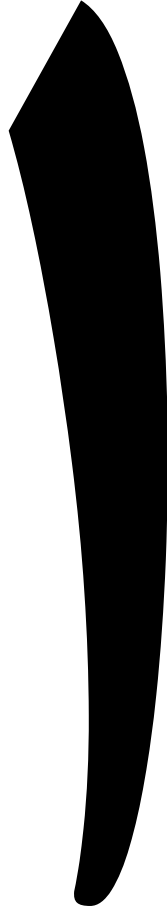




THE *TAZKIRAT AL-UMARA*
OF COLONEL SKINNER

BERNARD QUARITCH LTD



TEXT

A CATALOGUE

THE 1836 *TAZKIRAT AL-UMARA*

OF

COLONEL JAMES SKINNER

BERNARD QUARITCH LTD

Preface

In the brief course of research for this catalogue, I benefited from the hospitable assistance of Saqib Baburi and Ursula Sims-Williams of the British Library, who allowed me to examine their Skinner manuscripts side by side with the Quaritch copy of the *Tazkira*, and that of Elaine Wright at the Chester Beatty Library, whose rapid production of digital images of the Skinner manuscript held there made much of this catalogue possible. Staff at the Lilly Library, Library of Congress, and National Army Museum were similarly generous with their time and knowledge.

Linda York Leach's catalogue of the Indian paintings in the Chester Beatty has been a touchstone throughout, and many of the points made here are simply elaborations of her observations, benefiting from the passage of time and the appearance of additional Skinner material. J. P. Losty's 1982 exhibition catalogue, *The art of the book in India*, has likewise been a constant companion, leading me down avenues I would not otherwise have explored.

Lastly, Margarida Gouveida, the photographer for this catalogue, has been unfailingly patient in the face of my requests. I hope that this catalogue does her images, and the manuscript itself, justice.

N. G. McBurney

London, 2014

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والاخبار و امراى صاحب اقتدار و نو بيان عالیشان و خوانين و الاکمين مندان
 و بنای معمورى بعضى شهر و مکان که در قيد کتابت مورخان بالغ کلام گذشته
 زمان نياده مرقد که صورت بست و شدن توانست از آغاز تا انجام حيتوى
 تمام و اجتهاد و الاکلام تحقيقات رسانيده بعبارات سليس و صاف که ناظران
 خار راه حصول مدعا گردد و در رشته تحرير و سلك تسيير گشايند به تذکره الامرا
 موسوم ساختن تابر راى سند آريان بمنه فطرت و کشور گشايان صاحب
 خبرت کاشف حال ادانى و امانى و مصرف مردم سافل و عالى و مر شهر
 و حوالى گردين موجب خير و صلاح و زلفاه و صلاح عهده حال و استقبال
 و بر عرصه جهان يادگار عديم الزوال باشد اميد از دالانظران عالى سمت است
 که اگر جايى سوي و خطائى واقع شده باشد بذيل غنچه پوشند و بخورده گيرى
 آن نکوشند اين کتاب شتمل است بر چهار طبقه
 بر احوال راجها و غيرهم بر چهار دفعه
 بر احوال اودى پور و دفعه دوم بر شرح حال راجکان جو و سپور و غيرهم
 بر احوال راجها و غيرهم بر چهار دفعه
 بر احوال اودى پور و دفعه دوم بر شرح حال راجکان جو و سپور و غيرهم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

بعد تمهید تمجید مالک الملکی که اشطام سلسله کانیات را بوجوب دبا عدل وجود فرزان
روایان الاشکوه متعلق ساخته و نظام کارگاه موجودات را بذات تسبیح الحسنات
سریر آریان عدالت پرده پرداخته نیازمند درگاه کبریا کریم جنس سکن پرده
انزخ مدعا میکشاید که چون در سر عهد و آوان بادشاهان عالیجاه و عالم پناهان
کارگاه را برای دریافت حال رسم و آیین سلاطین مشین نظر بر نفع عام
و فائز تمام جهان جهانیان اکثر سیر و مطالعه کتب سوانحات دوران تواریخ
پاستیان میل خاطر می باشد لهذا این ذره بعمقه ارحام و احوال را بجای

Introduction

James Skinner died, wealthy but heavily indebted, in 1841. He left five sons, and uncounted daughters, a regiment of irregular horse which survives as a cavalry unit of the modern Indian army, countless paintings, substantial estates, within Delhi and beyond, and a reputation which still endures as an adventurer *par excellence*, a man whose birth and colour made commissioned service in the East India Company's forces impossible in the 1790s, and who turned the adversity of his station into a spur towards splendid success. A soldier's bastard and a failed apprentice, he was a Companion of Bath at his death and had been awarded a corresponding suite of pleasing titles at the Mughal court, having straddled, throughout his life, the fraught abyss of prejudice and suspicion a dark-skinned, ambitious Anglo-Indian faced at the turn of the eighteenth century.

He was born in 1778 to a Scottish father and a Rajput mother, and educated to an extent, at a series of charity schools in Calcutta; in 1796 he was, presumably having achieved sufficient erudition, apprenticed to a Calcutta printer. This brief brush with the printed word was not a success: he ran away. Through the good offices of a relation, he was introduced to De Boigne, a French mercenary then in the service of Sindhia. Skinner served with distinction under De Boigne and then his successor, Perron. This period was a lively one, with the region a hotbed of intrigue and martial strife, and Skinner saw service at Hansi and Delhi. After Lake's defeat of the Marathas at Delhi in 1803, Skinner accepted the British offer of a non-commissioned cavalry command. For the next twenty-odd years he fought in British service, and forged a reputation as one of the foremost commanders of his day. In 1825, his service was rewarded by a grant by the British of large tracts of land at Hansi, where he established a substantial estate, and thereafter he seems to have continued to acquire property and engage in commercial endeavours, with varied success. (His name is mentioned in contemporary agricultural journals in connection with the cultivation of cotton in India and the question of export markets, for example.) In 1828, he was created a Companion of Bath, and had, by this point, been awarded a lieutenant-colonel's commission, a recognition both of his excellent service and the discrepancy between his increasing seniority and lack of a regular commission.

Skinner advised British diplomatic missions to Ranjit Singh in the 1830s, and seems, on the whole, to have made a consistently excellent impression on those who encountered him. Governor-generals, from Wellesley to Auckland, were impressed by the man and his actions, and the overwhelming impression one receives is that he was a pillar of the British administration during turbulent years.

Yet his success was never a clear-cut process of assimilation. Skinner might have ceased to serve an Indian power, but he retained a deep affection for the Mughal court, and lived his life according to local mores. He might build a church at Delhi, but, apocryphally at least, he also built a mosque, and perhaps even a temple for good measure. His wives and daughters are uncounted, and the precise nature of his domestic arrangements, which evidently had little to do with prevailing English norms, are in large part ignored by his English peers. He was confirmed, and contemporary accounts have little doubt as to his fundamental decency, or the substance of

his assistance to the Anglican Church in Delhi, but even those accounts at pains to emphasise the sincerity of his prayers gloss the question of to whom he prayed.

Skinner's life was wholly his own, in a way remarkable for his age. And he has, with cause, been remembered as a dashing soldier, a grand, hospitable presence at Delhi and Hansi, a sort of Anglo-Indian warrior-prince. He certainly kept court, and entertained on a tremendous scale, commanded great bodies of men, and amused his dinner guests with music and dancing girls. Yet the impression this gives, of a bluff, honest, successful soldier elides much that makes Skinner fascinating. The tension between his early years, crabbed and cramped by British prejudice, and passed largely in the service of an opposing power, side by side with French officers, whose very presence in India was increasingly perceived as suspect by the British, and the almost complacent state of his later, successful life is palpable. And yet there is no evidence of rage or resentment extant, no evidence of frustration vented, perhaps, in part, because so little documentary evidence of his early career survives.

Beyond his sterling reputation, and a great body of anecdote, James Skinner left a surprisingly substantial corpus of manuscripts, all copies of texts he composed in Persian. It is here that the clearest evidence of his curious identity becomes plain, particularly when one turns to the magnificent illustrated volumes he commissioned between 1830 and 1836. Comprising six manuscripts in total, they consist of three copies of Skinner's *Tashrīh al-aqvām*, an account of the Indian castes, and three copies of his *Tazkirat al-umarā*, a description of the ruling families of Northern India, illustrated with portraits of men who were in large part Skinner's contemporaries. He seems to have commissioned them two by two, so that his chosen recipients received a harmonious gift, sketching out the whole of Indian society, from beggar to maharaja, Sikh to Rajput, and executed to a standard which compares with the finest manuscripts produced during this period.

But these manuscripts were not given to rulers, native or otherwise. Skinner gave them to three British officers, only one of whom, Sir John Malcolm, retains any posthumous reputation. That all three were likely literate in Persian is plain, but even so, Skinner's gifts seem, in part, perverse. He retained, at what must have been significant expense, the services of a manuscript workshop, to produce volumes which are, today, barely remembered. The man was an author, and a patron of manuscript art on a scale that compares to that of a princely ruler of his day, and easily surpasses that of many, and yet his reputation remains that of a soldier, his artistic patronage remembered more in association with Company School albums than these striking examples of Indian book art.

Despite the anecdotal accounts of his halting English, there is little to suggest that Skinner would have been incapable of composing his books in English had he so desired; a substantial portion of his first Persian work, a cavalry treatise, is likely his own translation of a European military manual. But Skinner chose to write in Persian, and commission copies which imitate the earlier models of imperial commissions, with golden bindings, lavish programs of illustration, well-executed calligraphy, and elaborate textual schemes. His program of commissions seems a deliberate assertion both of his own success and his place poised between India and England.

Elements of his books appear to draw on the arrangement of European plate-books, and both *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira* may be seen as forerunners to the many lavish late-Victorian books which documented India's people and princes.

The present manuscript is the latest dated copy of the six luxurious volumes Skinner commissioned in the 1830s, and is a superb example of the taste and discernment Skinner exercised in commissioning these remarkable manuscripts. Only one other copy of Skinner's *Tazkira* has appeared in the last century; though not a unique survival, this manuscript is a notable work in its own right, and contains a unique recension of the *Tazkirat al-umarā*.



Skinner's patronage

A survey of surviving Skinner manuscripts reveals a man whose taste, wealth, and interest created a stunning sequence of illustrated manuscripts, of which the present example is one of the finest. The chronology of his Persian writings, together with his commissioning of luxurious copies of the same, provides some insight into his motivations and methodology, and marks Skinner as a patron of considerable sophistication, whose activities in the 1830s were unmatched by any other patron in Delhi and its environs. The manuscripts form a body of material evidence in stark contrast to contemporary accounts of Skinner, and there is no evidence that his Delhi peers were aware of the extent of his manuscript commissions.

On the evidence of extant copies, James Skinner composed four Persian texts during his lifetime. In order of probable composition the first is an untitled autobiography, with a strong focus on his military career, whose narrative concludes in 1823; the second, composed at about the same time, is a handbook for cavalry officers; the third, entitled *Tashrīh al-aqvām*, is an account of the castes; the fourth is his *Tazkirat al-umarā*, a history of the noble houses of Northern India, together with a topographical account of Haryana, including Hansi, the site of Skinner's main residence.

James Baillie Fraser, brother of one of Skinner's closest friends, describes a man of action almost entirely incompatible with the evidence of the manuscripts themselves in the preface to his account of Skinner's military career: 'In truth, Skinner, being far more a man of the sword than of the pen, was very ill qualified to furnish materials for a life. He could *tell* his story most graphically, but he could not write it; and had the many friends who have heard him narrate the striking incidents of his life, and describe the remarkable scenes of which he had been a witness, thought of noting down such communications at the time, no doubt they would have served to form a far more interesting narrative than the present.'¹

Fraser's description encapsulates the great difficulty presented by contemporary accounts of the man. James Skinner is mentioned in almost every published traveller's account of Delhi in the 1830s. He sends an elephant to convey Fanny Parks on a tour of the city,² while Emily Eden visits his recently constructed church, and describes him thus: 'He is a native of this country, a half-caste, but very black, and talks broken English. He has had a regiment of irregular horse for the last forty years, and has done all sorts of gallant things, had seven horses killed under him, and been wounded in proportion; has made several fortunes and lost them; has built himself several fine houses, and has his zenana and heap of black sons like any other native.'³ The common thread between Fraser's fond sketch and Eden's prejudiced one is that Skinner was an adventurer, the archetype of the daredevil, dashing cavalryman, and that more cultured arts and occupations escaped him.

Emily Eden may dismiss Skinner as a 'half-caste', and refer sneeringly to his 'heap of black sons', but his presence and patronage, in the form of St. James's Church, is something which even she cannot help but notice. His architectural patronage, much like his eponymous 'regiment of irregular horse', has been a matter of enduring association, while the manuscripts produced at his behest have suffered relative obscurity, and, even in the past fifty years, have been treated more as adjuncts to the activities of British patrons like the Frasers, or as ersatz albums rather than the result of a coherent program of manuscript production. Surveyed as a whole, the three illustrated copies of the *Tazkirat al-umarā* and three of the *Tashrih al-aqvām*, distributed in pairs to Sir John Malcom, one J. Watkins, and one Colonel Thoresby, testify to a James Skinner unnoticed by his contemporaries, a man who composed several substantial accounts of his own country, and distributed them in deluxe productions to those he felt were sympathetic.

The chronology of Skinner's commissioning of luxury manuscripts is suggestive, for he seems only to have undertaken this significant expense after receiving a series of Mughal titles in May of 1830, titles incorporated into the dated seal whose impression marks both the Chester Beatty and British Library copies of the *Tazkirat al-umarā*. The nature of the workshop which likely produced all six illustrated volumes is dealt with in the final section of this catalogue, but the evidence of the craftsmanship of the Skinner manuscripts suggests that he was able to employ artisans previously associated with the imperial court at Delhi, and that the entire exercise, as with the entertainments he gave, and other notable acts of public generosity he undertook, were all intended to continue practices of courtly patronage that the Mughal court, increasingly impoverished and politically irrelevant, was unable to maintain by this period.

There is a clear divide between the illustrated manuscript produced in the 1820s, the cavalry treatise, and those produced in the 1830s, the multiple luxury copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira*. The former was bound in plain, blind-ruled leather, copied on rougher paper, and lacks the more elaborate *mise-en-page* of the later manuscripts, which are bound with increasing sophistication, and executed to a substantially higher standard. There are what appear to be working copies of both the *Tashrīh* and the *Tazkira* extant, which suggest that all the illustrated manuscripts were prepared from text exemplars, and may well have gone through multiple drafts before the final production. The additional text and painting present in the Quaritch *Tazkira* suggest that these drafts may also have afforded Skinner an opportunity to include additional material. No close textual comparison among the extant copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira* has been made, and such work would likely shed additional light on the knotty question of composition and chronology.

The brief survey below deals only with known copies of the texts composed by Skinner identified at the beginning of this section. Notwithstanding the paintings incorporated into the illustrated copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira*, separate paintings associated with Skinner and his eponymous album are not dealt with here, as numerous exhibitions and publications in the past decade have treated these in terms of Company School painters and patrons, and indeed dealt with single paintings from his manuscripts in a similar fashion. The Skinner texts are presented in probable order of composition, with each extant copy identified, located (possible in every case but two), and salient points noted.

The autobiography survives in an English manuscript translation now at the National Army Museum,⁴ and a preceding Persian manuscript, whose present location is unknown. There is no date of transcription, translation, or composition given in the NAM manuscript, but the source is almost certainly the Persian text mentioned in the preface to Fraser's *Military memoir*, whose description of the manuscript is revealing. 'Meantime, we shall endeavour to do our humble part, in sketching out, so far as materials are to be had, the military adventures of Colonel James Skinner. We regret to say that these are somewhat scanty. The principal part of this work is taken from a MS. placed in the hands of the writer by a son of the late Colonel, now a Captain in the service of his highness the Nizam. It is in the writing of a native, no doubt copied from the notes of the Colonel himself, who was in the habit of keeping a journal in Persian – or from his personal dictation; but it abounds in clerical inaccuracies, which require one well acquainted with the subject to correct; and it seems to have been intended rather as a brief memorial of his early life and services, framed for some special purpose, than as a full account of his chequered life and adventures. In the latter part, indeed about the year 1824, all detail ceases, and it ends... at a period long before the useful part of his life was over.'⁵

It seems likely that Fraser received a draft dictated by Skinner from his own notes in 1824 and set aside before the resulting text could be corrected or details of subsequent events included. The NAM version concludes in 1823, a year earlier than the Persian copy cited by Fraser, though it includes an appendix of selected letters to and from Skinner, with many dated to subsequent years. The manuscript's paper bears a watermark dated 1853 and it seems to have been prepared subsequent to the 1851 publication of the *Military memoir*, perhaps by one of Skinner's sons, working from the Persian copy employed by Fraser. It is copied in a neat English cursive, and is

accompanied by loose, incomplete drafts of the same text in the same hand. The Persian copy is reputed to have remained with the Skinner family until 1953, when it was presented to Skinner's Horse on the occasion of their 150th anniversary celebrations.⁶

The only known copy of Skinner's cavalry treatise is also at the National Army Museum.⁷ This manuscript first appeared at Sotheby's in 1974,⁸ when it was described as a Persian manuscript of 81 folios, with thirty-three coloured diagrams of cavalry manoeuvres and fourteen full-page paintings. At this stage, the binding was defective and the stitching loose, but the manuscript remained substantially intact. It subsequently passed into the hands of a London art dealer, who offered it to the National Army Museum entire, but for a price beyond the museum's acquisition budget. This impasse was overcome when the manuscript was broken up; thirteen of the fourteen paintings were dispersed separately, while the residue, comprising the diagrams, one of the paintings, all of the text folios, and the now empty binding, was successfully sold to the museum.

The surviving elements remain the earliest known example of an illustrated manuscript commissioned by Skinner, despite their present state. The program of illustration has several features in common with his later commissions. The versos of paintings and diagrams are left blank, and ignored in the contemporary foliation of the manuscript, and each diagram is labelled according to a separate numerical sequence. The paper, however, is rough and unburnished, and the binding is provincial, blind-ruled work, and has little in common with the bindings of subsequent Skinner commissions, though it does bear some relation to the cruder bindings of the unillustrated copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira*. The first section is dated 1823, and the final section 1824, suggesting that the text's composition and the manuscript's production were an extended matter – unsurprising given that Skinner was involved in several military actions during this period. It would seem to have been produced as a didactic tool, perhaps to inculcate a shared set of operational principles in the native officers of Skinner's Horse.

The third known text is Skinner's *Tashrīh al-aqvām*, a description of the castes. This survives in three illustrated copies and one unillustrated copy. The earliest of these is likely the copy inscribed to Sir John Malcolm, now at the British Library, and dated to August of 1825⁹, with 104 paintings. The Library of Congress holds a second copy¹⁰, inscribed to a Captain J. Watkins, dated the 9th of Muharram, 1241 AH (25 August, 1825), with 122 paintings. It seems unlikely that Skinner commissioned both these copies during the same period in 1825, given the quantity of paintings required and the sheer scale of the undertaking. More likely is that both illustrated copies reproduce the date of an earlier text copy, and that Skinner originally composed the text in August of 1825, perhaps in reaction to Malcolm's 1823 publication of an account of Central India.¹¹ Given that the illustrated Malcolm copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira* were bound by the same binder (to a higher standard than the provincial work of the cavalry treatise), it seems most likely that both ostensible 1825 copies of the *Tashrīh* were produced in tandem with the accompanying copies of the *Tazkira*, with the Malcolm copies preceding the Watkins ones. The paintings in the Malcolm *Tashrīh*, unlike those in either of the other illustrated copies of the text, are mounted on card, and were most likely prepared in advance of the manuscript's production.

A third copy of the *Tashrīh*, with 103 paintings, undated, but signed by Muhammad Bakhsh, the scribe of the Quaritch *Tazkira*, appeared at Christie's in 1981.¹² This was likely produced in conjunction with the Quaritch manuscript in 1836, and was probably presented to Thoresby at the same time. It may also be associated with the unillustrated text copy of the *Tashrīh* dated 1836, now in the British Library.¹³

The fourth Skinner text is the *Tazkirat al-umarā*, an account of the nobles and notables of Northern India, which similarly survives in three illustrated copies and an unillustrated copy. The Quaritch manuscript is an apparently unique recension of this text, appending a long section on the Rajas of Bharatpur to the main text. The earliest example of this work extant is an unillustrated manuscript, now at the British Library.¹⁴ It is dated the 15th of April, 1830, and the colophon includes the corresponding Hijri date. The two illustrated copies now at the British Library¹⁵ and the Chester Beatty Library¹⁶, the former inscribed to Malcolm, the latter to Watkins, carry identical Gregorian and Hijri dates stating that they were completed on the 10th of June, 1830. The text copy gives every indication of being a working copy; there are a few marginal insertions, and the hand is that of a scribe writing at some speed; the binding is similarly rough and ready work, if sturdy, with very minimal blind-ruling for ornament. All three of these copies have the same *mise-en-page*, with nine lines of black *nasta'liq* per page. It is unlikely that these two illustrated copies were in fact produced in the span of a month, rather, the surviving April rough copy would have been used to produce a fair copy, completed in June of 1830, which was subsequently employed as an exemplar for the consecutive production of these two illustrated copies. This impulse towards grand manuscript commissions likely relates to the titles Skinner received at the Mughal court in May of the same year. The dates of his seal and of the illustrated copies themselves are thus best treated as a matter of *antequam non*. There is no record of Skinner presenting the pair of manuscripts to Malcolm in person; they may well have been sent on to England, after his return there at the end of 1830. Even if this were the case, the manuscripts must have been sent before Malcolm's death in 1833, so it seems sensible to allow for the completion of both illustrated Malcolm manuscripts by as late as 1832. The British Library (British Museum as was) received both manuscripts as a bequest from Malcolm's heirs in 1865. The Watkins copies of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira* are presumed to have descended through that gentleman's family until their appearance in a 1929 Maggs Bros. catalogue.¹⁷

The Quaritch *Tazkira* is the finest surviving example of Skinner's luxury commissions of the 1830s, and its colophon provides important evidence for the manner in which Skinner's manuscripts were produced. Its binding, untouched and unrestored, remains in remarkable condition, and bar a handful of errant gilt-paper tabs, the text and paintings are similarly preserved in a superb state, the kind result of passing entirely unnoticed through the twentieth century. It includes a painting and text absent from both earlier copies, the text likely written by Skinner as an addition to this copy, and the accompanying painting almost certainly taken from life, as it depicts an adolescent Raja Balwant Singh of Bharatpur, who only acceded to his throne in 1835, after almost a decade of maternal regency. The Quaritch manuscript, unlike the Watkins and Malcolm copies, has no inscribed verses or seal impressions from Skinner, only the rough Persian ownership inscription of Colonel Thoresby, perhaps because Skinner presented this to Thoresby personally. Its binding, discussed in greater detail below, together with those of the other

manuscripts, was executed by the same workshop as that which bound the Chester Beatty manuscript. No Skinner manuscripts are known to have been produced after 1836, and this *Tazkira* was therefore probably one half of Colonel Skinner's final commission, a pair of illustrated manuscripts for Colonel Thoresby.

The extant Skinner corpus is one of startling riches, the result of a brief burst of effort and expense, which left three pairs of manuscripts, produced according to Skinner's own, still mysterious, intentions, and distributed to three men selected according to similarly obscure motives. That Skinner sought to produce manuscripts of a splendid standard, describing the country he knew according to its own mores, may have been a reaction to his own ambiguous status, and an assertion of his remarkable success, both commercially and professionally, but the only textual evidence of his intentions lies in the verses he wrote for Malcolm and Watkins in their respective copies of the *Tazkira*, which go no further than amiable, if sincere, platitudes.

1. Fraser, James Baillie, *Military memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner, C.B.*, London, 1851; vol. I, pp. vi-vii.
2. Parks, Fanny, *Wanderings of a pilgrim*, London, 1850; vol. II, p. 194.
3. Eden, Emily, 'Up the country', London, 1866; vol. I, p. 136.
4. NAM 1952-05-19.
5. Fraser, *Military memoir*; vol. I, pp. v-vi.
6. Holman, Dennis, *Sikander Sahib*, London, 1961; p. 258.
7. NAM 1977-07-9.
8. Sotheby's, sale, 'Oriental miniatures & manuscripts', 23 April, 1974; lot 200.
9. BL MS Add. 27255.
10. LOC MS Rosenwald 2076.
11. Malcolm, John, *A memoir of Central India*, London, 1823.
12. Christie's, sale, 'Important Islamic and Indian manuscripts and miniatures', 23 April, 1981; lot 155.
13. BL MS Or. 2008.
14. BL MS Add. 24051. (Purchased from Bernard Quaritch on the 12th of January, 1861.)
15. BL MS Add. 27254.
16. CB MS 33.
17. Maggs Bros., 'Bibliotheca Asiatica et Africana, Part V.', London, 1929. The Watkins *Tashrih* was no. 1005 in this catalogue, while his *Tazkira* was no. 1006. The *Tashrih* was probably sold to an American gentleman, Philip S. Collins, whose son, James S. Collins, donated the manuscript to the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection at the Library of Congress in 1968. The *Tazkira*, priced at £205 in 1929, was purchased by Chester Beatty from a subsequent Maggs catalogue, whose description is pasted to the manuscript's front fly-leaf, for the much reduced price of £105.



The manuscript

Skinner, James, Colonel. *Tazkirat al-umarā*. Dated 13 Muharram 1252 AH (29 April 1836) and signed 'Muhammad Bakhsh'.

Persian manuscript on burnished paper; 314 x 190 mm (text area 228 x 118 mm); ff. 245; 10-12 lines of black *nasta'liq* per page, within a thick frame of gilt, orange, red and blue and a marginal, finely-ruled frame in gilt; significant words and section headings in red, the text extensively overlined in red; f. 10.v with a rectangular illuminated headpiece, comprising the section title in red within a gilt cloud band, the cloud-banding painted in blue, green, and red to a floral scheme, within an orange-bordered gilt frame floreated to the same scheme; ff. 13.v – 14.r with a magnificently illuminated bifolium, consisting of a splendid headpiece at f. 13.v, elaborately painted in orange, black, blue, red and green, the margins of both folios floreated in gold and blue, with highlights in red and green, and the gutters similarly decorated; 39 full-page paintings, executed in colours and gold, after Rajput and Mughal models, each marked by a marginal tab of gilt paper (a few subsequently lost, but the majority intact); with a contemporary foliation in red (ignoring the folios with paintings and the fly-leaves); colophon at 226.r; in the original binding

of gilt-stamped and painted leather, the covers with elaborate central panels, block-stamped onto gilt paper and painted in red and blue to produce a filigree effect, within thin gold-painted frames surrounded by wider floral frames consisting of a repeated block stamp onto laid-down gilt paper, the doublures of leather with three gold-painted and floreated frames surrounding vertical lines of five gilt-stamped floral medallions set into the leather, the spine painted in gold, and the edges of the text block painted gold and floreated in colours; f.243.v with the Persian ownership inscription of a Colonel Thoresby and a tipped-in note from John Sampson to Mr Thompson Yates, dated the 31st of October, 1898.

The manuscript's paper is of two types. The fly-leaves (ff. 2-9 and ff. 228-244) are of a thick Indian paper, burnished, and with no visible laid lines or chain lines. The remainder of the manuscript (ff. 10-227) is on a lighter Indian paper, burnished, with tightly-spaced laid lines visible. The 39 folios with paintings, while apparently on a third paper, are in fact each comprised of two leaves of the lighter paper, laminated together (as evident in the distinctive slight cockling caused by the adhesive employed) and heavily burnished. Ff. 1 and 245 are single leaves of the lighter paper, their inside edges cut to produce a zigzag pattern, and pasted onto the extended strips of doublure leather on ff. 2.r and 244.v, giving the decorative pattern now visible.

The index (ff. 10.v – 12.r) lists the paintings in numbered order of appearance, supplying names and titles for the rulers depicted, together with a number for the facing folio. In practice, this supplied foliation is only accurate for the first two paintings listed; thereafter the numbers given err by an incrementally increasing number of folios. The index gives only thirty seven paintings (and takes no notice of the final painting in the present manuscript), though in fact one of the paintings, listed as 33 in the index and containing two figures, is here executed as two facing paintings (33 and 34 in the catalogue sequence), each with a single figure. The implications of these discrepancies are discussed in more detail in the final section.

The thirty nine paintings are found at ff. 15.v, 27.v, 44.r, 48.v, 52.r, 59.r, 62.r, 65.r, 68.v, 73.v, 75.v, 79.v, 82.v, 85.v, 87.v, 91.v, 94.v, 97.v, 100.v, 104.v, 109.v, 118.v, 122.r, 130.v, 136.v, 141.v, 144.v, 147.v, 152.v, 155.v, 158.v, 161.v, 164.v, 165.r, 169.v, 175.r, 179.v, 186.v, and 205.v. The verso of each painting is blank but frame-ruled, though the frames are unilluminated. Seven of the paintings appear to be misbound, and do not face the corresponding section headings. The paintings are discussed in more detail later in the catalogue, and are also illustrated separately in the accompanying volume.

The preface (ff. 13.v – 14.v) outlines the structure of the text itself, which is divided into four sections (here called *ṭabaqah*). The first *ṭabaqah* (ff. 16.r – 121.v) deals with Rajput rulers; the second (ff. 123.r – 168.r) with Sikh rulers; the third with Muslim rulers (ff. 170.r -189.r); and the fourth provides a topographical description of Haryana and its towns (ff. 190.r – 204.r).

The first *ṭabaqah* is divided into four sub-sections (or *daf'ah*). The first *daf'ah* includes notices of the **Rajas of Udaipur** (ff. 16.r -26.r). The second *daf'ah* deals with the **Rajas of Jodphur** (ff. 28.r – 43.v), and their vassals, the **Rajas of Bikaner** (45.r - 47.r) and of **Kishangarh** (ff. 49.r – 51.r). The third *daf'ah* includes notices of the **Rajas of Jaipur** (53.r – 58.r), **Raos of Uniara** (ff. 60.r – 61.v), **Thakurs of Jhalai** (ff. 63.r – 64.r), **Thakurs of Duni** (ff. 66.r – 67.r), **Raos of Mechari and Alwar** (ff. 69.r – 72.v), **Khangarot** (f. 74.r), **Thakurs of Dudu** (ff. 76.r – 78.r), **Thakurs of Pachewar** (ff. 80.r – 81.v), **Thakurs of Daki** (ff. 83.r – 84.v), **Thakurs of Todri** (ff. 86.r - 86.v), **Thakurs of Khetri** (ff. 88.r – 90.v), **Thakurs of Nawalgarh** (ff. 92.r – 93.v), **Thakurs of Bissau** (ff. 95.r – 96.r), **Thakurs of Sikar** (ff. 98.r – 99.v), **Raos of Patan** (ff. 101.r – 103.r), and **Rajas of Nimrana** (ff. 105.r – 108.r). The fourth *daf'ah* includes notices of the **Raos of Rewari** (ff. 110.r – 117.r) and the **Rajas of Sonipat** (ff. 119.r – 121.v).

The second *ṭabaqah* includes notices of the **Rajas of Lahore** (ff. 123.r -129.v), **Rajas of Jind** (ff. 131.r – 135.r), **Rajas of Patiala** (ff. 137.r – 140.r), **Rajas of Kaithal** (ff. 142.r – 143.r), **Rajas of Nabha** (ff. 145.r – 146.v), **Ahluwalia Rajas of Kapurthala** (ff. 148.r – 151.v), **Rajas of Thanesar** (ff. 153.r – 154.v), **Kalsia Rajas** (ff. 156.r – 157.r), **Rajas of Radwar** (ff. 159.r – 160.v), **Rajas of Ladwa** (ff. 162.r – 163.r), and **Rajas of Jagadhri and Buria** (ff. 166.r – 168.r).

The third *ṭabaqah* comprises notices of the **Nawabs of Farrukhnagar** (ff. 170.r – 174.r), **Nawabs of Dujana** (ff. 176.r – 178.r), **Bhatti Nawabs of Rania and Fatehabad** (ff. 180.r – 185.r), and **Nawabs of Bahawalpur** (ff. 187.r – 189.r).

The fourth and final *ṭabaqah* consists of descriptions of **Haryana** (ff. 190.r – 193.r), **Hisar** (ff. 194.r – 196.v), **Hansi** (ff. 197.r -200.r), and **Kanund** (ff. 201.r – 204.r).

Our manuscript concludes with a painting and text noticed neither in the preface nor the index. The text is an account of the **Rajas of Bharatpur** (ff. 206.r – 226.r), together with a painting of the then Raja Balwant Singh (f. 205.v).

The binding and paintings are treated in greater depth below, as are the production and provenance of the manuscript.

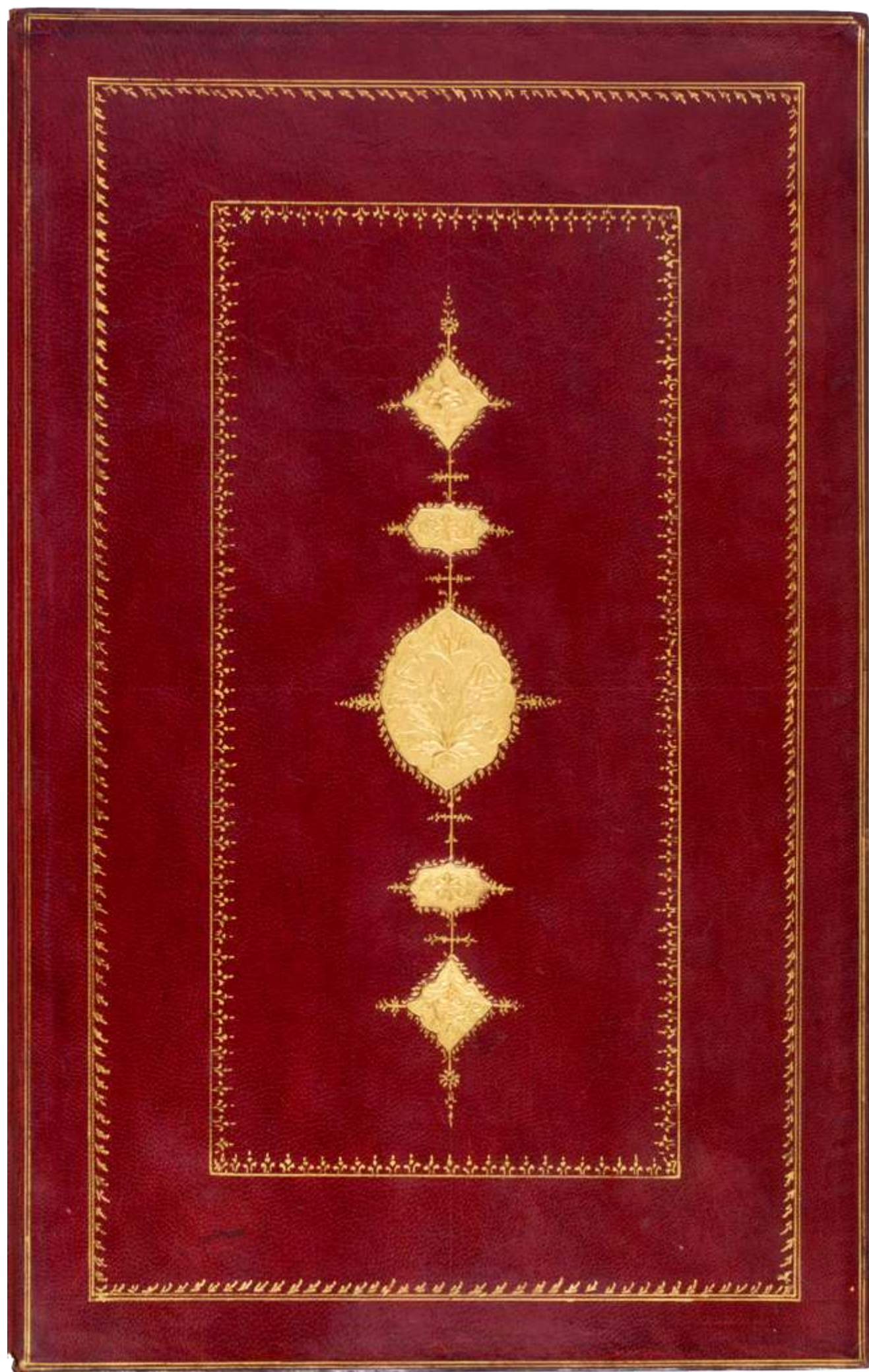
The binding

The binding of the Quaritch *Tazkira* is both a work of beauty in its own right, and one which establishes a continuous chain of craftsmanship between the successive productions of Skinner's luxury commissions. The three iterations of the *Tashrīh* and *Tazkira* display, broadly speaking, two styles of cover decoration. The first, employed in both Malcolm manuscripts and the Watkins and Thoresby copies of the *Tashrīh*, is that of painting decorative patterns in yellow-gold pigment directly onto the leather of the binding, in imitation of gilt-tooling. The second, imitating Safavid and Mughal models of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, involves the laying down of cut sections of gilt-paper, which are subsequently impressed with panel-stamps, punches, or rolls, recreating the effect of tooling the entire cover in gold. For examples of bindings whose form is clearly echoed in the bindings of the Thoresby and Watkins copies of the *Tazkira*, see the binding (without flap) of a copy of the *Anvār-i suhaylī* now at the British Library¹ and the binding (with flap) of a copy of *Yusūf va Zulaykhā* at the Walters.²

This binding style is employed only in the case of the Quaritch and Watkins *Tazkira*, and suggests that Skinner gained access to a far more competent binder between the production of the Malcolm *Tazkira* and the two subsequent copies. It is worth noting that the effect achieved by this binder is inventive and visually arresting in the extreme; his application of blue and red pigment to the panel stamps of the covers provides a depth and richness which is splendid to behold.







The binder of the present manuscript is linked, via a portion of the Salting Bequest now held at the National Art Library in London,³ to the binder of an illustrated *Gulistān* commissioned by Maharao Banni Singh of Alwar, completed in 1856, and now in the Government Museum at Alwar. The four detached covers which constitute the relevant portion of the Salting Bequest each appear to come from unique bindings, and are arranged to a similar scheme; a large, rectangular field, panel-stamped, surrounded by gilt-painted borders, punch-stamped rules, and gilt frames stamped in floral patterns, with three of the four having frames formed of small, floral cartouches. The central panels are painted in blue to create patterns, and one of the four covers has a central panel whose patterns have been traced with blue paint. One panel stamp, nearly identical to that of the Watkins and Thoresby *Tazkira* bindings, has been used for two of the covers, one of which includes a thick frame of floral gilt-stamping so similar to that of the Quaritch manuscript as to suggest the work of the same binder. The other two employ another, distinct panel stamp, overpainted in blue to a greater extent, but taken as a whole these four covers are clearly evidence of additional work by the same binder as he of the Watkins and Thoresby bindings. The only provenance supplied upon their accession was that they derived from Alwar.

The Salting-Alwar connection is suggestive in itself, but an examination of the binding of the 1856 *Gulistān*⁴ reveals its binding to be the work of the same binder. The pattern of painting corresponds to that of the detached covers in the Salting bequest; the panel stamp employed is almost certainly identical; and the arrangement of the framing cartouches in the margins is exactly the same as that on three of the four Salting bindings. The only noticeable difference is that the *Gulistān* binding's central panels appear to have been painted in at least three colours, with a yellow paint used in alternation with the blue for the ground, and details of the stamp picked out in red (similar to features of both the Watkins and Thoresby copies of the *Tazkira*).

The evidence then is that Skinner, or perhaps Muhammad Bakhsh at Skinner's behest, selected a binder of noticeable skill and invention for two of his commissioned manuscripts, and used this binder's work to mark out the Watkins and Thoresby copies of the *Tazkira* as books concerned with the nobility, as opposed to the more modest bindings of the accompanying copies of the *Tashrīh*. This same binder continued to find employment in the service of patrons of suitable wealth and taste, such as the Maharao of Alwar, for whom he bound at least one manuscript. The disbound covers in the Salting Bequest suggest that this binder completed at least four bindings, in addition to the three such surviving examples identified here. The present manuscript is thus one of only three such complete bindings known to survive, and a remarkable testament to the vibrancy of Indian bookbinding in the nineteenth century.

1. BL MS Add. 18579.
2. Walters Art Museum MS W.644.
3. Haldane, Duncan, *Islamic bookbindings*, London, 1981; no. 171 (illustrated). NAL catalogue barcode: 38041800154486.
4. Misra, Neeru, *Splendours of Rajasthan paintings*, Delhi, 2008; p.25. The illustration is regrettably low-quality, but the same image has been printed onto the book's dustwrapper, somewhat magnified, allowing a reasonable comparison to be made between the Salting bindings and that of the Alwar manuscript.

The paintings

Comparison of the three illustrated copies of the *Tazkirat al-umarā* reveals significant variation amongst their paintings, in terms of composition, palette, program, and simple quantity. The Quaritch and Malcolm manuscripts each contain an otherwise unrepresented painting; the former, a painting of Balwant Singh of Bharatpur, the latter a portrait of Skinner himself, dressed in European uniform, in vivid contrast to the other paintings, which are all after various Mughal and provincial models, albeit with occasional incongruous elements. A feature common to all three manuscripts is an index of paintings, preceding the preface and body of the *Tazkira*. The paintings are given in numbered order of appearance, with each entry including the name or names of those depicted, and the folio number opposite which the painting ought to appear. (The first page of the Quaritch copy's index is illustrated overleaf.) All three manuscripts are supplied with contemporary foliations, but each of these foliations excludes those folios with paintings,¹ which, taken in conjunction with the rather untraditional introduction of an index of illustrations before all else, strongly suggests that Skinner was influenced by the arrangement of plates in contemporary European books, and the prefatory text directing the printer to place each plate opposite a particular page.

This concept does not seem to have translated smoothly into the execution of Skinner's commissions. The indexes of all three manuscripts seem to have been copied from the same text exemplar, in advance of either illustrations or the body of the text. The Watkins copy calls for thirty seven paintings, but in fact contains only thirty three, though blanks for the missing paintings remain, suggesting that it may have been produced at speed. The Malcolm copy calls for thirty seven, all present, but fails to notice the painting of Skinner only a few folios past the index itself. The Quaritch copy entirely ignores the last painting contained within it, despite the presence of an entire page ruled as if for the extension of the index. The two figures (Quaritch paintings 33 and 34) depicted opposite each other are noted as a single painting with two figures in the index, as in the other two copies. The Watkins copy illustrates only one of them, Sher Singh of Buria (Quaritch 34), but opposite a blank clearly intended for a painting of the missing Gulab Singh (Quaritch 33). This arrangement of Sher Singh and Gulab Singh is much the more pleasing; what is in the Malcolm copy a cramped composition, is rendered a well-balanced pair of portraits in the present manuscript.

Portraits represented in all three copies vary widely in terms of palette, whether they face in or out (there is much mirroring among them), the presentation of architectural and decorative elements, the backgrounds painted, and in quality, the Malcolm painting of Nawab Zabita Khan (Quaritch 37) noticeably inferior to that of the present copy, though this unevenness in execution seems to be shared between all three copies. The Malcolm copy has been digitised by the British Library,² and the interested reader is advised to compare the digital facsimile with this catalogue's accompanying volume, which illustrates all the paintings present in the Quaritch manuscript. Linda York Leach's catalogue note³ on the Watkins copy at the Chester Beatty is likewise commended to the reader as perhaps the most comprehensive and sensible treatment of Skinner's illustrated manuscripts.

The attribution of these paintings places temptation in the path of cataloguers, for Skinner had a well-documented⁴ relationship with one of the only painters active in Delhi during this period known to us by name, Ghulam Ali Khan. The paintings produced by Ghulam Ali Khan for Skinner, however, are several years earlier than the production of even the Malcolm *Tazkira*, and of an entirely different nature and style. The overwhelming majority of artists active in Delhi during this period did not sign their work, and evidence as to their names, relations, and practices is sorely wanting. It seems most likely that the Quaritch *Tazkira*, and the other two copies, were illustrated by a changing pool of artists retained by Muhammad Bakhsh as required, working to pictorial exemplars supplied by Skinner. This question of production will be addressed in the following section. Despite their anonymous, unattributed execution, the paintings of the present manuscript are vividly coloured, impeccably preserved, and possessed of a surprisingly human quality, given the overwhelming formality of pose and place which prevails in them, and one finds amidst the pomp and ostentation of emeralds, court regalia, and elaborate palace interiors, that most of the rulers portrayed have been imbued with a surprising element of pathos.

1. This might be explained otherwise were the paintings simply inserted as single leaves after the completion of the body of the manuscript, prior to binding, but the paintings in the Malcolm copy, if inserted, were pasted onto existing leaves; the illustrations in the Quaritch manuscript were painted directly onto laminated pairs of leaves. The Watkins illustrations were likely produced in the same fashion as the Quaritch ones. Rather than a multitude of copies of the same image produced at once, and subsequently recycled into manuscripts as required, Skinner would have had a pictorial exemplar for the *Tazkira* together with a text exemplar, from which copies were produced. This might explain the significant variation between iterations of the same portrait, as the same workshop of artists reproduced portraits years apart.
2. Accessed at the following address: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_27254.
3. Leach, Linda York, *Mughal and other Indian paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, London, 1995; vol. II, pp.726-741.
4. ... by the slender standards prevalent in the attribution of Company paintings. Paintings inscribed by Ghulam Ali Khan, produced for Skinner in 1827 and 1828, are held at the National Army Museum (1956-02-27, 1-3).

The index overleaf lists the paintings of the Quaritch copy in order of appearance, identifying the rulers and notables portrayed where possible, and providing the caption text from the manuscript where it is not. It also acts as an index for the volume of illustrations which accompanies this catalogue.

Index of paintings

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Maharana Jawan Singh of Udaipur
(f. 15.v) ‡  </p> <p>2. Maharaja Man Singh of Jodphur (f. 27.v) ‡  </p> <p>3. Maharaja Ratan Singh of Bikaner
(f. 44.r) ‡  </p> <p>4. Maharaja Kalyan Singh of Kishangarh
(f. 48.v) ‡  </p> <p>5. Maharaja Jagat Singh of Jaipur (f. 52.r) ‡  </p> <p>6. Rao Raja Nup Singh of Uniara (f. 59.r) ‡  </p> <p>7. Thakur Karam Singh of Jhalai (f. 62.r) ‡</p> <p>8. Thakur Chand Singh of Duni (f. 65.r) ‡  </p> <p>9. Maharao Raja Bakhtawar Singh of Alwar
(f. 68.v) ‡  </p> <p>10. Manohar Singh of the Khangarot (f. 73.v) ‡  </p> <p>11. Thakur Jiwan Singh of Dudu (f. 75.v) ‡  </p> <p>12. Thakur Samir Singh of Pachewar
(f. 79.v) ‡  </p> <p>13. Thakur Bhup Singh of Daki (f. 82.v) ‡  </p> <p>14. Chaman Singh of Todri (f. 85.v) ‡  </p> <p>15. Raja Bakhtawar Singh of Khetri (f. 87.v) ‡</p> <p>16. Raja Udai Singh of Nawalgarh (f. 91.v) ‡  </p> <p>17. Thakur Shyam Singh of Bissau (f. 94.v) ‡  </p> <p>18. Rao Raja Lachman Singh of Sikar (f. 97.v) ‡</p> <p>19. Rao Lachman Singh of Patan (f. 100.v) ‡  </p> <p>20. Raja Lachman Singh of Nimrana
(f. 104.v) ‡  </p> <p>21. Raja Puran Singh of Rewari (f. 109.v) ‡  </p> <p>22. Aman Singh of Sonipat (r) & Tuta Ram (l)
(f. 118.v) ‡  </p> | <p>23. Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore
(f. 122.r) ‡  </p> <p>24. Raja Sangat Singh of Jind (f. 130.v) ‡  </p> <p>25. Raja Karam Singh of Patiala (f. 136.v) ‡  </p> <p>26. Bhai Udai Singh of Kaithal (f. 141.v) ‡  </p> <p>27. Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha (f. 144.v) ‡  </p> <p>28. Sardar Fateh Singh of Kapurthala
(f. 147.v) ‡  </p> <p>29. The son of the Raja of Thanesar (f. 152.v) ‡</p> <p>30. Hira Singh of Kalsia (f. 155.v) ‡  </p> <p>31. The Rani of the late Rup Singh of Radwar
(f. 158.v) ‡  </p> <p>32. Sardar Ajit Singh of Ladwa (f. 161.v) ‡  </p> <p>33. Sardar Gulab Singh of Jagadhri (f. 164.v) ‡  </p> <p>34. Sardar Sher Singh of Buria (f. 165.r) ‡</p> <p>35. Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Farrukhnagar
(f. 169.v) ‡  </p> <p>36. Nawab Muhammad Dundi Khan of Dujana
(f. 175.r) ‡  </p> <p>37. Nawab Zabita Khan Bhatti (f. 179.v) ‡  </p> <p>38. Nawab Dalil Khan of Bahawalpur
(f. 186.v) ‡  </p> <p>39. Maharaja Balwant Singh of Bharatpur
(f. 205.v)</p> |
|---|---|

‡ indicates that the figure portrayed appears in the Malcolm *Tazkira*.

  indicates that the figure portrayed appears in the Watkins *Tazkira*.

فہرست نامہائی اجماع غیرہ مندرجہ کتابت کردہ لامر قلمبر

لمبر	نام راجہ	ورق	لمبر	نام راجہ	ورق
۱	رانا جواں سنکھ اوی پور والہ	۳۳	۶	نوپ سنکھ اونیارہ والہ	۳۶۴
۲	راجہ مان سنکھ جودھ پور والہ	۱۳	۷	کرم سنکھ جملہ والہ	۳۸
۳	راجہ رتن سنکھ پکانیر والہ	۲۷	۸	چاند سنکھ دون والہ	۴۰
۴	راجہ کلیان سنکھ کشن کدہ والہ	۴۹	۹	بنخا ورسنکھ الور والہ	۴۲
۵	راجہ جگت سنکھ پیپور والہ	۵۴	۱۰	منو سنکھ پور امراپان کنگاروت	۴۶

بعون یاری حضرت باری عن اسمہ این کتاب حقایق راجکان وغیرہ کہ موسوم است
بتذکرۃ الامرا بتاریخ سینزدہم شہر محرم الحرام سنہ ۱۲۵۲ ہجری پر ایہ اختتام پو شد
حررہ اضعف العباد محمد بخش غفرلہ

Production & provenance

The Quaritch manuscript is the only one of Skinner's luxury commissions of the 1830s to bear both a scribal signature and a date of completion. The colophon, illustrated above, informs the reader that this book was completed on the 13th of Muharram, 1252 Hijri (29th of April, 1836), by one Muhammad Bakhsh. The only other signed manuscript among Skinner's luxury commissions was also signed by Muhammad Bakhsh,¹ and a tranche of loose paintings and text leaves sold at Christie's in 2012 were similarly signed by Muhammad Bakhsh;² these are likely to be associated with the Bakhsh-signed copy of the *Tashrīh* sold at Christie's in 1981, and may represent either text and painting drafts, or paintings worked up but never executed within the manuscript itself (it contained, when sold, only one hundred and three miniatures, the smallest program of illustration of any of the three illustrated copies of the *Tashrīh*).

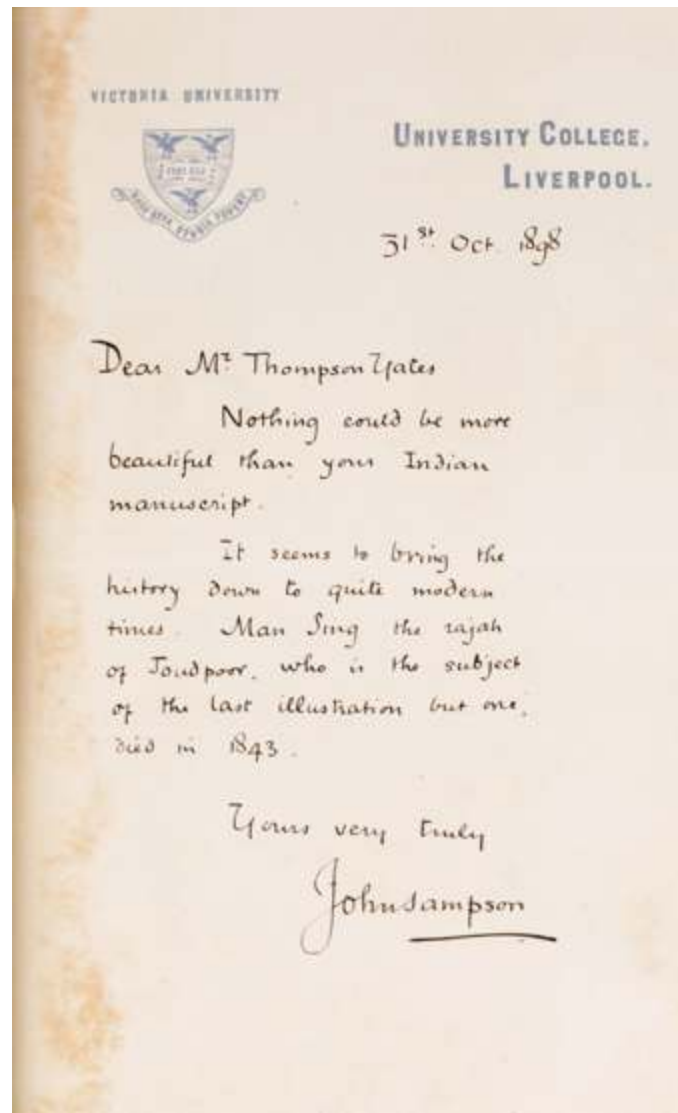
The binding of the present manuscript is plainly the work of the same binder as that of the Watkins *Tazkira*, as discussed previously, and all six illustrated copies are stylistically consistent, in terms of painting (allowing for the vagaries of time and the shifting nature of an ad-hoc atelier comprising multiple artists), *mise-en-page*, and hand (though as with the paintings, the manuscripts may well be the work of multiple copyists within a single workshop). All six copies are well beyond the scope of any workshop Skinner is known to have retained; the cavalry treatise and

unillustrated text copies of *Tazkira* and *Tashrīh* are most likely the work of such binders and scribes as Skinner retained on a consistent basis and are plainly inferior, if functional, copies. The relationship between the painters in Skinner's regular employment and those who executed his illustrated commissions may be more nuanced, but in the absence of inscriptions or signatures the quicksand of stylistic attribution seems best avoided. Paintings for both *Tazkira* and *Tashrīh* were most likely produced according to a pictorial exemplar produced under Skinner's direct supervision; in the case of the Malcolm copies, the paintings may well have been supplied in advance. The Watkins and Thoresby-Quaritch manuscripts, however, have paintings that were completed within the context of the manuscript's production, and were not separate pieces added to a completed codex.

Artists in Skinner's employ may well have followed his commissions to the workshop undertaking them; binders, illuminators, painters, and calligraphers are all reasonably mobile professions, and seem similarly likely to have followed the money, so to speak. The standard of Skinner's commissions is far beyond that which the patrons of Delhi were capable of supporting by the 1830s, and this suggests that the Bakhsh of this manuscript is not, in fact, a Bakhsh of Delhi at all.

Money, power, and patrons were to be found in Ranjit Singh's capital Lahore, and the Muhammad Bakhsh who signed the Quaritch manuscript is most likely Muhammad Bakhsh of Lahore, a bookseller who ran a bazaar-workshop from about 1819 until the 1840s; he had died by 1854, when his son completed a manuscript, naming his father in such a way as to indicate that he was deceased;³ this Bakhsh's identifiable work and probable movements are outlined by Barbara Schmitz in a 2010 essay.⁴ This association is speculative, and the evidence involved circumstantial, but the coincidences are too numerous to be easily dismissed.

All six of Skinner's luxury manuscripts are substantial volumes. The three copies of the *Tashrīh* verge on the monumental, and given the relatively brief period in which they were produced, and the number of skilled craftsmen required even for one such manuscript, it is entirely improbable that Skinner's own retained artisans could have completed such a body of work to such a standard. Thus, a workshop or atelier is the most likely site of production for the commissioned manuscripts, one in which individual craftsmen came and went but a certain stylistic unity might be maintained across a period of years. The painters were probably Delhi men, and Bakhsh himself likely secured Skinner's commissions in Delhi, received the necessary exemplars and artisans, and returned to Lahore. Bakhsh completed at least one manuscript in Delhi,⁵ on the evidence of a Mughal regnal date in its colophon, suggesting that in 1831 he was either in, or recently returned from, that city, which fits well with the chronology of production suggested earlier in this catalogue. By 1846 he seems to have been in Bahawalpur, where he executed a painting with one of his sons, Karim Bakhsh; in 1849 Karim Bakhsh, still in Bahawalpur, completed and inscribed another painting, with features somewhat reminiscent of the paintings found in the three copies of Skinner's *Tazkira*. Both paintings appeared at auction in 1990;⁶ their present locations are unknown.



Skinner's commissions were, in many ways, rather modern undertakings. He exported his patronage to another city, under a different political power, and entrusted the execution of his work to an alien agent. This may explain the degree to which these six manuscripts and their production passed beneath the radar of Skinner's Delhi peers, for the bazaar-work of Lahore would have been a world away from that of the English residents of Delhi, even those on close terms with Skinner and his family. On the whole, the process seems to have been a successful and satisfactory one, though one particular quirk of the Quaritch manuscript suggests that such long-distance commissions were not without their pitfalls. The index of paintings supplied is clearly that found in the text exemplar used for all three illustrated copies of the *Tazkira*, reproduced uncritically, which thus ignores Quaritch 33/34 and 39, the variant paintings of the copy (though even the Malcolm copy, earliest of the three, has an index with a similar omission, the paintings of Skinner himself). The more suggestive irregularity is the incremental increase in the inaccuracy of the foliation supplied in the Quaritch manuscript's index, which suggests that it was prepared from an index keyed to a text exemplar with one line count, before the text was actually written out with a greater number of lines to the page, thus leading to this curiously

consistent irregularity in the foliation of the index, as opposed to the actual foliation of the finished Quaritch manuscript.

The matter of provenance is mercifully more straightforward. The Quaritch manuscript would seem to have passed from Lahore to Skinner to one Thoresby, most likely the Thoresby who appears in the subscribers' list of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1836,⁷ as 'Thoresby, Capt., C., Jeypore', and is mentioned in the Imperial Gazetteer as directing resettlement activities at Sirsa, near Hisar, in 1838.⁸ The lack of seal impression or inscription suggests that the Quaritch *Tazkira*, unlike the other two illustrated copies, was presented directly to its recipient. Thoresby's ownership inscription comprises a single Persian inscription, in a ropey, clearly non-native hand, found at f. 243.v in the present manuscript. The same page includes the only other firm evidence of ownership in the manuscript, a brief tipped-in note from John Sampson, first librarian of University College Liverpool, to 'Mr Thompson Yates' (presumably Samuel Ashton Thompson Yates), concerning the present manuscript, dated 1898 (illustrated above).

The Quaritch manuscript appears to have passed through the British book trade before reaching Thompson Yates, on the evidence of various pencil inscriptions found within it. The paintings are each supplied with English captions, erroneous titles are found at both front and rear, and there is even a wildly inaccurate foliation and count of the paintings at f. 244.r. An apparent bookseller's price code appears at 245.v, though this has, regrettably, eluded identification. Thompson Yates's motives for its purchase are likewise obscure; he was known as a collector of European emblem books, not Oriental manuscripts. It remained in the hands of his descendants until the present day, slipping through the twentieth-century entirely unnoticed, a remarkable achievement for such a magnificent manuscript.

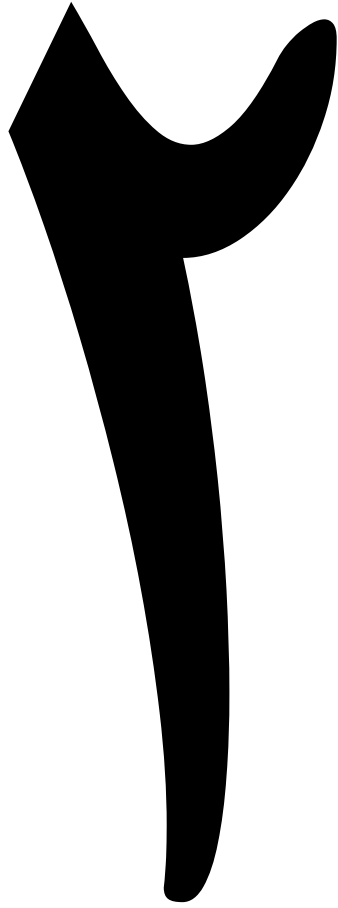
1. Christie's, sale, 'Important Islamic and Indian manuscripts and miniatures', 23 April, 1981; lot 155.
2. Christie's, sale, 'Art of the Islamic and Indian worlds', 26 April, 2012; lots 354-357.
3. BL MS Ethé 714.
4. Schmitz, Barbara, 'Muhammad Bakhsh *Sahhaf* and the illustrated book in Ranjit Singh's Lahore', *Marg*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2010; pp. 86-103.
5. *Ibid.*; p. 94. The manuscript is now in the Government Museum at Alwar.
6. Sotheby's, sale, 'Oriental manuscripts and miniatures', 26 April, 1990; lots 98-99.
7. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. V, Calcutta, 1836; p. xvi.
8. Meyer, William Stevenson, et al., *Imperial gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908-1931; v. 23, p. 45.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

THE 39 PAINTINGS

CONTAINED WITHIN

THE 1836 *TAZKIRAT AL-UMARA*

OF COLONEL JAMES SKINNER

BERNARD QUARITCH LTD

Note

This volume of illustrations is best consulted in conjunction with the index found at p. 19 of the accompanying catalogue, though the caption on the verso of each illustration also identifies each figure and provides regnal years where possible.

The paintings are numbered in order of their appearance in the manuscript.

In the verso captions:

‡ indicates that the figure portrayed is depicted in the Malcolm *Tazkira*.

£ indicates that the figure portrayed is depicted in the Watkins *Tazkira*.



رانا جوان سنگھ اودی پورولہ

1

MAHARANA JAWAN SINGH OF UDAIPUR

(r. 1828 - 1838)

‡

£



راجہ مان سنگھ جو دہپور والہ

2

MAHARAJA MAN SINGH OF JODPHUR

(r. 1804 - 1843)

‡

£



راجہ رتن سنگھ پکانیروالہ

3

MAHARAJA RATAN SINGH OF BIKANER

(r. 1828 - 1852)

‡

£



راجہ کلیمان سنگدکشن کدہ ولد

4

MAHARAJA KALYAN SINGH OF KISHANGARH

(r. 1797 - 1838)

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راجپوت سنگھ جی پور والہ

5

MAHARAJA JAGAT SINGH OF JAIPUR

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‡

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نوپسنگه اونیاره والہ

6

RAO RAJA NUP SINGH OF UNIARA

‡

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کرم سنگہ پہلا میوالہ

7

THAKUR KARAM SINGH OF JHALAI





چاند سنگہ دون الہ

8

THAKUR CHAND SINGH OF DUNI

†

£



نخا ورسنگه الوروالہ

9

MAHARAO RAJA BAKHTAWAR SINGH OF ALWAR

(r. 1790 - 1815)

‡

£



نورسنگه پیرامرایان کهنکارت

10

MANOHAR SINGH OF THE KHANGAROT

‡

£



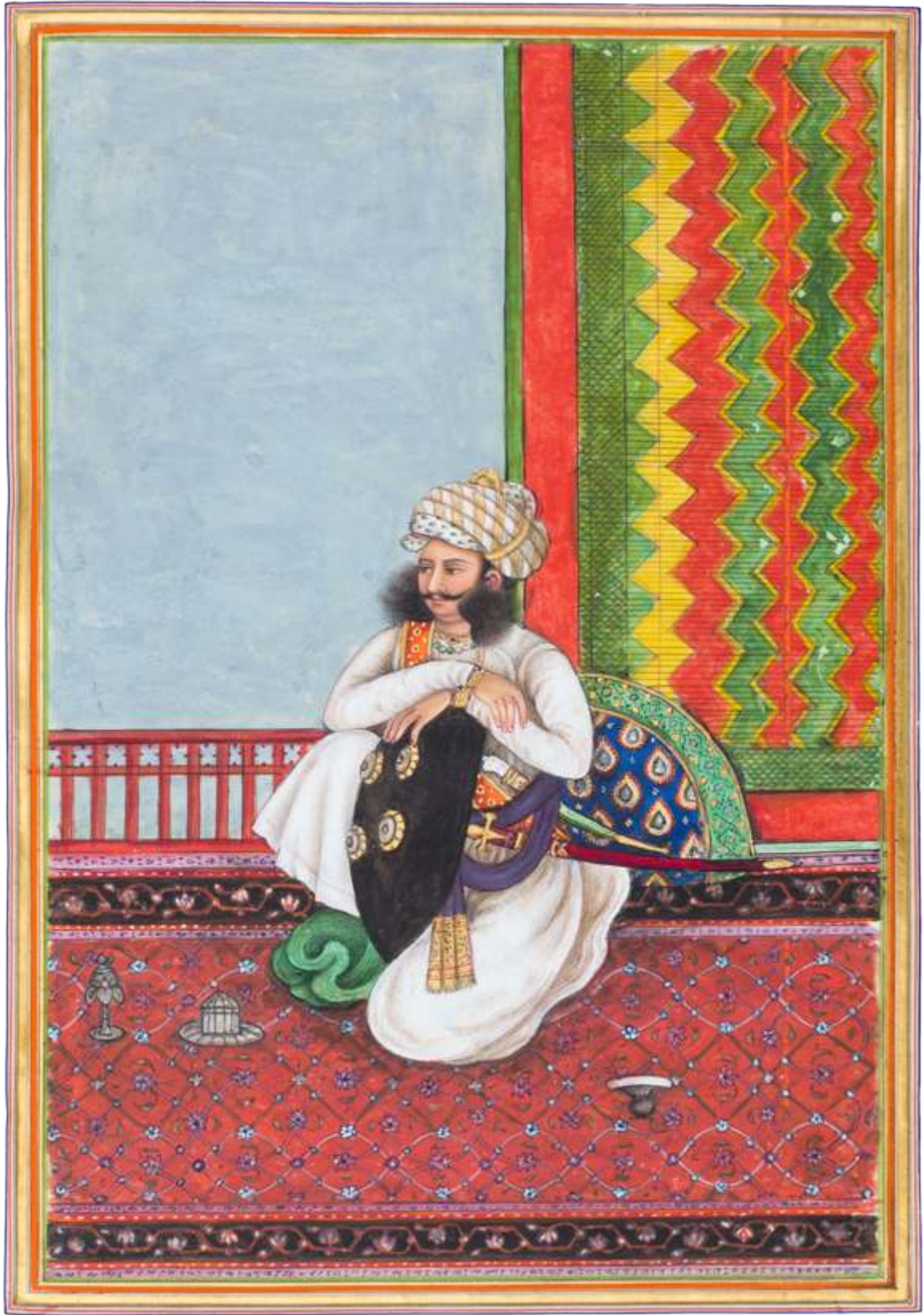
چون شکوه و دوا

11

THAKUR JIWAN SINGH OF DUDU

‡

£



سمیر سنگہ پھیروالہ

12

THAKUR SAMIR SINGH OF PACHEWAR

‡

£



بہو پنکھ ڈکی والہ

13

THAKUR BHUP SINGH OF DAKI

‡

£



چمن سنگہ تورری والا

14

CHAMAN SINGH OF TODRI

‡

£



بختاور سنگھ کتیری الہ

15

RAJA BAKHTAWAR SINGH OF KHETRI

(r. 1826 - 1829)





اودی سنگد نول کڈہ وڈر

16

RAJA UDAI SINGH OF NAWALGARH

(r. 1790 - 1828)

‡

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سیام سنگہ بہا مووالہ

17

THAKUR SHYAM SINGH OF BISSAU

(r. 1787 - 1831)

‡

£



پہمن سنگہ سیکر والہ

18

RAO RAJA LACHMAN SINGH OF SIKAR

(r. 1795 - 1815)





پہمن سنکھ پائٹن والہ

19

RAO LACHMAN SINGH OF PATAN

‡

£



لچمن سنگه نیراز والہ

20

RAJA LACHMAN SINGH OF NIMRANA

(r. 1828 - 1838)

‡

£



راو پورن سنگھ ریواری والہ

21

RAJA PURAN SINGH OF REWARI

‡

£



طوطا رام

سونی پت والہ

امن سنگھ

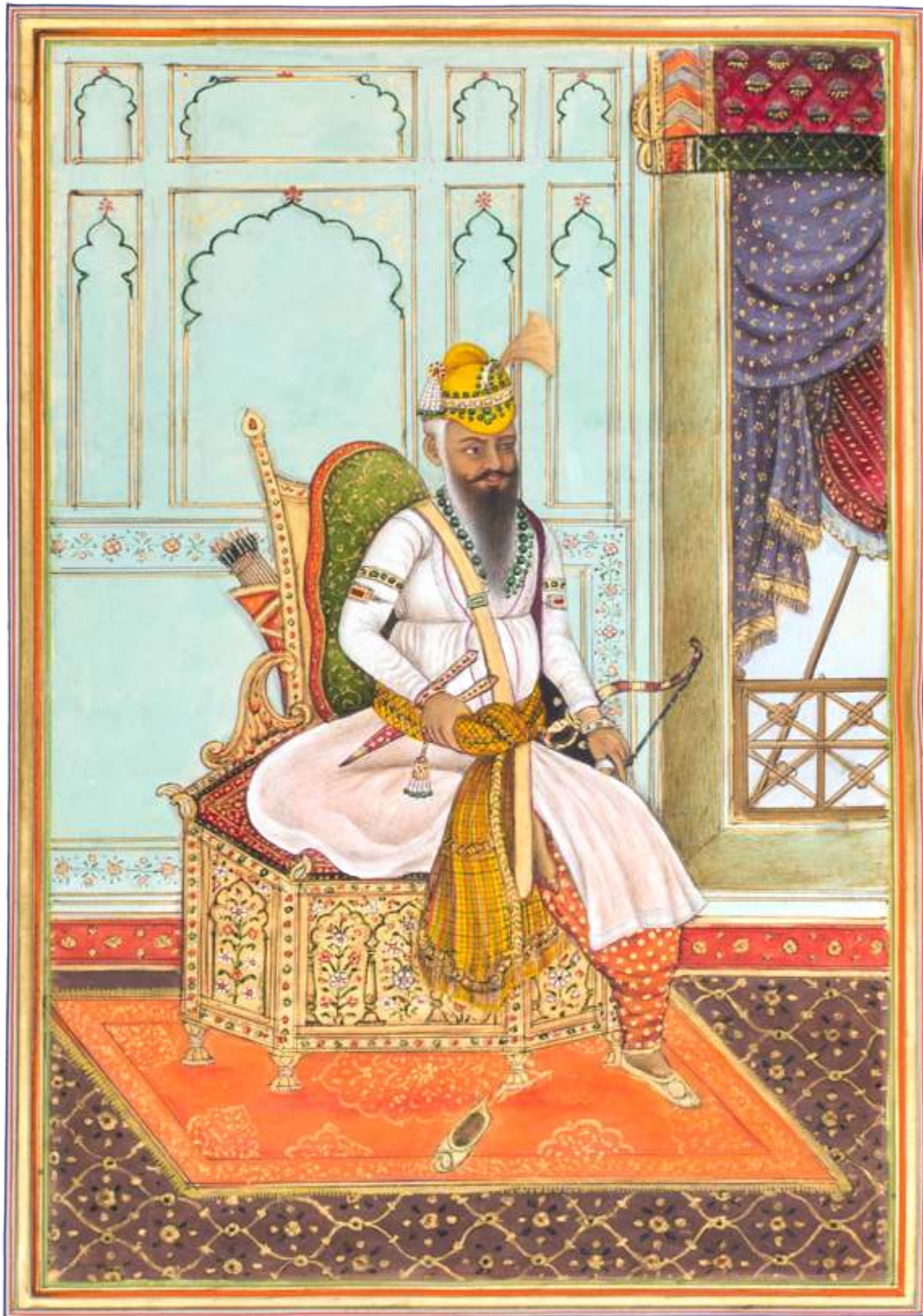
22

AMAN SINGH OF OF SONIPAT [R]

TUTA RAM [L]

‡

ℰ



سردار نجیت سنگھ لاسور والہ

23

MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH OF LAHORE

(r. 1799 - 1839)

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راج سنگیت سنگیت والہ

24

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25

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26

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27

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سردار فتح سنگھ آلوہا

28

SARDAR FATEH SINGH OF KAPURTHALA

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‡

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پسر راجہ تہا نیر

29

THE SON OF THE RAJA OF THANESAR





میر اسنکد کلیہ

30

HIRA SINGH OF KALSIA

‡

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رانی روپنکه مرحوم ردورول

THE RANI OF THE LATE RUP SINGH OF RADWAR





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32

SARDAR AJIT SINGH OF LADWA

‡

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34

SARDAR SHER SINGH OF BURIA

‡

£



شیر سنگہ بوڑیہ والا



کلاب نکه بجا در می الہ

33

SARDAR GULAB SINGH OF JAGADHRI





نواب مظفر خان فرخنگر والہ

35

NAWAB MUZAFFAR KHAN OF FARRUKHNAGAR

(r. 1785 - 1810)

‡

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نواب دوندی خان دوجانہ وال

36

NAWAB MUHAMMAD DUNDI KHAN OF DUJANA

(r. 1825 - 1850)

‡

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نواب ضابط خان بہٹی

37

NAWAB ZABITA KHAN BHATTI

(r. 1808 - 1818)

‡

£



نواب لیل خان بہاولپور والہ

38

NAWAB DALIL KHAN OF BAHAWALPUR

(r. 1828 - 1838)

‡

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راجہ بلونت سنگھ بہت پور والہ

39

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