

written on wooden tablets in shape exactly corresponding to those at the Niya site, and some also on scraps of paper.

There was thus evidence from the start that the same early Indian language as found in the records of the Niya site was in common use also in this distant Lop region for indigenous administration and business. Considering how far removed the Lop region is from Khotan, this uniform extension of an Indian script and language to the extreme east of the Tarim basin was a discovery of distinct historical interest. Of a variety of other curious relics by which the search of that first ruin was rewarded I can only mention fragments of a woollen pile carpet, the earliest so far known, and a small bale of yellowish silk, fairly well preserved (Fig. 60). Subsequent finds of wooden measures and of an inscribed silk selvedge have enabled me to prove that this bale shows us the regular width, nineteen inches, and the actual form in which that ancient and most famous product of Chinese industry used to be carried to the classical West.

From the start the wind-eroded bare ground near the ruined dwellings yielded an abundant crop of small objects in metal, glass and stone. There were fragments of bronze mirrors in abundance, often with good *relievo* decoration at the back, metal clasps, stone seals and the like. Beads of glass, paste or stone were picked up in plenty. The profusion of copper coins, all belonging to square-holed types of Han issue, was significant, suggesting a plentiful circulation of petty cash and that lively traffic which it usually indicates.

In a large structure to the south-west, partly built with sun-dried bricks, it was possible notwithstanding far-