

Position not
suited for
head-
quarters.

Remains of
watch-
tower T. XII.

Watch-
tower
T. XIII.

coming from the Western Regions, and effective safeguards taken that they would present themselves for examination at Yü-mên, i.e. T. XIV, instead of attempting to circumvent it, as the ground beyond T. XII might well have allowed them to do otherwise. Personal experience gained in the course of my travels both in the East and West justifies my belief that the system of 'double check' here assumed could be paralleled by exactly corresponding examples in abundance collected on modern administrative borders, customs lines and the like, as well as by plentiful earlier historical evidence of the same sort.⁵ I may, in conclusion, point out that, while the position of T. XII is particularly well suited for an advanced post of control as described, it would certainly not have been convenient for an important headquarters station on this frontier, such as the Jade Gate undoubtedly was. The space available on the narrow plateau which at its end is occupied by T. XII is far too confined for this purpose, and the water in the marshes which almost completely surround it is salt now and probably was so in ancient times.⁶

The remains at T. XII were, as Fig. 181 and the plan in Plate 38 show, of a very modest kind. The badly-broken tower, originally about 21 feet square at its base, rose to about 18 feet in height. Its masonry consisted of bricks measuring about 15 by 8 inches and about 5 inches thick. The manner in which they were set, with the longer and shorter sides facing outwards in alternate courses, closely resembled that observed in T. IX. There were also the usual thin layers of reeds inserted after every three courses of brick. Parts of the broken brickwork on the north side were reddened as if through some conflagration, and this was fully confirmed when the much-decayed remains of a small structure came to be cleared a few yards off the north foot of the tower. Nothing survived there except the foundations of square walls apparently built of stamped clay. Within them a good deal of ashes and charred wood mingled with refuse. From the latter and a rubbish-heap adjoining on the west there were recovered over a dozen inscribed slips, mostly in poor preservation. Among those reproduced by M. Chavannes⁷ only No. 597 need be noted here as referring to the 'Hsien-ming company of Kuan-chi' 官吉. We have seen already that this may possibly have been the name of the locality occupied by T. XII and T. XII. a.⁸ The numerous miscellaneous objects unearthed included fragments of greyish pottery of the familiar Han type, T. XII. 1-3 (Plate IV); wooden seal-cases, 12, 13, 002; a wooden fire-stick ('female'), 006; a bronze arrow-head, retaining its long iron tang, 0020 (Plate LIII); and several pieces of matting and cane basket-work, 0024, 0030, besides the usual fragments of wooden fittings, fabrics, etc.

The marsh to the east of T. XII and T. XII. a deepened northward, and it was only after skirting it for two miles or so that its marginal salt bog became passable. By making this *détour* I was

There early references to the examination of travellers passing this 'barrier' are given. At the inner western gate of the fine fort dating from the spacious times of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, I saw the office of the main guard where all travellers going west or east had still 'to show their papers' when Chiang Ssü-yeh passed through here before, about 1890, and probably later, too. During the last years of the decaying Manchu régime control had relaxed here—as elsewhere.

For a similar procedure at the ancient 'Gates' (*dvāra*, *draṅga*) guarding the passes through the mountain defences of Kashmīr, see my notes, *Rājāt*. ii. pp. 391, 395; also the passages quoted *ibid.*, Index, s.v. *dvāra*.

⁵ My latest experience illustrating this arrangement was on leaving Russian territory in October, 1915, from Askhābād for Meshed. There was a lengthy inspection of papers at the village of Gaudān, and some four or five miles beyond a final

examination of the *visa* at the fortified Russian post that guards the cart-road close to where it crosses the Persian border on the watershed towards Bājgirān.

⁶ It is desirable to draw attention to this topographical fact because M. Chavannes, on the strength of the documents Nos. 596-9 from T. XII. a and T. XII which mention certain companies of Yü-mên, has been led to assume that in Wang Mang's time the Jade Gate was placed in this locality. For another explanation of their designation, more in keeping with archaeological evidence, see above, p. 670. If similar inferences were to be drawn from Nos. 587 and 401, we should have to shift the Jade Gate also to T. VIII and T. XIII, localities quite as unsuitable as T. XII. a and T. XII.

⁷ Cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 132 sqq.

⁸ See above, pp. 668, 670.