

During the Mughal era, a number of contemporary works were written on current events as well as the social, economic and cultural trends followed by the royalty and nobility. Most of these texts form invaluable sources for researching on the Mughal dynasty. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur's autobiography, the *Baburnama*, and the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* by Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat, an account composed by his cousin in 1545-46 CE, remain the most popular texts for studying Babur's reign. The *Baburnama*, also known as the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* or the *Memoirs of Babur*, constitute a first rate account of Babur's own career and the history of his times. It describes the land, with its geography, trade and industry in evocative tones. The *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, on the other hand, introduces the rise of the Mughals under Babur and also sheds light on Humayun. Both these works are valuable for the intricate political culture of Central Asia and Afghanistan during Babur's time.

For assessing Humayun's reign, the *Qanun-i Humayuni*, the *Tazkirat-ul-Vaqiat*, the *Tazkireh-i Humayun va Akbar* and Gulbadan Banu's *Ahval-i Humayun Badshah* are still extensively read. The *Qanun-i Humayuni* (also called *Humayun Namah*) was composed in 1534 CE under Humayun's patronage by Khvandamir, one of his officials. The memoir is an eyewitness account of Humayun's reign, describing court festivities, and buildings erected by the *padshah*. The *Tazkirat-ul-Vaqiat* (also called the *Humayun Shahi*, and the *Tarikh-i-Humayun*) was put together in 1587 CE by Jawhar Aftabchi, Humayun's ewer-bearer. This contemporary account by an attendant, which was later to be revised by Ilahabad Faizi Sarhindi, is a major source on the life and times of Humayun. Next in the corpus of source materials comes the *Tazkireh-i Humayun va Akbar* (1590–91 CE) by Bayazid Bayat, a history of the reigns of Humayun and Akbar from 1542 CE–1591 CE. Emperor Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Banu Begum also wrote her account of her brother's life, the *Ahval-i Humayun Badshah* or the *Humayun Nama*. Interestingly, the term *Ahval* in the title of her text, denotes conditions, circumstances or situations; and her unique account of the everyday lives of the royal family presents many aspects of Mughal life about which very little is known from other sources. The work reflects a feminist perspective and also raises questions on the genre of history writing.)

(*Akbarnama* (1596 CE), the first official history of the Mughal court, was commissioned by Emperor Akbar. Its official and equally voluminous appendix, the *Ain-i Akbari* (an administrative and statistical record of Akbar's government), was written by a close associate and minister of the emperor, Abul Fazl Allami.) Still considered to be one of the most important sources for Emperor Akbar's reign, it holds forth on household administration, court ceremonials, coinage, salaries and ranks, literary and intellectual life. Abdul Qadir Badauni's three-volume *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* is also considered to be

a comprehensive account of Muslim rule in India from the Ghaznavids to Akbar. It is widely believed that Badauni, a severe critic of Akbar's policies, wrote this text in secrecy. It was to be subsequently found, copied and circulated after the death of Akbar. Historians have found this text useful for verifying facts portrayed by Abul Fazl; and also for a fuller picture of the political and religious climate of the time. The *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, written by another of Akbar's courtiers, Nizamuddin Ahmad, offers a more objective account of Akbar's reign; and is therefore considered to be one of the most reliable sources. Yet another text on the period, the *Tarikh-i-Akbar Shahi* of Muhammad Arif Qandahari presents a general survey of Muslim rule in India from Mahmud of Ghazni to the middle of the sixteenth century.)

(Emperor Jahangir's reign has been represented by Khwaja Kamgar Hussaini's *Maasir-i Jahangiri* as well as by Jahangir's autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*.) Another important text from this era was Mutamad Khan's *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri*, which describes the general history of the Mughals in India.

(A number of contemporary historiographers also captured accounts of Emperor Shahjahan's reign; of which Abdul Hamid Lahori's *Padshah Namah* is a comprehensive account of the emperor's life and times. Inayat Khan's *Shahjahan Nama* is another biography that archives Shahjahan's life till his thirtieth year.)

(Emperor Aurangzeb's rule has been compiled by his court historiographer, Mirza Muhammad Kazim, in the *Alamgir Nama*. Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* also covers Aurangzeb's lifetime, besides proffering the results of his political measures.) (The *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan, based on the official accounts of Aurangzeb's rule, covers a major part of his reign; while Shahnawaz Khan's *Maasir-ul-Umara* and Ishwardas Nagaur's *Fatuh-at-i-Alamgiri* give more detailed accounts of Aurangzeb's reign.)