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# The Geographical Nature in the Islamic East and its Impact on the History of the Political Formation of the States of the Islamic East

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## Abstract

*Objectives: the study aims at investigating the impact of geography in the foundation of the political authorities of Islamic East. Methods: the study follows a descriptive approach i.e. historical narrations in which Arab geographers' resources and translated resources that deal with the history and geography of Islamic East , are provided. Results: The study concluded that geography played a significant role in establishing any states as well as in creating leaders of any political transition. Recommendations: more research about the history of geography of Islamic East areas and its impact on politics and society are required.*

**Keywords:** history, east, society, Islamic, geography

## The First Section

### Geography and Authority

Geography (-Geography: A science that studies the natural phenomena of the Earth's surface, such as mountains, plains, forests, deserts, animals, and humans. It also studies the human phenomena of this surface, made by man. See: Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit, vol. 1, p. 126.) is a primary motif that urges tribes and nations to choose areas to settle in. It also influences the emergence of states and economically and politically powerful entities that rely on the strength of these nations in establishing and controlling their states.

It is considered as a primary vehicle in providing incomes, livelihoods, residential areas, frontiers, a climate and what is required to establish any village or city. If a territory has wealthy natural resources, political borders and neighbors with diversified cultures, the political entity or state will become strong.

On the other hand, if the territory has poor nature and climate, the state will get weak. Gradually, it become grab for another political entities or it will rely on another countries to protect it politically and economically.

Moreover, it is essential in establishing any state or microstate in the first place. A man has to have a proper natural environment to settle in which it later becomes his home. Later this city or village will be his country. Thus appropriate ground and climate are essential factors for any nations or tribes to be stable.

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Many ancient philosophers explained how a city that is established by people. They also linked its political nature with its geography. Aristotle, for instance, stated that a climate and a nature play a vital role in determining the ideal population for the ideal state where prosperity and stability for every person and state is possible. He also pointed that the state has to be protected strongly from any exterior invasion. Moreover he added that Athens is a good example since it is protected by many mountains that surround it. The more a state has exterior marine frontiers the more political relations it has. For him, Trade is also very essential since it is an economic and cultural resource that enable a state to contact with other states (Aristotle, 2006, pp. 275-276).

In his book *the republic*, Plato dealt with political geography. He saw the city as a proper place for a population in which the emergence of a state or microstate is linked to the emergence of population. He also suggested a proper ground for a city and state in which he asked whether it would be near the sea or inside the state (Aflatoun, 1994, p. 31).

In his Introduction *Muqaddimah*, the Arabic scientist Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, offered an overview of a microstate, a state, a tribe and the conflict between the Bedouin and the settled. Thus he asserted that the aspects of the human political behavior are linked with the environmental natural impact of geography (Ibn Khaldun, 2004 AD, p. 120)

Simply, the relation between geography and politics is a strong one. It is a relation between the ground, the nation and the activities that a human is able to do on this ground and what it gives for him. Hence it is the main source of strength or weakness of any society or political entity.

## Islamic East

### Language and Terminology

Almashriq is defined as the east. East is the direction from which the sun arises. It is said east is raised, two easts, and an east of summer and winter. Moreover east is a direction. It is also said "a man is raised .i.e. or he entered in a place at sunrise (Al-Jawhari, 1987, vol. 4, p. 1500) Earth shines .i.e. it is shined by the rise of the sun (Mukhtar, 2008, vol. 2, p. 1192) Furthermore, it is said "east and west are also completely different (Al-Sabti, (d.d.) vol. 2, p. 358). The two easts (Al-Farahidi, (d.d.), vol. 5, p. 38), . The Quranic verse also indicated (And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord) (Az-Zumar, verse 69).

Alkhwarizmi translated the word east as (The length of the state is measured by how far it is from the east to the west. However, for an astrologer, neither east or west has an end because every point in the equator is an east for a certain place and a west for another. If he mentioned the east, he definitely meant the farthest place of the developed land in east. On the other hand, if he said the west, he meant its farthest place in west in which hemisphere is between them longitudinally. The developed land means its quarter that lies on the north ) (Al-Khwarizmi, (d.d.), vol. 1, p. 126).

As for its terminological meaning, in *kashaf alaistilahat*, it is stated that (as-sumit (Ibn Manzur, 1993, vol. 1, p. 46) arch is located between any point of both east and west. As-sumit principle is the points of east and west. Whereas the whole as-sumit is the arch that lies from the horizon between any points of as-sumit and any points of north or south. Thus as-sumit begins from a circle of the first heaven. Therefore it is called so) (Al-Thanawi, 1996, vol. 1, p. 292), (east is a direction from which the sun arises, Islamic countries are Eastern Arabia and east and west) (Ibn Faris, 1979, vol. 3, p. 263). It is also said "between the two easts .i.e. between east and west" (Ibn al-Sakit, 1998, vol. 1, p. 286).

On the other hand, Al-Suyuti explained the boundaries of the word east astronomically. He said that : (Right ascension: a huge circle that surrounds celestial poles where it moves from east to west every day and night) (Al-Suyuti, 2004, vol. 1, 139). It is the average of a day and the Great Circle that surrounds the two celestial poles in which it moves from east to west once every day and night, it is called Day rate when the sun reaches it, it is midday (Al-Khwarizmi, (d.d.), vol. 1, p. 240). In Al-mashriq wal-shuruq book, it is said (there is a star arose from the east and another counterpart fell in the west) (Al-Azhari, 2001 AD, vol. 15, p. 387).

### **Geographical Location**

The Muslim Arabs referred to the geographical area of the Islamic Levant as: (The news of the East... Then we start with the East, which is a quarter of the kingdom, and we begin by mentioning Khurasan, which was under the hands of Asabdhahha Bazhusban, and four satraps. To each satzban, a quarter of Khurasan, then a quarter to the satzban of Marw al-Shahjahan and its works, and a quarter to the satzban of Balkh and Takharistan, and a quarter to the satzban of Harat, Bushang, Badgish, and Sijistan. Ibn Mufarrij said, "On the day she saw him, I hear you calling." I was blessed with a tayasra and called a right (Ibn Al-Mufregh, 1982, p. 224) and a quarter of Brisbane beyond the river (Ibn Khurdadhiba, 1889, p. 18).

As for Al-Yaqubi, he referred to the borders of the countries of the Islamic East by saying: (The first quarter is the quarter of the East from Baghdad to the Mountain, Azerbaijan, Qazvin, Zanjar, Qom, Isfahan, Rayy, Taristan, Gurjan, Sijistan, Khorasan, and what connects to Khorasan from Nabati and Turkestan) (Al-Yaqubi, 2001, p. 71).

In Sifat jazirat Al-arab, it is stated that : "Along the middle of Islamic East, the third region passes from east to west through the places whose days are the longest and its width is what we have mentioned. It extends where the second region ends where the daytime lasts for fourteen hours and a quarter. The width is thirty three and a third parts. Its middle is where the Children of Israel wandered during Moses's prophecy. It extends in the East in the north of China, India, Sindh, Kandahar, Kabul, Persia, Sigistan, Ashkelon, Egypt, Cyrenaica, Africa, and the city of Kairouan, until it ends at the western border of the countries of the Dark Sea i.e. the Atlantic "(Al-Hamdani, 1884, vol. 1, p. 29)

In all of the above sources, Arab historians nicknamed it as Islamic East and other names to distinguish it from other provinces. On the other hand, Al-Hamdani referred that its size depends on the chronic condition in which several areas share concerning the length of day. He did not only regarded it as a one province but he also divided it according to its population's religion. For instance the Children of Israel is a reference to Sinai Peninsula. Thus, the area of Arabic East is included in Islamic East.

According to his classifications of provinces, Al-Hamawi determined it as : " the third province: it begins when the shadow is at midday if the night and day is three and a half, a ten or sixteen feet. On the other hand, It ends when the level of shadow is four and a half and thirteen feet. Therefore the daylight lasts fourteen hours. It begins from east, then it passes through northern China, India, Sindh, Kabul, Kerman, Sijistan, Persia, Ahvaz, Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, and Alexandria. Countries that are located behind China i.e. near Midian in the Levant, the farthest of Iraq are at the middle. At its farthest end, which is next to the south, there are Althaelabia and what it lies on its east or west. Persia, Kandahar, and India, Multan, Nihaya, Karur, and the Afghan mountains, and Sur in the Levant, Tiberias, and Beirut are in its lowest limit i.e. the one that follows the north. As well as everything that was east and west between two regions, and the well-known cities that occurred in this region were: Ghazni, Kabul, Al-Rakhj, the

mountains of Zablistan, Sijistan, Isfahan, Bast, Zaranj, and Kerman, and from Persia: Istakhar, And Jur, and Fasa, and Sabur, and Shiraz, and Siraf, and Janaba, and Siniz, and Mahruban, and all of Ahwaz, : Basra, Wasit, Kufa, Baghdad, Anbar, Hit, and Al-Jazira are from Iraq, from the Levant: Homs in some narrations, Damascus, Tyre, and Acre. Tiberias, Caesarea, and Arsuf. Its length from east to west is eight hundred thousand seven hundred and seventy-four miles and twenty-three minutes, and its width is three hundred and forty-eight miles and forty-five minutes, and its divided area is three hundred thousand six thousand four hundred and fifty-eight miles and twenty-nine minutes(Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 1, p. 29).

Moreover Al-Hamwi included India and its neighboring regions of Sindh, China, the Kabul region, Iraq, the Levant, and Egypt. Here we find that Al-Hamwi gave all of these countries one characteristic, which is the length of the day and the night according to the length of the shadow.

According to another opinion, Khorasan is the same as the entire East since it is a vast country with many regions in which the Arabs in ancient times saw Khorasan as their eastern destination, that is, it was the country of the East. Therefore it is said " (it is a great work and a respected and venerable region". In Alhakim's poems, he mentioned the regions of the earth and ruled for them his saying: "And the world is Khorasan". Additionally if the Arabs mention the whole East, it is said: Persia, so Khurasan is from Persia(Anonymous, 2002, p. 123).

About East, Al-Maqdisi mentioned : (Abu Zayd (Al-Zirakli, 2002, vol. 1, p. 134) stated that it is three regions: Khorasan, Sijistan, and Transoxiana, but we regarded it as one with two sides separated by the Gihon. We attributed each side to the man who planned and built it. We represented each side and described it separately according to the size of the region, its architecture, the large area and its cities. If someone says: Why did you not make each side a territory as is known to the people? Did you not know that they say: Khorasan and Transoxiana (Al-Maqdisi, 1991, p. 260).

At the same time he described it as the best region, regarding Khorasan, Sijistan, and Transoxiana a separate region in itself, due to the greatness of the area, its diversity, and the abundance of its resources, lands, and works. Some historians agreed with Al-Maqdisi in this by dividing the regions of the East into regions because they deserved what was said about them: (If someone said why did not regard each side a region as it is known among the people. Did you know that they say Khorasan and Transoxiana?. it is also common that the area from the borders of Qums to Tiraz is called Khorasan. Did you know that the family of Saman is called the kings of Khorasan and they lived on this side even though we did not call this side Khorasan? So that we are bound by what you said. If he said, "Why did you include Sijistan and disagree with those who preceded you in this knowledge?" it would be said to him: "People also know that it is from Khorasan. Don't you know that they are preaching to the family of Saman? If we regard Sajistan a province, we would have to consider Khwarezm a province due to the intensity of its architecture and the large number of its cities and the diverse languages and personalities that people have ".this is not unlawful and not said. Then if he said " why did you make it two sides, it is said as if Yemen was two sides and Morocco was two parts(Al-Maqdisi, 1991 AD, p. 260).

Ibn Fadl Al-Omari called it as the kingdom of Iraqis in which it comprises Iraq, Persia, Kharasan towards Euphrates that divided it and along the Levant. The width extends from Kerman that is linked to the Persian Sea that is spilt up from the Indian Ocean to the end of the countries that are located under the rule of the remaining Seljuks in Byzantines. On the northern side, this kingdom,i.e. the kingdom of the Iranians, is separated from the country of

the Qabjaks, Demerqabu (It means iron door in Turkish; see Al-Omari, 2002, vol. 3, p. 197), and the Caspian Sea or Qalzum. Thus in his book he mentioned that it has a square shape in which the walking journey lasts for three months far and wide (Al-Omari 2002, p. 197).

East province is also regarded by Al-Qazwini as the third region. For him, It extends from north China, towards the west until it reaches Africa. He calculated the length distance in miles (A mile) A mile from the ground: a measure as far as the eye can see, and the plural is miles and miles, and a mile: a lighthouse built for the traveler in the highest places of the earth and its loftiness, and it was said: a slack distance from the earth that has no known limit: see, Ibn Manzur, 1993 AD, vol. 13, p. 236) from the East to the West, divided by the time in minutes (the third region... where the shadow is half the day if night and day are equal, three feet). And a half, ten and sixteen feet, and its end, where the shadow of the equator is half the day, is four and a half, twenty and thirteen feet. It begins in the east and passes through northern China, then India, then Sindh, then Kabul, Kerman, Sijistan, Persia, Ahvaz, Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, Alexandria, Cyrenaica, and Africa. And it ends as far as the surrounding sea. The longest day of these people at the beginning of the region is thirteen and a half hours, in its middle is fourteen hours, and at its end is fourteen and a quarter hours, and its length from east to west is eight hundred thousand and seven hundred and seventy-four miles and forty-five minutes, and it is divided into an area of three hundred thousand One thousand six thousand four hundred and fifty-eight miles and twenty-nine minutes) (Al-Qazwini, (d.d.), p. 137).

Thus determining the Islamic East region differed due to the various definitions and sources that have been given to the regions falling under the name of east. Some may regard the name of the Islamic East refers to the geographical region located east and south of the Mediterranean Sea and ending with the Arabian Gulf.

The word "East" is more clear than the word "West". It is more frequently used in historical texts. Some stated that it extends from the city of peace .i.e. Baghdad, to the utmost part of the East. Whereas its borders begin from Nahrawan .i.e. the entire East from Nahrawan to the furthest part of the Turks. Others referred that it start from Hamadan .i.e. from Hamadan to the end of the East. Despite there are different viewpoints concerning defining the concept of the East in heritage books. It is significant to refer that the study deals with the Islamic East that extends from Iraq, especially in the Abbasid era in which Baghdad was the capital of Abbasid Caliphate. Thus the expression Islamic East meant Iraq and the countries of the Eastern Caliphate .i.e. Persia and Transoxiana, (Bahjat, 2015, p. 349).

The study deals with Iraq, Persia and other areas due east .i.e. Persia and beyond. It also addresses the political entities that emerge at the early Abbasid era since ( 205 AH/800 AD), in which Tahirid dynasty was the first one, to the frontiers of India and China .i.e. Central Asia. It includes Uzbekistan, the western part of Kazakhstan, and the southern part of Kyrgyzstan. Thus, we find that the Arabs called this part of the East "Transoxiana" in reference to the two great rivers that border it to the west and east, namely the rivers Sihon (Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 3, p. 294) and Gihon (Al-Hamwi, 1993, vol. 2, p. 196).

## **The Second Section**

### **The Role of Geography in Establishing Microstates of Islamic East**

One of the most prominent cities and provinces in which East microstates are established and which have the most geographical role are :

## **1- Khorasan**

It is one of the homes of the states of Islamic East, the first of which is Tahiriyya whose founder is Taher bin Al-Hussein. He was born in the city of Bushinj that is characterized by its rivers, resources and riches that flow to his people. It is also one of the political cities of Kharasan and to whom Taher bin Al-Hussein was linked spiritually. It was his destination and goal. This is evident when Al-Fadl bin Sahl appointed him and asked him about his wish, so he said to him: (What is your wish?) He said: My wish is to deliver a sermon from the pulpit of Fusang (Bushang) in which there is a box of 100,000 dirhams. Thus, he ordered him 100,000 dirhams and left it. For several days, then he invited him to the testimonies, and he answered him and said, "If a man attains semen, he will experience blood" (With fatha al-shin, sukun al-nun, and jim, which is a blida with a fertile outing in a wooded valley on the outskirts of Herat, ten farsakhs between them. I saw it from a distance but did not enter it as I came from Nishapur to Herat. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, 1995 AD, vol. 1, p. 508).

It is significant to refer that the above narration showed that Taher bin Al-Hussein has clear political aspirations. The nostalgia that he had, and the desire to return to his hometown i.e. Bushing in order to be his ruler over are clear evidence of this narration. This is a kind of natural attraction to the environment in which he was born and raise especially when the city is rich like Bushing. There were also social ties that connected him to Bushing that are rooted in his soul. Thus, it is seen that his first demand was his guardianship over it, as it is the closest city to him spiritually. For him geography is also another reason for choosing that city, especially since it is one of the districts of the city of Khorasan.

Indeed, it is seen that Taher bin Al-Hussein declared what he feels towards this city in the following narration (And it was said to Taher in Baghdad, when he informed you: "Congratulations for what you have achieved of this status that none of your peers in Khurasan have ever achieved." He said, "I am not pleased by that, because I do not see the old women of Bushing looking up at me from the heights of their roofs." If you pass by them, he only said that because he was born and raised there, and his grandfather Musab was its governor and of Khurasan and Herat(Ibn Khalkan, 1994, vol. 2, p. 518).

Thus Tahir bin Al-Hussein achieved his political gains by becoming the rule of Khorasan. These gains was inheriting by his sons and grandsons from the city of peace to the farthest point in the east (Al-Tabari, 1967 AD, vol. 5, p. 152). On the other hand, Al-Ma'mun had his political reasons to deport Tahir bin Al-Hussein to Khorasan since he Al-Huessein was known with his political ability and power. He was also Al-Ma'mun in his war against his brother Al-Amin when he ordered him face and fight him. Hence he from the centre of Caliphate. Moreover there was another secret reason that Al-Ma'mun had to end Tahir bin Al-Hussein's life later on (Abu Al-Fidaa, (d.d.), vol. 2, p. 27).

However It was stated that Al-Ma'mun initially rejected Tahir bin Al-Hussein's appointment as a ruler of Khorasan because he knew that he was one of its people, and perhaps they reconciled with him, and rallied around him, so he would have a political power and influence. Then, perhaps, it would emerge from the cloak of the Abbasid Caliphate. Then Khorasan would become a state separate from the Abbasid caliphate. This was explained by his minister, Ahmed bin Ubayy Khaled when he said: "I fear that he will betray, depose, and abandon obedience. His minister, Ahmad al-Darak, replied to him about that. By God, he is al-Ma'mun(Ibn Tabataba, 1987, p. 224). Thus the responsibility for his subsequent departure fell on al-Ma'mun's minister, Ahmad ibn Abi Khalid, in the future.



We also find that Al-Ma'mun was anxious and worried about Tahir bin Al-Hussein's intentions especially he linked this to what happened to Al-Amin at his hand, even though what Taher bin Al-Hussein did was by order of Al-Ma'mun himself. This is evident when Tahir entered Al-Ma'mun while he was drinking wine, Hussein the servant was giving him something to drink, he ordered him to sit, and he said: (( The police officer does not have the right to sit with his master, so Al-Ma'mun said: That is the public council, but as for the private council, he has that right. Al-Ma'mun soon began to cry. Tahir came to him, O Commander of the Faithful, why you cry, may God not make your eyes weep. By God, if you had the country and the servants permitted you and you were drawn to love in every situation. A matter, he said: I cry for a matter whose remembrance is humiliation and its cover is sadness, and no one will be free from sorrow(Ibn Tayfour, 2002, p. 23).

However, according to many narrations and to Al-Yaqubi's history , Tahir bin Hussein longed for his hometown. He also complained about that to Al-Ma'mun's scribe, Ahmed bin Abi Khaled, about his reluctance to stay in Baghdad and his desire to return to his country, Khurasan (Ibn Tayfour, 2002, p. 23).

Furthermore in the previous narration, Al-Ma'mun mentioned what happened to his brother. The news reached Tahir, which made him fear what Al-Ma'mun had in store for him, so he personally asked the writer Ahmed bin Abi Khaled to help him leave Baghdad, and he said to him: (Praise from me is not cheap, and favor with me is not Goods. keep me away from Al-Ma'mun and said, "I will do it" (Hamouda, 2022, p. 58).

It is significant to refer that there were many reasons that lied behind the policy that Al-Ma'mun followed to appoint Taher ibn al-Hussein as a ruler of Kharasn. First Kharasan is one of the most important regions in the Abbasid Caliphate and controlling it means seizing what states that are behind it. Furthermore many movements and outbreaks emerged that threatened the political entity of Abbasid Caliphate namely the Babak Al-Khurrami movement and the emergence of Alawite activities. Thus it became necessary to send his strongest leader and the maker of his state's victories, namely, Taher bin Al-Hussein However, this policy had negative goals that reflected on the Abbasid state later especially when a strong, active microstate emerges that might strongly threaten the political entity of the Abbasid state.

Thus, it is found that geography played a primary role in emerging a micro state with a strong entity that is dependent from the Caliphate and has a wonder effect on its nation and communities since it has its own rulers who emanate from within this society. On the other hand the policy that Al-Ma'mun followed to keep Taher ibn al-Hussein away from the center of the caliphate because he feared him and Taher bin Al-Hussein's nostalgia to his home and city are not only one of the reasons that lead to establish the Tahirid dynasty but also contribute in emerging it

## **2- Tabaristan**

Tabaristan is also known as Mazandaran. It is one of the ancient states of Iran. It is located to the southeast of the Tabaristan Sea ,i.e. Caspian Sea. It borders Gilan to the west, Persian Iraq and Khorasan Al-Burz to the south, Khorasan to the east too, Astrabad on its sides which is to the east, and its base is Dunbawand or Demaqand((Reda, Muhammad, (D.T.), p. 83).

It was a stronghold of the Alawite state, as stated in the historical narrative describing its immunity: (long ago, Tabaristan has always been a home, a stronghold, and a refuge for the oppressors and the tyrants. Because of its impregnable immunity and the ruggedness of its

straits, to which they used to send treasures, cabinets, and munitions. Every king was defeated by his enemy and could not find a place for him on the face of the earth among the regions. On the other hand, he would come to this land to find security and freedom from the machinations of his opponent. It was a unique kingdom with an independent king. Its people never needed anything from other states. Everything that exists in the inhabited world of the necessities of life was present in it, with many juicy grasses in all seasons and clear times. It has a variety of good breads made from wheat, rice, and gourds, and it has different colors of meat, birds, and animals unlike what is found in other states. Its food is delicious, and it has delicious colored drinks of yellow, red, and white, such as fenugreek, roses, and rose water. The purity of these drinks is as delicate as the tears of lovers, and it arouses pleasure and joy, such as in the middle of the grass (Ibn Esfandiari, 2002, p. 90).

According to the previous narration, we find that the geography of Tabaristan has many characteristics and features that made it fortified against its enemies. Perhaps it was a safe place for many, as it is characterized with immunity, good living and weather. Moreover Ibn Esfandiari mentioned that: "There was a man on the borders of Marasak called Shahr -khawastan Ibn Zard Stan. He was an old man and had money, animals, beauty, and sense of humor. His sons and cousins were prestigious and strong. They devoted their lives to obeying and following him. When Lasfahbhd Farrakhan the Great established city of Sara, he found the wall that Anu Sherwan Adel had erected. He mentioned that and begun talking about a successor from a predecessor. Then he ordered digging a trench and constructing pillars. After that people turned towards his presence from all sides, praising him because of his right opinion in renovating those buildings for Shahr-Khwastan. When the opinion was presented to the king that Shahr-Khoastan was backward and he refused to appear with the delegations, he sent two knights to bring him. When the two knights arrived, he had prepared a feast and a party where the nobles of the city had gathered at his house. He said to his sons: Take them down and present to them everything that honors him. He went on to hide in his palace. He ordered to pack silk, linen, and cotton bread, good types of bread, various sweets, jams, pickles, udder scraps, water scraps, dried summer meat, domestic and non-domesticated birds, dried fruits, beverages of different colors and to be placed in sacks and embarked on the same night. Later he arrived during the day where they had spread a large carpet. Then he delivered a sermon. During his speech he said, "Know, O people of Tabaristan, that you were a group in the forests of the world in which nobody knew about you and no desire for the people of the provinces in this state. Your homelands are in the embrace of the forests... He said: O people of the council, pay attention for an hour and consider what can I offer you? He began checking what was inside the carts, one by one, including drinks, clothes, and food. After that, he said, "We people were not in need of what was brought to us from other states. God, Blessed and Most High, gave us relief, so we preferred to be content with subsistence. We spent the days in abundance, comfort, and reassurance. There is no lover or envier." There is no disputing person and there is no observer standing over the secrets of the guardianship. There is no greed among us and no need for anyone in us" (Ibn Esfandiari, 2002, pp. 90-91).

Consequently, it is inferred that Tabaristan is an economically sufficient state on its own compared to the rest of the states. It is also immune against any attacks. It was said: (It is adorned with sand and a mountainous plain. It is abundantly safe for its kings to walk through. Its river is for them a store and fishery, and its plain is paradise. The traveler walks on carpets of greenery, stylized as pedestrians with the lights of spring. The violets and the eyes of the narcissus and the sparkling of those lights under the shade of the trees on their branches are the inhabitants of birds. Every bird of them has a color of clothing." (Ibn al-Faqih, 1996, vol. 1, p. 570).



In the beginning it was difficult for the Muslims to conquer it due to the difficulty of penetrating it and at the same time its king was paying the tribute. In *Tarikh Tabaristan* it was stated that: (And Tabaristan was immunity and impervious. The kings of Persia appointed a man, which is called Al-Asbihdh, to rule. They continued to do so until Islam came and the kingdoms, that were linked to Tabaristan, were conquered. The ruler of Tabaristan used to make peace over a small thing, and he would accept it due to the difficulty of the path to it and its roughness, until Uthman bin Affan Saeed bin Al-Aas bin Umayyah ruled over Kufa in 29AH. So Marzban Tus wrote to him and to Abdullah bin Amir bin Kariz ( He is Abdullah bin Amer bin Kariz bin Rabia bin Habib bin Abdul Shams bin Abdul Manaf bin Qusay al-Qurashi al-Absham, the cousin of Othman bin Affan. The mother of Uthman, Arwa bint Kariz, and her mother and the mother of Amer bin Kariz al-Bayda, Umm Hakim bint Abd al-Muttalib, was born during the reign of the Messenger (may God bless him and grant him peace), and he combined the provinces of Basra and Kufa at the time of Caliph Uthman bin Affan. See: Ibn Abd al-Barr, 1992 AD, vol. 3, pp. 931-932). while he was in Basra, inviting them to Khurasan on the condition that Whichever of them defeated and won, he would become the king. Then Saeed went out, proceeded Ibn Amer and invaded Tabaristan in which Hassan and Hussein, the sons of Ali bin Abi Talib were with him in his raids. Thus Saeed conquered Tabaristan"(Al-Muhallabi, (D.T.), vol. 1, p. 150).

About its invincibility Al-Muhallabi praised it, by saying: "Tabaristan is so invincible and immune. It is surrounded by impregnable mountains on all sides, in which plain lands are in the middle of these mountains. It has a such abundant water and rain that no other country compares to it. It is also wealthy in silk and their bread is rice. He said: Tabaristan is on the east of Qazvin in East skewed to the north" (Al-Razi, 1995, p. 169) .

Tabaristan did not only use to be immune just before its conquest, but it continued even after Islam conquered it. For instance Yahya bin Abdullah bin Al-Hasan, peace be upon them, asked to hide in Tabaristan after what happened in a trap incident due to its invulnerability and impregnability:" (when Yahya feared that he would fall into their hands, he wanted to be in an immune and fortified place until his advocates would return to him and his affairs would be settled. Then he wrote to the King of Tabaristan, Chartun bin So-and-So ( He is Shartoun bin Sarkhab; see: Al-Razi, 1995, p. 196), asking him to grant him recovery for three years. He said: I will shelter him all the time, but I will direct you to a place that is more fortified than mine: Sijistan, king of Daylam, who has many high mountains among the plains of Tabaristan and beyond that are the mountains of Dunbawand. Whenever the soldiers descended there and besieged me, I did not believe that they would prevail in their desire and that they would find among my household someone who would show them my private parts, so I was safe (Al-Istakhri, 2004, p. 245).

### 3- Sijistan

Geography of Sijistan played very important role in founding the Saffarid state by Ya'qub ibn al-Layth al-Saffar. If we go back to its beginnings, we would find that Ya'qub al-Saffar migrated from the city of Qarnayn(Al-Kardizi, 2006, p. 202), which is one of the cities of Sijistan, due to the nature of this desolate, desert city that is not suitable for agriculture and has a hot and humid weather. This urged him to leave it and search for a more urban place and find opportunities to work and live. Then he headed to the city of Zaranj (With the first and second fatha, the noun sukunah, and the jim: a city that is the well-known Kasbah of Sijistan Al-Kurra; see: Al-Qutaei 1991 AD, vol. 2, p. 663), which was the capital of Sijistan at that time.

According to a historical narration, It was stated that: (Yaqoub bin Al-Layth was an unknown man from one of the villages of Sistan which is called Qarnain. When he came to Medina, he was learning the smithing(Ibn Khurdadhabah, 1889 AD, vol. 1, p. 50).

Yacoub was born in a village that was on the roads of the desert. It may have had some natural resources, even if they were few, but the atmosphere, desert, climate and the hot winds affected and made it one of the worst places for housing and settlement. Its soil was not suitable for agriculture. In terms of area, it is considered a small village through which he passes. A small river runs from its centre. However, this did not prevent Yaqoub bin Al-Saffar from feeling proud of his small town, Qarnin. He preferred it over other villages and regions, and it had many advantages for him and its people because it contained traces of a stud for the famous Rustum horse. Thus he was proud about it. However it was because it had been reported that his horses are from the same place from which Rustam's mare drank(Bakhwandemir, 1988, p. 57).

Then he left Qarnin and worked as a metalworker in Zaranj, but that work did not fulfill the same aspirations that he had, he later went to join the calibers who appeared in that period and worked with them in cutting off roads, especially the rough ones between the various cities of Sijistan. What helped him to continue in that people gathered around him and trusted him, in addition to his generosity, for which he was famous among his friends, as well as the roughness of the roads that they cut off to people at that time(Ali, Soraya, 1993, p. 7)..

#### **4- Ghor Province**

In the Pashto dialect, the word *Ghor*, with a dhamma on its first letter, means mountain. Therefore, the name Bilad al-Ghor was given to the mountainous region, an area located in Afghanistan, which is a difficult mountainous spot(Anonymous, 2002, p. 123).

Moreover Al-Ghor is a country between rocks and mountains. It has a king called Gurshah, who derives his authority from the prince of Jawzjan. In the past, Ghor was a home of infidelity entirely, but most of its people now are Muslims. It has many cities and villages in which slaves, guards, and good weapons are brought from it. Its people are bad-tempered, harsh and ignorant (Al-Qalqashandi , 1989, vol. 1, p. 398)

It is a country with a mountainous nature, in which Khorasan is close to Herat. It is a large kingdom, with many mountains, streams, orchards, and rivers. It is also a naturally fortified country, and it is bordered by Khorasan on three sides. Therefore, it is considered part of Khorasan, and its fourth border is Qibli Sijistan(Ibn al-Atheer, 1997, vol. 7, p. 570).

Its hard climate and rugged geographical nature were described: "The Ghor Province is adjacent to Ghaznah. The Ghors used to block the road and intimidate the passengers. Their country was rugged mountains and closed straits where they used take refuge due to the difficulty of its path(Muammar, Jaeren, 2013, p. 228). It is considered one of the most rugged mountainous states in the winter due to its heavy snowfall in which transportation roads were cut off(Iqbal, 1989, p. 209).

According to the description that are given by Arab geographers, Ghur is a country surrounded by mountains on all its sides. It is the valleys of the mountainous regions that are now called (Kuh Baba), Jabal Baba, and (Safid Kuh), meaning the White Mountain. The Khorasan mountains are connected through it to the Hindu Kush mountain range. From this region, Harmand, Harirud, and Murghab rivers also flows. Moreover mountains and the state of Herat, which is called Ghardistan are adjacent to its western (Barthold, Turkestan, 1981, p. 490).

We also find that Barthold specified that the name Al-Ghor was given to the mountainous regions located to the east and south-east of Oran and to the south Ghyristan and Jawzjan. Thus, we also find that he defined it as the mountainous region and made it one of the fortified regions, by saying: "In any case, it is difficult to say that It was a mere coincidence that after the Seljuk Sultan, the star of the rulers of those particular regions rose, which were characterized by unique geographical and racial conditions compared to other countries. As for the Ghor and the Shahs of Khawarzum, their country could represent a focal point in cases of attack and a safe sanctuary when disasters occur(Barthold, History of the Turk, 1996 AD, pp. 76-77).

In conclusion and according to the descriptions of Arab and contemporary geographers, as well as the orientalist who wrote about the history of the Islamic East and described its difficult, rugged, and perhaps inherently impregnable geography, the study tries to prove that it had a great influence on the establishment of the Ghurid state. There is no doubt that such conditions are imposed by the impregnable geographical reality that keeps external dangers away from it.

### **5- Khawarzum Province**

The geographical location of the Khwarezm region is of great importance in establishing the Khwarezm state, especially since the region is located in a remote and disconnected region from the Khwarezm and Transoxiana regions. It is located on many trade routes that connect its neighboring countries until they reach the Arab regions(Ibn al-Wardi, 2008, vol. 1, p. 123). According to a historical narration, it was divided into t east and west Khawarzum: "The land of Khwarazm is a great region that is separated from the land of Khorasan and far Transoxiana. It is surrounded by great cities such as Khwarazm, which is the base of this land, and it is a great city. There are also two cities, i.e. eastern and western. The first one is located on its eastern bank which is called Dargasha, and the second one is on its western bank and is called al-Jarjaniya(Ibn al-Wardi, 2008, vol. 1, p. 123) .

The Arab geographers determined its borders and said that Khwarazm is the last of Gihoun, not beyond it. It is on the Amara River, which is located in Lake Khwarazm. Thus it is on both sides of the river. Khwarazm is a name given to the region and a famous district, which is not given to the city, but to the district as a whole. Furthermore it is not a name for the city, but rather the district as a whole. As for the great city, it is called Al-Jurjaniyah. today, and its people call it Karkang (With a dhammah, then a sukun, and another kaf, and after the thousand nuns there is a sakana that is joined by two sukhans, then a jim: a name for the Kasbah of the country of Khwarazm and its great city, and it was Arabized, so it was said that it was al-Jurjaniyah. As for the people of Khwarazm, they call it Karkang, and Khwarazm is not a name for a specific city, but rather a name for the entire region; see: Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 4, p. 452) (Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 395).

In the fifth century AH, Khwarazm was considered one of the cities of Khorasan because it was subject to the Seljuk Sultan in 430AH/1039 AD. This determination was imposed on it due to its geographical nature. As for the wealth that the region is characterized with, many descriptions of Khwarazm were mentioned in Arab geographers' books, including: "I did not see a state of more architectural than it, with continuous architecture, , villages that are close to each other and many single houses and palaces in its deserts. It is rare to see deserted places its meadows. Moreover there are abundant trees. I did not think that there was a spot in the world as wide as Khwarazm(Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 396).

Additionally Al-Biruni described it as "a great city on a great valley, a mountainous sea plain with huge valleys and high mountains. If the sniper passes, he gets what he desires"(Al-Biruni, 1983, p. 7).

As for Al-Hamwi, he described it as not being geographically connected to Khorasan, by saying: "As for Khwarazm, it is the name of the region that is separated from Khorasan and Transoxiana. It is surrounded by several deserts on all sides. Its border is connected to the border of Al-Ghaziyeh in what follows the north and west, south and east of Khorasan, and Transoxiana, which is at the end of the Gihoun river. In the southern side, it has a large city which is called Al-Jarjaniyah. It is the biggest city in Khwarazm after its city, from which the caravans departed to Gurgan, Khazar, and Khurasan. It was decided to depict half of Khwarazm as Khurasan and Transoxiana are describe. However, the purpose of this book is to know the features of these regions and their cities, so I chose to have Khwarazm grouped with Transoxiana, so that I could achieve my purpose without repetition in the two images. Its cities are Darghan, Hazar Asb, Khiva, Khashmithen, Ardakhshmithen, Safardz, Nozwar, Kardran Khawash, Kardar, and the village of Bratkin(Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 396).

Regarding its vast area, it was said "a famous district with large cities and villages of a wide and spacious area that contains a variety of good things and all kinds of delights. Moreover Zamakhshari said: in Khwarazm there are virtues that are not found in other countries, and praiseworthy qualities that are not comparable with other regions. However it is ruined and destroyed by the fight of the Turks and other people of(Al-Qarmani, 1992, vol. 3, p. 359).

" the lands of the Bejanakis are all plains with no mountains and no stronghold for them to take refuge in. A group of Muslims who were captured in Constantinople reported that the Bejanakis were following the religion of the Magians. In 400AH, a Muslim jurist and scholar was taken as a captive, then he presented Islam to a group of them. They converted to Islam, and their intentions were correct. After that Islam was spread among them and the rest, who did not convert to Islam, were denounced. This led to a war, so God gave the Muslims victory over them in which they were about twelve thousand, whereas the infidels were many times their number. However, they killed them whereas the rest converted to Islam, so today they are all Muslims. There were many scholars, jurists, and reciters. Today they name those who came to them have enslaved the owner of Constantinople as *Alkhanawalis*. They give them the choice to remain on the condition that they work and marry whomever he wishes" (Ibn Hawqal, 1938 AD, vol. 2, p. 477).

## 6- Ghazna

Its name begins (with a fatha at the beginning, a sukun at the second, then a nun), as it is said by many and it is Ghaznain according to many scholars. They also Arabized it into Gazna. The whole of its country is called Zabulistan and Ghazna is its biggest city. It is a great city and a vast state on the outskirts of Khorasan, and it is the border between Khorasan and India" (Al-Bakri, 1992, vol. 1, p. 445).

Al-Bakri described its climate. Despite it has many good deeds, its cold is very intense. I have heard that there is an obstacle near it in which the walk between them is a day's distance. If the passer crosses it, he falls into a very hot area. From this side, it is so cold like Al-Zamhari" (Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 201). In Al-Hamawi's description " Ghazna is a venerable city and great in terms of its condition and trade. The road from Sijistan to Balsh is to begin with the city of Al-Rakhj above Panjwai (Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 2, p. 201).

As for Ibn Hawqal, he said about its geographical location "as for Ghazna, it is a city that is near to Sindh, and it was said that it is from it. The author of the book *Sifat al-Ard* said that Ghazna is from the land of Sindh and it is located in the third. Moreover the leader of Gurjan Abu Sa'id Mansur said, "I have never seen a town that is better in summer, nicer in Spring, and cleaner in good things than Ghazni, which has few trees and hence its air is pure" (Ibn Hawqal, 1938 AD, vol. 2, p. 322).

Perhaps there are fairy tales that are narrated about Ghazna and its climate. In one of them it was said: "Ghazna's waterhole: near the city of Ghazni is a waterhole. If any filth or impurity is thrown into it, the air changes immediately, and cold, strong winds, rain, and snow appear. It remains that way until that filth disappears from it. They claimed that the Sultan Mahmoud bin Sabakatkin Al-Saljuqi (Mahmoud bin Sabuktakin, the great sultan Abu al-Qasim Ain al-Dawla, son of Emir Nasir al-Dawla, Abu Mansur, was the king of Ghazni; see: Ibn Kathir, 1993 AD, vol. 1, p. 400) May God have mercy on him when he wanted to conquer Ghazna, every time he went to it, its people would throw some dirt into the waterhole. The weather became as if resurrection would come due to the intensity of the wind, cold and rain. Then he would return with his army without intending as broken man. After that he prayed one night and said: My God, if my intention i.e. to conquer this country result in approaching the day of resurrection, then discourage me from that and follow my forelock towards goodness. On the other hand if my intention is reward and the hereafter and strengthening the Islam, then make a way for me to conquer this city, and give rest to your Muslim servants who strive in your path.' Then he prostrated himself and fell asleep in his prostration with his face on the ground. Then someone came to him and addressed him with clear words by saying: O Ibn Sabakatkin, if you hope to be saved from this ordeal, then send soldiers to protect the spring and you have conquered Ghazna. Your effort is commendable and your action is justified. So be alert and send in advance to guard that spring. Then he marched on Ghazna and conquered it like lightening" (Al-Omari, 2002, vol. 3, p. 169).

Even if we do not accept the truth of that story about the waterhole of Ghazni, but it contained indications of the ruggedness of that region and the difficulty of its climate. Hence this may have made it difficult in the face of external attacks over the periods of time in which the rulers of Ghazni changed.

In addition, Ghazni has been occupied by many eastern states due to its geographical importance and perhaps because it is, as was said, an entrance to the lands of India (Ibn al-Wardi, 2008, vol. 1, p. 265). Here we find that Al-Umar mentioned: "Mahmud bin Sabuktakin took control of it after that. His sons circulated ruling it, in which the bed of their authority in the city of Ghaznah until the Seljukids captured it and the destruction spread to it after that. There was strife until it was added to Sultan Khwarazm Shah Muhammad bin Taksh, and from him the Tatars took it. As for Ghaznah and what was added to it from its countries, destinations and the countries of the Ghor, they were in the Samanid state, especially with Sabuktakin. When Mahmud took control of the great kingdoms and great sultanates, he used Ghazni as his home. So did his sons, until, the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar Shah\*Sanjar ibn Malikshah ibn Alp Arslan ibn Dawud ibn Mika'il ibn Seljuk ibn Daqaq; Sultan of Khorasan, Ghazni, and Transoxiana, and he was engaged to Iraq, Azerbaijan, Arran, Armenia, the Levant, Mosul, Diyar Bakr, Rabi'ah, and Al-Haramain, and the coin was struck with his name among the Khafiqin, and he was called the greatest Sultan Mu'izz al-Din; see: Ibn Khallikan, 1900 AD, vol. 2, p. 427) entered it. After that, it became owned by the Ghurids, and the Tatars took possession of it when they revolted against the Khwarezm Shah. As for Khwarazm, the sultans who owned it for a period of time i.e. the Samanidim, manage it (Al-Idrisi, 1989, vol. 1, p. 460).

## 7- Shiraz City

The city of Shiraz has a great importance, as it is considered one of the most important and prominent Islamic cities of that era that played an important role in Islamic history. Moreover its geographical location helped it to be a capital and an important center throughout many decades and centuries. Additionally it became the capital of some of the states that established in that region, the most important of which are the Buyid state and the Saffarid state (Al-Omari, 2002, vol. 5, p. 160).

As for the history of its construction, we find that the author of the *Hudud alealam* mentions it as: " it is a great city in Persia. It is a large, prosperous city with crowded trade and population. It is the king's abode. It was built in Islam. It has an ancient Hindu and a spring called Shahn and Badh. It has two huge fire houses and a type of basil known as the lily of Narcissus" (Al-Hazmi, 1994, p. 592).

However, Shiraz has become the capital of many states, as we mentioned previously, due to its geographical importance. For instance in 232 AH/685 AD it became the capital of the Saffarids of Tahiriyya i.e. the metropolis of the region, then the Saffarids took control of it in 255 AH/869 AD at the hands of Yaqub al-Saffar, then the Buyids in 331 AH/ 944 AD, after that the Seljuks came after them.

With the founding and construction of that city, some believe that it was founded on the ruins of an ancient city, as stated in the book *Shiraz, madinat alawalia'* : (Tradition tells that it was built from the ruins of Proseulus. Others say that it is as old as Cyrus. They are depicted as its founder. The similarity among the nations indicates that. However, it is not likely that Cyrus built it as a memorial monument, since he did not allow such a monument to be erected upon his death" (Anonymous, 2002, vol. 1, p. 144).

For this reason, opinions differed in determining the time of its construction. As historians mentioned, it was founded on the ruins of an ancient city. The other section believes that it was founded in the period after conquering Muslims into Persia. Kelisring says: "Shiraz, i.e. the capital of the Persian province, was founded by the Arabs to be a camp for the army that was sent to besiege Istakhr during the Islamic conquest during the reign of Caliph Omar" (Clesring, 1954, p. 284).

Hence, we find the geographical importance, perhaps due to its location, as it was the starting point for the Islamic armies towards the areas near it during the Islamic conquest since the Islamic armies cannot choose a location to an important camp to open important and difficult areas if the region does not have features that qualify it to be a starting point for the armies. In addition Shiraz is an average region, which made it as an important area for the launch of the Islamic conquests (Clesring, 1954, p. 284).

However, we are of the opinion that Shiraz is a city founded on a long-standing precedent city because, as we see, the regions of the East are mostly inhabited regions with civilization and culture, even though their inhabitants have multiple and different religions and perhaps not monotheistic, but they are possessors of thought, civilization and culture. After the Arabs conquered it, they built the city of Shiraz based on Arabic styles and Islamic plans that suited the Arabs who inhabited it during the times of the Islamic conquests (Clesring, 1954, p. 285).

In addition, Arab and Orientalist historians have often mentioned the presence of houses for fire in them. These temples cannot exist after the Islamic conquest unless they were of ancient construction and a place of worship that predated Islam, and as the presence of a population



indicates, even if they were in small numbers, they were inhabited for that reason and perhaps they were not built. These temples were built on inhabited geographical foundations, which made them play a large and prominent role in terms of importance later on (Al-Idrisi, 1989, vol. 1, p. 425) .

## 8- Bukhara

It is one of the most beautiful and fertile cities in the Sogd region that is located between the Gohoun and Sigun rivers. It also represents a religious and cultural center for a region bearing the same name at the time and was the capital of the Samanid state 279-295 AH/892-907 AD (Shaker, 2019, p. 208).

Al-Hamwi said that: (Bukhara, or as it is called Bumjakith, is a city that is located on a flat land. The buildings are made of latticed wood. Furthermore there is a wall, that is twelve , surrounds it. Behind this wall, there palaces, orchards, shops, streets and connected village. Moreover, there is another short wall, in which there is a city that is surrounded by a strong wall. It also has a fort outside the city but it is connected to it. A citadel, in which there is a house that his rulers live in, is Inside it. There is a space that is cut by a river that leads to fields, farms, orchards and mills. Within this wall, another villages and cities are there such as Altawawis i.e., Bumjakth, Zandana, and others (Al-Hamwi, 1995, vol. 1, p. 353)..

The city of Bukhara was one of the most built cities, as Al-Qazwini described it: (Between it and Samarkand are seven days and thirty-seven farsakhs, it is the land of Soghad, one of the parks of the world. The building of the city and the palaces, orchards, and villages connected to it are surrounded by a wall that is twelve farsangs in size, with all the buildings, palaces, villages, and the Kasbah. Through it, no wasteland or desolation can be seen. Apart from that, the wall is on the edge of the Kasbah, and the palaces, shops, and orchards connected to it, which are considered part of the Kasbah. The people of the Kasbah inhabit it in winter and summer. There is another wall about a league in size, and it has a city inside this wall surrounded by a wall. Immune (Al-Qazwini, (d.d.), vol. 1, p. 510).

From the beginning, Bukhara was not a weak city that could be easily conquered by the Muslim Arabs. Rather it resisted strongly and its people were wily with the Muslims. They showed that they follow Islam but encouraged paganism secretly. Throughout the periods of Islamic conquest, the Arabs had taken measures to ensure that they remained in the Islamic religion. Therefore it was stated in the book *Tarikh Bukhara*: (Despite that Bukhara did not hand over leadership to the conquerors. It was deeply rooted in paganism, showed Islam and remained in paganism. After long wars in which the Muslims suffered horrors, the Muslims were able to conquer it 64 AH (Al-Narshakhi, (D.T.), p. 8).

It is found that since it had a geographical location, great wealth, many different industries and successful trade, Bukhara became a focus of attraction for the micro-states in Islamic east. This was evident in the spoils that the Muslims seized during the Islamic conquest, as well as the tax money that was paid to the Muslims in the form of luxurious textiles presented to the house of the Caliphate (Al-Narshakhi, (D.T.), p. 8).

Until ( 259 AH/ 873 AD), Bukhara remained under the Taherians who was ruling Kharasan. At the request of people and scientists of Kharasan, it then became under the rule of Ismail Alsamani who became the ruler of Transoxiana and make Bukhara the capital of Samanid dynasty (Al-Narshakhi, (D.T.), p. 122).

During Samanid Dynasty, Bukhara was a symbol of dignity, as a holy place for the king, an assembly of people, a destination of the famous poets and a favorite place of the elite of that time (Al-Tha'labi, 1983, vol. 4, p. 115).

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