

APPENDIX N

NOTES ON STONE IMPLEMENTS FROM THE TĀRĪM BASIN AND SĪSTĀN

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[NOTE.—Descriptive notes kindly furnished by Mr. Reginald Smith on individual stone implements have been embodied in the Lists of Antiques in Chap. VI, sec. iv; Chap. VII, secs. ii, vi, vii; Chap. XXX, sec. iii.—A. STEIN.]

CONFIRMATION of previous descriptions¹ is the main result of analysing the stone implements of this expedition. The absence of any important new type indicates that the culture was homogeneous and comparatively short lived; but though petrologists may derive instruction from the materials employed, internal evidence is otherwise indefinite, and the chronology depends almost entirely on the circumstances in which the specimens were found.

It seems beyond question that the sites of these discoveries lie on an important east-and-west trade route across Asia; and the connexion with China at one end of the line is evident. How far west the route extended is more open to conjecture, but the stone industry has exact parallels in Palestine and Egypt as well as in Central India, and it is possible that a late neolithic or aeneolithic culture was common to a great zone between the Atlantic and Pacific, being spread by nomads from some central point (possibly Egypt) where raw material was abundant. From the Fayyum and the Libyan Desert there are in the British Museum (Sturge Collection) many spindle-shaped points like Pl. XXII, Nos. 13, 14, 23, and long narrow blades like Pl. XXII, Nos. 17-21, also cores from which they were struck. The 'points' are also known from Palestine.²

Arrow-heads of leaf pattern are, like nearly every other type, found in Egypt.³ Cores for narrow blades from 1" to 3" in length are known from India, and various sizes are published from Yokha in Chaldaea;⁴ small conical examples for pygmy blades are also found in India.

Though it includes many elaborate arrow-head types not represented in the Central-Asian series, the flint finds of Mauretania, on the western edge of the Sahara, may be mentioned in this connexion, as besides the slender pointed oval arrow-heads, straight-edged celts also occur,⁵ a late feature bringing to a close the evolution of the cutting-edge from an oval curve; and J. de Morgan pointed out that there was no pure neolithic culture in Chaldaea, in Elam, or the Iranian plateau,⁶ copper always accompanying anything not obviously palaeolithic. A *terminus a quo* is thus obtained for the present series which was obviously left behind by travellers going from end to end of Asia, and carrying a culture that should be recognized and dated at the western limit, as China was apparently not the focus of civilization at that date. The *terminus ad quem* or later limit of this stone industry is to a large extent supplied by Sir Aurel Stein's other discoveries on the ancient trade-routes; and if, as is apparently the case, the spindle-shaped arrow-heads are contemporary with the coins and other datable objects found in the same conditions, a chronological factor emerges which may apply to a wide belt of country across two continents.

¹ Cf. R. A. Smith, 'The Stone Age in Chinese Turkestan', *Man*, ii (1911), pp. 81 sqq.

² J. de Morgan, *L'Humanité préhistorique*, p. 99, Fig. 38 (Sur Baher, near Jerusalem).

³ J. de Morgan, *op. cit.* p. 94, Fig. 33 (Negadah, Upper Egypt)

⁴ J. de Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 97, Fig. 36.

⁵ *L'Anthropologie*, xxx, pp. 339, 351 (Verneau, 'Nouveaux documents sur l'ethnographie ancienne de la Mauritanie').

⁶ J. de Morgan, *L'Humanité préhistorique*, p. 109.