

both ends, shows that it came from a piece or roll of silk which had a width of about 19.7 inches, or 50 centimetres. The other strip, $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches (31 cm.) long and not quite complete at one end, bears a Chinese inscription read by M. Chavannes as meaning 'A roll of silk from *K'ang-fu* 亢父 in the kingdom of *Jên-ch'êng* 任城; width 2 feet and 2 inches; length 40 feet; weight 25 ounces; value 618 pieces of money.'^{6b} M. Chavannes has pointed out that the kingdom of *Jên-ch'êng* was established in A. D. 84 and is represented by the present Chi-ning chou in the province of Shan-tung. M. Chavannes has duly emphasized also the historical interest attaching to this inscription, which furnishes us with exact data as to the origin, the dimensions, weight, and price of a piece of silk at the end of the first century or early in the second century A. D. And, I may add, the importance of this find is increased still further by the fact that it dates precisely from the period to which we must attribute the famous classical record about the direct silk trade of the West with the land of the Seres, as learned by Marinus of Tyre from the agents of Maës the Macedonian and preserved in extract by Ptolemy.⁷

When discussing above the roll of silk discovered at the Lou-lan site, L.A. I. 002 (Plate XXXVII), I have shown at length that the width of 2 feet 2 inches (22 Chinese inches) which the inscription of our silk strip from T. xv. a. i indicates, when determined by the value of $\frac{9}{10}$ " (22.9 mm.) for the inch of the Han period as we see it in the wooden measures from T. VIII and T. XI, practically coincides with the actual measurement of the silk strip.⁸ This is 50 cm., the measurement resulting from calculation (22.9 mm. \times 22) being 50.38 cm. The mutual confirmation which the comparison of the silk strip from T. xv. a. i and of the wooden measures found at other stations of the Limes affords has its special value in view of the apparent uncertainties besetting early Chinese metrology.⁹ The seal characters in the seal impression on the other strip have not as yet been deciphered.

Measure of silk width.

SECTION V.—A RELIC OF THE ANCIENT SILK TRADE

A fortunate chance, for which we have reason to feel specially grateful, has preserved for us another interesting relic of that ancient silk trade at this very station T. xv. a. It consists of two strips of fine silk, undyed, T. xv. a. iii. 57, found together at the earliest of its refuse-heaps, iii. One of the strips, about thirteen inches long, is manifestly incomplete, having one end hemmed, the other torn off. But the other strip, though damaged in places, still retains the original selvedge at either end and shows that the piece of silk from which it was cut had a width of about $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or close on 50 centimetres. At one end of this strip there appears, written in bold upright Brähmī characters and in deep black ink, the short inscription of eleven *akṣaras* reproduced in Plate XXXIX. The strip had evidently been folded over before the ink had dried, and this accounts for the reverse impression of the legend visible below. At the very time of discovery, the writing had struck me as

Silk strip from T. xv. a. iii. with Brähmī script.

^{6b} The above translation embodies the correction made by M. Chavannes in the following interesting note of October 3, 1917, the last I received from his hand:

'Les mots que j'ai lus 古父 *kou-fou* ont été corrigés par M. Wang Kouo-wei (*Lieou cha to kien*, chap. II, p. 43^b) en 亢父 *K'ang-fou*, et cette heureuse rectification permet de donner maintenant une traduction exacte. *K'ang-fou* est le nom d'une sous-préfecture située dans le royaume de Jen-tch'eng et qui était à 50 li de la ville actuelle de Tsi-ning tcheou dans le Chan-tong. Il faut traduire: "Un rouleau de soie provenant de *K'ang-fou* dans le royaume de Jen-tch'eng . . ."

^c M. Wang Kouo-wei a en outre fait remarquer qu'un texte historique chinois peut être rapproché du document découvert

par M. Stein; dans le chapitre LXXII du *Heou Han chou* (p. 8^a) il est dit que, "au temps de l'empereur Chouen (126-144 p. C.), les barbares de l'Asie centrale se révoltèrent plusieurs fois; Tchong (崇, nom du roi de Jen-tch'eng) offrit aussitôt des monnaies et des pièces de soie comme subsides pour les dépenses de la frontière."

⁷ Cf. Ptolemy, *Geographia*, ed. C. Müller, I. xi. 6. Regarding the approximate date of Marinus of Tyre's great cartographical work (about A. D. 100), cf. Herrmann, *Seidenstrassen*, I. p. 19.

⁸ See above, pp. 373 sq., and pp. 660, 668.

⁹ Cf. Chavannes, *Les livres chinois* (*J. Asiat.*, 1905, janv.-février), p. 18 note 3.