

The other large residence farther to the south-west also yielded plenty of curious relics. In a room which seems to have served as an office there were found besides inscribed tablets of varying shape blank wooden stationery, writing pens of tamarisk wood, and eating sticks such as are still used by the Chinese. More interesting still were the well-preserved upper portion of a guitar found in a passage and the remains of an elaborately carved arm-chair. Its legs represent standing lions and the arm-rests composite monsters of a Hellenistic type, all retaining their original vivid colouring.

The arrangement of an arbour close by could be traced with great clearness. The trunks of the poplars still rising eight to ten feet above the ground were seen grouped in small squares and enclosing avenues, just as they can be found now in every 'Bostan' or arbour from Kashgar to Keriya. It was with a strange feeling, obliterating almost all sense of time, that I walked between two parallel rush fences that still form a little country lane just as they did nearly seventeen centuries ago. Searching in the sand at the bottom of the fences, my stick disclosed the rustling dead leaves of poplars and fruit trees. Among the fallen trunks of ancient trees such as I saw here and at other points of the site, my diggers easily distinguished white poplars once planted along lanes, as well as various fruit trees, such as the peach, apple, plum, apricot, mulberry, the wood of which they knew from their own homes.

It was clear from the excavations just described that the ancient dwellings of the site had been cleared by their last inhabitants, or soon after their departure, of everything possessing intrinsic value or still fit for practical use. Thus