

that case we should not reach the lake for several days. But as it turned out afterwards, had we only advanced a couple of hours or so to the south-west, or even to the north-west, we should have reached the shore of the lake beside which we discovered the huts and the canoe.

South of the last strip of tamarisks the appearance of the schor desert once more essentially changed. The surface became absolutely level, and so soft that at every step we dropped in two or three centimeters, and there were no longer either hard ribbings or crevices. All the same it was perfectly dry; probably the drift-dust had settled upon it whilst it was still moist, and it had not yet hardened. Here there was a thin sprinkling of köuruk bushes, but no tamarisks. Nor were we able to discover any sand, except on the sheltered sides of the plants, and on the inner face of a low clay terrace at Camp No. CLXV.

On the 17th March there only remained 4794 m. to bring us to the actual shore of the Kara-koschun; we travelled S.29°.3 W., and the descent was 0.550 m. Here we increased the interval between the telescope and the staff to 141 m. In this stage we crossed yet two other narrow belts of köuruk, with low sand, running parallel to those already described. Here we noticed the first signs of hares and foxes. The surface exhibited the same features as before, the only difference being that we came upon a low terrace-like swelling of considerable extent, consisting of coarse, hard schor. We caught our first glimpse of the lake from the 17th staff. It had been hidden behind the little rampart of köuruk and sand, and we were so near to it that the 19th staff was placed on the very brink of the water. We encamped (No. CLXVI) a little way south-west of the point where we approached the Kara-koschun; and it was from there that we made the excursion already described round the newly formed desert lakes.

During the last two days we had thus crossed five distinct shore-ramparts composed of plants and sand; and to these must be added a triple belt less distinctly marked, and situated a couple of kilometers north of Camp No. CLXV. Measured from north to south, the distances from the present shore of the Kara-koschun of these six shore elevations respectively are —

First shore elevation	11,760 m.
Second » »	10,750 »
Third » »	8,390 »
Fourth » »	7,040 »
Fifth » »	3,190 »
Sixth » »	2,530 »

Add to these the present shore-line, the seventh, which on the 17th March was 330 m. from the water-line, a distance which varies of course with the water-level in the lake. The fourth shore elevation is the middle belt of the three that lay immediately beside one another. There cannot exist the slightest doubt that all these shore-lines belong to the basin of the Kara-koschun, and it would need but a very slight rise in the lake for its waters to overflow them again. In the history of the Kara-koschun they serve as mile-stones marking successive stages on its way to destruction. The first elevation proves, that the northern shore of the lake once