

THE  
COINS  
OF THE SIKHS



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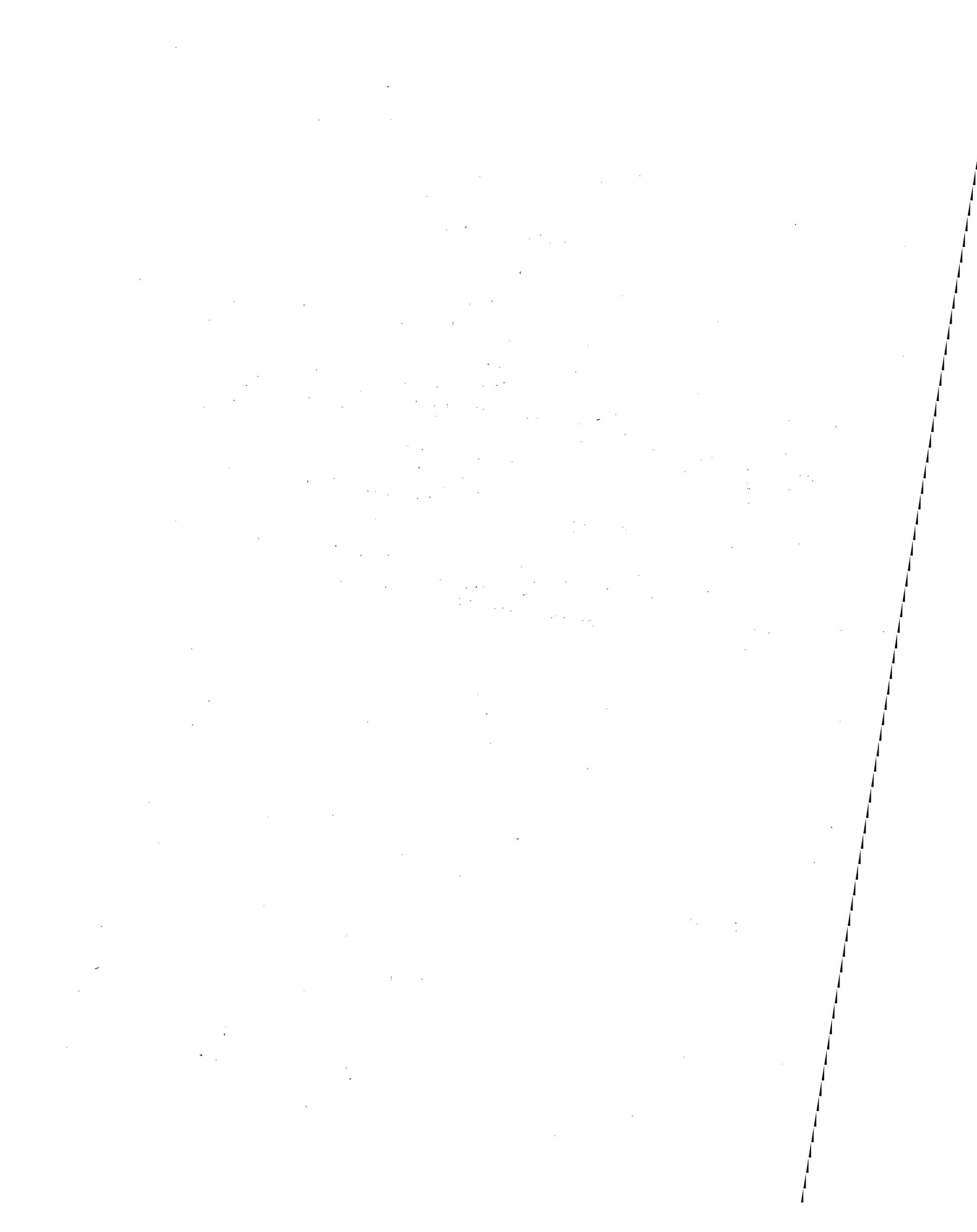
HANS HERRLI

## THE COINS OF THE SIKHS

The Sikh coinage started in the second half of the eighteenth century, reached its apogee during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and ended abruptly with the annexation of the Panjab by the British in 1849. Although the Sikhs struck coins in about 20 mints, their coinage remained quite uniform until the end. Their rupees bear religious legends and never mention their issuer, but Amritsar, their main economic and religious center, produced the most complex system of mintmarks in modern India. Early observers were often baffled by the first major non-Mughal coinage of northern India and their descriptions of Sikh coins are commonly full of errors, errors that have all too often survived until today.

In a first part the present book gives a short historical introduction and a general survey of the Sikh coinage. The second part consists of an illustrated catalogue of all the actually known Sikh coin types arranged by mints. Several appendices offer a brief survey of Sikh tokens and medals and a few important numismatic texts in extenso. This book is not only intended as a useful tool for coin collectors, but also as a source of material for historians and students of the economy of the Sikh empire.

Hans Herrli was born at Bienne (Switzerland) in 1933. After graduating from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich he worked in several countries in Europe and the Middle East. During numerous long visits to India and Pakistan he visited the territories of the former Sikh state and all its mint towns.



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HANS HERRLI

*second revised and augmented edition*



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## Contents

<i>Maps</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xi
A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE SIKHS	1
The 10 Gurus	1
The rise and fall of the Sikh State	4
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE FAMILY OF RANJIT SINGH	7
THE MAHARAJAS OF THE PUNJAB OR OF LAHORE	8
CHRONOLOGY OF THE SIKH LEADERS AND THE RULERS IN DELHI AND AFGHANISTAN	9
THE SIKH STATE OF RANJIT SINGH	10
THE SIKH MISLS	11
THE GURUMUKHI SCRIPT	14
SIKH TERMS	17
THE SIKH COINAGE	19
The copper coinage	19
Rupees	19
The coinage of the <i>Khalsa</i> confederacy	19
The <i>Misl</i> coinage	20
The coinage of Ranjit Singh and his successors	21
Metrology	23
Gold	23
Silver	23
Copper	24
The leaf mark on the Sikh coins	25
The purchasing power of the Sikh coins	27
COIN INSCRIPTIONS	28
The Gobindshahi couplet	28
The Nanakshahi couplet	30
Reverse inscriptions	32
Inscriptions on copper coins	32
DATES ON SIKH COINS	33
The <i>Vikrama Samvat</i> (VS) era	33
Comparative table of VS and AD years	34

The <i>Hijri</i> era	35
Table of the New Year days of the <i>Hijri</i> era	35
The <i>Guru Nanak</i> era	36
The <i>Banda Bahadur</i> era	38
Unexplained dates	38
<b>CATALOGUE</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>40</b>
The numbering system	40
01 AMRITSAR	42
The coinage of Amritsar	43
The rupees struck at Amritsar	45
The <i>Khalsa</i> rupee	46
The <i>Nanakshahis</i>	49
Rodgers' Dar Jhang rupee	57
The <i>Mora Shahi</i>	63
The <i>Arsiwala Shahi</i>	65
Marks on the <i>Nanakshahi</i> and <i>Gobindshahi</i> rupees of Amritsar	67
The <i>Gobindshahis</i>	77
Marks on the <i>Gobindshahi</i> rupees	83
Miscellaneous mohur and rupee types	85
Copper coins	86
A. Copper coins bearing only Persian inscriptions	86
B. Regular copper coins with inscriptions in Gurumukhi script	88
B1: Coins with an undivided obverse inscription	89
B2: Coins with an undivided obverse inscription and an additional horizontal middle line	91
B3: Coins with <i>SAHAI GUR</i> divided by a mark	92
C. Copper coins with the <i>AKAL SAHAI GUR NANAKJI</i> obverse of type B and various Gurumukhi reverse inscriptions	96
D. Coins with a Gurumukhi obverse inscription and the <i>JARABA SRI AMBRATSARJI</i> reverse of type B	97

Contents	vii
E. Coins with a Gurumukhi inscription on the obverse and a Persian inscription on the reverse	98
F. Mules	99
02 ANANDGHAR	100
30 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT A	104
31 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT F	105
03 PIND DADAN KHAN	107
04 UNIDENTIFIED COPPER MINTS IMITATING COIN TYPES OF AMRITSAR	110
05 DERA (Dera Ghazi Khan)	112
The coinage of Dera	113
Rupees	113
Copper coins	115
06 KASHMIR	119
The Sikh governors of Kashmir	120
The mint names on the coins of Kashmir	121
The rupees circulating in Kashmir	122
The copper coins of Kashmir	123
Catalogue of the Sikh coins of Kashmir	124
The regular rupees	124
Special rupees	139
Copper coins	141
07 DERAJAT (Dera Ismail Khan)	157
The coinage of Derajat	158
<i>Mahmudshahis</i> of the semi-independent Nawabs of Dera Ismail Khan	158
<i>Mahmudshahis</i> of the Nawab as a Sikh feudatory	159
Copper coins of the Nawabs as feudatories of Ranjit Singh	160
Copper coins struck before the annexation of Dera Ismail Khan in 1835 AD and bearing a Sikh legend	161
Coins struck after the annexation of the Derajat	162
Silver	162
Copper	164
<i>Billishahis</i>	165

08 LAHORE	167
The coinage of Lahore	169
The Jassa Singh Ahluwalia rupee	170
Regular rupees: <i>Gobindshahis</i> and <i>Nanakshahis</i>	172
Rupee patterns: the Guru Nanak / Ranjit Singh rupee	179
The <i>Ahluwalia</i> rupee	181
Copper coins	183
09 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT D	184
10 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT C	185
32 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT E	187
11 MULTAN	188
The coinage of Multan	192
Coins of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Sikh occupation of Multan	193
Silver rupees	193
Copper coins	194
Coins of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sikh occupation of Multan	194
Mohurs and rupees	195
Marks on the rupees	196
Copper coins	197
Durrani types	197
Sikh types	198
The emergency gold rupees struck during the siege of Multan in VS 1905	200
33 MANKERA	203
12 A LEAD IMITATION OF A SIKH COIN BEARING THE MINT NAME MULTAN (BELA?)	206
13 PESHAWAR	210
The coinage of Peshawar under the Sikhs	212
Rupees	212
Copper coins	214
14 PATIALA	217
The coinage of Patiala	218
Gobindshahi rupees of Patiala	221

Contents	ix
Copper Coins	223
15 NABHA	224
The rulers of Nabha	224
The coinage of Nabha	225
The Gobindshahi rupees of Nabha	226
16 JAMMU	230
17 NAJIBABAD	232
18 MISCELLANEOUS UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINTS	233
19 IMITATIONS OF SIKH PAISAS PROBABLY STRUCK AT LOHARU	235
20 UNDISCOVERED SIKH COINS	239
The <i>Jassa Singh</i> rupee of Lahore	239
The Ung rupee of Amritsar	239
The rupee in the name of <i>Hari Singh Nalwa</i>	239
Sikh rupees struck at Saharanpur	240
Sikh rupees struck at Rawalpindi	241
21 COUNTERFEIT AND FAKE SIKH COINS	242
Counterfeit coins	242
Fake coins and fabrications	242
22 COUNTERMARKS ON SIKH COINS	246
APPENDIX 1: The notes of Baron Karl Alexander Anselm von Hügel concerning the coinage of Kashmir	251
APPENDIX 2: A correspondence concerning the gold rupees of Multan published in Spinks Numismatic Circular, 1896	257
APPENDIX 3: The report of Major-General R.G. Taylor on the coinage of the Phulkian States	259
Patiala	259
Jhind	260
Nabha	261
APPENDIX 4: Coins of the Kalsia State	262
APPENDIX 5: Sikh medals and tokens	265
APPENDIX 6: Alexander Burnes' description of the Salt Range and its mines	279

APPENDIX 7: European travellers and adventurers in Ranjit Singh's Empire	283
Jean-François ALLARD	283
Paolo di Bartolomeo AVITABILE	284
Josiah HARLAN	284
Dr. Joh. Martin HONIGBERGER	285
Baron Karl Alex. Anselm von HÜGEL	285
Giovanni Battista VENTURA	286
Godrey Thomas VIGNE	286
Dr. Joseph WOLFF	286
<i>Bibliography</i>	289

## Maps

The Sikh State of Ranjit Singh	10
The Salt Range	106
Kashmir	118
The Derajat and Multan	156
Mankera and the Sind-Sagar Doab	202
Peshawar	208
The Cis-Sutlej Region	216

## Preface

From the seventeenth century to the present day the political history of the Sikhs has—with some intervals—been characterised by a long series of brutal and highly destructive disputes with the authorities claiming sovereignty over the Panjab. In the course of time this fact has led to a very distinct polarisation of opinion amongst the chroniclers and scholars studying Sikh history.

In the older sources as well as in a good deal of the more recent literature one finds not only extremely differing opinions, but also an amazing amount of prejudice and of grossly uncritical and all too often entirely unproven assertions. Some of the works are heavily biased in favour, others are strongly critical of the Sikhs, some abound in polemical, others in apologetic tones.

With regard to political issues I have tried to keep from the quarreling factions, but in any study of the Sikhs the quest for objectivity is time and again frustrated by the sheer difficulty of getting at the relevant sources. Many important documents have been lost or destroyed and the ones which survive are written in half a dozen languages and scripts and scattered far and wide in often almost inaccessible archives.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the paucity of documentary evidence the actual coins must remain the main source for any study of the Sikh coinage and these coins still raise a fair number of questions, which we are still unable to answer. Some of the puzzles of the Sikh coinage have been solved and a few errors have been set right in recent times, but numerous moot points—e.g., the identification and location of several mints—still await a breakthrough.

While preparing the second edition of my catalogue of the Sikh coins I have taken pains to make an exhaustive survey of all the coins safely attributable to the Sikhs and to keep abreast of new discoveries.<sup>2</sup> After the publication of the first edition of my book in 1992 I have seen or learned of a number of coins that earlier had eluded my notice. In the present edition, in which I have tried to summarise our actual knowledge of the coinage of the Sikhs, I have eliminated a fair number of factual errors, added new chapters to the catalogue and new information to most chapters and I have updated the bibliography. The appearance of hitherto unknown coins from yet unidentified mints necessitated the insertion of new chapters in the catalogue and the assign-

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1. *The Punjab State Archives* at Patiala store the *Khalsa Darbar Records*, the largest surviving block of Sikh administrative documents. The c. 100,000 files written in Persian cover the administration of the Sikh State during the period from 1811 to 1849 AD. Sita Ram Kohli catalogued the documents in the years 1915-1919; his catalogue was published by the Government of the Punjab in 1919 (Vol. I: Files of the Army Department) and 1927 (Vol. II: Revenue, *Jagir* and *Toshakhana Daftars*). Up to now most of the *Khalsa Darbar Records* have not been seriously studied by historians.

2. My definition of the term: *Sikh coins* does on one hand not encompass the totality of the coins ever issued by some Sikh authority and on the other it includes copper coins that were definitely not issued by the Sikhs:

The catalogue does not list the coins issued by the Cis-Sutlej *Phulkian States* of *Patiala*, *Nabha*, *Jind* and *Kaithal* in the name of Ahmad Shah Abdali, coins I consider a part of the Durrani coinage.

The *Faridkot* gold and silver issues of 1941 appear in catalogues as pattern coins, but they are in reality medals issued by a prince who had no minting rights.

The copper coins of the *Kalsia State* are definitely late Mughal types, but as they had never before been correctly attributed, I included them in the first and have kept them in the second edition.

As they circulated together with genuine Sikh *paisas* and were probably thought to be Sikh coins by many or most users, I have included in the catalogue the various kinds of imitations of Sikh copper coins.

ing of new numbers to the coins of a few minor mints. In the aggregate the number of corrections and additions is so important that the catalogue of the first edition of *The Coins of the Sikhs* must be considered obsolete.

As far as I deemed it pertinent to my subject I made for this edition use of the literature published since 1993. The bibliography contains a number of new papers and articles, but almost the only one of more than superficial importance are Mrs Jyoti reports on her research concerning the Sikh mint towns.

In a review of the first edition of this book G. Hennequin wrote: "*Les legends sont ensutie reproducties, avec une part variable de reconstitution, d'abord dans l'écriture originale, puis dans une translittération latine le plus soluvent assez approximative,*"<sup>3</sup> Gilles Hennequin's criticism concerning my transliterations is of course correct, but as I have found that all too often only professional linguists and orientalists are able to really understand the scientific phonetical notations and as my book is meant for a wider public, I have not changed my mainly traditional transliterations.

In the text the names of persons, whose short biographies can be found in appendix 7, are marked with an asterisk\*.

I should be very glad if this book were not only consulted by numismatists—scholars, collectors and dealers—but also by historians writing about the Sikhs. Where the Sikh coinage is concerned most Sikh and non-Sikh historians tend to follow to this day the wretched Indian tradition of uncritically copying from some predecessor, who had already acted in the same way, and of disdaining the study of the actual coins or of serious numismatic works. The level of scholarship of the numismatic sections of old and new historical works about the Sikhs is therefore often shockingly low.

I wish to thank once again the main contributors to the first edition: edition: Mrs. Norma J. Puddester, Saran Singh, Bob Senior, the staff of the IIRNS at Anjaneri and the ever helpful late Ken Wiggins.

Some of the new material of this edition I have found in the bazars of India and Pakistan, but much more I owe to friends. I am grateful to all those who let me have their opinion of the first edition, who told me about unlisted coins and tokens or who just provided me with useful information and advice. Special thanks go to Gurprit Singh Gujral, from whom I learned of some rarities, and to Dr. Becker, who in a rather short time managed to build an extremely interesting collection of Sikh coins and who, unlike quite a few other collectors, is always ready to let others profit by his extensive knowledge and to generously share information about his latest discoveries. Surinder Singh I thank for letting me have his collected articles and papers and his—as far as I know—still unpublished thesis submitted to the *Rabindra Bharti University* in Calcutta for a Ph.D. degree.

Last but not least my thanks go—as before—to Rosemarie Grieco for her patience.

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3 Gilles HENNEQUIN: "HANS HERRLI: *The Coins of the Sikhs*" in: *Bulletin critique des Annales islamologiques*, 1996/12, Le Caire 1996.

# A Sketch of the History of the Sikhs

## The 10 Gurus

The Sikhs, a community of dissenters from Brahmanical Hinduism, originated in the Punjab, the region where the majority of them still live and where *Guru Nanak*, the founder of their religion, was born in 1469 AD at the house of his *nana*, his maternal grandfather, at Talwandi.

We do not have an authentic biography of Nanak but the available sources show clearly that in the eyes of his contemporaries he was just one in a long line of reformers of orthodox Hinduism and not the founder of a new religion. The teaching of Nanak was strongly influenced by the creeds of the Hindus and Muslims; his own faith was strictly monotheistic and he taught his followers the worthlessness of ostentatious prayers, of penances and pilgrimages. In his views on Indian society he followed Ramanand, a religious reformer of the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, who had already abolished caste among his disciples. The social ideas of the founder of the Sikh religion are summarised in the *Adi Granth*: "*Castes and names are foolishness. All men are equal and they have only one supreme master: God.*"

Nanak, who feared that his reform movement might become a religious sect, excluded his own sons from its leadership; before his death in 1539 he designated Lehna -- he later took the name *Angad* -- as his successor in the Guruship.

Guru Angad promoted physical exercises among his followers and collected the teachings of Guru Nanak. To him we owe the inception of the *Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. Angad, who died in 1552, again excluded his own sons from the guruship and made *Amar Das*, a disciple of seventy-three years, his successor. This Guru compiled an anthology of writings by Nanak, Angad and some Hindu saints, established a general assembly on the first day of the month of *Baisakh* and the *Langar* -- the public kitchen -- as permanent institutions of the Sikh community, condemned *Sati*, the burning of widows, and stressed Nanak's attitude to caste by making all Sikhs eat together.

Amar Das, died in 1574 and was followed by his son-in-law Jeth who took the name *Ram Das*. In 1577 the fourth Guru founded a settlement and had a tank dug on land he had been granted by Akbar when he was Angad's representative at the Mughal court. The new town and residence of Ram Das, which was called *Guru-ka-chak* or *Ramdaspur*, soon developed into a regional commercial centre.

*Arjun Dev*, the third son of Guru Ram Das, succeeded his father in 1581. Guru Arjun introduced a systematic tax, enlarged the *Granth Sahib* -- half of which is due to him -- and built the *Harimandir* at Ramdaspur which now became known under the name of its tank: *Amritsar*. About 18 kilometers south of Amritsar, at Taran Taran, he had a further tank dug which soon developed into another pilgrimage center. During Khusru's unsuccessful rebellion against his father Jahangir Arjun sided with the insurgent prince and was consequently heavily fined by the exasperated Mughal emperor. As the Guru denied the charge of treason brought against him and refused to pay his fine he was arrested and imprisoned at Lahore. There he disappeared on 30 May 1606 in the river Ravi in which he had been allowed to take a bath.

Under Arjun's son and successor *Har Gobind* the Sikhs became a militant sect. The young Guru, who wore two swords as symbols of his temporal and spiritual power and had a royal umbrella held over his head, acted more like a semi-independent prince than a religious leader. He built the Lohgarh fort and -- at Amritsar -- the *Akal Takht*. He encouraged his followers to eat meat in order to become strong and created a Sikh army. After a stay at the fort of Gwalior, a state prison where Shah Jahan had sent him for unknown reasons, Har Gobind engaged

in petty warfare in the Punjab and was able to claim several minor victories over local Mughal commanders.

The Guru died in 1644 at Kiratpur on the Sutlej and was succeeded by his grandson *Har Rai*, who became a supporter of the unfortunate prince Dara Shikoh. When Aurangzeb overcame his brother Dara Guru Har Rai had to surrender his eldest son Ram Rai to the victor but the Mughal emperor soon released his hostage.

After the death of the peaceable Har Rai in 1661 the partisans of his two sons disputed his succession so violently that the decision was finally referred to Aurangzeb. The emperor decided in favour of *Har Krishna*, Har Rai's second son, but before the infant Guru (born 1656) could leave Delhi he died of small-pox in 1664.

The guruship now reverted to *Tegh Bahadur*, Har Gobind's second son. As the new Guru's life was threatened by the adherents of the pretender Ram Rai, the elder son of Har Rai, he accompanied the Raja of Jaipur on a campaign to Assam. At Patna the Guru's wife gave birth to a son, the future Guru Gobind Singh. When Tegh Bahadur returned to the Punjab he was again pursued by his old rival Ram Rai and had to withdraw to the country south of the Sutlej. The Mughal administration, which feared the Guru's alleged aspirations to sovereign power, sent troops against him and took the rebel prisoner. At the end of the year 1675 Aurangzeb had Guru Tegh Bahadur put to death. During his imprisonment in Delhi he is said to have prophesied: "*I see a power rising in the west which will sweep the Mughal empire into dust*", a prophecy which could as well refer to Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali or the British.

Tegh Bahadur's son Gobind Rai -- he is better known under his later name *Gobind Singh* -- became the tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs. He aimed at the creation of a powerful theocratic state, a refuge for the Sikhs in the Punjab. With this end in view he built a string of forts protecting him against his northern neighbours, the Rajas of the Hill States, and in 1699 he organised his followers into the militant *Khalsa*. The unity of this military brotherhood was strengthened by the introduction of the title *Singh* [lion] which was to be borne by all male members of the community and the famous five *Ks* which a Sikh must always wear after his admission to the *Khalsa*: *kesh* [unshorn hair], *kacha* [short trousers, the dress of the contemporary Indian foot-soldier], a *kara* [an iron bangle worn on the right arm], a *kripan* [a scimitar] or a *khanda* [a straight double edged sword] and a *kangha* [the hair-comb with teeth on one side used by men and worn in the top knot]. Guru Gobind allowed his warriors the meat of animals killed at one stroke but he strictly forbade them alcohol, tobacco and narcotics as well as the cutting or shaving of the hair.<sup>1</sup> During much of his adult life Guru Gobind Singh waged war against the Mughal officials in the Punjab but his troops were dispersed, his two youngest sons were put to death by the faujdar of Sirhind and his two eldest sons fell defending the small fort of Chamkaur. After Aurangzeb's death in 1707 Guru Gobind supported Bahadur Shah who apparently gave him a military command in the Dekkan. There, at Nader on the banks of the river Godavari, Gobind Singh was stabbed to death by a Muslim in 1708. Various reasons for the murder of the Guru have been advanced but it appears that he fell prey to a private vendetta and not to a political assassination.

Gobind Singh knew that the succession to the guruship, a bone of contention which had led to murderous quarrels before, might one day imperil the very existence of the Sikh community and religion. To eliminate this recurring danger once and for all he had recourse to the drastic expedient of declaring the line of Gurus extinct with the words: "*He who wishes to behold the Guru, let him search the Granth of Nanak. The Guru will dwell with the Khalsa. Be firm and be faithful: wherever five Sikhs are gathered together there will I also be present.*"

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi word *kesh* means: *hair of the head* but the meaning of its Persian homonym, which is currently used in Hindustani, is: *faith, religion*. Cutting one's hair stands therefore symbolically for the abnegation of one's faith.



### MUHARAJA RUNJEET SINGH

from a portrait by Jewan Ram, a native artist of Delhi, who accompanied the Governor-General to the interview at Roopur in 1831.

(Lithograph by Lemer cier, Paris)

Jiwan Ram, who also worked for Begum Somru, was not an employee of the EIC, but an independent artist who accompanied Lord Wm Bentinck to his meeting with the Maharaja of the Punjab at Rupar. On 26 October 1831 Lord Bentinck sent him to Ranjit Singh "for making a faithful picture of the Maharaja". During a lull of the ensuing interview, Jiwan Ram, who had presented Ranjit Singh with some pictures of English ladies "took out a sheet of paper and drew an outline of the picture of the Maharaja".<sup>1</sup> Before dismissing the painter Ranjit Singh gave him Rs. 100. Early in 1838 Jiwan Ram worked at Meerut. In a letter of 13 February Emily Eden wrote about him: "There is a native here, Juan Kam, who draws beautifully sometimes, and sometimes utterly fails, but his picture of William is quite perfect. Nobody can suggest an alteration, and as a work of art it is a very pretty possession. It was so admired that Fanny got a sketch of G on cardboard, which is also an excellent likeness."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Umdat-ut-tawarik*

<sup>2</sup> Emily EDEN: *Up the Country*, Oxford University Press 1930, p. 94. *William* is Lord William Osborne, *Fanny* is Emily's sister, and *G* is their brother, the Viceroy Lord George Auckland.

## The Rise and Fall of the Sikh State

*Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains  
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt  
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt  
The sunshine for a while. and downward go,  
Like lawine loosened from the mountain's belt.*

Lord Byron  
*Childe Harold IV, 12*

The inscriptions of the Sikh rupees present Nanak and Guru Singh, the first and the last Guru, as a harmonious pair but Sikhism had in reality come a long way and changed enormously within two centuries. In the words of Cunningham: "*Nanak disengaged his little society of worshippers from Hindu idolatry and Muhammedan superstition, and placed them free on a broad basis of religious and moral purity; Amar Das preserved the infant community from declining into a sect of quietists or ascetics; Arjun gave his increasing followers a written rule of conduct and a civil organization; Har Gobind added the use of arms and a military system; and Gobind Singh bestowed upon them a distinct political existence, and inspired them with the desire of being socially free and nationally independent.*"<sup>2</sup>

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikh community produced a number of military bands of which the most important one was led by Lakshman Das, a *bairagi*<sup>3</sup> who had become a disciple of the last Guru and adopted the new name *Banda* [slave].

Banda Singh Bahadur, who managed to form an almost regular army, gained notable successes against the Mughals and was able to sack Shahabad, Mustafabad, Shadaura, Sirhind -- here the faujdar Wazir Khan, who was responsible for the death of Guru Gobind Singh's sons, was killed -- and Saharanpur in 1709/10. For some months Banda controlled much of the open country from the neighbourhood of Delhi to the river Ravi but he was unable to take Sultanpur and other Mughal strongholds. The Sikh army, which was as much motivated by the prospect of plunder and blind vengeance as by religious fervour and which, wherever it passed, left behind a trail of death and destruction, soon became as feared and hated as half a century later Holkar's Marathas or Amir Khan's Pindaris.<sup>4</sup> When a strong Mughal army finally advanced against him, Banda first retreated to Lohgarh (northeast of Ambala near Mukhlisipur) and after the fall of this fort to Gurdaspur near Kalanaur. The Sikhs were then able to profit from the political disturbances at the court of Delhi after the death of Shah 'Alam Bahadur and

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Sikhs*, p.80.

<sup>3</sup> An ascetic or recluse.

<sup>4</sup> Banda was neither a social reformer nor an adherent of Nanak's humanitarian and tolerant ideals but a religious fanatic seeing himself as the scourge of God. At the time of his imprisonment in Delhi he summed up his views in an interview with Itimad ad-daula Muhammad Amin Khan, Farrukhsiyar's *bakhshi*. When questioned: "*How is it that in a short span of life with a dreadful futurity you have been guilty of such cruelty and of such detestable actions to Hindus and Musulmans?*" he replied: "*In all religions and sects, whenever disobedience and rebellion among mortal men passes all bounds, the Great Avenger raises up a severe man like me for punishment of their sins and the due reward of their works. When He desires to give the tyrant the recompense of his works, He sends a strong man like you to prevail over him, and to give him his due reward in this world, as you can see.*" ("Muntakhabu-l lubab" in: ELLIOT & DOWSON VII, 459. Kafi Khan, the author of this historical work, was an eye-witness to the executions of the Sikhs in Delhi.)

Today Banda is commonly and rather uncritically glorified as one of the greatest Sikh heroes but during his lifetime his acceptance as the supreme Sikh leader was far from universal. The conservative faction of his coreligionists, the *Tat Khalsa*, even went so far as to keep him out of Amritsar.

to regain large parts of the Punjab but when Farrukhsiyar appointed the able general 'Abd as-Samad Khan Diler Jang governor of Lahore the tide turned again against them. The exhausted Sikhs had to surrender and the Mughals now took a terrible revenge. Thousands of Sikhs were killed in the Punjab, but many of their leaders were sent to Delhi where Banda and his infant son were executed on 19 June 1716.

After Banda's death his partisans and the *Tat Khalsa* fought for some years for the control of the *Harimandir*, a conflict which only came to an end when Mata Sundari, Guru Gobind Singh's widow, finally excommunicated the *Bandai* in 1721.

'Abd as-Saman Khan and his son and successor Zakariya Khan undertook several campaigns aimed at crushing the Sikhs who had now organised themselves into *jathas*, small bands of warriors. As in the long run military measures did not prove too successful against an enemy waging a guerilla war, Zakariya Khan finally attempted to reach an understanding with his adversaries by offering them a *jagir* with an annual revenue of 1'00'000 rupees and the rank of *Nawab* for their leader. In 1733 the title of Nawab was bestowed on *Kapur Singh* who made Amritsar his residence. The Nawab reorganised the Trans-Sutlej Sikhs in 1734 into eleven confederacies or *misls*, each led by its own chief or *Sardar*. Before retiring from active leadership Nawab Kapur Singh formed in 1748 the *Dal Khalsa*, a united army of the *misls* under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. In the eyes of the Sikhs -- who deemed it meritorious to carry away a brick from the cursed place where two of Guru Gobind Singh's sons were put to death -- the proudest success of this army was the conquest and destruction of Sirhind in 1763.

The Indian campaign of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1738/9 AD and Amad Shah Abdali's nine invasions of northern India between 1747 and 1769 led to numerous encounters between Afghan and Sikh troops and to the repeated occupation, destruction and desecration of Amritsar but these incursions also had the effect of ending all Mughal control in most of the Punjab. When the Afghan supremacy over this province began to dwindle too the power-vacuum was filled by the only remaining organised force, the Sikh *misls*. Soon adventurous Sikh leaders and their highly mobile bands extended their raids beyond the borders of the Punjab into Haryana, Rajasthan and across the Yamuna but sooner or later their advance was always checked by Rohillas, Sindhia's *Army of Hindustan* under its French commanders de Boigne and Perron and by the Irish adventurer George Thomas, the self styled *dictator of the Sikhs*, who for a short time was able to establish his own principality centred on Hansi and the fort of Georgegarh near Jhajjar.

The year 1799 marked a turning point in the history of the Sikhs. In this year Ranjit Singh -- a bare 19 years old and yet the *Sardar* of the Sukerchakia *misl* since 1792 -- obtained the grant of Lahore from Shah Zaman, the Durrani ruler of Afghanistan. The young *Sardar* ousted the three incapable chiefs who shared the governorship of the town and made it his residence and the political capital of an emerging Sikh empire.

On 12 April (the first day of the month of *Baisakh*) 1801 Ranjit Singh was proclaimed Maharaja of the Punjab. The Sikhs generally called him *Singh Sahib*, his government was known as the *Sarkar Khalsa* and his court as the *Durbar Khalsa*. Unlike most other Indian princes and dynasties Ranjit Singh and his successors refrained from perpetuating their names and titles on official coins or buildings.

In the course of time the Sikh community had evolved into a loose feudal confederacy which had never developed an efficient civil service and legal administration or a consistent economic policy, a state of affairs that did change under the autocratic rule of Ranjit Singh, but not as much as his panegyrists would have us believe. In his state the *Lion of the Punjab* was not only the ultimate source of power and wealth, but of all the important and all too often not so important decisions. He therefore inevitably became the centre of endless intrigues of his fa-

avourites and courtiers. This form of government, where everything depended on the person of the ruler, worked fairly well as long as the wily Ranjit Singh was able to rule vigorously, but when his health began to fail it decayed rapidly and – as many observers clearly saw long before the Maharaja's death – it was bound to lead to chaos and a catastrophe under his weak and incapable successors.

It was Ranjit Singh's great ambition to weld the whole of the Punjab into a united Sikh Empire but the perpetual conquest of new territories soon also became an economic and political necessity. Like many a conqueror before him Ranjit Singh found out early that looting his neighbours represented the easiest and fastest way of replenishing the empty coffers of his treasury. For this policy he required a large and expensive army which, when it ran out of ready possibilities for new conquests, gravely endangered the political stability of the state.<sup>5</sup> After Ranjit Singh's death the oversized army -- now no longer held in check by a strong government -- reverted to earlier conceptions of a preponderant *Dal Khalsa* organised according to highly democratic principles and became one of the main reasons for the anarchy leading to the final downfall of the Sikh State.

Ranjit Singh was able to enlarge his domains by occupying Amritsar in 1805, Multan in 1818, Kashmir in 1819, the Derajat in 1819/21 and Peshawar, until then an Afghan town, in 1834 AD, but his supremacy over the Cis-Sutlej states of the *Phulkian* Sikhs was successfully contested by another rising power, the British, who by reducing the Marathas to political insignificance had reached the paramount position in the disintegrating Mughal Empire. The question of the hegemony over north-west India was settled by a treaty concluded between the British Government and the Raja of Lahore at Amritsar on 25 April 1809. In this document Ranjit Singh, a realist and quite free of illusions where the military superiority of the European troops and British-Indian *sepoys* was concerned, had to yield to the British and to accept the Sutlej as the western limit of his sphere of influence in the Punjab. In 1836 another of the Maharaja's political moves was checked by his powerful eastern neighbours when they prevented his planned conquest and annexation of Sind. Although he was far from enthusiastic about Lord Auckland's policy of substituting Shah Shuja for Dost Muhammad on the throne in Kabul, Ranjit Singh in 1839 loyally supported the British in their illfated advance into Afghanistan.

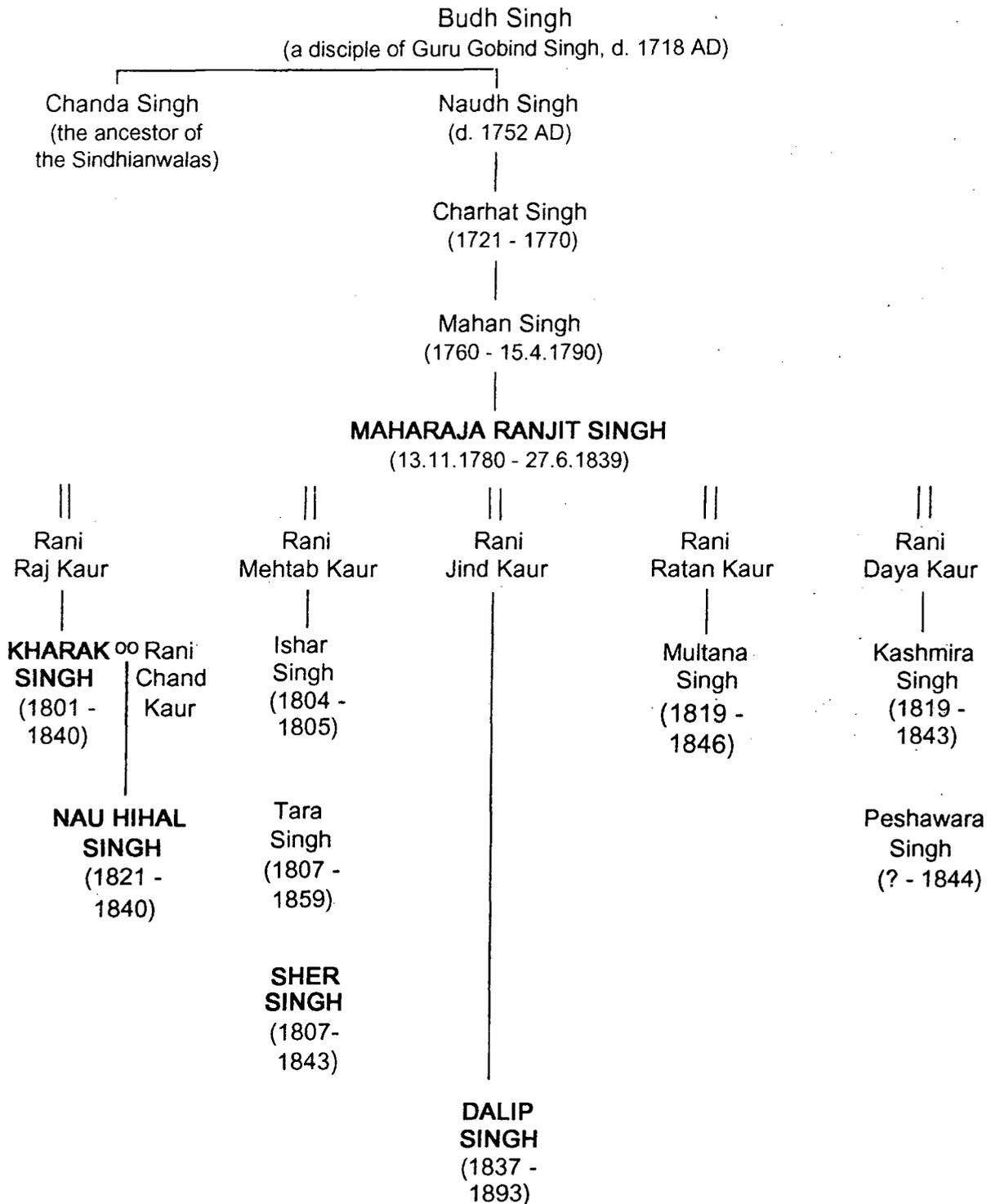
Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on 27 June 1839; under his weak successors his empire soon plunged into a murderous anarchy. On 11 December 1845 the Sikh army, over which the government at Lahore had lost all effective control, crossed the Sutlej and started the 1<sup>st</sup> Sikh War which -- after the bloody battles of Mudkee, Ferozeshah, Aliwal and Sabraon -- was to end with the victory of the British. As the Sikh Regency Council -- now closely supervised by a British Resident at Lahore and its staff in the provinces -- was unable to pay the war indemnity, Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh, Ranjit Singh's semi-independent Dogra governor of Jammu.

In 1848 a rebellion of troops of Diwan Mulraj, the governor of Multan, led to the murder of two British officials and the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sikh War which ended with the final defeat of the Sikh army at Gujrat on 21 February 1849. The abdication of the infant Maharaja Dalip Singh and the annexation of the Punjab by the British on 29 March 1849 marked the end of Ranjit Singh's dream of a Punjab united under a Sikh ruler.

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<sup>5</sup> Ranjit Singh's army included not only Sikhs but also a high percentage of Punjabi Muslims and units of Gurkha mercenaries. His famous *French Legion* -- it fought under the French *Tricolore* with an effigy of Guru Gobind Singh in its centre and was given all its commands in French -- and other regular regiments were drilled and led by former Napoleonic as well as other European, American and Eurasian officers. Most of them left the Sikh service after the death of Ranjit Singh; it seems that a single European officer, Don Domingo Hurbon d'Alcantara, a Spanish Carlist and artillery specialist, fought on the side of the Sikhs against the English.

## Genealogical table of the family of Ranjit Singh



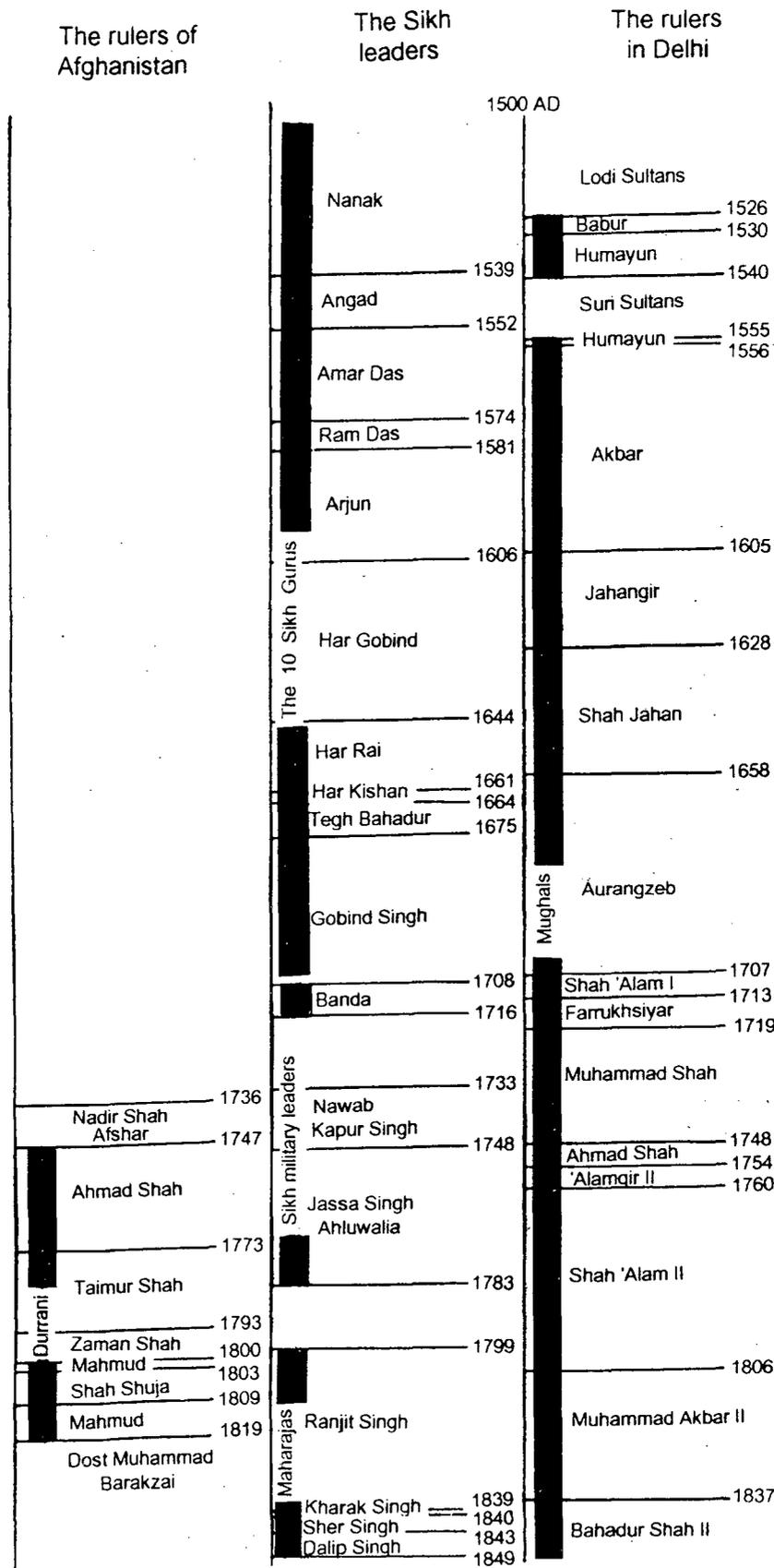
## The Maharajas of the Panjab

Ranjit Singh Sukerchukia (* 1780)	1801 - 27.6.1839 AD
Kharak Singh	27.6.1839 - 5.11.1840
Nau Nihal Singh	5.11.1840
<i>Mai Chand Kaur (widow of Kharak Singh), factual regent</i>	Nov. 1840 - 18.1.1841
Sher Singh	18.1.1841 - 15.9.1843
Dalip Singh (* 4.9.1838)	20.9.1843 - 29.3.1849

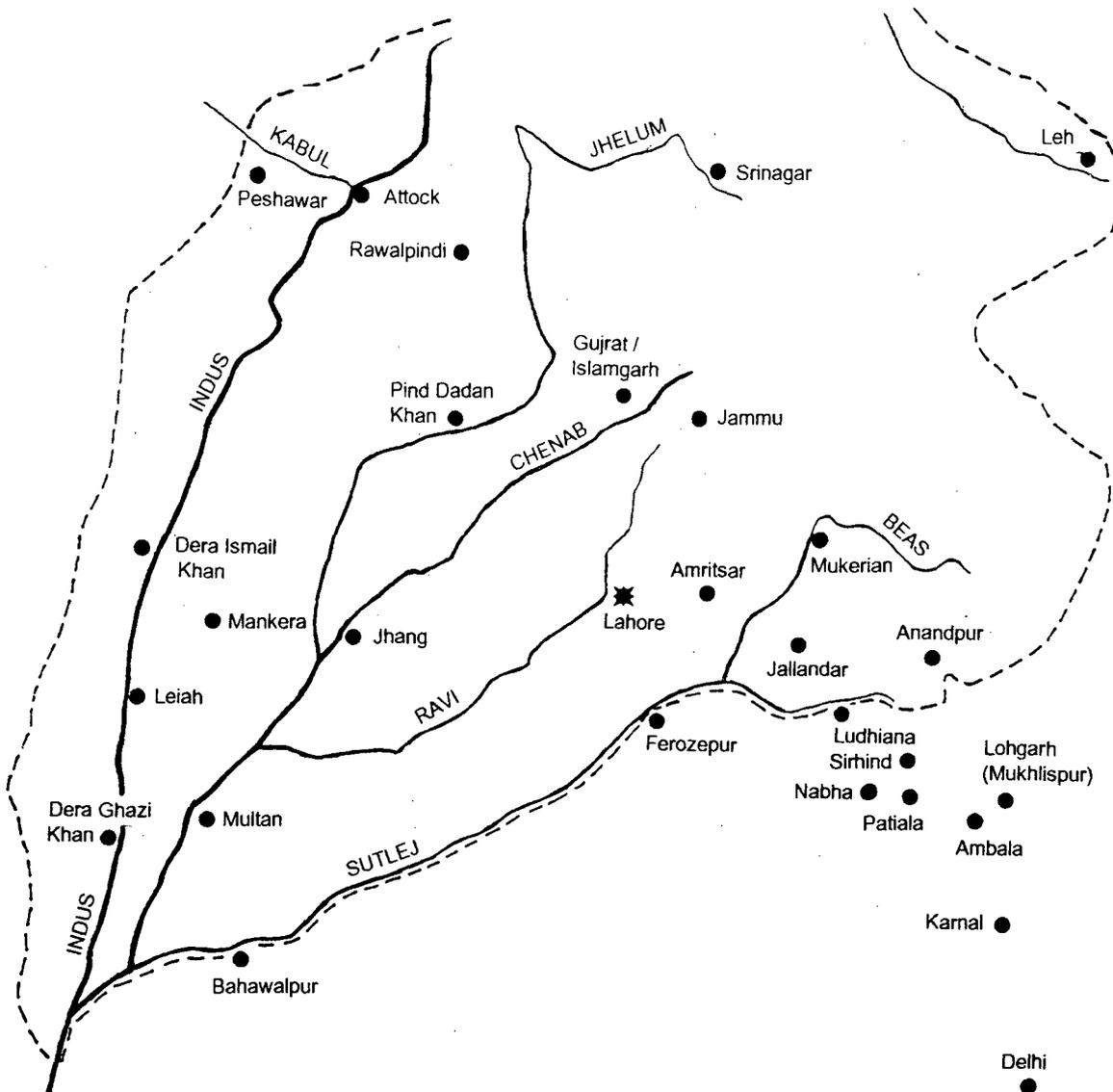
### *Wazirs acting as regents for Dalip Singh:*

<i>Hira Singh</i>	Sept. 1843 - 21.12.1844
<i>Jawahir Singh</i>	14.5.1845 - 21.9.1845
<i>Raja Lal Singh Muraria</i>	Nov. 1845 - 16.12.1846
<i>Regency Council under the supervision of the British Resident at Lahore</i>	16.12.1846 - 29.3.1849

# Chronology of the Sikh leaders and the rulers in Delhi and in Afghanistan



## The Sikh State of Ranjit Singh in 1838 AD



When his power was at its zenith Ranjit Singh directly ruled a country with an approximate surface of 260'124 km<sup>2</sup> or 100'436 square miles.

The following population tables are mainly based on: Carmichael SMYTH: *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* (Calcutta 1847, Appendix):

### Provinces (*Subas*):

Lahore	1'900'000
Multan	750'000
Peshawar	550'000
Derajat	600'000
Jammu and Hill States	1'100'000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5'350'000</b>

### Towns:

Lahore	73'000
Amritsar	60'000
Peshawar	55'000
Multan	45'000
Wazirabad	40'000
Jammu	10'000
Dera Ismail Khan	8'000
Pind Dadan Khan	6'000

## The Sikh Misl

The *Sarbat Khalsa* tried several times to organise the numerous *jathas* – independently acting bands of Sikhs – into larger and more effective units able to successfully withstand the assaults of the Mughal and Afghan armies. The final division of the *Dal Khalsa* into eleven or twelve *misl*s<sup>1</sup>, an organisation that was to last until Ranjit Singh's ascent to preeminence, is said to have been formally decided during the *Baisakhi* meeting of 1748 AD, but many of the groups had already existed before.

Each *misl* was basically a confederacy of Sikh horsemen led by a *Sardar*, called the *Mi-saldar*, and belonging either to the *Budha Dal* (the old army) or the *Taruna Dal* (the young army), but the different *misl*s were far from uniformly organised; some resembled large family clans whereas others – e.g. the *Shahids* or the *Nishanwalis* – were closer to brotherhoods or religious orders.

The size and relative importance of the *misl*s varied considerably during their fairly short history. The following list gives their strength in 1746:<sup>2</sup>

### *Majha-* or Trans-Sutlej Sikhs:<sup>3</sup>

<i>Budha Dal:</i>	<i>Ahluwalia</i>	3'000	horsemen
	<i>Dallewalia</i>	7'500	"
	<i>Faizullapuria</i> or <i>Singhpuria</i>	2'500	"
	<i>Karorasinghia</i> or <i>Punjgarhia</i>	12'000	"
	<i>Nishanwalia</i>	12'000	"
	<i>Shahids</i> and <i>Nihangs</i>	2'000	"
<i>Taruna Dal:</i>	<i>Bhangi</i>	10'000	"
	<i>Khanaya</i>	8'000	"
	<i>Nakkai</i>	2'000	"
	<i>Ramgarhia</i>	3'000	"
	<i>Sukarchakia</i>	2'500	"

### *Malwa-* or Cis-Sutlej Sikhs:

<i>Phulkia</i> <sup>4</sup>	5'000	"
	69'500	horsemen

<sup>1</sup> The word *misl* seems to have been derived from an Arabic word meaning: *equal*.

<sup>2</sup> The list is based on data given by H.T. PRINSEP. His total is not very different from other informed estimates of the military strength of the united Sikh forces during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. BROWNE estimated it at 73'000 horsemen and 25'000 foot-soldiers, George THOMAS at 60'000 horse and 5'000 foot.

<sup>3</sup> *Majha* literally means: the middle country and usually the districts of Amritsar and Lahore.

<sup>4</sup> The *Phulkian Sikhs* were not a part of the *Dal Khalsa* and did not form a *misl* in the strict sense of the word.

Most of the *misl*s did not hold a clearly defined territory but their members tended to concentrate in certain areas of the Punjab:

***Bhangi:***

The *misl* held much of the western Punjab between Multan and the Hill States with the important towns of Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat and Sialkot.

***Sukarchakia:***

South of the *Bhangis* between the rivers Chenab and Ravi with the towns of Gujranwala and Wazirabad.

***Nakkai:***

The Nakkai controlled territories along the river Ravi, between Multan and Kasur, with the small towns of Sharqpur, Chuniau, Gugera, Dipalpur, Satgarha and Kot Kamalia.

***Khanaya:***

Between Amritsar and the hills with Taragarh, Mirthal, Fathepur and a small territory near Mukerian with Sohian and Hajipur.

***Dallewalia:***

Areas on the right bank of the upper Sutlej.

***Ahluwalia:***

On the left bank of the Sutlej.

***Ramgarhia:***

Towards the hills between the *Ahluwalia* and *Dallewalia*.

***Karorasinghia:***

The Karorasinghia had a number of small territories east of the Sutlej and an area around Chhachhrauli which later became the *Kalsia State*.

***Faizullapuria:***

Along the right bank of the Beas and on both sides of the Sutlej with the towns of Ludhiana, Jallandar, Nurpur and the northwestern part of Ambala.

***Nishanwalia:***

Shahabad, Amlo and most of Ambala.

The *Shahids* and *Nishangs* shared parts of the plains south of the Sutlej, between Ferozepur and Karnal -- conquered by the Sikhs after the fall of Sirhind -- with the *Bhangis*, *Ahluwalias*, *Dallewalias*, *Ramgarhias* and *Karosinghias*.

***Phulkia:***

The *Phulkia* owned much of the land between Sirhind and Delhi with the Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal.

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the most powerful *misl*s were at first the *Ahluwalia*, the *Ramgarhia* and the *Faizullapuria*; later the *Bhangis* became predominant among the *Majha*-Sikhs. All the *misl*s -- with the exception of the British-protected *Phulkia* -- finally fell before Ranjit Singh, the *Sardar* of the *Sukerchakia*.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the *misl*s had long lost their political and military functions, some of their names became the names of a kind of Sikh castes. The *Ramgarhias* -- their foun-

der had been a carpenter, became the Sikh carpenter caste, whereas the Sikh *kulals*, the potters, called themselves *Ahluwalias*.

Between VS 1841 and c. 1850 some *misl*s coined rupees in Amritsar, but it has not yet been possible to match the coins and the *misl*s involved in this undertaking. Although -- with one exception -- Sikh coins do neither mention the name of a person other than Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh nor a *misl* in their inscriptions, some series can for historical reasons be assigned to a specific *misl*:

***Bhangi:***

Lahore: rupees struck from VS 1822 to 1855  
 Multan: " " " VS 1829 to 1836

***Karorasinghia:***

Chhachhrauli: copper *fulus* in the name of Shah 'Alam II struck c. AH 1214 - 1218 by Sardar Jodh Singh Kalsia. (There are said to be rupees of the Kalsia State too but I have never seen one.)

***Ahluwalia:***

In VS 1862 Sardar Fateh Singh struck -- probably at Lahore -- rupees bearing the inscription: *Sarkar Ahluwalian*. These coins, the only ones explicitly mentioning a *misl*, were a consequence of the political and personal rivalry between Fateh Singh, the Sardar of the *Ahluwalia*, and the more successful Ranjit Singh, the leader of the *Sukerchakia misl*.

***Phulkia:***

Patiala, Nabha, mohurs, fractional mohurs and rupees in the name of Ahmad Shah  
 Jind and Kaithal: Durrani.  
 Patiala  
 and Nabha: mohurs and rupees bearing the Gobindshahi couplet.

Pre-Ranjit Singh rupees of Amritsar bear two mint names (*Amritsar* or *Anandghar*) and varying marks. We do not yet know enough about these coins; it is possible that they were struck at different mints located at Amritsar or -- a more probable conjecture -- that the Amritsar mint produced rupees with different marks for different sardars. As all the types of Amritsar are very similar and as hoards are almost invariably made up of coins of several subtypes they cannot have been struck for the exclusive use in the territories of particular *misl*s.

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<sup>4</sup> The Rajas of Patiala, Jind and Nabha, the leaders of the Phulkian Sikhs (who did not take part in the *Sarbat Khalsa* and were not bound by its decisions) had obtained their minting rights as vassals of Ahmad Shah. As I consider their coins in the name of the Afghan ruler a part of the Durrani coinage they are not discussed in detail in this book.

## The Gurumukhi Script

*Gurumukhi* or *Gurmukhi* -- a word meaning: *from the mouth of the Guru* -- is the name of the script in which the holy books of the Sikhs are written. It is related to the Sindhi (*Landa*), Multani and *Devanagari* scripts and practically identical with the mediaeval *Sharada* (or in Chamba: *Devashesha*) script used for transcribing the Punjabi language. Guru Angad, Nanak's successor, perfected the system of the vowel augmentations of the already existing script but he did not, as is often said, invent *Gurumukhi* to mark the holy character of the *Granth Sahib*.

Another descendant of the *Sharada* used in Kashmir is the modern *Takari*, *Tankri* or *Dogri* script of Jammu, a script which can be seen on a few coins of the Dogra Rajas of Jammu and Kashmir.

### Numerals:

The Sikhs used Gurumukhi, Devanagari and Persian numerals:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Gurumukhi	ੴ	੨	੩	੪	੫	੬	੭	੮	੯	੦
Nagari	१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९	०
Persian	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۶	۷	۸	۹	۰

## The Gurumukhi Script

Phonetic	Guru- mukhi	Deva- nagari	Phonetic	Guru- mukhi	Deva- nagari
a	ਅ	अ	tha	ਠ	ट
ā	ਆ	आ	da	ਡ	ड
i	ਇ	इ	dha	ਢ	ढ
ī	ਈ	ई	na	ਨ	ण
u	ਉ	उ	ta	ਤ	त
ū	ਊ	ऊ	tha	ਠ	ठ
e	ਏ	ए	da	ਡ	ड
ai	ਐ	ऐ	dha	ਢ	ढ
o	ਓ	ओ	na	ਨ	ण
au	ਔ	औ	pa	ਪ	प
ka	ਕ	क	pha	ਫ	फ
kha	ਖ	ख	ba	ਬ	ब
ga	ਗ	ग	bha	ਭ	भ
gha	ਘ	घ	ma	ਮ	म
ña	ਙ	ङ	ya	ਯ	य
cha	ਚ	च	ra	ਰ	र
chha	ਛ	छ	la	ਲ	ल
ja	ਜ	ज	va	ਵ	व
jha	ਝ	झ	ra	ੜ	—
ña	ਞ	ञ	sa	ਸ	स
ta	ਟ	ट	ha	ਹ	ह

Vowel augmentations of the Gurumukhi script:

ka	ਕਾ	ki	ਕਿ	kī	ਕੀ	ku	ਕੁ	kū	ਕੂ
ke	ਕੇ	kai	ਕੈ	ko	ਕੌ	kau	ਕੌ	kā	ਕਾਂ

Some special signs of the Gurumukhi script:

gya	ਗ੍ਯ	nha	ਨ੍ਹ	mha	ਮ੍ਹ	rha	ਰ੍ਹ	lha	ਲ੍ਹ
sh	ਸ਼	z	ਜ਼	tr	ਤ੍ਰ	am	ਅੰ	gu	ਗੁ
ji	ਜੀ	sri	ਸ੍ਰੀ						

## Sikh Terms

### Akal

The word *akal* (literally: *timeless*) means: *eternal*. By the Sikhs *Akal* is used as one of the names of the Supreme Power, the Creator. Westerners frequently translate *Akal* as *God*, but the Sikh term stands for a rather more abstract idea than most Christian's notion of God.

### Akal Takht

*Takht* means: *throne* and the best translation of *Akal Takht* is: *Throne of God*. This is the name of a building which stands to the northwest of the tank of the Golden Temple at Amritsar -- the *Harimandir* or *Durbar Sahib* of the Sikhs -- and which was originally called *Akal Bunga*.<sup>1</sup> The first *Akal Takht* was built by Guru Hargobind in 1609, later destroyed by the soldiers of Ahmad Shah 'Abdali and rebuilt since 1775 by Ranjit Singh. In later times the *Akal Takht* served as the meeting place of the *Sarbat Khalsa* and of the Supreme Religious Council of the Sikhs. *Akal Takht* therefore came to be synonymous with *Khalsa* and the two expressions: *Zarb Khalsa mubarak bakht* and *Zarb bakht Akal Takht* found on Sikh coins have practically the same meaning. They both refer to the highest secular Sikh authority.

### Dal Khalsa

*Dal* is a Sanskrit word meaning: *army*; the *Dal Khalsa* was the army of the *Khalsa*, of the Sikh theocracy.

### Deg, Tegh and Fath

*Deg* is a *vessel for food, a kettle*. The word is used metaphorically as a symbol for the hospitality and the spirit of sacrifice and assistance to the helpless, oppressed and needy which the Guru asked of his followers and which found a practical expression in the *langars*, the free kitchens maintained by Sikh Sardars.

*Tegh* is a sword, the symbol of the secular power and *Fath* means: *victory*.

The two words *Deg, Tegh* summarise in the briefest possible form the essence of Sikhism, the force that enabled the Sikhs to overcome their powerful neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

### Guru

The title *Guru* (meaning: *a teacher or a spiritual guide*) was borne by the first ten leaders of the Sikh community. Guru Gobind Singh abolished Guruship and since his death the Guru of the Sikhs is the *Granth Sahib* or *Adi Granth*,<sup>3</sup> the Holy Book whose original is kept at the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

### Gurumatta

The word means: *advice of the Guru* and it is the name given to the resolutions of the *Sarbat Khalsa*, the diet or general assembly of the Sikhs.

<sup>1</sup> *Bungas* are residential quarters attached to a Sikh *Gurudwara*.

<sup>2</sup> As any set of symbols can be given different meanings, interpretations of *Deg, Teg, Fath* adapted to the actually predominant political ideas were often offered. My explanation is based on the interpretations found in works of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> *Granth* means book, *Adi Granth*: the first book. This name is used to distinguish the Holy Book from Guru Gobind Singh's: *Dasama Badshah ka Granth* (The book of the tenth emperor).

### Khalsa

The word *khalsa* is said to be either derived from *khalis* (pure or chosen) or from *khalas* (free).<sup>4</sup> *Khalsa* commonly designates the community of the Sikhs but the term also has a spiritual aspect explained in a quotation from the Holy Book of the Sikhs:

*"Consider the Khalsa as the Guru, as the very embodiment of the Guru;  
He who wishes to see the Guru will find him in the Khalsa. ...  
The Khalsa is everything, all the other divinities are as sand running through the  
fingers."*

(From the *Rehat Nama* of Guru Gobind Singh, written in 1695 AD)

### Sachcha Sahib

The literal translation of this expression is: the *true Lord* but it really means: the *spiritual Lord* and it most often refers to Guru Gobind Singh. He was also called *Sachcha badshah* (*true or spiritual Emperor*) to describe his spiritual leadership as opposed to his secular and military leadership of the *Khalsa*.

### Sarbat Khalsa

The Hindi word *sarb* means: *all, the whole* and *Sarbat Khalsa* is the name of the general assembly or diet of the *Khalsa*, the Sikh community. These assemblies took place twice a year -- in spring on the first day of the month of *Baisakh* and in autumn at *Dipamala* -- at Amritsar.

### Sikh

*Sikh* is derived from the Sanskrit word: *sishya* (disciple). It designates a follower of Guru Nanak and the 9 Gurus succeeding him.<sup>5</sup> In the past the Sikhs were often also known as *Nanak Shahis* and today they are colloquially called *Sardars* (Lords) in India.

### Singh

Guru Gobind Singh abolished caste among the Sikhs and ordered that every male member of the *Khalsa* should bear the title *Singh* (lion). This title -- it should not be confounded with a family name in the western sense -- is also borne by Rajputs, Jats and other Indian communities and does therefore not necessarily point to a Sikh.

Sikh ladies bear the title *Kaur* (princess).

### The two Worlds

In Sikh texts the expression: *the two Worlds* refers to the spiritual and the secular world. The concept of separate temporal and spiritual powers of the Guru, of *miri* and *piri* or of *raj* and *jog*, was first formulated by Guru Hargobind.

The expression: *Coin struck through the two Worlds by the grace of the true Lord* on the Nanakshahis may just represent a way of saying: *Coin struck in the name of the Guru* but its exact meaning is far from clear.

<sup>4</sup> J. MALCOLM: *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 91/92

<sup>5</sup> There were or still are dissident branches of the Sikhs which are generally known by other names. The *Khalasa* believe in Guru Nanak and the *Adi Granth* but do not conform to the institutions of Guru Gobind Singh. Another schismatic sect, the *Bandais* (followers of Banda Bahadur), also accepted the *Adi Granth* but rejected the works of Guru Gobind Singh.

## The Sikh coinage

With the exception of Amritsar, Pind Dadan Khan, Patiala and Nabha, places which only came into prominence under the Sikhs, and a few very ephemeral mints, all the identified Sikh mints had already worked under the Mughals and Afghans. As far as denominations or weight and purity standards are concerned, the Sikhs were content to continue the established Mughal and Durrani routines. Gold coins were struck in very small numbers and seemingly only used as *nazaranas*; the abundant *Nanakshahis* of Amritsar and an assortment of less important silver rupees represented the basis of the Sikh currency.

## The copper coinage

Although copper *Paisas* were the coins the average North Indian used most often and knew best, the extremely diverse copper coinage, which sprang into existence when the Mughal Empire disintegrated, has only been studied in parts and it is not yet fully understood.

In a few and rather exceptional cases the copper coins of north-Indian princely states of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were struck by government mints, but most rulers found it more expedient and profitable to lease the minting rights for copper to individual merchants or bankers, commercial companies or guilds of artisans. These contractors, who could only make a profit by changing the designs of their cheap products and by devaluating the earlier types frequently – often annually – supplied the market with the denominations and quantities of copper coins it was ready and able to absorb. Among the Sikh copper mints Kashmir is the most typical example of a mint farmed out to contractors who struck a multitude of *fulus* with ever-changing and short lived designs and legends.

In the heartland of the Sikh empire, at Amritsar and Lahore, Ranjit Singh and his successors seem to have exercised a much higher degree of control over the local copper coinage than in their outlying provinces. For Amritsar we know the theoretical weight standard of the *Paisa* (11 *mashas* = c. 11 g). A long series of Amritsar copper coins bearing Gurumukhi legends and the frozen year (VS) 1885 was probably struck for about 20 years. In the quite uniform *Paisas* of this group – their subtypes only differ in minor details and their secondary marks -- we may see an intended fiduciary coinage and the Lahore Durbar's answer to the increasing inroads made by the *Pice* of the EIC's Bengal Presidency in the Cis-Sutlej states.

## Rupees

### The coinage of the *Khalsa* confederacy

It is still not clear who issued the first and today extremely rare Sikh coins, the so-called *Khalsa* rupees (01.01.04 and 01.02.04), but the beginning of a Sikh coinage meant for general circulation dates from 1765 AD. In the month of April 1765 the Sikh *Sardars* assembled at the *Akal Takht* and led by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia founded the Sikh State by declaring their independence. They also decided to reconquer their lost territories and acquire new ones and to mint coins in the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh as a sign of their newly gained sovereignty. The first of these coins were rupees issued in VS 1822 (1765 AD) from Lahore, Amritsar followed in VS 1832 (1775 AD). Although the emerging Sikh state retained the weight and fineness standards of the Mughals in order to avoid interrupting international trade

and the ensuing revenue, in its coin inscriptions it completely broke with the established tradition. For the obverse of their rupees the Sikhs chose 2 legends – each with several minor varieties -- which were popularly known as the *Nanakshahi* and the *Gobindshahi* couplet. As both legends make it very clear that Guru Nana and Guru Gobind Singh are the true and supreme rulers of the Sikhs, the names and titles of secular chieftains, *Sardars*, *Misldars* or later of the Maharajas of the Punjab and their governors could never be mentioned on legitimate Sikh coins. (Only in Kashmir, which was far away from Lahore and always slightly special, several governors found a rather devious way to at least partially circumvent this rule.)

## The Misl coinage

As long as Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the most powerful and politically gifted among the Sikh leaders of his time, was alive, the *Sardars* acted more or less in unison, but after his death in 1783 (VS 1840), the different *Misldars* became practically independent.

Ganesh Das Badehra wrote in his *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (a history of the Punjab and especially the Sikh state of Ranjit Singh until 1849 AD) about the Sikh coinage of this time: „*This minting of the coins, however, was not confined to Lahore, for every Sardar established his own mint in the area under his control.*”

A survey of the coinage of Lahore (1822-1840), Amritsar 1832-1840) and Multan (1829-1836) shows that each of the 3 Sikh mints struck in any given year just one coin type and that at this time the individual *misls*, even if they controlled a mint, as the Bhangis did in Multan and Lahore, were definitely not allowed to strike their proper coin types. The situation changed with the death of Jassa Singh in VS 1840. In VS 1841 the rupee types began to proliferate. For the year VS 1841 we actually know 3 types bearing the mint name *Amritsar* (01.05.04, 01.18.04, 01.20.04), 4 types with the mint name *Anandghar* (02.01.04, 02.02.04, 02.04.04, 02.06.04) and 2 types from unidentified mints (30.01.04 and 30.02.04)

These rupee types – and we may not yet know all of them -- differ in their marks, dating systems and sometimes additional, unexplained words, but they all follow the already established basic pattern and silver standard of the *Khalsa* coinage and show the *JULUS AKAL TAKHT* formula on the reverse. Although we have not yet been able to assign any of the various marks and dating systems to definite *misls*, these rupees must represent the elusive *misl* coinage. As the large majority of the Punjabis of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century would probably have been unable to assign the different but clearly interrelated coin types to their issuers, it seems highly improbable that each rupee type was only current in the scattered territories of the issuing *misls*.

From a political point of view the period of the independent principalities of the *Misldars* and other powerful *Sardars* began to draw to a close when Ranjit Singh ousted the Bhangis from Lahore in 1799 AD (VS 1856) and took Amritsar in 1805 AD from Mai Sukhan, but it ended only with the occupation and annexation of the territories of the Nakkais in 1810, the Faizullapurias in 1811, the Kanaihyas in 1811/12 and the Ramgarhias in 1815.

Numismatically this period had already come to an end several years earlier. The coinage of the unidentified mints A and E seems to have been only ephemeral, the last known coins of the mint using the name *Anandghar* are dated VS 1849 and the Amritsar mint started to issue a single series of *Nanakshahis* in VS 1845. Only the *Gobindshahi* coinage of Amritsar, which was probably started in the context of the *misl* coinage, but may later have become a coinage for special (religious?) purposes went on until VS 1865.

We do not know why the *misl* coinage came to an end after about 10 years, but there probably were political and economic reasons. The influence and power of the Bhangis constantly increased in Amritsar and they may well have been able to suppress the coinage of their competitors for the control of the city. It is evident that none of the different *misl* rupees were produced in numbers large enough to gain a dominant position and the *sarafs* must have exacted a rather high *batta* when they changed them into more acceptable currencies. The *Misldars* – with the possible exception of the Bhangis – must soon have found out, that striking small quantities of coins, on which they could not even imprint their names, did neither bring them revenue nor prestige.

Although it is not entirely impossible that several independent mints in and near Amritsar were striking coins for different *misl*s, I think it highly improbable. The calligraphy and the design of most of the *misl* coins are so similar, that they were probably either struck at the same mint in Amritsar or in different workshops that normally depended for their dies and perhaps also their flans on a central establishment. With this kind of mint organisation the return to a uniform coinage would not have been much more than a simple administrative measure.

We still do not know with certainty what the *leaf mark* on the Sikh coins is meant to symbolise, but I think we know why it was put on the rupees of Amritsar and Lahore: the *leaf*, which is only indirectly related to Ranjit Singh, identified in both mints the rupees belonging to the reintroduced uniform *Khalsa* coinage!

## The coinage of Ranjit Singh and his successors

Although Ranjit Singh was an autocrat he strove to be seen to rule his empire as the lieutenant of the *Khalsa* and in the last instance of Guru Nanak. When Raja Dhian Singh remonstrated with him on his wearing a *dhoti* like a humble servant, the Maharaja answered with the question: „*In whose name are the coins struck?*“ Dhian Singh named Guru Nanak and Ranjit Singh explained that he, in whose name the coins were issued, was the true ruler and the Maharaja only the Guru's humble servant.<sup>1</sup> This story may well reflect Ranjit Singh's true attitude; he never put his name on a coin (and neither did his successors), but surviving pattern coins (08.12.04 & 08.13.04) seem to indicate that he once considered the introduction of anonymous pictorial rupees showing the ruler as a disciple of Guru Nanak.<sup>2</sup>

1 BHAGAT SINGH: *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his Times*, p. 173.

2 With the exception of the leaf mark introduced on the rupees of Lahore in VS 1856, the year in which he took the town, Ranjit Singh's rupees of his first mints – Lahore and Amritsar – continued the earlier *Khalsa* rupees in every other respect. Although this fact has always been known chroniclers and historians have time and again given incorrect descriptions of Ranjit Singh's coins and the erroneous impression that he created his own distinctive currency.

Some errors already originated with contemporaries of the Maharaja. The allegation that rupees bearing the Gobindshahi couplet were first struck at Lahore on 12 April 1801 AD, the day on which the place fell to Ranjit Singh, can be traced back to AMAR NATH (*Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.17) and it is still echoed in a recent and generally well researched book (BHAGAT SINGH: *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his Times*, 1990, pp. 409-411) stating that Ranjit Singh's coins struck at Lahore and Amritsar normally bore the Gobindshahi couplet. (The same author also declared: „*They [the copper coins of Ranjit Singh] bore dates, symbols and legends similar to those on the silver and gold coins of this period*“ (*op.cit.*, p. 410) or „*There was a rupee called Hari Singhee that passed current in Kashmir. On one side of this coin was written „Sri Akal Jiu“ and on the other „Hari Singh“.*“ (*op.cit.*, p. 410). In a slightly earlier but still fairly recent paper by MADANJIT KAUR („A Study of Sikh Numismatics with special Reference to the Coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh“, 1984, pp. 336-337) we find even more absurd statements. Dr. Madanjit Kaur, who is said to have worked extensively on the coins of Ranjit Singh and who among historians passes for an expert on this coinage, incorrectly asserted that Ranjit Singh's coins not only show a close association with religion, but also with famous local legends and that they show a pipal leaf and crossed swords. According to the same

At Amritsar Ranjit Singh continued the *Nanakshahi* type introduced in VS 1845, but from about VS 1858 on the uniform Amritsar *Nanakshahi* series splits into 3-4 parallel subseries differing in their marks. These subseries, which usually ran for a few years and then were replaced by new ones, went on until the closing of the Amritsar mint in VS 1906. As we do still not understand the very complex system of marks on the Amritsar rupees, we cannot yet explain the parallel subseries. We know of a resembling phenomenon in the Imperial Roman coinage, where the different marks identified different workshops within the mint, but we do not know if the large Amritsar mint was organised according to similar lines.

Its continuous expansion brought former Mughal and Afghan mints within the borders of Ranjit Singh's empire. Where such mints produced a long established local or trade coinage, they had to change their legends, but not their standards of weight and fineness. Kashmir, Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan therefore went on striking coins deviating from the Sikh standard rupee, the *Nanakshahi* of Amritsar.

All the regular Sikh rupees, which circulated in large areas of north-west India, bore inscriptions in Persian, then the *lingua franca* of educated people from Turkey to Bengal, but the copper coins followed the increasing trend to use local languages and scripts. Gurumukhi legends appeared not only in Amritsar, but even on *paisas* struck at provincial towns where the Sikhs were only a very small minority.

In the central parts of the Sikh domain the Nankshahi rupee was the predominant currency as well as an important weight unit:<sup>1</sup>

$$\begin{array}{l} 100 \text{ Nanakshahi rupees} = 1 \text{ seer} \\ 4'000 \quad " \quad " \quad = 40 \text{ seers} = 1 \text{ Lahori maund} \end{array}$$

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<sup>1</sup> In western India the rupee currently played the role of a weight unit. In Dera Ismail Khan 80 of the local Afghan rupees made up a *seer* and in Leiah, a town on the Indus and half-way between Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan, 84 *Mehrabi* rupees went into the local *seer*.

Alexander BURNES mentioned in his *Travels into Bokhara* the curious fact that Ranjit Singh used to drink wine according to weight. His normal ration was 8 paisas (c. 90 grs), but with his British visitor he drank the weight of 18 paisas (c. 200 grs).

## Metrology

The north Indian currency system of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century was trimetallic. The value relations between gold and silver and silver and copper coins varied constantly according to the relative market prices of the metals and the popularity of each coin type.

### Gold

Gold coins of the Sikhs are very rare and most of the surviving pieces are probably *nazaranas*.<sup>4</sup>

Of the regular gold coins struck by Sikh mints before the British annexed the Punjab only a handful of mohurs with weights varying from 9.5 to 12 grams and even fewer double mohurs have come down to us. Contemporary sources placed the value of Ranjit Singh's gold mohur at 14-16 *Nanakshahi* rupees<sup>5</sup> but owing to the fluctuating weights of the surviving gold coins and the changing market price of gold (expressed in silver) these statements are not too informative.

*Bugtis* or *Panchias*, gold coins worth 5 rupees, are said to have been popular for *nazaranas* and to have been worn as ornaments. Of the *Bugtis* allegedly struck at Amritsar or Lahore not a single piece seems to have found its way into a modern collection, but the Patiala gold coins that are generally catalogued as 1/3 and 2/3 *Mohurs* are their later successors and in reality 1 and 2 *Bugti* coins.

*Gold Rupees* minted by Diwan Mulraj in VS 1905 during the siege of Multan were emergency coins and not part of the regular Sikh coinage (# 11.09 + Appendix 2).

### Silver

The rupees of Lahore and Amritsar theoretically followed the standard of the *Shahjahanabad Rupee* of the Mughals. They were supposed to be of pure silver and to weigh 11 *mashas* and 2 *ratis*<sup>6</sup> but at Delhi they were only valued at 14½ *Annas*. Even in the Punjab, where the *sarafs* distinguished 3 groups of Amritsar rupees -- the *Purana* (struck VS 1841-1869), the *Chalan* (VS 1870-1879) and the *Chitta* (VS 1880-1905) -- the money changers discounted the Sikh rupees at various rates.<sup>7</sup>

The mints of Kashmir and Peshawar had their own rupee standards -- related to the standard of Kabul -- which are discussed in the appropriate sectors of the catalogue. Reliable data pertaining to the standards to which Sikh rupees were struck at Multan and some ephemeral mints do not seem to exist.

4 Ranjit Singh is said to have found in VS 1857 (1800 AD) a treasure buried by Mir Mannu (*subadar* of Lahore 1748-52) inside the fort of Lahore and to have spent it in payment of his army. According to SOHAN LAL SURI (*Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II,30) the treasure consisted of gold mohurs worth 20'000 rupees and according to KANAIHAYA LAL (*Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p.145) it even amounted to *lakhs* of rupees. (As in India *lakhs of rupees* often just means a lot of money the two statements are not necessarily incompatible.) We do not know what happened to the gold, but it does not seem to have left a trace in the coinage of Ranjit Singh.

5 E.g. Von Hügel: *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek*, II,235: 15 rupees; *ib.id.*, III,407: 16 rupees. E. THORNTON: *Gazetteer of the countries adjacent to India* ..., I,366: 15 rupees.

6 Diwan AMAR NATH: *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.17

7 Clipped or drilled coins were called *surakhi rupees*. The money-changers of Lahore accepted discolored or dirty *chitta rupees* only at the lower rate of the *chalans*, but after being thoroughly washed the depreciated rupees became *chittas* again. (*Foreign Department Consultations*, 26 December 1846, nr. 1058/59 and 7 April 1848, nr. 237).

The vast majority of the silver coins struck by Sikh mints were full rupees.<sup>8</sup> Fractional rupees were coined at Amritsar, Lahore and Multan and possibly occasionally also by other mints. They were – as in most Indian states – a late development and are today so rare that they can never have been an notable part of the regular Sikh currency.

### Copper

Indian copper coins often show the word: *fulus* as part of their legends. This Arabic word was frequently used in a generic sense and then simply meant: *a copper coin* but it was also a current name of the *Paisa*.

The weights of north-Indian copper coins of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century varied widely but the current copper denominations weighed approximately:<sup>9</sup>

1 Anna	=	$\frac{1}{16}$ Rupee	approx.	30	-	40 g
1 Taka	=	$\frac{1}{2}$ Anna	=	2 Paisas	=	$\frac{1}{32}$ "
				16	-	24 g
1 Paisa	=	$\frac{1}{4}$ Anna	=	$\frac{1}{64}$ "		8.5 - 12 g
$\frac{1}{2}$ Paisa			=	$\frac{1}{128}$ "		4.2 - 6 g

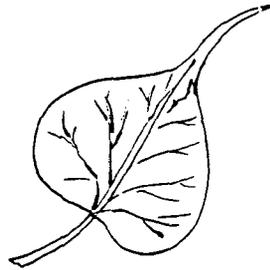
<sup>8</sup> Although the regular Sikh rupees were round, a few square pieces – *nazaranas* or mint follies? -- are also known.

<sup>9</sup> As a large number of differently rated rupees circulated in India and as the silver / copper price relation constantly fluctuated the names *Anna*, *Taka* or *Paisa* define a given coin's value only approximately.

## The Leaf Mark on Sikh Coins

If we know that the Sikhs put a special mark on their rupees to identify the uniform coinage replacing the *misl* coins – a mark that later also spread to copper coins – we still do not know why a *leaf* was the chosen mark.

C.J. Rodgers, who was intrigued by the almost universal occurrence of a leaf on the gold and silver coins of the Sikhs and their successors in Kashmir, the Dogra Rajas of Jammu, stated that he was unable to trace the origin and meaning of this mark. He also refrained from offering a botanical identification of the symbol but W.H. Valentine constantly referred to it as a "*Pipal leaf*", which he called, without giving a more detailed explanation, "*a favourite sign or mark of the Sikhs*".<sup>1</sup>



A leaf of the *Pipal* tree  
[*Ficus religiosa*]

Although other identifications were proffered<sup>2</sup> Valentine's opinion prevailed with most of the subsequent numismatic authors but it has recently been questioned by some numismatists and collectors of Sikh coins.<sup>3</sup> In one of his earlier publications Saran Singh saw in the mark a *kamal* or lotus leaf<sup>4</sup> whereas R.T. Somiya identifies it as the leaf of the *Ber* or *Beri* tree (*Zyzyphus jujuba*). For P.L. Gupta the mark represents a *kalangi*, a turban ornament, but he unfortunately does not inform us about the reasons for his rather farfetched statement.

The following selection of leaves occurring on rupees of Amritsar, the mint where the leaf mark originated, proves unambiguously that in most of the cases the Sikh die-cutters did not endeavour to show the leaf of a particular, botanically identifiable plant but to illustrate the general idea of a leaf:



If we cannot identify the leaf on Sikh coins we can still ask if any kind of tree or another plant is of such outstanding importance for the Sikhs that it could have induced them to place its leaf on their coins.

<sup>1</sup> C.J. RODGERS: "*On the Copper Coins of the Sikhs*", JASB, Vol. L, 86.

W.H. VALENTINE: *The Copper Coins of India*, II, 126.

<sup>2</sup> In the coin catalogue of the Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar Ram Chandra KAK called the leaf on a rupee of type 06.02.04 in 1923 a "*betel leaf*". (*Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar*, p. 152, coin # 1210.)

<sup>3</sup> E.g.: P.L. GUPTA (1994); R.T. SOMAIYA (1994); SARAN SINGH (1995).

<sup>4</sup> SARAN SINGH: *The Formation of Sikhism and the Coins of the Sikhs*, ..., p. 24. In a more recent paper (ONS 144) the same author no longer tried a botanical identification.



## The purchasing power of the Sikh coins

### Wages and salaries

The highest paid officials in Ranjit Singh's empire were the *nazims* (provincial governors). As their pay was less determined by their very similar duties than by personal sympathy and political considerations it varied greatly. Kirpa Ram, from 1827 to 1830 governor of Kashmir, received an annual *talib-i-izat* (pay for personal expenses) of 1 *Lakh* rupees.<sup>1</sup> When General Avitabile\* was appointed governor of Peshawar in 1837 he was paid Rs 41'000, but Sukh Dyal, Ranjit Singh's first (and not very efficient) *nazim* at Multan had to be contented with 36'000 rupees.

The foreign officers and specialists in the service of Ranjit Singh also drew very high salaries. The generals Allard\* and Ventura\* entered the Maharajas service in 1822 at an annual pay of Rs 30'000; the future generals Court and Avitabile\*, who probably were considered less qualified, were enlisted in 1827 at only Rs 19'992 per annum. Josiah Harlan\* was paid Rs 12'000, Dr. Honigberger\* Rs 10'800 and Lt.Col. Steinbach Rs 8'200.<sup>2</sup>

Soldiers were generally better paid than civil servants in comparable positions. The monthly salary of an Indian general ran to Rs 400-450, of a colonel to Rs 300-350, of a *subadar* (captain) to Rs 20-30, of a *naik* (corporal) to Rs 10-12 and of a private to Rs 7-12.

The salaries of the civil servants varied according to their seniority and responsibilities. A *kardar*<sup>3</sup> was paid from 30 to 150 rupees a month, the Chief Justice (*Adalat-i-Āla*) received a monthly salary of Rs 80 and a simple judge got Rs 45.

The wages of craftsmen and other workers depended on their specialities, their skills and the places where they worked: a skilled workman in the Lahore gun-foundry got 2 rupees a day and a labourer in the same factory 8 annas, but a mason was only paid 5 rupees, a cook 3 rupees 8 anna and a water carrier 3 rupees a month.<sup>4</sup>

A highly competent shawl weaver earned in Kashmir 1 rupee, an average weaver 8 annas and a beginner 2 annas a day. Whereas a gunsmith or a bow-and arrow maker would also earn 1 rupee, a tailor, a carpenter or a pen-case maker had to be satisfied with a daily wage of 4 annas.<sup>5</sup>

### Prices

According to Vigne\* the monthly expenses of a poor man in the Punjab were in the 1830s about 3 rupees and of a Kashmiri peasant not more than 2 *Hari Singhi* rupees.<sup>6</sup>

In Lahore and Amritsar 1 Nanakshahi rupee bought between 1830 and 1840 on an average:<sup>7</sup> 37.5 kg of wheat, 76.5 kg of barley, 7.7 kg of rice, 46 kg of gram, 18 kg of *gur* (unrefined cane sugar) or 3.7 kg of cotton. A sheep cost about Rs 2, a good cow Rs 40 - 50 and a she-buffalo c. Rs 100.

1 SITA RAM KOHLI: „Land Revenue Administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh“, p.88. 1 *Lakh* (100'000) of *Hari Singhi* rupees corresponded to about 69'000 Nanakshahis of Amritsar.

2 SITA RAM KOHLI: *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, pp. 348-353.

3 A *kardar* was a government officer in charge of the revenue and the administration of a *pargana* (an administrative unit normally consisting of 50-100 villages).

4 B.J. HASRAT: *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p. 395.

5 G.T. VIGNE\*: *A personal narrative ...*,II, p.121.

6 G.T. VIGNE\*: *A personal narrative ...*,II, p.120.

7 B.J. HASRAT: *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, p. 394.

## COIN INSCRIPTIONS

### The Gobindshahi couplet<sup>1</sup>

Of the Gobindshahi couplet, which originally was not composed to be used on coins, 5 varieties occur. They only differ in minor points which do not change the basic meaning of the distich.

Ia:

دیک تیخو فتح نصرت بیدرنگ  
یافت از نانک گورو گو بند سنگ

DĒG TĒGH Ō FATH NUSRAT BĒ-DIRANG  
YĀFT ĀZ NĀNAK GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH

Abundance, power and victory [and] assistance without delay  
are the gift of Nanak [and] Guru Gobind Singh<sup>2</sup>

Used on: Lahore 08.02.

Ib:

دیک تیخو فتح نصرت بیدرنگ  
یافت از نانک گورو گو بند سنگ

This is the same couplet as Ia but written in a slightly different way.

Used on:	Amritsar	01.18 - 01.23	Lahore	08.03
	"	01.30 - 01.32	"	08.12 - 08.13
	Anandghar	02.01 02.05	"	08.18
	Mint B	31.01	Multan	11.01
	Dera	05.01 - 05.02	Najibabad	17.01
	Derajat	07.04 - 07.09		

1 Surinder Singh has lead a relentless campaign against the word *Gobindshahi*, which according to him is not in accordance with the basic tenets of Sikhism. The words *Nanak* and *Guru Gobind* occur in all the major obverse legends of the Sikh rupees and we do not know why in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the bazars of the Punjab the *sharafs* and *shahukars* – who were mainly Hindus (*Khatri*s, *Kirars Aroras*, *Soods*) and Muslims (*Bohras*, *Pra-chas*, *Khojas*), with a highly privileged but unimportant minority of Sikh *Bedis* and *Sodhis* -- came to call the rupees bearing the two main variants of the Sikh obverse couplet *Nanakshahis* and *Gobindshahis*. It is evident that the 2 names were just technical terms distinguishing two well defined groups of Sikh rupees and mohurs and that they never had an ideological background. I therefore see no need to drop the well introduced name *Gobindshahi*.

2 This is a traditional translation of the inscription which appeared for the first time in 1710 AD on the seal of Banda Bahadur.

Ic:

دیگ و تیغ و فتح و نصرت بید رنگ  
یافت از نانک گورو گو بند سنگ

*DĒG Ō TĒGH Ō FATH Ō NUSRAT BĒ-DIRANG  
YĀFT ĀZ NĀNAK GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH*

Ic is the couplet Ia with و [and] added between *DEG* and *TEGH* as well as between *FATH* and *NUSRAT*:

Used on: Kashmir 06.01 - 06.51.

دیگ تیغ فتح نصرت بید رنگ  
یافت از نانک گورو گو بند سنگ

*DĒG TĒGH FATH NUSRAT BĒ-DIRANG  
YĀFT ĀZ NĀNAK GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH*

Id is the couplet Ia without و [and] between *TEGH*; *FATH*; *NUSRAT*:

Used on: Peshawar 13.01 - 13.03.

Ie:

دیغ تیغ و فتح نصرت بید رنگ  
یافت از نانک گورو گو بند سنگ

Ie is the same couplet as Ia, but *DĒG* is spelt differently.

Used on: Patiala 14.01 - 14.03  
Nabha 15.01 - 15.03

## The Nanakshahi couplet

The Nanakshahi couplet, originally inspired by a Durrani coin inscription, is known in 4 versions (II - V). The couplets III to V, which share the same first line, differ only in details. The minor alterations in these versions were probably only introduced to improve the poetical qualities of the couplet.

II:

سک زو بر سیم و زر فضل سچا صاحب است  
فتح گو بند سنگ شاهن تیغ نانک و هب است

*SIKKA ZAD BAR SĪM Ō ZAR FAZL SACHCHĀ SĀHIB ĀST*  
*FATH-I-GŌBIND SINGH-I-SHĀHAN TĒGH-I-NĀNAK WAHIB ĀST*

Coin struck insilver and gold by the grace of the true Lord.  
Of the victory of Gobind, Lion of Kings, Nanak's sword is the provider.

Used on:	Lahore	08.04 - 08.10	Mint C	10.01
	Mint D	09.01	Multan	11.03
				11.06 - 11.08

III:

سک زو بر هر دو عالم فضل سچا صاحب است  
فتح گو بند شاه شاهان تیغ نانک و هب است

*SIKKA ZAD BAR HAR DŌ 'ĀLAM FAZL SACHCHĀ SĀHIB ĀST*  
*FATH-I-GŌBIND SHĀH-I-SHĀHĀN TĒGH-I-NĀNAK WAHIB ĀST*

Coin struck through each of the two worlds by the grace of the true Lord.  
Of the victory of Gobind, King of Kings, Nanak's sword is the provider.

Used on:	Amritsar	01.01.
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IIIa:

سکہ زو بر ہر دو عالم فضل سچا صاحب است  
فتح گور گو بند سنگم شاہ شاہان تیغ نانک وہب است

*SIKKA ZAD BAR HAR DŌ 'ĀLAM FAZL SACHCHĀ SĀHIB ĀST*  
*FATH-I-GŪR GŌBIND SINGH SHĀH-I-SHĀHĀN TĒGH-I-NĀNAK WAHIB ĀST*

Coin struck through each of the two worlds by the grace of the true Lord.  
Of the victory of Gur Gobind Singh, King of Kings, Nanak's sword is the provider

Used on: Amritsar 01.02.

IV:

سکہ زو بر ہر دو عالم فضل سچا صاحب است  
فتح سعی گور گو بند سنگم شاہ نانک وہب است

*SIKKA ZAD BAR HAR DŌ 'ĀLAM FAZL SACHCHĀ SĀHIB ĀST*  
*FATH SAĪ GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH SHĀH NĀNAK WAHIB ĀST*

Coin struck through each of the two worlds by the grace of the true Lord.  
Of the victory gained by the effort of Guru Gobind Singh Shah Nanak is the provider.

Used on: Amritsar 01.03.

V:

سکہ زو بر ہر دو عالم فضل سچا صاحب است  
فتح تیغ گور گو بند سنگم شاہ نانک وہب است

*SIKKA ZAD BAR HAR DŌ 'ĀLAM FAZL SACHCHĀ SĀHIB ĀST*  
*FATH TĒGH-I-GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH SHĀH NĀNAK WAHIB ĀST*

Coin struck through each of the two worlds by the grace of the true Lord.  
Of the victory gained by the sword of Guru Gobind Singh Shah Nanak is the provider.

Used on:	Amritsar	01.04 - 01.15	Pind Dadan Khan	03.01 - 03.02
	Mint A	30.01	Mint E	10.01

Note: In the Urdu and Punjabi languages the words:

گورو      GURŪ  
 and  
 گور      GŪR

are used to describe a spiritual teacher. Both forms are correct and both occur on Sikh coins.

### Reverse inscriptions

The reverse inscriptions of the Sikh mohurs and rupees are much more varied than the obverse couplets. They are therefore explained in the catalogue at the places where they appear for the first time.

### Inscriptions on copper coins

The legends of the copper coins struck by mints in the Sikh territory vary enormously. In very few cases these coins bear one of the Sikh couplets, but they usually show short invocations of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh or the denomination of the coin, the mint name and a date.

Whereas all the main legends of the regular issues of Sikh mohurs and rupees are in Persian script, Sikh copper coins quite often bear inscriptions in Gurumukhi.

As the legends of the copper coins are extremely variable they are explained in connection with the coin on which they occur.

## Dates on Sikh Coins

In the course of time the Sikh mints have experimented with various dating systems but most of their coins bear only a year of

### The Vikrama Samvat Era

According to the Hindu astronomers this era began on 19 September 58 BC, according to other computations on 18 October 58 BC or on 23 February 57 BC and according to the Nepalese on 28 February 57 BC.

Years of the *Vikrama samvat* era [VS years] are today commonly converted in years of the Christian or universal era [AD years] by subtracting 57 years:

$$\text{VS year} - 57 = \text{AD year}$$

but it should be noted that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century 58 years were often subtracted, a procedure which explains some apparent chronological discrepancies in old texts.

The year of the *Vikrama* calendar, which is mainly used by Hindus and Sikhs in western and north-western India, is luni-solar; its New Year is defined by the spring equinox. The dates of the general assemblies of the Sikhs, which took place twice a year at Amritsar, were fixed by this calendar as the dates of the religious festivities of Sikhs and Hindus or of the great fairs of north-west India still are today. The spring *Sarbat Khalsa* always fell on the first day of the month of *Baisakh* [in April] and the fall assembly on *Dipamala (Diwali)*, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the dark half of the month of *Karttika* [in November].

Starting in VS 1885 at Amritsar and apparently in VS 1887 at Lahore the mohurs and rupees of these two mints bore a prominent frozen VS year (1884, 1885, 1888) on the reverse and the rather more inconspicuous year in which they were actually struck on the obverse. A theory, which is hardly worth a serious discussion, explains the frozen years by assuming that Ranjit Singh attempted to prolong his life by stopping time.

Another theory -- propounded by Goron / Wiggins<sup>1</sup> -- connects the frozen years with *batta*, an Indian tax on capital taking the form of an annual devaluation of the rupees.<sup>2</sup> States that had abolished *batta* sometimes put a frozen date on their coins in order to discourage the money-changers from continuing the now illegal but still highly lucrative practice. As Sikh rupees do not only bear a frozen year but also the year in which they were actually struck, it is difficult to see how such a dating system might fit into an effective strategy against *batta*.

I am of the opinion that the appearance of frozen years on the rupees of Lahore and Amritsar and the wellknown Gurumukhi copper series of the latter place was the consequence and outwardly visible mark of a reform of the currency or a reorganisation of the mint.

<sup>1</sup> In: *ONS Information Sheet* # 23, p.12.

<sup>2</sup> In a typical case tax collectors (in Rajasthan) would accept rupees of the current year at their full value, at 97.4% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and at 95.7% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and later years.

**Comparative Table of the *Vikrama samvat* and the Christian Era**

VS	AD	VS	AD	VS	AD
1765	1708	1813	1756	1861	1804
1766	1709	1814	1757	1862	1805
1767	1710	1815	1758	1863	1806
1768	1711	1816	1759	1864	1807
1769	1712	1817	1760	1865	1808
1770	1713	1818	1761	1866	1809
1771	1714	1819	1762	1867	1810
1772	1715	1820	1763	1868	1811
1773	1716	1821	1764	1869	1812
1774	1717	1822	1765	1870	1813
1775	1718	1823	1766	1871	1814
1776	1719	1824	1767	1872	1815
1777	1720	1825	1768	1873	1816
1778	1721	1826	1769	1874	1817
1779	1722	1827	1770	1875	1818
1780	1723	1828	1771	1876	1819
1781	1724	1829	1772	1877	1820
1782	1725	1830	1773	1878	1821
1783	1726	1831	1774	1879	1822
1784	1727	1832	1775	1880	1823
1785	1728	1833	1776	1881	1824
1786	1729	1834	1777	1882	1825
1787	1730	1835	1778	1883	1826
1788	1731	1836	1779	1884	1827
1789	1732	1837	1780	1885	1828
1790	1733	1838	1781	1886	1829
1791	1734	1839	1782	1887	1830
1792	1735	1840	1783	1888	1831
1793	1736	1841	1784	1889	1832
1794	1737	1842	1785	1890	1833
1795	1738	1843	1786	1891	1834
1796	1739	1844	1787	1892	1835
1797	1740	1845	1788	1893	1836
1798	1741	1846	1789	1894	1837
1799	1742	1847	1790	1895	1838
		1848	1791	1896	1839
1800	1743	1849	1792	1897	1840
1801	1744	1850	1793	1898	1841
1802	1745	1851	1794	1899	1842
1803	1746	1852	1795		
1804	1747	1853	1796	1900	1843
1805	1748	1854	1797	1901	1844
1806	1749	1855	1798	1902	1845
1807	1750	1856	1799	1903	1846
1808	1751			1904	1847
1809	1752	1857	1800	1905	1848
1810	1753	1858	1801	1906	1849
1811	1754	1859	1802		
1812	1755	1860	1803		

## The Hijri Era

Copper coins in the name of Mahmud Shah Durrani and dated according to the Muslim *Hijri* calendar were possibly struck by the Sikhs at Multan but among the genuine Sikh coins only a few Gobindshahis of Amritsar (# 01.20) and Anandghar (# 02.02) bear a *Hijri* year.

Table of the New Year days of the *Hijri* Era

AH	AD	AH	AD	AH	AD
1120	23.03.1708	1170	26.09.1756	1218	23.04.1803
1121	13.03.1709	1171	15.09.1757	1219	12.04.1804
1122	2.03.1710	1172	4.09.1758	1220	1.04.1805
1123	19.02.1711	1173	25.08.1759	1221	21.03.1806
1124	9.02.1712	1174	13.08.1760	1222	11.03.1807
1125	28.01.1713	1175	2.08.1761	1223	28.02.1808
1126	17.01.1714	1176	23.07.1762	1224	16.02.1809
1127	7.01.1715	1177	12.07.1763	1225	6.02.1810
1128	27.12.1715	1178	1.07.1764	1226	26.01.1811
1129	16.12.1716	1179	20.06.1765	1227	16.01.1812
1130	5.12.1717	1180	9.06.1766	1228	4.01.1813
1131	24.11.1718	1181	30.05.1767	1229	24.12.1813
1132	14.11.1719	1182	18.05.1768	1230	14.12.1814
1133	2.11.1720	1183	7.05.1769	1231	3.12.1815
1134	22.10.1721	1184	27.04.1770	1232	21.11.1816
1135	12.10.1722	1185	16.04.1771	1233	11.11.1817
1136	1.10.1723	1186	4.04.1772	1234	31.10.1818
1137	20.09.1724	1187	25.03.1773	1235	20.10.1819
1138	9.09.1725	1188	14.03.1774	1236	9.10.1820
1139	29.08.1726	1189	4.03.1775	1237	28.09.1821
1140	19.08.1727	1190	21.02.1776	1238	18.09.1822
1141	7.08.1728	1191	9.02.1777	1239	7.09.1823
1142	27.07.1729	1192	30.01.1778	1240	26.08.1824
1143	17.07.1730	1193	19.01.1779	1241	16.08.1825
1144	6.07.1731	1194	8.01.1780	1242	5.08.1826
1145	24.06.1732	1195	28.12.1780	1243	25.07.1827
1146	14.06.1733	1196	17.12.1781	1244	14.07.1828
1147	3.06.1734	1197	7.12.1782	1245	3.07.1829
1148	24.05.1735	1198	26.11.1783	1246	22.06.1830
1149	12.05.1736	1199	14.11.1784	1247	12.06.1831
1150	1.05.1737			1248	31.05.1832
1151	21.04.1738	1200	4.11.1785	1249	21.05.1833
1152	10.04.1739	1201	24.10.1786	1250	10.05.1834
1153	29.03.1740	1202	13.10.1787	1251	29.04.1835
1154	19.03.1741	1203	2.10.1788	1252	18.04.1836
1155	8.03.1742	1204	21.09.1789	1253	7.04.1837
1156	25.02.1743	1205	10.09.1790	1254	27.03.1838
1157	15.02.1744	1206	31.08.1791	1255	17.03.1839
1158	3.02.1745	1207	19.08.1792	1256	5.03.1840
1159	24.01.1746	1208	9.08.1793	1257	23.02.1841
1160	13.01.1747	1209	29.07.1794	1258	12.02.1842
1161	2.01.1748	1210	18.07.1795	1259	1.02.1843
1162	22.12.1748	1211	7.07.1796	1260	22.01.1844
1163	11.12.1749	1212	26.06.1797	1261	10.01.1845
1164	30.11.1750	1213	15.06.1798	1262	30.12.1845
1165	20.11.1751	1214	5.06.1799	1263	20.12.1846
1166	8.11.1752			1264	9.12.1847
1167	29.10.1753	1215	25.05.1800	1265	27.11.1848
1168	18.10.1754	1216	14.05.1801	1266	17.11.1849
1169	7.10.1755	1217	4.05.1802		

## The Guru Nanak Era

The *Nanakshahis* struck at Amritsar between VS 1841 and 1850 (or perhaps even later) bear the VS year on the reverse and a set of three figures on the obverse. Although Sikh sources do not report the use of such an era the 3 figures on the obverse of these coins can only be plausibly explained by interpreting them as years of an era starting with the birth of Guru Nanak.

All the date combinations of the following table could theoretically occur on the Nanakshahis # 01.05 - 01.07 [until VS 1850] but only the years marked \* have yet been observed:

	Obverse	Reverse
GN	315*	VS 1841
	315* & 316*	1842
	316* & 317*	1843
	317* & 318*	1844
	318* & 319	1845
	319* & 320*	1846
	320 & 321*	1847
	321 & 322*	1848
	322 & 323*	1849
	323* & 324	1850

As the founder of the Sikh religion was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> day of the month of *Kartikka* in the year VS 1526 [November 1469 AD] the obverse figures do not indicate the current year of the *Guru Nanak era* but the full years which had elapsed since the birth of the Guru. This way of counting years is hardly ever met with in modern calendars but in ancient India it was the rule rather than the exception.

A unique rupee 30.01.04 issued by a yet unidentified *misl* mint bears only a GN date.

On the obverse of some Amritsar Nanakshahis (01.07.04) struck c. VS 1848-1878 a number of 1, 2 or 3 digits can be observed in the *Lam* of *FAZL*. In an article on the rupees of Amritsar Gurprit Singh wrote: „*These coins* [Amritsar rupees of the years VS 1874-78 from a hoard found near Nurpur] *are different from the commonly found coins of the same year in the respect that there are distinctly legible digits or or etc. within the Lam of Fazl on the obverse of the coins.*“<sup>3</sup>

The fact that these numbers are almost always at least partly and normally entirely off the flan greatly impedes their examination; we therefore ignore if in a given year all the rupees or only an unknown proportion bear such numbers and we also do not know if there are really numbers of 1, 2 or 3 digits or if on the dies all of them had 3 digits.

We do know that until VS 1850 the rupees of type 01.07.04 bear the VS year and the Guru Nanak year in which they were actually struck. From 1851 to at least 1854, but possibly until 1871 or 1872 we find the frozen year GN 323. Between 1873 and 1877 the numbers listed in the following table have been observed, but as the numbers are fragmentary and as they sometimes end in a point that may be a 0 but could also be an ornament, the readings of this group are tentative:

<i>VS year</i>	<i>Number in FAZL</i>
1872	x30
1873	x30
1874	130
1874	302
1874	x13
1874	x32
1876	130
1877	x30
1877	xx3
1878	xx3
1878	xx8

It seems that starting in GN 323 the GN year first became a frozen number and later a traditional, but possibly meaningless and therefore unstable mark. Around VS 1880 the numbers disappeared entirely.

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<sup>3</sup> GURPRIT SINGH DORA: „Zarb Sri Amritsar Jiyo - A Broader Perspective“, *JNSI*, LVIII (1996), 93-93.

## The Era of Banda Bahadur

The Sikh military leader Banda Singh Bahadur (1708-1716) used in documents an era which according to Saran Singh started with the capture and sack of Sirhind on 14 May 1710.<sup>4</sup> If one accepts the assertion -- which is actually in fashion, but less based on demonstrable facts than on political ideology -- that the *Khalsa* rupees (01.01.04 + 01.02.04) were struck by Banda, the years 2 and 3 appearing on those coins would have to be years of the *Banda era*. I do not believe that Banda was ever in a position to strike coins of the quality of the *Khalsa* rupees and think that they were struck much later, possibly around 1734 AD, by Nawab Kapur Singh and that they are dated according to one of several still enigmatic eras occurring on Sikh coins.<sup>5</sup>

## Unexplained Dates

Starting in VS 1841 and 1851 short sequences of Arabic ordinals appear on three series of *Gobindshahis* of Amritsar and Anandghar:

On coins:

1 <sup>st</sup>	احد	<i>ahd</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ثاني	<i>tani</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ثالث	<i>talit</i>
4 <sup>th</sup>	رابع	<i>rabi<sup>c</sup></i>
5 <sup>th</sup>	خمس	<i>khamis</i>
6 <sup>th</sup>	سادس	<i>sadis</i>
7 <sup>th</sup>	سابع	<i>sabi<sup>c</sup></i>
8 <sup>th</sup>	ثامن	<i>tamin</i>

These ordinals remain unexplained. They may stand for the regnal years of some unknown Sikh chiefs but nobody has yet given a plausible reason for the use of Arabic ordinals by Sikh sardars.

On rupees of Amritsar of the type 01.18 struck in VS 1841 we find on the reverse of one coin 1A (18), on another an additional 4 (4) after *ahd*.<sup>6</sup> These numbers may represent years of an unidentified era but could also be a kind of control marks.

<sup>4</sup> SARAN SINGH: "The first coins of the Sikhs", *ONS* 144, p. 7-8. Saran Singh wrote in his paper that all the subsequent years of the *Banda Bahadur era* also began on 14 May, a statement which with reference to the Indian luni-solar calendar seems highly improbable.

<sup>5</sup> A more detailed discussion of the *Khalsa* rupees will be found in the *Amritsar* section of the coin catalogue.

<sup>6</sup> The 2 coins are in the collection of Dr. B. Becker.

# Catalogue

## Introduction

The catalogue lists all the types of gold and silver coins bearing Sikh legends that have come to my knowledge.

### The numbering system

Each coin has been given a composite number:

#### A. B. C.

- A. stands for the mint. Although coins bearing different mint names -- e.g. Amritsar and Anandghar --- may have been issued from the same place, each mint name appearing on coins has been given its own number.

As the Sikh mints, which now as ever include a number of unidentified ones, do not lend themselves to a purely geographical or alphabetical listing, they have been grouped according to various criteria. Whereas the first group includes all the mints that adopted the Amritsar reverse inscription, the second and third group are based on common historical and geographical features.

Mints using the Amritsar reverse inscription:

- 01 Amritsar
- 02 Anandghar
- 30 Unidentified mints A and F
- 03 Pind Dadan Khan
- 04 Unidentified mints imitating copper coins of Amritsar
- 05 Dera (Dera Ghazi Khan)
- 06 Kashmir

The mints of the western Punjab:

- 07 Derajat (Dera Ismail Khan)
- 08 Lahore
- 09 Unidentified mint D
- 10 Unidentified mints C and E
- 11 Multan
- 31 Mankera
- 12 An imitation of a Sikh coin of Multan (Bela?)
- 13 Peshawar

The mints of the Phulkian States:

14 Patiala

15 Nabha

Miscellaneous mints and coins:

16 Jammu

17 Najibabad

18 Miscellaneous unidentified mints

Miscellaneous coins

19 Imitations of Sikh paisas probably struck at Loharu

20 Undiscovered Sikh coins

21 Counterfeit and fake Sikh coins

22 Countermarks on Sikh coins

**B.** The second group of two figures represents the serial number of a coin type within the coinage of a given mint. Coins of the same type, but struck in different metals, have the same serial number.

**C.** indicates the denomination:

Gold:

01 Double Mohur

02 Mohur

03  $\frac{1}{2}$  Mohur

Silver :

04 Rupee

05  $\frac{1}{2}$  Rupee

06  $\frac{1}{4}$  Rupee

07  $\frac{1}{8}$  Rupee

08  $\frac{1}{16}$  Rupee

Copper and base alloys:

09 1 Anna =  $\frac{1}{16}$  Rupee

10  $\frac{1}{2}$  Anna = 1 Taka = 2 Paisa

11  $\frac{1}{4}$  Anna = 1 Paisa (=1 Fulus)

12  $\frac{1}{8}$  Anna =  $\frac{1}{2}$  Paisa = 1 Dhela

13 Coins of an unknown value

As the Sikhs did not have a token copper coinage, names like *Anna* or *Paisa* indicate only the approximate position of a copper coin within the hierarchy of denominations.

Amritsar, the spiritual centre of the Sikhs, is said to have been founded by Guru Arjun (1563-1606 AD) who had a tank dug and the *Harimandir*<sup>1</sup> built on land granted by Akbar to Guru Ram Das. The new town, which was originally named *Ramdasapur* after the father of its founder, only received its actual name at a later date. *Amritsar*, which means: *Pool of Immortality*, is derived from *Amrit* [nectar, ambrosia] and *sar* [a fountain, a pool]. On Sikh coins bearing a Gurumukhi inscription the mint name appears as *Ambratsar*, a form which is still colloquially used at Amritsar and Lahore.

Guru Hargobind, Arjun's successor, built *Lohgarh* [the Iron Fortress] and the *Akal Takht* [Gods Throne] at Amritsar, and he inaugurated the general assemblies of the Sikhs, the *Sarbat Khalsa*, which took place twice a year, on the first day of the month of *Baisakh* and on *Dipamala*, at Amritsar.

The Afghans, who temporarily occupied and sacked Amritsar several times, went to great lengths to destroy and defile its sacred tank and its temples, but by 1767 AD the danger of any serious Afghan or Mughal interference had definitively passed for the town in which different misls had their strongholds, but which was finally mainly controlled by the Bhangis. When Ranjit Singh started subjugating the misls he also gained some influence at Amritsar, but it was only in 1805 that he really became the master of the town. Together with his allies, the Ahluwalias led by Fateh Singh, the Kanayas and the Nakkais, Ranjit Singh marched in February of this year against Mai Sukhan, the widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, who, supported by the Ramgarhias and Akalis under Phula Singh, held Amritsar. Without much fighting Mai Sukan surrendered the city and the fort on 24 February 1805 (= 14 *Phagan* 1861 VS / 23 *Dhu al-Qada* 1219 AH).<sup>2</sup>

The annexation of Amritsar added the leading commercial centre of the Punjab to Ranjit Singh's growing empire. Baron von Hügel\* remarked about the town of approximately 60'000 inhabitants and 4'500 shops: "*Amritsar is a larger city than Lahore. The wealth of the whole Punjab seems collected in it, and the great merchants have made it their abode. ... Amritsar is the most bustling of all the cities of the Punjab; in every street, the most beautiful productions are seen exhibited for sale.*" Ganesh Das, an official in Ranjit Singh's administration, declared: „*Today there is no other city in the whole of the Punjab that is as large as Amritsar. The merchants from all countries have come to Amritsar and have settled here. Many Khatri of Lahore have adopted Amritsar as their home.*“<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 The *Harimandir* is often called the *Golden Temple*, a name that only came in use when Ranjit Singh roofed the shrine with gilt copper sheets.
  - 2 As he did not conquer Amritsar in a single campaign, the contemporary chroniclers give different dates for Ranjit Singh's occupation of Amritsar: according to AMAR NATH (*Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.27) it took place in 1802, and according to GANESH DAS BADEHRA (*Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p.146) and 'ALI UD-DIN MUFTI (*Ibratnama*, Lahore 1961, I,404) in 1803. I followed SOHAN LAL SURI (*Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 56-57).
  - 3 VON HÜGEL: *Travels in Cashmere and the Panjab ...*, pp. 391 + 393.  
GANESH DAS BADEHRA: *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p.249. *Khatri* is the name of a caste of traders, bankers and shopkeepers whose members were mainly active in Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur and the surrounding districts.

## The coinage of Amritsar

The very first Sikh rupees (types 01.01.04 & 01.02.04) only mentioned the place where they were struck in an oblique way, but all the later mohurs and rupees of Amritsar refer to the *Akal Takht* as the issuing authority. *Akal Takht* [The Throne of God] is the name of a building standing to the north-west of the tank around the *Harimandir*. It lent its name to the Supreme Religious Council of the Sikhs, which used to assemble there. In the early days of the Amritsar mint this council may actually have directed the coining of rupees and mohurs, but under Ranjit Singh its role can at best have been purely nominal.

When the *misl* system was introduced, some of the misls occupied parts of Amritsar, where they erected their own small forts. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century about ten families or clans, each employing its own tax and customs collectors, shared the income from the dues levied on merchants and travellers. Among these clans, the Bhangis were by far the most powerful and important. (For a discussion of the coinage issued by the *misls* from Amritsar see the chapter: *The Sikh coinage / The Misl coinage*).

The number of surviving rupees proves that Amritsar, under Ranjit Singh and his successors the main commercial centre of the Sikh State, was also the seat of its chief mint for rupees and copper coins. This observation is confirmed by von Hügel, who, among other things, was a coin collector and who during an audience even discussed a prospective pictorial rupee with Ranjit Singh. He did not mention a mint at Lahore, but when he passed through Amritsar early in 1836 AD he noted in his diary that the town -- not the Govindgarh Fort <sup>4</sup>-- was the seat of Ranjit Singh's mint. As von Hügel considered the Amritsar mint technically primitive and therefore uninteresting, he unfortunately did not visit and describe it.<sup>5</sup>

If von Hügel had paid a visit to the Amritsar mint he might have left us an explanation of the highly complex and puzzling system of marks found on its rupees. Although we do not understand the system, we observe during the rule of Ranjit Singh and his successors in any given year between 2 to 4, but usually 3 series of rupees, that only differ in their marks and often run for several years. A possible, but for the moment highly speculative way of explaining these parallel series consists in the comparison of the Amritsar mint with Imperial Roman mints and their *officinae*. The main Sikh mint may also have had several workshops using different sets of marks.

According to A.C. Elliot the Nanakshahis bearing the mint names Amritsar and Lahore and the year VS 1885 were all struck at a mint established by Ranjit Singh at the *Islamgarh* Fort at the town of Gujarat.<sup>6</sup> We know of rare Lahore and even rarer Amritsar rupees bearing only the year VS 1885, but the large majority of the gold and silver coins actually struck at Amritsar in VS 1885 bear the double date 1884/85 [type 01.10]. There can be no doubt that the year 1885 is in some yet unexplained way connected to a reform of the coinage at Amritsar and Lahore: double-dated Nanakshahis coined at Amritsar between VS 1893 and 1906 [types 01.11 & 01.12] and at Lahore between VS 1894 and 1903 [types 08.09 & 08.10] bear on the

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4 Ranjit Singh's Govindgarh Fort, built in 1805-1809, served under its governors Sardar Shamir Singh and Faqir Imam ud-Din as a grain store, a gun factory, arsenal, royal stables, barracks and the Maharaja's main treasure house, but the Amritsar mint -- established much earlier -- does not seem to have ever been located there.

5 *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek*.

6 *The Chronicles of Gujarat*, p.31..

reverse the frozen year 1885, and on the most common series of Sikh copper coins -- the types 01.34 - 01.64 issued during many years from Amritsar -- occurs the same frozen year. It is possible that at some time during the reforms coins were struck at Gujrat, but for practical reasons and because of the fact, that working mints at Lahore and Amritsar are fairly well documented, this cannot be true for all or even for a considerable part of the Lahore and Amritsar coins bearing the year 1885.

The British estimated the number of rupees issued from Amritsar and Lahore between 1801 and 1849 at 65'000'000.<sup>7</sup> As the bulk of these coins was struck at Amritsar, the average annual output of this mint would have run to about 1 million rupees.

After the annexation of the Punjab the British immediately started to replace the Sikh rupees and paises by their own coins; according to a British source: "*Large bullion remittances of the old coins aggregating fifty lakhs were transmitted to Calcutta, and also down the Indus, to be returned from the Bombay mint with the British stamp. In two to three years more, the Nanak Shahee rupee, the symbol of Sikh religion and power, will be numbered with the things of the past.*"<sup>8</sup>

Nanakshahis struck at Amritsar under the Maharajas of the Punjab form today the large majority of the surviving Sikh silver coins. Whereas a sizeable proportion of the rupees of other Sikh mints is usually found in a well worn state, Amritsar rupees, which were struck with well cut dies in rather high relief, commonly occur in hoards in a very fine or uncirculated condition.

If Nanakshahis of Amritsar are exceedingly common Gobindshahis are at least scarce and some years range from rare to very rare. There can be no doubt that these Gobindshahis were not struck to compete with the Nanakshahis in the marketplace, but for some special purpose -- perhaps for the payment of subsidies to the *Harimandir* or to *Gurudwaras* in general.



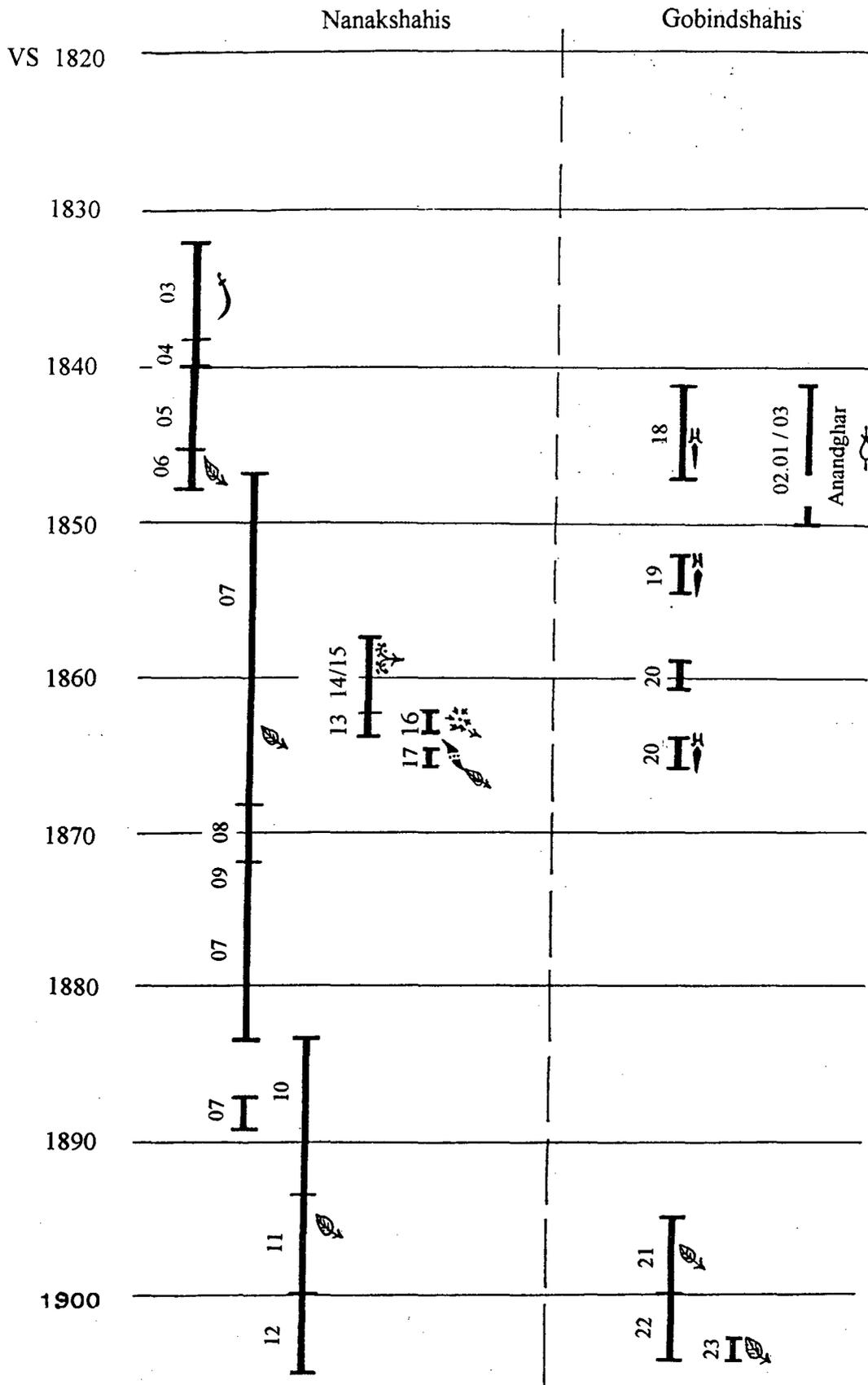
Amritsar c. 1833 AD

In 1825 Ranjit Singh had a ditch dug and -- according to plans by Mistri Muhammad Yusuf -- a boundary wall with 12 gates built around the city.

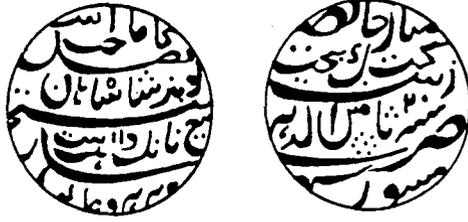
<sup>7</sup> "The Administration of the Punjab", *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XXI, 41, p.240.

<sup>8</sup> *Government of India Foreign Department General Report, Administration of Panjab Territories 1849-50 and 1850-51*, Calcutta 1856.

The Rupees struck at Amritsar



## The Khalsa Rupee



01.01.04

AR Rupee  
11.96 g

Year 2

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet III:

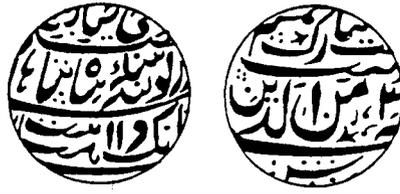
سچا صاحب است  
 قگو بند نشا نشا ہن  
 تیغ ناناوا است  
 زو بر ہر و و عالم

Reverse:

التیغ مبارک خالص  
 زینت آت تاکت  
 مشورت شاہ

ZARB KHĀLSĀ MUBĀRAK BAKHT  
 BA-ĀMAN ĀD-DAHR  
 ZĪNAT ĀT-TAKHT  
 MASHWARAT SHAHR:  
 SANĀH 2

Struck by the Khalsa of auspicious  
 fortune  
 at the Refuge of the Age,  
 the Ornament of the Throne, the City  
 of the Council.  
 Year 2



01.02.04

AR Rupee  
11.84-11.91 g

Year 3

Obverse : The Nanakshahi couplet IIIa.

Reverse : The reverse inscription has not been completely read, but it seems to be shorter than the reverse legend of 01.01.04. *Khalsa* and *bakht* have been replaced by one or more other words. *Man ad-din* appears to have been substituted for *baaman ad-dahr*, but as this expression does not make much sense, the reading may be incorrect.

Rodgers, who mentioned a Sikh coin bearing the mint name *Surat*<sup>9</sup>, may have seen a rupee of type 01.01.04 or 01.02.04 with a fragmentary *mashwarat*, which could easily be taken for *Surat*. Irvine also knew about these coins.<sup>10</sup> In recent years the type 01.01.04 was first recognised and published by Panish.<sup>11</sup>

Based on a paper by John Dyell, who for the first time gave a correct reading of the Nanakshahi couplet III, the so-called *Khalsa rupees* are now usually attributed to Banda Bahadur, but the case for the very existence of coins struck by this early military leader of the Sikhs appears rather weak.<sup>12</sup>

A number of writers, whose common source is Irvine, have mentioned Banda's coins in their books and articles. It has generally been assumed that Irvine's own source was the *Tazkirat as-Salatin-i-Chagataiya* by Hadi Kanwar Khan, a chronicler, who was present when a Mughal army led by Mun'im Khan Jumlat al-Mulk, the *Khan-khanan*, and Prince Rafi' ash-Shan besieged Banda in the fort of Lohgarh in 1710 AD. Surinder Singh, who did not find a mention of Banda's rupees in the Persian original or an English translation of Hadi Kanwar Khan's book, thinks that the true original source may have been Muhammad Ahsan Ifad's *Farrukhsiyar nama*.<sup>13</sup>

The coins themselves do not sustain their attribution to Banda, and their legends do not even obliquely refer to this Sikh leader. The rupees of the year 2 purport to have been struck at the

9 *Coin collecting in Northern India*, p.125.

10 "The Later Moghuls: Guru Gobind Singh and Banda", *JASB* Part I, No. 3, 1894.

11 "The First Sikh Trans-Sutlej Coinage", *JNSI*, Vol. XXIX, Part II, 1967.

12 "Banda Bahadur and the First Sikh Coinage", *Num. Digest*, IV, i (1980): 59-67.

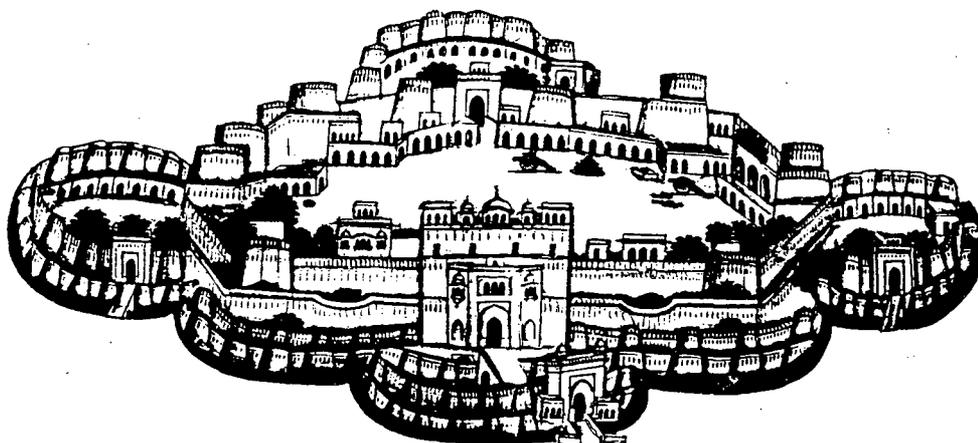
13 Letter to the author of 12 September 1990. A manuscript of MUHAMMAD AHSAN IFAD's: *Farrukhsiyar nama* is in the British Museum.

Dr. GOPAL SINGH mentioned --- without giving his source --- Banda's rupees in: *A History of the Sikh People 1469-1978* (p.343-344). According to Dr. Gopal Singh the inscriptions on these coins were: *Sikka zad barhar do alam Tegh-i-Nanak Wahib Ast / Fatah Gobind Singh Shah Shahan Socha Sahib ast. (This coin is struck by the Grace of the True Master, and also the victory that [Guru]Gobind Singh, the king of kings, brings and Struck in the City of peace, signifying the good fortune of man and the magnificence of the blessed Throne.)* The bowdlerized versions of the legends of the *Khalsa* rupee and the highly incorrect translations are unfortunately rather characteristic of the poor numismatic scholarship of many authors writing about the history of the Sikhs.

*City of the Council, the Ornament of the Throne* [of Akal?] and the *Refuge of the Religion*, epithets that would fit Amritsar quite nicely, but hardly the mud-fort of Lohgarh, Banda's major stronghold near Mukhlispur in the foothills of Sirmur, or Gurdaspur -- his later headquarters -- a military camp fortified with extensive earth-works.

Banda is said to have introduced an era starting on 14 May 1710, the day of the sack of Sirhind, and he is supposed to have dated his coins according to this new era. As only one document -- a letter written by Banda in Gurmukhi on 12 December 1710 to the Sikhs at Jaunpur and mentioning the year 1 -- has yet been published in support of the practical use of Banda's new era, this way of dating cannot have been too popular.<sup>14</sup> The *Khalsa rupees* may or may not have been dated according to Banda's era, but it should be kept in mind that they represent only one of several series of Sikh rupees bearing years of yet unidentified eras or reigns.

I think that the rupees 01.01.04 -- clearly the work of experienced coiners and not of some makeshift workshop in an army camp -- and 01.02.04 were not struck by Banda, but around 1734 AD by Nawab Kapur Singh.



The Govindgarh Fort

In 1805 Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered Govindgarh to be built outside Amritsar. The fort, which was completed in 1809, was still essentially modelled along the lines of traditional Mughal military architecture and would have been unsuited to withstand an attack by an army supported by modern artillery.

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<sup>14</sup> Banda's edict was published in: *Desh Pardesh*, London 1991, p. 49. A facsimile of the document (with a transliteration and a translation) can also be found in: *ONS 144* (Spring 1995), p.7.

## The Nanakshahis

01.03.04

AR rupee  
10.6-11.1 gVS 1832, 1833,  
1834, 1835,  
1836, 1837,  
1838.

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet IV:

حندناہ ناک واکت است  
فتح سعی کور کو بندہ سچا  
سلم زور بندہ دو عالم

Reverse:

سر سربے امریتسار  
VS year  
جولس بنی اکال تخت

SRI AMRITSAR JIYO  
ZARB  
(VS year)  
MAIMANAT  
JULUS BAKHT AKAL TAKHT

„Struck at illustrious Amritsar in the (VS) year ... under the prosperous rule of the fortunate Akal Takht (=Khalsa)“ is a variation of a traditional Mughal date and mint formula. *JULUS MAIMANAT BAKHT AKAL TAKHT* renders the name of the famous building in Amritsar in its usual form, but some authors prefer to read *JULUS MAIMANAT TAKHT AKAL BAKHT*, which does not change the meaning of the sentence.

The Punjabi suffix *-JIYO* is a common Sikh term of respect, the Hindi equivalent is *-JI*.

01.04.04

AR Rupee  
10.7-11.2 gVS 1838,  
1839,  
1840

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V:

شاہ نانا واپست  
متہ تیغ اور اس کے فضل صبا  
سرخ اور اور بندر سی  
سلا زو بر ہر روز و عالم

Reverse: As 01.03.04, but differently arranged:

سر جو  
سر ری امرت  
میمنہ vs year  
جلوس تخت ال تخت

Coins of type 01.04.04 are quite rare, but not, as Goron/Wiggins wrote, extremely rare.



On some of the early coins of type 01.05.04 the *alif* of *Amritsar* is either missing or at an unusual place and therefore off the flan on the known coins.

The reverse legend given here appears to be correct for the later rupees of the type 01.05.05, but earlier coins bear one or more additional words – one of them seems to be *PURAKH(JI?)* – at the top. It has not yet been possible to find all the elements of the mint name on the earliest coins and the word *AMRITSAR* may even be entirely missing from their legend.

The rupees of the types 01.05.04, 01.06.04 and 01.07.04 (until at least VS 1850) are double-dated: they bear on the reverse a VS year and on the obverse the corresponding year of the *Guru Nanak* era (GN). On 01.06.04 and 01.07.04 the GN year is placed in the letter *lam* of *FAZL* and is therefore almost always off the flan.

Although of the possible date combinations only the ones marked with an asterisk \* in the following list have yet been observed, all or most of the still missing ones do probably also exist and await their discovery.

	Obverse:	Reverse:
GN	---* & 315*	VS 1841
	315* & 316*	1842
	316* & 317*	1843
	317* & 318*	1844
	318* & 319	1845
	319* & 320*	1846
	320 & 321*	1847
	321 & 322*	1848
	322 & 323*	1849
	323* & 324	1850



#### 01.05A.04

AR Rupee  
11.02 g

VS / GN. 1844 / 317  
1845 / 318

Obverse: As 01.05.04.

Reverse: As 01.05.04, but the legend is arranged as on 01.06.04 (but still without the leaf mark).

This intermediate type seems to be rarest of the 3 rupee varieties struck at Amritsar in VS 1845, the year in which the leaf mark was introduced.

01.06.04



AR. Rupee  
10.7-11.1 g

VS / GN 1845 / 318



1846 / 319

1846 / 320

1847 / 321



Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V.

Reverse: As 01.05.04, but with the leaf mark, the characteristic feature of most of the later Sikh coins, added.



## 01.07.01

AU 2 Mohurs  
21.16 g

VS 1883



## 01.07.02

AU Mohur  
12.0 - 12.2 g

VS 1858, 1859,  
1861, 1862, 1863, 1864,  
\*1868, 1882, 1884,  
\*1901

\* With a Persian letter in the  
place of the reverse leaf mark.



## 01.07.03

AU ½ Mohur  
5.6-6.0 g

VS 1877



## 01.07.04

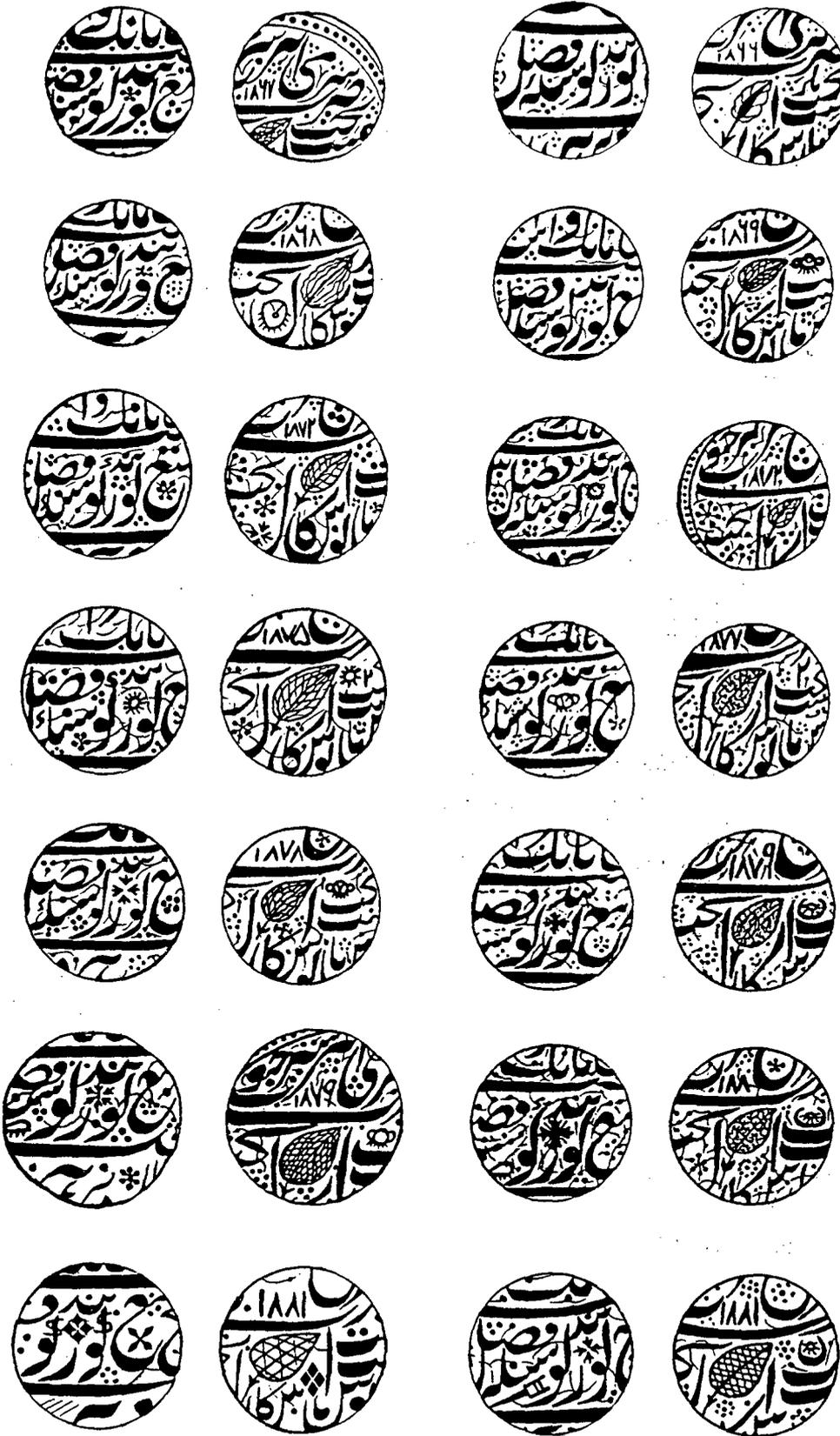
AR Rupee  
10.7-11.3 g

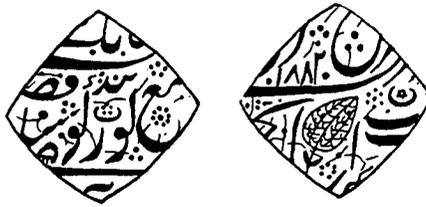


VS 1846, 1847, 1848,  
1849, 1850, 1851,  
1852, 1853, 1854,  
1855, 1856, 1857,  
1858, 1859, 1860,  
\*\* 1806, 1861, 1862,  
1863, 1864, 1865,  
1866, 1867, 1868,  
1869, 1870, 1871,  
1872, 1873, 1874,  
1875, 1876, 1877,  
1878, 1879, 1880,  
1881, 1882, 1883,  
1884, 1885, 1886,  
1888, 1889

\*\* The common date 1806 seems to  
be an error for 1860.

On rupees of 1861 the *alif* of *Akal*  
is often missing.





01.07.04N

AR Square rupee

VS 1882



01.07.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.6 g

VS 1871, 1880, 1883

01.07.06

¼ rupees of type 01.07.06 are known, but a coin with a legible VS year has not yet been observed.

**Obverse:** The Nanakshahi couplet V arranged as on 01.06.

**Reverse:** As 01.06., but the VS year is now placed on top of the **ب** of *zarb*.



01.08.04

AR Rupee  
11.1-11.2 g

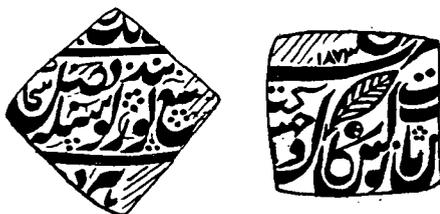
VS 1869, 1870, 1871.

Obverse: As 01.07.

Reverse: As 01.07, but the inscription is differently arranged:



Whereas rupees of type 01.08.04 are quite common, coins of type 01.07 bearing the dates VS 1869 and 1871 are rare, the year 1870 is extremely rare.



01.09.04N

AR Square rupee  
10.42 g

VS 1873



01.09.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1873, 1874



VS 1873

reverse mark  
(under the leaf)

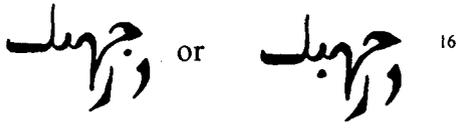
1874



Obverse: As 01.06.

Reverse: As 01.06, but with additional marks under the leaf and an additional inscription in the *lam* of *Akal*.

For a long time only one rupee of type 01.09.04, the specimen of the Lahore Museum, was known, but in recent years other coins from 3 or more sets of dies and at least one coin with the full additional reverse inscription have been found.<sup>15</sup>

The two-line additional reverse inscription is:  <sup>16</sup>  
 Rodgers read the inscription:  *DAR JHANG*

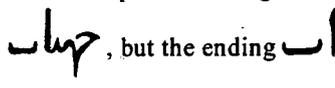
and he attributed the rupee to *Jhang*, a town situated near the junction of the rivers Chenab and Jhelum.<sup>17</sup>

Although Rodgers' reading is far from convincing, it is not impossible and could stand for:

*DAR JHANG*            *at Jhang*  
*DAR-I-JHANG*        *the gate of Jhang or the price of Jhang*

It is not at all certain that the first letter in the word, that is usually read as *Jhang*, is a ج and the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter looks on several coins more like a ب than a ن . I do not think that the inscription refers to the town of Jhang at all; it probably gives the reason or occasion for which the rupee was struck, but I am quite unable to propose a really convincing reading.<sup>18</sup>

15 As about 25 coins of type 01.09 are actually known and more are regularly discovered this type seems to represent quite a large issue. Single round rupees of this type are for instance in the Govt Museum in Lahore, the *Sheesh Mahal Museum* at Patiala and the collections of William F. Spengler and Dr. B. Becker (2). The square rupee was published in: *ONS Newsletter No. 131* (November 1991-January 1992), p.6, and in: Stephen ALBUM: *Price List No.82*, coin 119. Both publications give an inaccurate description of the unique coin.

16 William F. Spengler read the critical word as:  , but the ending  seems rather improbable and some of the coins do not support this reading.

17 GURPRIT SINGH („Zarb Sri Amritsar ...“, p. 92) assumed that these rupees were struck by Nawab Ahmad Khan Sial of Jhang when Ranjit Singh – on his way to Multan – forced him to pay a tribute of Rs 100'000, but the dates on the coins (VS 1873 and 1874) invalidate this line of argument.

Ranjit Singh attacked Ahmad Khan Sial in 1803 AD to exact an annual tribute of Rs 60'000 and again in 1805, when the tribute was doubled to Rs 120'000. In 1807 Jhang, whose ruler had fled to Multan, was annexed to the Kingdom of Lahore. The so-called *Dar Jhang* rupees are dated 9 and 10 years after the annexation, when Ahmad Khan Sial had already lived for some years as a pensioner on a *jagir* granted to him by Ranjit Singh. (Source: SOHAN LAL SURI: *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, II,212.) The *Tarik-i-Jhang Sial* by NUR MUHAMMAD CHELA SIAL gives a very detailed account of the struggle of the last Nawab of Jhang against Ranjit Singh, of the conquest of his state and of its administration under several Sikh governors, but it does not mention any coins struck at, for or in relation with Jhang.

18 P.L. GUPTA & Sanjay GARG proposed in: *The Coins of Dal Khalsa and Lahore Darbar in the Sheesh Mahal Museum, Patiala* (pp. 122-123) the reading: *Darjita*, which is clearly impossible.

## 01.10.01

AU 2 Mohurs  
23.9 g  $\varnothing$  28 mm

VS 1884 / 85



## 01.10.04

AR Rupee  
10.8-11.1 g

VS 1884 / 67\*

85, 86, 82\*\*  
87, 88, 89,  
90, 91, 92,  
93, 94, 95\*\*\*  
1905 (a mule)

\* An unexplained date  
(Collection Dr. Becker).

\*\* 1884 / 82 is an error for  
1884 / 86.

\*\*\* Possibly a mule with type  
01.11.



## 01.10.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g (early), 4.75-4.85 (late)

VS 1884 / 85, 86, 89, 90  
92, 93, 95

## 01.10.06

AR ¼ Rupee  
2.67- 2.75 g

VS 1884 / 85, 86, 89, 92,  
95,

## 01.10.07

AR 1/8 Rupee  
c. 1.4 g

VS 1884 / 95

Fractional rupees with other da-  
tes may also exist.

Obverse: As 01.07, but with the last 2 figures of the year, in which the coin was actually struck, added.

Reverse: As 01.07, but with a frozen VS year 1884.

## 01.11.03a

AU  $\frac{1}{4}$  Mohurs of VS 1885 / 95 and 97 have been reported.



## 01.11.04

AR Rupee  
10.9-11.2 g

VS 1885 / 93, 94, 95,  
96, 97, 98,  
99



## 01.11.05

AR  $\frac{1}{2}$  Rupee  
5.5-5.6 g

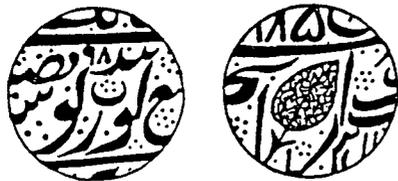
VS 1885 / 93, 94, 95,  
96, 97, 98,  
99



## 01.11.06

AR  $\frac{1}{4}$  Rupee  
2.7-2.8 g

VS 1885 / 93, 94, 95,  
97, 98, 99



## 01.11.07

AR  $\frac{1}{8}$  Rupee  
1.35-1.4 g

VS 1885 / 95, 99

Fractional rupees with other dates may also exist.



Obverse: As 01.10.

Reverse: As 01.10., but the frozen VS year is now 1885.

01.12.02

AU Mohur

VS 1885 / 1901  
(without a leaf mark)

01.12.04

AR Rupee  
11.0-11.2 g

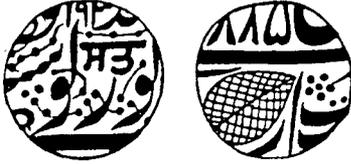
VS 1885 / 1900, 1901,  
1902, 1903,  
1904, 1905,  
1906



**01.12.05**

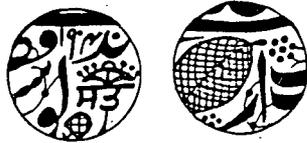
AR ½ Rupee  
4.8-5.6 g

VS 1885 / 1900, 1901,  
1902, 1903,  
1904, 1905

**01.12.06**

AR ¼ Rupee  
2.7-2.8 g

VS 1885 / 1900, 1901,  
1902, 1903,  
1904, 1905

**01.12.07**

AR ⅛ Rupee  
c. 1.4 g

VS 1885 / 1900, 1903

**Obverse:** As 01.11, but the year in which the coin was actually struck in 4 figures.

**Reverse:** As 01.11.

Towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fractional rupees, for which normal rupee dies were used at Amritsar, became more common in several Indian states. Other, yet unlisted years probably exist.

### The Mora Shahi

On rupees of the year VS 1857 occurs a double sprig as a secondary reverse mark:



01.12.04a

AR Rupee  
11.0-11.2 g

VS 1857

The secondary reverse mark of the rupee 01.12.05a became the main reverse mark of the *Mora Shahi* which was struck since VS 1858:



01.13.02 \*

AU Mohur  
10.9 g

VS 1862



01.13.04 \*

AR Rupee  
10.1-11.1 g

VS 1858, 1859, 1860,  
1861, 1862, 1863



\* Type 01.13 was in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition type 01.14.



Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V arranged as on 01.07.

Reverse: As 01.07., but the leaf has been replaced by a double sprig with buds:  
*AKAL* is replaced by *KAL*.



19

<sup>19</sup> According to R.T. Somaiya (*ICSN 25*) the reverse mark of the *Mora Shahi* shows a bunch of berries of the *Ber* tree.



01.14.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1862

Obverse: As 01.13.

Reverse: As 01.13, but with a sprig with 2 large and 2 small leaves:



01.15.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1862, 1863

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V as on 01.07.

Reverse: As 01.14., but with a sprig with 2 large, smooth and 4 small leaves:



Coins of the types 01.13.- 01.15 -- but especially 01.13. -- were popularly known as *Mora shahis* or even *Mora kanchani shahis* (Coins of *Mora*, the dancing girl, or *Mora*, the harlot), a name which Cunningham explained as follows:

*"he [Ranjit Singh] is not only represented to have frequently indulged in strong drink, but to have occasionally outraged decency by appearing in public inebriated, and surrounded by courtesans. In his earlier days one of these women, named Mohra, obtained a great ascendancy over him, and, in 1811, he caused coins or medals to be struck bearing her name."*<sup>20</sup>

Cunningham's statement refers to the popular but erroneous belief that the rupee 01.13.04 does not show a sprig, but the tail of a *mor* (peacock), an oblique allusion to the name of Rani *Moran*, who was originally a dancing girl in Lahore and who always remained a Muslim. Ranjit Singh made *Moran* in 1802 one of his many wives. She accompanied the Maharaja on his journey to Hardwar and was in August 1811 AD, together with some members of her family, exiled to the Fort of Pathankot, where she still lived in 1836.<sup>21</sup>

The earliest *Mora shahis* were struck in VS 1858 (1801/02 AD), at about the time when, according to Amar Nath, Amritsar and its mint fell to Ranjit Singh. The date lies 3 years before the fall of Amritsar according to Sohan Lal Suri and a full decade before the year given by Cunningham.

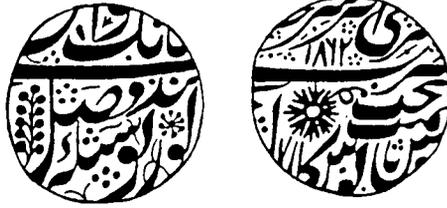
The name of the rupee may originally not have been derived from **मोर** *mor* (peacock), but from **मौर** *maur*, a Hindustani word meaning: *a bud, a blossom, the blossom of the mango tree.*

The coins, which came to be known as *Mora shahis*, represent -- like the types 01.16. and 01.17. -- a special rupee series issued by the Amritsar mint for an unknown purpose, but through their marks they are clearly related to the regular, contemporary Nanakshahis of type 01.07.

<sup>20</sup> CUNNINGHAM: *History of the Sikhs*, p. 159.

<sup>21</sup> Von HÜGEL: *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek*, III, 385.

## The Arsiwala Shahi



01.16.02

AU Mohur  
10.8 gVS 1862,  
1863

01.16.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 gVS 1862,  
1863

Obverse: As 01.07.

Reverse: As 01.07, but the leaf mark has been replaced by a flower.  
*AKAL* is replaced by *KAL*.

The coins of type 01.16. are said to have been called: *arsiwala shahis*. An *arsi* is a mirror or a mirror-ring worn on the thumb, an ornament that is still occasionally seen on dancing girls and brides, and an *arsiwala* is a maker or a seller of *arsis*. The name of the coin does not imply that it bears a picture of an *arsi*, and the *arsiwala shahis* do in fact not show such an ornament.

There once probably was a story that explained the strange name of this coin-type, but today it seems to be lost and forgotten.

On all the *Mora Shahis* (01.12. - 01.15), the *Arsiwala Shahis* (01.16) and some of the contemporary regular rupees (01.07.) the word *AKAL* is replaced by *KAL* in the reverse legend. As several dozens of different reverse dies are affected, this can definitely not be the result of a simple oversight by a die-cutter. The change, which was definitely intended, seems to be related to one of the meanings of the word *KAL*, which can be: *time, fate, dearth, famine* or even *death*. If we knew why *KAL* was substituted for *AKAL*, we would probably also be aware of the true reason for the emission of the *Mora Shahis* and the *Arsiwala Shahis*.

The following, rather common rupee type does not seem to have had a special local name:



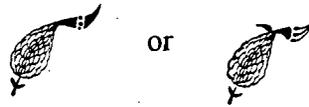
01.17.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1865  
1866

Obverse: As 01.07.

Reverse: As 01.07., but with a peculiar and unexplained variety of the leaf mark:



Although it is not rare, the rupee type 01.17.04 has never yet been observed with a number in the *lam* of *FAZL*.

## Marks on the *Nanakshahi* and *Gobindshahi* Rupees of Amritsar

Genuine marks, which start on the Nanakshahis in VS 1957 and on the Gobindshahis in VS 1895, mainly occur at two places on the obverse (marks ① and ②) and on the reverse (marks ③ and ④) of the coins.

On the obverse the Nanakshahis sometimes bear a mark ⑤ in the *Lam* of *FAZZL*. From VS 1850 until about VS 1880 these marks consist of numbers, which are discussed in the section about the *Guru Nanak era*. Practically all those numbers are only partly legible, they are therefore not listed here. On later rupees we find pictorial marks, but as they too are almost always of the flan, a fairly exhaustive list of the marks ⑤ is actually unachievable. The known marks are mentioned in the footnotes.



It is often difficult or impossible to differentiate between floral marks, which contain an information, and simple ornaments, but where many different varieties of clusters of points, rosettes and flowers appear on coins of one type and one year we can safely assume that they are just ornaments meant to fill empty spaces of the coin design.

In the list of the marks ornaments are represented by the letters **P** and **R**:

**P:** stands for one or more single points or one or more groups of 2 or 3 points:



**R:** Rosettes or flowers with 4 or more points or leaves. These ornaments can, even on coins of one year, show different shapes:



As the ornaments **P** and **R** are very often interchangeable and as a complete list of all the actually occurring combinations would only be interesting for someone doing a die-study, I have not tried to establish such a list. Combinations of ornaments „*not in Herrli*“ are just sub-varieties that certainly do not deserve a higher price.

The true marks are probably related to the control of the coinage, the administration of the mint and the coin production, but the exact meaning of the different marks still remains entirely unknown.

- ① Marks at this place are rare on early coins, but later issues of Nanakshahis and Gobindshahis usually show the mark:  or a variation for which a convincing interpretation has not yet been offered.
- ② These marks are the most variable ones. Parallel series of such marks running for two or more years and found on coins with the same reverse may point to the existence of more than one workshop within the Amritsar mint or to orders from more than one customer.
- ③ The main reverse mark shows relatively few varieties and many of them remained unchanged for quite a long time.
- ④ Marks at this place are often off the flan, but it seems that they are fairly rare and that the space within the *lam* of *Akal* is commonly filled with one or more rosettes or flowers. The clearly recognisable additional marks occurring exceptionally here or at other uncommon places are specially mentioned in the footnotes.

Where the same combination of the marks ①, ② and ③ was used in consecutive years they always appear in the same column and are joined with a vertical line:

Type 01.10	①	②	③
1884/85			R 
			R 
1884/86			R 
			R 
1884/87			R 
1884/88			R 
1884/89			R 

Types

01.07 -  
01.09

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1856									R	--	R	⚙				
1857	<sup>1</sup> R	--	R	🌿					P	--	--	⚙				
									<sup>2</sup> --	R	P	☀				
									<sup>3</sup> R	--	R	☀				
									<sup>4</sup> --	P	--	☀				
1858	<sup>5</sup> R	--	R	🌿	R	R	--	--								
	<sup>6</sup> 🌿	🐟	🌿	🌿	🌿	R	--	--								
	🌿	R	🌿	--	🌿	R	R	--								
	🌿	R	🌿	🌿												
1859	🌿	⊕	--	--	🌿	∞	R	--	🌿	☀	R	--				
					🌿	☀	--	--	🌿	☀	P	--				
					🌿	☀	--	--								
					🌿	☀	P	--								
					🌿	☀	P	--								
					🌿	☀	P	--								
					🌿	☀	P	--								
1860	🌿	☀	P	--	🌿	☀	P	--								
	🌿	☀	P	--	🌿	☀	--	--								
1806					🌿	☀	--	--	🌿	R	R	--				
									🌿	R	P	--				

<sup>1</sup> Obverse  
⑤



<sup>2</sup> Obverse  
⑤



<sup>3</sup> Obverse



<sup>4</sup> Obverse  
⑤



<sup>5</sup> Reverse



<sup>6</sup> Obverse  
⑤



	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1861		R	R			R	-	-		P	R	-	R	P		-
		R	P	-						R	R					
		R	P							R	R	-				
		R	P	-												
		R	R													
1862					R		P	-	R		-	-	-	R	P	-
1863		-	R	P										-	R	-
														R	R	P
1864		-	R	P		-	R	-		P		P	-	-	-	P
		P	R	-		P	R		-					-	P	P
														<sup>7</sup> P	R	P
1865		-	R	P		P	R		-	P	R	P	P	-	R	-
														P	R	P
														R	R	R
1866		P	R	P		P	R		-	P	R		-	P	R	R
						-	R	R		P	R	P	P	R	R	-
						P	R		-							
1867		P	R	P		R	R		-					-	R	-
														-	R	P
														R	R	-
1868		R	P	-	-	R	R							P	R	R
	-		P	-										R	R	-
	P		R	-												

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
1869	--	R		--	P	R	R		--	R	PP	--	8--	R	R	--	
	--	R		--	R	R	R						9--	R	R	--	
	P	R		--													
	P	R		--													
1870														P	R	R	--
														R	R	R	--
1871														--	R	R	--
														P	R	R	--
1872	R	R		--	R	R	R							R	R	R	--
	R		R	--	--	R	P						10--	P	R	R	--
	R		R	--										--	R	R	--
	--		P	--													
	R		--	--													
1873	--		R	--						R		P	--				
	R		R	--						R		RP	--				
										R		RP	--				
										--		RP	--				
1874	--		R	--	R	R	RP	--		R		PP	--				
					R		RP	--		R		PP	--				
					R		RP	--		R		RP	--				
					--		RP	--		R		RP	--				
					R		RP	--									

8 Reverse 

9 Obverse 

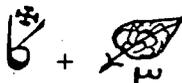
10 Obverse 

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1875					--	☉	RY	--	R	☉	RY	--				
					P	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
1876					P	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
					R	☉	RY	--								
1877					R	☉	RY	--	R	☉	RY	--	R	☉	☉	--
					R	☉	RY	--					R	R	☉	--
					R	☉	RY	--					R	R	☉	--
1878	R	R	R	☉	R	☉	RY	--	☉	R	☉	--	<sup>11</sup> R	R	☉	--
													<sup>12</sup> R	R	☉	--
													P	R	☉	--
1879	☉	☉	R	☉	☉	R	☉	--	☉	R	☉	--				
					☉	☉	☉	--	☉	R	☉	--				
					☉	R	☉	--	☉	R	☉	--				
					☉	R	☉	--	☉	R	☉	--				
					☉	R	☉	--	☉	R	☉	--				
1880	☉	☉	R	☉	☉	R	☉	--					☉	☉	P	☉
					☉	R	P	☉					☉	☉	☉	--
													☉	☉	☉	--

<sup>11</sup> Reverse



<sup>12</sup> Reverse



	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
1881					--					R		--			R		--	
					--													
1882					--													
					--													
				--														
1883					--					R		--			R		--	
															R		--	
1884					--	<sup>14</sup>		R	--		R		--			R		--
					--	<sup>14</sup>		R	--							R		--
				--	<sup>15</sup>		R	--		R		--			R		--	
															R	--		
															R	--		
1885								R	--									
1886											R		--					
1887																		
1888						R		R	--	R		R	--					
1889						R		R	--	P		R	--					

13 Reverse

14 Reverse

15 Reverse

Type 01.10	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1884/85												
1884/86												
1884/87												
1884/88												
1884/89												
1884/90												
1884/91												
1884/92												
1884/93												



Type 01.12	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
<sup>16</sup> 1885 / 1900							  R			  R			
<sup>16</sup> 1885 / 1901							  R			  R			
1885 / 1902	  R	  R	  R	  R	  R								
1885 / 1903	<sup>17</sup>  सउ R	  R		  R	  R	  R	  R			  R	  R		
1885 / 1904							  R	  R	  R	  R	  R	  R	  R
1885 / 1905	<sup>18</sup>  शिव R			  R			  R	  R	  R	  R	  R	  R	
1885 / 1906							  R						

<sup>16</sup> Coins dated 1911 and with a peacock  as mark ② are recent fabrications.

<sup>17</sup> सउ = sate

<sup>18</sup> शिव = Shiva



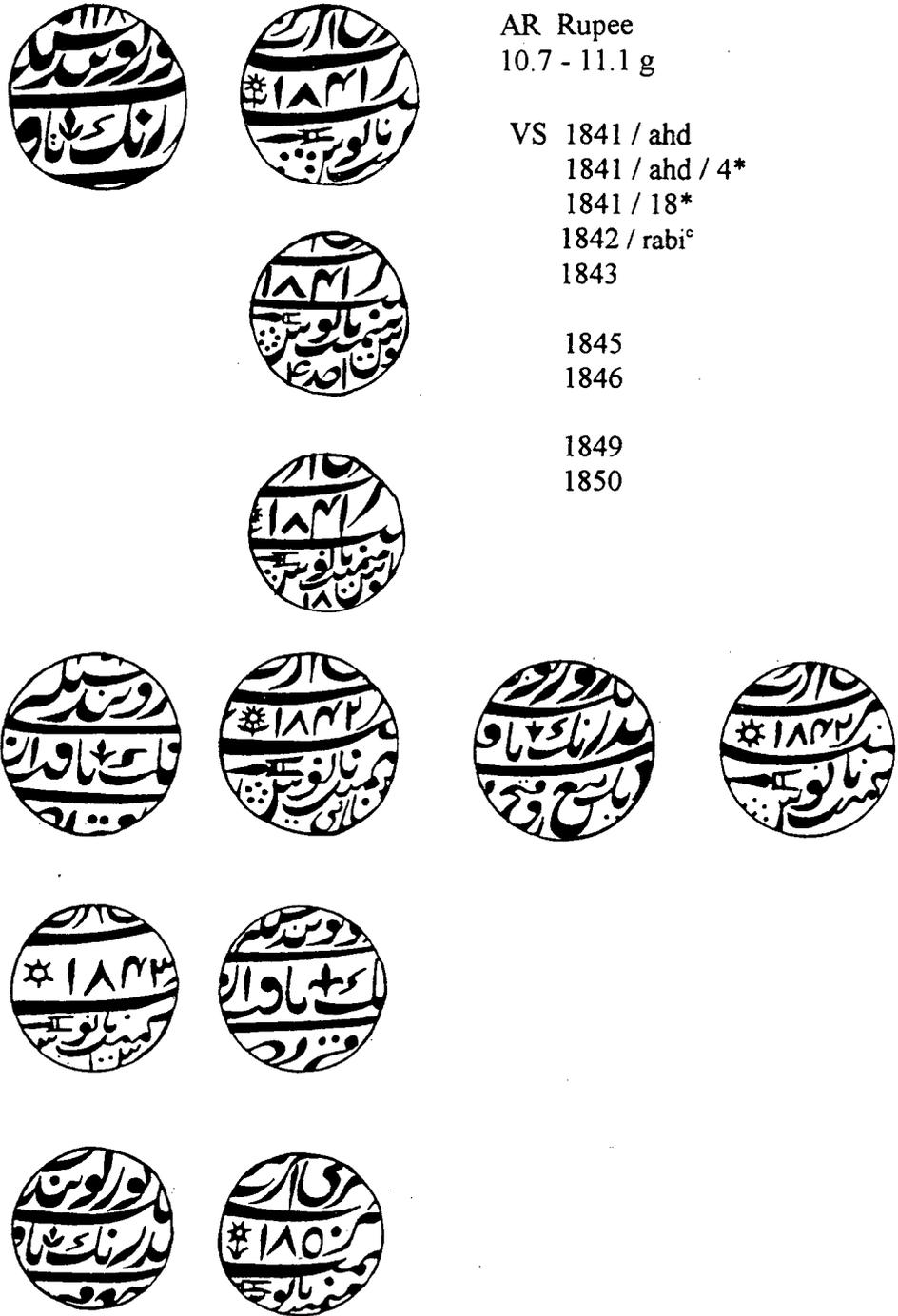
01.18.04

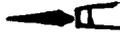
AR Rupee  
10.7 - 11.1 g

VS 1841 / ahd  
1841 / ahd / 4\*  
1841 / 18\*  
1842 / rabi<sup>c</sup>  
1843

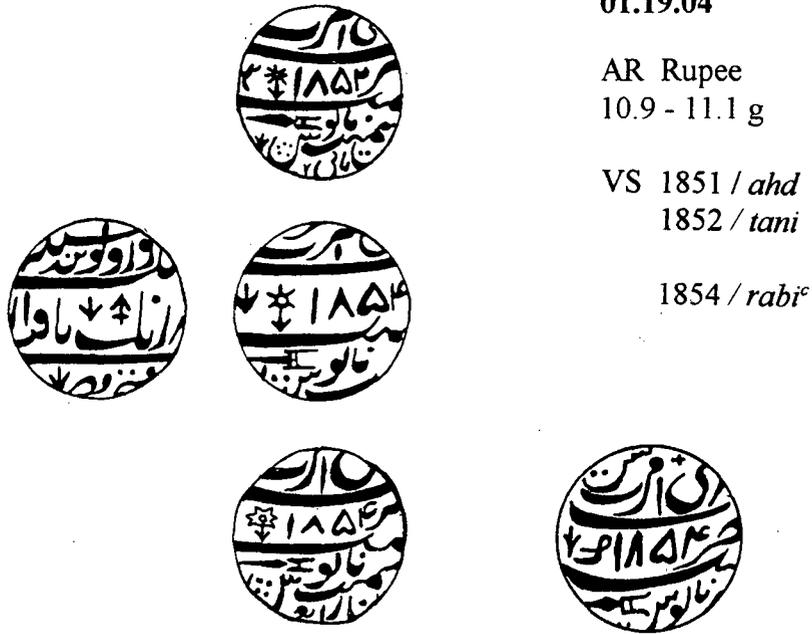
1845  
1846

1849  
1850



Reverse mark: *katar* 

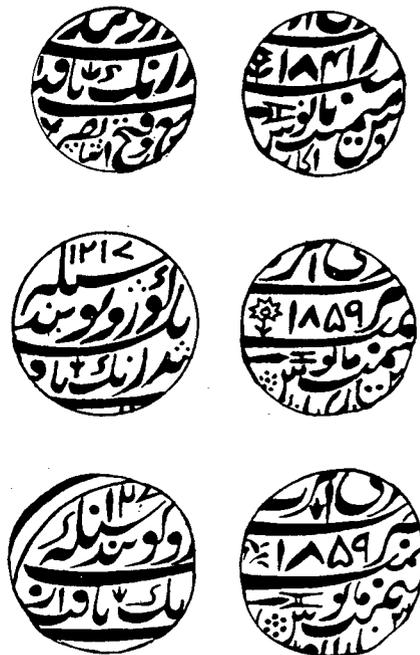
\* These 2 coins are in the collection of Dr. Becker.



01.19.04

AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 gVS 1851 / *ahd*  
1852 / *tani*1854 / *rabi*<sup>c</sup>

Obverse and reverse as # 01.18, but the Arabic ordinals seem to start in VS 1850 or 1851 with *ahd* (1).



01.20.04

AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 g

VS 1841

1854 / AH 1217  
(Possibly a mule of # 01.19  
and 01.20).1859 / AH 1217  
1860 / AH 12171862  
1863  
1864  
1865

Obverse and reverse legends as 01.18, but (AH) 1217 (= VS 1859/60 = AD 4 May 1802 - 23 April 1803) added at the top of the obverse.

The Arabic numerals have been replaced by *akar* on coins of VS 1841 and not yet read words on coins of other dates.

At the bottom of the obverse of one coin of VS 1841 (in the collection of Dr. Becker) appears a word, that might be *ama*.



01.20A.04

AR Rupee  
10.7 g

VS 1855 / AH ???

1860 / AH 1217

Obverse and reverse as # 01.20, but with a prominent leaf mark on the reverse and a slightly different arrangement of the mint name.

Coins of the type 01.20 (and possibly also of # 01.20A) bear additional words in Persian script at the bottom of their inscriptions.

On 2 coins of VS 1841 the word

اکار *ākār*

can be read on the reverse. Unlike the ordinals on coins of # 01.18 and 01.19 *akar* does not seem to be an Arabic or even a Persian word.<sup>22</sup> It could be an Urdu or Hindustani adjective meaning: *not yielding a return, unprofitable, sacrificed* and refer in some oblique way to the use the rupees were intended for.

The reading of the word:

اما *āmā*

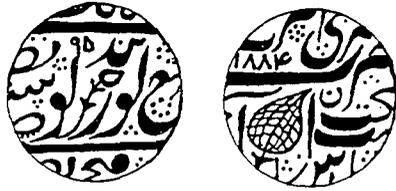
seen on a single coin of VS 1841 is uncertain and I am unable to propose an explanation of this word.<sup>23</sup>

On the reverse of coins of years other than 1841 the upper parts of different (?) additional words have been observed, but not yet read.

<sup>22</sup> The meaning of the Arabic word *akar* is: *to plough*, in the Persian language the word does not seem to exist.

<sup>23</sup> A rupee of type 01.20 showing the word *akar* on the reverse was published in: *List 31* (Summer 1992) of the *Persic Gallery*, Torrance, CA. Another coin showing *akar* on the reverse and an additional word (*ama?*) on the obverse -- the coin illustrated here -- is in the collection of Dr. B. Becker

After a lapse of about 30 years the striking of Gobindshahis was resumed at Amritsar:



This coin is perhaps a mule of an otherwise unknown obverse # 01.11 and a reverse # 01.21.

#### 01.21.04

AR Rupee  
10.7 - 11.1 g

VS 1884 / 95  
1884 / 96  
1884 / 97  
1884 / 98  
1884 / 99  
1884 / 67

(either an error for or a badly cut 97)



#### 01.21.05

AR 1/2 Rupee  
5.5 g

VS 1884 / 95  
1884 / 99



Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ib as on 01.18, but differently arranged:

#### 01.21.06

AR 1/4 Rupee  
c.2.7 g

VS 1884 / 95  
1884 / 97

یا ف از نایاب  
نابین کور کور سنه  
ایک فوج نصرت

#### 01.21.07

AR 1/8 Rupee  
c. 1.35 g

VS 1884 / 95

The last 2 figures of the VS year in which the coins were actually struck have been added after (GO)bind.

On some rupees the year (18)97 was recut into (18)98.

Reverse: As 01.10, but with the frozen year VS 1884.

The dates on the Nanakshahis 01.10 and the Gobindshahis 01.21/22 constitute a continuous series from 1884/85 to 1884/1905, but we do not know why the frozen 1884 was transferred to the Gobindshahis in 1885 and replaced by 1885 on the Nanakshahis.

**01.22.04**

AR Rupee  
10.8 - 11.1 g

VS 1884 / 1900  
1884 / 1901  
1884 / 1902  
1884 / 1903  
1884 / 1904  
1884 / 1905

**01.22.07**

AR  $\frac{1}{8}$  Rupee  
1.35 g /  $\varnothing$  12.5 mm

VS 1884 / 1904

Obverse: As 01.21., but with the year, in which the coins were actually struck, in 4 figures.

Reverse: As 01.21.

**01.23.04**

AR Rupee

VS 1888 / 1904

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Id and the year (VS) 1904 in the place usually occupied by mark  $\odot$ .

Reverse: As 01.21, but the frozen VS year is now 1888.

Although the extremely rare rupee 01.23.04 bears the mint name *Amritsar* it may have been struck at another mint.

Marks on the Gobindshahis of Amritsar:



Type 01.21	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1884 /95									
1884/96									
1884/97									
1884/98									
1884/99									
Type 01.22									
1884/1900									
1884/1901									
1884/1902									

	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1884/1903		?							
					R				
1884/1904							R		
									
1884/1905					R				

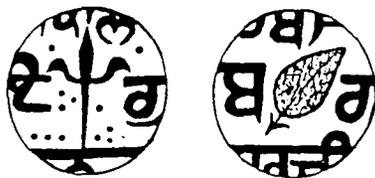
Type 01.23

1888/1904      ۱۹۰۴ — 

Although it is sometimes difficult to recognise, the Persian letter *Nun* seems to be the common reverse mark of the Gobindshahis of Amritsar.

## Miscellaneous Mohur and Rupee Types

01.25.02

AU Mohur  
9.72 g /  $\varnothing$  c. 20 mm

VS 1885

Obverse and reverse: As Paisa 01.60.

This coin, which was obviously struck with dies normally used for copper coins, should possibly be considered a token struck for presentation purposes.

## COPPER COINS

## A. Copper coins bearing only Persian inscriptions

01.30.11



CU Paisa  
 ø 20-24 mm  
 11.5-12 g

VS 1880, 1881, 1882

01.30.12



CU ½ Paisa  
 ø 15-18 mm  
 5-6 g

VS 1880, 1881, 1882

Obverse: The obverse legend is the normal Gobindshahi couplet:

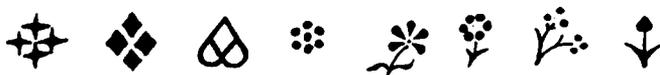


Reverse:



*SRĪ AMRITSAR*  
*SANĀH JULŪS ZARB*  
 VS year  
*MĀĪMANAT*  
*MĀNUS*

The numeral 5 on the reverse of a coin of VS 1880 has not yet been explained. All the coins of type 01.30 show the same inscription but varying reverse marks. (The first two of the following marks occur also on rupees of VS 1881):





01.31.11

CU ¼ Anna (= 1 Paisa)

ø 20-24 mm

11-12 g



VS 1896, 1898

01.31.12

CU ½ Paisa

ø 15-18 mm

5.5 g

VS 1896



Obverse: The obverse inscription is the Gobindshahi couplet arranged as on the contemporary Amritsar rupee 01.23.04. The year occurs in a full and a reduced version, e.g. 1896 or 96.

Reverse:

نانکشنای  
پانہ

*PĀ ANNA-I-NĀNAKSHĀI*

¼ Anna (of the) Nanakshahi

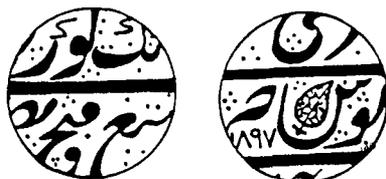
The coins, which do not bear a mintname, were probably struck at Amritsar. The numerals on the obverse, e.g. 92, have not been explained.

# 01.31.11 and 01.31.12 were struck from the same dies, but because its light weight. 01.31.12 can only be a ¼ Anna or ½ Paisa, a coin which was usually called a *Dhela*.

**01.32.11**

CU Paisa  
 ø 20-24 mm  
 11-12 g

VS 1897

**01.32.12**

CU ½ Paisa  
 ø 15-18 mm  
 5.5 g

VS 1897

Reverse: A legend only partially legible.

Although *SRI* is the only part of the mint name that has yet been read, it seems that 01.32 succeeded to 01.31 and that both types were struck by the same mint.

## **B. Regular copper coins with inscriptions in Gurumukhi script**

Coins of this general type are usually round, but hexagonal and square specimens are known for many varieties.

Valentine stated that the large 1 Anna coins were Nazarana pieces and not struck for circulation, but as they are often quite worn, at least some of them must have circulated.

Although 95% or more of the Amritsar copper coins are Paisas, Annas und Takas of most of the major subtypes bearing Gurumukhi inscriptions were presumably struck too. The catalogue shows just typical specimens of each of the known varieties without trying to fully enumerate all the existing denominations and shapes.

As many different subtypes of the Amritsar Paisa bearing the frozen year 1885 have been observed, these coins must have been struck for quite a long time, possibly from VS 1885 to VS 1905 or 1906.

The fact that copper coins show a number of obverse marks that occur on Amritsar rupees too does not necessarily mean that the rupees and the paisas bearing the same or a related mark were struck at the same time.

## B 1: Coins with an undivided obverse inscription



01.34

CU

VS 1885 (different arrangements of the date are known).

Obverse mark: ★



All the coins of this class are subtypes of one basic design; they mainly differ in their obverse marks.

Obverse:

ਅਕਾਲ  
ਸਹਾਇ ਗੁਰੂ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ

ĀKĀL  
SAHĀĪ GŪR  
NĀNAKĪ

God [AKAL] helps the illustrious Guru Nanak  
or

May God help the illustrious Guru Nanak

Reverse:

ਜਰਬਸੀ  
ਅੰਬ ਰਤਸਾ  
ਰਜੀ ੧੮੮੫

JARABA SRI  
ĀMB RATSA  
RĪ 1885

Struck at illustrious Amritsar [VS] 1885.

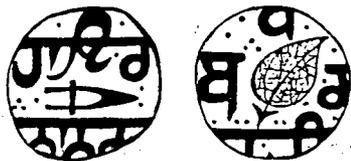
Varieties:

- On different dies of each subtype the words can be divided in several different ways.

- The date is always the frozen year VS 1885. It is normally written in Nagari numerals but the use of a Persian 8 has also been observed.

- On the reverse the leaf may be accompanied by an additional mark.

- Some coins show in the first line of the reverse ਸਿ instead of ਸ੍ਰੀ [Sri].



01.35

CU  
VS 1885

Obverse mark:   
(Rupees of VS 1893 and 1894  
bear the mark: )

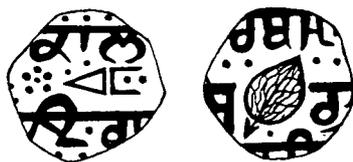
The *katar* on 01.35 occurs in different varieties:



01.36

CU  
VS 1885

Obverse mark:   
(between top and middle line)



01.37

CU  
VS 1885

Obverse mark: 



01.38

CU  
VS 1885

01.38A

Reverse mark: 

01.38B



(The rupee type 01.17.04  
shows a similar tip of the  
leaf.)



01.39

CU  
VS 1885

Reverse mark: 



## B 2. Coins with an undivided obverse inscription and an additional horizontal middle line

The only characteristic element varying on subtype B2 is the additional reverse mark on the right of the leaf.



01.40

CU  
VS 1885

Reverse mark: 



01.41

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark  
or:



01.42

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark.



01.43

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark:



01.44

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark:



01.45

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark:



01.46

As 01.40 but  
reverse mark:



B 3: Coins with *Sahai Gur* divided by a mark



01.50

CU  
VS 1885

Obverse mark:   
(Rupees of VS 1895 bear the  
mark: )



01.50A

Marks: 



01.50B

obverse marks: 



01.51

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: 



01.52

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: 



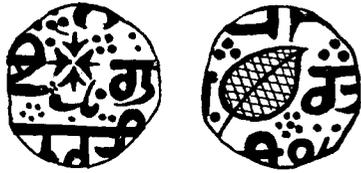
01.53

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: 



01.54

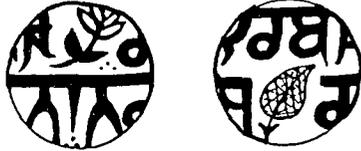
As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: 



01.55

CU

As 01.50 but  
obverse marks:



01.56

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark:



01.57

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark:



01.58

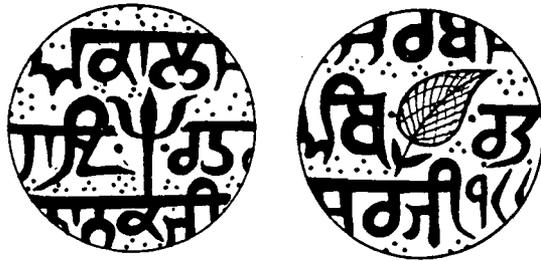
As 01.50 but  
obverse mark:  
(Rupees of VS 1898-1901  
bear the mark: )



01.59

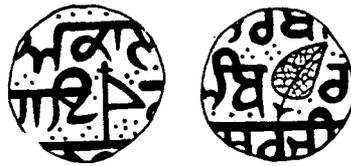
As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: Tiger

The tiger may refer to Sher Singh. Although he was first proclaimed Maharaja on 5 November 1840, his reign actually only began on 18 January 1841 AD. Sher Singh was assassinated on 15 September 1843 by Ajit Singh.



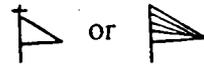
01.60

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark:   
(Rupees of VS 1898  
and 1899 bear the mark: )

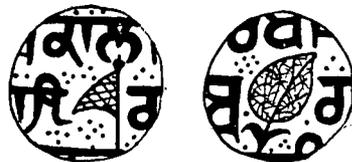


01.61

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: flag to the right

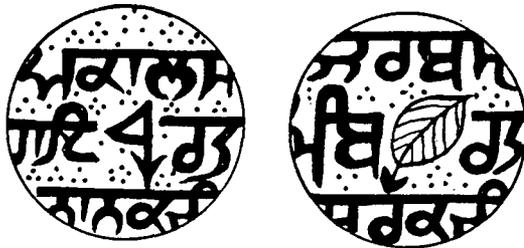


On a coin of type 01.61 [Amritsar 11] Valentine read: *SAHAI RATSAR*. As other coins of the same type show a correct legend; such a misspelled inscription could have been the result of a die-cutter's error, but I think that Valentine misread his coin.



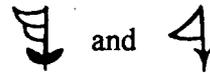
01.62

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: flag to the left 

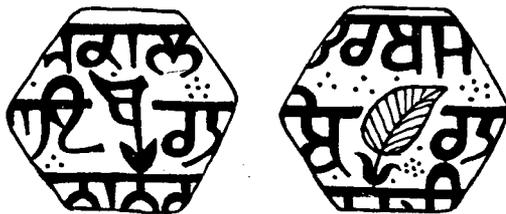


01.63

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark: flag with 2 leaves



(Rupees of VS 1902 and 1903  
bear the mark: )



On coins of type 01.63 the flag occurs in various forms:

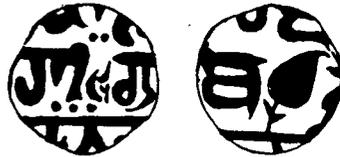




01.64

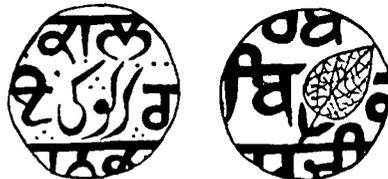
As 01.50 but  
obverse mark sword

Various forms of the sword occur on 01.64:



01.65

The mark  probably stands for 85 and possibly for VS 1885, the common date on this class of Amritsar Paisas.

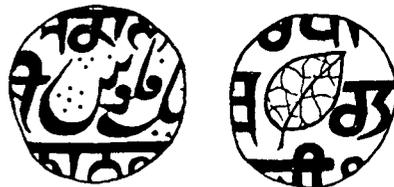


01.66

As 01.50 but with the word:

 *DĒVAKĪ,*

the name of the wife of Vasudeva and Lord Krishna's mother, in the place of the usual obverse mark.



01.67

As 01.50 but with the words:

 *ĒK FULŪS*

in the place of the obverse mark.



01.68

As 01.50 but  
obverse mark:



01.69



As 01.50 but  
on the obverse a Nagari number  
**१५६** (196), which may or may  
not stand for VS 1906.

**C. Copper coins with the *AKAL SAHAI GUR NANAKJI*  
obverse of type B and various Gurumukhi reverse inscriptions**

01.70

CU Paisa

VS ?

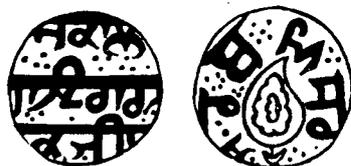


01.70A



01.70B

Reverse: Only a part of the inscription has been read: *GŪRŪ NĀNA KJĪ*



01.71

CU Paisa

VS ?

Reverse: The reverse legend has only been partially read:

*JARABA SRĪ (?) SARA (?)*

**D. Coins with a Gurumukhi obverse inscription  
and the *JARABA SRI AMBRATSARJI* reverse of type B**

There seem to exist several varieties of type D but as they were usually badly struck to begin with and often later overstruck, their inscriptions can hardly ever be read. The following coin, which is not too rare, has already been published by Valentine:



01.72

CU Paisa  
VS ?

Obverse: in Gurumukhi

ਅਕਾਲ  
ਦੇਵੀ  
... ਦਨਜੀ

ĀKĀL  
DĒVAKI  
NAMDANAJI

(Devaki is the mother, Namdana  
one of the many names of Lord  
Krishna.)

This reading, which appears rather more plausible than the one given by me earlier, was proposed by Devendra Handa, who wrote: "*We feel that the first letter in the last line is out of flan and that it was Nam. We therefore restore the complete legend on this side as Akala Devaki Namdana ji.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DEVENDRA HANDA: "Sikh Coin with an Enigmatic Legend" in: *Numismatic Circular*, October 1993, p. 248.

### E. Coins with a Gurumukhi inscription on the obverse and a Persian inscription on the reverse

This type of coins exists in many different varieties. They are usually attributed to Amritsar but could also be from Lahore.

01.80

CU Paisa  
c. 10 g  
VS 1900, 1901

The dates on this type are often  
botched, e.g. 191 or 1911 for 1901.



Obverse: In Gurumukhi

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ  
ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰੀ

BĀBĀ NĀNA  
K JĪ SAHĀĪ

Lord Nanak helps.

*Baba*, a Turki word meaning *father*, became a honorific title used for Muslim, Hindu and Sikh holy men and for old and wise men in general.

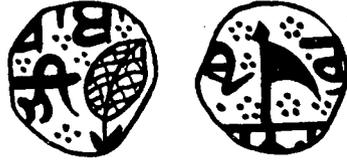
Reverse:

یا فلول

ĒK FULŪS

One Fulus

## F. Mules



01.81

CU Paisa

# 01.81 is a mule of the obverses of # 01.61 and 01.80.

Various types of other irregular Amritsar copper coins combining 2 obverses -- e.g. 01.61 and 01.63 -- are also known.

## 02 ANANDGHAR

انندگھر

The Anandghar rupees are, like the rupees of the unidentified mints A and F and several rupee series bearing the mint name Amritsar, part of the *Misl* coinage produced in the decade after VS 1841. As all the coins of this coinage are scarce or rare and some subtypes even unique and as we almost certainly do not know all the types of the Anandghar series, the numbering system chosen for this section of the catalogue must be considered tentative.

Rodgers and his successors, who all seem to have confused the two words:

and  *ghar* (house, home)

 *garh* (fort),

have attributed the rupees bearing the mint name *Anandghar* to *Anandgarh*, the fortress built by Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur, a place that never had a mint coining rupees.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that *Anandghar* and *Anandgarh* are synonyms --- comparable to names like *Jainagar* and *Jaipur* --- but as I have not been able to find a single instance where *GHAR* and *GARH* were indiscriminately used in the same place name, this theory does not seem to be valid.

The Gobindshahis 01.18 of Amritsar and the Anandghar rupees are very similar; they differ only in a few elements of the respective reverse designs: the mint name, the mark and an unexplained *era year*. The actually available material does not permit an absolutely convincing comparison, but it looks as if in some cases the same and often rather worn out obverse dies were used for Gobindshahis of Amritsar and Anandghar.

The Anandghar rupees, which do not bear a mint name in the strict sense of the word, i.e. The name of a town or a district, were most probably struck at Amristasr, either by the mint, that struck the Gobindshahis 01.18 or an other mint.

*Anand* means: *bliss* or *happiness* and *Anandghar* is the *House of Bliss*, a designation that probably stands for some institution or possibly even an actual building at Amritsar.<sup>2</sup>

1 On some rupees the word *Anandghar* is followed by a letter, a numeral or a mark, which is difficult to interpret, but which definitely is not the Persian letter *H: ħ*.

2 Surinder Singh advanced (in a letter to the author of 12 February 1990) the theory that *Anandghar* is a corruption of *Angarh*, the name of a place outside the *Treasury Gate*, one of the twelve gates of Amritsar. From a linguistic viewpoint it is extremely difficult to believe in the transformation of *Angarh* into *Anandghar*, and as long as it is not supported by some documentary evidence this hypothesis must be considered highly speculative.



02.01.04

AR Rupee  
10.8 gVS 1840 (?)  
1841 / *ahd*  
1842

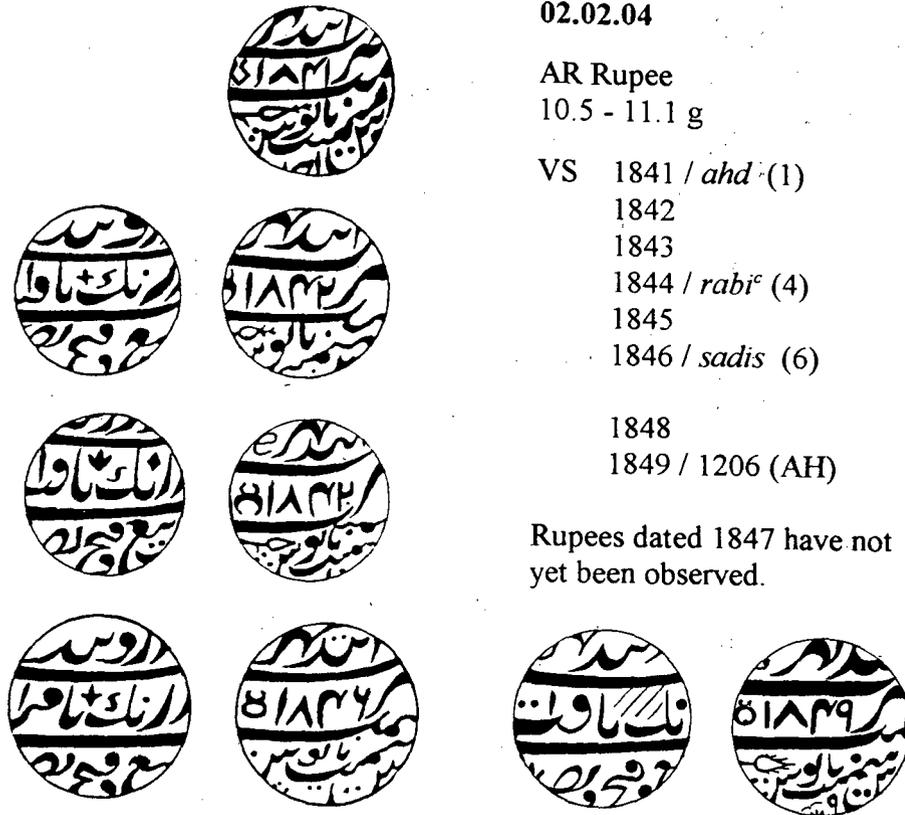
Obverse : The Gobindshahi couplet and AH year arranged as on Amritsar 01.18.  
The year of an unidentified era starting in VS 1840 or 1841 added at the bottom of the inscription after *FATH*. (This year has only actually been observed on a rupee dated VS 1841 / *ahd*).

Reverse : As Amritsar 01.18, but with the mint name *Anandghar* and different marks.

Main mark:



The very rare Anandghar rupees of VS 1840 are presumably of the type 02.01.04 but coins of this year showing the bottom of the obverse and reverse inscriptions have unfortunately not yet been found or published.



02.02.04

AR Rupee

10.5 - 11.1 g

VS 1841 / *ahd* (1)

1842

1843

1844 / *rabi*<sup>c</sup> (4)

1845

1846 / *sadis* (6)

1848

1849 / 1206 (AH)

Rupees dated 1847 have not  
yet been observed.

Obverse: As 02.01.04, but without an additional year (?).

Reverse: As 02.01.04, but with the year of an unexplained era beginning in VS 1840 or 1841 added in Arabic words after the *sin* of *julus*.<sup>3</sup>

Main marks:  (several var.) and  (1841),  (1841),  
 (1846),  (1846),  (1849)



02.03.04

AR Rupee

VS 1841 / *ahd*

Obverse: As 02.01.04.

Reverse: As 02.02.04. Main mark: .

Of # 02.03.04, which shows the word *ahd* on the obverse and the reverse, a single coin is known. This is clearly not a regular issue, but a mule of a 02.01 obverse and a 02.02 reverse.

<sup>3</sup> The coins of the Amritsar type 01.18.04 seem to be dated according to the same era.



02.04.04

AR Rupee

VS 1841 / *ahd.*

Obverse: As 02.02.04, but with the word: *akar* added after *fath*.<sup>4</sup>

Reverse: As 02.02.04. Main mark: ۞.



02.05.04

AR Rupee

VS 1842

Obverse: As 02.01 or 02.02.

Reverse: As 02.01 or 02.02, but with different marks. Main mark: ۞.

# 02.05 could in reality be # 02.01 or 02.02, but this question can only be answered when a coin showing the lower parts of the inscriptions becomes available.



02.06.04

AR Rupee

VS 1841 / *ahd* / 7

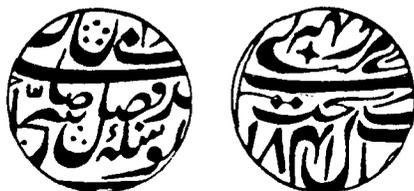
Obverse: As 02.02.04

Reverse: As 02.02.04, but V (7) added. Main marks: ۞ ۞

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the possible meaning of: *akar* see: Amritsar 01.20.04.

## 30 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT A

Like the Anandghar and some series of the Amritsar coinage the rupees of the unidentified mints A and F belong to the *Misl* coinage.



30.01.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V arranged as on Amritsar 01.05.04.

Reverse: only the lower part of the reverse legend has been completely read:



ZARB  
JULŪS MAĪMANAT  
BAKHT ĀKĀL TAKHT  
SANĀH (VS) 1841

„Struck under the prosperous rule of the fortunate Akal Takht“ is a reverse legend that first appeared at Amritsar

The part of the legend above ZARB seems to comprise the expression *SRI PŪRAKHJĪ* and possibly an other word. This rupee is clearly related to the Amritsar rupee series 01.05.04; although its legends do not seem to include a mint name, it may have been struck at Amritsar.

## 31 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT F



31.01.04

AR Rupee

GN 316

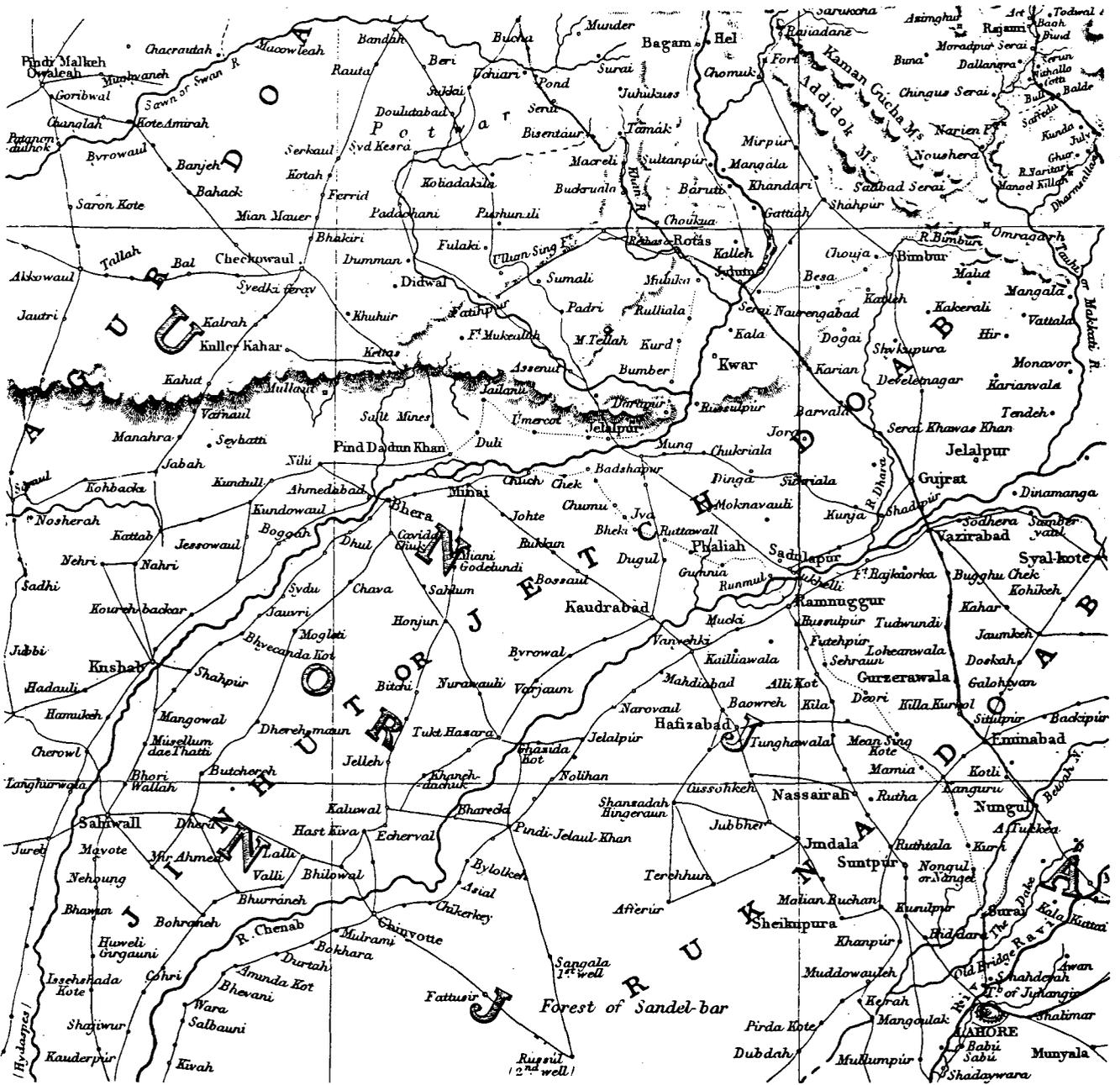
Obverse: Only *SHĀH NĀNAK* and parts of *GŌBIND* have been read on this coin.<sup>1</sup>

Reverse: Only parts of the the legend have been observed: *JULŪS BAKHT ĀKĀL TAKHT* and the year 316 of the Guru Nanak era (= VS 1842/43). The legend probably also includes the words: *SANĀH* and *ZARB* and possibly a mint name at the top.

---

<sup>1</sup> My illustration is based on what seems to be a rather bad rubbing transmitted to me by e-mail. The Indian owner of the as yet unique rupee did not provide a photo or additional information about his coin.

# The Salt Range



From: Map of the Punjab, Kashmir, Iskardu, & Ladakh;  
 Comprising the Dominions of Ranjeet Singh.  
 Compiled by John Arrowsmith and dedicated to Baron Hügel. London 1847.

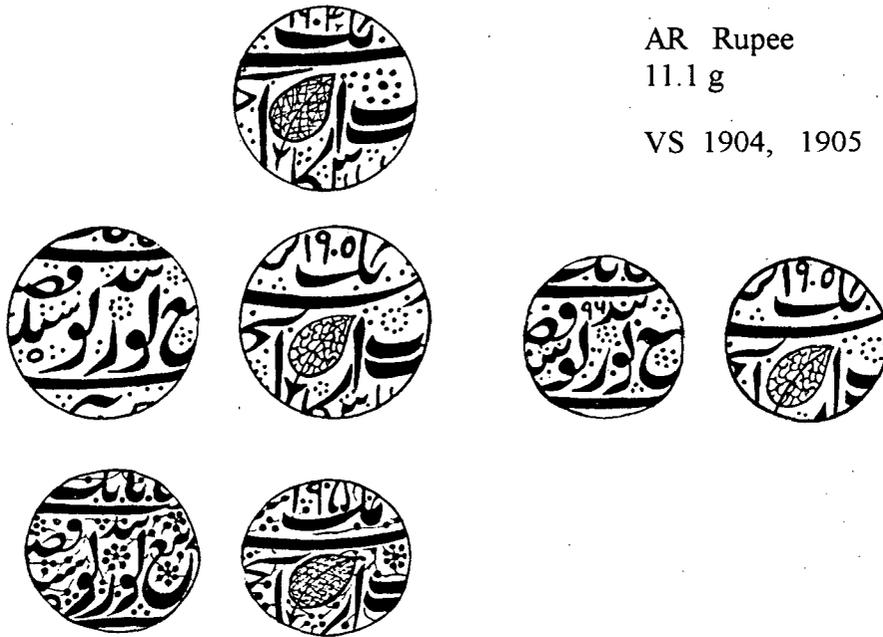
03 PIND DADAN KHAN<sup>1</sup>

03.01.04

AR Rupee

11.1 g

VS 1904, 1905



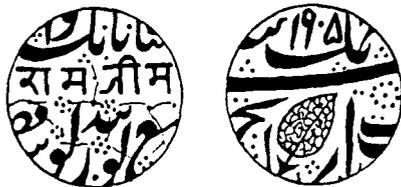
Obverse: The Nanakhshahi couplet V arranged as on Amritsar 01.07.

The 96, which occurs on a coin of VS 1905 in the *Puddester Collection* may not just be a mark, but stand for [VS 18]96 and point to the use of an obverse die made for an earlier, yet unknown rupee.

Reverse: As Amritsar 01.07, but with 2 words, which have never been completely read, in the place normally occupied by the mint name.

<sup>1</sup> In the 1<sup>st</sup> edition: *Unknown Sikh Mint A*.

03.02.04



AR Rupee

11.1 g

VS 1905

Obverse: As 03.01, but *SAHIB* is replaced by an inscription of which only a part has been observed. The inscription could be in Gurmukhi and read:

ਰਾ ਮ ਜੀ ਮ ...*KĀSAJĪ SA* ...,

but it seems more probable that it is in Nagari:

... *RAM JI M* ...

Reverse: # 03.01 and 03.02 are basically *Nanakshahis* of the Amritsar type 01.07 bearing a different "mint name" which Rodgers read:

نمک *NIMAK*

*Nimak* is a popular pronunciation of the Persian and Urdu word: *namak* [salt]. Rodgers attributed the rupees to a mint at *Pind Dadan Khan*, a town at the foot of the Salt Range and on the river Jhelum, the trading center for the salt mined near Khewra.<sup>2</sup> In a well researched paper Ms Jyoti Rai has shown that in 1847 AD the British in fact requested the Lahore Durbar to establish a mint at Pind Dadan Khan, which Ranjit Singh had occupied and annexed in 1797, for the recoinage of the light Afghan rupees still current in Hazara and the eastern parts of the Punjab.<sup>3</sup> This mint, which worked from October 1847 to late 1848, produced the *Nimak* rupees. Although documents calling Pind Dadan Khan *Nimak* have never been found, we still are not absolutely certain that the word *NIMAK* in the coin legend does not refer to the minting place but to the main commercial product of the region.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> C.J. RODGERS: "On the coins of the Sikhs" in: *JASB*, Vol. L. 1881.

When he came to power Ranjit Singh made the mining of salt a state monopoly. In 1830 Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Munshi Ram Das were allowed to farm the mines in the *Kohistan-i-namak*, the Salt Range in the Sind Sagar Doab. They paid the state Rs 800'000 annually and sold large quantities of salt in the Punjab. Mohan Lal, who visited Khewra in 1834, reported an annual revenue from the salt mines of Rs 1'800'000 and additional duties of Rs 200'000. (*Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan ...*, Calcutta 1834, p.24). Even in recent times the salt from Khewra, which was said to be of a better quality than the salt from the Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan, was sold in the bazars of North India under the name of *Lahori namak*.

For the rather detailed description of the salt mines by Alexander Burnes see: *Appendix 6* of this book.

<sup>3</sup> JYOTI RAI: "Unidentified Sikh mints -- proof of the existence of the mint at Nimak" in *ONS* 143: 13 - 15.

<sup>4</sup> These coins were recently and tentatively attributed to *Miani* (also spelled *Miyani* and on older maps *Mi-nai*), a town about 10 kilometers south of Pind Dadan Khan (R. SENIOR: "Nimak Mint Identified?" in: *ONS Newsletter* 129). After the research of JYOTI RAI this attribution, which rests on two highly uncertain assumptions, appears improbable.

Quite a number of coins of type 03.01.04 are known, but unfortunately not a single one shows the top of the reverse inscription. What can be read of the "mint name" is only:

نمک

*Namak* is followed by at least one additional word of which only fragments have yet been observed. Assuming that the reverse of these rupees does not bear the word: *zarb*, Charles Rodgers proposed the reading:

نمک شاہی

*NIMAK SHAHI*<sup>5</sup>

As two or three coins do show a part of a letter, that could be the *r* of *zarb*, I consider another reading more probable:

نمک شاہی

Although the occurrence of the expression: *namak shahi* [Salt coin] on a rupee does not seem entirely impossible, the reading of the word *shahi* is still far from confirmed.

<sup>5</sup> In: *Catalogue of the Coins in the Government Museum, Lahore* (p. 98, coin nr 122).

## 04 UNIDENTIFIED COPPER MINTS IMITATING COIN TYPES OF AMRITSAR <sup>1</sup>

It was the almost inescapable destiny of popular and widely circulating North Indian copper coins of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century --- and therefore also of the Amritsar Paisas --- to be imitated more or less closely at a host of usually unknown or at least unidentified country mints. The following coins are just a few samples of a vast class of coins which circulated and still are found together with genuine Amritsar coins.

Most of the imitations, which are usually lighter than the Amritsar prototypes, follow the general design of Sikh coins, but do not copy identifiable paisas. As they show, besides a very corrupt or illegible Gurumukhi legend, an attempt at a Persian inscription, they were probably struck at places outside the Sikh domain.



04.08.11

CU Paisa  
7.9 g

# 04.09 and 04.10, which are heavier than the average paisa of this group and show a highly stylized obverse inscription, were found at Peshawar:



04.09.11

CU Paisa  
9.8 g



04.10.11

CU Paisa  
10.3 g



04.13.11

CU Paisa  
8.6 g

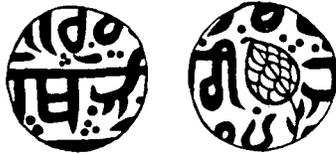


04.15.11

CU Paisa

Unlike most of the imitations the Paisas # 04.13.11 and 04.15.11 look like inapt copies of actual Amritsar coins.

<sup>1</sup> The chapters 04 and 18 of the 1<sup>st</sup> have been completely rearranged for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. As a consequence some coins had to be given a new number.

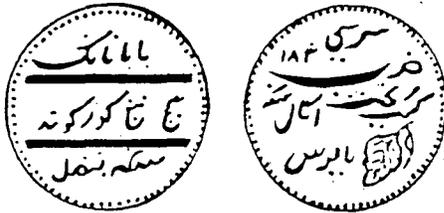


04.18.11

CU Paisa

Obverse: An unread Gurumukhi inscription.

Reverse: A leaf mark and an unread Gurumukhi inscription.



04.20.11

CU Paisa  
Diameter 27 mm

1830

Listed as a genuine coin by Valentine # 04.20 is in reality a rather clumsy pseudo-Sikh token. It simply shows the words, parts of words and the leaf commonly visible on *Nanakshahi* rupees of Amritsar in a slightly rearranged and incorrectly completed form. As the inscriptions of the rupees are almost always only partially legible this procedure inevitably had to result in a quite meaningless text on the token.

Prototypes of the token:

Obverse:



The partially legible *Shah Nanak* of the Nanakshahi rupee has become *Baba Nanak* on the token.

Reverse:



The designer of the token did not realize that he already had the *r* of *zarb* on his reverse; he therefore added the whole word once again.

The token 04.20 was probably struck in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century somewhere in North India. It could at best appeal to the illiterate part of the Sikh community; its purpose remains yet undiscovered.

## 05 DERA (Dera Ghazi Khan)



*Dera*, a Hindustani word meaning: *a dwelling, a habitation*, is a part of the names of several places in the Indus Valley.

The Mughals, the Durrani and, according to Rodgers, the Sikhs used the signature *Dera* on their coins struck at *Dera Ghazi Khan*.

The original town was founded at the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Ghazi Khan, a son of Haji Khan, a Baluch chieftain who, after governing the country for the Langah Sultan of Multan, had made himself independent. This town was washed away by the Indus river in 1908/09 and replaced by a new town.

After the fall and annexation of Multan (1818) Ranjit Singh sent in 1820 an army under Jarnadar Kushal Singh against the Nawab Zaman Khan of Dera Ghazi Khan. The Nawab, who still acknowledged the Durrani ruler at Kabul as his nominal suzerain, was easily defeated. His country fell as a fief of the Sikh State to the Nawab of Bahawalpur, who consented to pay an annual tribute to the Lahore Durbar, but who only ten years later was in his turn ousted from the Derajat by a Sikh army led by Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura\*.

Charles Masson travelled in the Derajat in December 1826 and visited Dera Ghazi Khan: *"Three or four miles beyond the river we entered the immense assemblage of date groves and gardens, amid which the large, populous, and commercial town of Dera Ghazi Khan is situated. ... The town of Dera Ghazi Khan, but a few years before the residence of a Durani governor, contained within its limits numerous vestiges, which denoting its present depressed political condition, also pointed to its former prosperity. Such were large brickbuilt residences, with extensive gardens, either desolated or occupied by humble tenants, and the public mosques, neglected and falling to decay. The bazars, with no pretensions to appearance, or even cleanliness, were still capacious and well supplied, and the merchants carried on a good trade, Dera being one of the commercial marts visited by the Lohani merchants of Afghanistan, while it does good business with the immediately adjacent parts.*

*During our stay here we spent our Christmas-day, and the abundance of every thing enabled us to regale ourselves bountifully, while we enjoyed the luxuries of fresh grapes, pears, and apples, brought by the traders from the orchards of Kabal [Kabul]. The nights here were particularly cold, and the days equally warm; indeed the vicissitudes of temperature at Dera render it an unhealthy place, and strangers are liable to intermittent and other fevers.*

*The Mahomedan inhabitants complained much of their misfortune in being under Sikh domination, while the Hindus joined with them in deprecating the rapacity of the Bahawalpur chief, who farms the revenues from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Both parties also united in regretting that the Durani power had passed away."*<sup>1</sup>

As a part of Ranjit Singh's kingdom, to which it was annexed in 1831, Dera Ghazi Khan had a small garrison of 500 men and was originally administered, together with the former state of Mankera, by the governor of Multan.

John Wood wrote in 1837: *"This town [Dera Ghazi Khan] stands on the alluvial bottom of the Indus, four miles inland, and upon the west bank of the stream. The country here for many miles round is inundated, and the town itself suffers when the river's periodical rise is unusually high. It is surrounded by date groves, from the produce of which the Seik government draw a considerable revenue. This town is admirably situated for traffic with the tribes among and beyond the mountains."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles MASSON: *Narrative of various journeys ...*, I, 31-33.

<sup>2</sup> Capt. John WOOD: *A Journey to the Source of the Oxus*, London 1841.

Alexander Burnes, who travelled together with Wood, remarked: "*On the right bank of the river [Indus] the province of Dera Ghazee Khan occupies the country as far as the mountains. It is a fertile territory, and the capital which bears its name is one of the largest towns on the Indus. It is surrounded by gardens and date-groves, and stands in a very rich country: it has been long numbered among the conquests of the Seikhs, who farmed it, till lately, to the Khan of Bahawalpur at an annual rent of six lacs of rupees; but as the district originally produced but four, every species of extortion was practised which led to its late resumption. The tract being remote from Runjeet Singh's dominions, he is anxious to hold it without requiring the services of his troops; and the Maharajah has given Dajil and some portion of the territory to the Brahooees, its former owners, on condition of military service.*"<sup>3</sup>

In later years Ranjit Singh made General Ventura governor of Dera Ghazi Khan; the Italian had to pay 1'150'000 rupees annually, almost twice as much as the Khan of Bahawalpur.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Dera Ghazi Khan was known as the *Gate of Khorasan*. In his *Journal of a Tour through the Punjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan, Khorasan and Part of Persia* Mohan Lal mentioned five different caravan routes leading from Dera Ghazi Khan through Qandahar to the trading centres of Afghanistan, Persia, Turkestan and Central Asia. (The most important of those routes was then and still is the one through the Bolan Pass to Baluchistan.)

Dera Ghazi Khan was an important market for indigo, which was sold to Afghanistan, Persia and Khorasan – to the latter for Rs 75'000 in 1835 -- but also to Bikaner in Rajasthan and a manufacturing centre for cotton textiles of great durability; in the 1830s 530 of its 1600 shops dealt in various kinds of cloth.

## The coinage of *Dera*

### Rupees

Rupees struck by the Sikhs at Dera Ghazi Khan are extremely rare. Rodgers catalogued a coin with the clearly legible mint name *Dera*,<sup>4</sup> but Goron/Wiggins have shown that another rupee, which Rodgers attributed to *Leiah*, a town east of Dera Fath Khan on the left bank of the river Indus, is in reality a *Dera* rupee too.<sup>5</sup> Two further *Dera* rupees, which very much resemble Rodgers' "*Leiah*" rupee, are in the collections of Saran Singh and Dr. Becker. All the coins show on the obverse a mark of two "letters" of which Rodgers said, that they stand for the word *Ram* in Nagari, but his reading is not really convincing. The mark is perhaps related to the two letters which appear on the latest rupees struck by the Sikhs at Dera Ismail Khan (07.07.04).

<sup>3</sup> Alexander BURNES: *Travels into Bokhara ...*, London 1834, III, 282. In 1911 Dera Ghazi Khan was swept away by the Indus. The new town lies 15 kilometers west of the Indus.

<sup>4</sup> *Catalogue of the Coins in the Government Museum, Lahore*.

<sup>5</sup> ONS Information Sheet No. 26. Rodgers published the Leiah rupee in his: *Catalogue of the Coins collected by Chas. J. Rodgers and purchased by the Government of the Punjab*.

05.01.04



AR Rupee

VS 1884 / [18]94

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ib and the year in which the coin was actually struck. Marks:  $\pi$   $\square$ .

Reverse: As Amritsar 01.07, but with the mint name: *Dera*.

05.02.04

AR Rupee  
11.0-11.1 gVS 1884 / 04  
1884 / 904

Obverse: As 05.01.04, but with an uncertain VS year. Marks:  $\pi$   $\square$ .

Reverse: As 05.01.04.

The rupees of Dera Ghazi Khan bear on the reverse the frozen year VS 1884 and another year on the obverse:

The *Dera* rupees of Saran Singh  
and Dr. Becker (# 05.01.04):

94

Rodgers' *Leiah* rupee:

94

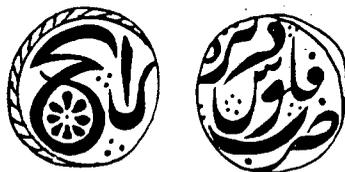
" *Dera* rupee:

.94

I believe that # 05.01.04 is the earliest type and that it shows the correct obverse year: VS [18]94. Rodgers' *Dera* and "*Leiah*" rupees are of inferior fabric and probably later.

Rodgers read the fragmentary date on the obverse of his *Dera* rupee as VS [19]04, but his completion of the VS year seems to me rather speculative.

## Copper coins



05.05.11

CU Paisa  
8.5-9.1 g

Obverse:

راج

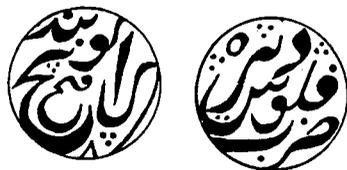
*RĀ'IJ*

Current

Reverse:

فلوس  
ضرب دیره*FULŪS ZARB DĒRĀ*

Fulus struck [at] Dera



05.06.11

CU Paisa  
8.5 g

VS 1898

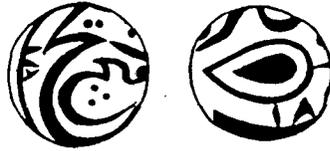
Obverse:

فتح گوبند راج

*FATH-I-GŌBIND RĀ'IJ*Gobind's Victory  
(or Victory to Gobind)  
Current

Reverse: As 05.05.11.

The year VS 1898 on the Paisa # 05.06.11 can be reconstructed from several coins with partially legible dates. As 1898 seems to be the only date occurring on the various types of copper coins of Dera Ghazi Khan it may represent a frozen year.



05.07.11

CU Paisa

VS 18xx

Obverse: Probably as 05.06.11.

Reverse: A leaf and an unread inscription.

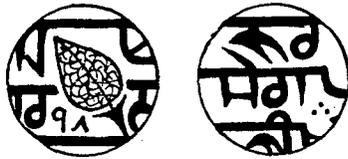
05.08.11

CU Paisa

Obverse: As the reverse of # 05.06.11.

Reverse: As # 05.07.

# 05.07.11 and 05.08.11 are probably Sikh paisas of Dera Ghazi Khan, but until coins with more complete inscriptions are found, the attribution must remain tentative.



05.10.11

CU Paisa

9.0 g

VS [18]98

Obverse: An unread Gurumukhi legend.

Reverse: The following reading of the Gurumukhi inscription is tentative, but plausible and probable:

ੜੱਬ  
ਪੇਗਖ  
ਜੀਖਨ

JARAB  
DHĒRĀ GHĀ  
JĪ KHAN

Struck [at] Dera Ghazi Khan

Pre-Sikh autonomous copper coins of Dera Ghazi Khan also bore the full name of the town in Persian script. Dera is normally spelled:

ڌيرہ or ڌيرہ  
ڌرہ

in Persian and

in Gurumukhi,

but the spelling *DHERA* is also known.



05.12.11

CU Paisa  
8.5-9.5 g

VS 1898

Obverse: <sup>6</sup>

शेर  
१८९८  
सिंह

SHĒR  
1898  
SINGH

The obverse legend presumably refers to *Maharaja Sher Singh* (20 January 1841-15 September 1843 AD) and the year 1898 to VS 1898 (1841), the accession year of the ruler.

Reverse:

ضرب ديرة

ZARB DĒRĀ

Of type 05.12.11 many varieties with different marks are known.

<sup>6</sup> In the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of this book I suggested a possible reading of the obverse legend similar to the obverse inscription of # 05.10.11. The correct reading was given by DEVENDRA HANDA in: "Copper Coins of Sher Singh" in: *Oriental Numismatic Studies* 1:193-198



From: *Map of the Punjab, Kashmir, Iskardu, & Ladakh; Comprising the Dominions of Ranjeet Singh.*  
 Compiled by John Arrowsmith, London 1847

Kashmir, which had passed from the Mughals to the Durrani in 1752 AD, was conquered in 1819 AD by a Sikh army under the command of Misr Diwan Chand, Ranjit Singh's most capable Indian general, and Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu.<sup>1</sup> Srinagar, the capital of the valley of Kashmir, was occupied on 5 July 1819.

After the oppressive Afghan rule the Kashmiris at first welcomed the Sikhs as liberators, but they were soon deceived. Before the appointment of Mihan Singh, the first *nazim* (governor) to receive a salary, Ranjit Singh simply used to fix the total amount of the annual revenue expected from Kashmir and then let the *ijaradars* (tax farmers) in the Valley enrich themselves at will by levying enormous sums from his Muslim subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Ranjit Singh had always been highly aware of the secessionist ambitions of some of the governors of his distant provinces, and after the death of the Maharaja Colonel Mihan Singh, the governor of Kashmir, effectively strove for at least a partial independence of Lahore. In this aspiration he was supported by Gulab Singh of Jammu, who then had become a purely nominal vassal of the Lahore Durbar and whose territories almost encircled Kashmir, but the attempt failed when Mihan Singh was assassinated by his rebellious soldiers on 17 April 1841.

After the first Sikh war the wily Gulab Singh came into possession of Kashmir through a treaty signed on 16 March 1846 at Amritsar by him and representatives of Sir Henry Hardinge, the British Governor-General. For the territory ceded by the bankrupt Sikh State of Lahore on 9 March 1846 the Raja of Jammu promised to pay the British 75 *lakhs* of Amritsar Nanakshahis, and he pledged to present to the British Government as a token of its supremacy an annual tribute of one horse, six pairs of shawl goats of an approved breed and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.

Srinagar was the capital as well as the chief manufacturing, trade and financial centre of Kashmir. The Valley produced arms, jewellery, paper, leather goods, aromatic oils and saffron – all of a superior quality - and exported those products, to the Punjab, Sind, British India, Ladakh and Tibet, but its economically most interesting product were its famous shawls, 19<sup>th</sup> century precursors of today's globally marketed luxury goods, which were already exported to all of India (through Amritsar), Persia, Central Asia and Russia, China and Europe. At its apogee the shawl industry employed 1/6 of the population of Srinagar and 16'000 looms in the Valley. It took a skilled worker many months to weave a shawl with an intricate and multicoloured design, but a simple shawl could be finished in less than 3 months. Whereas a shawl of average quality cost in Kashmir – according to von Hügel\* (c.1830) -- about Rs 200 and an expensive piece – according to Moorcroft (c.1820) – Rs 700, we learn from Alexander Burnes that Russian noblemen would pay up to Rs 12'000 for a pair.

- 
- 1 *Misr Diwan Chand*, originally a corn-weigher, was appointed by Ranjit Singh chief of the *topkhana* in 1814. In the final campaign against Multan he led a division under the nominal command of Prince Kharak Singh. After the conquest of Kashmir he was given the title: *Zafar jang fateh o nusrat*. In 1821 Diwan Chand took the town and fort of Bhakkar; he died on 19 July 1825.
  - 2 According to AMAR NATH (*Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, pp. 163 and 176) the province of Kashmir was given in *ijara* to Nizam Diwan Chuni Lal for Rs 2'750'000 and to his successor, Diwan Kirpa Ram, for Rs 2'600'000.

As Goron / Wiggins have shown, some of Ranjit Singh's governors in Kashmir left their personal marks on the locally struck silver and copper coins.<sup>3</sup> Although the various sources often disagree on the exact terms of office of the early *nazims* at Srinagar, a list of these officials is undoubtedly of some numismatic interest:

### The Sikh Governors of Kashmir

Governor	AD	VS	marks :
Diwan Moti Ram	End of 1819-1820	1876-1877	
Hari Singh Nalwa <sup>4</sup>	1820-1821	1877-1878	
Diwan Moti Ram (2 <sup>nd</sup> governorship)	Dec. 1821-spring 1825	1878-1882	
Gurmak Singh (acting go- vernor) <sup>5</sup>	1825	1882	
Diwan Chuni Lal	1825-end of 1826	1882-1883	
Diwan Kirpa Ram <sup>6</sup>	Early 1827-1830	1883-1887	ك
Maha Singh (for 1 month after Kirpa Ram)	1830	1887	
Bhima Singh Ardali <sup>7</sup>	Summer 1830-1831	1887-1888	ب ق
Sher Singh <sup>8</sup>	1831-1834	1888-1891	ش
Diwan Vesaka Singh (acting governor for Sher Singh)	1831-1832	1888-1889	
Shaik Gholam Muhyi ad- din + Jamadar Kushal Singh (acting governors for Sher Singh)	1832-1834	1889-1891	
Mihan Singh Kumedan <sup>9</sup>	July 1834-17April 1841	1891-1898	ش
Shaikh Gholam Muhyi ad- din <sup>10</sup>	April 1841-1845	1898-1902	ش
Shaik Imam ad-din Amir al-mulk Bahadur <sup>11</sup>	1845-November 1847	1902-1903	ش

<sup>3</sup> ONS Information Sheet No. 25.

<sup>4</sup> The famous general *Hari Singh Nalwa* was an efficient but also a rapacious and therefore highly unpopular go-vernor.

<sup>5</sup> *Gurmak Singh* was the brother of the later governor *Mihan Singh*.

<sup>6</sup> *Kirpa Ram*, the son of Diwan Moti Ram, appears under some strange names in travellers' reports: Dr. Joseph Wolff\* called him: *Kriss Bararam*, G.T. Vigne\*: *Kurpa Ram*.

<sup>7</sup> *Bhima Singh* was called *Bomassi Singh* by Baron von Hügel\*.

<sup>8</sup> *Kanwar* [Prince] *Sher Singh* was the nominal governor of Kashmir during the great famine of 1833 and, together with the acting governor Vesaka Singh, a major contributor to the economic ruin of the Valley.

<sup>9</sup> *Kumedan* was the title of an officer commanding a Sikh infantry battalion.

<sup>10</sup> *Shaik Gholam Muhyi ad-din* had already served as *mukhtar-i-kar* [deputy] under Kirpa Ram and, together with Kushal Singh, one of Ranjit Singh's favourites, as acting governor during the governorship of Prince Sher Singh.

<sup>11</sup> *Shaik Imam ad-din* was the son of Shaik Gholam Muhyi ad-din, his predecessor.

## The mint names on the coins of Kashmir

Muslim rulers had traditionally used the mint name *Kashmir*, a name that stood for the whole Valley as well as for Srinagar, its capital. On Sikh coins we find *Kashmir* and *Sri Kashmir* for the town of Srinagar as well as a separate expression referring to the whole Valley: *Khitta Kashmir* (District Kashmir). A few copper coins show the mint name *Srinagar* which later became usual under the Dogra Maharajas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mint names in Persian script:

خطہ کشمیر	<i>KHITTĀ KASHMĪR</i> (District Kashmir)
کشمیر	<i>KASHMĪR</i> (Srinagar)
سری کشمیر	<i>SRĪ KASHMĪR</i> (Srinagar)
سری نگر	<i>SRĪNĀGAR</i>

Mint names in Gurumukhi script:

ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ	<i>KASHMĪR</i>
ਕਸ਼ਮਰ	<i>KASHMAR</i>
ਖ਼ਿਤਾ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ	<i>KHITA KASHMĪR</i>

All the coins with Kashmiri mint names were probably struck at Srinagar, but most of the copper coins do not seem to be products of the government mint.

## The rupees circulating in Kashmir

Information about the Sikh coinage of Kashmir and especially the rupees is theoretically available in Indian documents and the accounts of foreign travellers. Unfortunately even authors writing at about the same time are rarely in accordance and their statements are often confusing and sometimes even definitely erroneous. Many of their assertions could only be proved or disproved by a systematic assay of the different types of Kashmiri rupees.

The standard silver coin of the late Mughal Empire was the Delhi or Shahjahanabad rupee. The Mughal rupees issued from mints under the direct control of the emperor showed from the time of Akbar to the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Shah 'Alam II a rather uniform silver content of 11.2 - 11.3 g. Mughal rupees struck in Kashmir and still circulating under the Afghans and Sikhs were locally known as *Muhammad Shahi* rupees and valued at about 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Annas of the Nanakshahi or the British *Sicca* rupee.

Later Durrani rupees from Kashmir are slightly lighter (10.8 - 11.2 g) than Mughal coins. In 1812 AD they were valued at 9-10 Annas of the contemporary British *Sicca* rupee.<sup>12</sup>

The first Sikh rupees of Kashmir were probably struck in 1819 according to the standard of the last rupees in the name of Ayyub Shah, but in 1820 Hari Singh Nalwa introduced a new Kashmir rupee.<sup>13</sup> This coin became known as the *Hari Singhi shahi* or the *chota rupiya*. G.T. Vigne\*, who travelled in Kashmir between 1835 and 1839, called the *chota rupiya* the "*small rupee*". The literal translation of *chota* is of course: *small* and the diameter of late *Hari Singhi shahis* was in fact often only 19 mm, but the Indian name of the coins probably refers to their reduced value and not to their small size.

The *chota rupiya* was the common silver coin of Kashmir and of the shawl trade from 1820 AD to the end of the Sikh rule in 1846 and the predecessor of the rupee of the Dogra Maharajas.

Vigne, who probably left the most comprehensive description of Kashmir under the rule of the Sikhs, quoted prices of goods, wages and tax returns exclusively in "*small rupees*".

Dr. Joseph Wolff reported in 1832 that:

1'800 <i>Kashmiri</i> rupees	= =	<i>Pounds</i> British
or 1 <i>Kashmiri</i> rupee	=	1 <i>sh</i> 2.22 <i>d</i> British

Vigne noted a few years later the following equivalents of the *chota rupiya* (Wolff's *Kashmiri* rupee):

1 <i>chota rupiya</i>	=	1 <i>sh</i> 4 <i>d</i> British (= 6.975 g of silver)
	=	<sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> of a <i>Sicca</i> rupee (= 7.08 g of silver)

Bar Baron von Hügel\* gave in 1835 the following exchange rate:

1 <i>Hari Singhi</i> rupee	=	<sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub> <i>Nanakshahis</i>
----------------------------	---	--

The available information from various sources shows that the *chota rupiya* (which weighed about 11g) was a rather base coin with a silver content of approximately 65%.

12 According to MIR IZZET ULLAH: *Travels in Central Asia in the year 1812-13*, Calcutta 1872, p.4.

13 The silver content of the rupees of several Sikh governors of Kashmir is mentioned in literary works. As it is regularly given in *dangs*, a weight unit ranging in contemporary sources from 0.6 - 1.6 grams, this information is unfortunately quite useless.

By introducing new types of rupees in Kashmir and later at Peshawar Hari Singh Nalwa seems to have tried to facilitate the trade of the territories under his administration, territories whose principal trade partners were at this time the regions of the future North West Frontier Province and eastern Afghanistan. As silver rupees struck to the light weight standard of Kabul were the customary trade coins of these parts, Hari Singh reasonably adopted the same standard.

To boost exports or to meet a shortage of silver governor Mihan Singh introduced in 1836 AD a new *Hari Singhi* rupee with a value reduced by 1 - 2 Annas.<sup>14</sup> The silver content of this coin --- approximately 50% --- seems to have remained unchanged till the end of the Sikh rule in Kashmir.<sup>15</sup>

### The copper coins of Kashmir

Under the Mughals the most common copper coin in Kashmir was the *Hath*, a coin which originally was of the same value as the Mughal *Dam* ( $=\frac{1}{40}$  rupee) and later corresponded with the *Pice* ( $\frac{1}{64}$  rupee).

Copper coins of the Sikh period sometimes bear the word *Fulus*, a name that was often given to the *Paisa*, but which can also simply mean: *copper coin*. Von Hügel mentioned copper coins worth about one *Pau*, a Kashmiri coin of account equivalent to  $\frac{1}{5}$  *Anna*.<sup>16</sup>

Although reliable information concerning the striking of copper coins in Kashmir is lacking, the multitude of different types and remarks in official documents indicate that the minting rights for copper were normally leased to contractors producing the number of coins and the „denominations“ which the market was ready to absorb.<sup>17</sup>

Even if the Kashmiri copper coins were called *Fulus*, *Paisa*, *Pice* or *Pau* they were not part of a fiduciary coinage. The following extract of a British Intelligence Report – written shortly after Mihan Singh reduced the silver content of the Hari Singhi rupee in 1836 – clearly shows that there was some government control of the number of copper coins in circulation and that the value of those coins was mainly, but not exclusively a function of the copper price: „*The bankers of the city have been ordered to keep not more than rupees worth 40 of pice in their shops ready for sale. Formerly 40 pice were sold for a rupee while at present the bankers have been directed to sell them at the rate double of that amount for the rupee.*“<sup>18</sup>

At the time of the Sikh occupation of Kashmir *Badam* [bitter almonds] and *Cowries* were still used for change in small business transactions. 1 *Anna* was then about equal to 100 almonds or 400 *cowries*.

14 *Intelligence Report from Kashmir*, 18 August - 22 October 1836: "The old coin has been discontinued and a new one circulated. For the sake of a thrifing profit to Government, the bankers have been made to suffer severe loss. The old rupee was valued 11 annas, but it has been reduced to 9 annas old."

15 According to GANESHI LAL (*Siyahat-i-Kashmir*, p. 36) in 1846 equal quantities of alloy --- mainly copper --- and silver were mixed to coin *Hari Singhi* rupees.

16 Von Hügel: *op. cit.* See also: Appendix I. The *Pau* was theoretically worth  $\frac{1}{60}$  of a rupee, but in practice there was no difference between the *Pau* and the *Pice*.

17 In MOORCROFT's list of the taxes paid by merchants and artisans of Srinagar in the early 1820's (*MS EUR D 264*, pp. 115-119) we find the entry:

*Zerrub Khaneh* [Mint house]: *Coiners of copper money, the whole trade per year Rs 40.*

Moorcroft's note shows that there were coiners of copper coins outside the government mint. The amount annually paid by them to the government is very small and only equal to the monthly tax of a single blacksmith shop, but as the tax rates seem to have been fixed in a rather arbitrary way, the Rs 40 do not say much about the size and importance of the copper mint.

18 *Intelligence Report from Kashmir*, 18 August - 22 October 1836.

## Catalogue of the Sikh coins of Kashmir

## The regular rupees



06.01.04

AR Rupee  
11.6 g

VS 1876

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet I c:

دیا تہ فتح و  
 ایزانا گوبے گو بنو  
 نصرت بیورنگیا

Reverse:

ضرب  
 سمیت  
 کشمیر  
 خطہ

ZARB  
 [VS year]  
 SAMBAT  
 KASHMIR  
 KHITTĀ

Struck in the [VS] year ... [in the /  
for the] Kashmir District



06.02.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 - 11.3 g

VS 1876



Obverse: As 06.01.04. Marks: variants of a sprig:  or a flower:  /   
 Reverse: As 06.01.04, but the VS year is divided by the leaf mark.



06.03.04

AR Rupee  
11.0-11.2 gVS 1877  
1878

Obverse: As 06.01.04.

Reverse:

VS year  
 كشمير  
 خط  
 ميمانت مانوس  
 جالوس

ZARB  
 SAMBAT ...  
 KHITTĀ KASHMĪR  
 JULŪS MAĪMANAT MĀNŪS

Struck in the [VS] year .... du-  
 ring the prosperous reign [in the /  
 for the] Kashmir District.

Many different designs of the leaf mark can be seen on these rupees, but they are hardly distinctive enough to define separate types.

Goron / Wiggins thought that they had observed the Gurumukhi letters **JT** (HA) added to the sprig on the obverse of a coin dated VS 1877 and the Gurumukhi letter **J** (HA) on a coin of the year 1878.<sup>18</sup>



Illustration by Goron / Wiggins showing the alleged HA added to the stem of the sprig on the obverse.

A close inspection of all the available coins of this type leads to the view that Goron / Wiggins fell prey to an oversophisticated assumption. The sprig occurs on these rupees in a number of different forms and the "Gurumukhi letters" are, in my opinion, simply leaves added to its stem.

Some sprigs observed on rupees of type 06.03.04:



06.04.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1878

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a sprig of a different design.

Reverse: As 06.03.04.

Some rupees struck under Hari Singh Nalwa in VS 1878 and 1879 in Kashmir bear the words *HAR* or *HARJI* in Gurumukhi or in Nagari script. These coins gave probably rise to the widespread conviction that Maharaja Ranjit Singh authorized his governor in Kashmir to strike coins in his own name.

It is evident that *HAR* and *HARJI* -- words which primarily mean: *God* -- on the rupees of Hari Singh or *SRI RAM* on coins of Diwan Moti Ram must be understood as oblique references to the *nazim's* names, but the very fact that the names appear in a religious disguise seems to prove that the governors acted without Ranjit Singh's express permission. (The ambiguous forms of the governor's names on the coins may have been inspired by a famous precedent, the *Allahu Akbar* on rupees of the Mughal emperor Akbar.)



06.05.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 gVS 1878  
1879

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with Gurumukhi **ੜ** (*HAR*) in place of the sprig.  
Reverse: As 06.03.04



06.06.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1879

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with Nagari **हर** (*HAR*) in place of the sprig.  
Reverse: As 06.03.04.



06.07.04

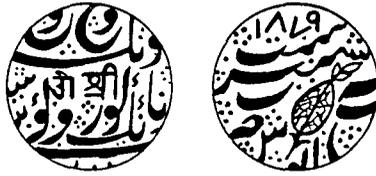
AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1879

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with Nagari **हरजी** (*HARJĪ*) in place of the sprig.  
Reverse: As 06.03.04.

According to the most reliable sources Hari Singh was recalled from Kashmir in VS 1878. For the rupees struck in VS 1879 and bearing the words HAR and HARJĪ old obverse dies may have been used.

The rupees 06.10.04 - 06.12.04 were struck during the 2<sup>nd</sup> governorship of Diwan Moti Ram:



06.10.04

AR Rupee

11.0 g

VS 1879

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with Nagari **ओ श्री** (*ŌM SRĪ*) in place of the sprig.

Reverse: As 06.03.04.



06.11.04 A + B

AR Rupee

11.0 g

VS 1880

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the words: **سریرام** (*SRĪ RĀM*) in Persian script.

Reverse: A: as 06.03.04

B: as A, but with a dagger across the stem of the leaf.



06.12.04

AR Rupee

11.0 - 11.1 g

VS 1881

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a flower mark:  in the place of the sprig.

Reverse:

VS year  
سمیت  
کشمیر کا  
خطہ زر

SAMBAT ....  
ĀKĀL SAHĀĪ  
KHITTĀ KASHMĪR  
ZARB

The dates of the next issue fall in the governorships of Diwan Moti Ram and Diwan Chuni Lal:



06.15.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 - 11.1 g

VS 1881, 1882, 1883

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a flag:  in the place of the sprig.

Reverse: As 06.12.04,

Type 06.16.04 was struck under Diwan Chuni Lal:



06.16.04

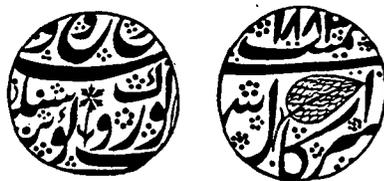
AR Rupee

VS 1883

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a flower mark:  or  in the place of the sprig.

Reverse: As 06.12.04.

The rupees 06.18.04 - 06.29.04 are issues of Diwan Kirpa Ram:



06.18.04

AR Rupee

VS 1883

Obverse: As 06.16, but with a Persian  (K), the initial of Kirpa Ram, added.

Reverse: As 06.12.04.



06.19.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1883

Obverse: As 06.18.04, but without the flower mark.

Reverse: As 06.12.04.



06.20.04

AR Rupee  
11.5 g

Date unread

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with  $\text{ك ر ا م}$  (*K RĀM*) added.

Reverse: As 06.12.04.



06.21.04

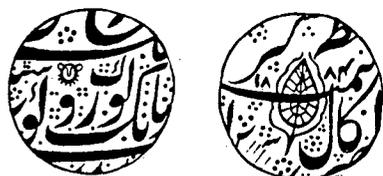
AR Rupee  
11.2 g

VS 1884

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the marks:  $\star \text{ك}$  added

Reverse: As 06.12.04, but with a differently arranged inscription.

(In his paper: „A Hoard of Sikh Coins of Kashmir“, *ONS* 168: 16-17, Nicholas Rhodes misread the word *sahāi* in the reverse legend of this coin type as *shahāb* [a bright star]).



06.22.04

AR Rupee

VS 1884

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the marks:  $\text{ك}$  added.

Reverse: As 06.21.04.



06.23.04

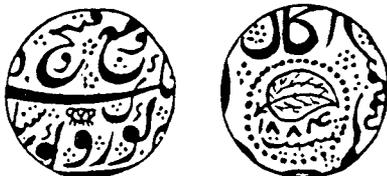
AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1884

Obverse: As 06.12.04.

Reverse: Inscription as on 06.12.04, but: *SAMBAT 1884* in a central lozenge, *ZARB AKAL SAHAI KHITTA KASHMIR* around the lozenge. (Different arrangements of these words have been observed.)

06.24.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1844

Obverse: As 06.22.04.

Reverse: As 06.23.04, but with a dotted circle instead of the lozenge.

06.26.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1885

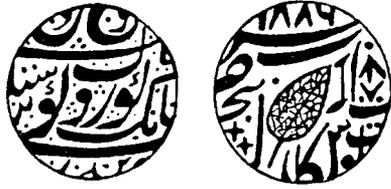
Obverse: As 06.22.04, but with marks: ل ه

Reverse: An imitation of an Amritsar reverse:

سری  
کشمیر  
VS year  
میمنت اکالتخت  
جلوس کال مانوس  
ضرب

*SRI KASHMIR*  
*BAKHT AKAL TAKHT*  
(VS year)  
*JULUS MAIMANAT MANUS*  
*ZARB*

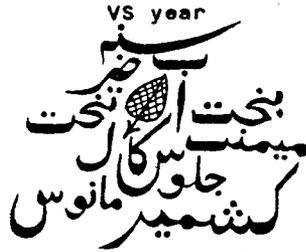
06.27.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1886

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but a Persian ك (K) added.

Reverse:



(VS year)

SANĀH

ZARB

BAKHT ĀKĀL TAKHT

JULŪS MAĪMANAT MĀNUS

KASHMĪR

Additional reverse marks: and

The reverse inscription of type 06.27.04 (and the following types) has been misread by Goron / Wiggins. On the coins known to me the word *KASHMIR* at the bottom of the reverse is never more than partially legible, but *SANĀH* --- at the top --- is often quite clear.

06.28.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 g

VS 1886

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the marks: added.

Reverse: As 06.27.04, but with mark:



06.29.04

AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.0 g  
( $\sigma$  often only 19 mm)

VS 1886, 1887

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the marks:   added.

Reverse: As 06.27.04, but with the *VS* year below *ZARB* and divided by the leaf mark.



06.31.04

AR Rupee

VS 1887

This rupee seems to be a mule:

Obverse: As 06.15.04 (*of VS 1881-1883*).

Reverse: As 06.29.04 (*of VS 1887*).

The rupees 06.35.04 - 06.37.04 were struck when Bhima Singh Ardali was governor of Kashmir:



06.35.04

AR Rupee  
10.8 g

VS 18(88?)

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a sprig  and a Persian  (*B*) for *Bhima Singh*.

Reverse: As 06.29.04. In the *lam* of *Akal*: . (Possibly a Persian *B* for *Bhima Singh*.)

06.36.04

AR Rupee  
10.75 - 10.9 g

VS 1888

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a Persian ب (B) for *Bhima Singh* instead of a sprig.

Reverse: As 06.29.04 or possibly 06.35.04.

Rupees of type 06.36.04 are generally rather small ( $\varnothing$  19-20 mm) and of light weight.

06.37.04

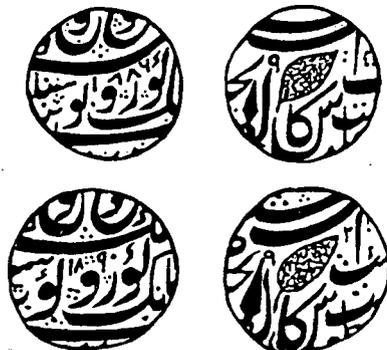
AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 g

VS 1888

Obverse: As 06.36.04.

Reverse: As 06.29.04, but with an additional Gurumukhi letter ਭ (Bha) for *Bhima Singh*.

06.40.04

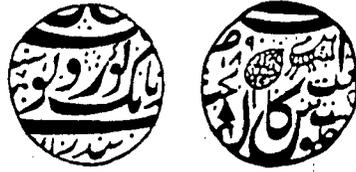
AR Rupee  
10.9 g

VS 1889, 1890

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the *VS year* added and without a special obverse mark.Reverse: As 06.29.04, but the *VS year* has been replaced by:

9 (or 900 ?) on VS 1889 and 92 on VS 1890

The meaning of these numerals has not yet been explained. Additional reverse mark:  
*a katar*, probably the mark of *Kanwar Sher Singh*.



06.41.04

AR Rupee  
8.5 g

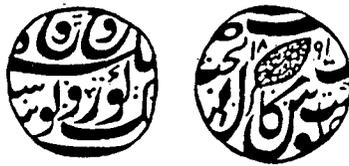
VS 1890

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but without a special obverse mark.

Reverse: As 06.29.04, but with 2 additional reverse marks: a *tiger* and a *katar* 

The Persian word *sher* means: *lion* in Persia and Afghanistan. In India its meaning can also be: *lion*, but it is more commonly: *tiger*. The Urdu speakers of the Punjab have combined the Persian word *sher* and its Turki equivalent: *babar* (lion) into: *sher babar*, a new expression meaning: *lion*.

The tiger mark on the rupees of type 06.41.04 points to *Sher Singh*, Ranjit Singh's son and nominal governor of Kashmir from VS 1889 to 1891.



06.42.04

AR Rupee  
8.5 g

VS 1891

Obverse and reverse: As 06.43.04.

The types 06.41.04 and 06.42.04 are extremely light. They could be the rupees of low silver content which were allegedly struck by *Shaik Gholam Muhyi ad-din*, the acting governor in VS 1890 and 1891.



06.43.04

AR Rupee  
10.9 g

VS 1891

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but without a special obverse mark.

Reverse: As 06.29.04. Mark: *katar* 

06.45.04



AR Rupee

11.0 g

VS 1891

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the sword mark:  of governor *Mihan Singh* in place of the sprig.

Reverse: The *VS* year on top and:



(VS year)

JĪ

AKH

SRĪ ĀKĀLPŪR

KASHMĪR

(ZARB ?)

In a paper published in ONS 161<sup>19</sup> Sh. Bhandare gave his reading of the reverse inscription of the rupees 06.45 - 06.51 (in the form of type 06.46, which has an additional final letter at the top of the legend):

سرب کشمیر سر سرب اکالپور لہ یج ب

ZARB KASHMĪR SRĪ ĀKĀLPŪRAKHJĪB<sup>20</sup>

Although we are compelled to accept the final *H* of *PŪRAKH* written in a rather uncommon way and notwithstanding the fact that the use of *-JĪB* instead of *-JĪYO* is not documented on any other Sikh coin type, S. Bhandare's reading is certainly basically correct.

Supported by Gulab Singh of Jammu, whose territories almost encircled Kashmir and its dependencies and who at this time was only a nominal vassal of Ranjit Singh, Colonel Mihan Singh began soon after the assumption of his governorship to strive for at least a partial independence from Lahore. The governor's political ambition finally led, together with other reasons, to a revolt of his troops and to his assassination.

<sup>19</sup> In his paper: „The Sikh Mint 'Akalpur': a Myth“ (ONS 161, 21-23) Sh. Bhandare correctly rejects an earlier reading of mine of this legend and then proceeds to give his own version.

In his unpublished doctoral thesis (chapter 5) Surinder Singh gives the reading: *SAN SRI AKAL PURUKH KASH-MIR*, a version which is evidently incorrect and incomplete.

<sup>20</sup> For a translation of this legend see page 134.



06.46.04

AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.0 g

VS 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895  
1896, 1897, 1898



06.46.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g

VS 1898



06.46.06

AR ¼ Rupee  
2.7 g

VS 1898

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with the mark of *Mihan Singh*:  and additional marks:

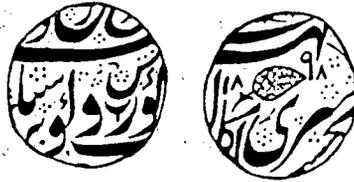
1892 ]	لو* رت و٘
1893 ]	
1894 ]	لو رت و٘
1894 ]	لو رٲ و*
1895 ]	
1896 ]	
1897 ]	لو رت و٘
1898 ]	
1897 ]	لو رٲ و٘
1898 ]	

Reverse:

  
 (vs  year)  
 سرری اکالپور  
 کشمیر  
 ب  
 ص

B  
 JĪ  
 AKH  
 SRĪ ĀKĀLPŪR  
 KASHMĪR  
 ZARB

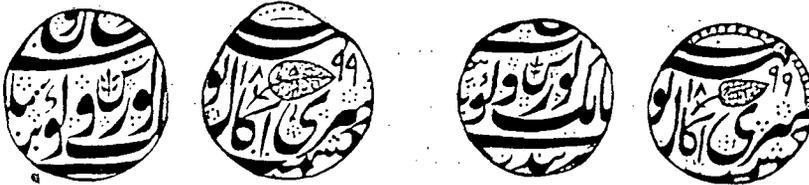
06.50.04



AR Rupee  
10.4 - 10.5 g

VS 1898, 1899

06.50.06



AR ¼ Rupee  
2.75 g  
ø 17 mm

VS 1898

Obverse: As 06.03.04, but with a Persian ش (SH) for *Shaikh* and an additional mark:

VS 1898

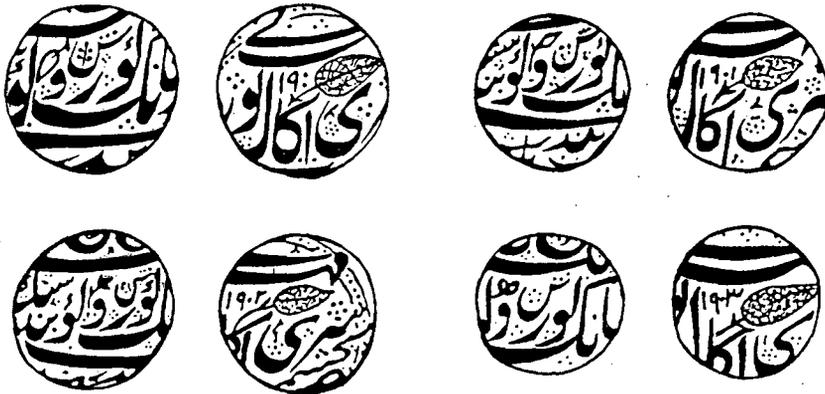


1899



Reverse: As 06.45.04.

06.51.04



AR Rupee  
10.6 - 10.7 g

VS 1900, 1901,  
1902, 1903

Obverse: As 06.50.04, but *VS year* not divided by the leaf mark. Additional marks

VS 1900 ❁

1900 ❁

1901 ❁

1902 ❁

1903 ❁

## Special rupees



06.60.04

AR Rupee  
7.6 g

VS 1892

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet in Gurumukhi and the sword mark of *Mihan Singh*:

ਢੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫ  
 ਤੇ ਨਸ੍ਰਾਤ ਬੇਦਿਰੰਗ  
 ਜਾਫਾਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ  
 ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ

DEG, TEG, F  
 ATE NASRAT BIDARANG  
 JAFAT AJ NANAK  
 GURU GOBIND SINGH

Reverse:

ਜਗਬਿਕਸ  
 ਮੀਰਸੀਆ ੧੮੯੨  
 ਕਾਲਪੂਖਜੀ

JARĪB KASA  
 MĪRA SRĪ Ā

(Persian) 1892

1892 (Nagari)

(SRĪ Ā)KĀL PŪRAKHJĪ

Struck at Kashmir [Srinagar]

[VS] 1892

SRĪ ĀKĀL PŪRAKHJĪ



06.61.04

AR Rupee

VS 1892

Obverse: As 06.60.04, but with ਗਮ (RĀM) in Gurumukhi added.

Reverse: As 06.61.04.

According to Rodgers *SRI AKAL PURUKHJI* means: "*Hail, timeless Divinity*", but this translation is obviously not too accurate. Better English equivalents of the Sikh expression were proposed by M.A. Macauliffe, the translator of the holy books of the Sikhs and author of the famous *Religion of the Sikhs*, who chose "*the immortal God*", whereas the missionary Dr. Joseph Wolff, who visited the Punjab and Kashmir in 1832, preferred the even simpler "*God*".<sup>21</sup> Sir Henry Lawrence used the shorter form: *Sri Purakji* and explained it as: "*Deity*".<sup>22</sup>

The rupee 06.60.04 was for the first time published in a paper by Joseph ARNETH on Bactrian coins.<sup>23</sup> The drawing of a coin brought to Vienna by Baron von Hügel (my 2<sup>nd</sup> illustration of this type) appears at the end of the text – upside down and with the laconic comment: „*Ranjit Singh's rupee*“. As the coin is extremely rare and weighs only about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a regular *Hari Singhi* rupee of Kashmir, this designation must be based on some error. The rupee looks in fact less like a coin than a medal or a token struck for a special and now forgotten occasion.



View of the river Jhelum in the city of Srinagar  
looking up the stream.

<sup>21</sup> *Missionary Labours* ....., p. 260.

<sup>22</sup> *Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Runjeet Singh*, Vol. I.

<sup>23</sup> In: VON HÜGEL: *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek*, Vol. IV, p. 348.

## Copper coins

About 45 different types of copper coins struck during the Sikh occupation of Kashmir have been observed and many more may have existed. Some of the coins were possibly struck at the government mint at Srinagar but most of them seem to be the work of private contractors.

The available information concerning the copper coins current in Kashmir does not allow the identification of the surviving coin types which range in their weights from 3.5 to 13 grams. The name *Fulus*, which appears on several coins, was mostly used for the *Paisa*, but as small and big, light and heavy coins were quite indiscriminately struck from the same dies the word *fulus* is normally nothing more than a synonym of: *copper coin*.

Weights given in the catalogue always refer to individual specimens; other coins of the same type may well be much heavier or lighter.

The design of the copper coins of Kashmir was frequently changed. Most of the coins were very badly struck and all too often only parts of the design and the inscription are recognizable. The following catalogue lists only the types on which more than minimal fragments of the inscription are legible and it must therefore be far from complete. Some of the drawings show coins which have been reconstructed from several only fragmentarily legible specimens.



06.70.11

CU Paisa

12.7 - 13.3 g

VS 1877

Obverse: Fragmentary:

سگه ناناک شاہ

SIKKĀ NĀNAK SHĀH (or SHĀHĪ)

Reverse:

۱۸۷۷  
کشمیر  
خطہ  
ضرب1877  
KASHMĪR  
KHITTĀ  
ZARBStruck in/for the District of Kashmir  
[VS] 1877.



06.71.11

CU Paisa

Date not read

Obverse: As 06.70.11, but inscription differently arranged.

Reverse: As 06.70.11, but without the leaf mark.



06.72.11

CU Paisa  
12.5 - 13.0 g

VS 1878

Obverse: In Gurumukhi:

ਅਕਾਲ  
ਨਾਨਕ

AKAL  
NANAK

....

Reverse: As 06.70.11, but VS 1878 and flag mark:  added.



06.74.11

CU Paisa  
3.5 - 13.0 g

No date observed

Obverse: Inscription only partially read; flag mark 

فلوس نانك شاه *FULŪS SIKKĀ NĀNAK SHĀH*

Reverse: As 06.70.11, but date off flan. Leaf mark 

06.76.11



CU Paisa  
12.5 - 13.0 g

VS 1883, 1884

Obverse: Inscription only partially read; flag mark 

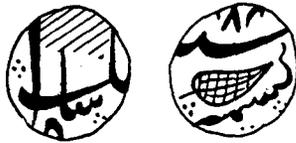
نانا گورو گوBIND سینگھ *NĀNAK GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH*

Reverse: Inscription only partially read:

سمبت  
کشمیر

*SAMBAT  
(SHĀH)Ī  
ĀKĀL KASHMĪR*

06.78.11



CU Paisa  
7.25 g

VS 1884 [?]

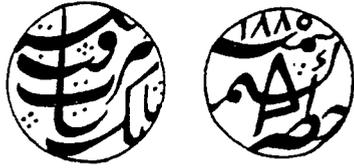
Obverse: Inscription only partially read:

نانا شاه *NĀNAK SHĀH*

Reverse:

۱۸۸۴  
کشمیر

*1884  
SANĀH  
KASHMĪR*



06.80.11

CU Paisa  
c. 12.5 g

VS 1885

Obverse: Fragmentary:

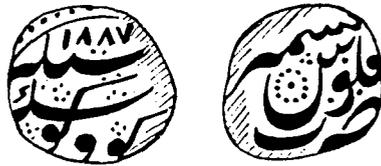
ضرب  
ناناک

YĀFAT  
ZARB  
NĀNAK

Reverse:

۱۸۸۵  
کشمیر  
خط

1885  
SAMBAT  
KASHMĪR  
KHITTĀ



06.82.11

CU Paisa  
9.0 g

VS 1887

Obverse:

۱۸۸۷  
سنم  
سنگ  
لور و گوبند

1887  
SINGH  
SIKKA  
GŪRŪ GŌBIND

Reverse:

کشمیر  
فلوس  
ضرب

KASHMĪR  
FULŪS  
ZARB

06.84.11

CU Paisa  
7.7 g

VS 1887

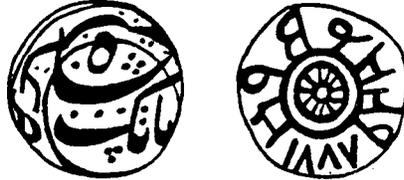
Obverse: Fragmentary:

نانک سنہ *NĀNAK SINGH*

Reverse:

ضرب کشمیر ۱۸۸۷ *ZARB KASHMIR 1887*

06.86.11

CU Paisa  
10.0 - 12.0 g

VS 1888

Obverse:

نانک شاہ *NĀNAK SHĀH*

The inscription around *NĀNAK SHĀH* is perhaps: *ZARB KASHMĪR*.

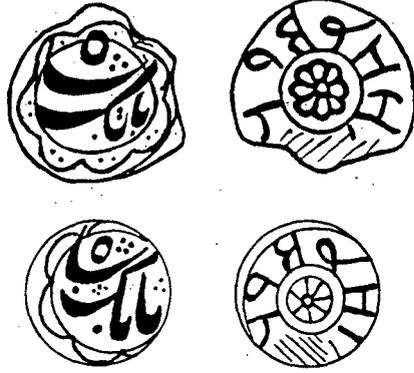
Reverse:

ਜਗਤ ਕਸਮਾਰ

This is an inscription in Gurmukhi mirror script:

ਜਗਤ ਕਸਮਾਰ *JARAB KASAMARA*

Valentine listed type 06.86.11 among the copper coins of unidentified Sikh mints and the *Standard Catalog of World Coins* (1991) erroneously attributed the paisa to Amritsar.



06.88.11

CU Paisa  
10.0 g

Date not read

Obverse:

نانک شاہ *NĀNAK SHĀH*

Reverse: As. 06.86.11.



06.90.11

CU Paisa  
9.33 g

VS 1888

Obverse:

نانک شاہ گورو گوBIND سنگھ *NĀNAK SHĀH GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGH*

Reverse: Fragmentary:

۱۸۸۸  
کشمیر  
خط

1888  
*KASHMĪR*  
*KHITTĀ*

06.92.11



CU Paisa  
11.4 g

VS 1888

Obverse:

لؤبند سہا ۱۸۸۸

GÖBIND SAHĀ 1888  
May Gobind help! [VS] 1888

Reverse:

ضرب کشمیر

ZARB KASHMĪR

06.94.11



CU Paisa

VS 1888

Obverse: Around a leaf:

जगध दमभठ

JARAB KASMAR

Reverse: Katar and

ضرب کشمیر

ZARB KASHMĪR

मभठ १८८८

SAMBHA 1888

06.96.11



CU Paisa  
7.7 g

VS (18)89

Obverse:

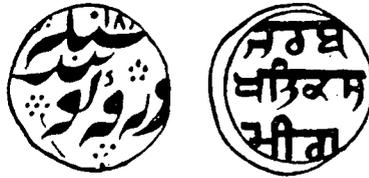
فلوس نانک شاہی

FULŪS NĀNAKSHĀHĪ

Reverse:

ضرب کشمیر  
.. ۸۹ سہبت

ZARB KASHMĪR  
SAMBAT .. 89



06.98.11

CU Paisa

VS 188x

Obverse:

۱۸۸ گورو گوبند سنگھ *GURŪ GŌBIND SINGH 188.*

Reverse: In Gurmukhi:

ਜਰਬ  
ਖਿਤਾ  
ਮੀਰਾ

*JARABA  
KHITA KASA  
MIRĀ*



06.100.11

CU Paisa

11.7 g

VS 1891

Obverse: Part of the Gobindshahi couplet.

Reverse: 2 leaves and

۱۸۹۱ فلوس کشمیر *FULŪS KASHMĪR 1891*



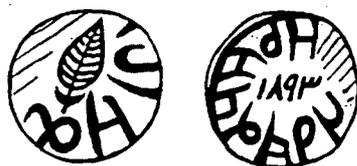
06.101.11

CU Paisa

9.995 g

VS 1892

Obverse: *SIKĀ NĀNAK SHĀHĪ*Reverse: *ZARB KHITTĀ KASHMĪR 1892*



06.102.11

CU Paisa  
9.8 g

VS 1893

Obverse: An unread Gurumukhi inscription.

Reverse: In Gurumukhi:

ਜਰਬ ਕਸਮਰ ਮ... 1893

JARABA KASAMARA SA ... 1893

Struck at Kashmir in [VS] 1893



06.104.11

CU Paisa

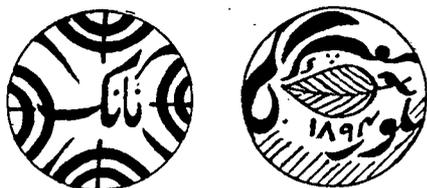
VS 1894

Obverse: 2 sprigs +

فلوس نانک شاہ *FULUS NĀNAKSHĀH(I)*

Reverse: The sword mark of Mihan Singh +

ضرب کشمیر 1894 *ZARB KASHMĪR 1894*



06.106.11

CU Paisa

VS 1894

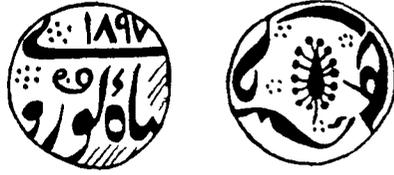
Obverse:

نانک *NĀNAK*

Reverse: Leaf mark:  and:

ضرب کشمیر 1894 *ZARB KASHMĪR 1894*

A drawing of this coin was published by Valentine (# 253/3) and a modified drawing of the same coin appeared in: *The Standard Catalog of World Coins*. A close inspection of two unpublished coins of the same type has shown that the mint name is definitely *Kashmir*. There is another word on the reverse which is unfortunately partly illegible on every known coin of this rare type. Valentine read "Jammun" and *The Standard Catalog*: "Pathankot", but the correct reading is most probably: *fulus*.



06.108.11

CU Paisa  
7.7 g

VS 1897

Obverse: Fragmentary:

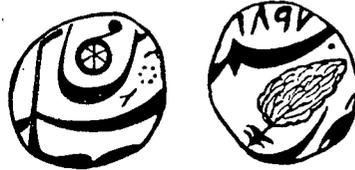
شاه لورو ۱۸۹۷

SHĀH GÜRŪ 1897

Reverse:

ضرب خط کشمیر

ZARB KHITTĀ KASHMĪR



06.110.11

CU Paisa  
16.25 g

VS 1897

Obverse: An unread Persian inscription.

Reverse:

ضرب کشمیر ۱۸۹۷

ZARB KASHMĪR 1897



06.112.11

CU Paisa

VS 189x

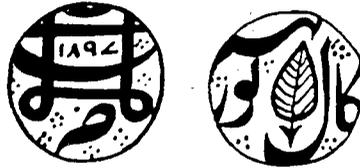
Obverse:

۱۸۹۷  
لور گویند189.  
SANĀH  
GÜRŪ GŌBIND

Reverse: Fragmentary:

فلوس کشمیر

FULŪS KASHMĪR



06.114.11

CU Paisa

VS 1897

Obverse: Fragmentary:

ضرب ١٨٩٧ ZARB 1897

Reverse:

لحمہ  
اکالپور AKH  
ĀKĀLPŪR



06.116.11

CU Paisa

Date unread

Obverse:

ضرب کشمیر ZARB KASHMĪR

Reverse: The mark of the last 2 governors of Kashmir: ش +

لحمہ  
اکالپور AKH  
ĀKĀLPŪR



06.118.11

CU Paisa

VS 1898

Obverse:

کشمیر  
سکہ فلوس KASHMĪR  
SIKKĀ FULŪS

Reverse:

١٨٩٨  
جلوس مانوس 1898  
JULŪS MĀNŪS



06.120.11

CU Paisa

VS 1898

Obverse:

1898 गुरु गोबिन्द सिंह  
 1898 GÜRŪ GŌBĪND SINGH 1898

Reverse: A tiger +

خطہ کشمیر  
 KHITTĀ KASHMĪR

The tiger probably refers to Maharaja Sher Singh, who ruled the Sikh State in VS 1898.



06.122.11

CU Paisa

Date not read



Obverse:

ਨਾਨਕ  
 ਮਾਗ

NĀNAK  
 SĀHA  
 May Nanak help!

Reverse: As 06.120.11.



06.124.11

CU Paisa

VS 1899

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet and the mark: **श**

Reverse:

18 99  
 श्री नर  
 कश्मिर

?  
 ?  
 1899  
 SRĪNAGAR  
 KASHMĪR



06.126.11

CU Paisa

No date observed

Obverse: *NĀNAKA SĀHA* as on 06.122.11.

Reverse: In Gurmukhi:

ਜਰਬਕਮਮਰ

JARABA KASAMARA  
 Struck at Kashmir



06.128.11

CU Paisa

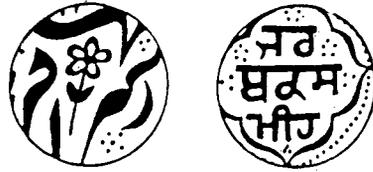
No date observed

Obverse: *NĀNAKA SĀHA* as on 06.122.11.

Reverse:

ਜਰਬਕ  
 ਮਮਰ

JARABA KA  
 SAMIRA



06.130.11

CU Paisa

No date observed

Obverse: An unread Persian inscription and a flower.

Reverse: In Gurumukhi:

जर  
घरम  
भीर

JARA  
BA KASA  
MIRA



06.132.11

CU Paisa

8.0 - 8.5 g

No date observed

Obverse:

فلوس نانک شاہی

FULUS NĀNAKSHĀHĪ

Reverse: Around a rose:

ضرب خطم کشمیر

ZARB KHITTĀ KASHMĪR

The roses of Kashmir were famous, but as the Persian word *Gulab* means: *rose*, the flower on the coin could be an oblique reference to *Raja Gulab Singh* of Jammu. He restored the order in Kashmir after the assassination of *Mihan Singh*; after the fall of the Sikh State he became the first Dogra Maharaja of the new State of Jammu and Kashmir.

06.134.11



CU Paisa

7.3 g

No date observed

Obverse: An unread Gurumukhi inscription --- perhaps *KHITTA KASAMARA* --- around a star.

Reverse: Mark:  +



ZARB KASHMĪR

*Mihan Singh's* sword mark is also found on coins of the last 2 Sikh governors of Kashmir and their successors, the Dogra Maharajas, but as the use of the Gurumukhi script seems to have been restricted to the time of the Sikh occupation, the Paisa # 06.134.11 can probably be attributed to this period.

06.136.11



CU ½ Paisa

3.75 g

No date observed

Obverse: A part of the *ĀKĀL SAHĀI GŪR NĀNAKĪ* legend found on copper coins of Amritsar.

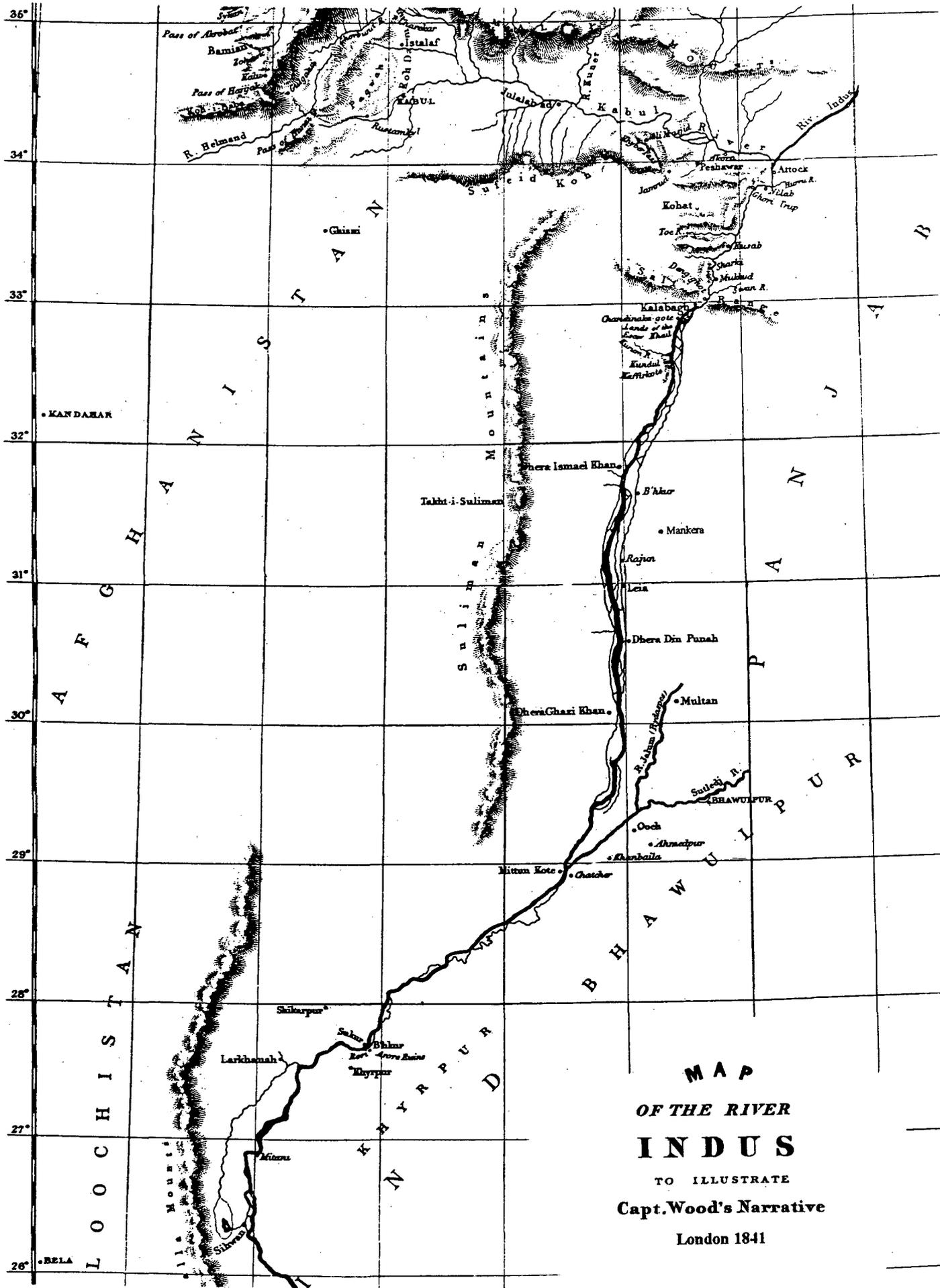
Reverse:



ZARB SRĪNAGAR

#### NOTE:

Copper coins of Kashmir bearing a leaf or Mihan Singh's sword mark and mentioning *SRI GADADHARJI* (Lord Krishna) or *SRI RAGHUNATHJI* (Lord Rama) were not struck under the Sikhs but by their successors, the Hindu Dogra Maharajas of Jammu and Kashmir.



**MAP**  
**OF THE RIVER**  
**INDUS**  
 TO ILLUSTRATE  
**Capt. Wood's Narrative**  
 London 1841

## 07 DERAJAT (Dera Ismail Khan) دیره جات

*Derajat* -- the Arabic plural of *Dera* -- is the name given to the alluvial plain in which lie Dera Ismail Khan in the north, Dera Fath Khan in the centre and Dera Ghazi Khan in the south and which is bordered by the river Indus in the east and by the Sulaiman Range in the west. Under the Sikhs the whole region had about 450'000 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

*Derajat* is also the mint name found on coins struck at Dera Ismail Khan by the late Mughal emperors Muhammad Shah and Ahmad Shah, the Persian invader Nadir Shah and the Durranis up to the second reign of Mahmud Shah.

*Dera Ismail Khan* was -- like Dera Ghazi Khan -- named after a Baluch chief, who settled here at the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and whose descendants ruled the district for 300 years.

In 1821 -- after the conquests of Multan (1818) and Dera Ghazi Khan (1820) -- Ranjit Singh sent an army under Misar Diwan Chand<sup>2</sup> against Dera Ismail Khan and Bhakkar<sup>3</sup> and advanced personally to Mankera.<sup>4</sup> The Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan, who had earlier sent a *nazarana* of 70'000 rupees to the Maharaja, had to give up his claims to Mankera, but was allowed to continue to rule his state under the suzerainty of Lahore.

Charles Masson, who visited Dera Ismail Khan early in 1827 wrote: „*This Dera is a newly built town, about three miles from the river, its predecessor seated thereon, having been carried away, about three years since, by an inundation. So complete was the destruction, that of a large and well fortified city no token remains to testify that it once existed. Two or three date-trees have only survived the wreck of its groves and gardens, and in graceful majesty exalt their heads amongst the surrounding desolation.*

*The new town promises to become very extensive. The bazar is already spacious, and of commodious breadth. ... Dera Ismael Khan is one of the greatest marts on the Indus, and an entrepôt for the merchandize of India and Khorasan passing in this direction. Few sites have a greater commercial importance. The customs levied form the chief source of revenue. The new fortress is not one of strength, the Sikhs forbidding the erection of too substantial a place of defence. It is small in extent, of a rectangular form, with angular towers, on which are mounted six pieces of ordnance. The walls are high, but there is no trench. ...*

*The district belonging to Dera Ismael Khan extends about forty cosses [60 miles] to the north, and thirty-five cosses [52 miles] to the south. The nawab, moreover, exacts tribute, either on his own account or on that of the Sikhs, from most of the petty rulers around him, such as those of Kalaichi, Darraband, Marwar, Isa Khel, and Kalabagh. His gross revenue may be about three lakhs of rupees, of which the Sikhs take one-half.*

1 Carmichael SMYTH: *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore, Appendix*, Calcutta 1847, p. XXIX-XXX.

2 *Misar Diwan Chand* led a division of the army which -- under the overall command of Prince Kharak Singh -- took Multan in 1818 and led an army to Kashmir in 1819. Misar Diwan Chand, who was in charge of the army which gained in 1821 the submission of the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan, died on 19 July 1825.

3 *Bhakkar* lies on the east bank of the Indus, about 30 kilometers southeast of Dera Ismail Khan. It is not identical with the island-fortress of Bhakkar (near Sukkur), the site of a Mughal mint

4 The territories of Nawab *Sarbuland Khan*, a Sadozai Afghan and the last Muslim ruler of Mankera, a fortress and town on the road from Lahore to Dera Ismail Khan, were annexed in 1818 by Ranjit Singh.

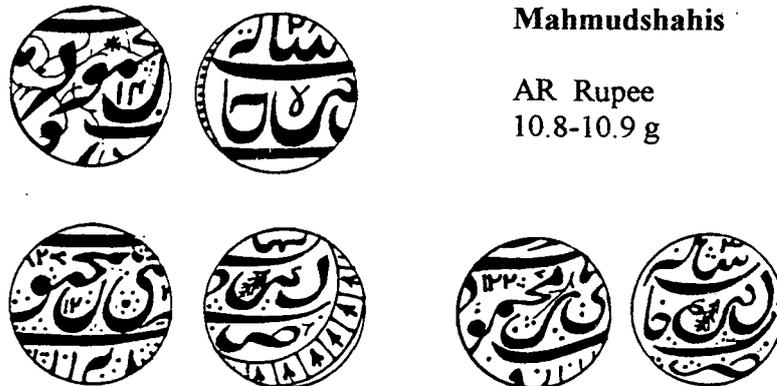
*The father of the actual nawab possessed a fertile country east of the river, comprising the rich and populous districts of Bakkar, Liya [Leiah], and Mankirah [Mankera] - while on the western side his authority extended to Sang Ghar. He was dispossessed by the Sikhs and died shortly after. The conquerors have assigned the son, the present Nawab Shir Mahomed Khan, a slip of land west of the Indus for the support of himself and his family"*<sup>5</sup>

In 1835 Ranjit Singh annexed the Nawab's territory and appointed Hakim Rai as governor of Dera Ismail Khan, Tonk, Bannu and Kohat.

John Wood, who in 1837 visited the town, which then had about 8'000 inhabitants and 300 shops,<sup>6</sup> remarked: *"The old town of Dhera Ismael Khan, with its wood of date-trees, was swept away by the Indus in 1829. ... The new town is well laid out. Its streets are straight and wide, though as yet houses in some of them are but thinly scattered. They are built of sun-dried brick, consist of a single story, and rise from a basement or platform about a foot in height. The bazar is roomy and well supplied. There was an airy clean appearance about this town, that augured comfort and health to its inhabitants. I regret, however, to observe that the result of further observations in the Dherajat did not confirm the first of these suppositions. The country is abundant in both the necessaries and luxuries of life; and yet its peasantry are poorly clad, indifferently lodged, and, by their own account, worse fed. This remark is applicable to the west bank of the river, where the spirit of the people is embittered by Seik bondage; but it may be truly said that, from one cause or another, this is more or less the condition of the lower classes throughout the entire valley of the Indus."*<sup>7</sup>

## The coinage of Derajat

With the exception of Herat, where he ruled till his death in 1829 AD, Mahmud Shah Durrani lost most of his territories to the Barakzais in 1818, but the local dynasty of Sadozai governors, which Zaman Shah Durrani had installed at Dera Ismail Khan in 1793, continued to rule and strike coins in his name:



These coins are samples of the pre-Sikh coinage issued by *Muhammad, Hafiz Ahmad* and *Sher Muhammad*, the Nawabs of Dera Ismail Khan, in the name of Mahmud Shah Durrani until 1820 AD.

<sup>5</sup> Charles MASSON: *Narrative of various journeys ...*, I, 38-43. *Sang Ghar* (Stone Fort) -- between Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Fath Khan -- was the seat of a khan, a nominal vassal of the nawab of Dera Ghazi Khan.

<sup>6</sup> Carmichael SMYTH: *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore, Appendix*, Calcutta 1847, p. XXIX-XXX.

<sup>7</sup> Captain John WOOD: *A Journey to the Source of the Oxus*, London 1841.

## Coins struck by the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan as a feudatory of Ranjit Singh between 1821 and 1835

After 1821 AD (1236 AH) the Nawab Sher Muhammad, now a vassal of Ranjit Singh, still struck *Mahmudshahis*, but at the top of the reverse the regnal year of Mahmud Shah was replaced by the year of a new era which on some, but not all the coins seems to begin in AH 1237:

### Silver (Mahmudshahis)



07.01.04

AR Rupee  
10.8-10.9 g

AH	1236,	1237,	1238,
	1239,	1240,	1241,
	1242,	1243,	1244,
	1245,	1246,	1247,
	1248,	1249,	1250,
	1251,	1252	

Obverse: Only a very small part of the obverse couplet is normally legible:

شدتو فیکا الماه  
 خسرو گیتی ستان محمود  
 سلم بر زر زرو

*KHUSRU GĪTĪ SITĀN MAHMŪD SHĀH*  
*SIKĀ BAR ZAR ZAD BATŪFĪQ ĪLĀH*

The world-conquering Cyrus, Mahmud Shah, struck gold coins with the aid of God.

This couplet was originally written for a gold coin of Mahmud Shah Durrani.

Reverse:

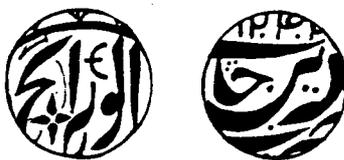
سینه  
 درجه جا  
 ضرب

*ZARB DĒRĀJĀT*  
*SANĀH*

Struck in [the] Derajat  
[in the AH] year

## Copper coins

Coins struck by the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan as a feudatory  
of Maharaja Ranjit Singh



07.02.11

CU Paisa

10.5 g

AH 1241, 1242

Obverse:

الوراء

... RĀ'ĪJ

... current

I am not able to offer a convincing explanation of the first word of the inscription  
but Valentine's *GURU* is certainly incorrect.

Reverse:

١٢٤٢  
ضرب ويرةجات

ZARB DĒRĀJĀT 1242

Struck [in the] Derajat [AH] 1242

Coins bearing a Sikh legend, but struck before the annexation  
of Dera Ismail Khan in 1835 AD

Rare copper coins with a Sikh couplet and bearing the mint name *Derajat* were struck since VS 1889 or possibly even earlier:



Obverse: The inscription, which is never more than partly legible, probably gives the Gobindshahi couplet. Mark:

Reverse:

VS year and perhaps *SANĀH*

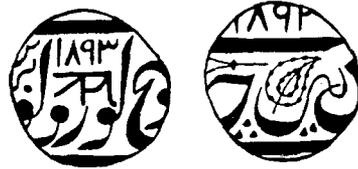
*ZARB DĒRĀJĀT*

Reverse marks: flower + leaf.

The Paisas # 07.03.11, which were issued before the annexation of the Derajat, may not have been struck at Dera Ismail Khan but at some place directly controlled by the Sikhs, perhaps at Mankera..

Coins struck after the annexation of the Derajat  
by Ranjit Singh in 1835 AD (1252 AH / VS 1892)

Silver



07.04.04

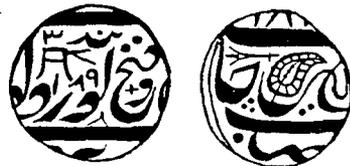
AR Rupee  
10.8-10.9 g

VS 1892, 1893, 1894



Obverse: As 07.03.11, but VS year added. Mark: 

Reverse: As 07.03.11, but with marks:  



07.05.04

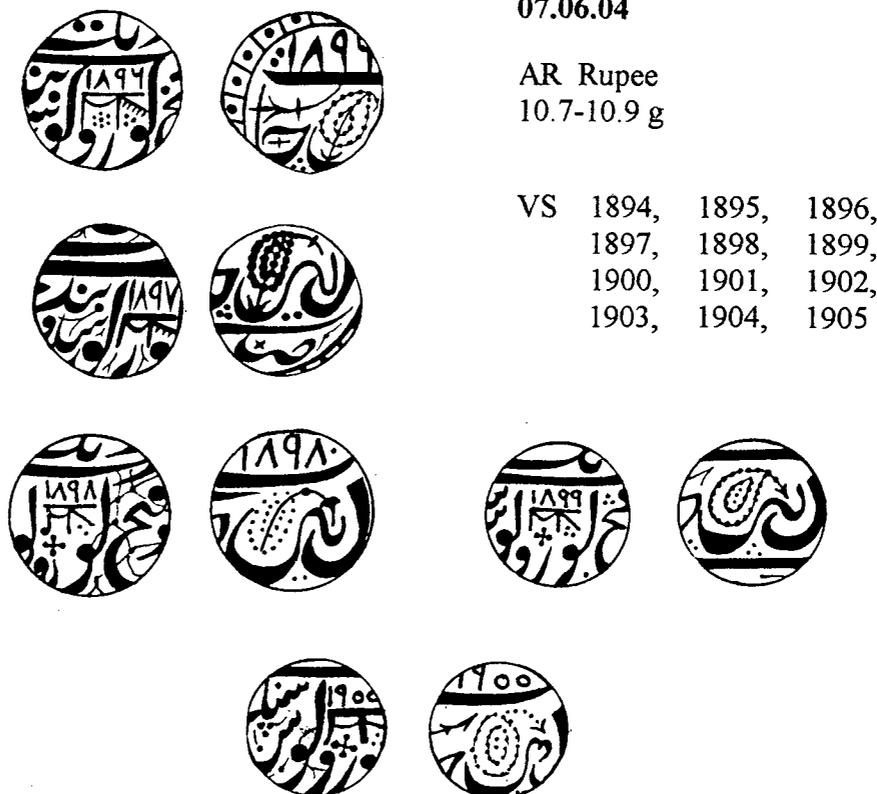
AR Rupee

VS 1893, 1894



Obverse: As 07.04.04, but with the VS year divided by the mark:   
Additional marks (missing on some coins of 1893):  

Reverse: As 07.04.04. The mark , which originally looked like an arrow, develops into a flower 



07.06.04

AR Rupee  
10.7-10.9 gVS 1894, 1895, 1896,  
1897, 1898, 1899,  
1900, 1901, 1902,  
1903, 1904, 1905

Obverse: As 07.04.04, but mark:  or rarely: . VS year undivided.

Many different secondary marks are known, e.g.: 1895 , 1897 , 1898-1900 .

Reverse: As 07.04.04, but with the leaf mark developing into a floral design:  until VS 1900, from VS 1901 on the earlier leaf is back.

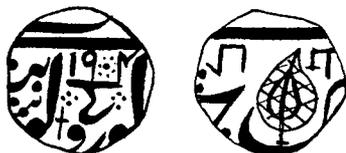
The former „arrow mark“ has now become a full-fledged flower: . It has yet been traced until VS 1901.

On 11 January 1848 Lieutenant (later Sir) Herbert B. Edwardes, an assistant of Col. Henry Lawrence, the first British Resident at Lahore, and then with a Sikh army in Bannu, noted in his diary: "I find that, though General Cortlandt has received orders to send all Mihrabee rupees to Pind Dadun Khan to be recoined into Nanuck Shahees by Misr Rullya Ram,<sup>8</sup> the Misr's own man has already converted his former Mihrabee mint at Dera Ismael Khan into a Nanuck Shahee mint which is now busily at work; and as this can only have been done by the wish of Misr Rullya Ram who is charged with the re-issue, and the expense of the mint at Dera is nothing like what the expense would be of hiring camels continually to convey Mihrabees to Pind Dadun Khan and bring back Nanuck Shahees, I have told General Cortlandt to allow the mint to continue till an answer to this reference can arrive from the Resident."<sup>9</sup>

8 Misr Rulia Ram was the administrator in charge of the mint opened in 1847 at Pind Dadan Khan in order to recoin the light Afghan rupees circulating in the Punjab into Nanakshahis of the Amritsar standard.

9 Lahore Political Diaries. Political Diaries of Lieut. H.B. Edwardes, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore 1847-49, p. 207.

As *Mirhabis* were Durrani rupees and as we do not know any Afghan *Derajat* rupees struck after the annexation, Lieut. Edwards remark about „his former *Mihrabee mint at Dera Ismael Khan* “ must refer to the time before 1835. According to Ms Jyoti Rai the Nanakshahis mentioned by Lieutenant Edwardes' could be the *Dera* rupees (H 05.01.04 & 05.02.04);<sup>10</sup> although these rupees may have been a by-product of the recoinage campaign of 1847-49, they are so very rare that they can hardly have been struck by camel-loads. I think that Lieut. Edwardes' economic considerations finally prevailed with the Resident in Lahore and that the following type 07.07.04 represents the *Derajat* rupees struck by Misr Rullya Ram's agent. They seem to have been produced as a parallel issue to the standard type 07.06.04 until the end of the Sikh rule in Dera Ismail Khan.



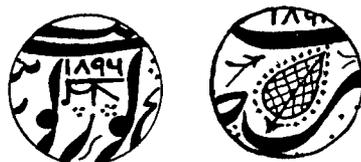
07.07.04

AR Rupee  
10.7-10.9 gVS 1904, 1905, 1906<sup>8</sup>

Obverse: As 07.06.04, but with mark: ੜ [TA].

Reverse: As 07.05.04, but with letters ੜ ੜ added.

### Copper coins



07.09.11

CU Paisa  
7.8 g

VS 1896

Obverse: As 07.05

Reverse: As 07.05

According to C.J. Brown "near about 1828 coins with a Gurmukhi inscription and the effigies of Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana carrying the distinguishing symbol of a leaf were struck mainly in copper at Derajat." <sup>12</sup>

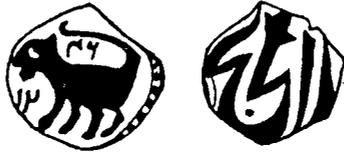
I have been unable to track any coins corresponding with Brown's description (which sounds more like the description of a token than a coin) and I doubt whether they exist at all. With the exception of rare rupee patterns (08.12 & 08.13) struck in 1836 AD in Lahore, Sikh coins showing human beings are unknown and such coins would not have been acceptable to the predominantly Muslim population of Dera Ismail Khan and the Derajat.

<sup>10</sup> ONS Newsletter 146, p.10-12.

<sup>11</sup> A rupee dated 1906 and presumably of type 07.07 was in the Longworth Dames collection. (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1888, p. 330).

<sup>12</sup> *Coins of India*, p. 107/108.

The *billishahis*,<sup>13</sup> copper coins bearing a lion or a panther on the obverse and the word *ra'ij* on the reverse, have often been attributed to the Sikh mint at Dera Ismail Khan:



Billishahi  
c. 7-9 g

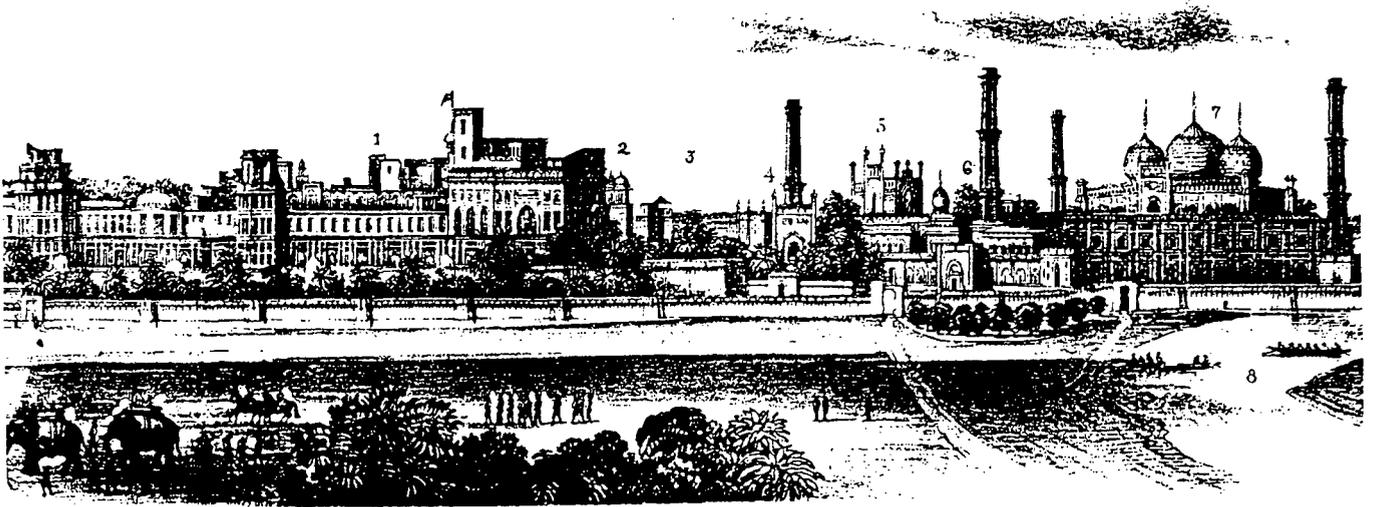
The attribution of these paisas, which are found in the bazars of the Indus Valley towns from northern Sind to Peshawar and which do not at all look like any known Sikh coin, is based on the fact, that they share the expression *ra'ij* with other copper coins bearing the mint names *Dera* and *Derajat* — and also with some types without a mint name. The attribution is -- in my opinion -- unfounded and the *billishahis* have therefore not been included in the catalogue.

*Billishahis* are known with *Hijri* years ranging from AH 1194 to AH 1276. Whereas earlier coins show regnal years of Durrani rulers on the reverse, later series seem to bear regnal years starting in AH 1259/60. That the 2<sup>nd</sup> reign of Dost Muhammad began in AH 1259 may simply be a coincidence, but the attribution of the *billishahis* to a mint controlled by Muslims, e.g. the pretender *Malik Fath Khan Tiwana* or his partisans, and situated in or near the Indus valley would seem rather more plausible than the current one.



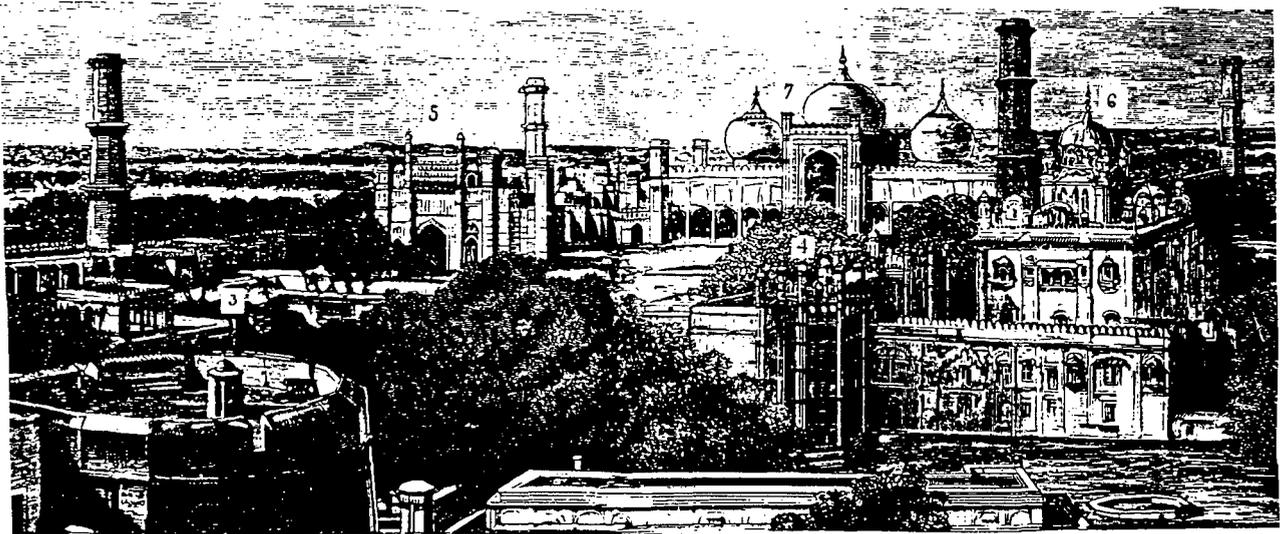
The son of Hakim Rai, Ranjit Singh's governor of Dera Ismail Khan

<sup>13</sup> A *billa* is a male cat.



View of the Fort of Lahore from the north during the lifetime of Mahara-  
 raja Ranjit Singh (top) and from the west c. 1849 (bottom).

1. *Saman Burj*. 2. *'Alamgiri Darwaza*. 3. *Hazuri Bagh*. 4. *Roshnai Darwaza* (Gate of Light) where Nau Nihal Singh fell prey to an attempt at his life and was killed by falling masonry. 5. The monumental gate of the *Badshahi Masjid*. 6. The *Gurudwara* of Guru Arjun Mal and, to the west of it, the *Samadh* built at the spot where the bodies of Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh were cremated. 7. Aurangzeb's *Badshahi Masjid* which, under the Sikhs, served as a gun powder magazine. 8. A branch of the river Ravi.



## 08 LAHORE

## دار السلطنة لاہور

According to a local legend a town called *Lohawar*, a predecessor of the later city of Lahore, was founded by *Loh*, one of the sons of Rama, the Lord of Ayodhya. Lahore, then a part of the territories of the *Hindushahis of Waihand* --- the actual *Hund* on the Indus --- fell in 1014 AD to Mahmud of Ghazni. In 1186 Taj ad-daula Khusru Malik, the last Ghaznawid Sultan of Lahore, lost his capital and the mint town of the Ghaznawid Empire in India, to the Ghorid invaders.

Beginning with Babur the Mughals struck coins at Lahore until the reign of 'Alamgir II, but the place only gained some importance, when Akbar surrounded it with a wall, enlarged its fort and made it his residence from 1584 to 1598. During the reign of Jahangir, whose tomb lies at nearby Shadara, Guru Arjun Dev was imprisoned at Lahore where he, according to the Sikh tradition, disappeared in the River Ravi. Shah Jahan built a palace in the Lahore Fort as well as the famous *Shalimar* Gardens, and to Aurangzeb we are indebted for the beautiful and impressive *Badshahi* Mosque. After the death of Aurangzeb Lahore began to decline, but in its prime a popular saying ran: "*Isfahan and Shiraz together would not equal the half of Lahore*".

The Persian invader Nadir Shah captured Lahore in December 1738; when he evacuated the city in the spring of 1739 it reverted to the Mughals.

On 22 January 1748 Lahore was taken and occupied by Ahmad Shah Abdali who soon retired to Qandahar and left the city to its former masters. When he invaded the Punjab for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time the Durrani defeated the Mughal governor Mir Mannu in April 1752 near Lahore. The victor formally annexed the provinces of Multan and Lahore but left the Mughal administration in place.

During his 4<sup>th</sup> invasion of India Ahmad Shah advanced in the winter of 1755/56 to Sirhind, which he annexed, and to Shahjahanabad and Mathura, which he plundered. Before retreating to Afghanistan he appointed his son Taimur Shah *nizam* or Viceroy of Lahore, Multan, Dera-jat and Sindh. Taimur Shah, whose grip on the Punjab always remained precarious, was driven out of Lahore and India by Marathas led by Raghuba, the Peshwa's brother, in 1758. Sikh auxiliaries serving with Raghuba's army briefly managed to occupy Lahore, but when they anticipated the Marathas in plundering the city they were promptly expelled by their former comrades in arms.

The loss of the Punjab soon brought Ahmad Shah back; in 1759 he reoccupied Lahore, sacked Delhi and on 7 January 1761 met and completely destroyed the united Maratha army near Panipat. Against the Sikhs, who fought a guerilla war and who normally tried to avoid battles between large bodies of troops, the Durrani had less success than against the more presumptuous Marathas. Although Ahmad Shah surprised and routed a Sikh army in 1762 near Bernala in a battle which among the Sikhs became known as the *ghulu ghara* or *Great Disaster*, in 1765 the followers of Guru Gobind had recovered enough to be able to take Lahore from Kabuli Mal, its Durrani governor.

After the death of his father in 1772 Taimur Shah did not try to enforce his claim to Lahore, but his son and successor, Shah Zaman, twice invaded the Punjab and briefly occupied its capital on 3 January 1797 and again on 27 November 1798 without meeting any serious opposition.

During his last stay at Lahore Shah Zaman met with Ram Dayal Kohatia, Ranjit Singh's *vakil*, and they may then have come to an agreement concerning the future of the city.<sup>1</sup> Shah Zaman left Lahore on 4 January 1799 and only six months later, on 6 July, the young Sukar-

<sup>1</sup> GANESH DAS BADEHRA: *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 140.

chukia Sardar took Lahore from its three oppressive and highly unpopular Bhangi owners, the Sardars Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh. It was said that Ranjit Singh then struck coins *in his own name* at Lahore. The expression: *in his own name*, a stock phrase which Indian chroniclers and historians used almost automatically, does not mean that the coins actually bear the name of the ruler by whose orders they were minted. Such coins could be anonymous -- as in the case of Ranjit Singh -- or, for economic or political reasons, even bear the name of another ruler, in India often a nominal overlord.

Ranjit Singh made Lahore his capital and it remained the seat of the government of the Sikh realm until the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849. The city, which John Lowrie quite correctly called the *Delhi of the Punjab*, was then a busy trade center on the *Grand Trunk Road* which dealt in cotton cloth, silk, shawls and arms.<sup>2</sup> Lahore and Amritsar, its economically more important neighbour, annually paid an amount of Rs 800'000 in local and Rs 500'000 in transit duties to Ranjit Singh's *toshakhania*.<sup>3</sup>

Charles Masson, who visited Lahore in the late 1820s, wrote about it: "*Lahore, the capital of the Panjab and of the territories of Ranjit Singh, is a city of undoubted antiquity, and has been long celebrated for its extent and magnificence. The extravagant praises bestowed upon it by the historians of Hindustan must, however, be understood as applicable to a former city, of which now only the ruins are seen. The present city is, nevertheless, very extensive, and comprises many elegant and important buildings; amongst them the masjits Padshah and Vazir Khan are particularly splendid. ... There are also many other masjits, and some sarais, deserving attention; moreover, some of the Hindu temples are remarkable.*

*The streets are very narrow, as are the bazars, which are numerous. ... There are some exceedingly lofty and bulky mansions, well built of kiln-burnt brick, (the material of which the city is mostly constructed,) many of them recently erected. They have no exterior decorations, opposing an enormous extent of dead walls. ... The sons of Ranjit Singh have each of them a large palace within the city, and the Maharaja, in his occasional visits to Lahore, resides in the inner fort, or citadel, which occupies the north-west angle of the city. Here are extensive magazines of warlike stores, and manufactures of muskets, cannon-balls, &c.*

*Lahore, seated within a mile of the Ravi river, is not dependent upon it for water, having within its walls numerous wells. It is surrounded with a substantial brick wall, some twenty-five feet in height, and sufficiently broad for a gun to traverse. It has many circular towers, and divers sided bastions, at regular intervals. ... There are many gates, as the Murchi Derwaza, the Lohar Derwaza, the Delhi Derwaza, the Atak Derwaza, &c. The last is also called Derwaza Tanksala [Taksila Darwaza], or the Mint Gate. At the Lohar Derwaza is a large piece of ordnance, called the Bhangi [i.e. the famous gun Zamzamah, now standing on the Mall in front of the Museum]. ...*

*About three miles north-east of Lahore is the renowned and once delightful garden of Shalimar. The gay pavilions, and other buildings of this immense garden, have suffered not so much from the dilapidation of time as from the depredation of the Maharaja, who has removed much of the marbles and stones to employ them in his new constructions at Amritsar, and the contiguous fortress of Govindghar. ...*

*Lahore, although possessing a certain degree of trade and traffic with its populous vicinity, is a dull city, in a commercial sense. Amritsir has become the great mart of the Panjab, and the bankers and capitalists of the country have taken up their abodes there. It has also absorbed, in great measure, the manufactures, and its prosperity has allured to it vast number of the starving artisans of Kashmir." <sup>4</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> J.C. LOWRIE: *Two years in Upper India*, New York, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Treasurer*

<sup>4</sup> Chs MASSON: *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, ...*, I, 408 - 415.

## The coinage of Lahore

The Sikh rupees of Lahore were struck at a mint outside the *Taksali* (or *Taxali*) Gate, which lies just south of the *Badshahi* Mosque. According to a British report of 1846 the mint had the capacity to strike 8'000 rupees a day. The coining of Rs 100 cost, due to the necessary amount of pure silver, Rs 98½; it left the government just 1½ % for expenses and profit. As the annual profit of the Lahore mint rarely exceeded Rs 3'000 it must normally have worked far below capacity.<sup>5</sup>

The troubled history of Lahore in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is reflected in the coinage of its mint. The following list, a modified version of a list first compiled by Goron / Wiggins, gives the names of the rulers of the city and the known dates of their coins:

1719 - 1739 AD /	1132 - 1152 AH	Muhammad Shah (Mughal)
1739	1152	Nadir Shah Afshar
1739 - 1748	1152 - 1161	Muhammad Shah (Mughal)
1748 - 1752	1161 - 1165	Ahmad Shah (Mughal)
1752	1165	Ahmad Shah Durrani
1754 - 1756	1168 - 1169	'Alamgir II (Mughal)
1756	1170	Ahmad Shah Durrani
1756 - 1758	1170 - 1171	Taimur Shah Durrani (as <i>nizam</i> )
1758 - 1759	1171 - 1172	Marathas in the name of 'Alamgir III
1759 - 1760	1173	Taimur Shah Durrani (as <i>nizam</i> )
1760 - 1766	1173 - 1180	Ahmad Shah Durrani
1766 - 1796	1822 - 1853 VS <sup>6</sup>	Sikhs ( <i>Bhangi</i> )
1797	1211 AH	Zaman Shah Durrani
1797 - 1798	1854 - 1855 VS	Sikhs ( <i>Bhangi</i> )
1798	1213 AH	Zaman Shah Durrani
1799 - 1846	1856 - 1903 VS	Sikhs ( <i>Maharajas of Lahore</i> )

The Sikh rupees of Lahore, which followed the weight standard of the Mughal and Durrani coins, were -- at least until the introduction of the *Nanakshahis* bearing the frozen year 1885 on the reverse -- of good silver. Later coins were less appreciated by the merchants and at least some of them may contain an increased proportion of copper.

According to A.C. Elliot Maharaja Ranjit Singh established a mint at Islamgarh, a fort at the town of Gujrat, where all the Nanakshahi rupees dated *sambat 1885* and bearing the mint names *Lahore* and *Amritsar* were allegedly struck.<sup>6</sup> As the double dated rupees bearing the year 1885 on the reverse were definitely not struck at Gujrat, Elliott's statement can only refer to the coins with the year 1885 as their single date. Such coins are known of Amritsar and Lahore; they are very rare and do not differ markedly from earlier pieces. Although the altered dating system clearly demonstrates that some currency reform took place in VS 1885, we do not really understand its nature and we do not know why a few coins were still struck using the old dating system.

<sup>5</sup> *Foreign Department Secret Consultations No. 1327, of 26 December 1848, No. 7.*

<sup>6</sup> The last Durrani rupees are dated in AH 1180, a year which began on 9 June 1766, and the first Sikh coins in VS 1822, which already ended in the spring of 1766. This inconsistency has not yet been explained.

<sup>7</sup> A.C. ELLIOT: *The Chronicles of Gujrat*, p.31.

## The Jassa Singh Ahluwalia rupee

Brown and after him Malcolm, Cunningham, Latif and other writers reported that the Sikhs took over the Lahore mint in 1758 AD and struck their own rupees.<sup>8</sup> According to Malcolm these coins bore the couplet:

*Coined by the grace of the Khalsaji in the country of Ahmed,  
conquered by Jassa Singh Kalal.*<sup>9</sup>

Griffin and Rodgers gave another version of the same couplet:<sup>10</sup>

سکه زد در جهان بفضل اکلال  
ملک احمد گرفت جسا کلال

SIKKA ZAD DAR JAHĀN BA-FAZL ĀKĀL  
MULK-I-ĀHMAD GIRAFI JASSĀ KALĀL

Coin struck by the grace of the Timeless (AKAL) at the gate  
of the world [in] the realm of Ahmad [Shah Durrani] captured by Jassa Kalal.

According to a tradition of the Ahluwalias the family had to adopt the name of *Kalal* when Sadawa, the younger brother of Sadao Singh, the founder of the village *Ahlu* and ancestor of Jassa Singh, the Rajas of Kapurthala and the whole Ahluwalia Clan, married a girl of the *Jat Kalal* or distiller caste.<sup>11</sup>

Another tradition reported by Baron von Hügel gave the Ahluwalias the title *Kulal* or "bearer of the alu", the ceremonial battle-axe of the *Khalsa*.<sup>12</sup> "Qazi Nur Muhammad stated that in order to deride his enemy Ahmad Shah Abdali slightly changed the pronunciation of Jassa Singh's honorific title into *Kalal*, a word meaning: a distiller, a brewer, an inn-keeper."

As neither Malcolm and Cunningham nor Rodgers have ever personally seen one of the elusive *Jassa Singh rupees* and as Malcolm's and Cunningham's legend could also be made into a Persian couplet, we do not know whether one of their two versions is the correct one and whether it represents the entire inscription of both sides of the coin.

Griffin and other historians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have shown that Brown's sources were ill-informed and that his statement about the first Sikh rupees of Lahore is incorrect. When the Marathas and their allies took Lahore in April 1758 they appointed Adina Beg, a former Mughal official, to the governorship of the Punjab. Among the Sikh chiefs who supported Adina Beg but were soon expelled from Lahore by the victorious Marathas was *Jassa Singh Ramgarhia*, who was also known as *Jassa Singh Thoka* or *Jassa Singh the Carpenter*. It seems that Brown confused the Ramgarhia and the Ahluwalia Sardars and that he did not realize that in 1758 the Sikhs were not at all the sovereign masters of Lahore and its mint. It was more than 4½ years later, on 11 November 1761, that a Sikh army occupied Lahore and there proclaimed its commander, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia: *Sultan al-qaum* [King of the People]. Ghulam 'Ali Azad, who compiled his *Khazana-i-Amira* in the summer of the year 1762, wrote about the events of 1761:

<sup>8</sup> J. BROWN: *India Tracts ...* / J.D. CUNNINGHAM: *History of the Sikhs*, p.89.

<sup>9</sup> J. MALCOLM: *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 95. Cunningham gave practically the same couplet.

<sup>10</sup> L.H. GRIFFIN: *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 461, footnote / CHS J. RODGERS: "On the Coins of the Sikhs", *JASB*; Vol. L.

<sup>11</sup> *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 453.

<sup>12</sup> *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek*

"... they raised the standard of rebellion and disturbance, and killed his viceroy.<sup>13</sup> They raised a person named Jassa Singh from among themselves to the status of a king [badshah], and like a demon, they made him sit on the throne of Jamshid, and blackened the face of the coin with his name."<sup>14</sup>

James Brown, who claimed to have owned a few *Jassa Singh rupees*, wrote: "Soon after the last expulsion of the Durrani Shah, the Sikhs held a general Diet at Amritsar, in which they determined to call in the rupees which were struck in the name of Jassa Kalal and to strike them for the future in the name of their Gurus with an inscription to the effect: 'Gooroo Gobind Singh received from Nanak, the Daig, the sword and rapid victory.' The first of these new coins, the Nanakshahis of Lahore, were struck in 1765 [1822]."<sup>15</sup>

Not a single Jassa Singh rupee is known today, but Griffin remarked already in 1870 AD about these coins: "... it is very doubtful whether they were ever struck in large numbers at all. The Raja of Kapurthala (the head of the Ahluwalia clan) has none in his possession, nor do I know any one who has seen one."<sup>16</sup>

Its rarity and its aggressive inscription leave little doubt that the Jassa Singh rupee was never meant for everyday business in a country where the Sikhs were only a minority, but to taunt and exasperate Ahmad Shah Durrani. This may explain the widespread belief that the coins were not struck by the Sikhs at all. According to Ganesh Das only 21 of these rupees were coined and sent to Kabul by Muhammadan Qazis and Mullahs who desired to anger Ahmad Shah against the Sikhs.<sup>17</sup>

Some Muslims might well have expected a positive result of this rather childish intrigue, but although the Sikhs were still much too weak to bear the brunt of the full military might of the Afghan ruler, some of their presumptuous chiefs might also have been capable of provoking Ahmad Shah in such a preposterous way. As long as we lack any tangible evidence the question of who really had the elusive Jassa Singh rupee struck must remain unanswered.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Shah Durrani's viceroy in Lahore was *Khwaja Ubaid Khan*.

<sup>14</sup> In early Iranian mythology *Jamshid* was the *First Man* and the *King of the Golden Age*. Jamshid has later become the subject of numerous Persian legends.

<sup>15</sup> James BROWN: *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*.

<sup>16</sup> L. GRIFFIN: *The Rajas of the Punjab*.

<sup>17</sup> GANESH DAS: *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*.

<sup>18</sup> The *Jassa Singh rupee* is not the only mystery coin abusing an Afghan ruler. In an article in *JRASB*, Vol. LVII, No. 1 (1888) CHAS J. RODGERS published a coin couplet attributed to Shah Shuja by Sultan Muhammad Khan bin Musa Khan Durrani in his *Tarikh-i-Sultan*:

سکه زد بر سیم و طلا شاه شجاع ارمني  
نور چشم لارڈ برنس خاک پا کمپني

SIKKA ZAD BAR SĪM O TILĀ SHĀH SHUJA ĀRMANĪ  
NŪR-I-CHASHM LŌRD BURNES KHĀK PĀ-I-KOMPANĪ

[Coins of silver and gold struck Shah Shuja, the Armenian,  
the light of the eyes of Lord Burnes, the dust under the foot of the Company.]

Of this coin, which represented Shah Shuja as a *protégé* of Sir Alexander Burnes (assassinated on 2 November 1841 in Kabul) and as a lowly servant of the mighty East India Company, Rodgers remarked that it "could never have been struck by the King's permission."

## The Gobindshahis and Nanakshahis

When the Afghans lost Lahore in 1765 AD, the capital of the Punjab was occupied by three Sikh chiefs. To Lahna Singh fell the centre of the city with the fort and the mint, to Sobha Singh Khanaya the southern and to Gujjar Singh Bhangi the eastern part of the town up to Baghbanpura and the Shalimar Gardens.



08.02.04

AR Rupee

11.1 - 11.2 g

VS 1822, 1823

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ia:

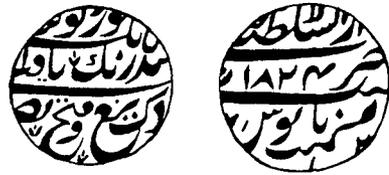
نانک گورو گو بند سنگم  
بید رنگ یافات  
دیگ تیغون فتح و نصر

Reverse:

ضار السلطنت  
سنم vs year  
میمنت مانوس  
جلوس

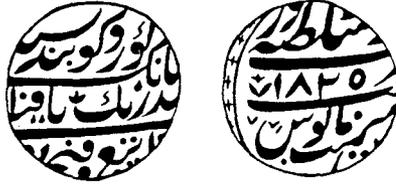
ZARB  
DĀR ĀS-SULTANAT LĀHŌR

.....  
SĀNĀH  
JULŪS MAĪMANAT MĀNŪS

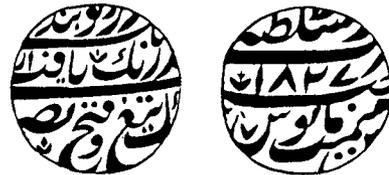


## 08.03.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 - 11.2 g

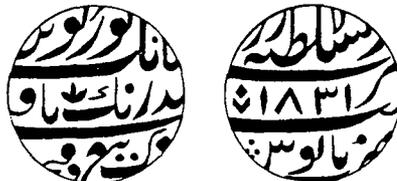


VS 1824, 1825, 1826,  
1827, 1828, 1829,  
1830, 1831, 1832,  
1833, 1834, 1835,  
1836, 1837, 1838,  
1839, 1840



## 08.03.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g



VS 1828,  
1832

Other years may also exist.



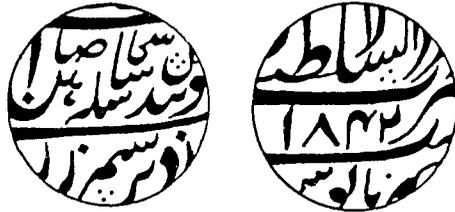
Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ie, arranged as on 08.01.04.

Reverse: As 08.01.04.

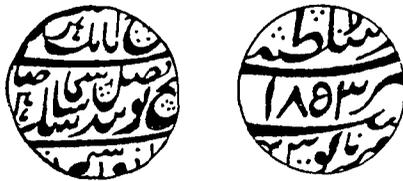
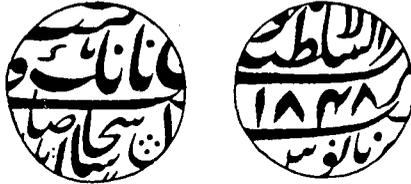
From VS 1824 to 1840 the rupees of type 08.01.04 are quite uniform and show the same set of main marks but rupees of 1839 show -- for reasons unknown -- a sword or a flag on the reverse:



Shah Zaman Durrani occupied Lahore for short periods of time in the winter 1797/98 AD (1211 AH) and in November 1798 (AH 1213) and on both occasions he had coins in his name struck in the conquered town. However, the regular Sikh coinage was only interrupted during the very short time when Lahore was actually controlled by the Afghans.



08.04.04

AR Rupee  
10.7 - 11.3 gVS 1841, 1842, 1843,  
1844, 1845, 1846,  
1847, 1848, 1849,  
1850, 1851, 1852,  
1853, 1854, 1855  
1856

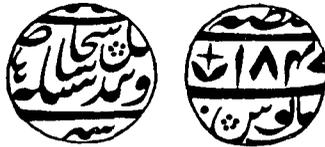
08.04.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g

VS 1847

Other years may exist.

½ Rupee:



Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet II:

است  
تیغ نانک و اہب  
فصل سپی صا  
قتم گو بندر سنم  
سکم زو بر تنیم وزر

Mohurs of type 08.04. have not yet been observed, but the expression *SIM WA ZAR* [silver and gold] may point to their possible existence.

Reverse: As 08.03.04.



08.05.04

AR Rupee

VS 1849

Obverse: As 08.04.04.

Reverse: As 08.04.04, but with a plant with flowers as the main mark.

**08.06.02**

AU Mohur  
10.70 - 10.85 g

VS 1876, 1884

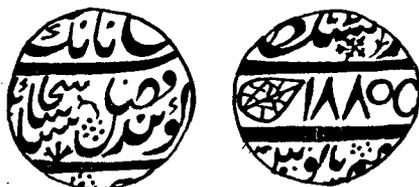
**08.06.03**

AU 1/2 Mohur  
c. 5.4 g

VS 1857

**08.06.04**

AR Rupee  
10.8 - 11.2 g



VS 1856, 1857, 1858,  
1859, 1860, 1861,  
1862, 1863, 1864,  
1865, 1866, 1867,  
1868, 1869, 1870,  
1871, 1872, 1873,  
1874, 1875, 1876,  
1877, 1878, 1879,  
1880, 1881, 1882,  
1883, 1884, 1885,  
1887

**08.06.05 N**

AR Square 1/2 Rupee  
5.68 g

VS 1857

Obverse: As 08.04.04.

Reverse: As 08.04, but with a leaf mark added.

**08.06.05**

AR 1/2 Rupee  
5.6g

VS 1858, 1864

**08.06.06**

AR 1/4 Rupee  
2.8 g

VS 185x

The fact that the leaf mark first appeared on the coins of Lahore in VS 1856 led to the belief that the mark was the personal emblem of Ranjit Singh. This assumption is clearly contradicted by the rupees struck at Amritsar, which bore the leaf since VS 1845, i.e. long before the place fell to the Maharaja of the Punjab.

*Format of Birmingham* offered in a price list a rupee of type 08.06.04. of the year VS 1849, which I have not seen. Although the existence of such a coin is not impossible, a misreading or misattribution seems more probable.

**08.08.02**

AU Mohur  
10.70- 10.85 g

VS 1884/88  
1884/92  
1884/9x

**08.08.04**

AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 g

VS 1884/87, 88, 89,  
90, 91, 92

1884/93 has been reported, but  
not confirmed.

**08.08.05**

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g

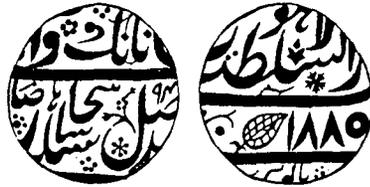
VS 1884/89

Other years may exist.

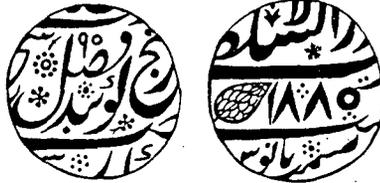
Obverse: As 08.06, but with a slightly different arrangement of the couplet and with the last 2 figures of the year, in which the coins were actually struck, added.

Reverse: As 08.06, but [VS] 1884 is now a frozen year.

Lahore 08.08 is a parallel series to Amritsar 01.10 but the coins of Lahore are much rarer.

**08.09.03**AU fractional Mohur <sup>19</sup>  
2.21 g

VS 1885/96

**08.09.04**AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 g

VS 1885/93, 94, 95, 96, 97



Obverse: As 08.08.

Reverse: As 08.08, but the year [VS] 1884 has been replaced by the frozen year [VS] 1885.

This is a parallel series to Amritsar 01.11 but again much rarer.

**08.10.04**AR Rupee  
10.9 - 11.1 g

VS 1885/1902, 1903

Obverse: As 08.09, but with the full year in which the coin was actually struck in 4 figures.

Reverse: As 08.09.

# 08.10 is a parallel series to Amritsar 01.12.

<sup>19</sup> The rare full and fractional Sikh mohurs --- all of which were Nazarana coins --- were, unlike rupees, not struck to an exact weight standard. A gold coin of 2.21 g could be called a ¼ or ½, mohur, but as it was not struck to be spent in a commercial transaction, it was probably not meant to correspond to a well defined denomination.

## Rupee patterns

08.12.04



AR Rupee

11.2 g

VS 1885/93

Obverse: Guru Nanak nimbate seated and receiving a flower, probably a lotus, from Ranjit Singh. In the background a pennant. Below:

ضرب لاہور ۱۸۸۵ ZARB LĀHŌRE 1885

Reverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ib:

دیکھتے تھے نصرت  
ازنانا بیدنگ ۹۳ یافت  
گورو گو بند سنگ

08.13.04



AR Rupee

11.4 g

VS 1885

Obverse: As 08.12.04, but with a floral ornament in the place of the pennant and without a date.

Reverse: As 08.12.04, but without 93; [VS] 1885 added.

The two very rare rupees 08.12.04 and 08.13.04 were until recently generally thought to be medals showing Guru Nanak with his disciple Mardana and possibly intended as presentation pieces struck for the marriage of Prince Nau Nihal Singh, the grandson of Ranjit Singh, celebrated on 8 March 1837 [VS 1893] at the village of Attari.<sup>20</sup> In 1990 Surinder Singh published a well-documented article which threw new light on these coins and which I follow here.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> BUTE SHAH's: *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar V, 372 says about this marriage: "After the marriage silver coins were thrown over the heads of the bride and bridegroom by Nau Nihal Singh's father Kharak Singh. Money was lavishly distributed amongst the poor. Beli Ram, who was in charge of the treasury, told the Maharaja that 7 lakhs of rupees had been distributed and he asked for another 2 lakhs of rupees."

<sup>21</sup> ONS Newsletter 123, March-April 1990.

Sohan Lal Suri reported a conversation between Ranjit Singh and Baron von Hügel\* that took place on 13 January 1836:

*"Right in the presence of Doctor Sahib [Baron von Hügel] the closing up of the mint and the preparation of the new dies was mentioned. Doctor Sahib said that 'the legend should be on one side and that the other side should bear the effigies of the Maharaja and of Baba Nanak in such a way that the Sarkar be presented with folded hands before the Guru Sahib.' The Maharaja approved of this suggestion which was considered to be proper and auspicious."*<sup>22</sup>

The following description of the paintings on the exterior of the Hall of Justice at the Lahore Fort shows that the representation of Guru Nanak and Maharaja Ranjit Singh found on the coins was not at all unique: *"Another picture represents the Maharaja in the presence of Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh sect: the holy father being most splendidly robed in a suit of embroidered gold, and sitting; whilst his disciple, who has done so much to extend the domains of his followers, is dressed in bright green silk, and standing, with his hands joined in a supplicatory manner. Behind the Baba, keeping guard, is an Akali with a drawn sword, and with but very little covering. A third represents a similar scene, with the single exception of Runjeet Singh being in a still more humiliating position -- on his knees. A few drawings of flowers, which separate these compartments one from another, are extremely well done, and true to nature."*<sup>23</sup>

The coins with the effigies of Guru Nanak and Ranjit Singh are so rare that they can only be considered patterns of a rupee type which --- for unknown but possibly religious reasons --- was never issued for circulation.

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<sup>22</sup> SOHAN LAL SURI: *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*.

<sup>23</sup> Lt. WILLIAM BARR: *Journal of a March from Delhi to Kabul*, p. 57.

## The Ahluwalia rupee



08.15.04

AR Rupee

VS 1862

Obverse: An unidentified variety of the Gobindshahi couplet.

Reverse:

ਅਕਾਲ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ  
ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਹਲੂਵਾਲੀ  
ਸੰਨ ੧੮੬੨

ĀKĀL SAHĀĪ (in Gurumukhi)  
SARKĀR <sup>24</sup> ĀHLŪWĀLIAN  
SANĀH 1862

With the help of God  
The Chief of the *Ahluwalia* [misl]  
Year [VS] 1862

This rupee was clearly struck by Sardar Fateh Singh, the leader of the Ahluwalia *misl* and grand-nephew of Jassa Singh Kalal. During Ranjit Singh's early years the Ahluwalia was the most powerful among the rapidly declining *misl*s; after the decline of the Bhangis Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, who ruled over large territories along the left bank of the river Beas, was the only serious political rival of the future Maharaja of the Punjab.<sup>25</sup> In 1802 Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh signed a treaty of unity and friendship and in 1806 the two Sikh leaders were still considered as equals by the British. The *Treaty of Lahore* (signed on 1 January 1806) therefore begins: "*Sardar Ranjit Singh and Sardar Fateh Singh have consented to the following articles of agreement, concluded by Lieutenant-Colonel John Malcolm (EIC) ... and Sardar Fateh Singh, as principal on the part of himself, and as plenipotentiary on the part of Ranjit Singh: ....*" and it ends: "*The British Government further agrees that, as long as the said Chieftains, Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh, abstain from holding any friendly connexion with the enemies of that Government, or from committing any act of hostility on their own parts against the said Government, the British armies shall never enter the territories of the said Chieftains, nor will the British Government form any plans for the seizure or sequestration of their possessions or property.*"

In later years Fateh Singh felt threatened by the growing power of Ranjit Singh, and as early as 1811 he desired to be regarded as separately connected with the British. When Ranjit Singh forced his *turban brother* to leave a new masonry fort unfinished, the Ahluwalia Sardar fled in 1826 to the British, who assured him of their protection in his possessions in the province of Sirhind. In 1827 Fateh Singh returned to Lahore where he was received with marked honour by Ranjit Singh. When he was visited by Dr. Wolff\* in 1842 Fateh Singh held the important post of governor of Amritsar.

<sup>24</sup> The meaning of: *sarkar* is: *Chief, Lord* as well as: *Government*. *Sarkar* was the title used by Ranjit Singh as ruler of the Punjab.

<sup>25</sup> The Ahluwalia territories later became the Sikh *State of Kapurthala*. The rulers of this princely state belonged to the family of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, whose sword they kept in their treasury, and of Fateh Singh.

The purpose of the Ahluwalia rupee, which was struck in the year of the *Treaty of Lahore*, may well have been the documentation and affirmation of the independent position claimed by the Ahluwalia *misl* represented by its leader Fateh Singh.

The Ahluwalia rupee does not bear a mint name, but the coin was evidently struck at a well equipped workshop employing experienced personnel; of the two possible mints --- Amritsar and Lahore --- the latter seems more probable.

## Copper coins



08.18.11

CU Paisa  
10.0 - 11.5 g

VS 1880, 1881

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ib arranged as on Amritsar 01.25.11.

Reverse:

لاهور  
دار السلطنة  
جلوس  
ص  
(VS year)

LAHÖR  
DĀR ĀS-SULTĀNĀT  
ZARB  
JULŪS  
SANĀH ....

Struck at Lahore, Seat of the Sulta-  
nate, [in the] year .... of the reign.

Lahore 08.18. and Amritsar 01.25. are parallel and contemporary series and probably government issues struck at the same mints as the rupees.

## 09 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT D



09.01.05

AR 1/2 Rupee

VS 1891 (?)

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet II arranged as on Lahore 08.08 and 91.

Reverse: Parts of *MAĪMANAT MĀNŪS*, the leaf mark of the Sikhs and to its right a 9 which is perhaps a part of (VS 18)91, and a not completely read mint-name.

The first word of the mint-name on this yet unique half rupee is:

*KHITTĀ* (district)

Although the design of the coin looks inspired by a rupee of Lahore, the use of the word *KHITTĀ* in the mint-name would rather seem to point to the mint of Srinagar in Kashmir and the second word, of which only a small fragment is legible, could in fact be *KASHMĪR*.

Assuming that the 91 on the obverse stands for VS 1891 – an assumption that appears plausible – and that the coin was struck at Srinagar, which is less certain, we can speculate about a reason for its existence: Col. Mihan Singh, who in VS 1891 was appointed governor of Kashmir, might have wished to introduce a new coin type and the 1/2 rupee could then be a pattern that was finally rejected.

## 10 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT C

In VS 1885 the double dated rupee type 01.10 became the standard *Nanakshahi* of Amritsar (and the main silver coin of the Sikh state), but the old type 01.07 -- struck since VS 1846 -- was still minted in small quantities until VS 1889. Whereas only a few rupees of the type 01.07 of the years 1885, 1886 and 1888 are known, coins dated 1889 are not very rare.<sup>1</sup> We do not know why the minting of this type went on after 1884 and why it stopped in 1889 and we cannot even be certain that all the rupees of type 01.07 dated 1885 - 1889 were struck in Amritsar. We therefore ignore if the demise of the type 01.07 is in some way related to the fact that at least 2 yet unidentified Sikh mints (C and E) struck rupees bearing the date VS 1889.



10.01.04

AR Rupee

11.2 g

VS 1889

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet II in the form in which it first appeared on Lahore 08.04.

Reverse: The only legible part of the inscription is the date: [VS] 1889. The lines at the bottom could be (in a very crude script):

*JULŪS MAĪMANAT MĀNŪS*

but the correct reading might also be something very different.

Rodgers, who had an unfortunate tendency to take a part for the whole and whose speculations quite often turned out to be incorrect, read the top line of the reverse as:

مزنگ اچھارہ *MUZANG ACHHĀRĀ*

The first part of the mint name could in fact be *MOZANG* but the second part is definitely not *ACHHARA*.

*Mozang* is today a part of central Lahore but in Ranjit Singh's time it was still a village south of the walled city of Lahore. No plausible reason for the establishment of a mint at this place, which was at the same time quite exposed and rather near the Lahore mint at the *Taxali Gate*, has ever been proposed.

<sup>1</sup> Rupees of type 01.07. dated VS 1887 have not yet been observed, but they may exist.

As we deal here with a rather crude imitation --- with a changed reverse inscription --- of a Lahore rupee and a coin which was probably not issued by one of the regular mints of the Sikh State, a conversation between Ranjit Singh and Dr. Honigberger\* can perhaps throw some light on the origin of this enigmatic piece:

*"Ranjit Singh one day told me that Hallen (Dr. Alen, an American) carried on secret alchemical experiments at the Fort of Gujrat where he then served as governor. I found it impossible to refrain from laughing and explained that what he meant by this term, the transformation of base metals into gold or of mercury into silver, is unthinkable and impossible. My statement was confirmed when it was later discovered that he was striking counterfeit coins and that this was the alchemy of the Doctor."*<sup>1</sup>

Honigberger's *Hallen* and *Dr. Alen* was Josiah Harlan\*, an American adventurer and self-taught physician, who had served as a medical officer with the *East India Company's* Bengal Army, but who could not rightfully lay claim to an academic degree.

Ranjit Singh remarked upon Harlan's secret activities during Dr. Honigberger's first stay at Lahore (1830-1834 AD) and Rodgers' *Muzang* rupee bears the VS year 1889 (1832 AD), a date which coincides with the American's governorship at Gujrat.<sup>2</sup>

We do not dispose of any details concerning Josiah Harlan's counterfeiting but the *Mozang* rupee might well be a lone survivor of the coins he struck. If this were true, the mint name could have been meaningless from the start and any attempt at reading it would have to remain futile.

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1 Dr. M. HONIGBERGER: *Früchte aus dem Morgenland*, p. 69: "Eines Tages erzählte mir Rendschit-Sing, das der Hallen (Dr. Alen, ein Amerikaner) in der Festung Gudscherats, wo er zu jener Zeit Gouverneur war, im Geheimen die Kimiai (Alchemie) betreibe, wesshalb ich mich des Lachens nicht enthalten konnte, und zu- gleich erklärte, dass das, was er darunter verstand, nämlich unedle Metalle in Gold zu verwandeln, oder das Quecksilber zu Silber zu umstalten, nicht denkbar und nicht ausführbar sei. Später fand man meine Worte be- stätigt, denn es ergab sich, dass er falsches Geld prägen liess, und das war des Doktors geheime Alchemie."

2 Dr. J. Wolff\* was Harlan's guest at Gujrat in the month of June 1832 AD.

## 32 UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINT E

**32.01.04**AR Rupee  
11.2 g

VS 1889

**32.01.07**AR 1/8 Rupee  
1.4 g /  $\varnothing$  12 mm

VS 1889

Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet V arranged as on Amritsar 01.07.

Reverse: The Amritsar reverse 01.07, but with a different mint name and mark.

Although quite a large part of the mintname (?) is visible on some coins, it has not yet been read convincingly.

The rupee 32.01.04 was for the first time observed in 2001 and it is still rare, but new specimens (struck from several dies) appear quite regularly in the market. It seems that all the known coins originated from a single Pakistani hoard of unknown size which is slowly broken up.

## 11 MULTAN

ملتان

Multan, a town of great antiquity and at the time of Alexander of Macedon's campaign in India probably the capital of the *Malli*, lies about 6 kilometers away from the left bank of the river Chenab and near the old bed of the Ravi.

Muhammad bin Qasim, the cousin and son-in-law of Hajjaj bin Yusuf Sakifi, the viceroy governing the former Sasanian kingdom for the caliph Walid I, took Multan in 713 AD and annexed it to the still expanding Umayyad Empire. The decline of the Caliphate, which soon set in under the 'Abbasids, led to a progressive weakening of the power and political influence of the Caliphal Government at the fringes of the empire; in 257 AH [871 AD] al-Mu'tamid had to confer the government of Sindh, Balkh and Tukharistan upon the military adventurer Yaqub bin Layth as-Saffar who earlier had already been invested with the governorship of Sijistan and Kirman. After the death of Yaqub in 879 AD and the advance of the Samanids into Afghanistan two new independent Muslim principalities arose in the lower Indus Valley: Lower Sindh or *Mansura* and Upper Sindh or *Multan*, both originally ruled by Arab amirs of the tribe of the *Quraysh*. At this time Multan was not only a large depot of the caravan trade between India and Khorasan but also the seat of an extremely popular cult of the Sun God. The idol, which attracted a multitude of pilgrims from India and Afghanistan and which represented the Amir of Multan's main source of income, was broken into pieces by the Qarmatians who, led by Jalam ibn Shaiban, conquered the Amirate of Multan in 977. The idol was restored in 1138 AD and definitively destroyed at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

When Subektegin of Ghazni rose into prominence, the Qarmatian Amir Abu al-Fath Da'ud bin Nasr entered into friendly relations with him but Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni marched thrice --- in the spring of 1006, in early 1007 and in October 1010 AD against the rebellious ruler of Multan.<sup>1</sup> The town and its district eventually fell to the *Sumras* of Sindh and in 1175 AD to Mu'izz ad-din Muhammad bin Sam of Ghor, who appointed Nasir ad-din Qubacha, one of his mamelukes, governor of Uchh. After the murder of Muhammad Ghori by a Qarmatian in 1206 AD Qubacha became the independent ruler of Upper Sindh, and when Sultan Qutb ad-din Aybak of Delhi died in 1210 AD he also brought Multan under his control. In 1221 Qubacha was besieged in Multan by Jalal ad-din Mangbarni, the last *Khwarizm Shah*, and in 1228 he lost Uchh, Multan and finally his whole kingdom to Shams ad-din Iletmish, the Sultan of Delhi. When the Mongol armies sacked Lahore in 638 AH [1241 AD] and advanced as far as Uchh, Kashlu Khan, the governor of Uchh and Multan, became a vassal of the Mongols, but Sultan Ghiyath ad-din Balban of Delhi later succeeded in reconquering the whole province of Multan.

Under the rule of the Delhi Sultans Multan, the burial place of Sheikh Baha ad-din Zakariya (d. 1262 AD), the founder of the Indian branch of the *Surawardi* Sufi order, his son Sheikh Sadr ad-din Arif and his grandson Rukn ad-din, commonly known as *Rukn al-'alam*, developed into an important religious centre. The tomb of Baha ad-din and the shrine of Rukn ad-din, a distinctive landmark, attract even today large numbers of pilgrims.

Timur occupied Multan in October 1398; later -- from 1444 to 1525 AD -- the city became the capital of an independent state encompassing the southern Punjab and ruled by a local dynasty founded by Qutb ad-din Mahmud Langa. In 1525 Multan was seized by Husain Arghun of Sindh and then annexed to the Mughal Empire by Kamran, Humayun's governor in the Punjab. In 1540 the town fell to Sher Shah Sur and in 1555 it was occupied by Akbar, who made

<sup>1</sup> In *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni* (Cambridge 1931) MUHAMMAD NAZIM pointed out that Firishta called Da'ud a descendant of Sheikh Hamid Lody and that Lody is an obvious error for Lawi who, according to Mas'udi, was probably an ancestor of Da'ud. This error has misled some authors, among them Goron/Wiggins, into calling Hamid and Da'ud members of the *Afghan Lodi family*.

Multan the capital of a *subah*, which included 88 *parganas* in the *sarkars* of Dibalpur, Multan and Sukkur.

The Persian invader Nadir Shah took Multan in 1151 AH [1738 AD] but it later reverted, at least nominally, to the Mughal Empire. The provinces of Lahore and Multan were ceded to Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1752 and occupied by the Marathas in the name of the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah Bahadur in 1759 but in the same year the invaders from central India were again expelled during Ahmad Shah Abdali's fifth invasion of India.

After Ahmad Shah's last eastern campaign in 1767 the Province of Multan was overrun by the plundering troops of the *Bhangi misl* led by Jhanda Singh; in 1771 the Sikh troops commanded by Mujja Singh, Jhanda's deputy, felt strong enough to attack the provincial capital, but were defeated by the joint forces of the Afghan governor and the *Daudputras*, the rulers of neighbouring Bahawalpur. When these allies later quarrelled Jhanda Singh was able to seize the citadel of Multan on 25 December 1772 as well as the town and fort of Mankera.<sup>2</sup>

Armies sent by Taimur Shah, the son and successor of Ahmad Shah Durrani, tried in 1777 and 1778 in vain to recapture Multan, but when the Afghan ruler led his troops in person against the city, the Sikh commander of its garrison surrendered the citadel on 18 February 1780. Muzaffar Khan, a Sadozai Afghan and Taimur Shah's governor of Multan, succeeded in buying off Ranjit Singh or his commanders when the Maharaja's armies attacked Multan in 1803, 1805, 1807, 1810, 1816 and 1817. In 1818 the Sikhs again laid siege to the Fort of Multan which they stormed on 2 June, killing Muzaffar Khan and 2 of his sons.

Ranjit Singh first appointed Diwan Sukh Dyal governor of Multan; when the Diwan proved unable to collect the revenue, the province was farmed for 650'000 rupees annually to Diwan Sham Singh Peshawari, who in turn was soon dismissed and replaced by Badan Hazari. In 1821 Sawan Mal, a man considered to be a fair and capable administrator, was appointed governor of the Province of Multan, a position which he retained for almost a quarter of a century.

Charles Masson left us quite an extensive description of the city of Multan, which he visited in 1827: "*This city appears advantageously seen in the distance, but loses its effect on our near approach to it. It cannot be less than three miles in circumference, and is walled in. Its bazars are large, but inconveniently narrow, and, I thought, did not exhibit that bustle or activity which might be expected in a place of much reputed commerce. The citadel, if not a place of extreme strength, is one on which more attention seems to have been bestowed than is usual, and is more regular than any fortress I have seen, not constructed by European engineers. It is well secured by a deep trench, neatly faced with masonry; and the defences of the gateway, which is approached by a drawbridge, are rather elaborate. ... Within the citadel are the only buildings worth seeing, — the battered palace of the late khan [Muzaffar Khan], and the Mahomedan shrine of Bahawal Hak. ...*

*Multan is said to have decreased in trade since it fell into the hands of the Sikhs, yet its bazars continued well and reasonably supplied with all articles of traffic and consumption. There are still numerous bankers and manufactures of silk and cotton goods. Its fabrics of shawls and lungis are deservedly esteemed, and its brocades and tissues compete with those*

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<sup>2</sup> The now ruined Fort of *Mankera* is strategically located in the Doab between the rivers Indus and Chenab (80 kilometers southwest of Dera Ismail Khan and 130 kilometers north of Multan). It controlled the road leading from Afghanistan through the Gomal Pass and Dera Ismail Khan to Lahore.

of Bahawalpur. It still supplies a portion of its fabrics to the Lohani merchants of Afghanistan, and has an extensive foreign trade with the regions west of the Indus. ...

The gardens of Multan are abundant, and well stocked with fruit-trees, as mangoes, oranges, citrons, limes, &c. Its date-groves also yield much fruit, and vegetables are grown in great plenty. The inundations of the Ravi river extend to the city, but it is three miles distant, and has what is called a bandar, a port, in this instance expressive of a boat station; whence there is communication with the Indus, and, consequently, with the sea.

The area enclosed within the walls being compactly built over, the city may be supposed to contain not less than eight or nine thousand houses, or from forty to forty-five thousand souls. ...

At present a Brahman, Sohand Mal [Sawan Mal] resides at Multan, as governor for Ranjit Singh, with the title of Subahdar; and his jurisdiction is extensive, comprising the southern parts of the Sikh kingdom from the Satlej to the Indus. He has at his command a force of eight hundred Sikhs, under Gandar Singh, besides the garrisons sprinkled over the country. He is a popular ruler, and many anecdotes are related of his liberality and indulgence. The Sikh authority over the conquered provinces held by the Subahdar being firmly established, the administration is mild, owing partly, perhaps, to his personal character, and two Sikhs are located at every village and hamlet on the part of the government. The peasantry make over a third of the produce of their lands; neither do they complain."<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Burnes passed through Multan in 1831 and also left us quite a long description of the city and the province: "The city of Mooltan is upwards of three miles in circumference, surrounded by a dilapidated wall, and overlooked on the north by a fortress of strength. It contains a population of about 60'000 souls, one third of whom may be Hindoos; the rest of the population is Mahomedan, for though it is subject to the Seiks, their number is confined to the garrison, which does not exceed 500 men. The Afghans have left the country, since they ceased to govern. Many of the houses evidently stand on the ruins of others: they are built of burnt brick, and have flat roofs: they sometimes rise to the height of six stories, and their loftiness gives a gloomy appearance to the narrow streets. The inhabitants are chiefly weavers and dyers of cloth. The silk manufacture of Mooltan is called "kais", and may be had of all colours, and from the value of 20 to 120 rupees: it is less delicate in texture than the "loongees" of Bhawalpoor. Runjeet Sing has with much propriety encouraged their manufacture, since he captured the city; and by giving no other cloths at his court, has greatly increased their consumption, and they are worn as sashes and scarfs by all the Seik Sirdars. They are also exported to Khorasan and India, and the duties levied are moderate. ... The trade of Mooltan is much the same as at Bhawalpoor, but is on a larger scale, for it has forty Shroffs [money changers], chiefly natives of Shikarpoor."<sup>4</sup>

About the Province of Multan Burnes wrote: "The greater part of the country bordering on this part of the Acesines [Chenab] is included in the district of Mooltan, which, besides the city of that name, contains the modern town of Shoojurabad. The government, when tributary to Cabool, has been described in the worst terms; but Runjeet Sing has recruited its population, repaired the canals, and added to their number, raising it to a state of opulence and prosperity to which it had been long a stranger. The soil amply repays the labour, for such is its strength, that a crop of wheat, before yielding its grain, is twice mowed down as fodder for cattle, and then ears, and produces an abundant harvest. The indigo and sugar crops are likewise rich, and one small strip of land five miles long, which we passed, afforded a revenue of 75'000 rupees. The total revenue amounts to about ten lacs [1'000'000] of rupees a year, or double the sum it produced in 1809. The tobacco of Mooltan is celebrated; but for

<sup>3</sup> MASSON: *Narratives of Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan, ...*, London 1842, p. 394–398.

<sup>4</sup> A. BURNES: *Travels into Bokhara being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia, Also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore*, London 1834, Vol. III, 110-117.

*an Indian province, the date-tree is its most singular production. It yields a great abundance of fruit, which is hardly inferior to that of Arabia; for the trees are not weakened by extracting a liquor from them, as in Lower India. I imagine that they owe their maturity to the great heat of Mooltan; for dates seldom ripen in India. The mangoes of Mooltan are the best of Upper India, and their good qualities seem also to arise from the same cause, as the mango is usually but an indifferent fruit beyond the tropics."*<sup>5</sup>

G.T. Vigne\*, who was at Multan in 1836, praised its governor for the efforts he made to develop his province<sup>6</sup>, but Leopold von Orlich, a Prussian officer, who travelled from Karachi to Lahore in 1842, was more critical. In a letter to the famous German scholar Alexander von Humboldt he wrote: "*Besides this country [the Bari Doab], so highly favoured by nature, but so neglected by man, the empire of the Sikhs extends over the fine and rich province of Mooltan, a tract seventy miles wide, along the right bank of the Indus, beyond Mettun Kote [Mithankot] and the province of Peshawar. The territory under the dominion of the Maharaja may be estimated at 8'000 geographical square miles, with five million inhabitants and a revenue of between two and three millions sterling. It is divided into provinces and districts, the administration of which is committed to governors and sirdars, who pay a certain sum to the prince; and of course, each of them endeavours to extort as much more as he possibly can from the country under his charge.*

*Mooltan, which is governed by a Hindoo, enjoys the best administration, and Kashmir is the most plundered and desolated."*<sup>7</sup>

Sawan Mal was assassinated in 1844 and succeeded by his son Diwan Mulraj, who objected to the large *nazarana* required by the Regency Council in Lahore as a condition of the confirmation of his succession. In September he agreed to pay a fine of 1'800'000 rupees but the payment was never made. When finally threatened with force Mulraj resigned in March 1848. Mr. Vans-Agnew, a political officer, and Lieut. Anderson, two British emissaries sent to install Sardar Kahan Singh Man, the new Sikh governor, were assassinated shortly after their arrival at the *Idgah* of Multan on 20 April 1848, and Mulraj, who rewarded the murderers, promptly rebelled against the government in Lahore. His forces were twice defeated by Lieut. Edwardes, Sir Henry Lawrence's assistant in charge of the Derajat, but on 14 September a Sikh army under Sardar Sher Singh sent by the Regency Council against Mulraj rebelled too and thus turned a mere local revolt into a national war --- a war that ultimately led to the annexation of the Punjab.<sup>8</sup> The town of Multan was invested by British forces in September 1848 and stormed by troops under General Wish on 2 January 1849. Mulraj surrendered the Citadel and Multan became a part of British India.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.id.*, p. 303-304.

<sup>6</sup> G.T. VIGNE: *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghazni, etc.*, London 1840, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> L. von ORLICH: *Travels in India, ....*, I, 162.

<sup>8</sup> *Sher Singh* was the son of Sardar Chattar Singh Atariwala, the father-in-law of Maharaja Dalip Singh and in 1848 governor of Hazara, who rose even before his son against the Regency government at Lahore.

## The Coinage of Multan

The mint established in Multan in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Akbar's reign served, with the exception of Jahangir, all the Mughal emperors down to 'Alamgir II.

The following synopsis of the gold and silver coins struck at Multan in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century reflects the troubled history of the city during this period:<sup>9</sup>

### Coins struck in the name of:

AH	1132-1 152	Muhammad Shah [Mughal]
	1152	Nadir Shah Afshar
	1153-1 161	Muhammad Shah [Mughal]
	1162-1 165	Ahmad Shah [Mughal]
	1165-1 170	Ahmad Shah [Durrani]
	1170-1 172	Taimur Shah [Durrani] as <i>nizam</i>
	1172	Ahmad Shah [Durrani]
	1172-1 173	'Alamgir II [Mughal]
	1173-1 185	Taimur Shah [Durrani] as <i>nizam</i>
VS	1829-1 836	Sikhs [Bhangi misl]
AH	1194-1 207	Taimur Shah [Durrani] as king
	1207-1 215	Zaman Shah [Durrani]
	1216-1 218	Mahmud Shah [Durrani]
	1218-1 224	Shah Shuja al-mulk [Durrani]
	1227-1 233	Mahmud Shah [Durrani]
VS	1875-1 905	Sikhs [Lahore Durbar and Diwan Mulraj]

The silver rupees struck during the two Sikh occupations of Multan are local varieties of the Gobindshahi and the Nanakshahi, but copper coins were also struck in imitation of Durrani types and --- during the 2<sup>nd</sup> occupation until 1264 AH --- even in the name of Mahmud Shah Durrani.

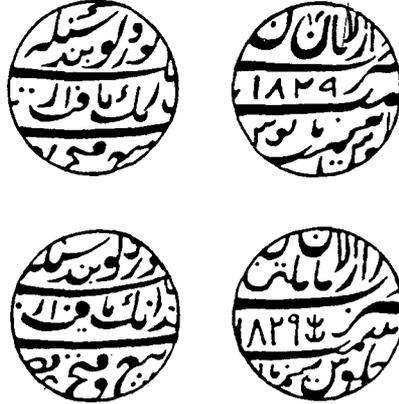
Gold rupees, an otherwise unknown coin type, were struck by Diwan Mulraj as an emergency coinage during the siege of Multan in VS 1905.

<sup>9</sup> This synopsis was first published by Goron / Wiggins in: *ONS Information Sheet 24*, p. 8.

Coins of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sikh occupation of Multan

Silver

11.01.04



AR Rupee  
11.0 - 11.1 g

VS 1829, 1830, 1831  
1832, 1833, 1834,  
1835, 1836

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet Ib:

نانا گورو گوبند  
بید رنگیت فری  
دیگ تیخ فتح و نصر

Reverse:

الان ن  
ضد الامان ملتان  
(VS year)  
سبب  
جاوون مہمانوں

ZARB  
DĀR ĀL-ĀMĀN MULTĀN  
SAMBAT ....  
JULŪS MAĪMANAT MĀNŪS

Struck at Multan, the Abode of Safety,  
in the year .... of the prosperous reign

The marks on the Sikh coins are not yet too well understood, but in the case of the rupees struck at Multan between VS 1829 and 1836 we at least seem to know the full set of the marks occurring on the reverse together with the VS year. Those marks probably indicated the acting *daroga* of the mint:

1829	↓	1829	☞	1830	☞	1831	☞	1832	☞
1833	☞	1834	☞	1835	☞	1836	☞		

## Copper coins

Copper coins struck during the first Sikh occupation of Multan are extremely rare. They imitate the copper coins of the Durrani kings but replace the name of the Afghan ruler by the name of *Guru Gobind Singh*:



11.02.11

CU Fulus  
11.3 - 12.0 g

VS 1834

Obverse:

ملتان  
ضرب  
مبارک  
حلبوسن

ZARB  
MILTĀN  
JULŪS  
MUBĀRAK

Struck at Multan [during the]  
auspicious reign

Reverse:

گورو گوبند سنگھ  
جیو  
فلوس

FULŪS  
GŪRŪ GŌBIND SINGHJĪYO

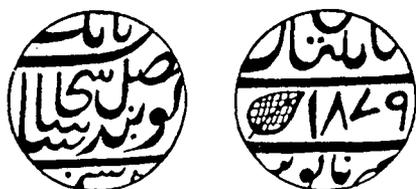
Coins of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sikh occupation of Multan

In February 1818 AD the town of Multan was reoccupied by one of Ranjit Singh's armies but the citadel was only stormed on 2 June 1818.<sup>10</sup>

Whereas the rupee production of the Multan mint was usually quite prolific under the great Mughal emperors, Sikh rupees of this mint are far from common. They are notably rarer than the Lahori rupees and of course very much rarer than the normal *Nanakshahi* types of Amritsar.

The rupees struck at Multan after VS 1875 followed the example of the contemporary *Nanakshahis* of Lahore but their calligraphy and workmanship clearly show a progressive deterioration.

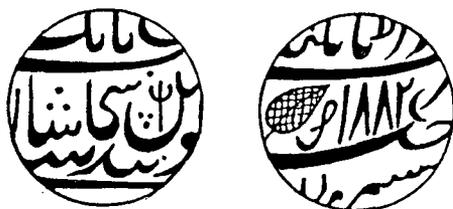
<sup>10</sup> The Sikh army was nominally commanded by Prince Kharak Singh but in reality led by Ranjit Singh's able general Misr Diwan Chand.



## 11.03.02

AU Mohur  
10.71 - 10.74 g

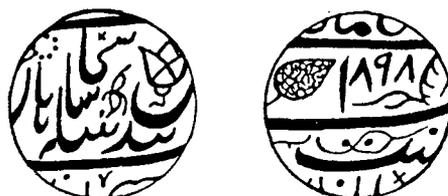
VS 1876<sup>11</sup>



## 11.03.04N

AR Nazarana Rupee

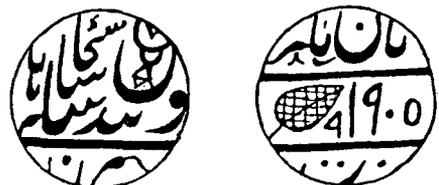
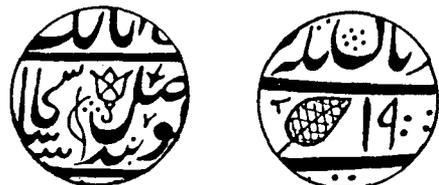
VS 1896



## 11.03.04

AR Rupee  
11.0 - 11.2 g

VS 1875, 1876, 1877,  
1878, 1879, 1880,  
1881, 1882, 1883,  
1884, 1885, 1886,  
1887, 1888, 1889,  
1890, 1891, 1892,  
1893, 1894, 1895,  
1896, 1897, 1898,  
1899, 1900, 1901,  
1902, 1903, 1904,  
1905



Obverse: The Nanakshahi couplet II:

است  
سبح نانک و اہب  
فصل سچا صا  
گو بند سنہ پن  
سک زو بر سیم وزر

Reverse: As 11.01.04.

## 11.03.05

AR ½ Rupee  
5.5 g

VS 1876, 1877, 1879, 1885

## 11.03.06

AR ¼ Rupee  
2.7 g

VS 1905

Rupee fractions of other years may also exist

<sup>11</sup> I know of 3 Sikh mohurs of Multan and all three of them are of the year VS 1876, a year in which there might have existed a special but now forgotten reason for the coining of gold at Multan.

From the time of Aurangzeb to VS 1905 Multani rupees often showed a flower mark which is sometimes called a *lily* but which especially on the later Sikh rupees looks much more like a *tulip*. The following table gives the marks yet observed on rupees struck during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sikh occupation of Multan, a list which is undoubtedly far from complete. It seems in fact that every die bore its individual marks:

	Obv.	Rev.		Obv.	Rev.		Obv.	Rev.
VS 1875		 1870	1888		 1888C	1898		 1898E
1876		 1876C			 1888C			 1898C
1877		 1877C			 1888C			 1898C
		 1877C	1889		 1889C			 1898C
1878		 1878C	1890		 1890C			 1898E
		 1878C			 1890C	1899		 1899E
1879		 1879C			 1890C			 1899E
		 1879C	1891		 1891C			 1899E
1880		 1880C			 1891E			 1899E
		 1880E			 1891E	1900		 1900C
1881		 1881C			 1891*			 1900C
		 1881C	1892		 1892E			 1900C
1882		 1882E			 1892E	1901		 1901E
		 1882E	1893		 1893C			 1901E
		 1882E			 1893E			 1901E
1883		 1883C	1894		 1894C	1902		 1902C
		 1883C			 1894E	1903		 1903E
1884		 1884C			 1894E			 1903E
		 1884E	1895		 1895E	1904		 1904E
		 1884E			 1895E			 1904E
		 1884E	1896		 1896C			 1904E
1885		 1885C			 1896C			 1904E
		 1885C	1897		 1897E	1905		 1905E
		 1885C			 1897E			 1905E
1886		 1886C			 1897E			 1905E
1887		 1887C			 1897E			 1905E
		 1887C			 1897E			 1905E

## Copper coins

Up to the year VS 1904 / AH 1264, the year when the local copper coinage came to its end, we find two parallel but radically different series of copper coins bearing the mint name *Multan*:

- ♦ Fulus of the traditional Durrani type bearing the name of *Mahmud Shah* Durrani and a AH year
- ♦ *Nanakshahis* bearing a VS year.

It is possible that 2 different copper mints worked simultaneously at Multan and that one of them struck coins of a Durrani type, a type which the Muslim population may have found more acceptable than the *Nanakshahis* of the Sikhs. I tend to believe that the *Fulus* in the name of Mahmud Shah, who from 1233 to his death in 1245 AH only actually ruled in Herat, were the product of a mint using the mint name *Multan*, but which was located beyond the borders of the territory effectively controlled by the Sikhs.

## Durrani types:

11.04.11

CU Fulus  
9.1 - 11.7 g



AH 1235,  
1253, 1254,  
1257,  
1263, 1264

Obverse:

دور دراز  
محمود شاه  
بادشاه

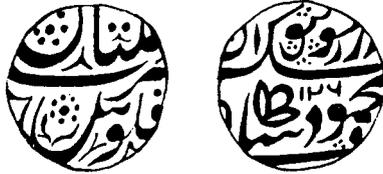
*DŪR-I-DŪRRĀNĪ* \*  
*MAHMŪD SHĀH*  
*BADSHĀH*

Reverse:

ملتان  
ضرب  
فلوس

*MULTĀN*  
*ZARB*  
*FULŪS*

\* *DUR-I-DURRANI* [Pearl of Pearls] was the traditional title of the descendants of Ahmad Shah 'Abdali.



11.05.11

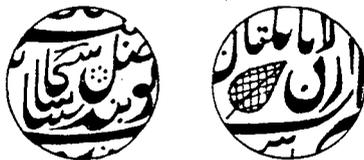
CU Fulus  
c. 10 g

AH 1260

Obverse: As 11.04.11.

Reverse: As 11.04, but *DUR-I-DURRANI* has been replaced by an unread inscription occurring in slightly varying forms.

## Sikh types:



11.06.11

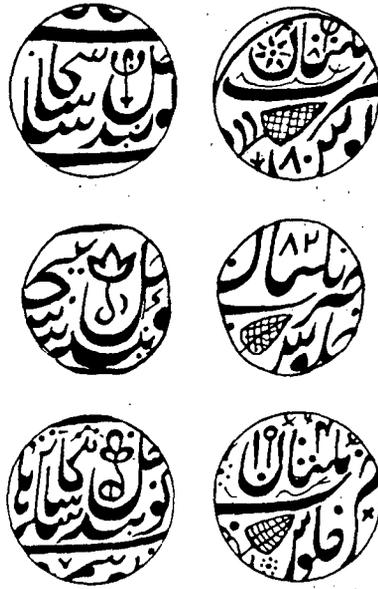
CU Paisa  
12.5 gObverse: The Nanakshahi couplet II as on 11.03. Mark: Reverse: Probably as 11.03, but the word *SAMBAT* and the VS year have not been read on the available coins. Mark:  above  of *ZARB*.

11.07.11

CU Paisa  
12.2 - 12.4 gVS 1875  
1878 reported

Obverse: As 11.06.11.

Reverse: As 11.06, but the leaf mark  below  of *ZARB*.



11.08.11

CU Paisa  
12.0 - 12.5 g

VS	1880
	1882
	1886
	1888
	1904

Of this type other years may exist.

Obverse: As 11.06.11.

Reverse:

ضرب جلوس ملتان ZARB JULŪS MULTĀN

Although the weight of this Paisa remained fairly constant, its diameter and the details of its design varied widely. As the large coins do not weigh more than the smaller ones they must also be single and not double paisas.

Obverse marks:

VS	1880
	1882
	1886
	1888
	1904



## The emergency Gold Rupees struck during the siege of Multan in VS 1905

Large quantities of small gold coins weighing about 0.65 grams and often erroneously called  $\frac{1}{20}$  Mohurs were found by the British troops occupying the citadel of Multan. In a note written in 1864 the British Commissioner at Amritsar reported about the origin of these tiny coins: "*When Mulraj was besieged in Multan [September 1848 - 22 January 1849], being short of silver to pay his troops, but having 40 lakhs of rupees hoarded in gold, he coined the whole of it into pieces which passed for one rupee.*"<sup>12</sup>



11.09.04

AU Rupee  
0.6 -0.65 g

VS 1905

Obverse:

سہا  
ستگورو

SAHĀI  
SATGŪRŪ

This is the inscription found on most of the gold rupees but some coins seem to bear a slightly longer and yet unread legend.

*SAHAI SATGURU* means: *May the true teacher help!*

Reverse:

19.0

1905

مندرکا

MUNDARKĀ

The word: *MUNDARKĀ* has puzzled numismatic writers for quite some time. Domrow wrote: "*Mundarka can only be explained as the name of a mint or state*"<sup>13</sup> and the more cautious Goron / Wiggins stated that the "*meaning of the word Mundarka, if that is the correct reading, has not been ascertained.*"<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> In: *Proceedings of the Financial Department, Gov' of India, 1864.*

Quoted by GORON / WIGGINS in: *ONS Information Sheet 24, p. 11.* These authors pointed out that it seems rather unlikely that Diwan Mulraj had the equivalent of 4 million rupees or 2'600 kilograms of gold at his disposition. For further information concerning these gold rupees see also: *Appendix 2* of this book.

<sup>13</sup> *JNSI, Vol. XXXV, 1973.*

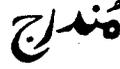
<sup>14</sup> *ONS Information Sheet 24, p. 11.*

*MUNDARKĀ* is a rarely used Urdu word which is related to the more common expressions:



*MUNDARĀ*

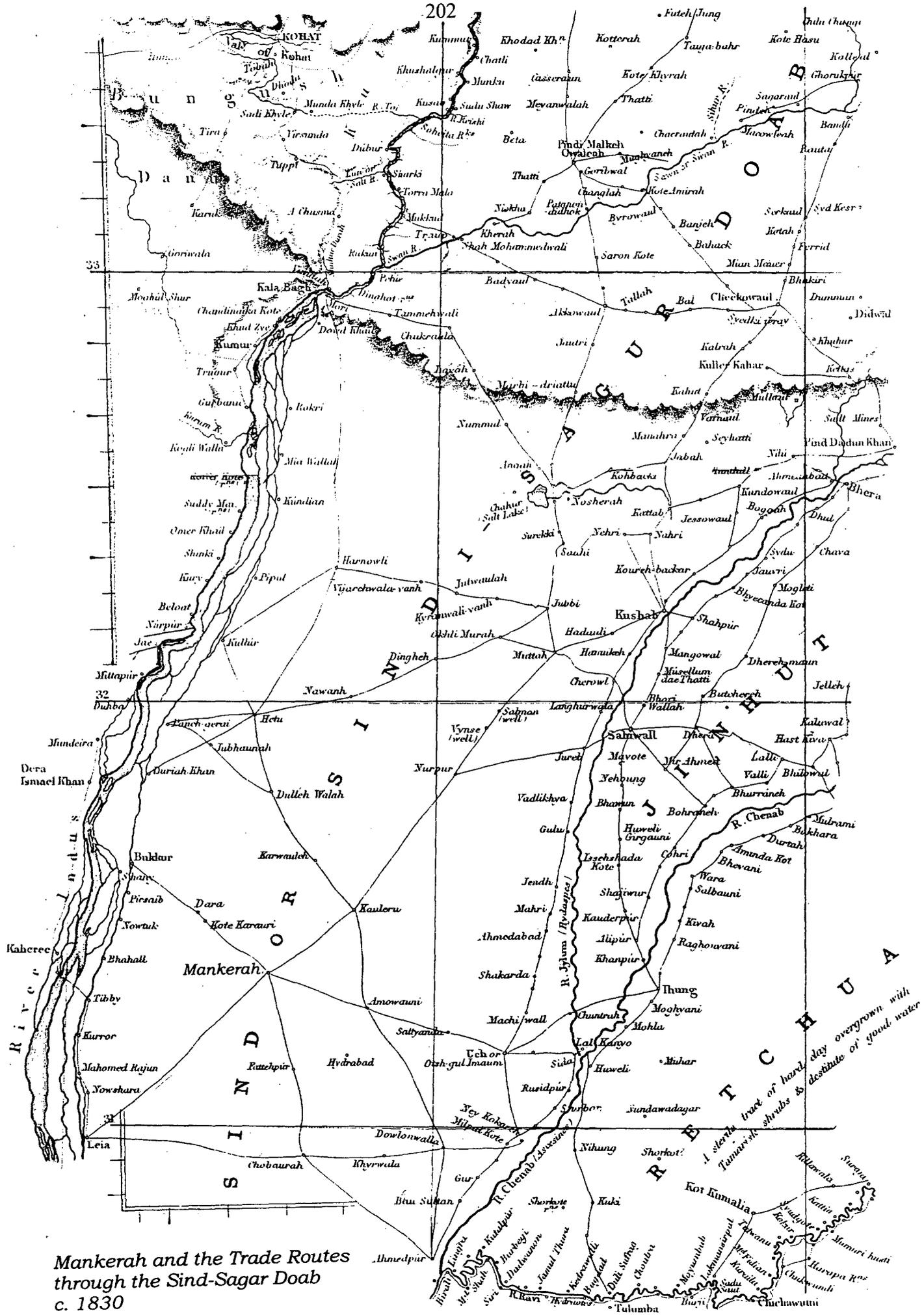
Ring, collar



*MUNDARIJ*

contained, encircled, surrounded, closed in, invested

The meaning of *MUNDARKĀ* is simply: *siege* and the expression gives the reason for the striking of the tiny gold coins.



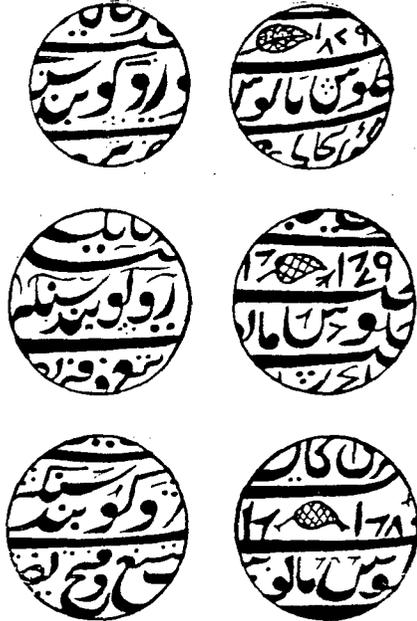
Mankerah and the Trade Routes through the Sind-Sagar Doab  
c. 1830

## 33 MANKERA

33.02.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1879, 1880



A double mohur of Mankera (VS 1880) which recently surfaced at Ludhiana is definitely a fake inexpertly copied from a rupee.

Obverse : The Gobindshahi couplet Ib. The arrangement seems to be the one used on Amritsar 01.25 and on Lahore 08.18, two contemporary copper coins.

Reverse : Only the words that are part of the standard late Mughal reverse inscription have yet been read with some certainty:

18 and [VS] year

SAMBAT [?]

JULŪS MĀNŪS

MAĪMANAT [?]

Coins of VS 1879 may also exist without the unexplained 18 on the reverse.

At the top of the reverse, where Sikh rupees ordinarily bear the mint name, only *SRI AKAL* is legible on all the known coins. A number of more or less plausible completions of this fragmentary part of the inscription have been proposed:

The catalogue of the Patiala Museum tends to the reading *SRI ĀKĀLPŪR* and favours the attribution of these rare rupees to Srinagar in Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> The expression *SRI ĀKĀLPŪ-RAKHJĪB* actually appeared there about twenty years later -- during the governorship of Col. Mihan Singh -- but as the inscriptions, the style and the weight standard of the Sikh rupees of Kashmir of VS 1879/80 are not only well known but also completely different from type 31.01, this attribution seems highly improbable.

K. Wiggins, who thought -- probably correctly -- that the bottom line of the reverse may include an unread mint name, proposed the completion: *SRI ĀKĀL SHĀHĪ*.<sup>2</sup> This expression

1 *The Coins of Dal Khalsa and Lahore Durbar in the Sheesh Mahal Museum Patiala*, p. 172.

2 Private communication, 1990.

has never been observed anywhere else and does not sound too convincing; *SRĪ ĀKĀL SAHĀĪ* or even *SRĪ ĀKĀLPŪRAKHJĪ* would be more in keeping with Sikh ideas and not at all improbable.

The mint which struck these rare coins has long remained an enigma.

Rodgers remarked about one of these very rare coins: "*This is said to be a Malkerian rupee*" but he did not explain where *Malkerian* might be located.<sup>3</sup> Codrington later placed *Malkerian* near Multan<sup>4</sup>, but Goron / Wiggins noted correctly that at least in recent times a place called *Malkerian* did not exist anywhere in the Punjab and wrongly surmised that this mint is nothing but an invention based on the misread words at the top of the reverse. Amazingly they then considered the identification of *Malkerian* with *Mukerian*, a village situated in the foothills of Kangra, north-east of Amritsar and north of Hoshiarpur.<sup>5</sup>

The rupee 31.01.04 is clearly related to the rupees of Lahore and Multan and it is therefore highly probable that it was also struck in the southwest of the Punjab.<sup>6</sup> It seems that Rodgers and Codrington disposed of some quite reliable information about the name and the location of the mint. Unfortunately the mint name had been slightly distorted into *Malkerian* during its oral transmission and the two great numismatists were either unable or did not care to correct it. I am now convinced that the mint which struck these rupees was located at *Mankera*.

Mankera, which was famous for its breeds of horses and camels, lies about 80 kilometers southwest of Dera Ismail Khan and 130 kilometers north of Multan. Its strong fort was once the centre of a state which included vast, but dry, unproductive and largely rainless areas extending from the south of the *Kohistan-i-namak* (Salt Range) to the borders of Multan, Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu and which often shared the political destiny of Multan.

Mankera fell for the first time to the Sikhs in December 1772, when it was occupied by the Bhangis under Jhanda Singh, but it was – together with Multan – reconquered by Taimur Shah Durrani in 1780. In 1821 AD, when Ranjit Singh sent an army under Misar Diwan Chand against Mankera and Dera Ismail Khan, Nawab Sarbuland Khan of Mankera was a semi-independent ruler with the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan as his nominal suzerain. The Maharaja, who had personally accompanied his troops to Mankera, accepted the surrender of the Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan and let him carry on as a vassal of Lahore until 1835, but annexed Mankera to his kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

For Ranjit Singh, who was acutely aware of the constantly looming threat of an Afghan incursion, the annexation of Mankera was inevitable. The fort was strategically located between the rivers Indus and Chenab and controlled the road leading from Afghanistan through the Gomal-Pass and Dera Ismail Khan to Lahore. The Gomal-Pass, which crosses the Sulaiman range at an altitude of 2500 m and is normally only used by merchants and the nomads of the Ghilzai tribe, was the only pass between the Khyber and the Bolan-Pass through which a large Afghan army could have invaded the Punjab. After the annexation of Peshawar and Mankera

3 *Catalogue of the coins collected by Chas. J. Rodgers ...*, Part II.

4 *A Manual of Musalman Numismatics*, p. 185.

5 *ONS Information Sheet 26* (March 1984), p. 8.

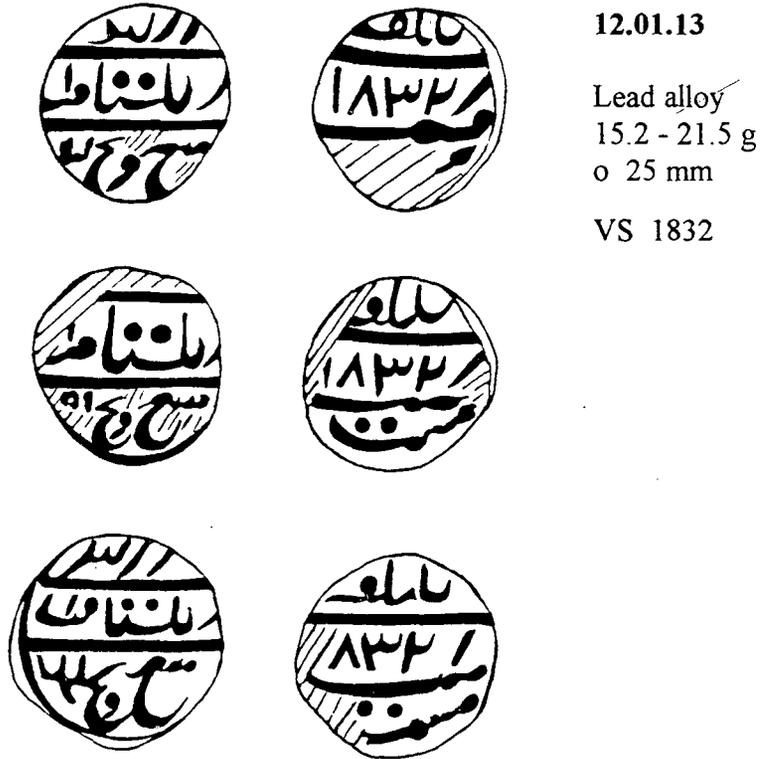
6 In the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the „*Coins of the Sikhs*“ I considered the fortress of *Akalgarh*, which controlled the crossing point between Dera Ismail Khan on the right and Darya Khan on the left bank of the river Indus, a plausible location for a temporary Sikh mint. In the meantime and after further studies I have changed my opinion.

7 Today the Fort of Mankera and the *Ghar-i-Baluchan*, the palace built by Sarbuland Khan in 1804, lie in ruins and large parts have already disappeared, but Ranjit Singh's infamous Sardar Khuda Yar Khan Tiwana, who massacred the people of Mankera and was rewarded with a *jagir*, is still remembered by the local population.

Ranjit Singh did not only control all the major routes from the Punjab to Afghanistan but also to the ever rebellious tribal territories of Kohat, Bannu and Waziristan, which he now held in a pincer.

The first rupees of Mankera were issued in VS 1879, a few months after the annexation of the town, and the last were struck in VS 1880. Opening a mint at Mankera was certainly more the consequence of political reasoning than a sound economic idea. In the Muslim principalities along the Afghan border its rupees must have been unable to compete with the long established local coinage and the not very distant mint of Lahore could easily supply the Sikh coins requisite for the garrison of Mankera. The mint at Mankera was clearly doomed from the beginning.

12 AN IMITATION OF A SIKH COIN  
BEARING THE MINT NAME *MULTAN*



12.01.13

Lead alloy  
15.2 - 21.5 g  
o 25 mm

VS 1832

Obverse : Crudely written parts of the Gobindshahi couplet Ib in the arrangement of Anandghar 02.01. The legible words are:

نہاں کو بند  
بیورناک بافات  
بیچ فوج نصر

Reverse:

ضرب الملتان  
۱۸۳۲  
سمبت  
میمنت

[DĀR ĀL-Ā] MĀ [N] MULTĀN  
ZARB  
1832  
SAMBAT  
MĀIMANAT

When I wrote the text of the first edition of this book, I only knew some heavily corroded coins of type 12.01.13, which had surfaced in 1988 in Delhi and Bombay. From the observation that all the coins then available seemed to have been cast in the same mould I inferred that they were recent fabrications.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime I found in an old collection of Indian coins (which I prepared in 1997 for an auction) another 3 coins of this type and a note declaring that they were the coinage of Bela in Baluchistan. Charles Masson left us a description of the capital of the small state of Las in the 1820s: "*About a mile from Béla the jangal first permits a glimpse of it, which is rather attractive, the residence of the Jám towering preeminently above the other houses. The large dome of the Jám's masjid has also a fair appearance. ... The residence of the Jám is of mud, and surrounded by lofty castellated walls, flanked with circular towers at the angles. The houses of the town are also of mud, and have but the ground-floor. They are all provided with chimneys for the admission of air, as is usual in the pakka villages of Las, also at Karáchi in Sind. ... Béla contains about three hundred houses, one-third occupied by Hindús. Supplies of common necessaries are procurable, but articles of luxury are scarce, and consequently high-priced. ... The town derives its water from wells, some on a level with it, and others in the old bed of the Púráli, where are fields of vegetables and tobacco, with a large cultivation of rice. ... The Púráli flows a little to the west of Béla, and its waters are seen from it. About a mile north of the town is the garden of the Jám, stocked, principally, with mango, plantain, orange, citron, and olive trees.*"<sup>2</sup>



BELA, CAPITAL OF LAS  
(from: Chs Masson: *Narrative ...*)

The 3 coins mentioned above entered a European collection several decades before 1988; they may still be fabrications but definitely not recent ones.

Although I doubt whether large lead alloy pieces of a Sikh type were cast at Bela for local use, the possibility that such coins once circulated in the principality of Las or in other parts of Baluchistan cannot be excluded. If they should be genuine the lead coins dated VS 1832 (1775 AD) would probably have been produced during the reign of Jam Mir Khan I (1775-1818), the 3<sup>rd</sup> ruler of Las and a vassal of the Khan of Kalat.

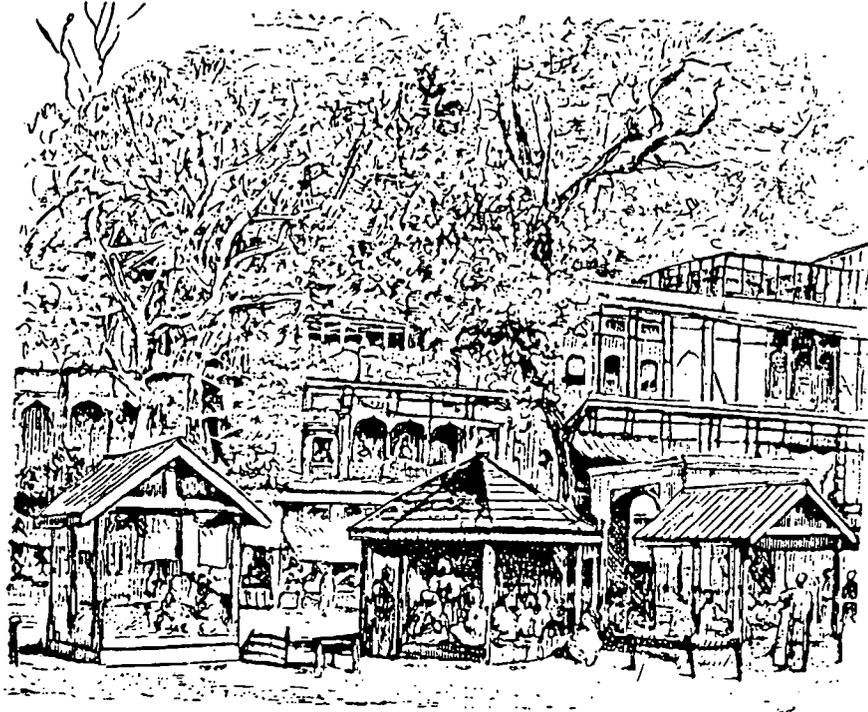
Fairly rare copper coins of *Las* are known. They usually bear the reverse inscription: *Falus-i-Bela* and bear dates later than 1850 AD.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. HERRLI: *The Coins of the Sikhs*, Nagpur 1993, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Charles MASSON: *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab, 1826 to 1838*, II, 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> Some copper coins of Bela -- now commonly called *Las Bela* -- have been published by W.H. Valentine (*The Copper Coins of India*, Part II: The Panjab and Contiguous Native States, p. 222, # 1 - 4). A short survey of the history of the *Jams of Las* and their copper coins struck at Bela was published by K. WIGGINS ("The coinage of Las Bela" in: *ONS Newsletter* 94/95, February-April 1985, p. 7-8.)





The *Chowk Yadgar*, the central square of Peshawar and the traditional location of the city's money-changers, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 13 PESHAWAR

پشاور

Peshawar, the old *Purushpura*, was given its actual name *Peshawar* [Frontier Town] by the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Less than two centuries later the dwindling Mughal Empire lost the town on the Afghan border when Nadir Shah Afshar took it on his way to Delhi in October 1738 AD [1151 AH] from Muhammad Shah. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747 [1160 AH] Peshawar fell to the Durrani Empire and became its winter capital.

The Sikhs, who had advanced to Attock in 1818, took Peshawar for the first time on 20 November 1818 AD from Yar Muhammad Khan, the Barakzai *nizam*, but Ranjit Singh soon retreated to Attock and his governor at Peshawar, Jahandad Khan, the former *qiladar* of Attock, was driven away by Yar Muhammad, who acknowledged the Maharaja of Lahore as his overlord and promised to pay an annual tribute of 20'000 rupees.

In 1824 Muhammad Azim Khan, a brother of Dost Muhammad and the *wazir* at Kabul, occupied Peshawar, which had been evacuated by Yar Muhammad, and declared a *jehad* against the Sikhs. On 14 March 1824 a Sikh army of about 25'000 soldiers met the 20'000 men of Azim Khan in the Battle of Nowshera (or Tibbi Tehri) in which the Sikhs --who sustained heavy losses -- finally put the Afghans to rout. According to Lepel Griffin: "*It was a critical contest and decided, once for all, whether Sikhs or Afghans should rule east of the Khyber, the mountains of the North West Frontier.*"<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja entered Peshawar on 17 March 1824, reinstated Yar Muhammad, who now offered to pay an annual tribute of Rs 110'000, and returned to Lahore on 27 April 1824.

Charles Maçon, who passed through Peshawar in 1827, wrote about the place: "*The city, which was represented to have flourished exceedingly under the Durani monarchy, has much declined, owing to the vicissitudes of power, and the recent spoliations and devastations of the Sikhs. The Balla Hissar, once a favourite winter residence of the ancient kings, was entirely in ruins, only the garden remaining, in a neglected condition. The houses, most of them slightly constructed, of which the city is composed, may still number nine or ten thousand, which estimate would give from fifty to sixty thousand inhabitants. ... The residences of the sirdars and of the nobility are, many of them, very respectable, and there are a great number of handsome and spacious gardens, although it is complained that the Sikhs have, in their inroads, cut down many of the best grown trees for fuel. ...*

*Peshawer was now governed by the Sirdars Yar Mahomed Khan, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Saiyad Mahomed Khan, and Pir Mahomed Khan, -- four brothers, sons of Pahindah Khan, and by the same mother. ... The Sirdar Yar Mahomed Khan, the eldest, was nominally the chief, and in fact possessed the larger proportion of revenue, but Pir Mahomed Khan, the youngest, was perhaps the most powerful. ...*

*The territory held by the Sirdars is of very limited extent, comprising only the city of Peshawer, with the adjacent country, which might be included within a circle drawn from the city, as a centre, with a radius of twenty-five miles; but then, it is uncommonly fertile, and well cultivated; the command of water being so abundant from the rivers Bara and Jelalabad, which traverse it. The gross revenue of the city and lands was estimated at ten lakhs of rupees, to which one lakh has been added by the acquisition of Kohat and Hangu. ... The military retainers of the Sirdars, probably, do not exceed three thousand men, if so many. ... Their artillery numbers ten or twelve pieces.*

*The inhabitants of the city of Peshawer are a strange medley of mixed races, of Tajiks, Hindkis, Panjabis, Kashmiris, &c, and they are proverbially roguish and litigious. ....*

*The Sirdars of Peshawer cannot be called independent, as they hold their country entirely at the pleasure of Ranjit Singh - a natural consequence of the advance of his frontier to the*

<sup>1</sup> L. GRIFFIN: *Ranjit Singh* (ed. 1893), p. 209.

*Indus. Still the Sikh Raja has not yet ventured to assume the full authority, and they are left in power, remitting him tribute. ... They are impatient under the yoke, but every manifestation of contumacy only tends to confirm their subjection, and to aggravate the annoyances inflicted upon them. ... He [Ranjit Singh] has established a system of sending annually large bodies of troops to the country, avowedly to receive his tributary offerings, but also, no doubt, to prevent it from reviving, and gaining its former consequence."*<sup>2</sup>

Yar Muhammad was killed in 1830 AD, when Sayyid Ahmad Khan, a Muslim reformer, attacked and occupied his capital.<sup>3</sup> A Sikh army soon reoccupied the town and Ranjit Singh now gave the feudatory state of Peshawar to Sultan Muhammad Khan, a brother of the late Yar Muhammad and of Dost Muhammad, the ruler at Kabul.

Peshawar was definitively captured on 6 May 1834 [VS 1891] by a Sikh army nominally led by Prince Nau Nihal Singh -- who was then 14 years old -- but in reality by the famous Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and General Ventura. Sultan Muhammad Khan was given *jagirs* at Kohat and Hangu and Hari Singh became the first Sikh governor of Peshawar and Hazara and commander of a garrison of 12'000 men.<sup>4</sup>

Although Ranjit Singh built and manned a net of forts along the North West Frontier, he was not really able to control the whole territory. "*The Sikhs never collected revenue except by armed forces, and every two or three years marched an army through the districts to sweep up their arrears*"<sup>5</sup>, but even so the cost of holding an area whose governor quite often had to buy off the rebellious Pathan tribes, was much higher than its revenue. Under the Sikhs (and later under the British and even under the Government of Pakistan) the traditional administration of the towns and villages around Peshawar did not change much. The tribes of the region were governed in the customary way by the heads of their clans, the *Khans*, *Maliks* and *Arbabs*, and the *jirgah*, the Council of the Elders. The local chiefs collected the taxes, which were rather low: depending on the fertility of the land the Government normally received only  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the produce.

The revolt of the Sikh armies, which started on 14 September 1848 in Multan and led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sikh War, very soon spread to Peshawar and Bannu. By the end of October the Sikh garrisons west of the river Indus had already marched off to the Punjab and were replaced by Afghan troops under Akram Khan, now allies of the Sikhs.<sup>6</sup> On 21 March 1849 Peshawar, recently abandoned by Dost Muhammad's army, was occupied by British troops under General Gilbert and the Sikh rule over the place came formally to its end.

2 Charles MASSON: *Narrative of various journeys ...*, I,126-135.

3 Sayyid Ahmad Khan, a native of Rae Bareilly and former soldier of Amir Khan Rohilla, wandered through the north of India preaching a doctrine, which was said to be similar to the teachings of the famous Arab reformer *Abd al-Wahab*, and inciting the Muslims to a crusade against the Sikhs and Hindus. In 1827 a Sikh army under Prince Kharak Singh and the generals Allard and Ventura marched against Ahmad and killed 6'000 of his followers, but in 1830 he succeeded in taking Peshawar with the help of 40'000 of his militant *ghazis* and to kill Yar Muhammad. Ahmad, the self-proclaimed *Khalif* and *Amir al-muminin*, is said (by Cunningham) to have struck coins in the name of: *Ahmad the Just, the Defender of the Faith, the glitter of whose sword scatters destruction among the infidels* at Peshawar. Today not a single specimen of this elusive -- and perhaps even nonexisting -- issue is known.

Ahmad was driven out of Peshawar by a Sikh army under Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura and killed with more than 500 of his followers in a battle in 1831, but as late as 1836 AD *Nasir ad-din*, a nephew of the reformer, tried to incite the population of the Derajat to a religious war against the infidels (*Foreign Political Proceedings*, 6 June 1836, No. 86). Today Ahmad Khan's tomb at Balakot is still held in veneration by a fair number of pilgrims.

4 Ranjit Singh appointed Prince Nau Nihal Singh governor of Peshawar, but the real power in the newly won province lay from the beginning with Hari Singh Nalwa. On 23 April 1837 Hari Singh was killed defending the border fort of Jamrud; his successor at Peshawar was Ranjit Singh's famous Neapolitan general Avitabile\*, known to his soldiers as *Witbul Sahib*.

5 L. GRIFFIN: *Ranjit Singh*, p. 213.

6 Lieut.-General Sir George MAC MUIR: *The Lure of the Indus* (1934, reprint Karachi 1989), p.235.

## The coinage of Peshawar under the Sikhs

The first coins bearing the mint name Peshawar were probably struck during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-1658 AD) and under his successors, the Mughals up to the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Muhammad Shah, Nadir Shah Afshar and the Durrani and Barakzais, the town remained the seat of a mint which sporadically struck gold, silver and copper coins.

It has been said that in 1834 -- after the annexation of Peshawar -- Ranjit Singh granted his general and acting governor Hari Singh Nalwa the right to strike his own coins --- a right with which the *Sardar* had, in recognition of his outstanding military achievements, allegedly already been endowed in his earlier position as governor of Kashmir. The coins struck under Hari Singh at Peshawar are the *Gobindshahi* rupees issued from VS 1891 to 1894, coins which bear, like the rupees of Derajat, the full VS year on the obverse and the reverse. These rupees do not mention Hari Singh in either an overt or concealed way, but as the production of silver coins lapsed after the death of Hari Singh for 10 years, the minting right may in fact have been attached to his person.



13.01.04

AR Rupee

8.5 g

VS 1891

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet:

بیورنگ یافت از  
 نادرگ تیغ فتح مصر  
 ۱۸۹۱  
 ناگورو گوبینو سنگه

Reverse:

پشاور  
 جلوس سنه  
 ۱۸۹۱  
 سنه

ZARB PESHĀWAR

JULŪS SANĀH 1891

The reverse of type 13.01.04 shows a leaf with a plain border.

**13.02.04**AR Rupee  
8.5 g

VS 1892, 1893, 1894

**13.02.05**AR ½ Rupee  
4.05-4.17 g / ø 16.5mmVS 1892<sup>7</sup>, 1894

Obverse: As 13.01.04.

Reverse: As 13.01.04, but the leaf has now a dotted outer border.

The rupees 13.01.04 and 13.02.04 weigh only 8.5 g and contain c. 7.0 g of silver. They were struck in continuation of the last Afghan rupees of Peshawar which, according to Alexander Burnes, were worth 12 Annas of the Indian *Sicca rupee* or of the *Nanakshahi* of Amritsar (and contained about 8 g of silver).<sup>8</sup>

**13.03.04**AR Rupee  
7.2 g / ø 23.75 mm

VS 1894

**13.04.04**AR Rupee  
10.4 - 11.0 gVS 1894<sup>9</sup>

Obverse + reverse of 13.03.04 and 13.04.04: as 13.02.04, but with an obliquely milled edge.

The few surviving coins of type 13.03.04 may be patterns; the heavier type 13.04.04 probably represents the Peshawar rupees struck during the recoinage campaign of 1847-49 AD, when the still circulating light Afghan rupees were replaced by Sikh coins according to the standard of the *Nanakshahis* of Amritsar. For this purpose a rupee mint was opened at Peshawar in the second half of 1847; the mint, which seems to have struck only small quantities of coins -- and those at a loss -- was closed again in May 1849.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Dr. B. Becker Collection.<sup>8</sup> *Travels into Bokhara*.<sup>9</sup> Collection of Mrs. Jyoti Rai.<sup>10</sup> Documents concerning the reopening and definitive closing of the rupee mint at Peshawar have been published by Jyoti Rai in: "Rediscovering Sikh Mints" in: *ONS Newsletter 146* (Autumn 1995), p. 10-11.

## Copper coins

In VS 1891 [1834 AD], the year in which the Sikhs occupied Peshawar, various local coins were overstruck with a legend which seems to be in Gurumukhi script, but of which only the year [VS] 1891 has yet been read.



13.04.11

CU Paisa

VS 1891

A rare Paisa using the design of the contemporary rupee was issued in the second year of the Sikh occupation of Peshawar:



13.02.11

CU Paisa

VS 1892

Obverse and reverse: As 13.02.04.

The following type of copper coins -- it is often found overstruck on paisas of Amritsar -- is dated AH 1265 [27 November 1848 - 17 November 1849 AD]. Although Peshawar nominally belonged to the Sikhs until 21 March 1849 it was held by Dost Muhammad's Afghans since October 1848. Type 13.05.11 should therefore better be considered an Afghan coin, an attribution which explains the AH date and the Afghan design.<sup>11</sup>

As copper coins had not been produced at Peshawar for quite some time, it may not have been easily possible to procure a sufficient supply of blanks, many of the coins of type 13.05.11 were therefore struck on Sikh paisas from Amritsar which were readily available.



13.05.11

CU Paisa

AH 1265

Obverse: A flower or sprig and 2 scimitars. Some coins show traces of Persian script -- perhaps parts of the word: *FULUS* -- below the flower.

Reverse:

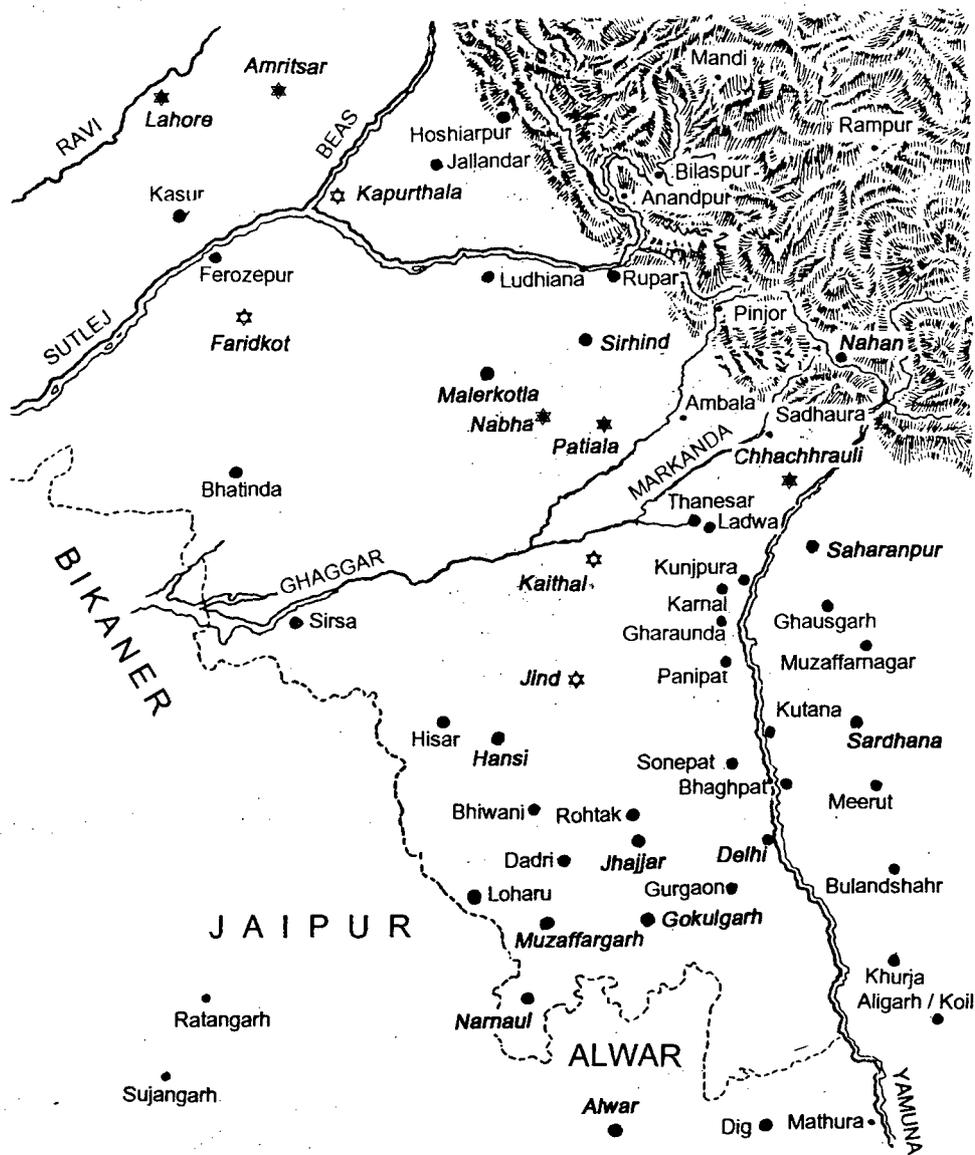
الکاسی پشاور  
۱۲۶۵  
فلوس صر

*FULŪS ZARB ĀLKĀĪ PESHĀWAR*

Fulus struck for the District of Peshawar [AH] 1265.

<sup>11</sup> An extremely rare rupee of AH 1265 -- only a few pieces may have been struck to document the reoccupation of Peshawar by the Afghans -- bears the Dost Muhammad couplet used in Kabul between 1259 and 1280 on the obverse and mentions, like the paisa, the District of Peshawar (*Alkai Peshawar*) on the reverse.

## The Cis-Sutlej Region



- ★ **Patiala:** Sikh mints treated in this book  
 ☆ **Jind :** Mints in Sikh States not treated in this book  
 ● **Delhi :** Other mint towns

## 14 PATIALA

The town of Patiala was founded in 1753 by Sardar Ala Singh, the chief of a branch of the Phulkian family, at the place of a small village. In 1762 Ala Singh was taken prisoner by the Afghans, who defeated and routed a Sikh army near Ludhiana in a battle which the survivors remembered as *The Great Disaster*. Ahmad Shah Durrani, who may have seen a propitious possibility to sow dissension between two groups of his most tenacious enemies, the *Malwa* and the *Majha* Sikhs, not only pardoned the Phulkian Sardar, but promoted him to the rank of a *Raja* and then dismissed him with honour.

In the month of December 1763 the Sikhs had recovered enough to defeat and slay Zain Khan, the Afghan governor of Sirhind, and to occupy most of the region between the rivers Sutlej and Jamuna. On this occasion Ala Singh, who in the same year had built a fort at Patiala, was able to add the ruined city of Sirhind and the surrounding country to his territories.

The first Raja of Patiala died in 1765 and was followed by his grandson Amar Singh (1765-1781). He kept up the friendly relations with Ahmad Shah Durrani, by whom he was given the title *Raja-i-Rajagan Bahadur* and the right to mint coins in the name of the Afghan ruler in 1767 AD. Amar Singh acquired Sirsa and Fathehabad and helped with his troops Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, who had been driven out of the Punjab by the Khanaya and Ahluwalia misls, in establishing himself in the country around Hisar. When he died after a life of constant warring Amar Singh was succeeded by his son Sahib Singh (1781-1813), a boy of 6 years of age, but until 1790 Patiala was governed by a regent, Diwan Nandu Mal.

Protracted dissensions between Sahib Singh and his forceful wife reached a climax in 1805 AD, when the Rani attacked Nabha and Jind and the two states invoked the assistance of Ranjit Singh, who crossed the Sutlej in 1806 and again in 1807. These moves finally led to a settlement in which the Rani obtained Banur and other tracts yielding Rs 350'000 a year, but also to a strong political reaction of the British. In consequence of Ranjit Singh's intervention Patiala and other Cis-Sutlej states became British protectorates in May 1809. The *Proclamation of Protection*, a document clearly directed against the ruler at Lahore, stated that the country of the chiefs of Malwa and Sirhind had entered under the protection of the British Government to secure to these chiefs "*the exercise of the same rights and authority within their own possessions which they enjoyed before.*"

The Sikh War of 1845 and the Mutiny of 1857 saw Sahib Singh's successors Karam Singh (1813-1845) and Narindra Singh (1845-1862) on the British side. In recognition of his services the British gave Narindra Singh the Narnol division of the Jhajjar district, territories which they had seized from rebellious princes after the Mutiny.

## The coinage of Patiala

Ahmad Shah Durrani allegedly allowed Ala Singh of Patiala in 1762 AD to strike coins and to use his couplet and the mint name of Sirhind, but it seems more probable that Amar Singh was the first ruler of Patiala to be invested with this right in 1767, when he met Ahmad Shah on the Sutlej and was confirmed in his ownership of Sirhind.<sup>1</sup>

The *Rajashahi* rupees of Amar Singh of Patiala and his successors, as well as the similar coins of the two other *Phulkian* States of Jind and Nabha, the Sikh Rajas of Kaithal, the Muslim Nawabs of Maler Kotla and possibly other, not yet identified mints, copied the design of the rupees struck in the name of Ahmad Shah 'Abdali at Sirhind.<sup>2</sup>



Rajendra Singh of Patiala

AR *Nazarana*-Rupee<sup>3</sup>

VS 1882

Obverse: Ahmad Shah's Persian couplet:

حکم شداز قادر بیچون باحمد بادشاه  
سکه زن برسیم وز راز اوج ماهی تابماه

HOKAM SHOD ĀZ QĀDIR BĒ-CHŪN BE-ĀHMAD BĀD SHĀH  
SIKKĀH ZAN BAR SĪM WA ZAR ĀZ ĀŪJ MĀHĪ TĀ BE-MĀH

The command came from the Powerful One, who has none like Him,  
to Ahmad, the Emperor

To strike coins on silver and gold from the height of [the zodiacal  
sign of the] Fishes to the moon.

Reverse:

مانوس  
سینه جلوبط  
سهرنو

MĀNŪS  
MĀĪMANAT  
JULŪS SANĀH ۴  
ZARB  
SAHRIND

<sup>1</sup> In his study of the coinage of the Native States of the Punjab (*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, Vol. XVIII, 1889, p. 323). R.C. TEMPLE held the unconvincing view that Raja Ala Singh of Patiala obtained the right to coin in 1765 AD.

<sup>2</sup> Although most of the coins of this group, which has not yet been studied very thoroughly, were struck for Sikh rulers, they are basically Durrani types and have therefore not been included in the present catalogue.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. RODGERS published this coin and attributed it to Ahmad Shah in his article: *Coins of Ahmad Shah 'Abdali*.

The minting right seems to have been bestowed on Amar Singh in his capacity as Ahmad Shah Durrani's governor of Sirhind and he may or may not have struck his first coins at the former Mughal and Durrani mint of this town. His successors definitely had their mint at Patiala, their capital and residence, but their coins invariably bore the mint name Sirhind, a name which in former times did not only apply to the town of this name, but to a large tract of land including the states of Patiala, Jind, Nabha and the district of Ambala. <sup>4</sup>

In Persian the name of the town of *Sirhind* was spelled in several ways:

سرهند	SARHIND or SIRHIND
سهرند	SAHRIND or SIHRIND
سپهرند	SĪHRIND
شهرند	SHAHRIND

The first spelling was current at the Mughal mint of Sirhind from the time of Akbar to the reign of Shah Jahan and the second variety was introduced under Aurangzeb, but other forms still occasionally occur in chronicles and on coins.

The coins struck by the rulers of Patiala, Jind, Nabha and Maler Kotla show on their reverse, in the letter *sin* of *JULŪS*, and on the obverse of the rupees bearing a Durrani couplet a mark which has been read as an archaic Arabic or Persian 4, but which is unknown on genuine Durrani coins:



Rupees of Sirhind struck in AH 1164 and the 4<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Ahmad Shah 'Abdali are known, but it is evident that they are not -- as has been said -- the direct prototypes of the coins of the Cis-Sutlej States.

The enigmatic mark, which on some Islamic tokens from India also occurs together with the names of the first four caliphs, is in fact not a 4 at all, but a form of the Arabic letter *sad* and an abbreviation of the Arabic word:

صحيح      ṢAHĪH

This word, which means: *right, true, correct, authentic or perfect*, was at the end of the 17th century used as an Ottoman counterstamp on Venetian sequins; in Ottoman and Indian documents, where it accompanies the signature of inspectors, it certifies the correctness of their content.

On the reverse of the coins of the Cis-Sutlej States the main mark is accompanied by a "state mark" on the right and an individual mark for each ruler on the left of the *sin* of *JULŪS* (and sometimes by secondary marks at different places).

<sup>4</sup> There is a mohur in the collection of Dr. B. Becker, Ulmen, which may bear the mint name *Patiala*, but I am not completely satisfied by this reading.

The mark of the Patiala State is:



The individual marks of the rulers of Patiala are:

Amar Singh (VS 1822 - 1838 / 1765 - 1781 AD)	
Sahib Singh (VS 1838 - 1870 / 1781 - 1813 AD)	
Karam Singh (VS 1870 - 1902 / 1813 - 23.XII.1845 AD)	and
Narendra Singh (VS 1902 - 1919 / 1845 - 14.XI.1862 AD)	
Mahendra Singh (VS 1919 - 1933 / 1862 - 14.IV.1876 AD)	
Rajendra Singh (VS 1933 - 1957 / 1876 - 7.XI.1900 AD)	
Bhupindra Singh (VS 1957 - 1994 / 1900 - 23.III.1938 AD)	
Yadavindra Singh (VS 1994 - 2005 / 1938 - 20.VIII.1948 AD)	

Coins in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani were struck by all the successors of Amar Singh, but after the closure of the state mint in 1892 or 1893 AD only occasionally and in the form of fractional mohurs, which were clearly *nazarana* pieces and no longer intended for general circulation.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after the annexation of the *Trans-Sutlej Sikh State* by the British the mint of Patiala began to issue a parallel series of rupees with an unchanged reverse, but bearing the Gobindshahi couplet instead of the Durrani inscription on its obverse. Various theories have been advanced to explain this novelty, but the true reason may simply lie in the fact that Sikhs and Hindus requiring coins -- preferably newly minted ones -- for gifts to their temples, for religious ceremonies (*puja*) or marriages gave preference to non-Muslim types. For the use of the Sikhs the mint of Amritsar and, to a lesser degree, other mints in the Punjab had kept up a steady supply of *Nanakshahis* and *Gobindshahis* until 1849 AD. The closing of these mints by

<sup>5</sup> According to SURINDER SINGH (*Patiala State Coinage*, p.199) the rifle mark already appeared on coins of VS 1993, which supposedly are "*readily available*", but I have not been able to find such a coin or a photo of one.

<sup>6</sup> Patiala coins issued after 1893 were struck by *sharafs* under contract.

the British and the melting of all the accessible Sikh rupees led to a dearth of such coins and may in turn have incited the mint authorities at Patiala to strike their own Gobindshahis. According to Surinder Singh these rupees were not available to the general public; only a few hundred Gobindshahis were struck each year before *Dusserah* to be used for *puja* and *nazaranas* by the ruler of the Patiala State.<sup>7</sup> Some of the coins were melted after having been used for *puja*, others were sent to the Treasury and are now in the collection of the *Sheesh Mahal Museum* at Patiala.

### Gobindshahi rupees of Patiala

Maharaja Narendra Singh (VS 1902-1919):



14.01.04

AR Rupee  
11.1 g

VS 1906 or 1909 \*

14.01.06

AR ¼ Rupee<sup>8</sup>  
c. 2.6 g

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet:

از نایاب  
نصرت گورو گوبند  
دیغ تیغ فتح نگ  
بیو

\* A rupee in the collection of K. Wiggins shows on the obverse ੧੯ in the place of a VS year. The numerals are unexplained but stand perhaps for [VS 1]908.

<sup>7</sup> SURINDER SINGH: *Patiala State Mint and Nazrana Coins* (Patiala 1990) and: *Patiala State Coinage* (Punjab University 1990).

It is possible that the *Gobindshahis* of Amritsar and Lahore were also primarily struck to be used in *puja* and for *nazaranas*. Such a restricted use would explain the relative rarity of the *Gobindshahis* of these two mints.

<sup>8</sup> Quarter rupees of Patiala are generally very rare. The only known ¼ rupee of type 14.01.06 is in the collection of the *Sheesh Mahal Museum* at Patiala.

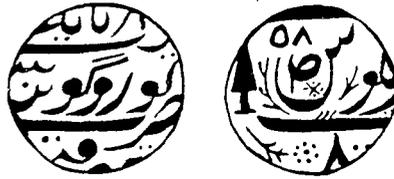
Reverse:



**Maharaja Mahendra Singh (VS 1919-1933)**  
**Maharaja Rajendra Singh (VS 1933-1957):**

Gobindshahi rupees of these 2 rulers have not been observed

**Maharaja Bhupindra Singh (VS 1957-1994):**



**14.02.04**

AR Rupee  
11.1 - 11.2 g

VS [19]58

Obverse: As 14.01.

Reverse: As 14.01, but with the year [19]58 and the personal mark of Bhupindra Singh.

Gobindshahis of Bhupindra Singh are only known of VS 1958, the first full year of his reign, but small numbers bearing this frozen year may have been struck in every year of his reign. Fractional mohurs of the Durrani type also occur with the VS year [19]90.

**Maharaja Yadavindra Singh (VS 1994-2004):**



**14.03.04**

AR Rupee  
11.1 - 11.2 g

VS 1994

Obverse: As 14.01.

Reverse: As 14.01, but with the frozen accession year [VS 19]94 and the personal mark of Yadavindra Singh, the bayoneted rifle.

Gobindshahis bearing the frozen year 1994 may have been regularly struck until VS 2005.

## Copper coins

Copper coins were never officially struck at Patiala. In earlier times *mansuris*, irregular and usually blank copper bits, and imitations of Jaipuri Paisas produced at Loharu -- a famous counterfeiting center -- were among the copper coins most often found in Patiala, but they were later supplanted by British-Indian copper types.

## 15 Nabha

نابھا

The ruling house of Nabha represented the senior branch of the descendants of *Phul*, the founder of the *Phulkian misl*, but the other branches of the family generally acknowledged the wealthier and more powerful Rajas of Patiala as their head. Feeling slighted by this attitude and cheated out of their birthright the Rajas of Nabha reacted by embroiling themselves, the other two Phulkian States, Ranjit Singh and the British in endless petty quarrels and disputes, which time and again marked the politics of the Cis-Sutlej region.

The town of Nabha was founded in 1755 by Hamir Singh, who also succeeded in enlarging his territories, which came into statehood after the fall of Sirhind. Nabha became, along with the other Cis-Sutlej States, a British protectorate in 1809, but this did not prevent Raja Devindar Singh, a rather bigoted Sikh, from siding with his Trans-Sutlej co-religionists during the first Sikh War. In consequence he was removed and almost a quarter of the territories of Nabha State were confiscated by the British. Devindar Singh's son and successor, Bharpur Singh, supported the British during the Mutiny and received some tracts of land in recognition of his services.

### The rulers of Nabha:

Since Hamir Singh the rulers of Nabha were styled *Raja*, but in 1911 the British bestowed the title of *Maharaja* upon Hira Singh.

#### Personal marks on coins:

Gurditta	VS 1744-1811 / 1687-1754 AD	
Hamir Singh	1811-1840 / 1754-1783	
Jaswant Singh	1840-1897 / 1783-1840	 F
Devindar Singh	1897-1903 / 1840-1846	 F
Bharpur Singh	1904-1920 / 1847-1863	
Bhagwan Singh	1920-1928 / 1863-1871	
Hira Singh	1928-1968 / 1871-1911	
Ripudaman Singh	1968-1980 / 1912-1923	
Partap Singh	1980-2005 / 1923-1948	

On 20 August 1948 Nabha was merged into *PEPSU (The Patiala and East Punjab States Union)* comprising Patiala, Jind, Nabha, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Kalsia, Maler Kotla and Nalagarh) which in November 1956 merged with the *Punjab State*.

### The coinage of Nabha \*

Griffin was of the opinion that Hamir Singh coined money "*in his own name*", but the earliest coin of Nabha known today is a rupee of VS 1877 [1820 AD] and it seems that Raja Jasant Singh established a mint at Nabha at about this time.

The first coins of Nabha, which were struck c. VS 1877-1893, were copies of the *Durrani coins* of Patiala from which they only differ in the mint name and the ruler's mark on the reverse.

The Lahore Museum owns a Gobindshahi rupee of Nabha dated VS 1892 and after VS 1893 the Sikh obverse inscription replaced the Durrani couplet on all the coins of this mint.

The mark of the Nabha State was:



The mint name on the coins of Nabha is:

سرکار نا بہر لال      SARKĀR NĀBHĀ LĀL.

The main meaning of *LAL* is: *red*, but the word can also stand for: *beautiful*. The meaning of the complete mint name is therefore either: *[The] Ruler of beautiful Nabha* or *[The] Government of beautiful Nabha*.

\* The coins of Nabha have been renumbered for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this catalogue.

## Gobindshahi rupees of Nabha

Raja Jaswant Singh (VS 1840-1897)



15.01.02

AU Mohur  
9.5 - 9.6 g

VS 1853 (?)

15.01.04

AR Rupee  
11.05 - 11.15 g

VS 1892 1893, 1895 [?]

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet *Ie* arranged as on Patiala 14.01 and the usually incomplete VS year.

Reverse:



MĀNŪS  
MĀĪMANAT  
JULŪS SANĀH  
ZARB  
SARKĀR NĀBHĀ LAL

The Persian 3 appearing on the reverse of these coins has not yet been explained.

The star on the right of the *sin* of *JULUS* is the Nabha State mark, the leaf on the left is a mark used on *Gobindshahis* by Jaswant Singh and his successors Devindar Singh and Bharpur Singh. Of Bhagwan Singh no coins have yet been found; Hira Singh used different marks.

Raja Devindar Singh (VS 1897-1903)

15.02.04

AR Rupee  
10.65 g

VS 1903

Obverse + reverse: as 15.01.04 but year VS 193. (This kind of incomplete date occurs quite often on rupees of Nabha. Theoretically 193 could also stand for 1930 but as Hira Singh used different marks we most probably have to read it as 1903.)

**Raja Bharpur Singh (VS 1904-1920):****15.03.02**AV Mohur  
9.5 - 9.6 g

VS 1907, 1911

**15.03.04**AR Rupee  
11.0 - 11.1 gVS 1907, 1908,  
1909, 1910, 1911,  
1912, 1913,  
1916, 1917,  
1920

Obverse : As 15.01.

Reverse : As 15.01., but without the Persian 3.

**Maharaja Hira Singh (VS 1928-1968):****15.04.04**AR Rupee  
11.0 - 11.1 gVS 1927, 1928, 1929,  
1930, 1931

Obverse : As 15.01.

Reverse : As 15.01, but with the *katar*, Hira Singh's personal mark, instead of the leaf.

## An unidentified ruler of Nabha



15.07.04

AR Rupee

Obverse: As 15.01.

Reverse: As 15.04, but with a different design of the *katar* and an additional sprig to the left of the *katar*.

The coin showing a very advanced *Nabha style* of the script and a modified mark of Hira Singh may have been issued by one of the 2 successors of Hira Singh.

Surinder Singh, who undertook a detailed study of the coins of Nabha, also investigated the later coinage of the state.<sup>1</sup> The following remarks are entirely based on his research.

After the annexation of the Sikh State of Lahore the British currency increasingly prevailed everywhere in the Punjab and Haryana and at the turn of the century the Cis-Sutlej States, which closely guarded their minting rights, finally had to adopt the British coins as legal tender. State coins were still struck, but only in small numbers as *nazaranas* for special occasions and for the sole use of the ruling house.

An inventory of the Nabha State Treasury drawn up in 1923 AD showed more than two lakhs of rupees, but less than 3'000 of them were Nabha coins.<sup>2</sup>

A report by the Accountant General stated in 1930 AD that Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had fixed annuities relating to charitable endowments and offerings to *Gurudwaras* [Sikh temples] worth approximately 1'300 rupees in Nabha instead of British coins.<sup>3</sup>

In a note of 26 June 1935 the Accountant General remarked that the market value of the Nabha rupee, which was now only struck for offerings to the *Gurudwaras*, had been greatly reduced by the steadily increasing addition of copper and he proposed to officially fix its value at 8 British Annas. On 9 July 1935 the Regency Council rejected the recommendations on the plea that there had not been any representations of the *Gurudwara* authorities on that account!<sup>4</sup>

The *Administrative Reports* of the Nabha State showed for the years 1930 to 1940 AD an annual expenditure of Rs 570 for the State Mint. In 1941 the expenditure stood at Rs 522; for the years 1942 to 1944 separate expenditures for the mint, which was now run by the *toshakhana* (State Treasury), were no longer shown.<sup>5</sup>

The minting of Nabha rupees for the annual offerings to the *Gurudwaras* ended with the merger of the state into *PEPSU* in 1948.

<sup>1</sup> SURINDER SINGH: *Nabha State Coinage*, Punjab University, April 1990.

<sup>2</sup> *Inspection Nabha Treasury*, 19.7.1923 (Panjab State Archives).

<sup>3</sup> *Accountant General Nabha, Note 13.10.1930* (Panjab State Archives).

<sup>4</sup> *Accountant General Nabha, Note 26.6.1935 & Regency Council Decision, 9.7.1935* (Both: Panjab State Archives).

<sup>5</sup> *Administrative Reports Nabha, 1929-1944* (Panjab State Archives).



Gulab Singh  
(\* October 1792, † 1856, Raja of Jammu, later Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir) and his signature.

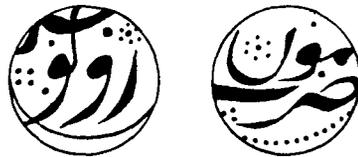
## 16 JAMMU

جمون

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Rajas of Jammu were under the domination of the Sikhs, especially of the Bhangi *misl*. In 1809 AD Gulab Singh, a member of a junior line of the Dogra family ruling Jammu, joined Ranjit Singh's army at Lahore. From 1815 to 1820 he commanded Sikh forces in the hills of Jammu and in 1820 he was appointed *Raja* and granted the town of Jammu as his *jagir*.<sup>1</sup>

The governor of Jammu, who never became a Sikh, gradually annexed the small states surrounding his capital (Bandralta, Basohli, Bhadrawah, Jasrota, Mankot, etc.) and in 1835 he occupied Ladakh. Gulab Singh nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sikh Maharajas at Lahore until 1845, but during the last years of Ranjit Singh's rule Jammu was actually already a semi-independent principality with a strong influence on the affairs of Kashmir. By the Treaty of Lahore [16 March 1846] Gulab Singh became the independent Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, but as Shaikh Imam ud-Din, the last governor of the Sikh state at Srinagar, opposed the new ruler by force of arms, Kashmir only fell to Gulab Singh in November 1846.

Although the Dogra Rajas of Jammu had struck rupees in the names of Shah 'Alam II (AH 1173-1221) and the local raja Ranjit Dev (AH 1155-1194 / VS 1799-1837) up to AD 1784, it seems that no Sikh type mohurs or rupees were ever struck at Jammu and that Ranjit Singh never granted minting rights to his powerful vassal Gulab Singh. For the time being only two types of copper coins with Sikh inscriptions can with certainty be attributed to Jammu and both types may only have been struck after the death of Ranjit Singh.



16.01.11

CU Paisa  
8.0 g

Obverse:

گورو گوبند

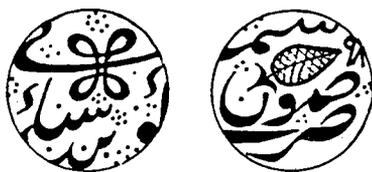
... GÜRÜ GÖBIND ...

Reverse:

ضرب جمون

ZARB JAMMÜN

<sup>1</sup> From 1812 to 1820 Jammu had been the *jagir* of Kharak Singh, the son and first successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.



16.02.11

CU Paisa  
7.1-7.5 g

VS 1898

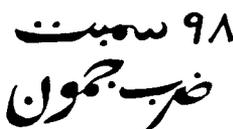
Obverse:



GÖBIND SINGH

(a further word, which is only partially legible, could be: SHĀHI)

Reverse:


SAMBAT 1898  
ZARB JAMMŪN

After 1846 AD the Jammu mint of the now independent rulers of Jammu and Kashmir struck copper paisas which look very much like Sikh coins. The most common type --- it weighs about 6.5-7.0 g and was issued between VS 1914 and 1922 --- exists in many varieties and is frequently found in the region between Delhi and the Afghan border:

Obverse:


SHRI RAGU-  
NATHJI  
SAHAI

On actual coins the script of the obverse inscription looks generally like Gurumukhi, but it is really a peculiar form of Nagari.

Reverse:


SANĀH  
JAMMŪN  
ZARB

As the designs of both sides of these paisas of Jammu were evidently heavily influenced by earlier Sikh types, they are often mistaken for Sikh coins.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In an issue of the magazine *Marg* dedicated to Maharaja Ranjit Singh appeared an advertisement of the Bank of India showing 15 copper paisas. Although the text states that they are *Nanakshahis*, <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> of them are really paisas struck at Jammu by Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 AD).

## 17 NAJIBABAD

نجیب آباد



17.01.11

CU Paisa  
2.5-10.0 gRegnal years: 21  
41  
x4

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet arranged as on Amritsar 01.20.

Reverse:

نجیب آباد  
ضرب  
RY

NAJIBĀBĀD  
ZARB  
...

Flower + fish mark:



Najibabad, a town in Rohilkand and about 100 miles to the NE of Delhi, was never a Sikh possession or the seat of a regular Sikh mint. The rather scarce copper coins bearing the Gobindshahi couplet and the name of this town were probably struck to commemorate an occupation of the place by Sikh raiders who frequently overran the country up to the borders of Awadh.

The regnal years on the reverse seem to be fictitious, but they might have been copied from ordinary Najibabad paisas struck in the 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> or 41<sup>st</sup> year of Shah 'Alam II.

A successful Sikh attack against Najibabad has neither been reported in the 21<sup>st</sup> (AH 1193-94 / 1779-80 AD) or 24<sup>th</sup> (AH 1196-97 / 1781-82 AD) nor in the 41<sup>st</sup> (AH 1213-14 / 1798-99 AD) year of Shah 'Alam II, but a Sikh army under the command of Jassa Singh swept in 1785 AD through Rohilkand and plundered the country as far as Chandausi, a town between Delhi and Bareilly. The Raja of Garhwal was made a Sikh tributary, and Najibabad was occupied for a short time by Sikh troops which on this occasion may have struck some paisas.

Dealers sometimes offer rupees of Najibabad as Sikh coins, but not a single rupee of this mint has yet been found with either a Sikh inscription or at least a mark that might point to the Sikhs.

## 18 MISCELLANEOUS UNIDENTIFIED SIKH MINTS

Chs J. Rodgers wrote in his book *Coin collecting in Northern India*:

*"The Sikhs in some of their predatory excursions went as far as the Duab between the Ganges and Jumna. It is not astonishing then that there are coins in existence on one side of which is the old Sikh coin distich and on the other the Najibabad mint name and mark. <sup>1</sup> One coin of this kind is known with the Jaipur mint name and mark, though I do not recollect reading anywhere that the Sikhs ever held that city. Sir Henry Lawrence told us in his Adventures of an officer in the Punjab that the Sikhs were given to bragging. This Sikh Jaipur coin is not by any means the first instance of bragging on coins. I remember seeing years ago a coin struck at Surat with the Sikh coin couplet on it, and it is certain the Sikhs never held Surat. The Sikh coiners were not at all particular. I had a coin, a square 8 anna piece; it had on one side the Sikh leaf and on the other the Urdu Zafar Qarin inscription of Akbar, with year alif, or one thousand."*

Rodgers' *Urdu Zafar Qarin* half rupee may have been a Mughal coin overstruck by the Sikhs or -- more probably -- a token. Islamic tokens imitating square coins of Akbar's Lahore and Urdu Zafar Qarin issues are extremely common in North India and the same dies were sometimes used for Islamic, Hindu and Sikh tokens.

A Sikh rupee allegedly struck at Surat could also be a token but in this case it is possible that Rodgers misread a rare but genuine coin. The *Khalsa rupee* bears at the bottom of the reverse the expression: *mashwarat shahr* (City of the Council); on a coin on which the *m* of *mashwarat* is off the flan the word can easily be taken for *Surat*. <sup>2</sup>

The Sikhs never occupied Jaipur but during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bands of Sikh raiders ranging in size from small groups of horsemen to respectable armies constantly made inroads into Haryana, northern and western Rajputana and the Jamuna-Ganges Doab; in some cases troops of Sikh mercenaries were also called as allies by various participants of the power-struggle going on endlessly in the heartland of the decaying Mughal empire. A body of Punjab Sikhs fought together with the armies of Raja Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur and Malhar Rao Holkar when those adventurers attacked Delhi in 1764. In December 1765 Jawahir Singh marched against Jaipur with 25'000 Sikhs who were bought off by Raja Mado Singh, but in March 1768 Jawahir Singh, supported by 20'000 Sikh mercenaries, again attacked and routed Madho Singh.

Sikh troops engaged in the civil wars that broke out after the the death of Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur pursued the pretender Nawal Singh as far as Chunar, where they destroyed on 24 February 1770 three of the six Sepoy companies of the French military adventurer René Madec. Sikh contingents also fought together with the battalions of the *Army of Hindustan* sent by General Perron in 1791 to take Jhajjar and the fort of Jehazgarh away from George Thomas, the famous Irish adversary of Guru Gobind Singh's militant followers.

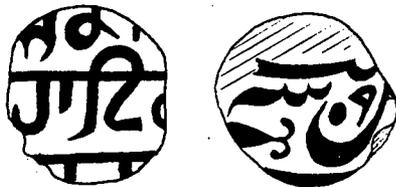
<sup>1</sup> See p. 222 of this book.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 43 / 44 of this book.

18.01.11<sup>3</sup>Copper  
4.80 g

Obverse: The left part of the obverse may read: *GU U GO* ..., but the *R* of the word looking like *GURU* is missing. If the inscription is really a part of a Sikh couplet it is arranged in a way not found on other known Sikh coins.

Reverse: The *jhar* (sprig) shows a form commonly observed on coins of Jaipur and Kishangarh. I doubt whether the fragmentary mint name (?) is *Jaipur*.

18.02.11<sup>4</sup>

Copper

Obverse: The *AKAL SAHAI GUR NANAKJI* inscription of the copper coins of Amritsar.

Reverse: A *Muhammadabad Benares* type which seems to have been imitated in several mints.

Sikh overstrikes on copper coins -- often on only one side -- are quite rare, but they seem to occur on almost any kind of copper coin ever current in the Panjab and adjacent areas; I have even seen Gurumukhi legends of an Amritsar type overstruck on Indo-Greek and Kushan copper. If Rodgers really found a Sikh couplet on a Jaipur coin it could have been a one-sided overstrike...

<sup>3</sup> This coin was published by K. W. WIGGINS in: *ONS Newsletter* 89, April 1984.

<sup>4</sup> A coin from the Wm F. SPENGLER collection.

## 19 IMITATIONS OF SIKH PAISAS PROBABLY STRUCK AT LOHARU

A vast class of paisas roughly imitating Sikh prototypes of Amritsar, sometimes overstruck on other Indian copper coins or even on very common billon coins of the Delhi sultans, is found all over the former Sikh state of Ranjit Singh and even beyond its borders, everywhere between Peshawar and Delhi and in the Hill states bordering on Kashmir and Jammu. As the still very common coins normally occur together with genuine Amritsar paisas, they must once have been readily accepted in the markets of northwestern India.

As far as I know these paisas have never been collected systematically. The following catalogue is almost exclusively based on my own collection and undoubtedly very incomplete.



19.01.11

CU Paisa



19.02.11

CU Paisa

Obverse + reverse: Leaf marks and unread Gurumukhi inscriptions.



19.05.11

CU Paisa  
6.9 g

19.07.11

CU Paisa  
7.3 g

19.09.11

CU Paisa  
4.6 g



19.15.11

CU Paisa  
6.7 g

19.17.11

CU Paisa  
5.3 g

19.19.11

CU Paisa  
6.5 g

19.21.11

CU Paisa  
6.85 g

19.25.11

CU Paisa  
6.0 g

19.27.11

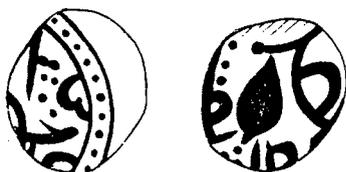
CU Paisa  
5.8 g

19.30.11

CU Paisa  
5.3 g

19.32.11

CU Paisa



19.35.11

CU Paisa  
6.3 g

19.40.11

CU Paisa

Although the very large number of different paisas of the general type # 19 points to their having been produced industrially, clues as to the origin of these coins were missing until lately. A paisa which I found at Peshawar may finally shed some light on this mystery:



19.45.11

CU Paisa  
6.0 g

Obverse: Imitation of a *takka* (2 paisas) of Bikaner in the name of Muhammad Akbar II and issued by Maharaja Ratan Singh (1828-1851).

Reverse: Imitation of a Sikh paisa, similar to #19.40.11.

Imitations of takkas (14.5-16g) and paisas (7-8g) of Ratan Singh are found quite often in northern Rajasthan and may even be more common than the genuine copper coins of this ruler:



**Imitations of takkas of Ratan Singh of Bikaner (ruled 1828- 1851 AD)**

The obverse legend of this coin type was originally:

MUHAMMAD AKBAR  
BADSHAH  
SIKKA MUBARAK

On the reverse the word:

MANUS

and the flowerlike *kirnia*, Ratan Singh's personal symbol, are still recognisable.



The imitations of the copper coins of Bikaner were mainly struck at Loharu in Haryana where the licensing of counterfeiters contributed a major part of the income of the ruler of this small territory.<sup>1</sup> The mass-production of imitated copper coins of various princely states reached its zenith at Loharu between 1845 and 1865; in 1850 not less than 52 "mints" were active in Shirrur and Surajgull, two villages belonging to the Nawab. Although the coining industry had then already passed its apex a certain Premasukhdas in 1860 still distributed copper coins struck at Loharu through shops established for the purpose at Calcutta, Monghyr, Patna, Benares, Mirzapur, Farrukhabad, Gazipur, Agra, Mathura, Bombay and Amritsar.<sup>2</sup>

As the history of the Loharu mints has never been seriously researched our knowledge of the prodigious production of the various workshops remains highly fragmentary but we know that *mansuris*<sup>3</sup>, imitations of Bikaner and probably also Jaipur paisas, *do-dundis* of Amaravati and *Trisuli pice* of Nagpur were coined and exported. The existence of the coin # 19.45.11 -- a mule of a pseudo-Bikaneri takka and a pseudo-Sikh paisa -- leads to the conclusion that the two coin types were struck at the same workshop, a workshop which probably was located in the territory of the Nawab of Loharu.

As long as Amritsar supplied large amounts of copper paisas mints outside the Sikh empire probably had little to gain from large-scale counterfeiting of Sikh paisas, but when the British abolished the Sikh coinage in 1849 their measures mainly concerned the various rupees. Not only did they not try or were not even able to rapidly replace the Sikh copper, the people in the villages and small towns went on preferring their traditional, dumpy paisas for a long time. Most of the imitations were probably struck between 1849 and c. 1875 when Sikh paisas were still in great demand in the Panjab; as they did not closely imitate their prototypes -- which were no longer legal tender -- the paisas of type # 19 may not even be considered counterfeit.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The town of Loharu (28°16' N / 75°45' E) lies between Chirawa in Shaikavati (in the former Jaipur State) and Bhiwani in Haryana. Loharu is not far from the large copper deposits near Khetri and Bairata.

<sup>2</sup> Some material concerning the counterfeiting of copper coins from the dominions of the Bhonsla Rajas was collected by P.P. KULKARNI (*Coinage of the Bhonsla Rajas of Nagpur*, Nagpur 1990: 78-72).

<sup>3</sup> *Mansuri Paisas* are square to rectangular or irregularly cut, blank or sometimes heavily defaced copper pieces of c. 20 x 20 x 6 mm and c. 10.5 gms. They circulated in the Cis-Sutlej- and some Hill States. (LALMAN & RITU: "Numismatic material from Sirmaur District" in: *Oriental Numismatic Studies* 2, New Delhi 1999, p. 93 + pl. XV, 118-122.)

<sup>4</sup> On 19 December 1870 Premasukhdas and Raghunathdas, two alleged counterfeiters from Loharu, were acquitted by the Chief Court of the Panjab. The judges found that: "*The first point to be proved was whether the coin was in fact counterfeit. The coining was openly conducted for many years and the coins do not purport to resemble anything but what they are. Whether the Nowab [of Loharu] was or was not authorised to coin is immaterial so far as this charge is concerned, the only question is, whether he in coining intended to produce a resemblance of any coin to be used for the purpose of deception, and this does not appear to be the case.*"

## 20 UNDISCOVERED SIKH COINS

### The *Jassa Singh rupee* of Lahore

Although it has been mentioned and discussed time and again by historians and numismatic writers this elusive coin, which was supposedly struck in 1758 AD after the occupation of Lahore, has not been seen for more than a century and it probably is nothing but a fiction.<sup>1</sup>

### The *Ung* rupee of Amritsar

In a footnote discussing the inscription of the Nanakshahi L.H. Griffin wrote in 1870:<sup>2</sup>  
*"This coin, known sometimes as Nanaki or Nanakshahi, is still current in the Punjab. The inscription was in Persian character, as is the case with all Sikh coins, with the exception of an extremely rare rupee, struck by the mint master of Amritsar during the reign of Ranjit Singh, on which the one word Ung or God, was inscribed in Sanscrit character."*

Griffin's *Ung* must have been:



OM.

Modern Diwali tokens bearing this word are quite common and available with jewellers in the main Indian towns, but I have been unable to find another mention of the *Ung* rupee and I doubt whether Griffin has ever seen one. *OM SRI* (in Nagari) occurs as a mark on rupees struck in Kashmir in VS 1879 (H 06.10.04) but the single word *OM* seems a rather improbable inscription for a Sikh rupee.

### The rupee in the name of *Hari Singh Nalwa*

Major Leech seems to have been the first author to mention a *Hari Singhi rupee* of Kashmir bearing the following legends:<sup>3</sup>

Obverse:

سری اکال جیو

*SRI ĀKĀLJĪV*

Reverse:

ہری سنگھ  
یک روپیہ

*HARĪ SINGH  
ĒK RŪPĀIYĀ*

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the *Jassa Singh rupee* see: chapter 8; nr. 08.01.04.

<sup>2</sup> L.H. GRIFFIN: *The Rajas of the Punjab* (The Kapurthala State), p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> In: *Revenue of Kashmir for the year 1836-37*.

A rupee matching this description has never been found or published and as the striking of such a coin by one of Ranjit Singh's governors would have been tantamount to an act of open rebellion, its very existence seems highly improbable. The statement of Major Leech appears to have been based on some rather superficial knowledge of the *Hari Singhi rupee* of Kashmir and the common misinterpretation of the expression: "... struck coins in his own name."

### Sikh rupees struck at Saharanpur

When in the spring of 1792 Mahadji Sindhia left north India for the Deccan the Sikhs felt at once encouraged to raid the district of Saharanpur; in October 1793 Devji Gauli and Babu Malhar, two Maratha officers, had to drive a band of Sikh marauders from the neighbourhood of the town. After the death of Mahadji Sindhia in February 1794, Gopal Bhau, his viceroy in Hindustan, posted Bhairon Pant Tatya at Saharanpur, but when Nana Rao, the deputy of Daulat Rao Sindhia's new viceroy Lakhwa Dada, was defeated in October 1795 by the Rani of Patiala and Sirdar Bhanga Singh of Thaneshwar and driven back to Delhi, a band of 5'000 Sikhs overran the Upper Doab. The Maratha garrison in Saharanpur made no stand against them and retreated to the fort of Jalalabad [a small town 30 kilometers south of Saharanpur]. In November 1795 George Thomas reached Saharanpur with a contingent of Ape Khande Rao's Mewat force and the Sikh raiders raised the siege of Jalalabad and fled.

Any rupees struck by the Sikhs at Saharanpur would have to bear the date AH1210 / RY 37 (18 July 1795-22 October 1795) or more probably AH 1210 / RY 38 (23 October 1795-6 July 1796). Whereas coins of 1210/38 seem to be unknown, there are at least 2 rupee varieties dated 1210/37 and bearing different marks.<sup>4</sup> Both types are in every respect typical of the coins struck by the mint of the Maratha governors of Saharanpur in the name of Shah 'Alam II; they neither show a Sikh inscription nor a Sikh mark. Saran Singh's attribution of these rupees to the Sikh raiders of 1795 is at best highly speculative and probably entirely unfounded.



Two rupees of Saharanpur dated AH 1210 / 37 in the name of Shah 'Alam II.

Although it is by no means impossible that the Sikhs struck coins at Saharanpur (and copper coins would be even more plausible than rupees), I do not think that such coins exist. The mint officials probably left Saharanpur with the garrison and the rest of the Maratha administration; as the striking of coins in occupied towns does not normally seem to have been a pressing concern of Sikh raiders, they presumably did not even try to reorganise the Saharanpur mint in the short time available to them.

<sup>4</sup> Should the different marks on the coins of 1210/37 be related to the Maratha administration of Saharanpur they might refer to the governors Bhairon Pant Tatya and Babu Malhar.

## Sikh rupees struck at Rawalpindi

Col. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident at Lahore, wrote on 26 June 1847 in his diary: "*Orders were sent to the Kardar<sup>5</sup> of Rawul Pindee to establish a mint there forthwith for melting down the miscellaneous rupees current in Huzara and the North-West and issueing Nanuckshahees in their stead. I am trying also to get Maharajah Golab Singh to do the same in his own dominions, substituting of course a Golabee for a Nanuckshahee currency, but making the former equivalent to the latter. This would simplify commercial transactions between the two countries.*"<sup>6</sup>

The order to the Kardar of Rawalpindi seems to have shared the destiny of so many others during the last chaotic years of the Sikh State: it remained without consequences. We never again hear of a mint at Rawalpindi and no coins have ever been attributed to such a mint.

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<sup>5</sup> In the Sikh State a *Kardar* was the head of the administration of a *Parganah*. A *Kardar* seems to be a rather lowly officer to be ordered to establish a rupee mint.

<sup>6</sup> *Lahore Political Diaries. Political Diaries of the Agent to the Governor-General, North-West Frontier and the Resident at Lahore. January 1<sup>st</sup> 1847 to March 4<sup>th</sup> 1848*, p. 190. The text concerning the order to the *Kardar* of Rawalpindi was published by Ms Jyoti Rai in: "Rediscovering Sikh Mints" in: *ONS Newsletter* 146 (Autumn 1995), p.11.

## 21 COUNTERFEIT AND FAKE SIKH COINS

### Counterfeit coins

#### Silver

Like every large and popular series of Indian rupees the Nanakshahis of Amritsar have fallen a prey to counterfeiters. We actually know of silver-plated copper rupees dated VS 1881-1884 which are very similar to roughly contemporary counterfeits of another plentiful issue, the rupees of Jaipur.

As the difference in the weights of silver and copper coins is significant and as the fraud could easily be detected by cutting with a chisel into a coin's face, the use of this kind of counterfeits was clearly limited to small deals involving not very sophisticated victims. As most of them have probably not survived, silver-plated rupees are rare today

A much more dangerous kind of counterfeits consists of rupees containing less silver than prescribed by the relevant standard. Although only a chemical analysis will positively prove this fraud – or, with less certainty, the touchstone --, the characteristics of the more common types of such counterfeits were usually known to the money-changers in the bazars, but none have been reported in contemporary documents for the Nanakshahis of Amritsar, the prevalent Sikh silver coinage.

#### Copper

The more or less industrially produced rough imitations, that even today are currently found intermingled with genuine Sikh paisas, show that such copper coins were readily accepted by the public in the market.<sup>1</sup> Counterfeiting Sikh copper coins would therefore not have been an economically viable proposition.

### Fake coins

Up to the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of my catalogue of the *Coins of the Sikhs* the specialised collectors of Sikh coins were few and the prices generally quite low. In the meantime the number of collectors – many of them Sikhs, who perceive in this coinage a part of their patrimony -- has multiplied and the prices for silver and gold coins have sky-rocketed. Today prices of \$ 500 or more for often only allegedly rare rupees and \$ 5'000 and above for Sikh mohurs are quoted and possibly also paid. In countries like India and Pakistan, where the forging of all kinds of coins is a long established cottage-industry, this situation renders the production of fakes not only highly attractive, but probably inevitable.

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<sup>1</sup> Such imitations are described in the chapters 04 and 19.

Collectors and dealers often contend that it is practically impossible to produce fakes capable of fooling experienced experts, a statement that may be true in some cases, but which in the case of Indian coins of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century represents just wishful thinking. The rather primitive minting technology of this period is well known and still easily available and for perfectionist forgers the raw material – old coins -- is still abundant. High quality fakes of Indian coins of these 2 centuries are most often not betrayed by technical details but given away by errors due to the perpetrator's lack of historical and numismatic knowledge.

The most difficult Sikh coins to forge are the most common ones, the rupees. One rarely realises that the fact that rupees only show a part of the complete die-design acts as an inbuilt deterrent to forgers. In order not to produce a series of identical and therefore easily detectable coins a forger of rupees has to follow the example of the old Indian mints and cut dies, that are larger than the coins. Where Nazarana rupees are not available this requires some specialised knowledge and is in the case of very rare types often impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Mohurs present in theory the same problems as rupees, but as Sikh mohurs are very rare and often struck with dies originally made for rupees, forging them is not too difficult. To produce a mohur of a yet unpublished year it suffices to copy a rupee of this year chosen at random.

The ideal playground for forgers and fabricators are fractional rupees (and fractional mohurs, but in a lesser degree because of their extreme rarity.) The Mughals struck some fractional rupees in places (Kabul, Surat) where they replaced older but still popular coin types, but most mints of the Mughals and the Princely States did not issue fractional rupees until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even then fractional rupees were much rarer than full rupees and it seems that most of them were not struck for circulation, but as presents, for ceremonial purposes or – in Rajasthan – for buttons. To produce fake fractional rupees one also needs a die that is larger than the coin, but as the fractions are smaller than the rupee, a copy of a full rupee will do in this case. Such copies can be produced by a traditional seal engraver or by using one of the modern precision casting processes.

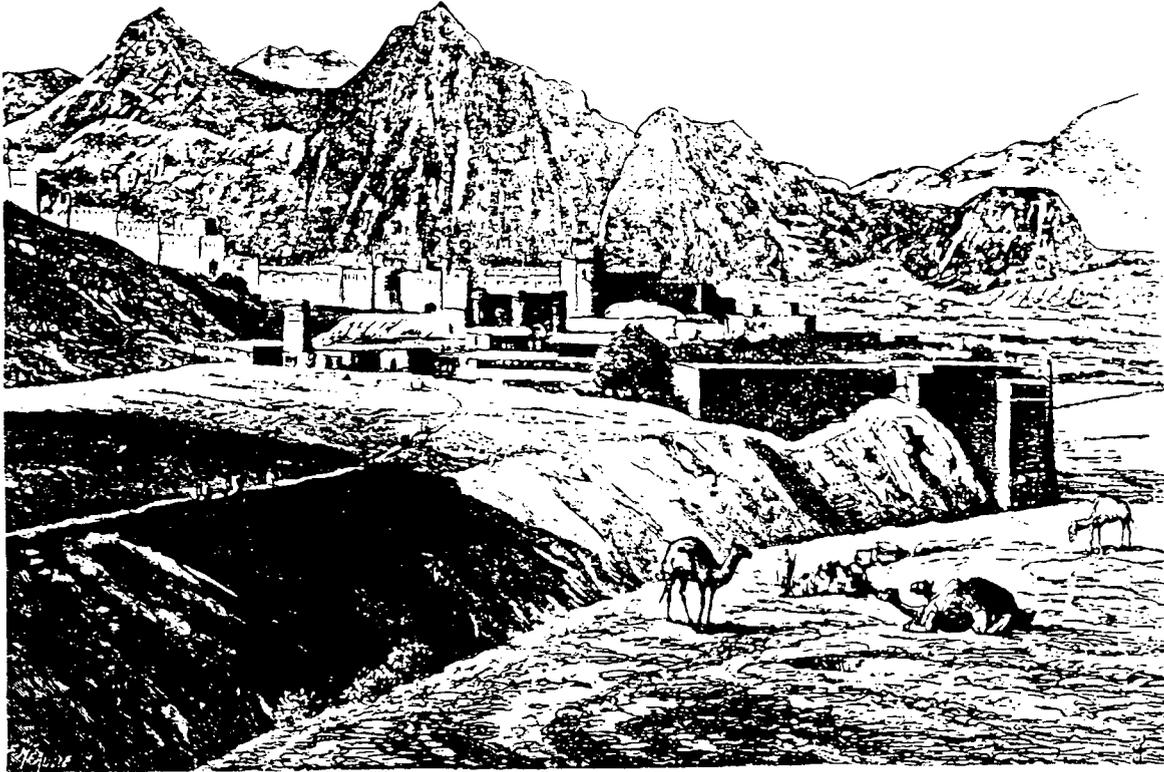
Although the forging of fractional rupees of the later Mughals and the more important Princely States has been flourishing for some years, it seems that fake fractions of Sikh rupees are not yet produced in quantities, but some fabrications purporting to be Sikh ½ rupees have already turned up in *ebay* auctions.<sup>3</sup>

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2 Pakistani forgers produce excellent fakes of silver and gold coins of the Sasanians, Huns, Kushans and later dynasties, but they are often betrayed by their allies, imprudent dealers offering groups of coins that are in every respect identical.

3 Collectors should be very wary of fractional Sikh rupees that show one or more of the following particularities: shoddily cut dies; illegible, improbable or impossible dates (e.g. 19001); marks, especially pictorial marks, that are unknown on rupees.

Internet auctions are a very risky source of Indian coins and the prices actually paid are on average even higher than the ones charged by specialised and trustworthy dealers.



### Attock Fort

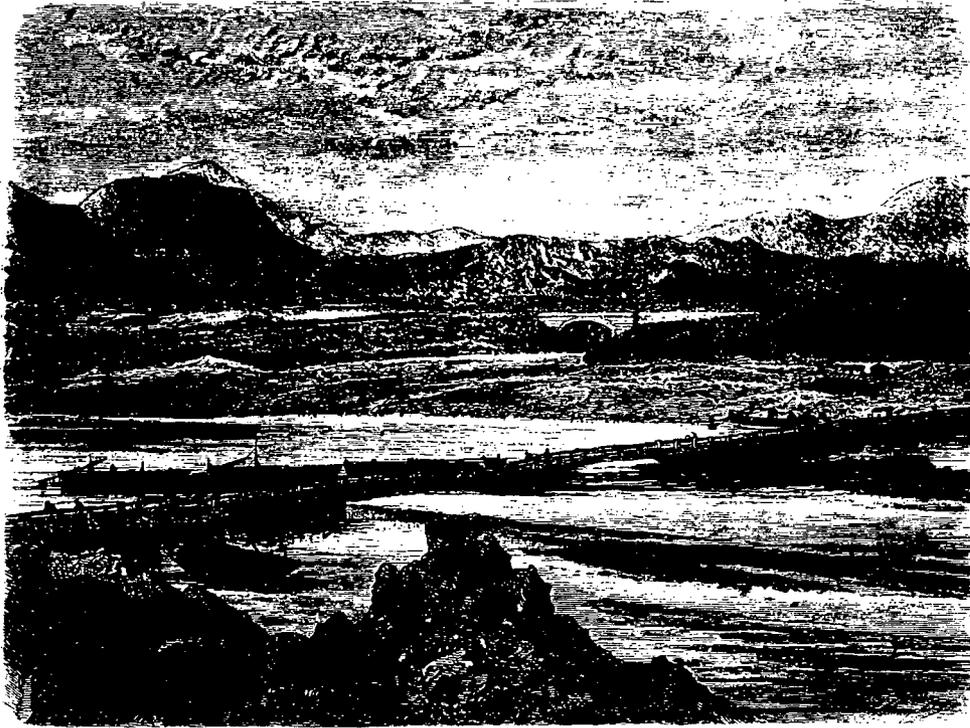
For millenias merchants, pilgrims, other travellers and invading armies had crossed the Indus at Hund, but in the 1540s Sher Shah Suri chose Attock, about 20 Kilometers downriver, as the crossing-point for his new *Shahi Road* (later called the *Grand Trunk Road*), that led from Delhi to Peshawar and Kabul.

In 1581-1586 Akbar built a strong fortress at Attock, at the junction of the Indus and the Landa (or Kabul) River, to watch over the crossing. When Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab Attock fell to the Durrani Empire, but in March 1813 Jahandad Khan, the Afghan *nazim* of Attock, who at this time was practically independent of the government in Kabul, surrendered the fortress to Ranjit Singh in exchange for the *jagir* of Wazirabad.

Under the Sikhs Attock, then called the gateway to the trade routes and passes into northern Afghanistan and Central Asia, was an important market-place for the timber that was floated down from Kabul and the Swat Valley on the Landa River.

Akbar established a mint at Attock, which sporadically worked until the reign of Taimur Shah Durrani (1786 AD). The Sikhs who normally let all the conquered Mughal and Afghan mints carry on with new Sikh coin types, seem not to have resurrected the shutdown Attock mint.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1837 AD a British document (*Foreign Dept. Political Consultations*, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1837) listing current exchange rates for *hundis* – a kind of draft – still mentions the fact that 96 *Zamanshahi* rupees were worth 100 rupees of the *Attock* currency. A quarter century after the occupation of Attock by the Sikhs the local Afghan rupees, which were last struck 50 years earlier, seem still to have circulated!



### The boat-bridge between Attock and Khairabad

Alexander Burnes noted in 1836: „*Runjeet Singh retains a fleet of thirty-seven boats, for the construction of a bridge at Attok, where the river is only 260 yards wide. The boats are anchored in the stream, a short distance from one another, and the communication is completed by planks, and covered with mud: immediately below the fortress of Attok, twenty-four boats are only required, but at other places in the neighbourhood, so many as thirty-seven are used. Such a bridge can only be thrown across the Indus from November to April, on account of the velocity of the stream being comparatively diminished at that season. ... Such a bridge has been completed in three days, but six is a more usual period.*“<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander BURNES: *Travels into Bokhara ...*, London 1834, III,284/85.

## 22 COUNTERMARKS ON SIKH COINS



22.1 As a part of the legend the word:

راع *ra'ij* (current)

occurs on copper coins from Malwa and the Derajat; as a countermark it is found on various Indian and Afghan -- especially Durrani -- silver and copper coins and occasionally also on coins of countries farther west.<sup>1</sup>

On Sikh coins the countermark *ra'ij* has only been observed on the very common *paisas* of Amritsar. It may have been used by some Afghan authority to authorise the circulation of counterstamped coins in its territories.

22.2 The mark



is also found counterstamped on Amritsar *paisas*. Neither the origin nor the meaning of the countermark is known.

The *Nishan Sahib*, the flag of the *Khalsa* showed – on a yellow ground – a symbol consisting of 4 symmetrically arranged weapons: a *khanda* (a two-edged sword), 2 crossed scimitars and a *chakar* (a quoit)<sup>2</sup>:



The *Khanda* or *Khalsa* emblem of the *Nishan Sahib*

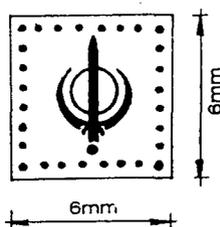
- 
- 1 On Afghan rupees of Attock this rather common c/m possibly represents a validation by the local Sikh government, which did not issue any coins of its own.
  - 2 Although the *chakra*, a metal ring with a sharp outer edge, can be a dangerous weapon in the hands of a skilled thrower, it was rarely used in actual fights. The *Akalis*, the blue-clad members of a militant Sikh brotherhood, wore *chakras* on their conical hats.

*Khanda* symbols of a more recent design occur as countermarks on Mughal rupees:



22.3 This countermark is found on common Mughal rupees struck during the late years of Aurangzeb and the reign of Shah 'Alam I Bahadur.<sup>3</sup>

22.4 In the collection of Dr. Becker is also another variety of a *Khanda* countermark on a rupee of Shah 'Alam Bahadur struck at Lahore in AH 1121 / year 3.



The rupees with the *Khanda* countermarks implicitly purport to be coins of Banda Bahadur (1708-1716). As such rupees were never mentioned in earlier sources and as they only appeared a few years ago on the Indian market, I believe that the coins with their obscure provenance are recent propaganda fabrications. The countermark, which is probably a by-product of the increasing and not always unbiased interest of parts of the Sikh community in the more heroic events of their history, may actually have been inspired by a mark observed on rupees of Shah 'Alam Bahadur and said to be a highly stylised *Khanda* symbol:<sup>4</sup>



I do not think that this mark can be called a *Khanda*, but it might still be an unexplained Sikh symbol. On a drawing by Emily Eden showing 2 *Akalis* of Ranjit Singh's army we see a similar combination of a crescent and some kind of short stick (minus the crossed scimitars) on the hat of one of the fighters.

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- 3 A group of Mughal rupees bearing this *Khanda* counterstamp is in the collection of Dr. B. BECKER. He published two of Aurangzeb's coins of Lahore dated AH 1107 / RY 39 (1695 / 96 AD) in *ONS Newsletter* 152, p. 10. In a heavily edited paper: *An earlier coin of Banda Bahadur* (in a publication of the Guru Nanak University, Amritsar: *Journal of Sikh Studies*, XXI,2: 39-40) Dr. BECKER provided further details: his group of countermarked rupees consists of 13 coins of Aurangzeb (6 of Lahore, 4 of Multan, 3 of Etawa) and one coin of Shah 'Alam Bahadur of Lahore. The dates range from 1105 / 38 (Aurangzeb) to RY 4 of Shah 'Alam I.
- 4 A rupee of AH 1122 / RY 4 (20.03.1710-7.02.1711 AD) struck at Lahore was published by Saran Singh in *ONS Newsletter* 144, p. 8, another rupee with an even more stylised mark is also known.

It is difficult to imagine that in the year, in which Banda's troops had just sacked Sirhind (14 May 1710), a *Khalsa* symbol could have found its way on rupees of the Mughal mint of Lahore.<sup>5</sup> But it is possible that the mark shows a symbol that, unlike the classical *Khanda*, was not necessarily associated with the fighting Sikhs or that was not known to the great public.

A mark that occurs on rupees of Aurangzeb struck at Lahore in AH 1110 / RY 42 has been interpreted as an even more stylised *Khanda* symbol:



I think that this mark shows a lotus flower and that it is entirely unrelated to the Sikhs.

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5 It would be an error to think that the Sikhs at large were actively involved in the wars against the Mughals. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the peaceful followers of Guru Nanak, the *Khalasas*, were still a prominent and clearly distinguishable division of the Sikh community, a division which lived in peace and cooperated with the old rulers of the Punjab. When in 1748 Mir Mannu, the semi-independent Mughal governor of Lahore, won several victories over the *Dal Khalsa*, the Sikhs only escaped annihilation through the intercession of Kaura Mal, a *Khalasa* Sikh and Mir Mannu's deputy. (J. MALCOLM: *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 91.)



Two Akalis of Ranjit Singh's army drawn in 1838 AD by Fanny Eden



### Akalis

*„The Acalees acknowledge no superior governor, and merely tolerate their reigning prince, whom they traduce in every possible way, and even openly seek his life, if he opposes their views. They are generally provided with a round quoit, which they wear either round their pointed turban, or at their side. The quoit is a flat iron ring, from eight to fourteen inches in diameter, the outer edge of which is ground extremely sharp: they twirl this weapon round their finger, or on a stick, and throw it to a distance, with such dexterity and force, that the head of of the person aimed at is often severed from the body. Many of these Acalees form a special troop in the army of the Maharaja [Ranjit Singh].“*

(Leopold von ORLICH: *Travels in India ...*)

*„Here [in Amritsar] the Akalees or immortals reside within the precincts of the holy tank. These are frantic demoniacs, and it is very dangerous to go near them. They are distinguished by a fiendish look, blue turbans, long dishevelled hair, and small iron things like horse-shoes stuck about their head-dress, which they use to fling at people; and they also carry a short club for the purpose, I believe, of throwing at a Faringee or any one that the devil incites them against. These demoniacs possess an awful influence over the people, being regarded as demi-gods; and when any public emergency arises, a convocation of Akalees is held at Umritsur, and whatever they decree is considered to be the voice of heaven and acted upon with universal enthusiasm.*

(James COLEY: *Journal of the Sutlej Campaign of 1845-6 and also of Lord Hardinge's Tour in the following winter*, London 1856.)

## Appendix 1

### The Notes of Baron Karl Alexander Anselm von Hügel \* concerning the Coinage of Kashmir

Baron Karl Alexander Anselm von Hügel (1796-1870), a German who served the Emperor of Austria as an officer and diplomat, published in 1840-1848 an account of his travels through Ranjit Singh's empire in 1835/36: *Kaschmir und das Reich der Sieks* (4 volumes, Stuttgart 1840-1848). An English translation appeared in 1845, but as it does not include all the material of the German version my remarks are based on the latter. Volume II, which is dedicated to a detailed description of Kashmir, contains on pages 233-239 a chapter: *Geldfuss* (Currency Standard). As this is probably the best treatise on the coinage of Kashmir under the Sikhs, the German original text is reproduced here. It is followed by a summary of the relevant parts and a comment in English.

#### Geldfuss

Wie überall in Indien, so ist die Verschiedenheit der Münzen auch in Kaschmir sehr gross. Die gewöhnlichen Goldmünzen sind folgende:

- 1) Lahor Gold-Mohur, von Ranjiet Singh geprägt = 15 Nanakschai-Rupien oder 22 bis 23 Hary-Singhi.
- 2) Herat Dinar zu 6 Nanakschai oder 9 Hary-Singhi-Rupien; diese ist die Gewöhnlichste.
- 3) Iskardu Hun (Hun bedeutet Goldmünze), ein dünnes Goldblatt, mit einer Art Rosette als Gepräge, zu  $1\frac{3}{5}$  Rupien.

Die Rupie, welche von den Mohamedanern in Indien eingeführt wurde, ist die Landesmünze. Ich kann mich nicht enthalten, hier den Ursprung derselben anzuführen. Die Rupeya (wörtlich Silbermünze) ward nach Abul Fazel durch Scher-Schah eingeführt, ein Patane, der den Thron Dehli's dem Kaiser Humayun, Sohne Babers, im Jahre 1545 entrisen hatte, und Indien bis zu seinem, einige Zeit darauf erfolgtem, Tode beherrschte.

Münzen zu schlagen, wird in Indien als ein nur dem Oberherrscher gebührendes Recht angesehen. Vor der Auflösung des ungeheuren Reiches in Hindostan gab es von Kandahar und Kaschmir bis zum Golf von Bengalen und dem Ausflusse des Indus, und in Süd-Indien, so weit die Waffen Dehli's reichten, kein anderes Geld, als jenes, welches im Namen des Schah von Dehli gemünzt wurde. Selbst nach der Auflösung dieses Reiches dauerte es lange, bis sich die Regenten der abgerissenen Provinzen für unabhängig genug hielten, um ihren eigenen Namen, jenem des Kaisers, auf den Münzen zu substituiren. Mit Ausnahme Tipu's und des Königs in Aude, wurden alle Rupien in Indien bis zum Jahre 1836, in welchem die englisch-ostindische Kompagnie ihr Geld im Namen des Königs von England prägte, im Namen Schah Alum's geschlagen, und nicht weniger als 314 verschiedene Rupien sind in Indien im Umlaufe, alle von verschiedenem Werthe, aber alle mit fast gleicher Inschrift, nämlich mit folgender: *Der Kaiser Alum, der Verteidiger des mohamedanischen Glaubens, der Widerschein der göttlichen Vollkommenheit, prägte diese Münze, um gangbar zu seyn, in den sieben Himmelnstrichen.*

Mit dieser Legende war auch das Geld der ostindischen Kompagnie bis zum Jahre 1835 versehen, und als hätte sie es darauf abgesehen, die Verwirrung zu vergrössern,

wurden nicht nur in ihren verschiedenen Münzen, sondern sogar in ein und derselben, Rupien von ungleichem Werthe geschlagen, immer im Namen Alum Schah's. Dieser Zustand des Münzwesens machte eine zahllose Menge von Wechslern nöthig, welche natürlich zum Nachtheile des Volkes bei jeder Münze etwas gewannen.

Dasselbe findet in Kaschmir statt, nur dass das Geld hier nach und nach selten geworden ist.

Von Thibet kommt jährlich ungeprägtes Silber nach Kaschmir, welches früher die Könige in ihrem eigenen Namen prägten. Von diesen Münzen ist jedoch jetzt keine mehr in Kaschmir aufzufinden. Unter den Afghanen ward das Geld im Namen des Königs dieser Nation geprägt. Unter den Siek erhielten die Gouverneurs das Recht zu münzen, und sie prägten Geld zu verschiedenem Werthe. Drei Arten Rupien sind jetzt in Kaschmir gewöhnlich.

1) Die Kabul-Rupie. Diese, im Namen Achmed Schah's und seiner Nachfolger geprägte Münze, hat denselben Werth wie die Siccah-Rupie, sie gilt nämlich etwas weniger als 1 fl. C. M.; 106 Rupien = 10 Liv. Sterling oder 100 fl. C. M. Sie beginnt nun selten zu werden.

2) Die Nanakschai-Rupie, desselben Wertes, von Ranjiet Singh geprägt und zu Ehren des Stifters der Siek-Religion: Nanak so genannt.

3) Hari Singh begann in Kaschmir Rupien zu prägen, die um mehr als ein Drittheil weniger werth sind als die Letztern, und Hari-Singhi-Rupie heissen. Ihr Wert ist nur  $\frac{11}{16}$  einer Nanakschai-Rupie, wornach  $169 \frac{6}{10}$  Hary-Singhi's Rupien = 10 Liv. Sterling oder 100 fl. ausmachen, das ist  $35kr\frac{1}{2}$ : Diese Rupie ist wie in Indien in Anna und Peiss abgetheilt; 10 Anna bilden hier im Handel eine Hary-Singhi-Rupie: 16 eine Nanakschai, Anna werden keine geprägt; die Hary-Singhi-Rupie enthält 32 Peiss.

Ist die Verwirrung bei den Silbermünzen gross, so ist jene bei den Kupfermünzen endlos. Von schönen Baktrischen Münzen, Sita Ram Peiss (einer weiblichen und männlichen Hindu-Gottheit) genannt bis zu unförmlichen Stückchen Kupfer, sind unzählige Arten im Bazaar zu finden und jede Art hat ihren eigenen Kurs.

Die Unter-Abtheilung der Rupie ist folgende:

1 Anna	=	5 Pau
1 Pau	=	20 Ganda
1 Ganda	=	4 Kauri

Ganda sind wirkliche Mandeln, Kauri die *Cypraea moneta* Muschel. Pau ist eine ideale Münze, die nicht existirt, obgleich von manchen Kupfermünzen 5 eine Anna ausmachen.

Die unabänderliche Einheit des Münzfusses ist die Anna, und jede Münze wird darnach geschätzt; alle andern Abtheilungen wechseln.

Die kleinsten Münzen sind Kauri, deren 115 ungefähr einen Peiss ausmachen; so dass:

1 Hary-Singhi-Rupie	=	10 Annas
1 Anna	=	$3\frac{1}{2}$ Peiss
1 Peiss	=	115 Kauri

Die frühern Kupfermünzen, als Kaschmir unabhängig war, sind gänzlich verschwunden. Ich war indess so glücklich, mir einige in Bijbahara zu verschaffen, die ich jedoch bis jetzt nicht entziffert habe.

Die Hary-Singhi-Rupie ist als die Landesmünze Kaschmir's angenommen, und wenn nichts beigefügt ist, so wird in diesen Blättern immer diese gemeint.

Abul Fazel, im Ayien Akberi, erwähnt folgender Unterabtheilung der Rupie für die Suba Kaschmir.

## Silbermünzen

1 Siccah-Rupie	=	1½ Sassnu
1 Sassnu	=	10 Hat
1 Hat	=	4 Kasserie

## Kupfermünzen

1 Rupie	=	40 Dam
1 Dam	=	4 Pantschie
1 Pantschie	=	2 Baraghany
1 Baraghany	=	4 Schakry

Diese Münzen sind jetzt nicht mehr in Kaschmir zu finden.

## Summary

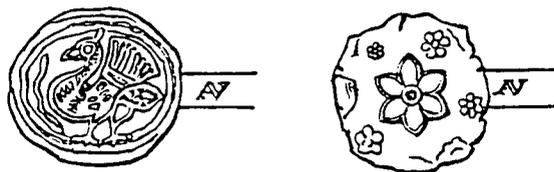
## Gold coins:

Von Hügel had but little to say about gold coins:

"As everywhere in India there is much variety in the coins circulating in Kashmir. The most common gold coins are:

1. The *Lahore gold Mohur* struck by Ranjit Singh. It is equal to 15 *Nanakshahi rupees* or 22 to 23 *Hari Singhis*.
2. The *Herat Dinar* worth 6 *Nanakshahis* or 9 *Hari Singh rupees*; this is the most common gold coin.
3. The *Iskardo Hun*, a thin gold leaf imprinted with a kind of rosette and worth  $\frac{13}{5}$  rupees.

Volume IV of von Hügel's account contains on pages 319-348 a paper by Joseph Arneth on the subject of the German traveller's coin collection.<sup>1</sup> It ends with an illustration and a short description of *Iskardo Huns*:



"The two illustrations show gold coins of the Iskardo State, the Little Tibet or Balti of the Europeans. In Iskardo they are called Hun or Dinar... These coins are very thin and uniface, not unlike bracteates."

At about the same time E. Thornton remarked in his *Gazetteer of the countries adjacent to India* ... (vol. I, p.366): "The Iskardu Hun was a small and thin gold coin worth 1.6 Nanak Shahi Rupees, Amritsari or Calcutta Sicca. It was the currency of the Iskardu (Baltistan) Raja."

<sup>1</sup> Von Hügel presented his collection, mainly Bactrian and Indo-Greek but also some other Asian coins, to the *Kaiserlich-königliches Münz-und Antiken-Kabinett*, now a part of the *Bundes-sammlung von Münzen, Medaillen und Geldzeichen* in Vienna.

## Silver Coins:

"The rupee, which in India was introduced by the Muslims, is the coin of the country. ... Raw silver, which every year is brought from Tibet to Kashmir, used to be coined by the kings (of that country) in their own name. This kind of coins is no longer found in Kashmir. Under the Afghans coins were struck in the name of the king of that nation. Under the Sikhs the governors obtained the right to coin and they struck coins of different values:

1. The *Kabul rupee*. This coin in the name of Ahmad Shah (Abdali) and his successors has the same value as the *Siccah rupee*, 106 rupees = 10 Pounds Sterling. These rupees are now becoming rare.<sup>2</sup>
2. The *Nanakshahi rupee* of the same value; struck by Ranjit Singh and named in honour of the founder of the Sikh religion.
3. Hari Singh began to strike a rupee in Kashmir which is worth less than two thirds of the first two kinds and which is called the *Hari Singhi rupee*.<sup>3</sup> Its value is only  $1\frac{1}{16}$  of a *Nanakshahi rupee*; 169  $\frac{6}{16}$  of *Hari Singh's rupees* are equal to 10 Pounds Sterling. This rupee is, as in India, divided into *Annas* and *Pice*. In the market-place 10 *Annas* (of the *Sicca rupee*) are equal to 1 *Hari Singhi rupee*, 16 (*Annas*) to one *Nanakshahi (rupee)*.<sup>4</sup> *Annas* are not struck, the *Hari Singhi rupee* is worth 32 *Pice* (of the *Sicca rupee*)."

<sup>2</sup> GANESH DAS: *Siyahat-i-Kashmir*, p.34: "The business of Jewellers was [in 1846 AD] generally conducted in Kabul or Qandahar currency."

<sup>3</sup> G.T. VIGNE, who travelled at the same time as von Hügel in Kashmir, stated in his *Travels in Kashmir*, ..., II,123: "The small or Hurisinghi rupi, which is of about the same value as the Kabul rupi, was coined in Kashmir, as already noticed, by the Sikh governor Huri Singh, and although subsequent governors have attempted to impress their name upon them, they have always retained their original name. The rupis are stamped by a die held in a man's hand, and on which is inflicted a single blow from an enormous hammer lifted by two gigantic arms."

<sup>4</sup> Von Hügel's exchange rates correspond fairly well with the observations of G.T. Vigne and Dr. Joseph Wolff, but there is a puzzling statement in MOORCROFT's *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces* ..., II,127: "The revenue of Kashmir is farmed and the farmer is independent of the military governor [Diwan Moti Ram]. At the time of our visit the sum paid by the farmer was thirty-eight lakhs of Panjab rupees, equal to twenty-nine lakhs of Sicca rupees, or about two hundred and ninety thousand pounds." The *Panjab rupees*, which in Kashmir -- according to Moorcroft -- were worth about 12 Annas 1 Paisa of the *Sicca rupee*, were perhaps Sikh rupees struck at Lahore or Amritsar before the introduction of the leaf mark.

Jyoteeshwar PATHIK mentioned in: *Cultural Heritage of Dogras* (Delhi 1980, p. 26.) that the *Hari Singhi rupee* was current in Jammu where it was equal to 10 British Annas.

The following quote from O.C. HANDA's *Numismatic Sources on the Early History of Western Himalaya* (Delhi 1984, p. 108) refers to the above mentioned passage. It appears here as a sample of the deplorable scholarship of some numismatic authors: "It is also known that prior to chilki rupaiya, Hari Singh rupaiya of Kashmir was in circulation in that region which also equalled ten annas of British currency. But no ruler of that name is known to have reigned in the valley prior to 1925-1948 AD. Probably Hari Singh here is an illusion for Harsa who reigned in the valley in 11<sup>th</sup> century and is known to have issued coins in his own name which, as Kalhana suggests, imitated the contemporary Karnataka coinage."

Discussing the external trade of Kashmir von Hügel mentioned one of the sources of the silver coined into rupees at the Srinagar mint:

"Silver is brought from Ladakh in lumps of 2½ Paus.<sup>5</sup> They bear marks in Chinese script guaranteeing their purity."

Additional information concerning the trade in precious metals with neighbouring countries was collected by Moorcroft during the governorship of Diwan Moti Ram (in the early 1820s) and Vigne in the 1830s:

G.T. Vigne\*: *Travels in Kashmir*, ..., I, 378-379:

"The barren and Alpine country that separates Kashmir from Yarkund and Turkistan is of great extent; the coinage of the north is not recognised in the south; and the natives of the last-mentioned countries bring down bullion instead of rupis, in the shape of little anvils of silver, as an article of trade."

Wm Moorcroft: *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces...*, Vol. I (Part II, Chapter III), 356:

"Silver is also imported (into Ladakh) in boat-shaped lumps, called yambos, stamped with Chinese characters, each lump weighing about one hundred and sixty rupees, and passing in the market for one hundred and eighty."

G.T. Vigne: *Travels in Kashmir...*, II, 344:

"The merchandise that passes from Yarkund to Hindustan, consists of gold, in ducats from Russia, in old coins from Bokhara, and a small quantity also finds its way from Baltistan; Syce silver, silks, and porcelain from China; ..."

Von Hügel continued about copper coins:

"The variety of silver coins is bewildering but an endless confusion reigns where copper coins are concerned. Countless types ranging from a beautiful Bactrian coin called Sita Ram Pice (showing a Hindu goddess and a god) to shapeless bits of copper can be found in the bazars and each one has its own exchange rate.

The subdivisions of the rupee are:

1 Anna <sup>6</sup>	=	5 Paus
1 Pau	=	20 Gandas
1 Ganda	=	4 Cowries

<sup>5</sup> *Pau* means: a handful. According to von Hügel 1 *Pau* of Kashmir was equal to 934.35 grams, but this may not have been a generally accepted value. G.T. Vigne mentioned for the same time 2 different *Paus*:

1 Pau of Ludhiana	=	0.25 Ser	=	907.2 grams
1 Pau of Kashmir	=	0.25 Ser	=	680.0 grams.

(About 15 years earlier Wm Moorcroft had observed a much lighter Kashmir Ser when making a detailed study of the shawl industry in the Valley. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*, II, 135-136: "A ser is equal to twenty pals, and a pal ought to be equal to three Mohammed Shahi rupees, and a third. At this rate the ser should weigh nearly two pounds (the rupee being 173,3 grains). The actual ser, however, is not above one pound and only equal to 788 grams avoirdupois."

<sup>6</sup> Von Hügel's Anna corresponds to  $\frac{1}{16}$  of the Sicca rupee, but according to other authorities, e.g. William Moorcroft and Major Leech, the Hari Singhi rupee was also divided into 16 Annas (of less value) and the Anna into two *Tungas* or four *Paisas*. The Paisa was further divided into 3 *Paees* (Pice). Wm Moorcroft (*Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*, II, 173, footnote) gave another value of the *Tunga* or *Tanga*: "Thirty-two *Tungas* or *Anas* equal two Rupees."

*Gandas* are genuine almonds, *Cowries* the shells of *Cypraea moneta*. The *Pau* is only a coin of account, but there are several types of copper coins of which 5 pieces are worth 1 *Anna*.

The one currency unit which never varies is the *Anna*; every other coin is measured against it; the value of all the other denominations is subject to changes.

The *Cowries* are the smallest coins, 115 of them are worth about one *Pice*:

1 <i>Hari Singhi rupee</i>	=	10 <i>Annas</i>
1 <i>Anna</i>	=	3½ <i>Pice</i> <sup>7</sup>
1 <i>Pice</i>	=	115 <i>Cowries</i>

The earlier copper coins, which were struck when Kashmir was independent, have completely disappeared."

In his *Travels in the Himalayan provinces ...* (II, Part III, Chapter II, pp.162-163) Wm Moorcroft remarked about the copper used in Kashmir:

*"Copper mines are said to exist [in Kashmir], but their existence is kept secret, lest they should become to the [Sikh] government an additional source of exaction: the copper used is British or Russian, imported from Lahore or Yarkand."*

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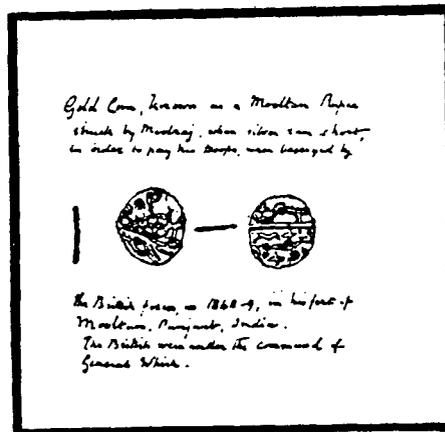
<sup>7</sup> This division of the *Anna* was only valid at a certain point in time and other sources therefore give other value relations. In the *Intelligence Report from Kashmir, 18th August - 22nd October 1836* we read for instance: "Formerly 40 pice were sold [at Srinagar] for a rupee while at present the bankers have been directed to sell them at double that amount for the rupee."

## Appendix 2

A Correspondence concerning the Gold Rupees of Multan  
published in *Spinks Numismatic Circular*, 1896.Chalgrove, Radnor Park, Folkestone.  
Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> 1895.*To the Editors of the "Numismatic Circular".*

Gentlemen,

Some two years or so ago I looked in at your City house, and casually asked if a little gold coin of India, known as the *Mooltan Rupee* was in your collection, After I had described it



(from recollection) I was told it was not. When I was in India with my regiment (then the 1<sup>st</sup> Bombay European Reg<sup>t</sup> Fusiliers; and later, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup> Royal Bombay Fusiliers, and now the 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers) I was quartered at Mooltan, in the Punjab, in 1857-8-9; and I there became possessed of a few of these coins, but gave them away as curiosities, to members of my family. I have only lately been able to inspect one of the coins I originally possessed, and I have made the enclosed sketch of it, believing that you might perhaps have it engraved in your *Circular*. The coin is of irregular shape, the design is in relief, the outside edge is irregularly milled: I cannot interpret the symbols. The history of the coin is (as I was informed) as follows: -- When the British forces, under General Wish, were pressing the siege of Mooltan, in 1848-9, the Dewan Moolraj, who held that place, ran short of silver wherewith to pay his troops; and in this extremity, made use of gold, coining a quantity of these (we may call them) *tokens*, for the purpose above mentioned.

My regiment formed part of the force which besieged and took Mooltan by storm (this was some eight years or so before I had the honour of belonging to it), and these coins, therefore, possess special interest for me.

Probably some one, or more of your learned readers will be able, from their own knowledge, to add somewhat to the meagre particulars which alone I have been able to furnish. The true size of this gold-piece is possibly infinitesimally smaller than the figures in the sketch, but I have endeavoured to be exact. If I remember rightly, I looked at the coins in the British Museum many years ago, but I failed to find a specimen of this (so called) *Mooltan rupee*.

I am,  
Gentlemen,

Very truly yours,  
Horace Miles HOBART-HAMPDEN  
Major (on retired list)  
late 103<sup>rd</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup>

To the Editor of the *Numismatic Circular*.

Clapham, Dec. 18, 1895.

Sir,

The gold Multan rupee mentioned by Major Hobart-Hampden in your last issue is not rare and is well known to Indian numismatists. Specimens are to be found in most collections of modern Indian coins; e.g. in the Lahore Museum there are 5; Dr. Stulpnagel had 2; Mr. Legget 2; I also have 2. There is little or no doubt that they were struck by Mulraj at the time mentioned. The date on them is almost always (Samvat) 1905, i.e. A.D. 1848, the year in which Mulraj was, as a rebel, holding Multan. Mr. C.J. Rogers in his catalogue of coins purchased by the Government of the Panjab describes them as having on *obv.* in Persian *shāhi satkūr*, on *rev.* a leaf to r. with date date above and below *mandarka*. But he does not say what those words may mean, and I don't know. Some are straight milled, others are not. The weight: 10 to 10¼ grains. Size: 0.35. My old friend Major Benett, formerly of the Bombay Fusiliers, who gained his commission from Sergeant at the siege of Multan for gallantly leading the storming party and placing the British Colours on the walls, told me that they found sacks full of these little coins in the treasury of the citadel when they took it, and that he remembered soldiers looting them and bringing them out *off guard* stowed away in their boots.

There was nothing very unusual in the issue of gold rupees when silver was short and gold to hand; the E.I.C. did so more than once or twice. It is rather a different state of things however now, I suppose.

Yours truly  
Oliver Codrington

## Appendix 3

### The Report of Major-General R.G. Taylor on the Coinage of the Phulkian States

The following report, which was written in 1869 AD, was published by Sir Lepel Griffin in his book: *The Rajahs of the Punjab* in form of a long footnote.

The following information regarding the Mints in the three Phulkian States of Pattiala, Nabha, and Jhind, was collected by Major-General R.G. Taylor, C.B., C.S.I., Agent to the Lieutenant- Governor Cis-Satlej States, at the request of the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India. The only other recognised mints in the States in political dependence on the Punjab Government, are in Maler Kotla and Kashmir.

#### Pattiala Mint

I. *Political condition* - No trace is ascertainable of any communication having been held with this office regarding the Mint. The Pattiala authorities have alluded to an application made, on the occasion of Lord Dalhousie holding a Durbar at Pinjor in 1851, by the Pattiala State Mint. To this the Pattiala Officers say no definite answer was given, and they presume that the record must be in this office, but I have had it searched for without success.

The Mint of Pattiala is said to have been established by the order of Ahmad Shah Durani, when the Pattiala State was ruled by Maharaja Amar Singh. This would have been about 100 years ago; in fact, in another place in the Pattiala reports, Sambat 1820 (A.D. 1763) is mentioned as the year.

II. *The nature, title, and character of the coinage* - The Pattiala rupee is known as the Rajah Shahi Rupee; it is three-fourths of an inch in circumference, and weighs 11 1/4 mashas: it is of pure silver<sup>4</sup>. The coin is really five ruttees less in weight than the British Government rupee, but the amount of actual silver in each is the same, and consequently the Pattiala rupee fetches the full 16 annas, but is subjected sometimes to arbitrary discount by the shraffs in British territory, and its value also fluctuates with the value of silver in the markets, fetching in this way sometimes more than the 16 annas.

The Pattiala gold mohur weighs 10 3/4 mashas, and is of pure gold. No copper coin is struck in Pattiala.

The inscription on the gold and silver coin is the same: it runs:-

*"Hukm shud az Qadir-i-bechun ba Ahmad Badshah :  
Sikka zan bar sim-o-zar az ouj-i-maht ta ba Mah :  
Jalus Meimunut Manus zarb Sirhind."*

The translation of which is: "The order of God, the peerless, to Ahmad Badshah: Strike coin on silver and gold from earth to heaven" (this is the real meaning of the passage; the actual words are, "from the height of the fishes back to the moon"), "in the presence, favoured of high fortune" (here would follow the date) "the Sirhind coinage."

No alteration has ever been made in the inscription; certain alterations are made in the marks to mark the reign of each Chief.

Thus, Maharaja Amar Singh's rupee is distinguished by the representation of a *Kulgi* (small aigrette plume)<sup>2</sup>; Maharaja Sahib Singh's by that of a *Saif* (or two-edged sword); Maharaja Karam Singh's had a *Shamsher* (bent sabre) on his coin; Maharaja Narindar Singh's coin had a *Katta* (or straight word) as his distinguishing mark.

The present Maharaja's rupee is distinguished by a dagger.

- 
- 1 General Taylor did not use the British decimal Tola of 11.664 g (introduced in 1833) but a traditional Tola of 12 Mashas of 0.972 g or 96 Ratis of 0.123 g. The comparison of the Pattiala and the British rupee is based on an incorrect computation.
  - 2 The mark on the coins of Amar Singh is not a *kalgi* (aigrette) but a *phul* (flower) which may refer to *phul*, the common ancestor of the ruling houses of Pattiala, Jind and Nabha, who died in 1652.

The inscription being long, and the coin small, only a small portion of the inscription falls on each coin.

III. *The annual out-turn of the establishment, and the value of the coinage as compared with that of the British Government.* - The annual out-turn is in fact evidently uncertain; the striking of the coin being only capriciously carried out on special occasions, or when actually wanted.

The officials report that the Pattiala Mint could strike 2000 coins per diem, if necessary; always supposing that there be sufficient grist for the mill.

The value, with reference to British Government coin, has been given above in reply to question No. II.

IV. *The process of manufacture, and any particulars as to the artificers employed.* - The Mint is supervised by a superintendent, a mohurrir, two testers, one weighter, ten blacksmiths, two coiners, four refiners of metal, and one engraver.

The metals are refined carefully, and thus brought up to the standard of the gold and silver kept as specimens in the Mint, the metal is tested and then coined :

The chief implements are anvils, hammers, scales, dies, pincers, vices, & c.

V. *The arrangements for receiving bullion, and the charges (if any) levied for its conversion into coin.* - Metal brought by private individuals is coined at the following rates :-

*Silver.* - 1 rupee 1 anna for 100 coins, of which the State dues amount of 10 1/2 annas, and 6 1/2 go to the establishment.

*Gold.* - Rs. 24 per 100 coins :-

	Rs.	a.
State.	17	2 1/2
Establishment dues.	1	2
Miscellaneous expenses.	5	11 1/2

VI. - The currency is principally confined to the area of the State, but there are a good many Pattiala rupees about in the neighbouring districts, but not probably beyond the limits of the Civil Division.

## Jhind Mint

I. *Political conditions, & c.* - The Jhind Mint would seem to have been established at the same time as that of Pattiala, as the inscription is exactly the same. There does not appear to have been any correspondence with this Agency or the British Government regarding its continuance or conditions.

II. *Nature, title, and character of the coinage.* - The rupee is called "Jhindia;" it is 11 1/4 mashas in weight. The inscription is, as in the case of the Pattiala Raja Shai rupee, viz.:-

*"Hukmshud az Kadir-i-bechun ba Ahmad Badshah:  
Sikka zan bar sim-o-zar az ouj-i-mahi ta ba Mah."*

The third sentence which appears on the Pattiala coin is omitted in the Jhind inscription.

Translation of the inscription has been given above.

III. *The out-turn is quite uncertain* ; on the occasion of marriages large sums are coined, but otherwise only the actual quantity considered necessary is struck. The value of the coin is said to be about 12 annas, but I have been unable to procure a specimen in Ambala and the shraffs in our markets know little about this coin.

IV. *Process of manufacture, & c.* - The only point noted is, that the die is entrusted to the care of the State Treasurer, the process of manufacture and arrangements at the workshops, & c., is not noticed.

V. *The arrangements for the receipt of bullion.* - Bullion has never been tendered for coining at the Jhind Mint, so no rates for conversion have been fixed.

VI. *The general area of currency.* - Only within the State.

## Nabha Mint

I. *Political conditions. & c.* - This Mint appears to have been established under Sikh rule; there has never been any correspondence on the subject with the British Government.

II. *Nature, title, and character of the coinage.*- The rupee is called the "Nabha" rupee; its full weight is  $11\frac{1}{4}$  mashas, of which 10 mashas  $4\frac{1}{4}$  ruttees is pure silver. It is thus 5 ruttees in actual weight, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ruttees in pure silver less than the British Government rupee.<sup>3</sup>

Gold mohurs are occasionally struck by the Nabha Government for its own use. The weight of the mohur is  $9\frac{3}{4}$  mashas, and it is of pure gold.

The inscription on both coins is the same, viz:-

*"Deg, tagh-o-fatah nasrat be dirang:  
Yafi az Nanak Guru Govind Singh.  
Julus meimunat manus Sirkar Nabha, sambat 1911."*<sup>4</sup>

The above may be rendered :-

"Food, sword, and victory were promptly obtained from Nanak by Guru Govind Singh."

In the above, food is expressed in the couplet by the word deg, signifying the large cooking-pan in use among the Sikhs; but I have found it very difficult to introduce pot or pan into the English rendering; the spirit of the expression is "abundance-"

III. *The outturn of the establishment, value, & c.* - The Nabha officials have not noticed the out-turn, but I know that, as in the other States, money is only coined on grand occasions or when there is supposed to be need of it; so that no rule can be fixed.

The value is exactly 15 annas.

IV. The Mint establishment consists of one superintendent, one tester, one smelter, a silversmith, and a blacksmith.

The silver is carefully refined in presence of the superintendent, who sees the metal brought up to the proper standard.

V. Silver has often been received from without for coining. Gold has never been tendered.

The mint-duty for coining is 14 annas per 100 rupees, which is distributed as follows :-

To Silversmith.	.	.	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	annas per cent
" Smelter	.	.	2	"
" Blacksmith	.	.	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
" Tester	.	.	1	"
" Superintendent	.	.	$\frac{3}{4}$	"
" State dues	.	.	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	"

VI. *General area of the currency.*- These rupees find their way into the neighbouring markets, but not to any great extent.

<sup>3</sup> The difference amounts in reality to slightly more than  $2\frac{3}{4}$  Ratis.

<sup>4</sup> Rupees of Jaswant Singh of Nabha bearing the couplet of Ahmad Shah Durrani are known.

## Appendix 4

### Coins of the Kalsia State

Although Sikhs of several *misl*s fought in the army that conquered and sacked Sirhind in 1763, the principal gains from the victory over Zain Khan fell to the Phulkians, especially the Raja of Patiala, and different Sardars of the *Karorasinghia*, a confederation founded by Karora Singh, Mastan Singh and Karam Singh. Sham Singh, the successor of Mastan Singh, gave his name to a division of the *misl*, but its most powerful part was the *Kalsia* clan, whose main possessions originally lay to the north of the Buria territory, between the Jamuna and the Makanda rivers.

The best-known Karorasinghia Sardar of the second half of the 18th century was Gurdit Singh Ladwa, who after the fall of Sirhind seized the district of Ladwa and later captured the fort of Karnal. Gurdit Singh was one of the leaders of the Sikh army beaten in 1798 by George Thomas at Narawind; on 11 September 1803 he fought on the side of the Marathas in the Battle of Delhi and in 1805 he was the only Sikh chief expressly excluded from the amnesty proclaimed by the British. Gurdit Singh supported Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1806 in his campaign against Patiala and was rewarded by the grant of 32 villages in the districts of Badowal and Jagraon. When his son Ajit Singh, who had been made a Raja by the British, rebelled in 1845, the estate of the family was confiscated.

Another well-known Karorasinghia Sardar was Bhagel Singh Karorasinghia, the Lord of Chalaundi<sup>1</sup> who in 1779 joined Nawab Majd ad-daula Abd al-ahd, the minister of the Court of Delhi, in his abortive attempt to reconquer the Malwa country from the Sikhs and who in 1783/84 governed Delhi for 9 months and built there 7 *gurudwaras*.

In the long run Sardar *Gurbakhsh Singh Kalsia*, a Sandhu Jat from the village Kalsia in the *tahsil* of Kasur (Lahore), proved to be the most successful of the Karorasinghia chiefs. In 1763 he took the *parganah* of Banbeli in the Jalandhar Doab (District of Hoshiarpur) from Adina Beg, the governor of Lahore, and in 1764 he captured the *parganah* of Chhachhrauli -- 114 villages in the District of Ambala -- and so laid the foundation of his own small state. Gurbakhsh Singh took part in the Dal Khalsa's raids into Haryana, Shaikhawati and northern Bikaner and gained rich booty when the Sikhs looted Hansi, Hisar, Bhiwani, Nolgarh, Mundelo, Sikar, Bissau, Surajgarh and other towns and villages. He lost several villages to Amar Singh of Patiala but managed to recover them in alliance with other Sikh Sardars in 1769.

Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1785; his son *Jodh Singh* (1751-1817), who succeeded him and in 1805 also followed Bhagel Singh as Sardar of the *Karorasinghia misl*, secured the lands north of Ambala, which later formed a part of the Kalsia State. In 1798 he took the *parganah* of Dera Basi with 54 villages from Khazan Singh of Rasulpur and in 1803 he married his son Hari Singh to Ram Kaur, a daughter of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted Jodh Singh in 1806 the *parganah* of Chirak (7 villages in the *tahsil* of Moga) and Khurdin, which he seized from Baghel Singh's widow. In 1807 Jodh Singh took part in Ranjit Singh's Naraingarh campaign and was rewarded with the estates of Laharpur (near Sadhaura), Budala and Kheri. After the fall of the *Dallewalia misl* Ranjit Singh added the *parganah* of Garhdiwala (Jalandar Doab) -- worth Rs 125'000 annually -- to Jodh Singh's possessions. Jodh Singh joined Ranjit Singh's expedition, which in 1817 failed to capture Multan, and was severely wounded in an attack on the strong fort of the city. After his return to Chhachhrauli he succumbed early in 1818 to his wounds.

<sup>1</sup> *Chalaundi* lies 3 miles to the east of Ladwa.

Jodh Singh's possessions are said to have yielded him more than Rs 5'00'000<sup>2</sup>; but according to L.H. Griffin the Kalsia State -- 176 square miles, 175 villages and about 62'000 inhabitants -- had in the 1860s a revenue of only Rs 1'30'000.<sup>3</sup>

The later rulers of the Kalsia State:

Sardar Sobha Singh	1818 - 1858
Sardar Lehna Singh	1858 - 1869
Sardar Bishan Singh	1869 - 1883
Sardar Jagjit Singh	1883 - 1886
Sardar Ranjit Singh	1886 - 1908

On 30 October 1902 the ruler of the Kalsia State, which ranked sixteenth among the princely states of the Punjab, was granted the title of a Raja; on 20 August 1948 the state was merged into PEPSU.

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<sup>2</sup> W.L. CONRAN & H.D. CRAIK: *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Lahore 1910, p. 472.

<sup>3</sup> In: *The Rajahs of the Punjab*.

### The coinage of the Kalsia State

Sardar Jodh Singh had copper fulus or dams struck at Chhachhrauli, his residence and capital. Two of these coins were published by Valentine,<sup>4</sup> others have later been published in various publications,<sup>5</sup> but all of them are quite rare.

The copper coins of the Kalsia State, which are only known with dates between AH 1214 and 1218, clearly imitate the general design and marks of the much more common contemporary copper coins of Saharanpur, the Mughal provincial capital 40 kilometers southeast of Chhachhrauli.

As the copper coins of the Kalsia state show a distinctly Mughal design without any Sikh characteristics I have not tried to list them completely. The following coins are just samples illustrating the general type:

Copper fulus  
c. 15-18 g



Obverse::

عالم شاهي  
فلوس

'ALAM SHĀHĪ  
(AH year)  
FŪLUS

Reverse:

چھچھرولی  
ضرب  
RY  
سنہ

CHHACHRĀULĪ  
ZARB  
(Regnal year of  
Shah 'Alam II)  
SANAH

Rupees of the Kalsia State are said to exist but I have never seen an actual specimen.

<sup>4</sup> In: *The Copper Coins of India*, p.138, nrs. 96 & 97.

<sup>5</sup> E.g.: H.N. Wright: *Catalogue of the Indian Museum Calcutta*, III,299, nrs. 2490 & 2491;

R.B. Whitehead: *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, II,418, nr. 3202

*The Standard Catalog of World Coins*, Centennial Edition, 2 vols, Iola 1991: Vol. I,1436, nr. KM 610

## Appendix 5

### Sikh Medals and Tokens

#### MEDALS

The military and civil medals and decorations of the Sikh Empire of Ranjit Singh and his successors have yet attracted very little serious research. We know of two orders instituted by Ranjit Singh, the so-called *Order of Ranjit Singh* and the *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab* (*The Star of the Prosperity of the Punjab*, also called the *Auspicious Star of the Punjab*), but the existing descriptions do not really correspond with the actually surviving medals.<sup>1</sup>

According to Mohan Singh the military *Order of Ranjit Singh* was awarded after 1821 and prior to 1837 AD.<sup>2</sup> The decoration in the Patiala collection, which is suspended from a green silk ribbon with orange borders, clearly shows a strong European influence. From a central, silver gilt medal bearing the head of the Maharaja (wearing a turban and facing right) on the obverse and a Persian inscription<sup>3</sup> on the reverse emanate a twelve-pointed sun-burst and a clover-leaf with three leaves enamelled in red, white and blue, the colours of the French *Tricolore*.<sup>4</sup> The top leaf is flanked by two silver *bulls rampant*. Below the portrait medal stands an eagle with spread wings on a naked sword. A medal in the Lahore Museum proves that the silver gilt centre piece of the decoration was fashioned out of a round medal which was probably struck in France and brought to Lahore by General Allard.<sup>5</sup>

To commemorate the marriage of Prince Nau Nihal Singh, his grandfather, Ranjit Singh, instituted on 8 March 1837 an Order of Merit, the *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab* (*The Star of the Prosperity of the Punjab*), with Nau Nihal Singh as its Grand Master. According to its rules (framed by the Political Agent at Ludhiana, Capt. C.M. Wade and amended by Sir Henry Frane, the British Commander-in-Chief [1835-1840]) the order, which was largely modelled after Napoleon's French *Légion d' Honneur*, was to be awarded in three classes to military officers and civilians.

The insignia of the order has been described as follows:

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- 1 Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala (1900-1938) bought a collection of Sikh medals and decorations from Spink & Son, London. These medals are now in the collection of the Dept of Archaeology & Museums, Govt of Punjab, Patiala and on exhibition at the Medal Gallery at Patiala.
  - 2 MOHAN SINGH: *Medals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 126.
  - 3 The inscription reads: *Maharaja Ranjit Singh Bahadur Wali-i-Punjab*.
  - 4 The leaves of the Patiala specimen bear -- in a rather peculiar script -- the names of four of Ranjit Singh's campaigns: *Mankera* and *Multan* (1818, blue), *Kashmir* (1819, white), *Attock* (1813) and *Peshawar* (1818, 1819, 1823, 1834?, red). MOHAN SINGH assumed that the original owner of the decoration had personally taken part in all the campaigns mentioned on it and attributed the star therefore to Hari Singh Nalwa.
  - 5 These medals were mentioned by J.R. GUPTA in his article: "Dashara Festival in the Punjab during the Sikh Rule 1800-1849" in: *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, August 1970, p. 42: "In 1837 M. Allard made a nazar of some new coins made of gold and silver and struck in France, in honour of Dassahra. On the obverse side they bore the inscription: Maharaja Ranjit Singh Bahadur, the Wali of Lahore and on the reverse was the image of the Maharaja. They were of the size of Punjab ducats (mohurs)." With the exception of the last word of the inscription, which is *Punjab* instead of *Lahore*, this is an accurate description of the central medal of the *Order of Ranjit Singh*.

This portrait medal may also have inspired the decoration of some guns; in a letter written by Emily Eden on 16 March 1838 from the Governor-General's camp at Ludhiana we read: "The salute was fired by the howitzers that G. [Lord George Auckland, the Governor-General and Emily's brother] had made to present to Runjeet [Maharaja Ranjit Singh]. They are very handsome, ornamented more than our soldiers think becoming, but just what Runjeet would like; there is the bright Star of the Punjab, with Runjeet's profile on the gun; and Captain E. says that thousands of Sikhs have been to look at these guns, and all of them salaam to Runjeet's picture as if it were himself. (EMILY EDEN: *Up the country*, p. 189.)

*A star with ten rays and a medal in the centre, worn on a silk ribbon with gold and scarlet stripes. The star was basically the same for the three classes, but each class had its proper ornamentation: diamonds for the first, diamonds and emeralds for the second and emeralds only for the third class. The central medal bore a bust of Ranjit Singh on its obverse and the name and title of the ruler on the reverse.*<sup>6</sup>

The surviving stars clearly show that these regulations were not followed in practice:

The *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab* was presented to General Sir Henry Fane, on 27 March 1837 and to Lord Auckland in 1838 during his visit to Lahore.<sup>7</sup> The central medal of Lord Auckland's star, which is in the Patiala collection, does not show a bust of Ranjit Singh, but a miniature painting of the Maharaja holding a lily and a rosary. Although the decoration awarded to the Governor-General must have been of the highest class, it is not only studded with diamonds, but also with small emeralds, supposedly the mark of the second class. The star given to William G. Osborne, Lord Auckland's Military Secretary, was supposedly of a lower class, it also had a miniature painting of Ranjit Singh in the centre, but was only decorated with diamonds.

A *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab* which once belonged to Maharaja Dalip Singh and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London shows in the centre a miniature painting of a bust of Ranjit Singh holding a bow. The star of gold is set with emeralds and rock crystal (instead of diamonds).

It is not at all certain that the *Star of the Punjab* was always meant to be worn on a ribbon; Isabella Fane, who accompanied her father, Sir Henry Fane, the British commander-in-chief, to the marriage of Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh, wrote in a letter from the British camp near Lahore and dated 27 March (1837): "*To him [Sir Henry Fane] and [Colonel] M. Beresford he [Ranjit Singh] gave a thing to tie round their necks which he called an order or badge of honour, and one he desired to be given to Lord Auckland. So now I suppose they may call themselves Barons of the Punjab!*"<sup>8</sup> In speaking rather derisively of the Sikh award Miss Fane echoed the British officers; about a year later Emily Eden, the sister of Lord Auckland, wrote in a letter from the Governor General's camp near Lahore to her sister: "*He [Ranjit Singh] has got a cunning way of cutting off a great many [of our gentlemen] with the Bright Star of the Punjab, his new order. It is worth about fifty rupees.*"<sup>9</sup>

Two unique stars, that once belonged to General van Cortlandt, may or may not be varieties of the *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab*. One, encrusted with diamonds, emeralds and rubies and suspended from a ribbon of pearls, shows in the centre of the obverse a miniature painting of Dalip Singh. The reverse inscription explains that Maharaja Dalip Singh gave this „*high medal*“ to General van Cortlandt *Sahib* for his good services, loyalty and expertise in the battle of Heldli in VS 1901 (1844/45).<sup>10</sup> The other star shows Raja Lal Singh, who gave it to

6 *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (First Death Centenary Memorial, 1939), Language Department Punjab, p. 94-96.

7 Besides Lord Auckland and Sir Henry Fane quite a number of other Europeans were awarded the *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab*. Among them were Colonel (later General) Marc Beresford, Major Henry Fane (Sir Henry Fane's eldest son and his Military Secretary and A.D.C.), Captain C.M. Wade (the Political Agent at Ludhiana), Lord William Godolphin Osborne (Lord Auckland's nephew and Military Secretary) and Ranjit Singh's French general Allard. As the King of England did normally not grant the necessary permission, most of the British recipients of the *Star of the Punjab* were not allowed to wear it.

8 *Miss Fane in India*, p. 217-218. Isabella Fane's remark about the *Barons of the Punjab* is not just a joke; Ranjit Singh used to grant titles of nobility together with the *Star of the Punjab*. With the 1<sup>st</sup> class came the title of *Raja*, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> class: *Sardar* and with the 3<sup>rd</sup> class: *Bahadur*. When the Maharaja presented the decoration to W.G. Osborne he also made him a *Knighthood*, a title which was not acknowledged by the British government.

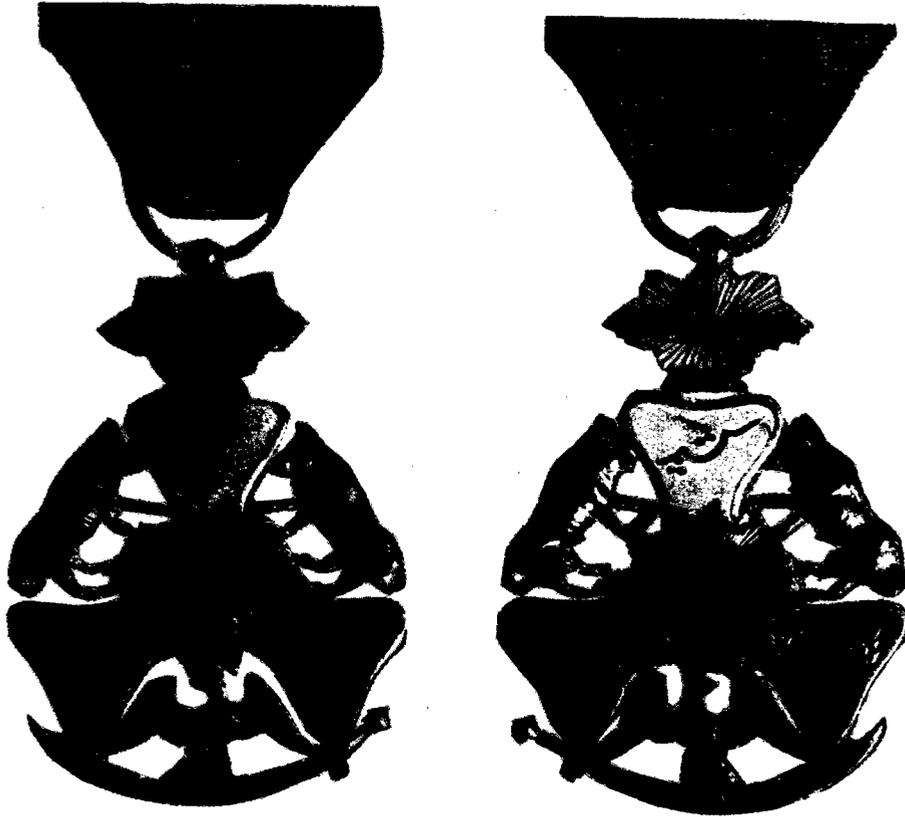
9 EMILY EDEN: *Up the country*, p. 234.

10 The portrait on this medal is sometimes erroneously said to show *Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh*.

General van Cortlandt was an Eurasian and one of the last foreign officers to leave the Sikh service. The general, who in 1848 commanded Sikh regulars at Dera Ismail Khan, joined the forces led by Lt. Edwar-

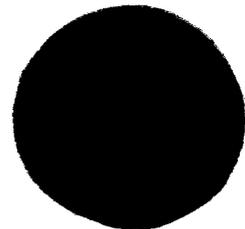
van Cortlandt in VS 1901 for unspecified „good services, loyalty and wisdom.“ <sup>11</sup>

When Dalip Singh married Ada Douglas Wetherill on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1889 in Paris he wore a *Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab*. An agent of the British government stationed in Paris wrote on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June to London about the plans of the exiled Maharajah: „Aided by a daughter of General Ventura\*, once military instructor of Ranjit Singh, he is getting up a revival of the order of chivalry created by said Ranjit: this decoration will be distributed in Russia and elsewhere.“ <sup>12</sup>



The military Order of Ranjit Singh attributed to Hari Singh Nalwa  
(Collection of the Deptt of Archaeology & Museums, Govt. of the Punjab)

The gold medal with the portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (actually at the Lahore Museum) is probably one of the medals brought by General Allard from France.



des against the rebellious governor Dewan Mulraj of Multan. I have not been able to find out what the battle or possibly skirmish of Heldli was.

11 Raja Lal Singh, the favourite of Rani Jindan, Maharaja Dalip Singh's mother, became the *Wazir* of Dalip Singh in November 1845 and was deposed in December 1846.

12 Ventura's daughter Victorine had been granted a *jagir* in the Punjab by Ranjit Singh.

## TOKENS

Like Hindus, Muslims and Christians the Sikhs produced religious tokens which are found in different metals, but most often in brass, billon and silver.

Although not genuine Sikh tokens in the strict sense of the term fairly rare hand-struck *Ramatankas* with Gurmukhi inscriptions may represent the oldest surviving tokens struck for Sikhs. These pieces of generally rather base silver with diameters from 22 to 24.5 mm, weights of 11.4 - 11.8 g and a fabric similar to Sikh rupees of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century are of the *Ramasabha* [Court of Rama] / *Rama-Laksmiana* type, the most common kind of Indian religious tokens. On the obverse they show a crowned *Rama* and *Sita* wrapped in a *sari* enthroned, often one or more attendants and *Hanuman* with folded hands; on the reverse appear --- with very few exceptions --- the inseparable brothers *Rama* and *Laksmiana* crowned, looking to the right and bearing bows and arrows.<sup>13</sup> The usual Gurmukhi inscriptions --- they may occur on the obverse or on the reverse or on both sides --- are: *RAMA SITA* (or *SATI*) and *RAMA NAMA*.

According to R. Niyogi "*these [Ramatankas] were no doubt produced in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries for the Sikh traders who had settled down in eastern India, specially at Patna and Calcutta.*"<sup>14</sup>

Innumerable varieties of the *Guru Nanak / Guru Gobind Singh* tokens, the most common kind of true Sikh tokens, seem to have been produced at Amritsar from about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> up to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tokens, which were originally neither issued nor recognised by the Gurudwaras, were sold to Sikh pilgrims outside the holy places by merchants, mendicants and Sadhus.<sup>15</sup> Recent varieties, which are not listed here, show rather fancy shapes and ever more elaborate and realistic designs with 3 and more attendants of Guru Nanak. A selection of these tokens are shown in Patwant Singh's book: „*Gurudwaras in India and around the World.*“

Modern Sikh tokens in good silver are almost exclusively produced in Dehli. They usually show a bust of Guru Nanak on the obverse and the Golden Temple on the reverse. Like modern Hindu tokens they are mainly sold by jewellers and silver dealers.

The following and incomplete review of genuine Sikh tokens is based on my own collection and on the works by I.F. Brotman, Roma Niyogi, Jai Prakash Singh and especially Surinder Singh.<sup>16</sup> It endeavours to present a fairly complete survey of the older types (but not varieties!) of Sikh tokens --- some are very common, others are rare or even unique --- but it includes just one example of the tokens actually sold by jewellers.

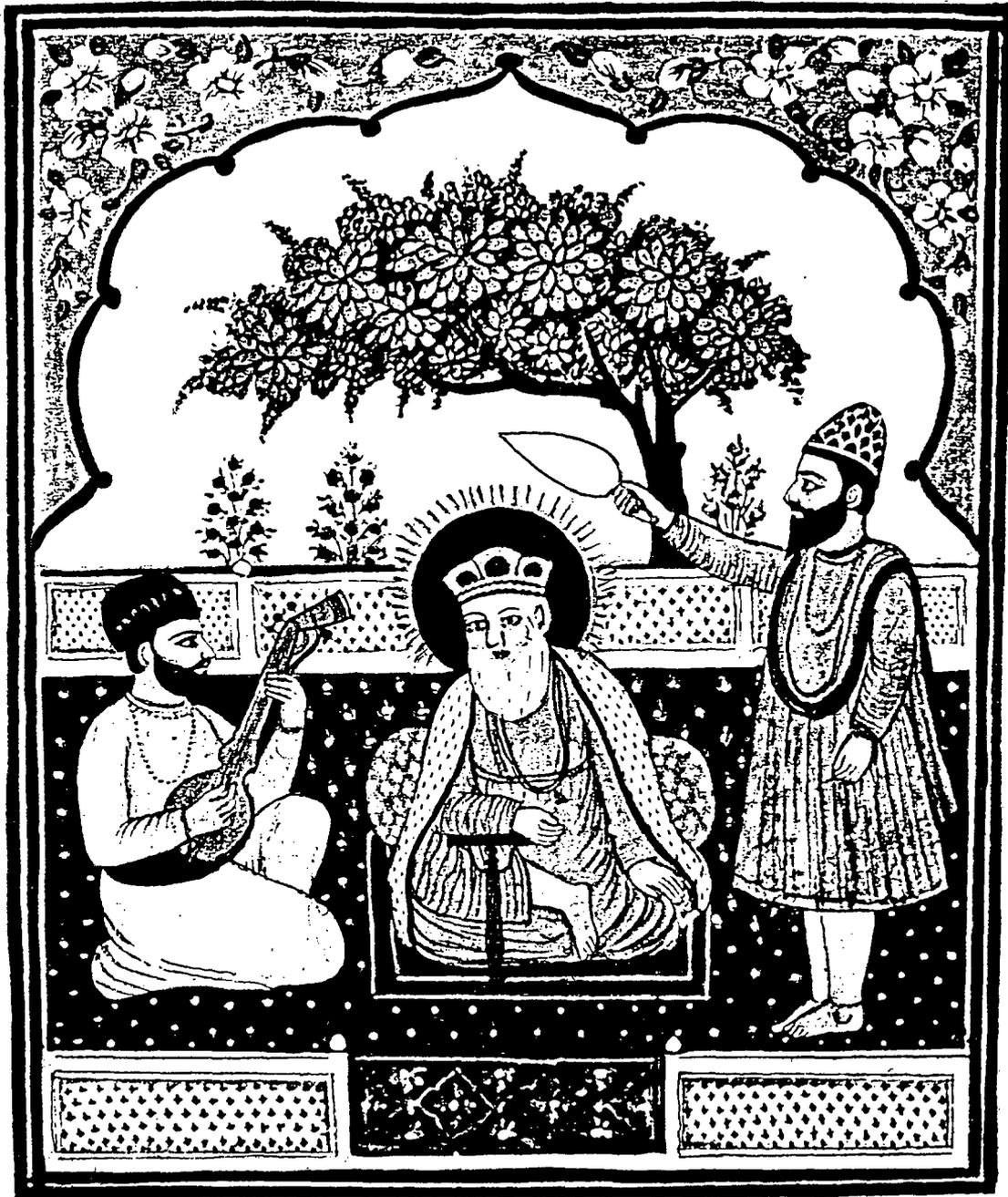
<sup>13</sup> Rama and Laksmiana look to the left on the reverse of *Ramatankas* with *Nagari* legends and to the right on the *Ramatankas* with a Gurmukhi inscription. This peculiarity of the Sikh *Ramatanka* design probably has an as yet undisclosed meaning. (A tentative explanation by R. NIYOGI [p. 83] seems to me too improbable to merit a serious discussion.) Although Sikh *Ramatankas* of the standard type are no longer too common quite a few have been published: e.g. R. NIYOGI (*Money of the People*): B 25- 28; I.F. BROTMAN (*Temple Tokens of India*): A 1, 8, 10, 11 or M. MITCHINER (*Non-Islamic States & Western Colonies*): # 4704, 4709.

Rare *Ramatankas* with a simplified *Ramasabha* obverse and Gurmukhi legends show on the reverse *Rama*, *Hanuman* and a Gurmukhi inscription (NIYOGI: Plate VIII, B 30 and MITCHINER: # 4710); even rarer types bear on the reverse coin legends of Gaurinatha Simha, who ruled in Assam 1780-1796 AD (NIYOGI: Plate X, B 47 + 48).

<sup>14</sup> R. NIYOGI: *Money of the People*, p.82.

<sup>15</sup> SURINDER SINGH: "Sikh Religious Tokens", p. 53-54. According to Surinder Singh the Sikh tokens were more or less exclusively struck at Amritsar but the fact that Sikh, Hindu and Muslim tokens share identical reverses (e.g. *Magical Squares*) may point to the possible existence of nondenominational workshops at unidentified places in the Punjab or in Delhi.

<sup>16</sup> IRWIN F. BROTMAN: *A Guide to the Temple Tokens of India*, p. 142-153; ROMA NIYOGI: *Money of the People*; JAI PRAKASH SINGH: "Observations on Sikh Tokens"; SURINDER SINGH: "Sikh Religious Tokens". Some unpublished tokens are from the collection of Gurprit Singh, Ludhiana.



Guru Nanak seated under a tree with Mardana playing a *rebab* and Bala Sindhu holding a *chowri*, a fly whisk.

The mural from Ram Tatwali (Hoshiarpur District) shows Guru Nanak in the same canonical way as most Sikh tokens: as a spiritual and secular king with a halo.

### A. Tokens showing Guru Nanak on the obverse and Guru Gobind Singh on the reverse

The overwhelming majority of the older Sikh tokens belongs to this class.<sup>17</sup> There are a few subtypes bearing various meaningful or fictitious Samvat years or without any date (and each subtype is made up of a large number --- often hundreds --- of minor varieties), but a common design is easily recognisable:

**Obverse:** *Guru Nanak* is seated on an *asana* (carpet) under a tree with two companions: *Mardana*, a Muslim musician playing a *rebab*, and *Bala Sindhu*, a Hindu, who holds a *chowri* (fly whisk). Many tokens show a *lota* and a pair of wooden sandals in front of Guru Nanak who often, but not always, has a halo around his head.

**Reverse:** *Guru Gobind Singh* wearing a princely dress and a sword sitting on an *asana* in front of a lattice parapet and resting his back against a *masnad*. Guru Gobind Singh, who is almost always shown nimbate, holds a wand or, according to Surinder Singh, an arrow. A bird, which seems to be perched on the parapet, usually looks like a peacock, but on some coins it might also be a hunting hawk. The inscription at the top: *(Om) Sat Kartar* [God is Truth] occurs either in *Gurumukhi* or *Nagari* script; at the bottom most tokens show a year, sometimes a possibly meaningful date but often clearly a phantasy .



**T 1**  
Usually Silver or Brass  
Diameter: 28 mm  
12.9g (silver)

Obverse: Guru Nanak without a *lota* and sandals

Reverse: without an inscription or date.

The same general type exists also with a *lota* and a pair of sandals added on the obverse and the inscription: *Sat Kartar* on the reverse.



**T 3**  
Diameter: 27-30 mm

Reverse: [VS] 1723 (=1666 AD). Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna in VS 1723.

<sup>17</sup> Of the 10 Sikh tokens listed by BROTMAN nine are *Guru Nanak* / *Guru Gobind Singh* types.



**T 6**  
Brass  
ø 27-30 mm

Reverse: [VS] 1804 (= 1747 AD). In 1747 AD Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded the Punjab for the first time and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia proclaimed the *Dal Khalsa*. These tokens --- by far the most common type --- may originally have commemorated the latter event, but they were struck for a very long time in a large number of varieties and possibly also in different places.



**T 8**  
Brass  
ø 27-30 mm

Reverse: 400. Should 400 stand for a year it would be meaningless; such dates are quite rare on Sikh tokens but rather common on Hindu types. A possible interpretation was proposed by R. Niyogi: "*Year 400 found on some Sikh tokens may have a reference to the 400<sup>th</sup> year of commemoration of Guru Nanaks advent which falls in 1869 AD.*"<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> R. NIYOGI: *The Money of the People*, p. 81.

## B. Tokens with Guru Nanak on the obverse and various reverses

Tokens of class B combine the obverse of class A with various reverse designs.



**T 10**  
Silver  
Diameter: 31.2 mm  
12.5g

Reverse: The first *vani* (verse) of the *Jap Ji Sahib*, the so-called *mool mantra*:

*I OM KAR, SAT NAM, KARTA PURAKH, NIR BHAU,  
NIR VER, AKAL MURAT, AJUNI SAI BHANG, GUR  
PARSAD, JAP, ADI SACH, JUGAD SACH, HAI BHI  
SACH, NANAK, HOSI BHI SACH.*

There is but one God. True is His name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is without fear, without enmity, unborn and self illumined. By the Guru's grace, He is obtained. Embrace His meditation. True in prime, true in the beginning of ages, true. He is true even now and true He verily shall be, O Nanak.<sup>19</sup> [VS] 1955.

The obverse of this medal occurred in a presentation case containing 20 uniface tin impressions from dies prepared between c. 1896-1910 by the *Heaton Mint*, Birmingham, for various oriental coins, patterns and medals. It seems that (VS) 1955 (=1898 AD) is the year in which the dies for this very rare and quite enigmatic medal were actually produced.<sup>20</sup>



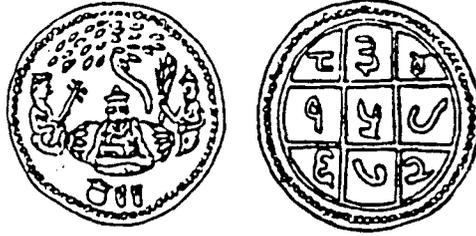
**T 12**  
Diameter: 27 mm

This is basically the same type as T 10, but the token, which was produced in India, shows a much rougher style.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This translation of the *mool mantra* by MANMOHAN SINGH was quoted by SURINDER SINGH in: *Sikh Religious Tokens*. BROTMAN, who did not mention his source, gave a slightly different and seemingly less correct translation.

<sup>20</sup> I owe the information concerning this medal, which was offered by *Buckland, Dix and Wood*, London, as lot 451 of their auction of 1 December 1993, to Saran Singh, Kuala Lumpur.

<sup>21</sup> From: SURINDER SINGH: *Religious Tokens*, # 6. Varieties with more elaborate obverses and reverses with floral borders are also known.



T 15

Diameter: 29 mm

Reverse: A blundered form of the basic magic square with a sum of 15 in which the numerals 2 and 6 have changed places. Magic squares, which according to a popular belief have the power to protect against a multitude of evil influences, are frequently found on Indian Muslim tokens. According to Surinder Singh this token with Devanagari numerals was issued by or for the *Udasis*, a sect founded by Sri Chand, a son of Guru Nanak.<sup>22</sup>

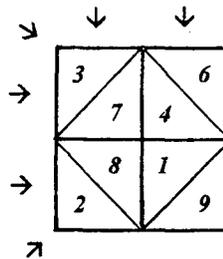
T 18<sup>23</sup>

Brass

Diameter: c. 30 mm

Obverse: As T 3.

Reverse: A tantric *Yantra* which can be read in all directions and always totals 20:



The same reverse also occurs on Hindu tokens.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Sikh Religious Tokens", p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> A token of this type is in the collection of the *Himachal Lok Sanskrit Sansthan*, Mandi.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. *Brotman S 2*, with a sitting Shiva on its obverse. (I.F. BROTMAN: *A Guide to the Temple Tokens of India*, p. 140/41).

T 20<sup>25</sup>  
Copper  
Diameter 22 mm

Obverse: *Guru Nanak* under a tree with *Bala Sindhu* and *Mardana*.

Reverse: In a floral border in Gurumukhi and 2 lines:

*GURU NANAK JI*

The reverse follows the example of the copper coins of the regal series of British India.

**C. Miscellaneous types**



T 30  
Goldplated brass  
Diameter: 27.6 mm  
6.35 g

Obverse: *Guru Gobind Singh*, sitting on a carpet and wearing princely attire and a sword, holds a bow in his right hand and a hawk on the left hand. Inscription: *GURU GOBIND SINGH* in Gurumukhi.

Reverse: The *mool mantra* in Gurumukhi and below it an additional inscription in Persian script claiming that *Raja Darya Mal Devi Dayal* of *Chowk Darbar* (Amritsar) had this token made in Austria (*ASTARIA*).

T 31  
Brass  
Diameter 27 mm  
6.35 g

Obverse: Nimbate and crowned *Guru Nanak* sitting to right on a carpet on a platform; with *Mardana* and *Bala Sindhu*. In the exergue in Gurumukhi: *GURU NANAKJI*.

Reverse: As T 30 (same die).

The rare tokens T 30 and T 31 are of exceptionally fine craftsmanship. They may have been distributed by a merchant of Amritsar as a form of publicity. Although the identical reverse of both tokens claims that they were struck in Austria this may not be true.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The only token of this type known to me is in the collection of Gurprit Singh, Ludhiana. I unfortunately only have a photocopy which is not clear and detailed enough for a drawing.

<sup>26</sup> A token of type T 30 is in the *Surinder Singh Collection* at Chandigarh; the specimen of T 31 of the G.S.Beed Collection, Calcutta, was published by Roma Niyogi (*The money of the people*, p. 68/69 and pl. XIV, B 80). Ms. Niyogi erroneously gave the name of the issuer as *Devidayal Jang Bahadur*. Several tokens of type T 31 have been offered in *ebay* auctions.

**T 40**

Ø 32 mm

Gold: 11.88 - 12.17 g

Silver: 11.11 - 11.33 g

Copper: 12.13 g

Obverse: *Guru Gobind Singh* on horseback with a hunting-hawk and a dog, *Bala Sindhu* follows the Guru with a fly-whisk.

Reverse: The *mool mantra*.

The size of type T 40 usually corresponds with the size of the full dies and it shows an ornamental border on the obverse and reverse, but pieces with a smaller diameter and therefore without the border are also known.<sup>27</sup> (A silver medal T 40 with the full border was published by Dr. Becker.) As T 41 shows the identical reverse, but a different obverse, T 40 and 41 may be parts of a suite of medals.

**T 41**

Ø 32 mm

Silver: 11.29 g

Obverse: A turbaned guru in Mughal dress, armed with a dagger, a sword and, on his back, a shield stands to the right. On his left hand sits a hunting hawk or falcon.<sup>28</sup> In the background: 2 trees and 2 bushes. The medal does not show an obverse legend.

Reverse: As T40. (Same die.)

The following rather enigmatic token may or may not be a Sikh piece:

(Published: I.F. BROTMAN: M1; R. NIYOGLI: B 81 + 82; M. MITCHINER: # 4738 + 4739.)

**T 45**

Silver or billon

Diameter: 23.5-24.5 mm

11.25 - 11.8 g

Obverse: A man wearing a turban rides to the left. He is accompanied by a running dog and followed by a turbaned man in a *dhoti* bearing a fly-whisk or a peacock feather. Gurumukhi letters around.

Reverse: A central eight-rayed sun, above: the bull *Nandi*, below: 2 peacocks feeding from a bowl, on the right: a turbaned man in a loin-cloth stands half-turned to the left. Gurumukhi letters around.

<sup>27</sup> The illustrated gold medal, which lacks the usual ornamental border, was auctioned by Spink & Son Ltd, London, on 7 March 1995; it fetched £ 4'600! The catalogue described the medal as Indian, but it was probably produced in Europe.

<sup>28</sup> B. BECKER: „Three Sikh Medals or Tokens“ in ONS 164, p.28.

These hand-struck tokens -- they possibly were produced in Bengal and are known from several very similar dies -- are not too rare but their iconography has never found a satisfactory explanation and their inscriptions have not been read and may even be meaningless. According to BROTMAN and NIYOGI the obverse shows *Guru Gobind Singh* on horseback and accompanied by his dog and an unidentified attendant bearing a fly-whisk. Whereas NIYOGY does not venture an explanation of the reverse BROTMAN mentions the fact that the peacock *Paravani* is the vehicle of the war-god *Karttikeya*, Shiva's son. MITCHINER sees on the obverse *Yudhishthira*<sup>29</sup> -- the oldest of the five Pandava brothers of Mahabharata fame -- on horseback and behind him the war-god *Skanda* (another name of *Karttikeya*) bearing a peacock feather. On the reverse we are supposed to see Skanda feeding his peacocks and above his father's bull *Nandi*.

As neither Skanda / Karttikeya nor the attendants of Guru Gobind Singh are commonly portrayed as poor peasants and as the sun on the reverse remains completely unexplained the two interpretations proffered here do not seem too convincing.<sup>30</sup>



T 50  
Brass  
Diameter: 24 mm  
4.1g

The token roughly imitates a Dutch ducat struck in 1707 AD at the Utrecht mint.

Obverse: A standing warrior holding a bundle of seven arrows symbolising the seven protestant provinces of the Netherlands. Genuine Dutch coins show a knight in armour, but the person on the token looks more like a 19th century horse-soldier in jack-boots. The latin inscription reads:

*CONCORDIA PAR(vae) RES CRES(cunt) TOA*  
Through concord small countries grow large<sup>31</sup>

The three letters *TOA* at the end of the inscription must be a blundered form of *TRA*, an abbreviation which on Dutch coins stands for *TRAIECTUM*, the latin name of the town of *Utrecht*.

Reverse: The *mool mantra* in Gurumukhi script and arranged like the legends on Dutch ducats.

The origin of this rare token --- only one piece is actually known --- is still a mystery. D.K. Handa thought that the token might be a medal issued by the Dutch when Guru Gobind Singh visited Agra early in 1707 AD<sup>32</sup>, whereas Surinder Singh is of the opinion that it was struck in Holland and that the obverse was struck from a genuine coin die.<sup>33</sup>

29 *Yudhishthira* quarrelled with Indra when the god would not admit the hero's dog into heaven.

30 *Karttikeya / Skanda* is sometimes depicted with one, but most often with 6 heads and 12 or 16 arms and various weapons.

31 Some German coins and Dutch medals show the complete sentence: *CONCORDIA PARVAE RES CRESCUNT, DISCORDIA MAXIMAE DILABUNTUR* (Through concord small countries grow large, through discord the largest go to rack and ruin).

32 D.K. HANDA: *Studies in Indian Coins and Seals*, Delhi 1989, p.170.

33 „Sikh Religious Tokens“, p. 58-59.

During his lifetime Guru Gobind Singh was neither famous nor important enough to incite European merchants to strike a medal in his honour and the very rough style and the blundered obverse legend show that this token was definitely not struck by Dutch authorities or in a Dutch mint.

Dutch ducats were popular trade coins and fairly well-known in India. The obverse of the token is copied from an actual coin struck at Utrecht in 1707 AD, but the token must, like all the Sikh tokens bearing the *mool mantra*, be much younger. It was most probably produced in India in the 19th century for an as yet unknown purpose.

T 60<sup>34</sup>

Copper (cast)

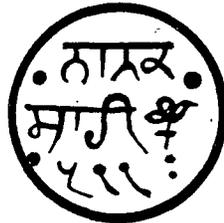
9.7 g

Obverse: A sprig and in Gurmukhi:

*NANAK SA(HA)I* and 1 (੧)

Reverse: A leaf and in Gurmukhi:

*AKAL SA(HA)I*

T 61<sup>34</sup>

Copper (cast)

Diameter: 31 mm

11.05 g

Obverse and reverse as T 60, but at the bottom of the obverse Gurmukhi 2 (੨).

The Gurmukhi numbers 1 and 2 may point to the fact that T 60 and 61 are possibly not purely religious tokens; they were perhaps – like many *tesserae* and tokens in the west – produced for some profane purpose where the bad quality of the casting did not really matter.

Gurprit Singh read at the bottom of the obverse of T 60: 1880, but a comparison with T 61 and the single points on T 60 and the double points on T 61 make it highly probable that  is just an ornament and that the tokens are not dated.

<sup>34</sup> A token of type T 60 is in the collection of Gurprit Singh, Ludhiana. T61 was published by Dr. B. Becker in *ONS* 164 (p.28).

The following token has been included as a sample of the modern tokens produced by silversmiths for all the major Indian religious communities:



**T 70**  
Silver  
Diameter: 32 mm  
9.5 g

Obverse: Bust of *Guru Nanak* with *GURU NANAK* in Devanagari above the head.  
Reverse: The Golden Temple at Amritsar and the *mool mantra* in Devanagari around.  
999 (at the end of the inscription) probably indicates the fineness of the silver.

According to Surinder Singh: "*The token is of pure silver and is currently available with the silversmiths in northern India. It is sold for eighty rupees with its metal content worth about sixty rupees. There are a couple of small private factories in Chandni Chowk in Delhi which make such tokens in bulk. It is a common practice to distribute sweets on marriages and important festivals. Affluent persons present such tokens along with the sweets as a token of well being with the Guru's grace. The recipients preserve them as a blessing.*"<sup>35</sup>



**T 80**  
Gold  
Diameter: 16.5 mm  
10.74 - 10.821 g

Obverse: The Gobindshahi couplet *Id* in Gurumukhi.  
Reverse: 3 x in Gurumukhi:

ਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ

WAHE GURUJI  
The Guru be praised!

The piece is of the same weight as some Sikh mohurs, but as it does not bear a mint name or a date it is probably better considered a token, not a coin. Surinder Singh wrote about this piece: "*I presume that this token was made in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh for presentation at the Golden Temple where he used to annually present cash on Baisakhi and Dussehra festivals.*"<sup>36</sup> Although this statement sounds plausible and may be correct there is actually no indication of the purpose the token was originally meant for.

<sup>35</sup> "Sikh Religious Tokens", p. 59-60.

<sup>36</sup> *ib. id.*, p.60.

## Appendix 6

## Alexander Burnes' description of the Salt Range and its mines

Alexander Burnes visited the Salt Mines near Pind Dadan Khan in 1832 while travelling from Delhi to Bokhara. He published the following description of the Salt Range in: *Travels into Bokhara being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia*, London 1834, Vol. I, 50-56:

Salt mines  
of Pind  
Dadun  
Khan.

Pind Dadun Khan lies within five miles of the salt range, which stretches from the Indus to the Hydaspes, and in which numerous mines are dug for the extraction of that mineral. We halted a day to examine these curious excavations, and which I shall now describe. We found about 100 persons at work in one of the mines, who were as much surprised to see us, as we were to behold the bright and beautiful crystals of red salt which formed the walls of the cave. We converted our visit into a day of rejoicing, by a liberal distribution of some of the money which was every where heaped upon us, nor could it be better bestowed, for the poor creatures presented to us a spectacle of misery. Mothers with their infants, children, and old men, were alike employed in bringing the salt to the surface, and their cadaverous looks and stifled breathing excited the utmost compassion. We gave them a rupee each, the value of which could be justly appreciated, since they could only earn it after extracting 2000 pounds of salt. 50

Position of  
the salt  
range.

In the high lands of Cabool, between the city of that name and Peshawur, a range of hills springing from the roots of the White Mountain (Sufeed Koh) crosses the Indus at Karabagh, and terminates on the right bank of the Jelum, or Hydaspes of the ancients. This range formerly figured in our maps under the name of Jood, after it had passed the river; but it has been more appropriately denominated the "Salt Range," from the extensive deposits of rock-salt which it contains. An account of that part of it near Karabagh, where the Indus, in its course southward, cuts this range, and lays open its mineral treasures, will be found in Mr. Elphinstone's work. In the neighbourhood of 51

Pind Dadun Khan, a town about 100 miles N. W. of Lahore, the salt mines which supply the northern provinces of India with that necessary of life are excavated in the same range. The following particulars pretend not to rank as a scientific account of these mines, my only object being to convey that information which a journey to so unfrequented a part of the Punjab has enabled me to collect.

52

Formation,  
&c.

The salt range forms the southern boundary of a table land, between the Indus and Hydaspes, which rises about 800 feet from the plains of the Punjab. The hills attain an actual height of 1200 feet from the valley of the Jelum, which gives them an elevation of about 2000 feet from the sea. They exceed five miles in breadth. The formation is sandstone, occurring in vertical strata, with pebbles or round stones imbedded in various parts of it. Vegetation is scanty; and the bold and bare precipices, some of which rise at once from the plain, present a frightful aspect of desolation. Hot springs are found in various places. Alum, antimony, and sulphur also occur; but a red clay, which is chiefly seen in the valleys, is a sure indication of a salt deposit, and is to be found at intervals throughout this range. The supply of the mineral is now drawn from Pind Dadun Khan, whence it can be conveyed with facility both up and down a navigable river.

Mines,  
strata, tem-  
perature.

At the village of Keora, five miles from Pind Dadun Khan, we examined one of the principal mines. It was situated near the outside of the range, in a valley, which was cut by a rivulet of salt water. It opened into the hill through the red clayey formation above mentioned, at a distance of about 200 feet from the base. We were conducted by a narrow gallery, sufficient to admit of one person passing another, for about 350 yards, of which fifty may be taken as actual descent. Here we entered a cavern of irregular dimensions, and about 100 feet high, excavated entirely in salt. The mineral is deposited in strata of the utmost regularity, occurring, like the external rock, in vertical layers. Some of

53

them, however, subtend an angle of from twenty to thirty degrees, and have the same appearance as bricks that have been placed upon one another. None of the layers exceed a foot and a half in thickness, and each is distinctly separated from its neighbour by a deposit of argillaceous earth about an eighth of an inch thick, which lies like mortar between the strata. Some of the salt occurs in hexagonal crystals, but oftener in masses; the whole of it is tinged with red, varying from the slightest shade to the deepest hue; when pounded, the salt is white. The temperature of the cavern exceeded that of the open air by twenty degrees, where the thermometer stood at sixty-four (in February). The natives state that these mines are much colder in the hot season; but this only shows that they undergo little or no alteration, while the heat outside alters with the season. There was no moist feeling, which one might have expected in a salt mine.

54

Manner of  
working the  
salt. Its  
quality.

There were upwards of 100 persons, men, women, and children, at work in the mine; and their little dim burning lamps on the sides of the cavern and its recesses shone with reflected lustre from the ruby crystals of the rock. The cavity has been excavated from the roof downwards. The salt is hard and brittle, so that it splinters when struck with the sledge-hammer and pickaxe. The rock is never blasted with gunpowder, from fear of the roof falling in; and accidents of this kind sometimes happen in the present simple mode of excavation. The mines are not worked for two months during the rains, for the same reason. The miners live in villages among the hills. They have a most unhealthy complexion, but do not appear to be subject to any particular disease. They receive a rupee for every twenty maunds of salt brought to the surface, a task which may be performed by a man, his wife and child, in two days. In those mines where the mineral is near the surface, it is hewn into blocks of four maunds, two of which load a camel, but it is usually broken in small pieces. This salt holds a high reputation throughout India, with native practitioners, from its medical virtues. It is not pure, having a con-

siderable mixture of some substance (probably magnesia), which renders it unfit for curing meat. The natives of the Punjab ascribe the prevalence of "noozlu" to its effects. 55

Supply of  
the mineral.

As the salt range contains a supply which is inexhaustible, the mines yield any quantity that may be desired. Two thousand five hundred maunds of Lahore (one of which is equal to 100 lbs. English) are extracted daily, which gives about 800,000 maunds annually. A few years since the salt was sold at the mine for a half, and even a quarter, of a rupee per maund; but its price has been now raised to two rupees per maund, exclusive of duties. It is closely monopolised by the Punjab government; and Runjeet Sing hopes to derive an annual revenue of sixteen lacs of rupees, with two and a half more for the duties. A lac and a half of rupees, however, is expended in working the mineral. The profits amount to about 1100 per cent., though the salt is sold for one third the price of that of Bengal, which averages five rupees per maund of 80 lbs.\* The Punjab salt is exported by the Jelum to Mooltan and Bhawulpoor, where it meets that of the Sambre lake. It finds its way to the banks of the Jumna and Cashmeer, but it is not exported westward of the Indus. Runjeet Sing has prohibited the manufacture of salt in all parts of his dominions; yet it is very questionable if he will permanently derive so large a revenue from it as he now receives. The farmer of the monopoly, a cruel and tyrannical man, is now mercilessly oppressing the people to extract it. The natives do not know the period at which these mines were first worked; but it must have been at an early date, since the mineral is laid open by the Indus. They were used by the emperors of Hindostan; but the enquiring Baber does not mention them in his commentaries. 56

\* Vide Mr. Ramsay's evidence before the Committee of the Lords

## Appendix 7

### European Travellers and Adventurers in Ranjit Singh's Empire

The accounts of Western observers: travellers, civil servants and officers in the service of the Maharajas of the Panjab, are major sources of historical information. The reports of Lieutenant William Barr, Emily Eden, Victor Jaquemont, Dr. Martin Honigberger, Baron Karl von Hügel, Charles Masson, William Moorcroft, Leopold von Orlich, Prince Soltykoff, G.T. Vigne and others are often quoted, but all too often their authors are only familiar to specialists. For the use of the general reader of this book I have therefore collected short biographies of the Europeans and Americans mentioned in the text.

#### ALLARD, Jean-François (1785-1839)



جنرل الارو

J.-F. Allard, a native of the small Mediterranean port of St. Tropez, served as a cavalry officer in Napoleon's Imperial Guard. Together with the future General Ventura he left France in 1815 for Egypt and Persia where 'Abbas Mirza, the crown-prince of Fath 'Ali Shah, made Allard a colonel, but failed to give him any troops to train. The two officers soon left the Persian service and travelled by way of Kabul to Lahore where they joined Ranjit Singh's army in 1822.

The French colonel was at first only given the command of a company of a hundred men, but he later became Ranjit Singh's highest ranking general in charge of the regular cavalry and drilling about 30'000 Sikh soldiers in European tactics and military discipline.

Allard, who lived in splendour in a palace surrounded by famous gardens, married an Armenian Christian who gave him two sons. When he visited France in 1835 on an extended leave, he was received by King Louis-Philippe in Paris. Already an officer of the *Légion d'honneur* since 1832 Allard was now promoted to commander and appointed French Ambassador to the Maharaja of the Panjab. During the general's stay

in Europe a French writer, Cuvillier-Fleury, published several articles in *Débats* which he later made into a book with the title: *Notes sur le général Allard et le royaume de Lahore* (1836). Allard, who returned to Lahore in 1837 and died after a short campaign against the Afghans on 23 January 1839 at Peshawar, was buried at Lahore.

## AVITABILE, Paolo di Bartolomeo (1791-1850)



جنرل اوتويل

Born in Agerola near Naples Paolo Avitabile served as an artillery sergeant-major in the armies of Napoleon I and the King of Naples, as a colonel and administrator of Kurdish districts with the Shah of Persia, and as a general with Ranjit Singh. Avitabile, who arrived in Lahore in 1826, successively held the governorships of Wasirabad and of Peshawar where he was paid Rs 41'000 a year. He fluently spoke Italian, French, Persian and Hindustani and was an extremely effective administrator, but undoubtedly also the most ruthless of Ranjit Singh's European officers. He was notorious for hanging even petty criminals, a behaviour which Dr. Honigberger, who lived for three years in Avitabile's house, attributed to a brain disorder caused by the Italian's excessive drinking of Champagne.

After Ranjit Singh's death Avitabile managed to retire and to transfer the large fortune, which he had amassed during his stay in the Punjab, to his native Agerola.

There he married a young wife and spent the rest of his life as a rich man.

Literature: COTTON, J.J.: "Life of General Avitabile", *Calcutta Review* CCXLVI (October 1906), pp. 515-585.

## HARLAN, Josiah (1799-1871)

Born near Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Harlan studied medicine and journeyed to the Far East in 1824. There he entered the service of the East India Company and served as medical officer of the Bengal Artillery during the first Burmese War. In 1826 he travelled to North India and in 1828 we find him at Kabul working as a secret agent of Shah Shuja al-Mulk, the former king of Afghanistan, and trying to foment trouble for Dost Muhammad. When he failed in this task he returned to India and entered the service of Ranjit Singh, who appointed him governor of Gujrat. After seven years in the Punjab Harlan's position at the court of Lahore became difficult and he went over to Dost Muhammad, Ranjit Singh's enemy, whom he urged to attack the Sikhs. Harlan trained the troops of the Amir of Kabul in western military tactics and in 1838/39 he commanded a division of the army sent against Mir Murad Beg, the Amir of Qunduz.

During much of his career in India and Afghanistan and his service with the British, the Sikhs, Shuja al-Mulk and Dost Muhammad Josiah Harlan was involved in secret work and complicated intrigues, often acting as a double agent and betraying his principals. When Shah Shuja was restored to the throne of Kabul the scheming American adventurer, who finally had run out of potential employers, returned to Philadelphia in 1841.

At the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 Harlan raised his own regiment, *Harlan's Light Cavalry*, and served for some time with the army of the Potomac. After the war he moved to San Francisco where he practised medicine and died in 1871.

Josiah Harlan published *A Memoir of India and Avghanistaun* (Philadelphia, 1842) and prepared a *Personal Narrative of General Harlan's Eighteen Years' Residence in Asia* which remained unpublished.

### HONIGBERGER, Dr. Johann Martin (1794-1869)



Honigberger, who was born at Kronstadt, the actual Brasov in Romania, worked as a surgeon and physician in Constantinople, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and he travelled in Persia, Bokhara and Russia. By way of Persia he reached Lahore in 1830. There he served as one of the ordinary physicians of Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh, but also as director of the jail hospital and the black powder and musket factory established by Ranjit Singh. Living in Lahore during the years 1830-1834 and 1839-1849 Honigberger was one of the very few Europeans to witness the chaotic end of the Sikh Empire on the spot, a drama in which he knew most of the principal actors personally.

*Früchte aus dem Morgenlande* (Vienna 1851), the book which Honigberger wrote after his return to Europe, is partly a travel report and partly a very detailed study of Oriental and especially of Panjabi medical practices.

During his long stay in the Orient Honigberger did not restrict himself to the practice of medicine. Following the example of General Ventura he opened two stupas near Kabul and Jalalabad and he also dealt in antiquities and coins which he sold to collectors in Egypt, St. Petersburg, London, Paris and Vienna.

### Von HÜGEL, Baron Karl Alexander Anselm (1796-1870)



Von Hügel was born at Regensburg in Bavaria. After studying at Heidelberg he joined the Austrian army, fought against Napoleon and in the Neapolitan campaign of 1820/21 and resigned in 1824 with the rank of a major. Between 1830 and 1836 von Hügel travelled in India, Australia, the Philippines and again in India where he visited the Punjab and Kashmir.

Back in Vienna he erected a villa in the Roman style, the gardens of which the contemporaries considered one of the sights of Europe, and he became a member of the Academy of Science. Von Hügel, who in Vienna is commemorated by the Hügelpark,

was appointed Austrian Ambassador to Tuscany in 1849 and to Brussels in 1859. He retired in 1867, spent the last years of his life in England and died 1870 in Brussels.

Von Hügel wrote: *Kaschmir und das Reich der Siek* (1840-1848) and: *Der Stille Ozean und die spanischen Colonien im Indischen Archipel* (1860).

### VENTURA, Giovanni Battista (1785-1858)

A native of Modena in northern Italy Ventura served as a captain in the Napoleonic armies and especially with Joachim Murat, the Marshal of France and later King of Naples and Sicily. After the Fall of Napoleon he is said to have served in the Turkish and Egyptian armies from 1816 to 1820. In Teheran he met Allard, another former Napoleonic officer, with whom he travelled to Lahore where they arrived on 11 March 1822. Ranjit Singh put Ventura, whom he soon made a general, in charge of the regular infantry of his army. He served with distinction in campaigns against the Afghans (1823), Kangra (1828), Sayid Ahmad Khan at Peshawar (1832) and Mandi<sup>1</sup>, was often sent to recover the tributes with which the feudatory princes were constantly in arrears and in 1832 was appointed governor of the Derajat by Ranjit Singh.

When encamped near Rawalpindi General Ventura ordered his troops to dig into a stupa at Manikyala. They found Buddhist relics and ancient gold and copper coins which mainly went to the fast growing collection of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. (General Ventura was not the only coin collector among the European officers serving with the Sikhs. General Allard and Colonel Court, the commander of Ranjit Singh's *Légion Française*, his artillery and his Gurkha Corps, had private collections which later found their way to Paris.)

Ventura, who had been in Europe during 1837-1839, returned just before Ranjit Singh's death. He asked for retirement in 1843, sold his *jagir* for Rs 80'000 and left Lahore after the assassination of Maharaja Sher Singh, whom he had supported, in November 1844. He came back briefly, but as he was not offered a suitable employment, he returned to France where he died on 3 April 1858.

### VIGNE, Godfrey Thomas (1801-1863)

Originally a lawyer, Vigne, the scion of a wealthy Essex family, travelled in 1831 in the United States and in 1832 he left for India. There he spent the next seven years mainly in the Panjab, Kashmir, Ladakh and Afghanistan where he met several times with Dost Muhammad. He gave an account of his travels in South Asia in: *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul, and Afghanistan* (London 1840) and in: *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo, ...* (London 1842).

In 1853 and the following years Vigne visited the West Indies, Mexico, Nicaragua and the United States. His account of these travels appeared posthumously in 1863.

### WOLFF, Dr. Joseph (1795-1862)

Wolff, the son of a Jewish rabbi, was born near Bamberg in Bavaria. He became a Christian in 1812 in Prague, studied Oriental Languages and Theology in Vienna, Tübingen, Rome and Cambridge and found his aim in life in the missionary work among the oriental Jews and in the search for the lost Ten Tribes of the Jewish people. Between 1821 and 1837 Wolff travelled

<sup>1</sup> Among Europeans and in France Ventura was known as *Count of Mandi*.

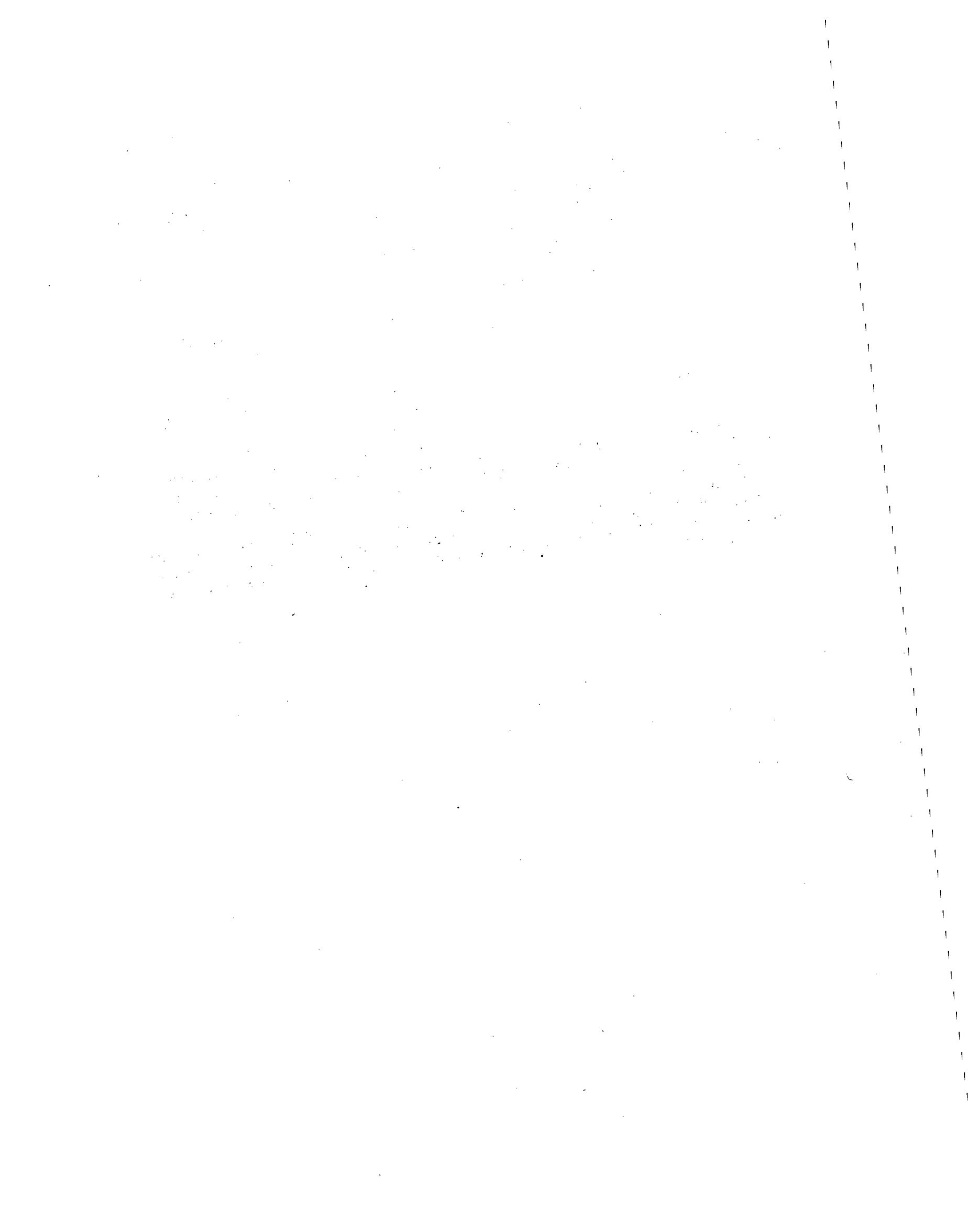


in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, the Near East, Abyssinia, the Yemen, Iraq, Persia, Bokhara, Afghanistan and India. He was robbed and dragged across the desert tied to a horse's tail, shipwrecked and captured by slavers and he almost died of dysentery, typhus and cholera, but the self-styled *Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ for Palestine, Persia, Bokhara, and Balkh* imperturbably went on preaching to the scattered communities of the Eastern Jews and confuting numerous Muslim scholars in endless theological disputes.

In 1843 Wolff, who had become rector of Linthwaite in Yorkshire, once again

undertook the dangerous journey to Bokhara in order to ascertain the fate of two British officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, who had been taken prisoners and were executed by order of the Amir.

Wolff published several accounts of his travels and an autobiography. The description of his journey to Bokhara, Afghanistan, the Panjab, Kashmir and through British India can be found in: *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans and other Sects* (London 1835).



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The literature treating of the coinage of the Sikhs ranges from serious and scholarly works to factually incorrect and misleading compilations and pure, sometimes hilarious fiction. As even generally use-less treatises may be of some interest to future researchers the numismatic section of the bibliography includes all the books, papers and articles known to me. (Although I tried to mention all the significant numismatic works I did not go out of my way to search for the more ludicrous productions. Papers, which have appeared in two or more publications, are usually only listed once.)

From among the enormous number of works discussing some aspects of Sikhism and the history of the relations of the Sikhs with their friends and foes I have selected the ones which I found most useful. Numismatic and historical works which I consider especially important or of special interest to students of the coins of the Sikhs are marked with an asterisk\*.

**Singh** and **Kaur** are titles and not personal names. Some Sikh publish under a personal name with *Singh* or *Kaur* added, others abbreviate or completely drop *Singh*, but add a family or clan name. Sikh autors may therefore appear in the alphabetical list under their personal name, their family name or, where neither the personal nor a family name was known, under *Singh*.

## Abbreviations

<i>JASB</i>	<i>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal</i>
<i>JHSP</i>	<i>Journal of the Historical Society of Punjab</i>
<i>JNSI</i>	<i>Journal of the Numismatic Society of India</i>
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<i>NIB</i>	<i>Numismatic International Bulletin</i> (Dallas, Texas)
<i>ONS</i>	<i>Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter</i>

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TAHMAS KHAN MISKIN

"*Tarikh-i-'Alamgir sani.*"  
"*Tarikh-i-Kalan.*"

The *Tarikh-i-Kalan* is an important source of information on the economy of Kashmir under the Sikhs. Manuscript copies are in the Punjab State Archives and in the National Archives of India.

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### Websites

The following addresses correspond to websites of the SACG (South Asia Coin Group) and were active in July 2003.

[http://www215.pair.com/sacoins/public\\_html/sikhs/sikhs\\_1.html](http://www215.pair.com/sacoins/public_html/sikhs/sikhs_1.html).

The site, which contains scans of rupees from various Sikh mints, runs from: [sikhs\\_1](#) to [sikhs\\_28](#).

[http://www215pair.com/sacoins/public\\_html/sikhs/sikhs-main.htm](http://www215pair.com/sacoins/public_html/sikhs/sikhs-main.htm).

In July 2003 the site was still partly unfinished; it mainly contains the same scans as the first site.

[http://www215.pair.com/sacoins/public\\_html/sikhs/sikhspage.htm](http://www215.pair.com/sacoins/public_html/sikhs/sikhspage.htm)

Early Sikh history

There are several websites with and without illustrations giving general outlines of the Sikh coinage. Unfortunately not one of them (not even the one by Jioty Roy = Jioty Rai) is accurate and detailed enough to be of any use to a serious student of Sik coins.