

in this belt. But their discovery has in no way modified the general conclusions which the results of my excavations, described above, allow us to draw about the history of the ruined site. They seem to me to prove that all the structures examined, with the single exception of the fort M. 1, date from a period approximately corresponding to that to which the ruins of the Lou-lan Site belong, viz. the third and early fourth century A.D., and that they were probably abandoned about the time when occupation ceased at Lou-lan. The remains themselves afford no direct indication of the cause or causes to which the abandonment was due. That the settlement which must have been close to these Buddhist shrines and Stūpas was that of the ancient *Yü-ni*, 'the Old Eastern Town' of Shan-shan, I believe to have made highly probable by the analysis of the Chinese historical records examined in a previous chapter.¹⁹

Settlement
of ancient
Yü-ni.

No remains
of dwellings
traced.

These sanctuaries must have already been completely in ruin when the fort M. 1 was built in the eighth century, probably towards the close of T'ang domination in Eastern Turkestan. To what extent and under what conditions the settlement continued to exist during the intervening period it is impossible to ascertain from the available archaeological data. There are no structural remains which could be assigned to this period. All traces that the dwellings of that time and of the settlement coeval with the Tibetan occupation may have left behind are likely to lie completely buried, either in the riverine belt still capable of irrigation, or in the area which receives subsoil water from the river and is now covered with scrub and tamarisk-cones. There is no indication whatever that the site was permanently occupied after the close of the Tibetan period. Therefore we may safely assume that when Marco Polo passed here more than six centuries ago, it was the same desolate waste which it remained until the small Loplik colony settled down by the Mīrān stream a few years after my first visit.

SECTION IX. LIST OF ANTIQUES FROM SHRINES OF MĪRĀN

OBJECTS EXCAVATED IN, OR FOUND NEAR, TEMPLE M. II

- M. II. a. Pottery fr.**, hand-made, of well-levigated red clay, and hard fired on an open hearth; both faces dark brown. $1\frac{1}{8}'' \times 1\frac{3}{8}''$.
- M. II. b. Pottery fr.**, as M. II. a., but thicker; inside face dull brown. $2\frac{3}{8}'' \times 1\frac{5}{8}''$.
- M. II. c. Pottery fr.**, hand-made, fired on an open hearth; red clay burning black; outside orn. with indistinct stamped pattern, apparently series of short bars, arranged at various angles to one another. $2\frac{1}{16}'' \times 1\frac{7}{8}''$.
- M. II. d-e. Pottery frs.**, hand-made; dull light red clay, well levigated and hard fired on an open hearth. Gr. M. 2".
- M. II. 001. Arrow-shaft of lacquered reed**, as T. XIX. i. 006; remains of feathers and binding; notch at end to fit on string; found in N.E. passage. Length $5\frac{3}{4}''$. Pl. LI.
- M. II. 002. a-b. Stucco relief frs.** of drapery from colossal and life-size figs.
(a) Top of R. thigh and lower part of abdomen; prob. from colossal seated Buddha statue (see M. II. 007); no relief, folds of drapery being rendered by incised lines, single and in groups of three alternately, while the surface follows roughly the forms of the body. Drapery is drawn
- across the body (cf. *Ancient Khotan*, ii. Pl. LXXXVI, R. xii. 1, but reversed) falling in almost straight folds by R. side and in curves across body, the uppermost being the flattest. Poor work; soft clay plentifully mixed with hair; painted red. $1' 7'' \times 1'$.
(b) L. shoulder with part of neck and breast, prob. from life-size figure (see M. II. 006); outer drapery rendered by pairs of incised lines; border along neck raised in a pointed ridge with subsidiary inner folds; painted red; at neck, part of inner robe visible, pale yellow, no folds; flesh apparently white. Clay, as (a). $10'' \times 9\frac{1}{2}''$.
- M. II. 004. Fresco fr.**, painted pink with line of buff across, and traces of green, buff, and black; colour very soft. $4'' \times 2\frac{5}{8}''$.
- M. II. 005. Frs. of coarse hemp string.** Gr. length $1' 9''$.
- M. II. 006. Stucco relief head**, life-size, prob. of Buddha as there are signs of *uṣṇīṣa* (broken off) on top; almost whole of surface scaled off. Features of conventional Buddha type, with smooth forehead and cheeks, large rather prominent eyeballs with eyes almost closed, short sharp-edged nose, and small upturned mouth; ears broken at tips but prob. elongated. Remains only of white slip over face; hair rendered by small snail-shell curls, applied

¹⁹ See above, pp. 326 sqq., 333.