

**THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST  
TRANSCRIPTS**

**EPISODE 16:  
THE RISE OF THE ROME – AND LATIN**

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## **EPISODE 16: THE RISE OF THE ROME – AND LATIN**

Welcome to the History of English podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 16: The Rise of Rome – and Latin.

In this episode, we're going to look at the emergence of Rome from a small city near the western coast of Italy to the dominant political and military power of the Mediterranean. This will set the stage for the expansion of Latin throughout the western world.

In this episode, I am going to provide a brief overview of the rise of the Rome. There have been millions of words written about this subject, and there are some great podcasts that deal exclusively with the history of the Roman Empire. But for our purposes, I think it's important to understand the basic events which led to the rise of Roman power and the spread of the Roman language throughout western Europe. And along the way, we can look at some of the Latin words which have passed into English.

And again, since Latin has had such a tremendous influence on English, I am only going to look at a few of the Modern English words which originated during this period. In fact, from this point forward in the story of English, I will be introducing more and more Latin words because, from this point on, the Latin words are constantly filtering into English. They come in during the late Roman period when the Romans encountered the Germanic tribes. They come in when the Romans conquered southern Britain. They come in with the spread of the Church into Britain. They come in with the Norman French. And they come in during and after the Renaissance in a variety of academic, scientific and legal borrowings. So Latin is going to be constant part of the story of English as we move forward.

And the fact that Latin is so pervasive is itself a testament to the overall power and influence of the Romans. We live with the Roman legacy everyday in the words we use and the alphabet we use to write those words.

So let's pick up the story where we left off in the last episode. As you may recall, Indo-European tribes had settled into modern Italy. And a group of Indo-European tribes had settled in a region which extended from the Tiber River southward which was called Latium. And the dialect of these tribes was eventually called Latin after the name of that region. And a group of these people had begun to settle in and around the hilly region along the Tiber River which eventually became known as Rome. But this early Roman village was initially controlled by Etruscan kings from northern Italy. And this is a very important point. South of the Tiber was the Latium region occupied mainly by Latin speakers with a culture descended from the original Indo-Europeans. But north of the Tiber was the early Etruscan civilization which spoke a completely different language. And Rome was located on the Tiber River which was dividing line between these regions. The people who lived there were Latin-speaking people with an Indo-European ancestry. But they were ruled by Etruscan kings from the Etruscan culture to the north.

Now as I said, Rome was home to only a portion of the Latin speaking peoples in the region. And during this early period, tribal warfare was a constant. There were wars between these Latin-speaking tribes – and wars between those tribes and other tribes. And early Rome had to deal with these conflicts and the warring tribes all around it. But the hills of Rome afforded it some protection during that period. And eventually, as Rome began to grow, and as it began to borrow more and more from the Etruscans including Etruscan military practices, Rome started to become a powerful city-state in its own right. And it soon became more aggressive in its relationship with the surrounding Latin tribes. Rome began to wage war against its Latin neighbors, and it began to conquer them. And as Roman power grew, the overall power and influence of the Etruscans to the north began to wane.

As you may recall, from the last episode, the Etruscan territory was a collection of independent city-states with a common language and culture. There wasn't a centralized government. And furthermore, they were primarily interested in trade and commerce. They weren't empire builders. And they also found themselves at war not only with surrounding tribes in the north of Italy, but also with the Greeks who had expanded into the northern Mediterranean as well. And all of this took a toll on the Etruscan civilization which was beginning to experience a period of decline. And this was occurring at the same time that Roman power was growing at a faster and faster rate. The Romans had become much more organized and more militaristic. And the tipping point in this relationship was late in the sixth century BC.

As I've noted, Rome was initially ruled by Etruscan kings. Later Roman historians alleged that these early Etruscan kings were cruel and harsh rulers. The authority of these kings was symbolized by a bundle of rods with an ax. This was called a *fascis*. And that is actually the origin of the term *fascism*.

In the late sixth century BC, the Romans began to rise up against their Etruscan rulers. Around 509 or 510 BC, the Romans drove out the last Etruscan king named Tarquinius, or sometimes called Tarquin the Proud. And at this point Rome became a republic. After the loss of Rome, the Etruscans continued to lose their grip on other cities in northern Italy. And increasingly, the loss of Etruscan power was replaced by Roman power.

So we now have a completely independent Rome, occupied by Latin-speaking Romans, and now governed by Romans. Again, this is around 509 BC, which is the date the Romans themselves used as the date when Rome began. Part of the reason why this date is used as the date of the beginning of the Roman republic is because a treaty was signed between Rome and Carthage in 508 BC, though some historians argue over the accuracy of that date. And that particular treaty doesn't mention a Roman 'king.' So that suggests that Rome was no longer being ruled by kings, which would have been the Etruscan kings.

So, again, now we have an independent Roman republic, but life was not easy for Rome during this period. As soon as the Etruscans were expelled from Rome, the city came under attack from its neighbors. Rome had to fight for survival, but Roman power eventually allowed Rome to take the upper hand. And the city was ultimately able to establish an alliance with the other Latin-

speaking tribes in Latium to the south of Rome. And Rome eventually came to dominate that alliance.

During this period, the culture of Rome became more and more distinct from the Etruscan culture to the north. Around this time, the Romans built the first temple to the Roman Gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. This temple is sometimes called the ‘Temple of Jupiter,’ but it was actually a single structure with three different sections for each of the three Gods – Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. This temple was built on one of the Seven Hills of Rome. And according to tradition, when the foundation of the temple was being laid, the Romans found a human skull buried in the ground. And the Romans took this as a positive sign. They interpreted this head as a sign that Rome was destined to be the ‘head’ of all of Italy.

The Latin word for head was *caput*. And if you have a good memory, you may remember that I talked about this word in episode on Grimm’s Law. Remember that Jacob Grimm had studied the Germanic languages which includes English, and he had identified the specific sound changes which had occurred within the Germanic language family and which distinguish the Germanic languages from the other Indo-European languages. And two of the specific changes which he observed were a shift in the ‘k’ sound to the ‘h’ sound, and a shift of the ‘p’ sound to the ‘f’ sound. And I gave this Latin word *caput* as an example because it includes both of those changes. Remember that the Romans almost always used the letter C for the ‘k’ sound. So the word *caput* was spelled C-A-P-U-T. And this word is apparently very similar to the original Indo-European word for head. In the Germanic languages, the initial ‘k’ sound had shifted to an ‘h’ sound and the middle ‘p’ sound had shifted to an ‘f’ sound under Grimm’s Law. So in Old English, we have the word *hafud*. And that was the original version of the modern word *head*. Over time, the middle consonant ‘f’ had fallen out and the word was shorted to the modern word *head*. So I just wanted to make that connection again for you.

Well, the Romans found this head – this *caput* – as they were building the temple to Jupiter. And based upon this discovery, they determined that they were destined to be the head of Italy. So they called this particular hill where the temple was being built the ‘Capitoline’ Hill. And that produced the word *capital* which has come down to us in modern English. And that word still means the ‘head place’ or primary place. It also can refer to a specific building in which government business is conducted. And of course in the United States, we have our own ‘Capitol Hill.’ And this reflects the influence which the Romans had on the founding fathers of the United States.

So we have the Capitoline Hill. And in the last episode, I mentioned that the first Latin-speaking Indo-Europeans had settled on the Palatine Hill in Rome. So these are two of the so-called Seven Hills of Rome. And many of the leaders and prominent families of Rome lived on the Palatine Hill. So around this time, the Romans decided to drain the valley between these two hills. And, at that site, in the drained valley, the Roman Forum was constructed. The Forum was the marketplace of Rome. It was the center of civic life, and it contained temples, law courts, the senate house and other public forums. There was a lot of arguing and debate in the Forum, and the word *Forum* had given use the word *forensic* meaning something related to the law or the

courts. So ‘forensic science’ – which seems to dominate prime time television these days – it means science related to proving a case in court like proving someone’s guilt or innocence.

After the Forum was constructed, the Romans placed a large stone there. The Romans then placed additional markers along the roads leading out of Rome. And each marker was placed at a distance of 1,000 paces.

Since a pace was approximately 5 feet, 1,000 paces was approximately 5,000 feet in modern measurements. Since the unit of length was 1,000 paces, the Romans called the distance a *mille* which was the Latin word for ‘thousand.’ And we have taken that measurement in Modern English as the word *mile*. And that is also why a modern mile comes from the Latin word for ‘thousand’ but actually represents a measurement of slightly more than 5,000 feet. By the way, each of these markers was called a *milliarium*. And this word comes into English as *milestone*. So as you traveled in or out of Rome, you passed a *milliarium* every 1,000 paces. So this was a mark indicating how far you had come or how far you had to go. And it is in this sense that we have inherited the term *milestone* to refer to a level of achievement or accomplishment. Of course, the Latin word *mille* meaning ‘thousand’ appears in many other modern English words. For example, we see it in *millipede*, *millimeter*, and the word *million* which actually means a thousand thousands.

So Rome has emerged as a powerful republic, independent from its earlier Etruscan overlords. Over the next century, Rome continued to expand its territory, and the Etruscan territory continued to shrink. In the early fourth century BC, two back-to-back events occurred which would have a tremendous influence on the development of the Roman Empire.

First, in 396 BC, the Romans finally defeated the chief Etruscan city of Veii after a 10-year siege. And after the capture of Veii, the Romans quickly consumed the entirety of the Etruscan territory within the emerging Roman Republic. So we see the emerging Roman Republic expanding at a rapid rate and basic consuming its former rivals in the Italian peninsula.

And what’s really interesting at this point is how the Romans treated the Etruscan culture which had been so influential to its early history. At this point, Etruscan influences may have been as great, if not greater, than Greek influences. But the Romans apparently wanted nothing to do with these Etruscan influences. Maybe it was because Rome didn’t want to acknowledge or admit that it had begun as basically an Etruscan city. Maybe it resented the Etruscan kings. But regardless, the Romans largely discarded the Etruscan contributions to the early Roman culture. And instead, they gave the credit to the Greeks or to mythological stories.

It is believed that the Romans may have actively destroyed Etruscan writings which may have presented an alternate view of history. We know that the Etruscans had writing because the Romans had borrowed the alphabet from them. Yet we have very few traces of the Etruscan language today. Only a few artifacts and inscriptions exist. And that is partly why we know so little about the Etruscan language. And many Roman historians believe that this scarcity of Etruscan writings and artifacts is due to an intentional purge by the later Romans.

Now, as I mentioned, there were two back-to-back events which happened around this time in Roman history. The first was the complete victory over the Etruscans. But the other event, which only happened about 6 years later, would have the exact opposite impact on Rome, at least in the short term. And this event was an invasion of Celtic-speaking Gauls from the north who sacked Rome in 390 BC.

Now I am going to take a much closer look at the early Celtic-speaking tribes in the next episode. But for now, it is just important to understand that much of central Europe north of Italy was occupied by a variety of tribes which had a similar culture and who spoke closely-related Celtic languages.

You may recall from the last episode that many language historians believe that the linguistic ancestors of the Celtic tribes may have once lived with, or in very close proximity to, the ancestors of the Latin-speakers in southeastern Europe. This is because there are some strong similarities between the two language families. And this view holds that the Celtic ancestors traveled into central and western Europe where they came to dominate the entire region. The region north of Italy and generally west of the Rhine is known today as France, but at this time the region was called 'Gaul,' and it was dominated by these Celtic-speaking tribes.

Around 391 BC, a group of these Celtic-speaking tribes crossed the Alps from the north and began to settle into northern Italy. Of course, this was the Etruscan territory which was in the process of falling to the Romans in the south. So the Romans sent ambassadors to arbitrate between the Gauls and the Etruscans in the north of that territory. But the Romans committed a diplomatic 'no-no' by dropping their neutrality and joining the Etruscans against the Gauls. The Gauls were so offended by this breach of military etiquette, that they decided to march on Rome itself.

But the important part of this story is what happened when the Celtic-speaking Gauls arrived in Rome. Simply stated, they defeated the Roman army, and they occupied, sacked and burned the city. They occupied and ruled over the city for seven months before eventually being afflicted by malaria and other diseases. They finally agreed to leave after the Romans paid them a massive ransom of gold.

When the Gauls finally abandoned Rome, many Romans returned to find the city almost uninhabitable. Many Romans thought that it would be best to abandon the city and move to the Etruscan city of Veii which they had recently conquered. But the decision was made to stay put and to rebuild Rome.

The consequences of this event cannot be overstated. Up to this point, everything had been going Rome's way. They were beginning to think of themselves as invincible. But all of that changed with the sack of Rome by the Gauls. It was a very traumatic event for the Romans, and it severely affected their psyche. It shaped both their view of the Celtic tribes to the north and the way the Romans interacted with them in the future. So it is an important backdrop to the Roman invasion of Gaul under Julius Caesar which I will look at in the next episode. But it also made the Romans re-focus and re-double their efforts to dominate the region. The Romans would

remember being sacked by the Gauls for many generations, and they remained apprehensive of the Celtic threat to the north even as they were conquering the Mediterranean. And in fact, this invasion of Celtic-speaking Gauls was the last time a foreign invader would sack Rome until the fall of the Roman Empire many centuries later.

Now in the aftermath of the invasion by the Gauls and Rome's period of rebuilding, several Latin tribes around Rome took the opportunity to declare their independence. And after a period of revolts and border wars, Rome finally subjugated almost all of the Latin tribes in 338 BC. The Latin League, which had been established by these communities and Rome, was dissolved and replaced by a federation of Latin colonies which owed their loyalty to Rome. Even though the other Latin cities theoretically retained their freedom and also retained many of the rights as the citizens of Rome, the Romans still established garrisons throughout the Latin cities to maintain order.

And this is the basic model which Rome followed as it conquered one territory after another. And it is also very important to the overall spread of the Latin language. Unlike other empires or armies, the Romans didn't just invade and conquer and loot new territories. They basically offered each new defeated territory a deal. If the newly defeated territory accepted Roman rule, they could become part of Rome. They could even become Roman citizens. They could share in the wealth of the Roman civilization, and they could enjoy the civilizing influence of Roman culture. But if the territory rejected Roman rule, the consequences would be severe. So it was either Romanization or repression. Not surprisingly, many chose Romanization. But that process of Romanization meant the spread of Roman culture, and specifically the Roman language – Latin. As these new territories were added to the Roman Empire, Latin became the *lingua franca*. It quickly replaced native languages in many of these territories. We will especially see this trend in western Europe in the next episode.

So since we're talking about the spread of the early Roman Empire throughout Italy, let's talk about the Roman military.

You probably won't be surprised to learn that we get a lot of military-related terms from the Romans. Actually, we get many Latin-derived military terms from the French-speaking Normans after 1066, but we can see the roots of the words by looking at the Romans themselves.

For example, the wooden bar that links two animals together when pulling a wagon or a plow is called a *yoke*. And you may remember that the word *yoke* has been traced all the way back to the original Indo-Europeans. Well, when the Romans defeated an opposing army, they would sometimes make the defeated troops pass underneath a homemade yoke. The yoke was made by sticking two spears in the ground and placing a third one across the top. This ritual symbolized Roman victory and Roman domination over the defeated troops. In Latin, a yoke was called *iugum*. And the ritual of marching defeated troops under the *iugum* was called *sub iugum* meaning 'under the yoke.' In later French, the 'y' sound shifted to a 'j' sound in many words. So *sib iugum* evolved from French into English as *subjugate*. So *subjugate* literally means 'under the yoke' in this original Roman military sense.

The Romans valued salt for both its preservative value and its use as a flavoring. The Romans adopted a rule that Roman soldiers would receive a salt allowance or an amount of money to purchase a specific amount of salt. The Latin word for salt was *sal*. So the salt allowance or payment to soldiers was called the *salarium* from the Roman word for salt. And this became the root of the word *salary* which we have in Modern English. It's also the basis of the phrase '*worth his salt*' or '*worth one's salt*.'

Roman soldiers were also issued very specific military equipment, including a sword, a shield and a helmet. The helmet was one of the most important pieces of equipment since it protected the soldier's head in battle. This gave Romans an advantage against barbarian tribes that didn't use helmets. The fastener of the helmet's chin strap was located near the soldier's cheek and was called a *buccula* which meant 'little check.' Over time, this term was used to refer to any type of fastener. The term became *buckle* after it was adopted into English.

The word *infantry* can also be traced back to the Romans. And speaking of *infantry*, have you ever wondered if there was a connection between the words *infant* and *infantry*? Unless you visualize an army of babies, there doesn't seem to be a connection there. But, as you might imagine, there is a connection. What do infants and an infantry have in common? Well, at least theoretically, they both supposed listen and obey their elders or superiors. And the connection here has to do with speech, or actually in this case, the lack of speech.

And it also affords me one of those occasional opportunities to digress into some interesting etymology.

The Latin word for 'baby' or 'small child' was *infans* which literally meant 'not speaking' since babies were not able to speak yet. And of course the modern English word *infant* comes to us directly from the Latin word *infans*. In the Roman military, the newest soldiers were not ready for cavalry or advanced responsibilities, so they were relegated to duty on foot. Since they were the inexperienced soldiers – and since they were to obey orders and not speak unless spoken to – the term *infans* was used to create the term *infantry*.

And speaking of youth. The Latin term *alescere* meaning 'to grow' is derived from an original Indo-European root word which meant the same thing – to grow or nourish. Now the Romans put the prefix *ad* (meaning 'to') on the front of *alescere* to form the word *adolescere* meaning 'to grow up.' This is the root of the word *adolescent*, in other words, one who is growing up. The past participle of *adolescere* was *adultus* which is the root of *adult*, in other words, one who has already grown up.

Now let's go back to the Latin word *infans* for a second. As I said this word gave us *infant* and *infantry*. But buried within that word is a very basic root which appears in lots of Modern English words. That root is '*fa*' which refers to anything going into or coming out of the mouth. So it could refer to words or it could refer to food. So *in* was a Latin prefix meaning 'not', like *incapable* meaning 'not capable' or *in-sensitive* meaning 'not sensitive.' So since *fa* referred to speech or words, *infans* meant 'unable to speak.' And, as I said, *infantry* referred to young soldiers and those who were supposed to listen and obey but not speak – like infants.



Latin *fa* came from the Greek word *pha* (which was spelled with the Greek letter Phi, so the Greek root is spelled P-H-A in the modern alphabet). Both Latin *fa* (spelled ‘F-A’) and Greek *pha* (spelled ‘P-H-A’) meant basically the same thing. And we see this root in words like *esophagus*. We also see it in the root of the word *face* since the mouth is the largest opening in the face. We also see the root *fa* in the word *fame* (from the Latin word *fama*) which is based upon your reputation or things people say about you. Many Romans felt that your *fama* or *fame* impacted you and ultimately how your life played out. This created the word *fata* which is the root of the Modern English word *fate*.

The root word *fa* also produced the word *fess* which is found in modern English expressions like ‘*fess up*’ meaning to speak the truth about yourself. Another word for this is *confess* and its noun version *confession*. Again, both based on that same *fa* root. We also see it in *profess*. *Pro* could mean ‘in front of’ or ‘on behalf of’ something. So if I am going to speak on behalf of something, I am going to *profess* it. That would make me a *professor*. And something that I can talk about in great detail and with great expertise is my *profession*. That might make me a *professional*. And if the connection between speech and *profession* seems like a bit of a stretch, well then what about your *vocation* which shares the same root as *vocal*. So there.

And by the way, a place where you offered prayers or made oaths was called a *fanum* in Latin, again with that same *fa* root. So since you offered prayers there, a *fanum* came to refer to a religious or holy place. And the words *profane* and *profanity* come from the combination of *pro* and *fanum*. Now this may seem a bit odd at first. If you are ‘pro’- *fanum*, then it may seem like you are speaking in favor of something religious or holy. But *pro* also meant ‘before or in front of.’ So if you were speaking *profanum*, you were speaking in front of or outside of the fanum – not inside of it. So *profanum* came to refer to things outside of the holy place. They were therefore not holy. They were common or vulgar. In other words they were *profane*.

So we can see how a common Greek or Latin root word like *fa* produced a multitude of Modern English words. By the way, I got a lot of these ‘*fa*’ words from the book The Words of the Day by Professor Steven M. Cerutti, Ph.D. So I just wanted to acknowledge that book for this brief digression.

And since I have talked about words which come from the original Latin word related to ‘speech’, let me mention a couple of things about writing. The Romans didn’t have books in the sense that we know them today. Instead, they wrote with ink on parchment. And the parchment was rolled up for easy handling. When writing with ink, the Romans would often use a feather for writing. And the Latin word for feather was *penna*. And that is the source of the modern English word *pen*. And you may remember for an earlier episode that Latin *penna* and English *feather* are actually cognate. Both words came from an original Indo-European word. And again, between *penna* and *feather*, we see that shift from the ‘p’ sound to the ‘f’ sound in the Germanic languages which Jacob Grimm had identified.

In addition to parchment, some Romans also wrote on small wooden boards covered with a thin coat of wax. They would take a stylus and write on the wax. They called these *tabulae* and that is the origin of the word *tablet*. And it’s kind of fascinating to think of ancient Romans walking

with tablets and writing on them with a stylus. Because in the modern world of iPads and iPhones and other digital tablets, we're sort of mimicking what the Romans were doing over 2,000 years ago.

So let's turn our attention back to the growing Roman Republic, soon to become the Empire. And I want to conclude this episode by looking at the expansion of the Roman Republic beyond the Italian peninsula into the Mediterranean, including North Africa, Greece and the Middle East.

Now it was very possible at this early date, around the fourth century BC, that Rome's sphere of influence could have basically been contained to Italy itself. Because beyond the shores of Italy to the south was a major regional power with a lineage that stretched back to the Phoenicians. That was the city-state of Carthage. I mentioned Carthage in an earlier episode when I discussed the Phoenicians. You may recall that the Phoenicians were a collection of city-states in and around modern-day Lebanon who spoke a Semitic language and who used an early form of the alphabet which the Greeks later borrowed, and which was the original form of the alphabet we still use today.

You may also recall that these Phoenicians traded throughout the Mediterranean and established colonies along the way, especially along the North African coast. One of those colonies was Carthage in what is modern-day Tunisia.

And as the power and influence of the Phoenicians began to disappear in the east, the power of Carthage became greater and greater in the west. The language of the Carthaginians was inherited directly from the Phoenicians and was called *Punic* by the Romans, again a direct reference to the original Phoenicians. The Latin word for Phoenician was *Punic*. And in fact, the Romans generally thought of Carthage as a Phoenician city speaking a Phoenician language.

As Carthage grew, its biggest rival early on was Greece. Remember the Greeks were the only people who could challenge the trading and shipping prowess of the early Phoenicians. And when the Phoenicians city-states were consumed by other regional powers, that left Carthage to deal with the Greeks. Carthage had briefly entered into an alliance with the Etruscans to fend off the Greeks. And Carthage expanded its sphere of influence by taking control of what is today southern Spain. So Carthage now extended from North Africa into southern Europe. In turn, the Greeks intensified their position in southern Gaul – remember that's modern France. And also remember that modern cities like Marseille and Nice were once Greek colonies. These Greek port cities in southern Gaul allowed the Greeks to maintain access to trade routes which extended into the heart of western Europe. So what resulted was an unstable and very delicate balance of power between the Greeks, the Carthaginians and the Etruscans. And this balance of power was ultimately disrupted by the Rise of Rome.

It was probably inevitable that Rome and Carthage would collide as Rome's sphere of influence spread southward and Carthage's sphere of influence spread northward. Initially, direct conflict between these two powers was avoided because Greek colonies were located in between Rome and Carthage in parts of southern Italy and Sicily. So those Greek colonies provided a bit of a buffer zone.

A non-aggression treaty had been negotiated between Rome and Carthage in 348 BC, which allowed Rome to advance south. And it was only a matter of time before Rome was eyeing those Greek cities in southern Italy and Sicily. Those cities were in a state of decline and headed for conflict with Carthage when Rome intervened on behalf of the Greek cities.

As Rome's intentions were clearly spreading to the southern part of Italy, it led to direct conflict with Carthage in southern Italy in 264 BC. This initiated the first of three Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage to determine who would rule the Mediterranean world. Remember the Latin word for Phoenician was *Punic*, so that is the source of the name for these wars.

The first war was fought over control of the island of Sicily. And the first Punic War was actually a naval war primarily. This was something the Romans were not accustomed to. And the Romans had to actually build a navy to fight the Carthaginians, but they proved successful and won control of Sicily from Carthage.

In the second Punic War, the famous Carthaginian leader Hannibal decided to avoid a fight at sea, and he surprised the Romans by mounting an armed expedition from Spain and traveled through southern France and famously crossed the Alps with a contingent of war elephants and engaged the Romans from the north. Hannibal actually defeated the Romans in battle after battle. But he was not able to (or wasn't willing to) actually invade Rome itself. He apparently expected an uprising from within Italy by the various peoples who had been conquered by the Romans. He thought that these people would join his effort to overthrow and defeat the Romans. But that never really happened. And the fact that there was no such uprising is another indication of the success of the Romanization process I mentioned earlier. At least Rome offered the benefits of Roman citizenship and Roman civilization. So a popular uprising within Italy never happened.

As I said, at various points, Hannibal could have headed straight for Rome, but for whatever reason he held back. And some language historians note at this point that had Hannibal not held back – had he gone to Rome and defeated the Roman army and took control of the city – then much of modern western Europe might be speaking some version of Phoenician today rather than a version of Latin. But of course, that is not what happened. Instead of bringing a decisive end to the war, Hannibal fought an inconclusive war in Italy for 16 years.

Given a perhaps unintended reprieve by Hannibal, Rome put a general named Scipio in charge of the army, and Rome began to build up its naval fleet. As Rome began to rebuild its army and navy, the tide started to shift in favor of Rome. Under Scipio, Rome defeated and took control of Carthage territories in Spain which interrupted Hannibal's supply lines. Rome finally gathered its rebuilt army and navy, but rather than attack Hannibal directly in Italy, they decided instead to head southward across the Mediterranean for Carthage itself. And this caused Hannibal to return to north Africa to engage the Romans there. Hannibal was finally defeated by the Romans in Carthage to end the Second Punic War.

A few decades passed before Rome put the final nail in Carthage's coffin with the third and final Punic War. Rome was able to assume control of north Africa in the process. Rome burned the city of Carthage to the ground and, according to historical legend, Rome sowed the fields of

Carthage with salt to make sure nothing would grow there. Most modern historians don't believe that the fields were actually salted, but there is no doubt that the devastation was massive. Carthage was never able to recover from the Punic Wars. And with Carthage removed as a threat to Rome, the Roman Empire was able to expand its influence around the Mediterranean. By the end of the third Punic War, Rome had extended its control to Greece. And with Carthage out of the way, Egypt and much of the Middle East would also fall to Roman armies. The entire Mediterranean was soon under the control of Rome.

So with the Mediterranean under its control, Rome's attention soon turned to the north – to that vast region occupied by those hated Gauls who had sacked Rome a few centuries earlier. It would take an ambitious and shrewd military and political leader to conquer that region. And Rome happened to have just such a person. His name was Julius Caesar. And Caesar's expeditions to the north brought the Romans into direct contact with the Celtic-speaking tribes of central and western Europe, and eventually brought the Romans into contact with the Germanic-speaking tribes of northern Europe. Caesar's expeditions also saw the first attempt by Rome to colonize southern Britain. So we're now at the point where we need to begin looking at the Celts, the Germanic tribes, and early Roman Britain. So were getting very close to the period of Old English. But we're not quite there yet.

Next time, I'm going to focus on the Celtic tribes who occupied much of Europe during this period. And I'm going to look at the Caesar's expeditions to conquer those continental Celts. And I am also going to continue to look at Latin as its influence began to spread into western Europe.

So until next time, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.