

cords it usually consists of a slightly rounded top-stroke, with a vertical slanting forwards and continued by a bottom stroke towards the right, in a convex curve. In our record the top is essentially the same, but it is continued at the left extremity in a continuous curve, opening backwards.

In Indian inscriptions the letter is rather infrequent, and the shape is quite different. In the Wardak epigraph, however, it is found, in the same form as in our legend, in the word *paṭiaśae*, Sanskrit *pratyamśāya* 'for the sharing', though it has not hitherto been recognized, having been transliterated as *ḍ*. From the view-point of Indian Kharoṣṭhī the Lou-lan silk inscription is therefore of importance as showing us a hitherto unknown form of the letter.

Now the distance between Wardak and the find-place of the silk strip is no doubt considerable, and it might be considered rash to draw any chronological inferences from the similarity of the script used in these different places. But there are several indications to show that the intercourse was not inconsiderable, and in the case of the Wardak record these indications even extend to the occurrence of the personal name *Marega*, which we only know from Central Asia. I therefore think that we are quite justified in assuming that our silk legend belongs to about the same time as the Wardak inscription.

The latter is dated on the 15th Artemisios of the year 51. There is a general consensus of opinion to the effect that the era is the same which we know from many Indian records and which starts from the inauguration of the famous king KANIṢKA. But there is no unanimity about the initial point of this reckoning. Most scholars apparently hold that we have to do with the well-known Indian Śaka era beginning in 78/9 A. D. and that the Wardak inscription accordingly goes back to about 130 A. D. It would lead us too far astray to repeat the arguments which, in my opinion, make it impossible to identify the KANIṢKA reckoning with the Śaka era. I am still convinced that we must assume an epoch for the former in A. D. 128/9, and that the Wardak inscription is dated on April 25, A. D. 179. Our silk strip would accordingly seem to have to be ascribed to the last decades of the second century A. D. And such a dating seems to agree with what we know from other sources.

In his *Serindia*, Oxford 1921, pp. 373 f., Sir AUREL STEIN describes a bale of silk found at Lou-lan. Its width is 18 3/4 inches. At one of the ruined watch-stations of the ancient Chinese limes west of Tun-huang he subsequently found two strips of undyed silk, and one of them bears a Chinese inscription which CHAVANNES translated 'a roll of silk from K'ang-fu in the Jen-ch'eng kingdom; width 2 feet 2 inches; length 40 feet; weight 25 ounces; value 618 pieces of money'. Sir AUREL adds: "The mention of the kingdom of Jen-ch'eng, which was established in A. D. 84 in the province of Shan-tung, still one of the chief silkproducing regions in China, proves the silk to date from the end of the first or the beginning of the second century A. D.

The find of two wooden measures enabled Sir AUREL to accurately determine