

of some dead trunks of cultivated poplars and fruit-trees, it proved that a small agricultural colony must have existed near the fortified station.

Excavation  
of ruined  
house.

The largest of the ruins, Ka. I (Figs 303, 304), was that of a good-sized dwelling with wattle and timber walls of a type practically identical with that found in the houses of the Niya Site. Its plan and internal arrangements (Plate 55) showed also very close resemblance to the latter. But here, as in the dwellings of Lou-lan, the timber used was exclusively of the wild poplar. The ruined house, in the main portion cleared,<sup>13</sup> was filled with 6 to 8 feet of sand. Owing to the immediate vicinity of a dune rising to 12 feet or more, some rooms to the east could not be excavated with the dozen men or so available. For the same reason no search could be made for any refuse-heaps outside which might have preserved archaeologically useful relics. The objects brought to light are described in the List below. Among them may be mentioned the wooden lock and key, Ka. I. 001-2; a dagger-like iron tool, Ka. I. 003; several amphorae, Ka. I. 0019 (Plate IV; Fig. 307); strong woollen fabrics of different kinds, Ka. I. 0014-16. All these closely resemble finds of the same kind made at the Niya and Lou-lan Sites. So does also the piece of an open-work wooden screen seen in Fig. 307. A rectangular wooden tablet, Ka. I. i. 001, is also of a type frequent among the wooden documents of a Niya Site, but has lost all traces of writing.

Other sand-  
buried  
dwellings.

At Ka. II were found the remains of a dwelling mainly of timber and wattle, badly destroyed by wind-erosion and subsequently overgrown by tamarisks, which had helped to form a sand-cone some 7 feet high above it, but were dead now. No objects were found on clearing this. The remains of a third ruined dwelling, Ka. III (Fig. 305), were also buried in a tamarisk-cone, which was, however, still living; the walls were built here of timber with plastered vertical bundles of rushes and reeds. Apart from a large pottery jar, a plain wooden plank-bed,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, was the only find here. Four more small dwellings, of which the position is marked in the site-plan, were found either completely eroded down to the foundation beams or else too deeply buried by the side of high dunes to permit of excavation with the limited number of men available.

Evidence of  
agricultural  
settlement.

Scanty as are the newly explored remains of the site and the objects found on it, they yet furnish definite evidence that a small agricultural settlement must have existed here far away in the desert, and not merely a small frontier guard-post, as I had been led previously to assume. With regard to the probable date, too, of the site, not merely as regards its character, the new observations permit us, I think, to form a clearer view. The resemblance in the construction of the houses and in the type of the objects of daily use found there is sufficiently close to justify the attribution of the ruins approximately to the period when the Niya and Lou-lan Sites were abandoned, i.e. the third-fourth century A.D. With this dating the two coins found close to Ka. I fully agree; they are both *Wu-chu* pieces, apparently of the second-third century A.D. The coins found on the occasion of my first visit, fourteen in all, were also either *Wu-chu* pieces or else uninscribed.<sup>14</sup> The few tiny bits of paper found in 1901 among the débris of the ruined quadrangle<sup>15</sup> raise no longer any chronological difficulty, since the discoveries at Lou-lan have proved that the use of paper by the side of wood as writing material had reached the Tārīm Basin by the middle of the third century, if not somewhat earlier.

Date indi-  
cated by  
Han coins.

Changes in  
Keriya  
River bed.

Even now we cannot determine the immediate cause which may have led to the abandonment of the small settlement. But my previous remarks as to the possibility of this having been caused by a change in the course of the river which deprived the site of its water-supply<sup>16</sup> have since received striking illustration by what I was able to observe myself on my renewed visit. The river, which in 1901 was fully eleven miles away from Kara-dong at its nearest point, flowed seven

<sup>13</sup> Marked with the broad arrow in plan, Pl. 55.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 447.

<sup>15</sup> See *Ancient Khotan*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, i. p. 451.