

evidently long been continuously occupied, was attributed to successive failures of crops, owing to defective irrigation. Yet the inhabitants of this region were loath to abandon it for newly reclaimed and for the time being better served land, such as, curiously enough, we saw next day stretching for about four miles below the last old farm of Khanak-atam. A new canal, made some six years before under the District Magistrate's orders, had caused new cultivation to be started here by a considerable number of colonists. Yet none of them seemed as yet to feel sufficient confidence in the venture to establish homes on the land. This is a significant illustration of that impermanence to which the uncertainty of various factors is apt to reduce agricultural enterprise along the terminal courses of canals in all these oases.

At Khanak-atam I found that Afrāz-gul had arrived from the survey he had carried transversely from Yulduz-bāgh across the southern portions of Kuchā cultivation. His observations, recorded on the plane table and in a route report, proved the existence of a series of ruined walled enclosures and watch-towers, now abandoned to decay, in the area stretching east of the Kuchā-Shahyār high road. These remains of small circumvallations, built of stamped clay, all resemble closely those which we examined to the south of Yulduz-bāgh. Rough plans of two specimens from a site known as *Ak-shahr*, near the village of Sai-arik, are reproduced in Pl. 40. As the map (No. 17. B. C. 2) shows, they all lie near existing canals and within easy reach of the present occupied area. Hence they appear to have suffered much, both from decay through moisture and from frequent digging for manuring soil or for 'treasure'. There was little chance of finding datable relics at such ruins, and this made it easier for me to forgo examining them in person.

Walled enclosures observed by Afrāz-gul.

Instead, I set out on May 2nd from our camp at the last farm of Khanak-atam to visit the ruins that Mīr Sharīf had offered to show me to the south-east. For about four miles our route followed the new canal previously mentioned, which at that time carried nearly 4 cubic feet of water per second, and past the newly cleared fields of the colony it had created. Then the tamarisk-cones in the neighbourhood grew higher, and we saw groves of wild poplars stretching from north-west to south-east. Between these, and at a distance of about nine miles from camp, we came upon the embankment of an old canal following the same direction. It led to a large circumvallation, which Mīr Sharīf knew by the name of *Chong-shahr*. It was formed by an earthen rampart about 10 feet high, enclosing an area of irregular oval shape (Pl. 41). This measured, on the inside, about 340 yards from north-west to south-east, in the direction of the major axis. On the north-west the rampart adjoined an earthen mound about 70 yards across from north to south and about 30 feet high. Refuse heaps permeated with salt spread in places over the interior of this rough enclosure, the age of which remains quite uncertain.

Circumvallation of *Chong-shahr*.

After we had moved about a mile and a half north-eastwards across ground encrusted with soft *shōr*, Mīr Sharīf showed me what he called the 'small town' of the site. It proved to be the ruin of a small post, enclosed by walls of stamped clay about 7 feet thick, and measuring about 38 feet square inside. There were traces of an outer enclosure, also built of stamped clay, with walls running parallel to, but at varying distances from, those of the post. The walls of the latter still rose to 12 or 13 feet in places, betokening solid construction. But here, too, I could find no definite indication of date.

Marching from here for about four miles to the south-east, we arrived at a large depression known as *Tauruk*, which in certain years, at times of flood, receives water from the Shayān-daryā, an easterly bed of the terminal course of the Muz-art river. The bottom of the depression was found to be dry, but a well dug here to a depth of only 2½ feet yielded perfectly fresh water. The fact that this depression had been put under temporary cultivation in the preceding year, and had yielded a good wheat crop, furnished an illustration of a practice widely prevalent along the banks

Inundated ground cultivated.