

The Punic Wars Begin

Once the Romans completed their wars of conquest across the Italian Peninsula, they found themselves facing opposition from outside Italy. After acquiring the Greek colonies of southern Italy, for example, the Romans found themselves in control of the island of Sicily, off the coast of the toe of the Italian boot. (Sicily was the site of both Greek colonies and trading posts occupied by the Carthaginians.)

With their takeover of Greek trade colonies in Sicily, the Romans inherited a long-standing rivalry between the Greeks and the Carthaginians. This competition led the Romans to fight a series of wars with the Phoenicians of Carthage. Since the Romans referred to the Carthaginians as the Puni, their word for Phoenicians, the wars became known as the Punic Wars. In all, the Romans fought three such wars with the Carthaginians over a 120-year period.

The Carthaginians were a formidable foe. As a Phoenician colony located in modern-day Tunisia, Carthage was the centerpiece of an extensive trading empire which stretched throughout the entire western Mediterranean Sea. Founded around 800 B.C., the colony and its satellites had been doing business for hundreds of years prior to the rise of the Romans.

In fact, business was such an important part of life in the Carthaginian Empire, that the government of the city-state was an oligarchy, consisting of 30 royal merchants who served as the power base of the Carthaginian Senate.

The civilization established by the Carthaginians was one based on prosperity and luxury. The Phoenician religion, however, had a reputation for the gruesome practice of child sacrifice. Such rituals involved the unthinkable acts of slicing the throats of infants and young children, placing them on an altar, and then dropping the bodies into a fire dedicated to a Phoenician-Canaanite god. All this took place at a holy site called a *topheth*, which was a combination temple altar and fiery furnace.

The First Punic War began in 264 B.C. with the invasion of the Roman army onto the island of Sicily, following an appeal from the city-state of

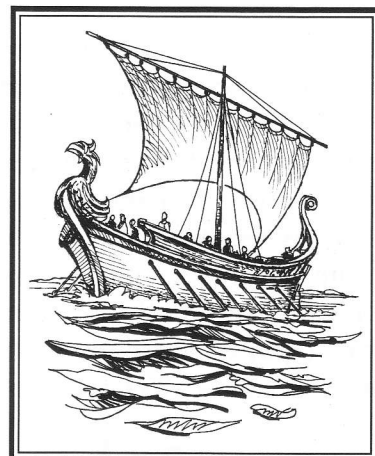
Messana. There the Romans engaged the Carthaginians in battle. This first of the Punic Wars was to last an entire generation, covering the years from 264–241 B.C.

To ensure an ultimate victory in this war, the Roman Senate was prepared to spend as much money as it might take and sacrifice as many troops as needed. As a result, Roman losses against the Carthaginians were staggering: at least 250,000 men and 500 ships were lost by the Romans in this single Punic war.

But victory did come. With it, the Romans gained control of the island of Sicily. In addition, the Carthaginians were forced to pay war damages to the Romans amounting to millions of dollars in silver. With the annexation of Sicily, the Romans were later able to take over from Carthage the neighboring islands of Sardinia and Corsica.

Within a generation of the end of the First Punic War, the Romans conquered additional territory in northern Italy. In 222 B.C., a Roman army defeated the Gauls in the Cisalpine region, north of the Po River.

Within 50 years, the Romans had extended their power considerably. They controlled, by the end of the 3rd century B.C., 120,000 square miles of territory, extending from southern Italy to the Alpine region, as well as the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica.



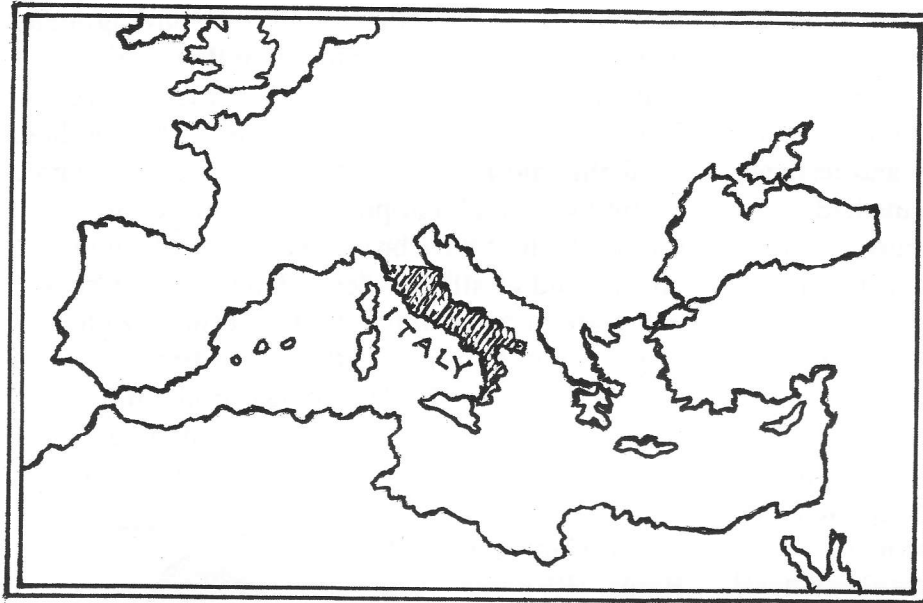
Review and Write

Describe the culture and society of Carthage on the eve of the First Punic War.

Rome vs. Carthage: A Map Study

Prior to the First Punic War, Rome had come to control the entire Italian Peninsula south of the Po River. Following the war, and over the generation to follow, the Romans expanded their presence outside the Italian Peninsula. The Roman army made this expansion possible.

The Carthaginians, prior to the First Punic War, controlled a vast western Mediterranean trading empire, which included territory in northern Africa, the southern portion of modern-day Spain, and various islands in the Mediterranean, including Corsica, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, and part of Sicily.

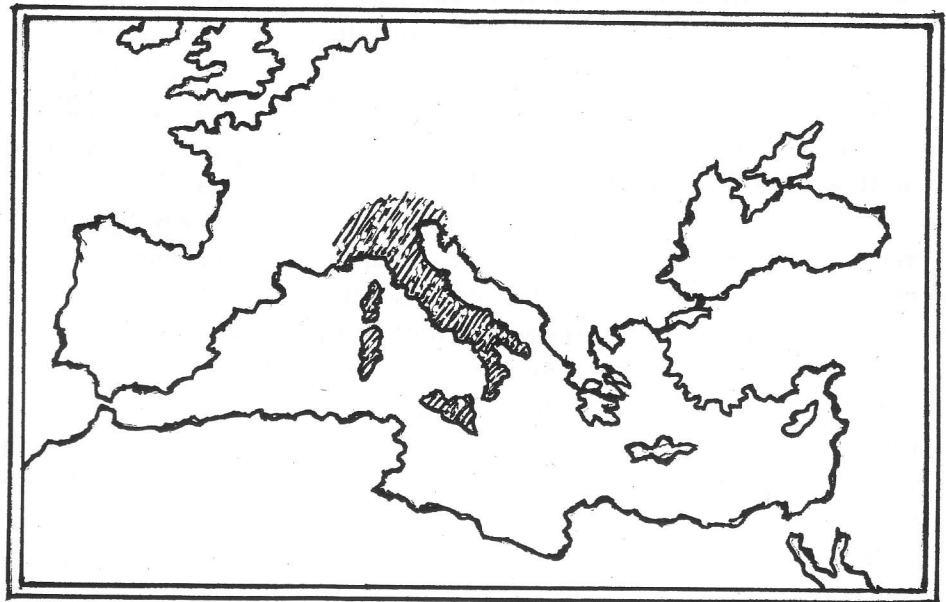


Map Exercise I

The map at the left shows the extent of Roman domination prior to the outbreak of the First Punic War (261–241 B.C.). Using additional sources, shade in the lands which were under Carthaginian control in 261 B.C. (Use a colored pencil.) Also, identify on the map each of the following: Rome, Sicily, Syracuse, Carthage, Corsica, Sardinia, and Cisalpine Gaul.

Map Exercise II

This map is dated just prior to the beginning of the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.). What territories in northern Italy and throughout the Mediterranean Sea did the Romans come to control by 219 B.C.?



Review and Write

1. What regions of control did the Carthaginians still maintain after the First Punic War?
2. How important were the losses of Carthaginian islands in the Mediterranean Sea to the Carthaginians?

A Defeated Carthage Rebuilds

During the First Punic War, the Carthaginians suffered because they could not find a strong, capable general who could win battles against the Romans—not until the rise of a general named Hamilcar Barca (huh MIL kahr BAHR kuh). Hamilcar was made leader of a Carthaginian army in Sicily in 248 B.C. and fought brilliantly. If only he had been born sooner, the Carthaginians might have won their war with the Romans.

For years, Hamilcar fought the Romans successfully, never losing a land battle to them. He raided the Italian coast repeatedly and dashed across Sicily so swiftly that the Romans had trouble keeping up with his whereabouts.

However, ultimately, the Romans won the war even though they never defeated Hamilcar. They defeated the Carthaginian naval fleet in 242 B.C., forcing an end to the war. Hamilcar himself helped negotiate the peace in 241, bringing the First Punic War to its conclusion.

Despite Carthage's defeat in this war, General Hamilcar never forgot that he had not lost a battle to the Romans. His hatred of the Romans continued long after the First Punic War was over. As Rome continued its expansion into the Mediterranean Sea after the end of the war, it targeted and gained control of the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. This was only possible for Rome to accomplish as long as Carthage was weak.

With the threat of Rome growing even after the end of the First Punic War, Hamilcar soon realized that Carthage would have to fight Rome a second time. But Carthage would need to be strengthened. To ensure a stronger Carthage, Hamilcar placed himself in Spain to lead an expedition. Hamilcar's army expanded Carthaginian power in southern Spain. He established new cities, such as Barcino (BAHR shi noh), which he named for himself. Today, it is known as the city of Barcelona. However, in 228 B.C., his campaigns were cut short with his death.

A son-in-law to Hamilcar, Hasdrubal (HAS droo bal) continued where his father-in-law had left off. He extended Carthaginian

control over additional Spanish tribes. He founded a city which he named Carthago Nova. In Latin, it meant "New Carthage." (Today, the city is known as Cartagena.)

Through these years, the Romans were preoccupied with their own campaigns in Italy, especially in the Cisalpine Gaul region. They did not pay much attention to what the Carthaginians were doing in Spain. By the time they realized that Carthage had once again become a powerful force in the Mediterranean, it was nearly too late.

Rome did manage to force Hasdrubal to agree to limit Carthaginian power in Spain to the region south of the Ebro River. The Carthaginians also agreed to allow independence to the Greek city-state of Saguntum (suh GUN tum), which was located 80 miles south of the Ebro.

The threat of Hasdrubal was soon eliminated, however. In 221 B.C., he was assassinated. In his place, another Carthaginian general rose to the front. He was the son of Hamilcar Barca. His name was Hannibal.

From his youth, Hannibal had been taught to hate the Romans. As a boy, his father had taken him to Spain on a military campaign.

Raised in the art of war, Hannibal became a skilled sol-

dier and leader. He would prove to be a great challenge to the Romans in the years ahead.

Although only 26 years old when Hamilcar died, Hannibal assumed control of Carthaginian forces in Spain. In 219 B.C., despite early Carthaginian promises to the Romans, Hannibal began to lay siege to the city of Saguntum. When Saguntum appealed to the Romans for help against the Carthaginians, the Roman Senate responded immediately. In a short time, this conflict between Rome and Hannibal escalated into the Second Punic War.



Hannibal

The Second Punic War Begins

When Saguntum fell to Hannibal in 219 B.C. following an eight-month siege, the Romans sent a delegation to him to protest the military takeover of the city. Hannibal treated them with disrespect and refused to respond to their concerns.

The Romans responded with war. With the outbreak of the Second Punic War in 218 B.C., Hannibal was prepared to do battle with the Romans. He began developing a strategy which was to take him to Italy where he nearly brought about the destruction of the city of Rome itself.

Hannibal amassed a huge army of over 90,000 men and began a lengthy march from Spain to Italy. Accompanying Hannibal's army were 40 elephants, which he used to carry supplies and equipment.

Hannibal crossed over the Ebro River in the fall of 218 B.C. and headed north. He knew the Romans were expecting him to sail his forces to northern Italy and they sent an army there to meet him. However, Hannibal decided to take his forces by land through the high, snow-covered mountains known as the Alps.

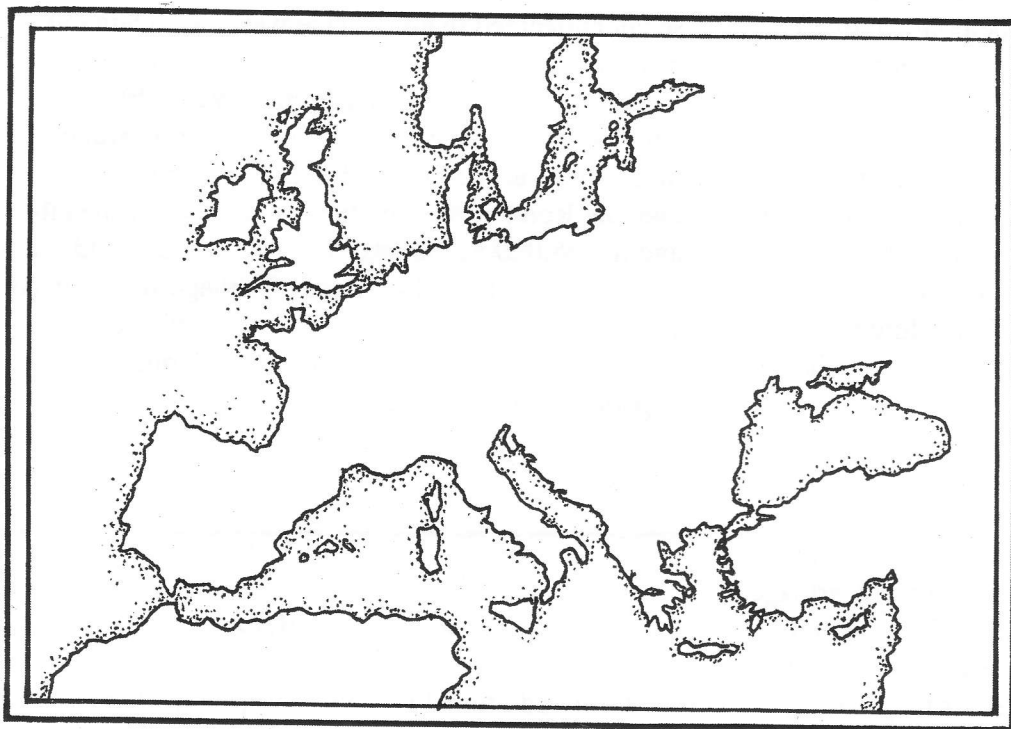
Hannibal's campaign was a treacherous one. His army was unaccustomed to the cold and snow of the mountains of south-central Europe. Thousands of

Hannibal's men succumbed to the wintery weather. To protect his elephants from the cold, Hannibal had special woolen blankets to cover them. Tribes of warriors native to the Alpine region fought Hannibal as he worked his way through the many snowy mountain passes.

This campaign proved nearly disastrous to Hannibal. All of his elephants died except one. The trek through the Alps took many months. Only one out of three of the men who began this campaign remained alive when Hannibal's forces emerged from the mountains into northern Italy. There he met 26,000 Roman forces and defeated them.

His greatest victory came in 216 B.C. when he defeated the Romans in the battle of Cannae, located south of Rome on the Adriatic coast. Thirty thousand Romans lost their lives at Cannae. Although this was an important victory for Hannibal, it did not bring about absolute defeat for the Romans.

For the next 15 years, Hannibal campaigned throughout Italy, ravaging the Italian Peninsula and defeating the Romans in battle repeatedly. In 211 B.C., Hannibal's army came to within one mile of the city of Rome, but never saw it fall.



Map Exercise

On the map, draw a line showing the route Hannibal took from Spain to Italy. Then locate the following on the map: the Ebro River, Saguntum, Carthago Nova, Carthage, Rome, Cannae, the Alps, the Mediterranean Sea, the Po River, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia.

The End of the Punic Wars

No Roman general in Italy was able to stop Hannibal during 15 years of fighting. At best, the Carthaginian general could only be slowed in his relentless campaign. One Roman general known for his delaying tactics was Fabius the Delayer.

The Roman army constantly harassed Hannibal's forces, making it hard for his army to stay supplied. This required great resolve on the part of the Roman army to fight on continually without letting up.

However, not until a Roman general left Italy and sailed straight for Carthage itself did Hannibal decide to abandon Italy and his countryside campaign. The general was named Publius Cornelius Scipio. He was named for his father who led Roman armies in Spain.

Scipio the Younger took control of Roman forces in Spain in 206 B.C. He met the enemy there in the battle of Ilipa (IL ih puh) in southwestern Spain. Although outnumbered, Scipio won the battle, having surprised the Carthaginians with a dawn attack.

With Scipio's success, the Carthaginians were forced to abandon Spain. The Romans in Italy also realized they had a great general who might be able to meet Hannibal head on. In 205 B.C., Scipio traveled to Rome where he was hailed as a great hero. This young general (he was only 32 in 205) was soon elected as a consul of Rome despite the fact he was, by law, too young to hold the political office.

In spite of Hannibal's longtime presence in Italy, Scipio decided not to fight him there. Instead, he decided to lure him off the peninsula. In 204 B.C., Scipio set sail with his army for northern Africa. Soon, Scipio joined forces with former Carthaginian allies and began menacing the city of Carthage.

Desperate, the Carthaginians sent word to Hannibal to come to their rescue. But before he could arrive, the Carthaginians negotiated a truce with Scipio. Before the truce was officially ratified, Hannibal landed in northern Africa. The Carthaginians broke the truce and the stage was set for war between Scipio and Hannibal.

The battle took place at Zama (ZAY muh), a town located about 100 miles southwest of Carthage. The battle began on October 19, 202 B.C. Hannibal used 80 elephants in the fighting, beginning the battle with an elephant charge. However, as they ran toward the Roman line, they were frightened by the

enemy's trumpet blasts and turned about, rampaging into Hannibal's cavalry. Confusion took place among Hannibal's forces.

Scipio's men took advantage of the confusion and began advancing against the Carthaginians and their allies. The enemy began melting away until only Hannibal's most seasoned veterans were left, those who had fought alongside him in Italy. Hannibal's army was in shambles. The battle of Zama was a Roman victory, the only battle lost by the great Carthaginian general.

The Second Punic War was over and the Romans were victorious. Under the peace treaty that followed in 201 B.C., the Carthaginians were stripped of all power. Hannibal survived his loss at Zama and was made ruler of a newly humbled Carthage.

Yet this did not mark the end of conflict between the Carthaginians and Rome. Although Carthage never regained full power, it did become prosperous in the 2nd century B.C. By 150 B.C., certain Roman senators decided that Carthage was once again too powerful.

The result was the Third Punic War (149–146 B.C.). This war resulted in the utter destruction of Carthage at the hands of bullying Rome. In the end, the Romans ordered the dismantling of the city, and the 55,000 occupants of Carthage were sold into slavery. Even the fields around Carthage were sowed with salt so they would never again be fertile. Following this victory, Roman power would experience much change.



A coin depicting two Roman soldiers

Review and Write

Using additional sources, describe the battle of Zama in 150 words.

The Roman Republic Faces Challenges

An era of great change occurred in Rome following the end of the Third Punic War (149–146 B.C.) to about 30 B.C. It was an era of war, political strife, revolt, assassination, and much social conflict.

One of the major political and social class conflicts of the period occurred in the second half of the 2nd century B.C. For many years prior, the patricians had ruled Rome through the Senate. In 133 B.C., a conflict of power arose when two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, proposed granting land to those who did not have it. (They were the grandchildren of Scipio.) These two were members of the Senate and were of the patrician class. However, they were responding to a loud cry from the plebeians for greater social and economic reform in Rome.

When Tiberius Gracchus was elected as tribune, he proposed a law restricting the amount of land any single patrician could own. But the move was vetoed by the patrician-controlled Senate. Tiberius became so unpopular that he was killed by mob violence brought about with Senate support.

His brother, Gaius, would later take up Tiberius's cause. In 123 B.C., Gaius was himself elected as tribune of Rome and re-elected in 122 (even though no one was to serve as tribune for two years in a row). He was soon enacting legislation designed to help the poor. In time, the Roman Senate turned on him, killing Gaius and 3000 of his supporters.

With the deaths of the Gracchi brothers, Rome was in political turmoil. In their places, two military leaders stepped forward and made themselves rulers of Rome. The first was a general named Marius, who was elected as consul by the plebeian party in 107 B.C. He was elected for six consecutive years.

The election of Marius to office started an era in Roman history which took Rome from a Republic to a military dictatorship. Despite Marius's military power, he accomplished little politically. He did, however, reorganize the Roman army. This move proved an important step in changing Roman history.

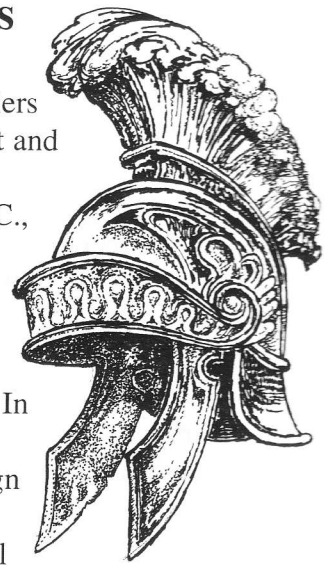
Marius was the first Roman general to allow men without property to become Roman soldiers. Traditionally, only citizens who owned property had been soldiers. Since they had no ownership of

Roman property, these soldiers became loyal to Marius first and Rome second.

After his death in 86 B.C., the patricians once again took control of Roman affairs. They appointed another general to power—one who was loyal to them. In 82 B.C., Sulla, a Roman general known for his foreign victories became dictator.

Sulla set about killing all those who opposed him or the Senate which installed him in power. He was even able to reduce the power of the elected tribunes. After a three-year campaign of securing dictatorial power, Sulla retired to his luxurious country villa and its expansive lands where he died the next year in 78 B.C.

Now the patricians had a new level of power in Rome. But they would not go unchallenged. Several new leaders rose to prominence on behalf of the people. Among them were two generals: Gnaeus Pompeius (pom PEE us), known as Pompey (106–48 B.C.), and Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.). Through their efforts, the Roman Republic was doomed to come to an end.



Review and Write

1. From what you have read here, do you feel the Roman Senate had too much power? Why?
2. Why was it an important change that Roman soldiers no longer had to own property to serve in the military by the beginning of the 1st century B.C.?
3. What reforms did the Gracchi brothers institute after the Third Punic War?

The First Triumvirate

Both Roman generals, Marius and Sulla, used their military power for personal gain in the 80s and 70s B.C. After their deaths, other generals came to the front, claiming power for themselves as well.

One such general was Pompey (106–48 B.C.), who fought alongside Sulla earlier in his career against pro-Marius forces in Sicily. Pompey's military career continued after the death of his friend. In 77 B.C., he fought an anti-Sulla general named Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (LEP ih dus) and defeated him.

When Lepidus fled to Spain, Pompey began a campaign there to rout out Lepidus and other anti-Sulla forces. Even though Lepidus died shortly after reaching Spain, Pompey found himself facing another rival, Roman general Sertorius, who defeated him. This might have been the end of Pompey's career, but other events saved him. Sertorius was assassinated in 72 B.C. Although Pompey was not involved in the plot, the forces supporting Sertorius in Spain collapsed after his death. Pompey was hailed as the winner of the Spanish struggle. His star was once again on the rise.

At the same time that Pompey was making his name well known within the Roman Republic, another general, Marcus Licinius Crassus, was busy fighting rebellious slaves in Italy led by a slave-gladiator named Spartacus. By 71 B.C., Crassus and his army defeated Spartacus and his followers.

Now two Roman generals, Pompey and Crassus, had created reputations for themselves and had armies loyal to them, ready to follow them anywhere. Pompey and Crassus knew and respected one another. Between them, they saw an opportunity to take control of political events in Rome. In 70 B.C., they marched on Rome with their troops and seized the office of consul for themselves. Despite Pompey's former support of Sulla, these two began to systematically destroy any reforms which Sulla had brought to the Republic and to the city of Rome. They worked to make the Senate a weak body with no real power. All this meant more power for the plebeians in Rome and less for the aristocratic patricians.

Over the next 10 years, Pompey carried out important military campaigns throughout the Mediterranean region. His successes made him the hero of Rome as tribute money flowed into the city from those whom Pompey conquered. In short order, he brought the entire eastern Mediterranean region under Roman control, defeating enemies in Syria, Judea, and Armenia.

Meanwhile, Crassus remained in Rome making himself a powerful political figure and controlling the politics of the Senate. As Pompey achieved further success on the battlefield, Crassus came to consider him an enemy.

When Pompey returned to Rome in 62 B.C., Crassus wielded so much political power that the Senate refused to reward Pompey and his army with the land grants Pompey requested.

Disappointed, Pompey burned for revenge against the Senate. But he had already disbanded his army, expecting his requests to be accepted by the Senate.

Fresh from a military campaign of his own in Spain, a young general named Julius Caesar sought an ally in Pompey. He suggested that Pompey, and Crassus (a friend of Caesar's) join forces. Despite the differences between Pompey and Crassus, Pompey agreed.

Soon these three powerful men—all successful Roman generals—formed an alliance called the First Triumvirate, from the Latin meaning "three men." Among them, they found themselves in control of Rome. But their alliance would not last more than a few years.



Review and Write

Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Crassus, Caesar: Each of these generals seized power in Rome at one time or another. Is it important that they were generals? Explain.

Test I

Part I. Multiple Choice (Worksheets 1-7)

Match the answers to the right with the statement on the left.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| _____ 1. By 1000 B.C., early inhabitants in Italy included this tribe | A. consul |
| _____ 2. This boot-shaped peninsula was home to the Romans | B. rex |
| _____ 3. Name for 7th century B.C. Roman ruler | C. Samnites |
| _____ 4. Roman privileged upper class | D. Italy |
| _____ 5. Roman underclass consisting largely of small landowners | E. Romulus-Remus |
| _____ 6. This region in Italy was originally home to 30 towns including Rome | F. Twelve Tables |
| _____ 7. Mythological pair who founded Rome in the year 753 B.C. | G. Jupiter-Juno |
| _____ 8. These Italic people were Rome's greatest enemy in the 300s B.C. | H. patriarchal |
| _____ 9. Political role replacing the last of the Etruscan kings in Rome | I. plebeians |
| _____ 10. Written form of Roman law | J. Etruscans |
| _____ 11. Latin term meaning "power of the father" | K. Latium |
| _____ 12. Chief Roman god and his wife | L. patricians |

Part II. Multiple Choice (Worksheets 8-15)

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| _____ 1. Roman word referring to the Carthaginians | A. Scipio |
| _____ 2. Series of wars fought between Rome and Carthage | B. Punic Wars |
| _____ 3. Canaanite-Phoenician shrine and sacrificial altar | C. the Gracchi |
| _____ 4. Carthaginian general during the 1st Punic War | D. Barcino |
| _____ 5. Carthaginian city established in Spain by General Hamilcar | E. Hannibal |
| _____ 6. Greek city state in Spain which was taken over by Carthage | F. topheth |
| _____ 7. Great Carthaginian general who used elephants during 2nd Punic War | G. Zama |
| _____ 8. Final battle of the 2nd Punic War | H. Hamilcar Barca |
| _____ 9. Roman general who defeated Carthaginians at end of 2nd Punic War | I. Saguntum |
| _____ 10. Two Roman brothers who attempted reforms in the 2nd century B.C. | J. Sulla |
| _____ 11. Roman general who became a dictator over Rome in 82 B.C. | K. Julius Caesar |
| _____ 12. Roman general who joined with Crassus and Pompey in 1st triumvirate | L. Punici |

Part III. Respond and Write

By the 1st century B.C., the Roman Republic was becoming the victim of powerful Roman generals. How were such men able to seize power without the Republican government stopping them?