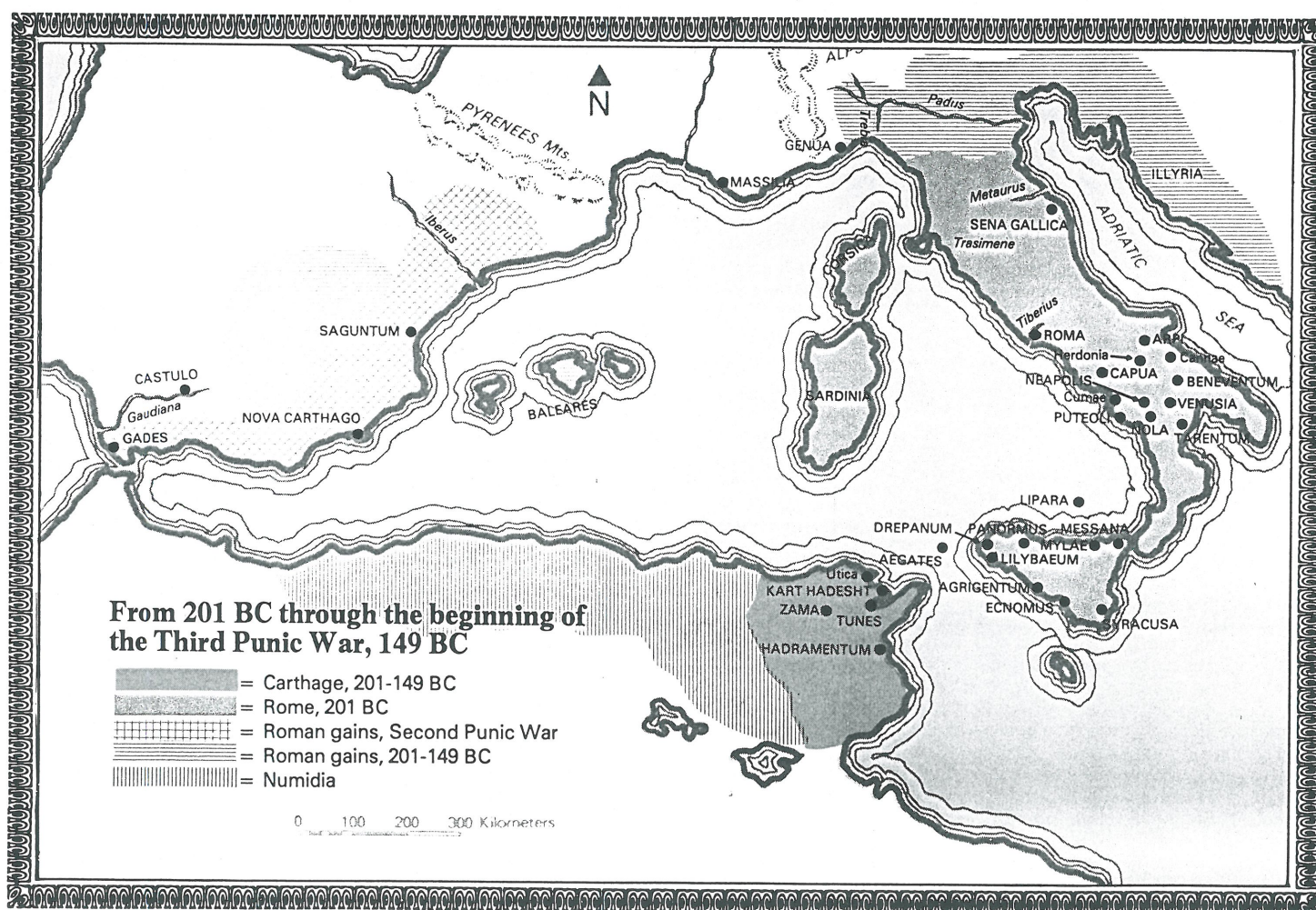


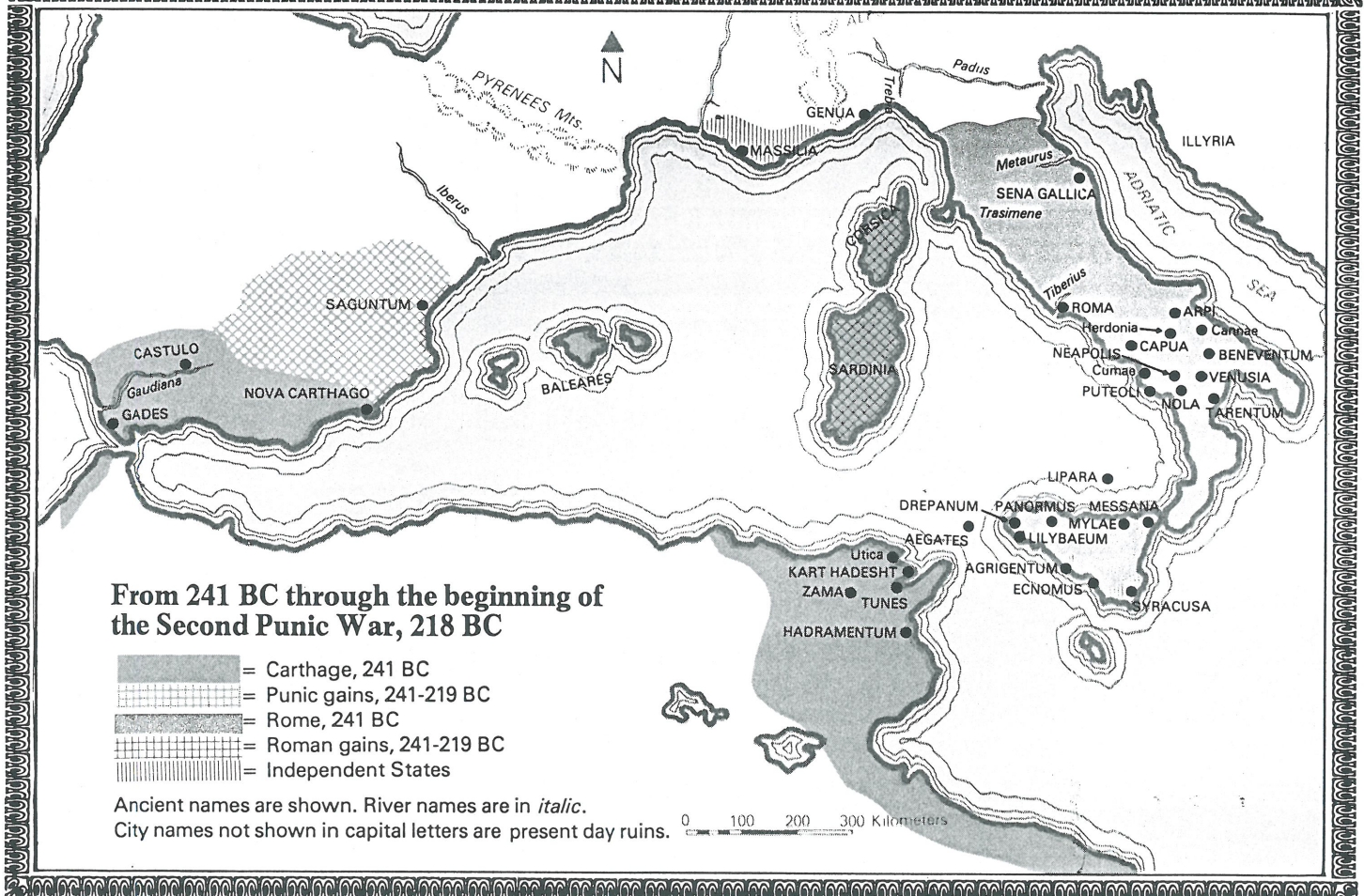
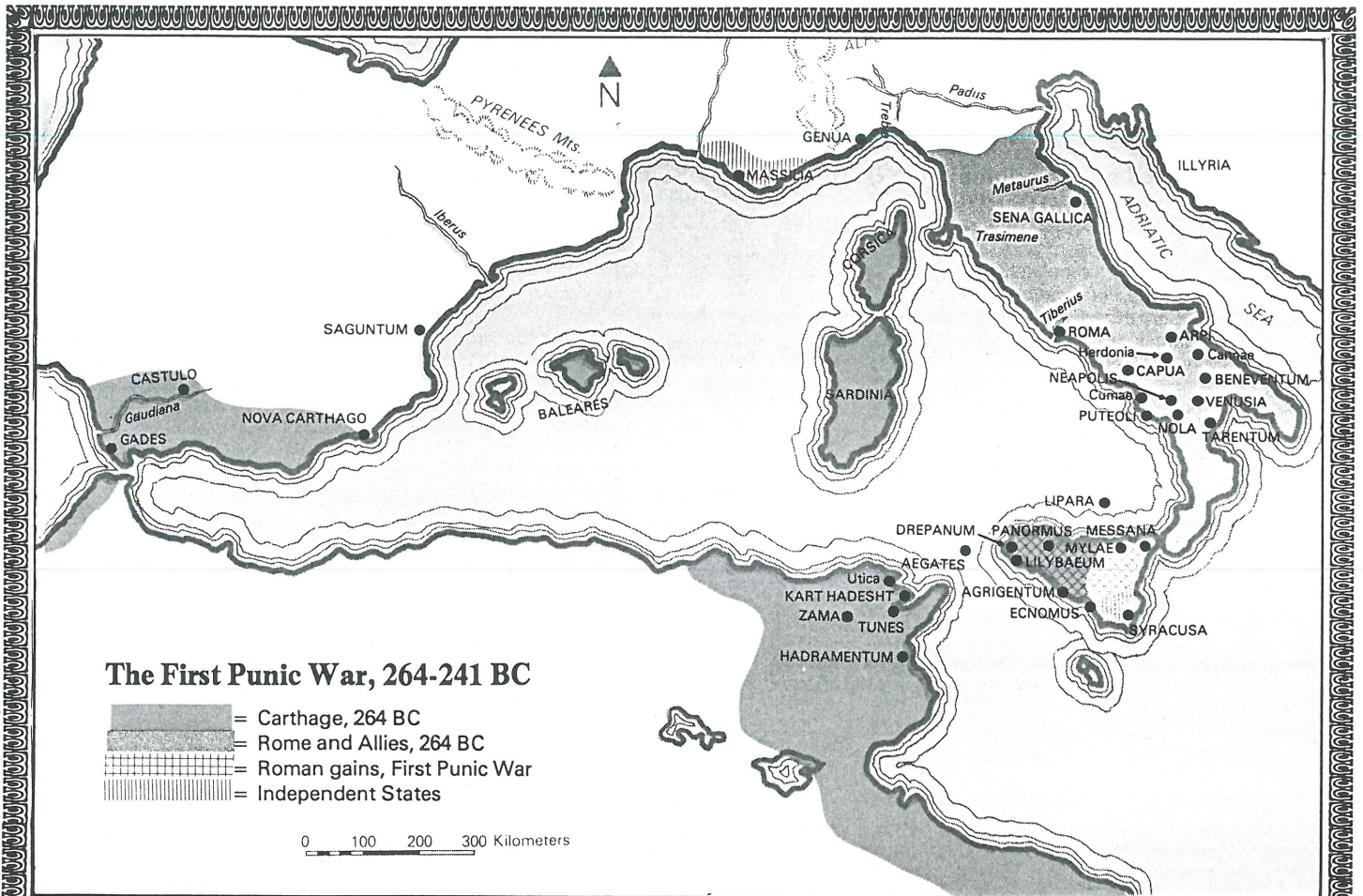
»THE PUNIC WARS«

Rome vs. Carthage, 264-146 B.C.

by Stephen B. Patrick

For the first millenia of western civilization, activity was confined to the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Only Phoenicia and the Greek trading states, such as Athens and Thebes, ventured west, setting up colonies in Africa, Italy and Gaul. By 400 BC, Phoenicia was part of the Persian Empire and Greece was exhausted by the internal wars between the various city-states. Their colonies, notably the Phoenician colony at Carthage, and the Greek colonies at Syracuse, Massilia and Neapolis, as well as the Italian-based conglomerate called Etruria, headed for domination in Italy, Carthage for Africa and Spain, while the Greek colonies would have the remainder. A century later, all of this was changed. Etruria was in disarray and the small city of Rome was expanding its control throughout Italy, defeating in turn all of its potential foes. The wars with Pyrrhus suddenly made Rome the master of southern Italy and heir to the Greek colonies' trade position. Now only Rome and Carthage were left to decide who would control the western Mediterranean.





When the first treaty was made between Rome and Carthage (traditionally, 509 BC), Carthage had already become the most important trading nation in the western Mediterranean, while Rome was a small city, centered around the marshy ground of the left bank of the Tiber, still under Etruscan domination. The treaty was an agreement that Rome would restrict its trade with Africa, while Carthage would restrict its trading in Latium, around Rome. A century later, when Carthage expanded into Spain, a new treaty was made barring Roman trade in Spain. This was of little consequence to Rome, as it was not by any means a trading power.

The first confrontation occurred during the war with Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus had used Sicily as his base of operations, and, following initial successes, was being pushed out of Italy. Rome lay siege to the major city of Tarentum and was on the verge of carrying the city, only to see a Punic fleet sailing into the harbor of Tarentum. Carthage said that they had sent the fleet to assist Rome, with whom they had agreements of friendship. Rome suspected (probably rightly) that Carthage hoped to snatch Tarentum from Rome before the Romans could really claim they had the city in their control. The Romans prevailed and no blood was shed between the two nations, but the seeds were planted for the ultimate confrontations between the two powers.

With Rome controlling southern Italy and Carthage controlling western Sicily, as well as Sardinia and Corsica, Rome had a reason to develop sea trade and Carthage presented a potential barrier. Throughout its expansion, Rome had not deliberately sought an empire. Still, as it met and finally defeated its enemies, it adopted the policy that it was better to bring these former rivals under Roman control and so Roman sway expanded. Most important to Rome's new position as a southern Italian power was the situation in Sicily.

Carthage had fought the Greeks, primarily in Syracuse, for several centuries, winning control of the western part of the island, but not the east. In 264 BC, a group of brigands (no more accurate term can be applied), calling themselves Mamertines, siezed the city of Messina, directly across the straits from Italy. They had also taken the city of Rhegium, on the tip of the toe. Rome had moved to throw them out and had exacted rather brutal reprisals against the Mamertines. But in Messina, the situation was different. Syracuse made preparations to expel the Mamertines and they sought aid from both Rome and Carthage. Carthage, already in Sicily, reacted first and occupied the citadel in Messina. After some debate, the Senate authorized Roman intervention. The Romans struck quickly, caught the Punic garrison by surprise and threw them out of the city. This, then, was the beginning of the First Punic War.

Sicily remained the focus of the First Punic War. It lay between Italy and the Punic homelands and was the logical center of activity. The pace of the war was slow, with only one or two major actions occurring in any year, and in many years, nothing of note occurring. The first two years involved the siege and counter-siege of Messina, resulting in Hiero II of Syracuse changing sides in 263 BC, bringing eastern Sicily under Roman control. In 262, they then moved to the south coast and besieged Agrigentum. After the prolonged siege had virtually broken the ability of the

Punic defenders, a relief force was beaten off, forcing the defenders to abandon the city to Rome. This left only a few scattered cities in the west of the island in Carthaginian hands.

By 260 BC, Rome had developed a strong enough fleet to meet the Carthaginians in their "home court." The first battle that year, off the Lipara Islands, was a Roman loss, but later that year C. Duilius employed a new tactic. While traditionally ancient fleets fought by maneuvering and ramming, the Romans wanted to use their strongest point — the Roman soldier. The solution was a device called a *corvus*: a gangplank mounted in the bows of the Roman ships with an iron spike on the end. It was dropped on the enemy's deck, holding the enemy ship close and allowing the Romans to board. Duilius used this at Mylae, winning a decisive victory for Rome. This was followed by Roman invasions of Sardinia and Corsica, though neither achieved any major success.

Four years later, another major naval battle occurred off Cape Ecnomus. The Romans again won and now felt strong enough to consider taking the war home to Carthage. The Roman Army, under the consul Regulus, landed near Utica and won a decisive battle at Adys. Carthage initially sued for peace, but the Roman terms were so severe that they decided to fight on. They recruited a Spartan general, Xanthippus, who, with a force of mercenaries, arrived in 255 BC, made good use of his elephants and cavalry, and crushed the Roman Army, capturing Regulus. Although the remainder of the Roman Army was evacuated by sea, most were lost when a storm destroyed the evacuating fleet.

The following year, 254 BC, Carthage resumed the offensive. It besieged cities in Sicily and retook Agrigentum. Rome countered by taking Panormus by amphibious assault and a stalemate followed.

Finally, in 251 BC, the Carthaginians attacked at Panormus, were crushed and sought terms. They sent Regulus on parole to deliver their offer. Regulus advised rejection of the Punic offer and, honoring his parole, returned to Carthage, where he was apparently tortured to death, adding another hero to the Roman pantheon.

In 249 BC, Adherbal, commander of the Punic fleet, crushed the Roman fleet blockading Lilybaeum. The remainder of the fleet was lost in another storm and the Romans considered this a sign that the gods did not favor their activities on the sea. Accordingly, the Romans refrained from naval action for several years.

In 247 BC, Carthage found her best commander of the war, Hamilcar Barca. He was put in command in western Sicily and not only repulsed all Roman attacks, but was able to conduct raids on Italy. This situation existed until 242 BC, when Rome went to sea once more, taking Drepanum and Lilybaeum by combined land and sea assaults.

Carthage responded the following year by sending Hanno with a fleet to defeat the Romans. Instead, in the battle of the Aegates Islands, Rome prevailed. Hanno, returning in disgrace, was crucified by the Carthaginians (they were rather unforgiving of failure). By now, Carthage was exhausted economically. They could no longer pay the mercenary force upon which they put so much reliance. Rome had the edge here since they used citizen and allied armies which could, if necessary, go

without pay. Moreover, with Rome in control of the seas, Carthage could not supply her forces in Sicily.

Carthage again sought terms. This time Rome agreed. Although Rome had the upper hand, Roman resources were also being taxed to their limit and the Romans were tired of this seemingly interminable war. By the surrender terms, Carthage surrendered all of her holdings in Sicily to Rome, as well as all of the islands between Sicily and Italy. Only Syracuse remained outside Roman hands, since it was still under the control of its own government. Carthage was also to pay 3,000 talents as an indemnity over a ten year period.

Carthage was not defeated if one considers defeat, in this case, to require enemy troops on Carthaginian soil. Carthage simply could not fight on any longer. Thus, the seeds were planted for a renewal of the fighting, much in the same way that the conditions surrounding the surrender of Germany in 1918 permitted the Germans to consider themselves unbeaten in the field when Hitler began to beguile them.

Shortly after the war, Carthage was faced with severe internal problems. Her mercenaries rebelled due to delays in pay and the Punic North African territories likewise rebelled in sympathy with the mercenaries. Hanno, called the Great for no apparent reason, botched the conduct of the mercenary war and it dragged on until Hamilcar Barca was given command. He wrapped it all up in a year, cementing his control of the government of Carthage in the process. From that time until his death, Hamilcar Barca and his supporters controlled the government of Carthage and its foreign policy.

During the mercenary war, Utica and Sardinia offered to become subjects of Rome, but Rome maintained a proper neutrality, while Carthage took care of its internal problems. However, when the war was over, and as Carthage was preparing a military force to regain control in Sardinia, Rome suddenly landed troops in Sardinia. The Romans claimed that Sardinia was, in fact, an island between Sicily and Italy, and therefore was Roman under the peace treaty in any event. Moreover, they stated that the Punic force allegedly assembled to deal with Sardinia was, in fact, to be an invasion force headed for Italy. Rome declared war. Carthage, still not recovered from the last war with Rome and still unsure of its mercenaries, upon whom it placed so much reliance, immediately sought peace terms. Rome demanded that Sardinia and Corsica be ceded to Rome and that an additional indemnity of 1,200 talents be paid. Carthage yielded.

Carthage, under Hamilcar Barca, turned westward and began to expand in Spain. On his death in 229 BC, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal. Hasdrubal built a new city, Nova Carthago, which he made the capital of Punic Spain. The Romans watched all of this with interest as they, too, were beginning to move into Spain, though the Romans were coming out of Gaul from the north, while the Carthaginians were expanding from the south. In 226 BC, Rome and Carthage made a new treaty under which Carthage agreed not to advance north of the Ebro River for the purposes of making war. In 221 BC, Hasdrubal was murdered and Hamilcar Barca's son, Hannibal, took command in Spain.

[continued on page 9]

The Roman Art of War

The Romans of the Punic War era were serious people. Few virtues were considered more important than *gravitas*, seriousness. When war was declared, in all its formality, it was awesome.

When mobilization was for war, rather than simple annual training, after the quaestors brought the insignia for the maniples, the consul who had command that day would go to the Temple of Mars and shake the shield and lance of the statue there. The doors of the Temple of Janus would be opened, signifying that war had returned to the republic. The army would then perform a lustration (sacrifice of animals) to propitiate the gods.

The actual declaration of war was made by herald. He would present a list of grievances and demands for satisfaction. As the Romans usually expected war, they were not surprised when nothing was done to meet the demands. When the deadline passed, a bloody spear was thrown into enemy territory, marking the formal declaration of war. Of course, this formality was not always observed, but the ritual was there.

The opposing armies would usually spend a considerable time maneuvering for good position. Considering that the length of the campaigning season would be four months or so, allowing for spring planting and fall

harvest, usually only one or two major engagements would be fought over a year. Or the entire year might be devoted to siege of a city. Assuming that the opposing armies did wish to fight, or that one had fallen on the other so that it had to fight to extricate itself, the Romans would deploy into their three lines of maniples. They made substantial use of musical instruments to control maneuver in combat and this, plus the manipular insignia, were the only two effective means of control above the din of battle. At the first trumpet signal, the Romans gave their battle cry, important as a morale factor for the Romans against the enemy. At the second signal, they would advance at a quick step. If necessary, a third signal would be blown, indicating that they should charge at the double time. If they did this, they would clash lance against shield as they ran.

In front of the legion were the *velites*, the light troops. They threw darts and generally tried to disorder the enemy. As the main body closed, the light troops would fall back through the gaps in the checkerboard pattern and would not be used again unless the situation indicated. When the first line was about eight to ten paces from the enemy, they would halt, throw their spears (*pila*) and close with swords. They would allow between five and one and a half feet per man, depending on the needs of the battle. Because the Romans were emphasizing thrusting, rather

than slashing, they produced their own advantage. They would often engage, not the man directly in front of them, but the man to their right. This was because as that man raised his arm to slash with his sword, he exposed his entire right side (armies invariably fought right-handed, regardless of the natural "handedness" of individuals). The Roman would thrust home at this target, then step back and slightly to the right to get a new purchase. The result was that the Roman line tended to go to the right and rear with the enemy having to go to its left and forward, over the bodies of the dead. That little edge in footing often provided the key to success for the Romans.

Traditionally the Romans took no prisoners, though they were beginning at this time to realize the value of hostages and might spare the principal leaders either for their ransom value or because they made good objects of display for the triumph which every commander hoped to gain if victorious. This same attitude toward taking prisoners carried over to the fact that the Romans expected no special consideration for their prisoners and it was not thought unusual for a man like Regulus to return to captivity and certain death.

War was serious business to the Romans and on the eve of the Second Punic War, they took it with even greater seriousness.

The Punic Army

By the Punic Wars, the Punic Army was in decline. Its citizens did not serve, with certain special exceptions. They did, of course, have a cadre of excellent leaders, but the soldiers were mainly mercenaries. Because the Carthaginians had the Near Eastern attitude toward cavalry, rather than the Greek contempt (as the Romans had), Punic cavalry was one area where a Carthaginian citizen would serve. They also had an elite force of horse and infantry, called by the Romans, the Sacred Band (after the Theban model), which was composed, in part, of a 1,500-man citizen infantry.

The balance of the army was mercenary. Spain furnished the best soldiers, African nomadic tribes, the most numerous. Both cavalry and infantry were composed of light and heavy elements. The Sacred Band was the heavy infantry. They carried a large circular shield, in excess of three feet in diameter, a short sword and a pike or lance. They wore a red tunic and sandals. The heavy cavalry, as with the Romans, was composed of the upper class of citizens. They had a buckler-type shield, a long and short lance and a wide short sword. Their armor was mail with helmet and greaves.

The Spanish heavy infantry and horse was the strongest mercenary force. The infantry had a Spanish short sword (the type Scipio would introduce to the whole Roman Army). They had a bull's hide buckler and wore a white woolen tunic with red edges. The cavalry carried an extra rider who would dismount and fight as infantry when they got to the crucial point.

Punic auxiliaries were led, as far as fame is concerned, by the slingers of the Balaeric Islands. These slingers were to perform the same task for the Romans in the first centuries of empire, using long and short slings, depending on the range, and were capable of throwing both lead and stone projectiles. Also in the Punic Army was light infantry, equipped with lance, javelin, a round, hide-covered wooden shield and darts.

The African contingents were the most colorful, with shaved head and small fringe of beard. They were often heavily tattooed and wore a red hood, white woolen shirt which hung to the knees and a cloak of goat or wild animal skin. They had an elephant or bull's hide buckler and carried a long lance, bows and arrows and were sometimes armed with a long sword. Some

had special weapons, such as flails or harpoons held by a cord.

The best cavalry was the Numidian cavalry, who wore leopard skins and carried lances, darts and a sword.

The elephants were adopted after a war with Pyrrhus. Elephants were more dramatic than valuable and could turn on their own side as easily as on the enemy. Accordingly, the riders had a spike and mallet to dispatch an elephant which refused to trample the right side.

This mixture was whipped into shape by a series of excellent commanders. Perhaps it was the challenge of making such a mixed group function that developed good leaders, but Carthage never seemed to produce leaders as impetuous as Flaminius or Varro. It seemed that they had a string, one after the other, all named either Hannibal, Hasdrubal or Hanno, who could lead the mercenary forces to victory after victory. Of course, this was not really true and in the end the fact that their army was not a citizen army told against the Carthaginians, so that even leadership could not salvage the day.

Origins — Fact and Myth

According to Roman tradition, the origins of Carthage and Rome are intertwined. Carthage was said to have been founded when Dido, sister of Pygmalion, King of Tyre, fled her brother's tyranny and reached the site of Carthage to found her city within the limits of what could be encompassed by a bull's hide. Aeneas, a son of Venus and the Trojan Anchises, fleeing the fall of Troy, stopped at Carthage, had an affair with Dido, and moved on, with Dido cursing him and his descendants. This would be around 1200 BC if the historical date of the fall of Troy is considered or around 813 BC if the traditional dates of the reign of Pygmalion are considered.

Aeneas founded Lavinium, in Italy and his son, Ascanius, founded Alba Longa, in the Alban Hills not far south of Rome's present location. After several generations, keeping up with the close relationship of the family with the gods, one of Aeneas' descendants, Rhea Silvia, a vestal virgin and niece of the reigning king of Alba Longa, was raped by Mars and gave birth to twins, Romulus and Remus. The children, condemned to drowning, were taken to the Tiber in a basket with the idea that they would be set afloat and drown when the basket leaked and sank. But the Tiber was

in flood and the men charged with the task put the basket at the river's edge, hoping that the flow of the water would carry it off. It was left stranded as the river level fell and the twins were discovered by a she-wolf which nursed them (the traditional emblem of Rome being the she-wolf as the result), though some said that in fact they were cared for by a woman of questionable morals who was known as "the wolf" among her clients. Later, the twins decided to set up their own city and chose some hills near where they were found as babies. Romulus and Remus disputed the name of the city and agreed that he who saw the proper omen from the gods would get to name the city. Remus set up his position on the Palatine Hill and soon saw six vultures. Romulus set his position on the Palatine Hill and saw more than that, but he saw his omen after Remus. They argued over whose omen was better, and, according to tradition, Remus, to mock Romulus, jumped over the small walls that Romulus had been building. Romulus is said to have killed his brother at that, claiming that the same thing would happen to anyone else who tried to cross the walls of Rome. It makes a good story.

The amazing thing is that archeology has discovered evidence which appears to bear out tradition. Carthage was apparently

founded as a Phoenician trading station. The earliest artifacts indicating a permanent city date from about 750 to 725 BC, but this is complicated by the fact that so much of the city was destroyed by the Romans and archeologists have not really done the thorough job the situation requires. Nonetheless, it is probable that the trading station predated the city by fifty to seventy-five years, thus making the date of the first settlements around 800 BC.

Similarly, Rome has a traditional founding date of April 21, 753 BC. Evidence unearthed in Rome indicates that the first settlements were on the Palatine Hill near the middle of the Eighth Century BC, bearing out tradition with surprising accuracy, considering the primitive records which were maintained until well into the republic.

The Phoenicians called their trading station Kart Hadesh, which means "new city," and is, of course, the origin of what the Romans called Carthage. Because of the Phoenician origin of Carthage, the Romans corrupted *Phoenicia* into *Punicus*. This is why the word "Punic" is interchanged with "Carthaginian."

It would appear that the name for Rome, in fact, is a corruption of the word "*ramnes*," which means "people of the stream."

Telling Your Players Without a Program

The Romans were one of the few ancient peoples to use multiple names. Most western nations used one name, only, for men with some variation on the father's name if there was additional identification needed. The typical Roman had at least two names. His first name (*praenomen*) fulfilled the same function as modern first names. The Roman selection, however, was rather narrow, of which thirteen (Caius, Cnaeus, Lucius, Marcus, Publius, Spurius, Sextus, Servius, Quintus, Tiberius, Titus, Appius and Decimus) were decidedly the most popular. As a result, conventional abbreviations were adopted (respectively, C, Cn, L, M, P, Cp, Sex, Ser, Q, Ti, T, Ap and D). Female names were even fewer, often being feminine versions of the family name. The second name (and the middle name for more important families) was the true last name (*nomen*). However, as some families achieved importance and retained it over the years, this was especially true among the relatively few patrician families, as well as the better known plebian families. Obviously, this could lead to an interminable number of people called C. Claudius. The result was the adoption of a nickname (*cognomen*) to designate various branches of the family. The nicknames, of course, had meanings when first applied, but gradually lost them over the years, so that people took no particular notice that a

person's *cognomen* was, say, Paulus, which means "small." It caused no more reaction than meeting a person with the last name of Little or Klein would today. Among the better known cognomens involved in the Punic Wars are Scipio, meaning a staff or cudgel; Paulus, meaning small; Regulus, meaning chieftain; Varro meaning blockhead (probably most apt in light of his performance at Cannae); and Verrococus, meaning warty. However, because of the small number of first names, even the family name and nickname did not necessarily differentiate one man from another. For example, in the Second Punic War there was P. Cornelius Scipio and his nephew of the same name. In part, this could be solved by adding a notation as to the fact that the man was the son (*filius*, abbreviated "f") of one man, and grandson (*nepos*, abbreviated "n") of another. This all produces quite a handle, but one necessary if a particular individual was to be designated or if full formality was desired. Finally, a man achieving something of significance in his life might be given his own nickname, such as "Africanus" being given to Scipio, or "Maximum" (meaning "the great") given to Fabius. All of this, put together, produces this mouthful: Q. Fabius QfQn Verrococus Maximum Cunctator - Quintus, of the Fabius family, son of Quintus, grandson of Quintus, of the branch of the Fabian family called "warty," the great, the delayer.

In the normal run of things, even the Romans shortened these ponderous names. But there was no convention on this. They usually called a man by his cognomen — Caesar, Scipio, Sulla. But not always, as indicated by Fabius, or, later, the emperor Claudius, where the family name (*nomen*) was normally used. The only solution is to have a general idea as to the era you are dealing with. There are two Brutuses in Roman history of any note. The problem is easy if you know one is said to have founded the republic, the other to have ended Caesar. And so on.

If you have the Roman names sorted out, the problem gets better among the Carthaginian names. Few Carthaginian generals are known by their last name (Hamilcar Barca and Hasdrubal Gisco being the two most prominent in the Punic Wars). The rest seem to be an unending array of Hannibals, Hasdrubals, Hamilcars and Hannos, with a Mago and Adherbal thrown in for good measure.

Carthaginian names also had an underlying meaning. Hannibal means Favorite of Baal (principal god of Carthage and Phoenicia); Hanno means Peaceful or Mild; Hasdrubal, Whose Help is Baal. Himilco, on the other hand, means favorite of Milcar (Malkert or Melqart was the patron deity of Tyre, the founding city of Carthage). Hamilcar commemorates the same god. Barca, one of the few last names, means Thunder, which may be the most apt name for the family which plagued Rome for so long.

[continued from page 6]

Attention soon focused on the town of Saguntum, an independent Spanish town which was in fact south of the Ebro River, but was of sufficient size to make it an interesting prize for both Rome and Carthage. Rome managed to interfere enough in local politics that a pro-Roman government seized power. They then were able to declare Saguntum friendly to Rome and direct Carthage to stay clear of the city. Hannibal correctly felt that since it lay south of the Ebro, Saguntum was not properly the concern of Rome and if anyone had a right to interfere in its affairs, it was Carthage. Finally, in 219 BC, Hannibal struck. He besieged Saguntum for eight months. During that period, the war party gained power in Rome and war was declared.

A great deal of mythology surrounds the outbreak of war; not the least was the myth of undying hatred sworn by Hannibal as a child. This was probably a story started by Hannibal himself to prove his credentials in Carthage. The Romans, for their part, have played games with geography and had actually declared that Saguntum lay north of the Ebro. The facts are that while Hannibal may not have feared war with Rome, it was still Rome which forced the issue on a trumped-up charge. It would appear that Hannibal's plan was to reduce Rome to an Italian power, though he had no particular desire to destroy Rome as a power altogether. He did want to regain Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily for Carthage. In order to achieve this goal, he became probably the first commander to have a strategic plan as well as tactical ones. He felt that a string of successes in Italy would induce Rome's allies to desert, and, without them to supply manpower and food, Rome would have to surrender.

Because Rome controlled the seas off the west coast of Italy, Hannibal was forced to make his famous march through Gaul and over the Alps. In so doing, he thwarted Roman plans which apparently consisted of a two-pronged attack, one to be into Spain to capture that area and the other from Sicily into Africa. Hannibal's march forced them to abandon these plans and deal with him.

Hannibal arrived in Italy in November, 218 BC, brushed aside an army led by the consul P. Scipio at the Ticinus River and crushed the other consular army of T. Sempronius at the Trebia River. He then went into winter quarters in the Po Valley.

In Spain, the Romans went on the offensive. Cn. Scipio, the consul's brother, defeated and captured Hanno, gaining control of Spain between the Ebro and the Pyrenees.

In 217 BC, the two new consuls, C. Flaminius and Cn. Servilius, marched north to block the main routes from the Po to central Italy. Hannibal marched south and got around behind Flaminius, cutting him off from his supplies. In his haste to regain his supply lines, Flaminius forced the issue with Hannibal and deployed to fight Hannibal beside Lake Trasimene. Hannibal destroyed Flaminius' army, killing the consul in the process. Rome reacted by appointing a dictator, Q. Fabius Verracosus. Fabius began his now-famous policy of avoiding a pitched battle, letting Hannibal chase him around Italy, wasting his strength in doing so. To the offensive-minded Romans, this was contrary to all tradition. Romans did not run from a fight. Accordingly, they took the unprecedented step of

appointing Fabius' master of the horse, M. Minucius, to be Fabius' equal co-commander, almost in the consular sense. Minucius, more offensive-minded than Fabius, accepted battle at Geronium. It was only the timely arrival of Fabius on his flank that prevented another disaster.

The time gained by Fabius during 217 BC permitted Rome to rebuild her army and the new consuls of 216 BC, Aemilius Paulus and Terentius Varro, renewed the practice of alternating command. Technically, when both consuls were in the field, this was the way it was supposed to be done — every other day one consul would command the army, while his colleague would command on the intervening days. In practice, this left much to be desired in the form of continuity. But few consuls would rise above the natural desire for glory and accept a secondary role to permit the necessary continuity of command.

In fact, the two consuls were radically different in style. Paulus was cool and deliberate, while Varro was impetuous and anxious for glory. Hannibal saw this and waited until he knew that Varro would be in command before offering battle. Varro accepted and they met at Cannae. There Hannibal achieved one of the classical victories in military history, a double envelopment of the Roman Army. Paulus was killed, as were about 60,000 Romans and only 6,000 Carthaginians. Varro fled with the survivors.

These defeats were the greatest test of Rome's mettle. Few thought of surrender, even though there was almost no army left in the field. They scraped together the survivors (and, as punishment, kept them in service to the end of the war). They even bought slaves at public expense and mustered them into a legion. The biggest surprise was that few Italian towns went over to Carthage, even though, after Cannae, there was no reason to assume that Rome could survive.

A dictator, M. Claudius Marcellus, was appointed. He turned out, over the succeeding years, to be one of the constant bright spots in the Roman defense of Italy. Marcellus rushed to Neapolis and held off Hannibal's attempt to take that city. As Hannibal advanced toward Neapolis, some cities, such as Capua, did defect. But when Marcellus again held off Hannibal, this time at Nola, defections stopped. The Italian cities were not so sure that Hannibal would win if he could not take a city against strong Roman defense.

These battles were not decisive in the sense that Hannibal was beaten. He did not have an adequate siege train and this was the primary reason why he did not march on Rome after Cannae, even though there was no army left in the field to oppose him. Still, the fact that Rome would defend these cities, even though they were non-Roman (in the sense of not being citizens or Roman colonies), indicated to the Italian cities that Rome was far from beaten and, accordingly, was as serious a blow to Hannibal's effort as if he had lost in open battle.

Accordingly, Hannibal decided to try to build a power base on the cities which had defected, hoping to show those which remained under Roman control that there was a better life available to them under the aegis of Carthage. He proposed a non-Roman Italy, with Capua as its capital. The defense of Neapolis and Nola dashed these plans.

In 215 BC, Hannibal captured a few towns, but the Romans adopted the Fabian tactics of avoiding decisive battle. They coupled this tactic with a scorched earth policy, directing friendly cities to gather their crops by a certain time and burning all of the crops they could get to belonging to the cities in Punic hands. The Carthaginians tried to retaliate by doing the same to Roman crops, but the over-all result hurt the Carthaginians more than the Romans, because the Romans kept Punic supplies from coming into Italy with great effect.

Meanwhile, in Spain, Publius Scipio, joined by his brother Cnaeus, attacked Hasdrubal's fleet in the mouth of the Ebro, destroying half of it. During the following two years, the Scipios consolidated their holdings in Spain while Hasdrubal (who was Hannibal's brother, just to keep the record straight) had to deal with native revolts in southern Spain. 215 BC was spent with the Scipios holding off Punic attempts to regain cities which had deserted to Rome.

The lack of reinforcements began to tell on Hannibal. Rome could and did tap her manpower resources and, in 214 BC, had more than 200,000 under arms, of which slightly less than 100,000 were facing Hannibal. Hannibal, for his part, had only maintained a strength of about 40,000 by heavy recruiting among the Italians and their support was less than enthusiastic. The Carthaginians therefore tried another strategy. They stirred up Philip V of Macedon into making war on Rome. The real power of Rome was apparent when, rather than breaking off the campaign in Spain to deal with Macedonia, the Romans formed an anti-Macedonian alliance in Greece and let the Greek allies bear the brunt of the land fighting. Rome did furnish the naval support, thereby giving her allies naval superiority. The Macedonian War drew on to 205 BC before Philip sought peace. It had no serious impact on Roman conduct of the war against Carthage. While Carthage was having trouble keeping two fronts going, Rome was able to successfully defend on one, attack on the second and keep the third from even making a drain on her manpower.

In 214 BC, Hasdrubal took the offensive in Spain to reestablish Punic authority among the Spanish and the Scipios took this chance to move south of the Ebro for the first time, though inconclusive fighting resulted. Meanwhile, in Italy, Hannibal again tried to take a major city, but failed at Cumae, Puteoli, Nola and Tarentum. Hanno, his other brother, tried to join Hannibal, but was defeated at Beneventum, preventing the link-up of 20,000 badly needed reinforcements.

In 213 BC, the theater of war was Apulia. Arpi, Hannibal's winter base for 214-3 BC fell to Rome, but this was off-set by Hannibal finally taking a major city, Tarentum, in the winter of 213 BC.

By this time, the Romans were tiring of the Fabian tactics. They seemed to be no closer to victory than when Fabius' influence was first felt. Hannibal was not worn down chasing the Romans over Italy and had managed to take a city from them. As a result, a more aggressive faction began to gain power in Rome. They directed that the Romans undertake a siege of Capua and begin to regain ground from Hannibal. By 211 BC, the siege was in full swing. Hannibal tried to relieve the city, but by that time the Romans had put a double line of siege works around the city and he could not

[continued on page 12]

Quintas Agricola — Miles (Quint Farmer — Infantryman)

The Roman citizen of the Punic War era was a unique person. He was in the minority among the peoples under Roman control and along with the special rights citizenship brought, it also brought certain obligations. One of them was to serve in the military.

Because of the complex system attributed to Servius Tullius, the citizens would be evaluated from time to time to see how much money they had and to assign them to their appropriate status in the military hierarchy. This was the original purpose of the censor. The poor were in the cavalry and the middle class were the infantry. As is almost typical of any middle class, the infantry took their task the most serious of all.

So, take Quintas Agricola, a hypothetical young man who had a small farm outside of Rome. He probably went into Rome twice a year. Once for the Saturnalia, the big festival in December. The other time would be in the spring for the *dilectus* — the Roman version of the draft.

All able-bodied male citizens between the ages of 17 and 45 assembled each spring in the Campus Martius, an open field located outside the city walls (because citizens could not bear arms inside the city), but on the left bank of the Tiber. They were screened for general physical fitness. People who were obviously lame or otherwise unfit were excused. The Romans wanted someone between 5' and 5'3".

The first order of business was the selection of officers. The two consuls were, by virtue of their office, the joint commanders-in-chief of the army. They selected three tribunes (*tribuni militum*) for each legion (two legions were selected) while the other three tribunes for each legion (*tribuni militum a populo*) were elected by the people. They formed the junior officers of the legion. The tribunes, in turn, selected the centurions. Centurions were selected from among people who had previously served and were proven in ability. The troops would then be assigned to their

appropriate positions in the various lines based on their status as determined by the census, and based on selection by the tribunes and centurions.

Then came the religious formalities. The quaestors brought the manipular insignia from the treasury in the capitol (the famous legionary eagle would not be introduced for more than a century). The men then swore their oath of service: to obey the orders of the officers to the best of their ability. Normally, one man per legion would swear the full oath. They would then call the role and when each man's name was called, he would answer "idem in me" — "the same for me."

Quintas, as an able-bodied young farmer, would be either in the first or second line, depending on his experience. Chances are he would be a senior member of the first line, about ready to be assigned to the more prestigious second line. He would be fitted out with a woolen tunic, close fitting to the waist and pleated to the knee. Over that, he wore a chain mail garment called a *lorica hamata*, without sleeves, and hanging below the waist. A tight belt (*cingulum*, a word which really meant the military belt, as opposed to any other belt) not only served to support the weight of the chain mail and ease the load on the shoulders, but also served as a symbol of being in the army (though what people would think of a person who had all of that kit, but lacked the belt is not recorded as far as identification of occupation). A mild form of punishment was to deprive a man of his belt, which made the load on the shoulders rough going. From the belt, on the right side, was the sword and scabbard. This was worn high up on the right so that it did not interfere with walking. It was carried on the right, rather than cross-drawn as became the practice in the Middle Ages, to avoid getting in the way of the shield.

From the left side of the belt hung a dagger. He would have a cloak for foul weather, reddish brown in color, which was hooded and hung to the knees, but he would under no circumstances wear pants. Pants were for barbarians, like the Gauls. By the time of the Punic Wars, the Romans had

abandoned the greaves which protected the shins. They wore open leather sandals. The helmet Quintus would receive would be made of bronze, because bronze was easier to work than iron and could be shaped more readily. It was not the simple bowl shape with neck guard, which is better known in the imperial period. At this time, it probably had wing-like projections on the side, strictly ornament, and tubes brazed to the helmet to hold plumes for parades and the like. It would have rather substantial cheek-pieces (much broader than shown in most statuary, since the statue is designed to show the face, while the cheek-pieces are to protect it), which would tie under the chin. The helmet usually had a leather liner or was worn over a leather cap to ease the burden on the head.

Quintas would also get the semicylindrical shield (*scutum*) made of wood, covered with leather and with an iron rim around the edge and an iron boss in the center. The boss was used as an effective weapon, as well as to deflect enemy sword blows. The iron rim had the additional benefit of being unnerving when brought up smartly against any enemy's chin. As a member of the first line, he would get the throwing spear, or *pilum*, which was five-and-one-half feet long in the shaft and had a nine-inch iron point. His older comrades in the rear rank would have the ten to fourteen foot long thrusting spear, or *hasta*, instead.

In the normal peace-time army, service began in the spring, after the planting, and ended in the fall before the harvest. In between they learned soldier skills. One of the most popular was marching. The Romans needed to march in step to maintain their control. Marching in step was not unique to the Romans during this period (e.g., the Phalanx). The Roman soldier was expected to march fifteen Roman miles in a day (about 18 statute miles). He also was expected to pitch a full, formal camp at the end of the day and break it down at the start. On the other hand, this was not the legion which made the empire. Their march security was poor to say the least. They paid no attention to

The Punic Art of War

The defeat of Carthage in the Third Punic War resulted in the destruction of Punic culture. What has been determined about how the Carthaginians fought comes from the mouths of their enemies — the Greeks in Sicily and the Romans. As a result, it is a far from complete picture. It would appear, nonetheless, that they fought in a phalanx type of formation, as far as the heavy infantry was concerned, though they did not use the 21-foot Macedonian style spear. They also did not use the light infantry in the peltast style.

The infantry would deploy in the center with the cavalry and the auxiliaries on the flanks. As noted elsewhere, the Cartha-

ginians had the Phoenician attitude toward cavalry and used it both imaginatively and effectively. The slingers would usually be out in front, trying to disorganize the enemy in the same way the Roman light troops did. When the main battle was to be joined, the slingers would fall to the rear, leaving the infantry to fight. The mixed bag of nations furnishing troops to Carthage made it hard to say that the same system would be used in a given situation every time. Consideration had to be given to the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of each type of mercenary force and this might dictate changes in tactics just as one allied nation could not handle the mission which another ally, fielding the same type of force, could handle.

Finally, the Carthaginians did not tolerate failure gladly. The Romans expected that, if necessary, a commander would die with his troops, but when Varro fled from Cannae, all he suffered was the shame of it. The penalty for bad failure, or even ill-timed failure for a Punic general was crucifixion, a pleasant little punishment which the Romans adopted from Carthage (though Rome had sufficient sense of decorum to hold that a citizen could not be subjected to the humiliation of crucifixion — only non-citizens and those citizens who, by acts of treason, forfeited their rights of citizenship. Several key generals on the Carthaginian side were recalled to Carthage after losing and crucified — perhaps in the old French style, *pour encourager les autres*).

the possibility of an ambush until they were ambushed at Trebia, by Hannibal. Then, they made the necessary change. In fact, the whole system of pitching such an elaborate camp, complete with palisades and surrounding trench, was only begun after having been taught an earlier lesson at the hands of Pyrrhus.

Quintus and his mess-mates ate a ration which seems sparse by modern standards. He would get 1½ to two pounds of unground wheat per day, which he would usually grind up and make into a porridge. Breakfast was a light meal, there was no lunch and dinner, if possible, was eaten in the traditional Roman manner, reclining. Thus, it was another punishment to force a man to eat barley instead of wheat and/or to eat standing up for all meals. Punishments for minor infractions may seem curious by modern standards, but minor infractions require deprivation of small things which the person being punished regards as an imposition. Being able to eat while reclining was the mark of a Roman and the humiliation a Roman might feel at such deprivation was genuine.

Quintus would also learn to handle his sword, cutting at stakes set out in the Campus Martius or wherever the army trained. But his sword was still the older, long sword. It was Scipio who introduced the short Spanish sword, sharpened on both sides, as well as having the tip necessary for thrusting, which was to make the Empire.

By this time, although service was expected, it was not demanded free. Pay of the troops had been introduced during the ten-year siege of Veii (405-396 BC). By now pay was up to five asses per day for the infantry, sixteen and one-half for the cavalry or eleven for junior officers. An *ass* was originally a copper piece and at this time probably worth 1/16th of a *denarius*, the principal silver coin of the time. Out of this came his equipment and rations. Still, this was not bad pay, since 100 asses could buy a horse.

Quintus would have been called for the draft annually until he passed beyond the

age limit or was rendered unfit for some other reason. If, by some chance, he got very rich, he might buy his way out, but that possibility appeared too remote for a farmer. Besides, since members of the middle class at this time still strongly believed in the traditional virtues, including manliness (*virtus*) and doing the right thing (*firmitas*), Quintus would have viewed trying to avoid service as simply the unRoman thing to do. However, it would also appear that the soldiers did not have to serve constantly throughout the summer. They probably went off and trained right after formation and then went home, acting as a ready reserve, to respond when needed. According to tradition, the great dictator Cincinnatus was able to raise, equip and march off with the army in 457 BC between sunrise and sunset of one day. That implies that the army was not standing by, but that it could respond quickly.

When he did his service, Quintus would not only be with his fellow soldiers, he would also serve with the allied legions. These people formed and dressed and trained just like Romans, but, of course, they weren't Roman. They spoke Latin with a funny accent, had different customs and probably worshipped different gods, or at least didn't worship them in the same ways as the Romans. Obviously, as non-citizens, they were inferior to any Roman, and Quintus, with his friends, may well have gotten a good laugh at some Samnite farmer trying to cope with Latin. The notion that someday these rubes would ever merit consideration for citizenship, as some of them were undoubtedly suggesting, would have struck Quintus as unlikely as the notion that the sun didn't revolve around the earth.

If Quintus had his own strong sense of duty, so did his superiors, and he was subject to a strict code of discipline. The centurion had a vine staff, symbol of his office, which he could, and would use to inflict on-the-spot punishment for any infractions. If a soldier grabbed the stick to stop the beating, that was a punishment of death. The typical legionary could be

subject to five degrees of punishment: deprivation of pay, reduction (either in grade or transfer to an inferior branch, such as from the legion to the cavalry), disgrace, corporal punishment and capital punishment. While the first two categories are obvious, the last three bear some note.

Disgrace took several forms. The most severe was the equivalent of a dishonorable discharge. Less serious offenses would be punished by barley rations, instead of wheat, as noted, or being made to camp outside the fortifications. Corporal punishment could include the centurion beating a man with the vine staff or flogging. Capital punishment took three forms. Beheading was the form of execution for a citizen, and, hence, a soldier. A person guilty of treason (*perduello*) was considered to have forfeited his rights as a citizen and would be tortured and killed by such means as being thrown to wild beasts or being torn apart. Such a person was usually denied burial. The last category of capital punishment did not always mean death. This was called *fustuarium* and involved being made to run the gauntlet out of camp while being beaten by clubs (*fustes*). If a man did survive this, he would be denied shelter, officially.

Warfare of the period was a slow-moving affair. Even when overseas, winter quarters were the rule and campaigning was confined to the good weather, with one or two major operations undertaken each year. If Quintus were unlucky enough to be mobilized in war, he would expect to serve for the duration, though in prolonged wars, the average length of service for a legion was about six years. As punishment, however, the survivors of Cannae were mustered into two legions and stationed in Sicily until the end of the war, when they were probably well past the age of fitness for service.

Quintus, as a Roman, lived by a strict discipline and the army which defended Rome reflected this. It is this discipline which, time and again, stood the Romans in good stead when threatened with defeat and it is the fact that men like Quintus served in the legion which allowed it to achieve such great success.

Seapower and The Second Punic War

The First Punic War was highlighted as much by its naval engagements as its land battles. However, except for some raids on Italy and Mago's attack on Genua, late in the war, there was almost no naval action in the Second Punic War and no major naval battles at all. With Rome controlling Sardinia, Corsica and the portion of Sicily closest to Italy, this made those waters far more secure to Rome than when Carthage had Sardinia, Corsica and nothing in Sicily. Carthage sent its fleets into these waters at their peril.

This proved crucial in the conduct of the war. Roman fleets patrolled these waters. Accordingly, Hannibal was unable to

strike directly into Italy. His march over the Alps was not simply a clever strategy, it was the only way he could get his army into Italy. As it was he lost almost all of his elephants, upon which he had counted for shock effect, before he reached the Po Valley. Similarly, had Hasdrubal been able to go directly into southern Italy, it is unlikely that he would have been defeated at the Metaurus by a superior force. If he had been at the Metaurus then, it would have been with Hannibal along. Finally, the lack of Punic naval presence strangled Hannibal in terms of no reinforcements and few supplies. The only time Hannibal received any reinforcements was when he had pulled back to Bruttium, narrowing the distance the Punic fleet had to travel. There is further room to believe that had there not been a truce, Hannibal himself

might not have gotten out of Italy with his army at all.

By contrast, this control of the seas allowed Rome to prosecute the war in Spain by reinforcing as needed. When the Scipio brothers were killed and their army badly depleted, the Romans were able to ferry over enough troops to resume the offensive the following year. Likewise, they were able to strike at will into Africa, once Scipio was ready.

The failure of Carthage to rebuild its fleet once war was at hand, in 219 BC was an error. The error was compounded into a fatal one by Carthage not doing anything to redress the balance during the course of the war.

[continued from page 9]

break the siege. Capua was an important city to Hannibal, since it was one of the first to go over to him. If he were unable to keep Capua, the proposed capital of his non-Roman Italy, his credibility would rapidly deteriorate. Accordingly, he finally decided to make an attack on Rome. Whether he really hoped to carry the city remains to be seen. His siege trains were no better than right after Cannae. However, he did hope that if he threatened Rome, the Romans would have to weaken their siege works at Capua and he could then sweep down on that operation and relieve Capua.

As it turned out, neither of the consuls for the year were at Capua. Both were in Rome where they had either two or four legions on hand. As a result, Hannibal abandoned his planned attack on Rome and settled on ravaging the countryside. Then he struck south to Rhegium, hoping to take that city by surprise. He failed there, too. Capua, resigned to its fate, fell in 211. The city was treated with moderation considering its position as a defector to Carthage. Hannibal had now lost his most valuable ally in Italy. In the same year, Syracuse fell to Rome. The tide was turning, though Carthage was by no means finished.

In Spain, the Scipios had finally taken Saguntum in 213 BC. As they planned to eventually cross from Spain into Africa, they stirred up the Numidian king, Syphax, to wage war against Carthage. In fact, Syphax proved ineffectual and Carthage advanced their own Numidian pawn, Masinissa. By 211 BC, Masinissa had crushed Syphax and sent a contingent of Numidians to Spain to help Carthage. Carthage, for its part, sent Hasdrubal, son of Gisco, to assist Hasdrubal and Mago (a third brother of Hannibal), as well as to counterbalance the domination of Hannibal's family. In 211 BC, the Scipios made a fatal mistake. They divided their forces in an attempt to accomplish two goals at the same time. Hasdrubal Gisco, Mago and Masinissa destroyed Publius' army and then the three fell on Cnaeus' army, along with the other Hasdrubal. This army was crushed and both of the Scipio brothers killed. In these two battles, the whole Roman presence in Spain was wiped out, including the two Roman generals who seemed to know how to win against Carthaginians. Fortunately for Rome, Carthage failed to follow up their victories and apparently left the major Roman garrisons north of the Ebro intact (as well as, quite possibly, those south of the Ebro).

In 210 BC, the tempo of war wound down noticeably. War-weariness started to show among the Roman allies. It reached the stage during 209 BC where twelve allied cities refused to send their quota of troops. Hannibal remained invincible in open battle. He destroyed a proconsular army at Herdonia. But he lacked the ability to hold the ground once he had won the battle. So, even though Herdonia was one of the first to defect to him, he razed the city and sent the inhabitants to cities more in his control in the south. Because his army was slowly being bled white by losses which were not replaced, he had to gradually surrender cities in Samnium, Lucania and Apulia. By and large, Hannibal was beginning to react to Roman initiative, rather than setting the tempo himself.

In 209 BC, with Fabius in his last consulship, Rome took the offensive and regained

Tarentum. This cost Hannibal further prestige, especially since the one man who cautioned against fighting a pitched battle against Hannibal now felt strong enough to challenge Hannibal. In addition, by contrast to their easy handling of Capua, Rome now made an example of the Tarentines, sacking the city and generally showing other Italian cities still in Punic hands what would await them when Rome was able to drive Hannibal from Italy, an event which was now merely a matter of time.

In Spain, the son of Cn. Scipio, also called Publius, was given command at the end of 210 BC. In 209 BC, he marched south and took Nova Carthago, the Punic capital of Spain. This broke Carthaginian control of eastern Spain. The Spanish began to desert to the Romans. In 208 BC, Hasdrubal moved into the southwest and Scipio followed. He came within an ace of trapping Hasdrubal, but Hasdrubal, realizing what was happening, disengaged at the last minute and headed for Gaul to go on to Italy and join Hannibal. This left Hasdrubal Gisco and Mago in Spain to try to shore up the sagging Punic position.

Though Spain was slipping out of Carthaginian hands, Hannibal's prospects began to brighten. He finally caught Marcellus, who had deviled Hannibal for years. Marcellus, in his fifth consulship, was caught by Hannibal near Venusia and slain in battle. The co-consul was also mortally wounded, marking the first time in history that both consuls had fallen in battle. This, plus the news that Hasdrubal was headed for Italy, led the Romans to fear that victory might yet elude them.

Instead of being the year of revival, 207 BC was the last gasp of Carthage. If Hannibal and Hasdrubal had united their forces, this would have put two able commanders in Italy, together with a much larger Carthaginian force than had been seen in Italy in years. It might have even forced the recall of Scipio from Italy with Marcellus now dead and Fabius too old to lead troops. But the Romans intercepted Hasdrubal's message to his brother outlining his plans. C. Claudius Nero, one of the consuls, who had been watching Hannibal while his colleague was poised to intercept Hasdrubal, decided to react strongly to this piece of intelligence. He left a screening force to keep Hannibal tied down. He then force marched north to join his co-consul, slipping into the existing camp and trying to deceive Hasdrubal into thinking that only one consular army was present. However, when they deployed near Sena Gallica, Hasdrubal realized what he was facing and declined battle. Instead, Hasdrubal tried his own trick, slipping off in the night to try to get over and south of the Metaurus River before the Romans could react. However, his Italian guides deserted during the night and he lost his way and was unable to find the fords across the Metaurus. As a result, the next morning, the two consular armies came upon him, defeated his army and Hasdrubal was killed. Nero took Hasdrubal's head, force marched south again and flung the head into Hannibal's camp. Hannibal withdrew to Bruttium.

In Spain, 207 BC saw the Carthaginians confined to the southern part of the peninsula, with the Romans gradually eroding their position. In 206 BC, Carthage decided that they would have to force the issue in a pitched battle in hopes of inflicting the same defeat on Scipio as they had inflicted on his father and

uncle. The armies met in the Baetis Valley. Instead, Scipio brought off his own Cannae on the Carthaginians, enveloping both flanks. Hasdrubal Gisco and Mago withdrew to Gades with the remains of their armies, which they evacuated by sea. Masinissa changed sides and went over to the Romans (apparently preferring to back a winner than any false sense of principle). When Gades fell to Roman siege, Spain was Roman.

The tide had turned finally in Rome's favor. Fabius was old and his tactics no longer needed. In Scipio, the Romans had found the offensive commander they had long sought. In 205 BC, Scipio became consul and got Sicily for his province with the authority to cross to Africa if he deemed that the situation permitted.

Although 205 BC was a quiet year in the main part of Italy, Mago, with the survivors from Gades, moved north and raided Genua, destroying it and using the area as a base of operations. The Romans were concerned that he would try to join Hannibal, too, though less concerned than when Hasdrubal had been there and Scipio still tied down in Spain. In fact, Mago apparently had no intention of moving into Italy proper. Rather, he preferred to spread disaffection among the Celtic and Etruscan peoples, apparently with considerably more success than the Romans wanted to concede.

Hannibal attacked in the south, meeting Scipio for the first time at the siege of Locri, which Scipio had seized in 205 BC. Again, the lack of a siege train cost Hannibal any chance of success and he had to withdraw. By and large, Hannibal was now confined to Bruttium by lack of troops, lack of supplies and the general spread of illness among the surviving troops. Hannibal's biggest problem was not so much whether he should stay in Italy, but how he could get out of Italy, as Carthage had no pretense to controlling the seas between Italy and Africa.

In 204 BC, Scipio set sail from Lilybaeum, landing near Utica, becoming the first Roman commander in more than fifty years to land in Africa. He was joined by Masinissa. Syphax, the erstwhile Roman ally, joined the Carthaginians. Masinissa ambushed and destroyed the Punic cavalry in the area, allowing Scipio to besiege Utica, though Hasdrubal Gisco arrived with fresh troops and forced him to withdraw to winter along the coast.

In 203 BC, Scipio attacked again at Utica. This time it was a ruse. As the Punic relief force approached, he launched a night attack. Masinissa took on the Numidians of Syphax and Scipio the Carthaginians, routing the enemy. Surprisingly, the Punic forces did not collapse. Just as the Romans after Cannae, the Carthaginians pulled together a new army to face their enemies. Scipio fell on this new force and drove it off, leaving Scipio free to move off into the countryside to capture the small non-Carthaginian cities which were under Punic control, but without much enthusiasm. Masinissa moved into Numidia and in a pitched battle captured Syphax and thus gained control of Numidia.

Scipio now began to press Carthage to consider surrender. For one thing, his term of office was coming to an end in 202 BC, and there were competing factions which disagreed on how severe the terms should be.

[continued on page 14]

The Dictator

Of all the institutions adopted or modified from the Romans, none has more evil connotations than the institution of dictator.

Rome, the first republic in history, had created the concept of collegiality to run their country. By having two or more men in each major office (consul, praetor, aedile, quaestor and tribune), they had an effective system of checks and balances against one man being too ambitious. But in times of crisis, it was an ineffective system. The two consuls had dual right of command and this was most often exercised with the consuls alternating command of the legions daily. Against a run-of-the-mill enemy, this posed little problem. Against an able foe, such as Carthage, the system broke down as few consuls had sufficient sense of duty

to allow their colleague to gain all of the credit for victory.

But the Romans were nothing if not methodical. The knowledge that this sort of situation would exist, where one strong ruler was needed, resulted in the institution of dictator. The process normally would be that the Senate would declare a need for a dictator. While the Senate's declarations had no true legal effect, they were very persuasive. The consul then having his day in control would select the proposed dictator, who would be confirmed by the popular assembly and would then assume office.

During the First Punic War, five dictators were appointed: in 263 BC, 257 BC, twice in 248 BC and once in 246 BC. During the Second Punic War, with Hannibal loose in Italy, three were appointed in 217 BC, then one in 216 BC, 212 BC, 208 BC, 207 BC, 205 BC, 203 BC and 202 BC. None of these men

served as dictator twice, though several men had served as consul for as many as five times. Of the great Roman generals, only one served as dictator: Q. Fabius Verrucosus. Scipio was never a dictator and only Fabius held both the office of consul and dictator during the wars. The dictator for 202 BC, C. Servilius Geminus, was the last dictator until Sulla's resumption of the office in 81 BC, when the whole republican system was becoming unravelled.

There were great dictators in Roman history, but only Fabius stands out during the Punic Wars. The men who held the office were true Roman republicans, who surrendered their office as soon as possible. It was only the debasement of the office under Sulla and Caesar, who held it in extralegal manner, which gave to the title dictator the evil connotations it has today.

Roman Military Organization

The Roman Army was organized, at the outbreak of the Punic Wars, under the so-called Servian system, named after the legendary king, Servius Tullius, who is said to have instituted it. The Servian system was based on the wealth of the citizens, with each citizen being assigned a position based on how much money he had, and, accordingly, how well he could afford to equip himself. It was also organized in what has been called the manipular system, which is likewise attributed to Servius Tullius. In fact, during the regal period, the Romans probably fought in a straight phalanx formation, just like the Greeks. This was apparently modified either as a result of the Samnite Wars (354-290 BC) or the last war against Veii (405-396 BC).

Under the manipular system, which evolved during the Fourth Century BC, the legion was divided into 40 *manipula* (maniples). The legion had a nominal strength of about 4,200. The maniples were not of uniform size, however. The legion deployed in three lines with ten maniples per line, the remaining ten maniples of the 40 constituting the light troops (*velites*). Each line of maniples had a name. The name often gave a hint of the prior legionary organization. The first line, during this period, was called the *hastati*, though they no longer carried the *hasta*, the Roman version of the phalanx' spear. The second line was called the *principes*, though it no longer was the first line and had not been for about one hundred years. These two lines each had 120-man maniples. The third line, the *triarii*, had only 60 men per manipule. The light troops were organized in 120-man maniples. Each manipule was, in turn, divided into two centuries (*centuriae*). The legion was completed by a small cavalry force of 300. The cavalry counterpart of the manipule was the *turma*, with ten *turmae* making up the cavalry force.

The legion had a flexible organization in that it could be expanded to 5,000 by

adding 30 men per manipule in the first two lines (though none to the third line or light troops).

Under the rigid manipular system, each manipule had a 60-foot front and 45-foot depth. The maniples were deployed with a twenty-man front, six men deep and sixty feet between maniples. An interval of 30 to 60 paces usually was used between lines.

The unique element was that the second line deployed checkerboard-wise to the first so that their maniples covered the gaps between the maniples of the first line. Consequently, a legion had a total frontage of about 2,400 feet and a total depth of 635 feet.

The importance - and genius - of this checkerboard system must be seen in context with the systems used by other nations. The phalanx, which was the most common system for civilized nations at the time, relied on its mass and, while it did not require much training to organize an effective phalanx, the cooperation of the whole body was essential to achieve maximum impact. The legion, when it deployed, would only be facing sections of the phalanx, while other portions of the phalanx would be left with nothing to do. This defeated the whole purpose of the phalangeal formation, and in effect allowed the Romans to defeat the phalanx in detail. If the pressure on the first line got too great, it would fall back and the second line would take up the fighting, now facing a different section of the phalanx.

Against an enemy like the Gauls, the Romans learned to move the second line of maniples forward into the gaps to prevent the Gauls from taking the deployed maniples in the flanks.

If the first two lines were beaten back, they would fall back through the third line, which had been kneeling down and was equipped with the thrusting spear. The third line fought in the old system of the phalanx.

As the Romans had control of most of Italy by the time of the Punic Wars, they levied their allies for troops. These would be formed into separate allied legions, but were led by Roman officers. The normal consular army would consist of two Roman and two allied legions, with the Roman legions deployed in the center and the allies on the flanks.

The cavalry was poorly regarded during this period. It was, in fact, the branch to which the richest were supposed to be assigned, according to the strict application of the Servian system. However, the Romans made little use of cavalry during the battle, except for targets of opportunity.

Scipio Africanus made a major change in the strict manipular system. Rather than deploying in a checkerboard, he had the three lines deploy behind each other in full lines. He would then, as the need arose, send a whole line out to turn an enemy flank, leaving the first line to cope for itself. This system paved the way for the changes which Marius was to formalize during the following century.

The legion was further augmented by a group called *extraordinarii*. This force was furnished by the allies and consisted of 200 horse and 840 foot. They were a special group under the direct command of the commander and often formed his *praetorium* guard, the spiritual ancestor of the imperial Praetorian Guards. They also served a more interesting function: they were hostages for the loyalty of the cities which furnished them and were drawn from the families of the leading men of those cities.

In general, the first line was composed of the youngest men, lacking experience. The second line was the more seasoned veteran and the third line were the oldest. They were probably the ones who relied more on their skill than sheer physical ability since they were usually the ones who would be past their physical peak, but still eligible for service.