

It may be convenient to explain here that the intended distribution of the whole collection between the Indian Government and the British Museum, which has by now been actually carried out,^{14a} supplied *ab initio* an additional cogent reason for making all entries in the Descriptive Lists adequately detailed. Since the three-fifths share of the Indian Government is to be deposited in the new Imperial Museum at Delhi,¹⁵ it is obvious that comparison which may be needed hereafter, for purposes of research, between different remains, when distributed between places so widely distant as London and Delhi, will ordinarily be practicable only by means of the descriptions recorded in the present Report and such reproductions as it has been possible to include in its Plates.¹⁶ In view of the importance thus attaching to the Descriptive Lists, it ought specially to be mentioned also that, while they have been prepared by other and varying hands, their contents have undergone careful checking and, where it seemed to me needful, final revision by myself.

Distribution of collection.

Descriptive Lists of antiques.

The greater portion of the tasks above detailed had been completed when, by the end of 1911, I had to return to duty in India as Superintendent of the Frontier Circle, Archaeological Survey. By that time, too, most of the Plates illustrating antiques had been arranged, and some of the materials for the Appendices to be presently mentioned had been received from collaborators. Work on the text of *Serindia* claimed most of my time after the field season of 1912, devoted to Gandhāra sites, until in the summer of 1913 the generous support accorded by the Indian Government, then under Lord HARDINGE as Viceroy, enabled me to undertake my third Central-Asian expedition. The ample results, archaeological and geographical, which it yielded,¹⁷ as well as the development which took place in the political conditions affecting that remote field like the rest of Asia, have fully justified the timely execution of that long-cherished plan. But as only about one-fourth of my text had been prepared for the press by the time of my start northward at the end of July, 1913, the fresh explorations extending till February, 1916, implied a postponement of years in the completion of the present work.

Return to work in India.

Third Central-Asian expedition, 1913-16.

Fortunately this delay has not been without compensating advantages. The explorations renewed during 1914-15 in the Lop desert and in westernmost Kan-su have thrown fresh light upon numerous questions closely affecting the earliest Chinese routes into the Tārīm Basin, the eastern extension of the ancient *Limes*, etc. A reference to numerous chapters of *Serindia* will show the

Advantages of resumed explorations.

^{14a} Objects allotted to the British Museum are marked with an asterisk in the *Index of objects*, etc., in Vol. III.

In addition to these all MSS. in Chinese, Sogdian, Turkish, and Uigur are deposited in the British Museum, while the India Office Library has received all Tibetan MSS.

¹⁵ This does not apply to the share in manuscripts which have been placed in the India Office Library, London.

¹⁶ Some notes concerning the arrangement of entries in the *Descriptive Lists* may usefully find brief record here.

The arrangement follows throughout the numerical order of the 'site-marks'. As these had to be given as the objects were discovered, acquired, or unpacked, this numerical order does not anywhere represent an attempt at systematic classification. 'Site-marks' given at the time of discovery show the initial letter of the site, the number of the ruin, etc., followed by plain Arabic figures, e.g. N. xxiv. viii. 35. In such cases these last figures correspond to the actual sequence of 'finds'. When 'site-mark' numbers were given by myself at the site, but after the day's work, they are preceded by a zero, e.g. L.A. vi. ii. 061. When objects had been marked by me

merely with the place of discovery and numbers were subsequently added at the time of unpacking at the British Museum, two zeros precede the numbers, e.g. M. i. ix. 003.

Where it has been found convenient to indicate in the descriptive entry for one particular object descriptive details equally applicable to other objects of a closely related type, an asterisk has been prefixed to the 'site-mark', e.g. *Ch. 0010.

In a few cases where partially effaced 'site-marks' had been misread at the British Museum, the necessary corrections were subsequently effected by me in the light of my diary records when dealing with the remains of the particular site. In all cases the 'site-mark' shown in the Descriptive List is to be considered as the one finally verified.

Throughout the abbreviations *R.* and *L.* have been used to indicate the right and left side of objects as they are seen in reproductions, except where the right and left proper of the body are referred to.

¹⁷ For a preliminary account of this expedition, see my paper *A Third Journey of Exploration in Central Asia*, in the *Geographical Journal*, 1916, xlviii. pp. 97-130, 193-225.