

employed on the Limes drew pay, probably in addition to free rations, is proved by the document No. 62, from T. vi. b, which states the pay arrears of a certain *hou-shih*, or assistant commander of a watch-tower, for four months as amounting to 2,400 pieces of copper 'cash'. This works out at 20 'cash' pieces per diem. Modest, no doubt, as the rank of this subaltern was, one feels in view of such remuneration that to the China of the glorious Han times, too, there applied the old ditty: 'Le militaire de l'Autriche, tout le monde sait, n'est pas riche.'³⁹

Cross-bows
supplied for
service.

If the reward accorded to the rank and file for the hard service on the border was scanty, there is at least plentiful evidence to show that the arms and equipment needed for it were provided and duly cared for by Government. Lists, orders, labels, and other documents relating to the arms kept at the various watch-posts are abundant. The principal armament of the Limes guards consisted of cross-bows; they are frequently mentioned and in several varieties. These are distinguished according to the force needed for stretching the string, and that itself is estimated by the weight which had to be attached in order to produce the corresponding pull. Thus the documents mention cross-bows of 3, 4, 5 and 6 *shih* respectively, the *shih* 石 being equivalent to 120 Chinese pounds.⁴⁰ In several cases we find the companies or soldiers specified in whose keeping the cross-bows were.⁴¹ There is mention also of the *ta-huang* 大黃 variety of cross-bow.⁴² In T. vi. b. 004 we have possibly the fragmentary remains of a cross-bow.⁴³ It is of interest to observe the care with which in No. 554 it is recorded of a cross-bow, originally of 6 *shih*, that its strength at the time of listing was reduced to 4 *shih* and 68 pounds. The supply of cross-bow strings appears to have been kept and accounted for separately, several kinds in silk and hemp being mentioned.⁴⁴

Arrows
issued for
cross-bows.

As M. Chavannes has rightly observed, the fact that bows are mentioned only twice in our documents, and each time in the hands of barbarians,⁴⁵ clearly points to the soldiers on the Limes having been armed with cross-bows, not with bows. Hence it can be safely concluded that the arrows which figure so frequently in the arms lists and other documents were provided for cross-bows. Two types of arrows, designated as *mêng shih* 蒙矢 and *kao shih* 橐矢, are distinguished; but we are left in the dark as to what the difference was. Preference was evidently given to the former type, as it is named far more frequently and in one label described as 'the *mêng* kind which triumphs over what is hardest.'⁴⁶ From the way in which the bronze points or heads for these arrows are mentioned apart in what manifestly were labels,⁴⁷ it appears to me very probable that the bronze arrow-heads were stored separately in bags or small boxes.

³⁹ Possibly the record of an officer's salary paid in another and more substantial kind of currency is preserved in *Doc.* No. 490, which mentions the captain of a certain company as having received '32 feet of silk fabric'. From M. Chavannes' supplementary note on the inscribed strip of silk, No. 539 (see above, p. 701), it is seen that according to a statement of the Later Han Annals a king of Jên-ch'êng in Shan-tung sent subsidies 'in coins and pieces of silk' for the frontier expenses at a time (A.D. 126-44) when 'the barbarians of Central Asia repeatedly revolted'. Could the piece of silk received by that captain have been meant for payment in a kind of silk currency?

It is true that the document No. 490 probably belongs to the time of Wang Mang, as the Kuang-hsin company seems to be named in it (see above, p. 670). But the use of silk as a sort of currency is likely to have been resorted to in China long before Later Han times. Silk is not among the local products of western Kan-su.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Documents*, p. xv, and references in notes 7-10 to

the varieties of strength.

⁴¹ See Nos. 64, 73, 74, 599, 676, 703, 705.

⁴² See Nos. 119, 599.

⁴³ See above, p. 645, and below, p. 769 (Pl. LII).

⁴⁴ For hemp strings see Nos. 116, 119; for a silk string of the *fêng* 奉 type, No. 117; *fêng* cross-bow strings are mentioned also in Nos. 38 (see M. Chavannes' note on the term), 65, 598, 705. A case for a *fêng* cross-bow seems to be referred to in No. 115. In No. 624 we find the gratuitous loan of an iron hook for a bow-string by one man to another meticulously recorded.

⁴⁵ See *Documents*, p. xvi; Nos. 172, 548.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Doc.* No. 498; also Nos. 38, 71, 134, 253, 587, 682, 693. Arrows of the *kao* type are referred to in Nos. 125, 126, 266. In Nos. 41, 703 (incomplete) the type meant remains doubtful.

⁴⁷ See Nos. 125, 126, 266, 267, 498, 587, 693. The last five records have the shape of labels.