

## Civilization 271

### Chapter 271: Planning the Western Expedition, Part 2

Aweit decisively shifted the conversation, maintaining a gentle tone.

"My daughter, you just said you wanted to find a teacher. Do you wish to study alchemy, why is that?"

Alisa nodded vigorously, her eyes brightening once again.

"Yes, Father. I love alchemy and want to make both you and Xiulote happy."

Aweit pondered for a moment and then slowly nodded with a smile.

"Very well. As it happens, I too am skilled in potion-making, though it's been quite some time since I had the opportunity to concoct. When I have a moment, I will teach you about the basic properties of medicinal plants, there's no need to call for a Priest... From now on, I will entrust you with the potions I take, my dear daughter. Only you can I fully trust."

With her father's permission, Alisa's face bloomed into a radiant smile.

"Father, I will study diligently! In the future, I will take good care of you and Xiulote..."

Aweit nodded with a smile and once again gently pinched his daughter's cheek. In the corner, Gillim's expression underwent a slight change. He wanted to say something, but then chose not to speak.

The bonfire flickered, filling the hall with warm light. It was a good while before Alisa bid her father goodnight and went off to rest with a light step, softly singing a happy song under her breath.

Aweit listened with a smile until the song faded completely, and then his demeanor slowly returned to seriousness.

By now, Gillim stood silently beside the throne. He pondered for a moment before cautiously suggesting.

"Your Majesty, with no Queen to preside over the court, the Princess lacks instruction in the affairs of men and women. Such matters are difficult for you to broach... With the affairs of the Alliance settled, it is time to choose a new Queen."

On hearing this, Aweit's gaze sharpened. He thought for a moment, his expression shifting slightly, before speaking in a low voice.

"The war is urgent. After this western campaign, we will find a stepmother for Alisa! Remember to have the daughters of the Royal Family come over when they can to chat with Alisa. I will see which one is best for her..."

Gillim solemnly accepted the order, then once again brought out the wood map, laying it in front of the King.

"Your Majesty, as you can see, the Eight States of the Tarasco people are actually no smaller than the Alliance. To the north of the Tarasco Kingdom is the state of Akanbaro. They have always faced the Otomi across the Lerma River, but the Alliance's campaigns of the last two years have hit the Otomi hard, and the northern states of Otapan and Guamare State are retreating.

In recent months, the Tarasco people have taken advantage of this to expand northwards, already gradually gaining control of both banks of the Lerma River. If not for our grain treaty with Otapan and the threat of the Alliance's Naval Forces, the Tarasco people would have likely crossed north to besiege Otapan City by now."

Aweit nodded lightly, as if the battle on the Lerma River was still before his eyes. After contemplating for a moment, he inquired.

"Since Xilotepec fell, how has our grain treaty with Otapan City been fulfilled?"

"There is one last delivery of grain for thirty-four thousand people for one month that hasn't been made. Your Majesty, are you thinking...?"

Gillim replied seriously, ready to offer counsel.

"No, the treaty must of course continue, but we will add some conditions. We can provide even more grain to the Otomi, but they must mobilize to counterattack the Tarasco strongholds on both sides of the Lerma River. Spring planting hasn't begun yet, and the Otomi's Samurai and Militia aren't required for farming during these two months.

The Alliance needs them to swiftly raid the northern border of the Tarasco people, even employing their Naval Forces to support them in crossing the Lerma River and raiding the towns and villages of Akanbaro State to the south. Such raids would also be profitable for them."

Aweit instructed thoughtfully. In the game of war, there are only targets to achieve, no permanent enemies or friends. The Alliance must mobilize all forces that can be mobilized to enhance itself maximally and to divide and weaken the enemy to the greatest extent.

"What if the Otomi are unwilling to agree?"

"Then, the Alliance would halt this grain payment, re-enter into a state of war with the Otomi, and disrupt their spring planting in the spring," came the merciless voice, determining the fate of hundreds of thousands.

Gillim nodded. Without the interference of vulnerable emotions, the King was always wise and decisive.

"There is only one weakness you have, and I need to cover it for you..." thought the Intelligence Officer.

"Your Majesty, following the Lerma River further west, within a dozen days is the Chapala Lake Region. Here lie the northwest two states of the Tarasco people, Zapotlan and Tzitzapan. This region has an extremely dense population, second only to the Patzcuaro Lake Region, with a population likely above six hundred thousand, able to mobilize twenty thousand warriors.

However, these two states are several ten-day travels from the capital Qinchongcan, and the Tarasco King can't effectively control them. Should we send Envoys to attempt contact with local tribal leaders?"

Gillim proposed seriously.

Aweit considered for a moment. He wasn't familiar with the area, holding only vague impressions.

"Beyond the Chapala Lake Region to the west, where the Lerma River empties into the endless West Lake, that would be the Halixco region, right? I remember that they are still at war there? Also, to the north of the Chapala Lake Region are the Chichimeca Canine Descendants?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. On the edges of the Great Lake, the people of Tekos in Halixco State are still battling the Tarasco Kingdom. Unlike their southern kin, they have never submitted to the Tarasco Kingdom. And to the north of Chapala Lake are the Canine Descendants in the highlands forests."

Aweit nodded gravely, issuing his orders.

"Send three groups of Envoys. One to attempt to win over the Chapala Lake Region, to divide the strength of the Tarasco people. Another to reach out to Halixco State, supporting their resistance. Lastly, to bribe the northern Chichimeca Canine Descendants, inciting them to raid southward!"