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The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians

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 5 charts the end of the Afghan dynasty in 1526 and most of the reign of Akbar, as frankly recounted in Abd-ul-Qadir Bada'uni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (1595). It also includes chronicles of the rule of the second Mughal emperor, Humayun (1508–56), and the *Tarikh-i-Akbari*. The appendices contain Elliot's notes on aspects of Indian culture.

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The Muhammadan Period

VOLUME 5

HENRY MIERS ELLIOT
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BY ITS OWN HISTORIANS.

THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD.

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF THE LATE

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

EDITED AND CONTINUED

BY

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

STAFF COLLEGE, SANDHURST.

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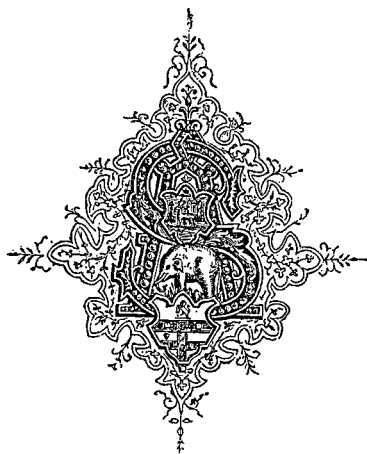
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P R E F A C E.

IN this volume the history of the Afghán dynasty is completed. The reign of Humáyún is also finished, and the annals of Akbar's reign are carried on to the thirty-eighth year.

The Afghán *Tárikhs* are of no great literary value, but they are the best authorities for the period of which they treat. The first of them, the *Tárikh-i Salátn-i Afághana*, has never before been translated; but the other, the *Makhzan-i Afghání* or *Tárikh-i Khán-Jahán Lodí*, is the book translated by Dorn in his work entitled "*The History of the Afgháns.*"

Some notices of the first reign of Humáyún are given by the Afghán historians, and his overthrow and expulsion are described by them from the Afghán side of the question in this and the preceding volume. The *Humáyún-námá* of the veteran historian Khondamír gives some curious accounts of the regulations established by Humáyún in the early part of his reign. This is followed by a few extracts from the valuable *Tárikh-i Rashídí* of Mirzá Haidar, the brave and adventurous cousin of the Emperor Bábar. The work is a general history of the Mughal Kháns, and does not contain

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much about India; but the Mirzá was a vigorous writer, and what he has recorded of his Indian experience is very vivid and interesting. Some few passages have been extracted from the Memoirs of Humáyún, written by his personal attendant Jauhar, and translated into English by Major Stewart. But the general history of this reign has been drawn from the *Tabakát-i Akbarí* of Nizámu-d dín Ahmad. Sir H. Elliot's intention has thus been carried out; for he had fixed upon the narrative given in the *Tárikh-i Salátín-i Afághana*, which proves to have been copied verbatim from the *Tabakát*.

Sir Henry Elliot had made no provision for the important reign of Akbar, nor did he leave any notes indicating the MSS. he intended to employ. So it has fallen to the Editor to select and translate some history in illustration of this period. The rule of this work has been to prefer original contemporary writers, or, in the absence of actual contemporaries, those nearest in point of time. This rule reduced the choice to two works—the *Tabakát-i Akbarí* of Nizám Ahmad, and the *Akbar-nama* of Abú-l Fazl; for the *Muntakhabu-t Tawárikh* of Badáúní is avowedly founded on the *Tabakát*, and the *Akbar-namá* of Shaikh Illáhdád Faizí Sirhindí contains very little that has not been borrowed either from the *Tabakát* or the greater *Akbar-náma* of Abú-l Fazl. The latter work is of considerable length, and is written in a very ornate style; so the *Tabakát* seemed best suited to the requirements of this work.

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PREFACE.

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It has accordingly been translated in full, and only such passages as are trivial and irrelevant have been passed over. The reputation of the *Tabakát-i Akbarí* stands very high in India, and European writers also have joined in its praises. As a contemporary history, it is certainly of very high authority, though it does not exhibit much literary ability. The narrative is often disjointed and fragmentary, but the language is manly and simple, and in striking contrast to the polished phrases of Abú-l Fazl. The *Tabakát* extends only to the thirty-eighth year of Akbar's reign; the history of the latter end of the reign will be drawn from the works of Abú-l Fazl, Shaikh Illáhdád, and other writers, and will appear in the next volume.

In addition to the *Tabakát-i Akbarí*, some extracts have been made from the *Tárikh-i Alfí*, a general history compiled under the direction of the Emperor Akbar, and more copious selections have been taken from the *Muntakhabu-t Tawárikh* of 'Abdú-l Kádir Badáúní. The latter writer introduces into his work much original matter; and all that he says about the personal affairs of the Emperor and his religious opinions is of great interest. Extracts from the two *Akbar-námas* relating to the earlier part of the reign will appear in the next volume; so that although the history of the first thirty-eight years of the reign is comprised in the present volume, it will not be quite complete until those passages are printed. The *A'in-i*

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Akbari is the greatest monument of the reign of Akbar, and a new translation by Mr. Blochmann is now in course of publication in the Bibliotheca Indica, enriched with copious notes. That work supplies many of the deficiencies of the historians, and Mr. Blochmann's labours have happily made it quite unnecessary to do more here with the *Ain-i Akbari* than to refer to his valuable production.

The notes in the Appendix are entirely the work of Sir H. Elliot, and are printed exactly as he left them.

The following is a list of the articles in this volume with the names of the respective writers:—

- XXXIV.—*Tárikh-i Salátin-i Afághana*—"Ensign" C. F. Mackenzie, and a little by Sir H. M. Elliot.
 XXXV.—*Tárikh-i Khán-Jahán Lodí*—"Ensign" C. F. Mackenzie and Sir H. M. Elliot.
 XXXVI.—*Humáyún-náma*—Sir H. M. Elliot's *munshí*.
 XXXVII.—*Tárikh-i Rashídí*—Editor.
 XXXVIII.—*Tazkiratu-l Wáki'át*—Major Stewart.
 XXXIX.—*Tárikh-i Alfi*—Sir H. M. Elliot and the Editor.
 XL.—*Tabakát-i Akbarí*—Editor.
 XLI.—*Tárikh-i Badáúní*—Sir H. M. Elliot and the Editor.
 APPENDIX.—The whole by Sir H. M. Elliot.

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CORRIGENDUM.

Vol. V. p. 116, lines 4 and 5, dele the words “in all probability.”

ADDENDUM.

Vol. IV. p. 289. “Shaikh Zain was one of the most learned men of the time, and translated in an elegant style the memoirs written by the late Emperor Bábar.”—Badáúní, Text, vol. i. p. 341.