



BARDA'A

BARDA'A or BARDA'A (Arm. Partav, Georgian Bardavi, Mid. Pers. Pērōzāpāt; see Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 117-18), the chief town until the 4th/10th century of the Islamic province of *Arrān*, the classical Caucasian Albania, situated two or three *farsaks* (i.e., 812 miles) south of the Kor river on its affluent the *Ṭartūr* (modern Terter). Its site now lies at the western extremity of the *Šervān* steppe in Soviet Azarbaijan.

Barḍa'a was strategically situated on the edge of the lowlands of the lower Kor-Araxes (Aras) valley, adjacent to the mountains of eastern Transcaucasia; from it there ran routes to Dvin (Dabīl), Tiflis, and Bāb-al-Abwāb (Darband). It was already a frontier strong point under the Sasanians, having been fortified by Qobād I against the Huns and other steppe peoples who swept down through the Caucasus (see Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, pp. 194-95), a role which it inherited in early Islamic times, when it became a bastion of Muslim arms against the Khazar Turks, being repeatedly mentioned in the accounts of Arab-Khazar warfare, e.g., during the great Khazar invasions of 104/722-23 and 112/730; it was perhaps at Barḍa'a that the marriage was celebrated of the Khazar princess and the Arab governor Yazīd b. Osayd Solamī, the lady's early death providing the pretext for the further Khazar invasion under Rās Ṭarḳān during the decade 140-50/757-67 (see D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton, 1954, pp. 62, 69, 72, 179-81). At a somewhat later date, it further became a frontier point against the Christian Georgians and *Abkāz*.

The Arab and Persian geographers of the 4th/10th century describe Barḍa'a as a town with a citadel, a congregational mosque where the treasury of Arrān



was kept, several gates, and flourishing markets, including the Sunday market of Korakī (from Greek *kuriakos*, the Lord's Day); at this time Barḍa'a, like Arrān in general, retained a substantial proportion of Christians, and Ebn Ḥawqal (*Ṣūrat al-arḥ*, p.348, tr., II, p. 342) lists certain princes of the Barḍa'a region in his own time (later 4th/10th century) who were clearly Christian (cf. V. Minorsky, *Abū-Dulaf Mis'ar ibn Muhalhil's Travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950)*, Cairo, 1955, pp. 74-75). The fertile rural environs produced much fruit (with a particularly noted variety of figs), nuts, and also the dyestuff madder (*rūnās*), which was exported as far as India. In the Kor and other nearby rivers, the sturgeon (*sormāhī* from Persian *šūrmāhī*, salt fish) and other tasty fish were caught; and there was extensive production of textiles, including silks (see Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 337-39, 347, 349, tr. Kramers, II, pp. 330-32, 340, 342; Maqdesī, [Moqaddasī], p. 375; *Ḥodūd al-ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 143-44, secs. 36.21, 36.30; R. B. Serjeant, *Islamic Textiles. Material for a History up to the Mongol Conquest*, Beirut, 1972, p. 69).

Barḍa'a fell into Arab hands during 'Oṭmān's caliphate, probably before 32/652, when Salmān b. Rabī'a Bāhelī accepted the town's surrender after a short siege, tribute being levied on a similar basis as at Baylaqān (Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, p.201). Barḍa'a's fortifications were strengthened by the governor of Armenia, in the face of Khazar threats, during 'Abd-al-Malek's caliphate, either by Ḥātem b. No'mān Bāhelī or the latter's son 'Abd-al-'Azīz, or by Moḥammad b. Marwān b. Ḥakam (ibid., p. 203). The most notable event in its subsequent history was the descent upon it and occupation for several months by the Scandinavian-Slavic Rūs, who sailed up the Kor from the Caspian and encamped at the village of Mobārakī just outside Barḍa'a. Only after their numbers had been decimated by plague was the Mosaferid ruler of Azarbaijan Marzobān b. Moḥammad able to drive them out (Ebn Meskawayh, *Tajāreb* II, pp.62-67, tr. V, pp. 67-74; D. S. Morgoliouth, "The Russian Seizure of Bardha'ah in 943 A.D.," *BSO(A)S* 1, 1918, pp. 82-95; Dunlop, pp. 239-41). This may have been a factor in the apparent comparative decline of Barḍa'a in the second half of the 4th/10th century, attested by Ebn Ḥawqal and Maqdesī, although these sources imply that the chief factor was the extortions and oppressions there of the Daylamite Mosaferids and possibly raids by the Yazīdī Šervānšāhs and the Shaddadids of Ganja, who in 383/993, for instance, took possession of Barḍa'a and Baylaqān. At all events, Barḍa'a evidently at this time lost ground to Baylaqān. It is sporadically mentioned in Saljuq times (e.g., as being attacked in 457/1065 by the Abkāz or Alans) and in the Mongol period, when it was still significant enough for coins to be minted there by members of the Il-



khanid family and their governors (including as late as 756/1355; see Spuler, *Mongolen*¹, pp. 129, 131, 133, 135). Thereafter, however, it lapsed into its present status as a village, now called Barda, among the ruins of its former glories.

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See also Yāqūt, *Boldān*, Beirut, 1374-76/1955-57, I, pp. 379-81.

Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 177-78, 230.

V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, London, 1953, pp. 17, 65, 117.

Idem, *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10th-11th Centuries*, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 11, 18, 58, 73, 76 and index. *Et*² I, pp. 1040-41.

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