

slip, still retaining some Chinese characters, which emerged from a small refuse layer at the south-west corner.<sup>14</sup>

Border line  
keeping to  
right river  
bank.

I now felt assured that the border line guarded in Han times had here kept close to the right bank of the river, as I had already assumed in 1907 when we surveyed this ground from the high road far away to the south. But no trace of the wall or *agger* which once must have passed the tower survived in the belt of vegetation that lined the valley at this point. Nor was a wall traceable farther on where this belt gradually narrowed and finally gave place to bare clay, furrowed by the wind into small *Yārdangs*, 4 to 6 feet in height. But a conspicuous tower rising above a bend of the river higher up afforded guidance; it was reached after a march of about five miles from the last tower and, like it, proved to be of ancient construction.

Finds at  
watch-  
tower  
T. XLI. b.

This watch-tower, T. XLI. b (see plan, Pl. 14), was built of layers of stamped clay and, being in very fair preservation, still rose to a height of 29 feet on a base 20 feet square. With the help of the foot-holes still surviving on the west face and of a rope thrown over the top one of the men managed to climb to the summit. Here he found the wooden spoon T. XLI. b. 02; a rolled leaf holding some drug made up into small yellow rods, 01; fragments of leather, 06; and a coarse woollen fabric, 018, &c., as described in the List. Of the chips of wood, 04-5, one retained faint traces of Chinese characters. Among the abundant fragments of Han pottery found at the foot of the tower, the pieces of a vessel, 014-17, may be mentioned on account of their greyish-brown mottled glaze. An enclosure, measuring 27 feet along its northern wall, which alone still rose a few feet above the ground, once adjoined the tower to the west. The refuse of straw and dung dug up here yielded no finds; but a broken *Wu-chu* coin was picked up outside. A low mound of earth, without clear indication of fascines, was found forming a rough semicircle to the north of the tower and probably represents a small segment of the otherwise wholly effaced Limes *agger*.

Clay terrace  
T. XLI. c,  
converted  
into tower.

Proceeding about two miles farther across a belt of bare clay almost wholly cut up into small *Yārdangs*, we reached a conspicuous clay terrace, T. XLI. c, which had been converted into a natural tower by roughly cutting down the sides. It measured about 20 feet square at the base and stood to a height of 21 feet. That it has been used as a watch-station and probably occupied for a long time was proved by the abundance of potsherds of Han type that thickly covered the ground near by, especially to the south. Here, too, a broken *Wu-chu* coin was found. A well-marked *agger*, about 10 feet in height, passed round the eastern, northern, and western faces of the little Mesa at a distance varying from 32 to 36 feet. But no continuation of this mound to the east or west could be traced.

Watch-  
tower  
T. XLI. d.

We camped for the night by the river about half a mile to the south, and on the morning of April 21st resumed our survey eastwards. After proceeding only a mile and a half we arrived at T. XLI. d, a conspicuous tower of stamped clay, rising within 30 yards of the river bank and facing the lower end of the village lands of Chiu-tao-kou on the bank opposite. Owing to wind-erosion which had undercut the clay soil to a depth of 4 feet at the northern foot of the tower, that side had fallen down in solid blocks of *pisé*. The other half of the tower still stood to a height of about 28 feet. Ancient pottery debris lay in plenty at its foot, and the fragment of a *Wu-chu* coin was picked up near by.

Remains of  
watch-  
station  
T. XLI. e.

After covering another mile and a half across the narrow wind-eroded belt of clay between the Sai and the river, we arrived at the westernmost foot of a low rocky ridge which juts out here from the gravel-covered *glacis* towards the river. Noticing debris of Han pottery on the track which winds here along the riverine terrace, I followed it up northward to a little hillock that rose some 30 to 40 feet higher. Fascines of tamarisk branches plainly marked this as the site of a watch-

<sup>14</sup> For specimens of pottery and a few other small relics, see the Descriptive List below, p. 419.