THE CAMBRIDGE GLOBAL HISTORY OF FASHION

From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century

VOLUME I

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PART II

Early Modern Global Entanglements

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7

MAGNIFICENCE AT THE ROYAL COURTS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

SURAIYA FAROQHI

The Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires are the focus of this chapter, which between them covered a stretch of Eurasia between Budapest and Murshidabad in Bengal (India). Royal magnificence is the lens through which I will assess the fashion dynamics of these imperial dynasties. The Ottoman realm included Southeastern Europe, with the capital city of Istanbul straddling the border between Europe and Asia. From the 1530s onward, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria – in the broad and historical sense of the latter term – were part of the territory controlled by the sultans as well. Apart from the brief timespans during which the Safavids held Iraq, their realm corresponded roughly to present-day Iran and sections of Afghanistan. Other regions that today are part of Afghanistan, including Kabul, were part of the Mughal Empire, which had expanded first over the territories covered by today's Pakistan and northern India. In the second half of the sixteenth century, moreover, Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) added the highly productive territories of Bengal and Gujarat to his realm. About a hundred years later, Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) conquered a large part of Peninsular India, so that if we go by a map, his empire stretched almost over the entire subcontinent; however, imperial control over the outlying territories remained very problematic.

The Ottoman sultans established one of the longest-lived dynasties in history, on the throne from about 1300 until 1922; the period treated here encompasses the years in which the empire was at the peak of its power. By contrast, the Safavids had a shorter lifespan, as they ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722, followed, after an interregnum,

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by the reign of Nādir Shāh Afshar (1736–47). Mughal rule in India began with the conquests of Bābur (1483–1530) between 1526 and 1530, who started out from a newly conquered kingdom in Afghanistan. In a greatly weakened state, the dynasty lasted until 1857.

In terms of population and revenue, around the year 1600 the Mughal Empire was by far the most populous and the wealthiest of the three: scholars have estimated that at that time, Ottoman subjects numbered about 22–35 million, Safavid Iran about 10 million, while the population of the Mughal realm may well have reached 100–145 million.[1] Mughal revenues were by far the largest as well, as the empire contained the immensely productive Ganges and Yamuna River valleys. Thus, the means for deploying royal magnificence were far greater in India than elsewhere. On the other hand, the practices of the Ottoman court are far better known, due to extensive surviving archives, while the records covering the Safavid and Mughal realms are scanty by comparison.

Attention to royal and princely fashions enables an analysis of why many courts spent large amounts of money on clothes and jewellery, especially on the monarch, but in addition, on his family and close associates.[2] Political, dynastic, and cultural considerations determined the material shape that royal magnificence might take. When Edward Barton (*c.* 1562–1598) attended the Ottoman palace as an ambassador of Queen Elizabeth I of England, it is unlikely that the sultan's courtiers scheduled any special events to impress the representative of a distant 'infidel' kingdom, who moreover received his salary from the merchants of the Levant Company. However, when in 1546, the Safavid prince Alqās Mīrzā arrived at the Ottoman court, and Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66) considered him a potentially useful ally in the confrontation with the Safavids, the result was that the Ottoman court gave the Iranian prince a magnificent reception and assigned

1 Stephen Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107–8.

2 The term 'royal' is reserved for the courts of the Ottoman sultan, the shah of Iran, and the emperor/*pādishāh* of the Mughal realm, as well as the Romanov, Habsburg, and Bourbon rulers. The term 'princely' refers to smaller courts, especially but not exclusively those recognizing the superiority of one of the 'big six'.

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him the considerable sum of 90,000 *akçe*.[3] When Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1446–8 and 1451–81), strongly interested in Italian painting, invited the Venetian artist Gentile Bellini (active from the mid-fifteenth century, d. 1507), the latter received a golden chain that he proudly took back to Venice. By contrast when the Danish painter Melchior Lorichs (1526/7–after 1583) visited the court of Sultan Süleyman, he was simply a member of the Habsburg ambassador's suite, as the sultan did not regard him as deserving special recognition or largesse.

To make sense of the reasons for royal ostentation, I begin by briefly discussing the religious values attached to the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties. Outside of the royal courts, controversy might swirl around the ostentation of a given monarch, in part from religious motivations. At the same time, however, magnificent clothes and jewels had the advantage of convincing the ruler's entourage that he or she had the wherewithal for gift-giving on an impressive scale, a worthy ally. As for the population, given widespread poverty, opulent outfits may have overawed some people seeing them on the royal person. Courtly and costly clothes might symbolize the continuity of the dynasty as well, especially when worn at accession ceremonies.

As for female members of Islamic royal courts, they might rightly share in the magnificence of the dynasties to which they belonged by birth or as consorts. Though invisible to the public gaze, some royal women were powerful and even if not, their monarchs often granted them fine clothes and jewels. In the absence of textual evidence, we need to speculate about the reasons for this behaviour. While Ottoman and Safavid royal women did not appear in reliable images, the situation differed somewhat in Mughal India. Generic paintings of harem women were common, so that even though portraits of identifiable personalities are rare, we at least glimpse the manifestations of monarchical power in the garments and jewellery allotted to females at the Mughal courts.

A discussion of luxuries as signs of royal and princely privilege concludes this chapter, captured in part in artistic representations.

[3] Saleh Muhammedoğlu Aliev, 'Elkas Mirza (القاس ميرزا) (ö. 957/1550), Safevî Şehzadesi', in *Diyanet İşleri Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, online edition, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/elkas-mirza (accessed 25 April 2023).

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Ottoman and Mughal royal portraits are more numerous than those surviving from Safavid Iran, probably because of the plundering of Isfahan during the Afghan conquest. These capture, in part, the luxuries of court life. The select use of colour, luxurious fabrics, furs and jewels, assembled with great artistry, comprised the components of magnificence, markers of royal and imperial privilege and power. The totality of these elements sustained royal workshops and artisans working to construct unique material splendour, defining the greatest imperial hierarchies on the Asian (Eurasian) continent.

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS OF COURTLY MAGNIFICENCE

Historians have been studying the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul from the very moment that the building became a museum in 1924.[4] In particular, the regulations on court ceremonial made by Mehmed the Conqueror and amended by Süleyman the Magnificent have become a favoured topic of study.[5] On the other hand, until recently, the religious aspects of the sultanate played a secondary role, with Halil İnalcık especially in his earlier works emphasizing Ottoman continuity with the major Near Eastern empires of antiquity. The same author dwelt on the treatises of 'good government' in the Iranian tradition, and discussed how the claims of the Ottoman sultans to be upholders of justice fitted in with this understanding of empire. Historians often emphasized that the title of caliph was of limited importance when compared, for instance, to the sultans' position as protectors of the pilgrimage to Mecca: titles thus highlighted the practical role of these monarchs, who, while very pious, eschewed fanciful claims to holiness.

However, during the last thirty years or so, with a spate of studies revealing Sultan Süleyman and his immediate successors

[4] Barnette Miller, *The Palace School of Muhammad the Conqueror* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).

[5] Halil İnalcık, 'Kanunnâme', https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kanunname, see section 4 (accessed 2 February 2020); Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, Cambridge, MA, and London: The Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1991).

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surrounded by millenarian expectations, there has been a sea change.[6] Quite a few fifteenth- and sixteenth-century texts treat the Ottoman sultans as religious figures, who might well rule until the end of time and in addition, were caliphs in the Sufi sense of the term. Thus, the reverence shown them was not merely due to their secular position as just and efficient rulers, but to their numinous spiritual qualities as well. Having taken over the Caliphate, the sultans would only surrender it to 'the awaited Messiah'.[7] On a less refined and more political level, the growing stress on the sultans as religious figures in recent years may have a connection to the increasingly dominant role of Islam and the widespread nostalgia for the Ottoman sultanate currently observable in Turkey.

A similar change in the historiography on the Mughal world is also connected with current intellectual and political trends. Representatives of the Aligarh school of Mughal historiography, established by Muhammad Habib (1895–1971) and especially Irfan Habib and Shireen Moosvi have emphasized the image of Akbar (r. 1556–1605) as an active and committed ruler, who 'recognized India not only as his own but as a country with a distinct political and cultural personality'.[8] While the selection of sources in a volume on this ruler put together by Moosvi includes Akbar's claims to spiritual pre-eminence, her vision does not especially stress this aspect of imperial rule. However, the recent study of Azfar Moin on millennial thought in Mughal India emphasizes just this aspect, stating that 'In the early modern era, the style of Muslim kingship was inspired by,

[6] Barbara Flemming, 'Sahib-kıran und Mahdi: Türkische Endzeiterwartungen im ersten Jahrzehnt der Regierung Süleymans', in György Kara (ed.), *Between the Danube and the Caucasus* (Budapest: The Academy of Sciences, 1987), 43–62.

[7] Cornell Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in Massumeh Farhad with Serpil Bağçı (eds.), *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 231–44; Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 286.

[8] Shireen Moosvi (ed.), *Episodes in the Life of Akbar: Contemporary Records and Reminiscences* (Delhi: National Book Trust, 2007), ix.

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among other things, Sufi saints.'[9] Irfan Habib has published a decidedly unsympathetic review of Moin's work, as for Habib, the astrological and millenarian musings of Akbar's court are no more than 'intellectual trivialities'.[10] At present, no comparable debates have ensued among Ottoman historians. But the consensus on Mughal rulers now seems to weigh religious standing in equal measure to secular capacity, both of which required earthly manifestations.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ROYAL OSTENTATION: THE CLAIM TO MAGNIFICENCE

In the Ottoman world, writing on royal magnificence found a place in treatises aiming to teach good government, a genre part of the Iranian literary tradition. Thus, Mustafa Âlî (1541–1600) wrote about appropriate ways of showing royal generosity, including the provision of gifts and festivities. Open-handedness ennobled even Umayyad rulers (661–750), whom the author otherwise reviled for their opposition to 'Alī, the fourth caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. As a one-time finance official, Mustafa Âlî even tried to quantify the proportion of public revenues that the sultan should distribute as gifts: from an annual income of 2,000 'loads' of silver coins (*akçe*), it might be appropriate to give a gift of two 'loads' to a figure deemed especially meritorious.[11] Speaking *pro domo*, Âlî opined that the sultans had been especially remiss in suitably rewarding the authors of important books. The issue of royal generosity was especially relevant to Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17), who built a major mosque complex without having won victories against the Safavid and Habsburg opponents of the

[9] Interview with Azfar Moin, https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/moin-millennial-sovereign (accessed 2 February 2020); Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[10] Irfan Habib, 'Book Review: Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*', *Studies in People's History*, 5/2 (2018), 235–7.

[11] Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, *Görgü ve toplum kuralları üzerinde ziyâfet sofraları (mevâidü'-nefâis fi kavâidi'-l mecâlis)*, trans. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Istanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, 1978), 22. The number of coins in a 'load' was variable.

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Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the sultan's imam and spiritual adviser Mustafa Safi felt that he must defend his advisee, by emphasizing royal open-handedness in particular to modest people. Thus, the mosque complex might feature as another example of the sultan's generosity.[12]

While the issue of appropriateness, put differently giving neither too much nor too little, was part of Ottoman advice literature, to the knowledge of this author, elaborate discourses on magnificence, magnanimity, and splendour were not part of the Ottoman literary tradition. Treatises written during the European Renaissance on these issues therefore do not lend themselves well to a comparative approach.[13]

In the centuries discussed here, a ruler had to show his or her wealth, for a monarch gained and preserved adherents by giving, and giving lavishly. A Mughal ruler retained the loyalty of his commanders only if he could assign them ample revenues, and if he was not generous enough, allies and subordinates might desert him. In the reign of Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703–30) known for his predilection for a well-filled treasury, the Ottoman grand vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa (d. 1730) was careful to give away significant amounts of money in charity.[14] Even among fellow monarchs, distributing treasure was a sign of power: when Nādir Shāh, de facto ruler of Iran after the overthrow of the Safavids, had raided Delhi in 1739, he sent some of the treasure to Istanbul, as an assertive royal gift to Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730–54).

[12] Rhoads Murphey, 'Mustafa Safi's Version of the Kingly Virtues as Presented in his *Zübdetü'lTevarih*, or *Annals of Sultan Ahmed*, 1012–1023 A.H./1603–1614 A.D.', in Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (eds.), *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province and the West*, 2 vols. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), I: 3–24.

[13] Peter Howard, 'Preaching Magnificence in Renaissance Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 61/2 (2008), 325–69; Evelyn Welch, 'Magnificence and Private Display: Giovanni Pontano's *De splendore* (1498) and the Domestic Arts', *Journal of Design History*, 15/4 (2002), 211–21; Peter McNeil and Giorgio Riello, *Luxury: A Rich History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[14] Selim Karahasanoğlu, 'Challenging the Paradigm of the Tulip Age: The Consumer Behavior of Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim Paşa and his Household', in Elif Akçetin and Suraiya Faroqhi (eds.), *Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 134–60.

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An easy way of making the wealth of the monarch visible was to exhibit it on the royal person and on the royal entourage. At the Mughal court, rulers and their courtiers both male and female wore knee-length skirts over pantaloons. Pleated and very full, these skirts highlighted the court's ample supplies of diaphanous cotton, so delicate that it must have deteriorated very quickly, with the message of high privilege inherent in the perishability of the fabric. In a different vein, the kaftans of Ottoman sultans and princes often were heavy and/or easily disfigured by water stains. The young sons of a sultan owning such garments must have ruined quite a few of them, and doubtless this fact was part of royal ostentation.[15] As for French kings and queens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they exhibited the wealth of the monarchy through the extravagant designs of the fabrics depicted on their official portraits.[16] While French images highlighted the aristocratic bodies wearing these textiles, female royals depicted in early modern Spain and at the Central European courts taking their cue from the Habsburgs, might appear as mere tailors' dummies: caps and gowns were stiff with cardboard, starch, silks, and jewellery.[17]

Materials highlighting royal magnificence were, on the whole, quite similar from one court to the next. Silks, velvets, furs, fine linen or cotton, gold and silver jewellery and gems, with embroideries with plenty of gold and silver wire, as well as the feathers of certain birds were popular in most palaces, although details varied for certain courts or periods. Thus, lace was a favourite in early modern European palaces but had no particular standing in Istanbul, Isfahan, or Agra, while the Ottoman court used fur in larger quantities than its Mughal or Safavid counterparts. Even so, as Venetian velvets were popular in the Topkapı Palace and Indian luxuries had their admirers anywhere between London and

[15] Hülya Tezcan, *Osmanlı Sarayının Çocukları: Şehzadeler ve Hanım Sultanların Yaşamları, Giysileri* (Istanbul: Aygaz, 2008).

[16] www.alamy.com/stock-image-tocque-louis-portrait-of-marie-leczinska-queen-of-france-1740-166323001.html (accessed 23 December 2019).

[17] As one example among many, see the portrait of Anne of Austria (1549–80) in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna by Alonso Sánchez Coello, published in Peter Noever (ed.), *Global Lab: Art as Message, Asia and Europe 1500–1700* (Vienna: MAK and Hatje Canz, 2009), 314–15.

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Istanbul, courtiers could select imperial gifts from a repertoire that they knew well, and showing finesse meant choosing the items appropriate for the rulers and dignitaries who were to receive the gifts.

At the same time, not all observers of royal and princely courts approved of royal magnificence. The inclination to devalue this type of ostentation has a long history, present among certain Islamic mystics (Sufis), who indicated their disapproval by wearing rags or even going around partly naked.[18] In the Indian context, this attitude resembled that of Hindu renouncers, and Muslim princes might defer to the widespread veneration of these holy men, visiting them and politely listening to their admonitions. Certain European monastic orders, especially the Franciscans, rejected expensive garments as well, although they bowed to the injunction of the Catholic Church that when celebrating mass or officiating as a bishop, even a member of the Franciscan order must appear in the most sumptuous textiles available.

Many people from the Islamic world and Latinate Europe may have felt reservations concerning royalty appearing in breathtaking clothes and jewellery. Nevertheless, they rarely articulated their feelings: between Istanbul and Agra, many people seemingly assumed that costly accoutrements were part of royal privilege. But, given widespread illiteracy throughout the early modern world, it is wise to avoid categorical statements on this issue.

Nonetheless, in non-capitalist societies where socio-political rank implied the right to parade certain garments that nobody else could wear, appearing in such garb was a way of asserting royal or princely privilege. Thus, at least in the early seventeenth century, donning the elaborate cloak known as *kapanıça* was the privilege of the Ottoman sultan.[19] In the years around 1800, the garb worn by Ottoman sultans on official occasions might include large numbers of diamonds.[20] By contrast, it would have been

[18] Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994; repr. London: Oneworld, 2006).

[19] Özer Küpeli, 'Revan Seferine Götürülen Padişah Kiyafetleri', *Cihannüma: Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2/2 (2016), 33–74, at 41–2.

[20] See Ünver Rüstem, *Ottoman Baroque: The Architectural Refashioning of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 97 on the fondness of Mahmud I (r. 1730–54) for jewellery.

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imprudent of a vizier or pasha to exhibit such jewels on his person.[21] Even if he owned these valuables, he likely never permitted them to leave his treasure chests, for until the mid-nineteenth century and sometimes afterwards as well, it made sense to hide one's valuables. Especially during the difficult times of the later 1700s, sultans might confiscate the property even of wealthy people not part of the Ottoman administration, who had been immune in earlier centuries. After all, Ottoman society was non-capitalist, and (incompletely) transited to capitalism only in the later nineteenth century, with the monarchs confiscating 'private' property until their empire dissolved in the 1920s.

Many rulers, even of those polities where adherence to a monotheistic religion was universal, proclaimed a special relationship with the deity. Such claims made it difficult to criticize a (supposedly) semi-divine creature for exhibiting a special status through costly clothes and ornaments. Indian rulers and, to a lesser but still significant extent, Ottoman sultans asserted a status higher than that of ordinary mortals; and in the sixteenth century, many soldiers of the Safavid shah believed in the other-worldly status of their ruler.[22] Moreover, after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the restored Bourbon kings of France made comparable claims, appearing in ceremonies in which they 'cured' scrofula by the miraculous royal touch.[23]

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a royal might advertise his and especially her wealth by patronizing famous fashion designers. However, in the period at issue, design was rarely a major factor in determining the cost of royal accoutrements, at least insofar as we know. Outside of early modern Europe, there are few sources documenting relationships between patrons and designers. However, for Istanbul around 1800, there survives the

[21] On the diamonds owned by a grand vizier of the late seventeenth century, see Hedda Reindl-Kiel, 'Diamonds are a Vizier's Best Friends or: Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa's Jewelry Assets', in Akçetin and Faroqhi (eds.), *Living the Good Life*, 409–32.

[22] Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

[23] Now nearly a century old, the classic study of this issue is still Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges: Etude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre, preface par Jacques Le Goff* (Paris: Gallimard, [reprint] 1983).

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correspondence between Princess Hatice Sultan (1768–1822), sister of Selim III (r. 1789–1807), and the French artist Antoine Ignace Melling (1763–1831), who designed everything from seaside villas to jewellery.[24] However, in her letters, the princess exhibited an imperious persona, leaving little room for discussions of design and other aesthetic questions.

Royal emblems distinguishing the sultan from his suite are reasonably well known. Apart from the *kapanıça* previously mentioned, the aigrettes holding costly feathers were emblems of the monarch's supreme power. Surviving examples apart, images and photographs of these jewels are in ample supply.[25] Thrones survive in sufficiently large numbers to convince the viewers of Ottoman miniatures that the painters stayed close to reality. In particular, the Topkapı Palace Museum holds an Indian throne that probably was part of the booty brought back by Nādir Shāh from his plundering raid of Delhi.[26] Furthermore, this same museum holds some spectacular ceremonial objects that only a sultan could use, such as a gold- and jade-plated water flask (*matara*) or a jewelled mace.[27]

By contrast, in Isfahan, the Afghan conquerors of 1722 destroyed or dispersed many of the valuables in the Safavid palace, and the treasures of the Mughal emperors suffered an even worse fate. After Nādir Shāh, Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī plundered Delhi in 1757, and the British took whatever remained in and after 1857. Illustrated manuscripts suffered dismemberment and passed from one collector to the next, often ending up in museums in Great Britain and the United States. As for other valuables, the survival rate has been very low; even the collections of the Kachhwaha princes of Jaipur, while impressive, do not preserve many of the royal gifts that the Mughal emperors must have sent to these princes.

[24] Jacques Perot, Frédéric Hitzel, and Robert Anhegger (eds.), *Hatice Sultan ile Melling Kalfa: Mektuplar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001).

[25] Gül İrepoğlu, *Imperial Ottoman Jewellery: Reading History through Jewellery*, trans. Feyza Howell (Istanbul: BKG/Bilkent Kültür Girişim Yayınları, 2012).

[26] Ibid., 320. [27] Ibid., cover image and 164–5.

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ROYAL AND PRINCELY VALUABLES AS SITES OF MEMORY

On a different level, a monarch or potential monarch might value ostentation in clothing and jewellery because the items displayed referred to the traditions of the dynasty, empire, or kingdom of which he or she was the most recent representative. Thus, in 1605, the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17) had the Hungarian nobleman Stefan Bocskai crowned king of Hungary; but as the historic crown of this kingdom was in Habsburg hands, a coronation without this piece of jewellery did not have much prestige among the new king's aristocratic subjects. As for the Ottoman-made crown used by Bocskai, it ultimately made its way to Vienna.[28] These events emphasize that a jewel symbolizing the medieval kingdom of Hungary was indispensable for the legitimacy of a king even in the early seventeenth century. Ottoman sultans did not wear crowns, but in the seventeenth century, a newly enthroned monarch girded the so-called sword of Osman at a solemn visit to the pilgrimage site of Eyüp near Istanbul. Rather than garments or jewellery, this sword stood for the continuity of the dynasty; arrows sometimes served the same purpose.[29]

Even in death, precious textiles, sometimes of exotic manufacture, might indicate the royal or at least princely status of the deceased. While the Counts Palatine buried in the parish church of St Martin in the little town of Lauingen, Germany certainly were not royal, their family burial, which includes men, women, and children, has yielded a unique collection of late sixteenth-century princely garments.[30] Thus, Countess Sophia Dorothea wore a multi-coloured dress of satin and velvet ornamented with gold and silver lace, all of them imports from manufacturing centres in

[28] Anonymous author, 'Eine türkische Krone für Ungarn?' (2018), www.kaiserliche-schatzkammer.at/besuchen/ausstellungen/es-geht-um-europa/ (accessed 4 January 2020).

[29] Cemal Kafadar, 'Eyüp'te Kılıç Kuşanma Törenleri', in Tülay Artan (ed.), *Eyüp: Dün/Bugün, 11–12 Aralık 1993* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 50–61; Nicolas Vatin, 'Aux origines du pèlerinage à Eyüp des sultans ottomans', *Turcica*, 27 (1995), 91–100.

[30] Karen Stolleis and Irmtraud Himmelheber, *Die Gewänder aus der Lauinger Fürstengruft (Forschungshefte – Bayerisches Nationalmuseum München)* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1977).

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northern Italy.[31] By burying the family in what were probably their most valuable clothes, the descendants may have shown off their wealth at the funeral while at the same time expressing their veneration for their deceased relatives by sacrificing garments that they might have reused.

In the Ottoman world, it was customary to place the kaftan of a person of standing, sultans, princes, and princesses included, on top of his or her grave.[32] Exhibiting jewels in such a place was probably exceptional; but in the Istanbul mausoleum of Ahmed I, royal jewels adorning the sultan's turban have survived. For the most part, the original textiles placed on royal graves have decayed in the humid climate of Bursa and Istanbul, but exceptionally, archaeologists have retrieved a few examples during recent restorations of the mausoleums adjacent to Aya Sofya.[33]

As a substitute for textiles, by the later fifteenth century it had become customary to sculpt headdresses in stone and place them on top of the headstones marking male graves. However, the mausoleums of the sultans continued to exhibit high turbans made of textiles, but as the examples currently visible are the product of modern restorers, we do not know what types of headdresses originally appeared on these sites.

Moreover, after the death of a sultan, Ottoman court officials preserved in his memory a set of the clothes worn by the deceased. However, these courtiers proceeded selectively, so that we have large collections documenting the wardrobes of certain rulers and almost nothing for others.[34] By mischance, palace servants sometimes misplaced the markers identifying the clothing belonging to different monarchs, so that it has become difficult to determine the former owners. Nor do we know according to which criteria

[31] www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de/index.php?id=546&L=0&tx_paintingdb_pi[p]=32&tx_paintingdb_pi[categories]=7&cHash=ef59b820238db99152cd1ee61fa75acf (accessed 24 December 2019).

[32] Headstones featuring turbans and dervish headdresses identified non-royal males: H. Necdet İşli, *Ottoman Headgears* (Istanbul: European Capital of Culture Traditional Arts Directorate, 2009).

[33] Sibel Alpaslan Arça, 'Ayasofya Müzesi Şehzadeler Türbesi'nde Tespiti Yapılan Tekstil Buluntuları', in Frédéric Hitzel (ed.), *14th International Congress of Turkish Art: Paris, Collège de France 19–21 September 2011* (Paris: ICTA, 2013), 73–80.

[34] Küpeli, 'Revan Seferine Götürülen Padişah Kiyafetleri', 54.

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courtiers selected certain outfits for preservation: Were they pieces that the deceased had liked and often worn, or were they of special material value? Palace officials may have recycled those garments featuring designs still in current use at the time of the sultan's death, while retaining those with only limited appeal to contemporaries. In the end, moreover, we should not discount the role of chance.

Typically, the people at Islamic courts wore shirts or under-kaftans over loose-fitting pantaloons, with men of status winding their turbans around high caps. The exact shape of the latter indicated whether the wearer adhered to the Ottoman project, although the high red cap supporting the turban was common to certain headdresses worn by the courtiers of Sultan Süleyman and those of his Safavid rival. However, the Safavid-style cap was significantly taller, and for contemporaries the difference between the two types was patent and full of political significance. As for the enormous turbans of high Ottoman dignitaries, they seemingly attracted notice at the Mughal court, although we do not know whether the attention was positive or negative. Whatever the situation, headgear was a *condicio sine qua non* for public appearances of any kind.

THE USES OF COLOUR: RED, WHITE, AND THE VARYING FATES OF 'COURTLY BLACK'

Colours held power and were aligned with dynasties and institutions. From the portraits of sultans and the surviving textiles, it is clear that red was the colour of choice for an Ottoman sovereign – as incidentally was true of the better off among the sultans' subjects as well.[35] In the palace, red often appeared in combination with lavish amounts of gold thread, which drastically limited the number of people wealthy enough to own the relevant fabrics. However, well-to-do subjects of the sultans living in the seventeenth century could buy cushion covers in red, cream, and gold for

[35] On the association of the colour red with the sultan, compare Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 84.

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their reception chambers. Importantly, no colour or colour combination was the exclusive privilege of the sultan's palace.[36]

At the Ottoman court, white appeared in the shirts that were the foundation garments for men and women alike and in the large headdresses typical for various subgroups of the Ottoman elite. At the Mughal court, as noted, we encounter a large number of white outer garments, worn by emperors as well as by their principal associates, particularly the nearly transparent skirts that both covered and revealed the colourful trousers underneath. Perhaps the fine cottons manufactured in Mughal India explain this predilection.

Apparently, the non-colour black, though considered inauspicious in the Ottoman Empire of the mid-sixteenth century, made an impression on courtly painters in both the Ottoman and Mughal worlds. From the fifteenth century onward, the ducal court of Burgundy and later that of Spain had adopted 'courtly black' as a fashion statement, and quite possibly, in the Muslim Mediterranean, the predilection of 'Frankish unbelievers' for black clothes enhanced the negative associations connected with these people and this colour. Moreover, the black clothes of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty ruling Spain from 1516 onward must have reminded viewers of clerical garb.

As for European ambassadors to Istanbul, in the mid-sixteenth century they seemingly came in for criticism because of their black clothes, considered appropriate only for people suffering some great misfortune.[37] However, as European merchants importing cloth usually carried black fabrics, they must have found a market for these goods. In 1720, European ambassadors assisting at the famous circumcision festival organized by Ahmed III certainly wore black hats and hose, but otherwise their garments were colourful.[38] After all, the French and English/British royal courts

[36] Amanda Phillips, 'The Historiography of Ottoman Velvets, 2011–1572: Scholars, Craftsmen, Consumers', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 6 (2012), 1–26.

[37] Augerius Gislenius Busbequius, *Legationis turcicae epistolae quatuor*, ed. Zweder von Martels, trans. Michel Goldsteen (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 90–1.

[38] Esin Atıl, *Levni and the Surnâme: The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Festival* (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1999), 94–5.

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had little enthusiasm for 'courtly black' and in the seventeenth century their members mostly appeared in colourful clothes.

In Mughal India, emperors and senior courtiers very rarely wore black garments; and when the latter appeared on miniatures, the wearers were often the Jesuits that attended Akbar's court in Fatehpur Sikri, or else the Christian saints sometimes depicted on album leaves.[39] However, occasionally, black or nearly black garments might appear on locals too; thus around 1600, a Kamphata yogi appears in a green landscape dressed in a garment of dark purple grey that might be a stand-in for black, and Nādir Shāh of Iran seemingly had himself depicted in black at least once.[40]

Intriguingly, black was in favour at the court of Humāyūn, who supposedly wore black clothes once a week. According to the litterateur Khvānd Mīr (d. about 1537), the emperor had decided to organize his court by astrological criteria, and this arrangement included the appearance of the ruler in clothes of a certain colour on certain days of the week, each of the latter supposedly dominated by one of the seven 'planets' known at that time.[41] The wearing of black clothes, considered especially imposing, had a connection to Saturn, and these garments derived further prestige from the flags of the Abbasids, which had featured that colour as well. However, we do not know to what extent this account was realistic rather than fantastical, and if the emperor ever wore this sequence of clothes, it is unknown for how long he could abide by his own rules. After all, the elaborate crown (*tāj*) that he had designed for himself lapsed into obscurity when Humāyūn

[39] See Elisa Gagliardi Mangilli, 'Akbar the Great. The Emperor's New Clothes: The Evolution of Mughal Costumes in the Contemporary Documentary Sources', in Gian Carlo Calza (ed.), *Akbar: The Great Emperor of India* (Milan: Skira, 2012), 71–80, at 73; for a surviving princely garment from the seventeenth century, see 75; see also Elaine Wright, Susan Stronge, and W. M. Thackston, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library Dublin* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008), 59.

[40] Wright et al., *Muraqqa'*, 270–1.

[41] Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 112–27, esp. 121–2; Eva Orthmann, 'Ideology and State Building: Humāyūn's Search for Legitimacy in a Hindu-Muslim Environment', in Vasudha Dalmia and Munis D. Faruqui (eds.), *Religious Interactions in Mughal India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3–29.

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(r. 1530–40, 1555–6) had to take refuge at the Safavid court and wear the headdress Shāh Ṭahmāsp I had imposed upon him.

WOMEN AT COURT

When compared to the clothes left by Ottoman sultans, few garments survive that had been the property of princesses, queen mothers, and the female retinues of these royals. Even so, a garment once worn by a princess of the late sixteenth century has emerged during the restoration of the Ottoman imperial mausoleums, as previously mentioned.[42]

Moreover, as we have seen, no sultan commissioned portraits of his female relatives, and no images of Safavid princesses seem to be extant. Thus, these royal women remain invisible to posterity. By contrast, from Mughal India a few portraits depicting women of the ruling dynasty and made by Indian/Iranian artists do survive. One such example is an image from the *Akbarnama*, painted by Tulsi and Durga about 1595 and showing Akbar's elderly mother (Figure 7.1). While travelling towards Agra on a ship with a red pavilion and sail, Humāyūn's former queen appears in a cream-coloured gown and a green shawl, which leaves her face visible.[43] Other images depict Jahāngīr's powerful empress Nūr Jahān (1577–1645).[44] One of them is the work of the court painter Abū'l-Ḥasan, who worked in the early seventeenth century. The official title of this artist was Nādiru'l-Zamān or Wonder of the Age. The empress stands in a green meadow, and loads a musket, a powder horn hanging from her sash, a strongly martial image. Her turban, which resembles that worn by men, sports a golden ornament and the profile of the empress shows a jewelled earring. Another

[42] Alpaslan Arça, 'Ayasofya Müzesi', 75.

[43] http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9283/mariam-makani-painting-tulsi/ (accessed 6 January 2020). The explanation given by the Museum authorities identifies the royal woman as Mariam Makānī and Akbar's mother, although normally this title applies to the mother of Jahāngīr.

[44] Ruby Lal, *Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan* (London and New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), images, not numbered after p. 142; for explanations, see 144–9, 271–2, 278–9.

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Figure 7.1 A royal woman of the Mughal dynasty (Mariam Makani) on a boat to Agra. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper from the *Akbarnama* (Book of Akbar), *c*. 1590–5. 33 × 20 cm. Alamy.

painting depicts the empress while sitting for her portrait, on which a female artist named Chiterin/Chiteri is working. However, as the empress has covered her body and even her

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chin with her white shawl, this image does not give much information about her apparel underneath.[45] A further portrait shows the empress in light indoor dress, holding a portrait of her husband: perhaps this painting dates to the time of Jahāngīr's death.

Why did monarchs accord costly clothes and jewels to the women of their families, who for the most part were invisible to the public? Perhaps the members of royal/imperial courts assumed that anybody whom the ruler encountered at close range should be of magnificent appearance to uphold the honour of the dynasty. In addition, at the Ottoman court, from the late sixteenth century onwards, the mothers of the reigning sultans exercised significant power; due to the institutional anchoring of the queen mother's prerogatives, the holders of this position retained some of their importance even after Köprülüzade Mehmed Paşa had re-established the primacy of the grand vizier.[46] Thus, some female members of the Ottoman court controlled significant wealth, including textiles and jewels, although their property returned to the sultan after their deaths.

In Safavid Iran, female royals participated in the charisma of the dynasty, and for this reason, the shahs granted them elegant garments and jewellery. In addition, certain Safavid rulers reserved some princesses as possible spouses for the Hidden Imam, if he were to appear during the reign of the current monarch. Thus, the permanently virgin princesses achieved a certain vicarious holiness. This factor may have furthered the monarchs' inclination to single them out with expensive accoutrements – however, here we enter the realm of speculation, for documentation is limited. In the Mughal orbit, although Nūr Jahān's prerogatives remained exceptional, certain females held formal or informal power; but once again, due to the lack of sources, the textiles and jewellery owned by these women remain a subject of intriguing speculation.

[45] Anjan Chakraverty, *Indian Miniature Painting* (Delhi: India Crest, Lustre Press, Roli Books, 2008), no page number, includes a larger-scale reproduction of the miniature showing Chiteri at work. However, the author does not link this image with Nūr Jahān.

[46] Betül İpşirli Argıt, *Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan 1640–1715* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2014).

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DISPLAYING THE ROYAL ACCOUTREMENTS IN PORTRAITURE: THE OTTOMAN CASE

Portraits were a convenient vehicle for displaying the royal person in his or her official garb and wearing the appropriate jewellery, including ornamental weapons. However, we cannot be sure that these portraits depicted the clothes and insignia personally utilized by a given monarch, as court traditions might determine the iconography. Even so, given the limited number of surviving objects, portraits are often the best source on royal or princely garb.

Questions of accuracy aside, in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal worlds, the sovereigns decided on the painting and sometimes the distribution of official portraits. In the Ottoman Empire, Mehmed II was the first sultan to have his portrait painted and bust sculpted, with extant depictions de-emphasizing royal accoutrements worn on the person. However, the sheer novelty of such portraits in the Ottoman setting must have emphasized the sultan's imperial ambitions, and the items framing him render these aspirations obvious (Figure 7.2). A valuable cover enlivened by embroidery and coloured glass/jewels hangs on the balustrade separating the sultan from the viewers, in conformity with the conventions of early Renaissance Venetian portraiture. In the embroidery of the cover, meticulously depicted, we find a crown; and the painter has arranged six further crowns over the Renaissance arch framing the portrait. Supposedly, these items stand for the position of Mehmed II as the seventh ruler of the Ottoman dynasty.[47] Perhaps the sultan avoided carrying the symbols of royalty on his person because Islamic religious law disapproved of gold and silver jewellery. Whatever the monarch's intention may have been, the portrait features the date of 25 November 1480, about six months before the ruler's death. We may thus assume that the *mise-en-scène* corresponds to the intentions of Mehmed II at the end of his life, when one of his commanders was conquering the Italian fortress town of Otranto.

[47] Julian Raby, 'Opening Gambits', in Selmin Kangal, Priscilla Mary Işın, and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi (eds.), *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (Istanbul: İşbank, 2000), 64–95, see 80–1.

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Figure 7.2 Gentile Bellini, *The Sultan Mehmet II*, 1480. Oil on canvas, 69.9 × 52.1 cm. The National Gallery, London, Layard Bequest, 1916, NG3099. Alamy.

If a sultan ruled long enough, as happened in the case of Sultan Süleyman, the extant portraits show that age played a role when the monarch chose his accoutrements. As an old man, this monarch appeared without almost any royal ornaments upon his person, apart from some – probably rare and precious – feathers in his turban (Figure 7.3). In one image, a page followed the monarch, carrying the latter's golden/gilt sword and scabbard. Likely, the sobriety of Süleyman's attire pointed to the piety and abstemiousness of the monarch in his later years. However, in the numerous portraits showing the sultan as a young and later as a middle-aged man, produced by both Ottoman and non-Ottoman artists, Sultan

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Figure 7.3 *Süleyman the Magnificent.* Print by Melchior Lorck (1526–after 1588). 40.4 × 28.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925, 25.2.49.

Süleyman certainly wore highly decorated textiles and expensive jewellery.[48]

For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the portraits of Osman II (r. 1618–22) and Selim III (r. 1789–1807) figure prominently. Murdered before reaching the age of eighteen, Osman II is of special interest as his portraits usually show him in precious attire and riding his richly caparisoned and favourite grey horse (Figure 7.4).[49] Perhaps the miniaturists intend to highlight the closeness between the juvenile monarch and his mount, depicting him as the victorious warrior of his teenage ambitions. Even so, the

[48] Jürg Meyer zur Capellen and Serpil Bağçı, 'The Age of Magnificence', in Kangal et al. (eds.), *The Sultan's Portrait*, 96–133.

[49] Banu Mahir, 'Portraits in a New Context', in Kangal et al. (eds.), *The Sultan's Portrait*, 298–335.

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Figure 7.4 *Osman II on horseback*, 1620. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul (Inv. H 2169, Fol. 13a). The Picture Art Collection / Alamy Stock Photo MN07E7.

painter Nakşi, a contemporary, has understated the martial aspect of his subject's personality. As we only know that the portraits date to about 1620, and Osman II was already dead by May 1622, perhaps at least some of the images are posthumous. In consequence, it is hard to say whether the painter showed the clothes and jewels actually worn, or rather produced an image commemorating 'Young Osman' as he lived on in the imagination of local minstrels.

Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807) explicitly used royal portraits for propaganda purposes, even sending samples to England for engraving. Intriguingly, at a time when the empire was in crisis, and the

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sultan came to the throne fully aware of this fact, he preferred to appear in jewelled splendour. Earlier monarchs and their advisers perhaps had not considered such shows of opulence necessary.[50] In a portrait that shows him, shortly after his accession, giving an audience in the second court of the Topkapı Palace, the monarch wears garments that are all bright red, apart from the brown fur lining his overcoat with the long pendant sleeves (Figure 7.5). Only his turban is white, featuring small gold jewels. However, the most eye-catching aspect is a huge vertical diamond-studded aigrette from which sprouts a very tall bundle of light-coloured feathers. Moreover, Selim III, like his predecessors, had adopted an outer garment studded with rows of diamonds, so that he appeared as if wearing a diamond breastplate. A source of brilliant light, this apparel illuminates the royal presence.

In the seventeenth century, Istanbul jewellers produced a significant number of imperial ornaments for the tsars of Russia. Museum specialists continue to speculate on the reasons why the tsars of this period favoured precious items of Ottoman (and Iranian) workmanship.[51] Some authors dwell on the Russian tendency to identify Istanbul with Byzantine Constantinople, a city to which the tsars claimed entitlement as part of their imperial identity. Alternatively, the adoption of the title of 'tsar' by Ivan IV (1547) may have fuelled competition with other monarchs of imperial status, especially with the magnificent court of Sultan Süleyman.[52] Firm evidence seems

[50] Günsel Renda, 'Portraits: The Last Century', in Kangal et al. (eds.), *The Sultan's Portrait*, 442–543, at 470–1. The huge bunch of feathers and the diamond aigrette reappear in the portrait of Selim's successor Mustafa IV: see ibid., 500–1.

[51] Compare the comments in the section on Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich, 'Sceptre and Orb', www.kreml.ru/en-Us/exhibitions/virtual-exhibitions.regalii-russkikh-tsarey/tsar-aleksey-mikhaylovich/ (accessed 4 February 2020). Among valuables of Iranian origin, the so-called diamond throne, dated to 1659, was a gift from Armenian merchants living in Iran.

[52] Nurhan Atasoy and Lale Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe, 1453–1699* (Istanbul: Armaggan Yayınları and The Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2012), 77. On Russian–Ottoman interactions in the decorative arts, see I. I. Vishnevskaya, 'The Court of the Tsars in the 16th–17th Centuries', in Olga Bogoslovskaya and Selmin Kangal (eds.), *Treasures of the Moscow Kremlin at the Topkapı Palace* (Istanbul: Moscow Kremlin Museums and Topkapı Palace Museum, 2010), 15–45.

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Figure 7.5 Detail of *Selim III in audience*, between 1789 and 1807. Oil on canvas. Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul 17/163. © Alamy MW46CM.

to be missing. It is clear, however, that Ottoman workshops and artisans produced masterpieces fit to bedeck royal bodies.

DISPLAYING THE ROYAL ACCOUTREMENTS IN PORTRAITURE: THE SAFAVIDS AND THE MUGHALS

Among Safavid royal portraiture there survives an image of Shāh ʿAbbās I (r. 1588–1629) being offered a goblet by a handsome page, whose arms and shoulders the shah lightly embraces. For informal poses of this kind, there is no parallel in Ottoman royal portraiture. While the page wears an intricately folded turban, the sovereign has donned a cap with a pointed top, bordered with fur and a golden ornament at the brim. A red shirt and a vest of cloth of gold or gilt leather provide colour accents in an otherwise nearly monochrome

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image; the pensive-looking shah wears no other ornaments.[53] Apparently, this is the only extant portrait painted during the lifetime of the sitter (Figure 7.6). The prominent red and gold ensemble apparently signified his royal standing.

After the fall of the Safavids in 1722, constant warfare made royal patronage precarious, but Nādir Shāh (1688–1747), who ruled Iran between 1736 and 1747, did commission several portraits reflecting the manner in which a military leader without royal background presented himself as the legitimate successor of the Safavids. In a portrait painted in 1743–4, today in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, Nādir Shāh wears a full black beard, thus differing from the (more or less) clean-shaven Shāh ʿAbbās.[54] His coat is of a stiff dark material, with buttons but worn open, once again very different from the light and fine materials chosen by Shāh ʿAbbās. It has a narrow waist and a stiff wide skirt descending to the knee, ornamented with a jewelled belt into which the monarch has tucked a long sword and a dagger, while carrying a ceremonial mace in his hand. Nādir Shāh adopts a similar pose in a portrait today in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Figure 7.7), but here the jacket appears as rusty brown rather than nearly black, as is the case in the St Petersburg version.[55] In both images, the most striking items are the elaborate jewelled armbands (*bazuband*) worn above the elbow and a red headdress with its plume surrounded by a golden ornament so large that it resembles a crown. Whether intentionally or not, Nādir Shāh's attire emphasizes that he is 'different' from his Safavid predecessors and from the Mughal dynasty as well, whose contemporary representative Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48) he had spectacularly defeated in 1739.

A wall painting in a pavilion of the Isfahan garden precinct provides a unique perspective on how the seventeenth-century

[53] Sophie Makariou, 'Le prince et l'album', in Sophie Makariou (ed.), *Les arts de l'Islam au Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Louvre Éditions, 2012), 437–83, here at 457.

[54] Adel Adamova, *Persian Manuscripts, Paintings and Drawings: From the 15th to the Early 20th Century in the Hermitage Collection* (London: Azimuth Editions, 2012), 251.

[55] Basil William Robinson, 'Painting in the Post-Safavid Period', in Ronald Ferrier (ed.), *The Arts of Persia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 225–31, here at 225–6.

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Figure 7.6 *Shāh 'Abbās and his page.* Ink drawing, colour highlights and gold on paper signed Muhammad Qâsim, 1627. Musée du Louvre, Paris, MAO 494. © Alamy MNX81T-H.

Safavid court viewed its relationship to the rulers of Mughal India. The historical background was the flight of Bābur's son Humāyūn, ousted from India by his brothers who competed with him for the throne, in addition to his Afghan opponent Shēr Khān Sūr, who later used the title of 'shah'. After spending over a decade in Iran (1543–55) and converting to the Shi'ite faith at least nominally, Humāyūn regained his throne but died in an accident shortly afterward. In the courtly history known as the *Akbarnama*, composed for Humāyūn's son, this event featured mainly as a triumphal encounter among friendly rulers.[56]

However, the Safavid angle on this meeting was quite different.[57] In the courtly entertainment depicted in Isfahan, Shāh Ṭahmāsp and his no-longer-royal visitor certainly shared food and drink on the same dais. However, the shah sported an outsized sabre, while Humāyūn was unarmed. In addition, the turban surmounted by the

[56] For a discussion of the relevant text-cum-image, see Ursula Sims Williams, https://scroll.in/article/833610/how-was-emperor-humayun-received-by-shah-tahmasp-of-iran-manuscripts-offer-contrasting-views (accessed 3 January 2020).

[57] Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims, 'Painting', in Ferrier (ed.), *The Arts of Persia*, 200–24, at 215.

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Figure 7.7 Muhammad Riza Hindi, *Portrait of Nadir Shāh*, c. 1740. Gouache on paper, 22 × 14 cm. Entered the Hermitage in 1924; handed over from the Stieglitz Central Museum of Decorative and Applied Arts. Inventory Number: VP-552. Alamy 2F2DHDB.

high and pointed cap, which symbolized adherence to the Safavid project, greatly increased the size of the Iranian ruler, to say nothing of the feathers and ornaments enhancing the latter's turban. Humāyūn by contrast, wore a turban without ornaments, thus, appearing to be a smaller man than the shah was; the Iranian monarch clearly dominated the picture. Apparel signified status emphatically, with varying magnificence.

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A descendant of Timur Lenk, Humāyūn's father Bābur from 1526 onward had conquered northern India, and his grandson Akbar not only consolidated and expanded the Mughal Empire, but also acted as a major sponsor of royal and elite portraits. The large number of such depictions, produced well into the reign of Aurangzeb, allow us to reconstruct the garments and jewellery that advertised the imperial presence at magnificent court gatherings (*durbar*), where a halo known from European images of saintly persons typically indicates the sovereign.[58] As Bābur during his few years in India was almost constantly on campaign, the images showing him are posthumous, wearing the garments considered appropriate at the time of painting, rather than recording what Bābur may have worn in life.[59] In an illustrated 'Bāburnāma' dated to 1589, we see the ruler in a sportive contest, wearing a turban wound around a short red cap and adorned with a feather, a long red kaftan with an ornamental closure, and a belt with a suspended embroidered shawl or napkin and a dagger. However, the most eye-catching item is the horsetail hung around the horse's neck; but this is not an emblem of royalty, as Bābur's companions have decorated their horses in the same manner. While clothing and pose highlight the person of the monarch, the al fresco or perhaps warlike atmosphere seemingly precludes the exhibition of 'showy' valuables.

However, from the reign of Akbar onward, the court employed numerous painters; royal fashions from the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth century were thus on record in contemporary imagery.[60] Humāyūn wore a conspicuous pointed headdress with a bunch of feathers affixed to it and a cloth wrapped all around. As noted, he chose the colour of his garments by astrological criteria; however, his successors did not adopt this custom.

Akbar appears in many images, often when 'in action'. When receiving the Iranian ambassador Sayyid Beg conveying the shah's condolences because of Humāyūn's death (1562), the adolescent

[58] For Mughal royal portraits, see Wright et al., *Muraqqa'*, 36–149.

[59] Michael Barry and Lale Uluç, 'The Illustrated Text', in Margaret S. Graves, Benoît Junod, and Çağatay Anadol (eds.), *Treasures of the Agha Khan Museum: Arts of the Book & Calligraphy* (Istanbul: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2010), 238–307, at 300–1.

[60] Gagliardi Mangilli, 'Akbar the Great'.

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monarch sits on an elevated gold-coloured throne, dressed in what seems to be cloth of gold, wearing a red turban (Figure 7.8).[61] In quite a few images, Akbar as a young man appears while engaged in wild and dangerous sports, for which he wears simple dress but always shows his imperial status. These symbols include a sash, as well as a jewelled turban with a feather and an ornamental collar.[62] Later in life, when returning to his palace in Fatehpur Sikri after a campaign, the main features marking Akbar as the ruler of a vast empire are again a feather surmounting his turban and the double sash, which seems to be Akbar's privilege at least in this picture. In other images, by contrast, we see this feature on senior courtiers as well.[63] Similar to the image of Mehmed the Conqueror, Akbar's imperial presence is apparent not so much from signs worn on the person as from the items surrounding him.

Portraits documenting Akbar's appearance in the last years of his life show him wearing a small turban, in one case ornamented by a red band. His shirt has a ruffle at the closure, while around the waist the emperor wears the characteristic double sash and a nearly transparent white skirt over colourful striped pants. In addition to a necklace, probably of pearls, the emperor sports two bracelets featuring similar jewels. His outfit is thus resplendent although the face and manner of standing clearly show his advanced age.[64]

Portraits of Akbar's son and successor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) being very numerous, we can only discuss a tiny selection.[65] Painted around 1613, an image of Jahāngīr holding up a picture of his royal father shows that the garments and jewellery worn – or not worn – by a Mughal emperor could vary considerably.[66] We need to supplement this image, which only shows head and shoulders,

[61] This miniature is in the Victoria and Albert Museum IS.2:27–1896, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9419/akbar-receives-the-iranian-ambassador-painting-lal/ (accessed 5 January 2020).

[62] www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/islamic-art-late-period/a/illustration-from-the-akbarnama (accessed 3 January 2020).

[63] Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, *Fathpur Sikri Revisited* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32.

[64] Gagliardi Mangilli, 'Akbar the Great', 72 and 78.

[65] Jahāngīr, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahāngīr, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[66] Makariou, 'Le prince et l'album', 460–2.

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Figure 7.8 Akbar receiving the Iranian ambassador Sayyid Beg in 1562. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper by La'l and Nand. Mughal, *c.* 1590–5. Alamy.

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with others showing the full figure. In a durbar scene painted about 1640, over a decade after Jahāngīr's death, the emperor wears two elaborate sashes around the waist: the lower one is larger and gold-coloured, while the upper one is narrower and of a darker hue, with a small dagger suspended from it.[67] Over his trousers, the emperor wears a richly pleated skirt reaching well below the knees, as do some of his courtiers; however, Jahāngīr's garment is much finer, showing the middle-aged ruler's rather full figure (Figure 7.9).[68]

To summarize: while certain rulers might prefer 'understated elegance' to eye-catching opulence, even those eschewing gold and silks appeared in costly though simple clothes or at least wore one or two pieces of expensive jewellery marking their rank. Thus, when in his sixties, Akbar appeared in sparingly decorated white garb, a valuable jewel in his turban still made it clear that he was in fact the emperor. Similarly, Süleyman the Magnificent in his later years gave up wearing silks. While an outsider to the Ottoman court might have had trouble distinguishing the sultan from the viziers that surrounded him, the feathers set in a jewelled holder decorating his turban made the monarch recognizable to those familiar with Ottoman etiquette.[69]

EXOTIC VALUABLES: SIGNS OF ROYAL PRIVILEGE

In many courts, goods imported from afar emphasized the privileged position of the monarch, who could acquire such valuables through conquest or arouse enough awe in lesser princes for them to send the desired items as gifts. More prosaically, the monarchs at issue might simply be rich enough to purchase whatever was rare and exotic. On a more modest level, this kind of ostentation was accessible to non-royal persons as well: thus in the seventeenth century, male Polish nobles wore clothing that they fancied 'Sarmatian' and which in reality included garments and insignia 'in the Ottoman style'. Silk sashes with embroidered ends, imported from Iran or the Ottoman

[67] See Jagjeet Lally's chapter in this volume.

[68] Linda Komaroff (ed.), *Gifts of the Sultans: The Art of Giving at the Islamic Courts* (Los Angeles: Museum Associates/Los Angeles County Museum of Arts, 2011), fig. 154.

[69] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 20.

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Figure 7.9 Jahāngīr in a garden with his nobles. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper by Manohar. Mughal, *c.* 1610–15. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM.9–1925.

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Empire and, at a later stage, manufactured in Poland itself, were part of the 'Sarmatian' outfit (Figure 7.10).[70]

However, the Ottoman sultans, the shahs of Iran, and the Mughal emperors – as well as the female members of their courts – could obtain exotic rarities inaccessible to anyone else. The survival of certain objects and especially archival documents enable us to say more about the Ottoman court than about its Iranian and Indian counterparts. A letter from Nur Banu Sultan (d. 1583), the mother of Mehmed III, addressed to the Venetian resident ambassador (*bailo*), is very instructive. In this missive, the queen mother imperiously demands that feathers imitated in delicately spun glass and imported from Italy should be a privilege of the sultan's court, at least until they were no longer in high fashion.[71] Thus, her letter shows that while the general shape of Ottoman costume changed very slowly, among the royal cohort the notion of something being in fashion for only a short time, existed already in the sixteenth century.

In addition to Venetian velvets, jewellery, large mirrors and other glassware, exotica at the Ottoman court included Iranian silks. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, these items must have caused ambivalent reactions; for at that time, Safavid textiles made for use in non-religious contexts, such as palaces, featured images of people and animals, including references to well-known stories. In the Ottoman world, by contrast, such motifs usually appeared only between the covers of books. However, as some Iranian textiles decorated with mythological and real-life persons have survived in the Topkapı Palace collections, certain sultans probably did not consider these images objectionable.[72] In any case, the fashion for textiles decorated in

[70] Nazan Ölçer et al., *Distant Neighbour, Close Memories: 600 Years of Turkish-Polish Relations* (Istanbul: Sakip Sabancı Museum, 2014), 331–3.

[71] Luca Molà, 'Material Diplomacy: Venetian Luxury Gifts to the Ottoman Empire in the Late Renaissance', in Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello (eds.), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56–87, here at 76.

[72] Mohammad Reza Mehrandish, İlber Ortaylı et al. (eds.), *Onbin Yıllık İran Medeniyeti: İkibin Yıllık Ortak Miras* (Istanbul: The National Museum of Iran and T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2009), 234–7.

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Figure 7.10 An Ottoman sash. Istanbul, first half of the eighteenth century. National Museum Krakow, MNK, Inv. no. XIX 2528.

this style disappeared in Iran during the late seventeenth century, with designers reverting to floral and abstract motifs.[73]

Indian cottons, silks, and cashmeres were popular among Ottoman subjects with money to spend on luxuries; and some of these pieces have survived in the Topkapı Palace as well.[74] Even so,

[73] Joan Allgrove McDowell, 'Textiles', in Ferrier (ed.), *The Arts of Persia*, 157–70, at 163–70.

[74] Hülya Bilgi and Sumiyo Okumura (eds.), *Textile Furnishings from the Topkapı Palace Museum* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Foundation and Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007), nos. 19, 20, 35, and 53.

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around 1800, Selim III recorded his disapproval of imported luxuries, claiming that he wore textiles of Ottoman manufacture and his courtiers should do the same. However, the many diamonds appearing in his portrait were definitely imports.[75]

CONCLUSION

Magnificence took different forms. While royal courts between Paris and Delhi or Agra went in for splendid, jewel-encrusted paraphernalia on official occasions, the notion of 'understated elegance' was present as well. Particularly at the Mughal court, clothes and jewels singled out the emperor; however, especially Akbar and Jahāngīr's empress Nūr Jahān had portraits painted on which they appeared in comparatively simple clothes suitable for an active life. In the Ottoman context, Mehmed the Conqueror and Süleyman in his later years presented themselves in powerful simplicity as well, perhaps manifesting religious aspirations. Life cycle and political circumstance could define the apparel chosen by a monarch, including preferred colours. In the empires studied here, while the Ottoman court privileged red, and white was a Mughal favourite, there was no attempt to declare any colour a royal prerogative. This restraint is remarkable as at least in the Ottoman world, certain shades of green were the privilege of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. At present, our full understanding of colour symbolism at the courts of Istanbul, Isfahan, and Agra is limited indeed – and the same observation applies to other aspects of royal magnificence. However, it is fully evident that magnificence was employed to define a select population of men and women and their dynastic claims, in empires stretching across vast regions of the globe.

[75] Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III'ün Hatt-ı Humayunları: Nizam-ı Cedid 1789–1807* (repr. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 136. I thank Betül Başaran for this reference. For the diamonds, see Renda, 'Portraits: The Last Century', 470–1.

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