

If we now examine the contents of these records from T. XIV, as far as they have a local archaeological bearing, we must be struck at once by the frequency with which *Yü-mên* 玉門, the 'Jade Gate', is mentioned in them. We find its name in not less than ten documents, four times coupled with the usual designation of *kuan* 關, 'barrier' or 'pass'. In addition there are clear references to it, under the latter designation only, in two other documents.² The frequency of this mention of the 'Jade Gate' at T. XIV may well appear significant if we take into account that, in the total of 672 documents from the Limes published by M. Chavannes,³ the famous frontier station is named altogether only twenty-four times. Thus nearly one-half of the records containing its name are to be found among the eighty documents which come from T. XIV. Such statistics are instructive also if we examine the local distribution of these references to *Yü-mên* at stations other than T. XIV. At T. XV. a, a point of importance to be discussed hereafter and only a little over two miles to the north of T. XIV, we find *Yü-mên* mentioned in five out of 117 published records. Still more striking is the comparison with that richest of all refuse 'archives' of the Limes, T. VI. b, where the name of *Yü-mên* is found only in one out of 228 pieces treated by M. Chavannes.⁴ Of the remaining seven references to *Yü-mên*, two each occur in records from the watch-towers, T. VIII, XII. a, XIII, all three on the line of wall west of T. XIV and obviously controlled from this headquarters station. The seventh reference is in No. 343, a document found at the watch-tower T. XIV. a, the nearest to the ruined station.

Documents frequently mention *Yü-mên*.

Among the documents from T. XIV containing a mention of *Yü-mên* there are several which distinctly point to its location at T. XIV itself, and the contents of the rest are such as can easily be interpreted in agreement with this location. In *Doc. No. 381* (Plate XII) we have a label or address of some letter or object evidently intended for circulation among 'the officers dependent on the military commandant (*tu-wei*) of *Yü-mên*'. The same commandant is named in the complete slip, *Doc. No. 305* (Pl. IX), as giving an order to a certain officer 'commanding a thousand men', which sufficiently indicates the importance of his own superior charge. Distinct weight as evidence must be claimed for the well-preserved large wooden label, *Doc. No. 307* (Plate X; see also p. 231), dated A. D. 14, which describes itself in the legend as a 'list of damaged objects in the armament of *Ta-chien-tu* at *Yü-mên*'. We have plenty of records from the Limes showing the care which was taken, just as under a modern military administration, to assure the 'return into store' of all damaged arms and equipment, partly for the sake of checking the need for fresh issues and partly with a view to eventual repairs.⁵ It is obvious that such articles would be collected at the headquarters station and that this is meant here by *Yü-mên*. Considering all the circumstances, it must certainly appear to be the simplest explanation that the site where the label was found is *Yü-mên* itself.

Yü-mên located at T. XIV.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that we find four records from T. XIV, *Doc.*, Nos. 315-17, 378, mentioning 'the superintendent of the *Yü-mên* barrier (or simply *Yü-mên*)'. The documents, which M. Chavannes has not been able to interpret completely, do not allow us to realize the exact functions of this 'superintendent'. But the title 候 *hou* given to him and the reference to frontier officials made in connexion with him in *Doc. No. 378* suggest that he was a dignitary of some

Officers of *Yü-mên* mentioned.

² For *Yü-mên*, see *Doc.* Nos. 305, 307, 315, 378, 380, 381; for *Yü-mên kuan*, Nos. 316, 317, 357, 379; for *kuan* alone, Nos. 367, 373.

³ I exclude from this reckoning the lexicographical and calendar fragments grouped by M. Chavannes under Nos. 1-36.

⁴ See *Doc. No. 137* (Pl. VI). This document is of special interest. It communicates the appointment of an assistant of

the *tu-wei*, or military commandant, of *Yü-mên* to the charge of the *Ta-chien-tu* post. We have seen above, pp. 636, 648, that *Ta-chien-tu* was probably the designation of the extreme western section of the Limes, the commandant of which also controlled the outlying watch-stations guarding the southwestern flank. About the dependence of *Ta-chien-tu* on the command of *Yü-mên*, see below, p. 691.

⁵ Cf. below, chap. xx. sec. vi.