

Road connecting  
Yü-mén and  
Yang kuan.

Local worship  
continued at  
Jade Gate.

Limes posts  
abandoned  
in second  
cent. A. D.

Traffic continued along  
westernmost  
Limes.

Modern  
shrine  
proving  
local worship.

of the Limes.<sup>8a</sup> There is on this line no ruined site nearer to the extreme end of Nan-hu cultivation than T. xiv, and none more suited for a main frontier station. From the first establishment of the Limes a much-frequented road must have connected the two important headquarters, and obviously it was a natural and advantageous course to construct the new wall along this very road. The way in which the lines of the Roman Limes were originally made to follow in most cases earlier routes of importance furnishes an exact analogy,<sup>9</sup> and the same is illustrated also by the alignment of our Tun-huang Limes itself, which keeps along the Lou-lan route. Thus, by taking their new wall to the time-honoured site of the Jade Gate, those who substituted it, I believe, for the westernmost section of the Limes early in the first century A.D. were able to satisfy at the same time the exigencies of a changed frontier policy, practical convenience, and respect for tradition.

It is the last-named motive, always strong in Chinese character, which also explains the previously described discovery of remains of a Buddhist shrine belonging to T'ang times on the débris-covered hillock of T. xiv abandoned centuries earlier. Since we can now safely identify the site as that of the ancient Jade Gate, we have no difficulty whatsoever in recognizing here a clear case of continuity of local worship. With the renewed assertion of Chinese power in the Western Regions, which reached its fullest development through Pan Ch'ao's glorious exploits during the period A.D. 73-102,<sup>10</sup> the danger of Hun raids upon the administrative border of China had receded. With the subsequent migration of the Huns westwards it disappeared altogether. Already, from about the middle of the second century A.D., the relations of the Chinese empire with the 'Western Kingdoms' had become more and more restricted;<sup>11</sup> after the end of the Later Han dynasty and the division of the empire they seem for a time to have ceased altogether. Judging from the total absence of records later than the middle of the second century A.D. in the ruined stations explored by me, the whole line of the Limes west of Tun-huang appears to have been soon after abandoned to the desert.

But, as proved by the documents of the third and fourth centuries found at the Lou-lan Site and by Fa-hsien's journey about A.D. 400,<sup>12</sup> caravans still continued to use the desert route to Lop. Nor is there reason to doubt that wandering herdsmen, woodcutters, and the like from the Tun-huang and Nan-hu oases still visited the grazing along the lakes and marshes of the terminal Su-lo Ho, just as they do at the present time. So local worship had a chance here of proving its tenacity once more. It clung to the site where those leaving the Jade Gate of the Han times for the difficult desert journey to Lou-lan had of old been accustomed to put up ex-votos at the border shrine and pray for a safe return 'within the barrier' of the empire, just as Chinese travellers do now at Chia-yü kuan, the modern equivalent of the Jade Gate on the extant 'Great Wall' of China.<sup>13</sup>

Here, at the site of the Jade Gate of Han times, I was fortunate enough to find the survival of that old tradition to the present day attested in most conclusive fashion by a small modern shrine which lay in ruins on a knoll only about a hundred yards to the west of the hillock explored. While the walls still stood to a fair height, the roof and all woodwork had disappeared. The coarsely made clay images were badly broken, perhaps the act of some truculent Tungans, but in front of them there were still to be found incense sticks placed in small sand-filled trays and similar marks of recent worship. There was thus tangible evidence that herdsmen and occasional Chinese wayfarers even now offered prayers at the ruin, and superstitious fear would not allow my own labourers

<sup>8a</sup> Cf. above, pp. 620 sqq.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Kornemann, *Die neueste Limesforschung*, *Klio*, 1907, pp. 76 sq., and the publications quoted there.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. Chavannes' extracts from the Later Han Annals,

*T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 218-43; 1907, pp. 156 sqq.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1907, pp. 167 sq.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. above, pp. 408 sq., 558.

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 602; below, chap. xxvii. sec. i.