

fortified post of Yü-ch'ang-lo must thus have lain one march beyond T. xv. a. But where? We can hardly expect to find it on the Limes, as we could not in that case account for the document being discovered at the station T. xv. a, which itself lay far off from the direct route connecting the westernmost portion of the Limes with the eastern sections beyond T. xiv, or the Jade Gate. We shall have to recur to this interesting minor question.

Dated documents from T. xv. a. ii (A.D. 15-56.)

Medical recipes and reports.

Records from refuse-heap T. xv. a. i (A.D. 97-137).

Silk strip with Chinese inscription.

Next in chronological order are the contents of the refuse-heap T. xv. a. ii, where the dated records range from the reign of Wang Mang (A.D. 9-23) to the middle of the first century A.D.^{4a} The oldest is *Doc.* No. 482 (Plate XIV) of A.D. 15. No. 490 is also attributed by M. Chavannes with great probability to the time of Wang Mang. Then follow Nos. 483-6 with the dates A.D. 43, 46, 55, 56 respectively. The slip No. 487 is of interest because it is addressed to 'the commander of the posts of the western section', who is supplied with a list of men and dogs on guard requiring to be fed. It appears very probable that the western section of *Ping-wang*, already referred to in connexion with No. 390 from the neighbouring watch-tower T. xiv. a,⁵ is meant here, and that the office of this section was stationed at T. xv. a, but unfortunately the name of the locality is not stated. The mention of the sub-prefecture of *Lung-lo*, in No. 488, and of the governor of Tun-huang, in No. 497, does not help us on this topographical point, but anyhow suggests that this station had official relations more extended than those of a simple watch-post on the line of wall. From this refuse-heap, T. xv. a. ii, came also the curious collection of medical recipes and case reports written on bamboo slips of uniform size and shape, Nos. 524-34, which M. Chavannes has fully analysed,⁶ and the small silk envelope, No. 503 (Plate XIV), bearing the name of the addressee and sender. Judging from its size, the letter it once contained must, as M. Chavannes has rightly pointed out, have been folded up into a little roll just as the letter on paper, L.A. II. i. 1, *Doc.*, No. 904 (Plate XXVIII), found at the station of Lou-lan. But, as the clearly defined period to which the refuse accumulations of T. xv. a. ii belong precedes the invention of paper (A.D. 105) by about half a century, it appears to me almost certain that the letter in this case was itself written on silk.

The latest of the refuse-heaps of this station is T. xv. a. i, which was found on the highest edge of the terrace mixed up with the scanty débris of any structural remains that could be traced there. Records thus recovered from the ruin itself are obviously such as found a resting-place there during the latest occupation of the station. It is in striking accord with this archaeological indication that the dated documents from T. xv. a. i are all later than those from refuse on the slopes below (ii, iii). We find the dates A. D. 67 and 137 definitely stated in the records, *Doc.* Nos. 535 and 536 respectively,^{6a} already referred to on account of their other contents. No. 537 (Plate XV) is the fragment of a calendar for a year which M. Chavannes has succeeded in definitely identifying as A. D. 94. The fragment of a letter on paper, *Doc.* No. 707 (Plate XX), proves by its very material that it must have been written some time after A. D. 105. An observation made above as regards the official relations with *Lung-lo* is confirmed here by the tablet No. 540 (Plate XV), which directly emanates from that sub-prefecture and by its deferential wording appears to indicate that the officer addressed was one of some consequence.

But of greater antiquarian importance for us are the two silk strips, T. xv. a. i. 3, *Doc.*, No. 539 (Plate XV), found together and originally belonging to the same piece of undyed creamy silk. One of them bears the ink impression of a Chinese seal and, by retaining the selvedge at

^{4a} It is of interest to find the dating of this refuse deposit confirmed by the fragment of a knife-shaped coin, T. xv. a. ii. 69, which M. Chavannes, *Doc.* No. 709 (Pl. XX), has described, and which is attributed to an issue of Wang Mang.

⁵ See above, p. 698.

⁶ The slip No. 524, T. xv. a. iii. 42, evidently had found its way to the rubbish-heap northward by some chance, or else had been erroneously marked by me.

^{6a} See also Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 231, for a correction.