

and well-preserved sheets have, under M. Chavannes' examination, proved to contain an exact daily record of expenses, very interesting in its details, kept by the monks of a Buddhist establishment. The constant references made to outlays on creature comforts and luxuries unthinkable in such a desert locality, indicate that this curious monastic account must have found its way here from a distance. Whatever the origin of this particular piece may have been, it is certain that this lonely frontier post in the desert, just like the ruined fort of Miran, serves to mark the wide extent of Tibetan predominance after Chinese control of the Tarim Basin was lost in T'ang times.

While I was busy with the digging I let the Surveyor make a reconnaissance along the geologically interesting hill range stretching away north-westwards. He was able to follow it for over twelve miles, and saw it continuing beyond for at least as great a distance. Considering the bearing of this curious low range and the similarity of its geological structure with that of the chain of rugged, isolated hills subsequently visited near Maral-bashi and Tumshuk beyond the Yarkand River, it appears very probable that it forms the last remnant of an ancient mountain system which jutted out south-eastwards into the Tarim Basin from the outermost chain of the T'ien-shan. The never-ceasing wind erosion of countless ages has reduced this remnant to its present insignificant dimensions, and has so completely broken its connection with those apparently isolated rock-islands that Hedin, when crossing in 1896 the great area of drift sand from the side of the Yarkand River, saw no trace of its line.