

The finds made in the course of my renewed explorations, and particularly at N. xxiv, have supplied such materials in plenty, and there was therefore ample justification for my learned collaborators in postponing publication until the newly discovered tablets could also be dealt with. In January, 1913, Professor Rapson was kind enough to communicate to me some notes on certain tablets from the new collection which he thought of special interest, and I feel all the more grateful for being thus enabled to utilize his results as they have a close bearing on the questions which the hidden archive in N. xxiv. viii has raised.

Prof. Rapson's decipherment of deed of sale.

Professor Rapson's examination proves that a considerable number of the double rectangular tablets are deeds of sale. 'As a good example of the regular formula conferring full rights of possession, in spite of any merely verbal order of an official at some subsequent time to the contrary,' he cites N. xxiv. viii. 74, the document already referred to on account of the clay impression it bears from the seal of the Chinese chief official at Shan-shan.<sup>17</sup> From the abstract given of the opening portion of the text on the under-tablet it appears that 'this is a deed recording the sale of *miṣi*-land. "Miṣi" is some crop. The seller is Koñaya and the purchaser is the writer (*divira*) Ramṣotsa. It is dated in the 17th year of the king Jiṭugha Aṃguvaka, in the 12th month and the 8th day. The price is 70 *khi* (a sum or measure, to be paid apparently in *masu*, a term the meaning of which is not yet certain), and Ramṣotsa seems to have deposited a two-year-old camel as an earnest of the payment. The purchase has been completed, both the part-payment 10 *khi* (*aṅgamuli*) and the remainder of the sum total, 60 *khi*.'

Deed concerning land, and its alteration.

Then follows a definition of Ramṣotsa's full rights which is thus translated: 'This writer Ramṣotsa has full proprietary rights over this *miṣi*-land. It shall be his for the enjoyment of all its benefits in whatsoever way he desires, whether for ploughing or sowing, or for giving to another as a gift or as a *namanya* [*nāmanya*, tenancy?]. If at any subsequent time a *vasu aḡeta* [*vasu*, a common title; *aḡeta* also apparently the title of some official] shall give any order concerning it, such a verbal order shall be invalid at the king's court.' On the reverse of the covering-tablet next follow the names of certain witnesses, and the deed ends thus: 'This deed is written by the writer Tama-spāputra at the order of the mahātman, the writer Mogata. This document is for the instruction of Koñaya. [space] The string is cut by *tomgha* [well-known title] Yāmcā (?) by name.' It seems very tempting to connect the broken condition of one or several string folds which, as mentioned above,<sup>18</sup> is noticeable in a number of unopened documents from the hidden deposit with the legal ceremony referred to in the concluding words of the deed. Only further examination of these documents and their legal technicalities can settle this little detail. But what is important is the certainty that my assumption was right when at the very time of the find I thought 'myself the *de facto* possessor of deeds probably referring to lands and other real property'.<sup>19</sup>

Sanskrit verses on Kharoṣṭhī tablet N. xxiv. viii. 9.

This will be a convenient place to sum up briefly also the rest of the interesting information which Professor Rapson's notes convey. The tablets to which reference is made are not from the hidden deposit but were found in the same ruined residence. Particularly important from the philological point of view is the discovery he has made of four Sanskrit ślokaś written on the obverse of the wedge under-tablet N. xxiv. viii. 9 (see Plate XXIV) which on its reverse had served for a record of receipts, apparently sums or supplies given to servants on a farm. The verses for which a more learned scribe has utilized the obverse, are the very first specimens of Sanskrit literature so far found in Kharoṣṭhī script and clear up a number of important palaeographic questions connected with the latter. Scarcely less interesting is the Takhtī-shaped tablet N. xxiv. v. 1 containing at least eight lines of verses in Prākṛit on obverse and reverse. The first of these is taken from the Dhammapada

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 230.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. above, p. 228.

<sup>19</sup> See *Desert Cathay*, i. p. 284.