

of consequence was made clear by a succession of interesting finds which came to light from below that protective cover. There were Kharoshthi tablets of official shape in excellent preservation; pieces of elaborately woven rugs in delicate colours; wooden panels once evidently belonging to cupboards or similar pieces of furniture, and decorated with floral designs in relief unmistakably derived from classical models. Of articles which plainly suggested use by some clerical establishment, there were writing styles in wood; several detached seal-cases, no doubt used in the manner employed by Mr. Macartney to secure my mail bags; a curious almost square tablet, with its surface slightly sunk between narrow borders as if for the reception of wax or some similar coating after the fashion of classical note tablets; and a flat stone for rubbing Chinese ink on.

In one hall, measuring twenty-eight by twenty-five feet, the roof had been borne by four elaborately turned pillars which still rose in their original places (Fig. 124). Above they were badly withered and splintered; but below, where hard layers of dung were encrusted around them to a height of nearly two feet, they retained their fine mouldings. A large trough, such as used for the feeding of cattle, dug out roughly from a tree trunk, was found here embedded in the dung layer. It strikingly illustrated the contrast between the original character of the building and the base use to which it had been put when the ancient colony had fallen to the state of a primitive pastoral station.

The clearing of these consolidated crusts of refuse cost far more care and time than mere digging in sand would have. Thus it was not until December 27th that the large ruin yielded up some of its finest relics. Among these were two exquisitely modelled and painted pieces of wooden furniture, probably arm-rests from chairs, which vividly demonstrated the close and varied relations of all local art with the Far West (Fig. 125, 2, 3). One carved in relief and elaborately lacquered showed the representation of a grotesque beast, probably meant for a conventional lion. The design is distinctly of Persepolitan style and suggests Assyrian ancestry, down to the many-coloured spirals which indicate the hair round the claws. The other, larger