



BAYLAQĀN

BAYLAQĀN, Armenian form P'aytakaran (cf. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 457), a town of the medieval Islamic region of **Arrān**, the classical Caucasian Albania, lying in the triangle between the Kor and Aras (Araxes) rivers, in what is today the Mīl steppe in Soviet Azarbaijan. In Islamic times, it lay on the highway connecting Ardabīl and **Bājarvān** with **Bardā'a**; today, only ruins remain of Baylaqān, to the south-east of Shusha.

Said to have been founded by the Sasanian Emperor Qobād, Baylaqān may well have been founded when the area was colonized by Iranians in the later Sasanian period (cf. Balāqorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 194); Minorsky (*History of Sharvān*, p. 15) connected its name with Baylamān in Gīlān. It is said to have surrendered peacefully, with the requirement of paying tribute, to the Arab commander Salmān b. Rabī'a in 'Otmān's caliphate. The medieval geographers describe it as a small but flourishing town of the fertile Caspian basin plains, famed for its textiles and for a variety of confectionery called *nāṭef* (Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 342, tr. Kramers, p. 335; Maqdesī [Moqaddasī], p. 376; Abū Dolaf Mes'ar b. Mohalhel, ed. and tr. V. Minorsky, *Abū Dulaf Mis'ar ibn Muhalhil's Travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950)*, Cairo, 1955, pp. 36, 75; *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 144, 398).

Baylaqān's strategic position on the main route from Azarbaijan into Transcaucasia and thence to Georgia ensured it an exciting role at various points in Islamic history. When the Turkish Khazars invaded the Islamic lands from the north in 112/730, during Hešām's caliphate, Baylaqān was the scene of a great battle in which the Arab general Sa'īd b. 'Amr Ḥarašī defeated and



repelled the invaders (D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton, 1954, pp. 72-74). In the early 3rd/8th century, it may well have been affected by the rebellion of Bābak and the Ḳorramīya in adjacent Mūgān and Azarbaijan, for in 223/838, Bābak's brother 'Abd-Allāh took refuge with the local prince of Baylaqān, one Ebn Oqt Eṣṭefānūs (Ṭabarī, III, p. 1232). In the 4th-5th/10th-11th centuries, it fell generally within the territories controlled by the Kurdish dynasty of the **Shaddadids** of Arrān, although coveted also by the Yazīdī **Šervānšāhs**. In 421/1030 the Scandinavian-Slav Rus, who had sailed on the Caspian Sea and up the Kor river, helped the Shaddadid Mūsā b. Fażl to recapture Baylaqān, which had rebelled. Doubtless on account of its frontier position Baylaqān was at this time a turbulent place, frequently disturbed and in revolt against the Shaddadids of Ganja; its mixed ethnic and religious composition and its volatility emerge from the collection of correspondence compiled there in ca. 505/1111-12 by a Kurdish official of the Šervānšāh (see V. Minorsky and Cl. Cahen, "Le recueil transcaucasien de Mas'ūd b. Nāmdār (début du VI^e/XII^e siècle)," *JA* 237, 1949, pp. 93-142, also in V. Minorsky, *Medieval Iran and its Neighbours*, London, 1982, no. X). In the mid-6th/12th century, the period of Georgian resurgence, the Georgians claimed tribute from Baylaqān and Ganja, then defended by the Atābak of Azarbaijan Eldegüz. In 617/1220, Baylaqān was captured by the Mongols, who slaughtered the inhabitants and burned it down; but survivors subsequently returned and restored it (Jovaynī, tr. Boyle, I, p. 148). It was again besieged and taken toward the end of the 8th/14th century, this time by Tīmūr, who again rebuilt it and connected it with the Araxes by a canal; but in the following centuries, Baylaqān seem to have declined and to have become ruined.

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See also Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 178.

Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 1144, 1296-98.

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