

Pyrrhus, and he returned home with only one-third of his original force. Three years later Pyrrhus was killed in a battle at Argos, when an old woman, alarmed at the sight of Pyrrhus engaging her son in combat, hurled a heavy roof tile at Pyrrhus and struck him below the helmet, knocking him unconscious. An Argive soldier then cut off his head.

By 275 B.C., the Roman army had subdued all of the Greek city-states of Italy. Only the conquest and colonization of the Po River valley, shortly after 200 B.C., remained to complete Roman control of the Italian Peninsula.

### Roman Treatment of Conquered Italians

The Romans won the loyalty of the conquered Italians through lenient treatment. Although most subject states had to adhere to Rome's foreign policy, to supply troops for the Roman army, and to surrender 20 percent of their land (twenty-seven small Roman colonies were established in these lands by 250 B.C., thereby reducing Rome's population problems), the Romans demanded no tribute and allowed each state to retain its local self-government. Some cities were even allowed full Roman citizenship and given loot and land. Such leniency was extremely uncommon in the ancient world. As we have seen, the "enlightened" Greeks often slaughtered or enslaved conquered peoples. But Roman leniency in Italy proved extremely wise. During the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.), when Hannibal and the Carthaginians invaded Italy, their failure to entice Italians into widespread rebellion saved Rome and proved fatal to Carthage. As Camillus had once put it, "By far the strongest government is one to which men are happy to be subject."

## THE GROWTH OF REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT

Until 509 B.C., the Romans were ruled by monarchs selected by the Senate and approved by the people. The Senate was a council of 300 former officeholders called *patricians* (fathers) who advised the king. Nearly all of the senators were landed aristocrats.

After the Romans expelled Tarquin, they established an oligarchy. In theory, two *consuls* (colleagues) replaced the king as the city's executive and legislature. (Tarquin's reign had produced the fear of a single executive.) The consuls were elected annually from the patrician class by the people, subject to ratification by the Senate. But, in reality, since the consuls were fatally weakened by their fractured power (they could veto each other's decisions) and exceedingly short terms, the real power in the Roman republic was held by the life-tenured Senate, which decided public policy and controlled the treasury. The Senate could veto any actions taken by the consuls. If the consuls disagreed with each other, the Senate could make

executive decisions. The Senate also served as the supreme judicial body. During a time of emergency, the Senate had the power to substitute a dictator for the consuls for a period of six months. Common Romans, the *plebeians*, possessed very little power.

### Republican Reforms

Within a few centuries, however, Rome moved from an oligarchy to a more republican government, a system in which common people possessed a greater voice. In 494 B.C., short of grain and tired of fighting wars for the benefit of the patricians, the plebeians withdrew to Aventine Hill. They threatened to secede and establish their own city. As a compromise, the patricians then allowed the plebeians to elect two *tribunes*. Eventually, these tribunes, whose persons were sacrosanct (to strike them was considered both a political and a religious crime), were granted the authority to halt any Senate measures they considered unfair by walking into the Senate chamber and shouting, "Veto!"—Latin for "I forbid!" They could block any magistrate from exercising his office. They were required to maintain an open house and were prohibited from leaving Rome overnight, so that plebeians could request their aid at any hour. The number of tribunes was gradually increased from two to ten.

In 451 B.C., the plebeians demanded a written code of laws, so that consuls could no longer interpret Rome's customary law to suit their own interests. Drafted by ten aristocrats called the *decemviri*, the legal code was inscribed on twelve tablets and set up in the Forum for all to see the following year. Roman children memorized the laws. The Law of the Twelve Tables was the first landmark in the illustrious history of Roman law. Like most of its contemporaries, the code, which was largely formalized from existing oral law, was harsh, allowing enslavement for debt. But its terse sentences represent the first indication of the Romans' uncanny talent for legal definition.

In 445 B.C., plebeians were granted the right to marry patricians. (In practice, only a plebeian who had acquired some wealth would be acceptable to a patrician woman.) In 421 B.C., the office of *quaestor* (the consuls' finance manager) was made elective and opened to plebeians, and the number of quaestors was increased to four. (Previously, the consuls had appointed them.) In 367 B.C., one of the two consulships was reserved for the plebeians; in 342 B.C., the other was opened to them. In 326 B.C., confinement and enslavement for debt were abolished. Livy later referred to this measure as "a new birth of freedom," a phrase later immortalized in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

In the mid-to-late fourth century B.C., new offices were created and opened to the plebeians. Most of the new offices possessed powers previously held by the consuls. One office was that of *aedile* (supervisor of the

marketplace, public buildings, archives, traffic, water and grain supplies, and weights and measures and sponsor of games), while another was that of *praetor* (supervisor of courts). A third new office was that of *censor* (administrator of the census every five years, assessor of taxes, supervisor of public morals, awarder of state contracts, and confirmer of the lineage of senators). At about the same time, some wealthy plebeians (especially former officeholders) were admitted into the Senate.

In 300 B.C., every citizen was granted the right to appeal to the people against a death penalty. At about the same time, the college of *pontiffs* and *augurs* was opened to plebeians. The pontiffs presided over rituals and maintained the lore, while augurs recorded omens and predicted the future.

Most significantly, in 287 B.C. temporary dictator Quintus Hortensius transferred supreme legislative authority from the Senate to the *comitia tributa*, one of the Romans' three popular assemblies. The plebeians had gained each of these reforms by taking advantage of Rome's dependence on their military support. The patricians knew that if the plebeians refused to serve in the army, or left to form another city, they would be destroyed. The increased wealth of some plebeians also helped produce the reforms.

The Romans called the system of government that developed in their city a *res publica* (commonwealth). They believed it was a mixed government, a system in which the power of the one (in this case the two, the consuls), the few, and the many were balanced against one another. The Greek historian Polybius noted that the consuls needed to maintain good relations with the Senate because the Senate could block the flow of grain, clothing, and money to them in military campaigns, could replace them in the middle of a campaign if their year in office had expired, and could withhold triumphs and other prestigious awards. The consuls needed to maintain good relations with the people since they could find fault with the account that the consuls were required to submit at the end of their term and could reject the treaties they negotiated. Similarly, the Senate and the people were bound to one another by the Senate's control of lucrative contracts, by its dominance of the judicial system, and by the people's ability (through the tribunes) to veto the Senate's decisions. Likewise, the people needed to maintain good relations with the consuls since they served under them in the army.

But, although political power was certainly more balanced than it had been before the initiation of the republican reforms discussed earlier, the few still possessed more power than the many. The Senate still controlled the treasury. It could refuse to fund any measure passed by the *comitia tributa*. The patricians were also able to use their control of most Roman land to pressure many plebeians, including their own *clients* (various dependents, including tenant farmers, who worked patrician land for part of the crop), to vote the way they demanded. The patricians gave their clients jobs, protection, and legal aid (when called before the aristocratic

Senate) in exchange for their loyalty. Since most plebeians could not afford to hold office, because officials did not receive salaries, the patricians controlled most offices. Even the tribunes were hardly immune from their influence. The fact that tribunes and many other officeholders knew that they would automatically become members of the Senate after they left office often led them to support aristocratic interests. Similarly, the consuls, who were almost always patricians, who shared in the economic interests of that class, and who generally had relatives in the Senate, can hardly be considered to have served as an effective counterweight to that body. In addition, the balances between the consuls and the people were of unequal weight. A consul's fear that he might have a treaty rejected hardly balanced plebeian terror at the thought of opposing someone who, as a military leader, would have the power of life and death over them. Indeed, the imbalance between the patricians and plebeians was increasing at the very time that Polybius and Cicero were writing their odes to the Roman republic, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, the republic granted the plebeians greater rights than they had ever known. Hence, the plebeians felt that they had a stake in Roman military success. It is no accident that republics, such as Athens, Sparta, Rome, Carthage, France after the French Revolution, and the United States, have generally fought well.

## THE FIRST PUNIC WAR (264–241 B.C.)

### Carthage

The word "Punic" is derived from *Poeni*, the Latin term for the Carthaginians since Carthage had been founded as a Phoenician colony by settlers from Tyre. The Phoenicians had colonized the western Mediterranean (western Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Spain, and North Africa) by about 800 B.C. By 500 B.C., Carthage, located on the coast of what is now Tunisia, had become wealthy and powerful enough to dominate the other Phoenician colonies. The chief source of Carthaginian wealth was trade (especially in metals), and the chief source of Carthaginian power was a large navy. Thirty merchant princes played the leading role in governing Carthage. The Carthaginian senate, controlled by the aristocracy, possessed most of the power. The popularly elected magistrates (called *suffetes*) possessed only one-year terms, and the popular assembly was consulted only when the senators and *suffetes* could not agree. The Carthaginians possessed little art or literature. Their chief deities were Baal, a Canaanite-Phoenician god whose worship the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament had denounced, and Tanit, a fertility goddess who became more prominent after the fifth century

B.C. The smaller size of the Carthaginian population, when compared with that of Rome, forced Carthage to rely too heavily on mercenaries.

### The Cause of War

Rome and Carthage began to quarrel after the Romans conquered southern Italy, thereby extending their borders to within range of Carthaginian territory in Sicily. In 264 B.C., the First Punic War began as the result of a struggle over the strategic city of Messana (now Messina) on the northeastern tip of Sicily. When the Greek king Hiero II of Syracuse threatened to expel from Messana a group of Italian mercenaries called Mamertines, they begged both Rome and Carthage for protection. Carthage quickly provided troops. The Romans feared that if the Carthaginians controlled the Straits of Messina, the narrow strip of water that separates Sicily from the Italian mainland, they would be able to cross over into Italy without warning and to block Rome's most important sea-lane. Hence, the Romans dispatched an army, under Appius Claudius, to besiege Messana. Fearing that army, the Mamertines fooled the Carthaginian garrison into leaving the citadel and turned the city over to the Romans. After suffering a serious defeat at the hands of Appius Claudius, Hiero also defected to the Roman side, becoming the first of Rome's many client-kings.

### The War

The First Punic War was a bloody struggle that lasted twenty-three years. Some contemporaries believed that the Carthaginians' economic and naval superiority ensured their victory. In fact, the Romans possessed so few ships at the beginning of the war they had to borrow vessels from the Greeks in southern Italy just to transport their army to Messana. Yet, the Romans managed to construct a fleet and train its crews in just a few months. The Roman ships were modeled on Carthaginian vessels but were heavier and slower, since the Romans liked to keep soldiers aboard for grappling and boarding enemy ships.

After defeating the Carthaginians in a naval battle at Mylae (260 B.C.) through these tactics, the Romans suffered a serious defeat in North Africa (255 B.C.), from which they were forced to withdraw. The Romans then lost two complete fleets and 200,000 men (mostly allied soldiers) in a series of other naval battles and storms.

But, unable to admit defeat, the stubborn Romans rebuilt their fleet each time. Rome was a pit bull that would not release its grip on the enemy's leg, no matter how many times it was beaten on the head or offered the milk bone of peace. In 242 B.C., the Romans' third fleet, under Gaius Lutatius Catulus, defeated the Carthaginian navy off the Aegates, a group of islands near the western coast of Sicily. Based on the false assumption

that the Romans could not recover from the destruction of their previous fleets, the Carthaginians had allowed their own naval training to diminish. Meanwhile, the Romans had learned how to fight at sea. They had removed all nonessential equipment from their ships and had worked hard at rowing in unison. As a result, the Romans were able to sink 50 Carthaginian ships and capture 70 vessels containing 10,000 men at the Aegates. Although the Carthaginians had lost only 500 ships to the Romans' 700 during the war, they now faced the threat of another invasion. Carthage sued for peace on Roman terms.

### The Peace

Under Lutatius's treaty, Carthage was forced to surrender Sicily and 3,200 talents over a ten-year period. A few years later, taking advantage of a rebellion against Carthage launched by mercenaries and Libyan slaves, Rome seized Sardinia and Corsica and demanded another 1,200 talents. The Carthaginians were furious but were in no position to resist the Romans.

The islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were the first of Rome's overseas provinces, which it ruled less leniently than its Italian possessions. The provinces were taxed and disarmed. Sicily and Sardinia were placed under the rule of Roman praetors. Local leaders, operating under Roman direction, were allowed to continue governing the other provinces until 146 B.C., at which point they were replaced by Roman military governors, called *proconsuls* because they acted "for the consuls." The proconsuls ruled according to the Senate's stipulations, but the vagueness of the regulations created a tremendous opportunity for abuse.

## THE SECOND PUNIC WAR (218–201 B.C.)

The Roman republic reached its peak during the Second Punic War. In this war, waged against Rome's most formidable adversary, wealthy and powerful Carthage, the Romans demonstrated their most impressive quality: the ability to maintain their courage and determination in the darkest hours. The defeat of Carthage was crucial to Roman survival and, hence, to the transmission of Greco-Roman civilization throughout western Europe. Victory in that war also made possible Roman conquest of the rest of the Mediterranean world.

### The Causes

Although the First Punic War had weakened Carthage, the Carthaginians quickly regained their strength. Between 237 and 229 B.C., Hamilcar Barca, Carthage's greatest general, expanded Carthaginian territory in Spain.

(When the Romans asked Hamilcar what he was doing in Spain, he remarked snidely that he was fighting to obtain the money Carthage needed to pay its indemnity to Rome.) In 229 B.C., Hamilcar died covering a retreat that saved the lives of Hannibal, his brilliant son, and Hamilcar's staff. By 219 B.C., Hannibal (Grace of Baal) had further extended Carthaginian rule northward to the Iberus (now the Ebro) River. When news reached Rome that Hannibal had besieged Saguntum, an important Roman ally in Spain, the Romans were furious. When Carthage refused to repudiate Hannibal's act and turn him over to the Romans, Rome declared war (218 B.C.).

It is difficult to say which side was most responsible for the war. The Romans argued that, in besieging Saguntum, the Carthaginians had violated Lutatius's treaty, in which each side had agreed not to assault the other's allies. But Saguntum was not yet an ally of Rome when that treaty had been negotiated and, in a different treaty, the Romans had agreed that the area south of the Iberus River was a Carthaginian sphere of influence. Saguntum, which lay within that area, had been inciting other towns to resist Carthage—out of fear of the growing Carthaginian power and out of confidence that Rome would come to its aid. But while an examination of the treaties leads one to the conclusion that Rome was technically in the wrong, it is also true that the Carthaginians were exceptionally bitter toward Rome because of past humiliations and that both sides eagerly embraced the conflict.

### Hannibal's Expedition

It was thought that the Second Punic War, like the first, would consist largely of naval battles, with some ground combat in Spain. No one expected that the Carthaginians would attack Italy from the north. But the Romans had not reckoned with the fierce determination of Hannibal. When Hannibal was only nine years old, his father had made him take a solemn oath, on an altar to Baal, to oppose Rome his whole life.

Hannibal now collected an army of 90,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and 50 war elephants. He then subdued the tribes of northern Spain with remarkable speed. Leaving some troops behind in Spain under the command of his brother Hasdrubal, Hannibal then crossed the Pyrenees Mountains into what is now southern France with 50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and all 50 elephants.

One of Hannibal's greatest challenges lay in crossing the Rhone River, where the Volcae, a Gallic tribe, blocked his path. Hannibal secretly dispatched a party of his best men upstream to build a bridge and ford the river. They accomplished the task swiftly. The detachment then moved back downriver toward the Volcae, who remained unaware of their pres-

ence. When the detachment was in position, they informed Hannibal through smoke signals. Hannibal then began crossing the river. In their eagerness to slaughter the Carthaginians while engaged in a difficult river crossing, the Volcae rushed to the waterfront. The Carthaginian detachment that had forded the river then emerged from hiding and attacked the Volcae in the rear, throwing the whole army into utter panic.

Hannibal then faced the difficult task of leading his thirty-seven remaining elephants across the river. The elephants followed all of their Indian drivers' orders but one: they refused to go into the water. So Hannibal had rafts constructed and fastened to the docks in such a way as to appear to be mere extensions of the docks. The elephants confidently followed their drivers onto the rafts up to the edge of the water. Imagine their surprise when the rafts were cut loose from the bank, and they began to float across the river. Some panicked and overturned the rafts. Nevertheless, none of the elephants drowned, since they could hold their trunks above water to breathe and to discharge water. Many of the drivers were not so fortunate, however.

### Hannibal and the Alps

Hannibal then proceeded to the Italian Alps. Contrary to popular myth, the reason the Romans were surprised that Hannibal crossed the Alps to attack them was not because the Alps were impassable, though they were certainly difficult to cross. (The Gauls crossed the Alps constantly.) Rather, the Romans were surprised that Hannibal would risk so large an army by leading them through a mountainous area inhabited by Gauls, whom the Romans considered fierce and treacherous. But many Gallic tribes whom the Romans had treated harshly favored the Carthaginians. They supplied Hannibal and showed him safe passes through the mountains. (It is true that one tribe, the Allobroges, ambushed Hannibal, inflicting heavy casualties. On that occasion, wounded horses, laden with baggage, fell off the precipices or collided with those before and behind and with horrified soldiers, who plunged to their deaths. But the canny Hannibal defeated the tribe and took their city, thereby intimidating neighboring tribes into cooperating with him.)

Having ascended the Alps, the Carthaginians then encountered the problem of descending its steep, icy slopes. The elephants proved a mixed blessing; they terrified the Gauls, who had never seen such monstrous animals, but they were difficult to lead across mountain passes.

Hannibal managed to reach the Po River in northern Italy with 20,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and a bunch of skinny elephants. (There had not been enough grass in the snow-capped mountains.) It had taken him only five months to march from New Carthage (now Cartagena) in Spain to the Alps and only fifteen days to cross the mountains.

### The Battle of Trebbia

After Hannibal defeated a Roman cavalry force, Gauls serving in the Roman army rebelled and massacred Roman soldiers. Reinforcing his army with Gallic allies, Hannibal then routed 40,000 Romans, under Tiberius Sempronius Longus, at the Trebbia River (218 B.C.). In this battle, Hannibal employed what was to become his favorite tactic: he enticed Sempronius into an ambush. Hannibal ordered a small force to attack Sempronius and withdraw, thereby drawing him into a ravine. Hannibal's main force then attacked the Romans on all sides from its positions on the overhanging riverbanks. Hannibal then armed his force with the larger shields and sturdier swords captured from the Romans in the battle.

### The Battle of Lake Trasimene

Fearful of assassination attempts by treacherous Gallic chieftains (he even wore a collection of different wigs and other disguises to elude them), Hannibal then marched his men into Etruria via an obscure road that led through the marshes. The men traveled four days and three nights with little sleep, periodically collapsing on top of dead pack animals in order to keep above the water. Hannibal himself lost the vision in one eye from an infection exacerbated by sleeplessness.

By laying waste to the countryside, Hannibal managed to entice another Roman army, under the rash Gaius Flaminius, into pursuing and attacking him at a preselected position. Hills lay to Hannibal's left and Lake Trasimene to his right. Flaminius believed the hills provided sufficient cover for his flank. He was wrong. Aided by a thick mist, Hannibal had hidden detachments in the hills, who now fell on the Romans from the side and rear. Fifteen thousand Romans were killed, including Flaminius himself, and another 15,000 were captured. Hannibal lost only 1,500 men, mostly Gallic allies.

Hannibal's victories stunned and terrorized the Roman people. They had been so confident of victory that large numbers of them had followed Flaminius's army carrying chains and fetters in the hope of capturing Carthaginian slaves. Fortunately for Rome, Hannibal lacked the engines and supplies required for a siege, so he turned away from the city, crossed the Apennines, and ravaged Italy's Adriatic coast.

### The Strategy of Fabius

The Romans used the respite to declare a state of emergency and appoint the fifty-eight-year-old Quintus Fabius Maximus dictator. A religious man, Fabius improved public morale by attributing the Roman defeats to a lack of

piety, rather than to cowardice or ineptitude. Fabius wisely decided that Hannibal was too brilliant, and his Carthaginian veterans were too experienced (having fought with Hannibal in Spain for many years), for the Romans to oppose him in open battle. Fabius's strategy was to follow Hannibal but to avoid major engagements with him. Fabius knew that the Romans possessed two important advantages. First, while the Romans, as the native power in Italy, would always be well supplied, the Carthaginians would have to scavenge for supplies ceaselessly. Second, unlike the Romans, the Carthaginians could not easily receive reinforcements in Italy. Hence, Fabius kept his army intact and pounced on every small detachment Hannibal dispatched to forage for supplies. Through this war of attrition, Fabius gradually depleted Hannibal's force. Fabius kept to the mountains overlooking Hannibal's army—out of the reach of Hannibal's superior cavalry, but close enough to pounce on Carthaginian stragglers and foragers. Everywhere the victorious Hannibal marched, Fabius followed.

Fabius's strategy frustrated Hannibal. Hannibal could not defeat a force he could not fight. The losses Fabius inflicted on Hannibal's army were imperceptible to most observers, but not to Hannibal, who shared Fabius's farsightedness.

### Fabius under Attack

But Fabius's strategy was as unpopular in Rome as George Washington's Fabian strategy was in the United States during the Revolutionary War. (During the early years of that war Washington consciously followed Fabius's model in avoiding major battles with the better-trained and more experienced British soldiers.) Many Romans considered Fabius a coward. They called him "*Hannibal's pedagogus*" (a pedagogus was a male slave who walked his master's children back and forth from school). When Fabius's friends begged him to risk a battle in order to save his reputation, he replied, "In that case I should be an even greater coward than they say I am."

Hannibal was one of the very few who realized that Fabius's strategy was the wisest and the most dangerous to his army. Hence, in order to discredit Fabius's strategy among the Romans, he adopted the cunning tactic of sparing Fabius's country villa while laying waste to the surrounding countryside. As Hannibal expected, some Romans then charged Fabius with colluding with the enemy. Fabius shrewdly dispelled the charge by selling the estate and contributing the proceeds to the repayment of Rome's public debt.

But the Roman people remained frustrated. When Fabius moved to punish his rash subordinate, the cavalry commander Municius Rufus, for attacking the enemy against orders, the Romans appointed Municius codictator with Fabius. The appointment of codictators was an unprecedented act.

### Fabius Vindicated

Now freed from Fabius's wise restraint, Mucius allowed Hannibal to lure him into an ambush at Gerunium. Hannibal hid some of his men in the small ditches and hollows of a plain. When Mucius attacked his decoy force, situated on a hill, the other detachment came out of hiding and attacked the Roman force in the rear and on the flanks. If Fabius had not moved quickly to reinforce Mucius, he would have lost his entire force. After seeing the vigor of Fabius's successful counterattack, Hannibal told his aides, "Haven't I kept telling you that the cloud we have seen hovering over the mountain tops would burst one day like a tornado?"

To the credit of both men, Fabius did not gloat or criticize, and Mucius placed himself and the remnants of his army under Fabius's command. The strategy of Fabius, whom the Romans nicknamed "the Delayer," had been vindicated.

### The Battle of Cannae (216 B.C.)

Hannibal's greatest victory occurred at Cannae, on the southwestern Adriatic coast, when he had only a ten days' supply of food left and his Spanish allies were considering desertion. The Romans had ended the dictatorships of Fabius and Mucius and had transferred control of the armies to the duly elected consuls, Lucius Aemilius Paulus and Gaius Terentius Varro. Although Fabius was able to persuade Paulus of the wisdom of his defensive strategy, Varro was too ambitious to heed such warnings.

On one of Varro's days to command (the consuls alternated the command), he attacked Hannibal at Cannae with 80,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry. Hannibal possessed only 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Hannibal placed his army with its back to a strong, choking wind. The fighting was close and desperate, but Hannibal routed the Romans in the same fashion that Miltiades had routed the Persians at Marathon. He kept his center weak, filling it with Spaniards and Gauls, and kept his wings strong, filling them with his Carthaginian infantry and cavalry. Hannibal himself led the weak center, so that it held long enough to ensure that its feigned retreat did not occur too soon. When the Carthaginian center executed its cautious retreat, the Romans foolishly pursued too far too fast, thereby allowing the victorious Carthaginian wings, led by well-trained Numidian cavalry, to close in and slaughter them. Though well armored in front and behind, Roman soldiers were vulnerable on their flanks, which the Carthaginians struck with javelins.

Rather than taking advantage of his great numerical superiority to outflank the Carthaginians or to hold a force in reserve that might be sent wherever it was needed, Varro had massed the bulk of his army in the

center along a one-mile front, thereby fatally reducing his soldiers' ability both to get at the enemy and to escape Hannibal's trap. Varro compounded this error by filling his wings with his least experienced troops. (Because of the previous disasters at Trebbia and Lake Trasimene, the Romans were short of experienced soldiers.)

At Cannae, the Carthaginians slaughtered 50,000 Roman soldiers (including a bleeding and dejected Paulus, who refused a Roman soldier's offer of a horse for his escape) and captured another 10,000. Astonishingly, the Carthaginians lost only 4,000 Gauls, 1,500 Spaniards and Carthaginians, and 200 cavalry.

The Romans perceived the defeat at Cannae as the greatest calamity in their history. Looking for the cause of divine disfavor, they discovered that two of their priestesses called Vestal Virgins were no longer such; against one they carried out the prescribed punishment, burying her alive, while the other was allowed to commit suicide. Indeed, the Romans became so desperate for the favor of the gods they even briefly adopted the ancient Carthaginian practice of human sacrifice, burying alive a pair of Gauls and a pair of Greeks in the Forum. (Ironically, by that time the Carthaginians themselves had abandoned the practice of their Phoenician forebears of sacrificing small boys to Baal.)

Only the commanding presence of Fabius (and the guards he placed at the city gates) kept many citizens from fleeing Rome. In order to prevent the people's confidence from declining even further, Fabius even prohibited public lamentation for the dead. He also cut the property qualification for infantry service in half, and even offered 8,000 slaves their freedom in exchange for such service, in an effort to replace the army lost at Cannae. Better yet, because Hannibal now possessed fewer than 20,000 troops and was not equipped for siege warfare, he still did not march on the city.

The Battle of Cannae secured Hannibal's place as one of the greatest generals in history. Legends of his brilliance abound. Hannibal had once even outfoxed Fabius. Fabius had trapped Hannibal in a valley at Casilinum because Hannibal's guide, misunderstanding his Carthaginian accent, had led him to the wrong place. Hannibal ordered the guide beaten and crucified. There was only one pass out of the valley, and Fabius had posted a detachment to block it. But Hannibal had used nightfall and a clever ruse to mask his movements. The ruse had consisted of several thousand cattle with torches tied to their horns, which Hannibal stampeded in the direction of Fabius's camp. Fooled by the sound of so many thundering hooves and by the sight of so many flickering lights into believing that Hannibal was hurling his whole army at Fabius, the detachment at the pass had rushed to Fabius's aid, leaving the opening unguarded. Hannibal's army had then slipped through the deserted pass.

### The Loyalty of the Italian Allies

But Hannibal's impressive victories proved as futile as his pillaging of Italy. The Romans displayed their usual determination to persevere, and most of their well-treated Italian allies refused to join the Carthaginians. The Italians realized that they had little to gain and much to lose from a Carthaginian alliance. Except for the Gallic villages of northern Italy (which was not then considered part of Italy), only a few Italian cities joined the Carthaginians. (Rome put down these revolts between 211 and 209 B.C. Fabius captured Tarentum and massacred its inhabitants; Marcellus seized Syracuse on a festival night, but spared most of its inhabitants. It was in the latter siege that Archimedes unleashed his diabolical inventions on the Romans.) Naples even voluntarily contributed forty platters of gold to the Roman treasury.

The most remarkable and crucial fact about the Second Punic War was that the vast majority of Italians suffered death and destruction alongside the Romans for sixteen years rather than defect to the enemy. Their loyalty, combined with the gradual depletion of Hannibal's forces, undermined the Carthaginian war effort.

### Scipio's Spanish Victories

In 210 B.C., twenty-four-year-old Publius Cornelius Scipio was elected proconsul for Spain. The young man had fought his first battle at the age of seventeen. At the head of a troop of cavalry, Scipio had saved his wounded father from being surrounded. Scipio refused an award for his heroism, saying, "The action was one that rewarded itself." Having survived the rout at Cannae, Scipio had broken up a meeting of dejected officers who, considering Rome lost, were considering escaping overseas to serve as mercenaries for some king. As he was to do so many times, Scipio had reminded the officers of their duty and had inspired them with a new sense of confidence. After the Carthaginians defeated and killed Scipio's father in Spain, Scipio alone among the Romans volunteered to take the Spanish command.

Scipio then set about instilling confidence in the Roman people, the Roman soldiers in Spain, and the Spanish allies. His generosity soon secured the support of most of the Spanish tribes.

In 210 B.C., Scipio captured New Carthage, Carthage's greatest city and largest supply center in Spain. Overconfident after conquering nearly all of Spain, the Carthaginians had left the port city garrisoned by only 1,000 men. Discovering from local fishermen that the sea ebbed dramatically in the late afternoon each day, Scipio told his men that Neptune, the sea god, had come to him in a dream and promised aid. Scipio then assaulted the city from the usual approaches, attempting to scale its high walls. When

this conventional approach failed, and the hour came for the tide to ebb, Scipio dispatched a special force to scale the eastern wall. The soldiers were astonished by the rate at which the ocean was receding, thereby allowing them to set up their ladders and scale the wall. Remembering Scipio's promise of help from the sea god, the soldiers were greatly encouraged. The Carthaginians had left the eastern wall virtually unmanned, since they had not expected an attack from that quarter.

Scipio then defeated Hasdrubal at Baecula, an inland city in southeastern Spain, in 208 B.C. Doubting that Scipio would attack his strong position on a ridge, Hasdrubal had allowed his men to grow careless. Scipio used his heavy infantry to attack Hasdrubal's flanks, while his light infantry held the center. Hasdrubal lost one-third of his 25,000 men.

Scipio then won another important victory at Ilipa in 206 B.C. Near the end of each day, Scipio marched his soldiers out of their quarters in the same formation: his Roman legions were positioned in the center, his less reliable Spaniards on the wings. After staring across at each other for a while, each army would then return to its quarters. Then one day Scipio attacked the Carthaginian camp before dawn, with his Spaniards in the center and his Romans on the wings. The Carthaginians mustered in their customary formation, with the Carthaginians in the center and their Spanish allies on the wings. Thus, the Roman infantry and cavalry were able to fall on and rout the Carthaginians' Spanish allies. With their wings crushed, the Carthaginians were forced to retreat. The pursuing Romans slaughtered most of the fleeing Carthaginians. Out of the initial force of 70,000, only 6,000 Carthaginians escaped. Unlike many generals, both ancient and modern, Scipio understood the importance of pursuit.

Scipio's victory at Ilipa drove the Carthaginians from Spain and caused the defection of King Masinissa of Numidia (eastern Algeria) to the Roman side. Scipio had been cultivating Masinissa, the brilliant commander of Carthage's Numidian cavalry, ever since the Battle of Baecula. After the battle, Scipio had released Masinissa's young nephew, who had been captured when thrown from his horse, and dispatched him to his uncle on a charger, bearing a golden ring and draped in fine clothing as gifts of Scipio. When combined with Scipio's Spanish victories and Masinissa's disgruntlement with Carthage, Scipio's cultivation of Masinissa succeeded in securing an alliance that would pay huge dividends in North Africa. Because the Carthaginians did not treat their allies as well as the Romans did, they proved far less loyal.

### The Death of Hasdrubal

Forced from Spain, Hasdrubal moved to aid Hannibal in Italy. But in 207 B.C. the Romans, having intercepted a dispatch from Hasdrubal to Hannibal that

revealed his destination, surprised and routed Hasdrubal at Metauros in northern Italy. Out of 30,000 Carthaginians, 10,000 were killed, including Hasdrubal himself, to only 2,000 Romans. Another 10,000 Carthaginians were taken prisoner. Hannibal would get few reinforcements. His first inkling of the disaster came when the Romans flung his brother's head on the ground in front of his outpost.

### The North African Campaign

The Romans were now prepared to strike their first direct blow at Carthage. The Senate granted Scipio, fresh from his conquest of Spain, its reluctant permission to land a force in North Africa. The cautious (and perhaps envious) Fabius opposed the daring expedition so vehemently he would not allow funds to be voted for it. Scipio had to pay for the expedition out of his own income. Furthermore, the Senate assigned Scipio minimal forces. Aside from Scipio's own recruits, the Senate granted him only the discredited remnants of the Fifth and Sixth Legions, legions that had been decimated by Hannibal in the shameful defeat at Cannae.

But Scipio, who was fully aware that the rout at Cannae had been the fault of the imbecilic Varro and not the result of any cowardice on the part of the soldiers, was delighted to command these battle-hardened veterans. A master at instilling confidence in troops, Scipio now took full advantage of the intense desire of his soldiers to avenge their fallen comrades, to wipe away the personal humiliation and stigma of Cannae, and to reward Scipio's own faith in them. With his own recruits, Scipio filled these neglected legions to full strength for the first time in over a decade, a move that further restored the morale and the *esprit de corps* of the resurrected legions.

After a year of training and preparation, Scipio sailed for North Africa in 204 B.C. Using a peace conference to spy out the Carthaginian camp at Utica, he discovered that the soldiers' huts were wooden structures built close together. Therefore, Scipio attacked the camp at night, setting its buildings ablaze and slaughtering the bewildered soldiers who often emerged from their huts unarmed, thinking that the fire was an accident. When another Carthaginian army rushed in to help put out the fires, it, too, was ambushed and slaughtered.

Scipio then defeated another Carthaginian army on the plains before Carthage. The Carthaginians became so confused and panic stricken that they surrendered Tunis, only fifteen miles from Carthage, without a fight. After sixteen years of brilliant victories but no knockout blow, Hannibal was forced to return home to face the dire threat posed by Scipio's army.

### The Battle of Zama

In 202 B.C., Hannibal faced off against Scipio's legions at Zama, eighty miles southwest of Carthage. Both had about 40,000 troops, though Scipio's force was greatly superior in cavalry. The fact that Hannibal had never been defeated as a commander did not intimidate Scipio, perhaps because neither had he. In fact, when Carthaginian spies were caught lurking about his camp, Scipio ordered an officer to give them a personal tour of the place and send them back, an act of bravado that impressed Hannibal.

Hannibal planned to use his eighty elephants to launch the opening assault, hoping that their charge would disrupt the Roman lines. While his Carthaginian and Numidian cavalry held off that of the Romans and Masinissa, the Roman infantry would wear themselves out on the mercenaries and Carthaginian civilians Hannibal placed in the front lines. (Since the Carthaginians, unlike the Romans, did not require military service of their civilians, the Carthaginian civilians now pressed into service were poor fighters.) When the Roman infantry was exhausted from the sheer energy required to kill all of these worthless masses of troops, he would then unleash his trained veterans on them.

But Hannibal's cunning and ruthless plan was thwarted by a clever stratagem of Scipio. Recalling that the Carthaginians' elephants at Ilipa had become so confused at one point in the battle that they had charged into the Carthaginian center, Scipio ordered a tremendous blare of trumpets along the front lines as Hannibal's elephants charged to begin the Battle of Zama. Frightened by the trumpets, some of the elephants wheeled around and collided with Hannibal's Numidian cavalry. The other elephants followed the path of least resistance, the semicircular line that Scipio had purposely left open for them, where they were urged along by Roman darts and javelins, only to emerge and crash into the Carthaginian cavalry on the opposite side. Instead of wreaking havoc on the enemy, the elephants had scattered both wings of Hannibal's cavalry. Taking advantage of the chaos, Scipio's cavalry charged Hannibal's disoriented cavalry, driving the horsemen from the field and pursuing to ensure that they would not return.

Meanwhile, the rest of the battle proceeded as Hannibal planned. The Roman soldiers tired themselves killing mercenaries and Carthaginian civilians. Indeed, the civilians proved so cowardly, leaving the mercenaries to bear the brunt of the Roman attack, that the mercenaries finally turned on the civilians and struck many of them down. There were so many bodies and severed limbs, and there was so much gore on the ground, that the Romans had great difficulty maintaining their footing, much less advancing. When they were finally able to advance, Hannibal struck them with his well-rested veterans.

The Carthaginians then had the better of the battle, and victory seemed at hand, when Scipio's cavalry returned. Surrounded by Roman veterans and Masinissa's horsemen, the Carthaginian infantry was beaten to a pulp. Twenty thousand Carthaginians were killed, and almost as many captured, to the Romans' 1,500.

### The Peace

Under the terms of the treaty of 201 B.C., 500 out of the 510 ships of the Carthaginian fleet were towed out to sea and set ablaze, in what might be called the funeral pyre of Carthaginian supremacy. The Romans also forced the Carthaginians to pay a huge indemnity of 10,000 talents, to relinquish their war elephants, and to cede Spain and southern France to the Romans. Henceforth, Carthage could not wage war outside of Africa and could not wage war within Africa without Roman consent. Yet, such was the weakness of the Carthaginian position that Hannibal physically pulled an astonished Carthaginian senator from the podium when the senator proposed rejecting the treaty terms. Hannibal was amazed that the Romans did not kill or enslave every Carthaginian in retribution for his destruction of Italy. Rome now controlled all of the western Mediterranean.

Hannibal set about reducing corruption in the Carthaginian government and placing the city's finances on a sounder basis. Angered by his attacks on them, corrupt politicians and judges in Carthage joined with Roman senators led by Cato the Elder to accuse Hannibal of continuing to plot war against Rome. Against the protest of Scipio, Hannibal was called to Rome to stand trial on these charges. Hannibal fled to the Seleucid Empire, where he did indeed stir up opposition to the Romans. In 183 B.C., Hannibal poisoned himself when the king of Bithynia (in Asia Minor) surrounded his house with the purpose of killing him in order to win favor with Rome.

Scipio was given the title "Africanus" in honor of his North African victories. Some people wanted to make him a perpetual consul and dictator but he rebuked them. He even refused to allow statues of himself to be erected.

After helping to defeat the Seleucid king Antiochus III at Magnesia, Scipio was later tried on the preposterous charge of giving Antiochus favorable peace terms in exchange for a bribe, an accusation made by his implacable foe Cato the Elder. On the first day of his trial, which ironically fell on the anniversary of the Battle of Zama, Scipio stood and, with all eyes fixed on him, credited the gods for his famous victory. He then declared that he was going to the Capitol to sacrifice to the gods in order to "give them thanks for having, on this day, and at many other times, endowed me with both the will and ability to perform extraordinary services to the commonwealth." He added: "Such of you also, Romans, who choose, come with me and beseech the gods that you may have com-

manders like myself." The entire audience followed Scipio, leaving his accusers alone in a deserted Forum. Scipio refused to attend the rest of the trial, and the charges were dropped. He remained at his estate at Liternum, never visiting Rome again. Scipio left instructions that his body should be buried on his estate, where he died in 183 B.C.—ironically, the same year as Hannibal, his erstwhile foe and fellow enemy of Cato.

Shamelessly vindictive, Cato then succeeded in having Scipio's brother Lucius convicted of the same charge of accepting a bribe from Antiochus. When the praetor attempted to collect the imposed fine, which was equal to the alleged bribe, he discovered that the value of Lucius's entire estate did not equal the fine—strong proof of the brothers' innocence.

Just as Themistocles had been exiled by rivals after saving Greek civilization at Salamis, Scipio spent his final years, after saving the Roman republic at Zama, in a self-imposed exile caused by the less justifiable attacks of his own rivals. Like the democratic society of Athens, the Roman republic seems to have been far better at producing saviors than at dealing with the repercussions of their success. Invariably, winners in the quest for military glory had to deal with envious and suspicious competitors, men determined to level those who had grown so great as to pose a potential threat to other glory-seekers and to the republic itself. But, though no one can deny that the ancient republics displayed a disgraceful ingratitude to their military heroes, ingratitude proved less fatal than the alternative extreme of granting them excessive power, a mistake that would eventually play a leading role in the destruction of the Roman republic.

### THE LEGACY OF SCIPIO AFRICANUS

Scipio Africanus had succeeded in defending the Roman republic against the serious threat posed by Carthage and in setting Rome on the path to conquering and ruling the whole Western world. Ironically, Scipio's very success—the Roman victory in the Second Punic War—would ultimately contribute to the downfall of the republic and lead to the rise of the emperors.