



## ĜUR

---

**ĜUR**, a region of central Afghanistan, essentially the modern administrative province (*welāyat*) of Ĝōrāt.

Pre-modern Ĝur comprised the basins of the upper Harirud, the Farahrud, the Rud-e Ĝōr, and the Kašrud, together with the intervening mountain chains. The mountains rise to over 10,000 feet, increasing as they merge in the east into the Hindu Kush and Pamirs; they made the region difficult to access in medieval times, explaining why it remained for long a pagan enclave and why the modern Ĝōrāt province remains one of the least developed of the country. The population in medieval times was, as it is now, presumably Tajik. The language of the Ĝuris must have had considerable dialectical divergencies from the Persian spoken in Khorasan, for the Ghaznavid prince Mas'ud b. Maḥmud had to employ local interpreters for his campaign of 411/1020 into Ĝur (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, p. 140). There is nothing to indicate that any other Iranian language, e.g., proto-Pashto, was spoken there. On the evidence of a Judeo-Persian inscription found near Češt, it seems that there were some Jews in Ĝur during the 8th century (see Henning).

Information about Ĝur in the pre-Ghaznavid period is very sparse. There were raids into the region, doubtless aimed primarily at securing slaves, in the Umayyad and 'Abbasid periods, e.g., in 107/725-26 and some time after 364/974-75 (Bosworth, 1961, pp. 120-22). Ĝur, however, lay outside the purview of most of the Muslim geographers of the 10th century, whilst the account in the *Ho-dud al-'ālam* (ed. Sotuda, pp. 101-2, tr. p. 110), is not very informative, despite the fact that the anonymous author apparently worked in Guzgān



(q.v.) just to the north of Ġur. Slaves coming from Ġur were considered to be of high caliber, and the coats of mail and weapons produced there were known to be of excellent quality; the people, white and tawny, were malevolent, unruly, and ignorant (*badk'āh o nāsāzanda o jāhel*) The difficulties which the Ghaznavid invaders faced confirm Yāqut's information (*Boldān*, Beirut, IV, p. 218) that Ġur had no towns of note, but many fortified towers and strongholds.

The accounts of Bayhaqī concerning the three expeditions by Mas'ud of Ġazna into Ġur (see Nāẓim, pp. 70-73; Bosworth, 1961, pp. 125-28) give various items of topographical information, much of which cannot, unfortunately, yet be elucidated (see, however, *Ḥodud al-'ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. xxi-xxxvii and map on p. xxix). The raids may have helped the spread of Islam within Ġur, since the Ghaznavids left behind there preceptors of the faith. Enthusiasts of the pietistic and ascetic Kar-rāmiya sect, influential in Khorasan, may have aided this process; certainly, in the 6th/12th century, the Karrāmiya had a strong following in Ġur, up to and including the ruling Ghurid family (Bosworth, 1960; idem, 1961, pp. 128-33).

The Ghaznavid sultans were never able to incorporate Ġur properly into their empire. It was left to local chieftains, out of whom the Šansabānis rose to pre-eminence in the later 11th century and during the ensuing century made Ġur, with their capital Firuzkuh (q.v.), the center of a mighty but transient military empire (see GHURIDS). There is, accordingly, information on events within Ġur and on its historical topography in the work of the Ghurids historian, Menhāj-al-Din 'Oṭmān b. Serāj Juzjāni (*Ṭabaqāt* I, pp. 319-414; tr., Raverty, London, I, pp. 300-507), which still requires further elucidation.

The role of Ġur on the wider stage of Islamic history comes to an end with the Mongol sack of Firuzkuh in 619/1222 and the fall of the native Ghurid dynasty. Thereafter, Ġur is mentioned only occasionally in reference to the affairs of surrounding powers, such as the Kart Maleks of Herāt and the Timurids (qq.v.). It was affected by incursions of Turco-Mongol freebooters like the Qarawnas or Negüders in the 13th-14th centuries; one legacy of these was the persistence into the 20th century in southern Ġur of a pocket of ethnic Mongols, who still spoke Mongolian until recently (Bosworth, "Moghols").



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

(for cited works not given in detail, see “Short References”):

Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, pp. 137-44.

A. D. H. Bivar, “*Ghūr*,” in *EI2* II, p. 1096. Bosworth, “Moghols” in *EI2* VII, p. 218.

Idem, “The Rise of the Karrāmiyyah in Khurasan,” *The Muslim World* 50/1, 1960, pp. 5-14.

Idem, “The Early Islamic History of Ghūr,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 6/2, 1961, pp. 116-33.

Eṣṭakri, pp. 272, 281, 285. *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* III, pp. 135-39.

W. B. Henning, “The Inscriptions of Tang-i Azao,” *BSOAS* 20, 1957, pp. 335-42.

*Ḥodud al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, comm. pp. 342-44 and map on p. 329.

Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 416-17.

M. Nāzim, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*, Cambridge, 1931.

*Nozhat al-qolub*, ed. Le Strange, p. 152.

H. F. Schurmann, *The Mongols of Afghanistan. An Ethnography of the Moghols and Related Peoples of Afghanistan*, The Hague, 1962.