

Punic Wars (notes)

Rome (southern Europe) v. Carthage (northern Africa)

Three Wars, 264 BCE – 146 BCE

“Punic” → “Punicus” (Latin for “Phoenicians”)

1st Punic War: 264 BCE – 241 BCE

- Lasted about 20 years
- Inspired Rome to build a navy
- Rome gains control over Sicily and Sardinia

2nd Punic War: 218 BCE – 201 BCE

- Hannibal (general for Carthage)
 - Hannibal goes to Italy to fight (46,000 men, 37 elephants through the Alps -- 1/3 men and all but one elephant die on the way)
 - Battle of Cannae (southern Italy), 215 BCE, won by Hannibal, 50,000-70,000 Romans killed, including a Roman consul and 80 senators (huge defeat for Rome; one of the bloodiest battles in human history in terms of number of dead in a single day)
 - Hannibal stays in Italy for 17 years raiding and fighting
- Scipio (general for Rome)
 - 202 BCE: Scipio invaded Carthage -- Hannibal must return to Carthage
 - Scipio defeats Hannibal at the Battle of Zama (south of Carthage); 30,000 Carthaginian soldiers killed; Hannibal loses respect among Carthaginians
 - Rome rules the Mediterranean

3rd Punic War: 149 BCE – 146 BCE

- Rome destroys Carthage (wipes it off the face of the map)
 - Kills hundreds of thousands, enslaves 50,000

IMPACT

- Rome is the uncontested power in the Mediterranean region.
- Rome is demoralized after losing hundreds of thousands of young men.
- Roman soldiers return to Rome after years of being away -- over the long years of war, many lost their farms to the wealthier patricians.
- Rise of the professional soldier, end of the part time soldier.
- Generals pay soldiers and give them land for retirement.
- Soldiers now loyal to their commander, not to Rome.
- Army commanders seek more power with the support of their soldiers.
- From this time on, the army will have a significant say on who 'rules' Rome. It will dominate Rome rather than Rome dominating its army.