INTRODUCTION

Hello delegates,

Welcome to the Southern Ontario Model United Nations Assembly’s Second Punic War Historical Crisis. The Second Punic War, also known as the Hannibalic War, was a conflict that occurred from 218 – 201 BC in the Western Mediterranean. The war was fought between Carthage, a dominating commercial empire, and the emerging power of Rome. This was not the first time the two sovereignties had faced each other. A half a century prior, Rome had defeated Carthage in the First Punic War and had consequently gained territory lying outside of Italy, most notably on the island of Sicily. This was the beginning of a new chapter for the Roman Republic, one governed by the policy of defensive imperialism that she adopted.

Many historians have cited the outbreak of the war as the moment when Hannibal captured the city of Saguntum. But though this event may have been the specific instance which catalyzed the onset of war, it was most certainly not the root cause. The contrasting cultures and ideologies of the two belligerents made it inevitable that the two would eventually be at odds. The rise of Rome as a new world power challenged Carthage’s imperial dominance and the result was an epic showdown that would determine the new overlord of the Western Mediterranean.

In this particular crisis committee, the SOMA Crisis heads and staff will attempt to create a simulation of events that is fun and engaging, all the while maintaining as much historical accuracy as possible. This background guide is meant to provide a general overview of the economic, political, and military considerations of the war. It is meant to provide a starting point for your research, however, in order for your experience to be as fulfilling as it can, it is necessary that you devote time and effort into conducting your own independent
research on the crisis. Only then will you be able to fully participate in the committee. So that being said, please enjoy and we look forward to seeing you at SOMA XL.

Respectfully,

William Tang  Alexander Fung  Oriane Edwards
William Tang  Alexander Fung  Oriane Edwards
Under-Secretary General: Crisis  Head of Crisis: Second Punic War  Junior Head of Crisis: Second Punic War

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

FORMAL HISTORY OF ROME

Located in the area called Latium on the Tiber River, the formal state of Rome was created when two smaller settlements on two of the Seven Hills around Rome, the Palatine and Quirinal, combined forces and resources. The older inhabitants of Latium, the Etruscans, had migrated to Italy from Asia Minor approximately 600 years prior to the founding of Rome, sometime during the 15th century BC. The Etruscans passed on a cultural legacy of gladiatorial games and sports, togas, and augury\(^1\), as well as the Roman numeral system.

Most importantly, the Etruscans influenced the Romans as their kings. T. Livius, or Livy, describes seven Etruscan kings who ruled Rome, each with his various virtues and flaws, culminating with Tarquinius Superbus. Dissatisfied with the immoral and corrupt nature of his rule, the leading Roman citizens, led by Lucius Junius Brutus\(^2\), rose up in revolt and expelled the Etruscans and the kings, thus resulting in the formation of the Republic and the consulship.

Rome, now a republic, and separated from the Etruscan hegemony, began to come into conflict with the other tribes in the region. Between fighting with some, and creating treaties with others, the Romans gained control over the entire Italian Peninsula by the end of the 4th Century. Modern societies can now analyze the treaties Rome signed with her

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\(^1\) Augury is a form of soothsaying. An animal is killed, and its entrails examined, and a priest deduces from the entrails the will of the Gods as well as the future.

\(^2\) Not to be confused with distant descendant Marcus Junius Brutus, of Shakespearean fame.
neighbors and admire the tact with which the Romans conducted themselves politically. More information about the earliest parts of Rome can be found in the works of T. Livy³.

[Rome fought against her first overseas enemy in 280 BC when Pyrrhus, the King of Epirus landed in North-Western Greece and invaded; yet Rome prevailed and Pyrrhus retreated in 275 BC⁴.]

**MYTHOLOGICAL HISTORY**

Rome crafted for herself a very noble and elaborate tale to explain her heritage and history. It is told in Vergil's Aeneid, the text of which can also be found online easily. In their history, everything begins with Venus, the goddess of love. She was the mother of Aeneas, who was a Trojan prince. During the mythical Sack of Troy by the Greeks, Aeneas took his son, and father on his back, as well as a handful of the population and fled the burning city. They sailed to Carthage, and there, Aeneas fell in love with its queen, Dido. Instead of marrying her, Aeneas was spurred forward – on to Italy – by visions sent from the Gods. He left Dido, who committed suicide⁵. Aeneas eventually reached Italy, and his son founded the settlement of Alba Longa. In time, Romulus and Remus, the children of the God of War, Mars, and a descendant of Aeneas created a new civilization⁶, and this was Rome, a child of Love and War.

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³ And the entire works of T. Livy can be found online.
⁴ Members of the Carthaginian faction can research Pyrrhus, or more importantly Chandragupta Maurya for inspiration concerning war elephants.
⁵ Although the Aeneid was written in 19 BC, long after the Punic wars, one can note the lingering animosity between Rome and Carthage.
⁶ Rome was founded with another form of soothsaying. The location of Rome’s founding was decided when twelve eagles flew over the site. This practice, of receiving signals from birds, was also very popular in Rome. Other oracles include the Delphic Oracle, in Greece, as well as Zeus’ priests at Dodona, who interpreted the rustling of oak leaves.
ROMAN ECONOMICS

Rome was primarily an agriculture-based society. She had farmlands surrounding the city in the Latium and Campania areas. These areas, as well as the rest of Italy, were cultivated, sometimes with basic crop rotation. This system, and the small farmers, formed the backbone of the Roman economy and military. They were allowed to pay taxes, if necessary, in the form of excess grain and crops, and these crops would then be used to feed either the army or the needy. Principal grain crops for the Romans included wheat, barley, oats, and rye. They grew many vegetables, though the upper classes often chose to import exotic produce and meats instead.

Rome’s trade was not nearly as extensive as Carthage’s. Rome had a port, Ostia, to which it was linked by the Tiber. The Romans did have trade routes (for example, one treaty with Carthage mentions routes to Numidia), but no trade monopolies, like Carthage.

Romans paid for their daily needs in coin, minted from gold, silver, and bronze. The Romans had three main classes- the patricians, the oftentimes wealthy and esteemed families, the plebeians, the generally poorer class, and slaves. As slaves could win their freedom, and families could run out of money and allies, there was lots of social mobility and individuals could easily move up and down this ladder. As a result of the Lex Hortensia in 287 BC, both plebeians and patricians were able to run for public office. This allowed plebeians to gain wealth, affluence, and influence and thus rise in rank.

FOUNDING HISTORY OF CARTHAGE

Like the Romans, Carthage had a founding myth of exile, and a dramatic hero. Dido was a princess of the Phoenician city of Tyre. When her husband was killed by her brother, the devastated Princess Dido and her companions and servants fled across the sea. They eventually came to North Africa. There, they bargained with the locals who allowed her to have as much land as she can cover with the hide of an ox. The wily princess then proceeded to cut the hide into very thin strips, and these strips served as the boundary of The New City, otherwise known as Carthage. The city continued to trade just as Dido did, and soon came to prosper economically. Some versions of the story say that, in order to save her people from a war, Dido committed suicide. Other accounts, including the one found in the

7 For example, Roman banquets often describe peacock meat as being a delicacy.
Aeneid, claim that Dido committed suicide because she could not bear to live without Aeneas.

CARTHAGINIAN ECONOMICS

Carthage was originally a colony of Phoenicia, a Maritime-based trading society on the Levant Coast, founded in the 9th Century BC. They settled on the coast of North Africa, a region already inhabited by the Berbers. Although a mere trade colony during the first few centuries of her existence, Carthage’s influence increased dramatically when her mother state, Phoenicia, was conquered by the Babylonians. This gave the Carthaginians the opportunity to become an important trade civilization and dominate the world stage.

The Phoenicians and Carthaginians were famed for their production of purple dyes; a commodity which was prized far above gold in the ancient world. To transport this, they developed a very strong shipping network and shipped goods in quantities that were unfeasible for the Europeans until the 1400s. Eventually, as their territory increased, they began trading and selling many of the ancient commodities from all around the world. Exotic spices such as myrrh, frankincense and cinnamon, as well as, precious metals, ebony, ivory, and marijuana all passed through the port of Carthage. These foreign contacts gave the Carthaginians a highly diverse culture and a booming economy.
Their own exports consisted mostly of products that were assembled in Carthage, although the raw materials came from other parts of the world. Other exports include art and textiles embroidered and made in Carthage, while, once again, the original materials came from elsewhere.

Carthage was not entirely dependent on imported goods as there was good farmland around the city. Archaeological records, as well as written essays about farming suggest that the Carthaginians had ploughs, iron tools for cultivation, and understood principles such as proper irrigation and crop rotation.

The Carthaginians used coinage as well, and, by the time of the Punic Wars, most of these coins were gold, thanks to the plentiful gold mines in Iberia.

Carthage’s acceptance of many cultures and its lenience with women and women’s rights is very notable in the ancient world. Carthaginian women were permitted to partake in business endeavors as well as religious duties. This philosophy is clearly represented by their founding hero, a woman, Dido. Furthermore, modern-day Carthage, which is now Tunisia, is the most progressive Arab state in terms of women’s rights, undoubtedly a Carthaginian influence.

*List of Some of Carthage’s Goods*

Prior to the First Punic War (in which Carthage lost her navy), Carthage was able to trade around the world, and was thereby able to procure the following goods. These are the main goods for which we can find records and archaeological remains—there must have been many more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alabaster</td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Fish sauce</td>
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<td>Salt</td>
<td>Ivory</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peacocks</td>
<td>African beasts and their furs</td>
<td>Myrrh</td>
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<td>Frankincense</td>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Marijuana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>Precious Gems</td>
<td>Sesame</td>
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A NOTE ON CARTHAGE MYTHOLOGY

Just as Carthage was a patchwork culture, incorporating many elements from their various trading partners, their mythology drew from many influences as well. However, their most important deity was the God Baal. It was alleged that the God required human sacrifice, and this repulsed the Romans and Greeks. This was sometimes offered as an excuse, albeit unconvincingly, to explain the Romans’ hatred for the Carthaginians.

ROMAN-PUNIC RELATIONS

For a very long part of their histories, Rome and Carthage were on very good terms. The four recorded trade treaties signed between the two nations prior to the First Punic War are clear indications of their mutual goodwill, the last of which being signed in 279, fifteen years prior to the First Punic War.

Carthage was generally taken to be the stronger nation, founded earlier than Rome, and considerably richer. While an imperialism eventually became the goals of both nations, this tension was not what sparked conflict. This spark came from Sicily.

Sicily, at the start of the First Punic War, was under neither complete Roman nor complete Punic control. It was not even unified. There were many small city-states, such as those of the Greeks, who, like the Greeks, were frequently waging war against each other. One of these states,
Syracuse, was becoming increasingly powerful and some frightened mercenary rebels, controlling another city-state, Messana, called for help. They first asked the Carthaginians for support and defense against the Syracusans, however, once the Carthaginians were there, they feared that they would conquer Syracuse for their own, and thus asked the Romans for their defense against the Carthaginians. The Romans complied, starting the war.

At this point in time, Carthage was the supreme naval power. They were very experienced with ships, sailing, and naval warfare. This can be contrasted to Rome’s powerful legions: a very strong land army with absolutely no navy. To compensate, they created the *corvus*, a tall structure that towered above the boat that could be lowered and used as a gangplank to cross over to the other ship and fight hand to hand. While it was a key feature for the Romans, and assisted them in many battles, it made the ships more unbalanced.

This new construction, as well as Roman inexperience, and very poorly timed storms, destroyed two Roman fleets, which were rebuilt both times. This was a very costly practice, and the Roman government began to borrow money from private citizens with the understanding that they would be repaid after the war was won.

The war continued, at various paces, for a little over 20 years. The Carthaginians went under the leadership of various generals, including Hamilcar Barca and Xanthippus, the Mercenary. Eventually, the Carthaginians were defeated in 241 BC, and signed for peace under a very harsh set of terms. They were to:

1. Cede Sicily to the Romans, for it to become a Roman province.
2. Give up their navy.
3. Pay 2,200 talents for ten years (an absolute fortune).
4. Keep their expansion and colonial interests within certain boundaries, one of which was the Ebro River.

Smarting from defeat, the Carthaginians, under Hamilcar Barca did not lose hope. Instead, they began to conquer more territories in the Iberian Peninsula (modern day Spain), with the hopes of creating a Carthaginian base in Europe should another war with Rome break out. With the founding of New Carthage, this goal was accomplished. Before leaving Spain, Hamilcar took his infant son, Hannibal, and compelled him to swear an oath of eternal hatred for Rome. Soon afterwards, Hamilcar was killed, and Hannibal rose to take his place as general.

By 218, Hannibal felt that Carthage was ready to attack and took the supposedly neutral city of Saguntum. With that, the Second Punic War began.
GOVERNMENT

Little is known about the Carthaginian political system other than that they had a body like the Roman Senate that was headed by 2 suffetes, similar in function to the consuls. The Roman political system is much better understood and includes several bodies of magistrates as well as a limited number of positions (dictator, (pro)consul, and (pro)praetor) with imperium, the highest political power an individual could possess. This imperium allowed them to:

1. Take auspices (looking at birds for omens) and supervise religious matters that bore weight on political actions
2. Represent the state to other sovereignties
3. Command the army and navy
4. Interpret and carry out the law
5. Issue proclamations and edicts
6. Summon the senate and popular assemblies

ROMAN REPUBLIC

As the political framework in Rome shifted from a monarchy to a republic, the functions and powers that were previously invested in a few individuals gradually partitioned themselves amongst a greater number of branches of government. These members of government formally became known as magistrates, who through elections became authorized representatives of the people. Several magistrate positions existed and each is considered to be either major or minor. The major magistracies would include positions such as the (pro)consul, (pro)praetor, dictator, censor, and magister equitum, with the rest falling under the minor category. In terms of rank, the position with the most authority was the dictator, with the consul, praetor, aedile, and quaestor following in that respective order.

THE CONSUL

The consuls were the heads of state. They were the chair of the senate and the assemblies, they presided over the comitia centuriata that elected other magistrates, and they were the ones to nominate the dictator if need be. The consuls were the commanders-in-chief and dealt with most
foreign diplomacy. Most of their financial duties were given to the senate, censors, and quaestors, and their judicial duties to the praetors.

**THE DICTATOR & MAGISTER EQUITUM**

The dictator was appointed by the consuls in times of emergency. The dictator holds essentially all the same responsibilities as the consul except with a small number of additional powers and fewer legal restrictions. When a dictator was elected, the consuls still remained in office but were required to yield to the dictator’s authority if any conflict should arise between the two. Coupled with the election of the dictator was the election of a magister equitum (Master of the Horse), who was the dictator’s military second-in-command and held charge of the cavalry.

**THE PRAETORS**

The praetors (there were four at the outset of the Hannibalic war) were second in rank only to the consuls and from 227 – 81 BC their roles were primarily as judges and provincial governors.

**THE CENSORS**

The two censors, of whom at least one must be plebeian, were elected every five years and held office for a year and a half. The censors were legally ranked below the praetors but were regarded practically with higher esteem by the public. The role of the censor was to assess the property of citizens and arrange them into tribes, classes, and centuries, appointing senators, and manage the finances of the state including taxation and renting or selling of public land.

**THE AEDILES**

There were four aediles in total, two curule aediles and two plebeian aediles. The aediles were primarily responsible for looking after urban function: the maintenance of public spaces, the organization of public games, police supervision, and local judicial processes. One of their most important functions was also to ensure that the city was well supplied with grain from the provinces.

**THE QUAESTOR**

The quaestor was an elected magistrate that held office for one year and whose main responsibility was financial in nature and similar to the role of a treasurer. The quaestor received all
the money paid to the state and kept an account of state funds. He made all the payments from public funds and represented the state in smaller internal affairs dealing with the upholding of financial contracts. That being said, he had little say in how the state funds were being used, rather he was merely executing orders given to him by higher officials.

THE TRIBUNE

The tribunate is a college of plebeian officials that was created for the sole purpose of protecting plebeian citizens from the potential abuse by upper classes. However, over the years it transformed into a council that represented the rights of the citizen over the state. Together, the tribunes acted as a check against arbitrary action by the magistrates. The tribunes were considered sacrosanct and wielded the immense power of being able to veto any magistrate’s actions.

THE SENATE

At the time of the Second Punic War, the senate was composed of both plebeian and patrician civilians. In order to become a senator, it was necessary that one was a free citizen and had previously held a major magistracy (or quaestorship). Different senators held different ranks depending on the previous magistracy they held and this rank then determined the speaking order, with ex-censors and ex-consuls speaking first. Their primary function was as a consulting body for the consuls and the three areas in which the senate held most sway were religion, finance and foreign politics.

COMITIA TRIBUTA

At the time of the Second Punic War, the people of the Roman Republic were organized into 35 different tribes, with fewer belonging to the more elite tribes. Each tribe was further divided into five classes based on material wealth, with the first being the wealthiest and the last being the poorest. In order to determine the position of the tribe with regards to a certain issue, a vote involving every member of the tribe would be conducted. This would begin with the first class, whose votes weighed the most, and proceed until there was a simple majority. As a result, oftentimes the lower classes would not even get to vote at all. The tribe’s position would then be represented at the comitia tributa where each tribe received one vote. The comitia tributa was responsible for electing the quaestors, curule aediles, and tribunes.
COMITIA CENTURIATA

Perhaps more important than the comitia tribute was the comitia centuriata (Assembly of the Centuries). During the Second Punic War, the voting unit of the comitia centuriata was the century. There was a century for both the seniors and the juniors in each of the five classes in each of the 35 tribes (350 tribes total). With an additional 18 centuries from the patrician ranks of ‘knights’ and 5 from the poorer classes, the total number of centuries added up to three hundred and seventy-three. The voting process is similar to that of the comitia tribute, with a majority vote in each century deciding how that particular century will vote. The comitia centuriata elected major magistrates such as the consul, praetors and censors, formed the highest court of appeal, and was the only body that could declare war.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

The Roman Republic was riddled with checks and balances to protect the citizenry from the arbitrary actions of a single radical individual. All magistrates had a limited period in office, with the period becoming shorter as the office becomes more powerful; the consuls held office for one year, the dictator for six months at most. This fixed period could only be overcome by something known as ‘prorogatio imperii’, whereby the term of office can be extended in exceptional circumstances such as war. Those higher magistrates had the power to veto the actions of those below him or suspend him from office. However, this power was checked by the collegiality of the positions, whereby those holding the same office had the power to veto the actions of others with the same rank and thus prevent abuse of the system. Lastly, the tribunician veto, whereby the council of tribes could veto any action of any magistrate or assembly, or the senate, provided the final safety that would guard against potential exploitation.

OTHER STATES

Besides Rome and Carthage, there were other third-party states that took part in the Second Punic War. One was Saguntum, the siege of which essentially triggered the war. Although it took Hannibal eight whole months to complete the siege, he finally captured it in 218 BC, and had a base with which he could support his troops. The location of Saguntum was of some importance, as controlling it allowed Hannibal to cross the Pyrenees without resistance.
MACEDON

Macedon, west of Illyria, had a role in the Second Punic War as well; the king, Philip V allied himself with Hannibal during the war in an attempt to take advantage of Rome’s problems after their defeat at Cannae. Although it did not amount to much strategically, as it cost Rome little more than a praetor, Laevinius⁸, and a fleet of ships to keep an eye on Philip, it did result in few skirmishes along the shore of the Adriatic when Philip attempted to cross over into Illyria. However, Laevinius had to sail along the coast, as his goal was to prevent Philip V from reinforcing any Carthaginian forces by sea, and so the land route to Illyria was wide open. The Romans therefore contacted the Aetolians⁹ for their help in keeping Macedon at bay. This worked until the Aetolian League was defeated in 206 BC; the Macedonians then roamed freely along the Adriatic until Rome was finally able to deal with Philip V in 205 BC. By that time, the two sides, Rome, exhausted from war, and Philip V, happy with his gains, were both ready for peace. And so, Scipio Africanus proposed a treaty that allowed Philip V possession of his territorial gains and access to the Adriatic, a treaty that Philip V happily agreed to. Although Rome did give up some property to Macedon, they had achieved their goal: to prevent Philip from reinforcing Hannibal.¹⁰

SYRACUSE

Another state that caused problems for the Romans was the Kingdom of Syracuse, located in the southeastern region of Sicily. It was a close ally of Rome up until the pro-Carthaginian

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⁸ Marcus Valerius Laevinus was a Roman magistrate who was elected praetor in 215 BC.
⁹ The Aetolian League was a confederation of tribal communities and cities in Ancient Greece. It had a reputation for piracy, and was established for the opposition of Macedon and the Achaean League.
¹⁰ These skirmishes between Rome and Macedon were known as the First Macedonian War (214 – 205 BC)
Hieronymus came into power, after the death of his grandfather, King Hiero II, in 215 BC. The pro-Roman faction of Syracuse was alarmed by this and had the king, as well as other pro-Carthaginian leaders, assassinated in 214 BC. This pre-eminent reaction to an expected danger was the downfall of the pro-Roman faction however, as Hieronymus’ death lead to civil war between the two sides.

The pro-Carthaginian faction was eventually victorious, and so the Romans were forced to send Marcus Claudius Marcellus to deal with the situation. He immediately laid siege to the kingdom by both sea and land and had many Carthaginian sympathizers beaten and beheaded. Syracuse was known for its significant fortifications though, and its great walls, along with Archimedes’ devices, protected the capital city from attack. They were successful in their defense, and the Carthaginians, realizing the potential hindrance Syracuse could offer towards the Romans, attempted to relieve the city, but were driven back by Roman forces.

The Romans decided to attempt to blockade the city in order to starve them to death, but this was not necessary; the Syracusans, overconfident in their ability to repel the Romans, took part in their annual festival to their goddess Artemis in 212 BC, and Marcellus, seeing the opportunity, immediately breached in city. He had ordered for Archimedes to be kept alive, but a Roman soldier killed him, not knowing who he was. The Syracusans then fell back to their fortified inner citadel, but a traitor opened the gates to the Romans, who then promptly rampaged throughout the citadel and slaughtered most survivors. Although much effort was spent on this siege, the taking of Syracuse was worth it as it ensured that the Carthaginians could not set up a base there, and support

11 King Hiero II had frequently assisted the Romans with men and provisions, up until his death.

12 According to Plutarch, Archimedes was contemplating a mathematical diagram and enraged the soldier when he refused to go with him, saying that he had a problem to finish working on.
Hannibal's campaign into Italy. On top of that, it proved to be a crucial setup point for the Romans during their final campaign into Africa at the end of the Second Punic War.

**NUMIDIA**

Numidia was the African territory surrounding Carthage, with two tribal groups: the Massylii in the east, and the Masaeslyi in the west. The east was ruled by the Gala who was allied with Carthage, whereas the west was ruled by Syphax who was allied with the Romans. In 206 BC however, Gala died, and was replaced by Massinissa and Oezalces who initially quarreled about the inheritance while Syphax conquered parts of the eastern Numidian kingdom.

Massinissa eventually came into power, and, seeing that Rome was winning the war against Carthage, decided to defect to the Romans. At about the same time, Syphax was offered Hasdrubal’s daughter, Sophonisba, in marriage which sealed an alliance with the Carthaginians. At first, it seemed that this exchange provided Carthage with the upper hand but Scipio was able to defeat both Hasdrubal and Syphax decisively at Utica, forcing the two to escape all the way to the Great Plains where they raised another 30,000 men to join their army. Scipio, along with Massinissa and another Roman commander Laelius, marched from Utica to the Great Plains, to engage the Punic forces once more. Syphax was forced to flee back to Numidia, but was pursued by Massinissa and Laelius. His army then threatened to desert him and so Syphax decided to ride alone, straight towards the Roman cavalry in an attempt to rally his troops. Unfortunately for him, he was thrown off by his wounded horse and promptly taken to Massinissa. At the end of the war, the victorious Romans confirmed Massinissa as the king of all of Numidia, seeing him as a loyal ally.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVES THROUGHOUT THE WAR**

Carthage’s strategy in the war was never to destroy the Romans, or even, initially, to wear them down. Hannibal always expected Rome to still exist after the war. Rather, he was fighting for
the honor and pride of Carthage; he wanted to restore Carthage as the main military power in the Mediterranean. He planned to go about this very simply – he would first defeat Roman armies through pitched battles, which would hopefully weaken Rome’s credibility and therefore cause Roman allies to leave Rome. Once that was done, he would invade Latium and besiege Rome.

Hannibal continuously freed prisoners in an attempt to build good faith and weaken the ties between Rome and their allies. This plan indeed worked well with the Gallic tribes who were for the most part already anti-Roman and helped by replenishing Hannibal’s depleted army.

While Hannibal was in Italy, it was still necessary for Carthage to secure their territory in Hispania as well as their North African territory, since Hispania was a large source of financial wealth and Carthage needed to be protected in the case of a Roman invasion. Not much had to be done for the most part though as Hannibal’s invasion of Italy had already kept the Romans’ hands tied there.

The Carthaginian senate refused to support Hannibal’s plan to march on Rome, even after his initial success in Italy. Instead, they attempted a more peripheral plan: to gain allies outside of Italy to support the Carthaginian effort. This worked with Tarentum, a Greek colony that revolted against Roman domination, as well as King Hieronymus of Syracuse. However, after Marcellus succeeded there, the only way for reinforcements to reach Hannibal was through the Alps from Iberia. Hasdrubal attempted this but was defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Metaurus. After losing the tactical upper hand, Carthage decided to have Hannibal’s forces stay in Italy in an attempt to stop the Romans from an invasion. It clearly failed however when Scipio approached Carthage, and forced Hannibal to be recalled.

Rome’s goal throughout the entire Second Punic War was to stop Carthage from coming back to power after their conquests in Hispania, and to maintain their military status in the Mediterranean. Their plan originally was to invade Iberia with Scipio the Elder, and North Africa with Sempronius, both through sea launched land attacks.

Their advantage in sea warfare was critical; they were able to move and resupply large forces with ease as long as they controlled the sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean. This allowed them to quickly respond to problems in distant regions.

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13 Originally the home of the Latins, by this point Latium was the region of central western Italy where Rome resided.
14 At this time, the Iberians occupied the east coast of Hispania.
15 The Carthaginians had a working naval force as well, although they were never able to use it successfully against the Romans during the Second Punic War.
For example, when Scipio discovered that Hannibal was moving towards the Alps, he was unable to intercept him, but Sempronius immediately cancelled the invasion of North Africa and made his way towards northern Italy immediately by sea. As soon as Scipio made it to Iberia, he began moving his army towards northern Italy as well. The Romans lost many pitched battles with Hannibal however and were forced to change their strategy of head-on warfare.

They soon concluded that they could not beat Hannibal on his choice of a tactical battlefield and decided to adopt the policy of Quintus Fabius Maximus, also known as Fabian strategy. The strategy focused on avoiding conflict at all possible costs, and preventing Hannibal from foraging for supplies and from receiving reinforcements.\(^\text{16}\) This would also deal with the problem of allies leaving Rome, as they would not lose credibility without defeats. They then refocused on taking the battle to Hispania, far away from Hannibal, where they could remove their source of wealth and manpower. And so, Carthage was forced to send reinforcements en route to Hannibal to Hispania instead.

The Romans were skilled in diplomacy and foreign relations, which they used to maintain their hold on allies. They labeled Carthaginians as outsiders who did not belong with the Italians as they had different traditions and religion, and as traditional commercial rivals of the Greeks. All of those who supported Carthage served as an example towards other city-states; for example, Hannibalic supporters were immediately executed when Capua fell to the Romans, whereas cities that went back to Rome freely were treated well.

When Hasdrubal was defeated during the Battle of Metaurus at the hands of Scipio the Younger, the strategy of the Romans changed again. Although Scipio and Fabius disagreed on what steps they should then take, as Fabius wanted to continue the Fabian strategy while Scipio wanted to attack not Hannibal, who was isolated in Brutgium, but Carthage itself in North Africa. He is quoted as saying:

\emph{Quintus Fabius, I shall have the adversary you tender – Hannibal, that is – but let me draw him after me rather than hold me here. Let me force him to fight in his own country – and Carthage, rather than some crumbling Brutian forts, will be the prize of victory.}

The Roman Senate agreed to this plan. The result? Carthage’s bloodless surrender.

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\(^{16}\) That is not to say there was no conflict; the Romans harassed the Carthaginians through skirmishes which were intended to disrupt the supply of food and affect morale, and therefore to essentially win a war of attrition.
In the end, there were many factors hindering Carthage’s cause. First, the war had to be fought in Italy in order to break the Romans’ political will – Hannibal wanted to finish with a treaty advantageous to the Carthaginians – but this meant it was difficult for Carthage to resupply or reinforce Hannibal, especially considering their severe disadvantage by sea. Therefore, Hannibal had to find his own replacements for combat losses in Italy. In addition, Hispania and Carthage had to be protected at all costs as they were the sources of wealth and political will respectively, but, unfortunately for the Carthaginians, both were conquered. The Carthaginians were never able to break the political will of the Roman Senators however, as the repeated defeat of Roman armies was prevented for the most part due to the Fabian strategy.  

ARRANGEMENT OF ARMIES & WEAPONRY

The largest structural unit of the Roman army was the legion, which consisted of 4,200 infantry in total and 300 cavalry, although it could always be increased if necessary, such as during the Battle of Cannae. It included 1,200 light infantry, known as the velites, which were recruited from those who could not afford heavy armour. The heavy infantry had three lines, with 1,200 hastati (‘spear-men’), which were the youngest men, 1,200 principes (‘front-liners’), who were more mature soldiers, and 600 triarii (‘third-liners’), the oldest and most experienced veterans. The Romans generally employed standard manipular formation which consisted of three lines, with the hastati in the front, principes right behind, and the triarii in the back – the velites would generally be at the very front at the beginning of the battle but would retreat as soon as they had hurled their javelins at the opposing lines. The hastati and principes each had two javelins for hurling and a sword whereas the triarii were allowed to thrusting spears on top of this. These three lines each consisted of ten maniples, which consisted of two centuries each, with a centurion leading each century. Arranging themselves in maniples allowed the armies to maneuver flexibly, unless they were forced into dense packs. The cavalry would be stationed on one or both wings. Each legion would be led by a praetor, although a consul would lead two.

Perhaps the weakest division of each legion would be the cavalry – the Roman cavalryman was a fairly underdeveloped branch of the army. He had to maintain his own balance, and grip the

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17 Although they did suffer a huge number of losses, not all of their armies were defeated; Hannibal had to continue inflicting defeats over and over again in order for this to happen considering the fact that the Romans had abundant resources. On the other hand, the Carthaginian armies in Italy were not as numerous or as resilient as Rome’s and so they could be, and were, defeated much more easily.
18 Each century generally consisted of 60 Roman soldiers, which are known as legionaries.
19 It was this that mainly caused the downfall of the Roman armies at the Battle of Cannae.
horse with his knees, while controlling the reins with his left hand, which also held the shield. This shield would be made of buffalo hide, and so, it’d easily become soft in damp conditions. The principal weapon of a cavalryman would be the javelin, though it was thin and difficult to aim with. Even worse, if it broke, which happened quite often, there was no butt spike, so all that would be left would be a broken stick. Though the cavalryman could pull out the sword, vital seconds would be lost pulling it out, especially if the opponent was upon him. On the other hand, the Roman infantryman would have a large, flat, oval shield on top of their principal weapon, as well as either a mail shirt, if they were rich, or a simple square of bronze on the chest.

The Carthaginians generally followed a similar format, with three lines – mercenaries at the front, Punic infantry in the second line, and veterans at the back – although more than often Hannibal would change depending on different situations and how many men he was able to get to join him. The principal weapon was a fairly short spear, and each troop member also had a large oval shield and wore Roman armour looted from the dead at previous battles. The cavalry from Carthage were similar to those of Rome, but the Numidian cavalry, who were at first on the Punic side, were superior; although all they had were a few javelins and a shield, along with a simple, sleeveless tunic, they were formidable horsemen. Instead of encumbering their shield arms with reins, the Numidians controlled their horses with only their knees and body weight, which gave them a tremendous advantage in combat. The Spanish and Gallic recruits were overall fairly similar to the Carthaginian troops, except for the fact that the Celtiberians from Spain used a completely iron javelin as the principal weapon, which would not break in combat, unlike the javelin used by the Romans. However, the Celtiberians would hurl them anyways while the Gauls charged wildly at their enemies.

**STRATEGY AT THE BATTLE OF CANNAE (216 BC)**

Hannibal’s greatest strength throughout the war was being able to draw forces much larger than his into pitched battles and coming out victorious, perhaps most noticeably at the Battle of Cannae. Although the Romans numbered 70,000 or more, while the Punic forces had 45,000 troops at maximum, Hannibal cleverly outmaneuvered his adversaries. The Romans had entered the battle in their standard manipular fashion with the infantry in the center and small detachments of cavalry on both sides (the point of this was to prevent the enemy cavalry from riding around and flanking the infantry). This setup allowed the Roman infantry to charge forward and overwhelm the center of
the enemy’s center. However, Hannibal, realizing this, decided to place his less formidable Gallic and Celtic infantry in the center, while holding his strongest troops, the Africans, on the sides.

And so the battle began as it normally would have, with skirmishers running from each side, hurling javelins at their opponents. Afterwards, as per the usual manipular tactic, the front line of the Romans began to charge the Punic center and push them back. By this time, the Punic horsemen had already defeated most of the Roman cavalry units, and were chasing them away, thus leaving the Roman infantry unprotected.

Regardless, the Roman infantry continued to advance, pushing the center to the point where they were actually surrounded on the sides by the stronger African infantry. These troops now turned inward and attacked the sides of the Roman infantry while at the same time, the Punic cavalry, returning from chasing off the Roman cavalry, assaulted the rear. Now encircled, the Romans fell into chaos and were butchered by the Carthaginians. When it was all over, Hannibal had only lost about 6,000 men whereas the Romans lost at least 45,000 infantry, 2,700 cavalrymen, 80 senators, and the consul Paullus himself; indeed, it was Rome’s worst defeat, not only throughout the entire Second Punic War, but perhaps through her entire history as well.

STRATEGY AT THE BATTLE OF ZAMA (202 BC)

Even though Rome had suffered this humiliating defeat, they were able to bounce back due to Hannibal’s inability to besiege Rome because of his lack of ships, siege equipment, and permanent supply bases nearby, as well as the control Rome continued to maintain over the ports, rivers, and
farmland. In addition to this, Rome’s renowned spirit of determination kept them alive as well.\footnote{Although it is very arguable that Hannibal did not have what it took to besiege Rome, many historians claim that this was the only point in time during the war when it was possible that Hannibal could have broken the political will. It was the failure to do so that allowed Rome’s spirit of determination to stay alive.}

Livy says:

*So great, in this grim time, was the nation’s heart that the consul [Varro, who had survived Cannae, unlike Paullus, the other consul], fresh from a defeat of which he had himself been the principal cause, was met on his return to Rome by people of all conditions to participate in the thanks publicly bestowed on him for not having “despaired of the commonwealth.” A Carthaginian general in such circumstances would have been punished.*

It came as no surprise then that Rome’s only victory over Hannibal, which proved to be the conclusion to the war, finally arrived fourteen years after their worst loss. As Scipio the Younger led a direct attack with Masinissa on their enemy’s very own capital, using 400 troop transports and 40 warships to ferry his forces from Sicily, Hannibal had no choice but to return to Africa to defend his homeland. He faced off with Scipio about seventy-five miles southwest of Carthage, on the plains of Zama. This time, the Carthaginian forces numbered to 40,000 men and 80 elephants, while the Romans totaled to 36,000, including the Numidians. Again, the Romans were arrayed in manipular fashion with their three distinct lines, while the Carthaginians were arranged in three lines as well.

The Carthaginian elephants opened the battle, charging the front lines of their enemy, but were slain through the use of javelins by the Romans, and were frightened and dispersed by Roman trumpeters. This time around, the Roman cavalry had the upper hand as they were now allied with Masinissa’s Numidian cavalry, and chased away Hannibal’s horsemen, leaving his infantry exposed.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{initial_stages.png}
\caption{Initial formation at the Battle of Zama (202 BC) (Source: Vis Bellica Online)}
\end{figure}
Scipio’s first line of infantry then continued to push forward, and easily defeated Hannibal’s first line of Mercenaries. The second line of Punic infantry proved to be much more of a match, but The Romans were still able to defeat them and move on. As they advanced on Hannibal himself and his veterans, the battle seemed to be coming to somewhat of a stalemate, until Masinissa and his horsemen, after having finished off Hannibal’s cavalry, came in from behind and attacked the Carthaginians. The Romans finished with a loss of 1,500 men while 20,000 Carthaginians were killed, and just as many taken prisoner. With this decisive victory by the Romans, the Second Punic War was successfully brought to an end.

DAY 1 SITUATION

The committee begins the spring of 218 BC, just after Hannibal has captured Saguntum. War has not been declared but each party has sent an envoy to meet and negotiate. The likelihood though is that peace will fall through and the two sides will be at war. The map on the following page will be the map used in committee sessions by all three parties (the Punics, the Romans, and the crisis staff) and includes all the major cities that will be considered for the purposes of this crisis. If a town or city is not on the map, please ignore its existence. The current troop distribution is as follows but further details will be provided at the start of the first committee session.

**PUNIC**

40 000 troops with Hannibal at Saguntum
20 000 troops defending Africa
15 000 troops in Southern Spain
11 000 troops north of Ebro river
20 000 troops in the hinterlands of Carthage
100 ships and 25 000 marines

**ROMAN**

40 000 troops in Northern Italy
50 000 troops as reserves in Rome, Sicily and Sardinia
20 000 troops assigned to Spain
220 ships and 50 000 marines

The Romans exercise a naval superiority at this point in time but the tides can easily be turned. For the sake of simplicity we will assume that Carthage’s political system operates analogously to the Roman Republic, with two suffetes and a senate. Hannibal is considered the military head for the Punic committee while the delegates with the privilege of beginning the crisis as consuls are Tiberius Sempronius Longus and Publius Cornelius Scipio (however for our purposes, we will have Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Calvus, the brother of Publius, replace him as consul for that year). A more comprehensive list of positions and offices will be given out the first day of the crisis, though delegates should be able to acquire this information through their independent research.
THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN 218 BC
showing the different peoples recruited
into Hannibal’s army for his march on Rome
CRISIS 101

Crisis committees are unlike any other Model UN committee. In crisis there are no topics or resolutions, no formal speakers list or strict procedural rules. Instead what you have in crisis is an informal style of debate with a committee of 11-12 individuals who each represent a single person instead of an entire state. The more flexible nature of crisis lends itself to a more efficient, face-paced, and exciting MUN experience. That being said, there also exists the potential for crisis committees to get out of hand sometimes and so there are a few rules that have been developed in order to ensure the committee remains focused, organized, and on-task.

SPEAKING IN COMMITTEE SESSIONS

First and foremost, there will be a chair for each committee that has absolute discretion over who is allowed to speak. This chair has been rigorously trained and understands not to abuse his/her privilege. There is no speakers list, but instead, when delegates wish to speak, they must raise their placard and the chair will call on them. When recognized by the chair, the delegate is allowed to speak for a maximum allotted time of a minute, or else risk being cut off by the chair. If a delegate would wish to say something in response to the previous delegate, they do not have to formally declare a point of information or right of reply. Instead they should raise their placard and, when recognized by the chair, can then say anything they wish in the given minute of speaking time. When circumstances necessitate it, a motion for an un-moderated caucus can be called on by any delegate. This un-moderated caucus is essentially a 5 or 10 minute period in which any delegate can speak freely (it is essentially a free-for-all in terms of discussion).

CRISIS DIRECTIVES

Instead of the usual resolutions created in normal MUN committees, crisis instead has directives, which are orders written on slips of paper that are delivered to the crisis staff at Crisis Central by pages and dictate what the committee wants to do with its resources. Directives have to receive a consensus from the entire committee in order to be passed and then sent to Crisis Central, the exception being a directive that utilizes one’s own personal resources (e.g. Hannibal moving his troops, or Masinissa defecting to the other side), which then does not need to receive approval from the whole committee. Directives can include anything from troop movements, to conscription, to
the management of funds, to asking for an envoy from another state, etc... Please remember though that both committees are democratic states and so if they wish to increase taxation or conscript more troops, it will become necessary to ensure that the people also agree, or else risk veto by the tribes in the case of Rome, or a civil uprising in the case of Carthage. Crisis Central will use its discretion in evaluating whether or not the instruction on the directive is physically possible and whether it should be processed. Little is known about this ancient world and the sources for this given conflict are far and few in comparison to more relatively modern crises. As a result, there will be times when the crisis staff will have to use its own discretion when processing directives but we ask that delegates please do not object to any of the decisions that SOMA crisis staff has made.

FICTIONAL CRISES

To supplement delegates’ experience, the crisis staff members have prepared several fictional crises that will happen throughout the entire war and that we hope will add fun twists to the crisis. It would be anticlimactic for us to provide you specific examples of what we have planned but needless to say there will be moments where committees have to deal with several problems at once, which may become a bit overwhelming. However, the side which manages to best overcome these fictional crises will gain an upper hand in some respects of the war.

FINAL NOTE

The SOMA crisis staff has worked hard to prepare for you what we hope will be an educational and enjoyable three days. A war that took place over two millennia ago may seem irrelevant to modern-day situations, but nevertheless there are certain parallels that can be drawn between the social, economic, and diplomatic considerations in 218 BC and those of modern wars. This ancient war is not without potential applications to our current world and though crisis is meant to be a fun and exciting experience, it is also meant to better equip delegates to tackle the problems of our modern-day society.

Thank you for reading and we look forwarding to seeing you at SOMA XL.

- SOMA XL Crisis Heads


