



## AFSŪS

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**AFSŪS** (AFSŌS), the *taḳalloṣ* of MĪR ŠĪR-‘ALĪ, late 18th century poet and translator of India. He was born at Nayā Šahr. His ancestors, originally from K̄vāf in Iran, came to India and settled in the town of Narnawl near Agra; hence the family was known as Narnawl. His grandfather and his father, Sayyed Moḡaffar ‘Alī Khan, came to Delhi during the reign of the emperor Moḡammad Shah (1719-48) and became associates of the poet ‘Omdat-al-molk Nawwāb Amir Khan Anjām (d. 1747), who was a favorite of the emperor. This must have happened after 1743, when Nawwāb was recalled to the court from his post as governor of Allahabad. When Afsūs was eleven years of age, his father took him to Bengal. At this time Afsūs was studying the *Golestān* and *Dīvān-eWalī* and had started writing Urdu verses; later he also composed Persian poetry. While his father stayed in Azimabad (Patna) till 1765, Afsūs moved to Lucknow in 1763, where he settled and was supported by Nawwāb Sālār Jang. He was eventually appointed a court poet by Mīrzā Jahāndāršāh (Javānbaḳt), the eldest son of the emperor Shah ‘Ālam II. After the death of Mīrzā Jahāndāršāh (25 Ša‘bān 1202/31 May 1788), Afsūs gave up writing poetry and started teaching under the patronage of Nawwāb Sarfarāz-al-dawla Ḥasan-Rezā Khan Bahādor. On 27 Jomādā I 1215/17 October 1800, the British resident at Lucknow, Colonel W. Scott, employed Afsūs at the College of Fort William and dispatched him to Calcutta to work as a translator. In Calcutta in 1216/1802, at the request of John Borthwick Gilchrist (1759-1841), principal of the College at Fort William, he translated the *Golestān* of Sa‘dī as *Bāḡ-e ordū*. He also translated the first part (less than one-third of the whole) of the *Kolāṣat al tawārīk*, a Persian history of India written by Sojān Singh Dhīr in



1107/1695-96. The Urdu translation was named *Ārāyeš-e mahfel* and deals mainly with the geography of India and the Hindu Rajahs of Delhi. It was begun in 1219/1804 and completed in 1220/1805. Afsūs died at Calcutta in 1809 according to Garcin de Tassy and Sprenger, in 1221/1806 according to Beale.

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