

it was built up rose at an angle of 4° from the north-east and plunged down steeply towards the south-west. The higher these individual dunes are situated on the threshold, the steeper are their windward slopes. The long leeward slope which went down from the last of these dunes descended at an angle of 32° to 33° .

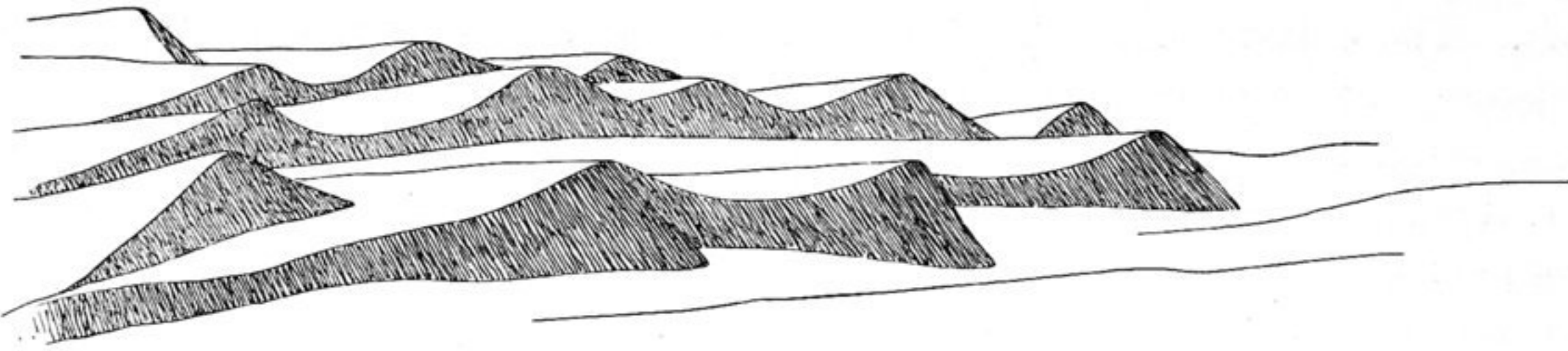


Fig. 269. INDIVIDUAL DUNE-RANGES UPON THE HIGHEST PART OF A DUNE-ACCUMULATION.

Bajir No. 33 fully realized all that we expected of it: its southern end was lost in the grey tints of the far distance, and its floor was covered with a more abundant crop of kamisch than any of the bajirs we had hitherto traversed. We found in it one solitary tamarisk, bravely struggling against destruction, though it was entirely dead except a few branches. Several of its other branches, dry and withered, lay scattered around it. In all probability only two or three of its root-fibres now reached down to the ground-water. In places the kamisch still showed tints of light green. For the most part it was dead and withered, broken, dark-coloured, and only one or two decimeters high, as though it had been eaten off. It had however been broken and destroyed after it withered. It is this surviving stubble which makes the ground appear chequered with black spots. This kamisch is always found growing in conjunction with small rudimentary dunes; it does not grow where the ground is free from sand. The reason of this is no doubt that to which I have already pointed: it is the kamisch which starts the formation of the small dunes on its own sheltered side.

Continuing our journey on the 29th December, we traversed bajir No. 33, the longest and biggest throughout the whole journey. This, in contrast with those at the beginning of our march, lay due north and south. In length it measured not less than 19.5 km., and, shut in as it was by the long sand-waves, it was like a glen or dried-up river-bed. Every now and again the prospect ahead was hidden by headlands (*tumschuk*) projecting from the western sand, but no sooner were we past each of these in turn than the bajir opened out again. As far as the dust-haze would permit us to see, the steep dune-wall continued to fence in our route on the left, though in one place, towards the southern end of the bajir, there was apparently a breach in it, occasioned by one wing of the dunes having advanced faster than its neighbour. The floor of the bajir was almost everywhere covered by low spoon-shaped dunes (fig. 270), elongated (fig. 271) from north-east to south-west, and amongst and round about these the kamisch was still growing, although more sparsely than hitherto. But in

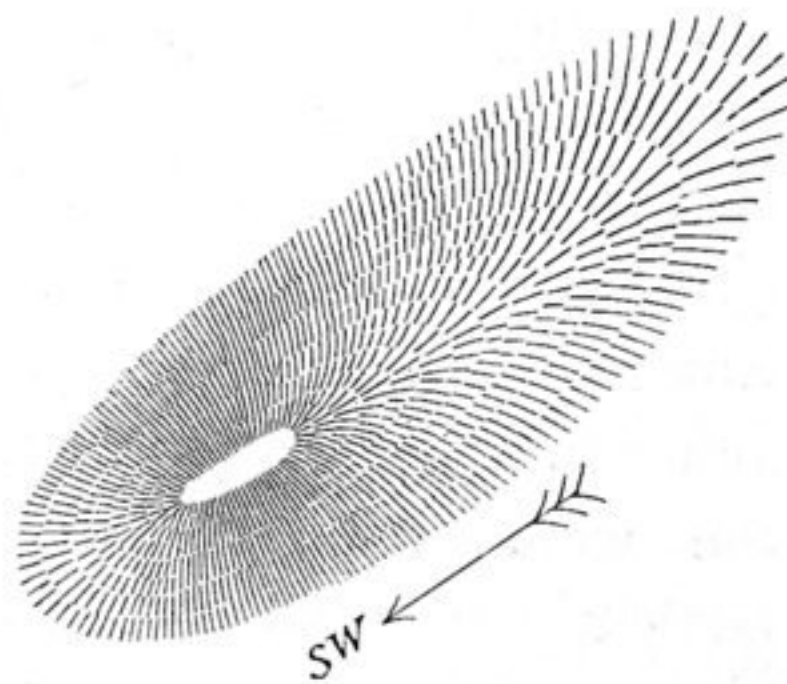


Fig. 270. SPOON-SHAPED DUNE.