

Civilization 44

Chapter 44 Ambush_3

"The Toltec-Tepanecs then revered the Sun God, abandoned their capital city, dissolved their alliance, and joined the Mexica people. They converted to the worship of the Sun God, intermarried with the ancestors of the Mexica through generations, and then merged together to establish the Mexica city-states, one can say they are one of our forebears."

"Now, in the city-states to the west and north of the Mexican Valley, many customs of the Toltec people remain, such as the grand celebration activities on the day of the Feathered Serpent Divine."

"A portion of the Toltecs, nostalgic for the Feathered Serpent, followed His departure to the east, and then evolved and merged to become the relatively peaceful Nava-Totonac people of the present-day eastern coast."

"Only a very small faction of Toltec-Tepanec rebels, still fervently worship the Feathered Serpent Divine and are hostile towards the Mexica alliance, taking refuge in the deepest forests at the border of the Otomi, Mexica, and Tarasco people, where they eke out a miserable existence. Speaking of which, the stronghold of these rebels is indeed not far from here."

Xiulote recalled the mural of the Feathered Serpent Divine found in Teotihuacan, the "Song of the Feathered Serpent" his grandfather had offered to the king, remembering the New Year celebrations spent in the city-states, indeed everywhere bore the imprint of the Toltec people and the Feathered Serpent faith.

However, the history Bertade narrated of the Tepanecs being assimilated by the Mexica people was like a myth: the Sun God merging two peoples to create an alliance? Intuition told Xiulote that there must have been countless bloody storms and battles of faith behind today's integration, which had been

glossed over with myths. But since the Mexica people were the ultimate victors, he had no intent to delve into the truth of those bygone days.

After confirming the identity of the Unarmored Warrior, Bertade went to check the body of the warrior with the Wooden Bow and upon seeing the small garment beneath the leather armor adorned with black and white striped patterns, he said,

"This is an Otomi samurai."

Xiulote nodded, picking up the wooden bow from the ground. The bow was nearly one meter forty in length, very thick in the grip, still of a single-piece bow design, and the string was tight and strong. Xiulote tried shooting an arrow and, combined with the metal arrows on the ground, the power was formidable: ninety paces would kill an unarmored warrior, fifty paces would break through single-layered padded cotton armor, and thirty paces would penetrate double-layered padded cotton armor.

Xiulote's eyes lit up at first, as the bow was much more powerful than a slingshot. But then he felt a wave of fear, realizing that even wearing leather armor, if he had been struck by several arrows at a distance of thirty paces just now, he probably would have been dead for sure.

"This is Tlaxcala's Long Wooden Bow," Bertade declared with certainty.

The two then continued to inspect the Short Spears with metal heads and the metal arrows on the ground.

"Tarasco's Copper Spears and Copper Arrows," both said simultaneously, and fell silent.

After that, the warriors cleaned up the equipment and weapons on the ground, beheaded the enemies, and piled their heads into a small tower by the roadside. Then they tended to the bodies of the fallen, burying them in freshly dug shallow pits.

Xiulote silently watched as Kusora was submerged by the earth, his expression frozen, with a faint smile, holding a soft water bag in his hands, which still contained the remnants of his wife's farewell wine, as if he was returning to the warmth of home.

"Your son will definitely become a Jaguar warrior," Xiulote whispered his promise, filled with sorrow in his heart but calm and reverent on the outside.

Then, he looked towards Otapan City two days to the west and then glanced to the east and south: "The Toltec rebels, the Otomi samurai, Tlaxcala's Long Wooden Bow, and Tarasco's Copper Weapons."

"It seems the enemies of the Empire have unknowingly formed some kind of union!" A foreboding feeling welled up in Xiulote's heart, like the distant dark clouds on the horizon.