

Yārdang trenches as we proceeded eastwards, brought us back to the fort L.K. Next morning I had our camp moved to the newly discovered site L.M., which by its first 'finds' had held out such promise, and started work at a ruined dwelling situated amidst groups of dead Toghraks about 660 yards to the north-west of L.M. i. It occupied the top of a wind-eroded ridge rising fully 16 feet above the present ground level to the south. A terrace about 8 feet high, between this depression and the ruin, bore remains of dead tamarisks, thus suggesting that the ground, after having lain exposed to erosion for a prolonged period, had been reached again for a time by moisture. Erosion had reduced the structural remains still *in situ*: a large room measuring about 35 by 26 feet, of which the timber and wattle walls survived to a height of only about a foot above the ground; a smaller room adjoining on the north, i, which had suffered even more; and a place enclosed by rush walls on the south-west, iii. Big beams and rafters lying on the slope to the south-east showed that the building had extended farther in that direction.

The clearing of the central room, covered only by about 8 inches of sand, brought no finds, but showed four massive oblong bases of Toghrak wood still marking the position where pillars had carried the roof. From what remained of room i there emerged the fragment of a paper leaf inscribed with exquisitely penned Chinese characters suggestive of some religious or literary text, besides a quantity of ragged fabrics, including a fragment of printed silk, L.M. ii. i. 02, of the same pattern as found on a piece from L.M. i. In the refuse of room iii we recovered a wooden key, L.M. ii. iii. 01 (Pl. XXVI), of a type already found at various sites of the Khotan region and elsewhere;⁵ besides a wooden weaver's comb, L.M. ii. iii. 03 (Pl. XXVI), and fragments of basket-work. Here, too, was found the fragment of a Kharoṣṭhī document on paper, L.M. ii. iii. 04.

To the east of the surviving structure an area about 40 feet square had been protected from erosion by a thick layer of reed-straw and horse-dung. From this refuse, ii, there came to light almost at the start a crumpled up paper document, L.M. ii. ii. 09 (Pl. CXXIV), measuring about 7 inches by 4, bearing remains of twenty lines of the Early Sogdian script, the first specimens of which had been discovered by me at the Lou-lan station L.A. and at watch-posts of the Han Limes west of Tunhuang.⁶ The find was particularly welcome as it confirmed my previous chronological conclusions as to the occupation of this site and that of the small fort L.L. In addition, small fragments of paper documents in Chinese and Cursive Brāhmī script were recovered here. Fragments of stout fabrics in wool and goat's hair (L.M. ii. ii. 02-4) and of cane basket-work (L.M. ii. ii. 09-11, Pl. XXVI) may be noticed, and special mention may be made of the remains of a woollen pile carpet L.M. ii. ii. 05, much worn and unfortunately too faded in its colours for the pattern to be determined.

Proceeding to the north-west we crossed a well-marked winding depression, about 90 yards wide, lined on either bank by rows of dead Toghraks, and at a distance of about 700 yards from L.M. ii found an isolated Yārdang terrace crowned by the scanty remains of what, judging from the timber debris that strewed the slopes, must have been a fair-sized dwelling (Fig. 136). The outline of only a single room, about 27 feet square, could still be traced by the Toghrak posts that alone showed where its walls had stood. Two oblong wooden bases with sockets for pillars survived on the floor, such as were found elsewhere in the ruins of L.M. Among the timber debris outside it on the slopes were two double-bracket capitals, of exactly the same shape as that found at L.M. i, but far more decayed. From refuse lying outside the west wall of the room a fragmentary paper document was recovered showing Chinese writing on one side and several lines in Kharoṣṭhī on the other.

Another ruined dwelling, L.M. iv, discovered at a distance of about 340 yards to the west,

⁵ For references, see *Serindia*, iii. pp. 1541, 1546, Index, s. v. keys, locks.

⁶ Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 383; ii. pp. 652, 671 sqq.