

## Civilization 53

### Chapter 53 The World\_3

"Chichimeca Canine Descendants, known to be from Four States, with at least eight divisions, are a population of around seven hundred thousand. They are nomadic people without horses, and the whole population is ready for war."

"The Vastec people are somewhat loyal vassals of the Alliance. They live scattered near the lake at the very end of the East, distributed across the northeastern plains. They once had an Alliance too, but it was long ago subjugated and dissolved by us."

"They are natural musicians with a tradition of worshipping in the nude; they rarely wear clothes. Hmm, their young women are slender and excel in rhythmic dance." Aweit looked at the young man and smiled meaningfully.

"The Vastec, scattered across Six States, with about six hundred thousand people, fifteen thousand Samurai, and thirty thousand Militia."

"The Tekos live to the west and north of the Tarasco, near the lake at the edge of the West. They have a loose Alliance that the Tarasco Alliance constantly subjugates. Colima is their ancestral land with nearly two hundred thousand people, and there, the World's Fissure belches smoke and fire."

"Tekos Alliance, Four States, seven hundred thousand people, twenty thousand Samurai, fifty thousand Militia."

Colima? The name sounded very familiar to Xiulote. He racked his brain, searching through his memories.

Colima, Colima Volcano? The famous "Volcano of Fire," extremely active. He recalled witnessing this volcano's eruption during a trip to Mexico; smoke billowing, blocking out the sun, shrouding the land in a spectacular display. It even caused nearby airports, ports, and iron mines to shut down.

Iron mines? Iron mines! A flash of inspiration crossed Xiulote's mind; he suddenly remembered a piece of information that at the time seemed trivial but was now crucial.

"Peyacolorado Large Iron Mine!" Xiulote was so excited he nearly jumped from the Watchtower, had it not been for Aweit's timely grasp.

Because it lies in a geologically active volcanic belt, the state of Colima has an abundance of minerals. There lies Mexico's—and indeed, Central America's—largest iron mine, Peyacolorado (hydrothermal apatite) magnetite deposit. The reserves are astonishing, with surface layers reaching fifty to three hundred meters thick, extending over several kilometers.

"Colima, Iron Age, hope!" Xiulote couldn't help but whisper to himself, and gave Aweit another hug. The teacher was used to his student's nonsensical ramblings and occasional outbursts.

When he had calmed down a bit, Xiulote realized that things were not so simple. Historically, the great iron mine of Colima was not discovered and exploited until the modern era because of three unfavorable factors.

First, the main ore layer was located more than a hundred meters underground. The surface had only scattered iron ores. A hundred meters underground wasn't a big deal for later generations, but it was a massive challenge now, requiring ample manpower, resources, and copper pickaxes, after years of mining to proceed.

Second, the mine was located in the mountains, where transportation was very inconvenient. Roads would have to be built to transport the iron ore.

Third, the great iron mine was formed under the influence of magma, near the active Colima Volcano. There were potential risks in the mining process.

However, no matter what, Xiulote would not let go of this great iron mine; it was the dawn and hope of a new era!

During the subsequent conversation, the young man's mind was somewhat distracted; he only roughly recorded Aweit's introductions of the various Tribes.

"Nava-Totonac people, Seven States, seven hundred thousand people. Twenty thousand Samurai, forty thousand Militia. Along the eastern coast, a loose City-State Alliance, incorporating some of the Toltec people."

"The Jontal people, Four States, two hundred thousand people. Five thousand Samurai, ten thousand Militia. In the southern part of the Mexica Alliance, on both sides of the Balsas River, with village settlements and no cities. There's a continuous influx of Mexica people."

"Mistec people, Five States, eight hundred thousand people. Twenty thousand Samurai, forty thousand Militia. To the south of the Tlaxcala Alliance, a loose City-State Alliance. They are the 'Cloud People' of the mountains and 'the best goldsmiths,' centered around Totoztepec State. One of the disloyal vassals of the Empire."

"Zapotecs, Three States, five hundred thousand people. Fifteen thousand Samurai, thirty thousand Militia. East of the Mistec Alliance, a loose City-State Alliance, abundant in cochineal. The second disloyal vassal to the Empire. Beyond the Zapotecs to the east lies the fearsome, vast Rainforest, which leads to the Maya's unknown heartland."

"Tlapanec people, Four States, two hundred thousand people. Five thousand Samurai, ten thousand Militia. Southwest of the Mistec Alliance, along the Pacific Ocean coast—an insignificant minor Force."

"There are also wild Tribes scattered in the forests, large and small, impossible to count accurately. Wherever sweet potatoes can survive, there will be human habitation."

"Eighty States under heaven, divided into five distant domains. Fifty years in the human world, nine Tribes united in a hundred battles!" The young man's heart surged and he couldn't help but chant a crooked poem. Then thinking again, fifty years in the human world? Bah, that's an ill omen, he misspoke just now.

"What about the more distant Maya?" After a while, Xiulote asked Aweit with curiosity.

Aweit racked his brain, contemplating for a long time, before answering: "That is the end of the world, endless southeastern Rainforest. The Maya people are roughly divided into three: the corn people of the northern Yucatan, the Itza corn people in the middle, and the K'iche' corn people in the far south. Hm, corn people is the self-designation of the Maya."

"And as for the more specific numbers?" the Commander finally shrugged, absolutely refusing to admit he didn't know. "Let's conquer the known world first, then go see what's at the edge of this world!"

Xiulote then laughed loudly, and the two looked south again. Tarasco's Scouts were running toward the main camp in the south. After a while, a large group of elite Samurai clad in Armor emerged, each holding a huge Bronze Axe that glinted coldly. They exuded an intimidating killing intent and, escorting another tall banner, went straight to the Lerma River bank.

The persistent drizzle finally ceased. Across the several hundred meters of the river, the two armies' Supreme Commander faced each other from opposite shores. The huge banners fluttered in the wind, saluting one another to signify the beginning of battle.