

quite as great as that to be apprehended from human pilferers. This protection could be made particularly efficient by leaving the base without stairs or other means of access except such as might be provided only on occasions when supplies had to be moved in or out. The hard clay besides lent itself very readily to a little undercutting of the outer face of the base, which would help to keep off mice or rats.

In view of this close agreement of the purely structural indications, it is specially gratifying that M. Chavannes' analysis of the still legible records from this site, *Doc.* Nos. 413-27, has fully confirmed the inference drawn from those two documents. One of them, *Doc.* No. 418 (Plate XII), is an order for the issue of grain signed by three officials apparently in charge of the granary. Still more significant is *Doc.* No. 415 (Plate XII). This is a formal receipt for two cart-loads of grain, of specified kinds and weights, delivered at the granary from a particular area of cultivation within the Lung-lo sub-prefecture of Tun-huang, evidently as a contribution towards the commissariat requirements of the Limes. We have already seen that the Former Han Annals place both the 'Yang and Yü-mên barriers' within the Lung-lo sub-prefecture.<sup>5</sup> The reference made in the fragmentary record T. XVIII. i. 40, *Doc.*, No. 413 of 52 B.C., to two carts may also be supposed to concern such a delivery. Elsewhere, in No. 421, apparently an incomplete wooden label, we find mentioned twenty suits of a particular quality such as a military magazine might store. Other fragmentary documents from T. XVIII. i seem to contain communications, private or official. One of them, No. 424, may yet deserve further attention, as it refers to an order issued by a certain high official 'to those who administer the command of Chiu-ch'üan (Su-chou)'.<sup>5a</sup>

Magazine  
use con-  
firmed by  
documents.

Any one familiar, from historical study or personal experience, with the serious difficulties to be faced in moving large bodies of men over desert ground or in maintaining them there must realize the advantages offered by such an advanced base of supplies both for the troops which guarded the Limes on this desert border and for the military expeditions, political missions, and caravans which had to pass along it, whether going to or coming from Lou-lan. Considering the number of troops and the frequency and size of the missions which the notices of the Former Han Annals mention as having followed this difficult desert route, especially during the early period of Chinese expansion westwards under the Emperor Wu-ti,<sup>6</sup> we can fully appreciate the need of such ample accommodation for stores as this imposing building provided. As I looked towards the ruined magazine from the track of the ancient Lou-lan route which edges the gravel plateau on the south, and twenty centuries ago had served as the main artery for Chinese trade and political effort westwards, there came back to my mind the thought of the huge sheds and 'commissariat godowns' which are a familiar sight to the traveller approaching Peshawar from the east. They contain the military stores kept ready for an advance, if ever its need may arise, by the one great route which connects India with Kābul, and thence with Central Asia. Yet even the most barren parts of the Khyber route might seem like a garden when compared with the desert through which those Chinese troops of Han times had once moved towards Lou-lan.

Advanced  
base of  
supplies of  
Limes.

The size and solidity of construction make it appear very probable that the great magazine dated back to those times when the Lou-lan route first came into military use and the line of the Limes was extended to protect it. In those days the site must have seen busy scenes, and quarters for guards and administrative *personnel* are also likely to have stood there. In view of what we know of the effect of wind-erosion or moisture, it is easy to realize why the remains of all such less permanent structures outside the main ruin had completely disappeared, except on a small clay terrace beyond the south-east corner of the inner enclosure, where layers of refuse were found, and below them

Remains  
near great  
magazine.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. above, p. 621.

<sup>5a</sup> For No. 425, a text fragment, see below, p. 764.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wylie, *Notes on the Western Countries*, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, x. pp. 25, 70 sqq.; also below, pp. 725 sqq.