

Political conditions disturbed about close of third century A.D.

cussion that the close of the third century A.D. marks exactly that period when, during the internal troubles in the Empire which followed the death of the Emperor Wu ti, Chinese political control over 'the Western regions' ceased or was greatly reduced in effectiveness.²⁰ In fact during the early part of the fourth century direct contact between the Empire and the Tārīm Basin was broken by the establishment in the westernmost part of Kan-su of what practically represented an independent local dynasty.

There is no direct historical evidence as to the effect which this prolonged withdrawal of Chinese control exercised upon the economic conditions prevailing in the various small states between Lop-nōr and the Pāmīrs. Still less are we able to judge from the available records to what extent, if any, that withdrawal itself was brought about by economic causes, due, as Prof. Huntington would have us assume, to climatic change at that period. But it seems safe to suppose, in view of all we know of the peculiarly unstable character of cultivation in the Tārīm Basin, that such a great political change would be reflected also by a reduction of economic prosperity. And it is certainly noteworthy, as our subsequent investigations show, that at the sites of Endere, Mirān, and north of Lop-nōr, ruins are likewise encountered, indicating abandonment of once cultivated oases about the same period or a little later. Whether this abandonment was brought about by contemporary physical causes or was due, partly at least, to a state of weakness in the human factors, resulting from this political change, we have no means at present to decide.

SECTION VI.—LIST OF ANTIQUES EXCAVATED AT NIYA SITE

OBJECTS FOUND AT RUIN N. V

- N. v. xv. 001.** Frs. of ordinary buff felt, including sole of shoe, with piece of light buff fabric and handful of natural wool.
- N. v. xv. 002.** Strip of leather with stitch-marks along the edges; tanned. $3\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}''$.
- N. v. xv. 003.** Tanned leather strip of irregular shape. $6\frac{5}{8}'' \times 1\frac{3}{16}''$.
- N. v. xv. 004.** Piece of 'green' leather scale armour (see *Anc. Khotan*, p. 411), rectang. one corner broken off. Two holes bored in each of others, parallel to long side; in one, piece of thong. In middle of one short side, hole cut ($\frac{9}{16}'' \times \frac{3}{16}''$), $\frac{3}{16}''$ from edge. $3\frac{1}{8}'' \times 2'' \times \frac{3}{32}''$.
- N. v. xv. 005.** Piece of 'green' leather scale armour (see *Anc. Khotan*, p. 411), rectang. Holes in corners, as in N. v. xv. 004. Towards middle of one short side, rectangular piece cut out. Hard and curled up. $2\frac{5}{16}'' \times 1\frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{1}{16}''$ to $\frac{1}{8}''$.
- N. v. xv. 006.** Fr. of 'green' leather scale armour. Hard and curled up as N. v. xv. 005. $1\frac{5}{8}'' \times 1\frac{3}{8}'' \times c. \frac{1}{16}''$.
- N. v. xv. 007.** Small strip of wood. Longitudinal section curved. Broken at one end where was a saw-cut. At the other end wedge-shaped. Small hole near point. $3\frac{3}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{16}'' \times \frac{1}{16}''$.
- N. v. xv. 008.** Flat strip of wood, broken at one end;
- other end sq. and bevelled. Broken down one side. $3\frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{11}{16}'' \times \frac{1}{8}''$.
- N. v. xv. 009.** Wooden seal-case. One side broken away. Hole ($\frac{5}{16}''$ diam.) through bottom. Three string grooves. $1\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{16}''$.
- N. v. xv. 0010.** Wooden seal-case, like N. v. xv. 009. Rounded sides. $1\frac{5}{8}'' \times 1\frac{7}{16}'' \times 1''$.
- N. v. xv. 0011.** Piece of 'green' leather scale armour (see *Anc. Khotan*, p. 411), rectang. In middle of each long side three holes are cut parallel to edge, with frs. of thong remaining in them. In middle of one short side hole cut ($\frac{1}{4}''$ diam.), $\frac{5}{16}''$ from edge. $2\frac{9}{16}'' \times 1\frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{3}{32}''$.
- N. v. xvi. 001.** Wooden block carved into form of Buddhist Stūpa. The circular form of orig. block is retained as a base. This form becomes sq. at a height of $1\frac{1}{2}''$ up, the transition from round to sq. being by four chamfers. Sq. portion is $2\frac{1}{2}''$ diam. and $2\frac{3}{4}''$ high, each face having a sunk surface with $\frac{3}{16}''$ raised border reserved on three sides, the lowest being cut away. Each of these sunk panels bears traces of an attenuated quatrefoil in painted outline, placed diagonally. Prob. rough sketch as guide for carving, but never carried further. Above square rises a circular drum ($1\frac{3}{8}''$ high $\times 2''$ diam.), surmounted by stilted semi-circular dome of same diam. and $1\frac{3}{4}''$ high. Dividing drum from dome is a narrow keel moulding. A hole is drilled through centre vertically. Much cracked.

²⁰ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 384; M. Chavannes' extracts from the Chin Annals, *ibid.*, pp. 543, note 4; 544.