

discussion. There is no need here to review this nor to examine certain points which in the account of the route beyond Baktra, as excerpted by Ptolemy, still remain obscure and may remain so for ever, owing, perhaps, to the loss of the original record, whether of Maës or Marinus. We are spared this obligation, since the certain identification of the 'mountain country of the Kōmēdoi', which the essential passage of Ptolemy mentions on the line of the route, makes it quite certain that the route led through Kara-tegīn. I have already had occasion to show 'how Sir Henry Yule, by a chain of sound critical reasoning, had been led to Kara-tegīn, as the probable position of the Kōmēdoi'. This location is confirmed on the one hand by finding the same ancient name in the form *Chü-mi-t'o* applied by Hsüan-tsang to a territory in a position exactly corresponding to Kara-tegīn, and on the other by the application to the same of the name *Kumēdh* by early Arab geographers.⁸

These references to Kara-tegīn and others found in the Chinese historical Annals will be duly noticed below. Here, however, we must consider two points mentioned in Ptolemy's account of the route followed by the agents of Maës, which certainly have to be looked for beyond Kara-tegīn. From Antiochia Margiana, i. e. Merv, he tells us, the route proceeds 'in an eastward direction to Baktra, whence it turns towards the north in ascending the mountains of the Kōmēdoi, and then in passing through these mountains it pursues a southern course as far as the ravine that opens into the plain country. For the northern parts of the mountain region and those farthest to the west where the ascent begins are placed by him under the parallel of Byzantium, and those in the south and the east under the parallel of the Hellespont. For this reason he says that this route makes a detour of equal length in opposite directions, though in advancing to the east it bends towards the south, and thereafter probably runs up towards the north for 50 schoini till it reaches the Stone Tower. For to quote his own words, "when the traveller has ascended the ravine he arrives at the Stone Tower, after which the mountains that trend to the east unite with Imaos, the range that runs to the north from Palimbothra"'.⁹

Ptolemy on
route of
Maës'
agents.

I cannot attempt definitely to settle the doubts occasioned by the rather involved references to the changing direction of the route. But it will be useful to point out certain plain topographical facts which must clearly be kept in view. The easiest and most direct line by which the route leading up Kara-tegīn to the Alai valley could be gained from Balkh lies, after crossing the Oxus near Termez, up the wide valley of the Surkhan river past Deh-nau and Rēgar to Kara-tāgh in the Hissār tract, and then past Faizābād to the Kizil-su (Surkh-āb) below Āb-i-garm.^{9a} This line leads as far as Kara-tāgh to the NNE. and thence as far as Faizābād south of east; from there onwards the route up Kara-tegīn follows a general north-easterly bearing. The slightly southerly trend of this route from Kara-tāgh to Faizābād over a distance of about 60 miles, when combined with the rough total of 160 miles to be reckoned over the SSW.-NNE. portion of the route from Balkh to Kara-tāgh, would certainly not constitute 'a detour of equal length in opposite directions'. But I know of no route on which a closer approximation between the bearings indicated and the geographical facts could possibly be made out.

Direction
of route
from
Baktra.

In the 'ravine that opens into the plain country', I believe we may quite safely recognize the comparatively narrow main valley of Kara-tegīn which between Kara-muk at the upper end

Route up
Kizil-su
(Surkh-āb).

⁸ Cf. below, ii. p. 893, and *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 54 sq., with references to Yule, *Cathay*², i. pp. 190 sq.; *J. R. A. S.*, 1873, pp. 97 sq.; Richthofen, *China*, i. p. 497, note. The connexion of the Kōmēdoi with Chü-mi-t'o was first suggested by Cunningham, *J. A. S. B.*, 1848, xvii. pt. II, p. 15.

For a detailed discussion of the classical notice, see also Tomaschek, *Sogdiana*, pp. 77 sqq., and for Kumēdh also

Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 233.

⁹ Cf. Ptolemy, *Geogr.* I. xii. 7-9, as translated in McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, pp. 18 sq.

^{9a} Since the above was written, I was glad to notice that this line is also marked as the one meant by Marinus in the instructive sketch-map illustrating Dr. Herrmann's *Seidenstrassen zwischen China und Syrien*, I.