



ĠARĀESTĀN

ĠARĀESTĀN, name of a region in early Islamic times, situated to the north of the upper Harīrūd and the Paropamisus range and on the head waters of the Moṛḡāb. To its west was **Bādḡīs** and to its northeast **Gūzgān**. Ġarāestān thus corresponds to the region known at present as **Fīrūzkūh** and forms part of the province of Bādḡīs in contemporary Afghanistan. The term *ḡarča* perhaps reflects an Iranian word for mountain, as suggested by Maqdesī/Moqaddasī (p. 309).

The early Islamic geographers also term the region Ġarj-al-Šār “Ġarj of the Šār/Šēr,” the title of the local princes (a title also known for the princes of **Bāmīān** and **Ḳottal**), who were by the 10th century vassals of the Samanids. The geographers describe the region as populous and flourishing, producing grain, fruit, and rice and also with an element of pastoralist herdsmen; it had ten congregational mosques. The two chief towns, of roughly the same size, were Abšīn/Bašīn and Sūrmīn/Šūrmīn, the exact sites of which are not known. The first lay in the lowlands of the upper Moṛḡāb valley, four stages to its south in the mountains. The Šār/Šēr, however, originally resided at neither of these places but at a settlement in the mountains called Balkīān, according to Eṣṭaḡrī (p. 272), though by the later 4th/10th century he had moved to Abšīn, according to Maqdesī (p. 348).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hodūd al-‘ālam, tr. Minorsky, p. 105, comm. pp. 327-28.

Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 79. Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 415-16.

R. N. Frye, “Ghardjōistān” in *EI2* II, pp 1010-11.