

(Figs. 35, 37, 48), remains of well-made household furniture and implements, objects of decorative art in the shape of fine wood-carvings (Figs. 41, 43), etc., all attest a highly developed state of civilization. The products of local industrial arts and crafts clearly show the prevalence of a strong Hellenistic influence as transmitted from Eastern Iran and the north-western borders of India.

Finds of objects of Buddhist worship make it quite certain that Buddhism had by that time already acquired a predominant position in the religious and intellectual life of the indigenous population of the Tarim basin. This strong influence of Indian culture is very strikingly reflected also in the mass of written records recovered in the ruined dwellings and the refuse-heaps adjoining. At the Niya site I found by the hundred wooden documents (Fig. 9) comprising correspondence, mainly official, contracts, accounts, miscellaneous memoranda and the like, all written in that Sanskritic language and Kharoshthi script which during the first centuries before and after Christ were used on the Indian north-west frontier and in the adjacent portions of Afghanistan.

We are able to reconstruct almost as clearly the physical aspects of the life once witnessed by these sites. Everything in the orchards and arbours dead for sixteen centuries but still clearly recognizable (Figs. 6, 45, 49); in the fences; in the materials used for buildings, etc., distinctly point to conditions of cultivation and local climate having been essentially the same as those now observed in oases of the Tarim basin similarly situated and still occupied.

Just as in the present terminal oases of the Tarim basin, so cultivation at those sites must have been entirely depend-