



## ANBAR

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**ANBĀR** or ANBĪR, a town of the medieval Islamic province of Gūzġān or Jūzġān in northern Afghanistan, probably to be identified with the modern Sar-e Pol. The variable spelling of the sources (in Yāqūt, I, pp. 257, 259, there are separate entries for each of the two forms) doubtless reflects a contemporary pronunciation Anbēr or Ambēr. The modern town of Sar-e Pol lies upstream from the larger town of Šebargān (medieval Ošbūrġān or Šobūrġān) in 35° 32′ north latitude and 66° 43′ east longitude at an altitude of 610 m on the middle course of the Āb-e Sefīd, the eastern of the two Oxus affluents draining the region of Gūzġān. According to Yāqūt, Anbār was one stage (*marḡala*) south of Šobūrġān. Sar-e Pol now comes administratively within the Afghan province of Jūzġān; ethnically, it lies in the Uzbek zone of northern Afghanistan, but with a Tajik admixture increasing as one goes southwards. In early Islamic times, Anbār was one of the main towns, together with Šobūrġān, Maymana (or Yahūdīya), Fāryāb, and Tālaqān, of what seems originally to have been an autonomous petty principality, possibly under rulers of Hephthalite stock. Much fighting took place in this region between the Omayyad Arab governors and the Hephthalite princes of Bactria during the first half of the 2nd/8th century, and it was at Anbār that the ‘Alid pretender Yaḡyā b. Zayd b. Ḥasan was killed in 125/743 (Ṭabarī, II, p. 1773; Yāqūt, I, p. 259, s.v. Anbār). By the 4th/10th century, Gūzġān was under the rule of the Farighunid family (see [Āl-e Farīġūn](#)), who retained power there till the annexation of the province by Sultan Maḡmūd of Gāzna early in the 5th/11th century. The geographers of this period are rather confused about what had formerly been and what was in their own time the capital of Gūzġān. Thus Ebn



Ḥawqal (II, p. 443; tr. II, p. 428) says that Anbār was the winter capital (*qaṣaba*) of the Farighunids, whereas their summer one was higher up in the mountains in the district of Jorzevān, towards Ġūr. Somewhat earlier, Ya‘qūbī (p. 287, tr. p. 100) stated that Anbār was the capital of the *wolāt* “governors” of Gūzgān, perhaps referring to the Arab governors who preceded the Farighunids in power there; other sources (such as Maqdesī [Moqaddasī], p. 298) mention Yahūdīya as the capital. At all events, it was an important and flourishing town in the 4th/10th century. It was larger than Marv-al-rūd<sup>2</sup>, according to Eṣṭakrī and Ebn Ḥawqal, with extensive vineyards and orchards; the *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam* (p. 107, par. 23.58, cf. commentary, p. 335) says that it lay at the foot of a mountain and that it was the emporium (*bārgāh*) of Balk<sup>2</sup> and a resort of merchants, producing for export the famed Gūzgānī leather. During the next century, Anbār seems to have been identical with the chief town of Jūzjānān where the philosopher-poet NāsĀ;er-e Kjosrow spent a month in 437/1045-46 drinking wine and living riotously, before experiencing the vision which transformed his life and made him resolve to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Safar-nāma*, ed. M. Dabīrsiāqī, Tehran, 1335 Š./1956, p. 1; cf. pp. 128-29, mention of Sar-e Pol-e Jūzjānān?). Thereafter, Anbār drops out as such from mention in the historical sources.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 426.

Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 79-80.

*Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. xxiv.