

of the Lop region has already been discussed with reference to the statements furnished by Li Tao-yüan's commentary on the 'Book of the Waters'.²⁰ It was seen that the town of I-hsün, which Li Tao-yüan places to the south of the united course of the Tārīm and Charchan River, and which in his time had become the capital of Shan-shan, must be located at the present Charkhlik. It was further proved that the position of the town of Yü-ni, which is named by the *Ch'ien Han shu* as the capital of Shan-shan or Lou-lan, and which in Li Tao-yüan's time was known as the 'old eastern town', corresponds to the ancient site of Mīrān. With these locations the account given by the Annals as to the origin of the Chinese military colony at I-hsün fully agrees; for, as M. Chavannes has rightly recognized,²¹ the locality selected for this colony must have been within an easy distance of the capital if the presence of a Chinese garrison planted there was to afford the support which the new king of Shan-shan needed.

The evidence thus afforded by the *Ch'ien Han shu* enables us to feel certain that, from about 77 B.C. onwards, the capital of the 'kingdom' corresponding to the mediaeval and modern Lop was situated in the present Charkhlik tract. It also supplies the definite date when the name of the territory was changed from the original *Lou-lan* to *Shan-shan*. There is nothing in the record of the Annals to suggest that this change in the official Chinese designation was prompted or accompanied by any change in the position of the capital. But since this view has been put forward by M. Chavannes and after him by Dr. Herrmann,²² though for different reasons, it seems necessary to examine the question thus raised more closely.

The reason which induced M. Chavannes to suggest, but with due critical caution, that such a transfer of the capital took place in 77 B.C. was the difficulty of otherwise reconciling the evidence. On the one hand, the position of I-hsün was established south of the terminal course of the Tārīm, and the records of later date placed Shan-shan in the same vicinity near Charkhlik; on the other, he had adopted a location for Lou-lan either at Pichan or Lapchuk, both on the Hāmi-Turfān route.²³ We have, however, already seen that this location was based on a misapprehension.²⁴ In reality the 'ancient Lou-lan', which the *Wei lio* mentions on its 'route of the Centre', is identical with the ruined 'site of Lou-lan' to the north of the Lop-nōr, but yet within the Lop region. The exploration of these ruins, first discovered by Dr. Hedin in 1900, has convinced me by conclusive archaeological evidence that the 'route of the Centre', which the *Wei lio's* author knew about the middle of the third century A.D., passed this site, and that it was not abandoned until about the middle of the fourth century. Documentary evidence obtained at the site, and discussed in Chapter XI, shows that the Chinese military station represented by those ruins was actually called *Lou-lan* in local Chinese records of the third and fourth centuries.²⁵

This proves that the *Wei lio* and the source used in Li Tao-yüan's commentary on the *Shui ching* were right in giving the name of *Lou-lan* to the Chinese military colony which guarded the route along the north side of Lop-nōr in their own time. But the continued application of the archaic name *Lou-lan* to this particular locality cannot be accepted as proof that the capital of the whole Lop tract or *Lou-lan*, as the Chinese called it down to 77 B.C., must also necessarily have stood there. It is simple enough to assume that the Chinese retained in use or revived the antiquated designation of *Lou-lan* for that part of Lop through which the most direct route westwards from Tun-huang led, and which to them was consequently of special importance, while for the capital of

Name of
Lou-lan
changed to
Shan-shan.

Supposed
transfer of
Lou-lan
capital.

Ancient
name re-
tained for
colony north
of Lop-nōr.

²⁰ Cf. above, pp. 325 sqq.; for Li Tao-yüan's record, see Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1905, pp. 567 sqq.

²¹ Cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1905, p. 533, note.

²² Cf. Herrmann, *Seidenstrassen*, pp. 103 sq.

²³ Cf. in particular M. Chavannes' discussion in his notes

on the *Wei lio's* mention of 'ancient Lou-lan', *T'oung-pao*, 1905, pp. 531 sqq.

²⁴ See above, pp. 336 sq., note 13.

²⁵ See below, chap. xi. sec. viii.