

sighted since Charchan. I knew the place to be still some ten miles off and nothing but a small hamlet. So the apparition on the scene of this worthy Muhammadan wearing his Chinese cap of office and followed by a son of Kepek, the original settler of the place, carrying a big gourd with milk, was a pleasant surprise. I welcomed his coming not merely as an earnest of the friendly reception awaiting me at Charklik, but also because it allowed me to secure without loss of time guides and labourers for a survey of the ancient site of Vash-shahri which I was anxious to examine *en route*.

A march of less than four miles brought me next morning to the centre of the débris-strewn area which marks the position of the earlier settlement. The patches of eroded ground extending between large tamarisk cones for about one mile both north and south of the route showed all the features of a typical Tati. Among the fragments of pottery which profusely covered the loess soil where bare of sand, pieces of finely glazed ware in a variety of rich colours from translucent brown to celadon green were numerous. Fragments of coarse opaque glass and of small objects in bronze, such as buckles and arrow-heads, with beads of all sorts in paste and stone, were also abundant. What copper coins I could pick up on the spot or acquire from the villagers of Vash-shahri, all belonged to the coinage of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, and thus pointed to the site having been occupied down to the thirteenth century or the time of the Mongols.

By the side of tamarisk cones, and thus partially protected, half-a-dozen small structures still showed their brick walls to heights of from four to seven feet. I had the one or two rooms which each of them comprised cleared with care, but without coming upon 'finds' of any sort. One little ruin attracted my attention by being built in hard burnt bricks, a material nowhere else met with among sites south of the Taklamakan. In another I noted that the sun-dried bricks, which throughout the ruins showed a fairly uniform size of about fifteen by eight inches with a thickness of four inches, were carefully laid with the long and short sides facing in alternate courses, a practice