

Explora-
tions in
Sīstān.

My winter's work in that small but geographically very interesting *pendant* of the Tārīm basin,⁸ was successfully begun with a survey of the large ruined site on the sacred hill of Kōh-i-Khwāja. It was rewarded by the discovery of wall-paintings and other remains going back to Sasanian times (Chap. XXVIII). While most of the numerous ruined structures examined in the Persian portion of the present Helmand delta were found to date from Muhammadan times (Chap. XXIX), surveys in the desert to the south, once watered from a branch of the river, revealed remains dating from far more remote periods.⁹ There on wind-eroded ground I discovered sites of prehistoric settlements marked by stone implements as well as by abundant painted pottery closely linked in type with corresponding relics of chalcolithic times that have come to light in localities so far apart as Transcaspia, Mesopotamia, Balūchistān, and Western China. And across this area of prehistoric occupation, now all desert, I was able to trace a line of ruined watch-stations, which certainly dates from pre-Muhammadan times and curiously recalls the ancient Chinese Limes on the far-off Kan-su border (Chap. XXX). With a three weeks' camel ride by the caravan route connecting Sīstān with the railhead at Nushki my journey came to an end about the end of February, 1916.

Prehistoric
remains
in desert
south.

Collection
deposited at
Srinagar.

Some four months earlier my collection of antiquities had, under R. B. Lāl Singh's watchful care, safely arrived in Kashmīr. The fortunate circumstance that Mr. FRED H. ANDREWS, O.B.E., then and for a number of years thereafter had charge of the Technical Institute of Kashmīr at Srinagar, made it possible for me to leave the collection in the care of that artist friend. His close association with the custody and examination of my former collections, no less than his exceptional familiarity with Eastern arts and crafts in general, made him once more a most valued collaborator in the heavy and multifarious work involved in the arrangement, close study, and description of the thousands of objects now brought together. I therefore felt very grateful when sanction was secured for the temporary deposit of the new collection at Srinagar under Mr. Andrews' care for the purposes above indicated.

Mr. F. H.
Andrews'
work on
antiques.

Treatment
of mural
paintings.

There during the years 1917-22, Mr. Andrews devoted whatever leisure he could spare from his heavy administrative and educational duties to the preparation of the Descriptive Lists of Antiques which are included in the present Report and which are mainly his work. In addition he utilized his winter vacations of those years and subsequent cold-weather periods, while on special duty under the Indian Government, for the exacting task of setting up the many fine mural paintings brought away from ruined Buddhist shrines. As these wall-paintings, all executed in tempera on mere mud plaster, were to be accommodated and exhibited at New Delhi in a temporary museum specially erected for the purpose, very careful treatment was indispensable to assure their future preservation from climatic and other risks.¹⁰ This labour has now been completed. But the reproduction and interpretation of these important remains of Buddhist pictorial art in Central Asia will claim a separate publication, now in preparation. Hence, with the exception of a number

⁸ For convenience of reference the portion of the 1 : 1,000,000 Sheet No. 30, from the Survey of India's Series, *India and Adjacent Countries*, showing the main area of the Sīstān basin, has been reproduced at the Dehra Dun Survey Office and inserted as a separate map in Vol. iv of the present publication.

⁹ In order adequately to illustrate the position of the ancient remains, &c., surveyed in the desert to the south of the present Helmand delta, the corresponding portion of Degree Sheet No. 30 F of the Survey of India (published 'for Official Use only') has been reproduced, with the needful

additions, at the Dehra Dun Survey Office and inserted as a separate map in Vol. iv.

For permission kindly granted for this reproduction I wish to express here my thanks to the Chief of the General Staff in India.

¹⁰ For the very skilfully devised methods and special materials used by Mr. Andrews in treating and setting up these wall-paintings, which in some cases cover surfaces of as much as 16 feet by 10, see his full statement in the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey, 1921-2*, pp. 98 sqq.