

I had observed at a point of the Limes where it approaches An-hsi from the west.<sup>16</sup> As the cutting made at one place showed more substantial layers of brushwood on the outside faces of the *agger* than within, these depressions may well be the result of partial subsidence.

The stretch of the Limes rampart just described, short as it is, is guarded by two towers, T. XLII. c and T. XLII. d, and immediately to the south of the latter lies the small fort to be presently described. The placing of two watch-towers so close together on the ridge calls for notice. It may be explained either by the special need of protection for the Limes where its line was immediately adjacent to a settled area, or else, and perhaps more justly, by the fact that neither from the tower T. XLII. d nor from the little fortified post below it can the watch-station T. XLII. b be seen. T. XLII. c is a tower of stamped clay, showing the characteristic reinforcing layers of reeds at intervals. Its base measured 20 feet square, but later repairs in clay and brickwork had enlarged this. On the west face these encasing additions had fallen and exposed the original dimensions. The present height is 14 feet.

Watch-towers  
T. XLII. c, d.

The tower T. XLII. d (Fig. 216) appeared to have undergone repeated repairs, and now, with much brickwork added at the south-east corner and a later clay facing elsewhere, measured 33 feet square at the base. But here, too, an older core of stamped clay could be distinguished. Its height is 13 feet. Five small P'ao-t'ais, ranged along the ridge to the east, are manifestly very recent. This is shown also by their vertically set bricks, which are of the same size as those used for the repair of the tower. On a rocky terrace some 30 feet below T. XLII. d rises a rectangular enclosure (Fig. 216; Pl. 14). Its size and its massive walls of stamped clay, 8 feet thick, strongly reminded me of the small fort T. XIV, found at the site of the ancient 'Jade Gate'.<sup>17</sup> The interior measures 58 feet from east to west and 46 feet across. Its walls are 18 feet high, excluding a parapet built of bricks measuring 12 x 8 x 4 inches and probably of later date. A great portion of the west wall has fallen, and to the same cause is due the widening of the gateway on the south.

Walled enclosure.

No remains of any kind survived within the enclosure. But its position in very close proximity to the Limes and outside the cultivated ground, as well as the massiveness of the walls and their present condition, distinctly point to antiquity. As the plan shows, the route leading from the village of Shih-êrh-tun towards T. XLI. o and thence connecting with Obrucheff's alternative route to Hāmi passes immediately below the small fort, and so does the route which leads to the latter place via Ch'iao-wan-ch'êng. Considering that the ground occupied by the village must at all times have been the last point of cultivation touched by these two routes before entering the desert region of the Pei-shan, it seems very probable that the position guarded by the fort was occupied as a 'barrier' or Gate station, *kuan*, ever since the Limes was constructed. That it lay at some distance from the points where the two routes above mentioned actually passed outside the 'wall' is a circumstance for which an exact parallel is found in the position of the ancient *Yü-mên kuan* west of Tun-huang.<sup>18</sup>

Likely position of a 'barrier' station.

The assumption here put forward as to the original character of the site receives support from two local observations. As already stated elsewhere,<sup>19</sup> there is the significant fact of the little fort bearing locally the designation of *Hsiao-fang-p'an* 小防盤, 'the small protective camp', the same which is applied to the exactly similar fort at the ancient Yü-mên or Jade Gate. In the second place, in view of what I have repeatedly pointed out as regards the continuity of local worship at all points where routes pass outside the line of the Limes,<sup>20</sup> some weight may be claimed

Designation of *Hsiao-fang-p'an*.

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 369.

<sup>17</sup> See *Serindia*, ii. pp. 683 sq.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, ii. p. 691.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, iii. p. 1137.

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 369, 380; *Serindia*, ii. pp. 602, 696; iii. 1094 sq.