

discovered to be fully and precisely dated. The initial characters, as since verified also by my friend Professor Chavannes, plainly and unmistakably indicate the fifth year of the Tai-shih period of the Emperor Wu-ti, corresponding to 269 A.D.

Thus an exact date has at last been found which fixes the period when this remarkable collection of documents accumulated. A careful comparison of the years recorded in the Kharoshthi tablets with the relative depths of the layers of rubbish in which they were found, may yet enable us to determine a number of important chronological details. A discussion of these would be out of place here, but I may call attention to a point of more general historical interest. We know from the Chinese Annals that the sovereignty of the Imperial Government over Eastern Turkestan, which during the Later Han Dynasty (24-220 A.D.) had vigorously asserted itself, was rudely shaken and for long periods practically effaced under the far less powerful dynasties which followed until the advent of the Tangs (A.D. 618). Of Wu-ti, however, the first Emperor of the Western Tsin Dynasty (A.D. 265-290) it is distinctly recorded that he succeeded in re-establishing Chinese authority in the westernmost provinces during his reign. The discoveries just described fully confirm this, as they show that Chinese posts then existed at this ancient settlement and probably also in other parts of Khotan territory. It is difficult to believe that the buildings of the ruined site continued to be inhabited for many years after Wu-ti's time. We are thus tempted to connect its abandonment with the great political and economic changes which undoubtedly accompanied the withdrawal of Chinese authority from these parts.

But, whatever the historical events may have been, there was ample evidence in this refuse-heap for the closeness of commercial relations with China. The pieces of remarkably well-finished lacquered ware and the bits of delicately woven silk fabrics, which lay embedded here with other litter, could only have come from the far eastern parts of the Empire. Whether the fragments of cut green and yellow glass, showing great transparency, and very