

PREFACE

THE purpose of this publication is to record the explorations, mainly archaeological but intended also to serve geographical interests, which generous help received from a fund of Harvard University, supplemented by a grant from the Trustees of the British Museum, enabled me to carry out during the years 1931-3. The fund was raised at Harvard University at the beginning of 1930, chiefly through the efforts of Professor Paul J. Sachs, Associate Director of the Fogg Art Museum. They were made after an invitation received from the President of Harvard University at the suggestion of my friend Mr. C. T. Keller had enabled me to deliver a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute on the three Central Asian expeditions which I had carried out under the orders of the Government of India between 1900 and 1916.¹

The fund was primarily intended to enable me to resume those explorations in Chinese Turkistān, and to extend them eastwards. But it was provided that it should be available also for whatever archaeological labours might be undertaken by me elsewhere in Asia. Professor Sachs kindly charged himself with the administration of the fund on behalf of Harvard University. For the unfailing consideration and help he kindly extended to me and for his ever encouraging friendly interest in my efforts I wish to record here my feelings of deep gratitude.

After the Trustees of the British Museum had, at the recommendation of Sir Frederic Kenyon, then Director of the Museum, been pleased to offer a contribution approximately equal to one-seventh of the Harvard fund, I proceeded in the spring of 1930 to Nanking in order to secure the permission of the Central Chinese Government for the proposed explorations. The effective help kindly offered by Sir Miles Lampson, H.B.M. Minister, made it possible, after full explanations had been furnished as to their object, to obtain the issue by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a passport authorizing me 'to trace and investigate ancient remains in Hsin-chiang and Inner Mongolia'.

After completing needful practical preparations I started from Kashmīr in August 1930. But, before the Chinese border on the Pāmīrs was reached, unscrupulous nationalist agitation had forced the Nanking Government to

¹ These lectures, amplified in parts, have been published in *On Ancient Central Asian Tracks. Brief Narrative of Three Expeditions in Innermost Asia and North-Western China* (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1933).