



## 'ABD-AL-RAZZĀQ AWRANGĀBĀDĪ

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'ABD-AL-RAZZĀQ AWRANGĀBĀDĪ (full name, MĪR 'ABD-AL-RAZZĀQ B. MĪR ḤASAN-'ALĪ ḤOSAYNĪ K̄'ĀFĪ AWRANGĀBĀDĪ), titled NAVVĀB ṢAMṢĀM-AL-DAWLA ṢĀHNAVĀZ KHAN ṢAMṢĀM JANG, Mughal official and biographer, chiefly famous as the author of *Ma'āter al-omarā'*. He was descended from the Sayyeds of K̄'āf, and one of his ancestors, Mīr Kamāl-al-dīn, had migrated to India in the reign of Akbar (1556-1605). His great-grandfather, Mīrak Mo'īn-al-dīn, titled Amānat Khan, had been appointed to high offices by the emperors Shah Jahān (1628-1657) and Awrangzēb (1658-1707); for a long time he was prime minister (*dīvān*) of the Deccan, an office later held by several of his descendants.

'Abd-al-Razzāq was born at Lahore in 1111/1700. At the age of fifteen he moved to Awrangābād in the Deccan, where many of his relatives had already settled. Later, he joined the service of Navvāb Āṣaf Jāh, Neẓām of Hyderabad, and by 1732 had risen to the position of *dīvān* of Berar. Ten years later he suffered a setback, siding with the heir-apparent, Nāṣer Jang, in an unsuccessful revolt against Āṣaf Jāh. He was suspended from office, and while awaiting reinstatement (which took place in 1747), he spent the intervening five years in compiling *Ma'āter al-omarā'* (see below). On Āṣaf Jāh's death in 1748, his son and successor Nāṣer Jang appointed 'Abd-al-Razzāq as *dīvān* of the Deccan. In the ensuing political turmoil, however, Nāṣer Jang and his rival claimant, Moẓaffar Jang, were both killed. The next Neẓām, Ṣalābat Jang, appointed



‘Abd-al-Razzāq first as governor of Hyderabad, and in 1753 as prime minister with the title Şamşām-al-dawla Şāhnavāz Khan Şamşām Jang. He succeeded in restoring the country to prosperity, and in 1755, in appreciation for his services, ‘Ālamgīr II (1754-59) awarded him the insignia of *māhī o marāteb*, a privilege usually reserved for princes and nobles of high rank. The period was marked by intense political rivalry between the British and French in south India, and when the French began to influence Şalābat Jang at Awrangābād, ‘Abd-al-Razzāq, in his eagerness to rid the Deccan of French influence, antagonized the French commander, Bussy. The latter’s hostility led to the imprisonment and eventual assassination of ‘Abd-al-Razzāq in May, 1758. He was buried near Awrangābād.

Şāhnavāz Khan, as he is best known, was well versed in the sciences as well as poetry. He specialized in the history of Timurids and their nobles, possessing a private library with a large collection of books in Persian and Arabic. His excellent knowledge of Persian earned him tribute from Iranian scholars who met him. He was a conscientious administrator and scrupulously faithful in performing his religious duties.

Şāhnavāz Khan’s best known work is *Ma’āter al-omarā’*, a meticulous, well researched, and ably written compilation of the biographies of Mughal nobles from the time of Akbar until his own. He left it incomplete, and for a time it was considered lost until salvaged by his friend, Ğolām-‘Alī Āzād Belġrāmī. (For the later history of the text and partial English translation, see: [Āzād Belġrāmī](#) and ‘Abd-al-Ĥayy b. ‘Abd-al-Razzāq.) He also left an incomplete *taḍkera* of poets, *Bahārestān-e soġan*, which likewise was completed by his son, ‘Abd-al-Ĥayy. Şāhnavāz Khan’s letters and miscellaneous writings have been partially collected into manuscript form in Bombay (Storey, I, p. 1097).

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