

square, a natural clay bank projecting beneath the broken west face of the masonry having been wrongly included before in the measurement. Remains of brick-built walls rising to about two feet from the ground, and enclosing small apartments which must have served as quarters for the detachment guarding the watch-station, were brought to light close to the east and north faces of tower. From the little passage iii a flight of stairs, each nine inches high and very narrow, had once led up to the top of the tower; two of them were still intact.

Documents
found at
quarters of
T. iv. b.

Ta-chien-tu,
name of
Limes
section.

Dated
records from
T. iv. b.

Traces
suggesting
entrenched
camp.

The clearing of these modest quarters yielded about a dozen Chinese documents, which with one exception were on wood, several of them being in fair preservation.⁶ It is curious to note that a complete and particularly clear wooden 'slip' (*Doc.*, No. 432, Plate XIII),⁷ which contains a general order enjoining 'a perfect look-out and the immediate lighting of a fire-signal on receipt of one', was found just in the passage iii giving access to the top of the tower. The text itself describes it as 'an order to be posted up in a visible place of the [quarters of the] company of the watch-post', and the place where it was found proves that this direction had been duly complied with. Among the other documents, which all refer to military matters, receipts for letters, rations, and the like, two others deserve mention here as having a special archaeological bearing. The large tablet (T. iv. b. ii. 1 *Doc.*, No. 430, Plate XII) is of interest as emanating from 'an adjunct of *Ta-chien-tu*' and bearing a date which M. Chavannes hypothetically accepts as *T'ai-shih* 3, in agreement with Chiang Ssü-yeh's original reading. As regards *Ta-chien-tu* 大煎都, it appears to me very probable that this local designation, which is met with in nine records found at the stations T. iv. b, v, vi. b, and only in one found elsewhere, T. xiv,⁸ refers to that section of the Limes which comprised the westernmost watch-towers of the wall and the detached ones guarding its south-west flank.

With regard to the date it must be observed that the characters read above as *T'ai-shih*, and hence as indicating the year 94 B.C., could be read according to M. Chavannes also as *Yüan-shih*, which would make the date correspond to A.D. 3. Considering that all the numerous dated documents found at the watch-stations on the south-west flank belong to the first century B.C., and that [*Ta*]-*chien-tu* is mentioned in a document of the year 96 B.C. (*Doc.*, No. 304, T. xiv. iii. 67), I should be inclined to prefer the earlier dating. But it must be noted that another record from this station, T. iv. b. i. 10 (*Doc.*, No. 434), written on a label of red cloth, shows the name of the sub-prefecture Lo-yang written with the character 雒 which, according to M. Chavannes, necessitates its attribution to the period of the Later Han Dynasty. Accepting this evidence, we must assume that even the westernmost posts along the wall continued to be garrisoned at least until the beginning of this period, even though the detached posts on the flank may have been abandoned somewhat earlier. The discovery at the same station of records separated in date by upwards of a century can be paralleled elsewhere along the Limes.⁹ In this case it must also be pointed out that the narrow passage ii may have been turned into a rubbish-heap and abandoned for a long time while the room i, where the cloth label was found, still continued to be tenanted. Among the refuse found at T. iv. b (see List) were a bronze arrow-head and numerous fragments of silk fabrics.

The position occupied by the tower T. iv. b commanded so open a view of all the low ground in the neighbourhood that, as I stood there and looked about, I could not help asking myself why

⁶ See Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 96 sqq.

⁷ The correct mark of this document is T. iv. b. iii. 1.

⁸ Cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, Nos. 51, 137, 138, 150, 166-68, from T. vi. b; No. 430 from T. iv. b; No. 436 from T. v; No. 307 from T. xiv; also *ibid.*, p. 23. The local name *Chien-tu*, probably an abbreviated form, is found

also in Nos. 304 and 356 from T. xiv, and in No. 452 from T. xv. a. For the last-named record, which also points to the location of [*Ta*]-*chien-tu* about T. iv, cf. below, chap. xix, sec. vi.

⁹ Cf. e.g. T. xiv. iii, where the dated records range from 96 B.C. to A.D. 14 (see Chavannes, *Doc.*, Nos. 304 and 317).