

Perish 206

Chapter 206: Joint Deliberation System_2

From his heart, Maximus did not want to hand this position to Gaius, because this guy was always lackadaisical and did things half-heartedly. But with the establishment of each department this time, the scale was so large and the talent pool so small, the most suitable candidates, Capito and Volenus, already had their assignments. Looking around, only Gaius seemed barely suitable. After all, he was a senior member, with a long-standing history, and he had experience in material storage.

As for Magus, he was still too young, only 15 years old. While he could manage the finances, managing subordinates and gaining respect from the public would be difficult. Promoting him too quickly might not benefit his growth!

Gaius was stunned.

Although he was now the deputy supervisor of the warehouse, he was basically idle. He never cared much about it because, although he joined as a slave, he used to be a Roman citizen and had complex feelings towards Rome. Moreover, he never believed the rebel army could be a match for the Roman Army, so he drifted along with the tide, taking things as they came.

But now, the situation was different. They had arrived at a new place, with no more ties to Rome, and with vast fertile land here, everyone was pushing hard to build a new home. Watching those who joined later than him being given important roles, the long-suppressed ambition in Gaius's heart started to stir too. However, he knew well that Maximus's impression of him wasn't good, so he started to feel regret in recent days, cursing himself for not being more proactive in the past.

Unexpectedly, Maximus called out his name.

Afraid that his hesitation might leave Maximus with an unwilling impression, he sprang up and loudly declared: "Leader. I am willing to take this role as Financial Officer, and I will strive to do it well!"

Maximus was also surprised, seeing Gaius so enthusiastic for the first time, and then he smiled: "With you saying this, I can rest at ease! Let me recommend you a Deputy Officer, Magus, you will take on the role of Financial Deputy Officer, responsible for managing the treasury."

"Yes, Leader!" Magus replied loudly.

"Leader, with Magus guarding the treasury, I will be much more at ease." Gaius instantly flattered.

So, you old fellow also know how to flatter! ... Maximus thought to himself, maintaining a stern expression as he said: "How should the financial department collect taxes? From whom? How to allocate resources? How to pay the officials? ... We'll discuss these details later. But there's one thing you need to remember: the financial department holds the tribe's money and resources; it's the place most prone to corruption. You must strictly manage yourself and your subordinates, I don't wish to see any financial department personnel among the criminals judged by Sidonius in the near future!"

Gaius felt a chill in his heart and quickly assured: "Leader, rest assured, our financial department will be strictly managed, and such situations will never occur!"

"That's good." Maximus nodded.

After Gaius sat down, he glanced at Capito not far away, thinking: back then, when you were the warehouse supervisor, you were so domineering, never letting me intervene in anything! But now I'm on the rise again, a Financial Officer, oh, you'll come to me for favors in the future.

Capito seemed not to notice, his gaze remaining fixed on Maximus.

At this moment, Maximus made a gesture indicating everyone's attention and continued: "The next department is related to everyone, it's called the Civil Affairs Department."

"Civil Affairs Department?" Everyone whispered this unfamiliar term, pondering what it could mean?

"The Civil Affairs Department is a department for supervising and managing tribal officials, responsible for assessing the achievements of officials during their tenure, deciding whether they should be promoted, and recommending suitable talents for each position to me. It also assesses whether the citizens and officials in the tribe should be promoted in rank and given titles—"

Maximus paused and said: "Titles! I will talk about this later. The head of the Civil Affairs Department is the Civil Affairs Officer, equipped with two Deputy Officers and five subordinates. Karina, how about you take on this role as the Civil Affairs Officer?"

When Maximus mentioned this person's name, everyone was stunned: What?! The supervisor of the officials will actually be a woman?!

Karina herself was also dumbfounded: "Leader, you want me to be this Civil... Civil... Civil..."

Even she, usually straightforward, stammered at this moment, drawing laughter from inside the tent.

"Civil Affairs Officer!" Maximus said sternly, eyes scanning the crowd, and the tent immediately quieted down.

His gaze softened when it fell on Karina: "Karina, you have done an excellent job as the Female Camp Captain. Whether in encampment or marching, you've brought no trouble to the team, and your contributions have been immense in our successful arrival here.

However, as we settle down, everyone will get their share of land and have their homes. Naturally, the position of Female Camp Captain will be abolished... But I think you are daring and good at managing people, making you suitable to be the Civil Affairs Officer!"

"But I... am illiterate," Karina whispered, lacking confidence.

"If you are illiterate, you can find a literate Deputy Officer to assist you initially." Maximus said in a deep voice, "However, if the Civil Affairs Officer is illiterate, there will be people mocking in the future. So you are only a temporary Civil Affairs Officer now. You must learn to read and count within a year; otherwise, someone else will replace you in this position.

Are you willing to find a husband in the future, farm, and have children, living an ordinary woman's life? Or are you ready to accept this challenge and contribute more to our tribe alongside other officials? Give me an answer now."

"I am willing to be the Civil Affairs Officer!" Karina said resolutely.

"Good!" Maximus looked at this tall and steadfast Gallic woman with admiration: "I look forward to your future performance!"

As Karina sat down, she still felt a little dazed: she originally only wanted to be a warrior in the team, not expecting the reality to be so far from her wishes! Supervisor of the officials...!

Karina looked around, gradually revealing a trace of a smile: this should be very interesting!

"The next department is the Cultivation Department," Maximus continued, "Which has two parts. One is education. Our tribe will establish schools to teach our children to read, write, learn arithmetic, acquire various skills, and also undergo basic military training... Cultivating them as future talents of the tribe is the responsibility of the Cultivation Department.

The other responsibility is to establish and manage etiquette. Although our Nix Tribe is newly established, it is not an ordinary tribe and will have greater development in the future. We cannot be as barbaric and crude as other tribes. Therefore, there should be fixed etiquette between leader and officials, between officials, and between officials and civilians. Worshiping the gods should have rituals, and receiving foreign guests should have protocol...

This way, everyone understands etiquette, the tribe will have order, society will be stable, and it will also demonstrate our civilization to other tribes! The head of this department is the Ritual Officer, equipped with two assistants, and tentatively five subordinates—"

At this point, Maximus sighed: "Ideally, this Ritual Officer would be filled by a person with deep knowledge to fulfill the duties of the Ritual Officer well. I've looked carefully, and there is no suitable person among us—"

"Leader, may I recommend someone?" Volenus interjected.

Maximus recalled how Volenus had once replaced him to organize his subordinates in teaching children, students, and some soldiers literacy and arithmetic, and he instantly became expectant: "Go ahead."

"Among my subordinates, there's someone named Kefisofon, who used to be a scholar in Athens. Later, his family fell into decline, accumulating debt, unable to remain in Athens, and he thought to try his luck in Italy. Unfortunately, he was captured by pirates en route. Unable to pay the ransom, he was sold into slavery.

The purchaser was a major noble in Sarabia, intending for him to be a personal slave tutor for his children. However, when we occupied Sarabia, literate slaves like him were incorporated into the team to teach the children. Among all the teachers, he is the best teacher!"

Chapter 207: 20 Noble Systems

"Oh, I seem to have heard of this person's name." Maximus recalled for a moment and then asked, "Is he willing to work for us?"

"He teaches the children very seriously and has never shown any intention of leaving the ranks. I think he is quite happy staying with the team," Volenus said.

"Go call him over now, and I'll take a look at him first," Maximus said. After that, Volenus immediately got up and left the tent.

Maximus continued, "Let's discuss the next department, which is also the last one—the Military Department!"

Torrelugo, Camillus, and others immediately perked up.

"The responsibilities of the Military Department should be clear to everyone without me saying: training soldiers, managing the army, defending against enemies, and conducting operations," Maximus said word by word, "The Military Department has no general in charge—"

Quintus felt a slight disappointment in his heart. He quietly glanced at Flanitnus, who was sitting straight beside him, and quickly turned his attention back to Maximus's words.

"...instead, it is divided into three departments. One is the Staff Department, responsible for the regular training of soldiers, researching strategies and tactics, and formulating battle plans... Its chief is the Staff Officer, and Quintus will hold this position."

"Thank you, Leader!" Quintus's emotions returned to normal at this moment.

"The second department is the Military Affairs Department, responsible for specific matters within the army, including the statistics of military merits and promotions of ordinary soldiers... and so on. Its chief is the military officer, and Flanitnus will continue to serve in this role."

"Yes, Leader!" Flanitnus responded in a loud voice.

"The third department is the Arms Department, which is responsible for the storage and management of weapons and equipment in peacetime and the supply of food and materials in wartime. I'm temporarily without a candidate for the position of Arms Officer. Do any of you have recommendations?" Maximus asked, looking at Quintus and the others.

"Calvinus!"

"Lebilus!"

Quintus and Flanitnus almost spoke simultaneously.

This is interesting... Maximus suppressed his curiosity and said seriously, "Let's introduce their backgrounds first."

"You go first," Quintus demonstrated grace at this time.

Flanitnus did not decline, "Lebilus was also a Roman veteran and later became a slave to the army like me. When Capito became the warehouse supervisor, he once asked him to help in the warehouse, and later he stayed in the Supply Camp."

"Calvinus was also a Roman veteran and used to live near Tarentum Bay. After we occupied Sarabia, he joined the team and later stayed in the Supply Camp," Quintus quickly followed up.

Oh, it really is a coincidence... Maximus turned to the newly appointed Public Works Officer and said, "Capito, you should talk about the performance of these two."

Capito said with slight helplessness, "Leader, I'm very familiar with these two and even thought about recruiting them into the Public Works Department."

"It seems these two are indeed capable, and everyone is vying for them!" Maximus smiled, seeing that neither Quintus nor Flanitus made reckless recommendations out of personal interest.

"Lebilus works very hard and is quite diligent, while Calvinus is more mentally agile and sometimes comes up with good solutions to problems..." Capito gave a brief evaluation of the two.

Maximus thought for a moment and said, "The Arms Department has just been established and there's a lot to do. It requires someone who is hardworking and capable to lead, so let Lebilus serve as the Arms Officer and Calvinus as the Deputy Officer."

Just as Maximus made the decision, the tent curtain lifted, and Volenus walked in, followed by an old man with a partially bald head, a long beard, and a sleepy expression, clearly having been roused from slumber.

"Leader, this is Kefisofon," Volenus introduced.

Maximus directly asked, "Kefisofon, which school of Athens do you belong to?"

Kefisofon unhesitatingly replied, "Stoicism."

Since Maximus reincarnated into this world, the survival pressures had driven him to learn about local customs and culture from soldiers of the rebel army from all over the Mediterranean. Naturally, Athens, which once held sway over the Mediterranean, was of great interest to him, so he learned quite a bit about Athens, including Stoicism, which originated there.

Most Stoic scholars are very rational, open-minded, actively worldly, and adaptable, which is why this Kefisofon is so comfortably serving as a teacher within the ranks. This reassured Maximus quite a bit.

"Leader Maximus, may I ask why you want to design so many ceremonies within the tribe? Isn't this likely to create inequality among people?" Kefisofon asked in return, his eyes filled with curiosity as he stared at Maximus, clearly having been briefed by Volenus on the way.

Maximus replied solemnly, "Appropriate ceremonies can make people revere heaven and earth, understand hierarchy, and clearly know their position within the tribe, which allows the tribe to be orderly, the public to abide by laws, and have their own goals to strive for. I think what Athens lacked before was precisely ceremony; the government had no authority, and the people had no reverence. They could freely accuse and slander governors, and generals could act freely without obeying the governor's orders... Do you think such a situation is good?"

Kefisofon fell into deep thought and did not speak.

Chapter 208: 20 Noble System_2

Maximus briefly reiterated the responsibilities of the Cultivation Department and asked, "Kefisofon, are you willing to take on the role of Ritual Officer, educating the children into talents and teaching the people proper etiquette?"

"I'll give it a try." Kefisofon thought for a moment, then nodded in agreement.

Maximus reminded him, "Etiquette should be simple, not overly intricate—just effective. When I have time, we can discuss this together, draft some rituals for trial implementation, and if they prove suitable, then officially establish them."

Kefisofon nodded in understanding.

Maximus invited him to take a seat, then instructed Capito to quickly summon Lebilus and Calvinus.

Awakened from their sleep and told of their promotions, the two were overjoyed.

Once everyone was seated, Maximus began again, "Furthermore, the last department is the Medical Department. Its responsibilities extend beyond treating ailments to include improving the tribe's overall

medical capabilities and disease prevention. Horace, the position of Medical Officer is unquestionably yours!"

"Thank you for your trust, Leader!" Though grateful, Horace's face showed not joy but a solemn expression, as he felt the weight of the responsibilities.

Maximus continued, "All along, our team's medical abilities far surpass those of others—not just because we have good doctors, but also because we have excellent nurses. Nexia, you've made significant contributions here. I hope you'll take on the role of Medical Officer's Deputy, mobilizing more women to join, training them into skilled nurses. What do you think?"

"As long as the Leader believes I'm capable, then I must be capable." Nexia responded with a cheerful smile and playfully winked at Maximus.

Maximus quickly averted his gaze, coughed lightly, and spoke loudly, "Everyone, these are the nine departments our tribe is about to establish—"

"Wait a moment!" A woman stood up from the crowd. "Leader, what about the kitchen? Are we no longer keeping the kitchen?!"

Seeing Acronis—a steadfast supporter of his—looking anxiously distressed, Maximus felt a pang of guilt and softly said, "Acronis, I'm truly sorry. There were so many things to discuss earlier that I almost forgot you. I need a Chief of Internal Affairs here—would you be willing to take on this responsibility?"

"What's the Chief of Internal Affairs?" Acronis asked, bewildered.

"Simply put, it's managing my personal affairs," Maximus quickly explained, concerned that Acronis might refuse. After all, she currently oversees hundreds of people, yet as Chief of Internal Affairs, she'd only manage a handful—a stark difference that might be hard to accept.

"Alright, I'm willing to be the Chief of Internal Affairs!" Acronis agreed readily, catching Maximus off guard.

In truth, Acronis agreed with enthusiasm because she was from Egypt, having grown up near Alexandria. She had witnessed firsthand how the Pharaoh's favorites wielded power throughout the countryside. Having followed Maximus for some time and witnessed his brilliance many times, she firmly believed this young leader would certainly become a great figure. Being a close aide to the Leader was far more prestigious than any other position, especially since she harbored ulterior motives in her heart.

Still, she hesitated, asking another question, "Will our kitchen team be disbanded now?"

Maximus reassured her, "Indeed, now that we've settled down, everyone will eventually have their own homes and can cook their own meals. Eating together as a large group won't be necessary anymore. Additionally, those who follow you currently will likely receive land and focus on their own affairs in the future.

However, they have gained valuable experience in army food supply, and I believe Arms Officer Lebilus will select a few from your team to work as subordinates. In times of war when troops are deployed, they may even be reassigned to prepare food for the soldiers."

"Leader, we are indeed planning for this." Deputy Arms Officer Calvinus interjected.

Acronis' expression softened, then she asked, "As Chief of Internal Affairs, may I select a few subordinates?"

"Just two—not more," Maximus responded firmly, as having too many people serving just himself would leave a poor impression among the tribe.

Acronis, content, sat down.

"Acronis' reminder brought another department to mind that I have yet to announce—and that is the Secretary Department, responsible for drafting my orders, relaying messages, and recording meeting notes among other detailed tasks. This department has no Chief Officer, only subordinates who are collectively referred to as secretaries, typically young individuals like Akegu and Casius."

Upon hearing this, everyone realized it was a formal designation for the Leader's attendants and didn't pay much attention.

Akegu and Casius visibly perked up. Seeing Magus appointed as Finance Department Deputy Officer had initially made them envious. But before the meeting, Leader Maximus had confided to them: the Secretary Department may seem inconspicuous now, but it will play an important role in the future.

They hoped this assurance would prove true.

At this moment, Maximus declared loudly, "Fellow members, from tonight onward—Agriculture Department! Public Works Department! Commerce Department! Finance Department! Legal Department! Civil Affairs Department! Cultivation Department! Medical Department! Military Department!—Nix Tribe's nine great departments are officially established. Each Chief Officer must diligently plan for their respective department, lead their teams, and strive to fulfill their responsibilities. If every department prospers, the entire tribe will surely thrive and grow strong!" Maximus spoke with a smile and began clapping.

Prompted by his reminder, the crowd realized the significance of the occasion and joined in the applause to celebrate.

As the applause faded, Maximus reminded, "However, we're still living in temporary camps, squeezing into tents for sleep. Thus, we must continue our previous tasks. For instance, Acronis, you're still accountable for the kitchen... In the meantime, everyone can make time to prepare and plan for their new departments, undertaking any feasible preliminary work."

"Please pay attention—" Maximus raised his voice solemnly, "Above these nine departments, I've established the Political Affairs Hall, which can convene the Chief Officers of the nine departments at any time to discuss major and urgent matters concerning the tribe and resolve issues or challenges collectively. Additionally, I will convene a tribal assembly at the beginning of every month, where Chief Officers, Deputy Officers, key subordinates, several Legion Commanders, Deputy Legion Commanders, and the Guard Captain must attend. You may bring forth issues within your jurisdiction during the assembly for collective deliberation and resolution..."

The attendees felt invigorated, soon deep in contemplation.

Kefisofon listened intently, realizing Maximus had devised a governance system unlike anything he had encountered. It lacked a parliament, with nine departments encompassing all aspects of tribal life. The Leader's position was fixed and not subject to periodic elections, yet he convened officials to deliberate

and address matters together—it hardly seemed dictatorial and promised apparent efficiency... An elitist polity? Oligarchy?

As he pondered, Maximus continued, "Tribal Leader, nine departments, Political Affairs Hall, tribal assembly—this forms the governance system I've set for the Nix Tribe. But that's not all, as it pertains only to the upper echelons of the tribe. What about the ordinary tribespeople? If civilians always remain civilians, wouldn't our system mirror that of Rome or Persia?! So, what I've just outlined represents only part of the plan. Now, allow me to discuss the other part—"

Maximus spoke each word with clarity and authority, "That is—the Twenty Peerage System! These titles are rewards the tribe grants its distinguished citizens for their merits. The higher the title, the greater their contributions to the tribe. They will also receive larger rewards and deserve the greater respect of the people!"

Chapter 209: Dividing Land, Granting Titles and Collecting Taxes

Maximus loudly said, "The lowest rank of tribe members is Reserve Tribe Members. Most of us are born from slaves, so we will not keep slaves in the future. However, if we defeat and capture foreigners or if foreigners voluntarily join our tribe later, they will all be Reserve Tribe Members. Besides ensuring their right to survive, they temporarily do not enjoy other tribal rights. But as long as they work diligently for the tribe for three years, they will become Official Tribe Members of the tribe.

The rank above Reserve Tribe Members is that of ordinary tribe members. The tribe will allocate land to them, and they will enjoy the rights given by the tribe, but they must also fulfill some obligations of citizens, such as serving in the military and paying taxes—"

As Maximus said this, murmuring broke out inside the tent.

Maximus had somewhat anticipated this but pretended to be displeased as he shouted, "Any different opinions? Say them outright, don't whisper among yourselves!"

The tent was silent for a moment, then Volenus, pushed by those beside him, reluctantly said softly, "Leader, Roman citizens do not pay taxes, and many Greek City-States also do not pay taxes."

"That's right, Roman citizens do not pay taxes, but Roman province citizens have to pay heavy taxes. Rome uses provincial taxes to support its citizens, making itself stronger. Many Greek City-States may

not collect taxes during peacetime, but in the event of war, they impose direct taxes amounting to 20-30% of people's income, enough to bankrupt many..."

Maximus persuasively said, "When the tribe has a land tax, it has money to buy weapons and armor, can provide free food to starving tribe members during famines, can hire craftsmen and laborers to build roads and bridges, and can pay salaries to the tribe's officials, rather than expecting them to contribute to the tribe without compensation... Do you think these taxes should be collected?"

"They should be... they should be!..." came the responses from within the tent, eventually converging into a unified voice. Everyone agreed that Maximus had a point, especially with that last line.

"Leader, how much land can us ordinary tribe members be allocated?" Quintus asked the question everyone cared about most.

"Fifty mu!" Maximus replied without hesitation. He had considered this number for a long time, only solidifying it after making a particular decision today.

"Fifty mu!!" A gasp came from inside the tent.

For Quintus and Flanitnus, who were former Roman citizens, the land owned by early citizens of the Roman Republic exceeded fifty mu. But now, the land in Italy had been mostly split up, and the land forcibly allocated by Marius and Sulla to their soldiers was generally less than this acreage.

So they were surprised at the amount of land they were to receive. Not to mention people from other places, some of whom had never owned even a mu of land since birth, were completely stunned now: "How big a piece of land is fifty mu?!"

As everyone started to discuss excitedly, Acronis stood up again: "Leader, do we women get land allotted to us?"

"Of course you do, also fifty mu!" Maximus replied without hesitation, "As I've said before, the contribution you women have made to the team is evident. It's only right to allocate land to you, and no one will object. However, for women who join the tribe later or girls born in the tribe, we'll discuss whether to allocate land to them in the future."

In short, my opinion is that everyone in our team is an ordinary tribe member, and everyone gets fifty mu of land, but taxes must be paid! Children will wait until they are adults to be allocated land; otherwise, giving it to them now would be wasteful since they can't cultivate it."

Maximus paused and loudly asked, "Does everyone agree with what I said?"

"Agree!!!" everyone yelled in unison.

"Leader, what amount of tax do ordinary tribe members have to pay?" Quintus asked another question that everyone was concerned about.

"Ten percent of their annual land income," Maximus replied.

The group immediately started calculating: is that ten percent tax high or not?

In the end, they all thought it was acceptable.

Seeing this, Maximus intensified his tone and said, "Above ordinary tribe members are Second-class Tribe Members. As long as ordinary citizens kill an enemy in battle, they can be promoted to Second-class citizens and receive an additional ten mu of land—"

Instantly, the tent was in uproar.

Ignoring it, Maximus spoke even louder, "The rank above Second-class Tribe Members is First-class Tribesman. If a Second-class tribesman kills two enemies in frontal battle, they can be promoted to First-class Tribe Members and be allocated another twenty mu of land; a First-class Tribe Member who kills three enemies in frontal combat can be promoted to Knight and can receive another twenty mu of land!"

Maximus paused his speech because the tent had already erupted in excitement: "If you only need to kill six enemies, you can get another fifty mu! A total of one hundred mu, in Italy, only those nobles can own such a large piece of land!"

"Yes, one hundred mu is such a large piece of land! I'm afraid I won't be able to cultivate it all!"

"One hundred mu of land can produce a lot of grain. By that time, we can hire people with some of the grain to cultivate it!"

"Hey, that's a good idea!"

...

Maximus watched everyone's excited faces and secretly laughed to himself: This is just the beginning, and you're already overwhelmed; what will happen later?

Chapter 210: Dividing Land, Granting Titles and Collecting Taxes_2

"Ladies and gentlemen, do you still wish to hear me continue?!" Maximus shouted, and the crowd quickly calmed down: yes, the Twenty Peerage System! The leader had only begun explaining a few ranks, and it already sounded so promising—how much better would the higher ranks be!

Under the gaze of the expectant crowd, Maximus cleared his throat and, unhurriedly, said, "Reserve Tribe Members, Ordinary Tribe Members, Second-class Tribe Members, and First-class Tribesman will be the lowest four ranks in the Nix Tribe hierarchy, and their primary rewards will be land.

However, it's different for Knights. Knights have already entered the noble class of the tribe. Tribe members who become Knights should command respect among the ordinary populace, who must greet them courteously on seeing them. When vacancies arise in various departments and the army, they will be given priority consideration.

In local regions, if our tribe develops rapidly and has many villages, Knights can be prioritized to serve as village chiefs. Even if they are not village chiefs, the chiefs must still respect them when implementing policies, and must consult them on significant matters...

Above Knights are Barons, Viscounts, Earls, Marquises, and Dukes, forming a hierarchy of five noble titles. Each rank is divided into three classes, such as Third-class Baron, Second-class Baron, and First-

class Baron... In total, there are fifteen levels, each enjoying different tribal privileges. The most important privilege is the entitlement to revenues from estates.

What is estate revenue? For instance, a Third-class Baron may annually enjoy the revenues of one household estate. This means that beyond their own yearly farming income, they may also receive an income equivalent to the average yearly farming earnings of a tribal household. This could be grain or converted into money, both of which are provided directly by the tribe, and tax-free.

In addition, tribe members holding noble titles may be granted varying amounts of land by the tribe. They can access rare items unavailable to ordinary tribesmen; possess the privilege to meet officials directly—without interference from guards—and discuss political affairs with me; and hold important tribal positions, which are reserved for those with high-ranking noble titles...

Moreover, noble titles can be inherited by descendants. Children of high-ranked nobles may enjoy tribal privileges from birth and be groomed early for official roles."

The more Maximus spoke, the more enthusiastic the crowd grew. In the past, they hated nobles because they were the oppressed side. But now, when the opportunity arose to gain immense wealth, wield immense power, and benefit their descendants, no one could resist—no one could remain indifferent.

"Leader, how can we become Dukes... Dukes, Earls, or Barons? Is it still by killing enemies?" Torrelugo asked eagerly.

Everyone's gaze fixated on Maximus, their passion so intense it seemed as though it might engulf him.

"No." Maximus said solemnly, "Above Knights, noble ranks are no longer based on the number of enemies slain, but instead on leading armies to achieve victories.

For example, if a Knight-ranked Centurion leads a hundred-man unit to defeat an enemy force of equal size, he may be promoted to a Third-class Baron. However, if he leads an army and defeats only a hundred enemies, it would merely count as a small merit, and his noble rank would not be promoted—unless he achieves such minor victories consistently, in which case he might be considered for advancement. Conversely, if he commands an army and wins a decisive battle where the odds are

against him, exterminating a large tribe, then earning Dukedom or Marquess rank becomes far easier... In short, the greater the merit amassed, the easier it is to advance in rank!

As for the detailed conditions and rewards for noble rank advancement, I still need to discuss them with the Political Affairs Hall and the chief officers of various departments before announcing them in the tribe. The Military Department and Civil Affairs Department will directly verify military merits and report promotion candidates to me, so you must take the Twenty Peerage System very seriously."

Quintus, Flantinus, Lebilus, and Karina listened, their expressions a mix of tension and excitement.

"Leader, this seems a bit unfair. Does this mean that those of us who cannot participate in battle have no chance of earning noble titles?" Capito asked loudly, expressing the sentiments of many.

"Certainly not." Maximus replied solemnly, "Ordinary tribesmen who diligently farm and attentively herd livestock, producing excellent harvests or raising healthier cattle and sheep, will have their merits recorded by the Finance Department. The department will report these merits to me, and I will grant them promotions.

Of course, ordinary tribesmen can also focus on raising their children—making them strong and finding teachers to educate them with knowledge and military skills. When these children achieve great merits in the future, earning Dukedom or Marquess titles, their parents, naturally, would enjoy prosperity alongside them, wouldn't they?!"

"Yes!" Someone smiled knowingly.

"For ordinary officials contributing to tribal matters, those who consistently perform excellently in Civil Affairs Department evaluations can also earn promotions. However, their advancement would ultimately be limited to Knight rank.

To advance further, chief officers or deputy officers of departments must achieve great merits as well. For instance, Pigeris persuading a tribe to submit to us; Volenus teaching better farming techniques that significantly increase crop yields; Capito, under whose leadership the Public Works Department produces superior weapons and armor in high quantities, ensuring our army's advantage in battles; Sidonius compiling a perfected tribal legal code; Gaius leading the Finance Department to open new

revenue streams without harming the populace, greatly increasing our treasury's wealth... They could all qualify for noble titles!

Additionally, for individuals with exceptional talents, the Twenty Peerage System offers unparalleled opportunities! For example, Minujus, should you discover a method to cure a certain serious illness, you deserve a noble title! Like Spukala, if you improve the design of the Water Hammer to enhance blacksmith efficiency, you should rise in rank. If a farmer innovates a superior plow for faster cultivation, they should be promoted. If a blacksmith invents improved weaponry, they should rise in rank. If a carpenter builds ships better suited for navigating river battles here, they should rise in rank...

In short, any tribesman contributing to the tribe will be rewarded with promotions and noble titles! If you wish to prosper or elevate your status in the tribe, then strive to contribute more to the tribe!"

Maximus's words stirred everyone's emotions to a fever pitch, but there were still some dissenters. "Leader, the Twenty Peerage System sounds excellent—it's an institutional innovation unlike anything I've ever heard! However, it seems to favor the military. Soldiers and team officers can earn significant promotions simply by winning a few battles, whereas our achievements take far longer to materialize. This feels... somewhat unfair!"

"Unfair, how?!" Flantinus snapped at Capito, and the tension was palpable as years of camaraderie between the two seemed on the verge of breaking.

"Officials toil for half a year and may not even earn promotions, whereas soldiers can earn noble titles in just a few victories. The system appears more advantageous to the military." Capito said tightly. Maximus, with a stern expression, passionately countered, "But you must understand—ordinary citizens and officials only sacrifice time and effort, whereas soldiers sacrifice blood and lives in battle! Whether victorious or defeated, casualties are inevitable. It's entirely appropriate to award noble ranks generously to those ready to die defending the tribe! Moreover—"

Maximus intensified his tone: "In today's Mediterranean, wars abound. Every year, every month, there are tribes, nations, and races that falter and perish due to warfare. We are no exception—our current circumstances are no less dire!

The Roman Army may invade the mountains any time for revenge. Thus, we need a powerful army to resist them! The Pannonians to the north will not allow us to establish ourselves here. Thus, we need a powerful army to defeat them! Be it dividing land or awarding noble titles, we require more territories,

more people, and more wealth to bring greater benefits to everyone—and all this depends on a powerful army to expand our borders and awe the enemies!

The Twenty Peerage System aims to inspire every able-bodied man in the tribe to take up shield and sword, charge into battle, slay the enemy, earn merit, receive noble titles, and become heroes revered by the people and respected by the tribe!"

"Leader, perfectly stated!" Torrelugo started clapping, followed by Flantinus, Fesaros, and other military officers and commanders, who joined enthusiastically. Even Pequot and Quintus revealed excited expressions.