

Dead Men Do Tell Tales: Spendius, Mathos, and Autaritus in the Punic Army

Summary of the events leading to war (241)

- I. First Punic War ends, and as part of the peace Carthage evacuates Sicily
- II. Gisco, governor of Lilybaeum, ships back army in batches to Carthage
- III. Soldiers arrive and are sent to Sicca, a nearby town
- IV. In Sicca, soldiers tally up what they are owed and arrive at massive sums
- V. Carthaginian magistrates fail to successfully negotiate with the soldiers
- VI. Soldiers march on Carthage and camp at nearby Tunis
- VII. Gisco arrives to pay off some portions of the army
- VIII. Spendius and Mathos become the main advocates for rebellion and war with Carthage
- IX. The Libyans inquire about being paid, and Gisco tells them to shove it
- X. Mathos and Spendius arrest Gisco and the Carthaginians
- XI. Mathos calls the Libyan cities to revolt, war begins

Handout References

<p>(1) Polyb. 1.69.4</p>	<p>ἦν δὲ τις Καμπανὸς ἠὲτομοληκῶς παρὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων δοῦλος, ἔχων σωματικὴν δύναμιν καὶ τόλμαν ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς παράβολον, ὄνομα Σπένδιος.</p>	<p>“And there was a certain Campanian slave having deserted from the Romans, possessing bodily strength and who was taking risks in the war, named Spendius.”</p>
<p>(2) Polyb. 1.67.7-8</p>	<p>ἦσαν γὰρ οἱ μὲν Ἴβηρες, οἱ δὲ Κελτοί, τινὲς δὲ Λιγυστίνοι καὶ Βαλιαρεῖς, οὐκ ὀλίγοι δὲ μιξέλληνες, ὧν οἱ πλείους αὐτόμολοι καὶ δοῦλοι· τὸ δὲ μέγιστον μέρος αὐτῶν ἦν Λίβυες</p>	<p>“For some (in the army) were Iberians, others Celts, some Ligurians and Balearics, and not a few mixed-Greeks, the most of who were deserters and slaves. But the greatest portion of them were Libyans.”</p> <p><i>[By mixed-Greeks, Polybius probably means those like Spendius, who were from Greek Italy, but also Greeks who were living in Carthage (of which there existed a substantial number). That “most were deserters and slaves” is a reference to Spendius and is assuredly false.]</i></p>
<p>(3) Polyb. 1.69.6</p>	<p>ἅμα δὲ τούτῳ καὶ Λίβυς τις Μάθως, ὃς ἦν μὲν ἐλεύθερος καὶ τῶν συνεστρατευμένων, πλείστα δὲ κεκινηκῶς κατὰ τὰς προειρημένας ταραχάς</p>	<p>“And together (aka: with Spendius) in this was one Libyan Mathos, who was indeed free and (a member) of the army, but most of all had set in motion the later chaos as the instigator.”</p>
<p>(4)</p>	<p>ἀγωνιῶν οὖν μὴ τίση καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν λοιπῶν δίκην, ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς</p>	<p>“Fearing then (the Libyans) might bear the penalty also on behalf of the rest, he</p>

<p>Polyb. 1.69.6</p>	<p>ἐγένετο γνώμης τοῖς περὶ τὸν Σπένδιον.</p>	<p>came to be of the same mind in this as Spendius.”</p> <p><i>[That is, when the rest of the army was paid off, that the Libyans would be persecuted.]</i></p>
<p>(5) Polyb. 1.70.3</p>	<p>οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τῶν Λιβύων οὐδέπω κεκομισμένων τὰς σιταρχίας, οἰομένων δὲ δεῖν ἀποδεδοῖσθαι σφίσι, καὶ προσιόντων θρασέως, βουλόμενος ὁ Γέσκων ἐπιπλήξει τὴν προπέτειαν αὐτῶν, Μάθω τὸν στρατηγὸν ἀπαιτεῖν ἐκέλευεν</p>	<p>“But conversely the Libyans were not yet provided with their <i>σιταρχίας</i>, and thought it needed to be given to them, and approached boldly; Gisco, wishing to punish their insolence, urged them to demand it from their general Mathos.”</p> <p><i>[Here the Libyans demand their pay from the Carthaginian Gisco. The definition of σιταρχίας is unclear; it means either their pay or the funds provided to them for food and upkeep. The former would mean their salary, the latter just their cost of living.]</i></p>
<p>(6) Polyb. 1.66.6</p>	<p>...λαβόντας εἰς τὰ κατεπεῖγοντα χρυσοῦν ἕκαστον</p>	<p>“giving each (soldier) a golden (stater) towards their pressing (needs)”</p> <p><i>[At the end of the war upon reaching Carthage, all of the soldiers were each given a gold stater. A gold stater was perhaps enough to pay for food and essentials for a month or two, but was certainly not a proper salary. This was probably to feed the soldiers while they negotiated with Carthage.]</i></p>
<p>(7a) Polyb. 1.77.1 and Polyb. 1.77.4</p>	<p>Αὐτάριτον τὸν τῶν Γαλατῶν ἡγεμόνα and καὶ τοὺς μετ’ Αὐτάριτου Γαλάτας, ὄντας εἰς δισχιλίους</p>	<p>“Autaritus, the leader of the Gauls” and “and with him the Gauls of Autaritus, being two thousand (in number)”</p>
<p>(8) Polyb. 1.80.6</p>	<p>πάλαι γὰρ στρατευόμενος ἤδει διαλέγεσθαι φοινικιστί· ταύτη δὲ πως οἱ πλεῖστοι συνεσάινοντο τῇ διαλέκτῳ διὰ τὸ μῆκος τῆς προγεγεννημένης στρατείας.</p>	<p>“Since he had been serving a long time (in the Punic army), he had learned to pick up Phoenician, the language which the most of them were amenable to owing to the length of the campaign.”</p>
<p>(9) Polyb. 1. 69.12</p>	<p>καὶ μόνον τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο κοινῇ συνίεσαν τὸ βάλλε διὰ τὸ συνεχῶς αὐτὸ πράττειν</p>	<p>“And this phrase alone, “stone him”, (the soldiers) were mutually understanding because of the constancy of the act itself.”</p> <p><i>[The key here being that this was a Greek verb that was mutually intelligible to all.]</i></p>

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