

Risk of
official
obstruction
countered.

had made his way to me in the Lop desert in a far more adventurous fashion.⁸ Among the many letters, some close on five months old, which claimed my attention before we moved on, none was more welcome than the latest from Sir George Macartney's hand. Sent off from Kāshgar on January 23rd by Chinese post via Korla, it brought me the very reassuring news, based on telegraphic information from the British Legation at Peking, that Sir John Jordan had succeeded in securing from the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs the issue of telegraphic instructions to the Provincial Government at Urumchi to accord me favourable treatment and not to interfere with 'archaeological surveys'. Thus, thanks to Sir George Macartney's ever-watchful care and his prompt action in obtaining the effective help of H.B.M.'s Minister, the threatened obstruction, from which only the 'revolutionary' trouble at Charkhlik had temporarily saved me, was finally frustrated and the heaviest of the cares I had borne for two months removed.

Survey of
high sand
ridges.

While I was kept hard at work on the mails for Kāshgar, Europe and India, which Turdi was to carry back via Khotan, and on the repacking of the cases containing the finds from the sites explored in the Lop desert, Lāl Singh made an excursion into the high sands to the south-east. He ascertained that the belt of mighty dunes seen from the caravan track all the way from Achchik-bulak to Bēsh-toghrak was at this point formed by a succession of well-marked ridges or 'Dawāns' running parallel to the direction of the valley and each rising to a height of about two hundred feet above our camping place.

Sand
'Dawāns'
parallel to
river-beds.

This direction of the high sands is of distinct interest, as it accords with what I have repeatedly observed as regards the big accumulations of dunes or Dawāns in the Taklamakān and the Lop desert, that they always range themselves parallel to the direction of the nearest river-beds, whether these still carry water or are dry.⁹ It confirms the impression derived from the configuration of the Bēsh-toghrak valley and from the facts noted about its hydrography and that of the Su-lo-ho basin eastwards, viz. that the gradually narrowing eastern extension of the sea-bed which occupies most of that valley represents the ancient estuary of the Su-lo-ho drainage which in a geologically recent period emptied itself into the Lop Sea. We shall presently have occasion to recur to this supposition.

OBJECTS FOUND ON ROUTE FROM CAMP cv ALONG SHORE OF ANCIENT BAY

- C. cv. 01. **Bronze tag**, made of rectang. plate, doubled, and joined at corners by two rivets which secured it to fabric. $\frac{9}{16}$ " \times $\frac{7}{16}$ " \times (length of rivet) $\frac{3}{16}$ ". Pl. XXIII.
- C. cv. 02. **Carnelian bead**, light red, spherical, showing

signs of 'grounding'. Diam. $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

- C. cv. 03-8. **Frs. of fossilized tamarisk**, from top of Mesa above ancient sea-shore, 10 miles to E. of C. cv. Gr. fr. $4\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $\frac{5}{8}$ ".

OBJECTS FOUND ON ROUTE BETWEEN CAMPS cvi and cvii

- C. cvi. 01-2. **Two punch-like pieces of hard stone**, dark grey. Gr. fr. (02), length $3\frac{7}{8}$ ", thickness $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

- C. cvi. 03. **Flake of hard stone**, light green (possibly used as 'scraper'). $3\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

OBJECTS FOUND BELOW CLIFF NE. OF CAMP cvii

- C. cvii. 01. **Rough piece of wooden stick**, showing charred surfaces. Length $5\frac{1}{4}$ ", diam. $\frac{7}{8}$ ".

- C. cvii. 08. **Fr. of pottery**; rough grey, of character similar to C. cvii. 02-6 with modified dog-tooth raised moulding. $2\frac{1}{4}$ " \times $2\frac{1}{4}$ " \times $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Pl. XXIII.

- C. cvii. 02-6. **Five frs. of pottery**. Coarse, gritty, grey; badly burnt. All frs. of side of vessel, except 03 which is fr. of bottom; 03 and 04 hard; others friable. Prob. hand-made. Gr. fr. (04) $3\frac{1}{4}$ " \times $2\frac{1}{8}$ " \times $\frac{7}{16}$ ". Thickness of 03, $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

- C. cvii. 09. **Fr. of pottery**, from rim of vessel, rough reddish-grey slightly recurved. Prob. hand-made. $3\frac{1}{8}$ " \times $2\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $\frac{3}{16}$ ".

- C. cvii. 07. **Frs. of iron buckle**, one side missing. $2\frac{1}{8}$ " \times $1\frac{1}{2}$ " \times $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Pl. XXIII.

- C. cvii. 010-11. **Two frs. of charcoal**. c. $\frac{3}{4}$ " sq. \times $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

⁸ Cf. *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 407 sq.

⁹ See *Serindia* i. pp. 241, note 2, 451 sq. iii. p. 1239.