

study of all epigraphical finds in Kharoshthi. The painstaking researches concerning them which he has carried on for the past year with scholarly zeal and acumen are not likely to be concluded for a long time. But they have advanced sufficiently to make it possible for me, with his permission, to indicate in broad outlines certain main results and some of the more curious details.

It is a source of gratification to me that the conclusions I first arrived at regarding the language and general character of these documents have been fully confirmed by Mr. Rapson's labours. From his exact analysis of a considerable number of Kharoshthi documents on wood and leather, it can now be asserted with certainty that the language is an early Indian Prakrit, possessing a large admixture of Sanskrit terms. The latter are particularly prevalent in the introductory and other formal parts of the letters and reports, that is, exactly where the epistolary custom of modern Indian vernaculars has large recourse to phrases of the classical language. As regards the great mass of the documents there can be no doubt that they contain, as surmised by me from the first, official correspondence of various kinds. Reports and orders to local officials on matters of administration and police, complaints, summonses, safe-conducts, and similar communications seem to constitute the bulk of the documents. Others, again, may prove to be records of payments or requisitions, agreements, bonds, and the like. Accounts, lists of labourers, &c., are probably the contents of the mass of miscellaneous "papers" written on single tablets of irregular shapes and usually in columns ending with numerical signs.

Exceptionally great as are the difficulties with which the work of detailed decipherment has to contend, on account of the very cursive character of the Kharoshthi script and the puzzling phonetic peculiarities of the Prakrit dialect employed, we already obtain many interesting glimpses from the passages which can be definitely interpreted. The titles given to the ruler in whose name orders are issued, and with reference to whose reign the more