

rather than thousands of years, and which falls well within historical times. It is probable, as will be shown later, that the lake has stood twice at this level, but this inference is based on historical rather than physiographic evidence. This level seems to be that at which the lake would permanently discharge to the God-i-Zirrah through the Shila. Therefore the lake might be expected to return to this position whenever it was abundantly supplied with water.

(3) *The Sabazkim beach and bluffs.*—The most remarkable of the old beaches of Sistan lies in the northward-facing bay of Sabazkim, a mile and a half south of Aliabad, on the road from Seh-Kuheh to Kohuk. It is situated 12 miles from the lake, and is elevated but little above it, standing probably at the 15-foot level. When the water filled Sabazkim Bay it must have covered most of that part of the Helmund delta which is to-day most thickly populated, although the ridges occupied

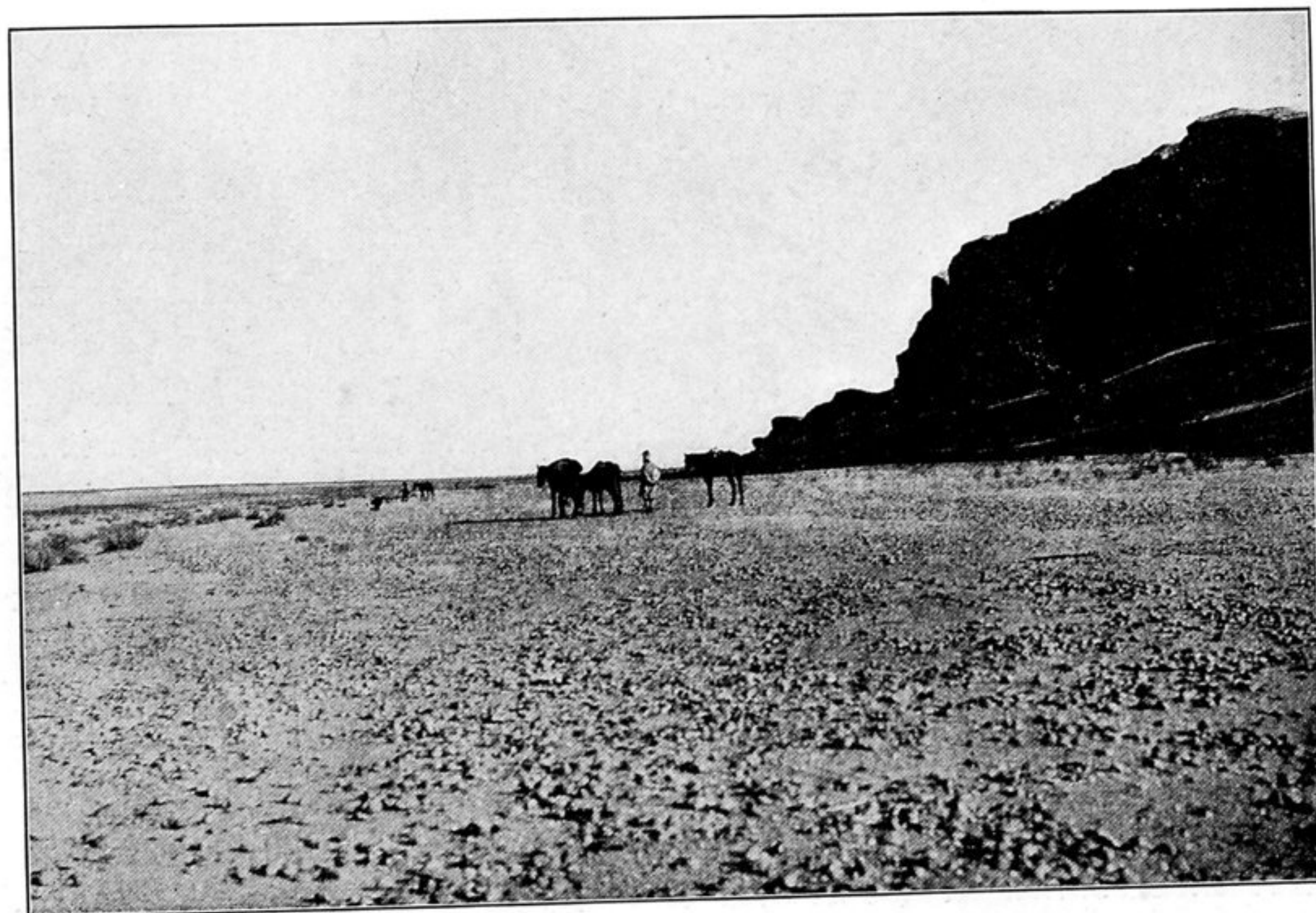


Fig. 171.—Abandoned Beach and Lacustrine Bluffs at Sabazkim. At the base of the bluffs sand-dunes are accumulating.

by Zahidan and most of the other ancient ruins were probably out of water. The shape and position of the bay exposed it to the full force of the waves and currents generated by the fierce north-northwest "Wind of One Hundred and Twenty Days," and the result is seen in the size of the beaches. At the base of the highest of the Sabazkim bluffs, where the British Arbitration Commission has set up a monument, there is a beach, over 500 feet broad, with a rise of 20 feet (fig. 171). At the top of the beach rise large sand-dunes like those at Seh-Kuheh, and behind these a very freshly eroded cliff rises almost perpendicularly to a height of 110 feet (see section P, plate 5). The upper part of the beach is composed of fine gravel, the middle part of small cobble-stones and sand, and the part far out toward the lake of sand. Everywhere the beach is crowded with shells of four or five kinds, of which