

The layers of refuse of all kinds left behind by the occupants continued to yield such records, complete or fragmentary, right down to the bottom. The papers varied greatly in size and character, some written on oblong leaves and with regularly ruled lines, being manifestly fragments of Pothis with religious contents, while the majority, written on sheets of rather flimsy paper, which recalled my corresponding finds at Dandan-oilik and Khadalik, represented documents of a secular character.

That the far more numerous records on wood, mostly narrow tablets up to eight inches in length and inscribed on both sides, were also of the latter type was made clear by the small seal cavities found frequently at their left end. But there was no time for closer examination, in fact scarcely for the marking of such finds, so rapid was their succession. The first day's work brought the total up to over two hundred. Similarly the remains of implements of all sorts, articles of clothing, arms, etc., were abundant. There were many curious pieces of scale armour, in hard leather, tastefully lacquered in red and black; embroidered pieces of silk; seals in horn, with Tibetan letters; neatly worked dies in bone, etc. Everything pointed to the conclusion that these deep deposits of rubbish, rich in archaeological plums—and remarkable, too, for their dirt—had accumulated during a protracted period of Tibetan occupation which historical evidence justified me in assigning to the eighth or ninth century A.D.

The profuse antiquarian haul of that first day, which it took me half the night in my tent to clean, sort, and examine, made it hard to leave behind such a mine, even for a time, without exhausting it. But when on the following morning I left the excavations in the fort to be continued under Naik Ram Singh's and Chiang-ssü-yeh's supervision, and proceeded on a reconnaissance to a ruin about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles away to the north-east which Tokhta Akhun had spoken of as showing remains of sculptures, I soon realized that I could not possibly settle down now to a complete clearing of Miran without risking indefinite delay in the execution of my raid to the sites in the north of the Lop-nor desert. The ruin proved to be that of a