

Notes on the Babur-nama

Author(s): Annette S. Beveridge

Source: *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Apr., 1914, (Apr., 1914), pp. 440-451

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25189172>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*

The following, therefore, are some of the syllables used for the personal pronouns of the verb in Sumerian :—

“ I ” : *a-, un-, an-, in-, en-, ma.*

“ Thou ” : *e-, (ib-e-, ba-e-, be-, bi-e-), un-, an-, in-, en-.*

“ He ” : *un-, an-, in-, en-, ub-, ab-, ib-, eb-, u-, a-, i-, e-, ba-an-, ni-, bi-.*

“ We,” “ us,” “ to us ” : *mea, ma, ma-ra.*

“ You ” : *ene, enea, menšen-, unšen-, anšen-, inšen-, enšen-.*

“ They ” : *enene.* Also the same prefixes as in the singular (see “ he ”), with the plural termination *-eš (-ieš)* suffixed to the root.

It will thus be seen that the Sumerian method of expressing the persons of the verb was very complex, and, in writing, made for considerable obscurity. In speaking, however, intonation must have played an important part, as it did in Chinese. As far as they go, therefore, the Sumerian pronouns support the late de Lacouperie's and the Rev. Dr. C. J. Ball's contention, that Sumerian and Chinese are closely connected.

Upon the language in general it will suffice to mention Dr. Stephen Langdon's *Sumerian Grammar* (Geuthner, 1912), already referred to.

THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES.

NOTES ON THE BABUR-NAMA

- I. Nagarahār and Nīng-nahār.
- II. Dara-i-nūr.
- III. The wines of Dara-i-nūr.
- IV. Of Bihbūd Beg ; and of Bābur's vassal-coinage.

I. On the names *Nangrahār* and *Nīng-nahār*

Those who consult books and maps about the riverain tract between the Safed-koh (Spin-ghur) and (Anglicé) the

Kābul-river find its name in several forms, the most common being Nangrahār and Nangnahār (with variant vowels). It would be useful to establish a European book-name for the district. As European opinion differs about the origin and meaning of the names now in use, and as a good deal of interesting circumstance gathers round the small problem of a correct form (there may be two), I offer about the matter what has come into the restricted field of my own work, premising that I do this merely as one who drops a casual pebble on the cairn of observation already long rising for scholarly examination.

A. The origin and meaning of the names.

I have met with three opinions about the origin and meaning of the names found now and earlier. To each one of them obvious objection can be made. They are:—

1. That all forms now in use are corruptions of the Sanscrit word Nagarahāra, the name of the Town-of-towns which in the *dū-āb* of the Bārān-sū and Sūrkh-rūd left the ruins Masson describes in Wilson's *Ariana Antiqua*. But if this is so, why is the Town-of-towns multiplied into the nine of Na-nagrahār (Nangrahār)?¹

2. That the names found represent Sanscrit *nawā vihāra*, nine monasteries, an opinion the Gazetteer of India of 1907 has adopted from Bellew. But why precisely nine monasteries? Nine appears an understatement.

3. That Nang (Ning or Nung) -nahār verbally means nine streams, (Bābur's Tūqūz-rūd,) an interpretation of long standing (Section B *infra*). But whence *nang*, *ning*, *nung*, for nine? Such forms are not in Persian, Turkī or Pushtu dictionaries, and, as Sir G. A. Grierson assures me, do not come into the Linguistic Survey.

¹ Another but less obvious objection will be mentioned later.

B. On nang, ning, nung for nine.

Spite of their absence from the natural homes of words, however, the above sounds have been heard and recorded as symbols of the number nine by careful men through a long space of time.

The following instances of the use of "Nangnahār" show this, and also show that behind the variant forms there may be not a single word but two of distinct origin and sense.

1. In Chinese annals two names appear as those of the district and town (I am not able to allocate their application with certainty). The first is Na-kie-lo-ho-lo, the second Nang-g-lo-ho-lo and these, I understand to represent Nagarahāra and Nang-nahār, due allowance being made for Chinese idiosyncrasy.¹

2. Some 900 years later (1527–30 AD.) Bābur also gives two names, Nagarahār (as the book-name of his *tūmān*) and Nīng-nahār.² He says the first is found in several histories (B.N. f. 131*b*); the second will have been what he heard and also presumably what appeared in revenue accounts; of it he says, "it is nine torrents" (*tūqūz-rūd*).

3. Some 300 years after Bābur, Elphinstone gives two names for the district, neither of them being Bābur's

¹ Julien notes (*Voyages des pèlerins Boudhistes*, ii, 90), "Dans les annales des Song on trouve Nang-go-lo-ho, qui répond exactement à l'orthographe indienne Nangarahāra, que fournit l'inscription découvert par le capitaine Kittoe" (JASB. 1848). The reference is to the Ghoswāra inscription, of which Professor Kielhorn has also written (*Indian Antiquary*, 1888), but with departure from Nangarahāra to Nagarahāra.

² The scribe of the Haidarābād Codex appears to have been somewhat uncertain as to the spelling of the name. What is found in histories is plain, N : g : r : hār. The other name varies; on first appearance (fol. 131*b*) and also on fols. 144 and 154*b*, there is a vagrant dot below the word, which if it were above would make Nīng-nahār. In all other cases the word reads N : g : nahār. Nahār is a constant component, as is also the letter *g* (or *k*).

book-name, "Nangrahaur¹ or Nungnahaur, from the nine streams which issue from the Safed-koh, *nung* in Pushtoo signifying *nine*, and *nahaura*, a stream" (*Caubul*, i, 160).

4. In 1881 Colonel H. S. Tanner had heard, in Nūr-valley on the north side of the Kābul-water, that the name of the opposite district was Ning-nahār and its meaning Nine-streams. He did not get a list of the nine and all he heard named do not flow from Safed-koh.

5. In 1884 Colonel H. G. McGregor gives two names with their explanation, "Ningrahar and Nungnihar; the former is a corruption of the latter word² which in the Afghān language signifies nine rivers or rivulets." He names nine, but of them six only issue from Safed-koh.

6. I have come across the following instances in which the number nine is represented by other words than *na* (*ni* or *nu*); viz. the *nenhan* of the Chitrāli Kāfir and the *noun* of the Panj-ābi, recorded by Leech,—the *nyon* of the Khowāri and the *huncha* of the Boorishki, recorded by Colonel Biddulph.

The above instances allow opinion that in the region concerned and through a long period of time, nine has been expressed by *nang* (*ning* or *nung*) and other nasal or high palatal sounds, side by side with *na* (*ni* or *nu*). The whole matter may be one of nasal utterance,³ but

¹ Some writers express the view that the medial *r* in this word indicates descent from Nagarahāra, and that the medial *n* of Elphinstone's second form is a corruption of it. Though this might be, it is true also that in local speech *r* and *n* often interchange, e.g. Chighār- and Chighān-sarāi, Sūhār and Sūhān (in Nūr-valley).

² This asserts *n* to be the correct consonant, and connects with the interchange of *n* and *r* already noted.

³ Since writing the above I have seen Laidlaw's almost identical suggestion of a nasal interpolated in Nagarahāra (JASB. 1848, art. on Kittoe). The change is of course found elsewhere; is not Tānk for Tāq an instance?

since a large number of tribesmen express nine by a word containing a nasal sound, should that word not find place in lists of recognized symbols of sounds ?

C. Are there two names of distinct origin ?

1. Certainly it makes a well-connected story of decay in the Sanscrit word Nagarahāra to suppose that tribesmen, prone by their organism to nasal utterance, pronounced that word Nangrahār, and by force of their numbers made this corruption current,—that this was recognized as the name of the town while the Town-of-towns was great or in men's memory, and that when through the decay of the town its name became a meaningless husk, the wrong meaning of the Nine-streams should enter into possession.

But as another and better one can be put together, this fair-seeming story may be baseless. Its substitute has the advantage of explaining the double sequence of names shown in Section B.

The second story makes all the variant names represent one or other of two distinct originals. It leaves Nagrahār to represent Nagarahāra, the dead town; it makes the nine torrents of Safed-koh the primeval sponsors of Nīng-nahār, the name of the riverain tract. Both names, it makes contemporary in the relatively brief interlude of the life of the town. For the fertilizing streams will have been the dominant factors of settlement and of revenue from the earliest times of population and government. They arrest the eye where they and their ribbons of cultivation space the riverain waste; they are obvious units for grouping into a sub-government. Their name has a counterpart in adjacent Panj-āb; the two may have been given by one dominant power, how long ago, in what tongue matters not. The riverain tract, by virtue of its place on a highway of transit, must have been inhabited

long before the town Nagarahāra was built, and must have been known by a name. What better one than Nine-streams can be thought of ?

2. Bellew is quoted by the Gazetteer of India (ed. 1907) as saying, in his argument in favour of *nawā vihāra*, that no nine streams are found to stand sponsor, but modern maps shew nine outflows from Safed-koh to the Kābul-river between the Sūrkh-rūd and Daka, while if affluents to the former stream be reckoned, more than nine issue from the range.¹

Against Bellew's view that there are not nine streams, is the long persistence of the number nine in the popular name (Sect. B.).

It is also against his view that he supposes there were nine monasteries, because each of the nine must have had its fertilizing water.

Bābur says there were nine ; there must have been nine of significance ; he knew his *tūmān* not only by frequent transit but by his revenue accounts. A supporting point in those accounts is likely to have been that the individual names of the villages on the nine streams would appear, with each its payment of revenue.

3. In this also is some weight of circumstance against taking Nagarahāra to be the parent of Ning-nahār:—An earlier name of the town is said to be Udyānapūra, Garden town.² Of this Bābur's Adinapūr is held to be a corruption ; the same meaning of garden has survived on approximately the same ground in Bālā-bāgh and Rozābād.

Nagarahāra is seen, therefore, to be a parenthetical

¹ These affluents I omit from main consideration as sponsors because they are less obvious units of taxable land than the direct affluents of the Kābul-river, but they remain a reserve force of argument and may or may not have counted in Bābur's nine.

² Cunningham, i, 42. My topic does not reach across the Kābul-river to the greater Udyānapūra of Beal's *Buddhist Records* (p. 119) nor raise the question of the extent of that place.

name between others which are all derived from gardens. It may shew the promotion of a "Garden-town" to a "Chief-town". If it did this, there was relapse of name when the Chief-town lost status. Was it ever applied beyond the delta? If it were, would it, when dead in the delta, persist along the riverain tract? If it were not, *cadit quæstio*; the suggestion of two names distinct in origin, is upheld.

Certainly the riverain tract would fall naturally under the government of any town flourishing in the delta, the richest and most populous part of the region. But for this very reason it must have had a name older than parenthetical Nagarahāra. That inevitable name would be appropriately Ning-nahār (or Na-nahār) Nine-streams; and for a period Nagarahāra would be the Chief-town of the district of Na-nahār (Nine-streams).¹

D. Bābur's statements about the name.

What the cautious Bābur says of his *tūmān* of Ning-nahār has weight:—

1. That some histories write it Nagarahār (Ḥaidarābād Codex, f. 131 b);
2. That Ning-nahār is nine torrents, *i.e.* mountain streams, *tūquz-rud*;
3. That (the) nine torrents issue from Safed-koh (f. 132 b).

Of his first statement can be said, that he will have seen the book-name in histories he read, but will have heard Ning-nahār, probably also have seen it in current letters and accounts.

Of his second,—that it bears and may be meant to bear two senses, (*a*) that the *tūmān* consisted of nine torrents,—their lands implied; just as he says "Asfara is four

¹ The strong form Ning-nahār is due to euphonic impulse.

bālūks (sub-divisions f. 3*b*)—(b) that *tūqūz rūd* translates *nīng-nahār*.

Of his third,—that in English its sense varies as it is read with or without the definite article *Turkī* rarely writes, but that either sense helps out his first and second, to mean that verbally and by its constituent units *Ning-nahār* is nine-torrents; as verbally and by its constituents *Panj-āb* is five-waters.

E. Last words.

Detailed work on the *Kābul* section of the *Bābur-nāma* has stamped two impressions so deeply on me, that they claim mention, not as novel or as special to myself, but as set by the work.

The first is of extreme risk in swift decision on any problem of words arising in North *Afghānistān*, because of its local concourse of tongues, the varied utterance of its unlettered tribes resident or nomad, and the frequent translation of proper names in obedience to their verbal meanings. Names lie there too in *strata*, relics of successive occupation—Greek, *Turkī*, *Hindī*, *Pushtū* and tribes *galore*.

The second is that the region is an exceptionally fruitful field for first-hand observation of speech, the movent ocean of the uttered word, free of the desiccated symbolism of alphabets and books.

The following books, amongst others, have prompted the above note:—

Ghoswāra Inscription, Kittoe, *JASB.*, 1848, and Kielhorn, *Indian Antiquary*, 1888, p. 311.

H. Sastri's *Rāmucārita*, Introduction, p. 7 (*ASB. Memoirs*).

Cunningham's *Ancient India*, vol. i.

Beal's *Buddhist Records*, i, xxxiv, and cii, 91.

Leech's *Vocabularies*, *JASB.*, 1838.

The writings of Masson (*Travels and Ariana Antiqua*),
Wood, Vigne, etc.

Raverty's *Ṭabaqāt-i-nāsirī*.

Jarrett's *Āyīn-i-akbarī*.

P.R.G.S. for maps, 1879; Macnair on the Kafirs, 1884;
Tanner's *On the Chugānī and neighbouring tribes
of Kāfiristān*, 1881.

Simpson's *Nagurahāra*, JASB., xiii.

Biddulph's *Dialects of the Hindū-kush*, JRAS.

Gazette of India, 1907, art. Jalalābād.

Bellew's *Races of Afghānistān*.

II. *On the name Dara-i-nūr.*

Some European writers have understood the name Dara-i-nūr to mean Valley of light, but natural features and also the artificial one mentioned by Colonel H. G. Tanner (*infra*), make it better to read the component *nūr*, not as Persian *nūr*, light, but as Pushtū *nūr*, rock. Hence it translates as Valley of Rocks, or Rock-valley. The region in which the valley lies is rocky and boulder-strewn; its own waters flow to the Kābul-river east of the water of Chitrāl. It shews other names composed with *nūr*, in which *nūr* suits if it means rock, but is inexplicable if it means light, e.g. Nūr-lām (Nūr-fort), the master-fort in the mouth of Nūr-valley, standing high on a rock between two streams, as Bābur and Tanner have both described it from eye-witness,—Nūr-gal (village), a little to the north-west of the valley,—Aūlūgh-nūr (great rock), at a crossing mentioned by Bābur, higher up the Bārān-water,—and Koh-i-nūr (Rocky-mountains), which there is ground for taking as the correct form of the familiar "Kumar" of some European writers (Raverty's *Notes*, p. 106). The dominant feature in these places dictates reading *nūr* as rock; so too the work done in Nūr-valley

with boulders, of which Colonel H. G. Tanner's interesting account is subjoined (P.R.G.S. 1881, p. 284).

“Some 10 miles from the source of the main stream of the Nur-valley the Dameneh stream enters, but the waters of the two never meet; they flow side by side about three-quarters of a mile apart for about 12 miles and empty themselves into the Kunar river by different mouths, each torrent hugging closely the foot of the hills at its own side of the valley. Now, except in countries where terracing has been practised continuously for thousands of years, such unnatural topography as exists in the valley of Nur is next to impossible. The forces which were sufficient to scoop out the valley in the first instance, would have kept a water-way at the lowest part, into which would have poured the drainage of the surrounding mountains; but in the Nur-valley long-continued terracing has gradually raised the centre of the valley high above the edges. The population has increased to its maximum limit and every available inch of ground is required for cultivation; the people, by means of terrace-walls built of ponderous boulders in the bed of the original single stream, have little by little pushed the waters out of their true course, until they run, where now found, in deep rocky cuttings at the very foot of the hills on either side” (p. 280).

“I should like to go on and say a good deal more about boulders; and while I am about it I may as well mention one that lies back from a hamlet in Shulut, which is so big that a house is built in a fault or crack running across its face. Another pebble lies athwart the village and covers the whole of the houses from that side.”

III. *On the names of two Dara-i-nūr wines.*

From the two names, Arat-tāshī and Sūhān (Suhār)-tāshī, which Bābur gives as those of two wines of the

Dara-i-nūr, it can be inferred that he read *nūr* to mean rock. For if in them *Turkī tāsh*, rock, be replaced by *Pushtū nūr*, rock, two place-names emerge, Arat (-nūri) and Sūhān (-nūri), known in the Nūr-valley.

These may be villages where the wines were grown, but it would be quite exceptional for Bābur to say that wines are called from their villages, or indeed by any name. He says here not where they grow but what they are called.

I surmise that he is repeating a joke, perhaps his own, perhaps a standing local one, made on the quality of the wines. For whether with *tāsh* or with *nūr* (rock), the names can be translated as Rock-saw and Rock-file, and may refer to the rough and acid quality of the wines, rasping and setting the teeth on edge as does iron on stone.

The villages themselves may owe their names to a serrated edge or splintered pinnacle of weathered granite, in which local people, known as good craftsmen, have seen resemblance to tools of their trade.

IV. *Of Bihbūd Beg ; and of Bābur's vassal-coinage.*

A. *Of Bihbūd Beg.*

We have found one further item of information about Bihbūd Beg to add to Bābur's statement that the beg's name was on Husain *Bāi-qarā's* coins, but we have not found Bābur's statement elsewhere. The second item is that Bihbūd Beg was one of Husain's commanders at the battle of Chikmān-sarāi in 876 AH. (1471 AD).¹

We have found also that Husain once had a horse called Bihbūd ; it is mentioned as given to an adversary when a peace was made in 865 AH. (1461 AD).²

¹ *Īhabū's-siyar* iii, 227. For discussion on the *Bih būd* of Husain's coins, JRAS., 1913, 1914, Notes by Dr. Codrington, Mr. M. L. Dames, and Mr. H. Beveridge. For particulars of the Bābur-nāma passage, *Memoirs of Bābur* trs. ASB. Fasc. II, Appendix H.

² *l.c.* iii, 219.

B. Of Bābur's vassal-coinage.

The following historical details narrow the field of numismatic observation on coins believed struck by Bābur as a vassal of Ismā'il *Şafawī*. They are offered because not readily accessible.

The length of Bābur's second term of rule in Transoxiana was not the three solar years of the B.M. Coin Catalogues but did not exceed eight months. He entered Samarkand in the middle of Rajab 917 AH. (c. Oct. 1st, 1511 AD.). He returned to it defeated and fled at once, after the battle of Kūl-i-malik which was fought in Şafar 918 AH. (mid-April to mid-May 1512 AD.). Previous to the entry he was in the field, without a fixed base; after his flight he harboured in small forts till at the end both of 920 AH. and of 1514 AD. he returned to Kābul.

He would not find a full Treasury in Samarkand because the Aūzbegs evacuated the fort at their own time; eight months would not give him large tribute in kind. He failed in Transoxiana because he was the ally of a Shī'a; would coins bearing the Shī'a legend have passed current from a Samarkand mint? These various circumstances suggest that he could not have struck many coins of any kind in Samarkand.

The coins classed in the B.M. Catalogues as of Bābur's vassalage, offer a point of difficulty to readers of his own writings, inasmuch as neither the "Sultān Muḥammad" of No. 652 (gold), nor the "Sultān Bābur Bahādur" of the silver coins enables confident acceptance of them as names he himself would use.

ANNETTE S. BEVERIDGE.

 DURYODHANA AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

On p. 684 of the Journal for 1913 I drew attention to the resemblance of a story about Duryōdhana in the Mahābhārata to a legend about the Queen of Sheba in