

Archæological Survey of India

REPORT
OF
A TOUR IN THE PUNJAB
IN
1878-79.

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“What is aimed at is an accurate description, illustrated by plans, measurements, drawings, or photographs, and by copies of inscriptions, of such remains as most deserve notice, with the history of them so far as it may be traceable, and the record of the traditions that are preserved regarding them.”—LORD CANNING.

“What the learned world demand of us in India is to be quite certain of our data, to place the monumental record before them exactly as it now exists, and to interpret it faithfully and literally.”—JAMES PRINSEP.

CALCUTTA:
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING,
1882.

Of Hâji Jamâl all that is known is that he was a pupil of Mâhammad Mumin, the occupant of the other tomb.

23.—NÛRMAHAL.

The small town Nûrmahal in the Jâlandhar Doâb was named after the famous Empress of Jahângir, and in honour of her its Bâdshâhi sarai was built of unusual size, and with two highly ornamented stone gateways. Nûrmahal is situated 25 miles to the east-south-east of Sultânpur, 16 miles to the south of Jâlandhar, and 13 miles to the west of Phalor. The site is an old one, as proved by the large bricks, 13 by 11 by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, which are dug up in great numbers, as well as by numerous coins found on the spot, which range from the earliest times down to the present day. I obtained one punch-marked silver coin, one copper piece of the satrap Rajubul, and one of Mahipâl of Delhi; besides numerous Muhammadan coins of all ages. The bricks are finger-marked by three concentric semicircles with a dot in the centre.

In 1863 I was informed that the old Hindu name of the place was *Kot Kahlor*, and I see that the Deputy Commissioner of Jâlandhar has stated the same thing in the Gazetteer of the Jâlandhar District. In 1879 some of the people gave the old name as *Kot kapûr*. But there is no doubt that both of these names have originated in a misreading of a part of the inscription over the western gateway of the sarai. The words are clearly "*ba-khitah Phalor*, in the district of Phalor" and not *Ba-takht kahlor* or *ba-kot-kapûr*, as read by the people. I had an inked impression of this part of the inscription made before all the people, and on showing it to them they admitted that my reading was correct.

The sarai is 551 feet square outside, including the octagonal towers at the corners. The western gateway is a double-storeyed building faced on the outside with red sandstone from the Fatehpur Sikri quarries. The whole front is divided into panels ornamented with sculpture; but the relief is low and the workmanship coarse. There are angels and fairies, elephants and rhinoceroses, camels and horses, monkeys and peacocks, with men on horseback and archers on elephants. The sides of the gateway are in much better taste, the ornament being limited to foliated scroll-work with birds sitting on the branches. But even in this the design is much better than the execution, as there is little relief. Over the entrance there is a long inscription.

There was also a similar gateway on the eastern side, but this is now only a mass of ruin, and all the stone facing has disappeared. There was also an inscription over this gateway, which will be given presently, as a copy of it was fortunately preserved by one of the inhabitants.

In the north side of the court-yard there is a masjid, and in the middle a fine well. On each side there are 32 rooms, each 10 feet 10 inches square, with a verandah in front. In each corner there were three rooms, one large and two small. The Emperor's apartments formed the centre block of the south side, three storeys in height. The rooms were highly finished, but all their beauty is now concealed under the prevailing whitewash. The main room was oblong in shape, with a half-octagon recess on two sides, similar to the large rooms in the corners of the sarai, one of which is shown in the accompanying plate.¹ From this description it will be seen that there was accommodation inside for about 100 people. But the great mass of the Imperial followers found their quarters outside, in an exterior court about 2,000 feet square, some of the walls of which were pointed out to me in November 1838; all these have disappeared now.

The sarai is said to have been built by Zakariya Khan, the Názim of the Subah of Jalandhar, during the reign of Jahangir. His inscription, which is cut in sunken letters on the right jamb of the west gateway, says nothing about the *building* of the sarai, while the main inscription over the western gateway distinctly states that the sarai was erected by the order of Núrjahán [*ba-hukam Nur Jahán Begam*]. I suppose, therefore, that the actual work was superintended by Zakariya Khan, of whom I can learn nothing; but who appears from his inscription to have been an energetic man. This inscription consists of six short lines, as follows:—

*Akhar ráhdári abwáb
Mamnáh bamújib amar Nawáb
Zakariya Khán bahádur Náziy
Subah muáf harkas az, Fojdá-
rán Doábah bagírad, bar sanao.
talák, talák, talák.*

“Taking payment from travellers is forbidden, the Nawab Zakariya Khan, Bahadur, Governor of the district, having exempted them. Should any Fojdar of the Doab collect these dues, may his wives be divorced.”

The expressive word *talák*, three times repeated at the end

¹ See Plate XXI.

of this inscription, means "divorce, or repudiation," and its threefold repetition by a husband is said to be all that is necessary for a formal divorce. As this record is engraved on the gateway of the Bādshāhi sarai, I conclude that the rooms of the sarai were available for the use of travellers whenever the Emperor was not moving himself; or perhaps it was only the outer court, which has now disappeared, that was so appropriated.

The inscription over the eastern gateway must have been put up before that on the western gate, as it gives the earlier date of A.H. 1028 only, whereas the latter gives the later date of A.H. 1030 in addition to that of 1028.

The date is given in the last line, according to the *abjad* or numerical powers of the letters

"Abad shud za Nūr Jahān Begam ain Sarai."

The whole inscription in five rhyming verses is as follows:—

Over the-East or Delhi Gate.

- 1.—Shāhè Jahān badāur Jahāngir bādshāh
Shānhinshāhè zamin-o-zamān sâyè Khudā
- 2.—Māmūr kard baske Jahān rā ba-adl-o-dād
tā-āsmān rasīd binā bar sarè binā
- 3.—Nūr-e-Jahān ke hamdam-o-hamsāz khās aust
jarmūd ain Sarai wasi è sipahar sâ
- 4.—Chūn ain bināi kher ba rûè zamīn nihād
bādā bināi umrash jāwed bar bakā
- 5.—tārīkh ain chūn gasht mūrattib ba-guft akal
ābād shud za Nūr Jahān Begam ain Sarai

- 1.—During the reign of Jahāngir Bādshah, lord of the Universe,
king of kings of this world and his time, the shadow of God.
- 2.—The fame of whose goodness and justice overspread the earth
Until it reached even the highest heavens above.
- 3.—His wife and trusted companion, Nūr Jahān,
commanded the erection of this Sarai, wide as the heavens.
- 4.—When this fortunate building rose upon the face of the earth,
May its walls last for ever and ever!
- 5.—The date of its foundation wisdom found in the words
"This Sarai was founded by Nūr Jahān Begam."

The inscription over the west gateway, which is in four rhyming verses, is as follows:

Over the West or Lahor Gate.

- 1.—Ba-daur adl Jahāngir Shāh Akbar Shāh
kih āsmān-o-zamīn misl-au nādārad yād
- 2.—bināi Nūr Sarā shud bā-khitah-Phalor
ba-hūkam Nūr Jahān Begam farishtah-nihād

- 3.—barâi sâl binâyash sūkhan warè khûsh gûft
ke shud za Nur Jahân Begam ain Sarâ âbâd 1028
4.—chu, shûd tamâm khirad gûft bahar târîkhash
ba-shûd za Nûr Jahân Begam ain Sarâ âbâd 1030

- 1.—During the just rule of Jahângir Shâh, son of Akbar Shâh,
whose like neither heaven nor earth remembers,
2.—The Nûr Sarai was founded in the district of Phalor
By command of the angel-like Nûr Jahân Begam.
3.—The date of its foundation the poet happily discovered
“ This Sarai was founded by Nûr Jahân Begam ” (1028)
4.—The date of its completion wisdom found in the words
“ This Sarai was erected by Nûr Jahân Begam ” (1030).

The last half line of this inscription gives the date of A.H. 1030 by merely adding the letter B to the seventh half line, thus changing *shud* to *bashûd*, and adding 2 to the number. The words are arranged somewhat differently, the *âbad* being placed at the end of the line.

24.—SUNIT.

Four miles to the west of Ludiana, and to the south of the Ferozpur road, there is a large mound, 1,750 feet in length by 1,200 feet in breadth, on which stands the village of Sunit. Large bricks, 13 by 8 by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, are found here in such a quantity that the Railway contractor obtained ballast sufficient for 18 miles of the Railway from the Satlej to Dorâha sarai. The fort of Ludiana is said to have been built with them, and at the time of my visit I saw several cart-loads being taken away to Ludiana. Large bricks are also found in the fields at three-quarters of a mile to the east towards Ludiana. I saw also two fragments of sculpture in sandstone, one being the body of a male figure, the other the knee of a squatted figure.

But one of the surest tests of the antiquity of a place is the number and variety of the old coins that are found there. At Sunit I obtained upwards of one thousand coins, of which I was able to recognise 576. Amongst them was 1 coin of the Greek King Hermæus, 269 coins of the earlier Indo-Scythians, 132 of the later Indo-Scythians, 1 Gupta coin, and 126 of the Indo-Sassanian period. With them there were 2 old Hindu coins of Amogha bhuti, 1 of Uttama-datta, and 17 of Vyâghra. Of Samanta Deva, about A.D. 900, there were no less than 20 specimens, but strange to say there was only one Muhammadan coin, an Ala-ud-din Muhammad of Delhi, amongst the 576 specimens.