



## AḶSĪKAṬ

**AḶSĪKAṬ** (AḶSĪKANT, later medieval form AḶSĪ), in early medieval times the capital of the then still Iranian province of Farġāna; according to the *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam* (p. 112, tr. Minorsky, p. 116), it was “the residence of the *amīr* and his local representatives (*‘ommāl*).” At the time of the Arab conquests in Central Asia, Farġāna was an independent principality under a Sogdian local ruler (the name AḶsīkaṭ must mean “town of the prince”). AḶsīkaṭ may conceivably be the Si-kien of Chinese geographical sources (6th century and later). That city is said to stand on the northern bank of the Čen ču river (see E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval researches from eastern Asiatic sources*, London, 1910, II, pp. 52-53; E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux*, St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 148). Cf. *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, which locates AḶsīkaṭ on the north bank of the “river of Ūzgend” (also called Kašart)—i.e., the main stream of the Syr Darya, where the Kāsān river joined it. The present ruins of Eski AḶsī (see below) are in 71° 24’ east longitude and 40° 55’ north latitude. The geographers of the 4th/10th century describe the town as roughly the same size as Qobā, the other main town of Farġāna. It lay in a pleasant and fertile agricultural area; among its products were grapes, so that the inhabitants were noted wine-drinkers. The town was well watered by canals from the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) and by *qanāts*. It had the typical tripartite structure of an eastern Islamic town. There was a citadel, described as in ruins by that time and containing the governor’s palace (*dār al-emāra*) and prison, and an inner city (*šahrestān*) and an outer one (*rabaž*), both with extensive markets. The inner city had walls a mile across, pierced by five gates; and the outer city or suburb was enclosed by a further wall, beyond which lay



orchards and gardens. In the nearby mountains of Farḡāna were gold and silver mines (Eṣṭakrī, p. 333; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 513, 515, tr. Kramers, pp. 490, 492; Moḡaddasī, p. 271; Le Strange, pp. 477-78; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 161-62). Maḡdesī (Moḡaddasī) described the people of Aḳsīkaṭ as rough and impetuous, aspects of a frontier mentality explicable by the position of Farḡāna on the eastern margin of the Islamic world, close to the pagan Turkish lands.

Aḳsīkaṭ was a mint town under the Samanids and remained a place of considerable importance under the Turkish Qarakhanids, Farḡāna being an important part of their western khanate; thus we possess coins minted there in 416/1025 by Yūsuf Qadīr Khan, in 417-18/1026-27 by Aḡmad Toḡan Khan b. Hārūn Boḡrā Khan, in the later part of the century by Ebrāhīm Tamḡač Khan, etc. (R. Vasmer, "Zur Münzkunde der Qarāḡāniden," *MSOS AS*. 1930, pp. 83-104; E. Von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams, zeitlich und örtlich geordnet* I, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 38). The town was apparently badly affected, along with other towns of Farḡāna, during the wars of the Qara Khitay and the K̲v̲ārazmšāh 'Alā'-al-dīn Moḡammad at the opening of the 7th/13th century, and shortly afterwards by the Mongols. Jovaynī only just mentions Mongol operations there, but cf. Šaraf al-dīn Yazdī, *Zafar-nāma*, Calcutta, 1885-88, I, p. 441; II, p. 633. The capital of Farḡāna was then transferred to Andejān further east, but Aḳsīkaṭ still remained the second town of the province. Bābor mentions it as Aḳsī, and it was the scene of much of his local warfare in Farḡāna with his Chaghatay rivals (*Bābur-nāma*, tr. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1922, see index). Thereafter it fell into decay. The ruins of the old citadel, called locally Eski Aḳsī, exist near the modern villages of Aḳsī and Šāhad. These ruins were explored in 1885 by the Russian N. I. Veselovskii (see Barthold, "Akhsikath," *ET*<sup>1</sup>, p. 234). Today, the site falls administratively into the easternmost *oblast* of the Uzbekistan SSR.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also Yāqūt, II, p. 162.

*ET*<sup>2</sup> I, p. 330.