

In the afternoon HUMMEL, BERGMAN, SIU and TING rode to the ruined town Qara-khoja, that had been investigated by GRÜNWEDEL, V. LE COQ and STEIN. These ruins are situated fifteen li to the south of Sengim-aghiz. The rest of us continued our journey in our carts on the highway to Turfan, leading for the most part over sterile, flat, desert country. The curious depression around Turfan has its lowest part to the south of the town (according to STEIN, 980 feet or 298 meters below sea-level<sup>1</sup>). About halfway between Sengim-aghiz and Turfan we found ourselves on the same level as the sea.

At midnight we drove into the courtyard of a little caravanserai in Turfan.

### IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In this old town we rested for a day. Professor SIU and I paid visits to the burgo-master and the commandant.

From two Turfanliqs, TOKHTA AHUN and KHOJA ABDUL, I learned a geographic fact that was as unexpected as it was interesting. For eighteen years they had travelled three or four times a year via Ying-p'an to Tikenliq on the Konche-darya to buy sheep that they afterwards sold in Turfan. Seven years ago, they related, the water in the Konche-darya had gone over to the dry river-bed Quruq-darya, afterwards continuing to flow in this channel. The place of bifurcation was stated to go under the name of Qusliq and was situated a day's march above Tikenliq. In the neighbourhood of Ying-p'an there was a ferry over the new river, that was so deep that it could not be waded. The river continued eastwards and gradually diminished as it fed small lateral arms that went to swamps and meres along the banks. The water was stated to give out three days' journey to the north of Tun-huang without forming any terminal lake; but neither of them had been there.

It may be understood with what delight I listened to this information if I mention that, especially during my long stay at Lop-nor and its delta in 1900 and 1901, I had foretold this event. I had compared the Tarim arms to a pendulum and Lop-nor to the weight at the end of it, that was now in the southern part of the desert and now in the northern part. The desert is almost entirely flat, and the water is therefore very sensitive to any changes in the level of the ground. When the then lake, commonly called Qara-qoshun, and the river itself in the course of time get their beds filled with silt-sand and decaying vegetable and animal matter, the water goes over to the northern lake-basin, that in the meantime has been complete desert and has become hollowed out by the severe spring and summer storms from E. N. E.

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<sup>1</sup> AMBOLT afterwards established the depth to be 130 meters below sea-level. F. B.