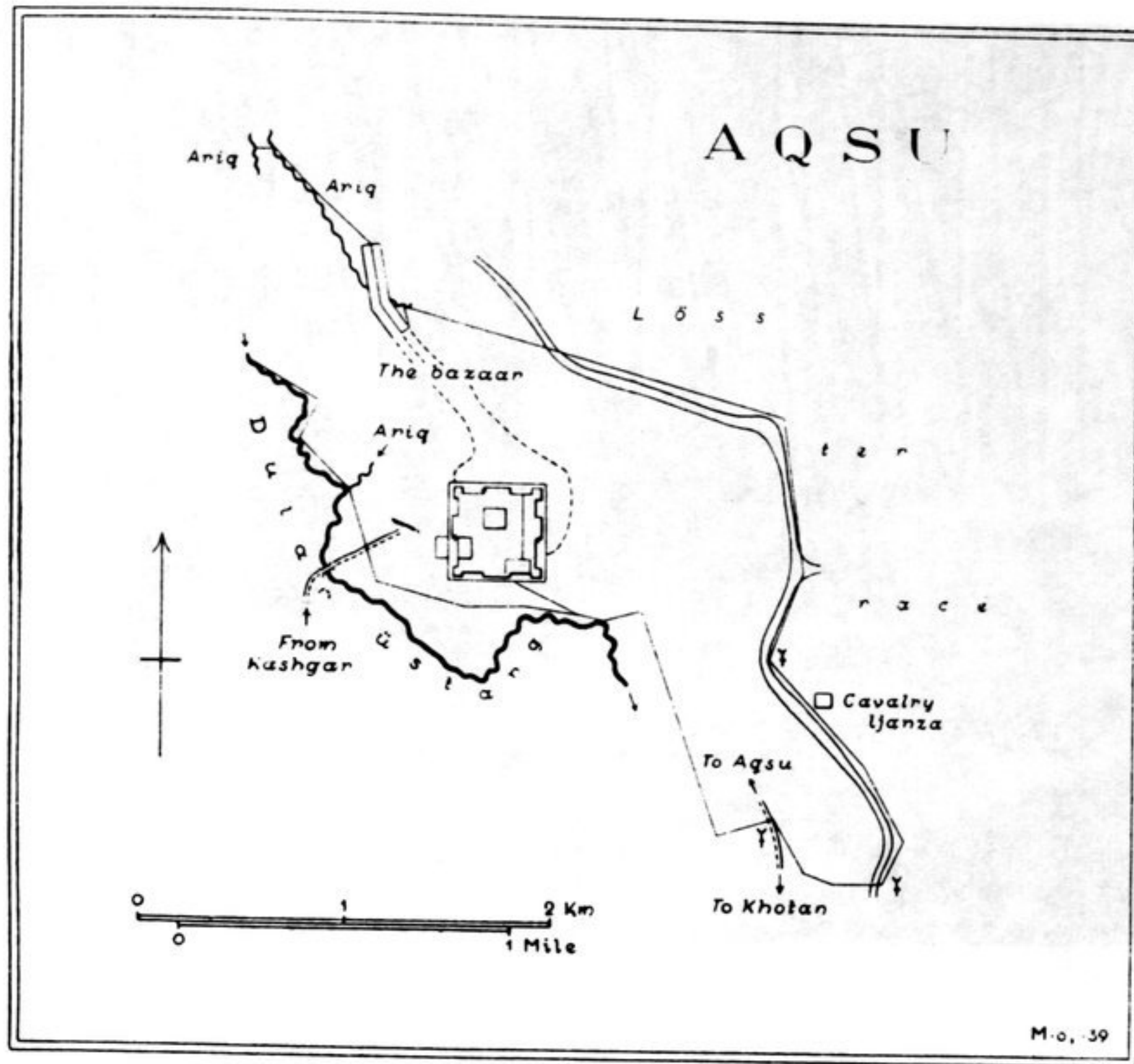


RECORDS OF THE JOURNEY

CHINESE AQSU

The inner dimensions of *Chinese Aqsu* from wall to wall are about 300 m. No corner towers. The protected area is 28 fathoms wide. The parapet 4 fathoms high. Inner wall of gateway 23, outer wall 20 feet wide at the base. Middle projection about 28 m in width and depth (?). Fosse 4 fathoms wide, 3 feet deep, neglected. The wall of unbaked bricks. 2 clay buildings of about 10 m in length on the ramparts between each projection. Inside the wall 2 main streets running approximately from one gate to the other. Government buildings, surrounded by walls close to and just outside the W wall, close to the S and E walls and in the centre of the N half of the town.



The area above the eminence is a barren plateau of löss. Below all the land is tilled, with scattered houses, no large groups of houses excepting the N bazaar. Fields slightly marshy in places. Dulan üstang 5—10 fathoms wide. Impossible to ride across from the middle of May to the middle of July. At other times possible almost everywhere, the depth varying from 0.40 to 0.80 m. — Drawn by the author.

My stay in Aqsu and its neighbourhood proved longer than I had expected, as seems often to be the case in Central Asia. This was mainly due to the difficulty of collecting some statistical materials through a poor and, especially, sleepy interpreter and to a good deal of time being taken up by mapping. My principal oracle, besides the aksakal, was a curious old mullah, who is employed by the staff of the yamen for various jobs, a peculiar fellow, who kept clearing his throat and spitting into his top-boots, so as to spare the aksakal's lovely carpets. He had a mass of information noted from documents in the yamen and was all right so long as you stuck to his notes and took them in order, but if you were obliged to change the order, the old man was completely at sea and read long extracts from his notebook that had nothing to do with the question. If I add that he was so frail and so sleepy in the evening that any work after 8 p.m. was out of the question and that I was constantly otherwise engaged in the morning, it will easily be understood that during a few short evening séances, interrupted furthermore by the disappearance of the old fellow to say the obligatory Mohammedan prayers, I was not able to get very far. It is a pity that I cannot reproduce his looks, as he communicated what he obviously thought were state secrets in a low voice. It was priceless to see the old man stagger out about 8 o'clock, completely doubled up and supported by the aksakal and myself, utterly exhausted by each meeting.

*March 26th.
Jam village.*

We started to-day at last. Thanks to the astonishing kindness of the Chinese authorities, fodder has been arranged for at all my camping places up to Mazar bashi, including the