

THE HISTORY OF ROME



Written and Illustrated by
Tim Pulju



**THE
HISTORY
OF
ROME**

**FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY
TO THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE**

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

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Speculative Grammarian Press

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Published by
Speculative Grammarian Press
www.specgram.com

This book was typeset by Tim Pulju using several different fonts, mostly Times New Roman, but also a bit of Garamond, Lucida Calligraphy, and Lucida Handwriting, plus mere smidges of Helvetica, Monotype Corsiva, Old English Text MT, and (on the spine and front cover) Century and Book Antiqua. Frankly, I can't see why anyone would care to know all that, but it seems to be customary to include font information on a book's publication page, so I went ahead and included it.

The cover illustration shows the Arch of Titus as it looked when last I saw it, back in 1998. I expect it looks about the same now as it did then.

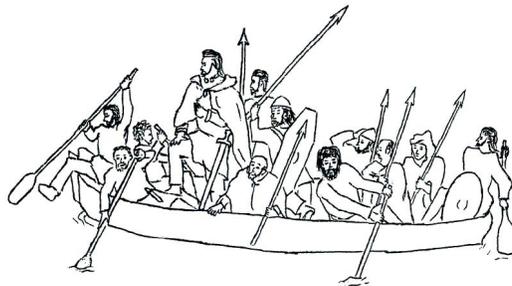


Table of Contents

List of maps.....	vii
<i>Boring Prelude</i>	ix
Chapter One <i>in which our heroes build a city</i>	1
<i>Dramatic Interlude</i>	13
Chapter Two <i>in which the Romans spread their dominion</i>	15
<i>Musical Interlude</i>	25
Chapter Three <i>in which a surprisingly large amount of stuff happens</i>	27
<i>Epistolary Interlude</i>	33
Chapter Four <i>in which there are some stylistic oddities</i>	35
<i>Psychiatric Interlude</i>	49
Chapter Five <i>in which a republic becomes an empire</i>	51
<i>Strange Interlude</i>	61
Chapter Six <i>in which we meet emperors of various sorts</i>	63
<i>Poetic Interlude</i>	73
Chapter Seven <i>in which there are five good emperors</i>	75
<i>Pugilistic Interlude</i>	83
Chapter Eight <i>in which things fall apart</i>	85
<i>Lexicographic Interlude</i>	95
Chapter Nine <i>in which the Romans put Humpty together again</i>	97
<i>Promotional Interlude</i>	107
Chapter Ten <i>in which our story comes to an end</i>	109
<i>Consolatory Postlude</i>	125
Index of personal names	127

Boring Prelude

You can skip this part if you want.

Really, I won't mind. How could I mind? I won't even know.

I originally wrote this book for students in my first-year Latin courses at Dartmouth College. In those classes, we have to spend so much time cramming in grammar and vocabulary that there's little class time left over for learning Roman history. That's a shame, because Roman history is fun, plus learning Latin is more fun if you have some idea of, say, who Cicero was, or why Caesar was conquering Gaul anyway. So I decided to write up a short history of Rome for my students to read outside of class, if they wanted to, or to toss in the recycling bin, if they didn't want to read it. To try to encourage them to do the former rather than the latter, I tried to make it entertaining. Some of my students, possibly those who wanted to get good grades without doing a lot of work, claimed that they did find it entertaining. So maybe people who aren't my students will like it too.

One thing that most people don't find very entertaining is technical terminology in foreign languages. Therefore, this history leaves out lots of terms and associated concepts that you'll find in other, stodgier works, such as *iugerum*, *comitia centuriata*, and *magister peditum praesentalis*. If you want to learn those sorts of terms, you could get one of the many other Roman history books that are out there. Many of them are quite good, stodgy though they may be. I haven't included a list of such books, because if you're really interested in them, you're probably clever enough to find them on your own.

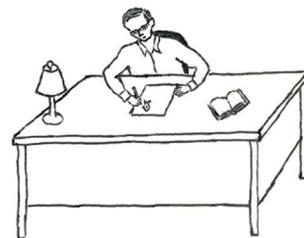
I should perhaps mention that, entertaining or not (hopefully the former), this book is historically reliable, except for things that are obviously meant as jokes. Thus, on p. 18, when I tell you that Rome declared war on Carthage in 149 BC, you can believe it. But when I tell you that the Romans sold tickets to people who wanted to watch the war, you might want to swallow a grain or two of salt.

One last thing that this book has to make it entertaining is pictures. Nowadays, all the other books have pictures too, but their pictures are actual photographs of works of art, or ruined cities in northern Africa, or so on. I thought it would be more fun to draw my own pictures, and also cheaper, since I wouldn't have to pay for the rights to use other people's photographs. It's true that I don't have any artistic training, so the pictures aren't, to use a technical term from the world of art criticism, particularly "good." However, I like to think that they have a naive charm, not unlike that of the text itself.

I also drew the maps. Like the pictures, they're kind of amateurish, but at least they tell you where to find cities, provinces, rivers, etc. Unlike some writers of history books, I'm well aware that not every American knows where the Danube River is, let alone Palmyra.

Anyway, now you know why I wrote this book the way I did. If you don't really care, maybe you should have skipped this prelude, as per my suggestion above, and gone straight to Chapter One. Too late now.

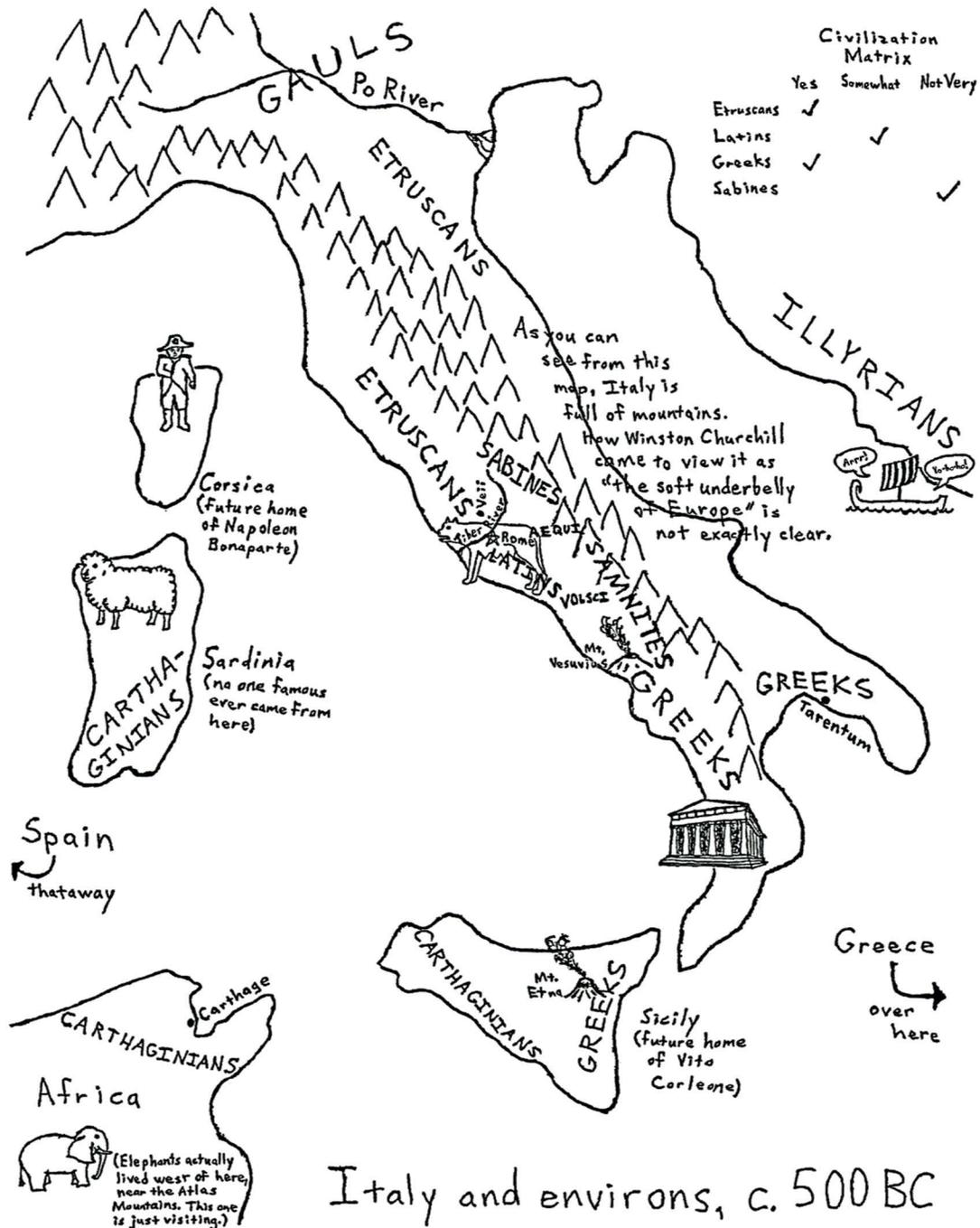
The Author Attempts to
Draw a Picture of Caesar



THE HISTORY OF ROME

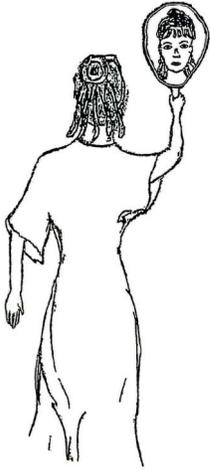
Chapter One

*in which our heroes build a city,
fight the neighbors,
and meet some elephants*



Rome: The Beginnings

About 3000 years ago, there were no Romans, just a bunch of tribal people living in Italy, herding cattle, worshipping a paternal sky god, and doing other sorts of things that tribal people do. Probably drinking a lot of wine, because there are plenty of grapes in Italy, and herding cattle all day long can get pretty boring.



An Etruscan Woman

Some of these people lived near the center of the southwestern coast of Italy, mostly to the southeast of the Tiber River. They called themselves Latins, for no apparent reason, and they called their country Latium. The Latins had a few towns, like Alba Longa, which made them more civilized than some of their neighbors, such as the Sabines who lived in the mountains of central Italy. However, elsewhere there were people who were much more cultured than the Latins.

To the northwest of Latium, in Etruria, lived the Etruscans, elegant people who spoke a funny language and liked mirrors and cemeteries.

To the southeast, there were even more cultured people who called themselves Hellenes. But the Latins weren't going to stand for that. Hellenes, in their opinion, was a stupid name, and they preferred to call the southeasterners Greeks. Most people today follow their example, except for the Greeks themselves, who insist on calling themselves Hellenes still, even though they don't pronounce the name properly anymore. Still, it's better than the Middle Ages, when the Greeks very confusingly called themselves Romans, even though by that time they didn't live anywhere near Rome.

Which gets us back to our main topic, Rome, which, I confess, I almost forgot about in the course of the last paragraph. Some of the Latins lived on some hills near an island in the Tiber, which was a convenient place for fording the river if you were headed southeast from Etruria, and also a good place for boats to go down the river and trade with Greeks or other people who came by sea to the river mouth. So some enterprising Latins set up a cattle market at the foot of the hills, as well as a more generalized open air market, called the Forum, in a swampy area between two of the main hills. But they kept living on the hills, because it was easier to defend the hills if some marauding neighboring tribesmen happened by. Besides, no one wants to live in a swamp or a cattle market.

Over the next couple of centuries, somehow or other, the settlement on the hills expanded and developed into a city, ruled by kings, which dominated the rest of the Latins, and was called Rome. Unfortunately, no one knows exactly how any of this happened, because no one at the time bothered to write any descriptions of what was going on, and now they're all long dead. Obviously,

The Etruscan Language

Chances are that you've heard some nonsense about the mysterious Etruscan language, still undeciphered despite the best efforts of generations of scholars, and probably proof that Etruscan civilization was founded by spacemen or something. Bah! Although Etruscan is, in fact, unrelated to other languages of Italy, there's still nothing particularly weird about it. It's written in an alphabet that's similar to other ancient alphabets of Italy, so scholars can pronounce Etruscan words easily enough. The problem is that most Etruscan texts are very short and boring. A lot of them are tomb inscriptions, saying things like "Tanaquil Trebia, wife of Arruns Vibenna, son of Arruns." There are some longer texts, but unfortunately, we don't know what most of the words mean, and there are no extant copies of the Etruscan dictionaries that Roman scholars put together.

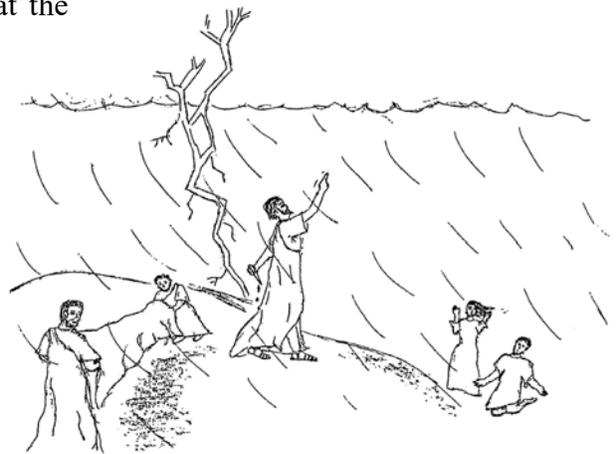
someone was doing something—building temples, draining the swamp (“Hey,” said some clever Roman, “I bet the Forum would be a lot more fun to shop at if there weren’t so many mosquitoes”)—and one of those somebodies eventually made himself the first king. But since no one knows who or when, modern historians spend most of their time arguing about things like how much the growth of early Rome was the result of Etruscan influence.

But we’re not going to worry about the extent of Etruscan influence in this book, because that might require us to start talking about really boring topics like pottery. Instead, we’re going to review a story about the early days of Rome which no one believes in nowadays, but which everyone knows anyway, because it’s a good story, and it’s the only one we’ve got. This story comes from an ancient Roman named Livy, who, writing many centuries after Rome was founded, tried to put together a coherent history based on what he could cobble together from various legends and traditional stories. He admitted that most of what he wrote probably wasn’t historically accurate, but he said it was worth reading anyway. So let’s read it.

The Early History of Rome, as told by Livy (somewhat modified, rearranged, and abridged)

Once upon a time in the year 753 BC, in the city of Alba Longa, two youths, twin brothers from the countryside, appeared at the king’s house. They called themselves Romulus and Remus, and they explained that they were there to kill the king and put the king’s brother (their grandfather) on the throne. And that’s just what they did. Next, they went off to the hills near the Tiber and decided to found a city. Romulus wanted to found it in one place, Remus in another, so Romulus killed Remus and then went on with his nation-building enterprise. He populated his city (which, modestly, he named “Rome”) with the dregs of society, many of them criminals who had fled from other towns, and then got wives for them by kidnapping a bunch of Sabine women. He also spent lots of time fighting little wars against neighboring communities. Eventually, Romulus mysteriously disappeared during a thunderstorm one day, at a time when he happened to be standing near a group of Roman nobles who didn’t like him very much. The nobles claimed that he had flown up to heaven, turned into a god, and changed his name to Quirinus, which I guess is what you did in those days when you became a god. Strangely, the bulk of the population accepted the nobles’ claim and started to worship Quirinus. One suspects that the bulk of the population was not all that bright.

The Romans, who needed a new king, eventually chose someone as unlike Romulus as they could, a peaceful, pious Sabine named Numa Pompilius. Numa did lots of religious stuff, then died and was succeeded by a king named Tullus Hostilius. As you can tell from Tullus’ last name, the Romans were tired of being peaceful, so they picked a king who was bound to revive the tradition of attacking the neighbors. After Tullus, the next king was Numa’s grandson Ancus Marcius, who was pretty boring, so we’ll say no more about him.



Romulus Goes up to
Heaven

Speaking of Religion

Having mentioned both Romulus' apotheosis and Numa Pompilius, maybe we should take some time out to say a little bit about Roman religion. The Romans' three main gods were Jupiter, the paternal sky god; Mars, the god of war; and Quirinus, an obscure fellow who probably originally had nothing to do with the Romulus story. In later days, Rome also had a whole bunch of different kinds of priests and priestesses—flamens, augurs, pontifexes, Vestal Virgins—and a lot of temples built from the proceeds of successful wars. Priests were generally from aristocratic families, and they used their control of religion to try to influence state affairs.

The Romans were religiously conservative in that they almost never got rid of old rituals or religious holidays, even if they didn't really remember what they were about anymore. (Many Americans have the same attitude toward junk in their garage). But at the same time, they were happy to add foreign gods to their pantheon, which accounts for why they needed to build so many different temples. (This may also account for why so many American houses have such enormous garages).

When Ancus died, an Etruscan immigrant named Tarquinius Priscus, or Tarquin for short, got himself chosen king, to the exclusion of Ancus' young sons. Naturally, once they were older, the sons weren't too happy about this, so they killed Tarquin as part of plot to retake the throne. However, Tarquin's son-in-law Servius Tullius outwitted them and got the people to choose him instead.

Modern historians think there may really have been a Servius Tullius. The Romans themselves, many centuries later, credited Servius with reforming the organizational scheme of society, government, and the army. He was so impressive a

king that the Romans thought he had built a wall around Rome which, according to archeologists, actually postdates him by a couple hundred years. However, not everyone was impressed, especially not one of Tarquin's sons, known as Tarquinius Superbus. This younger Tarquin was married to Servius' daughter, but that didn't help Servius out when Tarquin decided that he ought to be king instead. Yes, you guessed it, Tarquin killed Servius and made himself king.

Tarquin's Latin nickname, Superbus, doesn't mean "superb," it means "proud" or "arrogant" (it would be a good nickname for certain countries, such as France and Lesotho). The Romans didn't care for Tarquin much. He conquered a lot of neighboring peoples, using the army that Servius Tullius had reorganized, and he built some temples, but the people complained about having to fight in his wars and pay high taxes. Eventually, there was a revolution, and Tarquin was kicked out of the city.

Livy says that the revolution happened in the year 509 BC. There probably really was a revolution around that time, and it probably did involve throwing out a king whose family was of Etruscan origin. The leader of the revolt was a man named Lucius Junius Brutus, whose last name means "stupid" in Latin. But maybe Brutus wasn't so stupid after all: having noticed that Roman kings had a way of getting killed or overthrown, he declined to become king himself, but instead instituted a republic with two chief magistrates (known, eventually, as "consuls") who ruled jointly for a one-year period. Of course, he didn't go so far as to decline the honor of being one of the magistrates himself, in which position he had the pleasure of executing his own sons when they got caught plotting to put Tarquin back on the throne.

So much for the seven kings. And so much, also, for just repeating what Livy said because we can't think of anything better. From now on, although the story relies on Livy quite a bit, there are other sources of information which help us to have a more realistic picture of what was going on. And Livy himself becomes gradually more reliable the closer he gets to his own time. So what follows will be a story much less colorful than the legend of Romulus the fratricide, but hopefully a little more historically accurate. Not that you could get any random group of five modern scholars to agree on any of it. It's hard enough to get modern scholars to agree on where to go for dinner.

The Roman Republic: The First 250 Years

The Roman Republic had been founded by leading aristocratic families who called themselves patricians. It didn't take long for the non-patricians to notice that the patricians defined a republic as "a system of government in which the patricians have all the rights." The relatively poor non-patricians, who were called plebeians, were particularly upset about things like being sold into slavery when they couldn't pay their debts. Unfortunately, since the patricians had all the wealth and power, there didn't seem to be much the plebeians could do to change things.

However, it turned out that while the Romans had been distracted with their revolution, various neighboring communities whom the kings had subjugated had taken the opportunity to break free of Rome's yoke. Oops! Even worse, new peoples named Volsci and Aequi had settled in the neighborhood and were making trouble. So the patricians thought that Rome should continue to raise armies and go out to fight the neighbors.

The plebeians saw their chance. Next time the patricians called the plebeians together and said, "Okay, guys, get your weapons and let's go conquer the neighbors," the plebeians replied, "Sorry, we're going to go have a meeting on the Aventine Hill instead. No patricians allowed." And they refused to come back from the Aventine Hill until the patricians gave them some rights. Through the use of this and similar tactics, the plebeians won a variety of concessions over the next decades, including the right to put Twelve Tables in the middle of the Forum (originally, there were only Ten Tables, but everyone agreed that ten just wasn't enough) and the right to have their own magistrates called tribunes.

What with all the civil strife, it was hard for the Romans to war down their proud neighbors the way they wanted to, but the end of the 5th century BC, they had their act together again. The Volsci and Aequi were defeated, the other Latins acknowledged Rome's hegemony, and the Romans even conquered a nearby Etruscan city named Veii. So by the year 390 BC, the Romans were feeling their oats, flexing their muscles, strutting their stuff, and generally employing so many metaphors that it was plain they were riding for a fall.

The fall came in the form of a group of rampaging Gauls. Gauls were fair-skinned barbarians with flaxen hair and plaid trousers; one imagines that Gallic boys would have been very popular with ancient Greek intellectuals. The Gauls were not, however, all that popular in Italy, which they had started invading from the north around 600 BC. In the year 390, a Gallic army that was raiding central Italy took time off from fighting the Etruscans to attack Rome. They whupped a Roman army, captured the whole city except for the citadel on the Capitoline Hill, and only went home after the Romans paid them a large ransom. (They would have captured the citadel if not for the intervention of a manly Roman soldier and a flock of geese. Yes, I said geese.)

Naturally, most of the Romans were upset about the sack of Rome, but a guy named Marcus Camillus was particularly furious. Under his leadership, the Romans rebuilt their city and subdued the other



A Gallic Warrior
Strikes an Appropriate Pose

Latins, who had gotten uppity when Rome was in ruins. Meanwhile, even though Camillus, a patrician, was not much fonder of uppity plebeians than he was of uppity Latins, he and the other patricians came to realize that civil discord wasn't helping Rome in her external relations. So the patricians eventually made some more concessions to the plebeians, the most significant being an agreement that plebeians could be consuls.

This concession was of particular value to rich plebeians, who were increasing in number, although the average plebeian remained working class. Naturally, these rich plebeians were the ones who wanted political rights commensurate with their wealth. The average poor plebeian farmer or artisan wasn't interested in taking time off from his work to run for an office that he wasn't going to win anyway.

Anyway, as the fourth century progressed, Rome became a lot more peaceful internally. Power slowly passed into the hands of the Senate (a Latin term meaning "old guys"), which consisted mostly of ex-magistrates. In other words, the Senate included members of patrician families and members of wealthy, politically successful plebeian families. The poor people didn't complain too much, because with its newfound internal peace, Rome was now able to conquer lots of neighbors and make their land available for settlement by rich and poor alike.

Unsurprisingly, many of the neighbors objected to being conquered. In addition, when formerly friendly neighbors saw how powerful Rome was getting, they got scared of being conquered themselves. So a bunch of wars ensued, most notably against the Samnites (similar to Sabines) of mountainous inland central Italy. By the year 282 BC, the Romans had won almost all of these wars and found themselves in control of Latium, Etruria, and Samnium, as well as Campania, a region southeast of Rome that was inhabited by Greeks and Samnites.

Some of the Greeks even further southeast, notably in the city of Tarentum, were rather perturbed by the growth of Roman power. "What we need," they said (but in Greek, not in English), "is a new warrior, a flame that will drive these Romans back like sheep fleeing a large and vicious dog. Such as a mastiff, or an Irish wolfhound. Definitely not a poodle." So they invited a semi-Greek king named Pyrrhus, who lived near what is now Albania, to come over to Italy and show these Romans what war was really like.

Pyrrhus brought 25,000 men and 20 elephants with him to Italy; elephants were popular in Greek warfare in those days, despite the fact that they were hard to control and sometimes stampeded through their own army. The Roman army, though, was no match for the elephants, nor for Pyrrhus' veteran troops, and Pyrrhus won battles at Heraclea (280) and Ausculum (279). But he couldn't capture fortified cities swiftly, and he couldn't recruit new men to his armies as easily as the Romans (and forget about trying to find replacement elephants when you're in southern Italy). Since the Romans just stayed in their cities and refused to surrender, Pyrrhus got bored and wandered off to Sicily. By the time he got back, in 275, there was a new Roman army, which fought and beat him at Beneventum. Disgruntled, Pyrrhus sailed home, leaving Tarentum to be conquered by Rome in 272.

Appius Claudius Caecus

Any man who gets commemorated by a brand of homemade pizza mix probably merits a mention in this history. The Claudii were a politically prominent clan of Sabine origin; throughout the history of the Roman Republic, you'll find guys named Claudius getting elected to important public offices. Appius Claudius Caecus was a patrician and two-time consul who, depending on which modern historian you believe, was pro-plebeian, anti-plebeian, or somewhere in the middle. When old and blind, he made a famous speech in the Senate in which he opposed any peace negotiations with Pyrrhus, Pyrrhic victories notwithstanding. Earlier in his career, he had assured his immortality by ordering the construction of the Appian Way, the first of the famous Roman roads.

By now, almost 250 years had passed since the founding of the Roman Republic. Sensing that the next section of this chapter was going to be a long one, the Romans decided to pause and take stock of their situation. They found that they more or less controlled all of Italy south of the Po River valley (the Po River valley was still the Gauls' turf). Rome's control was largely indirect. Various peoples—Etruscans, Samnites, Campanians, Greeks—had varying degrees of local self-government, but they were bound to Rome by treaties obligating them to assist Rome in wars whenever Rome wanted them to. The local aristocracies mostly prospered under this arrangement, and Italy as a whole was largely satisfied with Rome's leadership. At the same time, Rome had planted various colonies of Romans and other Latins at strategic points around the peninsula, just in case any allies were thinking of ignoring their treaty obligations. With respect to treaties, the Roman attitude was, "Trust, but verify." Or maybe that was Ronald Reagan.

Pyrrhus was eventually killed when an irate Greek woman threw a roofing tile at him and cracked his skull. Just in case you were wondering.

Who're You Calling "Punic"?

While they were busy conquering most of Italy, the Romans had enjoyed friendly relations with the seafaring Carthaginians whose home was in North Africa. Carthage had been founded by immigrants from Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), so Romans called the Carthaginians "Punic," which sounds like an insult in English, but the Carthaginians didn't seem to mind it much. As for more substantive issues, the Romans weren't a naval power, and the Carthaginians weren't interested in settling on the Italian mainland, so the two sides could trade with each other and not dispute sovereignty over land or sea.

But by the year 264, having conquered the Greeks of southern Italy, Rome became interested in the Greeks just across the way in Sicily. Greeks and Carthaginians had been fighting for control over Sicily for hundreds of years, with neither side gaining total control. The Romans must have thought they could do better. So, on a rather flimsy pretext, they crossed the straits and went to war against both the Greeks and the Carthaginians. After a few Roman victories, the Greeks decided to switch to the winning team, but the Carthaginians kept fighting and successfully kept hold of a number of fortresses. So in 260, the Romans, noticing that Sicily was an island, started building big navies, which surprisingly usually defeated the Carthaginian fleets pretty easily. The Carthaginians thought this was manifestly unfair, given that they'd been a maritime power for hundreds of years, while the Romans had never even heard of Alfred Mahan. Fair or not, by 256, the Romans were able to land an army in Africa itself. But after some initial success, the invasion force was defeated by an army led by a Spartan mercenary.

After that, the Romans decided to forget about invading Africa and concentrate on conquering Sicily. Mostly due to the generalship of a Carthaginian named Hamilcar Barca, the war dragged on for another fifteen years. Eventually, though, Roman control of the sea, and Carthage's lack of money, caused the Carthaginian government to give up. Hamilcar and his army went home, and the peace treaty awarded Sicily to Rome.

Alas, no lounging for Hamilcar Barca. He and his countrymen were soon embroiled in a vicious war against their own former mercenary soldiers, who were disgruntled by the fact that Carthage didn't have enough money to pay their back salaries. While this war was going on, the Romans said, "Let's conquer Sardinia!" (which was a Carthaginian possession). By the time

Carthage had defeated the mercenaries, it found that Rome was firmly in control of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, and there was nothing Carthage could do about it.

Being too weak to attack the Romans, Hamilcar decided to go attack Spain instead. “Hey, what’d we do?” asked the Spaniards, but to no avail; Hamilcar was determined to conquer them as a replacement for Carthage’s lost island empire. Over the next couple of decades, he and his successors won control of most of southern Spain. Spain turned out to be a valuable possession, with lots of silver, some nice harbors, and tribesmen who were happy to join your army if you paid them.

The Romans were none too pleased by Carthage’s success in Spain, but they were now busy conquering the Gauls in northern Italy, as well as the Illyrian pirates who lived on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. So they made the Carthaginians promise to stay in southern Spain, and they also made an alliance with Saguntum, a coastal city in southern Spain, to keep Carthage from completely controlling the region. Carthage had plenty of other Spanish to fight, so these Roman moves didn’t bother it too much.

The Ebro Treaty

The exact wording of the treaty restricting Carthage to southern Spain was preserved by reliable historians. The treaty said simply that the Carthaginian army couldn’t go north of the Ebro River, in northeastern Spain. There’s no evidence that it set any limits to what Rome was allowed to do, and it certainly didn’t say that it would be okay for Carthage to attack Roman allies south of the Ebro. Nevertheless, many modern writers have imaginatively proclaimed that Hannibal’s attack on Saguntum was perfectly okay, and Rome had no right to get upset about it. It’s a good thing that none of these writers was President of the U.S. in 1948, when Stalin decided he had every right to take over West Berlin.

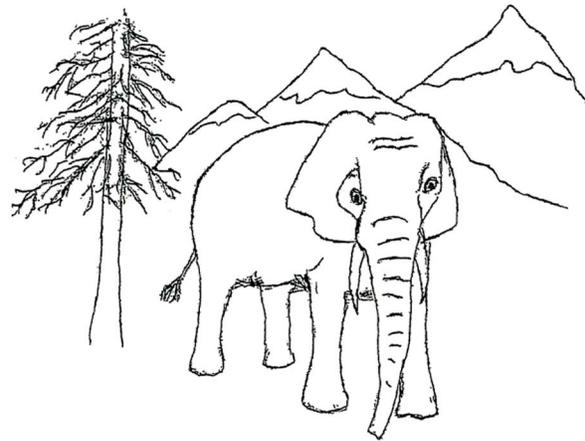
In 221, though, Hamilcar Barca’s son Hannibal succeeded to the position of Carthaginian generalissimo in Spain. Hannibal hated Rome, mostly because his father had told him he should. Moreover, he thought he had a good plan to conquer Rome. He knew that most of the people of Italy were not Romans, and that they’d only been conquered by Rome in the last century. Therefore, he reasoned, they would welcome an invading Carthaginian army as liberators. Only how to get to Italy? The Romans had command of the sea, and it’s a long way by land from Spain to Italy, with lots of mountains to cross along the way. And he couldn’t leave Saguntum behind as a Roman base when he left, unless he was willing to let the Romans conquer Carthaginian Spain while he was gone.

A sensible man might have left well enough alone and concentrated on conquering inland Spain, instead of involving his country in another war with Rome at a time when Rome didn’t seem particularly hostile. Hannibal, however, decided to attack Saguntum. The Romans protested, of course, but their protests were ignored, and their army was too busy in Illyria to intervene.

In the event, it took Hannibal eight months of siege operations to take Saguntum. This was not a good sign: if it took eight months to capture a podunk city like Saguntum, how on earth was he going to capture a metropolis like Rome? But it was too late to turn back now, since the Romans had finally declared war and were sending an army to Spain, and another one to Africa.

Hannibal was not about to wait around for the Romans to attack him. Leaving his brother Hasdrubal behind with enough troops to defend against the Romans, he took the rest of his army and marched across the Pyrenees and out of Spain forever. The Romans almost caught him on the way across what is now southern France, but he gave them the slip, fought his way through unfriendly Gallic tribes, and crossed the Alps into northern Italy.

And yes, he brought elephants with him. This is possibly the most famous thing that Hannibal did, bringing elephants across the Alps. There was even a parade on *The Simpsons* commemorating this achievement, much to Sideshow Bob's chagrin. But some people will tell you that he (Hannibal, not Sideshow Bob) didn't succeed (Sideshow Bob, in fact, did not succeed, but then, he never does), that it was too cold in the mountains, and the elephants fell off the footpaths, or got scared off by mice, or so on. Quite the contrary—Hannibal got all of his elephants across by autumn of 218 BC. He even used them in a battle at the River Trebia, against the army that, instead of going to Africa, had been diverted to northern Italy to oppose the invasion. (But Rome still sent an army to Spain, which turned out to be a good plan). The elephants were very effective against the Roman cavalry, because untrained horses are scared of elephants. The Carthaginians won the battle, but then winter came, and winter gets pretty cold in northern Italy. Too cold for the elephants, all but one of whom died.



A Worried Elephant Contemplates Spending the Winter in Northern Italy

Elephants or no elephants, when spring came, Hannibal marched south towards Etruria, accompanied by a lot of Gauls who'd joined his army. The Etruscans, though, didn't seem very interested in helping to overthrow Rome, so the army left Etruria and went east into the mountains. A new Roman army hastened in pursuit, too hastily, as it turned out. The Carthaginians ambushed the Romans on the shores of Lake Trasimene and wiped them out. Then they marched south to try to drum up support there.

Alas, no support was forthcoming. What came forth instead in 216 was a great big Roman army, somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000 men, led by both consuls at once. Could Hannibal possibly defeat such an enormous army? Of course, because if he hadn't defeated it, he wouldn't be so famous, and you wouldn't be reading about his exploits at such length. The battle took place at Cannae, a village in southern Italy, in August 216, and when it was over only 14,000 Romans had escaped death or capture.

After Cannae, many of the peoples of southern Italy switched to Hannibal's team, and soon the Greeks of Sicily did likewise. But just as they had done with Pyrrhus, the Romans obstinately refused to surrender, and they also wisely refused to fight another major battle. Instead, they concentrated on skirmishing to wear down Hannibal's army, and on besieging disaffected cities while Hannibal's army was elsewhere. Year after year, Hannibal's strength diminished, and by 203 he had been penned into a small area in the toe of Italy, across from Sicily.

Meanwhile, a young Roman general named Publius Cornelius Scipio had been conquering Spain from Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal and an assortment of other Carthaginian generals (one of whom, confusingly, was also named Hasdrubal). He finished things up in Spain by 206, then got himself elected consul for 205. Not satisfied with having just three names, despite the fact that many Romans had only two names, while Romulus had only had one, Scipio decided to invade Africa in hopes of earning the nickname Africanus. I suppose he might also have been motivated a desire to end the war. Anyway, by 202 he had the Carthaginians ready to surrender, but then Hannibal, having

finally realized that Italy was no longer the place to be, showed up with his army. “Ha!” said the Carthaginians. “Now we’ll show this punk kid” (Scipio was still in his early thirties). The two armies then fought a battle at a place called Zama, which, by the way, would be a good name for a female rap artist. To the Carthaginians’ great surprise, Scipio won a decisive victory. Everyone in Carthage realized then that the jig was up, even though nobody was exactly sure what a jig was. So in 201, the peace treaty was signed. Carthage became a second-rate power, Spain was confirmed as a Roman possession, and Scipio got his nickname.

Many years later, long after Scipio was dead, he got a fifth name, Major “the Elder,” to distinguish him from another Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, who was called Minor “the Younger.” No doubt Scipio was overjoyed to get a posthumous fifth name, but that’s a story for another chapter. The point here is that this chapter, which has been going on for a while, is finally over, and maybe now we can all get some rest.

Western Mediterranean League			
Punic War Standings (201 BC)			
	W	L	T
Rome	2	0	0
Carthage	0	2	0

A Note about Names

Neither the Romans nor the Carthaginians displayed much verve when naming their children, at least not in the upper classes. Roman men normally had a personal name, like Publius, a clan name, like Cornelius, and sometimes a third name such as Scipio. As we’ve seen, some Romans got greedy and added one or more extra names, often nicknames; eventually, Roman emperors ended up with about as many names as members of the British royal family. But you’ll notice in this book that prominent Roman men of the republican period almost all have one of a small set of personal names, such as Marcus, Publius, Servius, Gaius—no more than fifteen to choose from. Girls, on the other hand, didn’t get individual names at all. If Publius Cornelius Scipio had three daughters, all of them were named Cornelia. Reminds me of boxer and grilling entrepreneur George Foreman, who named all of his sons George.

But at least you can tell Roman nobles apart by their second, and sometimes third names. Carthaginians had only one name apiece (Barca was a nickname, meaning “Lightning,” applied to Hamilcar but not to his sons). The problem is that prominent Carthaginians, like prominent Romans, seem to have had maybe ten to fifteen personal names to choose from. The most common were probably Hasdrubal, Mago, Hanno, and Hannibal. During the Punic War in Spain, there were three main Carthaginian generals, one of whom was named Mago. The other two were Hasdrubal, son of Hamilcar Barca, and Hasdrubal, son of Gisco. And the Carthaginian generalissimo in Spain who immediately preceded Hannibal was yet another Hasdrubal, who happened to be Hamilcar’s son-in-law. I.e., Hasdrubal son of Hamilcar was brother-in-law to Hasdrubal son-in-law of Hamilcar.

Confused? A final warning: Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Minor will end up fighting yet another Hasdrubal next chapter.

Review Questions for Chapter One

1. How significant was Etruscan influence on the development of early Rome?
2. *Essay question.* Should Hannibal have marched on Rome after his great victory at Cannae?
3. Can you think of anything interesting that Ancus Marcius ever did?
4. Do you think there was too much about elephants in this chapter?
5. *Bonus question.* Have you ever eaten pizza made from Appian Way® homemade pizza mix? Was it any good?

Answers to #1-#4 at bottom of page.

Answers

- 1) $t=2.147$, $p < .05$.
- 2) No.
- 3) Neither can I.
- 4) Too bad. I like elephants.

Dramatic Interlude

Time: 197 BC. Place: Cynoscephalae, in northern Greece.

Gaius and Lucius, Roman soldiers, are standing facing a range of hills, behind which is the left flank of the Macedonian army of King Philip V. To Gaius and Lucius' left and right, identically armed Roman soldiers stand waiting.

LUCIUS: Sounds like they're already engaged on the other flank. Won't be long now before we start moving.

GAIUS: I still say this is stupid. No sooner did we sign the peace treaty with Carthage than we declared war on Macedonia. And now you and I are going into battle when I should be at home tending my olive trees.

LUCIUS: If we hadn't invaded Macedonia, they would have invaded us, and just imagine what a Macedonian army would have done to your olive trees. Don't you remember how King Philip declared war on us in the middle of the 2nd Punic War?

GAIUS: And did he invade Italy? No, he did not. We sent a little army over here to oppose him, and after ten rather uneventful years, both sides agreed to call it a draw.

LUCIUS: Yeah, but then he... *Lucius pauses as a wounded velite (a lightly-armed Roman youth who fights as a skirmisher) stumbles past, an arrow sticking out of his chest.*

LUCIUS: ...then he started attacking our friends in Greece.

GAIUS: Friends in Greece? I don't have any friends in Greece. All my friends are in Italy, which is where we belong. To hell with the Greeks, that's my opinion.

LUCIUS: That's awfully shortsighted of you. Even Scipio says—

GAIUS: Enough with the Scipio references, already. Just because you served under him in Africa, you think he's Jupiter's gift to Rome. If you ask me, Scipio's just another decadent Greek-loving noble. Cato, now there's a senator for you.

LUCIUS: Who, Marcus Porcius Cato? That nobody from a small Italian town? Without a single ancestor who served as consul?

GAIUS: Yes, Cato. He knows we've got better things to do than get tangled up in the Greek east. It's not like Spain and northern Italy are pacified yet.

LUCIUS: Which is exactly why we've got to take on Philip before he gets too powerful. Let him conquer Greece, and soon he'll be marching into northern Italy, and all the Gauls will rally to him.

GAIUS: Yeah, sure. All I know is, my idiot brother-in-law is running my farm while I'm stuck out here. By the time I get back, he'll have me so far in debt that I'll have to sell my land to some rich noble and become a landless proletarian.

Just then, a trumpet sounds, a drumbeat begins, and a centurion's voice is heard offstage.

CENTURION: All right, lads, here we go. Take it easy now, no running. And don't throw your javelins before I give the word.

GAIUS (*resignedly*): I guess it's all academic now. Well, let's go, see, and conquer.

Gaius, Lucius, and their silent cohorts hoist their shields and exeunt omnes, stage left, marching in time with the drum, which continues to beat as the stage goes dark.