

COMMANDING MANDATES OF ROYAL LINE –A CASE STUDY OF MUGHAL *NISHANS*

¹Sumbul Halim Khan, ²Masrat Ahmad Mir.

¹Associate Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Social Science, AMU, Aligarh, India.

²Research Scholar, Department of History, Faculty of Social Science, AMU, Aligarh, India.

DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2020.v05i06.017 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2020.v05i06.017>

ABSTRACT

Nishan is a mandate issued by queen, prince, princess to Mughal nobles. It is a public and legislative document carrying seal and *tughra*. Generally, it had the sanction of the Emperor. The basic construct of *Nishan* was more or less similar to *farman* and *manshur*. The context of *nishan* varied considerably from exchange of gifts to devising strategies of war of succession, Kabul and Deccan campaign, internal party politics, importance of Rajput support etc. This document remains an untapped mine of information. A scrutiny of the *nishans* indicates that royal ladies enjoyed an exalted position in the Mughal administration.

Keywords: Persian documents, Mughal *Nishan*, Rajasthan State Archives, Mughal Harem, Nur Jahan, Mughal princes, prince Khurram. Prince Aurangzeb, Dara Shikoh, Princess Jahan Ara, Nadira Bano Begum, Mughal party politics.

INTRODUCTION

Nishans are mandates which provide valuable insights on happening of a remarkable period of Mughal history, giving glimpse into rise and fall of rules and regimes, the interplay of various members of royalty, the Mughal party politics, and network of friends and allies bringing alive the entire dimensional panorama of Mughal empire.

Nishans reflect the contributions and participation of each member of royal family in the conduct of administrative apparatus of an extensive empire. These *Nishans* throw light on internal and external policies of Mughals, and also shed insight into imperial viewpoint. It also serves as corroborative, supplementary, and elaborative value to the extant Mughal chronicles.

This paper in order to call attention to this remarkable source offers a concise translation of sampled *Nishans*, focusing on portions of historical significance without entailing literary

extravagance and verbose courtly linguistic style, so typical of medieval epistles from heyday of Mughal empire.

Among the mandates issued by Mughal chancellery, the *Nishan* forms an important segment from various angles. *Nishanis* a public and legislative document promulgated in the name of the prince, princess, governor or any other holding partial elements of sovereignty.ⁱ *Nishan* existed in the Timurid and Aq-qoyunlu period as well, wherein it served varied purpose of an order, permit, confirmatory order etc.

Mughal *Nishan* (Royal order) is written by prince, princess, Queen or close family member to *mansabdar*, *foujdar*, and other nobles. It was issued by them from their office with their *muhur* and *tughra*. Mostly, it had the sanction of the Emperor. It was sometimes personal or cordial letter. These records therefore reflect the nature of position, the addressee enjoyed at the imperial court. In this way *Nishan* were at par with *farman* and are major testimony of the glory of Mughal period. The *nishans* of the royal ladies also make an interesting study reflecting their effective role in campaigns, war of succession, factional intrigues etc

Study of *Nishan* had been demanding attention of scholars after their becoming available in profusion from Rajasthan state archives, Bikaner. This series contains 117 *Nishan* commencing from 1622 till -1722.ⁱⁱ It is a well-known fact that Rajasthan State Archives enjoys its unique status for being extremely rich repository on Mughal period. This Archives collection boasts of a series of 105 *Nishan*, which belong to Raja Jai Singh, 11 to Raja Kunwar Ram Singh and one to Mohammad Beg. Most of these *Nishan* are from Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb mostly signed by them.ⁱⁱⁱ Besides these there are *nishans* in various other repositories which can complete a comprehensive vision of this particular genre of documents.

STRUCTURE OF NISHANS

These documents of the Mughal epistolary do not have any specific structure; still we have attempted to discuss some of the general features found in most of the documents of *Nishan* we have studied so far. Following are some of the key features of these documents.

Surnama

Intitulation in documents of Mughal chancellery are the invocation of Almighty Allah. Such supplications which crowned the *Nishans* are termed as *Surnama*. The *Surnama* seems independent from the documents content and is seen in every *Nishan*, *Farman* or *Manshur*, which carry varied contents and subject matter. In *Nishan* the frequently used supplications or *Surnamas* were *Bismillah-i-hir-rehman-nir-rahim*, (I begin with Allah's name, who is benevolent and most merciful), *Allah-u-Akbar*, (Allah is great) and *Al-qadiru*, (Allah is all power full), respectively. Shah Alam had used different *surnamas* in his *Nishans* like *huwa' al*

Muta'alu (He is most high and Unique), *huwa* (He i.e. Allah) and *huwal qadir* (He is Almighty).^{iv} (see fig 1) Similar intitulations were used in *farman*, the frequently used *surnamas* were *hu'wa*(He), *ya-fatah* (The granter of success), *ya-ghalibu* (overpowering), *hu'wahghalibu* (He is overpowering), *hu'wal qadiru* (He is mighty, exalted), *hu'wal mustan* (He is brilliant), etc.^v



Fig. 1: Specimen of different *Surnamas* in the illustrated *Nishans*

Courtesy: *Farsi Farman*

Tughra

Although the prince/princesses exercised independent power, *Nishan* often had double *Tughra*, the first stating the name and title of the Emperor. Underneath the first *Tughra* was the second *Tughra*, which contained the title and the status of the prince/author.

A close scrutiny of the *tughra* during the study of *Nishan* one finds varied specimen, for instance, the *Tughra* of Nurjahan, read as Hukumi Uliyah Nurjahan Badshah Begam, similarly Nadira Banu Begam *tughra* reads as nishani nadira banu begam and Jahan Ara's as Nishan i uliyai Mahdi uliya Jahan Ara Bint i Hazrat Shah Jahan Badshah Ghazi Sahib Qirani Sani.^{vi}(see fig 2)

The tughra of Dara Shikoh read as “ Nishan of Dara Shikoh ibn Shah Jahan Badshah Ghazi” and of Aurangzeb (as a prince) his tughra read as ‘the exalted Nishan of Shahzada Muhammad Aurangzeb Bahadur’

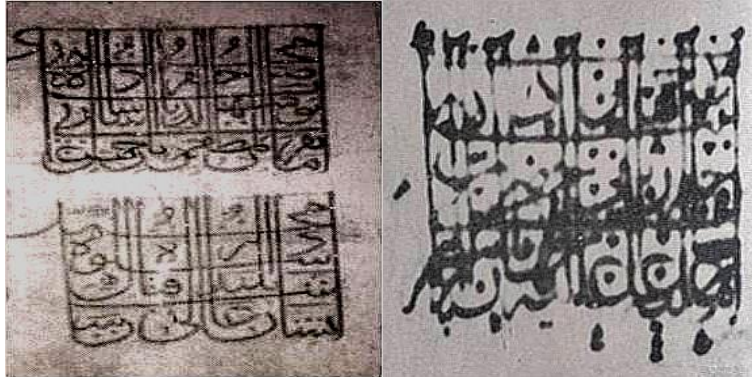


Fig. 2(A)

Fig. 2(B)



Fig. 2(C)

Fig. 2(A): Nishan of prince Dara Shukoh Dated: Dec. 23, 1657.

Courtesy: *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat*, (Plate XIV)

Fig. 2(B): Tughra of Jahan Ara Courtesy: *Edicts from the Mughal Haram*, p.103

Fig. 2(C): Tughra of Nur Jahan, Courtesy: *Edicts from the Mughal Harem*, p. 97.

Seal/Muhur

The *muhur* is found in some *Nishan*. The shape of these vary from almond or lozenge shape to *mehrabi* (Arched). Legend contains 1) praise of the Almighty 2) name and title of the royal family member, 3) the Emperor and 4) engraving of seal.

The *Nishan* of Nurjahan bore an arch seal (*mehrabi muhur*) bearing the name of the Emperor. Legend on seal said “God is great: with the light of the sun (or love) of Jahangir, the ruler of the world, the signet of Nurjahan Badshah became illumined”.(see fig 3A)

Some other seals read as:

Seal of Dara Shikoh was ‘*Allah, Shah-i-Buland Iqbal Muhammad Dara Shikoh ibn Sahib-i-Tsani Shah Jahan Badshah Ghazi*’

Seal of Aurangzeb read as ‘the exalted *Nishan* of Shahzada Mohammad Aurangzeb Bahadur’

Seal of Nadira Bano Begam read as *Nadira Bano Begam Humdam I Shahi Buland Iqbal*, translates as ‘Nadira Banu Begam, Companion (Spouse) of Shah iBuland Iqbal’ (see fig 3B)

Seal of Jahan Ara was *Uliya i aliya Jahan Ara bint i Shah Jahan*, it translates as “Her exalted highness Jahan Ara, Daughter of Shahjahan.”

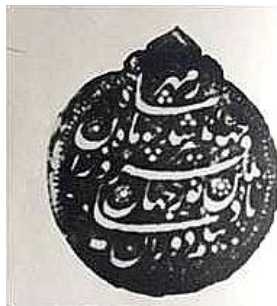


Fig. 3(A)

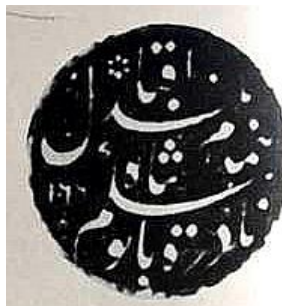


Fig. 3(B)

Fig. 3: Sample seals, Fig. 3(A) : Seals of Nur Jahan and 3(B) Nadira Banu respectively, courtesy: *Edicts from the Mughal Harem, Farsi Farman*.

A large number of *Nishan* are without *Tughra* and seal. It is therefore not a set rule that *Nishan* would bear *Tughra* and seal.^{vii}It appears the nature and content of the *Nishan* determined whether it would bear *tughra* or not, a close scrutiny indicates matters related to finances definitely have *tughra*, those having personal orientation were without it.

Compliments

The content starts with compliments and hyperbolic phrases, lavish titles were suffixed with the name of the nobles, these vary according to the status of the addressee, such as, prop of peers and contemporaries, pride of grandees and nobles, worthy of kindness and favor, leader of zealous warriors, pillar of the devoted, fitted for favors and grace, distinguished by exalted grace, exemplar for sincere servants of blessed character, best of virtuous peers, majesty of eminent

nobles, glorified by sublime favors, cavalier of race course of bravery, choicest one of dynasty, submissive to Islam.

Content of *Nishan*

The contents of *Nishan*, we have so far found arerich in classic Persian vocabulary. In lexis of content, hyperbolic praises are used for the addressee of the *Nishan*. These documents are composed with certain norms that distinguish the diction and style of such literary specimens from ordinary texts. There was a proper medium of formulation of *Nishan* like *farmans*. The structure of the content had a particular construct. There was considerable uniformity in the pattern of different *Nishan*. The usage of words was classical not colloquial or common language. The content whether it was informal or formal, it was couched with polite and subtle and indirect language, although it was addressed to subordinates. The *Nishan* were brief letters not more than one page.

TYPES OF NISHAN

In view of the varied nature of *Nishan* we have broadly classified them according to the senders. We would thus be able to comprehend broadly their significance. In the light of these sampled *Nishans* we can observe whether these were complimentary to each other or not, we can also determine whether there was a hierarchy of *Nishans*, some superior others ordinary, did all of these serve one purpose or contradicted each other, is there difference in earlier and latter *Nishans*. One should also know what was the subject matter or focal concerns of *Nishans* political, diplomatic, *madad-i-mash*, war strategy etc. (see following table I)

Table I: Types of *Nishans* classified on the basis of sender and subject matter

S. No.	Sender	Status	Subject	Source	Date(A.D)
1	Khurram	Son	Death of Jahangir /Rajput support/Deccan campaign	<i>Farsi farman</i>	1627
2.	Nurjahan	Queen	<i>Ijara</i> /Khurram revolt /Mahabat khan's revolt	Farsi Farman Edicts	1620
3.	Jahan Ara	Daughter	<i>Peshkash</i>	Farsi farman	1651

			<i>/madad I mash/</i>	Edicts	
			Jat problem/		
			Qandahar expedition		
4.	Dara Shukoh	Son	<i>Suba Kabul /</i>	Farsi farman	1651
			War of Mughal succession/Rajput support/ gift of jewel and pickle	documents	
5.	NadiraBano Begum	Daughter in law	War of Mughal succession/Rajput support	Farsi Farman Edicts	1652
6.	Aurangzeb	Son	Qandahar expedition	Farsi Farman	1652
7.	Suleman Shikoh	grandson	War with Rajputs	Farsi Farman	1658
8	Muhammad Akbar	Son	Grant of <i>mansab</i>	Farsi farman	1682
9.	Muazzam /Shah Alam	Son	Rajput support	Farsi farman	1677
10	Qutbuddin	Son	<i>Qaul panja</i> (imprint of hand for assurance)	Farsi farman	1722

A. Nishan of Royal Ladies:

Nishan bear testimony to the power wielded by royal ladies in Mughal court, they actively participated in the conduct of the administration. They exercised significant power like the ladies

in royal courts of Timurid and Mongol empires. The royal lady of Timurid Empire like Gawhar Sad, wife of a Timurid ruler Shahrukh (1405-47 A.D) had enjoyed power for a decade as a de-facto ruler after her husband's death.^{viii} Timurid women mostly patronized the religious edifice and institutions like *Khanqahs*, masjids and *madrasas*. Gowhar Sad patronized the two famous grand Friday masjids in Timurid Empire, one in Herat and another in Mashhad.^{ix}

Similarly in Mongol empire, despite its nomadic structure, it provided a measure of freedom and power to the women.^x Various ladies had wielded power in Mongol empire and decided the fate of empire, these ladies include Ögetei Khan's wife, Töregene Khatun (r. 1241-6), first empress regent of the Mongols. Second, the role of Sorghaghtani Beki (d. 1251/2), wife of Tolui and arguably the power behind the throne, is considered vis-à-vis the reign of the second Mongol regent Oghul Qaimish (r. 1248-50). Finally, the extensive reign of Orghina Khatun (d. 1266) in Central Asia was an example of the continuity of this practice of female rule in a Mongol khanate.

We find a similar influence of royal ladies in the politics and policies of the Mughals. The Mughal ladies from the time of Babur had an active role in politics of the empire. Some of such prominent ladies were Maham Begam, wife of Babur and mother of Humayum, whose *hokum* (Edicts issued by Queen or Queen-mother) is quoted as *farman* by Babur in his memoir.^{xi} It is noteworthy that queen mothers namely Maryam Makani, Hameeda Begam, mother of Akbar and Maryam Zamani, Wali Nimat Begam, mother of Jahangir issued *hokum* category of documents, which is evident from the *unwan* of the edict itself.^{xii} Thus in hierarchy of edicts *farman* was followed by *hukum* and then *Nishan*. The other ladies known for their power are Hamida Banu Begam, mother of Akbar, Nur Jahan, spouse of Jahangir, Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Shahjahan, Nadira Banu Begam, wife of Dara Shikoh and many others. Nur Jahan was a powerful lady in Mughal court; she was conferred with many *Jagirs* like Ramsar near Ajmer, and Toda. She appeared at *Jarokha* and issued orders as well as struck coins in her name.^{xiii} Similarly Arjumand Banu Begam (Mumtaz Mahal) is said to have received an allowance of ten lakh rupees a year by Shahjahan.^{xiv}

These appear to be inspired by Timurid and Mongol empires as we see Mughal claim of lineage traced from Timur, which is evident in their genealogical seals. The Mughals, we may say had imprint of Timurid concept of sovereignty with regard to the power and position of women within the imperial household. The significance of this fact is revealed by the *munshaat* (official documents) of the Mughals, which include the *Nishan* of princesses which we have selected as a part of study in the present paper.

The *Nishan* of royal Mughal ladies were as relevant and important as of the princes. In some cases *Nishans* served as corroborative order to the imperial *farman*, which was issued by the *Nishan* of princesses as well. This fact is attested by the *Nishan* of Jahan Aara.^{xv}

The princesses issued orders through *Nishan* during the time of war. We have a *Nishan* of Nadira Banu dated 13 April 1652, which she issued as reply to the *arzasht* of Raja Jai Singh in which she asked to him to report and accompany the troops in an expedition against Qandahar. (See fig 6).

i. Nishan of Nurjahan

Nurjahan was the title of Mehr un Nisan Begum. She received the title after her marriage to Jahangir in 1611. She enjoyed exalted position at imperial court. She had the custody of royal seal stamped on *farmans*.^{xvi} All imperial *farmans* concerned with financial and legal nature bore name of Nur Jahan.

The *nishans* of Nurjahan are important from many angles. The formulation of the entire document reveals the authority it exercised. The content of the *nishans* focus major concerns of the empire, like Khurram's and Mahabat Khan's unrest (see fig 5) She was actively involved in factional politics, she was loyal to Jahangir by all means but she was committed to promote *Shahryars* political profile at the Mughal court.

Her *nishans* indicate following highlights

1. It was as good as *hukum* category of mandates
2. It came from empress who wielded immense power.
3. Royal lady was directly addressing a noble in the mandate.
4. Such a *Nishan* was privilege for the addressee
5. *Sarnama*, *tughra* and *Muhr* respectively crown the *Nishan*.
6. The opening line of the running matter are short like the *parwancha* document
7. It is a direct command excluding any other routine information
8. It solicited Rajput support at the crucial time of Khurram rebellion, revealing Nurjahan's active participation in court politics

These *Nishans* of Nurjahan have been studied by scholars^{xvii}, and they question the identity of the document, whether to call it a *Nishan* or *hokum*.^{xviii} Although the document bears the *tughra*, which clearly states *hukumi alia*. A close scrutiny of the above mentioned manuscripts of *Nishan*, we find varied subject matter related to the different aspects of the administration concerning for instance instruction to *qanungos* for safety of merchants.^{xix} The *Hukum* were

basically issued for *Suyurghal* land assignments by royal ladies.^{xx} An important aspect in the text of these documents issued by Nurjahan is the mention of term *Nishan-i-alishan*.^{xxi} This reference as *Nishan-i-alishan* affirms that the orders issued by Nurjahan come under the category of *Nishan*.^{xxii}

In Rajasthan State Archives series six *Nishan* are written by Nurjahan addressed to Mirza Raja Jai Singh.^{xxiii} In many of the *Nishan*, Nurjahan praises Jai Singh and showers lavish compliments like well-wisher of the empire, successful administrator, etc.^{xxiv} She directs him to accomplish the tasks entrusted to him by the Emperor, and not be friendly with seditious people. Jai Singh complies with orders and as a mark of honor he was conferred a special *khilat*.

Each of the *Nishan* of Nurjahan is important because they relate to vital issues of administration.^{xxv} She orders that the revenue of *pargana* Amber etc. held in *ijara* by the Mirza Raja Jai Singh should be given to Mohammad Hashim who is deputed for the purpose. Jai Singh is expected to handover the revenue so that it is deposited in the treasury at Agra. Any protest or delay will not be tolerated. The compliance of orders should be treated as mandatory. The *Nishan* is very harsh as it relates to the *watan* area of the Raja to be treated as on *ijara*. Amber was the core *watan* area, the ancestral domain and hence the honor Amber house. Such an order was meant to be a pressure tactic to shake the very root of his prestige.

Another *Nishan* is laudatory edict commending Jai Singh's compliance of royal orders to disassociate himself from Mohammad Khan.^{xxvi} It was expected from loyal servant like him and imperial command was to be treated as supreme. He was asked to consider it as imperial benevolence for his further progress. He should continue supporting son of Khan-i-jahan which can earn him progress. It was stated not to evade the imperial order.

The following portion of the *nishan* is selected as an illustration (see fig 4) to show that *nishans* were not purely in the nature of running matter as discussed above, but could also offer detailed statistics of revenue from *ijara* of Amber with breakup of stipulated income (*muqarara*), actual (*hasil*), and balance (*baqaya*) from *Rabi* and *Kharif* harvest. This is a rare *nishan* entailing statistical content.

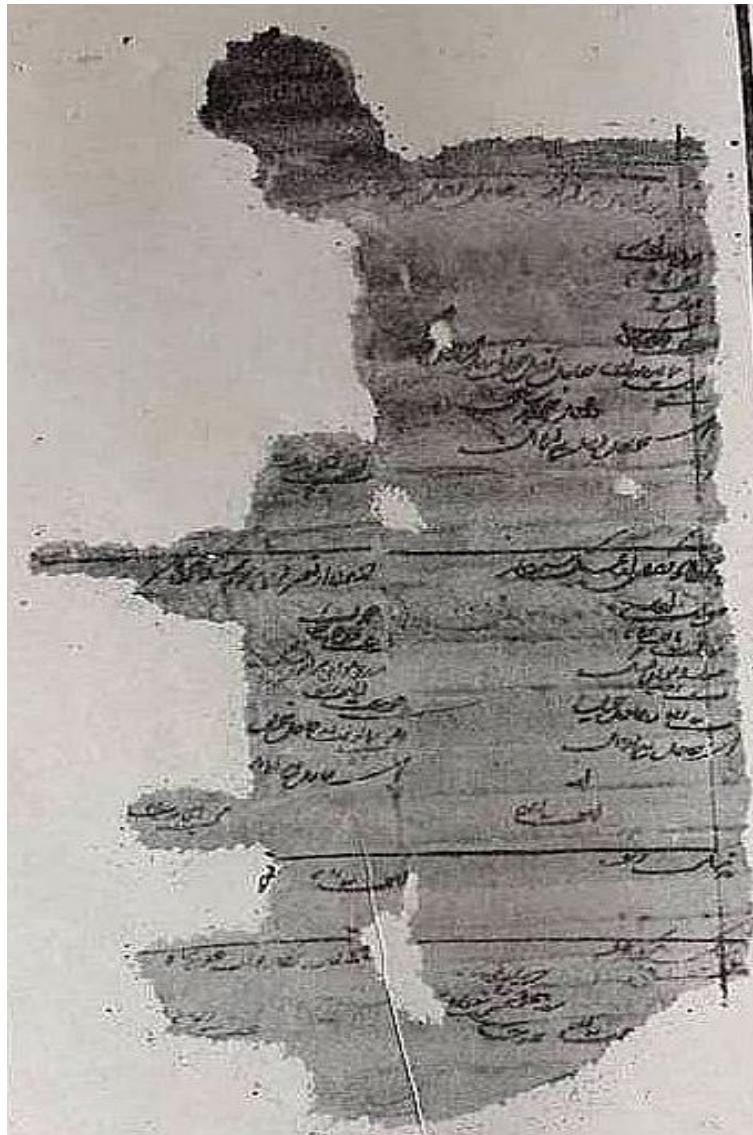


Fig. 4: Fascimile of *Nishan* of NurJahan, 31 July 1620

Courtesy: Edicts from The Mughal Harem, p. 20-21.

Summary:

Details of revenue for *ijara* of *pargana* Amber

Hasil from Rabi crop -38,04,100 dams grand total of revenue from *ijara* of Jai Singh and Purshottam Singh (stated below)

Muqarrara or stipulated of *Kharif* crop – Rs. 1,16,041 (total of *hasil* and *baqi* of *kharif*)

Hasil of *Kharif* – Rs 69,624

Baqi or balance of *kharif* – Rs. 46,416 and 40 *dams*

(1) *Tamassuk Sarkar* (*Jai Singh*)

- 32,88,150 *dams*

Muqarrara (details as follows) - Rs 1,00,000/

Hasil of *kharif* crop –Rs 60,000/

Baqi Rs 40,000

(2) *Purshottam singh*

-515950 *dams*

Muqarara (details as follows) Rs 12, 041/

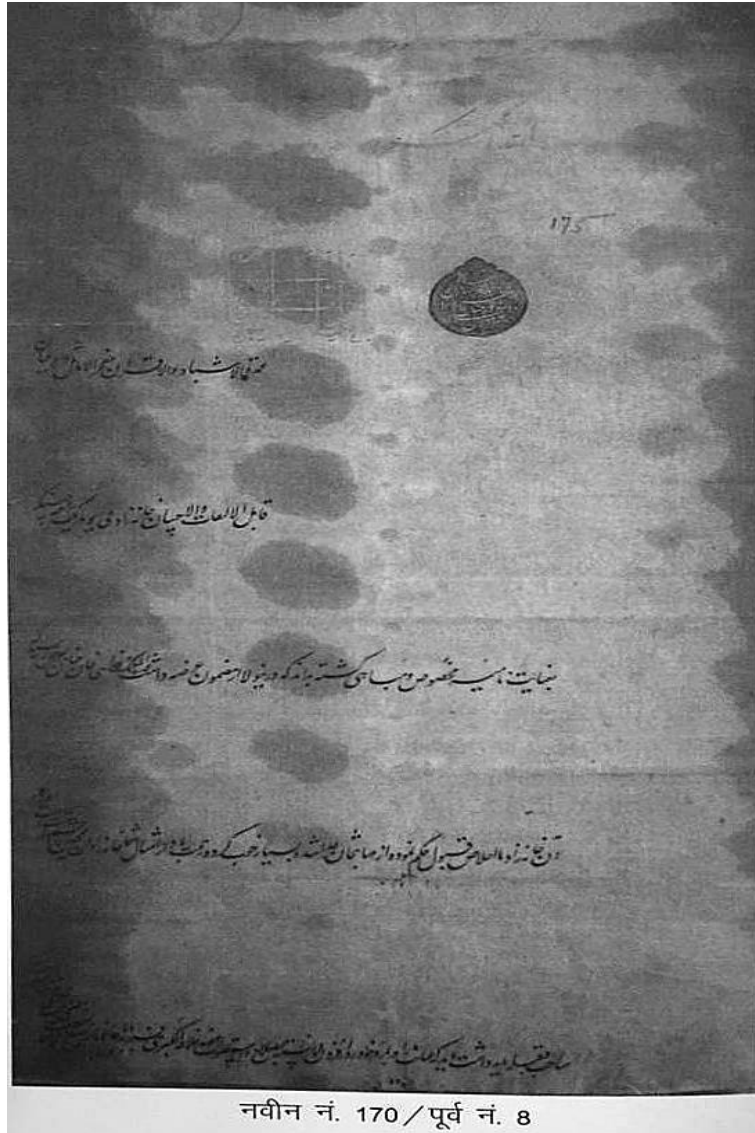
Hasil of *kharif*- Rs 8, 624/

Baqi, hasil of *rabi* Rs 3, 416

The amount for *peshkash* etc. (details as follows) –Rs. 40,000

Peshkash for Her Majesty (*Nurjahan*) - Rs 20,000/

Peshkash for *Nawab Ghufran Panah* - Rs 20,000/



**Fig. 5: Nishan of Nur Jahan addressed to Jai Singh,
Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.**

Summary:

Nishan of Nur Jahan addressed to Jai Singh

Dated 11 *abanIlahi* 20/23 Oct. 1623 A.D.

It has come to our notice through Fidai Khan, that since you are a loyalist, you have complied with the orders and disassociated yourself from the Mahabat Khan. This is great! May Allah bless you. It was expected from you, to be obedient servant. The welfare of the imperial court should always be your prime priority. And Mirza Raja Jai Singh should always remain the right arm of the empire and we wish you to work as per the instructions of *Khan-i-jahan* and not to deviate from imperial command.

ii. Nishan of Princess:

a) *Nishan of Daughter in law*

The example of this category comes from Nadira Banu Begam, the consort of Dara Shikoh . She was the daughter of Prince Parvaiz , son of Jahangir. She remained pillar of support to Dara till her death. One can discern that Nadira Banu was as authoritative as a prince; she appears to be integral element of the imperial court. Considering the authority she wielded we have sampled four *nishans* to illustrate her active involvement in the party politics .The language of the *Nishan* is very majestic in nature.

Nishan shows she held audience of nobles in porch (deorhi). In this *Nishan* she condones the formality so that Amber Raja could take charge of expedition to successfully accomplish the 3rdQandahar expedition.(see fig 6)

In this *Nishan* Rajput support is solicited on the behalf of the Emperor. She also mentions a handsome amount of Rs 50,000/-, disbursed from the imperial treasury to meet expenses of army.This campaign is related to war of succession, where Amber Raja was to chastise Suleman Shikoh at Banaras.^{xxvii}

This *Nishan* is a token of appreciation for overcoming the threat posed by Shah Shuja in war of succession. As a mark of appreciation the rank of Amber Raja was raised to 7000/7000 and assurance was extended for future favors and patronage. The *Nishan* showers lavish benedictions, which reveals the significance of Rajput support in favour of Dara^{xxviii}.

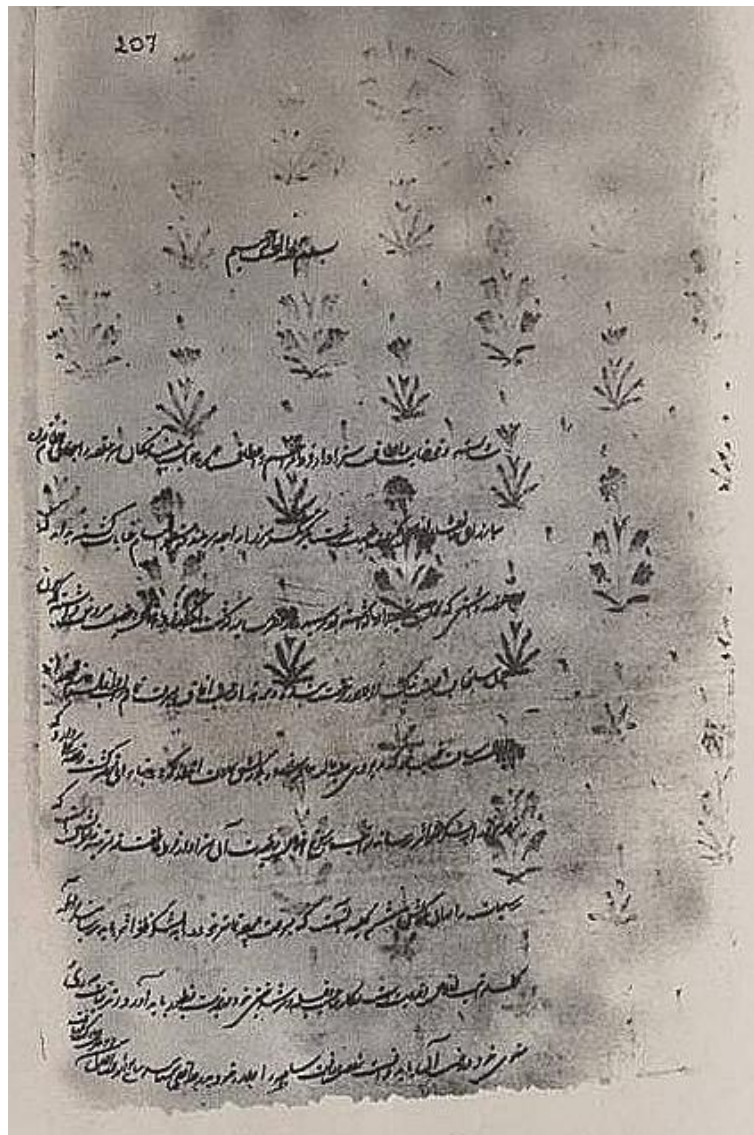


Fig. 6: Nishan of Nadira Bano Begam Addressed to Mirza Raja Jai Singh (New/Old No. 207/44) Dated 14 Jamadi I 26 RY/ 1062 AH/ 5 April 1652

Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III

Summary:

Acknowledging petition written by him, which has been perused, he had expressed complete loyalty and humility, and that he had proceeded at auspicious time towards Lahore. The Emperor then summoned him and therefore he could not present himself in her esteemed presence at her

Deorhi. In the context, it should be known to Jai Singh that it was not appropriate for him to pay respects at the Deorhi of her highness in the circumstances. His place is thus that it does not require any outwardly formalities. She wished him to join the imperial army and remain committed to the cause for which he will be duly rewarded for loyalty by the Emperor as well as her highness.

b) *Nishan of Daughter*

Daughter of Emperor enjoyed an exalted position as we see in the case of Jahan Ara, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan. Jahan Ara enjoyed the titles of *Sahibatuz Zamani* and *Badshah Begam*^{xxxix}, but was usually known as Begam Saheb. She had inclination towards mysticism and wrote pamphlets on the subject. She wrote Munisul Arwah, the biography of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti and his descendants. Murid Khan wrote a *Masnavi* in her praise.^{xxx}

She was taken in high esteem by brothers Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Murad Bahsh as well as Aurangzeb. However being the favorite daughter of Shahjahan, her clear inclination was towards Dara, her sisters Roshan Ara and Gauhar Ara supported Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh.^{xxxi}

She held *jagirs* in Panipat and Surat.^{xxxii} She mediated in political matters, maintained diplomatic and commercial contacts with foreign ambassadors and traders,^{xxxiii} assigned subsistence grants, received and gave gifts to the nobles.^{xxxiv} Jahan Ara wielded considerable influence before and during the war of succession, wherein she issued number of effective *nishans*. The reign of Aurangzeb gave her a respectable position, but the effect and implementation of her *nishans* was less effective as her political position diminished.

A close look over her *nishans* mirrors her pivotal role in better perspective. *Nishan* directs the revenue officials to safeguard the interest of *riaya* and caution against any excesses in *mauza umrauli*, which had been granted to Shaham Ara as *Inam*.^{xxxv}

Nishan in response to the petition of Amber Raja for annihilation of Jats and from Kaman and Pahari. Since, it was prime concern to Emperor. She informs that the Emperor has agreed for the inhabitation of Rajputs to check the Jat threat. (see fig 7) She also refers to impending conquest of Qandahar for which *farman* was sent to summon him. This was the second siege of Qandahar. Prince Aurangzeb headed the army and Raja was in charge of vanguard.^{xxxvi}

Another *Nishan*, addressed to Fazlullah Khan responds to petition for subsistence from *pargana* Panipat by grant of 60 *bighas* as *madad-i-mash* to Musammat Rajan, nurse of Jahan Ara. The *mutasaddis* were instructed to measure and allocate the land from crop to crop and year to year.^{xxxvii}

Jahan Ara received regular *peshkash* from nobles like Budh Prakash, Raja of Sirmur. The items included several animals, trays of sour pomegranate (*tursh anar*), myrobalan, musk pod (*mushk nafa*), zedoary, and golden winged bird (*murg zarrin*), fly whiskers (*chanwan*), falcon (*baaz*), honey, ice from Kashmir. ^{xxxviii}

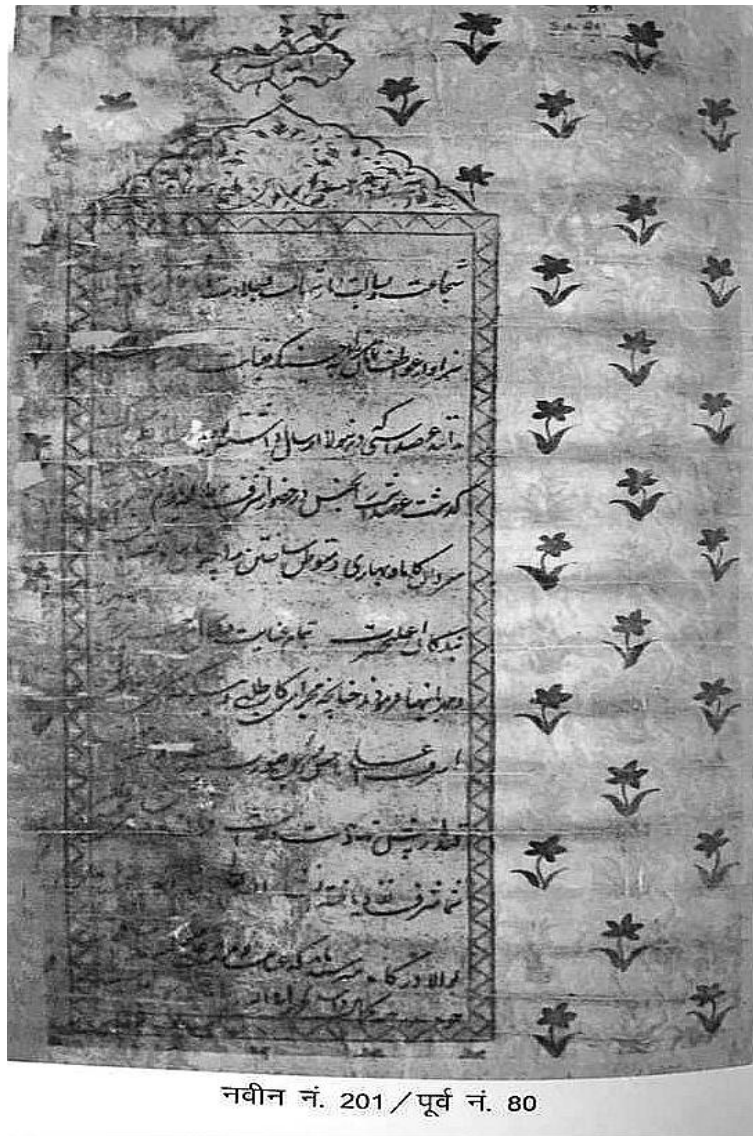


Fig. 7: Nishan of Jahan Ara Dated: 30 Oct. 1651.

Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III, p. 75.

Nishan of Jahan Ara,

Addressed to Mirza Raja Jai Singh

Dated: 30 Oct. 1651

Translation:

Be it known to the brave and courageous, audacious and dauntless, worthy of supreme rewards Mirza Raja Jai Singh, made hopeful of the grace of her highness. It should be known that the *arzi* (petition) has been received and perused and accordingly brought to the notice of the Emperor. The rebels of *pargana*, Kama and Pahari have been routed and the Rajputs have been populated in the area. This has made the Emperor very pleased and gracious. Your able devotion and instrumentality has impressed his majesty. Since Qandahar expedition is in the imperial focus a *farman* has been issued in the context to summon you in the court within three to four months. You should remain assured upon the recompense and rewards of her highness.

Written on 17th *shawwal* 1061/ 30 Oct. 1651 A.D.

B. *Nishan of Princes; sons and grandsons of Jahangir:*

In this category we have many illustrations of nishans of Jahangir's son, prince Khurram and grandsons namely Dawar Baksh, Dara Shukoh, Aurangzeb etc

Prince Khurram

Prince Khurram was the third son of Jahangir, who rebelled in 1622. Khusrau was a strong contender after his death his son Dawar Baksh aspired for the throne. Death of Parvaiz narrowed the contest for throne. Shahryar was fortunate to have enjoyed the political backing of Nur Jahan .but luck decided otherwise for him .

When Khurram ascended the throne he assumed the regnal title of Shahjahan (ruler of world). He reigned for three decades from 1628- 1658.The title of *Sahib Qiran-i- Sani* was inspired by Amir Timur, who was first to call himself *Sahib-i-Qiran*.

The following nishans of Khurram and Dawar Bakhsh belong to same time frame of 1627, while Dawar traces his support from Nurjahan , Khurram rests his claim on Divine will to take charge of the reins of Empire.(see fig 8)

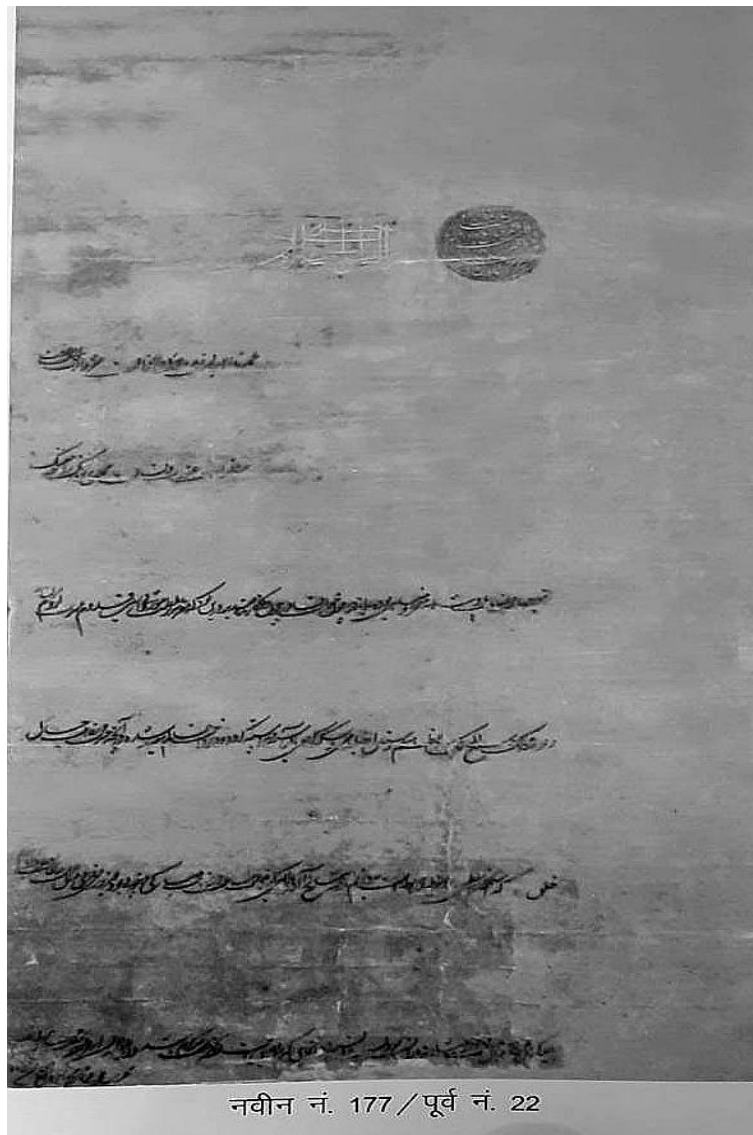


Fig. 8: Nishan of prince Khurram addressed to Raja Jai Singh related to Deccan Campaign, Dated: 20 Nov. 1627.

Courtesy: *Farsi Farman*, Vol. III.

Nishan of prince Khurram

Addressed to Raja Jai Singh,

Dated: 21 Rabi I 1037/ 20 Nov.1627

Translation

Pick of peers, exemplar of sincere servants, leader of zealous warriors, best of devoted, sincere and faithful Raja Jai Singh, privileged and comforted by manifold bounties and favors of His Highness, be it known that since Almighty wanted that the throne of this empire should be graced by his (prince Khurram)auspicious reign and the empire of Hindustan be dignified by his *khutba* and coin and to accomplish welfare of the state and serve mankind so that the roots of the Empire thus remain strong. Hence on the auspicious occasion of 10 *aaJarIlahi*, I have taken reins of empire in my hand, therefore you should continue with your responsibility and stay steadfast in loyalty and obey commands and deviate from any opposition.

Dawar Baksh

Dawar Bakhsh appeared as a political contender in 1620s. He was son of prince Khusrau. He benefitted from the sympathy for deceased prince Khusrau at the imperial court. Jahangir favored Dawar Bakhsh to avenge his father's murder by Khurram. Parvaiz death improved Dawar's position as a contender. He then contested against Shahryar and Khurram. Theoretically Dawar enjoyed the support of Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan, but otherwise the latter was inclined towards Shahryar. When Shahryar was defeated and blinded Dawar acted Emperor. In Jan 1628 Khurram put all princely contenders to death including Dawar Bakhsh and assumed power. The following *Nishan* relates to the crucial period when Dawar received the news of Jahangir's death and set forth his claim to throne.(see fig 9)

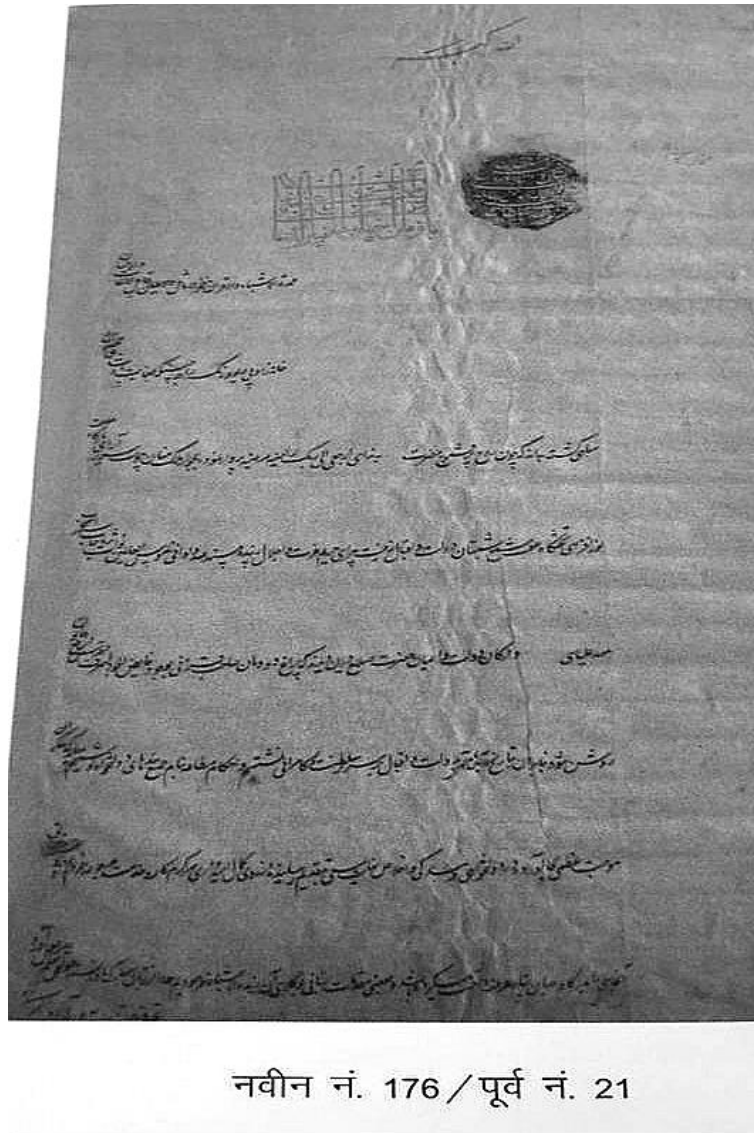


Fig. 9: Nishan of DawarBaksh to Raja Jai Singh related to death of Jahangir and Accession of Dawar. Dated: 25 June 1627A.D. (New/Old No. 176/21),

Courtesy: *Farsi Farman*, Vol. III

Nishan of Dawar Baksh to Raja Jai Singh.

Dated 24 *Aban Ilahi* 22RY/25 June 1627A.D.

25 June 1627

Translation:

Prop of the peers, pride of grandees, worthy of kindness, Mirza Raja Jai Singh. Be it known that since the soul of Hazrat Rizwan Makani (Jahangir) has left this transient world for heavenly abode, Her Highness Nur Jahan and the loyal nobles of the empire saw the welfare of the state in the opportune decision that the heir should be chosen from the best, pristine and gracious prince, hence on 17 *Aban Ilahi*. I ascended the throne and all well-wishers and near and dears were invited. You should also come on this auspicious occasion to offer good wishes and pledge to remain sincere and loyal towards duty. I have communicated orders through my *wakils* verbally, comply the said orders and not to deviate from what is commanded.

Nishan of Aurangzeb

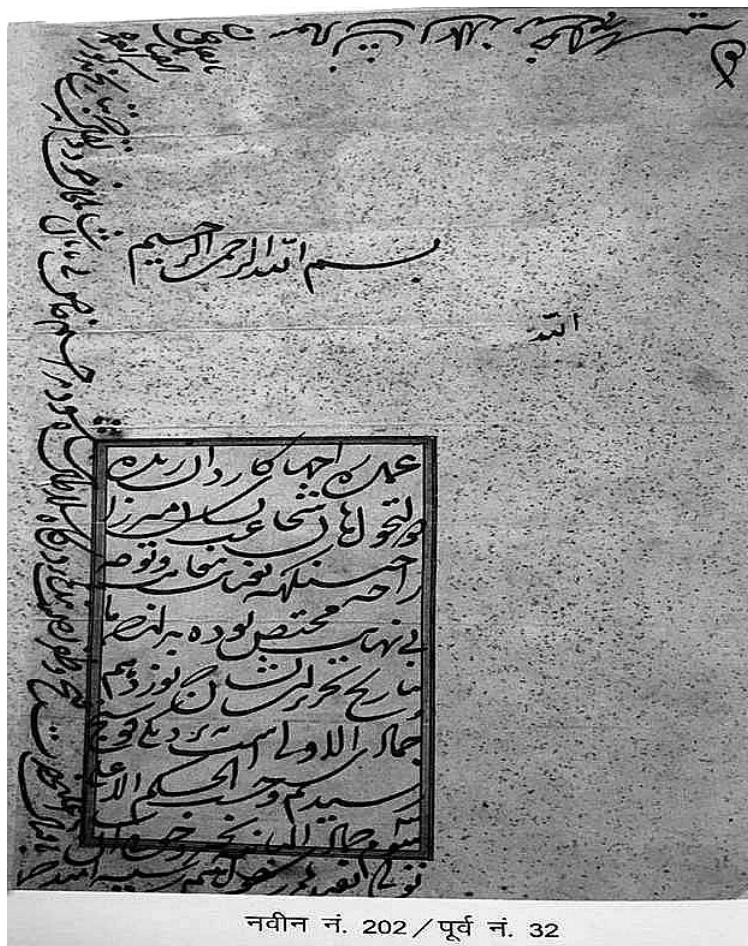


Fig. 10: Nishan of Prince Aurangzeb with subject ‘Expedition on Kandahar’ Dated: 18 April, 1652. Courtesy: Farsi farman, Vol.III.

Nishan of Prince Aurangzeb

Addressed to Jai Singh

Dated: 19 *Jamadi* I 1062/18 April, 1652

Translation:

Best of efficient peers, chosen amongst courageous well-wishers Mirza Raja Jai Singh, be comforted of extreme exalted grace. Be it known, that on this day of writing of *Nishan* i.e. 19 *Jamadi* I, reached near Kosanj and as per imperial order on coming 3rd *Jamadi* II, I will reach Qandahar, by His Majesty's might will be victories. Be comforted of special limitless grace. I am confident that on the said date you will reach in our presence to join the expedition.

***Nishans* of Dara Shikoh**

Dara Shikoh was the eldest son of Shah Jahan. He was invested with the title of *Shah Buland Iqbal* (king of high fortune). He enjoyed special military rank. He had the rank of 50000/40000 and was based at the imperial court and hence has considerable say in the affairs of the court. Shah Jahan demonstrated his support to Dara in many *farmans*, wherein he designed military strategy to counter the ambitions of contending princes, who were his full brothers viz. Aurangzeb, Murad Bakhsh and Shah Shuja.^{xxxix} All three of them acted as provincial governors of different regions of the Empire

Although there were Irani, Turani, Khurasani nobles, Rajput were prominent faction of Shah Jahan's court. Dara made active effort to enlist support of major Rajput houses, because of their martial valour and pivotal position.(see fig 12) Rajputs of Amber, Mewar, Sirohi were handled to control petty Rajput *zamindars*. Dara constantly urged the support of *zamindar* of Sirohi, Akhai Raj asking him to be alert with armed force to join the war,^{xi} the other Rajputs also were asked to muster force which included Rao Satrasal Bundela and Jaswant Singh.^{xli} Their support was intended to buttress his military prowess.

He was also fortunate enough to enjoy the sincere support of elder sister, Jahan Ara and his wife Nadira Bano Begum both of whom in their own capacity tried to win over support of prominent factions of nobility. His sons Suleiman Shikoh and Siphir Shikoh held military campaigns to check the claims of contesting princes.

The *nishans* issued by Dara Shikoh also inform about his aesthetic taste in specific gifts procured from specific area. One such *nishan* is issued to Santi Das, the business tycoon of Gujarat, for sending round *chapar* (diamond) weighing 44 *surkhs* only and none other variety^{xlii} Similarly a

nishan was issued to Muizzul Mulk to procure precious jewels from Santi Das for the celebration of Tuladan ceremony of Shahjahan. Further demand is made for pickled chillies (achari mirch), which is brought by firangis in Gujarat.^{xliii}

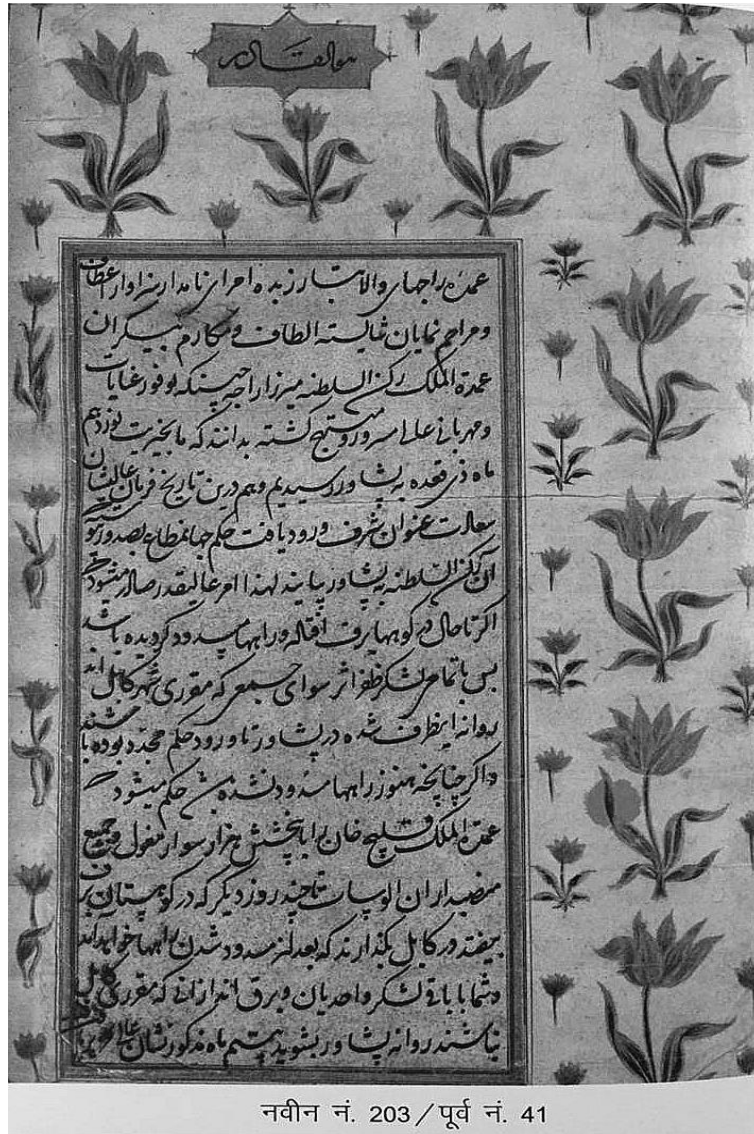


Fig. 11: Nishan of Prince Dara Shikoh to Raja Jai Singh related to Kabul, Dated: 13 Oct. 1652. Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.

Nishan of Prince Dara Shikoh

Addressed to Raja Jai Singh,

Dated: 20 Zialqad 1062/ 13 Oct. 1652.

Translation:

Best of illustrious lineage, leader of grandees of high rank , worthy of limitless bounties, Mirza Raja Jai Singh, be comforted of exalted grace and manifold favors, be it known that I have reached Peshawar safely on 19 *zialqad* and on same date imperial Farman was issued to reach Peshawar, therefore the command is issued to proceed with entire army, except those stationed at Kabul, proceed towards Peshawar and wait for further orders and if the passage is obstructed by snowfall it is ordered that you should leave Qulich Khan with 5000-6000 *sawars* along with *mansabdar* for few days, till snowfall continues and they can come later when passage becomes clear, while you should proceed towards Peshawar accompanied with *ahadis* and *barqandas*

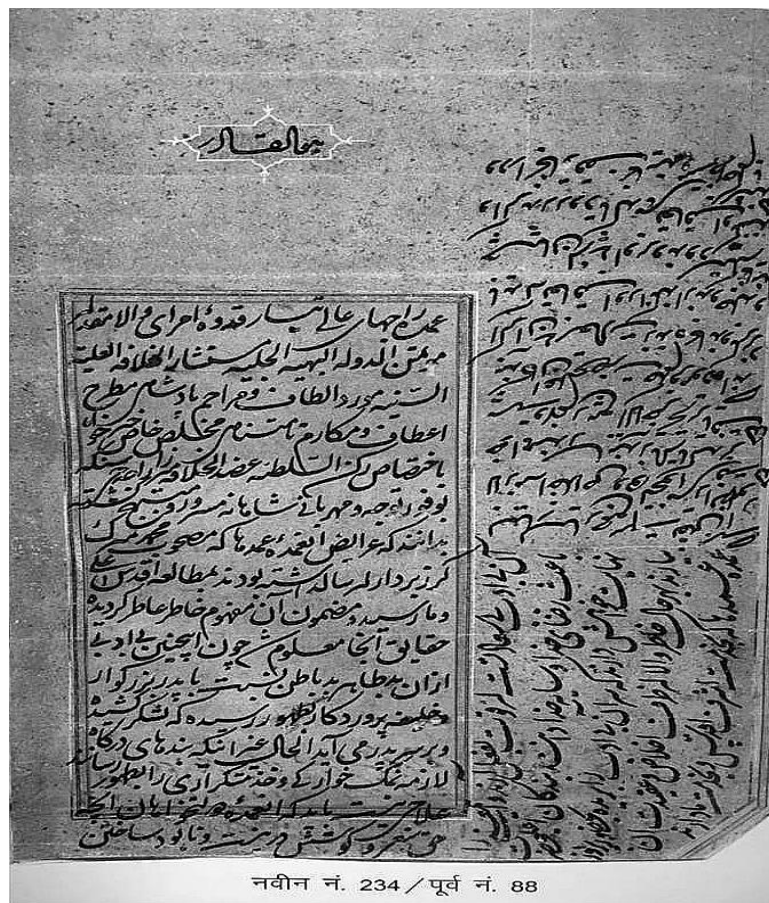


Fig. 12: Nishan of Dara Shikoh- Raja Jai Singh related to war of succession. Dated: 24 Jan, 1658. (New/Old No. 234/88) Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.

New/Old No. 234/88

Nishan of Dara Shikoh to Raja Jai Singh.

Dated: 24 Jan, 1658.

Translation:

Be it known that petition (*Arzis*) send through *gurz-bardar* (Mace-bearers), were received by the Emperor and myself. It is very unfortunate that prince Shuja came to attack, the imperial army. Now the only natural recourse would be to punish this grave mistake of Shah Shuja by destroying him and this task should be accomplished to make God and his shadow happy. The Emperor desires the mischief of Shah Shuja should be avenged by beheading him and the head should be brought to the imperial court. The Emperor is much pleased by your support and hope you will continue supporting the noble cause.

Shah Jahan orders that, if the unfortunate Shuja remains alive or escapes you should follow him and make him captive and if he even then he escapes the Raja should follow him till the *Garhi* (fortress) and wait for further imperial orders.

***Nishan* of grandson: Suleiman Shikoh**

Suleman Shikoh was the son of Dara. He is credited to have given a military setback to Shah Shuja near Bahadurpur in the beginning of 1658, (see fig 13)after which the latter fled to Bengal. He had to later turn his attention to the other contender ,Murad Bakhsh. He was constantly in correspondence with Amber Raja regarding the war related developments .(see fig 14) Suleman had married the daughter of Rao Amar Singh, nephew of Mirza Raja Jai Singh.

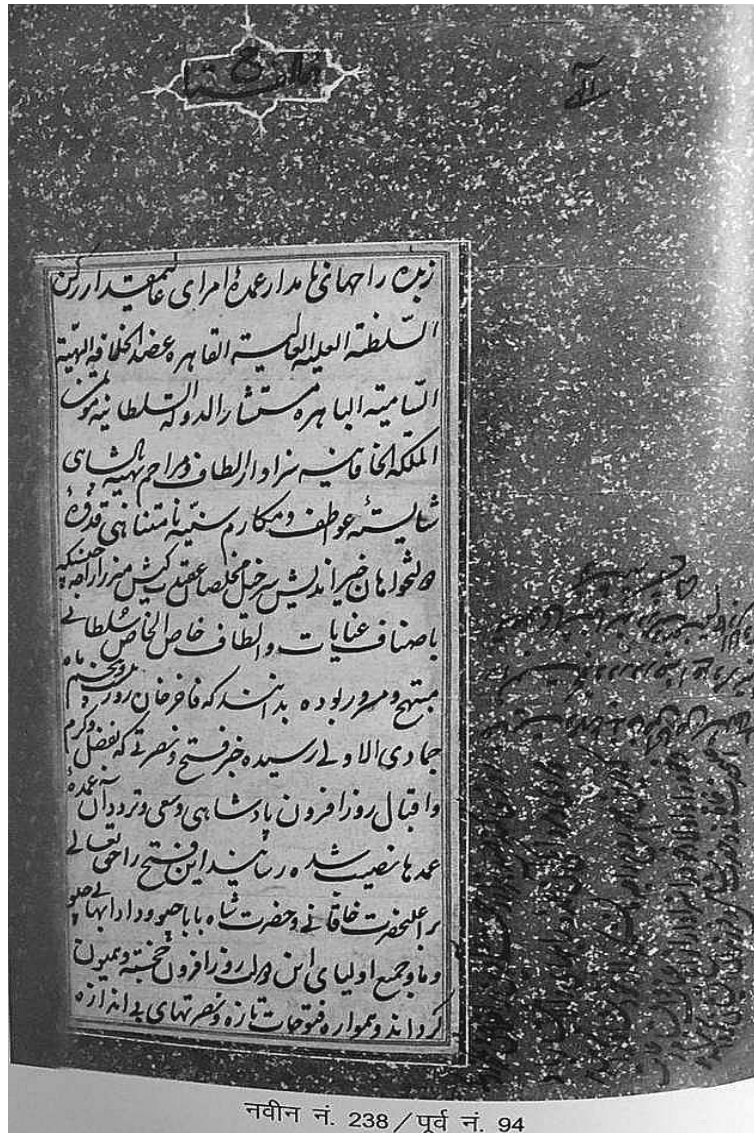


Fig. 13: Nishan of Suleman Shikoh with subject of ‘War of succession’. Dated: 20 Feb 1658. Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.

Nishan of Suleman Shikoh with subject of ‘War of succession’

Dated: 27 Jamadi I 1068/ 20 Feb 1658

Translation:

Famous among chosen peers, best among grandees, pillar of mighty Empire, well-wisher of empire, be comforted of exalted grace, chosen among loyal and selfless, Mirza Raja Jai Singh, worthy of manifold bounties, be it known that on 25 *Jamadi*, I gave the auspicious news of victory which was achieved through the committed well-wishers like you. This victory is of extreme importance for His Highness and entire circle.

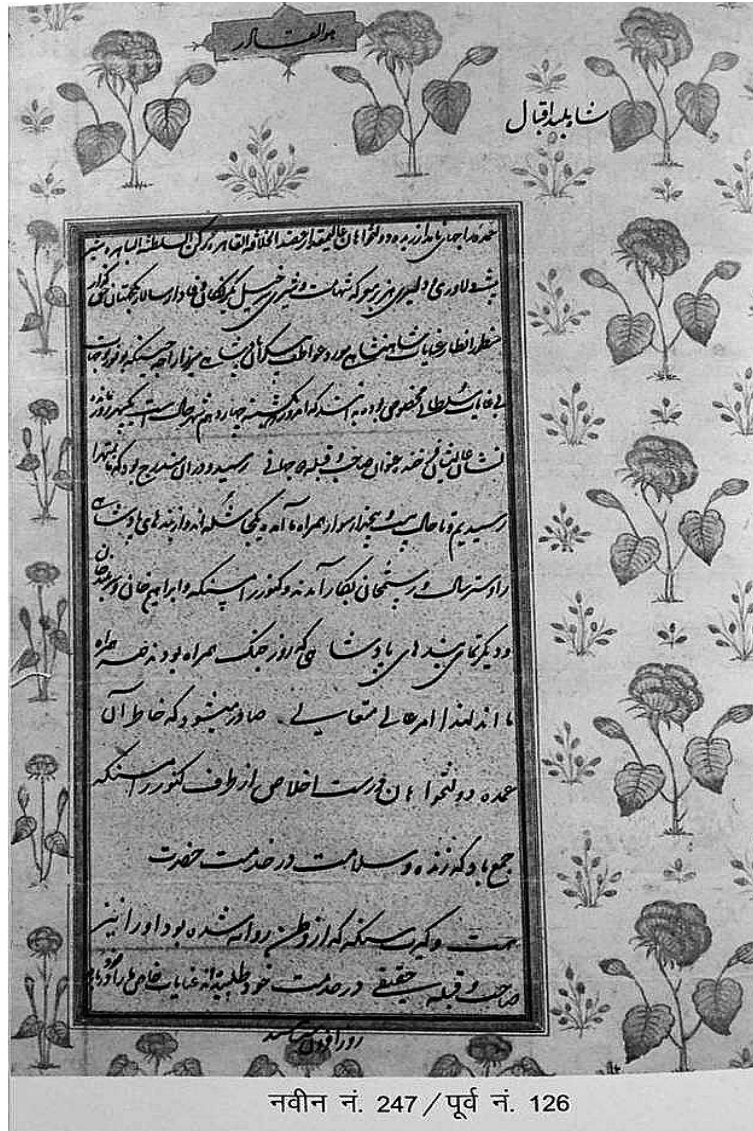


Fig. 14: Nishan of Sulaiman Shikoh with subject of ‘War with Rajputs’. Dated: 6 June 1658. Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.

Nishan of suleman shikoh

Addressed to Mirza Raja Jai Singh

Dated: 15 ramzan 1068/ 6 june 1658

Translation:

Pick of peers, chosen of well-wishers, Pillar of robust empire, lion of bravery and courage, best of loyal servants, be comforted of exalted grace Mirza Jai Singh, be it known that today on Sunday on 14 *Ramzan* morning the *Nishan* of Shah Buland Iqbal was received which stated that he has reached Mathura and till now 25000 sawars have already joined him and among imperial soldiers Rao Satrasal and Rustam Khan have died. Kunwar Ram Singh, Ibrahim Khan, Sarbuland Khan and other men who were on Emperor's side are still with us. Therefore orders have been issued that you should be satisfied about Kunwar Ram Singh , he is safe and secure with Shah Buland Iqbal. Kirat Singh has left the *watan* to join Shah Buland Iqbal. Be comforted with exalted grace.

***Nishan* of Prince (Muazzam) Shah Alam**

Muazzam was the son of Aurangzeb and Nawab Bai .In 1663 he was sent to Deccan as governor. He was governor of Kabul when Aurangzeb died. The following nishan relates to administration of Suba Kabul with Rajput support.

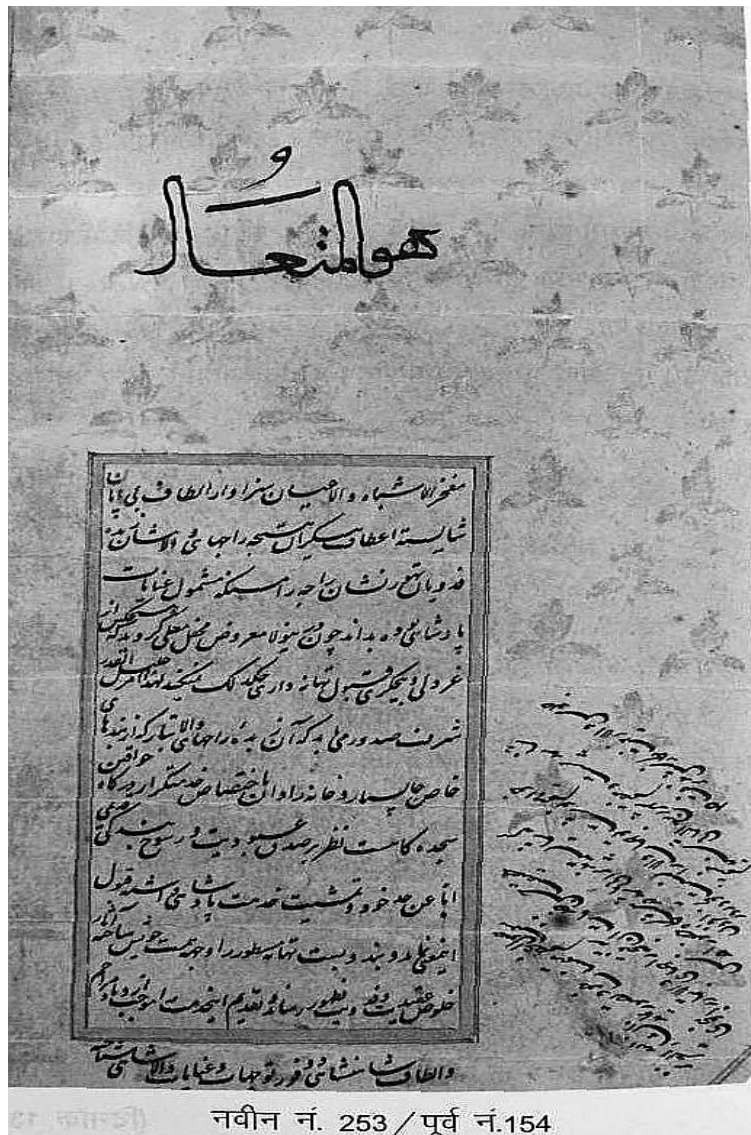


Fig. 15: Nishan of Prince Shah Alam to Raja Ram Singh, Dated: 13 June 1677.

Courtesy: Farsi Farman Vol. III.

Translation:

Pick of the peers , worthy of bounties , exemplar of loyal servants , chosen among brave and faithful , Raja Ram Singh , be comforted by manifold bounties , be it known , that out of cowardice , and fear nobody is accepting the *thanedari* of Jagdalak , it is therefore ordered that since you are extraordinarily brave and courageous , so in view of your loyalty , fidelity of your

ancestors this post of *thanedari* of Jagdalak should be accepted and administration of its *thana* should be taken in your charge . For this service be assured of exalted grace.

Prince Muhammad Akbar

He was the youngest son of Aurangzeb. He had rebelled against his father in 1681.He bluntly stated in a letter that he was insecure against Muazzam , who enjoyed special favours of his father , like the conferment of title of Shah upon Muazzam .^{xliv}The following *nishan* is interesting because it is a bold criticism of Aurangzebs Rajput policy.

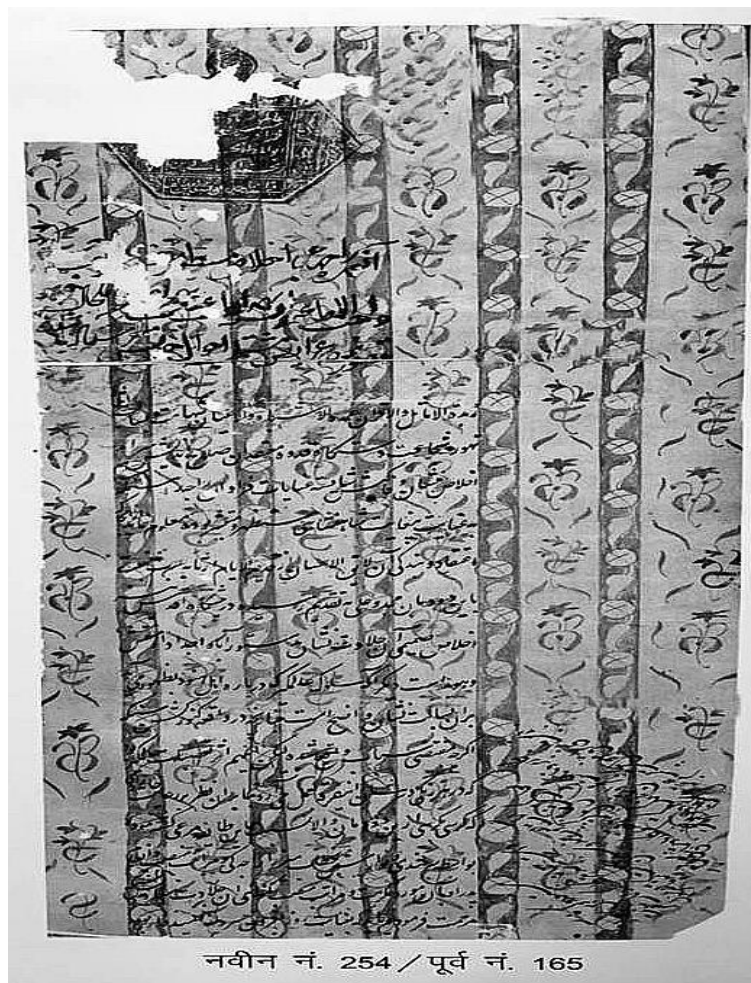


Fig. 16: Nishan of Prince Mohammad Akbar to Raja Ram Singh.Dated: 22 May, 1682. (New/Old No. 254/165). Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. III.

Translation:

Be it known that your services with devotion has been met from generation to generation and you in particular are very loyal like your ancestors, which is duly appreciated, the attitude of Alamgir towards you and the unfortunate incident of Kishan Singh was also because of Alamgir's bias. Bearing in mind, the esteemed services of your ancestors, you have been honored by scale of *mansab* of your father. Bishan Singh will be conferred the title of *Kunwar*. You should remain supportive to the imperial court. When imperial army march towards Hindustan, you should join the imperial army and contribute in all manner, which will benefit you.

In the hand of the prince, the best among the best that is Raja Ram Singh knowing our benevolence, keep us informed of each of the happenings.

The *Qaul-Panja Nishans*

Generally speaking the *qaulnama* are a genre of *farman*, wherein a word of honor or solemn promise is given by the Emperor as an assurance in context of some crucial political perspective. Such documents bore Emperors signature and impression of right hand palm (*panja*) with saffron and sandal wood.

The following *nishans* are *qaul-panjanishans*. Such *nishans* are unique in their nature and therefore need proper investigation .

Qaul panja nishan by prince Muizzuddin, the son of Bahadur Shah is an invitation to Maharaja Ajit Singh to imperial court in 1707, The *nishan* refers to a similar assurance sent by the Emperor Aurangzeb. Fortunately this *qaulnama* issued by Aurangzeb to Ajit Singh as a mark of assurance is also extant in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.^{xlv}

The other *qaul panja nishan* is issued by prince Saiyyid Qutbuddin for condoning wrong doings of Ajit Singh and giving a promise or assurance to Ajit Singh, the Raja of Jodhpur for conferring *mansab* of 7000/7000, restoration of *zamindari* of Jodhpur reinstating his status to his esteemed ancestors. These *nishans* are complimentary to the *farmans* of the period.

These *nishans* has to be contextualized in the perspective of political scene after the death of Aurangzeb and the consequent war of succession among the sons of Aurangzeb –Muazzam (Bahadur Shah), Muhammad Azam, and Kam Bakhsh. The eldest son, Muazzam hurried from Peshawar towards Delhi. Muhammad Azam declared himself Emperor and struck coins in his name. Kam Bakhsh also prepared for military confrontation. Factions of nobility were also

actively involved in active politics .Maratha and Sikh threat also loomed large .Under such extreme circumstances Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) was forced to adopt conciliatory tactics towards the Rajputs.

Hence his son Muizuddin issued *nishan*^{xlvi}, which invited Ajit Singh to imperial court accompanied with 20 to 30,000 *sawars* and *piyada* towards Delhi. He was given assurance of 7000/7000and *zamindari* of Jodhpur.(see fig 17)

Ajit Singh adopted rebellious attitude towards Muazzam, instead with the help of Rana of Udaipur adopted seditious behavior .After Muazzam defeated Azam he overcame the threat posed by Ajit Singh .The latter in view of his weak position petitioned for pardon , which was accepted with the mediation of Nizam ul mulk^{xlvii}. However Ajit Singh remained throughout a source of anxiety .His revolt came about in the beginning of Muhammad Shahs reign after the overthrow of Saiyyids and his removal from the subedari of Gujarat. The news of Nizams appointment as wazir after Muhammad Amin Khan death forced Ajit Singh, in 1722 to plead innocence and profess loyalty to Imperial court. This explains the context of *Qaul panja nishan* of Sayyid Qutbuddin. (see fig 18)



Fig. 17: Nishan of prince Muizuddin, Addressed to Maharaja Ajit Singh, Undated.(1707 A.D) (New No. 40 /Old No. 26). Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. IV.

Nishan of prince Muizuddin

Addressed to Maharaja Ajit Singh

Undated (C 1707 A.D)

Translation:

Pillar of bravery and courage, worthy of manifold bounties, pick of loyal servants best *khanazad*, Maharaja Ajit Singh, honored by exalted grace, be it known that as per your petition one distinguished *khilat*, *Nishan* with *qaul-panja* conferring *mansab* of 7000/7000, *zamindari* of Jodhpur is restored like that of your ancestors, has been dispatched with Padam Singh. Be comforted with exalted grace and proceed towards Shahjahanabad along with 20-30 thousand *sawars* and *pyada* in the imperial presence. The said favours will be accepted and you are befitting for these favors. In the presence of His Majesty the rank and honor of your ancestors will be restored. I have also proceeded towards Shahjahanabad and you should also speedily reach there, this will be reason for imperial pleasure. This should be treated important and you should be assured of your success.



Fig. 18: Nishan of prince Sayyid Qutbuddin (New No. 38 / Old No. 25) Dated: 9 Rabi II 4 RY/ 16 Jan 1722. Courtesy: Farsi Farman, Vol. IV.

Nishan of prince Sayyid Qutbuddin

Addressed to Raja Ajit Singh

Dated 9 Rabi II 4 RY/ 16 Jan 1722

Translation:

Courageous and brave, pick of loyal grandees, worthy of manifold bounties, recipient of limitless favors, be it known that in these auspicious days your *arzadasht* was received which acknowledged your wrongdoings and sought forgiveness for it. You had requested for Farman with *qaul panja* addressed to you, granting *watan*, it was presented to His Majesty.

Since His Highness is extremely gracious towards culpable and innocent alike, accordingly your misgivings were condoned and you have been honored by conferring a *farman* with *qaul-panja*, which restores *watan* etc. This *farman* has been dispatched with (titles) *Bakhshiul Mulk Mahabat Khan Bahadur*, you should be extremely grateful for this benevolence. You should obediently and fearlessly appear in Imperial court and obey Imperial commands and benefit from exalted grace.

SALIENT THEMES OF NISHANS

A) War of succession

In the Mughal Empire the patrimonial rights of royals were based on appanage system rather than primogeniture. Unlike the latter, in which the first born is the legal heir, the appanage system would allow any of the younger issues to succeed the Emperor, either by will of Emperor or war of succession. During Akbar's reign appanage ended. However the royal issues held territories as *jagirs* etc. within the larger empire. In this territory, they zealously boosted their political ambitions. Politically powerful princes became contenders for throne and sword became the arbiter.

The investigations of *Nishans* give us a glimpse of war of succession from Jahangir's reign, where Prince Khurram and Dawar Baksh contest for the throne. In more than twenty *Nishans* one can glean the moves of the princes in the different wars of succession attempting to buttress their political interest. We have selected the *nishans* of major contending princes .

Many *Nishan* are related to war of succession in which the contending parties seek support in order to buttress their position. It is in view of these *Nishan* that the war of succession assumes

significance in our study. One may recall that Emperor Shah Jahan fell ill in 1657 A.D., consequently all the four princes prepared themselves for the war of succession.^{xlvi}

Dara Shikoh mustered an army of about 50,000 and hastily wrote various letters (*Nishan*) to various princes and nobles to seek their support.^{xlvi} Shah Shuja declared himself King of Bengal and Murad Bakhsh of Gujarat.¹ In this war series of battles were fought. The first battle was Bahadurpur, near Banaras on 15 Feb. 1658, then battle of Dharmat and Samugarh in April and May of the same year.^{li} This was followed with issuance of various *Nishan* and *farmans*.^{lii} These *Nishan* were written by both princes and princesses like we have a *Nishan* of Nadira Banu Begam through which she orders Raja Jai Singh to collect 50,000 from imperial treasury for the expenses during the expedition.^{liii}

Similarly there were many other *Nishan* issued by the princes and princesses during the war as for instance we have a *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Raja Jai Singh in which he informs him about the evacuation of Monghyr fort.^{liv} We have another *Nishan* from the Dara Shikoh, which directs Raja Jai Singh to march towards Patna and join the army of Diler Khan.^{lv} There is another *Nishan*, which was issued by Prince Aurangzeb to Rana Raj Singh. In this *Nishan* Aurangzeb directs him to be vigilant after the security of *Suba* Malwa and directs him not come in conflict with Jaswant Singh.^{lvi} We have sampled some select *Nishan* as well with regard to the war of succession.

Nishan of the contending prince bear testimony to the faith they had in Rajput support. Each of the prince wanted assurance that he would have sole support. The *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Jai Singh is orders to chastise, arrest, and behead Shah Shuja.^{lvii} Finally the *Nishan* of congratulations over victory of prince were accompanied by information of increase in *mansab* and Rs 5000 as cash.^{lviii} We have also incorporated *nishans* of Prince Muazzam (see fig 15) and Muhammad Akbar (see fig 16), sons of Aurangzeb who aimed for throne

B) Kabul and Qandahar

The *Nishan* pertaining to Kabul and Qandahar reveal imperial concern for the region. Shahjahan himself took up the expedition Dara Shikoh, (see fig 11) and Muazzam (see fig 15) was also entrusted command, many *nishans* are issued for the administration of *Suba* Kabul. Raja of Amber, Ram Singh and Kishan Singh were deputed for the purpose. One would thus wonder as to what was the vital significance of the area?

This area is North West frontier of the Indian sub-continent, which has been volatile region from very early times. The strategic importance to the North West frontier is well known for providing entry point to conquering armies into India. It experienced the foreign rule from time to time.

The region however was largely loosely administered as the state of affairs was usually conducted by the native chieftains as they were better sensitized to the local conditions. It formed the main communication link across the Khyber Pass into the Mughal India. This area was also sensitive due to Khatak resistance. Kohat post was equally an important strategic location for the rulers of Amber to keep vigil on Bangash and the Afridi rebels of Tirah.

The whole North West Frontier was a strategic space from the Mughal India point of view.^{lix} An inlet of foreign incursions, and housed the most turbulent Afghan tribes, the Yousufzai, Khataks, Hazaras, Ghilzai, Shinavaras, Afridis, Urqzais and Sherzad. Each one of them was familiar with complex geography of Afghanistan, its secret tracts, forests, valleys, foothills, defiles, passes, slopes, ravines, river banks, ferries, and all those micro level geographical spaces as it could hide refractory elements. It thereby posed a potent threat to passers-by and Mughal forward policy towards central Afghanistan and Iran.

Moreover, to smoothly govern this hostile zone, worthwhile Mughal *Subedars* and *thanedars* were posted in Kabul with immediate support from the Rajas and princes of Amber. The Raja was, time and again, deputed and transferred to different strategic locations for diverse post. Raja of Amber had an extremely challenging role to play, controlling, dividing and appeasing the refractory Afghan tribesmen on the one end, keeping the *Subedars* posted about all sorts of developments taking place in the frontier on the other. For this purpose, the Mughal *faujdars* and *subedars* legitimized the role of some Afghan chiefs (*maliks*) from each clan under an undertaking (*muchalka*) and charged them with the responsibility of tribes men. In that, they required to facilitate (I) safety to the travellers from highway robbers, (II) Transfer of treasury as and when required, (III) supply of security and other related information, and (IV) executive transfer orders of the imperial officials. Similarly, the officer in charge of the ferry check posts were required to check those *dastaks* (permits) of the imperial officials as were intermittently issued by the *faujdar* and *subedar* these were renewed with the change of every *faujdar*.

A close scrutiny of documentary evidence indicates that the effective boundary of Mughal North West frontier constituted Ghorband and Bazarak in the north towards the kingdom of Balkh and Badakhshan, Ghazni and Bangshat in the south, Zuhak and Galgala in the east towards Herat and Qandhar, Ohind and Karappa towards Kashmir and Kashghar in the west. Within this geographical delimitation, Zuhak, Ghorband, Laghman, Jagdalak, Surkhab, Gandamak, Butkhak, Khyber, Jalalabad, Jamrud, Peshawar Indian outposts in the *Subah* of Kabul.

C) Deccan Campaign

Deccan has been a prime concern for expansionist policy of Mughals, since Akbar. It was Shahjahan, who recovered the lost territories as a prince. He was sent by Jahangir with strong

army to stop the crises created by the Malik Amber and his allies.^{lx} He was in Deccan at the time of death of Jahangir.^{lxi} After his accession, Shahjahan followed enthusiastic policy in Deccan and signed a treaty peace treaty of Bijapur, under the clauses of which Adil Shah, the king of Bijapur accepted the suzerainty of Mughal Emperor. Finally, Aurangzeb was entrusted the viceroyalty of Deccan in 1635 A.D.^{lxii} He carried the administration of the *suba* very competently, which can be ascertained from various *Nishans* of Aurangzeb.^{lxiii}

In this paper we have explored a *Nishan* of prince Khurram with regard to Deccan, in which he informs Raja Jai Singh of the death of Jahangir and further tells him, about his return from Deccan towards Agra to ascend the throne.^{lxiv} We have another *Nishan* of Prince Aurangzeb in which he directs Raja Jai Singh to work with Raja Durrain in the siege of Usa and Udgir and informs him, that Aurangzeb has to go to Daulatabad.

CONCLUSION

The above investigation of some selective *nishan* from the epistolary of Mughals reveals immense importance of these documents on multifarious dimensions. These documents acquaint us with the character and persona of the entire panorama of Imperial court, because they wrote these letters, therefore their personalities come alive – their intrigues, insecurities, apprehensions et al. *Nishans* unveil the personal and political life of prince and princess. These documents show us the division of responsibilities among the various nobles and members of royal family. It also reveals they broadly conformed to the imperial policy, however they had their viewpoints and they had their own chosen lobby as well as they safeguarded their own interest as and when they became political contenders. It is with help of these documents we get to know the accurate history of various historical events, campaigns, and land grants. *Nishans* still seem to be untapped documents on different realms like the subsistence, allowances and gifts. These documents exhibit the magnificence of royalty. We also gauge the apex and decline of power and effect of the different members of royal blood through the prism of *nishans* of Nurjahan, Khurram, Jahan Ara, Dara Shikoh etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors have primarily based the study on the rich collection of *nishans* available in *Farsi Farmano Ke Prakash Me Mughal Kaleen Bharat Evam Rajput Shasak, vol 3 and 4*. In order to contextualize these documents the *nishans* available in *Edicts From The Mughal Harem*, and *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat* have also been found invaluable. We gratefully acknowledge these major works.

REFERENCES

ⁱBert G. Fragner, "FARMĀN", *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farman>

ⁱⁱMahendra Khadgawat, *Farsi Farmano Ke Prakash Me Mughal Kaleen Bharat Evam Rajput Shasak*, vol.-III, Eds., Directorate of State Archives, Bikaner. (henceforth *Farsi Farman*)

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv}*Nishans* of Shah Alam with Old/New Numbers 248/147 and 252/156, Rajasthan State Archives Bikaner.

^v Sumbul Halim Khan and Masrat Ahmad Mir, *Saga Of Mughal Farman – Understanding The Essentials*, *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*, 2019, vol.-4, Issue-6.

^{vi} S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Edicts From The Mughal Harem*, Idarai Adabiyat-I Delli, Delhi, 1979, p. xix.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Nushin Arbabzadah, *Women and Religious Patronage in the Timurid Empire*, in Nile Green's, *Afghanistan's Islam*, University of California Press, 2017. p.56.

^{ix} Ibid. p.58.

^x Bruno De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: The Khatuns, 1206-1335*, Edinburgh University Press, 2017, p.65.

^{xi}*Edicts FromThe Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit. p. xvii.

^{xii}*Hukum* of Hameeda Banu Begam, Dated: 29 Sept. 1581 A.D. and *Hukum* of Maryam Zamani. Cf, *Edicts of Mughals Documents*, Op. Cit. p.8-11.

^{xiii} Ibid. p. xii.

^{xiv} Ibid. p. xiv.

^{xv}Momin Mohuddin, *The Chancellery and Persianss Epistolography under the Mughals: From Babur to Shahjahan (1526-1658)*, Iran Society-Calcutta, p.139.

^{xvi}Ibn Hassan, *Central Structure of "The Mughal Empire And Its Practical Working Up to 1657"*, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.101.

^{xvii} These scholars are Momin Mohiuddin and S.A.I. Tirmizi, for details see *The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography under the Mughals*, Op. cit. pp. 139-43 and *Edicts From the Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit. p xxiii. The Descriptive list of *Farmans, Nishan* and *manshurs* published by Rajasthan State Archives clearly classifies it as *Nishan*.

^{xviii} *Hukum* is an order of the royal of the queen mother or royal consort, which were particularly related to *suyurgals*, or a permit of transit. For more see *The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography under the Mughals*, Op. Cit., p. 139-42.

^{xix}*Nishan* of Nurjahan, dated: 27 January, 1625. *Edicts rom the Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit., p. 28-29.

^{xx}*The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography Under the Mughals*, Op. Cit., p. 141.

^{xxi}*Ibid*.

^{xxii}*Nishan* of Nurjahan, Dated: 27 Ardi Bihisht 22RY/16 May, 1627 A.D. *Edicts from The Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit., p. 49.

^{xxiii} *Nishans* 168/3, 4 Shawwal 1031/2 august 1622, *Farsi farman*, vol 3, p1-2;170/8, 30 muharram 1034 /2 nov 1624p5-6;171/09, 19 safar 1035/10 nov 1625,p7-8;172/25, 8 rabi II,1035/28 dec 1625, p9-10;174/15, 25 muharram 1036/ 6 oct 1626, p 15-16;175/16, 16 rabi II 1036/ 25 Dec 1626, p. 17-18

^{xxiv}*Nishan* of Nur Jahan 170/8 Dated: 23 *Rabi-ul-Awwal* 1032/ 15th Jan. 1623, *Farsi Farman* op. cit.

^{xxv}*Nishan* of Nurjahan to Raja Jai Singh(New/Old No.: 168/3), Dated: 4 shawwal 1031/2 Aug. 1622, *Farsi farman*.

^{xxvi}*Nishan* of Nurjahan to Raja Jai Singh, (New/Old No. 170/8),Dated:30 Muharram 1034/ 02 Nov. 1624 *ibid*

^{xxvii}*Nishan* of Nadira Bano to Raja Jai Singh, (New/Old No.: 231), Dated: 16 Rabi II 1068/22 Jan 1657.

^{xxviii} *Nishan* of Nadira Bano to Raja Jai Singh, (New/Old No.: 279), Dated: 16 Rabi II 1068/

^{xxix} *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. II, Op. Cit., p. 127.

^{xxx} Shameem Burney Abbas, *The female voice in Sufi ritual :Devotional practices of Pakistan and India*, Austin University of Texas Press, 2002, p. 160, 180-181.

^{xxxi} Munis D. Farooqui, *Princes of The Mughal Empire: 1504-1719*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 35

^{xxxii} *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. I, Op. Cit., p. 65.

^{xxxiii} English factory records, (1651-54,) Eds. W, Foster, Oxford, 1915 p 11-12, 73-74

^{xxxiv} *Edicts From the Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit., p. xxvii-xxxi.

^{xxxv} *Nishan* of Jahan Ara, Dated: 19 *mehr* 5 *ilahi* / 2 Oct. 1632, Victoria memorial Calcutta, Cf. *Edicts From the Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit., p. 82-83.

^{xxxvi} *Nishan* of Jahan Ara, No 201/80, Dated: 17 *Shawwal* / 30 Oct. 1631, *Farsi Farman*, vol 3, p. 75.

^{xxxvii} *Nishan* of Jahan Ara, Dated: 2 *Shawwal* 15 *julus* / 21 Jan 1763, Indian Museum, Calcutta, *Edicts From the Mughal Harem*, p. 98-99

^{xxxviii} *Nishan* of Jahan Ara, Dated: 7 *Jamadi* II / 27 June 1678, Cf. *Edicts From the Mughal Harem*, Op. Cit., p. 82-83.

^{xxxix} Farman of Shahjahan (No.94/123) Dated: 21 Mat 1658; nishan no 97/123 dtd 30 May 1658

^{xl} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Akhai Raj, (No. 4/5), Dated: 6 *Safar* 1067 / 14 Nov. 1656, *Farsi Farman*, vol-3 op. cit.

^{xli} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Akhai Raj, (No. 5/4), Dated: 17 *muharram* 1068 / 15 Oct. 1657.

^{xlii} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Santi Das dated 16 Zialqad 1064/ 1 september 1655.M.S. Commissariat, *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat*, Taylor and Francis, See plate X.

^{xliii} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh addressed to Muizul Mulk dated 14 Ramadan 1054 A.H/14 November 1644, S.A.I Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents* (1628-1659), vol II, Manohar, 1995, p. 76-77.

^{xliv} B.N.Reu, Letters exchanged between Aurangzeb and his son Prince Akbar, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1938, p. 356.

^{xlv} Saga of Mughal Farman –understanding the essentials, *International journal of social Science and economic research*, p. 4110.

^{xlvi} *Nishan* no 37/12 dated 6 April 1707 and 40/ 26

^{xlvii} *Farman* no. 2/ 14 dated 1708, *Farsi farman*, vol-4, p. 27-8.

^{xlviii} J.N. Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb: English Translation of Ahkam I Alamgiri ascribed to Hamid-ud-din Khan Bahadur*, Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1925, p. 4.

^{xlix} J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. II, M.C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1912, p. 33-34, 101.

¹ *Ibid*, p. 129. See also *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*, Op. Cit.

ⁱⁱ S.M. Jaffar, *The Mughal Empire: From Babur To Aurangzeb*, S.Mohammad Sadiq Khan *KissaKhani*, Peshawar, 1936. p. 260-61.

^{lii} *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat*, See plate...

^{liii} *Nishan* of Nadira Banu Begam, Dated: 13 April 1652. (See plate: 5 (A).)

^{liv} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh, No. 228/78. Dated: 27 Dec. 1657. R.S.A.B.

^{lv} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh, No. 231/83. Dated: 7 Jan. 1658. R.S.A.B.

^{lvi} *Nishan* of Aurangzeb, Dated: March 1658. Cf. *Mughal Documents*, Op. Cit. p. 127.

^{lvii} *Nishan* of Dara Shikoh, Dated: 24 Jan 1658, 31 Jan 1658, 16 Feb. 1658 (New/Old No.'s 234/88, 29 Rabi II 1063/ 24 JAN 1658; 235/91, 7 Jamadi I 1068 / 31 Jan 1658; 237/93) 23 Jamadi I 1068/ 16 feb 1658, *Farsi Farman*

^{lviii}*Nishans* of Dara Shikoh,(New/Old No.'s 238/94, Dated: 20 Feb. 1658, 240/100,16 March 1658,241/102, 25 March 1658, 244/133, 2 May 1658, 246/166) 9 May 1658, *Farsi Farman*

^{lix}Sumbul Halim Khan , Taming the dragon ,Mughal Rajput Policy 1676-88, *The Journal of Central Asian Studies* , volume XVIII, 2009, p. 1, 131-141.

^{lx}J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*(Vol. I, II nd Edition), S. C. Sarkar and Sons Ltd, Calcutta, 1925, Op. Cit., p. 28.

^{lxi}*Nishan* of prince Khurram to Raja Jai Singh, (New/Old No.: 177/22) dated: 21 Rabi I 1036/20 Nov.1627.. R.S.A.B.

^{lxii}Zakir Hussain, Aurangzeb's First Royalty of the Deccan, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Vol. 70, 2009-10, p. 310-317.S

^{lxiii}*Ibid.*

^{lxiv}*Nishan* of Prince Khurram (New/Old No.: 177/22) Dated:21 Rabi I 1036/ 20 Nov. 1627, *Farsi Farman*, vol-3, p. 23-24