

Chapter 3

War, Warfare and Diplomacy in the Republic

INTRODUCTION

International Anarchy

Romans lived in a dangerous neighborhood. The whole of Italy was an anarchic world of contending tribes, independent cities, leagues of cities, and federations of tribes. The Mediterranean world beyond Italy was not much different. During the period of Rome's emergence (ca. 500–300 B.C.) the Persian Empire had first consolidated its hold on the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean, and then lost it to Alexander the Great and the Macedonians. The Macedonian successor states of Alexander's empire fought each other to a standstill. They put down internal revolts and battled invaders.

Greeks fought with and against the Persians for two centuries. Individual Greek city states waged incessant wars with each other as did alliances of Greek states. Wars lasted for generations. The great Peloponnesian War raged in two phases from ca. 461 to 446 B.C. and from 431 to 404 B.C. During Rome's early years, the Phoenician colony of Carthage in Africa emerged as a belligerent, imperialistic power in the western Mediterranean, driving the Greeks first out of most of that area and then fighting centuries-long campaigns against them in Sicily. They waged similarly aggressive wars against the Berbers of north Africa. Continental Europe, although we know little about its detailed history in comparison with the Mediterranean world, was probably even less settled and certainly as warlike, to judge from the hoards of weapons, armor, and chariots that have been excavated by archaeologists and can be found in huge quantities in northern European museums. Historically, we know of the impact of warrior bands of Celts, who raided from Ireland to what is today Turkey. Fear of the Celts, *metus Gallicus*, was lodged deeply in Roman cultural perceptions and, as we will see, with good reason.

"All states are by nature fighting an undeclared war with all other states," said one of the speakers in Plato's dialogue the *Laws* (625e). A truer statement of the international situation might perhaps be that "*some* states are by nature fighting declared *and* undeclared wars with *some*, possibly many other states." The irony was (and is) that the absence of organized states leads to anarchy, but so does the existence of organized states. The harsh world of interstate anarchy of the

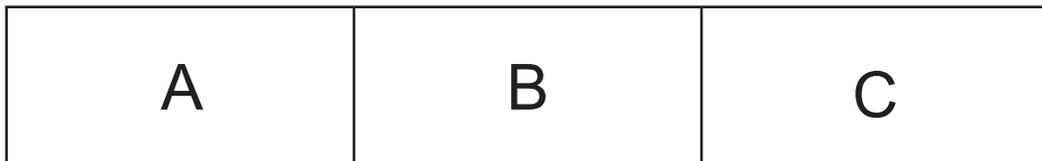
Mediterranean and European worlds fostered a culture of belligerence, militarism and aggressive diplomacy upon all parties. International law was minimal and, in any case, unenforceable. War “is a harsh instructor” said the Greek historian Thucydides, who witnessed the Peloponnesian War at first hand (3.82). If the Romans were good at war it was, in part, because they had so many, and such good teachers.

Living in an anarchic international environment, war, unsurprisingly, was a normal activity for Romans. When, in 235 B.C., the doors of the temple of Janus were temporarily closed (symbolizing peace), it was for the first time in 450 years. Why warfare played so large a role in early Roman history is partially explained by the vulnerable position of Rome in the middle of the Italian peninsula, and the presence of warlike peoples on all sides. Rome was located at a strategic crossing point in the lower reaches of the Tiber River at a site where a number of low hills offered opportunity for defense. There was another crossing point a little further upriver at Fidenae, but Rome was the ford of preference for just about all movement west of the Apennines. Whoever controlled this ford effectively controlled all movement in peninsular Italy. In turn, whoever occupied the site of Rome had to make a choice whether or not to defend the river crossing. It was a choice the earliest inhabitants of the site, and subsequently their descendants, had to make: Either defend the borders and maintain their independence, or become the slaves of whoever happened by. Ultimately this choice was at the root of Roman militarism.

Apart from its vulnerable geographic position, Rome had other problems. The city was wedged between the advanced and powerful Etruscan confederacy to the north, the Oscan pastoralists of the mountains to the north and east, and the Latin communities and Campania to the south. Of these, the most dangerous and warlike were the pastoralists of the Apennines. The Oscans pursued a way of life organized economically around the movement of their animals from lowland pastures in winter to highland pastures in summer, a system called transhumance. By contrast the peoples of the coastal lowlands, the Etruscans, Latins, Campanians, and Greeks, practiced settled agriculture. Italy was thus divided by a cultural and economic fault line into two, virtually incompatible ways of life. This does not mean that the Oscans and the rest of the inhabitants of peninsular Italy were constantly at each others throats, but rather that the possibility of conflict was built into the very structure of Italian society and economics. Even to use the term “Italian” is an anachronism. It was not until the ascendancy of Rome did any sense of a non-Roman, “Italian” identity begin to emerge among the non-Roman peoples of Italy. In the end this Italian identity was swallowed up in the more powerful Roman one.

The Advantages of Vulnerability: Central Place Location and Internal Lines of Communication

In all of its struggles, Rome had the advantage of central place location and with it, internal lines of communication. Rome was situated so that if it could succeed in holding off its enemies on one frontier while concentrating against the other, it had a good chance of winning campaigns for survival. This is reflected in the following hypothetical model:



“B” represents a country with potentially hostile neighbors “A” and “C.” Ideally diplomacy should enable “B” to prevent “A” and “C” from uniting and attacking simultaneously, but in a worst case scenario, with both “A” and “C” hostile, the key to “B’s” survival will be its ability to move its armies rapidly from one frontier to another. With luck, “B” should be able hold off one enemy while concentrating on the other. In both World Wars, Germany was in position “B” and was able to deploy its internal lines of communication and superior organization to good effect, nearly winning in both instances. Rome had to learn how to exploit its natural geographical advantages and organize its defenses accordingly. It was a process that went on for years. The building of the first Roman roads, the *via Latina* (built as early as sometime in the 500s B.C.) and the *via Appia* (312 B.C.), were stages in this development. Another was the construction of a series of frontier fortresses that acted as a protective perimeter far from Rome itself.

An obvious ally in Rome’s survival process was the successful conduct of diplomacy. Cynically, it is sometimes said, that Rome depended on a policy of “divide and conquer”—*divide et impera*—but such a policy of selfish realism would not have served Rome well in the long run.

Rome’s Social-Military-Political Complex

In democratized cultures it has been traditional to separate military and political careers and to insist that “the military” always be under civilian control. Romans would have regarded this practice not only as bizarre but hopelessly inefficient. A congress or parliament full of politicians who knew nothing about warfare or the governance of overseas provinces, and a military that knew only how to fight could only result in the bumbling, amateurish waging of warfare. For the Romans, a well-rounded leader had to have experience in both worlds. With the exception of a few purely civilian offices such as the tribunate of the plebs and the aedileship, all offices had military as well as civilian duties. All were elective. A man who wanted to be a general had first to be a politician. Candidates for leadership in Rome worked their way to the top through a series of militarized offices beginning with the military tribunate and ending with the consulship. This was the *cursus honorum*, the race track of honors. The Senate, composed of 300 ex-magistrates and led by the consulars (men who had held the consulship) was thus a very experienced body of military men who had years of experience in warfare and equal years of experience in civil society. At the same time, the *cursus honorum* was inextricably linked to Roman society through the household, whose honor and material possessions were enhanced by the successful military and political careers of its male members.

The Roman Military: “Participation Ratios”

In addition to clever use of geographic location and diplomacy, Rome had to rely on its army for its defense. As a *polis*, it had a built-in advantage of a socio-political organization extraordinarily well-adapted to waging war on a small scale. Relative to its population, perhaps no other form of state in history has been able to put a higher percentage of its male population in the battle line at any given time. In technical terms, the *polis* had a high participation ratio of total population relative to its military effectives.

Citizen soldiers as self-employed owners of their own homes and lands had a powerful incentive to defend their own possessions. Their economic wherewith enabled them to provide themselves with the necessary armor and arms for service in the ranks of legion as well as allowing them the leisure time to practice for war. In the political system they had a mechanism that allowed them to

debate war and peace with great efficiency so that when a war was declared the whole community was behind it.

Although structurally a *polis* Rome managed to escape the self-imposed constraints of the Greek version of the *polis*, which limited the size of its citizen population and the extent of its territory. Greek federations of *poleis* began to get around these limitations in the fourth century B.C., and such big leagues as the Aetolian and Achaean federations had significant military power. But in the end they were not centralized states, but simply strong federations. Rome's military and political genius was to create a centralized state that had the advantages of a federal state and *polis* state combined in one.

Over a number of centuries Rome evolved an extraordinarily powerful military machine built on its capacity to absorb into its commonwealth other cities and communities, thus augmenting both its population base as well as its economic resources and military strength. It has been estimated that after the Latin War (341–338 B.C.) and the subsequent incorporation of most of Latium into Rome, its territory increased by 37 percent and its population by 42 percent. This gave Rome resources that no *polis* state could match. Yet Rome did not lose the all-important ability of the *polis* to find the political will to fight its wars. Warfare is not simply a matter of military fighting power, but as much or more, the willingness of the community to sustain casualties once wars are decided on and their goals established.

The Legions

Warfare was a well-integrated aspect of Roman life. It was not just Rome's legions, or its leaders, or its ordinary soldiers that made Rome so formidable, though all of these factors were important. It was, rather, the special way in which social, political, moral, and religious elements interacted within the framework of the republican constitution (as discussed in chapter 2, introduction). The Republic combined a bewildering and contradictory capacity to exact unquestioning obedience from its conscripts as well as nearly total dedication from its upper classes. It possessed a political system that exercised its power quickly and efficiently, and an enviable ability to resolve internal conflicts. At moments when outsiders expected the state to collapse, it grew more compact. The Republic knew how to make and remain faithful to treaties. It understood the art of propaganda and the use of intimidation and terror. Intimidation eventually evolved into respect and fear. Centuries later, writing in about A.D. 390 in the late Empire, the Greek soldier Ammianus Marcellinus could say, "Even as Rome declines into old age... in every quarter of the world it is still looked upon as the mistress and queen of the earth; the name of the Roman people is respected and venerated."

Polybius provides us with a detailed account of the Roman army in the second century B.C. First, however, we must consider the early development of the army and some of the factors in its organization that Polybius did not consider. Although information is scant, it is probable that the Roman army initially modeled itself on the Greek phalanx, a heavy infantry unit which was designed to seize and hold ground. It was, at any rate, always a citizen militia, based on census qualifications. From one "levy" (or legion), the army expanded to four by the end of the fourth century. As citizen farmers, the soldiers were expected to supply their own arms and armor, and in the case of the cavalry, their own mounts. After the Celtic invasion of 390 B.C. which led to the defeat of the Roman army and the capture of Rome, a major reform is ascribed to the general Camillus, though in all probability the reforms took place gradually as a result of campaigns against Etruscans and Sam-

nites in the fifth and fourth centuries. Overall the reforms had the effect of making the army much less rigid than in the past. The phalanx was abolished and in its place each legion was divided into small units called maniples. There were 30 of these, each made up of two centuries commanded by officers called centurions. The maniples had 120 to 160 men, each armed with a short cut-and-thrust sword. Defensive armor was improved, and throwing javelins replaced the old, phalanx style thrusting spears. The legion depended henceforth on a very flexible tactical style of fighting that required a much higher degree of coordination and experience than in the past. Pay was introduced as part of the reforms. Another series of reforms took place in the second century B.C., when the 30 maniples were consolidated into 10 larger units called cohorts. These are known as the Marian reforms, initiated by the consul Gaius Marius, to enable the legions to stand up to the mass charges of German invaders in the period 115–105 B.C. They will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Cohesion and professionalism in the legions were provided largely by the centurions. These men were drawn from the ranks, not from the elite classes. These latter provided the higher officers, the consuls, quaestors (financial officers), and military tribunes. Centurions were not officers in the traditional sense of being outsiders from a different class who represented a potentially different set of interests from those of the enlisted men. They were, instead, rankers promoted on the basis of competence and trust. Unlike the officers who belonged to the legion as a whole, centurions were attached directly to the individual maniples, the tactical units of the legion. The introduction of pay that accompanied these reforms made them workable. A complete break with the past was thus achieved. The new legionary army was not the equivalent of the hoplite phalanx of a Greek city, which consisted only of those who could afford the necessary equipment for warfare. Instead, the legion more accurately reflected the integrated patrician-plebeian state of Rome, where the upper classes maintained control of the higher commands while the other classes supplied the bulk of the troops and some of its most critical sub officers, the centurions. Nevertheless, the Roman army was still a militia, an army of amateur citizen-soldiers. It was recruited and dissolved annually.

Roman Values

Unlike the United States before recent times, Rome did not enjoy the luxury of distance from those who would harm it. Its values inevitably reflected military priorities. Just a list of Latin words indicate where Roman values lay: *gloria* and *fama*, glory and fame, need no translation, even if in English they lack the force that, for instance, *gloire*, has in French. *Honos* and *dignitas* do not need translation either. *Severitas*, sternness, or seriousness was a prototypical Roman virtue. *Gravitas* and *auctoritas*, mean gravity and authority not in a legal sense, as though these qualities were awards bestowed by the state; they were, rather, acquired by a lifetime of devotion to the state in civilian and military affairs. *Industria* and *innocentia* mean diligence and integrity, again in a largely public sense of hard work on behalf of the community, self-control insofar as handling of people and public funds are concerned. The overarching term *virtus*, virtue, included all of the above. A virtuous Roman was one who handled his family affairs blamelessly and served the state diligently in civilian and military capacities.

These values tell us where the center of gravity of Roman society lay. Clearly it did not lie in either commercial success or professional accomplishment. Quite the contrary. Industry, trade and the professions were largely in the hands of non-Romans, slaves, or freedmen. Needless to say the values expressed by these words enshrine much ideology, but at least in the Republic there was a good deal of correspondence between ideology and reality. The early Roman state existed in a high-risk environment; it allowed little room for mistakes or feckless social behavior.

3.1 THE ROMAN APPROACH TO WARFARE

Early in its history Rome developed a reputation for its fighting abilities. It is still a popular belief that the Romans were uniquely bloodthirsty militarists and the legions were invincible. Neither is true. In the ancient Mediterranean world all peoples who had a polis-style government—and that included most of the opponents of Rome—were as highly militarized as were the Romans. Some of the non-polis people of the area—the Celts, Illyrians and Thracians, for example—were also formidable foes. The legions were not invincible; they were good but not necessarily superior to the armies of their enemies. Rome suffered some 95 major losses on the battlefield during the Republic. The limitations of the legions were a built-in function of the nature of Rome's polis state. Up to nearly the end of the Republic, the army was a citizen militia led by amateur officers with all of the strengths and weaknesses of such armies. Roman army commanders were more experienced than charismatic and had only a brief window of opportunity—the year of their consulship—to show their mettle. It took years for Rome to find someone who could take on Hannibal in the open field. Admittedly the citizens of Rome had a great deal more experience in war and warfare than do the citizens of modern states, but Rome did not succeed simply because the legions were efficient killing machines and the armies of their enemies were not. The story of Rome's military supremacy is to be found elsewhere, largely in Rome's first-class political culture which undergirded its military.

The Roman approach to war involved elements of glory seeking, enthusiasm, and greed, but a large amount of careful calculation also went into Rome's war making. Politics and the military were not separate spheres of activity. The Senate was a sober, calculating body made up of men who were at once statesmen, politicians, and generals. Even after the disaster of Cannae, when Rome lost possibly 50,000 men in a single day and the city seemed to be on its knees, the Senate was able to come up with a strategy to win the war, which amounted to bottling up Hannibal in Italy while attacking the Carthaginians elsewhere, beginning with Spain and then Africa. That decision took courage and cool thinking. Battles, too, were to a degree "rational"; they were not grand melées of infantry and cavalry milling about in disorder à la Hollywood, but calculated affairs in which units of soldiers were alternately fed into and withdrawn from the battle line. By conscious design and careful political and social engineering, Rome built up a manpower pool that could not be equaled. Cities, if they were to be looted, were to be looted systematically; frightfulness was practiced "rationally." The triumph at the end of a campaign was a calculated piece of theater aimed at animating the population—rich, poor, citizen or non-citizen alike—and instilling the belief that even after appalling losses, wars were worth fighting to the bitter end. Romans were proud to borrow techniques from other peoples, though the basic unit of the Roman army always remained the core of heavy infantry whose job was to scythe down the enemy and hold captured ground. This well-honed militaristic culture was not wholly different from what other states such as Carthage and Macedonia possessed; the Romans, with their hybrid political system, just went about the process of waging war more systematically, trained harder, and had stronger motivation.

Just War Rituals

For the Romans, as for most ancient peoples, a just war was one in which the gods were on their side—hence the importance of finding out whether this was, in fact, the case in particular instances. Livy provides an antiquarian's reconstruction of the ceremony that Romans believed allowed them

to wage war without provoking the anger of the gods. The reconstruction was based on the rituals of the priests (the *fetiales*) of his own day. According to Livy, Ancus Marcius, fourth king of Rome (ca. 625 B.C.), borrowed the rite from a neighboring people. Yet, after the passage of centuries, wars became too distant for the formula to be followed literally. At that point the Romans marked out a space of ground near the temple of Bellona (“The Goddess of Frenzy in Battle”) in the *Campus Martius* and ritually declared it to be non-Roman. Into this space the fetial priest hurled his spear while reciting the formula for declaring war. Although the just war ritual sounds formulaic, the need to believe the gods were on their side remained strong among those actually doing the fighting. The historian Dio suggests that the near rebellion in Caesar’s army in Gaul in 58 B.C. was inspired not only by the fear of their opponents, but also by the suspicion that he was waging war out of personal ambition—not because it was just (Dio 38.35).³¹

Just as king Numa had instituted religious practices for times of peace, king Ancus provided equivalent ceremonies for times of war **so that wars might not only be fought but also properly declared**. He borrowed the ritual from the ancient tribe of the *Aequicoli*. This is the law which the *fetiales* now have, and by which redress is demanded.

When the envoy arrives at the frontiers of the people from whom satisfaction is sought, he covers his head with a woolen cap and says: “Hear, Jupiter; hear, ye boundaries of”—naming whatever nation they belong to—“let righteousness be heard! I am the public herald of the Roman People. I come duly and religiously commissioned; let my words be believed.” Then he recites his demands, after which he calls Jupiter to witness: **“If I demand unjustly and impiously that these men and these things be surrendered to me, then let me never enjoy my native land again.”** These words he repeats when he crosses the frontier and again to the first person he meets when he enters the city gates. He repeats them yet again when he comes into the market-place, with only a few changes in the form and wording of the oath. If his demands are not met, at the end of thirty three days—for such is the conventional number—he declares war as follows: **“Hear, Jupiter, and thou, Janus Quirinus, and hear all heavenly gods, and ye gods of earth, and ye of the lower world; I call you to witness that this people”—naming whatever people it is—“is unjust, and does not make just reparation.** But regarding these matters we will take counsel of the elders in our country, how we may obtain our right.” Then the messenger returns to Rome for consultation. Immediately the king would consult the Fathers, in some such words as these: “In regard to the things, the suits, the causes, concerning which the representative of the Roman People has made demands on the representative of the Ancient Latins (*for example*), and upon the people of the Ancient Latins, which things they have not delivered, nor fulfilled, nor satisfied, being things which ought to have been delivered, fulfilled, and satisfied, speak,”—then turning to the senator whose opinion he was accustomed to ask first—“what think you?” Then the senator would reply: **“I hold that those things ought to be sought in a just and righteous war and so I consent and vote.”** The other senators were then asked the same question, in their order of rank, and when a majority was reached, war was agreed upon. It was customary for the fetial priest to carry to the frontier of the other nation a cornel wood spear, iron-pointed or hardened in the fire, and in the presence of not less than three adult men to say: “Whereas the tribes of the Ancient Lat-

³¹Livy 1.32. Based on the tr. of B. Foster (London: William Heinemann, Ltd. 1919).

ins and men of the Ancient Latins have been guilty of acts and offences against the Roman People; and whereas the Roman People has commanded that war be made on the Ancient Latins, and the Senate of the Roman People has approved, agreed, and voted a war with the Ancient Latins; I therefore and the Roman People hereby declare and make war on the tribes of the Ancient Latins and the men of the Ancient Latins.” **Having said this, he would hurl his spear into their territory.** This is the manner in which at that time redress was sought from the Latins and war was declared, and the custom has been received by later generations.

Clemency: “Romans Do Not, at First, Utterly Destroy a People”

To Romans, rebellion after a people had been defeated was a kind of perfidy, but it was different when an enemy was encountered for the first time. Flamininus, the Roman general who defeated the Macedonians at the battle of Cynoscephale 197 B.C., tells the assembled Greeks in the peace conference following the battle that it was Roman policy to be “moderate, placable, and humane” in victory. That comment, however, comes only after he says Romans did not destroy a people the “first time they fought them.” By implication, a rebellion after a defeat was treated with greater severity. The Aetolians, Rome’s allies in that battle and the implacable enemies of the Macedonians, wanted far more severe terms to be inflicted. Flamininus, in fluent Greek, gives the reasons why Rome thought otherwise.³²

Flamininus here took up the argument, and said that Alexander (*the Aetolian spokesman who had argued for severe measures*) was mistaken not only as to the policy of Rome, but also as to the object which he proposed to himself, and above all as to the true interests of Greece. **For it was not the Roman way to utterly destroy a people the first time they fought them.** A proof of his assertion might be found in the war with Hannibal and the Carthaginians; for though the Romans had received the severest provocation at their hands, and afterward had it in their power to do absolutely what they pleased to them, yet they had adopted no extreme measures against the Carthaginians. For his part, moreover, he had never entertained the idea that it was necessary to wage irreconcilable war with Philip; but on the contrary had been prepared before the battle to come to terms with him, if he would have submitted to the Roman demands. He was surprised, therefore, that those who had taken part in the former peace conference should now adopt a tone of such irreconcilable hostility. Was it, as seems evident, because they had won the battle? Yes, but this is the most senseless of arguments. For brave men, when actually at war, should be terrible and full of fire. **If beaten they should be undaunted and courageous. If victorious, on the other hand, they should be moderate, placable, and humane.** But your present advice is the reverse of all this. Yet, in truth, to the Greeks themselves it is greatly to their interest that Macedonia should be **humbled, but not at all so that she should be destroyed.** For it might chance thereby that they would experience the barbarity of Thracians and Gauls, as has been the case more than once already (*Macedonia buffered mainland Greece from unruly Thracians and Gauls*). He then added that the final decision of himself and his Roman colleagues was, that, if Philip would consent to fulfil all the conditions formerly enjoined by the allies, they

³²Polybius 18.37. Based on the tr. of E. S. Shuckburgh (London, New York. Macmillan. 1889).

would grant him peace, subject, of course, to the approval of the Senate, and that the Aetolians were free to take what measures they chose for themselves. Upon Phaeneas attempting to reply that “Everything done hitherto went for nothing; for if Philip managed to extricate himself from his present difficulties, he would at once find some other occasion for hostilities,”—Flaminius without rising from his seat, and said angrily, “Stop the nonsense, Phaeneas. **I will so settle the terms of the peace that Philip will be unable, even if he wished it, to molest the Greeks.**”

A Description of the Roman Army

As noted in the introduction, Rome modified its original tactical unit, the phalanx, at some point in the third century. The thrusting spear was replaced by the throwing javelin. This led inevitably to open-order fighting because hurling a javelin requires space between each soldier so equipped. The reformed legion was drawn up in three lines of 10 maniples. From front to rear these were hastati, principes, and triarii. Ahead of the legion was placed units of light infantry, the velites. The maniples were staggered to cover gaps in the line. The depth of the legion from the velites to the triarii has been estimated at about 100 yards. Its width would have been 200–250 yards. Once the javelins had been thrown the fighting continued with the gladius, a short cut and thrust sword. Celts and Germans, by contrast, used slashing swords.

The Roman army was an engineering army. After every day’s march, the legions set about building a marching camp. This provided protection in hostile territory and allowed relatively few soldiers to stand guard while the rest ate and slept. This technique helped the Romans to project their power far into an enemy’s territory and maintain good communications with rear areas. Supplies could be brought forward in an orderly way. The author of this reading is Polybius, who had seen the Roman army in action on many occasions.³³

The youngest soldiers, the *velites*, are ordered to carry a sword, javelins and a small shield. The shield is strongly made and large enough to protect the man, being round, with a diameter of three feet. Each man wears a helmet without a crest but covered with a wolf’s skin or something of that kind, for the sake both of protection and identification, so that the officers may be able to tell whether he shows courage or the reverse when confronting dangers. The spear of the *velites* has a wooden shaft of about three feet and a finger’s breadth in thickness. Its head is about nine inches, hammered and sharpened in such a way that it becomes bent the first time it strikes and cannot be used by the enemy to hurl back. Otherwise the weapon would be used by both sides.

The men next in age, the *hastati*, are under orders to wear full equipment. For a Roman this means, first, a large convex shield, four feet by two and a half feet. It consists of two layers of wood fastened together with glue. The outer surface is covered first with canvas, then with calf’s skin. On the upper and lower edges it is bound with iron to resist the downward strokes of the sword and the wear of resting on the ground. It has an iron boss to deflect the blows of stones, pikes and heavy missiles. With the shield they also carry a sword (**the *gladius***), called the Spanish sword, hanging down by their right thigh. **The sword is especially good for cutting and thrusting. It is strong and unbending, doubled bladed and has a sharp point. In addition they carry two javelins (*pila*), a**

³³Polybius, *The Histories* 6.22–39.

brass helmet and greaves.... Each man is decorated with a plume of feathers, purple or black, about a foot and a half long. The effect of these being placed on the helmet, combined with the rest of the armor, is to give the soldier the appearance of being twice his real height and to give him an impressive aspect calculated to strike terror into the enemy. The infantry men wear a small bronze breastplate over the heart. This completes their weaponry. Soldiers who have property worth more than 10,000 drachmae wear coats of mail (*loricae*) instead of breastplates. The *principes* and *triarii* are armed the same way as the *hastati*, except that instead of javelins they carry long spears (*hastae*).

The Centurions

The *principes*, *hastati* and *triarii* each **select twenty centurions according to merit**. All these sixty have the title of centurion alike, of whom the first man chosen is automatically a member of the council of war. The centurions in turn select a rear-rank officer each called an *optio*.... Each maniple selects two of their strongest and best-born men as standard-bearers (*vexillarii*). That each maniple should have two commanding officers is only reasonable. It is often impossible to know what a commander may be doing or what may happen to him. The necessities of war allow no slip-ups and the Romans are anxious that that the maniple never be without a commander. Hence, when the two centurions are both on the field, the first elected commands the right of the maniple, the second the left. If one is not there, the one who is there commands the whole unit. **They want their centurions not to be so much daring and adventurous as men with a capacity for command, steady rather than showy, not prone to launch attacks thoughtlessly and open the battle, but men who will hold their ground when hard pressed and be ready to die at their posts.**

The Cavalry and the Allies

Similarly they divide the cavalry into ten squadrons (*turmae*) and from each they select three officers (*decuriones*), who each select a subaltern (*optio*). The officer first selected commands the squadron, the other two having the rank of *decuriones*, a name which indeed applies to all alike. If the first *decurio* is not on the field, the second takes command of the squadron. The armor of the cavalry is very like that used in Greece... **no nation has ever excelled the Romans in their readiness to borrow new techniques from other people and to imitate what they see is better in others than themselves**....

The allies are mustered along with the citizens and are distributed and managed by the officers appointed by the consuls. They have the title of Prefects of the Allies (*praefecti sociorum*) and are twelve in number. These officers select for the consuls from the whole infantry and cavalry of the allies such men as are most fitted for actual service. These are called *extraordinarii*. **The whole number of the infantry of the allies is generally equal to that of the legions, but there are three times the number of cavalry.**

Guard Duty

The duty of going the rounds is entrusted to the cavalry. The first prefect of cavalry in each legion, early in the morning, orders one of his rear-rank men to give notice before

breakfast to four young men of his squadron who are to go the rounds. At evening this same man's duty is to give notice to the Prefect of the next squadron that it is his turn to provide for going the rounds until the next morning. This officer thereupon takes measures similar to the preceding one until the next day, and so on throughout the cavalry squadrons. The four men thus selected by the rear-rank men from the first squadron, after drawing lots for the watch they are to take, proceed to the tent of the tribune on duty and receive from him **written orders** stating which posts they are to visit and at what time. The four then take up their quarters for the night alongside of the first maniple of triarii, for it is the duty of the centurion of this maniple to see that a bugle is blown at the beginning of every watch.

When the time has arrived, the man to whose lot the first watch has fallen goes his round, taking some of his friends as witnesses. He walks through the posts assigned, which are not only those along the rampart and gates, but also the pickets set by the several maniples and squadrons. **If he finds the men of the first watch awake he takes from them their *tesseræ* (wooden tablets on which the watch-word was written). If, however, he finds any one of them asleep or absent from his posts, he calls those with him to witness the fact and passes on.** The same process is repeated by those who go the rounds during the other watches. The charge of seeing that the bugle is blown at the beginning of each watch, so that the right man might visit the right pickets, is as, I have said, laid upon the centurions of the first maniple of triarii, each one taking the duty for the day.

Each of the men who have gone the rounds at daybreak conveys the *tesseræ* to the Tribune on duty. If the whole number is given in, they are dismissed without question. But if any one of them brings a number less than that of the pickets, an investigation is made by means of the mark on the *tessera*, as to which picket he has omitted. Upon this being determined, the centurion is summoned. He brings the men who were on duty, and they are confronted with the patrol. If the fault is with the men on guard, the patrol clears himself by providing witnesses whom he took with him, for he cannot do so without. If no fault is found with the guards, the inquiry turns to the man who made the rounds.

The Court Martial

A court martial made up of the Tribunes is at once convened and the accused soldier put on trial. If convicted he is flogged. The method of flogging (in Latin the *fustuarium*) is as follows. The Tribune takes a staff and merely touches the condemned man. Thereupon all the soldiers attack him with clubs and stones. Generally speaking, men thus punished are killed on the spot, but if by any chance, after running the gauntlet, they manage to escape from the camp, they have no hope of ultimately surviving. They may not return to their own country, nor would anyone dare to receive such a fugitive into their house. Those who have once fallen into this misfortune are utterly and completely ruined. The same fate awaits the Prefect of the squadron, as well as his rear-rank man (the *optio*), if they fail to give the necessary order at the right time, the latter to the patrols, and the former to the prefect of the next squadron. **The result of the severity and inevitability of this punishment is that in the Roman army the night watches are kept faultlessly...** the punishment of flogging is assigned also to anyone committing theft in the

camp, bearing false witness, or acting as a male prostitute.... The following acts are considered cowardly and dishonorable: to make a false report of courageous behavior to the Tribunes with an eye to getting a reward; for men assigned to an ambush to quit the place assigned out of fear; for a man to throw away his weapons from fear on the field of battle. Consequently, it sometimes happens that men confront certain death at their stations because from fear of punishment awaiting them, they refuse to quit their posts. Others who have lost shield or spear or any other arm during a battle, throw themselves on their enemy in the hope of recovering what they have lost or of escaping by death certain disgrace and the insults of their relatives.

Decimation

But if it happens that a number of men are involved in these same acts—if for instance, an entire maniple has quit its position in the presence of the enemy—it is thought impossible to condemn the whole maniple to the *fustuarium* or to military execution. But a solution has been devised that is at once adequate for the maintenance of discipline and calculated to inspire terror. The Tribune assembles the legion, calls the defaulters to the front, and after administering a sharp rebuke, **selects five or eight or twenty of them by lot, so that those selected should number about a tenth of those who have been guilty of the act of cowardice.** Those selected are punished with the *fustuarium* without mercy. The rest are put on rations of barley instead of wheat and are ordered to take up their quarters outside the rampart and the protection of the camp.

Medals and Decorations

They have an excellent plan to encourage young men to face danger. When an engagement has taken place and any of them have shown conspicuous gallantry, the consul calls the whole legion to a meeting and calls up those he thinks have served with distinction. He first compliments each of them individually on his gallantry and mentions any other distinctions he may have earned in the course of his life, and then presents them with awards. **A decoration in the form of a spear** is given to any man who has wounded an enemy; **a cup styled decoration to one who has killed and stripped the armor of any enemy; a horse medallion if he is a cavalry trooper.** This does not take place in the case of having wounded or stripped an enemy in a set engagement, or the storming of a town, but in a skirmish or other occasion where there is no necessity for them to expose themselves to danger, they do so anyway. **In the capture of a town those who are first to mount the walls are presented with a gold crown.** So too are those who have protected and saved any citizen or ally are honored with presents. The person they have saved may voluntarily give them a crown, or if not, they are compelled to do so by the Tribunes. The man thus saved reverences his preserver throughout his life as his father, and is bound to act toward him as a father in every respect. By such incentives those who stay at home are stirred up to the noble rivalry and emulation in confronting danger, no less than those who actually hear and see what takes place. For the recipients of such rewards not only enjoy great glory among their comrades in the army, and an immediate reputation at home, but after their return they are marked men in all solemn festivals. They alone who have been thus distinguished by the consuls for bravery, are allowed to

wear robes of honor on these occasions. Moreover, they place the spoils they have taken in the most conspicuous position in their houses, as visible tokens and proofs of their valor. No wonder that a people whose rewards and punishments are allotted with such care and received with such feelings, should be brilliantly successful in war.

The Battle of Zama

The battle of Zama (202 B.C.) was the concluding and definitive battle of the Hannibalic War. We are lucky that Polybius, the historian whom we have to thank for the following account of it, had excellent sources, among them two of the commanders who actually fought at Zama. One was Gaius Laelius, Scipio's chief lieutenant, confidant and cavalry commander; and the other was Masinissa the commander of the allied Numidian cavalry. The description of the confrontation shows how much organization and battlefield control was exercised by commanders. Although the Roman army was a citizen militia, at least two of the legions at Zama had been in the field since Cannae 14 years earlier and were, in effect, professionals. Hannibal's aim was to wear down the Romans by forcing them to fight first through a line of elephants, then a line of mercenaries and a less dependable line of Carthaginians and Libyans. He held back for the final confrontation the veterans he had brought back from Italy with him. Polybius' plodding description does not do justice to the stakes involved and the high drama of the battle itself.³⁴

Scipio placed his men on the field in the following order: first the hastati, with an interval between their maniples; behind them the principes, but their maniples were not arranged to cover the intervals between those of the hastati as the Roman custom is, but immediately behind them at some distance, because the enemy was so strong in elephants. In the rear of these he stationed the triarii. On his left wing he stationed **Gaius Laelius with the Italian cavalry, on the right Masinissa with all his Numidians**. The intervals between the front maniples he filled up with maniples of velites, who were ordered to begin the battle; but if they found themselves unable to stand the charge of the elephants, to retire quickly either to the rear of the whole army by the intervals between the maniples, which went straight through the ranks, or, if they got entangled with the elephants, to step aside into the lateral spaces between the maniples.... Meanwhile **Hannibal had put his men also into position**. His elephants, which numbered more than eighty, he placed in the van of the whole army. Next his mercenaries, amounting to twelve thousand, and consisting of Ligurians, Celts, Balarrians (*from the Balearic Islands*), and Mauretanians (*Moroccans*); behind them the native Libyans and Carthaginians; and in the rear of the whole at a distance of somewhat more than 200 yards the men whom he had brought from Italy. His wings he strengthened with cavalry, stationing the Numidian allies on the left wing, and the Carthaginian horsemen on the right.

All arrangements for the battle being complete, and the two opposing forces of Numidian cavalry having been for some time engaged in skirmishing attacks upon each other, Hannibal gave the word to the men on the **elephants** to charge the enemy. But as they heard the horns and trumpets braying all round them, some of the elephants became unmanageable and rushed back upon the Numidian contingents of the Carthaginian army. This enabled Masinissa with great speed to deprive the Carthaginian left wing of

³⁴Polybius 15.9–16.

its cavalry support. The rest of the elephants charged the Roman velites in the spaces between the maniples of the line, and while inflicting much damage on the enemy suffered severely themselves, until becoming frightened, some of them ran away down the vacant spaces, the Romans letting them pass harmlessly along, according to Scipio's orders, while others ran away to the right under a shower of darts from the cavalry, until they were finally driven clear off the field. It was just at the moment of this stampede of the elephants, that Laelius forced the Carthaginian cavalry into headlong flight, and along with Masinissa pursued them vigorously. While this was going on, the opposing lines of heavy infantry were advancing to meet others with deliberate step and proud confidence, except, of course, Hannibal's "Army of Italy," which remained in its original position. When they came within distance the Roman soldiers charged the enemy, shouting as usual their war-cry, and clashing their swords against their shields, while the Carthaginian mercenaries uttered a strange confusion of cries, the effect of which was indescribable.... The whole affair was now a trial of strength between man and man at close quarters, as the combatants used their swords and not their spears. Superiority was at first on the side of the dexterity and daring of the mercenaries, which enabled them to wound a considerable number of the Romans. The latter, however, trusting to the steadiness of their ranks and the excellence of their arms, still kept gaining ground, their rear ranks keeping close up with them and encouraging them to advance. On the other hand the Carthaginians did not keep up with their mercenaries nor support them.... The result was that the foreign soldiers gave way and thinking that they had been shamelessly abandoned by their own side, fell upon the men in their rear as they were retreating, and began killing them with the result that many of the Carthaginians were compelled to meet a gallant death in spite of themselves (*The tactic was not shameful but calculated. Hannibal wanted the Romans to fight through two lines of infantry before confronting his most dependable troops which he kept rested 200 yards back from where the first phase of the battle was fought*). For as they were being cut down by their mercenaries they had, much against their inclination, to fight with their own men and the Romans at the same time; and as they now fought with desperation and fury they killed a good many both of their own men and of the enemy also. **Thus it came about that their charge threw the maniples of the hastati into confusion; whereupon the officers of the principes ordered their lines to advance to oppose them.** However, the greater part of the mercenaries and Carthaginians had fallen either by mutual slaughter or by the sword of the hastati. Those among the mercenaries who survived and fled Hannibal would not allow to enter the ranks of his "Army of Italy," but ordered his men to lower their spears and keep them back as they approached; and they were therefore compelled to take refuge on the wings or make for the open country.

The Second Phase of the Battle of Zama

The space between the two armies that still remained in position was full of blood, wounded men, and corpses; and thus the rout of the enemy proved an impediment of a challenging nature to the Roman general. Everything was calculated to make an advance in order difficult—the ground slippery with gore, the corpses lying piled up in bloody heaps, and with the corpses arms flung about in every direction. However Scipio caused the wounded to be carried to the rear, and **the hastati to be recalled from the pursuit**

by the sound of a bugle. He drew them up where they were in advance of the ground on which the fighting had taken place, opposite the enemy's center. **He then ordered the principes and triarii to form close order, and, threading their way through the corpses, to deploy into line with the hastati on either flank** (*these were complicated maneuvers*). When they had surmounted the obstacles and got into line with the hastati, the two lines charged each other with the greatest fire and fury. Being nearly equal in numbers, spirit, courage, and arms, the battle was for a long time undecided, the men in their obstinate valor falling dead without giving way a step until at last the cavalry divisions of **Masinissa and Laelius**, returning from the pursuit, arrived providentially in the very nick of time. Upon their charging Hannibal's rear, the greater part of his men were cut down in their ranks, while of those who attempted to fly very few escaped with their life, because the horsemen were close at their heels and the ground was quite level. On the Roman side there fell over fifteen hundred, on the Carthaginian over twenty thousand, while the prisoners taken were almost as numerous. Such was the end of this battle, fought under these famous commanders: a battle on which everything depended, and which assigned universal dominion to Rome. After it had come to an end, Scipio pushed on in pursuit as far as the Carthaginian camp, and, after plundering that, returned to his own.

Hannibal, escaping with a few horsemen, did not draw rein until he arrived safely at Adrumetum. He had done in the battle all that was to be expected of a good and experienced general. First, he had tried by an interview with his opponent to see what he could do to procure a peace and that was the right course for a man, who, while fully conscious of his former victories, **yet mistrusts Fortune, and has an eye to all the possible and unexpected contingencies of war.** Next, having accepted battle, the excellence of his dispositions for a contest with the Romans, considering the identity of the arms on each side, could not have been surpassed. For though the Roman line is hard to break, **yet each individual soldier and each company, owing to the uniform tactic employed, can fight in any direction, those companies, which happen to be in nearest contact with the danger, wheeling round to the point required.** Again, the nature of their arms gives at once protection and confidence, for their shield is large and their sword will not bend: the Romans therefore are formidable on the field and hard to conquer.

Still Hannibal took his measures against each of these difficulties in a manner that could not be surpassed. He provided himself with numerous elephants, and put them in the van, for the express purpose of throwing the enemy's ranks into confusion and breaking their order. Again he stationed the mercenaries in front and the Carthaginians behind them, **in order to wear out the bodies of the enemy** with fatigue beforehand, and to blunt the edge of their swords by the numbers that would be killed by them; and. **But the most warlike and steady part of his army he held in reserve at some distance moreover to compel the Carthaginians, by being in the middle of the army, to stay where they were and fight,** in order that they might not see what was happening too closely, but, with strength and spirit unimpaired, might use their courage to the best advantage when the moment arrived. And, if in spite of having done everything that could be done, he who had never been beaten before failed to secure the victory now, we must excuse him. For there are times when chance thwarts the plans of the brave;

and there are others again, when a man “Though great and brave has met a greater still.” And this we might say was the case with Hannibal on this occasion.

Sacking Cities and Distributing Booty

The Greek soldier and author, Xenophon, said that “It is a law established for all time among all men that when a city is taken in war, the people and their property belong to the victors” (Cyr. 7.5). There was, however, another reason for sacking a city: to terrorize enemy hold-outs into submission. Here Polybius uses P. Cornelius Scipio’s capture of New Carthage in Spain in 209 B.C. during the Second Punic War as an example of Roman frightfulness and simultaneously, of military discipline. New Carthage was the main Carthaginian base in Spain and its capture led eventually to the elimination of Carthaginian power in Spain. The same reading deals with the Roman method of distributing booty. The acquisition of booty was a major incentive to soldiers, but its collection and distribution had the potential to destroy the discipline and morale of a victorious army if the troops thought they were not getting their fair share of it, or if they were allowed to break ranks to acquire booty on their own. Scholars doubt that the Polybian model of city-sacking and booty distribution was consistently followed. There were loud complaints after the battle of Pydna (168 B.C.) when Aemilius Paullus, in the eyes of his troops, failed to distribute a fair share of the loot.³⁵

When Scipio thought that a sufficient number of troops had entered the town (*New Carthage*), he gave leave to the larger number of them to attack those in it, according to the Roman custom, with directions **to kill everything they met, and to spare nothing**; and not to begin looting until they got the order to do so. **The object of this is, I suppose, to strike terror. Accordingly, one may often see in towns captured by the Romans, not only human beings who have been put to the sword, but even dogs cloven down the middle, and the limbs of other animals hewn off.** On this occasion the amount of such slaughter was exceedingly great, because of the numbers of people in the city. Scipio himself with about a thousand men now pressed on toward the citadel. When he arrived there, Mago at first thought of resistance; but afterward, when he was satisfied that the city was completely in the power of the enemy, he sent to demand a promise of his life, and then surrendered. This being concluded, **the signal was given to stop the slaughter: whereupon the soldiers left off slaying, and turned to plunder.**

When night fell those of the soldiers to whom this duty had been assigned remained in the camp, while Scipio with his thousand men bivouacked in the citadel; and summoning the rest from the dwelling houses by means of the Tribunes, he ordered them **to collect all their booty** into the market-place by maniples, and to take up their quarters for the night by these several heaps. He then summoned the light-armed from the camp, and stationed them upon the eastern hill. Next morning the baggage of those who had served in the Carthaginian ranks, as well as the property of the city-folk and the craftsmen, having been collected together in the market-place, the Tribunes divided it according to the Roman custom among their several legions.

Now the **Roman method of procedure in the capture of cities** is the following: Sometimes certain soldiers taken from each maniple are told off for this duty, their numbers

³⁵Polybius 10.15. Based on the tr. of E. Shuckburgh (London: Heinemann, 1919).

depending on the size of the city; sometimes maniples are told off in turn for it: but there are never more than half the whole number assigned to the work. The rest remain in their own ranks in reserve, sometimes outside, at others inside the city, for taking such precautions as may be from time to time necessary. Sometimes, though rarely, four legions are massed together; but generally speaking the whole force is divided into two legions of Romans and two of allies. This being settled, all who are told off for plundering carry all they get, each to his own legion; and when this booty has been sold, the **tribunes distribute the proceeds among all equally, including not only those who were thus held in reserve, but even those who were guarding the tents**, or were invalided, or had been sent away anywhere on any service. But I have spoken fully before, when discussing the Roman constitution, on the subject of the distribution of booty, showing how no one is excluded from a share in it, in accordance with the oath which all take upon first joining the camp. I may now add that the arrangement whereby the Roman army is thus divided, half being engaged in gathering booty and half remaining drawn up in reserve, **precludes all danger of a general catastrophe arising from personal rivalry in greed. For as both parties feel absolute confidence in the fair dealing of each in respect to the booty—the reserves no less than the plunderers—no one leaves the ranks, which has been the most frequent cause of disaster in the case of other armies.**

War as Personal Vengeance: Caesar and Ambiorix

Two things are illustrated in the following reading. The first is that in the late Republic, warfare had become personalized in the sense that commanders in the field often campaigned with much more independence and self-assertion than had their predecessors in the days when the Senate was firmly in control of war-making. The second item illustrated is the emotional state of the Roman commander. We do not often get a sense of what individual Roman soldiers actually felt about war. Much of what we know is presented to us in carefully packaged form. In Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars, however, we have something different. Although that document has been carefully written for maximum propaganda effect, we can occasionally witness Caesar's emotions at work behind his coolly rational exterior. The opportunity to see this results from a disastrous incident during the wars in Gaul, when one of Caesar's legions was wiped out treacherously by Ambiorix, chief of the Eburones. Caesar's "honor" had to be slaked with devastation. The pursuit of Ambiorix took place in the difficult terrain of the Ardennes, the site of the future World War II Battle of the Bulge.³⁶

[53 B.C.] I now marched out again to harass the Eburones and sent out in all directions the large number of auxiliary cavalry I had gathered from the neighboring tribes. All the villages and all the buildings which they came across were set on fire. Cattle were collected from everywhere as booty. The grain, much of which had been flattened by the rains, was consumed by the large numbers of cattle and men involved in the campaign so that if any of the local inhabitants had concealed themselves for the moment, still, it seemed likely that they would **die of starvation** once the army had left. And it often happened with such a large a body of cavalry scouring the countryside that we took prisoners who claimed they had just seen Ambiorix in flight and that in fact he had not even passed out of sight. This raised the hope of overtaking him and unbounded exertions

³⁶Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*, 6.43; 8.24–25.

were resorted to by those who thought they would acquire the highest favor with me. They took enormous trouble, nearly overcoming nature by their exertions and always seemed to have just missed their quarry. **Ambiorix slipped away, hiding himself in ravines and forests.** Concealed by night he set off in new directions, escorted by only four horsemen, to whom alone he ventured to confide his life.

Two years later Caesar made yet another attempt to settle accounts with Ambiorix.

[51 B.C.] I myself set out to plunder and devastate the lands of Ambiorix. The chief was terrified and fled. In the end I was forced to give up hope of being able to get my hands on him. I then thought that the **next best thing to do**, and indeed **that which my honor demanded**, was to so thoroughly **strip Ambiorix's country of its inhabitants, buildings, and cattle as to make Ambiorix hated by any of his subjects who might survive. As a consequence, Ambiorix would never be able to come back to a state that had** suffered so much because of him. **Accordingly, I sent legionary detachments or auxiliaries throughout Ambiorix's territory to kill, burn, and loot.** There was total devastation. Large numbers of the inhabitants were either killed or captured.

3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF DIPLOMACY AND CONCILIATION

Like all ancient peoples, the Romans engaged in international diplomacy with other states. Given their vulnerable position in central Italy, Romans were forced at an early date to develop their diplomatic talents as much or even more than their war-making capabilities. Ancient historians and their readers preferred the specifics of campaigns and battles to the tedium of diplomacy, so we lack the kind of detailed history of treaty-making that would enable us to understand the degree to which Roman diplomacy contributed to its success, especially in Italy where Rome had to deal with hundreds of cities and ethnic groups. Certainly the Cassian Treaty between Rome and the other Latin states of Latium was of vital importance to the success of both Romans and Latins. Carthage appears early in Rome's diplomatic history. Polybius claims to have seen a treaty between Carthage and Rome and dates it to 507 B.C. the first year of the Republic. Scholars debate whether this treaty was simply a renewal of one that had existed between Carthage and the kings of Rome, or whether it belongs to a later date when there are references to another treaty between the two states. In either case it shows how Rome, as the most important state in Latium, dealt with an important—and later rival—state on the other side of the Mediterranean.

The Treaty Between Rome and the Latin States, 393 B.C.

The Cassian Treaty between Rome and the cities of Latium assumes the existence of trade rights, commercium, between Rome and the Latins. Another right shared among Latin cities was conubium, or the right to contract a legal marriage with someone from another state without either party forfeiting their inheritance or paternity rights. These two rights went a long way toward explaining why Rome and Latin poleis were not hamstrung by the narrow citizenship constraints found among Greek poleis, most of which jealously guarded their marriage and commercial rights

*and kept foreigners at arm's length. The treaty was seen by Cicero, so Dionysius' account of it is probably authentic.*³⁷

Between the Romans and the Latin cities there shall be a treaty as long as the heavens and the earth exist. Neither shall wage war or invite enemies from any place, or permit an enemy safe passage through its territory against another. When either is at war, the other shall give aid with all its forces. Both shall share equally in all booty and plunder taken in a common war. **In the case of private sales and contracts, judgments shall be given within 10 days in the courts of the city in which the sale was made.**"

Treaty Between Rome and Carthage, 507 B.C.³⁸

The first treaty between Rome and Carthage made in the year of Lucius Junius Brutus and Marcus Horatius, the first Consuls appointed after the expulsion of the kings, by which men also the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was consecrated. This was twenty-eight years before the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. Of this treaty I append a translation, as accurate as I could make it—for the fact is that the ancient language differs so much from that at present in use, that the best scholars among the Romans themselves have great difficulty in interpreting some points in it, even after much study. The treaty is as follows:

There shall be friendship between the Romans and their allies, and the Carthaginians and their allies, on these conditions: Neither the Romans nor their allies are to sail beyond the Fair Promontory (*in north Africa*), unless driven by stress of weather or the fear of enemies. If any one of them be driven ashore he shall not buy or take aught for himself save what is needful for the repair of his ship and the service of the gods, and he shall depart within five days.

Men landing for traffic shall strike no bargain except in the presence of a herald or town-clerk. Whatever is sold in the presence of these officials, let the price be secured to the seller on the credit of the state—that is to say, if such sale be in Libya or Sardinia. If any Roman comes to the Carthaginian province in Sicily he shall enjoy all rights enjoyed by others. The Carthaginians shall do no injury to the people of Ardea, Antium, Laurentium, Circeii, Tarracina, nor to any other people of the Latins that are subject to Rome. From those townships even which are not subject to they shall hold their hands; and if they take one shall deliver it unharmed to the Romans. They shall build no fort in Latium; and if they enter the district in arms, they shall not stay a night therein.

The Critical Decision of 338 B.C.: How Rome Handled Defeated Enemies

In all wars—ancient as well as modern—a key question for the victorious side was (and is) what to do with the defeated enemy. To be slaughtered, sold into slavery or reduced to helotry, or serfdom was not an uncommon outcome for the vanquished. The Romans, however, had a long tradition of sparing their enemies and eventually absorbing them into their political system by one method or another. After the Great Latin War of 340–338 B.C. which ended the ancient Latin League and the independence of Rome's Latin allies, a variety of techniques was employed. Some of the defeated were given

³⁷Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 6.95.

³⁸Polybius 3.22.

citizenship, others half-citizenship. Some were allowed to retain their original Latin citizenship. In a number of instances, land was confiscated and distributed to Roman citizens; in others colonists were sent out to occupy enemy towns while, at the same time, citizenship was conferred on their native inhabitants. The result for Rome was a spectacular increase in manpower from 165,000 to 250,000. The amount of available arable land went up three- or four-fold. More importantly, Rome was now in full political and military control of the resources of all of Latium. Livy prefaces the settlement with a made-up speech for the victorious consul Lucius Furius Camillus. The solution adopted in 338 B.C. became a template for Rome's behavior—with some notable exceptions—for the rest of its history.³⁹

“Conscript Fathers, what needed to be done in Latium by way of war and arms have now, by Heaven’s favor and the valor of our troops, been brought to a conclusion. . . . It remains to consider, since the Latins have caused us so much anxiety in the past by a renewal of hostilities, how we may hold them quietly in a lasting peace. The immortal gods have given you such absolute control of the situation as to leave the decision in your hands as to whether Latium is henceforward to exist or not to exist. In so far as the Latins are concerned you are therefore able to assure yourselves of a permanent peace either by the exercise of punishment or forgiveness. . . . **You may choose to blot out all Latium and make a vast desert of those places from where in the past you have often raised a splendid army of allies and used it through many a momentous war. Or you may follow the example of your fathers and augment the Roman state by receiving your conquered enemies as citizens.** You have at hand the means of becoming great and supremely glorious. That kind of government is certainly by far the strongest to which its subjects yield obedience gladly. But whatever it pleases you to do, you must determine it promptly because you are holding so many peoples in suspense between hope and fear. While they are still benumbed with apprehension it is imperative that you deal as soon as possible and with clarity with your own anxiety and theirs, whether by way of punishment or kindness. Our task as consuls was to give you the power to decide regarding everything; it is yours to determine what is best for yourselves and for the state.”

The leading senators praised the motion of Camillus on the national policy, but said that, **since the Latins were not all alike, his advice could best be carried out if the consuls would introduce proposals concerning the several peoples individually as each deserved leniency or punishment.** Accordingly they were dealt with one by one. The Lanuvians were given citizenship and their worship was restored to them, with the stipulation that the temple and grove of Juno Sospita should be held in common by the citizens of Lanuvium and Rome. The Aricini, Nomentani, and Pedani were received into citizenship on the same terms as the Lanuvians. The Tusculans were allowed to retain the civic rights which they enjoyed, and the charge of renewing the war was laid to a few ringleaders without injury to the community (*that is, the people of Tusculum retained their original Latin citizenship*). The Veliterni, Roman citizens of old, were severely punished, because they had so often revolted. Not only were their walls torn down, but their senate was carried off and commanded to dwell across the Tiber. . . . Colonists were settled on the senators’ lands, and on their enrolment Velitrae regained its former appearance of having a large population (*the future emperor Augustus was from Velitrae*). A colony was also sent to Antium with an understanding that the Anti-

³⁹Livy 8.13–14.

ates might be permitted, if they wished to enroll as colonists. Their warships were taken from them and their people were forbidden access to the sea; they were granted citizenship. The Tiburtines and Praenestini were deprived of territory, not only because of the fresh charge of rebellion brought against them in common with the other Latins, but because they had once, in disgust at the power of Rome, united in arms with the Gauls, a race of savages. **The rest of the Latin peoples were deprived of the rights of mutual trade and intermarriage** (*the important rights of commercium and conubium had been key factors in holding Romans and Latins united in the old, now dissolved, Latin League*), **and of holding common councils.** The Campanians, out of recognition that their knights had not agreed to revolt along with the Latins, were granted citizenship **without the suffrage.** So too were the Fundani and Formiani, because they had always afforded a safe and peaceful passage through their territories. It was voted to give the people of Cumae and Suessula the same rights and the same terms as the Capuans. Some of the ships of the Antiates were laid up in Roman dockyards, and some were burnt and a motion was passed to employ their bronze beaks for the adornment of a platform erected in the Forum (*this was the speakers' platform*). This place was dedicated with augural ceremonies and given the name of Rostra or The Beaks.

3.3 DECLARING AND WAGING WAR

How the Wars with Carthage Began

Mercenaries in antiquity had a reputation for being undependable and opportunistic. Syracuse (in Sicily) used mercenaries from Campania (in Italy) in its wars with the Carthaginians. These Campanians called themselves "Mamertines"—Sons of Mamer, the Oscan form of Mars. When given an opportunity, the Mamertines seized for themselves Messana, another Sicilian city. Across the straits from Messana yet another group of Campanians who were used by the Romans as a garrison for Rhegium now imitated the Mamertines, and with their assistance, took over Rhegium. The Romans eventually recovered Rhegium and executed the Campanians they captured. The Syracusans likewise turned on the Mamertines and besieged Messana. Deprived of their allies in Rhegium, the Mamertines began to debate what to do.⁴⁰

Some of them began to appeal to the Carthaginians, and were for putting themselves and their citadel into their hands, while others set about sending an embassy to Rome to offer a surrender of their city, and to beg assistance on the ground of the ties of race which united them. The Romans were **perplexed** for a long time. The inconsistency of sending such aid seemed manifest. A little while ago they had put some of their own citizens to death (*the Campanians had enjoyed a form of Roman citizenship since the previous century*) with the extreme penalties of the law, for having broken faith with the people of Rhegium and now so soon afterward it seemed difficult to excuse the injustice of assisting the Mamertines who had done precisely the same to Messana as well as Rhegium. But while fully alive to these points, they yet saw that Carthaginian aggrandizement was not confined to Libya but had embraced many parts of Spain too and that Carthage was, besides, mistress of all the islands in the Sardinian and Tyrrhenian seas.

⁴⁰Polybius, 1.10. Based on the tr. of E. S. Shuckburgh (London: MacMillan, 1889).

They were beginning, therefore, **to be exceedingly anxious lest, if the Carthaginians became masters of Sicily also, they would find them very dangerous and formidable neighbors. They would surround them on every side and occupy a position which commanded all the coasts of Italy. Now it was clear that, if the Mamertines did not obtain the assistance they asked for, the Carthaginians would very soon take over all of Sicily.** For should they accept the invitation of the Mamertines and become masters of Messina, they were certain before long to crush Syracuse also, since they were already lords of nearly the whole of the rest of Sicily.. The Romans saw all this, and felt that it was absolutely necessary not to let Messina slip, **or allow the Carthaginians to secure what would be like a bridge to enable them to cross into Italy.**

Before the Romans could respond, the Carthaginians arrived in Messina and occupied the citadel. Meanwhile the Romans concluded their debate and war was declared (264 B.C.). An expeditionary force was sent to Sicily and Messina was occupied by the Romans. Shortly afterward, Syracuse became an ally of Rome. The war concluded in 241 B.C. with the victory of Rome and its allies and the evacuation of Sicily by the Carthaginians.

The End of Macedonia: The Third Macedonian War (171–167 B.C.)

In comparison to the scanty information available for the outbreak of the First Punic War, the declaration of the Third Macedonian War is relatively well documented. We have the narrative of Livy, which relies on Polybius' excellent account, as well as an important inscription from Delphi dating to around 171–170 B.C., contemporaneous with the outbreak of the war. The views of all sides are well represented—Romans, Greeks, non-Greeks and Macedonians.

When Perseus succeeded his father Philip V to the throne of Macedonia in 179 B.C. he began the restoration of Macedonian strength by improving relations with Greek cities and the Hellenistic king of Syria. However, in 172 B.C., Perseus' great enemy, Eumenes II of Pergamum, travelled to Rome to try to persuade the Senate of the danger of Perseus. Already suspicious of growing Macedonian power, the Senate declared war. The following account shows how complex a world the Senate had to deal with. The document provides an interesting and accurate account of the declaration of war, the recruitment of the army, and the assignment of the generals. The role, and especially the number of allies involved, deserves special attention. Rome, emphatically, did not fight alone.⁴¹

The Diplomatic Situation: The Kings and the Free Cities

When Publius Licinius and Gaius Cassius were consuls (171 B.C.), not only Rome and all of Italy but even all the kings and states in Europe and Asia began to be concerned over the possibility of war between Macedonia and Rome. King Eumenes of Pergamum (*in western modern Turkey*) was motivated by his former enmity against Macedonia. Recently he had been further provoked to anger by an assassination attempt (*by Perseus, King of Macedonia*) on him at Delphi. Prusias, King of Bithynia (*northwest Turkey*), had decided to stay out of the quarrel and await the outcome. **Prusias thought, on the one hand, that the Romans would not expect him to take up arms against his wife's brother (i.e., Perseus), and, on the other, that if Perseus won he could straighten it out with him through his sister.** The king of Cappadocia (*eastern Turkey*), Ariarathes,

⁴¹Livy 42.29–35.

apart from the fact that he had promised help to the Romans, was tied to the policies of Eumenes of Pergamum in both war and peace because of his marriage connection with that monarch.

Antiochus of Syria was threatening the kingdom of Egypt, seeing, an **opportunity** in the youth of its king and inactivity of his guardians. He expected to have a cause for war by raising disputes in Lebanon and to be able to wage it without the interference of the Romans, who would be busy in Macedonia. However, **for this present war he had promised everything to the Senate** through his ambassadors to Rome and personally to Rome's own ambassadors. Ptolemy (*king of Egypt*), on account of his age, was still under guardians: these were preparing for a war with Antiochus in which they hoped to obtain Lebanon. **They too promised Rome everything** for the coming war with Macedonia. Masinissa (*king of Tunisia*) was helping Rome with grain and was getting auxiliaries and elephants ready to send under the command of his son Misagenes. Nevertheless, he was ready for any outcome. If the Romans obtained victory, then nothing would change. He could not, for instance, expand at the expense of the Carthaginians, because Rome would not permit it. But if Rome lost against Perseus, then all Africa would be his....

This is what the **kings** were thinking regarding the coming war. Among **free peoples and cities the masses chose, as usual, the least advantageous side**, favoring Perseus and the Macedonian cause. **Among the elites there was a division of opinion. Some were so enthralled with the Romans as to undermine their own authority by undue partisanship. A few of them were taken by the justice of Roman rule. The majority thought that if they could do some special favor for Rome they would become more powerful in their own states.** A different group was enthusiastic in its support of Perseus. This included some who, because of **debt and the desperate state of their own affairs if things remained unchanged, were committed to revolution.** Others in this group, because of their flightiness of character, were swept along by popular opinion in favor of Perseus.

Finally there was the group that was also the **worthiest and most circumspect**. They took the position that **if they had to be under someone's dominion, they would rather be under the Romans than under the Macedonians; but if they had a truly free choice, they would prefer that neither side become more powerful by the downfall of the other**, but rather that, the strength of both sides being undiminished, an equitable peace should continue....

The Vote for War

On the day they entered their magistracy, the consuls, by the decree of the Senate, offered sacrifices of full-grown victims at all the temples where the *Lectisternium* was accustomed to be held during the greater part of the year. **Feeling confident that their prayers had been accepted by the immortal gods, they reported to the Senate that the sacrifices and prayers for the war had been properly offered.** The entrail inspectors also responded to the Senate, saying that if some new enterprise was going to be undertaken, it should be done right away. **Victory, triumph, and the expansion of the empire were predicted.** The senators, with the traditional wish that affairs might be of

good omen and fortunate for the Roman people, ordered the consuls to present to the Centuriate Assembly, convened on the first available day, the following resolution:

That whereas: (1) Perseus, son of Philip, King of Macedonia, has attacked allies of the Roman people and has devastated their lands contrary to the treaty made with Philip his father and renewed with himself, and whereas (2) he has undertaken plans for war against Rome, and gathered arms, soldiers, and a fleet. Be it resolved: unless he offers satisfaction for these infringements, a state of war exists between Rome and Macedonia.

The measure passed by vote of the people.

The Order of Battle

Next the Senate passed a decree ordering the **consuls** to arrange with each other the assignment of the provinces—Italy and Macedonia—and if they could not agree, to settle the issue by casting lots. The consul to whom Macedonia should fall was to campaign against King Perseus and his allies unless they rendered suitable satisfaction to the Roman people. Four new legions were voted, two for each consul. A special arrangement was made in the case of Macedonia, namely that whereas the legions of the other consul were set at the traditional 5,200 infantry per legion, in the case of Macedonia a complement of 6,000 infantry per legion was established. For both forces 300 cavalry was allotted. The allied contingent was increased for the one consul: he was to take to Macedonia 16,000 allied infantry and 800 cavalry under the command of Gnaeus Sicinius. Twelve thousand **allied** infantry and 600 cavalry were judged adequate for Italy.

In connection with the draft for Macedonia, the consul was allowed, as he thought necessary, **to enroll former centurions and soldiers up to 50** years of age. Regarding **military tribunes**, a new practice was started that year because of the Macedonian War. The consuls, following a resolution of the Senate, proposed to the people that the military tribunes should not be chosen by vote that year but that the consuls and praetors be allowed to make the choice. Commands among the **praetors** were arranged as follows: the praetor who drew the senatorial lot was to go to the fleet at Brindisi and inspect the naval allies. He was to dismiss the unfit and provide replacements from freedmen. Two-thirds were to be Roman citizens and one-third allies. The praetors who drew Sicily and Sardinia were to provision the fleet from these provinces. They were to impose a second tithe on the Sicilians and Sardinians and this grain was to be transported to the army in Macedonia....

The war dragged until 168 B.C. when the last battle of the famed Macedonian phalanx was fought at Pydna. The Macedonians were soundly defeated, and Perseus was captured and displayed in the triumphal procession of the Roman commander, Aemilius Paullus. Macedonia was broken up into four weak, nominally independent republics with the aim of destroying any sense of Macedonian unity. Yet neither Greece nor Macedonia came under Rome's direct rule.

Roman War Propaganda

Before the war with Perseus, began the Senate launched a propaganda campaign against him and tried to win over Greek cities to the Roman side. The letter below was inscribed on a stele of marble

at Delphi, now broken in several places. It was addressed to members of the Delphic Amphictyony (a sacred league of Greek states in central Greece) with the aim of putting the Roman case before as many Greeks as possible. Why it was necessary to write this letter is explained in the reading from Livy (above) where it is shown that the Greek cities were divided into pro- and anti-Roman factions, while many thought that the Romans were simply the lesser of two evils. The letter was part of a deceptive strategy to gain time to build up Rome's forces in Greece. Standard themes of propaganda, such as courting the mobs, proposing the cancellation of debts, and violations of religion are stressed. Cancellation of debts was a rallying cry for the anti-oligarchic, anti-bourgeois elements in Hellenistic Age Greek cities.⁴²

“First of all be aware that Perseus came with his army to the festival of the Pythia with his army against all that is proper. It was clearly wrong for him to share with you in the sacrifices, games and festal gatherings **because he invited the barbarians (Celts) from across the Danube who previously without cause had sought the enslavement of Greece and marched on Delphi with the intention of plundering and destroying it** but were instead fittingly punished. He violated the treaty his father had made and which he himself had renewed. He defeated our Thracian allies and threw out of the kingdom Abroupolis (*the king of the Thracians*). He drowned by means of a treacherous shipwreck the Theban envoys who had been sent to Rome about an alliance.... contrary to oaths he attempted to do away with **the freedom we gave to you** through our generals by throwing the whole Greek nation into confusion and political strife (*stasis*), **courting the mobs**, destroying men in high places, foolishly pronouncing the **cancellation of debts**, initiating revolutions, revealing hatred toward the most worthy men.... That he might enslave all the Greek cities he plotted the murder of Arthetauros the Illyrian (*who had complained to Rome about Perseus*), he attempted to ambush Eumenes (*king of Pergamum*) our friend an ally at a time he came to Delphi to fulfil a vow, **spurning the customary devotion toward the god by all who go there and ignoring the protection of your temple**: by all of these acts he has attained in the eyes of all among the Greeks as well as the barbarians... (*the inscription breaks off at this point*).

Duplicitous New Wisdom: “They Did Not Recognize in this Embassy the Ways of Rome”

The outbreak of the Third Macedonian War shows how devious some of the senators had become in their handling of foreign affairs. That, at least, was the opinion of the older members of the Senate who had been in the fight with Hannibal. For example, the way the prominent senator Marcius Philippus handled Perseus was seen as typical of what came to be called the “New Wisdom.” Philippus was an hereditary guest and friend of the Macedonian king (meaning his distinguished ancestors had developed a friendly relationship with the royal Macedonian household), and yet, while on an ambassadorial mission, he had no qualms about deceiving the king about Roman intentions. His aim in doing so was to gain time for Rome to build up its army in Greece. Livy regarded this new style of diplomacy as evidence of the decay of Roman moral standards for waging war. According to him the older senators still believed in a just war (bellum justum et pium).⁴³

⁴²Robert K. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East*, #40.

⁴³Livy 42.47.

When Marcius and Atilius had arrived in Rome, they reported in the Capitol about their embassy, emphasizing nothing as a greater achievement **than the deception of the king by the truce and the hope of peace**. For he had been, they said, so equipped with apparatus for war, while the Romans had made no preparations, that all the commanding places might have been seized by him before an army could be sent over to Greece. However, **with the time consumed by the truce**, the war would be waged on even terms; he would be in no way better prepared, and the Romans would start the war better equipped in everything. Also they had **subtly disrupted the Boeotian League**, they said, so that the Boeotians could no longer be joined by any common action to the Macedonians. These actions a large part of the senate approved as having been done with great wisdom; the **older men and those mindful of ancient custom said they did not recognize in this embassy the ways of Rome**.

“Not by ambushes and battles by night,” they thought, “nor by pretended flight and unexpected return to an enemy off his guard, **nor in such a way as to boast of cunning rather than real bravery, did our ancestors wage war; they were accustomed to declare war before they waged it**, and even at times to announce a battle and specify the place in which they were going to fight. With the same straightforwardness the information was given to King Pyrrhus that his physician was plotting against his life; in the same way the betrayer of their children was delivered bound to the Faliscans; these are the acts of **Roman religious scrupulosity**, not of Carthaginian **artfulness** nor of Greek **slyness**, **since among these peoples it has been more praiseworthy to deceive an enemy than to conquer by force**. Occasionally a greater advantage is gained for the time being by trickery than by courage, but final and lasting conquest of the spirit overtakes one from whom the admission has been extorted that **he has been conquered, not by craft or accident, but by the hand-to-hand clash of force in a proper and righteous war** (*iusto ac pio bello*).” Thus the older men, who were less well pleased by the **new and over-sly wisdom**; however, **that part of the Senate to whom the pursuit of advantage was more important than that of honor** (*potior utilis quam honesti*), prevailed to the effect that the previous embassy of Marcius should be approved, and he should be sent back again to Greece....

Cato’s Speech on the Rhodians: Not Everyone Subscribed to the “New Wisdom”

One of the many casualties of the Third Macedonian War was Rhodes. This powerful naval ally of Rome was solidly on Rome’s side at the beginning of the war, but made the mistake of trying to broker peace just before Rome’s final victory at Pydna. The Senate was furious with the Rhodians and debated waging war on them, but was dissuaded by Cato, though they were punished by losing their possessions on the mainland of Asia Minor. The treaty with Rhodes was not renewed for a number of years. Cato’s speech is preserved only in fragmentary form.⁴⁴

And I really think that the Rhodians did not wish us to end the war as we did, with a victory over king Perseus. But it was not the Rhodians **alone** who had that feeling. Indeed I believe that many peoples and many nations agreed with them and I am inclined to think that some of them did not wish us success, not in order that we might be disgraced,

⁴⁴Aulus Gellius, 6.3. Based on the tr. of J. C. Rolfe (London: William Heinemann, 1927).

but because they feared that if there were no one of whom we stood in dread of, we would do whatsoever we liked. I think, then, that it was with an eye to their own freedom that they held that opinion, in order **not to be under our sole dominion and enslaved to us**. But for all that, the Rhodians **never publicly** aided Perseus....

He who uses the strongest language against them says that they **wished** to be our enemies. Pray, is there any one of you who, so far as he is concerned, **would think it fair to suffer punishment because he is accused of having wished to do wrong**? No one, I think; for so far as I am concerned, *I* should not.... “What? Is there any law so severe as to provide that if anyone **wish to do such-and-such he be fined** a thousand sesterces, provided that be less than half his property? Or if anyone shall **desire** to have more than five hundred acres contrary to the law, let the fine be so much? Or if anyone shall **wish** to have a greater number of cattle than is allowed, let the fine be thus and so? In fact, we all **wish to have more, and we do so with impunity**.... **But if it is not right for honor to be conferred because anyone says that he wished to do well, but yet did not do so**, shall the Rhodians suffer, not because **they did wrong**, but because they **are said to have wished** to do wrong? Shall we, then, of a sudden abandon these great services given and received and this strong friendship? **Shall we be the first to do what we say they merely wished to do?**”

3.4 RESOURCES AND OTHER TECHNIQUES OF WARFARE

Roman Manpower Resources: The Secret of Roman Military Success

When at war, most ancient states faced the following dilemma. The armies of city-states (poleis) were generally well motivated, informed, and well-trained, but severely limited in terms of available manpower. Poleis also found it very difficult to unite against a common enemy. On the other hand, the armies of large territorial states such as the Persian Empire were huge but were made up of undependable mercenaries and poorly trained, unmotivated peasant draftees. While Rome was a true polis it managed to escape the demographic dead-end of the usually small city-states. As seen above, this was done by adroit extension of the citizenship to non-Romans and by faithfulness to allies. They were thus able to combine the motivation and dependability of their own citizen soldiers with the resources of other allies and achieve approximately the equivalent of the demographic mass of a territorial state. The historian Polybius (second century B.C.) recognized this when he commented that it took audacity on Hannibal's part to challenge Rome. Below is Polybius' version of Rome's draft register (known as the formula togatorum—“the list of those who wear the toga”) for the year 225 B.C. at the time of a major Celtic invasion. This was just seven years before Hannibal's attack on Italy.⁴⁵

But that it may be clear from the facts themselves what a great power it was that Hannibal dared to attack... I must state what were the **actual number** of the Roman forces at this time. Each of the consuls was in command of four legions of Roman citizens, each made of 5,200 infantry and 300 cavalry. The **allied forces** in each consular army came to 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. The cavalry of the Sabines and Etruscans who had

⁴⁵Polybius 2.24.

come now to the assistance of Rome, were 4,000 strong and their infantry over 50,000. The Romans massed these forces and posted them on the frontier of Etruria under the command of a praetor. The draft of the Umbrians and Sarsinates of the Apennines came to about 20,000 and with them were 20,000 Veneti and Cenomani (*from the Po Valley*). They were stationed on the frontier of Gaul (*i.e. in the Po Valley*).

In Rome itself there was a reserve force, ready for any contingency, consisting of 20,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry. The allies supplied 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. The list of men able to bear arms (*the "formula togatorum"*) was as follows:

Latins 80,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry; Samnites: 70,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry; Iapygians and Messapinas: 50,000 infantry and 16,000 cavalry; Lucanians: 30,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry; Marsi, Marrucini, Frentani and Vestini 20,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry. In Sicily and Tarentum were two reserve legions, each made up of 4,200 infantry and 200 cavalry. Of Romans and Campanians there were on the roll 250,000 infantry and 23,000 cavalry. **Hence, the total number of Romans and allies able to bear arms was more than 700,000 infantry and 70,000 cavalry, while Hannibal invaded Italy with an army of 20,000 men.**

Flexibility: Roman Borrowing from their Enemies

The Romans made no secret of the fact that they borrowed institutions and military practices from other people. They then claimed in their propaganda that by such borrowing, they achieved mastery over their teachers, turning weaknesses into strengths. This line of argument was useful in the battle with the Greeks for ideological supremacy in the middle and late Republic, when it was clear to the Romans that their culture was in many respects inferior to that of the Greeks. The following passage is a fragment from an anonymous Roman historian whose work is now lost. The setting is a debate between Romans and Carthaginians at the outset of the First Punic War.⁴⁶

There was much discussion, and both sides engaged in acrimonious debate. The Carthaginians said they wondered **how the Romans thought they could cross over from Italy into Sicily because they, the Carthaginians, had control of the seas** and that unless they remained on friendly terms with each other the Romans could not so much as **wash their hands in the sea let alone cross it**. The Romans responded that the Carthaginians should not try to dissuade them from engaging in naval warfare because **as pupils they always outstripped their masters**. In ancient times, for example, when they were using rectangular shields, the **Etruscans** who fought with round shields of bronze and in phalanx formation, impelled them to adopt similar arms and were in consequence defeated. Then again when the **Samnites** were using shields such as the Romans now use, and were fighting in maniples, they imitated both and overcome the very people who introduced these excellent weapons. From the **Greeks** they learned siege craft and the use of engines of war for demolishing walls, and had then forced the cities of their teachers to do their bidding. So now, should the **Carthaginians** compel them to learn naval warfare, they would soon see that the pupils had become superior to their teachers.

⁴⁶Diodorus Siculus 23.2.

3.5 THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE ROMANS

Although the Romans were the champions of the more urbanized and presumably more civilized areas of Italy, they were not far removed themselves from the customs of Celts and Samnites. In the desperate battle of Sentinum in 295 B.C. against a combined army of Gauls and Samnites, one of the consuls, Decius Mus, “devoted” himself and his enemies to the gods to win victory. The fact that the act of “Devotio” was a formal state ritual, administered by a properly designated pontiff, and not a private vow, says a lot about the way warfare was waged by Rome during the early Republic.⁴⁷

Devotio: Self-Sacrifice for Rome

Twice the Romans compelled the Gallic cavalry to give way. At the second charge, when they advanced farther and were briskly engaged in the middle of the enemy’s squadrons, they were thrown into confusion by a method of fighting new to them. A number of the enemy, **mounted on chariots and wagons**, made toward them with such frightening **noise from the trampling of the cattle and the thunder of the wheels that the Roman horses were terrified. The victorious cavalry were scattered in panic**; in blind flight men and horses fell to the ground. The disorder spread to the legions, and many of the first ranks were trampled underfoot by the horses and wagons which swept through their ranks. As soon as the Gallic infantry saw their enemy in confusion, they pursued their advantage and did not allow them time to recover themselves.

Decius shouted to his men, asking where they were fleeing to or what hope there was in running away. He tried to stop them as they turned their backs, but finding that he could not persuade them to keep their posts because they were so panicked, he called on his father, Publius Decius. “Why do I postpone any longer the fate of our family?” he cried. **“It is destined for us to serve as sacrificial victims** to avert dangers to our country. I will now **offer the legions of the enemy, together with myself, to be immolated to Earth and the Gods of the Underworld.”**

Having said this, he ordered Marcus Livius, a priest whom he had ordered not to leave his side when they went into battle, to dictate the form of the ritual in which he was to devote himself and the legions of the enemy on behalf of the army of the Roman people. He was accordingly **devoted** with the same prayers and in the same dress in which **his father, Publius Decius, had ordered himself to be devoted at Vestris during the Latin War**. Immediately after the solemn ritual prayers he added the following: **“I drive away dread and defeat, slaughter and bloodshed, and the wrath of the gods, celestial and infernal; with the contagious influence of the Furies, the Ministers of Death, I will infect the standards, the weapons, and armor of the enemy. The place of my destruction will be that of the Gauls and Samnites also.”** After uttering these curses on himself and his foes, he spurred forward his horse where he saw the line of the Gauls was thickest, and, rushing on them, met his death.

From then on the battle seemed to be fought with a degree of force that seemed scarcely human. The Romans... stopped their flight... and were anxious to begin the fight again. Livius the priest, to whom Decius had transferred his lictors with orders to act as pro-

⁴⁷Livy 10.28–20.

praetor, cried out aloud that **the Romans were victorious, having been saved by the death of the consul, and that the Gauls and the Samnites were now the victims of mother Earth and the Gods of the Underworld**; that Decius was summoning and dragging to himself the army devoted along with him.

Steadiness of the Romans: How They Coped with Defeat

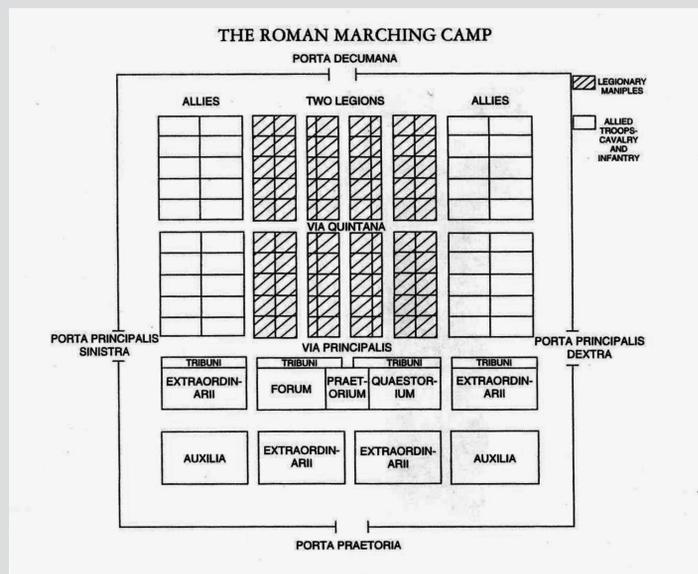
The Hannibalic War stretched Roman society to the breaking point. In the early years, one disaster succeeded another. Two legions were lost at Trasimene in 217 B.C., and the following year approximately 50,000 perished at Cannae, although not all the casualties were Roman. Livy noted that the first step taken following a disaster was always religious. Defeats occurred because the proper religious rituals had not been observed. Fortunately, Romans knew how to propitiate the gods. The key was to know which gods needed to be propitiated. After Trasimene, the rituals known as the Lectisternium, the “Strewing of the Couches” (described below), and the Sacred Spring were resorted to. In earlier times the latter rite involved the dedication to the gods of all offspring, human as well as animal, born in the spring of the designated year. The religious formalism of the Romans should be noted. The Sacred Spring was to be performed only if in five years from the vowing of the ritual, “Rome should still be preserved in safety.” Livy does not mention humans in this Sacred Spring. He was, however, shocked at the rituals resorted to after Cannae, in which two Gauls and two Greeks were buried alive in the Cattle Market. But, as he remarks elsewhere of the early Romans, they were a people born “before skepticism was taught about the gods.”⁴⁸

This was Fabius’ second Dictatorship, and the day he entered office he convened the Senate. Beginning with religious issues, **he pointed out that Flaminius’ mistake (at Trasimene) derived not so much from rashness and inexperience as from his neglect of the proper rituals.** He proposed that the gods themselves should be consulted as to the proper form of appeasement, and he prevailed upon the Senate to direct the Board of Ten to consult the **Sibylline Books**, a step taken only when events of the most awful kind occurred. The sacred books were duly consulted and the Senate informed of the results: First, the vow made to Mars for the successful prosecution of the war at its start had not been properly performed and would have to be **repeated on a larger scale**. Second, a performance of the **Great Games** in honor of Jupiter should be vowed, along with a **shrine** to Venus of Eryx and to Mens. Third, a supplication, a day of public prayer, and a **Lectisternium**, a feast of the gods, should be held. Finally, a **Sacred Spring** should be vowed if the war went well and the state was returned to its previous, pre-war condition. Since Fabius would be preoccupied with military affairs, the Senate ordered the praetor Marcus Antonius to see that these measures were carried out quickly, under the direction of the College of Pontiffs.

After the passage of these resolutions, L. Cornelius Lentulus, the Pontifex Maximus, gave as his opinion, and was supported by the Board of Praetors, that the first step was to consult the people on the matter of the Sacred Spring. That vow could not be made without their approval. The proposal was put as follows: Do you wish and order that the following undertaking be performed:

⁴⁸Livy 22.7–11.

The Roman Marching Camp



The plan of the Roman camp described here follows, with some simplifications, the description offered by Polybius. The camp was surrounded by a ditch and a rampart on which was set a palisade of stakes. In the center of the camp was the *Praetorium*, the tent of the commanding officer. On either side of this tent were open areas, the *Forum*, a market area, and the *Quaestorium*, where the quaestor, a junior officer in charge of the finances of the army, had his tent. Tents of the tribunes were adjacent, located along the main thoroughfare and axis of the camp, the *Via Principalis*. The tents of the maniples of the legions and the troops of the allies were lined up in groups of five on either side of another street which ran parallel to the *Via Principalis*. This was the *Via Quintana* (“Fifth Street”). Elite groups of allies, the *extraordinarii*, were billeted on the other side of the *Praetorium*.

The construction of the camp was an integral part of Roman legionary tactics. At the end of each day’s march all members of the legion pitched in to dig the ditch and rampart and set up the stake palisade. There were several aims behind this laborious undertaking. One was that it allowed Rome to project force deep into enemy territory. A line of marching camps followed the route of the advancing army and allowed for the movement of supplies forward without loss of manpower in the legions as they advanced. At night a small force could patrol the perimeter of the camp and allow the majority of the legionaries get a good night’s sleep. In case of a serious attack, especially one at night, all members of the force knew exactly where their positions were.

Over time some marching camps (the kind described here) evolved into permanent bases or even cities. Camps in northern environments had to be built to withstand the rigors of northern winters. At Inchthuthil in Scotland, for example, the houses of some of the officers were equipped with central heating provided by hypocausts underneath the floors through which hot air passed, a common technique used by the Romans for heating their houses and public buildings.

If the Republic of the people and citizens of Rome shall have been preserved in safety from the present wars **five years from now**, as indeed I wish that it may... then the Roman citizens' vow as a gift whatever that spring shall have brought forth from its herds of pigs, flocks of sheep, goat, and oxen...."

At the same time a celebration of the Great Games was vowed and 333,333 asses set aside for the expenses. **Three hundred oxen** were to be offered to Jupiter, along with white oxen and other victims to many other divinities. The vows were properly made in public, and a supplication was proclaimed. **The inhabitants of the city, together with their wives and children, participated and also the rural dwelling people** who had property and were concerned with the welfare of the state. The *Lectisternium*, the festival of the gods, was held for three days, under the direction of the Board of Ten. Six couches were set out, one for Jupiter and Juno, another for Neptune and Minerva, a third for Mars and Venus, a fourth for Apollo and Diana; Vulcan and Vesta got the fifth couch, and the sixth went to Mercury and Ceres. Then the temples were vowed. Q. Fabius Maximus the Dictator vowed a temple to Venus of Eryx, for the prophetic books said that the ceremony should be performed by the highest officer of the state. The praetor T. Otacilius vowed a shrine to Mens.

Divine things having been thus attended to, the Dictator then put the question of the war and the state, what and how many legions the Fathers thought were necessary to send against the victorious enemy....

3.6 WEAKNESSES OF ROME'S MILITARY SYSTEM

Quarreling Consuls: the Dangers of Divided Command

Part of the military problem the Romans faced was of their own making. The army, as befitted a free republic, was a militia commanded by amateurs. There was no single commander-in-chief. Two consuls were elected annually. Consuls rose to the top on the basis of political, social, as well as military skills and experience, but the ability to exercise successful command on the battlefield has been, throughout history, a hit-or-miss affair. The opening years of wars frequently see the wholesale clearing out of peacetime generals until finally—or on occasion not at all—some competent commander is discovered. Consider Lincoln's problems in the early years of the United States Civil War. The Roman military was no exception to this rule. It had the added disadvantage of having two, coequal commanders present when the whole Roman army was assembled for a single campaign. When this occurred—which was not often—the command rotated on a daily basis between the two consuls present. Such an arrangement was hazardous at best; some would say idiotic, but the principles of political freedom trumped military common sense.

In the Hannibalic War Rome had the bad luck of confronting a fully professional army led by one of the greatest generals of all time. That Rome's amateurism in the end triumphed is one of the proofs that at times, something more than military expertise is an essential ingredient in the successful waging of war. The following reading provides a description of the immediate lead-up to the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C. It emphasizes the problem of divided command but also the political nature of the consulate and the degree to which ordinary Roman soldiers had a way of making their views felt. In the senatorial historical tradition which dominates Livy and most other sources, the

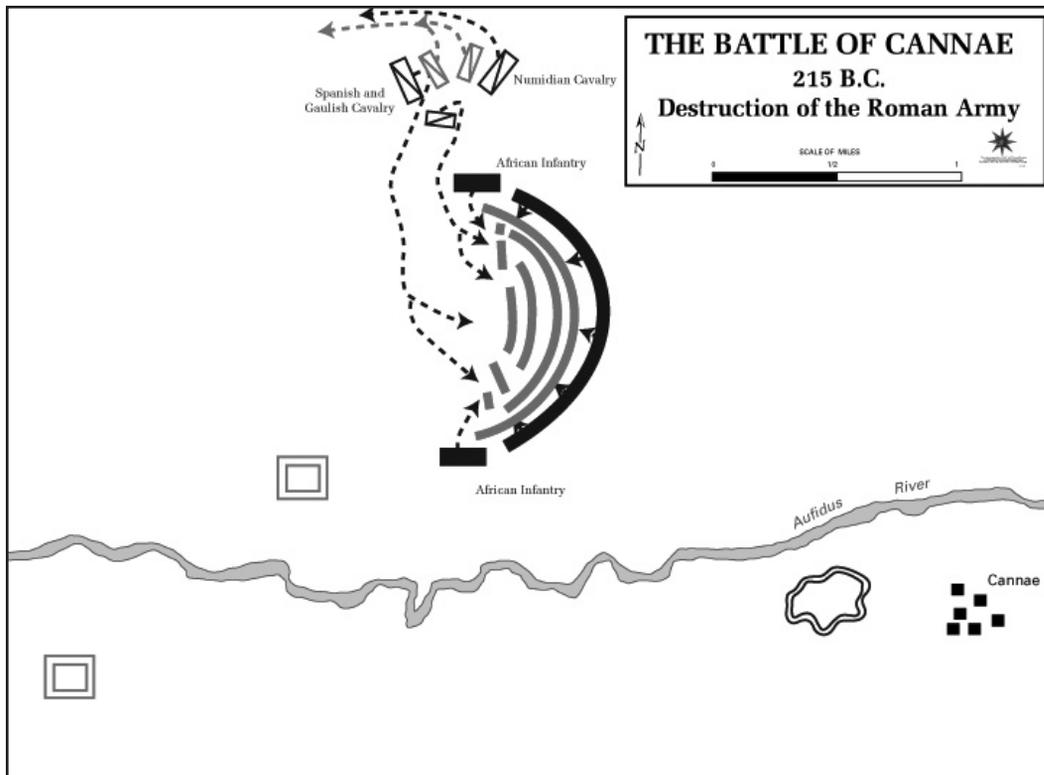
*consul Varro was portrayed in a very hostile manner. He was described as the son of a butcher and, therefore, a radical demagogue who managed to get himself elected to the consulship with popular support despite his military deficiencies. There was nothing wrong with the system of command, so this explanation ran; it was the intrusion of lower-class incompetents that brought on disaster. In fact, Varro was probably elected with the support of the blue-blooded Scipio family and their allies. Livy's view of the lower classes as a disorderly rabble reflects the Republic of his day when the plebs urbana, the city people, did indeed wield power and was regarded as a threat by the established oligarchy.*⁴⁹

When the consuls arrived at Cannae they had a clear view of the Carthaginians position. They themselves established two camps at about the same distance as had been the case in the previous encampment at Geronium. As before, their forces were divided. The River Aufidus flowed between the two camps. It could be reached from both of them as was needed, though not without opposition from the Carthaginians. It was easier to reach the river from the smaller Roman camp on the south side of the Aufidus since there was no enemy garrison on that side.

Hannibal, hoping he could persuade the consuls to engage him on ground suited to cavalry, his strongest arm, drew up his battle line and sent his Numidian cavalry to provoke the enemy. **Immediately the soldiers in the Roman camps began to agitate and the consuls to quarrel.** Paullus cited the reckless behavior of Sempronius and Flaminius (*two generals who had recently been defeated by Hannibal; Flaminius had been killed*) to Varro. Varro replied by claiming that the example of Fabius (*the famous "Delayer", the general who counseled avoiding confrontations with Hannibal*) was a specious excuse for timid and spiritless commanders. Varro then called on the gods and mankind to witness that it was through no fault of his that Hannibal was now in possession of Italy; his hands, he claimed, had been tied by his colleague. His men, he continued, were ready for the fight but were deprived of the opportunity to use their weapons. Paullus replied that he was blameless if the legions were recklessly betrayed into an ill-considered and imprudent battle, though he would, of course, suffer the consequences. It was to be seen, he said, whether a quick and rash tongue was matched in battle by equally vigorous actions.

While the Romans spent time arguing among themselves rather than getting ready for battle, Hannibal began to withdraw his troops from the position he had occupied for most of the day. At the same time he sent his Numidian cavalry to harass the watering parties sent out from the smaller camp. Almost before these disorganized groups had reached the banks they were sent fleeing in noise and confusion by the Numidians who then continued their advance right up to a guard post in front the camp's ditch and almost to the camp's gates. The Romans were indignant that their camp should appear to be threatened by what was in reality a mere auxiliary skirmishing force. The only thing that held them back from immediately crossing the river and challenging Hannibal to battle was the fact that it was Paullus' day of command. The following day Varro was in control of the army and, without consulting his colleague, gave the order to engage the enemy. Having drawn up his battle line he crossed the river. Paullus had no choice but to follow and help though he fundamentally disagreed with his colleague's action.

⁴⁹Livy 22.44–45.



Needless to say, disaster followed. The Roman cavalry was defeated and driven off, the infantry was surrounded and massacred, and the consul Paullus killed. Varro survived. Despite his rash behavior, on his return to Rome after the battle he was greeted by crowds of people. The Senate thanked him publicly for “not having despaired of the Republic.” Had he been a Carthaginian general in similar circumstances, Livy went on to say, he would have been severely punished (i.e. he would have been crucified). By implication, it was Rome’s supreme self-confidence in its own system of government that, even in the aftermath of Cannae, neither the people nor the Senate lost their nerve.

War Weariness

Resistance to the draft and to the imposition of extraordinary taxes was not uncommon, even in wartime. In 210 B.C., at one of the worst moments in the war against Hannibal when, as Livy says, “there was no other time in the war when Carthaginians and Romans were in a more uncertain state of hope and fear or more involved in rapid changes of failure and success” (26.37), just such a push-back occurred. The reading below summarizes the kind of florid rhetoric that might have been heard in the forum at that time. The Senate eventually came up with the kind of exemplary solution the moralizing Livy liked.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Livy 26.35–36.

A levy was held. Then, once the requisite number of troops had been enrolled, the question of recruiting more oarsmen came up. As there was neither enough men, nor any money in the treasury out of which they might be procured and be paid, the consuls in an edict ordered that private citizens according to their census and classes, as on a previous occasion (*in 214 B.C.*), should furnish oarsmen, with pay and rations for thirty days. The edict was met with such a howl of disapproval and such indignation, **that all that was lacking for an uprising was a leader rather than fuel**.... The consuls, it was said, had taken upon themselves the task of ruining and destroying the Roman people. Exhausted by paying the *tributum* (*an emergency tax which was expected to be refunded after the crisis had passed*) levied for so many years, they had nothing left but their land, bare and desolate. **Their houses had been burned by the enemy; the slaves who tilled the soil had been taken away by the state, either by impressing them as oarsmen or buying them at the lowest price possible for military service.** If a man had any cash on hand in silver or bronze, it might be taken away for the pay of the oarsmen and in the yearly taxes. As for themselves, they could not be compelled by any force or by any authority to give what they did not have. **Let their property be sold, let their bodies**—all that remained at any rate—**be abused**; not even for the purposes of a ransom was anything left to them. **Such were the complaints of a great multitude, not in secret, but openly in the Forum and even before the eyes of the consuls, as they flocked about them.** And the consuls, now upbraiding, now consoling, were unable to quiet them. Thereupon they said that they gave the people three days for reflection, a time which they themselves employed in looking into the matter and seeking a solution. The following day they held a session of the Senate on the recruiting of more oarsmen. There, after setting forth many reasons why refusal on the part of the populace was fair, they so far altered their language as to say that the burden, whether fair or unfair, must be laid upon private citizens. For from what other source were they to get crews when there was no money in the treasury? And without fleets how could either Sicily be held, or Philip (*king of Macedon who had recently made an alliance with Hannibal*) kept away from Italy, or the coasts of Italy be safe?

The crisis was resolved when one of the consuls was able to persuade the senators to take the lead by making large contributions in public to the costs of hiring rowers.

Laevinus, the consul, said that, “as magistrates are superior to the Senate in dignity, and as the Senate is superior to the people, so ought you to be leaders in shouldering all heavy and hard burdens. **If there is a duty which you wish to impose on an inferior, take on the same obligation for yourself and your family and you will find that others will follow your lead.** When the people see that every prominent man is taking upon himself more than his share of the burden they will come to regard their share of the burden as reasonable. Accordingly, if we wish the Roman people to have fleets and equip them, and private citizens to furnish oarsmen without protest, let us first impose the obligations on ourselves. Let us senators bring all our gold, silver, and coined bronze, to the treasury tomorrow, keeping only a ring for himself and for his wife and his children....”

The plan worked. The example of the senators, the knights, and the wealthy in general was followed by the rest of the population. Livy concludes, “Thus without an edict, without constraint on the part of any magistrate, the state lacked neither oarsmen to fill the complement nor their pay.” However,

a year later war weariness manifested itself more dangerously. Rome's military strength relied upon its large manpower pool found mostly in Latium and in the Latin and Roman colonies scattered throughout Italy. It came, therefore, as a tremendous shock to the Senate when in 209 B.C., during the enlistment of the army for the campaign season, 12 of the Latin colonies refused to supply the usual number of recruits as well as the money to pay them. It was particularly disturbing that among the 12 were some of the oldest colonies that had been sent out, and that many of these were located within the inner fortress ring built around Rome; most in fact were just a few days journey from the city. The Senate reacted with panic, rightly seeing this as a threat to the heart of the Roman system of waging war. If the colonies failed Rome, the allies would surely follow suit. The reading provides insight into how the Romans dealt with their quasi-independent federated states.⁵¹

It is a truism that the course of great events often depends on trivial events. So it was that the transfer of soldiers to Sicily—and the majority of them were of Latin status or allies—was the cause of an outbreak which might have been calamitous. Complaints began to be heard among Latins and allies in their home-town gatherings. **They said that for now the tenth year they had been exhausted by levies of troops and their pay and that almost every year they suffered a disastrous defeat. Some, they said, were slain in battle, others carried off by disease. The townsman who was enlisted by the Roman was lost to them more completely than a man taken captive by the Carthaginian. For with no demand for a ransom the enemy sent him back to his native town; the Romans transported him out of Italy, really into exile rather than into military service. For the eighth year now the soldiers from Cannae were growing old abroad, certain to die before the enemy, who at the very moment was in the flower of his strength, departed out of Italy.** If the old soldiers should not return to their native places, and fresh soldiers continued to be levied, **soon no one would be left.** Accordingly, they had better refuse the Romans what the situation itself would soon dictate anyway and prevent them from supplying the troops before they reached the extremes of desolation and poverty. If the Romans should see the allies unanimous to this effect, surely they would think of making peace with the Carthaginians. Otherwise never, so long as Hannibal lived, would Italy be rid of war. Such were the matters debated in their meetings.

There were at that time **thirty Latin colonies of the Roman state.** Of these, while delegations from them all were at Rome, **twelve** informed the consuls that they had no means of furnishing the required number of soldiers and their pay. These were Ardea, Nepete, Sutrium, Alba, Carsioli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Setia, Cales, Narnia, and Interamna. The consuls were shocked by the novelty of the refusal; nothing like this had happened before. Wishing to deter the colonies from such an unthinkable action they thought they could accomplish this more by upbraiding and rebuking them than by soft words. Accordingly they said that the colonies had dared to say to the consuls what the consuls themselves could not bring before the Senate; the colonies' claims amounted not just to a refusal of burdens and of military service, but to an open revolt from the Roman people. Therefore the delegates should return to their colonies promptly as though nothing had been settled, since they had spoken of so great a crime but had not yet ventured to commit it. They should deliberate with their people. Let them remind them that they

⁵¹Livy 27.9–10.

were not Capuans, nor Tarentines, but Romans, sprung from Rome and sent thence into colonies and on land captured in war, to increase the Roman population. **All that children owed to their parents they owed, it was said, to the Romans, that is, if there was any filial affection, any memory of their former city.** Let them therefore deliberate again; for their present reckless proposal tended to betray the Roman empire, to give over the victory to Hannibal. The consuls by turns kept on for a long time in this way, but the **deputies remained unmoved**, saying that they had nothing new to report back home, nor did their senates have anything new to decide upon. **Their towns had neither soldiers to be enlisted nor money to be furnished for pay.** The consuls, finding them unyielding, brought the matter before the Senate. **Such a panic** was inspired in the minds of the members that **a great many of them said the empire was at an end and that the same thing would happen in the other colonies and among the allies.** All had conspired to betray the city of Rome to Hannibal.

The main concern was to prevent the panic from spreading from the Senate to the people. This was done by quietly canvassing the delegations of the remaining 18 colonies and upon finding that these were not going to side with the recalcitrant 12, the consuls brought the faithful delegations into the Senate. After the Senate had been calmed, the delegations were then sent to talk to the people. The crisis was avoided by pitting one group of colonies against the other; by not pressing the issue with the 12, and by adroit public relations.

With the aid of these colonies at that time the empire of the Roman people was able to stand firm and thanks were rendered to them in the Senate and before the people. Of the other twelve colonies, which refused to obey orders, the senators forbade any mention to be made; their legates should neither be dismissed nor detained nor spoken to by the consuls. **That silent rebuke seemed most in keeping with the majesty of the Roman people.**

The matter did not and could not end there; the threat to the Roman alliance system was too dangerous to let the recalcitrance of the 12 become a precedent. Five years later, when the fortunes of war turned in favor of Rome, there was a reckoning with the 12. Their delegations were summoned to Rome and forced to deliver twice the number of infantry and cavalry as was due according to law. A special tax was levied and the wealthy were compelled to bear the brunt of these demands. To ensure local elites did not manipulate the demands and that the burdens were fairly distributed, a new census was held. The census was to be held according to Roman rules, not those of the individual colonies.

A Problem with the Draft: Tribunes and Centurions

The steadiness of the Senate during the Hannibalic War gave that body practical control of foreign affairs. Its ideology is reflected in a speech that Livy composed and put in the mouth of a centurion, Spurius Ligustinus. The context for the speech was a protest led by his fellow centurions who protested the way the draft was being conducted in preparation for a campaign against Macedonia (the Third Macedonian War, 171–167 B.C.). Although the speech reflects a senatorial viewpoint, some of the realities of war as seen from the viewpoint of the ordinary draftee are also to be found in it. It

*is interesting to note how the draft was conducted and how tribunes could get involved in what was essentially a military affair.*⁵²

The consuls were conducting the draft with greater care than usual. Licinius was enrolling veteran infantrymen and centurions, but many signed up voluntarily because they saw that those who had fought in the previous Macedonian War and against King Antiochus in Asia had become rich. However, when the military tribunes who had been enlisting the centurions put them down in the order in which they enlisted, **23 centurions who had held the rank of chief centurion, upon being treated this way, appealed to the tribunes of the people.** Two of the tribunes, M. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Claudius Marcellus, threw the matter back to the consuls. They claimed that the investigation was the responsibility of those to whom the job of conducting the draft and the war had been given in the first place. The other tribunes agreed to investigate the case and, if injury had been done, they would intervene on behalf of the citizens injured.

The procedure took place at the tribunes' benches. Marcus Popilius, a former consul, **appeared as counsel for the aggrieved centurions.** Also appearing were the **centurions themselves and the consul who had been conducting the draft.** When Licinius demanded that the investigation take place in a public assembly, the people were duly gathered. Popilius, who had been consul two years earlier, spoke on behalf of the centurions. These experienced soldiers had completed their regular military service, he said. Their bodies were worn down by age and unremitting labor. They had no objection to serving the state, but they requested they not be assigned to a rank lower than they had had during their regular stint.

In response, Licinius the consul ordered the decrees of the Senate to be read, first the one authorizing the war against Perseus, than the decree authorizing the enrollment of as many centurions as he thought necessary and **exempting no one under 50 years of age. He went on to request that the people not interfere with the draft being conducted by the military tribunes or prevent the consul from assigning the rank to each as was in the best interest of the state.** There was, he reminded them, a new war in progress, near Italy, and against a very powerful king. Should there be any issues in doubt, they should be referred back to the Senate.

The impasse was resolved by the speech of the senior centurion Spurius Ligustinus.

When the consul had finished, Spurius Ligustinus, one of the centurions who had appealed to the tribunes of the people, requested permission of the consul and the tribunes of the people that he be allowed to speak. With their permission he began:

Citizens, I am Spurius Ligustinus of the Crustumina tribe, by origin a Sabine. **My father left me an acre of land and a small cottage in which I was born and raised. I live in it to this day.** When I came of age, my father found a wife for me, his niece. She brought nothing with her except her free birth and good morals and a fertility that would have been adequate for a rich home. We had six sons and two daughters, both of whom are now married. Four of our sons are grown; two are still boys. I began my service in the consulship of Publius Sulpicius and Gaius Aurelius (200 B.C.). I served **two years** as a private in the

⁵²Livy 42.32–35.

army brought to **Macedonia** for the war against King Philip. In the third year T. Quinctius Flaminius promoted me centurion of the tenth maniple of the front rank (*the lowest of the three subdivisions of the legion*) because of my bravery. After the defeat of Philip and the Macedonians, when we had been repatriated to Italy and demobilized, I went to **Spain** with M. Porcius Cato as a volunteer with the rank of private (195 B.C.). Of all the generals alive, no one is a shrewder observer or judge of bravery. This will be borne out by those who, through long service, have served with him as well as other commanders. This general considered me worthy to be assigned centurion of the first century of the front rank. I enlisted a third time as a volunteer and a private in the army sent against the **Aetolians** (*in Greece*) and **King Antiochus** (191 B.C.) (*in Asia Minor*). Once again I was given the rank of centurion, this time by Manius Acilius. On this occasion, however, I was made a centurion of the first century in the second rank (*a promotion*). After Antiochus had been driven out and the Aetolians defeated, we returned to Italy. Twice thereafter I served in single, year-long campaigns. Twice I fought in **Spain**, once with Q. Fulvius Flaccus when he was praetor and once with Ti. Sempronius Gracchus when he held the same office. I was brought home from Spain by Flaccus along with others for his triumph. This was because we had been distinguished for bravery.

Four times in a few years I was Chief Centurion. I was decorated for bravery 34 times. I won six civic crowns (*given for saving a fellow citizen's life*). I have served **22 years in the army and am over 50 years old**. Nevertheless, if I had not completed all my years of service, Publius Licinius, and my age did not give me an exemption, I could still give you four soldiers in my place (*i.e., his own sons*). I would like you to take what I have said into consideration on my side of the case.

For my part, as long as I am considered fit for service, I will never refuse to be enrolled. I am willing to accept the rank assigned to me by the military tribunes. This is their responsibility. I will try to make sure that no one in the army exceeds me in bravery. That I have always done so my generals and those who have served with me will attest. Fellow soldiers, even though it is within your right to make this appeal, it is also right that you submit to the authority of the consuls and the Senate. When you were young, you never resisted them. Consider every rank honorable in which you will be defending the state.

When Ligustinus finished his speech, Publius Licinius the consul praised him profusely and conducted him from the meeting to the Senate. There, a motion of thanks was authorized, and the military tribunes made him Chief Centurion in the first legion because of his bravery. The other centurions gave up their appeal and responded obediently to the draft.

3.7 PROPAGANDA FOR HOME FRONT CONSUMPTION: THE OTHER

War is easier to wage if an enemy can be made to appear to be outside the boundaries of civilization or even humanity. The Celts, who practiced human sacrifice, were fairly easily fitted into the barbarian mold.

There were two stages of Celtic cultural development, the first known as the Hallstatt phase (ca. 700–450 B.C.) and the second the La Tène phase (450–50 B.C.) which arose in the area between the River Marne in France and the southern Rhineland. Around 400 B.C., a wave of migrations began from this area, and by 300 B.C. La Tène culture had spread from the Atlantic coast of France east to Romania, and south into Spain and northern Italy. The sack of Rome in 390 B.C. was a one of the

ramifications of these migrations. By the first century, *La Tène* culture had spread to Britain and Ireland. During this period the Celts, especially those in contact with the Mediterranean, began to move away from the chieftdom form of social and political organization toward an early form of urban and state culture. Some Celtic kingdoms adopted the alphabet, issued their own coinage, collected taxes, and conducted censuses. Paradoxically this made them an easier target for the Romans to deal with than the more primitive Germans, who maintained the chieftdom for several more centuries before they too began to adopt forms of the state.

By the first century the Romans had conquered most of the Celtic heartland. Celtic culture in these regions was essentially decapitated: Its ruling elites were either eliminated or Romanized. Having lost their chance to evolve on their own, continental Celts became part of Roman history and their history was written for them by their conquerors. Understandably it was not written from a sympathetic viewpoint.

What follows is an accurate enough description of some types of Celtic warfare. Generally Greeks and Romans were repelled by those features of Celtic society which were unlike their own, such as the use of butter, as opposed to olive oil, the drinking of beer and distilled alcohol (whiskey, “uisce” water, in Celtic), as opposed to wine, and especially by the large bodily size of the Celts which came from their consumption of large quantities of meat and dairy products to which Mediterranean peoples had only limited access. The Samnites (second reading), as noted in the introduction, were Oscan-speaking highlanders who provided the main impetus for resistance to Rome down to the third century B.C.⁵³ They were less easily assimilated to the barbarian model than were the Celts.

Celtic Barbarity: “To Ill Treat the Remains of a Fellow Human After He is Dead is Bestial”

In their wanderings and in battle the Celts use chariots drawn by two horses which carry the driver and the warrior. When they meet with cavalry in battle, they first throw their javelins at the enemy and then step down from their chariots and fight with their swords. Some of them so despise death that they enter the dangers of battle naked, wearing only a sword-belt. They bring to war with them their freedmen attendants, choosing them from among the poor. They use them in battle as chariot drivers and shield bearers. They have the custom when they have lined up for combat **to step in front of the battle line and challenge the bravest of their enemies to single combat, brandishing their weapons in front of them in an attempt to terrify them.** When anyone accepts the challenge to single combat, they **sing a song** in praise of the great deeds of their ancestors and of their own achievements, at the same time mocking and belittling their opponent, trying by such techniques to destroy his spirit before the fight. When their opponents fall, they **cut off their heads and tie them around their horses’ necks. They hand over to their attendants the blood-covered arms of their enemies and carry them off as booty, singing songs of victory.**

Spoils of war they fasten with **nails to their houses**, just as hunters do the heads of wild animals they have killed. They embalm the **heads of the most distinguished opponents in cedar oil and carefully guard them in chests.** They show these heads to visitors, claiming that they or their father or some ancestor had refused large sums of money

⁵³Diodorus Siculus 5.29.

for this or that head. Some of them, it is said, boast that they have not accepted an equal weight of gold for the head they show, **demonstrating a kind of barbarous nobility**. Not to sell a thing that constitutes the proof of one's bravery is a noble, well-bred kind of thing, but on the other hand, **to continue to ill-treat the remains of a fellow human being after he is dead is bestial**.

The Samnites: "They Despised the Soft Character of the Settled Farmers"

The fact that the Oscans practiced a pastoral rather than a settled form of agriculture was not lost on the Romans. The first reading emphasizes the contrast between two agricultural regimes. The incident described in the first reading occurred in 320 B.C., during the longest of the wars with the Samnites, the Second Samnite War (327–304 B.C.).⁵⁴ The Romans were able to make their advance into Samnium because the Samnites had alienated the plains-dwelling agriculturalists. The second reading describes an event from the Third Samnite War (298–291 B.C.).⁵⁵

A.

The second army, led by the consul Papirius advanced along the coast as far as Arpi. Everything was peaceful on the way not because of benefits bestowed by the Roman people but because of the injuries done by the Samnites and the resulting hatred of them. The reason for this was that the Samnites at that time lived in mountain villages and used to plunder the plains and coastal areas. **They despised the soft character of the settled farmers. As tends to be the case, the character of the inhabitants reflects the kind of countryside they live in. The Samnites, unlike the plain and coastal dwellers, were rugged mountain dwelling people.** Had this region been loyal to the Samnites a Roman army could never have been able to reach Arpi. It would have been cut off from its supplies and annihilated along the way because of the barren nature of the countryside.

B.

The Samnites made their preparations for war (*in 293 B.C.*) with the same dedication and effort as on the former occasion and provided their troops with the most magnificent arms money could buy. **They likewise called to their aid the power of the gods by initiating their soldiers in accordance with an ancient form of oath.** Under this ordinance they levied troops throughout Samnium, announcing that anyone of military age who did not report in response to the general's proclamation, or who departed without orders, would be **dedicated to Jupiter** (*i.e., they were "sacred" to Jupiter and could be killed with impunity by anyone meeting them*). Orders were then issued for all to assemble at Aquilonia, and the whole strength of Samnium came together, amounting to 40,000 men.

At Aquilonia a piece of ground in the middle of the camp was enclosed with hurdles and boards and covered overhead with linen cloth. The sides were of equal length, about 200 feet each. In this place sacrifices were performed according to directions read out

⁵⁴Livy 9.13.

⁵⁵Livy 10.38.

of an old linen book. The priest performing the rituals was an old man by the name of Ovius Paccius, who claimed that he took these ceremonies from the ancient ritual of the Samnites and that these were the same rituals that their ancestors had used when they formed the secret design of wresting Capua from the Etruscans.

When the sacrifices were finished, the general ordered an attendant to summon all those who were most distinguished by their birth or conduct. These were brought into the enclosure singly. **Besides the other ritual objects of a solemnity calculated to impress the mind with religious awe**, there were in the middle of the covered enclosure altars around which lay **the slain victims**. Centurions stood round about with drawn swords. Each individual was led up to the altars—**rather like a victim himself** than a performer in the ceremony—and was bound by an oath not to divulge what he should see and hear in this place. He was then compelled to swear according to a dreadful formula containing curses of his own person, his family, and his people if he did not go to battle wherever the commander should lead, if he fled from the field, or if he should see any other fleeing and did not immediately strike him down.

At first, **some refused to take the oath and were beheaded around the altars. Lying among the carcasses of the victims, they served afterward as a warning to others not to refuse**. When the leading Samnites had been bound under these solemnities, the general nominated ten of them and made each choose a man, and so on until they had brought up the number to 16,000. This body of men was called the **Linen Legion**, from the covering of the enclosure wherein the nobility had been sworn. They were furnished with splendid armor and plumed helmets to distinguish them from the rest. Somewhat more than 20,000 men made up another army, which neither in personal appearance nor renown in war or in equipment was inferior to the Linen Legion. This was the size of the Samnite army, comprising the main strength of the nation that encamped at Aquilonia.

Greeks: “Incompetent to Manage Their Own Affairs but Thinking Themselves Competent to Dictate War and Peace to Others.”

Greeks had been in southern coastal Italy in large numbers for centuries before the Romans were drawn into the region by their wars with the Samnites. The most important settlement in this area was Tarentum, founded by Sparta in the eight century B.C. As was typical of Greek cities everywhere, including those overseas, they had difficulty maintaining internal stability and were frequently at war with each other. The event recorded here occurred in 320 B.C., when the Romans were campaigning in Apulia to the north of Tarentum.⁵⁶

Just at that moment, as both sides were getting ready for battle, ambassadors from Tarentum arrived and ordered both Samnites and Romans to stop fighting. They threatened that whichever army was responsible for preventing an end of hostilities they would take on themselves on behalf of the other. The consul Papirius listened to the envoys as if he were persuaded by what they had to say and replied that he would have to confer with his colleague. He sent for Publilius (*the second consul commanding the*

⁵⁶Livy 9.14.

other Roman force) but went about getting ready during the interval. Then, after he had discussed the situation with Publilius, he gave the signal for battle.

The two consuls were involved in the usual matters that occurred before battle, both religious and practical, when the Tarentine envoys appeared again, hoping for an answer. “Men of Tarentum,” Papirius said, “the keeper of our chickens (*the augur*) tells us that the auspices are favorable and that the omens from the sacrifice are also good. So, you see, the gods are with us as we go into action.” With that he gave the order for the standards to advance and led out his troops, **commenting on the folly of a people which was incompetent to manage their own affairs because of internal strife and discord, but thought themselves competent to dictate limits of peace and war for others.**

3.8 GOVERNING THE VANQUISHED: ROMAN STYLE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

When Rome emerged victorious from the Punic Wars, it found itself responsible for maintaining order in large swathes of territory outside Italy—Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and Spain to begin with—followed by Africa (Tunisia), Asia Minor (western modern Turkey), Syria, and eventually Egypt. Despite long experience in dealing with conquered peoples in Italy, ruling overseas provinces (as organized conquered territories were called) presented special difficulties for the Senate. The supervision of the behavior of governors who would be away from Rome and out of contact with—and the influence of—their colleagues was one concern. Another was the real possibility of a governor enriching himself by systematically plundering his province and thereby gaining an advantage over his peers in the aristocracy. Unalterably opposed to creating an administrative bureaucracy, the Romans chose the simple method of treating overseas provinces as conquered territories under military law. They were not to be “governed;” they were to be ruled. A Roman “governor” was not a civil administrator in the modern sense of the term, but a military commander with full imperium over his provincial subjects. That meant he had unfettered, unchecked power to do what he wanted. Few governors were as self-restrained as Cicero, who wanted only to maintain his reputation for moderation when he ruled Cilicia in 50 B.C. In the second century, some attempts were made to rein in misbehaving governors, and most could expect to be prosecuted by ambitious young politicians anxious to make names for themselves upon leaving their provinces. Securing a conviction, however, was a different matter. Verres, the corrupt governor of Sicily whom Cicero successfully prosecuted, joked that a man needed three fortunes: one to win office; a second with which to bribe the jurors after his term as governor was over and prosecution was certain; and the third to live off comfortably afterward.

When he left Rome, a newly appointed governor donned military garb as did his lictors (entourage). Provinces themselves were often complicated mosaics of territories possessing different legal statuses ranging from nominal independence to complete subjection. Depending on where he was sent, the governor might find colonies of Roman citizens; native cities designated as free cities by Rome; independent temple states; tribal organizations of one kind or another; allied kings in neighboring territories, or dangerous enemies beyond the province’s borders. In early years, governors were praetors in office. In the late second century B.C., governors began to be selected from a pool of ex-consuls and ex-praetors who were sent to their assigned provinces as promagistrates (proconsuls or propraetors) for a year or longer. Cicero tried to avoid his turn as provincial governor for

as long as he could—he regarded the job of a governor as the equivalent to exile from Rome—and from his province bombarded his friends with letters begging them to make certain he would not have to serve longer than a year.

A First Hand Account: Cicero's Experience as Governor

Only the letters of Cicero written to his friends during his governorship and the subtle but propaganda-laden reports of Julius Caesar from Gaul provide sustained, first-hand information of what a governor's life might have been like. (Caesar's career is dealt with in a later chapter). Here Cicero's letters are used to provide insight into the people and the problems a late Republican governor might have encountered in his province. It is hard to know what a "typical" province might have been like. Governing peaceful Sicily was very different from governing a frontier province like Cicero's, but frontier provinces themselves varied hugely, and in 50 B.C. there was the additional difficulty of the chaos in Rome caused by the coming clash between Pompey and Caesar. Nevertheless, the pestering of governors by people in Rome for favors for their friends, the clash of the governor's interests and the interests of the publicans (Roman tax farmers), the misbehavior of native inhabitants and resident Romans alike, and the temptation to exploit the great power inherent in the governor's imperium must have been standard experiences for governors in just about all of Rome's provinces. Granted that the spin given to events puts Cicero in as good a light as he was able to devise, but because the letters (at least those to Atticus) were not intended for publication there is a limit to how much of them we can dismiss as self-serving advertisements. Cicero was not inspired by a humanitarian sense of duty to Rome's subjects so much as by the preservation of his reputation as an honorable, just, and decent human being, an image which contrasted with the more average rapacious, grasping governors of that period.

Governors could choose their own legates, legati, who could be assigned any task the governor decided on. Cicero had with him as his legati his brother Quintus, who had been governor of Asia from 61–58 and had served with Caesar in Gaul; C. Pomptinus, who was praetor in 63 (the year of Cicero's consulship), had governed Narbonese Gaul from 63–59; M. Anneius, another experienced soldier; and L. Tullius, a friend of Atticus and Cicero's confidant. On the other hand his quaestor (financial officer), who was assigned to him by lot, "was irresponsible, licentious and light-fingered" (6.3). Despite the importance of the province and the threat from the Parthians, Cicero's army consisted of two skeletal legions which, at one point, nearly mutinied because his predecessor, Appius Claudius, had not paid them on time. Cicero managed to restore discipline and morale, and supplemented the legions with a good sized auxiliary force from allied kings whom Cicero had won over by his friendship. With these forces he successfully defended his province against the Parthians and defeated tribesmen in the Amanus mountain range separating Cilicia and Syria, whom he described as perpetual enemies of Rome. The following readings are not in chronological order.⁵⁷

Cicero as Military Commander

Both Cilicia and neighboring Syria were front-line provinces in the ongoing war with Parthia in which Rome had suffered a severe defeat at Carrhae in Syria in 53 B.C. Yet neither Cicero, assigned to Cilicia, nor Calpurnius Bibulus, assigned to Syria, were noted for their military competence. While Bibulus sat out his year hiding behind the walls of Antioch, Cicero campaigned vigorously

⁵⁷Based on Cicero. *The Letters of Cicero*, tr. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (London: George Bell and Sons. 1908–1909).

and successfully in his province. His active defense seems to have deterred the Parthians from attacking and he was able to spend the respite reducing recalcitrant tribes in the Amanus Mountains. Cicero had to have a good grasp of the geography of the region and needed to develop an overall strategic plan for the defense of Cilicia. The letter below shows how Cicero had to deal not just with the threat from the Parthians and independent minded tribesmen, but also semi-autonomous allied kingdoms, only a few of which were truly dependable. At age 55, Cicero was not a young man. During campaigns he lived in the open with his troops and travelled on foot, horseback, or by litter. The letter given here is addressed to Cato the Younger, a stiff-necked martinet, who Cicero hoped would support his claim for a triumph. Apparently the requisite body count of 5,000 slain enemies had been met. Spitefully, Cato refused the request although he supported other less deserving petitioners.

To M. Porcius Cato, January 50 B.C.

Having entered my province on the last day of July, and seeing that the time of year made it necessary for me to make all haste to the army, I spent only two days at Laodicea, four at Apamea, three at Synnada, and the same at Philomelium. Having held well attended assizes (*circuit-court sessions*) in these towns, I freed a great number of cities from very vexatious tributes, excessive interest, and fraudulent debt. **The army before my arrival was broken up by something like a mutiny, and there were five cohorts without a legate or a military tribune and, in fact, actually without a single centurion.** I took up my quarters at Philomelium, while the rest of the army was in Lycaonia, and ordered my legate M. Anneius to bring those five cohorts to join the main army; and, having thus got the whole army together into one place, I pitched camp at Iconium in Lycaonia. This order having been energetically executed by him, I arrived at the camp myself on the 24th of August, having meanwhile, in accordance with the decree of the Senate, collected in the intervening days a strong body of reserves, a very adequate force of cavalry, and a contingent of volunteers from the free peoples and allied sovereigns.

While this was going on, and when, after reviewing the army, I had on the 28th of August begun my march to Cilicia, some legates sent to me by the king of Commagene (*on the Euphrates in eastern Syria*) announced, **with every sign of panic**, yet not without some foundation, **that the Parthians had entered Syria.** On hearing this I was made very anxious both for Syria and my own province, and, in fact, for all the rest of Asia. Accordingly, I made up my mind that I must lead the army through the district of Cappadocia, which adjoins Cilicia. For if I had gone straight down into Cilicia, I could easily indeed have held Cilicia itself, owing to the natural strength of Mount Amanus—for there are only two defiles opening into Cilicia from Syria, both of which are capable of being closed by insignificant garrisons owing to their narrowness, nor can anything be imagined better fortified than is Cilicia on the Syrian side—but I was disturbed for Cappadocia, which is quite open on the Syrian side, and is surrounded by kings, who, **even if they are our friends in secret, nevertheless do not venture to be openly hostile to the Parthians.** Accordingly, I pitched my camp in the extreme south of Cappadocia at the town of Cybistra, not far from Mount Taurus, with the object at once of covering Cilicia, and of thwarting the designs of the neighboring tribes by holding Cappadocia. Meanwhile, in the midst of this serious commotion and anxious expectation of a very formidable war, king Deiotarus (*king of the old, now semi-Hellenized Celtic kingdom of Galatia*), who has with good reason been always highly honored in your judgment and

my own, as well as that of the Senate—a man distinguished for his goodwill and loyalty to the Roman people, as well as for his eminent courage and wisdom—sent legates to tell me that he was on his way to my camp in full force. Much affected by his zeal and kindness, I sent him a letter of thanks, and urged him to hasten....

Key to holding Cappadocia was the loyalty of its king, Ariobarzenes. He was, however, surrounded by enemies (including his mother) in his own court, and burdened by debts owed to Pompey and other influential Romans.

However, being detained at Cybistra five days while maturing my plan of campaign, I rescued king Ariobarzenes, whose safety had been entrusted to me by the Senate on your motion, from a plot that, to his surprise, had been formed against him: and I not only saved his life, but I took pains also to secure that his royal authority should be respected. Metras and Athenaeus (the latter strongly commended to me by yourself), who had been exiled owing to the persistent enmity of queen Athenais, I restored to a position of the highest influence and favor with the king.

Then, as there was danger of serious hostilities arising in Cappadocia in case the priest (*the priest of the temple of Comana was an important political figure in Cappadocia*) as it was thought likely that he would do, defended himself with arms—for he was a young man, well furnished with horse and foot and money, **and relying on those all who desired political change of any sort**—I contrived that he should leave the kingdom: and that the king, without civil war or an appeal to arms, with the full authority of the court thoroughly secured, should hold the kingdom with proper dignity. Meanwhile, I was informed by dispatches and messengers from many sides, that the **Parthians and Arabs** had approached the town of Antioch in great force, and that a large body of their horsemen, which had crossed into Cilicia, had been cut to pieces by some squadrons of my cavalry and the praetorian cohort then on garrison duty at Epiphanea. Therefore, seeing that the forces of the Parthians had turned their backs upon Cappadocia, and were not far from the frontiers of Cilicia, **I led my army to Amanus with the longest forced marches I could.** When I arrived there, I learnt that the enemy had retired from Antioch, and that Bibulus was at Antioch. I thereupon informed Deiotarus, who was hurrying to join me with a large and strong body of horse and foot, and with all the forces he could muster, that I saw no reason for his leaving his own dominions, and that in case of any new event, I would immediately write and send for him.

And as my intention in coming had been to relieve both provinces, should occasion arise, so now I proceeded to do what I had all along made up my mind was greatly to the interest of both provinces, namely, **to reduce Amanus, and to remove from that mountain an eternal enemy.** So I made a **feint** of retiring from the mountain and making for other parts of Cilicia: and having gone a day's march from Amanus and pitched a camp, on the 12th of October, toward evening, at Epiphanea, **with my army in light marching order I effected such a night march, that by dawn on the 13th I was already ascending Amanus.** Having formed the cohorts and auxiliaries into several columns of attack—I and my legate Quintus (my brother) commanding one, my legate C. Pomptinus another, and my legates M. Anneius and L. Tullius the rest—we surprised most of the inhabitants, who, being cut off from all retreat, were killed or taken prisoners. But Erana, which was more like a town than a village, and was the capital of Amanus, as also Sepyra and

Commoris, which offered a determined and protracted resistance from before daybreak till four in the afternoon Pomptinus being in command in that part of Amanus—we took, after killing a great number of the enemy, and stormed and set fire to several fortresses. After these operations we lay encamped for four days on the spurs of Amanus, near the Altars of Alexander (*near Issus where Alexander the Great won a great victory over the Persians*), and all that time we devoted to the destruction of the remaining inhabitants of Amanus, and devastating their lands on that side of the mountain which belongs to my province. Having accomplished this, I led the army away to **Pindenissus**, a town of the Free Cilicians. And since this town was situated on a very lofty and strongly fortified spot, and was inhabited by men who have never submitted even to the kings, and since they were offering asylum to deserters, **and were eagerly expecting the arrival of the Parthians, I thought it of importance to the prestige of the empire to suppress their audacity, in order that there might be less difficulty in breaking the spirits of all such as were anywhere disaffected with our rule.** I encircled them with a stockade and trench and fenced them in with six forts and huge camps: I assaulted them by the aid of earthworks, mantlets, and towers: and having employed numerous catapults and bowmen, with great personal labor, and without troubling the allies or costing them anything, I reduced them to such extremities that, after every region of their town had been battered down or fired, they surrendered to me on the fifty-seventh day. Their next neighbors were the people of Tebara, no less predatory and audacious: from them after the capture of Pindenissus I received hostages. I then dismissed the army to winter quarters; and I put my brother in command, with orders to station the men in villages that had either been captured or were disaffected. (*To His Friends*, 15.4)

Civilian Administration: Favors, Meddlers, Obnoxious Visitors

The Provincial Edict: 50 B.C. at Laodicea

When a new governor came into his province he issued an edictum—an edict—a public proclamation on how he intended to discharge his duties. These were primarily fiscal and judicial. New governors usually took over the edict of their predecessors but made adjustments as they thought fit given changes in circumstances. Such edicts were of great importance to all provincials, especially the elite who bore the main burden of collecting and paying taxes, settling debts and the like.

As to Bibulus's edict there is nothing new, except the proviso of which you said in your letter, "that it reflected with excessive severity on our order." I, however, have a proviso in my own edict of equivalent force, but less openly expressed (derived from the province of Asia edict of Q. Mucius Scaevola)—"provided that the agreement made is not such as cannot hold good in equity." I have followed Scaevola in many points, **among others in this—which the Greeks regard as a charter of liberty—that Greeks are to decide controversies between each other according to their own laws.** But my edict was shortened by my method of making a division, as I thought it well to publish it under **two heads:** the first, exclusively applicable to a province, concerned **municipal finances, debt, rate of interest, contracts, and all regulations referring to the tax farmers (*publicans*).** The second, including what cannot conveniently be transacted without an edict, related to **inheritances, ownership and sale, appointment of receivers, all which are by custom brought into court and settled in accordance with the**

edict. The third division, embraces the remaining departments of judicial business, I left unwritten, stating that my rulings given under this head would correspond to those made at Rome.... The Greeks, indeed, are jubilant because they have non-Roman jurors. “Yes,” you will say, “a very poor kind.” What does that matter? **They, at any rate, imagine themselves to have obtained “autonomy.”** You at Rome, I suppose, have men of high character in that capacity—Turpio the shoemaker and Vettius the broker! **You seem to wish to know how I treat the *publicani*. I pet, indulge, compliment, and honor them and arrange so that they oppress no one.** The most surprising thing is that even Servilius maintained the rates of usury entered on their contracts. **My line is this: I name a day fairly distant, before which, if they have paid, I give out that I shall recognize a rate of 1 percent; if they have not paid, and the rate shall be according to the contract. The result is that the Greeks pay at a reasonable rate of interest and the *publicani* are thoroughly satisfied because they now get in full measure complimentary speeches and frequent invitations.** Need I say more? They are all on such terms with me that each thinks himself my most intimate friend. (*To Atticus*, 6.1).

Court Sessions at Laodicea, April 50 B.C.

The main job of the governor was maintaining order in his province. Ideally this was achieved by the equitable administration of justice. Governors periodically held assizes in different parts of their provinces to provide local people with an opportunity to have their cases tried. When a governor held court he did so with his consilium seated beside him. The consilium, or council, was made up primarily of the legates the governor brought with him from Rome, perhaps his assigned quaestor, and prominent local notables.

I see that you rejoice at my equitable and disinterested administration. You would have been more so if you had actually been here. Why, in these very sessions which I have been holding at Laodicea from the 13th of February to the 1st of May for all the dioceses (*districts*) except that of Cilicia, I have produced some astonishing results. A great number of communities have been entirely **freed from debt**, and many very significantly relieved: all have **enjoyed their own laws, and with this attainment of autonomy have quite revived.** I have given them the opportunity of freeing themselves from debt, or lightening their burdens, in two ways: **first, in the fact that no expense has been imposed upon them during my government—and when I say “no expense” I do not speak hyperbolically, but I mean none, not a nickel.** It is almost incredible how this fact has helped them to escape from their difficulties. The other way is this. There was **an astonishing amount of peculation in the states committed by the Greeks themselves—I mean their own magistrates.** I personally questioned those who had been in office in the course of the last ten years. They openly confessed it: and accordingly, without being punished by any mark of disgrace, **repaid** the sums of money to the communities out of their own pockets. The consequence is that, whereas the communities had paid the *publicani* nothing for the present quinquennium, they have now, without any moaning, paid them the arrears of the last quinquennium also. So I am the apple of their eye to the publicans... The rest of my administration of justice has been sufficiently skillful on the one hand and merciful on the other, all of it enhanced by my affability. The ease with which I have admitted men to my presence is a new thing in the provinces. I

don't employ a secretary. **Before daybreak I walk up and down in my house, as I used to do in old times as a candidate. This is very popular and a great convenience,** nor have I found it as yet fatiguing to me, being an old campaigner in that respect. . . . I mean to devote July to my return journey. For my year of service is finished on the 30th of July, and I am in great hopes that there will be no extension of my time. I have the **city gazette** up to the 15 of March, from which I gather that, owing to the persistence of my friend Curio, every kind of business is coming on rather than that of assigning the provinces. Therefore, as I hope, I shall see you before long (*To Atticus*, 6.2).

The Problem of a Replacement, Tarsus June-August 50 B.C.

The split between Pompey and Caesar and the possibility of a civil war between the two had made the performance of routine tasks, such as sending out replacement governors to the provinces, difficult. Nevertheless Cicero was determined that he would leave his province on the dot of July 30, the date his year as governor ended, but he had to leave someone competent in charge. If the threat from the Parthians grew worse he realized he would have to stay.

I arrived at Tarsus on the 5th of June. There I was disturbed on many accounts—a serious war in Syria (*with the Parthians*); serious cases of brigandage in Cilicia; difficulty in fixing on any definite scheme of administration, considering that only a few days remained of my year of office; and, greatest difficulty of all, the necessity, according to the decree of the Senate, of leaving someone at the head of the province. No one could be less suitable than the quaestor Mescinius—for of Coelius (*the new quaestor*) I don't hear a word. Far the best course appears to be to leave my brother Quintus with *imperium*. But in doing that many disagreeable consequences are involved—our separation, the risk of a war, the bad-conduct of the soldiers, hundreds of others. What a nuisance the whole business is! (*To Atticus* 6.4).

The new quaestor, Coelius Calvus, finally appeared and Cicero was relieved of the problem of who would take over Cilicia when he left. However, why he decided to appoint Coelius, for whose competence he had the lowest regard, is interesting. But Cicero also had serious concerns about leaving his brother in charge if Coelius did not work out.

I have put Coelius in command of the province: **a mere boy**, you will say, and perhaps **empty-headed, with neither solidity nor self-control**. I agree: but nothing else was possible. The letter, indeed, which I received from you a good while ago, in which you said that you "hesitated" as to what I ought to do about leaving a substitute, gave me a twinge, for I saw your reasons for your "hesitation," and I had the very same. Hand over **my province to a mere boy**? Well, **to my brother**, then? The latter was against my interest: for there was no one except my brother whom I could prefer to my quaestor without casting a slur on him, **especially as he was of noble birth**. Nevertheless, as long as the Parthians appeared to be threatening, I had resolved to leave my brother, or even to remain myself, contrary to the decree of the Senate, for the sake of the Republic. But when by incredible good fortune they had dispersed, all my hesitation was at an end. I saw what people would say: "What? Leave his brother! Is this what he calls not holding his province more than a year? Did not the Senate, again, intend that the governors

of provinces should be those who had not had them before? Yet this man (*i.e. his brother Quintus who had been governor of Asia Minor*) has held one for three years!” So here are my reasons for the public ear.

What am I to give you privately? I should never have been without anxiety as to something happening **from Quintus’ ill-temper, violent language, or carelessness**, as will happen in this world. Again, **if his son did anything—a mere lad and a lad full of self-confidence?** What a distress it would have been! His father was resolved not to part with him, and was annoyed with you for expressing an opinion that he should do so. But as to Coelius, as things are, I don’t say that I don’t care about his **antecedents**, but at any rate I care much less. Then there is this consideration: Pompey—so strong a man and in so secure a position—selected Q. Cassius without regard to the lot; Caesar did the same in the case of Antony: was I to put such a slight on one regularly assigned me by lot, as to make him **act as a spy** on any man I left in command? No, the course I adopted was the better one, and for it there are many precedents, and certainly it is more suited to my advanced time of life (*To Atticus* 6.6).

Favors, A mother-in-law in trouble 50 B.C.

Roman social interchange among all classes demanded the performance of favors, beneficia. In non-bureaucratic society this was how things got (and still get) done. Roman letters are full of requests for favors of all kinds. Here Cicero intervenes in a judicial matter without, apparently, being in the least bit embarrassed to do so. The letter was to the governor of Asia, Q. Minucius Thermus.

I am obliged to you for many instances of your attention to my recommendations, but above all for your very courteous treatment of M. Marcilius, son of my friend and interpreter (*not for Greek which Cicero spoke fluently but for the indigenous languages of his huge province*). He has arrived at Laodicea, and in an interview with me has expressed great gratitude to you, and to myself on your account. I therefore ask you as a further favor, that, as you find your kindness well laid out and meeting with gratitude from those persons, you would be still more ready to oblige them, and would endeavor, as far as your honor shall permit, to prevent the young man’s **mother-in-law from being prosecuted**. I recommended Marcilius to you before with some earnestness: I do so now with still greater, because, in a long course of his service as *apparitor* (*an officially appointed servant of some kind, in this instance, an interpreter*), I have found his father Marcilius to be peculiarly and almost incredibly trustworthy, disinterested, and scrupulous (*To His Friends*, 13.54).

Cicero writes to Gaius Memmius, a prominent senatorial colleague, on behalf of a freedman sculptor friend of his who needed an extension of his living arrangements. Apparently this man’s business was booming.

I am a close friend of C. Avianus Evander (*a freedman and a prominent sculptor*) as well as with his patron M. Aemilius Avianus. Evander is at present living and working in your family’s shrine (*apparently in Rome*). I ask you, therefore, with more than common earnestness, to give him any accommodation you can, without causing yourself

inconvenience, as to his place of residence. **For owing to his having many orders on hand for a number of people, it would hurry him very much if he were forced to quit your house on the 1st of July.** My modesty will not allow me to use more words in preferring my request: **yet I feel sure that**, if it is not inconvenient, or not very much so, **you will feel as I should have felt if you had asked a favor of me.** I, at any rate, shall be extremely obliged to you (*To His Friends* 13.2).

Dangerous Meddlers: Brutus and Appius Claudius, Laodicea 50 B.C.

When a governor entered his province, he found himself confronted not only with the problems of the province itself—disorder, banditry, potential invasion by enemies of Rome—but as or even more dangerously the interference of powerful Romans who expected the governor to look after their private interests in the province. For many governors it was easier to look after the needs of these outsiders and fellow members of the elite than to ignore them or stand up to them. After all a governor was only in a province for a short time whereas he was in the Senate for his whole life and his future depended on getting on well with important colleagues. Cicero found that his “friend” Brutus (the future assassin of Caesar) had a large financial interest in the city of Salamis in Cyprus and expected Cicero to look after it.

Now for the case of the Salaminians, which I see came to you also as a novelty, as it did to me. For Brutus never told me that the money was his own. Indeed, I have his own memo stating the following: “The Salaminians owe my friends M. Scaptius and P. Matinius a sum of money.” He recommends them to me and even adds, as though by way of a spur to me, that he had gone surety for them for a large amount. I had succeeded in arranging that they should pay with interest for six years at the rate of 1 percent, and added yearly to the capital sum. But Scaptius demanded 4 percent. I was afraid, if he got that, you yourself would cease to have any affection for me, for I should have violated my own edict (*which had established 1 percent as the maximum rate*), and should have utterly ruined a community which was under the protection not only of Cato, but also of Brutus himself, and had been the recipient of favors from me. When lo and behold! At this very juncture Scaptius comes down upon me with a letter from Brutus, stating that it was his own property that was involved—**a fact that Brutus had never told either me or you.** He also begged that I would appoint Scaptius as a **prefect** (*which would have made Scaptius an official representative of Cicero with military power to coerce the debtors*). That was the very reservation that I had made to you—**that no private business man would be appointed a prefect and if I was to make an exception it would certainly not have been for Scaptius.** This very same Scaptius had been made a prefect by Appius Claudius (*Cicero’s predecessor as governor in the province*), and had, in fact, some squadrons of cavalry with which he had kept the senate (*of Salamis*) under so close a siege in their own council chamber, that five senators **died of starvation.** Accordingly, the first day of my entering my province, Cyprian legates having already visited me at Ephesus, I sent orders for the cavalry to quit the island at once. For these reasons I believe Scaptius has written something unfavorable about me to Brutus. However, my feeling is this: if Brutus holds that I ought to have decided in favor of 4%, though throughout my province I have only recognized 1 percent, and had laid

down that rule in my edict with the assent even of the most grasping money-lenders; if he complains of my refusal of a prefecture to a private businessman, which I refused to our friend Torquatus in the case of your protégé Laenius, and to Pompey himself in the case of Sextius Staius, without offending either of them; if, finally, he is annoyed at my recall of the cavalry, **I shall indeed feel some distress at his being angry with me, but much greater distress at finding him not to be the man that I had thought him.** Thus much Scaptius will admit that he had the opportunity in my court of taking away with him the whole sum allowed by my edict. I will add a fact which I fear you may not approve. The interest ought to have ceased to run (I mean the interest allowed by my edict), but I induced the Salaminians to say nothing about that. They gave in to me, it is true, but what will become of them if Paullus comes here (*Cicero's expected successor*)? However, I have granted all this as a favor to Brutus, who writes very kind letters to you about me, **but to me myself, even when he has a favor to ask, writes usually in a tone of hauteur, arrogance, and offensive superiority** (*To Atticus* 6.1).

Meddlers: Merely Annoying, Laodicea February 50 B.C.

Less irritating requests came from friends. His good friend Caelius Rufus won the election for the aedileship and, as a consequence, was obliged to give public games which included wild animal hunts. He was desperate for these and constantly pestered Cicero to send him panthers from Cilicia.

Caelius Rufus to Cicero: In nearly every letter **I have mentioned the subject of the panthers to you.** It will be a disgrace to you that Patiscus has sent ten panthers to Curio, and that you should not send many times more. And these very beasts, as well as ten more from Africa, Curio has presented to me, lest you should think that he does not know how to make any presents except landed estates. If you will only not forget, and send for some men of Cibyra, and also transmit a letter to Pamphylia—for it is there that they are said to be mostly captured—you will effect what you choose. I am all the more earnest about this now, because I think I shall have to furnish the exhibition entirely apart from my colleague. Pray lay this injunction upon yourself. It is your way to take much trouble willingly, as it is mine for the most part to take none (*To his Friends*, 8.9).

In the course of a much longer letter Cicero replies politely but with tongue-in-cheek to Caelius' request.

The panthers are being energetically sought by the regular hunters in accordance with my orders, but there is a great scarcity of them, **and such as there are, I am told, complain loudly that they are the only creatures for which traps are set in all my province,** and they are said in consequence to have resolved **to quit our province for Caria.** However, the business is being pushed on zealously, and especially by Patiscus. All that turn up shall be at your service, but how many that is I don't in the least know. I assure you I am much interested in your aedileship: the day itself reminds me of it; for I am writing on the very day of the Megalensia. Please write the fullest particulars as to the state of politics in general: for I shall look on information from you as the most trustworthy I get (*To His Friends*, 2.11)

In a letter to Atticus written at about the same time as the previous correspondence with Caelius, we find that another aedile by the name of Octavius had also contacted Cicero about wild animals for his hunt, but had been told by Atticus that Cicero would not be of help. We also learn that Caelius has not given up and wanted Cicero to raise money from the provincials for his show.

As to M. Octavius, I hereby again repeat that your answer was excellent. I could have wished it a little more positive still. For Caelius has sent me a freedman and a carefully written letter about **some panthers** and also **is requesting a grant from the provincial communities**. I have written back to say that, as to the latter, I am much vexed if my course of conduct is still obscure, and if it is not known at Rome that not a penny has been exacted from my province except for the payment of debt ; and I have explained to him that **it is improper both for me to solicit the money and for him to receive it**; and I have advised him (for I am really attached to him) that, after prosecuting others, he should be extra-careful as to his own conduct. As to the former request, I have said that it is inconsistent with my character that the people of Cibyra should hunt at the public expense while I am governor (*To Atticus* 6.1).

Visits of Obnoxious Romans, Laodicaea 50 B.C.

Provincial governors were expected to welcome and entertain travelling members of the Roman elite; inns or hostels were not places where the elite stayed. In this case, the object of Cicero's scorn was a wealthy nobody whose only crime was vulgar ostentation, but there were other travelling Romans who caused problems by their bad behavior, especially the sons of prominent senators. One of these was the son of the famous orator Hortensius, which created an awkward situation for Cicero, who revered Hortensius.

But look here! Have you yet managed to wring out of Caesar by the agency of Herodes the fifty Attic talents? In that matter you have, I hear, roused great wrath on the part of Pompey. For he thinks that you have snapped up money rightly his and that Caesar will be no less lavish in building his villa at Nemi.

I was told all this by P. Vedius, **a hare-brained ass**, but yet an intimate friend of Pompey's. This Vedius came to meet me with two chariots, and a carriage and horses, and a sedan, and a large suite of servants, for which last, if Curio has carried his law (*limiting the number of servants a traveler could take with him*), he will have to pay a toll of a hundred sestertii apiece. There was also in a chariot a dog-headed baboon, as well as some wild asses. I never saw a more extravagant fool. But hear the end of the story. He stayed at Laodicea with Pompeius Vindullus. There he deposited his properties when coming to see me. Meanwhile Vindullus dies, and his property is supposed to revert to Pompey. Gaius Vennonius comes to Vindullus's house: when, while putting a seal on all goods, he comes across the baggage of Vedius. In this are found five small portrait busts of married ladies, among which is one of the wife of your friend—you know who I mean. . . . I wanted you to know these tales in passing; for we have both a fondness for gossip. (*To Atticus* 6.1).

Young Hortensius, at the time of the gladiatorial exhibition at Apamea, behaved in a scandalous and disgraceful manner. For his father's sake I asked him to dinner the day

he arrived, and for his father's sake I also went no farther. He remarked that he would wait for me at Athens, that we might leave the country together. "All right," said I: for what could I say? After all, I don't think what he meant amounted to anything. I hope not, at least, lest I should offend his father, of whom, by heaven, I am exceedingly fond. But if he is to be in my suite, I will so manage him as to avoid giving offence where I least wish to do so. That is all: no, there is this—please send me the speech of Quintus Celer against M. Servilius. Send me a letter as soon as possible. If there is no news, let me know there is none at least by a letter-carrier of yours. Love to Pilia and your daughter. Take care of your health (*To Atticus*, 6.3).

QUESTIONS

1. What was the aim of just war rituals conducted by Rome's fetial priests? (3.1)
2. What was main point made by Flaminius in his speech to the Greeks? (3.1)
3. How were centurions selected? What does Polybius say their qualities should be? (3.1)
4. What judgment does Polybius pass on Hannibal's conduct of the Battle of Zama? (3.1)
5. Discuss the significance of the peace settlement of 338 B.C. after the Great Latin War. What role did this model settlement play in the evolution of Rome's Empire? (3.2)
6. What were the Romans afraid of in the lead-up to the First Punic War? (3.3)
7. What did the older senators think of the "New Wisdom" of their younger colleagues? Did Cato have anything to say on the subject? (3.3)
8. After the disastrous battle of Trasimene against Hannibal, what were the first actions the Romans took? What reasons were given for them? (3.5)
9. What were some of the weaknesses of Rome's military system? Why was the refusal of the 12 colonies to supply recruits seen as such a threat by the Romans? (3.6)
10. Like all warring nations, Romans portrayed their enemies in unflattering terms. Discuss the images our sources provide us for Celts, Samnites, and Greeks. (3.7)
11. Cicero's year as governor of the province of Cilicia tell us as much about Cicero as it does about how a Roman province was governed. Evaluate Cicero and his governance of Cilicia, taking into account the challenges he faced in his province. (3.8)