



AFZAL KHAN, AMIR MOHAMMAD

AFZAL KHAN, AMIR MOHAMMAD (1220-84/1814-67), governor of Balk and for a short time ruler of Afghanistan. The eldest son of the ruler Dōst Moḥammad Khan (Fayz Moḥammad Hazāra, *Serāj al-tawārīk* II, p. 251; Y. 'A. Kāfī, *Pādešāhān-e mota'aḳker* I, p. 212), under his father (whose reign at Kabul began in 1254/1838) Afzal held a governorship at Zormat, south of Kabul, and in 1266/1849 was appointed governor of the northern provinces of Afghanistan with his seat at Balk. Since the ancient city of Balk was in ruins, he built the new town of Taḳta-pol east of the old citadel (*Serāj* II, p. 214; Amir 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Khan, *Pand-nāma-ye donyā va dīn*, p. 6). When he returned to Kabul in 1271/1854, he left his twelve-year-old son Sardār 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Khan at Taḳta-pol as his deputy (*Serāj* II, p. 717; 'A. Ḥabībī, *Tārīk-emoktašar-e Afḡānestān*, Kabul, 1967, II, p. 122). Rebels in the district of Qaṭaḡan and the towns of Tāleqān, Baḡlān, and Andarāb were subdued by Afzal Khan and his brother Sardār Moḥammad A'zam, but Mīr Atālīq, who had mustered a large force at Rostāq and Kūlāb, held out until he was overcome by Afzal's son Sardār 'Abd-al-Raḥmān in 1276/1859 (*Serāj* II, p. 234). After Dōst Moḥammad's death at Herat on Tuesday, 21 Du'l-ḥejja 1279/9 June 1863, Afzal's younger brother Šēr-'Alī made himself amir at Herat and then went back to Kabul. When Šēr-'Alī moved to Čārīkār intending to subdue the provinces north of the Hindu Kush range, Afzal led a substantial force toward Kabul, but was defeated and taken prisoner in a battle in the Bājgāh valley on the northern flank of the range. Šēr-'Alī then took control of the Balk district and brought



the captive Afzal with him to Kabul (*Serāj* II, p. 273; *Pādešāhān-e mota'akker* I, p. 79; M. Farroq, *Tārīk-esiāsī-e Afġānestān*, pp. 63, 201; G. M. Ġobār, *Afġānestān dar masīr-e tārīk*, Kabul, 1347 Š./1968, p. 590). Šēr-'Alī's first reign did not last long. On a Friday in early Moħarram, 1283/June, 1866, Afzal's brother Moħammad A'zam and son 'Abd-al-Raħmān, having captured Kabul, released Afzal from his imprisonment at Ġazna and enthroned him at Kabul; but his reign also was short. In Jomādā II, 1284/October, 1867, he died of cholera at the age of 54 in Kabul. He was buried in the castle of Hūšmand Khan in the south of the city (*Tārīk-emoktašar* II, p. 121; S. J. Afġānī, *Tatemmat al-bayān fī ta'rīk al-Afġān*, Cairo, 1901, pp. 133-37).

In regard to Afzal Khan's achievements at Balk, Naġm al-dīn "Dāker", a contemporary poet resident in the inhabited part of Balk, wrote a *maṭnavī*, the *Afzal-nāma*, which runs to about 1,000 *bayts* in the *motaqāreb* meter and was completed on 1272/1855 (ms., Public [āmma] Library, Kabul).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Fayz Moħammad Hazāra, *Serāj al-tawārīk*, Kabul, 1331/1913, pp. 214-95.

Y. 'A. Kāfī, *Pādešāhān-e mota'akker-e Afġānestān*, Kabul, 1955-57, I, pp. 39 to end; II, chap. 4.

M. Farroq, *Tārīk-esiāsī-e Afġānestān*, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954, pp. 201-16.

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