

first under Dr. A. von Lecoq, a distinguished Orientalist, and then again under Professor Grünwedel. Their excavations which had been carried on with the help of abundant State means almost uninterruptedly from 1904 until about half-a-year before my arrival, had, as I knew, been attended with well-merited success.

It could not be my object, during the few weeks I could spare for Turfan, to attempt supplementing these protracted labours by digging at sites upon which the German savants had already been able to bestow ample time, unbounded scholarly zeal, and a thorough local experience. But I was anxious to familiarize myself as well as I could with the constructive peculiarities of the ruins, the art remains left *in situ*, and what else might help me to understand better the significance of the Turfan finds, and to use their evidence for the interpretation of my own. Even more, perhaps, was I attracted by the wish to study on the spot those peculiar topographical and archaeological facts which might throw light on the ever-fascinating subject of desiccation.

On this account I had already, on the last march to Pichan, greeted with special interest that characteristic feature of Turfan cultivation, the 'Karez' or underground irrigation channel. I knew it to be mainly responsible for the present flourishing condition of the oases in Turfan; for they are situated in a depression which is watered by no rivers of any size, and suffers from terrific heat during the greater part of the year. The cause of this heat, as Roborowsky first established, is to be sought in the fact that the lowest portion of this drainageless basin sinks well below the level of the sea.

This geographical interest induced me to start my tour at the south-eastern end of the basin. There Roborowsky's map marked the ruins of 'Chong-Hassar,' 'the Big Castle,' not far from the terminal marshes of the whole depression, and on ground which I was told was now desert. My archaeological predilection for the latter naturally influenced the choice, and I had no reason to regret it. Directing the heavy baggage train to proceed to Turfan town, I moved with the Surveyor on November 13th down the