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Two new sources for the study of Muḥammad Vâjid-‘Alî Shâh in the William Irvine Collection

The historian William Irvine assembled his scholarly collection of Persian manuscripts around the turn of the twentieth century, while working for the Bengal Civil Service. Although his focus was largely on historical and literary sources from earlier periods, especially materials for the study of the Timurids in South Asia (otherwise known as the Moghuls) and local history, Irvine also collected a smaller number of manuscripts on near-contemporary subjects. Although they lack the finer calligraphy and luxurious appearance of élite production, their importance lies in the relative rarity of the texts they preserve. This paper examines two rare works (the *Sulṭān al-ḥikāyāt* and the *Ījāz al-siyar*) that throw new light on the production and patronage of history at the flamboyant court of the last independent King of Awadh, Muḥammad Vâjid-‘Alî Shâh.