

sites as genuinely neolithic and somewhat anterior to the painted pottery. As the Sinkiang finds which are characterized by micro-implements of flint must be placed in the same extensive Gobi culture as the Mongolian finds, their first appearance must be anterior to the oldest painted ceramics in Sinkiang.

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The scarcity of finds does not necessarily mean that the province of Sinkiang was poorly inhabited in prehistoric time. The fact that our collections of stone age articles from Sinkiang are far less numerous than those from Mongolia is at least partly explained by the different modes of travelling that we used during the expedition. In Mongolia we used camel caravans, making — as a rule — pretty short marches, and thus getting much time for investigating the ground. In Sinkiang we were travelling in carts for long stretches of the highways, partly under military supervision, and covering the long stages in ordinary local tempo, which allows of very little field research work. Moreover, large parts of the ground traversed under more favourable conditions were hidden by sand dunes or thick vegetation, which is more seldom the case in the parts of Inner Mongolia visited by us. If we make due allowance for what has just been said we shall not attach too much importance to the distribution of finds as shown on the map Fig. 4.

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Let us now turn to the historical time and concentrate our attention to the Lop-nor region.