

of Hormos, and which these in turn carry all over the world to dispose of again. In fact, 'tis a city of immense trade.'¹

But what he relates of the 'fine streams of water with plenty of date-palms and other fruit-trees' to be found in the surroundings is still true. The canals taking off close below the fort, picturesquely perched on a rocky spur above the narrow lanes of the town (Fig. 58), carry fertility over an area which, varying in width and broken here and there by belts of scrubby waste, extends for fully 10 miles to the south and about the same distance to the west. With its date-palm groves, fields growing barley and other cereals, and luxuriant orchards of sub-tropical fruit trees, the oasis of Mīnāb is bound greatly to impress the traveller, whether he descends to it from the arid barren hills inland or reaches it after following the still more forbidding coast from the side of Makrān. But the pleasing contrast thus presented cannot obscure the truth of what the Venetian notes of Hormuz: 'It is a very sickly place, and the heat of the sun is tremendous.' This observation and what he says about the residents avoiding living in the towns during the summer, are in full agreement with the notices of the early Arab geographers.²

In view of plain geographical facts the location in the Mīnāb tract of the Hormuz seen by them and Marco Polo cannot be subject to any doubt; for nowhere else on this coast is a river to be found that could possibly allow of such plentiful cultivation and local resources as their descriptions imply. Nor can such advantages for safe anchorage as the tidal creeks at the mouth of the Mīnāb river provide for ships of shallow draught be looked for anywhere else on the Persian coast near the mouth of the Gulf. If any more explicit proof were needed for this location it is furnished by the notices of two Muhammadan travellers, Abūlfidā and Ibn Baṭūṭa, who wrote of 'Old Hurmūz' not very long after Tartar ravages had brought about the transfer of the trade emporium from the mainland to the island of 'New Hurmūz' about the close of the thirteenth century. In the accounts of both travellers this island of Hurmūz, which formerly was known as Jarūn or Zarūn, and since that transfer soon rose to fame as one of the richest ports in the East, is clearly stated as lying within a short distance to the west of 'Old Hurmūz'.³ And in fact the distance of 3 *farsakh* across the sea, which Abūlfidā gives

¹ Cf. Yule, *Marco Polo*, i. p. 107.

² See Yule, *Marco Polo*, i. p. 108: 'The residents avoid living in the cities, for the heat in summer is so great that it would kill them. Hence they go out (to sleep) at their gardens in the country, where there are streams and plenty of water.'

For translations of the accounts of Hurmūz given by Iṣṭakhrī, Muqaddasī, and other Arab geographers, cf. Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, pp. 242 sqq. Exactly corresponding conditions about the

summer heat and the consequent exodus of people are noted at Bandar Abbās by European travellers of the seventeenth century, and are observed at the present day; cf. Yule, *loc. cit.* i. p. 119, note 4.

³ See for translations of both notices, Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, p. 244; also Yule, *Marco Polo*, i. p. 110 sq., note 1, where the bearing of these notices and that of Edrīsī (i. p. 424 in Jaubert's translation) has been clearly recognized by the great commentator.