



## ‘ABD-AL-ḤAMĪD LĀHŪRĪ

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‘**ABD-AL-ḤAMĪD LĀHŪRĪ**, 17th-century Indo-Persian historian and author of the *Pādšāhnāma*, the official account of the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahān (1037-67/1628-57). Little is known of ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd’s early life, as he did not come into prominence until an advanced age, after he had already retired to the city of Patna in Bihar. Looking for an historian to highlight the major events of his reign, Shah Jahān summoned ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd to the Mughal court on the recommendation of his vizier, Sa’dallāh Khan. After accepting the imperial assignment, ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd commenced his work around 1052/1642 and recorded the events of Shah Jahān’s reign up to 1058/1648. Old age and infirmity compelled him to cease writing and to entrust the remainder of the work to his pupil, Moḥammad Vāreṭ. ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd died on 16 Šavvāl 1064/30 August 1654.

Despite its verbose and flowery style, in which the author perhaps consciously mimicked his predecessor as court historian, [Abu’l-Faẓl ‘Allāmī](#), the *Pādšāhnāma* remains the most important literary authority for Shah Jahān’s reign. Since the final section was not his own and the first section mainly followed another contemporary history (the *Pādšāhnāma* of Mīrzā Amīnā Qazvīnī), ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd is chiefly known for his coverage of the second decade; in this period he was actively writing and recording events as an eyewitness, rather than citing earlier authorities.

Overall, Lāhūrī’s work shares the flat, opaque quality of Persian historiography that has been frequently identified with medieval Indo-Muslim chroniclers. Events do not grow out of prior events, but merely succeed one



another in linear sequence. On the other hand, the *Pādśāhnāma* is a scrupulously accurate chronicle. As the official court historian, the author was, of course, quick to record the generous deeds and victorious exploits of his royal patron. But other aspects of Mughal history are also illuminated by ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd’s account, such as details of the imperial administration—appointments of new nobles, transfers of *ḵājīrs*, pensions, etc.—and the military exploits of Prince Awrangzēb in the Deccan. Significant mention is also made of nonpolitical events such as famines, irrigation projects, and both Christian and Muslim efforts at conversion.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd Lāhūrī, *Pādśāhnāma* (vols. I and II only), Calcutta, 1866-72; extracts translated in Elliot, *History of India* VII, pp. 3-72. Storey, I/1, pp. 574-77.