

The 2nd Punic War (218-201B.C.): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

La 2e guerre punique (218-201 av. J.-C.) : de Sagonte à Zama, fin de l'hégémonie navale carthaginoise

Dr. OUYAHIA Saida

Histoire ancienne.

Algiers2 University (Algeria)

saida.ouyahia@univ-alger2.dz

Abstract:

One of the results of the First Punic War (264-241 BC.) was the shrinking of Carthage's vital space in the Mediterranean, and the decline of its maritime trade due to its loss of the former islands of Sardinia and Corsica and other islands, including Sicily, which led to the collapse of its economy, prompting it to search for areas New leverage to compensate for its loss. Carthage realized that it could restore its status 7 but outside Rome's vital sphere, so it turned its attention to Spain, away from Rome. However, that did not prevent a new war from occurring between the Romans and the Carthaginians in 218 BC, which ended with Carthage's defeat and it's signing of peace treaty in 201 BC. In this study, we will try to find out the reasons for the outbreak of the Second Punic War and the consequences that resulted from it.

Key words: Second Punic War, Hannibal, Carthage, Rome.

Résumé:

L'un des résultats de la première guerre punique (264-241 av. J.-C.) fut le rétrécissement de l'espace vital de Carthage en Méditerranée et le déclin de son commerce maritime dû à la perte des anciennes Iles, Sardaigne et la Corse et d'autres îles, notamment La Sicile, qui a conduit à l'effondrement de son économie, ce qui l'a incitée à rechercher de nouveaux leviers pour compenser sa perte. Carthage réalisa qu'elle pouvait retrouver son statut, mais en dehors de la sphère vitale de Rome, elle tourna donc son attention vers l'Espagne, loin de Rome. Cependant, cela n'empêcha pas qu'une nouvelle guerre éclata entre les Romains et les Carthaginois en 218 avant J.-C., qui s'est terminée par la défaite de Carthage et la signature d'un traité de paix en 201 avant JC. Dans cette étude, nous tenterons de connaître les raisons du déclenchement de la deuxième guerre punique et les conséquences qui en ont résulté.

Mots clefs : La deuxième guerre punique, Hannibal, Carthage, Rome.

E-mail de correspondance : ouyahiasaida@yahoo.fr

Introduction:

One of the results of the First Punic War (264-241 B.C.) was the shrinking of Carthage's vital space in the Mediterranean, and the decline of its maritime trade due to its loss of the former islands of Sardinia and Corsica and other islands, including Sicily, which led to the collapse of its economy, prompting it to search for new areas of influence to compensate for its loss. The Carthaginian leader, Hamilcar Barca, realized that Carthage could regain its status, but outside the vital sphere of Rome, so he directed his attention and efforts away from it, to the western coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, Spain, but this did not prevent a new war between Carthage and Rome, and the Carthaginian army was under the command of his son Hannibal, who fought a devastating war against the Romans in its homeland. From there we discuss the following problem: What were the reasons for the outbreak of the war between Carthage and the Rome? What were the consequences?

This study aims to investigate the motives and reasons that led to the outbreak of war between Hannibal and the Romans, and the consequences resulting from it. To answer this problem, we rely on the descriptive approach to trace the course of events through what was reported in ancient historical sources, and the analytical approach in interpreting and analyzing the information contained therein.

1. Causes of the Second Punic War:

Roman authors generally blame the Carthaginians for the outbreak of the Second Punic War. They point to the Carthaginians' violation of treaty made between Carthage and Roman Republic ¹, as well as the hatred of the Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca for Rome (Polybe, 1856: III, 5, 6). Italicus mentions that Barca made his son Hannibal, when he was a child, swear to hate Rome for as long as he lived, to fight it on land and sea, and to pay no attention to the sacred, the gods, or the treaty that had been made (Italicus, 1871: I).

Hannibal was the son of the great Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca. He was born into a prestigious family in 247 BC in Carthage, as the first Punic war (264-241 BC) was drawing to a close. He lived his childhood in his hometown, but his adolescence and youth years were spent far from it. The Greek historian Polybius and the Roman historian Livy are the two primary sources for his life. According to them, Hannibal was taken to Spain by his father (Polybe, 1856: III, 3, 5, 6) (Livy, 1864: XXI, 4, 10). He joined the Carthaginian army when he was young.

Hannibal's earliest commands were given to him in the Carthaginian province of Spain by Hasdrubal, brother-in-law and successor of Hamilcar Barca. He was given charge of all the cavalry. He took the responsibility of Carthage's army in Spain after the assassination of Hasdrubal, the army chose him as its commander, and their action being reported at

¹Treaty concluded between Rome and Hasdrubal, which he accepted the river Ebro in Iberia as northern frontier, the river is fixed as the boundary between the fair of Carthage and Roman Republic (Polybe 1847: II, 3, 5). (Livy, 1864: XXI, 2).

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

Carthage, it was confirmed. So it was that when he was less than twenty-five years old, Hannibal became commander-in-chief; and within the next three years he subdued all the people of Spain by force of arms, and stormed Saguntum, a town allied with Rome” (Nepos, 1995: 3).

In 219 BC, Hannibal laid siege to Saguntum, a coastal city in northeast Hispania that enjoyed a treaty of friendship with Rome. In 226 BC Hasdrubal the Fair signed a treaty with Rome that acknowledged Carthage’s control of Hispania south of the Ebro River (modern Ebro). Saguntum’s status, therefore, was ambiguous, was it an ally of Rome or a ward of Carthage? When the besieged Saguntines appealed to Rome, Rome pressured the Carthaginians to recognize their alliance with Saguntum. Even as the Romans attempted to negotiate a settlement to the crisis, Hannibal captured the city after an eight-month siege. When Carthage refused Roman demands for Hannibal’s extradition, both sides prepared for war (Nepos, 2015: 29).

The capture of Saguntum by Hannibal was the direct cause that led to war between Carthage and Rome (Polybe, 1856: III, 2-6). Rome considered it a violation of the treaty that it had been signed with Hasdrubal (Livy, 1864: XXI, 18, 9), Hannibal’s father-in-law. Rome hastily sent envoys to Carthage demanding that Hannibal be handed over to the Roman Senate, as he was responsible for the violence against their ally. However, the Carthaginian Senate refused their request, and Rome declared war on Carthage (Polybe, 1856: III, 4).

Hannibal maintained his desire to revenge Rome, even though he had signed a peace treaty with them in 201 B.C. He did not hesitate to help the Macedonian king (Antiochus III) in his war against the Romans, where he told him the story of his oath in the temple at the request of his father, Hamilcar Barca, who did not want him to be a friend of Rome, as recorded by the historian Polybius: "My father Hamilcar, when I was a small boy not more than nine years old, just as he was preparing to go to Spain with the army, he took me to the temple of god Jupiter in Carthage, as usual, I was at the altar while he sacrificed to Jupiter. While this libation and other ceremonies were being performed, my father took me out of my hands and asks if I would like to go with him on the campaign. I eagerly accepted and began to beg him not hesitate to take me with him. Thereupon he said, *I will do it, provided you will give me the pledge that I ask.* With that he led me to the altar on which he had begun his sacrifice, and having dismissed all the others, he bade me lay hold of the altar and swear that I would never be a friend of the Romans”(Polybe, 1856: III, 3).

Hannibal kept the promise he made when he sided with Prusias as a king of Bithynia in his war against Rome (Strabon, 1867: XII, 4), but his discovery by the Romans prompted the Roman Senate to demand that he be handed over to them for revenge (Livy, 1864: XXXIX, 51), as they could no longer wait for his death to reassure them. The horror that spread among the Romans never left their hearts. The Roman historian Livy tells us what Hannibal said before he took the poison: "Let us rid the Roman people of their long anxiety, because he can no longer wait for an old man's death" (Livy, 1864: XXXIX, 51).

Cornelius Nepos wrote: "It must be admitted that Hannibal excelled all other commanders in skill and bravery. Yet after all, he cherished the hatred of the Romans which he never ceased to fight against left him as an inheritance by his father, that he would have given up his life rather than renounce it. Indeed, even after he had been driven from his native land and was dependent on the aid of foreigners, he never ceased to war with the Romans in spirit" (Nepos, 1995: 1).

Hannibal believed that Carthage had the right to protect its interests and regain its sphere of influence in the Mediterranean, where he believed it was impossible to confront Rome. His determination and willingness to confront and crush Rome seemed to be at home, where in the early years of the campaign against the Romans he demonstrated his ability to endure difficulties and adapt to different circumstances. As his historian Polybius describes: "His humanity had a great effect, and he was mentally qualified(...) to carry out any project within the reach of human energy. He remained(...) in a state of war with Rome without ever releasing his army from work in the field. He kept this large number of warriors under his control without resentment (...) do not hesitate to obey his orders" (Polybe, 1856: III, 4-10).

As for Livy, he described Hannibal as being strong, brave and daring, patient in heat and cold, short of sleep, sharing the hardships and dangers of his soldiers, not sparing them in food or drink, and modest in his dress, so that he could not be distinguished from others. He was a skilled horseman, a great fighter, and a fair opponent (Livy, 1864: XXI, 4).

According to Polybius, the Roman historian Quintus Fabius Maximus, attributes the outbreak of the Second Punic war to the greed and excessive ambition of the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal, and the humiliation suffered by the inhabitants of Saguntum. After imposing his control over large areas of Spain, Hasdrubal suggested to the Carthaginian Senate that they abolish the laws of the republic and establish a monarchy (Polybe, 1856: III, 38). However, the chief magistrates of Carthage saw through his plan and unanimously rejected his proposal. After returning to Spain, he ruled alone and paid no attention to the Carthaginian Senate. Hannibal, who had been under his command for three years, followed in his footsteps (Livy, 1864: XXI, 4, 10).

Hannibal continued his father-in-law's policies, using his military forces at times and negotiating with tribal leaders at others (Polybe, 1856: III, 4). He was able to impose his authority on all the areas south of the Douro and Ebro rivers. However, the city of Saguntum, located on the east coast between the Ebro and Ugar rivers, refused to submit to him, as it was an ally of Rome (Livy, 1864: XXI, 5, 6, 2). Rome asked Hannibal to withdraw from the city (Polybe, 1856: III, 4), but he refused and considered it to be within his sphere of influence (Livy, 1864: XXI, 11).

Fabius also adds that when Hannibal besieged Saguntum, Rome sent envoys to Carthage, demanding that he be handed over or war be declared (Polybe, 1856: III, 2). Rome justified this by claiming that Hannibal had violated the treaty between Rome and Hasdrubal

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

(Livy, 1864: XXI, 18, 9). However, the Carthaginian Senate rejected Rome's request and even claimed that Carthage was not bound by the treaty (Livy, 1864: XVIII, 10-14).

The Carthaginians were divided into two factions by this crisis. One faction wanted to reach a treaty with Rome (Livy, 1864: XXI, 10), while the other did not recognize Rome's claims and refused to submit to its demands. Hannibal was given the authority to decide the matter, according to his own judgment and discretion (Livy, 1864: XXI, 11). It was clear that he did not respond to Rome's demands. According to Sextus Aurelius Hannibal He continued his attack on the city, as he was looking for a pretext to declare war on it, (Victor, 1846: XLII). This is also the opinion of Dion Cassius who wrote: "The war was brought on chiefly by Hannibal, the general of the Carthaginians (...) he was a son of Hamilcar Barca, and from his earliest boyhood had been trained to fight against the Romans. For Hamilcar said he was rearing all his sons like so many whelps to fight against them, and when he saw that this one had by far the best nature, he made him take an oath that he would wage war upon them; accordingly he was engaged in giving him a careful training, particularly in warfare, at the time of his own death, when the boy was fifteen years of age. Because of his youth Hannibal was unable to succeed then to the general-ship; upon the death of Hasdrubal, however, he delayed no longer, being now twenty-six years of age, but at once took possession of the army in Spain, and after being acclaimed general by the soldiers" (Cassius, 1914: III).

There is a weak evidence to support the view of historians who attributed the outbreak of the Second Punic war to Hamilcar's hatred of the Romans and his incitement of his son against them. They also claim that Hannibal's capture of Saguntum did not have the support of Carthage. Information from Polybius (Polybe, 1856: I, 85-88) and Diodore of Sicily (Diodore, 1865: XXV) indicates that Rome bears some responsibility for the war because it did not adhere to the treaty it signed with Carthage at the end of the first Punic war. Rome seized the island of Sardinia by force, taking advantage of Carthage's difficult situation due to the mercenary revolt. It also forced Carthage to sign a new treaty, under which Carthage gave up Sardinia to Rome and agreed to pay an additional fine (Polybe, 1856: III, 3). Carthage felt humiliated and insulted. It became clear that Rome was no longer to be trusted or respected, and that its ambitions would not stop at its current borders but might even reach Africa. Therefore, the commander Hamilcar Barca focused his efforts on expanding Carthaginian territory west of the Mediterranean Sea towards Spain (Justin, 1806: XLIV, V). He was able to expand his control there over nine years (Livy, 1864: XXI, 1-2), without any opposition from Rome (Polybe, 1856: III, 2-6).

It seems that the responsibility for the outbreak of the Second Punic war is shared between both parties. However, the question that arises is: who is responsible for the consequences of the war? Is it Hasdrubal and Hannibal, or the Carthaginians themselves?

The economic hardship that Carthage suffered as a result of the first Punic war and its loss of Sicily made it unable to pay its mercenary soldiers. The latter revolted against Carthage and nearly overthrew it, but were stopped by the intervention of the commander Hamilcar Barca, who lifted the siege and extinguished the revolt (Polybe, 1856: I, 17, 18).

Hamilcar Barca realized that Carthage could only rise again by staying away from Rome and its areas of influence in the Mediterranean. To avoid a new conflict with Rome, he turned his attention to Spain in search of mineral resources and to build up the manpower of the Carthaginian army. Together with his son-in-law Hasdrubal, he managed to control large areas of Spain within a few years (Polybe, 1856: III, 3), sometimes using military superiority and sometimes using negotiations (Polybe, 1856: II, 1, 5).

After taking over as commander of the Carthaginian armies in Spain after Hamilcar Barca, Hasdrubal was able to build an army of 60,000 men, 800 cavalries, and 200 elephants. He also succeeded in controlling many cities and founding new ones, including New Carthage. He was even recognized as governor of the areas he conquered after marrying a Spanish princess (Diodore, 1744: XXV, 2).

Rome became increasingly concerned about the growing Carthaginian activity in Spain. It prepared a clever plan to prevent Hasdrubal's activity from spreading north, by asking him to sign a new treaty stipulating that his army would not cross the Ebro River (Livy, 1864: XXI, 2,7), which was located north of Carthaginian territory in Spain.

However, once Hannibal was chosen as the new commander of the Carthaginian army after Hasdrubal (Polybe, 1856: III, 4), with the approval of the Carthaginian Senate (Livy, 1864: XXI, 3, 1-5, 4), he worked hard to complete the project of his father Hamilcar Barca and his son-in-law Hasdrubal (Polybe, 1856: III, 2). He paid all the financial obligations that Rome had imposed on Carthage in previous treaties, continued to expand in Spanish territory, and occupied the city of Saguntum after an eight-month siege. He sent part of the booty to Carthage, and Rome considered the attack on this city a violation of the treaty it had made with Hasdrubal (Livy, 1864: XXI, 18, 9).

Hasdrubal was criticized for accepting to sign the previous treaty with Rome and for complying with its terms. But could he had refused its request? Some historians, such as Muhammad Asad Allah Safa, believe that Carthage's internal and external situation did not allow it to wage a new war against Rome, which might have led to its defeat and final expulsion from Spain (Safa, 1987: 83-84).

It seems that Hasdrubal, by signing the treaty, was trying to appease Rome and gain more time to fully implement his project in Spain. He knew that this could only be achieved with patience, caution, and perseverance and he preferred to avoid any potential confrontation with Rome at that time. However, Hannibal was not as wise as his son-in-law Hasdrubal in his decision-making.

According to Italicus (Italicus, 1871: II), **Hannibal** was determined to break the treaty with Rome and draw it into a horrific and bloody war. He therefore rejected Rome's threats and decided to march on Saguntum, convinced that a clash with Rome was inevitable (Warmington, 1985: 495).

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

According to Muhammad Asad Allah Safa, this step was behind the downfall of Carthage (Safa, 1987: 91). He considered the arguments and justifications presented by Hannibal to be superficial, hasty, and not carefully considered. His youthful enthusiasm and impulsiveness prevailed over the voice of wisdom and reason. Perhaps he was also fulfilling a promise he had made to himself and his father since he was a child, or perhaps he was afraid of the reaction of the cities under his control, which might seek protection from Rome, this would inevitably lead to a decline in his prestige and reputation, and thus waste the efforts he had made to build a vast empire led by Carthage, encompassing Spain, Gaul, and Italy. In 218 B.C, after the fall of the city of Saguntum, Hannibal crossed the Ebro River and headed for the Alps, and then made his way to Italy (Livy, 1864: XXI, 21, 22, 23, 24). His strategy was to crush Rome on its own territory, expecting it to invade Carthage. The war between the two sides lasted until 202 B.C, and during this time the Romans suffered heavy losses (Warmington, 1985: 495).

Despite Hannibal's genius and two major victories over Rome, the first at Lake Trasimenus in 217 B.C, where Rome lost about 15,000 soldiers (Livy, 1864: XXII, 7, 2, 3), and the Second at Cannae in 216 B.C, where Rome suffered a crushing defeat, losing 45,500 infantries, 2,700 cavalries, 29 military commanders, a consul, former magistrates, and 80 senators (Livy, 1864: 49, 14-18), Hannibal was unable to subdue the Roman people or break the power of Rome's allies in Italy. They remained loyal to Rome, despite their suffering since the outbreak of the war, providing the Roman army with an inexhaustible supply of manpower that Hannibal could not match (Warmington, 1985: 495-496).

While Rome continued to follow the defensive policy of Fabius Maximus in Italy, the commander Cornelius Scipio, nicknamed Scipio Africanus, succeeded in winning Spain over to Rome in 206 B.C. He then prepared to attack Carthage. With the addition of the Numidian leader Massinissa, son of Gaia, King of the Massyl, to the Roman side, Rome gained a fierce and trustworthy ally. Massinissa played a major role in defeating Syphax, Carthage's ally, in 203 B.C (Polybe, 1856: XIV, IX), and contributed significantly to the decisive Roman victory against Hannibal at the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C (Livy, 1864: XXX, 33, 35).

The Second Punic war ended when Hannibal was defeated by Scipio who counterattacked in Northern Africa and routed the Carthaginian army at the Battle of Zama. In this battle the Carthaginian army was annihilated. It is said that twenty thousand men were slain, and as many more taken prisoners.

Hannibal spent a total of 15 years in Italy and although he was able to defeat the Romans in key battles, he was ultimately defeated because the Romans had a large population to draw new recruits from and Carthage's mercenary forces shrank as time went on. The Roman armies under Fabius followed the Carthaginians and wore them down with delaying and harassing tactics.

Even after he had been driven from his native land and was depended on the aid of foreigners, Hannibal never ceased to war with the Romans in spirit. He went to Antiochus, as

soon the opportunity offered, and after calling to mind many proofs of his hatred to the Romans, he added” *For my part, up to my present time of life, I have kept the oath which I swore to my father so faithfully, that no one ought to doubt that in the future I shall be of the same mind. Therefore, if you have any kindly intentions with regard to the Roman people, you will be wise to hide them from me*” (Nepos, 1995: 2).

2. The result of the Second Punic War:

The Second Punic war ended with the surrender of Carthage and the signing of a humiliating peace treaty. According to Polybius and Livy, the terms of the treaty were as follows:

- The Carthaginians shall live free under their own laws.
- They shall keep the cities and territories they occupied before the war, within the same boundaries.
- The Romans shall cease from plundering them.
- The Carthaginians shall return all deserters and prisoners to the Romans.
- The Carthaginians shall surrender all their warships, except for ten triremes.
- The Carthaginians shall surrender all their elephants, and they shall be prohibited from training any more elephants in the future.
- The Carthaginians shall not wage war in Africa or outside Africa without the permission of the Roman people.
- The Carthaginians shall restore all of Massinissa's possessions to him and conclude a treaty with him.
- Carthage shall provide the Roman army with food and supplies until the treaty is ratified.
- The Carthaginians shall pay 10,000 talents of silver in instalments over fifty years.

Finally, the Carthaginians shall hand over one hundred hostages chosen by Scipio, who must be between the ages of fourteen and thirty (Polybe, 1856: XV, XVIII) (Livy, 1864: XXX, 37).

This treaty destroyed Carthage's expansionist ambitions, turning it into an isolated city. Carthage was no longer allowed to engage in any activity outside its defined borders without the approval of Rome. Rome's continued interference in Carthage's internal affairs stripped the city of its sovereignty, which prompted Hannibal to flee to the east and seek refuge with King Antiochus III, the latter, in turn, tempted Hannibal to enter into a new conflict against Rome.

Carthage was also forbidden from maintaining a large army to reclaim its sovereignty and dignity. Most of its soldiers were mercenaries, and they were disbanded.

Since the mid-6th century B.C, Carthage, under the leadership of the Magonid family, had widely adopted the use of mercenaries in its armies. These mercenaries included Iberians, Gauls, Italians, and Libyans, who played a significant role in Carthage's conquest of inland

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

Africa (Warmington, 1985: 496). Numidian cavalry also played a prominent role in Carthaginian armies, either as mercenaries or as allies under treaties between Carthage and Numidia. During the Second Punic war, Numidian armies fought alongside Carthage in Spain, Italy, and even Africa (Polybe, 1856: III, 23, 24), at a time when Carthaginian involvement in soldiering was declining.

There is ample evidence that some Carthaginian nobles formed the core of the heavy cavalry, albeit in relatively small numbers (Warmington, 1985: 39). The African infantry formed the backbone of the forces sent to Spain, but their numbers dwindled over time and were replaced by Spanish, Gallic and Numidian recruits (Livy, 1864: XXII, 46). The Numidians were a crucial element of the Carthaginian army, considered the best cavalry of their time. They excelled in scouting, skirmishing, ambushing, and foraging, and became an integral part of the Carthaginian army. The defection of the Eastern Numidian Kingdom's army led by Massinissa to the Roman side had a significant impact on Carthage's defeat at the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C (Livy, 1864: XXX, 33).

3. Reasons for Carthage's failure in its wars against Rome:

Carthage's poor and reckless policy towards its Libyan neighbors and Numidian allies led to the loss of their trust and respect, causing them to ally with its enemies to fight against them. Carthage failed to learn from its past experiences and repeated defeats against the Greeks and then the Romans.

The relationship between Carthage and the indigenous people began to weaken from the beginning of the 5th century B.C. Carthage not only stopped paying the tribute it had pledged to them since its foundation (Justin, 1806: XIX, 1, 2), but also waged war against them, seized their lands, and imposed heavy taxes on them to finance its wars. Sometimes, soldiers were even recruited from among them to join the mercenary army. The worst off were the Libyans who lived in the interior, who were taxed a quarter of their crops, which was increased to half during the crisis of the First Punic war (Polybe, 1856: I, 15-17).

One of the reasons for Carthage's withdrawal from its areas of influence seems to be its policy of exploiting the inhabitants of these areas for material and human resources. This policy was not well thought-out and its long-term results were not guaranteed. Carthage did not try to integrate with these people to form a popular base that would support it in times of crisis. Instead, its aim was to expand its influence, control, and wealth. Therefore, despite its success in expanding its power, it failed to build a stable nation-state with solid foundations and strong rules.

Although information about Carthage's political history and the nature of the institutions that governed it is scarce, it is commonly believed that its initial system of government was a monarchy. This is based on the writings of Justin (Justin, 1806: XVIII, IV-VI), who described the founding of Carthage before the 6th century B.C. In the 5th century B.C, the power of the kings diminished. It seems that there was an evolution in the system of

government, which led to the emergence of the "Shophets". This is the only Carthaginian political term that has been transmitted to us by Roman writers. The word "Shophet" encompasses the meanings of judge and ruler. From the 3rd century B.C onwards, two (and perhaps more) Shophets were elected annually. It is easy to compare them to the Roman consuls.

At the same time, the power of the wealthy aristocracy increased. In addition to their collective membership in the Council of State, which resembled the Roman Senate, the aristocrats formed a council of one hundred members to control all branches of government. Although the citizens had some say in the elections of the kings, the Shophets, and other officials, it is certain that Carthaginian politics was always ruled by wealth.

In the 4th or 3rd century B.C, the leadership of the armed forces was completely separated from other functions. Military leaders were appointed when needed and for specific campaigns. The state did not have a strong national army that required a permanent leader. However, many families adopted a military approach, such as the Magonid family in early Carthaginian history and the Barcids family later on (Warmington, 1985: 481).

The Carthaginian government combined elements of oligarchy and democracy (and was praised for this by Aristotle, (Politics II), but it leaned more to the former. The highest magistrates in the state were the two shophets (or judges), but the real power rested with a subset (104) of the 300 senators, who formed a high court or executive. The nobility was hereditary but, as also at Rome, entry was granted to a few newly wealthy families (and the Barcids, the ancestors of Hannibal, seem to have been among these). Aristotle considered the role that wealth played in Carthage to be a bad thing (Aristote, N.D: II, VIII, 2-9). Honor of birth and wealth were essential conditions for election, and all matters were decided by the kings or the Shophets and the council in consultation with each other. Only in case of distraety were the popular assemblies consulted.

According to Aristotle, the Carthaginian political system generally fluctuated between oligarchy, aristocracy, and democracy (Aristote, N.D: II, VIII, 5-9). The Carthaginian families that provided the administrators were not the same as those that provided the leaders of the land and naval armies, but they had supervision and authority over these leaders.

The army, which had originally been citizen, relied increasingly on mercenaries and also conscripts from among the subject peoples, especially the Numidian cavalry which are ubiquitous in Roman accounts of land battles with Carthaginian forces.

The Mercenary Revolt showed the flaws of the Carthaginian system to such an extent that Carthage was on the verge of collapse at their hands. If not for the intervention of Hamilcar Barca to end the crisis and quell the revolt, Carthage would have faced a tragic fate. However, Carthage later faced a tragic fate due to the decision taken by the members of the Carthaginian Senate regarding Hannibal's siege of Saguntum and their lack of deep understanding of the seriousness of the situation for Carthage and the region as a whole.

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

Instead of diligently working to resolve the crisis with Rome, studying it from all sides in a deliberate manner, and taking the necessary steps to resolve it, they entrusted the task to a young man who lacked experience and was not versed in politics and interstate relations. This young man, Hannibal, decided the fate of an entire region by declaring war on Rome to avenge it and restore the honor of his ancestors (Livy, 1864: XXX, 30, 3-7, 13-14).

Conclusion:

Hannibal played a pivotal role in the Mediterranean history, he came close to destroying Rome through his military skill and cheeky audacity. Not only did he outmaneuver the great Roman legions, but he also managed the logistics of getting his army through the Alps to surprise Rome. He was nourished by the hatred of the Romans, which had been left to him as an inheritance by his father; he would have given up his life rather than renounce it. Even after he had been driven from his native land and became dependent on the aid of foreigners, he never ceased to war with the Romans in spirit.

Hannibal spent a total of 15 years in Italy and although he was able to defeat the Romans in key battles he was ultimately defeated because the Romans had a large population to draw new recruits from and Carthage's mercenary forces shrank as time went on. The Roman armies under Fabius followed the Carthaginians and wore them down with delaying and harassing tactics.

After a huge defeat at the battle of Zama 202 B.C, Carthage surrendered to Rome. The terms of peace were significantly stricter than the first Punic war. The treaty of Zama 201 B.C prevents Carthage from taking any military action without Rome's approval, forcing it to partially disarm. After Rome launched a successful invasion of Africa and defeated its worst enemies, its ambitions began its influence in the Mediterranean.

The Carthaginian political system, which was dominated by the aristocracy and focused on their narrow interests, made Carthage an isolated city unable to adapt to the changing world around it and understand the true nature of the threat it faced. For nearly six centuries, Carthage mistreated the indigenous people and made no attempt to integrate with the peoples it conquered. Instead of building a united states with a common interest that would have been a strong ally in war, Carthage exploited these peoples. Carthage paid a high price for its harsh treatment of them.

Hannibal could not change the fate that the Carthaginians had brought upon themselves. They lacked an ambitious civilizational project to build a strong state with the capacity to unite the peoples that came under its influence or control. It was essential for the ruling power in Carthage to change its treatment of its subjects and its Libyan and Numidian neighbors, to adopt a policy of openness, and to abandon its selfishness and superficial cultural trappings that disappeared with its fall.

The Carthaginian army, with its diverse composition of ethnicities and cultures, could not match the strength of a national army. It was a mercenary army, fighting for pay rather than out of love for their country, which made it difficult to control. In contrast, the Romans were politically and administratively efficient in organizing their conquests and maintaining control over the territories they seized. This was evident in the way social development interacted with military organization, with a deep mutual influence. This interaction grew as Rome expanded from a city to a state and then to a vast empire.

The events and wars that took place in the western Mediterranean basin played a major role in shaping the map of the ancient world before the spread of Islam, which redrew it again. Studying the history of this region at this stage in its history is essential to understanding the reasons that led to its fall under foreign occupation and how to avoid this by comparing it with the countries they interacted with.

Bibliography:

Sources

1. Aristote, politique (N.D.), (policy), French translation by Barthelemy Saint-Hilare, Paris, librairie philosophique De Ladrangue.
2. Diodore of Sicily (1865), bibliothèque historique (Historical Library), French translation: Ferd. Hoefer, Librairie Hachette et Cie, Paris, (fragments) livre XXV.
3. Diodore of Sicily (1744), histoire universelle (Universal History), French translation by Mr. Abbot Terrassons, seventh volume, Hachette Livre, Paris.
4. Dion Cassius (1914), Histoire romaine (Roman History), published in Vol. II, of the Loeb Classical Library edition, Fragments of book XIII, (Zonaras 8, 21).
5. Italicus Lucain Silius (1871), Claudien, œuvres complètes (complete works), French translation (Desiré Nisard), Firmin Didot Fresnes, Paris.
6. Polybius(1856), histoire générale (general History), French translation, Thuillier-Waltz-Bouchot, Librairie pour l'Art militaire, Paris.
7. Strabon (1867), géographie (Geography), French translation by Amédée Tardieu, Librairie Hachette, Paris.
8. Livy (1864), histoire romaine (Roman history), Bibliotheca classica selecta, traduction Nisard, Libraires Imprimeurs de l'Institut de France, Paris.
9. Victor Sextus Aurelius (1846), Hommes illustres de la ville de Rome (Illustrious men of the city of Rome).

Studies (books and articles)

1. Muhammad Asad Allah Safa (1987), Hannibal, Part One, Dar Al-Nafais, first edition, Beirut.
2. Warmington (B.H.) (1985), "la période Carthaginoise ", Histoire générale de l'Afrique, Volume II, (pp.476-501) Jean Afrique/UNESCO.

Internet websites:

1. Cornelius Nepos (1995), Hannibal, from De Viribus Illustribus trans. J. Thomas.
https://faculty.tnstate.edu/tcourse/h1220revised/cornelius_nepos.html.
2. Cornelius Nepos, 'Life of Hannibal'. Latin Text, Notes, Maps, and Vocabulary, by Bret Mulligan, Open Book Publishers, Vol.1, and publication date 05/10/2015.
<https://archive.org/details/e5ade02a-2f32-495a-b879-98b54df04c0a>.

The 2nd Punic War (218-201): from Sagunto to Zama, end of Carthaginian naval hegemony

3. Justin, *Histoire universelle*, livre XLIV, V, extrait de l'histoire abrégée de la littérature latine par Schoell, édition Wetzel, 10/11/2005, 1806, Site de Philippe Remacle JUSTIN : Histoire universelle : livres 41 à 44 Remacle.org. visité le 24/02/2024.