

coloured wool in the folds show that the piece has been joined to some other material.

33:25. Flat bottom of large oval basket, coiled with interlocking stitches on a

coarse single-rod foundation. 74×36 cm.

33:26. Fragm. of rim of large basket, probably a tray-basket of the same kind as No. 37:2. (Pl. 18:7).

D. DISCUSSION.

The distribution of ruins, cemeteries and stray finds clearly shows that the settlements have been limited to the western side of the large salt crust between the glacia of the foot hills of Quruq-tagh and the northern marshes of Qara-qoshun. We have thus to deal with a delta-settlement. If we take into account only the remains of buildings and graves we can distinguish three groups. The first one is centred around the present complicated delta of Qum-darya, and is no doubt the most important of the groups, containing many ruins and the main part of the graves.

The second group consists of STEIN'S ruins L. K., L. L., L. M. and L. R., situated to the south and near the northern shore of the Qara-qoshun. These settlements have probably drawn their water supply from one and the same river branch, apparently the southernmost delta branch in the time of Lou-lan. Prof. HERRMANN'S construction of a "River of the South", passing through the middle of the Taklamakan, the fortress of Merdek and the ruins just mentioned, seems too much out of touch with realities. In his last work he has also queried it on the map. (Herrmann 1938, Taf. VIII).

So far, no graves have been discovered belonging to this second group of ruins.

The third group is formed by the graves discovered in the western part of the Lop desert along The Small River. There the water has returned and is now following a single bed, which must be practically identical with the old course. This region is more protected against wind erosion than the more easterly parts of the desert, thanks to its cover of sand dunes. At the time of Lou-lan this region was covered by less sand, but with the passing of the centuries more and more drift sand has accumulated.

Future researches will of course increase the number of ancient remains — even in the areas between these three groups — and quite new centres may come to light. In the main, however, I believe that the differentiation as given above will remain.

The first group forms the centre of the whole Lou-lan settlement, and this fact alone makes it evident that the then delta must have watered this region. It is remarkable, though, that the Lou-lan station, which during at least the latter part of the occupation was the centre, is the southernmost ruin so far known in this group.

The total absence of structural remains between the Lou-lan station and the southern group of ruins is worthy of special attention. On this stretch of 45 km.