

The area represented in this sheet comprises two distinct regions. In the north there extend the low desert ranges and the plateaus of the Kuruk-tāgh; in the south, the great salt-encrusted basin occupied in prehistoric times by the Lop sea, together with its desolate shores of bare gravel or clay. Both regions are utterly lifeless, except for the occasional passage of wild camels. Their character is illustrated by the fact that apart from the wells of Kum-kuduk there is to be found no drinkable water in this vast area, nor living vegetation, except in scanty patches close to the rare salt springs in the north and in narrow strips along the shores of the great eastern bay of the ancient lake-bed (C,D.4).¹⁹

While the Kuruk-tāgh region here shown has never known human life except for rare visits of hunters in its western part, distinct historical interest is imparted to the lake-basin by the fact that across its wastes of hard salt-crust and along its equally barren shores of gravel and wind-eroded clay there led the route which from the second century B. C. onwards formed the earliest, and for a long time the chief, line of communication from China into the Tārīm basin. The complete 'desiccation' of the Lou-lan territory some four centuries later finally closed it to traffic. The Chinese historical notices

Astronomically observed latitudes.

1913-15 Kaurük-bulak, Camp 88 (near spring; A. 2)	...	...	41° 4' 0"
Camp 92, southernmost Kuruk-tāgh (D. 3)	...	...	40° 35' 0"
Palgān-bulak, Camp 260 (near spring; A. 2)	...	...	41° 19' 44"
Camp 266, S. of Achi-tāgh (B. 1) ...	...	...	41° 45' 24"

NOTES ON SHEET No. 33 (LOWAZA, BĀSH-KURGHĀN)

The two routes from which all the ground shown in this sheet was surveyed, are the only lines of communication now practicable between Tun-huang and the Lop region. They were followed both on the second and third expeditions, the latitude observations taken on the latter (see below) making it possible to lay down the route lines more correctly than before. The traverses of both

¹⁹ No vegetation of any kind, whether living or dead, was met with by R. B. Lāl Singh on his five long marches in the unexplored Kuruk-tāgh between Camps 262-267. I myself in February, 1914, left behind the last remains of dead vegetation near the easternmost ruin (L. J.) of ancient Lou-lan (A.3), and did not come upon any living vegetation until I had

of this Lop desert route and the topographical facts concerning it, as elucidated in the course of our surveys, have been set forth in *Serindia*, ii. pp. 553 sqq.²⁰

The caravan track along the southern shore of the dried-up lake bed, is described in *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 520 sqq. For a full account of the historical topography of this interesting route, the same which Hsüan-tsang (A.D. 645) and Marco Polo followed, see *Serindia*, Chapter XIV. sec. i-iii (ii. pp. 549 sqq.). A preliminary report on my explorations among the easternmost ruins of the Lou-lan territory (A. 3), and on the journey by which I traced the earliest Chinese route from Tun-huang to Lou-lan across the salt-encrusted Lop lake bed, is contained in *Geograph. Journal*, 1916, xlviii. pp. 126 sqq.; *Geographical Review* (New York), 1921, ix. pp. 22 sqq.

Corrections. A. 1. Delete the latitude station symbol from Bir-atai-bulak, Camp 270.

C. 3. For Achchik-bulak the height 2270 (aneroid; of 1913) ought to be adopted.

D. 4. For Kum-kuduk, Camp 52, the height 2245, observed by mercurial barometer, ought to have been shown. Delete height 2750 (aneroid) at adjoining Camp 95 and height 2730 (aneroid) at Camp 94.

routes are adjusted on the positions adopted for Mīrān and An-hsi. In the case of the former place, it must be noted that reconsideration of R.B. Lāl Singh's triangulation in 1921 brings its longitude about 2 minutes to the west of the one shown in Sheet No. 30. B. 2.

The route shown in the north-western portion of the sheet forms part of the old

crossed some 120 miles of the salt-encrusted sea-bed and its shores to Camp cvi on the shore of the above-named bay (D. 4).

²⁰ For details of the ancient topography of this route as traced in the course of my surveys of 1914, cf. also *Serindia*, i. pp. 341 sq., 423 sqq.