

passage, access is gained to a large quadrangular court, which on the east and on what remains of the north face is enclosed by lines of great vaulted recesses built against the very thick curtain walls (Fig. 61). At the north-east corner there is reached through a high-vaulted gallery a well-preserved second gate built with large cut slabs and having a porch towards the beach close by. Judging from remains of masonry outside this gate and from what I was told by boatmen about remnants of walls to be seen under water, where the north face of the *enceinte* is now closely approached by the sea, it appears possible that there may have been here an outwork of which the foundations, still *in situ*, have been covered by water through some subsidence of the shore, while the higher portions have been demolished so that the stones might be carried away and used for building at Bandar Abbās.³

Such operations long continued would account for the complete disappearance of the greatest part of the enclosing wall on the north face, where convenient transport of the materials was facilitated by the close approach of the sea. Effects of the same quarrying are clearly shown also by the extensive damage which the defences towards the west, forming part of a citadel and originally of particular strength, have undergone (Fig. 59). There the outer wall facing of a round bastion has been pulled down, disclosing the circular core of masonry. Beyond this there are shapeless masses of masonry still standing, embedded between the remains of two angular towers or bastions built with roughly cut stone blocks set in regular courses. Could these have belonged to an earlier Muhammadan fort which the Portuguese utilized as a kernel for their citadel?

Returning to the court within the castle, we find in its centre an imposingly large and deep cistern. Its quadrangular roof rests on splendid columns and arches, and rises about 5 feet above the level of the surrounding flat ground (Fig. 61). From the west of the main court an ascent leads through a decayed interior wall to a second court forming part of a kind of citadel. Here there is another great cistern with its vaulted roof supported by four massive square pillars. The arched niches, over which the roof rises, are connected by a narrow ambulatory passage which made it possible to draw water at different places at the same time. Access to this passage is gained by steps leading down from the ground outside. The bottom of the cistern lies fully 20 feet below the passage. The importance attached to the provision of an adequate supply of water is shown by a third cistern smaller in size but very deep. This is passed on ascending by a wide flight of stairs to the top of the great circular bastion which commands the south curtain of the circumvallation, and forms a kind of keep. The

³ Such quarrying operations are recorded by Sir Thomas Herbert about 1627 (see *Persian Gulf*, p. 151) and Chardin in 1674-5 (cf. Stiffe, *Geogr. Journal*, 1900, August, p. 213).