

recruited twenty men for trial excavations, I started on the morning of September 24th for the site of Khadalik. The limit of cultivation eastwards was soon reached at the Domoko Yar, a lively little stream at this season spreading itself in a wide grass-covered Nullah. Beyond I entered once more that maze of closely packed sand-hills overgrown by tamarisk scrub which I well remembered from my march from the Shivul swamps. After wending our way through them for about three miles eastwards, we came to more open ground; and, forewarned by the appearance of pottery débris, I found myself presently at the old site I had come to explore.

Its appearance at first by no means encouraged archaeological hopes. There was a little plain about 400 yards from east to west and less than half across, fringed all round with high tamarisk-covered sand-cones. The ground, partly eroded by the winds and elsewhere overrun by low sand dunes, showed no indications whatever of structural remains. Considering how near the site was to the oasis and how exposed its remains must have been from early times to constant exploitation, I did not feel surprised at the absence of those gaunt remnants of timber-built houses and ancient orchards, which had at once struck the eye at sites previously explored far out in the desert. But what filled me with misgivings was the thoroughly-dug-up surface of the low but extensive mound pointed out by Mullah Khwaja as his find-place of manuscripts. It seemed as if all its layers must have been disturbed by such multifarious burrowings.

This feeling did not last long when, after a rapid preliminary survey of the whole site—not a protracted affair, seeing how small were its limits—I set the men to work where an eroded depression approached the south face of the mound. The first clearing of the slopes brought to light broken pieces of a frescoed wall manifestly belonging to a Buddhist shrine, and with them little fragments of paper manuscripts written in bold Indian script of the type known as Central-Asian Gupta. Within half an hour there emerged from the loose sand the first important 'Khat,' for the discovery of which I had promised a special