

floor of what remained of the small room (N. xviii.) eight Kharoṣṭhī tablets were found, which the proximity of the south-east wall had helped to protect, most of them short label-like pieces. Completely bleached and withered fragments, which lay on the eroded slope adjoining, showed that more records had once been left behind in this room. Apart from some small rags of coarse cotton and woollen fabrics (N. xviii. 01. b-f) found in this and the adjoining rooms, there turned up here a contrivance formed by two wooden discs (N. xviii. 01. a, see Plate LXX), which looks as if it had been used as a 'dead eye'. A tree-trunk, which set up upright might have served as a rough seat or table, and a large jar of coarse pottery embedded in the floor, and approaching in dimensions that seen at Niya³, both marked in the plan, were the only other finds on this side of the ruin.

Finds of
agricultural
implements
and pro-
duce.

The rooms to the north-east may have been used as godowns and sheds. In one of them (N. xix.), a good deal of straw turned up in excellent preservation⁴, mixed with what the examination effected at the Royal Gardens, Kew, has shown to be husks of *Panicum miliaceum*. Here was found the ancient wooden pitch-fork (see Plate IX), over 5 ft. long, made solely of wooden pieces fastened with leather thongs. Here, too, lay a flat wooden bowl (see Plate IX), measuring 8 in. in diameter, containing grains of millet (*Setaria italica*). The wooden implement, reproduced in Plate LXXIII, was recognized by the men from Niya as a mouse-trap, similar to those still in use, but I had no opportunity of ascertaining its arrangement. A small and completely preserved pot of bright red clay, about 7 in. in diameter, is seen in the photograph (Plate IX). A large wedge under-tablet, N. xix. 1 (see Plate C), had likewise found its way among the contents of this agricultural store-room, its thick encrustation with straw and other vegetable matter still bearing evidence of this association. The charred condition of the square end suggests that it had been used as a torch or taper. The walls throughout the house showed little strength, being only 4 to 5 in. thick, and constructed, apart from the usual timber framework, of plaster laid over horizontal layers of reeds similar to those used in the Dandān-Uiliq structures. As to the status of the last owner, only the Kharoṣṭhī tablets might possibly allow us to form a conjecture.

Northern-
most group
of ruins.

While the clearing of this ruin was still proceeding, I made an examination of the northernmost group of remains, situated nearly 2 miles to the north-east of N. v., which I had sighted on my first reconnaissance in this direction, and subsequently, on February 10, I shifted my camp to it. The ruins here consisted of a number of small houses and cattle-sheds scattered over an area roughly 400 yards square, as seen in the plan of Plate XXXIV. Most of these structures were badly decayed and only just traceable, owing to the extensive erosion which this portion of the ground had undergone. But here and there some larger dunes, rising to 15-20 ft. in height, had accumulated, and close by two better-preserved structures had survived.

Finds in
ruined
house
N. III.

The larger of these (N. VIII), which I first proceeded to excavate, consisted, as the detail plan in Plate XXXIV shows, of two rows of three apartments each, separated by an inner line of smaller rooms 11 ft. broad. The most interesting of the finds made here came from the northernmost room (N. xx.) which was covered by only 2 to 3 ft. of sand, and had consequently very little of its outer walls left. On the plaster platform running along the south-eastern wall I discovered the Takhtī-shaped tablet (N. xx. 1) 11½ in. long, showing on one side much-faded Brāhmī writing of the Kuṣana type, and on the other side two short lines of Kharoṣṭhī, the palaeographic and chronological interest of which has been explained in the preceding section⁵.

³ See above, p. 312.

⁴ Specimens of this, as well as of other cereals found at

the site, are in my collection.

⁵ See above, p. 369.