



JĀJRUD

JĀJRUD, a major river of the southern slopes of central Alborz (q.v.) in the Central Plateau (140 km long, basin of 1,890 km²), running from the mountains of Šami-rānāt at Rudbār-e Qašrān to the plain of Varāmin and eventually joins the salt lake of Qom (Daryāča-ye Qom), at about 89 km to the northwest of the city.

The name of Jājrud is mentioned as Jāyejrud (lit. the river of Jāyej, a village in the Lavāsān district; Razmārā, I, p. 50) in the 14th century by Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi as “a river rising from Mount Damāvand and flowing through the province (*welāyat*) of Rey ...” (Mostawfi, I, p. 312, II, p. 312). In the next century, it is already referred to as Jājrud by Ṣāḥir-al-Din Mar’āši (p. 154). Under the Qajars, the name Jājrud was better known as the royal hunting ground near Qašr-e Firūza east of Tehran, where Faṭḥ-‘Ali Shah and Nāṣer-al-Din Shah had each built a royal residence (E’temād-al-Salṭana, 1989a, p. 86; idem, 1989b, s.v. Jājrud). Numerous travelers going to Tehran by the roads of Harāz or Firuzkuh have mentioned this river, which they used to cross at Pol-e Jājrud, two leagues (*farsak*) before reaching the capital city.

With an average annual discharge of 317 million cubic meters at Latiān, Jājrud is the second major river of Southern Alborz, after the river of Karaj. The annual discharge is very irregular, for instance, fluctuating from 127 million m³ in 1969 to 731 million in 1969; the seasonal variations are even wider, with 61 percent of the discharge in spring, due to the heavy rainfalls and the melting of the snow. According to Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E’temād-al-Salṭana (1989b, s.v. Jājrud), the meaning of Jājrud “is “the angry river,” which can



probably be explained by its rapid flow and the casualties caused by the spring floods when the flow reaches 130 m³ per second, while the average is only 9.3 m³ per second. The amount of sediments transported by the rapid flow of this strong river is very high, making the lands irrigated by it quite fertile but, at the same time, causing serious erosions in the highlands of the upper valley (Ehlers, p. 120; Kayhān, I, p. 87).

The Latiān Dam, built in 1967 (altitude 1610m., 110m. high, ca. 35 km NE of Tehran) with the original capacity of 95 millions m³, cannot store the largest part of the water of Jājrud that flows down and reaches the central desert (*kavir*) during major spring floods. This medium size dam provides the city of Tehran with 80 million m³ of piped water through an 11-km. long tunnel, which since 1990 has also been the conduit of the water coming from the dam of Lār. A small power station below the dam provides electricity. Four small villages, including Latiān, were destroyed by the dam's lake (4 km long), where now numerous migratory birds rest near the villages of Laškarak and Galanduak and the new city of Lāvāsān.

The watercourse of Jājrud can be divided into three parts. The Upper Jājrud valley (45 km long, 692 km²) above the Latiān Dam, where two main streams join at Fašam (altitude 1920m); they come from mountains of more than 4000m. high above the ski resort of Šemšak (Kolumbastak, Dizin Pass) and the village of Garmābdar and the pass of Qātumbārgāh. It joins the river of Āhār (annual discharge of 20 million m³) at Ušān (altitude 1850m.) and near the Latiān Dam connects with the Lāvorak River (Kizrudbār River in Ja'fari, 1997) coming from Lavāsān (annual discharge of 35 million m³). The narrow mountainous valley of Jājrud has numerous old villages, where people used to have large flocks of sheep and cultivate rich orchards of apples (see Hourcade, 1975; Lambton, pp. 213, 250). The rural district (*dehestān*) of Rudbār-e Qašrān (*šahrestān* "provincial district" of Šami-rānāt) is well known in history as the mountainous region of Rey (see Karimān, II, pp. 566-67, 601) and has now become a very popular and crowded summer resort (*yeylāq*) of Tehran, with numerous villas and restaurants and a picnic place along the river bank (Hourcade, 1975, 1976, 1978). The former villages of Fašam, Ušān, and Meygun are now cities, and, near the lake formed by the Latiān Dem, the new township (*šahrak*) of Lavāsān has become a suburb of Tehran.

In the middle valley between Latiān and Pārčīn, the river flows across the bare lands of Hazār-darra and the mountains of Qara-āgāč (see [ANTI-ALBORZ](#)). In the upper part are located the ruins of the Safavid bridge and the



caravanserai of Pol-e Jājrud which were the last stages before Tehran on the road from Māzāndarān. At Māmālu, the river joins the small stream of Damāvand, coming from this city and the mountains of Emāmzāda Hāšem. There are only some hamlets along this middle section of Jājrud, because the access has been restricted since the 19th century, when Nāṣer-al-Din Shah Qājār (r. 1264-1313) took over these mountains as a royal hunting area (*šekargāh-e saltānati*) and made it off-limits (*qoroq*) to the general public (Lambton p. 258). The only inhabitants allowed to live there with their flocks were some semi-nomadic families of the tribe of Hedāvand, a Lor tribe living in small hamlets (Yurd-e Šāh, Ḥammāmak). Soon after the revolution of 1978-79, access was restricted again because of the development of the military-industrial compound of Pārčīn (1180m) at the exit of the valley in the plain, where a large new city has been built at about 30 km southeast of Tehran. The highway linking western Tehran (Damāvand road) to Khorasan road in the plain along Jājrud valley is not open to the public for reasons of military security.

The lower Jājrud valley is the large alluvial fan of the plain of Varāmin. From Pārčīn downward, the river branches off into numerous streams that feed countless brooks (*juy*) irrigating the plain of Varāmin, one of the largest irrigated lands of the Central Plateau. The major stream crosses the city of Qarčak and joins in the Kavir-e Namak the lower course of the Karaj River and sometimes the Rud-e Šur stream during major spring floods. There are also many subterranean channels (*qanāt*) using underground water, but since the construction of the Latiān Dam in 1967, which diverts the water to the city of Tehran, the level of underground water has fallen, drying up many *qanāts* and wells. The agriculture of the plain of Varāmin was thus deeply upset and irrigated lands were abandoned. Now only deep wells equipped with water pumps are able to use the underground water provided by Jājrud.

A large canal has been under construction for years to collect the polluted waters of the capital city and bring them back to Jājrud River and the plain of Varāmin after de-pollution in a large sewage system. This comprehensive program for the management of the water of Jājrud was proposed when the Latiān Dam was built, but it never materialized. Consequently, a great part of the water of Jājrud that is diverted to Tehran is lost in the desert and in the surrounding areas of the city of Rey, which are flooded at spring time because of the height of the water table, especially after the diversion of the water of the Lār River to the Latiān Dam and Tehran in 1990. Another part of the flood



of Jājrud is collected by the canal near Rey and lost in the new large lake of Band-e ‘Ali Kān between Rey and the Kavir near Qom.

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