

a slight movement in the adjoining dunes since my first visit to the site, and Sadak knew that some 'treasure-seekers' from Niya had been attracted to it a few years later. But they had contented themselves with digging holes here and there, and had left the refuse thus extracted lying close by. I had scarcely begun to examine it when, amidst plentiful fragments of pottery, rags of felt and coarse fabrics, and clods of stable refuse, I came upon a small piece of wood bearing traces of Kharoshthi characters. So the men were set promptly to work, and most of the ruin was cleared before nightfall. On the top there was a thick layer of stable refuse and straw, extending uniformly over the remains of brick walls, only about three feet high, and over the débris which filled the two rooms clearly traceable between them. From their floor and that of an adjoining apartment, which erosion had almost completely destroyed, I recovered, besides several fragmentary Kharoshthi records on wood and leather, a large and perfectly preserved oblong tablet showing a curiously elongated variety of that script, and ending with a series of curious monograms of Indian look manifestly meant for signatures. Another noteworthy find was a piece of flexible bark inscribed with a line of very cursive characters bearing no resemblance to any of the known Central-Asian writings.

But of far greater antiquarian interest than any of these epigraphic relics was the new light which the discovery of this small ruin began to throw on the history of the site. When in 1901 I excavated the ruins within the circular fort, I had recovered from its temple a Chinese inscription dated in 719 A.D. and a number of manuscript remains in Tibetan, Brahmi, and Chinese. These proved the fort to have been occupied about the first decades of the eighth century A.D. and abandoned during the Tibetan occupation soon after. Now it was curious that Hsüan-tsang, who on his return journey to China about 645 A.D. passed along the desert route from Niya to Charchan, found no inhabited place on the ten days' march; but he mentions, in a position exactly corresponding to the Endere site, four marches after leaving Niya and six from Charchan, ruins of abandoned settlements which the tradition of his time