

pieces, three distinct languages—one is Sanskrit, one a language simply called Central Asian, and Prof. Hoerule, to whom I showed the bundle bought by me, says a third language, not yet deciphered, also appears in some of the fragments.

Whether all the leaves in the manuscript as handed to me had been taken from the same site, Father Hendricks could not learn. Those in Sanskrit are almost wholly Buddhist sacred literature, and they constitute the bulk of the whole. Their approximate date is 750 A.D. The other fragments have not yet been studied sufficiently to fix a date.

Prof. Hoerule, in the short afternoon which we spent together at Oxford, was able to determine only this as to the non-sacred, non-Sanskrit pieces—that they seemed to contain a contract for agricultural materials. I hope some of our scholars may be interested to probe deeper. Prof. Hoerule was good enough to say that he would be glad to correspond with any one desiring the aid of his work, which stands almost alone in this field. As it is not probable that other examples of these finds will be seen in this country for some time, I have placed these in the Congressional Library, with request that they be made available, as far as possible, to any inquiring paleographer.

The discoveries thus far made indicate that during a period of about four hundred years there was a progressive diminishment of the habitable area. It is ever shrinking toward the sources of the streams, which find it ever more difficult to fix a constant course across the wind-swept sands. Thus we see the desert as destroyer, the desert as preserver, but