



JIROFT I. GEOGRAPHY OF JIROFT SUB-PROVINCE

JIROFT

i. GEOGRAPHY

Jiroft sub-province. Located in the south of Kerman Province, the sub-province of Jiroft is bound by those of Kermān (north), Bam (east), ‘Anbarābād and Kahnuj (south), and Bāft (west). It is comprised of three districts (*baḳš*), eleven rural districts, and three towns (Darb-e Behešt, Jebāl-e Bārez, and Jiroft, which is the administrative center of the sub-province).

Jiroft is situated in a relatively wide valley (see [JIROFT ii](#), Figures 1-3; iv, Figures 1-2). The Bārez mountain range, extending for approximately 156 km in a northwest-southeast direction to the east of Jiroft, forms the natural boundary between Jiroft and Bam sub-provinces. The north of the sub-province is marked by Bahr Āsemān range with the highest peak of 3,886 m (Ja‘fari, I, pp. 121-22, 173). Jiroft obtains its water from the Halilrud River (q.v.), which rises in the Hazār Mountain at about 96 km to the northwest of Jiroft town, and its tributaries, one of which contains a waterfall 170 m high (Ja‘fari, II, pp. 86, 236, 300, 432, 480; Şafā, pp. 8, 14). The sub-province is also home to one of Iran’s tallest waterfalls, Sarandkuh Darin, (177 m high; Şafā, p. 154).

Jiroft has three different climate zones: cold, warm, and moderate. Humidity stemming from the Indian Ocean causes torrential rains that result in floods.



In the summer a very warm wind, locally called Hušā and Kuhbād, blows from the mountains in the north and northeast towards the plains of Jiroft. This wind, which at times blows for as long as a week, reduces the humidity (Şafā, p. 4).

Jiroft is considered the most suitable region in the entire Kerman Province for agriculture. Thanks to its variant climate zones, it produces both warm and cold weather crops and has earned the nickname of “Little India” (Şafā, p. 3). The inhabitants of Jiroft are Twelver Shi‘ites and speak a local dialect of Persian (Edāra-ye joġrāfiā’i, CXIX, p. 56). Several nomadic tribes, such as the Āsiābar, the Jebāl Bārezi, Solaymāni Baluč, and the Mehni do their seasonal migration within the Jiroft sub-province (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, 1999, pp. 123-25). In 1996 the sub-province of Jiroft had a population of 208,874, among whom 74,790 (36 percent) lived in urban areas while the rest resided in villages (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, 1997, p. 60).

The main road between Kerman and Bandar ‘Abbās passes through this sub-province. In 1972 the city of Jiroft on the left bank of Halilrud River was connected to the Kahir village on the right bank with the building of a large stone bridge (Şafā, p. 13).

In 1937 Jiroft was a sub-provincial unit with three districts in the South Province, and was divided into three districts (*Qawānin wa aḥkām*, p. 75). On Dey 19 of the same year (10 January 1937), with the addition of Sabzevārān, Jiroft became a district of the Bam sub-provincial unit (*Qawānin wa aḥkām*, pp. 89-90) and became a sub-province in 1950 (Wezārat-e kešvar, 1950, II, pp. 368, 440-46). In 1951, Jiroft is mentioned as a sub-provincial unit with four districts (Sabzevārān, Jebāl Bārez, Sārdu’iya, and Kahnuj), with Sabzevārān (i.e., Jiroft) as its administrative center (Razmārā, pp. 95-96, 105-6, 227, 228-29, 343-44). In the administrative divisions of 1976, Jiroft was a sub-provincial unit, consisting of two districts in Kerman Province. In 1990, Jiroft sub-province, with the town of Jiroft as its center, consisted of four districts (Markazi, Jebāl-e Bārez, Sārdu’iya, and ‘Anbarābād) and twenty-two rural sub-districts (*Qawānin wa aḥkām*, 1991, pp. 832-33). In 1998, it included the towns of Jebāl-e Bārez and Darb-e Behešt in addition to 121 rural settlements (*ābādi*). In 2003, the district of ‘Anbarābād became recognized as a sub-provincial unit and separated from Jiroft (Wezārat-e kešvar, 2003, s.v. OstāĀn-e Kermān).

Jiroft dam (Sadd-e Jiroft). Jiroft or Halilrud Dam is built on Halilrud River (q.v.) at Narāb Gorge (Tang-e Narāb), at its junction with Narāb stream, about 45 km



northwest of Jiroft. Jiroft Dam was the 5th concrete dam built in Iran. Construction began in 1975 and was completed in 1993 (Farhangi, p. 96). It is 134 m high and 250 m wide at the crest, with six spillways, a volume of 430 million cubic meters, and the power capacity of 30 megawatts. The lake, with an area of approximately 12 hectares, irrigates nearly 14,200 hectares of Jiroft's and approximately 4,500 hectares of Kohnuj farmlands (Farhangi, p. 96; Şafā, pp. 13-14; Niknafs Dehqāni, p. 8).

The town. The town of Jiroft, located approximately 248 km southeast of the city of Kerman at an elevation of 690 m above sea level, is the administrative center of Jiroft sub-province. Jiroft's climate is hot and dry, with the highest temperature of 47 C recorded in Mordād/July-August and the lowest of 2 C in Bahman/January-February. The average annual rainfall has been recorded at approximately 251 mm (Sāzmān-e havā-šenāsi-e kešvar, p. 454). It has an airport serving domestic flights, and is connected by a 282 km highway southwest to Bandar 'Abbās (q.v.), by a 248 km highway northwest to Kerman city, and by a 95 km highway east to Zāhedān. The city is home to an oil factory and a cotton mill (Edāra-ye joġrāfiā'i-e arteš, CXV, p. 28; Niknafs Dehqāni, p. 9). Jiroft was designated as a city in 1951 (Wezārat-e Kešvar, 2003, s.v. Ostān-e Kermān). According to the 1996 national census, it had a population of 59,201 (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, p. 81).

Jiroft was the center of Kerman Province when the latter was conquered by the invading Arab armies under Sohayl b. 'Adi in 644, during the caliphate of 'Omar b. al-Ḳaṭṭāb (Ṭabari, I/V, pp. 2703-705; tr, XXIV, pp. 73-74; Ebn al-Aṭir, pp. 43-44). Jiroft was once more taken during the caliphate of 'Oṭmān b. 'Affān by the Arab forces under Mojāše' b. Mas'ud Solami, who was chasing fleeing Yazdegerd III (Balāḍori, pp. 391-92, tr., p. 147). The inhabitants of Jebāl-e Bārez, which separated the Jiroft area from the rest of Kerman in its northeast, remained Zoroastrian throughout the Omayyad period, converting to Islam towards the end of the 9th century under the Saffarids (EsĀṭakri, pp. 164-65, tr. pp. 164-65; Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 221, tr., II, p. 305; Ḥāfez-e Abru, III, p. 20). During the first century of Islam, the region of Kerman, especially Jiroft, was considered a major center of the Kharejites. They were eventually defeated and chased out of the city in 696 by Moḥallab b. Abi Şofra Azdi (Ṭabari, II/II, p. 1003, tr., XXII, p. 150).

In the 9th century, Ebn Ḳordādbeh mentioned Jiroft as the largest city Kerman, located 20 leagues (*farsak*) from Bam. In the 10th century, Jiroft was the center of a *kura* (a major administrative unit in a province) of the same name, very



prosperous and pleasant, a center commerce with nice markets and clean bathhouses, and larger than Eṣṭaḳar in Fars. It had a fort with four gates (Šāpur, Bam, Sirjān, and Moṣallā). The Friday mosque was made with bricks and gypsum; it was located near the Bam Gate but far from the markets.

Jiroft was referred to as the city of contrasts. It produced fruits of both hot and cold climates, such as dates, walnuts, and citrus fruits. It had a rapid river, and auriferous sands (*kāk-e zar*) were found in its canals. Silver was carried to Jiroft from the mines of the area (Eṣṭaḳri, p. 166; Moḳaddasi, pp. 461, 466; *Hodud al-‘ālem*, p. 126, tr., p. 124).

In the 19th century, Aḥmad-‘Ali Waziri Kermāni (1974, pp. 115, 117-18) described Jiroft as a rural district (*boluk*), with Dosāri as its center and a population of about 8,000 people. According to him, there was no area in the Jiroft district that could be considered a town at that time. The town was already in ruins when the Venetian traveler, Marco Polo (1254-1324) visited the area. He referred it by the name of Camadi, which Vasilī Barthold identified with the ruins near the village of Karimābād (Barthold, p. 141 and n. 46; Sykes, 1958, II, p. 105). Sir Percy Sykes mentions a cemetery in Jiroft dating to the 11th century and located the historical city of Jiroft opposite the Kuč plains, 10 km west of the present-day town (Sykes, 1902, pp. 144-45).

Apparently from early 14th century the city was known as Jiroft, center of the Jiroft rural district, which has sometimes been mentioned in sources as Sabzevārān (Kayhān, II, p. 251; Wezārat-e Kešvar, 1950, II, p. 251). Around 1951 Sabzevārān and other districts of Jiroft sub-province were considered the most arable regions of the Eighth Province (i.e., Kermān wa Makrān), where citrus fruits, dates, rice, and cereals were cultivated. Its citrus fruit and rice products were exported. The population of Sabzevārān was lower during the summer, due to the seasonal migration of the nomads, who moved to higher grounds to escape the intense heat (Razmārā, VIII, pp. 105, 228-29). During the middle of this century, particularly in 1962, drought and famine in Jiroft caused the deaths of many of its residents. Droughts still continue to plague the area (Šafā, pp. 138-39).



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