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PURSuing PLEASURE, ATTAINING OBLIVION:
THE ROLES AND USES OF INTOXICANTS AT THE MUGHAL COURT

By:
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B.A., University of Louisville, 2008

A Thesis
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A Thesis Approved on

May 7, 2010

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father

Roger Louis Honchell

ABSTRACT

PURSUING PLEASURE, ATTAINING OBLIVION:

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Stephanie Honchell

May 7, 2010

Intoxicant use in Mughal India was not only widespread, it also represented an important part of the empire's history and culture. The influence of intoxicants – specifically opium and alcohol – has often been overlooked in secondary literature, leading to several misconceptions in modern historiography. This is especially true in the case of the relationship individual emperors had with drugs and alcohol. During the formative years of the empire, intoxicant use was representative of both a peripatetic lifestyle and the Turko-Mongol cultural legacy. As the empire took on more elements of settled society, the roles and uses of intoxicants underwent a significant shift. Drinking practices became increasingly private leading to greater incidence of addiction, while opium use became much more habitual and ingrained in Mughal culture. Attempts to curb intoxicant use by Aurangzeb not only contradicted the precedents set by earlier emperors, but also served to weaken the emperor's authority and foster internal dissent.

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INTRODUCTION

Intoxicants have been consumed throughout human history with their roles and uses dictated by and reflective of every individual society. Despite this, very little scholarship has focused on the impact of intoxicants on history prior to the modern period. The use of intoxicants – such as alcohol and opium – in Mughal India is well documented and often acknowledged in secondary sources written on the period. That intoxicants played a role at the Mughal court is undeniable but is often only vaguely referred to by historians, with the same basic information repeated over and over again in secondary literature. However, rather than identifying an evolution in the use of drugs and alcohol, intoxicants have been depicted either as widespread and unchanging or only mentioned in reference to specific individuals. The goal of this study is to both explicate and analyze the changing roles and uses of intoxicants at the Mughal court from 1526-1707 during the reigns of its first six emperors: Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb.¹ During this period both alcohol and opium's roles in Mughal society transformed and reflected the larger changes that were happening within the Mughal world.

¹ To avoid confusion, Jahangir and Shah Jahan will be referred to by their regnal names throughout as opposed to their given names, Selim and Khurram, respectively.

The lack of any study focused solely on the Mughals' changing relationship with and use of drugs and alcohol has unfortunately led to several misconceptions about both the Mughal world and the individuals within it. Portrayals of each emperor's relationship to intoxicants has increasingly had more to do with perceptions of the successfulness of their reigns than on what is actually in the historical record. Less effective rulers such as Humayun and Jahangir have become the emperors most often associated with addiction, while Akbar has been presented as a sober and temperate ruler. Humayun specifically has continually been portrayed as an opium addict in works such as those by John Richards, Waldemar Hansen, and Abraham Eraly; though when opium use throughout the empire is examined, his consumption hardly stands out as unique or out of the ordinary.² This perception of Humayun has remained relatively unquestioned since it entered modern historiography through the works of Stanley Lane-Poole, Vincent Arthur Smith, and Stephen M. Edwardes.³ The opposite stance has been taken in relation to Akbar, as evidenced by André Wink who draws a direct correlation between the emperor's moderate use of intoxicants and his moderation in public policy, as apparently the two must go hand in hand.⁴

These ideas about who the emperors were has even effected the ways in which some primary sources have been interpreted. For example, in her book *Nur*

² John Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India, 2007), 9-12; Waldemar Hansen, *The Peacock Throne: The Drama of Mughal India* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Throne: The Saga of India's Great Emperors* (London: Orion Books, 2004), 42-43.

³ Stanley Lane-Poole, *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule, 712-1764* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1903), 219; Vincent Arthur Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542-1605* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), 406; Stephen Meredyth Edwardes and Herbert Leonard Offley Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1995), 11, 158.

⁴ André Wink, *Akbar* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 58-59.

Jahan, Ellison Banks Findly wrongly identifies Jahangir as the subject of a story about his father, Akbar, riding an elephant while drunk. Findly even goes so far as to use the episode as an example of Akbar's disapproval of his son's drinking habits. This and other misinterpretations appear to be the direct result of incorrect assessments that over time have come to be regarded as facts.⁵ The only publication specifically on the topic of intoxicants, S.P. Sangar's article "Intoxicants in Mughal India," fails to provide any analysis of the subject, instead only listing off the names of different drugs and citing direct quotations from European travelers as evidence. Sangar does not scrutinize his sources, mention their consumption by specific individuals, or provide any indication of changes in how they were perceived or used.⁶

One significant exception to this tradition is Stephen Dale's book, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, wherein multiple connections are drawn between Babur's use of intoxicants and the earlier nomadic traditions from which he hailed. Though the focus of the work is on Babur's life and not narcotics, Dale discusses the changes that occurred in relation to drug and alcohol consumption during Babur's lifetime. Annemarie Schimmel's work *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, and Culture* has a short section on intoxicants which provides an interesting overview, but gives little information related to changing uses of or attitudes towards drugs and alcohol. In his book *The Mughals of India*, Harbans Mukhia mentions opium and alcohol multiple times but, like Schimmel, presents their place in society as

⁵ Ellison Banks Findley, *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 78.

⁶ S.P. Sangar, "Intoxicants in Mughal India," *Indian Journal of History of Science* 16 (November, 1981): 202-14.

widespread and unchanging. Ruby Lal discusses both the drinking culture under Babur and the transformation of Mughal society from peripatetic to settled, but fails to draw any connection between the two. The Mughal drinking culture underwent significant changes as a result of this transition, though it has not been specifically addressed in any secondary literature. Lal's delineation of the public and private spheres within the Mughal court have been incorporated into this study, with the term "public" primarily referring to male homosocial interactions on military campaigns or at court, while "private" refers to occurrences within the emperor's household inside the *zenana*.⁷

While secondary sources have been extensively consulted, in order to avoid assumptions that may have arisen in recent historiography regarding intoxicant use, the main information used in this study comes directly from primary source material produced during or immediately following the periods discussed. These sources include memoirs written by the emperors themselves or by those close to them such as the *Baburnama*, *Humayunnama*, *Akbarnama*, and *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. Official records such as the *Ain-i-Akbari* also provide important insight into the economics of intoxication during this period. The accounts of Europeans who visited or lived in India during the Mughal period such as Duarte Barbosa, John Huyghen van Linschoten, and Niccolao Manucci, also offer a wealth of information regarding drug and alcohol consumption. Primary sources on the Mughals not only

⁷ Stephen F. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India (1483-1530)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), *passim*; Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, and Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 195-99; Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 45, 86, *passim*; Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

provide much more knowledge about intoxicants than secondary treatment would suggest, their analysis also allows for the re-examination and reconsideration of existing ideas of the empire as a whole.

It is important with these, as with any sources, to keep questions of their reliability in mind. While the Mughal sources are often incredibly candid in nature, they were crafted specifically for “clarification and justification of the Mughal’s sovereign legitimacy.”⁸ The memoirs and official histories especially were intended to be – and in many cases were – read for generations to come, not only expressing who the individuals were and what they did but also how exactly they wished to be remembered. This is especially important when studying the roles of intoxicants in society, as reality is sometimes impossible to discern from illusion and rhetoric. Additionally, the potential impact of Orientalist thought on Europeans who visited or lived in India cannot be ignored. The tendency to focus on illicit behaviors – drugs, alcohol, sexuality – both relative to their own preconceived notions and to appeal to those of their readers, can result in false assumptions and over-emphases. While much of the information in the sources is impossible to validate with any certainty, the tones conveyed in relation to alcohol and opium are oftentimes just as important of the veracity of the stories themselves.⁹

Many different intoxicants such as opium, alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco were used with varying regularity in the Mughal world, but only the roles and uses of opium and alcohol will be specifically examined in this study. Lack of references

⁸ Lisa Balabanlilar, “Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent,” *Journal of World History* 18 (2007): 3.

⁹ see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

to other intoxicants throughout the period makes any substantial analysis impossible. Opium and alcohol feature prominently during the reigns of all six emperors and the strength of their narcotic properties far exceeds other intoxicants used by the Mughals. Both substances are highly addictive and have the power to wreak profound influences on the life of the user and others around them. As a result of their widespread use, both had significant impacts on Mughal society and the history of the empire. While the evolutions of alcohol and opium followed different trajectories, the place of each in Mughal culture was influenced by multiple different factors including religion, economics, and the replacement of a peripatetic way of life with an increasingly sedentary one.

Much as histories written on the Mughals lack significant discussion of the changing patterns of drug and alcohol use, histories of intoxicants have the inverse tendency of neglecting the Mughal period. Books on the history of opium and narcotics such as Martin Booth's *Opium: A History* and Richard Davenport-Hines' *The Pursuit of Oblivion* generally relegate the Mughals to their introductions before discussing the drug's more recent history.¹⁰ Other works such as *Drugs and Narcotics in History* and *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* make no references to the Mughals.¹¹ Surveys on the history of alcohol such as Iain Gately's *Drink: A Cultural History*, Mack P. Holt's *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural*

¹⁰ Martin Booth, *Opium: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1996); Richard Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion: A Global History of Narcotics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

¹¹ Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds. *Drugs and Narcotics in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt, eds. *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1995).

History, and Raymond McCarthy's *Drinking and Intoxication* make little discussion of pre-colonial India and fail to mention the Mughals at all.¹²

Because the history of alcohol use is incredibly broad and the effects of its intake are generally well known, it seems unnecessary to devote time to explaining it here. For most people, the effects and pre-modern history of opium are much less familiar and therefore will be briefly discussed. Despite its historical prevalence, opium is now most commonly associated with drugs that are derived from its narcotic compounds such as heroin and prescription painkillers. Propaganda and disinformation have become increasingly effective means of removing opium from the modern consciousness, a testament to the fear invoked by this highly addictive and influential drug. In his book *Opium for the Masses*, Jim Hogshire quotes an interview with a DEA agent who described the dangers and complexity of opium production as being so great that "I don't think a person with a PhD could do it."¹³ Obviously, the history of the drug proves otherwise.

Opium – History, Production, and Pharmacology

Technically speaking, there are twenty-eight different genera of poppies and hundreds of species, however, only one the *Papaver somniferum* – "sleep-inducing poppy" – produces the narcotic alkaloids used to make opium. Opium poppies produce five different narcotic compounds: morphine, codeine, narcotine, thebaine,

¹² Iain Gately, *Drink: A Cultural History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008); Mack P. Holt, ed., *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Berg, 2006); Raymond G. McCarthy, *Drinking and Intoxication, Selected Readings in Social Attitudes and Controls* (New Haven, CT: College and University Press, 1959).

¹³ Jim Hogshire, *Opium For the Masses: Harvesting Nature's Best Pain Medication* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2009), 50.

and papaverine. Of these, morphine is the most abundant with a concentration of around ten percent in raw opium. The juice of the poppy is generally extracted through incisions made to the pod of the plant and is then left in the sun for several days to dry. Raw opium can remain in this form for several months, making transport across vast distances possible. To increase purity and potency, raw opium is boiled and sieved multiple times before being left in the sun to dry again, thus preparing the opium for consumption. For most of history, including the Mughal period, opium was either eaten or mixed with drinks, as the practice of smoking opium did not become prevalent until the seventeenth century.¹⁴

Like alcohol, opium is a depressant and its consumption generally leads to extreme relaxation, feelings of euphoria, and deep sleep. While under the influence of opium sensory perceptions are altered; feelings of physical pain and anxiety are lessened while visual stimuli become more vivid. Regular consumption over an extended period of time often leads to both mental and physical addiction and deterioration, causing the user to experience side effects such as memory loss, lethargy, epilepsy, delirium tremens, and death. The negative effects of opium have been known for millennia, as evidenced by Nicander of Colophon who wrote a description of the symptoms of opium poisoning during the second century B.C.E., instructing immediate action for anyone found in such a state: "Forthwith rouse him with slaps on either cheek, or else by shouting, or again by shaking him as he sleeps,

¹⁴ Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion*, 29-30; L.D. Kapoor, *Opium Poppy: Botany, Chemistry, and Pharmacology* (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 1995), 71-79, 161-62.

in order that the swooning man may dispel the fatal drowsiness.”¹⁵ Attempting to stop opiate consumption once addicted often results in severe withdrawal symptoms that can prove just as fatal as the drug itself. The terms “addiction” and “abuse” have primarily been used in this study to describe cases of physical dependency. In interpreting the information conveyed in primary sources, the basic guidelines for substance dependence set forth in the DSM-IV-TR – tolerance, withdrawal, duration of use, functionality of user, etc. – have been consulted.¹⁶

The history of opium production dates back at least five thousand years, as evidenced by Sumerian clay tablets detailing the cultivation of poppies and extraction of their juice to produce *Gil*, or “happiness.” In his book, *The Pursuit of Oblivion: A Global History of Narcotics*, Richard Davenport-Hines argues that opium use most likely predates the use of alcoholic spirits due to the complexities of the distillation process. Other ancient societies including the Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, and Greeks were also familiar with the intoxicating effects of opium.¹⁷ The Greeks and Romans used opium to treat a variety of ailments including anxiety, pain, diarrhea, and insomnia. The medicinal use of opium is discussed in the works of Hippocrates, Theophrastus, Dioscorides, and Galen, who stated, “Opium is the strongest of the drugs which numbs the senses and induces deadening sleep.”¹⁸ The uses of opium in Rome were very similar to its later uses at the Mughal court. Marcus Aurelius used small amounts to assist in sleep, Nero likely used opiates to

¹⁵ Nicander: *The Poems and Poetical Fragments*, ed. and trans. A.S.F. Gow and A.F. Scholfield (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002), 125.

¹⁶ Booth, *Opium*, 30-43; *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2000), 199.

¹⁷ Kapoor, *Opium Poppy*, 2-6; Richard Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion*, 28-31.

¹⁸ Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion*, 30-31.

kill his rival Britannicus, and it was also a common means of committing suicide “when unbearable disease had rendered [life] hateful.”¹⁹

Medicinal use of opium from the Greco-Roman tradition carried over to Arab physicians, to whom the translated works of Galen and Dioscorides served as a basis point for their knowledge on the subject. The physician and philosopher Avicenna, or Abu-Ali-Ibn-Sina – who died in Persia of opium poisoning in 1037 C.E. – wrote a thesis on opium, recommending its use for sleepless children, eye-related diseases, and diarrhea. In the eighth century, Arab traders cultivated poppies in Egypt for exportation not only to Europe and the Middle East but also to India. The acceptance and prevalence of opium in the early Islamic world is interesting relative to the prohibition of alcohol in the Qur’an, which is generally interpreted as extending to all intoxicants. The lack of a religious ban on opium during this period is most likely connected to its medicinal function.²⁰ The first attempt in the Muslim world to curb opium intake occurred in 1621, during the reign of the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas I, who witnessed a significant increase in opium use after enforcing the prohibition of wine and alcohol within his empire.²¹

Classical Indian literature and medical writings including the Vedas, Puranas, the Charaka Samhita, and the Sushruta Samhita, make no reference to opium cultivation or use. The first references to opium in Sanskrit occur around the eighth century, coinciding with the early arrival of Arab traders, who are believed to have

¹⁹ David T. Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 32; Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion*, 32-33.

²⁰ Qur’an 5.90; Cyril Glassé and Huston Smith, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 148, 474.

²¹ Selma Tibi, *The Medicinal Use of Opium in Ninth-Century Baghdad* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 15-17; Kapoor, *Opium Poppy*, 3; S. Shahnava, “Afyun,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 1985, available at www.iranica.com.

introduced both the plant and drug to the sub-continent. The Dhanvantari Nighantu and other Ayurvedic texts dating from the eighth to fifteenth centuries discuss the medicinal preparations and properties of opium, and prescribe its use for a variety of ailments including sexual debility. The date of the poppy's arrival in India is contested, as some scholars believe it was first brought to India by Alexander the Great. While this theory seems highly plausible, there is simply no evidence in the Indian texts to support such a claim.²²

The key difference between opium use prior to and during the Mughal period is the prevalence of recreational consumption over medicinal use. Even in the contemporary Safavid and Ottoman Empires, where opium use was increasingly recreational, its primary use was still medicinal. Opium played an important and varied role in Mughal society, where many used it recreationally, others routinely. There are accounts of recreational consumption and debilitating addictions alongside its use as a mechanism for suicide and murder. In addition, the cultivation of poppies represented a significant source of tax revenue for the state. When the British later colonized India, they were able to easily exploit the infrastructure established by the Mughals, accumulating massive amounts of wealth in the process. Despite the acknowledged dangers of addiction and overdose, opium was not stigmatized as in other societies, and instead represented an important subset of Mughal life and culture.²³

²² Kapoor, *Opium Poppy*, 10; Courtwright, *Forces of Habit*, 32; David Owen, *British Opium Policy in China and India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 1-2.

²³ Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).97-101, 115-16.

BABUR AND HUMAYUN

*"Only the drinker knows the pleasure of wine.
What enjoyment thereof can the sober have?"²⁴*

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was originally from Fergana – in modern day Uzbekistan – and was a direct descendent of the conqueror Timur (Tamerlane) on father's side and Chinggis Khan on his mother's side. Though from Central Asia, Babur's cultural heritage represented a conglomeration of Turko-Mongol, Persian, and Sunni Islamic traditions. Historically, intoxicants played a pervasive role in both Mongol and Persian societies, which carried through into Mughal culture as exemplified with Babur, who had a clear affinity for both opiates and alcohol. Like his illustrious ancestors, Babur's lifestyle can be described as having been predominantly peripatetic and his use of intoxicants appears to have been in direct response to this way of life. Alcohol and opiates were consumed socially and offered an opportunity for relaxation whilst also encouraging a sense of camaraderie amongst Babur and his men as they embarked on near-continuous campaigning. In this sense, drugs and alcohol were not viewed a private acts but rather as social rituals utilized to lessen

²⁴ Babur, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2002), 154.

the physical and emotional stresses wrought by such a rigorous lifestyle – at least until the following morning.²⁵

Babur makes over thirty specific references to eating *ma'jun* – a concoction of opium, ghee, and sugar – or other opium containing intoxicants in his memoir, the *Baburnama*. Today *ma'jun* is primarily made with cannabis as opposed to opium, and Babur does not specify the drug used in his confection. For the most part, only descriptions of *ma'jun* written prior to the twentieth century list opium as a key ingredient. There are several factors indicating Babur used opium as opposed to cannabis. The effects Babur describes after taking *ma'jun* appear to be the result of a depressant like opium, not a hallucinogen like cannabis. Technically speaking, ingesting cannabis produces a stronger reaction than if it is smoked, producing feelings of nervous excitement then hallucinations which are followed by a period of tranquility. Babur does not describe experiencing these different stages, instead only discussing the heightened perceptions and relaxation more commonly associated with opium ingestion. Additionally, he mentions the dangers associated with mixing *ma'jun* and alcohol on several different occasions in the memoir. Cannabis and alcohol can be used simultaneously without adverse effects on the user. However, combining two depressants such as opium and alcohol can be very harmful and in extreme cases even fatal.²⁶

²⁵ Babur, *Baburnama*, *passim*; Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 37, 212; Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, 69, 78-81.

²⁶ For definitions of *ma'jun*, see George Watt, *Dictionary of the Economic Products of India: Volume V, Linum to Oyster* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1891), 109, and Dr. Hennis Green, ed., *Provincial Medical Journal and Retrospect of the Medical Sciences, Vol. V* (London: Henry Renshaw, Medical Bookseller and Publisher, 1843), 347; Martin Booth, *Cannabis: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 12.

Babur describes his father, Umar-Shaykh Mirza, as having consumed his fair share of intoxicants, throwing drinking parties at least once a week and having been “rather fond of *ma’jun*, and under its influence he would lose his head.”²⁷ Though neither primary nor secondary sources make any connection between his fondness for intoxicants and his premature death at thirty-nine – wherein he fell from his dovecote at Akhsi fortress into a ravine – it may well have been a contributing factor.²⁸ Following his father’s untimely death the twelve-year-old Babur secured his position as the rightful successor and ascended the throne of Fergana in 1494. After losing Fergana to Shaybani Khan, an Uzbek chief bent on the removal of Timurid rulers from Central Asia, Babur moved south, successfully capturing Kabul in 1504. Babur continued his conquests, with several campaigns into India, culminating in 1526 when he entered Delhi after the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi at the Battle of Panipat.²⁹

The word “opium” is only specifically used in the memoir on two occasions. One is in the final year and other than the usage of the word there is nothing extraordinary about the very casual statement: “I ate some opium that day.”³⁰ Within the same week Babur refers to having taken opium, he also mentions having eaten *ma’jun* twice. Why Babur chose to use the word for opium here is unknown, but the most likely explanation stems from the translator Wheeler M. Thackston’s observation that the end of the memoir had not been edited as the earlier parts had at the time of Babur’s death. Perhaps this statement would have been made clearer,

²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁹ Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, 22-24.

³⁰ Babur, *Baburnama*, 443.

or the word changed to “ma’jun” had Babur been able to edit this portion of his text. The only other time Babur uses the word opium is also his only reference to using the drug to treat an ailment, specifically an earache, though he also states that “the moonlight induced me to take it,” indicating a non-therapeutic motivation as well. The strength of the opium in this instance appears to have been stronger than that used for recreation as Babur describes vomiting the following morning as a result of his “opium hangover.”³¹ With this one exception, Babur’s references indicate opium’s use solely as a pleasurable intoxicant.

The tradition of social drinking exhibited by Babur is strikingly similar to that of his ancestor Timur, as recorded by the Castilian ambassador Clavijo. Clavijo observed the regularity with which the conqueror and his men reveled in drinking wine, relating that “no feast we were told is considered a real festival unless the guests have drunk themselves sot.”³² These practices were also common among the earlier Mongol conquerors, though they often resulted in problems of addiction: two of Chinggis Khan’s sons – Ogedai and Tolui – died as a result of alcoholism at relatively young ages. There is also evidence that Timur’s death occurred as the result of drinking too much *arak* – a distilled alcoholic beverage. As the Mughals became less peripatetic and more sedentary, clear changes occurred in the ways they used intoxicants. Babur’s uses are representative of the larger nomadic culture from which he hailed, whereby intoxicant use was relative to the search for pleasurable respite amidst continual movement.³³

³¹ Ibid., 413.

³² Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, quoted in Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 144.

³³ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 143-44; Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, 42.

In his descriptions of people, Babur often includes information on their drinking habits. For example, his paternal uncle Sultan-Ahmad Mirza, the padishah of Samarkand, is recorded as having consumed alcohol “continually for twenty or thirty days, but when he stopped he did not drink again for the same amount of time.”³⁴ Babur assures the reader that despite this he never missed his daily prayers, partaking in them whether intoxicated or not. Babur also comments on his skills as a poet, attributing the following line to his uncle:

*I'm drunk muhtasib. Chastise me on a day you find me sober.*³⁵

The term “muhtasib” refers to a city or town’s moral officer, indicating not only a sense of irony in the verse, but also showcasing the humor with which the padishah reflected on his own frequent state of inebriation. Sultan-Ahmad Mirza and his brother Sultan-Mahmud Mirza, another of Babur’s uncles, died in their early forties. Sultan-Mahmud Mirza is said to have been addicted to drinking wine, as were his sons who, Babur states, all died young as a result of their “shameful immoderation.”³⁶ In addition to such stories, Babur also tells of people who forsook alcohol – as he later does – in the name of their faith. For Babur, fulfilling the Islamic obligation of temperance was a matter of individual choice and not something that should be forced on anyone.³⁷

Another relative whose drinking habits are discussed in great detail by Babur is his distant cousin, Sultan-Husayn Mirza, the ruler of Herat – in modern day Afghanistan – and another direct descendent of Timur. Babur relates that for

³⁴ Babur, *Baburnama*, 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23-25, 31, 472.

several years after taking the throne he was completely abstinent, but later took to drinking on a daily basis. These habits were in turn adopted by his sons and his men who, according to Babur, “lived in inordinate revelry and debauchery.”³⁸ Several of the mirza’s sons predeceased him, one of whom – Ibrahim-Husayn Mirza – is specifically recorded as having drunk himself to death. Additionally, one of the Mirza’s grandsons – who Babur himself sent away from his camp “for committing an act of immoderation” – was put to death in Persia as a result of his excessive drinking and intemperance.³⁹ Babur gives no details of the cause or circumstances of Sultan-Husayn Mirza’s death. However, he does state that within ten years of the mirza’s death, his son Muhammad-Zaman Mirza was the only remaining vestige of this once great family who had given way to lives of “vice and debauchery.”⁴⁰

Despite his family’s affinity for alcohol, Babur claims to have not started drinking until he was twenty-three years old. It appears to have been due to the influence of his devoutly religious teacher, Khwaja Qazi that Babur abstained from alcohol until he was in his early twenties. In his childhood Babur had no desire to drink, despite having been offered wine by his father and others, as he “did not know the delight and pleasure of being drunk.”⁴¹ His decision to start drinking was the result of both genuine curiosity and a great deal of contemplation. Babur not only weighed his decision to try alcohol, he also deliberated over how exactly to “cross that valley,” given that he had denied offers of wine on so many occasions

³⁸ Ibid., 194.

³⁹ Ibid., 198.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 193-99, 202.

⁴¹ Ibid., 226.

that many people had stopped suggesting it.⁴² In accepting an offer of wine, Babur feared that his previous denials would be misinterpreted as slights against the individuals. To remedy this, he invited two brothers who had both recently offered him wine in their homes to partake in a drinking party with him. Despite the great lead in to his first drinking experience, Babur says nothing of his first taste of intoxication other than that the party continued until late at which point he decided to stay over rather than venture home.⁴³

Babur's first reference to his own intake of opium containing mixtures is in the year 1519, over a decade after his first experience with alcohol. The concoction known as *kamali*, which is similar to ma'jun, was brought to him by Shah Mansur Yusufzai, and though Babur only consumed one-third of it, he was so intoxicated by it that "when the begs gathered for council, I was unable to come out."⁴⁴ In hindsight, Babur quips about his low tolerance at the time by stating: "These days, if I were to eat a whole kamali, I don't know if it would produce half the high."⁴⁵ Babur's opium consumption falls into two main categories, entertainment and relaxation, both of which are direct responses to the rigors of military campaigning. After ordering the destruction of the tomb of the "heretic wandering dervish" Shahbaz Qalandar in Sindh, Babur muses: "Since it was an agreeable place and the air was so good, I had some ma'jun and sat there for a while."⁴⁶ In this instance, Babur ate ma'jun leisurely in order to better appreciate the tranquility of his

⁴² Ibid., 227.

⁴³ Ibid., 226-28.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 267.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 269.

surroundings. This is Babur's first reference to his own use of ma'jun, though there is no indication that this is the first time he tried it. The absence of earlier remarks about ma'jun could be due to the absence of the years 1508 and 1519 in the surviving memoir. Additionally, there is a five-year gap in the memoir from 1520-1525, during which Babur's consumption of ma'jun can be inferred due to his many remarks about it during the years immediately preceding and following the missing text.

For entertainment, Babur threw drinking and ma'jun parties, and refers several times to the problems associated with mixing ma'jun and wine – though he does discuss doing this on a few occasions. The regularity with which Babur used intoxicants can also be inferred from his designation of drinking and non-drinking days – specifically Monday, Thursday, and Friday – on which he consumed ma'jun rather than alcohol. However, after he decided to give up wine drinking, his ma'jun intake increased, as did the number of days a week he partook in it. In the book *Private Life of the Mughals of India*, R. Nath discusses Babur's addiction to opium and states that Babur used the drug as a stimulant rather than for intoxication. This assertion seems incorrect as Babur does not indicate any use of opium before going into battle, but rather used it for relaxation and amusement during breaks from his rigorous campaigns.⁴⁷

One instance of opium use in Babur's memoir left him in immediate danger, not as a result of overdose, but rather due to his loss of consciousness and a subsequent attack. After an evening of carousing on an island near his camp during

⁴⁷ Babur, *Baburnama*, *passim*; R. Nath, *Private Life of the Mughals of India (1526-1803 A.D.)* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2005), 115-18.

the campaign in India, Babur, “stoned on ma’jun” decided to have “the boat brought near [his] tent and just laid back on it.”⁴⁸ That night, an alarm was sounded when several Hindustanis attempted to board the boat and kill Babur, though fortunately he was saved by the quick response of his night watchmen. This incident does not appear to have curtailed Babur’s opium use, as he makes several more references to eating ma’jun in his memoir. In recalling the attack, Babur does not appear to regret the state he was in, but rather states simply: “God preserved us that time.”⁴⁹

Babur also includes three stories of events that transpired as a result of extreme drunkenness. In the first – memorialized in a painting⁵⁰ included in later versions of his manuscript – he relates how one night after getting very drunk on a boat he got on his horse and “galloped into camp holding a torch,” though he claimed to have no memory of the event other than vomiting a great deal when he returned to his tent.⁵¹ In the second story, Babur’s companion in intoxication, a man named Abdullah, decided to throw himself fully clothed into the water during a daytime excursion from Kabul. Finding himself too wet and cold to ride his horse back to Kabul, Abdullah was forced to stay the night at a nearby estate. Embarrassed by his behavior, Babur states that Abdullah swore off drinking the following morning, though his temperance only lasted a few months.⁵²

Babur’s third story of drunken antics is by far the most bizarre and also resulted in the most precarious situation for those involved. Following a wine party

⁴⁸ Babur, *Baburnama*, 448.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Appendix A.

⁵¹ Babur, *Baburnama*, 277.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 285.

one night, Babur and several members of his entourage found themselves inebriated to the point that their servants had to lift them up onto their horses when they planned to return home. One member of the group, Dost-Muhammad Baqir was so drunk that attempts to get him onto his horse repeatedly failed. As when Babur fell asleep on his boat after eating ma'jun, a band of Afghans appeared. Fearing for Dost-Muhammad's safety, the equally inebriated Amin-Muhammad Tarkhan decided the best course of action was to attempt to decapitate his friend and take his head with them so the Afghans could not capture him. Luckily, several servants were able to stop him from completing this task and finally managed to get Dost-Muhammad onto his horse so everyone could escape to safety.⁵³

In addition to his stories of drinking alongside his men, Babur also recounts the one and only time he allowed a woman to join one of his wine parties. Upon hearing that Huhlul Anikā wanted to join him and his companions in drinking wine, Babur excitedly invited her to come, as he had never seen a woman drink before. The fact that Babur claims to have never seen a woman drink prior to this occasion illustrates that an evolution had taken place regarding women's role in society since the time of Timur. In his account of his time at Timur's court, Clavijo claimed to have regularly seen high-ranking women enjoying wine alongside men. By Babur's time, Islam and increasingly sedentary lifestyles had not effected changes in the drinking rituals of men, but they had permanently altered the acceptability of women's participation in such public revelry.⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., 298.

⁵⁴ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 312.

Unfortunately, Babur's experience did not make him want to rediscover this aspect of nomadic culture. Everything was going well until Babur tried to relax and Huhlul Anikā started making "offensive requests."⁵⁵ Finally, Babur pretended to be drunk in order to get rid of her and swore never to invite a woman to partake in wine with him again. The story of Huhlul Anikā is the earliest reference to female intoxication in the Mughal sources. It is not until the reign of Akbar and the institutionalization of the harem that women's use of intoxicants finds its way back into recorded history. Whether or not Mughal women partook in alcohol or opium on any kind of regular basis during the reigns of Babur and Humayun is unclear. Since women did not at this time exist in a separate space their actions would have been far more visible, thus deterring intoxication. The clear separation of space that occurred with the establishment of the harem granted women the ability to use intoxicants in a way that was not as visible, perhaps leading to an increase in both usage and acceptability.⁵⁶

The question of whether a Muslim ruler should drink alcohol or not is only specifically addressed by two of the six emperors in this study, namely Babur and Aurangzeb. As previously stated, Babur considered leading a life of temperance in observance of Islamic law to be a personal choice. Though he hosted and partook in many drinking parties he believed in respecting an individual's choice and upheld a policy he had kept since childhood of not "forc[ing] drink on anyone who did not drink."⁵⁷ After jokingly offering a temperate friend wine he acknowledges that even

⁵⁵ Babur, *Baburnama*, quoted in Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 312.

⁵⁶ Babur, *Baburnama*, 300.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 294.

this simple joke is out of character for him as it was “not my way to offer wine to someone who did not drink.”⁵⁸ One evening when Babur was north of Kabul in Bihzadi, there was a call for a party whilst he and his men were staying at a *qadi*'s house.⁵⁹ The qadi protested, saying he was not accustomed to such goings-on in his home but that he would allow it only because Babur was the ruler. Out of respect, Babur decided to cancel the party even though all the preparations for it had been made. Though Babur was the ruler and could by that right do as he pleased, he recognized the importance of maintaining the support of religious leaders in order to maintain legitimacy and achieve stability.⁶⁰

Just as Babur's decision to begin drinking alcohol when he was young followed a great deal of contemplation, so does his decision to cease consumption and take a pledge of temperance. Babur clearly enjoyed drinking and wine parties, once penning the verse:

*Only the drinker knows the pleasure of wine.
What enjoyment thereof can the sober have?*⁶¹

Babur found great pleasure in drinking, though the act weighed heavily on his conscience. He relates that for some time he had considered giving up alcohol, and finally does so while in India in 1527. The timing of this decision coincides with his first campaign against non-Muslims, namely the Rajputs. The reason he gives for taking a pledge of temperance is the guilt he feels for committing sin relative to his faith, asking himself: “How long will you be polluted by sin? How long will you stay

⁵⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁵⁹ A qadi is a Muslim judge who makes decisions based on sharia law.

⁶⁰ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 346-47.

⁶¹ Babur, *Baburnama*, 154.

comfortable in your deprivation?"⁶² Propaganda may also have played a role, as Babur would have wished to cement his image as a pious leader in anticipation of his campaign against the Rajputs.⁶³

Having always viewed temperance as a personal choice, Babur does not force anyone else to partake in the vow with him, though he is pleased when nearly three hundred of his men decide to join him in his repentance. Having just received three camel trains of wine from Kabul, he orders all the wine either poured out or turned into vinegar. In the place where the wine was poured out he commissioned a charitable building to be constructed in memoriam of the event. Additionally, he collected all the vessels and wine goblets that had held alcohol and had them destroyed and ordered the gold and silver from which they were made distributed amongst the poor.⁶⁴

To formalize his pledge Babur issued an official decree – which he includes in the memoir – explaining his reasons for giving up intoxicating beverages. In the decree Babur does not outlaw the production, sale, or consumption of alcohol, but does indicate a hope that others will follow his example. In his attempt to follow Islamic law more faithfully, he also used this decree to abolish the *tamgha*, a customs tax that had first been imposed by the Mongols and had long been considered un-Islamic. With this, Babur differentiated himself and the empire he

⁶² Ibid., 380.

⁶³ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 345-47.

⁶⁴ Babur, *Baburnama*, 379-81.

was building from the Turko-Mongol traditions of Central Asia and attempted to assert himself as a legitimate Muslim ruler.⁶⁵

Though Babur never indicates that he broke his pledge he found that the act of making his vow was far easier than the reality of keeping it. Two years after embarking on a life of sobriety Babur expressed the importance of finding the same pleasure he previously experienced through alcohol in other worldly delights. In a letter to his friend Khwaja Kalan in Kabul, Babur wrote of the appreciation he had found in things such as melons and grapes since abstaining from alcohol. He relates that he had recently found himself “oddly affected” and wept the entire time while eating a melon.⁶⁶ Towards the end of the letter Babur intimates both his extreme desire to succeed in the “valley of temperance” and the struggles associated therein:

*I am distraught to have given up wine.
I do not know what to do, and I am perplexed.
Everybody regrets drinking and then takes the oath,
But I have taken the oath and now regret it.*⁶⁷

It does not appear from this quatrain or Babur’s other comments that he was necessarily physically addicted to alcohol, but there was certainly a mental addiction to the social aspects of drinking that Babur struggled to overcome. He goes on to say that shortly after making his oath the “craving for a wine party was so overwhelming that many times out of longing for wine I was on the verge of weeping.”⁶⁸ Despite such difficulties Babur appears to have maintained his resolve

⁶⁵ Ibid., 381-83.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 434.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 436.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

and encouraged his friend to take up a similar oath, stating that if his current drinking partners were not pleasant, such a vow should not be difficult to keep.⁶⁹

Babur's daughter Gulbadan also makes reference to her father's decision to abstain from alcohol in her memoir, the *Humayunnama*. While in Dholpur, India Babur commissioned a pool to be made out of a single large piece of stone, saying that when it was completed he would have it filled with wine. However, since he swore off wine before the pool was finished he decided to have it filled with lemon sherbet instead. As a young child at the time, Gulbadan no doubt enjoyed and appreciated this alternative. The story of Babur's pledge is reiterated by Gulbadan, though in her telling the three hundred followers – both military and civilian – who also took the oath becomes “four hundred men of name, who had given proof of manliness and one-mindedness[.]”⁷⁰ By the time Gulbadan wrote her memoir, during the reign of her nephew Akbar, Babur's original story had taken on almost legendary status and incorporated certain degrees of exaggeration in order to emphasize the momentous nature of the occasion.

Babur's memoir ends abruptly mid-sentence just over a year before his death in December 1530, a mere four years after his defeat of Ibrahim Lodi and the conquest of Delhi. The story of his death is included in Gulbadan's memoir, where she relates that Babur's favorite son Humayun had fallen dangerously ill and in an effort to save him, his father offered his own life to God so that his son would be spared. Shortly thereafter Humayun regained his strength while Babur gradually

⁶⁹ Ibid., 434-36.

⁷⁰ Gulbadan Begum, *The History of Humayun*, trans. Annette Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006), 99.

became weaker and weaker. A few months later, Babur “passed from this transitory world to the eternal home,” leaving Humayun as his chosen successor.⁷¹

Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun was born in Kabul in 1508 and served as governor of Badakshan from the age of twelve. Though he had several brothers he was his father’s favorite and was named as his successor, ascending the throne when he was twenty-two years old. Following Timurid custom each of Humayun’s four brothers were granted provinces to administer. Much of Humayun’s reign was spent trying to maintain the empire his father had built. His brothers led several rebellions against him and he spent fifteen years in exile after losing his domains in India to the Afghan nobleman Sher Khan Sur. Humayun finally retook Delhi in 1555, restoring Babur’s empire and finally achieving some degree of stability, though Humayun’s death followed his victory by a mere seven months.⁷²

Intoxicants continued to play an important role during Humayun’s reign, and he is perhaps the Mughal Emperor most often associated with opium use and addiction. Nearly every secondary source discussing Humayun’s reign mentions his opium addiction, and a few even cite his half-sister Gulbadan’s memoir or the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* to confirm this assertion. In his book *The Mughal Empire*, John Richards blames Humayun’s year of inactivity in Agra on “his growing addiction to opium taken with wine.”⁷³ Similarly, Abraham Eraly makes several references to Humayun’s addiction concluding: “He sleepwalked through life...more often than

⁷¹ Ibid., 109.

⁷² Richards, 9-12; Eraly, *The Mughal Throne*, 42-43.

⁷³ Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 10.

not induced by opium, which he mixed with rosewater.”⁷⁴ These interpretations concur with the earlier writings of Stanley Lane-Poole who states that: “after a moment of triumph [Humayun] would bury himself in his harim and dream away the precious hours in the opium-eater’s paradise.”⁷⁵

Unlike Babur, Humayun did not write his own memoir. As a result, information about his reign comes primarily from five contemporary Mughal sources: Khwandamir’s *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, Gulbadan Begam’s *Humayun-Nama*, Jawhar Aftchabi’s *Tadhkiratu’l-waqiat*, Bayazid Bayat’s *Tarikh-i Humayun va Akbar*, and Mirza Haidar’s *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*. Humayun’s opium use is mentioned in several of the sources, but when those references are considered alongside accounts of opium use throughout the Mughal period, there is hardly enough evidence to substantiate the seemingly universal view of Humayun as an opium addict. Alcohol is rarely mentioned in any of these sources and if anything its consumption appears to have declined during Humayun’s reign.

Of the contemporary sources, Khwandamir makes no mention of opium use – by Humayun or anyone else. He also makes no mention of alcohol, other than the occasional incorporation of wine into poetic analogies. The closest Khwandamir comes to any discussion of Humayun’s use of intoxicants is in verse wherein he states that the emperor “*Always abstains from prohibited things.*”⁷⁶ The nature of the work is one of praise and exaltation depicting Humayun as the ideal ruler. Due to this clear bias, it is impossible to make any clear assessment about intoxicants. In

⁷⁴ Eraly, *The Mughal Throne*, 113.

⁷⁵ Lane-Poole, *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule, 712-1764*, 219.

⁷⁶ Khwandamir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni also known as Humayun Nama*, trans. Bains Prashad (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1996), 16.

addition, Khwandamir's work was completed in 1534, meaning it only covers the first four years of Humayun's reign, and this could also account for the lack of any information on Humayun's supposedly debilitating addiction.⁷⁷

Jawhar's work, on the other hand, was written after Humayun's death and covers the entire period of his reign. As Humayun's ewer bearer, Jawhar was a trusted member of the Emperor's retinue, and therefore would have been aware of the extent of his use of intoxicants. Humayun's grandson Jahangir states that his ewer bearer also had the responsibility of caring for his opium. There is no mention of this by Jawhar, but there is the possibility that he would have been designated to care for both the emperor's water and opium. Interestingly, neither alcohol nor opiates are presented as having featured prominently in Humayun's day-to-day affairs. Jawhar mentions wine drinking on two occasions, the first being at an assembly held while the emperor is in Gujarat, though there is no indication that Humayun consumed any. The assembly was held in an attempt to learn the whereabouts of the treasure of Sultan Bahadur – who had recently fled to Surat – from one of his officers, Alam Khan. Humayun intended to ascertain the location of the treasure by getting Alam Khan drunk, a tactic that proved successful as the officer revealed that the sultan's wealth could be discovered by draining a nearby water tank.⁷⁸ Humayun's drinking is only mentioned on one occasion, wherein he

⁷⁷ Khwandamir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Jawhar Aftabachi, *Tadhkitratu'l-waqi'at*, in *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2009), 1: 76.

has a glass of wine because he is upset about his brother Kamran's betrayal in leading a rebellion against him.⁷⁹

Jawhar makes only one passing reference to opiates, stating that following Kamran's rebellion and capture, Humayun shared a piece of kamali with him. This one instance hardly implies excessive use or addiction, especially compared to Babur's comment regarding the tolerance he built up to kamali.⁸⁰ It seems there are two possible explanations for why Jawhar does not refer to Humayun's addiction, the first being that he did not mention it due to the respect and reverence he felt towards Humayun. The second – and perhaps more interesting – reason could be that Humayun did not actually use opium to the extent that it interfered with his day-to-day life or set him apart from his contemporaries.

The latter explanation gains credence in the account of Bayazid Bayat, a soldier during Humayun's reign who was later appointed "gatekeeper of the harem" and "keeper of the imperial treasury" under Akbar.⁸¹ Bayazid's memoir begins in 1542 and continues into the reign of Akbar, and like Jawhar's account makes little mention of opium, only recounting two instances involving the emperor himself. According to Bayazid, one night Humayun ate *yusufi* – another narcotic confection – with a group of his men, and then had difficulty standing up due to a leg cramp. His steward inquired as to why "a refined emperor...would eat something that makes his legs cramp up," after which Humayun thanked him and stated: "we won't eat it

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1: 136.

⁸⁰ Jawhar, *Tadhkitratu'l-waqi'at*, 1: 156; Babur, *Baburnama*, 267.

⁸¹ Wheeler M. Thackston, *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, 1: viii, xii-xiii.

anymore.”⁸² Humayun left the assembly, and later chastised two of his companions for not questioning the yusufi. Bayazid goes on to relate that “from that time, and as long as he lived, he never again ate any opiate that was suspect.”⁸³ With this story, Bayazid – like Jawhar – gives no indication of addiction, but rather lists nine companions Humayun consumed the yusufi with, and attributes to the emperor a discerning taste uncommon in someone overpowered by dependency.⁸⁴

The second time Bayazid mentions the emperor’s opium use is in passing while they were on campaign to Balkh and running short on supplies. Humayun inquired, “Does anyone have a piece of bread? I want to eat some opium.”⁸⁵ Not having bread, Bayazid offered the emperor some cookies and preserves he had procured. The author records that Humayun ate the cookies and preserves but does not specifically say whether he followed through on his intention of eating opium. The picture of Humayun’s character painted by Bayazid does not tend toward that of a drug addict. In fact, Bayazid makes greater discussion of the emperor’s affinity towards lemon sherbet than opium, even recounting a fight Humayun got into with his cook when he was told supplies were too low for him to continue to have it on a daily basis.⁸⁶

Unlike Khwandamir, Bayazid does not present an idealized view of Humayun as a leader but rather shows him as being remarkably human and not without fault or weakness. He records how Humayun wept uncontrollably at the defeats of his

⁸² Bayazid Bayat, *Tarikh-i Humayun*, in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2009), 2:25,

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2: 26.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2: 25-26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2: 50.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 50, 59-60.

brothers Hindal and Kamran, even though they were his enemies and had led open rebellion against him. According to Bayazid, Humayun had planned on handing over power to his son Akbar after retaking India in order to retire and “occupy himself with dervishes and the learned.”⁸⁷ Given the accounts of Humayun’s interest in astronomy and his inventions – he is said to have designed both a moveable bridge and a floating palace – and his apparent lack of desire to rule an empire, this assessment of his intentions may very well have been accurate.⁸⁸

In relation to alcohol, Bayazid includes no instances of Humayun drinking and implies that drunkenness was not something the emperor generally tolerated, as is the case with the renowned painter Mulla Dost who is said to have left Humayun to join Kamran’s retinue due to “his fondness for wine which he couldn’t give up.”⁸⁹ Additionally, Humayun once had a young officer who arrived at his court while drunk instructed to leave and not return until he was sober. The young man, Sherafkan, took great offense to this and did not return to court for several days. When he was finally convinced to come back, Humayun had generous amounts of food brought out and asked him to recount his recent act of bravery in battle. The emperor’s intention in praising of Sherafkan’s courageous conduct is said by Bayazid to have been Humayun’s way of “[making] up for the day he was drunk.”⁹⁰ Humayun was unwilling to tolerate the disrespect Sherafkan showed in coming to court drunk, but at the same time he did not begrudge him for this behavior once he was no longer intoxicated.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 2: 94.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 2: 65, 69-70.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 2: 27.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 2: 31.

Humayun's half-sister Gulbadan wrote her memoir at the behest of her nephew Akbar, and does mention Humayun's opium use on three occasions, though says nothing about him in relation to alcohol. The first reference tells the story of a ma'jun party thrown by Humayun to celebrate "the feast-day of the Mystic House."⁹¹ While this does provide an instance wherein Humayun consumed ma'jun, the event itself is no different than the ma'jun parties hosted by Babur. The second instance occurs after Bega Begim⁹² complains about the infrequency of Humayun's visits to her house. In response, Humayun calls the women to him and first replies that he has been busy fulfilling his obligations to visit his elder relations, then goes on to say: "I am an opium-eater. If there should be delay in my comings and goings, do not be angry with me."⁹³ Through this statement, Humayun admits an awareness of the effects of his opium consumption, but is not necessarily implying that it is an addiction or a problem in need of fixing. Additionally, Humayun's description of himself as an opium-eater can hardly be considered unique, as Babur admits as much about himself in his own memoirs.⁹⁴

Gulbadan's final reference to opium occurs after Humayun invited the women to join him on his excursion to the Dilgusha Garden. Apparently several of the women had problems keeping their horses under control, causing delays, which proved frustrating for the emperor. Unable to continue sightseeing with his ladies, he instructs them to go on ahead while he had "some opium and got over [his]

⁹¹ Gulbadan Begum, *The History of Humayun*, 124.

⁹² Most likely Babur's widow, Bibi Mabarika, see A. Beveridge, 216.

⁹³ Gulbadan Begum, *The History of Humayun*, 131.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 124-26, 130-31.

annoyance.”⁹⁵ These last two remarks on opium are interesting as they both specifically deal with Humayun’s interactions with women, which is not necessarily surprising given that this is a woman’s memoir. In the first instance, Bega Begim nagged and disrespected Humayun, even though, as Gulbadan points out: “everyone knew he was angry.”⁹⁶ Yet, Bega Begim continued to push the point at which time he made his response, referring to himself as an “opium-eater,” perhaps off-handedly to convince her to leave him alone. If this was his meaning, it clearly did not work, as Bega Begim responded by chiding him for turning it into “a case of ‘the excuse being worse than the fault.’”⁹⁷

Analyzed objectively, these cases do not necessarily confirm the perception of Humayun as an opium addict. In one instance he made a statement while angry in order to get Bega Begim to stop nagging him, and in the other he once again found himself annoyed by the ladies of the harem and used opium to calm himself down. The regularity with which opium was used at the Mughal court makes this second instance relatively unremarkable. Looking solely at Gulbadan’s account, it could just as easily be claimed that Humayun experienced anxiety in trying to appease and deal with the women of the harem as that he was addicted in any debilitating way to intoxicants.

Of the contemporary Mughal sources on Humayun, only the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* states unequivocally that he was addicted to opium. At the beginning of his discussion of Humayun’s reign, Mirza Haidar relates how Humayun “had contracted

⁹⁵ Ibid., 189.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

some bad habits; among these was his addiction to opium. All the evil that has been set down to the Emperor...is attributable to this vice.”⁹⁸ Mirza Haidar then retracts slightly in saying: “Nevertheless he was endowed with excellent qualities, being brave in battle, gay in feast and very generous.”⁹⁹ The sentiment of the latter quote is carried through the remainder of the discussion of Humayun, and no further mention of opium is made. This one reference is hardly conclusive when considered with the lack of substantial corroborating evidence from the additional sources. This is not to say that Humayun did not suffer from an opium addiction, merely that the sources do not necessarily confirm that his consumption of opiates impeded his ability to rule or was anything out of the ordinary.

The official history of Akbar’s reign, Abul Fazl’s *Akbarnama*, makes one passing yet important reference to Humayun in relation to opium. The section of the *Akbarnama* on Humayun is not considered a primary source as it was composed mainly using the previously discussed sources; in fact, most were commissioned specifically for that purpose. However, Abul Fazl’s reference does not appear in the other works leaving its exact source unclear. Shortly before Humayun’s death the emperor is said to have “reduced his consumption of opium” significantly, allotting himself only a small amount each day.¹⁰⁰ There is no indication that he struggled in cutting back or experienced any symptoms of chemical withdrawal, but rather he appears to have been successful at limiting his intake.

⁹⁸ Mirza Haidar, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia, being the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlat*, ed. N. Elias, trans. E. Denison Ross (London: Curzon Press, 1972), 469.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Calcutta: Baptist Missionary Press, 1939), 1: 652.

Abul Fazl does not imply that Humayun's opium use was anything out of the ordinary, but does go on to hint at its potential in having contributed to his death. Humayun died as the result of injuries sustained from a fall down the steps of his library, supposedly because he tripped in response to the evening call to prayer. Since cutting back, he had apparently allotted himself two to three pellets of opium a day and on the day of his fall he had four pellets left. According to Abul Fazl, he sent for the remaining pellets, mixed them in rosewater¹⁰¹, and drank them. After decreasing his consumption of opium, this amount would likely have rendered him more intoxicated than he intended. In Babur's accounts of his own opium intake, he admits to finding himself in several precarious situations due to his own state of intoxication. Having finally achieved a semblance of stability in his empire, Humayun – like his father before him – sought pleasurable respite in opium, though the resulting intoxication may have contributed to his fatal misstep¹⁰²

One other source, Firishta's *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, written during the reign of Jahangir fifty years after Humayun's death, appears to be the basis point for much of the modern commentary regarding Humayun's use of opium. There are two main problems with this source, first being that Firishta was writing after the fact, and as stated by Peter Jackson in his work *The Delhi Sultanate*, Firishta's incorporation of legend, oral histories, and sometimes his own imagination, makes aspects of his

¹⁰¹ In relation to Eraly's previously quoted comment about Humayun's opium use, it should be noted that this is the only specific reference to opium in rosewater.

¹⁰² In his translation of the *Akbarnama*, Henry Beveridge states in a footnote that he does not believe Abul Fazl meant that Humayun consumed all four pellets. It appears Mr. Beveridge took the earlier part of the passage to imply that Humayun divided two or three pellets over a weeklong period, not that he took two or three a day. However, if it is read as two or three *per day*, then having four pellets left at the end makes sense. To divide two or three over a week and have four remaining is, clearly, mathematically impossible.

work unreliable as a primary source. Even though Jackson specifically refers to Firishta's writings on pre-Mughal India, the same questions of reliability are present throughout the work. The second problem lies not with the work itself, but with the translation that is most often cited in secondary sources, which was published in 1829 by the British general John Briggs. Briggs' translation is not necessarily true to its source, as he added to and omitted from the work at will, producing a "garbled version of Firishta...coined only by [Briggs'] imagination."¹⁰³ For example, in a footnote Briggs states that the original work contains a verse about opium attributed to Humayun "which has not been thought necessary to translate."¹⁰⁴ However, even if the verse were included, its composition by the emperor himself would still be somewhat questionable as it is not included in any other sources.¹⁰⁵

Richards' comment regarding Humayun's year of inactivity comes directly from Firishta, though where Firishta obtained this information is unknown, as it does not appear in the earlier sources. Firishta ambiguously mentions the emperor devoting himself to pleasure on several occasions, but in the Briggs translation opium is only mentioned twice. Though Richards does not include Firishta specifically in his bibliographic essays, the comments found in the two works are nearly identical and it is also likely that Richards or the source he used for the information utilized Briggs' translation of the work. Firishta's second comment about opium – the first being the one used by Richards – is not directly about

¹⁰³ Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore, Past and Present: Being an Account of Lahore from Original Sources* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1996), 63.

¹⁰⁴ Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, published as *The Rise of Mohammedan Power in India*, trans. John Briggs, 2: 154, available through the Packard Institute at <http://persian.packhum.org>.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 151.

Humayun, but rather about his son, Akbar. In it Akbar is said to have “adopted the habit of eating opium, as Hoomayoon, his father had done before him.”¹⁰⁶ Relatively speaking, Firishta makes no distinction between the two emperors regarding their opium habits.

Further questions about Firishta’s reliability can be found in his section on Babur, wherein he – according to Briggs – states that “Babur was much addicted to wine and women,” using a verse written by the emperor as evidence. Babur’s use of wine has already been discussed, and as for women Babur implies quite the opposite in his memoir. Babur was so reluctant in pursuing his first wife, Ayisha Sultan Begam that his mother was forced to “drive me to her with all the severity of a quartermaster.”¹⁰⁷ Though this was not necessarily the case with all of his wives, Babur gives no evidence substantiating Firishta’s claim of being addicted to women.

Though there is clear evidence that Babur, Humayun, and Akbar all partook in opiates, modern historiography singles out Humayun for reasons that are unclear. In his book on Akbar published in 1919, Arthur Vincent Smith describes Humayun as someone who rarely drank but who “made himself stupid with opium.” He goes on to say that Akbar indulged excessively in both vices, which relative to the sources appears to be an exaggeration. However, after Smith historians have tended to focus opium use primarily on Humayun and portray Akbar as the more temperate and stable ruler. Akbar’s reign did exhibit greater stability than his father’s, but that this had anything to do with the amount of intoxicants each consumed is not only an

¹⁰⁶ Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, vol. 2, under the heading “October 1579,” available at <http://persian.packhum.org>.

¹⁰⁷ Babur, *Baburnama*, 89.

oversimplification, it ignores key differences in the emperors' personalities and individual circumstances. Akbar was able to achieve stability during his reign partially due to the groundwork laid out by Humayun shortly before his death. Substance abuse has essentially become the scapegoat for explaining why Humayun was an ineffective ruler. Based on the evidence in the sources, it is much more likely that Humayun's reign was "unsuccessful" relative to his character and personality, not his opium consumption.¹⁰⁸

Regardless of the amount of opium Humayun consumed and whether or not this use constituted addiction, his reasons appear to have been quite different from his father's. Babur's confidence led him to use opium as an amusing diversion, whereas Humayun used it more for escapism in order to cope with his own lack of confidence. Babur recorded a letter he sent to his son in his memoir, and though he does not mention opium, it reveals a great deal about Humayun's character. Humayun, according to Babur, spoke of often feeling alone, so his father instructed him to "stop sitting by yourself and avoiding people," and reminded him that: "Solitude is a flaw in kingship."¹⁰⁹ While excessive opium use is often blamed for the problems in Humayun's reign, it seems just as likely that both his shortcomings as a ruler and his opium use were the results of a natural demeanor unsuited for leadership.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542-1605*, 406.

¹⁰⁹ Babur, *Baburnama*, 423-24.

AKBAR AND JAHANGIR

*"Let not the wise man be sunk in wine,
For this flood ruins wisdom's palace."¹¹⁰*

Following Humayun's death in 1556 he was succeeded by his twelve-year-old son, Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar. Akbar, whose reign lasted for nearly fifty years, is generally considered to be the most successful Mughal emperor, earning him the epithet "Akbar the Great." Building on his father's later successes, Akbar expanded the empire to include Bengal and Gujarat, and also was able to subdue Gondwana in Central India, and Rajasthan. He also implemented major changes to the Mughal administrative system with the goal of stimulating India's economic development. Though incredibly intelligent and knowledgeable, Akbar was illiterate, which many historians believe was the result of severe dyslexia. Abul Fazl, a close friend and courtier of Akbar, composed both the aforementioned official memoir of Akbar's reign, the *Akbarnama*, and the *Ain-i-Akbari*, which detailed the administrative aspects of the empire. Abul Fazl's work lent to the creation of a cult of personality around Akbar, which went so far as to establish a court religion centered around the emperor.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 708.

¹¹¹ Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India, Eighth Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 130-38; John McLeod, *The History of India* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 49-52; John Keay, *India: A History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), 309; Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, 142-46.

As the empire achieved stability during Akbar's reign, a fundamental shift regarding the roles and uses of intoxicants took place. Intoxicant use during Babur's reign was representative of his peripatetic lifestyle and bore a striking resemblance to earlier nomadic traditions. His many references to drinking parties outline the predominantly social role of alcohol during this period. However, following his vow of temperance, alcohol consumption took on a much less overtly social role. The lack of references to alcohol during Humayun's reign showcases this changing attitude. This is not to imply that alcohol use disappeared or even decreased, but rather the way that it is presented in the sources changes significantly. The drinking parties of Babur's time all but disappear, replaced by Akbar's reign with instances of the problems associated with alcohol addiction and abuse. The regular consumption of alcohol by Babur and his men turns into habitual consumption as the Mughals incorporated more and more elements of settled society. Problems with alcohol addiction tend to increase in cultures where drinking is more private and less social, a point exemplified in the experiences of the Mughals.¹¹²

Just as alcohol use became increasingly private and habitual, so did the use of opium. However, where Babur generally used both intoxicants for the same means, they take on very different roles once the empire has been established. During Akbar's reign there is no stigma or negativity associated with regular opium use, and references to daily doses or allotments begin to appear. For Babur, opiates offered distraction and relaxation but were not necessarily a part of his daily routine, hence the reason he specifically mentions on what occasions he consumed

¹¹² David G. Mandelbaum, "Alcohol and Culture," in *Beliefs, Behaviors, and Alcoholic Beverages: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Mac Marshall (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 26-27.

them. Interestingly, the social acceptability of regular opium use actually increased at the same time that the acceptability of alcohol use decreased. The origins for this can be seen in Babur's increased consumption of opiates after choosing to abstain from alcohol. It is important to note that there remained a clear distinction between what was acceptable and what was considered to be excessive, though the standards of measuring excessiveness were not uniform in nature.

The acceptance of opium as a part of Mughal culture can be inferred from its casual reference and lack of vilification in the *Akbarnama*.¹¹³ Abul Fazl mentions opium in passing during his discussion of Sharafud-din Husain Mirza, who died after poison was mixed in with his opium. There is no indication that the Mirza's use of opium was out of the ordinary, merely that it was the mechanism through which he was poisoned. Multiple references are made throughout the *Akbarnama* of the problems associated with excessive alcohol use, as seen with the inclusion of "drunkards" on Abul Fazl's list of people not to be associated with.¹¹⁴ The lack of discussion of opium-eaters or addicts, relative to Abul Fazl's detailed descriptions of people's undesirable qualities, indicates a tolerance of opium in Mughal society. However, this toleration was not all encompassing, as it hinged on the use of opiates in small daily doses, sedating the user but not with the intention of intoxicating him. Babur's very public use of opiates for intoxication would, by Akbar's time, have been much more socially unacceptable. Regular opium use among Mughal elites would

¹¹³ Meaning the portion of the work written by Abul Fazl, not the conclusion written after Fazl's death.

¹¹⁴ Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, 3: 1078.

have created a more complacent male population, which undoubtedly provided a framework within which Akbar was able to assert control and maintain stability.¹¹⁵

Alcohol is shown in a predominantly negative light throughout the *Akbarnama* both in literal and figurative references. The words “intoxicated” and “drunk” are used repeatedly by Abul Fazl when he wishes to describe an individual’s negative attributes, including arrogance, pride, or even simply an all around corrupt nature. He also incorporates negative metaphorical references to other intoxicants including drugs, though not in relation to opium specifically. In his account of the capture of Akbar’s enemy Shah Abu-I-Maali, Abul Fazl writes figuratively that he was “a drunken madman” whose delusions of grandeur were the result his servants “ever pouring the drug of inconsideration into the wine of his arrogance.”¹¹⁶ Disapprobation of alcohol prior to Akbar’s reign focused predominantly on questions of its acceptability relative to Islam. While the attitude towards alcohol expressed by Abul Fazl may stem from religious beliefs, he does not use religion as a basis point for his disapproval. In his account of the early years of Humayun’s reign, Khwandamir also occasionally incorporated metaphorical references to intoxication and wine. While he too used this terminology to condemn undesirable traits, he also uses the same words in relation to much more lighthearted fare such as love and joy.¹¹⁷ Where literal intoxication leads to a loss of physical control, figurative intoxication is indicative of a loss of emotional control. The acceptance of feelings associated with physical or emotional intoxication during the empire’s formative

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3: 478, 1078, *passim*.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 2: 27.

¹¹⁷ Khwandamir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, *passim*.

years was representative of inherent instability. Writing during a period that focused on stability and the maintenance of control, Abul Fazl praises sobriety and abstemiousness and views any “intoxicating” emotions not as natural but as signs of weakness.

Akbar, like his predecessors, appears to have consumed opiates with some regularity, as indicated in European travel accounts, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, and Asad Beg’s *Wikaya*. The latter work focuses on the final years of Akbar’s reign and includes the murder of Abul Fazl. After learning of his friend’s death, Akbar was reportedly so distraught that he spent the entire day and night weeping and “neither shaved...nor took opium.”¹¹⁸ Clearly, the emperor took opium regularly enough that it was noteworthy when he did not. An earlier reference expressing similar sentiment occurs in Abul Fazl’s discussion of the fruitery, wherein he relates: “whenever his Majesty wishes to take wine, opium, or *kúkna*¹¹⁹...the servants in charge place before him stands of fruits.”¹²⁰ This statement is made casually and without any sort of judgment against the use of intoxicants. This is interesting considering Abul Fazl’s general aversion to alcohol, though it is of note that this is the only time he mentions Akbar’s drinking habits. Even in his rare reference to “a drinking feast,” he does not indicate that Akbar drank, merely that he found amusement in the inebriation of “his ecclesiastical and judicial dignitaries.”¹²¹ Nizam al-Din’s history, the most objective and impersonal of the sources on Akbar’s reign, says nothing of

¹¹⁸ Asad Beg, *Wikaya*, in Henry Miers Elliot, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period, Volume 6* (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), 177.

¹¹⁹ A highly addictive liquor infused with opium, see Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, 107.

¹²⁰ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H.S. Jarrett (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1891), 1: 64.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 468.

either Humayun or Akbar's use of intoxicants, though like Abul Fazl he does include some information on prominent figures who died of alcoholism. Badauni, perhaps Akbar's harshest critic, also avoids any discussion of alcohol in relation to Akbar.¹²² Apparently drawing on the information – or lack thereof – in these three works, Akbar is generally described in secondary sources as having drunk only rarely and never to the point of inebriation.

In contrast, a very different impression of Akbar given by his son Jahangir and by the Jesuit missionary Ridolfo Aquaviva. In the opening section of his memoir, Jahangir remarks that he never heard his father, “whether in his cups or in his sober moments,” call him by his given name, Selim.¹²³ Jahangir's comment runs in seeming contradiction to the impression of Akbar as very moderate and restrained: if Akbar rarely drank there would be no necessity to refer to his “sober moments.” Given the recent shift in alcohol consumption from the public to the private spheres, it is possible that Jahangir had knowledge of his father's activities that others were not privy to. At the same time Abul Fazl makes multiple comments regarding Akbar's extreme distress over Jahangir's excessive drinking, a problem Jahangir himself readily admitted to.

Akbar's attitude towards others' perceptions of his intoxicant use is illustrated in a story preserved in Jahangir's memoir. The emperor told his son that in his youth he once drank several cups of wine and then proceeded to get on an elephant. Allowing everyone to *believe* he was drunk, he *pretended* to lose control of

¹²² Mukhia, *The Mughals*, 7.

¹²³ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Henry Beveridge, trans. Alexander Rogers (Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2006), 2.

the elephant as it charged at people and then chased another elephant. The point that he was not in any way out of control of the elephant or intoxicated is continually stressed and emphasized in Jahangir's retelling of his father's story. Abul Fazl provides his own spin on this event, failing to mention alcohol and also claiming that it was not Akbar's elephant that lost control. Instead, when Akbar saw that another driver had lost control of his elephant he heroically jumped from his elephant to the other. Apparently Akbar's divine presence atop the elephant was enough to incite it into submission. The story Akbar told Jahangir is obviously much more believable than Abul Fazl's rendition, though the overemphasis put on Akbar's not having been either intoxicated or out of control in the first telling also makes its veracity questionable. Regardless of what really happened with Akbar and his elephants, is it clear that the emperor's reputation as the sober guardian of his people was carefully constructed and maintained.¹²⁴

The question of perception versus reality regarding Akbar's drinking habits is further complicated with the account of Aquaviva, who recalled that Akbar "went to such excess in drinking that the merit of fasting was lost in the demerit of inebriation."¹²⁵ At first glance, this comment seems much more likely to be a description of Jahangir than of his father, but this would hardly be possible as the prince was barely a teenager at the time of Aquaviva's mission. These conflicting representations of Akbar make any conclusive statements about his drinking habits impossible. Based on Abul Fazl's multiple references to alcohol related illnesses and deaths, it does seem clear that excessive alcohol use was a serious problem at this

¹²⁴ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2: 41-42; Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 2: 111-12.

¹²⁵ Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, 115.

time. The construct of Akbar as the ideal ruler presented by Abul Fazl could explain his failure to elaborate on Akbar's drinking habits.

In addition to drinking, Aquaviva also mentions Akbar's use of opium in describing his consumption of a drink known as *post*, a "preparation of opium, diluted and modified by various admixtures of spices."¹²⁶ Father Antonio Monserrate attributes the discovery of this drink to Shaikh Kipur of Gwalior, who created it as a safer and less intoxicating alternative to eating opium. Monserrate also gives a detailed description of how *post* is made, stating that after a poppy's juice has been extracted to make opium, the seeds are removed and the head of the flower is soaked in water. After the water has turned the color of wine, the poppy heads are removed, the liquid is strained to remove impurities, and the drink is ready for consumption. Given the process described by Monserrate, any decrease in inebriation between *post* and opium was likely solely the result of dilution, as even after the juice had been extracted, the pods would have contained a fairly high concentration of narcotics. Whether *post* was in fact safer or less addictive, as Shaikh Kipur seems to have intended, is uncertain. In some secondary sources, *post* is described as a drink made from infused poppy seeds, but this seems incorrect as poppy seeds contain only trace amounts of narcotic compounds. In order to obtain even mild intoxication either the latex or the head would need to be used.¹²⁷

As the use of opium continued during Akbar's reign the cultivation of poppies provided an important source of revenue for the government, as evidenced in the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Michael H. Fisher, ed., *Visions of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 46.

Ain-i-Akbari. Abul Fazl lists poppies as an important part of the spring harvest in regions throughout the Empire including Malwa, Oudh (Alwa), Delhi, and Lahore. Poppies were not considered produce, and therefore the revenue from them “was ordered to be paid in ready money” at a set rate of one third of the gross value.¹²⁸ In the statistical data provided by Abul Fazl on the rates of different commodities over a nineteen-year period beginning in 1590, poppies, indigo, and sugar are listed as three of the products with the highest value. The revenue from poppy production provided increased incentive for the continued cultural acceptance of opium within the Mughal world. The economic value of opium extended beyond government revenues as internal and external trade would have been important sources of income for the regions in which poppies were cultivated. The exportation of opium via Dutch traders increased significantly during this period as the practice of smoking opium became popular in Southeast Asia and South China. Despite the prevalence of this new form of ingestion elsewhere, within India eating and drinking opiates remained the norm during this period.¹²⁹

Evidence for the recreational use of opium during Akbar’s reign can be found in the fourth chapter of Bayazid Bayat’s memoir, specifically in a section titled “Mir Faridun consumes an enormous amount of opiate.”¹³⁰ While in Jaunpur, Bayazid witnessed Mir Faridun eat one hundred and forty mithcals¹³¹ of opiate and “since

¹²⁸ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 2: 65; Geeta Ojha, *Economic History of India: Trade During the Great Mughals 1526-1700 A.D.* (New Delhi: Shri Sai Printographers, 2005), 39.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 69-86, 87-113; George Bryan Souza, “Opium and the Company: Maritime Trade and Imperial Finances on Java, 1684-1796,” *Modern Asian Studies* 43 (2009): 116-17.

¹³⁰ Bayazid Bayat, *Tarikh-i Humayun*, 2: 146.

¹³¹ According to Alexander Rogers’ in his translation of the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, (1: 309f.), 18 mithcals is equal to around 3 ounces. As such, Mir Faridun consumed over 23 ounces of opiates. To put this

this was a very strange thing, [he] included it in this history.”¹³² The strangeness, Bayazid relates, is not in the mere consumption of opiates, but rather in the quantity and lack of subsequent side effects. This event came about after Munim Khan – who Bayazid was in the service of at this time – heard that Mir Faridun had eaten eighty mithcals, and challenged him to do it again. Not only did Mir Faridun exceed his original number of eighty, he washed it down with “poppy juice instead of water.”¹³³ While this event is out of the ordinary, the regularity with which opiates were consumed is demonstrated in one of Bayazid’s statements about Mir Faridun: “That morning he had taken his regular dose of opium.”¹³⁴

During this period, records – such as Aquaviva’s – of interactions between the Europeans and Mughals also shed light on opium’s prominence in Mughal society. As early as 1513, Portuguese traveler Don Afonso de Albuquerque recognized the economic advantages of opium and wrote to the Portuguese king, urging him to “order poppies...to be sown in all the fields of Portugal and command [opium] to be made.”¹³⁵ De Albuquerque’s contemporary, Duarte Barbosa, did not share the former’s enthusiasm for the drug, and instead wrote of the dangers of addiction, and its use as a means for committing suicide: “the women of India...eat it with oil of sesame, and so die sleeping without feeling death.”¹³⁶ While many of Barbosa’s stories are clearly exaggerated – such as his account of the “King of

into perspective, according to historian Alfred W. McCoy the average Chinese opium addict in the early twentieth century consumed approximately 3 ounces per day.

¹³² Bayazid Bayat, *Tarikh-i Humayun*, 2: 146.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Don Afonso de Albuquerque, quoted in David Owen, *British Opium Policy*, 2.

¹³⁶ Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Henry E.J. Stanley (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1866), 57.

Cambay” whose opium use made him poisonous to anyone he came in physical contact with – specific instances of opium suicides are also found in Mughal sources, including Jahangir’s memoirs.¹³⁷

The Dutch traveler, John Huyghen van Linschoten – who visited India in the 1580’s – wrote of opium as a kind of poison, remarking: “hee that useth to eate it, must eate it daylie, otherwise he dieth.”¹³⁸ Van Linschoten goes on to describe what he believes to be the two primary uses of opium, the first being a form of escape for workers to avoid the aches and pains wrought by manual labor. The second use indicated in his account is “for lecherie: for it maketh a man to hold his seed long before he sheddeth it, which the Indian women much desire.”¹³⁹ He goes on to say that the use of too much opium could counter this effect, making men “unable to company with [women].”¹⁴⁰ Barbosa also records that men took opium “as a means of provoking lust,” though unlike van Linschoten, he does not go into any details.¹⁴¹ While opium may well have been used as an aphrodisiac, as it had been in other societies, there is no real indication of this use in the Mughal sources.¹⁴²

The European sources from this period say little about the Mughals drinking habits, though wine is mentioned with some regularity. Most of the references deal with the areas in which wine was produced and include commentary on the quality of said wine. Van Linchoten comments on the tendency to mix the hallucinogen *datura* with wine, which causes either uncontrollable laughter or very deep sleep.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ John Huyghen van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies, from the Old English translation of 1598*, ed. P.A. Tiele, trans. ? (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1885), 2: 113.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2: 114.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 123.

¹⁴² Van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies*, 2: 113-14.

He goes on to say that women often give this mixture to their husbands. In this way they are able to meet with their lovers and “performe their leacherie” in full view of their husbands, who have been rendered insensible by the drug.¹⁴³ Van Linschoten’s focus on sexuality in relation to intoxicants appears to be at least in part directed at satisfying his readers’ desires for exotic stories from the East, thereby confirming the Orientalist presumptions of his audience. Additionally, he was deeply religious and rather than judging others based on his own cultural experiences, he was fascinated by accounts of anything that was strange and different as examples of God’s wondrousness at work.¹⁴⁴

The lack of discussion of alcohol use by Europeans is somewhat surprising given the number of illnesses and deaths resulting from alcohol abuse recorded in the Mughal sources. Despite efforts during Akbar’s reign to curb the excessive use of intoxicants by emphasizing stability and control, three of his sons and one son-in-law all suffered from serious problems in relation to their addictions. Both the reality and myth - as created by Abul Fazl - of Akbar may have proved intimidating for those in the position to succeed him. Additionally, as alcohol and opium consumption became increasingly private relative to social norms, the risks of addiction increased. Public intoxication generally limits consumption due to risks of embarrassment and avoidance of judgments. In essence, drug and alcohol use can more easily be kept in check if it is partaken in socially. Changing perceptions

¹⁴³ Ibid., 2: 69.

¹⁴⁴ Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 156-57; for the definition of “Orientalism,” see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*.

brought about by the establishment of empire and a subsequent courtly culture had drastic effects on the relationship between Mughal elites and intoxicants.

Muzaffar Husain Mirza, the son of Babur's daughter Gulrukh Begum, was married to Akbar's eldest daughter Sultan Khanum. As the emperor's son-in-law, Muzaffar held a high position at court and had many favors bestowed upon him. Despite these advantages, Abul Fazl relates that "he from an evil nature took to drinking, and the brightness of his intellect did not remain."¹⁴⁵ This is one of several examples given in the *Akbarnama* of excessive alcohol use among high-ranking members of the Mughal court. In an episode similar to the one experienced by his father, Akbar is recorded to have expelled Shaikh Jamal from court after he annoyed the emperor by arriving drunk. The Sheikh responded by going into a violent rage and was subsequently imprisoned. Though Akbar pardoned him not long afterwards, he continued in his vice and in short time "brought *delirium tremens* on himself."¹⁴⁶ In addition to stories of the slow physical and mental degradation brought about by overindulgence, there are also several ominous accounts of alcohol related deaths. Abul Fazl cautions that the death of Sheikh Ism'ail, son of Sheikh Selim Fathpuri, from drinking should serve as "a warning to the wise," and includes the following verse:

*Let not the wise man be sunk in wine,
For this flood ruins wisdom's palace.
They drink wine to produce death:
They do not drink for pleasure and intoxication.¹⁴⁷*

¹⁴⁵ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 1151.

¹⁴⁶ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 1: 191.

¹⁴⁷ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 708.

The somber nature of this verse lies in stark contrast to the verses composed by Babur, which praised wine and relished in its effects. Wine is not presented here as a mechanism for the pursuit of pleasure, but rather as a means by which to obtain an untimely death.

During his lifetime Akbar lost his two youngest sons, Murad and Daniyal, to alcohol related illnesses and made efforts to curb the drinking and opium habits of his eldest surviving son, Jahangir. Prince Murad was born in 1570 and died at the age of thirty as the result of epilepsy brought on by alcoholism. According to the *Akbarnama*, Murad started drinking very heavily after the death of his son Rustum in 1598. Within six months of his son's passing he was stricken with epilepsy, diarrhea, and severe abdominal pain. Akbar immediately dispatched his best physician to care for his ailing son, but these efforts proved fruitless, as Murad was rendered unconscious by a violent seizure and died six days later. Though he expresses a profound sense of grief at the prince's death, Abul Fazl makes no qualms about blaming Murad for his own demise:

*A form that was destined for long life he himself
destroyed.
A jewel that might have threaded many years he himself
broke.¹⁴⁸*

Given that less than a year passed between the deaths of Rustum and his father, it is most likely that Murad already suffered from a drinking problem that was exacerbated and magnified by the loss of his son.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 1126.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 514, 1125-26.

Six years after Murad's death, his younger brother and Akbar's favorite son, Daniyal died as a result of his own addiction to alcohol at the age of thirty-three, though to quote his older brother Jahangir, "his death occurred in a peculiar way."¹⁵⁰ Recognizing that his son had a problem, Akbar insisted that Daniyal follow in Babur's footsteps and take the oath of temperance, which he did, and like his great-grandfather, ordered all his drinking vessels destroyed. Unfortunately, the prince was unable to curb his habit and returned to drinking shortly thereafter. Akbar sent his best physicians followed by Daniyal's mother to bring the prince to court in an effort to "restrain him from his fatal propensity."¹⁵¹ Unable to convince the embarrassed prince to return, Akbar appointed guardians to keep constant watch of him to ensure he could not gain access to alcohol. In what can only be deemed an act of desperation, Daniyal convinced his private servants to sneak doubly distilled spirits to him in the barrel of a gun. The alcohol combined with the gun's rust and gunpowder residue, and the prince fell gravely ill shortly after drinking it. For forty days he grew weaker, and according to Abul Fazl during this time "no other word but wine passed from his lips."¹⁵² When Daniyal finally passed away, Akbar had ten of his servants imprisoned for their part in delivering the alcohol to him, though all were murdered three days later, supposedly by grief-stricken admirers of the prince.¹⁵³

The premature death of two sons undoubtedly took a toll on the often melancholy Akbar, as did the rebellion of his heir, the future emperor Jahangir.

¹⁵⁰ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 35.

¹⁵¹ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 1228.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 3: 1254.

¹⁵³ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 1228-31, 1248, 1254; Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 35.

Seven months after Daniyal's death, Akbar died of dysentery a month short of his sixty-fourth birthday. By the time of his ascension, Nuruddin Salim Jahangir was already struggling with serious alcohol and drug addictions. In the year preceding his death, Akbar grew tired of the prince's irreverent behavior and had him locked in a closet for ten days and deprived of wine, which Abul Fazl describes as "the hardest of punishments."¹⁵⁴ The prince and his father are said to have reconciled shortly before Akbar's death, thus affirming Jahangir's place as successor.¹⁵⁵

Of the first six Mughal emperors, only Babur and his great-grandson, Jahangir, wrote memoirs of their lives. Much like Babur, Jahangir is incredibly candid about his use of drugs and alcohol. However, where Babur primarily recounts the pleasures brought about by intoxicant use, Jahangir speaks of the problems of addiction. Several of Jahangir's stories are incredibly similar to Babur's, though the tone with which they are conveyed is drastically different. Babur's story of Muhammad Baqir drunkenly attempting to cut off the head of Dost-Muhammad to protect him from the Afghans was written so as to emphasize the humor of an otherwise dangerous situation. There is also an innocence expressed in Babur's story as Muhammad Baqir genuinely – albeit drunkenly as well – thought he was saving his friend's life. In contrast, Jahangir recounts a story he heard about an official named Abdullah Khan, who ordered a man's head chopped off at a wine party for making a drunken joke. This story is obviously of a much more serious nature than Babur's, especially regarding the outcome, though it is representative of

¹⁵⁴ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, 3: 1247-48.

¹⁵⁵ Wolseley Haig, *Cambridge History of India, Volume IV: The Mughul Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), 152-3; McLeod, *The History of India*, 53.

the larger thematic differences between the two emperors' depictions of intoxication. Where Babur's focus was on averting a potentially dangerous situation, Jahangir's is on the realization of it.¹⁵⁶

His main addiction appears to have been to alcohol, recalling a period wherein he drank "twenty cups of doubly distilled spirits" per day.¹⁵⁷ He took up drinking spirits after building up such a tolerance to wine that no amount could intoxicate him. Even though his drinking usually took place in the palace and was not necessarily undertaken as publicly as Babur's, his habits were incredibly well known. European visitors to Jahangir's court recounted his daily routine with astonishing precision relative to the emperor's own musings on the subject. As a result of this heavy drinking, his hands shook so badly that he had to have his attendants lift his cup for him to drink from. Jahangir was told by his doctor that if he did not cut back on his drinking "in six months...there will be no remedy for it."¹⁵⁸ According to Jahangir, his opium use came about in an attempt to curb his daily alcohol intake; wherein he decreased his alcohol consumption while proportionally increasing his use of opium.¹⁵⁹

Muhibb Ali, who completed the *Akbarnama* following Abul Fazl's death, also refers to Jahangir's alcoholism and subsequent substitution of opium. In his account, Jahangir did not add opium in order to cut back on his alcohol intake, but rather did so in order to recreate the intoxication he no longer experienced from

¹⁵⁶ Babur, *Baburnama*, 298; Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 420-21.

¹⁵⁷ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 308.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 308.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 307-9.

wine alone, due to his increased tolerance. He illustrates this further by incorporating a verse he deemed fitting:

*We cast the heart's core into the limpid tears
The wine was without effect; we threw opium into it.¹⁶⁰*

As a result of this “double intoxication,” Muhibb Ali states that Jahangir’s “brain was dried up,” causing him to make irrational decisions, such as ordering capital punishment for minor offenses.¹⁶¹ Jahangir’s involvement in plotting Abul Fazl’s murder may partially account for the negative treatment he receives in the latter part of the *Akbarnama*. The implication of Muhibb Ali’s statement is that Jahangir was unique in mixing alcohol and opium; however, Abul Fazl’s reference to Akbar’s occasional intake of *kúknar* – a drink made with liquor and opium – indicates that such combinations were not originated by Jahangir.¹⁶²

In seeming contradiction, early in his reign Jahangir prohibited the production or selling of wine and intoxicating drugs as part of his “rules of conduct.”¹⁶³ However, in recounting this particular rule, Jahangir expresses his own personal liking for wine – which he claims here to use only as a digestive aid – and gives no indication of a desire to give it up completely. Captain William Hawkins, who led the first expedition of the English East India Company to India and visited Jahangir’s court, wrote that after eating the emperor did only take one drink of wine, at which point he retired to a private room, drank five cups, and ate opium. Following this he took a two-hour nap and was fed by his servants, as he was too

¹⁶⁰ *The Akbarnama*, 3: 1242.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 1: 64.

¹⁶³ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 7-8.

intoxicated to feed himself, and retired to bed. Though Jahangir speaks candidly in his memoir about his drinking habits, he took care to create a separation between his public and private personas. The recognition of the difference between public and private life did not necessarily exist during Babur's reign, but rather emerged and evolved alongside the empire itself.¹⁶⁴ Another Englishman who visited Jahangir's court, Edward Terry, also recounts that Jahangir was often "overcome by wine," though the emperor had no patience for others appearing before him in the same state.¹⁶⁵ Jahangir ordered that anyone wishing to visit him at court have their breath smelled, and if it appeared that they had been drinking they were immediately dismissed. Whatever habits the Mughal emperors may have had, it appears none of them – perhaps with the exception of Babur – appreciated the inherent disrespect of drunken visitors at their court.¹⁶⁶

Hawkins fails to mention Jahangir's rule regarding coming to court drunk for reasons made clear by East India Company merchant John Jourdain. The emperor's *wazir*, Khwaja Abul-I Hasan had a personal disliking for Hawkins and knowing that he was a drinker sent his porter to him one day to discern whether or not he was drunk. Finding that he was, the porter insisted he come to court at which point the *wazir* revealed to all that Hawkins was intoxicated. Jahangir's reaction was somewhat tempered by the fact that Hawkins was a visitor, but he still instructed the now disgraced captain to return to where he was staying until he had sobered

¹⁶⁴ Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, 214-16.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India* (London, 1777), 387.

¹⁶⁶ Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 147; James Talbot Wheeler, ed., *Early Travels in India* (Calcutta: The "Englishman" Press, 1864), 43; Eraly, *The Mughal Throne*, 239; Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, 371, 387-88.

up. Greatly embarrassed, Hawkins returned to the court only rarely following the debacle. Though intoxicant use was widespread and well acknowledged, this episode illustrates the impropriety associated with public inebriation, wherein the image of sobriety was of much greater importance than the reality therein.¹⁶⁷

Jahangir recalls assemblies much like those of Babur, at which many people drank intoxicating drinks, “whilst others ate what they wished of the preparations of opium.”¹⁶⁸ Though such parties surely took place during Akbar’s reign as well, they are conspicuously absent from the sources. Where Akbar’s focus was on maintaining at least the image of control, Jahangir’s appears to have been more about lack of control. The regularity with which the Emperor consumed intoxicants can also be inferred from a comment he makes recalling the pursuit of his son Khusrau, who had led a rebellion against him. Jahangir recollects that around midday, it occurred to him that he had not yet had his daily allowance of opium “which it was the practice to take the first thing in the morning, and no one had reminded us of the omission.”¹⁶⁹

In addition to his own consumption of opium, Jahangir also discusses the use of opium by others, including three women who used it to commit suicide. The way Jahangir interprets these suicides is with a certain heroism rather than condemnation. The first woman is Man Bai, one of Jahangir’s wives and the mother of Khusrau. According to Jahangir, while he was still a prince, Khusrau’s behavior and her brother’s misconduct – he gives no details on the actual offense – so grieved

¹⁶⁷ John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617*, edited by William Foster (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1905), 155-7.

¹⁶⁸ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 168; 49.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 54.

Man Bai that “in her agitation [she] swallowed a quantity of opium, and quickly passed away.”¹⁷⁰ He goes on to state that it almost seemed as if she had foreseen Khusrau’s later betrayal of him. In contrast, Muhibb Ali also mentions Man Bai’s death, but he ascribes the cause to Jahangir’s improper treatment of her, stating that “her mind became jealous and she killed herself by taking opium.”¹⁷¹ If in fact it was Jahangir’s behavior that led her to take her own life, it seems unlikely that he would admit as much in his memoirs, however candid his account may appear. Jahangir’s involvement in Man Bai’s decision to commit suicide could also have provided further impetus for her son Khusrau’s rebellion against his father.

The second account of suicide includes an account of opium addiction. In telling of the death of Jalalu-d-din Ma’sud, Jahangir reveals “he was an opium-eater, and used to eat opium after breaking it in pieces, like cheese,” then goes on to say that “he frequently ate opium from the hand of his own mother.”¹⁷² There is no direct indication that his death was opium related, however, out of grief his mother “ate more opium than was right out of that which she used to give her son” and died only a few hours after Jalalu-d-din.¹⁷³ The final reference to opium suicide involves the concubine of Pishrau Khan, who had served the royal family since the time of Humayun and was apparently “never for a moment without the intoxication of wine.”¹⁷⁴ Following his death at the age of ninety, one of his concubines killed

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 55-56.

¹⁷¹ *Akbarnama*, 3: 1239.

¹⁷² Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 142.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 149.

herself using opium, at which Jahangir remarked: "Few women among the Musulmans have ever shown such fidelity."¹⁷⁵

Alcoholism during Jahangir's reign continued to be a serious problem extending beyond the emperor himself. He mentions several deaths resulting from alcohol abuse including those of his two younger brothers. One of Jahangir's servants, an Afghan named Shir Khan is said to have drunk continually, consuming "on every watch...four brimming cups of arrack of double strength."¹⁷⁶ After failing to keep his fast during the month of Ramadan, he decided to fast for two months the following year. As a result, he experienced extreme withdrawals and died at the age of fifty-seven. Echoing Abul Fazl's remark following the death of Prince Murad, Jahangir holds Shir Khan responsible for his own demise, stating: "one might say that he took his own life."¹⁷⁷ In addition to Shir Khan, Jahangir also records the death of a nobleman named Maha Singh¹⁷⁸ from alcoholism at age thirty-two. Apparently, Maha Singh's father had also died at thirty-two from excessive drinking. In another instance, a young man Jahangir held great admiration and hope for, Shah-nawaz Khan suffered from *delirium tremens* resulting from his abuse of wine before dying at the age of thirty-three. Alcoholism in the royal family also continued with Jahangir's son, Parvez, who developed epilepsy and died at thirty-eight. Seeing as

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 1: 150.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 1: 134.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Maha Singh was the grandson of Jahangir's brother-in-law, Raja Man Singh.

how most of these deaths occurred in men who were only in their thirties, their individual consumption of alcohol must have been both significant and regular.¹⁷⁹

In addition to these deaths, Jahangir also recounts the death of Inayat Khan, who was addicted to opium and wine. As a result of these addictions, he developed *delirium tremens* and severe diarrhea, which the emperor's physician was unable to remedy. As a result, he lost so much weight that upon seeing him, Jahangir declared that he resembled nothing more than "skin drawn over bones."¹⁸⁰ The Emperor was so astonished that he ordered a portrait of Inayat Khan in this weakened state.¹⁸¹ Unlike most Mughal art, the picture of the dying Inayat Khan is not decorative or even highly detailed, but does convey the frightening image of a man close to death.¹⁸²

The extremity of the drinking culture exhibited during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir reflects some of the larger changes taking place within Mughal society. During Jahangir's reign there was a resurgence of public intoxication – exhibited primarily through wine parties – in addition to the continuation of private consumption. With the establishment of a stable empire and increases in trade under Akbar, intoxicants became much more easily accessible. The ready availability of copious amounts of wine and opium in the Mughal world combined with an increasingly sedentary lifestyle resulting in a surge of drug and alcohol abuse and dependency.

¹⁷⁹ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 133-34, 377, 2: 87; Muhammad-Hadi, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. by Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 448.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 43.

¹⁸¹ See Appendix B.

¹⁸² Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2: 43-44; Ellen Smart, "The Death of Inayat Khan by the Mughal Artist Balchand," *Artibus Asiae* 58 (1999): 273-79.

Jahangir was never able to – or more than likely never fully desired to – give up intoxicants entirely. After multiple warnings from physicians telling him of the need to significantly decrease his habit, his greatest concession was to decrease his alcohol consumption by about one-fifth.¹⁸³ Despite his problems with addiction, Jahangir's reign represented a period of relative stability and prosperity, though much of this was due to a continuation of the policies set forth by his father. Other than rebellions led by the emperor's sons attempting to seize power, the major problems encountered during this period were on the far reaches of the empire in southern Afghanistan and the Deccan. Along with his favorite wife, Nur Jahan – who incidentally wielded an unprecedented amount of power due to her husband's drug and alcohol problems – Jahangir was a great patron of the arts, which flourished during his reign. Unlike his brothers, Jahangir lived a relatively long life, though physically weakened by his years of opium and alcohol use, the emperor died at the age of fifty-eight. As his death neared, Muhammad-Hadi wrote that Jahangir lost his appetite and “developed an aversion to the opium that had been his constant companion for forty years,” refusing to take anything more than a few cups of wine.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2: 35.

¹⁸⁴ Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 102-3, 116-7; Muhammad-Hadi, *The Jahangirnama*, 455-46.

SHAH JAHAN AND AURANGZEB

*"I seek forgiveness from God, my Lord, for every sin that I have committed;
and I turn to Him (in repentance)."*¹⁸⁵

The excessive use of intoxicants during Jahangir's reign was the result of multiple different variables. The stability instituted by Akbar's reforms allowed for a kind of resurgence of the drinking culture exhibited by Babur, though now the circumstances under which it took place had been drastically altered, partially due to a more private and sedentary lifestyle. When considering the emperors themselves, Jahangir's son and successor, Shahab Uddin Muhammad Shah Jahan I represents a significant break with the tradition of his forefathers regarding his personal relationship with intoxicants. Following Jahangir's death, Shah Jahan took swift action to secure his succession and spent the initial years of his reign putting down rebellions, primarily focused in the Deccan. Much like his father, Shah Jahan was a great patron of arts and architecture. He commissioned the building of many famous Mughal structures, including the Taj Mahal in Agra, which was built as the tomb for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their fourteenth child.¹⁸⁶

Shah Jahan lost two uncles and his brother Parvez – who died a year before Jahangir – to alcoholism, and watched his father engage in a lifetime of drug and

¹⁸⁵ Aurangzeb, *Ruka'at-i-Alamgiri; or, Letters of Aurangzebe*, trans. by Jamshid H. Bilimoria (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1972), 6.

¹⁸⁶ Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 156-58.

alcohol abuse. Therefore it is not surprising that he personally displayed a certain aversion towards intoxication. Jahangir began drinking wine regularly in his late teens, whereas Shah Jahan did not even try wine until he was twenty-four, at which time it was essentially forced upon him by his father. At Shah Jahan's weighing ceremony, his father encouraged him to start drinking wine, arguing that even doctors believed it was beneficial in moderation. To prove his point, Jahangir quotes a quatrain by Avicenna, who, as previously discussed also expounded the benefits of opium and died from an overdose of the drug:

*Wine is a raging enemy, a prudent friend;
A little is an antidote, but much is snake's poison.
In much there is no little injury,
In a little there is much profit.*¹⁸⁷

Given that Jahangir was not necessarily the greatest spokesperson for moderation over indulgence, Shah Jahan remained reluctant to partake, though finally "with much trouble wine was given to him."¹⁸⁸ It does not appear that Shah Jahan ever took to drinking regularly, though his reasons for this were probably more based on personal experience than religious conviction. Because he was not using religion as a basis point for his decision, there was no larger push to prohibit or discourage intoxicants during his reign. Niccolao Manucci, an Italian traveler who spent many years at the Mughal court, confirms that Shah Jahan did not drink, but states that at the same time he did not dissuade others from doing so. As a result, Manucci claims alcohol consumption actually increased significantly during Shah Jahan's reign.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 1: 306.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 307.

¹⁸⁹ Niccolao Manucci, *Storia de Mogor: or, Mogul India, 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine (London: John Murray, 1907), 1: 5.

The inaccessibility of many primary sources from the reign of Shah Jahan makes it difficult to draw any substantial conclusions about the widespread role of intoxicants during his reign and the excerpts that are available in translation deal primarily with major events not everyday life. One reference comes from Cristobal de Acosta, a Portuguese doctor, who visited India during Shah Jahan's reign. Acosta recounted the regularity with which he saw opium used, stating: "Though opium is condemned by reason, it is used so extensively that it is the most general and familiar remedy of degraded debauches."¹⁹⁰ The implication of Acosta's statement is that opium use at the Mughal court continued during the reign of Shah Jahan at a level at least relative to the periods prior to and following it.

In the excerpts from the *Padshahnama* available in translation, only one reference is made to opium. In this case, it is not the human consumption of the drug that is discussed, but rather the administering of opium to an ass in order to sedate him as prey during a lion hunt.¹⁹¹ Jahangir also mentions giving opium to animals; though in his case it was antelopes he had caught during a hunt. Having heard that an antelope caught by a cheetah could not survive, he decided to test it out for himself. When the antelopes started acting wild and unruly, no amount of opium administered was able to quell them, and they died shortly thereafter. Jahangir takes their deaths as confirmation of the rumors he heard, but the doses of

¹⁹⁰ Booth, *Opium: A History*, 25.

¹⁹¹ Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, ed., *King of the World: The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1997), 110.

opium given to sedate the animals may also have played an unacknowledged part in their deaths.¹⁹²

When Shah Jahan fell ill in 1657, his sons became bitterly entwined in a war of succession, primarily between the emperor's favorite, Dara Shikoh and his younger brother Aurangzeb. The brothers' personalities were diametrically opposed: Dara Shikoh was an intellectual and firm believer in religious toleration, while Aurangzeb was a militant orthodox Sunni. Shah Jahan recovered from his illness but this did not prevent a war from breaking out between the brothers. Dara Shikoh was defeated and eventually executed. According to French traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, the charges against Dara Shikoh in relation to Islamic law included drinking alcohol and showing preference to infidels. Upon Aurangzeb's victory over his brother, Shah Jahan found himself deposed and imprisoned by his power hungry son. With this, Muhi Uddin Muhammad Aurangzeb Bahadur Alamgir I became the new Mughal emperor in 1658, hearkening an era of attempted reforms intended to solidify the Mughal Empire as an orthodox Sunni Islamic state.¹⁹³

Among Aurangzeb's reforms was an attempt to prohibit drug and alcohol consumption within the empire. As the most religiously devout Mughal ruler he did not personally partake in any intoxicants during his reign, including alcohol and opium. Aurangzeb, according to Manucci, was not always as opposed to alcohol as he was during his time as emperor. Apparently while still a prince and serving as governor in the Deccan, Aurangzeb fell in love with a dancing girl with whom he

¹⁹² Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2: 109-10.

¹⁹³ McLeod, *The History of India*, 55-6; Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 160-2; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. by Valentine Ball (London: MacMillan and Co., 1889), 1: 356.

would often drink wine. Following her death, he vowed never to drink again and thanked God for ending the girl's life as it removed the temptation to commit the sin of inebriation. Upon coming to the throne, he supposedly observed that drinking alcohol was so common that he could only find two men in all of India who did not drink: himself and his qadi. However, Manucci claims to have seen this same qadi drink a bottle of spirits everyday, though he took great pains to keep this fact hidden from the emperor.¹⁹⁴

Much of the information about intoxicants during Aurangzeb's reign comes from Manucci's account and as such its limitations must be recognized. Katherine Butler Brown specifically addresses questions of reliability in relation to this source in her article on music during Aurangzeb's reign, arguing that Manucci's personal dislike of the emperor colored his depictions. In addition, she claims that Manucci is prone to exaggeration and self-aggrandizement.¹⁹⁵ These are valid concerns and lack of corroborating evidence from other sources gives rise to countless questions concerning the validity of the stories he tells. However, Manucci did spend most of his life – over sixty years – in India at the Mughal court so it is impossible to wholly dismiss his account. How much Manucci exaggerated or even made up will probably never be known, but what is more important than the veracity of his individual stories is the overall tone he conveys in relation to the use of intoxicants. This tone is mirrored in letters written by Aurangzeb himself, wherein he expresses both his disapproval of alcohol and his frustrations at its continued use despite his sanctions

¹⁹⁴ Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, 1: 230; 2: 5.

¹⁹⁵ Katherine Butler Brown, "Did Aurangzeb Ban Music? Questions for the Historiography of his Reign," *Modern Asian Studies* 41 (2007): 96-9.

against it. In a letter to his chief minister Asad Khan, the emperor complains about reports he received concerning frequent drinking amongst the soldiers in the army led by his grandson – who had also neglected his duties and “did not restrain himself from drinking wine notwithstanding the prohibition.”¹⁹⁶

Aurangzeb’s reforms included a prohibition on the sale of alcohol. He permitted Christians to continue to make and consume alcohol but they faced imprisonment if they were caught selling it. According to Manucci, any Hindu or Muslim caught selling intoxicants risked far harsher punishment: one arm and one leg would be cut off, after which they would be publicly dragged through a dung heap and left to die. As a result, many nobles took to distilling spirits in their own homes and drinking secretly. The more the emperor tried to enforce control over intoxicant use, the more consumption moved into the private sphere, representing a continuation – albeit extreme – of the shift which had begun under Akbar.¹⁹⁷

Whatever measure Aurangzeb undertook to prohibit the use of intoxicants, he proved remarkably incapable of convincing anyone in his family to follow suit. His brother who had sided with him during the war of succession with Dara Shikoh, Murad Bakhsh drank continually, a weakness that Aurangzeb exploited. While dining together, the emperor encouraged Murad to drink until he passed out and was disarmed. When he awoke, Aurangzeb reprimanded him severely for being intoxicated and ordered that he be immediately imprisoned at Gwalior Fort. Wishing to remove all other possible claimants to the throne, Aurangzeb saw to it that Murad was forced to drink opium continuously while in prison, also

¹⁹⁶ Aurangzeb, *Ruka'at-i-Alamgiri*, 122.

¹⁹⁷ Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, 2: 5-6.

commissioning a monthly portrait of his brother so he could witness the slow deterioration. Not wanting to appear cruel, Aurangzeb hoped this method would eliminate his brother without causing anyone to suspect that he had a direct hand in his brother's death. However, opium poisoning proved too slow for Aurangzeb's patience, so he conspired to have Murad charged with murder, convicted, and promptly executed.¹⁹⁸

Murad was not the only member of the royal family who Aurangzeb attempted to eliminate through opium poisoning, as the drug's use evolved during this period from a source of pleasure to a mechanism for punishment. Prior to Aurangzeb's reign, references to opium deaths are generally attributed to either addiction or suicide. While fighting Dara Shikoh, the future emperor ordered his brother's son Sipahr Shikoh imprisoned, though he conceded "as a favor that he [would] not be given opium-water to drink."¹⁹⁹ Suleiman Shikoh – another of Dara Shikoh's sons – and Aurangzeb's son Sultan Muhammad were not fortunate enough to receive this same consideration. Aurangzeb's extreme paranoia led him to whatever measures were necessary to eliminate anyone who could potentially threaten his position. As much as he was partial to slow opium-induced deaths, this method continually proved inefficient and wore on his patience. Suleiman Shikoh was poisoned with a large dose of opium a month into his imprisonment.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, 1: 298, 302-3, 382; François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, A.D. 1656-1668*, ed. Vincent A. Smith, trans. Archibald Constable (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), 67-68.

¹⁹⁹ Maunucci, *Storia do Mogor*, 1: 356.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 356, 380.

The emperor's son Sultan Mohammad remained imprisoned for several years, maddened by a combination of opium water and strict orders that no one speak a word to him. This same son had proven incredibly loyal to his father in fighting Dara Shikoh and personally seizing his grandfather, Shah Jahan, thereby allowing his father to take the throne. It was this loyalty and the skills shown by Sultan Muhammad that incited Aurangzeb's paranoia and led to his son's imprisonment. However, finding he might need his eldest son's military leadership, Aurangzeb sent a melon from which he had already taken a bite to Sultan Muhammad at Gwalior in order to see if his son still trusted him. Suspecting a trap, Sultan Muhammad threw the melon at the eunuch sent from his father. Upon hearing this, Aurangzeb remarked: "What a terrible madness must that be which, after the medicine of so many years in prison and of opium drinking, has not been cured!"²⁰¹ Cruelly blaming the madness he had himself induced, Aurangzeb ordered that a large dose of opium be given to his son, thus removing any potential threat he could one day pose.²⁰²

In addition to its use as a punishment device for political prisoners, regular opium use appears to have continued in its prominence. In his account of his time in India between 1672 and 1681, John Fryer echoes the sentiments of earlier travelers, discussing the rampant use of opium, which the Indians used "to divert their care and labours."²⁰³ He then goes on to discuss the different levels of opium use. Most people, he relates, consume a small amount everyday, however, if they built up a

²⁰¹ Ibid., 2: 195.

²⁰² Ibid., 1: 338, 2: 194-95.

²⁰³ John Fryer, *New Account of East India and Persia, Being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-1681* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995), 3: 99.

tolerance and took larger doses, they became physically addicted. Having reached this point, “they must continue [using] it, or else they die.”²⁰⁴ Exactly how widespread opium use was at this time will probably never be known, but Fryer’s account of addicts dying from want of their drug is most likely accurate. Technically speaking, ceasing opiate use once physically addicted can result in the addict’s death.²⁰⁵

Despite Aurangzeb’s efforts, it is nearly impossible to find a record of anyone who actually subscribed to his policies. When his son and eventual successor, Shah Alam (Bahadur Shah I) was sent to Kabul his tutor reported to Aurangzeb that the prince had taken up drinking, for which the emperor ordered his immediate return. This did not put a stop to his indulgences, as Manucci states that the prince often requested that he procure wines from Persia and Europe that would be delivered in secret. The emperor’s third son Azam Shah did not go to any great lengths to conceal his drinking from his father, for which he was arrested and deprived of wine for one year. Aurangzeb’s attempts to assert control over what was now a thoroughly ingrained part of Mughal culture proved futile and resulted not in stability, but in resentment.²⁰⁶

Just as Aurangzeb proved incapable of curbing the alcohol intake of his male family members, he was also unable to stop the women of the royal harem from acquiring and using intoxicants. He once found his favorite concubine, Udepuri Begam so intoxicated in her apartments that she mistook him for her servant and

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 3: 100.

²⁰⁵ Francis Moraes and Debra Moraes, *Opium* (Oakland, CA: Ronin Publishing, 2003), 137-38.

²⁰⁶ Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, 2: 226, 392.

asked him to bring her more liquor. Disappointed and angry as he apparently was, he did not allow his religious convictions to overpower his feelings for her, instead placing the brunt of his wrath on the guards posted outside her door. In many ways it seems as if Aurangzeb recognized that most people were unwilling to give up intoxicants, but this did not lead him to condone it or even to cease punishing those who were careless enough to be caught.²⁰⁷

Originally, women had continued to use intoxicants based on the argument that the prohibition only specifically applied to men. When word came that the *mullahs* – men educated in Islamic law – were planning on extending the prohibition to include women as well, the emperor's sister Jahanara invited all of their wives to her palace for a drinking party. Aurangzeb arrived to inform his sister of the new laws, making the excuse that the decision was not up to him and Jahanara proceeded to invite him inside. There he found all of the mullahs' wives lying around drunk and Jahanara told him that the mullahs should concern themselves with getting their own houses in order before trying to impose laws on others. According to Manucci, this incident was successful in appeasing "the storm that had been raised against women."²⁰⁸

For appearance's sake, Aurangzeb posted guards at the entrance to the harem who were instructed to search all visitors for drugs, alcohol, or cucumbers. The reason for the latter's inclusion in items prohibited from entering the harem is not disclosed by Manucci, but rather left to the reader's imagination. Much to the emperor's chagrin, the women proved incredibly resourceful in getting whatever

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 2: 107-8.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 2: 149-50.

they wanted, though the punishment they faced if caught was extremely severe. The emperor's sister, Roshanara – who was also very fond of wine – reportedly kept nine young men secretly living in her apartments. When this was revealed to Aurangzeb by his daughter Fakhrunnissa – who was apparently upset that her aunt would not share the youths with her – he had all of the men killed and his sister poisoned with a large dose of opium. Where alcohol had once been used publicly to create a sense of camaraderie, it had by this period evolved into a source of illicit private entertainment. The role of opium, on the other hand, had evolved from a source of relaxation and pleasure to an instrument in carrying out punishments of death.²⁰⁹ Following Aurangzeb's reign the Mughal Empire slowly deteriorated, losing most of its power and prestige very quickly, though not completely disappearing until the mid-nineteenth century.

Two main obstacles stood in the way of Aurangzeb's attempts to quash the use of intoxicants, the first being that his empire was obviously not solely made up of Muslims. Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and others resented the enactment of religious laws that were not relevant to their belief structures. This created a great deal of resentment that fundamentally weakened the authority of the Mughals. The second obstacle has to do with the ideas on which the empire was originally founded. Babur strongly believed that the observation of religious laws was a matter of individual choice. He was a Muslim, but thought that people needed to seek out and accept religious truth for themselves, not be forced or coerced to do so. Even when he took an oath of temperance, he did not prohibit the use of alcohol by

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 2: 74, 189-90, 351.

others. The role of intoxicants in early Mughal society also bore a greater resemblance to Central Asian traditions than to Islamic ones. This led to the incorporation of intoxicants as an integral part of Mughal society and culture. Though the roles and uses of intoxicants had changed since Babur's time, the importance of them had not.

Aurangzeb's goals were completely unrealistic given the context that he was working within relative to everything that had come before. In attempting to reshape the empire into a religiously Islamic state governed by Sharia law, he undermined the respect and authority his position had once held. His son, Bahadur Shah I overturned many of his father's unpopular policies and attempted to return the Mughal state to what it had once been, though the empire's decline had already begun. His death only five years after coming to power prohibited any potential for the realization of this dream. Factionalism, internal unrest, and a succession of puppet rulers led to the disintegration of Mughal authority and eventually the end of the empire itself.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 173-74; Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 253-58.

CONCLUSION

The point of this study is not merely to show that intoxicant use was prevalent in Mughal society, but rather that the ways in which opium and alcohol were used and written about changed over time. In many ways the evolution of opium mirrored the progression of an opium addict. What began as sporadic use for pleasure and relaxation became habitual, then excessive, and finally destructive. The lack of stigma associated with the consumption of opiates meant that no serious attempts were made to curb or prohibit its usage. The unacceptability of alcohol consumption relative to Islam made its position in Mughal society much more tenuous. Though religious observance did not eliminate alcohol use, it did cause a shift to occur wherein drinking became an increasingly private act. This in turn led to an increased occurrence of abuse and addiction, causing a reactionary movement to curb intake through prohibition.

Babur used opium and alcohol as pleasurable intoxicants in order to encourage camaraderie amongst his men and distract himself from the rigors of military campaigning. This represented a continuation of the Central Asian traditions of his Timurid and Mongol ancestors. His very public decision to give up alcohol led to both an increase in his consumption of opiates and to a decrease in public drinking at the early Mughal court. Because he believed that religious observation should be genuine and not

forced, he did not prohibit others from imbibing, though his vow of temperance still proved highly influential in limiting social drinking.

Perhaps relative to his father's influence, Humayun does not appear to have drunk with any regularity and alcohol was not a prominent feature at his court. Instability and a natural demeanor perhaps not suited for empire building led Humayun to seek respite through eating opium. Where Babur's opium use was an expression of his confidence, Humayun's was an expression of his insecurities. While he is often portrayed as an opium addict in secondary literature, the sources do not indicate that his consumption was necessarily unique or excessive in the larger context of Mughal society. Though substance abuse has become a convenient explanation for the ineffectiveness of Humayun's reign, other factors such as his personality and external circumstances appear to have been much more influential.

During Akbar's reign opium's role in society underwent a significant shift as its use became more routine and less recreational, with small daily doses sedating users rather than intoxicating them. In addition, the institution of a new tax system allowed the Mughals to reap the economic rewards of poppy production. As Mughal society became more sedentary, public intoxication became less acceptable and alcohol use moved farther into the private sphere. With the empire's stability and the establishment of a distinct Mughal culture that accepted opium use and exhibited increasingly private drinking habits came overindulgence. Jahangir, Murad, Daniyal, Parvez, and Inayat Khan are representative of this shift, where recreation clearly evolved into reliance. While questions about alcohol's place and acceptability within Mughal society had existed since Babur's time, up to this point the negatives of opium were rarely written

about. During Jahangir's reign the darker sides of opium use – addiction and suicide – emerge and become prominent themes, much as problems with alcohol had during Akbar's time.

Unlike his predecessors, Shah Jahan eschewed intoxicants most likely as a result of witnessing the addictions suffered by his uncles, father, and brother. He did not attempt to curb opium or alcohol intake within Mughal society and their use appears to have continued much as it had during his father's reign. Aurangzeb's strict Islamic policies included reforms prohibiting intoxicants, and his paranoia led to the use of opium as a mechanism for eliminating potential rivals. The problem was that Aurangzeb was not trying to return to something that had once existed within the empire, but instead was moving away from everything that had come up to that point. Even though the roles and uses of intoxicants had changed since the empire was founded, their importance had not. As a result, Aurangzeb's policies had little practical effect, instead leading to feelings of resentment and permanently weakening the emperor's authority.

The importance of intoxicants in human societies is often overlooked and rarely represented in historical studies. For the Mughals, opium and alcohol represented a fundamental part of their culture, both shaping their experiences and reflecting their society. Though the two evolved along different trajectories, each had a hand in shaping the empire as a whole. In addition, these evolutions mirrored and remained relative to the larger development and eventual decline of the Mughal world. At the beginning, intoxicants were used to pursue pleasure; in the end, they were used to attain – or render unto – oblivion.

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APPENDIX A

“A Drunken Babur Returns to Camp at Night”¹



¹ Farrukh Beg, 1589. Available through the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery online at www.asia.si.edu.

APPENDIX B

“The Death of Inayat Khan”¹



¹ Ellen Smart, “The Death of Inayat Khan by the Mughal Artist Balchand,” *Artibus Asiae* 58 (1999): 277.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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