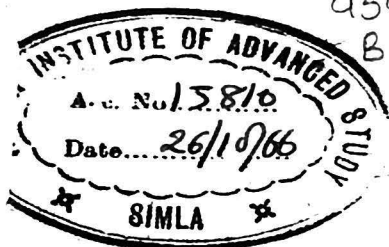




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# 18. A Passage in the Turki Text of the Bābarnāmah.

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In the two published texts of Bābar's Memoirs in the original Turki there is a long passage at the end of the year 908 A.H., 1502-03 A.D., which completes the story of Bābar's flight from Akhsi and his final deliverance. The passage does not occur in the Elphinstone MS. of the Turki, nor in any of the Persian translations. All the Persian MSS. end with Bābar's being in a garden, and in imminent danger of being captured. The last words are part of a melancholy Persian verse quoted by Bābar. The two Turki texts take up the narrative at this place and describe Bābar's deliverance, and his rejoining his maternal uncles at Andijān. A consideration of the passage seems to me to prove that the passage is an interpolation, and that in all probability it was added by some one many years after Bābar's death. Possibly it is one of the four passages which his great-grandson Jahangir added to the text (see Tūzūk, 2nd year, p. 52 of S. Aḥmad's edition). My reasons for disbelieving the authenticity of the passage are as follows:—

*Firstly.*—It is a very suspicious circumstance that the passage does not occur in the Elphinstone MS. of the Turki, nor in any of the numerous MSS. of the Persian translation of the Memoirs. If the Alwar MS. is to be believed, the Persian translation existed in the time of Humāyūn, and at all events it existed in the time of Akbar. It is commonly said that the translation was made for Akbar by the Khān-Khānān 'Abdu-r-Raḥīm. He must have had access to good Turki MSS. —We know that there was one in Bābar's own handwriting in the Imperial Library as late as the time of Shah Jahān, see Pādshahnāmāh, I, 42 and II, 703—and it is impossible to suppose that he would pass over so important and even thrilling a passage. It occurs, so far as is yet known, in two Turki MSS., namely, Kehr's MS. on which Ilminsky founded his edition, and the Haidarabad MS. in Sir Sālār Jang's library. The age of neither of these MSS. is known, but they do not seem to be more than one hundred and fifty or two hundred years old, and so are later than the Elphinstone. The Kehr MS., at all events, cannot be older than Jehangir's time, for it contains fragments translated from Abul-i-Faẓl's Akbarnāma. If the passage had occurred in any early Turki MS. it would surely have been referred to in Ferishta's long account of Bābar's reign. He makes copious use of the Memoirs, and

speaks<sup>1</sup> of them as being written in Turkī. He also (see the Newal Kishore's lithograph of *Ferishta*, p. 196) gives a translation of Bābar's comparison of his taking of Samarkand with Sultan Husain's taking of Herat, which is certainly not in verbal agreement with 'Abdu-r-Rahīm's translation, and seems to be an independent version. *Ferishta* was born at Astrabad on the shores of the Caspian, presumably therefore Turkī was almost, if not quite, his mother-tongue.

*Secondly.*—The story told in the passage in question implies the occurrence of the miraculous, and it is a generally accepted axiom that miracles do not occur. Not only does a certain *Khawājah* Y'aqūb appear to Bābar in a dream and announce to him, on the authority of his grandfather, his speedy deliverance, and his future greatness, but *Khawājah* 'Ubaid Ullah Ahrār himself appears in a dream to one of his servants at Andijān, and also apparently to his uncles, and announces that Bābar is at Karmān<sup>2</sup> or Karnān. The servants Bābā Pargarī and Quṭlūq Muḥammad Barlās are persons not mentioned elsewhere in Bābar's Memoirs, for it seems very doubtful if Quṭlūq the Barlās is the same person as the *Khawājah* Quṭlūq Kokaltāsh mentioned as being at Samarkand in 906. *Khawājah* Y'aqūb also, the alleged son of *Khawājah* Yahīa, and grandson of *Khawājah* 'Ubaid Ullah, is, as far as I know, an otherwise unknown person. *Khawājah* Yahīa and his two sons Zechariah and Bāqī were killed by the Uzbeks some two years before, and though Yahīa had a third son who survived him, his name was not Y'aqūb.<sup>3</sup> It also seems to me very improbable that if the story of Bābar's dream were true, *Khawānd* Amīr should not have mentioned it. He probably never saw Bābar's Memoirs, but he heard of, and has reported, the dream which Bābar had before taking Samarkand. If the dream in the garden at Karnān really occurred, he would surely have heard of it from Shaikh Zain or others, and if so, he would probably have reported it, as it was much more important and more intelligible than the Samarkand one.

*Thirdly.*—The story told in the passage seems to me to

<sup>1</sup> Mohl, *J. des Savants*, 1840, 221, thinks he must have used the translation, but he gives no reasons for this view.

<sup>2</sup> Karnān is not marked on the maps but must be near Ghiva and to the north of Akhsai.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Khazīna Aṣṣiyā* I, 594, Yahīa and his two sons Zechariah and Bāqī were killed at the village of Kasrāb in the Tāsh-kend district on 11 Muḥarram 906, 7 August 1500. The third son was *Khawājah* Muḥammad Amīn. See also the *Rashahāt-i-'ain adhayāt* of Fakhr-u-d-dīn 'Alī the son of Husain Wā'iz, Rieu's Cat. I. 353a and Ethé's Cat. I. O. MSS., p. 261, which was written in 909, 1503-04. The account of the martyrdom of K. Yahīa and his two sons is given at pp. 277 etc. of the I. O. MS., and it is stated that the life of the third son, *Khawāja* Muḥammad Amīn, was spared in order that one son of K. Yahīa might survive.

[N.S.]

contradict the account given by Bābar himself in the same chapter, and only a few pages previous. According to the passage, Qutlūq Muḥ. Barlās was one of the men who fled from Akhsi at the same time as Bābar did, but got separated from him in the confusion and made his way to Andijān. He arrived there just as the Khāns, Bābar's uncles, were entering the place, and had his dream. He told it to the Khāns, who informed him that they had had a similar intimation. He then went off with a party, found Bābar, and rescued him just as he was about to be seized and murdered, and brought him to Andijān. Bābar found his uncles there, stayed with them four months, and then made up his mind to leave Farghana. With this statement the chapter ends, and the next begins with the first month of 910 and the march towards Kabul. But according to Bābar's own story, as related earlier in the chapter, the Khāns were not at Andijān at the time when he fled from Akhsi. They never had possession of Andijān fortress, but they came to the outskirts of the place (Erskine, p. 111, and Ferishta 197), and Bābar saw them there and was sent by them to Akhsi. He got possession of the fort for a short time, but when Tambal came with 2,000 or 3,000 men he had to leave the place and fly for his life. But previous to doing so he had heard that the Khāns had raised the siege and retreated to Kand Bādām, Erskine 114. They went by Marginān and Kand Bādām, and were followed to the former place by Tambal. When Tambal saw that they were in full retreat he came to Akhsi with the result that Bābar had to fly. The reason why the Khāns retreated was because Tambal had applied to Shaibānī for help, and the latter had replied that he would come shortly, Erskine 114. It was this retreat of the Khāns which disturbed Bābar so much and made it impossible for him to hold Akhsi. If the above view of the contradiction between Bābar's undoubted narrative and the Turkī passage be correct, it must follow, I think, that the latter is not genuine.

*Fourthly.*—It seems to me very extraordinary that if the passage is genuine, Bābar should not have gone on to describe<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Khāns crossed the river at Khojand, *i.e.*, I presume, they crossed from the south to the north bank. Apparently, their idea in retreating was to oppose the entry of Shaibānī into Farghāna, and perhaps, also, they thought of joining the Tāshkend army which was under Sultan Muḥammad the son of Sultan Maḥmūd, see T. Rashīdī, 158. Haidar's father was left at Uratipa. The Khāns afterwards marched back to Akhsi with Bābar. They thought, says Haidar, that Shaibānī could not pass between two armies, *viz.*, the Tāshkend army under Maḥmūd's son, and the Uratipa army under Haidar's father. But Shaibānī did pass between them, taking Uratipa on his road. Haidar's father thought he had come to besiege him, but instead of that Shaibānī went straight on in the night to Akhsi and crushed the Khāns. News was sent from Uratipa of his approach, but he went so fast that the messengers and his army reached the Khāns at the same time.

the battle which took place in 908 between himself and his uncles on the one side, and Shaibānī on the other. Bābar and his uncles were defeated, and the latter were made prisoners, while Bābar had to fly, first towards Tāshkend, and afterwards to the hills in the south of Farghana and to Hīsār. He eventually also went to Termiz on the Oxus and there got advice from the governor of that place (Amīr Muḥammad Bāqī),<sup>1</sup> which led him to march into Afghanistan.

It was on this occasion that he passed through Khushrau Shāh's country. See the Ḥabību-s-Siyar, II, 318. According to the Shaibānīnāmah, as quoted<sup>2</sup> by Vambéry in his history of Bokhara, 258, the battle was fought five miles off from Akhsī, and lasted for two days. But this latter statement as well as Vambéry's date of 911 must be incorrect, for the Tārīkh Rashīdī, while also stating that the battle was fought at Akhsī, says the conflict was a short one. Bābar marched to Kabul in 910, and was there on 911 and his younger uncle died after the battle in 909. The battle must have taken place either in the latter part of 908 or the beginning of 909. The uncle died in the winter season of 909, Tārīkh Rashīdī 123, and consequently at the end of 1503 or beginning of 1504. At p. 160, however, it is said that the uncle died at the end of 909, i.e., in April or May 1504.

If the Turkī passage is genuine, Bābar has passed over the battle in which his two uncles were made prisoners, and the events of more than a twelvemonth, for there is no question here of a gap in the MS. or of a page being lost. According to the Turkī, Bābar winds up the chapter by saying that he rejoined his uncles at Andijān, stayed with them for four months, and then resolved to leave Farghāna. Nor can it be said that the apparent contradiction between Bābar's own words and the Turkī passage is the result of abridgment, and that Bābar merely means that he joined his uncles at Andijān some time before the battle. For according to the T. Rashīdī, p. 159, the uncles in marching into Farghāna (for the second time apparently) did not get as far as Andijān before the battle. They went by Akhsī and were defeated and captured before they could get to Andijān. The statement that Bābar stayed four months with his uncles at Andijān and then made<sup>3</sup> up his mind to leave Farghāna has evidently been made by the interpolator to round off the chapter and to fit it into the begin-

<sup>1</sup> Bābar incidentally mentions the defeat of the Khāns in the early part of his Memoirs. See P. de Courtille, pp. 6 and 24, and Erskine, 4 and 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Bāqī Cheghānīnānī of Bābar's Memoirs. He was Khushrau Shāh's younger brother.

<sup>3</sup> Vambéry wrote his history of Bokhara before editing the Shaibānīnāma, and apparently, before he had studied that poem. I can find nothing in his translation of it to show that the battle lasted two days.

ning of the next one. But it is contrary to fact, and seems to indicate that the interpolator was ignorant or careless of the fact of the decisive battle between the *Khāns* and *Shaibānī*.

*Fifthly.*—In the Persian translation *Bābar's* account of his flight from *Akhsī* and his being in the garden at *Karmān* (or *Karnān*) ends in a very startling way with an unfinished verse. The last word is *ākhir*, "at last". It is judiciously pointed out by *Erskine*, p. 123, that the narrative breaks off in a similar abrupt fashion in the account of the year 914 (see *Erskine*, 235), and he inclines to think that in both instances the breaking<sup>1</sup> off was intentional. They are dramatic endings such as *Shahrzāda* made every morning to her stories. *Erskine* also says, "All the three copies which I have had an opportunity of comparing break off precisely at the same part, in both instances. This holds in the original *Turkī* (the *Elphinstone MS.*) as well as in the translation, and it is hardly conceivable that the translator would have deserted his hero in the most memorable passages of his life."

Now, it seems to me that if *Bābar* had written anything in the chapter in 908 after the verse, he would not have left the latter incomplete. And this seems to have struck the *Turkī* adapter, for in the *Turkī* the verse though in Persian is not the same as in the Persian MSS., and is a complete distich. The break off in the verse in the Persian MSS. is much more dramatic than the conventional second line in the *Turkī* text, and is like the *Quos ego* of *Virgil*, and *Bābar's* own ending in the record for 914. It is noteworthy that the first line in the *Turkī* text is also different from that in the Persian MSS., and that it is not the same in the two *Turkī* texts. It appears from a manuscript now in the *Rylands' Library* that another interpolator attempted to complete the chapter, for it says that *Bābar's* friends came up and rescued him and arranged for the care of his ladies. See *A.S.B.J.* for 1905.

For these reasons I am of opinion that the *Turkī* passage is not genuine, and that it may be one of *Jahangir's* additions. Perhaps some *Turkī* scholar will examine the passage, and say if the style is that of *Bābar*, or resembles the fragments in *Ilminsky* and *Pavet de Courtille*, which must have been written not earlier than the end of *Akbar's* reign.

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The "five miles" mentioned in his history are five *īghāch*, that is, five leagues and more. The battle took place at *Arkhiā* (?) between *Akhsī* and *Andijān*. *Bābar* was there and had the command of a thousand men. *Shaibānī*, when in pursuit of the *Khāns*, crossed the river at *Akhsī*, and apparently took the *Khāns* by surprise (p. 267 of the *Shaibānīnāma*). The battle soon ended in a victory for *Shaibānī*.

<sup>1</sup> It is also contrary to *Bābar's* statement in the opening chapter of his *Memoirs*. There he says that after *Shaibānī* had taken *Tāshkend* and *Shāhrukhiā*, he went to the *Sukh* and *Hushīār* hill country (in the south of *Farghana*) and was there nearly a year, and left from there for his expedition to *Kabul* (*Erskine*, p. 4).

With reference to Erskine's remark at the top of p. 124,<sup>1</sup> and in order to prevent misconception, it is necessary for me to state that there is no doubt that Bābar eventually rejoined his uncles after his flight from Akhsi. My point is that he did not do so at Andijan, at least not within a few days after his flight from Akhsi. What happened was, apparently, that the Khāns returned to Farghāna<sup>2</sup> after their retreat, and in company with Bābar were defeated by Shaibānī near Akhsi. That the Khāns were not at Andijān at the time of Bābar's flight has already been shown. To that evidence may be added the indication furnished by the direction of his flight. He wanted to join the Khāns and called upon his pursuers to help him in doing so, but he did not go towards Andijān and he spoke to the men about wishing to cross the river and to proceed to Khojand,<sup>3</sup> Erskine, p. 120. Unfortunately Bābar does not tell us the day or month when he fled from Akhsi. But at p. 121 of Erskine, we are told that it was winter and excessively cold. The flight therefore must have been in nearly the middle of 908, viz., December 1502 or January 1503. It was probably in the following spring that the battle took place between Shaibānī and the Khāns, though it may have occurred in 909.

<sup>1</sup> The existence of gaps containing the accounts of several years is noticed in the Pādshāhnāma I. 42 as occurring in a MS. in the Imperial Library in Bābar's own handwriting.

<sup>2</sup> Erskine did not know the T. Rashīdī when he was translating the Memoirs. His later work, the History of India, corrects some of the statements in the notes to his translation. See I. 184 for account of the battle.

<sup>3</sup> Khojend, which is mentioned by Bābar as the place they retreated to, was often not reckoned as part of Farghana (Erskine 9). At least it is in the extreme west of it, and is, apparently, not now included in the Russian district of Farghāna, but in Samarkand. See Kostenko's Tur-kistan I. 347.



