

remains of a large gate. The distance between the northern and southern wall faces was about 370 yards. Assuming that the area enclosed by the rampart had a square shape, as usual in the case of fortified Chinese towns, all remains still recognizable as those of dwellings at this group of ruins would just fall within it.

Outside only two ruined structures had survived in the immediate vicinity. Both were low mounds of solid masonry which appeared to have served once as bases for shrines and by their massive construction had so far escaped complete erosion. The one about half a mile to the north-east of the station was reduced to a small pyramid about ten feet high and measuring about thirty-five feet on each side at the bottom. This, as in the case of every large structure at the site, rested on a foundation of two layers of tamarisk brushwood, embedded in clay. The other mound not far from the south-east corner of the walled area was larger, and must have measured originally over fifty feet along each of its orientated sides. The height of the erosion terrace on which it stood, fully sixteen feet, added to that of the extant mass of masonry, close on fourteen feet, made it look quite imposing. That wind erosion had been aided here by human activity was clearly proved by a tunnel which treasure-seekers, no doubt of an early date, had cut from the centre of the mound right through to the west face. No trace was left of the superstructure which this mass of masonry must have borne, nor of the stucco revetment likely to have adorned its sides.

It was curious to note here, and also among the ruins within the enclosure, the plentiful remains of tamarisk scrub which had once managed to subsist both at the foot of the débris and on the eroded slopes below. It must have helped greatly to protect the ruins, and its dead branches strewed the slopes of most of the terraces. Also within the erosion trenches small tamarisk cones and single dead bushes could occasionally be found. Not far from the ruin of the 'Ya-mên' I even discovered a small clump of tamarisks still alive. All this suggested that water might have found its way again to this ground at some