

A Tentative Listing of the Stein Manuscripts in Paris 1911–19

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In January 1911, over 400 Dunhuang manuscripts collected by Aurel Stein in 1907 were sent to Paul Pelliot in Paris for cataloguing. By the end of 1913, newly appointed to the Collège de France, and, having taken on far more than he could manage, Pelliot finally admitted that he could not produce the catalogue, but the manuscripts were not immediately returned to London, remaining in Paris throughout the First World War I.

Making his collections available to specialists and acquiring scholarly descriptions that he could use in his publications was always a priority for Stein. Faced with the contents of Cave 17 at Dunhuang, he lamented his

total want of Sinologist training with reference to those masses of Chinese manuscript which formed the preponderating bulk both of the hidden library and of what I was able to bring away from it.¹

Always preoccupied with the significance of his finds, he continued:

So it was a particular satisfaction for me when M. Pelliot, after his own return [from Dunhuang] early in 1910, expressed the wish to examine my collection of Chinese manuscripts from the cave, and eventually to undertake its catalogue. The results of the first rapid scrutiny to which he was good enough to devote a fortnight of unremitting labour, were as gratifying as they well could be. It showed that the total number of Chinese manuscripts amounted to over 9000, about one-third of these consisting of complete text rolls, and about two thirds of detached records and fragmentary texts.

Pelliot's preliminary report stressed the significance of the fragmentary texts, 'detached records, acts of ordination, bans, accounts etc, often exactly dated; these illustrate all the varied aspects of local life, and represent a category of documents of which, until the Tun-huang discoveries, practically no ancient specimens were known to exist. Finally, it is among the fragmentary manuscripts that there are found most frequently those texts of secular literature, historical, geographical, lexicographical etc., which are of the greatest importance for the advance of learned Sinological research.'²

In the autumn of 1910, after Pelliot's rapid survey, Stein sent a letter to the Under Secretary of State for India, accompanying a proposal from Pelliot that he produce a catalogue in about a year, on condition that the manuscripts were sent to him in Paris, that the catalogue would be published, that he would be paid 5000 francs and would have a reasonable priority for the publication of certain documents.³

In order to facilitate Pelliot's cataloguing work, two crates containing 440 manuscripts were sent from the British Museum to 59 Boulevard Edgar Quinet in Paris where Pelliot signed a receipt for them on 13 January 1911. No list of the manuscripts survives other than the simple description on the packing list: '15 bundles of mss., numbered 1–233, except no. 55 (Brahmi) and 213 (a painting)' and '14 bundles of mss., numbered 234–443, except no. 237 (not found).'⁴ This paper represents a first attempt to establish which of the 9000 or so Stein manuscripts surveyed by Pelliot were actually sent to Paris, an attempt which is complicated by the absence of precise pressmarks or numbers in either the packing lists or in Pelliot's various series of notes on the items sent to Paris.

Pelliot's descriptions of the manuscripts can be found in the archives of the Musée Guimet (Pel.C.62c).⁵ It would appear that he made no coherent list, nor did he consistently refer to Stein's site numbers which seemed to have been inscribed on some of the manuscripts. Pelliot frequently refers to numbers in what he describes as 'Stein inventaire chinois'. This may be the same as the 'fiches du catalogue des manuscrits du Dr. Stein qu'a dressé son garçon chinois' [the catalogue slips prepared for Dr Stein by his Chinese boy, presumably Jiang Xiaowan].⁶ A number of the manuscripts identified below bear numbers written in red by Jiang Xiaowan in what is sometimes described as the 'business form of numerals' (*mazi* 码子).⁷ Some also bear the same number written out in roman numerals in blue pencil, possibly by Edward Denison Ross, who was very briefly employed in early 1914 in the British Museum to work on the Stein collection (somewhat to Stein's dismay). According to Miss Lorimer, Stein's assistant, Denison Ross 'catalogued' 600 manuscripts — although in the absence of any catalogue slips, it is more likely that he simply transcribed Jiang Xiaowan's numbers.

Some manuscripts have a number in a three-part form such as 74.III.4 (which I think may be S.2263). Pelliot refers to 'Caisse 74' and 'Caisse 83' and these are the numbers of the crates in which the manuscripts were transported to England. When Pelliot made his flying trips to England in 1910 to survey the collection, he seems to have chosen to visit when Stein was not present, which worried Fred Andrews who was unpacking the cases in the basement of the British Museum. At that stage, the crate number seems to have served as a form of distinct identification. The second, roman numeral, appears to be that assigned to a bundle of manuscripts, and the last to the individual manuscript within a bundle.⁸ Pelliot made a list of 45 manuscripts using these numbers, from 'Caisse' 75, 76, 79, 81, 83 and 87. Unfortunately, his descriptions are so brief as to make identification difficult, an example being 'Caisse 97, portions de Lunyu' of which there are many and there are no further clues as to which particular 'portions' are meant. Nor is it easy to pin down 'Caisse 83: Ouvrage magique de caractère bouddhiste, composé en Chine?' Only 15 of the 51 manuscripts thus listed by crate or packing number can be firmly identified at this time.

Stein assigned the prefix 'Ch' (for Ch'ien-fo-tung 千佛洞 or Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in the old Wade-Giles romanisation) to items collected at Dunhuang on his second expedition, and began the process of listing them in Anxi in the summer of 1907, but such was the quantity of manuscripts that many were only assigned site marks after arriving in London in January 1909.⁹ Whilst the Stein paintings from Dunhuang now in the British Museum have 'Ch' numbers, not many of the manuscripts have full site numbers. There is only one reference to 'Ch' numbers in Pelliot's lists where he notes the manuscripts chosen for illustration in *Serindia*, most of which have 'Ch' numbers: 'L. Giles a fait reproduire Ch.759, Ch.905, 906, 922, 935, 936, 1181 et Ch.cv.001. J'ai conseillé d'ajouter Ch.917, 1024, 1073, 1080 et le Vajracchedika imprimé en 868.'¹⁰

It is clear from the notes that Pelliot made on the Stein manuscripts he received in Paris that he was interested in dating them and identifying them, often in the context of the

manuscripts from Dunhuang that he had collected himself. Of number 29 (Or.8210/S.1857) he writes, 'Bon mss. analogue au mien... endommagé mais moins que le mien'. Lionel Giles, by contrast, describes this 'Interpretation of dreams' as a 'mediocre mss.'¹¹ It is clear from Pelliot's notes that they were largely personal, made for his own interest. Nowhere does he use the special 'slips' that Stein had Miss Lorimer send out to all his cataloguers, nor did he take measurements or make any bibliographic description other than an identification and, in the case of interesting manuscripts, notes to himself: 'intéressant', 'très important', 'à copier'. Though he had been asked to use the Giles romanisation in his catalogue, he never did, sticking to the French system.

Pelliot's notes consist of seven separate lists. The first is of four manuscripts that interested him in particular, numbered according to the 'Stein inventaire chinois'. No. 910 is described as a 'prière daté de 道至元 二年' and can be identified as Or.8210/S.374. The manuscript still bears the 'business' number 910 in red ink by Jiang Xiaowan and 910 in Roman numerals written blue pencil in a European hand.

Number 955 is a 'rouleau lexicographique...bon mss. quoique copié assez tardivement' and may be identified as Or.8210/S.388. Like the previous manuscript, it has Jiang Xiaowan's red ink number for 955. The third manuscript, no. 1264, can be identified as Or.8210/S.1635. It has Jiang Xiaowan's red number 1264 but there is no sign of the blue pencil roman numeral version. Similarly, the last manuscript to be described at length (and therefore much easier to identify), no. 79, a 老子化胡经 also bears the packing number 79.X.17 and can be identified as Or.8210/S.1857.

There follows a fairly detailed list of 12 manuscripts by crate number. From Crate 80, we may identify a 'calendrier' (Or.8210/S.6886), 'un recueil de mirabilia' (Or.8210/S.610), the 'manuel d'oniromancie' (Or.8210/S.620) and the dictionary (Or.8210/S.617). From Crate 77, Or.8210/S.2073, another 老子化胡经 (Or.8210/S.2081) and Or.8210/S.1441. Two numbers, Or. 8210/S.1393 and Or. 8210/S.2081 are less certain.

From 'Caisse 82' we can identify a *Lunyu* (Or.8210/S.5972), Or.8210/S.1722 which includes the 兔园策府, and a booklet (Or.8210/S.5439).

There follows a detailed description of 'Stein inventaire de chinois, no. 1069', a description of Shazhou (Or.8210/S.2593) and then a list of 140 manuscripts described as 'textes chinois de Stein' listed by number from 45 to 1283 though not all numbers appear and the source of the numbers is mysterious. From the description, it can be determined that number 45 is Or.8210/S.75 but it does not bear the number 45, nor a 'Ch' number, nor a packing number. Number 79 however, a Diamond sutra which can be identified as Or.8210/S.87, has Jiang Xiaowan's business number for 79, and 79 is also written in roman numerals in blue pencil. Number 86 is Or.8210/S.80 but has no further identifying numbers, nor does the next number listed, 103, which can be identified as S.976, or the subsequent number 107 which is probably Or.8210/S.2732.

The rest of the manuscripts in this list which can be identified are (in the order in which they appear in the list): Or.8210/S.996, Or.8210/S. 4126, Or.8210/S.5574,

Or.8210/S.1155, Or.8210/S.1156, Or.8210/S.1324,
Or.8210/S.1285, Or.8210/S.1284, Or.8210/S.86,
Or.8210/S.1350, Or.8210/S.1351, Or.8210/S.2724,
Or.8210/S.1380, Or.8210/S.1386, Or.8210/S.95,
Or.8210/S.2048, Or.8210/S.238, Or.8210/S.785,
Or.8210/S.173, Or.8210/S.5973, Or.8210/S.298,
Or.8210/S.289, Or.8210/S.276, Or.8210/S.381,
Or.8210/S.528, Or.8210/S.389, Or.8210/S.406,
Or.8210/S.560, Or.8210/S.2729, Or.8210/S.3877,
Or.8210/S.568, Or.8210/S.2593, Or.8210/S.5448,
Or.8210/S.1946, Or.8210/S.1931, Or.8210/S.525,
Or.8210/S.1891, Or.8210/S.1947, Or.8210/S.482,
Or.8210/S.1731, Or.8210/1605 and Or.8210/S.1635.

The next series of notes consists of quite lengthy descriptions of manuscripts that interested Pelliot, such as the small notebook containing the 敦煌录 which he copied out in its entirety (Or.8210/S.5448), the 东京至西天路程 (Or.8210/S.383), Or.8210/S.389, Or.8210/S.525 and Or.8210/S.113. There follows a description of the woodblock print Diamond Sutra of 868 (Or.8210/P.2) where he notes the running margin and mentions the all-important colophon. It is worth noting that at this stage, the Diamond sutra had absolutely no numbers written on it, no 'Ch' number, no packing number, no business number and Pelliot simply referred to it as 'le Vajracchedika imprimé en 868' or in this case 金刚般若波罗蜜经 'long rouleau imprimé'. The description suggests that it was one of the items sent to Paris which may have been returned to London in 1913 (carried by Denison Ross) for photography for *Serindia* and for inclusion in the first exhibition of the finds in the British Museum in 1914. Also included in the Pelliot archive is a letter from Lionel Barnett of the British Museum to Pelliot dated 7 March 1913 in which he wrote, 'Our friend Ross has returned home with the mss. and the notes.'¹²

The next series of manuscripts are listed in no particular order, sometimes with reference to the mysterious list of numbers 45 to 1383. They include: Or.8210/S.1344, Or.8210/S.5475, Or.8210/S.5574, Or.8210/S.1563, Or.8210/S.2052, Or.8210/S.2055, Or.8210/S.2054, Or.8210/S.2056. Or.8210/S.2051, Or.8210/S.2053,¹³ Or.8210/S.5257, and Or.8210/S.87.

There follows a series of manuscripts listed, once again, by crate numbers. From 'Caisse 85' it is possible to identify Or.8210/S.2103; from Caisse 80, Or.8210/S.619 and Or.8210/P.1; from Caisse 87, Or.8210/S.3747 and from Caisse 84, Or.8210/S.2922. Listed in Caisse 97 were Or.8210/3016, Or.8210/S.2075, Or.8210/S.3135, Or.8210/S.2708 and in Caisse 79, Or.8210/S.3618, Or.8210/S.4366 and Or.8210/S.1857. The list from Caisse 83 includes Or.8210/S.4610, and Caisse 76 included Or.8210/S.1513.

Pelliot's final list is arranged by packing number. So, 74.V.5 can be identified as: Or.8210/S.737, 74.V.1 as Or.8210/S.2327, 74.VI.19 as Or.8210/S, 74.VI.19 as Or.8210/S.2367, 74.VI.15 as Or.8210/S.799, 75.XVI.20 as Or.8210/S.5614, 81.VIII.10 as Or.8210/S.4160, 76.II.18 as Or.8210/S.2474, and 75.XI.5 as Or.8210/S.5507.

As can be seen, the complexities of numbering systems, lists of various sorts that have disappeared and, above, all, the lack of a systematic numbering system before 1919 makes it very difficult to identify securely many more of the Stein manuscripts examined by Pelliot in 1911–1919. Much work remains to be done but the identification of these 108 manuscripts can provide a basis for continuing research.¹⁴

Notes

- 1 An account of Stein and Pelliot's relationship and the failure of the catalogue will appear in the papers of the Colloque Pelliot (forthcoming). Colloque 'Paul Pelliot (1878–1945). De l'histoire à la légende', Collège de France, Paris, 2–3 October 2008.
- 2 M.A. Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay: Personal Narrative of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, London, 1912, pp. 216–218.
- 3 British Museum Archive, CE32/23/35/2; also British Library, Correspondence with M. Pelliot regarding Chinese documents (kept by Dr. Stein) Or. 13114, f. 7, my translation from the French.
- 4 Worryingly, one of Pelliot's lists of Stein's manuscripts in the Musée Guimet archives lists numbers running from 45 to 1283, although it is not a complete series.
- 5 I am grateful to Francis Macouin, Librarian of the Musée Guimet, his successor, Cristina Cramerotti and the staff for their kindness in letting me see the archives.
- 6 Musée Guimet, Pel. 62 C. These slips were mentioned by Stein in a letter to Pelliot, described as 'rough slips on which constitutes probably a little over one third of our Chinese collection.' They were apparently sent to Pelliot by Lionel Giles on 3 May 1910. They must have been made in Anxi and beyond by Jiang Xiaowan. The whereabouts of these catalogue slips is, sadly, unknown.
- 7 See *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary*, Cambridge, Mass., 1956, p. 1178, table VIII.
- 8 Andrews to Stein, Bodleian Library, Stein MSS.38/23, 26, 32.
- 9 Stein described the difference between site numbers assigned in China and those assigned in London (with an extra two zeros) in *Serindia*, London, 1921, vol. 1, p. xv, fn. 16. The current pressmarks (Or.8210 for the whole collection and S for each individual manuscript) were assigned by Lionel Giles in 1919 when the collection was finally deposited in the British Museum. Some of the packing numbers have been added to the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) database but have to be searched for by adding the prefix 'Ch' (the site number for Ch'ien-fo-tung) to the packing number. Thus, 'Pelliot's final list: 74.V.5' on the concordance table has been entered on the IDP database as 'Ch.74.V.5'. Very few manuscripts were actually assigned a 'Ch' number so the addition of the 'Ch' prefix is potentially misleading.
- 10 Musée Guimet, Pel.62.C.
- 11 Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Dunhuang in the British Museum*, London, 1957, p. 225.
- 12 Musée Guimet, Pel.62.C.a. The letter follows one from Miss Lorimer to Pelliot dated 6 February 1913 in which she states that she has not received the manuscripts required for photography: 'I trust they have not been delayed in the post.'
- 13 It is interesting to find a sequence which suggests that these manuscripts were kept together by Lionel Giles when they returned to London and were given S. numbers.
- 14 I have some 35 tentative identifications to pursue and hope that further work on packing lists, 'business numbers' and blue pencil numbers may help identify more of the 440 manuscripts sent to Paris.

Concordance (in the order they appear in Pelliot's Papers)

Pelliot no.	Stein no.	BL no.	Contents (as described by Pelliot)
Caisse 74.III.4		S.2263	
Caisse 75			
Caisse 76			
Caisse 79			
Caisse 81			
Caisse 83			
Caisse 87			'Ouvrage magique de caractère bouddhiste, composé en Chine?'
Caisse 97			'Portions de Lunyu'
	No. 29	Or.8210/S.1857	'Bon mss. analogue au mien... endommagé mais moins que le mien'
	No. 910	Or.8210/S.374	'prière daté de 道至元 二年' <i>Daozhi yuan er nian</i>
	No. 955	Or.8210/S.388	'rouleau lexicographique... bon mss. quoique copié assez tardivement'
	No. 1264	Or.8210/S.1635	
Caisse 79.X.17	No. 79	Or.8210/S.1857	老子化胡经 <i>Laozi hua hu jing</i>
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.6886	'Calendrier'
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.610	'un recueil de mirabilia'
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.620	'manuel d'oniromancie'
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.617	Dictionary
Caisse 77		Or.8210/S.2073	
Caisse 77		Or.8210/S.2081	老子化胡经 <i>Laozi hua hu jing</i>
Caisse 77		Or.8210/S.1441	
Caisse 77		Or. 8210/S.1393	
Caisse 77		Or. 8210/S.2081	
Caisse 82		Or.8210/S.5972	Lunyu
Caisse 82		Or.8210/S.1722	Includes the 兔园策府 <i>Tuyuan cefu</i>
Caisse 82		Or.8210/S.5439	Booklet
Stein inventaire de chinois, no. 1069		Or.8210/S.2593	A description of Shazhou
Textes chinois de Stein no. 45		Or.8210/S.75	
Textes chinois de Stein no. 79		Or.8210/S.87	Diamond sutra
Textes chinois de Stein no. 86		Or.8210/S.80	
Textes chinois de Stein no. 103		Or.8210/S.976	
Textes chinois de Stein no. 107		Or.8210/S.2732	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.996	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S. 4126	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.5574	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1155	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1156	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1324	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1285	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1284	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.86	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1350	

Pelliot no.	Stein no.	BL no.	Contents (as described by Pelliot)
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1351	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.2724	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1380	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1386	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.95	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.2048	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.238	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.785	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.173	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.5973	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.298	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.289	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.276	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.381	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.528	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.389	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.406	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.560	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.2729	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.3877	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.568	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.2593	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.5448	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1946	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1931	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.525	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1891	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1947	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.482	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1731	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/1605	
Textes chinois de Stein		Or.8210/S.1635	
Next series of notes		Or.8210/S.5448	Small notebook containing the 敦煌录 <i>Dunhuang lu</i>
Next series of notes		Or.8210/S.383	东京至西天路程 <i>Dongjing zhi xi tian lucheng</i>
Next series of notes		Or.8210/S.389	
Next series of notes		Or.8210/S.525	
Next series of notes		Or.8210/S.113	
		Or.8210/P2	Woodblock print Diamond Sutra of 868 / le Vajracchedika imprimé en 868 / 金刚般若波罗蜜经 <i>Jingang ban ruo poluomijing</i> 'long rouleau imprimé'
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.1344	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.5475	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.5574	

Pelliot no.	Stein no.	BL no.	Contents (as described by Pelliot)
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.1563	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.2052	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.2055	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S. 2054	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.2056	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.2051	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.2053	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.5257	
Next series of manuscripts		Or.8210/S.87	
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.2103	
Caisse 80		Or.8210/S.619	
Caisse 80		Or.8210/P.1	
Caisse 87		Or.8210/S.3747	
Caisse 84		Or.8210/S.2922	
Caisse 97		Or.8210/S.3016	
Caisse 97		Or.8210/S.2075	
Caisse 97		Or.8210/S.3135	
Caisse 97		Or.8210/S.2708	
Caisse 79		Or.8210/S.3618	
Caisse 79		Or.8210/S.4366	
Caisse 79		Or.8210/S.1857	
Caisse 83		Or.8210/S.4610	
Caisse 76		Or.8210/S.1513	
Pelliot's final list: 74.V.5		Or.8210/S.737	
Pelliot's final list: 74.V.1		Or.8210/S.2327	
Pelliot's final list: 74.VI.19		Or.8210/S.2367	
Pelliot's final list: 74.VI.15		Or.8210/S.799	
Pelliot's final list: 75.XVI.20		Or.8210/S.5614	
Pelliot's final list: 81.VIII.10		Or.8210/S.4160	
Pelliot's final list: 76 II.18		Or.8210/S.2474	
Pelliot's final list: 75.XI.5		Or.8210/S.5507	