

**John Watson McCrindle**



*The Invasion of India  
by Alexander  
the Great*



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# **The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great**

**As described by Arrian, Q. Curtius, Diodoros, Plutarch  
and Justin: Alexander's Campaigns in Afghanistan,  
the Panjâb, Sindh, Gedrosia and Karmania**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION](#)

[PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[Arrian](#)

[Q. Curtius Rufus](#)

[Plutarch](#)

[Diodoros the Sicilian](#)

[Justinus Frontinus](#)

[The Life of Alexander the Great](#)

[ARRIAN](#)

[ARRIAN'S ANABASIS](#)

[Q. CURTIUS RUFUS](#)

[HISTORY OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, BY Q. CURTIUS RUFUS](#)

[DIODÔROS SICULUS](#)

[BIBLIOTHECA HISTORICA OF DIODÔROS SICULUS](#)

[PLUTARCH](#)

[PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF ALEXANDER](#)

[JUSTIN](#)

[HISTORIAE PHILIPPICAE OF JUSTINUS](#)

[APPENDICES](#)

[BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX](#)

[INDICES](#)

[I. GENERAL INDEX](#)

[II. INDEX OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED OR REFERRED TO](#)





# PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

## Table of Contents

Since this volume was written, three works have appeared which not only make important additions to our knowledge of Alexander's campaigns in Turkestan, Lower Sindh, and Makran respectively, but which also serve to correct some current errors with regard to the identification of places which lay in the route of the great conqueror, as he passed through these obscure regions. As the works referred to have been written by scholarly men, who possess an intimate personal knowledge of the localities which they describe, the conclusions to which their investigations have conducted them may be accepted with confidence, and we propose to give here a brief summary of these conclusions so far as they concern our subject. The works are these: 1. *Alexander des Grossen Feldzüge in Turkestan*, von Franz Schwarz, München; 2. *The Indus Delta: a Memoir chiefly on its Ancient History and Geography*, by Major-General M. R. Haig, M.R.A.S., London; 3. *A Lecture on "The Retreat of Alexander the Great from India,"* by Colonel Holdich, R.E., as reported in the *Calcutta Englishman*.

We begin with Turkestan, by which is here meant the provinces called anciently Baktriana and Sogdiana. Their reduction, as will be seen from our Introduction ([pp. 39-44](#)), occupied the arms of Alexander for upwards of two years, from B.C. 329-327. The description of the campaigns by which this conquest was effected has hitherto proved a task of unusual difficulty, due partly to imperfect knowledge of the geography of the seat of war, and partly also to

discrepancies in the accounts of these campaigns as given by Arrian and Curtius, who neither drew their facts from the same original sources nor relate them in quite the same order of sequence. It is fortunate therefore that Herr Schwarz, who for fifteen years resided in Turkestan, and had occasion or opportunity during that time to visit all its places of importance, sedulously applied himself to study the antiquities of the country, and was thus able ultimately to identify with certainty, almost all the places in which Alexander is reported, by his historians, to have shown himself. His work is accompanied by an excellent map, in which he has traced the line of the marches and the counter-marches of the Macedonian troops, while operating in the regions of the Oxus and the Jaxartes.

Alexander, in the early spring of 329 B.C., left Kabulistan, and having crossed the Indian Kaukasos, arrived at Drapsaka, and from thence continued his march to Aornos and Baktra. It has never been doubted that Baktra is now Balkh, but opinions have differed with regard to the other two places. Schwarz, on sufficient grounds, identifies Drapsaka with Kunduz, and Aornos with Tash-Kurgan, near which are situated the ruins of Khulm. Alexander, marching from Baktra through a frightful desert, gained the banks of the Oxus, which he crossed with his army in five days. The passage was effected, not from Kizil, as has been hitherto supposed, but from Kilif, higher up the stream—a place which Schwarz thinks was probably the city of the Branchidai, which, with its inhabitants, Alexander so remorselessly destroyed. From the Oxus the expedition advanced by way of Karshi and Jam to Marakanda, the

famous city of Samarcand. Near Karshi, at the hill Kungur-tau, occurred the skirmish in which Alexander, on this march, received a wound. Marakanda was situated on the banks of the Polytimêtos, now the Zerafshan or Kohik, which flows westward till its waters are lost in the sands of the Khorasmian Desert. Alexander marched thence to the river Tanais—the Jaxartes or Syr-darya—which formed the eastern boundary of the Persian empire, and separated it from the Skythians. On the Persian side of this river Alexander founded a city, which he called by his own name, Alexandria. It is agreed on all hands that the site of this Alexandria was at or near where Khojent now stands. In this neighbourhood Alexander captured seven towns, which had shown signs of a purpose to revolt. The names of two of these have been recorded, Gaza and Kyropolis. The former Schwarz identifies with Nau, and the latter with Ura-tübe, a considerable city occupying a commanding position, strongly fortified, and distant from Khojent about 40 miles. It had been founded by Cyrus to serve as a bulwark against incursions of the Skythians. Alexander having quelled the attempted revolt of the Sogdians, crossed the Jaxartes, and inflicted a defeat on the Skythians, who had mustered in great force on their own side of the river. He pursued them as far as what Curtius calls the boundary-stones of Father Bacchus, which Schwarz has identified as a pass over Mogul-Tau, near Mursa-rabat, a post-station, 17 miles distant from Khojent.

On the heels of this victory tidings reached Alexander of the terrible defeat and slaughter of his Macedonian troops by Spitamenes in one of the islands of the Polytimêtos, and



he immediately started for Marakanda, and reached it after a march of three days. As the distance from Khojent to Samarcand is 172 English miles, this march, made in broiling heat, and through a country without roads, must have tried to the very utmost the powers of endurance of the Macedonian soldiers, some of whom were hoplites, wearing their brazen helmets, carrying their shields, and clad in mail. Spitamenes made his escape into the desert, and Alexander could only sate his vengeance by ravaging with merciless severity the beautiful valley through which the river flowed. Schwarz tells us that he searched in vain to discover the island which was the scene of the disaster, and it probably no longer exists. It must, however, he thinks, have been situated in the neighbourhood of Ziadin and Kerminéh. Alexander, pursuing his way down the river, passed Bokhara, the Sogdian capital, and advanced as far as Karakul, beyond which the river disappears in the sands. He then retired for the winter to Zariaspa. Zariaspa has been taken to be another name of Baktra, but Schwarz shows that such an opinion is altogether untenable, and identifies it, for reasons not to be gainsaid, with Charjui, a place some six or seven miles distant from where the Oxus is now spanned by the bridge of the Trans-Caspian Railway.

From Zariaspa Alexander returned to Marakanda, passing on his route by Karakul, Bokhara, Kerminéh, and Kata-Kurgan. Koinos meanwhile had difficulty in holding his own against the indomitable Spitamenes, who had collected at Bagai a body of 3000 Skythian horsemen, with a view to invade Sogdiana. Bagai is now Ustuk, a Bokharan frontier fortress, 28 miles below Charjui, but on the opposite side of

the Oxus. The hostile forces at length came to an engagement. Koinos was victorious, and Spitamenes, who fled into the desert with his Skythian horsemen, fell a victim to their treachery. They cut off his head, and sent it as a peace-offering to Alexander. After the reduction of Sogdiana, Alexander withdrew to Nautaka, where he spent the winter of 328-327 B.C. This place has been generally identified with Karshi, but Schwarz takes it to be Schaar, which lies 40 miles to the south of Samarcand.

Alexander left Nautaka early in spring, and his next great exploit was the capture of the famous Sogdian Rock, in the fortress of which Oxyartes had placed for safety the members of his family, including his daughter, the beautiful Roxana, whose charms so fascinated her captor, that he made her his queen, in spite of all the remonstrances of his friends. Curtius calls this stronghold the Rock of Arimazes. Some have identified it with the steep crags which line one side of the narrow gorge near Derbent, called the Iron Gate, which forms the only direct approach from West-Bokhara to Hissar. Schwarz, however, says that the Iron Gate, through which he has himself often passed, answers neither to the description of Arrian nor of Curtius, and his own identification of the Rock is with a mountain which ascends precipitously from a gorge similar to that of the Iron Gate, from which it is some five miles distant in a north-east direction. From the Rock the expedition marched eastward into the country of the Paraitakai, the mountainous district now known as Hissar. Here Alexander's progress was arrested by another mountain fortress no less formidable than the Sogdian. It is called by Arrian the Rock of

Chorienes, and by Curtius the Rock of Sysimithres. Its identification presents no difficulty, as in all Hissar there is but one place which answers the descriptions of it, namely, the narrow pass at the river Waksh, where the Suspension Bridge (Pul-i-Sangin) overspans it on the way from Hissar through Faizabad to Badshuan. This pass, Schwarz tells us, is the most remarkable place to which he came in the whole course of his travels. The fort having been surrendered through the persuasions of Oxyartes, the conqueror returned to Baktra, by way of Faizabad, Hissar, Karatag, and Yurchi, from which place he proceeded down the right bank of the Surkhan to Tormiz, and thence to the passage of the Oxus at Pata-gisar. On his return to Baktra, he there made his preparations for the invasion of India. We have here only further to notice that Alexander's visit to Margiana, the city now so well known as Merv, could not have been made, as Curtius informs us, from Bokhara, which is 215 miles distant and separated from it by a terrible intervening desert, all but entirely destitute of wells, but was probably made from Sarakhs in the earlier part of the march from the Caspian Gates.

We turn now to Major-General Haig's *Memoir* on the Indus-Delta country—a work of which about a fourth part directly concerns our subject. The sections which are of this nature discuss the following points:—1. The Geography and Hydrography of the Delta Country (chap. i.); 2. The Delta at the time of Alexander's Expedition (chap. ii.); 3. The Delta according to later Greek Accounts (chap. iii.); 4. The Lonibare Mouth of the Indus (Append. Note A); 5. The general course of the Indus in Sindh in ancient times

(Append. Note C); 6. Itineraries in the Las Bêlâ Country (Append. Note D); 7. The March to the Arabios (Append. Note E); 8. The voyage of Nearchos from Alexander's Haven to the Mouth of the Arabios (Append. Note F).

Our author could scarcely have chosen for his subject one that is more beset with problems of aggravating perplexity. The Indus is notable even among Indian rivers for the frequency, and sometimes also for the suddenness, with which it changes its courses. As Colonel Holdich well observes, "The difficulty of restoring to the map of India an outline of the ancient geography of Sindh and the Indus Delta is one which has baffled many generations of scholars. The vagaries of the Indus, even within the limits of historic record, ... render this river, even before the Delta is reached, a hopeless feature for reference with regard to the position of places said once to have been near its bank. Within the limits of the Delta the confusion of hydrography becomes even more confounded." In my note on Alexander in Sindh, which will be found at [page 352](#), I have noticed that the channel in which the Indus now flows lies much farther to the west than the channel in which the Macedonians found it flowing. This *westing*, as it is called, is due to the operation of the law, first discovered by K. E. von Baer, that the difference of the velocity of the earth's rotation at the Equator and at the Poles causes eroding rivers in the Northern Hemisphere to attack their right bank more than the left, and to push their beds sideways—while in the Southern Hemisphere, this action is reversed. From the *Memoir* we learn how this law, and the other natural laws by which its action is modified, have affected the

Indus. The river, we learn, pursues from the confluence of the Panjnad a very uniform S.W. direction for nearly 300 miles, till it reaches lat.  $26^{\circ} 56'$ , long.  $67^{\circ} 53'$ . At this point the river changes its general direction to one due south, and maintains this for about 60 miles, till it strikes, in lat.  $26^{\circ} 20'$ , long.  $67^{\circ} 55'$ , the eastern base of the Lakî Hills, just under the peak called Bhago Toro. Below this point the westing movement of centuries has now brought the stream to the extreme edge of the alluvial land, and into contact with the gravel slopes bordering the hill-country. As the gravel tracts project in a bow into the alluvial land of Lower Sindh, the river, unable to erode them, is forced to conform to their contour, and to run in a great curve for nearly 180 miles to Thata. This curve continues through the Delta to the sea, so that from Bhago Toro to the river-mouth the course of the Indus forms an arc of some 260 miles, of which the chord is about 160 miles, and the maximum depth nearly 50 miles. The general result is to give the course of the river in Sindh the form of the letter S. And, as its abandoned channels attest, *such has been the form in which the river has run in past ages* as it approached the sea. The lower curve of the S had a still bolder sweep *eastward* when the river ran far east of its present course, unchecked by rock or gravel bed, than it has now, when this part of the course has been shaped by a resistance which the current cannot overcome. This S-shaped course of the river *in all ages* should be remembered in considering questions of ancient local topography, such, for instance, as that of the site of Patala. It will then be seen to be impossible that the river can have run at the same period in



its present course near Haidarâbâd, and, lower down through the Ghâro, or ancient Sindh Sâgara; also that if Patala was at Haidarâbâd, the western river-mouth of Alexander's time must have lain, not at the western extremity of the sea-face of the Delta, but much to the east of that point. From these remarks (which I have abbreviated from the text), it will be seen that Haidarâbâd can no longer be taken to be the modern representative of Patala. Where then was the point at which, in Alexander's time, the Indus bifurcated, and Patala was situated? Major-General Haig says that any precise identification of this site is hardly within the limits of possibility; but, for reasons for which his work itself must be consulted, he is of opinion that "the ancient capital of the Delta was most likely not far from a spot 35 miles south-east of Haidarâbâd"—a spot which happens to be 160 miles distant from each extremity of the Delta coast, as supposed to have existed in Alexander's time. With regard to places which lie farther north than Patala, the views set forth in this volume do not differ from those of Major-General Haig. He is, however, of opinion that the kingdom of Mousikanos was of greater extent than is usually supposed, and must have embraced the district of Bahawalpur, which answers better to the description of that kingdom, as *the most flourishing in all India*, than the country around Alôr.

The Delta tract, as taken in the *Memoir*, extends from the sea northwards to the latitude of Haidarâbâd (25° 25' N.), and is bounded on the east by the desert, the Purân or old course of the Indus, now dry, and by the Korî mouth, which is the Lonibare mouth of Ptolemy; on the west by the outer

border of the plains, where the boundary runs S. by W. for 50 miles to near Thata, from which point it turns almost due west, and runs for 60 miles more to the sea, near Karâchî. This alluvial tract is everywhere furrowed by ancient channels, some continuous, both above and throughout the Delta, and others all but totally obliterated. Our author has a notice of each of the more important of these channels. Regarding the Ghâro, the western arm down which Alexander and his fleet sailed, he says that it runs nearly east and west along the southern border of the Kohistân (hill-country), that it is thus on the extreme edge of the Delta, and that it has a course of about 40 miles in length. Referring to the present channel of the Indus, he remarks:—

“This divides the lower Delta region into two unequal portions. Of these, the western, and much the smaller, portion is in the form of an equilateral triangle, having sides of about 64 miles in length, consisting of the river, the coast-line, and the southern edge of the Kohistân plains, and including an area of about 1700 square miles. This it will be convenient to call the ‘Western Delta,’ a name the more suitable that all the westward-flowing branches of the river have, or have once had, their mouths within the limits of the tract to which it will apply.”

A very interesting question is next discussed—that of the secular extension of the Delta seaward—and the conclusion arrived at, which is, however, conjectural, and below the estimate of Colonel Holdich, is that from Alexander’s time to 1869 A.D. the advance of the Delta seaward has been eight miles, or at the rate of rather more than six yards in a year,

this being less than a fourth of the growth of the Nile Delta in a not much greater period of time.

We now proceed to show what new light we gain from the *Memoir* respecting the voyage of Nearchos from the naval station in the Indus to Alexander's Haven, now Karâchî. We abridge the account which Arrian has given in his *Indika* of this part of the famous voyage:—

Weighing from the Naval Station, the fleet reached Stoura, about 100 stadia further down stream, and at the further distance of 30 stadia came to another channel where the sea was salt, at a place called Kaumana. A run of 20 stadia from Kaumana brought it to Koreatis, where it anchored. After weighing from this, a bar (ἔρμα) was encountered at the spot where the Indus discharges into the sea, and through this, where it was soft, a passage had to be cut at low water, for a space of five stadia. On this part of the coast, which was rugged, the waves dashed with great violence. The next place of anchorage was at Krokala, a sandy island, which was reached after a course of 150 stadia, that had followed the windings of the coast. Near this dwelt the Arabies, who had their name from the river Arabis, which separates their territory from that of the Oreitai. On weighing from Krokala, a hill called Eiros lay to the right, and to the left a low flat island, which stretched along the face of the coast, and made the intervening creek narrow. The ships having cleared this creek, reached a commodious harbour to which Nearchos gave the name of "Alexander's Haven." At the harbour's mouth, two stadia off, lay an island named Bibakta, which, acting as a barrier against the sea, caused the existence of the harbour.

Our author thinks that some of the circumstances described in the above passage supply irresistible evidence that it was through the Ghâro that Nearchos sailed into the sea. If the obstruction at the mouth of the river was caused in part by rock, it is certain, he says, that that mouth cannot have been situated to the east of the Ghâro, for along the whole sea-border of the Delta, to a depth of several miles, no rock, not even a stone, is to be found. The description again of the coast adjoining the bar as rugged or rocky (τραχεῖα) can apply with great propriety to the plain west of the Ghâro, consisting, as it does, of a compact gravelly soil, frequently broken by outcropping rock, while the description would be utterly out of place if applied to the low mud-banks of the actual Delta coast. And further, the statement that the fleet, after leaving the river, ran a winding course, shows very pointedly that the Ghâro must have been the mouth by which the fleet reached the sea, since, if it had issued from any of the mouths east of the Ghâro, there would have been no windings to follow, the coast of the Delta being singularly straight and regular. The fleet probably entered the sea by the creek of the Ghâro known as the Kudro, not far from the present mouth of which there is a small port named the Wâghûdar, accessible to riverboats of light draught. Sir A. Burnes, however, who visited the Delta in 1831, took the Pitî channel to have been that by which Nearchos gained the sea. He had seen in that channel what he took to be a rock, and concluded that it was the obstacle which Nearchos had encountered. It was not a rock, however, but probably an oyster-bank, for when

search was made for it afterwards during a survey it was no longer to be found.

The island of Krokala, which General Cunningham erroneously identified with the island of Kîâmârî, which lies in front of Karâchî, no longer exists as an island, but forms part of the mainland. It lay at the mouth of the Gisri Creek, by which the Malîr river pours its waters into the sea. The headland which Arrian calls Eiros is to be identified with the eminence called "Clifton," the eastern headland of Karâchî Bay, the "narrow creek" which the fleet entered on leaving Krokala, is Chinî Creek, which leads into Karâchî Bay and harbour. Kîâmârî thus corresponds with the "low, flat island" of the Greek narrative, while Manora (mistaken by Cunningham for Eiros), exactly corresponds with Bibakta.

We must now briefly notice what is said regarding the eastern portion of the Delta. Here the most important of all the forsaken channels of the Indus is the Purân, which can still be clearly traced from two different starting-points in Central Sindh, one 24, the other 36 miles north-east of Haidarâbâd. The two head channels run south-east for about 50 miles, and unite at a spot 45 miles east by south from Haidarâbâd. The single channel has then a course of over 140 miles to the head of the Korî Creek, the last 50 miles being through the Ran of Kuchchha. The eastern arm of the Indus, which Alexander in person explored, was probably some channel running into the Purân not far above the point where it enters the Ran. On reaching the sea by this eastern branch, Alexander, as Arrian informs us, landed, and with some cavalry proceeded three marches along the coast. This statement the *Memoir* declares to be a



fabrication, since such a march would be an utter impossibility. At the same time, the notion of wells being dug in the locality is scouted as an absurdity.

The *Memoir* further indicates the route by which Alexander, after starting from Patala to return homewards, reached the Arabis or Arabios—now the Purâli river, which flows through Lus Bela, and discharges into Sonmiyâni Bay. The eastern frontier of the Arabios lay near Krokala, and was very probably formed by the river called the Malîr. Alexander, according to Curtius, reached this frontier in a nine-days' march from Patala, and the western frontier, which was about 65 miles distant from the other, in five days more. Our author, assuming that Alexander would not have marched his army across the comparatively waterless plain of the Kohistân, but would keep, if possible, within easy reach of the river or one of its branches, thinks it obvious that the earlier part of the route would follow the branch which ran westward—the branch, namely, of which the Kalrî and Ghâro formed the lower portion. From the position which he assigns to Patala, the distance traversed in the nine-days' march would be 117 miles, while the point on the Malîr where Alexander encamped would be, he thinks, 7 or 8 miles east by north from Karâchî cantonments. The distance between the Malîr and the Purâli, it must be pointed out, is much greater now than it was in Alexander's time, for, like the Indus, the Purâli has shifted its course far westward. The coast-line, moreover, at Sonmiyâni has advanced 20 miles, if not more, since then. Our author, therefore, placing the mouth of the river rather to the north of the latitude of Liâri, suggests that the point where the

army reached the Arabios was about 10 miles east by north from Liâri, and 20 miles north or north by east from Sonmiyâni.

The last Appendix in the *Memoir* is devoted to a review of the narrative of the voyage by which Nearchos in six days reached the mouth of the Arabios or Purâli from Alexander's Haven. It states in the outset that the discovery of the great advance of the coast about the head of Sonmiyâni Bay serves to explain some difficulties in the account of the voyage which have hitherto defied solution. We here abridge that account:—

The fleet, on weighing from the haven, ran a course of 60 stadia, and anchored under shelter of a desert island called Domai. Next day, with a run of 300 stadia, it reached Saranga, and on the following day anchored at a desert place called Sakala. Another run of 300 stadia brought it on the morrow to Morontobara or Women's Haven. This haven had a narrow entrance, but was deep, capacious, and well-sheltered. The fleet, before gaining the entrance, had passed through between two islets, which lay so close to each other that the oars grazed the rocks on each side. On leaving this harbour next day it had on the left a tree-covered island 70 stadia long which sheltered it from the violence of the sea. As the channel, however, which separated the island from the mainland was narrow, and shoal with ebb-tide, the passage through it was difficult and tedious, and it was not till near the dawn of the following day that the fleet succeeded in clearing it. A course of 120 stadia brought it to a good harbour at the mouth of the

Arabios. Not far from this harbour lay an island described as being high and bare.

The island of Domai Colonel Holdich and others would identify with Manora. Manora, however, Haig points out, is even now 4 to 5 miles off from the nearest mainland, and must have been further in Alexander's time. He would, therefore, place Domai rather more than 4 miles due west of the town of Karâchî, or perhaps further north. The fleet, in its course to Saranga, must have rounded Cape Monze or Râs Muâri, but this projection is not mentioned by Arrian. The position of Saranga, to judge from the recorded length of the run, must have been near the mouth of the Hub river, which is 26 miles distant from the position assigned to Domai. The Hub mouth has been silted up, and this led, last century, to its port being abandoned. Our author points out that if K were substituted for  $\Sigma$  in Saranga, we would then have in Karanga a very fair representation of Kharok, the name of the Hub port. However this may be, he adds, there can be no doubt that the Saranga of Nearchos was either at the Hub mouth or a few miles further north.

He then corrects a mistake into which Dr. Vincent and myself had both of us fallen in our respective translations of the record of the next part of the voyage—that from Saranga to Sakala, and thence to Morontobara. Our versions represented the two rocky islets, between which the fleet passed instead of taking a circuitous course out in the open sea, as being in the neighbourhood of Sakala instead of that of Morontobara. Sakala, Haig thinks, may be placed a little east of Bidok Lak—a place 24 miles distant from Saranga, if Saranga be taken to lie a few miles north of the Hub mouth.

Between these two places the fleet must have passed the island of Gadâni, which is now a part of the mainland, and was probably the Kodanê of Ptolemy.

With regard to Morontobara, our author agrees with Colonel Holdich in thinking that it is now represented by the great depression known as "Sironcha," which, though usually a fresh-water lake, is occasionally quite dry. This, as the Colonel states, was at no very distant date a commodious harbour or arm of the sea, which has extended north in historic times at least as far as Liâri, and possibly further. He adds that south-west of Liâri some of the land formation is probably very ancient, and that westward along the Makran coast there are many indications of local changes. The distance from Bidok Lak to the depression is estimated at about 27 miles, which represents very fairly the 300 stadia of the narrative. Liâri is now about 20 miles distant from the sea.

On leaving the Arabios the fleet, coasting the shores of the Oreitai, arrived at Kôkala, a place near Râs Kachar, where Nearchos landed, and was joined by the division of the army under Leonnatus, from whom he received a supply of provisions for his ships. From Kôkala, a course of 500 stadia brought him to the estuary of the Tomêros, or, as it is now called, the river Hingol. All connection between the fleet and the army was thenceforth lost until the district of Harmozia, in Karmania, was reached. The coast of the Oreitai extended westward from the Arabios to the great rocky headland of Malan, which still bears the name given to it in Arrian, Malana—a distance of fully 100 miles. The desolate shores of the Ichthyophagi succeeded, and inland

lay the vast sandy wastes of Gedrosia. Between Cape Malan and the mouth of the Anamis river in Harmozia, from which Nearchos, with a small retinue, proceeded inland to meet Alexander, no fewer than twenty-one names of places at which the fleet touched are recorded in the narrative of the voyage. Most of these have been identified by Major Mockler, the political agent of Makrân. We can refer to only one or two of the more notable. From Cape Malan the fleet proceeded to Bagisâra, which, Colonel Holdich tells us, is likely enough the Dimizaar or eastern bay of the Urmara headland. The Pasisis, who are mentioned as a people of this neighbourhood, have left frequent traces of their existence along the coast. At Kalama, now Khor Khalmat, which was reached on the second day from Urmara, there can be traced a very considerable extension of the land seawards, which would have completely altered the course of the fleet from the present coasting tract. The island of Karbine, which was distant 100 stadia from Kalama, cannot, our author points out, be the island of Astola, but is probably a headland now connected with the mainland by a low sandy waste. Astola, however, he takes to be the island sacred to the sun, which Arrian calls Nosala, and places at a distance of 100 stadia from the mainland. The nearest land to it is Ras Jaddi or Koh Zarên, in the neighbourhood of which was Mosarna, where Nearchos took on board a pilot, by whom thenceforth the course of the fleet was directed. The next place of importance was Barna, called by others Bâdara, and this Mockler identifies with Gwâdar. The following identifications succeed:—Dendrobosa with the west point of Gwâdar headland, Kôphas with Pishikân Bay, Bagia with



Cape Brês, Tâlmèna with a harbour in Chahbar Bay, Kanate with Karatee, Dagasira with Jakeisar, near the mouth of the Jageen river, Bâdis with Kôh Mubârak, and the mouth of the Anamis river with a point north by east from the island of Ormus. The distances which Arrian records as run by the fleet from day to day are generally excessive, especially after it had left the mouth of the Arabios.

We must now resume consideration of the movements of Alexander himself. When we left him he had reached the banks of the Arabios, at a point distant some twenty miles from Sonmiyâni, or perhaps even higher up the river. On crossing the stream he turned to his left towards the sea, and with a picked force made a sudden descent on the Oreitai. After a night's march he came to a well-inhabited district, defeated the Oreitai, and penetrated to their capital—a mere village called Rambakia, which Colonel Holdich places at or near Khairkot. The Oreitai themselves are, in his opinion, represented by the Lumri tribes of Las Bela, who are of Rajput descent. From Rambakia Alexander proceeded with a part of his troops to force the narrow pass which the Gadrôsoi and the Oreitai had conjointly seized with the design of stopping his progress. This defile was most probably the turning pass at the northern end of the Hala range. The Gadrôsoi seem to owe their name to the Gadurs, one of the Lumri clans, from which, however, they hold themselves somewhat distinct. Alexander, after clearing the pass, pushed on through a desert country into the territory of the Gadrôsoi, and drew down to the coast. He must then, says our author, have followed the valley of the Phur to the coast, and pushed on along the track of the modern

telegraph line till he reached the neighbourhood of the Hingol river, where he halted to collect supplies for the fleet. On this part of the route were the tamarisk trees which yielded myrrh, the mangrove swamps, the euphorbias with prickly shoots, and the roots of spikenard.

Beyond this he could no longer pursue his march along the coast in order to keep in touch with the fleet. The huge barrier of the Malan range, which abutted direct on the sea, stopped his way. There was no goat track in those days, such as, after infinite difficulty, helped the telegraph line over. He was consequently forced into the interior. Taking the only route that was possible, he followed up the Hingol till he could turn the Malan by the first available pass westward. Nothing here, we are told, has altered since his days. The magnificent peaks and mountains which surround the sacred shrine of Hinglaz are "everlasting hills," and it was through these that he proceeded to make his way. The windings of the Hingol river he followed for 40 miles up to its junction with the Parkan. The bed of this stream leads westward from the Hingol, and skirts the north of the Taloi range. Alexander had thus for the first time a chance of turning the Malan block, and directing his march westward to the sea. He therefore pushed his way through this low valley, which was flanked by the Taloi hills, that rose on his left to a height of 2000 feet. All the region at their base was a wilderness of sandy hillocks and scanty grass-covered waste, which could afford his troops no supplies and no shelter from the fierce autumn heat. All the miseries of his retreat, which are so graphically depicted by his historians, were concentrated into the distance between the Hingol and

the point where he regained the coast. The Parkan route should have led him to the river Basol, but having lost his way, he must have emerged near the harbour of Pasnî, almost on the line of the present telegraph. The distance from the Hingol to Pasnî our author estimates at about 200 miles; but in Curzon's well-known map of Persia it appears as if only 150.

From Pasnî Alexander marched for seven days along the coast till he reached the well-known highway to Karmania. He could only leave the coast near the Dasht river and strike into the valley of the Bahu, which would lead him to Bampur, the capital of Gadrosia. This part of the march probably occupied nearly a month. It has been doubted whether Bampur was, in Alexander's time, the capital of Gadrosia, rather than the place on the edge of the Kirman desert, called indifferently Fahraj, Purag, and Pura, where there are extensive ruins of a very ancient date. Colonel Holdich, however, adduces arguments which suffice to set aside the claims advanced in favour of Fahraj. Bampur is as old as Fahraj, and has in its neighbourhood the site of a city still older, and now called Pura and Purag. Besides, in order to reach Fahraj, Alexander must have passed Bampur, since there is no other way consistent with Arrian's account. With regard to the route pursued by Krateros with the heavy transport and invalids, our author points out that it was probably by the Mulla (and not the Bolan) pass to Kelat and Quetta. Thence he must have taken the Kandahar route to the Helmund, and followed that river down to the fertile plains of lower Seistan, whence he crossed the Kirman

desert by a well-known modern caravan route and joined Alexander at or near Kirman.

Since the publication of his lecture, of which we have thus summarised the contents, Colonel Holdich has contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* (January 1896), an article on "The Origin of the Kafîr of the Hindu-Kush," which contains some very interesting notices regarding Alexander as he fought his way from the Hindu-Kush to the banks of the Indus. The route by which the conqueror himself advanced with one division of his army, while the other division, which was more heavily armed, advanced by the Khaibar Pass, is thus described by our author:—

"The recognised road to India from Central Asia was that which passed through the plains of Kabul, by the Kabul river, into Laghmân or Lamghân, and thence by the open Dasht-i-Gumbaz into the lower Kunar. From the Kunar valley this road, even to the time of Baber's invasion of India (early in the sixteenth century), crossed the comparatively low intervening range into Bajour; thence to the valley of the Panj-Kora and Swat, and out into India by the same passes with which we have now (after nearly 400 years) found it convenient to enter the same district."

A reference to our notes, B. C. D. E., in the [Appendix](#), will show that this view of the route is that which we ourselves had adopted. His views with regard to the position of Massaga, Aornos, and Embolima are also coincident with those at which we had arrived. Dyrta he takes to have been the place now known as Dir. That opinion was held by such great authorities as Court and Lassen, but we have pointed

out an objection to it in [p. 76, n. 3](#). To Nysa, which, as will be seen by a reference to our long note [pp. 338-340](#), we have identified with the Nagara or Dionysopolis of Ptolemy (B. vii., 43), thus placing it at a distance of four or five miles west of Jalâlâbâd and near the Kabul river, Colonel Holdich assigns a different locality.

“The Nysaeans,” he says, “whose city Alexander spared, were the descendants of those conquerors, who, coming from the west, were probably deterred by the heat of the plains of India from carrying their conquests south of the Punjab. They settled on the cool and well-watered slopes of those mountains which crown the uplands of Swat and Bajour, where they cultivated the vine for generations.... It seems possible that they may have extended their habitat as far eastward as the upper Swat valley and the mountain region of the Indus, and at one time may have occupied the site of the ancient capital of the Assakenoi, Massaga, which there is reason to suppose stood in about the position now occupied by the town of Manglaor.”

The hill in the neighbourhood of Nysa called Mount Mêros, which was clad with ivy, laurel, and vine-trees, he identifies with the Koh-i-Mor or Mountain of Mor, and gives this account of it:—

“On the right bank of the Panj-Kora river (the ancient Ghoura), nearly opposite to its junction with the river of Swat (Suastos), is a very conspicuous mountain, whose three-headed outline can be distinctly seen from the Peshawar cantonment, known as the Koh-i-Mor or Mountain of Mor. On the southern slopes of this mountain, near the foot of it, is a large scattered village called Nuzar or Nasar.

The sides of the mountain spurs are clothed with the same forest and jungle that is common to the mountains of Kafiristan, and to the hills intervening between Kafiristan and the Koh-i-Mor. Amid this jungle are to be found the wild vine and ivy."

In [note B.](#)—Nikaia—page 332, some remarks will be found regarding the Kafirs. Colonel Holdich describes them similarly, but upholds the view, rejected by Elphinstone, of their Greek origin. The best known of them, he points out, are the Kamdesh Kafirs from the lower valley of the Bashgol, a large affluent of the Kunar river, which it joins from the north-west, some forty miles below Chitral. He then continues:—

"In the case of the Kamdesh Kafir, at least, the tradition of Greek or Pelasgic origin seems likely to be verified in a very remarkable way. Scientific inquiry has been converging on him from several directions, and it seems possible that the ethnographical riddle connected with his existence will be solved ere long. In appearance he is of a distinct Aryan type, with low forehead, and prominent aquiline features, entirely free from Tartar or Mongolian traits; his eyes, though generally dark, are frequently of a light grey colour; his complexion is fair enough to pass for Southern European; his figure is always slight, but indicating marvellous activity and strength; and the modelling of his limbs would furnish study for a sculptor."

Colonel Holdich subsequently calls our attention to certain strange inscriptions found in the valley of the Indus east of Swat, and engraved, most of them, on stone slabs built into towers which are now in ruins. These inscriptions,

on being subjected to a congress of Orientalists, were pronounced to be in an unknown tongue. They may possibly, he adds, be found to be vastly more ancient than the towers they adorned, it being, at any rate, a notable fact about them that some of them “recall a Greek alphabet of archaic type.” He concludes his observations regarding the Kafîrs in these terms: “I cannot but believe them to be the modern representatives of that very ancient western race, the Nysaeans—so ancient that the historians of Alexander refer to their origin as mythical.”

I may, in conclusion, advert, in a word, to an article of great ability, contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for October 1894, in which the writer endeavours to show that Alexander reached the Indus by a widely different route from that which is indicated in our pages, although it is also the route which, in its main outlines, has been determined by the best authorities—men of high military rank, personally acquainted with the country, and scholars of the greatest eminence. As the selection of the route advocated was mainly based on the opinion which the writer had formed as to the point whereat Alexander had effected his passage of the Indus, it will suffice to refute his theory if we prove that his opinion is altogether untenable. In his view, the Indus was crossed, not at Attock, but much higher up stream, at a point between Amb and the mouth of the Barhind river, the Parenos of the Greeks. Now, while the passage at Attock is that which, from time immemorial, has been used as the easiest means of access into India from the west, the passage higher up is much more difficult and dangerous, for though the river is not there so wide, its