Jorge Flores

The Mughal Padshah: A Jesuit Treatise on Emperor Jahangir's Court and Household.
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In *The Mughal Padshah*, Jorge Flores offers an excellent edition and translation of a Jesuit treatise on the court and household of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r.1605–27), the *Tratado da Corte e Caza de Iamguir Pachá Rey dos Mogores; em que brevemente se trata dos Reinos que tem; e de seos tizouros, e o grande estado e preheminencia com que se serve de suas portas para dentro; suas mulheres, filhos, e seos grandes capitais* (Treatise of the court and household of Jahangir Padshah king of the Mughals, briefly addressing his kingdoms, and his treasures, and the great majesty and preeminence by which he is served in his court; his wives, children, and his chief captains"). Written around 1610, this document exists today in four known versions in two languages but its authorship is not completely clear. The treatise survived the passage of time in four different versions: a Portuguese manuscript located at the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Portugal), a Spanish manuscript located at the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Spain), and two different Portuguese and Spanish manuscripts at the Real Academia de Historia (Spain).

The *Tratado* is not a typical missionary report, but a detailed survey of Jahangir's imperial court and household that could be easily written by a diplomat or a merchant. Its contents offered important information on the emperor and his family, the organization of the court, the political rituals surrounding the figure of Jahangir, the economic organization of the empire, as well as its military power. The fact that the *Tratado* predates the correspondence and accounts of Sir Thomas Roe's embassy to Jahangir's court (1615–19)—which played a crucial role on the early modern European perceptions of Mughal India—makes this Jesuit document particularly relevant to understanding how Europeans constructed their images of the Timurid polity.

Jorge Flores provides an extensive introduction that situates the treatise in the early modern European literature on Mughal India, and highlights the conditions of production and reception of the *Tratado* based on a brief, but rather complete, survey of the evolution of Luso-Mughal relations up to 1615. Indeed, one cannot dissociate the production of a document such as the *Tratado* from the Mughal embassy to Goa led by Muqarah Khan of 1610–11, an event that the Portuguese authorities had desired for some time. Consequently such a detailed account on the Mughal polity as the Jesuit treatise was a valuable source of information for the viceroy at Goa.

While two versions of the treatise ignore the question of authorship, the other existing versions suggest that one of Jerónimo Xavier or Manuel Pinheiro

was behind the text. The two men played a crucial role in the third Jesuit mission and their reports and correspondence were widely known in Europe. Xavier could be easily described as the prototype of the court missionary. His literary production at the Mughal court, his collaboration with different courtiers and scholars and, above all, his proximity to the emperor, made him strong candidate for the authorship of the treatise. Indeed, the contents of the treatise are in line with the information provided by Xavier in his correspondence to Europe and Goa.

Although Pinheiro lacked the intellectual sophistication of Xavier, he wrote several richly informed reports on the Mughal empire. If Xavier was the court missionary, Pinheiro was the field missionary. As the responsible for the Lahore mission field, the Jesuit from the Azores was in permanent contact with several Timurid political agents that made him a valuable intermediary between the Mughals and the Portuguese. In fact, Pinheiro accompanied Muqarrāh Khan's embassy. It is therefore possible that Pinheiro wrote the treatise during his time in Goa, or that he carried Xavier's text. Flores also explores the possibility of the *Tratado* as a composite text, a collective text supervised by Xavier that counted with the collaboration of other members of the mission such as Manuel Pinheiro, António Machado, a Francesco Corsi, and Giuseppe di Castro.

Flores convincingly argues that the author (or authors) of the treatise is not a mere casual observer, but someone who actively participated in the court and had the capacity to theorize on Mughal politics and sovereignty in a dialogue with the emperor or other Mughal political actors. Indeed, some of the contents of the *Tratado* are very similar to topics covered by Abu'l Fazl's *A'in-i Akbari* (c.1595) such as the emperor's household, the treasuries, the harem, the imperial menagerie, the *mansabdars*, or the imperial finances and administration. This does not mean that the author copied Fazl's work, but that they had access to a specific type of information that circulated through the channels of the Mughal bureaucratic apparatus and was accessible to those who were at the imperial court, either in written form or through oral accounts provided by other courtiers or officials. This role of the missionary as an active courtier and political observer is particularly relevant to understand how the author or authors of the treatise collected their information.

One of the most interesting aspects of the treatise is its effort to provide a systematic quantification of Jahangir's court and household. Such concern in enumerating and describing the Mughal polity, as Flores notes, was typical among Iberian colonial officials in the Americas and Asia that links the treatise to the evolution the European colonial bureaucratic apparatus.

The fact that there are four versions of the *Tratado* and the definitive version is now lost poses interesting questions on the production, circulation and transmission of texts in the early modern period. Although it is not possible to know the exact conditions in which the treatise travelled from India to Europe, Flores explores the networks formed by different agents such as missionaries, colonial officials, merchants, scholars or aristocrats to give an example of how manuscripts and other documents produced in South Asia could reach Lisbon or Madrid.

The translation of the Portuguese manuscript into English is excellent and it will allow many scholars and students of Mughal India or the Jesuit missions in south Asia to explore a unique source. Together with the well-researched and stimulating introduction provided by Jorge Flores, this work will find a prominent place in the study of the Jesuit missions in the Mughal empire.

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