

## Conquest and Expansion

In the 400s B.C., Rome began a long period of conquest and *expansion* (growth). The Romans first conquered their neighbors in central Italy. Then they conquered the Etruscans to the north.

By about 270 B.C., the Romans had conquered the Greek city-states of southern Italy. They now controlled most of the Italian Peninsula.

### *The Roman Army*

Rome's success on the battlefield was due to its powerful army. The Romans built the mightiest army of their time. They divided their army into groups called *legions*. A legion had about 6000 soldiers. Each legion was divided into smaller units of 60 to 120 soldiers.

In battle, the Romans moved their small units quickly to wherever they were needed. That gave them an advantage over enemies who fought in phalanxes. (You read that phalanxes were groups of soldiers who fought in tight blocks.) Phalanxes were larger, slower, and harder to maneuver.

### *War with Carthage*

Rome's main rival in the Mediterranean was the city of **Carthage** in North Africa. You read that the Phoenicians founded a colony at Carthage around 800 B.C. In time, Carthage became an independent city-state.

Carthage built an empire that included parts of Spain, North Africa, and the island of Sicily.

In 264 B.C. Rome and Carthage began a series of wars called the **Punic Wars**. The First Punic War lasted for 23 years. The Romans defeated the Carthagenians and won control of Sicily. With Sicily, Rome had its first overseas territory and the beginning of an empire.



### *Hannibal and the Second Punic War*

The Second Punic War began in 218 B.C. In that year, Carthage's greatest general invaded Italy. His name was **Hannibal**.

Hannibal surprised the Romans by invading Italy from the north. He first landed an army of 50,000 soldiers and 37 elephants in Spain. Then he marched across Spain and France, over the Alps, and into Italy.

Hannibal defeated several Roman armies in Italy. But he was not able to capture Rome. In 204 B.C., a Roman army landed in North Africa and threatened Carthage. Hannibal was forced to leave Italy to defend his homeland.

### *The Defeat of Carthage*

The Romans defeated Hannibal at Zama, a town near Carthage. In the *treaty* that ended the war, the Romans forced Carthage to give up Spain.

In 149 B.C. Rome and Carthage began the Third Punic War. After three years of fighting, the Romans captured Carthage. They destroyed the city. Carthage's territory in North Africa now belonged to Rome.

### *Rome's Empire Grows*

During the years of the Punic Wars, Rome also expanded to the east. The Romans conquered Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. Syria and Egypt came under Roman control.

By 130 B.C., Rome ruled most of the Mediterranean world. Romans now called the Mediterranean *Mare Nostrum*. In Latin, that means "Our Sea."

### *Looking Back*

1. Why was the Roman army successful?
2. What were the Punic Wars?
3. Describe Hannibal's invasion of Italy.

## The End of the Republic

The conquest of an empire changed Rome. Riches from conquered lands poured into the city. But only a few Romans became wealthy. Many Romans suffered during the years of conquest.

Roman workers were one of the groups that suffered. Thousands of slaves from conquered lands were sent to Rome. Slaves did most of the work once done by Roman workers. Some Romans were forced to beg to survive.

Farmers also suffered. Huge amounts of grain were brought to Rome from conquered lands. As a result, the price of grain fell. Roman farmers could no longer make a living by selling their grain. Many farmers lost their farms.

Farmers looking for work crowded into Rome. But Rome had no work for them.

### Julius Caesar

Roman workers and farmers turned to the government for help. But the government was controlled by wealthy Romans. It did little to help the poor. Rome was soon deeply divided between the rich and the poor.

For over 100 years, the city was torn by riots, rebellions, and *civil wars*. (A civil war is a war fought between groups who live in the same country.)

In 49 B.C., a general named **Julius Caesar** came to power in Rome. The Senate made Caesar *dictator*, or absolute ruler, of Rome. Caesar used his power to help the poor. He gave farms to Romans who had lost their land. He also created jobs for the poor.

Julius Caesar was popular with many Romans. But some senators resented Caesar's growing power. They feared Caesar would make himself king. In 44 B.C., a group of senators assassinated Caesar.



Julius Caesar was a successful general and a great speaker and writer. In 59 B.C. he was elected consul of Rome. Later, the Senate made him dictator- or absolute ruler, for life.

### Caesar Augustus

After Caesar's death, Rome was again torn by civil war. The struggle for power was won by Caesar's adopted son. His name was **Octavian**.

In 27 B.C., the Senate made Octavian consul, tribune, and military leader for life. It gave him the title *Augustus*, which meant "honored." After that, Octavian was known as **Caesar Augustus**.

Under Augustus, the Roman Republic came to an end. The Senate continued to meet. But it had little real power. Augustus was the sole ruler of Rome.

### Looking Back

1. Why did many Roman workers suffer during the years of conquest?
2. Why did farmers suffer?
3. How did Julius Caesar help the poor?
4. What happened to the republic under Augustus?