

Clearing of
ruined
dwelling
L.M. i.

The clearing of this first ruin, L.M. i (Pl. 11), which was accomplished before the approach of nightfall obliged us to return to our camp at L.K., proved singularly fruitful. A central room, iii, measuring 25 by 30 feet, still retained in position most of the massive Toghrak posts that had formed the framework of its walls; these had been made of timber and wattle and had rested on big foundation beams, as seen in Fig. 137. Adjoining two of its walls were sitting platforms of clay, and athwart the floor lay the heavy central pillar of Toghrak wood that once supported the roof, with its fine wooden capital, L.M. i. iii. 01 (Pl. XV), still attached. This capital, fully described in the List below, with its voluted flanking blocks or brackets and its billet-decorated abacus, corresponds in design very closely to the double-bracket capital, L.K. i. 03 (Pl. XV), found in the ruined fort. As already noted above, a comparison of the latter find with the double brackets found at L.A., and with the capitals of the stucco pilasters in the Mīrān shrine M. 11, had furnished a very useful chronological indication.⁴ It was therefore particularly gratifying to obtain conclusive evidence of the date of the site L.M. and thus indirectly also of the ruined fort; this was found on clearing away the refuse from what remained of the floor of a room that once adjoined the central hall on the north-west.

Finds in
refuse layer
L.M. i. i.

The refuse layer of this room, L.M. i. i, heaped up to a height of about 2 feet over the narrow surviving strip of mud flooring, was composed mainly of reed-straw and camel-dung. But in this were recovered interesting fragments of textiles in silk and wool, including printed silks, L.M. i. i. 08-9 (Pl. LXXXVI), and pieces of woollen tapestry decorated with flowers and grotesque animals, L.M. i. i. 01 (Pl. XXXIII, LXXXVII); also remains of well-made leather articles, including a leather strap decorated with bronze ornaments, L.M. i. i. 016 (Pl. XXVI), and of wooden utensils such as the eating-tray, L.M. i. i. 017 (Pl. XXVIII). In type all these closely agreed with corresponding finds from the Lou-lan sites explored on my second journey. That the ruined dwelling belonged to the same period as these sites was definitely proved by the discovery in the same refuse heap of a number of Chinese paper fragments, including a large one, and a small wedge-shaped tablet with Kharoṣṭhī writing, L.M. i. i. 023. Of particular interest, too, were two small fragments of paper leaves, perhaps of a Pōthī, bearing three lines of minute and exquisitely written characters in slanting Central Asian Brāhmī script and apparently Kuchean language.^{4a}

Finds in
refuse heap
L.M. i. ii.

Another refuse heap, covering what remained of the floor of a partially eroded room, ii, to the south-west of the central room, yielded no writings, but plenty of other interesting relics. The most noteworthy, perhaps, are the pieces of a finely lacquered casket, L.M. i. 01-4 (Pl. XXV), undoubtedly of Chinese manufacture. The top, bottom, and two longer side pieces were found disconnected, and the ends are missing. The top and sides are decorated externally with very gracefully designed borders showing cloud scrolls and grotesque beasts in red lacquer over black ground. Their design, as seen in Pl. XXV, very closely resembles in style that found in the figured silks of Han times that I subsequently discovered at the cemetery L.C. and shall have occasion to discuss below. The wooden bowl L.M. i. 05 (Pl. XXVI) is similarly of Han type, as shown by comparison with one, T. vi. b. ii. 001 (*Serindia*, iv. Pl. LII), recovered from the Tun-huang Limes. The same chronological indication is furnished by the designs of the figured silks, L.M. i. 026 and ii. 05 (Pl. XLII), and by their method of weaving, which is 'warp-rib', the characteristic technique of all figured silks of Han times both from L.C. and the Tun-huang Limes. Among other relics I may draw special attention to the well-made arrow-shaft of cane, L.M. i. 07 (Pl. XXVI); the wooden die, L.M. i. 012 (Pl. XXVI), of unusual type; the high narrow wooden beaker, L.M. i. 035 (Pl. XXVII), and the finely made wooden spindle, L.M. i. ii. 01.

A tramp in the dark of nearly six miles, made trying by the steadily increasing depth of the

⁴ Cf. above, p. 187.

^{4a} See Prof. Konow's Appendix F.