

PLATE XXXII
PAINTING FROM DANDĀN-OILIK

D. II

THE brittle and friable nature of the plaster made it impossible to remove this painting from the wall of the shrine. It is therefore not represented in the collection in the Central Asian Antiquities Museum, New Delhi; nor have I seen it. But having certain features of unique interest Sir Aurel Stein desired that a reproduction of his photograph of it should be included in the Portfolio. The photograph was taken by him when he discovered the shrine during his first Central Asian Expedition in 1900–1, long before his skill in photography had reached the high level that distinguishes his later pictures. The enlargement now given is based upon a print from his very imperfect half-plate negative, the negative itself having long since disappeared: and the present result is a triumph of the skill and judgement of those artists at the Oxford University Press who, under the direction of Mr. Charles Batey, O.B.E., Printer to the University, have produced such a successful picture from very unpromising material. It is greatly to be regretted that much in the left foreground is so vague, but the fault lies in the original print and cannot be helped.

Not having had the good fortune to see the painting myself, I had hoped that Stein would have contributed his description of it. But this was not to be and such particulars as follow are compiled from the record embodied in his report of the expedition,¹ written after our joint study of the photograph and his contemporary notes.

The shrine containing the picture was a very small free-standing structure, timber framed with thin, plaster walls. It measured 12 ft. 8 in. by 8 ft. 8 in., the length lying north to south. Near the south-west corner, on the right of the picture, was the figure modelled in clay in high relief, of a mail-clad warrior (perhaps the Lokapāla Vaiśravaṇa) standing on a prostrate foe. He wears a coat resembling those found some years ago in Tibet, now in the British Museum. Made of leather, it is armoured with scales laced or riveted in horizontal rows on the skirt and in vertical rows on the part above the hips, these last overlapping upward. It is of interest that this method of upward overlapping, the reverse of western

¹ Stein, *Ancient Khotan*.