

coarsely designed carving of the under-surface showed the four petalled flower of Gandhāra origin, along with simpler patterns. In the scanty remains of N. xvi (see plan in Plate 11), the extant walls were constructed of rushes and plaster, and the only find to be noticed was a bent stick which may have served as a fixed shoemaker's measure (N. xvi. i. 002; see Plate XXVIII). The ruin N. xvii had suffered so badly through erosion that only a single small room, with a sitting platform, could be traced, the solitary find being a wedge-shaped tablet with a column of Kharoṣṭhī writing at its square end. This probably had been earlier the under-tablet of a double-wedge which had been scraped down to be used again for a memorandum.

Ruin N.  
xviii.

In another small group of dwellings, situated over a mile to the east-south-east, the ruin N. xviii (see plan in Plate 11) was of fairly large size but completely eroded. Apart from the rectangular covering-tablet of a Kharoṣṭhī document there was found here a large wooden eating-tray, about thirty-two inches by fifteen inches, raised to a height of six inches by short legs (seen in background of the photograph, Fig. 52). A curious object here recovered was a flat wooden stamp, N. xviii. 001 (see Plate XIX), showing on its face the rude design of a cow. Its use remains doubtful. About fifty yards to the south-east there were clear remains of an orchard, with several trunks in a row of dead mulberry-trees still rising to heights varying from ten to twelve feet (see Fig. 51). Evidently a dune had offered them protection for centuries and thus saved them.

Excavation  
of ruin  
N. xix.

N. xix was a dwelling about a quarter of a mile to the east of N. xviii, covered by sand to a height of two to five feet. The photograph in Fig. 50 shows its eastern part as it looked before excavation, and its plan is seen in Plate 8. It consisted of two separate sets of rooms separated by a small fenced orchard, the trees of which, mainly mulberry, were lying as prostrate trunks in the sand. Most of the walls were constructed in timber and plaster, with diagonal tamarisk matting as a core. In the western set room i yielded the under-tablet of a wedge document in Kharoṣṭhī and room ii an intact jar, twenty-one inches high, nineteen across at its widest and six inches in diameter at its mouth (see Fig. 52). From the passage, iii, of the eastern set there emerged three label-shaped tablets; part of a bowl decorated in red and black lacquer; two boot-lasts of different sizes (N. xix. 001, 002; see Plate XIX) and a small wooden implement (N. xix. 003, see Plate XXVIII) which might possibly have served as a handle for the thong of a fire-drill or as a 'dead-eye' for a rope. In the largest room, N. xix. iv, the two well-preserved door-jambs showed decorative carving of the pattern now known in the Punjab as *jaudāna* (see inset in Plate 8). Two small structures to the east and south of N. xix, at thirty and ten yards' distance respectively, proved completely eroded, the only remains left being the posts which rose above the low sand dunes. To the south of the first a row of big poplars (Tereks) still stood upright at regular intervals.

R. S. Rām  
Singh's  
reconnais-  
sance.

After clearing N. xix I marched on the evening of October 21 across the dunes eastwards in order to examine the large ruin, the posts of which rising above the dunes had attracted notice from a distance. It proved, as expected, the ancient residence, N. viii, already excavated in 1901. The condition of the sands overlying and surrounding it and the adjacent ruins seemed to have changed very little. While there I was rejoined by Surveyor Rām Singh and learned with some dismay that the guidance of Islām Ākhūn, the Niya villager who had offered to show some ruins newly discovered away to the east, had completely failed. He persisted in moving northward, in manifest contradiction to his previous statements, and when no ruins of any sort were sighted after a long and trying day's march, confessed to having lost his bearings. On the next day Islām Ākhūn endeavoured to pick up some guiding points by steering south-eastwards. But his confusion becoming more and more manifest, the Surveyor thought it prudent to head again for my camp before the camels, which showed signs of exhaustion, broke down. In spite of various détours and the growing height of the dunes, Rām Singh had reached a point fully thirteen miles farther north in