

ANCIENT KHOTAN.¹

DR. M. A. STEIN'S promised scientific publication of the material gathered by him during the course of his first expedition to Chinese Turkestan has now appeared, and has been awarded the distinction of being published by the Clarendon Press, and so under the auspices of the University of Oxford; and worthily: "for the importance of Dr. Stein's archaeological discoveries is great. The significance of his finds will be found fully explained in two articles which appeared in NATURE on the occasions of the publication of Dr. Stein's first "Preliminary Report" (1901) and of his popular book, "Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan" (1903), which gave so good a general account of his work. It is therefore unnecessary to go over the same ground again now, and we can confine ourselves to a consideration of the fine volumes before us.

The Clarendon Press has produced the book in sumptuous style. The form of the broad page and the size of the type are both good and pleasant to read. The title-page is quite a work of art; as a specimen of a modern title-page with good type, well sized and well spaced, it is worth seeing. The only fault we can find in the general get-up of the book is that the photographs in the first volume are printed on paper that is somewhat too thin and flimsy, with the result that the half-tone blocks have a somewhat cheap appearance which does not agree well with the fine appearance of the rest of the book.

The same may be said of the first eighteen plates of the second volume, which contains the great body of the illustrations. In one of these also (plate iii.) the upper picture has been printed upside down, which is a pity. But to the rest of the plates nothing but unqualified praise can be given; the coloured ones are very good, especially those reproducing textiles.

From these plates the remarkable character of the art of Niya, Yotkan, and Dandan-Uiliq, having the chief "find-spots" in their chronological order, can easily be grasped. Especially interesting are the wooden remains from Niya, and the pottery and little clay *genre* figures from Yotkan. The strength of the classical tradition which came from Greece to India, and thence to Chinese Turkestan, is very evident to us as we turn over these pictures. Plate lxx., too, shows wooden chair-legs in the shape of the foreparts of

sphinxes, with a headdress that reminds us of the triple horn above the heads of Assyrian bulls. Why not? Niya's art came from Gandhāra, and Gandhāra's from Seleucia on the Tigris. The analogy of these excavations to those of Egypt is well shown in such a plate as No. lxxiii., which presents to us antiquities in the shape of musical instruments, carding combs, brooms, hoes, &c., of the same kind as those that may be found on an Egyptian site. In both countries the dryness of the soil preserves objects that elsewhere would long since have perished.

The Kharoshthi letters on wooden boards, and the Chinese written slips found with them, also have a very Egyptian look, and we have a strange note of connection in the Judæo-Persian document written on paper, which was found at Dandan-Uiliq, but which, so far as its language and appearance are concerned, might just as well have been found at Oxyrrhynchus! After all, Tabari-

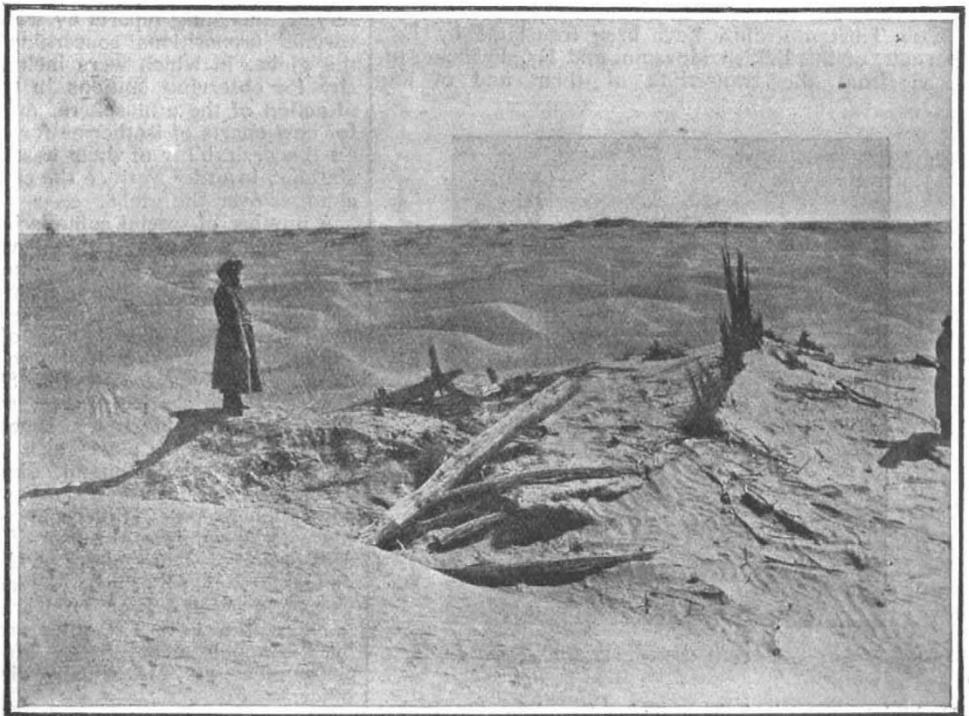


FIG. 1.—Remains of dwelling completely eroded; Niya site. From "Ancient Khotan,"

stan, where it was written, is not so much farther from the banks of the Nile than from those of the Tārim. And in the reign of Trajan, long before this document was written, the great Chinese general, Pan-ch'ao, advancing ever westwards from Ch'angan (Si-ngan-fu, then the capital of China), had reached the Caspian, and tried to open up relations with the Romans. So that many a merchant may even in the first century A.D. have known the banks of the Nile, Tigris, Oxus, and Tārim equally well, and we can well comprehend how classical art influenced that of China by way of the civilisation of which Dr. Stein has discovered the remains in Turkestan.

Dr. Stein's letterpress is very copious, since he includes in his work long dissertations on Chinese and other literary evidence as to the identification and history of the ancient places which he has found. When we say that his success, and that of his coadjutors, in this interesting work has been striking, we do not err; and, on the other hand, several of

¹ "Ancient Khotan; Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan, carried out and described under the Orders of H. M. Indian Government." By M. Aurel Stein. Two vols.; text and plates. Pp. xxiv+62r; pp. vii+119. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.) Price 5s. 5s. net.

Dr. Stein's finds have amply confirmed the statements of the Chinese official records, especially with regard to the period of the isolation of the "Four Garrisons" of Turkestan after the Tibetans had driven a wedge northwards into the dominions of the T'ang, in the eighth century A.D. To this period belong the ruins of Dandan-Uiliq, while those of Niya, which show the most marked classical characteristics, are five hundred years older. It is at Niya that we find a document sealed with a Chinese and a Greek seal side by side!

The Tibetan evidence contained in graffiti (which Dr. Stein for some reason insists on calling "sgraffiti": "sgraffito-work" is something quite different) at Dandan-Uiliq and Enderi is curious. We have apparent references to defeats of the Chinese: "At Pyagpag in the province of Glom-lom this army fought, and a tiger's meal was obtained (*i.e.* many were killed)"; followed by the savage remark, "Now eat until you are fat!" apparently an incitement to go and kill more Chinese. These Tibetan graffiti have been translated by Dr. Barnett, of the British Museum, and Dr. Francke, of Leh: from the transcripts of them and of the



FIG. 2.—Intaglio of a Greek Goddess. From "Ancient Khotan."

Buddhist sutras in Tibetan, also found by Dr. Stein, the curious reader can gain an idea of the sounds of the extraordinarily hideous Tibetan language, which would seem to have served as the model for Swift's Glumdalclitch, Brobdignag, the Struldbrugs, and the rest of the names in "Gulliver's Travels," not excepting "Houynhnhm."

The Chinese graffiti are translated by the great French Sinologist, Dr. Chavannes; and Prof. E. J. Rapson, of Cambridge, has begun the translation of the Kharoshthi letters of the Indian maharajas who ruled Khotan in the third century B.C., and of their officials and dependants. Chinese rule seems to have been maintained contemporaneously with that of the maharajas; but what powers were specially reserved to the latter we cannot quite see from this correspondence. Dr. Stein's new discovery (1907), that the Indian kingdom stretched away east to beyond Cherchen and Charkhalik to the Lop-nor, is of great historical importance.

For the details of Dr. Stein's exhaustive description of his discoveries we must refer the reader to the book. The congratulations of all archæologists to all concerned in its making go without saying. And not

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least congratulatory should be modern Chinese and Japanese literati, to whom the Chinese documents and antiquities of the Former Han and the Great T'ang dynasties should prove of the greatest interest.

H. R. HALL.

INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL COMMITTEE.

A MEETING of the International Meteorological Committee was held at Paris on September 10 and following days.

The committee consists of seventeen members, appointed at the conference at Innsbruck in 1905. Ten members were present, including the director of the Japanese service. Two places were vacant by death. The principal subjects discussed were the scheme of organisation of international meetings for meteorological purposes; marine charts and weather signals; a number of items of the international daily weather service, including reports by wireless telegraphy; and various propositions concerning the meteorology of the globe, in which were included one on the necessity for observing stations in the regions of centres of action of the atmosphere, another on the necessity for new charts of isotherms for the globe, and a third on the desirability of daily observations from selected stations, in order to trace the course of meteorological changes over the globe.

A number of special commissions were appointed to report upon, or carry out, the various proposals. M. Mascart, president of the committee, was unfortunately prevented by illness from attending the meetings with the exception of one held at his house for the discussion of the question of international organisation. At the close of the session he resigned the office of president, and Dr. Shaw, director of the British Meteorological Office, was elected president. M. Angot, M. Mascart's successor at the Bureau Central, takes his place also as a member of the committee. Dr. Hellmann, director of the Prussian Meteorological Institute, was elected secretary, in succession to Prof. Hildebrandsson, who retires upon his withdrawal from the post of director of the Royal Meteorological Observatory at Upsala. Dr. Hamberg, director of the Swedish Meteorological Office, was elected to succeed Prof. Hildebrandsson as a member of the committee. The other vacant places were filled by the appointment of Dr. Maurer, director of the Swiss office, and Mr. Stupart, director of the Canadian office.

NOTES.

WE notice with regret the announcement made in a Reuter telegram from Paris that M. Loewy, director of the Paris Observatory, and a member of the Academy of Sciences, died there on Tuesday, October 15.

AT 1.17 a.m. on October 11 the Cunard liner *Lusitania* arrived at Sandy Hook, having crossed the Atlantic in 4 days 19 hours 52 minutes. The total distance travelled was 2780 nautical miles, and the average speed was 24.002 knots. The highest day's run was 617 nautical miles.

REUTER'S correspondent at Mombasa reports that Dr. Koch, who has been examining the causes of sleeping sickness, left for Germany on October 15. His investigation camps in Uganda have been taken over by the colonial authorities. It is understood that Dr. Koch's investigations have not led to any fresh discoveries.

THE Peking correspondent of the *Times* reports that an Imperial Edict issued on October 9 orders the Board of Revenue and Commerce forthwith to introduce a uniform