

was still unwilling to listen to any proposals implying a cession *en bloc*; but he allowed Professor Pelliot to remove all his 'selections' against an appropriate compensation.³

I need not emphasize here the high value of the selected materials thus safely transferred to Paris. Nor is this the place to assess the value of the manifold fruitful researches which they have rendered possible for a brilliant group of French Orientalist scholars. But there are two points having a direct archaeological bearing with regard to which M. Pelliot's researches have furnished collateral evidence of such particular value as to call for mention here. Both points concern the important question as to the approximate date when the deposit of manuscripts and other relics was finally walled up. This question had already received careful consideration from Professor Pelliot while working on the spot, and it is a matter of no small gratification to me that the reasoned conclusion to which he was led entirely accords with the one I have explained above.⁴ This I had occasion publicly to record when I embodied my original notes in the lecture that I delivered before the Royal Geographical Society in March, 1909, long before I became acquainted with M. Pelliot's paper.⁵ Just as the many dated documents found in the 'mixed' bundles had enabled me 'to determine that the walling-up of the chamber must have taken place soon after A.D. 1000', so Professor Pelliot, too, primarily lays stress upon the fact that the latest *nien-haos* borne by the Chinese documents which he examined are those corresponding to the periods A.D. 976-83 and A.D. 995-97, within the first two reigns of the Sung dynasty.⁶ He adds: 'De plus, il n'y a pas, dans toute la bibliothèque, un seul caractère *si-hia*. Il est donc évident que la niche a été murée dans la première moitié du XI^e siècle, et probablement à l'époque de la conquête *si-hia* qui eut lieu vers 1035.'

M. Pelliot's agreement as to date of deposit.

Professor Pelliot's Sinologue knowledge enabled him to recognize clear evidence of the decadence which took place in the Chinese civilization of Tun-huang during the tenth century in the careless writing of the documents belonging to that period. Together with the distinctly inferior paper which I, too, had soon learned to recognize, it provides a safe criterion for distinguishing such manuscripts as the monks of that late epoch still produced from the fine calligraphic rolls of the

Inferior writing and paper of later manuscripts.

hoard and as to the extent and character of my 'selections'; see *Une bibliothèque médiévale, B.É.F.E.O.*, 1908, p. 505. M. Pelliot was himself enabled to rectify his impressions when, for the best part of two weeks in June, 1910, he gave the great benefit of his expert, if rapid, examination to the Chinese manuscripts brought back by me from Wang's cave. He then arrived at the estimate recorded below (see p. 917) that they comprise about 3,000 rolls, complete or of considerable dimensions, and about 5,000-6,000 detached pieces, i.e. documents, or fragments of texts.

Nor would it be, perhaps, right to blame the good priest too much for having apparently misled M. Pelliot as to the payments made by me and the manner in which he received them. To the credit of his personal honesty I may here mention that, on my second visit in 1914, he took special care to produce the public accounts of his shrine, showing that all sums he had received from me had been duly entered for its benefit and none kept back for private use. So, in spite of his queer diplomatic attempts, I retain my belief in Wang's genuine devotion to his chosen pious task. There was abundant evidence of the use to which he had put all those silver 'horseshoes' in the pile of new shrines and pilgrims' quarters I saw in 1914 erected in front of his cave-temple.

³ Cf. *Conférence de M. Pelliot, Bulletin du Comité de l'Asie*

fr., 1910, p. 21. M. Pelliot there estimates the quantity of his selections at about one-third of what he found in the chamber. Of the approximate total of 1,130 'library' bundles which I counted on clearing it out there ought to have remained at the time of his visit about 860 bundles.

Of the great variety of the Chinese materials rescued in M. Pelliot's selections, and the extreme interest which many among them offer for Sinologue studies and research in other directions also, the vivid glimpses presented in M. Pelliot's paper, *B.É.F.E.O.*, 1908, pp. 508 sqq., convey a striking impression. This is fully borne out by such particular Chinese texts as he, partly in collaboration with M. Chavannes, has hitherto been able to publish from his collection.

For a summary indication of the number of text pieces in Brāhmī and Uigur (or Sogdian) scripts, see *B.É.F.E.O.*, 1908, p. 507. These have supplied materials for quite a series of important papers by MM. Gauthiot, Meillet, Pelliot, and Sylvain Lévi, in the *Journal Asiatique, Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, etc.

⁴ See above, pp. 820 sq.

⁵ Cf. my *Explorations in Central Asia, Geogr. Journal*, 1909, July, September, p. 42 of reprint.

⁶ Cf. Pelliot, *B.É.F.E.O.*, viii. p. 506.