

the spot, interrogating the alleged finders and verifying the exact circumstances and position of the discoveries, was the only way to determine their full archaeological value. How much more he achieved in this strenuous twelve months' tour is recorded in his preliminary report, *Archaeological Exploration in Chinese Turkestan*, and his fuller account entitled *Ancient Khotan*. The route taken on this, his first Central Asian expedition, ran via Gilgit and Hunza into Chinese territory on the Tāgh-dumbāsh Pamīr by way of the Kilik Pass. Here was started his triangular and plane-table survey, which, with astronomical and geological observations, continued throughout his journey. Passing through Tāsh-kurghān, a very ancient outpost of Central Chinese dominions, and Sarīkol, surveying by the way the Mus-tāgh-ata range with a peak of 24,000 feet, he reached Kāshgar on 29 July, where he made preparations for his journey into the desert near Khotan. An enforced delay at Khotan was utilized to survey the hitherto imperfectly mapped portion of the K'un-lun range, by which certain errors in official maps were subsequently corrected. This done, the desert sites explored from Khotan included Dandān-oilik, where very interesting wall paintings and paintings on wood were found, one, with an Aphrodite-like figure, on the wall of a shrine,<sup>1</sup> and another, on wood, of the 'silk princess', both referred to in the Introduction. At Niya, on the site of ancient buildings, he made the momentous discovery of documents dated from the first and second centuries A.D., written on wooden tablets, mostly in the ancient Kharoṣṭhī script, but many in Chinese; a considerable number of the hundreds found bearing their original clay seals with figures of Athene, Eros, and portrait heads, both Indian and Chinese. Endere, Rawak, and other sites were explored, revealing archaeologically valuable material in coins, seals, pottery, textiles, wood-carvings, and other objects. He returned to Khotan in April and came to London via the Trans-Caspian railway, arriving on 2 July 1901.

His next expedition into Central Asia started in 1906. Travelling by way of Swāt and Dīr, the Upper Oxus, over several difficult passes past Kiz-kurghān (the Princess's Tower)—whereof an ancient legend tells of a Chinese princess who, on her way to be married to the King of Persia, being detained here owing to military operations on the road, was visited by a divine person who came riding on horseback from the sun, with romantic consequences—he reached Kāshgar and 'the hospitable roof' of the late Sir George Macartney. From Kāshgar he proceeded to the oasis of Khotan, the base for his expedition. The full record of this great

<sup>1</sup> See plate xxxii.