

victuals. But the excellent wood-carving displayed on the front legs, more than seventeen inches high, and in some pieces of panelling, was of interest by its unmistakable Graeco-Buddhist design.

When in the afternoon the turn came for clearing the heap of timber débris which covered the small eroded terrace in the centre and marked the position of the shrine, my hope of other artistic remains of the same sort was soon fulfilled. Even among the woodwork which lay on the top practically without any sand to protect it, just as Hedin's people had left it, I discovered carved panels and posts which still retained portions of beautifully designed floral decoration in relievo. In others, which had lain fully exposed to the force of sun and wind, the surface of the wood had become badly bleached and splintered. But even among such withered pieces my eye lit here and there upon familiar outlines of flower ornaments known to me from the sculpture of distant Gandhara.

How great was my relief when I discovered that, on the south-east slope of the terrace, where sand had since its erosion accumulated to a height of three to four feet, numerous fine pieces of ornamental wood-carving had found a safe place of refuge! (Fig. 122). From here emerged several thick beams, over seven feet long and eight inches wide on their carved face, showing rich festoons of eight-petalled lotus flowers of a type I remembered well from the fresco decoration of one of the residences I had excavated in 1901 at the Niya site. Other beams up to twelve feet in length, which might possibly have served also as uprights, were decorated with a very tasteful relievo pattern of large lozenges filled by open four-petalled flowers common to the art of Gandhara. Even more classical in design was a beautiful piece of wood-carving over five feet long, which might originally have served as the top part of a door frame, showing intertwined garlands of acanthus leaves and clematis (Fig. 122, 9).

All these pieces must have belonged to the decoration of a structure nearly square and mainly built in timber; its outer foundation beams on the south-east and north-east sides, nineteen and a half and eighteen and a half feet long,