

The eighteenth century in Sikh history: political resurgence, religious and social life, and cultural articulation

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Abstrak

The eighteenth century marks that transformative era in Sikh history when rebels became rulers. Riding on the wave of a political revolution, peasants and artisans in the Khalsa order refashioned themselves into administrators in the Punjab region. This was no mean feat as it meant displacing first the mighty Mughals and then the Afghans. Based on a wide range of contemporary sources, this volume takes a fresh look at the political processes and the accompanying changes in the religious, social, and cultural life of the Sikhs. The author examines the political resurgence of the Sikhs and their system of government. She takes a closer look at their conception of God and Guru, the emergence of Amritsar as the premier centre of the Sikh world, and the rites, ceremonies, and ethics of the Khalsa. Issues of caste and gender, and Sikh interest in literature, art, and architecture are also explored. A convergence of all these developments led to the crystallization of a distinctive Sikh identity by the end of the century. In a very real sense, the eighteenth century emerges in this book as a bridge between the earlier and later history of the Sikhs.