

Perish 101

Chapter 101: Dividing Forces to Head South

Secondly, the rapid expansion in numbers also led to a swift decline in military discipline. Conflicts between soldiers and between armies increased. As early as half a month ago, the rebel army's various divisions no longer co-existed in Pompeii but stationed separately in the towns they had captured. Although this temporarily quelled the discord, the uneven development of each army remained a lurking threat.

For example, compared to other armies, Maximus's troops were very well-stocked with supplies and could even do business with southern merchants through the port, constantly increasing their reserves. For this reason, leaders like Cross and Enomai repeatedly proposed that Maximus hand over the port for everyone's shared use. Maximus firmly refused but made some concessions, agreeing to provide some urgently needed supplies to other groups for compensation.

It was precisely these dual reasons that prompted the rebel army's Military Commander Conference to specifically discuss the issue of the entire army moving southward, and they soon reached a consensus. A general military meeting was then convened, gaining the approval of most soldiers, and so the plan to march south was quickly implemented.

The first to take action and the two leaders most eager to move south were Cross and Enomai. The route chosen by the armies they led was to head straight south along Latina Avenue, enter the Lucania Region, and step onto Ania Avenue. The endpoint of Ania Avenue is Regium, which faces the Messina Strait, but their current destination was Turi, midway...

Next to depart were the other armies of the rebel army. Instead of heading straight south, they turned north, passing through Capua, then turned east into the Samnium Mountain Area to reach Benevento.

Benevento is the largest town in the Samnium Region, also a transportation hub, with a relatively large population and thriving commerce. The Samnite Mountain People were once very valiant (after all, they had repeatedly defeated the Romans and resisted Rome for decades), so the City Guard was not weak, but faced with the overpowering force of more than 40,000 rebels, the Benevento people had no courage at all to drive these invaders out, shrinking back into the city early and leaving the rebel army to ravage the fields and pastures outside the city.

It was just that when the frightened Benevento people queued up in front of the Hercules Temple inside the city to sincerely pray for safety, they had no idea that the rebel army, like locusts, scavenging everything left outside the city, had no plan at all to attack Benevento City.

Maximus, looking at Spartacus, Antonix, Hamilcar, and later two other leaders who were there to see him off, said solemnly, "Everyone take care, we will lead the army and head out first!"

"You all take care too, keep in touch in time, and after arriving in the south, we will meet again!" Spartacus reminded in a serious tone.

"We will!" Maximus's wandering gaze finally rested on Hamilcar, and with the concern shown in his eyes, Maximus nodded slightly, then extended his right hand and powerfully struck his chest, "See you in Tarentum!"

"See you in Tarentum!" the crowd responded.

Maximus mounted his horse, waved his right hand forcefully forward, and shouted loudly, "The whole army, move out!"

"Woo!..." The high and long copper horn sounded, and the soldiers of Maximus's army, who were already assembled, began to march forward. Though their equipment was somewhat varied and their ranks appeared a bit scattered, each soldier marched with high spirits and a vigorous aura...

Spartacus observed, nodded, and said, "Maximus has trained his soldiers well!"

"That's because he is the one among us with the fewest new recruits, and he monopolizes Pompeii Port, obtaining enough supplies to satisfy his soldiers..." Antonix's words revealed dissatisfaction.

Spartacus said nothing.

Hamilcar glanced sideways at him, thinking: Maximus's occupation of Pompeii Port was agreed upon after everyone's discussion at that time. His trade with southern merchants was something he developed himself, and he did not keep the rare supplies he acquired solely for himself; everyone had

their share. If it were you, Antonix, could you do the same? Let alone trying to attract merchants to trade, even if given a port?!

Though Hamilcar thought this, he did not say it out loud. After all, Antonix, who hailed from Thrace, was one of his own people, always honoring Spartacus as the leader, and their relationship was relatively close.

"Besides, Maximus's soldiers are only well-trained but lack combat experience. These two months we've captured so many towns and cities; he, Maximus, either hid in Pompeii or followed other armies from behind—"

"That's not right." Hamilcar couldn't hold back anymore and opened his mouth to point out the other's mistake: "Besides Pompeii, wasn't Abella City also captured by Maximus leading his army! And he did it with his troops alone, without asking others for help!"

Antonix was stunned for a moment, then muttered, "That was only once..."

"Enough, we're here today to see our brothers off." Spartacus frowned and reminded, "Attutmus is coming."

Hamilcar and Antonix fell silent, looking up, they saw the leader Attutmus leading soldiers, closely following Maximus's troops, coming over this way...

The rebel army split their forces at Benevento: the two armies led by Maximus and Attutmus were to head east through the Samnium Mountain Area, enter the Apulia Region, and then turn south, with the destination being northeast of Tarentum; while the armies led by Spartacus, Antonix, and the two newly joined leaders were to march directly southeast, passing through the Samnium Mountain Area, through the Lucania Region, and finally reaching near Tarentum.

Chapter 102: Dividing Forces to Head South_2

The reason for dividing the forces and marching south is that Spartacus and the other leaders considered how massive the rebel army had grown. If they stayed clustered together, it would not only hinder their movement but also make gathering sufficient supplies along the way difficult, potentially leading to internal conflicts. Additionally, splitting the forces and advancing south would further expand the rebel army's power.

Of course, there's another important reason the rebel army chose Benevento as the place to divide their forces — two major roads leading south converge here.

One is the Appian Way, which runs from Benevento through Tarentum all the way to Brindisi. This is one of the earliest roads Rome built to connect to Great Greece. Back then, King Pyrrhus of Epirus led his mercenary army through this road to march on Rome. Spartacus and the leaders' army planned to take this road.

The other road is the Minucia Avenue, constructed by the Romans after the First Punic War. It stretches from Benevento through Canosa to Bari, ending ultimately at Brindisi. Maximus and Attutmus' armies were taking this route.

Traveling by land from Campania to Great Greece is no easy task. The Samnium Region and the Lucania Region are filled with rolling mountains, which make north-south travel difficult. Fortunately, the Romans built these roads to connect the north and south, promoting exchanges and strengthening control over the southern regions. However, these same roads also made it easier for enemies to invade...

Maximus, mounted on his horse, looked at the soldiers in their column snaking along the road, both ends of the line obscured by verdant mountain ridges. He couldn't help but marvel: Look here at the Minucia Avenue underfoot! Though narrower compared to the Latina Avenue on the Campagna Plain, it has roadside trees, tombstones, milestones, pedestrian paths, stone benches, drainage ditches, and carriageways — everything one could ask for. The road's overall width averages about five meters, and its surface is paved with neatly cut stone slabs, flat and sturdy. It's truly remarkable! Bear in mind, this is all within a mountainous region! The Romans' infrastructure prowess is extraordinary!

While marveling, Maximus also felt fortunate: Thanks to this road, his troops could march far more effectively in the mountains!

The Supply Team's wagons — whether drawn by horses, oxen, or donkeys — traveled along the central carriageway, while the soldiers marched on pedestrian paths on both sides. At the front and back, a battalion served as guards, ensuring safety during the march. It could be said that the Roman roads were practically designed for military operations...

"Report, Leader Maximus!" A mounted rider came galloping from the front.

Maximus felt a jolt of unease but reined it in, feigning calm as he asked, "What happened? Is there any enemy activity?"

The messenger dismounted, saluted respectfully, and said, "Leader, Military Officer Flanitnus has found a site ahead suitable for camping and recommends that the army halt here to construct the camp immediately."

Maximus instinctively looked up at the sky, a little surprised, and said, "Camping already? Isn't it a bit too early for that?"

Before the messenger could respond, Quintus, Chief of Staff, standing near Maximus, cleared his throat lightly and said, "Leader, I believe Flanitnus' suggestion is correct. It's winter now, and the mountains are much colder than the plains. The soldiers expend more energy while marching... Furthermore, finding a good camping site in the mountains is no easy task. If the soldiers can start constructing the camp earlier, they can enter their tents before nightfall to rest, helping them recover their strength for the next day's march..."

Though Quintus and Flanitnus occasionally clashed over minor issues, Quintus was not one to oppose a sound suggestion out of spite. Still, as he explained his reasoning, he couldn't help but chide himself internally: This is common military knowledge — how could I forget to raise the idea earlier? Could it really be because I'm getting old?

With the two most experienced Roman veterans in the army aligning on this recommendation, Maximus wisely conceded. He laughed heartily and said, "It seems sending Flanitnus to assist Fesaros as the vanguard was a smart move! Let's follow his advice and start camping now. Akegu, take some men and notify each unit to prepare for camping!"

"Yes!"

"Casius, inform Engineering Captain Adrius to lead his team forward and supervise the camp's construction!"

"Yes!"

"Gaurus, head to the rear immediately and find Leader Attutmus. Explain our reasons for camping now and suggest that he coordinate with us and take similar action."

"Yes!"

...

Maximus calmly issued one order after another, while the young attendants at his side quickly dispersed to carry them out...

Recently promoted to Centurion, Tini Bazus was motivating his somewhat fatigued soldiers when a sudden cheer erupted from the front lines. Shortly after, a messenger sped down the roadside pedestrian path, holding a command token and shouting, "Leader Maximus orders all units to halt the march and move to the valley ahead to construct the camp!"

The soldiers under Tini Bazus also began cheering.

He immediately scolded them, "What's there to be so happy about? Marching may be exhausting, but digging trenches is even worse!"

"Captain, we know that, but at least we'll get into the tents to rest earlier," a soldier replied.

"Fine, since you think building a camp is easier than marching, I'll keep an eye on you. If I catch you slacking off while digging, you'll regret it," Tini Bazus said, putting on a stern expression.

The soldier quickly protested, "Captain, I never said digging was easier than marching!"

"I don't care — you better work hard anyway!" Tini Bazus said with a hint of playfulness in his tone.

The soldier, knowing his officer's temperament, sighed in exasperation but didn't argue further. The others laughed openly.

The pace of the columns ahead suddenly quickened. Tini Bazus and his men hurried to catch up.

After rounding the mountain ridge ahead, the troops left the road and entered a mountain hollow to the right. It was a large sloped area with relatively even terrain, covered in wild grass and scattered trees but few rocks. A small brook ran along its edge... While not an ideal campsite, finding a place like this in the mountains was no small feat. Moreover, it wasn't far from the main road, making it quite suitable for the army.

When Tini Bazus led his Centurion unit to the site, earlier-arriving units were already at work — some felling trees, others clearing wild grass...

"Captain, our Fifth Battalion is over there!" an observant soldier shouted, pointing to the right front where many soldiers had gathered. In the center of the group, a standard was raised — a white linen flag embroidered with the special numeral "5" taught by Maximus.

Having spent nearly two months in the evening study sessions, Tini Bazus certainly understood the meaning behind this "5." Most soldiers, however, had merely memorized its form and nicknamed it the "scythe flag."

Tini Bazus led his men to the Fifth Battalion's assembly point: "Reporting to the Great Captain, the Second Centurion arrives!"

The commander of the Fifth Battalion, Crusinas Lufus, was once a veteran under Marius. Later enslaved and serving in the military like Flanitus, Lufus eventually joined Maximus' forces. Initially placed in an advisory role, he was later assigned to the staff team.

After capturing Pompey, the rebel army expanded rapidly. Despite Maximus' caution, his soldiers alone reached 6,000 men, and the entire force swelled to over 7,000 when including others. More soldiers meant there was a severe shortage of officers.

Chapter 103: Camping and Marching in the Mountains

Thus, among the original soldiers, those who trained well and performed outstandingly during the raids on Pompey and the attack on Abella City were promoted, such as Tini Bazus.

However, the position of Great Captain was too important. Maximus believed that most of the team officers in the army were inexperienced and promoted too quickly, so experienced Great Captains were needed to manage the troops and ensure combat effectiveness. As a result, in addition to the four original Great Captains—Fesaros, Torrelugo, Camillus, and Oluus (Maximus' Personal Guard had been expanded into a battalion)—the other two Great Captains were selected from the original army slaves and the later-joining Lukaiya people respectively. Lufus was one of them.

At the moment, Lufus said to Tini Bazus, "Our Fifth Battalion doesn't have any arrangements for now. You should all rest well here and recover your strength as soon as possible."

Upon hearing that they could rest for now, the soldiers of the second Centurion not only failed to feel happy but instead sighed collectively. Based on their past military training experience and the exhaustion from camping outside Benevento City yesterday, they suspected they would soon be ordered to dig trenches.

Lufus saw this, furrowed his brow, and shot a glance at Tini Bazus.

Tini Bazus pretended not to notice, thinking to himself: I'm exhausted too, where would I get the energy to console them?

Lufus realized Tini Bazus wasn't reacting, so his face darkened, and he glared at him.

Tini Bazus grew uneasy and had to muster a forced smile before speaking loudly, "Why are you all muttering to yourselves? Hurry up and rest! Even if we're assigned to dig in a while, it's still better than putting on armor again and standing dumbly to guard the camp! Besides, once we've dug the trenches and built the earth walls, we can eat directly without worrying about anything else. Isn't that great? Or do you want to end up like them—"

Tini Bazus pointed toward the soldiers who were working, "Waiting until we're resting just to set up their tents."

"The Captain is right, no point complaining, let's rest first and be ready to work later..." Some soldiers responded, and the complaining quickly subsided.

Only then did Lufus feel relieved and went off to greet the incoming troops.

The soldiers gingerly placed the wooden shields and bundles carried on their shoulders onto the grass, unbuckled the leather water pouches tied to their waists one by one, took a sip of the cool water inside to quench their thirst, and then tightened the thick cloth wraps they were wearing. (According to Flanitnus and Quintus' suggestions, Maximus distributed a wool blanket to each soldier. However, even through trade with southern merchants and the spoils from Abella City, the number of wool blankets obtained was far from enough to satisfy the needs of so many soldiers. Warehouse manager Capito instructed military women to sew together layers of linen into thick cloth wraps. Though bulky, they were fairly effective for warmth and distributed to the newly formed battalions.) Afterward, they reclined on the dry grass and closed their eyes for a nap...

Tini Bazus and the soldiers didn't rest for long before Spukala, the deputy captain of the engineering team who had finished surveying the terrain and drawing the camp map, came over. After discussing with several waiting Great Captains, Lufus grabbed a tree branch and went up to his troops, shouting loudly, "Soldiers of the Fifth Battalion, get up! It's our turn to work!" With that, he turned and strode ahead.

Urged on by the Centurions' shouts, the soldiers slowly got up, picked up their bundles again, and followed behind.

Not far from the stream, Lufus stopped, planted a tree branch beside him, and stepped off a hundred paces before planting another one. Then, he shouted back, "Futus, your First Team is responsible for this section!"

"Yes, Great Captain!"

Lufus then measured another hundred paces and planted another branch, "Teribazus, your Second Team is responsible for this section!"

"Understood, Great Captain," Teribazus replied. Instead of immediately urging his soldiers to work, he called together the ten centurions under him to divide the portion designated for their Centurion into ten equal parts and clearly assign them to each sub-team.

Only after that did he shout to the soldiers, "Brothers, don't just stand around! Hurry up and get to work. The sooner we finish, the sooner we can rest!"

"Yes... Captain..." The soldiers responded without enthusiasm, but they wasted no time getting to work. Each swiftly pulled their digging tools from their packs, followed their respective centurions to their assigned sections, and began digging soil...

Though a centurion himself, Teribazus dared not slack off. He understood well that if he did, the soldiers wouldn't apply themselves to their work, leading to delays, scoldings, and embarrassing himself before other centurions... This was precisely why he initially only wanted to be an ordinary soldier!

Yet, as an ordinary soldier in the Pontus army, Tini Bazus quickly became a centurion after joining the rebel army, commanding over a hundred men. This brought him unprecedented satisfaction and motivation, so he still wished to perform well.

Tini Bazus summoned a few soldiers, took them to the Supply Camp, and procured several wooden crates for soil transport and ten sharp digging tools—Crane Head Shovels. Returning to his troops, he picked up a shovel himself and began digging enthusiastically...

While the army worked to construct the camp, the Supply Team was not idle either.

Before the army's impending march south, Maximus made the temporary decision to merge the warehouse and kitchen departments into the Supply Team, appointing Capito as captain and Acronis as deputy captain. They had undergone march training beforehand and cooperated well together. Additionally, personnel from these two departments had regularly received military training during idle periods, so since departing Pompey, there hadn't been any major slip-ups.

Chapter 104: Mountain Area Marching and Camping_2

At this moment, under Capito's command, the drivers had already maneuvered the horse-drawn carts, ox carts, and donkey carts into the lower slopes of the planned campsite for the Supply Team. They were arranged in a massive circular formation, then unloaded the cattle and horses, fed them forage in the center of the wagon circle, and began to construct simple stables.

Meanwhile, another group of supply personnel began unloading various camping supplies from the carts: tents, ropes, iron rods, wooden frames, hoes... These items were then distributed to soldiers from various units who came to collect them.

Acronis, on the other hand, led the kitchen staff in unloading cooking utensils and ingredients from the carts. They built several simple stoves nearby, placed the large copper pots specially crafted by Pessianaxis for the kitchen use on them, poured in clean stream water collected earlier, added a handful of husked wheat, and lit the firewood collected by the soldiers to begin making porridge. Then, diced bits of smoked meat were added, and toward the end, some freshly washed wild vegetables and a pinch of salt were thrown in... At last, a pot of field porridge, deemed both convenient and nutritious for the marching troops by Maximus, was ready.

Each soldier could fill two pottery jars with wheat porridge, using dry bread they carried to dip and eat, making for a simple evening meal.

As the sun began to set, the once wild and overgrown slope transformed into a bustling campsite with trenches and earth walls at its perimeter, and countless tents within. The lively and noisy atmosphere gradually settled into silence, except for the largest military tent at the center of the camp where candlelight flickered.

"Leader, all the battalion soldiers have settled in for the night, and the personnel and supplies of the Supply Team have been properly arranged..." Military Officer Flanitnus reported on the situation within the newly established camp to Maximus.

After listening, Maximus asked, "How is the night watch arranged for the camp? Any signs of enemy activity?"

"Tonight's watch falls to the Second Battalion. I specifically reminded Torrelugo and deployed a Centurion to guard the highest watchtower on the slope. If any enemies approach, they will have the high ground to detect them early and notify the entire army to defend in time..."

Quintus, pointing to a camp map drawn by Spukala placed on the wooden table, explained in detail, "During the construction of the camp, the defensive duties were carried out by the First, Second, and Third Battalions. They did notice a few Samnites scouting near the slope, but they retreated when confronted and did not display any hostility. Our scouts also observed that the gates of Aquum City in the distance ahead were shut tight, without any signs of troop deployments... From these observations, it seems Ramdolos was right— the Samnites have no intention of making us their enemies."

Ramdolos was a poor shepherd from Samnium who had fought against Rome in the Marci War (Italian Alliance Civil War) in his youth. Recently, he led dozens of his compatriots to join Maximus' army and was quickly appointed as a Centurion, serving as a guide for this southern expedition.

He had previously advised the Maximus Army leadership: as long as the army refrains from plundering in the Samnium Region, the Samnites will not oppose the rebel forces.

Additionally, he provided the rationale: around a decade ago, during the Roman Alliance War (90 BCE), although Samnium joined the rebellion late, when the Julian Citizenship Law was enacted and most rebellious regions laid down their arms, the Samnites continued fighting against Rome. It was Sula who ultimately subdued the Samnium Region through ruthless slaughter, sowing deep resentment among the Samnite populace. During Sula's civil war with Marius, most Samnites sided with Marius. After Sula became Dictator, he severely oppressed the Samnites. Even many years after his death, the Samnites still harbor disdain for the Senate controlled by Sulla's faction. The situation of the rebel forces repeatedly defeating the Romans and embarrassing the Senate is something the Samnites are delighted to witness...

Flanitnus remarked, "Thinking about it, we should thank Sula. If it weren't for his hatred of the Samnites, marching through this mountainous region would surely be troublesome for us."

Quintus shot a glare at the old veteran of Marius but hesitated, ultimately refraining from defending Sula.

Maximus observed their interaction but chose to ignore it. He spoke cautiously, "Even though the Samnites have shown no hostility toward us, we must not lower our guard. The army must remain prepared for reconnaissance, vigilance, and defense at all times! Additionally, the soldiers must be strictly disciplined under Military Law, refraining from harassing or provoking the Samnites, so that we can quickly pass through this mountainous region!"

Flanitnus and Quintus both nodded in agreement.

"Based on our current marching speed, how many days will it take to exit the Samnium Mountain Area and enter the Apulia Region?" Maximus continued to inquire.

Flanitus thought for a moment and replied, "Leader, you previously stated that this is our army's first independent long-distance march, and all precautions must prioritize safety. Thus, today's marching speed on the road was merely twenty-odd li, and given that the size of our army is not as large as the forces led by Spartacus and Cross, but the Supply Team carries abundant materials, the pace in the coming days won't improve significantly. I estimate it will take three to four more days to traverse the mountains and reach the plains in Apulia."

"Yes, about three to four days." Quintus, despite personally clashing with Flanitus, did not let it impede his agreement with the assessment.

Maximus pondered briefly, then smiled and said, "Compared to the marching routes of Spartacus and Cross, traversing the mountains and reaching the plains in just three to four days isn't slow. Let the soldiers gradually adapt to this wartime rhythm."

After speaking, Maximus turned to Volenus, who sat calmly nearby, and asked, "Volenus, do you have any suggestions?"

Since departing Pompeii, beginning the march, Volenus, jokingly dubbed "Maximus' Army Steward," found himself with little to do and spent his days with the Supply Team, assisting Capito and Acronis with their tasks.

"Leader, Capito and Acronis manage the Supply Team excellently." Volenus recalled something and added, "The children are doing well too, constantly helping out with the Supply Team's work." Volenus knew how Maximus valued that group of children, and sure enough, his words brought a slight smile to Maximus' face.

"Because you, Leader, ensured ample preparation beforehand, the grain reserves carried by the Supply Team are sufficient to sustain the entire army for three months..." Volenus continued, "When we first seized Pompeii, food supplies were abundant, but with the influx of new recruits, there was a period where our food reserves became strained... During our march, we haven't had new recruits in recent days, but I worry that after entering Apulia, many might come to join us, and we should prepare accordingly..."

"Volenus, this issue you're concerned about isn't problematic." Maximus raised his brows and replied resolutely, "While we aren't planning to plunder resources in the Samnium Mountain Area, once we reach Apulia—"

Maximus slammed his right hand on the table, "We must seize the opportunity and act boldly!"

The crowd's spirits were lifted.

At that moment, Cavalry Captain Hagux entered the military tent: "Leader, Chief Attutmus has arrived with his men."

Chapter 105: The First Target of Strategy

"They are somewhat late in coming!" Maximus murmured softly, then stood up, took the lead out of the tent, and opened his arms enthusiastically as he approached the incoming Attutmus, saying, "Attutmus, welcome to your arrival!"

Attutmus, facing the young Maximus, was not as arrogant as Cross or Enomai, but instead had a look of apology: "Maximus, I'm sorry! I was busy setting up camp just now and came late!"

"Your army is marching behind, so it's naturally later for you to set up camp than us; we all understand, so the meeting is just starting..." Maximus warmly grabbed Attutmus's arm and walked shoulder to shoulder into the military tent, saying, "Judging from today's marching situation, we should pass through the Samnium Mountain Area smoothly. I have some new ideas, and we need both of our teams to discuss and see if we can implement our previously planned strategies more effectively."

"That's great, Maximus, you have better ideas. I must listen carefully!" Attutmus's face beamed, expressing genuine delight. The previous military plan had been almost entirely devised by Maximus and Quintus; having been a sailor for decades, Attutmus knew little of strategic planning. He was astounded by such a comprehensive development plan for Apulia and proactively coordinated his army's actions with Maximus's forces after leaving Campania and heading south together.

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Three main ethnic groups primarily inhabit the Apulia region: the Doni people, the Puqieti, and the Apulians.

Their ancestors came from Illyria across the Adriatic Sea, so they all spoke the same language. Over generations, they developed this once-barbaric area into a prosperous and affluent region.

Later, the Romans conquered the area by force, officially naming it Apulia, but the local populace never fully submitted to Rome. During the Second Punic War, they supported Hannibal, and in the Roman Alliance War that occurred over a decade ago, most of this region aligned with the Samnites to resist Rome. After their defeat, they faced some repression from the Roman Senate, which led to a decline in this region.

Now, the so-called "Free Italy" slave rebel army had arrived, making the Apulian people nervous. However, reports kept coming in that puzzled them: this rebel army, which had been rampaging in Campania, had not committed any atrocities while crossing the Samnium Mountain Area. Upon entering the Apulia region, they passed towns like Acay on Minucia Avenue without stopping, only spreading the word that they were the Free Italy army, formed by the poor to help them live better lives, and to aid Italians in freeing themselves from Roman oppression and regaining independence...

This propaganda quickly had an effect: some impoverished Apulians flocked to them, while some affluent citizens adopted a wait-and-see attitude. However, the nobles and officials scoffed at the rebel's propaganda, although many hoped that maybe these rebels were in a hurry to head south to plunder the wealthy Great Greek City-States?

The Apulians, hoping for a stroke of luck, were in fact incapable of expelling a rebel army of over 30,000 people (including Attutmus's forces).

The Apulians' lack of resistance allowed the rebel army to advance along Minucia Avenue and successfully cross one of the major rivers of the Apulia region—the Ophidus River, where on the south bank lay one of the once-largest city-states of the Apulia region—Canosa (Canusium).

This time, the rebel army didn't bypass the city but chose to camp nearby, sending out cavalry to scout around, and the following morning sent an envoy to meet with the Canosa Governor.

The Canosa Governor, out of curiosity and fear of the rebel army, met with this envoy.

The envoy was none other than the Business Officer Pigeris under Maximus's leadership. Originally, he wasn't the first choice for this envoy position, but upon hearing the news, Pigeris volunteered. At first,

Maximus hadn't agreed to it; after all, going to Canosa had certain risks, and Pigeris was a rare talent under his command, so he was reluctant to let him take the risk. But after Pigeris persistently requested, Maximus eventually nodded in agreement.

As the army marched south, Pigeris had to halt his thriving maritime trade at Pompeii Port. Having grown accustomed to being busy, he couldn't allow himself to be idle throughout the campaign. Encountering this rare opportunity to exert his talents, he naturally couldn't pass it up, especially since this marked the first step of Maximus's army in reopening maritime trade, and as a Commerce Officer, he certainly had to make a contribution.

Feeling somewhat anxious, Pigeris, under the escort of the City Guards, entered Canosa City. Seeing the chaotic order within and the fear on the citizens' faces when they looked at him gradually eased his tension, leaving him with more calculations in his mind.

Upon entering the City Lord's mansion and meeting the Canosa Governor and his subordinates, Pigeris already had a condescending mindset.

The administrative governor from Rome put on a stern face, trying to keep his tone civil but his voice slightly trembling: "Reb...Reb...Um, the envoy, originally you have no right to meet me, considering your identity, but since you have not infringed upon the Apulian people since entering Apulia, I made an exception to see you... Are you here to negotiate peace with Rome on behalf of your army? If so, I... I am willing to promptly convey your demands to Rome and do my utmost to mediate, ensuring that you are not only spared from punishment but also receive favorable arrangements..."