



FĀRĀB

FĀRĀB (Pārāb, Bārāb; *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, ed. Sotūda, p. 117, tr. Minorsky, p. 118; *Eṣṭakrī*, p. 346, tr. pp. 307, 360; *Moqaddasī/Maqdesī*, pp. 26, 48), a small district on the middle Syr Darya (Nahr al-Šāš, Sayḥūn) in Transoxania, at the confluence of that river with its right-bank tributary, the Arys, which flows down from Esfijāb (q.v.), and also the name of a small town within it. The site of both of these now lies within the modern Republic of Kazakhstan.

The main center of the district was originally Kadar (*Eṣṭakrī*, p. 346; Ebn Ḥawqal, ed. Kramers, p. 523-24, tr. Kramers, p. 499). According to *Moqaddasī/Maqdesī* (p. 273), Fārāb was a large fortified town with a citadel and several market places, the largest of which was located outside the city. It had a warlike population, which *Moqaddasī/Maqdesī* puts at about 70,000 (p. 273; *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, ed. Sotūda, p. 117, tr. Minorsky, p. 118). A village of the district was Vasīj, which was, according to Ebn Ḥawqal (p. 510, tr., p. 488), the birthplace of the philosopher Abū Naṣr Fārābī (q.v.). The lexicographer Abū Naṣr Ḥammād Jawharī (d. 393/1003?), the author of *Tāj al-loḡa wa ṣeḥāḥ al-‘arabiya*, was born in Fārāb. The terrain thereabouts was marshy, with salt-flats which were liable to flooding, but agriculture was possible along the river banks (Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 511-12, tr. Kramers, p. 488; Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbih*, p. 66; *Eṣṭakrī*, tr., p. 360). Fārāb is not mentioned much in the historical sources, and cannot have become Muslim before the Samanid conquest of Esfijāb in 225/840. For long it was a frontier post, facing the pagan Turkish steppes, and had some commercial significance as the starting-point of a route which went northward via Deh-e Now or Yangīkent to the lands of the Kimek (Kīmāk)



Turks on the Ishim and Irtysh (Erteš) rivers (Gardīzī, ed. Ḥabībī, pp. 258-59; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, pp. 66, 181; *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, tr. Minorsky, comm. pp. 306-09).

It seems that Fārāb was replaced by the more important and more historically significant town of Otrār, whose ruins now lie some 6 miles from the Syr Darya; Otrār is mentioned from Qarakhanid times onwards.

Today Fārāb is also the name of a rural district in the *šahrestān* of Rašt and a village in the *šahrestān* of Arāk in Persia; in about 1950 they had populations of 11,000 and 273, respectively (Razmārā, *Farhang* II, p. 197).

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