

ment and interpretation with which Professor Rapson has charged himself, has proceeded sufficiently far to permit him to include tentative transcriptions and translations of four documents from N. 1 among the 'Specimens' presented by him to the Fourteenth Orientalist Congress, and a comparison of these distinctly supports the above conclusion.

Decipherment of four documents.

Referring to that publication for all details, I must restrict myself to the following brief notes regarding their contents. N. i. 104+16, N. iv. 108, and N. i. 105 are all three brief official orders written on double wedge-shaped tablets. The first-named is addressed to Cojhbo Bhima and Şoṭhaṃga Lipeya about a messenger called Şameka, who proceeds from Calmadana via Saca and Nina to Khotana, and who is to be provided with an escort<sup>16</sup>. N. iv. 108 is addressed to Şoṭhaṃga Lipeya alone, and directs that Cuvayalina Phummaseva going as messenger to Khotana should be furnished with certain transport and supplies. In N. i. 105 Śili and Piteya, designated by the frequently recurring title Cojhbo, are ordered to inquire into the claim raised by a certain Opgeya, apparently to a share in some property, and to send the matter up for judicial inquiry in case of dispute. Finally, in N. iv. 136, written on a large single wedge, Şoṭhaṃga Lipeya himself sends a long and politely worded communication to his 'beloved brothers Cojhbo Tsmaya, the scribe Aṅgaca, and the secret agent Sucama', principally about some sacrifice he is anxious to have performed at the advice of 'his reverence Kuṅgeya'. The character of the orders conveyed in the two 'double wedges', N. i. 104+16 and N. iv. 108, seems to make it clear that Şoṭhaṃga Lipeya, their recipient, must have been a local official of some kind who would be expected to arrange for the safe progress of official messengers. That he actually resided at or near the house represented by the ruins of N. 1 becomes all the more probable from N. iv. 136, which, as it bears neither a seal nor any signature or other mark of authentication, I take to be the draft of a letter sent by this official. The absence of any arrangement for fastening this tablet, and its needlessly large and inconvenient size, preclude the idea of its being a letter actually dispatched. Finally, the 'Cojhbos' Śili and Piteya, to whom N. i. 105 is addressed, may have held office by the side of Şoṭhaṃga Lipeya, or may have been officials who preceded or followed him in his charge.

Office rooms in N. 1.

Seeing what these documents prove as to the official character of the last occupants of the house, a suggestion may be hazarded as to the particular use of the two rooms which between them yielded almost the whole of this great collection of records. That they were used as offices does not need further demonstration; but a curious difference as to the types of documents found in them deserves notice. We have seen that, while N. i. contained (with the exception of less than a dozen miscellaneous tablets) only wedge-shaped documents, the latter were in N. iv. a very insignificant minority as compared with the imposing array of oblong tablets of all kinds and rectangular tablets containing formal letters. Now I shall have occasion to show below that the wedge-shaped tablets, with their limited writing space, were chiefly, if not solely used for brief official records serving to corroborate orders entrusted to messengers and the like, while rectangular tablets and oblongs were the regular 'stationery' intended for communications and records of a more permanent character. In view of this distinction, and looking at the relative sizes of the two rooms, as well as the significant position of N. i., the much smaller one, near the approach to N. iv., I am inclined to believe that the latter, with its ample space and good lighting, served as the proper office room where 'papers' of consequence were kept and disposed of, while N. i. might have been utilized for the accommodation of the subordinate clerk who took charge of miscellaneous petty matters. That messengers' warrants corresponding to the 'Parwānas' of modern India, or orders about a preliminary police

<sup>16</sup> For the localities here mentioned see above, p. 311.