



## AFZAL KHAN QATAK

**AFZAL KHAN QATAK** (b. 1075/1664-65), chief of the Qatak tribe, Pashto poet, and author of *Tāriḳ-emoraṣṣa'*. He was the eldest son of Ašraf Khan "Hejri" (1044-1105/1635 to 1693-94); in 1083/1672-73 Ašraf succeeded his father Kvošhāl Khan in the chieftaincy of the Qatak tribe, but in 1092/1681 he was betrayed into the hands of the Mughal emperor Awrangzēb by his brother Bahrām and died in captivity. Afzal Khan was arrested by the Mughals in 1098/1686-87 and carried to Kabul; he returned two years after the death of Kvošhāl Khan (1100/1689) to assume the chieftainship of the Qatak tribe, which he held for sixty-one years. Based on a reading of a *tāriḳ* in the *dīvān* of Afzal's son, Kāzem Khan Šaydā, S. Rixtin and 'A. Ḥabībī (*Paḫtanə šu'arā*, Kabul, 1941-42, I, pp. 229-30) give the date of Afzal's death as 1183/1769-70, but this *dīvān* had already been put into final form in 1181. The date of his death is uncertain.

H. G. Raverty's statement (*Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, London, 1867, p. 269) that Afzal, upon the assumption of the chieftainship, put his uncle (and rival) 'Abd-al-Qāder to death does not bear examination; the latter translated the *Golestān* of Sa'dī in 1124/1712. Another uncle of Afzal's, Gawhar Khan, writing in 1120/1708, gives testimony to Afzal's good chieftainship and to his consuming literary interests, which were aimed at (1) collecting his illustrious grandfather's works and having them copied to save them from oblivion, and (2) inspiring Gawhar Khan and other members of the family to use their talents in translating into Pashto some of the great works in Persian and Arabic. Afzal himself made a number of translations, chiefly historical:



the *Tārīk* of Aṭam Kūfī, the *Sīar* of Mollā Moʿīn, and a *tafsīr* of the Qurʾān; when he “had ruled for twenty-five years and was fifty-three years old,” he began a translation of the *Īār-e dāneš*, Abuʾl-Faẓl’s simplified Persian version of the *Anwār-e Sohaylī* by Ḥosayn Wāʿeẓ Kāšefī, which was completed in 1128/1716 under the name *ʿElmḵāna da dāneš*.

Afzal Khan Kaṭak began writing his main work, the *Tārīk-emoraṣṣaʿ*, about 1120/1708. It is an uneven history of the Afghans in Pashto, compiled from various sources. The first and last parts are translations from the Persian work *Maḵzan-e Afḡānī* (or *Tārīk-eKānġahānī*) written by Neʿmatallāh in 1020/1611. The second part (about half the volume) contains an account of the Yūsofzays and kindred tribes, based mainly upon the *Taḍkerāt al-abrār* by Āḵūnd Darvīza, the *Ṭabaqāt-e Akbarī*, the *Jahāngīr-nāma*, and other Persian sources, and an extensive account of the history of the Kaṭaks, particularly of the author’s grandfather. It includes long extracts from the *bayāz* (notebook) of K̄voṣḥāl Khan and relates events up to the year 1136/1723-24. This part of the book was used by H. G. Raverty as source material for his *Notes on Afghanistan* (London, 1888). Afzal Khan Kaṭak is buried in Zīārat Kaka Ṣāḥeb near Nowshera.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also Gawhar Khan Kaṭak, *Qalb al-sīr* (ms. in Peshawar Museum). J. F. Blumhardt and D. N. MacKenzie, *Catalogue of Pashto Manuscripts in the Libraries of the British Isles*, London, 1965, no. 46, 157; on Aṣraf Khan, see no. 79, and Raverty, *Selections*, pp. 249-70.