

spent several years there as British Consul and made full use of his special opportunities for the study of Kermān's past and present.⁴ There seems good reason to assume that Kermān has been since ancient times the administrative centre of the province which the classical accounts already know as Karmania and with which it still shares the name. The descriptions given by the early Arab geographers, especially Muqaddasī, of the capital of the Kermān province, distinctly support this location, even though they refer to it by the name of *Bardsīr*.⁵ This term, meaning 'the cool region', is applied by the early Muhammadan writers to the whole of the elevated portion of the province, enjoying a more temperate climate, and not merely in a restricted sense, as at present, to the broad plateau tract stretching along the northern foot of the high mountain range culminating in the Chihiltan, Chahār-gumbaz, and Lāleh-zār peaks.

It was to this plateau that at last by November 6th I could make my start southwards with transport composed mainly of donkeys, and with a small escort provided by the military authorities at Kermān. It comprised a dozen conscripts on foot and four mounted men under Naib Akbar Aḥmad Āmarī, an officer at one time employed in the South Persian Rifles under Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes. The direction of this initial move was indicated by the report Surveyor Muhammad Ayūb Khān had brought me from his previous tour in Bardsīr of a large mound there known as *Tal-i-Iblīs*, which, as the specimens of painted pottery picked up by him unmistakably showed, marked a site of chalcolithic occupation.

Two marches covering some 46 miles brought us first across the valley trough of Kermān, partly cultivated, and then through a much broken hill chain to the cluster of villages known as Mashīz. It is situated on the lower course of the Lāleh-zār river and with its land mainly irrigated from numerous *qanāts* is the chief oasis of Bardsīr. From its centre, where the residence of Bahādur-ul-mulk, a wealthy landowner, afforded us hospitable shelter, I proceeded on November 8th to inspect the extensive debris area known as the 'old town of Mashīz', situated about three-quarters of a mile to the north of our quarters. It occupies the top of a low terrace, formed, as the examination of its sides dug down for manuring earth showed, of natural deposits of alluvium. This terrace stretches for a distance of about 600 yards to the north-west of a ruined tomb known as Ziārat-i-Pīr Jasūs, and for some 300 yards to the south-

⁴ See Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, cc. xvi, xvii. For references to earlier accounts cf. Curzon, *Persia*, vol. ii. p. 244, note 1.

⁵ For notices excerpted from those writers see Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, pp. 220 sqq., where

the reasons against placing the provincial capital named by them at Mashīz within the present Bardsīr, as had been suggested, are duly pointed out.