

the more trustworthy, because it agrees perfectly with my own observations so far as I have travelled round the same lake. Pjevtsoff learned that every year the Kara-koschun grows shallower; indeed so much is this the case that the older men remember well how, when they were young, the lake was both very much greater and had more extensive reaches of open water. As to how far the lake stretches northwards, to this question I shall return in the chapters dealing with the Desert of Lop.

The conclusions which admit of being drawn from the above information with regard to the eastern and southern shores of the Kara-koschun are as follows.

(1) The water in the eastern parts of the lake are salt, the percentage of salinity increasing from west to east. The western half on the other hand is perfectly fresh, with the possible exception of small basins temporarily and in part cut off from the main body of the lake.

(2) The shore at the eastern end of the lake, as well as the whole extent of the southern shore, is almost entirely barren.

(3) All round the lake there is a belt of shore which was under water not very long ago. This is narrowest on the south, where the ascent to the foot of the Astin-tagh begins at only a short distance from the lake; and is broadest on the north. To the north-east and east-north-east it cannot be particularly broad; for, according to the altitudes given by Kosloff, the contour rises considerably in that direction.

(4) The zone that was formerly under water consists of schor, that is sedimentary saliferous silt, which, after hardening, has cracked and formed ridges, crevices, and other irregularities of surface.

(5) The actual basin now filled by the lake is itself so flat that the greatest measured depth amounts only to 5.15 m., and at medium level the recently exposed parts of the basin are only very slightly higher, 2 m. at the most, than the existing surface.

(6) Reeds appear to be absent in the extreme east of the lake; at all events, it may safely be said that in proportion as the salinity increases the reeds diminish.

(7) The Kara-koschun has a length, according to Prschevalskij of 90 versts, according to Pjevtsoff of 100 versts. The Sa-tscheo road leaves the lake shore at Latschin, which Kosloff puts at  $56\frac{1}{2}$  versts from Kum-tschapghan.\*

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\* On sheet 62 of *Stielers Hand-Atlas* the Kara-koschun is represented as stretching to the well of Tuja, a distance of  $274\frac{1}{2}$  versts according to Kosloff's itinerary, so that it is made three times longer than it ought to be. The mistake is due to Kosloff's description, which has also been used for the map of the Russian general staff (*Karta Juschnoj Pogranitschnoj Polosij Aziatskoj Rossij*). On the latter we find the altitude 2,550 feet at the embouchure of the Tarim into the Kara-koschun, but a long way out into the marsh the altitude is put at 2,720 feet. But Kosloff would appear to have modified subsequently the views which he urged in *Lop-nor*, for on the general map which accompanies his and Roborovskij's work the Kara-koschun is given a length of barely 70 versts; and there is no marsh at all to indicate its north-eastern continuation.

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