

Civilization 276

Chapter 276: Stirrup Crossbow, the King's Instructions, Human Force and Production

The crisp end of February approached, yet the high sun remained warm. A steady breeze moved forward, passing through the solemn Samurai, brushing past the bustling craftsmen, and arriving at the vibrant Divine Revelation Place.

In the northeastern weapon research area, Xiulote held a bulky Stirrup Crossbow, aiming at a straw man seventy steps away. The young man peered through the bronze crossbow machine's sighting device, carefully gauging the target. Then, he slightly lifted the crossbow, braced its end against his shoulder to stabilize it, and forcefully pulled the trigger.

With a "whoosh" sound of the arrow, a shadow swiftly shot out like lightning. Xiulote's upper body suddenly leaned back, as if his shoulder had been pushed hard, followed by a dull "thud" noise from afar. When the young man looked carefully, the crossbow arrow had passed through the straw man and was firmly embedded in a wooden wall one hundred and fifty steps away, unyielding.

The surrounding Samurai looked at the arrow stuck in the wall and quietly cheered for His Highness. Master Carpenter Kushinji remained silent.

Bertade's gaze followed the trajectory of the feathered arrow, watching it brush past the armored straw man with a half-foot gap to spare, and he couldn't help but laugh silently. Then, the Head Warrior stepped forward, squinted his eyes, and saw the arrowhead deeply embedded in the timber, its tail still trembling. He stretched out his hand, at first gently, then with added force, and finally extracted the crossbow arrow. The bronze arrowhead was still sharp, but the wooden shaft already had a crack, making it unusable for further shooting.

Xiulote maintained his composure, feeling embarrassed inside. He motioned for Bertade to step back. Subsequently, the young man positioned the bulky Stirrup Crossbow upright on the ground, braced its

rope-wrapped body with his feet, pulled the string with both hands, exerted force with his legs, and slowly cocked the crossbow. He silently calculated that the cocking movement required just over ten seconds, and with the added complexity of shooting preparation, a skilled crossbowman could only shoot twice per minute.

A few breaths later, Xiulote steadied the crossbow again, bending his knees slightly forward and back. He aimed at the straw man once more, using the previous experience to make slight adjustments to the angle. Subsequently, the young man slightly lowered his body and forcefully pulled the trigger, using his knees to absorb the impact, stabilizing the shot considerably.

Another "whoosh" sounded, and seventy steps away, the chest of the straw man burst open as the crossbow arrow pierced through both layers of leather armor, then forcefully embedded itself in the mud behind. This time, the Samurai's cheers were especially loud.

Xiulote lifted his head, looked at the warm sun, and wiped the sweat from his face. Then he waved his hand, gesturing for Kushinji to come over.

The Master Carpenter approached with a serious expression, taking large steps closer, remaining silent, just looking at the crossbow in His Highness' hand.

"Kushinji, you've done well! This Stirrup Crossbow is very powerful, still able to pierce armor from one hundred fifty steps away!... What are its specific measurements?"

Hearing His Highness' praise, Kushinji finally showed a smile.

"As per your instructions, I made the body of the crossbow thicker and more robust, giving it a draw weight of 350 pounds. At a half-slant, this Stirrup Crossbow can reach a maximum range of about two hundred thirty steps, and it can pierce leather armor within one hundred sixty steps. Within one hundred twenty steps, even a Samurai clad in Double Armor cannot escape death! The great crossbow I've crafted far exceeds Kuode's longbow!..."

Xiulote slowly nodded, this power had reached his expectations. Based on the recent trial, the crossbow's accuracy was also within an acceptable range. He pondered for a moment and then asked.

"Kushinji, I am planning to mass-produce this Stirrup Crossbow. What are its labor requirements? How long does it take for a craftsman to make one?"

The Master Carpenter's expression stiffened. He shut his mouth, thought again and again, then spoke softly.

"Each the arms and the body need one experienced carpenter for one to two days to make them sturdy enough. Stringing the bow takes even longer, although several can be done simultaneously. The bronze crossbow machine and the wooden case need a goldsmith for two days to make them precise enough. Then the assembly is done by me personally, adjusting and calibrating about one day... If accounted for a regular craftsman, it would take about... about seven or eight days to complete."

Xiulote felt a heaviness in his heart, the production efficiency was far from that of a longbow. The young man thought carefully, following this production rate; the Stirrup Crossbows couldn't be equipped on a large scale by October's westward campaign. Probably only a few hundred to a thousand could be assembled, to serve as a 'long-range' strike force for the era.

After thinking for a moment, Xiulote gave a firm order.

"Kushinji, starting today, cease all other crossbow research. I will allocate several dozen more craftsmen to you, plus a group of apprentices for handling the wood. You just need to focus on making Stirrup Crossbows, at least one hundred fifty qualified Stirrup Crossbows per month! Additionally, I will give you hundreds of Samurai to assist you in making bolts and practice shooting here."

Hearing His Highness' command, Kushinji solemnly saluted and responded in a deep voice.

"Your Highness, I follow your will!"

Xiulote carefully observed, Master Carpenter's face displayed genuine obedience and earnest confidence. The young prince nodded slightly, then turned and strode away.

Leaving Divine Revelation Place, Xiulote already had plans, hurrying to the northern craftsmen's center. It had been some days since he last visited, and the scale here had further expanded, almost concentrating the entire manufacturing capacity of the Mexica Alliance.

As the young man passed, thousands of craftsmen were tirelessly busy, loads of wood and cotton were transported in, crafted into powerful longbows, slotted war clubs, and thick cotton armor. Meanwhile, the stripped bark and offcuts were carried away by laborers, sent to the paper-making center as raw material for paper.