶⁹ Roland Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption”, in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Counihan and Van Esterik, pp. 21, 22. Italics added.

³⁷⁰ Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal”, *Daedalus* 101, no. 1, Myth, Symbol, and Culture (Winter, 1972), pp. 61-81.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 61-81.

Ayurvedic texts.³⁷³ In Zimmermann's analysis, culinary practice was guided by the "gourmet logician's gaze", which was mirrored in scholarly treatises on medicine. As he states: "cuisine proceeds in the same manner as logic, through combinations (mixtures, sauces) and transformations (the various modes of cooking)."³⁷⁴ Moreover, in Zimmermann's account, 'Indian cuisine' appears to have an almost timeless element to it, wherein contemporary culinary culture accords with the logic of ancient texts. It is true that staples occupy an important position in most Indian diets – something not unusual in settled agricultural societies. However, this does not translate into any logical grammar of meals as posited by Zimmermann. Firstly, there can be no singular account of 'Indian cuisine'. Secondly, as my analysis in this chapter will show, even in the fairly limited culinary context of Indo-Persian cookbooks, it is impossible to tease out any fixed logic of meal components.

The structuralist approach made fundamental contributions to the academic study of cuisine. In particular, it drew attention to the social character of food, its role as a cultural signifier and as a marker of identity and of socio-economic distinctions. However, from the 1980s onwards, systematic critiques of the structuralist approach began to emerge. One of the most significant of these was contained in Jack Goody's *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, which adopted a comparative framework to the analysis of cuisine.³⁷⁵ For instance, Goody pointed out that the binary oppositions in Lévi Strauss's work (endogenous/exogenous, central/peripheral, marked/not marked) represented arbitrary distinctions and often conflated socio-economic categories into a singular cultural structure of distinctions. This analytical framework also proved of little value if extended to other cultures.³⁷⁶ More recently, Mennell has shown how Lévi Strauss's analysis does not even compare like with like, since the English elite often favoured French cuisine.³⁷⁷ The structuralist approach also failed to account for change and suffered from the analytical flaw of what Norbert Elias called "process reduction".³⁷⁸ Recent studies of cuisine and food cultures, such as those of Mennell and Fergusson, have instead chosen to adopt comparative and historical approaches. The attempt has generally been to understand the processes that underlie the evolution of food practices, without reducing these into rigid 'structures' and 'systems'. Mennell's work focuses on comparing cuisine and food culture in England and France by tracing their

³⁷³ Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats*, pp. 125-126.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³⁷⁵ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*.

³⁷⁶ For Goody's analysis of Lévi Strauss's and other structuralist approaches, see Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, pp. 17-29.

³⁷⁷ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, p. 8.

³⁷⁸ Norbert Elias, *What is Sociology* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), 111ff, cited in Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, p. 13.

histories from the ‘middle ages’ to the present, and analysing the socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics that underlined these processes of evolution and change. In doing so, he derives much inspiration from the work of Norbert Elias, whose concept of “the civilising process” emphasised evolution rather than structures and systems.³⁷⁹ Fergusson similarly analyses the development of the French concept of cuisine as a key aspect of cultural identity within the post-revolutionary historical context of the nineteenth century.³⁸⁰

In my analysis of cuisine and culinary developments in early modern India, I have drawn inspiration from these and many other works. However, the sources available for the study of early modern South Asian history differ considerably from those available for European history. Thus, methodological adjustments need to be made accordingly, and a suitable approach designed that can account for all the fluidities and complexities of cuisine and food cultures on the subcontinent. My approach combines a *longue duree* historical analysis, with analytical insights drawn from anthropological studies of cuisine and historical biographies of fruits and vegetables. I will begin by examining evidence of dishes sold in the bazaars of Mughal cities as well as recipes recorded in Indo-Persian cookbooks. The aim will be to analyse the cultural and sociological patterns of culinary cultures in early modern India. Questions that will be answered include: what sort of cuisine was represented in Indo-Persian cookbooks? How did this differ from the ‘food of the common-folk’ and what linkages existed between the cuisine of Persian cookbooks and their culinary environment? The next few sections will analyse aspects of culinary evolution and transformation. By investigating the entry and absorption of new fruits and vegetables into Indian culinary traditions, they will examine the dynamics that shape the development of culinary traditions.

Menus, Techniques and Tools: Meals Explored

(I) Tracing Recipes: From the Bazaar to the Imperial Kitchen

Cuisine is at the core of the linkage between the material culture of food and its social history. Here, I will compile evidence from a variety of contemporary sources pertaining to recipes and dishes cooked and eaten in various contexts. A separate section will analyse the range of recipes found in Indo-Persian cookbooks. In doing so, an attempt will be made to answer key questions such as the nature of interaction between ‘elite’ cuisine and its broader

³⁷⁹ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, pp. 15-16.

³⁸⁰ Fergusson, *Accounting for Taste*.

culinary environment, and the extent to which ‘elite’ cookbooks can be read as evidence of past diets and cuisines.

The major staple crops have been briefly reviewed in the Introduction. Rice preparations and breads were a key aspect of all culinary traditions on the subcontinent. In North India, rice, wheat and millets such as *juwār* and *bājra* were processed and cooked in a number of ways that ran the gamut of complexity and variation. Rice could of course be boiled or steamed, and this simple preparation would have been accessible to all. It is the basis of most rice preparations described in cookbooks of the time. Another common preparation, called *khichrī*, combined rice with pulses. The simplest preparation used rice and mungbean (*moth*). *Khichrī* could also be prepared using millets such as *juwār* and *bajrā*. In his memoirs, Jahāngīr describes one such variation of *khichrī*: “One of the dishes peculiar to the people of Gujarat is *khichrī* of *bājra* [millet]. They also call it *lhadra*. It is a tiny grain found nowhere other than Hindustan. There is more of it in Gujarat than anywhere else in India, and it is the cheapest of all grains.”³⁸¹ *Khichrī* was a dish that was eaten by people cutting across status and income levels. It is encountered in all Indo-Persian cookbooks at the time. But it is also recorded in a verse attributed to the weaver-poet Kabīr (fl. circa 1500), which eulogises it as a simple but satisfying food (although it must be noted that the dating and ascription of these poetic compositions is controversial).³⁸² Indo-Persian cookbooks carried a wide array of recipes for *khichrī*, ranging from relatively simple, to more complex preparations that included various meats, vegetables and spices. All this once again suggests that socio-economic stratification did not necessarily translate into rigid cultural categories. ‘Elite’ and ‘popular’ are problematic analytical categories in the early modern context.

There is evidence of many other rice preparations in our sources. The seventeenth century Spanish traveller Sebastian Manrique describes rice dishes being sold in the Lahore camp bazaar, which he calls “Persian Piloes”, “Mogol Bringes [*birinj* or rice]”, and a rice preparation with vegetables called “Gujarat or dry Bringe”.³⁸³ Manrique classifies the bread sold in the bazaar as being of three sorts: *apas* (from the Tamil word *appu*)³⁸⁴ – the dry usual

³⁸¹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 239; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 242. Thackston’s translation retained.

³⁸² “Slightly salted khichery/ is quite tasty fare/ Why then should one lose his head/ craving the flesh of another” [G. N. Das, edited, translated and compiled, *Couplets from Kabir (Kabir Dohe)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers), 1991, p. 12, verse no. 240]. For a discussion of dating and authenticity issues concerning Kabīr’s verses, see Winand M. Callewaert, “Kabir: Do We Sing His Songs or Someone Else’s”, in *The Intimate Other: Love Divine in Indic Religions*, ed. Anna S. King and John Brockington (New Delhi: Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 2005), pp. 129-152, esp. pp. 137-152.

³⁸³ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique*, Vol. II, p. 187.

³⁸⁴ Note by Eckford Luard. See *ibid.*, p. 188, footnote no.9.

bread of the ordinary people, *crunchas* (or *khajūr*, a kind of sweet bread)³⁸⁵ – which was a whiter and richer variety, and *ruganis* (*raughhanī* – oily or buttery)³⁸⁶ – made from wheat flour and the purest ghee such that it came out in thin leaves. There was also, according to Manrique, another kind of bread called *Mitay raguni* (*mīthē raughhanī*), which besides containing much more ghee, also had sugar in it and thus was much more like a pancake.³⁸⁷ Manrique’s bazaar account also talks of several “cook shops” in some of which, the roast flesh of domestic and wild animals was sold. Other shops contained large spits where birds such as fowls, capons, chickens, young pigeons, peacocks, doves and quails were being roasted and sold.³⁸⁸ Yet others sold meats seasoned in various styles.³⁸⁹ The overall evidence of Manrique’s description indicates that the bazaar catered to a wide spectrum of clientele in socio-economic terms. However, Manrique’s account dates to the time when the Emperor was in Lahore, and the imperial camp bazaar was much more elaborate than other bazaars.

Also writing in the seventeenth century, Bernier tells us that meat roasted and dressed in a variety of ways was sold in the bazaar of Delhi, although in line with the generally critical tone of his account, he felt distrustful of its quality.³⁹⁰ According to Bernier, there were also numerous bakers in the city, but he believed the bread sold in Indian bazaars to be inferior compared to European varieties since “the ovens are unlike ours and defective”.³⁹¹ The bread sold at the fort, was in his opinion, “tolerably good”.³⁹² Bernier’s opinions on the bread sold in Indian bazaars was probably tainted by his taste for the European style leavened breads. Most Indian varieties were unleavened or semi-leavened. This aspect of Bernier’s preference is quite clearly displayed when he talks of the bread that the Mughal notables baked at home. According to Bernier, plenty of fresh butter, milk and eggs were used in the baking of such bread, “*but though it [the bread] be raised*”, it had a burnt taste, and Bernier found its taste to be “too much like cake”.³⁹³ It is obvious that Bernier’s point of reference here is European (and in particular, French) bread, and his not so flattering opinion even of rich Indian breads that were actually considered to be delicacies should be understood in this

³⁸⁵ Note by Eckford Luard. See *ibid*, p. 188, footnote no.10. Here the name of the bread is spelt as *khjūrā*, but I understand it to be the same as *khajūr*.

³⁸⁶ Eckford Luard also identifies this with the *raughandār* of the *Qānūn-i Islām*. See *ibid*, p. 188, footnote 11.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 188.

³⁸⁸ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique*, Vol. II, pp. 185, 186.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 184, 186, 187.

³⁹⁰ Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 250.

³⁹¹ *Ibid*.

³⁹² *Ibid*.

³⁹³ *Ibid*. Italics added.

context.³⁹⁴ Bernier also informs us that there were numerous confectioners' shops in the town, but that the sweetmeats are badly made, and full of dust and flies.³⁹⁵

In the *Ardhakathānaka* (completed 1641), Banārasīdās describes his sojourns at the shop of a *ḥalwā'ī* (seller of sweets and snacks) who allowed him to eat *kachaurīs* (usually a kind of stuffed flour puff) worth twenty rupees on credit. The then cash-stripped Banārasīdās lived off this *ḥalwā'ī*'s generosity.³⁹⁶ Food stalls are prominently featured in the representation of a bazaar in a c.1604 painting *An altercation in the bazaar* found in a copy of Sa°dī's *Kulliyāt*. These stalls are clearly shown selling cooked food items.³⁹⁷

The rice, meat, and bread dishes that are described in the above accounts vary in cost and complexity. But by sharing common space in the bazaar, they blurred the culinary boundaries between socio-economic distinctions. Thus, there was a continuum of foods within the urban sphere in cities such as Delhi, Agra and Lahore that linked the socially multifarious world of the bazaar to the exclusive realm of the Indo-Persian cookbook. This is another reason why explanations for understanding cuisine must be process-oriented and capable of understanding social fluidities. The next section will discuss some instances of recipes from Indo-Persian cookbooks, drawing linkages with recipes from contemporary Iranian cookbooks as well as examining the place that these recipes may have held within the larger cosmos of urban food culture.

(II) Recipes in Indo-Persian Cookbooks

Although they were produced and circulated within a limited and exclusive socio-cultural context, Persian cookbooks are valuable sources in that they allow detailed analyses of recipes from the past. This section will outline various kinds of dishes that are encountered in these cookbooks, with a view to situating them within a broader analysis of contemporary food culture. It would be impossible to give an account of all of these, so a representative sample of recipes is discussed here with a view to exemplifying the range of ingredients and cooking techniques employed. The recipes selected are among those that occur frequently, and which represent the major categories of dishes as described in most Indo-Persian

³⁹⁴ For a fuller discussion of Bernier's description of the Delhi bazaar, see Narayanan, "A Culture of Food", pp. 69-71.

³⁹⁵ Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 250.

³⁹⁶ Banārasīdās, *Ardhakathānaka or Half a Tale: A Study in the Interrelationship between Biography and History* (Jaipur: Rajasthan Prakrit Bharati Sansthan, 1981), translation, pp. 49-50; text, p. 249, verses 337-343.

³⁹⁷ *An altercation in the bazaar*, from a copy of the *Kulliyāt* of Sa°dī c.1604, Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection (MS 35, f. 19b), reproduced in Zeenut Ziad, ed., *The Magnificent Mughals* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), frontpiece.

cookbooks. They also cover a gamut of cooking techniques and ingredients employed during the early modern period. A comprehensive documentation of these recipes would require volumes of dry description, which would not serve the primarily analytical purpose of this dissertation. Nevertheless, without some detailing of the recipes contained in Persian cookbooks, it would neither be possible to assess them as sources, nor draw on their valuable evidence pertaining to the material culture of food and cuisine. With all the customary caution exercised in the use of cookbooks as source material, scholars such as Mennell have shown that they can be valuable assets in a historical-anthropological analysis of culinary cultures.³⁹⁸

Indo-Persian cookbooks describe recipes for various kinds of rice dishes such as *khichrī*, *pulā³o*, *zerbiryān*, *tāhirī* and *qabūlī*. Of each there were numerous varieties, and the cooking techniques employed range from the simple to exceedingly complex. Most *khichrī* recipes described in Persian cookbooks use mungbean pulses (*mūng*), although recipes that employ other pulses and lentils are invariably included. The oldest Indo-Persian cookbook that we have (the *Ni^cmatnāma*) contains several recipes for *khichrī*.³⁹⁹ Most of the *khichrī* recipes in Persian cookbooks include the use of meat. However, all Persian cookbooks also include some variations that are vegetarian. The *khichrī-i Gujarātī* or Gujarati *khichrī* is one such commonly described recipe. The *Khulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt* starts the recipe with fried garlic, into which onion rings, cinnamon, and other spices are added and again fried. Then cumin is added, following which the whole mixture is removed from the heat. The *dāl mūng* is then fried in that oil or ghee, and the oil or ghee is drained. Rice is added to the *dāl* and mixed well. The spice mixture mentioned earlier is added to this, along with hot water and ginger. Ghee is added and the dish is sealed and slow-cooked to finish.⁴⁰⁰ The *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī* and many other cookbooks also carry the same recipe.⁴⁰¹ The recipe is of medium level complexity, in terms of cooking techniques employed and number of ingredients prescribed. The use of many spices, however, marks it out as a dish for an elite kitchen. A relatively simpler recipe for a *khichrī* made with *arhar dāl* (split pigeon pea), is also described in the *Khulāṣat*. In this recipe, the *dāl* is cooked in water till soft and the water has been absorbed. Half the ghee is then added to the *dāl*, and the rice is fried in the rest. Then, the *dāl* and spices are added to the rice, along with water. It is then put on *dam* (or pressure, i.e., slow

³⁹⁸ For Mennell's historical analysis of cuisine based on the evidence of cookbooks, see Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, pp. 40-101.

³⁹⁹ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu*. See also, p. 73 in this dissertation.

⁴⁰⁰ “*Khulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt*”, MS NMI S.No.145, Acc. No. 96.479. f. 47v.

⁴⁰¹ *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 107.

cooked in a sealed container) in the final stage before being ready to serve.⁴⁰² Other recipes are more complicated and call for the use of meat. The ingredients listed for *khichrī Dāwud Khānī* are oil or ghee (*raughan*), *mūng*, meat, pureed spinach, a hen's egg, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, onions, ginger, salt, coriander, garlic and saffron.⁴⁰³ The preparation process described is extremely complicated. According to the recipe, part of the meat is used to prepare a *yakhni* (meat broth) with spices. The rest is minced, and following a lengthy process, is prepared as a *dopiyāza*. Later, this is combined with the other ingredients over several steps and cooked in a sealed pot (*dam dahad*). The dish is garnished in the end with boiled and halved eggs.⁴⁰⁴ The complexity of this recipe is consistent with its being named after a prominent personage.

A variety of cooking techniques were used in the preparation of *khichrīs*. The rice and pulses were normally boiled, but frying was also used. The technique of finishing of the dish in a sealed pot on a low heat (*dam*) added complexity to many of the preparations. Thus, while the simplest form of *khichrī* relied on boiling, the addition of new ingredients and steps of preparation necessitated the adoption of multiple cooking techniques in many of the *khichrī* recipes described in Persian cookbooks.

Pulā'os were rice dishes that were prepared with a variety of other ingredients, particularly including meat and spices. The *pulā'o* recipes described in Persian cookbooks are highly complex, involving the use of multiple ingredients and numerous steps of preparation. The number and variety of *pulā'o* dishes described in Persian cookbooks is also large, and it is therefore difficult to encompass or define the essential aspects of this dish in any overly simplistic fashion. The *pulā'o* recipes described in Persian cookbooks invariably involved the use of meat in some form, but many also included fish, fowl, vegetables or fruit. In many recipes, the meat is converted into a *yakhni* (meat broth), such that the rice is infused with the flavour of the meat. Often, more than one kind of meat is combined in the recipe. A few of the commonly described *pulā'o* dishes are described here so as to illustrate the variety of ingredients and techniques employed in their preparation. There is a basic *pulā'o* recipe in the *Khulāṣat* that has a meat *dopiyāza*, which is eventually combined with rice.⁴⁰⁵ The *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī* has a recipe for *murgh pulā'o* (chicken *pulā'o*) that is as follows: minced meat is fried with onions and made into a *dopiyāza*. The belly of the chicken is stuffed with this mince *dopiyāza* and ginger. The chicken is then tied with a string and fried with a little

⁴⁰² “*Khulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt*”, MS NMI S.No.145, Acc. No. 96.479, f. 47r.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, f. 45v.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, ff. 45v-46r.

⁴⁰⁵ “*Khulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt*”, MS NMI S.No.145, Acc. No. 96.479, ff. 39r-v.

saffron and water as well as some yoghurt (*jughrāt*). Boiled rice is flavoured with cinnamon and cloves, and cooked with the chicken in a pot (*deg*), with butter added on top.⁴⁰⁶ Recipes for *yakhnī pulā'o* require *yakhnī* to be prepared from meat and other ingredients (usually onions, ginger and coriander). Once the meat broth or *yakhnī* has been prepared, half-cooked rice is boiled in it so as to infuse its flavours.⁴⁰⁷ Another recipe called *nargisī pulā'o* also requires *yakhnī* to be prepared for the base of the recipe, but also uses gram.⁴⁰⁸

A set of dishes closely related to *pulā'os* and widely described in Persian cookbooks are the *zerbiryāns*, also referred to as 'duzdbiryān' in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*.⁴⁰⁹ The ingredients listed in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* for the *duzdbiryān* include meat, rice and spices, which indicates that it is the same as the *zerbiryān* described in other cookbooks.⁴¹⁰ The word 'zerbiryān' literally means 'undercooked' or 'under-roasted'. Analysing the recipes in various cookbooks that appear under this rubric suggests that the name derives from the fact that the meat that is usually the main ingredient in these recipes (along with rice) is either uncooked at undercooked at the initial stage of preparation. However, there are a few variations of this recipe that occur in the sources. Firstly, not all *zerbiryān* recipes contain meat. For instance, the *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī* has a recipe for *zerbiryān* made from *panīr* (Indian curd cheese)⁴¹¹ and *māhī* (fish).⁴¹² In case of the *zerbiryān* made from *panīr*, the cheese is first batter-fried in *maida* (white flour) before being combined with the rice and spices. Half-cooked rice is layered on the cheese and topped with ghee. It is then sealed with flour and cooked through the *dampukht* method.⁴¹³

With regard to meat *zerbiryāns*, there are two distinct variations in preparation. In the case of most *zerbiryāns*, the meat is partially cooked before being layered with the rice, sealed with flour and cooked through the aforementioned *dampukht* method. However, the *zerbiryān-i Rūmī* (Ottoman style *zerbiryān*) involves layering uncooked meat with rice.⁴¹⁴ In either case, the meat being partially or wholly uncooked prior to being layered and cooked

⁴⁰⁶ *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 40.

⁴⁰⁷ For example, *ibid*, pp. 44-45; "Kḥulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt", MS NMI S.No.145, Acc. No. 96.479, ff. 43r-v.

⁴⁰⁸ See for instance, *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 40.

⁴⁰⁹ Syed Ahmed Khan's edition of the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, actually has this as *zerbiryān*. See Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, ed. Syed Ahmed Khan, p. 43. Blochmann's edition has *duzdbiryān* (see Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 56); *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 62. The *Bayāz-i Kḥwushbū'ī* (MS BL IO Islamic 828) in its description of recipes from the *Akbarnāma*, also has *duzdbiryān* (f. 98r).

⁴¹⁰ Abū-l Fazl, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, p. 56; *The Ā'in-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 62.

⁴¹¹ The method for the preparation of *panīr* is described in the *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, pp. 142-144.

⁴¹² *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, pp. 35-36 (*zerbiryān-i panīr*); pp. 37-38 (*zerbiryān-i māhī*), pp. 37-38.

⁴¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 35-36.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37.

with the rice is the probable origin for the generic name *zerbiryān*. In the case of the *zerbiryān-i Nūrmaḥalī*, the meat is first marinated and cooked with fried onions, yoghurt and spices, and then rice is layered on the meat and cooked as per the usual *dampukht* process.⁴¹⁵ There is a variation of this recipe that uses *rohū* fish instead of meat.⁴¹⁶

Zerbiryāns were a uniquely Indian preparation, but most probably had origins in Iranian food traditions, and could have absorbed other influences as well. The *Kārnāma dar bāb-i Ṭabākhī wa ṣanʿat-i ān* (or *Manual on Dishes and their Preparation*) of Ḥājī Muḥammad ʿAlī Bāwarchī Baghdādī, a cookbook from the Ṣafawid period, has a set of recipes called *biryān* which combine meat or fowl with rice, often layered over each other.⁴¹⁷ The *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat* (or *The Substance of Life*) – also from the Ṣafawid period – has a few recipes under a single heading *biryān pilāv* (or *pulāʿo*)⁴¹⁸ that also describe similar preparations.⁴¹⁹ At the end of this set of recipes, the *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat* notes that nobody prepares these kinds of recipes (*biryān pilāv*) in this age of justice better than Ustād Fūlād Biryānī (*wa īn aqsām-i biryān pilāv ke maḏkūr shud dar ʿālam-i inṣāf darīn rozgār bahtar az Ustād Fūlād Biryānī kasī namī pazad*).⁴²⁰ This is illustrative of the manner in which the skills of cooks were appreciated and recognised in the early modern Iranian context – something that was missing within the Persianate cultural ecumene on the Indian subcontinent.

In most of the Iranian recipes, freshly slaughtered meat is salted and laid over cooked rice. The oven (*tanūr*) is covered – often with an iron plate (*sāj*) – and a fire lit over the seal.⁴²¹ Of this basic recipe, there are several variations, including the lamb (*barra*) being stuffed.⁴²² *Biryāns* were also prepared from the meat of chicken and fish.⁴²³ However, other aspects of the preparation of these dishes were distinct from their Indian counterparts. The Iranian *biryāns* or *biryān pilāvs* were not as richly spiced as the Indian *zerbiryāns*, and the latter involved a unique *dampukht* procedure. Additionally, the Indian *zerbiryāns* were

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, p. 36. This is, of course, a highly abbreviated version of the recipe; the full version is rather long.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p. 38.

⁴¹⁷ Īraj Afshār, ed., *Kārnāma wa Mādat al-Ḥaiwat: Matn-i do Risāla dar Āshpazī az Daura-i Ṣafawī* [Tehran: Surosh (Intishārāt-i Ṣada u Sīmā), Hijrī Kḥwurdhedī 1377], pp. 159-161.

⁴¹⁸ While I transliterate this word in the context of Indian cookbooks as *pulāʿo*, in the context of Iranian cookbooks, I find it more appropriate to use Steingass's transliteration of *pilāv* [See Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 254. However, the dictionary says *palāv*, *pilav* – the latter transliteration (*pilav*) possibly an error].

⁴¹⁹ Afshār, *Kārnāma wa Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*, pp. 214-215.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, p. 215.

⁴²¹ Ibid, pp. 160-161, p. 214.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid, pp. 159-161, 214-215.

cooked in a *degcha* (cooking pot), rather than in a *tanūr*.⁴²⁴ The Indian *zerbiryān* is in turn is the ancestor of the many versions of the modern Indian *biryānī*.

Pulā'os, *zerbiryāns* and *tāhirīs* are variations of a similar recipe concept: that of combining rice with various spices, meats, and other ingredients. Variations around this concept were thus found in diverse settings, from the bazaar to the kitchens of Mughal notables. The most important distinction between the *pulā'o* and the *zerbiryān* is the use of uncooked or partially cooked meat and the elaborate *dampukḥt* process. Many other recipes call for the ingredients to be put to *dam* or pressure in the final stage of cooking, but this apparently refers to a simpler sealed cooking procedure than the one employed for the *zerbiryān*. The *dampukḥt* procedure described in our cookbooks for the *zerbiryān* is more elaborate. However, in terms of overall complexity and number of steps involved in preparation, the *pulā'o* recipes described in Persian cookbooks are more complicated than the *zerbiryān* recipes. Despite some differences, it must be noted that there were significant continuities between various 'categories' of rice dishes, and that this reflects the dynamic, process-oriented evolution of cuisine.

As per the recipes recorded in Persian cookbooks, meat itself was cooked and dressed in a variety of ways. As discussed above, some of the procedures for preparing meat such as *qalīya*, *dopiyāza* and *yakḥnī* were themselves also used as basic recipes for other more complex preparations. Both the *qalīya* and *dopiyāza* preparations involved frying onions and the addition of numerous spices. The basic difference between a *qalīya* and a *dopiyāza* was that the *qalīya* was a little 'wetter' than the *dopiyāza*. The vast majority of Persian cookbooks also carried recipes for a wide variety of *kabābs*, which were dry meat preparations usually prepared over a skewer.

Other savoury recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks include *saṃbosas* and various condiments such as *achārs* (pickles) and chutneys. The *saṃbosa* is a common dish in many Asian, and in particular, Asian Islamicate cultures. Both the Iranian cookbooks described earlier carry several *saṃbosa* recipes. Among Indo-Persian cookbooks, the *Ni^cmatnāma* in particular begins its description of recipes with *saṃbosas*, and has a rich variety of these. A variety of meats are used in these recipes, including beef and deer meat, and many of these recipes involve the use of exotic aromatic ingredients such as rose water, ambergris and camphor.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ See for instance, *Nuskḥa-i Shāhjahānī*, pp. 35-37.

⁴²⁵ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnama Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu*.

Recipes for sweetmeats are almost invariably included in major cookbook volumes. The manner in which the sweet flavour was employed in the recipes and menus of Indo-Persian cookbooks, however, suggests that a very sharp distinction between sweet and savoury did not exist. Sweet and savoury recipe descriptions are often interspersed in the arrangement and organisation of Persian cookbooks. Moreover, there is evidence that strong elements of the sweet taste were often incorporated into savoury recipes. This was done through making a *chāshnīdār* or ‘syrupy’ variation of the dish, which involved adding a mixture of sugar syrup and lemon to the dish. Thus, there were *chāshnīdār* variations of various *qalīya* and *dopiyāza* recipes.

Nevertheless, there were certainly dishes that were classified under the sweetmeat (*shīrīnī*) category and that are often described under separate chapters in Persian cookbooks. Warm puddings (*ḥalwās*) and flummery (*fālūda*) are among dishes that had an ancestry in the larger Asian-Islamicate cultural sphere. But a large number of the recipes that fall under this category bore distinctly Indic names, such as *laḍḍū*. It is not possible, however, to segregate the ‘Indic’ from the ‘non-Indic’, since these recipes were usually born out of multiple influences, but all of them nevertheless found their place within a distinctly Indian or Indo-Persian culinary sphere.

It is instructive to compare the recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks to roughly contemporary Iranian ones, such as the *Kārnāma* and the *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*.⁴²⁶ Some of the recipes frequently detailed in Indo-Persian cookbooks find their counterparts in these Iranian texts. The basic concepts of recipes such as *qalīya*, *dopiyāza*, *pulā’o* (or *pilāv*), *kabāb*, *ḥalīm* and *harīsa* are shared. Also shared are certain essential pieces of kitchen equipment such as *tanūr* (oven), *deg* (cauldron or cooking pot) and *sīkh* (skewer). But beyond that, there are many differences in detail. In particular, the recipes in Indo-Persian cooking manuals employ a wide variety of Indian ingredients, including spices, fish and vegetables peculiar to the subcontinent. These differences may be made clearer through a comparison of Iranian and Indian recipes for a few dishes. For instance, the *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat* details the method for preparing a basic *qalīya* as follows: the meat is chopped into tiny pieces and cleaned; onion rings and plenty of finely chopped herbs are added to this meat. When the meat is half cooked, several sticks of cinnamon, some whole pepper, ginger, ground pepper, cloves and green cardamom and finally, salt is added.⁴²⁷ In the version of the *qalīya* detailed in most Indo-Persian cookbooks, onions are first fried; the meat is chopped into large pieces (*pārcha-i*

⁴²⁶ Afshār, *Kārnāma wa Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 235.

kalān) and then fried and tempered in spices with this mixture.⁴²⁸ The *Kārnāma* uses a similar basic *qalīya* recipe as the *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat* for the several *qalīya* variations that it details.⁴²⁹ *Qalīya Nargisī* is an example of a dish that appears both in Indo-Persian and Iranian cookbooks. In the Indian version, the meat is cut into large pieces, and fried with onions and ghee. Salt, ginger and whole coriander are added. To this mixture, beets, carrots or parsnips and *dāl* (pulses) are added and cooked till soft. The beets and carrots are then separated from the meat, and the *shorbā* (soup) is passed along with the *dāl* through a cloth, then combined with the meat and tempered with cloves and ghee. Cooked rice is passed through a piece of cloth and the rice water is held. Spices, saffron, dry fruits and crushed spices are then added. This mixture is then removed from the pot, a *dopiyāza* is made out of the *sāg* (greens) and it is then cooked on a *māhī tāba* (or *tawā*⁴³⁰ – iron skillet). An egg is added and the dish is cooked further. Finally, crushed spices are added on top.⁴³¹ In the Iranian version recorded in the *Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*, the basic *qalīya* recipe described earlier is used. According to this recipe, after cooking the *qalīya*, spinach should be added, and several eggs should be cracked open over the spinach. Ground spices are then to be added, and *kirmānī* cumin along with salt is sprinkled on top of the eggs.⁴³² The *Kārnāma* also uses a similar recipe, namely it prescribes the preparation of a basic meat *qalīya*, with the addition of spinach and eggs.⁴³³ The use of spinach (or other leafy greens) and eggs are the primary characteristics common to both the Iranian and Indian versions of this recipe. However, the Indian version also includes *dāl* and root vegetables (namely carrots or parsnips, beets and turnips) and is also prepared and spiced differently. If we compare *pulā'o* recipes as well, a similar picture emerges. Most of the *pulā'o* recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks are quite distinct from their Iranian counterparts, despite sharing fundamental elements. In particular, Indian *pulā'os* were spiced very differently, and used different herbs and spices as compared to their Iranian counterparts. However, there are also a few specific recipes that are found both in Ṣafawid era cookbooks as well as in their Indo-Persian counterparts. For instance, the *nargisī pilāv* recipe, which is found in the *Kārnāma*, also has a variation in many Indo-Persian cookbooks, including the *Nuskḥa-i Shāhjahānī*. Both recipes share the basic element of incorporating spinach and eggs as key ingredients.⁴³⁴ Another such recipe is the *muza'far pulā'o* (or *pilāv*). The recipes in the

⁴²⁸ For instance, see *Nuskḥa i Shāhjahānī*, pp. 11-32, for descriptions of *qalīya* and *dopiyāza* recipes.

⁴²⁹ Afshār, *Kārnāma wa Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*, pp. 123-155.

⁴³⁰ Spelt in many cookbook MSS as *māhī tāba*, but spelt in the printed text of the *Nuskḥa-i Shāhjahānī* as *māhī tawā*. See *Nuskḥa-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 14.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, p. 14.

⁴³² Afshār, *Kārnāma wa Mādat al-Ḥaiwat*, p. 235.

⁴³³ *Ibid*, pp. 152-153.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 114-115; *Nuskḥa-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 40.

Kārnāma and the *Nusk̄ha-i Shāhjahānī* are similar in using a stuffed chicken as a key element in the recipe, but other aspects of preparation and spicing differ between the Indian version and the Iranian one.⁴³⁵ Thus, even when recipe names and basic concepts are shared, the actual preparation and spicing process differ in various respects.

The complexity and dynamic intermingling of various cultural influences in the shaping of cuisine do not permit a rigid structural analysis. In the case of Persian cookbooks, for example, the recipes described cover a range of culinary influences from local, to Iranian and Central Asian, and even European. The dynamic nature of the process of cuisine creation precludes any possibility of a fossilised understanding of culinary traditions. It would not be possible, for instance, to undertake a structuralist comparison between Mughal and Ṣafawid (or Qājār) cuisine. There was much continuity between the two, as well as several internal complexities. The kind of analysis that Lévi Strauss advocated in comparing English and French cuisine would not be able to account for the presence of several ‘peasant’ origin dishes among ‘elite’ Mughal culinary delights. It would also not be able to explain the presence of both simple, lightly garnished recipes as well as complex, richly spiced ones in Indo-Persian cookbooks. There is no ‘grammar’ that can be used to deconstruct the cuisine represented in Indian cookbooks, or to differentiate it from early modern Iranian culinary practice.

However, this is no reason to eschew an analytical approach altogether. It is possible to evolve analytic frameworks to comprehend the underlying dynamics of cuisine creation and evolution. Elisabeth Rozin has posited the concept of ‘flavour principles’ to understand the manner in which recipes are created.⁴³⁶ She argues that every cuisine engenders certain spice and technique combinations that produce tastes based on distinct understandings of flavour. Through various combinations and recombinations of these – according to familiar patterns – new recipes may be evolved. It is these flavour patterns that enable the evolution of cuisine, by allowing for the creation of new combinations within a familiar spectrum of tastes.⁴³⁷ I would interpret the evidence from my sources as suggesting that these ‘flavour principles’ are dynamic and evolve through the very process by which they allow for the creation of new recipes. As against Zimmerman’s positing of a timeless logical grammar underlying every Indian meal, my argument thus stresses the vibrant nature of culinary practice.

⁴³⁵ Afshār, *Kārnāma u Mādat al-Haiwat*, pp. 128-129; *Nusk̄ha-i Shāhjahānī*, pp. 42-43.

⁴³⁶ Elisabeth Rozin, “The Role of Flavor in the Meal and the Culture”, in *Dimensions of the Meal: the Science, Culture, Business and Art of Eating*, ed. Herbert L. Meiselman (Gaithersburg, Maryland: Aspen Publishers Inc., 2000), pp. 134-142. See esp. p. 135.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

The recipes described in Indo-Persian cookbooks are fairly consistent. It is also notable that certain spice combinations occur repeatedly in these cookbooks. The spices most commonly used are *dārchīnī* (cinnamon), *zīra* (cumin), *qaranful* (cloves), *ilāychī* (cardamom), *filfil* (black pepper), *adarak* (ginger), *kishnīz* (coriander), and *zard chūb* (turmeric). These are almost always combined with onions. In fact, fried onions form the basis of most savoury dishes. While all the spices mentioned above are not used in every dish, the majority of them appear repeatedly in combination. These spice combinations, found frequently across the spectrum of Indo-Persian cookbooks, give the dishes described a stronger flavour than their more mildly spiced Iranian counterparts. The somewhat indistinct separation of sweet and savoury elements is another distinct aspect of the cuisine represented in Indo-Persian cookbooks.

As has been cautioned earlier, the recipes recorded in Persian cookbooks cannot be seen as exemplifying the diet of most of the urban population. However, this does not mean that they had no links to the larger culinary environment of the urban sphere within which they were produced. I have previously noted that many recipes recorded in Persian cookbooks had similar counterparts among the food dishes sold in the urban bazaars. This process was likely not uni-directional. For instance, the *Khulāṣat* has a recipe for *qīma kabāb ʔarah-i bāzār* (bazaar style mincemeat kebabs).⁴³⁸ The same recipe is also found in the *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*.⁴³⁹ Whether or not this recipe was ‘authentic’ is not the point: rather, it illustrates how the food world of these cookbooks was not separated from that of the bazaar, and that recipes, recipe titles and culinary influences flowed both ways. The *Ni^cmatnāma* also records recipes with similar titles suggestive of popular or rustic origins: *māhī rūstā^ʔi ganwārī* (rustic rural fish) and *rūstā^ʔi sabzī* (rural style vegetables).⁴⁴⁰

Thus, recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks represented an amalgam of various components of diverse origins. They bore the imprint both of local and indigenous food traditions, as well as influences from the Asian-Islamic world. But there were other agencies, and the early modern period may be particularly noted for the active participation of European trading factories on the Indian subcontinent. This was also a time of exploration in Europe, which eventually led to the colonisation of the Americas. This resulted in the introduction of many fruits and vegetables from the New World to the Old World, and vice versa. Many of these entered South Asia via Europe. When and how did these enter the Indian

⁴³⁸ “*Khulāṣat-i Mākūlāt u Mashrūbāt*”, MS NMI S.No.145, Acc. No. 96.479, ff. 21r-v.

⁴³⁹ *Nuskha-i Shāhjahānī*, p. 88.

⁴⁴⁰ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript*, facsimile MS ff. 20v, 29r, translation, pp. 12, 16.

subcontinent, and how were they amalgamated into Indian culinary traditions? These questions will be examined in the next section.

New Entrants, Cultural Interactions

I

From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, maritime explorations undertaken by explorers from various European states heralded a new stage of social, economic and cultural interactions in the world. These changes were by no means sudden or dramatic, but they did bring hitherto unknown cultural commodities to new shores. One of the significant impacts of the European exploration of the New World was on diet and food cultures. New World vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes and chillies and well as fruits such as pineapples revolutionised palates in Europe and Asia. These vegetables and fruits are known to have made their way into South Asia via Europe. The Portuguese in the sixteenth century, followed by the Dutch and English in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively emerged as significant trading powers, also acquiring colonial possessions on the subcontinent. They acted as agents for the importation of new foods into the Indian subcontinent, although the absorption and amalgamation of these newcomers into Indian culinary cultures and dietary patterns was a gradual process.⁴⁴¹

In examining the entry of new foods and agricultural products into Indian food systems and cuisines, I will draw on both extant works on the subject as well as some fresh source material in the form of Persian agricultural manuals, medical texts and cookbooks. On the first place, I will shed further light on the chronology of the entry and absorption of major New World foods in the Indian subcontinent. But merely dating the entry of new crops on the agricultural field or tracing the earliest references to unfamiliar ingredients in cookbooks is only half the story. Other key questions remain to be explored: what were the vehicles of new culinary influences? What form did their culinary incorporation take? How rapid or gradual was this process? How do culinary cultures interact and what are the results of such interactions? I will attempt to answer some of these questions with particular reference to the

⁴⁴¹ For details on the Dutch and Portuguese trading activities and colonial possessions in Asia, see Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2012). For a survey on the entry of New World fruits and vegetables into the Indian subcontinent, see Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, pp. 218-238.

early modern South Asian context, and in doing so endeavour to evolve a theoretical framework to understand certain aspects of transcultural culinary interactions.

In the previous chapter, I discussed certain cookbooks that acted as ‘bridges’ between culinary cultures.⁴⁴² There were two culinary manuals of Indian recipes written specifically for an English patron, and one cookbook that was a Persian translation of an English original. These are the *Risāla dar bayān-i aṭʿima u aghziya lazīza*, the *Majmūʿ al-Taʿm* and the cookbook translated from English to Persian, also known as *Nusk̄ha-i Niʿmat K̄hān*. These ‘crossover’ texts bear the imprint of cultural translation: the process by which unfamiliar objects and terms are rendered knowable through linguistic references to more familiar words and objects. These cookbooks as well as other Persian sources of the period also provide us with clues as to when and how New World foods were absorbed in, and adapted to the Indian context.

My discussion will consist of two parts. The first part will examine various sources for the earliest evidence of cultivation and consumption of certain major New World foods. I will focus on three New World imports: the tomato, the white potato⁴⁴³ and the chilli, since these were the vegetables that arguably had the greatest impact on the dietary habits and tastes of the subcontinent. They also serve as valuable case studies for the cultural absorption of new foods and new tastes. In the second section, I will discuss the dynamics of cultural absorption and amalgamation that these new foods went through, as well as enter into a theoretical discussion on the dynamics of transcultural culinary interaction.

Tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*, *Lycopersicon lycopersicum*, *Lycopersicon esculentum*) are botanically fruits, and belong to a genus of weed-like plants native to North-western South America, arising from an original variety called cerasiforme. Early European references to the tomato’s use date to the mid-sixteenth century.⁴⁴⁴ In India, as well as in Asia generally, the tomato took much longer to be regularly cultivated and consumed.

Perhaps one of the earliest reliable references to the tomato on the Indian subcontinent comes from the *Nusk̄ha-i Niʿmat K̄hān* (1801). This cookbook has a recipe for tomato soup,

⁴⁴² See pp. 89-92 in this dissertation.

⁴⁴³ The introduction of the white or Irish potato into the subcontinent was preceded by sweet potatoes or *Ipomoea batatas* (also of New World origin). The subcontinent was already home to various varieties of edible aroids and yams (*Colocasia* and *Dioscorea* genres respectively). See Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, pp. 198-199; George Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Vol. II (London: W. H. Allen & Co. and Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1889), pp. 509-511; Vol. III (1890), pp. 115-122; Vol. IV (1890), pp. 478-482; Vol. VI, Part III (1893), pp. 265-272.

⁴⁴⁴ J. W. Purseglove, *Tropical Crops: Dicotyledons* (Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers, 1974), pp. 531-532; Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 225.

which is titled *tarkīb-i ʾtomātā sūp yaʿnī shorbā wilāyatī baigan*, or “recipe for tomato soup otherwise known as *wilāyatī baigan*”.⁴⁴⁵ Throughout the recipe description, the vegetable is referred to as ‘eggplant’ (*baigan*).⁴⁴⁶ Thus, the tomato is named after a known vegetable, a common process by which the unfamiliar is rendered familiar. The name (*wilāyatī baigan* or ‘foreign eggplant’) also recalls its foreign origin. The fact that the vegetable is referred to by both its transliterated English name as well as an Indian or Persian name, suggests that the vegetable was relatively new and rare, but nevertheless gathering familiarity in some circles. The tomato was at this time still unknown in Indo-Persian cookbooks, but may have been an exotic vegetable available to the elite.

The earliest references for the regular use of the tomato date from the first half of the 19th century. In 1832, it was recorded as being commonly used throughout the subcontinent by William Roxburgh in the *Flora Indica*.⁴⁴⁷ By the late nineteenth century, there is no doubt that the tomato had become ubiquitous. In Birdwood’s *Catalogue of Vegetable Productions of the Presidency of Bombay* (1865), it is described as being widely cultivated and being used in sauces and salads.⁴⁴⁸ J. F. Duthie and J. B. Fuller, in the *Field and Garden crops of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (1882-1893) note that “this vegetable is coming more into favour with natives as an article of food on account of its acid taste.”⁴⁴⁹ In this compilation, the Hindi name of the “Tomato, or Love-apple” is identified as “*vilayati baigan*”.⁴⁵⁰ As late as 1889, George Watt records in his *Dictionary of the Economic Products of India* that “(n)atives are beginning to appreciate the fruit, but the plant is still chiefly cultivated for the European population. Bengalis and Burmans use it in their sour curries.”⁴⁵¹ He also records that in the plains tomatoes are sown in the autumn, and the fruit ripens during winter and spring. In the hills, the tomato grows more luxuriantly.⁴⁵² All of this evidence leads to the conclusion that the tomato perhaps first made its initial presence felt (at least to any noticeable degree) on the subcontinent towards the end of the eighteenth century, but took several decades to become widely cultivated and consumed.

⁴⁴⁵ “Nusk̄ha-i Niʿmat K̄hān”, MS BL OR 2028, f. 2r.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 41v-42r.

⁴⁴⁷ William Roxburgh, *Flora India or, Descriptions of Indian Plants*, Vol. I (Serampore: W. Thacker and Co. Calcutta and Parbury, Allen and Co. London, 1832), “*S. Lycopersicum*”, p. 565.

⁴⁴⁸ G. C. M. Birdwood, *Catalogue of Vegetable Productions of the Presidency of Bombay Including a List of the Drugs Sold in the Bazars of Western India*, Second Edition (Bombay: Education Society’s Press, Byculla, 1865), p. 173.

⁴⁴⁹ J. F. Duthie and J. B. Fuller, *Field and Garden Crops of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh with Illustrations* (Roorkee: Thomason Civil Engineering College Press Part III, 1893), p. 30.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Vol. V, 1891, p. 100.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

The potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is native to the South American Andes, and reached Europe by the mid-sixteenth century.⁴⁵³ The potato emerged as an important staple in many parts of Europe⁴⁵⁴, but is consumed only as a vegetable in India and many other parts of the world. Tracing the early trajectory of the potato in India is rendered somewhat complicated by confounding nomenclature in the sources of the period. Edward Terry mentions potatoes “excellently dressed” as being served at a dinner given by Āṣaf K̄hān in 1615 for the English ambassador Thomas Roe.⁴⁵⁵ John Fryer (who travelled in India between 1673 and 1682) noticed “potatoes” being cultivated as a garden crop in Karnataka and Surat.⁴⁵⁶ However, these may have actually referred to the sweet potato, rather than the white potato.⁴⁵⁷

Writing in 1847, George W. Johnson quotes another nineteenth century writer as follows:

Threescore years ago, a basket of potatoes, weighing about a dozen pounds, was occasionally sent, as opportunity offered, by Warren Hastings, to the Governor of Bombay, and was considered a very acceptable present. On acceptance the members of the council were invited to dine with the governor, to partake of the vegetable. Somehow or other, the potato was introduced into Guzerat, and in process of time, Bombay became well supplied with it; so well that the market had ever an abundance at a low price, and very good.⁴⁵⁸

The above quote seems to indicate that potatoes were available in India during Warren Hastings’ tenure as governor-general (1773-1785), but that it was rare and expensive enough to be considered a valuable gift. Mahesh Upadhyaya and following him, K. T. Achaya, have taken this as evidence of the white potato’s arrival in India by the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵⁹ If the quote is accurate, it certainly does provide us with not only an anecdote of its use and value in the last decades of the eighteenth century, but also tells us of its spread over the next few decades. However, since this is a second hand quote of an anecdote recorded several years after the supposed event, I regard its evidence as suspect. The above

⁴⁵³ Purseglove, *Tropical Crops: Dicotyledons*, p. 560; Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 226.

⁴⁵⁴ Purseglove, *Tropical Crops: Dicotyledons*, p. 562.

⁴⁵⁵ Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India* (London: J. Wilkie, W. Carter, S. Hayes and E. Easton, 1777) (reprinted from the 1655 edition), p. 197.

⁴⁵⁶ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia in Eight Letters being Nine Years Travels*, p. 104.

⁴⁵⁷ Any mention of ‘potato’ in English sources of the time could refer to either the white potato, or varieties of sweet potato, or even to yams. See Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 53, footnote 101; Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 226.

⁴⁵⁸ George W. Johnson, *The Gardner*, Vol. I: The Potato, Cucumber, Gooseberry and the Grape Vine (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), p. 19. The anecdote cited here is recorded as a quotation within inverted commas from a “recent writer” whose identity is not revealed.

⁴⁵⁹ Mahesh D. Upadhyaya, “Potato”, in *Evolutionary Studies in World Crops: Diversity and Change in the Indian Subcontinent*, ed. Joseph Hutchinson (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 140; Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 226.

quotation is on firmer ground in recording events of the nineteenth century, and it is probable that the potato had indeed become fairly common in Gujarat and Bombay by the early decades of the nineteenth century.

We do, in fact, have clearer details emerging for the spread of the potato from the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *ālū* listed as a *khariḥ* crop (autumn harvest) in the *Kitāb-i Zirāʿat* – an Indo-Persian agricultural manual dated 1796-97 – may have referred to the white potato.⁴⁶⁰ There is also a detailed description of the emerging potato culture in Bengal [Berhampore (or Baharampur), 1797], given by the Rev. William Tennant in his *Indian Recreations*.⁴⁶¹ Tennant clearly distinguishes this vegetable as the regular potato, rather than the sweet potato whose cultivation had already been practiced for some time.⁴⁶² Tennant’s account provides a mixed picture of the potato’s acclimatisation:

In this district, we have first to notice the Culture of Potatoes, which has been introduced into Bengal; and apparently with the most beneficial effect. It is a comfortable circumstance, that superstition in Hindostan, all-powerful as it is, does not shut up every avenue to improvement, or preclude the people from every advantage to be derived from the superior attainments of Europeans in industry, art, and science. No prejudice prevents the Hindoo from the culture and use of the potatoe: the most useful and nutritious of all vegetables in every country where the growing of it is fully understood. If the natives here have hitherto derived but small benefit from this plant, it is because the culture has not become universal, nor has the method of preserving it been so much attended to as in Europe.⁴⁶³

Tennant’s account appears to suggest that the potato had made a noticeable, if somewhat limited, presence in Bengal. Indians had begun to incorporate it into their diet, although he later adds that the potato was much more commonly consumed by the European population.⁴⁶⁴ Tennant also states that he had been informed of the introduction of the potato in Madras and some other parts of the Coromandel.⁴⁶⁵ Based on similar evidence from the end of the eighteenth century from Roxburgh, Watt suggests that the potato must have been introduced in India sometime between the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the

⁴⁶⁰ “Kitāb-i Zirāʿat”, MS BL OR 1741, f. 5r. 1796-97 is the colophon date on the manuscript. White potatoes are still usually a *khariḥ* crop in contemporary South Asia.

⁴⁶¹ William Tennant, *Indian Recreations; Consisting Chiefly of Strictures on the Domestic Economy of the Mahomeddians and Hindoos*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: C. Stewart, 1803), pp. 45-51.

⁴⁶² Ibid, p. 50.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, p. 46. Since I have been unable to reproduce the original typescript, which contains the old form of “s”, I have used the regular, modern font instead.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 47.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 48.

eighteenth century.⁴⁶⁶ However, there does not, in fact, appear to be sufficient concrete evidence of the regular cultivation and use of the potato from the seventeenth century, or even from the earlier part of the eighteenth century.

Various references exist for the use of the potato in the early nineteenth century. The *Nuskha-i Ni^cmat Kḥān* (1801) has some basic recipes for the potato: two methods for boiling potatoes (*tarkīb-i jūshānīdan-i ālū*) and a recipe for mashed potatoes (*tarkīb-i ālū-i māsh ya^cnī bhūrta*).⁴⁶⁷ The fact that the potato is called only by its Indian name (*ālū*) is indicative of familiarity. The recipe descriptions leave no doubt that it is the white potato that is being described.⁴⁶⁸

Potatoes are also mentioned, albeit infrequently, in the household accounts of Lord Wellesley in Bengal (1804-1805).⁴⁶⁹ The fact that these potatoes cost as much as six rupees a maund suggests they were indeed white potatoes.⁴⁷⁰ By the 1820s the potato had become common in Bengal and was also spreading rapidly to other regions of the subcontinent. The monthly bazaar accounts of the Calcutta Great Jail in 1824 regularly mention the potato.⁴⁷¹ The fact that the vegetable had become part of the regular purchases for prison inmates indicates that it was no longer a rarity, but an item of everyday consumption.

The *Majmū^c al-Ta^cm* (1826) has a recipe for *sālan-i ālū* or potatoes in a sauce or curry.⁴⁷² In this recipe, potatoes are peeled and kept in fermented or sour milk (*dogh*). Onions are fried with a little turmeric to which ginger and garlic are added. The meat is also washed, kept in *dogh* and fried in the aforementioned spice base. Then the potatoes are added and fried. After six minutes some *dogh*, water and salt are added. When the water dries up, the dish is ready.⁴⁷³

Another significant reference comes from a *materia medica* titled *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt*, authored by Saiyid Faẓl °Alī (d. 1834) under the *nom de plume* Shifā³ī Kḥān. In this text, there are two entries for *ālū*: one under the section on fruits – which clearly refers to the plum – and another in the section on vegetables. The latter reads as follows:

⁴⁶⁶ Watt, *Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Vol. VI, Part III, p. 266.

⁴⁶⁷ “Nuskha-i Ni^cmat Kḥān”, MS BL OR 2028, f. 8r. The word for “mash” is normally spelt as *bharta* or *bhurta*, but here in this MS is spelt as *bhūrta*.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, ff. 118r-120r.

⁴⁶⁹ Accounts of Lord Wellesley’s Bazaar Expenses, April 1804 - August 1805, MS BL Add. 13891.

⁴⁷⁰ See for instance, Ibid, ff. 23v, 40r.

⁴⁷¹ In two volumes covering years between 1824-1834: MSS BL Eur E392/6/a and E392/6/b. The second volume also includes the Jailor, Pearson’s personal accounts (March 1836-May 1838).

⁴⁷² “Majmū^c al-Ta^cm”, MS BNF Supplément Persan 1878, recipe no. 25.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

It belongs to the class of *arwī*, *shakarkand* [varieties of taro and sweet potato respectively] etc. that the Christians have brought from their islands to the country of Bengal. Now it has become abundant in Hind [North India] as well. It has also arrived in the country of the Deccan, but has not become very common. The potato is very tasty. Cook it in water and when it has softened, remove the thin peel that covers its skin, and eat with or without salt. It is very delicious.⁴⁷⁴

The entry goes on to briefly describe some other potato recipes, notably, meat with potatoes and potato mash (*bharta*).⁴⁷⁵ This description gives details on the potato's penetration into various parts of the subcontinent. For the Deccani author of this text, the potato was a novelty that he was evidently excited about. At the same time, his description suggests that it had already established a happy home in other parts of the subcontinent. Other references indicate that potatoes had been cultivated around the 1830s on the Shimla hills as well as the hills surrounding Dehra Dun and the Khasia, Jaintia, Garo and Lushai hills of Assam.⁴⁷⁶ Roxburgh's *Flora Indica* (1832) records the potato as being "very generally cultivated over India, even by the natives for their own use".⁴⁷⁷ Likewise, in 1893, Watt records the potato as being cultivated and eaten all over India.⁴⁷⁸

Thus, the preponderance of evidence on the entry and absorption of the potato in India indicates that early mentions of it in English sources dating from the seventeenth century most likely refer to the sweet potato. The earliest significant references to the routine cultivation and consumption of the potato date to sometime towards end of the eighteenth century, and the vegetable seems to have spread somewhat unevenly to different parts of South Asia in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It is probable that the potato arrived earlier in areas of English settlement such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. By the 1820s and 1830s, it had made significant progress in acclimatising itself to the soil and culinary traditions of various regions in the subcontinent.

Perhaps the most notable import from the New World that revolutionised palates was the chilli. Chillies belong to the genus *Capsicum* and family *Solanaceae* (the family of nightshades). There are various species of it in use all around the world. The species most commonly used in India are the *Capsicum annum* and the *Capsicum frutescens*. The chilli is a fruit that is originally green, usually turning red as it ripens. The active ingredient that lends chillies their pungency is the alkaloid capsaicin. Of all the New World imports that spread

⁴⁷⁴ "Qūt-i Lā-yamūt", MS Salar Jung, Tibb 183, p. 54.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁷⁶ Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 226; Upadhyaya, "Potato", p. 140.

⁴⁷⁷ Roxburgh, *Flora Indica or, Descriptions of Indian Plants*, Vol. I, p. 565.

⁴⁷⁸ Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Vol. VI, Part III, pp. 265-272.

across the world from the fifteenth century onwards, it is the one food that is initially highly unpalatable, but without any attenuating desirable psychotropic properties (unlike coffee, for instance).⁴⁷⁹ It remains a mystery as to how and why certain populations (mostly in South Asia, Southeast Asia, parts of West and East Africa, parts of China and Hungary) incorporated the chilli into their diets following the discovery of the New World.⁴⁸⁰ I hope that my investigations in this chapter provide some clues to this puzzle, at least as far as the South Asian context is concerned.

There is no record of the chilli in India prior to the past few centuries. Achaya has drawn attention to a tantalising reference to it in a composition attributed to the South Indian devotional poet Purandaradāsa (1489-1564).⁴⁸¹ However, the historical authenticity of Purandaradāsa's verses is questionable, since they were not textually codified and compiled until the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸² Manrique mentions *pimienta* pickles at a dinner served by a Mughal notable.⁴⁸³ The English translation of this passage renders *pimienta* as green chillies.⁴⁸⁴ But this is misleading, since the Spanish referred to the newcomer chilli as *pimiento* and not *pimienta*.⁴⁸⁵ What Manrique actually refers to is green peppercorn. John Huyghen van Linschoten tells us that green peppercorns were often used to prepare *achārs* or pickles, just as Manrique describes.⁴⁸⁶ There are no other references pertaining to the cultivation or use of the chilli on the Indian subcontinent prior to the eighteenth century, at least in North India. The spice that was usually used to add heat and pungency to food was black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), both round and long.⁴⁸⁷ Most varieties of black pepper, however, do not have the same intensity of heat as green or red chillies do.

⁴⁷⁹ Paul Rozin and Deborah Schiller, "The Nature and Acquisition of a Preference for Chili Pepper", *Motivation and Emotion*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1980), p. 79.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ "I saw you green, then turning redder as you ripened, nice to look at and tasty in a dish, but too hot if an excess is used. Saviour of the poor, enhancer of good food, fiery when bitten, even to think of [the deity] Pāduranga Vittalā is difficult." Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 227.

⁴⁸² Divya T, "A Study of the Songs of Purandaradasa in the Social, Historical and Religious Context of Vijayanagara Empire (1484-1564 AD)" (PhD dissertation, Department of History, Pondicherry University, 2011), p. 15.

⁴⁸³ Fray Sebastian Manrique, *Itenerario de las Misiones* (Roma: Francisco Caballo, 1649), pp. 329-330. I am grateful to Borayin Larios of the University of Heidelberg for his help in reading and interpreting this section of the Spanish text of Manrique's account.

⁴⁸⁴ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique*, Vol. II, p. 127.

⁴⁸⁵ Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *History of Food*, trans. Anthea Bell (Malden, Mass. and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), pp. 515-516.

⁴⁸⁶ John Huyghen Van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies from the Old English Translation of 1598: The First Book Containing his Description of the East in Two Volumes*, Vol. II, ed. P. A. Tiele (London: Haklyut Society, 1885), p. 75

⁴⁸⁷ See, for instance, Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, p. 11, for an account of the varieties of pepper. The active ingredient that gives black pepper its heat is the alkaloid piperine.

Regular references to the chilli begin trickling into Persian cookbooks from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. There is a reference to *mirch-i surkh* in the chutney recipe recorded in the *Risāla Dar Bayān-i Aṭʿima*, which probably dates to sometime between the third and fifth decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸⁸ It is mentioned in the chutney recipe of the *Khawān-i Niʿmat* dedicated to Nawāb Qāsim ʿAlī Khān Bahādur.⁴⁸⁹ A reference to *mirch-i surkh* also appears in the untitled manuscript of vegetarian recipes discussed in the previous chapter, which likely dates to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁹⁰ In Ḥājī Qambar’s *Alwān-i Niʿmat*, the red chill is used in two pickle recipes (*achār-i līmūn kāghazī* and *achār az khichṛī*).⁴⁹¹ In addition, there is a reference to *mirch-i surkh* in the translated cookbook, *Nuskha-i Niʿmat Khān*.⁴⁹² Thus, early references to the chilli in Persian cookbooks are in chutney or pickle recipes. In other dishes, pepper continued to be the pungent spice of choice. Perhaps the chilli was considered too hot for use in regular food, and thus its use was restricted to spicy relishes such as chutneys and pickles.

Āzād Bilgrāmī, writing in 1762-63 seems to indicate that the chilli had become fairly common.⁴⁹³ He argues that the reason for the dry temperament of the Indian people could be traced to their diet.⁴⁹⁴ Such ‘anthropological’ observations reflect the close interface between medical and socio-cultural thought in the early modern period. Whether rich or poor, according to Bilgrāmī, the base of the Indians’ diet was *dāl-i tūr* (split pigeon pulse; *Cajanus cajan*), to which they added little to no oil or ghee (*be raughan yā kam raughan*). Instead, they added red chillies (*mirch-i surkh*), asafoetida (*hiltīt*) and turmeric (*zard chūba*) to all their dishes (*dar har mākūl dākḥil mīsāzand*).⁴⁹⁵ He adds that some Indians had learnt the use of the chilli in the past ten or twenty years.⁴⁹⁶ From Bilgrāmī’s slightly inconsistent account, it is not possible to say exactly how common the chilli had become, since he first seems to indicate that it was in wide use, but later qualifies this with the statement that *some* Indians

⁴⁸⁸ “Risāla Dar Bayān-i Aṭʿima u Aghziya Lazīza”, MS RAS Codrington/Reade 213.

⁴⁸⁹ See *Shakaristān-i Khayāl wa Khawān-i Niʿmat*, p. 11 marginalia.

⁴⁹⁰ Untitled MS BL IO Islamic 717, f. 10r. See p. 86 in this dissertation.

⁴⁹¹ “Alwān-i Niʿmat”, MS SBB Sprenger 2002 (text continued from MS SBB Sprenger 2001), ff. 310-11.

⁴⁹² See, for instance, “Nuskha-i Niʿmat Khān”, MS BL OR 2028, f. 192v. The red chillies are here used in a curry recipe. This of course is a translation of an English cookbook, so it is not possible to draw inferences regarding typical use of the chilli based upon this reference. But it is nevertheless relevant since red chillies were evidently by now an established ingredient with an indigenous name (*mirch-i surkh*). In this recipe, the seeds are removed from the chillies so that they do not lend much heat.

⁴⁹³ Āzād Bilgrāmī, *Khizāna-i ʿĀmira* (Cawnpore: Munshī Nawal Kishor Press), 1871, p. 48. Also referred to in Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 52, footnote no. 96.

⁴⁹⁴ Bilgrāmī, *Khizāna-i ʿĀmira*, p. 48.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

(*barkhī mardum-i Hindūstān*) had learned its use.⁴⁹⁷ It must be understood that Bilgrāmī's account is not without exaggeration and stereotyping. Thus, his initial generalisations about the Indian diet must be read with some scepticism. This is reinforced by the fact of his belief that this diet was responsible for the humoral imbalances of the Indian temperament. Nevertheless, the inescapable and conservative conclusion that we must draw from this reference is that the chilli was in the process of coming into common use in various parts of the subcontinent by around the mid-eighteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century (1796-97), the chilli had apparently acclimatised itself sufficiently as an agricultural commodity for it to find place in the *Kitāb-i Zirā'at*.⁴⁹⁸ By the mid-nineteenth century the chilli seems to have become ubiquitous. Private Robert George Hobbes, in his unpublished account of India (1852), writes in his usual sensationalistic style of the breakfast enjoyed by the English at Fort William:

...and down the centre [is] a row of tables at which a batch of recruits lately arrived from Europe are taking their hazree* [*Breakfast]. What a glorious spread they seem to think that before them! See the gusto with which they devour those savoury but apparently hot curries; which while they tickle the palate, bring streams of water from their eyes! Observe how they lick their lips...⁴⁹⁹

It would seem a fair assumption that the hot curries that Hobbes mentions were spiced with chillies, rather than with the milder black pepper.

Thus, from all the available evidence, it is possible to argue that the chilli had made a noticeable presence in India by around the mid-eighteenth century, for this is the period to which early references to it in contemporary sources may be reliably dated. However, it evidently took some time for people to get used to its hot taste. Initially, its use may have been restricted to chutneys and pickles, in other words, spicy meal accompaniments. But eventually, its use became ubiquitous.

To understand the acclimatisation of the chilli (or indeed of other New World imports) in India, it is necessary to first take a detour through Europe.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ “*Kitāb-i Zirā'at*”, MS BL OR 1741, f. 5r.

⁴⁹⁹ Private Robert George Hobbes, “*Scenes in the Cities and Wildes of Hindoostan*”, Vol. I, 1852, MS BL Eur B260, f. 25. Asterisk indicates footnote provided in the manuscript itself.

II

In his *De historia stirpium*, Leonard Fuchs, a Lutheran professor of medicine at the University of Tübingen records a description of the chilli, which had arrived in the German lands a few years prior to 1542.⁵⁰⁰ In this, he repeats the mistaken belief that the chilli originated in India, and in fact was known as ‘Calicut pepper’.⁵⁰¹ On the one hand, this misidentification is testament to how closely associated spices were to India in the European imagination. But it also begs the question as to why the chilli was not very successfully absorbed into German, or in general, most European cuisines, even though the earliest German references to it date as far back as the first half of the sixteenth century.

Not all foods find acceptance in new homes. Climate and soil conditions may not prove ideal for their cultivation. But there is also the possibility that they may not appeal to people’s tastes. Cultural sensibilities, food prejudices and previous experiences with similar foods may act as barriers to full acceptance.⁵⁰² The fact that the foods discussed above found acceptance in India thus begs certain questions: why and how did these become such a ubiquitous part of Indian diets, what were the factors that promoted their culinary integration, and what were the impediments that had to be overcome? Clues to some of these questions exist in the sources already examined above. I will elaborate further on these aspects in this section. Detailed studies exist for the incorporation of foods into new host cultures. One significant instance is David Gentilcore’s *Pomodoro*.⁵⁰³ Madeleine Ferrières’s historical survey of food fears also covers many of these aspects. It is possible to draw comparisons from these studies with the Indian experience.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Jean Andrews, *Peppers: The Domesticated Capsicums*, New Edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 24.

⁵⁰¹ Some accounts record this as ‘Calcutta pepper’, but this is obviously an error.

⁵⁰² Paul Rozin points to the phenomenon of the ‘omnivore’s dilemma’ (or generalists dilemma). This refers to a central behavioural predicament that characterises humans’ attitudes towards new and unfamiliar foods. As omnivores and generalists, human beings are able to survive and thrive in a diverse range of habitats, with a variety of different food choices. But this comes at the cost of greater risks in the selection of safe and nutritious foods. In particular, this means that humans tend to have an interest and curiosity in new foods, while at the same time displaying fear and cautiousness in sampling them (neophobia). See Paul Rozin, “The Selection of Foods by Rats, Humans, and Other Animals”, *Advances in the Study of Behaviour* 6 (1976), pp. 21-76; Paul Rozin, “Human Food Intake and Choice: Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives”, in *Food Selection: From Genes to Culture*, ed. Harvey Anderson, John Blundell, and Matty Chiva (Paris: Danone Institute, 2002), pp. 7-24; Elisabeth Rozin and Paul Rozin, “Culinary Themes and Variations”, in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), pp. 34-41.

⁵⁰³ David Gentilcore, *Pomodoro: A History of the Tomato in Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), Kindle Edition.

⁵⁰⁴ Madeleine Ferrières, *Sacred Cow, Mad Cow: A History of Food Fears* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

Gentilcore's study discusses the negative associations with the tomato that initially impeded its acceptance in Italy, as well as the factors that eventually enabled its successful incorporation into Italian diet and cuisine.⁵⁰⁵ Its association with the nightshade family meant that it was feared for being poisonous and harmful to health.⁵⁰⁶ Similarly, the potato, despite its eventual significance in European history, was initially slow to progress as a crop and as a dietary component. Potato cultivation required practices that were different from that of traditional grain cultivation, and also conflicted with traditional land use patterns. Furthermore, the early potatoes that arrived in Europe were variably coloured and gnarly in appearance. For all these reasons, John Reader argues that potatoes were eventually accepted only out of necessity.⁵⁰⁷ Chillies were a New World import that had a highly variable rate of acceptance and assimilation into the cuisines of different cultures. Thus, the fairly dramatic impact that the advent of tomatoes, potatoes and chillies eventually had on Indian culinary traditions was by no means a forgone conclusion.

As would be clear from the preceding discussion, the two major conditions required for the incorporation of a food into the regular diet of people during the early modern period were its successful induction into the local agricultural cycles, and secondly, its culinary inclusion. The negative associations that nightshades suffered from in Europe did not exist in India, and thus some of the negative feedback that this might have generated was avoided. Nevertheless, the eventual integration of these vegetables into Indian culinary traditions was, as is usually the case with culinary transformations, a gradual process. People had to get used to their taste, and find ways to cook them that pleased their palates.

Members of the *Solanaceae* family are ideally suited to tropical conditions, and thus their incorporation into the agricultural cycles of the subcontinent would not have been difficult, especially once local cultivars had been developed. Chillies do well in the tropics with moderate rainfall, while tomatoes can tolerate a fairly wide array of climatic conditions. Potatoes are not strictly speaking ideally suited to the tropics, yet they succeeded in becoming ubiquitous in South Asia as a vegetable.⁵⁰⁸ Both the potato and the chilli are mentioned as *kharīf* crops in the *Kitāb-i Zirā'at*, indicating their absorption into regular agricultural cycles. Ambient conditions for cultivation are an important aspect of a food's dietary acceptance and

⁵⁰⁵ Gentilcore, *Pomodoro: A History of the Tomato in Italy*.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid, chapter 1, "Strange and Horrible Things".

⁵⁰⁷ John Reader, *Potato: A History of the Propitious Esculent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 111-114.

⁵⁰⁸ For a survey of the botanical features and suitable habitats of various members of the *Solanaceae* family, see Purseglove, *Tropical Crops: Dicotyledons*, pp. 523-563.

incorporation. However, this is only moot when the food finds cultural acceptance, and when other political and economic conditions collude to aid its propagation.

The process by which vegetables are given names reveals much about the process of their incorporation. These names may either derive from the languages of the cultures that brought these vegetables to new shores, or from certain characteristics that the new host culture perceives in the vegetables. For instance, we have seen that the tomato was named *wilāyatī baigan*. This name not only makes reference to the vegetable's foreign origins, but also associates it with an already familiar vegetable: the eggplant (*Solanum melongena*). This association may seem strange at first. In culinary terms, the tomato and the eggplant have little in common with each other. However, they do in fact both belong to the same genus, *Solanum*. How this association was made is not clear, but we know that a similar association between the tomato and eggplant was made in early modern Italy during the early years of its introduction from the New World.⁵⁰⁹ The Hindi name for the tomato that eventually came into popular use, i.e., *ṭamāṭar*, however, simply derived from its English (and ultimately, Latin American) original. In the case of the potato, the name used (*ālū*) derived not from any real or supposed genomic association, but from its culinary use. Without any prefixes or suffixes, the word *ālū* normally denoted the plum in Persian texts. However, with various prefixes (eg. *kachālū*), it referred to various kinds of taro or yam. This suffix probably derived from the Sanskrit *āluka*, a generic name for esculent roots.⁵¹⁰ Yams, taro and sweet potatoes are indeed root tubers, but the white potato is a stem tuber. The former also belong to different genres from the white potato. However, the similarity of their appearance and culinary use probably led to the potato inheriting their name. With regard to the chilli, its name in most South Asian languages (for instance, Hin. *mirch*) was simply borrowed from that of pepper. This association is obviously linked to its taste and culinary use: it tastes hot and lends pungency to food. The newcomer was qualified in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Persian texts as *mirch-i surkh*, or red chilli to distinguish it from the better-known black pepper. The latter was sometimes called *mirch-i siyāh*. But in early modern references, the word *mirch*, used on its own, also normally denoted black pepper. The Persian word *filfil*, which was used for black pepper, exclusively retained its original meaning. It was never used to denote the green or red chilli.

⁵⁰⁹ Gentilcore, *Pomodoro: A History of the Tomato in Italy*, chapter 1, "Strange and Horrible Things".

⁵¹⁰ Vaman Shivaram Apte, *Revised and Enlarged Edition of Prin. V. S. Apte's The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957-1959), p. 36. Dictionary available online at <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/apte/> [accessed 28.04.2014]. See also, Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 199. I have used Apte's translation, which is more accurate.

The next question concerns culinary use, or how the new ingredients were incorporated into culinary practice. The evidence that we have is somewhat limited, but it is enough for us to draw a few broad extrapolations on the ways in which such culinary incorporation might have occurred. What seems clear is that the new vegetables were sought to be used in ways that were indigenous and familiar. This was often done by associating them with already familiar ingredients, and cooking them in similar ways. Borrowing new vegetables from another culture did not necessarily mean that ways to cook these new foods were adopted along with the foods themselves. For the tomato, we have very limited evidence of its early use. The recipes found in the *Nuskḥa-i Ni‘mat Kḥān* obviously do not represent instances of typical use. However, the evidence of Duthie and Fuller, cited above, suggests that it was commonly used as a souring agent in familiar dishes. The methods prescribed by the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* for cooking the potato mostly recall well-known recipes. Apart from a basic recipe for boiling the potato, it suggests that potatoes with meat be prepared in a manner similar to meat with *arwī* (taro). It also gives a recipe for potato *bhartā* (mash).⁵¹¹ The evidence of Indo-Persian cookbooks reveals that mash or *bhartā* recipes had a familiar place in culinary praxis.

Chillies, although hotter than the more familiar black pepper, came to occupy a familiar space in Indian culinary traditions. The concept of adding heat and pungency to recipes was a well-established one.⁵¹² The evidence derived from early references to the chilli in Persian cookbooks suggests that its initial use was in chutney and pickle (*achār*) recipes, while black pepper continued to be the preferred hot spice for other dishes. The initial induction of these highly pungent chillies in condiment recipes may have lent a pathway to their eventually ubiquitous use in a broad array of preparations. This was thus a process of gradual acclimatisation and graduation to higher levels of heat and pungency. To some extent, it mirrors – at a macro-level – the process of preference acquisition among children in chilli eating cultures described by Paul Rozin and Deborah Schiller: one of gradual and incremental exposure.⁵¹³ The fact that chillies are normally cheaper than black pepper may have also allowed for their more widespread adoption, especially among the poor.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹¹ “Qūt-i Lā-yamūt”, MS SJML, Ṭibb 183, pp. 54-55.

⁵¹² Familiarity with black pepper has been proposed as a reason for eased acceptance of the chilli in other parts of the Old World as well. See Paul Rozin, “Getting to Like the Burn of Chilli Pepper: Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives”, in *Chemical Senses, Volume 2: Irritation*, ed. Barry Green, J. Russel Mason, Morley R. Kare (New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker Inc., 1990), pp. 231-269, esp. p. 238.

⁵¹³ Rozin and Schiller, “The Nature and Acquisition of a Preference for Chili Pepper”, pp. 77-101. Based on their investigations conducted with university student volunteers in the United States and traditionally chilli-eating Mexican villagers, Rozin and Schiller conclude that there were significant differences with regard to preference for the chilli between their American and Mexican subjects, and that gradual (mostly non-coercive) exposure to

With regard to all three newcomers discussed in this chapter – tomatoes, potatoes and chillies – the evidence outlined above suggests that local contextualisation was crucial to the acceptance of the new foods. Gentilcore observes a similar process of indigenisation in his analyses of the early use of the tomato in Italy: “Native American uses [of the tomato] had little impact on European perceptions and uses. Because Europeans regarded native societies as inferior, the various roles of their plants were not passed on except in a very superficial way.”⁵¹⁵ Gentilcore argues that colonial European perceptions of Latin American societies impeded the adoption of their culinary uses. Instead, Europeans incorporated the new vegetable into their cuisines by cooking them in familiar ways. It may well have been the case that European colonial perceptions did indeed have such an impact. But it seems that such processes were not limited to a situation where a colonial power borrowed foods from a colonised region. When the Europeans brought New World vegetables to South Asia, Indians did not merely emulate European ways of preparing and eating them. Instead they sought to find familiar and indigenous ways of cooking them, and to locate a place for the new food in their cuisines. Even where some elements of cooking methods may have been borrowed, this occurred only when these fitted into current culinary practice.

The processes by which a culture perceives and incorporates new foods may be condensed to certain fundamental questions, as per Gentilcore’s interpretative paraphrase of Ferrières’s analysis: What do you resemble? What do you taste like? What do you replace?⁵¹⁶ The unfamiliar was always rendered familiar by a process of comparison and incorporation.

the chilli at a young age in the Mexican village largely accounted for this difference. They also suggest a range of possible biological, psychological and cultural reasons for the acquisition of a preference for the chilli. One of their findings is that – except in the case of certain specific exceptions – there is no significant correlation between threshold detection of capsaicin and levels of preference for the chilli. Thus, desensitisation does not appear to be key to the development of such preference. Instead, Rozin and Schiller propose an alternate explanation: that a liking for the chilli may be an instance of ‘benign masochism’, in that people actually come to “like the burn”.

⁵¹⁴ Rozin, “Getting to Like the Burn of Chilli Pepper: Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives”, pp. 240, 245. In Hungary, the newly introduced chillies were preferentially adopted by the lower classes (ibid, p. 240). Rozin also draws attention to the following line from the novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), which deals with rural life in South India: “...when the tongue rebels against plain boiled rice, desiring ghee and salt and spices which one cannot afford, the sharp bite of a chillie renders even plain rice palatable”. (Rozin, “Getting to Like the Burn of Chilli Pepper: Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives”, p. 245). The verse attributed to Saint Purandarādāsa, as quoted by Achaya (*Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, p. 227, cited above) refers to the chilli as “saviour of the poor”. Āzād Bilgrāmī (*Khizāna-i Āmīra*, p. 48) appears to suggest that “Indians” spiced their food with condiments such as turmeric, asafoetida and chilli, rather than adding ghee or oil. He claims this to be true of both rich and poor Indians, but it might be possible that this applied more to the poor who could not afford much ghee or oil. However, it is not possible to arrive at a precise or definitive interpretation of this statement. Chillies, unlike pepper, eventually came to be cultivated all over the subcontinent, which makes them cheaper than pepper in contemporary times. For details on the cultivation of pepper and chillies in the twentieth century, see M. Ilyas, “Spices in India”, *Economic Botany* 30 (July – Sept. 1976), pp. 273-280.

⁵¹⁵ Gentilcore, *Pomodoro: A History of the Tomato in Italy*, chapter 1, “Strange and Horrible Things”.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

People sought to locate the new ingredient within a familiar cosmos of foods, so that it could be incorporated into their world. They sought to find something familiar that the new food resembled (*what do you resemble?*). This is the impetus behind the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt*'s introduction of the biscuit. The novel food was familiarised by associating it with the *nān khaṭāʾī*.⁵¹⁷ Potatoes were compared to yams, taro or sweet potatoes. Chillies played the role of pepper, only more potently. Tomatoes probably fulfilled the role of souring agents, as tamarind and yoghurt may have previously (*What do you replace?*). In this way, the flavours of these new foods were sought to be understood (*What do you taste like?*) and brought into play in well-known recipes. Tastes do change, and these new ingredients profoundly altered the flavours and textures of South Asian foods. The route through which this occurred was by way of *cultural translation*, a rendering of the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. It was through such processes that new foods were indigenised and incorporated into local culinary traditions. This may be characterised by the progression *translation-incorporation-transformation*: when a new food enters a culture, it is first understood in terms of the familiar (*translation*). If it finds a place within the cultural and sensory universe of the new host culture, then it is successfully *incorporated* into it. Through this process, both the food and the culinary culture into which it is amalgamated are irreversibly altered (*transformation*).

I am now in a position to make some concluding remarks on why it was that vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes and chillies were successfully incorporated into Indian culinary traditions. My argument here is that it was a congeries of multiple factors that contributed to the absorption of these foods into subcontinental menus. First of all, the extensive maritime trading contacts that the Indian subcontinent had with Europe as well as other parts of Asia had long facilitated the movement of spices from peninsular India to western Asia and Europe. The same trading networks, as well as the presence of European trading factories in India, proved an impetus for bringing the new vegetables to Indian shores. This was especially true since the establishment of European trading colonies along the Indian coastline. In addition, it was possible for these vegetables to find a place in the agricultural cycles of the subcontinent. Chillies and tomatoes do well in tropical and semi-temperate climates, while potatoes are flexible enough to adapt to a sufficiently diverse variety of climatic conditions. On the Indian subcontinent, it is grown more as a vegetable than as a staple.⁵¹⁸ A further significant set of factors is however cultural: these vegetables managed to find a place

⁵¹⁷ “Qūt-i Lā-yamūt”, MS SJML Tibb 183, p. 125.

⁵¹⁸ One may suggest plausible reasons for this: there was already adequate production of a variety of staple grains that were better suited to the climate. Secondly, the cultural impetus to switch from a grain-based diet to a potato-based diet was lacking. Potatoes were not seen as a culinary substitute for rice, wheat or millets.

within subcontinental culinary traditions and managed to adapt to Indian palates. It has been argued here that this was primarily due to the fact that these new vegetables were initially similar enough to existing ingredients, such that it was possible to adapt them to existing tastes and recipes.

The processes that govern interactions in the praxis of cuisine share many of the characteristics outlined above, but also certain particular features of their own. Members of the elite classes often had a penchant for novelty as well as access to food ideas and ingredients from all over the world, and the sources of the period furnish several instances of culinary experimentation. For instance, Manrique describes a banquet given by Āṣaf K̲h̲ān in honour of Emperor Jahāngīr as follows:

I was astonished and surprised to see so much polite usage and good order in practice amongst such Barbarians, while I was no less astonished at the abundance and diversity of the dishes and eatables among which some were in European style, especially certain pastries, cakes and other sweet confections...⁵¹⁹

Europeans and other foreigners in the subcontinent were equally likely to borrow from subcontinental culinary traditions. Indo-Persian cookbooks written exclusively for Englishmen, as discussed in the last chapter, are an example of this.⁵²⁰ By the time colonialism was beginning to flower in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this process had reached an advanced stage. Studies on colonial food cultures, such as those of Collingham⁵²¹ and Leong-Salobir⁵²² have highlighted the manner in which colonial food traditions emerged as an admixture between Indian culinary repertoires and the colonialists' English inheritance. In 1804, the bazaar accounts of Lord Wellesley's household show clear evidence of this cultural blending. The lists unsurprisingly contain several dishes and ingredients of European origin such as duck, "turkies", European hams, muffin, brown cake and biscuit, but the number of Indian foods is also striking: these include ingredients such as cardamom, cinnamon, table rice, ginger, garlic, turmeric and "tur dall" (split pigeon pea pulses). There are also multiple entries for "Corry [curry] stuff", without further elaboration.⁵²³ The dishes in the *Nusk̲h̲a-i Ni^cmat K̲h̲ān* also contain various foods that have both English (or European) and Indian origins.⁵²⁴

⁵¹⁹ Manrique, *Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique*, Vol. II, p. 218.

⁵²⁰ See pp. 89-91 in this dissertation.

⁵²¹ Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*.

⁵²² Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia*.

⁵²³ Lord Wellesley's household accounts, MS BL Add. 13891, *passim*.

⁵²⁴ "Nusk̲h̲a-i Ni^cmat K̲h̲ān", MS BL OR 2028, *passim*.

This culinary cross-pollination often entailed more than processes of cultural translation. As with the Englishmen who had Indian cookbooks prepared for them, it also necessarily involved acts of conscious borrowing. Indians acted as agents in many ways to promote this process. The authors and translators of these cookbooks were among these agents, as were the cooks and kitchen staff of the colonial household.⁵²⁵ Both Indians and the English borrowed elements from each other's repertoire and reinterpreted it.

Certain key elements emerge from the evidence on culinary interactions and change, whether this concerns the borrowing of recipes or the migration of foods from one culture to another. Firstly, culinary cultures are in a constant state of dynamism, ever in a state of creation and metamorphosis. Thus, it is impossible to locate any authenticity of culinary or food cultures at any point in space or time. While chillies are an indispensable part of most culinary traditions on the Indian subcontinent, they were once foreign. If we were to go back further in time, we would find many other foods and culinary traditions that had foreign origins at some point of time. Structural analyses of cuisine that seek to understand food cultures in a static mould thus do not offer a valid frame of analysis for the study of culinary cultures. If cuisines are in a constant state of creation, they must be studied and understood as *processes* with multiple interacting elements.

Secondly, the interactions of food and culinary traditions are characterised by patterns of circularity and constant exchange. The interactions between subcontinental and colonial culinary traditions offer a classic example of this. The European colonialists were instrumental in bringing New World fruits and vegetables to Indian shores. At the same time, those who settled on the subcontinent absorbed many elements of Indian culinary traditions, as has been discussed above. This interaction with the culinary traditions of the subcontinent in turn led to many *colonial re-interpretations* of Indian cuisine that were themselves recycled back into subcontinental culinary practice. For instance, the word 'curry' denotes a style of cooking derived from Indian (or more broadly, Asian) culinary traditions. It does not appear in early modern Persian cookbooks, or in any Indian source of the period. The word 'curry' itself may have subcontinental linguistic origins, although there are several possible sources.⁵²⁶ Yet this word and the culinary concept(s) associated with it eventually became a part of South Asian culinary vocabulary and praxis.

⁵²⁵ Leong-Salobir in *Food Culture in Colonial Asia* highlights the crucial role that Indian cooks played in the development of colonial cuisine.

⁵²⁶ The word 'cury' means cooking in Middle English, and the late fourteenth century cookbook *Forme of Cury* is one of the oldest cookbooks in English (see the catalogue entry for Add. 5016 in the British Library). The

Another instance of circularity comes from the *Nusk̄ha-i Ni^cmat K̄hān*, which has multiple recipes for *malāgṭānī shorbā* or mulligatawny soup.⁵²⁷ The word *malāgṭānī* or mulligatawny has its origins in the Tamil phrase *mulaga tannī*, which literally means pepper water, and its recipe is of South Indian origin. Elements of this dish must have travelled from South Indian kitchens to Europe along with travellers, traders and missionaries. Then its highly anglicised variation seems to have been brought back to a subcontinental Persianate audience through this translated cookbook. While we can never know what use was ultimately made of this cookbook, it is at least possible that this recipe was cooked in a North Indian kitchen.

Even within the subcontinent, there was constant mingling and exchange between the culinary traditions of various social groups and strata. There were no sharp or absolute distinctions between the culinary cultures of the upper classes and the ‘common folk’, and even the use of terms such as ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ may be somewhat problematic. At least as far as food traditions are concerned, socio-economic distinctions do not coincide closely with cultural ones. The diet of the upper classes was more varied and benefitted from access to a wider variety of ingredients. For instance, only the rich could afford costly ingredients such as white flour for their bread. Many fruits, spices and meats were also too expensive to be a part of the everyday diet of most people.

Nevertheless, the evidence of Persian cookbooks as well as other sources of the period suggests that the diet of the elite classes incorporated many so-called common or popular dishes such as *khichrī*. Other instances from Persian cookbooks include recipes for bread made with millets such as *bājra*. Thus, there was a constant intermingling and exchange of culinary ideas among various social groups and classes. This may have been aided, in part, by the culinary contributions of cooks from relatively lower socio-economic backgrounds working in elite kitchens.⁵²⁸ In particular, the diet of the Indo-Persian elites was both *inclusive*

modern word ‘curry’ is, however, often traced to a Tamil origin. The Hindi word “*karhī*” – which also denotes a sauce-based dish, often with chickpea flour – may also be a source.

⁵²⁷ “*Nusk̄ha-i Ni^cmat K̄hān*”, MS BL OR 2028, ff. 16r-21r. There are, in total, four variations of this dish described.

⁵²⁸ In chapter 2 of this dissertation “A culture of connoisseurship” esp. the section entitled “gendered food discourses”, pp. 93-96, I highlighted, with the citation of adequate evidence, the underrepresentation of the roles played by plebeian cooks, and especially of women, in Mughal culinary discourse. See also, Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia*, cited above, who demonstrates the contributions of native cooks in bringing Indian culinary influences to European tables in the colonial context. In chapter 2, I noted Jack Goody’s argument that European courts employed male cooks who brought over women’s recipes to more affluent circumstances [Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, p. 101]. I also cited the work of Shirin Mahdavi, who makes mention of similar processes under the ʿAbbāsids, where male cooks employed by imperial courts brought over and elaborated upon peasant recipes [Mahdavi, “Women, Shiʿism, and Cuisine in Iran”, p. 22]. It is thus probable, given the evidence for significant culinary cross-pollination across social classes as well as the

as well as *exclusive*. It was inclusive in the sense that it incorporated many elements from the culinary traditions of the ‘common folk’, but it was exclusive in the sense that it included foods that could only be accessed by the affluent.

Patterns of intra-regional culinary exchange could also be observed among various interacting ‘communities’ and social groups. One striking instance of this were the communities that were integrated into the Mughal *manṣabdārī* system, and hence into its cultural sphere. The *rasoi khāsā* records from Eastern Rajasthan illustrate the manner in which this happened. These include two sets of records that interest us: one which covered items prepared as consecratory offerings (*bhog*) for the patron deity, Śrī Sītārāmjī (dating to 1801 CE) and the other which dealt with food items for regular use and secular occasions (dating to 1749-1750 CE). On examination, a striking difference appears between these two lists. The items meant for the deity are meatless and adhere to certain dietary norms of purity (*aṭṭo* - flour, *chāwal* - rice, *dāl* - pulses, *tel* - oil, *tarkārī* - vegetables, *khichṛī* and *khīr*).⁵²⁹ On the other hand, those on the ‘secular’ lists include several meat dishes. What is even more notable is that the names of some items (e.g., *kabāb*, *murgā*, *pulāv*) display the influence of cultural contact with the Mughals.⁵³⁰ Similarly, Ānand Rām – a Khatrī – inhabited a cultural world that accommodated an understanding of cuisine shared amongst the Mughal elite at large.⁵³¹

The above analysis highlights culinary interactions across class and social groups in early modern India. This exposes another problem with a structuralist understanding of cuisine: it tends to divide culinary practices into discreet units that do not allow us to consider the diversity and fluidity of food traditions as they actually tend to exist, both among geographical and cultural units, as well as between socio-economic strata.

Cuisines can never be understood as discreet units. I would further assert that analysing cuisines and food cultures *always* involves the deconstruction of transcultural configurations. As has been shown in this chapter, cuisine is in a constant state of creation at the interstices of cultures. When cultures engage, elements of food ideas, cuisine, and even foods themselves are exchanged. This exchange occurs in constant motion, and is circular in nature. It is within this framework that cuisines and food cultures must be analysed.

underrepresented role of plebeian cooks in Indo-Persian elite kitchens, that Mughal India witnessed a similar phenomenon.

⁵²⁹ Jaipur Kārkhāna Rasoi Khāsa Samwat 1858, Bundle No. 50, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner (RSAB).

⁵³⁰ Jaipur Kārkhāna Rasoi Khāsa Samwat 1806-1807, Bundle No.2, RSAB. I am grateful to P. C. Joiya, Research Officer, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, for helping me read these documents. Responsibility for any errors in reading or interpretation remains my own.

⁵³¹ Ānand Rām, *Safarnāma-i Mukhlīs*. For a detailed discussion, see pp. 67-69 in this dissertation.

Conclusion

Food recipes have lives. They have biographies that are dynamic and ever evolving. These are shaped by a multiplicity of influences, a few of which may be traced through the written repositories of cookbooks. In the context of this dissertation, Indo-Persian cookbooks have been particularly focused on. As has been shown in this chapter, the cuisine embodied by the recipes that they record combine multifarious influences, bringing together the local and global. They traverse the realm of the urban Mughal bazaar, as well as Iranian, Central Asian and even European influences. Recipes such the *zerbiryān*, for instance seem to have developed from Iranian influences, but were distinctly Indian in the details of their preparation. Comparing the recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks with those recorded in their Iranian counterparts of the Šafawid period, it is apparent that despite some common elements, the recipes in Indo-Persian cookbooks represented a unique and distinct culinary tradition.

Certain ‘flavour principles’ (a concept coined by Elisabeth Rozin) can be distinctly discerned in Indo-Persian cookbooks. Spices such as cinnamon, cumin, cardamom, cloves, coriander, black pepper, turmeric and ginger were usually combined in savoury recipes with a base of fried onions. Sweet and savoury flavours were not so sharply separated and were often combined. For instance, the *chāshnīdār* variants of many *qalīya* and *dopiyāza* recipes involved adding a syrup of sugar and lemon to the dish. These distinct aspects can be noted consistently throughout the corpus of Indo-Persian cookbook literature. However, it must be emphasised that these were not rigid principles or part of any structure of recipes. The fact that the recipes in these cookbooks constantly borrowed from both local Indian as well as other Asian and European influences precludes any rigid, structural understanding of the cuisine that they represented, or of any broader culinary Indian traditions that they interacted with. Moreover, new fruits and vegetables such as pineapples, tomatoes, potatoes and chillies were incorporated into Indian culinary traditions. The dynamicity of such culinary changes makes a case for the historical approaches of Mennell and Fergusson, which emphasise studying cuisine as process rather than as structure.

A study of the manner in which new foods and vegetables were incorporated into Indian dietary traditions provides an instance of culinary dynamicity. In this chapter, I have examined the evidence for the absorption of potatoes, tomatoes and chillies into Indian food traditions. There was a particular process by which this integration was achieved. This involved a process of *cultural translation* that allowed the unfamiliar to be rendered familiar. The newcomers were always compared to familiar flavours or vegetables. Thus, the chilli was

identified with the already familiar pepper, because of their shared pungency, although the former has a sharper flavour. Potatoes were identified with varieties of sweet potatoes, taro and yams. And tomatoes probably fulfilled the function of a souring agent within the existing flavour cosmos of Indian culinary traditions. Eventually, however, the incorporation of these vegetables into Indian diets led to fundamental transformations in existing culinary practices. They were thus strong agents of dynamicity. The process by which new fruits and vegetables were absorbed and incorporated may be characterised by the progression *translation-incorporation-transformation*. Thus, a new food is first introduced via its translation in terms of the familiar, is then incorporated into the existing culinary cosmos, and this incorporation eventually leads to fundamental changes in existing culinary practices. I have argued that a large number of factors contributed to the successful incorporation of these vegetables: trading connections and the presence of European factories and colonies along the Indian coastline was one important factor. The association of the newcomers with familiar agents in existing diets was another factor. Successful incorporation into existing agricultural cycles was a third.

The process of culinary creation and transformation is circular and dynamic. It led to fundamental changes in Indian dietary practices in the early modern period. Thus, the word *curry*, which does not occur in Indian cookbooks, was borrowed from English usage. But the English recipes called 'curry' in turn borrowed elements from Indian dietary traditions. Thus, this study confirms that cuisine must be studied as a dynamic process, rather than as a structure.

Chapter 4

Food and Medicine

Introduction

In previous chapters, I have examined various themes pertaining to the cultures of gastronomy and feasting in Mughal India, as well as the ways in which patterns of consumption changed over the period under study. I have shown how medical ideas of humoural balance played a significant role in the construction of Mughal ideologies of food. Apart from this, I have also extensively used cookbooks as sources, and the world of food and recipes was never far from that of medicine. The study of dietetics and pharmacology thus has many interconnections with the world of food cultures and food ideas. In this chapter, I will excavate some of this interrelatedness.

I will particularly focus on analysing Indo-Persian medical texts with a pharmacological and dietetic focus. I shall demonstrate that while this genre is diverse and tends to resist generalisation, there were some noticeable trends in content and production. I will also examine some key aspects of pharmacology in this chapter, and demonstrate the fluidity of dietetic taxonomies. Apart from this, I shall discuss the manner in which the high medical tradition represented in Persian medical texts interacted with popular medical praxis and lore. This discussion will show that there were no sharp distinctions between ‘high’ and ‘low’ medical traditions, and that they intermingled seamlessly.

It is also important to note the major secondary works that I have drawn on, or that have helped me formulate my analysis. Two major monographs that have appeared on the history of Unani or Graeco-Arab medicine are Seema Alavi’s *Islam and Healing*⁵³² and Guy Attewell’s *Refiguring Unani Tibb*⁵³³. The numerous articles of Dominik Wujastyk, which deal with early modern Ayurvedic texts⁵³⁴, also form a valuable set of secondary sources. There is precious little specifically on the theme of dietetics. However, David Waines’ work on

⁵³² Seema Alavi, *Islam and Healing: Loss and Recovery of an Indo-Muslim Medical Tradition 1600-1900* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁵³³ Guy Attewell, *Refiguring Unani Tibb: Plural Healing in Late Colonial India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007).

⁵³⁴ See esp. Dominik Wujastyk, “Change and Creativity in Early Modern Indian Medical Thought”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 33 (2005), pp. 95-118; “Indian Medical Thought on the Eve of Colonialism”, *IIAS [International Institute for Asian Studies] Newsletter* 31 (July 2003), p. 21; “Medicine: India”, in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (in six volumes), ed. Maryanne Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner and Sons, 2005), pp. 1410-1412.

medieval Islamic dietetics bears some (indirect but significant) relevance to the early modern South Asian context as well.⁵³⁵ Fabrizio Speziale has also written on early modern medicine in India and Iran.⁵³⁶ The literature on the history of medicine in Europe, and of humoral medicine generally is vast. I would like in particular to cite here, Noga Arikha's *Passions and Tempers*, which offers a competent survey of the history of humoral beliefs, mostly with a European focus.⁵³⁷ Apart from these works on the history of medicine, it is also important to take note of works on the anthropology of medicine, and in particular, those works that deal with popular beliefs regarding the humoral qualities of food among various cultures around the world, which will be referenced later in this chapter.⁵³⁸

I will begin by giving a background on the various medical and dietetic traditions that co-existed on the subcontinent during the early modern period. I then move on to a bibliographical survey of a selection of Persian medical texts with a pharmacological and dietetic focus. The next section will examine key pharmacological concepts in these texts, and attempt to dissect their context and implications. Finally, I will look at the interactions between various dietetic traditions, and situate them within their social and institutional contexts.

The Menu of Medical and Dietetic Traditions

It would be mistaken to consider the array of medical traditions that existed in early modern India as exclusive and discrete. In actual fact – as shall be seen – the lines between them were often blurred, and the relationships between these diverse practices could be both complementary as well as contradictory. Nevertheless, there did exist some congeries of medical knowledge that had distinct identities, traditions of learning and norms of professional practice. These had diverse historical backgrounds with literature that was usually expressed in different languages, although their historical and literary traditions often intertwined. This complexity and interrelatedness has led Guy Attewell to question the

⁵³⁵ Waines, “Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture”.

⁵³⁶ See esp. Fabrizio Speziale, “The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī's *‘Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*”, *eJournal of Indian Medicine* 3, no. 2 (2010), pp. 53-67; “India xxxiii. Indo-Muslim physicians”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009. URL: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xxxiii-indo-muslim-physicians> [accessed May 29, 2013]; “The Circulation of Ayurvedic Knowledge in Indo-Persian Medical Literature”, (Symposium “Ayurveda in Post-Classical and Pre-Colonial India”, IAS, Leiden, 9 July 2009).

⁵³⁷ Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humours* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007).

⁵³⁸ See esp. Lenore Manderson, “Hot-Cold Food and Medical Theories: Overview and Introduction”, *Social Science and Medicine* 25, no. 4, pp. 329-330.

appellation ‘system’ for the various medical traditions and customary practices that existed on the subcontinent.⁵³⁹

Two major or ‘great traditions’ of medicine in Mughal India were *Tibb* (or ‘Unani’) and Ayurveda. There also existed numerous informal and household medical practices that had a crucial bearing on everyday dietary practices, but these should not be seen as de-linked from, or considered to be in competition with, the ‘great traditions’. During the early modern period, contemporary European medical practices were also making an appearance. However, European medical praxes – at the time still heavily reliant on humoral theories – had a relatively limited place in the menu of healing traditions on the Indian subcontinent.

Persian medical texts may very broadly be located within what has come to be known as the Unani medical ‘system’, although contemporary texts speak merely of *Tibb* (Ar. medicine).⁵⁴⁰ The word ‘Unani’ refers to the tradition’s ancient Greek (or Ionian) heritage. This corpus of medical traditions is also sometimes referred to as ‘Graeco-Arab’, because it was primarily developed in the Islamicate world following the establishment of the Islamic caliphate. As Islamicate societies and state systems emerged in various parts of the world, from Spain in the west to Malaya in the east, many medical traditions, pharmacopeia, and dietetic practices clustered together sharing sources of knowledge and customs of praxes. Unani’s links with Indian medical traditions may be traced back to early contacts under the Abbasid caliphate, but the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the twelfth century led to the development of indigenous offshoots of this intellectual genealogy on the subcontinent. Many Persian texts drew substantially on Indian medical lore, and the ‘Unani’ pharmacopeia in India understandably incorporated a large corpus of local Indian *materia medica*.⁵⁴¹

The intellectual genealogy of ‘Unani medicine’ in India was thus diverse, drawing on Greek, Arabic, Persian, as well as Sanskrit sources. Its theoretical basis largely derived from its Graeco-Arab origins, but medical praxis was indigenised to a significant degree. In

⁵⁴⁰ As Speziale has pointed out, the appellation ‘Unani’ only became popular in the nineteenth century to highlight its common origins with ‘western’ medicine and counter accusations of being unscientific. See Fabrizio Speziale, “Indo-Muslim Physicians and the Yûnânî Denomination”, *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter* 37 (June 2005), p. 18.

⁵⁴¹ For surveys of the history of Unani or Graeco-Arab medicine, see Claudia Liebeskind, “Unani Medicine of the Subcontinent”, in *Oriental Medicine: An Illustrated Guide to the Asian Arts of Healing*, ed. Jan Van Alphen and Anthony Aris (London: Serindia Publications, 1995), pp. 39-65; Syed Zillur Rahman, “Unani Medicine in India: its Origins and Fundamental Concepts”, in *Medicine and Life Sciences in India*, ed. B.V. Subbarayappa (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2001), pp. 292-325; Helen E. Sheehan and S. J. Hussain, “Unani *Tibb*: History, Theory, and Contemporary Practice in South Asia”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 583 (Sept. 2002), pp. 122-135; Alavi, *Islam and Healing*, pp. 18-29. For a discussion of some historiographical and methodological issues concerning this history, see Attewell, *Refiguring Unani Tibb*, pp. 1-29.

common with many other pre-modern medical traditions, ‘Unani medicine’ was based on a conceptual paradigm anchored around the concept of humours, an imbalance among which was the main cause of ill health.⁵⁴² The three primary humours (*akhlāt*) in ‘Graeco-Arab’ medicine – as derived from its Greek forbears – were *dam* or *khūn* (blood), yellow bile (*ṣafrā*), black bile (*saudā*), and phlegm (*balgham*). The character of each of the humours was related to their composition. Blood was warm and moist, phlegm was cold and moist, yellow bile was warm and dry, and black bile was cold and dry. The preponderance of one or more humours over the others caused particular temperaments (*mizāj*). An excess of blood caused a person to be sanguine (*damawī mizāj*); predominance of phlegm was the cause of a phlegmatic temperament (*balghamī mizāj*); excessive yellow bile led to a choleric temperament (*ṣafrāwī mizāj*); and preponderance of black bile made for a melancholic temperament (*saudāwī mizāj*). A proper balance of the humours was essential for good health, and conversely, humoral imbalances were the fundamental cause of illness. Physicians sought to correct these imbalances through various therapies such as diet, exercise, prescriptions of compound medications, baths, bloodletting, purging, and emesis.

Foods also had their own humoral character, and would be prescribed to counteract the humoral imbalances of a patient. Persian dietetic texts and pharmacopeia usually classify foods and medicines as either ‘simple’ (*mufrad*) or ‘compound’ (*murakkab*). Simple foods or medicines are single ingredients: a certain kind of vegetable, herb, fruit or meat. Compound foods or medicines were composed of multiple ingredients. These could be, for instance, tablet or syrup preparations, or may even take the form of recipes for food dishes. Each of these simple and compound medicines had their own unique set of characteristics (*khāṣiyat*), based on their humoral make-up. They were classed as either hot or cold, and as either moist or dry. The potency of their action was measured in four degrees (*darja*), with the first degree being the weakest, and the fourth being the strongest. The action of the first degree was so slight as to be imperceptible, while the fourth degree was indicative of potency intensive enough to be destructive of bodily tissue and metabolic processes. The effect of poisons was classed in the fourth degree. The characteristics of most foods described in Persian medical texts were classified either in the first or second degree. Another

⁵⁴² The following survey of the concepts of Unani medicine is based on my study of early modern Persian medical manuscripts as well as various published materials on the history of medicine. For competent surveys of some of these concepts see Liebeskind, “Unani Medicine of the Subcontinent”; Rahman, “Unani Medicine in India: its Origins and Fundamental Concepts”; Sheehan and Hussain, “Unani Tibb: History, Theory, and Contemporary Practice in South Asia”; R. L. Verma, and N. H. Keswani, “The Physiological Concepts of Unani Medicine”, in *The Science of Medicine in Ancient and Medieval India*, ed. N. H. Keswani (New Delhi: S.K. Manchanda, 1974), pp. 145-163.

categorisation of *materia medica* was based on the transformations and actions of substances after entering the human body. According to this criterion, all foods and medicines were classified into six categories: *ghizā-i muṭṭlaq* (absolute food), whose form alters on entering the body, but the body remains unaffected; *dawā-i muṭṭlaq* (absolute medicine), which effects changes on the body in consonance with its own humoural nature, but is not absorbed into it; *ghizā-i dawāʾī* (medicinal food), which both changes and is changed in the human body, and is eventually absorbed into it; *dawā-i ghizāʾī* (food-like medicine), which begins by effecting changes in the body, and then is altered itself and is eventually fully absorbed; *dawā-i sammī* (toxic medicine, which is altered on entering the body and then effects changes on it, eventually with destructive effects), and *samm-i muṭṭlaq* (absolute toxin, which remains unaltered after entering the body, but causes destruction within it).

The healing beliefs and practices that came under the umbrella of Ayurveda were broadly based on a similar set of beliefs. ‘Ayurveda’ itself simply means ‘the science of life’, and so it was merely a standard Sanskrit term for medicine. It was only the presence of other medical traditions such as *Tibb*, which outlined its identity as a specific medical tradition with its own set of theoretical beliefs. A taxonomic concept similar to that of the Galenic humoural tradition was a significant aspect of its medical theory. According to the most widely accepted version, there were three primary ‘humours’ (*dosha*): *kapha* (phlegm), *vāta* (wind), and *pitta* (bile).⁵⁴³ Whether these represented ‘humours’ in the same sense as understood in Graeco-Arab medical traditions is a question that deserves further research, although current scholarship on medical history regards these concepts as being roughly equivalent. Nevertheless, as Dominik Wujastyk points out, even this three-fold ‘humoural’ division in Ayurvedic theory was not carved in stone; many practitioners and scholars practically regarded blood as a fourth ‘humour’.⁵⁴⁴ As in *Tibb* or Graeco-Arab medical traditions, *dosha* balance was essential to good health. A variety of therapies were employed to treat *dosha* aggravations and imbalances, including drugs, diet, exercises, massages, enemas, purgation and bloodletting.⁵⁴⁵ Thus, the menu of treatments was very similar to that of *Tibb*, or indeed to that of contemporary European medical practices.

Healing practices were however, not limited to scholarly and ‘formal’ medicine. A wide range of beliefs pertaining to food and drugs were held and put into practice by people

⁵⁴³ There is some disagreement as to the precise translation of the terms *kapha*, *vāta*, and *pitta*. See Bhagwan Dash and Lalitesh Kashyap, ed. and trans., *Materia Medica of Ayurveda* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co., 1980), p. xxix, for a contrary view.

⁵⁴⁴ Wujastyk, “Medicine: India”, p. 1411.

⁵⁴⁵ Surgery had declined in social importance and respect considerably by this time, having veritably become the preserve of barber surgeons.

of all classes and social groups. There also existed popular beliefs regarding the taxonomy of foods, of which the belief in ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ properties of foods was – and still is – common. The relationship between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ traditions of medical practice will be analysed and elaborated later in this chapter.

Cookbooks and Medical Treatises: Blurred Boundaries?

The genre of dietetic texts had a ubiquitous presence in the early modern world. The prescription of proper diets and medicaments was such a crucial and elemental aspect of medicine that it often merited entire treatises devoted to it, apart from forming a major aspect of most general texts on medicine.

However, the distinction between medical texts and cookbooks, although real, was not very sharp. A cookbook such as the *Ni^cmatnāma* could contain medical prescriptions,⁵⁴⁶ while in medical texts the distinction between food and drug recipes was blurred. In this chapter, I will discuss a number of instances where the line between food and medicine – and likewise between medical text and culinary manual – was rendered somewhat ambiguous. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that distinctions in genre did exist. Cookbooks were self-consciously culinary manuals, and medical texts were treatises written by physicians as manuals of healing, not gastronomic pleasure. While the authors of Indo-Persian cookbooks are generally unknown to us, the authorship of a medical text is only rarely in doubt. The foods and drugs in medical texts were classified as ‘simple’ and ‘compound’, and typically listed in alphabetical order. On the other hand, in cookbooks, the preferred arrangement was according to categories of dishes, such as breads, *pulā³os*, *zerbiryāns*, *qalīyas* and *dopiyāzas*, *kabābs*, and *ḥalwās*.

‘Unani’ medical texts were written in Arabic and Persian, with a number of Urdu translations and medical manuals being produced from the latter part of nineteenth century onwards. These texts recognised an intellectual genealogy going back to Greek scholars such as Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates, as well as a number of Arab and Iranian scholar-physicians such as ^oIbn Sīnā and ^oIbn Rushd. While the style and content of Indo-Persian dietetic texts vary widely, certain characteristics are frequently observed.⁵⁴⁷ Many gave a justification for writing the text, or cited a lacuna that the text was meant to fill. The listing of significant previous texts served to highlight the intellectual genealogy of the treatise in

⁵⁴⁶ Titley, *The Ni^cmatnāma Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu*. See p. 75 in this dissertation.

⁵⁴⁷ These observations are made based on my study of the genre.

question.⁵⁴⁸ It also advertised the importance of the text to its proposed audience. The texts also often claimed value in making compilations that were more complete or accessible.⁵⁴⁹ It was a common practice to begin the treatise with a discussion of theoretical concepts pertaining to the taxonomy of foods and drugs. Against each simple or compound medicament, the *khāṣiyat* (attributes) would be listed: the specific degree to which a particular food or drug was hot (*garam*) or cold (*sard*), and the degree to which it was dry (*khushk*) or moist (*tar*). It was the usual practice to go on to list the medicament's effect on the humours, as well as medicinal indications and contra-indications. For compound drugs and foods, it was often the practice to include detailed recipes. Detailed medical and humoral descriptions of this kind were normally not found in cookbooks.

This and other salient aspects of style and content will be further clarified as I now move on to a bibliographic survey of some notable Indo-Persian dietetic and pharmacological texts. This survey will demonstrate the range and diversity of Persian medical texts; it will also trace trends in text production, style and content as the Mughal Empire blossomed and went to seed.

Indo-Persian Dietetic and Pharmacological Texts: A Survey

I shall begin this survey with a discussion of sixteenth and seventeenth century texts. One prominent work belonging to this period was the *Dastūru-l Aṭibbā*, also known as *Tibb-i Firishta* or *Ikhtiyārāt-i Qāsimī*.⁵⁵⁰ It was written by Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Shāh (d. 1623). Also known as 'Firishta' (angel), he had been in the service of the °Ādil Shāhī rulers of Bijapur from a young age. Other works he authored are the *Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī* and *Tarīkh-i Firishta*.⁵⁵¹ The first *maqāla* (chapter) of the text deals with simple medicines, the second with compound medicines, and the final *maqāla* concerns itself with the treatment of diseases. The foods contained in its alphabetical list are mostly Indian in origin, such as mango (*amba*), *ilāychī* (cardamom), and *anār* (pomegranate), and it uses Hindi names (for instance, *akroṭ* or walnut and *pān* or betel leaf), but also gives Persian equivalents. The text frequently quotes the opinions of 'Indian scholars' (*ḥukmā-i hindī*).⁵⁵² This is not surprising, given the generous patronage extended to vernacular languages under the °Ādil Shāhī sultans, as well as under

⁵⁴⁸ This was also a feature of Renaissance dietetic texts. See Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 14.

⁵⁴⁹ These are general observations based on the corpus of texts that I have studied.

⁵⁵⁰ "Dastūru-l Aṭibbā", MS Bodl. Fraser 203, MS BL IO Islamic 2364.

⁵⁵¹ Hadī, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 182

⁵⁵² "Dastūru-l Aṭibbā", MS Bodl. Fraser 203, MS BL IO Islamic 2364.

other Deccani sultanates. As Muzaffar Alam has shown, vernacular languages were accorded importance by the Deccani sultanates both in the court as well as in administration. This was in sharp contrast to the policies and practices of the Mughals.⁵⁵³

A notable aspect of the *Dastūru-l Aṭibbā* is its interest in indigenous Indian medical beliefs and practices. In a section entitled “about beliefs regarding methods of eating amongst Indians”, it begins by noting that the author’s description pertains to Indian people, especially *brahmans* and *khatrīs*.⁵⁵⁴ The text describes their food habits as follows: “Before eating food, they rinse their mouth with warm water, and know [this practice] to be appropriate. The first thing they eat should be sweet and a little fatty and after that, sour, salty and hot pickle (*achār-i tursh u shor u tez*). After that without bread, they eat whatever food is light; it must have less fat. Once they are half full, if they do eat food that has some fat, that is no problem, but meat and other fatty foods are prohibited.”⁵⁵⁵ As noted in the text itself, this description pertains to brahmanical practices, and does not necessarily bear any relation to medical prescriptions described in Ayurvedic texts. In point of fact, no Sanskrit text is cited here. It is not the absolute accuracy of this description that is of moment here, although we may assume that some part of it was based on real reports or observations. Rather, this sort of anthropological description of food practices shows an interest in medical and dietetic practices derived from various sources.

A number of dietetic and pharmacological texts can also be dated to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during the heyday of the Mughal Empire. An early text is the *Riyāz al-Adwīya*, which was an alphabetically arranged compendium of foods and medicines authored by Yūsuf bin Muḥammad Harawī, who bore the *nom de plume* ‘Yūsufī’ and was a prolific author of medical treatises. The *Riyāz* was compiled in 946 AH (1539 AD), and was presented to Emperor Humāyūn.⁵⁵⁶ The text consists of an introduction (*muqaddama*), two chapters (*bāb*) on simple (*mufrada*) and compound (*murakkaba*) medicines, and a *khātima* (conclusion). As in many other medical texts, the first few pages contain explanations of dietetic taxonomy, particularly the concepts of *khāṣiyat* (qualities) and *darja* (degree). The six categories of foods and medicines, classified according to their influence on the human

⁵⁵³ Muzaffar Alam, “The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics”, *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 1998), p. 344.

⁵⁵⁴ MS Bodl. Fraser 203, f. 15r-v; MS BL IO Islamic 2364, ff. 19r-v.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ “Riyāz al-Adwīya”, MS SJML Ṭibb 130.

body's aspect and humoral composition, are also briefly described. This preface is followed by a fairly typical description of the qualities and uses of various medicaments.⁵⁵⁷

The *Fawā'id al-Insān* was a versified *materia medica* written by the Iranian poet-physician ʿAinu-l-Mulk Shīrazī, whose *nom de plume* was Fidāʿī Dawāʿī. The text is dated 1590, and was presented to Emperor Akbar.⁵⁵⁸ In his prose introduction, the author introduces his work as describing the qualities and uses of famous foods and drugs from the Arab lands, Iran, Tūrān, Turkey (*Rūm*), and India with as much brevity as possible (*be kotāhtarīn lafẓ be ʿarz rasānad*).⁵⁵⁹ The introduction praises Akbar in effusive terms over several pages,⁵⁶⁰ referring to him as *shāh-i dunyā u dīn* (ruler of the temporal and spiritual worlds).⁵⁶¹ It also notes that the Emperor himself had named the text *Fawā'id al-Insān* (The Benefits of Man).⁵⁶² Thus, the political subtext of this work is unmistakable. The association of 'proper' food with perfection and majesty was probably an underlying theme of this text.⁵⁶³

The versified part of the text begins with discussions of the main technical and theoretical aspects pertaining to pharmacology, i.e., the taxonomic classification of foods and drugs according to their attributes (*khāṣiyat*) and degree (*darja*) of potency.⁵⁶⁴ It also discusses the difference between food and medicine, making the point that medicine is that which is more potent.⁵⁶⁵ The rest of the text gives an alphabetical listing of foods and drugs, along with a description of their qualities and medicinal uses. For most foods and drugs in this text, Persian names are used. But where a food has no well-known Persian name, a Hindi or Arabic term that had gained greater currency is used.⁵⁶⁶ An instance of this (also referenced in the text's preface) is the plantain or banana, which has no original Persian name. Therefore, the entry for banana is titled *mūz*, which is the Arabic name of the fruit, while the Hindi name, *kela*, is mentioned in verse.⁵⁶⁷

Another stylistic aspect of this text is the use of the poetic device known as *muwashshah*, wherein the beginning alphabets of a verse make sense when put together.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ "Fawā'id al-Insān", microfilm NMC no. 26-10.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, p. 2.

⁵⁶² Ibid, p. 2.

⁵⁶³ Alavi, *Islam and Healing*, p. 3, argues that the authors of Persian medical texts codified ideals based on an elite ideal of outward bodily deportment.

⁵⁶⁴ "Fawā'id al-Insān", microfilm NMC no. 26-10, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, *passim* and esp. p. 1.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 1, 67.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

Thus, the initial alphabets of each line of the verses spell the name of the food or drug being discussed. As a result, the length of discussion that is devoted to a particular food or medicine correlates with the length of its name. For instance, the entry for spinach or *isfānākḥ* (I-S-FA-N-A-KḤ) consists of exactly six lines. It is described as cold and moist, which renders it useful in the alleviation of excess yellow bile.⁵⁶⁹ Evidently, some liberties are taken with regard to the vowel protocol of the *muwashshah* to facilitate description. A more consistently applied protocol, for instance, would have yielded a description seven lines long (I-S-F-A-N-A-KḤ). Thus, the poet-physician undertakes a something of a balancing act between poetics and the exigencies of composing a medical text. However, the latter is usually subordinated to the former, as the enumeration of temperamental qualities and medical indications are sought to be fit into the straightjacket of the *muwashshah* protocol. To take another example, the entry for green cardamom or *hel* (H-Y-L) is a mere three lines long, in which its medicinal taxonomy is entirely omitted, although its properties as a digestive, as well as other uses are briefly noted.⁵⁷⁰

Thus, it is clear that the object of the *Fawā'id al-Insān* was not merely to catalogue and describe foods and medicines. Its *materia medica* is hardly exhaustive and style is usually prioritised over substance. It is as much a display of literary skill, as it is of medical knowledge. Its obvious intended purpose was to impress Emperor Akbar. However, another intention may well have been to compose a novel and unusual poetic medical text, in a context where most Persian medical texts were in prose. Novelty and literary finesse, rather than encyclopaedic scope was its claim to fame as a text.

Another important text from the high Mughal period is the *Alfāz-i Adwīya*.⁵⁷¹ This was a *materia medica* compiled by Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad °Abdullah, also known as Ḥakīm °Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī and very likely the son of the other °Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī who presented the *Fawā'id al-Insān* to Akbar.⁵⁷² The title itself is a chronogram, which gives the date of composition as 1038 AH (corresponding to 1628-29 CE).⁵⁷³ The text is dedicated to Emperor Shāhjahān.⁵⁷⁴ The opening section of the text contains a long preface that includes a dedication and explains the purpose of composition.⁵⁷⁵ It then goes on to discuss theoretical

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 37.

⁵⁷¹ “Alfāz-i Adwīya”, MS Bodl. Fraser 195.

⁵⁷² Speziale, “The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī's ‘Ilājāt-i Dārā Šīkōhī”, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁷³ “Alfāz-i Adwīya”, MS Bodl. Fraser 195, 4v; Sachau and Ethe, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pashtu manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Part I: The Persian Manuscripts*, p. 966, catalogue no. 1603.

⁵⁷⁴ “Alfāz-i Adwīya”, MS Bodl. Fraser 195, f. 3v.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid, ff. 1v-4v.

concepts such as *mizāj* (temperament) and the four degrees (*darja*).⁵⁷⁶ A description of weights is also included.⁵⁷⁷ The *materia medica* itself is typical of pharmacological texts of the time, arranged in alphabetical order, with a brief description and listing of temperamental qualities in terms of hot, cold, wet or dry. The drug list ostensibly draws on Greek, Arabic, Turkish, Andalusian, Syriac, Barbary, Persian and Hindi sources.⁵⁷⁸ Both the intent and the content of this text indicate a desire to compose a masterful compilation of *materia medica* dedicated to no less than the Emperor. Thus, the text purports to derive its fame both from its comprehensiveness as a work, as well as its association with Emperor Shāhjahān.

Apart from the *Alfāz-i Adwīya*, Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad °Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī also authored the °*Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī*, dedicated to the Mughal Prince Dārā Shukoh,⁵⁷⁹ son of Shāhjahān.⁵⁸⁰ The text is a massive tome of encyclopaedic proportions that discusses various aspects of medicine including anatomy, surgery, pharmacology and dietetics.⁵⁸¹ In his study of the treatise, Fabrizio Speziale shows how it draws both on *Ṭibb* or Unani and Ayurvedic sources, and even combines medicine with traditions of mysticism.⁵⁸² This makes its dedication to Dārā Shukoh, who was known for his eclectic taste in religious and mystical traditions, particularly appropriate. As Speziale notes:

Another important intellectual feature of the °*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī* is its synthesis of religious and secular medical traditions of the Islam [*sic*]. Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī quotes in his work the *ḥadīth* (sayings) of Muḥammad and also mentions other pre-Islamic prophets and imams; in particular the *Risāla al-dahabiyya*, a medical treatise attributed to the eighth Shi'ite imam °Alī al-Riḍā (m. 818). The °*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī* was dedicated to a Sufi prince and the religious and esoteric traditions of Islam constitute an important framework of the book.⁵⁸³

It is thus problematic to view Persian medical texts solely as secular treatises, or indeed to view the philosophical and scholarly subscript of the entire corpus in monochromatic terms. They drew on an eclectic variety of sources as well as knowledge traditions. In particular, as has been pointed out by Speziale, the °*Ilājāt* embodied a philosophical outlook that closely

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, ff. 8v-7r.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid, f. 9r.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, f. 4v.

⁵⁷⁹ The name is transliterated variably as Dārā Shikoh or Dārā Shukoh. However, Dārā Shukoh makes more sense since *shukoh* means majesty and *shikoh* means fear or terror. Steingass translates *dārā-shukoh* as “powerful and majestic as Dārā”. See Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 496.

⁵⁸⁰ “°*Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī*”, MSS RAS Codrington/Reade 195, 196, 197; MSS BNF Supplément Persan 342, 342B, 342A.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. See also, Speziale, “The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī’s °*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*”.

⁵⁸² Speziale, “The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī’s °*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*”, pp. 57-59.

⁵⁸³ Ibid, p. 58.

coincided with that of its political patron, Dārā Shukoh. Political patronage could thus have a profound impact on the style and content of Persian medical texts.

The *‘Ilājāt* is divided into an introduction (*miiftāḥ*), ten chapters (*guftār*, or discourses), and a conclusion (*khātima*).⁵⁸⁴ The contents have been dealt with in some detail by Speziale, and I shall not repeat that discussion here. More of concern to us here is the text’s treatment of food and dietetics. The seventh chapter contains a section on food and drink, which deals extensively with foods prescribed by Indian physicians, as well as various drinks prepared from barley and juice preserves. Descriptions of electuaries and infusions are also given. The concluding chapter deals with compound drugs in various forms, including pills, powders, oils and perfumes. The section on food and drink also contains recipes for prepared dishes including various types of *kabāb*, *qalīya*, *āsh*, *pulā’o* and *duzdbiryān*.⁵⁸⁵ These recipes, which include ones reproduced from the *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, thus emphasise the imperial context of the text as well as the genealogy of its princely patron.

After the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, a number of smaller states emerged all over the Indian subcontinent. These successor states emerged as important vehicles for the sustained propagation of Persian and Persian literature.⁵⁸⁶ Indo-Persian medical works continued to be produced during this period, and copies of older texts were also in demand. Many important medical treatises composed prior to the eighteenth century in India, Iran, and Central Asia have come down to us through copies made in the subcontinent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I shall argue here that the production of Persian medical texts during this period was not entirely immune to the political situation that arose around the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries following the weakening and eventual disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Alam has pointed out that the

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 61.

⁵⁸⁵ “‘Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī”, Vol. II, MS BNF Supplément Persan 342 B. The dishes described include *kabāb-i akbarshāhī* (*kabāb* of Emperor Akbar), *murgh musamman akbarshāhī* (whole chicken of the Emperor Akbar), *kofta kabāb akbarshāhī* (mincemeat *kabāb* of the Emperor Akbar), *māhī kabāb* (fish *kabāb*), *nīlūfar kabāb* (‘lily’ *kabāb*), *qalīya līmū* (lemon *qalīya*), *qalīya āmba* (mango *qalīya*), *qalīya narīgsī* (‘narcissus-like’ *kabāb*), *qalīya akbarshāhī* (*qalīya* of the Emperor Akbar), *qalīya zardak* (carrot *qalīya*), *qalīya safed* (white *qalīya*), *qalīya zardak dampukht* (carrot *qalīya* in the ‘sealed pot’ style), *bādinjān shīrāzī* (aubergines prepared in Shīrāzī style), *dopiyāza akbarshāhī* (*dopiyāza* of the Emperor Akbar), *ḥalīm akbarshāhī* (*ḥalīm* of the Emperor Akbar), *āsh-i gandum* (wheat soup), *yakhnī pulā’o* (meat broth *pulā’o*), *māsh pulā’o wa ‘adas pulā’o* (varieties of *pulā’o* prepared with pulses and lentils), *līmū pulā’o* (lemon *pulā’o*), *alūbalū pulā’o* (sour cherry *pulā’o*), *anār pulā’o* (pomegranate *pulā’o*), *duzdbiryān-i akbarshāhī* (*duzdbiryān* of the Emperor Akbar), *bādinjān-i akbarshāhī* (aubergines of the Emperor Akbar), *sāg-i akbarshāhī* (greens of the Emperor Akbar).

⁵⁸⁶ Alam, “The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics”, p. 331; Juan Cole, “Iranian Culture and South Asia 1500-1900”, in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Politics*, ed. Nikki Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002), pp. 15-35.

Mughals “failed to give meaningful patronage to any [vernacular] language of the land”.⁵⁸⁷ However, the late seventeenth century witnessed a rise in regional assertions of autonomy, and this induced the Mughals to learn and encourage Hindi and related vernaculars to a greater extent than had been the case previously.⁵⁸⁸

Indo-Persian medical texts had always been grounded in the context of the subcontinent in terms of listing Indian foods and medicaments. Hindi synonyms for Persian names of foods and drugs were often provided in these texts. This is to be noticed – for instance – in the *Fawā'id al-Insān*, although Persian names are privileged in this work. But from the eighteenth century onwards (and perhaps beginning even in the late seventeenth century) there appears to have been a subtle trend towards a more pronounced incorporation of local and everyday foods. There was also an increasing use of Hindi, often as a primary, or even the sole, language for listing the names of foods and medicines. While Persian continued to remain significant, the incremental influence of the vernaculars was often visible in the vocabulary of these Persian texts themselves.

These findings may be pointers towards broader conclusions regarding the process of vernacularisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The evidence of the medical texts studied here seem to suggest that this was a gradual process that extended over a long period of time, beginning in the late seventeenth century and continuing into the late nineteenth century.⁵⁸⁹ These points will become clearer from the following survey of a selection of texts from this period, and I will elaborate further on them in my concluding remarks at the end of this section.

The *Ḳḥulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt* dates to earlier than 1766-67 (AH 1180), since this is the transcription date on the India Office manuscript copy.⁵⁹⁰ The text contains a total of twenty-two chapters. The introductory portion of the text gives a description of weights and measures in use among physicians all over India.⁵⁹¹ The first chapter describes compound perfumes (*argaja*), many of which are named after significant notables or imperial figures (mostly from

⁵⁸⁷ Alam, “The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics”, p. 343.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ According to Juan Cole, the most significant decline of Persian in India can be dated to the end of the nineteenth century, around 1850. Cole cites the rise of vernacular education and the growing importance of English as significant factors. Until this time, Persian continued to enjoy significant prestige and patronage in the various post-Mughal successor states. See Cole, “Iranian Culture and South Asia 1500-1900”, p. 31.

⁵⁹⁰ “Ḳḥulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt”, MS BL IO Islamic 2814. For a note on the date see Hermann Ethe, ed., *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, Vol. I (Oxford: India Office, 1903), catalogue no. 2346, column 1281.

⁵⁹¹ “Ḳḥulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt”, MS BL IO Islamic 2814, f. 2r.

the seventeenth century). These include *argaja-i Jahāngīrī*, *argaja-i Ja^cfarkhānī* and *argaja-i Dilāwar^{kh}hānī*.⁵⁹² This follows the feature, noticeable in many Indo-Persian cookbooks, of preparations being named after prominent personages. As I have argued in chapter 2, this phenomenon must be viewed in a context where association with the names of important people gave a certain preparation a special prestige and meaning in the socio-cultural context within which the text circulated.⁵⁹³

The *Khulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt* includes descriptions of stimulants (*mufarrijat*), digestives (*jawārishāt*), medicinal powders (*safūf*), extracts (*‘arq*), and beverages (*ashraba*).⁵⁹⁴ The text also contains prescriptions for increasing sexual appetite or virility (*tarkībāt-i quwwat-i bāh*).⁵⁹⁵ The twelfth chapter carries a discussion on tea and coffee. According to the text, tea (*chāy*) was called *ṣāy* in some of the older books.⁵⁹⁶ The recipe for Chinese tea (*chāy-i khaṭā^ṣī*)⁵⁹⁷ also included fennel or aniseed (*bādyān*), cardamom (*dārchīnī*), and cloves (*qaranful*). These ingredients were to be boiled along with the tea for at least three *gharīs* (somewhat less than an hour and a half) and perfumed with musk (*mushk*) and ambergris (*‘ambar-i ashhab*). Similarly, recipes are also given for ginger coffee (*qahwa-i zanjabīl*) and cinnamon coffee (*qahwa-i dārchīnī*).⁵⁹⁸ It thus appears that these stimulants first made an entry into the subcontinent as medicaments, before becoming widely adopted as beverages. The rest of the text includes descriptions of teeth-cleaning compounds, medicines for improving digestion (*adwīya ke hāzim bakḥshad*), pills or lozenges (*qurṣ*), and beverages (*sharāb*) of fruits and flowers such as quince (*bih*), pomegranates (*anār*), and violets (*banafsha*).⁵⁹⁹

Another text probably belonging to the late or post-Mughal period is an unusual manuscript of uncertain origin that did not owe patronage to any notable figure, Mughal or otherwise.⁶⁰⁰ The purpose of this text – titled *Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya* – was pointed: to list and describe simple Indian foods and medicines that are useful for the medical treatment of the poor and peasants (*dar mufradāt-i hindīya ki barāy mu^cālaja-i ghurabā u dahāqīn be kār*

⁵⁹² Ibid, ff. 3v-9r.

⁵⁹³ See the section entitled “Indo-Persian cookbooks: an analytical survey” in chapter 2 “A culture of connoisseurship” in this dissertation, pp. 72-93, esp. pp. 81-82.

⁵⁹⁴ “*Khulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt*”, MS BL IO Islamic 2814, see for example, ff. 34r-40v, 63r-66v.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid, ff. 40v-49v.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid, f. 86r.

⁵⁹⁷ Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 387.

⁵⁹⁸ “*Khulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt*”, MS BL IO Islamic 2814, ff. 86r-v.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid, ff. 89r-180v.

⁶⁰⁰ “*Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya*”, MS SJML Ṭibb 250.

āyad).⁶⁰¹ There is no further preface or chapter-wise division of contents; the text moves directly on to an alphabetically arranged description of simple foods and medicaments.⁶⁰² The text is undated and – unusually for a medical text – bears no author ascription. However, its mention of a relative newcomer on the subcontinent, the pineapple (*anānās*) as a common Indian fruit that could be afforded by the poor – and in particular, those living in villages (*dahāqīn*) – may suggest a late or post-seventeenth century origin.⁶⁰³

As predicted by its title and its stated purpose, the text focuses its attention on common Indian fruits, vegetables, and grains. The descriptions contain information pertaining to the appearance and taste of the food, its characteristics (in terms of hot or cold and wet or dry), recipes for medicines, and the usage of these items in food and diet. The text includes descriptions of simple foods such as *anānās*, *kḥarbūza-i kḥām* (raw watermelon), *torī* (ridged gourd), *champa* (a flower), *dātūn* (a tree wood used to clean teeth), *shakarkand*, *kaṭṭhal* (jackfruit), *kachālū* (taro) and *mahū²ā* (*Madhuca longifolia*, described in the text as a tree, the essence of whose blossoms are used to prepare an intoxicating drink).⁶⁰⁴ The descriptions often include culinary uses along with medical ones. For instance, the text describes the pineapple as a very delicious Indian fruit of golden colour. *Murabbā* (jam) is prepared from it, and it is also used in *qalīyas* and *pulā³os*.⁶⁰⁵ The uses of various items in medicine are also described in terms of their action upon various bodily conditions. Thus, *bāns* (bamboo) is described as being cold in nature, and a defender against digestive corruption (*fasād*). The text goes on to note that Indians use its tender shoots in the preparation of vinegar pickles.⁶⁰⁶ Local foods and ingredients are particularly emphasised in this text, and it is thus not surprising that the names of entries are listed in Hindi. The author of this text is unknown, suggesting that he was not a prominent physician or scholar, and that he did not owe patronage to any powerful figure. This probably contributed to its somewhat rustic style and substantial use of Hindi vocabulary.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid, p. 2.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid, p. 5. Abū-l Faḏl in the *Ā²īn-i Akbarī* mentions the pineapple as a winter (*zimistānī*) fruit in his list of “sweet Indian fruits” (*mewa-i shūrīn-i hindī*), costing 4 *dāms* apiece. See Abū-l Faḏl, *Ā²īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 69; *The Ā²īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 70. The listing of the pineapple as an Indian fruit suggests that it was grown in India, but the evidence of the *Ā²īn* is not necessarily sufficient to indicate actual availability of the fruit to a significant degree. As mentioned in chapter 1 of this dissertation “The emperor’s table: food, culture and power” under the section “food and the Mughal cityscape”, pp. 44-45, Jahāngīr records in the early seventeenth century that the pineapple was to be found in the ports of the Franks, although several thousand were produced every year in the Gulafshān garden in Agra (See Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 4; *Jahāngīrnāma*, ed. and trans. Thackston, p. 24). This would seem to suggest that at this time, the fruit was probably not yet widely available on the subcontinent.

⁶⁰⁴ “Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya”, MS SJML Ṭibb 250, the entire MS.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 37.

The *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* – briefly referenced in chapter 3 – was composed by Saiyid Faẓl °Alī (d. 1834), under the *nom de plume* of Shifā’ī K̄hān.⁶⁰⁷ It contains an alphabetical list of various foods: fruits, vegetables, meats, spices, and even cooked dishes. For each, the qualities (*k̄hāṣiyat*) and medicinal uses are listed.⁶⁰⁸ The preface of the text lists its purpose as bringing together foods (*ghizā*) and medicinal compounds (*mufrada*) from various sources at one place.⁶⁰⁹ The text is dedicated to Āṣaf Jāh (the third) Sikandar Shāh (r. 1803-1829).⁶¹⁰ It consists of seven chapters, with each dedicated to a particular category of foods and medicines: fruits, cereals and pulses, vegetables, meats, dairy, herbs and spices.⁶¹¹ In the seventh chapter, ‘compound foods’ or prepared dishes are described. This section includes both sweet and savoury recipes. Each entry includes an introductory description of the dish, followed by its recipe. There is, however, no list of ingredients, nor any measurements. Also, the preparations discussed are broad categories of dishes, and not specific varieties of them, as was usual in cookbooks. Thus, the book carries entries for *firnī*, *achār*, *yak̄hnī*, *bharta* (mash), *dopiyāza*, *qalīya*, *dogh*, and *kabāb*. Cookbooks would normally have entries for different varieties of *qalīya*, *yak̄hnī* and *kabāb*.⁶¹² This text includes many foods of common origin, including especially in the section on vegetables. These include *arwī*, *pālak* (spinach), *baigan*, *torī* (ridged gourd) and *chachindā* (snake gourd). Throughout the text, Hindi is used as the language in which the names of foods and drugs are listed.⁶¹³

If the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* discussed some broad categories of cooked dishes in its *materia medica*, the boundaries between food and medicine are further blurred in the *Māydat al-Riẓā*

⁶⁰⁷ “Qūt-i Lā-yamūt”, MS SJML Ṭibb 183. This text has been previously referenced in this dissertation in chapter 3 “Cuisine and the lives of recipes” under the section entitled “new entrants, cultural interactions”, pp. 121-122.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 1-4.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

⁶¹¹ Ibid, *passim*. The first chapter deals with the temperament and medicinal uses of fruits, and includes entries on *ālū* (plum), *ālūbālū* (sour cherry), *akroṭ* (walnut, here spelt as *aḳhroṭ*), *anār* (pomegranate), *am u aṃb* (mango), *angūr* (grape), *anjīr* (fig), *anānās* (pineapple), *bādām* (almond), *khīrā* (cucumber), *kela* (banana), *līmū u nīmbū* (lemon), *nāranj* (orange), and *nāshpati* (pear). The second chapter deals with cereals and pulses such as *urad* (black gram), *bāqilā* (broad bean, *Vicia faba*), *bājrā* (pearl millet, *Pennisetum glaucum*), *tuwar* (pigeon pea pulse, *Cajanus cajan*), *til* (sesame), *chāwal* (rice), *chanā* (chickpea, *Cicer arietinum*), *juwār* (sorghum), *gehūn* (wheat), *lobiyā* (cow pea, *Vigna unguiculata*), *maṭar* (green peas), and *mūng* (mungbean, *Vigna radiata*). The third chapter is devoted to vegetables, including *adarak* (ginger), *arwī* (a kind of taro, of the *Colocasia* genus), *ālū* (white potato; *Solanum tuberosum*), *pālak* (spinach), *baigan* (aubergine), *torī* (ridged gourd), *chachindā* (snake gourd) and *chaquandar* (beet-root). The fourth chapter deals with the category of meats, including *andā* (egg), *pāya* (lamb or goat foot), *bārasinghā* (Swamp deer; *Cervus duvauceli*), *baṭ* (duck), *bakrī* (female goat), *kabak* (partridge), *maḥlī* (fish), *murgḥ* (chicken), *murgḥābī* (water fowl or wild duck), *hudhud* (hoopoe) and *hiran* (deer). The fifth chapter deals with dairy. The sixth discusses various kinds of herbs and spices, including *ilāychī* (cardamom), *piyāz* (onion), *dārchīnī* (cinnamon), *za‘frān* (saffron), *zīra* (cumin), *kālī mīrch* (black pepper), *kishnīz* (coriander), *laung* (clove), *lahsun* (garlic), and *methi* (fenugreek).

⁶¹² Ibid, pp. 4-175.

⁶¹³ Ibid. In many cases, naturally, the Hindi and Persian names are the same.

of Rizā ibn Maḥmūd Dakkanī.⁶¹⁴ This text combines invocations of Greek and Arabic traditions with details on Indian foods and drugs, both simple and compound. The book is divided into two *khwāns* (food or meal). The first *khwān* deals with foods for the healthy (*dar aghziya-i aṣaḥa*), which in turn is divided into two *qābs* (plate or course), the first on simple foods and their qualities, and the second on compound foods and their temperaments as well as actions. The second *khwān* deals with foods for illnesses, “from head to foot, inside and outside” (*az sar tā qadam andarūnī u bīrūnī*). This in turn is divided into two *ṭabaqs* (dish), the first dealing with foods recommended by Islamic and Greek (*yūnānī*) doctors, and the second devoted to recommended foods according to Indian physicians.⁶¹⁵ The text begins with an elaboration of dietetic taxonomy, before moving on to describing different foods, including recipes of cooked dishes. The recipes described include various kinds of *āsh*, *pulā'o*, *zerbiyān*, *dopiyāza*, *ḥalwā*, *kaḇāb*, *khichrī* (rice and lentils), *qalīya* and *nān* (breads). The dishes are exactly the kind that are found in Persian cookbooks, but are arranged in alphabetical order in a manner typical of pharmacological compendia. Thus, despite resembling a cookbook in some important respects, the *Māydat al-Rizā* is emphatically a medical text. It nevertheless embeds its prescriptions within the metaphorical framework of a feast, with each level of detail being imagined as courses and as dishes within those courses.⁶¹⁶ The link that the text draws between a feast and the normative ideal of a proper diet probably had a political subtext. The displays of power and wealth inherent in the symbolism of a feast went hand-in-hand with ideals of human perfection.⁶¹⁷ It is highly probable that these symbolisms persisted beyond the high Mughal period and were inherited by the successor states.

Another pharmacological text that focussed on Indian *materia medica* was the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī*, composed by Muḥammad Sharīf Kḥān (d. 1815), who was a well-known physician in Delhi.⁶¹⁸ The text deals with simple (*mufrad*) foods and drugs. Its preface talks about Indian sources and discusses medical traditions pertaining to food according to “Indian physicians” (*aṭba'o-i Hind*) or “Indian scholars” (*ḥukmā-i Hind*).⁶¹⁹ It then proceeds, in the usual manner, onto an alphabetical list of foods and medicines. It begins with a long discussion on mangoes

⁶¹⁴ “Māydat al-Rizā”, MS SJML Ṭibb 218.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid, *passim*.

⁶¹⁷ See also Alavi, *Islam and Healing*, p. 3.

⁶¹⁸ “Tālīf-i Sharīfī”, MS SJML Ṭibb 27; Maulānā Ḥājī Muḥammad Ashraf (compiled), *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, Vol. X [Medicines and Veterinary] (Hyderabad: Director, Salar Jung Museum, 1991), p. 113. English pagination on MS cited here.

⁶¹⁹ “Tālīf-i Sharīfī”, MS SJML Ṭibb 27, p. 3.

(*amba*).⁶²⁰ It is described as a fruit available in most regions of India, which is at first green and then turns sometimes red, but usually yellow.⁶²¹ The text also mentions culinary uses of the mango. For instance, it says that in its raw state, the fruit is used to prepare pickles and jams, as well as being used in *pulā'o* and *qalīya* preparations. The text testifies these as being “very delicious” (*bisyār bā-maza shawad*).⁶²² Muḥammad Sharīf K̲h̲ān also notes the difference of opinion regarding the humoural temperament of the mango. He says that although the Indian physicians classify it as being cold, in fact it is not devoid of heat even in its raw state. The ripe (sweet) fruit is described by Unani physicians as being hot in the second degree and dry in the third.⁶²³ This is a significant point, and I will discuss the phenomenon of variant ideas regarding the humoural temperaments of foods and drugs in greater detail in the next section. The entire entry on the mango in the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* is lengthy and elaborate. However, the entries for certain other items are strikingly brief. For instance, the entry for *anār* (pomegranate) merely notes that it is a name for *dārim* (a kind of tree).⁶²⁴ Both Hindi and Persian names of foods and medicaments appear in this text.

It is not easy to draw generalisations on the production, style and content of Persian medical texts given their diversity. Nevertheless, certain points are brought out from the discussion above. Firstly, Indo-Persian medical texts drew on an eclectic range of sources. Secondly, political patronage was often important to the authors of these texts, and this is reflected in the subtext of these works. Thirdly, Indo-Persian medical texts drew extensively on local *materia medica*, and often used Hindi names for foods and drugs.

This trend became somewhat more noticeable after the break-up of the Mughal Empire. The political disintegration of empire did not lead to a loss of heritage in terms of Persian medical texts. But it did enable a relatively more localised contextualisation of these works. This is, for instance, observable in the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt*, which on occasion displays an interest in the local availability of foods in the Deccan.⁶²⁵ Such rootedness is not to be found in the major Mughal medical texts. The *Dastūru-l Aṭibba*, written under the aegis of the °Ādil Shāhī sultans of Bijapur in the Deccan before the heyday of the Mughal Empire also evinces

⁶²⁰ Ibid, pp. 5-12.

⁶²¹ Ibid, pp. 5.

⁶²² Ibid, p. 6.

⁶²³ Ibid, p. 8.

⁶²⁴ Ibid, p. 27.

⁶²⁵ See for instance the entry on *ālū* or potato cited in chapter 3 of this dissertation “Cuisine and the lives of recipes” under the section “new entrants, cultural interactions”, p. 122, where the text notes that “it has also arrived in the country of the Deccan, but has not become very common”. [“Qūt-i Lā-yamūt”, MS SJML, Ṭibb 183, p. 54].

an interest in indigenous medical practices, and uses Hindi extensively. Moreover, many of the late and post-Mughal texts that have been surveyed here do not bear exact dates of composition. In some relatively rare instances, they do not have a clearly identified author. This appears to have been unlike the norm for major medical treatises composed in the high Mughal period.

Table 4.1 encapsulates the points discussed above and highlights the variations as well as shifts in the style and content of Indo-Persian medical texts over the period between the sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. Also apparent is the fact that these changes were subtle and gradual, suggesting that the disintegration of the Mughal Empire probably represented a significant – but not in any way a dramatic or catastrophic moment – in the cultural history of the subcontinent, as a conventional view of history imagines.

Table 4.1

Selection of notable Indo-Persian pharmacological and dietetic texts

Text	Author	Date	Remarks
Riyāz al-Adwīya	Yūsuf bin Muḥammad Harawī ‘Yūsufī’	1539	Typical pharmacopeia
Fawā'id al-Insān	°Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī ‘Fidā'i Dawā'i’	1590	Versified <i>materia medica</i>
Dastūru-l Aṭibba	Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Shāh ‘Firishta’	16th/early 17th cent.	Interest in indigenous Indian medical beliefs and practices
Alfāz-i Adwīya	Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad °Abdullah Shīrāzī	1628-29	Typical pharmacopeia
°Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohi	Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad °Abdullah Shīrāzī	1646-47	Encyclopaedia of medicine; also has a section on food and drink which includes food recipes
Ḳhulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt	Anon.	Earlier than 1766-67	On compound medicaments. Includes description of weights and

			measures in use among physicians in India
Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya	Anon.	Probably late or post-17 th cent.	Purports to describe simple Indian foods and medicines that are useful for the medical treatment the poor and peasants
Tālīf-i Sharīfī	Muḥammad Sharīf K̲h̲ān	Late 18 th /early 19 th cent.	Discusses simple foods and drugs. Often cites the opinions of “Indian physicians”
Qūt-i Lā-yamūt	Saiyid Faẓl °Alī ‘Shifā’ī K̲h̲ān’	Early 19 th cent.	Describes many locally available foods, includes recipes
Māydat al-Rizā	Rizā ibn Maḥmūd Dakkanī	Early 19 th cent.	Includes many recipes for cooked dishes

The above is a broad survey of the major medical texts that have been used as sources in this chapter. In the next section, I will undertake an analytical examination of the manner in which these texts actually classified the foods and drugs that they describe. What can be said about the views that these works expressed about food and medicines as substances and as taxonomic categories? How did these reflect the nature of early modern medical knowledge? These are some of the key questions that will be examined in the pages that follow.

Food as Medicine: Excavating Concepts and Taxonomies

The first question that naturally arises here pertains to the difference between food and medicine. This was not a simple matter in the early modern context, when medicines were composed of foodstuffs, and the techniques and instruments used in the preparation of medicines were the same as those used in the kitchen. Thus, it is not surprising that Persian medical texts were concerned with the issue of what constituted ‘medicine’ and what differentiated a medicament from a foodstuff. The classification of foods and medicines in Persian medical texts as ‘absolute food’, ‘absolute medicine’, ‘medicinal food’ and ‘food-like

medicine' according to their action after entering the body (discussed earlier) is an instance of this. The Iranian pharmacopeia, *Maḵẓan al-Adwīya* (1769-1770) explains this distinction thus: that God had created medicines in greater measure than he created food because human beings need them more (*mawād-i adwīya rā bīshṭar az mawād aghẓīya āfrīd wa bijihat-i ānki iḥṭiyāj-i insān badānhā zyāda ast*).⁶²⁶ The text explains that food is for everyday consumption, while medicines are necessary to restore the body to its natural temperament, from which it strays on account of disease.⁶²⁷ Similarly, the *‘Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī* defines food as being that which people eat at the time of hunger (*mardum ba waqt-i gurusnagī bikhẓurand*).⁶²⁸

The *Fawā'id al-Insān* explains the difference between food and medicine in a verse thus:

That whose quality in the body changes

Not a bit, in substance or in temperament

Rather that which affects is medicine

*If it changes in substance, it is food*⁶²⁹

The above verse elucidates the belief that the difference between food and medicine is explained by the variant manner in which they affect or are affected after entering the body. Medicine causes change, but is not affected by its entry into the body. Food, on the other hand is materially altered upon entering the body. This, however, is a broad conceptual distinction, since various gradations of difference between food and medicine were recognised: from absolute medicine to absolute food.

This was the classical medical theory. In practice, however, it was impossible to draw any well-defined distinction between food and medicine. The pharmacological taxonomy followed by Persian medical texts, which divided foods or drugs as simple or compound, took no account of whether a particular item was a food or a drug. Only the use or prescription of a particular food or medicament brought out this distinction: drugs were prescribed by physicians in regulated doses, while food was for general consumption. But even here the

⁶²⁶ Muḥammad Ḥusain ibn Muḥammad Hādī °Aqīlī °Alavī Shīrāzī, *Maḵẓan al-Adwīya* (1769-1770), p. 4. The full text is online at the digital library of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Islamic Republic of Iran: <http://www.elib.hbi.ir/persian/TRADITIONAL-MEDICINE/MAKHZAN-AL-ADVIEH/MAKHZAN-INDEX.htm> [accessed 16.07.2014].

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ “‘Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī”, MS BNF Supplément Persan 342 B, f. 110v. The foliation of this manuscript is faulty, and the same folio numbers appear twice.

⁶²⁹ “Fawā'id al-Insān”, microfilm NMC no. 26-10, p. 4.

difference was not clear-cut, since dietetic prescriptions were part and parcel of the physician's repertoire, and many Persian pharmacological texts also carried food recipes. The categorical distinction between food and medicine was to remain blurred until the decline of humoral medicine in the 19th century.⁶³⁰

The next issue that arises pertains to the actual qualities assigned to foods or medicine, and their taxonomical classifications based on these. The categorisation of foods as 'hot', 'cold', 'wet' and 'dry' was common across many medical traditions around the world, both scholarly and popular. Ethnographic research has, however, revealed a wide degree of subtlety and variation in the actual hot/cold values assigned to various foods.⁶³¹

Analysis of hot/cold and moist/dry values attached to various simple (*mufrad*) foods in Persian medical texts reveals some telling results. Two major observations may be made here. There is, by and large, broad agreement among various sources as to the temperament of various foods. However, differences do appear. The pineapple, according to the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* is cold and moist in the second degree.⁶³² However, as per the *Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya*, it is hot in the first degree and moist, although the same text points out that this fruit is described as cold by Indians.⁶³³ The second point is that while these temperaments are often listed in binary terms, midway values could also exist. That is to say that most temperaments are listed as hot or cold and as moist or dry. But this could also represent a continuum, along which intermediate values also exist. For instance, the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* records the temperament of the plum as cold and moist in the first degree. But it also adds that the degree of coldness increases with sourness.⁶³⁴

In the context of analysing the taxonomy of foods in Persian medical texts, it would be useful to consider an example of a single food as it is classified in various texts. Here, I take the example of the banana or plantain (Ar. *mūz*, also used in Persian; Hin. *kela*). According to the *Fawā'id al-Insān*, the banana is hot and moist (*garam agar īnast tar buwad pay-i qaul*).⁶³⁵ The *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt*, using the Hindi term 'kela' notes that the fruit is medium on the hot-cold

⁶³⁰ The publication by William Harvey of *On the Movement of Heart and Blood in Animals* in 1628 and of *The Circulation of Blood* in 1649 should have signalled the death of humoral theory, but such beliefs died a slow death (See Arikha, *Passions and Tempers*, pp. 187-191). On the Indian subcontinent, they remain influential to this day. But their decline in professional practice began with the introduction of modern medicine in the nineteenth century.

⁶³¹ Manderson, "Hot-Cold Food and Medical Theories: Overview and Introduction", pp. 329-330.

⁶³² "Qūt-i Lā-yamūt", MS SJML Ṭibb 183, p. 12.

⁶³³ "Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya", MS SJML Ṭibb 250, p. 5.

⁶³⁴ "Qūt-i Lā-yamūt", MS SJML Ṭibb 183, p. 4.

⁶³⁵ "Fawā'id al-Insān", microfilm NMC no. 26-10, p. 67.

spectrum and moist in the second degree (*garmī u sardī-i o mu^ctadil ast dar duwum tar*).⁶³⁶ According to the *Mu^cālajātu-l Nabawī* (or the Prophet’s healing) of G̃hulām Imām⁶³⁷, a sweet or ripe banana is “middling hot in the first degree and moist at the end of this spectrum” (*garam dar auwal ausaṭ wa tar dar āk̃hir-i ān*).⁶³⁸ The raw banana is noted as being cold and moist.⁶³⁹ Thus, while there appears to be some broad agreement among these sources as to the plantain or banana’s temperament, there are also subtle differences (see Table 4.2). These particularly arise in describing an ambiguous or middling position on the hot-cold spectrum. This instance also shows that the raw and ripe forms of a fruit or vegetable were often assigned a different temperament.

Table 4.2

Temperament of banana or plantain according to three Persian texts

Text		Hot/Cold	Moist/Dry
Fawā ^ṣ id al-Insān		hot	moist
Qūt-i Lā-yamūt		medium	moist in 2 nd degree
Mu ^c ālajātu-l Nabawī	ripe banana	middling hot in 1 st degree	moist at end of 1 st degree spectrum
	raw banana	cold	moist

These observations of ambiguity and relative inconsistency are in agreement with the findings of previous research in medical ethnography. For instance, Lenore Manderson makes similar observations about intermediate values and the fluidity of temperament ascription, based on her research on the Malaya.⁶⁴⁰ It is possible that such values sometimes originated in popular belief before being formally systematised in medical texts. Their origin in the fluid environment of popular medicine may explain the differences occasionally observed in the temperamental values ascribed to various foods.

⁶³⁶ “Qūt-i Lā-yamūt”, MS SJML Ṭibb 183, p. 37.

⁶³⁷ I am unable to identify the author for certain. However, he may be the same as the author of the “*Ilāj al-ghurabā*”. See C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bibliographical Survey*, Vol. II, Part 2/E. Medicine (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1971), p. 318, no. 70.

⁶³⁸ “Mu^cālajātu-l Nabawī”, MS SJML 239, p. 339.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Manderson, “Hot-Cold Food and Medical Theories: Overview and Introduction”, pp. 329-330.

Another interesting question pertains to how new foods are assigned such temperamental values. As Manderson has pointed out:

While humoral traditions are attenuated in North America and Europe, in other parts of the world humoral thinking incorporates new items of culture. For example, hot and cold properties are attributed to canned foods, ice cream and coca-cola, or to Western pharmaceutical products, and humoral beliefs and practice have been incorporated into the management of childbirth in cosmopolitan medical settings.⁶⁴¹

Similar observations may be made with regard to the humoral temperaments ascribed to various foods in Indo-Persian medical texts. New fruits and vegetables, as well as new drugs such as china root (*chob-i chīnī*), tea and coffee, are all assigned temperamental characteristics. However, the origins and derivations of these values are a matter of speculation.

As an example, we may consider the temperament ascribed to the white potato, and consider what may have led to this ascription. According to the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt*, the potato is hot and moist in the first degree.⁶⁴² One possible source for this characterisation is an association with *arwī*, which the *Qūt-i Lā-yamūt* expressly makes.⁶⁴³ *Arwī* itself is recorded in the same text as being hot in the first degree as well as dry in the first degree according to some sources.⁶⁴⁴ There thus appear to be various views of the *arwī*'s temperament, but the white potato is apparently considered moister. Both the white potato and *arwī* are 'hot' foods. Precisely how the potato's temperament was ultimately derived is uncertain. However, its association with the *arwī* may have been one influence.

But Indo-Persian pharmacopeia did much more than merely list the medicinal qualities of each food. Descriptions of foods may be brief, but were often also rich and detailed. The *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* of Muḥammad Sharīf Kḥān also contains a description of the pineapple that is worth quoting in full:

It is also called *kāthal safarī* for the reason, that if the plant is carried along with a person proceeding on a journey, it will bear fruit. It is about the size of a large lime, called *turnuj*; its colour is yellow tending towards red (*rangash zard mā'īl ba surkhī*); its surface is irregular, and covered with small prickles; its smell like some varieties of the mango, and very pleasant; the whole plant, including the fruit, is about a yard in height; the leaves have serrated edges, and the fruit grows perpendicular. On top of the stem there is a bunch of leaves

⁶⁴¹ Ibid, p. 329.

⁶⁴² "Qūt-i Lā-yamūt", MS SJML Ṭibb 183, p. 54.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 53.

growing from the top of the fruit, which if broken off, and planted, is reproductive. It bears fruit only once, and only one fruit at a time. I have not seen its properties (*khawāṣ*) noticed in any [medical] book, but the people of India call it cold. It was first described by Abū-l Faḏl in the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī* and this was afterwards copied by the author of the [*Ilājāt-i*] *Dārāshukohī*, from which others have copied it. Part of this description I have copied, and from my own observation have added the remainder. In my opinion, it is hot in the first degree, and moist in middling second degree. Its use is grateful to the system, and it gives strength to intellectual powers, also tone to the stomach. It is injurious to the throat, to the solids, to respiration, and to the intestines; but its corrector is sugar, and if it be sliced, put in rose water with musk to which sugar is added, and allowed to stand for two *ghaṛīs* [a little less than an hour], its beneficial properties are increased, while its injurious properties are prevented or corrected. A preserve made from it is excellent, and is used with *qalīya* and *pulāʾo*, as giving them great additional relish.⁶⁴⁵

The above description from the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* contains information on a variety of aspects concerning the foods that it describes – in this case, the pineapple. Apart from particulars concerning the pineapple’s medical properties, the text also contains information on the culinary uses of the fruit. These were, indeed, inseparable from its medical uses. The *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* also carries details on the cultivation and botanical properties of the fruit. It is particularly notable that in discussing the temperament of the pineapple, the author of the text admits to the existence of a great deal of ambiguity. He notes that the “people of India” regard the fruit as cooling, although he himself is of the opinion that the pineapple is slightly hot. The overall conclusion that must be drawn from the above analysis of the description of foods in Persian medical texts is that they were not merely standardised records of a certain set of medical properties; rather, they reflected the ambiguity of turf between the kitchen and the apothecary. They contained information on linguistic, botanical, medical and culinary aspects of the foods that they described.

From the above survey, it is clear that the medical treatment of foods and medicines was fluid, varied and subject to a variety of influences. It seems probable that a close association with popular medical and dietetic beliefs influenced these associations. Moreover, there was a very close link between medical pharmacology and the techniques and tools of the kitchen, with many Persian dietetic and pharmacological texts even carrying recipes of common dishes. From his analysis of classical Greek and medieval Arabic texts, David

⁶⁴⁵ “*Tālīf-i Sharīfī*”, MS SJML Ṭibb 27, pp. 12-13; Muḥammad Sharīf Kḥān, *The Taleef Shereef, or Indian Materia Medica*, trans. George Playfair (Calcutta: The Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta, 1833), pp. 17-18. I have used Playfair’s translation, but somewhat modified it. Part of this description is lifted from the *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*. See Abū-l Faḏl, *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 69; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 70.

Waines has drawn attention to the close association between the physician and the cook, and to the manner in which dietetics must be located within a broader medico-culinary tradition. Medicine and the culinary arts developed in close conjunction, and cooking was a site of dietetic experimentation. Dietetics was thus a fundamental branch of medicine. Waines further argues that the dietary prescriptions and recipes found in many medieval Arabic medical texts closely follow culinary practices, suggesting the strong influence of the kitchen on the apothecary.⁶⁴⁶ In the description of the pineapple cited above from the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī*, for instance, it is probable that the recommendation for pineapple to be consumed with rose water, musk and sugar was influenced by an actual preparation, wherein actual culinary practice preceded and informed medical prescription.

What separated the physician and the cook, socially and professionally? In the early modern context, this was a matter of social prestige related to the professional practice of medicine and cookery. These and other themes pertaining to the institutional and social context of food and medicine in early modern India will be examined in the next section.

Food, Medicine and Dietetics: Social and Institutional Contexts

In previous sections, I have delved into Indo-Persian medical texts in order to excavate the cultural and intellectual patterns embedded within them. In this section, I shall situate these texts within their social and institutional contexts. How did the education and social situation of their authors affect the sources of knowledge that Persian medical texts drew on? How did political contexts impact the translation of knowledge found in these works from one language to another? And how did scholarly and popular knowledge of food and medicine interact with and inform each other? These are the major questions that will be addressed here.

The authors of Persian medical texts belonged to an educated Persianate class who based their writings on a rich heritage of Islamicate medical knowledge that itself drew on an eclectic range of sources. As has been discussed in the preceding survey, Persian medical texts often made reference to other Indian knowledge traditions and practices. These theories and praxes themselves were deeply enmeshed with each other, such that the popular and the scholarly are often difficult to separate. When Persian texts cited the knowledge of “Indian doctors”, or when an Indo-Persian medical text like the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* cites the beliefs of “the

⁶⁴⁶ Waines, “Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture”.

people of India” on the medical properties of the pineapple, we find traditions of medical knowledge intertwined.

Dietetics lay at the core of both so-called formal and informal medical systems, and was particularly influenced by popular lore and food practices. In the case of early modern India, several anecdotes may be cited from the sources of the period to show the manner in which popular dietetics was a pervasive aspect of healing praxes.

In the *Ardhakathānaka*, Banārasīdās records the manner in which he was treated for his illnesses at various points in time.⁶⁴⁷ These give us an insight into the kinds of popular healing practices commonly adopted. He mentions having been treated by a physician when he fell ill with a chronic form of dysentery at the age of five.⁶⁴⁸ He also recounts that when he was fifteen years of age he was struck by “a disgusting disease caused by a morbid condition of the windy humour”.⁶⁴⁹ This description of the disease suggests that the humoral theory held widespread currency, and that many people were familiar with it. It was thus not merely a feature of scholarly medical discourse, but of popular belief and praxis. Banārasīdās recounts that the skin all over his body “became like that of a leper”.⁶⁵⁰ He suffered from body pains and loss of hair. Eruptions covered his limbs.⁶⁵¹ He was finally cured not by a physician, but by a barber. He describes his cure thus-

It was a barber who finally cured me. He prescribed medicines that proved to be effective, keeping me entirely on a salt-free diet consisting mainly of parched grams. I began to recover by slow degrees, and after four months had passed, my disease showed definite signs of subsiding. In another two months I was totally cured.⁶⁵²

The barber was often a dispenser of therapeutic services among the common people in towns and villages.⁶⁵³ In the above quoted instance, the barber cured Banārasīdās through the prescription of medicines as well as a dietary regimen. The recommendation of special diets and fasts thus seem to have been commonly adopted in order to affect cures. Banārasīdās

⁶⁴⁷ For a prior discussion of Banārasīdās’s various illnesses and dietetic treatments, see my MPhil dissertation: Narayanan, “A Culture of Food”, pp. 106-108.

⁶⁴⁸ Banārasīdās, *Ardhakathānaka or Half a Tale*, translation, p. 14; text, p. 231, verses 95-96. Banārasīdās says that the doctors tried many cures, but the disease persisted for a year, before eventually disappearing on its own.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid, translation, p. 30; text, p. 238, verse 184.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid, translation, p. 30; text, p. 238, verse 185.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid, translation, p. 30; p. 238, verse 186. Ali Nadeem Rezavi, “Physicians as Professionals in Medieval India”, in *Disease and Medicine in India: A Historical Overview*, ed. Deepak Kumar (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 50, and some other scholars have identified the disease that Banārasīdās was suffering from as syphilis. Mukund Lath (Banārasīdās, *Ardhakathānaka or Half a Tale*, “Notes and Comments”, p. 169) on the other hand has suggested instead that it was more likely to have been a vicious form of dermatitis.

⁶⁵² Banārasīdās, *Ardhakathānaka or Half a Tale*, translation, pp. 30-31; text, p. 238, verses 189-190. Translation slightly adjusted for English grammar.

⁶⁵³ See Rezavi, “Physicians as Professionals in Medieval India”, p. 50, for a brief discussion on bazaar physicians.

recounts further instances of his illnesses, and the treatments applied for the cure of each. On another occasion, he starved rigorously to cure an illness, although he tells us that he was cured only after he clandestinely feasted on bread.⁶⁵⁴ On a third occasion, when he was ill with a high fever, he starved for ten days, after which he took some medicines and kept himself on a restricted diet. His recovery reportedly took quite some time.⁶⁵⁵ Fasts and special diets were often prescribed by physicians practicing Ayurveda and *Tibb* or Unani medicine as well.⁶⁵⁶ But it seems that in the above instances quoted, the treatments were usually either self-prescribed, or prescribed by persons who were not physicians.

Beliefs regarding the properties of food items were varied. Tavernier narrates an incident concerning a woman who was the wife of a rich *bania* merchant in Ahmadabad. Having failed to conceive for many years, she was advised by a domestic worker in her house (who evidently belonged to a different community) to eat three or four of a kind of small fish as a remedy. The *bania* woman at first felt unable to bring herself to eat the fish, but agreed when she was promised that it would be prepared such that she would not know. She agreed, and conceived a child soon after, which caused great suspicion and distrust among her relatives.⁶⁵⁷ The story not only tells us about a food related belief, but also illustrates the manner in which dietetic beliefs varied across communities. At the same time, such ideas appear to have circulated fairly freely across social ‘boundaries’.

The urban bazaar of early modern India was a hub of healing services. Describing Chawk Sa^cdullah K̲h̲ān in Delhi around 1737-41, Dargāh Qulī K̲h̲ān writes that:

Doctors and *Hakims*, wearing expensive cloths and conical caps sit on their colourful carpets at their respective places and sell multicoloured pouches which are supposedly a variety of medicines but are in fact just muck. People are made aware of the benefit of these medicines in the manner of one fool befooling the other and there are many fools ahead of others wanting to buy this muck. Tablets, antiseptic lotions, medicinal powder, laxatives and *sherbats* are all available in these shops and whatever else a person wishes to buy.⁶⁵⁸

The doctors and *hakims* that Dargāh Qulī K̲h̲ān refers to were not members of the elite, such as the authors of Persian medical texts were. That is a major reason for his contempt of these bazaar physicians. But they were crucial dispensers of services in the

⁶⁵⁴ Banārasīdās, *Ardhakathānaka or Half a Tale*, translation, p. 33; text, p. 239, verses 205-207.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid, translation, p. 48; text, p. 248, verses 325-326.

⁶⁵⁶ Fasts are mentioned as commonly prescribed by both Unani and Ayurvedic physicians in our sources. See Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire* p. 338, Edward Terry, in *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, ed. Foster, p. 310.

⁶⁵⁷ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. I, pp. 61-62. The suspicion and distrust of the woman’s relatives was partly related to their desire to inherit the possessions of her rich husband, who had died shortly after she conceived.

⁶⁵⁸ Dargāh Qulī K̲h̲ān, *Muraqqa-e-Dehli*, p. 22.

‘medical labour market’,⁶⁵⁹ for it was such practitioners that most people came into contact with. Crucially, the prescriptions and remedies of such bazaar *ḥakīms*, although looked down upon by the elite, had much in common with those found in Persian medical texts. The same kinds of sherbets, electuaries, tablets, powders and lotions were a part of the repertoires of both ‘high’ medical literature and ‘popular’ prescription.

In analysing the relationship between ‘popular’ and ‘scholarly’ medicine, the links between the oral and literate realms of medical learning should be considered. Based on her ethnographical work in contemporary Tamil Nadu, V. Sujatha has suggested that the ‘medical lore’ of a certain region – consisting of a set of circulating health-related beliefs and practices – included a diverse variety of knowledge systems and medical practitioners within its ambit. Local, orally transmitted knowledge sometimes differed from learned traditions, but there were often striking similarities. This is suggestive of a network of links between the oral and literate spheres of medical knowledge.⁶⁶⁰ Other studies have likewise pointed towards continuities between various spheres of knowledge. Adam Fox’s seminal study of oral and literate culture in early modern England shows the manner in which knowledge was constantly circulated and recirculated between books, manuscripts, pamphlets and broadsides on the one hand, and folklore as well as commonplace usage on the other. In fact, Fox’s study suggests that it is virtually impossible to draw a line of distinction between the ‘oral’ and the ‘literate’ as distinct cultural spheres.⁶⁶¹ This is not to argue that there was no diversity of opinions and ideas, both among and between various social groups; rather, it is to question the easy adoption of socio-economic distinctions as cultural categories in historical and anthropological analyses.

Thus, food beliefs and practices criss-crossed across a complex mesh of intertwining forms of knowledge emanating from both ‘scholarly’ and ‘popular’ sources. It is important to emphasise that scholarly traditions did have a distinct identity of their own with systems of training and education as well as norms of professional practice. But the substance of their prescriptions cannot be so easily differentiated from those that existed in the popular realm of medical lore and dietetics.

⁶⁵⁹ Alavi, *Islam and Healing*, p. 31, uses the term ‘medical labour market’ for the wide range of *ḥakīms* and physicians offering their services in early modern India. The authors of Persian medical texts occupied the top rung of this market, while the bazaar physicians were at the lower end.

⁶⁶⁰ V. Sujatha, “Pluralism in Indian Medicine: Medical Lore as a Genre of Medical Knowledge”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 41, no. 2 (2007), pp. 169-202.

⁶⁶¹ Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

The social situation and status of the authors of Persian medical texts also differentiated these texts from cookbooks, in terms of importance and circulation. As has been discussed in chapter 2, the person of the cook was strangely absent from the text of cookbooks.⁶⁶² In stark contrast, however, the physician registered a strong presence as the author of medical texts. Persian medical texts typically have long prefaces that introduce the author-physician and the patron to whom the work is dedicated. As has been pointed out previously in this dissertation, this is related to the higher social status of the physician compared to the cook. Physicians usually belonged to the elite classes and received an education typical of this class. Medicine, as opposed to surgery, was regarded as a branch of high learning and its practice was well regarded socially. Here it is important to note that dietetics was an important aspect of formal medical practice, and thus the production of pharmacological treatises earned its author high prestige. It is thus not without reason that °Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī (or Fidā°ī Dawā°ī) chose his versified medical text dedicated to Emperor Akbar to be a *materia medica*. Both cookbooks and pharmacological treatises carried food recipes. But its situation in a medical text gave a food recipe a different meaning and prestige. Analysing the differences in the circulation of cookbooks and medical texts is also instructive. Indo-Persian cookbooks appear to have circulated exclusively in the subcontinent. Likewise, Şafawid and Qājār cookbooks were circulated in Iran. However, Iranian medical texts were often copied and circulated in India. This was partly due to the prestige enjoyed by Iranian textual productions on the Indian subcontinent, but was also because the knowledge represented by medical texts was seen as more universal than those of cookbooks.

The cultural economy of medical manuscripts in the early modern period was characterised by constant inter-linguistic and inter-tradition engagement. Attention has previously been drawn to the fact that Persian medical texts often drew on the pharmacopeia of other Indian medical traditions. In addition to this, translations of medical texts from Sanskrit to Persian were often produced. One example of this was the *Dastūru-l Hunūd*, which was a translation of the *Madanavinoda* prepared by Amānullāh K̄hān. As Speziale has pointed out, studies of Indian medical systems by scholars of *Tibb* or Unani medicine was often guided by a need to find local substitutes for foreign drugs as well as a means for adjusting and adapting medical practice to suit local conditions.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² See chapter 2 in this dissertation “A culture of connoisseurship”, esp. the section “Indo-Persian cookbooks: an analytical survey”, pp. 72-93.

⁶⁶³ Speziale, “The Encounter of Medical Traditions in Nūr al-Dīn Šīrāzī’s ‘*Ilājāt-i Dārā Šikōhī*’”, p. 58.

It is notable that an analysis of English translations of Persian texts made in the nineteenth century reveals some shared motivations. For instance, an English translation of the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī* prepared by George Playfair was published in 1883. Comparing the translation with the original, it seems clear that the objective was to make available the medical knowledge contained in it: the translation is not exactly a verbatim rendition of the original, and edits out the occasional ‘unnecessary’ phrase. It also supplies additional ‘useful’ information such as the scientific names of some of the foods listed in the text.⁶⁶⁴ Moreover, the preface of the Persian original is entirely omitted, and the whole text is alphabetically reordered in English. Explaining his purpose in translating the *Tālīf-i Sharīfī*, Playfair explains:

In the course of a practice of upwards of twenty-six years in India, I have often had occasion to regret, that I had no publication to guide me, in my wish to become acquainted with the properties of native medicines, which I have frequently seen, in the hands of the Physicians of Hindoostan, productive of the most beneficial effects in many diseases, for the cure of which our pharmacopeia supplied no adequate remedy; and the few which I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with, so far exceeded my expectations, that I intended to make a translation of the present work, for my own gratification and further guidance.⁶⁶⁵

The above statement is in line with what is known about the medical thinking of the time: that each region and climate had its own peculiar effect on human health. Europeans in India believed the tropical climate to be particularly enervating for this reason. As David Arnold has shown, European discourses on the tropics ranged from viewing them as paradise to disparaging them as perennially hot and humid sources of disease.⁶⁶⁶ According to this line of thinking, Indian medical systems could provide better remedies for tropical illnesses. It is also pertinent to note the manner in which Muḥammad Sharīf K̲h̲ān’s interest in drawing on pharmacological knowledge from Indian sources parallels the manner in which Playfair later draws on the former’s text to excavate “the properties of native medicines”.⁶⁶⁷ Translation thus provided a platform for the flow of knowledge between medical traditions, which is one important reason why thinking of these as ‘systems’ or discrete entities is rendered highly problematic.

⁶⁶⁴ For example, the translation omits phrases like “very delicious” that the text at various points uses to describe recipes. Compare for instance, “*Tālīf-i Sharīfī*”, MS SJML Ṭibb 27, p. 6 and Muḥammad Sharīf K̲h̲ān, *The Taleef Shereef, or Indian Materia Medica*, trans. George Playfair, p. 2. Latin scientific names are to be encountered at various points throughout the translated volume.

⁶⁶⁵ Playfair, “Translator’s Preface”, *The Taleef Shereef, or Indian Materia Medica*, p. iii.

⁶⁶⁶ David Arnold, “‘Illusory Riches’: Representations of the Tropical World, 1840-1950”, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21, no. 1 (2000), pp. 6-18, esp. p. 7.

⁶⁶⁷ Playfair, “Translator’s Preface”, *The Taleef Shereef, or Indian Materia Medica*, p. iii.

Similar observations may be made based on a reading of Francis Gladwin's rendition of 'Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī's *Alfāz-i Adwīya*. This adaptation omits much of the lengthy and ornate Persian preface contained in the original, only including basic information on the four degrees of drug potency and weights. The *materia medica* itself is reorganised as a dictionary in tabular form.⁶⁶⁸ This work again shows the manner in which the original text was not treated as a mere relic to be translated verbatim as a matter of arcane interest. The information contained in it was reorganised and reformulated for use in the new colonial medical environment. Parts of the text considered as being unnecessary or superfluous embellishments were thus omitted from the English rendition.

The difference between Persian translations of Sanskrit texts and English renditions of Persian ones, however, lies in their differing contexts. As has been seen, Persian texts drew freely on knowledge from different sources – including Sanskrit medical treatises – and thus brooked no sharp contextual dissonance. On the other hand, English renditions of Persian medical texts pulled these out of their original contexts into a new colonial environment. In this form, they were fossilised, archived and redeployed. These colonial translation projects thus highlight the continuing significance of Persian medical texts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, albeit in a new context and a new avatar.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter surveyed a range of Persian pharmacological and dietetic medical texts from the early modern period. These display an immense diversity in size, content and style. Most were in prose, but they could also be in verse, like Fidā'ī Dawā'ī's *Fawā'id al-Insān*. Nūr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's *Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī* combined mystical traditions of Islam with scholarly medicine. Others, like the *Mufaṣṣal-i Hindīya*, confined themselves to an alphabetically ordered description of locally available foods. However, despite this diversity, certain common elements may be discerned. Persian medical texts drew not only on a long tradition of Graeco-Arab scholarship, but also on a wide variety of indigenous sources, as well as being influenced by actual kitchen practices. Many list foods and medicines of local origin and include Hindi names for these. Several Persian medical texts were dedicated to political patrons, and I have argued that this was often reflected in the subtext of these works.

⁶⁶⁸ Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad 'Abdullah Shīrāzī, *Ulfaz Udwiyeḥ or the Materia Medica in the Arabic, Persian and Hindevy Languages*, trans. Francis Gladwin (Calcutta: Chronicle Press, 1793); "Alfāz-i Adwīya", MS Bodl. Fraser 195.

I have also suggested in this chapter that the disintegration of the Mughal Empire and the rise of regional assertions were followed by a relative vernacularisation and ‘localisation’ of the knowledge represented in Persian pharmacological and dietetic texts. These changes were subtle and gradual, probably indicating that the decline of the Empire had a significant, but not an immediate or dramatic impact on the cultural history of the subcontinent.

I have further shown how, in the early modern context, foods and drugs represented deeply intertwined categories, as were the spaces and tools of the kitchen and the apothecary. This is reflected in Persian medical texts through a certain wrestling with the conceptual difference between food and medicine. Differences were sought to be delineated on the basis of distinctions in the actions of foods and drugs within the body, which were drawn from the theoretical taxonomy of Graeco-Arab medicine. But in practice, the categories of ‘food’ and ‘medicine’ were often confounded in the descriptions found in these very texts. It was only around the nineteenth century, that the decline of humoural medicine brought about a sharpening of the taxonomic divide between the categories of food and medicine.

The medicinal values ascribed to various foods and drugs themselves were fluid and varied. Anthropological research on beliefs regarding the humoural qualities of foods in different cultures provides ethnographic support for the existence of such variations. Moreover, foods are often not classified as distinctly ‘hot’ or ‘cold’, but have intermediate values along this spectrum. My analysis of the relevant evidence from Indo-Persian medical texts tends to support this conclusion. As has been shown in this chapter, the humoural values attached to various foods could sometimes vary from one text to another, and intermediate values were often assigned. I have suggested that this likely reflects the close association between ‘scholarly’ and ‘popular’ medicine, as ambiguous and variant beliefs were sought to be textually captured.

Indeed, ‘scholarly’ medical traditions were deeply intertwined with ‘popular’ dietetic praxes in the early modern period. A significant aspect of this was that the barber was often a dispenser of dietetic advice in many parts of urban South Asia. ‘Popular’ food practices often drew on humoural beliefs, showing that these were not exclusive to ‘scholarly’ medicine. Curative fasts were another practice common to both ‘high’ and ‘low’ dietetic traditions. In fact, there was much continuity between the ‘scholarly’ and ‘popular’ as well as the ‘oral’ and ‘literate’ realms of medical knowledge. Yet, there was also diversity: dietetic beliefs were multifarious in character and often varied between different social groups and communities.

Finally, I discussed the transfer of knowledge represented by these medical texts through the medium of translations. There was some similarity in the processes of these translations when we compare the case of Persian translations or renditions of Sanskrit texts, with English versions of Persian medical texts. In both cases, drawing on 'indigenous' pharmacological knowledge was a significant motive. Yet, contextually, there was a difference: English translations of Persian medical texts pulled the original work out of its context and sought to fossilise and redeploy it. On the other hand, knowledge from Sanskrit texts usually mingled seamlessly with that from other sources in Persian medical treatises.

The overall conclusion that must be drawn on the basis of the discussions in this chapter is that dietetic and pharmacological practices were fluid and that there were close interactions between various traditions of medical knowledge. Although the sources used in this chapter have mostly been Persian medical texts, the role of 'popular' dietetic beliefs in shaping the knowledge represented therein should not be underestimated.

Chapter 5

Wine in the Mughal World

Introduction

Previous chapters of this dissertation have examined the social and cultural roles of food in the Mughal and post-Mughal period, as well as aspects of taste, diet and food traditions within historical, cross-cultural and transcultural perspectives. As an essential aspect of feasting traditions, convivial practices, poetry and cultural iconography, wine is intimately connected to this story of food. And yet as an intoxicating beverage, it had its own distinct socio-cultural paradigms as well as historical trajectories. In chapter 1, I argued that as the Empire matured, Mughal feasting traditions moved from engendering a relatively convivial culture to more spatially restricted and gender segregated norms, accompanied by circumscribed practices of etiquette. This trend reached its apogee under Akbar, who attempted to enforce strict spatial and ritual distinctions. In this chapter, I will argue that the culture of wine drinking also moved along a similar trajectory; however, there were contradictions between imperial intent and actual practice, as well as various complexities and nuances that shaped the constant shifts between temperance and indulgence. My analysis of the medical uses and representations of wine in this chapter will also tie up with my previous discussions in chapter 4 on food and medicine.

In the Persian and Indo-Persian cultural ecumene, wine has had a particularly long history of representing and mediating social and cultural intercourse both materially and symbolically. Mughal India inherited much from this long tradition and developed it in unique ways. The trajectory and underlying factors as well as the mythos of this development will be further explored in this chapter. The concept of ‘wine’ in the Islamicate, Indo-Persian and Mughal contexts was not restricted to the beverage made from fermented grape juice, but was part of a continuum of intoxicating beverages. Typically, Persian sources use the term ‘*sharāb*’ to mean both alcoholic beverages in general, as well as grape wine in particular. I likewise use ‘wine’ in this chapter as often including a broader range of alcoholic beverages besides the wine of grapes. Grape wine specifically will, nevertheless, remain a fairly significant focus of discussion given its hallowed cultural status. I will also situate my discussion of wine in the Mughal context by including an introductory note on the menu of alcoholic beverages consumed in early modern India.

Over the next few pages, I shall examine wine traditions through different analytical lenses, while referring to a variety of sources. First of all, Mughal wine culture developed within a context of diverse cultural influences, particularly Central Asian and Iranian. I will thus examine the manner in which these cultural inheritances shaped Mughal wine traditions. A significant part of the chapter will analyse contemporary histories, memoirs and biographical dictionaries to tease out the manner in which the political evolution of Empire was reflected in the subtext of Mughal wine culture. I also look at the discourse around wine in Iranian and Indo-Persian medical texts, and examine the manner in which these were informed by religious and cultural concerns. Mughal miniature paintings are also a significant source in this study of wine traditions. Art not only furnishes empirical evidence on Mughal courtly life, but also provides a significant window into the manner in which wine was symbolised and represented in the Mughal cultural ecumene.

Recently there has been some relevant scholarship on the role of wine and alcoholic beverages in Mughal India and the Indo-Iranian cultural ecumene. In this chapter, I will draw on, as well as engage with, the evidence and arguments presented in these works. The most comprehensive analysis pertaining to the history of wine that is germane to the cultural context of the present dissertation is to be found in Rudi Mathee's *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History*.⁶⁶⁹ His discussions on wine in Iranian history is part of a larger thesis on the social history of drugs and stimulants, but nevertheless charts out the specific cultural roles of wine in several chapters devoted solely to this theme. Because of the cultural commonalities and shared linguistic heritage between Mughal India and Ṣafawid as well as Qājār Iran, Mathee's work also engages partially with Mughal source material. Other works, mainly in the form of published articles in academic journals, have discussed the histories and social roles of alcohol and wine in the pre-modern Indian context. These have either been mostly descriptive or have relied largely on published and translated sources.⁶⁷⁰ Meera Khare's article on the wine cup in Mughal art represents a valuable contribution to this topic as she approaches the history of wine from an iconographic perspective, i.e. through an

⁶⁶⁹ Rudi Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁶⁷⁰ See: Prasun Chatterjee, "The Lives of Alcohol in Pre-Colonial India", *The Medieval History Journal* 8, no. 1 (2005), pp. 189-225; Meena Bhargava, "Narcotics and Drugs: Pleasure, Intoxication or Simply Therapeutic – North India, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries", *The Medieval History Journal* 15, no. 1 (2012), pp. 103-135; Sangar, chapter VI "Wine and Wine Drinking", *Food and Drinks in Mughal India*, pp. 183-228. Sangar's chapter on wine is based on (mostly published) Persian, Hindi and English sources and is entirely descriptive in nature. The other two articles by Chatterjee and Bhargava are analytical, but rely on published and translated sources.

analysis of Mughal miniatures.⁶⁷¹ What is largely missing in the extant work on alcoholic beverages and wine in the early modern Indian context is a synchronisation of the Islamic and Iranian cultural histories of wine with the specificities of the Indian context. This chapter aims at addressing this lacuna to some extent by examining both literary as well as iconographic sources, and by linking up these discussions with the larger context of Indo-Persian consumption cultures, medical traditions and Mughal socio-political mores.

In the first section, I will explore wine traditions and symbolisms within the Indo-Persian ecumene. The second section will examine medical beliefs concerning wine within the Islamicate and Indo-Persian contexts. The third section will analyse the trajectory of wine as a substance and symbol in the Mughal cultural world. Finally, the concluding section will integrate my analysis of Mughal wine traditions with the rest of my dissertation.

Wine in the Islamic and Indo-Persian Ecumenes

The grape (*Vitis vinifera*) is not indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, but wine had long been imported from other regions where grape cultivation and wine making flourished.⁶⁷² What is more significant, however, is the role of wine in Iranian history and culture. It is the influence of these cultural traditions that gave Mughal wine-drinking traditions their social and political significance.

Wine has a long history in Iran. Archaeological excavations at the Hajji Firuz Tepe site in the Zagros Mountains have indicated that wine making may have dated back to as early as 5400–5000 BC.⁶⁷³ According to Rudi Mathee, the ancient Persians may have indeed been the first in the world to distil wine.⁶⁷⁴ Mathee points out that the influence of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia is also evident in the development of Iranian wine drinking traditions. The fondness for imbibing and the lax attitude towards alcohol consumption shared by

⁶⁷¹ Meera Khare, “The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: From Hedonism to Kingship”, *The Medieval History Journal* 8, no. 1 (2005), pp. 143-188.

⁶⁷² The archaeological record suggests a Near Eastern origin of the domesticated grape (*Vitis vinifera vinifera*) developed from the wild subspecies *Vitis vinifera sylvestris* dating to around 6,000 to 8,000 b.p. Many varieties of table and wine grapes have since been developed through vegetative propagation and cross-breeding [Sean Myles et al., “Genetic Structure and Domestication History of the Grape”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 9 (March 1, 2011), pp. 3530-3535]. For details on the importation of wine into India in the early modern period, see the third section in this chapter below entitled “wine as substance and symbol in the Mughal Empire” (pp. 187-208), esp. Bernier’s account on p. 188-189.

⁶⁷³ Ali Saeidi and Tim Unwin, “Persian Wine Tradition and Symbolism: Evidence From the Medieval Poetry of Hafiz”, *Journal of Wine Research* 15, no. 2 (2004), p. 101.

⁶⁷⁴ Rudi Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History*, p. 1.

members of the Gh̄aznawid dynasty and the Mongols testified to this.⁶⁷⁵ Despite the religious reservations of many, wine continued to be a significant aspect of courtly life in Şafawid Iran.⁶⁷⁶ The French traveller Jean Chardin (1643-1713) reportedly considered the wines of Shiraz and Georgia to be excellent.⁶⁷⁷ Shiraz wine was considered to be the most esteemed spirit and reserved for the Shāh, members of the court and high officials of the Şafawid Empire.⁶⁷⁸ It was also a wine of choice in the Mughal Empire.⁶⁷⁹ According to the account of Chardin, Iranian wines were strong, and often contained additives such as hempseed and chalk to intensify the aroma and intoxication, as also *kuchūla* (*Nux vomica*) to prevent hangovers.⁶⁸⁰

Mathee has traced the trajectory of wine drinking in Şafawid and Qājār Iran and situated this within its cultural and political background. This historical exemplar offers us a point of comparison with the Mughal case, which will be discussed in the next section. Mathee sees Şafawid drinking traditions as a continuation of the Persian pre-Islamic *razm u bazm* warrior tradition of hard drinking and hard fighting. Thus, the king was not just permitted to drink – he was expected to do so.⁶⁸¹ Despite being an inherent aspect of royal traditions, wine naturally suffered from the stigma of Islamic proscriptions, which haunted its history in medieval and early modern Iran. Mathee argues that despite inconsistencies and variations, it is possible to trace a trajectory of wine drinking and prohibition from the early Şafawid to the Qājār period. He links this development ultimately to the evolution of the Shāh's image from that of an incarnation of the divine to that of the Imām's trustee and protector of Islamic orthopraxy.⁶⁸² Unable to draw legitimacy from any religious aura of divinity and constrained by the growing influence of the *‘ulamā* (theologians), the Qājār kings restrained their consumption of alcohol in pursuance of a more Islamic ideal of kingship.⁶⁸³

The influence of Islamic ideology and religious precepts in juxtaposition with prevalent cultural traditions of wine produced ambiguous results. Indeed, if we examine the revelations of the Qur'ān with regard to wine, what emerges is a great deal of ambivalence and room for variant interpretations. The very first Qur'ānic verse on wine or alcoholic

⁶⁷⁵ Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p. 41.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 44-66.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 44.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ See the third section of this chapter entitled "wine as substance and symbol in the Mughal Empire" (pp.184-205), esp. pp.184,185.

⁶⁸⁰ Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, pp. 44-45.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid, p. 67.

⁶⁸² Ibid, p. 68, 177-184.

⁶⁸³ Ibid, pp. 182-184.

beverages (Sūra II: 219) talks about both benefit as well as harm, although tipping the balance on the negative side: “They will ask you about wine and games of chance⁶⁸⁴ say, ‘In them both is sin and profit to men; but the sin of both is greater than the profit of the same.’”⁶⁸⁵ The next verse also shies away from an outright condemnation of intoxicating liquors, merely warning that prayer is to be avoided in a state of intoxication (Sūra IV: 43).⁶⁸⁶ As noted by Kathryn Kueny, in this passage, “intoxication leaves no permanent stain that requires some kind of punishment or ritual rectification, and may, in fact, be acceptable as long as it is confined to non-ritual contexts”.⁶⁸⁷ It is only in Sūra V: 90-91 that the Qurʾān comes down severely on intoxicating beverages. In these verses, intoxicating drinks are described as the Devil’s work, but even here there is no clear prohibition. The Qurʾān only advises that wine or intoxicating beverages should be avoided in order to succeed and prosper.⁶⁸⁸ In fact, a later verse recalls commonly held medical beliefs about the salubrious effects of wine and similar beverages: Sūra XVI: 67 talks about the “intoxicants and goodly provision” that may be obtained from the fruits of palms and grapes.⁶⁸⁹ Thus, the Qurʾān contains no explicit prohibition of wine, nor do imbibers necessarily invite specific sanctions, such as the threat of hellfire. Yet, wine and other intoxicating beverages are clearly seen as barriers to the fulfilment of a proper spiritual life. It is clear that prevalent pre-Islamic anxieties about disorder and ideas about the medical effects of intoxicants played a role in the shaping of Qurʾānic revelations. At the same time, the largely negative – but somewhat ambivalent – nature of the Qurʾān’s prescriptions on wine had a lasting impact on the role of wine in social life among Islamicate societies, as well as on its representation in the arts and scholarly learning.

Historians have noted that the prescriptions of the Qurʾān regarding alcohol are

⁶⁸⁴ This is merely transcribed as “el-maiser” in E. H. Palmer, trans., *The Quran*, Part I (Delhi, Patna, Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965) (first published, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), p. 32. Other translations of the Qurʾān render this as “games of chance” or something similar. See Maulana Muhammad Ali, trans., Zahid Aziz, ed., *English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes* (Wembley: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, 2010), p. 51. Apart from this term, the rest of the translation conforms to Palmer.

⁶⁸⁵ Palmer, *The Quran*, Part I, p. 32; Muhammad Ali, *English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes*, p. 51.

⁶⁸⁶ Palmer, *The Quran*, Part I, p. 78; Muhammad Ali, *English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes*, p. 115. Verse appears to be differently numbered in Palmer’s translation.

⁶⁸⁷ Kathryn Kueny, *The Rhetoric of Sobriety: Wine in Early Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), p.9.

⁶⁸⁸ Palmer, *The Quran*, Part I, p. 110; Muhammad Ali, *English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes*, p. 157.

⁶⁸⁹ Palmer, *The Quran*, Part I, p. 257; Muhammad Ali, *English Translation of the Holy Quran with Explanatory Notes*, p. 329. Palmer’s translation is in the singular: “an intoxicant and a goodly provision”. Muhammad Ali’s translation adopted here.

complex, and often leaned towards moderation rather than outright condemnation.⁶⁹⁰ Mathee observes that from a milder view, the Qurʾān becomes progressively more negative in its attitude towards alcohol in its later revelations.⁶⁹¹ But it was only after the time of Muḥammad that these proscriptions hardened into a formal ban. Yet – as Mathee points out – even after the crystallisation of the classical Islamic prohibition on wine, cultural praxes often encouraged the exploitation of loopholes by avid imbibers.⁶⁹² This diversity of both interpretation as well as practice characterises the history of wine drinking throughout the Islamicate world.⁶⁹³

A closer look at the inherent ambiguities of wine drinking in Islamic societies also reveals the complex roles played by wine and intoxication within the realm of spiritual experience. Wine in Islamic tradition represented a threat to order and the stability of consciousness, which in turn constituted a disruption in human beings' relationship to the divine. At the same time, within Ṣūfī discourse, wine symbolised the breaking down of barriers that blocked access to a true experience of the divine. According to Kueny, the ambiguity of the discourse on wine in early Islamic tradition can be represented by the following duality: on the one hand wine evoked the glories of paradise. But on the other hand, when order and structure were privileged, wine became a problematic focus of interpretation.⁶⁹⁴ A theme that permeates early Islamic texts, according to Kueny's analysis, is that the human realm had to remain distinct from that of the divine. Wine represented a threat to this distinction, but it retained an ambivalent character. The manner in which these ambiguities were resolved thus emerged as the focus of much exegetic discourse.⁶⁹⁵

This ambivalence and complexity of theory as well as practice also characterised the relationship between Ṣūfīsm and wine. For the Ṣūfī, the ambiguity over the effects of wine represented a crucial problematic in the mystic's relationship with the Divine. As Kueny explains, the Ṣūfī's experience embodies the constant quandary between losing his or her identity in union with the divine on the one hand, and being aware of his or her highly personal, individual experience on the other.⁶⁹⁶ Resolution of such ambivalences only serves

⁶⁹⁰ Saeidi and Unwin, "Persian Wine Tradition and Symbolism: Evidence from the Medieval Poetry of Hafiz", pp. 98-100; Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁹¹ Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, p. 39.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ A fuller exposition of this phenomenon in the Mughal case follows in this chapter under the section "wine as substance and symbol in the Mughal Empire" (pp.184-205).

⁶⁹⁴ Kueny, *The Rhetoric of Sobriety: Wine in Early Islam*, p. 118.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid, p. xiv.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 106.

to lead the mystic away from “true knowledge and experience”.⁶⁹⁷ In order to achieve such understanding, the mystic must move back and forth “between the two polar opposites of sobriety/intoxication, experience/reflection upon that experience, and the material/ideal realms”.⁶⁹⁸

The Şufi engagement with wine and wine imagery was mainly reflected in mystical poetic compositions. Wine had long been a popular trope and symbol in Persian poetry. In the poems of Ḥāfiẓ, for instance, wine (*mai*), the wine cup (*qadah*) and the cupbearer (*sāqī*) are ubiquitous.⁶⁹⁹ The poetry of Bābā Fiḡhānī (d. 1519) – a Şafawid poet from Shiraz – is also replete with poetic allusions to wine.⁷⁰⁰ Scholars have long debated the meaning and significance of references to wine in Persian poetry.⁷⁰¹ Much of this debate has concerned the issue of whether wine motifs in Persian poetry were purely symbolic and mystical or also literal, and even hedonistic. Kueny draws attention to the distinctions between divine intoxication and earthly intoxication apparent in the compositions of the mystical poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273).⁷⁰² Saeidi and Unwin highlight the links between early references to wine in Arabic poetry and the ubiquitous use of wine metaphors in Persian poetry. They argue that wine imagery in Persian poetry drew to some extent on Arabic precedents, such as the compositions of Abū Nuwas al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī al-Ḥakamī (c. 756 - c. 815). However, Persian poetry departed from its Arabic forebears in its sophisticated use of wine as a symbol of mystical engagement.⁷⁰³ On the other hand, A. J. Arberry argues that it is difficult to maintain that the use of wine imagery in all Persian poetry was innocent and devoid of hedonistic connotations.⁷⁰⁴ With particular regard to Ḥāfiẓ, he offers a third interpretation rooted in the context of a “philosophy of unreason”, sceptical of the possibility of a rational universe, and hence hedonistic only in appearance.⁷⁰⁵ Whatever the interpretation of the association between mystical discourse and wine, it is arguable that Şūfīsm had as much of an influence on Islamicate wine traditions as the Qurʾān.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid, p.114

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid, p.114

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 109-111; Muḡammad Ḥāfiẓ-i Şīrāzī, *Dīwān* (Calcutta: Asiatic Lithograph Press, 1896).

⁷⁰⁰ Losensky, *Welcoming Fiḡhānī*, pp. 289-294.

⁷⁰¹ Saeidi and Unwin, “Persian Wine Tradition and Symbolism: Evidence From the Medieval Poetry of Hafiz”, p. 109; A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp.115-116.

⁷⁰² Kueny, *The Rhetoric of Sobriety: Wine in Early Islam*, pp.112-114.

⁷⁰³ Saeidi and Unwin, “Persian Wine Tradition and Symbolism: Evidence From the Medieval Poetry of Hafiz”, p.105.

⁷⁰⁴ Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, p.116.

⁷⁰⁵ Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, p. 116; Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, p. 270.

The diverse Indo-Islamicate and Indo-Persian encounters with wine – particularly from the point of view of the Mughal experience – will be examined from various angles in this chapter. I will begin with analysing the complex views of wine in medical knowledge, lore and practice.

Wine and Medicine

The association of wine with medical benefits and uses has many precedents in the history of human civilization. Perhaps the oldest known pharmacopeia in history is a Sumerian tablet dated to between 2200 and 2100 BC, and excavated at Nippur in 1910.⁷⁰⁶ In this text, the use of wine is recommended for various ailments: for instance, sweet wine with honey is prescribed for the treatment of a cough.⁷⁰⁷ The Hippocratic physicians of ancient Greece also made extensive use of wine for medical purposes⁷⁰⁸ and wine remained an important component of the apothecary in medieval and early modern Europe.⁷⁰⁹ An early modern English text, *The Tree of Humane Life, or The Bloud of the Grape* (1638) by Tobias Whitaker focussed exclusively on the medicinal use of wine.⁷¹⁰ Whitaker apparently believed wine to be something of a wonder drug that could maintain good health throughout life and ward off all sickness.⁷¹¹

While wine as a medical substance appeared in many cultures, the specificities of its use varied widely and were dependent on local intellectual traditions as well as social and cultural contexts. As has been seen in the previous chapter on food and medicine, scholarly traditions on food and drink interacted in complex ways with popular dietetic practices. This section will in turn demonstrate the manner in which medical views on wine in the Mughal and early modern Indian contexts were shaped by a number of factors – cultural, social as well as religious. In Persian medical texts and Islamicate medical traditions, prescriptions of alcoholic beverages often wrestled with tensions between religious proscriptions and cultural practice. The manner in which these contradictions were manifested will be made clearer through the following discussion.

⁷⁰⁶ P. A. Norrie, “The History of Wine as a Medicine”, in *Wine: A Scientific Exploration*, ed. Merton Sandler and Roger Pinder (London and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2003), p. 22.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 26-31.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 36-41.

⁷¹⁰ Louise Hill Curth, “The Medicinal Value of Wine in Early Modern England”, *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 18 (2003), pp. 40, 48.

⁷¹¹ Ibid, pp. 40-41.

Intoxicating beverages had long been discussed in medical texts produced in the Islamicate world. David Waines – in discussing Abū Zaid al-Balkhī’s (d. 934) and Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī’s (d. 932) medical treatises – notes that the benefits of moderate drinking were discussed in these texts, despite being largely frowned upon in religious cannon.⁷¹² Wine, in particular, was accorded pride of place among beverages by physicians. According to al-Balkhī, the *sharāb* (liquor) made of fine grape juice was the “noblest in essence, finest in composition and the most beneficial” of all beverages, if consumed moderately.⁷¹³ He describes it as being salutary for the body in terms of health and useful to the soul in terms of happiness.⁷¹⁴ Moreover, al-Balkhī notes the benefits of wine in enhancing the sociability and pleasure of convivial gatherings.⁷¹⁵ On the other hand, al-Rāzī takes a more clinical view of wine, which is on the balance more sober and detailed than al-Balkhī’s account. Among the benefits that he lists for intoxicating beverages are that – when consumed in moderate quantities – they aid in digestion and sleep. On the flip side, immoderate consumption leads to a variety of ailments associated with the black bile humour, including a weakened digestion. Al-Rāzī recommends that drinking twice or thrice a month would allow for the beneficial effects of drinking to be reaped without any detrimental consequences.⁷¹⁶ Waines contrasts al-Balkhī and al-Rāzī’s accounts with that of Najīb al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 1222) almost three centuries later. The section on intoxicating beverages from al-Samarqandī’s treatise on dietetics emphasises the deleterious effects of intoxicating drinks (*khamr*), and is particularly informed by religious proscriptions on alcoholic beverages. But even he grudgingly acknowledges that doctors were generally unanimous in their opinion that intoxicating beverages consumed in moderation were beneficial to the health of the body and aided the well being of the soul.⁷¹⁷

The manner in which medical texts were influenced by a complex of social, cultural and religious ideas may be observed from an analysis of a fifteenth century Persian medical manuscript, dated 1480 on the colophon.⁷¹⁸ This text was likely of Iranian origin, but like other Persian medical texts, probably circulated on the Indian subcontinent as well. It sheds

⁷¹² David Waines, “Abu Zayd al-Balkhi on the Nature of Forbidden Drink: A Medieval Islamic Controversy”, in *Patterns of Everyday Life*, ed. David Waines (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), pp. 329-344.

⁷¹³ Ibid, p. 333.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid, p. 334.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 338-341.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 341-343.

⁷¹⁸ Untitled MS BL Add. 6591, ff. 126-136. In translating, interpreting and analysing this text, I have benefitted greatly from my discussions with Seyed Hossein Zarhani, who spent many hours reading this MS with me. He has especially helped me in translating the many Arabic phrases that pepper this text. However, responsibility for any errors of translation and interpretation remain entirely my own.

much light on the cultural and intellectual context of wine drinking within the Indo-Persian ecumene. The primary stated motive of the text is to discuss the benefits and harmful effects of wine. It begins by using the imagery of wine in the customary invocation of God at the beginning of the treatise. This invocation begins with the following words: “Gratitude and unlimited thanks are due to the Emperor (God) who filled our cup to the brim with the drink of love from his treasury of mercy.”⁷¹⁹ Here the use of wine imagery refers to its mystical and ethereal role in Islamic culture, even though the remainder of the text deals with wine as an actual physical substance. But wine as a mystical symbol and wine as a material entity with intoxicating properties were not separate and distinct entities in this treatise; rather these two identities of wine equally inform the medical, moral, religious and philosophical essence of wine drinking as reflected in this text.

The first chapter of the treatise deals with the varieties of wine according to temperament (*ṭabʿ*), consistency (*qawām*), taste (*ṭaʿm*) and age (*zamān*), and gives examples of these.⁷²⁰ According to this text, as far as age is concerned, wine may be classified as new, old or middling.⁷²¹ New wine is dated from the time of maturation and may be up to a year old. Beyond one year – or two years according to some sources – the wine is middling, and after that it is old. Old wine can be up to seven years old.⁷²² The text goes on to list the qualities as well as the benefits and detrimental effects of each category of wine. Thus, new wine is considered to be fat promoting. It is also said to nurture a good, healthy colour, lend the body moisture, and is suitable for drinking in hot weather. Its intoxication wears off soon. On the other hand, it damages the liver and causes diarrhoea as well as flatulence. Old wine acts quickly, and is therefore useful in treating unconscious patients. It leads to the softening, purification and elimination of the phlegmatic humour and of cold-related illnesses. It also strengthens the senses. This vintage of wine, according to the text, should be used carefully as a medicine. Middling wine has qualities that fall in between those of the old and new varieties.⁷²³ Similarly, the text discusses the qualities of various categories of wine classified according to colour, consistency, smell and taste.⁷²⁴

The second chapter is concerned with the benefits of wine. According to the text, some benefits pertain to the body and some to the spirit. Among the benefits of wine to the spirit is that it makes a person joyous and cheerful, removes corrupt thoughts, stimulates generosity

⁷¹⁹ Ibid, f. 126v.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Ibid, ff. 126v-127r.

⁷²² Ibid, f. 127r.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid, ff. 127r-128v.

and bravery, eliminates fear, stimulates purity of mind, eliminates sadness and removes melancholy as well as madness.⁷²⁵ These benefits are said to be greater for the vegetable soul, followed by its effects on the animal soul.⁷²⁶ At this point, my previous discussion of the text of the influential Persian philosopher Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī from chapter 1 should be recalled.⁷²⁷ Ṭūsī analyses consciousness in terms of various levels of sentience: the vegetable (*nabātī*) soul at the lowest end of the spectrum and the human (*insānī*) at the highest, with the animal (*ḥaiwānī*) soul in between.⁷²⁸ The only difference is that the wine treatise uses the term *rūḥ-i ṭabʿī* or ‘elemental soul’ instead of using the term ‘vegetable’ (*nabātī*) soul, but the meaning is essentially the same.⁷²⁹ In drawing on these ideas without explicitly identifying their source, the wine treatise consciously or unconsciously represents a mimesis of influential philosophical concepts from the Islamicate world. These ideas blend theology, philosophy and medical ideas seamlessly. A similar continuum of thought is reflected in the text on wine under consideration here. Medical concepts both influenced and were influenced by reigning religious and philosophical ideas.

Among the bodily benefits of wine, according to the text, is that it beautifies colour, increases libido, cleans the body’s canals, improves digestion, lightens and increases the flow of blood, makes the skin soft and pure, drains out excess humours through sweat and diarrhoea and preserves youth.⁷³⁰ From a cross-cultural perspective, a probable phenomenon is that the tendency of wine to cause the ejection of fluids from the body through processes such as vomiting and urination may have been interpreted as a cleansing property that allowed the expulsion of excess humours. For Whitaker, it was, in fact, one of the most important medical functions of wine.⁷³¹

The discussion of harmful effects is very significant for the manner in which religious proscriptions influence the composition of the text, as well as for the ways in which benefits and detrimental effects are weighed and balanced against each other. At the very outset of this discussion, the text states that despite the benefits discussed, the detrimental consequences of wine are greater.⁷³² Here it cites the Qurʾān to the effect that the harmful effects of wine are such as can be understood through the intellect (*ʿaql*). It adds that wine is also forbidden in

⁷²⁵ Ibid, f. 128v.

⁷²⁶ Ibid, ff. 128-129r.

⁷²⁷ See pp. 27-28 in this dissertation.

⁷²⁸ See pp. 27-28 in this dissertation; Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, pp. 41-42; *Aḳḥlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Tihirānī, p. 23.

⁷²⁹ MS BL Add. 6591, f. 128v.

⁷³⁰ Ibid, f. 129r.

⁷³¹ Curth, “The Medicinal Value of Wine in Early Modern England”, p. 43.

⁷³² MS BL Add. 6591, f. 129v.

most religions.⁷³³ According to the text, wine destroys the intellect and causes the loss of a human being's dignity and respect. And the benefits of wine that do occur are not for everyone and do not manifest in the same manner in all.⁷³⁴ Among the detrimental effects of wine listed are that it impairs abilities, weakens sinews and joints, diminishes the intellect, causes the domination of corrupting passions, weakens the body, destroys spiritual and bodily perception, kills interest in food, affects the senses, causes forgetfulness and results ultimately in a person being excluded from religious and worldly affairs.⁷³⁵

An analysis of the discussion of harmful effects in this text reveals a close synchronisation with the criticisms of wine recorded in religious and ethical works. Particularly evident is the influence of the Qur^ʿān itself. Not only does the text directly quote the Qur^ʿān, but also draws on its arguments against wine and intoxicants in more subtle ways. For instance, while acknowledging the benefits of wine, the present text argues – in a manner similar to that of the Qur^ʿān – that its harmful consequences outweigh any salubrious effects.⁷³⁶ Again shadowing the critique of wine contained in the Qur^ʿān, the text states that intoxication is responsible for clouding the mind in a manner that interferes with a person's participation in religious life.⁷³⁷ This religious criticism is, however, reformulated and integrated into a medical context – as befitting the focus of the text.

The next chapter concerns the ordering of drinks according to temperament, age, season and times. According to the text, for those of cold and moist temperaments as well as for those of hot and dry temperaments, wine is useful if consumed in an orderly and regulated fashion. But those who are hot and dry should preferably abstain. Wine is useful for those of a melancholic temperament, who are cold and dry. For such individuals, it extends lifespan and promotes health as well as strength.⁷³⁸ It is also said to be of great benefit to the elderly. In this category of people, it eliminates roughness of the skin, improves digestion, generates sexual appetite (*taulīd-i ḥarārat-i gharīzī*), and eliminates colds. The young should avoid wine, especially those of *ṣafrā* (yellow bile) humour, because it causes a hot liver and weakness of the brain. If the young do drink, the wine should be diluted (with substances such

⁷³³ Ibid.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Ibid, f. 130r.

⁷³⁶ See my discussion above (pp. 175-177) in this chapter on the treatment of wine and intoxicating beverages in the Qur^ʿān, especially with regard to Sūra II: 219.

⁷³⁷ This is indicated in Sūra IV: 43 of the Qur^ʿān, which warns against engaging in prayer in a state of intoxication. See my discussion above in this chapter under the section “wine in the Islamic and Indo-Persian ecumenes” (p. 176).

⁷³⁸ MS BL Add. 6591, ff. 130r-130v.

as water or fruit juice). According to the text, children should not drink wine.⁷³⁹ It quotes Plato to the effect that after the age of eighteen they could perhaps drink.⁷⁴⁰ The fact that the text appeals to the authority of *Aflātūn* (Plato) indicates that it draws not only on religious canon, but also on prominent scholarly authorities of the Islamicate world. In fact, it is probably problematic to separate the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’ into separate intellectual categories in the early modern context. Both the Qurʾān as well as Plato belonged to the learned traditions that the text drew on and that it itself belonged to.

This blanket prohibition on the consumption of alcohol by children, however, appears to have been contradicted in actual practice. As per Jahāngīr’s testimony in his memoirs, his mother and nurses administered one *tola* (12.05 grams) of liquor mixed with rose water and water as a cough remedy.⁷⁴¹ This instance also suggests that women of the harem often had their own prescriptions for various common illnesses, and that popular medical lore often used wine or intoxicating liquors in household remedies. These ideas were not developed in isolation; they interacted with medical concepts and remedies drawn from other ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ knowledge traditions. In the instance narrated by Jahāngīr, for instance, while the use of wine as an infantile remedy may have been a distinctly domestic practice, the very idea that wine had curative properties was shared in common with many traditions of medical theory and praxis.

Various other themes touched upon in this wine treatise highlight certain aspects of the manner in which medicine, culture and social life interacted. Social customs and cultural practices surrounding the ritual of drinking also appear to have influenced medical prescriptions in this text. In this context, it is pertinent to recall David Waines’ arguments regarding the manner in which culinary practices often influenced medical prescriptions.⁷⁴² In the case of wine, it appears from the evidence of this Persian text that medical views were particularly influenced by drinking rituals and social practices surrounding the communal sharing of wine. This is not dissimilar to the manner in which al-Balkhī linked wine drinking with sociability and conviviality. Thus, there appears to have been an observable trend indicating the influence of social custom on the content of medical texts in general, and on their appreciation of drinking rituals and practices in particular.

⁷³⁹ Ibid, f. 130v.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid, ff. 130v-131r.

⁷⁴¹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 174; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 184. *Tola*-gram weight conversion as per Thackston in *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, Appendix A, p. 473.

⁷⁴² Waines, “Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture”. See also pp. 162-163 in this dissertation.

For instance, it was a common practice to eat some snacks or other foods to accompany the drinking of wine.⁷⁴³ Thus, the Persian text under analysis here finds it necessary to warn against this, stating that “the wise and knowledgeable (*ḥukmā*) have forbidden this.”⁷⁴⁴ However, the text continues that if unavoidable, it is advisable to eat apple, sorrel, orange, *rībās* (a sour herb), electuary of lemon, sour extracts, jams as well as roasted almonds and pistachios.⁷⁴⁵ Also, the text advises that before starting to drink, small amounts of heavy foods such as *ābgosht* (a rich meat soup) and *kabāb* should be partaken of, so as to prevent excess intoxication.⁷⁴⁶ In addition, foods likely to cause diseases of the liver are to be avoided.⁷⁴⁷

An important aspect of the relationship between food and wine must be noted here: in the Indo-Persian cultural ecumene, it was the *food that accompanied the wine*, rather than the other way around. Abū-l Faḏl, for instance, describes the wine drinking rituals of Akbar as follows: “Whenever his Majesty wishes to take wine or partakes of opium and *kūknār*⁷⁴⁸ (he calls the latter *sabras*), dishes of fruits are placed before him. He eats a little, but most is distributed.”⁷⁴⁹ Several Mughal miniature paintings also feature wine cups, flasks and chalices accompanied by various items of food.⁷⁵⁰ To the extent that food was secondary to wine in Indo-Persian and Mughal drinking rituals, there was a separation between feasts where food was the focus, and drinking parties where wine was at the centre of the act. Thus, while various kinds of eatables often accompanied the act of drinking, the sources do not mention

⁷⁴³ Instances of this are cited on this page, as well as later in this chapter (see Roe’s account discussed on pp. 201-202 below).

⁷⁴⁴ MS BL Add. 6591, f. 131r.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid, ff. 131r-131v.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid, f. 131v. The meaning of this sentence is obscure. An alternative reading, suggested to me by Hossein Zarhani is that before drinking, one must not eat too much of heavy foods such as *ābgosht* and *kabāb* since this would interfere with (or dilute) the experience of intoxication.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid, f. 131v.

⁷⁴⁸ This is also meant to be opium here. Steingass translates it as poppy head, or an oil made of this, or poppy seeds [Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary*, p. 1063]; The *Lughatnāma* of Dihḡudā also translates it similarly as poppy heads [Dihḡudā, *Lughatnāma*, ed. Jaʿfar Shahīdī and Muḡammad Muʿīn, p. 16527]. However, an intoxicant prepared from poppy seeds seems to be implied here.

⁷⁴⁹ Abū-l Faḏl, *Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, ed. Blochmann, pp. 67; *The Āʿīn-i Akbarī*, Vol. I, trans. Blochmann, ed. Phillot, p. 69.

⁷⁵⁰ For instance, a miniature from Akbar’s era is a sketch by Basāwan of a fat man seated against a large cushion surrounded by a string instrument, some food, a wine flask and a wine cup [Reproduced in Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1981), catalogue no. 25, p. 198]. Another instance is the political allegory *Jahāngīr Entertains Shāh ʿAbbās* [Reproduced in Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, catalogue no. 17c, colour plate, p. 78]. This painting depicts a fictional meeting between Jahāngīr and Shāh ʿAbbās of Persia. Below the two is a small but exquisite table laid with wine flasks, and below are plates of fruit. See also *Cupbearer* attributed to Gowardhan, ca. 1610, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.78.9.11 [Reproduced in Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 415]. This miniature from a Jahāngīrī album depicts a *sāqī* or cupbearer holding aloft a wine cup. In front of him is a tray with a wine flask and some eatables.

wine being consumed during regular feasts. Drinks such as lemonade and various other kinds of sherbet were probably preferred accompaniments to banquets and main meals.⁷⁵¹

To return to the treatise under discussion: the use of perfumes may also have commonly accompanied the act of drinking in social circumstances. Hence the text states that whatever is an allayer of heat or cools the head is beneficial, such as sandalwood, ambergris, rose, violet, lotus and cucumber.⁷⁵² Apart from this, the text even has a passage on the benefits of music, which may have been a frequent accompaniment to the act of drinking.⁷⁵³

As far as the setting or location (*makān*) of imbibing is concerned, the text advocates that one drink by running streams and gardens of blossoms and in the company of friends and companions.⁷⁵⁴ This advice is clearly inspired by the social function of communal drinking, and probably by the picnic-like location of many drinking parties. At the same time, the text warns against some of the excesses caused by drinking. For instance, it advises against sexual intercourse in a state of intoxication. The reason given is that such intercourse is not likely to result in conception, and that even if it did, it would not lead to the birth of a boy.⁷⁵⁵

The rest of the text discusses themes pertaining to substances, medications and treatments that can slow down or cure intoxication. These include compound medications, incense sticks and massages.⁷⁵⁶ At the end of the text, the author declares that if nothing else works, two or three more cups of wine should be drunk to reduce intoxication and regain one's normal state.⁷⁵⁷ Thus, an underlying concern of the text, as that of most physicians, was to maximise the benefits of wine, while minimising its deleterious effects. In all this, pleasure and the social roles of wine were also factors.

A few final observations on the text that has been analysed above are in order. Avowedly, it appears to be a text with a medical orientation, focusing on the benefits and harmful effects of wine. But as has been observed in chapter 4, it is problematic to classify all medical texts in the early modern context as exclusively 'secular' in nature.⁷⁵⁸ This text was clearly influenced by its Islamic religious context as well as by its situation within a particular Persian cultural ecumene that engendered certain drinking customs and norms of etiquette.

⁷⁵¹ Bāyazīd Bayāt, "Tārīkh-i Humāyūn", in *Three Memoirs of Hodayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, Persian text, p. 8, translation, p. 5. Previously cited in chapter 1 of this dissertation "The emperor's table: food, culture and power", under the section entitled "gift-giving and the political symbolism of food", p. 47.

⁷⁵² MS BL Add. 6591, f. 131v.

⁷⁵³ Ibid, ff. 131v-132r.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid, f. 132v.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid, f. 133r.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid, ff. 133v-136r.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid, f. 135v.

⁷⁵⁸ See especially, the discussion of the *'Ilājāt-i Dārāshukohī* on pp. 148-149 in this dissertation.

Descriptions of the medicinal qualities of wine or intoxicating beverages, however, do not routinely appear in Indo-Persian medical texts, and this can most likely be attributed to the influence of religious proscriptions. These texts do sometimes contain descriptions or prescriptions and recipes for items listed as *sharāb*, but these usually referred to medicinal beverages intended for specific indications, rather than to alcoholic drinks for routine or recreational use. For instance, the *Fawā'id al-Insān* carries entries for *sharāb* or medicinal syrup prepared from lavender (*uṣṭūkhūdūs*) and bloodroot (*anjabār*).⁷⁵⁹

Thus, it may be concluded from the foregoing discussion that medical views of wine were born out of a complex of intellectual, social, cultural and religious contexts. In the Indo-Persian and Islamicate ecumenes, this generally meant the balancing of tensions between robust wine drinking traditions and social anxieties concerning intoxicating beverages as well as religious and moral proscriptions of alcoholic drinks. Medical views on wine shared much in common with the manner in which other foods and consumables were dealt with in Persian pharmacological literature, both in terms of the importance of humoural beliefs and of the role of cultural practice in shaping medical prescription. However, in addition, they were particularly subject to a complex of varying and sometimes dissonant philosophical, mystical and religious traditions in a manner that most other foods were not.

Medical texts treated wine as a physical substance, but not isolated from its mystical connotations or its social role. In the section that follows, I will take a closer look at the many lives of wine in the Mughal cultural world, with a view to examining its socio-political functions and cultural character.

Wine as Substance and Symbol in the Mughal Empire

Among the Mughal elite, expensive wines were prized as gifts, and thus had particular social significance in the cultural dynamics of reciprocity and exchange. Shiraz wine was favoured, and European wines not distrusted. But liquors (usually referred to in English sources as arrack, an Anglicisation of the Arabic word *ʿarq* meaning sweat – and by extension – extract) were distilled across the subcontinent from various materials.⁷⁶⁰ These liquors were

⁷⁵⁹ “Fawā'id al-Insān”, microfilm NMC no. 26-10, pp. 126-128. As mentioned in chapter 4 of this dissertation (p. 151), the *Ḳhulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt* contains recipes for the preparation of *sharāb* from fruits and flowers such as quince (*bih*), pomegranates (*anār*) and violets (*banafsha*) [“Ḳhulāṣat al-Mujarrabāt”, MS BL IO Islamic 2814, ff. 179r-180r].

⁷⁶⁰ For a competent account of the various alcoholic beverages available on the subcontinent, see Chatterjee, “The Lives of Alcohol in Pre-Colonial India”, pp. 191-196.

often fermented from *tari* or toddy⁷⁶¹, but could also be distilled from other materials such as rice, jaggery and *mahu³a* (*Madhuca latifolia*).⁷⁶² John Ovington mentions three types of arrack: Goa arrack, Bengal arrack, and arrack from Batavia. The Bengal arrack, according to Ovington, was the stronger variety. Both were used by Europeans to make punch, and both could be obtained very cheaply.⁷⁶³ Ovington adds that arrack is distilled from either rice or toddy. A stronger, variety, called “Jagre [jaggery]” arrack was distilled from black sugar mixed with water, along with the bark of the Babul tree.⁷⁶⁴ John Jourdain mentions “reason wine” which was made by boiling raisins in arrack.⁷⁶⁵ Arrack also finds mention in the records of the English factories in India in the seventeenth century, as it was often a part of the traders’ and factors’ supplies.⁷⁶⁶ Jahāngīr talks about *bhāng* (hemp) and *boza* (spirit distilled from rice, millet or barley) being sold in bazaars, and he attempted to prohibit this.⁷⁶⁷ At another place, he notes that the people of *sarkār* Pakhlī prepare a kind of *boza* from rice and bread and call it *sar*. Jahāngīr adds that this drink was much stronger than the *boza* available elsewhere, and that this liquor got better as it aged.⁷⁶⁸

Bernier’s account contains a detailed description of the wines and spirituous liquors available in Delhi. According to him, the wine drunk in the Mughal Empire was “either Chiraz [Shiraz] or *Canary*”.⁷⁶⁹ He adds that Shiraz wine was first sent by land from Persia to Bandar Abbas and then dispatched to the port of Surat, from where it reached Delhi in forty-six days. Canary wine was brought by the Dutch to Surat. Both the Shiraz and Canary varieties were very expensive. Bernier also indicates the availability of “*Paris pints*”, which could not be purchased for less than six or seven crowns. Arrack also finds mention in Bernier’s account, which he describes as a very strong spirit distilled from unrefined sugar.

⁷⁶¹ For a description of the preparation of toddy (*tari*), see the account of Jean de Thevenot in *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. Surendranath Sen (New Delhi: National Archives of India, 1949), p. 24. Also, Mundy, *Travels of Peter Mundy*, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.

⁷⁶² See Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat, in the year 1689*, p. 142.

⁷⁶³ Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat, in the year 1689*, pp. 237-238.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 238.

⁷⁶⁵ John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617: Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India and the Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster (Cambridge: Haklyut Society, 1905), p. 132.

⁷⁶⁶ See for instance, the letter of President Rastell and the Council at Surat to the Commanders at Swally, November 17, 1630 in William Foster, ed., *English Factories in India, 1630-1633: A Calender of Documents in the India Office, Bombay Record Office Etc.*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 97. Quote: “Of rack [arrack] you may not expect any more than one but to be sent you before your departure hence for Persia”. This was during a great famine in Gujarat, hence the scarcity.

⁷⁶⁷ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 90; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 103. Text has B-W-R-H, but this makes no sense, and the missing dot is probably a printing error. For the translation of *boza*, see Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 206.

⁷⁶⁸ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 329; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 324. The text has Paglī instead of Pakhlī, but since I cannot find any reference to a Mughal *sarkār* of this name, and since Pakhlī is appropriate to the geography of the narrative, I have chosen to use Thackston’s reading.

⁷⁶⁹ Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, pp. 252-253.

Bernier claims that the sale of arrack was strictly forbidden, and that only the Christians dared drink it openly.⁷⁷⁰ However, this seems to be in contradiction to the widespread mention of such liquors in most contemporary accounts. Finally, Bernier tells us that “a wise man” would confine himself to “the pure and fine water, or to the excellent lemonade” that were easily available.⁷⁷¹

Drinking and the consumption of intoxicants such as opium and *ma^cjūn* (a narcotic confection) had a long history in Timurid social circles. The memoirs of Emperor Bābur are full of descriptions of drinking parties. In chapter 1, I have discussed the convivial nature of social gatherings in Bābur’s time, and the manner in which they evolved and changed as the Mughal state developed and imperial legitimacy was sought to be asserted.⁷⁷² Drinking parties provided occasions for male bonding and the celebration of kinship ties, as both Stephen Dale and Ruby Lal have noted in their respective analyses.⁷⁷³ Both discuss, in some detail, Bābur’s description of the events of the year 1519-20, which is peppered with accounts of such parties. One instance in particular illustrates the free camaraderie of such gatherings:

On Wednesday, after my morning draught, I said in jest that anyone who sang a song in Persian would be allowed to drink a cup of wine. Lots of people drank on that account. Early that morning we sat under some willow trees in the middle of the meadow. Then it was proposed that anyone who sang a song in Turkish would be allowed to drink a cup. Many also drank on that account. When the sun was well up, we went to the edge of the pool under the orange trees and drank.⁷⁷⁴

The humour and conviviality in this account is apparent, as is the freedom of intercourse eased by alcohol consumption by the male participants of the gathering. On another occasion, Bābur invited a woman, Hulhul Anika to a drinking party, telling Tardī Beg that he had never seen a woman drink. However, it appears that Hulhul Anika behaved in what was considered to be an inappropriate fashion under the influence of drink, and Bābur got rid of her by himself pretending to be drunk.⁷⁷⁵ This anecdote illustrates that it was rare for women to be a part of these drinking parties, but not entirely unthinkable for one to be invited.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 253.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid, p. 253.

⁷⁷² See chapter 1 “The emperor’s table: food, culture and power”, under the section “food, gender and space: articulations of imperial power”, pp. 22-35 in this dissertation.

⁷⁷³ Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, pp. 78-81; Dale, *The Garden of Eight Paradises*, pp. 143-144.

⁷⁷⁴ Bābur, *The Baburnama*, p. 303.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 300. Dale [*The Garden of Eight Paradises*, p. 312] observes that “if Bābur really had never seen a woman drink wine before it is a measure of how Timurid society had evolved to become more sedentary and Islamized than that of Timur himself”. For another analysis of this anecdote, see Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, pp. 80-81.

That drinking and the consumption of intoxicants were associated with companionship and conviviality is also apparent from the following description that Bābur offers of his own father, °Umar Shaikh Mirzā:

He used to drink a lot. Later in life he held drinking parties once or twice a week. He was fun to be with in a gathering and was good at reciting poetry for his companions. He grew rather fond of *ma^cjūn*, and under its influence would lose his head. He was of a scrappy temperament and had many scars and brands to show for it. He played backgammon a lot and occasionally gambled.⁷⁷⁶

The above quote also suggests that drinking was regarded as a common princely and warrior pastime, along with gambling and bonding with male compatriots. These were traditions and cultural concepts that appeared to have enjoyed a long cultural life.

An analysis of the many accounts of drinking in Bābur's memoirs also offers a glimpse into the tensions between the warrior cult of consuming intoxicants on the one hand, and Islamic religious proscriptions on the other. Despite religiously inspired discomfort over the practice, drinking was common even among the pious. In his brief biographies of Uzbek notables, Bābur often mentions the fondness for drinking among many of the observant and god-fearing. For instance, he records that Sulṭān Aḥmad Mirzā (b. 1451) was of orthodox Ḥanafī belief and never missed his prayers, even when drinking.⁷⁷⁷ One of Sulṭān Aḥmad's wives, Qataq Begam is also mentioned as being fond of wine.⁷⁷⁸ Again, when introducing Baisunghar Mirzā, Bābur once again notes his fondness for the wine cup, adding however, that when not drinking the *mirzā* performed his prayers.⁷⁷⁹ This once again suggests that some contradiction between drinking and the performance of religious duties was recognised, but that this did not stop many of the pious from being avid imbibers.

Drinking in Bābur's account was associated with a variety of qualities, from military prowess and the warrior ethic, to hedonism. For instance, Bābur records that the sons of Sulṭān Ḥusain Mirzā were brave and courageous warriors. But he also tells us that they were addicted to drink and indulged in much revelry and debauchery.⁷⁸⁰ In fact, one of his sons, Ibrāhīm Ḥusain Mirzā, is said to have died due to his overindulgence in Herat wine.⁷⁸¹ This association of drinking with the warrior ethic must not be seen as being in contradiction with its relationship to conviviality. In fact, both these were among the complex of characteristics

⁷⁷⁶ Bābur, *The Baburnama*, p. 10.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 22.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 194.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 199.

that were associated with male warriors in a society infused with the *ghaza* ethic. Wine and drinking played key roles as signifiers of male camaraderie in this socio-political setting.

The significance of alcoholic beverages as agents of male bonding was such that often the social pressure to drink was not insignificant, and it was not always easy for those who chose to abstain. This is evident from an anecdote that Bābur narrates of a wine party held in September 1519:

A few mule-loads of wine had been brought from Dara-i-Nur, so after the evening prayer there was a wine party. The members of the party included Muhibb-Ali Qorchī, Khwaja Muhammad-Ali Kitabdar, Shah-Hasan son of Shah Beg, Sultan-Muhammad Dulday, and Darwesh Muhammad Sarban. Darwesh-Muhammad was abstaining. From my childhood it has been my rule not to force drink on anyone who did not drink. Darwesh-Muhammad was always at these parties and no coercion was exerted. However, Khwaja Muhammad-Ali would not leave him alone and kept trying to compel him to drink.⁷⁸²

It is apparent from the above account that while Bābur obviously felt his non-coercive approach to be superior, this does not seem to necessarily have been the norm in such parties.

Bābur pledged to give up drinking at the age of forty, and at the very beginning of the year 1520, he confesses to “drinking to excess out of anxiety”.⁷⁸³ This anxiety was probably brought about by the hectic campaigning that Bābur had been engaging in at the time.⁷⁸⁴ Bābur finally gave up drinking in 1527 on the eve of his battle against Rana Sanga. His public declaration on the occasion underlined the *ghaza* motivation of the campaign and served to motivate and rally his troops. Wine cups and goblets were dutifully and ceremoniously smashed into smithereens. The renunciation of wine by Bābur was not merely a personal act of repentance or reformation. It had a very clear political aim in terms of motivating his *ghaza*-oriented warring party on the eve of the Battle of Khanua.⁷⁸⁵ He spoke to his troops on this occasion, encouraging them to take up the sword for the sake of Islam. Although genuine feelings of devotion towards the cause of holy war cannot be entirely discounted, the fact that *raison d’etat* and pragmatism motivated Bābur on this occasion is clear from his declaration that:

⁷⁸² Ibid, p. 294.

⁷⁸³ Ibid, p. 303.

⁷⁸⁴ According to Dale [*The Garden of Eight Paradises*, p. 311], the prominence given to descriptions of gatherings and entertainments in Bābur’s accounts of the year 1519 and 1520 “probably reflects in part at least the powerful nostalgia he felt for his social life in Kabul as he struggled in the enervating Indian climate to subdue the panoply of Muslim and Hindu rulers he encountered in northern India”.

⁷⁸⁵ For an analysis of the events surrounding the Battle of Khanua, see *ibid*, pp. 342-349.

Beg and liege man, great and small alike, all willingly took Korans in their hands and swore oaths to this effect. It was a really good plan, and it had a favourable effect on friend and foe.⁷⁸⁶

Thus, wine could play various symbolic roles in a *ghaza*-imbued warrior society. On the one hand, it acted as an agent of male bonding and as a symbol of the warrior ethic. But on the other hand, giving up drink could also symbolise devotion to the cause of holy war, and have the potential effect of galvanising and motivating *ghaza*-oriented warriors. After the battle of Khanua, while Bābur seems to have remained faithful to his pledge to stay off wine, he did not give up intoxicants entirely. Instead, wine parties were merely replaced by *ma'jūn* parties.⁷⁸⁷ Thus, the role of intoxicants in oiling the bonds of male social conviviality remained significant.

The entire discourse of wine in the *Bāburnāma* – from displays of excess to pledges of abstinence – was pegged around the socio-political circumstances and exigencies of a *ghaza*-oriented military-social community. For the reign of Humāyūn, we do not have the same volume of evidence in order to be able to judge the extent to which this reign represented a point of cultural evolution in the consumption of wine. Nevertheless, as discussed in chapter 1, etiquette and order were beginning to be emphasised to a relatively greater extent. One instance from Bāyazīd's account that testifies to this was when Humāyūn chided Qoch Beg's son Sherafkan for coming into the court drunk.⁷⁸⁸ According to Jauhar Āftābchī's account, when Kāmṛān paid homage to Humāyūn, "they brought in a goblet and gave half to the emperor and half to Mirzā Kāmṛān..."⁷⁸⁹ This sharing of wine from a goblet clearly symbolised a ritual coming together after Kāmṛān's rebellion against Humāyūn had created acrimony between the two brothers.

As discussed in chapter 1, Akbar attempted not only to build Mughal state structures, but also to construct instruments of imperial legitimacy. Various ideologies and symbolisms were drawn on for this purpose, many of which centred on rituals of consumption. The symbolism of wine, ever present in Indo-Persian cultural discourse, formed a key aspect of the allegorical representations of power under Akbar. Efforts were made to regulate the sale of wine, requiring its dispensation to be made only against a physician's prescription. Akbar's

⁷⁸⁶ Bābur, *The Baburnama*, p. 384.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 418, 448.

⁷⁸⁸ Bāyazīd Bayāt, "Tārīkh-i Humāyūn", in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. II, text, p. 42; translation, p. 31.

⁷⁸⁹ Jauhar Āftābchī, "Tadhkiratu l-wāqi'āt", in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, ed. and trans. Thackston, Vol. I, Persian text, p. 173; translation, p. 144.

dastūru-l ʿamal (circular) enumerating the duties of officers of the Empire circulated on 21 March 1594 contains the following prescription:

Should make every effort to enforce prohibition (in his jurisdiction) and with the approval of the *ḥākim* should punish its buyers, sellers and distillers so severely that this should be a lesson to the people. If, however, used as a medicine to increase the intellect (*ḥikmat u hoshafzāʿī*), questions should not be raised.⁷⁹⁰

Here, we notice not only attempts at controlling the distillation and sale of wine, but also allowances made for its medical use. This point is reinforced in other contemporary comments. For instance, in the context of a comment on the character and behaviour of Malwa ruler Bāz Bahādūr, Abū-l Faḥr discusses the proper use of wine as follows:

Wine, which experts have prescribed, in small quantities and at fixed times, in consideration of the arrangement and composition of their bodily elements, for certain temperaments and constitutions, was made by this man [Bāz Bahādūr], who was immersed in bestial pleasures, a cause of increased indolence, and without distinguishing night from day or day from night, was continually indulging in it.⁷⁹¹

Here the proper consumption of wine is associated with its medical use, for the purpose of preserving bodily health and humoral balance. Recalling my discussion from chapter 1, this mode of theorising the ‘proper’ use of wine may be linked to the broader complex of ideas related to bodily health, discernment and temperamental balance around which Abū-l Faḥr pinned ideas of perfection and imperial charisma.⁷⁹² It may also be linked to what Rosalind O’Hanlon terms as the construction of imperial service under Akbar around a “socially inclusive model of masculine virtue”,⁷⁹³ since imperial servants were expected to implement Akbar’s policies of temperance. Through these attempts to regulate the consumption of wine, the instruments of legitimacy built by Akbar continued to draw on hallowed Indo-Persian wine traditions, even while imposing a certain discipline over their more hedonistic aspects. In this context, it is also pertinent to note that from Abū-l Faḥr’s description cited above, it is apparent that Akbar drank alone – just as he ate in imperial solitude.⁷⁹⁴

Akbar’s attempts to regulate the sale of wine nevertheless drew criticism from orthodox Muslims. The Emperor’s trenchant and bitter critic, Badāʿūnī, penned the following caustic description of Akbar’s measures concerning the sale of wine:

⁷⁹⁰ Abū-l Faḥr, *Inshā-i Abū-l Faḥr*, URL: <http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10219499.html> (accessed 12.12.2013), p. 72; *Mukātabāt-i ʿAllāmī (Inshāʿi Abūʿl Faḥr)*, trans. Haider, p. 85.

⁷⁹¹ Abū-l Faḥr, *Akbarnāma*, Vol. II, ed. Maulawī ʿAbdu-r-Raḥīm, p. 136; *The Akbar Nāma of Abu-l-Faḥr*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. II, p. 211. Beveridge’s translation somewhat modified.

⁷⁹² See pp. 24-32 in this dissertation.

⁷⁹³ O’Hanlon, “Kingdom, Household and Body: History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar”, p. 892.

⁷⁹⁴ See p. 27 in this dissertation.

Another was that wine must be drunk, if for the healing of the body (*rafāhīyat badanī*) by the advice of physicians. But lest confusion and wickedness should become more common on this account, he laid down severe punishments on excessive drinking, carousals, and disorderly conduct. And in order to keep the matter within due bounds he set up a wine shop near the palace, under the charge of the porter's wife who by birth belongs to the lineage (*nasl*) of wine merchants (*khammār*), and appointed a fixed tariff. Persons who wished to purchase wine, as a remedy for illness, could do so by having their name, and that of their father and grandfather, written down by the clerk. Some by deceit had false names written down, and so obtained wine – for who could accurately enquire into the matter? And [in point of fact] a shop for the benefit of drunkards was opened. They say moreover that swine-flesh formed a component of that wine, but God knows! In spite of all precautions, confusion and wickedness raised its head, and however many persons were everyday punished, no practical result was effected.⁷⁹⁵

What is interesting about Badā'ūnī's comment above is not its predictable criticism of the sale of wine; rather, it is that he does not question the idea that wine could be salubrious, if properly and moderately consumed. The medical benefits of wine seemed beyond question even to a staunch Muslim like Badā'ūnī, whose cultural and intellectual existence within the Indo-Persian cultural ecumene exposed him to very complex narratives on wine. Indeed, it seems to have been part of received wisdom for a man of his class and education. Instead, his criticism of Akbar's measures revolves around the inevitable misuse of such attempts to regulate the sale of wine.

Akbar's own sons were famously immune to the imposition of any kind moderation in the consumption of wine. Two of his sons, Murād and Daniyāl apparently died prematurely due to overindulgence.⁷⁹⁶ His eldest son, Salīm – who succeeded him as Jahāngīr – managed to rule for twenty-two years, but constantly struggled with his wine addiction. In fact, his memoirs contain detailed descriptions of his travails with the wine cup from an early age.

To some extent, Jahāngīr's engagement with intoxicants should be viewed in the context of his overall endeavour to identify with his father's policies. He attempted to follow in his father's footsteps in reiterating Akbar's measures to control the production and sale of wine, but he was clearly aware of the contradiction that these policies displayed vis-à-vis his

⁷⁹⁵ Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, ed. Capt. W. N. Lees and Munshi Ahmad Ali, pp. 301-302; *Muntakhabu't Tawārīkh*, Vol. II, trans. W. H. Lowe, p. 311. Lowe's translation slightly modified.

⁷⁹⁶ All Persian sources attest to the heavy drinking habits of Murād and Daniyāl, and attribute their death to alcohol addiction. However, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has suggested from his study of Portuguese sources that it is possible that Murād's death in 1599 may have been ordered by the Portuguese viceroy Dom Francisco da Gama (1565-1632). See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Viceroy as Assassin: The Portuguese, the Mughals and Deccan Politics, c.1600", in *Sinners and Saints: The Successors of Vasco da Gama*, ed. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 162-203.

own drinking habits. Writing of the twelve decrees (*dastūru-l ʿamal*) that he issued soon after his accession, Jahāngīr confesses:

No wine, spirits, or any sort of intoxicant or forbidden liquor is to be manufactured or sold. This despite the fact that I myself commit the sin of drinking wine and have constantly persisted in doing so from the age of eighteen until my present age of thirty-eight. In my youth, when I was an avid drinker, I sometimes consumed twenty cups of double-distilled spirits (*ʿarq-i do ātisha*). Because little by little it was having a severe effect upon me, I began to decrease my intake. Within seven years I reduced it from fifteen cups to five or six. I also drank at various times: sometimes I began to drink three or four hours before the end of the day, sometimes I drank at night, and occasionally I drank during the day. Until the age of thirty this is how it was. After that I decided that I would drink only at night. These days I drink solely to promote digestion.⁷⁹⁷

Jahāngīr's testimony above not only documents his struggle to limit his intake of wine, but is also additional evidence for the widespread acceptance of the medical properties of wine. Thus, the Emperor reportedly attempted to restrict his wine consumption to what was required to promote digestion. Or at least, his cultural context allowed him to righteously supply this as an excuse for continuing to indulge in his addiction. That alcohol occupied an important place in his life – and that he may have felt rather guilty about his drinking habits – is indicated by the manner in which he repeatedly returns to reminiscing and musing about his addiction throughout his memoirs.

In a long account, which is worth quoting in full, Jahāngīr gives a detailed account of the manner in which his addiction to liquor began and grew:

Then, when my exalted father's entourage was camped to deal with the Yūsufzaʿī Afghans in the Attock fortress on the banks of the Nīlāb River, one day I mounted to go hunting. Since I overdid it and got exhausted, a wonderful gunner named Ustād Shāh Qulī, the chief of my uncle Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm's gunners said to me, "If you drink a beaker of wine, it will relieve your exhaustion." Since I was young and my nature was inclined to do these things, I ordered Maḥmūd the water carrier (*ābdār*) to go to Ḥakīm ʿAlī's house and bring some alcoholic syrup. The physician sent a cup and a half of yellow coloured, sweet tasting wine in a small bottle. I drank it and liked the feeling I got. After that I started drinking wine, increasing it day by day until I no longer got a kick out of grape wine (*sharāb-i angūrī*) and started drinking liquor (*ʿarq*). Little by little, over nine years, it increased to twenty cups of doubled distilled spirits, fourteen during the day and rest at night. By weight that much is six Hindūstanī *sers*, which is equivalent to one and a half Iranian maunds. During

⁷⁹⁷ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 6; *Jahangirnama*, trans. Thackston, p. 26. Thackston's translation retained.

those days my only food was the equivalent of one meal with bread and radishes. In this state no one had the power to stop me. Things got so bad that in my hangovers my hands shook and trembled so badly I couldn't drink myself but had to have others help me.⁷⁹⁸

Jahāngīr's description here provides a graphic account of the range of intoxicating beverages of varying strengths that he consumed, as he progressively graduated from lighter to stronger drinks. It also gives us an idea of the assortment of wines and intoxicating beverages that members of the Mughal elite were accustomed to consume. Grape wine, though an important and favoured beverage, was not the only intoxicant of choice. Harder liquors were not out of favour for those desperately seeking to achieve an intoxicating high. It is easy to see how, despite Akbar's public attempts at controlling wine, his own sons fell hopelessly into a mire of addiction. Socially and culturally, there was little to control the drinking habits of princes. Ultimately, it was only Jahāngīr's own realisation of his desperate situation that impelled him to seek help. Thus, he gives an account of how he eventually sought medical advice over his deteriorating condition, and the manner in which he attempted to withdraw from his addiction:

Finally I summoned Ḥakīm Humām, Ḥakīm Abū-l Faṭḥ's brother and one of my exalted father's confidants, and informed him of my condition. In perfect sincerity and compassion he said, with no beating around the bush, "Highness, the way you're drinking, in another six months – God forbid – things will be so bad it will be beyond remedy." Since his words were spoken out of genuine concern (*khair-andeshī*), and life is precious, it made a great impression on me. From that date I began to decrease the amount and started taking philonium⁷⁹⁹, increasing it by the amount I decreased the wine. Then I ordered the spirits mixed with grape wine, two parts wine to one part spirits, and I kept decreasing the amount I drank every day. Over a period of seven years I got it down to six cups, the weight of a cup being eighteen and a quarter *miṣqāls*.⁸⁰⁰ I have now been drinking like this for fifteen years without increase or decrease. I only drink at night, but not on Thursday, the day of my accession, or on Friday eve, a blessed night of the week. Out of these two considerations I drink at the end of the day because I don't like to let the night go by in

⁷⁹⁸ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 174-175; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, pp. 184-185. Thackston's translation retained. Text inexplicably has the meaningless "Nablāb" river. Thackston's reading of "Nīlāb" is correct.

⁷⁹⁹ According to the *Lughatnāma* of Dihkḥudā, *filūniyā* (philonium) is a confection made of hemp seeds, poppy and opium, and is used as an intoxicant [Dihkḥudā, *Lughatnāma*, ed. Ja'far Shahīdī and Muḥammad Mu'īn, p. 15186].

⁸⁰⁰ Thackston's translation has seventeen and three quarter *miṣqāls*, (= 81.65 ml) but the text clearly says *hazhdah miṣqāl u yak pā'o* (or eighteen and one quarter *miṣqāls*, which is equivalent to 83.95 ml). There is no footnote in Thackston's translation to explain this. Elsewhere, Jahāngīr mentions cups (*piyāla*) of 7½ *tolas* as well as 6 *tolas*, 3 *mashes* [Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 275, *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 276. These are equivalent to 90.375 ml and 75.3 ml respectively (See *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, "Appendix A", p. 473). So clearly there was no standard *piyāla* or cup measure.

negligence without rendering thanks to the True Benefactor...After a while I substituted opium for the philonium. Now that I am forty-six years and four months old by solar reckoning, or forty-seven years and nine months by lunar reckoning, I have eight *surkhs* of opium after the elapse of five *gharīs* of the day and six *surkhs* after the first watch of the night.⁸⁰¹

Jahāngīr's account above is revealing of his struggle with wine and other intoxicants, and of his oscillation between addiction and the desire to maintain some level of temperance. The intervention of physicians in Jahāngīr's engagement with wine reveals much about the manner in which addiction was considered more a medical issue than a moral one. No mention of religious proscriptions is made here. Also, as is revealed above, even as he decreased his consumption of wine, he replaced it with other intoxicants such as philonium and opium. Jahāngīr also observed non-drinking days, the justification for which derived from two distinct traditions: imperial ideas of temperance guided his abstinence from wine on Thursdays, and the Islamic proscription of wine was the reason for his not drinking on Friday eve.⁸⁰² Further, without explicitly citing the Qur'ān, Jahāngīr invokes the classic Qur'ānic objection to wine: that it disturbs prayer and hinders the relationship between the believer and the divine. These were deeply ingrained concepts that coexisted and jostled with other cultural beliefs associated with wine. A notable feature of Jahāngīr's engagement with wine addiction as presented in his memoirs is the same 'proto-scientific' concern for precision and measurement that he displays in his expressions of connoisseurship.⁸⁰³ This is evident in the exact measurements he provides for the quantities of intoxicants he consumes. Whether these quantities are honestly reported is beside the point; what is significant is that rather than adhering to the typical style of exaggerated and stylised descriptions common in Persian texts, Jahāngīr prefers to supply his readers with 'accurate' details.

Another striking aspect of Jahāngīr's descriptions of his struggle with wine addiction is the frank manner in which he addresses his own weaknesses. Conermann observes the openness with which the Emperor discusses personal matters in his memoirs:

In seinen *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* [*Jahāngīrnāma*] präsentiert sich Jahāngīr als ein Mensch, der sich die Welt nicht mit Hilfe der Vernunft erschließt, sondern seine Umwelt hauptsächlich über die Sinne aufnimmt. Man ist bei der Lektüre überrascht, wie freimütig der Herrscher über Persönliches spricht. Er gewährt seinen Lesern

⁸⁰¹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 175; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 185. Thackston's translation slightly modified. 1 *miṣqāl* = 4.6 grams and 1 *surkh* = 0.875 carats (*Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, "Appendix A", p. 473).

⁸⁰² This would have been Thursday evening by European reckoning, since the Islamic day starts at dusk.

⁸⁰³ See p. 66 in this dissertation.

Einsicht in ein Privatleben das üblicherweise von der Außenwelt sorgsam abgeschottet wird. Durch die Schilderung etwa seiner Krankheiten oder Alkoholprobleme entsteht eine ansonsten in den mogulzeitlichen historiographischen Schriften nicht anzutreffende Komplizenschaft zwischen Autor und Leserschaft.⁸⁰⁴

However, it is not merely frankness that is a notable character of Jahāngīr's memoirs, but an element of self-criticism as well as an expressed desire to reform. This is relatively unusual in early modern South Asian literature, particularly on the part of an Emperor. The larger implications of this deserve more research. I also do not agree that 'reason' or 'rationality' can be separated in Jahāngīr's memoirs from sensual experience. All these aspects were meshed together in the Emperor's personal account of his engagement with hunting and his addiction to alcoholic beverages.

Despite Jahāngīr's regulations against the production and sale of wine, there were many exceptions to these rules at his own court. For instance, on the first Nauroz (Persian New Year) after his accession, Jahāngīr decreed that "everyone could drink whatever intoxicants or exhilarants they wanted without prohibition or impediment."⁸⁰⁵ On this occasion, he also quotes one of Ḥāfiz's verses:

Cup-bearer, brighten our goblet with the light of wine!

*Sing, minstrel, for the world is working as we desire.*⁸⁰⁶

The quoting of one of Ḥāfiz's verses, imbued with wine imagery, is indicative of the manner in which Persian cultural and poetic traditions often overruled tendencies towards temperance, and served as hallowed justification for indulgence. This was especially pertinent on the occasion of Nauroz. It also illustrates the influence of Ṣufiistic poetic traditions on the cultural subtext of the drinking culture at the Mughal court.

Despite his desire to impose a certain moderation in the consumption of alcoholic beverages, Jahāngīr's memoirs are replete with anecdotes of wine parties and drinking bouts. On one occasion during his second regnal year, he mentions drinking wine with intimates while out fishing. In the same year, on the eve of his departure from Kabul, he ordered a feast day, which he describes as follows:

On Thursday the sixth [August 19, 1607] I went to His Majesty Firdaus-Makānī's [Bābur] throne platform. Since I was leaving Kabul the next day, I considered that day a holiday like °Arafa, and there and

⁸⁰⁴ Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, p. 430.

⁸⁰⁵ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 29; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 46. Thackston's translation only slightly tweaked.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid. Thackston's translation retained.

then I ordered a wine party arranged and the basin carved in the rock filled with wine. All the intimates and courtiers who were present were given many goblets. Few days have passed as pleasantly.⁸⁰⁷

The mood and tone of the above description to some extent recalls the convivial atmosphere of Bābur's memoirs. Evidently, wine enabled elements of the older freer forms of social intercourse to materialise from behind the veil of the new more restrictive order. The peripatetic nature of the Mughal court, especially pronounced during the reign of Jahāngīr, may have contributed somewhat to the survival of these cultural remnants.⁸⁰⁸ The emperor's overwhelming attachment to wine was also a crucial factor. Yet, we find that these gatherings were more controlled and focussed on the person of the emperor than in Bābur's time. Jahāngīr's description of another such entertainment runs as follows:

On Thursday the thirteenth [March 28, 1610], corresponding to the nineteenth of Farwardīn, the day of culmination and a day of happiness for the sun, I ordered a celebration held and all sorts of intoxicants brought. I ordered that the *umarā'* and the others could partake of whatever they liked. Most chose wine, although a few took *mufarriḥ* [a narcotic concoction] and some ate as many opiates as they wanted. It was a splendid party.⁸⁰⁹

Once again we notice similar elements of the manner in which wine enabled an atmosphere of conviviality despite the ideal imperial order of restraint. However, elements of control and circumscription are also noticeable. Celebrations were not spontaneous; rather they happened on the Emperor's orders. Most of the wine parties recorded by Jahāngīr seem to have been attended exclusively by men. However, there is one instance in which Jahāngīr records the members of the harem (*mardum-i maḥal*) as also being present.⁸¹⁰

One of the most important factors that may be implicated in the survival of this culture of wine-drinking is the Indo-Iranian *razm u bazm* tradition of hard drinking and hard fighting, which has been referred to in the opening section of this chapter. As Jahāngīr recalls advising his son Ḳhurram (later Shāhjahān) on the occasion of his weighing ceremony:

On Friday the twenty-fifth [January 5, 1616], the weighing of my son Ḳhurram took place. Until this year, when he is in his twenty-fourth year, is married and has children, he has never defiled himself by drinking wine. On this day, his weighing ceremony, I said "Baba has

⁸⁰⁷ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, pp. 69-70; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 83. Thackston's translation retained.

⁸⁰⁸ On the peripatetic nature of the Mughal court under Jahāngīr, see Lisa Balabanlilar, "The Emperor Jahangir and the Pursuit of Pleasure", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 19, no. 2 (April 2009), pp. 173-186.

⁸⁰⁹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, pp. 96-97; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 108. Minor alteration made to Thackston's translation.

⁸¹⁰ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 181; *Jahāngīrnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 190.

children, and *monarchs and princes have always drunk*. Today, which is your weighing ceremony day, I let you drink wine and give you permission to drink on festival days, on Nauroz and on great occasions, but you must keep to the path of moderation because drinking wine to the point that you lose your reason is not allowed by the wise. There must be a profit and benefit in drinking. Bū °Alī [Avicenna], the great physician and doctor, has said this in poetry:

Wine is an enemy to the drunk and a friend to the sober

A little is an antidote, but too much is snake's venom.

In too much the harm is not insignificant;

In a little there is great benefit.”

It took great persistence to get him to drink.⁸¹¹

Many significant and revealing points may be noted from the above quotation. Firstly, Jahāngīr begins by noting that K̲h̲urram had until that point of time not “defiled himself” with wine. And yet, he sets about persuading him to drink because “monarchs and princes have always drunk”. This is a clear reference to the Indo-Iranian *razm u bazm* tradition. Male members of royalty were not merely permitted to drink: tradition *demande*d that they do so. Jahāngīr goes on to give the familiar advice on moderation, perhaps also somewhat influenced by his own experience. This counsel drew not only on philosophical and moral notions of balance and moderation, but on medical ideas pertaining to intoxicating beverages. And, in fact, Jahāngīr quotes Avicenna in support of his advice.

We also get a ringside view to Jahāngīr’s drinking habits from an external source – the account of Sir Thomas Roe. Writing to the East India Company on the subject of presents, Roe says that:

Ther is nothing more welcome here, nor euer I saw a man soe enamord of drinke as both the King and Prince are of redd wyne, wherof the Governor of Suratt sent vp some pottle. Euer since, the King hath solicited for more. I thinck 4 or 5 handsome cases of that wyne wilbe more welcome than the richest Iewell in Cheapesyde.⁸¹²

From the above account, it is apparent that presents of wine were fairly routine. In fact, it appears from this quotation that the Emperor actually *demande*d gifts of wine. I have already discussed the significance of food and drinks as gifts in chapter 1.⁸¹³ Wine was one of those

⁸¹¹ Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Hāshim, p. 174; *Jahangirnāma*, trans. Thackston, p. 184. Thackston’s translation slightly modified. Italics added.

⁸¹² Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. William Foster, Vol. I (London: Haklyut Society, 1899), p. 119.

⁸¹³ See chapter 1 of this dissertation “The emperor’s table: food, culture and power”, under the section entitled “gift-giving and the political symbolism of food”, pp. 46-53.

items of gift that were highly esteemed and appreciated, particularly in Mughal circles. The cultural significance of wine within the Indo-Persian ecumene was doubtless the main cause of the privileged position that wine enjoyed among items of gift. The value of wine as a present was also recognised by the English factors in India, as evidence gleaned from the English factory records makes apparent.⁸¹⁴

On another occasion, Roe describes a drinking party that Jahāngīr held on occasion of his own birthday:

Then he sent me woord it was his byrth day and that all men did make merry, and to aske if I would drinck with them. I answered: what soeuer his Maiestie Comanded: I wished him many prosperous dayes, and that this ceremonye might be renewed 100 years. Hee asked mee what wyne, whether of the grape or made, whither strong or small. I replied: what hee Comanded, hoping hee would not Command to much nor too strong. So hee Called for a Cupp of Gould of mingled wyne, halfe of the grape, halfe Artificiall, and dranck, causing it to bee fylld and sent it by one of his Nobles to mee with this message: that I should drinck it twice, thrice, four or five tymes off for his sake, and accept of the Cupp and apurtenances as a present. I dranck a little, but it was more strong then euer I tasted, so that it made mee sneese; wherat hee laughed and Called for reasons [raisins], almondes, and sliced lemons, which were brought mee on a Plate of gould, and hee bad mee eate and drinck what I would, and no more.⁸¹⁵

It is necessary to exercise caution in interpreting Roe's account, since there was much that he did not understand about Mughal court traditions. Language was also a barrier, since Roe spoke no Persian and did not have access to a reliable interpreter.⁸¹⁶ However, it seems apparent – at least from Roe's account of events – that on occasions such as the emperor's birthday, court notables were not merely *permitted* to “make merry”; there was a certain compulsion in this pleasure. Roe's reference to the strength of the wine that Jahāngīr served him is unsurprising. Wine in the Indo-Persian tradition was stronger than European wine; it was meant to be to heavily intoxicating.⁸¹⁷ Also notable are the many varieties of wine and spirituous liquors on offer, as well as the snacks such as raisins, almonds and lemons that

⁸¹⁴ A letter from Thomas Kerridge and Thomas Rastell at Surat on February 9th and 16th, 1619 notes that “allegant” (Allecante wine) and “strong waters” were useless except for presents [Foster, ed., *English Factories in India, 1618-1621* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p. 54]. In another instance, Thomas Joyce and Nathaniel Wyche at Masulipatam write to the Company on October 25 1634 about how esteemed Canary wine was to the King of Golconda: “a commoditie likewise of better esteeme amongst most of the nobility at court then to give five times its valewe in any thinge else” [Foster, ed., *English Factories in India, 1634-1636* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), pp. 46-47].

⁸¹⁵ Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, Vol. I [1899 edition], p. 256.

⁸¹⁶ Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks*, p. 158.

⁸¹⁷ Mathee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, pp. 44-45. Cited above in this chapter, p. 175.

attended the drinking ritual. The food, as always, was an accompaniment to the chief act of drinking.

In tune with the general trope of his narrative, Roe paints Jahāngīr as a frivolous monarch, more interested in drinking than in the affairs of state. In this vein, he recalls the Emperor's probing questions about beer:

Soe with many passages of Iests, mirth and brages concerning the arts of his Countrye, hee fell to aske mee questions: how often I dranck a day, and how much and what? What in England? What beere was? How made? and whether I could make it heere? in all of which I satisfied his great demands of state.⁸¹⁸

What emerges from all the evidence presented above regarding Jahāngīr's engagement with wine and other intoxicating beverages is a lot of complexity and many contradictions. It is undoubtedly clear, that like many others of his socio-cultural background, Jahāngīr was fond of wine to the point of addiction. This drew, as has been pointed out, from hallowed Indo-Iranian wine drinking traditions. Yet, he inherited both Islamic proscriptions of wine, as well as his father's attempts to impose certain restrictions on the production and consumption of wine as part of his project of imperial legitimacy building. Caught as Jahāngīr was between these two extremes, he forever oscillated between indulgence and temperance. And these contradictions were never resolved.

Jahāngīr's son and successor Shāhjahān succeeded to the throne in 1627 after a long period of rebellion as a prince, and a hard-fought battle of succession following his father's death. The new emperor thus initiated fresh attempts at bolstering his authority. Shāhjahān's endeavours at building his legitimacy were both genealogical as well as ideological. Genealogically, he adopted Tīmūr's title, calling himself Ṣāhib Qirān-i Ṣānī ("Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction" the second).⁸¹⁹

In ideological terms, Shāhjahān attempted to gain legitimacy as a defender of the Islamic faith. One of his early steps as emperor, according to histories of his reign, was to end the practice of *sijda* or prostration.⁸²⁰ Histories of his reign also portray him as a sober ruler who shunned drinking. Already as a prince, he had given up wine during his expedition to the

⁸¹⁸ Ibid, p. 225. Beer as it is known today began to be brewed in England around the 1480s, principally with the addition of hops to ale. This development incidentally led to the displacement of women from brewing work and turned it into a male bastion. See Judith Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 77-97. This process was unknown in India at the time.

⁸¹⁹ For the history and significance of this title, see Naindeep Singh Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the *Sāhib Qirān*", *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009), pp. 93-110.

⁸²⁰ *Sijda* or prostration before the Emperor was opposed by the orthodox because it contradicted the principle of a unique God, who is the only one worthy of worship and veneration.

Deccan in 1621. The historian Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kaṃbo gives a very detailed account of Shāhjahān's elaborate and ceremonious renunciation of wine. According to this account, Shāhjahān had not touched wine until the age of twenty-four, and only sipped a little on occasions of feasts and celebrations on the insistence of his father.⁸²¹ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ tells us that Shāhjahān pledged to give up wine at the age of thirty. This account also makes a direct and pointed reference to Bābur and the manner in which the first Mughal emperor had given up wine on the eve of his battle with Rānā Sāngā, and following which he achieved victory.⁸²² Emulating his great-great grandfather, Shāhjahān made a public show of his renunciation on the occasion of the weighing ceremony on his thirtieth lunar birthday on the banks of the river Chenab. On his orders, wine was thrown into the river and all the jewel-studded wine jars of gold and silver were smashed into pieces.⁸²³ As the historian °Ināyat Kḥān noted: “through the blessing of repentance from the blemish of wine, God Almighty awarded His Majesty victory and success over his enemies and made the difficult task of the expedition easy.”⁸²⁴ Once again, ideology, *raison d'état*, and the politics of dynastic legitimacy are meshed together in this account of Shāhjahān's act of renunciation. In other words, wine emerges in the narrative(s) of this act as a signifier of piety on the one hand, and as a means of foregrounding exemplary aspects of dynastic inheritance and imperial status on the other.

Aurangzeb, who came to the throne after imprisoning his father and fighting another bitter battle of succession, espoused a more rigorously Islamic imperial ideology – at least on the surface. According to Manucci's gossipy account, Aurangzeb was anguished at the rampant nature of wine drinking in the Empire. Manucci ascribes to Aurangzeb the bitter comment that there were only two people in the Empire who did not drink: °Abdu-l-Wahhāb, the chief Qāzī, and Aurangzeb himself.⁸²⁵ However, he caustically adds that in the case of °Abdu-l-Wahhāb, Aurangzeb was in error, for he (Manucci) himself sent the chief Qāzī a bottle of spirits (*vino*) everyday, which the latter drank in secret.⁸²⁶ Manucci narrates that on Aurangzeb's orders, the *kotwāl* (chief of police) – despite being a customer himself – went

⁸²¹ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Kaṃbo, *Shāhjahānnāma*, Vol. I, ed. Wāḥid Quraishī, annotated, Ghulām Yāzdānī (Lahore: Majlis-i Taraqqī-i Adab, 1967), p. 113.

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Ibid, p. 114.

⁸²⁴ Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhīr Kḥān Āshnā entitled °Ināyat Kḥān, *Mulakhkhas-i-Shahjahan-Nameh (Abridged Shahjahan Nameh)*, ed. Jamīlu-r-Raḥman (New Delhi: Centre for Persian Research, Office of the Cultural Counsellor, Islamic Republic of Iran, 2009), p. 54; *The Shahjahan Nama of °Inayat Khan*, trans. W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 9-10. Begley and Desai's translation retained.

⁸²⁵ Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1907), p. 5.

⁸²⁶ Ibid, pp. 5-6.

after wine vendors, each of whom was supposed to lose a hand and a foot as punishment.⁸²⁷ Further, according to Manucci, the regulations against wine were at first strictly enforced, but were eventually relaxed. During the initial period of strict enforcement, Mughal notables – unable to resist imbibing – distilled and drank within the privacy of their homes.⁸²⁸ Manucci’s account, with all its characteristic cynicism and hyperbole, is however, not the only source that indicates contradictions between imperial intent and the actual place of wine in Mughal society and culture.⁸²⁹

Such dissonances are particularly notable when we analyse the depiction of wine in Mughal art. Despite the efforts of Shāhjahān and Aurangzeb to impose an Islamic ethic of temperance, wine and the wine cup continued to be a significant motif in miniature paintings, as has been shown by Khare.⁸³⁰ These included paintings where the wine cup bore both hedonistic and mystical connotations. For instance, among the miniatures of the Pādshāhnāma is one depicting the presentation of gifts as part of the wedding celebrations of Dārā Shukoh; among the items gifted are wine cups, chalices and flasks.⁸³¹ The more mystically inclined miniature paintings include several depictions of princes engaged in discussions with dervishes, with wine cups and flasks between them.⁸³² However, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, wine was also represented in more worldly contexts: in celebration scenes, romantic scenes and depictions of princely life. References were also made to the royal *razm u bazm* tradition that Mathee has drawn attention to in his work.⁸³³ As Khare has shown, depictions of wine from the eighteenth century onwards present a distinct trend

⁸²⁷ Ibid, p. 6.

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

⁸²⁹ I highlight various aspects of these contradictions in this chapter, including instances from Mughal art. For further details, see also Chatterjee, “The Lives of Alcohol in Pre-Colonial India”, pp. 202-203.

⁸³⁰ Khare, “The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: From Hedonism to Kingship”.

⁸³¹ Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch, Wheeler M. Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), Plate 14. Previously referenced in Khare, “The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: from Hedonism to Kingship”, p. 152.

⁸³² Khare, “The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: From Hedonism to Kingship”, esp. pp. 151-165.

⁸³³ A couple of examples may be cited. In one miniature, *A Royal Entertainment* [Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, catalogue no. 21, pp. 193-194, colour plate, p. 88], attributed to Sūr Dās and dated 1600, an unidentified prince is shown holding a wine cup and sitting under a richly decorated canopy set within an idyllic garden surrounded by musicians, a sword-bearer and a poet with a book in hand. Wine here clearly represents the princely *razm u bazm* ethic. The richly appointed settings are one testament to the princely status of the painting’s main protagonist. The other symbolic marker of status is represented by the presence of two deer towards the bottom right hand corner of the miniature. This is most probably a reference to a key royal pastime: hunting. Thus, wine, hunting and the accoutrements of wealth and status are juxtaposed in this painting to highlight the royal identity of the central figure. Among the miniatures from Shāhjahān’s atelier is *Princes and Courtiers at Camp*, painted in 1650 by Payāg [Pratapaditya Pal, ed., *Master Artists of the Imperial Court* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991), see Joseph M. Dye, III, “Payāg”, p. 132. From the Hashem Khosrovani Collection]. In this miniature, a group of people including women, are huddled together at a camp by the light of a single candle. A man holds a wine cup in his hand, and a woman offers her lover another. One woman lies languorously on the lap of another. Food and wine are laid on the floor.

towards hedonism.⁸³⁴ Miniatures from this period include explicit sexual themes and depictions of women virtually in the nude accompanied by wine cups, flasks and chalices. Some of these paintings, however, are perhaps better interpreted as leaning more towards romantic sensuousness rather than rank hedonism.⁸³⁵

While wine drinking was particularly associated with kingship, it was in fact very much a part of everyday elite life within the Indo-Persian cultural ecumene. For instance, in the *Ma'āshiru-l Umarā* of Shāhnawāz K̲h̲ān Aurangābādī, Shaikh °Abdu-r Raḥīm, a Shaikhzāda (i.e., of Indian ancestry and extraction) of Lucknow is described as having been led into wine drinking by Jamāl Bakhtiyār, whose sister was one of Akbar's favourite wives. According to this biographical notice, he became so addicted to drinking that one day, at the time of returning from Kabul during Akbar's thirteenth regnal year, the Shaikh became deranged and wounded himself.⁸³⁶ Similarly, it is noted in the same text that Emperor Akbar was so offended by the smell of wine that exuded from the person of Shaikh Jamāl Bakhtiyār that he was excluded for a time from the court.⁸³⁷

The evidence that emerges from biographical dictionaries as well as from other sources reveals that within the Indo-Persian cultural ecumene, wine drinking was common among people of various backgrounds. The *Ma'āshiru-l Umarā* also contains biographical notices of Rajputs who were addicted to wine. For instance, both Kunwar Jagat Singh and his son Mahā Singh were said to have died due to excessive drinking.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁴ Khare, "The Wine-Cup in Mughal Court Culture: From Hedonism to Kingship", pp. 180-184.

⁸³⁵ One painting attributed to Gowardhan and dating to 1615-1620 [John Seyller (with introductions and interpretations by Konrad Seitz), *Mughal and Deccani Paintings* (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 2010), Plate 11, p. 55, description: p. 54] shows two scantily clad women on a bed sharing an intimate, sensual moment. The two women are shown gazing ardently at one another, as one of them offers the other a wine cup. Wine cups and chalices are also laid beside the bed. The carpet below depicts hunting scenes, and the background that frames the image is one of lush green. The symbolism of wine here is more complex than it appears at first; wine here is associated more with sensuousness than pure hedonism. Another miniature with a similar theme is that of a lovelorn lady, dated 1740 [Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Mughal India* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2008), Plate 56, p. 121, description: p. 120. MS Bodl. Ouseley Add. 171, f. 3v]. Almost nude with bared breasts, she sits in a garden flanked by two maids; one of them offers her a drink. The other clasps her hand so as to console her. The woman herself holds a garland of flowers in one hand. Flowers, fruits and wine flasks are laid beside her. In this miniature again, wine is associated with romantic love.

⁸³⁶ Shāhnawāz K̲h̲ān Aurangābādī, *Ma'āshiru-l Umarā*, Vol. II, ed. Maulawī °Abdur Raḥīm and Maulawī Mirzā Ashraf °Alī (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1890), pp. 564-565; *The Maāthir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. I, trans. Henry Beveridge, rev. Baini Prashad (Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979), p. 49.

⁸³⁷ Shāhnawāz K̲h̲ān Aurangābādī, *Ma'āshiru-l Umarā*, Vol. II, ed. Maulawī °Abdur Raḥīm and Maulawī Mirzā Ashraf °Alī, p. 566; *The Maāthir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. I, trans. H. Beveridge, rev. Baini Prashad, p. 741.

⁸³⁸ Shāhnawāz K̲h̲ān Aurangābādī, *Ma'āshiru-l Umarā*, Vol. III, ed. Maulawī Mirzā Ashraf °Alī (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1891), p. 150; *The Maāthir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. I, trans. H. Beveridge, rev. Baini Prashad, p. 725. Jahāngīr also records that both father and son died of excessive drink at the age of thirty-two [Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīrnāma: Tūzuk i-Jahāngīrī*, p. 215; Thackston, *Jahāngīrnāma*, p. 220].

Women also apparently drank. The *Ma'āşiru-l Umarā* records a famous anecdote dating to Shāhjahān's reign, according to which Prince Aurangzeb fell in love with a beautiful singer called Hīrābā'ī Zainābādī. The Prince would, according to this account, fill her wine cup with his own hand (*pyāla-i sharāb bedast-i khwud pur karda be o mīdād*).⁸³⁹ We also have the testimony (1626) of the Dutch factor Francisco Pelsaert that "... (i)n the cool of the evening they drink a great deal of wine, for the women learn quickly from their husbands, and drinking has become very fashionable in the last few years."⁸⁴⁰

From the evidence presented above, it is apparent that despite the (inconsistent) efforts of Mughal emperors to impose temperance both at the Mughal court and in the Empire at large, the drinking of wine remained a common practice. This prominence of wine in Mughal and Indo-Persian culture was also reflected in Mughal miniatures and in Persian poetry. Thus, during the Mughal period, there emerged and remained a stubborn contradiction between the intentions and pronouncements of Mughal emperors regarding wine on the one hand, and actual practice on the other. The attempts at imposing temperance arose from various motives. For Akbar, it was part of an attempt to assert a certain imperial ethic. Shāhjahān and Aurangzeb, on the other hand, employed the language of Islam in their attempts to curb wine-consumption.

The inability of successive Mughal emperors to regulate or prohibit the distillation, sale and consumption of wine was, to some extent, indicative of the limitations of imperial power. The drinking habits of princes and notables could not be effectively controlled because the deeply ingrained wine culture in Mughal social circles often trumped religious and social concerns regarding the drinking of intoxicating beverages. Even the emperor's writ was of little use in limiting the consumption of wine. This is hardly surprising, given that attempts at prohibition have historically had little effect.

It would be fruitful to compare this situation with that of Şafawid Iran. In Iran, there were several sultans who attempted to prohibit or regulate the production and consumption of wine. Shāh Ṭahmāsp gave up drinking following his proclamation of the Edict of Sincere Repentance in 1532-33.⁸⁴¹ Another ruler to have attempted something similar was Shāh °Abbās II (1642-66), whose reign began with a general ban on wine. However, he reneged on

⁸³⁹ Shāhnawāz K̄hān Aurangābādī, *Ma'āşiru-l Umarā*, Vol. I, ed. Maulawī °Abdur Raḥīm (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1888), pp. 790-791; *The Maāthir-ul-Umarā*, Vol. I, trans. H. Beveridge, rev. Bains Prasad, pp. 806-807.

⁸⁴⁰ Pelsaert, *Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstantie of Fransisco Pelsaert*, p. 65.

⁸⁴¹ Mathee, *In Pursuit of Pleasure*, p. 50.

this commitment in 1649.⁸⁴² But most other Şafawid rulers imbibed, some to excess. Drinking was always popular among the elite.⁸⁴³ In addition, it was often a practice for rulers to force their subordinates to drink.⁸⁴⁴ This complexity of circumstance, shifting between temperance and excess, to a large extent mirrors the Mughal situation. However, in the latter case, the ideological motivations for the restrictions on the production and consumption of wine often went beyond Islamic orthodoxy. The culture and symbolism of wine, within the Mughal context, was influenced both by imperial and Islamic ideologies of temperance. Both these forces had to contend with other traditions of wine drinking derived from Persian, Central Asian and other Islamic sources.

The question naturally arises as to whether Mughal wine traditions also drew on Hindu, Brahmanical or other Indic ideas on the consumption of intoxicants. The evidence of the sources does not seem to indicate any significant impact. This is unlike the case of Mughal debates on meat, which do appear to have been influenced by Brahmanical and Jain discourses.⁸⁴⁵ It is probable that the consumption of intoxicants simply was not as much of a focus of contentious argumentation within Brahmanical tradition as was meat-eating. On the other hand, wine was a controversial issue in Islamic discourse, and this naturally exercised a far greater influence on the evolution of Mughal wine culture as well as on debates surrounding the consumption of intoxicating beverages.

Before I conclude this section, I will briefly comment on some anthropological insights that may be drawn on the basis of my analysis here. Anthropological alcohol studies have raised a number of questions pertaining to the social and cultural forces that shape drinking habits in particular communities. A considerable volume of literature has been devoted to alcoholism and ‘the drinking problem’, but much other work has also dealt with more general questions concerning the cultural associations of alcoholic beverages.⁸⁴⁶

Questions of gender have been at the forefront of many investigations. Particular among these are investigations into the prevalence of homosocial drinking cultures among men, and why cultural restraints on drinking habits are so different for men and women. As Dimitra Gefou-Madianou frames the question: “Why is it that in the majority of the societies studied men may in certain contexts drink alcohol even in large quantities without cultural

⁸⁴² Ibid, p. 54.

⁸⁴³ Ibid, pp. 37-96.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 63-64.

⁸⁴⁵ See p. 31 in this dissertation.

⁸⁴⁶ See: Mary Douglas, ed., *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1987); Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, ed., *Alcohol, Gender and Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

impunity whereas women for the greater part either do not drink or, drink less and very rarely in homosocial gatherings?”⁸⁴⁷ No universal explanations can be offered for these phenomena. In case of the Central Asian, Iranian and Mughal traditions that we have surveyed above, there is certainly a significant observable tendency towards male homosocial drinking behaviours, although women also on occasion drank. I would argue that this trend towards male homosocialisation was linked to the fact that drinking was intimately associated with a warrior ethic and the princely *razm u bazm* tradition. It was this factor that rendered drinking practices as being capable of dissolving inter-personal boundaries on the one hand, as well as acting as an instrument of gender ordering and social control on the other. One crucial insight from anthropological research that is worth noting here is that drunken comportment is a culturally conditioned pattern of behaviour.⁸⁴⁸ Thus, the apparently anarchic bouts of drunken revelry often described in Mughal and Persian sources must be seen as conduct that was shaped within a certain socio-cultural context. These acts had socially encoded meanings, both for the person engaging in such behaviour as well as for others in the same cultural environment. In Turkic, Indo-Iranian and Mughal social circles, they essentially indicated membership of an exclusive male princely-warrior class.

Studies of wine and alcohol in human society that combine historical methods with anthropological insights are not large in number. Mathee’s study of wine and intoxicant culture in early modern Iranian history, which traces the trajectory of changes in drinking practices from the Şafawid to the Qājār periods thus serves as a rare and valuable point of reference. In this chapter, I have shown that there were several shifts in wine culture, drinking customs and imperial attitudes towards alcoholic beverages in early modern Indian history as well. These were a product of a combination of forces, both historical and anthropological; they included religious and cultural factors, social changes, gender relations and attempted assertions of imperial prestige. Thus, both anthropology and history must be integrated into any history of food and drink. This is the direction that the investigations and analyses presented in this chapter – as well as in my dissertation as a whole – have attempted to take.

Conclusion

Wine played diverse roles in Mughal cultural life, both as a substance and as a symbol in social discourse. In particular, the central argument of this chapter is that wine held a

⁸⁴⁷ Madianou, “Introduction”, in *Alcohol, Gender and Power*, p. 7.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2.

unique place in the Mughal cultural universe that derived significantly from Persian and Timurid forbears, but more significantly, that this culture developed over time and followed a distinct historical trajectory that was closely linked to the political developments of the Mughal Empire. As the Empire matured and as imperial prestige was sought to be asserted, wine became an object of contested discourse around which symbolisms of authority were constructed. Wine was at various points of time both glorified as an aspect of princely tradition, as well as sought to be controlled as an agent of disturbance and subversion. Islamic proscriptions of intoxicating beverages also played a significant role in the shaping of politico-cultural discourses on wine in Mughal India. In Indo-Persian feasting and drinking traditions, wine had a distinct relationship with food. In drinking rituals, it was always the food that accompanied the wine, rather than the other way around. On the other hand, in feasts where food was the focus, the consumption of intoxicating beverages does not appear to have played a significant role. The drinking of wine along with substantial meals does not find mention in the sources. Sherbets and lemonade may have been preferred accompaniments on such occasions.

To some extent, the trajectory of wine as a symbol in Mughal social discourse paralleled that of feasting. In chapter 1, I argued that with the development and maturation of Mughal tools of imperial legitimacy, feasting tended to become more ritualised and gender segregated. A similar process may be observed with wine drinking, but was riddled with greater complexities and contradictions. Imperial attempts to assert sobriety through controlling the distillation and sale of wine met with limited success. Even within the imperial establishment itself – as well as among the elite of the Empire – wine continued to be imbibed with considerable abandon. However, the conviviality of wine gatherings was constrained to some extent as drinking parties tended to be focussed on the person of the emperor. Wine always remained a part of imperial Mughal tradition because of its inalienable association in Indo-Persian discourse with the *razm u bazm* tradition of hard drinking and hard fighting. This continued to be the case even under the supposedly pious and sober reigns of Shāhjahān and Aurangzeb. Also, there remained a significant element of informality and conviviality in drinking parties and wine gatherings, despite Akbar's attempts to centre all feasting and drinking rituals on the emperor. Nowhere is the contradiction between imperial intent and actual practice more starkly visible than in the continued representation of wine in Mughal art throughout the Mughal and post-Mughal periods. Not only do Mughal miniatures furnish a pictorial record of wine drinking, but also illustrate the continued importance of wine as a symbol and metaphor.

To some extent, the complexities of political and cultural circumstances and the seemingly contradictory movements between temperance and indulgence in Mughal India paralleled the case of Şafawid and Qājār Iran. However, in Iran, the imperatives towards abstinence were guided mainly by Islamic considerations. In the Mughal case, the picture was somewhat more complex, since attempts to control the production and sale of wine also derived from discourses of imperial sobriety and control.

Another aspect analysed in this chapter concerns the manner in which wine was viewed within Islamicate and Indo-Persian medical traditions. In particular, I demonstrated the manner in which medical ideas about intoxicating beverages were influenced by religion and cultural practice. Wine also occupied a notable place among household remedies of the Mughal harem. This is similar to the manner in which remedies involving food were often circulated among women, as seen in the last chapter.

Lastly, it is important to take note of the importance of gender and gender regulation in the shaping of communal drinking practices. Drinking traditions in early modern India – as in much of Central Asia and Iran – tended to develop along male homosocial lines, although it is important to note that women were not necessarily abstainers. Ethnographical studies conducted among many communities and cultures around the world have often pointed towards similar trends, but no universal explanations can be offered for this. In the case of Mughal India, I have argued that this phenomenon may be traced to the association of drinking with princely and warrior traditions.

In a larger sense, feasting and drinking customs were shaped at a complex crossroads between communal traditions, gender relations as well as social and political symbolism. Despite significant differences and nuances, the roles of food and wine shared many commonalities in the evolution of convivial practices in Mughal India. Finally, I have noted the crucial importance of applying both historical and anthropological techniques of analysis to any study of food and drink in human societies.

Conclusion

“Food history is a slippery subject that resists the historian’s urge to generalize”, observes Joan Thirsk in her book *Food in Early Modern England*.⁸⁴⁹ This is because food is linked to a large number of variables and dynamics – biological, social, cultural, political and economic. Thus, there are many factors – from individual tastes and idiosyncrasies to cultural taboos – which influence and shape food practices across time and space. Changes in foodways usually occur unevenly and inconsistently. Nevertheless, it is possible to tease out distinct patterns of behaviour and change in food culture and diet. The food historian need not shy away from drawing broad conclusions on the basis of a collection of evidence; however, this must be undertaken with attention to complexity and nuance. This dissertation has surveyed evidence regarding food cultures and dietary practices from Mughal and post-Mughal India, i.e. from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Within this broad time frame, it has been possible to trace distinct shifts and patterns that enable certain conclusions to be drawn.

The spatial locus of this dissertation has been the Mughal city. Here, the city emerges as a theatre for staging displays of power and status through the symbolism of food. It is also a space where the food beliefs analysed in my work were both expressed and contested. It is within this urban context that I have examined various themes over the course of this thesis, including feasting customs, the food culture of the urban bazaar, connoisseurship, the culinary absorption of foreign foods, medical beliefs pertaining to food, and the role of wine in convivial rituals.

I have drawn extensively on Persian sources, apart from materials in English and Hindi. My focus has been to a large extent (although not exclusively) on the Indo-Persian ecumene. I have argued that this cultural sphere engendered a specific patron-oriented culture of connoisseurship. This is particularly exemplified in the *Ni^cmatnāma* cookbook produced under the aegis of the Sultans of Mandu. The miniature depictions in this manuscript place the Sultan – rather than the food itself – at the centre of the narrative. I have shown that this observation holds true for the genre of Indo-Persian cookbooks as a whole. Most specimens of this genre have no identifiable author, and recipes are often named after prominent persons rather than cooks. Thus, it was the elite patron-connoisseur who set standards of taste. Cooks are rarely identified by name in the sources of the period. In contrast, elite consumers often

⁸⁴⁹ Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), p. 329.

expressed their sense of gastronomic discernment. A case in point was the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr, who very consciously articulated his status as a cultivated connoisseur – both of art and of food. It was the *art of tasting*, rather than the *art of cooking* that is given prominence in early modern Indo-Persian literature. This was in contrast to – for instance – the development of the gourmet chef in post-revolutionary France at the centre of culinary discourse. Even cookbooks produced in Ṣafawid and Qājār Iran recognised the identities and skills of prominent cooks.

A corollary of this patron-oriented culture of connoisseurship in the Indo-Persian ecumene was a masculinisation of discourses on taste. The elite patron-consumer was inevitably male, and I have shown how women’s creative roles in the production and consumption of food were marginalised in the Persian literature of the period.

The production of cookbook manuscripts was particularly prodigious in the Mughal and post-Mughal periods. This might not be a coincidence, given the development of a high Mughal culture that laid great stress on taste and etiquette. In this dissertation, I have argued that the evolution of Mughal institutions and polity was accompanied by distinct shifts in feasting practices. To a great extent this was an outcome of attempts to articulate imperial authority. The endeavoured assertions of hierarchy and control were accompanied by shifts in feasting traditions. From a fairly convivial social setting under Bābur, dining practices became increasingly sequestered. This process reached its apogee under Akbar, who attempted to highlight imperial prestige by enforcing rigid spatial demarcations. Dining was gender segregated and the Emperor, as a rule, ate in pristine solitude. Abū-l Faḡl’s discourse emphasises that ‘proper’ attention to food and eating was a mark of distinction. This was related to his attempt to portray Akbar as the Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmil*) in terms appropriated from the twelfth century Andalusian Ṣūfī and philosopher Ibn al-^cArabī. He also borrowed heavily from the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri* of the thirteenth century Persian philosopher Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. I have argued that a distinct duality may be discerned in Abū-l Faḡl’s discourse on food. On the one hand, Emperor Akbar is portrayed as austere and detached, with no interest in the pleasures of the table. At the same time, Abū-l Faḡl takes pains to emphasise that the grandeur of the Emperor’s table could not be matched by the notables of the realm. Food here emerges as a means of asserting the Emperor’s status and power. This imperial discourse, however, did not go unchallenged, as Mughal notables often engaged in competitive displays of grandeur at the table. The strict spatial demarcation in dining and feasting appears to have been less stark under Akbar’s successors, but dining rituals nevertheless became even more elaborate, accompanied by strict rules of etiquette.

Social and political relationships and expressions of power and cordiality in the Mughal context were also expressed through the medium of food gifts. Certain articles such as fruits, the betel leaf, hunted meats and wine enjoyed particular significance as gifts. Each category of gifts had its own particular set of symbolic meanings. For instance, fruit was associated with sugar and sweetness, and often accompanied messages of friendship or truce. Hunted meats probably conveyed symbolic meanings of intimate favour in a manner similar to the ceremonial robe of honour or *khil'at*.

The food ideology of the Mughal Empire can also be mapped out onto the physical spaces of Mughal cities. For instance, in the case of Fatehpur Sikri, the gendered separation of food spaces served to highlight the personal charisma of Akbar, who dined alone in a specially designated chamber. The likely location of this chamber – juxtaposed between official and domestic spaces – also illustrates the blurring of boundaries between the household and the state. As illustrated by the discourse of the *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, the imperial kitchen was as much an important arm of the state as it was of the household. In Shāhjahānābād, food production, sale and consumption were dispersed across the city and even in its suburbs, but were most conspicuous at its core – which was symbolically also the heart of the Empire.

The actual components of Mughal cuisine may be traced to some extent from cookbooks dating from the Mughal and post-Mughal periods, corroborated by incidental references in the contemporary literature. I have argued that the recipes found in these cookbooks represented a distinct culinary tradition, with a recognisable set of ingredients and cooking techniques. But at the same time, they should not be considered as being removed from the dietary practices of the broader population in the regions where the Mughals held sway. For instance, Indo-Persian cookbooks often carried many recipes for *khichṛī*, a dish of rice and pulses that was a common dietary staple in Northern India. The recipes for *khichṛī* in Persian cookbooks ranged from simple to intricately complex, but the basic culinary concept had humble roots.

I have emphasised, in line with recent research on the subject, that cuisine must be studied as a dynamic process rather than as a static structure. Recipes have lives, and are in a constant state of evolution. I have illustrated this process with the instance of the *biryānī*, which evolved from the *duzdbiryān* or *zerbiryān* of Indo-Persian cookbooks. This recipe, despite its Iranian origins, developed its own unique identity within the Indian context. At its core, it usually combined rice with uncooked or undercooked meat, which were then cooked

together along with spices in a sealed pot as per the *dampukht* method of cooking. From its earlier versions to the many varieties of *biryānī* popular today, it is impossible to pinpoint a moment of birth or an ‘original’ recipe.

Another instance of the dynamic quality of cuisine is illustrated by the manner in which New World vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes and chillies were integrated into Indian diets and culinary cultures. This was a relatively slow process. Tomatoes probably made a noticeable presence on the subcontinent towards the end of the eighteenth century, but it took several decades for the vegetable to be widely cultivated and consumed. Early references to the routine cultivation and consumption of the potato date to sometime around the end of the eighteenth century, and the tuber spread in a somewhat uneven fashion across various parts of the subcontinent in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The chilli had made its presence on the subcontinent noticeable by around the mid-eighteenth century. The evidence suggests that the process of acclimatisation to its taste was a gradual one. I have argued that the incorporation of these new foods into Indian diets involved a process of *cultural translation*, wherein the unfamiliar and the new were rendered in terms of the familiar. Thus, the white potato was compared to sweet potatoes, chillies inherited the name *mirch* from black pepper and tomatoes came to be used as a souring agent in place of ingredients such as tamarind and yoghurt. The absorption of new foods followed the progression *translation-incorporation-transformation*: that is, new foods were understood in terms of old familiar foods, following which they were incorporated into existing culinary traditions. Finally, culinary practices were transformed as a result. The factors contributing to the successful indigenisation of New World foods on the Indian subcontinent were diverse. They included the existence of familiar foods to which the new entrants could be compared, the vibrancy of trading links with Europe and Asia as well as the presence of European trading posts, successful incorporation into agricultural cycles and the absence of food prejudices such as the fear of nightshades that initially inhibited the acceptance of the tomato in Europe. Finally, I emphasised that the process of culinary transformation is inherently circular, dynamic and transcultural. For instance, the word ‘curry’, which does not exist in Persian cookbooks, was borrowed from English usage. But recipes referred to as ‘curry’ did inherit elements from South Asian culinary traditions. In fact, the word ‘curry’ was eventually itself absorbed into Indian vocabulary.

Another aspect covered in this dissertation concerns the relationship between food and medicine. I have studied this with particular reference to Persian dietetic and pharmacological treatises, but have also incorporated evidence from contemporary sources regarding ‘popular’

practice. First of all, the evidence suggests that the distinctions between ‘scholarly’ and ‘popular’ medicine were blurred and that various medical traditions including Ayurveda, *Tibb* (Unani) and other practices were deeply intertwined. Indo-Persian medical texts may broadly be located within the Graeco-Arab medical tradition, but were, nonetheless, thoroughly rooted in the context of the subcontinent. Many Persian dietetic and pharmacological treatises produced on the Indian subcontinent use Hindi names for the foods and drugs they describe and even, at times, cite the authority of indigenous medical traditions. Often, locally available foods are listed. There appears to have been a subtle trend towards a localisation of content and vernacularisation of language observable in Persian medical texts from the late seventeenth or eighteenth century onwards, once the Mughal Empire began to weaken and regional powers asserted themselves. This process was, however, gradual rather than dramatic, suggesting that the disintegration of the Empire was probably a significant but in no way a revolutionary or catastrophic moment in the cultural history of the subcontinent, as a conventional view of history would imagine.

Unlike cookbooks, the authors of medical treatises were usually identified. This parallels the social prestige of the physician as against that of the cook. Many of these texts were dedicated to prominent personages and patronage often had a discernable influence on their content. For instance, the *Fawā'id al-Insān* of °Ainu-l-Mulk Shīrāzī ‘Fidā’ī Dawā’ī’ was dedicated to Emperor Akbar and appears to have been imbued with the idea that perfection and majesty were linked to diet and health. In this sense, its subtext was underpinned by ideas of imperial prestige and legitimisation.

While the authors of Persian medical texts belonged to an elite class, the medical world that they interacted with – and from which many of their ideas were sourced – was diverse. There were many dispensers of medical services and dietetic advice in early modern India, from barbers to bazaar *hakīms*. But what is notable is that many of these medical practitioners shared a universe of medical knowledge that was not far removed from that of elite physicians. There was a constant flow of ideas across socio-economic boundaries, and ‘scholarly medical knowledge’ was not necessarily separated from ‘popular lore’. There was also a blurring of boundaries between the ‘oral’ and ‘literate’ spheres, such that medical knowledge freely circulated between these. At the same time, there was also a diversity of medical beliefs across social groups and communities.

In this dissertation, I have argued that within the early modern Indian context, food and drugs were deeply intertwined categories, as were the tools and techniques of the kitchen

and the apothecary. A cookbook such as the *Ni^cmatnāma* could contain dietetic prescriptions, while many medical texts also carried food recipes. This categorical confusion is also illustrated by the manner in which Persian medical texts wrestle with the conceptual difference between food and medicine. Although in theoretical terms, these categories are differentiated, in practice they were conflated. The taxonomical practice followed in these texts was to classify foods and drugs as either simple (*mufrad*) or compound (*murakkab*), with no consideration as to whether an item may be regarded as a ‘food’ (*ghizā*) or a ‘medicine’ (*dawā*). It was not until around the nineteenth century, that the decline of humoural medicine sharpened the categorical distinction between ‘food’ and ‘medicine’. In addition, the humoural classifications of various foods and drugs were often variable. This variation was most likely an outcome of the close interface between ‘scholarly’ and ‘popular’ medicine, wherein dissonant versions of humoural classifications were sought to be textually captured.

The colonial period witnessed the translation of many Persian medical texts into English. I have argued that these translations represented a fossilisation of the knowledge contained in these texts. The translations often omitted parts considered ‘superfluous’ and reorganised the original treatises to serve the new colonial context. This may be contrasted to Persian translations of Sanskrit medical texts. Persian medical texts drew on diverse knowledge sources, and the insights derived from Sanskrit treatises blended into the knowledge universe of Persian medical works in a seamless, dynamic fashion.

In this dissertation, I have also examined the role of wine in the Mughal cultural world. The trajectory of drinking rituals to some extent paralleled those of feasting customs, but was riddled with greater complexity and contradictions. These complexities were related to the fact that wine enjoyed a hallowed status in many Islamicate cultures, despite being largely proscribed by Islamic canon. The same element of ambiguity also influenced the manner in which wine was viewed in medical texts. On the one hand, it was seen as having many benefits for physical and spiritual health, yet, on the other, its deleterious consequences were often regarded as outweighing its salubrious effects. Medical ideas on wine were also shaped to an appreciable degree by drinking customs, in a manner similar to the way in which culinary practices influenced dietetic texts. For instance, a late fifteenth century Persian manuscript on wine that I have examined in this dissertation offers advice on which foods to eat to while drinking. This parallels the relationship between food and wine in the Indo-Persian ecumene: it was always the food that accompanied the wine rather than the other way around. This is to say that some food was almost invariably consumed during drinking parties, where wine was the central aspect of the ritual. However, the sources do not record instances

of wine drinking along with substantial meals (such as feasts or banquets) – when the food was the focus of the act. Lemonade and other sherbets were probably preferred accompaniments on such occasions.

The largely male homosocial conviviality of Bābur's drinking parties slowly gave way to more circumscribed rituals, although it never disappeared altogether. Again, it was Akbar who tried to impose an element of temperance on this culture. He attempted to control the production and sale of wine, by requiring that wine be dispensed only against a physician's prescription. This again drew on humoral and medical beliefs, while linking these to ideals of discernment and 'proper' conduct. The measures were aimed at countering disorder and subversion, but were of little effect even at the Mughal court itself. Akbar's own sons were avid imbibers. Jahāngīr broadly continued his father's policies on wine, but was never able to overcome his own weakness for alcoholic beverages. His memoirs furnish us with a graphic account of his struggle with wine addiction. What is particularly notable about Jahāngīr's narrative is its frankness and self-criticism as well as apparent desire to reform. This is unusual in early modern literature, particularly on the part of an emperor. More research is required to enquire into whether this may be regarded as evidence of an early modern ethic of critical self-introspection.

Shāhjahān and Aurangzeb ostensibly abstained from alcohol on grounds of Islamic propriety, but this did not stop the notables of the Empire from indulging in wine. Wine also continued to feature in Mughal miniatures, both in celebratory and hedonistic contexts as well as in depictions with mystical connotations. The lack of success that characterised the efforts of Mughal Emperors to control the distillation and consumption of wine was perhaps an indication of the limitations of imperial power. The deeply ingrained nature of wine culture in Mughal social circles also ensured that there was little to control the drinking habits of princes and notables alike.

My study highlights aspects of the manner in which food mediated displays of power among various constituent elements of the Mughal state. The picture that emerges from this dissertation is that of a complicated mosaic of enunciations rendered through participation in feasting practices and drinking rituals. In particular, it is apparent that imperial efforts to monopolise assertions of power, or to impose temperance and control 'disorder', were by no means uncontested. This observation has larger implications for the study of the Mughal state and rituals of legitimisation. The results of my study support the view that the processes of

state construction and articulation were not a monologue, but a polyphonic discourse of various claimants to a share of status and power.

My investigations also raise various questions that deserve further research and exploration. A study of the preceding centuries is needed to uncover the factors that were fundamental to the development of some of the cultural dynamics that have been highlighted in this dissertation. For instance, it is necessary to decipher the historical circumstances underlying the phenomenon of the patron-consumer oriented connoisseurship that characterised the Indo-Persian cultural ecumene. Research drawing on source materials in languages such as Sanskrit, Rajasthani, Dutch, Portuguese and Marathi would enable a more complete picture of the culinary cultures of the subcontinent to be drawn. This holds also for dietetic traditions. My focus has been on Persian medical texts, and the insights gained from this study need to be integrated with analyses of medical texts in Sanskrit and other vernacular languages. Some of the theoretical frameworks that I have proposed in my study also need to be applied to other cultures and different periods. For example, the process of cultural translation that I have identified with regard to new foods entering the Indian subcontinent needs to be examined with reference to other cultures and historical circumstances.

I end with three broad highlights drawn from my dissertation. Firstly, food was a key tool for articulating claims of status and power in Mughal India, and that these processes were polyphonic and contested. Secondly, distinctions between ‘popular’ and ‘elite’ culinary practices and dietetic beliefs were often blurred. And finally, cuisines and food cultures are in a constant state of flux, and thus must be studied as dynamic, transcultural processes rather than in structural terms.

Glossary – I

(Arranged according to category)

This glossary consists of four categories: general terms, food dishes, beverages and unprocessed single ingredients (including grains, meats, vegetables, fruits and spices).

General Terms

akhlāt: (Ar.) Humour. There are four: *dam* or *khūn* (blood), yellow bile (*ṣafrā*), black bile (*saudā*), and phlegm (*balgham*).

begam: (Tur.) Royal or notable lady.

bismillah: (Ar.) In the name of God. A common invocation at the beginning of any book or before beginning any activity.

chāshnīdār: (Pers.) Containing a syrup, normally made of sugar and lemon juice.

dampukht: (Pers.) Slow cooked in a sealed pot.

darja: (Ar.) Degree. The potency of foods or medicaments were normally measured in four degrees of hot (*garam*), cold (*sard*), moist (*tar*) and dry (*khushk*).

dawā: (Ar.) Medicament.

deg: (Pers.) Cauldron or cooking pot.

farmān: (Pers.) Edict, order.

gharī: (Hin./Urd.) A unit of time equivalent to twenty-four minutes.

ghaza: (Ar.) Classically implies ‘holy war’, and those who engaged in such wars were *ghāzīs*. But in a tribal-like social context, a *ghaza* ethos engendered a social group or collective that engaged in raid and plunder, and shared the spoils.

ghizā: (Ar.) Food.

hakīm: (Ar.) Learned person; physician.

insān-i kāmīl: (Ar.) Perfect Man. A term with mystical connotations borrowed from the Andalusian Ṣūfī philosopher Ibn al-°Arabī (1165-1240).

khariḥ: (Ar.) The summer or monsoon crop culminating in the autumn harvest.

khāṣiyat: (Ar.) Medical attributes based on the humoral composition of a food or medicament.

khil^cat: (Ar.) Robe of honour.

māhī tāba: (Pers.) Also *tawa*; iron skillet.

ma^cjūn: (Ar.) A narcotic confection.

manṣabdar: (Compound: *manṣab*: Ar.; *dār*: Pers.) Holder of a rank (*manṣab*) in the imperial Mughal administration.

maṭbakh: (Ar.) Kitchen.

mizāj: (Ar.) Temperament, caused by the predominance of one or more of the humours. There are four major temperaments: sanguine (*damawī mizāj*); phlegmatic (*balghamī mizāj*); choleric (*ṣafrāwī mizāj*); and melancholic (*saudāwī mizāj*).

mufrad: (Ar.) ‘Simple’ or single-ingredient food or medicament.

murakkab: (Ar.) ‘Compound’ food or medicament, composed of multiple ingredients.

muwashshah: (Ar.) Poetic device, wherein the beginning alphabets of a verse make sense when put together.

qahwa khāna: (Compound: *qahwa*: Ar.; *khāna*: Pers.) Coffeehouse.

rabī^c: (Ar.) The winter crop culminating in the spring harvest.

sāj: (Pers.) Iron plate.

sāqī: (Ar.) Cupbearer.

sijda: (Ar.) Prostration. In orthodox Islamic belief, prostration in front of anyone or anything else but God is frowned upon.

ṣūba: (Ar.) Province.

tanūr: (Pers.) Oven.

ṭibb: (Ar.) The Arabic term for medicine, also used in Persian.

‘ulamā: (Ar.) Theologians; plural of *‘ālim* or scholar.

umarā^ʿ: (Ar.) Plural of *āmīr* or notable.

waqfnāma: (Compound: *waqf*: Ar.; *nāma*: Pers.) Deed of bequest document.

yātiṣṭkhāna: (Pers.) Lit. ‘guard room’. Also a series of office-cum-residence structures excavated at Fatehpur Sikri.

zā^ʿiqa (Ar.): Taste, flavour(s) of food.

zauq: (Ar.) Taste, pleasure; may be applied to food, music, décor, art or poetry.

zauqī: (Ar.) Connoisseur

Food Dishes

ābgosht: (Pers.) A rich meat soup.

achār: (Hin./Urd.) Also *āchār*; pickles.

āsh: (Pers.) Pottage.

bāqirkhānī: (compound: *bāqir*: Ar.; *khānī*: Pers.) Also *nān-i Bāqir Khānī*; a rich layered bread.

bara: (Hin./Urd.) Fried cakes or dumplings usually made with pulses or chickpea flour and various spices.

bharta: (Hin./Urd.) Also *bhurta*; mash.

bhāt: (Hin./Urd.) Cooked rice, often with other ingredients added.

bhūjī: (Hin./Urd.) Fried vegetables.

bughrā: (Tur.) Vegetable stew with noodles.

chapatī: (Hin./Urd.) Flatbread baked on an iron girdle.

chaṭnī: (Hin./Urd.) Chutney.

dāl: (Hin./Urd.) Pulses or lentils.

dogh: (Pers.) Sour milk.

dopiyāza: (Pers.) A dressed meat dish with a base of fried onions.

fālūda: (Pers.) A kind of flummery cut into pieces and dunked in syrup.

firmī: (Pers.) Rice and milk pudding.

ghī: (Hin./Urd.) Ghee or clarified butter.

gulgula: (Hin./Urd.) Sweet dumplings made with a thick batter.

ḥalwā: (Ar.) Warm pudding.

harīsa: (Ar.) Savoury porridge.

jughrāt: (Pers.) Yoghurt or sour milk.

kabāb: (Ar.) Kebab; skewered or roast meat.

kachaurīs: (Hin./Urd.) Kind of stuffed flour puff.

karhī: (Hin./Urd.) A yoghurt or sour milk based dish combined with chickpea flour. Often served with fried dumplings called *barī*.

khāgīna: (Pers.) Omelette.

khajūr: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of sweet dumpling.

khaṛḍawī: (Hin./Urd.) Savoury cakes made with pulse or gram flour.

khichrī: (Hin./Urd.) A dish of rice and pulses.

khīr: (Hin./Urd.) A sweet dish consisting of sweetened milk, with other ingredients added.

kofta: (Pers.) Also *kūfta*; meatballs.

kulthī: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of sweet, sticky rice dish.

laḍḍū: (Hin./Urd.) A sweetmeat shaped like balls.

malīda: (Pers.) Sweet powdery mixture made of dough.

māqūtī: (Ar.) A kind of thickened and flavoured syrup.

maṣāliḥ: (Hin./Urd.) Spice mix.

murabbā: (Pers.) Jam.

nān khajātā³ī: (Pers.) Crisp bread (like a biscuit).

nān-i tāftān: (Pers.) A kind of flavoured flatbread.

nān: (Pers.) Bread.

pālūda: (Pers.) Sweet beverage often made with flour, honey and water.

panbhatta: (Hin./Urd.) Sweet dish made of pounded rice in a sugar syrup.

panīr: (Pers.) Indian curd cheese.

phāṭ: (Hin./Urd.) Split pulse.

phīnī: (Hin./Urd.) A fried sweetmeat made from flour.

pīccha: (Hin./Urd.) A dish prepared by adding ingredients to the surplus water that is left in the pot after cooking rice or other grains.

pulā³o: (Pers.) Also *palīv*, *palāv*, *pilāv*; a dish with rice, meat and other ingredients.

pūrī: (Hin./Urd.) Fried bread.

qabūlī: (Pers.) *Qabūlī* or *qabūlī pulā³o* are a category of rice dishes, where the rice is cooked in a *yakhnī* or spiced meat broth.

qalīya: (Ar.) a sauce based dish, normally with meat.

qorma: (Tur.) A spiced meat dish.

rābarī: (Hin./Urd.) A dish normally made with thickened milk.

sāg: (Hin./Urd.) Greens.

sālan: (Hin./Urd.) A sauce based dish with meat and vegetables; like a curry.

sambosa: (Pers.) Also *sambūsa* or *samosa*; savoury stuffed and fried pasties.

shakar pāra: (Pers.) Sweet flour-based snack.

shīrbirinj: (Pers.) Sweet dish made with rice and milk.

shīrīnī: (Pers.) Sweets.

shīrmāl: (Pers.) A rich leavened bread prepared with milk and spices.

sholā: (Pers.) A dish usually with rice and meat, pulses and various vegetables.

shorbā: (Pers.) Also *shūrbā*; soup or broth.

sīkh: (Ar.) Skewered meat or fish. May also refer to the skewer itself.

thūlī: (Hin./Urd.) A thick sweet dish with flour and milk.

yakhnī: (Pers.) Spiced meat broth.

zerbiryān: (Pers.) Also *duzdbiryān*; a kind of layered rice-based dish. Forerunner or the many modern variations of *biryānī*.

Beverages

‘arq: (Ar.) An Arabic word meaning sweat, and by extension, extract. Referred also to intoxicating beverages brewed from various materials. The common Anglicisation encountered in the sources is ‘arrack’.

boza: (Pers.) Spirit distilled from rice, millet or barley.

mai: (Pers.) Wine.

sharāb: (Ar.) Alcoholic beverage or wine. May also refer to any beverage, in particular a medicinal concoction.

sharbat: (Ar.) Sherbet.

tarī: (Hin./Urd.) Toddy.

Unprocessed Single Ingredients (including grains, meats, vegetables, fruits and spices)

adarak: (Hin./Urd.) Ginger.

āhū: (Pers.) Deer or its meat (venison).
akrot: (Hin./Urd.) Also *aḵhrot*. Walnut.
ālū: (Pers.) Plum. Also referred to yams, sweet potatoes and later white potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*). This usage derived from the Sanskrit word *āluka* meaning esculent tuber.
ālūbālū: (Pers.) Sour cherry.
aṃba: (Pers.) Mango.
°aṃbar-i ashhab: (Pers.) Ambergris.
anānās: (originally from a Paraguayan language, probably Guarani) Pineapple.
anār: (Pers.) Pomegranate.
andā: (Hin./Urd.) Egg
angūr: (Pers.) Grape.
anjīr: (Pers.) Fig.
arhar: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of pulse; pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*). Also known as *tūr* or *tuwar dāl*.
arwī: (Hin./Urd.) Taro (*Colocasia* genus).
bādām: (Pers.) Almond.
bādyān: (Pers.) Fennel or aniseed.
baigan: (Hin./Urd.) Also *baingan*; *bādinjān* (Pers.). Aubergine or eggplant.
bājrā: (Hin./Urd.) Pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*).
bakrī: (Hin./Urd.) Female goat.
banafsha: (Pers.) Violet.
bāns: (Hin./Urd.) Bamboo.
*bāqilā*³: (Ar.) Broad bean; *Vicia faba*.
bārasīnghā: (Hin./Urd.) Swamp deer; *Cervus duvauceli*.
bih: (Pers.) Quince.
birinj: (Pers.) Persian word for rice (*Oryza sativa*).
baṭ: (Ar.) Duck.
chachindā: (Hin./Urd.) Snake gourd.
champa: (Pers.) A flower of the Magnolia family (*Magnolia champaca*).
chanā: (Hin./Urd.) Chickpea; *Cicer arietinum*.
chaqundar: (Pers.) Beet-root.
charz: (Pers.) Partridge.
chāwal: (Pers.) Rice (*Oryza sativa*).
chāy: (originally from Chinese) Tea.
dārchīnī: (Pers.) Cinnamon.
dātūn: (Hin./Urd.) A tree wood used to clean teeth.

durrāj: (Ar.) bustard or other game bird.
filfil: (Pers.) Persian name for black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) .
gandum: (Pers.) Persian word for wheat (genus *Triticum*).
gehūn: (Pers.) Wheat (genus *Triticum*).
gur: (Hin./Urd.) Jaggery.
hel: (Pers.) Green cardamom.
hiran: (Hin./Urd.) Deer or its meat (venison).
hudhud: (Pers.) Hoopoe.
ilāychī: (Hin./Urd.) Cardamom.
isfānākh: (Ar.) Spinach.
juwār: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of millet (genus *Sorghum*).
kabak: (Pers.) Partridge.
kachālū: (Hin./Urd.) Taro.
karelā: (Hin./Urd.) Bitter gourd.
kaṭṭhal: (Hin./Urd.) Jackfruit.
kela: (Hin./Urd.) Hindi name for banana or plantain.
khārbūza: (Pers.) Watermelon.
khīrā: (Hin./Urd.) Cucumber.
kishnīz: (Pers.) Coriander.
lahsun: (Hin./Urd.) Garlic. The Persian equivalent is *sīr*.
laung: (Hin./Urd.) Clove.
līmū: (Pers.) Lemon. Known in Hindi as *nīmbū*.
lobiyā: (Hin./Urd.) Cow pea; *Vigna unguiculata*.
mačhlī: (Hin./Urd.) Also *mačēhlī*. Fish.
māhī: (Pers.) Fish.
mahū³ā: (Hin./Urd.) The tree *Madhuca longifolia* and its blossoms.
masūr: (Hin./Urd. Originally Sans.) Lentil or black lentil (*Lens culinaris*).
maṭar: (Hin./Urd.) Hindi word for green peas.
methi: (Hin./Urd.) Fenugreek.
mīrch: (Hin./Urd.) A Hindi word, but often used in Persian texts as well. Initially referred exclusively to black pepper, but later extended to the chilli (*Capsicum* genus) as well.
mūng: (Hin./Urd. Originally Sans.) A kind of pulse; mungbean (*Vigna radiata*).
murgh: (Pers.) Chicken.
murghābī: (Pers.) Water-fowl or wild duck.
mushk: (Pers.) Musk.
mūz: (Ar.) Banana or plantain.

nāranj: (Pers.) Orange.

nāshpati: (Hin./Urd.) Pear.

nīlgāv: (Compound: *nīl*: Hin./Urd.; *gav*: Pers.) Lit. ‘blue cow’ (Hin. *nīlgāy*). An antelope doe of the species *Boselaphus tragocamelus*.

pālak: (Hin./Urd.) Spinach.

pāya: (Pers.) Lamb or goat foot.

piyāz: (Pers.) Onion.

qahwa: (Ar.) Coffee.

qaranful: (Pers.) cloves.

rībās: (Pers.) A sour herb.

rohū: (Hin./Urd.) Carp fish (*Labeo rohita*).

seb: (Pers.) Apple.

shakarkand: (Pers.) Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batata*).

tamrhindī: (Compound: *tamr*: Ar.; *hind*: Pers.) Tamarind.

tarbūz: (Pers.) Also *tarbuz*. Watermelon.

til: (Hin./Urd.) Sesame.

torī: (Hin./Urd.) Ridged gourd.

turunj: (Pers.) Orange.

urad: (Hin./Urd.) a kind of black gram or lentil (*Vigna mungo*).

wilāyatī baigan: (Compound: *wilāyatī*: Pers.; *baigan*: Hin. / Urd.) Lit. ‘foreign eggplant’. An early name for the tomato. The Hindi name that eventually came into popular use is *ṭamāṭar*.

zā^cfrān: (Ar.) Saffron.

zanjabīl: (Ar.) Ginger.

zardak: (Pers.) Carrot.

zard chūb: (Pers.) Turmeric.

zīra: (Pers.) Cumin.

Glossary – II

(Single alphabetical list)

ābgosht: (Pers.) A rich meat soup.

achār: (Hin./Urd.) Also *āchār*; pickles.

adarak: (Hin./Urd.) Ginger.

āhū: (Pers.) Deer or its meat (venison).

aḳhlāt: (Ar.) Humour. There are four: *dam* or *khūn* (blood), yellow bile (*ṣafrā*), black bile (*saudā*), and phlegm (*balgham*).

akrot: (Hin./Urd.) Also *aḳhrot*. Walnut.

ālū: (Pers.) Plum. Also referred to yams, sweet potatoes and later white potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*). This usage derived from the Sanskrit word *āluka* meaning esculent tuber.

ālūbālū: (Pers.) Sour cherry.

aṃba: (Pers.) Mango.

‘aṃbar-i ashhab: (Pers.) Amberggris.

anānās: (originally from a Paraguayan language, probably Guarani) Pineapple.

anār: (Pers.) Pomegranate.

andā: (Hin./Urd.) Egg

angūr: (Pers.) Grape.

anjīr: (Pers.) Fig.

arhar: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of pulse; pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*). Also known as *tūr* or *tuwar dāl*.

‘arq: (Ar.) An Arabic word meaning sweat, and by extension, extract. Referred also to intoxicating beverages brewed from various materials. The common Anglicisation encountered in the sources is ‘arrack’.

arwī: (Hin./Urd.) Taro (*Colocasia* genus).

āsh: (Pers.) Pottage.

bādām: (Pers.) Almond.

bādyān: (Pers.) Fennel or aniseed.

baigan: (Hin./Urd.) Also *baingan*; *bādinjān* (Pers.). Aubergine or eggplant.

bājrā: (Hin./Urd.) Pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*).

bakrī: (Hin./Urd.) Female goat.

banafsha: (Pers.) Violet.

bānis: (Hin./Urd.) Bamboo.

bāqilā²: (Ar.) Broad bean; *Vicia faba*.

bāqirḵhānī: (compound: *bāqir*: Ar.; *khānī*: Pers.) Also *nān-i Bāqir Ḵhānī*; a rich layered bread.

bara: (Hin./Urd.) Fried cakes or dumplings usually made with pulses or chickpea flour and various spices.

bārasinghā: (Hin./Urd.) Swamp deer; *Cervus duvauceli*.

baṭ: Duck.

begam: (Tur.) Royal or notable lady.

bharta: (Hin./Urd.) Also *bhurta*; mash.

bhār: (Hin./Urd.) Cooked rice, often with other ingredients added.

bhūjī: (Hin./Urd.) Fried vegetables.

bih: (Pers.) Quince.

birinj: (Pers.) Persian word for rice (*Oryza sativa*).

bismillah: (Ar.) In the name of God. A common invocation at the beginning of any book or before beginning any activity.

boza: (Pers.) Spirit distilled from rice, millet or barley.

bughrā: (Tur.) Vegetable stew with noodles.

chachindā: (Hin./Urd.) Snake gourd.

champa: (Pers.) A flower of the Magnolia family (*Magnolia champaca*).

chanā: (Hin./Urd.) Chickpea; *Cicer arietinum*.

chapātī: (Hin./Urd.) Flatbread baked on an iron girdle.

chaqundar: (Pers.) Beet-root.

charz: (Pers.) Partridge.

chāshnīdār: (Pers.) Containing a syrup, normally made of sugar and lemon juice.

chaṭnī: (Hin./Urd.) Chutney.

chāwal: (Pers.) Rice (*Oryza sativa*).

chāy: (originally from Chinese) Tea.

dāl: (Hin./Urd.) Pulses or lentils.

dampukht: (Pers.) Slow cooked in a sealed pot.

dārchīnī: (Pers.) Cinnamon.

darja: (Ar.) Degree. The potency of foods or medicaments were normally measured in four degrees of hot (*garam*), cold (*sard*), moist (*tar*) and dry (*khushk*).

dātūn: (Hin./Urd.) A tree wood used to clean teeth.

dawā: (Ar.) Medicament.

deg: (Pers.) Cauldron or cooking pot.

dogh: (Pers.) Sour milk.

dopiyāza: (Pers.) A dressed meat dish with a base of fried onions.

durrāj: (Ar.) bustard or other game bird.

fālūda: (Pers.) A kind of flummery cut into pieces and dunked in syrup.

farmān: (Pers.) Edict, order.

filfil: (Pers.) Persian name for black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) .

fīrnī: (Pers.) Rice and milk pudding.

gandum: (Pers.) Persian word for wheat (genus *Triticum*).

gehūn: (Pers.) Wheat (genus *Triticum*).

gharī: (Hin./Urd.) A unit of time equivalent to twenty-four minutes.

ghāza: (Ar.) Classically implies ‘holy war’, and those who engaged in such wars were *ghāzīs*. But in a tribal-like social context, a *ghāza* ethos engendered a social group or collective that engaged in raid and plunder, and shared the spoils.

ghī: (Hin./Urd.) Ghee or clarified butter.

ghizā: (Ar.) Food.

gulgula: (Hin./Urd.) Sweet dumplings made with a thick batter.

gur: (Hin./Urd.) Jaggery.

ḥakīm: (Ar.) Learned person; physician.

ḥalwā: (Ar.) Warm pudding.

harīsa: (Ar.) Savoury porridge.

hel: (Pers.) Green cardamom.

hīran: (Hin./Urd.) Deer or its meat (venison).

hudhud: (Pers.) Hoopoe.

ilāychī: (Hin./Urd.) Cardamom.

insān-i kāmil: (Ar.) Perfect Man. A term with mystical connotations borrowed from the Andalusian Ṣūfī philosopher Ibn al-°Arabī (1165-1240).

isfānākḥ: (Ar.) Spinach.

juḡhrāt: (Pers.) Yoghurt or sour milk.

juwār: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of millet (genus *Sorghum*).

kabāb: (Ar.) Kebab; skewered or roast meat.

kabak: (Pers.) Partridge.

kachālū: (Hin./Urd.) Taro.

kachaurīs: (Hin./Urd.) Kind of stuffed flour puff.

karelā: (Hin./Urd.) Bitter gourd.

karḥī: (Hin./Urd.) A yoghurt or sour milk based dish combined with chickpea flour. Often served with fried dumplings called *barī*.

kaṭṭhal: (Hin./Urd.) Jackfruit.

kela: (Hin./Urd.) Hindi name for banana or plantain.

khāgīna: (Pers.) Omelette.

khajūr: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of sweet dumpling.

khaṇḍawī: (Hin./Urd.) Savoury cakes made with pulse or gram flour.

khārbūza: (Pers.) Watermelon.

khārīf: (Ar.) The summer or monsoon crop culminating in the autumn harvest.

khāṣīyat: (Ar.) Medical attributes based on the humoural composition of a food or medicament.

khichrī: (Hin./Urd.) A dish of rice and pulses.

khil^cat: (Ar.) Robe of honour.

khīr: (Hin./Urd.) A sweet dish consisting of sweetened milk, with other ingredients added.

khīrā: (Hin./Urd.) Cucumber.

kishnīz: (Pers.) Coriander.

kofta: (Pers.) Also *kūfta*; meatballs.

kulthī: (Hin./Urd.) A kind of sweet, sticky rice dish.

laḍḍū: (Hin./Urd.) A sweetmeat shaped like balls.

lahsun: (Hin./Urd.) Garlic. The Persian equivalent is *sīr*.

laung: (Hin./Urd.) Clove.

līmū: (Pers.) Lemon. Known in Hindi as *nīmbū*.

lobiyā: (Hin./Urd.) Cow pea; *Vigna unguiculata*.

mačhlī: (Hin./Urd.) Also *mačēhlī*. Fish.

māhī tāba: (Pers.) Also *tawa*; iron skillet.

māhī: (Pers.) Fish.

mahū²ā: (Hin./Urd.) The tree *Madhuca longifolia* and its blossoms.

mai: (Pers.) Wine.

malīda: (Pers.) Sweet powdery mixture made of dough.

maṇṣabdar: (Compound: *maṇṣab*: Ar.; *dār*: Pers.) Holder of a rank (*maṇṣab*) in the imperial Mughal administration.

māqūtī: (Ar.) A kind of thickened and flavoured syrup.

maṣāliḥ: (Hin./Urd.) Spice mix.

masūr: (Hin./Urd. Originally Sans.) Lentil or black lentil (*Lens culinaris*).

maṭar: (Hin./Urd.) Hindi word for green peas.

maṭbaḥ: (Ar.) Kitchen.

ma^cjūn: (Ar.) A narcotic confection.

methi: (Hin./Urd.) Fenugreek.

mīrch: (Hin./Urd.) A Hindi word, but often used in Persian texts as well. Initially referred exclusively to black pepper, but later extended to the chilli (*Capsicum* genus) as well.

mizāj: (Ar.) Temperament, caused by the predominance of one or more of the humours. There are four major temperaments: sanguine (*damawī mizāj*); phlegmatic (*balghamī mizāj*); choleric (*ṣafrāwī mizāj*); and melancholic (*saudāwī mizāj*).

mufrad: (Ar.) ‘Simple’ or single-ingredient food or medicament.

mūng: (Hin./Urd. Originally Sans.) A kind of pulse; mungbean (*Vigna radiata*).

murabbā: (Pers.) Jam.

murakkab: (Ar.) ‘Compound’ food or medicament, composed of multiple ingredients.

murgh: (Pers.) Chicken.

murghābī: (Pers.) Water-fowl or wild duck.

mushk: (Pers.) Musk.

muwashshah: (Ar.) Poetic device, wherein the beginning alphabets of a verse make sense when put together.

mūz: (Ar.) Banana or plantain.

nān khaṭā’ī: (Pers.) Crisp bread (like a biscuit).

nān-i tāftān: (Pers.) A kind of flavoured flatbread.

nān: (Pers.) Bread.

nāranj: (Pers.) Orange.

nāshpati: (Hin./Urd.) Pear.

nīlgāv: (Compound: *nīl*: Hin.; *gav*: Pers.) Lit. ‘blue cow’ (Hin. *nīlgāy*). An antelope doe of the species *Boselaphus tragocamelus*.

pālak: (Hin./Urd.) Spinach.

pālūda: (Pers.) Sweet beverage often made with flour, honey and water.

panbhatta: (Hin./Urd.) Sweet dish made of pounded rice in a sugar syrup.

panīr: (Pers.) Indian curd cheese.

pāya: (Pers.) Lamb or goat foot.

phāt: (Hin./Urd.) Split pulse.

phīnī: (Hin./Urd.) A fried sweetmeat made from flour.

pīccha: (Hin./Urd.) A dish prepared by adding ingredients to the surplus water that is left in the pot after cooking rice or other grains.

piyāz: (Pers.) Onion.

pulā’o: (Pers.) Also *palīv*, *palāv*, *pilāv*; a dish with rice, meat and other ingredients.

pūrī: (Hin./Urd.) Fried bread.

qabūlī: (Pers.) *Qabūlī* or *qabūlī pulā’o* are a category of rice dishes, where the rice is cooked in a *yakhnī* or spiced meat broth.

qahwa khāna: (Compound: *qahwa*: Ar.; *khāna*: Pers.) Coffeehouse.

qahwa: (Ar.) Coffee.

qalīya: (Ar.) a sauce based dish, normally with meat.

qaranful: (Pers.) cloves.

qorma: (Tur.) A spiced meat dish.

rābarī: (Hin./Urd.) A dish normally made with thickened milk.

rabī^c: (Ar.) The winter crop culminating in the spring harvest.

rībās: (Pers.) A sour herb.

rohū: (Hin./Urd.) Carp fish (*Labeo rohita*).

sāg: (Hin./Urd.) Greens.

sāj: (Pers.) Iron plate.

sālan: (Hin./Urd.) A sauce based dish with meat and vegetables; like a curry.

saṃbosa: (Pers.) Also *saṃbūsa* or *samosa*; savoury stuffed and fried pasties.

sāqī: (Ar.) Cupbearer.

seb: (Pers.) Apple.

shakar pāra: (Pers.) Sweet flour-based snack.

shakarkand: (Pers.) Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batata*).

sharāb: (Ar.) Alcoholic beverage or wine. May also refer to any beverage, in particular a medicinal concoction.

sharbat: (Ar.) Sherbet.

shīrbirinj: (Pers.) Sweet dish made with rice and milk.

shīrīnī: (Pers.) Sweets.

shīrmāl: (Pers.) A rich leavened bread prepared with milk and spices.

sholā: (Pers.) A dish usually with rice and meat, pulses and various vegetables.

shorbā: (Pers.) Also *shūrbā*; soup or broth.

sijda: (Ar.) Prostration. In orthodox Islamic belief, prostration in front of anyone or anything else but God is frowned upon.

sīkh: (Ar.) Skewered meat or fish. May also refer to the skewer itself.

ṣūba: (Ar.) Province.

tamrhindī: (Compound: *tamr*: Ar.; *hind*: Pers.) Tamarind.

tanūr: (Pers.) Oven.

tarbūz: (Pers.) Also *tarbuz*. Watermelon.

tarī: (Hin./Urd.) Toddy.

thūlī: (Hin./Urd.) A thick sweet dish with flour and milk.

ṭibb: (Ar.) The Arabic term for medicine, also used in Persian.

til: (Hin./Urd.) Sesame.

torī: (Hin./Urd.) Ridged gourd.

turunj: (Pers.) Orange.

‘ulamā: (Ar.) Theologians; plural of *‘ālim* or scholar.

umarā³: (Ar.) Plural of *āmīr* or notable.

urad: (Hin./Urd.) a kind of black gram or lentil (*Vigna mungo*).

waqfnāma: (Compound: *waqf*: Ar.; *nāma*: Pers.) Deed of bequest document.

wilāyatī baigan: (Compound: *wilāyatī*: Pers.; *baigan*: Hin.) Lit. ‘foreign eggplant’. An early name for the tomato. The Hindi name that eventually came into popular use is *ṭamāṭar*.

yakhnī: (Pers.) Spiced meat broth.

yātiṣḥkhāna: (Pers.) Lit. ‘guard room’. Also a series of office-cum-residence structures excavated at Fatehpur Sikri.

zāʿfrān: (Ar.) Saffron.

zāʾiqa (Ar.): Taste, flavour(s) of food.

zanjabīl: (Ar.) Ginger.

zardak: (Pers.) Carrot.

zard chūb: (Pers.) Turmeric.

zauq: (Ar.) Taste in a general sense; may be applied to food, music, décor, art or poetry.

zauqī: (Ar.) Connoisseur.

zerbiryān: (Pers.) Also *duzdbiryān*; a kind of layered rice-based dish. Forerunner of the many modern variations of *biryānī*.

zīra: (Pers.) Cumin.

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