

mentioned before, which are addressed to, or speak of, 'indigenous officers' of the *Yen-hu* company. I have already given reason to believe that this company was entrusted with the guarding of the station T. vi. c, or else posted close to it at T. vi. b.⁴ Thus *Doc. No. 138* advises 'Fang, the indigenous officer (*fonctionnaire indigène*), charged with the guarding of the territory of *Yen-hu*', of an order verbally transmitted through a certain messenger by Ying, chief of the Ta-chien-tu post. No. 139 is an exactly similar order addressed to the same 'indigenous officer' of Yen-hu, but without stating his name or that of the sender. No. 51, not completely deciphered, is an order emanating from the same 'Ying, chief of the Ta-chien-tu post', and giving directions about an inspection of the 'barrier' to a certain 'indigenous officer', whose name and place, however, have not been made out. In No. 49, an incomplete 'slip', the chief of the Yen-hu company itself refers to 'indigenous officers', evidently of his own command. Such officers, belonging to the Pu-ch'ang station, are mentioned again in Nos. 144, 145, while in No. 140 we have an order addressed to a certain *Chung-chung-êrh-êrh-tzŭ*, whose name is recognized by M. Chavannes as clearly that of an indigenous officer.⁵

'Indigenous officers' in T. vi. b records.

There is no direct information in the records from the Limes to guide us as to the race from which these 'indigenous officers' and the men under them may have been drawn. But the employment of foreign mercenaries from 'outside the barrier' for help in guarding the Limes was certainly in full agreement with the policy which, as the Han and Tang Annals abundantly demonstrate, was followed by the Chinese throughout their dealings with the 'Western Regions', whenever there was an effective endeavour to expand imperial control into Central Asia.⁶ It is a policy which has been maintained even in our own days and is illustrated in a characteristic fashion by the employment of such local auxiliaries as Kirghiz for the guarding of outlying border posts, e. g. on the Chinese Pāmīrs and on certain routes leading across the K'un-lun southward. We have exactly analogous evidence of a documentary kind for the period immediately following the Later Han; for records which have been discussed above mention Yüeh-chih, or Indo-Scythian, soldiers among the garrison of the Chinese station at the Lou-lan Site.⁷

Foreign auxiliaries of Chinese.

It would be of little use to discuss such conjectural explanations as our present knowledge would allow us to suggest for the employment of soldiers of Sogdian or other Eastern Iranian origin on the Tun-huang border in the first half of the first century B. C. But I may well call attention to a very interesting historical parallel. M. Pelliot's important researches have established, partly from Chinese texts in my collection of Tun-huang manuscripts, that a Sogdian colony under a chief from

Old Sogdian colonies in E. Turkestan and China.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 648. That the *Yen-hu* company is named in No. 268, a record actually found at T. vi. c, strongly supports this location. Unfortunately it is a mere fragment and hence cannot afford definite proof.

⁵ It is, perhaps, not mere chance that in five of these documents, viz. Nos. 138, 139, 140, 143, 144, addressed to 'indigenous officers', the subject of the order is not specified, being obviously left to be verbally explained by the messenger whom the tablet was intended to accredit (cf. M. Chavannes' note on No. 138).

The method of not writing out detailed orders to 'natives', who in any case were not likely to be able to read them in person, had its manifest advantages—for the clerical staff at any rate. Cf. also Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 21, and for a similar practice, noticed with regard to many 'demi-official' Kharoṣṭhī documents of the Niya Site, above, p. 216.

Here it may be mentioned that, out of the eleven docu-

ments from the Limes in which indigenous officers are mentioned, not less than eight were found at T. vi. b. This seems to point distinctly to a policy of employing these foreigners on the outlying flank, which was, perhaps, considered less important than the line facing the enemy to the north. Among the remaining three documents, Nos. 375, 552 come from the 'Jade Gate' and its subsidiary station T. xv. a, No. 681 from T. xi.

⁶ This policy is well summed up in the pregnant words used by the great Chinese general Pan-Ch'ao in his memorial to the throne, A. D. 78: 'Se servir des barbares pour attaquer les barbares, c'est là le meilleur parti à suivre'; see Chavannes, *Trois généraux chinois, T'oung-pao*, 1906, p. 226. This significant advice was given with a view to re-establishing Chinese political control throughout the Tārīm Basin and extending it westwards.

⁷ Cf. above, pp. 411 sq.