

The present name Ak-su is obviously of Turkish derivation, and the earliest mention of it that I can trace does not go back beyond the fourteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

On May 6 I left the 'New Town' of Ak-su in order to visit Uch-Turfān and the little-known tract of Kelpin in the outer hills of the T'ien-shan to the south. I knew that the Kelpin region had been but imperfectly surveyed, and information secured at Ak-su with P'an Ta-jên's kind help pointed to the existence of ruined sites near its small oasis and towards Marāl-bāshi. By visits to these I wished to conclude my archaeological labours in the field before returning via Yārkand to Khotan, where many tasks urgently called me. The seven-miles ride from the 'New' to the 'Old Town' of Ak-su took me along the edge of the wide barren plateau which rises with precipitous cliffs of loess from 60 to 100 feet above the two towns and the irrigated area adjoining them. Its top is covered with large cemeteries, Mazārs, and crumbling forts or 'Karauls', manifestly of late Muhammadan times. Of earlier remains, such as the presence of all the numerous modern shrines might have suggested, I saw none. Yet plenty of quasi-troglodyte dwellings and tombs showed what excellent sites for cave-temples these steep and easily worked walls of hard clay might have furnished.

The two easy marches which brought me to the easternmost edge of the Uch-Turfān district lay across fertile and easily irrigated ground showing the same neglected cultivation I had observed on my way from the Tārīm. It was ascribed here to scarcity of population and inadequate labour. Both the river of Ak-su, or Kum-arik-daryā as it is known here, and the Tushkan-daryā which had to be crossed en route, carried a considerable volume of water, far larger than is to be found in the Khotan rivers at that season. The second, though filling then only a small portion of its flood-bed, fully three-quarters of a mile wide, was barely fordable.<sup>15</sup> MM. Grenard and Chavannes have already pointed out that these two rivers are correctly mentioned in the itinerary of the T'ang Annals where it describes the route from the town of Po-huan, i. e. Ak-su, to the town of Ta-shih 大石, or Wên-su 溫肅, i. e. Uch-Turfān.<sup>16</sup> The first is named as the 'river of Po-huan', and the second as the 'river Hu-lu' 胡盧.<sup>17</sup> The distance of the first river from the town of Po-huan is not stated, but a distance of 40 li is indicated between it and the second river. This corresponds fairly closely to the 12 miles or so passed by the present road between the marsh-bed, marking an old western bed of the Kum-arik-daryā (Map No. 19. D. 4), and the village of Terek-bāgh at the crossing of the Tushkan-daryā (Map No. 19. C. 4). The 'town of Hsiao-shih' 小石, which the itinerary places half-way between the two rivers, may be looked for approximately near the present villages of Bārun and Chawarik.

A pleasant march on May 8 carried me from near the west bank of the Tushkan-daryā<sup>18</sup> to

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Elias-Ross, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī*, pp. 7 sqq. Hājī Muḥammad, whose account Ramusio took down about 1550, also mentions Ak-su; see Yule-Cordier, *Cathay*, i. p. 293. His reference to the journey thence to Kāshgar lying through 'the wildest desert' is significant: it shows that either Uch-Turfān or Marāl-bāshi or possibly both were uninhabited at the time.

<sup>15</sup> In the Kum-arik-daryā, which feeds all the canals of the main oasis of Ak-su to the east of the Tushkan-daryā, I measured a volume of about 1,640 cubic feet per second, apart from the water caught in canals higher up. The Tushkan-daryā, then flowing in three main and three shallow channels, had a total volume of over 6,800 cubic feet per second. Later on in the season, when the melting of the great glaciers lining the western slopes of the Khān-tengri

massif has begun, the volume of the Ak-su River, which they feed, is far greater than that of the Tushkan-daryā; see Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.*, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, p. 9; *T'oung-pao*, 1905, p. 553, note 1.

<sup>17</sup> The itinerary mentions the 'river Hu-lu' as of the Yü-t'ien 于闐 territory; for *Yü-t'ien* must be read *Yü-chu* 于祝, the name of Uch-Turfān; see *T'oung-pao*, 1905, p. 553, note 1.

<sup>18</sup> This form of the river name is the one I heard from my local guides belonging to the settled population. The form *Taushkan-daryā* found in Russian maps and elsewhere may be the one used by the Kirghiz occupying the valley above Uch-Turfān.