

ii. 02 (Pl. XXIV) and bronze fragments L.K. i. 01, ii. 01. Three of the rooms had sitting platforms, and in two these were provided with raised hearths in clay.

Rooms  
under NE.  
rampart.

Beyond the flight of rooms just described there lay to the north-east and close under the rampart another small group of quarters, which, judging from the timber debris that strewed the ground between, appeared to have once been connected with it. The outer rooms here, too, had suffered much from erosion; but two others nearer to the enclosing wall were filled with sand to a height of 6 or 7 feet, and in these some observations of interest could be made. The entrance to room iii (Figs. 138, 139) was through a door of which the single wooden fold was found still in its place ajar. A looped string attached to the centre of the top of the door was manifestly intended to fasten it. The doorway, seen from outside in Fig. 138, was curiously low, only 4 feet 3 inches, with a width of 2 feet 5 inches. The height of the room was shown by the intact posts of the framework to have been  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet. A small clay platform, 3 feet 5 inches square, boarded round with willow wood, rose near the centre of the room to a height of about a foot and, as its top was reddened by fire, was taken by my men for the working place of a blacksmith. In confirmation they pointed to a shallow trough, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 1 foot, carved roughly out of a Toghrak trunk, which was found in the same room and which was assumed by them to have served as a smith's cooling tank. Fig. 138 shows it on the right, lying outside on the sand. Fragments of a large earthen jar were also discovered here.

Finds in  
room  
L.K. iv.

In another room, iv, approached from what may have been a central apartment of the block, a massive wooden pillar once supporting the roof still stood upright. The wooden double bracket which had surmounted the pillar was found close by at a height of about 3 feet from the floor level. It measured 3 feet 3 inches in length with a width and height of 9 inches. Though badly decayed and fissured, it showed clearly the same volute-like ends already noted in the double bracket L.K. i. 03 (Pl. XV) and in corresponding pieces from the Lou-lan station L.A. From outside the same room was recovered the wooden implement L.K. iv. 02 (Pl. XXIX), with an iron tang at one end, which may have served for cutting reeds. It is noteworthy that a beam from the roof of iv, in Eleagnus wood, and another in White Poplar wood from the room outside iii, afforded the only indication that cultivation had existed at some place within reach of L.K. That much of the wood on the floor of room iv and near it was found rotten proved that moisture must have reached the ground level within the fort at some time after its abandonment.

Objects in  
metal and  
stone from  
outside fort.

Among miscellaneous small objects picked up from wind-eroded soil around the fort some Chinese coins may first be mentioned. Two of them are *Wu-chu* pieces, like the fragmentary one which Tokhta Ākhūn had brought me from his reconnoitring visit, and which he said he had found within the walled enclosure; another is an uninscribed Han coin. Two more coins of the last-named type, as well as a fragment of a *Ho-ch'üan* piece, were found close outside when I visited the fort. Numismatic evidence therefore clearly favoured attribution of the ruins to the period that had seen the Lou-lan sites in the north occupied and abandoned. Of other finds, the most interesting was an excellently preserved silver ear-ring, L.K. Fort. 07, originally gilt, of superior design and workmanship (Pl. XXIV). It was picked up near the north-east face of the fort. With its thin pieces of silver sheet moulded in ornamental design and its pendant of wire loops and fine wire rods, it well bears comparison with the exquisite little gold ear-ring in filigree work from the Niya Site.<sup>17</sup> The result produced by wind-erosion on this ground is illustrated by the fact that not far from the place where we found this fine specimen of the silversmith's art, dating from the early centuries of our era, there could be picked up on practically the same level remains of the stone age, like the well-finished stone arrow-heads, L.K. Fort. 04-5, which are manifestly neolithic.

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 148, N. 03 (Pl. XXIV).