

meant to convey the meaning, recurs in a number of documents. It offers difficulties of interpretation, though its meaning word by word is clear. M. Chavannes, who has fully discussed it, hypothetically assumes it to refer to the clearing away of reed-beds and jungle.¹³ This would certainly have been needed almost in any locality within the areas of Tun-huang or Nan-hu before it could have been brought under new cultivation by an 'agricultural colony', and in a few records the mention of 'celestial fields' seems to me quite clearly to refer to such reclamation for agricultural purposes.¹⁴ Nevertheless the mention in the above-quoted document No. 265 of 'the delimitation of celestial fields' in the midst of injunctions undoubtedly relating to the watching of the border-line looks decidedly strange if in reality here, too, the preparation of ground for cultivation is intended. In the vicinity of T. VI. c, where this record was found, cultivation was certainly impossible, while the clearing away of the abundant reeds, tamarisks, and other scrub would obviously have facilitated the look-out. The same applies, of course, also to T. VI. b, the find-place of Nos. 88-91, which all refer to 'the delimitation of celestial fields' performed by certain men in the course of their 'fatigue' duties. I must leave here the question as one which, anyhow by the non-Sinologist student of the Limes, cannot be definitely settled with the available evidence.

What the documents otherwise tell us about 'fatigues' of the men is quite clear, and gives us interesting glimpses of the daily routine observed at the small watch-posts and the careful way in which a record was kept of it. We thus find statements of brick-making done, no doubt for towers or quarters, with exact details as to the number of men employed, the number of bricks made or carried by each per diem, etc.¹⁵ Similarly there are statements as to plastering work done on walls and roofs, the exact surface covered by each man being indicated down to square feet and inches.¹⁶ We have careful records of the distances covered by small fatigue parties collecting and bringing materials or supplies, such as firewood, hemp for shoes, plaster or grain, the total distances and the number of days spent being usually indicated for the aggregate of the men as well as the performance in *li* and steps for each individual man.¹⁷ The object aimed at, no doubt, was an equitable allotment of duties. The lightest among them was obviously that of acting as cook for the rest, which we also find repeatedly noted.¹⁸ There are records, too, of exemptions from service for particular days granted to individual soldiers or of general suspension of work.¹⁹

¹³ Cf. *Documents*, p. 32, note on No. 88. The words 'celestial fields' are supposed by M. Chavannes to have been applied to the waste lands which the Government assigned to newly founded military colonies. To the term *hua* 畫, which literally means 'to draw', 'mark off' (see Giles, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 622), he is led to assign the meaning 'to delimitate' and inferentially 'to clear', when used with reference to land which first needed clearing of brushwood, etc., before it could be brought under cultivation. Following up a suggestion thrown out by me (*Desert Cathay*, ii. p. 150), he seems inclined to believe that the 'clearing' spoken of in *Doc.* Nos. 88-90, where the work done by certain men is measured by distances only, in *li* and steps, and not by square areas, refers merely to the clearing away of reed-beds and other wild growth which might have interfered with the safe watching of the ground near the Limes.

¹⁴ Particularly clear is this reference in No. 433, mentioned above, p. 752: 'The ramparts are in ruin and are not kept in repair. The population and the soldiers of the garrison do not live on good terms. The celestial fields are not ploughed (*kéng* 耕), the delimitation (*hua* 畫) is not clearly arranged.' Similarly we are told in No. 495: '... a single man to keep

a look-out, to delimitate and arrange (*hua chih* 畫治) the celestial fields, the man's strength does not suffice.' In No. 290 'celestial fields within the section (*pu* 部)' are referred to, the latter term denoting an administrative subdivision commanded by a *tu-wei*; see *Documents*, p. 131; above, p. 745. In No. 289 also 'celestial fields' are referred to in a context suggesting, perhaps, cultivation.

¹⁵ See *Doc.* Nos. 99-100, 279-87, 673; also M. Chavannes' remarks, p. xiv.

¹⁶ Cf. *Doc.* Nos. 102-11. Two kinds of plastering seem to be distinguished, with straw and with *ma-fu* 馬夫. The nature of the latter material, which, as No. 92 shows, must have been obtainable within 3 *li* of T. VI. b, might, perhaps, still be determined by a closer examination of the wall-plaster in the ruined quarters of that watch-station.

¹⁷ Cf. as regards collection of firewood Nos. 124, 555; No. 96, hemp collecting; No. 92, transport of *ma-fu* for plastering; No. 95, fetching of grain (cf. also above, pp. 648 sq.); Nos. 93, 94 for fatigue journeys without indication of specific tasks. For the curious method of reckoning used in these records, cf. M. Chavannes' notes, pp. xv, 34.

¹⁸ See Nos. 279-83.

¹⁹ Cf. Nos. 91, 158-60.