

From T. xxxvii. h the *agger* could be followed quite clearly for a mile and a half to T. xxxvii. i, the layers of brushwood showing in places an admixture of reeds. The tower at this point was found reduced to a mere mound of clay. But about 30 yards to the west of it and within the wall line there survived the remains of a small cella in a somewhat better condition. It measured 6 feet 3 inches square and showed wall foundations of solid masonry to a height of about 2 to 3 feet. The bricks measured 9 inches by 6, with a thickness of 4 inches, the lowest courses being laid in a cutting in the natural clay.

Cella
traced at
T. xxxvii. i.

That these remains belonged to a small shrine became perfectly certain when I found the ruin of a little modern place of worship just outside the *agger*, where a well-marked track coming from the east crossed its line. It still retained three plastered image bases, and its masonry consisted of sun-dried bricks placed vertically, as is customary nowadays along these marches of Kan-su. The presence of this modern shrine was a striking instance of the tenacity of local worship. Repeated observations during my explorations of 1907 had shown that this clings particularly to all points where routes cross the Limes, from the region which used to lie within its protection, to territory 'outside the barrier' (*kuan wai-t'ou*), according to the Chinese expression.

Modern
shrine at
crossing of
Limes.

I have already fully discussed in *Serindia* the reasons for the persistence of local worship at such points, and commented on the characteristic instances presented at the site of the ancient frontier 'gate' of *Yü-mên*, at the passage of the present high road through the Limes line south of An-hsi, &c.¹⁴ It will therefore suffice here to mention that, as will appear from subsequent chapters, my renewed explorations have shown that almost every point where a recognized route passes outside the ancient border line of Han times is marked either by a shrine still 'in being' or else by one where worship has lingered until comparatively recent times.¹⁵ As regards the ruined cella close to T. xxxvii. i, I may add that the size of its bricks approximates to that of the bricks used in the ruined temple which I unearthed in 1907 at the Limes post T. xxix, and which, on the strength of the sculptural remains there discovered, may be assigned to a period not later than T'ang times.¹⁶

Evidence of
continued
local
worship.

At T. xxxvii. i the line of the *agger* took a sharp turn to the north-east. At first almost effaced, then reappearing quite clearly on ground where vegetation became more plentiful, it brought us after we had proceeded a little over a mile to the point which a mound of clay and abundance of ancient potsherds indicated as the position of a completely decayed tower. From here the line could be traced continuing with the same bearing towards another entirely ruined tower, T. xxxvii. k, a mile and a quarter distant. Owing to the presence of increased moisture, which reaches this ground from the western edge of An-hsi cultivation, much scrub and also small tamarisk-cones were to be found here on either side of the *agger*. Yet in places it still rose to a height of 6 to 8 feet.

Line traced
to tower
T. xxxvii. k.

From T. xxxvii. k the *agger* turned due east in the direction of a large conspicuous tower. This, when reached at a distance of a mile, was found to be new in appearance, but might well have been built round an old one serving as its core. The *agger*, as far as it was traceable to the east of k, showed a peculiar construction. It seemed to consist of two narrow walls built of earth and reed fascines, separated by a space of about 6 feet which had been filled with loose earth. This filling appeared to have subsided in many places, leaving small hollows. But the condition of the whole had suffered too much by moisture to permit of exact examination. In the vicinity of the new tower the ground became thickly covered with reeds and scrub, and the attempt to trace the line farther at this point proved fruitless. It had evidently been completely destroyed by the nearness of subsoil moisture. So we had to abandon the search here and were glad to pick up

Peculiar
wall con-
struction.

¹⁴ Cf. *Serindia*, ii. pp. 602, 696; iii. pp. 1094 sq.

¹⁵ See below, pp. 375, 380, 386, 412.

¹⁶ Cf. *Serindia*, ii. p. 601.