

Tabaqat-i-Shahjahani: Assessing the Historical Value of Indo-Persian biographical literature (*tazkira*)

Indo-Persian biographical literature called *Tazkiras* general or specialized, topographical, or literary, that of the poets, sufi *mashaikhs*, administrative elite, all are of great historical significance. If history is a collective memory, a guiding experience of human society, *tazkiras* are memorative communications. This celebrated genre of Indo-Persian literature supplements as well as corroborates information as contained in the historical works and supplies valuable data for social, cultural, political and administrative history of South Asia. Under the biographical notices, there exist layers of historical information. My paper would seek to highlight historical significance of such a *tazkira* entitled *Tabaqat-i-Shahjahani* written by a contemporary scholar and sufi-saint Muhammad Sadiq Hamadani Kashmiri Dehlawi. Its being argued that the seventeenth century Mughal India represented an age of a great intellectual efflorescence as the secular intellectuals as well as the religious scholars devoted themselves to academic pursuits along with their professional vocations.

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