





## ROME AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

ADVISORY EDITOR: BETTY RADICE

TITUS LIVIUS was born in 59 B.C. at Patavium (Padua) and later moved to Rome. He lived in an eventful age but little is known about his life, which seems to have been occupied exclusively in literary work. When he was aged about thirty he began to write the *History of Rome*, consisting of 142 books of which thirty-five survive. He continued working on it for over forty years until his death in A.D. 17.

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LIVY

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**ROME AND THE  
MEDITERRANEAN**

Books XXXI-XLV of  
*The History of Rome from its  
Foundation*

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HENRY BETTENSON

*with an Introduction by*

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PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2

Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi – 110 017, India

Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, Cnr Rosedale and Airborne Roads, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

[www.penguin.com](http://www.penguin.com)

This translation first published 1976

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ISBN: 9781101491881

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# INTRODUCTION

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Livy would surely have approved of our presenting a fresh translation of Books [XXXI–XLV](#). ‘Read my *Preface*,’ he might say. ‘It shows why I have written a testament of the past, even for those who prefer Sallust on the present. These are evil times: it is one thing to analyse degeneration, another to move men’s minds to reform. *O tempora! O mores!* Let us know our traditions in order to recover our standards of conduct. Romulus founded the City under divine auspices, as Ennius sang; our heroes established the Roman State and won Italian loyalty. What other nation could have withstood Hannibal? But even that was not the climax of our greatness. We conquered the Hellenistic kings, heirs of Alexander the Great, and ruled the Mediterranean world. Include these events in your knowledge of the past and be inspired by our achievement.’<sup>1</sup>

Virgil helps to clarify the conception in Anchises’ prophetic words to Aeneas. From Romulus, the son of Mars,

Under whose auspices Rome shall extend her rule  
Over the earth and rise in spirit to Olympus,

he calls the roll of illustrious men who will lead her to greatness and he laments the discord that has wrought havoc within her empire. Augustus shall fulfil the mission of Romulus’ city. How? Praise Greek culture and practise the Roman art of government:

Others shall mould more softly, I foresee,  
In bronze the breathing statue and from marble  
Fashion the living face, plead better at law,  
Measure the heavens and announce the rising stars.  
Do you, Roman, be mindful (these are your arts)  
To hold dominion and seal peace with custom:  
Spare those who yield, the defiant utterly subdue.

(*Aen.* VI, 847–53)<sup>2</sup>

Thus to say: ‘Impose the *Pax Romana* by right and responsibility of conquest’; and Livy has described the events. In 189 B.C. Scipio Africanus defeated Antiochus the Great. ‘The king’s envoys’, states Polybius, ‘urged the Romans to use their victory magnanimously, since Fortune had granted them world power.’ (XXI, 16). Livy heightens the tone. ‘You Romans’, the envoys say, ‘have always shown magnanimity towards those you have conquered. How much more generously ought you to act now, as masters of the world! Cease from strife with mortals and, like gods, tend and spare the human race.’ And Scipio replies, ‘From things in the power of the gods we have what the gods grant us: our spirit remains the same in every fortune.’ (p. 323.) The theme is idealized; its expression at the time of writing reflected both appeal and warning.

In 1897 Britain celebrated Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. The occasion was one of praise and thanksgiving, like a service that should close with a hymn of dedication, and it was accompanied by popular ‘tumult and shouting’. Then Kipling, the poet of imperial law and order, wrote the *Recessional*, addressed to the ‘God of our fathers’,

Beneath whose awful hand we hold



and he warned the nation against sinful pride:

Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget.

A Roman historian of like mind would wish to complete his illustration of ancient virtue – in the books we shall be reading – before he reached the years of corruption and decline.

## 1

Born at Patavium (Padua) in 59 (or 64) B.C. Livy was able to judge the condition of Roman affairs by the time Octavian (later called Augustus) had won the victory of Actium (31 B.C.). In affluent Cisalpine Gaul, which was now closely linked with Rome, he received a liberal education and practised rhetoric so as to prepare for a literary career. He wrote on philosophy, with a bent towards Stoicism, but treated history as yet only by discussion in ‘dialogues’, perhaps following the model of Cicero’s *De Republica*. It was not official experience or direct political interest that led Livy into full-scale history. He was a conventional thinker, set firmly in the sober Italian tradition, which the Italians held to be more faithful to Rome than the sophistication of the Late Republic.

Cicero had expounded the case for civic ‘concord’ in a united Roman Italy and the leadership of men like Pompey the Great. Against Antony and Cleopatra Octavian called on ‘all Italy’ and the west to defend the position of Rome, and after Actium he took control of the Greek east. In 29 B.C. he celebrated a triumph and closed the temple of Janus to proclaim peace throughout the Roman empire. As another Romulus (but not a king) he aimed at refounding Rome under the old auspices. It was in this situation that, moved by the feelings of relief, hope and doubt which arise in the aftermath of civil war, Livy undertook to write a history of Rome from her foundation. It would enjoy the goodwill of Roman Italy and support Augustus’ policy. Some ten years later he faced the wide expanse of Mediterranean conquest, most significantly visible in the Greek world. Polybius’ work would serve and instruct him; his own style would carry a long and complex narrative.<sup>3</sup>

Livy, then, laid historical stress chiefly on the Hellenistic kingdoms of Antigonid Macedonia (under Philip V and Perseus), Seleucid Syria (under Antiochus the Great), and Ptolemaic Egypt (under Ptolemy V and VI), which represented the partition of Alexander the Great’s empire. The three pentads comprising our fifteen books correspond to the three major eastern wars of the period, against Macedonia and Syria. At the same time he was also concerned overseas with Carthage and Spain, in Italy with the Cisalpine Gauls and the Italian confederacy, and in Rome itself with the direction of policy and administration by the Senate and magistrates. The material is arranged under the Roman years, in the form known as ‘annalistic’, which gave the chronology and related the different fields of contemporaneous action. We may find it useful to look briefly at the perspective and follow the continuity of important developments.<sup>4</sup>

As head of the Italian confederacy, which included the Greek cities in the south (Magna Graecia), Rome was in touch with the Hellenistic world. The invasion of south Italy and Sicily by Pyrrhus of Epirus in 280–275 B.C. had drawn Roman power into Magna Graecia, and the defeat of Pyrrhus was noted in the east; in 273, Egypt – always interested in western Greek trade – opened diplomatic relations (*amicitia*) with Rome. The Pyrrhic War had shown Roman strength in central Italy and raised the question of defence on the Adriatic side. More directly at this time, however, Roman policy turned against Carthage, whose naval activity based on Sicily could be regarded as a threat to the western coast of Italy, especially in Magna Graecia. Carthage and Rome – largely on the Carthaginian trading initiative – had long enjoyed treaty relations and recently agreed about common resistance to Pyrrhus. Now Rome intervened in Sicily to fight the First Punic War (264–241) and drive Carthage from the western waters of Italy, thus establishing her own naval policy. Under the leadership of Hamilcar Barca, Carthage made good her losses by intensifying her control of Spain south of the Ebro river; to the north the towns were associated with Greek Massilia (Marseilles), which had old diplomatic connections with Rome. Meanwhile in the Adriatic Rome had crushed Illyrian piracy by two minor wars (229–228 and 219), which extended her influence to the coastal stretch of western Greece; inland lay the frontiers of Macedonia and Aetolia. In northern Italy she defeated a formidable attack from Cisalpine Gaul at Telamon (225), a success that confirmed the loyalty of central Italy to her leadership.

We may note two features of this period. First, the Romans were acquainted already with the peoples they would take under control, sometimes after years of diplomatic recognition. Secondly, Rome expanded her power not by Machiavellian design but rather by impersonal strategy, as one move of ‘preventive action’ led to another. There is nothing paradoxical in this impression; for political relations, we know, tend to shift with their circumstances. What strikes one most is the degree of severity in the contrast, marked since the Samnite wars (327–290) by the ruthlessness of Roman policy and warfare.

In the Second Punic War (218–201) Rome prepared to attack the Carthaginian position in the western Mediterranean at two points: Carthage itself and Spain. Hannibal seized the initiative and, invading Italy, reinforced his Spanish army with Cisalpine Gauls and made Rome defend herself at home; his aim was to break up the Roman confederacy by victories in the field. No general could have come closer to success than Hannibal at the battle of Cannae in 216. No state was ever in greater danger of losing morale than Rome after that disaster, when Syracuse in Sicily and Philip V of Macedon entered the war on the Carthaginian side. The Roman people and their central Italian allies held out; the Senate organized manpower and material again; and steady soldiers like Fabius Cunctator withstood Hannibal himself. Marcellus subdued Syracuse. In the First Macedonian War (214–205) the Aetolian League, always hostile to Macedon, joined Rome and bore the brunt of fighting that kept Philip in Greece. The Senate could feel confident that a nation capable of handling superior resources might lose battles but never forfeit ultimate victory. Then (as Polybius would say) ‘Fortune’ raised up the brilliant Scipio Africanus to take Spain and defeat Hannibal at Zama on Carthaginian soil; one can follow these events in Livy’s dramatic description.<sup>5</sup> Yet there had been a crisis after Cannae, intensified by the threat of Macedonian opportunism, and the

Roman Senate did not forget. It saw Greece no longer merely as an Adriatic seaboard but rather as a potential base for a hostile power; the First Macedonian War had settled nothing, if Philip should reappear with a strong ally.

Let us now return to the character of Roman policy. Hannibal had tested Rome's martial spirit and her ability to devise large-scale conquest. The long struggle had raised a generation of leaders who, accepting Greek culture personally, had learnt in politics to regulate their own Italian experience. They combined civil and military administration under a single conception of policy: 'to seal dominion with custom'. But how would they by the same arts settle freedom with peace on the subject peoples? The Romans spoke of justice, but they would find power tending to corrupt. Virgil appealed to Rome's destiny; Livy records her past achievements, and we open his pages here to follow the last stage of conquest.

### 3

In 201 B.C. Rome imposed a peace treaty limiting Carthage to her home territory and set up Masinissa of Numidia as a counterweight in Africa. The post-war settlement of the west would involve operations in Spain and Cisalpine Gaul as well as reconstruction in Italy. At this moment Rome intervened in Greece to start the train of events that would lead to the conquest of the east. The Hellenistic kings had been occupied chiefly with their own play of power. Philip V of Macedon threatened the states of Greece and the Aegean; Antiochus the Great, notable for his campaigning in Central Asia and his naval strength in the eastern Mediterranean, claimed his hereditary rights in Asia Minor and Thrace; Ptolemaic Egypt was weakened by internal conditions. The situation after the death of Ptolemy IV (Philopator) would allow Philip and Antiochus, if they agreed to respect each other's aims, to partition Egypt's external territories. Philip's aggression was resisted by Pergamum (under Attalus I) and Rhodes, both enjoying diplomatic relations with Rome. When they reported a pact between Philip and Antiochus, and Athens also appealed for help, the Senate decided on war. Why – when Rome had so much on her hands? The calculation was strategical, with a touch of rancour, and the action was 'preventive'. Philip was suspect: he must be stopped attempting with Antiochus what he had undertaken with Hannibal; Greece and the Aegean should be rendered neutral. However war-weary they might be, the Roman people would respond to a threat of invasion (p. 27). The Senate acted not from fear but with stern confidence. Its military organization had not slackened, and Philip's enemies would join in support; the appeal to them could be made in terms of Greek 'autonomy', defended against the monarchies (pp. II8–19). Did the Senate exaggerate the danger to Rome? The question is wrongly put. Rome had learnt to allow no strategic advantage, however slight, to any potential enemy. What she had not learnt was that victory might be paid for, expensively, at home – if civil strife is more savage than war!

In the Second Macedonian War (200–196 B.C.) Rome, Pergamum and Rhodes found allies in the Aetolian League and, after Philip V had alienated the Achaeans, also in the Achaean League. The course of Flamininus' command is marked as much by awkward diplomacy as by his military operations, especially where the Aetolians were involved. He defeated Philip at Cynoscephalae, imposed a Roman settlement, and proclaimed the 'Freedom of Greece'. Philip

was confined to Macedonia, the Aetolian League kept in its place; and the legions withdrew. What of Antiochus the Great? He had simply proceeded with his own policy in Asia Minor. His claim on hereditary rights may be briefly stated. Under the partition of Alexander's empire Lysimachus had received Thrace, where he founded Lysimachia. In 301 B.C. he joined Seleucus I to defeat Antigonus I at Ipsus and take western Asia Minor. In 281 at Corupedium Seleucus crushed Lysimachus and added his territories (including Thrace) to the Seleucid kingdom (p. 133). It was this battle that fixed the political boundaries of the Hellenistic world. Despite encroachments by Egypt and Macedon Antiochus, in accordance with Hellenistic convention, now pressed his Seleucid claims against the policy of Rome (p. 210). The Senate, after its Italian fashion, regarded its new position *vis-à-vis* Greece as constituting an informal 'protectorate', and Antiochus' arrival at the Aegean coast of Asia Minor led to stiff diplomatic exchanges with Rome; Pergamum and Rhodes felt themselves in danger. At this point the Aetolian League, dissatisfied with their treatment by the Senate, offered military support to Antiochus, and this brought on the Syrian War (191–188). Rome defeated the Aetolians and reduced them to dependent status. At Magnesia Scipio Africanus took the field against Antiochus, who had been joined by Hannibal, and he won the decisive battle. Antiochus renounced his claims in Asia Minor, where Pergamum and Rhodes gained territory; Philip V had supported Rome in Greece itself. Rome again withdrew her legions.

So much for the historical gist of what we shall be reading; it is also worth while to glance at the complex situation in the Peloponnese, where Philopoemen would handle Achaean policy against Nabis of Sparta and face the intrusive influence of Rome. By 250 B.C. Aratus of Sicyon had consolidated the Achaean League and introduced a policy of defence against Macedon and friendly association with Egypt. His aims were checked by the strength of Sparta under Cleomenes III, and he turned to Antigonus III (Dodon) of Macedon; Antigonus crushed Cleomenes at Sellasia in 222. In Sparta the period was one of social revolution and military activity, in which Cleomenes (235–222) restored the ancient 'Lycurgan' system and revived Spartan claims on power against Achaean. Ruling alone, in defiance of the tradition of dual kingship, he could be called 'tyrant'. In 219 Lycurgus, banishing the rival Agesipolis, also ruled alone and was succeeded formally by his young son Pelops; but Machanidas (210–207) took charge as 'tyrant'. Nabis (207–192), probably of royal descent, removed Pelops and ruled officially as king; his enemies regarded him as the worst of the 'tyrants'. Nabis had joined with the Aetolians as an ally of Rome in the Second Macedonian War, and he stressed this fact in defying Flaminius; but his position could be challenged as inconsistent with Rome's 'principle of autonomy' (cf. pp. 170 and 172ff.). The Achaeans welcomed the downfall of Nabis, but they in turn would have to struggle against Roman pressure on their Peloponnesian policy; it was during this period to his death in 182 B.C. that Philopoemen earned the right to be called 'the last of the Greeks' (cf. pp. 364ff., and 436ff.).

In describing all these events Livy (in Books XXXI–XXXVIII) has drawn fully on Polybius' authoritative *Histories*. The Greek historian (c. 200–c. 118 B.C.), a rising figure in Achaean politics, was deported and held in Rome after 168, but enjoyed the favour of the Scipionic family. His work was Roman in general perspective, Hellenistic in contemporary detail. Livy knew little of Hellenistic conditions, but his narrative preserves the evidence of Polybius where the original text of the *Histories* is fragmentary.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile in the west Rome was carrying out the immediate measures. The Cisalpine Gauls could no longer be allowed to threaten Italian life with their destructive incursions or the Ligurians to disrupt the coastal route to Massilia and Spain. From 201 B.C. onwards Livy records campaigning for some ten years against the Boii, Insubres and Cenomani, followed by military control and Italian settlement. It took twenty years to subdue the mountain Ligures. The Carthaginian withdrawal had left Spain in disorder. The country comprised terrain of two kinds: the settled coastal area and the central plateau held by the warlike Celtiberian tribes; and military control required a double command. The Senate first appointed special proconsuls and then defined two provinces. In 195 Cato as consul organized regular administration. Campaigning in Celtiberia lasted until Sempronius Gracchus (180–179) defeated the tribes and negotiated a liberal peace that would continue for a generation. In Africa Hannibal led Carthage towards recovery at home, before he had to leave the city, while Masinissa extended Numidian power at Carthaginian expense (197–193).<sup>7</sup> Livy describes all these operations on the basis of Roman information, often in short reports, sometimes in detailed episodes when Cato, Sempronius Gracchus and Hannibal were prominent. There is evidence for two Annalistic sources, and the reader may be puzzled by Livy's discrepancies. One example will serve to illustrate the case. The regular governors in Spain were elected 'praetors' to exercise 'proconsular' authority (*imperium*) on taking over their province. One source kept the 'praetor' designation throughout, the other changed it to 'proconsul' in the province itself, both consistent in their usage. Livy simply copied whatever he had before him.

The lines of administration radiated from the city of Rome, and Livy gives the routine items of yearly business: election of magistrates, appointment to commands, allocation of troops, expiation of prodigies, as well as the reception of foreign envoys and so on. This is essential recording, but it makes for dull reading. One is tempted to tabulate it. Yet the procedure was ceremonial, even ritualistic, and Livy retains the effect (he liked prodigy lists p. 546). The formal writing, duly elaborated, becomes significant in introducing a major event, e.g. the wars against Philip V (p. 26) and Antiochus (p. 235ff.). Affairs in Rome, however, did not exclude a variety of interest, to which Livy devoted his best description. Questions of policy might be publicly discussed (recall the case against Philip V: p. 27) or legislation debated, as when Cato attacked a proposal to repeal the Oppian law of 215 B.C. that limited women's adornment (p. 141ff.). There were electoral rivalries and competition for honours (especially the military 'triumph'), intensified by personal animosity; note Furius Purpurio's Gallic triumph (p. 68f.), Manlius Volso's Galatian triumph (p. 377ff.), and above all the feud between M. Aemilius Lepidus and M. Fulvius Nobilior, reconciled as joint censors in 179 B.C. (pp. 375 and 474f.). Such occasions allowed the use of speeches, and Roman oratory was highly developed, not least in Livy's composition. We may follow the fortunes of his leading characters in special passages: the meeting of Hannibal and Scipio Africanus (p. 208), Scipio Africanus in his political downfall (p. 385ff.), and Cato's famous censorship (p. 431ff.).

In Italy the Senate had not only to adjust peace-time relations with the confederacy: the movement of population into the cities, especially at Rome, had also brought social problems

Shortage of money was eased by the profits of the eastern wars, which replenished the empty treasury, allowing repayment of special war taxation. It is interesting to observe the signs of wealth in the triumphs of Flamininus (p. 187f.) and Manlius Vulso (p. 400); Livy observes that Manlius Vulso's display marks the introduction of eastern luxury to Rome. But there were other influences at work, and Livy gives a full account of the repression in 186 of the Bacchic cult rites ('Bacchanalia'), which were now regarded as scandalous and subversive (p. 401ff.); this is a brilliant piece of social description, with a romantic theme. Equally remarkable is the statement by the centurion Spurius Ligustinus of his military record from 200 to 179: he had served against Philip V and Antiochus as well as with Cato and Sempronius Gracchus in Spain (p. 517f.); the plain blunt style is characteristic of the veteran soldier. Livy contrasts the hard Ligurian warfare with the soft life of Manlius Vulso's army in terms of discipline (p. 400), and Cato would boast that his censorship had saved Rome from moral collapse.

## 5

After Antiochus' defeat Philip V, who had received small thanks for standing by Rome, began to consolidate the position of Macedon in the Balkans and regained a measure of influence, though not power, in Greece. Livy's narrative in [Books XXXIX-XL](#) gives a clear account of the situation, at least as Polybius saw it. In particular, the tragic story of rivalry within the Macedonian court between Philip's sons, Perseus and Demetrius, for succession to the throne is treated in dramatic style. On Philip's death in 179 B.C. Perseus continued his policy in Macedonia and displayed his own interest in Greek affairs with less caution. The Senate, which had favoured Demetrius, became increasingly suspicious of Macedonian policy, and Eumenes of Pergamum felt it a threat to his position in the Aegean. He appealed to Rome's power over Greece, carrying charges against Perseus to the Senate, and this brought on the Third Macedonian War (171–167). In [Books XLI-XLV](#) (the text has gaps) Livy describes the tortuous course of events to their climax in the victory of Pydna and the Roman peace that destroyed the Antigonid monarchy: Macedonia was divided in four republics. Both Pergamum and Rhodes in their turn had lost favour at Rome: Eumenes found Roman diplomacy working against his interests in Asia Minor, while the Rhodians narrowly escaped direct punishment (p. 615ff.). Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt had taken no part in the war but resumed their old hostility. When Antiochus IV stood outside Alexandria, a Roman envoy, Popillius Laenas, despatched to enforce peace, ordered the king to retire and drew a line around him in the sand: 'Answer the Senate,' he said, 'before you step out of this circle.' (p. 611.)

Let us note some significant features that illustrate the last stage of Roman conquest. The Senate had not forgotten the earlier aggressiveness of Macedon under Philip V, and became the more easily suspicious of Perseus. As regards the Greek states the best diplomatic method of winning their support might stress 'autonomy', but the Roman practice was based on Italian experience. Like a 'patron' with his 'clients', the Senate tacitly assumed that inter-state relations would recognize Roman leadership. The Greeks, especially the Aetolian League and Macedon, had failed to grasp the implications of what, in effect, was an informal 'protectorate'; their misunderstanding might appear defiant (cf. p. 264f.). Rome's response was to impose her will, and thus to hold dominion. As the field of policy expanded and

diplomacy became more varied, the Roman commanders and envoys had to apply the rules at their own discretion. Their personal standards of conduct were tested, above all in the East, under fresh conditions which allowed scope for unscrupulous action. When Marcius Philippus in 171 B.C. boasted that he had deceived Perseus by a truce that would gain time for better preparations against him, the elder senators condemned this 'new wisdom' as a violation of the traditional code of honour (p. 531). Then, as the war dragged on, morale at home declined and the troops lost their discipline. Aemilius Paulus, indeed, after warning the people against idle criticism (p. 573), had to train his army in the field before he could move against Perseus (p. 584); and even on his victorious return to Rome his triumph was marred by attacks on his old-fashioned severity in commanding and rewarding his soldiers (p. 635ff). The speeches here are masterpieces of historical oratory. Whatever lapses in conduct he had to report, however, Livy could still regard this period as one of traditional achievement, exemplified at its close in the character of Aemilius Paulus.

## 6

Our introduction to the historical subject-matter has gone far to treat Livy's literary composition. He used two Roman Annalists, Valerius Antias and Claudius Quadrigarius, both of whom wrote c. 70 B.C.<sup>8</sup> By this time the *Annales Maximi* of P. Mucius Scaevola (Pontifex Maximus 130–c. 115) had provided a systematic, though bare, framework of annual public records, which could be supplemented from constitutional and antiquarian studies. The Annalists turned this material into literary history, not without factual error, political bias, and false elaboration. Valerius Antias often wrote wildly; Claudius used 'the Greek work' of Acilius (c. 142 B.C.; cf. p. 208), a senator who could have described episodes of our period. Livy thus found ready-made information on the Roman side, and he also mentions Cato.<sup>9</sup> For eastern affairs, as we have seen, he relied on Polybius. Polybius, it should be noted, had divided his narrative under years, but he used the Olympiad year (autumn to autumn) : Livy equates it with the Roman official year at that time, viz. March to March, which explains some discrepancies. However this may be, the 'Polybian' parts – as he recognized – add source detail as well as colour and variety to his long work.

With regard to style we may recall the influence of rhetorical training, for it taught general literary method as well as the rules of oratory. History was included on the grounds that, once the material was collected, it had to be presented clearly and intelligibly to the reader; the writing should be adapted to the various effects of the narrative, thus the formal sections would have their 'official' imprint, with technical vocabulary; political and military situations would be described methodically. Where an event was dramatic the stage would be set, the action sharply drawn; and where it was tragic the emotional impact would be conveyed by visual depiction. Whenever leading actors took the stage they were given speeches which would reflect their character and conduct. And so on – but no further here. Livy was the master of his literary craft, and he also had the power and the art to make his own impression, if not as a critical historian, certainly as a great historical author who could sustain and diversify a major work.<sup>10</sup>

The present books, as Livy foresaw, were a formidable test. Yet they were read in late

Roman antiquity by pagan senators, for the same reason that had moved him to write them, as the 'Old Testament' of their tradition. That motive lost its force during the Middle Ages; then in the Renaissance the interest of 'Humanist' circles in Rome and the discovery of Latin manuscripts extended the study of Livy. In 1328 Petrarch at Avignon, using a copy of a Chartres manuscript, introduced [Books XXXI-XL](#) (lacking [Bk XXXIII](#)) to the cultivated readers; they were translated by Bersuire in France and Boccaccio in Italy. Copying increased until c. 1400 it was a chief activity of Florentine scholarship. When the text was printed in 1469 it ran into many revised editions. German scholars on the Rhine, in the time of Erasmus, next played a part. In 1519 Carbach added most of [Book XXXIII](#), on the basis of a Mainz manuscript; in 1531 Grynaeus added [Books XLI-XLV](#) from an ancient Lorsch manuscript; in 1535 Gelenius used a Speyer manuscript in editing the text at Basle. [Book XXXIII](#) was not completed until 1615 from a Bamberg manuscript of the eleventh century.<sup>11</sup>

So much for the preservation of the narrative, but it would be a pity to pass over two discoveries of our own century, which take us back to c. 500. In 1904 at Bamberg the librarian found fragments of the manuscript from which the later copy had been made. The Emperor Otto III had received it in North Italy and his successor Henry II gave it to the new Bamberg bishopric in 1007; the fragments lay in a book binding. In 1906 fragments of a splendid old manuscript appeared in the *Sancta Sanctorum* of St John Lateran in Rome; they had been used in the eighth century to wrap relics of the Holy Land – a far cry from Livy and the pagan senators of ancient Rome.

A.H.McD.

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Where the text is defective the translator has supplied a sentence to continue the sense of the passage. The sentences are printed in italics between square brackets to distinguish them from the rest of the text.



# **PART I**

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**201–192 B.C.**

## **The Second Macedonian War Gaul, Liguria and Spain**

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## BOOK XXXI

1. I have reached the end of the Punic Wars; and this gives me a feeling of personal satisfaction, as if I myself had shared in its hardships and dangers. Now it is true that I was bold enough to profess the intention of writing a complete account of Roman history; and therefore it would ill become me to show exhaustion in the separate sections of this great undertaking. And yet the sixty-three years from the First Punic War to the end of the Second have taken up as many volumes as the 488 years from the foundation of the city to the consulship of Appius Claudius, who began the first hostilities against the Carthaginians; and when this fact comes home to me, I feel like someone who has been introduced into shallow waters near the shore and is now advancing into the sea. I picture myself being led on into vaster, one might say unplumbable, depths with every forward step. The task undertaken seemed to grow less with the completion of each of the early stages; now, in anticipation, it seems almost to increase as I proceed.

[201 B.C.] The peace with Carthage was followed by the war with Macedon. This latter conflict was in no way comparable with the Punic Wars for the gravity of the peril, either in respect of the qualities of the enemy commander, or by reason of the fighting strength of the troops engaged; and yet it had a claim to fame almost greater, because of the ancient renown of the Macedonian nation, and the vast extent of their empire, which gave them possession, by conquest, of large tracts of Europe, and the greater part of Asia. War against Philip had already begun, almost ten years ago; but hostilities had been broken off three years before the present date, the Aetolians being responsible for both the war and the peace. But now the Romans had their hands free, as a result of the peace with Carthage: they were incensed against Philip because of the treachery shown in the peace he had concluded with the Aetolians and the other allies in that part of the world, and also on account of the reinforcements, and the supplies of money, recently dispatched to Africa in aid of Hannibal and the Carthaginians. And now Rome was aroused to renew the war by the entreaties of the Athenians, who had been driven into their city by the devastation of their countryside.

2. At about the same time there arrived envoys from King Attalus of Pergamum and from the Rhodians, with the news that the cities of Asia were also being harassed. These deputations received the reply that the Senate would give earnest attention to this state of affairs; and the question of the Macedonian war was referred to the consuls,<sup>2</sup> who at that time were in their provinces, for them to reopen the discussion of the matter. Meanwhile, three envoys were dispatched to Ptolemy (V), King of Egypt. These were Gaius Claudius Nero, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, and Publius Sempronius Tuditanus, and their instructions were to inform the king of the Roman victory over Hannibal and the Carthaginians, and to thank him for remaining loyal to Rome when the situation was critical, at a time when even Rome's neighbouring allies were deserting her cause. They were also to beg him to maintain this former attitude towards the Roman people, if their wrongs compelled the Romans to take up arms against Philip.

At about this time the consul Publius Aelius was in Gaul, where he learnt that before his

arrival the Boii had raided the territories of Rome's allies. Accordingly he enrolled two scratch legions to deal with the disturbance, adding to them four cohorts from his own army; he then ordered Gaius Ampius, commander of the allied forces, to invade the territory of the Boii with this improvised force, proceeding by way of Umbria, through the region called Tribus Sapia.<sup>3</sup> Aelius himself made for the same destination by an open route through the mountains. On entering the enemy's territory, Ampius started plundering operations, which were carried out at first with great success and without serious casualties. But later on he chose a spot near the fortified town of Mutilum as a promising place for harvesting the crop, the corn being already ripe; and he embarked on the task without reconnoitring the district, and without putting out pickets in sufficient strength to remain under arms and protect the unarmed troops engaged in reaping. The Gauls made an unexpected attack, and Ampius, with his harvesters, was surrounded. Thereupon the armed men also were seized with panic and took to their heels; and as many as 7,000 men, dispersed among the cornfields, were slain, including their commanding officer, Ampius himself. Terror drove the rest into the camp. Finding themselves without any appointed leader, the soldiers came to a general agreement, and left the camp, abandoning a great part of their equipment, to find their way to the consul by well-nigh impassable tracks through the mountains. The consul, for his part, returned to Rome without achieving anything worth recording in his sphere of command, apart from ravaging the territory of the Boii and making a treaty with the Ingauni, a Ligurian tribe.

3. At the first meeting of the Senate called by the consul, there was a unanimous demand that the matter of Philip and the grievances of the allies should have precedence over all other business. This question was accordingly brought before the house and a full meeting of the Senate decided that the consul, Publius Aelius, should send a man of his own choosing, vested with the *imperium*<sup>4</sup>, to take over the fleet brought back from Sicily by Gnaeus Octavius, and to cross over to Macedonia. Marcus Valerius Laevinus was sent, as propraetor; and near Vibo he took over from Gnaeus Octavius thirty-eight ships, which he conveyed to Macedonia; there he was visited by the legate Marcus Aurelius.<sup>5</sup> Aurelius gave him full information about the strength of the armies mustered by the king, and the number of his ships, explaining that the king had summoned men to arms from the islands, as well as from the mainland cities, partly by personal visits, partly by means of his representatives. It was clear to both of them that Rome must put a greater effort into the prosecution of this war; otherwise, Rome's hesitation might lead Philip to take the bold step previously taken by Pyrrhus, on the basis of a kingdom considerably smaller; and they decided that Aurelius should write a dispatch to the same effect for the information of the consuls and the Senate.

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5. [200 B.C.] In the year 551 A.U.C., when Publius Sulpicius Galba and Gaius Aurelius Cottus were consuls, war was begun against King Philip, a few months after peace had been granted to the Carthaginians. On the Ides of March, which at that period was the day for entering the consulship, the consul Publius Sulpicius put this matter to the Senate before any other business; and the house passed a motion that the consuls should first do sacrifice to gods of their own choosing, with the greater victims, using this form of prayer: 'May heaven prosper with good success, for the Roman people, their allies, and the allies of Latin status,<sup>6</sup> all the measures that the Senate and people intend to take for the good of the commonwealth in the

undertaking of this new war.’ After this sacrifice and prayer the consuls were to consult the Senate about measures for the safety of the country, and on the question of their spheres of command.

About this time the dispatches arrived from the legate, Marcus Aurelius, and the propraetor, Marcus Valerius Laevinus, at just the right moment to inflame feelings in support of war; a deputation also reached Rome from Athens, with the news that the king was approaching Athenian territory, and that the countryside, and indeed the city itself, would shortly pass under his control unless some assistance from Rome were forthcoming. The consuls had already informed the Senate that the act of worship had been duly performed and that the soothsayer reported the god’s acceptance of their supplication; there were favourable signs in the sacrificial entrails, and portents signifying an extension of Rome’s frontiers and a triumphant victory. Thereupon the dispatches of Valerius and Aurelius were read out, and an audience was granted to the Athenian envoys. Then a resolution was passed to express thanks to the allies for their continued loyalty during a long period of harassment, a loyalty unshaken even by the threat of siege. It was decided to give the reply about the dispatch of help as soon as the consuls had cast lots for their spheres of command, and when the consul on whom the responsibility for Macedonia devolved had brought before the people the proposal for the declaration of war against Philip, King of Macedon.

6. As it turned out, the responsibility for Macedonia fell to the lot of Publius Sulpicius, and he brought before the people the following motion: ‘That it is the will and command of the people that war should be declared on Philip, King of Macedon, and on the Macedonians under his rule, because of the wrongs inflicted on the allies of the Roman people, and the acts of war committed against them.’

The other consul, Aurelius, received Italy as his sphere of command. The sortition of the praetors followed: Gaius Sergius Plautus was allotted the praetorship of the city; Quintus Fulvius Gillo was to be responsible for Sicily; Minucius Rufus for Bruttium, Lucius Furius Purpurio for Gaul. The proposal about the Macedonian War was rejected at the first assembly by almost all the centuries.<sup>7</sup> This was partly a spontaneous reaction of men who were tired of perils and hardships, exhausted as they were by a war which had lasted so long and had proved so burdensome; but it was also due to the activities of Quintus Baebius, a tribune of the plebs. He had embarked on the traditional course of attacking the senators, with the complaint that war followed war without a break, so that the plebs could never enjoy the blessings of peace. The Senate could not tolerate this behaviour; the tribune was lashed by censures in the Senate, where senator after senator called upon their consul to proclaim a fresh assembly for the passing of this measure. They urged him to reprove the people for their supineness, and to explain to them the injury to Rome’s interests and to her reputation which would result from this postponement of hostilities.

7. At the assembly in the Campus Martius the consul summoned the people for an informal address, before calling on the centuries to give their votes; and he spoke to them in these terms:

‘It seems to me, citizens, that you fail to understand that you are not being asked to decide whether you will choose war or peace; for Philip will not leave the choice open to you, seeing that he is actively preparing for unlimited hostilities on land and sea. What you are asked to decide is whether you will transport legions to Macedonia or allow the enemy into

Italy; and the difference this makes is a matter of your own experience in the recent Punic Wars, even if it had not been brought home to you on other occasions. Can there be any doubt that if we had brought vigorous assistance to the Saguntines when, under siege, they implored us to keep faith with them; if we had helped them, as our fathers helped the Mamertines, we should have diverted all the fighting to Spain, whereas by our hesitation we allowed it to enter Italy, bringing untold disaster to us. Now as for this Philip, our present adversary, we have, beyond doubt, succeeded in keeping him confined to Macedonia, in spite of his contract, made with Hannibal by means of envoys and letters, to transfer himself to Italy. This we did by sending Laevinus with a fleet, to take the initiative in hostilities against him; and we did this at a time when we had Hannibal as an enemy on Italian soil. But now that we have driven Hannibal from our land and have crushed the Carthaginians, are we hesitating to take the same course? Suppose that we allow the king to have experience of our reluctance to act, by letting him take Athens – which is what we did when Hannibal sacked Saguntum. It took Hannibal four months to reach Italy from Saguntum; but Philip, if we let him, will arrive four days after he sets sail from Corinth.

‘Let us have no comparison of Philip with Hannibal, of the Macedonians with the Carthaginians: however, you will, no doubt, see a parallel between Philip and Pyrrhus. Did I say a parallel? What a vast difference there is between the two men, and between the two nations! Epirus always has been, and still remains, an inconsiderable attachment to the Macedonian empire; whereas Philip has the whole Peloponnese under his sway, including Argos, the city which by the death of Pyrrhus won a fame equal to its ancient renown. And now compare our situation at that time and at this. When Pyrrhus attacked us, how much more flourishing was the condition of Italy: how much more unimpaired were its resources! We had all our commanders still with us, and all those armies which were later wiped out in the Punic Wars. Yet Pyrrhus struck us a shattering blow; and he almost reached Rome itself in his victorious course. And it was not only the people of Tarentum that went over to this side, together with that coast of Italy called “Greater Greece”. Had it been so, we might have supposed that they were attracted by a common language, and by the name of Pyrrhus. But in fact the Lucanians, the Bruttii and the Samnites also defected from us. Do you imagine that they would remain passive, that they would continue loyal to us, if Philip were to cross over to Italy? It is true that those peoples remained loyal to us on the later occasion of the Punic War: but they will never fail to break away from us, provided there is someone at hand to whom they can transfer their allegiance. If you had shirked crossing over to Africa you would today have Hannibal and the Carthaginians as enemies on Italian soil.

‘Let Macedonia, instead of Italy, be the scene of the fighting; let it be the cities and the countryside of the enemy that suffer the devastation of fire and sword. We have already found by experience that our arms are more effective and successful abroad than they are at home; and so, give your votes now, with the gracious help of the gods, and by your votes support the resolution of the Senate. It is not just the consul who puts forward this motion; it has the backing of the immortal gods; for when I made sacrifice, with a prayer that this war should be blessed with good success for me, for the Senate, for you, for our allies and those of Latin status, for our fleets and our armies, the gods gave omens of a joyful and prosperous issue.’

8. The vote was taken immediately after this speech, and the people’s voice was for war,

accordance with the consul's proposal. Thereupon, a supplication of three days duration was proclaimed, in fulfilment of a resolution of the Senate, and petitions were offered to the gods around all their shrines that the war against Philip, sanctioned by the people, might have a successful outcome. The consul Sulpicius asked the fetial priests<sup>8</sup> for their ruling on the question whether the declaration of war on King Philip should be actually conveyed to the king himself, or whether it would suffice to proclaim it in the nearest stronghold within the king's territory. The decision of the fetials was that the consul would be justified in taking either course; and the Senate entrusted the consul with the task of sending an envoy, chosen by himself from outside the ranks of the Senate, to declare war on the king.

The Senate then proceeded to the question of the provision of armies for the consuls and praetors; and the consuls were given authority to enrol two legions each and to discharge the veteran troops; but since Sulpicius had been entrusted with the command in a new war of such importance, he was given permission to enlist what volunteers he could from the army which Publius Scipio had brought home from Africa; however, no volunteers were to be enrolled against their will. The praetors Furius Purpurio and Quintus Minucius Rufus were each to receive from the consuls 5,000 allied troops of Latin status, and with these garrisons they were to control their respective provinces of Gaul and Bruttium. Quintus Fulvius Gillo was similarly empowered to select soldiers from the army which Publius Aelius had commanded as consul, choosing those who had served for the shortest time, until he also had attained the complement of 5,000 men from the allies and those of Latin status. This was to form the garrison for the provinces of Sicily. Marcus Valerius Faeto who as praetor had been in charge of Campania the year before, had his command extended for a year so that he could cross over to Sardinia as propraetor. He also was to enrol from the army there a force of 5,000 men of allied or Latin status, selecting those who had served the shortest time. The consuls were also empowered to enrol two city legions to be sent wherever the situation demanded, since many peoples in Italy had been affected by their involvement in the Punic War and were seething with resentment. Thus Rome was intending to employ six legions in that year.

9. While these warlike preparations were afoot, envoys arrived from King Ptolemy with the news that Athens had sought the king's help against Philip, but that although Athens and Egypt were joint allies of Rome, the king would send neither a fleet nor an army to Greece either to defend or to attack anyone, unless he had authority from the Roman people; he would either remain inactive in his own realm, if the Romans chose to defend their allies, or would allow the Romans to take no action, if they so preferred, and would himself send such supporting forces as would easily defend Athens against Philip. The Senate expressed its gratitude to the king, and affirmed that the Roman people had every intention of ensuring the safety of its allies. If they should need anything for this war, they would let the king know, with the confidence that the resources of his realm were sure and reliable supports for the republic...

10. While all attention was focused on the Macedonian War, there came a sudden report of an uprising in Gaul, which was the last thing they feared at that particular moment. The Insubres, the Cenomani, and the Boii had stirred up the Celines, the Ilvates and the other Ligurian peoples, and under the leadership of the Carthaginian Hamilcar, a survivor of Hasdrubal's army who had remained in those parts,<sup>9</sup> the rebels had attacked Placentia. They

sacked the city and burned down the greater part of it in their fury; leaving scarcely 2,000 survivors among the burning ruins they proceeded to cross the Po, intending to sack Cremona. The news of the disaster to the neighbouring city came in time to allow the colonists to shut their gates and set guards on their walls, thus ensuring that, at worst, a siege would precede the taking of their city, and giving them the chance to send messengers to the Roman praetor. Lucius Furius Purpurio was commander in that area at the time; he had disbanded all his army, on the Senate's instructions, except for 5,000 men of the allies and of the Latin status. With these forces he had taken up a position near Ariminum, in the district of the province nearest to Rome; and he now sent a dispatch to the Senate describing the disturbed condition of the region. He reported that, of the two colonies which had escaped the tremendous storm of the Punic War, one had been taken and sacked by the enemy; the other was being attacked. His own army would be insufficient to go to the rescue of the colonists in their desperate need – unless the Senate wished to offer 5,000 allies for slaughter by 40,000 of the enemy (that was the number under arms), and to allow the morale of that enemy, already enhanced by the destruction of a Roman colony, to be further heightened by a disaster of such magnitude to the praetor's own forces.

11. After the reading of this dispatch, the Senate voted that the consul Gaius Aurelius should give orders that the army which, by his edict, was to assemble in Etruria on a stated day, should muster instead at Ariminum on that day, and that either Aurelius himself should set out to suppress the Gallic revolt, if the national interests made it possible, or else he should send word to the praetor that when the legions from Etruria reached him he should send in exchange the 5,000 allied troops to act as a garrison for Etruria in the meantime, and that Furius himself should set out to raise the siege of the colony. The Senate also voted that envoys should be sent to Africa on a mission both to Carthage and to Masinissa in Numidia. They were to inform the Carthaginians that Hamilcar, their fellow citizen who had been left behind in Gaul (it was not certain whether he was from Hasdrubal's expedition or the later expedition of Mago) was making war in defiance of the treaty, and had raised armies of Gauls and Ligurians against the Roman people; if the Carthaginians desired peace they must recall him and hand him over to the Roman people. At the same time the envoys were bidden to point out that the Roman deserters had not all been handed over; in fact report said that a large number of them were living at Carthage without concealment. These people were to be tracked down and arrested, for restoration to Rome in fulfilment of the terms of the treaty.

Such were the instructions given to the envoys in respect of Carthage. As for Masinissa, they were bidden to congratulate him on the recovery of his ancestral kingdom and, further, on its enlargement by the addition of the most prosperous part of the domains of Syphax.<sup>10</sup> They were also told to report the beginning of war against King Philip, because he had actively supported Carthage, and by wrongful aggression against the allies of the Roman people at such a time when war was raging in Italy, he had compelled the dispatch of fleets and armies to Greece; by which diversion of Roman resources he had been the principal cause of delay in the invasion of Africa. They were to ask Masinissa to support Rome in this war by supplying Numidian cavalry. The envoys were given lavish gifts for presentation to the king: gold and silver vessels, a purple toga, a tunic embroidered with palm leaves together with an ivory sceptre, and a *toga praetexta*, together with a curule chair.<sup>11</sup> They were instructed to promise the king that if he indicated anything he needed to secure and enlarge his dominion.

the Roman people would spare no effort to supply it in return for his services.

At about this time a deputation reached the Senate from Vermina, son of Syphax, charged with excuses for his mistakes on the ground of his youth, and laying all the blame on the bad faith of the Carthaginians. Masinissa, they pleaded, had changed from an enemy of Rome into a friend; Vermina on his part would make every effort not to be outdone by Masinissa, or by anyone else, in dutiful service to the Roman people; and they asked that he should receive from the Senate the title of 'king, ally, and friend'. The Senate's reply was that his father Syphax had been an 'ally and friend' and had suddenly and groundlessly changed into an enemy of the Roman people; and Vermina himself had served his apprenticeship in harassing the Romans in war. His first step, therefore, must be to supplicate the Roman people for peace, before asking for the title of 'king, ally, and friend'; the honour of this appellation was normally granted by the Roman people in recognition of exceptional services rendered to Rome by kings. Roman envoys, they told him, would soon arrive in Africa, with instructions from the Senate to grant terms of peace to Vermina, and he was to leave complete discretion on those terms to the Roman people; if he wished any addition, deletion, or alteration in the terms he would have to make a fresh request to the Senate. The names of the envoys sent to Africa with these instructions were: Gaius Terentius Varro, Spurius Lucretius, and Gnaeus Octavius. A quinquereme was allotted to each of them.

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14. Publius Sulpicius, after the pronouncement of vows on the Capitol, left the city with his lictors in military uniform, and arrived at Brundisium. There he enrolled in the legions veteran volunteers from the African army and selected ships from the fleet of Gnaeus Cornelius; he then set sail from Brundisium and crossed to Macedonia, arriving there two days later, and he was met on his arrival by envoys from Athens, who begged him to raise the siege of their city. Sulpicius instantly sent to Athens Gaius Claudius Cento with twenty warships and a thousand soldiers.

King Philip, it should be explained,<sup>12</sup> was not directing the siege of Athens in person; he was chiefly concerned at that time with the attack on Abydus and had already tried conclusions in naval battles with the Rhodians and with Attalus, meeting with little success in either of these engagements. Nevertheless, his spirits remained high, not only because of his natural buoyancy but also because of a treaty concluded with Antiochus, King of Syria, by which they agreed to divide between them the wealth of Egypt; for both of them had been casting eager eyes on that wealth since the news had come of the death of King Ptolemy [IV].

Now the Athenians had taken on the war against Philip for no adequate reason, seeing that they preserved nothing of their old greatness – apart from their proud spirit. During the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries,<sup>13</sup> two young men of Acarnania, who were not initiates, had followed the crowd and had entered the temple of Ceres without realizing their sacrilege. They were easily betrayed by their conversation, since they asked some pointless questions, and they were brought before the priests of the temple; and although it was obvious that they had come in by mistake, they were put to death, as if for an unspeakable crime. The Acarnanians reported this shocking and hostile act to Philip and persuaded him to send them Macedonian reinforcements and to allow them to make war on Athens. This army at first ravaged Attica with fire and sword and returned to Acarnania with all kinds of booty



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