

The well-preserved covering-tablet of a wedge-shaped Kharoṣṭhī document (N. xx. 2) was also found here. Close by there turned up the curious carved wood panel, N. xx. 01 (see Plate LXVIII), representing the upper portion of a long-tailed ibex-like animal, of spirited design though rudely executed. Judging from its size this panel, which must have adjoined a lower piece, may have formed part of a cupboard, such as will be described presently.

On the floor of the same room lay the well-carved large double bracket of wood measuring 41 by 9 in. with a thickness of 3 in., which the photograph reproduced in Plate IX shows in the centre. In constructive detail it closely resembled the smaller brackets which were found in one of the inner rooms, and which the same photograph shows on either side of it; but owing to exposure the carved surface had suffered more damage. The carving of the oblong modillions below the architrave of the bracket shows decorative motives exactly similar to those found on the ancient wooden chair from N. III described above⁶. In one modillion we have the four-petalled and four-sepal flower, so frequent there and well-known to us from Gandhāra sculpture, repeated four times within fillet-borders. In the other modillion halves of the same flower reappear within four triangles, which are formed by diagonally crossing fillets. The bracket had, as the socket in the centre showed, rested on the round head of a post and, no doubt, served to support a true architrave beneath the roof. It is more difficult to say what architectural use there can have been for the carved wooden finial about 6 in. long seen in the foreground of the photograph (Plate IX). Its five circular tori or corrugations, widening in succession, recall the *chattras* or umbrellas in wood or stone which were mounted in a similar fashion above the dome of Indian Stūpas. Two implements of home industry, simple in character, but none the less interesting, also turned up in the same room. The wooden instrument N. xx. 05 (see Plate LXXIII), resembling a currycomb, has already been referred to in the description of the interesting painted panel from Dandān-Uiliq (D. x. 4), illustrating the legend about the introduction of sericulture, which it helped to explain. It served, like the similar implement used at the present day, for beating together the picks of the weft in the course of weaving. The wooden boot-last, 10 in. long (seen in Plate LXXIII), differs in no way from the same contrivance used by Khotan bootmakers at the present day.

Carved
wooden
bracket.

The hopes raised by these interesting finds of the first day were imperfectly fulfilled by the results of the subsequent excavation of other rooms in this dwelling. It was attended with considerable difficulty, owing to the height of the sand increasing towards the centre of the dune. Only the centre room on the west face, which was filled with sand to a height of fully 10 ft., yielded any finds. From the construction of the timber framework it was clear that the extant walls belonged to a lower story, and that this had once been surmounted by a second one, of which, however, only portions of the main posts survived. In view of this evidence I think it safe to conclude that the small recess, measuring 8 by 5 ft., built within the northern corner of the room was intended for a staircase or ladder communicating with the upper floor. The fact of its being accessible by doors, from both this room and the one adjoining, supports this supposition. In the centre of the room was found a wooden cupboard of plain make, 2 ft. 5 in. long, 1 ft. 10 in. broad, and standing with its legs 2 ft. 8 in. from the ground, the plain legs themselves being 1 ft. 10 in. high. In make it otherwise resembled exactly the cupboard subsequently brought to light from N. xxii. and seen in the photograph (Plate IX); the latter specimen, however, shows in the curved shape and mouldings of its legs some endeavour at ornamentation. In both cupboards a small opening, about 8 in. square, was found at one

Upper
story of
house
N. VIII.

Ancient
cupboard.

⁶ See p. 335 and Plate LXVIII.