



ABARQUH I. HISTORY

ABARQŪH (or ABARQŪYA), a town in northern Fārs; it was important in medieval times, but, being off the main routes, it is now largely decayed.

i. History

The Islamic geographers of the 4th/10th century describe Abarqūh as lying in the Shiraz-Isfahan-Eṣṭaḳr road, at a point where another road led off northeastwards to Yazd, and as 28 *farsaks* from Yazd, 20 from Isfahan, and 39 from Shiraz. According to Ebn Ḥawqal, Abarqūh was administratively the chief town of the *nāḥīa* or district of Rūdān; formerly dependent on the province of Kermān to the east, it was, at the time Ḥawqal wrote, attached to Fārs and came within the *kūra* or region of Eṣṭaḳr. These geographers describe Abarqūh as prosperous and populous in 'Abbasid and Buyid times; it was fortified, with a citadel, and had a fine Friday mosque (the precursor of the present Friday mosque, which dates from post-Mongol times [see below]). The streets and houses were jumbled together in a close network, and the houses were of a vaulted construction in sun-dried brick, as at Yazd. Although the surrounding region was treeless and arid, and gardens and orchards were lacking, ample provisions were brought in from outside. The town produced cotton cloth for export (see R. B. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles: Materials for a History up to the Mongol Conquest*, Beirut, 1972, pp. 50, 58). As a curious feature of the surrounding countryside, Ebn Ḥawqal mentions a lofty hill of ashes (a volcanic remnant?) that was popularly said to be the remains of the fire on which, according to Muslim legend, the tyrant Namrūd tried to burn Abraham to death.



In the early 5th/11th century, Abarqūh and the nearby town of Yazd were, on the evidence of coins, at times held by the Dailamite rulers in Isfahan and Hamadān of the Kakuyid family, originally kinsmen and vassals of the Buyids. Ebn al-Aṭīr records that at some time just before 435/1043-44 the Buyid ruler of Fārs, Abū Kālījār ‘Emād-al-dīn, came with an army against his former ally but present opponent, the Kakuyid Ḍahīr-al-dīn Abū Maṣṣūr Farāmarz b. ‘Alā’-al-dawla Moḥammad, and captured Abarqūh from him. However, as the Saljuq leader Toḡrel Beg consolidated his power in western Iran, he reduced the Kakuyids to vassal status, and in 443/1051 captured Isfahan from Abū Maṣṣūr Farāmarz; Toḡrel then made Isfahan his capital, but in compensation granted to the dispossessed Kakuyid amir the two towns of Abarqūh and Yazd. We know of the presence in Abarqūh around this time of another Dailamite or Māzandarānī family, the Firuzanids, originally from Eškavar in Ṭabarestān; for in 448/1056-57 there was erected in Abarqūh its oldest surviving monument, the Gonbaḍ-e ‘Alī of ‘Amīd-al-dīn Šams-al-dawla Abū ‘Alī Hazārasp Fīrūzānī (see for this period in Abarqūh’s history, C. E. Bosworth, “Dailamis in Central Iran: the Kākūyids of Jibāl and Yazd,” *Iran* 8, 1970, pp. 77, 83-85).

Abarqūh seems to have flourished under the Saljuqs, when the still-surviving tomb of Pīr Ḥamza Sabzpūš (“the wearer of green”) was constructed, and subsequently under the Mongols and Il-khanids and their epigoni. Various coins minted in Abarqūh survive from this period, including those of the Il-khanids themselves, the Injuids, the Mozaffarids, the Timurids, and the Aq Qoyunlu. Ḥamdallāh Mostawfī in his *Nozhat al-qolūb* (740/1340) describes it as small but prosperous town, with craftsmen and with products of corn and cotton grown with the aid of irrigation from both surface streams and *qanāts*; the revenue of Abarqūh and its dependent districts amounted to 140,000 dinars. The same author mentions the popular etymology for the town’s name, *bar kūh*, “on the mountain,” saying that its original site was a hill but that it was later moved down to the plain; and he speaks of the fame of the domeless tomb of the learned scholar Ṭāvūs al-Ḥaramayn, “Peacock of the two sanctuaries [sc. Mecca and Medina].” This saint is probably of the Mongol period. He is not mentioned, at least under that name, in Sam‘ānī’s entry on the scholars of Abarqūh (*Ansāb* [Hyderabad] I, pp. 92-93; see also Mostawfī, *Tārīḵ-e gozīda*, ed. ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā’ī, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, p. 676). A mausoleum with the name of this saint still survives in Abarqūh but is, in reality, that of Ḥasan b. Kay Ḳosraw (d. 718/1318) and his wife. Most of the few surviving monuments of interest in Abarqūh date, in fact, from the Il-khanid period, including essentially the Friday mosque with its four *ayvāns* (*mehṛāb*



dated 738/1337-38).

In the Safavid period, Abarqūh, together with Yazd, Bīābānak, and other towns of west-central Iran, was granted out as a governorship to a high court official, being included in the crown domains (*maḥāll-e kāṣṣa*). In the early 11th/17th century, according to the *Tadkerat al-molūk*, the spiritual leader at court, the *ṣadr-e kaṣṣa*, appointed the religious judge (*ḥākem-e šarʿ*) at Abarqūh, and the district (*olkā*) of Abarqūh was granted out to the *tofanġčī āġāsī* (“commander of the guard of musketeers”), being valued at 711 tomans and 5,300 odd dinars (*Tadkerat al-molūk*, ed. and tr. V. Minorsky, fols. 3b, 86b, tr., pp. 42, 86, comm., p. 170; cf. K. M. Rohrborn, *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1966, p. 29). The town suffered in the Afghan invasions of the early 12th/18th century, and at the end of that century was involved in the fighting between the Zands and Qajars as Āġā Moḥammad Qājār endeavored to take over Fārs; its citadel was for a while captured and held by Loṭf-ʿAlī Khan Zand in 1208/1793-94 (Fasāʿī, tr. Busse, pp. 27, 57). In the late Qajar period, the town seems to have acquired a reputation for lawlessness and turbulence; see E. G. Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians*, London, 1950, pp. 379, 387.

In present-day Iran, Abarqūh is situated in the tenth *ostān*, that of Isfahan, and forms a *baḳṣ* or district of the *šahrestān* of Yazd; this *baḳṣ* comprises thirty villages, with a total population of 17,351, and its main products are cotton and madder (Razmārā, *Farhang X*, p. 2).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Ebn Ḥawqal, tr. Kramers, pp. 260, 263, 276, 291, 293.

Maqdesī, p. 437. Yāqūt (Beirut), I, pp. 69-70. Mostawfī, *Nozhat al-qolūb* II, pp. 120, 178.

Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 284-85.

Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 17-18.



For coins minted at Abarqūh, see E. von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams, zeitlich und örtlich geordnet*, Wiesbaden, 1968, I, p. 36.