



BABAN

BABAN (or Bavan), a small town in the medieval Islamic province of *Bādġīs*, to the north and west of Herat, more particularly, in the district of Ganj Rostāq (q.v.), which formed the eastern part of *Bādġīs*. It must have been within the Herat *welāyat* of modern Afghanistan, just south of the border with the Turkmenistan S.S.R. and near the modern Afghan town of Košk.

The 4th/10th-century geographers link it with Kīf and Baġšūr as the three main settlements in Ganj Rostāq. Baban was two stages from Herat, Kīf and Baġšūr being respectively a stage and a day's journey further onwards. It was the most populous of the three and, as the *qaṣaba* or capital, the seat of the governor. The whole district is described as being agriculturally highly prosperous, obtaining its water from running streams from the hills and from wells, with grapes being a specialty; the *Ḥodūd al-ʿālam* mentions grape-syrup (*došāb*) from Baban. The place was still apparently prosperous in the later 6th/12th and early 7th/13th centuries, for both Samʿānī and Yāqūt visited it, the former hearing *ḥadīth* there from the local *cadi* (*qāzī*); both mention a prominent *faqīh* from the town, one Abū ʿAbd-Allāh Moḥammad b. Bešr Bavanī. After the Mongol invasions, however, it drops out of mention.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eṣṭakrī, p. 269.

Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 441, 457; tr. Kramers, pp. 426, 441.

Maqdesī, pp. 298, 308.

Ḥodūd al-‘ālam, tr. Minorsky, p. 104, sec. 23.31.

Sam‘ānī (Hyderabad), II, pp. 363-64.

Yāqūt (Beirut) I, p. 512.

Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 413.

A description of the district as it was a century ago is given by C. E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan or Letters from the Afghan Boundary Commission*, Edinburgh and London, 1888, pp. 67-68.