

every summer the hot glowing sun has burned down on their tombs. A peaceful resting-place they certainly had, until strangers came and disturbed them in trying to reveal something of the unknown and to dispel something of the oblivion which has for so long rested over this lonely part of Central Asia.

5. THE RUINS OF THE LOP DESERT.¹

A. INTRODUCTION.

The ruins of solidly constructed fortresses with walls of stamped clay, stupas of sun-dried bricks, and dwelling houses or temples with less solid walls but having reinforcements of timber, form the most conspicuous remains of human settlements of bygone ages in what for so many centuries has been an absolute desert. Thanks to the efforts of all visitors — in reality they are not very many — to these desolate regions quite a number of ruins have been discovered and put on record. In all probability many more await discovery, though probably none of any marked size.

SVEN HEDIN was the first to discover ancient ruins in the Lop desert, which happened on his expedition 1900 and 1901. He has fully described these events in his great work "Scientific Results of a Journey in Central Asia", Vol. II, and in his personal narrative "Asien". I have already discussed these questions in BMFEA 7, pp. 72—74.

The next to visit these grounds was the American geographer ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON. Between Altmish-bulaq and the Lou-lan station he, early in 1906, came across a good-sized house on the top of a great mesa, and half a mile from there were parts of an ancient *s a t m a* or shepherd's hut of reeds (Huntington p. 262). On his map he has marked seven ruins (beside the Lou-lan station) between Altmish-bulaq and Chivillik-köl. Save the two just mentioned he gives no particulars as to their appearance or exact position, and it is impossible to correlate them with the ruins found by later explorers. I have thus been unable to enter them on my maps. As far as mentioned in his book no collections of antiquities were made.

Sir AUREL STEIN surveyed the Lou-lan region both in the winter season 1906—07 and 1914, visiting all ruins discovered by HEDIN, and tracing many others. In the following I use STEIN's designations also for those ruins found by HEDIN, cf. the map Fig. 37. In practically all localities he undertook excavations which yielded rich collections of antiquities of about the same kind as those brought to light by HEDIN.

The Japanese scholar TACHIBANA paid a visit to the Lou-lan station in 1910, but I am unaware of any discoveries of ruins made by him.

The Chinese archaeologist HUANG WEN-PI, who took part in Dr. HEDIN's great

¹ I have discussed the Lop-nor graves anterior to the ruins from there because the former have yielded much more important finds, though it would have been more logical to start with the ruined dwellings and take the graves last.