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## **SUMMARY**

Work, *The Roman navy during the Second Punic War and the First Macedonian War. Organization and the operational activities.*, arose from the need to document the participation and influence of the Roman navy on the final victory in the War 218-201 B.C. with Carthage and Philip V (215-205 B.C.), King of Macedonia. A query of the sources, especially the works of Titus Livius, Polybios, Diodoros Siculus and Appianos of Alexandria, indicated that it was much more serious than it is currently assumed. In some moments, such as the siege of Syracuse and Taranto, and the operations of Publius Cornelius Scipio in Africa, the Roman involvement had a decisive influence on the course of events. In the last case, the Roman convoy system, completely dominated the enemy, driving him into deeply defensive positions. This state of affairs was caused by the reorganization of the fleet and its division into permanent squadrons, which consequently led the Carthaginian squadrons to a situation where they were unable to resist in many directions. Technical superiority and proper command also brought about the destruction of the Macedonian fleet of Philip V.

Research on the organization of the fleet has shown that Rome from 218 B.C. had a significant superiority and held it until the end of the war. However, in the years 206-201 B.C. we can speak of complete Roman sea domination. Carthaginian squadrons were focused on defending the African coast. Mago Barca was driven out of Spain, and Hannibal was forced to leave Italy and return to Africa to oppose Scipio. Ultimately, the Carthaginian fleet was neutralized without deciding to engage in a major battle.

The evaluation of the conducted research allowed for the formulation of the thesis that the Roman fleet, being an independent operational force under the constant command of the officials designated to the fleet, effectively broke the connection between Hannibal and the metropolis. It thus limited his progress in the land campaign in Italy. It was also instrumental in the final victory of Scipio over the Punic commander at Zama in 202 B.C.

## **CHAPTER 1- The Genesis of the Roman fleet. Warships.**

The beginnings of the Roman Navy (*classis Romana*) related to Etruscan and Greek shipbuilding. Rome probably controlled the coast of Lazio and the mouth of Tiber estuary

during the reign of Tarquinius the Proud (appr. 535-509 B.C.). The Sabelian invasions in V B.C. led to the loss of this region. In the 338 B.C., Roman Republic gained control of the mouth of the Tiber estuary, winning Volsci Antium, which then became the main Roman naval base.

The Warships used by the Roman fleet in III B.C. were of Greek origin. Due to the fact that its main opponents in the years 218-201 B.C. were Carthaginian, Macedonian and Syracusan forces, their formulation contains all the typological names of Greek War Galleys. During the Punic Wars of the III century B.C. Rome used: *trieres*, but the main warship of the line was the *pentere*. Larger *polyeres* appeared occasionally. Trieres (lat. *trirēmis*, hel. *τριήρης*) was according to the Thucydides, a ship built by Aimenocles of Corinth for Samos in 704 B.C. Warships of this type appeared en masse in the Mediterranean fleets only at the turn of VI/V century B.C. During the Punic Wars, they were used operationally as light, reconnaissance and escort units. The strength of the fleets was determined by the number of penters (hel. Πεντήρεις, lat. *quinqueremis*) and tetrers (hel. Τετρήρεις, lat. *quadrirēmis*). They appeared in squadrons and used maneuvers, following the example of the Greeks. *Periplus* consisted in circumnavigating the enemy warship and hitting it on the stern or the starboard/portboard with the battering ram (*rostrum*). *Dieklus* assumed breaking the enemy formation by damaging oars of attacked vessels. *Kyklos* was a tactical defense circle. The maneuverability and parameters of the triera have been evaluated and recognized thanks to the reconstruction of the triera called *Olimpias* by the team of J. S. Morrison and J. F. Coates.

With the capture of the Tiber estuary, Rome actively entered the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea. In 311 B.C. the *duovir navalis* office was established, and a year later the first Roman squadron appeared. In 306 B.C. naval squadron operated off the Campania coast. In 282 B.C. Roman Republic fell into conflict with Taranto, when a Roman squadron of 10 warships was destroyed in the waters on the Gulf of Taranto, during the war with Pyrrhos of Epirus (280-275 B.C.). At the time Rome collaborated with Carthage, with which it established an alliance.

In 264 B.C. the conflict over the Sicilian Messina led to the outbreak of the First Punic War. Carthaginian fleet had an overwhelming numerical advantage, but in 261 B.C. Romans implemented a program of building a modern fleet: 100 penters and 20 triers, according to Polybios. Thanks to this program, under Mylae in 260 B.C. *consul ordinarius* Caius Duilius achieved the first, historical naval victory. The Romans won at Ecnomus in 256 B.C., but maritime disasters and the defeat of Drepanum (249 B.C.) thwarted their achievements. Finally, on March 10, 241 B.C. they achieved a victory at the Aegades Islands under the command of

consul Caius Lutatius. Since 2004 Sebastiano Tusa led the excavation works of the rams of sunken warships from this battle. The work was cut short by his tragic death in the year 2019. He and his team managed to recover 23 rams from the seabed.

## **CHAPTER 2- Activities of the Roman Fleet in the beginning period of the Second Punic War. From the operating offensive to the strategic defensive in 218-216/5 B.C.**

The outbreak of the War with Carthage forced a concentration of the Roman fleet. In 218 B.C. it had 220 warships. This figure does not take into account the ships of praetor M. Aemilius Lepidus (about 10 galleys), which were stationed at Lilybaeum. It was his units that clashed with the enemy, before Hannibal entered Italy. The Praetor won the first naval victory in this War. The fleet of Roman ally, Hiero II, also broke up the Carthaginian squadron in the Strait of Messina. The Carthaginian fleet, according to the source text, started the War with 112 war galleys, grouped in three squadrons in Carthage and Spain. The author of this work assumes that the data is incomplete.

In 218 B.C. the Roman fleet took offensive actions in the direction of Sicily - Africa, under the command *c.o.* Tiberius Sempronius Longus and in the direction of the Iberian coasts under the leadership *c.o.* Publius Cornelius Scipio. T. Sempronius conquered Punic Malta (Melita). In 217 B.C. proconsul's brother, C. Cornelius Scipio defeated the Carthaginian fleet at the mouth of the Ebro River. A large Carthaginian squadron in the strength of 70 warships he reached Pisa, trying to make contact with Hannibal. A Punic team took over a Roman convoy near Cosa. C. Servilius, consul, pursued them without success.

A squadron was formed at Lilybaeum base under the command of praetor T. Otacilius Crassus, who continuously commanded this fleet to 210 B.C. After the Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 B.C. their offensive activities were halted. The Carthaginian fleet launched attacks on Hiero's possessions, and a second Punic team was threatening the Lilybaeum. T. Otacilius' squadron was unable to counteract. The number of its warships, in the years 217-215 B.C. rose to 75 penters.

## **CHAPTER 3 – Mediterranean War 215-212 B.C.**

The Cannae disaster had further consequences for the organization and operation of the Roman fleet. There was shortage of rowers and supplies for the fleet. In 215 B.C. Macedonian King Philip V stood on the side of Carthage, Hieron II also died, and his grandson Hieronymus began to lean towards Carthage. After his death Syracuse sided with Hannibal. The forces of the enemies of Rome increased by about 30-50 galleys from Syracuse and 120 Macedonian biremes. Rome adopted the doctrine of continuing active operations in Sicilian waters with the squadron of T. Otacilius Crassus. A fleet of Scipio brothers was maintained in Spanish waters, and the M. Valerius Laevinus' next squadron was formed against Philip V.

Carthaginian fleet in 215 B.C. has taken steps to take over the operational initiative. Hasdrubal the Bald landed in Sardinia with a force of 60 galleys. The Mago Barca crossed to Spain with the same force in order to strengthen the fleet in Iberian waters. Hasdrubal's squadron was intercepted and defeated by T. Otacilius in the Sardinian Sea. The latter also launched an attack on the African coast.

The following year, Rome decided to build a hundred new penters. These units were directed to the Sicilian waters. At 214 B.C. Roman fleet reached the number of 285 operational warships. There was a strengthening of the Carthaginian fleet, too. Consul P. Valerius Laevinus blocked Philip V's fleet (120 biremes) near Apollonia, forcing the King to burn it down due to the inability to break through.

C. M. Claudius Marcellus started the siege of Syracuse in 213 B.C. from the land and sea. Roman squadron used siege towers (sambuces). The assault was unsuccessful. According to Silius Italicus, the Carthaginian fleet along with the Syracusan warships, launched an attack on the Marcellus squadron. The Poet, Silius Italicus used the names of these ships in his work *Punica*. The attack was to end in a decisive Roman victory. In this year Bomilkar's squadrons entered the Grand Harbor at least twice.

In 212 B.C. Bomilkar led a large convoy to Sicily: 700 transport vessels under cover of 130 warships. Proconsul Marcellus launched the attack, but the Carthaginian admiral avoided the battle. His transport vessels returned to Carthage, while the warships sailed to Taranto. Cut off from the Punic Army, Syracuse was captured by the Romans.

## **CHAPTER 4- The Roman Fleet is gaining predominance 212/211-207 B.C.**

At the turn of 212/211 B.C. a decision was made to further strengthen the squadron of T. Otacilius Crassus bringing its size to one hundred penters (five's). His task was to attack the African coast in order to draw the Punic fleet into a battle. With the onset of year 210 B.C. Titus Otacilius died, and c.o. P. Valerius Laevinus was given command to the Lilybaeum fleet. The flotilla supplying the castle with the Roman garrison in Taranto under the command Decimus Quintius was destroyed in the Battle of Sapiortis in 210 B.C. In the light of this situation, 30 penteres from the P. Valerius fleet were reassigned to conduct operations in the waters of the Gulf of Taranto. The Punic fleet has gone to the Ionian Sea to link up with the small squadron of Philip V. The operation was not successful as the fleets did not reunite. Attalos I, Pergamenian King, joined the conflict on the Roman side.

In 209 B.C. P. Cornelius Scipio (Africanus) conquered the New Carthage in Spain, where he acquired warships and transport vessels for his fleet. In the years 208-207 B.C. proconsul P. Valerius Laevinus defeated the Carthaginian fleet twice. He also attacked the African coast. King Philip V unable to oppose the Roman and the Pergamon fleets, therefore he decided to build a one hundred ship strong fleet. The Carthaginian squadron reached Corcira and Oiniadai (Ojniades), but did not meet the Macedonian flotilla.

## **CHAPTER 5- The crossing of the Romans into Africa and the neutralization of the Punic fleet 206-201 B.C.**

Beginning in 206 B.C. there was a reorganization of the Roman fleet. Four squadrons of 40 warships were created. They covered the waters of Italy, Sicily, Africa and Sardinia. In Iberian waters, legatus of Scipio, C. Laelius defeated Adherbal in the sea skirmish at Cadiz (Gades). Mago Barca, with a squadron reduced to 30 warships, tried to recapture New Carthage, then reached the Balearic Islands. He also wintered there, so that in 205 B.C. sailed to Italy. He wanted to strengthen Hannibal with new forces and then join him. It was the last offensive operation of the Punic fleet in this War. In the same year, Philip V signed a peace with Rome.

P. Cornelius Scipio at 205 B.C. began the concentration of the invasion army in Sicily. He ordered the construction of new ships. In 204 B.C. he made the crossing of the fleet under the escort of 40 war galleys (Livius) or 52 (Appianus). He landed at Promunturium Pulchri, leading the Carthaginians into the field. He immediately connected with Masynissa and began

the siege of Utica. In 205 B.C. a Punic fleet of 100 warships, made an attack, capturing only 6 Scipio's troop transport vessels. Appianus mentions two attacks. In the years 204-203 B.C. Romans carried out at least 10 convoys from Sicily, Italy, Sardinia and Spain for the needs of Scipio's army. None has been intercepted. The C. Octavius convoy was dispersed by the storm.

After Scipio's final victory at Zama in 202 B.C. Carthage asked for peace. Scipio left the Carthaginians 10 warships, and ordered 500 ships of various types to be taken out to sea and burned.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Roman Navy (*classis Romana*) started the Second War with Carthage with 220-230 combat galleys, having twice the advantage over the enemy. Rome maintained this advantage almost throughout the War, retaining the operational initiative even in 215-214 B.C. when Syracuse and Macedonia sided with Carthage. Roman fleet successfully intercepted the convoys headed for Hannibal, although at least two arrived. Two more were made by Magon. The fleet fought 10-11 naval battles and skirmishes on the high seas, and which only one was lost to the Taranto fleet at Sapiortis in 210 B.C., and two more can be considered minor Punic successes (at Utica). Carthaginian fleet suffered three defeats from the Lilybaeum squadron led by T. Otacilius Crassus and P. Valerius Laevinus on the high seas.

Roman squadrons sunk, burned or captured: 95-131 Carthaginian warships, mostly penteres, contributed significantly to the burning of 120 biremes by Philip V. They took over 4 ships with the Macedonian legation, and in addition, Rome's ally, Hieron II, at the very beginning of the War, captured 3 Punic penteres in the Strait of Messina. This sums up to the elimination of no less than 222-258 enemy warships.

The Roman losses, unfortunately partially ignored by pro-Roman chroniclers, ended with the number documented in the sources: 5-8 warships destroyed by the Carthaginian fleet, 5 war galleys (penteres and trieres) and 15 smaller units by the squadron of Hannibal's ally, fleet of Taranto. This adds up to a total loss of 25-28 ships.

The reorganized Roman fleet in 204-203 B.C. conducted at least 10 convoys for the Army of Scipio Africanus, bringing equipment, soldiers, food and clothing. Thus, they were instrumental in his final victory over Hannibal. None of the Roman convoys were successfully attacked by the Punic fleet.

Completing the above conclusions and observations, it should be stated the Second Punic War was not a conflict of great naval battles, except in a few cases, but a clash of small squadrons, convoys and land transports. It was a War of soldiers, equipment and food for the land battle. We considered this aspect of the activities of the Roman Navy as worth documenting.