Sikh history records that Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) proclaimed that the Sikh Gurus' teachings, along with other selected compositions, compiled in a *granth* or book, be given the status of Guru. Thus the Guru Granth Sahib, reverently enshrined in gurdwaras, is without doubt of central significance to Sikhs. The role of the Guru Granth Sahib in Sikh tradition underscores the respect Sikhs accord the teachings of their Gurus. What, then, have Sikhs made of another *granth* in their tradition, the Dasam Granth, or 'book of the tenth', attributed to Guru Gobind Singh?

At 1,428 pages in most standard printed editions, the Dasam Granth is just a couple of pages shy of the Guru Granth Sahib's 1,430. Its status in Sikhism, however, has been a matter of some contention. For some, it is a 'second scripture of the Sikhs'; for others, its status as a part of Sikh 'scripture' is highly questionable. Disagreements about what status to accord the Dasam Granth have largely centred on two issues: whether the compositions within the Dasam Granth are in accord with normative Sikh theology, and whether discussions of matters of sexuality may appropriately be included in a text with theological content. Large portions of the Dasam Granth explore episodes in Hindu mythology. There are, for example, several compositions detailing the exploits of the goddess Durga, as well as accounts of the lives of Krishna, Rama, sections that many Sikh scholars have termed 'Puranic' given that they retell tales from the Hindu Puranas. These sections of the Dasam Granth raise the question of how to interpret them. Do they suggest that Sikhs should worship these gods, goddesses, and avatars, suggesting a disconnect with normative Sikh monotheism, or are they there for some other reason? A second major source of debate regarding the Dasam Granth is the content of one of the longest sections of the text, a composition entitled *Charitropakhian*, a series of vignettes many of which describe in rather graphic detail illicit relationships between men and women. This section raises the question of what place such material has in a religious text.

Controversies about some of the Dasam Granth's content have also led to a debate about the authorship of the Dasam Granth. Given the controversial portions of the text, some Sikh interpreters have concluded that Guru Gobind Singh could not have been the author of those portions of the text that seem out of keeping with normative Sikh
theology and particular conceptions of the propriety of addressing sexual matters. Others, however, do consider Guru Gobind Singh the author, and have presented a range of explanations as to why the text includes the content that it does. In addition to concerns about some of the Dasam Granth's contents, the authorship controversy is further fuelled by the presence of a range of 'pen names', such as 'Ram,' 'Siam,' and 'Kal,' found within some compositions, and the fact that Sikh history notes that Guru Gobind Singh, like his father Guru Tegh Bahadur before him, sponsored poets at his court (Fenech 2008). Thus some interpreters have concluded that some parts of the Dasam Granth are more likely to be the work of those court poets than Guru Gobind Singh himself.

Key questions about the exact history and compilation of the Dasam Granth remain. Dates on some of the compositions in the text suggest that it was largely composed in the 1690s and early 1700s. Sikh historical sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries do not provide definitive evidence about the compilation of the text. Absent definitive evidence to dispel these controversies convincingly, discussions of the content and authorship of the Dasam Granth continue, ranging from finely detailed scholarly debates about manuscript and linguistic evidence, to heated exchanges online on various Sikh discussion sites. The persistence of these discussions indicates that the Dasam Granth raises key issues for the definition of Sikhi—clearly defining and interpreting the works of the Gurus, and clearly defining the boundaries of normative theology as well as the boundaries of propriety. Also important is the fact that a relatively small number of passages from the Dasam Granth, such as the Jap Sahib, parts of the the Ardas found within the tenth Guru's book, and Benti Chaupai, are a regular part of daily Sikh liturgy.

**CONTENTS OF THE DASAM GRANTH**

Most of the Dasam Granth is in the Braj language, with a few sections in Punjabi and Persian. The earliest extant manuscripts do not all contain exactly the same sections in the same order, and the titles given to individual compositions within the Dasam Granth may differ as well. While the thematic content of different sections of the Dasam Granth varies widely, there is no immediately evident overarching organizational strategy for the text as a whole. Printed editions of the text, both in the original languages and in modern Punjabi or English translation, do not follow the exact same ordering and do not always include all the sections of the text. The compositions in the text are here briefly described in the order they occur in most standard printed editions.

**Jap** (Spoken Prayer; derived from a verb meaning 'to pray or to recite quietly')

One of the least controversial portions of the Dasam Granth, Jap is often considered Guru Gobind Singh's first work, though the exact date of its composition is not
entirely clear. As its title suggests, it may be seen as parallel to Guru Nanak's *Japji*, the opening composition of the Guru Granth Sahib. The 199 verses of the *Jap* offer praise to a formless, nameless, all-pervading god. Many Sikhs know it by heart and recite it daily.

**Akal Ustat (Praise of the Timeless One)**

*Akal Ustat* is a series of verses praising God, using phrases such as *Akal Purakh* or the Timeless Primal Being or Lord, and *Sarbloh* or the 'Lord of all Steel'. There are verses that explain that this lord takes form in numerous gods and goddesses, and also in Hindus and Muslims. This composition refers most frequently to Hindu mythology (e.g. mentioning God as manifesting as a demon-slaying goddess), with a few passing references to the Qur'an and Muslim practices as well. Many verses criticize an overemphasis on ritual as the best way to gain knowledge of God. A number of Sikh interpreters have concluded that this section is incomplete, and some have speculated that there are parts of this text that are later interpolations or that may actually belong in other parts of the Dasam Granth.

**Bachitra Natak (The Wondrous Drama)**

This is one of the most important and most intriguing compositions within the Dasam Granth. It is in part an autobiographical narrative in which the author (who, depending on one's perspective, may or may not be Guru Gobind Singh) details his ancestry from the time of creation. The author mentions his birth in the Sodhi lineage, earlier members of which include the family of Ram and Sita, hero and heroine of the Hindu epic the Ramayana. The text also describes Guru Nanak's birth in the Bedi clan, his lineage charting back to Kush, one of Ram and Sita's twin sons. The Bedi and Sodhi clans are both part of the *Kshatriya varna* (the so-called 'warrior' or 'princely' caste). Prior to Guru Nanak's birth, the Bedis had fallen on hard times, and the members of the different *varnas* or castes did not perform their traditional occupations. *Bachitra Natak* then explains how the office of guru was passed on to the next eight gurus, noting that the ninth, Guru Tegh Bahadur (Guru Gobind Singh's father), became a martyr in defence of *dharma* (proper religious practice, righteousness in general), giving his life to protect the sacred threads and *tilaks* or forehead marks of Hindus.

Next Guru Gobind Singh explains that he was deep in meditation, absorbed in devotion to God at Mount Hemkunt, when he was ordered by God to take birth in the *kaliyug* or age of iron, which in classical Hindu mythology is the fourth and last era of each cycle of creation when *dharma* is at its weakest. God explained to him that he had created a number of religious leaders, such as Muhammad, but that rather than promoting devotion, they clung to self-interest. He explained that Guru Gobind Singh's charge would
be to spread dharma. While the text does not use the term ‘avatar’, the story itself calls to mind texts such as the Bhagavad Gita (part of the epic Mahabharata), in which the god Krishna explains that he incarnates himself in various forms whenever dharma is in a state of decline. Confusion of caste responsibilities is a typical example of dharma gone astray.

Bachitra Natak is critical of people who take too much pride in their particular religious practices or texts. The text goes on to narrate Guru Gobind Singh’s birth in Patna and the nurses who cared for him as a young child, his move to the Punjab and assumption of a leadership role, his hunting expeditions, and a number of battles and skirmishes with local kings in the Punjab. The text covers events up until the late 1690s. Towards the end of this section, the author mentions that God allowed him to recall his previous births.

Chandi Charitra Ukti Bilas/Chandi Charitra II/Var Durga
Ki (aka Chandi di Var) (Enjoyment of the Recitation of Chandi’s Deeds/Chandi’s Deeds/The Ballad of Durga)

Bachitra Natak is followed by three different compositions narrating roughly the same events, the exploits of the goddess Durga or Chandi. (These three sections are included in the Bachitra Natak Granth section of the Dasam Granth.) The first, Chandi Charitra Ukti Bilas, mentions that it is a retelling of the Sanskrit Markandeya Purana. Both it and Chandi Charitra II depict the goddess Durga slaying the buffalo demon Mahisha as well as a host of other demons. The third composition concerning the goddess, Var Durga Ki, or Chandi di Var, is in Punjabi, and mentions a connection to the Sanskrit Durga Saptasati. The opening verses of Chandi di Var are part of the frequently recited ardas prayer or petition. Each of these compositions employs finely crafted imagery to narrate the battles between the goddess and the demons, with weapons and the wounds they inflict portrayed with exacting detail. The stories highlight the goddess’s role in allowing the gods to maintain the proper order of dharma with her ability to vanquish demons that the gods cannot overcome.

The opening line of Chandi di Var, ‘First I remember Bhagauti, and then I turn my attention to Guru Nanak’, illustrates one of the key controversies about the Dasam Granth. The term bhagauti is the feminine form of a word for Lord or God, i.e., Goddess [Sanskrit bhagavati], so that one might translate the first phrase of this line as, ‘First I remember the Goddess’. But many Sikh commentators translate the word bhagauti not as goddess, but as ‘sword’, seeing it as a figurative representation of a more abstract divine power. The interpretation of the word bhagauti illustrates the tension over whether the Dasam Granth somehow advocates reverence for or worship of a deity most often associated with Hindu tradition, and shows one strategy Sikh interpreters have used to assert that even the seemingly ‘Hindu’-influenced portions of the Dasam Granth may be viewed through a distinctively Sikh lens.
Gian Prabodh (*The Awakening of Knowledge*)

*Gian Prabodh* begins with a number of verses praising God. A later section includes a conversation between the soul and God, and there are many references to Hindu texts and mythology, particularly the epic *Mahabharata*. In particular, the stories from the *Mahabharata* focus on issues of kingship and *dharma*, and the responsibilities of members of the Brahman and Kshatriya varnas. Many Sikh commentators have concluded that this portion of the text is incomplete.

**Chaubis Avatar (The Twenty-four Avatars)**

This lengthy section describes various incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu, including Brahma, Rudra, Rama, Krishna, the Buddha, and the future avatar Kalki. The verses on Krishna and Rama comprise the longest portion of the *Chaubis Avatar*, and both it and the section on Rama include passages frequently cited by Sikh commentators in which the author states that he does not worship Hindu gods. For example, verse 434 of the Krishna section reads, 'I will not first honour Ganesha, nor do I ever meditate on Krishna or Vishnu'. Verse 863 of *Ram Avatar* proclaims, 'The Puranas speak of Ram, and the Qur’an of Rahim, but I don’t believe in either of them'. Sikh commentators often cite these passages as evidence that although the Dasam Granth tells the stories of various Hindu gods, it does not advocate their worship.

**Brahma Avatar (The Avatars of Brahma) and Rudra Avatar (The Avatars of Rudra, i.e. Siva)**

Here, seven avatars of Brahma and two avatars of Rudra are presented, although both were previously described as avatars of Vishnu.

**Shabad Hazare (literally ‘Thousand Hymns’; ‘Selected Compositions’)**

There are nine hymns in this section, each composed with a particular *raga* or melody, as are the verses in the Guru Granth Sahib. Some of these hymns are thematically similar to poetry about the god Vishnu and his incarnations. The sixth *shabad* is typically understood as Guru Gobind Singh’s expression of his grief at losing his four sons. *Shabad Hazare* is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the Dasam Granth (Jaggi 1966: 206).
Savaiye

The title of this composition refers to a particular type of poem. These thirty-three verses praise a god who is beyond the imaginings of Hindu texts such as the Vedas and the Puranas, and beyond the reckoning of the Qur'an as well. The verses challenge those who worship specific avatars or incarnations and who display their religiosity publicly without true knowledge of the mystery of god.

Khalsa Mahima (Praise of the Khalsa)

This text is a short passage presented as Guru Gobind Singh's address to a Hindu Brahman priest explaining why alms were given to Sikhs rather than Brahmans after a sacrifice, generally taken to refer to a sacrifice to the goddess at the Naina Devi near Anandpur. It is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the Dasam Granth.

Shastra-nam-mala (Garland of Weapons' Names)

The 1,300 verses of this lengthy composition exalt various shastras or weapons, describing them as symbols of God's power, created by God so that his devotees may protect themselves. Multiple terms for a variety of types of swords, the discus, arrow, noose, and matchlock rifle are listed and praised. Particular weapons that were used by various Hindu deities in battles against demons are noted, and there are riddles about weapons and their names.

Charitropakhian (also known as Pakhyan Charitra, Tria Charitra) (An Account of Behaviour/Deeds; The Behaviour of Women)

*Charitropakhian* is one of the major sources of controversy regarding the Dasam Granth. With over four hundred charitras (deeds, behaviour; character sketches), it comprises about 40 per cent of the Dasam Granth as a whole.

The first charitra praises the goddess Chandi, and then the following series of charitras are placed within a frame story narrated in the second charitra. A certain king named Chitra Singh fell in love with a beautiful *apsara* or celestial nymph. The two married and had a son. But the *apsara* later returned to her heavenly abode, and the lovesick king looked far and wide for a human lookalike to replace his beloved wife. After circulating a sketch, he located such a woman and the two wed. But the new wife tried to seduce the
king's son, explaining to him that his father didn't satisfy her. Although the son rebuffed his father's new wife's advances, when the king heard what had happened, he first thought to kill his son. However, his ministers advised him that it is difficult to understand the characters of women. The king then decided to put his son in jail, and each morning would have him released and brought to his court to hear a minister relate charitras or 'character sketches' illustrating the mysteries of human behaviour, particularly women's behaviour.

The subsequent charitras narrate traditional romance tales well known in the Punjab such as the stories of Hir and Ranjha, Sohni and Mahiwal, Krishna and his amorous exploits with the cowherd girls or gopis, and Yusuf and Zulaikha. Other charitras describe married women, many of whom are members of royal households, who devise schemes that allow their lovers to visit them without their husbands knowing, such as by having their lovers disguise themselves as yogis, sadhus, or fakirs, or by hiding them in cooking pots or rugs, and then sneaking them into the home for trysts. Some of the charitras have rather graphic descriptions of sexual behaviour, and characters in these stories also delight in opium, drinking liquor, and gambling.

Charitras 21–3 are sometimes said to relate an incident from Guru Gobind Singh's own life, though this is a matter of some debate. These three charitras, set in Anandpur, describe a rich man's wife who attempts unsuccessfully to seduce the ruler of Anandpur, generally taken to be Guru Gobind Singh. The ruler explains that he is an honourable married man, and cannot claim status as a righteous ruler or dharmaraja if he is unfaithful. After a complex series of events, the ruler, his honour intact, grants his would-be seductress a pension.

Another significant feature of Charitropakhian is the fact that the final charitra, number 404, after a detailed account of multiple battles between the gods and various demons (including demons who give birth to Mughals and Pathans), ends with the Sikh prayer known as Benti Chaupai, or 'verses of supplication'. Typically this prayer is separated from its context within Charitropakhian.

Charitropakhian is omitted from many printed editions of the Dasam Granth on the grounds that it is not suitable material for inclusion in a religious text. Much of the debate regarding the authorship of the Dasam Granth centres specifically on Charitropakhian. Quite a few of the charitras mention the pen names 'Ram' and 'Siam', and Sikh interpreters who argue that Guru Gobind Singh did not author Charitropakhian cite the use of these names as evidence that it is the work of one or more of Guru Gobind Singh's court poets. Those who believe that Guru Gobind Singh did compose it have most frequently asserted that the stories were not meant for a wide audience, but rather specifically as a means for both entertainment and moral edification for Guru Gobind Singh's troops who were away from their wives and families during battle. They also suggest that Guru Gobind Singh himself used different pen names such as Ram and Siam.

Zafarnama/Hikaitan

Zafarnama (Letter of Victory) is a Persian letter to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb which Guru Gobind Singh is said to have composed in 1706. In the letter, he chastises
the emperor for reneging on a sworn oath to give the Guru and his family safe passage from Anandpur. Instead, they were attacked. Most commentators agree that this is an authentic composition of Guru Gobind Singh.

_Zafarnama_ is usually grouped with _Hikaitan_, a collection of twelve stories which are of a completely different nature. The _Hikaitan_ are stories similar to those in _Charitropakhian_ (indeed a few are Persian versions of the same tales). Some suggest that these tales were sent along with the letter because they would be instructive for Aurangzeb; another explanation is that they were grouped together in the Dasam Granth because both are in the Persian language.

As these brief summaries suggest, the Dasam Granth contains a diverse range of compositions. A noteworthy theme that runs through much of the text, however, is that of dharma on multiple levels, from the maintenance of cosmic order by the gods (who frequently require the assistance of the goddess to defeat their demon foes), to the propagation of dharma by the Sikh Gurus, including Guru Gobind Singh, who in _Bachitra Natak_ is expressly created for this purpose. Importantly, the stories of _Charitropakhian_, with their frame story of a king whose minister instructs him and his son on how to deal with women, may also be read as a cautioning treatise on the proper personal behaviour of a leader. Taken as a whole, the Dasam Granth may be read as a courtly anthology exploring the dharmic responsibilities of leaders whose rule includes both a spiritual and a worldly, political component (Rinehart 2011).

**Guru Gobind Singh and the Dasam Granth**

Sikh commentators have often turned to accounts of Guru Gobind Singh’s life as a way to determine whether or not he authored the Dasam Granth. Such accounts as well as chronicles of the early history of the development of the Sikh Panth provide tantalizing clues to the possible origins of the Dasam Granth, though not all Sikh commentators interpret this evidence the same way. Most early sources detailing the life of Guru Gobind Singh agree that in the 1670s, when he was living in Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh’s education included instruction in the languages of Braj, Persian, the Gurmukhi script, and, according to some sources, Sanskrit. This is important because most of the Dasam Granth is in the Braj language, with other portions in Punjabi and Persian, and some compositions such as _Chandi Charitra Ukti Vilas_ note their indebtedness to Sanskrit texts.

These accounts also note that Guru Gobind Singh, like his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, maintained what is typically described as a royal court at Anandpur, and as part of his retinue he sponsored court poets, the traditional number being fifty-two. The existence of these court poets is central to arguments about the Dasam Granth, because some Sikh commentators have attributed particular sections to the court poets rather than Guru Gobind Singh.
Guru Gobind Singh stayed in Paonta for several years, from 1685 until 1688, and some biographical sources describe this as a time of great literary composition in his life. For example, Bhai Santokh Singh's 1843 *Suraj Prakash* states that Guru Gobind Singh would spend several hours a day composing or translating (from Sanskrit), poetry on topics such as Krishna's activities as an *avatar* (B. Singh 1999: 384). There are passages in the Dasam Granth itself which make reference to the place and time they were composed; for example, the *Krishna Avatar* section states that its author composed the passage at Anandpur and that it was based on the tenth chapter of the Bhagavat Purana, a Sanskrit text which describes the life of Krishna.

Military conflict with neighbouring kings was a feature of much of Guru Gobind Singh's life. He maintained an army, recruiting soldiers from various places and backgrounds. Guru Gobind Singh by nearly all accounts was well versed in weaponry and apparently often encouraged his male followers to be armed at all times. This ongoing military activity as well as the diverse nature of his army are important for how people have understood the Dasam Granth, which includes a section devoted solely to the description and praise of weapons, as well as detailed descriptions of many battles. Some commentators have also suggested that some of the most controversial portions of the Dasam Granth, which describe men and women engaged in illicit affairs, may have been used as the basis for moral teaching to the Guru's armed forces, and were not intended for general circulation.

One of the most significant events in the Guru's life is his establishment of the Khalsa order in Anandpur in 1699, which provided the basis for subsequent rites of initiation. The rite of initiation into the Khalsa typically involves recitation of certain parts of Dasam Granth such as its opening section, the *Jap*. Exact details on the establishment of the Khalsa vary, but there are some traditions that bear directly on controversies about the Dasam Granth. For example, Kesar Singh Chhibbar's 1769 *Bansavalinama* reports that Guru Gobind Singh worshipped the goddess before establishing the Khalsa. More recently Sikh historians have generally argued that this did not happen, or have explained that rather than actually worshipping the goddess, the Guru was in fact trying to show the futility of goddess worship and the ways in which Hindu Brahman priests exploited people through the performance of elaborate rituals. Particular thinkers' views on whether or not Guru Gobind Singh actually performed goddess worship tend to affect their analysis of whether or not Guru Gobind Singh was the author of those portions of the Dasam Granth that relate goddess mythology, or whether they should be read as encouraging worship of the goddess.

**THE COMPILATION OF THE DASAM GRANTH**

Sikh history ascribes the compilation of the Dasam Granth to Bhai Mani Singh, some twenty years after Guru Gobind Singh's death in 1708. Many sources state that during the turbulent times of conflict with local kings in the area surrounding Anandpur, written
material was lost as the Guru and his followers moved or had to flee during battles. It is not clear whether the compositions that now comprise the Dasam Granth were compiled together during Guru Gobind Singh’s lifetime, or whether they were meant to be part of a single text. The Bansavalinama reports that when Guru Gobind Singh was presented with the possibility of combining the Adi Granth (which subsequently became known as the Guru Granth Sahib) with his own compositions, he distinguished between the Adi Granth and his own work which he termed entertainment (khed), and declared that the two should remain separate (Jaggi 1972: 136).

Bhai Mani Singh was responsible for preparing the final version of the Guru Granth Sahib in 1706 under Guru Gobind Singh’s direction, which included the addition of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s compositions. He later served as the head official at the central Sikh sacred site, the Harimandar Sahib in Amritsar. There is an early Dasam Granth manuscript associated with him, as well as a letter to Guru Gobind Singh’s widow Mata Sundari, but many Sikh scholars (e.g. Jaggi 1966) have questioned the authenticity of these documents. Additionally, Sikh scholars have debated the authenticity of opening passages of some sections of the Dasam Granth which state that they are the words of the tenth Guru, typically with a phrase such as sri mukhvak patshahi das or ‘from the mouth of the revered tenth Guru’. Whatever the exact circumstances of its authorship and compilation, however, multiple manuscript versions of the Dasam Granth were in circulation by the mid- to late eighteenth century, and many Sikhs appear to have taken the text as the authentic work of Guru Gobind Singh, granting it a place of honour in gurdwaras alongside the Guru Granth Sahib.

**INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DASAM GRANTH**

Historians of Sikhism generally agree that throughout the eighteenth century, there was a wide range of practices among Sikhs, and that in many cases, people combined aspects of Sikh practice with traditions more closely associated with Hinduism. Given that goddess worship is especially popular in Punjabi Hinduism, it was one of the Hindu practices pursued by some Sikhs in the eighteenth century. In such an environment, the goddess mythology components of the Dasam Granth perhaps were seen as less problematic than they would later come to be.

The Dasam Granth became a key focus of the reform movements that arose within Sikhism in nineteenth-century colonial India. Sikhs in different towns and cities established branches of the Singh Sabha, and Singh Sabha reformers typically sought to establish clear distinctions between Hinduism and Sikhism, urging Sikhs to give up practices associated with Hinduism. Kahn Singh Nabha (1861–1938), author of the 1898 treatise Ham Hindu Nahin (We Are Not Hindus), presented an account of the Dasam Granth in his 1930 encyclopedia Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh that illustrates the concern for defining the status of the text. According to the Dasam Granth entry in Mahan Kosh (Nabha 1990: 616), the Dasam Granth was sent to Damdama Sahib after Bhai Mani
Singh’s martyrdom in 1737. But Sikh leaders were unsure of how to treat this collection of compositions. Some thought it should remain as a single text, but others suggested that it be separated into two parts, one with those compositions of the tenth Guru which seemed in keeping with the sentiments of the previous Gurus, and another containing the remaining sections of the text. But when no consensus could be found, the debate was solved in a way that had virtually nothing to do with the actual content of the Dasam Granth. Matab Singh stopped at Damdama Sahib on his way to Amritsar, where he had heard that Massa Ranghar was defiling the Golden Temple with improper activities. Matab Singh had therefore resolved to kill Massa Ranghar, and he suggested to the leaders debating the Dasam Granth that if he succeeded in his mission, the Dasam Granth should be kept as it was, but that it should be divided if he were to be killed (Kahn Singh Nabha 616). Since he was indeed successful, the Dasam Granth remained as a single text.

Since the rise of the Singh Sabha movement, there have been a number of studies of the Dasam Granth arguing for particular interpretations of its history and authenticity, and many Sikh organizations have established committees to research and make pronouncements on the text, often reaching different conclusions. R. S. Jaggi’s 1966 Dasam Granth da Kartritav effectively summarizes the major arguments both for and against Guru Gobind Singh’s authorship of the text. Among those who consider Guru Gobind Singh the author of the entire Dasam Granth, it has become quite common to argue for a distinction between Sikh ‘scripture’ and ‘Sikh literature,’ designating those compositions within the Dasam Granth focused on Hindu mythology and stories about male–female relationships as most appropriately fitting in the ‘literature’ category. As recently as 2000, in the midst of renewed controversy over the authorship of the Dasam Granth, the Akal Takht issued a directive that Sikh scholars should refrain from public comment on the debate, showing that the challenging issues raised by the Dasam Granth remain both vitally important and potentially divisive for the Sikh panth.

Bibliography


