

passes struck the route which leads past Muztāgh-Ata and on towards the Gez defile. In the brief supplementary notes contributed to Professor Cordier's critical analysis of this portion of Marco Polo's itinerary, I have pointed out how thoroughly the great Venetian's description of the forty days' journey to the E.N.E. of the Pāmīr Lake can be appreciated by any one who has passed through the Pāmīr region and followed the valleys stretching round the Muztāgh-Ata range on the west and north (cf. Yule, *Marco Polo*, II., pp. 593 *seq.*). After leaving Tāshkurghān and Tagharma there is no local produce to be obtained until the oasis of Tāshmalik is reached. In the narrow valley of the Yamān-yār river, forming the Gez defile, there is scarcely any grazing; its appearance down to its opening into the plain is, in fact, far more desolate than that of the elevated Pāmīr regions.

“In the absence of any data as to the manner and season in which Marco Polo's party travelled, it would serve no useful purpose to hazard explanations as to why he should assign a duration of forty days to a journey which for a properly equipped traveller need not take more than fifteen or sixteen days, even when the summer floods close the passage through the lower Gez defile, and render it necessary to follow the circuitous track over the Tokuk Dawān or ‘Nine Passes.’ But it is certainly worth mention that Benedict Goëz, too, speaks of the desert of ‘Pāmech’ (Pāmīr) as taking forty days to cross if the snow was extensive, a record already noted by Sir H. Yule (*Cathay*, II., pp. 563 *seq.*). It is also instructive to refer once more to the personal experience of the missionary traveller on the alternative route by the Chichiklik Pass. According to the record quoted above, he appears to have spent no less than twenty-eight days in the journeys from the hamlets of ‘Sarcil’ (Sarīkol, *i.e.* Tāshkurghān) to ‘Hiarchan’ (Yarkand)—a distance of some 188 miles, now reckoned at ten days' march.” (Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 40-42.)

XXXII., p. 171. “The Plain is called PAMIER, and you ride across it for twelve days together, finding nothing but a desert without habitations or any green thing, so that travellers are obliged to carry with them whatever they have need of.”

At Sarhad, Afghan Wakhan, Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, I., p. 69, writes: “There was little about the low grey houses, or rather hovels, of mud and rubble to indicate the importance which from early times must have attached to Sarhad as the