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The Bābur-nāma in English

(Memoirs of Bābur)

Translated from the original Turki Text
OF

Zahiru'd-dīn Muḥammad Bābur Pādshāh Ghāzi

BY
ANNETTE SUSANNAH BEVERIDGE

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THE MEMOIRS OF BABUR

SECTION III. HINDŪSTĀN

932 AH.—OCT. 18TH 1525 TO OCT. 8TH 1526 AD.¹

(a. *Fifth expedition into Hindūstān.*)

(Nov. 17th) On Friday the 1st of the month of Ṣafar at the date 932, the Sun being in the Sign of the Archer, we set out for Hindūstān, crossed the small rise of Yak-langa, and dismounted in the meadow to the west of the water of Dih-i-ya'qūb.² 'Abdu'l-malūk the armourer came into this camp; he had gone seven or eight months earlier as my envoy to Sultān Sa'īd Khān (in Kāshghar), and now brought one of the Khān's men, styled Yāngī Beg (new beg) Kūkuldāsh who conveyed letters, and

Haidarā-
bād MS.
Fol. 251b.

¹ Elph. MS. f. 205b; W.-i-B. I.O. 215 f. 199b omits the year's events on the ground that Shaikh Zain has translated them; I.O. 217 f. 174; Mem. p. 290; Kehr's Codex p. 1084.

A considerable amount of reliable textual material for revising the Hindūstān section of the English translation of the *Bābur-nāma* is wanting through loss of pages from the Elphinstone Codex; in one instance no less than an equivalent of 36 folios of the Haidarābād Codex are missing (f. 356 *et seq.*), but to set against this loss there is the valuable *per contra* that Kehr's manuscript throughout the section becomes of substantial value, losing its Persified character and approximating closely to the true text of the Elphinstone and Haidarābād Codices. Collateral help in revision is given by the works specified (*in loco* p. 428) as serving to fill the gap existing in Bābur's narrative previous to 932 AH. and this notably by those described by Elliot and Dowson. Of these last, special help in supplementary details is given for 932 AH. and part of 933 AH. by Shaikh Zain [Khawāfi]'s *Tabaqāt-i-bāburi*, which is a highly rhetorical paraphrase of Bābur's narrative, requiring familiarity with ornate Persian to understand. For all my references to it, I am indebted to my husband. It may be mentioned as an interesting circumstance that the B. M. possesses in Or. 1999 a copy of this work which was transcribed in 998 AH. by one of Khwānd-amīr's grandsons and, judging from its date, presumably for Abū'l-fażl's use in the *Akbar-nāma*.

Like part of the Kābul section, the Hindūstān one is in diary-form, but it is still more heavily surcharged with matter entered at a date later than the diary. It departs from the style of the preceding diary by an occasional lapse into courtly phrase and by exchange of some Turkī words for Arabic and Persian ones, doubtless found current in Hind, *e.g.* *fauj*, *dīra*, *manzil*, *khail-khāna*.

² This is the Logar affluent of the Bārān-water (Kābul-river). Masson describes this haltingplace (iii, 174).

"O Lord! we have dealt unjustly with our own souls; if Thou forgive us not, and be not merciful unto us, we shall surely be of those that perish"¹ (*Qorān* cap. 7 v. 22).

Taking anew the place of the penitent pleading for pardon, I gave my mind rest² from such empty thinking and such unlawful occupation. I broke my pen. Made by that Court, such reproof of sinful slaves is for their felicity; happy are the highest and the slave when such reproof brings warning and its profitable fruit.

(c. *Narrative resumed.*)

(*Dec. 8th continued*) Marching on that evening, we dismounted at 'Alī-masjid. The ground here being very confined, I always Fol. 253b. used to dismount on a rise overlooking the camp in the valley-bottom.³ The camp-fires made a wonderful illumination there at night; assuredly it was because of this that there had always been drinking there, and was so now.

(*Dec. 9th and 10th*) To-day I rode out before dawn; I preferred a confection (*ma'jūn*)⁴ and also kept this day a fast. We dismounted near Bīgrām (Peshāwar); and next morning, the camp remaining on that same ground, rode to Karg-awī.⁵ We crossed the Siyāh-āb in front of Bīgrām, and formed our hunting-circle looking down-stream. After a little, a person brought quoted. My translation differs from those of Mr. Erskine and M. de Courteille; all three are tentative of a somewhat difficult verse.

Nī qīlā mīn sīnīng bīla āī tīl?
Jihatīng dīn mīnīng aīchīm qān dūr.
Nīcha yakhshī dīsāng bū hazl aīla shī'r
Bīrī-sī fahash ū bīrī yālghān dūr.
Gar dīsāng kūimā mīn, bū jazm bīla
Jalāu'īngnī bū 'arṣa dīn yān dūr.

¹ The *Qorān* puts these sayings into the mouths of Adam and Eve.

² Hai. MS. *tīndūrūb*; Ilminsky, p. 327, *yāndūrūb*; W.-i.-B. I.O. 217, f. 175, *sard sākhta*.

³ Of 'Alī-masjid the *Second Afghān War* (official account) has a picture which might be taken from Bābur's camp.

⁴ Shaikh Zain's list of the drinking-days (f. 252 note) explains why sometimes Bābur says he preferred *ma'jūn*. In the instances I have noticed, he does this on a drinking-day; the preference will be therefore for a confection over wine. December 9th was a Saturday and drinking-day; on it he mentions the preference; Tuesday Nov. 21st was a drinking day, and he states that he ate *ma'jūn*.

⁵ presumably the *karg-khāna* of f. 222b, rhinoceros-home in both places. A similar name applies to a tract in the Rawalpindi District,—Bābur-khāna, Tiger-home, which is linked to the tradition of Buddha's self-sacrifice to appease the hunger of seven tiger-cubs. [In this Bābur-khāna is the town Kacha-kot from which Bābur always names the river Hārū.]

word that there was a rhino in a bit of jungle near Bīgrām, and that people had been stationed near-about it. We betook ourselves, loose rein, to the place, formed a ring round the jungle, made a noise, and brought the rhino out, when it took its way across the plain. Humāyūn and those come with him from that side (Tramontana), who had never seen one before, were much entertained. It was pursued for two miles; many arrows were shot at it; it was brought down without having made a good set at man or horse. Two others were killed. I had often wondered how a rhino and an elephant would behave if brought face to face; this time one came out right in front of some elephants the mahauts were bringing along; it did not face them when the mahauts drove them towards it, but got off in another direction.

Fol. 254.

(d. *Preparations for ferrying the Indus.*¹)

On the day we were in Bīgrām, several of the begs and household were appointed, with pay-masters and dīwāns, six or seven being put in command, to take charge of the boats at the Nil-āb crossing, to make a list of all who were with the army, name by name, and to count them up.

That evening I had fever and discharge² which led on to cough and every time I coughed, I spat blood. Anxiety was great but, by God's mercy, it passed off in two or three days.

(Dec. 11th) It rained when we left Bīgrām; we dismounted on the Kābul-water.

(e. *News from Lāhor.*)

News came that Daulat Khān³ and (Apāq) Ghāzī Khān, having collected an army of from 20 to 30,000, had taken Kilānūr, and intended to move on Lāhor. At once Mumin-i-‘alī the commissary was sent galloping off to say, "We are advancing march by march;⁴ do not fight till we arrive."

¹ This is the first time on an outward march that Bābur has crossed the Indus by boat; hitherto he has used the ford above Attock, once however specifying that men on foot were put over on rafts.

² f. 253.

³ In my Translator's Note (p. 428), attention was drawn to the circumstance that Bābur always writes Daulat Khān *Yūsuf-khail*, and not Daulat Khān *Lūdī*. In doing this, he uses the family- or clan-name instead of the tribal one, *Lūdī*.

⁴ i.e. day by day.

rumour that it is heard of in some islands as 10 *qārī*¹ high, but in this tract it² is not seen above 4 or 5. It eats and drinks entirely with its trunk ; if it lose the trunk, it cannot live. It has two great teeth (tusks) in its upper jaw, one on each side of its trunk ; by setting these against walls and trees, it brings them down ; with these it fights and does whatever hard tasks fall to it. People call these ivory ('āj, var. *ghāj*) ; they are highly valued by Hindūstānīs. The elephant has no hair.³ It is much relied on by Hindūstānīs, accompanying every troop of their armies. It has some useful qualities :—it crosses great rivers with ease, carrying a mass of baggage, and three or four have gone dragging without trouble the cart of the mortar (*qazān*) it takes four or five hundred men to haul.⁴ But its stomach is 'arge ; one elephant eats the corn (*būghūz*) of two strings (*qitār*) of camels.⁵

The rhinoceros is another. This also is a large animal, equal in bulk to perhaps three buffaloes. The opinion current in those countries (Tramontana) that it can lift an elephant on its horn, pl. eems mistaken. It has a single horn on its nose, more than th nine inches (*qārīsh*) long ; one of two *qārīsh* is not seen.⁶ Out n of one large horn were made a drinking-vessel⁷ and a dice-box, leaving over [the thickness of] 3 or 4 hands.⁸ The rhinoceros'

¹ Pers. trs. *gaz*=24 inches. *Il est bon de rappeler que le mot turk *qārī*, que la version persane rend par *gaz*, désigne précisément l'espace compris entre le haut de l'épaule jusqu'au bout des doigts* (de Coutteille, ii, 189 note). The *qārī* like one of its equivalents, the ell (Zenker), is a variable measure : it seems to approach more nearly to a yard than to a *gaz* of 24 inches. See *Memoirs of Jahāngīr* (R. & B. pp. 18, 141 and notes) for the heights of elephants, and for discussion of some measures.

² *khūd*, itself.

³ *i.e.* pelt ; as Erskine notes, its skin is scattered with small hairs. Details such as this one stir the question, for whom was Bābur writing ? Not for Hindūstān where what he writes is patent ; hardly for Kābul ; perhaps for Transoxania.

⁴ Shaikh Zain's wording shows this reference to be to a special piece of artillery, perhaps that of f. 302.

⁵ A string of camels contains from five to seven, or, in poetry, even more fullers, ii, 728, *sermone poetico series decem camelorum*). The item of food prepared is corn only (*būghūz*) and takes no account therefore of the elephant's green food

⁶ The Ency. Br. states that the horn seldom exceeds a foot in length ; there is one in the B.M. measuring 18 inches.

⁷ *āb-khwura kishtī*, water-drinker's boat, in which name *kishtī* may be used with reference to shape as boat is in *sauce-boat*. Erskine notes that rhinoceros-horn is supposed to sweat on approach of poison.

⁸ *ālīk*, Pers. trs. *angusht*, finger, each seemingly representing about one inch, a hand's thickness, a finger's breadth.

hide is very thick ; an arrow shot from a stiff bow, drawn with full strength right up to the arm-pit, if it pierce at all, flesh penetrate 4 inches (*aīlik*, hands). From the sides (*qāsī*) fore and hind legs,¹ folds hang which from a distance calls it housings thrown over it. It resembles the horse more than any other animal.² As the horse has a small hock (appetite?), so has the rhinoceros ; as in the horse a piece of bone (pastern?) grows in place of small bones (T. *āshūq*, Fr. *osselets* (Zenker), knuckles), so one grows in the rhinoceros ; as in the horse's hand (*aīlik*, Pers. *dast*) there is *kūmūk* (or *gūmūk*, a *tibia*, or marrow), so there is in the rhinoceros.³ It is more ferocious than the elephant and cannot be made obedient and submissive. There are masses of it in the Parashāwar and Hashnagar jungles, so too between the Sind-river and the jungles of the Bhīra country. Masses there are also on the banks of the Sārū-river in Hindūstān. Some were killed in the Parashāwar and Hashnagar jungles in our moves on Hindūstān. It strikes powerfully with its horn ; men and horses enough have been horned in those hunts.⁴ In one of them the horse of a *chuhra* (brave) named Maqṣūd was tossed a spear's-length, for which reason the man was nick-named the rhino's aim (*maqṣūd-i-karg*).

The wild-buffalo⁵ is another. It is much larger than the (domestic) buffalo and its horns do not turn back in the same way.⁶ It is a mightily destructive and ferocious animal.

The *nīla-gāū* (blue-bull)⁷ is another. It may stand as high as a horse but is somewhat lighter in build. The male is bluish-gray, hence, seemingly, people call it *nīla-gāū*. It has two rather small horns. On its throat is a tuft of hair, nine inches long ; (in this) it resembles the yak.⁸ Its hoof is cleft (*ārī*)

¹ lit. hand (*gūl*) and leg (*būl*).

² The anatomical details by which Bābur supports this statement are difficult to translate, but his grouping of the two animals is in agreement with the modern classification of them as two of the three *Ungulata vera*, the third being the tapir (Fauna of British India :—Mammals, Blanford 467 and, illustration, 468).

³ De Courteille (ii, 190) reads *kūmūk*, osseuse ; Erskine reads *gūmūk*, marrow.

⁴ Index s.n. rhinoceros.

⁵ *Bos bubalus*.

⁶ "so as to grow into the flesh" (Erskine, p. 317).

⁷ sic in text. It may be noted that the name *nīl-gāū*, common in general European writings, is that of the cow ; *nīl-gāū*, that of the bull (Blanford).

⁸ *b : h : rī qūlās* ; see Appendix M.

"Better than life with a bad name, is death with a good one.

(Persian) Well is it with me, if I die with good name !
A good name must I have, since the body is death's.¹

"God the Most High has allotted to us such happiness and has created for us such good-fortune that we die as martyrs, we kill as avengers of His cause. Therefore must each of you take oath Fol. 315. upon His Holy Word that he will not think of turning his face from this foe, or withdraw from this deadly encounter so long as life is not rent from his body." All those present, beg and retainer, great and small, took the Holy Book joyfully into their hands and made vow and compact to this purport. The plan was perfect ; it worked admirably for those near and afar, for seers and hearers, for friend and foe.

(u. *Bābur's perilous position.*)

In those same days trouble and disturbance arose on every side :—Husain Khān *Nuhānī* went and took Rāpī; Qutb Khān's man took Chandwār²; a mannikin called Rustam Khān who had collected quiver-wearers from Between-the-two-waters (Ganges and Jamna), took Kūl (Koel) and made Kīchik 'Alī prisoner ; Khwāja Zāhid abandoned Sāmbal and went off ; Sl. Muhammād *Dūldāī* came from Qanūj to me ; the Gūaliār pagans laid siege to that fort ; 'Ālam Khān when sent to reinforce it, did not go to Gūaliār but to his own district. Every day bad news came from every side. Desertion of many Hindūstānis set in ; Haibat Khān *Karg-andāz*³ deserted and went to Sāmbal ; Hasan Khān of Bārī deserted and joined the Pagan. We gave attention to none of them but went straight on with our own affair.

(v. *Bābur advances to fight.*)

The apparatus and appliances, the carts and wheeled tripods being ready, we arrayed in right, left and centre, and marched forward on New Year's Day,⁴ Tuesday, the 9th of the second Jumāda (March 13th), having the carts⁵ and wheeled tripods

¹ Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma* [Erskine].

² Also Chand-wāl ; it is 25 m. east of Āgra and on the Jamna [*Tabaqāt-i-nāsīrī*, Raverty, p. 742 n.9].

³ Probably, Overthrower of the rhinoceros, but if *Gurg-andāz* be read, of the wolf.

⁴ According to the Persian calendar this is the day the Sun enters Aries.

⁵ The practical purpose of this order of march is shewn in the account of the battle of Pānīpat, and in the Letter of Victory, f. 319.

reached where the army had encamped after crossing the ford. Today 6 *kurohs* (12 m.) were done.

(*March 18th*) Next day (*Friday 8th*), we stayed on that ground.

(*March 19th*) On Saturday (*9th*), we marched 12 *kurohs* and got to the bank of Gang again at Nulibā.¹

(*March 20th*) Marching on (*Sunday 10th*), we did 6 *kurohs* of road, and dismounted at Kintit.²

(*March 21st*) Marching on (*Monday 11th*), we dismounted at Nānāpur.³ Tāj Khān Sārang-khānī came from Chunār to this ground with his two young sons, and waited on me.

In these days a dutiful letter came from Pay-master Sl. Muḥammad, saying that my family and train were understood to be really on their way from Kābul.⁴

(*March 23rd*) On Wednesday (*13th*) we marched from that ground. I visited the fort of Chunār, and dismounted about one *kuroh* beyond it.

During the days we were marching from Piāg, painful boils had come out on my body. While we were on this ground, an Ottoman Turk (Rūmī) used a remedy which had been recently discovered in Rūm. He boiled pepper in a pipkin; I held the sores in the steam and, after steaming ceased, laved them with the hot water. The treatment lasted 2 sidereal hours.

While we were on this ground, a person said he had seen tiger and rhinoceros on an *ārāl*⁵ by the side of the camp.

(*March 24th?*) In the morning (*14th?*), we made the hunting-circle⁶ on that *ārāl*, elephants also being brought. Neither tiger nor rhino appeared; one wild buffalo came out at the end of the line. A bitter wind rising and the whirling dust being very troublesome, I went back to the boat and in it to the camp which was 2 *kurohs* (4 m.) above Banāras.

¹ Perhaps, where there is now the railway station of "Nulibai" (I.S. Map). The direct road on which the army moved, avoids the windings of the river.

² This has been read as T. *kīnt*, P. *dīh*, Eng. village and Fr. *village*.

³ "Nankunpur" lying to the north of Puhari railway-station suits the distance measured on maps.

⁴ These will be the women-travellers.

⁵ Perhaps jungle tracts lying in the curves of the river.

⁶ *jīrga*, which here stands for the beaters' incurving line, witness the exit of the buffalo at the end. Cf. f. 367b for a *jīrga* of boats.

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¹ On p. 22 n. 2 delete “*Chaghatāī Mughūl*” on grounds given in Additional Note, Page 22.

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¹ See *Wāqi'āt-i-mushtāqī*, E. and D. iv, 548.

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Bābur, Emperor of Hindustān

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Zehir-Ed-Din

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reasons. Nothing to count had fallen into the soldiers' hands during the three or four months we had been leading this army. Now that Bhīra, the borderland of Hindūstān, was so near, I thought a something might fall into our men's hands if, riding light, we went suddenly into it. To this thought I clung, but some of my well-wishers, after we had raided the Afghāns and dismounted at Maqām, set the matter in this way before me:—"If we are to go into Hindūstān, it should be on a proper basis; one part of the army stayed behind in Kābul; a body of effective braves was left behind in Bajaur; a good part of this army has gone into Lamghān because its horses were worn-out; and the horses of those who have come this far, are so poor that they have not a day's hard riding in them." Reasonable as these considerations were, yet, having made the start, we paid no attention to them but set off next day for the ford through the water of Sind.¹ Mīr Muhammad the raftsman and his elder and younger brethren were sent with a few braves to examine the Sind-river (*daryā*), above and below the ford.

(Feb. 16th) After starting off the camp for the river, I went to hunt rhinoceros on the Sawātī side which place people call also Karg-khāna (Rhino-home).² A few were discovered but the jungle was dense and they did not come out of it. When one with a calf came into the open and betook itself to flight, many arrows were shot at it and it rushed into the near jungle; the jungle was fired but that same rhino was not had. Another calf was killed as it lay, scorched by the fire, writhing and palpitating. Each person took a share of the spoil. After leaving Sawātī, we wandered about a good deal; it was the Bed-time Prayer when we got to camp.

Those sent to examine the ford came back after doing it.

(Feb. 17th) Next day, Thursday the 16th,³ the horses and baggage-camels crossed through the ford and the camp-bazar

¹ This will be the ford on the direct road from Mardān for the eastward (Elphinstone's *Caubul* ii, 416).

² The position of Sawātī is represented by the Suābī of the G. of I. map (1909 AD.). Writing in about 1813 AD. Mr. Erskine notes as worthy of record that the rhinoceros was at that date no longer found west of the Indus.

³ Elph. MS. *ghura*, the 1st, but this is corrected to 16th by a marginal note. The Hai. MS. here, as in some other places, has the context for a number, but omits the figures. So does also the Elph. MS. in a good many places.