



EŠKĀŠ(E)M

EŠKĀŠ(E)M (called Sekāšem, Sekīmešt, and Eskīmešt by early geographers), a settlement in medieval Badaḵšān in northeastern Afghanistan (q.v.), now in the modern Afghan province of Eškāšem (lat. 36° 43' N., long. 71° 34' E.; not to be confused with Eškameš, further to the west in the Qondoḡ or Qaṭaḡan district of Badaḵšān). It is situated on the left bank of the upper Oxus and is connected to the provincial capital Fayḡābād by a road across the Sardāb Pass; when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the Russians built a bridge there over the Oxus in the early 1980s in order to transport troops and matériel. Eškāšem is the home of a small group of speakers of the Eastern Iranian language Eškāšmī (q.v.), which straddles the Oxus, hence they are also represented on the Tajikistan side of the river. Many of the local people are Ismaʿīlis (locally known as Mawlaʿīs). Eskāšem has played a part in history because of its position commanding the only winter route between Badaḵšān and the trans-Oxus regions of Šoḡnān and Waḡān; it was here that John Wood crossed the Oxus on ice in 1837.

Bibliography (for cited works not given in detail, see “Short References”):

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