

APPENDIX I.

NOTE ON THE INSCRIPTION ON THE SILK-STRIP No. 34:65.

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The small silk-strip 34:65, which is 26.5 cm. long, bears, in the right hand corner, a short inscription, 5.75 cm. long and consisting of ten signs. They have been written with ink, and in the case of the first letter the ink has run out into the silk so that the head has become indistinct. There cannot, however, be any doubt about the reading. The preservation of the legend is remarkably good.

The alphabet is Indian Kharoṣṭhī, which we know from numerous documents found at the ancient sites along the southern route through Chinese Turkistan, where it seems to have been in current use during the first centuries of our era, so far as we can judge at present down to the latter half of the third century A.D. Later on it was replaced by the other ancient Indian alphabet, the Brāhmī, which had been introduced into the northern oases in the second century A.D., and of which there are also traces in the south even in the Kharoṣṭhī period.

We have not sufficient materials for judging, with certainty, about the gradual changes of individual characters during the period when this alphabet was in current use in the southern oases. Most of the documents have only been published in transliteration, and the table of letters prepared by the late Professor RAPSON¹ is useless for chronological purposes. We must therefore turn to dated Indian Kharoṣṭhī records in order to arrive at an approximate dating.

It has long been recognized that the closest parallel to the Central Asian Kharoṣṭhī is to be found in an inscription found at Wardak, about thirty miles to the west of Kabul, and now preserved in the British Museum.²

With regard to our record the similarity is very striking. We may compare the rounded top of the letter *ca*, which is angular in most Central Asian records; the straight top and the two long legs of *ya*, while the right hand leg in Central Asia is usually shorter than the other one; the modified form of *sa*, which it has become usual to transliterate *śa*, and which, in India, is met with for the first time in the Wardak inscription, and, above all, the form of the cerebral *ṭa*. In Central Asian re-

¹ Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan. Transcribed and edited by A. M. Boyer, E. J. Rapson, E. Senart and P. S. Noble. Oxford 1920—1929. Plate XIV.

² The last edition in Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions with the exception of those of Aśoka. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. Vol. II. Part I. Calcutta 1929, pp. 165 ff.