

To them was fastened a well-made wattle which consisted of horizontal reed bundles and was covered on either side with a plaster facing to a total thickness of eight inches. The posts and a massive wooden pillar, found within the same room and 1 foot 5 inches in diameter, showed that the height of the room had been about ten feet. This building must have been thoroughly cleared out after its desertion; for in spite of the excellent cover afforded by the fallen walls nothing was found here.

We fared somewhat better on clearing the ruin L.B. III (Fig. 103), which lay about ninety feet to the south-west. Only three rooms, built of timber and wattle, could still be traced under the slight covering of sand. But pieces of heavy foundation beams, which covered the eroded slopes eastward, showed that the building must have been originally larger. The wattle here consisted of horizontal reed bundles below and diagonally woven tamarisk matting higher up. In the large room a massive octagonal pillar of wood once supported the roof. Besides some small miscellaneous objects of bronze and paste, a quantity of rags of fabrics in silk, wool, and felt (L.B. III. 004, 007), and three Chinese copper coins of Han types, there were found here a number of pieces belonging to a large wooden chest or cupboard raised on four high legs and decorated by relieve carving, L.B. III. i (Plate XLVII). A detailed description of the pieces and the manner in which they fitted together will be found in the list below. In general constructive type and dimensions the cupboard closely agreed with the well-preserved but plain cupboards unearthed at the Niya Site,² and there can be no doubt about its having served, just as they had, for the safe storage of victuals. The four-petalled rosettes which form the decorative diaper carved in low relieve were also familiar to me as a motive from ornamental wood-carvings of the Niya Site.³

Finds in
ruined
dwelling
L.B. III.

My hope of other finds of artistic interest was fulfilled as soon as I had clearing begun at the heap of timber débris which covered the small eroded terrace in the centre and marked the position of the shrine, L.B. II, already referred to (Fig. 103). Even among the woodwork which lay on the top, practically without any sand to protect it, just as Dr. Hedin's people had left it, there were carved panels and posts still retaining at least portions of their well-designed floral decoration in relieve. In other pieces, which had lain fully exposed to the force of wind and sun, the surface of the wood had become badly bleached and splintered. But even among such withered carvings my eye was caught by outlines recalling floral ornaments familiar from the Niya Site or Gandhāra sculptures.

Decorated
woodwork
at shrine
L.B. II.

It was even more gratifying when, from the sand which had accumulated over the eroded slope on the south-east side of the terrace (Fig. 104) to a height of three or four feet, there emerged numbers of fine pieces of ornamental wood-carving which had found a place of refuge there. Among them some of the beams or posts could at once, by their very size, be recognized as having belonged to the wall decoration of the shrine. That this must have been mainly built of timber could be inferred also from the numerous fragments of open-work wooden panels, many of them showing bold and graceful designs, which had evidently filled the spaces in the wall left free for lighting.

That the shrine was of small size and approximately square was proved by the foundation beams on the south-east and north-east sides (see Plate 27; Fig. 103), which had remained *in situ* on the top of the terrace and measured 19½ and 18½ feet respectively. The two beams overlapped at

Structural
remains of
L.B. II.

² Cf. above, p. 224 with Pl. II; Fig. 57; also *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 377, 379.

³ See the ancient chair, N. vii. 4, in *Ancient Khotan*, ii. Pl. LXVIII; also *ibid.* Pl. LXIX. For other carvings excavated in 1906, see below, Pl. XVIII, XIX. The same

decorative motif is of frequent occurrence in 'Coptic' carvings of the Early Christian period; see Strzykowski, *Kopt. Kunst.*, Pl. XI-XIII, p. 172 sqq., for incised bone panels of the 3rd-4th century.