

ART. XXVIII.—*The Geography of the Kandahár Inscription.*  
By JOHN BEAMES, B.C.S. (retired).

IN the *Journal Asiatique* for 1890, vol. xv, p. 195, the late eminent scholar M. James Darmesteter gave the text and a translation of the inscription in the vaulted chamber constructed by order of the Emperor Bábar on a rock near Kandahár, A.D. 1522–27. The inscription is not entirely of the same date as the building. It is in three parts, the first of which only is synchronous with the dome, having been engraved under the orders of Prince Kámrán, then governor of Kandahár. The second, which has been partly defaced, seems to have been executed after Bábar's death by Prince 'Askari, to whom Kámrán entrusted the government of Kandahár at the time when, after their father's death, he began those scandalous intrigues against his brother, the long-suffering Humáyún, which ended in the temporary downfall of the dynasty. The third part was written and set up seventy years later by Mir Ma'súm, an official in the service of the Emperor Akbar. M. Darmesteter remarks on this portion of the inscription: "Un commentaire de la liste géographique contiendrait toute l'histoire géographique de l'Hindoustan . . . . Cette liste serait un bon point de départ pour remonter dans la géographie historique du moyen âge et pour descendre jusqu'à nos jours" (p. 223).



This, however, is giving the inscription far higher importance than it deserves. It can in no sense serve as a point of departure for the historical geography of mediæval India. Whatever value it may have is of a far slighter description, as will be seen from a comparison between it and two other nearly contemporary documents which have come down to us. I allude to Bábar's own

statement of the provinces he found himself in possession of after the defeat of Ibráhim Lodi at Pá niput (A.D. 1526), and to the elaborately detailed geographical lists in the *Áin-i Akbari* (A.D. 1589). The third part of the Kandahár inscription was executed in A.H. 1007 (A.D. 1597-98), and is thus the latest of the three. It would almost seem as if the writer of it had seen Abul Fazl's work or at least heard of it, for there are many points of similarity between them, and his aspiration that the whole inhabited world may soon be brought into subjection to His Majesty reminds one of the similar expression at the beginning of Abul Fazl's chapter on the Subahs.

The relation of Mir Ma'súm's list to the other two will be clearly seen from the following remarks. I give Ma'súm's list first, then that of Bábar and, where necessary, references to the detailed list in the *Áin-i Akbari*.

## I.

### THE KANDAHÁR LIST.

The list contains two sets of names. There is first (*Journal Asiatique*, vol. xv, p. 205, lines 7-10) a rough description of the boundaries of the Empire as follows:—"When the imperial sway was extended over most of the climes of the habitable world (*rub'-i maskún*), the length whereof from the frontiers of Sarandib and Udesa and Bandkúrakát and Kúr and Bankála to Tatta and Bandar Láhirí and Hurmuz is a distance of nearly a two years' journey, and the breadth thereof from Kábul and Kandahár to the frontier of Dakin and Barár is a journey of nearly a year and a half." At p. 219 of the same article there is a translation in French and in the notes an identification of the places mentioned. It must be remembered, as M. Darmesteter points out, that in Persian inscriptions  is represented by , and aspirated letters are written without the aspiration, while no distinction is made between cerebrals and

dentials. The places mentioned as constituting the eastern frontier are thus (1) Ceylon (which is, of course, a mere empty boast); (2) Orissa; (3) a place to be discussed presently; (4) Gaur; and (5) Bengal; which two last places Ma'súm apparently regards as separate provinces. The western frontier is formed by Tatta, the old capital of Sindh; Bandar Láhirí, near Karáchi; and the island of Ormuz in the Persian Gulf: a sufficiently vague description.

The place omitted above (3) is written in the Persian characters *Bandkúrá Kát*, بندكورات. This M. Darmesteter resolves into *Bánkúrá* and *Kát*, the latter of which he is unable to explain. But the first part of the word cannot be *Bánkúrá*, for three very good reasons:—

1. *Bánkúrá* is not on, or anywhere near, the eastern frontier of Akbar's dominions, but in the extreme west of the modern British province of Bengal.

2. *Bánkúrá* was not subject to Akbar, nor is it mentioned in the *Aín*. It was not conquered by the Mughals till long after Akbar's time.

3. *Bánkúrá* is merely an English corruption. The real name is बाकुंडा *Bákundá*, and until the days of British rule it was an obscure and very small village. Indeed, it is not much more than that now, though the headquarters of a district.

If we refer to the detailed list given by Ma'súm a little lower down, we find (line 16 on p. 205) two places in Eastern Bengal, *Sunárgáon* and *Ghorághát*, one following the other. The first of these, *Sunárgáon*, was a famous port, and as such was often spoken of as *Bandar*. It seems to me that in line 8 the name has been omitted by a mistake of the sculptor, and that what Ma'súm meant to write, and probably did write, was بندر کورات *Bandar Ghorághát*, and a ر has dropped out either in the carving or in the transcript made by the Mirzá in 1889. *Bandar* would refer to *Sunárgáon*, and the next place of importance on the north-east frontier is *Ghorághát*. It is even not

impossible that Ma'súm may have originally written "Bandar Sunárgáon wa Ghorághát."

The second set of names is much longer. Ma'súm says: "It should not be concealed that between the boundaries mentioned above there are many provinces, cities, and forts. It would be difficult to mention them all, but a few are cited for the sake of brevity. This is the list"; then follow the names of 106 places, some of which are towns or fortresses, while others are provinces. As M. Darmesteter has correctly identified most of them, it will be sufficient to follow his list, supplying omissions and noting some instances in which a different identification seems called for.

First comes the province of Orissa. Udesá should be read, not Adisa (D.).<sup>1</sup> So also Jagannáth, not Jagnáth.

In Bengal we have Sátgáon, and next to it, in contempt of all geography, Chatgáon, which the English have corrupted into Chittagong. Ma'súm seems to have taken this name from Abul Fazl, for it is well known that Chittagong was not conquered by the Mughals until the reign of Aurangzeb.

Then we go back to Western Bengal again with Bardwán and Sulaimánábád, the capital of the Sarkár of that name. Next comes a word written پيرنيہ which D. omits. It can hardly be Purniya, as that name occurs a little lower down; and at p. 229, l. 20, he gives a variant پيرنيز. Judging from the situation following upon Sulaimánábád, I should conjecture that the place meant is Pandúa or Panrúa, an ancient town mentioned in the Áin.<sup>2</sup> It had probably got to be written Panrúa, which would easily slip into پرنیہ for پيرنيہ.

The other names in Bengal are Sunárgáon, Ghorághát, Shírpúr Múrchá (written میرچہ with *i* for *ú*, a similar corruption to Panrúa for Panrúa), Purniya, Tájpur, Gaur, Tánda, and Ágmahal (Rájmahal), all well-known places and all mentioned in the Áin.

<sup>1</sup> To avoid repetition the letter D. stands for M. Darmesteter's name.

<sup>2</sup> See my article on Súbah Bengal, J.R.A.S., January, 1896, p. 99.

In Behár first comes Mungir (Monghyr), then the provinces of Behár (south of Ganges) and Tirhut (north of Ganges) and Házipúr. The next word is in the Persian text *بيہ*, which D. renders Biyat and explains by Bihiya. This seems rather doubtful, as Bihiya, though mentioned in the *Áin*, was always a small place and hardly of sufficient importance to be selected as one of the principal towns in Bihár. It will be observed that the consonants of this word will serve equally well for Patna: *پتنہ* may be pointed just as easily as *بيہ*. In fact, the consonants suit Patna better than Bihiya, for the latter is correctly written *بيہا* Bihíyá. It would be surprising if the great flourishing and famous city of Patna should be omitted, while an obscure place like Bihiya (wrongly spelled too) were inserted. I should therefore prefer to read Patna. The Mirza who made the copy used by D. may easily have mistaken the vowel points in this, as he has in several other instances. Patna is mentioned in the *Áin* under Sarkár Bihár, with two forts.<sup>1</sup>

Rahtál is obviously a mistake for Ruhtás or Rohtás, the great hill fortress so celebrated in history, Sher Sháh's stronghold. Sahasráam and Chausá are also well known places.

The list now passes into Súbah Ilahábás (Allahabad), the next province, going westwards, to Behár. Here we have a somewhat capricious selection of names, though on the whole fairly representative. Chausá was in Todar Mal's lists, probably in Behár, though the reading is doubtful. Gházipúr, Chunár, Banáras, and Jaunpúr are well known. The next place is given by D. as Kar (?), and in a note he suggests that it may mean Garh = 'fort.' The correct reading is, I think, Karra *كِرّہ*. It was one of the Sarkárs of Súbah Ilahábás.<sup>2</sup> The town is on the right bank of the Ganges, not far from Mánikpúr on the left, and in Indian

<sup>1</sup> See my article on Súbah Bihár, J.A.S.B., liv, 162.

<sup>2</sup> See Jarrett's "*Áin*," vol. ii, p. 167, for Karrah, and p. 164 for Mánikpúr.

historians the two places are constantly mentioned in conjunction as Karra-Mánikpúr. The latter was also one of the Sarkárs of Súbah Ilahábás.

The next two places, Kálpí and Kálinjar, have been put in the wrong order, Kálinjar, the well-known fortress in Bundelkhand, being further to the east than Kálpí, the other strong place on the Jamná. Then the list crosses the Jamná to Etáwah and Kanauj, where it crosses the Ganges into Oudh. The spelling Laknod is noteworthy, the Áin and Bábar's list write Lakhnau, the final syllable of the original name, Lakhnauti, having disappeared, though in Ma'súm's list the final *d* is a reminiscence of it. The only other places in this Súbah are Od = Audh or Avadh, the ancient Ayudhyá, and Bahráich.

Then we come to Rohilkhand, in which only three places are mentioned—Sambhal, Amrohá, and Badáon. The first and last of these give names to Sarkárs of Súbah Delhi, the second is a town in Sarkár Sambhal.

The list then crosses the Ganges into the Doáb, and mentions Kol and Jaláli, which D. treats as one name. Kol or Koil, the celebrated fortress at Aligarh, is, however, some twenty miles or so west of the town of Jaláli. The next place, Shamsábád, is outside the Doáb, west of the Jamná, a few miles south of Ágra. Then we go off southwards, taking the well-known cities and fortresses of Ágra, Gwálior, Chanderi, Ráisin (called in the Áin "one of the famous fortresses of Hindustan"<sup>1</sup>), Sárangpúr, Ujjayin, Mándú (or Málwah Mándú as it stands in the inscription), and Hindia on the Narbadda; all of which but the two first are in Súbah Málwah. Next Berár is mentioned, but none of its towns, unless the fortress-rock of Asírgarh and the town of Burhánpúr, which come next, are to be considered as in it.

The place written تطربار Tatarbár, is really نظربار, a mistake of dots only as between these two words, but there is a string of mistakes if we include the Áin. The

<sup>1</sup> Jarrett's "Áin," vol. ii, p. 199.

place meant is Nandarbár, a town on the Tápti a little above Súrat. نندربار is often corrupted into نذر بار, Nazarbár, in MSS. of the Áin, the dot over the second *n* having been read as belonging to the following ذ. Then the composer of the inscription has altered ذ into ظ, which is not surprising, as both letters are pronounced *z* in India.

Then follow the principal places in Gujarát—Súrat (with ص), Bharoch, Baroda, Muhammadabad (near Kaira), Khambát (Cambay), Diu (the Portuguese settlement), Júnágarh, Nawánagar, and Kachh, ending with Ahmadábád and the native state of Idar. Patan Baharwála, which D. correctly surmises to be Nahrwála, is for Anhilwára. Going northwards, we have Jálor, Sirohi, Mirtá, Jodhpúr the capital of Márwár, and Jesalmer. The next name, Nágor, brings us to Northern Márwár, whence by a long jump we land at Nárol, 150 miles off, the capital of a Sarkár of Súbah Ágra. Then we are taken southwards again to Ajmer and Ranthambhor, and a place written لنبلير, which is unintelligible,<sup>1</sup> whence we return to the neighbourhood of Ágra again. Biána, a famous place, and Fathpúr (probably Fathpúr Sikri) lead to Muttra (Mathurá), Delhi, Pánipat, Máhim (an obscure place west of Pánipat), Hisár Firoza, and on to Thánesar and Sirhind, whence we make another surprising jump back to Tijárah, an old Sarkár of Súbah Ágra, now in the native state of Alwar, some 200 miles south of Sirhind. Then follows one of the numerous places called Sultánpúr, and we then go on into the Panjab with Jalandar, Láhor, Kalánúr, Nagarkot, and Rohtás (the fortress built by Sher Shah near Jhelam as a defence against the Gakkhars, and called after his stronghold in Behár); thence to Aṭak (Attock), diverging to Jamú and on again to Jalálábád, skipping back to Bherá on the Jhelam, and thence to Ghaznín in the heart of Afghanistan; lastly, returning to the Panjab at Shor Patan Shaikh Farid, Multan, Dodai (which D.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Beveridge's suggestion that the place mentioned is Kambalmír or Kamalmír, a now obscure place in Ajmer territory, seems correct; *l* for *k* is a common mistake in MSS. and inscriptions. See Jarrett's "Áin," ii, 268, and Gazetteer of India, viii, 287.

considers to be Rohri, but this is very doubtful), and Uchh. The list closes with Bhakkar and Sehván, both well-known places on the Indus, Umrkot, Akbar's birthplace in the desert, and Tattá the capital of Lower Sindh.

## II.

### BÁBAR'S LIST.

At p. 334 of his *Memoirs* (Erskine's translation) Bábar says that the dominions conquered by him from the Lodis extended from "Bherá to Bibár"; this somewhat alliterative phrase is often used by him in his *Memoirs* to indicate the whole extent of his Indian dominions. It covers the whole country from the Jhelam in the west to the Kúsi in the east, and it will be seen that it excludes a very large portion of the country mentioned in the Kandahár inscription. Bábar then goes on to allude to "a detailed statement" of the revenue and provinces of the conquered area. Erskine was unable to find this statement when he was translating the *Memoirs*, but at p. 541 of vol. i of his *History* he gives it, with the vague and unsatisfactory remark that he found it "in a manuscript translation or paraphrase of parts of Babar's commentaries now in my possession." He unfortunately does not tell us who was the author of this paraphrase, whether Abdurrahím or some one else, so that we cannot be sure that the list is either authentic or contemporaneous with the *Memoirs*; and as there seems to be only one copy of it extant there is no means of correcting or restoring ambiguous names and phrases. Perhaps a search in the British Museum and other libraries might bring to light other copies of this very valuable statement. Even in its present evidently corrupt condition it can be made use of by the light of contemporary authorities to define roughly, though far from precisely, the extent of Bábar's conquests in India, and it may therefore serve as a standard of comparison with the Kandahár list.



The names of twenty-five provinces are thus stated. It should here be noted that as Erskine does not give the original Persian text we have to work from his transliterations of the names of places in Roman characters, and Erskine is throughout his works very careless and inconsistent in the spelling of Indian words, as well as loose in his translation of Persian sentences. I restore, as far as possible, the correct spellings.

1. "The Sarkár on the other side of the Satlaj, Bherá, Láhor, Siálkot, Dipálpúr, etc." The "other side" means evidently the side furthest from Delhi, i.e. the western side. This item practically includes all the northern Panjab, as far west as the Jhelam river. It does not include the trans-Indus country nor Multán. The former Bábar seems to have regarded as part of his Kábul territory, and the latter was not conquered from the Lodis, but was surrendered to Bábar at the close of A.D. 1526 by the Arghuns of Sindh.

Bherá, which Erskine persistently misspells Bhíra, is a well-known town, now on the eastern or left bank of the Jhelam, but from several passages in the *Memoirs* it was in Bábar's time evidently on the right or western bank, and the territory attached to it seems to have included all the Salt Range as far as Kálábágh on the Indus. This view is confirmed by Cunningham, "*Ancient Geography*," p. 155, who found the ruins of the older Bherá on the west bank. In his first invasion of India in A.D. 1519 (*Memoirs*, p. 254), Bábar says that "the countries of Behreh, Khusháb, Chanáb, and Chaniút" had long been in the possession of the Turks; he therefore considered them his own domains. In another place he says he claims them as having been conquered by Timúr (ib., p. 255). Behreh is, of course, Bherá. Khusháb is on the west bank of the Jhelam below Shahpur, and its territory comprises the southern

part of the Sindh Ságar Duáb as that of Bherá does the northern. Chenáb apparently means the Chaj Duáb (between the Chenáb and Jhelam rivers); and Chiniot, a town on the Ravi near Gugaira, the Rechna Duáb. In the list we are now considering these older names have given place to Láhor for the Bári Duáb, Siálkot for the northern Rechna Duáb, Dipálpúr for the southern Bári Duáb, and the "etc." for the rest of the country as far as the Satlaj. But there are no boundaries and the description is excessively vague.

2. "Sirhind and its dependencies." This vague description covers the country now called the Cis-Satlaj, i.e. from the Satlaj to the Jamná. The ancient town of Sirhind is in the northern part of this territory, about half-way between Ambála and Ludiána, or rather nearer to the latter. The spelling Sirhind and the derivation from *Sari-i hind*, 'head of India,' are an afterthought. The place could never at any period of its history have been correctly described as the 'head of India,' neither in the sense of the chief town nor in that of the frontier or beginning of the country. Cunningham ("Ancient Geography," p. 145) shows that in Sanskr. it was written Sirindha **सिरींध**. Provisionally the extent of the Sirhind territory may be assumed to be the same as that of Akbar's Sarkár of Sirhind in Súbah Delhi,<sup>1</sup> Akbar's divisions of territory being admittedly based on previously existing divisions.
3. Hisár Firúza. This well-known town and fort was also the capital of one of Akbar's Sarkárs in Súbah Delhi. This with Sarhind makes up the whole of the Cis-Satlaj, and we shall probably not be far wrong if we assume that the extent of Bábar's Hisár Firúza was identical with Akbar's.
4. "The capital (dár ul mulk) Delhi in the (Míán) Duáb." Thus Erskine. What the original Persian text was

<sup>1</sup> Jarrett's "Aín," vol. ii, p. 295.

we unfortunately do not know. The city of Delhi itself is, as we know, not in the Duáb between the Jamná and Ganges, but the greater part of Akbar's Sarkár Delhi is in the Duáb, and probably this is what is meant. But the point cannot be decided till the Persian text can be found.

5. Mewát. This corresponds nearly to Akbar's Sarkárs of Tijárah and Alwar, Súbah Ágra,<sup>1</sup> and to the modern native state of Alwar. Here Erskine gives an obscure sentence, which from his transliteration appears to have run *كه در میان اسکندر داخل نبوده*, and which he interprets to mean, "which was not included in Sikander Lodi's revenue roll." It may be so, but the Persian words will hardly bear that meaning; some word has apparently been omitted after *miyán*, unless *میان* is a mistake for *بیان* *biyán*, 'account' or 'description.' Here again we must wait until the Persian text can be found. Mewát was constantly in rebellion, even after Bábar's conquest, and was nearly always so under the Lodis.
6. Biána. This well-known place was in Akbar's time a parganah of Sarkár Ágra in the Súbah of the same name. It is now in the native state of Bhartpúr. Bábar's entry probably includes so much of Súbah Ágra as lay west of the Jamná, as will be seen from the next two entries.
7. Ágra. This entry, from the smallness of the revenue, probably includes only the royal city itself, with perhaps the immediate environs.
8. Mián e Vilaet (Miyán-i viláyat). This, like the similar remark under Delhi, refers apparently to that portion of Súbah Ágra which lay within the Duáb. But the use of viláyat in this sense is peculiar.
9. Guáliar. Gwálior was one of the Sarkárs of Súbah Ágra. In Akbar's time the revenue was 29,683,649 dams, which may be compared with Sikandar Lodi's revenue of 22,357,450 tankas.

<sup>1</sup> Jarrett's "Áin," ii, pp. 191, 192.

10. Kálpi, Sehindeh, etc. This entry is vague. Kálpi is the celebrated fortress on the Jamná, but I cannot explain Sehindeh, and suspect a mistranscription.
11. Kanauj. The ancient town on the Ganges, capital of a Sarkár of Súbah Ágra.
12. Sambala. Sambhal, a Sarkár of Súbah Delhi, comprising southern and western Rohilkhand. Here it seems to indicate the whole of Rohilkhand, as no other place in that neighbourhood is mentioned. Much of north-eastern Rohilkhand was at this time uninhabited.
13. Laknau and Baksar. Here there is probably some mistake, as it is not likely that two places so far apart as Lucknow and Buxar would be mentioned together. Erskine is doubtful as to the reading of the latter word.
14. Khairábád. North-western Oudh.
15. Oud and Behraich. Oudh implies Sarkár Avadh (Ayudhya), a portion of the modern kingdom lying south-west of the Sarayu or Ghogra river, while Bahráich is on the north-eastern bank and comprises most of northern Oudh.
16. Juánpur. Jaunpúr, a Sarkár of Súbah Allahabad, comprising most of the country between the Ganges and Ghográ.
17. Karrá and Mánikpúr. The two Sarkárs of Súbah Allahabad, which lie opposite each other on the Ganges above that city. They are constantly mentioned together in Indian history.
18. Behar. Refers to so much of the Súbah of that name as lies south of the Ganges, the region north of the Ganges being mentioned under other entries.
19. Sirwár. This was the ancient name of the country "across the Sarayu" (it is contracted from Sarayupára), corresponding to the modern district of Gorakhpúr. In Akbar's time, however, some portions of the country on the south of the river were included in Sarwár.

20. Sárán. A Sarkár of Súbah Behár and a modern district between the Ganges and Gandak rivers.
21. Chipáran. Meant for Champáran, the district north of the Gandak adjacent to Gorakhpur and Tirhut.
22. Gondleh. Probably meant for Gondah, a district between Sarwár and Bahráich in North-east Oudh.
23. Tirhut. The northern portion of Súbah Behár, between the Ganges and the Nepalese Terai. This large tract of country seems merely to have been tributary, not fully conquered and amalgamated with the empire. It was often, and for long periods, subject to the independent kings of Bengal.
24. Rantanbor. Ranthambhor (रणस्तम्भपुर Rāṇa-stambhāpūra, 'city of the pillar of war'<sup>1</sup>), the historic fortress, a Sarkár of Súbah Ajmer. Apparently only three parganahs—Boli, Milarna, and Chatsu—all of which are mentioned in the Aín, paid revenue. The rest of the Sarkár is included under heading 26.
25. Nagor. In Marwár. It was a Sarkár of Súbah Ajmer.

Then follow the names of five Rájás, to only two of whom is a locality assigned—

26. (a) Rájá Bikarmájit from Rantbor (Ranthambhor), the rest of the Sarkár (exclusive of the parganahs mentioned in heading 25), which apparently only paid tribute, not revenue; and are thus to be regarded as not actually conquered, but only tributary.
- (b) Rájá Kálinjarí. This entry seems to show that Bundelkhand was also only tributary, not conquered, territory.
- (c) Rájá Barsang Deo (? Bír Singh). } It is not stated what
- (d) Rájá Bikam Deo. } were the territories
- (e) Rájá Bikam Chand. } of these chiefs.

<sup>1</sup> Jarrett's "Aín," vol. ii, p. 274. Not as Colebrook renders it, 'Bee of the pillar of war,' which is meaningless. He evidently took *bhor* to be = *bhaṃr* (Skr. *bhramara* 'a bee'). But it is Prakrit Rāṇa-thambha-úra, where *úra* is for *púra* by a well-known rule.

The comparison of these lists would be rendered easier by a map. But the places themselves may without much difficulty be found on any good map of India. It will be seen from the above remarks that the Kandahár list is a mere superficial summary of names chosen at random without any system, probably just as they happened to occur to the worthy Ma'súm's recollection at the moment.

---