

## SEALS OF IMPORTANT PERSONS DURING THE BRITISH ASCENDANCY IN SINDH AND NEIGHBOURING STATES

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The normal custom of use of stamps or seals, for conveying orders, expressing willingness, issuing advises or making grants is studied by scholars. According to them the tradition is continuing since the times of Pharaohs. The stamps are normally termed 'Khatam', 'Muhar' or *Tumgha* in Arabia, Iran and Central Asia respectively.

It can also be made as a finger ring, may have some semi-precious stone as mount, and it is usually related to power and authority.

We have literary references indicating at the general understanding of the equation of authority with stamps/Seals. With the coming of power the seals were bestowed upon or handed over to the incumbents.

Stamps have many curious inscriptions and designs, *Osmanli Turks* normally had *Tughra* on their Stamps. It was usual for Kings to have more than one stamp, and those had specific usage as we have such practices observed during *Mughal* period.

But the time period we are dealing with is quite different, and the people whose stamps we will be discussing here, are either chiefs of petty states, or the Nawabs of subordinate provinces, or influential persons belonging to the ex-states, having very weak claims or pretensions to royalty. Some of the stamps, of the officials of Government are also included. The only criterion, as you know is fixed by this conference, that is the period when Britishers arrived in Sindh and its adjoining areas, which include Baluchistan, Cutch, Jaisalmeer etc; and took over affairs of the whole region in their hands.

۱۵۲۲  
مر ربيع الثانی ۱۸۰۸

پاراہدہ منقہ تالیفات (حریقی نیال تنق) جلد اول  
روایحی کاغذ ۱۴۸ موجب ہیکر و رجو مقبول  
کاغذ میزنگ جو ورقہ و اتوصل منوال جہتا ککلا  
ضلع ۱۹ مضمون ۵۸

تاریخ رجوع ۱۲۸۱  
هر

مهر سوخته و یک سکه طلا  
صد

۱۶۸۱ سال ۸۰ ۱۱۶

مختار صاحب خلیفه

هک کاندر بیک هک ایر وارو نارین شریک چیدیل با کس هر بتر سا  
موکلینو سو ما حب مهر بالری کوی معلول انجو و ناراحی سیر الی و معلول کاندن  
برگن جا به جریع دیاجی هر کلر و ادولس با صحیح بخره هر بتر کمر لمان بوند  
چاره نامو کلیر ادا جا کاندر بتر سا بچنا سوات ادا جا کیانیا لیس

Tutta  
7 June 81

govindapuram  
Deputy Post Master



These stamps have varied shapes, some of these are oval, few circular, others having almond shapes; most of these are squarish or rectangular, an odd one having arch. The shape of the stamp of Maha Rao of Kutch has curious shape, that more or less can be termed as a well cut diamond. Likewise the stamp of Maha Raja of Jaisalmeer is again of interesting shape. Both these Chiefs have long titles and their pretensions are reflected in the stamp designs, which compliment their ambitions. The Khan Kalats' stamp is interesting. It is چہار گوشہ کلاہک دار *Rectangular mounted with arch*. Mir Mehrab Kalmati, Malik of Pasni has 'rose' گلابی shape, a possible source of inspiration is Persia. There was visibly no restriction on either shape or size.

The stamps can be applied on the head of the document or at the end of it. But in our observation, it has never appeared on head of any letter once, but always have been observed at the end. It may be due to the reason that it has been seen on the letters addressed either to the British Officers of authority or others. When the stamp appear on the head, it belongs only on the orders, issued by people who are occupying offices, indicating that the authority of the office is being exercised.

Sir Charles Napiers' grants and Circulars, orders of the Commissioners, collectors, or the other officials, using their authority, have stamps applied at the head of the documents.



جنرل سر چارلس نیپیر صاحب بہادر  
گورنر ممالک مفتوحہ سندھ سنہ 1843 عیسوی

These stamps are getting our attention, only because these are in Persian.

### Why in Persian ?

There is no specific seclusion of the language of document on those these stamps are applied, it may be in Persian, Sindhi or English, some times even Urdu.

The stamps have been used, in follow up of the customary practice, since last many centuries, and in the recent past such as *Talpur Mirs*, their predecessors *Kalhora Mians*, Mughal *Nawabs* etc. all used Persian Seals thus the new masters too, couldn't possibly deviate from traditional power symbol. The Officials of *East India Company* were thus required to have stamps made in their names, in Persian, for official use [Urdu Daira Muaraf Islamia, vol.8, p,800,]



کپتان دانیال صاحب بہادر  
حاکم دریای سندھ و پنجاب 1855



نہی کلکٹر صاحب بہادر  
فرانتیر ڈسٹرکٹس 1852



کاردار تعلقہ کشمور 1855

The stamps were made of metal, or of semi precious stones. Gold, Silver and Copper being the choice metals; and Lapis Luzuli, Garnet, Turquoise etc. were the preferred stones, may be due to their association either with good omens or healing powers.

The making of stamps has always been considered a precise art, requiring certain command over the craft. During this period too, we have observed that the impressions made by the application of these seals on paper, were never wanting in any aspect of

craftsmanship. The writing/phrase is rendered in complete balance, in good hand; accompanying floral elements are accurately carved, upto the smallest details; Mir Ali Hasan, Aga Khan I, Mir Hussain Ali, Maha Rao Deserjee, Captain Danial and Sir Charles Napiers' stamps are good example of this. Besides these the year or any other mark has been minutely rendered. Inscription was carved in reverse, it is an amazing aspect of this art form, it can impress any one with its balance. Kuhundil Khan's stamp is carved in curious way, it can be read anyway, as it has been carved twice, even by placing the paper upside down, one of the remains upright. Thus the artistic content too is quite high. Contrary to the general belief that after 18<sup>th</sup> century, this art has suffered great set back [Ibid, p800-01]. It certainly require good training and adequate education, besides having deep knowledge of various scripts. The importance of stamp, and its usage on legal documents, its recognition by all concerned, puts more responsibility on those, who cast or carve the stamps; but we haven't come across any such document, or don't possess such direct evidence that can show that the stamps carvers were required to have registration with the authorities, in 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The phrase on the stamps vary, it may be a couplet, or may even simply be the name of the user. The name in most of the cases has the word "Abdahu" (عبدہ) as prefix or suffix.



عبدہ محمد



عبدہ محمد سعید



Use of officially bestowed honorific title on stamps seems to be a universal practice. Good example is the stamp of Nawabs of Bahawalpur, Mohammad Bahawal Khan; his title 'Rukun-e-Daula' is prominent part of his stamp. Similarly another Nawab has it

elaborately depicted, it says Mueen ul Mulk, Muiz ul daulah, feroz Jang Shahnawaz Khan Bahadur Abbasi.



معين الملك معز الدوله فيروز جنگ  
شاهنواز خان بهادر عباسی

The stamp of Aga Khan I is a pertinent example, where the article of faith is duly expressed, a reminder to the reader of the deep religious linkages of the user of stamp.



Imam Mohammad Hassan Hussaini Aga Khan	لا اله الا الله الملك الحق المبين عيده حسيني محمد حسن 1251
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While the persons of higher intellectual leanings show more preferences for phrases, of sublime and finer expressions. The stamps of Mirs Hasan Ali Talpur and Hussain Ali Khan are such examples. Other longer phrases may be seeking the "help of God" readily available to the users Jam Mir Khan of Lasbella has his stamps as *خان لطف خداوند خالق دوجہان برسر جام میر خان* It is also one of the prevalent practice to have such religious phrase, that may comprise the name or part of the name of the fellow, as its content Khudadad Khan of Kalat has it perfectly styled

Khudadad Khan, Khan of Kalat	دين دنيا مرا خدا داده است
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likewise Mir Imam Bakhsh Talpur has it as *امام بخش مارا باشد راخرام زیر سایه ادای نبی و علی مدام*. The confession of "faith in God" can be a common practice.



One Ahmed has put a phrase that shows his learnings, it is an interesting instance.

احمد طالب دیدار محمد

The calligraphic rendition is of interest; majority of these have *Nastaleeq*, but a few has the *Naskh* based monumental rendering of the script, earlier stamp of Amir of Khairpur Meer Ali Moorad is a very balanced execution in this category. The stamp of Kahundil Khan is a pleasing representation where the name is rendered in *Naskh*, it is written twice, that can be read even when the page is put head down.



سردار کھنڈل خان



علی مراد مرا داد  
بخت یاری کرد 1257

The phrase selected for the stamp is normally wishing success to the user, or praising the gifts of God, the holy prophet or the Imam bestowed on him.

Interestingly the phrase used by Mir Naseer, Khan of Kalat has the word *Naseer* in the phrase. God's blessings and favours of Mohammad are for Naseer.





Likewise Mir Ali Moorad has the word *Murad/desire* used, as an indication of the wishes fulfilled with the blessings of the fate and favours of *Ali Karam Allah Wajhu*.



علی مراد مراد داد  
بخت یاری کرد 1260

Mir Hussain Ali Talpur has his name being part of the phrase, indicating at favours and



ز نور محمد بود منجلی  
چراغ مراد حسین علی

flashes of Imam Hussain, the light of the world. His other stamp too is in same fashion



روشن ز فیض لم یزلی ست  
آفتاب جهان حسین علی هست

Similarly Mir Mohammad Ali Talpur has the phrase designed to avert the sufferings, with the blessings of Muhammad and Ali.

Some seals of the Talpur women are also observed. But these only have the reference of belonging by name, such as wife of Mir Mohammad Ali, or Senior wife of Late Mir Noor Mohammad. Many stamps of officials have been seen, there are true to their character, as these give the official designation, as collector or Commissioner, Deputy Collector, Surveyor Revenue etc. some of these have the name inscribed in true oriental tradition. Such as the John Jacob, Capt. Daniel and Goldsmid, or Sir Charles Napier himself.

The position of Qazi's was under transition, in the colonial set up, it had no place in the new hierarchy, but at the same time their presence couldn't be denied, thus there remained active and prominent in society. We have stamp of Qazi Faiz Mohammad Ansari, likewise another stamp of certain Ali Mohammad in worth nothing, he styles himself as Khadim Share Sharif, servant of Shariat.



محمد علی خادم الشرع شریف

The longer inscription are mostly in verse, and the last word of each line is brought to have balance. This is common practice, since long that is the reason that the phrase on

seals is generally termed as Rhyme or (سجع), no matter whether these are balanced or not. Rhyme (سجع) may be analysed by degree, type and position [J.A. Cuddon, 1998 (R) Literary terms and literary Theory, Penguin Books, London p. 750-52]. Perfect rhyme can be what we call متوازی. Where the words falling at the end of both lines, are same in number of letters, sound and look. The Khan of Kalat's Rhyme can be called متوازی, others rhymes don't fall in this category; a few examples which are available are مطرف (para rhyme). Mir Hussain Ali Khan's seal comes in this category, same is the case of Mir Ali Moorad's سجع.

While reviewing the seals of the period under study, it has been observed that the seals belonging to earlier part of British rule continued to be in older tradition, where the quality was pretty high. The calligraphic execution was good, the artistic content pleasing, and the composition had good intellectual level.

The quality seems to have deteriorated considerably during the late days of British period. The officials went on to have brought some uniformity in design of the seals; the nomenclature went plain and simple, the Persian gradually too was replaced by English, Urdu and Sindhi. Petty officials too were not obliged to make their stamps, as less and less such stamps have been observed, at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> or in earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However the stamps of chiefs of states continued to have same flavor, as we observe the stamp of Mir Faiz Mohammad of Khairpur State, that has good composition, flowing nastaleeq hand and balanced accompanying floral decoration.



1311 علی مرادم داد بحق فیض محمد

However the changing trend left not much choice for the important people outside the official circles to go for Persian stamps, increasing emphases on vernaculars and its official use created the atmosphere where the Persian was bowing out of the usage.

More and more people resorted to use of Sindhi in official correspondence, as encouraged; thus in official correspondence, as encouraged by the policies; thus it may be summed up that the British saw the end of Persian stamps, like so many other oriental traditions.



عبدالحسن خان

1266 عبدالحسن خان



سرکار

1289 سرکار امیر عبدالحسن خان تالپر



سرکار دولتمدار عالیبتار  
 امیر صاحب میر میان محمد حسین علی خان تالپر  
 بلوچ حمزوی العلوی القریشی 1271



ز نور محمد بود منجلی  
چراغ مراد حسن علی 1274



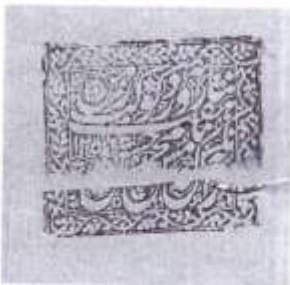
لا اله الا الله الملك الحق المبين  
عبدہ حسینی محمد حسن



دیرہ میر نور محمد خان تالپر



سردار کھنڈل خان



چو خدا دستگیر من است  
لطف اعدا بر نصیر من است



عبدہ سکندر 1255



محمد صدیق



عبدہ محمد سعید 1255



واتخذ الله  
ابراهيم خلیلا



عمرت کٹر انجنر

قاضی فیض محمد انصاری



احمد طالب دیدار محمد 1250



امام بخش مارا باشد را خرام  
زیر سایه ادای نبی و علی مدام 1273



لطف خداوند خالق دو جهان  
پر سر جام میر خان 1255



علی حسن



میر نازم رساله جان جیکب صاحب بہادر  
رسالہ سنہ 1896



مہر کچہری  
سرور صاحب بہادر  
ملک سنہ سن 1852 عیسوی



محکمہ عدالت کمشنر  
صاحب بہادر سندھ



جنرل سر چارلس نیپیر صاحب بہادر  
گورنر ممالک مفتوحہ سندھ سنہ  
1843 عیسوی



بخت یاری کرد  
علی مراد مرا داد 1260



مہاراجہ دھراجہ چندراج راجپوت  
مہاراول یمین الدولہ مظفر جنگ  
گج سنگھ سرکار جی بہادر



عیدہ محمد



دیبرہ میر دوست محمد خان تالپر





میر بحرام بن محراب



علی مراد مرا داد  
بخت یاری کرد 1260



مها راو مرزا راجه دیسرجی فدوی اکبر شاه بادشاه غازی  
باطنی حرمین شریفین 1234



معین الملک معزالدوله فیروز جنگ  
شاهنواز خان بهادر عباسی



کپتان دانیال صاحب بهادر حاکم  
دریای سنده و پنجاب 1855



محمود گلی از گلشن محراب 1241



دیپتی کلکٹر صاحب بہادر فرانتیر دسترکتس 1852



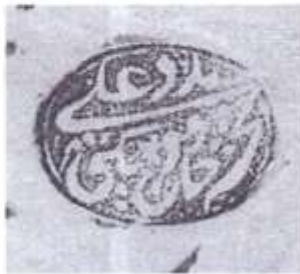
مختار کار تعلقہ سرحد سندھ



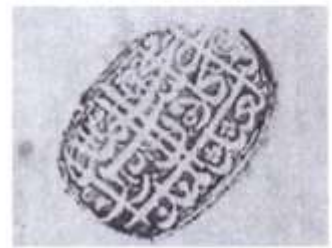
کار دار تعلقہ کشمور



شیخ عظیم اللہ 1265



مدد علی بخشہ خان دومکی 1855



دیرہ کلان محمد بخش

Khudadad Khan, Khan of Kalat	دین دنیا مرا خدا داده است
Sardar Mula Muhammad Raisani	شرف یا فتم ز نام محمد
w/of Mir Dost Mohammad Khan Talpur	دیرہ میر دوست محمد خان
Sardar Ghulam Murtaza Khan Tumandar Bugti	غلام مرتضی خان تمندار بگٹی
Sardar Mohammad Khan Khajak	عبده محمد 1277
Sardar Bakhtiar Khan Barozai	عبده بختیار خان
Sardar Sher Zaman	شیر زمان
Sardar Mir Bahram Khan Kalmati	میر بحرام بن محراب
Mir Ali Moorad Khan, of Khairpur	1257 علی مراد مراداد بخت یاری کرد

Jam Meher Ali Jokhia	حاجی جام مہر علی جوکیہ 1200
Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jaisalmeer	مہاراجہ دھراجہ۔۔۔ چندراج راجیسر مہاراول یمین الدولہ مظفر جنگ گج سنگہ سرکار جی بہادر
Maha Rao Deesaljee of Cutch	مہاراو مرزا راجہ دیسرجی قدوی اکبر شاہ بادشاہ غازی پاطنی حرمین شریفین 1234
Shahnawaz Abbasi	معین الملک معزالدولہ فیروز جنگ شاہنواز خان بہادر عباسی
Mir Ali Moorad Talpur, of Khairpur	بخت یاری کرد علی مراد مراد داد
W/o Mir Mohammad Khan	دیرہ کلان میرنور محمد خان مرحوم
Mir Mehmood Khan	محمود گلی از گلشن محراب 1241
Nawab Allahabad Khan Laghari	بہرکاری خدا یاد الہداد
Kishan Das Tapedar	کشن داس
Sardar Kamal Khan Gichki of ketch	کمالان
Sardar Taj Mohammad Khan	تاج محمد
Sardar Kuhun Dil Khan	کھنڈل
Mohammad Siddique	محمد صدیق
Mohammad Saeed	محمد سعید عیدہ 1258
Sikandar Khan	عیدہ سکندر 1255
Mir Mohammad Nasir Khan of Kalat	چو خدا دستگیر من است لطف اعدا بر نصیر من است
Nawab Bahawal Khan, of Bahawalpur	رکن الدولہ محمد بہاول خان بہادر 1842
Mir Hussain Ali Khan Talpur	ہست روشن ز فیض لم یزلی آفتاب جہان حسین علی 1271
Imam Mohammad Hassan Hussaini Aga Khan	لا الہ الا اللہ الملک الحق المبین عیدہ حسینی محمد حسن 1251
Mir Hassan Ali Khan Talpur	میر حسنعلی صاحب بی خلق حسن است
Mir Mohammad Khan Talpur	میر محمد خان تالپر 1267
Mir Mohammad Hussain Khan	امیر صاحب میر میان محمد حسین خان تالپر بلوچ
Mir Hassan Khan	محمد حسن علی خان 1273
Mir Imam Bakhsh Khan	امام بخش ما را باشد را خرام زیر سایہ ادای نبی و علی مدام 1273

*Mir faiz Mohammad Talpur, Khairpur 1311* حق فیض محمد علی مراد داد

Assistant Commissioner Jageers	اشستنت کمشنر جاگیرات سندہ 1854
Sindh Revenue Survey	مہر کچہری سرویر صاحب بہادر ملک سندہ سن 1852 عیسوی
Capt. Daniel, Commanding Indus Flotilla	کپتان دانیال صاحب بہادر حاکم دریای سندہ و پنجاب 1855
Assistant Collector	اشستنت کلکتہ انہارات ضلعہ کراچی سندہ 1855
Capt. Mereweather Sahib Political Superintendent	کپتان میری ویدر صاحب بہادر

Jam Meher Ali Jokhia	حاجی جام مہر علی جوکیہ 1200
Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jaisalmeer	مہاراجہ دھراجہ۔ چندراج راجپوت مہاراول یمین الدولہ مظفر جنگ گج سنگہ سرکار جی بہادر
Maha Rao Deesaljee of Cutch	مہاراو مرزا راجہ دیسرجی فدوی اکبر شاہ بادشاہ غازی پاطنی حرمین شریفین 1234
Shahnawaz Abbasi	مہین الملک معز الدولہ فیروز جنگ شاہنواز خان بہادر عباسی
Mir Ali Moorad Talpur, of Khairpur	بخت یاری کرد علی مراد مرا داد
W/o Mir Mohammad Khan	دیرہ کلان میرنور محمد خان مرحوم
Mir Mehmood Khan	محمود گلی از گلشن محراب 1241
Nawab Allahabad Khan Laghari	بہرکاری خدا یاد الہداد
Kishan Das Tapedar	کشن داس
Sardar Kamal Khan Gichki of ketch	کمالان
Sardar Taj Mohammad Khan	تاج محمد
Sardar Kuhun Dil Khan	کھندل
Mohammad Siddique	محمد صدیق
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Mir Hassan Khan	محمد حسن علی خان 1273
Mir Imam Bakhsh Khan	امام بخش ما را باشد را خرام زیر سایہ ادای نبی و علی مدام 1273
Mir Faiz Mohammad Talpur, Khairpur	بحق فیض محمر علی مرادم داد 1311

Assistant Commissioner Jageers	اشستنت کمشنر جاگیرات سندھ 1854
Sindh Revenue Survey	مہر کچھری سرویر صاحب بہادر ملک سندھ سن 1852 عیسوی
Capt. Daniel, Commanding Indus Flotilla	کپتان دانیال صاحب بہادر حاکم دریای سندھ و پنجاب 1855
Assistant Collector	اشستنت کلکٹر انہارات ضلعہ کراچی سندھ 1855
Capt. Mereweather Sahib Political	کپتان میری ویدر صاحب بہادر

Commandent & Political Supdt. Frontier Upper Sindh (Urdu)	اکتگ عامل ملکی اور ناظم سرحد سندھ کے 1856
Mukhtiarkar Taluka Sarhad Maj. John Jacob, Political Supdt. Sindh Frontier (URDU)	مختیار کار تعلقہ سرحد سندھ 1855 میجر جان جیکب صاحب بہادر عامل ملکی اور ناظم سرحد سندھ
Court of the Commissioner in Sindh	محکمہ عدالت کمشنر صاحب بہادر سندھ
Collector of Kurrochee	کلکٹر صاحب بہادر ضلع کراچی
Kardar Jherruck, Taluka Kotri	کاردار جھڑک تعلقہ کوٹری
Kardar Taluka Sakra	کاردار تعلقہ ساکرہ 1851
Kardar Taluka Jacobabad	کاردار تعلقہ جیکب آباد 1855
Kardar Taluka Kashmir	کاردار تعلقہ کشمور 1855
Mukhi Ram Singh Tapedar	رام سنگھ
Aish Ram Tapedar	عیش رام تپہ دار
Deputy Collector Sahib Bahadur	دپٹی کلکٹر صاحب بہادر فرانتیر دسترکٹس 1852
Neechaldas Tapedar	نیچلداس
Bakhsh Rahimdad	عبده بخش رحیمداد
Col. Regt. Commanding Officer	1842 کرنیل رجمنٹ صاحب بہادر