



Mughal Empire, Reign of Akbar the Great (AKBAR)

MUNUC 34



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIR LETTER.....3

CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER.....5

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & MECHANICS.....7

SENSITIVITY NOTE.....8

TOPIC: REIGN OF AKBAR THE GREAT.....9

History and Context.....9

Akbar's Reign So Far.....16

Current Situation.....27

Character Biographies.....28

Bibliography.....36

CHAIR LETTER

Howdy folks!

My name is Omar, and I am excited to be your chair for the Mughal Empire committee at MUNUC 2022! I am currently over-involved in Model United Nations as a fourth-year here at the University of Chicago, and I study three fake sciences (Political Science, Economics, and Data Science).

MUNUC strives to pass on skills in debate, historical literacy, and collaboration that will help you all become global citizens and make (beneficial) world changes, whether through or despite the United Nations. This could not happen if Henry Martyn Robert had not, in 1876, become ultimately fed up with inefficient meetings that could have been communicated over carrier pigeon. At MUNUC, we pride our use of Robert's Rules of Order above all else, but be sure to have fun within those rules! Trials levied against your most suspicious compatriots are absolutely encouraged.

I am from the West Coast and so you will never see me rise to any emotion similar to stress or worry, although that should not stop you from trying! I am Chief of Staff for ChoMUN, the conference UChicago hosts for college students, and I personally challenge you to be more stressful or time consuming than our (lovely) student staffers. We love MUN because of the stories we highlight within history, and so I want to personally encourage you to do your own reading and find an aspect of the committee that engages you. This attitude will help you dive into character and write notes that are fun-- and be sure to ask us for feedback along the way! At MUNUC, we want to help you learn and enjoy the committee.

In addition to "MUN stuff", I also lead Mudakhala (UChicago's Arabic Debate Team), and recreationally stab my friends at the Fencing Club. For fun, I like to fly on sketchy airlines, automate my life with Python scripts, and occasionally, study a ridiculous amount of Mughal history. Most of all, I love talking to people.

If you have a question, comment or even just want to say hi, feel free to hit me up at ob@uchicago.edu.

Rock on,

Omar Battisha

CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

Hi everyone!

My name is Devang Laddha and I am excited to welcome you all to MUNUC 2022 this February. I will be your Crisis Director for this committee, and in that role will be monitoring everything happening backroom (responding to notes, making crisis updates and so forth). I am currently a junior, majoring in Economics and Political Science (with a focus on international relations). I am from India and am very interested in South Asian politics (feel free to talk about that with me at any point). My interest in South Asian history in particular makes this committee very special to me, and I am very excited to see what you all do over the course of the weekend.

I started doing Model UN back in high school, and have continued to participate in it through college. Last year, I was an EAC (Experienced Assistant Chair) on the Cabinet of Colombia committee for MUNUC. Aside from that, I am an Under-Secretary General for UChicago's collegiate conference ChoMUN and also am a part of the traveling competitive team. Outside of Model UN, I love watching football (read soccer), discussing politics and philosophy, and complaining about Chicago winters.

I have learnt and read about the Mughal empire throughout my life as I am from India, where the remnants of the Mughal Empire continue to remain hallmarks of our culture. This makes me very excited to be simulating this committee, where you all will have the opportunity to sculpt the most interesting years of the Mughal dynasty under the reign of Emperor Akbar. I am looking forward to seeing the amazing ideas you come up with.

It is my hope to make this committee as exciting, engaging and inclusive as possible, and to make sure that each of you learns as well as has fun during our conference. Setting up an empire and maintaining power can be very difficult and I look forward to seeing you take on this challenge.

Both Omar and I are very excited to be running this committee and cannot wait to see you all very soon!

Warm Regards,

Devang Laddha

devang@uchicago.edu

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & MECHANICS

The Mughal Empire was an early modern empire founded in the 16th century in South Asia. At its height the empire controlled almost all of the Indian subcontinent and had created a vast and complex governing system which included a large bureaucracy, flourishing manufacturing and trading centers and a skilled workforce. This committee will be focusing on the rule of Akbar, who was responsible for building the empire, and setting up long-standing institutions of governance. Moreover, Akbar was known for his tolerant views and belief that the Mughals were Hindustani (or Indian themselves) rather than foreign occupiers. He strived to create an empire that had a booming economy, an efficient bureaucracy and a flourishing arts scene. This committee shall begin in the early 1570s, at this point Akbar has taken full control of the Mughal empire and all expansion efforts have been completed. Delegates will work to set up the empire's governance system and tackle any potential crises as they emerge. The delegates will represent various ministers within the imperial court as well as officials across the Empire, each having their own powers that they can exercise in the development of the Mughal empire. They must use these powers to try to shape committee and help the Empire prosper.

SENSITIVITY NOTE

MUNUC is all about thinking outside the box and having fun, but there are some ground rules that we all need to abide by. Although the historical events of this committee may have occurred in the 16th century, the way in which we act it out in committee has a salient impact on our fellow humans today. As such, no forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, or religious bigotry will be tolerated. In other words, everything that would be inappropriate for you to say outside of the committee remains inappropriate to say when you are acting as your character in committee. Moreover, MUNUC believes that the short time frame and competitive nature of a Model UN committee does not lend itself to a nuanced practice of violence. As such, please refrain from arcs that rely heavily on violence, and seek peaceable alternative measures to fulfill your committee goals. Any repeated violation of these rules after warning will be escalated to the Crisis USG, and will result in consequences for the delegate, and the potential for expulsion from committee. If you have any questions about whether a direction you hope to take is appropriate for the committee, feel free to reach out to either Omar or Devang via email, in person, or by writing us a side note in your notepad—we'd be more than happy to let you know.

TOPIC: REIGN OF AKBAR THE GREAT

History and Context

Geography

Though at the start of Akbar's reign, his dominion extended only over Punjab and parts of Delhi, we plan to start the committee well into Akbar's expansionary efforts. In 1574 (which is when we plan to start committee), Akbar's Mughal Empire controlled most of the Northern and Central regions of the Indian subcontinent, including Punjab, Delhi, Malwa, Rajputana, Gujarat, and Bihar, and was in the initial stages of expanding into Bengal. Within these regions were many major cities. Chief amongst these were Kabul and Lahore in the northwest, Surat to the southwest, Dhakka, Calcutta, Ayodyha, and Benares to the east, and Delhi and Agra (Fatehpur Sikri) in the center. This expansive region included a wide variety of geographic and natural features, which provided a plethora of resources and tactical advantages of the Mughal empire.^{1 2}

The northern border of the Mughal empire was marked by the Himalayan and Hindu Kush mountain ranges, which protected and isolated the Mughals from their northeastern neighbors. Steep passes—such as the infamous Khyber pass in the western portion of the range—served as the only openings for either invaders or migrants to come into the subcontinent. Just south of the Himalayas lie the Northern plains, which compose a large portion of the Mughal territory. These plains are watered by the rivers of the Indus Valley—most prominently the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra rivers—which keep the land fertile, and allow for a strong agricultural economy to thrive. These two regions consist of the historical range of the Mughal Empire at the start of Akbar's reign. As Akbar's reign progresses, he starts to make inroads into central India, a region which geographically consists of the Deccan plateau—an area with great agricultural promise. While currently not as fertile as the Indus valley, with the right agricultural techniques and care, the Deccan plateau definitely has the potential to be a hub of agriculture. The western border of the Mughal empire is the Arabian sea,

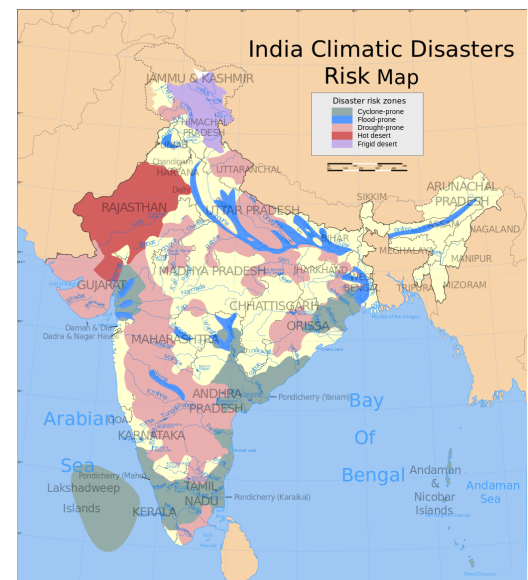
¹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mughal dynasty." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 28, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mughal-dynasty>.

² Ibid.

which enables the empire's significant naval trade through its port city, Surat. With the conquest of Bengal, Akbar also expanded the western border of the empire to the Bay of Bengal, opening opportunities for maritime trade in the other direction. Finally, the southern border of the empire is constantly shifting throughout Akbar's reign as new conquests in the central subcontinent are added to the empire.³

This diverse combination of regional features allows for certain resources to thrive in the empire. In terms of agricultural resources, the empire's fields provided spices, tobacco, cotton, oilseeds, rubber, coffee, coconut, tea, rice, wheat and maize, in addition to a diverse set of fruits and vegetables.⁴ Cotton, spices and tea in particular were highly desired by the Mughal's trading partners. In terms of raw materials, mines in central and eastern parts of the subcontinent extract a healthy amount of minerals, while large iron deposits can be found in the newly conquered southern parts of the empire.

In terms of natural disasters in the region, the most common by far is flooding, which occurs largely due to monsoons and cyclones. The two yearly monsoons—the winter monsoon blowing from the



³ Image: Avantiputra7. "Mughal Empire under Akbar, 1605." 6 May 2020, n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal_Empire,_1605.png.

⁴ BYJU'S. "Major Crops India for UPSC IAS Prelims Examination," n.d. <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/major-crops-in-india/>.

northeast, and the summer monsoon blowing from the southwest—often cause the rivers in the Indus basin to swell, and flood the fertile plains which they irrigate.⁵

History of the Indian Subcontinent

The Indian subcontinent is located in Southern Asia, and has been populated since ancient times, with the first large civilization to exist in the area being the Indus Valley (or Harappan) Civilization. Over the years, the region has seen a lot of political change, with many different Empires rising and falling. After the fall of the Gupta Empire which lasted upto about the 7th century AD, the subcontinent saw its first major foreign invasion, when Central Asian military commanders invaded from the north west, raiding large parts of the subcontinent.⁶

Over the next few centuries the invading leaders worked to settle in the subcontinent and carve out their own spheres of influence. Eventually, their superior cavalry and sword tactics allowed them to take over the north-west part of the region, founding the Delhi Sultanate in 1206.⁷ The sultanate was always under constant threat and, despite some successful consolidation efforts, weakened over time. Over time the Delhi Sultanate fragmented, losing much of its territory in the south to regional leaders who established their own states in the south. In a state of constant political upheaval and war, territories often exchanged hands through the years. In 1526, a warrior by the name of Babur invaded the subcontinent and established the foundation of what was to become the Mughal Empire.⁸

History of Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire was founded in 1526 by Babur, a warrior and provincial ruler from modern Uzbekistan who was a descendant of Gengis Khan.⁹ He wanted to attack India based on earlier exploits made by invaders such as Timur who had invaded the region in the late 14th century and

⁵ Image: Saravask. "India Climatic Disaster Risk Map English Version." March 2007. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_climatic_disaster_risk_map_en.svg.

⁶ Allchin et al. "India." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, December 1, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/India>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lal, Vinay. "The Mughal Empire." UCLA Social Sciences, 2001. <https://southasia.ucla.edu/history-politics/mughals-and-medieval/>.

plundered significant wealth. In the early 1500s he captured territory in what is today Afghanistan and realized that his only chance at making an empire was in the subcontinent, as other surrounding regions already had strong leaders. Seeing an opportunity, he invaded Punjab from 1519-1524. He was successful in his venture, and had seized control of Punjab by 1525. Using this territory as his base, he set his sights on Delhi, at the time ruled by Pashtun sultan Ibrahim Lodi.^{10 11}

Babur built a coalition of nobles unhappy with Lodi, and marched towards Delhi. The two armies met at Panipat, where Babur's military strategies helped him deal a crushing blow to the Lodi rule. By 1526, he controlled Delhi and the surrounding area, including Agra. While Babur had control of Delhi, he still faced enemies in almost all directions and was not secure. To expand his territory and cement his rule, Babur turned his eye towards Mewar, a region ruled by the Rajput King, Rana Sanga. He assigned other generals to conquer surrounding territories in the east and set out to battle the Rajputs. He defeated the Rana near Fatehpur Sikri and proceeded to conquer the territory of Chanderi. After he turned his eye eastward, towards Bengal, but was diverted by several Afghan uprisings. By the time Babur was able to focus on Bengal, his health was deteriorating, and ultimately he died in 1530.¹²



Babur was succeeded by his son Humayun, who inherited an unstable kingdom. While Babur had made several military exploits, he had failed to create a systemic and stable form of governance that could ensure peace and stability

¹⁰ Allchin et al. "India."

¹¹ Image: Cacahuete. "Map of Asia's Regions and Countries for Use on Wikivoyage." May 5, 2007. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Asia.png.

¹² Ibid.

in his kingdom. Without this foundation, Humayun's reign was constantly challenged and he was never able to create a stable center of power.¹³

Humayun's primary adversary was Sher Khan (also known as Sher Shah Suri), who was the leader of the Afghans in the east, and consolidated power east of Delhi. Humayun was unable to crush the Afghan rebellion, eventually turning to the ruler of Bengal for help, but even the combined forces were defeated. His long stay outside of Delhi while fighting against Sher Khan made his hold on Delhi and Agra tenuous. When he finally tried to return and cement his power he failed, and was forced to flee west into Sindh. Eventually, he travelled to Persia (modern day Iran) to get the support of the Shah to help him take back Delhi. While he got support, he was unable to defeat Sher Khan's forces. A critical reason for Humayun's failure was the structure of the Mughal army. Soldiers were not directly responsible to the ruler, but rather to their own clan chiefs. This made controlling the armies harder for the Mughal ruler, as the chiefs were always looking for an opportunity to take power for themselves. As a result any weakness in the Mughal empire led to a cascading effect where they continuously lost support and territory.¹⁴

Despite these setbacks, Humayun bided his time, and, following the death of Sher Khan's successor, he took back Lahore and marched on Delhi and Agra. In 1555, Humayun's forces successfully took back Delhi and Agra. Humayun died soon after, in early 1556, and was succeeded by his son Akbar.



Technology

The Mughals, like many of the Islamic empires that preceded them, had a phenomenal scientific and technological understanding relative to their time. By the time Akbar's rule had come about, there

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Image: Santosh.mbahrm. "Mughal Empire Map." September 26, 2015.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal-empire-map.jpg>.

was already a strong network of roads connecting the empire along primary trade routes to key destinations in central and western Asia. Intra-empire travel was also highly served by well-maintained roads, and the empire's seat of rule in Northern India was connected to Burhanpur, Cambay, Surat, Ahmedabad, and even Bengal. Means of transport in the Mughal empire primarily consisted of pack animals -- typically horses or mules -- with more affluent classes having access to carts.¹⁵ The Mughals also benefited from a strong foundation in astronomy and alchemy. Mughal astronomers had access to instruments and computational techniques that allowed them to track and observe the skies with relative accuracy, while Mughal alchemists were able to develop modern comforts such as shampoo.¹⁶ ¹⁷ The Mughals also had access to fairly advanced weaponry, including swords made of Damascus steel, Iron long-range cannons, and volley guns, giving them a technological edge against many of their opponents.

The Mughal empire covered a vast territory and therefore relied on a robust communication system that supported its intricate tax and intelligence policies. The Mughal emperor released news reports that carried orders and instructions for administrators across the land.¹⁸ News was spread at two levels: the *waqai*, news reports sent by various provinces to the imperial court, and *akhbarat*, the news sent out of the court to peripheral nobility to keep them aware of the goings-on at court. The *akhbarat* were private reports tailored to each noble's specific interests and were written by the noble's representatives and agents at court, an intelligence network known as *wakil*.¹⁹ A third form of communication included the official report of court proceedings, including the emperor's major decisions, in a type of historical record. The intelligence carried in these communications was fundamental to the workings of the empire, and so the administration dedicated to the collecting and dispersal of information was complex. Akbar created the post of an official news writer in the *waqainawis*, a compound of *waqai* (a Persian word meaning "event") and *nawis* (meaning "one who

¹⁵ Anjum, Nazer Aziz. "ECONOMY OF TRANSPORT IN MUGHAL INDIA." Aligarh Muslim University, 2010. https://ia800805.us.archive.org/32/items/LandRevenueAdministrationUnderTheMughals_201711/Economy%20of%20transport%20in%20mughal%20India.pdf.

¹⁶ Sharma, Virendra Nath. *Sawai Jai Singh and Astronomy*. 2nd revised edition. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2016.

¹⁷ Baber, Zaheer. *The Science of Empire: Scientific Knowledge, Civilization, and Colonial Rule in India*. SUNY Series in Science, Technology, and Society. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

¹⁸ Sah, Ram Shankar. "Mughal State and the Information System: 1556–1707." *Indian Historical Review* 46, no. 2 (December 2019): 292–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0376983619889517>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

writes").²⁰ By the time of committee, Akbar had divided the Mughal Empire into 12 provinces, known as *subas*, and appointed one *waqainawis* alongside various other officials to record local proceedings and news-worthy events.²¹ Information on the transfer of money, books read, presentations by scholars, military movements, etiquette practices, and obituaries were collected and shared. Most of this information was collected by a network of spies and passed by word-of-mouth, and the empire required eyewitnesses for reports of unusual or overly significant events. However, this reliance on individuals and privately-operated networks opened the system up to corruption, as the Mughal culture of gift-giving often edged into bribery.²² Overall, messages were carried by individual couriers or pigeons, although pigeons could only travel short distances.²³ Nobles a short distance from the central court used color-coded pigeon systems to pass messages between their homes and their networks at court. The majority of the intelligence system therefore relied on the courier, known as a *harkara* and *Mewras*. These runners carried written or oral reports, were stationed at "every place," and enjoyed the highest level of trust in their account of events.²⁴ *Harkara* were divided into three classes: the first class was highly educated in history and script and was fluent in five languages, the second was slightly less educated but had the same language requirement, and the third knew three or four languages and one script. Akbar therefore had a range of runners to efficiently and rapidly pass along salient information depending on need, with various layers of runners in reserve for emergency situations, across the Mughal Empire.²⁵

²⁰ Jahangir, Nurud-d-din, Alexander Roger, and Henry Beveridge. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri: Or, Memoirs of Jahangir*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. 247, 2016. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53716/53716-h/53716-h.htm>.

²¹ ALLÁMI, ABUL FAZI. *THE AÍN I AKBARI*. Translated by H. S. JARRETT. Vol. 2. CALCUTTA: ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL., 1891.

²² Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*

²³ Pelsaert, Francisco. *JAHANGIR'S INDIA*. Translated by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl. CAMBRIDGE: W. HEFFER & SONS LTD., 1925.

²⁴ Khān, Khāfī, and Muḥammad Hāshim. *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*. Translated by H. M. Elliot and John Dowson. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006.

²⁵ Sah, "Mughal State and the Information System: 1556–1707."

Akbar's Reign So Far

Expansion of the Empire

Akbar took power of a very fragile Mughal state. His primary threat was in the east, where Hemu (a Hindu general under Adil Shah of the Sur dynasty) was taking Mughal territory and weakening Akbar's power and access to resources. Furthermore, Akbar's own control over the Mughal dynasty was weak, considering he was only 13 years old. He faced significant internal dissent and primarily relied on his teacher Baryam Khan to act as Regent and lead the Mughal Empire.²⁶

Under Baryam Khan, Akbar's forces headed out to war against Hemu, with the forces meeting in Panipat. The Mughals won the war in November 1556, and eventually cemented their positions in Delhi and Agra, as well in the surrounding territories.²⁷ The defeat of Hemu, along with other successful campaigns against Sikander Suri (descendant of Sher Shah Suri) in the west led to Akbar having a consolidated power base in the north which extended into Punjab. The string of successful military campaigns continued as Akbar took power in Lahore, and then took over Ajmer in 1558. There were successful campaigns to the south as well where the Mughal forces took over Gwalior, securing territory north of the Narmada river, as well into the north and east, where what is now Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand were part of the Mughal Empire.²⁸

Through all this time, the decisions of the Mughal empire were being made by Baryam Khan. However, beginning when Akbar launched a military campaign into Rajput territory of Malwa in

²⁶ Biography.com Editors. "Akbar the Great Biography." Biography.com, April 2, 2014.
<https://www.biography.com/political-figure/akbar-the-great>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

1559, tensions were rising between Baryam Khan and Akbar. Eventually, in 1560, Akbar dismissed Baryam Khan and took full control of the Mughal Empire.

Soon after, in 1561 Akbar set out on further military campaigns, taking over Malwa and Chunar in the West.²⁹ He also strengthened his rule by removing internal dissidents, in particular by punishing Adam Khan, a high level general in the Mughal Army and Akbar's foster brother who tried to subvert Akbar's authority and increase his own influence in the Empire.³⁰

By 1562, Akbar had completely removed the old guard, taking away the power of the old courtiers and his wet nurse who had held great influence within the royal palace. He then took the critical decision of marrying Rajput princess Jodha, who was the daughter of Raja Bharmal of Amber. Through his marital alliance, Akbar won over the support of the Rajputs (who had historically ruled modern day Rajasthan, the territory west of Delhi), allowing him to expand his empire towards the west and capture territory near the Indus and Beas rivers. He took over modern Rajasthan by 1568, also taking the territory of Mewar in that year.³¹ With



²⁹ Image: UN. "UN Map of South Asia." n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_Asia_UN.png.

³⁰ SMITH, VINCENT A. *AKBAR THE GREAT MOGUL 1542-1605*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924024056503/mode/2up?view=theater>.

³¹ Ibid.

Rajasthan in his control, and most of northern India secured, Akbar moved to the southeast, taking over Gujarat which housed several important trade locations. By 1573, Gujarat was part of the Mughal Empire.

The next conquest was towards the East, where Akbar had his sights on taking over Bengal. Bengal was a critical trade route, having access to European and larger Asian markets. It also housed some remaining Afghan groups which continued to pose a threat to Akbar's reign. By 1574, Akbar took over Bihar and was poised to enter Bengal.

Economy

Having come into power, Akbar (initially under the regency of Bairam Khan) worked to develop a strong and prosperous economy. Core to this transformation was the reform in currency, where Akbar introduced a functioning trimetallic (copper, silver and gold) system which allowed for trade to flourish and the economy to run. Most if not all transactions however were held in copper, as that was the most available currency.³² The overarching aim of the coinage system was to create a uniform system where only the Empire's coins ran throughout its territory. To ensure this, there was also an open mining system, where people could give old or foreign coins to the mint, and after paying a minting fee, get them changed to the standardized coins.

The most important sector of the Mughal economy was agriculture, which contributed about 52 percent of the economy. Akbar pursued major agrarian reforms to help develop the agricultural industry and make it more efficient.³³ To accomplish this, he expanded on policies that had been initiated by Sher Shah Suri. One of the key initiatives undertaken was the development of irrigation systems across the Mughal Empire which helped grow yields and generate greater agricultural output. During the era, a number of crops were grown including rice, wheat, barley, cotton and indigo.

³² Mintage World. "Economy during Mughal Era," September 19, 2017.
<https://www.mintageworld.com/media/detail/4701-economy-during-mughal-era/>.

³³ Allchin et al. "India."

Under Akbar's reign, there was major restructuring of the land revenue system, which was the major revenue collection system for the government. Previously, there had existed a tribute system, under which the amount of money each region sent to the Emperor depended on factors such as the size of their region, productivity of the land and loyalties. Akbar abolished this system and replaced it with a more comprehensive one. He established a monetary tax whereby regions had to provide money to the Emperor on the basis of a uniform currency. This streamlined the process greatly, and made tax collection much more efficient and systematic. The system was also geared towards growing higher value cash crops such as indigo as they were more valuable and there was a lot of demand for them from the higher classes. The system of measuring land area was also changed from hemp rope to using bamboo joined by iron rings, which was a more definitive method and removed inefficiencies. Furthermore, the revenue from the land was fixed according to the cultivation and quality of soil, and was made payable in coins. This new system was implemented to encourage economic expansion, and allow more monetary services such as moneylenders and grain dealers to become a part of the economy and boost economic growth. The consistent taxes along with these new monetary services, allowed farmers to predict how much tax would be levied and thereby work towards creating profits, incentivizing them to work harder and grow more crops.

In terms of the personnel used for tax collection, Akbar stuck to previous models of land revenue administration. He did however introduce more meritocracy in the bureaucracy, which allowed for more skilled bureaucrats to enter the system, leading to it becoming more productive and supporting growth instead of hindering it. At the top of the system was the vizier, who was the head of all economic matters. Under him were three other ministers, who had separate economic jurisdictions (based on different economic sectors) and had under them a host of administrators who ran the revenue administration.³⁴ At each level, the administrative functions were primarily performed by Hindu clerks who were technically proficient in these bureaucratic activities. They were largely from the Kayasthas and Khatri castes. The inclusion of Hindus in the entire revenue system, which itself was run by Todar Mal, a Hindu who served as Finance Minister, highlighted Akbar's strong belief in religious diversity. On a more local level, the administration worked with local leaders to help with tax collection. The leaders of communities, called zamindars, held superior

³⁴ Ibid.

land rights and were responsible for collecting taxes from the peasants and then paying it to the treasury, with them keeping some of the collection for themselves as fees for their service.

Aside from agriculture, manufacturing was also a critical part of the economy. The major manufacturing industry at the time was textiles, particularly cotton. The textile industry was key to the international trade that the Mughal empire engaged in, and constituted 25% of the global textile trade.³⁵ This trade helped bring in a lot of foreign goods (mainly from Persia) into the Empire. Major ports included those in Bengal and Gujarat, which were primary points of trade throughout the duration of the Mughal Empire. Starting in the late 1560s, with a growing economy there was also a push for urbanization, a result of the growth of the manufacturing industry. The total population in the Mughal Empire also grew very quickly, with the prosperous economy and political stabilization extending life expectancy, reducing infant mortality and increasing fertility rates.

Military

As outlined earlier, the Mughal army was very well organized and was critical to the Empire's expansion and stability. Under the regency of Bairam Khan, the Mughals seized control of large swaths of land, and then in 1559, when Bairam Khan was dismissed and Akbar took full control, the expansion continued. The military was at the heart of the Mughal empire, and through its might they crushed any opponents, putting down any internal dissent as well as conquering neighboring territories.

The structure of the military was very interesting. The Emperor had a very small standing army that only numbered in the thousands and was stationed around the royal palace and the capital. The soldiers for this army were recruited directly by the Emperor and his close advisors, being chosen from the Emperor's blood relatives and tribe, thereby ensuring loyalty to the Emperor and protecting against any internal rebellion at the heart of the Empire. These soldiers were also paid better than

³⁵ Ibid.

the average military soldiers and had their own horses and armor. Thus, they were given special provisions (more money, better weapons, etc.) to ensure the protection of the Emperor.³⁶

A unique element of the military was the mansabdari system, which provided the structure of the entire military. Nobles and sometimes other civilians were given charge of regiments to conduct both military and bureaucratic operations, such as revenue collection. To do this, Akbar developed what came to be known as the zat and sawar system. Under this, an officer (which consisted of both nobles, civilians and other military leaders) was given the responsibility of recruiting and maintaining a certain number of horsemen. The rank of the office would be determined by the number of horsemen that they provided, his rank was decided. The ranges for this could be quite extensive, with officers having as few as 10 horsemen and up to 5000 horsemen. Larger titles such as princes had even larger numbers under their control, having about 25000 horsemen under their charge. Each officer also had to maintain a ratio of 2:1 between the number of horses they had and the number of riders they had. Critically, the Emperor could change the number of horsemen available to any title, increasing or lowering the number.³⁷ All the officers reported to the Emperor and importantly, did not have any ownership of land, but instead were tasked with revenue collection. There were both civil and military wings which followed the mansabdar system, with there not being large distinctions between the two. Mansabdars could also be transferred from one division to another.

In terms of the military, there were four divisions: cavalry, infantry, artillery and navy. The branches were divided individually amongst the Mansabdar (that is they were not different wings that had their own military commanders but rather each Mansabdar were responsible for each of these divisions, having soldiers that were trained in the different wings). The only exception to this rule was the artillery branch, which had its own specialized forces which worked by themselves and had their own military commander.

Amongst the four groupings, the cavalry was the most important branch of the Mughal army. The horsemen were critical in battle, and were recruited usually from higher classes and were paid better than foot soldiers (infantry) and artillery men. Cavalry soldiers used swords, lances and very rarely

³⁶ History World. "HISTORY OF THE MOGHUL EMPIRE," n.d.
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/plaintexthistories.asp?historyid=ab99>.

³⁷ Allchin et al. "India."

guns, with their armor being made of leather or steel.³⁸ They usually had the best equipment amongst all the branches, and utilized war elephants which were usually employed by the generals. The use of warhorses was definitively what gave the Mughal Empire an advantage in battle, and helped them gain territory across the subcontinent.

The infantry was the second branch, and was usually pretty badly equipped and paid poorly. As a result, a lot of the infantrymen were ill-disciplined and would desert the army at any point. Some of them had guns, while others used swords. They usually had no armor and therefore were very likely to die in case of a battle.

The third wing was the artillery, which was much more dominant in the earlier Mughal years, than when Akbar ruled. The primary weaponry used were cannons which were dragged by elephants and used to blast the enemy. Slowly however, lighter artillery such as swivel guns (which were mounted on camels) became much more useful as they were more portable and could be fired with greater accuracy, dealing great damage to the enemy.

The fourth wing was the navy, which was by the far the weakest and poorest wing of the military. While the Empire did have warships, they were very small and were most often not used in war. Instead, their main job was to control piracy and secure trade routes for the Empire.

Society

Mughal India's social dynamics have been described as a complex interaction of two complementary spheres of settled peasantry with itinerant peasant warriors.³⁹ Each life was heavily influenced and directed by ambitious rulers with the goal of building settlements after gathering warbands. By balancing this inherent tension, Mughal leaders achieved impressive military success and territorial expansion alongside long-lasting cultivation.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Heesterman, J. C. "The Social Dynamics of the Mughal Empire: A Brief Introduction." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47, no. 3 (2004): 292–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165051>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

By the time of Akbar's rule, the middle stratum, those neither feudal lords nor serfs, played a significant role as the Mughal Empire continued to develop.⁴¹ Their prosperity, often found within middle government officials, was distinct from both the higher officials and peasants and did not stem wholly from salary. Side businesses such as cultivation, usury, horticulture, and renting properties ensured a system of bribery that maintained a wealthy middle class. Although the development of this middle class marked an expansion of society and built opportunities for social mobility, the middle class was often of concern to higher officials due to tax fraud.⁴² The rapid accumulation of wealth in new hands, combined with the ever-present potential for shifts in courtly influence among the middle and upper classes, meant that much of Akbar's administration was focused on amassing intelligence and properly collecting taxes. The middle class vied for a place with the upper class through shows of wealth and power, and multiple accounts of acts of fraud to achieve such a position still exist.⁴³

As mentioned in the previous section, much of Akbar's emphasis on meritocracy changed the social strata in the Mughal empire: nobles relied heavily on intelligence networks to influence their court status and gain favor, making the system of spies and couriers heavily influential. Within those complex networks many people within a middle societal strata had chances to access education and become more trusted and well-paid couriers or informants.

Akbar additionally changed the societal influence of matrimonial alliances; while before they had led to little to no actual alliance between families, Akbar established a policy that those who married into his court were recognized as full members of the court.⁴⁴ This policy of marriage for political advancement meant that Hindu and Muslim cross-religious marriages lost much of their stigma, and the Hindu Rajputs became well established within Akbar's court.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Khan, Iqtidar Alam. "The Middle Classes in the Mughal Empire." *Social Scientist* 5, no. 1 (August 1976): 28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3516601>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Sarkar, Jadunath, and Raghubir Sinh. *A History of Jaipur, c. 1503-1938*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1984.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Religious Tolerance

Though the Mughals themselves were Muslims from Timurid origins— which is why the Mughal empire is often classified as an “Islamic” empire—most of those living under Mughal rule were actually non-Muslim. But while the Mughal Empire under Akbar’s predecessors (Babur and Humayun) enforced a de facto religious hierarchy, only allowing Muslims to hold certain positions and exercise certain rights, Akbar made great headway in creating a more multi-religious society. To enact these reforms without having to deal with the interference of religious leaders from the previous dynasties, Akbar publicly announced in a *mahzar* (executive edict) that he, in his role as emperor, was the empire’s highest religious authority, capable of setting religious practices to supercede even the religious scholars and courts. Some of Akbar’s most prominent religious reforms included abolishing *jizyah* (a defense tax that was paid by non-Muslims), the inclusion of Hindus to high positions within the Mughal cabinet, and abolishing the forced conversion of non-Muslim prisoners of war. Akbar’s religious reforms came to a point with his creation of a new religious order called Din-e Ilahi or the Divine Faith . This order was a product of Akbar’s interactions with other faith traditions during his meetings with Hindu, Jain, Christian, Parsi and Muslim religious experts at his regularly occurring “Ibadat-Khaneh” religious circles at Fatehpur Sikri. While Din-e Ilahi was strongly influenced by Sufi practices from the Islamic tradition, it also reflected Akbar’s newfound recognition of there being truth found in every faith. Instead of holding Islam to be the sole religion of the state, Akbar’s new order allowed for the various faith groups to remain attached to their respective beliefs and tradition, in combination with the new rites and rituals that were innate to the Din-e Ilahi order.⁴⁶

Politics

Some of Akbar’s most important and prominent reforms were his reorganization of the Mughal political and bureaucratic system. Akbar’s Mughal Empire functioned on many layers of governance, with regional power being delegated to provincial, and local governments, in addition to the power housed in the Mughal central government apparatus. Under the umbrella of Akbar’s own executive power as emperor, the central government was split into 4 departments each headed by its own

⁴⁶ Allchin et al. "India."

minister: the prime minister (*wakil*), finance (*diwan* or *vizier*), and religious judiciary minister (*sadr al sudur*), in addition to the paymaster general (*mir bakhshi*). These ministers effectively served as cabinet ministers do today—they serve in their offices solely upon appointment and dismissal by the executive—in this case Emperor Akbar. Since Akbar held executive power himself, these ministers were effectively administrators of certain bureaucratic processes. While under previous Mughal emperors the *wakil* was effectively the right hand of the emperor, with responsibilities ranging across the bureaucratic gamut, Akbar reallocated much of the *wakil*'s power to these other departments. Under Akbar, the *diwan* became responsible for the collection and distribution of state revenue and maintaining the treasury, the *mir bakhshi* administered the army and ensured that it was properly funded, and the *sadr al sudur* served as a religious judiciary, capable of interpreting doctrine, and responsible for the upkeep of religious endowments.⁴⁷ The *wakil* was effectively responsible for “all of the rest”—the remaining bureaucracy which didn't lie under the purview of one of the other three heads.

Power was also allocated across the 15 provinces or subahs (Allahabad, Agra, Ayodhya, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malka, Qhandesh, Berar, and Ahmadnagar), into provincial governments. Each provincial government was composed of a governor, a financial head (*diwan*), a military commander (*bakhshi*), a religious administrator (*sadr*), and a judiciary (*qadi*), in addition to other lower level bureaucrats. The separation of provincial power across the various heads of each province resulted in a system of checks and balances much as is seen in modern day democracies. The provinces were further divided into districts called *sarkars*, which had their own bureaucratic apparatus led by a civil administrator (*kotwal*), a tax collector (*fowjdar*), a head clerk (*bitikchi*), and a treasurer (*khazanedar*).

Akbar also introduced an overhaul of the nobility system. Before the entry of Akbar into the fray, regional leaders typically expected to share power with the executive in a decentralized manner. However, in the case of Akbar, with his aspirations for a thorough bureaucracy and a strong central government, assigning power amongst the nobility was not an option. Instead, Akbar hoped to create a form of nobility that essentially served as a glorified bureaucracy—wholly subordinate to his

⁴⁷ Srivastava, Shubham. Central and Provincial Administration of the Mughal Rulers. University of Allahabad. https://www.academia.edu/26352844/Central_and_Provincial_Administration_of_the_Mughal_Rulers.

rule, and primarily focused on providing military and civil administration. To modify the current nobility system into one that suited his needs, Akbar adopted two approaches. First, he elevated new groups of formerly non-noble peoples to the nobility. These groups, which were primarily composed of Indian and Iranian ethnic minorities, were all too happy to comply with Akbar's efforts to recruit them into his new nobility. A more important development was Akbar's recruitment of the Hindu Rajputs, which was revolutionary for its inclusion of a non-Muslim group into the nobility. The Rajputs were a collection of Hindu clans who claimed to be descendants of the historical Hindu warrior classes of Northern India, and composed a solid portion western and central India. In exchange for their compliance, Akbar gave each Rajput leader a high salary and rank, and allowed them to continue to hold nominal control over their historical lands, and practice their traditional cultures and customs.

Mughal political relations with the Uzbeks of Central Asia and the Safavids of Iran was generally well maintained through exchanges of embassies. The Mughal relations with the Ottomans, however, began through general indifference and started devolving into hostility in the 1570s.⁴⁸ Akbar repeatedly inserted himself into the religious and populace affairs of major cities, including Makka and Madina, with an apparent intent of building a claim to temporal and spiritual authority against the Ottoman sultans.⁴⁹

The Deccan, a geographic entity in Southern India, was an area of consistent attempts at conquest due to its potential for agricultural resources.⁵⁰ By the time of committee, Akbar was eyeing Bengal with a general idea to expand into Deccan states such as Berar and Khandesh. However, military problems stand to greatly weigh against income from the Deccan region, where many territories south of the Satpura range face potentially hostile powers.⁵¹

⁴⁸FAROOQI, N. R. "SIX OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS ON MUGHAL-OTTOMAN RELATIONS DURING THE REIGN OF AKBAR." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7, no. 1 (1996): 32–48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26195476>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Moosvi, Shireen. "THE MUGHAL EMPIRE AND THE DECCAN—Economic Factors and Consequences." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 43 (1982): 365–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44141249>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Current Situation

The year is 1574. The Mughal Empire extends wide into the north and west, and is looking to expand eastward into Bengal. Akbar has been in full control of the Empire for 14 years, and has assembled a wide range of ministers as well as bureaucrats to help lead his Empire. As Akbar's ministers and loyal advisers, it is now upon you to navigate the crises that come upon the Empire, starting with the war in Bengal. During the committee, we will explore the development of the Mughal Empire, where delegates will be asked to build trade and defense networks, an effective bureaucracy with an efficient revenue collection system and deal with any local crises that might appear. While this committee will not focus too much on the military elements, inevitably there might be conflicts that arise throughout the Empire that delegates will have to address.

Character Biographies

1. Raja Birbal

Raja Birbal was one of the most influential court advisors in Akbar's court. Part of the select Navaratnas (select group of nine ministers), Birbal was a trusted advisor who Akbar consulted often. Aside from being a proficient administrative and military leader, Birbal was also the court jester, and was famous for his wit and humor. He had led the Mughal army into several successful wars and was well known for his military prowess.

2. Todar Mal

Raja Todar Mal was the Finance Minister in Akbar's court. He was a Hindu, and was in charge of the revenue collection system of the Empire. He was an expert at managing the bureaucracy and running the empire's finances, which was a very large and important undertaking. Aside from being the Finance Minister, he was also part of the Mansabdar system and had 4000 military men under his leadership. He too like Birbal was part of the Navratnas and was a trusted advisor to Akbar on financial matters.

3. Fakir Aziao-Din

Fakir Aziao-Din was Akbar's Religious Minister and advised on related matters. He was a peaceful and tolerant individual, who wanted to find a way to bridge the gaps between the Hindus and Muslims in the Empire. While he was an Islamic scholar and was well-versed in the Quran, and held Islamic values in very high esteem, he saw value in the Hindu values and wanted to find a compromise between the two. He was a trusted figure in the public, and was often the deciding voice on a religious conflict.

4. Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana

Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana was the son of Bairam Khan, and Akbar's mentee. He was also one of the Navratnas and was a talented poet and religious scholar. Rahim was very acclaimed throughout for

his beautiful poetry (especially his religious ones), and had a great following amongst the people. A lot of people would travel to the court just to hear him recite poetry. He was also very well traveled and knew people around the Empire. A military man as well, on occasion he led Mughal forces on the battlefield.

5. Man Singh

Raja Man Singh was a Hindu Rajput leader, who was a leading General and in charge of the Mughal armed forces. Man Singh had won several battles, and was widely known throughout the empire for his tactical mind as well as military skill. An experienced veteran soldier, he was respected throughout the military and inspired loyalty from each soldier. He was extremely close to the Emperor and held great influence in the court as well.

6. Raja Bharmal

Raja Bharmal is a Rajput king over the region of Amer, and the father-in-law of Akbar. His daughter Jodha, is the third wife of Akbar, and as father-in-law he does hold some sway in the Mughal court. As a Rajput king and father-in-law, he is one of the most influential people within the Rajputs that are under control of the Mughal Empire. He continues to exercise a lot of control over the area of Amer in the northwest region of the Empire. He is a popular figure within the Rajputs that are under the Mughal empire, and still has some relations with the Rajputs that oppose the Mughals. He has at times tried to convince those outside the Empire to work with the Mughals and become a part of the Empire.

7. Empress Jodha

Empress Jodha is the third wife of Emperor Akbar and one of the most influential people in the royal court. Coming from a Rajput family, Jodha has relations throughout the Rajput community and is considered a very influential figure in those circles. She also serves as a key advisor for Akbar, who often consults her when making decisions, particularly about happenings within the royal court. She was also much loved within the empire, and had a lot of public support. Furthermore, she was a

strong religious figure and tried to advocate for greater tolerance towards more Hindu populations and equality of people from different faiths in Mughal society.

8. Mirza Aziz Koka

Mirza Aziz Koka was in control of the Subah of Gujarat, and was the key administrator in that region. He was the son of Akbar's wet nurse and a former Prime Minister, and therefore had grown up in the imperial court and consequently, had a lot of connections within the court as well as knowing how to play politics within the larger empire. He has a shrewd political mind and is very ambitious, often challenging decisions from the court. Despite this, he is an advisor to Akbar, and is known for his honesty.

9. Syed Hamid Bukhari

Syed Hamid Bukhari was the governor of the Subah of Multan, which lies in the Northwest region of the Empire. He has been a loyal servant to the court, and is renowned in Multan for his generosity and tactical mind. He is loved by the people of the region, and often travels to the court for official meetings. While there, he meets with a large number of friends that he has within the court and generally in the city. He is also a religious person, and has trusted connections with various religious leaders across the empire who he invites to Multan to have public forums with.

10. Dastam Khan

Dastam Khan is the governor of the Subah of Ajmer, one of the most important regions within the Empire. Ajmer is right next to the Rajput territory, and therefore is one of the most important defensive as well as offensive territories within the Empire. It is often the launching point for attacks into the Rajputana as well as defense against them. Dastam Khan is a great military leader, who ensures the safety of the Subah, marshalling a larger number of troops in the region. His fierceness is adored by the people, who like him for the security he maintains in and around Ajmer. He has also been able to make the region one of the most prosperous trading locations, trading goods with major cities across the Empire and generating great prosperity for the citizens of Ajmer.

11. Jahangir

Jahangir (Born: Nur-ud-din Muhammad Salim) is the son of Akbar and his wife Mariam-uz-Zamani. His grandfather from his mother's side is Raja Bharmal, a Rajput ruler in Jaipur. Despite still being a teenager, Jahangir has proven his worth as a military and political leader in his father's empire. He has attained the highest military rank possible after Akbar (Mansadbar of the ten thousand), and successfully led a battalion in Akbar's early conquest at the age of 12. Due to his young age, and his father's firm belief in rank based on merit, Jahangir still does not have access to a great deal of influence in the empire outside of his military role.

12. Iqbal Ghalib

Iqbal Ghalib is the owner-proprietor of a naval trading enterprise based in Surat. The son of a simple fisherman, Iqbal is a self-made businessman who has greatly benefited from Akbar's liberalizing reforms and focus on economic development. Though his trading fleet is still small compared to some of the larger naval merchants in Surat, Iqbal is determined to one day become an influential player in the Arabian ocean trade market. He has little interest in politics or religion beyond its impact on business, and in particular, his trading prospects.

13. Shahid Hussain

Shahid Hussain is the owner of an Iron mine in Bihar. Originally from the outskirts of Kabul, Shahid took advantage of Akbar's expansion into the eastern subcontinent and investment into new transportation infrastructure to start a new life in Bihar. He worked his way up from being a miner in a neighboring mine to become the owner of one of the largest mines in town. Now that Iron is fueling a wide array of products in Akbar's ever expanding trade economy, Shahid hopes to expand his business. A practicing Muslim who was raised on traditional values, Shahid secretly finds Akbar's religious reforms blasphemous and hopes to convince him to revert the state religion away from Din-e-ilahi.

14. Sharif Khan

Sharif Khan is the Foreign Minister of the Mughal Empire and a distant cousin of Akbar. Sharif comes from an affluent family in Lahore, and his great financial resources allowed him to travel across western and central Asia from a young age, giving him an international outlook. He believes in Akbar's mission to unite the various ethnic, religious, and cultural factions in India and hopes to expand this unifying mission even beyond the borders of the Empire. As part of the good-faith gestures following the unification agreement Akbar made to the Rajputs, Sharif—since he is a relative of Akbar's—was married to a Rajput princess, Jayanti. Despite the arranged origins of their marriage, Sharif and Jayanti have grown attached to each other. Consequently, Sharif has high hopes for Akbar's elevation of the Rajputs in his civil service infrastructure.

15. Raja Bharmal

Raja Bharmal is the Rajput leader of Amer (modern-day Jaipur). He is the father of Mariam-uz-Zamani (one of Akbar's wives) making him Akbar's father-in-law, and Jahangir's grandfather. Bharmal's family were one of the first confederacies to put trust in the Mughals and seek an alliance with them, which has now landed them a high position within Akbar's bureaucratic machine. Bharmal appreciates Akbar's religious and cultural reforms and believes in Akbar's project of building a society where Hindus and Muslims can live together.

16. Maharana Pratap

Maharana Pratap is a Hindu Rajput ruler of Mewar. Unlike Mughal-aligned Rajputs like Raja Bharmal, Maharana is firmly opposed to Mughal rule and has spent much of his life battling Akbar's army's attempts to conquer Mewar. He finds Akbar's religious reforms paltry, and argues that even with them, Mughal society still treats Hindus like second-class citizens. He has agreed to be on this committee solely so he can use his power to undermine Akbar and maintain the full autonomy of Mewar and other historically-Rajput regions.

17. Jodha/Mariam-uz-Zamani

Mariam-uz-Zamani, or Jodha, is a Hindu Rajput princess who was given to Akbar in marriage as a symbolic gesture after the integration of the Amber Rajputs into the empire. She is the daughter of Raja Bharmal and the mother of Jahangir. Though Jodha's marriage to Akbar was purely a political one, she had a significant impact in bringing about some of Akbar's latest bureaucratic and religious reforms—particularly those that benefited the Rajputs. Despite marrying an emperor of a nominally Muslim empire, Jodha has decided to keep her Hindu faith. The Muslim name "Mariam-uz-Zamani" or Mary of the Age was given to her by Akbar after she gave birth to his first son. As Jodha's marriage to Akbar gave increased privileges to many of her male family members, she holds a certain degree of influence over them, as well as over her newly acquired husband and family.

18. Salima Sultan Begum

Salima Sultan Begum is Akbar's fourth wife and his first cousin (granddaughter of Babur). Salima is highly educated and studious—she spoke Persian proficiently, read and wrote often, created highly-regarded poetry, and maintained a well-stocked library. As a consequence of both her own education and her familial relations, Salima wields great influence within Akbar's court. She is known to keep regular records of Akbar's courtly endeavors, and often writes under the pseudonym *Makhfi* (Arabic for "the Hidden one") to sway popular opinion amongst the court.

19. Sharifuddin Hussain Mirza

Sharifuddin Hussain Mirza is a viceroy of Mewat, and Akbar's brother-in-law, having married Akbar's sister Princess Bakshi Bano. Originally from a Persian family, Sharifuddin has proven himself to be a capable military leader, and was the one to capture the important Rajput region of Amer. However, despite his outward tendencies of being a loyal general and relative to Akbar, Sharifuddin believes that Akbar keeps too much of the power to himself, and hopes to one day usurp Akbar.

20. Fakir Aziao-Din

Fakir Aziao-Din is a mystical religious advisor on Akbar's court, and one of Akbar's "Narvaratnas"—nine extraordinary individuals who are given special honors in the Mughal court. Fakir has had a large influence on the direction of religious reforms in the empire; his mystical views were one of the main drivers that led to Akbar's heavy adoption of Sufi traditions in Din-e-ilahi. While one of Fakir's main goals is to continue moving the empire towards mysticism, he secretly also aspires to rule over some land of his own.

21. Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana

Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana is a Mughal poet who serves as a mentor and advisor to Akbar on religious matters. Like Fakir Aziao-Din, Abdul Rahim is regarded as one of Akbar's "Narvaratnas"—nine extraordinary individuals who are given special honors in the Mughal court—and is further honored by the label "Khan-I-Khana" or "King of Kings". Abdul Rahim comes from a powerful Delhi family of Turkic origins—his father was Bairam Khan, who was also one of Akbar's most trusted advisors. Abdul Rahim specializes in Hindi couplets, and has a great passion for astrology. He is known for his humble demeanor, and can often be found giving alms to the poor. In the midst of power-grabbing courtiers, Abdul Rahim truly thinks himself an honest man, and hopes to set the empire in the direction of godliness.

22. Salman Darvazi

Salman Darvazi is a career bureaucrat who is in charge of Akbar's civil infrastructure expansion projects. Originally from a small town in Gujarat at the outskirts of the empire, Salman has seen firsthand how important roads and public services are for the empire's most disenfranchised citizens. His most ardent hope is to connect the empire through a strong network of roads and will firmly stand against anyone who gets in his way.

23. Suleiman Barhi

Suleiman Barhi is a Muslim religious leader. Suleiman is originally from Barha, and is proud of his roots; his family are “Sayyids” and trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Suleiman memorized the Quran and prominent books of Hadith from a young age. Before being recruited by Akbar to join the court, he was known in Barha for his religious knowledge, and people came from all around the region to seek his jurisprudence. Though Suleiman was raised with a very traditional outlook on religion, he believes that religion is meant to adapt to the people, and supports Akbar’s religious reforms. As Suleiman himself was able to attain his status due to Akbar’s enfranchisement of ethnic minority groups that were previously excluded, he is a strong proponent of the empire’s integration of different groups—even the minorities from different religions.

24. Khadija Al-Longi

Khadija Al-Longi is an Arab pirate queen and privateer for the Mughal empire. Originally from the Portuguese-controlled fishing village of Quriyat in southeastern Arabia, young Khadija used to stare longingly at the sea, hoping to one day boldly ride its waves to a new land. One day Khadija decided to fulfill her dream, and she stowed away on a Portuguese trade ship headed to the newly-acquired colony of Mumbai. Finding herself in a new city with no friends or resources, Khadija joined a pirate gang, headed by ruthless pirate king Dhirubhai Bacchan. Relying on her grit and determination, Khadija soon usurped Dhirubhai, and claimed his piracy business for herself. Upon hearing of Akbar’s investments in infrastructure and trade and willingness to elevate minority groups to positions of power, Khadija relocated her base of operations to Surat and became a privateer for the Mughals. Khadija hopes to continue to ruthlessly plunder the Arabian sea, enriching Akbar and herself in the process. In addition to her proficiency at intimidation and naval navigation, Khadija is valued for her language skills, which she has picked up over her many voyages. She speaks four: Arabic, Marathi, Gujarati, and Persian.

Bibliography

- ALLÁMI, ABUL FAZI. THE AÍN I AKBARI. Translated by H. S. JARRETT. Vol. 2. CALCUTTA: ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL., 1891.
- Allchin, F. Raymond , Wolpert , . Stanley A. , Srivastava, . A.L. , Dikshit, . K.R. , Schwartzberg, . Joseph E. , Subrahmanyam, . Sanjay , Spear, . T.G. Percival , Calkins, . Philip B. , Thapar, . Romila , Champakalakshmi, . R. and Alam, . Muzaffar. "India." Encyclopedia Britannica, December 1, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/place/India>.
- Anjum, Nazer Aziz. "ECONOMY OF TRANSPORT IN MUGHAL INDIA." Aligarh Muslim University, 2010. https://ia800805.us.archive.org/32/items/LandRevenueAdministrationUnderTheMughals_201711/Economy%20of%20transport%20in%20mughal%20India.pdf.
- Avantiputra7. "Mughal Empire under Akbar, 1605." 6 May 2020, n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal_Empire,_1605.png.
- Baber, Zaheer. The Science of Empire: Scientific Knowledge, Civilization, and Colonial Rule in India. SUNY Series in Science, Technology, and Society. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
- Biography.com Editors. "Akbar the Great Biography." Biography.com, April 2, 2014. <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/akbar-the-great>.
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mughal dynasty." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 28, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mughal-dynasty>.
- BYJU'S. "Major Crops India for UPSC IAS Prelims Examination," n.d. <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/major-crops-in-india/>.
- Cacahuete. "Map of Asia's Regions and Countries for Use on Wikivoyage." May 5, 2007. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Asia.png.
- FAROOQI, N. R. "SIX OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS ON MUGHAL-OTTOMAN RELATIONS DURING THE REIGN OF AKBAR." Journal of Islamic Studies 7, no. 1 (1996): 32–48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26195476>.
- Heesterman, J. C. "The Social Dynamics of the Mughal Empire: A Brief Introduction." Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 47, no. 3 (2004): 292–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165051>.

- History World. "HISTORY OF THE MOGHUL EMPIRE," n.d.
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/plaintexthistories.asp?historyid=ab99>.
- Khan, Iqtidar Alam. "The Middle Classes in the Mughal Empire." *Social Scientist* 5, no. 1 (August 1976): 28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3516601>.
- Khān, Khāfī, and Muḥammad Hāshim. *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*. Translated by H. M. Elliot and John Dowson. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006.
- Lal, Vinay. "The Mughal Empire." UCLA Social Sciences, 2001. <https://southasia.ucla.edu/history-politics/mughals-and-medieval/>.
- Mintage World. "Economy during Mughal Era," September 19, 2017.
<https://www.mintageworld.com/media/detail/4701-economy-during-mughal-era/>.
- Moosvi, Shireen. "THE MUGHAL EMPIRE AND THE DECCAN—Economic Factors and Consequences." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 43 (1982): 365–82.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44141249>.
- Pelsaert, Francisco. *JAHANGIR'S INDIA*. Translated by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl. CAMBRIDGE: W. HEFFER & SONS LTD., 1925.
- Sah, Ram Shankar. "Mughal State and the Information System: 1556–1707." *Indian Historical Review* 46, no. 2 (December 2019): 292–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0376983619889517>.
- Santosh.mbahrm. "Mughal Empire Map." September 26, 2015.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal-empire-map.jpg>.
- Saravask. "India Climatic Disaster Risk Map English Version." March 2007.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_climatic_disaster_risk_map_en.svg.
- Sarkar, Jadunath, and Raghubir Sinh. *A History of Jaipur, c. 1503-1938*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1984.
- Sharma, Virendra Nath. *Sawai Jai Singh and Astronomy*. 2nd revised edition. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2016.
- SMITH, VINCENT A. *AKBAR THE GREAT MOGUL 1542-1605*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917.
<https://archive.org/details/cu31924024056503/mode/2up?view=theater>.
- Srivastava, Shubham. *Central and Provincial Administration of the Mughal Rulers*. University of Allahabad.

https://www.academia.edu/26352844/Central_and_Provincial_Administration_of_the_Mughal_Rulers

UN. "UN Map of South Asia." n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_Asia_UN.png.