



'AJABŠĪR

'AJABŠĪR, a town and *baḵš* in East Azarbaijan. The *baḵš*, one of four comprised in the *šahrestān* of Marāḡa, is bounded on the north by the *baḵš* of Āḡaršahr, on the west and south by Lake Urmia (Rezā'īya), and on the east by the central *baḵš* of Marāḡa. It consists of the small town of 'Ajabšīr and one *dehestān* named Dīzaḡ-rūd, which has 41 inhabited villages and a total population of 25,463 in 4,623 families (*Nazar-ī be tārik-e Āḡarbāyḡān*, pp. 554-56). The local climate is moderate, and adequate water supplies for human consumption and agricultural use are obtained from the Dīzaḡ or Qal'a river, springs, and semi-deep wells with motor-driven pumps (*Rāhnomā-ye āṡār-e tārik-ī-e Āḡarbāyḡān*, p. 59). The main crops in the *dehestān* are cereals, raisins, almonds, and various tree fruits. Most of the inhabitants are engaged in farming, fruit growing, carpet weaving (*qālīs*, *gelīms* and *ḡājīms*) and other rural handicrafts (*Farhang-e ḡoḡrāfīā'ī-e Īrān* IV, p. 328). Educational, clinical, and developmental services were provided in most of the villages by the Literacy, Health, and Development Corps. Within the *dehestān* each of the large villages of Ḳānīān, Ḳeẓerlū, Šīrāz, Šišāvān, and Gol-tapa has more than 1500 inhabitants. Also within it lies the ancient castle (*qaḡ'a*) of Barāztlū, known in the Sasanian and early Islamic periods as Afrārūd or Farāzrūd (*Abnīa va āṡār-e tārik-ī-e Marāḡa*, p. 3); at this site numerous bronze objects attributable to the 6th and 7th/12th and 13th centuries were unearthed not long ago during an unauthorized excavation (personal recollection of the present writer). Among the inhabited places are the ancient castle of Rūyīn-dez and the old village of Jonbaḡaḡ (Qazvīnī, *Āṡār al-belād wa aḡbār al-'ebād*, pp. 521, 533; *Waqf-nāma-ye rob-'e rašīdī*, p. 143).



The headquarters of the *baḵš* is a flourishing small town located 35 km northwest of Marāḡa at 37° 28’ north latitude and 45° 55’ east longitude and an altitude of 1330 m above sea level (*Rāhnomā-ye āṭār-e tāriḳī-e Āḡarbāyġān*, p. 59). Until half a century ago, ‘Aġabšġir had the appearance of a small, backward village. Now it possesses asphalted avenues, piped water, 24-hour electricity, a complete intermediate school (*dabġrestān*), a public library, bookshops, clinics, shopping and commercial centers, offices of government departments, lush orchards, productive farms, a railroad station, and well equipped barracks built recently for the army. The town’s population is 6,298 in 1,225 families (census of 1345 Š./1966). Among its old buildings, the shrine (*emāmzāda*) and Masġjed-e Jāme‘ of ‘Aġabšġir deserve mention.

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