

Roman imperialism was a complex and inevitable phenomenon. Rather than a monolithic institution, it was an ever changing *reactive* process with humble beginnings, responded to the internal pressures of the Roman political system, was subject to individual whims, and relied on varying logistics of the ancient Mediterranean.

P1: Begins to protect frontiers, fight preventative wars, defend *fides* and get that bread

- first Punic war and the Mamertines (**Polybius 1.8-12**) shows an ambivalent Senate that is motivated by profit, securing the peninsula against a Carthaginian/Syracusan Sicily, and opportunities for glory.
- later reiterated with the consul's speech to the centuriata to convince them to reignite conflict with Philip for the Second Macedonian War and avoid allowing another quasi-Pyrrhus/Hannibal to arrive in Italy (**Livy 31.7**). This event also hints at the stakes of Rome's reputation towards its Greek allies (who it had abandoned in the Peace of Phoenice).
- **Appian 98** gives particular attention to Carthage as a sea power when justifying Aemilianus' sack. This perhaps hints at the event being motivated by a desire to hinder their military and trading powers at sea (this hinderance of other economic powers was also present in Rome's punishment of Rhodes).

P2: Result of internal pressure and aristocratic competition

- Auctoritas and the *cursus honorum* carried implicit gratification based on military accomplishments and merit.
- Scipionic elogia push for recognition via conquest (**CIL I² 5**). Is this elogium, there is an implicit expectation that individuals would earn merit if they lived long enough. This is further indicative of a cultural obsession and competition with the ancestral past, a constant need to surpass the memory of other.
- This is made all the more unsustainable by politicians in the second century who were pressured to emulate prominent war-heroes of the Second Punic War in order to secure a place in cultural memory. This concern/trend is echoed by the increase in ovations, and the uptick of aristocratic display outside of Rome: Paulus and Metellus, wherein the city of Rome no longer suffices as an arena of display and the broader peninsula and Mediterranean are used.
- Nevertheless, there was still display within the city, with plunder/triumph serving as a means of obtaining cultural/symbolic capital. This is exemplified by Vulso's pillage of the Seleucid countryside before returning to Rome (**Livy 39.6-7**), a superfluous act that only served to give shape to the consuls' glory through displays of wealth and conquest (triumphs and dinners).

P3: Subject to individual whims

- Flaminius delaying peace with Philip (**Livy 32.31-7**) shows the lengths to which individuals given imperium would go to make certain their name would be attached to glory. Depending on the Senate's plans to extend Flaminius' imperium, his men would sway the Senate to extend or bring the war to an end. Ergo individual whims dictated foreign policy.
- Popilius Laenas and the Statellani Ligurians shows the tensions between individual magistrates' ambitions and Senatorial efforts at guiding Roman foreign policy (**Livy 42.21-22**).
- Laenas (brother of the above)'s ultimatum with Antiochus in relaying the Senatorial decree. This shows a fundamental shift in the nature of Roman foreign policy from a level of decorum towards imposing aggression (**Livy 45.12**).

P4: Increasing sporadic per theatre, subject to logistics of the ancient world

- The Romans had a vague sense of geography in the East due to Greek maps, indicated by their decision to use the Taurus mountains to create an allied buffer state between Roman interests and the Seleucid kingdom— which Antiochus was left in charge of to maintain stability (**Livy 37.55**). In the West, there was a very different story with consuls and praetors engaging with Spanish tribes as they come across them, not with a clear plan in mind and blurring the division between Nearer and Farther Spain (**Livy 35.22**).
- this is reinforced by the **Fasti Triumphales** denotation of a geographic uncertainty in Spain with multiple triumphs over the ‘same’ peoples.
- The Senate is reliant on rumours and sparse/biased sources driven by individual ambitions.
- In the first half of the second century, Spain was treated as a quasi-province and the four Eastern states (Pergamon, Rhodes, Achaean Greece, and Macedon) were treated as clients. However this hands-off approach in Greece comes to an end with the Third Macedonian War in 168 BCE, and is vehemently affirmed following the Fourth with the instalment of proconsuls to govern Greece as a pre-provincial territory in 146 BCE (**Polybius 36.9**).