

and sand-worn as that of the posts still standing, showing that they had been exposed for a considerable time. Owing to the loose material that formed the hill it cannot have been very long before the ever active wind erosion uncovered some of the coffins, buried at a shallow depth, especially on the most exposed sides of the hill, that is, with the prevailing strong winds from the north-east and east, the eastern end and the northern and southern long sides. It was these very parts of the hill that contained most of the disjointed coffins and fallen posts etc. On the top, however, the sand has accumulated, and thus protected the remains there.

The cemetery was of course in use for several generations, and the covering of sand may in some instances be used for determining the relative age between the constructions. Thus, the big palisade must be older than the coffins which have been buried in the sand covering the centre of the palisade. The coffins 5 G and H on the very top of the hill must be somewhat later than the rest.

When working at the spot I was considering the possibility that there had been some kind of roofing on the posts, or at least on some of them, especially those at the eastern end, where they seemed to be arranged symmetrically as columns. However, I was never quite convinced. Afterwards, when studying the photographs such as, for instance, Pl. VII c, and observing the uniform height of many of the posts standing close together, I again felt inclined to believe that there had been some roofing over a part of the hill. If it ever existed, such a roof must have been made of some very light material such as reeds, and must have been completely blown away long ago, as no traces whatsoever remained. The presence of a roof over parts of the burial place would in a way explain the very shallow depth at which some of the coffins were buried.

No clear connection could be observed between the arrangement of the high posts and the situation of the coffins in situ. In several cases there was, however, a short thin pole or peg standing just in front of one end or both ends of a coffin. The same arrangement was observed by HEDIN at the single graves in the Qum-darya delta. In two instances a large "oar", similar to that shown in Fig. 10: 3, was placed at one end of a coffin at Cemetery 5.

Originally the large posts may possibly have surrounded certain graves, having been erected there either as funeral monuments or as roof supports, but as the cemetery grew more crowded successive encroachments were made into the area of the first constructed graves. During an early stage in the use of the burial site the big palisade or stockade might have separated two parts of the burial-ground. When studying the plan Fig. 9 one has the impression that the whole construction is facing east. Near the east of the central part of the big palisade, for instance, the posts of uniform size are standing in a semicircle, and in front of this was situated the destroyed hut with its grave.

During our digging in this semicircular space a pile of wooden pegs came to light; they were made of branches 3—4 cm. thick, pointed at one end, and resembl-