

only about 10 feet by 9, was first entered. Probably the corpses had been dried up long before the solid wood of the coffins shrank and permitted the air in the tomb to be tainted.

Coffins
found in
Ast. ix. 2.

As seen in Pl. 34, of the three coffins found in the tomb two occupied a platform about 4 feet 6 inches high, towards the back wall of the chamber. The third stood on the ground in front of the platform. The coffin in the middle was turned with its broader or head end to the west. It at first impressed us, even hardened Mashik, our 'ghōrchi', by its extraordinary length, only a few inches short of 8 feet; the others measured close on 6 feet. Behind the head of the middle coffin there was placed against the western wall a low pedestal made of thin carved boards painted red (Fig. 322), showing in the shape of its framework a very close resemblance to the models of such pedestals found in Ast. iii. 4.⁴ Though very rickety owing to loosened joints, it still carried intact an assortment of wooden food bowls, ix. 2. 028-38 (Pl. XCI), decorated in the manner of those found in the tombs of Ast. i. They contained grapes, plums, pieces of meat, &c., all shrivelled, but otherwise in perfect preservation. On a low platform about 2 feet wide built against the western wall and at the head end of the third coffin, there stood some pottery jars, dishes and saucers, ix. 2. 039-42 (Pl. XC), 052, all holding remains of some oily substance or food. On this were also lying figurines made of paste or dough, ix. 2. 024, 47-50 (Pl. LXXXIX), together with the small model of a cart ix. 2. 06 (Pl. XCIV); and roughly circular pieces cut from bark, ix. 2. 044-6, perhaps meant to represent 'cash'. Below, the platform was strewn with grains of wheat. In the north-western corner of the chamber there stood the turned wooden urn ix. 2. 027 (Pl. XCI), painted and decorated with white spots, and inside this was found the miniature wooden duck ix. 2. 043 (Pl. CIV). Scarcely any dust covered these objects or the coffins, and even what dust there was may have been deposited only while the gate was being bricked up or our entrance effected. But the most striking thing among the sepulchral deposits was the hanging ix. 2. 054 (Pl. CIX), still in its place on the back wall of the chamber, showing on ivory-coloured silk the coarsely painted figures of the legendary sovereign Fu-hsi and his consort with their lower serpentine bodies entwined.

Coffin cover
of A. D. 706.

The coffin *a* nearest to the entrance was painted outside a reddish brown and covered with a plain sheet of cotton fabric resembling the present-day 'Khām', ix. 2. a. 07 (Pl. CXXVII), which reached down almost to the floor. One edge bears impressions of several stamps in red ink and a column of Chinese writing which still awaits interpretation. The seals may well have served a similar purpose to those affixed nowadays by Chinese tax collectors to 'Khām' fabrics upon which octroi duty has been paid when brought to the market. [This assumption has been confirmed by the reading which Dr. L. Giles has kindly supplied of the written characters; see App. I. The inscription records the receipt of a roll of cloth from a taxpayer at Wu-chou, Lan-ch'i hsien, Jui-shan hsiang, Ts'ung-shan li on a day of the 8th moon of the 2nd year of Shên-lung (A.D. 706).

Both *Lan-ch'i hsien* and *Hsin-an hsien*, mentioned in the corresponding inscription, dated A. D. 684-5 (see App. I), of the cotton sheet from coffin ix. 2. b (Pl. CXXVII), are localities in the province of Chekiang. The fact of plain cotton materials having been brought to Turfān from such a great distance is of distinct antiquarian interest; so is also the considerable interval of time between the date recorded on ix. 2. a. 07 and the year A. D. 689 named in the inscribed slab Ast. ix. 2 (see App. I, XII) as the date when Fan Yen-shih, the man found in coffin *b* of this tomb, died.]

Contents
of coffin
Ast. ix. 2. a.

The top of the coffin could be lifted with ease and disclosed the body, manifestly of a woman, seen in Fig. 322. Its knees were slightly bent. There was a shroud of white 'Khām' covering an assortment of much-decayed fabrics, evidently from old garments from which some of the silk

⁴ See above, ii. p. 657, and the examples in the Shōsōin there referred to.