

ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETYINFORMATION SHEET NO.23THE GOLD AND SILVER COINAGE OF THE SIKHSPART I. AMRITSAR MINTS. GORON and K.WIGGINSINTRODUCTION

The only article of importance dealing with the coins issued by the Sikhs of the Punjab was written by Rodgers (1) about 100 years ago. Little of significance has been published since and no serious attention has been paid to these coins. As Rodgers remarked, in the note at the conclusion of his paper ".....the subject is not yet exhausted, long and prosy though this paper has been." Although Rodgers' article is very informative and must form the basis of any further investigation into the Sikh coinage, since it was written new material has come to light and a revived interest taken in Indian coins of the post-Mughal period. Thus the opportunity has been taken to examine the new coins that have come to notice since Rodgers' time and to discuss the whole of the varied coinage of the Sikhs.

Unfortunately, Rodgers attempted to deal with the whole range of the Sikh coinage in one fairly brief paper and in consequence did not treat the subject in any great detail or in any logical sequence or order. Several important points appear to have escaped his notice and in spite of his long residence in the Punjab and his diligent search for coins, some types are not remarked upon in his paper. However, in spite of the shortcomings of his paper, students and collectors of Indian coins have cause to be grateful to Charles Rodgers for his initial study of the Sikh coinage and for laying down the path for further investigation.

In this and subsequent papers it is proposed to deal with the gold and silver coinage of the Sikhs under the heading of each mint at which they are known to have been struck. Their copper coins have been adequately dealt with by Valentine (2) as well as by Rodgers and so have been omitted from this treatise.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is not possible in the context of this paper to give a detailed account of the rise of the Sikh power in north-west India. There are, of course, a number of excellent works dealing with the history of the Sikhs and much has been written upon specific episodes and notable personalities connected with their history. The following paragraph gives a broad outline of Sikh history and this is complemented by a listing of key dates and events.

The story of the Sikhs begins with the initiation by a religious leader in the late 15th century of a movement which emphasised conceptions common to the Hindu and Muslim religions and the preaching of the unity of these two faiths. The first of these religious leaders was the Guru Nanak, whose teachings spread slowly throughout the Punjab. He was followed by other Gurus who, inspired by Nanak, compiled an anthology of sacred writings known as the Adi Granth or the sacred book of the Sikhs. What started as a purely religious movement gradually assumed a political tone, probably as the result of persecution by the



Mughals, and culminated in a revolt in the Punjab inspired by the last Guru, Gobind Singh, and largely executed by his successor Banda. Although this rebellion was suppressed, the Sikhs were not crushed and sporadic risings against the Mughals continued. In the middle of the 18th century began a series of Afghan invasions of India and into the Punjab. These were resisted by the Sikhs, who, in spite of them and intermittent Mughal oppression, became further unified and organised. With the final withdrawal of the Afghans from virtually all of the Punjab at the end of the 18th century and the serious decline of the Mughal government, the Sikhs were able to consolidate their territory and, after the capture of Lahore, to establish an independent state under the leadership of Ranjit Singh. There then began a period of expansion and unification of the Sikh state, which by 1834 attained its greatest extent. Ranjit Singh, the great leader of the Sikhs, died in 1839. Unfortunately, none of his successors were of his stature and the next six years were a period of anarchy and intrigue in the Punjab, during which the government fell into the hands of unscrupulous adventurers. Their warlike ambitions forced a clash with the British in 1845-46 and again in 1848-49, after which the Punjab was annexed and became part of British India.

#### KEY DATES AND EVENTS

A.D.

- 1469-1539 The first Guru, Nanak. Founder of the Sikh religion. Came to prominence as a religious teacher about 1500.
- 1504-1552 The second Guru, Angad
- 1479-1574 The third Guru, Amar Das.
- 1534-1581 The fourth Guru, Ram Das
- 1577 Foundation of Amritsar
- 1563-1606 The fifth Guru, Arjun. Built the Harimandir temple in Amritsar and established the town as a centre of Sikh worship.
- 1595-1644 The sixth Guru, Hargobind. Built the Lohgarh fort in Amritsar and established a Sikh armed force.
- 1627 Sikhs harassed by the Mughals.
- 1630-1661 The seventh Guru, Har Rai
- 1656-1664 The eight Guru, Hari Krishen
- 1621-1675 The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur. Executed by order of Aurangzeb.
- 1666-1708 The tenth and last Guru, Gobind Singh. Did much to establish the Sikhs as a religious warrior sect. Instituted the Sikh baptism and created the Sikh brotherhood called the Khalsa. Fought against the Mughals who saw a threat in the rise of Sikhism.
- 1660-1716 Banda Singh Bahadur assumed military leadership of the Sikhs on the death of Gobind Singh. Raised rebellion against the Mughals in the Punjab.
- 1709 Takes and sacks Samara. Ravages parts of the Punjab.
- 1710 Banda takes Sarhind. Liberates the Jullunder Doab.
- 1711 Mughal rule re-established in the Punjab.
- 1715 Banda captured after several years of guerilla war against the Mughals. Executed in Delhi.
- 1716-1738 Intermittent Mughal campaigns against the Sikhs in order to crush them. Some unification of the Sikhs under Kapur Singh, who organised them into twelve misls, each with its own leader. They consolidate their hold around Amritsar when the Mughal governor of the Punjab offers a jagir on payment of tribute as reconciliation.



- 1738 Nadir Shah invades India and pillages Delhi. His army harassed by the Sikhs.
- 1739-1747 The Mughal governor of the Punjab persecutes the Sikhs who adopt guerilla type warfare and form a united army under the Dal Khalsa with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in command. Fort of Ram Rauni built near Amritsar.
- 1747 Ahmad Shah Durrani invades India and occupy much of the Punjab. Expansion of Sikh territory between the Chenab and Sutlej rivers.
- 1748-1749 Second Afghan invasion of India. Sikhs occupy Lahore for a brief period. Afghan cede all territory west of the Indus.
- 1749-1750 Mughal governor of the Punjab wages war on the Sikhs.
- 1751 Third Afghan invasion of India. Lahore and Multan ceded to Ahmad Shah Durrani. Sikhs occupy much of the Punjab territory.
- 1753 Mughal governor again attempts repression of the Sikhs. Takes the fort of Ram Rauni at Amritsar and massacres many Sikhs.
- 1754 Punjab in a state of anarchy. Mughals no longer in effective control. Afghans neglect to establish any real form of government.
- 1754-1755 Sikh bands intrude into Mughal territory.
- 1756-1757 Fourth Afghan invasion of India. Ahmad Shah advances to Delhi, Mathura and Brindaban. Afghans attacked by Sikhs. Ahmad Shah retaliates by taking Amritsar. The Punjab assigned to Taimur. Strong measures by the Afghans to suppress the Sikhs. Battle at Amritsar. Sikhs defeat the Afghans at Hoshiapur.
- 1758 The Marathas enter the Punjab. Sarhind taken. Afghans vacate Lahore, Sikhs besieged in Ram Rani at Amritsar by Adina Beg Khan.
- 1759 Marathas again enter the Punjab. Afghans defeated by combined forces of Sikhs and Marathas. Ahmad Shah invades India for the fifth time.
- 1761 The Afghans advance to Delhi after defeating the Marathas at Panipat. Sikhs harry the Afghan army and occupy Lahore.
- 1762 Ahmad Shah reoccupies Lahore. Massacre of many Sikhs. Takes Amritsar and destroys the Sikh temples.
- 1763 Sikhs resurgent. Take Kasur and the Jullunder Doab.
- 1764 Sikhs capture Sarhind and invest Lahore. Seventh Afghan invasion of India. Ahmad Shah takes Amritsar and again destroys the temples.
- 1765 Sarbat Khalsa meet at Amritsar for Baisakh (10th April). Six of the twelve misls appointed to look after Sikh affairs at Amritsar. Sikhs capture Lahore and invade Rohilkand and the country around Delhi.
- 1766 Eighth Afghan invasion of India. Lahore retaken and Amritsar captured.
- 1767 On the departure of Ahmad Shah the Sikhs reoccupy large tracts of the Punjab and raid into the country about Delhi.
- 1769 Ninth Afghan invasion of India which reaches the Jhelum river and then returns to Qandahar.
- 1770) Sikh misls expand their territory and consolidate their position in the Punjab.
- 1798) Sikh invasions across the Sutlej into the lands around Delhi.
- 1772 Bhangi misl capture Multan from the Afghans.
- 1780 Afghans reoccupy Multan.
- 1792 Ranjit Singh Sukerchakia takes over the leadership of the Sukerchakia misl.
- 1796 Zaman Shah Durrani invades the Punjab.
- 1797 Ranjit Singh takes command of a united Sikh army. Afghans advance to within 5 miles of Amritsar. Lahore taken by Sikh sardars.
- 1799 Ranjit Singh takes possession of Lahore.
- 1801 Ranjit Singh proclaimed Maharajah of the Punjab.



- 1801) Sikh campaigns against the Pathans of Kaur and the Rajputs  
) of Kangra.  
1802) Sikhs occupy Multan. Amritsar possessed by Ranjit Singh.  
1806 Ranjit Singh signs a treaty of friendship and amity with East India Company.  
1809 Ranjit Singh and the East India Company conclude the Treaty of Lahore. Cis-Sutlej states are taken under the protection of the British. Ranjit Singh received the homage of the chiefs of the hill states and reduces autonomous principalities with the Punjab.  
1818 Sikhs capture Multan Fort. End of Afghan influence in the Punjab.  
1819 Sikhs take Peshawar and conquer Kashmir.  
1819) Sikhs take Dera Ghazi Khan.  
1820) Sikhs take Dera Ismail Khan.  
1821 Battle of Naushere. Sikhs enter Peshawar but do not retain it.  
1825 Sikh advance towards Shalipur.  
1831 Ranjit Singh meets Governor General, Lord William Bentinck. at Ropar.  
1834 Sikhs annexe Peshawar.  
1836 Ranjit Singh restrained by the British from advancing into Sind.  
1837 Battle of Jamrud. Sikhs defeat the Afghans in the Khyber Pass.  
1839 Ranjit Singh dies on 27th June.  
Eldest son, Kharak Singh, proclaimed Maharajah.  
1840 Kharak Singh dies from poison on the 5th November. Sher Singh, second son of Ranjit Singh, proclaimed Maharajah.  
1843 Sher Singh dies on 15th September. Dulip Singh proclaimed successor.  
1845 Sikh army crosses the Sutlej and invades British protected territory. Governor General declares war on the Sikhs.  
1846 Sikhs finally defeated at Sohraon. British occupy Lahore. Sikh government continued under a British resident. Kashmir made over to Gulab Singh of Jammu.  
1848 Dewan Mulraj, Governor of Multan, rebels. Multan besieged by the British. War breaks out between the British and the Sikhs.  
1849 Final battle of the war at Gujrat on 21st February. Sikhs defeated and British occupy the Punjab. Annexation of the Punjab announced by Lord Dalhousie.

#### AMRITSAR MINT

Amritsar, one of the principal cities of the Punjab and the spiritual centre of the Sikh religion, is not of any great antiquity. It is said to have been founded during the time of the Guru Arjun (A.D. 1563-1606), the son of the fourth Guru, Ram Das (A.D. 1534-1581), who obtained from Akbar, the Mughal emperor, the grant of the site together with 500 bighas of land for a payment of 700 rupees to the owner, the Zamindar of Tung. Tradition has it that this site had previously been frequented by the first Guru, Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539), thus endowing it with a special religious significance.



Arjun developed the site by having a tank dug there. Around the tank a town was gradually established which was at first known as Ramdaspur or Guru-ka-chak. At a later date the name was changed to Amritsar (Pool of Nectar). It was during this period that the Harimandir temple was built and the town became the focal point of the Sikh faith and their spiritual centre. It became customary for Sikhs to pilgrimage to Amritsar twice a year and meet there at Baisakh (April) and at Divalli (November).

The city was sacked on a number of occasions by the Afghans, who went to great lengths to destroy the Sikh temples and defile the sacred pool. As they made no attempt to permanently occupy Amritsar, the Sikhs were able to return and restore the damage. By A.D. 1767 the Sikhs were in a position to occupy Amritsar permanently, without fear of Mughal or Afghan interference and the city came under the control of the Bhangi misl. It subsequently became an important commercial centre to which goods were brought from all parts of India and Central Asia. Prior to the take-over of the city in A.D. 1802 by Ranjit Singh, Amritsar was divided between about ten different families, each owning different parts of the city with their own small forts and band of tax collectors, who levied dues on traders, shop-keepers and travellers as often as they were able.

There must have been some form of central administration that arranged for the striking and issuing of coins, but there appears to be no literary evidence to support this and presumably the mint was under the control of one of the semi-independent Sardars who would strike coins from bullion brought in by private persons. The mint, or possibly more than one, was active throughout the remainder of the period that the Punjab was under Sikh rule and there is no reason to doubt that coins were struck every year, although the writers have not yet encountered any that are dated to the Samvat years 1840, 1847 or 1871.

#### EARLY SIKH COINAGE

Until fairly recently the question of when and where the Sikhs issued their first coins was undecided. It now seems reasonably certain however that the first authentic Sikh coins were struck by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (A.D. 1660-1716). This man, whose proper name was Lachman Das, was chosen as leader of the Sikhs by the tenth and last Guru, Gobind Singh. On his appointment in 1708 he raised rebellion in the Punjab and at the head of a Sikh army waged war against the Mughals. Such was his success that he was able to capture and sack Sarhind in 1710. Thereafter he carried on a guerilla war in the northern Punjab until defeated and captured in 1715. Banda was taken to Delhi where he was executed in 1716. His initial successes against the Mughals and his occupation of some Punjab territory evidently gave him sufficient confidence to assume a royal title and strike coins in Gobind's name.

These coins appear to have been heard of by Irvine (3) but Rodgers does not mention them in his paper. A specimen was first recognised and published by Panish (4)



Weight: 11.91 grams.

Diameter: 23.3 mm



Another rupee of this type has recently been discovered in India and we are indebted to John Deyell for the particulars and photograph of it.



Rupee

Weight: 11.96 grams. Diameter: 28 mm

Ob. / سجا صا حب است / فضا در گو بنر شاه شاهان / فتح / تیغ ناکه و احب است / سکر / زدر بر دو عالم

Rev. / التخت مبارک تحت خالصه زینت / سنه ۲ با من الریلا / صرب / مسورت شهر

Transliteration and translation

Ob.

Sikka zad bar do alam, Tegh-i-Nanak wahab ast, Fath Gobind Shah-i-Shahan, Faizal Sachha sahib ast, = Coin struck in both worlds, the sword of Nanak is the giver, by the grace of the true Lord the victory is Gobind's, King of Kings.

Rev.

Zarb sanah 2, maswarat shahr, bi-aman al dhar, zinat al-takht, mubarak bakht Khalsa = Struck at the refuge of the world, the council city, the ornament of the throne of auspicious fortune of the Khalsa.

This coin is an earlier issue than the preceding rupee and shows a higher degree of skill in the calligraphy and the engraving, consequently the legends may be read more accurately.

The precise place and time that these coins were struck is still open to doubt. The description given of the minting place does not specify any known town. Banda's headquarters was in a fort, called Lohgarh, near the village of Mukhlisgarh in the foothills of the Himalayas, so it is reasonable to assume, as did Panish, that they were struck there. The coins do not bear a Hegira or Samvat date but the regnal years two and three. The regnal years of Banda are assumed to have commenced on the 24th May, 1710, on his capture of Sarhind. Other writers mention the introduction of a new calendar by Banda, dating from the seizure of the city.

The next issue of coins by the Sikhs is said to have been made when Jassa Singh Ahluwalia entered Lahore in A.D. 1761 (S.1818). The Sikhs were in occupation of Lahore for a few months only and then had to suffer the presence of the Afghans in the great fort, which they had been unable to take. If the Sikhs did strike coins during this brief period it would appear that none have ever come to light or have certainly not been recognised and reported other than by Rodgers who had apparently heard of these coins from some earlier source and gives the inscription they bear as follows:-

سکر زد در جهان بفضل الکرملک احمد گرفت جسا کلار



Transliteration  
and translation

Sikka zad dar Jahan bi faizal Akal, Mulki-i-Ahmad gerift  
Jassa Kalal = Coin struck by the Grace of God  
in the country of Ahmad, conquered by Jassa,  
brewer.

Whether these coins were struck with the authority of Jassa Singh is not known. It has been said that they were struck by the local Muslims of Lahore who sent a number to Ahmad Shah Durrani to arouse his anger against the Sikhs. Another source asserts that these coins were issued normally and remained in circulation for some years.

S.1822

As the power of the Mughals evaporated and the Afghans departed from the Punjab, the Sikhs were able to establish themselves in the cities. They then commenced striking coins in these centres, which had been traditional places for the issuance of coin. At Lahore the Sikh coinage dates from S.1822 (A.D. 1765) and this place had long contained a mint of the Mughals and then the Durrani. Multan contained a mint for the Mughal emperors and then the Durrani and when occupied by the Bhangi Sikhs from A.D. 1772 to 1779 they continued striking coins there. With the final expulsion of the Afghans in A.D. 1818 the Sikhs again coined at Multan until the end of their power.

With the expansion of the Sikh state during the early 19th century their money was struck at various places which came under their occupation, including Anandgarh, Peshawar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Derajat, Nimak (Pind Dadan Khan) and Kashmir. It is hoped that these other mints of the Sikhs can be dealt with in later papers.

GOLD AND SILVER COINS OF THE AMRITSAR MINT

Type 1. AR rupee. Ave. weight 11.08 grams. Diameter 22mm. Known dates S.1834. S. 1835. S. 1836. S.1837. S.1838.

شاه نانک وایب است  
سا خست  
فتح سی گور گوبند سنکھ فصل  
صا خست  
سنکھ زد بر دو عالم  
سری ابرت سر جو  
صا  
تخت اکال بخت  
جلوس



Ob. Sikka zad bar har do alam sahib / Fath suwee Guru Gobind Singh faizal / sakht / Shah Nanakwahib ast = Coin struck in each of two worlds, Victory gained by the exertions of Guru Gobind Singh and by grace Lord Nanak was the provider.

Rev. Zarb Sri Amratsar jiv / sambat 1836 / takht akal bakht jalus = Struck at illustrious Amritsar in Samvat 1836 by the grace of the throne of God (?).



No coins earlier than those dated S. 1834 have been noted for the Amritsar mint. It is therefore reasonable to assume that minting commenced in this year (A.D. 1777). By this time the Sikhs had been in uninterrupted occupation of Amritsar for some 10 years, whilst their compatriots in Lahore had been issuing coins for about 12 years. The dates cited by Rodgers for this type have been confirmed by the authors with the exception of S.1838 but it would seem unlikely that Rodgers would confuse this with Type II which follows. The rupee dated S. 1834 is in the British Museum collection. It is possible that earlier dates may exist.

Rodgers found difficulty in arriving at the correct readings of both obverse and reverse legends. There is certainly another word after Shah Nanak; Rodgers gives it as Sahib but it is more likely to be wahab. There are possibly other words associated with other parts of the obverse legend. The reverse legend, according to Rodgers, is complete. It is difficult to compose it into a meaningful couplet but it may have the sense given above.

This rupee was known colloquially as the Nanakshahi. Fractional pieces are not known nor have any gold coins of this type come to light.

Type II. AR rupee. Weight 11.15 grams. Diameter 22 mm. Known dates S.1838 S. 1839.



نانک و صاحب  
 سا صاحب  
 سیکہ فصل  
 صا سیکہ گور گوبند  
 ز د ر د  
 سزى ا عبرت سر حدو  
 صر سینه ۱۸۳۸  
 تخت اکال  
 سن

Ob. Sikka zad bar har do alam sahib/ fath tegh Guru Gobind Singh faiz#1/ sakht Shah Nanak wahib ast = Coin struck in each of two worlds, Victory (gained) by the sword of Guru Gobind Singh and by grace Lord Nanak was the provider.

Rev. As Type I but sanah 1838.

This type must be extremely rare. Only one specimen has been examined and that is in the British Museum collection. Rodgers recorded (5) what appears to be another specimen dated S.1839. It is not illustrated but the partial legends that are given leave little doubt that the coin is identical to the B.M. specimen.



Type III. AR rupee. Ave. weight 11 grams. Diameter 20 mm.

Known dates S. 1841. S. 1842. S. 1854. S. 1859 ✓

نانک گورگو بفر سسکه  
 بیری رنگ یا فثت  
 دیک تیغ فتح و نصرت  
 بیری اصبرت سر  
 سیمبنت  
 ۱۸۴۱  
 حلوس میننت  
 اکال احد



Ob. Az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh bederang yafat, deeg, tegh wa fath wa nasrat = Abundance, the sword, victory and help without delay Guru Gobing Singh obtained from Nanak.

Rev. Zarb sri Amratsar, Sambat 1841, jalus maimanat manus, Akal ahad = Struck at Sri Amritsar, Samvat 1841, in the year of the reign of tranquil prosperity, Akal first.

This type was known to Rodgers whose readings of the legends have been confirmed by examination of a number of specimens. No gold coins or fractions of the rupee of this type have been seen.

There are a number of points concerning this type on which comment should be made. The rupee dated S.1841 has the word احد (ahad = first) at the bottom of the reverse. The coin dated S.1842 has ثانی (thani = second) in the same place. Rodgers commented on these words but could give no explanation for them. Their normal purpose on an Indian coin is to indicate the year of a particular reign. The Samvat year 1841 = A.D. 1783-84 but history gives no indication that this particular year was the commencement of a new era or regime. Another odd occurrence is the reissue of this type of coin dated S.1854 and S. 1859, during the period when an entirely different type was being struck in Amritsar. It may be relevant that in A.D. 1797 Ranjit Singh took command of a united Sikh army and in A.D. 1802, he occupied Amritsar. The explanation may be simply that there was a shortage of coin locally at these times and as a matter of expediency the old dies were brought into use.

TYPE IV. AR rupee. Ave. weight 11.2 grams. Diameter 22mm.

Known Dates S.1841, S.1842. S.1843. S.1844. S.1845.

نانک فتح تیغ  
 گور گوبند سسکه وصل ماسیما ساهان  
 سسکه زد بر سر دو عالم  
 بیری اصبرت سر جمو  
 سیمبنت اکال بخت  
 ۱۸۴۱  
 تخت  
 حلوس مانوس





Ob. Sikka zad bar har do alam sakht/ Guru Gobind Singh faizal sacha shahan sahib / Nanak fath tegh wahib ast = Coin struck in each of two worlds, Victory gained by the sword of the true kings Guru Gobind Singh and Nanak, who by grace is the provider.

Rev. Zarb Sri Amratsar Jiv / Jalus maimanat manus 1841 / takht akal bakht = Struck at illustrious Amritsar in the reign of tranquil prosperity 1841 by the grace of the throne of God

The complete legends of this type, of which only the rupee is known, have not been determined with accuracy. Some words are probably missing from both obverse and reverse, The meaning of the reverse legend is far from clear. Rodgers remarks in his paper "...in these inscriptions there is more jingle than either good grammar or clear meaning." An alternative reading to that given above could be "Struck at illustrious Amritsar, auspicious accession in 1841 to the throne, come good or ill fortune".

This type has, on the obverse, some figures. The coin dated S.1841 has 3 1 5, those dated S.1842 and 1843 have 3 1 6. These figures appear to represent the number of years that have elapsed from the birth of Nanak to the year in which the coin was struck. The Guru Nanak was born in A.D. 1469 or S. 1526. Therefore 1526 plus 315 = S.1841 and 1526 plus 316 = S.1842. No other plausible explanation has been found for them.

Type V AR rupee. Ave. weight 10.80 grams. Diameter 22mm.

Known dates S.1845. S. 1846. S. 1847



شاه نانک و احب  
 اسلح تیغ گورگو بنو سنکده فصل  
 سا ج سده زد بر در دو عالم  
 بیری ابر سرت حو  
 ضربت اکال بخت  
 حلویت مالو ۳۵

Ob. Sikka zad bar har do alam sakht / fath tegh Guru Gobind Singh faizal Shah Nanak wahib ast = Coin struck in each of two worlds, Victory gained by the sword of Guru Gobind Singh and by the grace of Lord Nanak who is the provider.

Rev. As Type IV but with a pipal leaf.

This type appears not to have been known to Rodgers so presumably the coins are scarce. The pipal leaf symbol is introduced on the reverse for the first time, but both inscriptions are probably the same as Type II coins.

One fairly obvious defect with these rupees must have been the fact that most of the date fell off the flan of the coin, for in most specimens encountered only the last two figures are to be seen. This was rectified almost immediately by the introduction of Type VI having the date placed in a more central position above the pipal leaf. No gold coins or fractional pieces in silver have been noted.



Type VI.

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Known Samvat Dates</u>
AV double mohur	23.89 g	28 mm	1884/85
AV mohur	11.2 g	21 mm	1858, 61, 68*
AR rupee	11.1 g	22-25mm	1806 (error) 1846-84 (except 1847 & 1871)** 1884/82 (error), 1884/85 to /93
AR ½ rupee	5.5 g	19 mm	1884/85, /92 and /93
AR ¼ rupee	2.7 g	14 mm	1884/85 and /86
AR 1/8 rupee	1.4 g	10 mm	1884/95



Legend as Type V except for position of date

\* The mohur dated S.1868 is really a different type in that it has no pipal leaf on the reverse. It has instead a letter . The mint name is not very clear but it is thought to be Amritsar.

\*\* An identical piece to the rupee dated S.1883 has been noted struck in copper on an exceptionally wide flan. It is probably a trial striking.



A later rupee of Type VI with the single date. There is little

alteration in the general design but the lettering is larger leaving less to be seen on the flan.

A later rupee of Type VI showing the fixed date of S.1884 and the actual date of S.(18)93 on the obverse.



This type was struck from A.D. 1789 to 1836 before any change was initiated. The rupees were probably struck every year, other denominations less frequently. A number of die varieties have been noted e.g. the absence of the alif to the word akal on some rupees circa S.1861 and the extension of the word takht across the coin on some dated S.1869 and 1870. Two die-cutter's errors have been noted.

Various ornamental marks and symbols appear on coins of this type from a fairly early date. Their purpose is not known and Rodgers does not enlighten us. Probably the more prominent mark, that on the obverse, is for the daroga or mint master but what the others convey is pure conjecture. A chart showing the various marks which have been observed on rupees of different dates is given in Appendix A.

From S.1846 to S.1884 the coins bear the correct Samvat date. Thereafter the date S.1884 (A.D.1827) becomes a permanent feature and the actual Samvat date is shown on the obverse by its last two digits only. The reason for this system of dating has not been discovered. Rodgers gives an explanation which was related to him but which seems hardly credible ..... "There is a class of faqirs who say that, inasmuch as the number of breaths a man will take is numbered when he is born, the more slowly people breathe the longer they will live. I suppose the idea may have got into Ranjit Singh's mind (he was the slave of all kinds of superstitions as well as lusts), that if he could manage to drag out one year to the extent of ten, his life would be all the longer, the number of years being originally fixed." Although the practice of breathing slowly may meet with the approval of medical practitioners and may prolong life just how this theory relates to the dual dating system on the Sikh coins is difficult to understand. The probable explanation is that the Sikh coinage, in common with other Indian coinages, suffered from the imposition of a system of batta imposed by the bankers and moneychangers, whereby after a fixed period a coin would suffer depreciation depending on its date. The East India Company met the same problem in the late 18th century and adopted a fixed date on their coinage in order to defeat it. The Sikhs may have retained the fixed date for the same purpose but the placing of the actual date in a shortened form in tiny figures on the other side of the coins, would tend to defeat the objective.

Gold Mohurs of this type must be extremely rare. Fractional gold is unknown. Fractions of the rupee appear not to have been struck until after the introduction of the dual dating system; they are quite scarce and when found usually have one or both dates off the flan making it difficult to assign them to the correct type. By comparison of the symbols on these small pieces with the symbols on the larger coins they can generally be dated fairly accurately.



Type VIa. AV Mohur. Weight 10.90 grams. Diameter 22mm. Known date S.1862  
AR Rupee. Weight 11.1 grams. Diameter 21.5mm. Known dates S.1858-63  
except 1859



Legends. As Type VI

This type carries the same inscriptions as Type VI but in place of the pipal leaf has a double branch or spray which is said to be a peacock's tail. This device was allegedly ordered to be put on the coins by Ranjit Singh at the instance of a Kashmiri girl with whom he had an affair. The girl's name was Mora and according to Cunningham (6) Ranjit Singh caused coins or medals to be struck bearing her name. No coins with her name have ever been found, so the reference is probably an allusion to this particular mark. The name Mora means peacock in Hindustani. This type was issued over a period of five years and probably covers the period of Ranjit Singh's attachment to this young lady. According to Rodgers, these coins were known as Morashahi. The rupees most commonly met with are dated S.1862. Rupees of other dates are rare and the gold extremely so. No fractional pieces have been encountered. There are a number of die varieties in this type, principally in the formation of the spray or peacock's tail.

Type VIb. AV Mohur. Weight 10.76 grams. Diameter 20.3mm. Known dates S.1862 and 63.

AR Rupee. Weight 11.1 grams. Diameter 22mm.



Legends. As Type VI

This type also bears the same inscriptions as Type VI and VIa, but in place of the pipal leaf or peacock's tail has an arisi ( a thumb mirror commonly used by dancing girls in India). These rupees were called arisiwalla sikka. In other details it is indential to the other Amritsar coins of the period apart from the omission of the alif from the word akal, a feature which has also been noticed in Type VIa. The gold mohurs of this type must be quite rare. The rupees are not common.



Type VII. AR rupee. Weight 11.1 grams. Diameter 21.5 mm  
Known dates S.1884/95- /1904 except 1902

از نانک گورو بدير سنگر يافت  
بيرانغ گورو و ديك و فتح و نصرت



Ob. Az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh bederang yafat, deeg, tegh wa fath wa nasrat = Abundance, the sword, victory and help without delay Guru Gobind Singh obtained from Nanak.

Rev. As Type VI

The obverse legend of this type differs from Type VI. The last known date for Type VI is S.1884/93 and no specimen dated S.1884/94 of this type has been traced. Type VII commences with the date S.1884/95 and as it was produced contemporaneously with Type VIII it was evidently considered necessary to change the legend. A rupee with the date S.1884/1902 probably exists but has not been found. So far as it is known there are no gold coins of this type or fractional rupees.

Type VIII

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Known Samvat Dates</u>
AR rupee	11.15 g	23 mm	S.1885/90*, /93-1905
½ rupee	?	19 mm	S.1885/93, /98,/99,/1901-/1903
¼ rupee	2.8 g	14 mm	S.1885/93 /94, /99, /1901-/1903
1/8 rupee	1.5 g	11 mm	S.1885/1903



Legends as Type VI

This type is merely a continuation of Type VI but with the fixed date of S.1885 on the reverse and the true date in minute figures on the obverse. This type appears to have commenced in S.1893 (AD 1836) - the piece dated S.1885/90 is probably a die maker's error, intended for 95 - and continues, as does Type VII, until the final year of the Sikh state.



Type VIII (Continued)

It is noticeable that this type has a fair proportion of fractional denominations, which appear to have been struck from rupee dies thus leaving many with dates off the flans. It is probable that the fractions were struck every year but in very much smaller numbers as they are quite scarce. No gold coins of this type have been observed.

MISCELLANEOUS TYPES

Type A Rupee. Weight ?. Diameter 23mm. Known date S.1862



نانک  
بیدرنگ  
یا  
فتیح و فتح  
گورو گوبند  
نانک

ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਲਹੁਵਾਲੀਆ  
ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਲਹੁਵਾਲੀਆ  
੧੮੬੨

...Nanak...  
bederang yafat Tegh wa Fath  
Nanak Guru (Gobind.....)

Akal Sahaiya  
Sarkar Alhuwalian

Gods grace  
Government of Alhuwalia

Nothing is really known of this coin. Much of the obverse inscription is off the flan but what is visible would appear to be similar to that appearing on Type VII. The reverse indicates that the coin was struck by or for Fateh Singh Alhuwalia. This young man was a descendent of Jassa Singh Alhuwalia and the head of the Alhuwalia Misl. He was held in high esteem by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh, after becoming Maharajah of the Punjab, thought it prudent to have the support of Fateh Singh as an ally and friend. In 1802, on the way back to Lahore, Ranjit Singh stopped at Amritsar and in a formal ceremony exchanged turbans with Fateh Singh as a symbolic gesture of having become brothers in the faith. Both then signed a solemn pledge that thereafter their friends and enemies would be common to them and in every conquest made by their joint efforts Ranjit Singh would give one district to Fateh Singh. Thereafter, Fateh Singh was received in full durbar as a royal prince and became a trusted colleague of Ranjit Singh; advising him on military matters. Fateh Singh, was with Ranjit Singh, a signatory to the Treaty of Lahore made with the British on the 1st January, 1806, which falls in the Samvat year of 1862. The coin is therefore possibly a nazr struck on that event. The place of minting is unknown.



Type B . AR Rupee Weight, ?. Diameter 23mm. Known dates S.1888/1904



Legends. As Type VII

There is nothing very remarkable in this coin except that the fixed date of S.1884 of Type VII has been advanced by four years to S.1888. The reason for departing from an established conventional practice is not known; possibly the coin is a pattern or trial piece.

Type C . AV Mohur Weight 12g. Diameter ? Known Dates S.1901  
AR Rupee Weight ? Diameter 23mm Known Dates S.1889



Legends. As Type VI

This is another unconventional coin with the correct Samvat date of 1889 which was produced whilst the Type VI coins with the fixed date of S.1884 were being issued. There is no ready explanation for this enigmatic rupee and like Type B, may be a pattern. A similar mohur appears in the W.K. sale.

Type D . AV Mohur. Weight 9.5g. Diameter ?



ਅਕਾਲ  
ਸਗਲਿ ਗੁਰੂ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ  
  
ਜਵਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ  
ਅਖ ਗੁਰੂ  
ਸ੍ਰੀ

Akal  
Sahai Guru  
Nanakji  
• Jarb Sri  
Ambratsar Ji



Type D. {Continued)

This gold coin is identical to the common copper paisa of the Amritsar mint (see Valentine, page 131/30). The weight is too low for a currency mohur so its intended function is not known. It may have been struck from the copper dies for use as a presentation piece or in a religious context. This coin does not bear a date and neither do many of the paisa. On some of the very large copper coins, which Valentine suggests are proofs of the dies, the dates may be observed as S.1885 and S.1886 so the above coin is probably a contemporary issue.

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APPENDIX A.

A chart showing the various symbols found on rupees of the Amritsar mint. Marks 1 and 2 are found on the positions indicated on the reverse, marks under 3 are found on the obverse.



Obverse



Reverse

S. Date	1	2	3	S. Date	1	2	3	S. Date	1	2	3	S. Date	1	2	3
1846	☉		☉	1867	☉	*	☉	1884	☉	☉	☉	1885/93	☉	*	☉
				1867		☉	*	1884/85	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/93	☉	N.S.	☉
1848	☉	☉	☉	1868	☉	N.S.	☉	1884/86	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/94	☉	☉	☉
1849	☉		☉	1868	☉	N.S.	☉	1884/87	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/94	☉	☉	☉
1850			☉	1869	☉	☉	☉	1884/88	☉	☉	☉	1885/95	☉	*	☉
1851		*	☉	1869	*	N.S.	☉	1884/89	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/96	☉	☉	*
1852			☉	1870	*	N.S.	*	1884/90	☉	☉	*	1885/97	☉	☉	☉
1853		☉	☉					1884/90	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/97	☉	☉	☉
1854	☉	☉	☉	1872	☉	☉	☉	1884/91	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/98	☉	☉	☉
1855	☉	*	☉	1873	☉	☉	☉	1884/92	☉	☉	☉	1885/98	☉	N.S.	☉
1856	☉	*	☉	1873	☉		☉	1884/92	☉	☉	☉	1885/98	☉	N.S.	☉
1856	☉	*	☉	1874	☉	☉	☉	1884/93	*		☉	1885/99	☉	N.S.	☉
1857		☉	☉	1874	☉	N.S.	☉					1885/99	☉	*	☉
1857		☉		1875	☉	☉	☉	1884/95	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/99	☉	N.S.	☉
1858	☉	☉	☉	1875	☉	☉	☉	1884/96	☉	☉	☉	1885/1900	☉	☉	☉
1859		N.S.	☉	1876	☉	☉	☉	1884/97	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/1901	☉	N.S.	☉
1860		☉	☉	1876	☉	☉	☉	1884/98	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/1902	☉	☉	☉
1860		*	*	1877	☉	☉	☉	1884/99	☉	☉	☉	1885/1903	☉	N.S.	☉
1861		N.S.	☉	1877	☉	N.S.	☉	1884/1900	☉	N.S.	☉	1885/1904	☉	N.S.	☉
1862	☉	☉	☉	1878	☉	☉	☉	1884/1901	☉	☉	☉	1885/1905	☉	N.S.	☉
1862	☉	☉	☉	1879	☉	☉	☉	1884/1902							
1863	☉	☉	☉	1879	☉	N.S.	☉	1884/1903	☉	N.S.	☉				
1863	☉	N.S.	☉	1880	☉	☉	☉	1884/1904	☉	N.S.	☉				
1864	☉	☉	☉	1880	☉	N.S.	☉								
1864		☉	☉	1881	☉	☉	☉								
1865	☉	☉	☉	1881	☉	N.S.	☉								
1865	☉	☉	☉	1882	☉	N.S.	☉								
1866	☉	☉	☉	1882	☉	N.S.	☉								
1866	☉	☉	☉	1883	☉	N.S.	☉								
1866	☉	☉	☉	1883	☉	N.S.	☉								

N.S. indicates that the mark has not been seen. A blank space indicates that no mark is in that position.