

out of the solid clay. The single record found here also dated from 52 B.C.

But it was not merely the archaeological assurance gained that cheered me while encamped at this ruin. On exploring two ancient watch-stations north-eastwards (T. XIX. and T. XX.), I had noticed from the top of the high isolated clay terraces on which their ruins were perched (Fig. 178), that the wall here reappearing rested its right flank on a lake over two miles long, and that an open channel of water apparently led into the latter from the side of the Khara-nor and again left it westwards. A short reconnaissance north had shown me that it was a real river, some twenty yards broad, and quite unfordable at this point, flowing out of the lake with a velocity of nearly a yard per second. At the same time I convinced myself that, between the lake on the east and the wide marsh bed already mentioned as extending north of the magazine, there stretched a tongue of firm ground with a few isolated clay terraces. This circumstance at once accounted for the care taken to close this gap in the natural line of defence.

The wall was clearly traceable eastwards to the very edge of the lake's marshy foreshore, which showed a level only five feet lower than the foot of the wall, and was evidently still liable to periodical inundation. This was an important piece of evidence, agreeing with observations made at other points where the wall abutted on lakes or marsh beds, and proving that the difference here in the water level of the present and ancient times could not have been very great. There was another curious fact pointing to little change in the local conditions of soil and climate. The whole area between the two towers and farther on to the lake shore was covered with a luxuriant jungle of wild poplars—just as it must have been two thousand years ago; for the wall here proved by exception to be constructed, not with the usual reed fascines, but with layers of Toghrak branches, the material still abundant on the spot.

The time to realize fully the geographical importance of that observation about the lake outflow arrived when in the evening Rai Ram Singh rejoined me from the prolonged