



FŪŠANJ

FŪŠANJ (arabicized form Būšanj; Mid. Pers. Pūšang [Markwart, *Provincial Capitals*, p. 11], also reflected in the Būšang of the *Ḥodūd al-ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 64, 104), a town of medieval eastern Khorasan, situated just to the south of the Harīrūd River, and variously described in the sources as being between six and ten *farsaks* to the west-southwest of Herat.

The town existed in pre-Islamic times, and was reputedly founded by Šāpūr I, who is also said to have constructed a bridge there; subsequently, however, control of the Herat and Bādġīs region, in which Fūšanj was situated, oscillated between the Sasanians and the Hephthalites. In 588 C.E., a suffragan bishopric at Fūšanj, dependent on the Nestorian metropolitan of Herat, is mentioned (Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 49, 64, 77 n. 1). At the time of the Arab conquest of Khorasan, Herat and Bādġīs were under Hephthalite control, and these districts and Fūšanj were under what Balādorī (*Fotūḥ*, p. 405) calls “a powerful prince” (*‘azīm*). Fūšanj formed part of the conquests of Mo‘āwīa’s governor of Khorasan, ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Āmer (q.v.), who appointed as his deputy over Herat, Bādġīs and Fūšanj Qays b. Hayṭam Solamī, and then Zīād b. Abīhi appointed Nāfe‘ b. Kāled Ṭāḥī over these same districts (Balādorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 409; Ṭabarī, II, p. 79, year 45/665-66). After the ‘Abbasid revolution, Fūšanj was governed by Abū Moslem’s associate Moṣ‘ab b. Rozayq, and it was at Fūšanj that Muṣ‘ab’s grandson, Ṭāher Du‘l-Yamīnayn was born around 770 (Kaabi, p. 65). Possession of the town was wrested from the Taherids a century later by the Saffarid Ya‘qūb b. Layṭō, on the first occasion probably in 253/867 and then definitively in 259/873, when Ya‘qūb took over Khorasan from them



(Bosworth, pp. 112-13). With the shrinkage of the Saffarid dominions in the early 10th century, Fūšanj passed first to the Samanids, then to the Ghaznavids and then, in the mid-11th century, to the Great Saljuqs.

The geographers of the 10th century describe Fūšanj as a town half the size of Herat, with a citadel protected by a ditch and rampart, and as having three gates, leading to Nīšāpūr, Qohestān, and Herat respectively; the town did in fact enjoy a strategic position along the east-west routes. As well as being in a fertile, well-watered plain which favored agriculture, local timber resources were exploited, including juniper trees (*‘ar‘ar*; see Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 440, tr. p. 425; *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 104).

Whether Fūšanj was attacked by the Mongols is unrecorded, though Herat was devastated in 618/1221 (Jovaynī, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 151-52). In the next century Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfī described its agriculture as flourishing (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. and tr. Le Strange, text, pp. 152-53, tr., p. 151). Tīmūr destroyed the town in 782/1381 after reducing the last Kart ruler of Herat, Ġiāṭ-al-Dīn Pīr-‘Alī, to submission. It nevertheless revived, and is often mentioned in the Timurid period by Ḥāfez-e Abrū, who again mentions trade in its juniper wood and also a remarkable *rebāṭ* there, whose building was attributed to Abraham (Ḥāfez-e Abrū, text, pp. 22, 31, 39-40, tr., pp. 24, 29, 35-36, comm., p. 85). Later, Fūšanj drops out of mention, and was probably destroyed in the frontier disputes between Safavids, Uzbeks and then Afghans; according to Wilhelm Tomaschek (“Zur historische Topographie von Persien,” *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. classe 102, 1883, p. 223), the modern town of Ġūrīān, just to the south of the Harīrūd (34° 20’ N, 61° 26’ E), now in the Afghan province of Herat, marks the site.

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