



ĀLĀ DĀĠ

ĀLĀ DĀĠ, name of a number of mountains in Iran; of Turkish origin, the words mean “colored mountain.” Many mountains or mountain ranges in Turkey or regions inhabited by Turkman peoples, including Soviet central Asia and Siberia, bear this name. In Iran there are several mountains or smaller massifs known (often only to local inhabitants) as Ālā Dāġ, especially in northwestern Persia (Azarbaijan) and in the Zagros. The most important of the Iranian Ālā Dāġ massifs is in Khorasan in the northeast. Known as Kūh-e Ālā Dāġ or Rešta-ye Ālā Dāġ, it extends southwest, south, and southeast of Bojnūrd for some 120 km. The highest peaks are between 2,600 and 2,700 m. Along with Kūh-e Bīnālūd and Pošt-e Kūh the range forms, topographically and geologically, the eastern extension of the Alborz chain. This whole region, which is given the general name of the Khorasan mountains, divides the Khorasan trench, through which flows the Atrak, from the Iranian highlands proper. Running along a line from northwest to southeast, the tectonic structure of the Khorasan mountains is overlaid or interrupted by orogenic elements running in other directions. The latter include the Šāh-ĵahān and Kotal-e Soḵanī mountains which, running west-northwest to east-southeast, and west-southwest to east-northeast, collide in the area of Ālā Dāġ. This interlocking of various orogenic systems that culminate in Bīš Aġaš (3,032 m) in the immediate neighborhood of Ālā Dāġ means that this particular mountain range and its lower slopes are extremely prone to seismic activity. Like almost all parts of the Khorasan trench, the Ālā Dāġ massif is especially notable as an earthquake center; the town of Bojnūrd and its environs, which lie below Ālā Dāġ, have been completely devastated by earthquakes several



times over the last few centuries. The Ālā Dāġ mountains are of little economic importance: The core is granite covered by triassic and jurassic sediments (mostly chalks). There are no mineral resources worth mining; agriculture has been developed only at sporadic intervals, but the mountains do provide summer grazing for farmers and former nomads. A passable road (mule track) leads up into Ālā Dāġ southward from Boġnūrd to Mīānābād.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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