



ĀB-E DEZ

ĀB-E DEZ or ĀB-DEZ, a major river of Kūzestān, the one most vital to its economy. It rises in the central Zagros mountains about 20 km (all distances are given in a straight line) northeast of Borūjerd near the village of Čahār Borra. Flowing past Borūjerd to the west, it runs southeast until it is joined near Do Rūd, some 60 km southeast of Borūjerd, by the Mārbora flowing from the east. The combined waters of both rivers then flow southwest through a narrow, often gorgelike valley for about 70 km, as far as Kešvar. In this area the Trans-Iranian railway from the Persian Gulf to Tehran follows the course of the river. Here one sees at various points irrigation canals hewn out of the rocks, in which the river water used to be diverted to patches of arable land lying above the level of the river. South of Kešvar the Āb-e Dez curves again towards the southeast; in the neighborhood of Tang-e Pānī, about 30 km southeast of Kešvar, it is joined by another tributary from the east, the Āb-e Baḳtīār. Twenty km farther on, in an approximately southerly direction, the mountains on either side of the river are no longer as high, and the railway leaves the valley and runs to the west. The river now veers first towards the southeast, the back again towards the south; and some 25 km northeast of Dezfūl it flows out of the mountains into the Kūzestān plain. Here stands the Shah Rezā Pahlavī Dam, completed in 1963. The river flows southward past Dezfūl for some 50 km until it reaches Qaḷ'a Rob; near here it is joined by the Bālā Rūd from the west. It then tends to the southeast until it flows into the Kārūn at Band-e Qīr, about 100 km south of Dezfūl.

With a volume of water measuring between about 140 cu m/sec in the driest



months and approximately 610 cu m/sec in the spring (E. Ehlers, *Traditionelle und moderne Formen der Landwirtschaft in Iran*, Marburg, 1975, p. 17), the river has always been the life blood of a region subject to intensive cultivation. According to archeological surveys, it can be supposed that since prehistoric times the waters of the Āb-e Dez (and of Kūzestān's other rivers) have been used for irrigation purposes. It is uncertain whether the Dez waters were used for irrigation in Elamite and Achaemenian times. In the Sasanian period, however, a dense network of irrigation channels traversed the plain on either side of the river. The starting point of the canals on the eastern bank was the Dezfūl bridge, which also served as a dam, and the remains of which are still visible. After the Arab conquest the irrigation network was partly abandoned and destroyed by the Mongols.

In the Middle Ages the Āb-e Dez was known as the river of Jondīšābūr (Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 303f., with sources). Its source was thought to be located in the territory of Isfahan (thus Ebn Kordādbeh, p. 176, and Ebn Rosta, p. 90). Its upper reach bore the name of Qar'a or Qav'a. One of the tributaries flowing into it above Dezfūl (probably Āb-e Baqtīār) was called the Kazkī (Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 233). The Āb-e Dez gets its modern name from the town of Dezfūl, and the latter was named after a fort that stood by the old bridge of Dezfūl (see Dieulafoy, *L'Art antique de la Perse*, Paris, 1885, V, pp. 105-09, pl. Xf.). Dezfūl is derived from Dez-e Pol, "bridge-castle." In the Middle Ages the bridge was known as Qanṭarat al-Zāb (Ebn Kordādbeh, p. 176), Qanṭarat al-Rūd (Ebn Rosta, p. 90), or Qanṭarat Andāmeš (Yāqūt, I, p. 372). Andāmeš is also an old name for Dezfūl (Yāqūt, loc. cit.). The name Dezfūl occurs in Ḥamdallāh Mostawfī (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, p. 218).

From the early 1960s the Āb-e Dez formed the starting point of a large-scale irrigation development which would include the Kārūn, Mārūn, and Šawr rivers; altogether, approximately 1 million hectares of land in the Kūzestān plain would be irrigated. Completion of the multipurpose Dez Dam (203 m high, 3,4 billion cu m storage capacity) is a first step in this direction. The irrigable area of the Dez Irrigation Project covers about 100,000 hectares; its development has, however, caused social and economic problems for the traditional inhabitants of this area (see Ehlers, "Consequences").



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