
The official and personal seals of Tipu Sultan of Mysore



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Abstract

This article looks at all the known seals of Tipu Sultan of Mysore (r. 1782–1799) particularly those found in the manuscripts which formed his Library collection, disbanded in 1799 after the fall of Seringapatam and subsequently divided between the East India Company London (now in the British Library), and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata. By focussing on the British Library collections certain patterns of usage have come to light, possibly indicating Tipu Sultan’s linguistic and literary preferences.

It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this article to Barbara Brend as a mark of appreciation for her patience and help, whose knowledge and advice has been of such benefit to a non-art historian. At the end of this article I highlight an important manuscript from the Royal Asiatic Society’s collection which thanks to her sponsorship has now been digitised and is available on the web as part of the RAS digital collections.

Keywords: Tipu Sultan; Seals; East India Company Library; Seringapatam

Introduction

He was accustomed on most occasions to speak Persian, and while he was eating his dinner, two hours were devoted by him to the perusal (from standard historical works) of the actions of the Kings of Persia and Arabia, religious works, traditions and biography.¹

No-one needs to be reminded of the charismatic nature of Tipu Sultan of Mysore (r. 1782–1799). Regarded by some as a fanatic Muslim and brutal tyrant, for others he was a martyr and national hero whose wars against the British foreshadowed the historic uprising of 1857. Following his death in 1799, his name became a byword in the West for exotica and Eastern luxury. The fashion for “Tipumania” gave rise to large numbers of publications, paintings, and the collection of associated artefacts.² Accounts of Tipu’s

[‡]The original version of this article was published with an error in one Keyword. A notice detailing this has been published and the error rectified in the online and print PDF and HTML copies.

¹Kirmani, Husayn ‘Ali Khan, *The History of the Reign of Tipú Sultán... Translated from an Original Persian Manuscript ... by W. Miles* (London, 1842), p. 281.

²For examples see Stronge, Susan, *Tipu’s Tigers* (London, 2009), and Buddle, Anne, *The Tiger and the Thistle: Tipu Sultan and the Scots in India 1760–1800* (Edinburgh, 1999).

fabulous wealth extended to descriptions of his library which was said to include volumes “richly adorned and beautifully illuminated in the manner of the Roman missals”.³

Over the past few years I have been attempting to establish as far as possible exactly what Tipu Sultan’s collection consisted of in 1799 and where it is located today.⁴ Of an estimated 2000⁵ volumes, 469 were transferred between 1806 and 1808 from the College of Fort William, where the collection had been deposited, to the library of the East India Company in London.⁶ In 1836 the oriental collections of the College Library were disbanded and 308 further items were sent to London while the remainder was given to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. These were duplicate texts of which an unspecified number originated from Ser- ingapatam. In total, therefore, approximately 600 or 30 per cent of the original collection can be reckoned to be in the British Library today. The rest are presumed to remain in Kolkata at the Asiatic Society of Bengal, though several have found their way into private hands and continue to re-emerge in institutions worldwide.

By now I have examined some 535 out of the British Library manuscripts and a few in other collections, but have been surprised overall at how few of the volumes actually contain the seal of Tipu Sultan himself. So far I have found seven different seals in 59 volumes, some containing more than one impression (see Table below).

Table 1. summarising the different seals of Tipu Sultan arranged in chronological order

Seal	No. of examples	Shape	Date	Legend
1	1	Rectangular	1770/71	Tipū Sulṭān 1184 (1770/71)
2	39	Rectangular	1772/73	Tipū Sulṭān 1186 (1772/73)
3	2	Circular	1783	‘Umdat al-Mulk Mubārak al-Dawlah Tipū Sulṭān ‘Alī Khān Bahādur Hizabr Jang Fidvī-yi Shāh ‘Ālam Bādshāh Ghāzī 25, sanah 1197 (1783)
4	1	Oval	1782/83	Centre: Qur’an 44:19; rim: Persian verse [1197] (1782/83)
5	12	Rectangular	1787/88	Tipū Sulṭān 5121 (1787/88)
6	1	Oval	1787/88	Yā ḥāfiẓ 5121 (1787/88)
7	6	Rectangular	1795/96	Tipū Sulṭān 3221 mawlūd-i Muḥammad (1795/96)

What is striking is the use of these different seals, all of which have been used for official purposes, except for nos. 1 and 2 which pre-date Tipu’s accession to the throne and appear to have been personal seals. Seals 3 to 7 are official seals dating from his reign either according to the *hijri* era: nos. 3 and 4, or according to the *muhammadi* or *mawludi* era:⁷ nos. 5–7. I discuss these below according to usage rather than chronologically.

³Narrative sketches of the Conquest of the Mysore: effected by the British Troops and their allies, in the capture of Ser- ingapatam, and the death of Tippoo Sultaun, May 4, 1799 ... 2nd edition (London, 1800), p. 110.

⁴Parts of this paper have been the subject of talks at the British Library and the Royal Asiatic Society. I am grateful to colleagues who have responded with additional ideas and comments.

⁵Copy, dated 8 August 1799 of letter from William Kirkpatrick to the Governor-General. British Library (BL) Mss Eur E196, ff. 19–22.

⁶See Sims-Williams, Ursula, “Revisiting the provenance of the Sindbadnamah (IO Islamic 3214)”, <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2016/06/revisiting-the-provenance-of-the-sindbadnamah-io-islamic-3214.html>.

⁷Dating from the year of the Prophet’s birth which was considered to be 13 years earlier than the *hijra*.

Tipu Sultan's official seals

Seal 3



Fig. 1. Seal 3: mirror image of John Powell Powell's seal-matrix, acquired at some point before 1823. The seal reads 'Umdat al-Mulk Mubārah al-Dawlah Tīpū Sulṭān 'Alī Khān Bahādur Hizabr Jang Fidvī-yi Shāh 'Ālam Pādshāh Ghāzī 25, sanah 1197 'Pillar of the Kingdom, Blessed of the State, Tipu Sultan 'Alī Khān Bahādur, Lion in Battle, Servant of Shah 'Ālam the Victorious King, [Regnal Year] 25, Year 1197 (1783).' Photo courtesy of the Powell-Cotton Trust.

Hyder 'Ali died at the beginning of December 1782 and was succeeded by his son Tipu Sultan whose formal accession to the throne was 3 Bahari AH 1197 (April/May 1783).⁸ Shortly after this he sent a request to the Mughal Emperor Shah 'Ālam II (r. 1760–1806) to establish his formal legitimacy as successor to his father. Later that year, according to the contemporary author David Price who had been at Seringapatam in the capacity of Prize Agent for the Bombay Army,⁹ Tipu received a *sanad* granting him the titles 'Umdat al-Mulk Mubārah al-Dawlah Tīpū Sulṭān 'Alī Khān Bahādur Hizabr Jang, Fidvī-yi Shāh 'Ālam Pādshāh Ghāzī' ('Pillar of the Kingdom, Blessed of the State, Tipu Sultan 'Alī Khān Bahādur, Lion in Battle, Servant of Shah 'Ālam the Victorious King'), dated AH 1197 in the 25th regnal year of Shah 'Ālam (1783). In a contemporary account in Marathi by an officer attached to Tipu's Treasury¹⁰ the mission actually returned in 1784, bringing a palanquin and various gifts including the standard of the order of the fish (*māhī u marātib*). Presumably the seal

⁸BL IO Islamic 4683, f. 24r: original document listing days for official salutes, dated Zaffarabad 26 Haidari in the year Jalau AH 1197 (1783).

⁹Price, David, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer* (London, 1839), pp. 432–433.

¹⁰Punganuri, Ram Chandra Rao, *Memoirs of Hyder and Tippoo: Rulers of Seringapatam, Written in the Marhatta Language*; translated by C. P. Brown (Madras, 1849), p. 37.

matrix now preserved at Quex Park, Kent also arrived at that time as part of the official despatch.¹¹

The only example of this seal that I have come across is a wax impression of this matrix preserved at the National Museum of Scotland.¹² Perhaps, in view of the uncompromisingly subservient status it bestowed on Tipu Sultan as a vassal of the Mughal Emperor Shah ‘Alam, it fulfilled a purely ceremonial function and was not widely used.

Seal 4

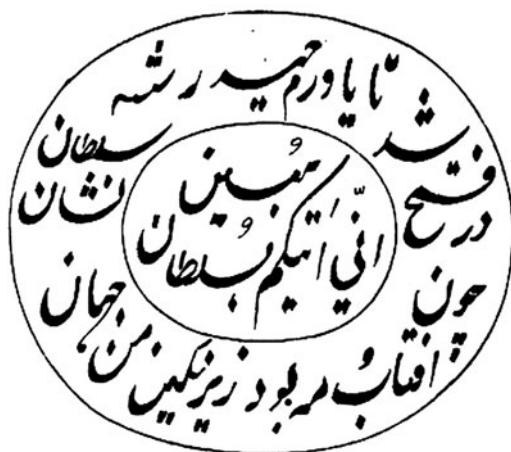


Fig. 2. Seal 4: Tipu Sultan's oval shaped state seal. From Dirom, *A narrative*, p. 287.

Another seal dating from the same period is what Alexander Dirom terms Tipu Sultan's "Great Seal of State".¹³ He writes that it was adopted soon after Hyder 'Ali's death and was used in all Tipu's public despatches. Oval-shaped, in the centre it contains a quotation from the *Qur'an* (*Sūrah* 44, verse 19): "Behold, I have come to you with clear authority"¹⁴ and round the edge a Persian verse which traces his royal descent playing on the names of his grandfather Fath Naik and his father Hyder 'Ali: "From conquest [*fath*], and the protection of the Royal Hyder comes my title of Sultan; and the world, as under the sun and moon, is subject to my signet".¹⁵ The date, according to Dirom,

*...may be found by taking the letters of the Arabic Sentence, in their numerical Capacity, and the middle letter, as implied, by the word Der from the first three words of more than one Syllable of the Couplet, viz. T from Fittah, A from Ta Yeaverum, and Y from Hyder, which completes the Date.*¹⁶

¹¹Featured in the BBC 'A History of the World' (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/FmGGcQgRPyd2MD6eQKaEw>). I am grateful to Hazel Basford, Archivist at the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex Park for supplying additional photographs and information.

¹²NMS A.1878.1 (https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/collection-search-results/?item_id=394091). I thank my colleague Saqib Baburi for bringing this to my attention.

¹³Dirom, Alexander, *A narrative of the Campaign in India, which terminated the war with Tippoo Sultan in 1792* (London, 1793), pp. 250–252 and Appx. III.

¹⁴Arberry, A. J. *The Koran interpreted* (London, 1955).

¹⁵Dirom, *A narrative*, p. 252.

¹⁶Dirom, *A narrative*, p. 287.

The numeric value of the Arabic quotation is 786 which added to $400 + 1 + 10$ makes a total of 1197 (AD 1782/83). To date I have not found an exact copy of this seal. However, a similarly inscribed matrix is preserved in the Royal Collection.¹⁷ Apparently presented by Richard Wellesley, 1st Marquis Wellesley, it was believed to have been the private seal of Tipu Sultan. Made of gold and inset with a dark red cornelian, the engraved inscription is identical to that of Dirom's 'Great Seal' though it is clearly dated 1217 of the *mawludi* era (1789/90).

Seal 5

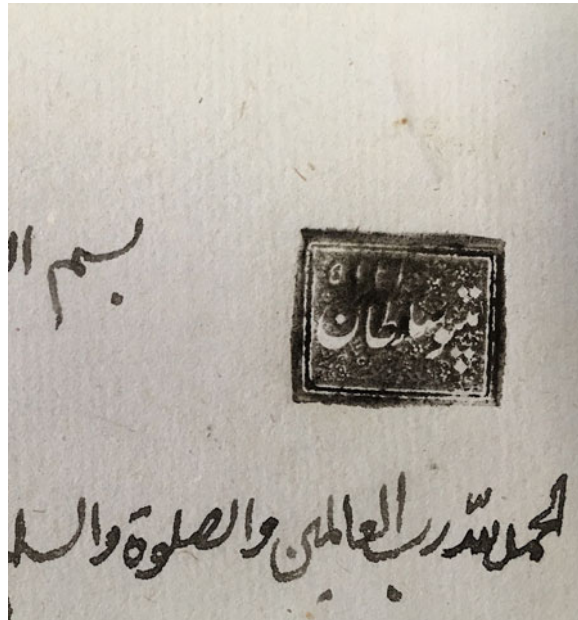


Fig. 3. Seal 5: official seal inscribed *Ṭīpū Sulṭān 5121* ie. AM 1215 (1787/88) in *Mu'ayyid al-mujāhidīn* ('The holy warrior's assistant'), an official collection of 104 sermons in verse to be read at prayers, composed by order of Tipu Sultan by Zayn al-ʿĀbidin Mūsavī Shūshtarī. This manuscript, copied by the author, is dated 27 Ramazan 1221 *muhammadi* corresponding to 7021 (ie 1207) *hijri* (8 May 1793). IO Islamic 447, f. 1v. Courtesy The British Library Board.

Within a few months of ascending the throne Tipu instigated calendrical changes by renaming the twelve months and the year names of the 60 year cycle, while still also using the traditional *hijri* era for the year.¹⁸ However in his fifth regnal year, he established a new lunisolar system which he called *muhammadi* or *mawludi*,¹⁹ ie. dating from the supposed spiritual or actual birth of the Prophet which was reckoned to be thirteen years before the *hijra*. A

¹⁷RCIN 65358 (<https://www.rct.uk/collection/65358/seal>).

¹⁸See for example documents dated 15 Ja'fari, year Azal AH 1198 (1784), and 1 Ahmadi, year Dalv AH 1200 (1786) in BL IO Islamic 4683, a collection of fifteen original documents bound together in one volume.

¹⁹See Kirkpatrick, W., *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan to Various Public Functionaries* ... London, 1811, especially his notes on the calendar and *mawludi* era, pp. xxvi-xxxvii; also Henderson, J. R., *The coins of Haidar Alī and Ṭīpū Sulṭān*. Madras, 1921. p. 28.

further innovation was to record the numbers from right to left instead of the usual way round, from left to right.²⁰

The reasons for establishing this new era are not clear but Kirkpatrick²¹ mentions a letter dated 29 Izadi (11th month) of the year Dalv, ie. at the beginning of 1787, written shortly before the change, in which Tipu Sultan had requested information from scholars as to the exact dates of the birth, mission and flight of the Prophet.

The new system was judged to begin with the month Ahmadi 1215, year Sha, which commenced on the 20 March 1787.²² The new seal was no doubt created to mark the new era and it continued to be used during the following years. It is found at the head or to the right side of documents and official manuals written at Tipu Sultan's request.²³ It reads *Tīpū Sulṭān, 5121*, i.e. AM 1215 (1787/88) and measures 19 x 15 mm (interior measurement: 16 x 13 mm). In his *Oriental Fragments* dedicated to David Price (mentioned above), Edward Moor describes a ring which was apparently "found among the booty captured with Seringapatam"²⁴ which was purchased "at the prize sales" by David Price. The ring, he described, was "cut on deep red, liver-coloured, cornelian, set in gold". The ring was still in Price's possession in 1834 when Moor published his description, and its impression, no. 2 of plate III, proves it to be the matrix of this seal which so far has been found in twelve different manuscripts in the collection.

Seal 7

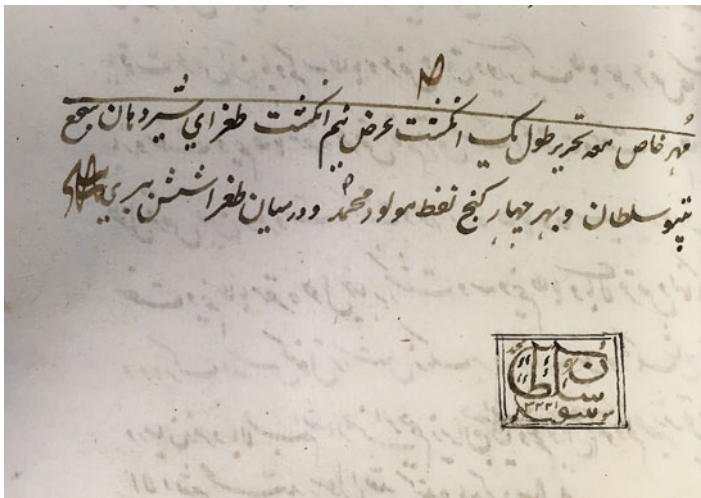


Fig. 4. Instructions for Tipu Sultan's 'special' (*muhr-i khāṣṣ*) seal (seal 7) from Chapter 1 of *Zawābiṭ-i Sulṭānī* ('Royal regulations'). IO Islamic 2379, f. 4r. Courtesy The British Library Board.

²⁰This practice was not, however, unique. For more on this see pp. 103–105 in Gallop, Annabel Teh, "Dates on Malay seals: a study of Arabic numerals from Southeast Asia," *Jurnal Filologi Melayu*, vol 22 (2015), pp. 89–114.

²¹Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters*, p. xxxi.

²²The first year of the *mawḥudi* era is sometimes reckoned as AD 1786–87, but fortunately some documents are dated in both the *mawḥudi* and the *hijri* era which confirms a start date of 1787–88.

²³For example his *Fatawā-yi Muḥammadi*, legal decisions (BL IO Islamic 1663), *Mu'ayyid al-mujāhidīn* (Fig. 3), *Zād al-mujāhidīn* on Muslim ethics (BL IO Islamic 2159 and 2734) and five copies of *Faṭḥ al-mujāhidīn*, army regulations.

²⁴Moor, Edward. *Oriental Fragments*. London, 1834, pp. 22–23 and plate III. The present whereabouts of the ring is unknown.



Fig. 5. Seal 7 inscribed *Tipū Sultān 3221 mawlūd-i Muḥammad*, ie. AM 1223 (1795/96) heading a copy of *Mufarrih al-qulūb* ('Heart's rejoicing'), a collection of mixed Persian and Dakhni songs collected for Tipu Sultan by Hasan 'Ali 'Izzat and completed in AH 1199 (1784/85). The annotations here identifying Tipu's seal and *tughra* are by the previous owner William Kirkpatrick. IO Islamic 1638, f. 1v. Courtesy The British Library Board.

In 1796 another seal was introduced. A description of this seal is given in *Zawabiṭ-i Sultānī* ('Royal regulations'), issued, according to the introduction, on 21 Haydari, year Hirasat, AM 1224 corresponding to 19 Rabi' I, AH 1211 (22 September 1796). Several copies exist of this official handbook which describes the correct royal insignia to be used in seals and standards, and the form of official cyphers to be used in different government departments.²⁵ Instructions are issued for the 'special seal' (*muhr-i khāṣṣ*) to measure one finger (*angusht*) by half with the *tughra* Tipu Sultan in the shape of a tiger's (*shūr*²⁶) mouth, and the four corners to carry the letters *Maw lū d-i Muḥammad*. The *tughra* was also to contain six tiger (*babrī*) stripes. Although the regulations were drawn up in AM 1224, the example illustrated in the manuscript itself (Fig. 5) dates from the preceding year.

The design of this new seal is another example of Tipu's fondness for the tiger motif. Dated AM 1223 (1795/96), it measures 19 x 15 mm (interior measurement: 17 x 13 mm) and like its predecessor (Seal 5) of AM 1215 (1787/88) is found on documents and government manuals of which multiple copies exist.

²⁵IO Islamic 2379 and RAS Persian 171.

²⁶*Shūr* usually refers to a lion, but there is no doubt that tiger is implied here because of the *babrī* 'tiger' stripe.

Seal 6



Fig. 6. Wax sealing (no 6) inscribed *yā ḥāfiẓ* 5121, ie. AM 1215 (1787/88). IO Islamic 4683. Courtesy The British Library Board.

A unique example of a further seal is found in a wax sealing attached to a document dated 15 Ahmadi, Shadab, AM 1226 (April 1798). The left-hand part is inscribed *yā ḥāfiẓ*, and the right-hand side is dated AM 1215 (1787/88), quite a few years earlier than the document to which it is connected. There were no doubt other seals of this type, but by virtue of their ephemeral nature they have not survived.

Tipu's personal seals

More interesting are what appear to be personal seals of Tipu Sultan, predating his accession to the throne at the end of 1782. With the exception of Seal 1 (below) and one other example, they occur in literary and historical works which are without any official status.

Seal 1

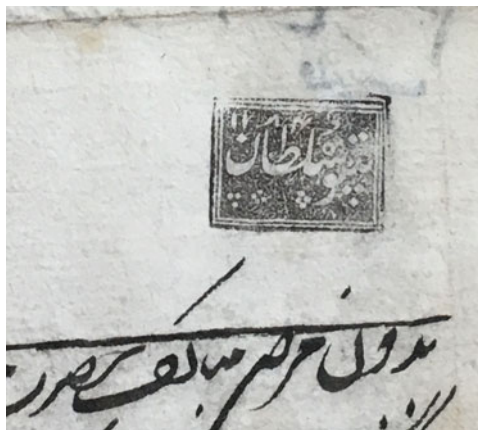


Fig. 7. Seal 1: the earliest of Tipu's seals, inscribed *Tipū Sulṭān* 1184 (1770/71) on an undated contract (SOAS MS 12869A). Courtesy SOAS Library.

The earlier of these is a unique example occurring on a contract (*iqrāmāmah*) which was discovered by William Kirkpatrick (1754–1812). As Military Secretary to the Governor-General Lord Wellesley, Kirkpatrick was commissioned to examine all the documents discovered at Seringapatam in 1799. The contract itself was published in facsimile and translated in full in his *Select Letters*²⁷ and the original is preserved as part of the Marsden collection at SOAS (MS 12869A).²⁸

This extraordinary document records a formal agreement between Tipu and his father that he will not steal, commit fraud, accept gifts, deceive or intrigue on pain of death. Although it is undated and may not be actually be in Tipu's handwriting, it is headed by his seal dated AH 1184 (1770/71). The seal measures 14.5 x 11 mm (interior measurement: 13 x 9 mm).

Seal 2



Fig. 8. Seal 2: Tipu's personal seal inscribed *Ṭīpū Sulṭān 1186* (1772/73), placed in the right hand margin of the opening of the *Dīvān* of Muḥammad Ṭālib Āmulī, court poet of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Dated circa 1637. BL IO Islamic 3474. Courtesy The British Library Board.

²⁷Kirkpatrick, *Select letters*, pp. 3–6 and Appx.C.

²⁸SOAS ms 12869; 2 works by Tipu Sultan, Fath 'Ali, Nawab of Mysore, 1753–1799.

The most commonly occurring and in many ways the most interesting of all Tipu's seals is a similar, but slightly larger, seal of 1186 (1772/73), which, with one exception,²⁹ was used in literary manuscripts in his collection. Measuring approximately 16 x 12 mm (interior measurement: 14 x 11 mm) it occurs in 39 out of all the manuscripts examined so far. Unlike most ownership seals which are placed either on an empty page before the beginning of the text or at the end next to the colophon, this seal is always positioned immediately above or in the right hand margin of the opening.

A full list of manuscripts in which it occurs can be found as an appendix at the end of this article.

Out of the total number of manuscripts, fourteen are volumes of poetry by Amir Khusraw, 'Attar, Rumi, Jami, Talib Amuli, Hasan Dihlavi, Nasafi, Zulali, Kamal Khujandi, 'Urfi, Ahsan Allah and others—but surprisingly not established favourites such as Firdawsi and Hafiz nor Sa'di. Other works with Tipu's seal include histories, biographies, dictionaries, and works on Islam. All the volumes bearing his seal are in Persian except for three in Arabic which also include Persian translations. This is in marked contrast to the rest of his collection which is made up of approximately 36 per cent Arabic works as compared with 60 per cent Persian. Not only does this indicate a preference for Persian but it suggests that Tipu Sultan's knowledge of Arabic might have been quite limited.

It is not known when nor from whom these manuscripts were acquired. The oldest, the *Haylājnāmah* ('Life of al-Ḥallāj') attributed to 'Attar,³⁰ dating from 1496, had belonged to the Qutb Shahs of Golconda and includes the seals of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (r. 1580–1612) and his successor Muhammad Qutb Shah (r. 1612–26). At least eight manuscripts had belonged to Nawab 'Abd al-Vahhab Nasir al-Dawlah Nusrat Jang of Chittoor, brother of Muhammad 'Ali Nawab of the Carnatic, whose property was confiscated in 1780 by Hyder 'Ali when he was taken prisoner with his family and sent to Seringapatam.³¹

For the most part these volumes are very ordinary, only two could be described as of exceptional quality. Since there were many other deluxe volumes in his collection which did not carry his seal, we can perhaps assume that it was the content that Tipu especially valued and that the volume was actually read or particularly favoured in some way.

²⁹BL IO Islamic 4683: a volume containing several documents from the beginning of Tipu's reign predating the first of his official seals.

³⁰BL IO Islamic 776. See appendix for details.

³¹Kirmani, *op. cit.*, p. 401, also Stewart, Charles, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the late Tippoo Sultan of Mysore* (Cambridge, 1809), p. v.

The Maṣnavīyāt-i Zafar Khān

Fig. 9. Tipu Sultan's seal of 1186 (1772/73) placed in the right margin of the opening of Zafar Khan's *masnavi Jilvah-i nāz*. Underneath an annotation by one of Tipu Sultan's clerks describing the manuscript as an autograph. RAS Persian 319, f. 1v. Courtesy of the Royal Asiatic Society.

One example which stands out is the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript *Maṣnavīyāt-i Zafar Khān* ('Poems of Zafar Khan'), RAS Persian 310.³² This manuscript contains two poems, *Jilvah-i nāz* ('Glorious lustre') and *Maykhānah-i rāz* ('Tavern of secrets') by Ahsan Allah known as Zafar Khan, and was copied by the author and dated 26 Zu 'l-Hijjah 1073 (1 August 1663) at Lahore, just a few days before his death.³³ The author, a distinguished Mughal courtier, was at different times Governor of Kabul, Kashmir and Sind, and was besides a noted patron of letters, poets and artists as well as a poet in his own right.

In addition to the volume's importance as an autograph copy, it contains six double paintings by one of Jahangir's favourite artists, Bishan Das,³⁴ painted around 1645 during Shah Jahan's visit to Kashmir. This is documented in two inscriptions on a flyleaf³⁵ by Zafar

³²RAS Persian 310, *Maṣnavīyāt-i Zafar Khān*. Now housed at Cambridge University Library it has been digitised as part of the Royal Asiatic Society digital collections (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-RAS-00310/1>) thanks to the sponsorship of Barbara Brend dedicatee of this article.

³³For more, especially on the content of this work, see Sharma, Sunil, *Mughal Arcadia* (Harvard, 2017), pp. 143–155.

³⁴Bishan Das, active from the early 17th century, one of Jahangir's favourite artists who in 1613 was sent on a diplomatic mission to the court of Shah 'Abbas in Iran.

³⁵<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-RAS-00310/21#>.

Khan's son, Inayat Khan, who was Shah Jahan's librarian and chronicler. He tells us that the paintings were by Bishan Das whom he describes as his father's employee: "It has nine illustrations", he wrote, "all two-pages which together make eighteen pages. The calligraphy is priceless and the value of the remaining decoration is 400 RS".

Although this manuscript had been long noted on account of its outstanding paintings and illumination³⁶ the seal on folio iv (Fig. 9) had defied identification. It was the discovery of a volume described as "Julweh Naz wa Meykhaneh Raz beautifully illuminated with paintings" in a list of books compiled in 1799 which first attracted my attention.³⁷ This list had been compiled by Capt. David Price and Samuel Ogg, Prize Agents for the Bombay and Madras Armies who had been tasked in 1799 with making an inventory of the Library and selecting books to be sent to the East India Company Court of Directors in London and the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Kolkata. The volume was mentioned again eight years later and recorded as "lost by the death of Mr Elliott Student of the College" in a list of sixteen books intended for London but "which are not to be found".³⁸

Comparison of the seal with other examples has confirmed the provenance. Additionally the handwriting of the inscription underneath, with its distinctive backward turning 'k', appears identical to that found in volumes of Tipu's documents.³⁹

The manuscript was presented to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1834 by Charles Joseph Doyle (1787–1848) Military Secretary to the Governor-General Lord Moira (later Marquess of Hastings) from 1813 to 1823. Possibly he had purchased this book in Kolkata from the estate of the unfortunate Mr Elliott.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there exists no dedicated study of the portion of Tipu Sultan's collection which remains in the Asiatic Society Kolkata, but the sample preserved in the British Library is sufficiently substantial to allow conclusions to be made. On the basis of acquisition notes which, if dated, usually predate Tipu Sultan's accession in 1782, it would seem likely that the major part of the collection was acquired during Hyder 'Ali's reign. This is also supported by the evidence of previous owners' seals, of which the latest is dated 1777. The presence of Tipu's 'library' seal of 1772/73, however, on a number of literary items reflects his personal ownership even if some of the manuscripts were acquired as a result of his father's military campaigns. Similarly the absence of Tipu's 'official' seals⁴⁰ on works of this kind may reflect a particular usage of the library seal. Given Tipu's known literary interests, it indicates his

³⁶Losty, J. P., *The Art of the Book in India* (London, 1982), p. 100.

³⁷Mss Eur/E196, ff. 70r-82v: Copy of *List of Selected Manuscripts for the Honble. The Court of Directors*, dated 1 & 28 December 1799.

³⁸*Ibid.* f. 95r: *List of Books selected by the Prize Agents for the Honorable Court of Directors, which are not to be found.* Enclosure with copy of letter dated 17 February 1807 from William Hunter, Secretary to College Council, Fort William, to Thomas Brown, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Two Elliots are mentioned in the *Annals of the College of Fort William* (Calcutta, 1819), one was John Bardoe Elliott whose collection was bequeathed to the Bodleian in 1859, the other was William Pearson Elliott who entered the College on 6 May 1801, about whom nothing appears to be known except that he distinguished himself in his Persian and Hindustani exams.

³⁹For example IO Islamic 4683, f. 171r, a covering note: "for his Highness' consideration."

⁴⁰An exception is IO Islamic 2116, *al-Hiṣn al-hiṣn* which had belonged to Nawab 'Abd al-Vahhab and includes Tipu's seal of AM 1223 (1795/6).

personal choice of reading matter and he may have continued to use it this way throughout his reign.

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Appendix

List of manuscripts known to contain Tipu's Library seal

- **IO Islamic 241** (Ethe 1516). *Qiṣṣah-i Khvurshīd va Māh*, a mystical *masnavi* by Muḥammad Sharīf Badā'ī Nasafī, copied by Muḥammad Beg Shāmlū. Early 18th century with an illuminated heading and flowers marking the end of each verse. Former owner Shāh Muḥyī 'l-Dīn.
- **IO Islamic 279** (Ethe 1202). *Maṭla' al-avnār* by Amīr Khusraw. Copied for Mīr Sirāj al-Dīn on 14 Zu 'l-Qa'dah 1169 (10 August 1756).
- **IO Islamic 329** (Ethe 910). *Dīvān-i Aḥmadī* attributed to the Sufi writer Aḥmad-i Jām Zhandahpīl (1048–1141). Early 18th century with illuminated heading. Former owner Sayyid Shah 'Abd Allāh Qādirī, his undated seal: Sayyid Shāh Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Qādirī.
- **IO Islamic 386** (Ethe 1218). *Nuh sipīhr* by Amīr Khusraw. 18th century copy. Former owner Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1186 (1772/3).
- **IO Islamic 403** (Ethe 1494). *Sab' Sayyārah*, here called *Āshūbnāmah*, seven *masnavis* by Zulālī, lacking part of the prose introduction at the beginning. Possibly 17th century.
- **IO Islamic 482** (Ethe 158). *Rawzat al-shuhadā*, a history of the martyrdom of 'Alī and his family by Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kāshifī. 18th century copy lacking final pages.
- **IO Islamic 776** (Ethe 1048). *Haylājnāmah*, the life of the Sufi Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj attributed to 'Aṭṭār. Copy dated 2 Safār 902 (10 October 1496). Former owners Muhammad Qulī Qutb Shah, Sultan of Golconda (r. 1580–1612), his successor Muhammad Qutb Shah (r. 1612–26), his seal dated 1021 (1612/13) and Sa'ādat 'Alī Khān, his seal dated 1176 (1762/63).
- **IO Islamic 827** (Ethe 22). *Majma' al-ansāb*, an incomplete copy of the general history abridgement to 736/1335 by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Shabānkārah'ī. Copy dated 14 Rajab 1027 (7 July 1618). Illuminated heading. Former owner Abu'l-Qāsim, his seal dated 1056 (1646/47).
- **IO Islamic 905** (Ethe 2034). *Juz 'īyat va Kullīyāt*, mixed prose and verse on the spiritual aspects of the human body by Zīyā al-Dīn Nakhshabī. Copy dated 19 Shavval year 41 [of Aurangzeb] (11 May 1697).
- **IO Islamic 925** (Ethe 1279). *Dīvān-i Kamāl* by Kamāl al-Dīn Khujujandī. Copy dated 6 Rabi' I 1085 (20 June 1674) by Shaykh Kālī. Former owner Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1186 (1772/73).
- **IO Islamic 1141** (Ethe 190). *Fathnāmah-i Ṣāhibqīrānī*, a simplified version of 'Alī Yazdī's *Zafarnāmah*. Copy dated 6 Zu 'l-Hijjah 982 (15 March 1575).

- **IO Islamic 1316** (Ethe 2045). *Riyāz al-inshā*, a volume of model epistolography by the Bahmanid minister Maḥmūd Gāvān Khvājah Jahān (d. 1481). Possibly 17th century. Former owners Abū Ḥāmid ibn Shaykh Maḥmūd known as Shaykh Ḥamīd and Muḥammad Taqī ibn Muḥammad Shaḥfī al-Gīlānī al-Muṣṭafikhānī.
- **IO Islamic 1334** (Ethe 1212). *Qir'ān al-sa'dayn* by Amīr Khusraw. 18th century copy.
- **IO Islamic 1364** (Ethe 1461 and 1641). *Qaṣīdas* by the poet 'Urfī and the *Dīvān* of Naṣīr 'Alī, dated 21 Muharram 1143 (6 August 1730).
- **IO Islamic 1405** (Ethe 598). *Majma' al-hudā*, lives of the prophets, Imams and other holy men by 'Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Zavvārī. Possibly dating from the 16th century, illuminated heading. Former owner, court servant Rūḥ Allāh Khān khānah'zād-i 'Ālamgīr Shāh year 11, 1079 (1668/69).
- **IO Islamic 1637** (Ethe 1227). *Dīvān-i Ḥasan Dihlavī*. 18th century. Former owner 'Abd al-Vahhāb Khān Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1174 (1760/61).
- **IO Islamic 1662** (Loth 138). *Kalimāt-i Murtaẓavī*, the 100 sayings of 'Alī in Arabic, with a Persian paraphrase in couplets. A beautifully illuminated copy, perhaps dating from the 17th century. Former owners 'Abd al-Razzāq Khān, his seal dated 1187 (1773/74) and his father 'Abd al-Vahhāb Khān servant of Muḥammad Shāh Bādshāh Ghāzī, his seal dated 1157 (1744). Also includes genealogical notes written by Ghulām Muḥammad Khān, a distant cousin of 'Abd al-Vahhāb.
- **IO Islamic 1682** (Ethe 2393). *Kanz al-lughāt*, an Arabic-Persian dictionary by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Khāliq ibn Ma'rūf. Copied by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Shukūr of Shahjahanpur, Bihar on 27 Jumadi II year 38 (12 February 1695).
- **IO Islamic 1687** (Ethe 2116). *Munsha'āt-i Bīdil*, letters of the philosopher poet Bīdil. 18th century copy by Qādir Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Khān the governor (*qil'ah dār*) of Calicut.
- **IO Islamic 1741** (Ethe 857, 2774, 2786, 2787). *Majmū'ah-i chand risālah*, a collection of four works including two treatises on archery, copied circa 1771 (dated watermark) by Abū 'l-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Ṣaḏīq at Haydarnagar (Bednur).
- **IO Islamic 1794** (Ethe 2499). *Burhān-i qāti'*, the well-known Persian dictionary compiled by the 17th century lexicographer Muḥammad Ḥusayn ibn Khalaf Tabrīzī Burhān who wrote under the patronage of Qutubshah ruler 'Abd Allah (r. 1626–72). Copied 20 Safar 1178 (19 August 1764), in the fort of Kolar by Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn 'Abbāsī.
- **IO Islamic 1865** (Ethe 1529). The final part (*rubā'iyāt*) of the *Dīvān* of Muḥammad Ṭālib Āmulī, poet laureate of the Mughal Emperor Jahangīr. Copy dated 1 Jumadi I 1047 (21 Sept 1637), including an illuminated heading and decorated opening. Follows on from IO Islamic 3474 below. Previous owner Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1186 (1772/73).
- **IO Islamic 1873** (Ethe 2043, 2257, 2258). A composite volume containing the *Manāẓir al-inshā*, an authoritative treatise on prose composition by the Bahmanid minister Maḥmūd Gāvān Khvājah Jahān (see also IO Islamic 1316 above), and two short treatises on astronomy. Copied by Ghulām Shaykh Najm Khaṭīb al-Murshidī. Former owner 'Abd al-Vahhāb Khān Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1175 (1761/62).
- **IO Islamic 2029** (Ethe 605). *Tārīkh-i Mūsavī*, on the life of Moses by Mu'in al-Miskīn, dated 23 Ramazan 906 (11 April 1501).

- **IO Islamic 2124** (Ethe 1875, 579). *Javāhir-i khamsah*, a Persian version of his Arabic treatise by the 16th century Sufi saint Muḥammad Ghaws Gwaliyārī. Illuminated heading. Copied by Muḥammad Vāsil Bayg Qādirī and dated 8 Safar 1173 (1 October 1759). Followed by a short treatise *Risālah-i Afghānān*, on the origins of the Afghans.
- **IO Islamic 2162** (Ethe 1885). *Durr al-majālis*, legends relating to the prophets and Sufi saints by Sayf al-Zafar Nawbahārī. Copy possibly dating from the 16th or early 17th century. Former owners: Ḥasan Muḥammad son of Dāvaljī and Dūst Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī, his inscription dated 19 Shavval 1125 (8 November 1713).
- **IO Islamic 2223** (Ethe 1228). *Jām-i jam* by Awḥadī Marāghah’ī, a treatise on mysticism in *masnavi* form. Copy dated 23 Rabi’ II 1169 (26 Jan 1756) by Mīr Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī for Mīr Sirāj al-Dīn copied from a book belonging to Hazrat Nawab Dilāvar Khān Bahādur in the district (*qasbah*) of Sira (Karnataka).⁴¹
- **IO Islamic 2266** (Ethe 1545, 1650). Volume containing a selection from the *Dīvān* of the Safavid poet Jalāl Aṣīr of Isfahan and the popular poem *Nayrang-i ‘ishq*, here titled simply *Masnavī*, by the Mughal poet Ghanīmat Kunjāhī. Copy completed 11 Rajab year 29 of Muhammad Shah (19 July 1747) on commission for Mīr Muḥammad Muḥsin, his seals dated 1156 (1743/44).
- **IO Islamic 2270** (Ethe 2576). *Tarjumah-i Kanz al-daqa’iq*, a Persian translation of al-Nasafī’s Arabic treatise on Hanafi law, here ascribed to Naṣr Allāh ibn Jamāl Izdī. Possibly 18th century.
- **IO Islamic 2341** (Loth 191). *Bāb al-akhbār*, a collection of traditions by Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh with a Persian translation. Copy dated 1 Muharram 1157 (15 February 1744).
- **IO Islamic 2352** (Loth 372). A compilation consisting of miscellaneous prayers and translations added at different times. Former owner Kanīz Fāṭimah, her seal dated 1169 (1755/56).
- **IO Islamic 3302** (Ethe 2490). *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* by Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Injū. Copied on 17 Rabi’ II 1047 (8 September 1637). Illuminated heading. Previous owner: Khudābakhsh ibn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad, his seal dated 1099, RY 31 (1687/88).
- **IO Islamic 3311** (Ethe 1078). *Maṣnavī-yi ma’navī* by Rūmī. Illuminated heading. Perhaps seventeenth century?
- **IO Islamic 3349** (Ethe 2155). *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, on ethics by Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, copy dated 7 Zu’l-Hijjah 1041 (25 June 1632). Previous owners: Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1186 (1772/73) and before him Ghulām Valī who had also owned two other manuscripts.
- **IO Islamic 3360** (Ethe 2155). The first part of Jāmī’s first *dīvān*. Illuminated heading. Perhaps seventeenth century?
- **IO Islamic 3376** (Ethe 1548). *Ghazalīyāt-i Jalāl Aṣīr* by Jalāl Aṣīr of Isfahan, completed by Qalandar on 23 Zu’l-Hijjah regnal year 24 of ‘Alamgīr (14 Jan 1681).
- **IO Islamic 3474** (Ethe 1527). *Dīvān* by Muḥammad Ṭālib Āmulī, court poet of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. The first of a two-volume set, consisting of *ghazals*, of which the second, IO Islamic 1865 above, is dated first Jumadi I 1047 (21 Sept 1637). Illuminated

⁴¹Dilavar Khan was ruler of Sira from 1726–1756 when it was taken by the Marathas. Conquered by Hyder ‘Ali in 1761(?), lost and then retaken by Tipu for his father in 1774.

heading. Former owner: Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, his seal dated 1186 (1772/73).

- **IO Islamic 4683.** A collection of orders (*ḥukmnāmah*), four of which carry Tipu's 1186/1772 seal in documents dating from 1783 to 1785 – thus predating his first official seal of 1787.
- **RAS Per 310.** *Maṣnavīyāt-i Zafar Khān*. Two poems, *Jilvah-i nāz* and *Maykhānah-i rāz* by Zafar Khān Aḥsan, copied by the author and dated 26 Zu'l-Hijjah 1073 (1 August 1663) at Lahore. Includes 6 out of an original 9 double paintings by Bishan Das painted circa 1645 during Shah Jahan's visit to Kashmir.