

visited the caves during the last reigns of the Mongol dynasty, fixes the early part of the fourteenth century as the lowest possible date limit, and the *sgraffito* of XIX in Cursive Brāhmī, solitary as it is, helps to push this back somewhat further still. How long after the painting of the frescoes these mementoes of visitors had been left behind it is, of course, impossible to determine. In any case they prove that the site must have been then a well-known pilgrimage place, and this justifies the hope that some account of it may yet be found in Chinese historical records. That destructive invasions affected it less than the sacred caves near Tun-huang, which had served as a model, may be safely inferred from its out-of-the-way position in the hills and from its actual condition. But does this account also for the total disappearance of the collection of sacred Buddhist texts, etc., that the guardians of the shrines must have possessed at one time?