



'ABD-AL-RAḤĪM KĀN KĀNĀN

'ABD-AL-RAḤĪM KĀN(-E) KĀNĀN B. MOḤAMMAD BAYRAM BEG KĀN KĀNĀN, distinguished general and statesman, patron of artists and poets. He was born at Lahore in 964/1556 (*Ma'āter-e Raḥīmī* II, p. 234) and was of the Bahārlū clan of the Qara Qoyonlū. In 1562, the year following his father's assassination, he was brought to Akbar's court, where he was raised. His teachers were Gāzī Khan Badaḡšī and Moḥammad Amīn Andeḡānī. In 981/1573 he accompanied Akbar in the campaign against Ḥosayn Mīrzā at Ahmadabad. He was appointed governor of Gujerat in 983/1576 and, after this and other services, reader to the king (*mīr 'arż*) in 988/1580. Four years later he became the guardian (*atālīq*) of Prince Salīm (*Ma'āter* II, p. 105; *Ā'in-e Akbarī*, tr., Blochmann, I, p. 355).

'Abd-al-Raḥīm returned to Gujerat and displayed his military skill at the battle of Sarkej, near Ahmadabad, in 992/1584. Disregarding the express royal command to await reinforcements, he attacked and routed the much larger army of Moḡaffar Shah. He thus earned the title *kān kānān*, with promotion to the rank (*manṣab*) of 5,000 (Šāhnavāz Khan, *Ma'āter al-omarā'* I, p. 695; Ferešta, I, p. 265). After several years of further service in Gujerat, he was appointed *vakīl* in 998/1590. In 1591 he was given command of an expedition originally intended to conquer Qandahār. (See, however, *Ṭabaqāt-e Akbarī*, tr., II, p. 632.) He turned, instead, toward Sind, achieving its conquest in 1000/1592 and thus serving Akbar's desire to increase his marine power (Ferešta, II, p. 323).

In 1594 'Abd-al-Raḥīm was dispatched to the Deccan to assist Prince Morād's



expedition. Lack of cooperation between the two caused affairs to proceed slowly. At the battles of Mandore and Āštī in 1005/1597, Kān Kānān gained a major victory over the allied Deccan forces under Sohayl Khan of Bijapur (*Āṭn-e Akbarī*, tr., I, p. 335), only to be recalled to Agra the following year due to Morād’s complaint. After Morād’s death (1006/1598), he was appointed to command the imperial forces under Prince Dānyāl in another expedition to the Deccan (1007/1698-99). Ahmadnagar was taken in 1008/1599, and four years later ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm, still active in the Deccan, was made guardian of the prince, who by then had become his son-in-law.

In 1014/1605 Prince Salīm succeeded to the throne as the emperor Jahāngīr. He sent fresh troops to the Deccan under Prince Parvīz, but ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm performed poorly when his initiative was overruled by the inexperienced princes. (See Jahāngīr’s criticism, *Tūzok-e Jahāngīrī*, tr. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, London, 1909-14, pp. 178-80.) Ahmadnagar was lost, and in 1018/1610 Kān Kānān was recalled to Agra in disgrace. But in 1021/1612 he was again selected, as the only person competent to deal with Deccan affairs, to head a southward expedition. Three years later he conquered Tilangana (northern Madras) and went on to defeat Malek ‘Anbar Ḥabšī of Ahmadnagar and regain the lost territories. In 1618 Kān Kānān’s son Amrallāh, at his direction, campaigned in Gondwana and consequently was raised to the rank of 7,000—the climax of the noble’s rank of *manṣab* (*Ma’āṭer al-omarā’* I, p. 708).

In 1622, with the revolt of Prince Korram (later Shah Jahān) against Jahāngīr, the fortunes of ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm began to decline. In trying to reconcile the two, Kān Kānān was suspected of double-dealing and incurred the wrath of both. He was placed under surveillance; and one of his sons, Dārāb Khan, along with the latter’s son, were executed by order of Mahābat Khan, the royal commander. In 1625, however, Jahāngīr restored ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm’s rank and title (*Ma’āṭer al-omarā’* I, p. 713). He then directed ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm to lead the pursuit of Mahābat Khan, who had by that time rebelled against Jahāngīr. While still conducting field preparations, Kān Kānān became ill at Lahore. He died in Delhi in 1036/1627 at the age of seventy-one. He was buried near the tomb complex of Shaikh Neẓām-al-dīn Awlīā’. ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm’s mausoleum, once a large and imposing edifice, had fallen into ruin by 1849 (T. W. Beale, *Meftāḥ al-tawārīk*, Agra, 1849, p. 364) and was in still worse condition by 1919 (Bašīr-al-dīn, *Vāqē’āt-e dār-al-ḥokūmat-e Dehlī* II, Agra, 1919, p. 702).

Kān Kānān was a handsome man of short stature and medium build. He was eloquent, quick-witted, resourceful and efficient; even when Kān Kānān was a



youth, Akbar used to consult him in political affairs (*Ma'āter-e Raḥīmī* II, p. 106). As a general Kān Kānān was intrepid; many of his victories were the result of quick decision and crafty maneuverings. His statesmanship in the Deccan, over a period of about twenty-eight years, bore similar characteristics, though his inclination to amicable settlements twice led to accusations of treachery from affected members of the royal house. He was said to be able to converse with Europeans in their own language (ibid., II, p. 592; *Tūzok-e Jahāngīrī*, tr., p. 471). In religious outlook he was a liberal Sunnite, kindly disposed to both Shi'ites and Sufis. Kān Kānān composed verse, in Persian, Turkish, and Hindi (even inventing a new meter, *barva*, in the latter language); he could intertranslate Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In 998/1589, at Akbar's direction, he translated the *Bābornāma* from Turkish into Persian with the title *Vāqe'āt-e Bāborī*.

In keeping with his high state, Kān Kānān was a generous patron, maintaining many poets, painters, calligraphers, and bookbinders. "Without his deep love for specific fine arts and his boundless generosity, the stream of poets and artists who came from Iran to seek their fortune in India would surely not have been so large" (A. Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India*, Wiesbaden, 1973, p. 26). Among Kān Kānān's most famous protégés was the Nišāpūrī émigré Naẓīrī, whose *qaṣīdas* in praise of his patron are quoted in *Ma'āter-e Raḥīmī*. 'Abdal-Bāqī has written notes on 103 such poets, giving extracts from their verses in 1,470 pages of *Ma'āter-e Raḥīmī* III. Most celebrated among them are 'Orfī, Naẓīrī's brother Šaraf, Naw'ī, Šekībī, Anīsī (who was Kān Kānān's army paymaster and a daring soldier), Faḡfūr, Voqū'ī, Ḥayātī, Ḥaydar Mo'ammā'ī, 'Aršī, Malek Qomī, and Zohūrī (the last two belonged to the court of the Deccan). Besides their regular salaries, which in some cases rose to 50,000 rupees a year, Kān Kānān favored them with generous grants on the occasion of marriage, festival, or pilgrimage (ibid., pp. 492, 520). Naẓīrī once requested to see 1,000,000 (1 lakh) rupees; he was not only shown the pile but also ordered to carry it home (*Ma'āter al-omarā'* I, p. 708). The staff of Kān Kānān's library consisted of ninety-five accomplished scholars and craftsmen—for example, 'Abd-al-Raḥīm of Herat and Behbūd b. Mīr 'Alī, calligraphers; Mīān Nadīm, illustrator; Moḥammad Ḥosayn, bookbinder; Moḥammad Amīn Korāsānī, gilder and illuminator. Some received annuities of 4,00 silver coins. Among Kān Kānān's painters were Ebrāhīm and Mādho, who represented the Iranian and Indian schools.

To academicians, the poor, dignitaries, and ascetics in Khorasan, Mecca, and



Medina Kān Kānān sent gifts and generous sums which won him wide renown. Among the beneficiaries were the physicians Ḥakīm Moḥammad Bāqer, Jebrīl, Moḥammad Amīn, Moḥammad Nafīs Mašhadī, and Ḥādeq (*Ma’āter-e Raḥīmī* III, pp. 31, 65, 1962). Mīrzā ‘Alī Qabčakī, Mawlānā Oṣūlī, Moḥammad Mo’men (musicians), Moḥammad Šāleḥ (gunmaker), Ebrāhīm (jewel polisher) also enjoyed his patronage (*ibid.*, p. 1682).

‘Abd-al-Raḥīm had six sons, all of whom predeceased him: Īraǰ Šāhnavāz Khan (d. 1028/1619), Dārāb, executed in 1035/1625, Raḥmāndād (d. 1029/1620), Amrallāh, Ḥaydar-qolī, and Qārān. His wife, Māh Bānū, sister of Kān-e A’zam Mīrzā ‘Azīz, also predeceased him, dying at Ambela in 1005/1596-97 (*Akbarnāma* II, p. 612). Of his daughters the accomplished Jānān Begom married Prince Dānyāl in 1007/1599; another daughter married Amīr-al-dīn b. Jamāl-al-dīn Īnǰū.

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