

its course with branches of the Tārīm below Tikenlik,<sup>12</sup> so the river, in that earlier period when it extended towards Lou-lan along the line marked by the present Kuruk-daryā, may well have been joined higher up by beds passing towards it from the Yārkan river and from the latter's important northern affluent, the Inchike-daryā or river of Shahyār. There are even now indications of such interlacing between these river systems in the area marked in the north by Chong-köl (Map No. 25. A. 2) and by Yangi-köl on the Yārkan-daryā (Map No. 25. B. 3).<sup>13</sup> If the Konche-daryā above Ying-p'an received such a contribution from the Inchike-Yārkan-daryā system it would be still easier to account for the great extent of the ground covered by its ancient delta about Lou-lan.

Likelihood  
of ancient  
connexion  
with Tārīm.

The other consideration, which distinctly favours the view just indicated, is supplied by Li Tao-yüan's account itself. Schematic as the Chinese description reproduced by him of the hydrography of the Tārīm basin evidently is, it would scarcely have been possible for it to treat the river-course extending to Lou-lan along the line marked by the Kuruk-daryā as forming part of the 'River of the North',<sup>14</sup> i. e. the united rivers of Kāshgar and Yārkan, if its waters had been solely derived from the Konche-daryā; for this has quite a distinct origin and comes from the opposite end of the Tārīm basin. If, however, the Konche-daryā, while it followed the straight continuation of its bed leading in the direction of Lou-lan, also received a contribution to its volume from the side of the drainage that is now wholly gathered into the terminal Tārīm, the generalization underlying the Chinese description of the river system becomes quite intelligible. It would be impossible now, after so many centuries of riverine changes, to determine where was situated this connexion between the Konche-daryā and the wholly distinct river system represented by the lower Yārkan-daryā and its tributary from the direction of Shahyār and Kuchā. Nor would even conjectures on the point be justified so long as we have no exact survey of the whole of this Mesopotamia.

An attempt to trace the probable course or courses of the Konche-daryā above Ying-p'an during the early historical period when its water flowed in the Kuruk-daryā bed towards Lou-lan is, naturally, not open to the same objection. Before, however, considering what light our actual survey of the region may throw on the question, I must recur to a particular point raised by Li Tao-yüan's above-quoted account which has a direct antiquarian bearing. I mean the reference to the 'town of Chu-pin' south of which the 'River of the North' is said to pass, after flowing past the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.*, pp. 78 sqq., with Dr. Hassenstein's map illustrating his observations.

<sup>13</sup> The Russian map, based here probably on Przevalsky's surveys, marks a connexion between the Inchike-daryā and the Konche-daryā to the south of Kara-kum and again from the side of the Chong-köl lagoons which are fed by the Inchike-daryā. Afrāz-gul's mapping, too, shows a channel passing from the Chong-köl eastwards in the direction of the Konche-daryā. His route report also records that he heard at Ulūgh-köl, on the Tikenlik-Korla road, of a bed passing from the Inchike-daryā to the Konche-daryā which recently supplied water for irrigation at Ulūgh-köl.

Whether this channel has any relation to the old river branch which Dr. Hedin's mapping of 1900 between Yangi-köl and Dilpār shows as having carried water from the side of the Yārkan-daryā to the Konche-daryā ten years before, I am unable to say. Owing to the want of a Loplik guide on our march from Ying-p'an to Kara-kum, I was unable to make inquiries about this portion of the Konche-daryā, and the necessity of visiting the ruined watch-stations on the old route kept us at most points too far away from the river

for useful observations. The whole of this Mesopotamia is inevitably liable to considerable changes, and away from the main river-beds still awaits systematic survey.

<sup>14</sup> That by the 'River of the North' the united Yārkan and Kāshgar rivers are meant is certain; for the *Shui ching* itself, in the passage upon which Li Tao-yüan comments, speaks of this river as the 'Ho (river) of the Ts'ung-ling' 葱嶺河, *Ts'ung-ling* being the Chinese designation of the meridional range dividing the Pāmirs and Oxus drainage from the basin of the Tārīm.

A complete translation by a competent Sinologist of Li Tao-yüan's account relating to the 'River of the North' would manifestly be of considerable interest to geographical and antiquarian students alike. This interest is not seriously impaired by the obviously schematic treatment of the subject, sufficiently illustrated by the distinction between the 'rivers of the North and South' and by the retention of the early Chinese belief, as expressed in the text of the *Shui ching*, that made the waters of the Tārīm come to light again in the Huang-ho; cf. Richthofen, *China*, i. p. 226.