



FAHRAJ

FAHRAJ, subdistrict (*dehestān*) and town in the Persian province of Yazd. The town (31° 46' N, 54° 35' E), 1270 m above sea level, is located 30 km southeast of Yazd on the main road to Bāfq and on the foothill of Čalta mountain (*Farhang-e joġrāfiā'i*, p. 70). In 1996 the population of the town was 16,549 (Markaz-e Amār-e Iran, p. 9). The local people are Persian-speaking and Shi'ite. Fahraj is situated in an arid environment on the desert fringe, and its irrigation is from *qanāts* and deep wells. The economy is basically agricultural with some carpet weaving. The main agricultural produce is wheat and fruits such as pomegranates, grapes, apples and apricots.

Ja'fari, in his *Tāriḳ-e Yazd* (p. 30) attributes the foundation of Fahraj to Qobād (Kawād), the Sasanian king. The tenth century geographers called it Bahra and ranked it together with Meybod and Nā'in as major settlements of Yazd, in the *kura* (province) of Eṣṭaḳr, each having a congressional mosque (Eṣṭaḳri, p. 97; Moqaddasi, pp. 75, 424; cf. *Ḥodud al-Ālam*, ed. Sotuda, p. 137). Abu'l-Fedā' (p. 330) gives its geographical coordinates, an information provided for important locations only (Šokuhi, p. 16).

In the early Islamic years the inhabitants of Fahraj were Zoroastrian (Moḥammad Mofid, III, p. 542). During the caliphate of 'Omar part of the Moslem army who were chasing Yazdegerd III arrived at Fahraj and called the people to convert to the new faith. The inhabitants of Fahraj as well as those of Kōvaydak and Farāftar resisted, they fought back and killed a number of the



Prophet's companions and the following generation (*ṣaḥāba* and *tābe'in*) who came to be known later as *šohadā-ye Fahraj* {The Martyrs of Fahraj} (Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn, pp. 48 f.; Ja'fari, p. 31; Mofid, III, pp. 543, 707f.). Today the mausoleums of these alleged martyrs are in Ābādi-e Šohadā, 2 km from Fahraj. (For its endowments, see Afšār, II, pp. 405, 438, 469, 911, 916)

The congregational mosque of Fahraj is located at the center of the present town. It is among the oldest extant mosques in Persia; it demonstrates the simple architectural characteristics of the early Islamic centuries. Its basic construction material is large sun-dried bricks, whereas the façade is coated with *sim-gel* (mixture of clay, sand and chopped straw), *gel-rig*, and plaster bracing (*ceftḥā-ye gaci*). The minaret was built in 10th or 11th century and is made of smaller raw bricks. The elegant stucco reliefs on the eastern wall and some other decorative pieces possess Sasanian art features (Šokuhi, p. 22). It is believed that there have been hiding places in the mosque in which people would hide their valuables during chaotic times (Pirniā, pp. 331-36).

Another historical monument of Fahraj is the tomb stone of Sayyed Faḡr-al-Din Abu Ja'far Ḥosaynī al-'Arizi made by 'Abd-Allāh b. Aḥmad Mara in the 12th century (Afšār, II, p. 911).

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