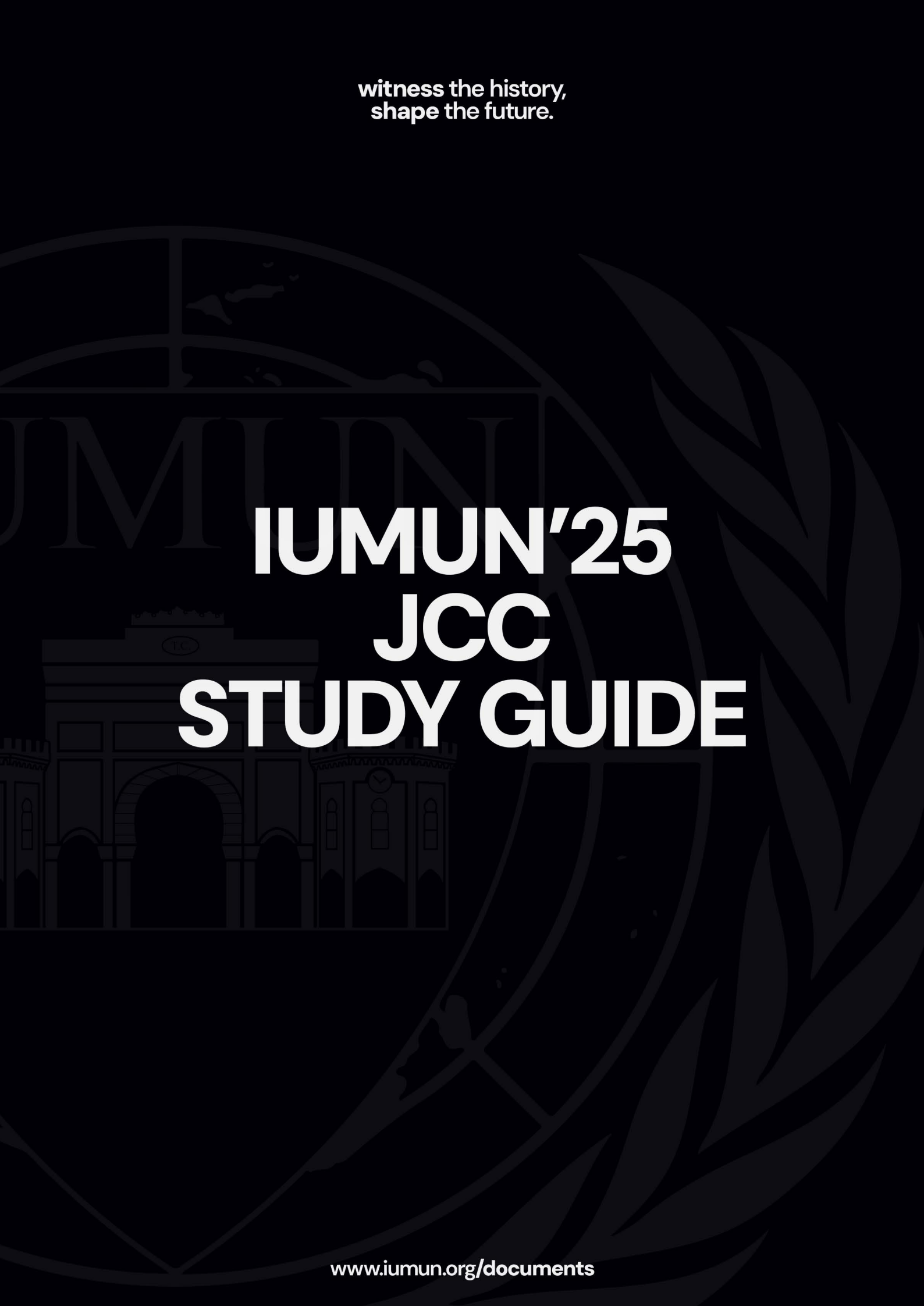


witness the history,
shape the future.



IUMUN'25 JCC STUDY GUIDE

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Honourable Delegates,

Welcome to the Joint Crisis Committee (JCC) at IUMUN 2025.

As the Secretary-General, I am thrilled to have you join us to discuss one of the most defining social and political conflicts of ancient Rome: Plebeians vs. Patricians.

This syllabus welcomes you to explore the deep social divisions and political struggles that marked the Roman Republic. The plebeians' and patricians' fight for rights, representation, and power offers basic lessons in the development of government, law, and social justice—issues still with us today.

I would like to take a personal moment to thank Under-Secretary-General Dağhan Aktaş and Academic Assistants Mina Işık and Seyederfan Alborzi for their diligent work on the study guides. Their work will allow you to engage in informed and substantive debate.

The Joint Crisis Committee is where history, law, and diplomacy converge. I am confident that you will approach this challenge with inquisitiveness, respect, and determination.

On behalf of the Secretariat, I warmly welcome all of you. May your discussions be insightful and your decisions fruitful.

Best regards,

Secretary-General
Öykü Taş

LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL

Hello there, Gentlemen and Gentlemen of the Senatus Populusque Romanus.

We're in a city state far, far away in Rome 493. During this committee, you will all experience the life of a Senator of Rome. You will go through battles, make debates, command armies, and govern your state. Last year's committee was quite good, so I decided to do it again. I am hoping every single senator (you) will truly experience the era's difficulties, a senator's duties, and the difficulties of governing.

The best part of the crisis committees is to be your character in the committee. You might ask; well, how can I do that? The answer is simple, just role-play like your character. If you are a plebeian, your job is rather simple: just be a commoner who despises the patricians(noblemen).

While some of you plebeians are peasants, others are living their best lives as plebeians, but although you have money, soldiers, and influence, you cannot govern your own country or serve as a high role magistrate. Therefore, although most of you are literally in love with Mother Rome, you will have major disagreements with selfish Patricians.

However, if you are a noble Patrician, you might despise the commoners, but you do need the wealthy and influential plebeians. So, your role is to work with the plebeians (if you want to) or suppress them by any means necessary; it's up to you to face the challenges of the country while also dealing with the plebeians. So basically, all you have to do is to represent your allocation's point of view properly.

If you decide to backstab your cabinet (for absolutely no reason at all) by acting against them, the consequences of your actions will most likely be severe, although if you somehow manage to succeed in your efforts of betrayal, you might rewrite history.

So, take your seats and prepare yourselves for the clash of classes.

Best Regards,

Under-Secretary-General

Dağhan Aktaş

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE	1
1.1. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS	3
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.1. THE ROMANS	6
2.1.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC (509 BC)	7
2.1.2 FIRST PUNIC WAR (264–241 BC): WHY DID IT HAPPEN?	8
2.2. THE PATRICIANS	8
2.3. PLEBEIANS' HISTORY THROUGH THE ROMAN ERA	10
2.3.1. ECONOMIC BURDENS, EXCLUSIONS, AND LEGAL DISADVANTAGES OF PLEBEIANS	11
2.4. SECESSION OF THE PLEBEIANS	13
2.4.1 THE PLEBEIAN COUNCIL	14
2.4.2 AFTERWARD SECESSIONS: 449 BCE, 445 BCE, 287 BCE	15
2.5. THE LEX GENUCIA	17
2.6. THE FIRST PUNIC WAR	17
3. MECHANICS OF THE ROMAN SENATE (SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS)	20
3.1 HOW DID THE SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS WORK?	20
3.2. HOW DID THE ROMANS ELECT MAGISTRATES?	21
5. FURTHER READING AND VIDEOS	27
6. REFERENCES	28

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

Hi, you are a rock floating in space, pretty cool, huh?

Well, for people who have no clue about this sentence, you might ask your chairs, and they will provide you with an answer.

So, *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (Roman Senate), well, to begin with, I need to talk about our committee. Since our committee is a joint crisis committee, you will all be divided into 2 cabinets: Plebeians and Patricians. The Patrician side will physically begin in the Roman Senate as senators; each one owning massive amounts of wealth, having significant influence (depending on your allocations), and experience.

Some of you will not be able to be elected as a consul at the beginning of the committee, but you will age fast, so don't worry about it. Plebeians, on the other hand, are a lot more complicated since they have no armies or serious governing officers.

You may think that since you are commoners, you are poor or underfed, think again because the plebeians in our committee are the wealthiest and experienced plebeians in all of Rome. But being a plebeian, you are not allowed to be a senator (because of your lack of "high-quality blood"), a consul, or any high-ranking magistrate. As for the Patrician side, your main goal is to secure the existence of Rome with the best conditions possible, but remember that you are a nobleman, so that means you do not get along well with commoners. So, you can't just go ahead and accept all plebeians into the senate; you will be executed.

Plebeians, however, have a straighter goal, which is to be accepted amongst the senators and have their chance to govern and represent their people. Whether making a peaceful agreement with the Patricians or revolting against them is up to you. Do not think of history as a guide; this will be an alternative history, meaning

anything after the committee starts may or may not be historical events. That is the reason why we do not have all the historical events in our guide.

Another topic you must know before participating in any kind of crisis committee is META. In a crisis committee, especially if it is a historical one, you cannot just write directives according to history. That is meta, and it's strictly out of order. Also, there is another type of meta that can only occur in joint crisis committees. If you are in a joint crisis committee and you chat with another delegate from the other cabinet to exchange any kind of information regarding your cabinet, that is also meta and strictly out of order.

1.1. Key Terms and Definitions

Roman Senate (Senatus Populusque Romanus): An assembly formed by 300 Senators. Their main duties included making plans/advising Magistrates, passing legislatures/ laws, and managing foreign affairs.

Senator: A member of the Senatus Populusque Romanus chosen from the wealthy population (even among plebeians), and they were the highest rank member (except Magistrates) for governing the country.

Consuls: Two annually elected magistrates who held executive power in the Republic. They led armies and presided over the Senate and assemblies.

Magistrate: An administrator or justice (depending on the role) appointed by the Roman government.

Public Affairs (Res Publica): The term used to describe the Republic. It signified a shared civic duty and collective governance rather than rule by a monarch.

Patrician: A Patrician is a wealthy man who is believed to be a descendant of the original Roman Senators that were chosen by Romulus. Basically, a nobleman.

Plebeian: A member of the common folk; farmers, merchants, etc.

Equites: Wealthy plebeians who gained significant economic influence through commerce and military service, forming a middle class between patricians and lower plebeians.

Nobles: A new elite class formed after the Struggle of the Orders, consisting of both powerful plebeians and patricians who held high office and dominated politics.

Plebeian Council (Concilium Plebis): An institution that helped plebeians pass laws, elect officials, and challenge patrician dominance.

Tribune of the Plebs: An elected official created after the First Secession of the Plebeians in 494 BCE. Tribunes had the power to veto decisions made by magistrates and protect plebeian rights.

Comitia Centuriata: An assembly of the Roman republic consisting of 193 centuries, the assembly's main goal was to elect Magistrates.

Legion: A unit main military unit of the Roman Republic's army. Each legion consists of its own cavalry, physicians, engineers, and a commander.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Italian peninsula during this period was full of contrasts, a landscape where mountains, farmlands, and coastlines shaped the identity of the people who lived there. It was a place where tradition clashed with change, and where local pride ran deep. Between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE, the Italian peninsula was a diverse region inhabited by various cultures each with their own traditions, economies, and ways of life. Rome was a rising regional power which throughout its history had many conflicts with neighbouring tribes. The Italian peninsula was not yet unified. It was a patchwork of independent city-states, tribal confederations, and small kingdoms. Some areas were urbanized and sophisticated, while others were rural and tribal. Beneath the politics and power struggles, families tilled the land, prayed to their gods, and hoped for peace. These centuries were not only about the rise of empires but also about common people trying to live, not starve, and endure.

Villages and valleys were governed by the rhythm of the seasons. Nature, not clocks, dictated the pace of life. Most people across the peninsula were farmers, agriculture was the core of daily survival. Families typically lived in small, mudbrick or stone houses with thatched or tiled roofs. Common crops included wheat, barley, olives, grapes, and legumes. Animal husbandry was also important. Infant mortality was high. People lived in extended families and local traditions, religion, and honour were central to identity. Through community and ritual, people found resilience in a world that could be harsh and uncertain.

In every town or settlement there were those who shaped the tools of daily life with their hands. These artisans were creators, problem-solvers, and quiet innovators. Craftsmen, blacksmiths, potters, masons, and traders made up a small but essential part of the economy, especially in towns. In larger cities and colonies, marketplaces were busy centres of trade and information exchange. More than

just places of commerce, these markets were spaces where cultures mixed, where news was shared, alliances were made, and strangers became neighbours.

The world of knowledge was small and intimate for most passed down by voice, gesture, and example, however, it was just as vital as any scroll or tablet. Formal education as we think of it today was rare outside the Greek colonies and, to a lesser extent, among elite Roman families. Instead, boys mostly learned by doing; trained at home in farming, soldiering, or crafts, depending on their family's status. Greek colonies in the south had structured education in reading, writing, music, and philosophy for the sons of wealthy families. Roman and Latin boys from aristocratic families were often taught to read and write Latin and Greek, study law and train in military discipline.

For most, education was not about classrooms but about preparing for life. Every task learned was a lesson in survival, responsibility, and identity.

Becoming a soldier was not only a duty, but it was also a path toward honour and respect. Young men entered war not just for Rome or tribe, but for family, pride, and the promise of a future. Military service was considered a rite of passage, especially for young men. Training often took the form of informal militias or tribal warbands, but as Rome's influence spread, a more standardized system of military training and conscription developed. Battle hardened the soul alongside the body, and for many, military life was both a proving ground and a mirror of the world.

2.1. The Romans

The Romans' culture emphasized virtue, faithfulness, duty, and seriousness. Family was central, and Romans saw themselves as inheritors of duty and destiny, often using mythic stories to justify their institutions and expansion.

The military was a duty of all male citizens, especially landowners. The Roman army evolved throughout the years to become an extremely disciplined, adaptable, and strategically flexible force, which allowed them to expand in the peninsula quite

quickly. This also meant that their expansion was often through alliances, colonization, and incremental wars. An expanded territory also meant the Romans would have to adapt new administrative policies for their lands; they used a flexible system of alliances and colonies. Some cities were full citizens and others were considered Latin allies under the Roman Republic. The system allowed Rome to harness the manpower of the Italian Peninsula fully, which was crucial for future expansion.

Victory and expansion brought both land, wealth, and slaves, but also social disruption; many small farmers would lose their land, and their farms would turn into slave-worked estates. There was a growing urban poor in Rome that relied on public grain and political patrons. These changes grew the gap between the elite and the masses, laying the groundwork for later civil conflict.

2.1.1 The Establishment of the Roman Republic (509 BC)

Before 509 BC, Rome was ruled by Kings in what is known as the Roman Kingdom. The last king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, was overthrown in 509 BC, an event that stirred revolt among the Roman aristocracy. The expulsion of the king led to the creation of a new political system: *Res publica* (The Republic or Public Affairs). This transition marked a shift from monarchic rule to a system where power was distributed among elected magistrates and representative assemblies. The Republic was not democratic in the modern sense, but it was a rather different political experiment in a world dominated by kings. Consuls replaced the King: Two consuls were elected annually to hold executive power and lead armies. Early republican society was deeply hierarchical and conservative; lineage, land, and tradition defined people's social position. The Roman Senate gained prominence as an advisory body to the consuls, composed primarily of aristocrats who were patricians. Assemblies known as *Comitia* allowed citizens to vote on laws and elect magistrates. Voting was weighted in favor of the wealthy, which also were mostly Patricians and a limited number of Plebeians. The plebeians, who made up the vast

majority of the population, were legally and politically marginalized, although they served in the army and paid taxes. All of this, since the very beginning, planted the seeds for the clash of classes.

2.1.2 First punic War (264–241 BC): Why did it happen?

By the early 3rd century BC, Rome had unified the Italian peninsula, and Carthage, a wealthy maritime power from north africa (modern-day Tunisia), controlled large parts of the western Mediterranean. The island of Sicily was a strategic and wealthy area, partly controlled by Carthage, Greek city-states, and some local powers and this meant that The Roman Republic, in order to gain more navy power and the wealth in Sicily had to expand its influence and prevent Carthage from dominating Sicily grounds completely. The city of Messana (Messina) became the flashpoint when a group of mercenaries seized Messana and sought help from both Rome and Carthage. Carthage intervened first, but Rome, eager to check Carthaginian expansion, eventually also entered the conflict. Through the course of war, Rome quickly gained ground on land, but Carthage dominated the sea. Rome, with little naval tradition, rapidly built a large fleet, especially after copying a captured Carthaginian ship and introduced the Corvus, similar to a boarding bridge, turning naval battles into something resembling to a land combat.

With the Treaty of Lutatius in the end Carthage had to Withdraw from Sicily, pay heavy indemnities to Rome and release Roman prisoners without ransom resulting Sicily to become Rome's first province as an overseas territory and this war sowed the seeds for the Second punic War, especially due to Rome's seizure of Sardinia and Corsica soon after, which angered Carthage.

2.2. The Patricians

The patricians were the aristocratic class of early Rome. The term comes from the Latin patres "fathers", referring to the founding families who advised the early kings which also were the origins of The Roman Senate. They claimed hereditary

privilege and political power, often tracing their ancestry back to the original 100 senators appointed by Romulus or other legendary founders and maintained their status through exclusive marriage, wealth, and family prestige. Only patricians could serve as consuls, priests, and senators in the early republic, and they opposed sharing power with the plebeians during the Struggle of the Orders. They also used their influence to shape laws and appointments through family alliances and patronage. They lived in large mansions in central Rome, owned large states and benefited from slave labor, especially after wars. Furthermore, they maintained clientela: networks of clients who depended on the patrician's wealth and political protection in exchange for loyalty and votes. This practice further corrupted the Senate's system. Powerful priests, who were deeply involved in religious rituals, came exclusively from patrician families. They cultivated the ideals of *mos maiorum*, which referred to the way of the ancestors and emphasized tradition, discipline, and duty.

Decline of patrician power: This is the timeline that the committee will be focusing on, the Struggle of Orders and the centuries long political struggle between patricians and plebeians, the events that will occur in the committee will not be the same as history at all and exclusively using the historical information given in the guide for delegates own benefit will have its consequences, however history can be used as a guideline to set the ideals of the committee's agenda.

494 BC – First secession of the plebs, led to creation of Tribune of the plebs

450 BC – Law of the Twelve Tables written, Rome's first written laws

367 BC – One of the two Consuls had to be a plebeian (Licinian-Sextian laws)

287 BC – Lex hortensia made plebiscites "plebeian assembly laws" binding on all citizens, effectively ending patrician legal dominance.

Rise of the nobiles and erosion of exclusivity began from 287 BC onward; political power shifted from a strict patrician vs plebeian divide to a new elite class called the nobiles. Many wealthy plebeian families had become just as powerful and intermarried with patricians and the senatorial aristocracy became more about wealth and service than birth alone. Most high offices were opened to plebeians by 200 BC, though some patrician clans remained influential, but they now competed within a broader elite political class.

2.3. Plebeians' History Through the Roman Era

From the beginning of the magnificent history of Rome, there has always been a division among the groups of the country; one superior and one despised. Which referred to plebeians as the despised side until they decided to revolt against the injustices committed against them and earned their places among the superior side in the society.

The Roman Republic was established in 509 BCE after the overthrow of the Roman monarchy. The Republic was built upon a rigid social hierarchy. At the heart of this structure was the division between two major social classes as before: the patricians and the plebeians.

The patricians were the aristocratic elite of Roman society. These families held most of the political, religious, and judicial power in the early Republic. They monopolized positions in the Senate, controlled the major priesthoods, and were the only citizens who could become consuls, praetors, or censors, which is the highest office in the Republic. On the other hand, Plebeians were largely excluded from both political and religious authority, even though they were the majority of the Roman population. Although they were free citizens just like patricians, they did not have the same legal rights or privileges as they did.

Most plebeians worked as farmers, craftsmen, merchants, soldiers, or manual labourers. Despite their essential contributions, especially in military service, they

had no political voice or legal protection, particularly in debt, property disputes, and family matters. And they had no voice in official assemblies, which meant that despite their critical role in the economy and military, plebeians had little to no influence in shaping the laws that governed where they lived. Also, many plebeians suffered from land loss, heavy debt, and even debt slavery after serving in wars and returning to find their farms neglected or seized. Even though a number of wealthier plebeians (later called equites) gained significant economic power later on, they still had to face legal and political discrimination because of their lower birth status. Social advancement was very difficult, and marriage between patricians and plebeians was prohibited by law, further reinforcing the rigid divide between the two classes. They had a growing frustration, and it would soon be the spark of the organized resistance.

2.3.1. Economic Burdens, Exclusions, and Legal Disadvantages of Plebeians

The economy of the Roman Republic was largely agrarian; based on farming, trade, and slave labour. Wealth and land ownership were tightly tied to the hands of the patrician elite, while the plebeians struggled under significant economic pressure. The structure of the Roman economy not only reflected the deep social divide but also reinforced it through unequal access to resources, land, and opportunity. During the beginning of the republic era, most plebeians were small-scale, low-income farmers, relying on their own labour and small plots of land to survive. However, repeated wars often forced plebeians to leave their homes and serve in the military for long periods. When they returned, many found their land neglected, destroyed, or taken by wealthy patricians. As a result, many plebeians fell into debt and were forced to sell their land or, worse, themselves into debt bondage. The expansion of Roman territory led to the growth of the large estates owned by aristocrats. In these areas, the slaves captured in wars were forced to work on many tasks. These massive farms produced grain, wine, and olive oil on a large

scale and outcompeted small plebeian farms. Therefore, many plebeians were pushed out of agriculture and into poverty or urban unemployment.

Debt was one of the most crushing burdens for plebeians. Without access to fair loans or legal protection, many poor citizens were at the mercy of patrician creditors. Harsh debt laws usually resulted in imprisonment or enslavement if a person failed to repay. In addition, plebeians also wore the weight of the military service. While the state provided weapons and armour in some cases, the cost of serving plus the time they spent away from work or harvest placed an enormous financial strain on working-class families. Meanwhile, the spoils of war and newly gained lands often went to patricians and high-ranking generals, leaving plebeians with little benefit as a result of their sacrifices. As rural plebeians lost their land, many migrated to Rome's growing urban centres, hoping for better jobs and income opportunities. However, life in the city offered few economic protections. Jobs were unstable, wages were low, and plebeians often became dependent on state-sponsored grain distributions (Annona) or they had wealthy patrons who offered their support in exchange for political loyalty.

The other issue that needs to be addressed is religious and legal discrimination. These forms of exclusion were deeply embedded in Roman tradition and law from the early periods of Rome, reinforcing the dominance of the patrician class, who controlled both sacred and secular institutions. The result was a system in which plebeians had limited access to justice and were banned from the spiritual and legal structures that defined power in Roman society. Religion in ancient Rome was intertwined deeply with government and law. Religious rituals, omens, and priesthoods held political importance, and they had control over religion, which means control over the state. In the early Republic, only patricians were allowed to serve as priests in the most important religious colleges.

These priesthoods performed ceremonies that controlled the public life, calendar setting, military campaigns, elections, and much more. Since plebeians were excluded from these roles, they had no voice in matters considered to reflect divine will, which often shaped political decisions. The exclusion of plebeians from these religious offices was not just symbolic; it also meant that the key of religious knowledge and power were held by patricians. They could also use their positions to delay legislation, cancel public meetings, or invalidate elections on religious grounds. This gave the patrician elite another powerful way to maintain dominance. But it also meant yet another disadvantage for Plebeians. Moreover, laws were not written or made public at that time, and patrician magistrates were responsible for interpreting them. This allowed patricians to abuse legal authority, often favouring their class in disputes over property, contracts, and debt.

2.4. Secession of the Plebeians

Their success did not come easily or immediately; it was achieved with endless effort and small yet strong steps, which held place one at a time.

To begin with, in 494 BCE, the first ever rebellion took place. This was a historical step, not a violent uprising, but a peaceful mass protest. The plebeians withdrew from Rome and moved off to the Sacred Mount, which was a hill outside the city. They set up camps there and refused to work, fight, or return until their demands were heard. It was a very strategic move if we take into consideration the fact that Rome could not defend itself without plebeian soldiers, and the Republic was vulnerable to outside attack and internal collapse. This forced the patricians to negotiate, and eventually they accepted the demands of the plebeians. As a result, the Roman Republic introduced several major reforms:

- The office of the Tribune of the Plebs (Tribunus Plebis) was formed. These officials were elected by plebeians to protect their rights and veto unjust decisions made by patrician magistrates.

- The Tribunes were declared as sacrosanct, meaning they could not be harmed or interfered with while in office.
- The Plebeian Council (Concilium Plebis) was also established, giving plebeians a space to discuss and vote on their own laws.

These reforms were marked as the first real political power granted to plebeians in the Republic.

2.4.1 The Plebeian Council

The Plebeian Council, as befits the name, was exclusively made up of plebeians. It gave them a platform to pass laws, elect leaders, and defend their rights against the dominance of the patrician class. This assembly could elect their own leaders (the Tribunes of the Plebs), discuss matters that affect the plebeian class, and pass plebiscites (resolutions or laws affecting plebeians)

The Plebeian Council was organized by tribes, rather than by wealth or military service. In this way, it was more democratic than other Roman assemblies. Each tribe had one vote, and the majority decided the outcome.

The assembly:

- Elected officials, including the Tribunes of the Plebs and plebeian aediles
- Passed laws that were originally binding only on plebeians
- Issued resolutions on social and economic issues
- Served as a check on patrician power

Tribunes could also use the assembly to propose vetoes, block unjust actions, or mobilize plebeians during times of crisis. At first, decisions made in the Plebeian Assembly only applied to plebeians, not the entire Roman population.

2.4.2 Afterward Secessions: 449 BCE, 445 BCE, 287 BCE

Although the creation of the Tribune of the Plebs and the Plebeian Assembly after the first secession gave plebeians a voice in Roman politics, true equality remained questionable. So, over the next two centuries, plebeians continued to protest the injustice through additional secessions.

The second major secession occurred in 449 BCE, during a constitutional crisis involving the Decemviri. They were a special group of a total of ten men who were assigned to write Rome's first law code, which later became the Twelve Tables. Initially, the decemvirs were welcomed as legal reformers. However, they soon abused their power, refusing to step down after their time of service ended and ruling without giving any account. Public outrage peaked when Appius Claudius, one of the decemvirs, tried to forcefully take a young plebeian girl named Verginia. Her father killed her in public to save her from dishonour, sparking a mass anger among the plebeians. In response, the plebeians withdrew once again, unlike last time, to the Aventine Hill this time, and refused to return until the decemvirs were removed. This Second Secession also successfully forced the patricians to take immediate action. Such as abolishing the decemvirate, restoring the tribuneship, and passing the Valerio-Horatian Laws. The Valerio-Horatian Laws reinforced the power of the tribunes, made the laws passed by the Plebeian Assembly binding only on plebeians, and protected plebeians from unjust arrest or punishment by magistrates.

In later years, 445 BCE, plebeians made a protest for recognition. It was not a formal secession, but it was a strong political movement that mainly focused on the continued restrictions on marriage between patricians and plebeians. Roman

law at the time forbade intermarriage across class lines, preventing plebeians from forming family ties with the ruling elite. This protest later on led to the passage of the Lex Canuleia, formed by Tribune Gaius Canuleius. Even though the Senate and patricians fiercely opposed this proposal. Because they feared that such marriages would dilute the purity of patrician bloodlines and weaken their political power. The Lex Canuleia was eventually passed by the Plebeian Assembly.

The Lex Canuleia;

- Legalized marriage between patricians and plebeians
- Granted full legal rights to children born from such unions.
- Helped blur the rigid social divide over time
- Opened the door for plebeian families to rise in political and social status

In 287 BCE, the Fourth and the final secession happened. It was mostly triggered by economic hardship and debt, especially among small farmers returning from the military. Plebeians, burdened by debt and excluded from land reforms, once again withdrew, but this time to the Janiculum Hill and they threatened the system of Rome by refusing to cooperate. This act of resistance forced the Senate to agree to yet another major legal reform: the Lex Hortensia.

The Lex Hortensia;

- Made plebiscites binding on all Roman citizens, including patricians, without needing Senate approval
- Gave power equality to the Plebeian Assembly
- Effectively ended the legal excuses for class-based laws

2.5. The Lex Genucia

The Lex Genucia was a group of reforms for the benefit of Plebeian society. One of its conditions required that at least one plebeian be elected consul every year, to ensure plebeian representation in the highest executive office of the Republic. It also defined that no one could hold more than one magistracy at the same time, a rule to prevent the accumulation of power by a single person and to encourage broader participation in public office. Additionally, the law prohibited individuals from being reelected to the same office within ten years, aiming to stop career politicians from monopolizing office and to increase fairness in elections. Finally, it imposed restrictions on lending money at interest, as an attempt to ease the debt burdens on plebeians, which had been a major source of class conflict.

Although it still took decades for plebeians to be consistently elected, the law helped spread the ideas of sharing power and equality between the two classes. Eventually, plebeian consuls became more common, and many plebeian families became a part of the new elite known as the nobles.

As a result of all these developments, the Plebeians not only gained a voice through their own efforts but also earned their place in society, bringing equality and justice to the community they were part of.

2.6. The First Punic War

The First Punic War was a fierce war between the Roman Empire and the Carthaginian Empire in the years 264–241 BCE. The war had many causes, but the main one was one empire's ambition to take control of Sicily and the other's desire to keep it. Multiple small parties who were on the island were all forced to choose sides between the Romans and the Carthaginians. Both sides had their strengths and their weaknesses. The Romans' strength was their land force, the spirit of their soldiers, and their discipline in battle, but the biggest weakness that they had was a lack of a navy and experienced crews to sail those nonexistent ships. While

Carthage being one of the biggest naval forces at that time had a clear advantage over the Mediterranean Sea but their lack of loyal troops (Carthaginian army mostly included mercenaries), inexperienced and undisciplined armies made facing Romans on land almost impossible to face them on land. Polybius, Histories, Book 1, Chapter 12–18)

Although having a non-existent navy, they learned how to build ships and find their way on the sea properly during this war. Even though Roman Sailors lacked experience in naval combat compared to Carthaginians, who had a lot of experience on the sea (their main strength), the Romans managed to defeat the Carthaginians a few times in naval battles during the First Punic War period. It is crucial to note that this war effort gave both nations a hard time in both their finances and military. During the war, both sides faced many difficulties, especially the Romans. Their lack of navy and naval skills caused many Roman souls to perish deep beneath the Mediterranean Sea. Also, since Sicily had no land border with the Italian peninsula, the Romans had a hard time supplying the war for the island (which is one of the main reasons why this war lasted for 23 whole years). Another reason would be that even though their system was almost perfect, it caused many problems (Consulship system). Since both Consuls would serve for only a year, they nearly always wanted to cut corners. War is, of course, a long process; sometimes it would take years for them to just capture a single castle. So, if a specific Consul wanted to be successful by conquering more land and winning the war during the time of servitude, they would need bright ideas. One of these ideas in the First Punic War was to attack Carthage on the mainland. While multiple battles were in process on the Sicily Island, in 256 BCE, two Roman Consuls at that time (Marcus Atilius and Lucius Manlius Vulso Longus) made a significant impact on the war efforts. Although they weren't able to fully win against the Carthaginians on the mainland, their actions certainly distracted the Carthaginians from the Sicilian Island. Ultimately, this resulted in the Romans taking control of the entire island. But of course, in order for them to attack Carthage on the

mainland, they needed a navy. How did the Romans build a navy out of nothing? They copied. Many historians believe the Romans captured a Carthaginian Quinquereme and built their own ships just like the Carthaginian ships. Historians believe it only took the Romans approximately 60 days to build 100 Quinqueremes. (Polybius, *Histories*, Book 1, Chapter 22–26)

Yet, of course, experience could not be copied as easily. Leading many Romans to drown in storms and dying at the Carthaginian hands. After a while Romans decided to come up with something new, named Corvus (which essentially made navigating and surviving bad weather conditions more difficult). Corvus would allow Romans to ram and board any ship that they could get near to. Ultimately changing a naval battle to a land battle (which the Romans were much superior at that time). Although this worked well for a while Romans eventually removed them from their ships. While it is not certain why they did that there are a few likely options like; Romans eventually gaining experience in “normal” naval battle strategies, it took a lot of man to just operate, it added weight to the ship significantly (ultimately causing them to have more naval problems) and Carthaginians got used to their tactics with it.

The End of the War: Battle of Aegates Islands

With this naval battle Carthaginians were unable to continue their war efforts for the Island of Sicily. Ultimately ending the First Punic War and signing the treaty after the war which was called the Treaty of Lutatius.

(et al., *The Bibliotheca Historica*, 1956)

3. MECHANICS OF THE ROMAN SENATE (SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS)

3.1 How Did the Senatus Populusque Romanus Work?

Well, although there are many traditions of the procedure of the Senate, most of its rules depended on their traditions. The Senate would be presided over (chaired) by a Consul or, in times of absence, a Praetor. This individual would set the agenda of the Senatus Populusque Romanus. Depending on how they would want to proceed, they would take in further agendas and debates. As mentioned in 6. *Being a Senator in Senatus Populusque Romanus*, the Senate did not have a specific rule for the order of speaking, but they always respected their elders, the wealthiest senators, their high-ranking magistrates, or magistrates that have served in the past. So, they usually let them speak first, but it was not mandatory.

A Senator would rise up and deliver his speech. While interruptions and asking questions to a Senator while he speaks are in order, the act of doing it has to be respectful, relevant, and not frequent. So, there was no time yields or anything formal about the allocated time for Senators' speech time. They could take as long as they needed when it was necessary. (Cicero, *On Laws*, Book 3, Chapter 10)

After the debate period ends, if the Senate had to make a decision, senators would call for a vote. The Magistrate or Senator responsible for the debate would call the vote when they deemed the debate was enough. Not all of the Senators necessarily had to talk in order for a Magistrate to call for a vote, but it was crucial that all legitimate ideas would be discussed properly.

Voting:

One method of voting was called -Discession- and the Senators would divide into groups in order to make their vote clear and fasten the process. So, the majority would be clear by just looking at the Senate Hall. Another method was

called –Viva Voce– which basically translates to; orally. Which was a much quicker method of voting, and this one was preferred often. All the Senators would shout their vote, yelling Ita (yes) or Non (no). Then, the Magistrate who was responsible for presiding would, and decide which side had the majority of votes. Yet, it was a less precise method of voting compared to Discession. (Polybius, Histories Book 6, Chp 15)

Now some in committee information; the Consul, Praetor or the respected Senator who is responsible for managing the debate and setting the agenda would have a great influence over the Senate. Although military actions and strategies as well as other subjects were oftentimes decided by the senate, a Consul or etc.in play could alter the debate (informally) and try to persuade the Senate into his ideas and ideals. Since, oftentimes the Senate would be divided into groups (unofficially), by whether they are a plebian or a patrician etc. in debates they could talk with other Senators in order for the perfect response.

Smith, William. (Roman Senate. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. John Murray, London, 1875). So, in committee you could definitely consult your fellow Senators in order to come up with bright ideas. Yet, of course you need to do this in a deliberate manner.

3.2. How Did the Romans Elect Magistrates?

Those of you who may have attended The Roman Senate 2024 (IUMUNX) or any other might think that this is the same Senatus Populusque Romanus, think again. Although having mostly the same mechanics and leadership system throughout its history; in this era, it still preserved its barbaric traits. The Senate in the era of 493 BCE did not have any plebeians at all, patricians used to rule Mother Rome. Every single senator seat belonged to a noble patrician and not the peasant plebeian.

With certain historical moments along the history of Rome plebeians slowly achieved their right to represent and to be represented in the senate. The major difference of the Roman Senate between 500 BCE and 250s BCE was during 500 BCE era Rome had just abolished Monarchy and converted into a Republic so the governing style and people still were influenced by monarchy. Another difference was the Roman Senate did not have a proper rulebook in the 500 BCE but as time went on the mechanics and rules of the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* became more straightforward.

So, it, so you are a senator in the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, and you are wondering if you can be a magistrate or not. The answer is a yes, but not a simple one. In order for you to understand this, you first need to know different types of magistrates; this will also allow you to understand what a magistrate is. There are many types of magistrates, but we will focus on Praetors, Consuls, and Dictators in the committee.

Praetors: In order for a person to become a Praetor, they had to be at least 38 years old. Praetors had considerable duties and authorities, including leading armies when necessary and acting as judges on legal cases. A man does not have to be a senator to become a praetor, but if elected, he immediately becomes a senator and gains the right to participate in the senate. Their terms of service last for a year (Lintott, 1999).

Consuls: For a person to be eligible for a Consul, they had to be 42 years old or older. Consuls are the ultimate form of a magistrate, similar to a chief of state, but there were always two of them. This sometimes benefited the country but also created problems during crises due to disagreements between the consuls. Although consuls could operate separately, they usually needed to act together to achieve good results. While being a praetor before becoming a consul was not required, it was common as consuls were often chosen from those who

had been praetors. Their terms of service last for a year, though the senate can approve extensions (Forsythe, 2005).

Dictator: A Dictator is a single man in charge during extreme crises to restore and rescue the country. This role lasts for six months and is usually appointed by the consuls with the senate's approval. It is crucial to remember that this role is only nominated in times of absolute need and is not a regular occurrence. When a consul nominates a dictator, it has significant consequences and is not guaranteed approval by the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (Boatwright et al., 2004).

The Romans elected their magistrates through The *Comitia Centuriata*. The Roman Republic consisted of 193 Centuries, with senators making up approximately 80–90 centuries, most being in the first class. Senators did not directly vote for magistrates in the senate but could vote within their Century. Wealth centuries always voted first, influencing the rest of the centuries significantly. Therefore, the wealthiest Roman Centuries often decided who would be the magistrates. In both consul and praetor elections, every Century would cast votes for as many positions as available. For instance, there would always be two consul candidates, so each Century would cast two votes for consulship. The candidates with the most votes from the centuries would become the next consuls or praetors. However, dictators were not chosen by *Comitia Centuriata* as it was not a constant event. Instead, a consul would nominate a candidate for dictator, often consulting the Senate. In times of absolute need, a consul could fully appoint a dictator (Lintott, 1999; Boatwright et al., 2004).

Any other magistrates not mentioned will not be included in the committee to keep the flow of the committee

4. BEING A SENATOR IN SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS

So it begins, the Roman Senate; in this committee, all of you will be impersonating a senator of the Roman Republic in the Roman Senate (Senatus Populusque Romanus). Each participant of the committee will have their own character. The character that you have may be real or may not be real, so if you cannot find it on the internet, do not panic. It will not matter much who your character is, though it is crucial to memorize your character's qualifications, such as age, wealth, the general location of their wealth, and their origin (whether he is a plebeian or a patrician, etc.). Since the Roman Senate had groups within it, it's important that you know who to trust, who to agree and who to disagree but do not just disagree or agree based on the other senator's persona. Always remember the Romans nearly always followed their traditions, so this is the case for the senate as well. They always respected their elders and oftentimes let them speak first since most of the time the senate is in an open debate structure. It's crucial to respect your fellow senators, especially the elder ones, because it will have consequences in the committee if you do not respect the traditions and show the proper respect to your fellow senators; it will also disrupt the flow of the committee's debates as well. As you act as a senator in this committee, always remember that you have a responsibility toward your country, your roots, and, of course, yourself. You, as a human, of course want to protect your wealth and life. While this may sound simple, there will be events and crises in the committee that will affect you in a way that you will be forced to make a choice between the good of the country and its people or yourself. While of course you are allowed to do and believe whatever you deem proper, remember that your duties, also remember that you are a senator and always stay in character. Now let's move on to the structure of the committee.

Now you may have guessed it, this is not your everyday Model United Nations committee, so it will have major differences. Although this is a crisis committee, it will not be your everyday crisis committee as well. If you are new to

crisis committees, you have to know a few things. As a delegate, of course, you will debate with your fellow delegates and chairs. But there is a mechanic called updates which will be provided to your committee by your crisis members (mostly,) which can vary on a lot of topics. It may change the date of the committee, the weather, information about your enemies, or betrayal within, etc. This will allow the flow of the committee to progress and continue. While you will also make debates about these new updates, you can also write directives about it, which I will briefly explain how to write one. There are a few types of directives, but they all have the same purpose which is taking action. For example, as a senator you have personal wealth and you want to make an expenditure by yourself, build something, send someone somewhere, kill someone, kidnap someone, hire someone, etc. During this committee, there will be times to make magistrate elections, which will be explained in more detail in the 5.2. *How do the Romans elect the Magistrates* part? Elected Consuls and praetors will leave the committee, and they will leave for battle. They will make plans and take actions toward the Roman Republic's enemies when necessary. They will also lead armies, make battle plans, and govern certain parts of the country if they deem fit. For a senator (a delegate) who wants to become a Magistrate in the next turn of service, there are a few steps they have to take. First of all, they will have to fit the requirements of the role. For example, in order for anyone to become a Consul, they have to be at least 42 years old. These requirements are explained in detail in 5.2. *How Did the Romans Elect a Magistrate?* Then the Senator has to apply for candidacy via Comitia Centuriata and afterward they should (if they want to get elected) campaign a lot about their candidacy which may include making public speeches, visiting the wealthy and old people of the country and of course they have to persuade the country (at least the people who vote in the Comitia Centuria) to see him as a proper candidate and vote for him. It is vital to keep in mind that the Romans are a people of tradition. They were a nation that always sought glory and conquest. For you to understand, the Romans also noted that they were a fierce nation. They did not tolerate the people who had crucial roles

within the country who were cowardly and weak. They mostly faced their enemies (historically) head on but that does not mean that they lacked tactics and strategies. This may statistically indicate that they generally supported candidates who seek to solve problems head-on (mostly enemies) though of course if you can convince the people otherwise it is possible enough to give it a try.

Well, since all actions have certain consequences, the Magistrates who had served their term resulting in unsuccessful outcomes and causing significant casualties, losing crucial grounds or major cities etc. will have to answer to the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. Depending on the magnitude of the losses, the Magistrates who were unsuccessful could face certain consequences, which may even include exile and execution. Although this was not a common event, a Magistrate (especially Consuls) could in fact face these results after their terms of service.

As I said before you always have to remember that you are a Senator of the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, since you will have to act and think like one as much as possible. In order for the Roman Senate committee to win the Second Punic War in our alternative history, you will have to think like a Roman of the time. If you research and try to prevent certain events that occurred in history, other counter-events will take place in our alternative history. It is called META, and even though you could do it, since it would be out of the roleplay and our alternative history, it will have dire results for the committee and yourselves.

So, always try to improvise your plan rather than try to look it up on Google. That of course, does not mean that you shouldn't research about the committee, please, be my guest because if you do not know the conditions, strategies, technology, and tactics of the time, you will have a hard time understanding the necessities of the committee.

5. FURTHER READING AND VIDEOS

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRmOWcWdQAo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRSGxw2AQnk>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2huuq4H5CRY>
- Goldsworthy, A. (2003). *The Punic Wars*. Cassell.
- Hoyos, D. (2015). *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at War*. Oxford University Press.
- Lazenby, J. F. (1998). *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Hoyos, D. (2012). "Hannibal: The Second Punic War," *Classical World*, 106(2), 213–217
- Eckstein, A. M. (1987). "Hannibal at New Carthage: Polybius 3.15 and Historical Method," *The Classical Quarterly*, 37(1), 104–112.

6. REFERENCES

Boatwright, M. T., Gargola, D. J., Lenski, N., & Talbert, R. J. A. (2012). *The Romans: From village to empire* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Cicero. (1928). *On the laws* (C. W. Keyes, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Forsythe, G. (2005). *A critical history of early Rome: From prehistory to the First Punic War*. University of California Press.

Lintott, A. (1999). *The constitution of the Roman Republic*. Oxford University Press.

Livy. (1919). *Ab urbe condita* (B. O. Foster, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Polybius. (1922). *The histories* (W. R. Paton, Trans.). William Heinemann.

Smith, W. (Ed.). (1875). *A dictionary of Greek and Roman antiquities*. John Murray.

Cornell, T. (1995). *The beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c.1000–264 BC)*. Routledge.

Flower, H. I. (2010). *Roman republics*. Princeton University Press.

Mouritsen, H. (2001). *Plebs and politics in the late Roman Republic*. Cambridge University Press.

Millar, F. (1998). *The crowd in Rome in the late Republic*. University of Michigan Press.

Morley, N. (2010). *The Roman Empire: Roots of imperialism*. Pluto Press.

Diodorus Siculus. (1956). *The bibliotheca historica* (C. H. Oldfather, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

Cato, M. P. (1935). *On agriculture* (W. D. Hooper & H. B. Ash, Trans.). Harvard University Press.