



## ASFEZĀR

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**ASFEZĀR** (or ASFŌZAR), designation of a district (*kūra*) and later its chief town in the Herat quarter of Khorasan. The town was more recently known as Sabzavār of Herat (to distinguish it from the Sabzavār of Khorasan near Nīšāpūr, medieval Bayhaq), and at the present time is called Šīndand. Since the administrative re-organization of 1964, it has fallen within the *welāyat* or provinces of Farāh. The town lies in 33° 18' north latitude and 62° 08' east longitude at an altitude of 3,400 feet/1,080 meters on the modern highway connecting Herat with Farāh and Kandahar. In medieval times it was on the route connecting Herat with Sīstān and was counted as three stages (*marḥalas*) from Herat. It is also situated on one of the perennial rivers flowing from the western fringes of the Ġūr mountain massif of central Afghanistan down to the Hāmūn-e Šābarī lake of the Sīstān depression—the Adraskand or Hārūt river. The waters of this river are used extensively for irrigation, so that the surrounding region is of renowned fertility; the medieval geographers mention fruits, including grapes and pomegranates, and rice and cotton are now grown there. The Islamic geographers often reckoned Asfezār as belonging as much to Sīstān as to Khorasan, and they enumerate four small towns in the district, whose names are unfortunately corruptly rendered in the sources; e.g., *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam* (tr. Minorsky, pp. 104, 327, sec. 29) gives them as Kavāžān (?), Araskan, Kūžd (?), and Jarašān; the contemporary Maqdesī/Moqaddasī (p. 298) gives them as Kavāšān, Kavārān, Kūšk, and Adraskar (similarly in Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 439-40; tr. Kramers, II, p. 425). Asfezār appears in these early centuries of Islam as the scene of fighting between Kharijite sectaries, who were especially strong on the eastern fringes of



Khorasan until a late date, and the Arab governors sent out by the ‘Abbasid caliphs (e.g., the Kharijite leader Ḥożayn rebelled at the end of the 2nd/8th century, as did, more seriously, Ḥamza b. Āḍarak in the early years of the next century, see C. E. Bosworth, *Sīstān under the Arabs, from the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Ṣaffarīds (30-250/651-864)*, Rome, 1968, pp. 85, 95). Certain of the geographers mention Kharijites as subsisting in the area—perhaps in the mountains to the east of the town of Asfezār. But Asfezār itself seems to have been orthodox Sunni in complexion, since Ḥamdallāh Mostawfī (8th/14th century) says that the area was by then strongly Shafe‘ite in *madhab* (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, p. 152; tr. p. 151). Sam‘ānī (Hyderabad, I, p. 228) lists a considerable number of Sunni ‘*olamā*’ who had the *nesba* of “al-Asfezārī;” in the 9th/15th century, the celebrated author of a local history of Herat, Mo‘īn-al-dīn Zamčī (or Zamaǰī), also had this *nesba* (Storey, I, pp. 355-56).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also Eṣṭakrī, p. 264.

Ḥāfeż-e Abrū, *Joğrāfiā-ye Ḥāfeż-e Abrū: Qesmat-e rob‘-e Korāsān*, Herat, ed. M. Heravī, pp. 29-31, 40-41, 112-31.

*Tārīk-e Sīstān*, index. s.v. Ya‘qūb Heravī, *Tārīk-nāma-ye Herāt*, ed. M. Zobayr Ṣeddīqī, repr. Tehran, 1352 Š./1973, passim.

Yāqūt, I, p. 248.

L. W. Adamec, ed., *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan II*, Graz, 1973, pp. 277-78.

H. Humpum et al., *La géographie de l’Afghanistan: Étude d’un pays aride*, Copenhagen, 1959, pp. 50, 145.

Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 340, 412.

2. The name of one of the quarters (*maḥallas*) of Samarqand during the Samanid period. It lay within the inner city (*madīna*, *šahrestān*) and contained



various government offices (cf. Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 493; tr. Kramers, II, p. 473. Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, p. 90).

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