

walls could be distinguished, manifestly the remains of small houses. These walls showed bundles of Kumush placed vertically between layers of mud, a mode of construction identical with that which I observed on the day following in the modern ruins of 'Old Domoko', and which still prevails for the ordinary dwellings of villagers throughout the neighbouring oases.

Finds at
Ak-taz.

The potsherds, of several varieties, red, black, and a yellowish colour, were hard and undoubtedly old; but neither they (see for specimens D. K. 006 in list below) nor a bronze finger ring with a jewel of opaque glass (D. K. 004, see Plate LI), which was picked up on the slope of a loess bank, furnish any definite indication of date. Several small areas of open ground similarly strewn with pottery débris were passed at short intervals for about one mile, remains of mud walls being traceable, however, only in two places. Other small Tatis are likely enough to be hidden away among the tamarisk-covered cones, but there was no time to search for them. It was clear that, owing to their exposed condition and the vicinity of the inhabited area, these scanty remains of old settlements must have been stripped long ago of any materials of value, and that the chance of finding structural ruins was very slight indeed. Turdi Khwāja, who rejoined me with a Dāk at Ārish-Mazār, had heard the site spoken of by people of Domoko as 'Kōnsamōma's town'¹, and as an object of frequent visits from villagers who hoped to find 'treasure', but were afraid of venturing far into the desert.

Colony of
Malaka-
lagan.

Ultimately we struck the well-marked bed of the stream of Domoko, about twenty yards broad, but now completely dry, all its water being absorbed for the time by the irrigation demands of the oasis. Immediately beyond we emerged on land newly brought under cultivation belonging to the village of Malakalagan, where we camped for the night. The colony had been formed about fifteen years before by people from the main oasis of Domoko². The latter, extending on both sides of the Khotan-Keriya road from six to eight miles further south, was said to be separated from Malakalagan by a barren belt of dunes. The reclamation of desert soil going on at the new colony was a sight as cheering as it was instructive. Small irrigation cuts were seen winding along the old tamarisk-covered hillocks of sand that had not yet been levelled down by the combined effect of running water and the cultivators' digging. Between them extended carefully-fenced fields. In order to save all arable ground the colonists had sensibly established their homesteads on the top of the larger sand-cones. Here and there the Toghraks of the desert jungle had been spared, particularly near the huts of the settlers. But it was clear they would soon disappear in a hopeless minority by the side of the avenues of young Tereks, Jigda, mulberry and other fruit trees which were rapidly growing up along all irrigation channels. I regret not to have ascertained, in the midst of many pressing occupations, what specific circumstances had led to the establishment of the new village. But there could be no doubt about the geographically interesting fact of cultivation here successfully invading the desert.

Battle-field
noticed by
Hsüan-
tsang.

Before I proceed to describe my search of the next days for the old sites in the desert northward, it will be convenient to set forth here what Hsüan-tsang tells us of P'i-mo, and what had made me look for possible traces of its position in this vicinity. We learn from the

¹ 'Kōnsamōma' seems to be the name given to a demon of old times whom popular legend of Khotan connects with a number of deserted localities near or within the oases, e. g., above Ujat and at Halālbāgh. I never succeeded in getting hold of a full legend concerning the demon, but gathered that he was credited with feeding on human beings.

² This is the form of the local name as I heard it commonly pronounced. M. Grenard, *Mission D. de Rhins*, iii.

p. 45, writes it *Doumakou* (i. e. Dumaku), Dr. Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.*, p. 201, *Damaku*. The first vowel is certainly *o* or *u*, both sounds being practically interchangeable in Eastern Turkī. The second vowel may be more correctly spelt as *ā*, its sound closely approaching *o*, owing to the preceding labial and the effect of epenthesis from the following *o* or *u*, a phonetic tendency strongly developed in the Khotan dialect.