

Civilization 230

Chapter 230: Printing and the Reformation

Having left the Royal Palace, Xiulote strode ahead, heading eastwards. Bertade calmly escorted him from behind. Together, they advanced briskly towards the Divine Revelation Place, facing the warm morning sun.

The young man's mood was clearly excellent. His face was filled with a warm smile as he slightly nodded in greeting to the nobility and samurais bowing respectfully along the way.

Not long after heading east from the palace district, the magnificent Great Temple loomed ahead. Xiulote looked up, his gaze sharp. He keenly observed that one of the twin pyramids, the Rain God Temple, was undergoing reconstruction.

At the edge of the Rain Divine's swirling banner, the War God's banner was also unfurled, positioned above it. The symbols representing the Rain Divine, mainly the storm markers, had mostly been removed and replaced with hummingbird carvings symbolizing the War God. Although he couldn't see the statue inside the temple, the young man was certain there would be changes there as well.

This was part of the Priesthood's preparations for the New Year. Starting from this year's sacrificial ceremonies, the Chief Divine would gradually take over the agricultural divinity from the Rain Divine. The priests would also use the prepared myths to explain and give the people several years to gradually accept the promotion of the Chief Divine.

After the Great Temple was the palace where the retired Chief Minister resided. Xiulote looked afar; the area in front of the palace was cold and somber. The elder's guard was as solemn as statues, but the centuries-old elder was nowhere to be seen. Passing the temple and palace, he continued eastward until he soon arrived at the bustle of the Divine Revelation Place.

Looking at his own name, which he had written by hand, stirred slightly in his heart. Inside the towering palace, was the calm gaze of the elder also watching over the future here?

A moment later, Xiulote regained his composure. He stopped pondering and headed directly towards the southern district, where the civilian craftsmen were. The first thing on his mind was the engraving printing he was most concerned about.

The study of engraving printing was located in an elaborate side hall on the eastern side. The side hall was filled with various thick wooden boards, dark blue ink, and pristine white paper. As the young man entered, he smelled the fragrance of pine wood, the scent of ink, and a mild acrid odor.

Xiulote's gaze swept across and paused slightly. He stepped closer and stared at the snow-white paper, musing silently.

Noticing his arrival, Aquila immediately put down the engraving plate he was holding and knelt down to pay homage. The young man waved his hand, signaling the seasoned middle-aged gem craftsman to rise. Then, he reached out and pinched the paper in front of him; it was thick and even in quality and superior in make. The faint acrid odor also emanated from the white paper.

"Aquila, did this paper come from the crafts center?" Xiulote asked, puzzled.

"Respected Highness, this is the latest batch of refined paper completed by the paper-making section of the Divine Revelation Place, more suitable for engraving printing. It was invented by a young craftsman and hastily delivered here early this morning. Their workshop is just nearby in the neighboring building."

Aquila replied steadily, honestly informing him.

Xiulote nodded, it appeared the paper-making section indeed discovered a new craft. He would have to go and ask in detail later to compare with the memory in his mind and see if there were more findings. Then, he looked at the calm and steady middle-aged gem craftsman.

"Is the engraving of the plates going smoothly? How is the printing effect?"

Aquila bowed and gestured with an open hand.

"Highness, everything is progressing well. Please allow me to demonstrate for you."

Saying this, Aquila took out a thick wooden board, which had completed engravings of the Thousand Character Text in negative form. The engraved text was raised in positive form, and the rest of the blank space was removed to be recessed. The young man reached out and felt it, the positive relief was extremely detailed, just slightly raised from the surface, shallow like the edge of a fingernail, protruding about 1-3 millimeters.

Then, the middle-aged gem craftsman carefully brushed an even layer of blue water-based ink onto the engraving board. This ink, commonly used by the Mexica Alliance, was Maya Blue, made from plant indigo extracted from wild añil leaves and a mineral binder extracted from the lapis lazuli stone. Maya Blue was prodigious, often used in sacrificial ceremonies, applied all over the sacrifices' bodies.

After observing the ink application, Aquila carefully covered the board with white paper and used another flat wooden board to press it evenly. Soon, he lifted the paper from the board and placed it in the wooden table's shadowy corner to dry.

Xiulote examined it carefully, dried papers were already there, with Chinese characters as large as a thumb, clear and precise. There were also illustrations of deities' majestic representations and the Alliance's calendar Sun Stone, all extremely detailed and lifelike.

"Aquila, how many papers can you print in a day? How many times can a single printing board be used?" the young man asked eagerly.

Aquila pondered for a moment and carefully replied.

"Highness, as long as there is enough paper, following the pace I've just shown, a printer can print more than a thousand sheets a day, and if working day and night, and proficiently, up to two thousand. The number of times a printing board can be used depends on the material of the wood. I haven't worn out an engraving board yet. Looking at the wear and tear, it seems it could be used tens of thousands of times."

Hearing this, Xiulote was greatly satisfied. Printing technology and books would be the most powerful intellectual weapons for accomplishing religious reforms and completely reshaping the spiritual world of the Mexica people!

The Priesthood had already compiled a concise doctrine of several thousand characters, called the "Book of Ama Colley" or simply "Ama Colley Scripture". In the Nava language, "Ama Colley" means book, revelation, reader, or ancient scroll.

The Ama Colley Scripture generally praises the Chief Divine as supreme and describes myths of the Chief Divine's creation. Its text is simple and plain, referencing the content of the Thousand Character Text, serving as a primary enlightenment book, much like the Bible in Europe.