



## BANĀKAṬ

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**BANĀKAṬ**, **BENĀKAṬ** (in Jovaynī, Fanākat), the main town of the medieval Transoxanian province of Šāš or Čāč, to be distinguished from the nearby town of Benkaṭ, another name of the town of Šāš, later Tashkent. Banākaṭ flourished in early Islamic times and almost certainly had a pre-Islamic history as a center of the Sogdians. According to Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang*, Leiden, 1938, pp. 162-63 n., the name derives from Mid. Pers *bon* “base, foundation” plus *kaṭ* “town,” hence “chief town, capital.” The town lay at the confluence of the Syr Darya or Jaxartes (which Jovaynī apparently calls “the River of Fanākat”) with its right-bank tributary the Āhangarān or Angren (medieval Nahr Īlāq) and at the mouth of the Gijigen valley, hence to the southwest of modern Tashkent; both the ruins of old Banākaṭ and of its replacement Šāhrokiya (see below) have been noted by Russian archeologists from 1896 onwards (Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, p. 169).

We do not possess information about the coming of Islam to Banākaṭ but local Iranian princes seem to have persisted there into Samanid times, and we have a detailed description in Moqaddesī, pp. 277, 335, of the town in the second half of the 4th/10th century. He calls it the capital of Šāš, with an orthodox Sunni but quarrelsome and turbulent population. There was a citadel (*qohandez*) with gates opening on to the inner town (*madīna*) and on to the inner one of the two outer towns (*rabaž*), where the majority of *bāzārs* lay; the Friday mosque was up against the city wall. The town had extensive gardens and orchards and produced “Turkestan” cloth and bows. Four stages to the north lay [Asfjāb](#) and the beginning of the Turkish steppes. It was apparently a



place of some importance under the Qarakhanids, and coins were minted there under these princes (see E. von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams, zeitlich und örtlich geordnet* I, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 79). When Jengiz Khan's hordes appeared in Transoxania, the Qanġli Turkish garrison under the K̡vārazmšāh's commander Iletġü Malek defended Banākaṭ for four days against 5,000 Mongol troops under Alaṗ Noyon, Sögetü, and Taqāy. On its surrender, there was a general massacre of the garrison, whilst the male population was impressed into the Mongol forces (Jovaynī, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 91-92).

Barthold doubted that it was this event specifically which caused the town's destruction, but opined that it probably fell into ruin in the later 7th/13th century. At any rate, in 794/1392 (year of the monkey), it was rebuilt by Tīmūr and named Šāhroḡīya after his son and successor Šāhroḡ (Šaraf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, *Ẓafar-nāma*, Calcutta, 1885-88, II, p. 636). As such, it is mentioned by other authors such as Ebn 'Arabšāh, Moḡammad Ḥaydar Doġlāt, and Bābor, the latter writing that in his time (opening of the 10th/16th century), Šāhroḡīya came within the territories of the Chaghatayid Khans; it apparently had a strong fortress and played a role in military operations up to the 12th/18th century (see Moḡammad-Ḥaydar Doġlāt, *Tārīḡ-erašīdī*, tr. N. Elias and E. D. Ross, London, 1895, pp. 112, 289; *Bābor-nāma*, tr. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1922, pp. 7, 23-24, 54, 151). Chinese accounts of the Timurid and Uzbek periods name it as Sa-lu-hai-ya (E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, London, 1888, II, pp. 253-55). Finally, it sank into total decay, although the ruins still bear the name "Šarḡīya" as a degenerate form of "Šāhroḡīya."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text. See also *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 118 par. 25.83.

Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 482.

Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 169, 407, 116-18.



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