

### Roman Imperialism

#### The Destruction of Carthage Appian's Libyca: "The Destruction of Carthage"

Gangs of robbers went from house to house and tortured people to make them give up their food; mothers fed upon their children; a terrible disease broke out; corpses lay scattered in the streets; men who were burying the dead fell upon them; others dug their own graves and laid down inside of them to die; houses in which all had perished were used as public sepulchres, and were quickly filled.

Then came new scenes of horror. The fire spread and carried everything down, and the soldiers pulled the buildings all down together. Others were seen still living, especially old men, women and young children who had hidden in the inmost nooks of the houses, some of them wounded, some more or less burned, and uttering horrible cries. Still others, thrust out and falling from such a height with the stones, timber, and fire, were torn asunder into all kinds of horrible shapes, crushed and mangled.

Nor was this the end of their miseries, for the street cleaners who were removing the rubbish with axes, mattocks and boathooks, and making the roads passable, tossed with these instruments the dead and living together in holes in the ground, sweeping them along like sticks and stones or turning them over with their iron tools, and man was used for filling up a ditch...Horses ran over them, crushing their faces and skulls, not purposely on the part of the riders, but in their headlong haste...all together made everybody frantic and heedless of the spectacle before their eyes.

Six days and nights were consumed in this kind of turmoil, the soldiers being changed so that they might not be worn out with toil, slaughter and want of sleep, and these horrid sights. Six days passed thus, and only the citadel was left. It was a steep rock in the middle of the town: a temple. Carthage burned for seventeen days before it was completely consumed. Then the plough was passed over the soil to put an end in legal form to the existence of the city. Houses might never be built again; corn might never again be sown, upon the ground where it had stood.

1. Why was Carthage destroyed in this manner by the Romans?
2. Describe some of the atrocities of the Roman soldiers, what was the purpose?

#### The Destruction of Corinth

Some in the city of Corinth saw the continuing war between Rome and Carthage and the continuing rebellion in Spain as an opportune time to stand against Rome's pretensions of authority over Greek cities. It was a time of economic distress among the Greeks, and a leader from Corinth named Critolaus traveled from town to town in Greece calling for debt reform and opposition to Rome.

In spring of 146 BCE Critolaus persuaded the Achaean League to declare war against Rome. The city of Thebes, resenting Roman interference allied itself with the League. Across Greece, patriotic clubs appeared and denounced Rome. Athens and Sparta stayed out of the war, but elsewhere across Greece men eagerly joined armies preparing to fight Rome. Slaves were freed and recruited, and wealthy Greeks were frightened into contributing jewelry and money to the cause.

In Greece, Critolaus' army was defeated by the Roman army sent from Macedonia. Later in 146 BCE a force sent from Rome arrived and defeated an army of Greeks at the city of Corinth. To warn others, the Romans slaughtered all the men they found in Corinth. The men were killed, and the women and children were sold into slavery. They shipped Corinth's treasures to Italy and burned the city to the ground. A large part of the rich art treasures of the city must have been destroyed by the rude and unappreciative soldiers. Polybius, who was an eyewitness of the sack of the city, himself, saw groups of soldiers using priceless paintings as boards on which to play their games of dice.

1. How did the Greeks in Corinth view the Romans?
2. Why did Greece want to rise up against the Romans? What was the outcome?

### The Siege of Jerusalem

By 63 BCE the Romans had conquered Judea, where most Jews had lived. Most Jews were reluctantly willing to live under Roman rule, others called Zealots were not. They called on Jews to revolt against Rome and wanted to establish a separate state.

In 66AD, discontent flared into rebellion. Roman forces crushed the rebels, captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish temple. Thousands of Jews were killed in the fighting; many were enslaved and transported to various parts of the empire. In 70 AD, Titus arrived in Jerusalem with at least eighty thousand troops. He captured half of the city, slaughtered its inhabitants, and built a siege wall around the remaining part of the city.

Trapped inside, the different Jewish groups fought one another. People killed each others for scraps of food, and anyone who was suspected of considering surrender was killed. Six hundred thousand bodies were thrown out of the city as a result of the famine. The Roman troops eventually recaptured the Antonia Fortress, and about a month later burned and destroyed the temple. The lower city and the upper city both fell.

Titus ordered all the buildings in Jerusalem to be leveled, except for the three towers in Herod's Palace. All the citizens of Jerusalem were executed, sold into slavery or saved for games in the arena. Alleys were choked with corpses; babies were thrown off walls, and people were burned alive. Eleven thousand prisoners died of starvation while awaiting their execution. More than one million Jews died in total, and one hundred thousand more were sold into slavery.

1. What was the role of a Zealot?
2. Why did the Romans destroy Jerusalem? What was the outcome of the siege?

### A Second Account of the Siege of Jerusalem

The Jewish historian Josephus was captured by the Romans and allied himself with them. He accompanied the army that destroyed Jerusalem. In his first work, *History of the Jewish War*, he praises the Roman army while criticizing the Zealots:

“Throughout the city people were dying of hunger in large numbers and enduring indescribable sufferings. In every house the slightest hint of food sparked violence, and close relatives fell to blows, snatching from one another the pitiful supports of life. No respect was paid even to the dying; the Zealots searched them, in case they were concealing food somewhere in their clothes, or just pretending to be near death...Need drove the starving to gnaw at anything...In the end they were eating belts and shoes, and the leather stripped off their shields. Tufts of withered grass were devoured, and sold in little bundles.”

1. What does his account of the siege tell us?