

of its kind had at the time greatly puzzled me. I visited the ruin on January 30, and ascertained that the place where Hasan Ākhūn said he had picked up the tablet was a small triangular shelf, marked *a* in the detail plan of the ruin (Plate XXXV), in the corner of the central room. The sand filling it to a height of about 4 ft. just reached this shelf. The effect of the exposure thus undergone by the tablet is marked by its warped and slightly cracked appearance, which makes the fair preservation of the two clay seals all the more striking. One of them represents a barbarian head recalling that of Maues on certain Śaka coins from North-western India, the other a bird rising with wings extended. The tablet must have lain on the shelf with the obverse downwards and would, no doubt, have been completely destroyed by a few seasons more of exposure.

Excepting a small store of wood comprising branches of poplar, Jigda, and tamarisk stacked in a passage (see plan in Plate XXXV), no other movable objects were found on clearing this modest residence. But it was of interest to observe that the room built on to the north of the one just referred to had three of its walls constructed of stamped clay. An outer shed adjoining eastwards appears to have been constructed with rush walls, and contained the remains of what seemed to have been a circular baking-oven built in clay, about 2 ft. in diameter. To the east of the dwelling numerous trunks of dead fruit trees marked an orchard, and beyond this the line of an ancient canal about 8 ft. broad could be traced for a little over a hundred yards in the general direction S. to N. It was once bordered by a double row of fine poplars, the dead trunks of which, massive and imposing even in their splintered and withered condition, lay stretched out in the sand more or less exposed.

February 12, the day preceding my departure, was spent in the examination of a small group of ruins (N. XII) lying about half a mile to the west of N. XI, and close to a belt of tamarisk-covered sand-cones which here fringes the high ridge of dunes marking the western edge of the ancient cultivated area (see site plan in Plate XXVII). Being hidden in a dip behind a series of broad swelling dunes, rising to about 15 ft. above the original ground-level, these remains did not attract attention until the clearing of N. XI had been completed. They consisted of two relatively large but much-decayed dwellings situated within about 300 yards of each other, and of three small structures lying in a row a short distance to the east of them. The northern and larger of the two houses formed a compact block of rooms measuring about 62 ft. from north to south, with a breadth of about 44 ft. The covering sand lay only to a height of 2 to 5 ft., and all the woodwork of the walls bore marks of long-continued exposure. In spite of the fissured and shrunk surface traces of ornamental wood-carving, similar in style to that observed in N. VIII, survived of a doorpost and some fragments of roof-beams. A pattern closely recalling the *kingri* work so common in the architectural carving of the Western Punjab could clearly be made out⁹. The rooms, with the exception of one at the south-west corner, were cleared completely, but no finds of any kind rewarded the labour. The excavations made in the smaller house situated to the south-east yielded no better result. The only discovery made here consisted of a very large jar let into the floor of the north-east corner room. In shape and material it closely resembled the ancient jar I had seen at Niya. The diameter was here fully 2 ft. 11 in., while the mouth measured nearly a foot across. The inside was filled with loose sand. The remaining three ruins seemed to be the remains of small dwellings or cattle-sheds roughly built of timber and rush walls. Being situated close under the lee side of relatively high dunes, their clearing would have cost considerable labour and delay with but

⁹ Compare for this pattern the side elevation of the bracket, N. xx. 02, Plate LXIX, with description in list.

Ancient
canal and
avenue.

Ruined
dwellings
N. XII.