

memoranda, tabular statements, accounts and other casual records.

Two series of oblong tablets largely represented among the finds of N. iv. (as this particular room was designated by me) showed far greater regularity and care in writing as well as workmanship, without being the less puzzling at the time of their discovery. These were tablets of rectangular shape, varying in length from 4 to 16 inches, which soon attracted my attention by the raised rim resembling a margin they invariably exhibited at the narrower sides of their single inscribed surface. The writing extending between these rims in five to thirteen lines always parallel to the longer side, ordinarily bore at the commencement a Kharoshthi numerical figure preceded by a word which I read before long as *samvatsare*, meaning in Sanskrit or Prakrit "in the year." In the text immediately following there appeared with equal regularity figures preceded by the words *mase* and *divase*, "in the . . . month" and "on the . . . day." There could be no doubt that I held in my hands dated documents or records of some kind. Yet there was nothing in this to enlighten me as to the peculiar form of these tablets or the manner in which they might have been used.

Busily occupied as I was in directing the excavation and clearing and numbering each find, I failed to realise at the time the close relation that existed between these tablets and another class of which the same ruined apartment furnished numerous specimens. They consisted of rectangular pieces of wood not exceeding 8 inches in length and 5 in width, and often much smaller, which on their flat reverse rarely had any writing, while the obverse in its raised centre invariably showed a square or oblong socket, manifestly intended for the insertion of a seal, together with a transversely written line or two of Kharoshthi characters. It was only later, when the remarkable rubbish-heap to be described below had yielded up its antiquarian treasures, that an explanation, as definite as it was simple, revealed itself of these curious seal-bearing tablets, and of the rims appearing on the wooden documents to which they had once been fitted as envelopes (for illustrations see pp. 366, 394, 395).