



ḤODUD AL-‘ĀLAM

ḤODUD AL-‘ĀLAM, a concise but very important Persian geography of the then known world, Islamic and non-Islamic, begun in 372/982-83 by an unknown author from the province of Guzgān (q.v.) in what is now northern Afghanistan. It was dedicated to the local prince of the Fariḡunid family, Abu'l-Ḥāreṭ Moḥammad b. ‘Abd-Allāh; and Vladimir Minorsky has surmised that it might have been written by the enigmatic Ša’yā b. Fariḡun, author of a pioneer encyclopedia of the sciences, the *Jawāme’ al-‘olum*, for an amir of Čaḡāniān on the upper Oxus in the mid-4th/10th century (see Minorsky, 1962, pp. 189-96; repr. in Minorsky, 1964, pp. 327-32). The author of the *Ḥodud* does not seem to have traveled beyond his native Guzgān, relying instead on earlier travel reports and geographical works, including those of Ebn Ḳordāḏbeh (q.v.) and, possibly, ‘Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Jayhāni, though he names no sources.

The *Ḥodud* is written in terse prose. He first enumerates, in careful and precise terms, the seas, islands, mountains, rivers, and deserts of the known world (par. 3-7), before proceeding to devote a chapter each to the different lands (par. 8-60). He divides the world as he knows it into the continents of Asia, Europe, and “Libya” (i.e., Africa), and enumerates forty-five lands (*nāḥiāt*) north of the equator, one of them (the Sudan) spanning it, and five of them among “the southern inhabited lands.” (Some of these last, such as Nubia and Abyssinia, are in reality north of the equator; others, like Zāba(j) and Zangestān, may be considered to be spanning it.)

Details about the habitat and local products, as well as political allegiance, are frequently mentioned. While the author naturally concentrates on the Islamic



lands, and especially on his own native regions of Transoxania and what is now Afghanistan, devoting some two-thirds of the book to them, the attention given to non-Islamic territories is noteworthy, far exceeding that in previous Arab geographies. He includes Andalusia, Byzantium, the lands of the Slavs, the Russians, the Bulgarians, and the Mordvins, and also Turkish lands in Inner Asia, Tibet, and China. His information on the Turkish tribes is particularly valuable; it seems that he drew on the same source here as did the Ghaznavid historian Gardizi (q.v.) for his own survey of the Turks written some 70 years later. The archaic language and style of the *Ḥodud* make it a valuable linguistic document as well; these aspects have been studied by Vladimir Minorsky (1970, pp. lv-lxv) and Gilbert Lazard (pp. 53-54).

Bibliography:

The work. The sole surviving manuscript has had an interesting history. Discovered by C. Toumansky in Bukhara in 1892, it was first edited and published by V. V. Barthold in Leningrad in 1930, with an important preface (reprinted in his *Sochineniya* VIII, Leningrad, 1977, pp. 504-46; an English translation of it was prefaced by Minorsky in 1937, accompanied by a commentary of stupendous erudition, *Ḥudūd al-Ālam, "The Regions of the World": A Persian Geography 372 AH–982 AD*, Gibb Memorial Series, N.S. XI, London, 1937.

A second edition (London, 1970), includes Minorsky's article "Addenda to the *Ḥudūd al-Ālam*" (originally published in *BSOAS* 17, 1955, pp. 250-76), a few textual improvements by Manučehr Sotuda, and a second series of "Addenda" by Minorsky. The Persian text had meanwhile been published by Jalāl-al-Din Tehrāni (Tehran, 1935) and also by Manučehr Sotuda (Tehran, 1961).

Studies. C. Edmund Bosworth, "Ḥudūd al-ālam," in *EI2*. Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris, 1963.

Minorsky, *Iranica: Twenty Articles*, Tehran, 1964.

Idem, "Ibn Farīghūn and the *Ḥudūd al-ālam*," in W. B. Henning, et al., eds., *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, London, 1962.

André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du XIe siècle*, Paris, 1967, I, pp. xxxiii, 398-99. Storey, II, p. 120.