

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
MODERN INDIAN HISTORY ALLAHABAD
UNIVERSITY. NO. 3; AN EMPIRE BUILDER OF
THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY; A SUMMARY
ACCOUNT OF THE
POLITICAL CAREER OF ZAHIR-UD-DIN
MUHAMMAD, SURNAMED BABUR**

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L. F. WILLIAMS

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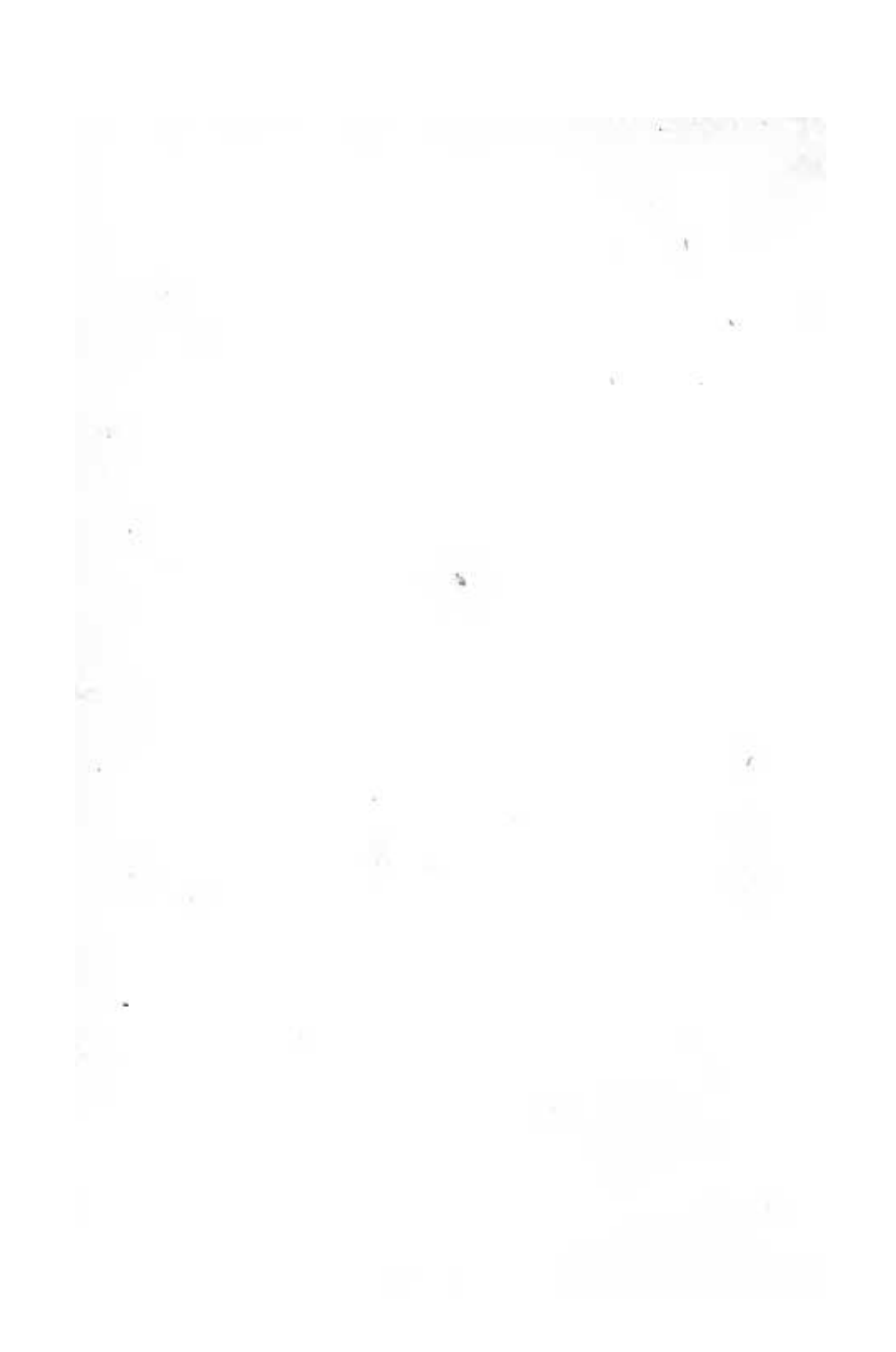
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DEDICATED

TO

SIR GEORGE FORREST, C.I.E., ETC.,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF THE DEBT
OF GRATITUDE OWED BY STUDENTS
OF INDIAN HISTORY IN GENERAL
AND BY THE AUTHOR IN
PARTICULAR



A SUMMARY LIST OF AUTHORITIES FOR THE CAREER OF BABUR

A.—Principal Sources.

1. The *Memoirs* of Babur himself.

A Turki text was published by Ilminski in 1857, and another (in facsimile from the Hyderabad Codex) by Mrs. Beveridge in 1905. This latter is probably a direct copy from Babur's autograph text: see *J.B.A.S.*, 1906, p. 87.

Of the Turki text there are two principal Persian versions, the first by Payanda Hasan, and the second associated with the name of Mirza Abd-ur-Rahim.

The best translations are three in number. That of ENSSKINE AND LEYDEN (1826), now rare, is based upon the second Persian version. It is extremely good reading, racy and vivid, but not always faithful to its original. The translation of PAVET DE COURTEILLE (1871) is based upon Ilminski's Turki text, and has remained until lately the nearest approach to the *Memoirs* as Babur wrote them which was accessible to readers of European languages. The third and latest translation, not yet complete, is the most faithful of all, being based upon the important Hyderabad codex. It is the work of MRS. A. S. BEVERIDGE. To this my obligations are great.

The *Memoirs*, even when the "personal equation" is allowed for, do not supply all the details necessary for Babur's life. There are three important "blanks" in them, the first including the years 1503-1504, the second 1508-1519, the third 1520-1525. Recourse must therefore be had to other authorities.

2. The *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of Mirza Haidar Dughlat. The only translation is that of N. Elias and Denison Ross. The author was Babur's cousin, and in intimate contact with him during the "Kabul" period of his career. Mirza Haidar's work is particularly valuable as helping to supply the blanks in the *Memoirs*; but as the author was a rigid Sunni, a great hater of Shah Ismael and all his works, he is inclined to side with the Uzbogs in 1510 and the following years. Here he is not to be trusted.

3. The *Habib-us-Siyar* of Khwandamir. Lithographed editions have been published at Bombay and Tehran. It is a universal history: but chapters iii. and iv. of Book III. are particularly important for the relations between Babur and Shah Ismael. The author was a well-informed contemporary, who visited Babur in India, but preserved a detached attitude. The work was begun in A.H. 927, and was perhaps continued down to A.H. 935. Very little use has been made of it, probably because it has never been translated. It was not known to Erskine.

4. The *Ahsan-us-Siyar* of Mirza Barkhwardar Turkman. The only copy known to me is the imperfect one in the library of Nawab Abdussalam Khan of Rampur (U.P.), which recounts in great detail the relations between Babur and Shah Ismael (to whom the book was dedicated). This history is noteworthy because the author, a Shiá, who wrote with the professed object of correcting the *Habib-us-Siyar*, confirms it in all important respects. The book was finished in A.H. 937.

5. The *Shaibani Nama* of Mirza Muhammad Salih is the versified history of Babur's great antagonist. It has been edited and translated by A. Vambéry. It is very important as showing the Usbeg side of the struggle between Babur and Shaibani.

6. The *Alim arai Abassi* of Mirza Sikandar Munshi is primarily a history of the Safawi king Shah Abbas (A.D. 1588-1628) and was composed in 1616. But there is a detailed account of the origin of the Safawi dynasty, and of the relations between Babur and Shah Ismael. I have used the Bodleian Fraser MSS., 144, 147, 145.

7. The *Humayun Nama* of Gulbadan Begam, Babur's daughter, contains some intimate personal recollection of the author's father. The whole account, however, is exceedingly partial, and unreliable where it is concerned with the relations between Babur and his sons, which are represented as being the best possible. It has been excellently edited by Mrs. Beveridge.

B.—Minor Sources.

8. The *Tarikh-i-Hakki* of Shaikh Abd-al-Hakk bin Saif-ud-Din Dihlawi is useful for the reigns of the Lodi dynasty. What the author reports of the time of Bahlol and his successors, he knows from actual eyewitnesses or from hearsay. The text I have used is Bodleian Fraser MS., 162.

9. The *Ahsan-ut-Tawarikh* of Hasan is a chronicle of the reigns of Shah Ismael and Shah Tahmasp from A.H. 900-985. There is, however, an unfortunate lacuna (A.H. 913-931) in the texts I have seen, which deprives the book of much of its value as a source for Babur's history. I have used the Bodleian Ouseley MS., 232.

10. The *Tarikh-i-Firishta* of Muhammad Bin Kasim is useful for helping to supply gaps in the *Memoirs*. The account of Babur is, like the rest of the book, sane, accurate and well-balanced. The most accessible version is the Calcutta reprint of Briggs' translation, but it is not faithful throughout.

11. The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad is a good general history of India from the Mubammadan invasions to the latter part of the sixteenth century. There is a short but good account of Babur. I have used the Bodleian Elliot MS., 381.

12. The *Akbar nama* of Abu'l Fazl contains an introductory chapter dealing with Babur, based principally upon the *Memoirs*, but too laudatory to be trusted. It is, however, occasionally worth consulting, and is readily accessible in the Bibliotheca Indica edition. It is being translated by Mr. H. Beveridge.

C.—Modern Works.

13. Erskine. *A History of India in the Time of Babur and Humayun* (1854) is a fine and scholarly piece of work, excellent alike from the Indian and from the Persian point of view. Its solid learning and sound judgment will always make it difficult to supersede. But the author did not make use of some important sources, particularly Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, so that his conclusions need re-stating in certain respects.

14. Lane Poole. *Baber*. (Rulers of India.) This is the best short account of Babur's career at present available, but it is based entirely on translated sources, the author relying on Nos. 13, 2, and 1 (Pavet de Courteille's translation).

15. Caldecott. *Life of Baber*. A readable summary based principally on the *Memoirs*.

For other books consulted, the reader is referred to the footnotes, where full particulars will be found.