

comparing them, as far as possible, with the accounts of modern travellers, Tomaschek shows that the climate has remained unchanged during the past thousand years. In this thousand years Marco Polo's journey took place, and I have shown above that he must have passed through Bahabad to Tebbes in order to cross from Kuh-benan in eight days a desert of the kind he describes. For if he went by any other road, and in eight days did not meet with a single oasis, it can only be explained by an improvement in the natural conditions between the 13th and 20th centuries, which is improbable.

While the descriptions of Marco Polo and the Arab geographers give not the least support to the assumption that the climate of Eastern Persia has deteriorated since their time, we have in the works compiled by the historians of Alexander the Great an excellent means of extending the period to 2200 years. It will be acknowledged that most of the ruins we now see in Eastern Iran are of later date than 2200 years. If it can be proved that the climate in the time of Alexander was much the same as now, the ruined settlements must have been abandoned for other reasons.

Such an investigation has been made by Huntington in the work quoted above. That all the interior of Asia is passing through a period of desiccation is a well-known fact. But is it credible that this phenomenon proceeds so rapidly that it can be detected within the course of 2000 years?

When Huntington asserts that all modern travellers, who have followed the track of Alexander, have declared that it would be quite impossible now to conduct an army through regions where water and pasturage can scarcely be found for twenty camels, we must remember that opinions are divided on this subject, for there are also travellers who say that it would be possible for an army to march through southern Baluchistan to India.

Nor is the silence of Arrian concerning the fortunes of Craterus any proof that this general did not suffer as great losses as Alexander. We only learn that Craterus, with the remainder of the army and the elephants, joined the king