Archaeology and Early Islamic Geography: 
The potential and limitations of a textual genre

A map of the world
Al-Istakhri 977
Types of Geography

- Astronomical/Quantitative geography
- Descriptive Geography
  - The emergence of the Balkhi School
  - Compendia
  - Urban biographical dictionaries
- Cartography
- Travel-logs (al-rihla litterature)
Role of Geography in Early Muslim Society

- Determining the Direction of Prayer
- Administration of Empire
  - Postal service
  - Cultures and their customs
  - Territorial boundaries
- Trade and Travel
- Building the Community of Believers
Al-Muqaddasi and his geographical systematics

►► Methodology and terminology
- Marking Muslim territory – the idea of a *Mamlakat al-Islam*
- Strict hierarchy of places
- Defining one’s terms and the difficulties of using an emic typology

►► Ethnographic observation
- Importance of being there
- What is worthy of reporting