

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The  
Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## HISTORIANS OF INDIA.

---

X.

JĀMI'U-T TAWĀRIKH

OF

RASHĪDU-D DĪN.

THE JĀMI'U-T-TAWĀRIKH RASHĪDĪ was completed in A.H. 710—A.D. 1310. The author Fazlu-llah Rashīd, or Rashīdu-d dīn ibn 'Imādu-d daula Abū-l Khair ibn Muwāfi'ku-d daula,<sup>1</sup> was born in A.H. 645—A.D. 1247, in the city of Hamadān.<sup>2</sup> His practice of the medical art brought him into notice at the court of the Mongol Sultāns of Persia. He passed part of his life in the service of Abākā Khān, the Tartar king of Persia, and one of the descendants of Hūlākū Khān. At a subsequent period, Ghāzān Khān, who was a friend to literature and the sciences, and who appreciated the merits of Rashīdu-d dīn at their proper value, appointed him to the post of Wazīr in A.H. 697—A.D. 1297, in conjunction with Sa'du-d dīn. Rashīdu-d dīn was maintained in his office by Uljāitū, surnamed Khudā-banda, the brother and successor of Ghāzān Khān, and was treated by him with great consideration and rewarded with the utmost liberality. The author himself

<sup>1</sup> [D'Ohsson says that he was also called Rashīdu-d daulat and Rashīdu-l hakk wau-d dīn. *Hist. des Mongols* xxxiii.]

<sup>2</sup> [The biographical portion of this article is, for the most part, taken from Mr. Morley's Notice of the Author, in Vol. VI. of the *Journal of the R. As. Soc.*]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

admits that no sovereign ever lavished upon a subject such enormous sums as he had received from Uljáitú Khán.

Rashídu-d dín and his successive colleagues did not manage to conduct the administration with unanimity; but this seems to have arisen less from any infirmity of our author's temper than from the envy and malice which actuated his enemies. In his first rupture with Sa'du-d dín he was compelled, in self-defence, to denounce him, and to cause him to be put to death. 'Alí Sháh Jabalán, a person of low origin, who had managed by his talents and intrigues to raise himself into consideration, was appointed Sa'du-d dín's successor at Rashídu-d dín's request, but with him he had shortly so serious a misunderstanding, that the Sultán was compelled to divide their jurisdiction, assigning the care of the Western provinces to 'Alí Sháh, and the Eastern to Rashídu-d dín.

Notwithstanding this arrangement, the two Wazírs continued at enmity, and shortly after the death of Uljáitú, who was succeeded by his son Abú Sa'id, 'Alí Sháh so far succeeded in prejudicing the Sultan against the old minister<sup>1</sup> that he was, after many years' faithful service, removed from the Wazárat in A.H. 717—A.D. 1317. A short time afterwards he was recalled, in order to remedy the mal-administration which was occasioned by his absence, but it was not long before he again lost favour at court, and was accused of causing the death of his patron Uljáitú Khán. It was charged against him that he had recommended a purgative medicine to be administered to the deceased chief, in opposition to the advice of another physician, and that under its effects the king had expired. Rashídu-d dín was condemned to death, and his family were, after the usual Asiatic fashion, involved in his destruction. His son Ibráhím, the chief butler, who was only sixteen years old, and by whose hands the potion was said to have been given to the chief, was put to death before the eyes of his parent, who was immediately afterwards cloven in

<sup>1</sup> Mod. Univ. Hist., iv. 401.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

twain by the executioner. Rashídu-d dín was 73 years<sup>1</sup> old when he died, and his death occurred in A.H. 718—A.D. 1318. His head was borne through the streets of Tabríz, and proclaimed by the public crier as the head of a Jew, his children and relatives had their property confiscated, and the Rab'a Rashídí, a suburb which he had built at an enormous expense, was given up to pillage. His eldest son, Ghiyásu-d dín, was subsequently raised to the same dignities as his father, and met with an equally tragical death.

“The body of the murdered Wazír was buried near the mosque which he had constructed in Tabríz, but it was not destined to repose quietly in its last asylum. Nearly a century after his death, the government of Tabríz, together with that of the whole province of Ázarbáiján, was given by Tímúr Lang to his son Mirán Sháh. The young prince, naturally of a mild disposition, had become partially deranged, in consequence of an injury of the head occasioned by a fall from his horse, and one day, during a temporary access of madness, he caused the bones of Rashídu-d dín to be exhumed, and they were finally deposited in the cemetery of the Jews,—a renewal of the insult offered by his enemies during his life and at the time of his death, in order to render his name odious amongst Musulmán's.”<sup>2</sup>

“Almost all those who had conspired to ruin Rashídu-d dín perished in the course of the following year. 'Alí Sháh, the one most deserving of punishment, alone survived to enjoy the fruits of his crime. He continued by his address to maintain his high honours and the favour of his master for the space of six years, when he died, being the only Wazír, since the establishment of the Mongol monarchy, who had not met with a violent death.”

<sup>1</sup> This is the age assigned by M. Quatremère (*Coll. Orientale*, Tom. I. p. xliv.) but these must have been lunar years, if he was born in A.D. 1247.—Hammer-Purgstall says, Rashídu-d dín was 80 years old when he died. (*Geschichte der Ilchane*, Vol. ii. p. 260.) Háji Khalfá gives 717 as the year of his death, but Sádik has it right.

<sup>2</sup> [“This calumny was probably grounded upon the particular attention he had paid to the history and customs of the Jews.” Morley.]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Rashídu-d dín was endowed with a wonderful degree of ability and industry. "Few men, even of those who have devoted their lives to research, could hope to attain the knowledge acquired by him; and when we recollect that from his youth upwards he was involved in the intrigues and tumults of the court, and that he bore the principal weight of the administration of an immense empire under three successive Sultáns, we cannot but feel the highest respect for his talents. Besides medicine, together with those sciences which are immediately connected with it, he had cultivated with success agriculture, architecture, and metaphysics, and had rendered himself conversant with the most abstruse points of Musulmán controversy and doctrine. He was also an accomplished linguist, being acquainted with the Persian, Arabic, Mongolian, Turkish, and Hebrew languages, and, as it seems from his works, with the Chinese also. Amongst his great natural powers, we may reckon as the most important, the talent of writing with extreme facility; this is attested by the voluminous extent of his works, and by a passage in one of his writings, in which he asserts that he composed three of his greatest works, viz. : the *Kitábu-t tauzihát*, the *Miftáhu-t tafásir*, and the *Risálatu-s Sultániat*, in the short space of eleven months, and this not by giving up his whole time to his literary labours, but in the midst of the cares of government, and without reckoning numerous other treatises on various intricate subjects, which were written by him during the same period," such as a book on Rural Economy, and works on Theology, Medicine, and Musulmán Theology.

"It was not till somewhat late in life that Rashídu-d dín turned his thoughts to authorship, and until his master, Gházán Khán, ordered him to compose a history of the Mongols, he had not ventured to commit the results of his learning and meditations to the judgment of the world." This history occupies the first volume of the *Jámi'u-t-Tawárikh*, and has received the highest commendations from European scholars.

"The work was on the point of completion when Gházán Khán

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

died, A.H. 703—A.D. 1303. Uljái-tú Khán, his successor, not only approved of the plan which our author had followed, and the manner in which he had executed his task, but enjoined him to complete it, and to add thereto a general account of all the people known to the Mongols, and a description of all the countries of the globe. Rashídu-d dín undertook this laborious work, and a few years sufficed for its accomplishment, for we find that in A.H. 710—A.D. 1310, the entire history was written, bound, and deposited in the mosque constructed by the author at Tabriz. It is true that the author of the *Tárikh-i Wassáf* affirms, that Rashídu-d dín continued his work till A.H. 712, but this, probably, only applies to that portion of it which gives the history of Uljái-tú. Haidar Rázi, in his General History, says, that the portion relating to India was completed in A.H. 703, the period when our author received orders to commence his researches." Still it is evident that he copied from Wassáf, who wrote upon his Indian history down to 710 A.H.

The entire work, when completed, received from its author the title of *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh*, or "Collection of Histories," a very appropriate name, for it is not a general consecutive history, but consists of several independent works, arranged and bound up together in different order according to the fancy of the copyist. Thus the first volume is often considered as a history by itself, and as such is called the *Tárikh-i Gházáni*, after the Prince by whose orders it was composed, and to whom it was dedicated.

[The value of the *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh* is unquestionable, but Rashídu-d dín must be ranked as a compiler, or copyist, rather than among historians. He borrows by wholesale from his predecessors, appropriating their productions, with all their errors, and without any critical examination or judgment of his own. It is to his credit, however, that he fairly and openly acknowledges the sources from which he has borrowed; and he occasionally makes additions which may be his own, or which may have been derived from other unknown sources. For the geographical

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

account of India<sup>1</sup> he is avowedly indebted to Bírúní, though he adds some passages in continuation.<sup>2</sup> In his account of the Ghaznivides "he follows 'Utbi implicitly as far as the *Yamíni* extends, taking out not only the facts, but giving a literal translation even to the images and similes." He makes no attempt to improve or supplement that work, his account of the Ghaznivides closes where that closes, and so he omits all notice of the famous expedition to Somnát.<sup>3</sup> The *Táríkh-i Jahán-Kushá* has also been laid under contribution. D'Ohsson finds that he often copied it word for word, but he adds, "the history of the Wazír Rashíd is the most complete, and that in which the best order and method prevail; his style also has that noble simplicity suitable to historical writings."<sup>4</sup> Wassáf, a contemporary of Rashídu-d dín, is another of those from whom he copied; and further investigation will probably reveal more of the sources of the *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh*.<sup>5</sup>

It seems to have been doubted whether the *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh* was originally written in Arabic or Persian. Most authors who have mentioned the work consider it to have been written in Persian, and translated, under the author's direction, into Arabic;<sup>6</sup> but it is certain that no Persian copies were very generally available in Akbar's time, for 'Abdu-l Kádír Badáúní states, under the transactions of A.H. 1000, that he was directed by the Emperor to translate the *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh* from Arabic into

<sup>1</sup> [Vol. I. p. 44.]<sup>2</sup> [Vol. I. p. 67.]<sup>3</sup> [See Vol. II. p. 430; Jour. R. A. S. New Series, Vol. III. p. 426].<sup>4</sup> [D'Ohsson, *Hist. des Mongols*, I. xlii. and 235.]<sup>5</sup> [David's *Turkish Grammar*, p. iii.]<sup>6</sup> [M. Quartremère concurs, and adds, "Mais ce qu'il y a de sûr, et que l'auteur atteste de la manière la plus formelle, au moment où il déposa dans la grande mosquée construit par lui à Tabriz une collection complète de ses ouvrages, il fit traduire en arabe ce qui avait été primitivement écrit en persan et, en persan ce qui était rédigé en langue arabe.—Ainsi les deux rédactions ont été exécutées par l'auteur lui-même, ou, au moins, sous sa direction—Par conséquent elles se trouvent également authentiques."—*Jour. des Sav.* Sep. 1850. A further and decisive argument may be drawn from the fact previously noticed, that proper names are occasionally met with in the Arabic version, in which a Persian preposition before a name, or a numeral immediately after it, is taken as being part and parcel of the name itself.—See Vol. I. p. 62.]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Persian. It does not exactly appear from the text whether this was an abridgment or a translation, but the portion which was completed by 'Abdu-l Kádír is distinctly said to have been translated from the Arabic. It is curious that an interlinear translation of a part of the history, executed under the orders of Colonel Francklin, and presented by him to the Royal Asiatic Society, should also bear the name of 'Abdu-l Kádír, who thus appears to have executed a second time what his namesake had done before him more than 250 years ago.

A portion of the *Tárikh-i Gházání* has been admirably translated by M. Quatremère in the first volume of the *Collection Orientale*, and we are indebted to him for a full account of our author's biography and his literary merits. M. Erdmann promised an edition of the complete text of the *Jámi'*<sup>1</sup> [which has never appeared, but he has given a short extract therefrom upon "Barkiarok's Regierung" in the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (vol. IX. 800)].

The following account of the contents of the entire *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh*, is taken from a notice in Arabic, by Rashídu-d dín himself, prefixed to a MS. of his theological works, in the Royal Library at Paris.

"The book called the *Jámi'u-t Tawárikh*, comprises four volumes, the first of which contains a preface, an account of the origin of the nations of the Turks, the number of their tribes, and an account of the Kings, Kháns, Amírs, and great men who have sprung from each tribe; also of the ancestors of Changíz Khán, the history of that monarch's actions, and of his children and descendants, who have occupied the throne down to the time of Uljái-tú Sultan. To the life of each prince is added his genealogy, an account of his character, and of his wives and children, a notice of the Khalífas, Kings, Sultáns, and Atábaks, who were contemporary with him, and a history of the remarkable events that occurred during his reign.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Asiatique*, 2nd Series, Tom. I. p. 322. [The work has been translated into Russian, and a "Tatar translation" has also been made—*Zeitschrift D. M. G.* VI. 125—IX. 800.]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The  
Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

“The second volume contains an introduction and a history of the life of Uljaitú from the time of his birth to the present day; to this portion of the second volume will be added a supplement, comprising an account of the daily actions of this prince, written by me, and afterwards continued by the court historians. This second volume also contains a concise history of the Prophets, Sultáns, and Kings of the universe, from the days of Adam to the present time, together with a detailed account of many people, of whom historians have, till now, given little or no description. All that I have said respecting them I have taken from their own books, and from the mouths of the learned men of each nation; it also gives the history of the People of the Book, viz., the Jews and the Christians, and the histories of the Sultáns and most celebrated Princes of each country; also an account of the Ismaílís, and many curious and instructive particulars.

“The third volume gives, after the preface, a detailed account of the descent of the Prophets, Kings, Khalífas, the Arab tribes, the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, etc., from the time of Adam to the end of the dynasty of the Baní 'Abbás; the genealogy of the ancestors of Muhammad, and of the tribes descended from them; the series of Prophets who have appeared amongst the Baní Isráíl, the Kings of the latter, and an enumeration of their different tribes; the genealogies of the Kaisers and others of the Christian princes, with their names and the number of years of their respective reigns. All these details have been faithfully extracted from the chronicles of these people, and arranged in systematic order.

“The fourth volume comprises a preface and a circumstantial account of the limits of each of the seven climates, the division and extent of the vast countries of the globe, the geographical position and description of the greater part of the cities, seas, lakes, valleys, and mountains, with their longitudes and latitudes. In writing this portion of our work, we have not been satisfied merely with extracts from the most esteemed geographical works, but we have, besides, made inquiries from the most learned men,



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## JAMI'U-T TAWARIKH.

9

and those who have themselves visited the countries described ; we have inserted in our relation, particulars obtained from the learned men of Hind, Chín, Máchín, the countries of the Franks, etc., and others which have been faithfully extracted from works written in the languages of those different countries.”

This is the account given by our author himself of his work ; it must, however, be remarked, that in the preface to the *Tárikh-i Gházáni* and in many other passages, he speaks of three volumes only, writing, under the head of the second, the matters which here form the contents of the second and third. The easiest way of accounting for this contradiction is to suppose that he subsequently divided this second volume into two portions, on account of its great bulk and disproportion in size to the others.

In the preface to the *Tárikh-i Gházáni* the work is divided, as mentioned above, into three volumes, according to the following distribution :—

The contents of the first volume are the same as given in the preceding description, and it is dedicated to Gházán Khán. It comprises two books and several sections.

The second volume contains the history of Uljái-tú Sultán (to whom it was dedicated), from his birth to the time when our author wrote ; this forms the first division of the volume. The second division comprises two parts, the first of which is again sub-divided into two sections. The first section contains an abridged history of all the Prophets, Khalífas, and of the different races of men, to the year of the Flight, 700. The second section comprises a detailed chronicle of all the inhabitants of the earth, according to their races, extracted from their various writings, and from the mouths of natives of the different countries. The second part is filled with the remaining portion of the history of Uljái-tú, “the Sultán of Islám,” as he is styled, and was destined to be continued in chronological order to the time of his death. “The historians who are, or may be, servants of the court, will take care to write this, and add it as a supplement to this second volume.”

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05585-7 - The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period: Volume 3

Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson

Excerpt

[More information](#)

The third volume comprises the description of the Geographical charts, and the various routes from one place to another, taken from the sources already mentioned. “The author has, as far as was in his power, multiplied and verified his researches from all that was previously known on the subject in this country, whether described in books or drawn in charts. To this he has added all that, during this fortunate epoch, the philosophers and wise men of Hind, Chín, Máchín, Farang, and other countries have written, and has entered it all in this third volume, after having fully ascertained its authority.”

The extended notice which is here given to Rashídu-d dín and the *Jámi’u-t-Tawárikh*, is not only due to his merits and to the curious sources of his information on Indian subjects, but to the interest which was excited some years ago by the discovery, under very peculiar circumstances, of a large portion of the work which, up to that time, was supposed to be lost.

A full account of this curious discovery is given in the sixth volume of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Mr. W. Morley, while engaged in making a catalogue of the Society’s MSS., met with an imperfect Arabic MS., which proved to be a portion of the *Jámi’u-t Tawárikh*. It was written in a beautiful and very old Naskhí hand, with many pictures very creditably executed. He addressed a letter to the Society, giving an account of his discovery, and before the letter was published Professor Forbes accidentally fell in with a much larger portion of the same MS., comprising one half the original volume, of which the Society’s fragment formed about one-fifth. The two fragments proved to be parts of the same original, and were thus brought together after many years, perhaps centuries, of separation. This larger portion of the MS. of the *Jámi’u-t Tawárikh* belonged to Colonel John Baillie, an eminent orientalist. Shortly after his death, his MSS. and books were prepared for transmission to the family seat in Inverness-shire, but before they were actually despatched Professor Forbes obtained a sight of them. He there picked out a fine large historical MS. on the back of which