

**THE REVENUE RESOURCES  
OF THE MUGHAL  
EMPIRE IN INDIA FROM  
A.D. 1593 TO A.D 1707**

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The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India from A.D. 1593 to A.D 1707 by Edward Thomas

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**EDWARD THOMAS**

**THE REVENUE RESOURCES  
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A.D. 1593 TO A.D 1707**



THE  
REVENUE RESOURCES  
OF  
THE MUGHAL EMPIRE  
IN INDIA,

FROM A.D. 1598 TO A.D. 1707.

A SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
THE CHRONICLES OF THE PATHAN KINGS OF DEHLI.

BY  
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LATE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

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1871.

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## PREFACE.

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THE subjoined compilation embraces much new matter, which was necessarily omitted from the brief Appendix on the Revenues of the Mughals, inserted in my late work on "The Pathán Kings of Dehli."

The growing interest of the subject, and the surprise expressed at the amounts realized at these periods, have induced me to scrutinize more fully the available data, and to present them in the amplified form of a Supplement to the "Chronicles" of the race, whose defeat secured the dominion of the Mughal.

LONDON,  
*November, 1871.*

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## REVENUES OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE.

### FIRUZ SHÁH'S REVENUES.

I HAVE had occasion to advert in the pages of "The Chronicles of the Pathán Kings of Dehli," to the revenues of India under Akbar, in elucidation of the State resources of his predecessors. As much difficulty has hitherto been felt in the definition of values, even where figures were unassailable, I revert to the subject as an appropriate sequel to Akbar's monetary system, in order to exhibit more fully, by absolute numismatic data, the intrinsic amount of the taxes imposed. And, further, in consideration of the interest at present attaching to the question of British Indian finance, I have taken advantage of this opportunity to extend my previous notice to an examination of the revenues of the later Mughal monarchs, so as to place before the public a progressive series of Imperial balance sheets extending up to 1707 A.D., when our own countrymen began to appear in force upon the Húghli, when Job Charnock, "the father of Calcutta," was buried in his own city (1692), and the foundation of "Fort William, in Bengal," (1700), foreshadowed the reduction of Agrah, Dehli, and Láhor to provincial capitals.

Before entering upon the details of Akbar's revenue, it may be as well to dispose of the earlier returns of Fírúz Sháh and Bábar, which in their modest totals only confuse the sequence of the Mughal lists, and in reality have little or no bearing upon the State resources of the later periods, which were derived from so much more extended an



empire. Firúz Sháh's revenue in A.D. 1351-1388 is fixed at £6,850,000, and that of Bábar in A.D. 1526-1530 at £2,600,000.<sup>1</sup>

The contrast of the relatively large income of Firúz Sháh, with his avowedly narrowed boundaries, would naturally seem to conflict with the reduced total confessed to by Bábar, who boasted of so much greater a breadth of territory; but these difficulties are susceptible of various simple explanations. In Firúz Sháh's forty years of undisturbed repose, the country was positively full to overflowing of the precious metals, which had been uniformly attracted towards the capital from various causes for nearly a century previously. The bullion resources of the metropolitan provinces may be tested by the multitude of the extant specimens of the gold and silver coinages of the previous reigns, and the confessed facility with which millions might be accumulated by officials of no very high degree. The whole land was otherwise teeming with material wealth, and was administered by Hindú *sastrs* and other home-taught men, who realized every fraction that the State could claim.

Far different were the circumstances which Bábar's limited tenure of his straggling conquests presented. Tímúr had already effectually ruined the land through which his plundering hordes had passed—what his followers could not carry away they destroyed; and while the distant provinces retained their metallic stores, the old capital and all around it was impoverished to desolation; so that when the prestige of Dehli re-asserted itself under Buhlól Lódi, he was forced to resort to the indigenous copper mines for a new currency

<sup>1</sup> See "Chronicles of the Pathán Kings," p. 272, note (the figures for Firúz's revenues in Sir H. Elliot's *Historians*, vol. iii. p. 288, are partially corrected at p. 346 of the same volume, where the *written* sum is 6,85,00,000 *tankaás*). Bábar's returns are given at p. 386 of my work.

("Chronicles," p. 361); and though public affairs and national prosperity improved under his son Sikandar, the standard coin was only raised to something like  $\frac{1}{8}$  silver to the copper basis, which, however, secured a more portable piece, and a more creditable value, in a currency which found ready acceptance with races who had already been educated in the theory of mixed metals. The substantial development of Hindústán under Ibrahim, the son of Sikandar, was absolutely unprecedented. Cheapness and plenty became fabulous even to the native mind, but this very prosperity of the people reduced, *pari passu*, the income of the king, which was derived directly from the produce of the land, his dues being payable in kind; so that when corn was cheap the money value of his revenues declined in nearly equal proportion.<sup>1</sup> And thus it came about that when Bábar examined the accumulated treasures of the house of Lódi, on the capture of Agrah, he found but little beyond the current copper coinage, leavened, as it was, with a small modicum of silver.

The statistical returns of Bábar's time were clearly based upon the old rent-rolls of that unacknowledged contributor to the efficiency of all later Indian revenue systems, Sikandar bin Buhlól. A single subdued confession in Bábar's table<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was with a view to remedy this state of things that Akbar introduced his *ten years' settlement*, the germ of that pernicious measure, Lord Cornwallis's notable Perpetual Settlement. Akbar's intentions were equitable, and, to his perceptions, the enforced pact as between king and subject left little to be objected to; but the uniformity it was desired to promote was dependent upon higher powers, and the Indian climate could not be made a party to the treaty. Hence, in bad seasons, the arrangement worked harshly against the poorer husbandmen, and threw them more and more into the hands of usurers, whose lawful Oriental rate of interest was enough to crush far more thrifty cultivators than the ordinary Indian *Raiyat*. The *ten years' settlement* itself was based upon the average returns of the ten preceding harvests, from the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth year (inclusive) of Akbar's reign (Gladwin, i. p. 266).

<sup>2</sup> No. 5, "Mévát, not included in Sikandar's revenue roll" (Chronicles, p. 330).

suffices to prove this, and simultaneously with the retention of these State ledgers the interlopers clearly accepted the official method of reckoning in Sikandari Tankahs, which, numismatically speaking, must have been almost the only coins available at the period, the profuse issue of which may be tested by the multitude of the pieces still in existence, and the completeness of the series of dates spreading over twenty-six continuous years of Sikandar's reign, already cited at page 366 of the "Chronicles."

But perhaps the most simple way of reconciling the striking discrepancy between the two sums assigned severally as the Imperial dues under Fírúz and Bábar, would be to suppose that the comparatively large amount of the revenue of the former monarch comprehended within its terms income from all sources, while the reduced estimate of Bábar's chronicler may be held to refer to the State demand upon the land alone, which the conqueror was able directly to enforce from the recorded assessments of the previous reign. The incidental statements of Fírúz Sháh's special biographer, quoted at p. 272, give countenance to such an inference, especially in the item of the £300,000 of vexatious taxes abandoned by Fírúz in A.H. 777 (A.D. 1375-6),<sup>1</sup> and the general terms in which the total income is adverted to.

<sup>1</sup> It is seldom we find an Oriental potentate testifying, under his own hand, to the iniquities of no less than twenty-four taxes he had previously tacitly sanctioned, and whose abolition he not only frankly proclaims in his own autobiography, but whose perpetual extinction was supposed to be secured by the display of this same royal manifesto on the surface of the walls of the Mosque he had founded for the good of his own soul, in his new capital on the banks of the Jumna ("Chronicles," p. 289, note 2); and yet so readily did the authorities fall back upon these ancient imposts, that we find many of the same items entered in the new relinquishment of oppressive demands under Akbar (pp. 17-18, *infra*). The list of curious cases given by Fírúz Sháh, so suggestive of a primitive stage of civilization, is here subjoined, together with the far more important declaration,