

we traversed we came only in two places upon insignificant fragments of pottery, too scant even to indicate a regular shepherd's station.

Ancient
high road
along
Kuruk-
daryā.

The importance of this riverine belt lay solely in its providing a practicable and very direct line for the western portion of the ancient Chinese high road connecting Tun-huang with the oases north of the Tārīm. In this respect it may be compared with the riverine belt of the lower Khotan river and the facilities that it offers for the trade route connecting Khotan with Ak-su and Kuchā. In order to trace the position of such ancient roadside stations as had once been maintained in this riverine belt before the Lou-lan route was abandoned, a prolonged and very close search would be needed. The difficulty about water would allow this to be carried out only during the depth of winter, when ice is available at Yārdang-bulak. Those stations were probably placed close to the river banks for the sake of easy access to water and constructed of wattle and timber or perhaps of mere rush walls. They were bound to decay rapidly on ground subject to occasional inundation, or to be buried under the deposits of silt and drift-sand accumulating along the main river-bed. Such archaeologically favourable conditions as once irrigated and subsequently abandoned areas offer in this region for the preservation of remains of dwellings, even when isolated, were here conspicuously absent. As a striking illustration of a similarly rapid disappearance of remains along the Khotan river, I may mention that of the Sangars maintained along it during Yāqūb Bēg's régime, and for a time after, I found it impossible to trace any relics at more than one or two places, though their positions were still well remembered by my guides.

LIST OF OBJECTS FROM GRAVES OF BURIAL-GROUNDS L.S. AND L.T.

OBJECTS EXCAVATED IN GRAVES OF BURIAL-GROUND L.S.

- L.S. 02.** Mass of hair and wool, dark brown and yellow.
- L.S. 1. 01.** Fr. of woollen fabric, terra-cotta; coarse yarn, warp perished; and piece of twisted woollen and grass cord. Fabric, gr. M. 3"; cord length 3½".
- L.S. 1. 02.** Fr. of bronze tube; straight, badly corroded. Length 1½", diam. ½".
- L.S. 2. 01.** Bundle of twigs, long and fine, doubled twice and bound round with another twig. Free ends projecting but broken. Length 10", diam. 1¼". Pl. XXVI.
- L.S. 2. 02.** Wooden ladle. Deep round bowl, with straight projecting handle cut in form in one piece. Fr. of edge broken off but preserved; no orn. Good condition. Length of whole 10¾"; bowl, diam. 5", depth 2½". Pl. XXVI.
- L.S. 2. 03.** Basket-work strainer or cover; parabolic. Centre formed of seven stakes—three inside, at right angles to four outside; the four bound together in centre by wrap-turning or 'paring', before the three are placed below them. The two sets are then joined by two rounds of close paring. Extra stakes are then introduced and the paring is continued, but with gradually increasing width between the rounds, to form an open texture. Number of rounds of 'paring' is fourteen. Border thickened and bound with rather clumsy lapping. Stakes appear to be stems of some climber and paring probably of the same. Well made and preserved. Diam. of mouth 5¾", depth 2½". Pl. XXVI.
- L.S. 2. 04.** Wooden bowl, elliptical; no flattening for base. Scored underneath with knife-cuts. Faint traces of black paint or lacquer inside and out. Wood hard. Mouth 7¾" × 5¾", depth 3½", thickness (average) ¾". Pl. XXVI.
- L.S. 2. 05.** Bone pin, from shroud. Round in section, gently tapering, flattened and widened at one end for head; cf. shroud-pins, L.F. ii. 04 (Pl. XXIV). Length 3¼", gr. width ¼". Pl. XXIV.
- L.S. 2. 06.** Fr. of goat's-hair fabric, coarse dark brown, plain weave; orn. with occasional inwoven thread of red or yellow. Sand-encrusted. Gr. M. 3½".
- L.S. 2. 07.** Human skull; adult. Rather pronounced ridge extends from upper half of frontal bone backward along top of head. Thick coating of brown dust lightly adhering to L. side (probably hair) bears impression of coarse canvas (?). All teeth perfect excepting L. upper wisdom, probably recently fallen out; crowns very evenly and smoothly worn. Chin prominent and narrow.
- L.S. 3. 01.** Fr. of woollen face-cloth; coarse plain weave of strong yellowish wool, with twisted fringe of same, and narrow ornamental line of brown wool inwoven along top of fringe. For width of 1½", within fringed border, double shoots of weft. Selvedge on one side. Well made. Marks of brown discoloration. One corner tied up with goat's-hair cord, containing small broken twigs (*Ephedra*); cf. L.Q. iii. 01, and L.F. 1. 03. Gr. M. 1' 5" × 9". Pl. XXV.