

forms an instructive parallel, and, like the curious find of a Judaeo-Persian document at the same site, convincingly demonstrates the continuity of these relations. Finally, the finds of Tibetan MSS. and sgraffiti in the ruined fort and temple of Endere prove that we have to reckon also with influences from the side of Tibet. From the seventh century onwards these are accounted for by historically attested invasions; but there are ethnic connexions, at present less clearly recognizable, which suggest them also for earlier periods.

But with all these varied foreign influences at work, there is ample evidence to show that Khotan, together with other territories of Eastern Turkestan, possessed during the Pre-Muhammadan epoch a well-defined civilization of its own. Neither the occasional references of the Chinese Annals nor the brief notices of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims could help us far to reconstruct, in its main aspects, that bygone phase of civilization of which all indigenous records and remains seemed to have vanished. Nor could acquisitions of chance finds, made from afar, of uncertain, if not suspected, origin and unaccompanied by precise archaeological evidence, be expected to throw true light on this cultural *milieu* and the historical changes and developments it had witnessed.

In order to secure materials that would help us to recover this interesting chapter of lost history, and to interpret it rightly, it was not enough to conduct excavations and to arrange for the deposition of what official language styles the 'archaeological proceeds' in Museums. It was at least equally important that an exact and detailed record should be kept of all observations made on the ground, and that the evidence thus secured should be published with all possible care and fullness. It is needless to emphasize for fellow-scholars the importance of this condition, which the canons of scientific archaeology impose upon any qualified worker. Yet for the benefit of others I cannot refrain from quoting the warning which an archaeological explorer of unequalled experience, Professor Flinders Petrie, has so eloquently recorded in his admirable handbook on *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*. 'To leave a site merely plundered, without any attempt to work out its history, to see the meaning of the remains found, or to publish what may serve future students of the place or the subject, is to throw away the opportunities which have been snatched from those who might have used them properly' ⁵.

I have often had to refer to the grave risks with which all ancient remains at the desert sites of Khotan are threatened by the destructive effect of wind-erosion, and even more at the hand of 'treasure-seekers', whose operations have in recent years been stimulated by the demands of European collectors. The thought of these risks and the knowledge that neither Khotan nor any other part of Eastern Turkestan, in spite of the conserving capacity of the climate, could ever have competed with countries like Egypt in wealth of antiquarian remains, always urged me on to unwearied exertion. The same thought and knowledge made me feel with equal keenness my responsibility in regard to the duty 'to work with the fullest care and detail in recording, to publish everything fully' ⁶.

To the obligation here indicated the peculiar conditions of the field in which my work lay added another closely allied one. I mean the necessity of recording in some detail my observations on the modern physical conditions and ethnography of the region. To the critical student of history, whether he deals with the written records or the antiquarian relics of the past, the powerful influence exercised by geographical conditions and surroundings must ever be present. Nor ought he to ignore the useful guidance which ethnic inheritance affords for

⁵ See *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*, p. 179.

⁶ Comp. Flinders Petrie, loc. cit., p. 175.