

4. GRAVES IN THE DELTA OF QUM-DARYA.

In the introduction to the section dealing with the ancient remains along The Small River I have referred to the beginning of Dr. HEDIN's journey in native canoes from Könche along the Könche-darya. He continued along the whole course of the new river Qum-darya. The beginning of May 1934 saw him and his party in the jagged delta of Qum-darya, where he discovered and examined some ancient graves containing articles of considerable importance to the student of archaeology and ethnology. The outer setting and the events of these excavations are described in Dr. HEDIN's personal narrative "Den vandrande sjön" pp. 102—117, (German edition "Der wandernde See" pp. 90—103.).

A. MASS-GRAVE I (NO. 34).

On May 6th, 1934, SVEN HEDIN's men found a tomb on a mighty mesa or eroded ridge of clay in the middle of the delta near its northern edge. The mesa was 25 m. high, the tomb being situated 17.5 m. above water level. It was found to be a collective grave consisting of a rather shallow rectangular pit located NE—SW as were also the extension of the mesa, with roofing of wooden boards, and a couple of standing poles marking its edge.

Fifteen human skulls and some other human bones were lying in a jumble with rags of various fabrics, wooden objects of many kinds, and so forth. There were no complete skeletons or mummies. Judging from the number of skulls the extant bones were only about one fifth of what they ought to have been.

The pit did not contain any coffins. What HEDIN calls a much decayed canoe found in the pit is, however, probably the remains of a coffin.

Three of the skulls and the lower jaw of a fourth were brought away; they have been handed over to Prof. GASTON BACKMAN for examination, to whose forthcoming report I refer.

All the funeral deposit, save some badly decayed or fragmentary bowls, was taken away. Cf. Pl. XIII a.

Here follows a brief survey of the objects; for a more detailed description I refer to the list on pp. 128 et seq.

Vessels.

The two pottery jars Pl. 21: 2—3 are of typical Han shape, and the light grey ware is also typical of the Han period. The higher one very much resembles a specimen from Charchan, Pl. 35: 3.

The wooden vessels are in the majority. Of the cups or dippers shown in Pl. 19: 4—6 there are seven pieces counting the fragments. They have a plain ring-handle.