

in position and construction corresponded exactly to those described in N. xxiv. The only find in this room, but a very interesting one, was the massive decorated double-bracket, nearly eight and a half feet long and fourteen inches in height, which is reproduced in Plate XVIII. The photographs, Figs. 63, 64, show it again, raised on the wooden pillar measuring five feet eight inches in height and a foot in diameter, which had once carried it and which was found lying close by. Both sides of the double-bracket as well as its under-surface bear well-designed though coarsely executed motifs in bold relief. Monsters of the composite type, such as Gandhāra borrowed from Hellenistic art and Central-Asian Buddhist art also cherished, with crocodiles' heads, winged bodies, and the tails and feet of lions, fill the side panels on each vertical face. The central panel is occupied by a vase holding long curving stems which end alternately in broad leaves and fruits. The whole arrangement recalls that of an Indo-Corinthian capital.

The under-surface at its ends is decorated with panels of varying design; the motifs of these are partly floral and all are elsewhere represented among the ornamental carvings of this site, as also in Gandhāra work. The plain surface of the centre is accounted for by the fact that the double-bracket, as seen in Fig. 63, though its mortice fitted the top of the chule of the pillar, did not take in the whole of the chule but originally rested on another double-bracket, now lost. To judge from the interval left between the foot of the chule and the under-surface of the extant double-bracket, this intermediary bracket had a height of about six inches. It would have been quite impossible to move the massive piece of carved timber as found, owing to its size and weight. So I was glad that Naik Rām Singh's skill as a carpenter permitted me to have the panels carefully separated along the ornamental bands dividing the panels. Even thus the weight of each portion had to be reduced by hollowing out the core in order to make up practicable loads. The reproduction of the rejoined panels in Plate XVIII shows that this fine piece of ancient wood-carving did not suffer either by this unavoidable operation or the subsequent long and difficult transport.

Architectural wood-carving.

In the southern portion of the house the room, vii, had evidently served as a kind of entrance hall or passage. Two out of its four doors had a width of two feet only, widening to two feet three inches at the bottom owing to the slant of the jambs. They stood only five feet above the floor, the same feature being noticed also in some doors of N. xii and other residences. The small room, vi, adjoining, in the south-west corner of the house, was so deeply buried under a dune that it had preserved its walls and roofing almost intact. The rafters of the latter with the layer of brushwood, once carrying the mud roof, were still in position. The two outer walls were solidly built of sun-dried bricks, with a thickness of one foot and a half. The west wall had a narrow window or air-hole just below the ceiling, which was at a height of nine feet two inches from the floor. The absence of any other opening, and the smoke-begrimed walls, showed that this little apartment had been specially affected as a warm corner during the winter months. The room contained a plastered platform underneath the window and on the opposite wall a perfectly preserved fire-place, with a wooden bench in the corner beside it, as seen in Fig. 71. On the top of the fire-place there lay, just as the last occupier had left them, a collection of perfectly preserved Kharoṣṭhī tablets, N. xxvi. vi. 1-11, mostly of oblong shape, of which specimens are reproduced in Plates XXVI, XXVII. With them was found the 'female' fire-stick, N. xxvi. vi. 12, and the empty seal-socket, N. xxvi. vi. 001 (Plate XXVII). The floor close by yielded some more tablets, resembling labels in shape, as well as the modern knife-handle, N. xxvi. vi. 002 (Plate XXXVI).

Room N. xxvi. vi found intact.

The large room, viii, to the east proved empty, except for a large and well-preserved cupboard in wood, of the shape already described as seen in the photograph, Fig. 57. Its cover-board showed on two edges decorative carving resembling a twisted rope. Finally, it was in the south-east corner room, v, that there lay, almost on the surface and therefore badly splintered by exposure, the large

More objects with wood-carving.