

Chinese trade route through it, still received water sufficient for permanent occupation. Until the Chinese and other documents found at L.M. have been duly interpreted no definite view can be formed of the character of this settlement. But it appears to me on topographical and archaeological grounds very probable that it derived some importance from its position close to the direct route connecting the Chinese station of 'ancient Lou-lan', i. e. the Lou-lan site L.A., with Mīrān and Charkhlik, then as now the chief places of the Lop territory or Shan-shan.

Position
of L.M.
relative to
L.K. fort.

In *Serindia* I have discussed in detail the great role which that station, the bridge-head as it were of the ancient Chinese high road coming through the desert from Tun-huang, must have played during the centuries immediately before and after Christ, standing as it did on the track of the main traffic between China and the West.¹¹ The route connecting it with the old capital of Shan-shan or Lop, located at the site of Mīrān, and thence with the oasis of Charkhlik (*I-hsin*), was certainly much frequented, and as the fort L.K. lies just on the most direct line between the two points,¹² it may safely be assumed to have been intended to guard the route. But it is probable that a local source of supplies existed for the maintenance of the fortified roadside post and for the convenience of such traffic as passed by it, and since no ancient cultivation was traceable around L.K., the conclusion seems justified that it was the settlement marked by the L.M. site which furnished those supplies and thus directly accounted for the location of the fort at this point. We shall see farther on that the position occupied by the ancient Chinese *castrum* L.E. on the old high road leading from the Tun-huang Limes to the Lou-lan Site is likely to have been determined by a similar consideration.¹³

SECTION IV.—LIST OF ANTIQUES EXCAVATED OR FOUND AT THE SITES L.L., L.M., AND L.R.

OBJECTS FOUND BETWEEN RUINED FORTS L.K. AND L.L.

L.K.-LL. 01. Jade celt; broad, thin, sharpened to fine axe-edge. Green jade. $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{3}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{4}''$.

L.K.-L.L. 02-3. Two stone flakes, single and double ribbed. $1\frac{1}{8}'' \times \frac{9}{16}''$, and $1\frac{1}{4}'' \times \frac{3}{8}''$.

OBJECTS EXCAVATED WITHIN RUINED FORT L.L.

L.L. 01. Fabric frs.; rags of felt, canvas, silk, &c., with frs. of hair rope and hemp cord. Gr. length (fabric fr.) 1' 8".

L.L. 02. Fr. of printed silk, blue with resist pattern of white dots in diagonal trellis, each lozenge containing a rosette of seven dots around a centre dot. Weave, fine warp-rib. Torn. c. 3" sq. Pl. LXXXVI.

L.L. 03. Felt cord; three strands, twisted. c. 7" long.

L.L. 04. Bronze frame, oblong, on thin hemp string. $\frac{5}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$.

L.L. 05. Fr. of iron (?) slag. $2\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2'' \times \frac{5}{16}''$.

L.L. 06. Misc. fabric and vegetable frs., including wool, felt, string, plaited grass, plain woollen cloth, hank of cloth (?) thread, &c. Gr. length (thread) 2' 3".

L.L. 07. Bundle of felt frs., with string and pieces of woollen jean. Gr. M. (felt) c. $9\frac{1}{2}'' \times 10\frac{1}{2}''$.

L.L. 08. Fr. of grey marble, irregular. $2\frac{1}{8}'' \times \frac{7}{8}'' \times \frac{5}{8}''$.

L.L. 09. Quantity of chopped straw, and two small frs. of perished wood.

L.L. 010. Fr. of bronze, concavo-convex. $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{1}{32}''$.

L.L. 011. Fr. of pottery, fine black. $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{7}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{8}''$.

L.L. 012. Stone core, hard black. $1'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}'' \times \frac{7}{8}''$.

L.L. 013. Strip of woollen fabric; light buff, strong, evenly woven, plain cloth. $9'' \times \frac{1}{4}''$.

L.L. 014. Strip of felt, light natural yellow, with remains of strong figured woollen fabric stitched to it. $8'' \times 1''$.

L.L. 015. Fr. of felt, light natural buff, in holes. $11'' \times 9\frac{1}{2}''$.

L.L. 016. Hank of cotton (?) thread, undyed. Length 1' 4".

¹¹ Cf. *Serindia*, i. pp. 416 sqq.

¹² See above, p. 189.

¹³ See below, p. 260; -Map No. 29. D. 3.