

The First Genocide: Carthage, 146 BC

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Delenda est Carthago ('Carthage Must be Destroyed!') may be the first recorded incitement to genocide. These were the words of Marcus Porcius Cato, the Censor.¹ Plutarch tells us that Cato's call ended his every speech in the Roman Senate, 'on any matter whatsoever', from 153 BC to his death aged 85 in 149. Scipio Nasica – son-in-law of Scipio Africanus, conqueror of Hannibal in the Second Punic War (218–202 BC) – would always reply: 'Carthage should be allowed to exist'. But such challengers were silenced.² Rome decided on war 'long before' it launched the Third Punic War just prior to Cato's death.³ One of his last speeches in the Senate, before a Carthaginian delegation in 149, was critical:

Who are the ones who have often violated the treaty? . . . Who are the ones who have waged war most cruelly? . . . Who are the ones who have ravaged Italy? The Carthaginians. Who are the ones who demand forgiveness? The Carthaginians. See then how it would suit them to get what they want.

The Carthaginian delegates were accorded no right of reply. Rome soon began a three-year siege of the world's wealthiest city.⁴ Of a population of 2–400,000,⁵ at least 150,000 Carthaginians perished. Appian described one battle in which '70,000, including non-combatants' were killed, probably an exaggeration. But Polybius, who participated in the campaign, confirmed that 'the number of deaths was incredibly large' and the Carthaginians 'utterly exterminated'.⁶ In 146, Roman legions under Scipio Aemilianus, Cato's ally and brother-in-law of his son, razed the city, and dispersed into slavery the 55,000 survivors, including 25,000 women. Plutarch concluded: 'The annihilation of Carthage . . . was primarily due to the advice and counsel of Cato'.⁷

It was not a war of racial extermination. The Romans did not massacre the survivors, nor the adult males.⁸ Nor was Carthage victim of a *Kulturkrieg*. Though the Romans also destroyed five allied African cities of Punic culture, they spared seven other towns which had defected to them.⁹ Yet, the Carthaginians had complied in 149 with Rome's demand to surrender their 200,000 individual weapons and 2000

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catapults. They did not know the Senate had already secretly decided 'to destroy Carthage for good, once the war was ended'.¹⁰ The surprise new demand, that they now abandon their city, meant desertion of its shrines and religious cults.¹¹ This is what the Carthaginians vainly resisted. Rome decided on 'the destruction of the nation'.¹² Its policy of 'extreme violence', the 'annihilation of Carthage and most of its inhabitants', ruining 'an entire culture', fits the modern legal definition of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention: the intentional destruction 'in whole or in part, [of] a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such'.¹³

It would be as unfair to condemn ancient Roman violations of 20th-century international criminal law, as to ignore the spirited opposition Cato's policy provoked in Rome itself.¹⁴ But what ideology demanded the disappearance of a disarmed mercantile city? Whatever the military reasons for pursuing the siege after 149, the socio-political motivation of the destruction's leading proponent is significant. Cato ultimately won a Senate majority, but the depth of his personal preoccupation was unusual. His catalogue of Punic atrocities resonated with his audience, who remembered the suffering Hannibal's army had visited on Italy. Badian writes that 'hatred and resentment towards [Carthage] seem to have smouldered in the minds of the Senate, although right down to the fifties there was never any reasonable doubt of Carthaginian loyalty'.¹⁵ Cato's purported list of Carthaginian treaty breaches was not only legalistic – no other writer 'put such emphasis on the topic' – but historically flimsy.¹⁶

Cato's broader thinking also shared more modern features with recent tragedies such as the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the Cambodian and Rwandan catastrophes. The perpetrators of these 20th-century crimes, like Cato, were preoccupied with militaristic expansionism, the idealization of cultivation, notions of gender and social hierarchy, and racial or cultural prejudices.¹⁷

Military expansion

Despite 'the amazing regularity with which Rome went to war' in this era, the policy to destroy Carthage was unusual. It was both decided in advance and pursued after the city's surrender. Authors differ on the threat Carthage posed,¹⁸ and whether Rome's demands were calculated to minimize it,¹⁹ or resulted from 'extreme power hunger'.²⁰ But to Cato, the danger was as much internal. A distinguished Roman administrator and orator, man of letters and action ('Stick to the point; the words will follow'),²¹ he was a straight-talking veteran of the Second Punic War – when he had first criticized Scipio Africanus for profligacy. With relentless corruption allegations, Cato hounded Scipio until his death in 183. Pliny noticed that Cato's history of the first two Punic Wars 'removed the names' of several Scipios and others who led legions, caustically naming only Hannibal's elephant.²² Fame was a dangerous temptation. To Cato, 'avarice and extravagance . . . have been the destruction of all great empires'.²³ And he insisted on Roman military domination. 'The Carthaginians are already our enemies; for he who prepares everything against me, so that he can make war at whatever time he wishes, he is already my enemy even though he is not yet using arms.'²⁴

Elected consul in 195, Cato took command in formerly Carthaginian-ruled Spain, and put down major rebellions. He was a courageous and effective general, noted 'for his cruelty towards his defeated enemies'.²⁵ Livy sympathized: 'Cato had more difficulty subduing the enemy . . . because he had, as it were, to reclaim them, like slaves who had asserted their freedom'. Cato commanded his officers in Spain 'to force this nation . . . to accept again the yoke which it has cast off'. In one battle, Livy cites an estimate of 40,000 enemy killed. When seven towns rebelled, 'Cato marched his army against them and brought them under control without any fighting worth recording,' but after they again revolted, he ensured that 'the conquered were not granted the same pardon as before. They were all sold by public auction.' Plutarch, for his part, said Cato subdued some tribes by force, others by diplomacy. 'Cato himself claims that he captured more cities in Spain than he spent days there. Nor is this an idle boast, if indeed it is true that they numbered more than four hundred.' Nevertheless Cato 'stayed in Spain rather too long'. One of the Scipios attempted to relieve him of his command. In response, Cato took 'five companies of infantry and five hundred horse and subdued the tribe of the Lacetani by force of arms. In addition, he recovered and put to death six hundred of those who had gone over to the enemy.'²⁶ Like other commanders, Cato was murderous against military opposition, and tolerant of societies who offered surrender.

In 154, rebellion again erupted in Spain. From Rome, Cato had been closely following events there. The Lusitanian uprising was followed by another in Macedonia in 151, and by the Achaean rising in the Peloponnese 2 years later. In 152, on a mission to Carthage at age 81, Cato was shocked by the city's recovery from defeat. Unburdened of empire, Carthage was again a thriving mercantile metropolis, 'burgeoning with an abundance of young men, brimming with copious wealth, teeming with weapons'. On his return, 'while he was rearranging the folds of his toga in the senate, Cato by design let fall some Libyan figs and then, after everyone had expressed admiration for their size and beauty, he said that the land that produced them was but three days' sail from Rome'.²⁷ This threat had to be destroyed.

Idealizing the farmer

Cato was posturing. His figs could not have come from Carthage, more than a 6-day voyage in summer. His audience of 'senatorial gentlemen farmers' probably knew they came from Cato's own estate near Rome. Some may even have read his advice on how to plant African figs in Italy.²⁸ Carthaginian products barely penetrated the Italian market. Was Carthage annihilated, then, to spare Rome's merchants the competition elsewhere in the Mediterranean? But Cato derided traders, Roman or Carthaginian. Questioned about money-lending, he replied: 'You might as well ask me what I think about murder'.²⁹ His only extant work, *De Agri Cultura*, begins by contrasting the trader with Cato's ideal citizen – the farmer:

It is true that to obtain money by trade is sometimes more profitable, were it not so hazardous; and likewise money-lending, if it were as honourable. Our ancestors held this view and embodied it in their laws . . . And when they would praise a worthy man their

praise took this form: 'good farmer' and 'good settler'; one so praised was thought to have received the greatest commendation. The trader I consider to be an energetic man, and one bent on making money; but, as I said above, it is a dangerous career and one subject to disaster.

'On the other hand,' Cato went on, 'it is from the farming class that the bravest men and the sturdiest soldiers come, their calling is most highly respected, their livelihood is most assured and is looked on with the least hostility, and those who are engaged in that pursuit are least inclined to be disaffected.'³⁰

Cato saw the loyal peasant farmer, often using slave labor captured in foreign campaigns, as the foundation of Roman power at home and abroad. According to Polybius, 'Cato once declared in a public speech that anybody could see the republic was going downhill when a pretty boy could cost more than a plot of land and jars of fish more than ploughmen'.³¹ From an old plebeian family, he cultivated 'fondly the life of simplicity and self-discipline', even as he owned 'great plantations' of slaves, 'preferred to buy those prisoners of war who were young and still susceptible, like puppies', and, Plutarch asserts, practiced 'the most disreputable branch of moneylending'.³²

Cato's alleged hypocrisy is less important than his romanticization of peasants in opposition to merchants, its military significance for his Carthaginian policy, and its persistent ideological influence. After Rome disarmed the Carthaginians in 149, the consul Censorinus commanded them to move 10 miles from the sea, 'for we are resolved to raze your city to the ground'. Censorinus explained the Roman rationale:

The sea made you invade Sicily and lose it again . . . [it] always begets a grasping disposition by the very facilities which it offers for gain . . . Naval prowess is like merchants' gains – a good profit today and a total loss tomorrow . . . Believe me, Carthaginians, life inland, with the joys of agriculture and quiet, is much more equable. Although the gains of agriculture are, perhaps, smaller than those of mercantile life, they are surer and a great deal safer . . . an inland city enjoys all the security of the solid earth.

Harris recalls 'Plato's advice that if a city was to avoid being full of trade and the moral consequences of trade, it must be 80 stades (10 miles) from the sea'.³³ Rome is 16 miles inland.

Gender and power

Cato idealized the peasantry, but did not advance its members' interests. Women had to be kept in their place too: 'There is the greatest danger from any class of people, once you allow meetings and conferences and secret consultations'. Here Cato was opposing the repeal in 195 BC of a wartime law denying women the right to 'possess more than half an ounce of gold, or wear parti-coloured clothing, or ride in a horse-drawn vehicle in a city or town'. Clamoring for repeal of this law, Livy tells us, increasing numbers of women 'came in from the towns and rural centres [and] beset all the streets of the city and all the approaches to the Forum'. Cato found himself asking: 'Are you in the habit of running out into the streets, blocking the

roads, addressing other women's husbands? . . . Or are you more alluring in the street than in the home, more attractive to other women's husbands . . . ? And yet, even at home, . . . it would not become you to be concerned about the question of what laws should be passed or repealed in this place.' Politicized women were an internal threat to the republic.

Our liberty, overthrown in the home by female indiscipline, is now being crushed and trodden underfoot here, too, in the Forum. It is because we have not kept them under control individually that we are now terrorized by them collectively . . . But we (heaven preserve us) are now allowing them even to take part in politics, and actually to appear in the Forum and to be present at our meetings and assemblies! . . . What they are longing for is complete liberty, or rather . . . complete license . . . The very moment they begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors. Good heavens!

Cato denounced the female throng as an 'untamed animal', a 'secession of the women'. He compared it to a plebeian riot, but also made an example of 'that rich woman over there' who simply wanted to flaunt her wealth. He preferred that 'the dress of all [be] made uniform'.³⁴

For Cato much of this seemed a matter of social control. According to Plutarch, 'since he believed that, among slaves, sex was the greatest cause of delinquency, he made it a rule that his male slaves could, for a set fee, have intercourse with his female slaves, but no one of them was allowed to consort with another woman'. After Cato's wife died, a prostitute 'would come to see him without anyone's knowing of it'. In public life he was more severe. In Spain, one of his officers hung himself when Cato discovered he had bought three captive boys. 'Cato sold the boys and returned the price to the treasury.' He once banished from the Senate a man who 'had kissed his own wife in broad daylight and in sight of his daughter'. Cato joked publicly that he had 'never embraced his wife except after a loud thunderclap' – Jupiter's blessing.³⁵

Women were not the only domestic group whose independent activities raised fears of external threats, or justified external expansion. In 186, Roman magistrates uncovered and prosecuted an alleged conspiratorial Bacchic cult which sponsored illicit sexual acts, violating a ban on secrecy and male priests. Formerly composed of women, the cult's main purpose had become male homosexual activity. The magistrates 'convicted a large number of men and women of foul sexual acts' in the service of a cult they labelled 'alien' and 'un-Roman'. In 156, the Senate launched an invasion of Dalmatia largely 'because they did not want the men of Italy to become womanish through too lengthy a spell of peace'.³⁶

Race and culture

Cato's military career had ended in 191 after a fearless feat of arms that clinched Rome's victory in Greece. But at home 'he never stopped taking on feuds for the sake of the republic'. He became a pugnacious prosecutor and 'vigorous opponent of the nobility, of luxurious living, and of the invasion into Italy of Greek culture'. These

issues were related: nobles 'were introducing into Rome Greek luxury and refinement'.³⁷ For this Cato targeted the nobility even more than merchants.

According to Cato, exotic corruption threatened Roman culture: 'We have crossed into Greece and Asia (regions full of all kinds of sensual allurements) and are even laying hands on the treasures of kings – I am the more alarmed lest these things should capture us instead of our capturing them'. At that time, explained Plutarch, 'Rome was, on account of its size, unable to preserve its purity; because of its domination over many lands and peoples it was coming into contact with various races and was exposed to patterns of behavior of every description'. As Ramsay MacMullen shows, 'urban life was half imported'. Romans used Greek terms not only for domestic architecture, equipment, containers, and food, but also for cosmetics, 'little embellishments and treats, the things one would enjoy at evening parties or in the performing arts, technical terms of science and mechanics, cult acts and items, the terminology of maritime travel and commerce'. The Roman aristocracy 'were surrounded by, they floated upon, a sea of products and artifacts and daily usages that had originated in the east'. This inevitably provoked the reaction led by Cato. There were 'two schools of thought among the upper classes, at war over the right style of life'.³⁸

Previous Roman historians had written in Greek. Cato now produced the first historical work in Latin.³⁹ His innovation was a statement of conservative ideology. Its seven books do not survive. But an outline by Cornelius Nepos reveals the preoccupations of Cato's 'didactic moralizing and pioneer ethnography.' One book told of the early Roman kings, and two each dealt with 'the origins of all the communities of Italy', the Punic Wars, and other 'events and sights in Spain and Italy'.⁴⁰ Racial prejudice, as we know it, was relatively uncommon in the ancient world,⁴¹ but Cato focused on Rome's lineage, as distinct from those of its enemies, and the secrets of its success – husbandry, morals and discipline. Rome, he wrote, followed the mores of the Sabines – Cato's forbears – who claimed descent from hardy Spartans. The Ligurians, by contrast, were 'illiterate and liars'. The Greeks of Cato's day were 'an utterly vile and unruly race'.⁴² He admired aspects of their history and even learnt their language late in life, but he condemned 'all Greek literature across the board' and promoted a series of repressive measures, including expulsion of teachers of Epicureanism and destruction of Greek philosophical works. Cato's hostility towards Greek rhetoric led to another crackdown against philosophers and teachers in 161.⁴³ At age 79, he expelled the visiting Greek sceptic Carneades, whose brilliant rhetoric was attracting young Romans to philosophy. Cato 'resolved to exorcize all the philosophers from the city', says Plutarch. 'Disturbed by this passion for words . . . he had come to blows with philosophical pursuits in general and was zealously trying to discredit Greek civilization and culture as a whole.'⁴⁴ He attacked a political foe for singing and performing Greek verse. Greek 'luxury and laxity', even culture, like colored clothing and Libyan figs, fostered Roman extravagance and decline. Cato was convinced that 'the city was in need of a great purgation'.⁴⁵

Cato's view of Carthage was merely his most sustained response to a panorama of perils. His perception of the combination of foreign and domestic subversion helps explain Cato's determination to destroy Carthage. Plutarch speculated that Scipio Nasica, for his part, preferred to keep the threat handy:

like a bridle, to serve as a corrective to the impudence of the masses, since he felt that Carthage was not so powerful that it could prevail over Rome, nor yet so weak that it could be treated with contempt. But, as far as Cato was concerned, it was precisely this that seemed to be a cause for alarm, that a city that had always been great and had now, in addition, been sobered and chastened by hardships was threatening the Roman people at a time when they were to a great extent intoxicated and staggering as a result of the authority that they now possessed. Rather, he felt, they should eliminate altogether the foreign threats to their supremacy and give themselves an opportunity to mend their domestic faults.

Rome's destruction of Carthage and sack of Corinth occurred in the same year.⁴⁶ One scholar speculates that in harping on Carthage, Cato had aimed 'to launch Rome into a long and difficult war in the West', against a traditional enemy, fearing that further involvement in Greece and the East would threaten Rome's cultural identity.⁴⁷ Cato's broader notions of culture and politics fostered a violent, vindictive hostility towards Carthage, not applied to other regions.

Carthage's threat to Rome paled before that to Carthage from Cato's ideal of the controlled, militarized ethnic rural community. In lesser ways his vision threatened the rights of Rome's citizenry as well. Cato's thinking underlines the connections between domestic and transnational aspects of genocidal policies – ancient and modern.⁴⁸

History and memory

After destroying Carthage, Rome ruled the Mediterranean. But from 49 BC, the Republic was wracked by civil wars. In this period Virgil began composing pastoral poetry in Latin. His Fourth *Eclogue* foreshadowed 'a new race' descending from the skies to 'end the iron race and bring in the golden all over the world'. In the *Georgics*, which appeared in 29 BC, Virgil took up a more agricultural theme.⁴⁹

. . . The husbandman
With hooked ploughshare turns the soil; from hence
Springs his year's labour; hence, too, he sustains
Country and cottage homestead, . . .
Meanwhile about his lips sweet children cling;
His chaste house keeps its purity; . . .

Virgil traced this agrarian bliss to the Italian heritage that gave Rome its glory: 'Such life of yore the ancient Sabines led, such Remus and his brother . . . and Rome became the fair world's fairest'.⁵⁰

The civil wars ended in 30 BC with Octavian's defeat of Anthony and Cleopatra in Egypt. The next year Octavian returned to Rome, becoming the Emperor Augustus in 27. Virgil spent his final decade (29–19) composing his imperial epic, the *Aeneid*, having set down a view of history: 'I shall lead the Muses home as captives in a triumphal procession'.⁵¹ This also expressed a view on gender. Ellen Oliensis writes that, 'In the world of Virgilian pastoral, girls are not singers; they do not perform, and while they are sometimes quoted, we never hear them speak'.⁵² In the *Aeneid*, recalling Cato, women are 'alarming and violent creatures, prone to the

making of terrible scenes', even embodying a 'clash between western civilization and the barbaric glitter and animal deities of the East'. When Cleopatra commanded her warships, 'Anubis barked and all manner of monstrous gods leveled their weapons'.⁵³

The *Aeneid* traced Rome's and Octavian's glory to the city's putative founder, a survivor of the Greek destruction of Troy. Cato had written of Aeneas' Trojans and their legendary arrival in Latium, having them kill its king Latinus in battle. Virgil transformed Latinus into an ally of Aeneas, nationalizing Aeneas just as he had called the hardworking bees of the *Georgics* 'little Romans'. Octavian claimed descent from Aeneas' son Iulus.⁵⁴ And just as Octavian conquered Cleopatra, Virgil pits Aeneas' destiny against that of another north African queen – Dido of Carthage.

The story of the *Aeneid* begins: 'There was an ancient city . . .'. Virgil's readers might have thought of Rome, or Troy. But he is referring to the city 'held by colonists from Tyre, opposite Italy . . . a city of great wealth and ruthless in the pursuit of war. Its name was Carthage, and Juno is said to have loved it more than any other place . . . But she had heard that there was rising from the blood of Troy a race of men who in days to come would overthrow this Tyrian citadel . . . [and] sack the land of Libya.'⁵⁵

Book Two of the *Aeneid* provides one of the most astonishing literary depictions of genocide – the destruction of Troy. Aeneas narrates the city's calamitous fall and his own narrow escape. 'Who could speak of such slaughter? Who could weep tears to match that suffering? . . . The bodies of the dead lay through all its streets and houses and the sacred shrines of its gods . . . Everywhere there was fear, and death in many forms.' Aeneas recounts an 'orgy of killing' near King Priam's palace, and adds: 'I saw Hecuba with a hundred women, her daughters and the wives of her sons. I saw Priam's blood all over the altar . . . Down fell the fifty bedchambers with all the hopes for generations yet to come . . . Hecuba and her daughters were sitting flocked round the altar, like doves driven down in a black storm . . . So ended the destiny of Priam . . . a corpse without a name.' He perished 'with Troy ablaze', while Aeneas' men 'had all deserted and thrown themselves from the roof or given their suffering bodies to the flames'⁵⁶ – just as the wife of Carthage's last commander, Hasdrubal, would plunge with her children into the flames of her city centuries later. Vivid description of a legendary genocide substituted for the unstated historical one.

The dramatic irony is that Aeneas is telling his story to Dido, Carthage's founder. Virgil's readers all knew, and he had just reminded them, of the fate of Carthage itself. When Aeneas lands in North Africa before reaching Italy, he finds Dido, herself a refugee from Tyre, founding her new city. But Jupiter has promised Aeneas' Rome 'an empire that will know no end' (*imperium sine fine*). Virgil has Jupiter subdue the Carthaginian's 'fiery temper,' lest Dido, 'in her ignorance of destiny, should bar her country' to the Trojan antecedents of the Romans destined to destroy it. Virgil's ironies come thick and fast.

The Tyrians were working with a will; some of them were laying out the line of walls or rolling up great stones for building the citadel; others were choosing sites for building . . . drawing up laws and electing magistrates and a senate . . . They were like bees at the beginning of summer, busy in the sunshine all through the flowery meadows, bringing out the young of the race.

Waiting to meet Dido, Aeneas sees them erecting a temple. Then a 'strange sight . . . allayed his fears', giving him 'better confidence for the future'. Painted on the new temple's walls were scenes from battles recently fought at Troy! Aeneas wept: 'Is there anywhere now on the face of this earth that is not full of the knowledge of our misfortunes? Look at Priam. Here too . . . there are tears for suffering and men's hearts are touched by what man has to bear . . . We are known here.'⁵⁷ Virgil, 'the clear-sighted poet of empire and of human life',⁵⁸ was building the destruction of Carthage into its very creation.

As Aeneas 'stood gazing' at the murals, even recognizing himself 'in the confusion of battle', Dido arrives. Roman readers must have gasped. Heightening the drama, a Trojan even assures Dido that 'we have not come to Libya to pillage your homes'. Dido unwittingly tells them: 'The city which I am founding is yours. Draw your ships up on the beach.' Aeneas says: 'We are the remnants left by the Greeks . . . whatever survives of the Trojan race, scattered as it is over the face of the wide earth. May the gods bring you the reward you deserve, if there are any gods who have regard for goodness, if there is any justice in the world.' Dido then tells of her own wanderings, and unaware of the future, adds: 'Through my own suffering, I am learning to help those who suffer'.⁵⁹

Still Aeneas' mother Venus fears 'the treacherous house of Carthage and the double-tongued people of Tyre'. The goddess learns that Aeneas is sending to Carthage his son Iulus, ancestor of its eventual Roman conquerors, bearing 'gifts which have survived the burning of Troy' – a cloak brought there by Helen, and the scepter of Priam's daughter. Venus sends Cupid with the gifts, disguised as Iulus. And so 'the unfortunate Dido, doomed to be the victim of a plague that was yet to come', falls in love with Aeneas. Unadvised to beware Trojans bearing gifts, 'doomed Dido' toasts this 'day of happiness for the Tyrians and the men of Troy, and may our descendants long remember it'. Attended like the unfortunate Hecuba by 100 female slaves, Dido asks 'question after question about Priam'. At her insistence, Aeneas tells his tale of 'the doomed Priam' and 'the last day of a doomed people'. As the survivors crept from the city, 'Horror was everywhere and the very silence chilled the blood . . . Troy lay smoking on the ground'.⁶⁰

The dramatic power of Virgil's multiple ironies came from Roman readers' knowledge of the similar, much more recent fate of Carthage, unwittingly forecast to Dido by Aeneas' narration of the fall of Troy. Romans did not need explicit reminding of Carthage's destruction. Virgil acknowledges this by passing over it with a silence that compounds the drama, but indeed chills the blood. Aeneas' decision to leave Carthage brought Dido the nightmare of 'looking for her Tyrians in an empty land'. Wishing instead she had destroyed 'father and son and all their race', she cursed Aeneas:

May he . . . see his innocent people dying . . . As for you, my Tyrians, you must pursue with hatred the whole line of his descendants . . . Let there be no love between our peoples and no treaties . . . shore against shore, sea against sea, sword against sword. Let there be war between the nations and between their sons forever.

Dido's suicide by fire as Aeneas' ships depart to found Rome not only recounts the

legendary beginning of Carthage, but again foreshadows its end, when Hasdrubal's wife followed Dido's example.⁶¹

Later Aeneas meets Dido on his journey to the underworld. Weeping, he asks: "'Was I the cause of your dying?" . . . Her features moved no more when he began to speak than if she had been a block of flint or Parian marble', like the razed stones of Carthage. 'Then at last she rushed away, hating him, into the shadows . . . Aeneas was no less stricken by the injustice of her fate, and long did he gaze after her, pitying her', as if Virgil himself was silently contemplating the disappearance of her city. Then the shade of Aeneas' father Anchises shows him the future, 'the glory that lies in store . . . for the men of Italian stock who will be our descendants'. Romulus, Caesar, 'and all the sons of Iulus' parade by. 'Who would leave you unmentioned, great Cato? . . . or the two Scipios, both of them thunderbolts of war, the bane of Libya?'⁶²

The *Aeneid* depicts centuries of deadly mutual enmity between Rome and Carthage and links them both to Troy. Virgil's dramatic metaphor of Rome's 'empire without end' as the product of genocides a millennium apart reverberates through western civilization even two millennia later. Along with the *Georgics*, which Dryden termed 'the best poem of the best poet', the *Aeneid* guaranteed Virgil an 'unbroken ascendancy of eighteen centuries'.⁶³

In the decades after Virgil's death, Livy completed his *History of Rome from its Foundation*. But all of Livy's Books 46–142, including his narrative of the Third Punic War, disappeared. This ended his extant account at 167 BC. Even Book 44, with its clipped prediction of 'the destruction of Carthage', was rediscovered and printed only in 1531.⁶⁴ In his initial works, Livy praised Cato the Censor 'far above' his peers for his 'force of character' and 'versatile genius'. He was 'the bravest soldier in a fight', an 'outstanding general', the 'most skilled' lawyer and 'most eloquent advocate' whose words were 'preserved inviolate in writings of every kind'. To Livy, Cato was 'a man of iron constitution, in body and in mind,' with 'a rigid integrity and a contempt for popularity and riches'.⁶⁵ Along with Virgil's subtle relocation of the Carthaginian tragedy in Trojan legend and Roman glory, Livy's assessment of the early Cato and the silence of his lost account of the Third Punic War guaranteed Cato's historical reputation as a model leader of the Republic.

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Notes

1. M. Dubuisson, "'Delenda est Carthago": remise en question d'un stéréotype', *Studia Phoenicia X, Punic Wars*, Leuven, 1989, 279–87; F. Limonier, 'Rome et la destruction de Carthage: un crime gratuit?', *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 101 (3–4), 1999, 405–11; W. Huss, *Geschichte der Karthager*, München, 1985, 436–57; E. Marotti, 'On the Causes of Carthage's Destruction', *Oikumene* 4, 1983, 223–31.
2. Plutarch, *The Lives of Aristides and Cato*, trans. D. Sansone, Warminster, 1989, 159; Serge Lancel, *Carthage*, Oxford, 1995, 410; E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae (264–70 BC)*, Oxford, 2000, 130–3.
3. Polybius, 36.2.1; W.V. Harris, 'Rome and Carthage', *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. VIII, *Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 BC*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 1989, 148–9, 152.

4. Maroti, 'Carthage's Destruction', 228, citing *Rhet. ad Herenn.*, IV.14, 20; Polybius, 18.3.59.
5. Strabo put Carthage's population c.149 BC at 700,000 (17.3.15). B. H. Warmington considers this impossible and suggests 200,000, though 'in the early third century . . . it would be surprising if it did not approach 400,000' (*Carthage*, London, 1980, 124–7). Appian reported the population rose 'greatly' after 201 BC (*Roman History* 8.10.69), as archaeology has 'fully confirmed' (Ursula Vogel-Weidemann, 'Carthago Delenda Est: *Aitia* and *Prophasis*', *Acta Classica*, XXXII, 1989, 79–95, at 86–7). Huss adds that during the siege, 'large sectors of the rural population took refuge within the city walls' (*Geschichte*, 452).
6. Appian, *Roman History*, 8.126; Polybius, *Histories*, 38.8.10.12, 38.1.1.6.
7. A.E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, Oxford, 1967, 36, 53, 280–1; Yann Le Bohec, *Histoire militaire des guerres puniques*, Monaco, 1995, 311, estimates over 55,000 survivors; Huss, *Geschichte*, 455–6 n.133; Plutarch, *Lives of Aristides and Cato*, 157.
8. The Athenian conquerors of Melos in 416 'put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves'. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, V.115.
9. The Senatorial order was: 'The towns that had allied themselves consistently with the enemy it was decided to destroy, to the last one' (Appian, *Roman History*, 8.135). Tunis, Hermaea, Neapolis and Aspis 'were demolished' (Strabo, 17.3.16). Bizerta was destroyed, and seven towns spared (Le Bohec, *Histoire militaire*, 314). The fate of Carthage's allies Kelibia, Nabeul, and Nepheris is unspecified (298–9, 308).
10. Vogel-Weidemann, 'Carthago Delenda Est', 80; Huss, *Geschichte*, 441–2.
11. Harris, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, VIII, 160. 'Such a diktat was the equivalent of a death sentence [to Carthage] . . . the destruction of its temples and cemeteries, the deportation of its cults, were a more surely mortal blow than displacing the population.' Lancel, *Carthage*, 413. See Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, 138.
12. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 51, 53; Appian, *Roman History*, 8.12.83–5, 89.
13. Harris, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, VIII, 154 ('submission and disarmament were not enough'), 161. 'The Senate sent ten . . . deputies to arrange the affairs of Africa . . . These men decreed that if anything was still left of Carthage, Scipio should raze it to the ground, and that nobody should be allowed to live there.' Appian, *Roman History*, 8.20.135.
14. A friend of Scipio Africanus told the Senate debate on Carthaginian policy in 201 that it was 'righteous and expedient to our prosperity not to exterminate whole races, but to bring them into a better state of mind'. Appian, *Roman History*, 8.9.58. Polybius wrote of the debate 50 years later that 'their disputes with each other about the effect on foreign opinion very nearly made them desist from going to war' against Carthage (*The Histories*, 36.1.2.4). He recounted Greek views on Rome's destruction of the city (36.2.9); 'it is not easy to find a subject more renowned' (36.1.1). Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 52–3, 276–80.
15. A. E. Astin, *Cato the Censor*, Oxford, 1978, 127–8; Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, 125.
16. B. Dexter Hoyos, 'Cato's Punic Perfidies', *Ancient History Bulletin*, 1.5 (1987), 112–21, at 120.
17. Ben Kiernan, 'Sur la notion de génocide', *Le Débat* (Paris) 104, mars–avril 1999, 179–92.
18. Harris, *Cambridge Ancient History*, VIII, 155, 160, noting 'the difficulty of believing that Carthage itself was a source of profound fear to Rome in the 150s' (153). Strabo specified that Carthaginian war preparations followed Rome's final ultimatum (17.3.15). Vogel-Weidemann argues that Carthage was 'well armed . . . Remains of shipsheds and plentiful naval material' have been found ('Carthago Delenda Est', 86–7). Maroti agrees: '[B]y the beginning of the siege, the Carthaginian fleet was ready in the harbour . . . the new warships could only [have been] built against Rome' (227). Carthage's naval harbour could dock 250 ships, which Limonier terms a violation of the treaty of 201. But he adds (409, n. 27) that warships were not mentioned in the Roman demands of 149 and could have been built subsequently, or commercial craft re-commissioned. Badian, citing Strabo (17.3.15) says 'the Carthaginians certainly had the few warships they were allowed by the treaty' (*Foreign Clientelae*, 134 n.). D. Kienast believes 'the naval material . . . was intended for the enlargement of her merchant fleet' and Harris dismisses the naval material and the warships (Vogel-Weidemann, 93, n. 88). See also Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 270–6.
19. The Senate's order to the Carthaginians 'to abandon their city and move inland was the best method

- to incite this humiliated people, deprived of its past, to place itself in the service of a Numidian prince . . . a mass exasperated with Rome and ready to do anything to retrieve its lost homeland' (Limonier, 407).
20. Vogel-Weidemann suggests that Rome's 'vindictiveness may have been rather a matter of cold policy, namely, to do away once and for all with centers of traditional anti-Roman leadership and, possibly, to set an example' (88), citing W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*, 1979, 234–40, and Diodorus to the effect that from 168 BC, 'at any price whatsoever', Rome 'sought to secure her predominance by fear and intimidation and by destroying the most eminent cities' (83, 85–6).
 21. *Cornelius Nepos: A selection, including the lives of Cato and Atticus*, trans. N. Horsfall, Oxford, 1989, 35.
 22. Plutarch, *Lives*, 173; *Cornelius Nepos*, 37–8 (Pliny, *NH* 8.11).
 23. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean*, trans. H. Bettenson, Harmondsworth, 1976, 34.4, 144.
 24. Vogel-Weidemann, 92 n. 73, citing Cato's speech *De bello Carthaginiensi*, in H. Malcovati, *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta* 3, 1967, fr. 195.
 25. *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, trans. W. D. Hooper and H. B. Ash, Cambridge, MA, 1993, Introduction, x.
 26. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean*, 155–8; *Cornelius Nepos*, p. 5; Plutarch, *Lives*, 113–17.
 27. Maroti, 'Carthage's Destruction', 226; Astin, *Cato*, 126–7; Plutarch, *Lives*, 157–9.
 28. 'The way in which Cato propagated his Italian chauvinism appealed to them.' F.J. Meijer, 'Cato's African Figs,' *Mnemosyne*, XXXVII (1–2), 1984, 117–24, at 122–3; Marcus Cato, *De Agri Cultura*, 8.1, and Marcus Terentius Varro, *De Re Rustica*, I.41, in *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, 21, 273.
 29. Maroti, 'Carthage's Destruction', 228; Cicero, *On the Good Life*, trans. Michael Grant, London, 1971, 171.
 30. Cato, *De Agri Cultura*, in *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, 3.
 31. Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, London, 1979, 529.
 32. *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, ix; Plutarch, *Lives*, 95, 143–7.
 33. Appian, *Roman History*, 8.12.86–9; W. V. Harris, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, VIII, 156.
 34. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean*, 141–7; see also Nels W. Forde, *Cato the Censor*, 101–4.
 35. Plutarch, *Lives*, 143, 153, 115, 133.
 36. Ramsay MacMullen, 'Hellenizing the Romans (2nd century BC)', *Historia* 44, 1991, 429–30, 434.
 37. *Cornelius Nepos*, 5–6; *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, x–xi.
 38. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean*, 144; Plutarch, *Lives*, 101; MacMullen, 'Hellenizing,' 427–8, 433.
 39. On early Roman nobles' openness to Greek culture, MacMullen, 'Hellenizing', 426; J. Briscoe, 'Cato the Elder', in S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds), *Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, Oxford, 1998, 146.
 40. *Cornelius Nepos*, 6, and commentary, 57; see also *Cato and Varro on Agriculture*, xii.
 41. Frank M. Snowden, Jr, *Blacks in Antiquity*, Cambridge, MA, 1970; Susanna Morton Braund, 'Roman Assimilations of the Other: *Humanitas* at Rome', *Acta Classica* XL, 1997, 15–32.
 42. *Cornelius Nepos*, 5, 36, note, 47; Astin, *Cato*, 171, quoting Cato's *Ad Filium* from Pliny, *NH*, 29. 13f.
 43. '[A] trove of Greek philosophical treatises which turned up in 181 had been barely looked at before being destroyed by senatorial order – it was feared that their teachings would arouse doubts about religion.' In 173, Rome expelled the teachers of Epicurean philosophy (MacMullen, 'Hellenizing', 435). On Cato's 'paranoia about Greek physicians' and view of 'alien statuary as a profanation', 436 nn. 62, 63.
 44. Plutarch, *Lives*, 147–9.
 45. MacMullen, 'Hellenizing', 432 n. 41; Plutarch, *Lives*, 129.
 46. Plutarch, *The Lives*, 159–61; V. Krings, 'La Destruction de Carthage: problèmes d'historiographie ancienne et moderne', *Studia Phoenicia*, X, *Punic Wars*, Leuven, 1989, 329–44, at 335.
 47. Dubuisson, "'Delenda est Carthago'", 285.
 48. Ben Kiernan, 'Twentieth Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor', in R. Gellately and B. Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide*, New York, 2003, 29–51.
 49. Jasper Griffin, *Virgil*, New York, 1986, 27, 36ff.

50. Virgil, *Georgics 2*, trans. *The Internet Classics Archive* [<http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/georgics.html>]
51. *Georgics 3*, quoted in Griffin, *Virgil*, 52.
52. Ellen Oliensis, 'Sons and Lovers: Sexuality and Gender in Virgil's Poetry', in Charles Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Cambridge, CUP, 1997, 297–9.
53. Griffin, *Virgil*, 84, 62; Virgil, *The Aeneid: A New Prose Translation*, trans. David West, London, 1991, 212.
54. Griffin, *Virgil*, 63–4, 54.
55. Virgil, *The Aeneid: A New Prose Translation*, 3–4.
56. *Ibid.*, 41, 45, 47.
57. *Ibid.*, 18.
58. Griffin, *Virgil*, 110; *op. cit.* note 49.
59. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, 19–23; *op. cit.* note 53.
60. *Ibid.*, 24–7, 57, 37, 53.
61. See Philip R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium*, Oxford: 1986, 282–4.
62. *Aeneid: A New Prose Translation*, 95, 100–1, 147, 159; *op. cit.* note 53.
63. West, 'Introduction', *Aeneid: A New Prose Translation*, ix; W. Y. Sellar, *Virgil*, Oxford, 1897, 59, 68.
64. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean: Books XXXI–XLV of The History of Rome from its Foundation*, trans. H. Bettenson, London, 1976, 596 (XLIV.44), Introduction, p. 20. Strabo, *Geography* Books III, VIII, and Appian, *Libyca* 69, *Roman History* 8.20.135, also mention the destruction of Carthage.
65. Livy, *Rome and the Mediterranean*, 430 (39.40).