

boats and rafts would carry Alexander's troops to the junction of that channel with another more southerly river branch. Then on being rowed across the united river course they would be able to land on what might well appear to them as the mainland on the river's left bank. In reality it proved another island 'and that a great one . . . separated from the mainland by a branch of the river in which the water was shallow'. Arrian's account brings vividly before us the unexpected obstacle presented by the swollen condition of this channel, and how this most critical phase of the bold enterprise was met by Alexander's unflinching determination and the pluck of his hard-trying Macedonians.¹²

An experience of our own helped curiously enough to illustrate this episode. We crossed the present main bed of the river due south from the present lower end of the Admāna island, where the Halkiwānī joins it. Apart from large pools, we found the main bed dry at that season up to where after about three-quarters of a mile a shallow stream, about 250 yards wide and nowhere more than 2 feet deep, had to be forded. Then, continuing for nearly a mile in the same direction, over ground which had all the appearance of mainland, having in part been taken up recently for a 'Reserved Forest' area, we came unexpectedly upon a small channel with flowing water, only some 50 yards wide. Quite shallow at the time, it was declared to be unfordable during the time of the summer floods, as proved by a small ferry-boat kept on its bank. It had obviously formed since the last survey was made in this area more than twenty years before. Beyond it we soon reached the edge of the fertile tract now irrigated by the Lower Jhēlum Canal near the village of Nūrpur.

It is on the absolutely open and flat ground stretching to the south of the left bank of the river towards Malakwāl and Miānī that we must assume the battle with Poros to have been fought. But neither available records nor the examination of the ground made on November 26th and 27th supply evidence that would make it possible to determine the exact position of the battle-field. We have no definite indication as to the distance between the place where Alexander reached the mainland and the position where Poros's army was encountered. But Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander* (Chap. LX) mentions that Alexander after crossing it had ridden forward about 20 stadia (about 2½ miles) in advance of the infantry by the time he fell in with a small Indian force of horsemen and chariots sent out against him.

Two points, however, deserve to be noted. One is the perfect openness of this ground allowing ample room for the extensive line in which Poros marshalled his army. The other is that room was left between its left wing and the

¹² The danger which attended the fording of this channel is strongly brought out also in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, LX.