

to the north-east, corresponded exactly to the indications I had deduced from these scanty relics. There were the remains of ancient brick walls, traceable for about forty feet on what had once been the south-east and south-west faces of a quadrangular temple cella (Fig. 74). But they rose only some two feet above the old ground level, and on the other sides had disappeared completely through deep wind erosion of the soil. What was once the interior of the cella now showed as a hollow lying more than six feet below the bottom course of bricks in the extant wall remains. The soil washed out under the latter, as if by a current, told plainly how the erosive power of the wind was proceeding in its work of destruction. The bleached fragments of carved timber and the small fissured fragments of stucco relievos showing familiar floral designs of Graeco-Buddhist art, which my men collected from the eroded ground, curiously recalled relics from some ancient burial-place.

The clouds which had given welcome shelter during the preceding two days had receded to the horizon and, though still clinging to the mountains southward, no longer mitigated the force of the sun. So it was hot work tramping over the glaring dunes in search of the other 'houses' which Ahmad, the Suya treasure-seeker, had still to show me in this neighbourhood. They proved to be the remains of modest dwellings built with timber and plaster walls, first destroyed by erosion and finally by the burrowings of those who have searched for 'treasure,' whenever the march of the dunes left them exposed during the course of long centuries. In one of them we could still trace the ground plan marked by the remains of walls made of plastered reed matting, the position once occupied by large jars sunk into the mud floor, and so on.

Farther east, where the dunes were getting lower and erosion had run its full course, the ground showed a distinct approach to the familiar 'Tati' type. Pottery débris reddened large stretches of eroded ground. Yet here and there the light drift sand still protected more distinctive marks of ancient occupation. There were the low stumps of fruit trees and poplars which once had surrounded the vanished