

It only remains for us now briefly to notice the literary relics in Turkish language and Uigur script that I was able to recover from the above deposit. In 1909 Dr. (now Sir) Denison Ross expressed the eager wish to undertake the elaboration of these materials. Whatever information regarding them can be offered here is derived solely from such notes as he kindly communicated to me between 1910-13 in the course of the protracted studies which he devoted to certain of these texts. Our Uigur materials consist partly of texts or records, written on rolls mostly fragmentary and some with Chinese text on the obverse, and partly of written books.<sup>23</sup> Of the rolls it is impossible to state more at present than that their contents, as far as they are not records, are taken from Buddhist religious literature. Of the large roll, Ch. 0013, it is of interest to note that its reverse bears some characters in Runic Turkish script, evidence of a relatively early date. Among the texts in book-form, which are all in remarkably good preservation, Dr. Ross had recognized from the first Ch. xix. 001 (Plate CLXIII) as comprising a super-commentary on Sthiramati's commentary on Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, a standard treatise on Buddhist metaphysics, the whole apparently translated from Chinese versions. Another portion of the same work is found in the booklet, Ch. xix. 002 (Plate CLXIV), making up altogether some 250 folios. With the assistance of Professor Stcherbatskoi, Dr. Ross devoted assiduous labours at Calcutta to the preparation of an edition of this treatise which, it is hoped, he may yet be able to publish. Of mixed contents is apparently the booklet Ch. xxvii. 002 (Plate CLXIV). In all the above, Chinese terms and phrases appear frequently interspersed among the Uigur text.

The peculiar type of the writing, closely resembling that used for Mongolian, and the thin paper of these books, unlike any found in other manuscripts from the cave, seemed from the first to suggest a later date. But the problem here implied first assumed a definite form when Dr. (now Sir D.) Ross, while at work in 1912 on another booklet, Ch. xix. 003 (Plate CLXV), discovered in its colophon a date which he believes to correspond to the year A.D. 1350.<sup>23a</sup> I have already had occasion to refer to the circumstances explaining the apparent discrepancy between the relatively late origin thus made likely for our Uigur books and the date which the mass of concordant archaeological evidence obliges us to assume for the closing-up of the cave.<sup>24</sup> In full accord with the view taken by M. Pelliot and communicated by him to Dr. Ross,<sup>25</sup> I see strong reasons for the belief that these books, so different in make-up and type of writing from other Uigur relics in our respective collections, do not belong to the originally discovered hoard, but were obtained by Wang Tao-shih when he cleared most of the small grottoes of the northern group fully half a mile off. These undoubtedly belong to the Mongol period, and in two of them, still untouched, M. Pelliot himself subsequently brought to light manuscript and print fragments clearly dating from the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.<sup>26</sup> I may specially note in conclusion that those Uigur texts in book-form were found by me not embedded in regular manuscript packets like the rolls, but lying open to view on the top of loose miscellaneous bundles.

<sup>23</sup> For specimens of Uigur rolls and books, see Pl. CLXIV, CLXV. It is hoped that it may be possible hereafter to secure from Sir D. Ross's competent hand brief notes on these texts and fragments, of which the Descriptive List gives merely a rough inventory; for rolls, cf. Ch. 0013, 13. a, 00282-4, 00287-8, 00290-1; lviii. 0012. a-f.

<sup>23a</sup> [For Dr. Haneda's confirmatory reading, see *Add. & Corr.*]

<sup>24</sup> Cf. above, p. 828 sq.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Ross, *The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*, *J.R.A.S.*, 1913, pp. 434 sqq.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Pelliot, *B.É.F.E.O.*, viii. p. 529, note 1.