

FESTSCHRIFT

KLAUS BRUHN

zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres

dargebracht von

Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen

herausgegeben von

NALINI BALBIR und JOACHIM K. BAUTZE

1994

Dr. Inge Wezler

Verlag für Orientalistische Fachpublikationen

Reinbek 1994

Jhala Zalim Singh of Kotah, A Great Patron of Rajput Painting

JOACHIM K. BAUTZE

The extent to which Rajrana Jhala Zalim Singh (1740-1823), for many years the divan or chief-minister of the Kotah-state¹ impressed upon his < European > contemporaries can at best be illustrated by contemporary or near contemporary statements on his truly outstanding personality and career.

"The legitimate Raja of Kota is, with his family, kept in close confinement by a person named Zalim Singh, who has long usurped the entire management of public affairs; and is indeed recognized as ruler by all the states of Hindoostan. He is a man of considerable talents; and, though not governing a very extensive territory, has yet contrived to render himself feared and respected by all his neighbours (letter dated 31st January, 1809)"².

"Zalim Singh, Rajah < sic > of Kottah < sic >³, has attained a power, through the influence of his personal character, far exceeding either his military means or the limits of his possessions: wise, consistent, and politic, he manages his own affairs and interferes with those of others with equal prudence: he pays tribute when protection is necessary, but his character causes him to be treated with comparative moderation. His territories are an asylum to distressed princes and offending subjects; he is a general arbitrator of disputes, and all

¹ Kotah was one of the leading royal states in Rajasthan, cf. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XV, new ed., Oxford 1908, pp. 410-425. We have chosen the spelling of that state as "Kotah", much in contrast to the majority of present-day maps, where it is written as "Kota". "Kota" denotes the geographical place name, whereas "Kotah" alludes to the former kingdom. The present His Highness of Kotah, Maharaja Brijraj Singhji, in his letter to the author dated March 2, 1992, had criticized the authors writing as "Kota" with the following remarks: "I wish you < i.e. J.K. Bautze > could have stuck to spelling *Kotah* in the traditional manner with an "h". This is the old spelling, which is historical and also appears more pleasing to the eye! The new one looks quite naked, if you know what I mean". The reader may object that the spelling "Kota" is not less historical than "Kotah", the final "h" being a British rendering to denote the long vowel at the end, but in this case I have decided to meet the demand of Brijraj Singhji, one of the last great Maharajas of India.

² Broughton 1892, p. 28.

³ As late as 1894, Zalim Singh was mentioned as "the present Raja of Kota", cf. Beale 1894, p. 427.

concur in granting him a respect and confidence which they refuse to each other. His country, though situated in the vortex of anarchy and confusion, is usually exempt from the misery of surrounding districts...(letter to the Marquess of Hastings, dated July 17th, 1817)"⁴.

"Averse to war, he <Zalim Singh> appears early to have commenced that system by which he has in the course of forty-five years raised a principality, whose revenue, when he was appointed minister, or rather regent, was not more than four lacks <= 400 000>, to forty lacks <= 4 000 000>. Amidst scenes of plunder, confusion and anarchy, when violence, weakness, rapacity, and ambition, led alike to ruin, the calm temper, the clear mind, the profound art, and the firm energy of Zalim Singh took advantage of the errors of all around, without ever committing one himself. He early shewed that, at a period when none were trusted, he might be confided in. His character for courage and wisdom was soon so well established, that it was deemed dangerous to have him as an enemy;... Bred to business, he was at once the farmer, the merchant, and the minister. In every transaction his tone was that of fairness and moderation; and though he, no doubt, from the first, cherished objects of the greatest ambition, these were never paraded, nor did good fortune (and the lives of few men offer a parallel of success so complete and uninterrupted) ever alter, or in the least disturb, his equal course (published 1824)"⁵.

The high opinion on Zalim Singh was shared by later Indian historians as well.

"*Jālisimh 18vīm śatābdī ke bhārat kā pramukh vyakti hai*" (Mathurālāl Śarmā)⁶.

The undoubtedly most famous 19th century historian on Rajasthan, Col. James Tod⁷, "who put Rajasthan on the world map"⁸, actually visited Zalim Singh on the 8th and 9th of September 1820 and left a touching account of that meeting⁹. Besides, he refers to him frequently in those parts of his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* which deal

⁴ Malcolm 1826, Vol. 2, p. cxlviii.

⁵ Malcolm 1824, Vol. 1, p. 490-491.

⁶ Sharma 1939, Vol. 2, p. 583.

⁷ For a brief account of his life see Cousens 1911; cf. also Vashishtha 1992.

⁸ Somani 1985, dedication page.

⁹ Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1708.

with the history of the former princely states: "Zalim Singh of Kotah, the most celebrated Rajput of modern times"¹⁰.

"If history attempt to sum up, or institute a scrutiny into, the character of this extraordinary man, by what standard must we judge him? The actions of his life, which have furnished matter for the sketch we have attempted, may satisfy curiosity; but the materials for a finished portrait he never supplied: the latent springs of those actions remained invisible save to the eye of Omniscience. No human being ever shared the confidence of the Machiavelli of Rajasthan, who, from the first dawn of his political existence to its close, when 'four-score years and upwards', could always say, 'My secret is my own'¹¹,

just to quote a few passages. It is not accidental that the more handy "Sladen edition" of Tod's *Annals* — the first edition was published in 1829 and 1832 in two bulky, now very rare volumes — bears a dedication to "His Highness The Maharaj Rana of Jhalawar", "the heir of Zalim Sing < sic > the Great, the hero who figures most largely in its pages..."¹² Sladen intended to write "On the life of Zalim Sing < sic > the Great, the Indian Machiavelli, the Rajpoot Prince who practically saved the British Power in India..." but had to face the "difficulty of procuring a copy of Tod's *Rajast'han*" for that purpose. He in fact managed to secure the help of the said Maharaj Rana of Jhalawar, "who was willing to share the burden of any firm of publishers who undertook its republication"¹³. Whether Sladen ever published his work on Zalim Singh is not known. Zalim Singh after all, once, in the hour of need, refused to help the British army during the retreat of Col. Monson on July 12th, 1804: "The Rajrana of Kotah, when the British troops appeared as fugitives, would neither admit them into the town nor supply them with food"¹⁴. It is perhaps due to this occurrence that Sladen might have had difficulties in finding a < British > publisher for his work, if it was ever completed.

The task of writing a book on Zalim Singh, originally a PhD submitted to the university of Rajasthan, was fulfilled by Miss R.P. Shastri. Shastri based her work

¹⁰ Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1506.

¹¹ Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1613.

¹² Tod 1914, Vol. 1, dedication page and preface by Douglas Sladen.

¹³ Tod 1914, Vol. 1, preface by Douglas Sladen.

¹⁴ Duff 1863, Vol. 3, pp. 198-199. Cf. also the most official source on that subject, Thorn 1819, p. 436: "Da der Rajah von Kottah unsere Truppen nicht in die Stadt aufnehmen wollte, unter der Entschuldigung, daß er sie nicht mit Proviant versehen könne...".

mainly on the original state documents preserved in different archives in India, in addition to several hundred inscriptions in the former Kotah state from 1785 to 1823. The book is now very difficult to obtain and we owe our copy to the generosity of the then Maharajkumar of Kotah, Brijraj Singhji. Were it not for the rather numerous and misleading misprints¹⁵, it would rank amongst the most important monographs on Rajput history.

All historians focussed on the historical aspects of Zalim Singh's career alone, which is quite understandable. But even then, the art-historian is able to read "between the lines" of the great historians, that Zalim Singh was a great patron of the arts, a fact which is well attested to by inscribed and dated paintings, which naturally escaped the attention of the historians and to which we will refer further below.

Zalim Singh always appeared to be very subservient although it was he who pulled the strings of Rajput history. From all historical sources on Zalim Singh it becomes clear that he knew how to entertain his contemporaries, how to keep them in good humour, the notorious Marathas in particular. These entertainments of his vassals and employers (the nominal kings of Kotah) alike were not without reason as Tod rightly remarked:

"Besides dissipating the ennui of his vassals, he obtained many other objects by an amusement so analogous to their character; in the unmasked joyousness of the sport, he heard the unreserved opinions of his companions, and gained their affection by thus administering to the favourite pastime of the Rajputs, whose life is otherwise monotonous¹⁶. When in the forest, he would sit down,

¹⁵ The first misprint occurs in the second line of the front cover and title page respectively, where Zalim Singh's lifetime is given as "1730-1823". In the same work, however, Zalim Singh was born in 1739 (Shastri 1971, p. 35). This is somewhat confirmed by Tod, who places his birth between 1738 and 1743 A.D. (Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1530). On p. 254 of Shastri's work, Zalim Singh died in July of 1824, aged 85, which would again account for 1739 as the year of his birth. On p. 93 of the same work, however, Zalim Singh "expired in 1823". Gahlot mentions in this connection a more precise date, viz. June 15th, 1824 and mentions that Zalim Singh was then 85 years old (Gahlot 1960, p. 89 under "Kota"). Kaviraja Shyamaladas informs about 1823 A.D. as the year of the great divan's death (Shyamaladas 1886, Vol. 2, p. 1424). Attention must be drawn to the fact that both historians, Gahlot as well as Shyamaladas, give Vikrama Samvat 1880 for the year of Zalim Singh's death.

¹⁶ Le Comte de Modave, who visited Kotah in the monsoon season of 1776, even claimed that "Ils (=the Rajput princes) meurent en quelque sorte au monde et aux affaires pour se donner tout entier à une lâche et stupide paresse. Leurs plaisirs sont plats et monotones et ne peuvent être des plaisirs que pour eux. Une musique détestable, des spectacles sans appareil et toujours uniformes, mal logés, plus mal nourris: l'esprit ne prend aucune part à leurs amusemens et je ne pense pas qu'on puisse mener une vie plus misérable que celle à laquelle ces princes se condamnent eux-mêmes, en pensant suivre le penchant qui les porte à la volupté" (Modave 1971, p. 489).

surrounded by thousands, to regale on the game of the day"¹⁷.

R.P. Shastri mentions some of these presents:

"He (Zalim Singh) used to send them (officers of Sindhia) suitable presents from time to time. A gun with a silver chain was presented to Jadurai at Ramgarh (...). Similar presents were also made to Pandit Rangrao. A dagger was presented to Shahji Lambaria. ... A rich dagger was also presented to Pandit Rangrao through Pandit Hariji. A silver hukka was presented to Fakerji Gharpadya (...) through Pandit Narpat Rao"¹⁸.

Shastri occasionally mentions more such presents: a sarpech (turban ornament) worth Rs.1,027¹⁹, 3 fans of silver handles²⁰, a sword with a rich gold hilt costing Rs. 1,543²¹, and many "dresses of honour", canons, elephants, horses, gold mohurs etc., which are of less importance in the present context. Shastri's following observation is thus absolutely correct:

"Such presents continued to be made by Zalim Singh to the important and influential officers in Sindhia's camp. These were not so much the marks of friendly feelings as of diplomatic dealings and this was the main source of Zalim Singh's strength"²².

Zalim Singh was fond of Kashmir shawls. He liked them for himself, as is attested by a story of his wit²³ and he needed them for the numerous dresses of honour ("saropao") which he so often bestowed. Tod writes in this context: "There was no occasion to repair to the valley of Kashmir to witness the fabrication of its shawls; for the looms and the wool of that fairy region were transferred to Kotah, and the Kashmirian weaver plied the shuttle under Zalim's Singh's own eye"²⁴. This seems rather improbable. Shastri refers to a document in the Kotah State Archives according to which

¹⁷ Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1615f.

¹⁸ Shastri 1971, p. 125.

¹⁹ This was given to Mahadji Sindhia (Shastri 1971, p. 127). Another Sarpech was given to Sukhram of Bundi (*ibid.*, p. 255).

²⁰ Shastri 1971, p. 127. The "fans" were apparently fly whisks in the form of chowries.

²¹ Given to Daulat Rao Sindhia, Shastri 1971, p. 128.

²² Shastri 1971, p. 127.

²³ Shastri 1971, p. 68f.

²⁴ Tod 1920, Vol. 3, p. 1617.

Zalim Singh "used to purchase about two thousand shawls every year"²⁵. Be that as it may, Zalim Singh consumed lots of this kind of articles of luxury for reasons that were already mentioned above.

One particular article of luxury that also fulfilled the design of the great divan was neither mentioned by Tod nor by Shastri. The latter just mentions that: "there was a paper industry at Kota in which about one hundred families of kagazis were engaged"²⁶. This fact may account for the comparatively numerous drawings which survived from the painter's ateliers in Kotah.

Apart from the articles of luxury already mentioned, Zalim Singh commissioned paintings for those court officials and rulers which he wanted to keep in a good mood, and for himself. Examples of the former group of consignees naturally included a portrait of the consignee himself and occasionally a portrait of Zalim Singh, the donor. Examples of the latter are comparatively rare and included mainly Zalim Singh with occasional depictions of some of his important contemporaries.

Maharao Shatrusal of Kotah (V.S.1815-1821)²⁷ e.g. received at least three miniature paintings from his divan Zalim Singh as "nazar" within one year, viz. 1764. One of these paintings shows Maharao Shatrusal riding his horse "Harihansraj" in the month Agahan: The gift of this painting was made by Jhala Zalim Singh on Wednesday, the 4th of the bright half of the month of Pausha, V.S.1821, shortly before the Maharao of Kotah breathed his last²⁸.

The second painting shows the same Maharao on the occasion of the Janmash-tami celebrations in the Raj Mahal of the Kotah palace worshipping the tutelar deity, Shri Brijnathji. This painting was given by Zalim Singh on the very same day as the painting previously mentioned²⁹. It includes a portrait of the donor who is seen stand

²⁵ Shastri 1971, p. 354.

²⁶ Shastri 1971, p. 355.

²⁷ His royal consecration took place on the 13th of the bright half of the month Bhadrapada, V.S. 1815, corresponding to September 15th, 1758, following Shyamaladas 1886, Vol. 2, p. 1418. Maharao Shatrusal died on the 9th of the dark half of Pausha, V.S. 1821, corresponding to December 17th, 1764, following Shyamaladas 1886, Vol. 2, p. 1419 and Gahlot 1960, "kota", p. 68. For the biography of Maharao Shatrusal see Sharma 1939, Vol. 2, pp. 416-455; a shorter account is given in Gahlot 1960, "kota", pp. 65-68.

²⁸ For a transliteration of the inscription see Bautze 1988, p. 108, f.n. 61. For a reproduction of the painting, which is presently in the Sidhu-collection, see *ibid.*, p. 92, fig. 5.

²⁹ For a transliteration of the inscription see Bautze 1987b, p. 268, f.n. 23. The painting is reproduced in Bautze 1987b, figs. 9-10 and Bautze 1992, fig. 45. The painting is now in the collection

ing in a green jama behind Maharao Shatrusal. Zalim Singh is the only person to wear a "Bundi *khadgar pugri*", a turban with "a conical peak rising up in the rear"³⁰. This turban-shape is characteristic of Zalim Singh, he never changed it throughout his life. The "Kotah *pugri* as seen in the paintings is generally shown sloping from the front to the rear in a flat manner"³¹.

The third and best known painting of this group represents Zalim Singh in his typical suppliant bearing when shown together with his lord, the Maharao of Kotah. Its inscription was never published but is said to contain more or less the same information regarding the donor and the date of the "nazar"³².

A fairly large number of paintings includes portraits of the great divan and Maharao Umed Singh, the *de jure* ruler of Kotah between 1771 and 1819³³. Maharao Umed Singh was fond of hunting, a fondness which Zalim Singh probably skilfully supported³⁴, since most of the famous Kotah hunting scenes show them shooting together at lions, tiger and other animals of sport. The Maharao's predilection for hunting is confirmed by Modave, who reports about it on the occasion of his visit to Kotah and its hunting grounds in 1776, when Umed Singh was still quite young. It is interesting to note that one of the earliest Kotah paintings of Umed Singh's reign shows him pursuing a boar on horseback³⁵, while Modave remarks on the forests

of Dr. Alvin Bellak, Philadelphia.

³⁰ Brijraj Singh 1985, p. 18. *Pugri* stands for *pagadī*, turban.

³¹ Brijraj Singh 1985, p. 18.

³² Beach 1972, p. 128, plate LXXIV, top; Beach 1974, plate LXXXIII, fig. 89 and plate LXXXIV, fig. 90.

³³ Shyamaladas 1886, Vol. 2, pp. 1420-1421 gives the following information: Umed Singh became the ruler of Kotah on the 28th of January, 1771 and died on November 19th, 1819. The latter date is confirmed by Sharma 1939, Vol. 2, p. 553, whose chapter on the period of Umed Singh practically deals exclusively with Zalim Singh, who succeeded to become (1939, Vol. 2, p. 474): the "phaujdar, divan, nyayadhis, senadhyaksa, kosadhyaksa sab kuch ho gaya".

³⁴ Zalim Singh employed "Chitiwans or Khojaris who traced the foot marks of panthers and tigers to their dens and informed Zalim Singh of their presence" (Shastri 1971, p. 331).

³⁵ Archer 1959, Kotah cat. no.3, figure 36. Archer only read the Samvat-year of the inscription which gives, however, much more information. A part of the inscription is covered by a textile tape. The beginning mentions the name of the hunting ground as "Unavilas <?>", but only the word "vilas", the letter "na" and something which looks like the preceding numeral "7" are readable. This information is followed by the date "V.S. 1828, the 7th of the bright half of the month Chaitra (March-April)" and the name of the horse ("Vrechivahadur"). The meaning of the next one and a half line of the inscription, written by another hand, is difficult to ascertain.

around Kotah: "Ces bois sont peuplés de sangliers"³⁶. The Kotah hunting scenes are too famous to be referred to again, several examples were often published more than once³⁷. In these paintings, Zalim Singh is generally easily recognizable by his "Bundi khadgar pagri".

Zalim Singh got a number of architectural structures built for his own purpose³⁸. Of these, the most important turned out to be the Zalim Singh ki Haveli, something like a big fortified mansion housing about 80 rooms within the garh of Kotah³⁹. Art historically the most interesting parts of this Haveli are the murals which have received but little attention by art historians. Archer mentions murals in Zalim Singh's "former residence, the *Kahla Kothi*" but it is doubtful whether this was really the Zalim Singh ki Haveli which Archer saw since his consideration of the glorious frescoes of which only the hunting scenes seemed to be worth mentioning, is rather restrained⁴⁰.

Milo Beach is one of the first to mention the murals in the Zalim Singh ki Haveli, also called Jhala ki Haveli, in art historical context. Beach called the Jhala Haveli erroneously "Jhala House"⁴¹, which is in fact a different building in the town of Ko-

³⁶ Modave 1971, p. 486. See also *ibid.*, p. 488, where he calls Maharao Umed Singh "...un prince foible et lâche tout ce qui est possible".

³⁷ For an enumeration of 13 publications all of which reproduce the Kotah hunting scene which W.G. Archer compared to paintings of the French artist the Douanier Rousseau cf. Bautze 1985, p. 118, f.n.97.

³⁸ Cf. Shastri 1971, pp. 359-365.

³⁹ Sharma 1939, Vol. 2, p. 474; Shastri 1971, p. 360f.

⁴⁰ Archer wrote in 1959, after describing some Kotah hunting scenes of the Umed Singh period: "Such pictures were clearly made for the rajah himself, but Zalim Singh seems also to have shared his ward's enthusiasm, since a long band of murals can still be seen in his former residence, the *Kahla Kothi*. The style of all these works is nothing if not local. Trees, rocks and tigers are endowed with strange richness...".

⁴¹ Beach 1974, p. 42. Beach, like Archer, especially mentions the hunting scenes, but does not reproduce any of them. He rightly suggests that Zalim Singh was "presumably, the patron of the illustrations". The existence of Zalim Singh's portraits in the hunting- and darbar scenes, however, seems to have escaped Beach's attention, otherwise he might have more firmly stressed the fact that the owner of the Haveli himself patronised these murals. Beach's dating of the wall paintings of the Jhala ki Haveli is more or less correct, although it is based on the wrong dating of some of the murals in the so-called Bada Mahal of Kotah, which he dates c. 1780. All murals in the Bada Mahal were executed during the reign of Maharao Ram Singh, see Bautze 1988/89. Beach devotes only about nine lines to the frescoes in the Jhala ki Haveli (Beach 1974, pp. 42-43). Brij Mohan Singh Parmar, whose project it was to record all the wall-paintings within the Bundi-Kotah area ("Hadoti") in his first article on the project, in which he lists a number of Kotah murals, does not mention them at all (Parmar 1976)!

tah which is, to our knowledge, devoid of any wall paintings of art historical interest. Today, it houses a branch of the Bikaner State Archives of Rajasthan⁴².

Brij Mohan Singh Parmar, then Registering Officer, Kotah, devotes 13 lines to the Jhala ki Haveli in an article on "Historical Personages - Murals of South East Rajasthan", recognizes Jhala Zalim Singh in one of the hunting scenes, but does not reproduce any mural from the said Haveli⁴³. The best, though rather short, account on the murals in the Jhala Haveli was given by the then Maharajkumar of Kotah, Shri Brijraj Singhji:

"He < Zalim Singh > also built several palaces, including a separate residence for himself in the Kotah fort, called Jhala Haveli, where one of the finest and longest wall painting panels of a superb hunting scene still exists, though in a somewhat damaged condition. In the same room of the Haveli is to be seen a wall painting of Umed Singh and Zalim Singh Jhala seated. Along the rear wall of this room are very finely executed small oblong cartouches of varied subjects including cock fights"⁴⁴.

These observations are accompanied by two reproductions showing details of the mentioned hunting scene⁴⁵.

None of the authors referred to above mentioned how many painted premises the Jhala Haveli has and what their size is⁴⁶. In fact, the murals are so numerous and artistically so outstanding that they do deserve a monograph in itself. Unfortunately, many of the murals have disappeared in recent years. The panel with the hunting scene, mentioned by all authors on the subject, has reportedly been removed to the National Museum of India in New Delhi, after it already had fallen to a considerable

⁴² Shastri 1971, p. 361.

⁴³ Parmar 1985, p. 88.

⁴⁴ Brijraj Singh 1985, p. 17.

⁴⁵ Brijraj Singh 1985, figs. 37-38.

⁴⁶ Beach in fact (see f.n.41) reproduces the north-eastern corner of the eastern verandah under his fig. 112. The murals measure, from left to right (in centimeters; height precedes width): 86 by 53; 86 by 53 (northern wall) and 84 by 42; 88 by 64 (eastern wall, the latter mural is only half visible in the reproduction). *Ibid.*, fig. 113 is also on the eastern wall of the eastern verandah, to the right of the entrance to the eastern painted room when standing in the verandah. It measures 90 by 63 and is nowadays completely destroyed but for the lowermost part. Brijraj Singh's reproductions are taken from the western room, eastern wall. The lower part of this painted panel is situated about 1,90 above ground level. The panel as such measures about 56 cms in height and its full length almost exceeds 6,63 m on this part of the wall.

state of decay. We fortunately received the authorization of the then Maharajkumar of Kotah, to document and to photograph the murals in the Jhala ki Haveli on two occasions in 1981 and 1983. Meanwhile, most of the murals which we then could still photograph, have disappeared ever since. Some suffered under the vandalism caused by children of the nearby school who managed to penetrate into the locked premises and the rest was practically spoiled by those who removed the hunting scene panel to the National Museum. Already in 1983 most of the murals had their gold-leaf scratched off.

The importance of the murals in the present context is explained by the fact that once a wall painting existed in the central niche (size: 114 x 95 cms., height preceding width) on the western wall of the western room. The visitor had to face this fresco when entering this part of the painted premises. The central part of this wall painting, which was already shattered into pieces in 1981, had shown the great divan, sitting in his typical posture facing right with his left lower leg resting on the thigh of his folded right leg, with his right hand resting on the right thigh holding a dagger and the left hand receiving some small gift handed over by a kneeling man seated in front of him. This part of the fresco was already destroyed to such an extent that the outlines of the two figures would not be discernable in a black-and-white reproduction, we have hence abstained from reproducing it here. Interestingly enough, one of the last paintings showing the great divan represents him in exactly the same posture as the visitor could encounter him in the mural of the Jhala ki Haveli some 15 years ago. Only his right hand in our fig. 4 does not hold a dagger, but the "snake" of the water pipe⁴⁷.

One of the earliest drawings showing Zalim Singh seated in the aforementioned posture is reproduced here under fig. 1⁴⁸. His left hand holds the mouth-piece of the bell-shaped hookah to his proper right while his left hand rests on his right thigh. He wears his "Bundi khadgar pagri" as usual but without any ornaments and appears to be unarmed. His dress looks rather private and unofficial when compared to other depictions in which he is shown together with other dignitaries. His moustache is still thin and short with some sort of "extension" on the cheek. In later representations,

⁴⁷ "The long elastic tube of the hookah is called the 'snake'", William Knighton in Knighton 1921, p. 246.

⁴⁸ Size: 20,4 by 11,7 cms, height precedes width. Private collection.

when his moustache grew sufficiently long, these "extensions" naturally made their disappearance. This drawing should be dated around 1770-1775⁴⁹.

A painting showing Zalim Singh in private audience with a Maratha was published in full colours⁵⁰. The divan sits very relaxed leaning his back against a large cushion while his right hand seems to play with the mouth piece of his hookah. His left hand is in the same position as in the now lost mural. The publisher's commentary needs to be quoted here:

"Les portraits de Zalim Singh, dictateur de Kotah (1756 à 1824) dont il fit l'Etat le plus puissant de l'Est Rajasthan sont très rares"⁵¹.

A similar, though somewhat later portrait of the great divan shows him engaged in watching a dance performance by two apparently female dancers in addition to five female musicians, while two servants are seen standing behind him. His raised left hand holds the mouth piece of the hookah while his right hand rests on the right thigh. His sitting posture hardly differs from our fig. 1 or the other portraits already referred to⁵². A hitherto unpublished painting, our fig. 2, is certainly not the best likeness of the famous statesman but is important for two reasons: it shows the great divan seated on both of his heels and it is inscribed on the back as: "Mamaji Rajaji Shri Zalim Singhji talking to a standing chieftain"⁵³. "Mamaji" (maternal uncle) was Maharao Umed Singh's honorific respectful appellation of his divan⁵⁴. This inscription was almost certainly written by one of the Maharao's scribes, if not by Maharao Umed Singh of Kotah himself. Zalim Singh bears a tiny indication of what could be a halo around his face. The ends of his moustache as well as the lower parts of his sideburns became grey. The painting should hence be dated around 1785.

Another drawing, fig. 3, is also of importance since it shows the divan with his usual hookah but with an outstretched right and a folded left leg. Zalim Singh's mut-

⁴⁹ A hunting scene dated November 30th, 1778 shows him already with a fully grown, long moustache, cf. Brijraj Singh 1985, col. Plate II, text p. 28.

⁵⁰ Soustiel/David 1974, no. 47.

⁵¹ Soustiel/David 1974, p. 50.

⁵² Christie's 1978, lot 115, plate 19. The major character of this painting was as yet not identified.

⁵³ This painting is in the collection of His Highness, the Maharaja of Kotah. It measures 32,6 by 24,7 cms (height precedes width). The inscription reads: "*māmājī rā <ja> jī śrī jālam sīghjī vaṇo / c sardār ubho*".

⁵⁴ Brijraj Singh 1985, p. 17; Shastri 1971, pp. 78-79.

ton chops are shaved, his moustache is so long that it almost reaches the ears. This drawing probably dates from the late 1780ies.

Single portraits of Zalim Singh are rare indeed⁵⁵. R.P. Shastri reproduces one as frontispiece in her monograph. This frontispiece is based on M.L.Sharma's reproduction of the same painting⁵⁶. M.L. Sharma adopted his illustration of Zalim Singh from Hendley's important volume on portraits of Rajasthani rulers, where it is reproduced in full colours⁵⁷. The painting shows the divan in old age with white, siccle-like extensions of his moustache. He is seated on his heels as in our fig. 2. A more typical portrait of Zalim Singh with regards to his sitting posture and his habit of smoking a hookah when at ease at his own place, is our fig. 4. It stems from the same period as the painting reproduced by Hendley. The identifying inscription on this drawing reads: "Raja Zalim Singhji Jhala"⁵⁸. Zalim Singh's head is surrounded by a halo as if he would be the official ruler of Kotah. By the time the drawing was made, only kings and the mahants of the Vallabhacharya sect were indicated by such a mark of dignity.

Zalim Singh's last portrait by a Kotah artist introduces the important politician in his usual sitting posture together with his son, Madho Singh (fig. 5). The inscription on the left margin of the painting gives the names of the two major characters in the picture: Raja Zalim Singh and Madho Singh⁵⁹. Zalim Singh's right hand holds the "snake" of the hookah whereas his left hand indicates the same gesture as in our fig. 4. He is facing his son Madho Singh, who greets his father with his palms put together. Madho Singh was Zalim Singh's rightful son. Zalim Singh's second son, from a muslim mistress of Arandhkhera, near Kotah, was considered to be of less importance⁶⁰. The painting must be dated rather late, viz. around 1824, as indicated by the presence of Madho Singh who looks very similar in several wall paintings of the Bara Mahal within the garh of Kotah which are dated by inscription between the years

⁵⁵ See f.n.51, *supra*.

⁵⁶ Sharma 1939, Vol. 2, plate facing p. 470.

⁵⁷ Hendley 1897, plate 12 — Jhalawar, no. 1.

⁵⁸ Private collection. Size within passepartout: 14,5 by 13,4 cms. Inscribed: "*rāja jālam / sīghjī / jhālā*". His actual title, conferred to him by Maharana Ari Singh of Mewar, was "Rajrana", see Shastri 1971, p. 260 or Gupta 1971, p. 85, where four references are given under f.n.39.

⁵⁹ The painting measures 25,2 by 29,2 cms (leaf). It is kept in the Heil collection, Berlin. Inscribed: "*rāje jālam sīghjī mādo sīghjī*".

⁶⁰ Shastri 1971, p. 78.

1827 and 1829⁶¹. It was only after Zalim Singh's death that also his son was styled "Raja" in the inscribed paintings⁶². The taller of the two young men in the lower left corner of the painting is most probably Zalim Singh's grandson, Madan Singh. He was between 16 and 17 years of age when this painting was done⁶³. Zalim Singh used to call him "Bapulal"⁶⁴.

A painting which is very similar to our fig. 5, exists in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. The ruler was labelled "Elderly Raja" and its provenance was given as "Bundi"⁶⁵. That Zalim Singh was also an eminent person outside the Kotah borders is proved by our fig. 6, a painting by an artist who reportedly worked for the court of a Thakur in Mewar. An inscription on the back reads: "Painted by the painter Pemji. This is a gift on the day of the Holi-festival..."⁶⁶. The inscription above the divan of Kotah reads: "Raja Zalim Singhji, a Jhala from Kotah". The figure at the left border of the painting is identified as: "Raja Bhuvani Singhji" and the person in the right half of the picture is: "Thakur Budh Singhji from Sikar"⁶⁷. The painter Pemji is known from several inscribed and published paintings. Some authors claim that he worked for the court of Sawar⁶⁸ while others claim that he worked in Badnore⁶⁹. Sawar is probably not correct⁷⁰. The ancestral collection of present His Highness of Badnore, Shri Raghuraj Singhji contains a number of identified and signed portraits.

⁶¹ Bautze 1988/89, figs. 1-2.

⁶² Bautze 1988/89, p. 322. In a miniature painting, he is called "kavar" (prince), see Sangram Singh 1965, no. 132 (= Spink & Son 1976, no. 30, illustrated p. 11). Madho Singh died in 1833, following Shyamaladas 1886, Vol. 2, p. 1425.

⁶³ Shastri 1971, p. 92 and p. 137f., 165, 176, 216, 253, 329.

⁶⁴ An inscribed equestrian portrait of him is in the Heil collection, Berlin.

⁶⁵ Heeramaneck 1984, col. Plate 83 and text p. 28.

⁶⁶ The painting is in the Heil collection, Berlin. Size of the folio: 30,5 by 21,3 cms. Inscribed on the back: "*catārā paimjī kī kalam / hōlī kai dīn najar kī do / hajur najar kī ra...*".

⁶⁷ "*śrī rāj śrī jālam sīghjī kuṭai / kā jāl*" / "*śrī rāj śrī bhulbanī sīghjī*" / "*śrī śrī ṭhākūr śrī vud sīghjī / sikar kā ṭhākar*".

⁶⁸ Welch 1973, p. 37 ("Ajmer area, <Sawar?>"); Sotheby & Co. 9th July, 1974, lot 101, p. 19 ("Sawar"); Indian Paintings 1974, no. 1 ("Sawar <Rajasthan>"); Beach 1992, fig. 148, text p. 187 ("Sawar").

⁶⁹ Leach 1982, no. 218, reproduced in col. on p. 77 ("Bednour"), caption also on p. 155 ("Bednor"); Ehnborn 1985, cat.no. 57, col. plate, text p. 126 ("probably at Badnore"). This painting is now in the Habighorst collection, Koblenz.

⁷⁰ We know of no properly inscribed and contemporary painting from the fourth quarter of the 18th century which would mention that name for certain.

None of them, however, is by the artist Pemji. Some unpublished paintings which are all attributed to the artist Pemji on the back, show, that he portrayed different Thakurs (landlords). A painting in the Vollmer collection, Freiburg, represents a portrait of Thakur Sagat Singhji with the princes Samat Singhji and Adar Singhji. Another unpublished painting in the Binney collection, San Diego, shows the shooting exercise of Prince Saman Singhji, Prince Adar Singhji and a number of other persons.

Apparently the only dated painting by Pemji is in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh. It is dated 1784 and shows the same Budh Singh as in the present painting⁷¹. This date would coincide with the appearance of Zalim Singh in our fig. 6. The official history of Badnore mentions no Thakur of this name around that date⁷². The present painting mentions "Sikar" as the barony of which Budh Singh is the Thakur. Sikar was a "feudatory chiefship under the Jaipur state"⁷³ and a Thakur Budh Singh actually existed there. He died, however, already in 1767 during the famous battle of Maonda Mandholi, "one of the bloodiest battles of Rajputana"⁷⁴. The discussion about Pemji's provenance may thus start again. Is the Thakur Budh Singh who appears in two paintings viz. the large miniature in the Sangram Singh collection and our fig. 6 actually the Thakur of Sikar? Are there more than one barony of that name in North India? The portrait of Thakur Budh Singh is certainly not a posthumous portrait since the likeness of Zalim Singh corresponds to his contemporary portraits from Kotah. Who is the third person in the painting, is he Raja Bhuvani Singh of Khatoli who died, white-haired, during the famous Ajmer Darbar of 1832⁷⁵? We do not know. Be that as it may, Zalim Singh's fame is attested to by Pemji's picture, a painter, who "deserves to be ranked among the best Rajasthani artists"⁷⁶.

⁷¹ Sangram Singh 1965, no. 39. The inscription on the upper red margin reads: "āsoj sud 10 dasamī sukrabār samat 1841 śrī thākur śrī śrī dharāj śrīmat śrī bad <read bud> sīghjī kī asabārī ko pāno tagar <?> huvo catāra pemjī kī kalam".

⁷² The Thakur of Badnor around 1784 A.D. was Akshay Singh, who died in 1787, aged 75, see Jaymal 1974, p. 7.

⁷³ Jain/Jain 1935, pp. 48-52 in chapter XIV headed "Jagirs and Jagirdars".

⁷⁴ Narendra Singh 1939, p. 215, the battle is described between pp. 203-221, Budh Singh's death is mentioned on p. 218; cf. also Chiefs and leading 1903, p. 64.

⁷⁵ Bautze 1990, fig.16, p. 85.

⁷⁶ Welch 1973, p. 37.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archer, W.G.
1959 *Indian Painting in Bundi and Kotah*. London.
- Bautze J.
1985 Drei Miniaturen aus Kota im Linden-Museum. *Tribus, Jahrbuch des Linden-Museums* Nr.34, pp.89-120. Stuttgart.
1987a Drei "Bundi"-Rāgamālās. *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der rajputischen Wandmalerei*. Stuttgart.
1987b Zur Darstellung der Hauptgottheiten Kotas in der Malerei der zweiten Hälfte des 18. und der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. *Berliner Indologische Studien*. Band 3, pp.253-278 + plates. Reinbek.
1988 Zwei Entwurfsskizzen aus Kota im Linden-Museum. *Tribus, Jahrbuch des Linden-Museums* Nr.37, pp.83-117. Stuttgart.
1988/89 Portraitmalerei unter Maharao Ram Singh von Kota. *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XLIX, nos.3-4, pp.316-350. Ascona.
1990 The Ajmer Darbar of 1832 and Kota Painting. *South Asian Studies* 6, pp. 71-91. London.
1992 Amsterdam and the Earliest Published Kota Painting. *Indian Art and Archaeology*, ed. by E.M. Raven and K.R. van Kooij (Panels of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference 1987, Vol.X) pp.78-93 + figs.40-51. Leiden <etc.>.
- Beach, M.C.
1972 Painting of the Later Eighteenth Century at Bundi and Kota. *Aspects of Indian Art. Papers presented in a Symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art October, 1970*, ed. by P. Pal, pp.124-129 + plates LXX-LXXIV. Leiden.
1974 *Rajput Painting at Bundi and Kota*. (Artibus Asiae Supplementum XXXII). Ascona.
1992 *Mughal and Rajput Painting* (The New Cambridge History of India I,3). Cambridge.
- Beale, T.W.
1894 *An Oriental Biographical Dictionary. A new edition, revised and enlarged by H. G. Keene*. London.
- Brijraj Singh
1985 *The Kingdom that was Kotah. Paintings from Kotah*. (Lalit Kala Series of Indian Art). New Delhi.
- Broughton, T.D.
1892 *Letters written in a Mahratta Camp during the Year 1809. Descriptive of the Character Manners domestic Habits and religious Ceremonies of the Mahrattas*. A new edition with an introduction by M.E. Grant Duff. (Constable's Oriental Miscellany of Original and Selected Publications, Vol. IV). London.

- 1903 *Chiefs and leading Families in Rajputana*, second edition. Calcutta.
- Christie's
1978 < Auction Catalogue of > *Important Indian Miniatures*, July 6. London.
- Cousens, H.
1911 The late Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod. *Annual Report* < of the > *Archaeological Survey of India, 1907-8*, pp.219-222. Calcutta.
- Duff, J.G.
1863 *History of the Mahrattas*. 3 Volumes. Bombay.
- Ehnbom, D.J.
1985 *Indian Miniatures - The Ehrenfeld Collection*. New York.
- Gahlot, J.
1960 *Rājapūtāna kā itihās. dvitīya bhāg. būmḍī, koṭā tathā sirohī rājyoṃ kā itihās*. Jodhpur.
- Gupta, K.S.
1971 *Mewar and the Maratha Relations (1735-1818 A.D.)*. New Delhi.
- Heeramanek, A.N.
1984 *Masterpieces of Indian Painting from the former Collection of Nasli M. Heeramanek*. W.p.
- Hendley, T.H.
1897 *The Rulers of India and the Chiefs of Rajputana, 1550-1897*. London.
- Indian Paintings
1974 *Indian Paintings from the 17th to 19th centuries*, 20th November - 14th December, Arthur Tooth and Sons Ltd. London.
- Jain, K.A. / Jain, J.
1935 *The Jaipur Album or all about Jaipur*. Jaipur.
- Jaymal
1974 *jaymal vaṃś prakāś arthāt rājasthān badnor kā itihās* < part 2 > . Badnor.
- Knighton, W.
1921 *The Private Life of an Eastern King Together with Elihu Jan's Story or The Private Life of an Eastern Queen*, ed., with Introduction and Notes by S.B. Smith. London < etc. > .
- Leach, L.Y.
1982 Introduction to Indian Painting. *In the image of Man. The Indian perception of the Universe through 2000 years of painting and sculpture*. pp.25-32 et var.loc. London.
- Malcolm, J.
1824 *A Memoir of Central India including Malwa, and adjoining Provinces with the History, and copious Illustrations of the past and present Condition of that Country*. 2 Volumes. London.

- 1826 *The political History of India, from 1784 to 1823*. 2 Volumes. London.
- Modave, Comte de
1971 *Voyage en Inde du Comte de Modave 1773-1776 (Nouveaux Mémoires sur l'Etat actuel du Bengale et de l'Indoustan)*. Texte établi et annoté par Jean Deloche (Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Volume LXXIX). Paris.
- Narendra Singh
1939 *Thirty decisive battles of Jaipur*. Jaipur.
- Parmar, B.M.S.
1976 Murals of Hadoti. *Cultural Heritage of Hadoti*. Ed. by Gahlot, Gahlot and Gahlot, pp.35-38. Jodhpur.
1985 Historical Personages - Murals of South East Rajasthan. *Painting as a Source of Rajasthan History*, ed. by Ram Pande, pp.85-91. Jaipur.
- Sangram Singh
1965 *Catalogue of Indian Miniature Paintings (Collection of Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh)*. Jaipur.
- Sharma, M.L.
1939 *Koṭā rājya kā itihās. dvitīya bhāg*. Kota.
- Shastri, R.P.
1971 *Jhala Zalim Singh (1730-1823), The de-facto ruler of Kota, who also dominated Bundi and Udaipur, shrewd politician, administrator and reformer*. Jaipur.
- Shyamaladas, K.
1886 *Viravinoda*. 2 Volumes. Udayapur.
- Somani, R.V.
1985 *Later Mewar*. Jaipur.
- Sotheby & Co.
1974 *Catalogue of Fine Oriental Miniatures and Manuscripts*, 9th July. London.
- Soustiel, J. / David, M.-C.
1974 *Miniatures Orientales de l'Inde. Ecoles mogholes, du Deccan, et autres écoles indiennes*. Paris.
- Spink & Son
1976 *Painting for the Royal Courts of India. To be exhibited for sale by Spink & Son Ltd...April 7 - April 23*. London.
- Thorn, W.
1819 *Der Krieg in Indien in den Jahren 1803 bis 1806, geführt von dem General Lord Lake, Oberfeldherrn, und dem General-Major Sir Arthur Wellesley, Herzog von Wellington. Mit historischen Skizzen, topographischen Beschreibungen und statistischen Bemerkungen*. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt. Gotha.

Tod, J.

1920 *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by W. Crooke. 3 Volumes. London < etc. > .

Tod, J.

1978 *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, The Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*. With a Preface by Douglas Sladen. 2 Volumes. New Delhi < reprint of the London, 1914 edition > .

Vashishtha, V.K.

1992 James Tod as Historian. *The Historians and Sources of History of Rajasthan*, ed. by G.N. Sharma < and > V.S. Bhatnagar. Jaipur.

Welch, S.C.

1973 *A Flower from every Meadow. Indian Paintings from American Collections*. New York.



Fig. 1

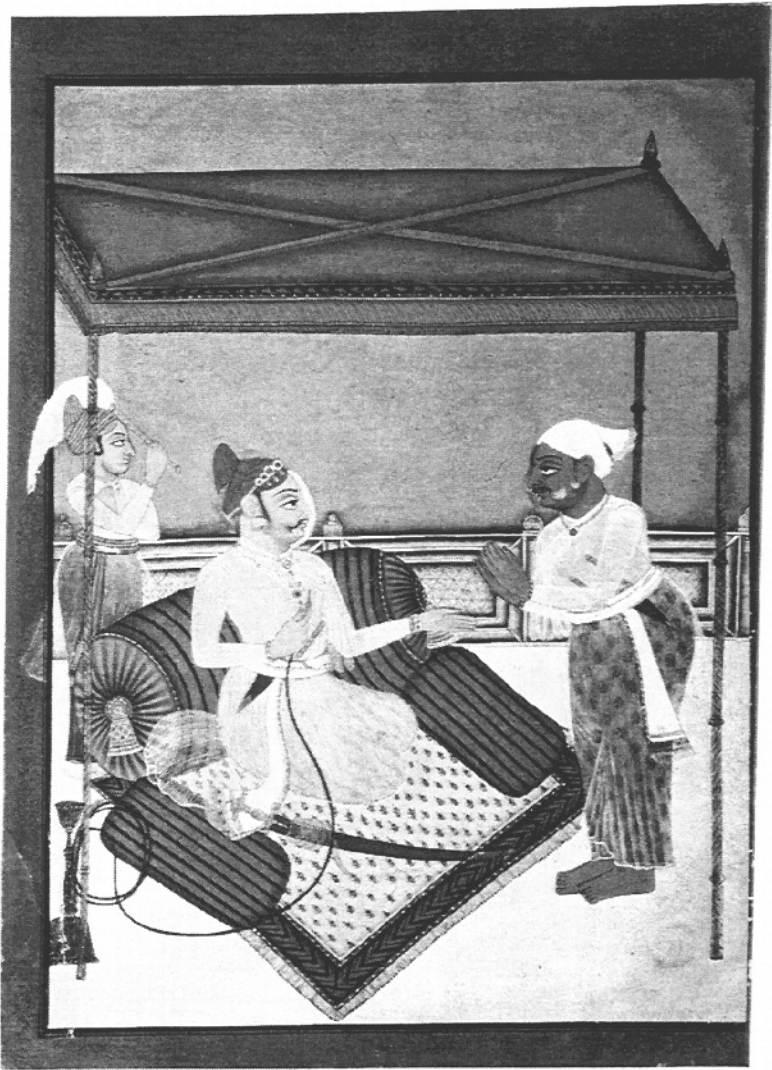


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

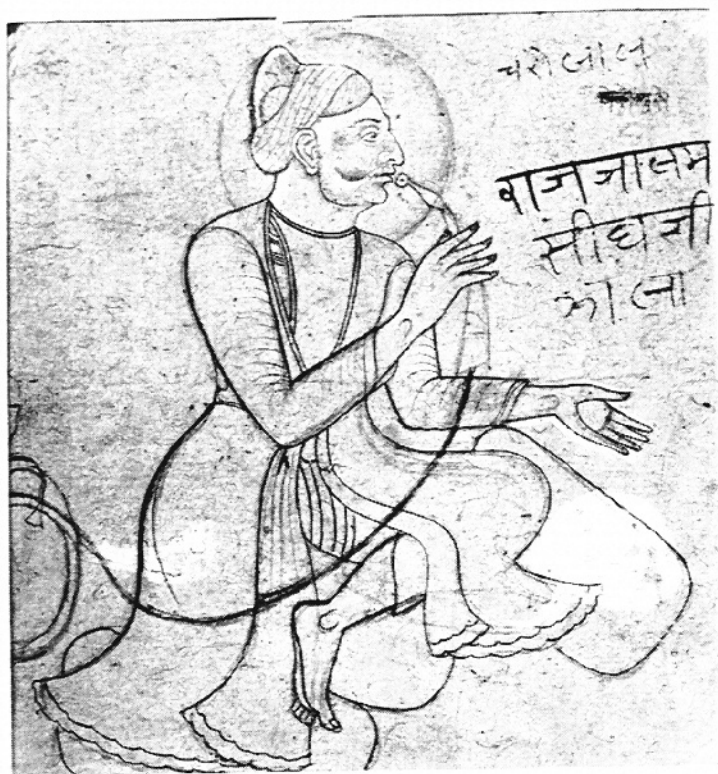


Fig. 4

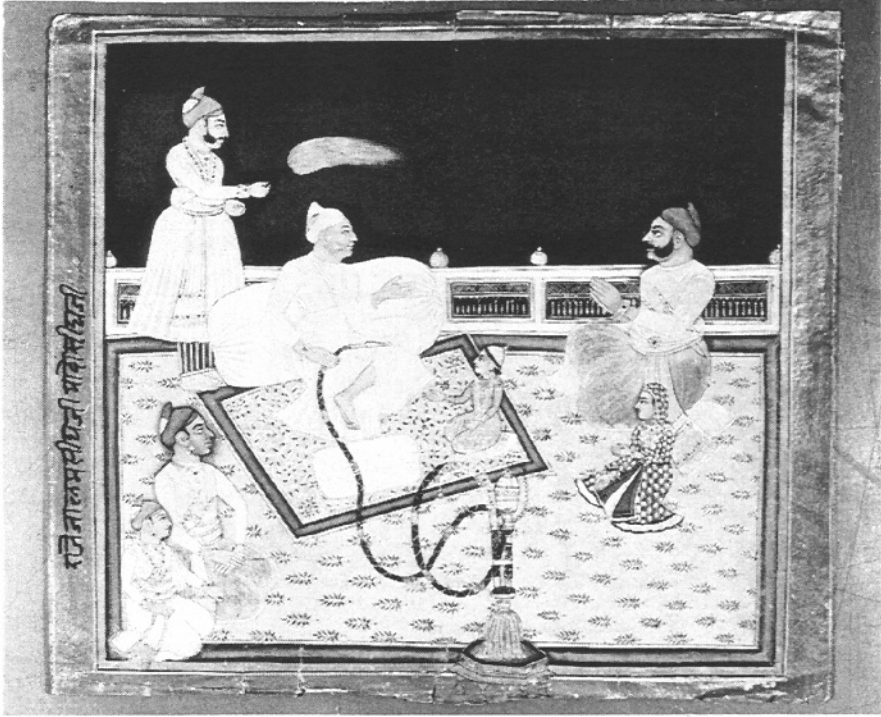


Fig. 5



Fig. 6