



OSRUŠANA

OSRUŠANA, a district of medieval Islamic Transoxania lying to the east of **Samarqand** on the upper reaches of the Zarafšān river or Nahr-e Šogd. It extended northwards to the southern bend of the Syr Darya and the western fringes of Farghana (see **FARGĀNA**), and southwestwards to the Bottamān mountains, which separated the upper Oxus basin and its right-bank tributaries from the Syr Darya valley. It was accordingly traversed by the highway linking Samarqand with Farghana. The exact form of the Iranian name Osrušana is not clear from the sources, but the forms given in *Hodud al-‘alam* (tr. Minorsky, pp. 63, 115, comm. 354), indicate an original *Sorušana.

Osrušana was a region comprising plains, whose fertility, agricultural richness, and pasturelands are praised by the geographers, and hills and, in the south, the Bottamān mountains (rising up to over 5,000 m), which were usually reckoned as belonging to it administratively. The mountains were rich in minerals; and gold, silver, sal ammoniac, and vitriol were obtained from them and exported; above all, local iron ore was made up into tools and weapons at the towns of Marsmanda and Mānk/Mink and sent as far as Khorasan and Iraq (Ebn Kordābeh, p. 38; Ebn Hawqal, pp. 505-6; tr. Kramers, pp. 483-84).

The region was little urbanized, and it long preserved its ancient Iranian feudal and patriarchal society. The main settlement, described by the early geographers as the ruler’s residence, was *Bunjikaṭ (*Hodud al-‘alam*, tr. Kramers, p. 115, spelt Navinjkat; cf. Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang*, pp. 81, 162). It was identified by Barthold, who surveyed the ruins of the area in 1894, with



Šahrestān, some 25 km from the modern Ura-Tyube at the entrance to the Farghana valley (*Turkestan*³, p. 166). It was flourishing and populous in the 10th century, and *Ebn Ḥawqal* estimated its male population at 10,000. There was a citadel, a walled inner town, and a walled suburb, in which was situated the administrative building (*dār al-emāra*). Streams from nearby hills supplied irrigation water and drove ten mills (*Ebn Ḥawqal*, pp. 503-04; tr. Kramers, p. 482; Maqdesi, p. 277). Next in size and importance came Zānin or Sarsanda, likewise walled and fortified and a staging post on the Samarqand-Farghana road. Dizak or Jizak, also situated in the plains, was a rallying point for ghazis or fighters for the faith, who made raids from there into the Turkish steppes; amongst its many *rebāṭs* (see “Ribāt,” in *EI* ²) was one at Kodayasar built by the *Afšin* (see below; *Ebn Ḥawqal*, pp. 504-5, tr. pp. 482-83; Maqdesi, pp. 277-78).

At the time of the Arab incursions into Transoxania, Osrušana had its own line of Iranian princes, the Afšins (*Ebn Kordādbeh*, p. 40), of whom the most famous was the general of the caliph Moʿtaṣem (q.v. 833-42), the Afšin Kaydar or Ḥaydar b. Kāvus (d. 841; see *AFŠIN*). Bottamān may have been a separate administrative district, since *Ebn Kordādbeh* (p. 29) says that it had its own *malek* with the curious title (which must be a corrupt spelling) of Ebn Naʿnāʿ “possessor of mint.” In this latter region lay the original home of the Sogdian magnate Abuʿl-Sāj Divdād, commander in the service of Motawakkel (847-61) and progenitor of the later line of Sajid governors in Azarbaijan (see *SAJIDS*).

Osrušana, a region strongly under Iranian cultural influence, for long strenuously resisted the Arab invaders. The governor of Khorasan, Qotayba b. Moslem, is said to have fought there “wearers of black,” and the last Omayyad governor, Naṣr b. Sayyār, invaded it and concluded treaties with the local rulers of the middle and upper Syr Darya regions (called in the Arabic sources *dehqāns*; see Gibb, pp. 49, 90). According to Tʿang dynastic annals, the ruler of Osrušana in 752 tried vainly to get Chinese help against the Arabs (*Barthold*, *Turkestan*³, p. 196). It did not submit definitively to the Arabs till Maʿmun’s (r. 813-33) caliphate in about 820. The Afšin Kāvus submitted, but, despite the killing of his son Kaydar or Ḥaydar (see above), members of the line continued to rule in Osrušana, minting their own coins there until 893, though theoretically under Samanid suzerainty. Thereafter, the Samanid Amir Esmāʿil b. Aḥmad (q.v., r. 892-907) brought it under his direct authority and incorporated into his empire. With the fall of the Samanids at the end of the 10th century, the region passed under Turkish Qarakhanid (see *ILAK-KHANIDS*) control; and the process of Turcification, which would be



completed in the more northerly part of the region by modern times, now begins. The name Osrušana drops out of use by the time of the Mongol invasions. In the mid-19th century, the main town of the region, Ura Tyube, lay in a frontier zone disputed by the Khans of Bukhara and Khokand; in 1866 it was captured by the Russians advancing into Central Asia. Shortly after this, the American traveler Eugene Schuyler (I, pp. 308-13) describes his journey through what was the region of Osrušana. The lowland parts of medieval Osrušana now fall mainly within the easternmost part of the republic of Uzbekistan, and the Bottamān mountains within the northern part of the republic of Tajikistan.

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