

forbidden ground make it possible to account for the absence of structural remains. In any case we have seen that the *Wei lio* mentions the 'Chü-lu granary' in a position corresponding to the present stage of Bēsh-toghrak, two marches beyond T. iv or the 'Well of the Protector-General'.³²

Han posts
in Lou-lan
and beyond.

Still more conclusive is the fact that in 1914 I discovered, close to the north-west edge of the dried-up salt sea of Lop, the ruins of a fortified camp or *point d'appui*, constructed in the characteristic fashion of the Tun-huang Limes wall and unmistakably going back to the same early period.³³ Its description must be left for the detailed report on my third expedition, and so also an account of the series of ancient stations and watch-towers examined in 1915 along the Konchedaryā towards Korla, which certainly mark the continuation of the old Chinese high-road beyond Lou-lan. Archaeological evidence induces me to attribute them to Han times, and probably to the first effective opening of the route beyond Tun-huang. The fact that the establishment by the Chinese of military agricultural colonies at Lun-t'ai and Chü-li, localities between Kuchā and the Konchedaryā,³⁴ is mentioned in the *Ch'ien Han shu* and by Ssü-ma Ch'ien in connexion with the extension of the Limes beyond Tun-huang shows clearly how far the operations then undertaken were pushed along the great highway westwards.

SECTION II.—THE TUN-HUANG LIMES SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION

Abundance
of Limes
records be-
fore middle
of first cent.
B. C.

We may now briefly review the information that can be gathered about the history of the Chinese Limes after it had reached its westernmost extension. No direct data are available in our textual sources apart from what the Annals tell us about the successive later phases of China's Central-Asian policy under the Former and Later Han dynasties. Fortunately we are able to add to these general indications the documentary and archaeological evidence derived from the exploration of the Limes itself. The large series of dated documents extending from 68 B.C. to about the middle of the first century B.C. may well be connected, as M. Chavannes thinks, with the very effective assertion of Chinese military power and political control in the Tārīm Basin which that period witnessed. The complete reduction of Lou-lan in 77 B.C. and the institution of a Chinese Protector-General in 60 B.C. to control both the southern and northern routes leading through the Tārīm Basin are outstanding features in that period.¹ But it must be remembered that most of those documents were found in the refuse-heaps of a single watch-station, a fact which introduces a certain element of chance into this chronological coincidence.

Absence of
Limes
documents,
39 B. C.—
A. D. I.

Some significance may, perhaps, be attached to the total absence of any documents dated between the years 39 B.C. and A.D. I. During the reign of the Emperor Yüan-ti (48–33 B.C.) Chinese power in Central Asia was further consolidated, and the submission of various Hsiung-nu chiefs appears subsequently to have secured prolonged peace from those troublesome neighbours on the northern border.² The need for the military protection of the Tun-huang Limes was likely to have grown less then, and possibly the consequent reduction of detachments, etc., along the border

³² See above, pp. 556 sq.

³³ Cf. *Geogr. Journal*, xlviii. p. 124, for a brief preliminary account.

³⁴ *Lun-t'ai* appears to be identical with *Wu-lei* 烏壘, which is repeatedly mentioned by the *Ch'ien Han shu* as the seat of the Chinese Protector-General of the Western regions after 60 B.C. Cf. Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, xi. p. 95. It may be located at the present oasis of Bugur, east of Kuchā; see below, chap. xxx. sec. ii. Cf. also Chavannes, *Documents*, p. xiii.

Chü-li 渠黎 was a small territory situated probably to

the south-west of Korla, between the Konchedaryā and Inchike-daryā; cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1907, p. 154, note 1; also below, chap. xxx. sec. ii.

Cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, p. vii; *T'oung-pao*, 1905, p. 567; 1907, p. 154, note 1; also Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, x. pp. 22, 27.

² Cf. Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, x. p. 23: 'After the reigns of Suan-ti and Yüan-ti, the Shan-yü [paramount chief of the Hsiung-nu] was styled a border vassal, and the Western regions gave in their submission.'