

A later writer, however, Hamdulla the Persian, in 1325 A. D., tells us that Aboskun was then under water because the Oxus had been diverted from its old course about the time of the Mongols. He probably refers to the siege of Urgenj, and assumes that the water had remained high ever since, which may or may not have been true.

A few years before the date when Hamdulla wrote his account, there had been another sudden rise of the Caspian Sea. This may have been due to a temporary diversion of part of the Oxus. Brückner tells us that according to a story related by Marino Sanuto, the underground outlet by which the natives supposed the Caspian Sea to drain to the ocean was closed by an earthquake, whereupon the sea rose rapidly at the rate of about thirty-two inches a year, and some towns were submerged. Sheikh Sefi-Eddin says in reference to this, that the water reached a certain holy grave, well known even now, which lies thirty-seven feet above the present datum-level, and then, in the winter of 1306-07, began to fall. Now this date, be it noted, is within a year of the time when the Dragon Town on the shore of Lop-Nor was overwhelmed by the rising of that lake. It is possible that at about this time there may have been a period of unusual rainfall, which caused the rivers and lakes to rise until the water of the Tarim overwhelmed the Dragon Town, and that of the Oxus broke from its old channel and flowed to the Caspian, causing a sudden rise of that sea. It was no such accident, however, which caused the original submer-sion of the ruins of Aboskun, as Hamdulla implies, for they were certainly under water in Istakhri's day, four centuries earlier, when the Oxus did not flow to the Caspian.