

tour of reconnaissance on which I had despatched him a fortnight earlier to the westernmost extremity of the wall. After tracing a far-extending line of towers south-westwards, and a wide basin of salt marshes and lakes which lay in front of them, he had returned to the caravan route at the point known to us as Toghrak-bulak, in order to replenish his supply of fresh water. Where he expected to find a spring-fed marsh, as seen on our first journey towards Tun-huang, he discovered to his surprise a deep and rapid river flowing westwards. He recognized at once that such a volume of water could only come from the flood of the Su-lo Ho which, as I realized at the time of our first approach from the Lop-nor side, had once made its way into that dry eroded basin we traversed on the day before reaching Toghrak-bulak. I had specially asked him to re-examine the dry river beds then sighted near it. Now, after fording with difficulty the river which flowed in the Toghrak-bulak bed, he followed it downwards until he made quite sure that it emptied itself through a little delta into the south-eastern end of the basin which early in March we had found quite dry.

Since my return to the *Limes* I had myself looked out more than once for the old bed, dry as I supposed it would be, stretching west of the Khara-nor, and on the north side of the fortified line. Once or twice I had pushed some distance beyond the latter to what seemed the very foot of an unbroken glaciis of gravel sloping up gently towards the Kuruk-tagh. My abundant archaeological tasks would not allow me to move beyond this. So for the time being I had been driven to the assumption that the dry beds noticed about Toghrak-bulak had their continuation towards Khara-nor only in the chain of isolated depressions, some dry, some still occupied by salt marshes, which we had come across both within and without the line of the wall.

In this case a direct connection between those old beds and the Khara-nor could not well have existed within historical times. But now the aspect of this puzzling question of drainage was completely changed by the discovery of an actual outflow from the lake which lay west