

SECTION II.—THE RUINS NEAR KHĀN-UI

It was from the Chinese City Prefect or Hsien-kuan of Kāshgar that I first learned of the existence of ancient remains on desert ground beyond the hamlet of *Khān-ūi*, some twenty miles to the north-east of the 'Old City' of Kāshgar. A tradition communicated to me by that amiable official connected the site with a Chinese settlement supposed to have existed there during the time of the Han Dynasty. But whether this tradition rested on some historical information or was merely, as I suspected, derived by a kind of 'popular etymology' from the name of the neighbouring hamlet *Khān-ūi* (literally meaning 'the Khān's residence'), I was not able to ascertain. The march which brought me, on Sept. 4, 1900, to Khān-ūi, through the fertile village tract of Bēsh-karīm, has been described in my Personal Narrative. There, too, I have given an account of the picturesque shrine of Bū (Bībī) Mairyam Khānum, situated some three miles to the west of Khān-ūi, which marks the resting-place of the saintly daughter of Satok Boghra Khān, the royal champion of Islām, famous in the local traditions of Kāshgar¹.

At a distance of about one mile to the north-east of Khān-ūi hamlet all cultivation ceases; and after another mile in the same direction, over absolutely barren 'Dasht', I found an extensive area of low denuded loess banks covered in plentiful patches with small decayed fragments of ancient pottery, glass, and slag. These remains, though far too small to show any characteristic decorative features, supplied unmistakable evidence of ancient habitation. But of the buildings from which they originated no other indication could be traced. The walls of sun-dried bricks or mud, of which these buildings must have mainly been constructed, had long ago disappeared—undoubtedly, as subsequent experience at so many other sites showed me, through the erosive action of wind and sand. The bare surface of relatively hard loess on which these fragments rested bore plain evidence, too, of the destructive forces at work here. It had, no doubt, been lowered considerably below the level of the ground at the time when the site was occupied; but the total absence of constructive remains makes it impossible to estimate the extent of reduction in level. In the shallow depressions separating these loess banks, there were to be found here and there small accumulations of sand forming rudimentary dunes. I now regret not having secured at the time specimens of this sand; for their microscopical analysis would probably have furnished clear proof as to whether this 'sand' is disintegrated loess produced by erosion on the spot, or fine detritus washed down from the hills northward.

This area, strewn with diminutive débris, extends probably over more than a square mile, and is known by the name of *Hāsa-Tam*². Popular tradition, as related to me by Sōp Niāz Bōwa, the old Aksakāl of Bēsh-karīm, supposes an 'old town' (*kōne-shahr*), the capital of a 'Chinese Khākān', to have stood here until Satok Boghra Khān destroyed it. Traces of an old canal, by which the town is believed to have received its water, are said to exist south of Hāsa-Tam; but the traditional connexion of this canal with the Yamān-yār river, far away to the south, is incompatible with geographical facts.

Proceeding eastward of Hāsa-Tam for a distance of three miles, over ground where stretches of wind-swept bare loess alternate with low dunes of moving sand, I reached the ruins known as *Tōpa-Tim* ('the Sandy Mound'). They proved to consist of a conspicuous mound, roughly circular in shape, built of sun-dried bricks, and the much decayed remains of a great quadrangle closely adjoining it on the west. The mound, which rises to a height of 28 feet, and on the

Débris-area
of *Hāsa-
Tam*.

Traditions
about
Hāsa-Tam.

Ruins of
Tōpa-Tim.

¹ See *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 142 sqq.

² *Tam* means 'wall' in Turkī. I am not aware of the significance of *Hāsa*. The word is apparently frequent as

a local name, and is in at least two places, near Gūma and Moji, applied to deserted village sites; see below chap. v. sec. ii, iv.