

ABSTRACT

From Intervention, To Insurgency, To Peace: How the Roman Approach to Interacting
with the Tribes in Iberia Almost Lost the Province

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This thesis looks at Roman Spain, from the initial intervention against the Carthaginians during the Punic Wars in the mid-third century BC to the rebellion of Sertorius in the first. It attempts to answer the question of why the Romans had such trouble pacifying the various tribes in the region, even though they were militarily inferior to Rome. The conclusion to this query is that mismanagement on the part of the vast majority of Roman magistrates assigned to the region resulted in the aggravation of those tribes. The subsequent mishandling of which created situations that almost resulted in the loss of the peninsula altogether. A positive example of Roman governance of the province, aside from the occasional crisis point, is found in the rebellious governor Sertorius, who demonstrated, via the employment of adaptive politics, cultural assimilation, and intentional Romanization, the most effective way to govern Hispania.

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IBERIA ALMOST LOST THE PROVINCE

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the unique and interesting relationships between the tribes of the Iberian Peninsula and the Roman Republic necessitates a general background knowledge of the peninsula and its inhabitants. Geographically, the Pyrenees Mountains in the north, in addition to the surrounding waters, kept Iberia fairly isolated from surrounding powers and cultures. Strabo describes the topography thusly,

most of the inhabited country consists of mountains, forests, and plains whose soil is thin — and even that not uniformly well-watered. And Northern Iberia, in addition to its ruggedness, not only is extremely cold, but lies next to the ocean, and thus has acquired its characteristic of inhospitality and aversion to intercourse with other countries; consequently, it is an exceedingly wretched place to live in; but almost the whole of Southern Iberia is fertile, particularly the region outside the Pillars.¹

This description represents the key divisions, both in geography and culture, that are most relevant to a discussion of the region. The culture that developed in the harsher climate north of the Ebro River and concentrated on the coasts, commonly referred to as “Celtiberian” by modern historians, was heavily influenced by their Gallic neighbors from beyond the Pyrenees, as well as by their Iberian family to the south.² Their artwork, coins, military equipment, and city structure all took from Gaulic influences, though the origin of those influences. Whether they are a result of an ancient invasion, cultural

¹ Strab. 3.2.

² Simon Keay, *Roman Spain* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1988), 21-22.

integration, or migration is still hotly debated by historians and archeologists today.³

This cultural influence, however, did not extend very far south of the Ebro, where cultures developed that were more purely Iberian. This is also the region where most of the colonizing Phoenicians would settle.

The first interaction that the ancient inhabitants of the Spanish Peninsula had with outsiders were Phoenician colonies set up in the 12th century BC, though archeological evidence of details about these colonies is scarce before the 800s.⁴ After that date the purpose of the colonies becomes clear. The Phoenicians set them up as part of a network of trading posts designed to diversify and increase their wealth and position further east. They set up mining operations and trading posts to acquire silver, gold, tin, and other raw materials to trade with the Assyrians and Syrians, for whom silver goods especially had become incredibly valuable commodities.⁵

The Spanish colonies became highly successful for the Phoenicians as they expanded their trade and production into other luxury goods such as wine, oils, and dyes.⁶ This success had two major lasting effects on the region. First, in a process known as orientalization, it both inundated southern Iberian culture with Phoenician influence and launched the tribes there from the early to the late bronze age in their technology and political organization, with a few tribes ascending in influence beyond that of their

³ Leonard A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (New York: Routledge, 2015). 15-17.

⁴ Richard J Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn of History: Iberians, Phoenicians and Greeks* (London, UK: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1988). 41.
- All dates are BC unless otherwise stated.

⁵ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 41-42.

⁶ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 43.

neighbors. It also attracted interest from the Greeks, who saw an opportunity to enrich themselves and gain influence at home by setting up their own colonies in competition with the Phoenicians.⁷

Orientalization is mostly important in this story for the growth in political organization, and it is here in the narrative where identifiable city-states like the legendary Tartessos begin to emerge and interact with the Phoenicians and Greeks on a more diplomatic basis.⁸ The Greeks wanted to use this developing situation to their advantage, and to that end set up several colonies like Emporiae and Rhode of Catalonia where they had enough autonomy to mint their own coins and develop a city-state identity.⁹ The vast majority of evidence, however, points to an operation designed for trade rather than resource exploitation, for example there have been findings of distinctively Greek eighth-century pottery on the Mediterranean coast of Spain from Gibraltar to the Pyrenees.¹⁰

While the Greeks had always treated their settlements as politically and financially autonomous entities, the Phoenicians were dependent on a network designed for the enrichment of Tyre. Thus, when that home city fell in 573, it threw the satellite states into chaos. The ones close to established empires were simply swallowed up by them, but ones detached from major empires, like the ones in Spain and northwest Africa, were forced to battle for supremacy among themselves, forming new empires. This is

⁷ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 43.

⁸ Hdt. iv.152.

⁹ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 69.

¹⁰ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 70-71.

how Carthage rose to prominence in its region and began to exert influence on the city-states in Spain.¹¹

Due to its nature as a newly created empire, however, Carthage would not pay much attention to its holdings on the Spanish peninsula at first. Instead, Carthage had to focus on consolidating power and influence in its home region. By 264, they had managed to consolidate much of their African holdings and were in need of a “breadbasket” region to pick up the slack left by the largely infertile lands in the province of Africa not immediately surrounding Carthage itself. An opportunity presented itself in the region of Sicily. Carthage intervened in a conflict between the Syracusans and the Messinians, but at the same time the Romans intervened with a similar goal.¹²

This war was mainly fought in the waters and coastal regions of Sicily itself, and though that was the piece of land in question, the war would have major implications for all involved, including Spain. The battles of the First Punic War would rage on for twenty-three years. Rome struggled at first, a fact largely blamed on their inexperience in naval warfare and lack of a true fleet compared to the Carthaginians who had carried over the maritime culture of the Phoenicians.¹³ Rome eventually gained ascendancy and pressured the Carthaginian senate into a peace treaty, much to the chagrin of the head Carthaginian general Hamilcar who never forgot the humiliation of defeat by the Romans, though the Roman historians universally respect his prowess on the battlefield.¹⁴

¹¹ Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn*. 80.

¹² Cass. Dio, 43.1-6.

¹³ Diod. Sic. 2.1.

¹⁴ Cass. Dio, 43.21-43.22.

The Treaty of Lutatius, as it was called, was heavily in favor of the Romans in its demands when it was signed by both parties in 241. In exchange for a cessation of hostilities and the return of the large number of Carthaginian prisoners the Romans had captured throughout the war, the Carthaginians gave the Romans their remaining Sicilian holdings, the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, as well as a sizable indemnity and release of prisoners.¹⁵ These terms would end up causing more problems for Carthage than the immediate loss of territory would first make it seem. The Carthaginian military effort relied chiefly on mercenary armies rather than ones raised out of their own populace, and thus when it became apparent that Carthage would not be able to pay their debts, those armies turned on them and territories like Numidia were lost to them for a time in what became known as the “Mercenary” or “Libyan” war.¹⁶ After first appointing Hanno to that conflict, the Carthaginian Senate called up Hamilcar, who quickly dealt with the rebels, seeing that, despite his loss in Sicily, he was still the foremost commander in Carthage.¹⁷ This success gave the once-disgraced Barcid the political capital to seek out whatever enterprise would satisfy his ambition, and for him the only option was Iberia. It also limited his options and made the choice all the more important for Carthage, as it prompted the Romans to agree to the annexation of Corsica and Sardinia by another group of rebellious mercenaries and charge yet another indemnity to the helpless Carthaginians.¹⁸

¹⁵ Polyb. 62.1-63.9.

¹⁶ Polyb. 65.1-9.

¹⁷ Polyb. 75.1-10.

¹⁸ Polyb. 11.1-15.

Their ambitions in the central Mediterranean stymied, and the resources there along with it, the Carthaginians were forced to turn elsewhere for the expansion and enrichment of their empire. To Hamilcar, the obvious choice was to make inroads in the territory where they already had a foothold. Spain had been ignored up till that point in favor of Sicily likely because Carthage wanted a breadbasket colony that was both closer than its holdings in Spain and, consequently, easier to set up transportation routes and defense mechanisms. Sicily was also much more productive due to its existing infrastructure. After the First Punic War, however, the Sicilian option was closed for Carthage, and so were Corsica and Sardinia which, though rocky, could have been developed in much the same way; thus, there were no other places to go that would be viable for Carthaginian interests other than the Iberian peninsula.

Such was the situation in the Iberian peninsula when Rome found and began to operate in the region around 218. The southern region was dominated by Carthage, with some Greek colonies along the Mediterranean coast, and a disunified amalgamation of tribes and cultures occupied the majority of the territory from the southern lowlands to the Pyrenees and from coast to coast. It was also the first true foreign test for the burgeoning Roman Republic. They had fought and won foreign wars before, as seen in their victory over the Carthaginians in their first conflict with that great civilization, but the conflict had centered around Sicily, a land close to Rome and, thus, a land easy to coordinate an invasion into, defend, and administrate after it was officially Roman.

Spain, however, was different. For one thing, it was much further away, a fact that greatly strained the one year governorships that worked so well in more domestic provinces. In addition to that, Iberia was a land populated, almost entirely, with peoples

whom the Romans would have considered barbarians, very unlike their Italian homeland, where, though they did not see the inhabitants of the Italian states as political equals, they at least understood their culture, language, and religious practice, an advantage they would not be able to carry over into Spain. Nevertheless, and not without great growing pains, the Romans would succeed in holding the Iberian Peninsula until the fall of their own empire. They would take the lessons they learned in that crucible of a first foreign province to their subsequent conquest. It was here they learned to govern, sometimes by trial and error, and sometimes by the actions of great leaders, like the effective, bureaucratic, and adaptive empire that is still having an impact on the world today.

CHAPTER ONE

With Eyes Toward Carthage

The Carthaginian holdings in Spain at the end of the First Punic War were mostly the same as those of the Phoenicians almost three hundred years earlier. The southern coast and the southern part of the eastern seaboard were either territory of Carthaginian settlements or were the territory of Iberian tribes that were under the influence of Carthage. At this time the Carthaginians tended to treat the tribes under their influence, specifically the Turdetani, the Bastitani, the Contestani, and the Editani, much like eastern satrapies that would have been natural to the heirs of a Phoenician kingdom.¹ Hamilcar made this his new theatre of operations and, through a series of military victories and political maneuvers, managed to secure near-complete freedom of operations in the southern part of the peninsula by the year 241, capturing the valley of Turditania (modern Guadalquivir) and the Mediterranean coast up to Akra Leukae (modern Alicante).²³ It would not be Hamilcar but his son-in-law Hasdrubal the Fair who would enjoy the opportunities that afforded however, as Hamilcar was killed that year in battle against an unnamed but “warlike” tribe, likely the Oretani, and his son Hannibal was too young to take command of the region at the age of 9.⁴

¹ Keay, *Roman Spain*, 26-29.

² Polyb. III.1.5-1.9.

³ James Smith Richardson, *The Romans in Spain* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 17.

⁴ Polyb. III.41.7-13.

At this point, it becomes clear that the campaigns in Iberia were, for Hamilcar and the Barcids, what the conquest of Gaul would be for Julius Caesar almost two hundred years later. It was known, even by the Romans, that there were those in the Carthaginian Senate who believed that Hamilcar was trying to carve out a personal empire in the region.⁵ There is little reason to disbelieve this either. His core of commanders was made up of men that were loyal to him first and Carthage second, usually blood relatives like Hannibal or in-laws like Hasdrubal. This pattern of behavior carried over into how he interacted with the tribes in the region, conquering, allying with, and making deals with tribes as it suited his goals of expanding Carthaginian territory in the region in much the same way as Caesar would. This was emblematic of the Carthaginian approach to Iberia until their activity in the region drew the eye of Rome, which was becoming increasingly wary of their enemy's success there.

Unfortunately for his hopes of empire, Hamilcar was unspectacularly killed in battle in 228.⁶ Hasdrubal the Fair continued his own campaigns on the peninsula until 226, when Rome began to get involved in Iberia, nominally due to the requests of the remaining Greek settlements in the area (at Emporiae and Saguntum), whose leaders were growing fearful of their own independence in the face of rapid Carthaginian expansion, but it is generally accepted, by both ancient and modern sources, that their true motive was to combat the rapidly expanding Carthaginian territory.⁷ Carrying on in much the same way as Hamilcar, though many historians have noted that he had a much

⁵ App. *Hisp.* 2.7.

⁶ App. *Hisp.* 2.7.

⁷ Richardson, *The Romans in Spain*, 21-22.

more diplomatic approach than his predecessor, Hasdrubal married a princess of the Tuditani and won many over to his side by means of persuasion. He became well known for being “attractive in personal intercourse.”⁸ He also subjugated other tribes by the sword, allowing his brother-in-law Hannibal to take the lead on those ventures in spite of his youth.⁹ The Romans and the aforementioned Greek-Spanish settlers both feared this ambition and subsequently sent diplomatic envoys to Carthage in hopes to put a definite limit on their expansion.¹⁰

So it was that Hasdrubal received word from the Carthaginian Senate a few months later that the northern limit of Carthaginian expansion in Iberia had been set at the Ebro River by the opposing empires’ negotiators.¹¹ While the agreement did accomplish most of the Greco-Roman delegation’s goals - if the agreement truly did only specify the Ebro as a boundary - Saguntum, which is well to the south of the Ebro, would have been well within Carthaginian territory and left unprotected. This is where the gap in knowledge when it comes to official documents of the time hurts the historical record of the wars in Spain because, though the accounts of Appian and Diodorus are credible, they provide nothing in the vein of details on the treaty itself, for instance what the Romans gave up, offered, or threatened to get the Carthaginians to make this concession in the first place. Nor do they say anything how the Greco-Roman delegation, which contained representatives from Saguntum, could have let this, rather obvious, error slip

⁸ App. *Hisp.* 2.6.

⁹ App. *Hisp.* 2.6.

¹⁰ Polyb. III. 15.5.

¹¹ App. *Hisp.* 2.7.

through. Though summaries of the content of the Ebro Treaty survive in the records of Appian and Polybius, no copies are extant. Also of note is the fact that Appian, in his history of the period, makes it clear that he believes Saguntum to be to the north of the Ebro, perhaps implying that the city was covered by the original treaty as it seems unlikely that the delegates from Saguntum who were supposed to be at the negotiations themselves would have made such a mistake.¹² This is why modern scholars familiar with the issue believe Saguntum to have been included by name or given some special circumstance in the agreement.¹³ Nevertheless, the Romans officially allied themselves with both Emporiae and Saguntum and, later that year, began the process of ensuring control over the new territory ceded to them at the negotiating table.¹⁴

As far as the Iberians themselves, the Treaty of the Ebro reinforces the idea that the Romans and Carthaginians saw them as strategic obstacles and advantages toward their larger goal of defeating each other. This treatment is, perhaps, why rebellion and antagonism became such a major problem for both sides during this period. Already mentioned were the “fifth-column” tribes that fought for the opposing sides, as well as the Iberian kings that threw their lot in with either power whether due to prisoners, the return of prisoners, or simply who they thought would come out on top. The interactions between the tribes themselves are, without a doubt, even more complex than those with the two empires because, when the purpose of Rome’s interaction with them during that period was the more short-term goal of defeating the Carthaginians, the problem of how

¹² App. *Hisp*, 2.7.

¹³ Richardson, *The Romans in Spain*, 21.

¹⁴ Polyb. III.15.

to deal with the tribes can be simplified down to which power they hold allegiance to. However, when those Roman goals changed from conquest to pacification after their victory in the Second Punic War, they failed to update their approach to fit the new goal and situation. The result of which would be widespread rebellion and unrest in the region, to the point that they almost lost control entirely.

Key to Roman control of their portion of Iberia were the Ausetani, Cantabri, Caristii, Vardulli, Vascones, Lacetani, and Ilergetae, which were all either Celtiberian or Proto-Basque peoples.¹⁵ Emporiae, which was a city-state in a true Greek fashion with established hegemony over the surrounding region, and Saguntum, which was sovereign over its city at the pleasure of the Editanii, an allied tribe south of the Ebro, provided the two main bases of operation to the Romans during this period.¹⁶ For the Roman commanders in Spain at the time, the chief concern would have been the defense of those two cities and the hampering of Carthaginian expansion. They began in 226 by strengthening already existing alliances and putting down the rebellions which were already beginning to become the rule with the Roman occupation of the region. During this time from 226 to 218 the relationship between the Roman state and those tribes in and surrounding their territory was colored by their overall goal of combating Carthaginian interest in the region.

For the most part, the ancient sources do not tell much about this period between 226 and 218, instead using the story of the Ebro Treaty merely as necessary background for the Second Punic War. What is known, however, are the results of their policy in that

¹⁵ Keay, *Roman Spain*, 27.

¹⁶ Zonar. 21.1.

coming war. For instance, it is known that, during this time, Rome was able to cultivate alliances with the Celtiberi,¹⁷ whose territory stretched well to the south of the Ebro. It is also known that they were able to make inroads with tribes such as the Indiketes and Lacetani, whose territory surrounded Emporiae.¹⁸ On the other hand, the Ilergetae, the tribe whose territory was north of the Ebro and which immediately bordered the Romans to the west, became a militant ally of the Carthaginians by the start of the Second Punic War.¹⁹ Why any given tribe declared for the Romans or the Carthaginians is unclear due to the lack of focus in the records. It can be inferred, however, that there was not a substantial difference between Roman and Carthaginian policy when it came to dealing with them due to the lack of substantial difference in the outcome of those policies.

Both sides gained Iberian allies within the official territory of the other and both sides had it done to them. Effectiveness aside though, the clear aim of both the Carthaginian policy, as well as the Roman, was to combat the interests of the other. This is demonstrated in the reason that the Romans first came to Iberia, to halt the rapid expansion that the Barcids were managing in the region. Although the official reason for the Roman presence in Iberia was to protect the interests of Emporiae and Saguntum, it seems unlikely that it was the only reason for their intervention and continued prosecution of the issue. Even Appian agrees that the expedition was targeted against the Carthaginians rather than for the Greeks saying of the Roman Senate, “they did not wish

¹⁷ This is a specific tribe of Celtiberians and not the only tribe of Celtiberians. It seems that it was the Romans who gave them the name “Celtiberi” and the name they would have given themselves was not recorded in any record that survives today.

¹⁸ Keay, *Roman Spain*, 26-27.

¹⁹ Keay, *Roman Spain*, 27.

to see Carthaginian influence augmented” when they sent the diplomatic delegation with the Saguntines and Emporians.²⁰ It must also be understood that the official Roman military presence in Iberia until 218 was minimal, relying on the threat of military retribution to keep the Carthaginians and their allies at bay.

It was during this interwar period that both sides began to see what would become the salient aspects of holding Iberia for the coming centuries: rebellion and resistance. Not only did both sides suffer fifth columns in their territory by 218, but the only surviving story from this period revolves around the unrest characteristic of Spanish occupation. Hasdrubal, after putting to death one of the kings resistant to Carthaginian rule in 220, went on a hunting trip where he was killed by a Spanish slave loyal to the rebellious king.²¹ Hannibal convicted the slave quickly after and had him publicly tortured and killed. He took charge in Spain, though still young, with the full support of the army and, later, the less-than-full support of the Carthaginian senate.²²

The reason that some in the Carthaginian senate were apprehensive about handing over the reins to the young son of Hamilcar, as recorded by Appian, was because they were concerned that he would begin an open war with the Romans, a war that they were not confident that they could win.²³ They were right to be concerned about this, however, as the ancient sources agree that Hannibal had, from a young age, been trained to fight Romans and had taken an oath of vengeance against them for his father’s defeat in

²⁰ App. *Hisp*, 2.6.

²¹ Zonar. 21.1.

²² App. *Hisp*, 2.8.

²³ App. *Hisp*, 2.8-10.

Sicily.²⁴ Thus, Hannibal consolidated his forces and prepared to provoke the Romans to war by laying siege on Saguntum, the city with, at best, ambiguous protection under the Ebro Treaty, but that Rome would rush to defend nonetheless because of its importance to their plans to combat Carthaginian expansion.

He began by inciting the Turbulettes, an Iberian tribe whose territory lay to the west of Saguntum, to rise up against them and, as Appian records,

[Hannibal] then suborned the Turbulettes, neighbors of the Saguntines, that they should complain to him that the latter were overrunning their country and doing them many other wrongs. They made this complaint. Then Hannibal sent their ambassadors to Carthage, and wrote private letters saying that the Romans were inciting Carthaginian Spain to revolt, and that the Saguntines were cooperating with the Romans for this purpose.²⁵

This first step in the Second Punic War demonstrates the common interaction of the ancient empires and the tribes in Iberia. Developed and practiced during the interwar period and explicitly shown in this tone-setting episode for the years to come, it is clear that the Carthaginians viewed the Iberians as tools, or obstacles depending on the situation, for their real goal of combating the Romans. In this instance, the Turbulettes go along with Hannibal's plans, sending a delegation to the Carthaginian Senate to complain about the Saguntines so that he could get his permission to besiege the town; their motives however are unrecorded.

It would be reasonable to say that they were merely taking the side, and doing whatever was asked of them, of the empire that posed the most immediate threat in hopes that they and their civilization might be spared. This cannot, however, be considered a

²⁴ Zonar. 21.1.

²⁵ App. *Hisp*, 2.10.

pattern of behavior due to the existence of those tribes, like the Ilergetae and Celtiberi, that went against the Romans and Carthaginians respectively, in spite of that empire presenting the most immediate threat to them. Though this does not rule out the possibility that they simply saw the other side as the most likely to win the conflict in the end and be thankful to them for their loyalty. Furthermore, this motive is in keeping with the rebellious behavior of the tribes after the end of the war and the establishment of Roman hegemony in the region, which would threaten and provoke rebellion in any tribe whose chief goal is self-preservation. As it was, the only time one of the powers succeeded in gaining the loyalty of a specific tribe was when Hasdrubal the Fair married a daughter of the king of the Turdetani in the 220s.

Hannibal then commanded his army to lay siege to Saguntum and, after a failed sortie from the city's defenders when they realized that Roman aid was not going to come fast enough to save them, sacked the city.²⁶ The Romans, upon getting word of the siege, sent an embassy to Carthage to demand that they turn Hannibal over to them for violating the Ebro Treaty.²⁷ Carthage responded by sending word to Hannibal that he was free to cross the Ebro River and invade the Roman territory, which he may have already done before receiving that permission.²⁸ He continued over the Pyrenees, collecting Celtiberian and Celtic allies along the way, and famously crossed the Alps into Italy in the spring of 218.²⁹

²⁶ App. *Hisp*, 2.12.

²⁷ App. *Hisp*, 2.12-3.14.

²⁸ App. *Hisp*, 2.13.

²⁹ Polyb. III.47.

The Romans, responding to the situation in Spain as they understood it, sent about sixty ships, ten thousand infantry, and seven-hundred cavalry, under the command of Publius Cornelius Scipio in order to take the fight to Hannibal there.³⁰ When they landed in Spain, however, Scipio learned from local merchants that Hannibal had already crossed the Alps into Italy.³¹ So he put his brother Gnaeus in charge of the Spanish operation and sailed back to Italy to participate in the defense of the *patria*, but when he got there was quickly sent back to Spain as the Senate had already dispatched both consuls to deal with Hannibal in Italy.³² Appian reports that Gnaeus Scipio did “nothing in Spain worthy of mention before his brother Publius returned thither.”³³

When Publius Scipio returned, they led in a joint-command, mirroring the style of the consuls back in Italy, but with much better success. Leading the Carthaginian forces was another general by the name of Hasdrubal Barca, not to be confused with Hasdrubal the Fair, who carried on for a short time before being recalled to Africa to deal with yet another Numidian uprising.³⁴ After that, the brothers dispatched the remaining Carthaginian forces and began to gain the fealty of the Iberian tribes that were previously allied with Carthage.³⁵ These tribes, now that there was no Carthaginian force in the region, quickly fell in line with the Roman brothers, of whom it is also said that they

³⁰ Livy, *History of Rome*, trans. Canon Roberts (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1905) 26.41.

³¹ App. *Hisp*, 3.14.

³² Polyb. III.44.

³³ App. *Hisp*, 2.14.

³⁴ Zonar. 21.

³⁵ Polyb. III.91.1-5.

were “as persuasive in inducing subjects as in leading armies.”³⁶ One of the key factors in this campaign to win the favor of some of the Iberian tribes was the returning of hostages that the Carthaginians had taken, emphasizing the generosity of Rome and degrading Carthage when they did so.³⁷ This move, above all else they did, seems to have been the most effective in convincing Iberian tribes to side with Rome, with many signing an official treaty soon after.³⁸

By winter, they had marched south to Turditania, the most heavily Carthaginian part of Spain, in time for Hasdrubal Barca’s return. Having secured victory over the Numidian king, Syphax, the Carthaginian Senate had outfitted Hasdrubal Barca with another army, including thirty elephants, and sent him to restore Carthage’s hold on Spain. He met the Scipios in battle and, though the battles were contentious, eventually accepted a temporary defeat and retreated deeper into Turditania, apparently to wait out the winter.³⁹ In an aggressive move, however, Hasdrubal Barca sent one of his commanders, another man named Hasdrubal, usually styled “Hasdrubal son of Gesco,” to harry the Roman supply lines and defenses.⁴⁰ The Scipios went out with small forces to deal with the menace but, in two separate instances of great misfortune, were killed in the ensuing skirmishes.⁴¹

³⁶ App. *Hisp*, 3.15.

³⁷ Polyb. III.91.1-8.

³⁸ Polyb. III.91.

³⁹ App. *Hisp*, 3.16.

⁴⁰ App. *Hisp*, 3.16.

⁴¹ App. *Hisp*, 3.16.

After hearing of this, Rome sent two commanders, Marcellus and Claudius (no cognomens given by Appian or Polybius) with another ten thousand infantry and one thousand cavalry.⁴² In Appian's words, however, "As nothing of importance was accomplished by them, the Carthaginian power increased until it embraced almost the whole of Spain, and the Romans were restricted to a small space in the Pyrenees."⁴³ This caused the sentiment of fear in Rome, already palpable due to the campaign of Hannibal, to boil over for the worry that a second army may soon head out from Iberia to reinforce him. So, then the senate asked for volunteers to take over Spanish operations and Publius Cornelius Scipio, son of the Publius whose death had sent the situation spiraling out of control, stepped up with the hope to avenge his father and win glory in Spain.⁴⁴

He left Rome with an army of a similar size to the ones sent before him and combined them with the ones still there in Spain as they had not been much expended by his predecessor and at once made for Saguntum due to both its strategic and symbolic importance. Mago, the commander Hannibal had left in charge of his forces in Spain, had set up his base there with approximately ten thousand soldiers in the employ of Carthage.⁴⁵ Scipio quickly surrounded and besieged the city. He launched an assault four days after that and captured the city, destroying the Carthaginian force there, though Mago himself was able to escape.⁴⁶ This gave him free reign over most of the

⁴² App. *Hisp*, 3.17.

⁴³ App. *Hisp*, 3.17.

⁴⁴ App. *Hisp*, 4.18.

⁴⁵ App. *Hisp*, 4.19.

⁴⁶ Cass. Dio, 4.22.

Mediterranean coast, which he used to occupy other strategic points like Carthago Nova, stopping only to take stock of their loot, offer the necessary sacrifices, and reward his men.⁴⁷ Dio records that he won over and solidified the loyalties of still more Iberians and Celtiberians in much the same way as Publius and Gnaeus Scipio; he would recapture prisoners from the Carthaginians, which they had been using to retain their loyalties, and would return them to their people.⁴⁸

Scipio is not specifically recorded as having any of the tribes in his army or even fighting on his side, though it may be assumed that the tribes won over by his father and uncle at least helped with supply and reconnaissance. Hasdrubal Barca, Hasdrubal son of Gesco, Hanno, and Mago met up in Carmo (modern Carmona) and combined forces in order to drive Scipio out of the region. This would be the deciding conflict in the Spanish theatre of the Second Punic War. Appian records the Carthaginians as having over seventy thousand African infantry, five thousand Numidian cavalrymen, and thirty-six elephants in their army, against Scipio's legions which had started with about twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse, but had been depleted by the battles at Saguntum and Carthago Nova.⁴⁹ Despite his cavalry quickly taking the advantage against the Numidians, the ultimate result of the battle was in doubt for Scipio for some time due to the sheer number of the Carthaginians, but once his cavalry was able to corner and deal with the Numidians, they quickly turned toward the Africans' rear and routed them.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ App. *Hisp*, 4.23.

⁴⁸ Cass. Dio, XVI.8.42-48.

⁴⁹ App. *Hisp*, 5.27.

⁵⁰ App. *Hisp*, 5.27.

After this, the Carthaginian commanders and their surviving men scattered. Some went to reinforce Hannibal in his Italian campaign, others into the Spanish interior to attempt the reestablishment of Carthaginian hegemony in the region as it was now effectively in the control of Rome. Scipio himself would later be called up to strike at Carthage directly, leaving Spain in the hands of Marcus Junius Silanus, his long-time aide.⁵¹ Marcius quickly set about punishing those tribes that had worked as mercenaries and scouts for Mago's army after officially allying themselves with Rome and rounding up the Carthaginian forces and commanders who were taking shelter among those tribes. This campaign resulted in the deaths of several thousand Iberian and Celtiberian mercenaries in the employ of the Carthaginians, as well as the execution of Hanno, the only Carthaginian commander left in Spain.⁵²

With the treacherous tribes and Carthaginian dispatched, Marcius turned his attention to those tribes that had been allied with Carthage from the beginning. Appian gives only one account of this operation, the siege of Astapia, a Carthaginian allied city in Turdetania. After the Romans took up positions around the settlement, their warriors made a daring sortie against Marcius' army and, when their attack broke on the superior numbers and discipline of the Romans, the fifty men who had been selected to remain behind burned a pile of valuables they had assembled, killed the Astapian women and children and then killed each other.⁵³

⁵¹ App. *Hisp*, 6.30.

⁵² App. *Hisp*, 6.31.

⁵³ App. *Hisp*, 6.33.

Though there is no record of any other specific cases like this one, there were other cities and tribes in the Carthaginian camp which would have been handled, though likely not universally reacted to, in the same manner. Appian mentioned that the Astapians had done what they did in an attempt to avoid Roman slavery, so it is also likely that those who did not have such a reaction as Astapia were looted and forced into servitude. This tactic worked as long as the Romans appeared to be unified and strong enough to carry out repercussions on their enemies. This state of affairs was helped, at first, by the return of Scipio, whose reputation was enough to hold the respect of his army and keep the Iberians in line. However, when Scipio fell sick in 206 and was unable to carry out the duties of command, the reputation and discipline of Marcius was not enough to keep the army totally in line.⁵⁴

A portion of Scipio's army, the legion stationed in the settlement of Tucro (near modern Barcelona), broke off and fortified itself within the city. Appian and Dio record that they were unhappy because they thought Scipio was taking an undue part of the glory for their victories and saw his sickness as an opportunity to mutiny.⁵⁵ The motives for their actions, however, are not as important to this study as the consequences of them. While Scipio, still very sick, was forced to try to win back and then punish his mutinous soldiers, the Iberian king Indibilis, who already had a pact of nonaggression with the Romans, attempted to use the confusion of the situation to make a push into the territory of other Roman-aligned tribes. Indibilis, however, did not seem to account for how quickly Scipio would be able to resolve the situation in Tucro. After sending the

⁵⁴ App. *Hisp*, 7.34

⁵⁵ A - App. *Hisp*, 7.34.
B - Cass. Dio, XVI.8.42-48.

mutinous legionaries letters expressing regret for not extolling their bravery more in his reports and promises that he would do so in the future, Scipio convinced them to come for a parley where their complaints could be heard, and their loyalty regained. When they came to the meeting though, Scipio had the leaders of the mutiny captured and beaten to death, along with all those who tried to protect them or said anything in protest.⁵⁶ This done, he quickly moved to meet Indibilis on the battlefield and won a crushing victory over him. Indibilis surrendered and was forced to sign a treaty that included an indemnity to Rome, though neither the specifics of the agreement nor the amount of the fine are known.⁵⁷ When Scipio departed for Rome to take part in his triumph, however, Indibilis rose up again and was defeated by Marcius. This time he was killed along with his retinue, and his people were punished much more severely the second time.⁵⁸

These brief wars with Indibilis are important because they mark the end of one stage of Roman conquest in Spain and the beginning of another. The Carthaginians had all but given up the peninsula, Hannibal had been defeated and the repercussions of the loss of the Second Punic War would leave Spain untenable for them. This meant that, for the Romans, the purpose of their interaction with the Iberians and Celtiberians was no longer for the larger goal of defeating another power, but for the purpose of pacifying the entire region for Roman rule. This is best seen in the Roman reaction to both of Indibilis' revolts in comparison to how they dealt with Iberian enemies in the Carthaginian era and

⁵⁶ App. *Hisp*, 7.35.

⁵⁷ App. *Hisp*, 7.35.

⁵⁸ App. *Hisp*, 7.36.

how they dealt with mutinies within their own army. With their own soldiers, the Romans expected absolute loyalty and so they punished a lack of loyalty absolutely in order to set an example for others. With the Iberians in the Carthaginian era, they had no reason to expect absolute loyalty, but they wanted them to be amiable to Rome and amicable with Carthage. Thus, they returned the Iberian prisoners they captured from the Carthaginians and, when the various tribes arrayed themselves against Rome and were defeated with their Carthaginian allies, they tried to make it so they could no longer aid their allies in their defeat. In the case of Indibilis, however, they first reacted in a way consistent with a power wanting dominance, but dominance via loyalty from their former enemies, in much the same way they had ruled the Italian cities for centuries, rather than outright conquest. However, when their grace was abused, as demonstrated by Indibilis' second revolt, they made it clear by punishing Indibilis and his cohort in the same way as they punished their own soldiers, showing that they expected a similar loyalty in return for their grace.

This expectation, in contrast to the reality of the Roman-Iberian interaction, is the most essential factor in determining why the tribes were always in resistance to Roman rule, despite the futility of their efforts. Soon after the expulsion of the Carthaginians, which officially ceded all Carthaginian territory on the peninsula to Rome according to the terms of peace set in 206, the Senate of Rome split the region into two official provinces, Hispania Citerior, encompassing the north of the province, and Hispania Ulterior, the southern part, and began sending governors and other magistrates there to begin integrating Spain into the Roman sphere of control.⁵⁹ The problem, then, was that

⁵⁹ Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 1991) 33.

they did not have the region entirely under Roman control. The vast majority was still in the direct control of regional kings and chieftains who, though they often had good relations with the Romans and were not capable of standing up to their military might directly, were unwilling to cede their land and people to a foreign power. The Roman approach to the Iberians worked well in the Carthaginian era because of their goal and the dynamics that were present in that time, but when those goals and dynamics shifted, the Roman methods failed to shift with them in ways that would have integrated Romanization into Iberian culture or Iberian culture into Roman. Thus, decades of rebellion and insurgency plagued the early Roman rule of Spain.

CHAPTER TWO

Wars of Pacification

Hispania was divided into two provinces because the Senate believed that the unruliness of the Iberian tribes was already so great that one governor could not possibly keep up with it by himself. These governors were dispatched with a peacekeeping force, and much of the conquering force either returned to Rome with Scipio for a triumph or remained in Spain to help set up military settlements.¹ The names of these governors were largely either unrecorded, or unimportant enough that keeping up with them would only serve to confuse the narrative. When the Romans faced real threats to their dominance in Spain, a consul was typically dispatched to deal with the problem more specifically and more swiftly than the local governors were equipped to do. So it was in 195, just a little over a decade after the founding of the twin provinces, that such a problem arose.

The specifics of the conflict are not well known, not even the names of the of the enemy commanders have been recorded, only that two governors and a replacement failed to contain a general revolt and, as a result, a young Cato the Elder was sent with an army of over 15,000 legionaries, not including the ones already there.² His two main adversaries were the Turdetani in southern Spain, the primary allies of the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War, and the Celtiberi in northern Spain, territory that had been considered “Roman” throughout that war. He landed in Emporia that year and, after

¹ App. *Hisp.* 7.38.

² Livy. XM.28-30.

refusing support to loyal tribes including the Ilergetae in favor of maintaining a united force, moved a little ways out of town to engage the rebellious army, whose combined force, numbered 35,000 men or more.³ Cato's disadvantage when it came to the size of his army, however, did not hinder him much as he quickly outmaneuvered his enemy and drove them, scattered and disorganized, from the field. After this, he marched his army south, apparently feeling that he had to reconquer the entire Mediterranean coast, the area previously most directly under Roman control.⁴ This, of course, begs the question of why, so soon after the establishment of their hegemony, the Romans lost control of the region.

This question is difficult to answer considering the lack of information given regarding this revolt in the primary sources. The information that is known consists of the basic military movements, the fact that the Ilergetae were fighting the revolts along with the Romans, and the fact that his two main adversaries were the Turdetani and the Celtiberi. The military movements of Cato and his adversaries have already been related, and it is not difficult to work out why the Ilergetae were not willing to make enemies of the Romans a third time, though, at that point, the staying-power of their loyalty was still to be seen. What is more interesting to the study of Iberian rebellion is the separation between the two tribes specifically mentioned, both in distance, relationship to the Romans, and culture, in contrast to their apparent unity of purpose. This implies that there was both a solid communication network between tribes, whether Iberian or Celtiberian, and that anti-Roman sentiment was strong enough to push tribes to rebellion

³ Livy, XM.30.

⁴ App. *Hisp.* 8.41.

against them, keeping in mind that the last major revolt against the Romans, the one undertaken by Indibilis, had met with little success and had ended in the deaths of those in charge. Not to mention the fact that such sentiment had to be diverse enough that two very different tribes from opposite ends of the peninsula put in the effort to unite against a common enemy, along with other tribes that were present but not mentioned by Roman historians. The lack of information on this conflict, however, makes general assessments about their motives little more than speculation.

After defeating the main rebellious force and marching down into Turdetania, sacking and looting rebellious settlements along the way, Cato set about solidifying his victory politically. Dio also records that Cato marched south rather than north because he believed that the Celtiberians were a stronger foe than the Iberians, though it is also likely that he believed the instigators of the rebellion to be in the region formerly controlled by Carthage. He sent out letters to all the tribes involved in the general revolt, demanding envoys and hostages, neither Appian nor Zonaras (who was using the original work of Dio, and thus supplements his fragmentary account) records from whom specifically so it seems likely that his orders were as general as the uprising itself. He then sent the envoys back, making sure to stagger their departure so they would all arrive at their destination on the same day. With those envoys, he sent orders that any Iberian walls or fortifications were to be destroyed.⁵ Appian records that they each then obeyed these commands because they received them before they had the time to hear about any other

⁵ App. *Hisp.* 8.41.

tribe receiving them and feared that Cato was singling them out and would bring specific retribution for disobedience.⁶

After this, there is yet another gap in the narrative. From Cato's victory conditions being carried out in 195 to the next outbreak of hostilities in 181, Dio says nothing of these interwar years, nor do Polybius or Livy. It can be assumed that the two-governor system was continued, and somehow the relationship between the Romans and the Celtiberian tribes in particular degraded to the point of rebellion yet again. It may also be the case that the Iberian tribes more to the south had been so thoroughly coerced into submission by Cato's campaign that they were unwilling or unable to engage in this war. Arrian says only that, "many Spanish tribes, having insufficient land, including the Lusones and others who dwelt along the river Iberus (Ebro), revolted from the Roman rule."⁷ This is the only stated grievance found in any primary source recording of the conflict and "having insufficient land," in addition to it being a reason to go to war with Rome in particular, implies that the Roman governors had been settling and encroaching on what the tribal kings thought to be their own lands during this interwar period. This idea is supported by the fact that multiple tribes banded together against the Romans when a lack of land for their own people could be more easily remedied by warring amongst themselves, as well as it being the common practice of Roman praetors to use their armies to exploit the land they were to govern to enrich themselves and recoup the financial losses they suffered in gaining the position in the first place.

⁶ App. *Hisp.* 8.41.

⁷ App. *Hisp.* 8.42.

The First Celtiberian War would last for only three years and be handled by two separate consuls. First among these was Quintus Fulvius Flaccus, who took with him an army from Rome and immediately began plundering the Celtiberian lands. This prompted the Celtiberians to gather in a city called Complega. Arrian makes a point of noting that Complega is a “new” city which may also imply that it was exempt from Cato’s prohibition against walls.⁸ Flaccus besieged the city and, throughout his siege, continued to raid the countryside and periodically negotiate with those who had taken refuge in it.⁹ While he was still encamped there, the next year’s consul, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, relieved him and adjusted strategy.¹⁰ This adjustment was not much of a choice as Flaccus’ lack of action had allowed another Celtiberian army to organize and begin their own siege on the Roman settlement of Caravis. Gracchus quickly moved to drive off the enemy army and, after a time of maneuver and counter maneuver involving quite a bit of trickery on both sides, Gracchus defeated the Celtiberian force of about 20,000 and negotiated the surrender of the rebellious tribes.¹¹

Much is made in the ancient sources of the success and brilliance of Gracchus’ treaties here, so it is worth the time of this study to look into what is known about them and to judge their true effectiveness.¹² First, he allocated an indeterminate amount of the

⁸ App. *Hisp.* 8.42.

⁹ App. *Hisp.* 8.42.

¹⁰ Livy. XM.30.

¹¹ App. *Hisp.* 8.43.

¹² App. *Hisp.* 8.43.

conquered land for distribution to the “poor.”¹³ Second, he drafted and signed “well defined treaties” with the reconquered tribes that made them “Friends of Rome” by oath, and likely other bindings like hostages as well, and also placed the requisite indemnity on them.¹⁴ This restitution did not seem to be a high priority for the Romans, however, as they did not demand payment on it until some of those same tribes rebelled again twenty-five years later. Arrian gives quite a bit of praise to these negotiations, going as far as to say that they were “longed for in subsequent wars” which would be a strange thing to say if the majority of the tribes proceeded to rebel even as long as a quarter-century later, so then it seems that the majority of these contracts did hold up and secured *amicitia* (friendship) with tribes that were formerly hostile.¹⁵ Additionally, Plutarch, in his biography about Gracchus’ more famous son, also named Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, notes that the younger Gracchus had an easier time in negotiations with the Numantines and other tribes because they remembered and loved the elder Gracchus for his treaties almost fifty years after the fact.¹⁶

So far, one of the most important things to note when looking at how these Iberian wars and rebellions took shape is the fact that the Romans were still handling the provinces as if they were foreign territory, outside of Roman jurisdiction. Even by the start of the Second Celtiberian war, over fifty years since the end of the Second Punic War and the division of Spain into provinces, the Romans were not acting like this

¹³ App. *Hisp.* 8.43.

¹⁴ App. *Hisp.* 8.43.

¹⁵ App. *Hisp.* 8.43.

¹⁶ Plut. *Vit. Ti. Gracch.* 5.11.

territory is even a part of their empire. Thus, the words that are most often used to describe these "provinces" and "rebellions" that happen within them may be misleading if they are understood in the typically modern sense. The only thing that is confirmable from the sources is that Rome controlled much of the Mediterranean coast directly through occupation of cities like Emporia, Saguntum, and Carthago Nova (along with other cities that they took directly from the Carthaginians). The rest of the peninsula, and especially the Lusitanians beyond the Minho and Guadiana rivers, were not under direct Roman rule and did not interact with Roman systems of authority on a daily basis as one might expect for those who live in the provinces, which were administered by the senate back in Rome. The only thing that differentiated the Iberian interaction with the Romans when they were living under provincial rule from when they were taking part in the war with Carthage was that their main contact with the Romans was a governor and not a general. Those governors, however, not only had civil jurisdiction over Roman land in their provinces, but they also had military jurisdiction over the surrounding area for the purposes of defense, pacification, and exploitation, an assumed practice for Roman politicians by that time.

This brings up the question of the Roman purpose for Iberia during that period. At the end of the Punic Wars, it seemed that they were on a track to dominate the province and absorb it into their empire, but from 206 to 154 they seem to have stagnated in that mission with only a few bursts of energy in between when an attack on their territory and people made it a necessity. It was only during these times of necessity that they sent a commander worthy of being noted in the historical record. That commander would then defeat whatever coalition of enemy tribes had sprung up to kick the Romans

off their peninsula, for though the fact that they were not always trying to convert the region into a directly-ruled Roman territory did not mean that their presence did not have natural annoyances for those that they purportedly ruled over. These likely included the creation of settlements within or very near to tribal territory, as well as the various methods implemented by the governors to enrich themselves during their tenure, as seen in the recorded reasons for Indibilis' war and the First Celtiberian War.

As far as the measures implemented by the Romans after their victories in order to prevent further uprisings go, none was foolproof. The most effective were ones directly targeting the rulers of the tribes, whether it was the execution of Indibilis and his cohort or the more widespread taking of hostages. The returning of Carthaginian captives also helped, but was more of a short-term solution for the immediate problem during that period. As for the agreements of Gracchus, so praised by Appian as being agreeable to both Spanish and Roman alike, the only discernible difference from other, less praised, treaties were the implementation of land redistribution. Setting aside, for the moment, the possibility that Appian is merely exaggerating the reception and effects of these accords for an ulterior purpose, the question of why land distribution to the poor could have been a deciding factor in the pacification of previously anti-Roman tribes remains. The answer is simple, this act made the region more Roman, and thus, more like a true province with Roman citizens living alongside tribal Iberians and Celtiberians. It seems clear from the usual *modus operandi* of the politicians of republican Rome that these "poor" would have been, at least in part, Romans, Italians, or Iberians who had been living in territory under direct Roman rule as giving those people land would have been

politically advantageous but giving it over to Celtiberians who were already there would not have been.

Thus, the long-term effects of these reforms would have been that Roman citizens, and those who looked to the Romans for government and protection alongside subjects of Iberian and Celtiberian kings, began to populate the interior of the peninsula. This change made the interior of the province much more like a province and much more controllable for the local Roman government. Also, the existence of people used to Roman rule and, at least nominally, loyal to Roman magistrates mixing with and living among the inhabitants of Iberia, spreading Roman culture and ideas, would make not only the territory more Roman but the people also. Thus, the first Iberian “rebellion” that truly fits the description of that word was the Second Celtiberian War. That is, a war fought to remove Roman rule from a land populated by Romans.

Appian records that the war was fought because,

Segeda, a large and powerful city of a Celtiberian tribe called the Belli, included in the treaties made by Gracchus... persuaded some of the smaller towns to settle in its own borders, and then surrounded itself with a wall seven kilometers in circumference. It also forced the Tithi, a neighboring tribe, to join in the undertaking.¹⁷

It was only then, when they received word that they were building such a wall that the senate demanded their indemnity from Gracchus’ treaty and sent Marcus Fulvius Nobilior, a praetor that year, with an army of 30,000 to enforce their ruling by any means necessary.¹⁸ He arrived and quickly marched on Segeda, demanding an unconditional

¹⁷ App. *Hisp.* 9.44.

¹⁸ Livy, 521.38-40

surrender, even going as far as to refuse an offer of mediation from a neutral tribe.¹⁹ In the short term, Nobilior's campaign was successful. The walls not yet finished, the Celtiberians quickly abandoned Segeda, pursued by Nobilior into territory with which no Roman was familiar.²⁰ Overextended and short on usable intelligence, he was ambushed by a force of more than 20,000 Celtiberians led by a commander named Carus.²¹ As Appian records, Nobilior lost 6,000 men in the engagement and even though his cavalry succeeded in killing Carus, his guard, later in the battle. The battle was considered an unmitigated disaster by the Romans. Despite this, Nobilior advanced to the city of Numantia and besieged the Celtiberians who had fled there.²²

After receiving reinforcements, consisting of thirty elephants and some cavalry from Massena, he made an assault on the city.²³ After some initial success due to his enemy having no experience in fighting elephants, the elephants went into a frenzy from the din and wounds of battle and began to trample the Romans as well as the Numantines. After this turn, Nobilior's men were routed from the field and he lost another 4,000 legionaries that day.²⁴ The Numantines continued smaller ambushes and other attacks in the guerilla style that wore down Nobilior's beleaguered army even further. He suffered defections from previously allied tribes, as well as a brutal winter quartering where he did

¹⁹ App. *Hisp.* 9.45.

²⁰ App. *Hisp.* 9.45.

²¹ App. *Hisp.* 9.45.

²² App. *Hisp.* 9.45.

²³ App. *Hisp.* 9.46.

²⁴ App. *Hisp.* 9.46.

not have the food to feed his men properly and underwent massive attrition, leaving the army almost completely unfit for battle by the spring of 152.²⁵

Consequently, Nobilior was replaced by Marcus Claudius Marcellus, who, after avoiding yet another Numantine ambush, began to dismantle the Numantines' base of support by targeting the minor tribes around Lusitania, defeating them and granting clemency, in exchange for various amounts of aid in the war against the Numantines.²⁶ Finally, after a misunderstanding that resulted in the resumption of hostilities with a few of the auxiliary tribes, Marcellus was able to manipulate the situation, saying that the only peace he would accept would be a general peace, thus forcing the minor tribes to pressure the Numantines into agreeing to terms with the Romans as well.²⁷ This led to a brief cessation of hostilities while the Roman senate heard from the envoys of those involved, including Roman allies in the region. They subsequently rejected the proposed peace and recalled Marcellus for his apparent unwillingness to see the war through. In his place they sent Lucius Licinius Lucullus, with co-governor Servius Sulpicius Galba to handle the situation.²⁸

This change marked the beginning of the end for the Second Celtiberian War but the beginning of the lead-up to the next major war on the peninsula, the Lusitanian War. Also of note for this stage in the Spanish conflicts is how it demonstrates the changing Roman view of the twin provinces from 200 to 151. In that time, the region had gone

²⁵ App. *Hisp.* 9.47.

²⁶ Polyb. 13.1-11.

²⁷ App. *Hisp.* 9.48.

²⁸ App. *Hisp.* 9.49.

from a place where the few ambitious statesmen who ever set foot there were sent by Rome for a special task, to a region where ambitious statesmen requested magistracies for the sake of wealth and glory in war. This seems to be due to the change in Roman policy in regard to the province discussed earlier. Even if these policies did not expand direct Roman holdings on the province, it did expand their influence.

Sometimes called the “Lusitanian War” or the “War of Fire,” this war was one of the most decisive events in the pacification of the Iberian peninsula, but it was also one of the hardest fought and most bloody. When taken along with the Second Celtiberian War before it and the Numantine War, which would come after it, it greatly contributed to an extended period of warfare that almost cost Rome the entire peninsula. In addition, it introduced the common association of the wars in Spain with guerrilla warfare, as the enemies of Rome would combine a conventional army in the field with irregular forces who fought in smaller engagements to wear down the Romans in a manner with which they were not unfamiliar. What turned out to be the beginning of a final, desperate, attempt to rid the peninsula of the Romans, started when a tribal warrior, whom the Romans dubbed Punicus, gathered together a confederation of Lusitanian and Celtiberian tribes in 155, and began to raid in the lands of tribes allied to the Romans, slowly moving south into Hispania Ulterior.²⁹

The armies of the united tribes organized under his command, Punicus marched south into Hispania Ulterior, raiding and killing Romans and Roman allies as he went. Appian says that, over the course of two years, they killed 6,000 Roman citizens,

²⁹ App. *Hisp.* 10.56.

including a praetor, and sent the two other praetors in the region fleeing back to Rome.³⁰ Punicus then set his army on the city of Blastophoenica, a remnant from the Phoenician settlement of the land centuries before, where he was killed by a slinger defending the city in 153.³¹ Another chieftain by the name of Caesarus took his place and continued the raiding until the Roman senate finally saw fit to send an army under the general Lucius Mummius Achaicus to put an end to the uprising.³² After an initial victory, however, the relieving Roman army over-pursued and fell into an ambush set by the Lusitanians and lost 9,000 men, more than half the number of his total force.³³ Mummius then withdrew to a fortified position, drilled his men, and waited for an opportunity. That opportunity presented itself in the form of the enemy looting the battlefield. Unprepared, a sudden sortie from the Romans set the Lusitanians to flight once again, but this time there was no trick and no rally. Turning his attention to the south, he ambushed another Lusitanian army, under the leadership of a warrior known as Caucenus, which itself had become overextended, raiding all the way down to the Pillars of Hercules.³⁴

For these successes, Mummius was granted a triumph and was replaced with Marcus Atilius in 152.³⁵ He made an advance into Lusitanian territory, where the Lusitanians themselves seemed to be badly depleted by this point as they were unable to

³⁰ *App. Hisp.* 10.56.

³¹ *App. Hisp.* 10.56.

³² *App. Hisp.* 10.56.

³³ *App. Hisp.* 10.56.

³⁴ *App. Hisp.* 10.57.

³⁵ *App. Hisp.* 10.57.

mount any kind of ambush or defense against him. Indeed, even when Atilius took the city of Oxthrae, the capital of one of the members of their coalition, Appian records that only 700 died in its defense.³⁶ Nevertheless, the victory moved several of the allied tribes to sue for peace with Rome, which was granted by Atilius, his mission being to pacify and not to exact anything more from them.³⁷ This attitude, however, was not true for all the Roman magistrates in the area. The actions of some would rekindle the already dying embers of the Lusitanian War, making it far worse than it was on course to be under Mummius and Atilius alone.

The actions of Galba and Lucullus, the governors taking over administration of Hispania Ulterior and Citerior from Marcellus demonstrated how the attitude and actions of Roman governors could, both positively and negatively, affect the overall Roman experience in Spain. Galba and Lucullus marched into Lusitania, nominally to end this war once and for all, but the sources seem adamant that they were also there in order to profit in the usual fashion of Roman governors. Upon their arrival in 151, they looted the territory and, in what can be assumed to be an attempt to curb any retaliation on the part of the Lusitanians, rounded up and killed every man of fighting age that they could find.³⁸ This massacre would not only rekindle the embers of a dying conflict, bringing more warriors and more tribes to the side of the Lusitanians, but it also seriously altered the Roman experience in the province, changing it from what could have been a largely

³⁶ App. *Hisp.* 10.58.

³⁷ App. *Hisp.* 10.58.

³⁸ App. *Hisp.* 10.58-59.

diplomatic process into a desperate struggle to hang on while their enemies allied with each other and attempted to push them out.

It was also indicative of how the typical Roman governor of the Spanish provinces had to treat their charges. They were having to go farther to find lootable land and raidable peoples, demonstrating the expansion of their own territory and influence. The governors sent there were far more active, not even waiting for a pretext for their campaigns, rather doing it explicitly for the power and money that came with victory. Appian goes as far as to say that Lucullus made his venture because he was “greedy for fame and needing money,” and “Galba, being even more greedy than Lucullus, distributed a little of the plunder to the army and a little to his friends and kept the rest himself, although he was already one of the richest of the Romans.”³⁹ This, at least perceived, attitude of the governors showed both that the wars in the region were becoming less about engagements for the sake of peace, and that the Spanish provinces themselves were becoming viewed as places where one could find enrichment or advancement. These two perspective shifts in the Roman approach to Hispania had a particular effect, both on who governed the province and how those governors would handle it in the coming years. First, the province would attract those politicians who were ambitious enough to desire the gold and glory from waging wars in the province, but not those competent enough to be sent to the provinces out of necessity. Thus, men like Galba and Lucullus were assigned the twin provinces rather than more competent statesmen until a situation was created by their incompetence that necessitated the deployment of a Gracchus or Scipio.

³⁹ App. *Hisp.* 10.60.

One of the young warriors to escape being killed at the hands of Lucullus' men, was a man who would be dubbed "Viriathus" by the Romans. Much like his predecessor Caesarus, he banded together a coalition of Iberian and Lusitanian tribes, much aided by the outrage at Lucullus and Galba's actions, and began a campaign against the Romans on the Iberian Peninsula.⁴⁰ Despite this advantage in recruitment, Viriathus was able only to gather a force of 10,000 men who had not been killed in the slaughter and once again invaded Hispania Ulterior, completely overrunning the province by means of their guerilla tactics, foraging and raiding from the local settlements in lieu of a supply train.⁴¹

In response, Rome dispatched yet another army, this one under the governor Gaius Vetilius, in order to combat the issue. His numbers were roughly similar to the Lusitanians, and his arrival caught them off guard as they were still in the process of supplying themselves.⁴² He cornered them and began talking peace once again, but Viriathus did not trust the Romans after he had been betrayed by Galba and Lucullus, who also spoke of peace before turning on him. Viriathus convinced his men not to trust the Romans' offer of peace either and instead they began battle preparations.⁴³ They marched out as if to engage the Romans, but as soon as they were clear of the fortifications, they scattered in every direction in small bands. About 1,000 stayed behind with Viriathus to harass the Romans and make it even more difficult to give chase. The ploy succeeded and they were able to reorganize a little later, with added

⁴⁰ Cass. Dio. 71.1-4.

⁴¹ App. *Hisp.* 11.61.

⁴² App. *Hisp.* 11.61.

⁴³ App. *Hisp.* 11.62.

recruits who had heard of Viriathus' success.⁴⁴ This started a period of eight years when he and the Lusitanians fought the Romans in an irregular war based around small forces raiding and harassing the Romans in order to do as much damage as possible.

Every year from 146 to 142, Rome sent an army to dislodge Viriathus from his position in Turdetania, and every year they failed to defeat him. One of these victories, in 143, gained him the influence to flip three major tribes against the Romans, effectively beginning the Numantine War which would eventually cause enough consternation in Rome to be comparable with Viriathus' own uprising.⁴⁵ Finally, in 142, the senate sent a consular army under Quintus Fabius Maximus Servilianus numbering over 19,000. He was able to engage Viriathus' army in the city of Erisana and though he took heavy losses, also captured and killed several of Viriathus commanders, as well as selling almost 10,000 Lusitanian warriors into slavery.⁴⁶ Apparently unable to maintain the upper hand on the slippery Lusitanian though, Viriathus escaped the initial attack, infiltrated the city, defeated the Roman army and demanded peace from Servilianus.⁴⁷ Servilianus, of course, accepted the terms, but the senate, being unhappy with the peace, sent the consul Quintus Fabius Maximus Caepio to eliminate Viriathus specifically and permanently in 140.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ App. *Hisp.* 11.62.

⁴⁵ App. *Hisp.* 11.64.

⁴⁶ App. *Hisp.* 12.68.

⁴⁷ App. *Hisp.* 12.69.

⁴⁸ App. *Hisp.* 12.70

Seeing the failure of his predecessors in trying conventional warfare against the Lusitanians, Caepio instead targeted their farms and villages, effectively waging total war against his enemy.⁴⁹ This succeeded in drawing out Viriathus' lieutenants Audax, Ditalcus, and Minurus, whom the Lusitanian leader had charged with negotiating another peace.⁵⁰ Caepio, however, was after Viriathus and Viriathus alone, and thus bribed the three men to assassinate their leader and end the war once and for all. The ploy was successful, and the three men stabbed Viriathus to death as he slept when they returned to him.⁵¹ This move would establish a precedent for how Roman commanders would deal with situations that they could not gain a foothold on militarily in Spain, as would be observed in the rebellion of Sertorius seventy years later. After a grand and sorrowful funeral for Viriathus, the Lusitanians chose another warrior named Tantalus as his replacement. Tantalus led his army against Carthago Nova, hoping to strike a blow in revenge against the Romans, but Caepio quickly defeated and set his army to flight.⁵² This led to peace negotiations that finally ended in the favor of Rome. Appian records, "Tantalus became exhausted and surrendered his army to Caepio on condition that they should be treated as subjects. The latter took from them all their arms and gave them sufficient land, so that they should not be driven to robbery by want. In this way the Viriathic war came to an end."⁵³

⁴⁹ App. *Hisp.* 12.71.

⁵⁰ App. *Hisp.* 12.74.

⁵¹ App. *Hisp.* 12.74.

⁵² App. *Hisp.* 12.74.

⁵³ App. *Hisp.* 12.75.

There was no rest for the victors, however, as the war quickly moved over into the Numantine War, which Viriathus had helped to start with his victories over the Romans and his diplomatic prowess. The first part of that conflict was fought contemporaneously with the Lusitanian War. It began in 143 when the Numantines and Arevaci, as well as, to a lesser extent, the Vettones, enraged by the massacres perpetrated by the Romans and encouraged by the success of Viriathus, renounced their friendship with Rome and began campaigns against them. Numantia itself was on the eastern half of the Ebro, quite close to official Roman territory. The tribes that rose up with it were from all over the peninsula, the Vettones being located in the center, the Vaccaei in northern Lusitania, and the territory of the Arevaci debatably extending into the southern portion of Hispania Citerior. Despite the diversity of their locations and the relative sizes of the tribes, the Numantines especially being substantial in native territory, they were only able to muster a combined force of 8,000.⁵⁴ With this force, they began to raid lands and harass garrisons in Hispania Citerior. At first, the Romans were far too distracted by their war with Viriathus in Hispania Ulterior to pay attention to their activities.

That situation lasted for three years, between 143 and 140, with some moderate success of the side of the Numantines. When Caepio's trickery worked out in Roman favor however, they got the full attention of the Roman senate, and they would hold that attention, despite their relatively small force, for another seven years. That Roman attention manifested itself in the form of 32,000 troops under the command of Quintus Pompeius Aulus, who took over from Caepio after the resolution of the Lusitanian

⁵⁴ App. *Hisp.* 13.76.

conflict.⁵⁵ As was typical by this point, Aulus at once marched on Numantia, which had been carefully fortified over the last three years, forcing the 8,000 Numantines still in the field to withdraw and defend their home. They arrived in time to take up the defenses left for them and began to use them in order to defeat the vastly superior force surrounding their city. They would periodically sally out of their fortifications in order to draw back the Romans into their series of traps and palisades where they would have an outsized advantage.⁵⁶ It was a great struggle for Aulus to keep his men disciplined enough not to chase after these attempts at bait and ambush.

To this end, he shifted his strategy to attacking the smaller towns around and under the influence of Numantia, but this would be even less successful than the first track. He first failed to take Termantia, losing 700 men and one of his chief officers there, as well as his baggage train to a Termantian sortie, and ended the day cornered on a rocky precipice surrounded by enemies.⁵⁷ The next day was not much better for the Romans, the whole daylight period was spent under arms, fighting a battle from which they could not retreat or rest. Only the setting of the sun caused the Iberians to withdraw, apparently believing that they could not hope to hold the Romans there any longer.⁵⁸ Fortune finally turned for Aulus when he reversed course and attacked the city of Malia, where the Numantine garrison was betrayed by the city's rulers and the settlement was surrendered without a fight. From there Aulus easily dealt with a large bandit army that

⁵⁵ App. *Hisp.* 13.76.

⁵⁶ App. *Hisp.* 13.78.

⁵⁷ App. *Hisp.* 13.78.

⁵⁸ App. *Hisp.* 13.78.

had been troubling him and, hoping to string together victories, moved on Numantia yet again.⁵⁹

This time he came with a plan to redirect the city's main water source, the river Durero, away from it in order to force their surrender. This project also met with many sorties and harassments from the Numantines, slowing Aulus' progress greatly and increasing his already mounting casualties of attrition.⁶⁰ This issue was not helped when, over a particularly harsh winter, an epidemic of dysentery came with the already under equipped replacements he received from Rome, ravaging his army further and devastating morale. The Numantines continued to take advantage of the situation, the accommodations of their cities and towns allowing them to ambush Roman foraging parties throughout the winter and inflict yet more casualties. After this, both sides agreed to discuss terms for peace, but after much politicking in Rome and in Spain, everything Aulus agreed to was rejected by the senate. He was replaced by Marcus Popillius Laenas, and the war continued.⁶¹

Laenas, in the words of Appian, "attacked the Lusones who were neighbors of the Numantines, but he accomplished nothing, and on the arrival of his successor in office, Hostilius Mancinus, he returned to Rome."⁶² Mancinus, when he took over in 138, did not fare any better. Again according to Appian,

Mancinus had frequent encounters with the Numantines in which he was worsted, and finally, after great loss, took refuge in his camp. On a false rumor that the Cantabri and Vaccaeï were coming to the aid of the

⁵⁹ App. *Hisp.* 13.77.

⁶⁰ App. *Hisp.* 13.76.

⁶¹ App. *Hisp.* 13.79.

⁶² App. *Hisp.* 13.79

Numantines, he became alarmed, extinguished his fires, and fled in the darkness of night to a desert place where Nobilior once had a camp. Being shut up in this place at daybreak without preparation or fortification and surrounded by Numantines, who threatened all with death unless he made peace, he agreed to terms like those previously made between the Romans and Numantines. To this agreement he bound himself by an oath.⁶³

Once again, the Senate of Rome declared the agreement null and void and sent yet another replacement, the consul Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, to take charge of the situation in 136.⁶⁴ Lepidus, while still bound by Mancinus' truce and waiting for word from Rome, turned on the Vaccaeii, whom he accused, without evidence of secretly supplying the Numantine war effort and besieged their capital of Pallantia. Though he quickly received word from the senatorial representatives that his actions were not sanctioned, he ignored their orders and continued on to Pallantia.⁶⁵ The siege of that city was even more disastrous than Aulus' time at Numantia. Lepidus quickly lost his supply train, whether to enemy attack or some other malady is unclear. That, in addition to another hard winter, resulted in wide malnourishment and even starvation in the Roman army, and Lepidus withdrew from the region.⁶⁶

The next commander, Quintus Calpurnius Piso, also accomplished nothing in his term and himself was replaced by Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, so elected because the Roman people were, "tired of this Numantine war, which was protracted and

⁶³ App. *Hisp.* 13.80.

⁶⁴ App. *Hisp.* 13.81.

⁶⁵ App. *Hisp.* 13.82.

⁶⁶ App. *Hisp.* 13.82.

severe beyond expectation.”⁶⁷ Scipio took up the command in 134 and made increasing the discipline of the army his top priority. He spent some time drilling and disciplining his men, as well as making some fundamental changes to the army procedure like forbidding the riding of donkeys and the expulsion of prostitutes from the camp. Only once the army was up to his standards of discipline and professionalism did Scipio march on Numantia.⁶⁸

He advanced carefully, making a point to keep his army together in order to avoid ambushes or other guerilla tactics often employed by the Numantines. The only time he violated his own rule on these matters, he had to rush to save his cavalry from being surrounded and killed by an army of Pallantians, who by this time were very much at war with Rome.⁶⁹ He began attacking the undefended villages around the Numantine countryside, one part of his army doing the looting and burning, while the other stood ready for an enemy attack.⁷⁰ He did this in order to bait his enemy into fighting in a conventional manner, and never gave chase when they were routed. These combined decisions allowed Scipio to establish siegeworks around Numantia itself without too much worry of attack from enemy forces in the city or the country. Thus, he erected walls around the city, preventing the raids and sorties that had so effectively beaten down the armies of his predecessors, and when the Numantines came out in force to try and provoke a fight he still held back, believing time to be on his side. Instead, Scipio had his

⁶⁷ App. *Hisp.* 14.84.

⁶⁸ App. *Hisp.* 14.84.

⁶⁹ App. *Hisp.* 14.88.

⁷⁰ App. *Hisp.* 14.89.

men continue to construct their own fortifications throughout the siege, never being satisfied with anything but impregnability.⁷¹

There were some attempts from the Numantines, as well as a relieving army from another tribe, to breach these defenses but they met with no success. There was also an episode where the besieged Numantines sent a warrior to negotiate with Scipio, but when he returned, having promised Scipio their surrender, they thought he must have taken a bribe and killed him.⁷² Thus, the siege stretched on for longer than the Numantine food stocks could support and they were reduced to cannibalism, and many others committed suicide before the ultimate destruction of the city in 133.⁷³ It is unclear whether the city itself was destroyed by Scipio's army or whether the inhabitants set fire to it to prevent the Romans from having access to it or plunder but both of these would be commensurate with the conduct of both sides up to that point. This victory effectively marked the end of Roman conflict with the Iberian and Celtiberian tribes in Spain. The remaining tribes were either unwilling or unable to resist the expansion of directly ruled Roman territory to the western shores of the peninsula.

When taken together this series of wars, the Second Celtiberian, Lusitanian, and Numantine, represent some of the most brutal and nearest fought conflicts in the history of Rome, arguably even worse than the Hannibalic war, though the stakes were not quite as high. This then begs the question of why this particular region gave the Romans so much trouble, despite its inhabitants' relative lack of training, equipment, and numbers.

⁷¹ App. *Hisp.* 14.90.

⁷² App. *Hisp.* 14.94.

⁷³ App. *Hisp.* 14.95.

One of the more obvious elements to this is the ineptitude of the majority of Roman commanders sent to the province, especially when compared to Viriathus. The failings of these commanders, such as Lucullus or Mancinius, however, were not very diverse. They universally failed to adapt to the situation in which they found themselves, even in the face of hardship and defeat. For instance, when Fabius Maximus Servilianus was sent to deal with Viriathus he attempted to engage him conventionally with a large army, seemingly paying no attention to the lack of success that men like Mummius had when engaging lesser Lusitanian commanders in a similar fashion. The only time the Romans found success in these wars was when a commander, like Caepio or Scipio Aemilianus, changed the approach to the situation, adapting to their enemies' tactics.

CHAPTER THREE The Sertorian Example

The difficulties that faced the Romans throughout their occupation and conquest of the Iberian peninsula can hardly be understated. Many of these issues can be clearly traced to the leadership in charge of the province during the times of and leading up to times of conflict by simply looking at the cause and effect of their decision making. There are, however, other factors in play. Factors which are not as easily seen in the relatively sparse coverage given to the wars of Iberian rebellion. Another way of analyzing the situation in Hispania at the time, one that may reveal other causes for the conflict there, is to compare a governance that succeeded in producing a prosperous and stable Hispania, and contrasting it with those that came before. Such a tenure can be found in that of Sertorius, who himself was rebelling against Rome due to the civil war between Marius and Sulla, but in spite of the political turmoil successfully ruled over the various tribes of the Iberian peninsula for nearly a decade before finally succumbing to political intrigue.

One of the more common and fitting introductions of Quintus Sertorius is Cicero's estimation of him in the *Brutus*, "But of all the Orators, or rather *Ranters*, I ever knew, who were totally illiterate and unpolished, and (I might have added) absolutely coarse and rustic, the readiest and keenest, were Q. Sertorius, and C. Gorgonius, the one of consular, and the other of equestrian rank."¹ This statement is interesting due to Cicero's unimpeachable reputation as a judge of rhetoric and the fact that his description

¹ Cic. *Brut.*

of Sertorius is completely at odds with the man that the historical record has handed down. Plutarch, for instance, the most complete biographer of Sertorius and best surviving source on his time in Spain, describes the statesman as, “more continent with women than Philip, more faithful to his friends than Antigonus, more merciful towards his enemies than Hannibal, and inferior to none of them in understanding, though in fortune to them all.”² These two accounts, though they seem contradictory, work well together to show how Sertorius developed from a young and inexperienced politician, as he was when he met Cicero, into the virtuous and competent statesman remembered by Plutarch.

It is also of note that the man with whom Plutarch parallels with Sertorius in his *Parallel Lives* was Eumenes, the virtuous general of Alexander who met a tragic end by the machinations of the successors. This further emphasizes how Plutarch, the foremost expert on Sertorius, saw his character and competence. Such attributes are important for the contrast between him as governor of the peninsula, in the microcosm of his short administration, and the governors that came before like Lucullus or Galba. While they succeeded only in agitating the tribes within and around their provinces, provoking them to more war and destruction against Rome, Sertorius united previously warring tribes under an ostensibly Roman banner and organized them to fight a common enemy, a common enemy that happened to be Rome itself.

The caveat that Sertorius was also technically in rebellion against Rome is one that requires some consideration as well. That said, it is better to see the Sertorian war as a civil war between differing Roman political factions. In fact, it can be seen as an

² Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 4.1-5.

extension of the civil war between Marius and Sulla, with Sertorius continuing the cause of Marius even beyond the death of Sulla himself. Sertorius also did much to develop the infrastructure, education system, and general Roman synchronization in the area, both cultural and religious, so that by the end of his reign, he held a Roman kingdom in every respect but in the people who populated it. In that way, Sertorius paradoxically advanced Roman interests in Iberia more than any single magistrate had since the expulsion of the Carthaginians while fighting the Romans himself.

The final, and likely most important, thing worth considering in the study of the Sertorian War are the sources available for it. The most thorough is Plutarch's entry in his *Parallel Lives* which covers the entire career of Sertorius from a brief description of his childhood to his death. His reason for writing the biography is primarily to provide an example of virtuous character and to demonstrate how the outcome of such character is beneficial to all.³ It would also be counterproductive to Plutarch's account to be deliberately untruthful about Sertorius' life or to "dress up" his character and virtue and historians have used his works as trustworthy sources for their own work, on this topic and many others, for centuries. That said, these things should remain under consideration when using *Parallel Lives* as a primary source. The second main source for this study will be the section of Appian's *Civil Wars* that covers it. Appian has a particular, and often exclusive focus, on war and military conflict, which is often an advantage when discussing this period of turmoil, but his narrow focus could leave out political, cultural, economic, or some other kind of detail, not related to the military, that could be important to understanding the narrative. With both of these sources, in conjunction with a critical

³ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 1.3-5.

eye, the true story of the Sertorian War can be seen, and furthermore Sertorius' personal impact on Roman Spain can demonstrate what he did right and what so many others did wrong.

Sertorius himself was born to either a minor senatorial or equestrian family, growing up in the town of Nussa in central Italy.⁴ He moved to Rome at a young age to gain experience with law and oratory.⁵ The first major role he obtained was as an aide in Quintus Fabius Maximus Caepio's disastrous campaign against the Cimbri and Teutones in Gaul from 105 to 102.⁶ The army was defeated, but Sertorius was able, by dressing up as a Gaul, to spy on the tribes that had defeated the Romans, for which he was given awards for bravery.⁷ In 97, he was given a position as a Military Tribune in Hispania Ulterior where, after a breakdown in discipline in his army as they were wintering in a Celtiberian city, his men were slaughtered by the local warriors.⁸ Only Sertorius and some of his personal guardsmen escaped. This story in particular is interesting, at least speculatively, because of how this incident contrasts with how he will treat the Iberian and Celtiberian tribesmen during his time as pseudo-king almost two decades later.

He was then appointed quaestor of Cisalpine Gaul at the outbreak of the Social War in 91.⁹ Sertorius used his power as governor to raise armies on the side of Marius,

⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 1.3-5.

⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 2.1.

⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 2.1.-3.5.

⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 3.1-3.5.

⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 3.4-3.7.

⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 4.1-4.

Plutarch does not record why Sertorius fell in with Marius over Sulla, but Appian implies that it was due to a previous political relationship with Cinna.¹⁰ Whether or not he was of great import to Sertorius' political life before the Social War, Cinna would become the leader of the camp Sertorius found himself in for the years immediately following Marius' initial defeat.¹¹ After Sulla successfully defeated the Marians and installed his faction in Rome in 89, he left once again to fight Mithridates in the east. After Sulla's departure Sertorius and his Marian allies lived in exile, not welcome in Rome, but not deliberately hunted by the Sullans either.¹²

Marius died in 86 and Cinna shortly thereafter in 84, causing Sertorius to then go to Etruria in an attempt to aid Scipio Asiaticus, who was raising an army to retake Rome from the Sullans at the time.¹³ Their plan, however, was cut short when Sulla returned in 83 and succeeded in turning their own army against them.¹⁴ After this, both Sertorius and Scipio Asiaticus were granted clemency, at least for a time, and, thinking they were sending him into a kind of exile because of the disaster that was his previous visit to the peninsula, the Sullans sent Sertorius to Hispania as a governor.¹⁵ It is not clear which province he was given specifically, only that he was sent there in 82 and that Plutarch says that it was initially meant as a sort of exile.¹⁶

¹⁰ App. *B Civ.* VIII.64.1.

¹¹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 4.1-5.

¹² Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 5.1-5.

¹³ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 5.3-6.5.

¹⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 6.1-5.

¹⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 7.1-5.

¹⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 7.2.

This explanation is an interesting one, it gives an update on how the Roman view of Iberia developed after the conclusion of the wars for pacification of the peninsula. If Plutarch is to be believed in his assessment, and there is little reason for him not to be as there are few other reasons for the Sullans to give a declared enemy an entire province, it would show how the reputation of hardship and defeat was maintained, and perhaps even grew, after the end of the wars of pacification. This idea is furthered by the story of Sertorius' previous experience there, which itself may demonstrate that the wars of pacification were not completely effective in their pacification of the region.

Nevertheless, when Sertorius arrived in Spain for his second tenure as a governing magistrate, possessing a higher rank than his last visit, he thrived by all accounts. His policies were "mild" with regard to the tribes and his most important accomplishment during his tenure was the building of a positive relationship with the inhabitants of the peninsula.¹⁷ There is not a lot recorded about the specifics of that mild governorship, though Plutarch records that he lowered taxes and abolished the practice of quartering. Both high taxes and being forced to house Roman soldiers had long been complaints of the Hispanians. In this way, Sertorius was able to make a lasting impression on the people of his province over a period of time that was no longer than any other governor who had held the position before him. Plutarch believed that the quickness with which Sertorius developed his amicable reputation with the Iberians was due to the comparison with the governors that the people were used to saying, "the rapacity and insolence of the

¹⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 7.1-5.

Roman officials sent thither from time to time had made them hostile to the empire in all its aspects”.¹⁸

He held that office until Sulla’s final return from his campaigns in Asia Minor, at which point Sulla, apparently either unhappy with the decision to send Sertorius to Iberia in the first place or with his unexpected success there, sent an army to chase him out of Iberia.¹⁹ Sertorius retreated without engaging and took his retinue to Mauritania where he also won popularity with the locals and helped to thwart a Sullan plot to seize the Mauritanian throne for one of Sulla’s allies.²⁰ After this victory however, Sertorius was at a loss as for what to do, as Plutarch puts it “Sertorius, then, having made himself master of the whole country, did no wrong to those who were his suppliants and put their trust in him, but restored to them both property and cities and government, receiving only what was right and fair in free gifts from them.”²¹ His question was answered when a delegation of Lusitanians arrived at his camp requesting that he come back to Iberia and become their leader.²² Apparently the subsequent governors sent by Sulla and his compatriots had done little to continue with the progress made by Sertorius during his administration and, remembering him fondly, the rulers of the Iberian peoples wanted him to lead a union against the current Roman government. Their request suiting

¹⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 6.1-5.

¹⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 7.1-5.

²⁰ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 9.1-5.

²¹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 9.1-5.

²² Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 9.1-10.5.

perfectly with his stated personal goals at the time, being to combat Sulla in the best way possible, he accepted their request and set off for Hispania.²³

This account of the tribal leaders sailing across the Strait of Gibraltar to request that Sertorius supersede their authority for the purpose of fighting against the Roman Republic may, at first glance, seem somewhat suspicious to a discerning reader. Thus, the episode requires some examination and explanation. The first thing that is worthy of note is that they would not truly be ceding any authority to Sertorius but rather exchanging those governors who, due to the previous wars of conquest and pacification, already had authority over them, and whose loyalties were to themselves and to Rome, for Sertorius, whose self-interest may, at least, be coincidentally aligned with theirs. This, in addition to their stated reasons, namely the fact that they can trust him with the position, demonstrates that this decision by the Lusitanians was not as strange as it may first appear. In addition, Appian mentions that Sertorius was “chosen” to take up leadership in Hispania, though granted with his usual lack of detail.²⁴ It is therefore reasonable to accept, at the very least, the wider strokes of this story.

This situation being agreeable to both sides, Sertorius sailed back to the northern Pillar of Hercules and proceeded into the interior of the peninsula.²⁵ He took up his position in Lusitania and immediately began expanding his sphere of influence into Celtiberia and southern Iberia. This endeavor did not trouble him too greatly as, “most of the people joined him of their own accord, owing chiefly to his mildness and efficiency;

²³ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 10.1-5.

²⁴ App. *B Civ.* XS.86.1.

²⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 10.1-11.5.

but sometimes he also betook himself to cunning devices of his own for deceiving and charming them. The chief one of these, certainly, was the device of the doe.”²⁶ The “device of the doe” refers to an anecdote about Sertorius which says that a hunter named Spanus found a white doe in the forest and brought it to Sertorius as a gift.²⁷ Sertorius, seizing upon the religious and cultural significance that white animals had in Roman, Celtic, and Iberian paganism, kept the doe as a pet, claiming that it was a gift from Diana and that it would give him special information.²⁸ So whenever he got a missive from his intelligence network, which he spent a good deal of time and energy setting up and was thus quite expansive and accurate, he would pass it off as a revelation from the doe.²⁹ Appian also mentions that the doe was part of a pre-battle ritual which brought morale to his men.³⁰

This story gives some support to the conclusions of the study into the first interactions between Rome and the Hispanian tribes during the Punic Wars, that the best and most effective means of allying with and pacifying the Iberians that the Romans took had to do with societal or cultural manipulation. In addition to that, it demonstrates the conclusion of the study into the Wars of Pacification because the majority of the tribes that had already committed to Sertorius did so because he was a competent and dutiful leader rather than the minor tyrants that they were used to. Due to these successes in the

²⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 11.1.

²⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 11.2.

²⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 11.3.

²⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 11.3.

³⁰ App. *B Civ.* XIII.109.1.

cultural and personal spheres, Sertorius was also able to raise a force for the purpose of combating Rome, who were by no means passive about his takeover. This army consisted of elements from all over, many were Italians and Romans, brought over from his time with Scipio and who had served him in Libya and Mauritania, many were natives of those lands, consisting mostly of cavalry and missile infantry, the majority of the force, however, was then filled out by natives of Hispania who were sent from their tribal rulers to aid Sertorius' struggle.³¹ Still the army he had raised was not great in respect to its size but he was forced, nevertheless, to engage the agents of Sulla, whose armies were marching over the Pyrenees by 79.³²

These engagements showed how Sertorius was able not only to learn and adapt in the civil sphere but also in the military. His multicultural army took up a guerrilla campaign, much in the same way as Viriathus in the Lusitanian war. In addition to that, it seems that the Lusitanians themselves had not easily forgotten that manner of combat and still used it to great effect against their enemies. Thus, the commanders that Rome had sent over found great difficulty gaining anything like a foothold in the territory and were repulsed.³³ Plutarch provides a list of these victories and how they were achieved:

Cotta he defeated in a sea-fight in the straits near Mellaria; Fufidius, the governor of Baetica, he routed on the banks of the Baetis with the slaughter of two thousand Roman soldiers; Lucius Domitius, who was proconsul of the other Spain, was defeated at the hands of his quaestor; Thoranius, another of the commanders sent out by Metellus with an army, he slew; and on Metellus himself, the greatest Roman of the time and held in highest repute, he inflicted many defeats and reduced him to so great straits that

³¹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 11.1-12.5.

³² App. *B Civ.* XIII.108.1.

³³ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 12.1-13.5.

Lucius Manlius came from Gallia Narbonensis to help him, and Pompey the Great was hurriedly dispatched from Rome with an army.³⁴

These victories bought Sertorius the time to organize and Romanize his army, while also giving them valuable combat experience. During this period of fighting, which lasted from 79 to 77, he also found time to establish a schooling system, build new public works, and organize the various tribes into a political entity.³⁵ Though these achievements are rightfully attributed to Sertorius historically, it should not be thought that he did these things by himself. Rather, it can be assumed that a skill for delegation was another of his fine qualities of leadership.

During this period, Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius would present himself as Sertorius' chief adversary. His strategy would mostly revolve around the construction of fortified positions within Sertorius' territory to try and combat his hit and run tactics.³⁶ The idea was not fully thought through, however, due to the fact that while these fortifications were under construction, they were vulnerable to the very kind of attack that they were supposed to prevent.³⁷ Metellus lost many men when he continued in this strategy and gained little in return for their sacrifice. Plutarch blames these failings on Metellus' old age and growing softness in life.³⁸ It was Metellus' sluggishness in his reactions, as well as Sertorius' ability to take advantage of his enemy that ended up

³⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 12.4.

³⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 14.1-5.

³⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 12.5.

³⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 13.1-5

³⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 13.1.

giving Sertorius the time and popularity that he needed to convert his undefined, guerilla army into a Roman one, with all the arms, order, and tradition that went along with it.³⁹ This conversion was important because of a Roman army's ability to take, hold, and defend land, when a guerilla army did not have such a capability, which creates a problem for someone trying to fight a defensive land war.

In addition to this military reform, Sertorius spent a great deal of resources creating a schooling system, mostly for sons of the local elites, so that he could groom a new class of politicians and bureaucrats, who could then administer a united Iberia, even in Sertorius' absence.⁴⁰ They were likely trained in the classical format, understanding grammar, logic, and rhetoric, but importantly they were also inducted into Roman culture and Plutarch makes a big deal out of how the students' fathers were proud to see them going to school in "purple bordered togas" which may have served as a uniform.⁴¹ These reforms not only attracted and gained the continued loyalty of the Lusitanian, Celtiberian, and Iberian ruling classes but also gained him the attention of other Marians who were searching for a promising front, on which to engage with Sulla's allies. One such man was Marcus Perpenna Vento who came to Sertorius in 76 with a modest force of Roman soldiers to add to Sertorius' new army.⁴² This development of the education system in Iberia was not only an example of Sertorius' personal accomplishments and unselfish decision making, but also shows how he was able to build on previously gained trust

³⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 14.1-5.

⁴⁰ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 14.1-5.

⁴¹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 14.3.

⁴² App. *B Civ.* XIII.109.1.

from the natives into willing and effective Romanization, which would ultimately become arguably the most beneficial thing for Rome that a magistrate ever did in the province.

It was in the same year that Perpenna arrived, 76, that Sertorius received word that Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus was marching with a massive army over the Pyrenees.⁴³ This would be the first major test of Sertorius' newly trained army alongside the reinforcements of Perpenna, who was not happy about the prospect of submitting to Sertorius' authority. When word came to him that Pompey's army was in Hispania, Sertorius was in the process of a siege of the city of Lauron, which had remained loyal to Sulla throughout the first years of Sertorius' administration.⁴⁴ Sertorius elected to continue his siege and wait for Pompey to come to him, which he promptly did. Pompey set himself up behind the army of Sertorius, believing that the superior numbers and experience of his men would be able to push Sertorius' army up against the city and easily win the day, even going as far as to send a missive to the leaders of Lauron saying as much.⁴⁵ When he moved into position to carry this optimistic plan out though, he quickly recognized that he had walked into a precarious position between Sertorius' main force and another one that Sertorius had hidden and fortified on a hill to his rear. Unwilling to withdraw, and even more unwilling to attack either of Sertorius' forces,

⁴³ Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 18.1.

⁴⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 81.3.

⁴⁵ Sall. 2.76-2.82.4.

Pompey was forced to watch as Sertorius took the city and razed it to the ground, then he withdrew with the help of a timely intervention from Metellus.⁴⁶

After this, Sertorius likely used the winter of 76 to continue the training of his men and his work in the civil sphere while Metellus and Pompey licked their wounds in northern Hispania Citerior. When they were done resting, however, they aggressively prosecuted the war against Sertorius and found early success in 75. Perpenna, and another of Sertorius' chief commanders, Gaius Herennius, were drawn into disadvantageous engagements with Pompey and Metellus, respectively, and were sent back to Sertorius in disgrace.⁴⁷ Sertorius followed this up by marching out against Pompey himself while Metellus was tied up with another issue.⁴⁸ He fought two major pitched battles with Sulla's famous henchman at the Sucro river and the city of Saguntum, which had been so important in the first Roman involvement on the peninsula.⁴⁹ Neither battle was particularly decisive and both sides suffered massive losses. Sertorius was forced to retreat to the interior of the peninsula once again and work on rebuilding his army, which by that point would not have been able to stand up to another Roman force for long.⁵⁰

74 was a year of intense fighting on both sides, with battles coming quickly throughout. First, Pompey and Metellus received reinforcements and decided to combine

⁴⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 18.1-5.

⁴⁷ Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 163-165.

⁴⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 20.1-21.5.

⁴⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 22.1-5.

⁵⁰ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 23.1-24.5.

their forces and march off to the city of Palentia in order to deliver a quick and harmful blow to Sertorius' little empire.⁵¹ When Sertorius' army arrived, refreshed and reinforced over the winter, the two quickly withdrew from their position around the city, but were able to avoid being caught in an ambush that Sertorius had set up in hopes of a final victory.⁵² Still desiring such a decisive battle, he then turned his army toward Calagurris, a Roman held city on the Ebro, which he was able to take quickly and establish his position there.⁵³ These main engagements were, of course, coupled with the usual minor skirmishes and raids that were now synonymous with warfare on the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the battles of Sertorius' other commanders, which are not as well recorded.

By 73 the two sides had fought each other to a standstill and Pompey was actively complaining to the Roman senate about a lack of funds and supplies.⁵⁴ For his part, Sertorius was also feeling the financial and material cost of war and began to engage in some lengthy negotiations with Mithridates, king of Pontus and chief enemy of Sulla, for both pecuniary and martial aid.⁵⁵ These talks would take over two years, during which time Pompey and Metellus continued their campaigns against Sertorius, though, taking a page out of Caepio's book, they were more politically active than militarily during this period with the goal of sowing discord in Sertorius' new state. Metellus even offered a

⁵¹ App. *B Civ.* 112.1.

⁵² App. *B Civ.* 112.1.

⁵³ App. *B Civ.* 112.1.

⁵⁴ Sall. *Hist.* 2.82

⁵⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 23.1-5.

bounty of both money and land in exchange for Sertorius' assassination.⁵⁶ Their efforts would come to fruition before Sertorius' would, possibly because of his attention being taken up by a king across the Mediterranean and possibly because there were already elements within his retinue who only needed a good reason to try something like that. Such an element was found in Perpenna, who had been uncooperative at best with Sertorius since his first arrival. He organized a banquet where Sertorius' guard would be down, and he and a few conspirators murdered him as he reclined to eat.⁵⁷ After this, the territories of Celtiberia, Iberia, and Lusitania did not resist as Pompey and Metellus took over and reestablished Roman rule on the peninsula.⁵⁸

The story of Sertorius' rebellion helps to put the previous two centuries of warfare on the Iberian peninsula into perspective. The first Roman experiences in the area, seen in the Punic Wars and characterized by an absolute focus on the Carthaginian threat, and thus the way the Romans treated the natives of the peninsula was as a way of harming the Carthaginians in one way or the other. Any long-term success that they found with their relationship with the tribes was found due to their manipulation of Iberian and Celtiberian culture and ingratiating themselves with their ruling class. Sertorius exemplified this practice to the point that they actively asked them to be their leader, granted it was not in the exact same circumstances and it is highly unlikely that the Romans would have been able to gain the Iberians' enthusiastic submission as Sertorius did, but it is very possible that they would have swayed more tribes to their side over the Carthaginians and had a

⁵⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 22.1.

⁵⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 26.3-4.

⁵⁸ Plut. *Vit. Sert.* 27.1.

much easier time in that theatre of the war. In the second era of conflict on the Iberian peninsula, the Wars of Pacification, it is possible that they would not have been necessary at all had the Punic-era Roman representatives been as concerned with the manipulation and integration of Iberian and Celtiberian culture and rulers as Sertorius was. In addition, those magistrates who were placed in charge of the provinces during that time in no way helped the situation in their policy or overall competence, often arriving there with the sole goal of exploitation. Thus, it can be seen, both by the troubles the Romans encountered as a direct result of the actions of magistrates like Lucullus and Galba, just as by the benefits seen in the administration of Sertorius, that it was the actions, and especially the adaptability of the men in charge of the territory and the people.

CONCLUSION

Though the Iberian peninsula was not entirely conquered by the end of the Sertorian War in 72, for instance Caesar would famously campaign in and around the Pyrenees in 49, it was the last time that Roman control was ever in serious doubt there. The Roman experience in Iberia, to that point, had been one characterized by war, unrest, and rebellion. Through the three major eras of conquest, pacification, and civil war, a pattern demonstrating why the prevalent unrest emerged.

First, the Roman goals within the province were limited to the expulsion of the Carthaginians from the peninsula. For the Romans, war was expected and pursued under this goal, so conflict in the region was not a source of trouble at the time. However, it was directly beneficial to them to make allies with as many tribes as they could so that they could more effectively fight the Carthaginians. To this end, their most effective approaches tended toward the manipulation of the tribal ruling class, such as the twin practices of taking or returning hostages. They also severely punished fifth columns and other kinds of insurrection, such as the conflict with Indibilis, when, after granting clemency the first time he rose up in a show of both grace and superiority, they beat him and his leading men to death for a second transgression. The result of this approach was that Rome gained dominance on the peninsula, but that dominance was over a people who viewed Rome either as a dangerous political tool, or as a hostile invader.

These attitudes would carry over to the age of uprising, when the issues with the Roman model for governing foreign provinces showed their limitations, at least for the administration of Spain. A series of poorly undertaken governorships, followed by badly

executed pacification campaigns made the provinces' tenability come into question several times throughout a half century of conflict. This not to take away from the bravery or prowess of Viriathus or his cohorts, but the deciding factor in the continuation of those wars were the mistakes of Roman administrators and commanders, whereas their enemies tended to be clever enough to not interrupt them while they were making mistakes. Nevertheless, through the actions of truly competent Romans like Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus and Scipio Aemilianus, Roman hegemony had expanded greatly in the region by the end of the Numantine war, in spite of the failure to adapt to the situation that so many magistrates displayed throughout the era.

The perception of Roman magistrates in Hispania as being vicious and incompetent was one that stuck with the natives of the land, and they requested Sertorius lead them in a general rebellion against Rome largely as a backlash to it. Sertorius, however, did not merely provide a contrast with the universally derided governors that had come before him, but also did more in rebellion for the complete pacification and assimilation of the Hispanians than anyone who came before him. He did this through a combination of vision, leadership, and an amount of time and influence that no one else had been able to cultivate like he did through his mild first governorship. Sertorius effectively demonstrated that the various people of the Iberian peninsula, even the warlike Lusitanians, were not averse to Roman culture, and they were not even particularly averse to Roman rule; but Romanizing, and then subjugating them, would take time, skill, and influence which no one else had demonstrated or been given.

Thus, the unrest and rebellion that characterized the Roman experience in Spain could be credited to a combination of factors. The first were misaligned goals and

methods within the region, as seen in the transition from conquest to pacification. The administrative system itself did not incentivize working for the long term success of Rome or Iberia, as shown by the many governors who remained there for only one year and whose motivation was usually self-enrichment. Finally, the collection of governors whom that system attracted, almost universally failing to live up even to Sertorius' first tenure, are excellent examples of that cause. Alone these caused enough problems, but together they compounded to make one of the worst political and military problems that the republic ever faced, and it was only by the arrival of a few competent men that what would become one of the most prosperous and stable provinces of the empire remained Roman at all.

Despite these setbacks, Spain became one of the most profitable, and eventually one of the most stable, provinces in the empire. The Romans were able to complete this transformation by relying on the salient strength of Roman civilization throughout their history, the ability to learn from experience. One of the most obvious things they learned, despite the time it took to figure out, was that governors needed more time in a province to be able to have any form of long term success in governing it. The one-year term system simply incentivized the governors to pillage and antagonize, because they would almost never be around to face the consequences of those actions. The governors who were given tenures of longer than that though were generally successful, and thus the common practice shifted, as best seen in the decade-long successful governorship of Gaul, undertaken by Julius Caesar in the first century. The twin practice of sending the most competent and ambitious commanders to these untamed or tumultuous areas, also seen in the famous campaigns of Caesar, was a hard lesson learned in Spain by the

mistakes of men like Galba and Lucullus. This not even mentioning the wealth of experience they gained with respect to conquering tribally organized peoples or defending themselves against guerrilla tactics.

The Romans grew into an empire so large and influential that governments are still modeling themselves on their example in the twenty first century AD. Before they could have such staggering success, however, they had to learn how to conquer, govern, and administrate in diverse and far-flung lands. These were not easy lessons to learn. They often involved the deaths of hundreds and thousands of Roman citizens. But in order to understand how those lessons were learned, and how their incorporation turned a fumbling, weak administrative system into one that could hold together a continent-spanning dominion for centuries, it all starts in that first truly foreign province on the Iberian Peninsula.

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