

Research Article

Genre Matters: What Tazkiras Can Say that Court Chronicles Cannot — Contrast tazkira “elasticity” with formal chronicles to explain how female power becomes narratable

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT



Keywords:

Chronicles, Mughals, Literature, Tazkiras

Article History:

Received: 11-07-2025

Revised: 11-11-2025

Accepted: 11-12-2025

Published: 30-12-2025

This paper ponders upon the Persian literary genre of the tazkira and its influence on the narrative potential of female power and authority within Mughal historiography. The study speculates that the genre itself dictates historical visibility by looking at the inflexible, patriarchal symmetry of court chronicles like the Akbarnama, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, and Padshahnama with the fluid, memory-driven structure of tazkiras. The chronicles praise divine kingship and marginalize women as political actors, on the contrary the tazkira's hybrid structure assimilating anecdote, poetry, and moral contemplation establishes an archive where emotion, domesticity, and artistry are politicized. The paper illustrates how Nur Jahan's patronage, ritual intelligence, and aesthetic judgment manifest as forms of "soft sovereignty" through meticulous analyses of texts such as Shaikh Farid Bhakkari's Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin and Iqbāl-nāma-i-Jahāngiri. Her writing about architecture and ceremonies turns beauty, kindness, and good taste into tools for ruling. The study concludes that the narrative elasticity of the tazkira allows for the feminine to be inscribed in history not as an exception, but as an epistemic presence. By broadening the definition of the political, tazkiras demonstrate that affect, intimacy, and memory are as essential to imperial power as conquest or edict.

Cite this article:

Garba, M. K., & Abubakar, J. H. (n.d.). The Recalibration of U.S. Aid and Development Programs in Africa: Assessing the Impact of Trump's Neo-Isolationist Agenda. *Mankind: Adam to Me*, 2(4), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.55559/mankind.v2i4.20>

Introduction

This study contrasts the official court records with the literary genre of the tazkiras, which provides a platform for the narration of female authority within Mughal history. The tazkira tradition is a distinct kind of oral history that developed in the Persian culture; it combines narrative, poetry, moral reflection, and anecdotes. In the setting of the Mughal Empire in the seventeenth century, tazkiras served as a repository for cultural memory, documenting subjective experiences and feelings that were often lacking in the official histories commissioned by the imperial court. Because of the malleability of their narrative style, they were able to document aesthetic, domestic, and emotional events that would have been hidden from public view otherwise. In light of the gendered hierarchies evident in Mughal historical literature, this dissertation contends that the tazkira provides a different perspective on the past that may be used to track the actions of women, especially in relation to Nur Jahan.

The *Akbarnama*, *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*, and *Padshahnama* are official records of imperial power from the Mughal court. These works, written with the support of the royal family, provide an imperial history that glorifies male dominance and the perpetuation of dynastic rule. Their ideology seeks to establish the emperor as the only legitimate political figure, and they center

their attention on government, lineage, and conquest. Unless it's for the sake of moral allegory or dynastic succession, women don't make an appearance in these chronicles. They are underrepresented in political representation as independent actors. According to Ruby Lal, these works have served to further divide Mughal history along public-private lines by depicting the *zenana* as an isolated, politically neutral place rather than a locus of authority (Lal, 2005). Only in connection to the male ruler does the feminine figure emerge in this representational economy.

The tazkira deviates from this pattern of storytelling by exhibiting what may be described as genre flexibility, which enables it to include many experiential registers. The tazkira in Persian literature was free from the constraints of imperial legitimacy and chronological order. Alternatively, it may include personal recollections, poetry pieces, and moral tales that show the court's emotional and social fabric. According to Leslie Peirce, women had an important role in the administration of dynastic life in pre-modern Islamic courts via ritual and familial ties, and the home was inseparable from political power (Peirce, 1993). It is in keeping with this understanding that the *zenana* is shown by the Mughal tazkiras as a dynamic arena for representation, patronage, and bargaining, rather than a secluded home.

One of the most powerful women in Mughal history, Nur Jahan, exemplifies how the tazkira permits the telling of female

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sovereignty in her biography. Her dedication to Emperor Jahangir, rather than her innate intellect or beauty, gives her the power to make decisions: “Her judgment in matters of adornment and taste is unparalleled; yet all her acts proceed from devotion to His Majesty” (Jahangir, 1999/1624) in the *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri*. Her agency is reduced to that of a submissive spouse by this statement. This limitation, however, is overcome by tazkiras like *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin* by Shaikh Farid Bhakkari. “The number of elephants, horses, saropa, and cash which she gave away has not entered the mind of anybody,” Bhakkari says, implying a level of patronage and authority comparable to that of the emperor himself (Bhakkari, 2015/1650). Likewise, she is shown as a person in *Iqbāl-nāma-i-Jahāngīrī* who, via her moral and artistic judgment, influenced imperial culture via ritual, taste, and charity. As seen above, the home is no longer a place of solitude but rather a platform for political discourse.

Within the larger feminist history that highlights the home as a site of political work, this article places these interpretations. An artistic kind of control that ran parallel to official government was established by Nur Jahan via her interventions in architectural design, garden planning, and ritual practice (Findly, 1993). Persianate storytelling forms, like the tazkira, retain power traces that elude bureaucratic history, as pointed out by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2012). By using these frameworks, the tazkira can capture the emotive, relational, and performative aspects of sovereignty that are left out of chronicles. What follows is an analysis of genre as a predictor of narratability, rather than just a stylistic category. The formal constraints of court chronicles prevent them from capturing the artistic and emotional spheres, where Nur Jahan and other strong women wielded power. On the other hand, these aspects may be integrated into historical memory via the tazkira. So, it's a counter-archive to official chronicles that shows how the Mughal monarchy articulated its sovereignty via the feminine without making her a minor figure or decoration.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is qualitative textual and historiographical that takes into account the influence of literary genre on the representation of female authority in historical writing of Mughals. It compares the official Mughal court chronicles like Akbarnama, Tuzuk-i Jahangiri and Padshahnama with Persian tazkiras, like *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin*, *Iqbāl-nāma-i-Jahāngīrī*, *Ma'āsir-ul Umara* and *Mir'āt-ul 'Ālam*. The study examines the narrative structure, the language, the symbolic treatment and the literary conventions that make women in general and Nur Jahan in particular come into existence in Mughal history. Additionally, the research uses feminist and critical approaches of historiography and discourse analysis to examine the relationships between gender, domesticity, memory, and sovereignty in Indo-Persian literary traditions. The theoretical framework for the political and cultural significance of the tazkira narratives in the light of Mughal historical writing is offered by the secondary sources by scholars like Ruby Lal, Leslie Peirce, Ellison Findly, Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam.

Genre and Power

Both the tazkira and the court chronicle are part of Indo-Persian historical literature, although they use different narrative logics. Contrasted with the tazkira's emphasis on multiplicity, closeness, and moral reflection, the chronicle's goals include factual accuracy, dynastic legitimacy, and internal consistency. The tazkira's adaptability gives it genre elasticity, which allows it to include aesthetic, domestic, and emotional experiences that formal history shuns.

As a kind of autobiography that combined memory with instruction, the tazkira first appeared in the Persianate world. According to A. A. Dodge, it originated in Arabic *tabaqat* literature but became a means of honoring Persian courtiers,

poets, and saints via tales and moral commentary when it was part of Persian court culture (Dodge, 1970). The style reached Mughal India in the 1600s and was modified to fit the cultural and political climate of the imperial court by the 17th and 18th centuries. In addition to documenting the accomplishments of nobles and kings, the Mughal tazkiras also detail the emotional climate of the home, the cadence of courtly ceremonies, and the lives of powerful women. In contrast, the chronicle expresses the sovereignty in an official declaration. They call it “a record designed to impose order on memory” (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2012). There is no mention of emotional work or household bargaining since it emphasizes “linear time, patriarchal power, and divine kingship.” But the tazkira brings a more open epistemology; it lists poetry, rumor, and memory as valid parts of truth. The tazkiras can depict forms of agency based on virtue, charity, and taste because of this openness.

A literary setting like this might give rise to different conceptions of power, as Ruby Lal's study of Mughal domesticity elucidates. When it came to reproducing sovereignty, “the early Mughal household was never the passive backdrop to male authority but the spatial and affective engine,” (Lal, 2005) was what she wrote. The genre of the tazkira allows scenes of ritual, emotion, and interpersonal behavior to be historically significant, which allows it to depict this dynamic perfectly. Sovereignty that is exerted by care, order, and aesthetic control, what may be referred to as “soft sovereignty,” is therefore preserved in the tazkira. In Shaikh Farid Bhakkari's *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin*, an anthology of Mughal nobility and courtiers from the seventeenth century, there is an illustrative instance. The genre's adaptability is on full show in Bhakkari's extensive article on Empress Nur Jahan. He wrote:

“The number of elephants, horses, saropa, and cash which she gave away has not entered the mind of anybody. The generosity of that exalted lady was boundless, and every day new favors issued from her hands.” (Bhakkari, 2015/1650)

The writing implies charity to be a show of dominance. While the *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri* chronicler could only characterize royal benevolence as an emperor's prerogative, the tazkira confidently ascribes such generosity to the empress. The malleability of the form makes it possible to unite feminine virtue with absolute power. The use of generosity as a symbol of authority in Bhakkari's writings shows how moral deeds in the home were really political performances. In the *Iqbāl-nāma-i-Jahāngīrī*, another tazkira, this artistic aspect of home power is further developed. The text reads:

“Within the precincts of the palace, there was a garden such that the rose of grace and the cypress of intellect grew side by side under the care of Nur Jahan Begum. Her order brought fragrance to the realm, and her taste gave pattern to the gatherings of the court.” (Anonymous, 1630)

In this case, metaphor stands in for official language. Transforming cultivation into government, the garden image mixes beauty with management. Political order as harmony and balance is encoded by the author's choice of symbols, “rose, cypress, fragrance”, which the factual vocabulary of the chronicle could not represent. Thus, genre changes the vocabulary used to conceive sovereignty.

The way the two styles handle the voice is another area where they diverge. Claiming access to heavenly truth, the chronicler talks from a position of institutional authority. The tazkira writer, on the other hand, often admits to being hesitant when writing from within social networks. To indicate that his stories had oral histories, Bhakkari would often use terms like “It is said” or “I have heard from reliable elders” before telling them. A multitude may be accommodated by this rhetorical humility. The tazkiras compile stories and anecdotes from several sources rather than delivering a unified narrative of events. This narrative transparency allows for the archiving of viewpoints that official

records exclude, such as those of imperial household attendants and women. What really sets the tazkira apart is the incorporation of moral and emotional depth. The political interventions of Nur Jahan are described in the *Tuzk-e-Jahangiri* from the emperor's point of view. It is mentioned by Jahangir:

"Her judgment in matters of adornment and taste is unparalleled; yet all her acts proceed from devotion to His Majesty." (Jahangir, 1999/1624)

She is both lauded and her authority is domesticated in the same line. Conversely, her choices are given agency by the tazkira writers. Rather than seeing her role as a wifely obligation, she portrays her monitoring of weddings and building projects in *Zakhirat-ul-Khawarin* as a statement of moral discipline. A perfect example of how genre influences meaning is the change from dedication to design. As the guiding concept of imperial culture, the tazkira might symbolize the need for the chronicle to include female initiative while maintaining patriarchal decorum. This view is backed by Leslie Peirce's research on Indo-Islamic and Ottoman courts. "Sovereignty was embodied rather than institutionalized, enacted through gestures and moral comportment rather than decrees" (Peirce, 1993) is what Peirce wants to emphasize. The tazkira is a literary reproduction of this physical model of governance. Stories of self-control, kindness, and composure translate into political action. By praising Nur Jahan for her restraint and controlled words, Bhakkari is engaging in the same moral economy that gave royalty its legitimacy.

So, genre flexibility changes the way we know about the past, rather than just adding to the archive. In contrast to the tazkira's malleability, which allows for ambiguity, the chronicle's rigidity demands singularity. In that gray area, remnants of women's authority emerge. An alternate history of the Mughal realm is built up by the tazkira via its combination of recollection, verse, and criticism. Historians can see how aesthetic refinement, emotional labor, and household order were tools of power. Sovereignty, like story, flourishes in plurality rather than uniformity, according to this view of power, which is based on the form's adaptability. Thus, the tazkira is revealed as both a literary relic and a methodological threat to the established order of historical genres. Making room for emotion, memory, and moral judgment, it reimagines the political. The narrative of women's power is essential to the symbolic framework of the empire, and its pliability makes this possible. Within this paradigm, the feminine is made narratable by way of form rather than exception.

Silencing of Women and the Court Chronicles

As a tool for maintaining imperial ideology via narrative structure, the Mughal court chronicle could be considered a literary technology of power. The king was depicted as the pinnacle of heavenly symmetry in all three chronicles (*Akbarnama*, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, and *Padshahnama*). Women were never unintentionally left out of that design; rather, they were shown as symbols of virtue or continuity rather than as historical figures. The shape necessitated an order of prominence that made the emperor stand out while relegating everyone else to a supporting role. This control system is seen in the *Akbarnama* of Abu'l Fazl. Akbar is presented as the pinnacle of divine reason in this work, which serves as both a political doctrine and a holy biography. In this picture of cosmic order, all human interactions take a back seat. The chronicler describes Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begum, as follows:

"The august mother, shining in the mirror of purity, prayed that the world's lamp might burn brighter with each day, and that her son might remain the shadow of God upon earth." (Abu'l Fazl, 1902/1596)

The text is reflective of ideological labor. The mother's words validate the will of God; her power is channelled into prayer. She is more of a moral decoration than a cog in the state's mechanism. Femininity becomes an abstraction in the discourse of innocence

and light. It is in this metamorphosis that the chronicle can remain silent, to use metaphor alone when referring to women.

The public-private division is encoded into the vocabulary of such writings, as Ruby Lal points out, "rendering the domestic an invisible yet essential infrastructure of sovereignty." Abu'l Fazl's devotional vocabulary upholds this hierarchy: the emperor makes decisions, while the lady offers prayers (Lal, 2005). In a similar vein, Leslie Peirce observes that official history "displaced women's political mediation into moral narrative" throughout early modern Islamic empires (Peirce, 1993). Gender norms are firmly established in the Mughal chronicle, which adheres to the larger Islamic cosmology of order. Jahangir gives this method first-person authority in his *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*. At the same time as it asserts immediacy, the emperor's voice erases any competing ones. His sensitivity or morality is the sole reason women come. Not as players in court life, but as examples of emotional stability, he describes his grandmother's devotion and Sahib Jamal's humility. Thus, self-reflection serves as censorship for the chronicler: the autobiography of the sovereign incorporates all other points of view.

During Shah Jahan's reign, Abdul Hamad Lahori's *Padshahnama* expands upon this norm. The intricate Persian writing, inspired by the Taj Mahal's design, elevates the aesthetic value of governance in every way. In his eulogy for Jahanara Begum, Lahori praises her for being "pure in soul and exalted in rank," a phrase that connects virtue with heavenly light (Lahori, 1877/1656). She was an imperial financial administrator and mediator in succession disputes, but her historical importance is ignored. The representation of Mumtaz Mahal is also characterized by melancholy images that turn death into a moral drama. As Ellison Findly notes, these depictions "translate the feminine from a participant in politics to a sign of transcendence," which keeps women's power out of politics (Findly, 1993). Structural exclusion is concealed by this aesthetic of transcendence. Subjects are obligated to be loyal to the emperor, women are obligated to be faithful to their spouses, and mothers are asked to pray for their sons, since the language of the chronicle only allows for vertical interactions. It is impossible to depict horizontal interactions of cooperation, correspondence, or negotiation without shattering the perception of heavenly oneness. Here, language takes on the role of political theology, according to Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam's "aesthetic of coherence" (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2012). In the sake of continuity, chronicles eliminate diversity; as a result, female agency is among the first to go.

The moral vocabulary also determines how the chronicle silences women. Many portrayals of royal women focus on virtues like virginity, forbearance, and dua (prayer). These qualities, albeit esteemed, define the bounds of permissible discourse. They confine the feminine figure to her own thoughts and feelings. It is necessary to recast every conduct that goes beyond devotion as an act of virtue or an act of heavenly inspiration. This is how the chronicle attains ideological stability; the symmetry and balance it displays reflect the emperor's flawless character. The "division of domains" proposed by Partha Chatterjee sheds light on the cultural reasoning for this exclusion (Chatterjee, 1989). Women are positioned in the spiritual heart of male modernity, outside of politics but crucial to its moral base, according to the chronicle. This split did more than just depict reality; it shaped how people understood the past. "The discipline of chronology is also the discipline of silence," Dipesh Chakrabarty argues further, as historical logic requires the elimination of emotion (Chakrabarty, 2000). Therefore, in order to preserve the chronological sequence of the Mughal chronicle, it is necessary to disregard the emotional work that maintained the empire.

Here, women's infrequent appearances serve more as metaphors for virtue than historical facts. The ideological accuracy of the chroniclers is concealed by their respectful tone.

Politics gives way to piety, and praise takes the place of activism. In reality, what passes for respect is confinement. The universe of the chronicle is bright but one-dimensional; the erasures it conducts are an integral part of its artistic attractiveness. The tazkira, on the other hand, will return narrative presence to moral praise, thereby re-establishing the texture of that silence. In contrast to the chronicle's idealization of women, the tazkira brings them back into the spotlight as objects of memory, emotion, and patronage. Until form relaxes, until symmetry gives way to memory's imperfection, the feminine cannot be narrated.

The Feminine Power and Expression Narrative in Tazkiras

The tazkira is unique among Indo-Persian historical texts because it liberates memory via storytelling (Sheemar, 2005). Memories, anecdotes, and moral contemplation drive the plot of the tazkira, in contrast to the chronicle's insistence on chronological order and public authority. Because of its malleability, it may depict aspects of power that official histories can't: the emotional, domestic, and aesthetic. Its malleable framework gives rise to women not as virtuous ideals but as active participants in imperial rule, contributing their emotional labor and cultural intelligence in concrete ways. In *Zakhirat-ul Khawanin*, written by Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, this potential is shown clearly (Bhakkari, 2015/1650). Written around the middle of the 17th century, it details not only illustrious family trees but also the personalities and deeds of people, placing equal value on eloquence and charity as on political success.

What may be described as genre flexibility is the source of this narrative freedom. Veracity is maintained in the tazkira by allowing moral comments, poetry pieces, and hearsay to coexist. Persian literature in India combines personal detail with imperial fantasy, a phenomenon characterized by what Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam term a "vernacular cosmopolitanism" (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2012). Gardens, kitchens, and ateliers become part of the historical record as a result of this confluence. The *zenana*, according to Ruby Lal, "appears not as the negation of politics but as its interior practice, a site where hierarchy is reproduced through intimacy" in these versions of events (Lal, 2005). Nur Jahan's role as master of ceremonies, patroness of architecture, and overseer of presents becomes an extension of statecraft in Bhakkari's tale. Additional tazkiras emphasize this reinterpretation. Nur Jahan's wisdom and judgment are praised in Shah Nawaz Khan's *Ma'asir-ul Umara*, along with her unique taste in palace decoration and party planning (Khan, 1989/1752). These succinct expressions bring aesthetic work back into political memory. In *Haft Qulzum*, written by Mir 'Abdul Wahid Bilgrami, the author comments that "among the women of Hindustan there was none equal to her in judgment and generosity," which elevates her to the moral status of a wise ruler (Bilgrami, 1907/1640). A common literary belief is shown by the fact that these sources have come together: that moral authority and artistic perception are integral parts of government.

This convergence, according to Findly, is proof of a new affect-based political language. "The public rituals of sovereignty alone did not exercise Nur Jahan's power; it was the constant circulation of gifts, art, and presence," (Findly, 1993) she contends in her argument. The tazkira is ideal for documenting such circulation since it is not constrained by the chronicle's need for hierarchical consistency. Its disjointed design reflects the diffuse but persistent Mughal women's agency. Due to a difference in ethics of authorship between the chronicle and the tazkira, the feminine becomes narratable in the latter. The tazkira writer asserts closeness to experience, in contrast to the imperial historian who asserts closeness to the crown. Instead of writing as an agent of policy, Bhakkari acts as an impartial witness and assessor. An air of wonder, rather than submission, permeates his expressions of appreciation. The text establishes its authority by closeness; it validates emotion as proof by focusing on vocalizations, body

language, and rumors. Methods like this add to the library of potential outcomes.

The political significance of this style is better understood thanks to Leslie Peirce's comparative research on Ottoman women. She notes, "When the ruler's body becomes the theater of order, the domestic becomes the language of power" (Peirce, 1993). In the context of the Mughals, the tazkiras are responsible for turning this embodiment into writing. Nur Jahan mastered symbolic administration via her command of rituals and her meticulousness with regard to clothing, fragrance, and protocol. Once repressed in chronicles, the female form now finds political expression in this narrative. Contradiction is also allowed by the tazkira's narrative flexibility. In a single paragraph, it may both commend and query, illustrating the diversity of societal views. Even though Nur Jahan's courtiers hated her power, Bakhtawar Khan admits in *Mir'at-ul 'Alam* that "her wisdom surpassed that of many ministers" (Bakhtawar Khan, 1930/1680). Power becomes more relatable, and its contentious nature becomes apparent in such ambivalence. A mosaic of voices replaces the flawless continuity of the chronicle, bringing back the richness of experience.

The tazkira does what the chronicle fails to do via these literary devices: it turns memory into recognition. The moral story and first-person accounts combine to show how the home functioned as a satellite of the empire. Because it is memory actions, not legal decisions, that make the feminine visible, the narratable is the feminine. The tazkiras construct a history that prioritizes diversity over uniformity by allowing itself to be biased and emotionally invested. Looking at the Mughal world from this perspective, we see a web of interdependent ties held together by mutual aid and support rather than a rigid hierarchy. What Bhakkari calls "generosity" is really a kind of government, a rebalancing of power and prestige within the royal family. It follows that genre may be used as a tool for fairness. In contrast to the chronicle's use of coherence to stifle female voices, the tazkira uses plenty to give them a voice again.

Nur Jahan, the Author and Subject

Nur Jahan is important in the tazkira tradition for two reasons: first, as the protagonist of stories, and second, as an author whose voice shapes the imperial lexicon. A deep comprehension of representation as power is on display in her aesthetic interventions, architectural works, and ritual practices. The tazkiras convey this contradiction by showing her as someone who helps create imperial meaning in addition to being a recipient of royal privilege.

The courtly aesthetics that Nur Jahan orchestrated are seen in the ceremonial venues, floral themes, and clothing that he designed. These elements sought to harmonize moral excellence with aesthetic harmony. According to Ellison Findly, her innovative ideas "constructed the empire as an aesthetic field where beauty and order were inseparable from authority" (Findly, 1993). She institutionalized behavior that brought imperial ideology into the sensory domain by regulating ritual and attire. Rather than seeing these actions as mere decoration, the tazkiras saw them as forms of leadership. Even in the most ceremonial dances, her co-authorship of Empire is plain to see. There was "a dynamic political arena where authority circulated through ceremony, kinship, and emotion" (Lal, 2005) in the Mughal *zenana*, according to Ruby Lal. Because of his extensive experience hosting festivals, banquets, and diplomats, Nur Jahan became an expert in this field. According to the *Ma'asir-ul Umara*, her presence was vital in diplomatic engagements due to her level of serenity and rhetorical talent (Khan, 1989/1752). Thus, her writing functioned as a performance, with rituals serving to legitimize her impact.

Her literary agency was further expanded by her love of architecture. She oversaw the commissioning of the *Itimad-ud-*

Daula tomb in Agra, which used pietra dura and symmetrical proportion to reimagine Mughal architectural aesthetics. “A physical text authored by a woman who inscribed her lineage into the material vocabulary of empire” (Asher, 1992) is how Catherine Asher describes this building. In this case, architecture serves as prose, a kind of marble history. It follows that Nur Jahan's inclusion in the *tazkiras* questions the duality of subject and author, as well as devotion and authority. She demonstrates a kind of literary authorship via design, gesture, and space that is informed by her ritual intelligence, inventiveness, and taste. According to Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Muzaffar Alam, cultural literature from the Mughal era “blurs the distinction between action and narration” (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2012). An author whose work is the empire itself, Nur Jahan is a prime example of that haze.

Conclusion

Questions of genre and power were intrinsic to historical writing in the Mughal period, as seen by the disparity between the *tazkira* and the court chronicle. The potential for expression, memorization, and worth was expanded by each form. Imperial ideology bound the court chronicle, which glorified divine order and unity. There wasn't much space for variety or feeling in its design. Within it, women were reduced to roles of domestic piety or moral excellence, their unique identities assimilated into the patriarchal discourse around male dominance.

An alternative form of commemoration was presented by the *tazkira*. Experience and emotion were able to cohabit with history in its fluid composition, which was part biography, part reflection, and part moral tale. It widened the definition of “political” by recognizing anecdotal evidence, word of mouth, and admiration as valid forms of information. The artistic, the emotive, and the domestic all found a home in historical narratives because of this receptivity. This style made Nur Jahan and other women like her more than just props to the throne; it made them active players. Being present throughout the *tazkiras* as Nur Jahan did shows that edict was not the only way to express sovereignty; beauty, charity, and ritual wisdom could do the job just as well. The cultural language of the empire was created by her authorship via her sponsorship of architecture, orchestration of rites, and control within the imperial family. These symbolic acts took on more significance as a result of the *tazkira*'s malleability. By redefining artistic and emotional work as valid forms of governing, it subverted the chronicle's limiting power logic.

This reveals how narrative form controls visibility via the interplay of these two genres. In contrast to the *tazkira*'s pluralism, the chronicle's symmetry serves to quiet. The other welcomes uncertainty, whereas the former demands precision. This distinction changes the way history acknowledges agency; it is not just a literary but an epistemic one. Restored by the *tazkira* is what official history has hidden: that closeness, taste, and care were also

integral to the formation of the empire. Because of its ability to combine domesticity with sovereignty, politics with passion, and the *tazkiras* reimagine authorship. This demonstrates that narrating is inherently a powerful act. They give a human voice to history, which was historically a language of exclusion, and give a narrative voice to the feminine.

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