

over approximately 500 miles of route, and for the last 130 miles or so, no intersections could be obtained on it owing to the absence of all landmarks. It was hence very reassuring to find that the difference between our positions as shown by the plane-tables at the point of junction amounted only to about half a mile in longitude and less than a mile in latitude.

After completing my successful excavations at and near the Dandān-oilik site I proceeded with the surveyor to Keriya and thence reached Niya, the last small oasis eastwards within the territory of old Khotan, by January 21, 1901. Valuable antiquarian information obtained here led me northward for five marches through the jungle belt along the bed of the dying Niya river. Beyond it in the area of bare dunes I discovered the widely scattered ruins of an ancient settlement abandoned to the desert sands since the third century A. D.²⁸ During the very fruitful explorations which kept us busy here for over a fortnight Rām Singh was fully employed on a detailed survey of the extensive site and on reconnaissances into the neighbouring desert.²⁹ From the termination of the Niya river we then traversed the wholly unsurveyed desert eastwards for a marching distance of over a hundred miles to the site of reported ruins not far from where the Endere river is lost in the sands.³⁰

Here the easternmost limit of my first expedition was attained, and after exploring with interesting results the ruins of an ancient fort and other remains, we commenced our return journey by February 26. It led us first back to Keriya along the desert track which since early times has served for caravan traffic along the southern edge of the Taklamakān from Khotan to the Lop-nōr region and to westernmost China beyond. Favourable weather conditions allowed the great rampart of the snow-covered K'un-lun range far away to the south to be sighted and in parts to be sketched on the plane-table.

A rapid expedition down the Keriya river for seven long marches from Keriya brought us to a point known as *Kara-dong*, where, near the head of the desert delta of the dying river, the remains of an ancient fort required exploration.³¹ Then from a point higher up the river we struck across to the west and surveyed the deceptive desert to the north of the oases of Domoko, Gulakhma and Chira. The ample evidence this ground retains of a much greater extent of the once cultivated areas and of their shifts in position during historical times gives it a special geographical interest.³²

The marches thence to Khotan offered opportunities for surveying similar areas of early occupation now abandoned to the desert north of the Hanguya canton. Two weeks later excavations carried on at the important ruins of Rawak and surveys of other ancient sites in the desert to the north of the Yurung-kāsh tract were successfully completed just before the increasing heat and sand-storms closed the season for sustained work on such trying ground.

Our rapid return journey to Kāshgar along the great caravan route *via* Yārkaṅd afforded no opportunity for fresh surveys, except from Kizil to Kāshgar. There I parted from Rām Singh who on the whole of this journey had rendered very efficient and willing services and who now returned to India. I myself gained the railway in Russian Turkistān across the Alai and T'ien-shan and thence proceeded with my archæological collections to London.

The topographical results of this journey found their first cartographic record in the 'Map of portions of Chinese Turkistān, surveyed under the direction, and with the assistance of, M. A. Stein, Ph.D., by Sub-Surveyor S.—R., 1900-01. Two sheets, scale 1 inch to 12 miles', prepared at the Trigonometrical Branch Office of the Survey of India and published in May 1903 under the orders of Colonel St. George C. Gore, C.S.I., R.E., Surveyor General of India. Owing

²⁸ See Sheet No. 19. B. 1, 2.

²⁹ Cf. *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 334 sqq.; *Ancient Khotan*, i. Chapter xi; ii, Plans xxvii-xxxii.

³⁰ See Sheet No. 19. C, D. 1; *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 389 sqq.

³¹ See Sheet No. 13. D. 3, 4; *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 405 sqq.

³² Cf. *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 414 sqq.; *Ancient Khotan*, i. Chap. xiii. sec. ii, iii.