

ing fully 500 feet square proved to be closely occupied by the timber debris of ancient houses. But as the dunes were only a few feet high and the ground everywhere greatly eroded, very little remained of the walls and still less of the contents of the rooms. Even thus careful search had its rewards here.

Thus in a detached room of which the floor was covered by sand only half a foot to one foot deep, there came to light some fifty tablets of wood besides a variety of household implements of wood including a mouse-trap, boot-last, etc. Unfortunately, owing to the inadequate protection, the majority of these tablets had become withered and bleached until all trace of writing was lost. Others, though much warped, still showed their Kharoshthi writing. Lists of names and account items, which appear on most of these, pointed to records kept in some office. The extent of clerical labour once carried on here,—and the occasional inconvenience of the wooden writing material,—could be estimated by the size of these tablets, one much effaced piece attaining the inconvenient length of seven and a half feet!

The slight depth of the sand covering this area permitted me rapidly to clear here a considerable number of small houses. These served to acquaint me with the typical arrangement of the rooms, cattle-sheds, etc., composing these homesteads. Finds of interest were here scarce, but I mention in passing that in an outhouse we came upon an unmistakable ice-pit. A thick bed of ancient poplar leaves, once used to cover the ice, still survived.

More varied in character and more interesting, too, were the relics yielded by the excavation of the two large ruined houses passed on our first approach to the site. The one to