

## Civilization 156

### Chapter 156 - The Coronation Ceremony: Song and Dance, Sacrifices, Light, and Blood\_4

"The noble Osanto of the Otomi goes to the realm of the War God!" Quetzal chanted briefly, casually adding a name, without commentary.

This time, no cheers erupted. A cowardly Samurai was not worthy of praise. In the martial society of the Mexica, cowardice was the greatest sin.

The sacred sacrificial rites continued. Whether brave, calm, or crying, in the divine sacrifice, the outcome was already destined.

The sacrifice ceremony had to be presided over by a Priest capable of communicating with the divine, and such high-standard ceremonies even required the personal presence of the Chief Priesthood. Quetzal's actions were precise and swift, making him the most skilled at the task.

Each sacrifice of the Otomi nobility took between one and three minutes, and 365 nobles would take up the entire day. The Great Temple's sacrifices began at dawn and lasted until dusk, with six Chief Priests taking turns performing the rite. The number of people involved in high-standard sacrifices could not be arranged too extensively, as the physical stamina of the Elder Priests could not keep up.

The number of sacrifices at the Aztec Temple all held special meaning, corresponding to astronomical events, guiding earthly affairs.

Auspicious numbers included: 13, the months of the Tzolk'in calendar; 18, the months of the Haab' Solar Calendar; 20, the days in each month; 52, the meeting of the Tzolk'in and Haab' Solar Calendar every 52

years, symbolizing the beginning of the next cycle; 140, the days it took for corn to mature, often used for major harvest ceremonies.

200, a traditional base number, units of Samurai squads. 260, the days in the Tzolk'in calendar; 365, the days in the Haab' Solar Calendar; 400, the number of siblings of the evil Moon Goddess and the night; 584, the synodic period of Venus, symbolizing great disasters; 800, this was an extremely rare sacrificial number, typically only used once every 52 years in a year of destruction.

In fact, over the decade or so that Xiulote had experienced, the sacrificial rituals of the various Mexica city-states were very restrained, each rite elaborate and symbolic. Sacrifices to the War God with weapons, to the Rain Divine with water, to the Fire God with fire, to the Earth Mother Goddess with stones, to the Corn God with flesh and blood, and to the God of Death with skin.

During the fifty years of the rise of the Mexica people, the total number of sacrifices would not exceed twenty thousand. This was not like the later Spanish records, those tens of thousands of bloodshed and cruelty. Such exaggerated descriptions, either to argue the natural legality of Spanish conquest, flaunting the civilization they brought to the natives, or simply poor math skills of illiterate soldiers.

In Xiulote's view, the essence of these widespread sacrifices resembled an artificial adjustment to the Malthusian population trap, to lessen the contradiction between finite land output and infinite population growth, akin to the cycle of governance and chaos in the Celestial Empire.

Xiulote's gaze shifted from the War God Hall. He heard a woman's "woo woo" crying and the delightful tinkling of her ornaments. Consequently, he looked towards the Rain God Hall of the same standard. Two hundred sixty Otomi girls were alternating between crying and dancing in front of the Rain God Hall.

260 was the days in the Tzolk'in calendar. 365 and 260, Samurai and girls. Undoubtedly, these girls were also part of the sacrifices. The Rain Divine would receive sacrifices through water. These girls, captured from the early stages of the Otomi wars, underwent more than a year of lengthy ceremonial training, allowing them to face death calmly.

Today, they would wear magnificent but light garments, singing hymns praising the harvest and the Rain God, presenting the most beautiful and final dance to the great Rain Divine.

The girls embodied the smile and fury of the Rain Divine Tlaloc. Their arms waved like floods, their stances undulated like hail, their delicate feet spun like storms, while their faces continuously cried, symbolizing the precious downfall of rain. When dusk came, they would take a boat to the center of the holy lake in Texcoco, where they would gracefully sink to the bottom of the lake, peacefully silent forever. Sacrificed to water.

In such sacred ceremonies, sacrifices needed prolonged and professional training to perform the beautiful rituals under the pressure of death. This was also the reason why the scale of sacrifices among the Mexica was not extensive.

Xiulote closed his eyes slightly, sighing at the fate that was bound to happen, lamenting the greed of the Mexica divine beings. The cries for religious reform in his heart grew ever stronger. Time passed in cheers and chanting, until an applause came along.

He opened his eyes and saw the familiar figure, the giant Samurai Stanley. He was clad in sturdy leather armor, his head adorned with a solid Eagle Beast Helmet, draped in a magnificent Eagle Feather Garment. In his right hand was a sharp war club, and in his left, a wooden shield woven with vines and feathers, towering in front of the Rain God Hall.

Opposite Stanley stood a middle-aged Otomi Samurai only wearing cloth shorts, holding a blunt wooden stick. This was the highest-ranking noble among the captured Otomi, possessing the noblest lineage.

Xiulote then understood that the ritual of the duel was about to begin. This ceremony should have been held in the Temple of the God of Death, but for the king's coronation ceremony, it was instead conducted in the most conspicuous Rain God Hall, adding more spectacular elements to the ritual. The senior priests were actually quite flexible in their religion, their faith more of a tool.

"I am Stanley, a noble of the Royal Family of Tenochtitlan!" Stanley bowed, placing his war club on his shield. His figure was still imposing.

"I am Oyet, a divine descendant noble from the city of Xilotepec!" Oyet also bowed, placing his wooden stick across his front.

"You are my beloved son," Stanley said solemnly to Oyet. It was a centuries-old ritual, also a tribute to fearless Samurai.