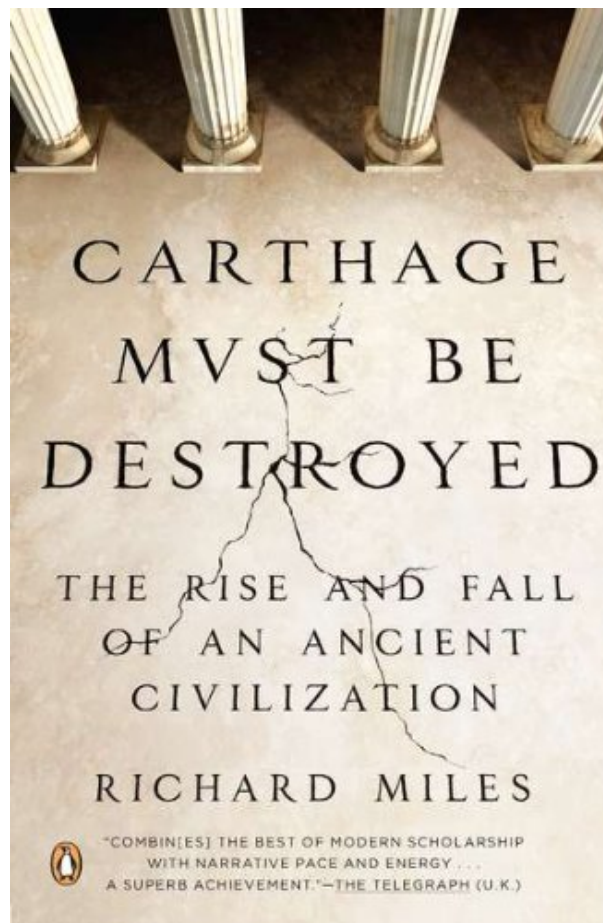
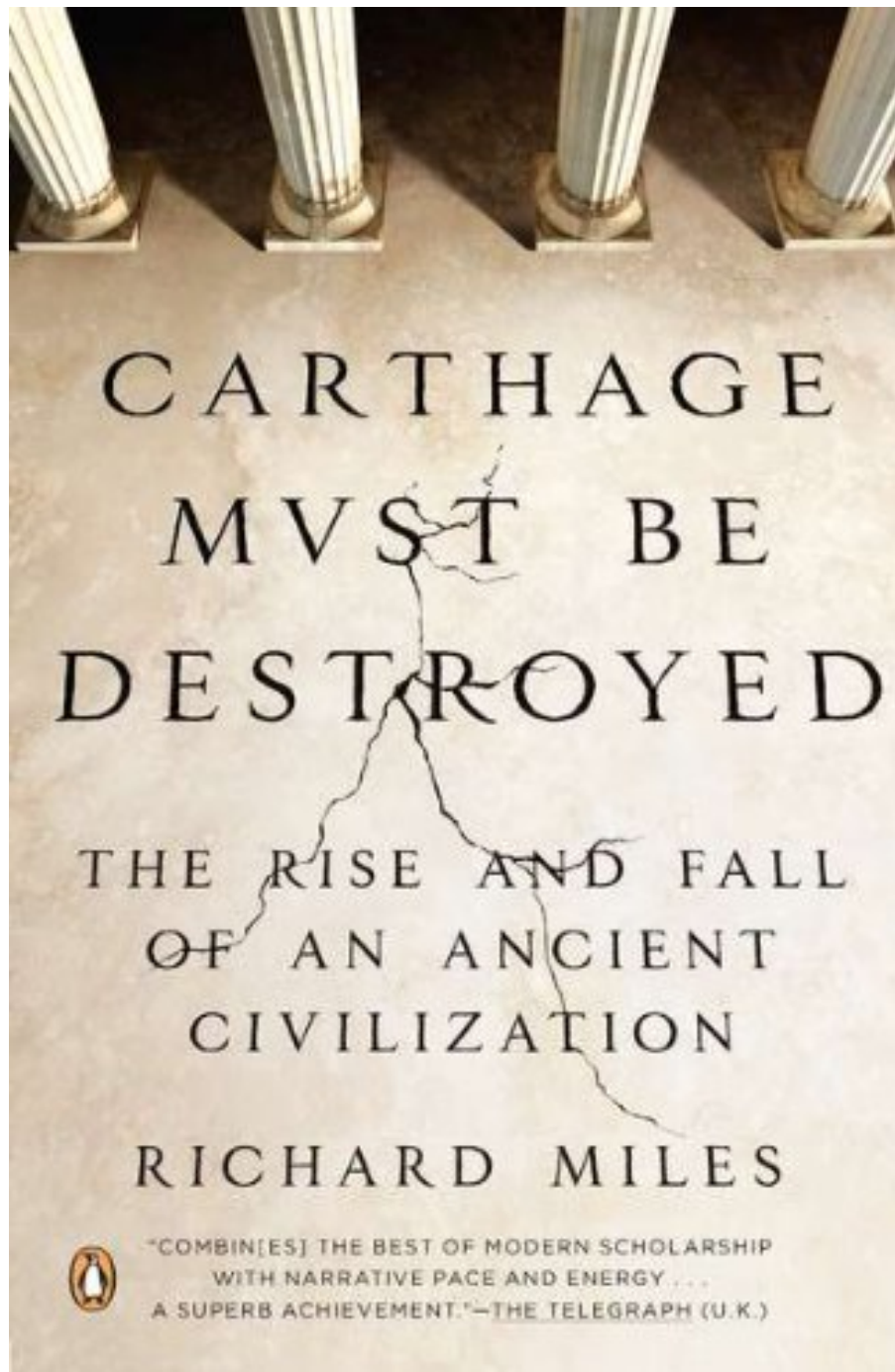


# **CARTHAGE MUST BE DESTROYED: THE RISE AND FALL OF AN ANCIENT CIVILIZATION BY RICHARD MILES**



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The first full-scale history of Hannibal's Carthage in decades and "a convincing and enthralling narrative."  
(The Economist )

Drawing on a wealth of new research, archaeologist, historian, and master storyteller Richard Miles resurrects the civilization that ancient Rome struggled so mightily to expunge. This monumental work charts the entirety of Carthage's history, from its origins among the Phoenician settlements of Lebanon to its apotheosis as a Mediterranean empire whose epic land-and-sea clash with Rome made a legend of Hannibal and shaped the course of Western history. Carthage Must Be Destroyed reintroduces readers to the ancient glory of a lost people and their generations-long struggle against an implacable enemy.

- Sales Rank: #205923 in Books
- Published on: 2012-06-26
- Released on: 2012-06-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.40" h x 1.20" w x 5.40" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 544 pages

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The new 'must have' text about Carthage

By Ben Kane

Until the publication of this excellent book, the preeminent text about Carthage was the 1995 volume Carthage by the French historian Serge Lancel. This, an outstanding contribution to the patchy knowledge we have of Carthage, has just been eclipsed. One might think that part of the reason for this is that Carthage Must Be Destroyed did not need to be translated (inevitably, there were some places where Lancel's text became unwieldy). It's far from that: this is a better written, easier to follow, more rounded book than Lancel's.

Miles begins with the Phoenicians, the people who founded Carthage, and goes on from there. His style is at all times enjoyable, and his arguments well presented. Apart from the obvious following of Carthage's history, he goes into great depth about subjects such as the manner in which Hannibal aped the feats of Hercules in order to show that he had divine backing, and how the Romans fought back against this religious propaganda. He also explains in depth how, from the time of the Second Punic War onwards, the Romans made their business to portray the Carthaginians as untrustworthy, perfidious liars and cheats. This in turn allowed them to show themselves as more heroic and steadfast.

Anyone who is interested in learning the full (well, what is known) details about Carthage and its history, needs to read this book. I for one will be returning to it again and again in the future. In my opinion, reading Lancel's book is also a good idea. Another interesting text is Daily Life in Carthage At the Time of Hannibal by the academic Gilbert Charles-Picard. Although it was written in the 1960s, it has some useful information about Carthaginian culture.

Ben Kane, author of Hannibal: Enemy of Rome and The Forgotten Legion.

177 of 202 people found the following review helpful.

A definitive history of Carthage

By Amrit

The Mediterranean is perhaps one of the most diverse regions of the world rivalled only by South East Asia. It is shared by Arabs, Turks, Israelis, Greeks, Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans. Miles' book studies

an era of the ancient Mediterranean when diverse peoples also shared the region. Greeks, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Libyans, Romans, Gauls and Spaniards all lived around the sea both competing and co-operating with each other. Miles study arguably is the definitive history of one of those peoples, the Carthaginians.

The narrative commences with the foundation of the city from Tyre by the legendary Queen Elissa (or Dido). Over time, the Carthaginians gained control of the area that today is Tunisia. From that base became a successful trading and maritime power. A key asset that the Carthaginians exploited early on was the silver mined in Spain, providing an early foundation for the city's wealth. The Rio Tinto area still has the huge slag heaps produced by the mining operations of the time. The importance of commanding access to silver is a recurrent theme in antiquity and later, for example in the importance of the Laurium silver mines to Athens and the significance of the silver of the Potosi mine in Peru to the rise of the West after the sixteenth century (Frank, Reorient).

One of the original reasons for the expansion into the Western Mediterranean by Tyre was the need to find resources such as silver to feed the "Assyrian beast", Tyre's overlord at the time. However, it was eventually Carthage that inherited these resources and its "renown would soon come to far outshine the faded lustre of its Phoenician parent".

Carthage became a major manufacturer of goods which it sold throughout the Mediterranean and an agricultural producer. It also acquired naval supremacy in the Western Mediterranean (The ring shaped military harbour of Carthage one of the great engineering works of antiquity can still be seen). The cities need for supplies however took it further afield with the establishment of control over Western Sicily. This brought the city into conflict with the Greek colonies established in Eastern Sicily such as Syracuse as both expanded. However, it was the expansion of Rome that eventually brought Carthage into conflict with its future nemesis.

The events of the Punic wars are well known but briefly, during the First Punic War, Rome successfully transforms itself from a land power into a sea power and defeats Carthage. Carthage loses Sicily but expands in Spain to try to make up for its losses. Than expansion once again brings the two cities into conflict. Despite Hannibal's epic march across the Alps and early victories over Rome, the Romans eventually wear the Carthaginians down, take the war to Africa and win. Carthage is then left with just its hinterland and a huge war indemnity. Even then, she is thought to be too much of a threat so that the Romans again go to war and destroy the city in 146 BCE after three year's of heroic defence by its citizens. In that same year, the Romans also destroy the Greek city of Corinth leaving the Romans with supremacy over the Mediterranean. The narrative however does not stop at 146 BCE. Miles looks at Roman "war guilt" and how that worked itself through the following centuries, for example in the Aenid of Virgil. Miles' narrative of these events is compelling and easy to read but with a lot more.

Miles looks at the problems with writing a history of Carthage. There are no Punic sources, the great library of Carthage having vanished after the destruction of the city. Instead, the historian needs to rely on hostile Roman and Greek sources - and some pro-Carthaginian Greek sources. Miles does a convincing job of cutting through the hostile propaganda and constructing a more even handed and broadly sympathetic picture of the Carthaginians and their story. He explores the Roman stereotype of "Punic faith", the supposed treachery and deviousness commonly attributed to Carthaginians - as well as their reputation as cunning and deceitful traders. Miles however shows a pattern of behaviour that is not too different to that of the Romans and Greeks. The accusations of child sacrifice that the Romans levelled at their Punic foes are also explored. The conclusion is that these accusations were not without foundation but are also highly exaggerated. In his study of stereotypes, Miles looks at Greek and Roman literature as sources.



Miles also uses the limited sources available and archaeological evidence to examine the intellectual, cultural and religious life of Carthage, a difficult task in view of the scarcity of sources. The Carthaginians appeared to have worshipped a number of West Semitic deities such as Baal and Tanit. Melqart as the god of the city however assumed great significance. The culture of the city appears to have been quite syncretic in its final centuries, absorbing much from the Hellenistic world. Melqart for example appears to have been conflated with the Greek God Hercules.

This kind of admixing worked to provide points of cultural contact with the Greek world and a common cultural idiom. That common idiom gave Carthaginians the means to engage with and deliver propaganda to Greeks and Romans, hopefully to win allies and demoralise enemies. Hannibal hires Greek historians to accompany him on his campaigns and write his war propaganda - self consciously following the example of Alexander. Hannibal effectively uses religious propaganda. He tries to convince the world that he had the favour of Hercules who had abandoned Rome. The tables are turned however when in 146 BCE, Scipio Aemilianus uses the same propaganda tools. Before taking the city, he calls the gods of Carthage to leave the city and take up residence in Rome.

Despite Miles' compelling effort to reconstruct from the debris and try to tell us how Carthaginians saw themselves and their world, one is left with the feeling that one would like to know more. Miles recounts the story of Hannibal's confrontation with Roman envoys in Spain in which he sharply rebukes them and speaks of "the old principle of Carthage never to neglect the victims of injustice". Hannibal's statement at least suggests a strong sense of Carthaginian self belief - and an emphasis on justice and righteousness, eerily reminiscent of passages from the Old Testament (eg Psalms 33:4-6). Given the closeness of Tyre and Israel as well as the common cultural threads binding Levantine peoples, if common points of cultural reference are found, this should not be surprising. This can however be speculation only in the absence of Punic sources.

Rome in the end established its dominion over the Mediterranean world - not Carthage. The common elite culture of the Mediterranean became Graeco-Roman culture not Punic culture. For Miles, nevertheless, the history of Carthage is also a history of Rome. The Carthaginians were the first to try to build an empire spanning both shores on the Mediterranean. Though it was the Romans who succeeded in the end, to do so they had to take over Carthage's empire and build upon it. The early overseas provinces of Rome with the exception of Macedon were all inherited from Carthage and with it presumably some of its structures of governance and law. The Quinqueremes of the Roman navy were based on the design of a captured Carthaginian ship. The Romans valued the technical expertise of the Carthaginians and had translated all 28 volumes of Mago's agricultural treatise said to be the "agronomic bible of the ancient world". Miles writes "Rome hugely benefited from the appropriation of the economic and political infrastructure that Carthage had previously put into place in the central and Western Mediterranean. In Sardinia, Sicily, North Africa and Spain, the Romans inherited not wild, virgin lands but a politically, economically and culturally joined up world which was Carthage's greatest achievement". The foundations of the Roman Empire therefore were laid by Carthage to a great extent but whether the Romans themselves recognised their Punic inheritance is less clear. A nephew of Constantine was called "Hannibalianus" suggesting perhaps some acknowledgement of the Carthaginian past. The emperor Septimius Severus himself a North African reburied Hannibal in a marble mausoleum.

The Romans to be clear were not out to destroy Punic culture but to destroy a political rival. Punic culture continued to exist in North Africa for centuries along with the other cultures that fell under Roman rule. The continual process of the mixing of ideas, cultures and peoples in the Mediterranean which under Carthage began, continued under the Roman imperium. The westward road that the early Tyrians took to found Carthage was followed during Roman times by other west bound peoples from the Levant. These included the early Christians such as Paul. These later travellers unlike their Tyrian and Carthaginian predecessors left

a more permanent cultural and religious imprint on the Mediterranean world and Europe - Christianity.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Amazing

By Phalanx

The book is insightful and well written. The biggest disappointment? That there are not more books on Amazon from this author.

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