

XX. Bastī-Rām's Account of the Dogra War, and Cunningham's 'Other Information'

Bastī-Rām was a Dogra officer and one of the early Wazirs of Ladakh. His Wazirate lasted from 1847 to 1861 A.D. Cunningham met him in Ladakh, probably in 1847, and asked him to write an account of the Dogra war, to which he agreed. As Bastī-Rām held a high office in the conquered kingdom of Ladakh, his account has a right to appear among the 'Minor Chronicles' of Ladakh. His account of the Dogra war is of particular importance, for the simple reason that it is the earliest ever written. On the other hand, it is in much need of re-editing; for the names contained in it have never been identified with those contained in the later Tibetan accounts of the same war. The original (probably Urdū) text of Bastī-Rām's tale has been lost. What we possess now is Cunningham's English rendering of the same. Cunningham says (p. 332) with regard to it: 'The following account of the Dogra invasion was kindly dictated, at my request, by Mehta Basti Ram, a Hindu Rajput of Káshtwár, now governor of Lé, who was one of the principal officers of the expedition. As an authentic record of an interesting event, of which no other account exists to my knowledge (in 1847 A.D.), I should have preferred giving the narrative almost literally, but I found that in this shape it would entail the insertion of too many footnotes, which would have completely distracted the attention of the reader. I have therefore re-written the account entirely, and have given the Tibetan names, which my knowledge of the localities enabled me to do without much difficulty. The narrative was of course dictated in the first person, for which I have throughout substituted the name of "Dogra" and "the Dogra troops".' Bastī-Rām's account breaks off immediately before the Balti war. The history of the conquest of Baltistan and the two later Tibetan Dogra wars was compiled by Cunningham from 'Other Information'. The correct Tibetan forms of the names have been added by the present author.

ENGLISH TEXT (Cunningham, p. 333)

1. CONQUEST OF LADÁK BY THE DOGRAS

1. The chief officers engaged in this expedition under the Vazir Zorávar Sing were, 1st, Mia Rai Sing; 2nd, Mehta Basti Rám; 3rd, Mirza Rasul Beg; 4th, Rána Zálím Sing; 5th, Singhé Mankotiah; 6th, Mian Tuta (Tibetan, Miyanota); 7th, Sirdar Uttam Sing; and 8th, Vazir Khojah Bhunjah.