

## **The Idea of Europe**

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*Edited by*

**Ovidiu CARAIANI,  
Daniela Maricica COTOARĂ,  
Adelin-Costin DUMITRU  
and Ciprian TUDOR**



# The Idea of Europe

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**Ovidiu Caraiani,  
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## **FOREWORD**

Each year, the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest organizes the Students' Scientific Conference. In the last couple of years, part of the papers presented during the European Culture and Civilization panel have formed the backbone of a collective volume, an emerging tradition which is hereby continued. The editors of the volume (Ovidiu Caraiani, Daniela Maricica Cotoara, Adelin-Costin Dumitru and Ciprian Tudor) teach courses and seminars on a variety of topics related to what could be labelled European culture and civilization at faculties such as the Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Robotics, and Faculty of Entrepreneurship, Business Engineering and Management.

The diversity of areas that could be covered by this label is visible from the topics selected by the students for their presentations. From analysing the impact of the Black Death on Europe to exploring the Ancient Greek institutional framework that offered us the first implementation of a democratic regime, from military events with a significant impact upon Ancient Rome's history to Europeanization and the Romanian cultural landscape, and from overviewing European Union policies for sustainable development to presenting changes occurring in European art throughout the centuries, the subjects chosen by students reflect the pluralism that has always characterized the European identity (or, better said, identities).

One of the advantages of having a panel such as European Culture and Civilization is that it provides room for not only a variety of subjects, but also for a multitude of disciplines to be represented. Each year (and 2024 was not an exception), Sociology, International Relations, Political Theory, History are well represented in the students' presentations. What the papers written with different methodologies and concepts have in common is an interest in exploring the aforementioned European identities, in all their multifaceted forms.

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The European Culture and Civilization panel also offers an opportunity for Erasmus students to take part in the public events organized by the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, further demonstrating the benefits of one of the most successful programs implemented by the European Union. By doing that, it also allows the other students – but also the organizers – to become more familiar with novel perspectives on some topics.

Last but not least, we should emphasize – as we have also done in the past – the importance of having such a panel available to students at a *Polytechnic* university. After all, engaging with such topics represents an endeavor that is outside the scope of their specialties. That being said, understanding what it means to be European, and delving into topics that would traditionally be considered to be researched almost exclusively within social sciences and humanities, are aspects whose importance ought not to be understated. They contribute, on the one hand, to the formation of engineers who can also understand the social phenomena that have an impact upon their professional activity, and on the other, they open up social sciences and humanities to novel perspectives.

The following list contains the titles of the presentations that have been made during this year's edition of the Student Scientific Conference. Some of the essays on which the presentations have been based were selected for this volume, as shown in the Table of Contents.

- The Trauma of World War II (by Alexandru DOBRIN)
- The French Revolution: From Queendom to Empire (by Eduard-Alexandru DRUȚĂ)
- The Punic Wars: Rome's Ascension to Power (by Denisa-Elena ȘTEFAN)
- The Tragedy of the Black Death (by Dan MOJOATCĂ)
- The Importance of the Punic Wars in the Romanization of Europe (by Alexandru Cristian VASILE)
- European Art (by Irene IGNATENCU and Rares BURCEA)
- The Evolution of Music in Europe (by Gheorghiu VLAD and Felix CONDEI)

*Foreword*

- Fashion throughout the last Century (by Vieru MAYA and Mara-Irina BALASA)
- Democracy in Action: Exploring Athenian Society and Governance in Ancient Greece (by Ilinca GOLGOT)
- Freemasonry in France (by Alexandru FLORIN)
- Europe's Environmental Challenges (by Elodie Nathalie Vivienne COFFIN)
- European Union Policies and Sustainable Development (by Valentina PETRENCU)
- What is Ethnic Nationalism all about? (by Marius ZAHARIA)
- About how Globalization Influences European Culture (Daniel SINDILĂ)
- The Importance of Mythology (Suzanne AUTIN).

The Editors

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# THE PUNIC WARS: ROME'S ASCENSION TO POWER

**Denisa-Elena ȘTEFAN**

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## **Abstract**

*Between 264 BCE and 146 BCE, several significant battles took place between Carthage and Rome, known as the Punic Wars. During the first war for control of Sicily, Rome built and prepared 330 ships, gaining naval superiority. Following a period of poor leadership, Hamilcar Barca and his soldiers played a crucial role in sustaining Carthage. In the Mercenary War (241-237 BCE), Rome compelled the Carthaginian colonies of Sardinia and Corsica to withdraw. The Ebro Treaty of 226 BCE stipulated that neither side could cross a certain border. The second Punic War began when Hannibal Barca led his army into northern Italy via the Alps, achieving numerous victories against the Romans and seizing control of northern Italy. The Romans' frustration with the perceived inaction of their forces unsettled Hannibal. Carthage refused Hannibal reinforcements and supplies, thwarting his ultimate conquest. Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio advanced against the Carthaginian army in Spain, defeating Hasdrubal, Hannibal's younger brother. This event coincided with Scipio assuming control of Utica, a Carthaginian city in North Africa, and an Italian ally withdrawing support for Carthage. Consequently, Scipio was able to*

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*outmaneuver Hannibal around Rome by thoroughly analyzing his strategies, thus preventing Rome from attacking him.[1] (Mark, 2018)*

### **Keywords**

*Punic wars, Romans, Carthaginian, Mercenary war.*

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### **Introduction**

Between 264 and 146 BCE, the Punic Wars were a series of conflicts between Rome and Carthage. The Carthaginian population, of Phoenician ethnicity, is commonly referred to as Phoenician (Phoinix in Greek, Poenus from Punicus in Latin). Roman historians named these conflicts "The Punic Wars" due to the origins of Carthage as Phoenician traders. This series of wars consisted of:

- First Punic War (264–241 BCE)
- Second Punic War (218–201 BCE)
- Third Punic War (149–146 BCE)

Following Rome's victories in all of these wars, it assumed control over the Mediterranean region previously under Carthage's control. Before 260 BCE, Carthage had evolved from a modest port settlement of the Phoenicians into the most affluent and dominant city-state in the Mediterranean. Its formidable mercenary army, powerful navy, and substantial wealth from trade, tariffs, and tributes enabled it to exert significant influence.

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Through a treaty with the juvenile city-state of Rome, Carthage severely restricted Roman trade in the Western Mediterranean. This was made possible due to Carthage's superior naval strength. Roman merchants sailing in Carthaginian waters risked having their ships raided and their cargo stolen. However, as a result of Rome's decisive victory in the First Punic War, these dynamics shifted, and Carthage lost its previously immense influence, wealth, and prestige throughout subsequent conflicts.

By the conclusion of the Third Punic War, Carthage, completely subjugated by the Roman Republic, ceased to be a significant political or military power.[1] (Mark, 2018)

## **Research methodology**

### Introduction;

The introduction sets the stage for the exploration of the Punic Wars, providing context for the historical significance of these conflicts and their enduring impact on Western civilization. It highlights the geopolitical tensions between Carthage and Rome, the strategic importance of Sicily, and the overarching themes of power, ambition, and conquest that characterize the period.

### 1. Background Research:

A comprehensive review of scholarly literature, primary sources, and historical accounts related to the Punic Wars is conducted. This phase involves gathering information on key events, battles, personalities, and socio-political dynamics leading up to, during, and after each war. Primary sources such as ancient texts, inscriptions, and archaeological findings are consulted to ensure accuracy and depth in the analysis.

### 2. Data Collection:

The collected data is analyzed through a critical lens, examining patterns, trends, and causal relationships within the historical context of the Punic Wars. This involves identifying key themes, assessing the significance of specific events, and evaluating the motivations and actions of major players such as Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis also considers broader implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military strategy, and socio-cultural development.

### 3. Analysis and Interpretation:

The collected data is analyzed through a critical lens, examining patterns, trends, and causal relationships within the historical context of the Punic Wars. This involves identifying key themes, assessing the significance

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of specific events, and evaluating the motivations and actions of major players such as Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis also considers broader implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military strategy, and socio-cultural development.

#### 4. Historiographical Approach:

A historiographical approach is adopted to contextualize the interpretations and perspectives presented in the paper within the broader scholarly discourse on the Punic Wars. This involves comparing and contrasting different historical interpretations, theories, and methodologies used by scholars to study this period. By engaging with diverse viewpoints and debates within the field of ancient history, the paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the Punic Wars.

#### 5. Theoretical Framework:

Theoretical frameworks from fields such as military history, political science, and cultural studies are applied to analyze and interpret the dynamics of conflict, power relations, and identity formation during the Punic Wars. Concepts such as hegemony, imperialism, nationalism, and cultural diffusion are explored to illuminate the complex interplay of factors shaping the course of these ancient conflicts.

#### 6. Conclusion and Implications:

The paper concludes by synthesizing the findings, insights, and implications derived from the analysis of the Punic Wars. It highlights the enduring legacy of these conflicts on Western civilization, including their impact on military strategy, statecraft, cultural exchange, and the rise of Rome as a dominant imperial power. The conclusion also reflects on the broader lessons and implications of the Punic Wars for understanding the dynamics of conflict and conquest in human history.

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### 7. Bibliography and Citations:

A comprehensive bibliography is provided, listing all sources consulted and cited in the paper. Proper citation methods are followed to acknowledge the contributions of previous scholarship and ensure academic integrity.

### **First Punic War**

#### (a) Introduction

The First Punic War erupted in 264 BCE, fueled by a power struggle over Sicily, an island with notable strategic importance, desired by both Carthage and Rome. The conflict was ignited when the Sicilian city of Messana, caught in a dispute between Syracuse and Carthage, sent a plea to Rome for assistance. The young republic, seeing an opportunity to overthrow Carthaginian dominance and further increase its own influence, responded by initiating a remarkable naval expansion effort. This expansion aimed to rival Carthage's naval supremacy. The ensuing battles and strategic maneuvers reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Mediterranean and introduced innovative military tactics and technologies with enduring implications for future conflicts.

#### (b) Genesis, Naval Warfare Evolution, and Background:

The appeal of Messana for Roman aid triggered a decisive intervention, leading to the commencement of hostilities. Faced with Carthage's naval superiority, Rome embarked on an unprecedented shipbuilding program, rapidly constructing a formidable fleet of over 100 warships. This ambitious endeavor signaled Rome's determination to challenge Carthaginian hegemony in the Mediterranean.

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The pivotal naval engagement at Mylae in 260 BCE showcased Rome's nascent naval prowess and introduced the innovative corvus, a boarding bridge designed to neutralize Carthaginian naval superiority. This tactical ingenuity enabled Roman marines to board and seize Carthaginian vessels, shifting the balance of power in favor of Rome and heralding a new era of naval warfare.

Hamilcar Barca, the Carthaginian general, emerged as a formidable adversary, renowned for his strategic brilliance and lightning raids along the Italian coast. Despite initial setbacks, including the loss of Drepana, Carthage's resilience and Hamilcar's leadership prolonged the conflict, inflicting heavy casualties on the Roman forces and underscoring the challenges of confronting Carthaginian military prowess.

Rome's perseverance and adaptability eventually culminated in a series of decisive naval victories, notably the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241 BCE, compelling Carthage to seek peace. The ensuing Treaty of Lutatius marked the end of the First Punic War, establishing Rome's dominance in Sicily and reshaping the geopolitical dynamics of the Mediterranean.

#### (c) Background, Naval Innovations, and Results:

The First Punic War erupted primarily due to the struggle for control over Sicily, a strategically vital region coveted by both Rome and Carthage. The conflict was triggered by the Mamertine War, a confrontation between Syracuse and the Mamertines of Messina, leading to Rome's declaration of war against Carthage in 264 BCE.

Despite lacking maritime experience, Rome rapidly adapted to the naval theater, constructing a formidable fleet and introducing groundbreaking innovations such as the corvus. This ingenious device, a portable gangplank equipped with hooks, allowed Rome to apply land-based tactics in naval battles, effectively countering Carthaginian naval dominance.

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Hamilcar Barca, renowned for his military prowess and strategic brilliance, emerged as a key Carthaginian commander. His hit-and-run tactics and coastal raids inflicted significant losses on Rome, prolonging the war and showcasing Carthage's resilience in the face of adversity.

The war's turning point came with Rome's decisive victory at the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241 BCE, compelling Carthage to sue for peace. The resulting Treaty of Lutatius concluded the First Punic War, establishing Rome's control over Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, while imposing heavy war indemnities on Carthage. This outcome marked the beginning of Rome's ascendancy as a dominant Mediterranean power and set the stage for further conflicts in the Second Punic War.[2] (Your guide to the Punic Wars)

### **Second Punic War**

#### (a) Introduction:

The Second Punic War, a monumental conflict between Rome and Carthage from 218 to 201 BCE, stands as one of antiquity's most renowned and strategically complex wars. The war's origins lay in Carthage's quest for revenge after its defeat in the First Punic War, compounded by Rome's imperial ambitions and expansionist policies. Hannibal Barca, the Carthaginian military commander, masterminded a daring campaign that saw his forces traverse the formidable Alps, achieving several stunning victories on Italian soil and threatening Rome's very existence. This conflict, characterized by epic battles, innovative strategies, and immense human drama, profoundly influenced the course of Mediterranean history and showcased the clash between two burgeoning superpowers.

#### (b) Hannibal's Invasion and Tactical Brilliance:

Hannibal's daring crossing of the Alps and subsequent victories in Italy stunned Rome, showcasing his strategic genius and resourcefulness. His

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innovative tactics, notably demonstrated at the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE, underscored his military prowess and posed a formidable challenge to Rome's hegemony. Hannibal's ability to win the support of his Italian allies further strengthened his position, threatening Rome's control over its territories.[3] (Bellón Ruiz, 2017)

#### (c) Scipio Africanus: Architect of Rome's Redemption:

In response to Hannibal's threat, Rome rallied under the leadership of Publius Cornelius Scipio, later known as Scipio Africanus. Recognizing the need for innovative strategies, Scipio adopted guerrilla warfare tactics and sought to undermine Carthaginian support in Spain and North Africa. Through diplomatic finesse and military acumen, Scipio orchestrated Rome's redemption, culminating in the decisive victory at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE. This victory not only secured Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean but also marked the end of Carthaginian expansion and influence in the region.

#### (d) The Legacy of the Second Punic War:

The Second Punic War left an indelible mark on both Carthage and Rome, shaping their futures in profound ways. For Carthage, the defeat signaled the decline of its power and influence, paving the way for Rome's ascendancy as the preeminent naval and military power in the Mediterranean. Rome, on the other hand, emerged from the conflict with a newfound sense of resilience and determination, setting the stage for its eventual transformation into a formidable empire. The lessons learned from the Second Punic War would influence military strategy and diplomacy for generations to come, leaving a lasting legacy on the course of Western civilization.[2] (Your guide to the Punic Wars)

## **Third Punic War**

### Introduction:

The Third Punic War erupted amidst renewed tensions between Carthage and Rome, sparked by Carthage's conflict with Numidia, a Roman ally. In 149 BCE, the influential Roman senator Cato the Elder seized upon this opportunity to advocate for the annihilation of Carthage, igniting a fervor within the Roman Senate with his impassioned rallying cry, "Carthago delenda est" ("Carthage must be destroyed"). This call to arms heralded the commencement of hostilities as Rome resolved to bring an end to the Carthaginian menace once and for all.

### (a) Carthage's Siege and Destruction:

The Third Punic War unfolded as a brutal siege of Carthage, lasting for three grueling years. Despite valiant resistance from the Carthaginians, who fought with unwavering determination and resourcefulness, they were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior military might of Rome. In 146 BCE, the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus orchestrated the final assault on Carthage, breaching its formidable walls and subjecting the city to a merciless sack. The once-mighty metropolis was reduced to rubble, its inhabitants either slaughtered or enslaved, and its territory annexed by Rome.

### (b) Legacy and Aftermath:

The destruction of Carthage in the Third Punic War marked the end of an era and the dawn of a new epoch dominated by Roman hegemony. With its annihilation, Rome emerged as the unrivaled master of the Mediterranean world, its supremacy unchallenged by any external power. The obliteration of Carthage served as a grim reminder of the brutal realities of power politics

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and conquest, leaving an enduring legacy that reverberated throughout the annals of history.

(c) The Last Showdown:

The Third Punic War, occurring from 149 BCE to 146 BCE, was the culmination of centuries of enmity between Carthage and Rome, ultimately resulting in the complete destruction of Carthage and the consolidation of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean.

Tensions between Carthage and Rome were reignited when Carthage became embroiled in a conflict with Numidia, a Roman ally. In 149 BCE, Roman senator Cato the Elder seized upon this opportunity to advocate for the annihilation of Carthage, famously declaring "Carthago delenda est" ("Carthage must be destroyed"). The Roman Senate, stirred by Cato's impassioned rhetoric and wary of any potential Carthaginian resurgence, acceded to his demands, thus precipitating the onset of the Third Punic War.

The Third Punic War commenced with a Roman siege of Carthage, which endured for three years. Despite valiant resistance from the Carthaginians, who fought with desperation and resourcefulness, they were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior military might of Rome. In 146 BCE, the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus breached the walls of Carthage, leading to a merciless sack of the city. The once-great metropolis was razed to the ground, its inhabitants slaughtered or enslaved, and its territory annexed by Rome.

The obliteration of Carthage marked the end of a civilization that had long been a rival to Rome. With its destruction, Rome solidified its dominance in the Mediterranean, unchallenged by any external power. The annihilation of Carthage also served as a stark warning to any other would-be

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adversaries of Rome, demonstrating the ruthless lengths to which the Roman Republic would go to preserve its supremacy.

The legacy of the Third Punic War reverberated throughout history, shaping the geopolitical landscape of the ancient world for centuries to come. It underscored the brutal realities of power politics and conquest, leaving an indelible mark on Western civilization.[1] (Mark, 2018)

### **Conclusion**

There were other goals to the more than a century-long Punic Wars than only territorial expansion. They battled for cultural legacy, economic superiority, and ideological disagreements as well. Every war revealed the strengths and vulnerabilities of both Rome and Carthage, proving their ability to change, innovate, and endure under trying conditions.

Apart from their military aspects, the Punic Wars had profound political, social, and economic consequences. Prolonged military engagements severely taxed the resources of Rome and Carthage, causing political unrest and socioeconomic upheaval. Carthage, whose economy was mostly dependent on trade, suffered significant financial setbacks as a result of war-related land destruction and interruption of its trading routes. Conversely, the consolidation of power and wealth within the Roman Republic was the outcome of Rome's growing thirst for conquest, which was driven by its ambition for expansion.

Moreover, the conflicts brought about important changes in both civilizations' socioeconomic systems. Riches from conquered areas were much appreciated by the aristocracy of ancient Rome and the socioeconomic gap between the patricians and the plebeians was increased. The political stability of the city-state was threatened and the commercial economy of Carthage deteriorated more quickly as a result of its wars.

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Since they changed the Mediterranean terrain and shaped the balance of power in the region for many centuries, the Punic Wars had long-lasting geopolitical ramifications. Rome consolidated its position as the leading force in the Western Mediterranean after defeating Carthage, expanding its rule over the territory that Carthage had previously controlled and founding colonies all over. The final shift of Rome from a republican government to a vast empire spanning many cultures and areas was made possible by this dominating influence.

In addition, by encouraging cultural interaction and commerce, the Punic Wars had a long-lasting effect on Mediterranean culture. The combination of Roman and Carthaginian military tactics, architectural styles, and cultural traditions improved the local fabric and laid the groundwork for the successful growth of Greco-Roman civilization in the years that followed.

In essence, the Punic Wars were important incidents that shaped the course of Western civilization rather than separate conflicts. Their influence is felt even now in historical accounts, reminding us of the complexities of power, ambition, and the cost of armed combat to mankind.

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[1] Punic Wars - World History Encyclopedia (Mark, 2018)

[2] What Were The Punic Wars? Your Guide to Rome Versus Carthage | HistoryExtra (Your guide to the Punic Wars)

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# THE TRAGEDY OF THE BLACK DEATH

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*Scientific coordinator: Conf. Univ. Dr. Ciprian Tudor*

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## **Abstract**

*The Black Death, or the Black Plague, was a disease caused by bacteria, a disease that ravaged the European and Asian landscape killing well over two thirds of the population in Europe alone, and leaving its survivors scarred with piles of bodies lying about on the street. We have all heard of the bubonic plague, but not everyone knows the severity of it and how impactful it was both on the culture of Europe at that time and how important it is for us, today. In this paper I want to shed light upon a couple of aspects of the plague, from its impact on the population, to a small medical breakdown, to the artistic consequences it had upon the world. I consider that all of these are required to fully grasp the effects it had on European culture in its entirety. And so, I want to start this discussion with a few questions. What is the Black Death, how did it spread, and why?*

## **Keywords**

*Bubonic plague, Black Death.*

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## *The Tragedy of the Black Death*

### **Introduction**

The Black Death is not the name of the microbe itself, but of the pandemic that it has caused. Induced by a bacterium, *Yersinia Pestis*, the disease had a tragic life expectancy of only nine to ten days. With a 30% to 90% mortality rate if left untreated [1], anyone who had this knew they were about to meet their demise within the next days. But to understand the severity and ultimately the impact on the culture, we must first break down how it worked, medically.

The plague is mostly an umbrella term for the three types of plagues that exist: bubonic plague, septicemic plague, pneumonic plague. I will break down the symptoms and manifestations of each one but will focus primarily on the bubonic variant of the plague, as it is more influential than the other ones, portraying the “buboes” widely associated with the plague. Scientists can research the fundamentals of conscious systems that are hardly ever able to be studied in "normal" states thanks to the way that psychedelics lessen defensive and ego limits and rigidity. Drugs are heavily conditioned by the meanings we assign to them in various contexts. They are neither fundamentally good nor fundamentally bad. They are tools.

**THE BUBONIC PLAGUE:** It affected predominantly the lymphatic system, associated with our immune system and complementary to the circulatory system. The infection took place at the spot of an infected flea bite and spread to the nearest lymph node to multiply. Between one to seven days, symptoms akin to the flu - headaches, vomiting, and fevers in specific - affect the host. It slowly progresses into chills, seizures, heavy breathing, vomiting blood, and the infamous buboes, swollen lymph nodes where the bacterium reproduces, which are very painful and slowly necrotize as the bacteria provokes bleeding inside the nodes. This gives them the black color that is associated with the plague.

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**THE SEPTICEMIC PLAGUE:** It can occur through two means – the bacterium has contact with the blood of the host, or through an untreated case of bubonic plague. The name septicemic implies that the bacterium has entered the bloodstream and proliferates within the blood. The plague inhibits the blood's ability to clot, which leads to bleeding under the skin, blood in vomit or spit, and tissue death of extremities such as hands, feet, and nose. This leads to additional infamous plague imagery: swollen, black hands/feet. Untreated, this disease is fatal.

**THE PNEUMONIC PLAGUE:** It can occur through inhalation of the bacterium, or through an untreated case of bubonic or septicemic plague. It starts like the flu, rapidly develops pneumonia, and can lead to respiratory failure or shock. Additional symptoms include coughing blood and chest pains. Untreated, this is fatal within even 36 hours. Unlike the other two, this enables the bacteria to spread from human to human, through airborne transmission (coughing).

With the symptoms laid down, let's see how these fatal combinations affected over 25 million people on Europe alone.

### **Research methodology**

The study of the determinants, occurrence and distribution of health and disease is labeled epidemiology, and in the following paragraphs I will make some remarks akin to this. To understand cultural impact, we must understand how the disease spread, which in turn will allow us to see how it ravaged throughout Europe and left the horrid marks of which we can still see the effects today.

The next section will be divided into three parts: Spreading of the plague, two of the plague outbreaks – Plague of Justinian and the Black Death, and cultural reactions.

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### **Results and discussion**

#### **Spreading of the plague**

I will split this into two sections: micro spreading and macro spreading.

**MICRO SPREADING:** This is how the disease spreads on a smaller level, as the name implies. By this I am referring to rats and fleas.

The main carriers of this plague were the rats. Due to their blood, they were able to carry the disease for long periods of time without any immediate adverse effects on them [2]. The thread connecting rat-to-human transmission is fleas. Due to the rise of urban populations, rats and fleas were closer than ever to humans.

Fleas didn't attack humans; this might be a misconception. Fleas stuck to feeding off the rats, which in return infected the fleas. However, two aspects can lead to flea-human transmission. The first one, which is the rat population declining slowly provokes fleas to find other means of feeding. The second one, which is more important, is the effects of the bacterium on the flea itself. *Yersinia pestis* blocks the gut of the flea and reproduces inside it. Unable to feed, it gets more and more hungry and starts seeking any means of feeding including humans, which explains the first contact. [3]

This information is crucial, because these two beings are nowadays commonly associated with plagues, filth and diseases, and it is very likely that this is one of the main reasons. Imagery of diseases often portrays rats running about in the streets, and we all know them as disease carrying animals that we should stay away from.

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**MACRO SPREADING:** This is how the disease spread around the world. While this is mostly about Europe, the pandemics affected Asia and Africa as well, and Europe isn't just a single country. From the Black Sea, to London, this disease marked a path in graves and bodies.

A main cause for the spreading was the increase of international trade, which saw a big part of Europe and Asia connect routes via ships or ground. The medieval population was growing in numbers. A consequence of the increased travel accessibility was the possibility of war waged from afar. Wars imply cadavers, and they in turn imply rats and fleas.

Now we will dive into two of the three major pandemics, the final pieces of the puzzle needed to finally detail the impact of this pestilence upon Europe.

### 3.2. Outbreak

**THE PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN (541-549; reoccurrence until ~700 AD):**

Named after the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, the plague of Justinian is a pandemic that affected Constantinople, Roman Egypt and Northern Europe with an estimated death toll of 15-100 million, equivalent to 25-60% of Europe's population at the time.

It is presumed that the disease was spread by rats which arrived in the cities by ships of grain, imported to satisfy food needs. The city of Constantinople required mass amounts of food to keep its population fed, and thus imported from grains from Egypt, with a thriving population of rats and in turn, fleas. [4]

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According to firsthand accounts, there was no room to bury the dead and as such the bodies were left nearby on the streets. The city smelled of death and estimations were around 10.000 people dying daily, a figure now considered widely exaggerated considering the hysteria provoked by the plague.

Even so, the ruthless emperor did not refrain from collecting his annual tax, demanding the same amount as well as the amount owed by the dead neighbors. Farmers could not take care of the crops anymore due to most of them dying, and the price of whatever grain was left quickly rose. Justinian had to change legislation to counteract the decline of revenue from the plague.

The consequences were even more severe on Europe as a whole, as the plague helped with the fall of the Byzantine Empire, impacting it at a very important moment: the retaking of Italy and the Mediterranean.

This is regarded as the first epidemic, historically recorded, of *Yersinia pestis*. Epidemiologically speaking, the origin of the plague was in fact Asia, more specifically, China [5]. Some contest this, suggesting that the plague originated from sub-Saharan Africa, aligning more with how the first epidemic started. It is estimated that, at its peak, there were around 5000 [6] daily deaths in Constantinople culminating at a death of 40% of the city's population, with subsequent outbreak taking place in the following centuries.

THE BLACK DEATH (1346-1353; reoccurrence until 18th century):

The second pandemic, the deadliest one, is also in the title of this work. This is the deadliest pandemic in human history, responsible for millions of deaths and countless empty cities.

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One of the causes that led to the rise of the disease once again was the lack of hygiene during that period. Medieval London was filled with animals freely roaming the streets, and excrement being present throughout the city. [7]

It started in 1347, when traders from Crimea entered Europe. They were under siege from Mongols, who used infected bodies as armament for catapults, spreading the plague to the traders. Fleeing, they arrived in Constantinople, then Sicily, Pisa and Marseilles. From there, it struck throughout Europe in the following years, including Spain, Portugal and England by 1348. In the following two years it arrived in Germany and Scandinavia as well. However, places with less established trade routes such as isolated parts of Belgium and the Netherlands. It is also said that common malnutrition also weakened the body's immune response.

Deaths include:

- Half of Paris (100.000 dead).
- 80% of Florence.
- 60% of Hamburg and Bremen.
- 62.000 Londoners.
- 170.000 settlements reduced to 40.000 by 1450.

Mass graves have been found, which allowed scientists to expand on the epidemiology of the plague. It is estimated that around 75 million to 200 million people in Eurasia died, with numbers for Europe varying from account to account, starting at 31% of the population, up to a possible 80%.

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Surprisingly, immunity was proven to be developed by the body. It observed how a third of the population contracted the disease and most died, and in subsequent occurrences, only a half contracted the plague and only some died, and so on. This shows that the body was able to produce an immune response to prevent infection. [8]

The plague persisted throughout the centuries, up until the 18th century. It ravaged the entirety of Europe, specifically Italy, France and London. The Great Plague of London was another reoccurrence that killed an additional 100.000 of the estimated 460.000 people living in London at that time.

It is also said that the plague could've been a factor in the occurrence of the Renaissance. Italy was hit very badly, and this could've provoked an increase of thoughts regarding mortality and our place on Earth, rather than spirituality.

### 3.3. Cultural reactions

We can observe how the culture at that time reacted to this unexpected phenomenon. This will include both medical and scientific reactions as well as religious ones. I consider that it is best described through art. In an illustrated manuscript from the 14<sup>th</sup> century (<https://www.thecollector.com/black-death-medieval-art-and-artists/>), devils are shooting arrows towards common people which are laid one on top of another on the streets, shot down. This elaborates the common belief at that time, that the plague is rather the divine punishment of God, striking down sinners. Depending on the religion, this was either wrath manifested or martyrdom, calling people to heaven. As such, some were reluctant to try and treat the disease, believing it's divine and not something else.

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Alternatively, the goal of the picture is to instill fear in the common folk, telling them to not sin such that they do not suffer of this plague, thought of as God's punishment.

In the painting *Persecution of the Jews*, from a manuscript by Gilles li Muisis, (<https://www.thecollector.com/black-death-medieval-art-and-artists/>), Jews are shown as being sacrificed, or better said massacred, to stop the Black Death from spreading. As said previously, the plague was seen more as the wrath of God rather than a disease, or a disease going around because of an angered God. Christians believed that Jews were responsible for the plague, for not believing that Jesus was the Messiah, angering God. Religious feuds like these are characteristic of the 14th century. Besides art, certain treatments or figures have become "representative" of the Black Death, and the times of the past, showing how us humans dealt with such a violent threat. I will now explain some of these, although for one of them I think an explanation might not even be needed!

Doctors attempted to treat patients through different means. At that time, medicine was not so advanced. Prayer was the main method of healing, but doctors still tried different means, and this is one of them. It was believed that if the buboes were burst by a lance, they would alleviate the pain and symptoms. In truth this did little to help the patient, likely provoking additional pain, lowering the immune system's ability to respond to all the symptoms happening at once.

Another treatment used by plague doctors at the time was bloodletting. It involved penetrating an artery or specific blood vessels, with the goal of letting all the "bad blood" leave the body. At this time, besides the explanation of God's wrath, a pestilence was also considered. Some thought that there was a specific "miasma" in the air, spreading the disease from person to person. In hindsight, this wasn't completely wrong, as the blood of victims contained bacteria, pneumonic plague was easily spread around and hygiene wasn't exactly considered, leading to dead bodies in the streets and little regard for protection from the airborne bacteria. Bloodletting was

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supposed to rid the body of the miasma that had entered. However, considering the body's inability to coagulate blood under septicemic plague, this most likely led to a lot of victims bleeding out.

The plague doctors can be recognized by anyone and have become representative of the Black Death. Contrary to popular belief, the mask wasn't created for the doctors, but was in fact used in Italian theaters beforehand, portraying doctors. The mask had medicinal herbs, along with some other pretty smelling flowers placed inside its beak, supposed to help with the "miasma" that was going around and infecting people. Surprisingly, it might have helped, as a mask could protect even a little against airborne bacteria.

The hat was used to indicate the profession, and the sticks were used to remove the clothes of the patients without touching them, as well as point to areas that needed attention from other doctors.

## Conclusions

The Black Death had dramatic impacts on culture, especially back in the 14th century.

In a period where spirituality and religion were an explanation to anything, such an advanced threat could only be explained by the anger of the Gods. And rightfully so, considering millions of deaths is something we've only seen as late as the World Wars, which is a grim statistic to be compared to. To me, the concept of a disease would've been incomprehensible to the 14th century mind, considering the reliance on religion, and the desperate acts of sacrificing people to 'please' a deity by ridding the world of sinners.

On the other side of the coin, I consider the attempt at medicine a fascinating part of the plague. While primitive, they were still attempts and some seemed to know that this might've been more than just the wrath of God. It would not be a stretch to consider the masks of the plague doctors as a beginning of self-protection measures. With hindsight, protecting not only the skin but the face as well, is an interesting attempt at avoiding disease, considering the herbs to block the 'miasma' which can be substituted for a mask [9]. Additionally, a method of quarantine was implemented in a later outbreak in Croatia, where a thirty-day quarantine period was needed for new arrivals in the city from any plague affected areas. [10]

Another interesting aspect is the amount of involvement the plague could've had on the Renaissance, a very important event in the development of European culture. While not the sole factor, it is impressive that a lot of the tragical consequences of the plague, from the social to the economical and religious changes resulted in an almost perfect landscape for this 'revolution' to take place. Some that I can name are an increase in Greek scholars after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the destabilization of feudalism. [11]

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All in all, the Black Death cannot be seen anyhow else than just a tragic part of history that only coincidence and the unstoppable march of time somehow turned it into quite literally a world reborn, with vastly different views upon life and our mortality. The effects can still be seen today, with us instantly recognizing figures such as the plague doctor, the danger and fear of disease we perceive when seeing a rat or fleas, and the simple but powerful words that have been used to name this plague, this pestilence, the Black Death.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PUNIC WARS IN THE ROMANIZATION OF EUROPE

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„The victor is not victorious if the vanquished does not consider himself so.”

- Quintus Ennius

## **Abstract**

*The Punic Wars, a series of three conflicts between Rome and Carthage from 264 BCE to 146 BCE, played a crucial role in the Romanization of Europe. These wars marked the transformation of Rome from a regional power in the Italian Peninsula into a dominant force in the Mediterranean, paving the way for its broader expansion and influence across Europe.*

*“The Punic Wars were perhaps the greatest and most significant armed struggle in all of antiquity. Over the course of more than a century the two most powerful nations in the Mediterranean battled for supremacy. The*

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*forces involved, and the casualties suffered by both sides, were far greater than in any wars fought before the modern era. [...] Rome rose from a small parochial power to become the mighty military machine that would dominate Europe and North Africa for the next five centuries.” - Adrian Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars [1]*

### **Keywords**

*Punic Wars, Romanization, Mediterranean domination, supremacy*

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### **Methodology of research**

1. Introduction: This section introduces the Punic Wars, outlining their historical significance and the lasting effects on European civilization. It describes the geopolitical rivalry between Carthage and Rome, focusing on the strategic value of Sicily, the Iberian Peninsula and northern Africa, while emphasizing themes of power, ambition, and conquest that defined this chapter of history.

2. Literature Review: A thorough examination of academic sources, primary documents, and historical accounts concerning the Punic Wars. This step involves collecting information on pivotal battles, significant personalities, and the socio-political context before, during, and after each war. The use of ancient texts, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence ensures a detailed and accurate study.

3. Data Gathering: This phase involves compiling information, statistics, and observations from multiple sources to create a comprehensive story of the Punic Wars and their geopolitical effects. It includes military tactics, diplomatic strategies, economic factors, and above all societal effects and cultural interactions between Carthage and Rome. Primary and secondary sources are carefully organized to aid in detailed analysis.

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4. **Critical Analysis:** The collected data is subjected to critical analysis, identifying patterns, trends, and cause-effect relationships in the context of the Punic Wars. This involves exploring major themes, assessing the importance of key events, and evaluating the roles of key figures like Hannibal Barca, Scipio Africanus, and Cato the Elder. The analysis extends to wider implications for Mediterranean geopolitics, military tactics, and cultural development.

5. **Historiographical Perspective:** This section provides a historiographical perspective to place the paper's interpretations within the broader academic discussion of the Punic Wars. It involves comparing and contrasting different historical analyses, theories, and methodologies used by historians to study this period. By exploring a range of viewpoints, this paper aims to offer a balanced view of the Punic Wars.

6. **Theoretical Framework:** Theoretical concepts from military history, political science, and cultural studies are used to interpret the complexities of conflict, power dynamics, and identity formation during the Punic Wars. Themes like hegemony, imperialism, nationalism, and cultural diffusion are examined to explain the multifaceted nature of these ancient conflicts.

7. **Synthesis and Implications:** This section summarizes the key findings and insights from the study of the Punic Wars, highlighting their enduring impact on Western civilization. It discusses how these conflicts influenced military strategy, statecraft, cultural exchange, and the rise of Rome as a major imperial force. The implications for understanding broader trends in conflict and conquest throughout history are also considered.

8. **References and Citations:** A detailed list of all sources used in the paper is provided, following proper citation practices to acknowledge prior scholarship and maintain academic credibility. This section ensures that all references are appropriately documented and accessible for further research.

## **Results**

### **A. Overview**

#### **Carthage**

Carthage was an ancient city located in present-day Tunisia in North Africa. It was founded by the Phoenicians, a civilization originating from the eastern Mediterranean, particularly from the city of Tyre, located in modern-day Lebanon. The date for the founding of Carthage is considered to be 814 BCE, according to Roman historians, however it is possible for it to be dated further back in history. [2]

The Phoenicians were known for their extensive trading networks and naval expertise. In its early days, Carthage served as a trading port and a strategic outpost for the Phoenicians in the western region of the Mediterranean. It rapidly developed into a significant economic and political power, eventually becoming the capital of the empire that holds its name.

Carthage slowly separated from its origins, creating its own distinctive culture and political structures, overtaking their ancestors in the race to power. The city's strategic location along the Mediterranean coast allowed it to control trade routes and build a powerful navy, whilst playing a major disadvantage in the agricultural landscape, as opposed to their European rivals.

Carthage is best remembered for its conflict with the Roman Republic, namely a series of wars fought between 264 BCE and 146 BCE. The Punic Wars ultimately resulted in the conquest of Carthage by the Roman Republic, ending its decades of control over the gateway to Europe and Africa, the Mediterranean Sea.

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Despite its eventual demise, Carthage left behind a significant legacy, having its remnants diverge into new cultures and civilizations, particularly in terms of trade practices, naval ingenuity and above all, a hope of revolt against an oppressive empire, which sought to exploit and enslave its people.

### **Rome**

Rome was an ancient city located in present-day Italy, near the Tiber River in the central-western part of the Italian Peninsula. According to legends, it was founded in 753 BCE by Romulus and Remus, twin brothers raised by a she-wolf. Romulus was also the first Roman king, having murdered his brother due to their disagreement over who should be the leader of Rome.

Rome developed from a small male-dominated community into the most powerful European civilization of the time through military conquest, strategic alliances, and a modern and complex political system. It transitioned from a monarchy to a republic in the late 6th century BCE, due to the severe corruption of their kings. By consequence, Rome developed a new governing style, which served as a bridge between democracy and aristocracy. This political structure allowed for the participation of civilians in the political system, creating the base for a strong sense of Roman identity and patriotism.

The Roman Republic's military prowess and engineering skills led to rapid territorial gains throughout the Italian Peninsula. What came as a disadvantage later was their division between the conquerors and the conquered, the latter being prone to rebel against their masters. Rome's legions, known for their discipline and adaptability, played a crucial role in their military campaigns. On the Italian Peninsula, Rome reigned supreme, having unmatched strategy and technology for the time, as opposed to the tribal latins and even the greek city-states. The Romans also established colonies and forged alliances with its more notable neighbors, further solidifying their control over the peninsula.

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Rome's strategic location and expanding influence made it a central hub for trade and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean. The city's architecture, law, and engineering achievements became renowned, with iconic structures like the Roman Forum, the Aqueducts and many others. By the 1st century BCE, Rome transitioned from a republic into an empire, eventually forming a vast territory stretching across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, establishing itself as one of history's most enduring and influential civilizations. Its footprint in history lived past its untimely demise under the young emperor Romulus, whose empire fell at the hand of the germanic king Odoacer; leaving the Eastern Roman Empire, later renamed to the Byzantine Empire, as the only significant part of the fallen giant. The roman influence stuck to parts of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Africa, but they were soon absorbed into the germanic tribes of the Visigoths and Vandals.

Some ruling aspects which Rome and Carthage had in common are the governing style, both being semi-democratic republics, having their own Senate and Judiciary. The title of „king”, however, was hated by the romans due to their previous incidents with corruption. One dreadful cause of the one year term that the consuls served, however, was the search for glory and prestige in a short span of time. The most reliable source of prestige were usually military victories, hence, romans had an inherent drive to conquer and expand as much as possible, partaking in an incredible ammount of offensive wars. The roman spirit was considered to be unbreakable, which lead to their victories in the Punic Wars, despite the numerous catastrophes they have encountered. (eg. The Battle of Canae where 25% of the male population aged 18-50 had perished, The mediterranean storms which lead to aproximately 250 thousand deaths etc.).

Rome's offensive approach was driven by its desire to gain control of key territories, especially Sicily, which was a crucial strategic and economic region. Despite Carthage's superior naval technology and experience, Rome quickly adapted by building a large fleet and developing innovative naval tactics. Rome's relentless pursuit of victory, commitment to expanding its

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territories, and ability to overcome initial disadvantages and even catastrophes ultimately led to Carthage's defeat and the Roman conquest of Sicily which marked the exchange of power in the Mediterranean region. Carthage, on the other hand had two major factors which led to their defeat, namely their overly defensive nature, especially on the land-based battlefield, where they were no match for Rome in terms of experience; alongside their reliance on mercenaries, as to not lose their own people and allow their trading practices to continue during war time. [3]

## **B. The economic aspects of Carthage and Rome**

### **Carthage's economic system**

As mentioned earlier, one of the key differences between Rome and Carthage is their focus on the external sphere. Some key aspects that highlight the trading and economic aspects of Carthage:

I. Strategic Location and Trade Routes: Carthage's location on the coast of North Africa, spanning from current day Morocco to the eastern borders of current day Libya, was a strategic advantage. It served as a gateway for two major Mediterranean trade routes, providing access to Europe, North Africa, and even the Middle East. This allowed Carthage to control all trade in the region, allowing for a thriving economy and unrivaled prosperity in the Mediterranean.

II. Diverse Trading Partners: Carthage's trade network served as a middle ground for every region that neighbours the Mediterranean Sea. It had trading connections with a high variety of cultures and regions, including Egypt, Greece, Italy, Iberia, the Levant, and West Africa. These connections led to a very diverse inventory of goods into Carthage, making it a thriving commercial spot.

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III. Exports and Imports: Some of the exported goods of Carthage include: agricultural products, textiles, pottery, metalwork, and luxury items. On the other hand, the Carthaginians imported raw materials, metals, precious stones, ivory, and exotic goods from distant lands. These imports facilitated the production of high-quality manufactured goods and luxury items, which were later exported to their trading partners or used within the Carthaginian empire.

IV. Innovative Maritime Technology: Carthage was a pioneer in maritime technology, with a strong focus on shipbuilding and navigation. The Carthaginians developed advanced ship designs, such as the quinquereme, which inspired the Roman version which also included the „corvus” (a mobile bridge that latched on to a neighbouring ship, creating a solid deck for the Roman soldiers to march on), and were skilled in building large trading fleets and warships. This technological expertise allowed them to maintain a dominant position in Mediterranean trade and establish colonies and trading posts in key locations.

V. Commercial Institutions and Financial Systems: Carthage had a well-developed system of commerce and finance. Its financial system relied heavily on exports, and later the extraction of silver ore from the Iberian Peninsula. The Carthaginians were known for their business acumen, and many of their practices influenced later economic systems in the Mediterranean region.

VI. Carthaginian Colonies and Expansion: Carthage established a network of colonies and trading posts throughout the Mediterranean, including in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Iberian Peninsula. These colonies served as important trading spots and sources of raw materials, especially in the case of the Iberian Peninsula. The Carthaginian presence in these regions also allowed them to control strategic points along key trade routes. Later on, after conquering most of current day Spain, Carthage founded the largest silver mining location in the region, which served as a means of paying war reparations to the Romans after the first Punic War. [2]

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### **Rome's economic system**

During the Republic period (circa 509–27 BCE), Rome's economy was characterized by a combination of agriculture, trade, and a flourishing market that facilitated the expansion of Roman influence across the Italian Peninsula. Several key factors defined the economic landscape of the Roman Republic, contributing to its growth and stability during this era:

I. **Agricultural Base:** Agriculture was the backbone of the Roman economy. The Roman countryside was dominated by small farming communities, in which the citizens grew staple crops such as wheat, barley, and legumes, along with olives and grapes for oil and wine production. This agricultural base provided the food supply needed to sustain Rome's population, its exports and its lengthy military campaigns.

II. **Land Ownership and Latifundia:** As Rome expanded through conquest, it acquired many new regions. Over time, a shift occurred from small family-owned farms to large estates known as latifundia. These estates were typically owned by wealthy patricians and staffed with slaves or tenant farmers. These factors contributed to social and economic changes, leading to greater wealth disparities and notable social tensions during the late Republic.

III. **Slavery:** Slavery played a significant role in the Roman Republic's economy. Slaves were used extensively in agriculture, mining, and even domestic work, providing a source of cheap labor. The influx of slaves from Rome's military conquests greatly increased the labor pool, enabling the expansion of large estates and the development of other economic activities.

IV. **Trade and Commerce:** As Rome's influence grew, trade and commerce became increasingly important. Rome's strategic location near the

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Tiber River allowed for efficient transportation and communication within the Italian Peninsula and beyond. The Roman Republic developed a network of roads and infrastructure to facilitate trade, enabling the movement of goods and resources across its territories. Rome's trade networks extended across the Mediterranean, connecting with regions like Greece, Egypt, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula.

V. Coinage and Monetary Economy: The introduction of coinage in the Roman Republic contributed to the development of a more sophisticated market economy. Coins like the denarius became widely used for trade and commerce, facilitating transactions and enabling Rome to maintain a stable economy. The use of coinage also allowed for the collection of taxes and the funding of public projects and the military.

VI. Military Expansion and Spoils: Rome's military conquests provided significant economic benefits through the acquisition of new territories, tribute, and spoils of war. The expansion of Roman influence across the Italian Peninsula and beyond brought new resources and wealth into the Republic, which further fueled its growth and economic stability. [1]

### **C. The military prowess of Carthage and Rome**

#### **Military aspects of Carthage**

Carthage's military traditions were deeply rooted in its history as a Phoenician colony with a strong emphasis on maritime prowess and strategic alliances. As a major trading empire, Carthage's military was designed to protect its commercial interests and maintain control over its vast network of colonies and trading outposts across the Mediterranean. The Carthaginian navy was among the most powerful of its time, boasting advanced ship designs and a formidable reputation for naval warfare. This naval strength allowed Carthage

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to control key maritime trade routes and project power across the sea. In terms of land forces, Carthage employed a diverse array of troops, often relying on mercenaries from various regions, including Iberians, Gauls, Numidians, and Greeks. [3]

This reliance on mercenary armies was a notable characteristic of Carthaginian military tradition, reflecting their pragmatic approach to warfare and the use of diplomacy and trade to secure military alliances. Carthage also fostered exceptional military leaders, with figures like Hannibal Barca demonstrating innovative tactics and strategic brilliance, particularly during the Second Punic War against Rome. Overall, Carthage's military traditions were a blend of naval dominance, strategic alliances, and reliance on a multicultural army, which contributed to the city's enduring influence in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Carthaginian military leaders were severely punished for failure, hence their reluctance to engage the romans in direct combat, usually relying on attrition. Their inexperience in land battles showed very early on, as they were unable to properly manouver their superior mounted units, usually opting for fights on uneven terrain, where they came at a severe disadvantage. They later hired a spartan strategist, who reformed their army, allowing them to defend their capital from the roman armies during the first Punic War.

While Carthage's reliance on a mercenary army provided flexibility and access to diverse fighting styles, it also had several inherent disadvantages:

- I. Loyalty and Trust: Mercenaries, by definition, are hired soldiers motivated by financial incentives rather than loyalty or allegiance to a particular cause or nation. This can lead to issues with trust and

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dependability, as mercenaries may not exhibit the same commitment to a battle or cause as traditional soldiers with deep ties to their state.

II.       Costs: Maintaining a mercenary army can be expensive, particularly during prolonged conflicts or wars. Mercenaries typically require competitive wages and benefits to keep them engaged, leading to significant financial burdens for the state that employs them.

III.       Unreliable in Crisis: Mercenaries might be less reliable in critical moments, such as when pay is delayed or when faced with high-risk situations. Their primary motivation—financial compensation—could lead them to desert or switch sides if it seems more profitable or safer.

IV.       Weak Cohesion and Discipline: Unlike a standing army composed of citizens or individuals with shared cultural or national ties, a mercenary force might lack the cohesion and discipline essential for effective military operations. This disparity can affect overall coordination and unity during battle.

V.        Vulnerability to Manipulation: An enemy could exploit the mercenaries' financial motives by offering better terms, leading to defections or mutinies. In the case of Carthage, there were instances of mercenaries revolting or shifting loyalties when their demands for pay or conditions were not met.

VI.       Reduced National Identity and Patriotism: Mercenary forces often have little to no connection with the national identity or patriotic fervor that can drive traditional armies. This can impact morale and the willingness to fight for broader national interests.

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VII. Potential for Civil Unrest: The presence of large numbers of mercenaries in a society can lead to social tensions and even civil unrest, especially if the mercenaries are not paid or treated fairly. Carthage experienced this firsthand during the Mercenary War (240-238 BCE), when unpaid mercenaries revolted, causing significant internal conflict and destabilization. The mercenary war was a chaotic event which led to Rome annexing the islands of Sardinia and Corsica, while also increasing the price of the war reparations that the Carthaginians had to pay, from 3200 talents of silver, to 4400.

Thus, while mercenary armies could offer Carthage immediate and flexible military capabilities, these inherent disadvantages posed significant risks and challenges, especially during periods of extended conflict or internal strife.

### **Military aspects of Rome**

Militarily, Rome was becoming more sophisticated and disciplined after the conquering of the Italian Peninsula. The Roman legions, with their flexible manipular structure, allowed for tactical adaptability on the battlefield. This military evolution was crucial as Rome engaged in the series of Samnite Wars, which culminated in Rome's dominance over the central and southern Italian Peninsula. By the early 3rd century BCE, Rome had also successfully faced external threats, such as the invasion by Pyrrhus of Epirus, demonstrating its ability to withstand and repel foreign incursions.

The Roman military during the Republic and early Empire periods was known for its structure, discipline, and adaptability, allowing Rome to

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expand and maintain control over vast territories. However, certain aspects of the Roman military posed potential challenges:

I.        Rigid Hierarchy: The Roman military operated under a strict hierarchical system, where orders flowed from the top down, providing clarity and discipline. While this structure ensured cohesion, it could also limit flexibility and creativity in the field. If commanders lacked initiative or misinterpreted orders, this rigidity could hinder a quick response to evolving battlefield conditions. These flaws were most noticeable when fighting Hannibal, as most consuls failed to agree on a strategy, usually engaging in chaotic skirmishes which favored the Carthaginians.

II.       Cultural Homogeneity and Limited Diversity: The Roman legions were primarily composed of Roman citizens and, later, those granted citizenship through conquest or alliance. This homogeneity fostered unity and a strong sense of Roman identity. However, it could also lead to a lack of diverse perspectives or specialized skills that non-citizen forces might provide. This limitation could impact Rome's ability to adapt to different warfare styles and environments.

III.      Inflexible Recruitment Practices: Roman military recruitment relied heavily on citizen soldiers, who were typically required to serve for a set period. This method worked well when Rome had a large pool of citizens to draw from, but as the Empire expanded and conflicts prolonged, maintaining this system became challenging. The inflexibility in recruitment could lead to a shortage of troops or over-reliance on allied forces and auxiliary units, impacting overall military effectiveness.

IV.      Dependence on Conquest for Resources: Rome's military expansion was often driven by the need to acquire new territories and resources. This dependency on conquest to fuel the military and economy could create a cycle where continual expansion was necessary to maintain

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stability. As Rome's territory grew, the cost of defending distant borders increased, putting additional pressure on the military to keep expanding.

V. Potential for Corruption and Abuse of Power: The hierarchical nature of the Roman military, combined with the significant authority given to commanders, could lead to corruption and abuse of power. Military leaders with substantial autonomy might misuse their authority, leading to internal discord or even rebellion. This risk was particularly pronounced during periods of political instability or when military leaders became influential figures in Roman politics.

VI. Logistical Challenges: The Roman military's vast reach created logistical challenges in terms of supplying and transporting troops across long distances. Maintaining a consistent supply chain for food, equipment, and other essentials was crucial for military success. However, disruptions to these logistics, whether from natural obstacles or enemy actions, could significantly impact Rome's ability to sustain its campaigns.

## **Aftermath and conclusions**

The aftermath of the Punic Wars dramatically reshaped the power dynamics of the Mediterranean and had far-reaching consequences for the Roman Republic and the entire Mediterranean region. Following the decisive Third Punic War, in which Rome utterly destroyed Carthage, the Romans established a new level of dominance over the western Mediterranean, leading to significant shifts in political, economic, and cultural aspects in the region.

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With Carthage's defeat, Rome gained control over vast territories, including Carthage's African holdings, which became the Roman province of Africa. This new province, with its strategic position, provided Rome with valuable resources, further strengthening its economic base. The annexation of other Carthaginian territories, such as Corsica, Sardinia, and parts of Iberia, also contributed to Rome's expansion and control over crucial trade routes, further facilitating Rome's economic growth and enabling more military campaigns.

The aftermath of the Punic Wars also had significant cultural implications. Rome's military success and territorial expansion further solidified the Roman identity and sense of superiority. As Rome's influence spread, so did its cultural values, language, and legal systems, contributing to the Romanization of conquered territories. The Latin language became more widely used, and Roman laws and administrative practices were now more common in their newly acquired regions. [4]

Politically, the victory in the Punic Wars transformed Rome into a Mediterranean superpower, but it also introduced new challenges. The acquisition of vast territories and the wealth that came with it led to social and economic changes within the Roman Republic. The Roman elite became wealthier, and the increased reliance on slave labor from conquered territories contributed to social unrest and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The need to maintain control over distant provinces and manage a growing empire created strains on Rome's political and military systems, foreshadowing future conflicts and internal instability.

Furthermore, the destruction of Carthage symbolized Rome's ruthlessness and determination to eliminate threats to its supremacy. The Roman Senate's relentless approach, epitomized by Cato the Elder's repeated call to "destroy Carthage" (*Carthago delenda est*), set a precedent for Rome's aggressive approach to dealing with rivals and competitors. This mentality of absolute domination would continue to influence Roman policies in the years to come.

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In summary, the aftermath of the Punic Wars was a transformative period for Rome, marking its emergence as the preeminent power in the Mediterranean. The conquests and expansions that followed led to significant economic growth and cultural diffusion but also sowed the seeds for social and political challenges within the Roman Republic, setting the stage for the transition from Republic to Empire in the coming centuries.

Overall, the Roman patriotism and sense of identity were key driving forces behind Rome's rise to power, setting it apart from Carthage. The Roman ethos was deeply rooted in a strong sense of duty, honor, and civic responsibility, embodied in the concept of "virtus"—a combination of courage, strength, and moral excellence. This sense of identity was cultivated through various institutions, including the family, the army, and public life. The Roman Republic encouraged active participation in governance through its system of magistrates, the Senate, and popular assemblies, fostering a collective sense of ownership in the state's destiny. Roman citizenship was highly valued, granting rights and privileges that tied individuals to the city and its interests. In contrast, Carthage, a city-state centered on commerce and maritime power, relied heavily on a mercenary army and diverse trading networks, with less emphasis on civic involvement and shared national identity. The Carthaginian focus on trade and business, while fostering a vibrant economy, led to a military structure which paled in comparison to the cohesive, citizen-based army of Rome. This difference in core values and civic engagement contributed to Rome's ability to mobilize vast citizen armies, driven by a sense of shared destiny and patriotism, while Carthage often struggled with issues of loyalty and internal unity. As a result, Rome's strong identity and commitment to its ideals played a crucial role in its victories over Carthage in the Punic Wars and its eventual rise to dominance in the Mediterranean, and later most of southern Europe and northern Africa.

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