

**The Horse: Conspicuous Consumption of Embodied Masculinity in  
South Asia, 1600-1850**

Monica Meadows

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Reading Committee:

Joel Walker, Chair

Purnima Dhavan

Selim Kuru

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

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University of Washington

**ABSTRACT**

The Horse: Conspicuous Consumption of Embodied Masculinity in South Asia, 1600-1850.

Monica Meadows

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Joel Walker, Associate Professor

History Department

In this dissertation, I analyze the role the horse and horse culture played in early modern South Asia through the lens of the genre of horse treatises (*farasnama*) produced in the Subcontinent in Persian. My analysis of the *farasnama* ties in directly with the new analyses of the Mughal Empire as a dynamic imperial formation fueled by the upward mobility of peasant and pastoral groups working together with elite groups in Indian society who had command over complex economic and bureaucratic systems. The horse occupied a culturally defined place and reflected the status and identity of its owner, one that changed over the course of this period. The horse trade moved through these systems, supporting and extending the cultural norms on which these relationships were based. Even without crunching the numbers of the astonishing economic and political scale of this trade, one begins to get a sense of how truly extensive the cultural systems were that supported it, and how critical these same cultural systems were to maintaining the political power of the warrior elite.

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*For the dead warriors on their mighty steeds.*

## Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The animals most liked are the stallions of Marwar or Kathiawar. White horses with pink points, piebalds, and leopard spotted beasts are much admired, especially when they have pink Roman noses and lightly-coloured eyes with an uncanny expression. Their crippled, highly arched necks, curby hocks, rocking gait, and paralytic prancing often proclaim them as triumphs of training.

-Man and Beast in India<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation investigates the breeding of horses and horse culture in South Asia between 1600 and 1850. The importance and relevance of the horse in South Asia extended beyond its utilitarian functions as transportation or in battle. Although the academic discourse on issues relating to horses has focused almost exclusively on the ‘war horse’, my research shows that horses occupied a more nuanced and intricate relationship with the groups that collected and wrote about them.<sup>2</sup> The ‘war horse’ was a cultural construct. It was built, maintained, and changed over this period along with cultural trends and preferences. The exorbitant prices horses commanded, the large stables that housed them, and the men who rode them into battle, while viewing a garden, hunting, racing, playing polo, or presenting them as gifts made them a vital cultural commodity. The ‘war horse’ was just one of many functions for a horse. In order to clarify these issues and raise new issues, I analyze four horse treatises (*farasnamas*) composed in South Asia between 1600 and 1850. Not only did the definition of a ‘war horse’ change over this period to reflect cultural tastes, but the *farasnama* genre was dynamic and evolved in concert with political and cultural realities. The entire process of

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<sup>1</sup> John Lockwood Kipling, *Beast and Man in India: A Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in their Relations with the People* (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1904), 175.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Digby, *War-horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies* (Oxford: Orient Monographs, 1971); Jos Gommans, “The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia,” *Journal of Social and Economic History of the Orient* 37, no. 3 (1994): 228-250.

this cultural dynamism was brought into sharp relief when the British began to search for their own culturally defined ‘war horse’ on the Subcontinent and failed. The records they left behind have had a large impact on how we think about horses in the South Asian context and British colonial opinions have often found their way into subsequent scholarship on the horse cultures of South Asia **without adequate qualification or** critical analysis. A major contribution of this dissertation is to reveal the dynamic and diverse *farasnama* traditions in Mughal India. This study offers a necessary corrective to the misreading of this tradition created during the colonial period which specifically detail the problems of Indian horses as poor stock, the mythology of not being able to breed viable stock due to climate conditions, and the inability to see colonial preferences for a certain type of purebred horse as much as a cultural construct as that of the Mughal and Indian markets.

### *Farasnamas*

The *Farasnama-i Hindis* are the Persian translations of the Indic horse treatise attributed to the Vedic hero Salihotra. They encompasses horse lore, advice on the proper comportment of horses, training, and veterinary medicine that were unique to South Asia. The underlying Vedic tradition is difficult to trace back to a single origin.<sup>3</sup> Salihotra (ca. 2350 BCE) and his most famous student, Nakula (one of the five Pandava brothers in the Mahabharata epic), act as knowledgeable authorities on all things related to horses. The Vedic and Indic advice most often translated into Persian was about auspicious and inauspicious whorls (places where the horse’s hair changed direction), proper horses for different occasions, and veterinary medicine. While the Persian *farasnama* genre extends to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the Perso-Islamic tradition, the first

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<sup>3</sup> I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2.

manuscripts produced in and for South Asia appear in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> The *farasnama-i hindi* genre was not a distinctive offshoot of the Perso-Islamic genre. The entire purpose of the work was to translate Indic texts about horses into Persian. Perso-Islamic traditions about horses and horse lore were fused onto a much earlier core of Indic (and Vedic) horse lore. Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, famous personalities from the *Shahnama*, comportmental advice from notable rulers, and the language itself set the earliest versions of these treatises apart from their Indic counterparts. The later versions reference these established norms, Indic and Perso-Islamic, and built on their foundations with more delineated advice.

The earliest notable *farasnama-i hindi* seems to have originated in Gujarat under Muzaffar Shah I (r. 1511-1526).<sup>5</sup> Almost a century later, the Mughal commander Abdullah Khan Bahadur Firuz Jang revived this version when copies of the Firuz Jang manuscript tradition began to appear with the most frequency.<sup>6</sup> The *Khatiri* administrator Anand Ram Mukhlis and Fa'iz, a nobleman and author based in Lahore, composed *farasnamas* in the beginning and middle of the eighteenth century and while ostensibly translations of the earlier Indic treatise traditions, both treatises recognize the existence of the Jang tradition but alter their renditions to respond to different political, economic, and literary circumstances. Mukhlis's *Rabat al-Faras* (The Comfort of the Horse) does not include the overtly Islamic horse lore and instead chose to convey the Indic.<sup>7</sup> He responds to the more pressing issues of diminished access to and maintaining the available supply of horses by looking to Greek medical traditions. Alternatively, Fa'iz

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<sup>4</sup> Iraj Afsar, "Faras-nama" *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey Vol. II* (London: Luzac & Co., 1927), 395, no. 663.

<sup>6</sup> Zayn al-Abidin Husayni Hashimi, *Faras-nama-yi Hashimi*, ed. D.C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Hashimi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910); Joseph Earles, *A treatise on horses, entitled Saloter, or, a complete system of Indian farriery... Compiled originally by a society of learned pundits, in the Shanscrit language: translated thence into Persian... by Abdallah Khan Firoze Jung... which is now translated into English, by Joseph Earles* (Calcutta: George Gordon, 1788).

<sup>7</sup> *Rabat al-Faras* of Anand Ram Mukhlis, (British Library) Or. 5762.

responded to the same situation by more firmly rooting *Tubfat al-Sadr* (al-Sadr's Gift) in the Arabic veterinary tradition and Islamic horse lore.<sup>8</sup> By the late eighteenth century, Rangin took the genre on an entirely different trajectory, basing his *Farasat-nama* on his own compiled knowledge of horses, with himself as the authority based on his own experience with horses as a soldier and horse merchant and writing in Urdu verse.

These Persian “translations” of Indic horse treatises were first instigated in the wake of the large number of texts translated at the behest of Mughal Emperors, from Akbar (d. 1605) to Shah Jahan (d. 1666).<sup>9</sup> One of the most famous translations of Sanskrit epics includes the *Mahabharata*, translated into Persian under the title *Raznama* (Book of War) under Akbar. The Persian translation of the epic maintained an ‘Indic register’ of transliterated words and phrases from Sanskrit and other North Indian vernacular languages.<sup>10</sup> The same is very much true of the translated horse treatises. Persian and Arabic glosses of what the treatises refer to as a ‘Hindavi’ equine lexicon occur throughout each text. For example, Fa’iz used the Arabic word *da’ira* (circles) to refer to the whorls that were an important element of Indic horse lore.<sup>11</sup> In the earlier Firuz Jang tradition, the Hindavi word *bhanavari* for feather is simply transliterated using the Arabic script.<sup>12</sup> These were not elaborately ornamented manuscripts for the Mughal court. These treatises were composed in simple language with simple illustrations. The nature and characteristics of these texts, especially the Firuz Jang tradition, would suggest that they were sold in bazaar towns along with other Persian texts on foundational

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<sup>8</sup> Sadr al-Din Muhammad Khan b. Zabardast Khan, *Tubfat al-Sadr*, ed. D.C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Zabardast Khan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911).

<sup>9</sup> Carl Ernst, “Muslim Studies of Hinduism? A Reconsideration of Arabic and Persian Translations from Indian Languages,” *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 2 (June 2003), 178.

<sup>10</sup> Ashley Truschke, “The Mughal Book of War: A Persian Translation of the Sanskrit Mahabharata,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 31, no. 2 (2011): 510-511; Wendy Doniger, “Contributions to an Equine Lexicology with Special Reference to Frogs,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98, no. 4 (October – December, 1978): 475-478.

<sup>11</sup> Zabardast Khan, *Tubfat al-Sadr*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Zayn al-‘Abidin Husayni Hashimi, *Faras-nama-yi Hashimi*, ed. D. C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Hashimi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910), 14.

knowledge, Persian and Indic epics, and Persian translations of local texts and traditions.<sup>13</sup>

### **Mughal Studies and the Historiography of the Horse Trade**

Horses were imported by way of well established maritime trade networks from the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula to South Asian ports.<sup>14</sup> They were also sought after commodities traded along the overland trade networks that connected Central Asia and South Asia.<sup>15</sup> Horses were bred within in the Subcontinent itself and traded at regional markets and bazaar towns.<sup>16</sup> Despite the importance of the horse and the horse trade in South Asia, academic research devoted entirely to the horse is a developing academic field.<sup>17</sup> Such work devoted entirely to the horse in South Asia or the Middle East is even more rare. The two works devoted solely to the horse in South Asia, by Simon Digby (1971) and Jos Gommans (1990), approached the subject of the horse from a military, utilitarian vantage point. The Persian sources Digby used for his study of the importance of horses and elephants in the Delhi Sultanate (1192-1398) focused primarily on mirrors for princes, memoirs, travel accounts, and court histories from the Sultanate and Mughal periods. He argues that access to war horses was a fundamental aspect of the

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<sup>13</sup> Muzaffar 'Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 63.

<sup>14</sup> Persian Gulf trade: Hala Fattah, "The Horse Trade" in *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 159-184; Ralph Kauz, "Horse Exports from the Persian Gulf until the arrival of the Portuguese" 137-144 and Rui Manuel Loureiro, "Portuguese involvement in sixteenth-century horse trade through the Arabian Sea," 137-143 both in *Pferde in Asien: Geschichte, Handel und Kultur*, eds. Bert Fragner et al (Vienna: Verlag der osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009); Elizabeth Lambourn, "Of Jewels and Horses: the Career and Patronage of an Iranian Merchant under Shah Jahan," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 2 (June, 2003): 214-241.

<sup>15</sup> Jos Gommans, "Horse Breeding and Trade with India" in *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire: c. 1710-1780* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 68-103.

<sup>16</sup> Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 228-236.

<sup>17</sup> John Curtis and Nigel Tallis, *The Horse: From Arabia to Royal Ascot* (London: British Museum Press, 2012); Thomas Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Karen Raber and Treva Tucker, eds. *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

Sultanate's success and intrinsically linked to its downfall.<sup>18</sup> Many years later, Jos Gommans approached the topic of the horse trade in South Asia in the eighteenth century and based much of his analysis on records from the East India Company.<sup>19</sup>

Digby's book, *War-Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate*, was the first attempt to explain the importance of horses in South Asia. Responding to a challenge from the Mughal historian Irfan Habib, his work is best viewed as a technical manual that outlines the centrality of horses in all medieval military ventures in South Asia.<sup>20</sup> In his findings, the lack of suitable warhorses presented a persistent problem for states dependent on heavy cavalry, the most popular form of warfare involving horses until the eighteenth century. The combination of access and ability to purchase expensive cavalry horses either imported overland or shipped overseas had direct consequences on military power.<sup>21</sup>

As one reason for the necessity of importing horses, Digby explains that the South Asian ecology could not sustain the horse. While discussing the strategic importance of horses and elephants, Digby noted:

Of these, the utility or rather indispensability of the horse in medieval warfare is universally accepted: but possibly the tactical implications of this fact in a comparatively highly developed and prosperous area of the medieval world where the horse does not breed well have not yet been considered in detail.<sup>22</sup>

Digby goes on to note that horses actually were bred successfully in the northwest, especially Sind, Gujarat, and the Punjab, because they were bred with horses imported from the Persian Gulf or Central Asia, and these were among the few regions with

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<sup>18</sup> Digby, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 228-250. The wide majority of Gommans' sources are from the EIC's *Military Department Proceedings* in the National Archives of New Delhi.

<sup>20</sup> Digby, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Digby, 29-49.

<sup>22</sup> Digby, 20.

pasturage and climates suited to such work.<sup>23</sup> Unacceptable horses, all domestic breeds from India, contemptuously called ‘tattus’ (Hindi, broken back) were not considered suitable for service as a warhorse in the Sultanate.<sup>24</sup> Compared with other, more suitable breeds, domestic breeds were significantly less expensive. Breeds considered suitable for the cavalry were imported regularly. Imported horses, according to Digby’s sources, “were the most costly and wasteful of India’s imports during this period.”<sup>25</sup> He details the horses recorded by Marco Polo (d. 1324) and crosschecks the numbers with Portuguese trading records from the sixteenth century in order to provide a chronological overview. While incredibly useful as a starting point for future research, Digby’s work underestimates the importance of culture in the valuation of horses. The accepted statement that it was difficult or impossible to breed horses in South Asia due to environmental restrictions – in a region with incredibly diverse ecological variations – is overturned by the fact that horses were bred more successfully in some areas than others. That the imported breeds were more expensive speaks more to the role of cultural preference in markets than to their utilitarian value alone. Horses from the Persian Gulf were notoriously small statured and lithesome, hardly able to serve as heavy cavalry. Their value was in the prestige of ownership.<sup>26</sup> This also reflects the cultural biases of the sources, which overwhelmingly preferred the imported breeds and the crosses with imported breeds over the horses bred locally. The horse’s ‘utility’ was to be

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<sup>23</sup> Digby, 27-29.

<sup>24</sup> Digby, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Digby, 29.

<sup>26</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract dated December 1786 states that: “No stable, however opulent can (even at immense expense) support a respectable corps of cavalry until their own province shall supply a sufficient number of horses possessed of the necessary qualifications for remounting their troupers.” This statement is followed by, “is it not therefore a matter of astonishment to behold a total neglect of so very important branch of administration in a kingdom which combines all the requisites for supplying and supporting studs.” These two statements were in response to the large imperial and noble stables in South Asia that boasted the finest horses compared to the dearth of such horses in the horse markets in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as experienced by British and French agents.

ridden on ceremonial occasions and kept in stables, fattened with costly feeds such as clarified butter (*ghi*), and peas, and was at least as important as the need for a horse who was robust enough to carry heavy cavalry. In order to unravel and explain the discrepancy in cost and utility, Digby focused on the horse in war.

After their initial conquest, Digby argues, rulers in the Delhi Sultanate (1192-1398) had access to a dwindling supply of the warhorses they needed to maintain power. His findings show that in response to the Mongol threat on the western borders and the Rajput tribes in the south, Sultan Balban (r. 1266-1287) and his successors tried to control access to the supply of imported breeds, notably from Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, through appointing key administrators to Sind and Bengal, implying both overland and maritime trade. Digby maintains that this tactic kept the Sultanate's two major enemies in check. The policy circumvented the need for Mongol horses from Central Asia and blocked enemy Rajput tribes' access to warhorses that could be used against them.<sup>27</sup> Digby goes on to outline the maritime and overland routes from Central Asia and the Himalayan mountains. His study convincingly demonstrates the importance of the horse as a fundamental instrument of South Asian warfare, however a consideration of the cultural context of his sources and fewer generalizations about the nature of the Delhi Sultanate would have led to a more nuanced understanding of horse consumption.

Digby's sources worked against him. He relied heavily on the *Tarikh-i Firuz-i Shah-i* by Diya' al-Din Barani (d. 1357), a Persian aristocrat whose family was enmeshed in the court of the Delhi Sultanate. Barani's preference for imported Persian breeds can be explained by his prejudice against local culture and natural preference for all things associated with his Perso-Islamic background. Indigenous "nags" would not pass

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<sup>27</sup> Digby, 20-23.

muster.<sup>28</sup> When Digby qualifies Barani as a source, he questions Barani's memory instead of his perspective.<sup>29</sup> Digby concluded that Barani's economic data should be considered approximate. However, his conclusions about which horses were suitable for warfare speak more to the cultural predilections of the author than to their abilities in battle.

Digby also relied heavily on *Adab al-Harb wa al-Shaja'ab* (Rules of War and Bravery), a genre piece originally written for gentlemen soldiers.<sup>30</sup> In this 13<sup>th</sup> century treatise, Muhammad bin Mansur Mubarrakshah outlined proper etiquette in warfare. This included religiously permissible wars, siege tactics, and political ruses.<sup>31</sup> However, instead of contextualizing this work as a literary genre, Digby grounds his argument on details central to this text, which he assumes were technical and incontrovertible, rather than produced by a specific cultural and historical context. For example, he interpreted the importance of heavy cavalry and calculated in the statistics of buying and discerning proper war horses, without considering that the varied terrain of Central Asia and India inevitably lead to different military needs and perspectives.<sup>32</sup> He treated other literary sources from a similar perspective. Consider the following example from the 14<sup>th</sup> century poet, Amir Khusrau:

The seaborne horse flies like the wind on the surface of the water, without even its feet becoming wet. And when the mountain horse steps on a hill, the hill trembles like a Hindi sword.<sup>33</sup>

From this quote, Digby noted the technical excellence of Hindi swords and the military superiority of Himalayan and Persian Gulf breeds, but the focus on utility overwhelmed their cultural value. A non-utilitarian reading of this treatise illustrates that Barani's

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<sup>28</sup> P. Hardy, "Barani," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill: Online, 2013); Digby, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Digby, 38.

<sup>30</sup> Fakhr al-Din Mudabbir and A. Zajaczkowski, *Le traité iranien de l'art militaire Adab al-Harb wa al-Shaja'a du xiii siècle* (Warsaw: Paustowowe Wydanecko Naukowe, 1969).

<sup>31</sup> Gerard Ghaliand, *The Art of War in World History: From Antiquity to the Nuclear Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 447-450.

<sup>32</sup> Digby, 15, 34, and 23 respectively.

<sup>33</sup> Digby, 48.

preferences were grounded in the symbolic value of their horse purchases, gifted and given as tribute while emphasizing the horses' and elephants' essential usefulness in battle.<sup>34</sup> Guides such as *Adab al-Harb* were needed to help the savvy cavalryman purchase the best value and warn him about deceptive horse traders. They promoted specific breeds and ensured the status of the horses' owners. Such works, however, also ensured the transmission of valued cultural beliefs and horse-lore to another generation of warrior elites. In other words, they were not simply utilitarian consumer guides, but established norms of proper manly comportment on a horse.

In his seminal 1994 article on the South Asian horse trade, Jos Gommans outlines the symbiotic relationship between the ecology of breeding areas and states' political stability in the eighteenth century. However, he does so based on the economic data first introduced by the Marxist analysis of the Mughal agrarian economy by Irfan Habib, the founder of the so-called Aligarh school of Mughal Studies. While Gommans, influenced by recent historiography, questioned Habib's Marxist analysis of Mughal power and its decline, he remained heavily reliant on data first presented in Habib's work.<sup>35</sup> By the time Gommans published his work more convincing scholarship has established that the eighteenth-century Mughal economy was strong and that the diverse peasant population was also thriving.<sup>36</sup> Habib's research is central to Gommans' own argument, which maintains that the most successful breeding areas were based on a close relationship between sedentary groups and pastoral nomads. Unstable political relationships between the groups who controlled areas on the periphery of breeding

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<sup>34</sup> Digby, 33.

<sup>35</sup> Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963); For a valuable summary of Habib's argument, see: Rizul Islam, "Review," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28, no. 1 (1965): 173. The peasantry's abject poverty forced them to abandon cultivating the already exhausted land, eliminating the Mughal tax base, which in turn explained the "decline" of the Mughal empire.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); John F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Sanjay Subrahmanayam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (London: Longman, 1993).

grounds, notably the Afghan Durranis, actually promoted the horse trade. However in semi-humid areas such as Kathiawar, where the ecology could not support sustained pasturage, and constant warfare ruined agriculture, breeding programs failed. On the other hand, in north central Rohilkhand, the three factors struck a balance that sustained agriculture, horse breeding, and the economy.<sup>37</sup>

Gommans' work also built on Simon Digby's utilitarian view of the horse as a commodity within a globalizing early modern world system. Using East India Company records, Gommans paints a detailed picture of the spring and fall fairs (*melas*) that serviced courts throughout South Asia with a steady supply of horses. Pastoral nomads from Central Asia, especially Afghanistan, bought horses near Balkh and Bukhara, fattened them on the Central Asian steppes during summer months, then moved with livestock caravans *en masse* over the Sulaimana mountains. From there, the Afghani merchants favored the northern route through Khyber pass and down into the Lakh Jungle and Jullundar Doab where they would rest and pasture horses until October or November without state intrusion. The largest fair for this route was in the northern entrepot Haridwar, on the bank of the Ganges. *Chabuk-sawars* (army officers and court agents) would either buy strings of imported *Turki* horses based on a representative few, or place orders for horses to be delivered on their way back 'home' in the spring. The agents would sell the best and worst of the string, then keep middle range horses for cavalry. During periods when political instability blocked the overland routes, sea routes connected the northern and southern markets and ensured southern kingdoms' access to imported warhorses. Local breeds from Punjab and Rohilkhand were available year round.<sup>38</sup> The problem with the picture painted by the British accounts is that it fails to account for the actual complexity of the trade infrastructure. The horse trade outspent

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<sup>37</sup> Gommans, "The Eighteenth-Century Horse Trade in South Asia," 245-246.

<sup>38</sup> Gommans, "The Eighteenth-Century Horse Trade in South Asia," 231-234.

the combined trade of European trading companies. Gommans estimated that 16,500,000 rupees were spent annually on the horse trade in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup> At the end of the century, the British spent a total of 36,847,15.10 rupees only on the breeding establishment in Pusa Moorcroft took over in 1810.<sup>40</sup> Gommans thus demonstrated the central significance of the transregional horse trade in the political economy of 18<sup>th</sup> century South Asia. It quite literally made and unmade the Afghan Durrani empire.<sup>41</sup>

Despite Gommans' erudite command of economic history, he still treats his sources as relatively transparent works to be mined for data. Gommans relied on dispatches from the veterinarian, adventurer, and spy, William Moorcroft, for the bulk of his information.<sup>42</sup> In 1819, the EIC sent Moorcroft on a fact-finding mission to survey suitable mounts for the British cavalry and report on political conditions in the peripheral regions. He vanished in 1825 during one of his missions in the Hindu-Kush; his letters were later gathered and edited by Horace Wilson, secretary for the Asiatic Society of Bengal and Sanskrit professor at Oxford.<sup>43</sup> The picture Gommans described based on Moorcroft's papers is flawed because likewise Moorcroft failed to appreciate the cultural complexities of the world he infiltrated.

Two important points illustrate the cultural biases and limitations of Gommans' sources for his arguments. First, as shown in chapter 5 below, Moorcroft had a strong preference for the Central Asian breeds promoted by the *farasnamas* and horse merchants. Rather than question the cultural bias, Gommans skeptically focused on the absence of good breeding grounds in India. The environmental debate about South

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<sup>39</sup> Gommans, "The Eighteenth-Century Horse Trade in South Asia," 239.

<sup>40</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Report dated 23 September 1806. This is topic is analyzed in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>41</sup> Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 68-103.

<sup>42</sup> Wendy Doniger, "Presidential Address: 'I have Scinde': Flogging a Dead (White Male Orientalist) Horse," *Journal of Asian Studies* 58 no. 4 (Nov. 1999): 953-955.

<sup>43</sup> Doniger, 954.

Asian ecology, essential to both Digby and Gommans, began with the colonial sources they used. Digby based his argument on the premise that the South Asian ecology could not provide suitable pastures; slightly more nuanced, Gommans held that the tropical environment in western India was less suitable than the semi-arid northern territories. The numerous colonial accounts of smaller and degenerate horses in humid environments is a theme based on contemporary European scientific debates. As colonial projects followed trading companies, they expanded into less familiar, and mostly tropical areas. The European predilection for large sturdy horses, built like themselves, informed their racially superior opinions of themselves *vis a vis* the shorter indigenous types they encountered, thus transferring colonial logic as applied to both human and equine bodies. Such differences were universally ignored when it came to maintaining any theory championing the white ‘Orientalist’ man’s racial superiority. From the Orientalist scientific perspective, it was the humid climate that led to sexual promiscuity and resulted in undesirable yet unacknowledged ‘sturdy’ breeds of humans and horses. According to such a view, Europeans could control both their environment and the breeding of horses they valued at home and abroad without unnecessary “mixing” with degenerate local people and animals, respectively.<sup>44</sup> The consistently biased opinions of these sources cloud conclusions concerning South Asian ecology and its impact on the horse trade. Second, the misinterpretation of the credit systems also stemmed from Moorcroft’s premise that he was dealing with economies that were neither complex nor modern. Gommans also simplified the credit system needed to support such extensive trading networks.<sup>45</sup> My cultural and literary research helps to reconcile this gap between

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<sup>44</sup> Greg Bankoff, “A Question of Breeding: Zootechny and Colonial Attitudes toward the Tropical Environment in the Late Nineteenth-Century Philippines,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 2 (May 2001): 424-430. For an earlier version of this argument, see Ivana Elbl, “The Horse in Fifteenth-Century Senegambia,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, no. 1 (1991): 85-110.

<sup>45</sup>For the academic debate surrounding *hundis* (credit notes), see Lakshmi Subramaniam, “Banias and the British: the Role of Indigenous Credit in the Process of Imperial Expansion in Western

numbers, ecology, and trade by acknowledging the culturally biases that have clouded the topic of horses in South Asia.

The novel cultural and literary analysis of this dissertation draws upon the sporadic treatment of these texts within Mughal studies, including recent scholarship on religious identity, multilingual literary traditions, masculinity, and warrior cultures.

Scholarship on South Asian literary genres and the largely multilingual cosmopolitan communities who composed them is growing. Attention to religious dimensions of secular texts has sometimes overwhelmed the literary texture and nuance of these texts.<sup>46</sup>

*Farasnamas* include both Hindu and Muslim religious symbols and associated lore as part of each text, yet without the intention of conversion or proselytization. These elements are culturally motivated. The inclusion of Islamic references is designed to show how to be a *ghazi*, here meaning a warrior who happened to be Muslim on a horse in the tradition of other famous *ghazis* rather than making a call for holy war. This image changes over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, the seventeenth-century *ghazi* did not ride a piebald (solid colored horse with large spots) into battle and the religious references he could summon whilst imaging his proper comportment on a horse included historical anecdotes and mostly spurious hadiths from both the Sunni and Shi'a authorities.<sup>47</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, Fa'iz tells us that a *ghazi* could and did ride a piebald and in fact, there were husbandry techniques that could increase the odds of breeding a multi-colored horse. Fa'iz's image of the *ghazi* drew from mainly Shi'a hadiths and *du'as* (prayers), which foreground the deeds of Ali.<sup>48</sup>

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India in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 21 no.3 (1987): 473-510; M. Torri, "Trapped Inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (May, 1991): 367 – 401; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce, Southern India 1500 – 1650* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>46</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Velcheru Rao, and David Shulman, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600-1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001 and 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Chapter 2.

<sup>48</sup> Chapter 3.

The closing of the century brought more groups and sub-groups into the cosmopolitan warrior milieu and the *ghaz̤i* was no longer a useful category in and of itself.<sup>49</sup> Carl Ernst discussed the non-religious nature of religious texts in the sense that language choice was not always associated with religion, but with acquisition of knowledge.<sup>50</sup> As a multilingual genre, the *farasnama* falls into what we today consider a ‘blurred periphery’ of a literary cannon discussed by Shantanu Phukan. He argued that it was on the blurred peripheries of literary cannons where we “can glimpse the intricate interdependencies and rivalries – in a word the ecology – of literary communities.”<sup>51</sup> By looking at more than single versions of texts in single languages, he argued further that we can recognize multiple literary voices interacting with each other.<sup>52</sup> It is difficult to judge which texts were considered canonical between 1600-1850, however I would argue that the wide dispersal of *farasnamas*, the recognition of previous versions, and the evolving and deliberate continuation of the genre by notable authors place these well within the mainstream of Mughal courtly and literary traditions. Such texts lie on the periphery of literary texts we recognize today as important to Mughal Studies, but were very much intrinsic in its own contemporary literary culture.

Rosalind O’Hanlon’s work on concepts of masculinity in imperial and noble courts informs the cultural concepts of manliness and martial bravery these treatises promote for warriors. She argues that the qualities, behaviors, and roles associated with manliness were linked with social groups and used to create hierarchies among men. Their social relationships, ideas of kingship, signifying power relationships, symbolic and social roles defined these hierarchies.<sup>53</sup> In North India, she contends, “codes about

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<sup>49</sup> Chapter 4.

<sup>50</sup> Carl Ernst, “Muslim Studies of Hinduism?,” 173-195.

<sup>51</sup> Shantanu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved: Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15 (2000): 7.

<sup>52</sup> Phukan, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no.1 (1999): 50-52.

martial bravery and correct manly behavior formed part of a wider common language and set of assumptions” that does not appear in the historiography.<sup>54</sup> The inward-looking concept of *javanmardi* (Pr. manliness) became a norm of comportment in the early seventeenth century and was complemented by the outwardly comportmental norm of expressive displays of power that focused on public enactment of universal kingship and rituals of display.<sup>55</sup> Properly exhibiting these ideals in thought and action was one avenue towards upward mobility and greater social status among elite warrior groups. One of O’Hanlon’s conclusions was that these codes solidified in the late seventeenth-century in the context of changing patterns in courtly cultural consumption and display as new wealthy servants and gentry sought admission.<sup>56</sup> For O’Hanlon, political, military, and religious elites were defining masculinity. By the late eighteenth century, emerging warrior groups including the Afghans, Sikhs, and Marathas challenged the luxury and hierarchy of the Mughal and noble courts with their own martial norms.<sup>57</sup> The magnificence of their fighting animals, she says, was one fundamental way to display authority in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> Displays of conspicuous consumption had shifted by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to displays of martial skill as proof of manliness: “At a simple level, celebrating a man’s war animals offered another means of talking about his own qualities.”<sup>59</sup>

          Their hoofs stamp the ground as soon as the foot touches the stirrup; they go like the wind, these milk-white steeds...by strong chains two grooms lead them; they pull at the chains and prance. They have arched backs, are white, youthful, strong and young. They are as if formed in moulds out of gold, they are beautiful

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<sup>54</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Duke University Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>55</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service,” 54.

<sup>56</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service,” 84.

<sup>57</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service,” 85.

<sup>58</sup> O’Hanlon, “Masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad,” 26.

<sup>59</sup> O’Hanlon, “Masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad,” 31.

in shape and form... they leap and bound, in strength they are like elephants.

Sahib Asgar, these are the steeds of a great lord.<sup>60</sup>

One especially notable aspect of this display of masculinity and its connection to war horses is that the horses are white. The white horse was reserved for ceremony in the seventeenth century according to the *farasnama-i hindi* and it was not until the middle and late eighteenth century that this norm slackened as available stocks of horses dwindled.<sup>61</sup>

One of the interventions my research proposes is that the *farasnama* provided an underlying framework that helped the aspiring warrior conceptualize himself appropriately, on a horse. In the case of the *ghaz̤i*, the *farasnama* provided a pragmatic source from which to visualize oneself as a *ghaz̤i* connected to other contemporaries by shared concepts and ideals of horsemanship.

The ideals expressed in these treatises were present on battlefields and expressed in noble and imperial courts. Elite patterns of consumption can be seen in period artwork and genres related to the *farasnama*, for example, the *mirzanama* (proper comportment for gentleman). The *mirza* (gentleman) was defined as much by his manners, commodities (such as horses), and culture as much as by his ability to consume.<sup>62</sup> The example of the piebald is illustrative. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, normative culture proscribed riding a piebald into battle but instead in gardens. This principle is articulated in both the *mirzanamas* and the Firuz Jang manuscripts.<sup>63</sup> To substantiate this principle, Shah Jahan is riding a piebald in a garden in Figure 9 and in every painting in the epic *Hamzanama* – there is not one instance of a man riding a piebald in battle.<sup>64</sup> The horses that filled courtly stables had specific cultural functions. Understanding these

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<sup>60</sup> William Irvine, “The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad – A Chronicle (1713-1857), Part 1,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 47 (1878): 372; also quoted in O’Hanlon, “Masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad,” 31.

<sup>61</sup> Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service,” 69.

<sup>63</sup> *Mirzanama*, (British Library) Br. Per. MS. Add. 16,817.

<sup>64</sup> John Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in association with Azimuth Editions, London, 2002).

functions and participating in the normative culture they promoted was one of the ways groups achieved upward mobility. The following story about Rathor Rav Viramde Vagharat of Sojhat (ca. 1515) illustrates the practical and cultural importance of these systems.

The one day a battle occurred. So [the stable keeper] had given Hardas Viramdeji's fine horse to ride, [the horse] that was used on ceremonial occasions; thus Hardas and the horse were both wounded. [Then] Hardas came to Sojhat. [His] wounds were bound. Then Viramde said, "Be off, Hardas! You caused injury to my horse worth five thousand [rupees]!" Then Hardas said, "Worthless Rajput! I caused injury to my own body [as well]." Then Hardas, being offended, set off without [his] wounds being healed.<sup>65</sup>

Although this anecdote comes from the late sixteenth century, the contrast here between a war horse and a horse for ceremony is clear. The exorbitant prices of horses, stables, and maintenance implied here and outlined in this dissertation signals that these horses were not primarily intended for the battlefield. It also implies the multiple stereotypes associated with different identities groups of military labor moving forward into the seventeenth century.

Ghazis and Rajputs were just two of many groups who participated in the burgeoning military labor market. In his work on the military labor market, Dirk Kolff highlights the significance of the wide spectrum of available labor.<sup>66</sup> The overwhelming numbers of highly mobile and armed peasantry tended their fields and soldiered in the off-season, supplying the bulk of Mughal forces. Their employers, Mughals or otherwise, were challenged by the peasantry's agency in switching sides as well as refusing to pay

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<sup>65</sup> Norman Ziegler, "Evolution of the Rathor State of Marwar: Horses, Structural Change, and Warfare," in *The Idea of Rajasthan: Explorations in Regional Identity*, eds. Schomer, Karine, John L. Erdman, and Deryck O. Lodrick (Manohar Publishers, 2001), 193.

<sup>66</sup> Dirk Kolff, *Naikar, Rajput, and Sepoy: the Ethnohistory of the Military Labor Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3-6.

taxes. The Mughals attempted to resolve insurgency with the threat of enslavement, deportation, or death. The Firuz Jang tradition suggests that promoting an inclusive warrior identity – in this case a *ghazi* – was another way to approach the issue.<sup>67</sup> Their ties to their original villages and identities loosened over the course of the seventeenth century.<sup>68</sup> Firuz Jang himself was an elite warrior, a well-promoted *ghazi*, who rose up the ranks of the *mansabdari* system. Kolff uses Jang (Abdullah Khan) in his introduction to illustrate the difficulty of pacifying an armed and recalcitrant peasantry. He maintains that this armed peasantry parleyed for more and more benefits in an economic environment where most peasants chose, rather than needed, secondary work.<sup>69</sup>

Stewart Gordon's work on the Marathas outlines the nuances of the relationships between peasant farmers and the rulers they tolerated. This warrior tribe (c.1600-1818) was notorious for the guerrilla warfare tactics they used against Mughal and British armies. They favored small fast horses with solid footing in order to easily transition between the steppe and mountains of western India. In the seventeenth century Shahji Bhonsle successfully negotiated his rise from petty horse trader to fort commander. Under the vacillating patronage of the Golconda and Bijapuri courts, he built a sizable following based on his ability to attract peasants to cultivate land and maintain their settlements as a tax base. His son Shivaji (d. 1680) severed ties with both courts and established his own kingdom on the now extensive complex of his father's forts.<sup>70</sup> Both men represent one side of the multifaceted relationship between rulers and the groups they ruled. Ruling was a "high risk, high return investment."<sup>71</sup> Whether termed 'agricultural workers' or peasants, they alternated seasonally between the fields and the

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<sup>67</sup> Cynthia Talbot, "Becoming Turk the Rajput Way: Conversion and Identity in an Indian Warrior Narrative," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (January 2009): 211-243.

<sup>68</sup> Kolff, 30.

<sup>69</sup> Kolff, 1-6.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart Gordon, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Marathas, 1600-1818*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 37-42.

<sup>71</sup> Gordon, 30-35.

battlefield. Like the Rajputs, Maratha troops were largely responsible for bringing their own horses.<sup>72</sup>

My analysis of the *farasnama* ties in directly with the new analyses of the Mughal Empire as a dynamic imperial formation fueled by the upward mobility of peasant and pastoral groups working together with elite groups in Indian society who had command over complex economic and bureaucratic systems. The horse trade moved through these systems, supporting and extending the cultural norms on which these relationships were based. Even without crunching the numbers of the astonishing economic and political scale of this trade, one begins to get a sense of how truly extensive the cultural systems were that supported it, and how critical these same cultural systems were to maintaining the political power of the warrior elite.

## Chapter Outline

The contents of this project are organized chronologically. Beginning in the early seventeenth century, Chapter Two focuses on the Firuz Jang tradition of manuscripts. “Real Men Don’t Ride Piebalds” is based on what I have identified as a tradition of manuscripts, rather than an original with multiple recensions. Almost all treatises in this tradition tell the story of Firuz Jang, who took a hillfort in Udaipur from Rana Amar Singh in 1611, after Singh repeatedly failed to pay taxes to the Mughals. Most importantly, in a time when the Mughals were at their most expansive, pushing deeper into the west and south, with little resistance, this tradition puts forward the ghazi, here defined as a Muslim soldier based on a composite set of Perso-Islamic ideals and lore associated with horses. The most obvious of which was the proscription against riding a piebald into battle. As the first ‘Persian translation of Salihotra’s Sanskrit horse treatise,’ this tradition subsumes the Indic tradition and places the Persian and the Islamic lore to

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<sup>72</sup> Gordon, 15-16.

the fore in a period when the abundance of horses imported by maritime and overland routes was secure. Chapter Three traces the evolution of this tradition of South Asian horse lore into the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Anand Ram Mukhlis' *Rahat al-Faras* (The Comfort of the Horse) and *Tuhfat al-Sadr* (al-Sadr's Gift) by Fa'iz respond to a dwindling supply of horses by expanding the comportmental ideals that established acceptable mounts while reaffirming the Vedic tradition in the case of Mukhlis and the Perso-Islamic in the case of Fa'iz. Either could now acceptably ride the piebald into battle, but the 'blue' horse began to appear almost solely by the Rajput in period paintings while the piebald only rose in popularity. This expansion in norms was coupled with each author's attempt to find new sources of veterinary medicine in order to better maintain the supply of horses within South Asia. Mukhlis looked to Greek veterinary medicine and promoted bleeding horses. Fa'iz delved into the Arabic veterinary advice in order to suggest husbandry techniques that would produce the piebald with more assurance. Both authors emphasized the authority of textual sources from outside the Subcontinent.

I based Chapter Four on the late eighteenth-century treatise by Rangin. His *Farasat-nama* is unique for several reasons. First, it is in Urdu verse instead of Persian prose, which signaled the irreversible decline of Mughal court culture in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, coupled with the rise of new vigorous regional states. The linguistic departure is coupled with a stylistic and authoritative change that, like previous chapters, evidences the ability of the genre to evolve to incorporate changes in cultural preference. Unlike previous authors, Rangin was an experienced horse merchant and soldier. This lived experience allowed him to promote the Deccan as a new source for an even more restricted number of horses, which were better suited to the style of light cavalry that became popular as the Marathas and the Durrani utilized in more effective ways in winning battles against the Mughals. Rangin's experience with these newly powerful

groups also allowed him to incorporate a more diverse group of cultural preferences than ever before, including, but not limited to British views.

Chapter Five focuses on British horse culture and the East India Company's failed attempt at breeding horses in South Asia. The failure was not due to environmental factors, but to the inability of the British to adjust their cultural preference to the realities of horse culture and breeding practices in South Asia.

## Chapter 2. REAL MEN DO NOT RIDE PIEBALDS: FIRUZ JANG'S FARASNAMA-I HINDI

### The Persian Translation of Salihotra's Horse Treatise

The central issue of this chapter is the command that emerging Mughal elites had to demonstrate over diverse forms of cultural knowledge about horse-lore that circulated among warrior groups in seventeenth-century South Asia. Farasnama in this early period drew from both Perso-Arabic and Indic traditions and reveal the importance of leveraging that knowledge in order for leaders to present themselves as the consummate, masculine cavalry commander whose command over the essential tool of cavalry war—the horse—was undisputed. This is perhaps most visible in Firuz Jang's *Farasnama-i Hindi* (the Persian translation of Salihotra's horse treatise). The chunky and unimaginative title of this text belies the popularity of this work among Mughal noblemen and administrators. In this chapter, I analyze the Firuz Jang manuscript tradition, its antecedents, and relationship with Salihotra's Vedic tradition of horse lore and place it in the historical context of Firuz Jang's world.

In 1611, the Mughal commander Abdullah Khan Bahadur led a raid on the hill fort of the tax-evading Rajput, Amar Singh in Udaipur.<sup>73</sup> Victorious, Abdullah was awarded the title Firuz Jang (hereafter, I refer to him only as Firuz Jang). Amongst the

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<sup>73</sup>The story of this raid occurs in the preface of most of the Firuz Jang manuscript traditions. Zayn al-Abidin Husayni Hashimi, *Faras-nama-yi Hashimi*, ed. D.C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Hashimi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910), 3; Joseph Earles, *A treatise on horses, entitled Saloter, or, a complete system of Indian farriery... Compiled originally by a society of learned pundits, in the Shanscrit language: translated thence into Persian... by Abdallah Khan Firoze Jung... which is now translated into English, by Joseph Earles* (Calcutta: George Gordon, 1788), 97-98. The event was also recorded in the following biographical dictionaries: Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangir-i; or, Memoirs of Jahangir*, trans. by Alexander Rogers, ed. by Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968), 74; Shah Nawaz Khan, Samsam al-Mulk 'Abd al-Hayy, *Maathir-ul-Umara Vol. 1*, trans. by H. Beveridge and Baini Prasad (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1941), 97-98. When Phillott collected the manuscripts in this tradition, he assumed that Firuz Jang plagiarized the earlier treatise by Hashimi. The Hashimi treatise, discussed in Chapter 1, dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Phillott named the compilation after Hashimi in an effort to give proper credit to the original author not understanding the genre or the references in the text.

booty he found a copy of Salihotra's *Asvasastra*, a South Asian compilation of classical texts about horse lore. Jang commissioned his pandits to translate the text from Hindavi into Persian, the official language of the Mughal Empire, in commemoration of his victory.<sup>74</sup> So begins the most copied version of the South Asian Persian horse treatise (*farasnama-i hindi*). The *farasnama* is a well-known genre with a long tradition in the Persian literary corpus but consistently overlooked in favor of works we now deem more historically and culturally pertinent.<sup>75</sup> Equally, the *Asvasastra* (Vedic horse treatise) has received limited attention despite the multitude of South Asian languages in which it appears.<sup>76</sup> Neither manuscript tradition can be traced to one original text or author. Instead, both were evolving textual traditions that continued to adapt to trends in South Asian horse culture until the twentieth century, when this tradition lost its relevance as a guide for martial masculine comportment.

The Firuz Jang manuscript tradition presents a multifaceted view of *ghazī* warrior culture in the diverse and growing cosmopolitan Mughal Empire. The imagined *ghazī* was promoted by Firuz Jang, his anonymous scribes, and those who commissioned, purchased, and copied this text for some two centuries after it was first commissioned. The manuscripts themselves are usually found tattered and often have copious marginal notes in illegible handwriting both of which indicate they were well-used. These were by no stretch of the imagination ornate manuscripts. Their simple language and instructive illustrations, combined with their connection with towns on trade routes make the

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<sup>74</sup>Hindavi could refer to any Indian language, but given the Rajput context was likely either Sanskrit or Braj Bhasa, a literary language that enjoyed patronage in several Rajput courts. Allison Busch, "The Anxiety of Literary Innovation: The Practice of Literary Science in Hindi/Riti Tradition," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 45-60. Vernacular languages in South Asia: Sheldon Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1 (1998): 6.

<sup>75</sup> Iraj Afsar, "Faras-nama" *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1999.

<sup>76</sup> English translations: Nakula, Sandeep Joshi, et al. *Asvasastram - An Illustrated Book of Equinology* (Jaipur: Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University, 2008); Hemasuri, V. Krishnasamy, V. Vijayaragharavacharya, *Asva-sastra or the Science of Horses* (Tirupati: P.N. Press, 1928); Nakula, *Asvasastra by Nakula with Coloured Illustrations*. ed. S. Gopalan (Tanjore: T.M.S.S.M. Library, 1952).

manuscripts in the Firuz Jang tradition a unique opportunity to study, among other things, how these treatises disseminated a horse-lore that promoted a specific kind of Indo-Persian *ghazī*. Their *ghazī* was defined by his knowledge of Perso and Arabo-Islamic horse culture. He was adept at negotiating the prescribed details of masculine comportment. Drawing from a wide range of sources, the tradition combined all appropriate conceptions of comportment and presented them as an introduction to the aspiring *ghazī* in South Asia. This was no small feat considering the influx of immigrants to South Asia during this period as well as the multiple martial groups vying for authority while negotiating and redefining their group identities. The *ghazī* image promoted in the Firuz Jang tradition was the counterpart to the Rajput, whose own versions of warrior culture were in the process of becoming an exclusive, rather than inclusive affair.<sup>77</sup> While the tradition was first established in the early seventeenth century, copies continued to be produced until the middle of the nineteenth century.

This literary genre falls on what we understand today as the periphery of the Indo-Persian canon, where we can begin to examine some of the “intricate interdependencies and rivalries” that composed what Shantahu Phukan has described as the ‘ecologies’ of literary communities.<sup>78</sup> However, I would suggest that the genre occupied a more central role in its contemporary context. The widespread dispersal of the tradition as well as the consistency with which its normative prescriptions appear in texts such as manuals for proper comportment (*mirzanama*) and in period artwork lead to the conclusion that the horse treatise played a central role in establishing and maintaining cultural norms. Subtle linguistic markers, such as the Arabic term *kumayt* (bay horse) that recurs despite a host of other options, and places this horse culture along what Stuart

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<sup>77</sup> Karine Shomer, “Warband and Court” in *The Idea of Rajasthan*, ed. Shomer (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 45-55.

<sup>78</sup> Shantahu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved: Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15, no. 5 (2000): 7.

Gordon refers to as ‘the cognitive geography of routes.’<sup>79</sup> Trade routes, military routes, and pilgrimage routes occupied much the same spaces in Mughal India. An awareness of proper comportment as conceptualized by groups along these routes was important to preserve. The Firuz Jang manuscript tradition not only offered a shared *ghaz̤i* horse culture, but a manual for how to buy horses that would appeal to large noble households and thus assist in supplying the diverse cavalry contingents they were required to attract. Its dispersal along the trade routes that connected northern pilgrimage sites and bazaar towns only bolsters the argument that this represents one version – the *ghaz̤i* version – of a shared ideal of outward masculine comportment. Firuz Jang’s own spectacular and well-publicized success spread along these routes by way of the *farasnama* tradition bearing his name.

This chapter focuses on how and why the seventeenth-century Firuz Jang tradition incorporated and made use of localized horse lore, ascribing such knowledge to the ancient Vedic Sage, Salihotra, while at the same time privileging the dominant Perso-Islamic tradition. This mixing of traditions and cultural references is too dense to unravel piecemeal. Instead, by focusing on the audience, in our case, groups of lower to mid-level, Persian-speaking *mansabdars*, who aspired to the higher ranks Firuz Jang achieved, we learn how they negotiated identity and manliness and how this intricate mixing informed their negotiations. I argue that this complicated mixing presented a composite ideal of outward masculine comportment. Rather than the internalized ethical concepts of *khanaz̤adi* (imperial service) and *javanmardi* (manly comportment) that were gradually integrated into the authoritative masculinity shared by the most elite Mughal nobility, the Firuz Jang tradition provides a visual guide to outward comportment and consumption.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Stewart Gordon, Talk at the University of Washington: 8 March 2013; Jos Gommans, “The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 3 (1994): 228-233.

<sup>80</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007): 889-923.

This Indo-Persian masculinity is described in detail and builds on famous *ghazi* personas of the past, while offering contemporary advice on how to present oneself to an audience of military men and inspire their loyalty, at least for the course of the battle.

### **The Manuscripts: Salihotra and Firuz Jang**

The manuscripts that fall into the Salihotra and Firuz Jang traditions do not trace back to one original - not in Persian, Sanskrit, Hindavi or Braj Bhasa, or any of the other host of languages in which they were recorded. Some manuscripts record slightly different details, an issue which compelled more recent researchers to compile them in edited volumes.<sup>81</sup> I refer to the two as ‘traditions’ in order to differentiate the multiple manuscripts from ‘recensions,’ which implies a reference to an original or standardized manuscript, and does not adequately characterize the nature of this collection of manuscripts. ‘Recension’ would also carry with it the idea that the Persian ‘translations’ actually conveyed the same information as the Salihotra treatises, written in multiple vernacular languages. Each manuscript records slightly different details, whether in terms of poetry, stories, or definitions of which horse is auspicious or inauspicious and under which circumstances. However they differ in the choices dictated by scribal authority, these traditions form the foundation for what I can only assume was a standard basis of knowledge on horses and horse lore across the multi-cultural South Asian milieu.

The white king’s horse (Figures 5 and 6) and the spotted piebald (Figures 8 and 9) illustrate how the ideas on horse lore and comportment merged. A solidly white horse was auspicious because of its rarity, as is the advice to not ride a piebald into battle but in

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<sup>81</sup>The Orientalist scholar, D. C. Phillott gathered six manuscripts for his edited compilation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although he focused more on the issue of plagiarism – he assumed the similarities between manuscripts were due to Firuz Jang’s theft of an earlier recension attributed to Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat (d. 1526) and his scribe Hashimi (explanation follows). Phillott, v-vii. Gopalan does not specify which of the Saraswati Mahal Library’s collection of Salihotra’s *Asvasastras* he gathered, except that they were in Marathi and Sanskrit. Gopalan, vi-viii.

gardens because such a horse will draw the attention of the enemy on the battlefield.<sup>82</sup> These comportmental ideals became normative when multiple illustrations of rulers appear on white horses at coronations and processions, and noblemen are portrayed riding piebalds in gardens. Thus, through the seventeenth century, even horses used primarily for display or ceremonial purpose came to be associated with particular contexts. The Salihotra and Firuz Jang tradition occupy a space Shantahu Phukan described as the “blurred periphery of literary canons, for it is there that we glimpse the intricate interdependencies and rivalries – in a word the ecology – of literary communities.”<sup>83</sup> It was here that Firuz Jang asserted his Persianate *ghazi* dominance over Amar Singh’s Rajput horse culture, in part due to his greater knowledge of the Central Asian horse-lore and his ability to link this knowledge to the emerging cultural preferences of the new Mughal elite. However we see this genre as peripheral only today. In the seventeenth century, the particularities of each horse were both well known, as evidenced by their repetition across literary genres and reflected in period artwork.

### **Salihotra’s *Asvasastra*.**

The treatises that make up Salihotra’s tradition are based on veterinary knowledge attributed to the Vedic veterinary sage Salihotra and transmitted orally and textually through his disciples, the most famous of whom was Nakula, one of the younger brothers of the Mahabharata epic, as the *Asvasastra*.<sup>84</sup> Like the Firuz Jang tradition, the texts that comprise this tradition cannot be traced back to one single original, furthermore, the languages they appear in - Marathi, Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, and Rajasthani - fall outside of my linguistic range. I relied on a partially translated rendition, titled *Asvasastra by Nakula*, compiled from five Tamil and Marathi manuscripts

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<sup>82</sup> See ‘Oypavaha’ in Table 1 below. Earles, Introduction; Phillott, 4:14-21 and 5:1-15.

<sup>83</sup> Shantahu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved,” 7.

<sup>84</sup> *Asvasastra, by Nakula*. Please see the bibliography for a partial list of untranslated Asvasastras.

as the basis for my analysis. Common to all surveyed manuscripts in this tradition is Salihotra's introduction as the sage who cast a spell to remove the wings from the first horses so they could complement Indra's war elephants in battle.<sup>85</sup> He offered this treatise as compensation for their loss, promising that he would teach men the secrets of horse lore and how to properly care for them.<sup>86</sup> Also like the Firuz Jang tradition, the manuscripts vary in length with some versions extending to 122 folios and others a mere few. As a whole, these manuscripts instruct the reader on how to find the best horse in a herd, advise on auspicious and inauspicious horses, and which horses are suitable for various groups of riders. The introduction relates the story told above, followed by chapters that include lists of auspicious and inauspicious markings, whorls (places where the hair pattern changes), remedies for common illnesses, and the correct mounts for different social groups. The accompanying illustrations vary in number but offer simply rendered depictions of horses or described in the manuscripts.

Characteristics of desirable horses were broken down into three large categories (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*) and numerous subcategories based on behavior. The heroic, strong, and noble *Sattva* horses are the most desirable because of their excellent memories, appreciation for music and piety. *Rajas* are moody and tend toward gluttony and fear. The very undesirable *Tamas* category is characterized by dull laziness and anxiety.<sup>87</sup> Auspicious and inauspicious horses are then described in great detail: for instance, "If a horse has black hooves and white on its legs or white on two legs, it has to be condemned."<sup>88</sup> The horse with "...black upper lips, scrotum, hooves, tail, head, eyes and penis and white on other parts, it will cause loss to the king."<sup>89</sup> Their auspiciousness is as much connected to whorls (*avartas*) as to markings (*pundras*). Auspicious appearance and desired behaviors combined to produce appropriate horses on different occasions and

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<sup>85</sup> *Asvasastra by Nakula*, 206-207. The story of Salihotra removing the horses wings for the "Raja" Indra is also related in Anand Ram Mukhlis' *Rabat al-Faras Or. 5762*, fols. 7 recto and verso.

<sup>86</sup> Salihotra's oath appears in the *Asvacikitsita* (Hunting treatise) cited in *Asvasastra by Nakula*, 207.

<sup>87</sup> *Asvasastra by Nakula*, 219-221.

<sup>88</sup> *Asvasastra by Nakula*, 215.

<sup>89</sup> *Asvasastra by Nakula*, 215-216.

for different riders.<sup>90</sup> My chart below illustrates the level of detail involved in the typology of marked horses in this Indic tradition of horse lore.

Rider/Occasion	Color	Characteristic	Quality	Whorls/Markings
<i>Devas</i> (Deities)	Red, light green, green, blue in color; red, yellow, white in body.	<i>Sattvik</i> : courageous and clean.		
<i>Purohita</i> (pandits and priests)	Dark cloud colored with white spots covering the body. White hoofs and eyes.	<i>Sattvik</i> : heroic and clean, good and patient	Neigh of lion or elephant, lotus-like face, good smell	Good <i>avartas</i> and capable of all trots.
Kings	White, black, red, yellow, multicolored.	<i>Sattvik</i> : fond of perfume, youthful and patient, intelligent, strong and valorous. No mildness or fear.	Pleasant face, lips, chin, teeth, eyes and tail. Perfect limbs and well-built body.	Good <i>avartas</i> and <i>lalamas</i> . No disease, bad marks. Good stride.
<i>Ksatriyasva</i> (advisors)	White, yellow, red, or black.		Perfect limbs, face, and beautiful hairs.	Stride of lion or elephant.
<i>Sannahya</i> (soldiers)		<i>Sattvik</i> : steady, bold, intelligent.	Good smell.	Good <i>lalamas</i> .
<i>Paramasva</i> (divine horse)	All attributes of king's horse, but: color of rising sun or full moon.	Brahma in his face. The Sun in his eyes. King of Serpents in his ears. The Moon on his forehead. ...		This horse should not be used for riding, but only worshipped.
<i>Onpavahya</i> (riding horses)	Multi-colored.	<i>Sattvik</i> : energetic, fearless, spirited.	Strong legs and comfortable back.	
<i>Abhisecankia</i> (coronation)	White.	<i>Sattvik</i> attributes.		Good <i>avartas</i> and auspicious markings in face, lips, teeth, chin.

(Table 1) Appropriate horses for different occasions and riders.

The remarkable similarities of this tradition from one manuscript to the next and the unadorned and instructive illustrations suggest several conclusions. First, the cultural constructs built around horses were shared at least by the groups who consumed them. They instructed on both how to purchase a horse, but also what to expect of an appropriately comported man on a horse. Second, this shared sensibility extended into other genres of literature without further mention as basic knowledge. At least one

<sup>90</sup> *Asvasasatra* by Nakula, 225-226.

published *Asvacikitsa* (hunting treatise) contains similar illustrations.<sup>91</sup> In her lexicographical analysis of Sanskrit horse treatises, Wendy Doniger pointed out that several technical terms from the *Asvasastra* appear in the *Mahabharata*. The word ‘*dvarta*’ was translated into English as ‘perfect with all ten curls’ with a note that this was perhaps a technical term.<sup>92</sup> Doniger references several other works that assume a shared understanding regarding horses and proper comportment.<sup>93</sup> It is important to note that the recensions of the Salihotra manuscript tradition I surveyed, as well as the textual and oral traditions that built on the shared horse culture they promoted, were collected and sometimes compiled in northern South Asia, both by the Mughal Empire and the rulers in the Deccan Plateau. While they are rarely dated, the northern recensions of Sanskrit manuscripts of the Mahabharata are “rarely as old as the Mughal translation,” commissioned by the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605) as part of a larger translation movement that encouraged a cross-pollination of Persian and Sanskrit cultural mores.<sup>94</sup>

The extension of this basic yet shared horse culture into the ranks of military servicemen familiar with these mores, regardless of textual or oral transmission, is evident in Figures 7 and 8 and transitions us into the Firuz Jang tradition. Figure 7 was taken from the Salihotra tradition and depicts winged horses before Salihotra cast the spell that deprived them of wings so they could serve in Indra’s cavalry. Each horse has

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<sup>91</sup> *Asvacikitsa of Nakula* (Umesa Chandra Bupta, ed. Bibliotheca Indica, 1887).

<sup>92</sup> Doniger, “Contributions to an Equine Lexicography with special reference to Frogs,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98, no. 4 (1978): 476 – *Mahabharata*. 2. The Book of the Assembly Hall. and 3. The Book of the Forest. Translated by J.A.B. van Buitenen, University of Chicago, 1975. *Mahabharata* 3.69.12 (Buitenen’s Mahabarata was based on the Poona Edition)

<sup>93</sup> Doniger, 475-6.

<sup>94</sup> Audrey Truschke, “The Mughal Book of War: A Persian Translation of the Sanskrit Mahabharata,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 31, no. 2 (2011): 509. Also within the body of scholarship on language and cosmopolitan culture in early modern South Asia, see Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); idem, “The Cosmopolitan Vernacular,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 1 (February 1998): 6-37. For the temporal fluidity of manuscript recensions, see: John Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in association with Azimuth Editions, London, 2002).

four wings and all except one are white. Figure 8 is slightly later (eighteenth century) and a Persian translation of Salihotra's horse treatise.<sup>95</sup> It depicts the same scene with one white horse and several black horses. Again, each horse has four wings. Both figures promote the same horse lore. The Salihotra tradition of horse treatises was widespread, occurred with slight variations in multiple languages, and promoted a shared horse culture, lore, and normative mores. Scribes translated this into Persian, prefaced with *ghaz̤i* values, but maintaining the underlying set of norms.

### **Firuz Jang's *Farasnama-i Hindi***

The oldest known manuscript in this tradition dates to the middle of the sixteenth century when Shams al-Din Muzaffar Shah, ruler of the lucrative port city of Gujarat (r. 1511-1526), commissioned his scribe Ibn Sayyid Abul Husayn al-Hashimi to translate Salihotra's *Asvasastra*.<sup>96</sup> The extent of the Vedic influence is difficult to judge due to co-mingling of manuscripts without reference to where one ended and the next began. However, in this instance Salihotra appears as an authority on color names, auspicious and inauspicious markings, and whorls, much as he does in the *Asvasastra*. He is also cited as an authority on veterinary treatments for common ailments caused by humid environments, such as spavin, hoof rot, and respiratory illnesses. Muzaffar Shah's version predates Firoz Jang himself by more than one hundred years, however the

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<sup>95</sup> This treatise is discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Farasnama-i Hindi* manuscripts consulted for this research: *Farasnama-i Hindi*, Wellcome Institute, London, WMS. Per. 559; *Farasnama-i Hindi*, Wellcome Institute, London, WMS. Per. 4 (A); *Farasnama-i Hindi*, British Library, London, Or. 11918; *Kitab-i Asbnama or Sabutar*, British Library, London, Or. 6704. For a partial list, see: C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bibliographical Survey, Vol. II Pt. 3* (Oxford: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1971), 395-6. India: two copies are in the Mulla Firoz Library in Bombay, dated to 1044/1634 and based on the contents, the second would be later. Edward Rehatsek, *Catalogue Raisonnee of the Arabic, Hindostani, Persian, and Turkish Manuscripts in the Mulla Firuz Library* (Bombay: Mulla Firuz Library, 1873), 100-101, 111-122. Several more copies are in the Salar Jung Museum Library: nos. 4216 dated to 1778; 4217 from 1756; 4218 from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and possibly 4222 composed in December, 1651. Muhammad Ashraf and Salar Jung Museum, *A Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Salar Jung Museum and Library* (Hyderabad: Salar Jung Museum and Library, 1965), 179-182.

content was included in the Jang manuscript tradition and sporadic mentions of ‘Hashimi’ are interspersed throughout the text.<sup>97</sup> The context is also similar. It seems that during his tenure as governor, Muzaffar Shah II struggled with groups who came to be identified as Rajputs in the Udaipur region just east of Gujarat. Firoz Jang also grappled with them during the two years he governed the city, albeit for a much shorter period.<sup>98</sup> Although no scribe is named in Firoz Jang’s text, only the “learned *pandits* (scribes)” who anonymously translated 20,000 lines of Hindavi text, here Hashimi was the clear scribal authority in the earliest traceable text.<sup>99</sup> The common struggle against these tax-evading and otherwise troublesome groups combined with Jang and Muzaffar Shah’s shared Turani lineage to form a kind of unified ghazi identity.

Moving on to the texts bearing Firoz Jang’s name and title, the first set of manuscripts I consulted was a Persian compilation of six manuscripts, which were combined and published in 1911 by D.C. Phillott in an effort to form one complete version.<sup>100</sup> Three of the six manuscripts Phillott included mention al-Hashimi’s translation.<sup>101</sup> The only notable difference between the Hashimi version and the Firoz Jang tradition is the inclusion of the Jang’s victory over Amar Singh in Udaipur. The second and third consulted manuscripts were both in the Firoz Jang tradition and include the Udaipur battle. Or. 11918 is a tattered original with 56 folios and copious marginal

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<sup>97</sup> One notable example is Phillott, 33 where “Hashimi” appears in a mnemonic poem about discerning the age of a horse from its teeth. In 1788, Earles translated the word as “Sage” (Earles, 29). “Examine their teeth with caution *Hashimi*, That you may determine their age.”

<sup>98</sup> In 1020/1611, Jang was rewarded with the lucrative governorship of Gujarat where the court gave him an auxiliary force for his next march to the Deccan via Nasik and Trimbak. *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 11; Ali Muhammad Khan and M. F. Lockandwala, *Mirat-i Ahmadi: A Persian History of Gujarat* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1965), 97-98.

<sup>99</sup> The similarities between manuscripts in the Firoz Jang tradition and the earlier Hashimi text sparked a short-lived scholarly debate. See: “Preface” Phillott, v-vii; also M. L. Huda, “Faras Namah-i Hashimi and Shalihorta,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* 14, no. 2 (1969): 143-65.

<sup>100</sup> Phillott, vii.

<sup>101</sup> Modern transcript by editor in 1900 of an older manuscript from Shahzada Sultan Jang of Kohat; one Nasta’liq copy bound up with two other farasnamas, undated and owned by Phillott; one Shikasta copy dated 28 Ramazan 1129 AH/ 4 September 1717 at the College of Fort William, owned by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. (Phillott, iv.)

notes; copied in the seventeenth century, it is housed today in the British Library's Oriental Manuscripts collection. An abbreviated version of the longer manuscripts in the tradition, it includes nine simple illustrations of the standard horse colors and markings, which could not be included here due to the extremely fragile state of the manuscript. The images in Figures 12 and 13 are similar to those in Or. 11918 and came from the same manuscript tradition, however the illustrations in Or. 11918 were rendered without saddles and on a plain background. The images are simple and help guide the reader toward choosing the correct and auspicious horse for battle and the prosperous household. Finally, in 1788, Joseph Earles published an English translation of the Firoz Jang tradition. His rendering almost exactly matches at least one of the manuscripts used in Phillott's compilation, with the exception of the table of contents and explanatory footnotes. Earles' translation is 94 pages long without reference to original folios or pagination and does not include illustrations or poetry.

The preface and introduction of all manuscripts in the Firoz Jang tradition follow a distinct format. After the necessary or the obligatory invocations to Shah Jahan and the Prophet, the scribes relate the story of taking the hill fort at Udaipur and then situate the treatise as the most recent in a textual tradition initiated under Mahmud of Ghazni (d. 1030) and Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat (d. 1526). Through his narrator, Mahmud of Ghazni describes which horse is acceptable to ride under which circumstances. The preface and introduction are peppered with references to the best horses according to or associated with Islamic luminaries. For example, the notoriously brutal governor of Iraq, Hajjaj b. Yusuf (d. 714) asked an unidentified Muhammad Marzban about which horse to ride into battle. The famous scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence, Abu Hurayra (d. 681), reports that the Prophet despised a horse whose hind foot was diagonally white, also those

whose fore and hind feet are diagonally white.<sup>102</sup> They are vicious animals. Figure 7 corresponds to the story of Abu Hurayra, depicting a horse with three black stockings. The caption notes that Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet Muhammad's distaste. This section concludes with a list of infamous Persian men and their horses where Rustam and his spotted horse Rakhsh make a brief appearance.

The main body of the Firuz Jang tradition is composed of a section on colors, markings, and characteristics and on veterinary medicine. The first section discusses and describes desirable colors for horses, markings, whorls, and physical and personality characteristics associated with each combination of attributes. Rather than merely describing what is desirable, it provides concrete reasons for particularly auspicious horses. For example, the *abrash* (Ar.) horse identified as a chestnut with small white spots, is auspicious because it tolerates flies and gnats and is afraid of lions but "riding the horse in the field of foot soldiers leads to being ridiculed." The solid colored horse is praiseworthy and without calamity.<sup>103</sup> In another passage, the author describes the attributes of white horses.

The white that they call silvery and the Hindus say 'sit baruna' and the Arabs say 'abyad' meaning the white that is like the pearl or cream or like the moon or silvery like snow. Silvery grayish white like the pure pearl – white as cream or moonlight. When the white horse is one color and the whorls are well conformed, that horse is priceless and it is praiseworthy and auspicious. In every household it is in, the people are pleased and happy and riding it in the day of battle you will be victorious against the enemy.<sup>104</sup>

The white horse brings happiness to the household and victory in battle. The reference to the entire household is important because it gives greater depth and significance to the term 'auspicious' which litters the rest of the description. The multi-lingual glosses speak

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<sup>102</sup> Phillott, 8: 6-8; Earles, xi.

<sup>103</sup> Phillott, 13-14; Earles, xvi.

<sup>104</sup> Phillott, 16; Earles, 25.

to the multicultural composite character of the text and how the authors demonstrated knowledge while addressing their audience.

The length of each subsequent section varies from one manuscript to the next. The order remains the same, and almost every treatise maintains the same order. After describing colors and characteristics, and how to determine the age of a horse by its teeth, then a section on horsemanship and training, the treatise concludes with a discussion of veterinary medicine and remedies for afflictions that commonly occurred in each season. Throughout the tradition, scribes have avoided flowery language and limited metaphors to short *masnavi* verses.<sup>105</sup>

The veterinary section details remedies for horses in South Asia with notes on the various diseases associated with particular seasons and recipes for prescriptions. The Ayurvedic and Galenic Humoral medicinal principles guide the chapter headings, which focus on Wind, Blood, Phlegm, and Bile. When attending to horses in the rainy season, for example, the master of the stable should make sure to gather ingredients that help to correct an imbalance in Wind and Phlegm:

His medicines should be long pepper, the bark of *shytrej*, commonly called *chettrachal*, and sprigs of *tamboul*, or the bettle leaf shrub, called *chowke*, ginger, and *myrabolan* boiled in cow urine.<sup>106</sup>

The jist of the section is to help the horse owner prepare for, identify, and treat illnesses. Much more could be done with the medical advice, specifically with regard to how the authors display their command over indigenous medical lore and the common diseases afflicting horses in India. However, it should be noted that *na'lbands* also called *syces* (farriers) were ubiquitous and while there are no studies of these groups in South Asia,

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<sup>105</sup> These differ from one manuscript to the next and could easily have been mnemonic devices. The Firoz Jang tradition also differs greatly here when compared to Mukhlis' *Rabat al-Faras* (Chapter 3).

<sup>106</sup> Earles, 40; Phillott, 48.

they are casually mentioned as part of military supply trains and household servants. Haidar Ali's stable, for example, employed upwards of 350 *syces* to care for 16 horse stables. They took care of medical issues and prepared food.<sup>107</sup> *Syces* were not the masters of stables. Stable masters, often called *dagh ve tashibah* (men in charge of branding of horses and recruitment of men), served in the household of a larger noble *mansabdar* or *zamindar*. One of their considerable duties was to oversee the maintenance of what was a substantial investment in battle, comportment, and public display.<sup>108</sup>

Salihotra's *Asvasastra* and Firuz Jang's *Farasnama* perform several functions at the same time. On one level, they promote two contrasting ideologies surrounding horses. For example, Salihotra says it was Indra who asked him to remove horses' wings, which he did using a spell. Firuz Jang's treatise tells a slightly different version involving the Angel Gabriel, who interceded when King Solomon attempted to kill all of the coveted winged horses he finally captured by filling a spring with wine. These stories not only frame the context of horses as divine beings made worldly for the purpose of war, but they highlight the significance of horses to legendary figures of the past, whether Indic or Islamic. It is easy to see how the genre has been considered only in the utilitarian context of 'war horses' without further analysis of the cultural preferences contained within the category. Second, it is in this context that the illustrative examples of the Prophet Muhammad, al-Hajjaj, Mahmud of Ghazni, and Jang himself then overwhelm Salihotra. By combining their ideals, as *ghazi* warriors with long and distinguished lineages as horsemen, these treatises make it possible for less distinguished horsemen, infused with correct knowledge and proper comportmental standards, to successfully imitate them.

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<sup>107</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: "Tippoo's Regulations Relative to his Brood," Appendix Number 4 in Major Fraser's Report dated 26 June 1795. The report expressly defines *syce* as a horse keeper. Haidar Ali ruled Mysore from 1761-1782.

<sup>108</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 311-338. Originally published as an article: "The Making of a Munshi," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 43-72.

This second point is important when one considers the large numbers of immigrants to South Asia in the seventeenth century, the relative flexibility of background and identity, and the high demand for skilled military labour, which I will delve into below. Third, they served as guides for officials of noble households. These officials were responsible for buying the horses for their households, which were extensive and included a host of administrators, scribes, and large stables. These households could include hundreds of members, rather than just the extended family of the elite. In this practical capacity these treatises had a significant impact in defining which horses were auspicious or inauspicious for the head of the household, the rider – whether in battle or on special occasions, and for the ruler. As the person responsible for correctly negotiating such transactions, the illustrations and mnemonic devices helped to conduct business in the horse markets where, coincidentally, these treatises were most often sold.

### **Firuz Jang, the *Ghazi***

Firuz Jang's career as a *mansabdar* in the service of the Mughal Empire began when he and his brothers, Yadgar and Burkhudar immigrated from Hissar, Transoxiana in 1592. Bolstered by his Naqshbandi lineage and martial ability, only Jang succeeded in finding a post. He first served under his relative Sher Khwaja in the Deccan and continued to build a reputation for martial skill under the Mughal Emperors Akbar (r. 1556-1605), Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), and Shah Jahan (r. 1627-1658). The incident that launched his career, and some controversy, was during his dealings with the Rana of Udaipur. According to the *Tuzuk-i Jahangir-i*, even after eight years, he could not subdue the recalcitrant, tax-evading ruler when Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) finally interceded and forced the Rana's submission.<sup>109</sup> According to the *Mirat-i Ahmad-i*, it took only four years, beginning when Muhabbat Khan, the commander leading the raid, was sent to

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<sup>109</sup>*Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 11.

another province and Jang took over.<sup>110</sup> Whether after four or eight years, Jang finally succeeded in his attack on Amar Singh's hilltop refuge at Mihrpur and captured the elephant Alam Guman. He entered the fort with some 300 troopers in gold-embroidered dress and decorated armor, along with 200 footmen consisting of servants, runners, and the like dressed in similar style. Once he established his hold, he then attacked at Kombalmir, where he routed and plundered Bairam Deo Solanki, a nearby Rajput leader.<sup>111</sup>

In 1611, Jang was rewarded with the lucrative governorship of Gujarat where the court gave him an auxiliary force of 10,000 cavalymen for his next march to the Deccan where he faced Malik Ambar. Three other *mansabdars* were supposed to meet him there with equally large forces, however Jang arrived first. Standing alone, Jang's forces suffered in continued skirmishes with Malik Ambar's troops and eventually withdrew and marched toward Ahmadabad. Jang was disgraced at Jahangir's court. "Today," said Jahangir while looking at Jang's portrait after he fled the battle, "no one equals you for ability and lineage, with such a figure and such abilities, and lineage, and rank, and treasure, and army, you should not have run away. Your title is *Garez* Jang (the fugitive from battle)."<sup>112</sup> He was pardoned when the Naqshbandi Sufi order of 'Abdur-Rahim Khawaja (Turani) pleaded his case to the emperor. Jang reportedly wore the metal earring of discipleship afterwards.<sup>113</sup>

While under surveillance during another falling out with Jahangir, Jang had the following conversation with Khan Jahan Lodi, his captor:

I said to Abudllah (Firuz Jang), "The Nawab (Jang) has done much as a holy warrior in the path of God. How many infidels' heads have you caused to be cut off?" He said, "There would be 200,000 heads and there might be two rows of minarets of heads from Agra to

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<sup>110</sup> *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, 97-98

<sup>111</sup> *Maathir al-Umara*, 97-98.

<sup>112</sup> *Maathir al-Umara*, 99.

<sup>113</sup> *Maathir al-Umara*, 103.

Patna.” I said, “Certainly there would be an innocent Muhammadan among those men.”

He got angry and said, “I made prisoners of five lacs (lakhs) of women and men and sold them. They all became Muhammadans. From their progeny there will be krors by Judgement Day.”<sup>114</sup>

His reputation for dealing with the rebellious zamindars was well known, even by Peter Mundy’s unnamed guide who, while travelling between Patna and Agra in 1632, explained that the 200 pillars with some 7,000 heads fixed in mortar were from the most recent exploit of Abdullah Khan Firuz Jang. Mundy reported that he “destroyed all their townes, tooke all their goods, their wives and children for slaves, and the chiefest of their men, causeing their heads to be cutt off and to be immortered.”<sup>115</sup> Mundy noticed approximately 2,400 additional heads on the return journey.<sup>116</sup> The rows of the heads of rebellious zamindars lining the main road from Patna to Agra served as a warning to potential rebellious zamindars, but they also publicized Firuz Jang’s exploits. Even Mundy’s guide knew who was responsible for the rows of heads. While Jang’s exploits were recorded and debated in biographical dictionaries and well-known because of the heads on pillars, low-cost copies of his treatise were also wide spread and copied often. The treatise, though, offers a visual guide to how to be a *ghazi*.

### **Never ride a pie-bald into battle: How to be a *ghazi***

The traditional way to portray the *ghazi* in South Asia usually includes a prestigious lineage and/or subscribing to a particular set of Central Asian ideals, transplanted into the South Asian cultural environment, yet usually distinct from it. Or if the lines between a *Turani* (Transoxiana) and other claims to prestigious lineage are blurred, even then some distinctions remain. Firuz Jang’s tradition draws from such a

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<sup>114</sup> *Maathir al-Umara*, 105.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1634, Vol. II* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1914), 90.

<sup>116</sup> Mundy, 185-186.

wide breadth of Persian and Arabic and Islamic sources that it makes this categorization difficult. He portrays the *ghazī* as a composite of equestrian ideals. The most expected, would be for him to lean on his Naqshbandi lineage and privilege this above other claims to heritage. However, there is no mention or hint of Naqshbandi lineage in the horse manuals linked to his name.

Firuz Jang's familial connection to the Naqshbandi Sufis helped influence the Mughal court to grant an imperial pardon after he fled battle. The Naqshbandis were never as popular outside of court as other groups of Sufis, such as the Chistis, who drew large crowds.<sup>117</sup> Their attachment to Mughal emperors was based primarily on a shared and prestigious lineage as Turanis and although each emperor supported their reputation at court, their reputation as religious attachments to military groups was relatively unsuccessful.<sup>118</sup> As Niles Green noted, "There is, after all, a great difference between the institutionalized living holy man with his myriad social functions, ties and allegiances, or the Sufi with the day job of bureaucrat, soldier or horse-dealer."<sup>119</sup> One example was Baba Palangosh (d. 1699), who served as a *pir*, attending to the spiritual and supernatural needs of Ghazi al-Din Khan Firuz Jang's military force and whose entourage included at least one dancing boy from Kabul.<sup>120</sup> However, Baba Palangosh and his contemporaries failed to attract adherents after the initial wave of immigrant soldiers to the Deccan.<sup>121</sup> The dancing boy insinuates pederastic tendencies, stereotypically attributed by Indian authors to *Iranis* and *Turanis* and offers a definite counterpoint to South Asian

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<sup>117</sup> Simon Digby, "The Naqshbandiya in the Deccan in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD: Baba Palangosh, Baba Musafir and their adherents," in *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, ed. Marc Gaborieau et al (Istanbul: Editions Isis, 1990), 206.

<sup>118</sup> Nile Green, "Emerging Approaches to the Sufi Traditions of South Asia: Between Texts, Territories and the Transcendent," *South Asia Research* 24 (2004): 130.

<sup>119</sup> Green, "Emerging Approaches," 137; For an account of Baba Palangosh, see Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Aurangzeb's Deccan: Malfuzat-i Naqshbandiyya* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>120</sup> Ghazi al-Din Khan Firuz Jang (ca. 1680) should not be confused with Abdullah Khan Bahadur Firuz Jang (ca. 1630), whose treatise is the subject of this chapter.

<sup>121</sup> Digby, "The Naqshbandiya in the Deccan," 206.

comportment. One anecdote about the Persian Shah Isma'il I's stay with Muzaffar Shah II in the early sixteenth century highlights both cultural norms.

One evening, after a dinner party the ambassador in a moment of pederastic enthusiasm assaulted Sahib Khan, who fled in shame first to Khandesh and then to Berar; the ambassador was sent back to Persia after scarcely a cordial reception.<sup>122</sup>

This instance is illustrative of the hetero-normative ideal of comportment in South Asia. The Firuz Jang tradition was not simply a manual on how to purchase war-horses. It combines a Persian literary genre with cultural norms shared among servicemen in Mughal South Asia. Jang puts forward a version of outward masculine *ghazi* comportment that appealed to a broader, more diverse audience, complete with visual guides and Islamic personalities in the process of becoming commonplace in South Asian warrior cultures. This emphasis on heteronormative conduct is not present in the case of poetry or tazkiras, a noticeable contrast between the milieu of the type of nobility that had a greater inclination for the army or Sufi khanaqahs, versus literary circles. The emperors were ambivalent and inconsistent in their discussion and reactions to sexuality.

In this manuscript tradition, outwardly masculine comportment – one which aligns with the concurrently developing Rajput warrior comportment – engages the most well-known personalities from a shared Persian, Arabic, and Islamic history, one which made its way into the South Asian, Mughal, imagination.<sup>123</sup> Far from the more rigid structures of polarized Islamic religious references that appear in *farasnamas* in the eighteenth-century, this draws from spurious and canonized hadiths attributed to Abu Hurayra (the Sunni Jurisprudent) juxtaposed with those of Ali b. Abu Talib (considered the first Shi'a). The ghazi fights righteously in battle. According to the Prophet

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<sup>122</sup> J. Burton Page, "Gudjarat," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Dirk Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-17; Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Manliness," 47-93.

Muhammad, the ultimate warrior, the noblest place in the world is on the back of an Arabian horse.<sup>124</sup> Such horses were eulogized:

All Tazies and Turkeys by descent or by birth,  
Well fed and fatten'd with sugar and ghee'  
Each one like a mountain, standing in his stall  
A mountain, not only, but more majestic.  
In fleetness and swiftness, outstripping the wind,  
In celerity, bearing the palm of {...} from it;  
While from under their hoofs as it flies in the air,  
It obscures with 'pake envy the cheek of the moon.  
All, pervading the world, all, surrounding the globe,  
None ever in the universe saw their equal.<sup>125</sup>

The ability to differentiate between good and bad horses is however, simply a means to the prestige of riding into battle on a fine horse. Ardeshir, the founder of the Sassanian Empire and fellow *ghazi*, interjects, "If rulers and nobles were not remarkable for their skill in horsemanship, they would not be distinguished for their superior quality from the vulgar."<sup>126</sup> This privileging of knowledge regarding horses and proper comportment when riding a horse, preferably in battle, is a large part of what defines a *ghazi*, from a *mirza* (gentleman), for example.

It is here that Firuz Jang really sets his treatise apart. By way of Mahmud of Ghazni's famous yet 'lost' *farasnama*, he recounts that the Prophet Muhammad frequently wiped the sweaty brow of his horse with his Mantle, which he also used to feed his

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<sup>124</sup> "Indeed Allah loves those who fight for His cause together, as though they are a compact edifice." Earles, Preface vi; Phillott, 3:21-23, 4:1-2. "Paighambar, may Allah pray for and preserve Him, said: The most noble and best place in this world is on the back of a 'Tazi' horse. Earles, Preface, vii; Phillott, 4:2-3. While Earles translated 'Tazi' as Arabian horse, this is not specifically mentioned as the definition of 'Tazi' anywhere in Phillott's compilation. In other passages, the term 'Arabi' (Arabian) is used, however the conflation of Tazi and Arabian seems to have complicated the understanding of the term, which translates as 'fresh' and 'pure'. According to Steinglass, this term became common parlance for 'Arabian' in Persian. (Steinglass, 275)

<sup>125</sup> Earles, Preface, iv-v; Phillott, 3:6-10.

<sup>126</sup> Earles, Preface, vii; Phillott 4:8-10. For a description of Ardeshir, see Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ardeshir" *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II/4 (1986), 382.

horse. The Prophet says that as the horse's owner, it is necessary to adorn them with amulets as one would a child, to protect them from the dangers of a malignant gaze. Even the grooms who care for horses are blessed because they care for the horses that carry *ghazis* into battle. Those responsible for purchasing horses, though, should purchase a *mushkin* or a *kumayt* (solid colored bay horse). On the back of one of these horses, one is almost certain to be victorious and collect booty.<sup>127</sup> Ghazni's lost treatise contains other breeding information, the Arabic terms for different levels of pure Arabian horses, yet the final two stories are especially poignant. al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, the notoriously brutal eighth-century governor of Iraq, spoke to Ibn al-Qurayyah, whom he executed in 702. He asked him which horse in his stable he should ride into battle. The response came with a list of appropriate horses and occasions for riding them:

If you want one for war, chose a *kumayt* of one color; if for pleasure and recreation, a *khing*; if you wish to inspire veneration and reverence, let your choice be a *mushkin*; if to view and enjoy the green verdure, give preference to the party-colored *ablaq*; if it is the sport of the field you determine on, then chose a *youz*; if you wish to be seen to advantage and show your horsemanship, a black-kneed and spirited *sumund* has no equal for this purpose; if you propose going on a journey with expedition and celerity, a *gulgun* is most appropriate; and if you wish to play polo successfully, above all take a *sereng*. It is proper to know, however that the best kind of horses is the *kumayt*, which has ever been held in the highest estimation by the potent shahs of Persia.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Mahmud of Ghazni's treatise is in Earles, Introduction, x-xi; Phillott 6:1-21, 7:1-3. An acceptable Muskhin is defined as a horse of one color with a white spot on the head, two white stockings on the hind feet and the left front foot; these stockings should not be diagonal, but straight. If diagonal, this is an Ashkil, which the Prophet abhorred. Earles, Introduction, xi; Phillott 8:6-9. In another passage, a Muskhin is black or brown with a shiny coat. (Phillott, 10.)

<sup>128</sup> Earles, Introduction, xii-xiii; Phillott, 9:18-19 thru 10:1-10. *kumayt* (Ar. Bay); *khing* (Pr. dark gray or red with white on the body but black mane, tail, hoofs, legs, and testicles); *mushkin* (Ar. Chestnut or light bay with black mane and tail); *ablaq* (Ar. Piebald); *youz* (Pr. Cream colored with black mane, tail, and knees); *sumund* (Pr. Dun with black mane, tail, and knees); *Gulgun* (Pr. Mixed

It is the point about the *ablaq*, the piebald, which gives us pause. Why ride a white horse with very large spots to enjoy the green verdure? The tradition later explains that it is best to avoid buying such a horse because it is likely to draw the enemy's attention in battle and make an easy target.<sup>129</sup>

This excerpt appears with the attribution to Mahmud of Ghazni, who famously invaded and plundered the northern portions of the Sub-continent some seventeen times in the first two decades of the eleventh century. The same advice appears in several other manuscripts about correct comportment on horses in South Asia. *Adab al-Harb wa-l-Shaja'ah* (Correct Conduct for War and Bravery) was written by Fakhr Mudabbir (Mubarakshah) for Shams al-Din Iltutmush, the Turkish 'Slave King of Delhi' (r. 1210-1236), in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>130</sup> Folios 74v:3-15 thru 75r:1-15 repeat the same lines I've quoted above.<sup>131</sup> The copyist does so without prefacing them as part of Mahmud of Ghazni's lost horse treatise. Strangely, the same lines are repeated again in the British Library's seventeenth century copy of a *Mirzanama* (Handbook for Gentlemanly Comportment), on folios 94v: 12-21 thru 95r: 1-9, again without reference to Mahmud of Ghazni. Instead the *Mirzanama* prefaces the passage with the comment that if a gentleman must ride a horse outside of battle, which should be avoided unless absolutely

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colored horse with large white spots, literally 'rose colored'); *Sereng* (Pr. Red inclining toward yellow).

<sup>129</sup> Earles, Introduction, xvi, Phillott 14:4-7.

<sup>130</sup> For a brief overview of Persian-speaking literati at the Iltutmush court in Delhi, see: Sunil Kumar, "The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (January 2009): 45-77. Fakhr al-Din Mudabbir is specifically mentioned on page 61.

<sup>131</sup> Fakhr al-Din Mudabbir and Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, *Le traite iranien de l'art militaire Adab al-barb wa-s-saga'a du XIIIe siècle* (Warsaw: Paustowowe Wydanecko Naukowe, 1969), 263-264. This is a facsimile reproduction of the manuscript in the British Library (no. 2627) which although cited in Storey I/2 pp. 1164-65 and Rieu, *Pers. Man. II*, pp. 48b-88, was not retrievable during my stays in London (Nov.-Dec. 2010, Feb. 2011). Two versions are referenced in C.E. Bosworth, "Adab al-Harb wa al-Shaja'a," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Online Edition, 1982), one from the British Museum, and the other at the Royal Asiatic Society in Bengal.

necessary, and in the event that a palanquin is not available, he should ride a *gulgun* or a pie-bald (*ablaq*) to enjoy the green verdure.<sup>132</sup>

The two *Mirzanamas*, dated tentatively to 1660 and 1739, reference possible earlier versions.<sup>133</sup> As Aziz Ahmad discusses in his study of the genre, in the seventeenth century South Asia absorbed an influx of immigrants from Iran. Those who did not achieve high ranks but had acceptable lineages generally found positions in the Mughal court or in courts of the Deccan. While the title of ‘mirza’ stopped being given sometime during the previous century, in the 1600s a ‘mirza’ became a term for a gentleman or lesser noble in both Iran and India. Nur Jahan’s nephew, Mirza Abu-Said, was known for his “good looks and delicate personality” and showed “such a proud and snobbish nature that he held the high heavens and the angels as of no account.”<sup>134</sup> Much like the homoerotic tendencies associated with the Iranis and Turanis such as Baba Palangosh and his ilk, here the effeminate *mirza* is an example of newly arrived immigrants from Central Asia and the Persian Empire who failed to suitably blend with or display norms of South Asian comportment. The introductions to the *mirzanamas* state clearly that they were written because so many pseudo-*mirzas* appeared without adhering to comportmental standards of manners, qualities, and accomplishments expected of a true *mirza*.<sup>135</sup> The Firuz Jang tradition corrects this oversight. First, it proscribes riding a piebald into battle because it is easily visible to the enemy, which would make the *ghazi* and his inauspicious horse a target; second, it attributes this piece of advice to the most illustrious *ghazi*, Mahmud of Ghazni. Firuz Jang did not rest on his Naqshbandi lineage in order to establish his claim to his position; it is nowhere mentioned in the treatise. His

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<sup>132</sup> *Mirzanama*, British Library, London, Br. Per. Ms. Add. 16,817: fol. 94v: 15. Referenced by Aziz Ahmad, “The British Museum Mirzanama and the Seventeenth Century Mirza in India,” *Iran* 13 (1975): 99-110 with a full translation of the above on page 105; also in Annemarie Schimmel, “The Life of a Mirza,” in *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, and Culture*, eds, Annemarie Schimmel, Corinne Attwood, and Burzine Waghmar (London: Reaktion Books, 2004) 225-227.

<sup>133</sup> Ahmad, 99.

<sup>134</sup> *Maathir al-Umara III*, 523-14; cited in Ahmad, 110.

<sup>135</sup> Ahmad, 99; *Mirzanama*, Br. Per. Ms. Add. 16,817: fol. 89v.

reputation is known by his deeds and his outwardly masculine comportment, one that complemented the similarly masculine Rajput ideals of heroic sacrifice, heavy cavalry, and landed rights.<sup>136</sup> However, even in illustrations, piebalds only appear in gardens and never in battle.<sup>137</sup> “Portrait of the Horse, Amber Head” in Figure 8 is actually a piebald with a hennaed tail. Painted approximately 1650 by the Mughal School and stylistic points aside, this piebald is standing in a garden. Figure 9 is even more obvious when considered in this light. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan is seated on a beautifully caparisoned piebald in a garden. These are just two of many images in which piebald horses appear appropriately in a garden. It is not until the eighteenth century that this comportmental norm changes, and the taboo of riding a piebald in other venues became more acceptable.

### **Understanding Courtly Conduct in the Firuz Jang Tradition**

John Richards’ discussion of proper comportment among imperial servants and the ideal of *khanazadi* (courtly service) in the early Mughal Empire complements my analysis of those who participated in the composite ideal promoted by the Firuz Jang tradition. In Richards’ opinion, during the early and mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, mainly Central Asian Muslim and Rajput nobles actively participated in and embraced Mughal codes of service. The slave/master or servant/ruler relationship between Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and these nobles was continued by Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) and their nobility, and in the nobles’ own households. These noble households included among those with *mansabs*, positions, over 5000 servants, wives, children, concubines, scribes, stable hands, and a host of other retainers

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<sup>136</sup> Karine Schomer, “Warband and Court” in *The Idea of Rajasthan*, ed. Karine Schomer et al. (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 45-55.

<sup>137</sup> There are no piebalds in the Hamzanama (ca. 1600), presumably because it depicts battle scenes. Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza*.

performing every conceivable role. As Richards observes, “Personal, lineage, and martial honor thus came to be identified with acceptance of discipline and service to a wider goal and a larger structure for both Muslim and Hindu warrior aristocrats.”<sup>138</sup> The extent to which this internalized ideal was shared by elite nobles becomes clear when considering muster rolls, grouped by ethnic or familial allegiance and included Abyssinians, Rajputs, and Turanis.<sup>139</sup> The muster roll also demonstrates the diversity of the military labor market and the importance of inspiring allegiance. The cultivation of proper masculine comportment, which transcended the various backgrounds, was one way to secure the allegiance of soldiers who could and did switch sides easily.

Rosalind O’Hanlon continued the conversation by introducing the concept of *javanmardi*, explaining this as the outwardly directed and expressed power of the male body.<sup>140</sup> Public displays and conspicuous consumption were another important part of patrimony and universal kingship for Sultanate and later Mughal rulers. The enactment and rituals of display, consumption, and gift giving worked together to affirm authority. Akbar’s efforts to incorporate the martial sensibilities of his most important allies, the Rajputs, with Indo-Muslim ideals, especially the *ghazi*, helped to solidify military support during the initial period of expansion and then to create a shared standard of comportment.<sup>141</sup> Rajput martial codes valorizing self-sacrifice in protection of personal and family honor were combined with the individual *ghazi* whose ethos had been shaped by Islamic conquests and imbued with Arabic, Persian, and Mongol martial culture. The combination of many martial identities was disseminated through ritualized displays of

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<sup>138</sup> John F. Richards, “Norms of Comportment among Imperial Mughal Officers,” in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Daly Metcalf et al (Berkeley: University of California Press), 263.

<sup>139</sup> Richards, 261 and 268-71. Bhimsen, *Tarikh-i Dilkasa*, translated by Jadunath Sarkar from BM Or. 23. For scribal lineages amongst Kayastha and Khatri groups: Subrahmanyam and Alam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 61-72.

<sup>140</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness,” 54.

<sup>141</sup> O’Hanlon, “Kingdom, Household, and Body: History, Gender, and Imperial Service under Akbar,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007): 889-923.

masculine power in court, in the hunt, and on the battlefield. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, “new classes of moderately wealthy imperial servants/gentry seeking ways of assimilating their personal styles to those of popular elites” appropriated, or misappropriated in some cases, aspects of these displays to the point of satire.<sup>142</sup> Both *khanazadi* and *javanmardi* were internalized ideals, which had been adopted and displayed in specific ways by the Mughal cultural milieu. The concept of proper manly comportment within the context of the Mughal Empire’s diverse nobility was also expressed outwardly through paintings and literature.

The Firoz Jang tradition promotes an image of masculinity that resonated with a wide cross-section of the North-Indian military labor market. By incorporating as many cultural and religious references as possible, patrons of this tradition could appeal to a larger public. In order to attract skilled followers who could reliably bolster muster rolls, crucial for military success, a composite image of manliness and martial skill promoted a dominant normative framework for reference. Unlike during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, group identities were still relatively porous in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which made it both possible and necessary to appeal to traditions associated with multiple cultural practices. Rajput identity, represented here by Rana Amar Singh, deliberately invoked and appropriated Indic horse lore said to have come from the sage Salihotra, which was itself coming fully into its own by the Mughal period.<sup>143</sup> By placing himself as the last in a line of Central Asian rulers including Mahmud of Ghazni (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Muzaffar Shah (16<sup>th</sup> century), the Firoz Jang tradition asserts itself – representing Central Asian Muslims – as ideal leaders with status and lineage. The power of this particular image of masculinity incorporates distinct but related Perso-Islamic and Indo-Persian warrior cultures and is replicated in each manuscript. The numerous and widespread dispersal of

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<sup>142</sup> O’Hanlon, “Manliness,” 74-76.

<sup>143</sup> Kolff, 1-31; Ramya Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

the Firoz Jang tradition suggests that it was consumed by a relatively large public and the reproduction of the Firoz Jang brand of masculine comportment in period paintings leads to a similar conclusion.

A pragmatic record of a representative cavalry muster illustrates the need for such a wide reaching reputation.<sup>144</sup> While no muster rolls of the early part of the seventeenth century survives, a muster role for the similarly-titled Ghazi al-Din Bahadur Firoz Jang, who worked for Aurangzeb in the late seventeenth century gives a sense of the scale of such imperial households. This late 17<sup>th</sup> century army totaled 33,621 men including musketeers and other specialists, though the bulk consisted of mansabdars and their followers, comprising just under 27,500 men. Each regiment was organized under nine of Jang's highest ranking nobles with Jang himself leading 3,700 cavalry officers. Jang's associate, Neknihad Khan was an Indian Muslim noble commanding 3,377 men. Khan's brother Miran commanded nearly 700; his brother's sons Mir and Barhe together led just over 500. Khan's son Mirand led 221. Nur Singh Rao and Mirmal Rao were Marathas who brought 45 men each with significantly lower *mansabdari* ranks than Neknihad's family. The Abyssinian Siddi Ibrahim appears with 23 men.<sup>145</sup> While regrettably late, this muster reflects the need of high ranking military service men such as Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang to appeal to a diverse group of possible allies. Secondary studies on the Marathas, the Rajputs, and the military labor market generally affirm this ability to lead forces of diverse ethnic composition as a crucial requirement for success.<sup>146</sup>

The Firuz Jang tradition is a commemoration of Jang's victory over the recalcitrant Rajput groups he had made a reputation for managing, and it is a guide to masculine '*ghaz̤*' comportment. Firuz Jang's reputation was built on the 'de-

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<sup>144</sup> As recorded from Bhimsen during Aurangzeb's reign, Richards "Norms," 261.

<sup>145</sup> Richards, "Norms," 261.

<sup>146</sup> Kolff, 117-158; Norman Ziegler, "Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties During the Mughal Period" in *The Mughal State, 1526-1750*, eds. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 168-209; Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Rajputization' policies adopted by Shah Jahan and Jahangir during the seventeenth-century.<sup>147</sup> This is a contentious issue because both emperors were of Rajput stock themselves, and recruited many Rajput households into the mansabdar system, yet, as Richards and others have pointed out, many of the Indic traditions that Akbar embraced were not continued as part of court ritual by his successors.<sup>148</sup> These categories were flexible in large part because of the high demand for skilled military labor coupled with a large influx of immigrants from Safavid Iran and Central Asia.<sup>149</sup> Broadly speaking, Ghazis and Rajputs were warrior groups and both presented serious challenges to imperial authority. Forced migration, impressment into slavery, and extermination were methods both emperors seemed forced to use in order to deal with especially difficult warrior groups. The Firoz Jang tradition commemorates the early career of a Central Asian Ghazi who dealt with such issues. By 1619, Jang was sent to deal with an insurgency of a group identified as 'Rajputs' in the Kanauj region (in modern Uttar Pradesh). Reflecting on the event, the Emperor Jahangir claims:

And here I am compelled to observe, with whatever regret, that notwithstanding the frequent and sanguinary executions which have been dealt among the people of Hindustan, the number of the turbulent and disaffected never seems to diminish; for what with the examples made during the reign of my father, and subsequently of my own, there is scarcely a province in the empire in which, either in battle or by the sword of the executioner, five and six hundred thousand human beings have not, at various periods fallen victims to this fatal disposition to discontent and turbulence. Ever and anon, in one quarter or another, will some accursed

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<sup>147</sup> Kolff, 15-17.

<sup>148</sup> Richards, "Norms," 286-289.

<sup>149</sup> Masashi Haneda, "India xxviii: Iranian Immigrants in India," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Online Edition, 2012.

miscreant spring up to unfurl the standard of rebellion; so that in Hindustan never has there existed a period of complete repose.<sup>150</sup>

Jahangir did not refer to this group as ‘Rajput’ but as rebels. It was only in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that identities solidified and ‘Rajput’ became a definite category with established lineage. However, in the early seventeenth century, even Jang referred to the ‘haughty zamindars’ in the hill region (Udaipur). His battles were against a warrior aesthetic that was developing in concert with his own *ghazi* identity, which he promoted with as much breadth as possible. For Jang, his own Central Asian *ghazi*-ness needed to appeal to as many skilled military men as possible. After all, he had musters to fill and his competition were ‘haughty zamindars’ who vied for skilled military men with their own warrior ethos.

The Firuz Jang tradition of the South Asian horse treatise leveraged cultural knowledge in order to incorporate the ideals of outward manly comportment in the context of its ambient horse culture. The tradition redressed Salihotra’s Vedic-inspired horse treatise in Perso-Islamic garb. In the next chapter, “Real Men Ride Piebalds”, we see how the cultural mores changed between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. As the supply of horses dwindled, the requisites slackened and attention shifted to maintaining available supplies.

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<sup>150</sup> Kolff, 13-14. Citing: *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 225-226.

### CHAPTER 3. REAL MEN RIDE PIEBALDS

#### Afghans, Piebalds, Blue Horses and Rajputs: Horse Culture and Cosmopolitan Identities in the Eighteenth Century.

If someone wanted to breed a piebald (Ar. *ablaq*) or a dapple (*mulamma*) or a horse with colored ankles (*muhajjal*), they must, at the time of covering, wave a cloth or something of another color just beyond the stallion's field of vision to draw his attention. This means of obtaining a horse of different colors is difficult.<sup>151</sup>

Over the course of the eighteenth-century, groups including the Marathas, Sikhs, Rajputs, and Afghan *ghazis* competed for a greater share of power as centralized Mughal authority began to wane. Rather than reviewing the political history of this competition which has been extensively analyzed in recent studies,<sup>152</sup> I would like to shift our attention to the evolving cultural landscape of the eighteenth-century Subcontinent using horse culture as an illustrative focal point. Jos Gommans argues that access to war horses was a fundamental factor in military success of new warrior groups during this period. The emergence of new polities in both Central Asia and South Asia cut off consumers from the traditional overland supply from Central Asia and the previous movement of

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<sup>151</sup> Sadr al-Din Muhammad b. Zabardast Khan, *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, ed. D. C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Zabardast Khan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911), 18: 4-16; Catalogued by C.A. Storey, *Catalogue of Persian Literature*, 398. There was a debate about who commissioned this manuscript. For details, see C.A. Storey, "A Baz-Namah and a Faras-Namah," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. ½ (April 1960): 59-60. Here Storey corrected a previous error in Phillott's attributing this manuscript to Zabardast Khan, rather than his son, Sadr al-Din b. Zabardast Khan. *Tuhfat al-Sadr* is a Gift to al-Sadr, meaning Khan's son rather than the literal translation: *A Gift to the Prince*.

<sup>152</sup> Representative scholarship includes: Satish Chandra, *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce, and Politics* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987); Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c. 1710-1780* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); John F. Richards, "The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Crisis in South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 2 (1990): 625-638; C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

horse traders either to the southern or western grazing grounds became attenuated, thereby reducing access to a reliable horse supply.<sup>153</sup>

In this chapter, I would like to nuance this argument by suggesting that cultural preference distinguished the ‘war horse’ from horses not used in battle. Both war horses and other luxury breeds more suited to ceremonial display were an integral part of the horse trade, and both are discussed at length in the *farasnama* texts. In the previous chapter, we saw how the Firuz Jang manuscript tradition reflected comportmental norms. For example, a piebald was not appropriate for battle. It was not a ‘war horse’. The tradition prescribed a basic set of guidelines for proper masculine comportment that spread throughout the northern half of the Subcontinent. Period paintings emphasize participation of military men in this tradition. Based on date stamps, the tradition continued at least until the late 1700s as a standard between an *amir* and his cluster of lower-level military retainers.<sup>154</sup> For the eighteenth century, we analyze two *farasnamas* that reflect a different set of tastes and relationships than those presented in the Firuz Jang tradition. The excerpt above, taken from *Tuhfat al-Sadr* (al-Sadr’s Gift) by Fa’iz, illustrates how the piebald appropriate for viewing the verdure in the previous century had moved from a descriptive category to a breeding specialty. Sadr al-Din b. Muhammad Khalil Zabardast Khan (fl. ca. 1750) went by the penname of Fa’iz. Fa’iz was a celebrated author from a family with Kurdish origins who had distinguished themselves as *ghazis* under Shah Jahan, Jahangir, and Aurangzeb. Based in Lahore and Kashmir, the regions which benefitted most directly from the overland trade with Central Asia, Fa’iz incorporated Arabic terms into his *farsnama* and his focus was decidedly on the details of creating horses for market consumption. The second treatise was composed by the well-

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<sup>153</sup> Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 79-83.

<sup>154</sup> Muhammad Ashraf and Salar Jung Museum, *A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts at the Salar Jung Museum and Library. Vol. 10*. (Hyderabad: Salar Jung Museum and Library, 1991), 179-187, Nos. 4216 (1798) at Pochampalli, 4217 (1756) at Imtiyazgarh, 4218 (mid 18<sup>th</sup> cent.), 4225 (1726).

known Khatri administrator Anand Ram Mukhlis (d. 1760) for his patron Himmat Khan during the period Mukhlis served as the deputy of Khan's household. Kayasthas and Khatri were usually families of Hindu scribes who held posts of lower level mansabdars and performed various scribal roles in the noble households. Mukhlis's *Rabat al-Faras* is another Persian translation of Salihotra's Vedic horse lore. This treatise rarely mentions the whorls that characterized Salihotra's earlier translation. It does, however, include information about blue horses and a brief mention of a piebald.<sup>155</sup> There is also no mention of *ghazis* or any of the Perso-Islamic lore that dressed the Firuz Jang tradition or is imbedded in Fa'iz's *Tuhfat al-Sadr*. The point where Mukhlis and Fa'iz come into dialogue is the question of how to respond to the restricted supply of horses, a problem of pressing urgency in the eighteenth century. They do this by amending the proscription on riding horses, such as piebalds, into battle. They also do this by looking to outside sources for veterinary medicine and breeding techniques in order to maintain and expand the available stock of horses in India.

The restrictions in supply caused by the continued struggles on the trade routes between Central and South Asia led to an uneven spread and stock of horses.<sup>156</sup> These horses were needed not only as instruments in war, but also as prized possessions for noble stables. The restricted supply coupled with continued demand created more competition in the market for horses. At the same time, employment was often unstable even for high-ranking *mansabdars* and more so for lower level *mansab* holders/administrators such as Mukhlis.<sup>157</sup> The decreased buying power combined with a more competitive market led to a shift in priorities over which horses were appropriate. It is also worth consideration that the Marathas and other warrior groups who relied on

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<sup>155</sup> *Rabat al-Faras* of Anand Ram Mukhlis, (British Library, London), Or. 5762: fol. 15r.

<sup>156</sup> Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 37, no. 3 (1995): 233-234.

<sup>157</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 61-71.

light cavalry and guerilla tactics preferred the country-bred horses of their homelands in the Deccan. These horses were a result of a breeding strategy that crossed the Dekhani mares with imported horses brought overland from Central Asia. The result was an agile, lightweight horse with a reputation for endurance.<sup>158</sup> The shift from describing the minutiae of idealized horses, riders, and associated imagery for each occasion towards a more pragmatic focus on horse care and breeding demonstrates that noble households had already begun to lean more towards maintaining and increasing their stables due to the restricted flow of horse from Central Asia.

### **Anand Ram Mukhlis and the Multi-Colored Horses**

Anand Ram Mukhlis (ca. 1697-1750) was not a warrior. Born into a wealthy Khatri family of administrative scribal *mansabdars*, Mukhlis received comprehensive training in what had become a standard, or expected, breadth of knowledge that one would expect of a professional administrator in a large Indo-Persian noble household.<sup>159</sup> Although his *farasnama* does not fall into the category of epistolography, accountancy, or demonstrate his linguistic skill in the same way his writings in more well-known genres has done, it represents what Subrahmanyam and Alam noted as interest in “Persian renderings of local texts and traditions.”<sup>160</sup> The Hindu scriptures and other Indic texts

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<sup>158</sup> Henry George Keene, *Madhava Rao Sindbi and the Hindu Reconquest of India* (London: Clarendon Press, 1891), 43-44; Sa’adat Yar Khan, Rangin and D.C. Phillott ed. *The Farasnama-e Rangin or: The Book of the Horse, by “Rangin.” Translated from the Urdu by Lieut. Col. D.C. Phillott* (London: Bernard Quartich, 1911), 11, fn. 4; Phillott references *Arash-i Mahfil* (1805).

<sup>159</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 311-338; originally published as “The Making of a Munshi,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 43-72. For noble households, see: John F. Richards, “Norms of Comportment among Imperial Mughal Officers,” in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of ‘Adab’ in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 255-290.

<sup>160</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 63.

were considered cultural accessories of the typical Khatri or Kayastha, but outside a *munshi's* (scribe) core curriculum.<sup>161</sup>

Mukhlis lived during a period when the numbers of people in this class of administrative *mansabdars* underwent a “veritable explosion in their ranks”, especially after 1700.<sup>162</sup> There are several examples of these Khatri and the roles they filled for their patrons. During his formative years, Nik Rai (b. 1670) traveled with his grandfather, father, and brothers while the eldest served the households of noble amirs. When it was their turn, Nik Rai’s older brother, Sobha Chand, obtained a position as superintendent of the *topkhanah* (artillery) and the *dagh va tashibab* (branding of horses and recruitment of men) in Bijapur.<sup>163</sup> His brother was promoted just as Nik Rai finished his education and happily filled his brother’s empty post.<sup>164</sup> Despite the military nature of the position, his autobiography never mentions actual fighting. In March 1739, Mukhlis was at a Chishti shrine with his literati contemporaries outside of Delhi. That same year, Nadir Shah was invading Delhi and in the same month, he brutally closed the city gates, ordering his soldiers to execute the civilians who had turned on his troops in response to premature rumors of Nadir Shah’s death.<sup>165</sup> At this time, Mukhlis was just outside the city. During a bout of insomnia, Mukhlis’s servant recited Jayasi’s 17<sup>th</sup> century sufi romance *Padmavat*. Mukhlis was inspired to translate the story into Persian and re-create the Indian princess and heroine in a refined Indo-Persian literary style. “If this Hindi Beloved were to be displayed in the robes of a Persian writer then it is possible that this work of art might

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<sup>161</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 63.

<sup>162</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 64.

<sup>163</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 69. Nik Rai’s older brother decided to move to Bijapur when “bandits and trouble makers” created a perceived threat to the family’s security.

<sup>164</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “The Making of a Munshi,” 70.

<sup>165</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Discovering the Familiar: Notes on the Travel-Account of Anand Ram Mukhlis, 1745,” *South Asia Research* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1996), 142.

appear elegant and permissible in the estimation of people of taste.”<sup>166</sup> The degree of separation between matters concerning his immediate surroundings and the subjects he writes about is somewhat startling but continues throughout his writing. In 1745, Mukhlis was serving Qamar al-Din Khan, then the imperial *wazir*, when they went to chastise the Afghan Rohilla ‘Ali Muhammad Khan for his encroachment on Mughal territories. During the journey, Mukhlis’ son fell from his horse while hunting partridges and larks.<sup>167</sup> His travel account focuses more of food and the arduous travel than on military concerns, and just as it seemed that there would be an actual battle, Mukhlis wrote:

O friends, now that matters have come to arrows and swords, why should we stay here, for we are not soldiers? We are Multawi Mal and Pakodi Das (Postponement Mal and Cutlet Das); why should we then not leave for the city to do business there?<sup>168</sup>

Mukhlis’s awareness of the disconnect between his involvement in the military affairs of his patron and his own concerns as a *munshi* caused him some discomfort. Mukhlis’ function in his patron’s household relied on his specific knowledge of both Persian and indigenous literary and courtly traditions. Even if he did not speak as a warrior, as did the Firoz Jang tradition, he provided a valued perspective on the values and management of the courtly household in the eighteenth century.

The contextualization of Mukhlis, his writing, and his surroundings places his *farasnama* outside of the background of bravery and martial skill of the Firuz Jang

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<sup>166</sup> As quoted in Shantahu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved: Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15, no. 5 (2000), 4. Original text: *Hangama-e ‘Ishq, compiled in 1739* of Anand Ram Mukhlis (Patna: Khudabakhsh Library) MS. 8918: folio 5.

<sup>167</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Discovering the Familiar,” 143-144.

<sup>168</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Discovering the Familiar,” 148. Original text: *Safar Nama-i Mukhlis (The Diary of the Travel of Anand Ram Mukhlis, d. 1164 A.H.)*, ed. with notes by Sayyid Azhar ‘Ali (Rampur, 1946). An English translation of the first part of the journey from Delhi to Gadh Muktesar by William Irvine appeared in *Indian Magazine and Review* (1903): 66-71, 102-106, 116-121, 151-156, 169-172.

tradition. Rather, Mukhlis renders the stories, content, and descriptions with polished skill and much like his redressing of the *Padmavat*, he reframed the Sanskrit *farasnama* in eloquent but not flowery Persian. Salihotra occupies a lesser role and Mukhlis only mentions him in the introductory story of winged horses. Some aspects of the story changed between the seventeenth-century Firoz Jang tradition and the eighteenth-century *Rabat al-Faras*. The Vedic Salihotra and Indra are not contrasted by Islamic stories about the origins of horses. Horses are not inauspicious or auspicious but re-categorized as breeds according to origins and desirable appearances. Whorls are barely mentioned. As with the Firoz Jang tradition, veterinary advice occupies the bulk of Mukhlis' horse treatise with complicated recipes. Thus, the pragmatic needs of the patron appear to be central concerns behind in the production of this text. Unlike the previous tradition, there is a preoccupation with blood-letting as a treatment and an entire section on which medications are appropriate for each season.<sup>169</sup>

### ***Rabat al-Faras* (The Comfort of the Horse)**

*Rabat al-Faras* opens with the ornate language of courtly Persian. Mukhlis dedicates the treatise to the Prophet Muhammad, the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Aurangzeb (Alamgir), and his patron, Himmat Khan.<sup>170</sup> After the initial opening phrases, it seems that Aurangzeb awarded Himmat Khan an Afghan elephant after a military victory. In keeping with Himmat Khan's increased status, his courtiers proposed the following:

One day, while seated with the brightest and best minds of the time, they were able to command that the knowledge of horses, and the treatments of horses' illnesses according to what is known and understood, be gathered from amid the

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<sup>169</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 18r-31v (veterinary section); fols. 18r-21v (blood letting).

<sup>170</sup> Beveridge, II 625-627. (Mukhlis mentions an Afghan elephant of f. 2v line 2 which was given to Himmat Khan after defeating the Marathas in Aurangzeb's 27<sup>th</sup> year.)

eloquent writings of the age to clarify the detailed criticism of the master of interpretation, organizer of wisdom, with the offer to compose a treatise which is in Hindawi, by Salihotra, comprising the knowledge of horses and treatments for illnesses. One suggested that it should be summarized and agreeable, and appear in adorned Persian. They commanded [this of] Anand Ram, the servant.<sup>171</sup>

The preface obliquely acknowledged a previous translation of Salihotra's tradition while also framing the request for Mukhlis to compose a more eloquent, agreeable, and summarized version. There is no mention of differentiating the good from the bad; although Mukhlis spends a few folios discussing where the most desirable horses can be obtained, he does not delve into their auspicious qualities.<sup>172</sup> While gathering sources, Mukhlis borrowed from Hindawi books from past rulers, and especially relied on the knowledge of Jughistar (better known as Yudhishtar, "Gifted in War," from the Sanskrit epic the *Mahabharata*) who had four brothers. Nakul was the third and he learned the science of wisdom and medicines from Aristotle and Plato, which he applied perfectly to horses.<sup>173</sup> Mukhlis also mentions that his colleagues knew of Salihotra, so he included a few of the best lines about how the horses lost their wings.<sup>174</sup>

The treatise has fourteen chapters (*babs*), including the introduction, a section on colors and another on general horse knowledge. The chapters are organized in the following way: 1. Introduction; 2. On knowing horses; 3. On knowing the colors of horses; 4. On distinguishing between coats; 5. On knowing the age of a horse by its teeth; 6. On knowing the parts of a horse; 7. On riding and equestrianism; 8. On learning about blood and recognizing illnesses and their cures; 9. On knowing the blood-letting parts; 10. On distinguishing when and in which season to give medications; 11. On

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<sup>171</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 3r: 9-11 to 3v: 1-11.

<sup>172</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 9v- 14v.

<sup>173</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fol. 5v: 9-10.

<sup>174</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fol. 6r: 7-9.

distinguishing between medications; 12. On the medications to give a horse; 13. On distinguishing the treatments for horses and ghees; 14. On preparing medications and administering them to the horse. The bulk of the treatise presents subjects including identifying blood organs, and how and when to properly bleed a horse, preparing and administering medications during different seasons, discerning the age of a horse by its teeth, and how to ride a horse.<sup>175</sup> The manuscript includes twelve simply rendered illustrations. The first (Figure 2) depicts the story told on the facing folio of how Indra, the Raja and Devi, went to the Vedic sage Salihotra imploring him to remove the wings from horses so they could serve better than elephants in Indra's cavalry. Salihotra obliges, leaving them bridled and ready for battle.<sup>176</sup>

Next, Mukhlis divides the horses into original colors, qualities, and elements. Each description is illustrated in a simple but full-page painting. The chestnut with a black mane and tail (hnd. *nid buṣ*) is first, followed by the bay horse (ar. *turuq*; lit. meaning: he who comes at night), the dun (hnd. *sarang*), the cream colored gelding (pr. *jardeb*), the blue (pr. *nableh kabud*; *kabud* also means gray), the dark black (pr. *mushgi siyah*), the horse the color of mud (pr. *khir*) and the white horse with two black ears. Three illustrations show additional variations. "The horse with every color is the most exalted and best. The white horse with two black ears is also very good, as is the red horse with four white legs (hnd. *jamardat*)."<sup>177</sup> These colors combined with the four elements, which Mukhlis attributes to Aristotle through Nakul, and resulted in secondary descriptions based on smells and behavioral characteristics. For example, the "splendor of water horses brings the fragrance of the flower and is perpetually chaste and pure."<sup>178</sup> Despite all of these categories, though, the "horses born in the *wilayat* (regions) of *Taṣ* and 'Iraq,

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<sup>175</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 4v: 1-11 to 5r: 1-3.

<sup>176</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 6r-7v.

<sup>177</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 9v-14v.

<sup>178</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: folio 9r.

Turkestan are the best, but those from the land of *faqirs* (mendicants) and peasants (*kipkan ve kikan*) are the worst.”<sup>179</sup>

This raises several issues around the origins and colors of the horses Mukhlis preferences. First, he conflates the association of *Taz* with Arabia as a breed rather than a region. Although the British translated ‘*Tazies*’ as ‘Arabians’ from the late eighteenth century on, it seemed more of a part of their obsession with an ambiguous concept of Arabian horses tied to an actual origin. Yet, Mukhlis distinguishes between *Tazis*, which in Arabic means ‘pure-bred’, ‘Iraqi horses, and horses from Turkistan. The familiarity with horses from these areas is not at all surprising considering at least three centuries of documented horse trade between Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia.<sup>180</sup> The distinction between *Tazis* and ‘Iraqis is notable because they both were shipped primarily by sea from either side of the Persian Gulf. It seems that Mukhlis, like the British, confused the idea of a purebred horse and horses from Arabia. The next step in this line of thought is that *Tazis* turned into a brand-name breed. Their actual Arabian origins were no longer worth mentioning and the adjective alone sufficed as a description. Mukhlis does not describe them in any more detail, but references *Tazis* in the chapter on equestrian skills: “Nakul says it is best to ride a *Taz*.”<sup>181</sup> The color schemes are not always intuitive. The *jerde* (dun gelding), for example, is recognizable as a gelding because the horse does not have testicles in the illustration. Mares were specified, yet ‘horse’ (*asp* or *faras*) refers only to stallions.

The *nablah kabud* (blue) horse and the horse of every color deserve our attention because they appear over and over again in eighteenth century paintings from Rajput courts.<sup>182</sup> In Figure 10, Maharana Amar Singh II rides a blue horse from Jodhpur

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<sup>179</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: folio 8v.

<sup>180</sup> Simon Digby, *War-Horse and Elephant in Delhi Sultanate* (Oxford: Orient Manuscripts, 1971).

<sup>181</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: folio 17r.

<sup>182</sup> Unfortunately, the British Library could not produce color copies of *Rabat al-Faras*. My notes for the illustrations of the *nablah kabud* (blue) horse on fol. 12r and for the horse of every color

accompanied by his retinue. Amar Singh II's court painter has been dubbed the "Stipple Master" for his skillful use of the half-pen technique (*nim-qalam*) and is well known for the equestrian paintings he produced for the court in Udaipur.<sup>183</sup> On the reverse side: *jodpar ka ache* ("It is from Jodhpur"). This particular painting is significant not only because it came from the same court who ruled the hilltop fort Firoz Jang took in 1611, but also because the blue horse is from Jodhpur. It has no other markings to differentiate between auspicious or inauspicious, and it is identified according to place. Slightly less prestigious than the *Tazî*, whose color seems insignificant unless combined with origin, the blue horse rose in esteem over the course of the eighteenth century when it became more common in period paintings. Amar Singh II's horse is rearing as though on a public procession.

Painted near the end of the eighteenth century, *Woman Riding a Horse* (Figure 11) also depicts a blue horse. Here, the catalogue does not include information about the artist or notes on the reverse side. It does note that the painting was produced at a Rajput court circa 1775. The noble woman's attendants are surrounding her and the blue horse is richly decorated. She appears in much the same manner as Amar Singh II at the beginning of the century. These paintings are only two of many depictions of blue horses.

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on fol. 13r indicate they simple paintings were actually blue in the first instance and multi-colored in the second instance.

<sup>183</sup> "Stipple Master" by Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/64891?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=\\*&who=Stipple+Master&pos=2](http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/64891?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=*&who=Stipple+Master&pos=2) The Stipple Master produced a second painting of the same horse from Jodhpur:

<http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/310636>

Blue horses appear earlier. See: Royal Horse and Runner (ca. early 17th century) Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. No. 25.68.3.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/447796?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=royal+riding+horse+india&pos=9>

Another painting of a winged blue horse is part of a 16<sup>th</sup> century (c. 1570) recension of al-Qazwini's *Aja'ib al-Makbluqat* (*Wonders of Creation*) from Bijapur. Los Angeles County Museum of Art III: Sultanate and Mughal Paintings. Acc. No. 73.5.585. (Arabic) The connection between blue and winged horses could be construed as part of Salihotra and Indra's story or simply a difference of opinion about the meaning of *kabud*, which translates in Persian to gray rather than blue.

The ‘horse of every color’ seems to be a piebald with henna applied to some portion of the lower half of the horse’s body. The illustration in the British Museum *Rabat al-Faras* manuscript does not differentiate between this horse and the white horse with black points.<sup>184</sup> However, the numerous paintings of piebalds in this period offer a measure of clarification. The painter Bhavani Das was recruited to the Kishangarh court (near Ajmer) by the Rajput ruler Raj Singh (r. 1706-48) from the Mughal court at Delhi in 1719.<sup>185</sup> There, he painted at least two prominent piebald stallions. *The Stallion Kitab* (Figure 12) stands alone with the lower half of his body hennaed and decorated. One groom is feeding him with a food bag while the others attend to him. The description on the reverse says, “Kitab, the wonderful Iranian [stallion], aglow with nine splendors.”<sup>186</sup>

The painting of the *Stallion Jugaldan Iraqi* (Figure 13) is also attributed to Bhavani Das during his time at the Kishangarh court. The Persian line of the bi-lingual heading says: “Stallion Jugaldan, Iraqi, mark on left side.”<sup>187</sup> In this instance, only the hooves were hennaed. He is unattended but left standing fully saddled. As with the blue horse from Jodhpur, both *Kitab* and *Jugaldan Iraqi* are associated with their origins. I would guess that *Jugaldan Iraqi*’s mark on the left cheek distinguished him from other piebalds in the Kishangarh stable. It is very clear that origin (genotype) and appearance (phenotype) combined to produce the ‘horse of many colors’ as another brand name breed by the middle of the eighteenth century, and that the piebald and the blue horse were both popular at Rajput courts. The Arabic term ‘*Ablaq*’ (piebald) is not mentioned in *Rabat al-*

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<sup>184</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 13v-14r.

<sup>185</sup> M.S. Randhawa and Doris Schreier Randhawa, *Kishangarh Painting*, (Mumbai: Vakils, Feffer, and Simmons, 1980), 10; Toby Falk, “The Kishangarh Artist Bhavani Das,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 52, nos. 1–2 (1992): 152-153, Notice 1 [n.p.] fig. 2 [detail].) For other equine portraits by Bhavani Das, see two views of the same stallion on either side of one page, c. 1725, formerly in the Heeramanek Collection (Alice N. Heeramanek, *Masterpieces of Indian Painting from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramanek* [N.p.: Alice N. Heeramanek, 1984], plates 74, 75; Sotheby’s, New York, November 2, 1988, lot 47 [both]).

<sup>186</sup> *Kitab iran achambha daaba nau angrang* (Kitab, the wonderful Iranian [stallion], aglow with nine splendors), M.S. and Doris Schreier Randhawa, *Kishangarh Painting*, 11.

<sup>187</sup> *Piebald Stallion Named Jugaldan Iraqi*, c. 1730, collection of Michael and Henrietta Spink, London (Sotheby’s, New York, June 2, 1992, lot 149).

*Faras* or on the painting inscriptions. For that matter, neither is the ‘*kumayl*’ (bay), which appeared in each Firoz Jang manuscript.

The Rajput horse culture Mukhlis promoted in *Rabat al-Faras* coalesced in the period between 1611 and 1725. Although produced for a still unidentified and assumedly Muslim Himmat Khan sometime towards the middle of the eighteenth century, his courtiers asked Mukhlis to compose this Persian translation of Salihotra’s horse treatise. Using the considerable corpus of available knowledge, Mukhlis connected Vedic and Greek knowledge through Salihotra’s student Nakul. The redressing of ‘indigenous’ horselore was in alignment with Mukhlis’s other writings.<sup>188</sup> However, this was not only theoretical but the basic tenets are substantive and appear in equestrian paintings produced by the ateliers of Rajput noble courts throughout the eighteenth century. *Rabat al-Faras* represents what could be seen as the ‘demand’ side of a supply and demand relationship between merchants and breeders and consumers. The blue horse from Jodhpur and the piebalds from Iraq and Iran, and *Tazis* all support this demand. Now we will transition to the supply side of this relationship. *Tubfat al-Sadr*, by the Fa’iz, the son of Zabardast Khan, guides the noble horse merchant, dealer, or breeder, in how to produce the horses in demand.

### **Fa’iz and *Tubfat al-Sadr* (al-Sadr’s Gift)**

For this project, I consulted the published and edited copy of *Tubfat al-Sadr* (A Gift for al-Sadr) copied in 1780 from an earlier manuscript.<sup>189</sup> While it contains almost

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<sup>188</sup> *Mir’at al-Istiblah*, catalogued in C. Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum, Vol III*. (London: British Museum, 1879-83). This is an alphabetically arranged dictionary of contemporary Persian language.

<sup>189</sup> That this was a later copy is clear since Fa’iz died in 1738. Sayyid Mas’ud Hasan Rizvi, *Fa’iz Dehalvi Aur Divan-i Fa’iz* (Aligarh: Anjuman-i taraqqi-ye Urdu, 1965), 63-64.

On page 63, the scribe Murtasim Amir Muhammad Aslam Zanjani wrote that one Lala Sahib Lala Paraan Nanahe Jiu Talvar commissioned this copy of Zabardast Khan’s *Tubfat al-Sadr*, which he completed in 1780 C.E./ 1194 A.H. The interest of Sikhs in Indo-Persian horse culture near Qandahar could be part of their efforts to maintain their large numbers of cavalry while at the

nothing of the organization and breadth found in the Jang tradition, the pared down style seems much in keeping with what is known about eighteenth century *ghaz̤i* norms of manly conduct and the title suggests it was intended at least in part as a ‘mirror for princes’, a related genre.<sup>190</sup> The author, Sadr al-Din b. Zabardast Khan (d. 1738), went by the penname Fa’iz.<sup>191</sup> His great grandfather was Amir al-Umara’ Ali Mardan Khan, and his grandfather was Ibrahim Khan Ali Mardan Khan, the Kurdish governor of Lahore and Kashmir who earned his title after switching to the Mughal side of the Qandahar campaign (1611-13).<sup>192</sup> His father, Muhammad Khalil Zabardast Khan Ali Mardan Khan, was also a high ranking noble. ‘Zabardast Khan’, ‘Ali Mardan Khan’, and Amir al-Umara’ were all titles conferred upon his family members for distinguished military service to the later Mughals. Fa’iz (the successful) himself does not seem to have participated in military service, although his history is relatively obscure.<sup>193</sup> Family politics aside, he composed several works, *Tuhfat al-Sadr* included, in which he plays with Persian literary norms in a way that shows his appreciation for genre and language while still

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same time seeking patronage at the Rohilla and Mughal courts. See: Purnima Dhavan, “Redemptive Pasts and Imperiled Futures: The Writing of a Sikh History” *Sikh Formations* 3, no. 2 (December 2007): 113. For a more thorough understanding of Sikh history-writing and Khalsa formation, see Dhavan, *When Sparrows Became Hawks: The Making of the Sikh Warrior Tradition, 1699-1799* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>190</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 19-37.

<sup>191</sup> Zabardast Khan was a Mughal title. “Fa’iz” was the penname for Sadr al-Din b. Zabardast Khan. See: *Fa’iz Dehalvi Aur Divan-i Faiz*, by Sayyid Mas’ud Hasan Rizvi, pp. 17-22. Beveridge, Vol. 1, 186-194; *Maathir al-Umara’* II, 795-807.

<sup>192</sup> William Irvine, *Later Mughals, 1707-1739* (Lahore: Sang-e-Mal Publications, 2007), 173, 180, 238.

<sup>193</sup> Rizvi reports that it was written in *Taz̤k̤hira Salatin Chagatai* that Zabardast Khan’s son Husn Beg Khan, Muhammad Khan, and Muhammad Taqi Farrukhsiyar all appeared before Kamwar Khan and received honorary *kebilats* (robes). *Fa’iz Dehalvi Aur Divan-i Faiz*, 17. See also: Sachau and Ethe, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library Vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889): 716-717. “no. 1177: Kulliyat-i-Fa’iz.” Ethe places Fa’iz during the reign of Muhammadshah (r. 1718-1738 CE) and notes that Fa’iz was the author of *Irsbad al-Wuzara’* (Short notices on celebrated wazirs), citing references to him also in Rieu I, 338; Elliot, *History of India*, iv. p. 148, and Garcin de Tussy, *Histoire de la Literature Hindouie*, I. p. 436-438.

conveying the requisite meaning.<sup>194</sup> *Tubfat al-Sadr* is both a mirror for princes and a horse treatise. While it still transmits horse lore, Fa'iz made several choices in content, language, and authorial authority which distinguishes his treatise from Mukhlis' treatise and establishes it squarely as a freshly reinvented *ghazi* guide. This as much an instruction manual for a horse merchant positioned on the Indo-Afghan borderlands as it is a guide to manly conduct.

The overland horse trade between Central Asia was a bustling business. The bulk of the horse supply was produced by pastoral nomads on the Central Asian steppe and fattened on the grazing grounds outside of Kabul and Qandahar in the late summer. Between October and November, Afghan Powindah trading nomads moved them across either the Bolan Pass or the Khyber Pass into Hindustan where they grazed on the pasturelands around the Jullandar Doab and the Lakhi Jungle in preparation for horse fairs in Rajasthan, the Punjab, and Rohilkhand.<sup>195</sup> For much of the eighteenth century the crucial pasturage and market around the Lakhi Jungle in Punjab experienced disruptions since this area was first the bone of contention between the Mughals, Afghans, and Sikhs, and after 1760 between different Sikh kingdoms.<sup>196</sup> Some, such as Raja Balwant Singh and his son, Chat Singh (ca. 1780) of Benares went to the fair near the Lakhi Jungle every year, where they had first choice of available stock and distributed the horses to relatives and their dependents.<sup>197</sup> Access to horses suitable for gifting to relatives and dependents (such as Mukhlis) required a level of political acumen both in contacts and cultural preference. If we remember again that Ghazi al-Din Firoz Jang's

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<sup>194</sup> Sunil Sharma, "‘If There is a Paradise on Earth, It is Here’: Urban Ethnography in Indo-Persian Poetic and Historical Texts," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 240-256.

<sup>195</sup> Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 230-232. Gommans' research found that horses taken over the Bolan Pass supplied the initial markets of the Jaipur, the Deccan, and Southern India.

<sup>196</sup> Dhavan, *When Sparrows Became Hawks*, 51. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c. 1710-1780* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 79-83.

<sup>197</sup> Gommans, "The Horse Trade," 245.

ability to attract and maintain an ethnically diverse group of military retainers made up of Marathas, Rajputs, Abyssinians, and Ghazis was a crucial aspect of his successful service career. Combined with the household ‘clusters’ described by John Richards, the task becomes all the more complicated.<sup>198</sup> Yet, it resonates with the meme of the horse merchant who attained political and military success and enlarged their business by going into politics. Shivaji Bhonsle started as a horse merchant before founding the Maratha confederacy; similarly Da’ud Khan Rohilla went from horse merchant to mercenary.<sup>199</sup> I argue that their success depended not only the utilitarian aspect of having access to a supply of warhorses, but knowledge of what each group considered a horse suitable for war, and almost as important – horses to fill the stables of the nobility.

### *Tuhfat al-Sadr*

After an invocation praising the Prophet, Fa’iz opens his treatise with an autobiographical sketch describing how he, “in the prime of manhood, in times of plenty, was most often occupied with amusement and hunting.”<sup>200</sup> His companions excelled at polo (*chawgun*) and in their excellence, they were the best authorities on breeding, the good and bad points of horses, and equine knowledge in general. Fa’iz claims to have used their “intellects,” rather than the “stories, numerous proverbs, and the like” to compose his treatise.<sup>201</sup> Fa’iz quotes from *Surat al-Nafi*: And [He created] the horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment.<sup>202</sup> After this, he notes the excellence of the horse above the donkey and the mule before enumerating rules for horses: women should not ride, horses should not carry loads or feed openly, their stables should be clean, the horses should be shod, the mane and tail should never be

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<sup>198</sup> Richards, “Norms of Comportment among Imperial Mughal Officers,” 255-289.

<sup>199</sup> Gommans, “The Horse Trade,” 249; Gordon, 49.

<sup>200</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 1:13, 18-21.

<sup>201</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 1:21-24.

<sup>202</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 2:07-09; *Qur’an*, *Surat al-Nafi* 16:8.

cut, and finally, those shown to the buyer should be free of blemishes and injuries.<sup>203</sup>

This last point establishes the primary purpose of the treatise as a merchant's guide to selling horses fit for noble stables.

The subjects and contents of the chapters support this purpose. Colors, teeth, habits, conformation, breeding, guidelines for recognizing and correcting vices, horsemanship, grooms, veterinary advice from books and from other horse treatises (in two separate chapters), advice on camels and elephants are all discussed in the course of the treatise, which concludes with a series of prayers (*du'a*). There are no illustrations. There is no origin story and no reference to winged horses. Colors are described in the course of the treatise. Arabic terminology abounds. For example, the term *Akhyaf* (Ar.) is used to refer to a wall-eyed horse.<sup>204</sup> However, literally translated, this term is the superlative for “fearful.” Few of the Arabic terms, other than color names, are easily traced and appear to have been specialized merchant terminology.<sup>205</sup> This treatise is unique in that while it conveys the same sort of utilitarian information, it does so without the guise of the now repetitive yet entertaining anecdotes that appear in *Rabat al-Faras* and the Jang tradition. The lengthy veterinary section is divided in two: one that refers to known veterinary books (*baytara*) in Arabic and Persian, and the other from other *farasnamas*. The cultural preferences it holds are those of the consumer and the descriptions are for the merchant. It is a merchants' guide more than any other I have discussed thus far. Fa'iz intersperses references to Shi'ite Imams and *hadiths* (sayings and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad) transmitted by Companions who came to be associated with 'Ali. He cites numerous Arabic textual authorities by name and seems to

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<sup>203</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 2:19-21.

<sup>204</sup> *Akhyaf* (ar.) is the superlative for 'fearful' – 'the most fearful' – and most closely corresponds to the story of al-Jahiz (d. 869 CE), the prolific author who most notably composed *al-Hayawan* (The Animals) and whose name means 'wall-eyed'. He was asked to pose for a portrait because he most closely resembled the devil. Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles: Essays on Classical Arabic Culture* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 54.

<sup>205</sup> Janet C. E. Watson, *Lexicon of Arabic Horse Terminology* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1996).

referenced a large body of Arabo-Persian works, although most are untraceable, he provided names and authors of books more than not. In order to illustrate what a *ghazī* horse merchant in the eighteenth century considered useful, I focus on Chapter 8, “On Differentiating Between Classes of Horses” and the Shi’ite merchants’ prayers in the conclusion.

In order to produce the most desirable colored horses, a piebald, Fa’iz advises using a Turkish stallion rather than an Arabian.

The best classes of horses are those with a pure Arab sire and dam, there is not much difference between horses from Arab regions. There are many *Ablaqs* (Ar. Piebald) among *Turkis* but among Arabians there are few. For this reason, the breeding stallion and the mare, at the time of covering, reside in plain and uncultivated land and water and greens and this section of affairs is right, they believe the swift sperm will produce different colors in the foal. This same color is equally smooth and full of life to the Arabian – except the sperm produces a solid colored horse. If someone wanted to breed an *Ablaq* or a dapple (*Mulamma*) or a horse with colored ankles (*Muhajjal*), they must, at the time of covering, wave a cloth or something of another color just beyond the stallion’s field of vision to draw his attention. This means of obtaining a horse of different colors is difficult.<sup>206</sup>

When presenting horses, Fa’iz first noted that an Arabian horse with pure parentage from any of the Arab regions is best. However, if one wants an *Ablaq*, or other multi-colored horse, they are more prevalent among the Turks and the same breeding process between Arabian horses results in a solid colored foal. He then goes on to detail the extra lengths a breeder must go to in order to produce the (much desired) horse of many colors. There is no mention of Mukhlis’ somewhat ambiguous *tazīs*, and no further

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<sup>206</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 17: 4-16.

delineation of horses from different parts of Arabia or the Levant. The Arabic terms he selects all refer to very specific differences within the category of multi-colored horses. By way of contrast, the sections on classes of horses in *Rabat al-Faras* had an elaborate framework that incorporated Greek and Indic concepts in order to explain the classes of horses.<sup>207</sup> The breeding advice quoted above is not one that can be proven to produce an *Ablaq*, but it is based on a more pared down and seemingly practical knowledge base. This is still a knowledge that supports the cultural construct of a proper horse from the supplier's point of view. While Fa'iz changed the format of how he presented the knowledge, his only substantial alterations were to replace the Greek and Indic terms with the Persian and Arabic. He also eliminated any mention of horses bred in other areas of South Asia.

The closing prayers for horses bring two aspects of Fa'iz's *farasnama* into sharp relief. First, that this is indeed information meant for merchants and second, that Shi'ism had become an intrinsic part of imagined ghazi comportment. Fa'iz quotes several protective prayers in Arabic. The following prayer was written by the Shi'ite Shaykh Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. Ta'wuus Alawi in this book *Aman al-Akhtar* (Safety from Dangers) in the thirteenth century and Fa'iz copied it in its entirety.<sup>208</sup> It is a lengthy protective prayer, which suggests along tradition of 'horse magic.'

In the name of God, the Merciful and Beneficent. I seek and give protection to the mount of Fulan b. Fulan, known as so and so, and all of the horses - the black (*adham*), the dun (*ashqar*), the bay (*kumayt*), and the unique and multi-colored, and the stallions and the mares - from the trembling, the invaders, the misfortune, the attacks, the sprains, the racing of the heart, and from scars and rotten hay, and from obstinacy, intemperance, hunger pains, and from the questionable and the novelty and the

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<sup>207</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 5v-6r.

<sup>208</sup> 'Ali b. Musa b. Tawus, *al-Aman min Akhtar al-Asfar wa al-Zaman* (al-Najaf: al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyah, 1951), 71-73.

obstacles, and the stumbling, from resentment and reddening, from scolding and urging on, and from the rest of the ailments of livestock. The malignant eye is shielded from their bodies and their skin, their meat and their blood, their marrow and their bones, and from their hides and abdomens, their veins and nerves, their hair and their hindquarters and their stomachs and backs, and from what they have exposed and what they have hidden. [I protect them] with the largest knowledge and with the best names of God and by his greatest words from denial of food, drink, [...], and medications, and from injury by iron and from thorns, from burns and [...], from the tip of the arrowhead and the teeth of the spear, from the inexperienced and the gibing, and from the discouragement of grueling battle, from a painful fall, a crippling misstep, and the painful blow. I protect him and his rider with what Gabriel, peace upon him, recited for protection; and with what the Prophet – may God pray for and preserve him and his people – recited to protect *al-Buraq*; and with what ‘Ali – peace be upon him – recited to protect his horse *al-Buraq*<sup>209</sup>; and with what Simon Peter recited to protect his horse *al-Tammab*; and with what Moses recited to protect his horse who crossed the sea in his footsteps. I protect this mount and her master, her place and her cavalry, and all of what he has – the trotter and the shepherd in the pasture – from harm and the evil eye. And from the rest of the beasts and the confusion and from every injury and calamity and from vigilance and age and drowning and burning and disease and the difficult journey, with the great contract and the names of the illustrious forefathers and each from the evil of spies and from the notables of heaven and society all together. In the name of God, the Omnipotent, the lord of the faithful, of God the all-knowing,<sup>210</sup>

Fa’iz notes that this prayer is to be recited in a low groaning voice. “Fulan b. Fulan” is a term akin to ‘so and so’; the owner’s name and epithet were to be inserted in the opening phrases. It is full of Shi’ite references and even creates new imagery. Ali and his horse *al-Buraq*, for example, are not mentioned in the standard canon of Islamic literature. Simon

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<sup>209</sup> In the Arabic text, Ali’s horse is called Laraaf. Ibn Tawus, 72.

<sup>210</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 59: 7-19 – 60: 1-15.

Peter and his horse al-Tammah (*the ambitious*) is an interesting addition because of the connection between this disciple and Ali in medieval Shiite doctrine.<sup>211</sup> Moses is not known to have had a horse crossing the Red Sea in his footsteps, but the imagery is powerful. Drawing on whatever power these illustrious men had at their disposal to protect their horses, the person reciting this prayer uses the constructed memory to protect his own herds. The horses could be subjected to all manner of threats, from those incurred during battle to those injuries that happened riding. This is one of several prayers Fa'iz included in his conclusion. The other two were intended to be whispered into the horse's ear or written down and carried somewhere in his trappings.

These concluding prayers highlight the Islamic sources Fa'iz utilized in order to compose his treatise. Culturally, the authoritative knowledge presented in *Tubfat al-Sadr* is in an Islamic and Shiite context as compared to *Rahat al-Faras*'s specifically Vedic and Galenic authority. The cultural component is exciting because it emphasizes the place of horse culture among the more refined ghazis who honed their masculine identity over the course of the eighteenth century. In her research on masculinity and the Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad, Rosalind O'Hanlon discusses codes of martial masculinity. These codes were recognized among martial groups, including Sikhs, Rajputs, Pathans, and several others. They were also a requisite for building and maintaining the systems of patronage that bolstered the ruling groups, such as the Pathan Nawabs of Farrukhabad, in their claims to power, lineage, and prestige. Skilled and exemplary soldiering, diplomacy, and honor were demonstrated in practice, while physical displays that included their physiques, weapons, and fighting animals were ways in which they could challenge, judge, and affirm each other's masculine qualities and in the process, their

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<sup>211</sup> Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Tawus and his Library* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 3-27.

suitability to rule.<sup>212</sup> Their horses are what concern us here. The Bangash Nawabs and their contemporaries did not have direct access to the supply of horses that arrived each season from Central Asia.<sup>213</sup> They relied on the available stock of horses already in South Asia, which brings us back to the *dua*'s and Fa'iz.

By the end of this century, the dwindling supply of Central Asian horses – which included the *Turkis* recommended to produce piebalds – met with an increased demand for horses, which among other things could demonstrate the outward masculine qualities outlined above. The dearth in horses did not include the smaller country-bred breeds popular with the Marathas, for example.<sup>214</sup> Whereas in previous periods, the breed could be replenished regularly with foreign bloodstock, the supply was diverted in this period from its source in Central Asia.<sup>215</sup> The stock of available horses included the imported breeds and cross-breeds that had become a staple of South Asian horse culture. At the same time, mares were becoming infertile from repeated pregnancies and being kept in dark stables for year after year. The practice of *band-i qasil*, wherein a horse was kept in the dark and fed a mixture of sugar and *ghi* in preparation for display and/or sale contributed to the overall ill health of horses.<sup>216</sup> The focus on breeding and bleeding horses rather than the focus on treating illnesses particular to South Asia supports this reasoning.

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<sup>212</sup> Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad," in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 24-26.

<sup>213</sup> Gommans, *Indo-Afghan Empire*, 132.

<sup>214</sup> Sa'adat Yar Khan Rangin, *Faras-Nama-e Rangin*, 11, discussed in Chapter 4 below.

<sup>215</sup> Gommans, *Indo-Afghan Empire*, 79.

<sup>216</sup> The results of feeding horses a diet of carbohydrates and sugars include Laminitis (Founder) and Diabetes. J. R. Coffman and C. M. Colles, "Insulin Tolerance in Laminitic Ponies," *Canadian Journal of Comparative Medicine* 47, no. 3 (July 1983): 347. Kibby H. Treiber et. al., "Evaluation of genetic and metabolic predispositions and nutritional risk factors for pasture-associated laminitis in ponies," *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 228, no. 10 (2006): 1538-1545.

The utilitarian aspect of *Tuhfat al-Sadr* could also be read as a response to dwindling supply of foreign bloodstock and more competition for available horses. Breeding a piebald, for example, still relies on the influx of horses and reflects a growing awareness of the practicalities involved in breeding despite the impracticalities of his advice. However, he looked to new sources to inform his choices in authoritative knowledge. By including Arabic veterinary treatises and Islamic *dua*'s, he injected the *farasnama* genre with fresh information. Moreover, by prefacing his treatise with the hands-on knowledge of a group of polo playing contemporaries, Fa'iz took the knowledge he imparted from the abstraction of the Firoz Jang tradition and placed it in the realm of experience.

## **Conclusion**

The first half of the eighteenth century was marked by rebellions and invasions along the northwestern border of South Asia. The Sikh rebellion (1709-1715), led by the mysterious yet enigmatic Banda, mobilized Sikhs and Jats throughout the Panjab during the succession struggles followed by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's death in 1707.<sup>217</sup> It was not until Banda's capture and subsequent execution that the rebellion was truly quelled. Just over twenty years later, Nadir Shah (r. 1736-1747) invaded the northwestern frontier and made his way to Delhi in 1739. Along with upwards of 20,000 troops he sacked the city and massacred those who made any pretense of resistance. In 1748 and 1752, the Afghan Duranni invasions again disrupted overland trade and led to widespread looting and inspired uprisings that continued until 1765.<sup>218</sup> At the same time, the Marathas were actively building their empire on the west coast. Between 1730 and 1780, they led a succession of raids and fought full-fledged battles that expanded their

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<sup>217</sup> Dhavan, *When Sparrows Became Hawks*, 49-56.

<sup>218</sup> Gommans, *Indo-Afghan Empire*, 124, 133-43.

control northward toward Sind and the Panjab and even sacked Delhi in 1737, just two years before Nadir Shah.<sup>219</sup> This considerable and almost constant fighting disrupted the regular flow of overland trade from Central Asia and severely hamstrung the horse-trade. The dwindling supply of horses in South Asia led to increased competition for suitable 'war horses' and horses suitable for noble stables. As the *ghazis* and Rajput groups included in this study honed their identities, both included horses as an important element in their concepts of masculinity. Their horses displayed their prestige and their horses' abilities furthered their own military ambitions. The lack of supply and increased demand drove up prices of horses fit for noble stables while localized breeding efforts were either displaced or relocated to other parts of South Asia.<sup>220</sup>

The horse treatises produced in the eighteenth century respond to this in two important ways. First, they shifted the focus from determining auspicious and inauspicious horses and as well as the intricate system of appropriate riders for ceremonial and other occasions to the care and breeding of existing stock. Mukhlis did this by spending less space discussing these intricacies and devoting more energy drawing on ancient Greek authorities, which he linked to Vedic authority. He went to lengths Abul Fazl only hinted at by incorporating Greek veterinary traditions. Bleeding the horse, he suggested, would heal it from the physiological problems created by feeding a horse *ghi* and sugar, while keeping it in a stable.<sup>221</sup> He also presented a more limited number of options for colors and terms for colors. The origins were less important than they had been and the more aware of other consumers. The 'blue horse' and the 'party colored horse' were represented in period paintings produced in Rajput courts and portrayed notable stallions the illustrated the descriptions. Fa'iz looked to Islamic sources for solutions to the same problem. His focus on breeding and care, while acknowledging the

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<sup>219</sup> Gordon, 114-131.

<sup>220</sup> Gommans, *Indo-Afghan Empire*, 90-96.

<sup>221</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fols. 21v-23r.

Persian *farasnamas* from South Asia, added to existing knowledge. The inclusion of *dua*'s introduced a fresh batch of Islamic personalities worthy of emulation. At the same time, it indicates the level of care and intention that went into horse lore.

In the next chapter, I analyze the final South Asian horse treatise in this study. Rangin's treatise is very much aware of these earlier treatises and the direction each took in responding to a dwindling supply of horses and what that meant both for merchants and consumers. He continues the tradition by altering its style and establishing his own authority as an experienced horse merchant and soldier. Simultaneously, Rangin omits details about Indo-Persian and Vedic horse lore and adapts the contents to reflect the new order of the late eighteenth century. In Urdu verse, Rangin evolves the horse treatise to promote horses bred in the Deccan rather than the northwest of South Asia and the style of light cavalry that proved itself militarily superior.

## CHAPTER 4. THE COLORFUL RANGIN

The final treatise examined in this dissertation is by a man who went by the penname ‘Rangin’ (the Colorful). His *Farasat-nama* has remained almost entirely unexamined except for the anecdotal mention as part of his *divan*. Composed in Urdu verse, Rangin presents himself as an experienced horse merchant, emphasizing his authoritative knowledge based on actual experience in various horse-breeding regions of India. For these reasons, this treatise is a departure from those discussed in the previous chapters. Linguistically, Urdu had become the cosmopolitan language of the late eighteenth century and especially among the literati of Delhi and Lucknow, where Rangin spent a good deal of his time.<sup>222</sup> The title of Rangin’s horse treatise speaks to the ambient linguistic and cultural mixings of the time. *Farasat-nama* is a play on words where *farasat* means ‘skillful horsemanship’ in Arabic and ‘sagacity’ in Persian and Urdu. The contents are even more of a departure from what we have come to expect from the genre over the previous two chapters, yet this treatise is very much in keeping with the genre’s ability to evolve, address contemporary concerns, and reflect cultural preference. That this treatise is in conversation with previous treatises and like them, conveys Salihotra’s Vedic horse lore, is implied by both its changing form and continuous dialogue about horses and horse culture in South Asia.

Rangin’s treatise reflects three main issues of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. First, there was a plethora of would-be consumers, each with their own particular set of preferences but with an overarching ideal of an acceptable horse. He makes repeated references to the preferences of Sikhs, British, Marathas, Rajputs, Afghans, and a host of others while reinforcing the ideal, as we shall see. Second, the

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<sup>222</sup> Frances Pritchett, “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 2: Histories, Performances, and Masters,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 864-911.

treatise reflects a new emphasis on light cavalry in this politically and militarily charged environment. Famous breeding grounds and pasturage that previously dotted the northwest, especially near the Lakhi and other jungles, had been the most popular sources for horses among the Mughal nobility in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The prejudice against horses bred in the southern regions and their smaller stature made the Deccani breeds less popular. For much of the Mughal period, these areas were associated with the seasonal trade patterns of overland trade and the nomadic trading groups who facilitated trade. The emergence of new regional states, discussed in the last chapter, disrupted existing routes, and brought into prominence markets, such as those in the Deccan, that had earlier not received much attention from the Mughal *farasnama* writers. Rangin's focus on the peninsula and the Deccani breeds it produced marks a definite change in preference and availability of horses and the trade routes they traveled along before sale.<sup>223</sup> The veterinary section focuses on maintaining and manipulating available stocks of horses, rather than promoting experimentation based on outside traditions. Third, the *Farasat-nama* is in Urdu verse, not the Persian prose we have grown accustomed to with this genre. The versified version was based on Rangin's own longer but now lost prose treatise.

Rangin lived in a very different political and cultural reality from that of Fa'iz, Mukhlis, and Firuz Jang. Between 1760 and 1804, the political map of South Asia shifted between new elite groups vying for power. In 1761, the Afghan commander Ahmad Shah led the Durranis to deliver a crushing defeat to the Marathas in Third Battle of Panipat and halted the Marathas' northward march into Mughal domains. In the far north, the Sikhs controlled Sind and much of the Punjab. In 1799, Ranjit Singh captured Lahore and went on to establish an empire that would last until 1849. In the peninsula,

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<sup>223</sup> Jos Gommans, "The Eighteenth-Century Horse Trade in South Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no.3 (1994): 228-234.

the Tipu Sultan was beginning to expand the borders of the Sultanate of Mysore. In Bengal, the East India Company had just won the Battle of Plassey and would expand westward in search of revenue. These events are only a brief overview of the complexities that changed the political landscape of South Asia in the late eighteenth century.<sup>224</sup>

The change in political fortunes had a large impact on the most famous breeding and grazing grounds, shifting the focus on breeding to one that relied mainly on local horses and the large pasturelands in the northwest to the peninsula. The nascent Sikh empire was growing along the overland trade routes between Central and South Asia. The horses (and other goods) that did come through had already been siphoned off toward the North (Russia). The Lakhi Jungle was one of the central entrepots for the eighteenth-century horse trade as both an area famous for breeding and grazing on nutritious grasses.<sup>225</sup> However by the end of the century, it was also one of the most dangerous areas with bands of mercenaries making names for themselves by looting and killing.<sup>226</sup> When EIC officials went in search of suitable war horses in the early nineteenth century, they attributed their failure to lack of such horses to the western market's sudden state of collapse rather than to the fact that this was at the end of three grueling Anglo-Maratha wars and the chance that agents were not willing to sell to the enemy (British).<sup>227</sup> This is all important because my predecessors, Simon Digby and Jos Gommans, argued that access to the supply of horses, suitable for battle, was a key factor in the success of established and emerging states. Much to their credit, these treatises do discuss the 'war horse', where they are located, and how to recognize a good horse for

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<sup>224</sup> Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 38-69.

<sup>225</sup> Gommans, "Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 230-231.

<sup>226</sup> Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad," in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 24-26.

<sup>227</sup> Gommans, "Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 241-242.

battle. The EIC records I discuss in the next chapter also reflect a strong tension between the supply and demand in the eighteenth-century horse trade. In this chapter, Rangin's treatise demonstrates that the category of 'warhorse' was malleable and changed with cultural tastes and in response to the political demands of the time. The *Farasat-nama* proves that this genre was not stagnant, but an evolving tradition.

### **Rangin's Background**

Rangin's given name was Sa'adat Yar Khan. He grew up with his father, the Mughal courtier, soldier, and memoirist Tahmasap Beg Khan Turani (1738 – ca.1785). Tahmasap was an interesting figure and it is due to his memoir that we know so much about Rangin.<sup>228</sup> As a young boy, Rangin's father was taken from his presumably Turkish family and enslaved by Persian soldiers. He was then educated in languages, accountancy, and trained in the litany of requisite skills before being placed in the household of Mu'in al-Mulk, the last Mughal governor of Punjab. After his patron's sudden death, Tahmasap found himself serving al-Mulk's widow until she eventually freed him. He refashioned himself as a soldier and occasional horse merchant and spent a great deal of time near the northwestern frontier.<sup>229</sup> Rangin's formative years were spent helping his father, both as a horse merchant and as a *mansabdar* to the Afghan Rohillas.

Rangin also received comprehensive training in the now familiar set of skills required of courtiers. These skills allowed him to move through this society as a consummate 'insider' aware of changing tastes and fashions, and to claim Mughal patronage (through his father) but also be fully a part of this new group of self-made warriors – such as the Afghans and Marathas. Rangin was a soldier, horse trader,

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<sup>228</sup> Tahmas Khan and Setumadhava Rao Pagdi trans., *Tahmas nama* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1967); C.M. Na'im, "Transvestic Words?: The Rekhti in Urdu," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 16 (2001): 3-26; Indrani Chatterjee, "A Slave's Quest for Selfhood in Eighteenth-Century Hindustan," *Indian Economic Social History Review* 37, no. 1 (2000): 53-86.

<sup>229</sup> Chatterjee, 60, 65-67.

courtier, and poet. After his father's death (ca. 1785), Rangin moved to Delhi and began a short-lived military career. In 1787, he moved to Lucknow and served the court of Mirza Suleiman Shikoh until 1796 when he shifted to Bengal and then Gwalior and served the Sindhias, the Maratha dynasty in Central India. He left his career as a soldier sometime after 1800 when he returned to his peripatetic horse-trading roots. Rangin died in Banda in 1827.<sup>230</sup>

The experience garnered in childhood gave Rangin unique insights into the workings of the horse market. Rangin knew, for example, that cultural tastes in horses were changing as Maratha and Afghan warriors mounted on smaller framed and more agile horses became a military necessity during campaigns. He also understood that continued campaigns and the rise of these warrior groups in Punjab, Afghanistan, and Rohilkhand, previously famous for their supply of horses and prime grazing grounds, resulted in a shift towards the peninsula. Beyond these logistical considerations, Rangin went into great detail in describing which groups prefer which horses and even how to manipulate whorls or create markings. He included detailed instructions for a practice called *Band-i Qasil*, intended to fatten horses quickly for viewing or sale.<sup>231</sup> The experience Rangin was afforded while accompanying his father allowed him to present his knowledge about horses as an experienced authority. The linguistic training and education in literary traditions allowed him to express his authority and leverage it in a way that resonated with his cultural milieu.

The *Farasat-nama* is part of Rangin's corpus, composed in several languages, but primarily in Urdu, the nascent literary language of the eighteenth century. He was most famous for taking literary tropes and manipulating them to reflect a new point of view. Each of the genres Rangin worked in shows a very creative and sometimes rebellious

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<sup>230</sup> "Rangin, Saadat Yar Khan (1756-1827)" in *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Urdu Literature*, ed. Abida Samiuddin (Global Vision Publishing Co., 2007), 507.

<sup>231</sup> Rangin, 16.

upending of literary and cultural norms. Due to this, scholars have focused mainly on his ‘salacious’ oeuvre without attempting to explain what might have prompted this facet of his style of writing. Like Na’im, they emphasize the idea of a degenerate 18<sup>th</sup> century. My analysis of Rangin suggests his tendency to question genre norms often had to do with pragmatic as well as aesthetic concerns with presenting ‘lived experience’. A brief comparison with his other works shows a similar engagement with depicting facets of everyday voice ignored in Indo-Persian literary traditions, even the emergent Urdu one. Today, Rangin’s most famous *divans* (collections) contain his notorious *Rekhtis*. *Rekhta* was a term that referred to the Urdu *ghazal* (love poetry) and the Urdu language more generally as ‘mixture’. By Rangin’s time the narrative voice was always masculine.<sup>232</sup> Rangin’s *Rekhtis*, however, take a female voice and are sexually explicit describing: “adulterous sex between men and women; sex between women; lustful women; quarrelsome women; jealous women; women’s superstitions and rituals; women’s exclusive bodily functions; women’s clothes and jewelry; and a variety of mundane events in the domestic life of women.”<sup>233</sup> These *rekhtis* are organized into several *divans*, including *Divan-e Rekhta* (1787), *Divan-e Bekhra*, *Divan-e Amekhta*, and *Agekhta*. Recent scholars of gender and literature have extensively probed these texts in order to understand more about women’s agency and lives. Earlier researches have focused on the illicit nature of the collections with comments such those included in the introduction to the English translation of *Farasat-nama*.

He is said to have been a good looking youth, of prepossessing manners, fond of society, not averse to wine-parties, and entertaining companion, and possessed of a wit, nimble, mischievous, flippant, and obscene.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Na’im, “Transvestic Words?” 4.

<sup>233</sup> Na’im, 4-5.

<sup>234</sup> Sa’adat Yar Khan, ‘Rangin’ and D.C. Phillott ed. *The Farasnama-e Rangin or: The Book of the Horse, by “Rangin.” Translated from the Urdu by Lieut. Col. D.C. Phillott.* (London: Bernard Quartich, 1911), xvii.

The surprising nature of the ‘obscene’ has overwhelmed attention to Rangin’s other works suggesting a prurient mind, rather than Rangin’s deeper engagement with multiple regional literary and cultural traditions. While he coined the term *rekhti*, the roots of the genre extend back to the middle of the seventeenth century in Bijapur with poets such as Sayid Miran, “Hashimi”.<sup>235</sup> Hashimi’s published divan contains 240 of 305 *ghazals* that would later be termed *rekhti*. Tracing further back, Hashimi adapted his style of *ghazal/rekhti* from the Deccani *ghazal* that was written in two ‘modes’: one Persian and the other Indic. The Persian mode included a male lover and female beloved. The Indic mode featured a female lover and male beloved. The poet in all cases was male and the topic was love, either sacred or profane.<sup>236</sup> Much in the same tradition as the horse treatises that have so far occupied the entirety of this dissertation, these love poems developed from a combination of the Persian and Indic modes. Neither remained mutually exclusive and both incorporated aspects of the other. The manipulation of language in order to express a multilingual cosmopolitanism is an aspect shared to different degrees by his contemporaries.<sup>237</sup> His other works include two divans of more conventional *ghazals*, one hetero-explicit collection of poetry, and the *Farasat-nama* I will analyze shortly. In his work, Rangin emphasizes the everyday knowledge of merchants and grooms rather than the classical Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic sources of earlier *farasnamas* in order to emphasize the ‘pragmatic’ tone of the work.

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<sup>235</sup> Na’im, 6.

<sup>236</sup> Na’im, 6.

<sup>237</sup> Shantanu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved: The Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15 (2000): 3-30; Ruth Vanita, “Married Among Their Companions’: Female Homoerotic Relations in Nineteenth-Century Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 12-53; Allison Busch, “Anxiety of Innovation: The Practice of Literary Science in the Hindi/*Riti* Tradition,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 45-59.

## The *Farasat-nama* of Rangin

During the two years separating his father's death in 1785 and before he secured employment in Lucknow in 1787, Rangin spent a brief time as a soldier. He refers to this period of his life in his preface as a time of dissatisfaction and subsequent wandering. Finally, he found himself in Lucknow where he stayed with two brothers – Muhammad Bakhsh Qadir and Miyan Qadir. One evening, they were flipping through Rangin's works. Among his writings, they found a horse treatise (*farasnama*) he composed and asked him to write it in verse.

One day my friends were turning over my writings and came upon my Book of the Horse; they were so delighted with its contents, for they were ever fond of horses and riding.<sup>238</sup>

This opening tells us that there was a longer, more detailed horse treatise by Rangin and places the setting of this versified treatise as an impromptu recitation among a group of friends. They were reading over his works, which means they most likely read the *rekhti* poetry he was known for. The ambience he sets for the readers, then, was not one of a serious display of horse knowledge, studied and philosophically considered, as we saw in the previous chapters. While this lighthearted beginning is reminiscent of the introduction of *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, which prefaced its treatise with some of the same tropes, the *Farasat-nama* does not include references and quotes from Arabic veterinary texts, or long prayers protecting horses. Fa'iz used the literary trope of a 'disillusioned wanderer' rather than stating that he served briefly as a soldier before arriving in Lucknow at the home of his two friends. He concludes the treatise with the following:

In very brief verses I have said my say, for brevity spares both reader and writer;  
therefore I have presented to you a great sea inside a pint pot. The receipts I have

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<sup>238</sup> Rangin, 12. It is noteworthy that Phillott spelled 'Fars-Nama' incorrectly. 'Fars-Nama' refers to a separate genre of writing about the region of Fars in Iran.

given have been tested and tried. I have penned these verses in twenty days, in 1795, my years then numbering forty and some days. When this “Book of the Horse” reached its end, I named it “The Book of Horsemanship (*farasat-nama*) of Rangin.” It contains just a thousand couplets.<sup>239</sup>

The condensed, versified version is a ‘sea in a pint pot’ of information on horses. The clever title plays with Arabic, Persian, and Urdu in order to combine horsemanship (Ar. *furusīyyah*) and sagacity (Urdu, *farasat*) with typical Persian heading, “for men of discernment,” which opens each work in the genre.

The main body of the treatise contains 21 chapters that fall into three divisions. The first five chapters cover descriptions of horses, feathers (whorls), defects according to Islamic tradition, and spavins. These are subjects we have come to expect in the introductory chapters of a horse treatise. Rangin alters the predictability by changing the authorial authority from one based on the cultural consensus of one or two elite groups (to the exclusion of or superiority over others) to the preferences of multiple groups. For example, Mughals find between three and five feathers on the forehead (*keboshā*) inauspicious, yet they consider a feather under the throat extremely lucky and call it a ‘purse of gold’ (*hamīyan-i zar*).<sup>240</sup> They alone do not mind plank-necked horses (*takehta garden*) or a horse with wide haunches.<sup>241</sup> Rajputs especially dislike a horse with a feather under the saddle (*chatur-bang*); the Maharattas consider a horse with a small feather under the belly (*gom*) unlucky; the English in particular object to a horse with spavin (*bel-haddi*) although others understand that spavin does not lead to lameness.<sup>242</sup> Among the

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<sup>239</sup> Rangin, 41. Phillott adroitly noted that *farasat* (sagacity) is a play on words. The Arabic terms *furusīyyah* or *furusah* (horsemanship) is mixed with the general heading the Urdu and Persian term for discernment, which has been the opening lines of previous horse treatises. (Persian, *arbab al-aql* – men of discernment) The root in both is *f-r-s*. For the Urdu: S.W. Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary, with illustrations from Hindustani literature and folk-lore* (Banaras: Printed at the Medical Hall Press; Trubner and Co., 1879), 868.

<sup>240</sup> Rangin, 2-3.

<sup>241</sup> Rangin, 6-7.

<sup>242</sup> Rangin, 4, 3, 5 respectively.

Mughals, there were Mughals of Persia, Qizilbash, and people of the region (*wilayat*) of Kabul corresponding to Persians, Turanis, and Afghans. Rangin describes groups from within South Asia as Panjabis, Maharattas, Rajputs, and English.

Hindus and Muslims received slightly different treatment. Muslims avoid a horse with either a white stocking on either or both the near or the hind foot (*arjal*) because “the Prophet has said that an *arjal* is bad; what else, then, is there to be said?”<sup>243</sup> Similarly, Persians avoided gray (*sor*) or dappled gray (*sanjab*) horses because Yazid (b. Mu’awiyah) rode these horses often.<sup>244</sup> The subtext of this is that Yazid b. Mu’awiyah was the Umayyad Caliph who ordered the battle that led to al-Husayn’s death, al-Husayn being the son of ‘Ali and a foundational figure in Shi’ite theology.<sup>245</sup> The Saffavid Empire and Persians by extension were Shi’ites, which explains this reference. In the same line of reasoning, all previous treatises with the exception of Anand Ram Mukhlis’s *Rabat al-Faras* referred to an *arjal* as inherently undesirable because the Prophet Muhammad disliked them – as the seventeenth-century Firoz Jang tradition reported on Abu Hurayra’s trusted authority.<sup>246</sup> Rangin treats the Hindus simply. They avoided an inauspicious horse whose ear could reach a feather (whorl) when pulled down and they called a horse with a feather on the throat *kanthi*.<sup>247</sup> Rangin’s summary of the religious groups is simplistic and while echoing earlier texts in the genre, he does so in a way that dismisses these categories in favor of the much more elaborate and pragmatic preferences of the newly formed warrior groups listed above.

Rangin presents the color typology outlined in these chapters on his own authority. He imparted his experiential knowledge of groups and the horses they preferred or shunned without reference to other authorities. With the exception of a

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<sup>243</sup> Rangin, 9.

<sup>244</sup> Rangin, 9.

<sup>245</sup> G.R. Hawting, "Yazid (I) b. Mu'awiya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill Online, 2013).

<sup>246</sup> Chapter 2

<sup>247</sup> Rangin, 3.

brief chapter entitled “*Uyub-i Shari’a*,” which relates only two defects according to Islamic law without reference to another book or *hadith* (sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad). The *arjal* and a ‘*bad rikab*’ (poor mount) is the extent of the advice offered.<sup>248</sup> He did not refer to these groups again, but the way Rangin presented their culturally constructed preferences with short and specific examples organized by theme rather than group reinforces his experiential authority. The first three and subsequent three chapters read as a purchasing guide.

In chapters six through ten the authority shifts to the ‘experts’, layering the levels of advice. The experts are unidentified but perhaps can be taken on Rangin’s authority because of his upbringing and personal experience in the horse trade. It includes the names and simple descriptions of eyesores and defects (Chapter 6), colors and markings (Chapter 7), and listing five common defects (Chapter 8) then goes on to list the best breeding districts (Chapter 9) and advices on how to determine the age of a horse by its teeth (Chapter 10). Rangin’s advice regarding defects such as chronic lameness, night blindness, poor feeder, poor worker, and night blindness are simple and rather than cure them, he instructs on how to recognize these issues. For example, a man-eater predisposed to using its teeth (*dandan-gir*) is “past praying for.” While other vices are “cured by castration,” this incurable viciousness is only remedied by death.<sup>249</sup>

For much of the Mughal period, the prime breeding grounds were believed to be in the northwest, particularly the Lakhi jungles, and were identified with the yearly migrations of the nomadic groups involved with the horse trade.<sup>250</sup> Rangin seems to focus more on the grazing grounds within peninsular India, and those associated most closely with the new powerful Maratha states and the trade routes that liked them. The best breeding districts were *Bhimrathal* (Bhima River Valley), *Kathiyawar* (Kathiawar), and

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<sup>248</sup> Rangin, 4.

<sup>249</sup> Rangin, 10.

<sup>250</sup> Gommans, 231, 240.

*Narjangel* (possibly Sind). Horses from the Bhima River Valley were hardy and capable of traveling long distances on small amounts of food. There is a popular anecdote about horses from this region, also referred to generally as “Deccani,” which highlights their reputation for endurance. After the epic third Battle of Panipat (1761), in which the Afghan forces led by Ahmad Shah Durrani soundly defeated a very large force of Marathas, the Maratha leader Shibdas Rao left the battlefield mounted on his Deccani mare pursued by a Durrani on his horse. The Deccani mare continued to carry Rao at a steady pace for two days, when she accidentally tripped in a ditch. Due to the Durrani’s weight and his Turkish horse’s largesse, he was forced to stop and rest at each stage, allowing Rao to escape if only Rao’s horse had not tripped.<sup>251</sup> Coming back to our treatise, Rangin only cited the long distances and the meager nutritional requirements and without any further explanation. However, the anecdote appears in numerous other sources. The horses of Kathiawar and Narjanel were second and third, respectively.<sup>252</sup> Rangin makes no mention of foreign imports, except in the chapters on veterinary medicine, which open with a cursory remark about adjusting dosages according to the temperaments of Arabian or Turkish horses.<sup>253</sup> Before concluding, Rangin includes a spare summary of how to tell the age of a horse by its teeth. This is yet another departure, especially in comparison to *Tuhfat al-Sadr* where Fa’iz goes into intricate detail on how to interpret a horse’s mouth. Instead of helping the would-be buyer discern the age of a horse over five years old, Rangin advises that a horse without hair around its eyes is old and it would be best to avoid the purchase.<sup>254</sup> He concludes this section saying: “I have told you what I know, and what are known facts; other things there are,

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<sup>251</sup> Henry George Keene, *Madhava Rao Sindhi and the Hindu Reconquest of India* (London: Clarendon Press, 1891), 43-44; The story also appears in Rangin, 11 (fn 4). Phillott references *Arash-i Mahfil* (1805).

<sup>252</sup> British agents reported that Kathiawar was no longer a breeding district in 1814. Jos Gommans, “Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia,” 241.

<sup>253</sup> Rangin, 13.

<sup>254</sup> Rangin, 12.

mere fancies, that no expert acts on, and these I have omitted to mention. What is necessary has been written.”<sup>255</sup> Rangin’s presentation of pragmatic information based on lived experience, dispenses with the theoretical knowledge of the classic *farasnama* genre.

## Veterinary Medicine

This orientation continues in his chapters on veterinary medicine where he addresses serious illnesses with instructions for effacing the markings and whorls that played central role in the classical *farasnamas*. The third section of Rangin’s treatise is on veterinary medicine with recommended cures for fairly common diseases and illnesses (Chapters 10 through 16) followed by treatments for wounds and other miscellaneous issues related to horses (Chapters 17 through 21). Rangin guides the horseman through the details of diagnosing and treating issues as serious as colic and tetanus, and as superficial as tips for fattening horses and faking markings. I would like to focus on these last three examples in order to highlight the larger issues of this treatise.

Tetanus (*chandni-zada*) was a serious concern and the efforts devoted to treating an illness that was usually fatal almost always met with failure. At the time, it was not yet understood that tetanus resulted from bacteria infecting an open wound.<sup>256</sup> It was well known that when the neck and back of a horse stiffens and its jaw locks – leading to the common term for the disease, lockjaw, death consistently followed. It is noteworthy that Fa’iz discussed convulsions (*tashannaq*) and tumors (*awram*) without addressing tetanus despite its continued threat to herds of horses and cattle, suggesting advances in the understanding of veterinary medicine.<sup>257</sup> The efforts Rangin recommends speak to the

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<sup>255</sup> Rangin, 12.

<sup>256</sup> “Tetanus” Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary. Online Version 2012. In 1854, the exact cause of Tetanus was still unknown, although some combination of cold and recent puncture injury was assumed. Delabere Blaine and Edward Mayhew, ed. *Blaine’s Outlines of the Veterinary Art; or A Treatise on the Anatomy, Physiology, and Curative Treatment of the Diseases of the Horse; and, Subordinately, of those of Neat Cattle and Sheep* (London: Longman, Brown, and Co., 1854), 379-384.

<sup>257</sup> *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, 33 and 41 respectively.

importance of this disease and the threat it posed to horses. The immediacy of the threat was so great that he devoted an entire chapter to its remedy.<sup>258</sup> In the rare instance that a horse survived the disease, Rangin says to “regard a horse that has recovered from an attack of tetanus as being granted a new lease on life.”<sup>259</sup> The onset of the disease happened anywhere from a few days to almost a month after the initial injury. One of the most common symptoms was a locked jaw, brought on by muscle stiffness and spasms. If the horse’s jaws are still open, he advises the treatment below.

Procure a fowl, remove its beak and shanks, and pound the whole carcass, guts and all, to a soft mass in a mortar; then add four pounds of *mabela* (boiled and mashed kidney beans), four ounces of pepper-corns, and a quart of *sharab* (wine). Give this quantity every evening for forty days. The drinking water should be made quite warm; further keep the horse in a warm stable free from draughts.<sup>260</sup>

If the horse’s jaws are closed, Rangin suggests the following as a last effort to save its life.

Get ten or twenty diapers soiled by a woman’s menses, and boil in ten quarts of water until reduced to half. Make the horse drink this through its nostrils, and continue the remedy for five days. Then cleanse yourself ceremoniously by bathing in the Ganges.<sup>261</sup>

Both of these solutions held at least a small degree of valid medical advice. In the first instance, it is entirely conceivable that ingesting a steady diet of protein would help a horse recover from illness. In the second instance, even boiled and reduced blood could cause some benefit. However, in both instances the remedy could not combat the anaerobic bacteria coursing through the animal’s body. In the rare cases of recovery, the horse probably survived because of physiological factors entirely unrelated to the remedy

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<sup>258</sup> Rangin, 22. The literal translation of *chandni-zada* is ‘moonstruck’, according to Phillott. Without the original Urdu treatise, this is difficult to corroborate especially without the diacritical markings.

<sup>259</sup> Rangin, 22.

<sup>260</sup> Rangin, 22.

<sup>261</sup> Rangin, 23.

offered.<sup>262</sup> The fact that Rangin included an entire chapter on the illness with time-consuming and difficult remedies points to a growing need to preserve the available stock of horses. The actual nature of his suggested remedies is more akin to a ritual designed to help the horse-owner or stable manager in the case of illness that is known to cause the death of an animal that represents an investment. Further, the investment had become important to preserve to the extent that this level of detail was called for. Rather than discuss philosophical issues surrounding bleeding a horse to cure tumors (*Rahat al-Faras*) or breeding a piebald and the predominance of spotted offspring from Turkish horses (*Tuhfat al-Sadr*), this treatise brings a new sense of urgency to both the dilemma of dwindling supplies of horses and preserving the available horses. The closing remark about bathing in the Ganges in order to cleanse oneself after administering a remedy for lockjaw demonstrates an awareness of both medical issues and the social environment of Indian stables where remedies had to be matched to the cultural and religious proclivities of the staff.

The urgency associated with caring for horses and their veterinary challenges met with practices that were antithetical to healthy practices and leaned more towards a particular idealized image of horses in South Asia. Rangin's chapter on fattening foals and horses includes *band-i qasil*, perhaps the most extreme example of these practices. It seems the stylized images of round horses that appear in contemporary paintings actually represented a standard for the outward appearance of horses.<sup>263</sup>

To make a horse round and fat beyond all recognition, feed it on green wheat and barley. It should be cut fresh every three hours, as it becomes distasteful after being cut a few hours. When the horse stops eating of its own accord, the *sais*

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<sup>262</sup> Interview with Kaye Brundidge, MD on 2 November 2013.

<sup>263</sup> Rangin, 17. Phillott notes in footnote no. 7: "Nearly all horses brought to the spring fairs have been subjected to this treatment. At the end of the forty days when the horse is taken out, it is covered with soft fat, and its coat is sleek and shining. The horse benefits by the absolute rest in a dark stable; and possibly, having nothing to look at it, it eats more than it would do in the light."

(attendant) should cram it. Three hours later he should give the horse two pounds of bran, in which he has mixed sometimes eight ounces of green ginger, and sometimes the same amount of fresh garlic. Sometimes give one and sometimes the other, as this prevents the horse's teeth from getting tender by gorging on green *qasil*<sup>264</sup>. In addition to the above, it is a good thing to smear the small stalks of wheat with *ghi*, not using less than a pound of the latter.<sup>265</sup>

*Band-i qasil* would undoubtedly fatten a horse quickly. Green wheat and barley, soaked in *ghi* and forced on a horse forty days to the extent that the ritual was amended in order to maintain the health of the teeth, was not healthy for the long-term survival of the horse. *Galiyana*, Urdu for 'cram,' is the equivalent of the English term 'gavage' and usually refers to force-feeding geese to produce *foie gras*. However, it did help to make a horse presentable in a relatively short time. *Band-i qasil* would also have been especially useful in preparing horses for sale at the spring markets (*melas*), scheduled after the grazing season.<sup>266</sup> However, comparison with Haidar Ali's (d. 1782) stable records shows that these ingredients were a staple of what we can assume was a noble stable. For example, each of the Mysore ruler's stables was required to keep grain, ghee, black pepper, ginger, and ground beans on hand as the daily allowance for his horses.<sup>267</sup> While force-feeding a horse in order to make it more appealing at market is both a convenient and logical explanation for this practice, the effort required was over and above what could be done while traveling. The second part of the practice involved keeping the horses in the dark and smearing their coats with excrement for the entire forty days:

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<sup>264</sup>Rangin, 17, footnote 1. See Phillott's note: *Qasil* was a term used in the Panjab for green wheat or barley, known as *kbavid* in formal Persian.

<sup>265</sup> Rangin, 17.

<sup>266</sup> Gommans, 231.

<sup>267</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: "Tippoo's Regulations Relative to his Brood" Appendix Number 4 in Major Fraser's Report dated 26 June 1795.

The horse, too, must be kept in a very dark stable, with only a small native lamp burning night and day. Neither curry-comb (*batthi*), nor brush must be applied to its body; the horse must not be groomed at all. Once a day smear all over its body the urine and dung it has evacuated during the previous twenty-four hours. Persist in this treatment for forty days and then see the result.<sup>268</sup>

The first half of the passage emphasizes the importance of emerging from this practice with a shiny coat and a well stocked and manned stable. Stables were expensive to maintain. Again, Haidar Ali's stable records help to illustrate the details. Cows and goats were kept to supply milk for making *ghi*. Grass cutters were employed to keep a steady supply of freshly cut fodder. *Syces* (grooms) were employed to prepare the *ghi*, mashes, and other foods considered necessary for caring for horses. Above the *sycce*, there were 'established farriers' who decided when medical intervention was required and to direct the *sycce* in which remedies to prepare and oversee their administration.<sup>269</sup> The cost of maintaining all of the above could be as high as 128,337.10 rupees.<sup>270</sup> While there could very well have been a difference in cost between Haidar Ali's stables and the stables of great *amirs* and lesser nobles, the overall expenditure would have been substantial. There has been the assumption that the main function of such stables was to supply warhorses, however manuals such as Rangin's make it abundantly clear that producing horses used

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<sup>268</sup> Curry comb was also known as *kbirkhid*. *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: "Tippoo's Regulations Relative to his Brood" Appendix Number 4 in Major Fraser's Report dated 26 June 1795; Rangin, 17.

<sup>269</sup> "Whatever medicine may be wanted for the horses, according to the prescriptions of the est'd farriers of the stables is to be notified to the *cutchery* (office of account) and to be provided, and kept carefully, in order to be administered as occasion shall require; and the quantity served out, is to be entered on the accounts, taking receipts from the *daroghas* of the stables." *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: "Tippoo's Regulations Relative to his Brood" Appendix Number 4 in Major Fraser's Report dated 26 June 1795.

<sup>270</sup> This figure was taken from expenses at the Pusa Stud in 1806, in rupees with the valuation of the early nineteenth century. *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Bengal Military Consultations dated 14 June 1806.

in battles was only one of many functions. *Band-i qasil* was not the only practice Rangin described; much of the advice Rangin provides is geared towards preparing a horse for sale. It was the most illustrative of the energies devoted to outward appearance.

Towards the end of Rangin's treatise, there are several sections detailing miscellaneous information on healing cuts, wounds to the eyes, and other bits that did not fit under a chapter heading. One of these details describes how to remove markings and fix whorls, also known as 'feathers'.

To efface a "feather", shave off both the hair and skin with a sharp razor, and then apply sweet oil and red-oxide of lead. The hair will re-appear in proper form, and not as a "feather". Should the feather not be completely effaced, repeat the operation. The hair will then cover the wound in a regular and normal pattern.<sup>271</sup>

Directly below the paragraph on effacing feathers, Rangin mentioned how to correct unfortunate markings on the face.

To remove a star (*sitara*) or a broken-blaze (*aqrab*), first get rid of the hair by friction and cast it away, then apply daily dry turmeric. The hair will grow again quickly, and will probably be of the colour of the body, and your eye-sore will be removed.<sup>272</sup>

The attention these two issues – markings and whorls – had received previously in this treatise and in all previous horse treatises makes the issue of fixing and effacing these marks especially pertinent. While this section definitely plays into our traditional perception of the wily horse merchant, such as Mahbub Ali in Kipling's *Kim*, it also lays bare the issue of how people dealt with a dwindling or depleted supply of horses in the late eighteenth century in ways that retained the meaning of a 'proper horse'.

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<sup>271</sup> Rangin, 33.

<sup>272</sup> Rangin, 33.

Rangin's horse treatise brings several of these issues to the fore. One of these issues was the raised importance of treating and caring for horses using methods that were perhaps known, but not explicitly stated. Tetanus is just one of the diseases that afflicted horses, yet it was almost always fatal. The ill-fated nature of the treatment and the measures required to follow through with each detail, in the worst case requiring purification in the Ganges, clarify the lengths one had to go in order to save a horse. Earlier in the century, Fa'iz and Mukhlis both experimented with outside authorities and veterinary techniques. Fa'iz introduced Arabic and Persian veterinary treatises from outside South Asia and Mukhlis attempted to meld Greek and Vedic methods to most effectively bleed horses and cure common ailments. Rangin kept his focus inside the South Asian milieu, exerting his authority as an experienced horse merchant with practical rather than theoretical knowledge of the field.

Outward appearance is another issue. *Band-i qasil* is illustrative of the lengths taken to fatten a horse in order to make it more appealing to consumers. These consumers might view horses in several different contexts. If fattening for sale at the Spring fairs (*melas*), this would imply that the merchants' networks included access to stables above and beyond the *karavanserais* provided during Akbar's time.<sup>273</sup> If fattening for sale in general, the breeding locations and general consumption patterns had shifted dramatically from just fifty years earlier. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the supply of foreign horses was dwindling to the extent that local breeds in a more limited combination of colors and markings became a viable option for manly comportment. This last option is verified by Rangin's cursory overview of the best breeding districts: the Bhima River Valley in the southwest, Kathiawar in the west, and Narjangel in the

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<sup>273</sup> Spring fairs: Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," 233; Abul Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. I, ed. and trans. H. Blochmann and Colonel H.S. Jarrett (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1907), 49: 132 "The Imperial Stables." *Karavanserais* and quarters for horse dealers under Akbar.

northwest along the coast. The horses from these areas were notable, according to Rangin, for their endurance and ability to go long distances on little food. By 1795, much of the fighting had shifted to the Deccan where the supply lines were attenuated and disrupted by rough terrain. He did not mention any of the Perso-Islamic or Vedic horse lore evoked in previous treatises to inspire the would-be horseman.

Effacing whorls and changing markings that were such an important part of earlier horse treatises also leads to two different yet complementary tangents. Rangin had a reputation for manipulating Indo-Persian norms, represented most poignantly by his *divan* of poetry on sexual proclivities in the brothels of Delhi. His horse treatise also subtly toyed with the Indo-Persian normative horse culture. By identifying and narrowing the preferences Rajputs, Marathas, Mughals as a group with sub-groups, Punjabis, English, and various others he makes broad generalizations. Yet, at least in the case of the English, it rang true. After stature, the leading complaint and reason for the rejection of otherwise acceptable horses into the East India Company remount program was spavin.<sup>274</sup> There are two kinds of spavin: bone spavin and bog spavin. Spavin is not a disease, but an affliction that occurs when excess fluid builds between the tibia and the upper bone of a horse's hock. Bone spavin is the final stage in a degenerative joint condition and more common in older horses that have been put through extended periods of strenuous and load-bearing activity, such as those required of dressage horses and the hard stops and starts involved in battle maneuvers. Bone spavin is slow to show itself but when it does, it shares the same symptoms as bog spavin, swelling of the joints. The only treatment available in the late eighteenth century would have been to reduce the horse's workload.<sup>275</sup> Bog spavin, on the other hand, is a swelling that subsides without

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<sup>274</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Bengal Military Consultations dated 23 August 1804.

<sup>275</sup> Will A. Hayden, "Bone Spavin," *Horseman's Veterinary Encyclopedia*, eds. Cheryl Rogers and D. Jeanne Wilcox (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2006), 206-209.

treatment. It is cosmetic and rarely leads to lameness.<sup>276</sup> Both are addressed in Rangin's treatise and his treatments cannot be seen as satire or easily dismissed. Whatever broad generalizations he made had at least some basis in his lived experience. However, his decision to leave out the associated lore, yet include a section on changing the markings and whorls to which previous treatises devoted so much time and energy, speaks to his literary ability and experience in the horse trade. At the same time, changing markings and whorls was a pragmatic response to the dearth in horses. The horse supply in the late eighteenth century, as we saw in the previous chapter, was greatly reduced from previous periods when the overland and the maritime supply were more stable and secure. By the end of the eighteenth century, efforts to obtain proper horses had reached a more fevered pitch.

## Conclusion

Rangin made the literary decision not to include the Perso-Islamic or Indic references of the earlier treatises. The linguistic standard was raised from simplistic Persian translations of Hindavi, to vernaculars understood by non-elite groups. Rangin, known for his 'mixed' *rekhtis* that developed out of a combination of Persian and Indic registers, focused his attention on updating this horse treatise, which also developed out of Persian and Indic ideals of horses and horsemanship. Date stamps on manuscripts in the Firuz Jang tradition show that it was still being copied, although with much less frequency than in the previous century. Instead of basing his information what had by now become classics of horse literature, Rangin responds to the diverse cultural ideals and standards for horses by informing the reader on their preferences as groups as he experienced them and incorporating their diversity into his response. The remedy for lockjaw, for example, is a very involved and time consuming process that involves

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<sup>276</sup> Hayden, "Bog Spavin," *Horseman's Veterinary Encyclopedia*, 204-205.

significant expenditures of time, energy, and the availability of ingredients and manpower. The symptoms of lockjaw were listed and fairly well known. The chances of anaerobic bacteria infecting a wound were high. Rather than an Islamic prayer of protection or revived Greek tradition of bleeding, Rangin posits a list of long-standing folk remedies. The slim likelihood of successful treatment warranted the expenditures required. The likelihood of a Hindu *syce* preparing the treatment was also high enough that Rangin included a note to perform the necessary ablutions in the Ganges. It was no longer necessary to remind the horsemen of how Salihotra removed the wings from celestial horses at Indra's request. Equally, they need not be reminded of great Perso-Islamic *ghazis* of the past while charging into battle. Light cavalry had become the order of the time. The piebald and the blue horse appear in enough late eighteenth-century equestrian portraits to make it seem as though where to buy quality horses fit for light cavalry had become at least as important as their outward appearance. Pasturage and breeding had shifted from the northwest toward peninsular South Asia.

This pragmatic, empirical basis of authority is unique among the South Asian *farasnama* to Rangin's *Farasatnama*. At the same time, it parallels similar developments in British approaches to veterinary medicine. The British, especially D.C. Phillott, collected and translated Rangin's treatise in the early twentieth century. Phillott's careful attention to every possible detail enabled the analysis above. Without his glosses, which he gleaned by interviewing horse merchants and soldiers in South Asia, I would not have been able to translate technical terms that do not occur in dictionaries. Yet, he missed the cultural references, the linguistic clues, and the subtle markers that made this treatise both relevant and kept it in dialogue with earlier renditions. The British were included among Rangin's groups of consumers as was their worry about spavins. However, they remained outsiders. In the next chapter, I discuss British horse culture and how it failed to transplant itself successfully in the world Rangin inhabited.

## CHAPTER 5. HORSE CULTURE, TRANSPLANTED

The story of British horse culture became intimately intertwined with the history of horses in South Asia over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when cadres of British merchants, soldiers, and administrators poured into the South Asian subcontinent. In Chapter 2, I explored the ways the Firuz Jang manuscript tradition promoted a *ghazi* horse culture, and while proscribing riding a piebald into battle, promoted the Indo-Persian equestrian comportment of the seventeenth century. Chapter 3 focused on how Jang's horse culture changed in the eighteenth century to adapt to restricted access to culturally desirable horses and greater efforts to care for available horses. Fa'iz and Mukhlis approached these issues differently, but both responded to the dwindled supply of desirable horses by refining the definition of an acceptable horse and searching out untapped sources for veterinary medicine. In Chapter 4, Rangin took the genre to a new level of practicality while infusing it with the language of the day – Urdu. Here in the final chapter, I focus on the British and the underpinnings and development of their unique horse culture at home, and how it translated in South Asia.

By horse culture, I am referring to the combination of cultural preferences that became the constructs that defined how the British conceived of a 'good horse.' They searched in vain for 'good horses' during their time in the Sub-continent.<sup>277</sup> They believed that access to good horses was integral to their military success.<sup>278</sup> Surprisingly, while the maritime and overland horse trade between the Levant and India thrived, British arbiters of quality horse stock began to complain increasingly of the lack of 'good

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<sup>277</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on the Mission of William Moorcroft, Superintendent to Central Asia to Purchase Horses, 1819, 1/mil/5/378, fols. 292-312; G.J. Alder, "The Origins of the "Pusa Experiment" the East India Company and Horse-Breeding in Bengal, 1793-1808," Bengal Past and Present 98, no. 1 (1979): 10-32.*

<sup>278</sup> Jos Gommans, "The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 3 (1994): 241.

horses.’ This leads to the question: What was a ‘good’ horse? British tastes were clear about unworthy qualities, as noted by Kipling’s *Man and Beast in India*:

The animals most liked are the stallions of Marwar or Kathiawar. White horses with pink points, piebalds, and leopard spotted beasts are much admired, especially when they have pink Roman noses and lightly-coloured eyes with an uncanny expression. Their crippled, highly arched necks, curby hocks, rocking gait, and paralytic prancing often proclaim them as triumphs of training.<sup>279</sup>

Kipling wrote that the horses from the Northwest (Marwar and Kathiawar) were popular within South Asia, but he also made it clear that these horses were not acceptable mounts for the British. While searches of British horse enthusiasts rarely produced acceptable results, they did leave behind a bevy of records documenting their inevitable disappointment. Examining horse culture is one way to approach the tension between the horses the British desired, or imagined, and the horses they found in the midst of the South Asian milieu detailed in previous chapters.

This chapter explores the set of ideals and norms of British comportment regarding horses and how those constructs collided with the horse culture I have discussed in the previous chapters. British cultural constructs regarding horses were formed and disseminated over what has been termed the Long Restoration (ca. 1650-1750). A handful of aristocrats who faced considerable loss in political power and economic wealth, privileged their hold on all things equestrian in order to maintain their cultural authority.<sup>280</sup> The Arabian horse became a hallmark of prestige even as it was almost entirely disconnected from its Arabian lineage; it was redefined and repackaged for aristocratic consumption. Crossed with British mares, Arabian stallions produced the

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<sup>279</sup> Lockwood Kipling, *Beast and Man in India: A Popular Sketch of Indian Animals in their Relations with the People* (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1904), 175.

<sup>280</sup> Donna Landry, “Steal of a Turk: Restoration Horse-Trading and Eastern Bloodstock,” *Prose Studies* 29, no. 1 (2007): 115-117.

thoroughbred, a construct created and defined by emerging aristocratic tastes. The thoroughbred and his Arabian sire were repackaged again for public consumption in paintings, at the racetrack, in popular literature, and in the sciences. By the eighteenth century, the thoroughbred so completely captivated the imaginations of a broadening section of British society that it left an indelible mark on equine and equestrian standards.<sup>281</sup> I argue that together, these aspects formed a paradigmatic ‘horse culture’ that remained a stiff British cultural construct, only tenuously moored in biological reality. As the East India Company took those merchants, soldiers, and administrators to South Asia, they carried this construct with them and imposed it on themselves and their foreign surroundings. Their ideal standards were rarely met.

The resulting opinions found their way into existing scholarship on horse lore and the horse trade in India without qualification or closer acknowledgement of a particularly British point of view. This is especially distressing when examining studies of topics such as the machinery of early modern warfare, maritime and overland trade, and environmental history that largely rely on British sources or early twentieth-century British scholarship involving horses in almost any capacity, but most poignantly in relation to South Asia.<sup>282</sup> Some of the gaps in our academic understanding of the role horses and horse culture played in these topics can be remedied by a careful analysis of the cultural history of the horse, and the multiple horse cultures that existed in the South Asian milieu. As the scholar Wendy Doniger noted, “Sometimes we cannot help looking a gift horse in the mouthpiece, or even in the ideology, but we can still accept the gift.”<sup>283</sup>

I trace the history of British horse culture in Great Britain and in relation to horse

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<sup>281</sup> Donna Landry, “The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and Early Modern English Culture,” *Criticism* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 42-43.

<sup>282</sup> Jos Gommans, “The Horse Trade in Eighteenth-Century South Asia,” 228-250; Surabh Mishra, “The Economics of Reproduction: Horse-breeding in Early Colonial India, 1790-1840,” *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 5 (2012): 1116-1144.

<sup>283</sup> Wendy Doniger, “Presidential Address: ‘I Have Scinde’: Flogging a Dead (White Male Orientalist) Horse,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 4 (November 1999): 957.

cultures in South Asia in an effort to contextualize the cultural biases that found their way into the commentaries and glosses of the Persian horse treatises (*farasnama*) that form the basis for this dissertation in this spirit, here. The case study of *The Committee for the Improvement of the Breed of Cattle and Horses in India*, a giant folio in the British Library, documents the history of one breeding operation (stud) in Pusa, British Bengal (modern Bihar) from 1793 until 1809. The tension between breeding horses suitable for battle, a charger, and a horse that appealed to this British notion of a good horse (thoroughbred) played out over the course of the stud's existence. By analysing the intellectual and cultural context of the founding and organization of the stud, we can begin to understand the economic and political factors that influenced the conflicted machinations of the Pusa Stud and many other attempts to breed horses suited to British tastes in India.

### **Arabomania in Great Britain**

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a steadily growing trickle of Arabian horses arrived in the stables of British noble and aristocratic households.<sup>284</sup> Several factors contributed to the impetus for importing Arabian horses. At home, the English Civil War (1642-1651), the Interregnum (1649-1660), and anxiety over growing Continental European powers provided a practical, utilitarian need to 'reinvigorate' British horses with Arabian bloodstock. By the middle of the eighteenth century, a series of livestock plagues devastated horses in Great Britain and sustained the argument for continuing to import Arabians.<sup>285</sup> To the British, these horses embodied the combination of military superiority and meticulous breeding. They appropriated what

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<sup>284</sup> Donna Landry reported over 200 Oriental horses imported into Great Britain between 1660 and 1750, according to the Museum of the Horse, "Thoroughbred." Quoted in Donna Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 1115.

<sup>285</sup> J. Broad, "Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England," *Agricultural History Review* 32, no. 2 (1983): 104-115.

they understood as Arabian bloodstock according to their own terms, often revealing a parallel anxiety over maintaining control over British aristocratic lineages. In the elite British imagination, Bedouin Arabs had been breeding the purest Arabian horses and “The Arabs are as careful, and Diligent, in Keeping the Genealogies of their Horses, as any Princes can be in Keeping their own Pedigrees.”<sup>286</sup> The Bedouins’ horses were sought after by Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal rulers and elites; they were superior on the battlefield, where they outmaneuvered western warhorses and inspired awe in European armies. Their pure blood could supposedly improve the breeds of horses at home, whose numbers had been depleted due to wars and political turmoil. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what was wrong with the horses, other than they were disappointing to seventeenth-century horse enthusiasts in England. The long-term contact with the Middle East, and after the mid-eighteenth century, the Persian Gulf and South Asia, exposed the British to Eastern symbols of power, wealth and status. The Arabian horse epitomized all three.

In 1667, William Cavendish (Royalist Duke of Newcastle) explained the reason for importing foreign breeds of horses:

There were, afore the Warrs, many good Races in England, but they are all now Ruined; and the many New Breeders of Horses comn up presently after the Warrs, are (I doubt) none of the Best; for, I believe, their Stallions were not very Pure, because the Men that did Govern in Those Dayes, were not so Curious as the Great Lords, and Great Gentry were Heretofore, neither would they be at the Cost; and besides, they have not Knowledge of Horses as in other Countries: For, though Every man Pretends to it, yet, I assure you, there are very Few that Know

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<sup>286</sup> Quoted by Landry, “Steal of a Turk,” 116. This upswing in the consumption of the horse, especially horses from what was considered the ‘Orient’ led to cultural preferences, trends, which had far-reaching effects on how the British considered their horses. First, the North African Barb, the Anatolian Turk, and Arabian horses from the Levant, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula became conflated and the distinctions, which demarcated the each of the three breeds, became less important than their eastern origins. The line previously drawn between a Turk (thick necked and with strong haunches), an Arab (dish-faced with a slight frame), and the Barb (a cross between Arab and heavier Spanish horses in North Africa) became blurred. However once in Great Britain, the previous lineages of the three famous horses no longer held much relevance.

Horses, as I have heard the KING say: Since whose Restauration, the Probability of getting Good Breeds again, is very Great.<sup>287</sup>

Cavendish's letter highlights three key perceptions that informed the ideology and cultural attitudes that grew around horses, horse breeding, and Arabian horses. First, there were good breeds of horses in England before the wars that ended in 1660, but the breeding stock had been depleted as a result of the military and political turmoil. This turmoil was remembered in political and cultural terms, which carried over into how the later aristocrats would conceive of and construct their idealized norms of comportment. Here, the memory was reconstructed in terms of horses along with their aristocratic Royalist riders. Second, there was a previous golden age of horse breeding, nurtured and supported by the aristocrats displaced by the less aristocratic breeders who, we shall presume, were not Royalists or supporters of King Charles II (d. 1685). Third, the new aristocratic pretenders did not have the knowledge or financial means to adequately remedy the still unnamed problem with the state of horse breeding in Great Britain. Himself an accomplished equestrian, Cavendish demonstrated his 'correct' knowledge in a celebrated and widely read manual that went into multiple editions.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> C.M.Prior, *Early Records of the Thoroughbred Horse Containing Reproductions of Some Original Stud-books, and other Papers, of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Sportsman Office, 1924); also see Prior, *The Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Togetherth a Reproduction of the Second Earl of Godolphin's Stud-book, and Sundry other Papers Relating to the Thoroughbred Horse* (London: 'Horse & Hound' Pub, 1935), 61. Cavendish was also responding to Cromwell the politics of the Interregnum: Landry, "Steal of a Turk", 127.

<sup>288</sup> William Cavendish, *A general system of horsemanship in all its branches* (London: J. Brindley, 1743). The first edition was published in French while Cavendish was exiled in Antwerp (1648-1660) during the Interregnum. Antwerp edition: William Cavendish, *Methode et invention nouvelle de dresser les chevaux par le tres-noble, haut, et tres-piissant prince Guillaume marquis et comte de Newcastle Vicomt e de Mansfield, Baron de Bolsover et Ogle: Seigneur de Cavendish, Bothel et Hepwel; Pair D'Angleterre; Qui eut la charge & honneur d'estre Gouverneur du Serenissime Prince de Galles en sa jeunesse, maintenant Roy de la Grande-Bretagne; Lieutenant pour le Roy de la Comte de Nottingham, & de la Forest de Sherwood; Capitaine general en toutes les Provinces outré la Rievriere de Trent, & autres endroits du Royaume D'Angleterre; Gentilhomme de la Chambre du lit du Roy; Consciller D'Etat & Prive: Chevalier du tres-noble Ordre de la Jarretiere, &c* (Anvers: Chez Jacques van Mevrs., 1658). This edition was reprinted in 1737 by Brindley in London.

All three of these factors fed into the thoroughbred's epic rise to fame. However, as remarkable as these horses and their story are, they are a cultural construct. The thoroughbred, and his Arabian sire's sudden fame unfolded in concert with a period when the Royalist aristocrats' loyalty to the British monarch was tested first by the English Revolution, its fallout, then again as mercantile success in the Levant and South Asia produced more and more wealthy 'pretenders' in the eighteenth century. The emphasis on the pedigrees and noble lineage of their horses was an effort to bolster the old aristocratic lineages, as expressed in the previous quote. Crossed between British hunter mares and Arabian stallions, the thoroughbred (directly translated from Arabic *kubaylan*: bred pure through) proved to aristocratic breeders with that ambiguously discerning 'eye for a horse' that the influx of this new bloodstock indeed 'fixed' the indigenous breeds. The horses became larger, the silhouettes of their bodies (lines) more refined, and they were faster, had more endurance, and their footing more solid than ever before. These subjective statements are difficult to understand to those of us without correct vision. The control of correct knowledge, and vision, became part of aristocratic primacy and comportment. As trade with the Levant – where the foundational Arabian sires originated - waned in the middle of the eighteenth century, an even more lucrative relationship formed with South Asia. A large number of newly wealthy 'pretenders' appeared with the financial means to pay exorbitant sums for fancy Arabian horses. It was at this time, in the late eighteenth century, that the thoroughbred lineage became closed to new Arabian sires. The General Stud Book was published in 1791 as a way to block new blood and establish the primacy of three foundational sires once and for all. It still reigns as the canon for thoroughbred horses. Thoroughbred breeders, owners, and aficionados accept only these three foundational Arabian stallions: the Byerley Turk (c. 1688), the Darley Arabian (1704), and the Godolphin Arabian (1729).<sup>289</sup> The story of

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<sup>289</sup> Rebecca Cassidy, "Turf Wars: Arab Dimensions to British Racehorse Breeding," *Anthropology*

each one's acquisition – by war, as a gift, and through trade (theft) – illustrates how their actual pasts were culturally and scientifically forgotten in order to promote the brilliance of the thoroughbred as an especially British construct. The Byerley Turk, Darley and Godolphin Arabians hold their standing as the basis for the General Stud Book and in consequence, the foundational sires, because their histories resonated with the British equestrian culture, not because they were the only or even the most 'pure' Arabian bloodstock available to Great Britain.

### **The Byerley Turk, Darley Arabian, and Godolphin Arabian**

Captain Robert Byerley reportedly captured the Byerley Turk from an Ottoman officer during the siege of Buda (1686). While the actual events have been disputed (for example, there is no record of Byerley serving in Buda), the relevance of the Byerley Turk as the oldest of the foundational sires is indisputable.<sup>290</sup> Byerley was by no means the first or the only such Western military officer to import his captured horse back to his estate. There are numerous reports of other officers who did the very same thing.<sup>291</sup> The Byerley Turk was, however, celebrated for its military prowess. In the reports of Captain Byerley's nearly epic exploits, his horse figured prominently especially during one episode in Ireland's Battle of Boyne (1689) when he "was so far ahead reconnoitering the enemy that he narrowly escaped capture, owing his safety to the superior speed of his horse."<sup>292</sup> Captain Byerley was subsequently promoted to Colonel, and married the

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*Today* 19, no. 3 (June 2003): 15-17; John Curtis and Nigel Tallis, *The Horse: From Arabia to Royal Ascot* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 72-75.

<sup>290</sup> Richard Nash, "Beware A Bastard Breed?: Notes Towards a Revisionist History of the Thoroughbred Racehorse," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds. Peter Edwards, Karl A. E. Enekel, Elspeth Graham (Boston: Brill, 2011), 193-196.

<sup>291</sup> Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 128-9. Landry includes a quote from St. James Park, where Turkish horses were brought in December 1684 after the Siege of Vienna.

<sup>292</sup> C.M. Prior, *Early Records of the Thoroughbred Horse* (Reproduces the private stud book of Cuthbert Routh, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Lancaster, and the Duke of Newcastle, 1924), 143. Also quoted in Landry, "Steal of a Turk", 128.

grand-niece of the famous racehorse breeder, Lord Wharton. The Byerly Turk produced several outstanding racehorses for the family.<sup>293</sup> Of the many paintings of the famous racehorse, the original painting seems to be misplaced or forgotten. Four of the five reproductions are attributed to the artist John Wootton (d. 1764). While only the painting represented in Figure 14 is believed to be painted from life, it is unlikely Wootton was the artist. It is more likely that he was “repeating instead the standardized silhouette that he had contrived to represent the ideal Arabian form.”<sup>294</sup> The remaining four images are slight variations on Figure 15. However, several reproductions hang in pubs near racetracks in England. The Byerley Turk is the best representation of a horse acquired through military exploits, and despite any and all evidence that contradicts this cultural meme, this is how he appears in the annals of Thoroughbred history.

While hunting in the outskirts of Aleppo with his companions, the merchant and consul Thomas Darley first learned of what became the Darley Arabian through his associates in trade networks. During a subsequent hunting excursion, Darley reportedly bought what became the Darley Arabian from Sheikh Mirza II for a mere 300 gold sovereigns until the Sheikh changed his mind. Darley then arranged for some British soldiers to steal the horse and smuggle him out through Smyrna (Izmir).<sup>295</sup> The horse reached the family estate in Leeds in 1704, where he was named Manak or Monica, in honor of his supposed lineage to the *Muniqui* strain of Arabians, which the British deemed the fastest. The racehorses Flying Childers (1715) and Eclipse (1764) were his most famous descendants; almost 90 percent of today’s thoroughbreds are genetically related to Eclipse.<sup>296</sup> Despite the scandal of the theft, for my purposes, the Darley Arabian represents the importance of hunting, connections, and trade in aristocratic

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<sup>293</sup> Cassidy, “Turf Wars,” 15.

<sup>294</sup> Jeremy James, *The Byerley Turk: The Incredible Story of the World’s First Thoroughbred* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2005), 337.

<sup>295</sup> Cassidy, “Turf Wars,” 15; Landry, “Steal of a Turk”, 131.

<sup>296</sup> Cassidy, “Turf Wars”, 15.

circles. Darley's contemporary, Nathaniel Harley, sent several shipments of horses to Great Britain and walked a similarly blurred line between purchase and theft. He wrote home about a Dun Arabian explaining:

Expresses have been sent after him, and all the passes of the Mountains between this and Scanderone Ordered to be watched, and ye Marine Strictly guarded to prevent his being Ship'd off I have heard of his being got Safe to the place where I ordered him, But Shan't be easy till I hear He is got a board the Ship, for till then I can't think him Safe.<sup>297</sup>

Harley used a similar combination to Darley of aristocratic connections in order to find and obtain horses; conversations or observations during hunting expeditions seemed to be a theme in these kinds of transactions. Thomas Darley had joined a hunting club while in Aleppo and it was through his hunting companions that he learned about the *Fedaan* Bedouins and became acquainted with their sheikh, from whom he stole the horse. His trade connections allowed him to arrange to smuggle the horse past customs officials and back to England.<sup>298</sup> However, it was his 'eye' for a fine horse and trade connections that made all of this possible.

The Godolphin Arabian was one of several horses the Bey of Tunis gave to the King Louis XV of France, who failed to recognize his value and sold him to one Edward Coke who in turn bequeathed him to Francis, the second Earl of Godolphin (d. 1766).<sup>299</sup> As Landry notes, "In its association with diplomatic gift-giving, and specifically with English wresting away from the French of an undervalued Eastern gift, this horse's story encapsulates the British/French rivalry."<sup>300</sup> The Godolphin's 'Arabianness' was

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<sup>297</sup> Nathaniel Harley, *British Library Additional Manuscripts 70143. Nathaniel Harley's Letters 1682-1720*. fol. 225; also quoted in Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 131.

<sup>298</sup> Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 130-131.

<sup>299</sup> Peter Willet, *An Introduction to the Thoroughbred* (London: Stanley Pearl, 1966), 22.

<sup>300</sup> Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 128. During this period, the proxy wars between the French and British in South Asia were a strong impetus to prove British superiority, here represented by a fine race horse.

questioned by many speculators, but was bolstered by his owner's determination to move the center of horseracing from Yorkshire to Newmarket, with the Godolphin as a central attraction. Once this happened, it was decided that the Godolphin's lineage was the most purely bred and genetically potent of the three foundational sires. He was one of the *Jilfan* Arabians bred in the Yemeni desert and transported overland to Syria, where the Bey of Tunis had acquired him through Mediterranean trade networks.<sup>301</sup> None of this can be verified, yet the consensus of belief in this constructed history and the subsequent proof of the Godolphin Arabian's record in producing successful race horses, including Man 'o War (d. 1947), was enough to sustain his importance. The painting of the Godolphin Arabian (Figure 17) was done after the stallion's death (1753) and promoted him as producing winning racers and "mending imperfections in shape".<sup>302</sup>

These three foundational 'Arabians' were exemplary as much for the otherness they represented, a quality believed to reinvigorate the flailing British horses, as they were for the methods by which they were acquired. They, in particular, most strongly resonated with the shifting cultural landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Great Britain. In order to understand why these horses became so ingrained in the British imagination, and then transposed onto their expectations and subsequent disillusionment with horses in South Asia, it helps to place them in their original context. As the historian Richard Nash wrote, "We might want to pause for a moment to reflect on the importance of the moments in which history is written and repaired, as well as the moments in which it takes place."<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Landry, "Steal of a Turk," 128.

<sup>302</sup> It is interesting that the British decided to import Arabians to fix perceived imperfections. Arab breeders, in case of imperfection, used inbreeding as a remedy. See Thomas Druml, "Functional Traits of Early Horse Breeds of Mongolia, India, and China from the perspective of Animal Breeding," in *Pferde in Asien: Geschichte, Handel und Kultur*, eds. Bert Fragner et al (Vienna: Verlag der osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 12-16.

<sup>303</sup> Nash, "Beware a Bastard Breed," 193.

The period between 1650 and 1750 is referred to as the “long restoration” because of the English monarch’s return to the throne after the revolution, and then the century required to gain a restructured authority. This left the portion of the aristocracy, known as the Royalists, who supported the monarchy, in flux. Their own authority had been severely restricted by the new parliamentary monarchy, and their previously secure place as scions of privilege, lineage, and power was challenged as they lost political power. The Royalists, also known as the Cavelliers, or horsemen, once deprived of their previous status as warriors on horseback, became the guardians of cultural prestige. Equestrianism became an essential element of the gentleman’s comportment. Men such as William Cavendish, the Royalist Duke of Newcastle, asserted their superior skills, knowledge, and connections in all things related to horses. They constructed their own versions of Arabian genealogy, based on the sire rather than the Arabs’ established practice of maternal lineage. They established new and ambiguous terms to describe their ability to recognize a good horse based on ‘lines’ and privileged that ability and knowledge to members of their own class. Most importantly, hunting, dressage, polo, and especially horse racing became their exclusive domain, until this also was challenged by an influx of mercantile wealth which began in earnest in the 1750s.<sup>304</sup> It comes as no surprise that the General Stud Book’s official closure of thoroughbred bloodlines in 1791 followed just a few decades later. During the same period, trade centers shifted from the Levant to South Asia, with one of the most assured ways to procure Arabian horses being through trade.<sup>305</sup> The horse trade with the Arab horse breeders in the Persian Gulf, a stopping point on the way to South Asia, was notoriously difficult to break into.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Donna Landry, “The Bloody Shouldered Arabian,” 41-69.

<sup>305</sup> Landry, “Steal of a Turk,” 130-131.

<sup>306</sup> Willem Floor, *The Persian Gulf: A Political and Economic History of Five Port Cities, 1500-1730* (Washington D.C.: Mage Books, 2006), 517-520.

As this group of aristocrats tightened their hold on all things equestrian, they were also the primary supporters of artistic and scientific development. A genre of paintings of fine horses alone, of ladies and gentlemen mounted on, and hunting with fine horses, flourished and produced the above paintings of the three foundational Arabian sires. The Byerley Turk was copied so many times that we are now only able to *attribute* it to John Wootton (d. 1764), famous for other equine portraits. One art historian noted that, “Apart from attention paid to coloring and individual markings, Wootton made little distinction between the Bloody Shouldered [Arabian], the Hampton Court Chestnut, the Godolphin [Arabian], and other famous Arabians, repeating instead the standardized silhouette that he had contrived to represent the ideal Arabian form.”<sup>307</sup> The idealized Arabian form was repeated, with slight stylistic alterations, by later equine artists despite the increasing distance from the foundational ‘Arabian’ sires. Most notably, George Stubbs (d. 1806) did renditions of Eclipse, the son of the Darley Arabian, after his death, represented in Figures 18 and 19.

This idealized construct of the Arabian horse actually represents a general failure of the drives fueling ‘Arabomania’ to recognize the distinctions between breeds. As horses from the Levant and North Africa arrived in Great Britain, the well-known differences became blurred between a horse from Central Asia with a thick neck and large shoulders, a dish-faced, lithesome horse bred primarily in the Persian Gulf, modern Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, and a much heavier Barb horse bred in North Africa and crossed with Spanish horses.<sup>308</sup> The Darley Arabian, if actually a *Jilfan* breed, would have been under 15 hands tall (approximately 60 inches from shoulder to hoof).<sup>309</sup> Despite the

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<sup>307</sup> Arline Meyer quoted in James, *The Byerley Turk*, 337.

<sup>308</sup> Landry, “Steal of a Turk,” 118.

<sup>309</sup> S. Gharahveysi et al, “Estimation of Genetic Parameters on Conformation Traits of the Iranian Arab Horses Population,” *Pakistan Journal of Biological Sciences* 11, no. 2 (2008): 280-284. Although this research was conducted on a population of today’s Arabian horses in Iran, these horses were first tested for genetic ‘purity’ meaning they showed no Central Asian Akhal-Teke genetic markers.

realities that accompany these separate breeds, what mattered most to the British equestrian imagination was the thoroughbred, which found its way past the race-track and into hunting, polo, and dressage. Well-comported British men envisioned themselves much like Col. Byerley, riding into battle on an impressive horse. Most of the anonymous copies of the Byerley Turk were in hung pubs outside of racetracks.

## **Equinology**

‘Arabomania’ coincided with a period of marked scientific development in horse anatomy and veterinary care. The drive to gain a better scientific understanding of horses was fuelled by similar developments in the field of human anatomy. The Stubbs illustration in Figure 6 is a visual portion of a movement that included veterinary medicine and evolved to stratify its practitioners. A series of cattle plagues (cattle meaning draught animals, including horses) seriously compromised stocks of work animals both in Great Britain and continental Europe. The need to replenish stocks met with new ideas in agriculture, prompted by scientific innovations, and led to the concerted effort to improve the state of veterinary medicine in both regions. While Europe, especially France, approached advances holistically, by blending agricultural and breeding efforts, the British focused almost solely on breeding.<sup>310</sup> During the farrier apprenticeship of William Moorcroft, who would play a large role in the Pusa Stud, he successfully treated cattle for one of many outbreaks and even published an article on treatments for large animal diseases in 1790. He subsequently attracted the attention of the Odiham Society, who sponsored his study at the first veterinary college in Lyons, France.<sup>311</sup> Moorcroft returned to Britain in 1793 after completing just one year and was

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<sup>310</sup> Diana K. Davis, “Brutes, beasts and empire: veterinary medicine and environmental policy in French North Africa and British India,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008): 245-247.

<sup>311</sup> J.D. Blaisdell. “The Zoocomium, or an Eighteenth-century Veterinary Hospital,” *Veterinary Heritage: Bulletin of the American Veterinary History Society* 14, no. 1 (1991): 32; Leslie Pugh, “From

quickly recruited as veterinary surgeon at Padnall's Stud (outside of Essex) in 1794. The Committee for the Improvement of Cattle and Livestock in India established Padnall's in order to breed mares for shipment to Madras and the Pusa Stud.<sup>312</sup> Mares, it was thought, were responsible for increasing the size of different breeds of horses, while stallions were responsible for their form. Within one year, Moorcroft was promoted from resident veterinary surgeon to the superintendent of Padnall's Stud.

Moorcroft's career was both exemplary in its rise and in keeping with the stratification of veterinary medicine. What began as breeding work animals, including horses, quickly evolved into a focus on the care and breeding of horses for aristocratic stables. Until the late seventeenth century, farriers were the mainstay for horse care in British society. As the upper echelon of veterinary care-givers they specialized in horses, rather than other draft animals, and their success was based largely on demand and reputation. The Farriers' Company of London was established in the 1670's, met biannually in a London pub, and imposed a partially effective monopoly on farriery within a seven-mile radius of the city.<sup>313</sup> Inclusion required at least seven years' apprenticeship, and adhering to certain professional standards. One member complained of "quacks who endeavour to subvert the Honour and trample upon the Dignity" of the profession and "regularly destroyed horses for want of due knowledge and skill in the right way of preserving horses."<sup>314</sup> The privileged knowledge of horse care insinuates that those not included in the Company were less able; however what differentiates the better from the lesser knowledge is never clearly stated.

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Farriery to Veterinary Medicine," Paper presented to a joint meeting of the Society of the Worshipful Company of Farriers at the Royal Agricultural Society on 10 July 1974: 13.

<sup>312</sup>Bengal Army Stud Department, *Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India, l/mil/5/465*: Correspondence dated 9 April 1793. The mare contributes less to the beauty of her offspring than the stallion but more to the constitution and stature. It will therefore be necessary to procure mares not less than 14 and a half hands high with proportional muscle and bone perfectly sound and healthy to make good nurses.

<sup>313</sup> *Farrier Court Journals*, Guild Hall Library, London, MS. 5534: 1674, 1, 2-4.

<sup>314</sup> L.H. Curth, *The Care of Brutes and Beasts: A Social and Cultural Study of Veterinary Medicine in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 82-83.

This oversight became even more contentious with the advent of printing, when compilations of the most famous British farriers became widely available and made the popularity of authors such as Gervase Markham and his much published *Markham's Methode* household names.<sup>315</sup> They were hotly debated throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as more experts began to assert their authority. At the same time, these publications seem to be the beginning of an identifiable print horse culture.<sup>316</sup> Noble and aristocratic horse owners then began to impose further restrictions on who qualified to treat their horses and their requisite training. Whereas for at least three centuries, distinguished farrier families cared for royal and aristocratic stables and more modest societies, for example the Farrier Company of London, fulfilled less prestigious veterinary needs, by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century societies of 'gentlemen' formed to promote scientific rigor. The Odiham Society (Hampshire) formed in the mid 1780's with the goal of "encouraging such means as are likely to promote the study of farriery upon rational and scientific principles" and raised funds to send two students to study in at a new veterinary school in Lyons.<sup>317</sup> One of the two students was William Moorcroft.

Arabomania and the development of veterinary medicine combined to create a distinctly British horse culture. The process of creating this horse culture began with importing Arabian stallions, establishing the thoroughbred as a recognized breed then restricting lineage to three founding Arabian stallions who coincidentally were obtained through war, royal gifting, and trade. These stallions and their thoroughbred offspring were notorious on the racetrack, which had become popular avenue for gambling among the lower classes. Idealized paintings of each foundational Arabian became the standard

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<sup>315</sup> *Farrier Court Journals*, MS 5534: 1674, 4; See discussion in Curth, 58.

<sup>316</sup> For a brief survey of early horse treatises: George R. Keiser, "Medicine for Horses: the Continuity from Script to Print," *Yale University Library Gazette* 69, no. 3 (1995): 111-128.

<sup>317</sup> O. Gerbaud, *Les Premiers vétérinaires français engagés pour le service des colonies entre 1770 et 1830: Histoire et biographies* (Alfort: Institut d'élevage et de médecine vétérinaire des pays tropicaux, Département du Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement, 1986), 9.

for horses in equestrian scenes including hunting, dressage, and polo, most famously executed by George Stubbs in the late eighteenth century. At the same time, the aristocratic impulse to set the standard for horses and equestrianism resulted in a stratified class of professional veterinarians. The veterinary surgeon, like the thoroughbred, was also a result of the eighteenth century. William Moorcroft's early career illustrates the demand for 'scientific' expertise in equinology. While others cornered the literary niche of manuals for horse care, Moorcroft was an expert in breeding and quickly recruited to help 'fix' the breed of horses in South Asia. The East India Company's (EIC) control on their holdings in South Asia was tenuous in the late eighteenth century. They had suffered military losses against the Marathas and the Sultans of Mysore and their horses were dying. 'Suitable' and 'good' horses were ridiculously difficult to find. Yet, there was a thriving horse trade in South Asia, spanning the entire Sub-continent and supplied by overland trade from Central Asia, maritime trade from the Persian Gulf, and established breeders in different regions of South Asia itself. The Committee for the Improvement of the Breed of Horses in India was created in order to provide 'proper' remounts for the EIC.<sup>318</sup> Even with the help of its sister stud at Padnall's in Sussex under Moorcroft's expert superintendence, the Pusa Stud was not able to produce 'good' horses.

**The Committee for the Improvement of the Breed of Cattle and Horses in India**  
**Major William Fraser (Superintendent, 1793-1809)**

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<sup>318</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India l/mil/5/465: Extract of letter from Sir John Shore 21 August 1794; Extract of Governor General's Letter from Bengal 31 December 1794; Extract of Bengal Military Consultations 28 July 1794; Alder, "Origins", 12.*

In 1793, one Major William Fraser suggested to his superiors in the EIC that the true challenge to British holdings in South Asia, and the key to future success was access to well-formed horses, saying:

The native powers are making alarming progress in the art of war, while our establishments are by no means improving... it cannot be denied that our want of cavalry during the campaigns in Mysore, became more apparent to all the powers of Indostan than at any other period. ... while a respectable cavalry would enable a good officer to carry the war into the enemy's country... The movement of the army's in India depends about entirely upon the quality of their bullocks, and it seems to be generally admitted that those we now employ are deficient in strength and stature.<sup>319</sup>

Fraser and his supporters wanted horses fit as remounts for British cavalry officers, who had suffered a series of devastating losses in the Anglo-Mysore wars (1766-69, 1780-84), and whose own horses failed to thrive in the very different environments of South Asia. The proposition for the program began with a focus on oxen to pull supply chains as well as horses was couched in terms of military necessity.<sup>320</sup> In both Anglo-Mysore Wars, Haidar Ali (r. 1761-82) and his son, Tipu Sultan (r. 1782-99), aligned militarily with the

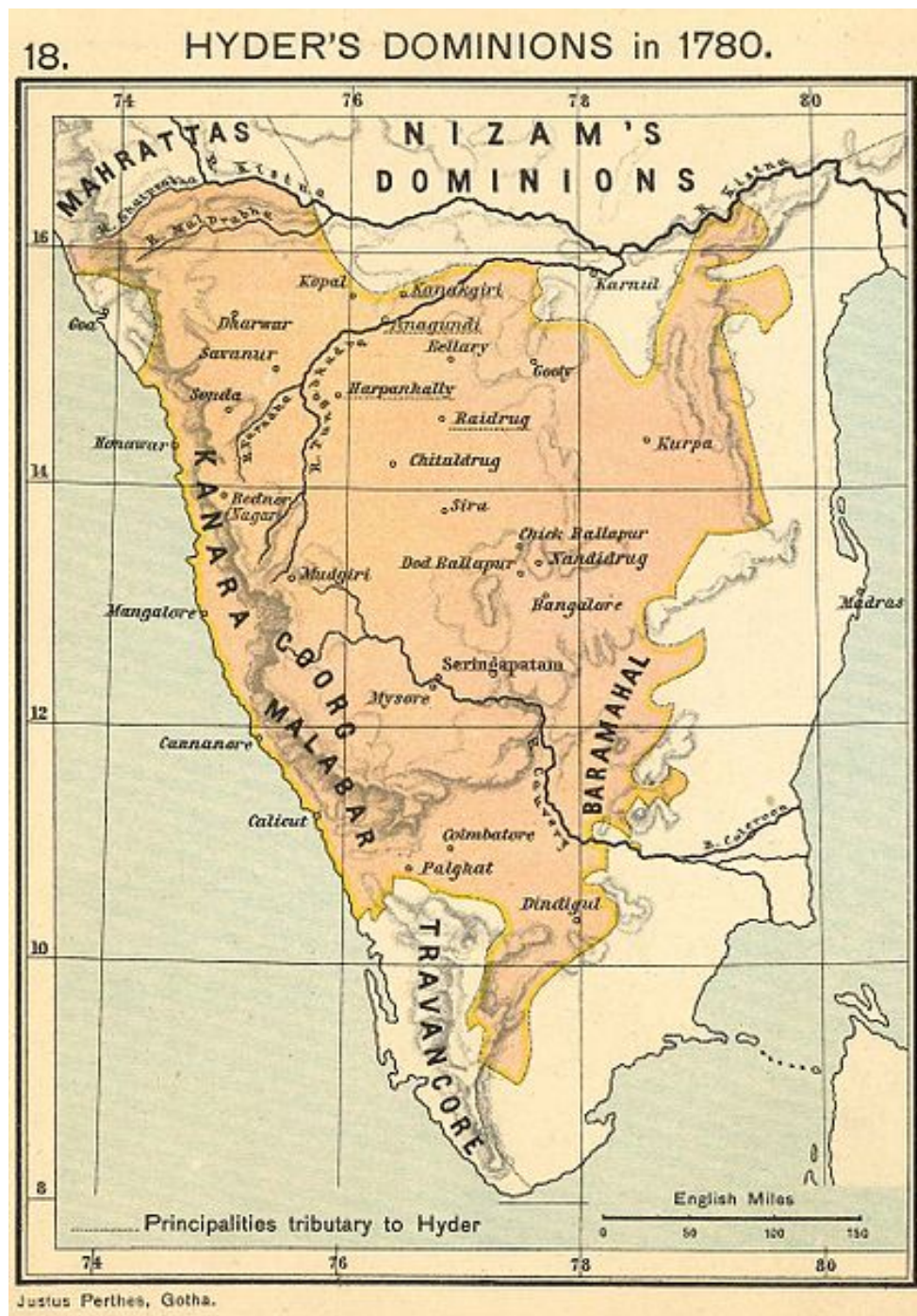
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<sup>319</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Governor General's Letter from Bengal dated 31 December 1794 and Extract of Bengal Military Consultations dated 28 July 1794. (manuscripts not numbered, only bound under this heading). Major William Fraser (brother of Robert Fraser) served in the Bengal Army from 1781 until his ship (the *Calcutta*) sank off the coast of Mauritius on the return voyage to England on 14 March 1809. He was the superintendent of the Pusa Stud from its inception in 1793 until he was replaced by William Moorcroft in 1809. This is not to be confused with the later William Fraser, the infamous agent and administrator who was assassinated in 1835. For Major Fraser see: Major V. C. P. Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army: 1758-1834. Alphabetically arranged and annotated with biographical and genealogical notices* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1928), 102-103.

For William Fraser, the agent and administrator, see: Delhi, *Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency: Political Diaries, Journals, Reports and Records of British India before 1857* (Sang-e-Meel Publications. Lahore, Pakistan, 2006), 63-68. For an account of his death: Sir Thomas Metcalf, *Assassination of William Fraser, Agent to the Governor-General of India*. Add. Or. 5457 fols. 31-32.

<sup>320</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India, l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Bengal Military Consultations dated 4 September 1793.

French, had won significant battles against the Marathas to the northwest while threatening the Nizam of Hyderabad and his British supporters to the northeast.



(Map 1) The Sultanate of Mysore under Haidar Ali, 1780.  
<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/colonial/joppenlate1700s/hyder1780max.jpg>

The pressing feeling that British holdings in Bengal and on the eastern coast were threatened by rulers within South Asia and at the same time by the French by proxy

clearly bothered EIC directors.<sup>321</sup> During the Mysore Wars, one regularly recurring complaint from soldiers was about supply chains and the lack of cart animals and their drivers.<sup>322</sup> The Madras government began to hire native troops to protect British transports and communication lines, while the EIC tried to save money spent on purchasing cavalry remounts by breeding both oxen and horses in regions they controlled.<sup>323</sup> The Committee for the Improvement of Cattle and Horses in India was developed in this climate, one in which the EIC devoted resources to solving a practical problem. The focus remained pointedly on improving the size and overall appearance of horses bred in India. Committee member Edward Parry, Esq. wrote:

... the horses which from their form, activity, and spirit are mostly used for cavalry in India, though well calculated for the native, are not so for the European soldier. The weight of the latter it is well known far exceeds that of the former, especially when their necessary accoutrements are considered, the stronger breed of horses in India, though well calculated for the harness, or the ordinary purposes of riding, are so thick in the shoulder as to be wholly unfit for the ménage or activity of the charger.<sup>324</sup>

Major Fraser's proposal answered such clear and practical considerations. Indeed, the average fully equipped European cavalryman weighed approximately 115 kilos and far surpassed the weight of a less encumbered native cavalryman.<sup>325</sup> Committee members quickly began to digress from this original aim and revelled in the lore of the Arabian

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<sup>321</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Bengal Military Consultations dated 4 September 1793.

<sup>322</sup> *Memoirs of Robert Orme, British Library, London: Orme. Ov. 2-15* (European Manuscripts); specifically fols. 2: 111-150, a series of letters (1769) from infantrymen to Charles Bouchier, president and governor of the council at Fort St. George which describe how bad bullocks contributed to significant setbacks and defeats in the Mysore campaigns.

<sup>323</sup> Gommans, 236.

<sup>324</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Stud Committee Minutes 1801-1809 l/mil/5/459*: dated 24 March 1801, fols. 7-8.

<sup>325</sup> Gommans, 246.

horses so popular in Britain. The directors continued to insist that, “all horses employed in the government stud should be, without a doubt, Arabian.”<sup>326</sup> Year after year, Arabian stallions covered Padnall’s mares and either the offspring or the stallions themselves, if not too dear, were shipped to Madras and Pusa.<sup>327</sup> The daunting task of significantly enlarging the breed of horses in India over the course of a decade combined with a conflicting cultural preference for lithesome Arabian or Arabian-like horses resulted in consistent disappointment.

Fraser’s proposal met with overwhelming approval and he began to search for a suitable place to establish breeding facilities. With considerations including soil, climate, and local politics, Fraser hoped to find land in Bengal, Bihar, or the Zamindari of Benares but settled on Pusa (in modern Bihar) because local politics were favourable to a long-term establishment.<sup>328</sup> After his superiors arrived and manipulated local land ownership policies to their advantage, the area surrounding the Pusa Stud was purchased from a group of *zamindars* (land holders), buildings were erected, horses purchased, and breeding commenced. The correspondence and *Committee* minutes allude to the initial high hopes for actually replenishing the supply of remounts while making local breeds taller and stronger. However, after nearly a decade of effort and substantial financial investment, the first round of horses sent to Cawnpore in 1803 for admission into the military was a disaster. Forty of the sixty-four 3 and 4 year old horses were rejected because they were “undersized”, “lame”, or “ill made.”<sup>329</sup> The following year, thirty-five of eighty horses were admitted. It did not seem that Fraser’s experiment was a success.

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<sup>326</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: dated 26 June 1795.

<sup>327</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Stud Committee Minutes 1801-1809 l/mil/5/459*: dated 28 August 1801- 10 April 1804, fols. 14-46.

<sup>328</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Report of Tour dated 2 June 1795.

<sup>329</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: dated 3 June 1803, 16 June 1803, and Summer 1803. Captain Rose and Major Black of the First Regular Native Cavalry, Captain Carden of the 29<sup>th</sup> Dragoon, and Captain Philpot of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dragoon.

Subsequent opinions about breeding horses in India were formed based on these assessments.<sup>330</sup> One of the rejecting officials described his preference for “horses of high blood and a light compact form.” Another wrote about his “... preference to that description of a horse which approaches the nearest to the Arabian horse in stature, blood, and character.”<sup>331</sup>

Fraser responded quickly to the *Committee*'s disappointment. However, rather than addressing the inherent conflict between the British cultural preference for Arabian-like horses (which bore little resemblance to Arabian breeds in India) and the actual horses he was able to produce, he only responded to the practicalities. The horses were marched over 400 miles northwest to Cawnpore and not allowed to recuperate before being assessed. The remount officers' vague comments did not adequately explain the exact problem with the horses. The records note that most rejected horses were slightly less than 14.1 hands tall (4.75 feet) when the *Committee* had only recently established this as the minimum height requirement for admission. Considerably more time would be required before the overall height of horses could be substantially raised.<sup>332</sup> Finally, Fraser was incensed at the rejected horses' sale at a loss at the Cawnpore market by ill-advised dealers while Fraser could have profitably sold them himself at the Hajipur market near Pusa.<sup>333</sup> Other than the height requirement, no specific regulations were available for what constituted a proper cavalry remount. According to 1804, 1805, and 1806 reports, Fraser's remounts continually underwhelmed remount officials. In 1807, the *Committee*

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<sup>330</sup> Gommans, 242.

<sup>331</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Reports dated 21 July 1804.

<sup>332</sup> The height of a horse is measured from the withers to the hoof. The shortest rejected horse stood 13 hands tall (just over 4 feet).

<sup>333</sup> Fraser's breeding efforts incorporated local practices, such as providing stallions to cover the local Zamindars' mares and sending newborn colts to be raised in private homes by women. His popularity with Marathas presents a conflict in strategy because he was essentially supplying the enemy. At the same time, their consistent preference for Arabian-esque blood stock crossed with local mares proves his success. Also, William Moorcroft, quoted by Gommans, attributes specific fairs to different groups, such as the Marathas, who reportedly purchased horses at the Majalgoan market in the Deccan. (Gommans, 231).

voted to have him replaced by Moorcroft; Fraser's ship sunk off Mauritius on the return voyage to England in 1809.

In the years Fraser ran the Pusa Stud, he adapted to the local breeding environment and consumption patterns in British Bengal. He learned that, contrary to initial conclusions, the jungle land, some of which was purchased as part of the Pusa Stud, was used for pastureland for passing herds of cattle and horses. Nomadic *Banjaras* had previously used this pasturage while providing stud services to the local *zamindars* in British Bengal (Bihar) as they had done to the northwest in Rohilkhand. Their stallions produced the "best breeds of horses, which were however rejected for cavalry service because they were lame or for some other reason blemished and not fit for warfare."<sup>334</sup> Fraser learned to maximize his access to *zamindars* through a breeding arrangement in which Fraser provided stallions to cover (breed with) the *zamindari* mares in exchange for first choice of foals. This practice was known and encouraged by the Committee's directors, however Fraser went a step further. He tapped into localized horse markets and consumption patterns, which allowed him to sell horses 'unfit for service' in the EIC on the public market. Branching off of this, he established several additional breeding operations. These entrepreneurial expansions revealed that Indian consumers appreciated and were willing to pay for horses that the English officers in India considered unfit.

Fraser was most enthusiastic about the Nisfee stud, where he sent newborn foals to be tended in local homes by wives until two or three years old, when they would be either presented as remounts or more often sold at the Hajipur market.<sup>335</sup> Despite his failure at providing cavalry remounts, he successfully supplied large, well-formed horses for the Governor General's guard and assisted several local British merchants/officials

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<sup>334</sup> Gommans, 243.

<sup>335</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Reports dated 20 March 1803, 31 January 1804.

with breeding racehorses.<sup>336</sup> The ready consumption of Fraser's horses by Indian and colonial customers suggests that the Army's rejection of his offerings stemmed from cultural biases rather than objective traits. He was not breeding the horses that resonated with the culturally based preferences of his superiors. They attributed his failure to Fraser's lack of proper qualification.

The Committee directors, the cavalry remount officers, and Fraser were unable to reconcile their ideals of a suitable horse. To a large degree their preferences were shaped by their understanding of the suitability of imported horses versus local Indian breeds in the Pusa Stud's breeding programme. While they all shared a combined British horse culture, they occupied different spaces within it. Fraser, deeply entrenched in South Asian horse culture after more than a decade in British Bengal, was devoted to breeding horses by utilizing available resources. The *zamindari* breeding system could only produce the offspring of a handful of the imported mares shipped from Padnall's and local mares, sometimes referred to disparagingly, crossed with the first, second, or even third generation of stallions from Great Britain. These future stallions were named after famous stallions, Capsicum, Eclipse, and Potempkin for example, appear in the rolls of colts' names.<sup>337</sup> Cavalry remount officers played a decisive role in this sequence. They rejected horses that sold easily on the local market at Hajipore, yet were thought by Army procurers as too slight, lame, or ill-formed for service against their enemies. Yet, the East India Companies rivals readily bought the horses for between 300 and 500 rupees at the Hajipore market.<sup>338</sup> The committee directors responded with a culturally conflicted

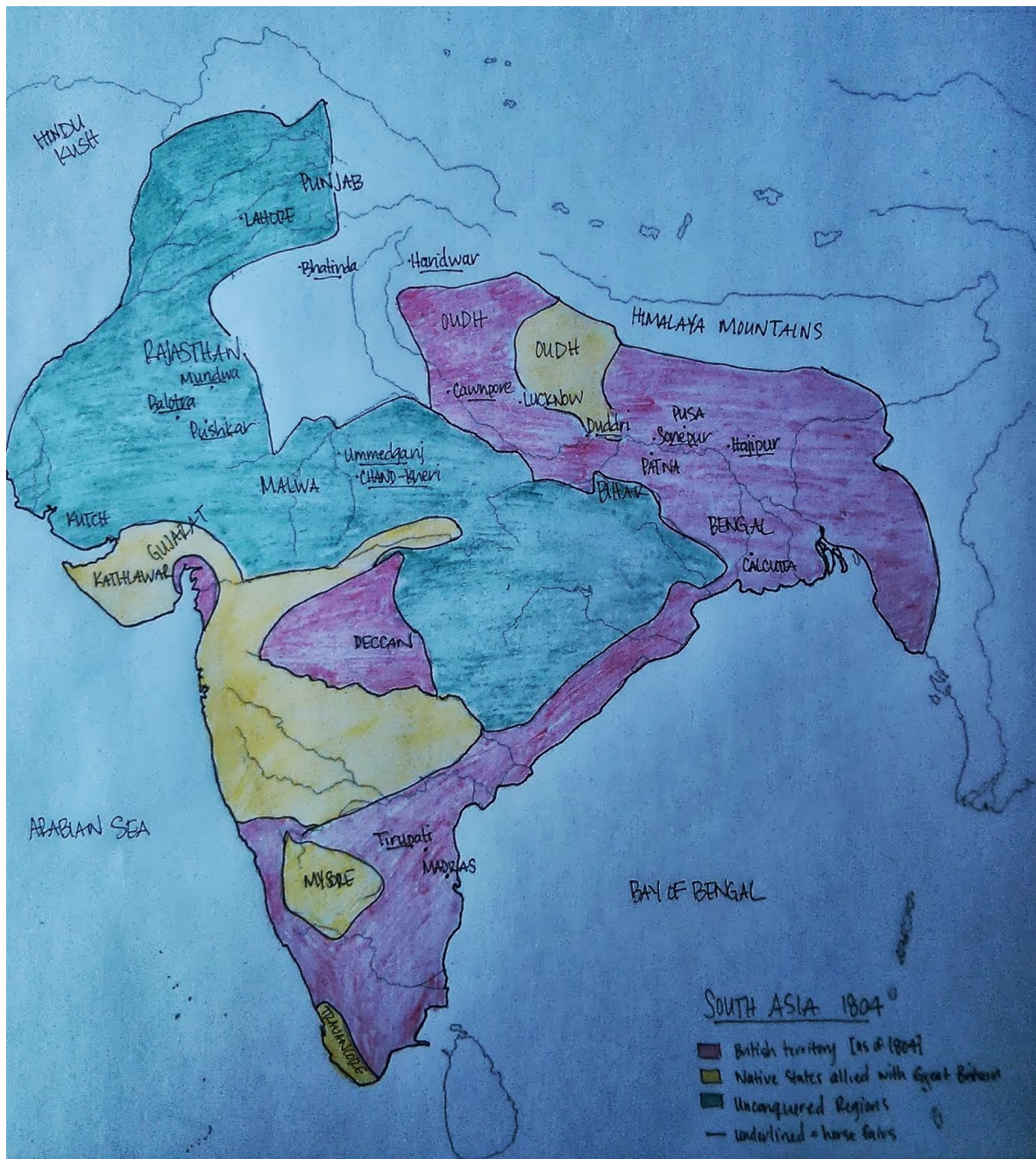
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<sup>336</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Report dated 1 January 1806.

<sup>337</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Descriptive Roll of Colts, the Produce of the Nairne Stud now at Mangee dated 8 June 1805.

<sup>338</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Letter to Thomas Graham Esq. and the Members of the Board of Superintendence for Improving the Breed of Cattle dated 18 October 1804.

response to infuse the local mares with Arabian bloodstock in order to 'fix' the faults with local mares.



(Map 2) South Asia ca. 1805.

### William Moorcroft (Superintendent, 1809-1818)

When the Pusa Stud was first established in 1793, there were only two peacetime East India Company cavalry regiments of not more than 500 horses. By 1799, that

number rose to 3500 and by the time William Moorcroft replaced Major Fraser in 1809, there were 6000 total cavalry horses.<sup>339</sup> The general conclusion was that in order to maintain and hold their expanded holdings, the EIC needed a definite and reliable supply of ‘war horses’. It was also estimated that between one in ten and one in seven horses were lost to sickness or battle in the same time period.<sup>340</sup> The demand for horses was fuelled by the EIC’s expansion into Western India and struggle to maintain a tenuous authority there before the British fully understood the nuances of local politics and the fluidity of martial labour markets.<sup>341</sup> The campaign against the Marathas (1775-1818),<sup>342</sup> a powerful martial confederacy based in the southwest, only accentuated the importance of the horse supply, as the Mysore Wars’ done just a few decades previously. As the superintendent of the Pusa Stud, Moorcroft faced a difficult decision: whether to save money and integrate with the local markets and *zamindari* breeding system, or continue the attempt to breed autonomously.<sup>343</sup> By 1809, the Committee estimated they had invested more than 10 lakhs of Rupees yet “...no adequate return has yet been made for such outlay.”<sup>344</sup> The average cost of breeding each horse was estimated at over 700 Rupees over five years, yet they could be purchased for 500 Rupees at horse fairs. The merchants at horse fairs could not be trusted and their produce was unreliable.<sup>345</sup> Neither of these proved viable choices.

Moorcroft discontinued Fraser’s breeding programs and after another decade, Moorcroft also was unable to make significant improvements to the breed of horses in

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<sup>339</sup> Gommans, 236.

<sup>340</sup> Gommans, 240.

<sup>341</sup> Dirk Kolff, *Naikar, Rajput, Sepoy: The ethnohistory of the military labour market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 159-192.

<sup>342</sup> The Marathas were a powerful martial confederacy based in the Northwest and founded by Shivaji, a horse merchant cum political leader. Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>343</sup> Mishra, 1118

<sup>344</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/4/465*: Extract no. 105 from Lieutenant Colonel Richardson to the Committee for the Improvement of Cattle and Horses in India dated May 1806.

<sup>345</sup> J.P. Pigott, *A Treatise on the Horses of India* (Calcutta: Printed by James White 1794), 60-71.

India. The height requirement had been relaxed after 1816 when it was acknowledged that “by too rigorous an adherence to restrictive regulations... relating to the height of cavalry remount horses many valuable undersized animals have been lost.”<sup>346</sup> Yet, even this relaxed requirement failed to produce an adequate number of horses. Moorcroft reverted back to the ambiguous language of British horse culture. There was a lack of suitable horses in India with ‘strong points’, continuing that, “The best of the race, their marked veins, a strong leg. The form of the head, the delicacy of the leg, the texture of the mane and tail, elegance, beauty, grace, gait... they are indispensable in war.”<sup>347</sup> In short, despite what must have been a real need for horses strong enough to carry a British cavalry officer into war in order to justify the large investment required to maintain what had become multiple breeding operations in an expanding British India, the language Moorcroft used still echoed the ambiguous and primarily aesthetic terms which resonated with the aristocratic leanings of his superiors.

Breeding efforts failing, he turned to the horse markets. Between 1800 and 1819, the British perceived that the Marathas monopolized their access to the overland trade in Central Asian horses. While Moorcroft and EIC agents made efforts to focus on famous horse breeds from within their territories, this also proved unsuccessful. Kathiawar and Kutch, for example, were briefly considered. The British agent Wyatt was sent to Kathiawar and Kutch, in the northwest, in order to buy horses for the EIC’s army in Bengal.<sup>348</sup> The horses in this area were famous for their size and beauty, and referred to by name in Persian horse treatises translated from vernacular treatises in South Asia.<sup>349</sup> Wyatt tapped into this information and began to search them out, because even the

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<sup>346</sup> Mishra, “The Economics of Reproduction,” 1121.

<sup>347</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on the Mission of William Moorcroft, Superintendent to Central Asia to Purchase Horses, 1819 l/mil/5/378*: fols. 297-298.

<sup>348</sup> Based on *National Archives of India, New Delhi, Military Department Proceedings*. 14 June 1814, nr. 76 “Report E. Wyatt”, fols. 75rr-83r. Quoted in Gommans, 241.

<sup>349</sup> Salihotra and D.C. Phillott, *The Faras-nama of Hashimi*, (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910), 3: “In the noble stables, Arabian, Anatolian, Iraqi, Turkish, and Kutchi horses are each represented...”

Persian treatises touted the horses from this area as fine war horses. However, by the time Wyatt reached Kathiawar, the breeders responsible for these horses had moved outside of EIC controlled areas.

The decline of the breed however amongst the Kattee tribe who were the most famous for their horses and who to this day possess the best remains of the breed is owing in some degree to a cause which cannot be regretted, that is to a check having been given to their plundering excursions by which until very lately they almost entirely subsisted.<sup>350</sup>

Wyatt concluded that although the area was ideal for breeding, the Kathi tribe had profited from the battles between the EIC and the Marathas (who bought Fraser's horses) and that the subsequent political stabilization resulted in their focus on agriculture. Once the most important source of supply for Deccani cavalry troops, whose estimated consumption by far surpassed the relatively meagre EIC requirements, those Kathis who remained became agriculturalists.

All options exhausted, Moorcroft proposed a horse-buying mission to Central Asia in 1819. According to his sources, Balkh and Bukhara were the source of the *Taxi* (pure bred horses) and *Turki* (Turkish) horses which permeated South Asian markets until British expansionist policies disrupted trade networks and prompted breeders and merchants to relocate. The *Committee* approved and Moorcroft along with two guides, dressed as a merchant and with a blackened face, set off to the northwest on his now infamous journey from which he never returned.<sup>351</sup> So, while the demand for horses suitable for war was increasing and breeding efforts were failing to produce suitable horses, Moorcroft and other EIC officials began to look again to outside supply.

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<sup>350</sup> Quoted in Gommans, 242.

<sup>351</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on the Mission of William Moorcroft, Superintendent to Central Asia to Purchase Horses, 1819 l/mil/5/378*: fols. 292-312.

What is clear from these correspondences is that the local South Asian breeds had become brand names. *Tazis*, *Turkis*, and *Kutchi* horses were in demand, even if their expense was outside the EIC's reach. However, Tazi simply meant a horse crossed with an Arabian (whose fame developed in India in a different trajectory than in Great Britain). *Turki* meant both fast and from Central Asia. Horses from Kutch (Kathiawar) were famous within South Asia and mainly among Rajputs and increasingly the Marathas in the Northwest. As the supply of Tazis became scarce due to popularity, and Kutchi horses because of the breeders' relocation to more lucrative and less hostile areas, the British were left to look for Turkish horses from Central Asia. They had experience with Turkish horses. When Moorcroft presented his research proposal, he included a French report about the horses kept and bred by the Kyrgyz tribes.

[They] had a coat typical of that race, salient veins, vivacious legs, but the form of the head, and the details on the legs and on the mane and tail were completely lacking elegance, grace, and beauty. Their hoofs are quite massive. But they have precious qualities for warfare and are inexhaustible, tough, and able to run long distances.<sup>352</sup>

The reputation of Central Asian horses, supported and bolstered by sources within and outside the Subcontinent led the British to redefine 'proper' horse as they negotiated their place in the South Asian cultural milieu.

### **Failed Transplant**

Among the myriad challenges of finding and securing a supply of 'good' horses, was the subjective nature of the category itself. Each soldier, administrator, and merchant defined 'good' in accordance with their own context, or culture. William Fraser

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<sup>352</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy Proceedings and Correspondence on the Mission of William Moorcroft, Superintendent to Central Asia to Purchase Horses, 1819 l/mil/5/378: fols. 297-298.*

successfully bred horses in British Bengal. His horses were rejected because they were too slight, a requirement which was later overturned. They were lame after marching hundreds of miles to be inspected. Fraser's horses did not at all answer to the imagined thoroughbred ideal and the ambitious EIC officials who rode these horses (because the remount numbers do not take native troops into consideration) could not envision themselves as the equestrians so popular at home. One aspect to consider is that contemporary ideas about breeding prompted them to focus on imported stallions, and with the recent Arabomania, Arabian horses were especially sought after. This, despite objections to the Arabians' slight build when a larger build was clearly called for to increase the size of horses in India, which was originally the problem. The tension between breeding a solid charger and a more aristocratic Arabian horse haunted Fraser's efforts. A charger usually had a strong muscular front chest and joints capable of carrying a fully equipped man (115 kilos) into battle and withstanding all of the damage that might be inflicted. Meanwhile, Arabian horses are famously lithe; and while swift, they were historically better suited for racing and light cavalry but not built to carry a European soldier into battle. This tension was expressed at different points in the history of the Stud. In 1801, Edward Parry, Esq. wrote from Padnall's:

... that the horses which from their form, activity, and spirit are mostly used for cavalry in India, though well calculated for the native, are not so for the European soldier. The weight of the latter it is well known far exceeds that of the former, especially when their necessary accoutrements are considered, the stronger breed of horses in India, though well calculated for the harness, or the ordinary purposes of riding, are so thick in the shoulder as to be wholly unfit for the ménage or activity of the charger.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Stud Committee Minutes 1801-1809 l/mil/5/459*: minute dated 7 May 1801, fols. 7-8.

Parry went on to contradict himself saying, "... that although the Arabian horse (easily procured in India) is considered as the highest blood for the turf, he is much too small to be used as a stallion."<sup>354</sup> However, Parry's theoretical practicality was already undermined by cultural proclivities towards Arabian horses. The same month, he borrowed a grey Arabian from one David Scott, Esq. of Scotland for breeding purposes. The horse was returned in 1805 after having sired several horses shipped to Bengal. The marginal notes state: "the Arabian breed not deemed eligible for cavalry."<sup>355</sup> Just six years earlier, it was decided that "all horses employed in the government stud should without doubt be Arabians; good mares may be selected from the produce of every country."<sup>356</sup>

Another important factor in this scenario is the relatively "new money" of EIC officials and British merchants. Whereas in Great Britain, they were usually excluded from aristocratic society, upper-level EIC employees suddenly found themselves within easy grasp of luxury status symbols. Gentry titles, especially 'Esquire', denoting a status just short of nobility became more common, even within the Stud documentation, and their consumption of Arabian race horses prompted Fraser to open the "Nisfee Stud", where he very successfully bred race horses for his immediate supervisors.<sup>357</sup> Of the abundant letters between officials in India and Great Britain, those dealing with estates are replete with reports of horse sales.<sup>358</sup> The correspondents attached to the Stud, the

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<sup>354</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Stud Committee Minutes 1801-1809 l/mil/5/459*: minute dated 7 May 1801, fol. 9.

<sup>355</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Stud Committee Minutes 1801-1809 l/mil/5/459*: minute dated 7 May 1801, fol. 16.

<sup>356</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Bengal Revenue Consultation dated 12 February 1796.

<sup>357</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract Bengal military Consultations dated 10 October 1804.

<sup>358</sup> *Estate Correspondence Regarding Racehorse Sale Between Samuel Manesty Esq. and the Mitchell Family of Aberdeen, Scotland, 1801-1802 MSS. Eur. D.100N*, fols. 26-46 for example, describes the death of one Mitchell Esq. and the contentious liquidation of his estate in India.

officials who rejected remounts, and the various consultants, all operated in this society and so were equally liable to allow cultural preference to outweigh immediate practicality.

The horse is a point where British and Arabo-Persian cultures surrounding horses merged in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the British appropriating Arabic and Persian concepts of breeding, riding, and status. One official noted:

... although it may be surmised by some that precedents drawn from dark and illiterate ages can afford nothing worthy of attention, in the present state of philosophy and the arts and sciences, perhaps there never did exist a people in the rudest state, whose manners and customs, when judiciously divested of mystery and superstition, will not be found to convey hints that may eventually prove a valuable acquisition to the stock of knowledge. Here Arabia and England lay claim to particular attention, the former being the acknowledged source of the finest broods in the world, and the history of the latter displaying a series of successful experiments, by which the race of horses have been improved to a high degree of pre-eminence.<sup>359</sup>

The British, freshly infused with ‘Oriental’ luxuries, began to systematically research Arabic and Persian horse culture, especially the *farasnama* (horse treatise). Similar veterinary treatises were already gaining in popularity in Great Britain and at least five authors vied for publicity in this niche market. In 1788, Joseph Earles, an EIC official, published an English translation of Salihotra’s *Farasnama*.<sup>360</sup> Between 1850 and 1905, D.C. Phillott (another EIC official) compiled and published an edited Persian volume based on at least five manuscripts in the Salihotra tradition. They became savants of Perso-Islamic history, heroes, and horse care. They paid grooms to inform on, for

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<sup>359</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: Extract of Letter from Captain Hutchinson to Col. Murray, Appendix 10 in Major Fraser’s Report dated 26 June 1795.

<sup>360</sup> Joseph Earles, *A Treatise on Horses, Entitled Saloter: A complete System of Indian Farriery in Two Parts* (Calcutta: George Gordon, 1778).

example, Haidar Ali's stables and tried at length to learn how to keep horses in India and to acquire the most sought after horses.<sup>361</sup> With all of their cosmopolitan sophistication, they still were unable to grasp the nature of the *farasnamas* (horse treatises) they gathered and translated to meet this end. They remained on the outside of horse cultures in South Asia; their opinions and conclusions were established based on their otherness. It is in this spirit that we can accept the proverbial "gift horse" of the sources they bequeathed.

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<sup>361</sup> *Bengal Army Stud Department, Copy of Correspondence and Proceedings on Breeding Cattle and Horses in India 1794-1806 l/mil/5/465*: "Tippoo's Regulations Relative to his Brood" Appendix Number 4 in Major Fraser's Report dated 26 June 1795.

## CONCLUSION

Over the course of this dissertation, we have seen how South Asian cultural preferences in horses changed between the early 1600s and the middle of the nineteenth century. It was culture as much as utility that defined which horse was best suited for battle. It was also culture that promoted where a warhorse should come from, what it should look like, and who should ride it. These norms of comportment on a horse were part of a complex cultural system that was defined and changed by a warrior elite who also defined and maintained political power. Participation in these systems provided a pathway of upward mobility for the agrarian and pastoral groups who sought admission to elite warrior groups or who established new groups. The horse trade that connected Central Asia and the Persian Gulf with South Asia, and again traversed truly immense market networks within South Asia, moved through these dynamic systems. My analysis of the *farasnama* genre written and consumed by members of the warrior elite of this period begins to explain how cultural preferences link in with the emerging reconceptualization of the Mughal Empire as a dynamic and vibrant imperial formation.

In this conclusion, I will outline how the current focus on cultural analyses in Mughal studies enriches our understanding of South Asian horse culture. Second, I discuss what more could be done with the *farasnamas*. The information they contain about facets of life in elite households, the particulars about the history of science, and how they relate to art history is truly astounding. I will also discuss the more nuanced historical appraisals of this period that could be highlighted by parallel texts such as Indo-Persian epics and hunting treatises. Finally, I would like to discuss some of the avenues I might have pursued if Sanskrit, Braj, or Urdu were part of my linguistic repertoire.

## Cultural Analyses and Mughal Studies

The shift from a focus on political and economic facets of Mughal studies to one based on cultural analyses of products, communities, and cultures has built an understanding of the period as robust and dynamic rather than stagnant and in decline. This shift began with a questioning of the established view that the Mughal Empire enjoyed a period of vibrancy and expansion under the Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and gradually stagnated under Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658). Ultimately, the empire faltered and collapsed during the reign of Aurangzeb, who died in 1707, due to his inability to maintain the structures and infrastructure of statecraft established under Akbar but allowed to degenerate under his two successors. This view holds that the campaigns of expansion and policies of decentralization associated with Aurangzeb's imperial programs coupled with his adherence to a less inclusive religious courtly culture ultimately led to the end of the Mughal Empire.<sup>362</sup> In terms of the economy, this view holds that agrarian workers provided the tax base that maintained the empire. As one largely undifferentiated group, these workers provided the tax base that supported the empire. According to this trajectory, the agrarian workers were either relentlessly oppressed or socially sophisticated.<sup>363</sup> The agrarian tax base supported a system of tax collection and remittance to Mughal officers, administrators and soldiers. When the peasant and zamindars rebellions deprived imperial groups of the ability to receive salaries based on this system, the entire system collapsed. Proto-capitalism followed the inflationary economy that resulted from a decentralized and declining imperial formation put further restrictions on all levels of the Mughal administration and bureaucracy until it collapsed.

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<sup>362</sup> John F. Richards, "The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Crisis in South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 4 (1990): 625-638; Also by Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>363</sup> Habib, 103, 107, 110.

By shifting the focus from political and economic histories to an analysis of products, communities, and cultures, the view changes from one of stagnation and decline to one of a robust economy that was fueled by a largely successful agrarian population. Most agree that the rural economy witnessed substantial if uneven growth despite intermittent or endemic warfare. The new state regimes that emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were directly involved in the promotion of agrarian production and continued to be so until well into the East India Company's intervention.<sup>364</sup> These emergent states re-oriented and re-allocated resources, with efficient tax gathering procedures replacing the Mughal military imperial order and adapted to the new political situations.<sup>365</sup> More prosperous agriculture resulted from increased commodity production because of rural investments by tax farmers.<sup>366</sup> Indian artisans, merchants, and bankers played key roles in the increasing levels of international trade that buoyed them.<sup>367</sup> States and societies along with markets and merchants were able to constantly reinvent themselves to the extent that markets were so vital, foreign merchants from the EIC were drawn into South Asia. These foreign merchants were initially part of a larger structure, rather than the main actors.

My research contributes to an understanding of the role culture played in this complex network. By focusing on the horse as a cultural commodity where preference and identity politics informed trends in consumption, we are able to see how such a ubiquitous facet of life actually underpinned an extensive trading network and why it was important to the warrior elite. The seventeenth-century *ghazji*, as seen with the Firuz Jang

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<sup>364</sup> Burton Stein, "A Decade of Efflorescence," *South Asia Research* 10, no. 2 (November 1990): 125-138.

<sup>365</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas 1600-1818* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>366</sup> C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>367</sup> Prasannan Parthasarathi, "Merchants and the Rise of Colonialism," in *The Eighteenth Century in India*, edited by Seema Alavi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002): 199-224.

tradition, super-imposed his horse culture over the existing Indic tradition. Rather than stagnant ‘traditions,’ both modes continued to undergo processes of definition and redefinition over the course of the 1600s until the next discernible shift in the early eighteenth century with Anand Ram Mukhlis’s *Rabat al-Faras*. The separation between the Indic and the Persian versions became both more pronounced in terms of the religious dogmas that prefaced Mukhlis’s horse treatise and Fai’z’s *Tubfat al-Sadr*, but both attempted to address the same problem of diminished access to imported horses and maintaining the stocks of horses in elite stables. Their mutual acknowledgement of classical texts in multiple languages and based on a corpus of theoretical equine knowledge was overturned in the late eighteenth century by Rangin, who replaced theoretical knowledge with lived experience.

As a sometime horse merchant, soldier, and member of the cosmopolitan literati of the period, Rangin’s *Farasat-nama* is illustrative of several important points. First, while the horse treatise occupies a peripheral genre insofar as our current scholarly attentions, it was actually part of a more foundational body of knowledge.<sup>368</sup> Rangin’s inclusion and re-dressing of influential genres in an everyday voice and in the emergent Urdu indicates that not only the genre, but its contents, were widely recognized. The copious copies of South Asian *farasnamas* included in archive and compiled catalogues second this assertion. However, the fact that the comportmental norms they promote appear in period artwork and related genres, such as hunting treatises and Indo-Persian epics, indicate that these norms changed in accordance with the evolving trends. In as much as the warrior elite participated in, negotiated, and defined these preferences as they negotiated political power, they understood the importance of these systems in establishing hierarchies. My research also addresses the conundrum of the horse as a commodity, treated alternately

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<sup>368</sup> Shantanu Phukan, “The Rustic Beloved: Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15, no. 5 (2000): 1-30.

as a luxury and military necessity without reconciliation between the two poles. By focusing on bridging this divide and reconciling the culturally defined categories of horses, definitions that changed over time, we can begin to understand the role of cultural preference in the horse trade.

### **Possibilities for Further Research**

The *farasnama* genre provides a wealth of untapped possibilities for future research. The ‘auspicious’ and ‘inauspicious’ valuations in the Firuz Jang texts, which date to the early seventeenth century but continued to be copied into the early nineteenth century, refer to the household. One especially poignant example from the Jang tradition is about the horned horse, or unicorn. “Experienced people say that the household (*khanah*), on the property (*mulk*), or in the city where the horned horse (*asp shakh*) resides, that household and that city will be desolated because it offends Allah.”<sup>369</sup> The horny protuberances were commonplace enough to warrant discussion, yet the ill fortune the horse brought to the household and even the city is a unique facet of this tradition. The owner, rider, stable master, and groom were included in these valuations as well as the town in which the horse resided and the area it passed through were as important as the horse’s more obvious functions.<sup>370</sup> The multiple glosses, with Hindavi, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Baluchchi, and Pashtu are also a source of information on the members of elite households, their understanding of equine lexicons and their backgrounds.<sup>371</sup> The literary value of the simple *masnavi* verses that highlight and help to reinforce specifically relevant information regarding horses recurs in multiple manuscripts without discernible shifts in register or vocabulary. Similarly, the longer poems that highlight ideals of statecraft and

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<sup>369</sup> Zayn al-Abidin Husayni Hashimi, *Faras-nama-yi Hashimi*, ed. D. C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Hashimi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1910), 38.

<sup>370</sup> Hashimi, 15-18.

<sup>371</sup> This is especially noticeable in the compiler’s notes, for example Hashimi, 22-25. For transliterated glosses, see Hashimi, 18: “Anubaran” means a horse of similar color.

the proper horse's role in that process deserves more careful attention and analysis than I have been able to afford here.

In terms of the history of science, the veterinary sections of each of these texts is replete with information regarding feeding, pasturage, anatomical theories, and medical development.<sup>372</sup> The recipes and prescriptions to treat different equine ailments would be especially significant when combined with knowledge of veterinary and biological science. I have learned that 'discerning the age of a horse by its teeth' is a practice still known and practiced today among horse enthusiasts. The field of environmental science, treated in more depth, would also benefit from a study of grasses and pasturage specified in these treatises.

The descriptions of horse colors and markings along with appropriate occasions for their display corresponds to their presentation in period artwork. I have done my best to highlight specific instances of this in the appendix, however I was only able to graze the surface of the correlation between the descriptions in the *farasnama* and specific illustrations. They appear not only in pieces made in courtly circles, but in more simple pieces circulated in bazaars. Chronologically, one notable and more recent example is the Kalighat collection in Oxford's archives.<sup>373</sup> Although this collection dates to the late nineteenth century, the horses portrayed in these pieces very much indicate the continued viability of the *farasnama* genre. The appearance of blue horses produced by Rajput courts in the eighteenth century, as in Figures 10 and 11, where Mukhlis translates

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<sup>372</sup> Hashimi, 41-116; Sadr al-Din Muhammad Zabardast Khan, *Tuhfat al-Sadr*, ed. D. C. Phillott as *The Faras-nama of Zabardast Khan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911), 38-57; *Rahat al-Faras* of Anand Ram Mukhlis, (British Library, London), Or. 5762: fols. 18-31; Sa'adat Yar Khan, Rangin and D.C. Phillott ed. *The Farasnama-e Rangin or: The Book of the Horse, by "Rangin," translated from the Urdu by Lieut. Col. D.C. Phillott* (London: Bernard Quartich, 1911), 13-41.

<sup>373</sup> *Ms. Ind. Inst. Misc. 22*; this collection was digitized and can be accessed at: <http://www2.odl.ox.ac.uk/gsd/ cgi-bin/library?e=d-000-00--0orient01--00-0-0-0prompt-10--4- ----0-11--1-en-50--20-about---00001-001-1-1isoZz-8859Zz-1-0&a=d&cl=CL1&d=orient001-aac>

*nabliḥ kabud* as blue rather than gray, as I discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>374</sup> Portraiture in epic texts such as the *Hamzanama* (Tale of Amir Hamza) commissioned by Akbar also corresponds to early seventeenth century comportmental norms.<sup>375</sup> The *Hamzanama* is one of many parallel texts where these norms appear. Indo-Persian and Indic epics, including the *Mahabharata* and the *Raznama*, would both be other avenues to pursue.<sup>376</sup> Other possibilities are hunting treatises; both the *Asvacikitsa* and the *Baznama* appear to correlate with the *farasnama*.<sup>377</sup>

In each of the above references, familiarity with multiple languages and literary genres that cross the boundaries of academic area studies are required. I would like to spend these last few lines discussing the possibilities with different combinations of linguistic skills. The *Asvasastra* (Indic horse treatise) appears in multiple South Asian languages. Versions in Marathi, Tamil, Rajasthani, and Gujarati were all referred to in the translated compilations I used in order to begin to understand and explain the basis for the Persian translation of Salihotra's horse treatise.<sup>378</sup> However based on my cursory analysis of the *Asvasastra* genre, I would propose that each version represents a similarly dynamic tradition in horse lore, where Salihotra acts as an authority for the horse cultures that developed in concert with those in surrounding regions, as has proved true of the *farasnama*. The relationship between South Asian horse treatises and those produced in Safavid and Ottoman empires would also be incredibly fruitful.<sup>379</sup> Further attention to the interaction of these many different facets of a much-ignored genre is needed.

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<sup>374</sup> *Rabat al-Faras*, Or. 5762: fol. 12r.

<sup>375</sup> John Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in association with Azimuth Editions, London, 2002).

<sup>376</sup> Wendy Doniger, "Contributions to an Equine Lexicography with special reference to Frogs," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98, no. 4 (1978): 475-478.

<sup>377</sup> *Asvacikitsa of Nakula* (Umesa Chandra Bupta, ed. Bibliotheca Indica, 1887).

<sup>378</sup> *Asvasastra*, by Nakula, edited by S. Gopalan et al., (Tanjore, 1952).

<sup>379</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi and Tulay Artan, *Ahmed I and "Tuhfetu'l-muluk ve's-selatin": a period manuscript on horses, horsemanship and hunting* (Eren, 2008).

## APPENDIX



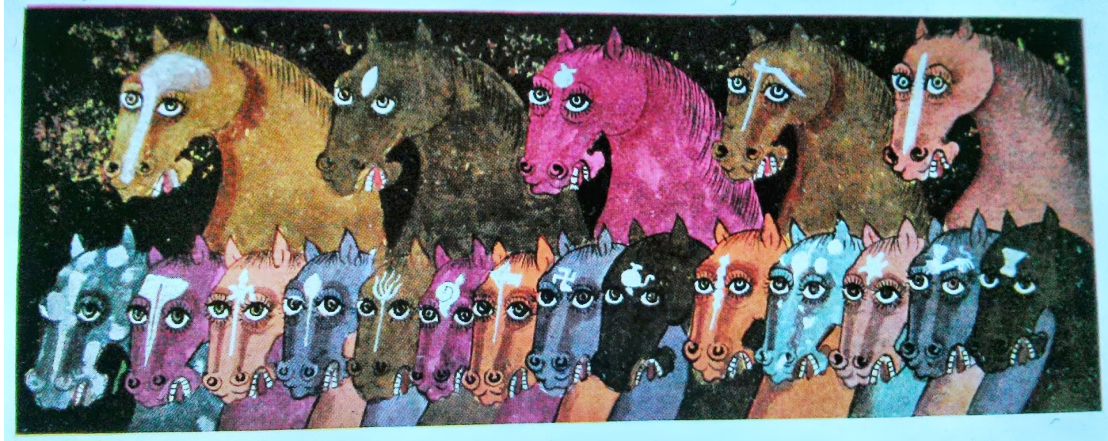
(Figure 1) *Asvasastra* by Nakula, eds. S. Gopalan et al. (Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Series, no. 56, Tanjore, 1952), 9. This illustration shows the original winged horses before Salihotra cast his spell to remove their wings so they could serve in Indra's cavalry. The iconography closely resembles Figure 2, which appeared in Anand Ram Mukhlis's *Rabat al-Faras*.



(Figure 2) Anand Ram Mukhlis, *Rabat al-Faras*, British Library, Or. 5762 folio 6v. (c. 1740)  
The winged horses from this eighteenth-century Persian translation of Salihotra's horse treatise are similar to those in Figure 1, with a reduction in the number of horses, the majority of which are dark, and the addition of landscape at the bottom of the image.



(Figure 3) *Asvasastra* by Nakula, eds. S. Gopalan et al. (Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Series, no. 56, Tanjore, 1952), 41. This image is an example of auspicious placement of whorls (*avartas*) on the forehead and knees in the Salihotra tradition.



(Figure 4) *Asvasastra by Nakula*, eds. S. Gopalan et al. (Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Series, no. 56, Tanjore, 1952), 43. This image depicts an even more demarcated system of markings (*pundras*) on the forehead in the Salihotra tradition.



(Figure 5) *Asvasastra* by *Nakula*, eds. S. Gopalan et al. (Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Series, no. 56, Tanjore, 1952), 137. "King's horse" The image above and the one in Figure 12 both depict a king's horse. The horse is white, a stallion with a darker mane and tail. This image is from the Salihotra tradition while the one that follows is from the Firuz Jang tradition.



(Figure 6) *Farasnama-ye Hindi*. “On the characteristics of white horses with a shade of black” MS London, Wellcome Institute , WMS.Per.559, folio 18r (c. 1803). This horse almost exactly matches the horse depicted in Figure 5. While the Firuz Jang tradition does not specify the white horse with black mane and tail as one fit for a king, it is auspicious. The image illustrates the extension of this basic yet shared horse culture into the ranks of military servicemen familiar with these norms.



(Figure 7) *Farasnama-ye Hindi*. "On the characteristics of black horses with white patches." MS London, Wellcome Institute, WMS.Per.47 (A), folio 7r (undated). This horse, much like the one in Figure 6, illustrates the simply rendered prescriptions for proper horses. This horse is an *arjal*, a bay (*kumay*) has three white socks, with the front right foot the color of the body. The Persian caption asserts that the Prophet despised such a horse.



(Figure 8) *Portrait of the Horse, Amber Head*. Mughal School (c. 1650). British Museum, via University of California, San Diego. This painting of a piebald (*ablaq*) horse has been noted only for the amber colored head. However, it illustrates the piebald in a garden. All sources agree that a piebald should only be ridden in a garden.



(Figure 9) *Shah Jahan on Horseback*. (c. 1627). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. This is not only a painting of Shah Jahan (d. 1666), but the ruler exemplifying proper comportment while riding a piebald (*ablaq*) in a garden setting.



(Figure 10) Stipple Master. *Maharana Amar Singh II Riding a Jodhpur Horse* (c. 1700-1710) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The 'Stipple Master' was a painter known for equestrian paintings and half-pen technique for the court at Udaipur, the hill fort Firuz Jang took in 1611. On the reverse side, the inscription reads: "jodhpur ka ache" ("It is from Jodhpur"). The blue horse became more common in eighteenth-century equestrian paintings, specifically Rajput courts.



(Figure 11) *Woman Riding a Horse*. (c. 1775) Set 50, Kanoria Collection IV: Paintings from Rajasthan and Central India. Patna, Vinod Krishna Kanoria collection, VKK 92. ID number 5027. American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA). An anonymous artist produced this painting for an unidentified Rajput court sometime around 1775. This horse, like the one above, is blue.



(Figure 12) Bhavanidas. *The Stallion Kitab*. (c. 1735) Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Acc. No. 2004-149-42. The artist Bhavanidas served at the Kishangarh court near Ajmer, Rajasthan. The stallion, called *Kitab*, stands alone with the lower half of his body hennaed and decorated. The description on the reverse says, “Kitab, the wonderful Iranian [stallion], aglow with nine splendors.” The nine splendors refer to the saddle, bridle, and accouterments that decorate the horse. Kitab is a piebald.



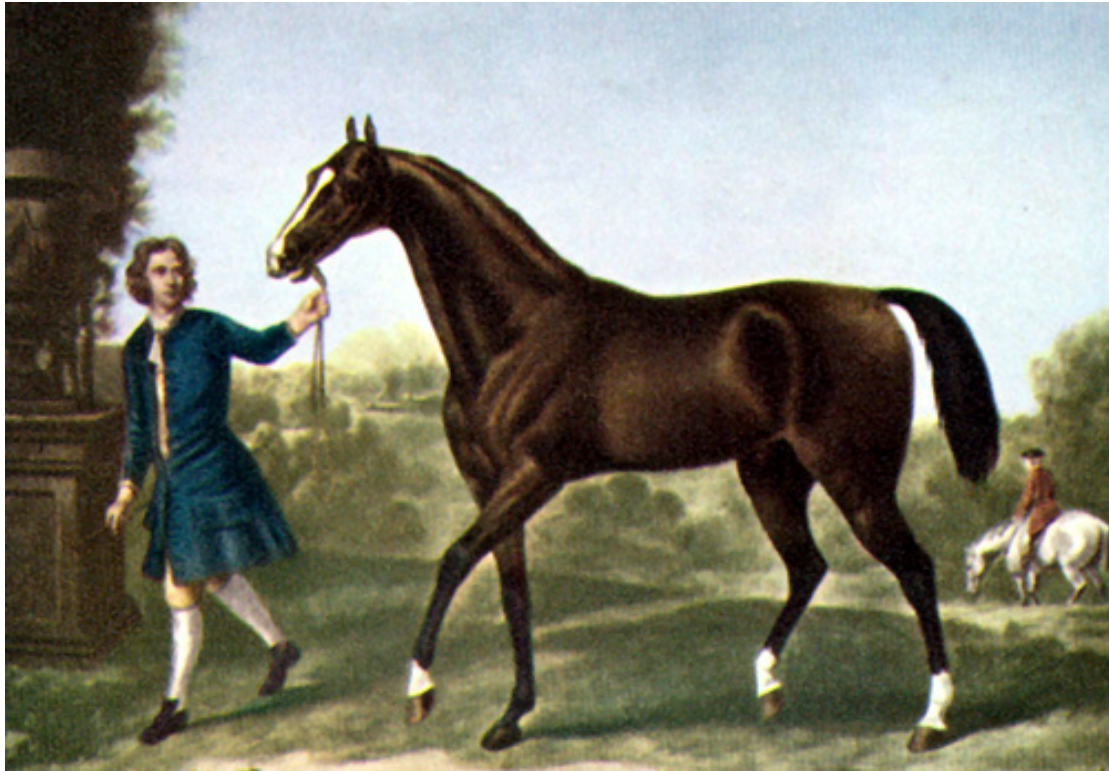
(Figure 13) Bhavanidas. *The Stallion Jugaldan Iraqui*. (c. 1730) Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Acc. No. 92.115. This painting, also by Bhavanidas, is of the stallion Jugaldan, the Iraqui, with a mark on the left side and kept at the Kishangarh stable. This horse is also a piebald.



(Figure 14) Theodore Andrea Cook, *A History of the English Turf*. (London: H. Virtue and Company, Ltd., 1901), 147. *The Byerley Turk*. This version is attributed to John Wootton (d. 1764). Wootton specialized in equestrian and hunting scenes. The numerous versions of the Byerley Turk paintings suggest that more than one artist copied the stylistic points of this painting without proper accreditation.



(Figure 15) [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byerly\\_Turk.jpg#file](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Byerly_Turk.jpg#file) *The Byerley Turk*. This painting can be traced to the Fores Gallery although the actual owner has not been found. Although this painting is also attributed to John Wootton, due to his impressive reputation for equestrian portraiture, the many versions of this painting complicate a definitive source. The difference between Figures 14 and 15 are mainly in the groom's dress, the hunting dog, and the background. The actual horse looks much the same in both illustrations.



(Figure 16) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Darley\\_Arabian.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Darley_Arabian.jpg) *The Darley Arabian*. This image is a hand painted lithograph painted by an unknown artist and based on John Wootton's original painting. The original is strangely difficult to trace despite numerous references to this image, as were the images of the Byerley Turk. The blaze on the forehead and three diagonally white markings on all but the front right hoof are distinguishing features.

*The Godolphin Arabian.*

**ESTEEMD**  
 one of the best  
 Foreign Horses  
 ever brought  
 into England;  
 Appearing to  
 both from the  
 Country became  
 from, and from  
 the Performance  
 of his Posterity.  
 They being Excd<sup>d</sup>  
 both as Racers  
 and Stallions,  
 and being  
 with most other  
 Pedigrees, and  
 mending the  
 Imperfections  
 of their Shape.

*Quigley Paint.*

HE was the sire  
 among others of y<sup>e</sup>  
 following Horses, &c.  
 Lad. & c. D'Ormal.  
 James, Flank, Old-rose.  
 Babrain, Bajeze, Regu.  
 Dorniculs, Sultan.  
 Whinose, Tarquin.  
 Infam, Godolphin.  
 Skew-ball, Entrance.  
 Whinowan, Amelia.  
 Bullcoat, Blolom, S. R.  
 Gores Dion Mare, &c.  
 He is allow'd to have  
 red blood y<sup>e</sup> English  
 Blood, more than any  
 Foreign Horse ever  
 yet Imported.  
 He Died at Hogs-nagge  
 Dec<sup>r</sup> 28. 1753.  
 Aged 32.

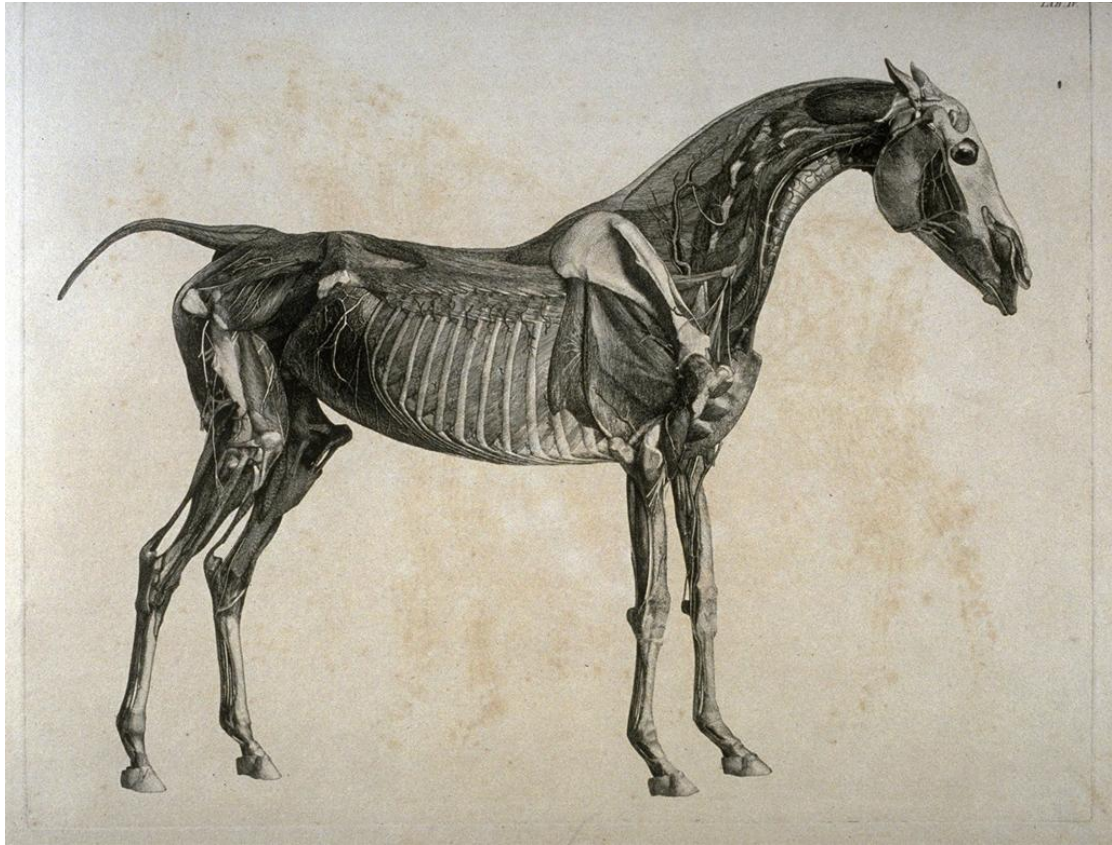
**Got by sons of the GODOLPHIN ARABIAN, all which were Train'd and have Run; and most of them WON.**

by REGULUS.	by CADE, Gade Maiden-head.	slouch, Camilla, Chan gling.	by WHITENSEE, Ballo.
Trajan, Adolphus, Sapho.	by HULLS Alfred, S. J <sup>n</sup> . Ram.	Young Gade, Bandy, Hero.	by OLD-ENGLAND, Free-stalon.
Romeo, Geo. Royal, South.	Bay Filly, MEJenn. Bay Colt.	Viper, comet, scamptan, gade.	Strang-bo, Hippinus, &c.
Achus, down, Peper.	SF C. Sidley's Bay Filly, Milo, Apollo.	Trunion, Bywell-Tan, Dorby.	by JANUS, Ruby, James, &c.
Pollys-delight, Alderman.	Rocket, Carillo, Why-not, Regulus.	Gade, Matchem, Lightfoot.	by LATH, Red cap, M <sup>r</sup> of
	Hannibal, Charmin'g, Polly &c.	Mercury, Martin Lightning.	by Hercules, M <sup>r</sup> . Tater B. Mare &c.
		L. Gores Roan Gade victum.	by HAVINGSTONE Bay Horse, &c.
		L. Northumber. Bay Horse &c.	

(Figure 17) Daniel Quigley (late 18<sup>th</sup> century) *The Godolphin Arabian*. Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection B1996.22.36 This painting of the Godolphin Arabian was intended to promote the quality of his offspring as race horses. Like most images of this foundational Arabian, it was produced some years after his death in 1753.



(Figure 18) George Stubbs (c. 1770). *Eclipse at New Market with Groom and Jockey*. Oil on canvas. San Diego. Accessed on Artstor on 27 May 13 with permission from University of California, San Diego. Eclipse was the most celebrated offspring of the Godolphin Arabian and gained such renown as a racehorse that he was the first horse dissected and studied in detail after his death.



(Figure 19) George Stubbs (c. 1776). *Second of two plates for the Fourth Anatomical Table of the Muscles, Fascias, Ligaments, Nerves, Arteries, Veins, Glands, and Cartilages of a Horse explained, which is the twelfth plate in the book, The Anatomy of the Horse* (London: J. Purser, 1776). Etching with engraving. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. This etching was part of a movement towards understanding equine anatomy. Veterinary medicine in Europe and Great Britain made significant advances during the late eighteenth century.

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de Bolsover et Ogle: Seigneur de Cavendish, Bothel et Hepwel; Pair D'Angleterre; Qui eut la  
charge & honneur d'estre Gouverneur du Serenissime Prince de Galles en sa jeunesse,  
maintenant Roy de la Grande-Bretagne; Lieutenant pour le Roy de la Comte de Nottingham,  
& de la Forest de Sherwood; Capitaine general en toutes les Provinces outré la Rievriere de  
Trent, & autres endroits du Royaume D'Angleterre; Gentilhomme de la Chambre du lit du  
Roy; Consciller D'Etat & Prive: Chevalier du tres-noble Ordre de la Jarretiere, &c.*  
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