

a narrow passage built along the south foot of the tower. On either side of the doorway might be seen the sockets meant for the insertion of heavy bolts, about 4 by 5 inches in section, which once barred the door. In the narrow passage along the east foot of the tower, which seems to have been intended for stairs but did not contain any, the original whitewashed plaster of the tower still showed behind the rubble of hard clay with which the end of the passage had been walled up at a later time.<sup>1</sup> The innermost room i is likely to have been used for the commandant's accommodation, and here half a dozen wooden records, all fragmentary, were found, besides the neatly ornamented fragment of a lacquered bowl.

Miscellaneous  
relics from  
T. vi. c.

The room iii, which may have been used for the men's quarters, yielded two wooden brackets, T. vi. c. iii. 002, 003 (Plate LIV), of the type already described which served for hanging up clothes, equipment, &c. There, too, was found the curious wedge-shaped wooden block, T. vi. c. iii. 001, inscribed with two Chinese characters no longer legible, to which reference has already been made in connexion with a similar find from T. vi. b.<sup>1a</sup> It was strange to find a quantity of perfectly fresh-looking horse dung, with remains of green reeds cut into straw, under the débris of the little ante-room iv. This measured less than 7 feet across, and could have barely allowed the horse to turn round. These tight quarters recalled life on board ship, and served to illustrate the need of shelter which in such an inclement climate was felt here even by animals. Elsewhere, too, I have made similar observations about stabling. In the entrance passage ii I came upon a neatly decorated leather tongue, T. vi. c. ii. 002 (Plate CX), which probably formed the end of a saddle strap, and what may have been part of a wooden lock, T. vi. c. ii. 001.

Wooden  
tablet with  
Early  
Sogdian  
script.

But the find which is of most interest was made just within the doorway or a few inches beyond. It was the remarkably well-preserved right-hand portion of a thin wooden tablet, T. vi. c. ii. 1 (Plate CLVII), 10½ inches in length and in its present state about 1½ inches across. It showed at the top four short lines in an Aramaic-looking, then as yet unknown, script, which I had first come across in a paper fragment of the Lou-lan site, L.A. vi. ii. 0104, and subsequently in the important find of paper documents made at the Limes station T. xii. a. As I shall have occasion to explain when discussing this find, the script, first partially deciphered by Dr. A. Cowley, has since been identified as Early Sogdian by M. Gauthiot.<sup>2</sup> The untimely death of this gifted collaborator has removed for the present all hope of securing some indication of the possible meaning of the short inscription. But the very place of discovery and the external appearance of the record may help us to realize its antiquarian import.

Script  
points to  
Iranian  
auxiliaries.

In the first place, I think, due stress must be laid on the fact that the tablet was found at an outlying watch-station of the Limes, far away from the line which the ancient trade route had followed. This speaks strongly against any assumption which might attribute the document, written in a script of Western Asiatic origin, to traders or other mere passing visitors from that side. Together with the wooden material, which is obviously local, this consideration made me wonder at the time whether the discovery of the relic at the far-off post T. vi. c might be due to the presence among its garrison of men drawn from that Iranian portion of Central Asia, Sogdiana, and the adjoining regions, with which I was already inclined to connect both the script and the language of the record.<sup>3</sup>

This conjecture has since found distinct support in certain documents of T. vi. b, briefly

<sup>1</sup> The symbol for this later rubble wall is wrongly described in the explanatory list of Pl. 37 as 'débris of bricks and clay'.

<sup>1a</sup> See above, p. 645.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 675 sq.; also above, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> I find that this view, which M. Gauthiot's analysis of my Early Sogdian finds and M. Chavannes' decipherment of the Chinese documents referred to below have so strikingly confirmed, had already been recorded in my original diary notes of May 6, 1907, written at Camp 172.