

Civilization 137

Chapter 137 Lake Capital City, Tenochtitlan! Part 2

After walking for over an hour and passing through more than a dozen communities, the great army finally arrived at the Fire God Huitzilopochtli's Temple, a twenty-meter-high flat-topped pyramid with the Temple at the top. Huitzilopochtli is the Fire God of the Mexica people, ruler of turquoise, and the Elder God. His other name, "We-we" meaning elder, origins from this.

The Fire God Temple is not very tall, but exceptionally broad. Its walls are made of red volcanic rock, incredibly sturdy and durable, resembling a mini-fortress. At the outer entrance of the capital's core area, there are four armories, guarding the most central Temple District, Royal Palace District, Great Nobility residences, and the capital's market.

This is the northern armory, also a solid northern stronghold. The corresponding southern armory is the God of Death Xiulotel's Temple, the western armory is the civilian military school of Telpochcalli, and the eastern armory is the southeastern Temple of the Southern Star. Armories usually house several squads of samurai, safeguarding the order and security of the capital, and also protect the core ruling classes. The Temples and the military school are large and sturdy, natural rocky fortresses.

However, since their construction, for half a century, the four armories had never once performed their military functions. Because with the establishment of the Aztec Empire, no enemy had ever invaded the capital. Mexica's wars were always unilateral outward expansions, bringing back countless tributes, nourishing the flourishing Lake Capital City.

Inside the temple stood a meters-tall statue of the Fire God. The Fire God was a muscular man carved out of rock, with his head wearing a gold headband marked with flames and his face painted in red and black, silver teeth sticking out from both sides of his mouth, his upper body bare, his chest adorned with countless turquoise-inlaid butterfly ornaments, and behind him was a brightly colored obsidian long knife.

Under the guidance of the Temple Priest, everyone entered the Temple and paid their respects to the Fire God in batches. The Fire God Priest presented Aweit with a turquoise chest ornament, fastening it on the King's chest. Xiulote also paid his respects and made a wish, praying for the enlightenment of turquoise wisdom.

Next came batches of direct samurai. They prayed in squads, wishing for the end of wars and a safe return. After the solemn prayers were finished, the samurai then faced Aweit and saluted deeply before temporarily disbanding and returning to their own communities. Afterward, the great army would not enter the core of the capital.

According to the military social norms of Mexica, the most central Temple District held the highest majesty, and the Palace District was not open to ordinary samurai. This was the prestige of the Royal Family and the Great Temple, not to be recklessly damaged.

After returning to the capital, Gillim had already contacted the intelligence department again, confirming that the elder Trakel Er did not oppose Aweit's ascension. Throughout the journey, the welcome rituals at the Great Temple were also of a king's level. Thus, after a brief discussion, Aweit, following political rules, dismissed the legions at the armory, only keeping the newly completed two thousand family samurai.

Disbanding the legion took several hours. Kuluka, Balda, and Begire each bid farewell to Xiulote in turn; they were heading back to their long-separated homes, to embrace their missed loved ones, to thank the God of Death for sparing their lives, and to thank the War God for granting them victory in their return. Only the solitary Bertade stayed with Xiulote, his face marked with the wear of ages, as timeless as the volcanic rock outside the temple.

As the two thousand samurai once again clustered around the Royal Banner and headed south, the sun had already begun to set. The closer they got to the center of the city, the more the terrain opened up, and the river channels gradually disappeared. This was the center of the great island in the lake, the original establishment site of the Mexica Capital City, and the location of the Temple District.

The vast Temple District was neatly surrounded by a three-meter-high stone wall. These once towering stone walls, now insignificant, crept beneath the foot of the Great Temple. Notably, the walls were covered with vivid serpent reliefs, forming a perfect square, and each side was 365 meters in length. This might be a striking coincidence, symbolizing the 365 days in a Maya Sun Calendar year.

The Temple District contained dozens of different Temples. Particularly important are the corners to the east and west, where there stand two forty-meter-tall single pyramids. One is dedicated to the Feathered Serpent Quetzalcoatl. He possesses the incarnations of the Wind God, Sky God, and Star God, wears an eagle-headed mask, has curved shell earrings, and wears a sparkling conch on his chest.

The other is dedicated to the original Sun Tezcatlipoca, who is also the Night God, Magic God, the god of divination and destiny, with a black face and body, a yellow headband, his feet replaced by ever-changing mirrors, and various weapons surrounding him.

At the center of the Temple District, the center of the Lake Capital City, the center of the Aztec Empire, and indeed the center of the Mexica world, stands the Divine Kingdom's earthly projection, the sacred site of communication between man and god, the unparalleled sixty-meter-tall twin Great Temple!

Xiulote passed through the surrounding wall. He strained to lift his head, letting his Long Feather hang down, then opened his mouth but forgot to speak, merely gazing silently at this Classical Period wonder, his heart surging with tumultuous emotions.

The majestic Great Temple stood like mountains, soaring cloudward, occupying all sightlines. The base of the Great Temple was two to three hundred meters in length and width, meticulously constructed of pure white giant stones, supporting the lofty upper platform. Atop the base were the twin pyramids, consisting of four sloped steps, each around ten meters high, connected by a central pathway.