

CHAPTER I

ON ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGN IN THE PANJĀB

SECTION I—ALEXANDER'S ALTARS AND THE COURSE OF THE BEĀS

RESUMED explorations within ancient Gedrosia formed the first object of the journey on which I had planned to start in the autumn of 1931. For this purpose my intention was to enter Persian Balūchistān from its extreme south-eastern corner, close to where my explorations in 1928 had brought me on the side of British Makrān. Adequate time had to be allowed for the Persian authorities to make arrangements about my escort, &c., before I could start on my journey in that outlying part of their territory but recently brought once more under effective political control. The interval thus afforded enabled me to take up the examination on the spot of two questions of ancient topography bearing on Alexander's Indian campaign which long before had attracted my attention. The opportunity was also used to visit several old sites in the adjacent parts of the north-western Panjāb containing antiquarian remains of interest from various points of view.

For the purpose of the present record it will be convenient throughout to follow the sequence of my movements. I shall therefore deal first with the short preliminary tour which antiquarian and practical considerations induced me to devote to an examination of the ground where Alexander's invasion into the plains of north-western India came to its end by the banks of the Hyphasis, the present Beās. It was here that the great Macedonian conqueror on his amazing progress through Asia was at last forced to turn back by the weariness of his hard-trying troops. This fact alone would suffice to invest the ground with much historical interest. But since all classical records of the campaign contain mention of the great tower-like structures, the famous 'twelve altars' which Alexander had erected to mark the farthest point of his advance,¹ exact determination of the site might claim distinct archaeological importance.

The indications to be gathered from the classical accounts as to the line followed by Alexander's army on the march from the Hydaspes or Jhēlum do not furnish sufficient topographical evidence to determine with even approximate

¹ For a complete synopsis of all classical references to Alexander's altars erected on the bank of the Hyphasis, cf. Anspach, *De Alexandri Magni expeditione indica*, 1903, pp. 81 sqq.