

completely preserved, with a triangular top for suspension.<sup>6</sup> Suspended by the apex of this, they would float in the air and, twisted by the breeze, would present either side to the beholder. It is undoubtedly for this reason that we always find in the banners the reverse painted precisely the same as the obverse. What was meant for the obverse can usually be determined by the pose being there the iconographically correct one and by the shading, etc., being properly finished.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the silk banners this procedure was made particularly easy by the transparent texture of the fine silk gauze which appears to have always been used for them. This allowed the design to be clearly visible on the reverse, where consequently it merely required to be reinforced and finished. The use of this fine gauze-like silk for the banners was obviously intentional. It offered the additional great advantage of causing the banners, when hung up in the manner described, to interfere less with the lighting of the interior of the cave-temples than would have been the case otherwise; for the latter, as explained above, received light only through their porches and the antechapels usually found in front of these.<sup>8</sup>

Triangular  
banner tops.

The triangular banner tops were usually made up of the same material as the banners themselves, this being in many cases painted with a decorative design suitable to the available space, or else left plain.<sup>9</sup> In some instances, however, a piece of embroidery took the place of the painted design.<sup>10</sup> Pieces of decorated woven fabrics were also employed in this fashion.<sup>11</sup> In the same way we find occasionally strips of fine brocade used for the borders which fringed the triangular top and served to carry the weight of the whole arrangement.<sup>12</sup> A single suspension loop was attached to the apex of the border.

Streamers  
and  
'strainers'  
of banners.

Thin slips of wood or bamboo, fixed along the top and bottom edges of the painted rectangles of the banners proper, served to keep them spread.<sup>13</sup> To the upper one was attached the triangular top. The lower one carried a long strip of silk, linen, or paper, according to the material used in the banner proper, of the same width as the banner, but slit lengthwise into four, three, or two bands.<sup>14</sup> In some cases the bands were painted or stencilled with simple floral patterns in monochrome.<sup>15</sup> The bottom end of these bands, having been folded over a narrow slip of cane, was attached by gluing to a flat piece of painted wood, usually decorated with a floral design, which served as a 'strainer' or weighting-board to check undue contortions in the wind.<sup>16</sup> The same piece of wood could conveniently be used also for folding up the banners in case of transport or deposit, and the actual use which, I found, had been made of it for this purpose, no doubt, helps to account for the excellent condition in which most of the banners thus rolled up had survived. Attached to the ends of the upper stick or the bottom of the triangular banner-top there depended two long streamers, of a plain material similar to that of the banner proper, but of a different colour.<sup>17</sup> These streamers, as

<sup>6</sup> For specimens of silk banners retaining the complete arrangement of triangular top, streamers, etc., cf. Pl. LXXVII, LXXX, LXXXII, LXXXVI. For similar specimens in linen, see Pl. LXXXVIII, LXXXIX.

<sup>7</sup> There are, however, instances where the finished side is (by mistake of the artist?) the reverse; see, e.g., Ch. 0010; xxvi. a. 002. Cf. also below, p. 850, note 22.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. above, p. 793.

<sup>9</sup> See Pl. LXXVII, LXXX, LXXXVIII, LXXXIX for examples of painted banner tops; for plain tops, see LXXVII, LXXXVI, LXXXII. Pl. LXXXI shows later repair of a poor sort.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Ch. liv. 002, Pl. LXXXVI; also xxvi. 002, Pl. CXI.

<sup>11</sup> Specimens detached from the banners for which they originally had served are seen in Pl. CVI (Ch. 00227), CX (i. 0011, 0020), CXI (009, 00118, 00172, 00181), CXII (00165. a, 00232), CXIII (00304. a).

<sup>12</sup> See Ch. lv. 0034, Pl. LXXX, also Pl. CVI; i. 0020, Pl. CX; liv. 005, Pl. CVI.

<sup>13</sup> For illustrations of this arrangement, see Pl. LXXX, LXXXII, LXXXVI, LXXXVIII, LXXXIX.

<sup>14</sup> Four or three bands were usual; see Pl. LXV, LXXVII, LXXX, LXXXII, LXXXV, LXXXVI, LXXXVIII, LXXXIX. The last shows also a banner with two bands. For a paper banner, Ch. xx. 0013, see Pl. XCIX.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Ch. 0025, Pl. LXXVII; xvii. 001, Pl. LXXX; xx. 0013, Pl. XCIX.

<sup>16</sup> For specimens of banners retaining such 'strainers', see Pl. LXXX, LXXXII, LXXXV, LXXXVI, LXXXIX. For a number of such weighting-boards found detached, see Ch. 0070. a-q.

<sup>17</sup> See Pl. LXXVII, LXXX, LXXXI, LXXXII, LXXXVI, LXXXIX, XCIX.