

wind erosion, this itself had suffered badly. It might have been a chapel court or monastic structure; and one solid brick wall, which lay exactly in the direction of the prevailing north-east wind, still rose for a length of close on sixty feet. But of the apartments once adjoining only one could be traced, and that merely in its ruined foundations. It was a massive small structure, measuring about nineteen feet outside and enclosing a circular chamber which recalled to my mind the domed chapels so often seen amidst the ruined Buddhist sites of the Indian North-West Frontier.

Unfortunately no antiquarian remains whatever survived within the low broken walls; and when I subsequently cleared the narrow space intervening between the walls behind the north-east temple passage, we discovered only deep layers of dung from sheep and horses. In places this also formed a thick cover over broken wall portions, thus proving that the ground must have retained vegetation fit for some sort of grazing long after the decay of the shrine. It will be remembered that my excavations at the Niya and Lop-nor sites revealed exactly corresponding evidence of a transitional period through which the area of ancient cultivation must have passed before becoming the utterly desolate waste it is now.

The safe packing of such sculptural remains from the ruined shrine as could be removed was no easy task, considering their weight and exceedingly friable substance. So I was kept hard at work while the men were laboriously 're-burying' everything else that our excavations had exposed. I could not deny the same measure of preservation to the quarters dug up in the fort, late as everything seemed there by comparison. But meanwhile I lost no time in starting work on January 31st at a group of ruined mounds which remained unexplored (Fig. 108), about a mile and a quarter west of the fort. The cursory inspection I had made of a cluster of five of them on my first approach to the site, had left the impression that they were much-decayed ruins of Stupas of the usual type. But even then I had been struck by the curious appearance of the smallest mound, which showed a remarkably well preserved little