



## AFZAL BEG QĀQŠĀL

**AFZAL BEG KHAN QĀQŠĀL**, south Indian *taḍkera* writer. Little is known about his early life or the Indian members of the Turkish clan from which he was descended (see Storey, I/2, p. 849, n. 1). A resident of Awrangābād in the Deccan or mid-southern region of India, he served in the army of Āṣafjāh Neẓām-al-molk (d. 1161/1748), founder of the princely state of Hyderabad, during the period of British rule. He held the post of troop commander (*resāladār*) and continued in the same position under Nāṣer Jang, the son and successor of Āṣafjāh. He was present at the battle with the combined forces of the rival claimant Moẓaffar Jang and the French in which Nāṣer Jang was killed (Moḥarram, 1164/December, 1750). Earlier, Qāqšāl had acted as the emissary of Nāṣer Jang to Shah Ġolām-Moṣṭafā Qāderī, a Sufī saint of Arcot, who had warned the Deccan ruler of his impending death.

Qāqšāl is primarily known for his *taḍkera* titled *Toḥfat al-šo'arā'*, which contains accounts of sixty-two contemporary Urdu and Persian poets, many of them attached to the courts of Āṣafjāh and Nāṣerjāh. *Toḥfat al-šo'arā'* is considered one of the earliest sources on Urdu poets and contains information about the social and literary conditions of their times. Qāqšāl also gives a detailed account of the first Āṣafjāhī rulers, making his work an important source for the history of the Deccan. A lithograph edition of *Toḥfat al-šo'arā'* (ed. Ḥ. Qātel, Hyderabad, 1961) is based on three extant manuscripts, two from the Āṣafīya Library, the third from the Sālārjang Library in Hyderabad. D. N. Marshall (*Mughals in India*, p. 45) mentions a fourth manuscript in Madras.

Qāqšāl was a man of literary taste who moved in the company of poets and



scholars. Āref Awrangābādī and Āzād Belgrāmī were among his friends, and both of them composed chronograms on the completion of *Toḥfat al-šo‘arā’*. A well-read man, Qāqšāl deftly utilized the format and style of previous *taḍkeras* in composing his own work.

*Bibliography* : Given in the text.