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Chapter 198 Mexica Folk Industry: Jade Carvers, Goldsmiths, Stonemasons, and Potters_2

Xiulote repeatedly examined the circle, but he could not find any flaws on the golden mask. Thus, he nodded slightly and returned the mask to the elder goldsmith, who clearly sighed in relief.

The young man chuckled softly, followed immediately by a surge of joy. The lost wax process could be used to create fine gold articles, as well as cast exquisite bronze and iron artifacts, including all finely machined components. More importantly, this clay mold casting method could be used to manufacture the trigger mechanisms for matchlock guns, the copper cannon of this era, and even future iron cannons!

Xiulote continued to examine the other gold artifacts. From the delicate earrings the size of a flintlock gun trigger to the sturdy golden staff as long as a matchlock gun, and to the single-cast idol the size of a small copper cannon, the young man grew more and more satisfied. As long as the craftsmanship level of the craftsmen was adequate, the casting costs were not an issue at all for the wealthy and powerful Alliance.

Then, the young man reflected for a moment, recalling the proportions for making gunpowder, and searching his memory for stable sources of saltpetre. Moments later, he sighed softly. The road ahead was still long; the progress of an era couldn't be achieved overnight.

Thinking this, Xiulote silently noted the information of the goldsmiths. Whether they liked it or not, they would become the first batch of coppersmiths and blacksmiths of the future. Finally, he gestured dismissively and, amidst the bowing craftsmen, he headed towards the carpenters, stonemasons, and potters' area.

Carpenters, stonemasons, and potters served the entire society, with a strict hierarchy within their ranks.

Usually, they started as apprentices, making daily household items and tools for common folks. As their skills improved, ordinary craftsmen served merchants and samurai, crafting exquisite implements. If their skills broke through once more, they could become senior craftsmen serving the nobility.

And the highest-tier, the master craftsmen, served directly the Royal Family and Chief Priesthood, possessing a status as lofty as that of a samurai, like old master carpenter Kuode. Master masons and carpenters participated in the most revered temple constructions, while master potters created burial objects for revered deceased.

The carpenters made everyday furniture, built the beams for houses, carved wooden sculptures, and artworks. They also undertook the production of helmets and longbows for the military. Kuode had already detailed much of this industry information.

Xiulote therefore bypassed the carpenters and directly proceeded to the stonemasons' area. After a full four thousand years of the Stone Age, Central America's stone crafts had developed to their peak. Stonemasons were exceedingly clear on the properties and applications of various stones.

The young man arrived at the largest stonemason workshop. The burly lead stonemason was initially slightly puzzled but then laughed heartily and welcomed the young High Priest. His voice was loud and enthusiastic as he introduced various expensive obsidian artifacts.

Xiulote smiled and admired the variety of stone tools on display.

First, he saw a highly polished obsidian mirror. Looking into it, he saw a handsome and refined face, even the determined eyebrows were clearly visible. Then, he saw a pair of exquisite earplugs, smooth

and warm to the touch, seemingly made from river pebbles. The young man inserted them into his ears, and the tinkling sound of stone tapping immediately disappeared.

Next, Xiulote saw an obsidian cup with thin, beautifully patterned walls. He picked it up and held it in his hands, full of admiration.

Obsidian, being brittle and hard, allowed for the creation of a drinking cup with walls only half a centimeter thick, meaning a strict mastery of the stone's grain and properties, with each carving exactly right. Without decades of hard work and outstanding talent, such craftsmanship was unthinkable, let alone incorporating such naturally elegant patterns during the carving process.

Finally, Xiulote's hand moved over a row of sharp obsidian blades and stopped at the thinnest oval obsidian lens. He then placed the lens above his eyes and looked up at the sky. This was a lens specifically used by Priests, as thin as a leaf. Through the lens, one could directly observe the dazzling sun.

Through the filter and blockage of the lens, the young man saw a bright sun with small changes appearing on it. The priests believed these changes were the language of the spirits, while the young man thought they were probably sunspots.

Xiulote fell into thought. These master stonemasons should be able to help him produce glass.

Glass was a low-cost yet highly profitable trade good, beloved by all tribes in America. Historically, colonizers often used shiny glass beads to deceive the indigenous people of America and Africa, exchanging them for goods hundreds of times more valuable and even invaluable land.

Producing glass could earn substantial returns while indirectly weakening future colonizers. Regrettably, the young man did not know the specific technique, only the basic principles. To truly manufacture it, he had to rely on the craftsmen's repeated experiments.

Xiulote pondered, first nodding, then shaking his head, followed by a light sigh. Then, amid the similarly fluctuating emotions of the lead stonemason, he picked up the stone mirror, earplugs, cup, and lens.

The stonemason leader finally burst into a joyful, radiant smile. He gleamed at the young Priest.

"Respected Priest, that will be two bags of gold dust. Each bag should weigh at least more than that standard stone,"

he said, pointing at a simple wooden balance scale with a squared-off stone sitting on one end of it.

Xiulote's smile faltered. He patted himself down but found he had brought nothing. He then looked towards Bertade, the impoverished Chief of the Personal Guards, who only managed to pull out two tokens and a few sour-sweet cocoa beans intended as snacks.