

TITLE: *World Map of al-Kashghari*

DATE: 664/1266 (original 464/1076 A.D.)

AUTHOR: *Mahmud al-Kashghari*

DESCRIPTION: This world map, oriented with East at the top, is from the unique manuscript of al-Kashghari entitled *Diwan Lugat at-Turk* [The Compendium of the Turkic Dialects]. Al-Kashghari was a Turkish grammarian of the 11th century A.D. whose world map appears as an illustration to his Turkish grammar. This in itself is unusual, and the map is certainly unlike any other map in Islamic literature. The individual elements of the map, symbols, and so forth, are all very much the same as those that appear on any other Islamic map, but its concept is most unusual. Although it is a map of the world, it is centered on the Turkish-speaking areas of Central Asia, with other countries receding from them toward the circumference of the world circle. In addition the scale seems to be reduced as one gets nearer the edge of the map, so that one has the impression of a fish-eye representation of the globe with Turkestan magnified in the center. The colors are described in the original as gray for rivers, green for seas, yellow for deserts and cities, the rivers are blue and the mountains are red.

Among countless important characteristics of *Diwan Lugat at-Turk* is this map located at one of the beginning pages. To our knowledge, it is the first world map of Turkish origin known in history. Al-Kashghari's map, drawn with a purpose to show the distribution of the areas inhabited by Turkic peoples in his time, also covers some other lands, making it almost a world map. The map, which may be regarded rather as primitive in terms of the techniques used in modern cartography, was definitely above the 11th century standards when the available geographical information and techniques of the time are considered.

There is enough evidence supporting the originality of Kashgari's map. First of all, the map was drawn centering the city of *Balasaghun*, where the Turkic khans resided. While all the other Turkic cities were placed accordingly, the four directions were indicated in accordance with the traditional Turkic system used in the *Orkhun Inscriptions*. The mountains, lakes, rivers and seas in the areas settled by the Turks are shown in exact details. The fact that there is almost no mistake in this respect indicates that the map is the original work of a Turk.

In reference to the map depicting the 11th century Turkic world, Kashgari says, "The main part of the lands of the Turks, from the area next to Rum up to Mashin, is five thousand farsakhs long by three thousand wide, making a total of eight thousand farsakhs. I have indicated all this in the circle in the shape of the earth so that it may be known". Kashgari's drawing the map in the form of a circle and making a reference to the shape of the earth clearly indicates the Turks knew quite well that the earth is round. Around the colored map on the twenty-second and twenty-third pages of the *Diwan*, the four cardinal directions, namely, East, West, South, and North are indicated. As mentioned above, the geographical features are color-coded; thus, seas are green, rivers are blue, mountains are red, and cities are yellow.

On the map, the lands to the north extend as far as the *Ytil* borders, where the Kypchaks and the Franks lived. To the south, there are countries of the *Hind*, the *Sind*, the *Berber*, the *Abyssinians*, and of the *Zanj*. While to the east there are the lands of *Mashin* [China] and *Japarqa* [Japan], to the west, there appear the borders of Egypt and the lands of the *Magrib* [Iberian peninsula], which is *Andulus*.

The map shows in detail the cities and the lands where the Turkic people lived. Close to *Balasaghun*, centered on the Turkish speaking areas, are *Barsghan*, the city of

Mahmud Kashgari's father, and *Kashgar*, the city of culture and learning. The lake appearing close to *Barsghan* with no name is the Lake of Issyk. Other Turkic cities shown at the center are *Kucha*, *Barman*, *Uch*, *Qoachrnarbashi*, *Yarkand*, *Khotan*, *Jurcan*, *Ozjand*, *Marginan*, *Khojand*, *Samarqand*, *Ekkiogüz*, *Talas*, *Beshbaliq*, and *Mangishlag*.

Other Turkic areas indicated on the map are the *Oghuz* land, *Kypchak* and *Oghuz* provinces, *Bashgirt* steppes, *Oruken*, *Khorasan*, *Kharezm*, and *Adarbadgan*. Besides the seas, lakes and mountains shown in coded colors, the rivers *Sayhun*, *Jayhun*, *Ila* (Ili), *Atil*, *Artish* and the mountains *Qarachuk* and *Sarandib* are indicated with their geographical names.

Besides indicating the areas the Turkic people live in, Kashgari also indicates on his map the names of the non-Turkic people who are living in the same areas and getting into interaction with the Turks. However, those people and countries who have no interaction with the Turks are disregarded.

Mahmud Kashgari shows a variety of places on his map, including the *Great Wall [the Barrier]* of China, deserts and sands where the water seeps away, *City of Women*, areas of wild animals and areas uninhabitable because of excessive cold or heat. As he writes about the eastern people of China, *Mashin* and *Jabarqa* [Japan], he mentions that their distance, the interposition of the mountains, seas and the Great Wall altogether make the languages of these people unknown. Kashgari's mentioning Japan in his work and showing it on his map upgrades the value of the map even more. To our present knowledge, the map in *Diwan Lugat at-Turk* is the first world map on which Japan is placed. Kashgari shows Japan as an island in the east and calls it *Jabarqa*. The first individual map of Japan was drawn three hundred years after Kashgari by a Japanese man; but the second map placing Japan on a world map after Kashgari was drawn four hundred years after *Diwan Lugat at-Turk*. Because of this, Kashgari is distinguished as the first man who placed Japan on a world map.

Other types of maps from this period show how the people of the Near East gained greater knowledge about China through the overland connections and the Arab sea-trade with the Far East. Kashgari's 11th century encyclopedic dictionary of Turkish language, for example, places Turkic Central Asia at the center of the map. Obviously, the geographic knowledge of the world portrayed in the map circulated to the broad readership that had access to his dictionary. This round Turkish map differs significantly from the contemporaneous *Balkhi School* (#214.2) maps because it does not show the coastline for any of part of Afro-Eurasia, or draw clear spatial relationship between regions. Yet, as Andreas Kaplony argues, Kashgari's small illustrative map records geographic data using unique visual language signs distinguished by color and shape. For example, the map usually marks the Turkish tribes with a yellow dot. Interestingly, the use of color-coding on the map in a language dictionary calls to mind the color-coding common to the language maps often found on the cover or back page of modern-day dictionaries. Although Kashgari, an educated Turkish nobleman, was Muslim and relied on methods of his Arabic-Islamic geographer forebears, he omitted Mecca and Medina. Its form may seem simplistic, yet Kashgari's map adds new geographic knowledge that Turkish authors gained through overland contact between his country and northern China. He resembles al-Biruni in that he reveals new knowledge about the political division that separated China into northern and southern halves during this period. Yet Kashgari used different terms, *Chin* [China] and *Mashin* [greater China], that would often appear in later Persian works. Perhaps Kashgari learned about a political division of China when he undertook his alleged journey to the

northeastern part of Eurasia, which may have included northern China; or perhaps this information was common among those who traveled along the overland routes of Central Asia.

Although this map is oriented eastward toward China, centers on Central Asia, and focuses on the location of Turkic tribes, according to Karen Pinto, in its illustration style, it betrays Islamic cartographic influences. Red lines demarcating boundaries, dark-green copper (now black because of oxidation) for the seas, and slate gray for the rivers, encased in an encircling band symbolizing the *Bahr al-Muhit* [Encircling Ocean], with a keyhole form for the Caspian Sea are all common iconographic tropes also used on the KMMS world maps. The grid of lands in the Islamic world laid out at the bottom of the map is evocative of Biruni-type maps that layout the lands in a grid-like structure in the lower half of the map. It is, as the reigning expert on the Kashgarl map, Andreas Kaplony, suggests, akin to a modern “dialect atlas” speaking the “same visual language” as Arab-Islamic cartographers, and it is for this reason that we need to take this map into consideration when reviewing the Islamic cartographic tradition. Again, according to Ms Pinto, given the Kashgari map’s close visual connection to Islamic models and the fact that the earliest extant Islamic manuscript maps herald from the 11th century, after the Turkic entry into the Islamic theater, it leaves us wondering if it was the Turks who brought a world-envisioning mapping tradition to the Islamic world from their Icarian vantage point atop the highest peaks in the world.

LOCATION: The Millet Genel Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri 4189, Istanbul.

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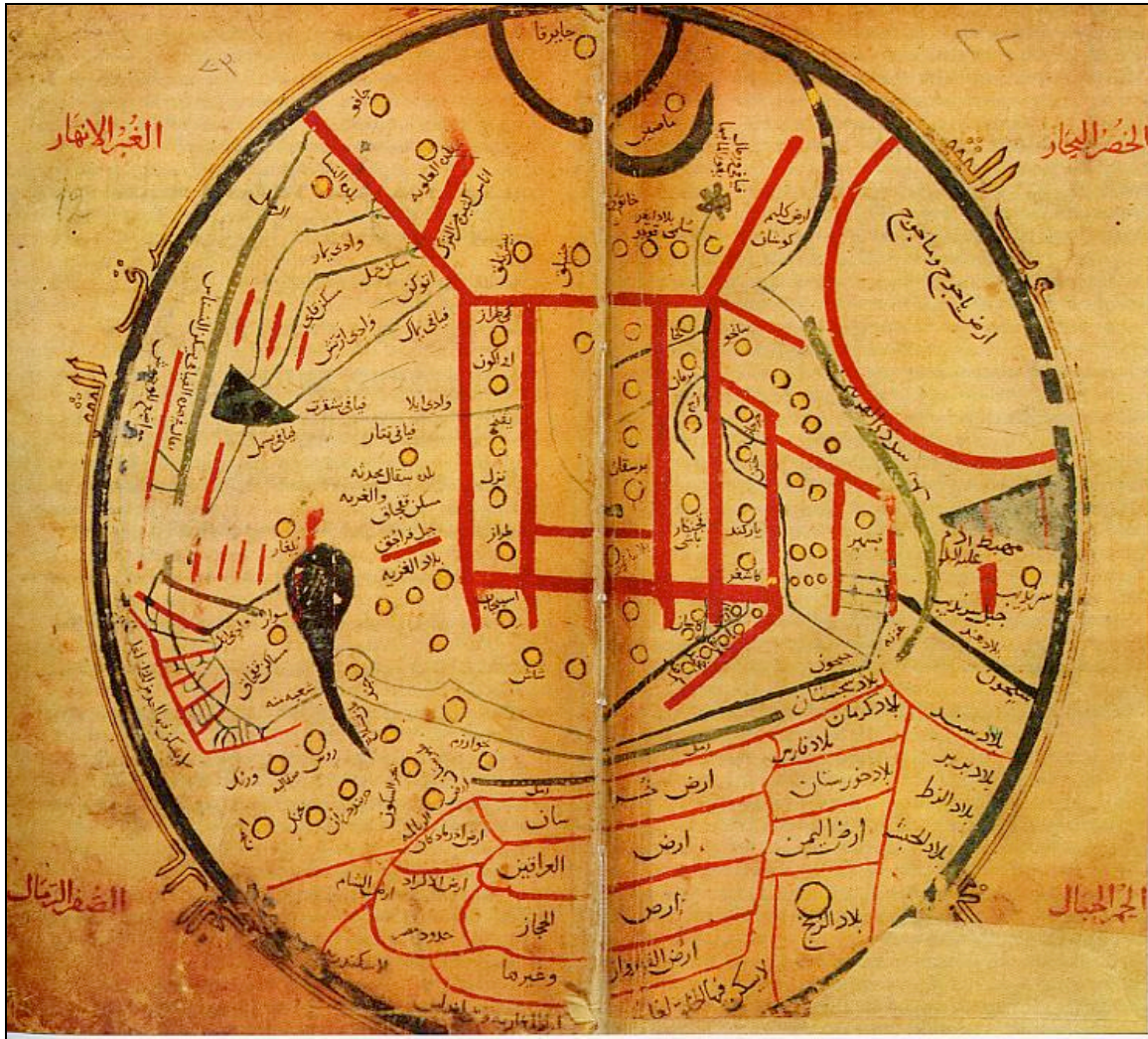
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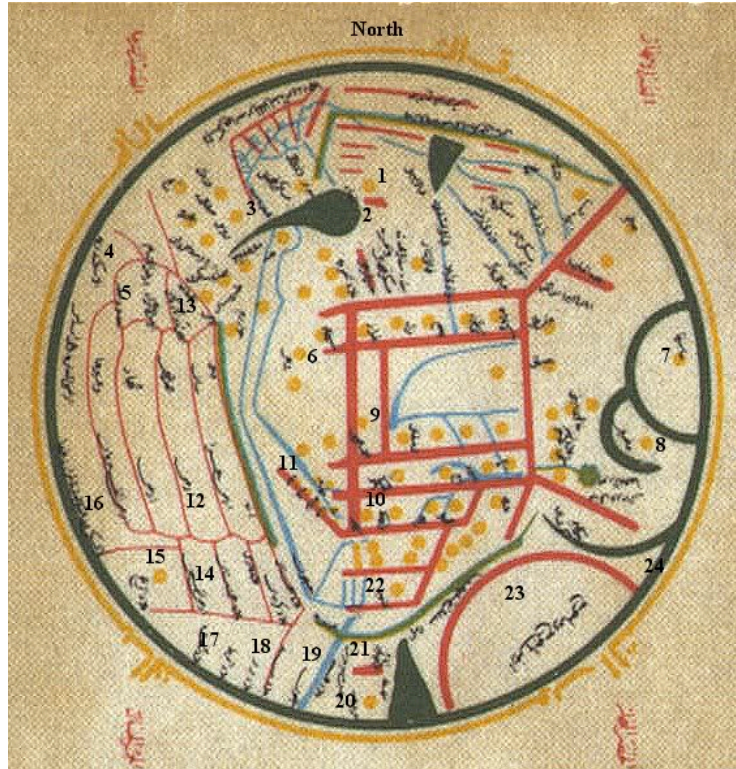
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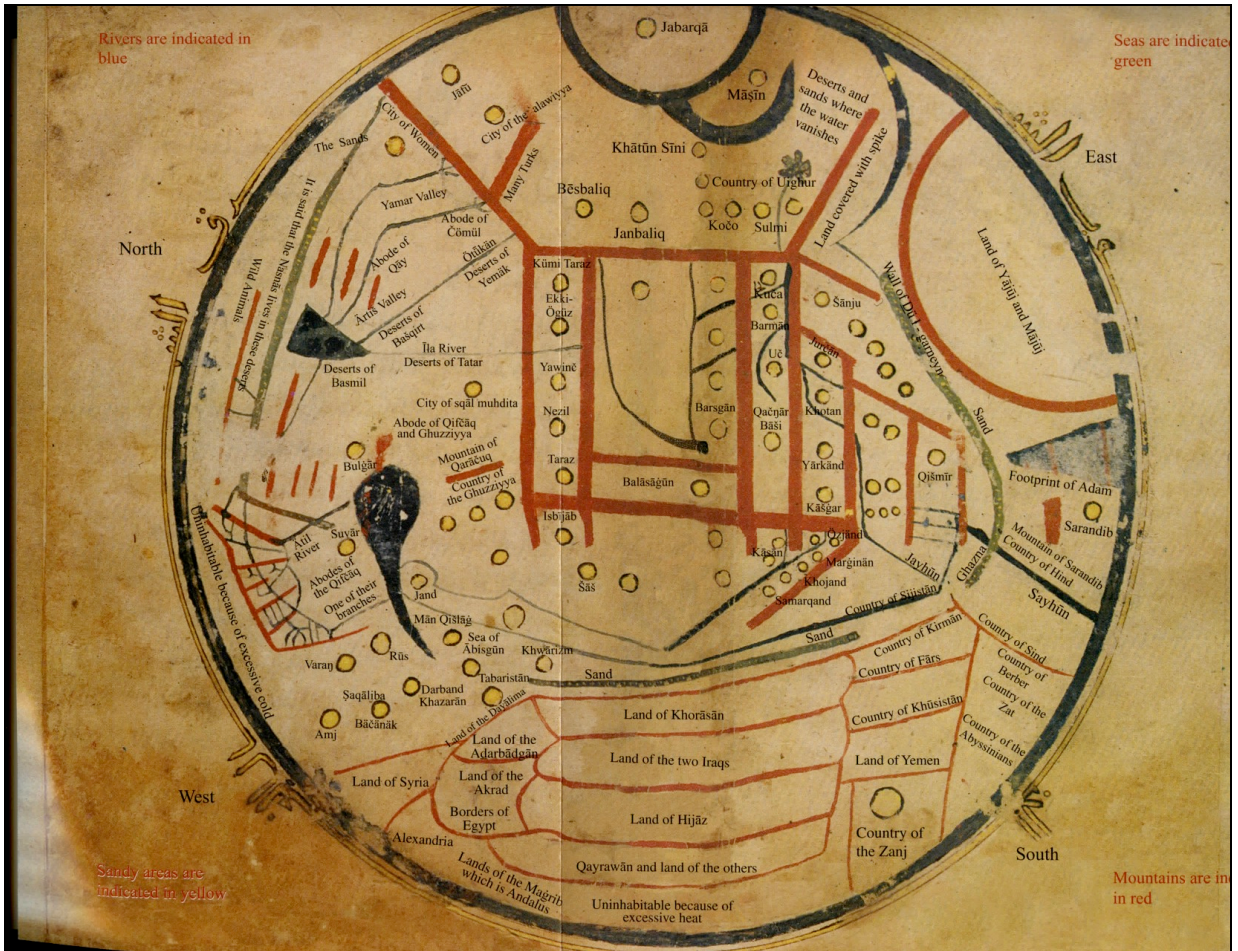
al-Kashgari's world map, from the *Diwan lughat al-Turk*, 664/1266, 27.5 x 11.5 cm oriented with East at the top, Millet Genel Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri 4189, fols. 22b-23a, Istanbul. The earliest Turkic-Arabic dictionary, al-Kashgari's late 11th century CE *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* [Compendium of the Turkic Dialects], contains this intriguing world map. Centered on Inner and Central Asia, it shows the location of Turkic tribes according to linguistic variations. This is the only existing copy and it dates from 1266 CE. Its illustrative style reveals cartographic influences used on Islamic world maps. Red lines demarcate boundaries, dark green copper for seas and slate gray for rivers, all encased in an encircling band—symbolizing the Bahr al-Muhit [Encircling Ocean], with a keyhole form for the Caspian Sea. The grid of lands in the Islamic world, laid out at the bottom of the map, resemble the grid-like structure of al-Biruni's world map (#214.3) but different in that it is oriented with north to the left.



A reproduction of the world map by al-Kashghari from the 11th century, oriented with East at the top, with some selected place-names translated re-oriented with North at the top

- Blue – rivers
 - Green – seas
 - Light yellow – deserts
 - Red – mountains
 - Yellow – cities, countries, lands and peoples
1. Bulgaria [judging by its location, probably the so-called Wolga-Bulgaria rather than present-day Bulgaria]
 2. Caspian Sea
 3. 'Rus' [Russia]
 4. Alexandria
 5. Egypt
 6. Tashkent
 7. Japan (surrounded by a green semi-circle)
 8. China (with water to the west)
 9. Balasagun [now in Kyrgyzstan, then the 'centre of the world']
 10. Kashgar (the map-maker's birthplace)
 11. Samarqand
 12. Iraq
 13. Azerbaijan
 14. Yemen
 15. East Somalia
 16. East Sahara
 17. Ethiopia
 18. North Somalia

19. Indus
20. Hindustan
21. Ceylon [Adam's Peak or *Jebel Serandib*, indicated by the red dot on the south of the island, supposedly is where Adam was exiled to after being kicked out of Paradise]
22. Kashmir
23. Gog and Magog [Biblical/legendary land walled off from the world by a mountain range]
24. The World-Encircling Sea



Translations in English of toponyms from Akalin's *One Thousand Years Ago, One Thousand Years Later, Mahmud Kashgari and Diwan Lughat at-Turk*. Notice Jabarqa [Japan] in the partial circle at the top of the map.

