

ravine or 'Yār', through which the tract here passes, displayed a continuous layer of potsherds and similar 'Tati' débris, about six to eight inches in thickness. The present surface level of the ground, consisting of fertile loess deposits, rose four to six feet above this 'culture stratum'. There is no cultivation at present but only by its previous existence can the thick cover of earth be explained which now hides from the view the remains of some ancient settlement. A narrow fringe of cultivation extends by the side of the river bank to the hamlet of Faizābād, a mile further on, and at the entrance of this I was met by another sign of antiquity in the shape of a small and completely decayed mound known as 'Tim'. It measures about fifteen feet in diameter and rises about twelve feet above the road level. Being undoubtedly of artificial origin it may well mark the remains of a modest Stūpa.

Rock-cut
tomb
opposite
Faizābād.

Opposite to Faizābād on the left bank perpendicular cliffs of sandstone, rising to a height of about 120 feet, with alternate strata of red and bluish-grey colour, overlook the river. During the summer months, when the river is in flood, their foot is quite inaccessible. Here at a height of about fifty to sixty feet the rectangular porch of a grotto is seen carved into the rock face. On revisiting the spot in April, 1908, I was able to cross the river and examine the cutting more closely from the left bank. The porch appeared to be about ten feet wide and eight feet high, with an approximate depth of six feet. At its back in the centre a low doorway, about five feet high and between three and four feet across, gives access to some interior grotto. It is surmounted by an arch resembling a truncated triangle. These modest dimensions suggest that the excavation is more likely to have been intended for a tomb than a shrine. There was no time then or later to arrange for the construction of a scaffolding which would make this curious grotto accessible. That it is of pre-Muhammadan date seems to me highly probable, and if that is the case attribution to either Nestorian Christians or Manichaeans naturally suggests itself. In this connexion it deserves, perhaps, some attention that the large village of Ujat, which lies by the left bank of the river some two miles below this spot and is widely famous for its grapes, appears to figure in late tradition as a place once inhabited by Nestorian Christians, or at least by people who were considered as insincere Muhammadans.¹⁵

Ruined
fort near
Lānghru.

From Faizābād a ride of some three miles over barren plateaus of stone and rubble overhanging the river brought me within sight of the easternmost fields of Lānghru when there appeared close on the right of the track the remains of a ruined fort. I had heard of this previously and of the popular tradition vaguely connecting it with a demon of old, known as 'Kōnsasmōma'. The walls, badly decayed, enclose an irregular quadrilateral which occupies the rim of a stony plateau in the angle between the right bank of the river and a dry boulder-filled ravine. The north-west side of the enclosure lies along the edge of the plateau where it falls away very precipitously to the river some hundred feet lower down. The wall to the north-east curves along the edge of the ravine with a length of about 300 feet. That to the south-east measures about 245 feet. Sun-dried bricks, full of gravel, about eighteen by twelve inches in size with a thickness varying from three to six inches, formed the material for the walls; these at their foot showed an average thickness of eight feet. Near what appears to have been the entrance on the south-east face, the walls still stood to a height of about fifteen feet. Rough in their construction, they yet looked decidedly old. But there were neither structural remains nor other relics within the walls to give any definite indication as to its relative age. So much, however, was clear that the little stronghold was intended to close the route leading down the Karā-kāsh Valley and those debouching towards it from the mountains south.

¹⁵ For Ujat, cf. *Ruins of Khotan*, p. 247. The somewhat scanty indications as to the 'Ujatliks' having been originally Nestorian Christians are discussed by Dr. Hoernle in *J.A.S.B.*,

1899, Extra No., p. xxxii; cf. also *Yarkand Mission Report*, p. 127.