

Civilization 303

Chapter 303: Foothold_2

The robust Jaguar Warrior cracked a satisfied smile and continued to drag the spoil towards the command flag.

The pursuing Mexica warriors reached the base of the wooden fort, facing a prepared barrage of stones and arrows. Standing atop the three-meter-high fort walls, the Tarasco warriors vigorously shot at the Mexica warriors. Despite the hundred-step distance, their Tlaxcalan bows couldn't penetrate the cotton armor of the Mexica warriors. The Mexica warriors deliberately slowed their pace, waiting for the gates to open to seize the opportunity to storm through.

The fleeing Tarasco squad avoided the main gate, hugging the fort walls under the protection of archers and stone-throwing militia, circling to the back until they reached a partially opened side gate, where they quickly retreated into the camp. The Mexica warriors, wary of shooting from the walls, could not catch up and had to retreat sullenly.

After a few quarters, three warrior camps successively landed. Xiulote waved the command flag again, and the three camps neatly deployed along the riverbank, getting ready for battle. Scouts dispersed in all directions, exploring the surrounding mountains and forests. The army's landing was systematic until six warrior camps had landed. Xiulote then moved the large flag and led the guards to land on the North Coast. The naval forces left behind four thousand warriors and several thousand sailors on standby.

The first batch of scouts returned, reporting no sign of ambush within several miles. The vanguard Jaguar Warriors also reported the intelligence they had just gathered from interrogation.

"According to the captured, spring plowing has begun, and there is a shortage of manpower. The nearby five wooden fort camps each have two hundred Tarasco warriors, a thousand militia, and nearly a thousand civilians aiding in construction."

Xiulote nodded slightly. He waved the command flag again, and the sound of the attack drums began. The six warrior camps spread out according to the direction indicated by the flag, surrounding three sides of the wooden fort. The middle army comprised the Chief of the Personal Guards' Longbow Camp, Temple Guards, and the Jaguar Warrior Brigade, with a Longbow Warrior Camp and a club and shield warrior camp on each flank.

Soon, all camps were in position. Xiulote observed the three-meter-high fort walls, the outer layer of wooden fences, and parts of the brick-clad walls, pondering quietly. He ordered the craftsmen to build wooden ladders while secretly summoning Bertade to give orders quietly. The Head Warrior bowed and took hundreds of Longbow Warriors away.

Soon, the captured Tarascans, guarded by two shield-bearing Mexica warriors, tremblingly approached the camp, loudly calling for surrender in the Tarasco dialect.

"...Thirty thousand Mexica warriors have arrived... Tarasco regiments too late to rescue... Southern villages burned down... Surrender quickly... Spare your lives... Militia return to their homes..."

As the call for surrender was announced, there was a flurry of disturbed discussions among the people atop the fort walls. The Tarasco warriors and militia, seeing the endless Mexica warriors below the wooden fort and the large flotilla by the Lerma River, no longer doubted the size of the invading army. Given the demanding wartime during the season of spring plowing and the scale of the war, the isolated northern camps had no chance of survival.

While morale among the defending army was faltering, a warrior carrying the camp flag mounted the fort walls. He surveyed the size of the enemy forces, his face suddenly taking on a resigned expression. Then, he loudly reprimanded, waving a copper spear and seemingly making some promise, calming the turmoil on the walls.

Bertade confirmed the identity and suddenly gestured. A hundred and twenty paces away, hundreds of Longbow Warriors simultaneously notched arrows, and then a whistling "swoosh, swoosh, swoosh..." followed as continuous arrows tore through the air.

The arrow barrage arrived in an instant; the leader carrying the flag, unable to dodge, showed a look of extreme pain. His movements instantly froze, and then he staggered and collapsed sideways, blood gushing like a fountain, his body riddled with arrows. The surrounding personal guards also dramatically fell, as warriors and militia inside the camp panicked. They successively dropped to the ground, hiding from the deadly arrows shot from such a distant range.

Xiulote continued to wave the flag, signaling precise, free-aim shooting. The right-wing Longbow Warrior Camp promptly stepped forward and spread out. These elite longbow warriors shot continuously, gradually moving to within sixty steps, then aimed at the archers and militia on the city head, shooting them with pinpoint accuracy.

The warriors and militia on the city head tried to shoot back with stones and arrows, but couldn't penetrate the Longbow Warriors' cotton armor and rattan helmets. Bertade personally notched and aimed an arrow, pausing slightly, then raised his hand to release it. A Tarasco warrior covering his throat dropped his single bow and tumbled from the fort walls. The Head Warrior didn't pause, shooting another defending warrior.

The exchange of fire continued for several quarters until it became a one-sided slaughter. Only about a dozen Mexica warriors were injured; already a hundred from the camp were dead. Under the long-range advantage of the Longbow Warriors, the over a thousand defenders crouching on the fort walls could no longer retaliate, their morale plummeting rapidly.

Xiulote calmly watched the situation unfold. He waited another three or four quarters until more than ten simple three-meter wooden ladders were ready. He then waved the battle flag again, ordering the

left-wing club and shield warriors to get ready. The quick construction of these ladders was thanks to the wood piled outside the wooden fort.

Then, the Longbow Warriors moved within thirty steps, intermittently aiming and firing arrows, suppressing those on the fort walls. After a while, the deep sound of the battle drums started, accompanied by a flag pointing forward. Five hundred Mexica warriors heeded the order, quickly running towards the outermost wooden fence of the wooden fort, beginning to chop and destroy it.

Seeing the Mexica start to break through the first barrier, the temporary fort commander shouted loudly. The archers and stone-throwing militia on the fort walls sporadically began to shoot. At this distance of thirty steps, the Tlaxcalan bows were sufficient to threaten the warriors' lives. A dozen Mexica warriors successively fell, their fates unknown.