

modern India as *parwāna*, in Persia as *rāhdārī*, in Chinese Turkestan as *yol-khat*) to travellers, official messengers, etc., still prevails in all eastern countries, and has become personally familiar to me from my travels. Many of the documents which I have found at ruined sites of the Khotan region and elsewhere in Chinese, Kharoṣṭhī, 'Khotanese', etc., undoubtedly are of this nature.²

The term
yariq.

Yariq, on the other hand, is a hitherto unknown word. But apart from the etymological derivation pointed out by Professor Thomsen (from the verbal root *yar-*, in the literal sense of 'one who is detached'), there appears to be sufficient indication in the entries themselves to support the great Danish scholar's conjectural inference that *yariq* is used here 'to designate an officer (?) dispatched for a special purpose by another and superior officer' or, in other entries, 'a military personage provided as an escort'. In fact, long practical experience of the realities of Eastern administration and travel makes me strongly inclined to believe that the functions here indicated by Professor Thomsen are just those which that humble but omnipresent subordinate of every Oriental régime, the *Chaprassī* or 'orderly' of modern India, the *Darōgha*, also known by a Chinese term as *Ya-yeh*, of Chinese Turkestan, the *Ghulām* of Persia, would indifferently be called upon to perform in the regular course of official routine.

Approximate dating
of record.

It is not necessary for me to analyse the contents of this Old-Turkish record in detail and to show how well the above interpretation of the two most frequently recurring terms agrees with them. But there are to be found in them other terms and names which must claim our attention here because they have a distinct bearing on the origin and date of these Mīrān documents, and are therefore of historical and archaeological interest. Professor Thomsen, when discussing the question as to the age of the manuscript,³ has already pointed out that the date given in the first line of the large sheet *a* mentions merely 'the fourth month, the twenty-ninth [day]' and gives no information as to the year. At the same time, he has emphasized the chronological importance of the fact that the document, which was evidently 'written by a Turkish clerk who held an appointment at a Turkish or essentially Turkish garrison', refers to several persons by 'Chinese titles (and names?), such as *Sangun*, *Chigshi*, etc.'⁴ From the use of these titles he infers that the fort and the country were then under Chinese rule. As 'on the other hand there appears to be no trace whatever of Tibetan in the MS.', the conclusion is drawn that it cannot be later than the middle of the eighth century A. D., the approximate time when the Tibetans are likely to have established themselves here. 'If anything, it is perhaps of somewhat earlier date, and the form of the letters as well as the texture of the paper corresponds fairly well with this supposition.'

Titles of
Chinese
origin.

I doubt whether the use of those titles of Chinese origin can by itself be recognized as a certain proof that the fort and country must then have necessarily been under Chinese rule; for such effects of that close and constant political control which the Chinese succeeded in establishing over both the Northern and the Western Turks in the second quarter of the sixth century A. D., and which enabled the T'ang emperors to maintain their hold over Eastern Turkestan for more than a century,⁵ might well, in conjunction with the powerful influence exercised by Chinese civilization, have outlasted for some time actual Chinese dominion in those regions. But I believe that Professor Thomsen's approximate dating finds distinct support in other indications furnished by the Mīrān documents.

² Cf. e.g. the Chinese slips from the Niya Site translated by M. Chavannes, *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 541 sqq.

³ See *J.R.A.S.*, 1912, p. 185; below, pp. 473 sq.

⁴ Thus we have mentioned in *a* the *Yariqs* Urungu Tudun Chigshi and Chik Bilgā Chigshi, also one Kūl Chigshi. In *a* the title *Sangun* is found in the designations of three persons, Äd[ch?]ü Sangun, Tirā Bars Khan Sangun, and

Urungu Sangun; in *b* recto we read of Kūlūg Sangun and Kūrābir Urungu Sangun, also in *b* verso of Ut Sangun and one [.]ärkin Sangun Tir[-].

⁵ Cf. M. Chavannes' masterly résumé of Chinese relations with the different Turkish nations during the seventh and eighth centuries in chapters VI-IX of his *Documents sur les Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 259-99.