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Muhammadan Period: Volume 3
Henry Miers Elliot Edited by John Dowson
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This extensive eight-volume work was first published between 1867 and 1877 by the linguist John Dowson (1820–81) from the manuscripts of the colonial administrator and scholar Sir Henry Miers Elliot (1808–53). Before his death, hoping to bolster British colonial ideology, Elliot had intended to evaluate scores of Arabic and Persian historians of India, believing that his translations would demonstrate the violence of the Muslim rulers and 'make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and the equity of our rule'. Volume 3 covers the period from the death of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (1246–66) to the rise to power of Timur (1336–1405) at the end of the fourteenth century. It includes Timur's purported autobiography and the fifteenth-century *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, a history of the Timurid dynasty. The appendices contain studies of contemporaneous texts, including poetry and the *Travels of Ibn Battuta*.

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The Muhammadan Period

VOLUME 3

HENRY MIERS ELLIOT
EDITED BY JOHN DOWSON



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THE
HISTORY OF INDIA,
AS TOLD
BY ITS OWN HISTORIANS.

THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD.

EDITED FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF THE LATE

SIR H. M. ELLIOT, K.C.B.,

EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

BY

PROFESSOR JOHN DOWSON, M.R.A.S.,

STAFF COLLEGE, SANDHURST.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS third volume carries the history of India on from the death of Násiru-d dín, in 1260 A.D., to the inroad of Tímúr the Tátár, in 1398 A.D. It comprises some matter relating to periods not included within these dates; but on the other hand, it is deficient in the history of the reigns intervening between the death of Fíroz Sháh and the irruption of Tímúr. This portion remains to be supplied, in the succeeding volume, from works of a somewhat later date. The period here traversed is not a very long one, but it is illustrated by works of more than usual interest and importance.

Of the first five works included in the present volume, three were noticed in the old volume published by Sir H. Elliot himself. The other two, the *Tárikh-i Wassáf*, and the *Tárikh-i 'Alái* of Amír Khusrú, are now first made accessible to English readers. Part of the History of Wassáf has appeared in a German translation, from the pen of Hammer-Purgstall, but the portions relating to India are now published for the first time. The *Tárikh-i 'Alái* is more of a poem than a history, but it bears the celebrated name of Amír Khusrú, and it enters into de-

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tails which the student of history cannot pass over, however diligently and cautiously he may weigh and sift them.

Far different from these are the two *Tárikhs* bearing the title *Fíroz-Sháhi*. Sir H. Elliot was strongly impressed with the value of these histories, and his design was to publish a full translation of both. For the translation of the work of Zíáu-d dín Barní, he had enlisted the services of an eminent member of the Bengal Civil Service; for that of Shams-i Siráj's history, he trusted to a *munshí*. Advancement in the service, and the increasing cares of office, arrested the translation of Barní's work, and the *munshí's* partial translation of that of Shams-i Siráj proved to be entirely useless. Thus there was a complete deficiency of these two important works. Determined to prevent the publication from coming to a standstill, the Editor took in hand the translation of Shams-i Siráj's work, and caused renewed inquiries to be made in India for that of Barní. He completed the former, and still no promise was received of the latter; so he again set to work, and he had all but completed the translation of Barní, when Sir H. Elliot's friend, loyal to his promise, transmitted from India the translations of two reigns, made by friends in whom he had confidence. Unfortunately they arrived too late. The annals of these particular reigns had already been completed; so, without any undue partiality for his own

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work, the Editor declined using them; for a translation by one hand seemed preferable to one made up of the work of three different persons.

Barni's work approaches more nearly to the European idea of a history than any one which has yet come under notice. Narrow-minded and bigoted, like Muhammadans in general, he yet has a care for matters besides the interests of his religion and the warlike exploits of the sovereign representatives of his faith. He freely criticizes the actions and characters of the kings and great men of the time, dealing out his praises and censures in no uncertain terms. His style has been criticized as being occasionally tarnished by Hindí idioms, and this is no doubt true, not only of him, but of other historians who wrote in Persian, but whose native language was Hindí. Persian was familiar to them, still it was a foreign language, and their writings could hardly fail of receiving a tinge from the more ready and familiar expressions of their mother-tongue. To Europeans this blemish is of no importance, few can detect it in the original, and it entirely disappears in translation. As a vigorous plain-spoken writer, he may unhesitatingly be indicated as the one most acceptable to a general reader, one whose pages may be read without that feeling of weariness and oppression which the writings of his fellows too commonly produce. The Editor's translation adheres strictly to the text, without being literal; for, as the author has

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no pretensions to beauty of style or felicity of diction, a clear representation of his meaning is of more importance than an exact reproduction of his words. So the object aimed at has been to make the translation an accurate but a free and readable version of the original text.¹

Shams-i Siráj, the author of the other *Táríkh-i Fíroz Sháhí*, is a writer of a very different character. A painstaking and laborious chronicler, he enters into details of little moment to the general reader, but of importance to the historian and archæologist. Valuable as a recorder of facts and details, he is not an author who will be read for the interest of his narrative, or the excellence of his style.

The short but interesting work of the Sultán Fíroz Sháh, almost as rare in India as in Europe, is now first brought to notice. The Editor has made the translation from a unique copy belonging to Mr. E. Thomas.

Tímúr's irruption into India is fully represented by the extracts from his own memoirs, and from the work of his panegyrist, Sharafu-d dín Yazdí; but there is more matter in store upon this period from other writers.

¹ Lest this statement should excite a feeling of misgiving as to the licence taken with the Text, the Editor refers to Nos. IV., 1869, and I., 1870, of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in which a literal translation of the history of 'Aláu-d dín's reign has been published since the present translation has been in print.

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In the Appendix there is a careful and exhaustive analysis by Sir H. Elliot of several of the poetical works of Amír Khusrú, from which he has culled all the passages which, in his judgment, have an historical bearing. He has performed the same office for a far inferior poet, Badr Chách. The two succeeding articles are the work of the Editor. The first is taken from an article in the *Notices et Extraits des MSS.*; the other from the Travels of Ibn Batúta. The former is but little known, and in India is almost inaccessible. Both these works were published in French. They afford many curious and interesting illustrations of the period covered by this volume; so to bring them to the knowledge of the many Indian readers who are conversant with our own tongue, copious extracts, translated into English, have been here introduced.

The following is a statement of the various articles in this volume, with the names of their respective authors, and to this the reader is referred if he desires to ascertain the authority for any article or passage. It will be seen that somewhat more than two-thirds of the contents have been supplied by the Editor, and this has made it undesirable to keep up throughout the use of the brackets [] to mark the Editor's additions. Where this table shows a translation to have been made by the Editor, the whole of it, notes and all, are to be considered his, and no brackets are used. Sir H. M. Elliot had made preparation, more or less,

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for all the bibliographical notices: in these, and in those translations which the table shows to have been made by Sir H. Elliot, or by his coadjutors, the brackets indicate the Editor's additions.

- X.—*Jámi'u-t Tawárikh*—A *munshí* revised by Editor.
 XI.—*Tárikh-i Wassáf*—Part by Sir H. M. Elliot and part by a *munshí*, revised by him.
 XII.—*Tárikh-i Binákití*—A few lines by Editor.
 XIII.—*Tárikh-i Guzída*—Revised by Editor.
 XIV.—*Tárikh-i 'Aláí*.—Sir H. M. Elliot.
 XV.—*Tárikh-i Fíroz Sháhí*, of *Ziáu-d dín Barní*—Editor.
 XVI.—*Tárikh-i Fíroz Sháhí*, of *Shams-i Siráj*—Editor.
 XVII.—*Futuhát-i Fíroz Sháhí*.—Editor.
 XVIII.—*Malfúzát-i Tímúrí*—Page 394 to 421 by Mr. C. E. Chapman, B.C.S.; page 422 to 477 by Editor.
 XIX.—*Zafar-náma*—Editor.

APPENDIX.

- A.—Poems of *Amír Khusrú*—Sir H. M. Elliot.
 B.—Poems of *Badr Chách*—Sir H. M. Elliot.
 C.—*Masáliku-l Absár*—Editor.
 D.—Travels of *Ibn Batúta*.—Editor.
 E.—Notes on the *Tárikh-i Fíroz Sháhí*—Editor.

The Editor much regrets the length of time which the printing of this Volume has occupied. The delay has, in some degree, arisen from causes over which he had no control, but principally from his having had to supply so large a portion of the matter from his own pen. When the extent of this is taken into consideration, the time engaged may not appear excessive.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

- Page 121, five lines from bottom, omit "(Filibhit)."
 ,, 146, omit the note: "Jháin must be Ujjáin."
 ,, 168, Gold Stars. See note of Sir Walter Elliot in Thomas's Coins of the
 Pathán Sultáns, new edition, page 169.
 ,, 303, para. 3, line 11, omit the word "silver."
 ,, 311, line 16, to the word "Torábánd," add a note, "Possibly this is a pun on
 the words *Terá banda*, 'thy slave.'"
 ,, 400, line 4, for "1408," read "1398."
 ,, 421, to the word "Rudanah," add a note, "See note in page 488."
 ,, 427, to the word "Sarsúti," add "Sirsah."
 ,, 430, to note 1, add, "This is Firoz Sháh's bridge."
 ,, 468, line 7, to "*jims* (specie)," add a note, "See note in Appendix, p. 626."