



ĀṢAF KHAN

ĀṢAF KHAN, 'ABD-AL-MAJĪD, 10th/16th century Mughal official and military commander. Descended from Shaikh Abū Bakr Tāybādī (d.791/1389), he was born and brought up in Herat. He served under 'Askarī and then as *dīvān* of Homāyūn. In 967/1560 he was appointed governor of Delhi by Akbar, who subsequently made him commander of 3,000 and gave him the drum and the flag as well as the title Āṣaf Khan (*Akbar-nāma* II, p. 231; *Ā'in-e Akbarī* I, p. 367). After taking possession of Chunar in concert with Moḥammad Ġawṭ, he was appointed governor of Kara Manikpur in 969/1561-62. Soon thereafter he attacked and defeated the recalcitrant Raja of Bhatta (Panna in Bundelkhand). Having by now collected a large booty and recruited a sizable contingent, Āṣaf Khan attacked the kingdom of Garh-Katanga, defeated its army, and captured the fort of Chauragarh.

The immense booty included 1,000 elephants, but Āṣaf Khan, tempted to rebel against the imperial authority of Agra, sent only 200 elephants to the emperor. In 973/1565 Akbar came to know of his intentions and Āṣaf Khan was forced to take shelter in Garh-Katanga. He lost his nerve, however, running to his brother Wazīr Khan at Jaunpur. Khan Zamān, another ambitious Mughal official, who himself subsequently rebelled against the emperor, wanted to kill both of them for their wealth, but they managed to escape and secured Akbar's pardon through the intercession of Moṣaffar Khan Torbatī.

Āṣaf Khan was next sent to Kara Manikpur where he had previously been governor. He fought bravely against Khan Zamān when the latter revolted. Then in 1567 he recruited a contingent to attack the Rānā of Mewar. When



Chittor fell on 27 Ša‘bān 975/25 February 1568, Āṣaf Khan was appointed governor of the fort and surrounding region. After this date nothing more is known about him. H. Blochmann, however, on the margin of p. 368 of volume one of his personal copy of *Ā’in-e Akbarī*, notes: “According to an inscription on his tomb in Dihli, he died on 25 Šawwāl 976/14 September 1569.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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