

covered with crumbling walls and low mounds of debris, lies within some 500 yards of the south-western end of the village. This is all that remains of the rich city, the fine dwellings, extensive commerce, and opulent life of which are vividly described both by Oriental and European travellers, and the ruler of which, before the coming of the Portuguese, held sway over Masqat, Bahrein, and several other important islands of the Gulf.⁵ Yet the same accounts also emphasize the extreme scantiness of water and the necessity of bringing all victuals from outside. The difficulty about water and the excessive heat explain why even the poor miners and fishermen of the present day during the spring and summer seek relief on the mainland at Old Hormuz, i.e. Mīnāb, just as 'the Moors of position' did when Barbosa visited the island about 1518.

Among the mounds marking the site of the city there rise the ruins of two domed structures, one of them known as the *madrasa*. There are a number of roofed reservoirs, of moderate size, some old, some new or repaired, none of them holding water at the time of my visit. A few shallow wells, muddy at their bottom, which catch what scanty drainage descends from the bare boldly serrated hills to the south, were said to dry up towards the close of the winter. Wells and cisterns combined are barely sufficient to meet the needs for water of the present village, said to count about 200 homesteads. This bears out the statements about the dependence of Hormuz at the time of its greatness upon water brought from the coast. It also explains the labour bestowed by the Portuguese upon the construction of the magnificent cisterns seen within the castle. In shallow nullahs some small trees subsist, the only ones apparently to be found on the island, and by their side a little patch of ground showed signs of being cultivated in exceptionally favourable seasons.

All over this ground fragments of glazed pottery lay in abundance. The large proportion of porcelain, all manifestly Chinese, to be found among them, was significant of the role played by Hormuz as an entrepôt for Far Eastern imports, and also of the comfortable style of living adopted by a considerable portion of the population. Among the unglazed ware picked up were pieces with finely incised geometrical patterns produced from moulds, of exactly the same type as found at the sites of Old Hormuz, in particular at Qal'a-Sarāwān. In their case local production on the mainland is most probable. Such pottery debris of all kinds extends right down to the foreshore, and more of it may be covered by the sand of the beach or by water if the subsidence conjectured above has really affected the shore line of the island to any extent during the last three centuries.

⁵ Cf. Wilson, *Persian Gulf*, pp. 105 sqq.; Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, pp. 244 sq.