

a priori all the more justified because in Former Han times the term *t'ing* was regularly applied to an administrative subdivision comprising 10 li 里, or groups each of twenty-five families. That its meaning could not have been very different as used in the Tun-huang area and its military colonies is brought out quite clearly by an analysis of the dozen odd documents in which 'T'ings' are mentioned.

The *t'ing* an administrative area maintaining a company (*tui*).

The discussion in the note below³¹ shows us that the term *t'ing*, as used in our documents, designated a small area, situated within the oasis but under military administration, the population of which was expected to maintain a company (*tui*) for the guarding of the Limes and, in case of need, for military service beyond it. In addition to the contribution in men, the T'ing had evidently, in keeping with its character as part of an 'agricultural colony', to furnish certain supplies of grain to the military magazines of the Tun-huang command.³² That the food-supplies which company commanders issued to their men³³ also came from the stores of the respective T'ings is very probable. Thus the T'ing was both the permanent recruiting area as well as the supply base in ordinary times for the company contingent which it furnished. Considering that besides providing the usual pickets for one or more watch-towers on the Limes the 'company of the T'ing', as the documents call it, might be called up as a whole for service in case of emergency, it is easy to recognize that the maintenance of two distinct appointments, of 'head of the T'ing', *t'ing-chang*, and of 'company commander', *tui-chang*, was a reasonable, nay necessary, arrangement. It seems clear that a village group of such size as the notice in the Former Han Annals referred to above indicates, viz. one comprising about 250 families, could, under the defensive arrangements necessitated by border conditions, raise a body of men approximately corresponding to a modern company.^{33a}

Strength of a *t'ing's* contingent.

Fortunately we have a document directly confirming this in No. 198, T. VI. b. i. 64, which states: 'the aforesaid hundred and forty-five men are soldiers of the *t'ing*.' Though the wording does not explicitly show that this was the total number of the contingent, it yet appears reasonable to conclude from this, with M. Chavannes, that the average effective strength of each company was about a hundred and fifty men.³⁴

³¹ In the first place we should note *Doc.* Nos. 207, 273, 415, in which mention is made of 'heads of *t'ings*' 亭長, these being clearly distinguished from the commandants of companies. No. 273 is of interest because it is a general order 'to be posted at the *t'ings* of the barrier', directing that 'when the companies of the northern barrier have set in movement', reports are to be sent regularly southward to the heads of *t'ings*, etc. That *t'ings* were situated within the cultivated area is indicated by No. 415, which is a receipt from an official of the granary T. XVIII for two cart-loads of grain furnished 'by the head of the *t'ing* of the Wan-nien canton in the sub-prefecture of Lung-lo' from a specified acreage (for *Lung-lo*, containing the barriers of Yü-mên and Yang, see above, pp. 620 sq.).

The situation of a certain *t'ing* within inhabited ground is proved with equal clearness by No. 302, which reports the planting of ten elms 'in the *t'ing* of Ch'in-su, dependent on the *hou-kuan*'. We have seen that this term designates a sub-section of the administrative area of the Limes. Yet it is certain that then, as now, elms could grow only within cultivated ground, and not at desert stations.

In No. 536 we have a notice intended for circulation 'in the company of the Yü-mên barrier', issued by a post-commandant after an official inspection at which certain men had been found absent, and urgently requesting that a certain

'soldier of the barrier should on no account be allowed to leave the *t'ing*. A *Yü-mên kuan t'ing* is directly named in the fragment No. 357. In No. 681 we are told of a certain indigenous officer and the captain of the Tang-ku company having left the area of the *t'ing*. No. 172 reports the approach of an armed horseman towards a *t'ing* and orders troops to be on their guard and fire-signals to be watched at the Limes towers. *Doc.* Nos. 432, 460, 552, which mention 'the company of the *t'ing*' in connexion with movements or fire-signal service, furnish no definite evidence. The interpretation of the *t'ing* referred to in No. 592 seems doubtful; for No. 198, see the text above.

³² Cf. above, note 31, for No. 415; also above, p. 747, for No. 157, which mentions the deputation of certain company commanders for service at granaries.

³³ See above, p. 747.

^{33a} The poem of the third century A.D. quoted by M. Chavannes, *Documents*, p. xxii, shows how heavy the incidence of military service on the frontier might be. It tells of a householder there being called up thrice in one year and of five of his sons being away with the armies.

³⁴ Cf. *Documents*, p. x. It should be noted that this record must, in view of what has been explained above, pp. 647 sq., date back to the first half of the first century B.C.