



FARĶĀR

FARĶĀR, river, valley, and administrative district (*woloswālī*), in Takār province, northeastern Afghanistan. The river, which drains the central western slope of the K̄vāja Moḥammad range of the Hindu Kush, has different names over its course of 261 km: Āb-e Wār, Daryā-ye Qondoḏ, Rōd-e Warsaj, Rōd-e Orsajāb, Daryā-ye FarĶār, Daryā-ye Ṭālaqān, and Daryā-ye K̄nābād. The district comprises the main valley from the Tang-e Warsaj gorge (elev. ca. 1,650 m) to the foot of the mountains (elev. 900 m), with its side valleys. The latter are short and steep, except for the well-populated K̄ormāb valley, which opens to the east 2 km above the main town, FarĶār Bāzār, located near the old village of FarĶār in the widest part of the lower valley. The upper valley constitutes Warsaj subdistrict (*‘alāqa-dārī*); north of it lies Kalafgān subdistrict, on the fringe of the mountains. The highest point in FarĶār is Kōh-e Fergardī (5,107 m) in the southwest.

The FarĶār valley opens without barrier onto the plain of Ṭālaqān, but it has never been important for transit traffic, as passes across the K̄vāja Moḥammad range are high and difficult. Although a branch of the old route from Qondoḏ and Ṭālaqān to BadaĶšān passes through the lower tip of the FarĶār valley (the route of the present motor road), this valley was not mentioned by Arab geographers, who noted only that the river K̄ottalāb waters the Ṭālaqān plain (Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 428). FarĶār usually belonged to Ṭālaqān but in the 1860s was temporarily annexed to BadaĶšān (Yule, p. 441; “Central Asian Material,” p. 175). In 1302 Š./1923 Borhān-al-Dīn Kuškakī (pp. 81-83, tr., I, pp. 76-79) described it as a district of about five thousand people (probably an



underestimate), all Tajik peasants or weavers. In 1357 Š./1978 it was still a center of traditional cotton weaving specialized in *alača* fabrics, of cotton and silk or rayon, for long-sleeved coats (*čapan*; Grötzbach, 1990, p. 253). Beside irrigated cultivation of wheat, barley, maize, some rice, and rich fruit orchards in the valley bottom and on alluvial fans, the lower slopes of the mountains, still covered with the scant remnants of former pistachio and almond groves, are used for dry farming or pasturage.

The district of Farḳār proper (1,450 km²) had a population of 27,355 in 1357 Š./1978. Some archeological sites in the vicinity of Farḳār village date from the Achaemenid or Hellenistic period (Ball and Gardin, I, pp. 97-98, 256).

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