

## A Study on Schools of Geography throughout the History of Islamic Civilization

Reza Ebadi Jam Khaneh<sup>1</sup>

Ph.D. in History, Department of History, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University,  
Tehran, Iran

Sina Foroozesh

Assistant Professor of History, Department of History, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad  
University, Tehran, Iran

Received 17 May 2020

Revised 11 July 2020

Accepted 24 August 2020

---

**Abstract:** The science of geography, also literally called in Arabic "faces and slices of earth", involves a kind of land survey which emerged into Islam. There were several factors contributing to geography such as command of Islam to learning, Quran geographical themes, pilgrimage routes and wide-range Muslim conquests. This article attempted to examine two major schools of geography in the Islamic world under the influence of Hindi and Iranshahri schools of geography, which include 1. Iraqi school (Baghdad worldview) 2. Balkh school given the centrality of Mecca and the Muslim. Unlike the former, the Balkhi school more attention to the Muslim world, to the extent that their followers of Balkhi school consider Mecca as the centre of the world, where the geography is religious. The Balkhi School of geography has been based on Islamic data plus adopting a more scientific perspective, whereas the Iraqi school entails a more widespread and more comprehensive geography.

**Keywords:** schools of Islamic geography, Balkh and Iraq school, Yaghoubi's Albaladan, Moqadassi's Ahsan al-Taqasim.

---

### Introduction

Geography is a branch of knowledge discussing the geographic coordinates of various places, the natural environment, climate, weather, mountains, rivers, seas, islands, deserts, forests, cities and lands, natural features and plant and animal life. In other words, geography is science about the Earth's surface and terrain, weather, vegetation, soil, products, people and their scattering on the ground. The emergence of historical geography or in other words "topology" is a branch of geography which does not have a specific definition. However, the history and geography researchers have argued that historical geography is a science exploring the effects of geographical environment on historical events, evolution of governments and their border changes and the history of geographical discoveries. In other words, historical geography encompasses the reconstruction of past environments through evaluation of events at a given time considering the historical developments in the past<sup>2</sup>.

The term *geography* the title of the book written by Marinus Sovari (70-132 AC) and Ptolemy's book (90-168 AC), translated later over the era of knowledge transfer into Arabic as "faces of earth" in the Muslim world. This term was first used in the Epistles of Ikhwan al-Safa literally referring to *the map of world and climates*. Masudi (m. 345 AH) was the first geographer who used the Arabic term of geography referring to navigating the earth. Later on, the progress of science and translation from foreign languages and special interest of Muslims in geography compelled to compose numerous articles in various geographic topics titled "Albaladan", "Masalik and Mamalik", "Faces of Earth", "Science of Roads" and others shining in the Islamic civilization. Some geographers such as Ibn al-Faqih (d. 290 AH), author of brief book Albaladan and Moqadassi (d. 390 AH), the author of Ahsan al-Taqasym Fi Marefat al-Aghalim approached the geography through a more wisely perspective, making an effort to explore the natural characteristics of the land and qualities of the people and typical customs of each

---

<sup>1</sup> Email: masood\_koochooloo2006@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

<sup>2</sup> A Dictionary of Geography; London: 9691, p.671.

reflecting the distinction between each pair. Moqadasi believed it was crucial for all the Islamic community including the Caliphs, ministers, merchants, pilgrims, Ayaran and others<sup>1</sup>.

Given the above facts, the following questions arise: 1. how many categories are there for geographical schools and what are their characteristics? Have the Iranian and Indian schools and theories been influential in the ideology of geographers in the Muslim world? And why did geography develop in the Muslim world?

### Materials and Methods

This research paper was historical-documentary.

### Research objectives

1. The factors contributing to of geography in the Muslim world
2. The impact of Indian and Iranian geography on the geography among Muslims
3. Analysis of the world geography schools with an emphasis on two books Al-Baladan and Moqadassi's Ahsan al-Taqasim

### Analysis and findings

#### *Expansion factors of geography in the Islamic world*

1. In the early Abbasid rule and the establishment of Baghdad as the capital, Muslims became familiar with geography of Iran, 2. The conquest of Iran, Egypt and Sand was an opportunity for Muslims to obtain first-hand knowledge of the scientific and cultural situations in those three civilizations, gaining the ownership or access to scientific centers, laboratories and observatories. Nevertheless, the acquisition of foreign knowledge began only by the rule of Caliph Mansur (135 158 AH), 3. Mansour's enthusiasm for to translation of scientific works, the role of ministers in his era encouraged the development of scientists, scholars and experts. In the first Abbasid period, especially in the era of the Mansur, Harun and Ma'mun, a great deal of attention was paid to foreign science and rational knowledge as well as holding meetings and scientific sessions that provided context to express scientific competition. In the past, concern with rational knowledge was rare and most concentration was on religious jurisprudence. The trend of Mu'tazilite motivated the Muslims pay attention to the non-Islamic achievements of other societies and communities. There were several Greek books during this era translated into Arabic. Moreover, there were three countries contributing to the rise of Islamic geography including:

#### *India*

The translation of the book *surya-siddhanta*, which entailed some ancient Greek influences, became the source of knowledge of astronomy and geography among Indian Muslims. Later on by the translation of these books, there were other titles under *Zeige* or horoscope in the Muslim world, such as *al-Zeige* by Ibrahim ibn Habib Fazari (170 AH), "*Al-Sunna al-Saghir India* by Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (after 232 AH), "*Alsand India*» by Habash ibn Abdullah Baghdadi Marvazi (second half of the third century) which were all based on *surya-siddhanta* (Maqbool Ahmad, Teshner, translation by Ganji, 1989: P. 92).

#### *Greece*

Geographer Ptolemy Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi Shd.aqtbas several Barbh by the Muslim translations of his work with the information incorporated Muslims. Khordadbeh Ibn Masood and Ibn Hvql have agreed to refer to it, even though they may not refer to the book. Word of its geography, is another Greek word book (*Al-majesty* in Arabic) Book Ttrabylyvn (*Almqalat Alarbh*) and geography with the map of the world's Marinos. Timaeus by Plato (the atmospheric qualities) and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* divided the world into division into three or four sections which never attracted the Muslims (Qarchanlu, 2001: Pp. 17 to 21).

---

<sup>1</sup> Ahsan Altqasym, p. 1 and 2.

**Iranian influence**

The Islamic geographical literature is suggestive of sufficient evidence to influence of the Iranian nation on geography and science of cartography. The writer of *science in Islam* argued, "the geography molded within the Islamic worldview explored above all the vastness of Islam (Dar al-Islam) adapted from multiple Babylonian, Greek, Hindi and especially Iranian influential sources. As mentioned earlier, cartography was evidently involved the regional geography and descriptive mapping, such as the application of Iranian terms tilsan, shabureh, Ghavareh and the like when describing the appearance of some beaches." (Tayyebi, 2003: 62) the collection of information was adopted by Iranians from Muslims through translation of certain Pahlavi books entailing descriptive geography of Sassanid Empire, postal routes and other details for administrative purposes. (Zarrinkub, 1983 P. 77)

*Effect of geographic practices of India and Iran in the formation of Islamic geography*

At the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate and transfer of the Islam capital from Damascus to Baghdad (145 GH), Muslims became familiar with geography as a science. The conquest of Egypt, Iran and Sindh provided an opportunity for Muslims to become aware of the scientific and cultural advancement of the people of those lands which possessed the cradle of world civilization before Islam<sup>1</sup>. It should be noted that Sarton in this respect argued: For the development of science, transfer is as fundamental as exploration. There are similarities between a civilization and an infectious disease, since both people can contract from one nation to another. As you may know, Kufa and Basra were counted as the great centers of Islamic Sciences. There were scientific and cultural relations established among Hira, the important center of Nestorian activity, and Basra, In Basra, as the center of culture in southern Iraq, the seminarian tradition spread quickly. Furthermore, the Greek Cultural Heritage of Odessa (Raha) and Nisibis as two Greek Center for Science Education were transferred to Jundishapur in Iran, which was then moved to Baghdad. On the other hand, monophysite education centers unlike the Nestorians focused on Jundishapur were like scattered monasteries as resources and other centers of culture and knowledge of Greek culture and Islamic civilization<sup>2</sup>. (Historical geography of Islamic countries, vol. 1, p. 16)

**Impact of Indian geography on Islamic geography**

The Islamic traditions have stated the relationship with Indian knowledge dated back to 154 or 156 AH at the Embassy of India in the court of Mansour Abbasi, an Indian scientist named Kanka who was skilled in identification of celestial movements and astronomical calculations and other works according to the methodology of his nation and especially of a Sanskrit book called "Surya-Siddhe anta" written by Brahma Gupta (born in 598 AD) a famous mathematician and astronomer. Mansour ordered that he summarize the book. Then it was ordered to be translated into Arabic so as to make the book available to Muslims for calculating the movements of the stars<sup>3</sup>. Mohammed bin Ibrahim Fazary and Yaghub bin Tariq completed the task, creatin an ephemeris known as Ziege popular among the Muslim scholars. Up until the era of Abbasid Ma'mun when Ptolemy's method became common in calculation of constellations and tables, there were no practices without Fazari ephemeris. The word Sadhanta (Indian Sadh) in Sanskrit means knowledge, science and scientific method, but it transformed into Al-sand in Islam under the influence of ordinary interpretations, which derives from the Arabic vision of two parts of India known as Sanh and Hindustan<sup>4</sup>. Scientists made a distinction between this book and that written by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Musa Kharazmi (232 AD) at the time of al-Ma'mun through calling it the Great Indian document<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Science of geography and its evolution of the world of Islam, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> J Muslim Contribution to Geography, P. 17

<sup>3</sup> History of Islamic Astronomy, p. 188 and 189.

<sup>4</sup> History of Al-Adab Al-Goghrafy Al-Arabi, P. 77, and History of Islamic Astronomy, p. 189

<sup>5</sup> History of Islamic Astronomy, p. -189 and 190.

### **The effect of Iranian geography on Islamic geography**

There ample evidence found in the Muslim geographic literature suggestive of the Iranian influence on geography and cartography among the Muslims, but it is still unknown how the information was transferred. The German Kramers<sup>1</sup> mentioned that the effects of the geography of Greece in the third century AH dominated the Islamic geography; But by the end of this century onwards, the influence of the geography of the East, especially Iran, over the West's geography intensified; because geography authors were mostly Iranian<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Jundishapur had remained a major center of scholarship and research. There is no doubt that Muslims became familiar with some of the Pahlavi works on astronomy, geography, history etc. Many of these works were translated into Arabic, underlying to other Arabic writings on different subjects. Masoudi attributed a Persian book titled Zieg al-Shah to Habash ibn Abdullah Maruzi Baghdadi (died between 250 and 261)<sup>3</sup>. He also said that the book is about the history of Iran, mentioning two history books counted as important histories of Sassanid. Furthermore, he mentioned another Persoan book titled *Gahnameh Sokhan* concerning the Iranian kingdom classes, description of the Sassanian government internal organization, hierarchy of ranks.. This book is part of the book of regulations<sup>4</sup>.

Masoudi writes: In 303 AH / 915 AD in Persia Estakhr, I was by n Iranian noble man when I saw a great book about sciences and history of the kings and their buildings not to be found in other books such as Khodaynameh and Ayeennameh. This book, which was obtained from the treasures of the kings of Persia, was translated into Arabic by Hisham ibn Abd ol-Molk (105-125 AH / 724-743 AD)<sup>5</sup>. It is not unlikely that Muslims acquired their knowledge about geography and geographic locations in Iran as well as the Sassanid state borders and administrative division of the country and in literature of this kind<sup>6</sup>. Among the concepts and geographic traditions of Iran adopted by the Arabs were, above all, the notion of seven states or seven territories supposedly divided into seven geometric circles, each of which a country or a region (Figure 1). The fourth circle is known as Iranshahr at the center of which "Savad" surrounded by the other six states or regions<sup>7</sup>. However, the Muslims always thought that the Earth was affected by Qaf a legendary mountain and seven territorial images of the Seven Heavens. In other words, astrology tends to interpret in another way, where each climate is similar to one of the planets of the Zodiac areas and climates are symmetric to the seven heavens. This belief was common the the Babylonians and Greeks as well

### **Geographical analysis of the Islamic world**

#### *A- Iraqi School and famous geographers of this school*

In this school, the works by of Ibn Khordadbeh, Yaghubi and Masoudi are different from other works in the same school of geography from two perspectives: Firstly, land division into several regions was followed, and that Iraq was considered the same as Iranshahr putting the center in geographical divisions, from there starting their works. Masoud wrote that Iraq was the fourth climate of this division; it is then selected and top land and Iranshahr's crop of the cream<sup>8</sup>. Similarly, Biruni introduced the seven countries or regions divided into seven identical circles<sup>9</sup>, where the central region is called Iranshahr covering Khorasan, Fars, Jebal and Iraq. He writes: Land development was divided into seven equal pieces together in terms of the direction of politics and the expansion of the kingdom, so that there were six identical circles while the seventh encompassed the rest. The reason behind such segmentation was that great kings in Iranshahr known as Iraq, Jibal and Khorasan and Fars were dominating, some of whom ruled the entire state in the beginning and before people were scattered everywhere. Therefore, the kings should have been positioned between some road to pave their wishes for them and let them

<sup>1</sup> *Analecta Orientalia*; 1, 741-841.

<sup>2</sup> *Science of geography and its evolution of the world of Islam*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Iranian culture before Islam*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> *Wa'l-tanbihat and Al-Ashraf*, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> *Science of geography and its evolution of the world of Islam*, p. 92.

<sup>7</sup> (6). *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> *Wa'l-tanbihat and Al-Ashraf*, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *Altafhim*, pp. 197- 200.

grasp what they aspire<sup>1</sup>. Thus, such division has nothing to do with the status of natural and geographical or astronomical properties, but is rather relied on changes in the political or ethnic and linguistic differences<sup>2</sup>. With the establishment of Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasid government, Iraq naturally found political significance in the Muslim world, so that Ibn Khordadbeh equalized Iraq and Iranshahr, where the Savad called the heart of Iranshahr in the past, became the center of geographical classification. He started his book by describing Savar (Historical geography of Islamic countries, vol. 1, p. 28).

Yaghubis deemed Iraq the center of the world calling the navel of the earth. He described Iraq so: Baghdad is the largest city in terms of area, civil development, water abundance and good weather in the East and the West. The town of Bani Hashim is their Dar al-Molk and central monarchy. Because it is in the center of the universe, there is good weather, pleasant and the people are good-looking, smart and well-behaved<sup>3</sup>. In addition to the description of Baghdad, Yaghubi mentioned Samarra. His book begins by describing the two cities<sup>4</sup>. Masoudi the well-known historian and geographer also points to the superiority of Iraq and writes:

The Fourth climate is moderate of all, where Iraq among the regions is selected as the top region of the world..., and the region where Madinatosalam (Baghdad) is located is the best in the world in terms of cleanliness and food<sup>5</sup>. Unlike Ibn Khordadbeh, Yaghubi and Masoudi, other geographers such as Qadameh Bin Ibn Jaafar and Ibn Faqih showed no interest in Iraq or Iranshahr within their works, but rather to Mecca and Saudi Arabia; For example, Qadameh Bin Ibn Jaafar considered Baghdad important just because it was the capital of the Muslim territory and the political and administrative affairs. He mentioned in his book initially the roads to Mecca preferred over the roads leading to Baghdad. Thus, Qadameh Bin Ibn Jaafar violated the geography practice through the Iranian Seven Climates, inclining toward the Islamic aspect. He placed the utmost importance to the borders of the Islam territory, located in front of the Byzantine government<sup>6</sup>. This tendency can be found in Ibn Rasteh (290 AD). He withdrew completely from the Iranian tradition and granted the first place in geography to Mecca and Medina<sup>7</sup>. When discussing the climates of Earth, he deviated from the Iranian seven climates approach and rather focused on the Greek climates and writes: Some believe that earth is a surface spread in four directions east, west, south and north and creatures reside only on one side at the top of the north quarter.<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Faqih granted the first place to Mecca and Medina. His categorization in the book is based on the Greek climates, but in describing the east lands he considered the Iranians seven climates<sup>9</sup>.

Maruj al-Zahb is the report on experiences and observations of Masoudi which can be regarded as a historical-geographical Encyclopedia. In this book, Masoudi discussed the earthquakes, the layer formation of earth, sea and nature etc.<sup>10</sup>. As mentioned above, Masoudi was a follower of Iraqi school of geography, putting great importance onto Iraq and its center Baghdad. In his own writing, he described the seven climates<sup>11</sup> and pointed out other divisions, writing: Mathematical scholars divided the earth into four quadrants: East, west, north and south. He mentioned the division of land into residential and non-residential (i.e. developed and underdeveloped)<sup>12</sup>. Since was a follower in the Iraqi school of geography, he pursued the climate approach, the seven Iranians climates. He writes:

Another geographical work written by the Iraqi school was Al-Alam by an unknown author. The book was written during year 372 AH / 982 AD, considered the oldest Persian piece on geography of world

<sup>1</sup> Tahdid Nahayat al-Amaken..., p. 109 and 110.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Albaldan, pp. 233- 235.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 233 and 255.

<sup>5</sup> Wa'l-tanbihat and Al-Ashraf, p. 35 and 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ahsan Altqasym, p. 1 and 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ahsan Altqasym, p. 24 and 58.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ahsan Altqasym, p. 16 and 23.

<sup>10</sup> J Muslim Contribution to Geography, P. 38

<sup>11</sup> Wa'l-tanbihat and Al-Ashraf, p. -31 and 35.

<sup>12</sup> Maruj al-Zahab, vol. 2, p. 83.

in the old days. The author of *Al-Alam* benefited from the materials and devoted many chapters prior to description of the inhabited world, focusing on seas, islands, mountains, rivers and deserts<sup>1</sup>.

#### *B- Balkhi school and its characteristics and famous geographers*

Abu Zaid Ahmad ibn Sahl Balkhi (322 AD) was born in an area called Shamestan near Balkh. For gaining knowledge, he went to Iraq and benefited the presence of the famous philosopher Kennedy (260 AD) from whom he learned philosophy and history. Back in his hometown, at the service of the Prince of Balkh, Ahmad ibn Sahl ibn Hashim was today. Balkhi was one of the first Muslims getting engaged in cartography and his important work is *Sovar Awalim* entailing a description of the geographical maps and tables<sup>2</sup>. He developed a method later accepted by next geographers. The Balkhi School geographers managed to give a positive Islamic taste to geography and also concentrated mainly on description of Islamic lands, pointing to those concepts and geographical information contained in the Qur'an or the Hadith. For instance, the sayings suggested that lands were like a hen whose head was China, whose right wing was India, whose left wing was Caspian region, whose chest was Mecca, Hijaz, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and whose tail was North Africa<sup>3</sup>. This story was the basis of cartography in the Balkhi School.

It seems that this map is an impression of the Earth's left from what the ancient Iran perceived of the world later accessed by the Muslims. Apparently, this type of old sayings that reflect the geographical data among the Muslims was developed in later eras so as to encounter the scientific information of Muslims, which was just beginning to thrive. Indeed, some of the traditional sayings have been deemed scientifically valid by certain geography scholars. Although science has advanced, some of these traditions in geographical thought profoundly influenced some Muslims as well the way geographic mapping was practiced<sup>4</sup>. The geographers of Balkhi school thought of the entire lands in the form of a circle (referring to the flatness of the earth) surrounding the sea environment" (referring to the oceans) like a necklace, from where two gulfs flowed in (the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean) separated by a limbo at the Red Sea. Such a perception was based on the Quran<sup>5</sup>. The geographers of Balkhi School unlike the followers Iraqi school counted the Arab island as the center of the earth since it was housed Mecca and the Kaaba. This new justification giving the highest importance to Mecca and the Kaaba became the prominent feature of Balkhi School. The geographers of Balkhi School mentioned in their books only the Islamic countries, which had been divided into twenty regions, as the non-Islamic countries were briefly explored. (*Historical geography of Islamic countries*, vol. 1, p. 36)

They classified the region into several states and climates were neither based on the conventional division of the countries in Iran, nor was it based on the division of the Greek climates. Such a division entailed a pure land and natural aspect as a more advanced practice than the previous ones benefited somewhat from lightening<sup>6</sup>. As Ibn Hoqel said, he never followed the arrangement of seven climates map by Ghobadian mentioned at the beginning of the book. He believed that even if the map was correct, it was very perplexing<sup>7</sup>. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Farsi Estakhri (340 AD) had a major role in the dissemination of Balkhi school ideas. There is little information on his life, but he traveled so often and brought his experiences in the book *Masalik and Mamalik*. Undoubtedly, he wrote this book based on the book by Abu Zayd Balkhi. Estakhri's work later became an authentic source for the geographers of this school.

#### **Comparison of two Iraqi and Balkhi schools**

The Balkhi School of geography has been based on Islamic data plus adopting a more scientific perspective, whereas the Iraqi school entails a more widespread and more comprehensive geography.

<sup>1</sup> J Muslim Contribution to Geography, P. 41 and 42

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Mokhtasar Albaldan, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Science of geography and its evolution of the world of Islam, p. 91 and 104

<sup>5</sup> Furqan, 53.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>7</sup> Faces of Earth, pp. 15 onwards.

The wide variety of titles in the geographic writings among Muslims was indicative of their vast knowledge, which can be categorized into four classes. 1. Concerning the Greek word celestial geography. Muslims used the term Elm al-Atval and Aaraz or Albaldan calendar. 2. They identified the descriptive geography through science of masalek and mamalek. 3. When discussing the positions, they employed the science of barid. 4. If their studies had a taste of cosmology or description of the universe and its wonders, it was called the *wonders of lands*. The entire diverse approaches compelled the external and non-Muslim authors deem the Islamic geography widely diversified, where a certain category was based on the book Tarikh al-Adab Algography al-Arabi written by Ignati Krachovski mentioning a number of features:

1. High historical and political wisdom and understanding as well as preferences for molding of art of presenting items.
2. Providing fresh geographic themes beyond the existing theories. (They closely observed and recognized the residential and non-residential areas)
3. Enthusiasm for social life, craftsmanship, agriculture, language and religious education in addition to the physical geography and climate,
4. information on the non-Islamic lands, noting that the Greeks were not aware of the eastern lands, Caspean and the eastern bank of Asia and other regions, whereas the Muslims were aware of all the regions.
5. Fundamental diversity of practices, i.e. they had scientific treatise on astronomy and mathematics, and also books and court functionaries and ordinary travelers. This kind of writings is entertaining, because they are partly exquisite art works.
6. Pleasant presentation of dull material with especial appeal when the public needs the art of story-telling.

Krachovski wrote about the course of Islamic geography as: "the Islamic geography grew and then experienced decline. The third century was the era of innovation and the culmination of the Islamic geography. In this period, Muslims became familiar with the works of Ptolemy and others. At the end of this century, we faced with the emergence of geographic entries, some of which are for authors and some other was for the literary people. In the fourth century with the emergence of school of geography, together with the Islamic World Atlas, geography reached its peak." (Krachovski, 1408 AH: P. 112)

## Results

Science of geography in Arabic was initiated in the era of Manur Abbasi consequently through translation of "Sanskrit". The geographical early teachings came from Indians to Muslims. Between the third to eighth centuries AH, several geographical works were written in Arabic, which have today received importance in the historical geography. There are a number of factors contributing to the development of geography in the Islamic world such as: 1. Establishment of Baghdad as the capital city for Muslims, 2. conquest of Iran, Egypt and Sindh, 3. role of Iranian ministers in encouraging the scholars and experts in the development of science, 4. emergence of Mu'tazilite mainstream, 5. adjacency to India, Greece and Egypt, 6. influence of Iran. In the Islamic world, there are two major geographical schools developed: 1. Iraqi school: after Baghdad became the capital of the Abbasid Empire, Iraq naturally gained a central and a major political achievement, which is why Yaghibu considered the world as Iraq. For this reason, Yaghubi began his book Albaldan by describing Baghdad. Massoudi and Khordadbeh bore similar opinion. 2. Balkhi school: The school's main features include: 1 It gave geography an Islamic taste, 2. they restricted themselves to the Islamic lands with an emphasis on geographical concepts compatible with the Quran and the sayings and traditions of the Prophet, for example, droughts in earth were likened to a bird matching a hadith of Abdullah bin Amru bin Aas, 3. they considered the center of the world as Saudi Arabia, Mecca and Medina, 4. classification system was neither based on the division of the Iranian nation nor on the Greek climates, but rather on the lands.

**References**

1. Encyclopedia of explorers and geographers of the world, Nasrallah Kikbin, Nabavi publications, 1996.
2. Frantez Teshz- Maghbul Ahmad, history of geography in the Islamic civilization, Tehran: Islamic Encyclopedia Foundation, 1996
3. George Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, translated by Gholam Hossein Sadri Afshar, Scientific and Cultural Publishing Company. 1995.
4. Gharchanlu, H., (2001), historical geography of Islamic countries, Tehran, SEMAT publishing, first edition.
5. Hakim Mohammad Taqi Khan. Treasure of the historical geography of Iranian cities. First Edition Tehran: Zarrin Press, 1987.
6. Krachokvfski, (1408), Tarikh al-Adab Algoghrafy al-Arabi , Beirut, Press: Daralmghrb al-eslami
7. Lestrangle, Gie (1998), historical geography of the lands of the caliphate Eastern mysticism, translation by Mahmoud Erfan, scientific and cultural publications, first edition.
8. Maqbool Ahmad, Teshner (1989), history of science in the Muslim world, translation by Hasan Ganji, Tehran, Press: Encyclopedia of Islam foundation.
9. Masoudi; Wa'l-tanbihat al-Eshraf, Beirut: And Maktabat Al Hilal, in 1421 AH.
10. MT Khan, Hakim (1991), the treasure of historical geography in Iranian cities, the introduction by Abdulhossein Navayee, Tehran: Zarrin publication.
11. Nahchiri, A., (1997), historical geography of cities, Tehran, Madereseh Publications
12. Tayyebi, M., (2003), Geography Journal article, "theory on geography in Islamic civilization", autumn and winter, Issue. 2.
13. Tayyebi, M., (2004), Journal of Knowledge, article "Exploring in Yaghubite history", Issue. 77, May.
14. Yaghubi, Ahmad ibn Ya'qub, (1983), Albaldan, translation by ME Ayati, publishing firms
15. Yaghubi, Albaladan, Beirut: Al-Elmiah Library, 1422 AH.
16. Zarrinkoob, Abdulhossein (1983) History on Scale, Tehran, Amir Kabir, 1982.
17. Zarrinkub, A., (1983), biography of Islam, Amir Kabir Publications.