

Handout: The Mughal Dynasty from Timur to Awrangzeb

Timur (1336-1405)

Timur's son	Timur's grandson
Timur's great-grandson	Timur's great-great grandson (Babur's father)
1. Babur (r.1526-1530) First Mughal emperor	2. Humayan (r. 1530-1540,1555-1556)
3. Akbar (r.1556-1605)	4. Jahangir (r. 1605-1627)
5. Shah Jahan (r. 1627-1658)	6. Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707)

A Society of Spectacle and Refined Luxury

The Mughals lived in a society of the spectacle organized by strict principles of visual order. . .An overwhelming number of refined, luxury objects were produced for the Mughal elite, and they avidly collected a wide variety of natural substances. An extraordinary cataloguing of all these things and of a wide range of other aspects of court life reflected the refinement of visual sensations. . .There was an elaborate hierarchy used to grade their favorite blood-red spinels [a gemstone sometimes confused with rubies] and green emeralds (with poetic words used to describe their colors). Their unblemished pearls were ordered in terms of luster, size and weight and how closely they resembled the ideal of the perfect sphere. . .It was the same for horses, carpets and armor. Their shawls were sorted according to color beginning with the natural hues, off-white, red-gold and then on to blues and lilacs and last of all dove grey (Minissale 2006: xviii).

Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) on His Birthday

His turban was plumed with heron's feathers; on one side was a ruby as big as a walnut; on the other side was a large diamond; in the center was a large emerald, shaped like a heart. . .His sash was wreathed with a chain of pearls, rubies, and diamonds. His neck-chain consisted of three double strings of pearls. He wore armlets set with diamonds on his elbows; he had three rows of diamonds on his wrists; he had rings on nearly every finger (Chopra 1976: 17).