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ARIANA ANTICUA^A.

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

OF THE

ANTIQUITIES AND COINS

OF

AFGHANISTAN:

WITH A MEMOIR ON THE BUILDINGS CALLED TOPES, BY C. MASSON, ESQ.

BY

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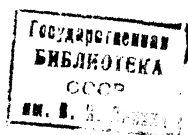
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TO THE MEMORY
OF
JAMES PRINSEP,
LATE SECRETARY OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL,
AND
EDITOR OF THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL,
IN WHICH PUBLICATION
HE
WITH EXTRAORDINARY TALENT, INDUSTRY, AND ZEAL, PURSUED WITH UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS
THE INVESTIGATION OF
INDIAN NUMISMATICS AND PALÆOGRAPHY,
AND EFFECTED DISCOVERIES OF THE HIGHEST INTEREST AND VALUE IN
THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA,
~~This Work,~~
FOUNDED UPON HIS LABOURS,
IS INSCRIBED
BY
HIS FORMER COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND,
H. H. WILSON.

LONDON, SEPT. 1841.

P R E F A C E.

THE circumstances under which important accessions to Indian Numismatics have been made within the last few years are fully detailed in the following pages ; those which have led to the publication of the present work require to be explained.

It is stated in the following account of the progress of the discovery of coins and antiquities in Afghanistan, that one of the most active and successful labourers in the field was Mr. Masson. At an early period of his researches, Mr. Masson proposed to the Government of Bombay, through the Resident in Cutch, Colonel Pottinger, to transfer his actual and all future collections to the East India Company, on condition of their defraying the cost of his operations. The proposal was favourably received, and from the year 1834 until 1837 Mr. Masson was sedulously employed in the pursuit, in which he had engaged with equal intelligence and zeal, on behalf and at the expense of the East India Company. In the course of time the collections he had formed were transmitted to England, and deposited in the Company's Museum.

Although the discoveries of Mr. Masson had been brought to the know-

ledge of the public by his own descriptions of them, and by the remarks and illustrations of Mr. James Prinsep in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, of which he was the able and indefatigable editor, yet as this work was not extensively accessible in England, and as the notices of Mr. Masson's collections were published at different intervals, and were consequently in a detached and inconvenient form,—as the subject also had received much additional light from the observations of scholars and numismatists in Europe, and many of the verifications and conjectures hazarded in the early stages of the inquiry had been corrected by further experience and investigation,—it appeared to me to be likely that a connected description of the principal antiquities, and of the whole of the coins received from Mr. Masson, would be acceptable both to the cultivators of numismatic science, and to those interested in the ancient history of India. I accordingly offered my services to the Honourable the Court of Directors to prepare such an account, if they should think the publication desirable. The suggestion was most cordially and liberally approved of, and as profit was not the aim of either of the parties, the Court resolved, that after appropriating such a portion of the edition as they should think fit to require, the remainder should be presented to the mother of Mr. Masson as an additional mark of the sense they entertained of the merits of her son.

Having accordingly undertaken to publish a description of the antiquities and coins sent home by Mr. Masson, I conceived it to be necessary, in order to enable any who might feel disposed to direct attention towards them the better to appreciate their character and value, to prefix to the account some specification of the steps by which they had been discovered, some proofs of the interest which they had excited amongst the antiquaries