



AMĀNAT KHAN ŠĪRĀZĪ

AMĀNAT KHAN ŠĪRĀZĪ, 'ABD-AL-ḤAQQ (d. 1054-55/ 1644-45), designer of the calligraphy on the Tāj Maḥall. He and his elder brother Afzal Khan (q.v.) immigrated from Iran to India around 1017/1608; the tomb of Akbar (d. 1014/1605) was then under construction at Sikandra near Agra, and 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq was appointed to design the calligraphy and probably also to compose the Persian verses inscribed on the gateway. Completed in 1022/1613, the calligraphy is signed by 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq in three places, once citing his father's name as Qāsem of Shiraz. Afzal Khan quickly became an important court official and eventually Shah Jahān's prime minister, while 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq apparently worked at the royal library, as evidenced by the presence of his seals and inspection notices (*'arż dīda*) in several important Mughal manuscripts. Periodically he was entrusted with more important official functions; in 1040/1631 he headed a diplomatic mission to receive the newly arrived Persian ambassador Moḥammad-'Alī Beg and escort him to Burhanpur, where Shah Jahān was in residence.

When Shah Jahān's wife Momtāz Maḥall died in childbirth (17 Du'l-qa'da 1040/17 June 1631), 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq was appointed to select the Koranic passages and design the calligraphy for her tomb. One year later, the emperor honored him with the title Amānat Khan and promoted him to the *manṣab* rank of 900 (*Pādšāh-nāma*, ed. K. Aḥmad and 'Abd-al-Raḥīm, Calcutta, Bib. Ind., 1867-69, Ia, p. 535). During the next six years, he devoted himself primarily to completing the Tāj Maḥall's calligraphy, though he continued to hold his post in the royal library and also designed the calligraphy for the small Madrasa-ye Šāhī



mosque at Agra (dated 1045-46/1635, with three signatures). The calligraphy inside the great domed hall of the Tāj Maḥall was completed in 1048/1638; Amānat Khan's signature (Figure 33) reads: "Finished with His help; written by the humble *faqīr* Amānat Khan Šīrāzī in the year 1048 *hejri*, corresponding to the twelfth year of the auspicious reign [of Shah Jahān]." At about this time Afzal Khan died in Lahore at the age of seventy; according to Čandar Bhān's *Čahar čaman* (ed. M. Rafiq, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Punjab University, 1970, pp. 114-16), the calligrapher was deeply grieved, gave up his office and rank, and constructed a serai near Lahore in which he was later buried; now known as Sarāy-e Amānat Kan, it is located twelve miles southwest of Amritsar. Amānat Khan designed the elaborate glazed-tile calligraphy and composed the Persian inscriptions (dated 1050/1640-41), which imply that he built the serai as a memorial to his brother. According to the *Pādšāh-nāma* (II, p. 737), Amānat Khan died in Shah Jahān's eighteenth regnal year (1054-55/1644-45); he was survived by two sons, Fażlallāh and 'Enāyatallāh, the latter of whom, known as 'Āqel Khan, had been adopted by Afzal Khan.

The following images have been submitted by generous permission of our reader, Mr. Saiyed Anwer Abbas, who personally visited Sarāy-e Amānat Kan in March 2014.

Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6.

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See under Afzal Khan. See also E. W. Smith, *Akbar's Tomb, Sikandarah, Near Agra*, Archaeological Survey of India 35, Allahabad, 1909.

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Idem, "Four Mughal Caravanserais," *Muqarnas* 1, 1983, pp. 167-79.