



DEZFŪL I. GEOGRAPHY

DEZFŪL

i. Geography

The *šahrestān* is bounded on the north by Lorestān province, on the west by Īlām province, and on the east and south by Īza, Šūštar, and Ahvāz *šahrestāns*. It covers an area of 7,884 km² and consists of three districts (*baḡš*): Markazī (including the rural districts Šamsābād, Šarqī, Šam'ūn, and Nāẓer), Šūš (including the rural districts Ḥosaynābād, Farāzīn, Čanāna, and Sorḡa), and Sardašt (including the rural districts Mīānkūh, Livūs, Šāhī, and Sardašt), with 526 settlements. The climate is characterized by hot summers and moderate winters, with average annual rainfall of 250 mm; temperatures range between 3° C in winter and 49° C in summer. The humidity varies between 22 and 73 percent (Sa'īdiān, p. 498).

According to the census of 1365 Š./1986, the population of the *šahrestān* was 365,695 (64,225 family units, 189,343 men, and 176,352 women), 191,136 (52.3 percent) living in urban (151,420 in Dezfūl, 39,716 in Šūš) areas, 161,151 (44.1 percent) living in rural areas, and 13,408 commuting between the two. Population density was recorded as 46.4 per km². According to the census, 48.4 percent of the population of Dezfūl *šahrestān* was below the age of fifteen years, 48.8 percent between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years, and 2.7 percent were sixty-five years and older. The literacy rate among those six years old and older was 60.15 percent. The population consisted of Persians, Kurds, Lors, and Arabs, mainly Persian-speaking Shi'ite Muslims. A small



Zoroastrian minority (0.13 percent) was also recorded.

Sugarcane, which has been cultivated in the Dezfūl region for more than a thousand years (see, e.g., Moqaddasī, p. 405), is still an important economic factor; a modern sugar refinery with a capacity of more than 300 tons has been built in Haft Tappa near the town of Dezfūl. Other major agricultural products of the *šahrestān* include wheat, barley, clover, alfalfa, sesame, maize, and grass peas; sheep are the most important livestock. Agriculture and local supplies of electricity have been greatly increased since the completion, in 1350 Š./1971, of a modern reservoir dam across the Dez river northeast of the city of Dezfūl (see [BARQ i](#)). ¶

The center of the *šahrestān* is the city of Dezfūl, situated at 32° 23' N, 48° 24' E (*Gazetteer of Iran I*, p. 458), on the left bank of the [Āb-e Dez](#). The population is more than 150,000 (see above), compared to more than 16,000 at the end of the 19th century (Curzon, *Persian Question II*, p. 304). The name Dezfūl appears to refer to a Sasanian bridge built over the Āb-e Dez by Šāpūr II (309-79; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 238). The Sasanians also built a fortress nearby to defend it (Matheson, p. 155). The area surrounding the bridge and the fortress became the site of a settlement that developed into the city of Dež-Pol or Dezfūl (Bayāt, p. 275), though this name apparently did not come into use until the 12th century (Lockhart, p. 350). The 10th-century writer Eṣṭakrī called it Qanṭarat-al-Andāmeš (p. 197; cf. Yāqūt, I, p. 372). It was also known as Qaṣr al-Rūnāš (Yāqūt, IV, p. 111; for the names, Qanṭarat al-Rūm, Qanṭarat al-Rūd, and Qanṭarat al-Zāb, see Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 238 and references; Lockhart, p. 350). The stone foundation of the bridge is still visible; the upper part was repeatedly reconstructed in brick, during the early Islamic, Saljuq, and Qajar periods (Matheson, p. 155). In the 14th century Ḥamd-Allāh Mostāwfi (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, p. 111) described it as 520 paces long and 15 paces wide, with forty-two arches; Šaraf-al-Dīn Yazdī, who visited the area in 795/1393, also provided a detailed description (Barthold, p. 187).

The chief local manufacture of Dezfūl, according to George Curzon, who visited the area in the late 19th century, was indigo (with 120 factories in town), the cultivation of which had been introduced there in the early 19th century (*Persian Question II*, p. 304); Dezfūl was also noted for fine reed pens (Lockhart, p. 350).



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