

north-east, we travel a good forty days, continually passing over mountains and hills, or through valleys, and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And in all this way you find neither habitation of man, nor any green thing, but must carry with you whatever you require. The country is called BOLOR. The people dwell high up in the mountains, and are savage Idolaters, living only by the chase, and clothing themselves in the skins of beasts. They are in truth an evil race.³

NOTE I.—[“The length of Little Pamir, according to Trotter, is 68 miles. . . . To find the twelve days’ ride in the plain of Marco Polo, it must be admitted, says Severtsov (*Bul. Soc. Géog.* XI. 1890, pp. 588-589), that he went down a considerable distance along the south-north course of the Aksu, in the Aktash Valley, and did not turn towards Tásh Kurgán, by the Neza Tash Pass, crossed by Gordon and Trotter. The descent from this pass to Tásh Kurgán finishes with a difficult and narrow defile, which may well be overflowed at the great melting of snow, from the end of May till the middle of June, even to July.

“Therefore he must have left the Aksu Valley to cross the Pass of Tagharma, about 50 or 60 kilometres to the north of the Neza Tash Pass; thence to Kashgar, the distance, in a straight line, is about 200 kilometres, and less than 300 by the shortest route which runs from the Tagharma Pass to little Kara Kul, and from there down to Yangi Hissar, along the Ghidjik. And Marco Polo assigns *forty* days for this route, while he allows but *thirty* for the journey of 500 kilometres (at least) from Jerm to the foot of the Tagharma Pass.”

Professor Paquier (*Bul. Soc. Géog.* 6^e Sér. XII. pp. 121-125) remarks that the Moon-shee, sent by Captain Trotter to survey the Oxus between Ishkashm and Kila Wamar, could not find at the spot marked by Yule on his map, the mouth of the Shakh-Dara, but northward 7 or 8 miles from the junction of the Murghab with the Oxus, he saw the opening of an important water-course, the Suchnan River, formed by the Shakh-Dara and the Ghund-Dara. Marco arrived at a place between Northern Wakhán and Shihgnan; from the Central Pamir, Polo would have taken a route identical with that of the Mirza (1868-1869) by the Chichiklik Pass. Professor Paquier adds: “I have no hesitation in believing that Marco Polo was in the neighbourhood of that great commercial road, which by the *Vallis Comedarum* reached the foot of the Imaüs. He probably did not venture on a journey of fifty marches in an unknown country. At the top of the Shihgnan Valley, he doubtless found a road marked out to Little Bukharia. This was the road followed in ancient times from Bactrian to Serica; and Ptolemy has, so to speak, given us its landmarks after Marinus of Tyre, by the *Vallis Comedarum* (Valley of actual Shihgnan); the *Turris Lapidea* and the *Statio Mercatorum*, neighbourhood of Tash Kurgan, capital of the present province of Sar-i-kol.”

I must say that accepting, as I do, for Polo’s Itinerary, the route from Wakhán to Kashgar by the Taghdum-Bash Pamir, and Tásh Kurgán, I do not agree with Professor Paquier’s theory. But though I prefer Sir H. Yule’s route from Badakhshan, by the River Vardoj, the Pass of Ishkashm, the Panja, to Wakhán, I do not accept his views for the Itinerary from Wakhán to Kashgar; see p. 175.—H. C.]

The river along which Marco travels from Badakhshan is no doubt the upper stream of the Oxus, known locally as the Panja, along which Wood also travelled, followed