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978-1-108-05513-0 - A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradat Khan: A Nobleman of Hindostan, Containing Interesting Anecdotes of the Emperor Aulumgeer Aurungzebe, and of his Successors

Translated by Jonathan Scott

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A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradat Khan

A nobleman of the court of the Mughal emperor, Iradat Khan (c.1649–1716) experienced the rule of Aurangzeb (1618–1707) and observed at first hand the decline of the Mughal empire. This English translation of his memoirs was first published in 1786 by Jonathan Scott (1754–1829), a captain of the East India Company. He translated Khan's memoirs in order to educate the British about India's history and inform them about the Mughal empire. In these memoirs Khan relates anecdotes of his encounters with Aurangzeb and recounts the events following the emperor's death, including the rule of his son Bahadur Shah (1643–1712) between 1707 and 1712. The memoirs conclude with the death of Jahandar Shah (1661–1713), who ruled only briefly before being beaten in battle, captured and executed. Also included are extracts from Aurangzeb's last letters.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108055130

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2013

This edition first published 1786

This digitally printed version 2013

ISBN 978-1-108-05513-0 Paperback

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T R A N S L A T I O N
O F T H E
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A N O B L E M A N O F H I N D O S T A N,
C O N T A I N I N G
I N T E R E S T I N G A N E C D O T E S
O F T H E
E M P E R O R A U L U M G E E R A U R U N G Z E B E,
A N D O F H I S S U C C E S S O R S,
S H A W A U L U M A N D J E H A U N D A R S H A W;
I N W H I C H A R E D I S P L A Y E D
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M O G U L E M P I R E I N I N D I A.

B Y J O N A T H A N S C O T T,
C A P T A I N I N T H E S E R V I C E O F T H E H O N O U R A B L E E A S T - I N D I A C O M P A N Y,
A N D P R I V A T E P E R S I A N T R A N S L A T O R T O W A R R E N H A S T I N G S, E S Q U I R E,
L A T E G O V E R N O R - G E N E R A L O F B E N G A L, & c. & c. & c.

L O N D O N:
P R I N T E D F O R J O H N S T O C K D A L E, O P P O S I T E B U R L I N G T O N - H O U S E, P I C C A D I L L Y.
M D C C L X X X V I.

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T O
WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

S I R,

PERMIT me to dedicate this Translation to you, who so amply patronized my attempts to make myself useful to my honourable employers, when in India. The distinction you were pleased to confer upon me, by an appointment in your family, and the favour of your friendship, I shall ever regard as honours of which I may reasonably boast: and I trust a time will come, when far more important pages than mine will acquire merit with the nation, from being adorned with the name of HASTINGS.

I am, S I R,

Your most obedient

And grateful humble servant,

LONDON,
12th May, 1786.

JONATHAN SCOTT.

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E R R A T A.

Page

- 29, line 20, *for* meffuage, *read* meffage.
- 30, line 24, *for* Raujepoet, *read* Raujpoot.
- 51, line 2, in the notes, *for* mizid, *read* muzjid.
- 52, line 10, *for* Bahadar, *read* Bahadur.
- 54, line 2, *for* Soubadacy, *read* Soubadary.
- 83, in the notes, *for* Yemmum, *read* Yemmun.
- 89, line 8, *and* 22, *for* Downan, *and* Dowran, *read* Dowraun.

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P R E F A C E.

ENCOURAGED by the generous attention of my honourable masters, the East-India Company, and of their representatives in Bengal, to every species of useful information from their servants, I was induced, during my residence in India, to study the languages and history of the country, with a view of recommending myself to their notice and favour. I also cherished the hope of laying up a fund of amusement from these studies for the hours of retirement, should I be so fortunate as to revisit my native country: nor was I without the ambition, of being able to add somewhat to the store of public information respecting the extensive empire of Hindostan, of which Great-Britain possesses so large a share. Rewarded by the accomplishment of my two first objects, I am now led to try the merit of the last.

The History of Hindostan, from the earliest Mahumedan conquests to the year 1669 of our æra, has been already presented to the public by the late Colonel Dow, who, had he lived, would in all probability have continued

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it down to the present day ; but, unfortunately, his work concludes at a period, when the affairs of Hindostan were becoming most interesting to European curiosity. I mean the 11th year of Aulumgeer, commonly called Aurungzebe, the events of whose reign, and those of his successors, are to us more important, as nearer to our own times.

The celebrated Mr. Orme, when writing of this period in his Historical Fragments of Hindostan, regrets the want of information regarding it, and justly observes, “ the knowledge is well worth the enquiry ; for, besides the magnitude of the events, and the energy of the characters, which arise in this period, there are no states or powers on the continent of India, with whom our nation have either connexion or concern, who do not owe their present condition to the reign of Aurungzebe, or to its influence on the reigns of its successors.”

It is the History of Dekkan, and the above-mentioned very important period, with which, if the following Translation is approved, I hope shortly to present the public. Of materials I have no want, but must confess myself unwilling to labour in their arrangement, without some prospect of such a task's proving acceptable. On this account, I have judged it prudent to offer first a specimen of my work, that, if unworthy of the public eye, I may keep the remainder of it in that privacy I shall then think

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it only fit for, and save myself the pain of disappointed expectation.

The following Memoir is translated from the Persian of Eradut Khan, a nobleman of the court of Aulumgeer. The authenticity of the facts he relates is undoubted in Hindostan, and the simplicity of his style regarded as a strong proof of his veracity. I have studiously endeavoured to make him write English, in the same unaffected and plain manner that he has his native tongue; being more anxious for the fidelity of my translation, than desirous of praise for composition.

It now remains only to give a short introduction to the subject of my author. It is generally known, that the Emperor Aulumgeer reigned fifty years over Hindostan, and extended his empire, before too vast to be secure, over the southern peninsula of India, called Dekkan, in the reduction of which he spent the last five-and-twenty years of his life. In this period, he reduced the monarchies of Golconda and Beejapore; but though he could conquer enervated kings, he could not subdue the minds of their uncorrupted subjects. His zeal for the Mahummedan religion, led him to deprive the Hindoo princes of those indulgences which his less bigotted ancestors had allowed them: he destroyed their temples, and disgraced them by a capitation-tax. This tyranny weakened the affections of the

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ancient vassals of the house of Timur, and raised such a spirit of resistance in the hardy natives of Dekkan that could never be effectually subdued. Sewajee and his successors, the Mharatta chiefs, though they could not wholly withstand the Imperial arms, yet so harassed Aulumgeer by their predatory incursions, as to render his victories of no advantage. The treasures of the old provinces were dissipated in half-conquests of new territory, and the emperor's long absence from his hereditary dominions, occasioned a universal weakness in the powers of government. The nobility and army, tired with nearly thirty years of constant war, were grown remiss, and anxious for repose in the luxurious pleasures of Dhely and Agra. Aurungzebe's three sons, ambitious of empire, waited only the death of their father, to fight against each other for the important prize. Thus every circumstance combined to bring on the decline of the Mogul empire, and involve it in the miseries related by Eradut Khan, whom I shall now leave to speak for himself.

ORIGINAL

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O R I G I N A L

P R E F A C E.

THUS sayeth the compiler of these records and events, an humble and sinful slave, ¹Moobaric Oollah ²Eradut Khan Wazeh, son of the ⁴sheltered in mercy, ⁵Keffaiut Khan, writer of the ⁶Shekest: When I had finished the ⁷Kulmaut Aleeaut, it entered my mind to draw up a concise relation of what events had happened to myself, while I was composing that work.

¹ Anglicè, Blessed of God.

² The author's title of nobility, signifying The Faithful Lord.

³ His poetical name, by which he chose to signify himself in his poems; Anglicè, Clear. Eastern authors always use one.

⁴ The Mussulmans, when mentioning a deceased person, never say such a one who is dead, but such a one sheltered in mercy, received in pardon, or some similar expression. When mentioning a deceased prince, they say the prince whose seat is in Paradise.

⁵ Anglicè, The serviceable.

⁶ The broken hand, generally used in business.

⁷ Anglicè, Sublime Discourses. This work I never could obtain, though I made strict enquiry after it.

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I have observed, that delightful scenes, and the society of friends, are not so striking at the time of enjoyment, as afterwards, when reflected in the mirror of recollection. On this account, I write down most passing occurrences; and whenever I peruse them, or ruminates upon them, a particular feeling, a surprizing pleasure and astonishing extasy, prevail in my mind. My writings also serve as a memorial to my friends.

During the short period of my age, which has this day arrived at the sixty-fourth year, and the 1126th of the holy A. C. 1715. Hijhera, such wonders of time, such astonishing marks of the power of the Creator of night and day in the vicissitudes of worldly affairs, the destruction of empires, the deaths of many princes, the ruin of ancient houses and noble families, the fall of worthy men, and rise of the unworthy, have been beheld by me, as have not been mentioned by history to have occurred, in such number or succession, in a thousand years.

As, on account of my office, and being engaged in these transactions, I have obtained a perfect knowledge of the sources of most events, and what, to others, even information of must be difficult, was planned and executed in my sight; and as I was a sharer, as well as spectator,

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of all the dangers and troubles, I have therefore recorded them.

My intention, however, not being to compile a history of kings, or a flowery work, but only to relate such events as happened within my own knowledge, I have therefore, preferably to a display of learning in lofty phrases and pompous metaphors, chosen a plain style, such as a friend, writing to a friend, would use for the purpose of information. Indeed, if propriety is consulted, loftiness of style is unfit for plain truth, which, pure in itself, requires only a simple delineation. I hope, therefore, that my readers will not loosen the reins of impartiality from their hands, nor call my modesty, ignorance.

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TO THE
R E A D E R.

IT will be necessary to remember, that Aurungzebe is the same person with Aulumgeer. He took the latter title on his accession to the throne, agreeable to the custom of the eastern princes, who always assume a new one on that occasion.

It is hoped that the number of notes will not prove tedious, nor perplex the reader's attention. Some, perhaps, may appear trivial to those whose local knowledge renders such assistance, to them, unnecessary; but, as their number is comparatively very small with those who require it, the translator requests the indulgence of the few, in compliment to the many.

MEMOIRS