

of that tract on the Limes which comprised the neighbouring watch-station T. xxvii. *Tun-hu* may well have been the name of the part of the Limes adjoining Wan-sui on the west.

Of the wall itself no trace had survived here or at any other of the towers to the south-west of T. xxvi, a fact for which the character of the surface soil, with the consequent result of wind-erosion, is quite sufficient to account. Even the quarters sheltering those who had once kept watch by the tower had completely disappeared. Yet from the plentiful refuse thrown out by them it was possible to draw some conclusion as to the conditions of their life. Among the miscellaneous small objects found here and detailed in the Descriptive List, wooden articles such as spoons, rough combs, sticks of various sorts, and the like are the most common. Numerous, too, were small oblong wooden blocks, T. xxviii. c-g, k-n (Plate LIII), apparently intended to be made into dice or counters. Plate LIII shows also two ink-seals, T. xxviii. j, q, on which, however, the Chinese characters have become mostly effaced. Of particular interest are two wooden seal-cases, T. xxviii. a, b, evidently meant to be attached to some closed bag or other receptacle by means of a string passed across or through them. Their types are represented also by numerous specimens found at other points of the Limes, and have been fully described in the List, under T. viii. 5, as well as illustrated by specimens shown in Plate LIII. The special importance of the types to which the two seal-cases of T. xxviii belong lies in the fact that they show the same arrangement of three grooves for folds of string over which the seal was to be impressed in clay, as I had first discovered in 1901 on the envelopes of the Kharoṣṭhī documents brought to light at the Niya Site. These seal-cases supplied additional and conclusive proof that I had been justified before in tracing all such details of that ancient wooden stationery of the Tārīm Basin back to earlier Chinese models.<sup>3</sup>

Seal-cases  
and miscel-  
laneous  
finds from  
T. xxviii.

Among small metal objects I may single out for briefest notice the portion of a cast-iron hoe-blade, T. xxviii. 0018, an implement represented also elsewhere on the Limes (see T. xv. 009); the bronze buckle, T. xxviii. 0020; and the bronze arrow-heads, T. xxviii. 009-0012, specimens of the several modifications of the type which, as the abundant finds all along the Limes have proved, was prevalent in Han times. Its chief characteristic is the blade triangular in section, with each face slightly leaf-shaped and a hexagonal socketed shank; often one or more faces have small hollows. References to the entries where the various forms have been detailed will be found in the Descriptive List, and reproductions of different specimens in Plate LIII. The examination of the subtypes and their grouping with reference to the several classes of 'regulation' cross-bows, which are frequently mentioned in our documents as among the equipment of the various posts and small detachments guarding the Limes, would be a very interesting subject of inquiry; but it would fill a small monograph by itself.

Bronze  
arrow-heads  
of ammuni-  
tion.

T. xxviii. 1-3 are specimens of the dark-grey wheel-made pottery which, with or without 'mat-marked' outer surface, was found in abundance here, as at other watch-stations of the Limes, both amongst refuse and on the surface of the ground. I have already referred to the numerous fragments which showed perforations on the edges with regular drilled holes. Here the discovery in the rubbish-heap of several pieces still actually reunited by a cord-fastening, of which T. xxviii. 2 (Plate LII) is a specimen, conclusively explained these perforations. The practice bears witness to the value which the quondam owners had attached to their pots and jars, however badly damaged. Indirectly it also serves to show the remoteness of the guarded line of the wall from the inhabited area at this and most other points of the Tun-huang Limes. As the material was of the coarsest, and hence, no doubt, cheap enough, only the difficulty of transporting the larger earthenware from the oasis would account for this continued use after the roughest mending. Yet two small pieces of

Perforated  
pottery  
fragments.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 361 sq.; also above, p. 382.