

## Civilization 179

### Chapter 179: Alliance, Villages and Nobility Privileges

Under the noonday sun, the floating fields shimmered, encouraging the growth of the corn's new sprouts. A cool breeze swept across the surface of the lake, bringing with it the moist scent of earth. The three of them then took to a small boat, navigating through the waterways of the Chinampa. Xiulote wore a plain ritual robe, Gillim simple cloth garments. Bertade was clad in unadorned leather armor, bearing a longbow on his back.

Seeing the three of them, the farmers on the Chinampa bowed their heads in greeting. They showed sincere respect for Xiulote's status as a low-ranking priest, then continued with their work, planting flowers in the gaps of the floating fields. There was always endless work to be done on the Chinampa.

"The Texcoco Lake District is the foundation for the Alliance's dominion over the tribes. Within a range of a hundred or two hundred li from the capital, there dwell one and a half million people of the lake region. Their journey to the capital takes mere three to five days, thus they are tightly controlled. The royal family's direct samurai number fifty thousand, and the other Seven States have approximately the same number. Only by relying on the superior force of the direct samurai can we suppress the city-states of the entire Alliance,"

Gillim spoke solemnly about the current situation, with a trace of gravity between his brows.

"If the other Seven States can muster fifty thousand samurai, then shouldn't they also have a population of about one and a half million?"

Xiulote pondered as he asked.

"The population of the other Seven States should be slightly more than one and a half million, as there are still unyielding wild tribes in the mountains and forests. After all, the lake region is richer, with a higher proportion of samurai who also have better equipment. However, the land of the lake region has been developed to its limit, with complete water channels, and the population has reached its peak. Whereas the other Seven States still have vast tracts of uncultivated land, they can still construct water channels along the Tampen and Lerma Rivers, and build Chinampa,"

Gillim recalled related intelligence gravely. As long as sufficient investment was made, the population of the other Seven States could still grow further. However, the central authority had no drive to develop these regions.

"Outside the Four States of the capital, the Great Nobility and priests replace the Royal Family and princes in standing, occupying the vast majority of the land to become the local rulers. The proportion of the lower nobility and commoner samurai remains basically unchanged."

Xiulote mused for a moment. He remembered the amount of land his family owned in Teotihuacan and did some calculations in his mind.

"The proportion of the land owned by the Great Nobility in each city-state is 55%, priests 20%, lower nobility 15%, and commoner samurai 10%. The estimated influence is roughly 55%, 30%, 10%, 5%, with the might amounting to twenty thousand private armies of the Great Nobility, five thousand Temple Guards, ten thousand private armies of the lower nobility, and eleven thousand commoner samurai."

"If we aggregate a population of three million, the Royal Family and Government's influence in the Alliance is only 18%, princes 5%, Great Nobility 40%, priests 22%, lower nobility 10%, commoners 5%."

Xiulote was secretly alarmed. These specific numbers had no great significance, as they were only rough estimates. However, the numbers revealed the current state of the Mexica Alliance: kin to a feudal state with loosely stratified nobility, or like the loose tribal alliances on the Eurasian steppes.

The influence of the Great Nobility was alarmingly high, operating with complete autonomy, and their loyalty wavered. And the lower nobility often obeyed their local Great Nobles. To suppress the noble powers of the various localities, one had to strengthen the royal forces, ally with priests and commoner samurai, and vie for the support of the lower nobility. To promote the use of metal tools in the future, priority had to be given to the directly governed territories, strengthening the core force.

The atmosphere grew somber. After a brief moment, Gillim finally spoke.

"Not far to the west is the village of Tlacopan. The village is the foundation of Mexica society, we might as well take a look there. The Prince of Tlacopan has already ceded the land there, and I also need to understand the local development situation,"

Xiulote nodded in agreement. He wanted to learn more about the most fundamental levels of village community. The boat then cut a nimble arc, speeding towards the western shore of the lake.

The outermost parts of the west bank were also neatly divided Chinampas, belonging to the nobility or the royal family. Along the impressive Prepetcha Highlands water channels, both sides spanned with a dense array of villages and continuous farmlands.

Viewing the vast farmlands, Gillim's smile appeared once more. To the Mexica of that era, they believed they had perfected the development of the valley.

The slash-and-burn milpas covered the plains of the valley. Relying on the high yield of American crops, each hectare of milpa could sustain three to five people, the output even surpassing the sparse drylands of Spain. While it couldn't compare to the twenty people per hectare supported by the Chinampa, it was still a magnificent achievement for the Stone Age.

Xiulote sighed lightly. He was not satisfied. Current agricultural production had enormous deficiencies. Limited river silt and manure had to be supplied first and foremost to the Chinampa floating fields, hence milpas couldn't be cultivated continuously and had to be cycled with fallow periods to maintain fertility.

And more crucially, without metal tools and large draft animals, the most basic and important practice of deep plowing in ancient agriculture couldn't be conducted. Replacing human labor with animal power, iron plows with wooden ones, and large scythes with small ones were the first epoch-making advances in the history of agriculture, their significance even comparable to the First Industrial Revolution. Likewise, this was the foundation for developing the deep-rooted grassy plains of North America.

The boat docked at the shore. The three of them disembarked, followed by four or five samurai. Not far ahead was a village. Xiulote saw sturdy storehouses and temples made of white stone from afar within the village with mud-walled and grass-roofed buildings, indicating the wealth of this village. He headed towards the center of the community.

The Mexica villages were mostly still in the stage of collective tribal communes under public ownership. Four-man teams were responsible for village affairs, constructing collective storage warehouses and priest temples. Typically, every two hundred people had a squad leader, in charge of food distribution, work assignments, and lodging arrangements within the squad. Squad leaders were wealthier, able to support their own samurai to manage and intimidate the villagers.