

The natives may indeed call these remains a 'kone-shahr,' using the term which is applied throughout the country to old ruins of any kind. But to talk of an "ancient city" here would imply more imagination than an archæologist need care to take credit for.

The excavation of the ruined structures in the interior of the quadrangle kept my little force of diggers hard at work for two days, but there was little to reward their labour. Long prior to the accumulation of the present covering of sand, the buildings must have been exposed to the full force of erosion. The plaster of the walls had completely disappeared, and much of their wooden framework had also crumbled into loose débris. From the general arrangement of the rooms, however, which could still be made out, it was evident that these structures must have once served as dwellings.

Only Toghrak wood appears to have been used in the construction of these houses and of the enclosing quadrangle. This species of poplar grows plentifully in the jungles of all the rivers which lose themselves in the desert. But its twisted knotty trunks and branches by no means furnish as good a building material as the Terek or white poplar, the Jigda, and other trees planted in the cultivated areas. At Dandan-Uiliq and at the ancient site beyond Imam Jafar Sadik only timber of these latter trees seems to have been used for the framework of houses, which accordingly there bore a far more finished look than at Karadong. At those other old sites the dead trunks of Terek and other trees dependent on cultivation formed a conspicuous feature. But around Karadong I looked for them in vain. Dead trees rising from between the sand dunes were plentiful, but they were all old Toghraks, just as are still found growing luxuriantly along the recent river-beds a few miles to the east. I concluded from this observation that cultivation could not have existed to any extent in the vicinity of the Karadong site at the period from which its buildings date.

What then can have been the purpose of the latter, situated as they evidently were in the narrow belt of forest land between the desert and the river? Keeping in view the position and the peculiar plan of the ruined structures, I think the suggestion may