



DAŠT-E ARŽAN

DAŠT-E ARŽAN (also Arjan, Arzan, lit., “plain of the mountain or bitter almond”; Forṣat Šīrāzī, p. 275), a mountain basin ca. 14 x 5-6 km (Manouchehr Kasheff, personal communication) situated 1,500 m above sea level on the road from Shiraz to Kāzerūn. Located on the elevated plain is a small catchment area, fed largely by northern springs. It is surrounded by limestone escarpments, crossed from the south by the Pīra-zan pass (*kotal*). Centuries ago Dašt-e Aržan was covered with forests and was famous for its lush foliage and ample pasturelands; almond trees flourished there. At present the pastures serve as grazing lands. On the eastern flank of the plain are marshes fed by the abundant streams that flow beneath the limestone hills (Mostawfī, p. 4).

According to early Muslim geographers, the lake was 10 farsangs long at high water; the width of 8 farsangs given in *Hodūd al-‘ālam* (tr. Minorsky, p. 55) was apparently exaggerated (Eṣṭakrī, p. 122; Ebn Hūrawqal, p. 277; Ebn al-Balkī, p. 153). Lions used to roam the fertile plain (Ebn al-Balkī, p. 154; *Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. Le Strange, p. 135). Later travelers confirmed that after a steady rainfall a large lake appeared; lions and wild boars could be found in the meadows (Mohandes et al., pp. 56-57; Forṣat Šīrāzī, p. 275).

The subdistrict of Dašt-e Aržan now belongs to the *šahrestān* (district) of Kāzerūn. Until recently about 720 ha of land were under cultivation, 500 of them dry-farmed in wheat. Some experts have argued that the arable land could be expanded to approximately 2,500 ha through irrigation (Mobaššerī and Qodratnamā, p. 117). According to legend, the village of Dašt-e Aržan, now



the administrative center of the subdistrict, was the birthplace of Salmān the Persian, a companion of the Prophet Moḥammad. Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥasan Ḥosaynī Fasā'ī (ed. Rastgār, I, p. 742; II, pp. 1437-38) reported that certain local families claimed to be related to Salmān and were thus known as Salmānī. A small shrine (*qadamgāh*) shelters a pool fed by a spring; it is popularly believed that Salmān once bathed there (Sadīd-al-Saltāna, p. 39).

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(SAYYED ‘ALĪ ĀL-E DĀWŪD)