

mound, could be made out here coming from T. xxiii. c, the nearest station to the east. It passed at a distance of about 120 yards north of the ridge towards the lake shore. It could be followed up to a point about 300 yards to the north-west of T. xxiii. b, and beyond this disappeared on the scrub-covered marshy foreshore. The tower, built of sun-dried bricks of the usual size,  $14 \times 7 \times 4$  inches, measured 16 feet square at the base and still rose to a height of about 13 or 14 feet (see plan in Pl. 13). Among the objects recovered from the refuse in two small adjoining rooms were the fragments of a finely woven tapestry rug showing rainbow stripes, T. xxiii. b. 03, and a painted wooden bracket, T. xxiii. b. 06 (Pl. XLVI). This was meant for hanging up equipment, &c., and closely resembles others found at Limes stations farther west. A clipped *Wu-chu* coin and the fragment of a Chinese record on wood were also found here. [In this M. Maspero believes to find mention of a 'signal post' (*sui*) named *Lai-hsiang* 來降.]

Almost due east of T. xxiii. b a high conspicuous Mesa rises at a distance of about a mile and a half, commanding a very open view all round and crowned at its summit by the tower T. xxiii. c.<sup>23</sup> In order to reach this Mesa, the lowest portion of the depression above referred to had to be crossed. Owing to the boggy nature of the ground the passage was distinctly difficult east of T. xxiii. b. But after going for about half a mile, we picked up the line of the Limes wall marked by a low straight mound, and followed it right through to the Mesa. This rises above the surrounding salt-encrusted ground as a steep clay ridge, about 400 yards long, with an axial bearing from ENE. to WSW. Refuse of straw and dung was at once found at its southern foot, where a shelter appeared to have been devised amidst fallen masses of clay. The abundant pottery debris encountered on climbing the slope indicated that the station above had been occupied for a long period.

Limes wall  
on ground  
crossed to  
T. xxiii. c.

As the sketch-plan in Pl. 13 shows, the Limes wall, built of reed fascines and layers of clay, extended up the southern slope to terrace-like ground near the middle of the Mesa at an elevation of about 90 feet. There it was carried to the west round a steep clay knoll about 30 feet higher, which bears on its top the remarkably well-preserved tower T. xxiii. c. This was built of layers of stamped clay and measured  $14\frac{1}{2}$  feet square at the base. It was intact to a height of about 15 feet and retained on its top a layer of reeds and a large piece of Toghrak wood. The eastern face of the tower showed foot-holes flanked on either side by smaller holes evidently intended to afford a grip to the hands of a person clambering to the top. On the northern side there adjoined a room, about 13 feet square, with walls built of brick and about 1 foot 8 inches thick. The wall facing to the north still stood to a height of 8 feet, while the one to the west was much broken and the one to the east almost effaced—significant proof of the eroding force of the prevailing east winds even at a height well above the sand and gravel scoured ground.

Ruins of  
watch-  
station  
T. xxiii. c.

From a point opposite to the north-western corner of the tower the Limes wall, here as elsewhere 8 feet in thickness, turned off to the south-west and was carried to a small knoll, about as high as that bearing the tower, but much steeper. This precipitous knoll provided natural defence, and here the line of the wall was interrupted for a distance of about 30 feet. Beyond this gap the wall was built of bricks, measuring  $14 \times 7 \times 4$  inches, and was 3 feet thick. In this form it descended the steep slope of the knoll for a distance of 27 feet, the only instance I ever traced of the Limes wall being constructed of masonry. Beyond this stretch it was once more built of reed fascines and clay and thus continued down the slope to the south-west, here somewhat easier, for another 90 feet. It then turned off west-north-west in the direction of T. xxiii. b, being built of fascines mainly of Toghrak branches, with layers of clay between.

Limes wall  
at tower  
T. xxiii. c.

<sup>23</sup> Owing to the small scale of the map and the consequent difficulty of finding room for all details, slight inaccuracies have occurred in placing the symbols of several watch-towers

in this limited area. The symbol of T. xxiii. b requires to be shifted slightly farther north and that of T. xxiii. e a little to the south-west of the positions shown.