

Section

2

The Roman Republic



History Social Science Standards

WH.6.7 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.

Guide to Reading

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Romans had suffered under cruel Etruscan kings. When they had the chance to create their own government, they chose something very different.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- Rome's republic was shaped by a struggle between wealthy landowners and regular citizens as it gradually expanded the right to vote. (page 427)
- The Roman Republic's legal system was based on the rule of law. (page 431)
- Rome slowly destroyed the Carthaginian Empire and took control of the entire Mediterranean region. (page 432)

Locating Places

Carthage (KAHR • thihj)
 Cannae (KA • nee)
 Zama (ZAY • muh)

Meeting People

Cincinnatus (SIHN • suh • NA • tuhs)
 Hannibal (HA • nuh • buhl)

Content Vocabulary

patrician (puh • TRIH • shuhn)
 plebeian (plih • BEE • uhn)
 consul (KAHN • suhl)
 veto (VEE • toh)
 praetor (PREE • tuhr)
 dictator (DIHK • TAY • tuhr)

Academic Vocabulary

legislate (LEH • juhs • LAYT)
 accommodate (uh • KAH • muh • DAYT)
 challenge (CHA • luhnj)

Reading Strategy

Categorizing Information Complete a chart like the one below describing the government of Rome.

| Officials | Legislative Bodies |
|-----------|--------------------|
| | |



Where & When?



450 B.C.

451 B.C.
 Romans adopt the Twelve Tables

300 B.C.

264 B.C.
 Punic Wars begin

150 B.C.

146 B.C.
 Rome destroys Carthage



WH6.7.1 Identify the location and describe the rise of the Roman Republic, including the importance of such mythical and historical figures as Aeneas, Romulus and Remus, Cincinnatus, Julius Caesar, and Cicero.

WH6.7.2 Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its significance (e.g., written constitution and tripartite government, checks and balances, civic duty).

Michael Halford

Rome's Government

Main Idea Rome's republic was shaped by a struggle between wealthy landowners and regular citizens as it gradually expanded the right to vote.

Reading Connection Do you know where our word *republic* comes from? It is made up of two Latin words meaning "thing of the people." Read on to learn about the republican government that early Romans created.

Early Romans were divided into two classes: patricians and plebeians. The **patricians** (puh•TRIH•shuhnz) were wealthy landowners. These nobles made up Rome's ruling class. Most of Rome's people, however, were **plebeians** (plih•BEE•uhnz). This group consisted of artisans, shopkeepers, and owners of small farms.

Both patrician and plebeian men were Roman citizens. They had the right to vote and the responsibility to pay taxes and serve in the army. However, plebeians had less social status. Marriage between members of the two classes was forbidden. Plebeians also could not hold public office. Only patricians could serve in the government.

How Did Rome's Government Work?

Rome's government was a tripartite government. This means it had three branches, just as our government does today. One group of people ran the government. Another group made the laws, and a third group acted as judges interpreting the law. It also had checks and balances so that one group of people could not get too strong.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Growth of the Roman Republic 500–146 B.C.



Using Geography Skills

- Movement** What major islands did Rome conquer?
- Human/Environment Interaction** Why do you think Rome did not expand farther north?

KEY
 Yellow: Rome, 500 B.C.
 Light Green: Territory added by 264 B.C.
 Dark Green: Territory added by 146 B.C.

Roman consul



Primary Source

A Roman Triumph

Sometimes military leaders returning to Rome after a victory took part in a great parade called a triumph.

"Thus arrayed [decoratively dressed], they entered the city, having at the head of the procession the spoils and trophies and figures representing the captured forts, cities, mountains, rivers, lakes, and seas—everything, in fact, that they had taken. . . . [When] . . . the victorious general arrived at the Roman Forum . . . he rode up to the Capitol. There he performed certain rites and made offerings."



▲ Roman soldiers

—Zonaras, "A Roman Triumph"



Document-Based Question

Why do you think the military leaders and their troops were dressed decoratively before the triumph?

In the Roman Republic, the top government officials were the **consuls** (KAHN • suhlz). Two consuls—both patricians—were chosen every year. They headed the army and ran the government. Because they served such short terms, there was little risk that they would abuse their power. The consuls also kept each other in line because each could **veto** (VEE • toh), or reject, the other's decision. The word *veto* is Latin for "I forbid." Rome also had other important officials called **praetors** (PREE • tuhrz). Their core task was to interpret the law and act as judges in court cases.

Rome's most important **legislative**, or lawmaking, body was the Senate. This was

a select group of 300 patrician men who served for life. In the beginning, the Senate only gave advice to the consuls. Over time, the power of the Senate grew. By the 200s B.C., it could propose laws, hold debates, and approve building programs.

Another legislative body was the Assembly of Centuries. It elected the consuls and praetors, and passed laws. Like the Senate, the Assembly of Centuries was controlled by the patricians.

Plebeians Against Patricians As you might predict, plebeians complained about having so little power in the Roman Republic. After all, they fought alongside patricians in the army, and their tax payments helped the republic thrive.

In 494 B.C. many plebeians went on strike. They refused to serve in the army. They also left the city to set up a republic of their own. These moves frightened the patricians into agreeing to share power.

The patricians **accommodated** the plebeians by allowing them to have their own body of representatives, called the Council of the Plebs in 471 B.C. The assembly elected tribunes who brought plebeian concerns to the government's attention. The tribunes also won the right to veto government decisions. In 455 B.C. plebeians and patricians were allowed to marry, and in the 300s B.C., plebeians were allowed to become consuls.

The most far-reaching political reform came in 287 B.C. In that year, the Council of the Plebs finally was granted the power to pass laws for all Romans. Now all male citizens had equal political standing, at least in theory. In practice, a few wealthy patrician families still held most of the power, and women remained without a voice in government. The Roman Republic had become more representative, but it was far from a full-fledged democracy.



The Art Archive/Archeological Museum Beirut/Dagli Oni

Who Was Cincinnatus? An unusual feature of the Roman Republic was the office of **dictator** (DIHK • TAY • tuhr). Today we define a dictator as an oppressive ruler with complete control over the state. Roman dictators also had complete control, but they only ruled on a temporary basis during emergencies. The Senate appointed a dictator in times of great danger. As soon as the danger was past, Roman dictators gave up their power.

The best-known early Roman dictator is **Cincinnatus** (SIHN • suh • NA • tuhs). About 460 B.C., a powerful enemy had surrounded a Roman army. Officials decided that Rome needed a dictator and that Cincinnatus was the man for the job. Cincinnatus left his farm and gathered an army. He defeated the enemy in short order and returned to Rome in triumph. Although he probably could have continued ruling, Cincinnatus did not want power. Having done his duty, he returned to his farm and gave up his dictatorship.

Romans strongly believed in civic duty, or the idea that citizens have a responsibility to help their country. Cincinnatus was a popular example of someone doing his duty as a citizen. He was widely admired in his generation and in later ages. George Washington, for one, took inspiration from his example. Like Cincinnatus, Washington was a farmer when he was asked to head an army: the Continental Army in the American War for Independence. After leading the Americans to victory, Washington returned to his plantation home. Only later, and with some reluctance, did he agree to become the first president of the United States.

Reading Check Explain What checks and balances existed in the Roman Republic's government?

Focus on Everyday Life

Roman Dinner Parties Before Rome became a powerful empire, Romans ate simple meals of porridge, dried vegetables, and greens. People rarely ate meat or seafood. After Rome's conquests, the dining habits of wealthy Romans changed. Newly rich Romans showed off their wealth with expensive feasts that included exotic foods and lively entertainment for their guests.

At Roman dinner parties, guests reclined on couches. The enslaved servants served the food, which would be carried into the banquet room on great silver platters. Roman dishes might include boiled stingray garnished with hot raisins; boiled crane with turnips; or roast flamingo cooked with dates, onions, honey, and wine.

▼ A wealthy Roman woman reclining on a couch



Connecting to the Past

1. Whose eating habits changed after Rome became wealthy and powerful?
2. Describe how their eating habits changed.



WH.6.7.1 Identify the location and describe the rise of the Roman Republic, including the importance of such mythical and historical figures as Aeneas, Romulus and Remus, Cincinnatus, Julius Caesar, and Cicero.

LUCIUS QUINCTIUS CINCINNATUS

c. 519–438 B.C.

The loyal devotion of Cincinnatus greatly impressed the Roman historian Livy. In his *History of Rome*, Livy advised his readers to listen to the worthwhile story of Cincinnatus, whose virtue rose high above any rewards that wealth could bring.

According to Livy, Cincinnatus lived in Rome but owned and worked a four-acre field on the other side of the Tiber River. On the day that the officials looked for Cincinnatus, they found him hard at work in his field, covered with dirt and sweat. Cincinnatus was surprised when the officials asked him to put on his toga and listen as they explained the wishes of the Roman Senate.

The officials explained the emergency situation to Cincinnatus. He agreed to the Senate's request that he become a dictator. Cincinnatus and the officials crossed the Tiber River to Rome. The next morning, before daylight, Cincinnatus went to the Forum and gathered his forces to attack the enemy.

The story of Cincinnatus was important to the ancient Romans for several reasons. He was victorious in battle and quickly gave up the dictatorship. Perhaps more importantly, he did his civic duty by responding to a call to serve.



▲ Cincinnatus is asked to lead Rome.

“The city was in the grip of fear.”

—Livy, *The Rise of Rome*

Then and Now

Name a modern-day leader that you think historians will write about with great admiration. Explain why.



WH6.7.2 Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its significance (e.g., written constitution and tripartite government, checks and balances, civic duty).

WH6.7.8 Discuss the legacies of Roman art and architecture, technology and science, literature, language, and law.

Roman Law

Main Idea The Roman Republic's legal system was based on the rule of law.

Reading Connection Have you ever heard the phrase "innocent until proven guilty"? Read to learn how Rome introduced this idea that we still use in our courts today.

One of Rome's major gifts to the world was its system of law. The legal system of the United States owes much to the Roman system.

Rome's first code of laws was the Twelve Tables, adopted about 451 B.C. Before this time, Rome's laws were not written down. As a result, plebeians claimed that patrician judges often favored their own class. They demanded that the laws be put in writing for everyone to see.

The patricians finally agreed. They had the laws carved on bronze tablets that were placed in Rome's marketplace, or the Forum (FOHR•uhm). The Twelve Tables became the basis for all future Roman laws. They established the principle that all free citizens had the right to be treated equally by the legal system.

The Twelve Tables, however, applied only to Roman citizens. As the Romans took over more lands, they realized that new rules were needed to solve legal disputes between citizens and noncitizens. They created a collection of laws called the Law of Nations. It stated principles of justice that applied to all people everywhere.

These standards of justice included ideas that we still accept today. A person was seen as innocent until proven guilty. People accused of crimes could defend themselves before a judge. A judge had to look at the evidence carefully before making a decision.

The idea that the law should apply to everyone equally and that all people should be treated the same way by the legal system is called the "rule of law." In the age of

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

HISTORY MAKERS

Twelve Tables c. 451 B.C.

The Twelve Tables were laws written on tablets that described the rights of each person in the Roman Republic. The laws were the first written rules to govern Rome. Writing the laws down and putting them on public display ensured that everyone knew the laws and that judges did not apply the laws differently to different people.

The laws on the Twelve Tables explained a person's rights concerning property, wills, public behavior, family law, and court actions. The Twelve Tables were the first step toward equal rights for citizens of all classes in ancient Rome. They were also a first step toward the idea of the rule of law that we still uphold today.

Rome, the rule of law was still a new concept. In many lands, people at the top of society often had special privileges and did not have to obey the same laws or use the same courts as people lower down. In some places, people at the bottom of society did not have any legal rights at all.

The rule of law is one of the key ideas that the Romans gave to the world. It remains the basis of our legal system today.

Reading Check Identify What is the "rule of law" and why is it important?



WH6.7.3 Identify the location of and the political and geographic reasons for the growth of Roman territories and expansion of the empire, including how the empire fostered economic growth through the use of currency and trade routes.

Rome Expands

Main Idea Rome slowly destroyed the Carthaginian Empire and took control of the entire Mediterranean region.

Reading Connection When you achieve a victory—whether it is in academics, sports, or some other field—do you then strive for more success? That may have been how the Romans felt once they had taken over Italy. Read on to learn how they continued to expand their power.

While Rome developed its government, it also faced **challenges** abroad. The Romans had completed their conquest of Italy. However, they now faced a powerful rival in the Mediterranean area. This enemy was the state of **Carthage** (KAHR•tihj) on the coast of North Africa. It had been founded around

800 B.C. by the Phoenicians. As you learned earlier, the Phoenicians were sea traders from the Middle East.

Carthage ruled a great trading empire that included parts of northern Africa and southern Europe. By controlling the movement of goods in this region, Carthage made itself the largest and richest city in the western Mediterranean.

The First Punic War Both Carthage and Rome wanted to control the island of Sicily. In 264 B.C. the dispute led to war. The war that began in 264 B.C. is called the First Punic War. *Punicus* is the Latin word for “Phoenician.” The war started when the Romans sent an army to Sicily to prevent a Carthaginian takeover. The Carthaginians,



who already had colonies on the island, were determined to stop this invasion.

Up until then, the Romans had fought their wars on land. They soon realized they could not defeat a sea power like Carthage without a navy. They quickly built a large fleet of ships and confronted their enemy at sea. The war dragged on for more than 20 years. Finally, in 241 B.C., Rome crushed Carthage's navy off the coast of Sicily. Carthage was forced to leave Sicily and pay a huge fine to the Romans. The island then came under Roman rule.

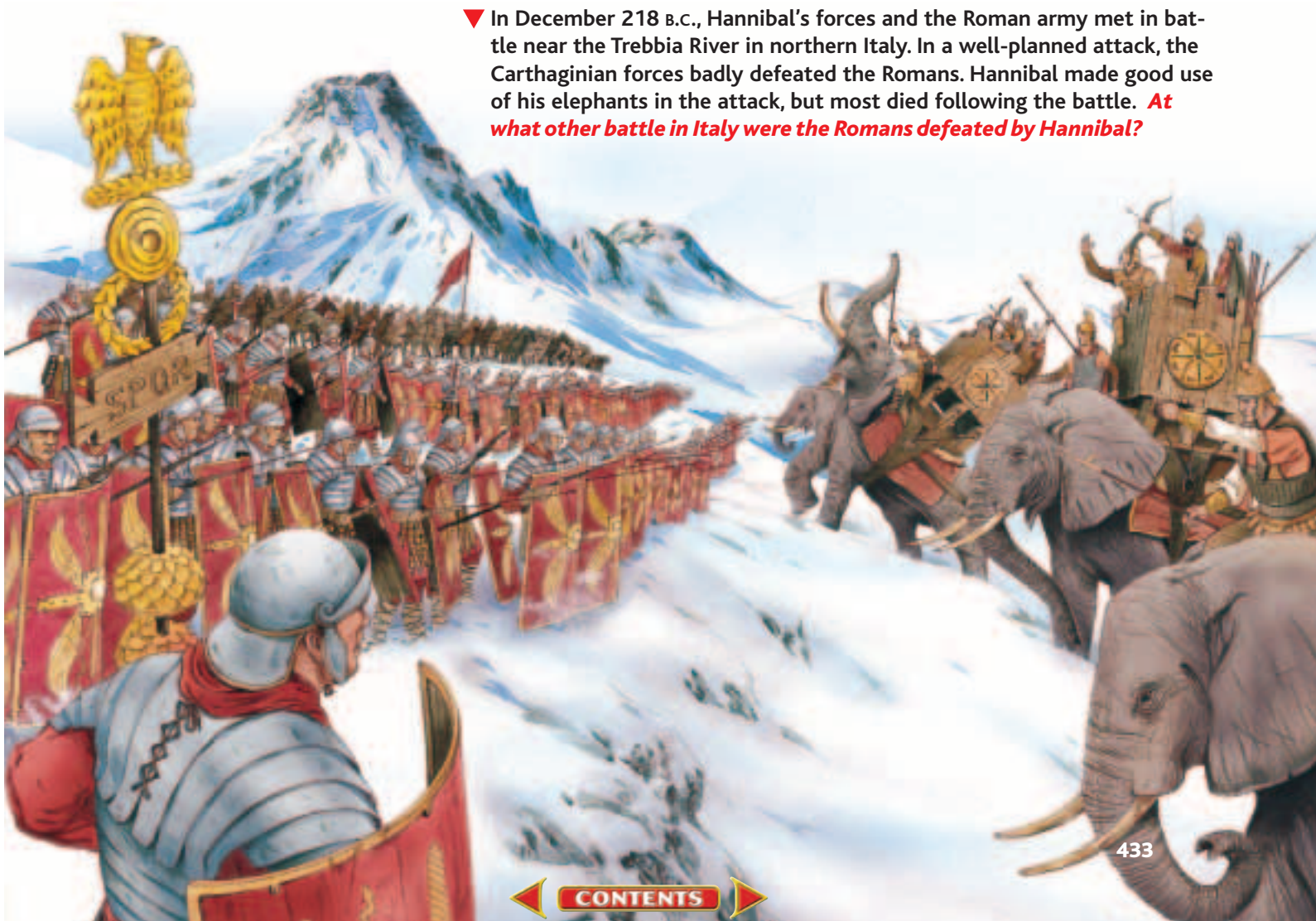
The Second Punic War To make up for its loss of Sicily, Carthage expanded its empire into southern Spain. Roman leaders were not happy about Carthage gaining land

near Rome's northern border. They helped the people living in Spain rebel against Carthage. Of course, Carthaginians were angry. To punish Rome, Carthage sent its greatest general, **Hannibal** (HA•nuh•buhl), to attack Rome in 218 B.C. This started the Second Punic War.

Hannibal's strategy was to take the fighting into Italy itself. To do this, Hannibal gathered an army of about 46,000 men, many horses, and 37 elephants. He landed his forces in Spain and then marched east to attack Italy.

Even before reaching Italy, Hannibal's forces suffered severe losses crossing the steep, snowy Alps into Italy. The brutal cold, gnawing hunger, and attacks by mountain tribes killed almost half of the

▼ In December 218 B.C., Hannibal's forces and the Roman army met in battle near the Trebbia River in northern Italy. In a well-planned attack, the Carthaginian forces badly defeated the Romans. Hannibal made good use of his elephants in the attack, but most died following the battle. **At what other battle in Italy were the Romans defeated by Hannibal?**





soldiers and most of the elephants. The remaining army, however, was still a powerful fighting force when it reached Italy.

The Romans suffered a severe loss in 216 B.C. at the Battle of **Cannae** (KA•nee) in southern Italy. Even though Hannibal's army was outnumbered, it overpowered the Roman force and began raiding much of Italy.

The Romans, however, raised another army. In 202 B.C. a Roman force led by a general named Scipio (SIH•pee•OH) invaded Carthage. Almost all of Carthage's troops were with Hannibal. Scipio's invasion forced Hannibal to head home to defend his city.

At the Battle of **Zama** (ZAY•muh), Scipio's troops defeated the Carthaginians. Carthage gave up Spain to Rome. It also had to give up its navy and pay a large fine. Rome now ruled the western Mediterranean.

More Conquests While Carthage was no longer a military power, it remained a trading center. In 146 B.C. Rome finally destroyed its great rival in the Third Punic War. Roman soldiers burned Carthage and enslaved 50,000 men, women, and children. Legend says that the Romans even spread salt on the earth so no crops would grow. Carthage became a Roman province, or regional district.

During the Punic Wars, Rome successfully battled states in the eastern Mediterranean. In 148 B.C. Macedonia came under Roman rule. Two years later, the rest of Greece became Roman. In 129 B.C. Rome gained its first province in Asia. It was no wonder that the Romans began to call the Mediterranean *mare nostrum*—"our sea."

Reading Check Describe How did Rome punish Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War?

Section 2 Review

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

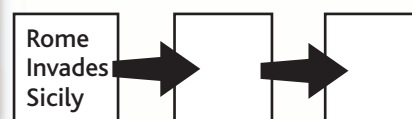
- During the Roman Republic, the government changed as the plebeians, or lower classes, and the patricians, or ruling class, struggled for power.
- Rome introduced the idea of the rule of law treating all citizens equally in court.
- Beginning in 264 B.C., Rome fought and won a series of wars with Carthage and other powers and gained control of the Mediterranean region.

What Did You Learn?

1. Who were the top government officials in the Roman Republic, and what were their duties?
2. What does *mare nostrum* mean, and why did the Romans use the term?
4. **Geography Skills** Where was Carthage located, and why did it compete with Rome?
CA 6RC2.0 CA CS3.

Critical Thinking

3. **Sequencing Information** Draw a diagram to describe the sequence of events from the start of the First Punic War to the start of the Second Punic War. **CA CS1.**
5. **Summarize** What other conquests did Rome carry out during the period of the Punic Wars? **CA 6RC2.4**
6. **The Big Ideas** How did the creation of the Twelve Tables change the legal system in Rome? **CA HI2.**
7. **Persuasive Writing** Write a speech demanding equal rights for plebeians in the early republic. **CA 6WA2.5**



History online
Study Central Need help understanding how Rome expanded? Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on Study Central.