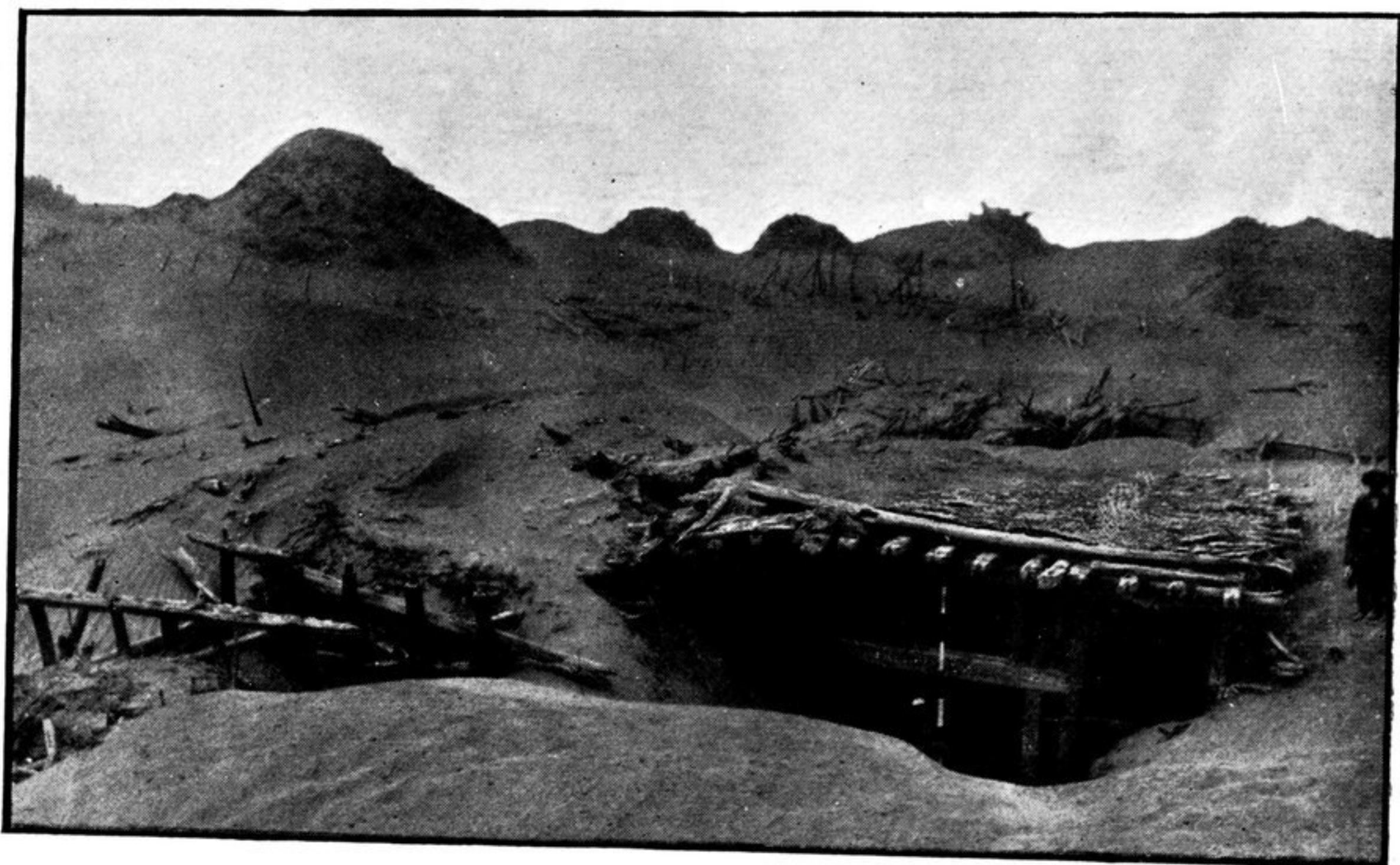


be hazarded that we have here the remains of a fortified frontier post or roadside Sarai. A remark of Mirza Haidar, the Moghul leader and historian, makes it very probable that the Keriya River reached the Tarim as late as the sixteenth century. Its old course across the desert can be followed even now without serious difficulty, and certainly forms the most direct route between Khotan and the ancient settlements of Kucha and further north-east. Karadong lies about half-way between the Tarim and the line of oases stretching to the east of Khotan, and a small post established here



WOODEN GATEWAY OF RUINED QUADRANGLE, KARADONG, AFTER EXCAVATION.

would have answered the purpose of guarding the route and protecting the approaches from the northern region. The age of the ruined structure is approximately indicated by the coins I picked up in its immediate vicinity, which were all copper pieces of the Later Han dynasty, showing long wear.

The best preserved portion of this ancient Sarai or post was the large wooden gateway which my subsequent excavations brought to light on the eastern face of the quadrangular enclosure. It formed a square of 22 feet, and its roof, perfectly intact,