

and a review of the essential characteristics of their iconography and artistic execution. It is hoped that the particularly full descriptions furnished in the List of Chap. XXV, sec. ii, and the provision of numerous reproductions both in Vol. IV and in the portfolio of the *Thousand Buddhas*<sup>10</sup> will stimulate and assist detailed study by competent experts.

The same remarks apply to the analysis offered in Chap. XXIV, sec. i-iii, of the very numerous and interesting textile relics with reference to their technique and particularly their decorative designs. As regards the thousands of texts and documents in a variety of languages brought away from the walled-up chapel, Chap. XXIV, sec. iv, v, merely records the arrangements made for their first examination and cataloguing, and passes in rapid review any indications of quasi-antiquarian interest which the labours already accomplished by competent collaborators may furnish as to the sources of the old monastic library and the like. Here, as in all similar cases, the systematic analysis of the manuscript materials discovered falls beyond the scope of this Report and must be left to separate publications by qualified experts.

Analysis of  
textile finds

Study of  
MS. finds.

From the 'Thousand Buddhas' I proceeded in June, 1907, to the oasis of An-hsi, and, after tracing in its vicinity more remains of the ancient *Limes*, explored the ruined site of Ch'iao-tzū and a smaller group of cave-temples, known as the 'Myriad Buddhas', in the outer hills of the westernmost Nan-shan (Chapter XXVI). Then in July I made my way along the high and barren mountains of this range to Chia-yü kuan, the well-known western Gate of the mediaeval 'Chinese Wall'. This, in spite of its late origin, proved to offer here points of distinct antiquarian interest. Extensive surveys in the high snowy ranges of the Central Nan-shan, rich in topographical results,<sup>11</sup> and some antiquarian work along the ancient high road leading through Kan-chou and Su-chou completed our labours in Kan-su (Chapter XXVII). Then a long journey in the autumn from An-hsi allowed me to trace in detail Hsüan-tsang's adventurous crossing of the Pei-shan desert and subsequently to pay rapid visits to the old remains of Hāmi and Turfān (Chapter XXVIII). Next ruined Buddhist sites of the Kara-shahr district offered opportunities for excavations particularly fruitful in fine reliefs reflecting Graeco-Buddhist art (Chapter XXIX).

Explora-  
tions in  
Nan-shan  
and Kan-su.

My second winter campaign in the Tārīm Basin included a successful crossing of the great 'Sea of Sand' of the Taklamakān at its widest, accomplished under serious risks and ending with a fresh visit to the ruins of Kara-dong (Chapter XXX), and subsequently more excavations rewarded by interesting results at desert sites to the east and north of Khotan (Chapter XXXI). In the spring of 1908, travelling northward, I was able to reap a rich harvest of ancient records in Khotanese, Tibetan, and Chinese at the ruined fort of the Mazār-tāgh, and subsequently, passing through Ak-su, Uch-Turfān, and unsurveyed hill ranges south of the T'ien-shan, to visit ruined sites near the ancient Chinese high road leading towards Kāshgar (Chapter XXXII). Finally, after returning to Khotan, I used the time still available in the summer and autumn of 1908 for fresh geographical work in the high and almost wholly unexplored K'un-lun mountains between the head-waters of the Khotan rivers and the barren plateaus of the extreme north-west of Tibet (Chapter XXXIII).<sup>11a</sup> A serious accident through frost-bite, suffered in my feet just when completing my last exploratory task on the ice-clad crest of the main K'un-lun range, caused me to return to India in a crippled state. But my collection of antiquities, filling close on a hundred cases, travelled safely, and by the close of January, 1909, it reached the British Museum uninjured.

Winter  
campaign  
in Tārīm  
Basin, 1906.

Explora-  
tions in  
main K'un-  
lun range.

The elaboration of the over-abundant results brought back from this expedition was bound to lay very heavy tasks on my shoulders. So I felt very grateful when the Government of India sanctioned my being placed on special duty in England for a period of two years and three months

Deputation  
to England,  
1909.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding this supplementary publication, see below, p. xvi.

<sup>11</sup> Fully described in *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 297-333.

<sup>11a</sup> For a detailed account, cf. *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 440-82.