

# DEATH OF AN EMPIRE

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BOOK 2

LOU SHOOK

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ISBN: 978-1-63492-607-2

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

This is a work of historical fiction, based on actual persons and events. The author has taken creative liberty with many details to enhance the reader's experience.

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2017

First Edition

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## **CHAPTER NINETEEN ROME BECOMES POISED FOR MORE CONQUESTS (201-200 BC)**

### **YEAR 201 BC**

After Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus's victory at Zama, the defeat of Carthage was complete. Rome, by her victory, had taken a key step towards domination of the Mediterranean world. The end of the war was not universally welcomed in Rome, for reasons of both politics and morale. When the Senate decreed upon a peace treaty with Carthage, Quintus Caecilius Metellus, a former consul, said he did not look upon the termination of the war as a blessing to Rome. He feared that the Roman people would now sink back again into its former lethargy, from which it had been roused by the presence of Hannibal. Others, most notably Cato the Elder, feared that if Carthage was not completely destroyed, it would soon regain its power and pose new threats to Rome - and he pressed for harsher peace conditions. Even after the peace, Cato insisted on the destruction of Carthage, ending his speeches with "Furthermore, I think Carthage must be destroyed" - even if his speech had nothing to do with Carthage. Many Roman aristocrats, especially Cato the Elder, had expected Scipio to raze that city to the ground after his victory.

Scipio, having been immediately involved with Hannibal, was better able to assess the situation regarding Carthage. He saw nothing gained by destroying Carthage, and much to be gained in restoring Carthage to be a vibrant part of the Roman Republic. With the admiration he had developed for Hannibal, and the confidence he had gained in Hannibal's ability, he deemed Rome's best interest would be served if Hannibal were chosen the Political Leader of Carthage. With this decision made, he began to take steps to achieve this goal.

Following Scipio's promotion, Carthage sued for peace with the Romans, ending the Second Punic War. Scipio dictated moderate terms for the Treaty ending the war with Carthage, in contrast to an

immoderate Roman Senate. Carthage surrendered all her Mediterranean possessions to Rome, including her Iberian territories; agreed to pay Rome 200 talents per year for 50 years; allow Masinissa to rule Numidia as an independent kingdom; make no war without Rome's permission; and destroy all but 10 of the Carthaginian warships. While the security of Rome was guaranteed by these demands, the strictures were sufficiently light for Carthage to regain its full prosperity. With Scipio's promotion, Hannibal became the civic leader of Carthage (which the Cato family did not forget). In contrast to his moderation towards the Carthaginians, Scipio was cruel towards Roman and Latin deserters: Latins were beheaded and the Romans crucified. For his self-restraint in putting the good of the republic ahead of his own gain, Scipio was showing uncommon greatness of mind, an example conspicuously not emulated later by Marius, Sulla or Caesar.

Hannibal Barca, still greatly admired as a Barcid military leader, was elected Suffet, or chief magistrate, of Carthage (with Scipio's disguised support). The office had over the years become insignificant in Carthaginian politics, but Hannibal restored its power and authority. Hannibal soon showed that he could be a statesman as well as a soldier. He set out to reform the administration and finances of Carthage and reduce the blatant corruption and power of the oligarchy which had ruled Carthage before and during the Second Punic War.

When his reforms were blocked by a financial official about to become a Judge for life, Hannibal rallied the populace against the '104 Judges'. By the old constitution, the Senate had the right to control the magistrates; but this new body the '104 Judges' controlled the Senate, and therefore, in reality, the magistrates also. Nor was the '104 Judges' content to control the Senate; it practically superseded it. No Shofete, no Senator, no General, was exempt from their irresponsible despotism. The Shofetes presided, the Senators deliberated, the Generals fought, as it were, with a halter around their necks. The sentences passed by the '104 Judges', if they were often deserved, were often also like those of the dreaded "Ten" at Venice - to whom they bore a striking resemblance, both arbitrary and cruel. By leading a populist reform movement, including substituting annual rotation in office for the life tenure

formerly enjoyed by the '104 Judges' and to add a term limit of two years, Hannibal managed to restore a measure of popular rule. Until Hannibal's reforms the '104 Judges' held their position for life.

All of these changes, instituted by Hannibal, rather quickly resulted in a noticeable increase in the prosperity of Carthage – and the continued relationship with Rome seemed quite promising. Time would tell.

#

## YEAR 200 BC

As Rome prepared to enter the Second Century BC, a number of challenges were faced by Rome. Among these challenges was Rome's increased involvement with some of the remnants of the Empire of Alexander the Great (died in 323 BC). These remnants were Macedon, led by Philip V of Macedon (221 to 179 BC); Ptolemaic Egypt, led by Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–181 BC); the Seleucid Empire (Syria and western Asia), led by Antiochus III the Great (222–187 BC); and Pergamon (western Asia Minor), led by Attalus I (241–197 BC).

#

## PTOLEMAIC EGYPT, LED BY PTOLEMY V EPIPHANES

In 201 BC, Ptolemaic Egypt, concerned about the incursions of Philip V of Macedon, sent a request to Rome to explore mutual cooperation against Philip. In answer, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and two colleagues were sent as ambassadors by the Roman Senate, arriving in Alexandria. Lepidus confirmed that Rome's alliance with King Ptolemy V of Egypt would continue through the coming war with Philip of Macedon (which the Romans were preparing for) – and also announced Rome's victory over Carthage. Ptolemy was still only a young boy at this time. Lepidus' visit resulted in his remaining in Egypt temporarily as the King's guardian, and for a time, he governed the country while acting for the King.

In 200 BC, Lepidus took time away from Alexandria and sailed to meet personally with Philip of Macedon, while the King was besieging Abydus. This was in an attempt to persuade Philip to lift



the siege and abandon his attacks on Pergamon and the Rhodians. Lepidus delivered a message from the Roman Senate that Philip of Macedon must cease from making war on any other Greeks and agree to pay compensation to Attalus of Pergamon and Rhodes for any damage caused. If Philip would not agree to these terms, then he and Macedon would soon find themselves at war with Rome. Rejecting the demands and saying that he was ready for war, Philip took the city of Abydus and Lepidus departed. The result of the King's refusal of Lepidus' terms, was the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War.

King Ptolemy V of Egypt, being ten years old, had suffered considerable trauma in his upbringing during the past four years. In 204 BC King Ptolemy IV Philopator of Ptolemaic Egypt had died, leaving the throne to his six-year-old son Ptolemy V. Agathocles of Egypt (Ptolemaic Minister) and his allies kept the death secret, that they might have an opportunity to plunder the royal treasury. They also formed a conspiracy with Sosibius (Chief Minister) aimed at placing Agathocles on the throne or at least making him regent for the new boy king, Ptolemy V Epiphanes. With the support of Sosibius, they murdered Arsinoë III (mother of Ptolemy V). Agathocles then acted as guardian to the young king Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Agathocles was an insidious schemer, being the son of Oenanthe of Egypt and her first husband Agathocles (Grandson of Agathocles of Syracuse) – and soon had Sosibius killed.

Agathocles' mother Oenanthe was an ambitious and avaricious character, who had introduced Agathocles and his sister Agathoclea to the Egyptian Greek Pharaoh Ptolemy IV Philopator. Agathoclea had become the favorite mistress of Ptolemy IV, and Agathocles served as a Priest. Through her children she was able to possess the greatest influence in Ptolemaic government in the reign of Ptolemy IV. Oenanthe's influence only lasted until Ptolemy IV died. After the accession of the young Ptolemy V, the Egyptians and the Greeks of Alexandria, exasperated at Agathocles' outrages, rose against him and his mother, Oenanthe. Agathocles, Oenanthe, her family and their party fled for refuge to the Temple of the Thesmophorium. Some noble ladies, who had come to console Oenanthe, hoped that with the aid of the goddesses and their enchantments, they would drive away the threats and curses against

Oenanthe and her family. The military governor Tlepolemus took charge in the resulting popular uprising, and surrounded the Temple in the night, forcing the way in. Agathocles and his sister begged for mercy, but in vain. Agathocles was then killed by his friends, to avoid an even more cruel fate. Oenanthe, her family and their party, were dragged out from the Temple altar of the Thesmophorium by the Alexandrians and were brought naked on horse-back to the stadium, where they were delivered. There, in a state of nakedness, exposed to the fury of the multitude, they were literally torn limb from limb. All their relations and those who had had any share in the murder of Arsinoe III, were likewise put to death. (Agathocles had died along with his wife and their son.)

Thus the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, begun in a shadow of deceit & treachery (purported by Oenanthe, and by her son Agathocles), was off to a dismal start. Fortunately for Ptolemy V, Rome had maintained Lepidus as both guardian and adviser for the King.

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### SELEUCID EMPIRE, LED BY ANTIOCHUS III THE GREAT

In 204 BC, Antiochus concluded a secret pact with Philip V of Macedon, to take advantage of the infant Ptolemy V Epiphanes having succeeded to the Egyptian throne. With strong leadership now missing in Ptolemaic Egypt, their intention was to acquire the partition of the Ptolemaic possessions. Under the terms of this pact, Macedon was to receive the Ptolemaic possessions around the Aegean Sea and Cyrene, while Antiochus would annex Cyprus and Egypt.

Also in 204 BC, Scopas of Aetolia had withdrawn to Alexandria. Here he was received with the utmost favor by the ministers who ruled during the minority of the young Ptolemy V Epiphanes. He was appointed to the chief command of the army in Coele-Syria, where he had to make head against the ambitious designs of Antiochus the Great. At first he was completely successful, and reduced the whole province of Judaea into subjection to Ptolemy, but was afterwards defeated by Antiochus at the Battle of Panium.

In 200 BC, the Battle of Panium was fought in Judea between Seleucid and Ptolemaic forces as part of the Syrian Wars. The Seleucids were led by Antiochus III the Great, while the Ptolemaic army was led by Scopas of Aetolia. The Seleucids won the battle. A major factor in the Seleucid victory was the Seleucid army's use of the cataphract (armored heavy cavalry) in a decisive manner. The cataphracts attacked the Egyptian cavalry on the flanks and drove the enemy cavalry off, leaving the backs of the enemy infantry exposed and open to the front line. The Seleucid cataphracts then attacked the Ptolemaic infantry in the rear, thus leading to an Egyptian rout. Antiochus the Younger, the firstborn son of Antiochus III, was in command of the cavalry, leading the successful attack on the Egyptian flanks and rear. The Seleucids won the battle which allowed Antiochus III to obtain the entire possession of Palestine and Coele-Syria from King Ptolemy V of Egypt. Though the Romans send ambassadors to Ptolemy V, they are unable to lend him any serious assistance against Antiochus III. The battle was fought near Paneas (Caesarea Philippi), and marked the end of Ptolemaic rule in Judea. In the resulting peace, Antiochus III agrees to give (193 BC) his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy V. Antiochus' hands were now clear of problems in Asia and he now turned his eyes towards Europe.

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## PERGAMON LED BY ATTALUS I

The Attalids became some of the most loyal supporters of Rome in the Hellenistic world. Under Attalus I (241–197 BC), they allied with Rome against Philip V of Macedon, during the First Macedonian War and the Second Macedonian War. Philip V of Macedon's fleet and army had been advancing into Pergamon, plundering Pergamese territory and attacking cities in Caria, after defeating the Rhodians at Lade.

Attalus I of Pergamum, who is with his fleet at Aegina, receives an embassy from Athens asking him to come to Athens for consultations with the Romans. (This is in response to an invasion of Attica by the Acarnanians, allied with Philip V of Macedon.) Arriving in Athens, Attalus was introduced by the Athenian Ambassador to the Roman Consul Publius Sulpicius Galba Maximus. Together they

developed a plan to overcome the forces allied against Athens, the Acarnanians and Philip V of Macedon. Galba asks Attalus I and his fleet to meet up with the Roman fleet off the Greek Aegean coast. Galba then directed that Gaius Claudius Centho with 20 Roman ships and 1,000 men, join with Attalus I and his fleet off the Aegean coast, and conduct a naval campaign against Philip V, including harassing Macedonian possessions in and along the Aegean.

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### MACEDON, LED BY PHILIP V OF MACEDON

Philip V (238–179 BC) was King of Macedon from 221 to 179 BC. Philip's reign was principally marked by an unsuccessful struggle with the emerging power of Rome. In the First Macedonian War against Rome, the issue of Illyria, resolved by the Peace of Phoenice in 205 BC, had had little impact on Rome. The Second Macedonian War (200–197 BC) was fought by Macedon (led by Philip V of Macedon), against Rome (allied with Pergamon and Rhodes). The result was the defeat of Philip who was forced to abandon all his possessions in southern Greece, Thrace and Asia Minor. The war marked a significant stage in increasing Roman intervention in the affairs of the eastern Mediterranean which would eventually lead to their conquest of the entire region.

In 204 BC, Philip had turned his attention to the independent Greek city states in Thrace and near the Dardanelles. His success at taking cities such as Kios worried the states of Rhodes and Pergamon who also had interests in the area.

In 201 BC, Philip launched a campaign in Asia Minor, besieging the Ptolemaic city of Samos and capturing Miletus. Again, this disconcerted Rhodes and Pergamon and Philip responded by ravaging the territory of the latter. Philip then invaded Caria but the Rhodians and Pergamonians successfully blockaded his fleet in Bargylia, forcing him to spend the winter with his army in a country which offered very few provisions. At this point, although they appeared to have the upper hand, Rhodes and Pergamon still feared Philip so much that they sent an appeal to the fast rising powerful state of the Mediterranean: Rome. The Romans listened to the appeal from Rhodes and Pergamon and sent a party of three ambassadors to investigate matters in Greece. The ambassadors

found very little enthusiasm for a war against Philip until they reached Athens. Here they also met King Attalus I of Pergamon and diplomats from Rhodes. At the same time, Athens declared war on Macedon and Philip sent a force to invade Attica. The Roman ambassadors held a meeting with the Macedonian general and urged Macedon to leave the Greek cities in peace, singling out Athens, Rhodes, Pergamon, and the Aetolian League as now Roman allies and thus free from Macedonian influence, and to come to an arrangement with Rhodes and Pergamon to adjudicate damages from the latest war. The Macedonian general evacuated Athenian territory and handed the Roman ultimatum to his master Philip.

In 200 BC, Philip, who had managed to slip past the blockade and arrive back home, rejected the Roman ultimatum out of hand. He renewed his attack on Athens and began another campaign in the Dardanelles, besieging the important city of Abydos. Here, in the autumn of 200 BC, Roman Ambassador Marcus Aemilius Lepidus reached him with a second ultimatum, urging him not to attack any Greek state or to seize any territory belonging to Ptolemy and to go to arbitration with Rhodes and Pergamon. It was obvious that Rome was now intent on making war on Philip. At the very same time that the ambassador was delivering the second ultimatum, a Roman force was disembarking in Illyria. Philip's protests that he was not in violation of any of the terms of the Peace of Phoenice he had signed with Rome, were in vain.

During the siege of Abydos, Philip had grown impatient and sent a message to the besieged that the walls would be stormed and that if anybody wished to commit suicide or surrender, they had 3 days to do so. The citizens promptly killed all the women and children of the city, threw their valuables into the sea and fought to the last man. This was consistent with the reputation for atrocities that Philip had earned by this time, during his efforts at expanding Macedonian power and influence through the conquest of other Greek cities.

Philip found himself with few active allies in Greece, but there was little enthusiasm for the Roman cause either, the Greeks remembering the frequent brutality of the legions during the First Macedonian War. Most states adopted a policy of waiting to see which way the war went. For the first two years, the Roman

campaign was lacklustre. Roman Consul Publius Sulpicius Galba Maximus made little headway against Philip and his successor, Consul Publius Villius Tappulus, had to deal with a mutiny among his own men.

#

### GAULS OF CISALPINE GAUL IN BATTLE OF CREMONA

During the end of the Second Punic War, tribes in Cisalpine Gaul rebelled against the Republic of Rome, sacking the city of Placentia. Praetor Lucius Furius Purpureo, serving under Roman Consul Publius Sulpicius Galba Maximus, was chosen to govern in Cisalpine Gaul for the year 200 BC. Shortly after arriving in the province of Gaul, Consul Galba Maximus declared war on Macedonia and gave Purpureo 5,000 allied Roman troops to enable him to defend his province from barbarian incursions. However, this contingent of soldiers was insufficient to protect Gaul from the large armies of Insubrians, Canomanians, and Boians, led by the Carthaginian General Hamilcar. These armies numbered around 35,000 men. Upon learning of the invasion, Purpureo sent messengers to Rome to request more troops. The Senate responded by sending legions from Etruria and telling Purpureo to use his standing force of 5,000 to relieve the besieged cities of Gaul from Hamilcar until more legions could arrive. Upon the arrival of the consular army of Gaius Aurelius Cotta to their aid, the 5,000 soldiers were moved to Etruria. On the following day, the Gallic army of 35,000, led by Hamilcar, began the battle. They attempted to overwhelm the right flank of the Roman army with speed and numbers. Having failed in this task, they then failed to flank both wings of the Romans, for Purpureo had lengthened his flanks and called up legionary support. Now counterattacking all sides, Purpureo's men suppressed the Gallic flanks and broke their center ranks, soon routing the enemy completely and killing or capturing over 30,000, including the commander, Hamilcar.

#

Rome had made little headway against its neighbors during this period, but was poised for major gains in the coming years.

Masinissa was now king of both the Massylii and the Masaesyli. He showed unconditional loyalty to Rome, and his position in Africa was strengthened by a clause in the peace treaty of 201 between Rome and Carthage prohibiting the latter from going to war, even in self-defense, without Roman permission. This enabled Masinissa to encroach on the remaining Carthaginian territory as long as he judged that Rome wished to see Carthage further weakened.

With Roman backing, Masinissa established his own kingdom of Numidia, west of Carthage, with Cirta (present day Constantine) as its capital city. All of this happened in accordance with Roman interest, as they wanted to give Carthage more problems with its neighbors. Masinissa's chief aim was to build a strong and unified state from the semi-nomadic Numidian tribes. To that end, he introduced Carthaginian agricultural techniques and forced many Numidians to settle as peasant farmers. Masinissa and his sons possessed large estates throughout Numidia. Major towns included Capsa, Thugga (modern Dougga), Bulla Regia and Hippo Regius.

The Carthaginians led by Hannibal, now at peace with Rome and free of the power of their oligarchy, continued to enjoy their new sense of prosperity.