

preservation of the walls might have been taken as an indication of late date, had not the fact of a huge sand-cone covered with living tamarisk on the top adjoining the west wall, and rising fully twenty feet above it, suggested the possibility of another explanation. Judging from what experience has taught me at other old sites by the southern edge of the Taklamakan, I should find it easier to account for the height attained by the tamarisk cone if this ruined fort, too, dated back to the time of Tukhara occupation. In the case of some badly eroded small dwellings traced within half a mile to the south and south-east, the large size of the bricks used and similar structural details distinctly pointed to the earlier epoch; but here, too, the search for exactly datable relics was fruitless.

It was on my return from these surveys southwards that I traced quite clearly the line of an ancient river-bed running from the present course of the Endere river to the north-east, and passing within half a mile on the east of the ruined fort of the T'ang times. A close search along it showed here and there bleached and much-decayed remnants of ancient fruit trees. But no more structural remains could be traced, and as the excavation of the last dwelling-places within the fort was now concluded, on the evening of November 12th I moved my camp back to Korgach higher up the river.

On the frosty but brilliantly clear morning of the next day I paid off my Niya labourers, new and old, and saw them set out in great glee for the four days' tramp to their homes. Then crossing the river, which in spite of the winter's close approach still filled a channel some forty yards broad and two feet deep in the centre, flowing with a current of about a yard per second, I visited what old remains Mihman, our shepherd guide from the Endere Tarim, could show me in the riverine jungle belt westwards. The closeness of the luxuriant tamarisk thickets made orientation very difficult. But in the end, after many détours, we succeeded in tracing the débris of a roughly made water-mill by the side of a shallow canal bed, and at a distance of nearly two miles from the river the almost completely eroded relics of a hut built with Toghrak