

advanced decay to recognize the remains of a 'Ya-mên' or Chinese administrative headquarters. In a small closet-like room which may originally have served as a prison cell, Dr. Hedin had found a considerable number of Chinese records on wood and paper, some dated between the years 264-70. Careful search of the whole structure yielded plenty more of such documents, including thin, curled pieces of wood, obviously shavings from slips of the regular size which had been scraped down for fresh use.

Smaller houses close by, built exactly in the same manner as the residences of the Niya site though more roughly, had probably served as quarters for officials of the local non-Chinese administration; for here Kharoshthi tablets of the familiar shape prevailed, and style and contents bore close resemblance to those of the Niya documents. But the richest haul was made in a big rubbish-heap, over 100 feet across, outside the western end of the 'Ya-mên' building. Amidst layers of stable litter and other refuse this unsavoury quarry, still retaining its pungent odours, yielded up abundant Chinese records both on wood and paper (Fig. 47). Evidently they had been swept out from office rooms as 'waste papers'. Often they had been torn up, or else in the case of wooden slips they showed signs of having been used as 'spills' to light fires with.

Kharoshthi documents, on wood, paper and silk, had also found their way, though in smaller numbers, into this general deposit of refuse. A very interesting find and unique at the time was a torn piece of paper inscribed in an 'unknown' script, recalling Aramaic. This has proved since to be a relic of that Sogdian language and script, hitherto completely lost, which in the early centuries of our era was used in