

double-wedge tablet was recovered. Among the small objects picked up from eroded ground close by was a neatly worked pendant showing a piece of greenish glass set in a round silver mount, N. xxxv. 006 (see Plate XXIX).

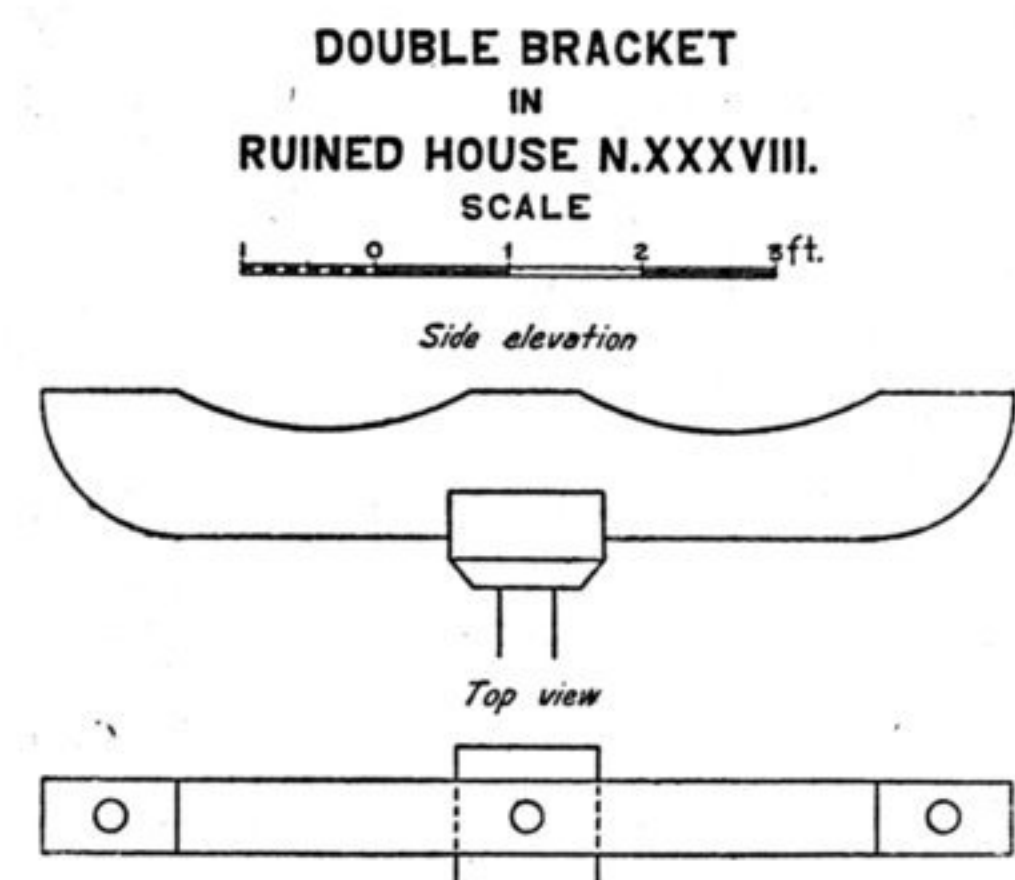
SECTION V.—EXPLORATION OF SOUTHERNMOST RUINS AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON SITE

We emerged on somewhat more open ground on nearing the area where, on the day of my arrival, I had noticed a few living Toghraks still lingering among the numerous dead ones. Here, amidst some low dunes and plentiful tamarisk scrub, as seen in the background of the photograph, Fig. 68, lay a group of ruins, the southernmost of the main site, except for the isolated remains noticed on my first return. In this jungle which still struggled against death, half a dozen ancient dwellings were traceable, all of modest extent and, it seemed, of rather rough construction. In several of them I noticed that the diagonal matting forming the core of the walls was strengthened on the outside by thick vertically placed rush bundles. The plaster covering used appears to have been very thin and had almost completely decayed. N. xxxvi, at the north foot of a conspicuous tamarisk-cone (Fig. 68; for plan, see Plate 17), yielded no remains of any sort. But from the several apartments of the ruin to the south of this, N. xxxvii (see plan, Plate 17), there were recovered a number of Kharoṣṭhī tablets, including a rectangular cover with the clay seal of the Chinese command at Shan-shan (Plate XXIII), besides a curious piece of decorative wood-carving (N. xxxvii. ii. 004, Plate XIX), which evidently belonged to some piece of furniture. The four-petalled flower appearing on it is of an unusual form.

Excavation of dwellings N. xxxvi, xxxvii.

In the dwelling N. xxxviii, which lay a short distance to the east (see plan, Plate 17), the main room, i, showed on three sides a sitting platform, four feet broad and fifteen inches high, faced with sun-dried bricks seventeen by twelve by three inches.

Wood-carving in N. xxxviii.



There was found here a roughly carved round central pillar and a plain double-bracket, eight feet long and seven and a half inches wide, with ends curving upwards (see diagram). Mortises showed that, as in N. xxvi, there must have been a second double-bracket combined with this. In room ii a wooden pillar was discovered, five feet high and oval in section, with a longer axis of nine inches and the sides showing sixteen facets (see Fig. 69). The top, both in front and on the back, was decorated in rough bold chip-carving with a design showing a vase from which issued two long curving stems ending in broad leaves and fruits pendent, exactly after the style seen in the central panel of the double-bracket N. xxvi. iii. 1 (Plate XVIII).

In the small and badly eroded dwelling, N. xxxix, a quarter of a mile to the north, a rectangular covering-tablet was found, carved in the rough and manifestly unfinished. On a 'witness' about fifteen feet high, close to camp, stood the small ruin N. xl, of which only a single room with fire-place and sitting platform on three sides had survived erosion. It was curious to note that a tamarisk-cone, rising some thirty yards to the west and also eroded at its foot, bore on its top dead Toghraks. These stood on a level about five feet higher than the floor of N. xl. They must have grown up when the sand-cone was quite low, just like those which now abound over the neighbouring area

Dead Toghraks on eroded sand-cone.