city. In these circumstances, Quintus Fabius Maximus[4] put forward some proposals: riders, he suggested, lightly equipped, should be sent out along the Appian and Latin Ways[5] to question any survivors they might meet roaming the countryside, and report any tidings they could get from them of what had happened to the consuls and the armies. If the gods, in pity for the empire, had suffered any of the Roman name to survive, they should inquire where they were, where Hannibal went after the battle, what his plans were, what he was doing, and what he was likely to do next. The task of collecting this information should be entrusted to vigorous and active men. There was also a task, Fabius suggested, for the Senate itself to perform, as there was a lack of public officers: this was, to get rid of the general confusion in the city and restore some sort of order. Women must be forbidden to appear out of doors, and compelled to stay in their homes; family mourning should be checked, and silence imposed everywhere; anyone with news to report should be taken to the praetors, and all individuals should await in their homes the news which personally concerned them. Furthermore, guards should be posted at the gates to prevent anyone from leaving the city, and every man and woman should be made to believe that there was no hope of safety except within the walls of Rome. Once, he ended, the present noise and disorder were under control, then would be the proper time to recall the Senate and debate measures for defence.

The proposals of Fabius won unanimous support. The city magistrates cleared the crowds out of the forum and the senators went off to restore some sort of order in the streets. . . .

How much more serious was the defeat at Cannae than those which had preceded it can be seen by the behaviour of Rome's allies: before that fatal day their loyalty had remained unshaken; now it began to waver, for the simple reason that they despaired of the survival of Roman power. The following peoples went over to the Carthaginian cause: the Atellani, Calatini, Hirpini, some of the Apulians, all the Samnites except the Pentri, the Bruttii, the Lucanians, the Uzentini, and nearly all the Greek settlements on the coast, namely Tarentum, Metapontum, Croton, and Locri, and all the Gauls on the Italian side of the Alps.

But neither the defeats they had suffered nor the subsequent defection of all these allied peoples moved the Romans ever to breathe a word about peace.

[4]Fabius (Quintus Fabius Maximum Verrucosus, nicknamed "the Delayer," d. 203 B.C.) was elected consul several times, but his tactics in trying to avoid pitched battles displeased the Romans. However, Fabius' successors were totally defeated at Cannae, and Fabius, elected consul for the fifth time, recaptured Tarentum in 209.

[5]The Appian Way, parts of which exist today, was the main highway from Rome southward to Campania. The Latin Way (Via Latina), a parallel route, passed through hill towns before rejoining the Appian Way.

Appian of Alexandria
THE THIRD PUNIC WAR: THE DESTRUCTION OF CARTHAGE

Despite his brilliant victory at Cannae, Hannibal lacked the manpower to deal Rome a knockout blow, and the Romans, respecting Hannibal's generalship, refused to engage his army in another major encounter. Finally, when Rome invaded North Africa and threatened Carthage, Hannibal quit Italy to defend his homeland and was defeated at the battle of Zama in 202 B.C.

Although Carthage, now a second-rate power, no longer posed a threat, Rome started the Third Punic War in 149 B.C. Driven by old hatreds and the traumatic memory of Hannibal's near conquest of Italy, Rome resolved to destroy Carthage. After Carthage fell in 146 B.C., Rome sold the survivors into slavery, obliterated the city, and turned the land into a province, which was named Africa. The savage and irrational behavior of Rome toward a helpless Carthage showed an early deterioration in senatorial leadership. In the following passage, Appian of Alexandria (A.D. 95–c. 165) describes the destruction of Carthage by the Romans under Scipio Aemilianus (185–129 B.C.).

Now Scipio hastened to the attack of Byrsa, the strongest part of the city [of Carthage], where the greater part of the inhabitants had taken refuge. There were three streets ascending from the forum to this fortress, along which, on either side, were houses built closely together and six stories high, from which the Romans were assailed with missiles. They were compelled, therefore, to possess themselves of the first ones and use those as a means of expelling the occupants of the next. When they had mastered the first, they threw timbers from one to another over the narrow passageways, and crossed as on bridges. While war was raging in this way on the roofs, another fight was going on among those who met each other in the streets below. All places were filled with groans, shrieks, shouts, and every kind of agony. Some were stabbed, others were hurled alive from the roofs to the pavement, some of them alighting on the heads of spears or other pointed weapons, or swords. No one dared to set fire to the houses on account of those who were still on the roofs, until Scipio reached Byrsa. Then he set fire to the three streets all together, and gave orders to keep the passageways clear of burning material so that the army might move back and forth freely.

Then came new scenes of horror. As the fire spread and carried everything down, the soldiers did not wait to destroy the buildings little by little, but all in a heap. So the crashing grew louder, and many corpses fell with the stones into the midst. Others were seen still living, especially old men, women, and young children who had hidden in the inmost nooks of the houses, some of them wounded, some more or less burned, and uttering piteous cries. Still others, thrust out and falling from such a height with the stones, timbers, and fire, were torn asunder in all shapes of horror, crushed and mangled. Nor was this the end of their miseries, for the street cleaners, who were removing the rubbish with axes, mattocks, and forks, and making the roads passable, tossed with these instruments the dead and the living together into holes in the ground, dragging them along like sticks and stones and turning them over with their iron tools. Trenches were filled with men. Some who were thrown in head foremost, with their legs sticking out of the ground, writhed a long time. Others fell with their feet downward and their heads above ground. Horses ran over them, crushing their faces and skulls, not purposely on the part of the riders, but in their headlong haste. Nor did the street cleaners do these things on purpose; but the tug of war, the glory of approaching victory, the rush of the soldiery, the orders of the officers, the blast of the trumpets, tribunes and centurions[1] marching their cohorts hither and thither—all together made everybody frantic and heedless of the spectacles under their eyes.

Six days and nights were consumed in this kind of fighting, the soldiers being changed

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[1]Centurions were noncommissioned officers, each commanding a hundred men; attached to each legion were six military tribunes, who had been voted in by the citizens of Rome in the general elections.

so that they might not be worn out with toil, slaughter, want of sleep, and these horrid sights. . . .

Scipio, beholding this city, which had flourished 700 years from its foundation and had ruled over so many lands, islands, and seas, rich with arms and fleets, elephants and money, equal to the mightiest monarchies but far surpassing them in bravery and high spirit (since without ships or arms, and in the face of famine, it had sustained continuous war for three years), now come to its end in total destruction—Scipio, beholding this spectacle, is said to have shed tears and publicly lamented the fortune of the enemy. After meditating by himself a long time and reflecting on the rise and fall of cities, nations, and empires, as well as of individuals, upon the fate of Troy, that once proud city, upon that of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians, greatest of all, and later the splendid Macedonian empire, either voluntarily or otherwise the words of the poet escaped his lips:—

> "The day shall come in which our
> sacred Troy
> And Priam,[2] and the people over
> whom
> Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall
> perish all."
> (*Iliad*. vi, 448, 449;
> Bryant's translation.)

Being asked by Polybius in familiar conversation (for Polybius had been his tutor) what he meant by using these words, he said that he did not hesitate frankly to name his own country, for whose fate he feared when he considered the mutability of human affairs. And Polybius wrote this down just as he heard it.

[2]Priam, in Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*. was the king of Troy at the time of the Trojan War.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the Romans ensure good discipline among their soldiers?
2. What factors mentioned by Polybius help explain Rome's emergence as a great power?
3. Ancient historians believed their task was to shape the character of youth through edifying accounts of the experiences of past generations. What lessons did Livy intend to teach in his account of the Punic Wars?
4. What do you think prompted Scipio Aemilianus to quote the lines from Homer's *Iliad*?

2 The Spread of Greek Philosophy to Rome

One of the chief consequences of Roman expansion was growing contact with Greek culture. During the third century B.C., Greek civilization started to exercise an increasing and fruitful influence on the Roman mind. Greek teachers, both slave and free, came to Rome and introduced Romans to Hellenic cultural achievements. As they conquered the eastern Mediterranean, Roman generals began to ship libraries and works of art from Greek cities to Rome. Roman sculpture and painting imitated Greek prototypes. In time, Romans acquired from Greece knowledge of scientific thought, medicine, and geography. Roman writers and orators used Greek history, poetry, and oratory as models. Roman philosophers borrowed the ideas of Greek philosophical schools and adapted them to Roman culture.