

accommodate an officer, one bore a date corresponding to May 10 in 68 B.C.

But far more important was the big haul of Chinese records made soon after we started the first experimental scraping of the refuse-heaps which cropped up from the gravel-strewn slopes below the ruin. Here within an area only a few feet square more than three hundred inscribed pieces were recovered. The contents of a small official archive had evidently been thrown down here together, and the very numerous dated pieces showed that these 'waste papers' of an ancient military clerk's office belonged to the years 65-56 B.C. I cannot here mention more than a few among those which have a distinct historical and antiquarian value from the light they throw on the organization of this military border and the life led along its course.

Several documents found here reproduce or quote Imperial edicts concerning the establishment of an agricultural military colony in the Tun-huang region and the construction of a 'rampart' or wall to guard the border. Others refer to the organization of the troops along it, giving the names of different companies, etc. There are also reports and orders relating to other posts and sections of the *Limes*. The mention made of 'indigenous officers' in a number of documents proves that the enlistment of non-Chinese, *i.e.* barbarian, soldiers was resorted to here, just as it was on more than one Roman border line. And curiously enough I found at a neighbouring signal-post half of a wooden tablet inscribed in that Early Sogdian language which was spoken about Samarkand and Bukhara. The piece had evidently served as a tally. Curious, too, are numerous pieces containing elaborate Chinese calendars for the years 63, 59, 57 B.C.,