



AHVĀZ III. MONUMENTS

AHVĀZ

iii. Monuments

Little of architectural interest appears to have survived from the medieval period. On the left or east bank of the Kārūn river, in the old part of the present city, is the tomb of 'Alī b. Mehryār, a contemporary of Abū Nowās and a follower of Imam Reżā. The present building dates from the 18th century, and is a small square brick structure with a white plastered dome, encircled at its base by a single line of *nasta'liq* inscription. The major part of this quarter dates only from the development of Bandar-e Nāşerī in the late 19th century. (By the early 20th century it was called Old Ahvāz to distinguish it from the "newer" city on the opposite bank of the Kārūn, actually the more ancient site.) The steel railroad bridge crossing the Kārūn just above the fourth rapids rests on the presumed foundations of the Sasanian dam or weir. It is built on an outcropping of sandstone in the riverbed. Some of the superstructure of the dam remained in the early 19th century for it to be described as a few small arches of very small bricks which were coated with vitrified bitumen. The foundations of the dam are constructed of large masonry blocks. Because the natural barrage on which the dam is built provides the easiest crossing at this part of the Kārūn, it is possible that the spot is also the location of the bridge of boats that spanned the river in Achaemenid times, and of the bridge encountered by Alexander's admiral, Nearchus, when he navigated the Kārūn in 325 B.C.



Although Bandar-e Nāṣerī on the left bank survives as the older quarter of the present city, medieval Ahvāz was concentrated on the right bank in the area of new Ahvāz. Tenth-century descriptions of the city hint at architectural riches (see [part i](#)). The poet and traveler Abū Dolaf Yanbū'ī writes of a mosque “spacious and beautiful,” which may have been the Congregational Mosque mentioned by Moqaddasī; across the river was the Masjed-e 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Rezā. Spanning the Kārūn at the fifth rapids, upstream from the Sasanian dam and the city itself, was a large bridge of kiln-baked brick which dated from at least 'Abbasid times, and which had been restored by the Buyid 'Azod-al-dawla.

In the vicinity of Ahvāz are several *emāmzādas*. Some have the white conical or sugar-loaf dome that is characteristic of the region, consisting of a number of stepped stages with concave or honey-combed surfaces. A typical example is the tomb of Daniel at Susa; another, the tomb of Robayn b. Ya'qūb, 43 miles south of Ahvāz near Ḥosaynīya, is illustrated by G. N. Curzon (*Persia and the Persian Question*, London, 1898, II, facing p. 344). The type does not seem to be earlier than the Safavid period.

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