

fruitful. Here it must suffice to mention only a few observations and finds of special interest. The careful clearing of a small Buddhist shrine yielded abundance of fine pieces of wood-carving, including beams of over seven feet long, showing decorative motifs of a distinctly Hellenistic or Graeco-Buddhist type (Fig. 62).

Wind erosion had worked terrible havoc here, too, and at some large dwellings about a mile off to the south-east. Yet we recovered at the latter plenty of interesting relics. They included fine pieces from elegantly carved and lacquered furniture; fragments of carved wooden panels with motifs almost Roman in style (Fig. 61); decorated textiles such as a well-preserved slipper adorned with tapestry designs unmistakably Western, etc. Near another small Buddhist shrine there survived dead fruit-trees of an ancient fenced orchard, the only proofs of ancient cultivation to be traced at the site. There were other indications also that the settlement once existing there and around the fortified station had derived its importance far more from the traffic with China which passed through it than from its local resources.

My desire to trace the line followed by this traffic through the vast expanse of unexplored desert eastwards was eager enough. But any attempt at this very difficult task was precluded at the time. Our ice store was getting very low. Increasing cases of illness among the men showed how exposure to the continual blasts was telling on them. So when, by December 29, 1906, the exploration of all structural remains at the western site also was completed, the main body of the men was sent back to Abdal along with the 'archaeological proceeds' in charge of Surveyor Rai Ram Singh. Rheumatism brought on by exposure to the