

opinion ; for if the Arabs introduced the word, it is difficult to understand why it has been corrupted in some parts of the country and left unchanged in others. Wahrmund writes the Arabic word *qæfr*, plural *qyfâr* and *qufur*.¹ This derivation becomes much more improbable when we remember that *kafr* signifies desert in general and particularly desert of the usual Arabian and African type, sandy, stony, and extremely dry. In a kevir there is neither sand nor stone, but water and salt. The difference between a kafr and a kevir is as great as between a kafr and a river delta.

For my part I inclined at first to the old form Darya-ikebir or the "great lake," which, moreover, is consonant with the tradition of a large inland sea. The word *darya* is still applied to several salt deserts with ephemeral lakes, e.g. the Darya-i-nemek or salt lake lying south of Siah-kuh. Both at Jandak and Turut the Persians spoke of the *leb-ikevir*, the "lip of the kevir" ; just as in the case of the great Hamun, where the expression *leb-i-hamun* or sea-shore is in constant use. The Arabic word *kebir*, or great, would naturally be used to signify that the northern salt desert is the largest of all. I believed I had found a strong confirmation of the correctness of this derivation in the name of a small village of ten houses situated a day's journey north of Destgerdun on the eastern edge of the salt desert. It is called Cha-ikebir or the "great well."²

However, W. Tomaschek has changed my views by his meritorious treatise, *Die Wege durch die persische Wüste*. He there writes: "The largest area of the country, especially in the northern parts, is occupied by salt desert and salt steppe. Even in the transitional zone we came upon several places which bore this character ; the occurrence of a Kawîr (older form *gawér*, from *gaw*, cavity) or a *kefeh* (from *kef*, froth, saliva) in the lowest parts of the trough, is typical of this form."³ This suggestion has, as we have seen, been brought forward by Schindler, and as Tomaschek grounds his conclusions on

¹ *Praktische Grammatik der neu-persischen Sprache*, vol. ii. p. 69.

² Compare the name of the great mosque in Baiburt, which is called Jamesi-kebir.

³ *Zur historischen Topographie von Persien*, vol. ii. p. 24.