

are abundant opportunities of procuring water. Had he travelled through Naibend, he would in any case have had no need to hurry on so fast. He would probably keep to the same pace as on the way from Kerman to Kuh-benan, and this length he accomplished in seven days. Why should he have made the journey from Kuh-benan to Tun, which is exactly double as far, in only eight days instead of fourteen, when there was no necessity? And that he actually travelled between Kuh-benan and Tunocain in eight days is evident because he mentions this number twice.

He also says explicitly that during these eight days neither fruits nor trees are to be seen, and that you have to carry both food and water. This description is not true of the Naibend route, for in Naibend there are excellent water, fine dates, and other fruits. Then there is Duhuk, which, according to Sykes, is a very important village with an old fort and about 200 houses. After leaving Duhuk for the south, Sykes says: "We continued our journey, and were delighted to hear that at the next stage, too, there was a village, proving that this section of the Lut is really quite thickly populated."¹ This does not agree at all with Marco Polo's description.

I therefore consider it more probable that Marco Polo, as Sir Henry Yule supposes, travelled either direct to Tebbes, or perhaps made a trifling *détour* to the west, through the moderate-sized village Bahabad, for from this village a direct caravan road runs to Tebbes, entirely through desert. Marco Polo would then travel 150 miles in eight days compared with 103 miles in seven days between Kerman and Kuh-benan. He therefore increased his speed by only 4 miles a day, and that is all that is necessary on the route in question.

Bahabad lies at a distance of 36 miles from Kubenan—all in a straight line. And not till beyond Bahabad does the real desert begin.

To show that a caravan road actually connects Tebbes with Bahabad, I have inserted in the first and second columns of the following table the data I obtained in Tebbes and Fahanunch, and in the third the names

¹ *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 35.