

Perish 121

Chapter 121: A New Way of Conquest

Then, Tegcharles saw a group of people quickly approaching the dock, led by a familiar face, walking with a limp.

"Pigeris! Pigeris!..." Tegchamos waved and shouted as he hurriedly disembarked.

"Tegcharles?! I didn't expect you to really come!" Pigeris looked with some surprise at the merchant coming off the ship.

"Although you only said one line when you left Pompey, 'If you're interested in continuing business with us, you can come to the east coast and take a look, there might be some opportunities'... but I trust you!"

Tegcharles said seriously, "Plus, my family has some shops in Hydruntum, and I've been there all this time, while sending people to investigate any news about you on the east coast. When I heard about the fall of Sarabia, I came without any hesitation."

"Thank you for your trust in us, welcome to our new port!" Pigeris warmly opened his arms and gave a strong hug to the other, then muttered as if to himself, "I wonder if Kroxi Bas and Daltemas will also come here like you in the future."

"You know, Kroxi Bas has a greater desire for money than I do. Hearing you say he hasn't come yet, I think it might be because your other group has occupied Turi and continues to advance south, with some towns in the south, including Hibernian, gathering soldiers and forming armies to prepare for battle with your companions."

In such a situation, Kroxi Bas' family might not allow him to come here to avoid damaging their family's reputation among the Hibernian people... As for Daltemas, he doesn't have the same confidence in you as I do." Tegcharles said with a touch of self-satisfaction.

"With you here, it's enough." Pigeris smiled broadly and changed the topic, "Although we don't have good wine here, the resources we've acquired are more than Pompey's! Galgano's finest wool, high-quality red and white striped marble, a large quantity of ship timber, premium pottery from Greece..."

"All good stuff." Tegcharles felt tempted and asked directly, "I wonder what the prices are like?"

"For old friends like you, the prices are of course very cheap." Pigeris promised without hesitation.

"Can you show me these goods?"

"Please follow me." Pigeris led Tegcharles to the warehouse next to the dock.

Seeing the warehouses filled with various goods, Tegcharles couldn't tear his eyes away.

At this moment, Alakosia walked in, whispering in Pigeris' ear, "A merchant ship that had been lingering outside the harbor has finally come in!"

"This is a good thing!" Pigeris glanced at Tegcharles, who was bending over to inspect the goods, and whispered, "This guy set a good example!"

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Xie Pangbo stood in front of the port management building, having a panoramic view of the scene at the dock: two merchant ships were already docked, and laborers were continually loading goods onto the ships...

Thinking of soon having to bargain with these foreign merchants, handling the sale of huge quantities of materials... Xie Pangbo felt a surge of excitement, something he had always longed for during his years of serving as a procurement slave for his master.

Forget it, as long as Free Italy is still here, we have no choice but to obey, agree if we must... Xie Pangbo quietly persuaded himself.

"Xie Pangbo, why are you standing here stupidly! Hurry up and go to your place to get your things, from now on you'll live with us here." Alakosia came over and said loudly.

"Okay, okay." Xie Pangbo responded repeatedly, not daring to delay any longer, and quickly followed Alakosia towards the town.

Passing by the South City Gate, a roar of cheers came from ahead, and Xie Pangbo curiously wanted to see what was going on, but was pulled to the side by Alakosia.

Soon, the sound of hoofbeats came from ahead, and a cavalry of over a hundred people appeared in sight. They wore light armor, wielding round shields and long spears, their heads held high in imposing manner.

Following them was a young leader, wearing a towering feather helmet and dazzling golden armor, riding a mighty warhorse. He looked relaxed, smiling as he talked with someone beside him, but when his gaze inadvertently swept over Xie Pangbo, it made his heart beat faster.

Surrounding the young leader was a group of adolescents, wearing well-fitted white belted garments, looking extremely serious. Their backs were straight, marching in relatively orderly rows, their steps sounding loudly... Yet it made Xie Pangbo feel it was too contrived, far less significant than the natural authority exuded by the young leader.

"That's our leader, Maximus!" Alakosia said in a tone of admiration.

After the young leader passed by, Xie Pangbo softly uttered an "oh."

Next came a large infantry unit. Their ranks were disorderly, armor and weapons varied, and their steps were slow and weary, but the bloodstains on their armor and the excitement in their eyes made Xie Pangbo realize that this was not an easy army to provoke.

Following them was a massive convoy, with carriages pulled by oxen, horses, and donkeys, loaded with grain, gold, silver, and bronze items, various iron materials, cloth, leather, wood, and even bloodstained weapons and armor...

A large number of raggedly dressed people, both men and women, young and old, mostly gaunt with pallid complexions, but with expressions of joy, followed along both sides of the convoy...

"It seems we have won a victory this time!" Alakosia said happily.

Xie Pangbo's heart was moved, recalling Soricles's request when he left after buying a pottery jar: "Xie Pangbo, you need to learn more about the internal situation and military movements of the rebel army and find opportunities to inform me. This way, when the Roman Army drives them away in the future, I will plead for you and forgive your sins for working with them during this time, do you understand?!"

Xie Pangbo shook his head slightly and cautiously asked, "Where did we win the victory?"

"I don't know about that, we only care about trade, and we shouldn't meddle in military matters," Alakosia reminded. "Anyway, you just need to understand that our army is very powerful; no town in Apulia can match us, enough to ensure our safety!"

Xie Pangbo watched the marching army, finding some sense in what Alakosia said, but it left his mind a bit unsettled...

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Maximus led the army and the spoils of war, not straight to the camp in the wealthy district but instead took a large loop around the city for a military parade.

His extravagant show was to flaunt their strength before the people of Sarabia, to deter those who could move freely within the city from having any other ideas...

Maximus and the leaders of the army returned to the Sarabia Governor Mansion.

"Leader, after capturing Barduli, should we continue southward to attack Turulum, or even Bari?" Torrelugo asked eagerly.

"Torrelugo, it seems you forgot what I said before leading the troops out of the city!" Maximus said sternly. "I will say it again now, I hope you remember! What we want is for the surrounding towns to surrender, not to destroy and kill them all! If it weren't for the Buduli people's stubborn refusal to submit, I wouldn't have ordered the siege. I'm sure that with Barduli's painful lesson, other towns will have to think twice when facing the might of our army—"

"But even if those towns surrender, they wouldn't genuinely submit, and might secretly work against us," Fesaros reminded.

"I don't care whether they are sincere or not, as long as they meet my demands by delivering the stipulated amount of supplies monthly, we won't destroy their lands and farms outside the city, won't start wars against them, and won't harm their people, it's that simple!"

Maximus explained earnestly to the Great Captains, "Capturing towns can indeed bring more wealth at once, but then what? It becomes a ruin, incapable of generating wealth again. However, if we ask for things within their bearable range and promise not to invade their land, I believe they will eventually accept.

In this way, although what we obtain is less than what we would from plunder, it comes in a constant stream every month, enough to support our ever-growing army and develop our maritime trade. This also gives us enough time to properly train our soldiers. Those newly joined soldiers are not short of the courage to kill the enemy but lack effective military training; we cannot let them fight unprepared, only to die in vain! Let's not forget, our real enemies are not the Apulians but the Roman Army that could arrive at any moment!"

Maximus's words left the Great Captains silent.

"Barduli is a small city with low walls and not many people. We attacked with full force, but even so, we lost over 300 men. Turulum City is quite a bit larger than Barduli; how many casualties would we incur trying to capture it?! As for Bari, with our current strength, I don't think we could take it," Flanitnus honestly shared his thoughts.

Then Quintus confidently said, "The supplies we demand from each town are based on their actual situation, calculated repeatedly, and are not higher than the direct taxes they paid before becoming Roman citizens. I believe they will agree to the terms we propose."

Maximus pondered and said, "Let the soldiers rest well tomorrow, and the day after, we will lead the army south to surround Turulum, forcing its surrender. Flanitnus, how many new recruits do we have now?"

Flanitnus replied, "Previously, we had nearly 4,000 new recruits, and today, having captured Barduli, more than 300 impoverished people are willing to join our ranks to fight Rome."

"Bring them along as a training march, it can bolster our presence and further pressure the Turulum people into submission," Maximus glanced at Quintus and said.

"Leader, that's a good idea, I will arrange it," Quintus immediately responded.

Camillus couldn't help but speak up, "Leader, our Third Battalion has been stationed at the port for almost half a month without moving, when the army moves south the day after tomorrow, shouldn't we be considered too? Otherwise, it's too unfair!"

Hearing this complaint, Oluus followed up with his dissatisfaction: "At least the Third Battalion participated in the siege of Canosa, our Personal Guard Team hasn't participated in any battle since the expansion, only responsible for guarding the city gate and the administrative office, shouldn't the troops in the Personal Guard Team have the chance to see the world and gain some combat experience?"

Maximus did not immediately speak, instead, he frowned and looked at the military officer.

Flanitnus hurriedly explained, "Leader, I initially chose the Third Battalion to guard the port and the Personal Guard Team to secure the city because they originally had this experience, and it was with your approval. Moreover, they are not permanently assigned to this task; they will rotate every month.

The reason for the monthly rotation is that since we have just occupied this town, things haven't been sorted out, and the order is not yet stable, so we can't move the troops too frequently..."

"Flanitnus did the right thing, and it was approved by me," Maximus took over the conversation, speaking loudly while sternly looking at Camillus and Oluus: "The first rule of our Military Law is to obey orders and follow commands!"

With my permission, Flanitnus assigned tasks to each battalion, you as Great Captains should set an example for the soldiers and complete the tasks earnestly. But instead, you two are here complaining and shirking, do you think military law is a child's play, and that I wouldn't dare to punish you both!"

Their expressions changed drastically, especially Camillus, who quickly lowered his head and saluted: "Leader, it was I... wrong to make such a request."

Confronted with Maximus's piercing gaze, Oluus finally reluctantly said, "I didn't know Flanitnus had plans to change assignments and shouldn't have... complained this way, it won't happen again."

"If there's a next time, it would indicate you two are unqualified as Great Captains, and we might need to find someone else!" Maximus scolded them rather unceremoniously.

Since Maximus led the army independently, he had rarely criticized his subordinates so harshly. Now his anger was impressive, causing not only Camillus and Oluus to feel nervous but also alerting the other Great Captains.

The hall was exceptionally quiet.

Moments later, Maximus softened his tone and said gravely, "If you want the recruits to gain battlefield experience, what's the rush, there'll be plenty of opportunities for combat in the future.

Assigning them to guard the city was not to let them idle but to take the time for training, so when we encounter the Roman Army in the future, they have the courage and ability to fight!"

Chapter 123: Female Camp

"Rest assured, leader, the soldiers of the Personal Guard Team train day in and day out without slack. They will definitely become the sharpest short sword in your hand, ready for you to use them to slay the enemy!" At this moment, Oluus spoke with considerable humility.

Camillus followed closely in expressing his stance.

Maximus merely nodded.

"Leader, besides Turrinum and Bari, why don't we advance southwest, threatening Rubi, Buton, and other towns to surrender? That way, we would obtain more resources," Fesaros asked.

"Attutmus and I have a private agreement that the southwest inland region is his forces' target to conquer," Maximus explained seriously. "Moreover, once we accept these towns' surrender and gain their offered resources, we must fulfill our promise to ensure their lands and people remain unharmed.

With our current strength, we can only incorporate these few closer towns along the southern coast. Going further south might enter territories controlled by Spartacus and Antonix's forces.

The way they treat the local people is different from ours, potentially leading to conflict, which we all wish to avoid. Therefore, we will halt at Bari, quickly force the surrender of these coastal towns, and refocus our conquest efforts northward. If we can conquer Cips and control the area around Sinus Lake, we won't have to worry about a shortage of food and resources..."

The six Great Captains listened thoughtfully, while Quintus and Flanitnus remained composed, as Maximus's plan had already been discussed with them.

The commanders exited the administrative chief's mansion, each heading to their respective camps. Quintus, lagging behind, called out to Oluus, speaking bluntly in a low voice: "Oluus, you shouldn't have confronted Flanitnus just now; it can easily lead Maximus to question the Lukaiya people's loyalty!"

"You misunderstood me. I didn't mean anything else; I was merely influenced by Camillus, expressing some grievances to Maximus, hoping to change the current situation where the Personal Guard Team seldom goes to battle," Oluus defended himself.

"Change? The primary mission of the Personal Guard Team is to protect Maximus and the entire command echelon. As a seasoned soldier, you should know this!" Quintus reminded sternly. "Don't be fooled by Maximus's youth; he is very shrewd and has great means. I'm sure you already experienced his acumen just now.

Focus on training your soldiers and don't meddle in other affairs. We must unite as one, preparing to face the imminent threat of the Roman Army."

"Quintus, whether you believe me or not, I was merely complaining, nothing more. I really don't care about your and Flanitnus's matters!" Oluus, somewhat irritated, said angrily, turning to leave in broad strides.

As he passed Flanitnus up ahead, Flanitnus gave him a slightly puzzled glance, then turned back to look at Quintus standing at the bottom of the steps.

Quintus nodded in acknowledgment.

He nodded back in return.

After seeing off the commanders, Maximus did not sit down to rest but summoned Volenus: "In my absence over the past two days, is there anything in the city that requires my attention?"

"Spartacus's leader sent a messenger, informing us that their army has reached north of Tarentum and taken Uriya, using it as a central base to build their camp. They are now splitting forces to attack nearby towns, expanding their encampment..."

The messenger brought Spartacus's leader's command, believing our forces are still too far. It was suggested we continue moving south, preferably setting camp near Bari. This way, when the Roman army strikes, we can mobilize together faster..."

After Volenus finished speaking, he noticed Maximus sitting at the table, looking at his hands, as if he were not listening and couldn't help asking again: "Leader, should we follow Spartacus's leader's command to move our army south?"

Maximus flicked his fingernail, slowly saying, "Volenus, you've been part of our army for years. You should know that Free Italy's highest authority is the Military Commander Conference. Although Spartacus has the most say, he does not have the right to interfere in other leaders' management of their armies, so what he gave is not a command, but only a suggestion."

"Leader, it's my foolishness for getting this wrong!" Volenus hurriedly admitted his mistake.

Maximus explained earnestly: "There is a road connecting Sarabia to Uriya City. The army can reach there in a day or two. Even if the Roman Army strikes, it wouldn't matter much. Moreover, being in Sarabia, we can ensure both supply and safety, making it the best camp location.

But if we camp near Bari, we would be too close to Spartacus's forces. These days, many people from all over Free Italy are joining us. Spartacus's forces would undoubtedly accept any newcomers, quickly expanding their ranks. As their numbers grow, they are bound to occupy more land. By then, our camp will border theirs, leading to many complications, similar to what happened in Pompey..."

Chapter 124: Female Camp_2

"Leader, you were indeed thoughtful; we really cannot move south." Volenus suddenly realized and immediately expressed his stance.

"Has that messenger left?"

"Not yet, he's been waiting for your return."

"I'll meet him later. After all, Spartacus is the head of our entire Free Italy, so we need to be more diplomatic in our refusal." Maximus took it more seriously and then asked, "Is there anything else?"

"Today, fifty-eight Sarabians accepted our employment and started working within the city. Another group went to the market to purchase goods... At the port, two merchant ships have docked, and Pigeris has been negotiating with them. How much money we earned and how much important goods we acquired, Pigeris has yet to report..."

Maximus smiled, "This is a good thing. Although it's only fifty-eight people, I believe more Sarabians will submit to us in the future! More merchant ships will trade at the port! Therefore, we must expedite our military actions, gain more supplies, and make this town operate better..."

By the way, did the market implement our previous demands to increase the prices of food and cloth, and reduce the prices of looted copperware, pottery, marble statues, and other luxury goods?"

"Yes, I heard someone bought a lot of good pottery today."

"That's fine then." Maximus nodded with satisfaction, "At present, supplies like food and cloth are what we urgently need. We must set high prices to prevent more Sarabians from buying them, while lowering prices for good pottery and marble allows them to take advantage of buying them, and we can exchange them for more supplies from merchants..."

Leader, you're squeezing the life out of the Sarabians!... Volenus dared only to think to himself, then said: "Today Capito came by to tell you that the weapons workshop outside the city is already in operation."

"This is the best news I've heard today!" Maximus excitedly stood up and said loudly, "Capito did a great job. I want to visit the weapons workshop tomorrow and give them some encouragement. Uh... you come along too. If Capito and the others have any difficulties, we can discuss and resolve them on the spot."

"Sure, leader." Volenus agreed, then added, "Capito also mentioned another matter... He said we've been recruiting too many women recently, and aside from a few who went to the kitchen, most are in their warehouse."

Among them are quite a few former maids of the Sarabian aristocrats' households. They are not as obedient as the previous female slaves and mostly can't weave or sew. Instead, they tend to seduce men and disrupt the order in the warehouse. He urgently hopes you will assign someone to manage these women..."

"This is indeed a problem..." Maximus joked, "Volenus, are you interested in managing these women?"

Upon hearing this, Volenus shook his head vigorously, "Leader, I'm getting old, and just managing this city as per your instructions is already exhausting. I don't have the extra energy to manage these women..."

I heard you recruited so many women to solve the marriage issue for the soldiers. Why not marry them off to the soldiers quickly and solve the problem that way?"

Maximus put his hand on his chin, pondered for a while, and said, "Indeed, I recruited so many women to address the soldiers' bachelor issues, but we can't marry them off so quickly, or it will destabilize our ranks... It seems we need to establish a Female Camp—"

"A Female Camp?"

"Yes, a team exclusively for women, with their own camp, managed by female officers under military discipline. Women working in other departments can go to work during the day, but must return to the Female Camp at night, even after marrying soldiers. Only when they have their own land and houses in the future can they live together...

This avoids scandals and disorder among the troops while enhancing our combat effectiveness, especially during marches and operations..." Maximus spoke eloquently, thinking about the setup of the Female Camp among the late Ming Rebel army under Leader Li Zicheng.

"That's a good idea!" Volenus complimented, then asked, "But with around 2000 women in this planned Female Camp, who will serve as the Chief Officer? Can they manage themselves well?"

Maximus smiled slightly, "Don't underestimate women. As the old saying goes, 'Women hold up half the sky.'"

Volenus was puzzled; he had never heard of such a strange old saying.

"What do you think about Acronis?"

"She... might be able to manage the Female Camp, but now our ranks exceed 15,000 people, and the kitchen affairs are very busy. If we lack her, I'm afraid..."

"Indeed, logistical support is vitally important at this stage..." Maximus gave up on making Acronis the Female Camp Captain, saying, "Don't worry, we'll find a suitable Head of the Female Camp in due time."

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The weapons workshop in Sarabia is not inside the city but to the south of the town, on the north bank of the Ophidus River. It is not just a single workshop, but a cluster of over a dozen houses large and small scattered along the riverside hollow, forming a small settlement.

When Maximus, accompanied by Capito, saw the weapons workshop from afar, he was genuinely taken aback.

Initially, when Volenus reported about the weapons workshop in Sarabia, he subconsciously thought it was a yard much larger than Pompey's blacksmith shop, but he didn't expect it to be a village.

Apart from being surprised, he couldn't help but feel puzzled, "The distance between here and Sarabia is not short. When we took Sarabia, we didn't know there was a weapons workshop here, so we didn't manage to take control of it promptly. Many blacksmiths and slaves here should have escaped, right? Did you then pick some blacksmiths and slaves from the city?"

Capito shook his head, saying, "Leader, this weapons workshop wasn't built long ago. Ordinary blacksmiths and regular slaves can't operate it. Only blacksmiths and slaves who have been in the trade for years can do it. Ilacus spent a considerable amount from Rome to find blacksmiths and buy slaves.

For fear of causing envy and loss from peers, he had these people live in the city, come out to work at dawn, and escort them back at dusk. We took Sarabia City at night, so the blacksmiths and slaves couldn't escape even if they wanted to."

"Haha, it seems we are lucky enough!" Maximus laughed happily.

"It's Fortuna's blessing!" Capito responded.

Capito's explanation made Maximus increasingly eager to inspect the weapons workshop, so he urged his horse and sped towards the destination.

Previously, the Maximus Army had specifically stationed a Centurion here, strictly prohibiting any strangers from approaching or entering, emphasizing its importance.

Surrounded by workshops, Maximus was overwhelmed by the deafening noises, the misty smoke before his eyes, and the burning smell in his nostrils... For a moment, Maximus felt dizzy and lightheaded.

At this point, a sturdy man with a blackened yet reddish complexion, dressed in a white robe, approached and rather politely said to Capito, "Sir... Sir..."

Capito gestured with his hand to the side, "This is our Leader Maximus. He came here specifically to see our weapons workshop. Are you ready?"

"Le... Leader!" The man became even more nervous, bowing deeply, "Welcome... welcome to your visit. We... we're all prepared."

Chapter 125: The Weapon Workshop

Maximus glanced at Capito.

Capito immediately introduced, "Leader, his name is Kadesos. He used to be a slave, but now he is appointed by me as the manager of this weapons workshop. The original manager was Ilacus's trusted aide, a Sarabian and Roman citizen, who was reluctant to work for us.

And Kadesos was his servant. As you can see, the environment here is not very good. The manager didn't like staying here, usually instructing Kadesos to do things, so Kadesos is more familiar with the workshop's affairs than the manager."

Maximus nodded in agreement, "You're right. The weapons workshop is very important to us, and only those who are aligned with us can be entrusted with significant positions!"

Then Maximus smiled broadly and affectionately patted Kadesos on his sturdy shoulder, "I know nothing about the weapons workshop, so I'll rely on you to show me around and explain everything in detail. Let me learn well."

"Y...yes, Leader." Kadesos was flattered and, after composing himself, cautiously asked in an inquiring tone, "Shall we go to the stone crushing room first?"

"I'll follow your arrangement," Maximus replied cheerfully.

Kadesos led Maximus and Capito towards the riverbank, followed closely by fully armed soldiers of the Personal Guard. They encountered many busy people along the way, who sensibly stepped aside upon seeing the formation.

Soon, they came to a tall building situated above the water channel, right next to the small hill on the west. The two-meter-wide channel introduced the gentle Ophidus River water, which became turbulent as it cascaded down from the hill, hitting a substantial wooden wheel beneath the building, producing a loud rumble and causing the paddles of the wooden wheel to continuously rotate under the impact of the water flow...

Seeing this, Maximus's mood suddenly became excited. He couldn't wait to step into the building, where he saw a large gear at the other end of the wooden wheel, spinning inside the building. This gear meshed with another smaller iron gear, which meshed with another iron gear, and through connecting rods... eventually extended an iron arm, ending with a large iron hammer. The interlocking gears resulted in continuous up-and-down movements of the iron hammer, smashing the iron ore laid below...

"This is the Water Hammer!" Maximus exclaimed involuntarily. In Campania, he had discussed water mills with Volenus and Scapula, but instead of seeing a water mill, he first encountered another ancient mechanism utilizing water power.

"Lea... Leader, please... step back a little, beware of flying stones!" Kadesos reminded with concern, having to raise his voice due to the rumbling noise within the building.

Maximus nodded, stepped back a few paces, and watched a few laborers nearby. They wore thick clothes with their heads wrapped tightly, slowly moving the boards full of iron ore. Only when all the ore was crushed did they pour it into a wooden frame, place new iron ore on the boards, and continue the hammering...

After staying only a short while, Maximus found his eardrums couldn't take it anymore. He quickly withdrew, rubbing his buzzing ears, and said, "We should get Spukala here to study the structure of this water hammer thoroughly."

"Leader, Spukala has been here before. Previously, when this water hammer malfunctioned, I invited him to fix it," Capito said.

"Oh, so you all knew about this fine thing and even kept it from me," Maximus said half-jokingly, half-seriously.

Capito responded earnestly, "Leader, I don't find this thing very good. I heard that building the water hammer requires a lot of manpower, but it often malfunctions, making repairs troublesome. Moreover, the fluctuating water levels of the Ophidus River greatly impact the water hammer...

Originally, Ilacus planned to build several more water hammers, widely used for forging melted iron, but probably due to these drawbacks, it was only used for the less technically demanding stone crushing."

"Oh, I see..." Maximus responded, but Capito's words didn't dampen his interest in the water hammer. As a modern person, he knew mechanical power was far more efficient than manpower and could better drive societal progress...

He was pondering this when, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed Kadesos hesitating to speak. He smiled and asked, "Kadesos, what do you think of this water hammer?"

Kadesos cautiously glanced at Capito.

"Speak freely! When it comes to iron processing and weapon crafting, Capito and I aren't very knowledgeable. You've been here for so long; you're the expert in this area. Your opinion is very important to us!"

Maximus spoke candidly, making Kadesos feel an unprecedented level of respect, and he felt a surge of warmth, blurting out, "I think the water hammer is excellent. It should not only be used for crushing stones but also for forging!"

"Oh, tell me more," Maximus encouraged.

"This water hammer was commissioned with a high price for Romans to build. I heard the master... Ilacus complain privately that the Romans, worried that the weapons and armor made here might surpass theirs, weren't too meticulous during construction, leading to frequent malfunctions. And our carpenters here lack the experience to repair it, so it gets out of use from time to time. But we have the gentleman who came that day (referring to Spukala), and there shouldn't be as many problems in the future.