

20 feet above the level of the lake. On the east, where marshy ground was much nearer, the wall was traceable down the gravel slope to a point where the last swelling indicative of its line disappeared on soft soil, about 150 yards from the edge of the marsh and on a level about 10 feet higher.

The ruined tower was badly decayed, as seen in Fig. 178, and as its construction was rough, resembling that of T. x, the original dimensions could not be determined with certainty. It still stood to a height of about 16 feet, and its base seemed to have measured about 24 feet. The building material used consisted of hard lumps of salt-impregnated clay, stamped into layers about 2 feet thick, which thin strata of reeds separated. On the top were found remains of what looked like broken walls, enclosing a small conning-place or guard-room. On the west, close to the base of the tower, was a small room about 21 by 12 feet, built with very rough walls of clay, of which only the foundations survived under the débris and these so imperfectly that no accurate measurements were possible. To the north, north-east, and west I could recognize the remains of an enclosing wall, partly visible on the left in Fig. 178, which might have been approximately circular, with a diameter of about 75 feet. On the south and south-east it had entirely disappeared. This wall was very roughly built with lumps of salty clay and strengthened by the insertion of vertically placed reed fascines, now almost petrified. It still stood in places to a height of 2 or 3 feet, but, as it was only from 1 to 1½ feet in thickness, it was clearly not intended for defence, but merely as a shelter from the winds which in this exposed position would make themselves particularly felt.

My impression was that this enclosure was of later date. The abundance of fragments of Chinese porcelain, painted in blue, which lay scattered on the surface within it, and of which T. xi. 001-4, 008-11 are specimens, certainly showed that the place must have continued to be used for shelter by travellers or herdsmen down to Sung times at least, if not later also. This is fully accounted for by the convenience of the ruin as a halting-place. Its position is near springs and grazing, and yet well raised above the vegetation belt of these marshes, where the pest of mosquitoes and insects of all sorts in the spring and summer makes a stay most trying, for men and beasts alike, whenever the winds' force decreases. But if I could have entertained any doubt as to the antiquity of the tower itself, it would have been quickly dispelled as soon as the plentiful rubbish-heaps I had noticed on my first passage came to be dug up and searched two months later. While the excavation of the room above mentioned yielded no find whatever, a considerable number of Chinese records on wood, together with some other relics of the Han period, came to light from the thick layers of refuse.

In one of these, marked i, close to the south-west of the tower, was found the completely preserved slip, *Doc.* No. 682 (Plate XIX), which furnishes a list of the arms and equipment issued to a certain soldier. Among the dozen records, some intact, found in another layer, ii, extending down the slope on the same side, there are three claiming special mention here. T. xi. ii. 6, *Doc.* No. 680 (Plate XIX), written on a bamboo slip, contains a portion of a calendar relating to a cyclical year which M. Chavannes believes to correspond probably to the year A. D. 153. He bases this dating on the chronological indication furnished by another document from the same rubbish-heap, T. xi. ii. 8, *Doc.* No. 8 (Plate II), which contains what M. Chavannes considers to be probably a supplement to the well-known Chinese lexicographical work, the *Chi chiu chang*, composed between 48-33 B. C., and mentioned above.¹ If this deduction is correct, we must consider the former document as the latest among the datable records on wood which I recovered from the portion of the Limes explored in 1907.

¹ Cf. above, p. 647; also below, chap. xx. sec. vi; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 10.