



ĀMOL (ĀMŪYA)

ĀMOL (ĀMŪYA), a town situated in 39°5' north latitude and 63°41' east longitude, one *farsak* or three miles from the left bank of the Oxus river (Āmū Daryā). In medieval Islamic times it fell administratively within the province of Khorasan; today it is Čārjūy/Čardzou ("Four irrigation canals"), one of the main towns of the Turkmenistan S. S. R. Although surrounded by desert, Āmol marks an important crossing-place over the Oxus for the historic route from Nīšāpūr and Marv to Transoxiana and beyond; the town of Farab (or Farabr/Ferabr), a dependency of Bukhara, lay on the opposite bank. Āmol has thus always been of strategic and commercial importance; downstream was no significant town till Ṭāheriya on the frontier of K̄vārazm. In pre-Islamic times, Āmol (Old Pers. *Āmṛda) may have been connected (like Āmol in Māzandarān) with the eastern branch of the people mentioned by Pliny (1st century A.D.) as Mardoī, Amardoī (J. Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 136, n. 3). It may also be that Āmol derived its name, in the form Āmūya common in later medieval times, from that of the river, the Āmū Daryā; Ḥāfeẓ Abrū inverts the process and names the river after the town, itself a common enough procedure (cf., e.g., Nahr-e Šāš for the Jaxartes or Syr Daryā). In order to distinguish it from the Āmol on the Caspian, this city was in early medieval Islamic times often called Āmol-e Šaṭṭ ("Āmol on the river bank"), Āmol-e Jayhūn ("Amol on the Oxus"), Āmol-e Zamm ("Āmol near Zamm," sc. the town of Zamm, the modern Kerki, some 125 miles upstream), and Āmol-e Mafāza ("Amol of the desert;" see Yāqūt, I, p. 69).

In the period of the Arab conquests, Āmol was of great importance as a base



for the invasions of Transoxiana and K̄vārazm. Hence in 50/670 the governor of Khorasan, Rabī'a b. Zīād Ḥāreṭī, sent expeditions into Ṭokārestān and Čaġānīān and also to Āmol and Zamm in order to secure the left bank of the river and its crossing-points. In 87/706 Qotayba b. Moslem used Āmol as his base for attacks on Paykand and Bukhara, and in 110/728-29 Asras b. 'Abdallāh Solamī used it to re-cross the Oxus after the local Sogdian princes and the Qaġan of the Tūrgeš had swept the Arabs out of virtually the whole of Transoxiana. It was also at Āmol that the Omayyad governor Asad b. 'Abdallāh Qasrī had the 'Abbasid *dā'ī* or propagandist Kedāš, head of the Hāšemīya sect, brought before him and executed (J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, Calcutta, 1933, pp. 458, 510; H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, London, 1923, pp. 16-17, 33, 70). Āmol played a role in the campaigns of the Saffarid 'Amr b. Layṭ and the Samanid Esmā'īl b. Aḥmad at the end of the 3rd/9th century (cf. Naršaḳī, *Tārīḳ-e Bokārā*, ed. Modarres Rażawī, Tehran, 1319 Š., pp. 104-05; tr. R. N. Frye, *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, pp. 88-90); and it was the base in 408/1017 for Sultan Maḥmūd of Ġazna's invasion of K̄vārazm (Bayhaqī, pp. 676-78, 687). In 548/1153, recognizing its strategic importance, the K̄vārazmšāh Atsīz attempted in vain to seize Āmol from the governor of the Saljuq sultan, Sanġar, while the latter was being held captive by the Oghuz in Khorasan (Jovaynī, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 285-86; Barthold, *Turkestan*³, pp. 329-30).

The medieval Islamic geographers describe Āmol as the most frequented of the Oxus crossings for caravans. According to Maqdesī (Moqaddasī), it has fertile cultivated fields, water from wells, good markets, rich fruits, and a Friday mosque set on a slight eminence. The desert came close to the river bank, but there was a continuous strip of cultivation downstream towards K̄vārazm; and the road towards Marv and Khorasan had wells at each stage. The importance of Āmol was such that the Samanid government paid the *šāḥeb barīd* or postmaster of Āmol and Farabr an annual salary (*ešrīnīya*) of 400 dirhams, which equalled that of the *qāzī*, the tax-collector, and the police chief for those districts (Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 452, 470, tr. Kramers, pp. 437, 452; Maqdesī, pp. 291-92; Yāqūt, I, p. 69; Le Strange, pp. 403-04).

In the military campaigns of the Mongol and Timurid periods, Āmol is frequently mentioned by such historians as Nasavī, Jovaynī, and Šaraf-al-dīn Yazdī, often as Qal'a-ye Āmūya, the form Āmūy(a) being already old and registered by Yāqūt (I, p. 69) as the common Persian one. It was apparently in Timurid times that the place began to receive its present name of Čārġūy; thus



in the *Bābor-nāma* (facsimile ed. A. S. Beveridge, GMS 1, repr., Hertford, 1971, p. 58b), Bābor mentions the crossing-place (*gaḍar*) or Čājūy. It retained its strategic value during the wars of the Uzbeks and Safavids; boats were always kept there in readiness and were sometimes made into bridges for the passage of large bodies of troops and baggage animals, e.g., for Nāder Shah's army in 1153/1740 during his expedition against Bukhara and Kīva (see L. Lockhart, *Nadir Shah: a Critical Study Based Mainly upon Contemporary Sources*, London, 1938, p. 187).

With the extension of Russian imperial power into Central Asia in the later 19th century, Čārjūy became, after 1884, an important stage on the road to the newly conquered Russian outpost of Marv. A railway was then constructed from Krasnovodsk on the Caspian, reaching the Oxus at Čārjūy in 1886; this increased the town's importance, especially as a Russian military base was constructed at New Čārjūy, 10 miles from Old Čārjūy, on territory ceded by the amir of Bukhara. In 1901 a railway bridge was built over the Oxus there, providing communication with Bukhara and Tashkent. Under the Soviet regime, New Čārjūy has become a center for administration, industry, and communications; it is the second town of the Turkmenistan S. S. R. and the chief town of the Čardzou oblast. Old Čārjūy, now Kaganovichevsk, remains a small town, populated mainly by Turkmen and Uzbeks, whereas New Čardzou is overwhelmingly Russian in population.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*² XLVII, p. 49-59, on the oblast and the town.