Notes on Quiz #3: The Nemesis of Carthage

1. Carthage was known for
   a. a focus on farming with no interest in trade
   b. incompetence in sailing and shipbuilding
   c. its descent from the Phoenicians of Tyre
   d. succeeding despite being situated in a place of little strategic importance

Carthage controlled vital mining resources around the western Med, giving them access to lead, zinc, copper, tin, iron, and silver. They also controlled quantities of highly-prized grains, olive oil, wine, and fruit. As with their Phoenician forebears, they leveraged wealth in natural resources into lucrative luxury trade, including pottery, textiles, and jewelry. — The Phoenician seafaring tradition and the excellent harbors at Carthage ensured superior shipbuilding and expertise in sea trade. Carthage was also able to establish a powerful navy to protect its ships, ports, and land resources. — Not unlike Rome, Carthage was governed by its landholding familes via an assembly, a senate, and elected magistrates.

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2. All of the following are true of the First Punic War EXCEPT:
   a. The war came out of a conflict over Sicily, which both Rome and Carthage coveted
   b. The call for aid from the Mamertines was backed by all Romans as a just and noble cause
   c. Lacking in naval power to fight Carthage, Rome used a captured Carthaginian warship as a model for a new 100-ship armada
   d. Rome's win resulted in a punitive treaty and Rome's first provincial territories

At the outset of the first war, Carthage was an established military power at sea, experienced in the building of ships, the equipping and operating them at sea, and naval strategy and tactics; on land, by contrast, they tended to rely on mercenary armies. Rome, however, had neither the inclination nor the expertise to be a naval power; by this time Rome had become expert at land warfare and tended to be suspicious of the sea, where their vast skills in land warfare were moot. — Now that the enemy was, for the first time, overseas, and because the object was the island of Sicily between Italy and north Africa, it was suddenly imperative to be able to fight at sea. Characteristically Rome approached this by both adapting to alien ideas and Romanizing them. A captured Carthaginian quinquireme was reverse-engineered and a contingent of merchant sailors and new recruits trained in using these speedy, maneuverable warships. Instead of relying on ramming, the primary naval tactic of the time, the Romans devised a free-turning grappling gangplank, the corvus, that enabled Roman soldiers aboard their ships to board the enemy and fight in the way Romans knew best—infantry combat.

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3. Before the Second Punic War, the river Ebro was the boundary between
   a. Carthaginian and Roman territory in Spain
   b. Carthage and Egypt
   c. Italy and Gaul
   d. the worlds of the living and of the dead

A treaty between Carthage and Rome marked the Ebro River in Spain as the boundary between the influence of Rome (from the north) and Carthage (from the south) in the Iberian peninsula. The deliberate violation of this agreement resulting from Rome's interference in Saguntum (south of the Ebro, in Carthaginian territory) helped lead to the war.

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4. All of the following are battles in which the Romans suffered disastrous defeats at the hands of Carthaginian forces EXCEPT:
   a. Battle of Zama (202 BCE)
   b. Battle of Lake Trasimene (217 BCE)
   c. Battle of the Trebia (218 BCE)
   d. Battle of Cannæ (216 BCE)

Hannibal inflicted a succession of devastating victories on Rome at Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae, all of which are in Italy. Carthage was finally defeated at the Battle of Zama, in the Carthaginian home territory in north Africa.

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5. Fabius Maximus was known as Cunctator (the Delayer) because he
   a. stalled Rome's entry into the Second Punic War
   b. avoided battle with Hannibal's superior forces
   c. conducted his morning rituals in the afternoon
   d. made annoyingly long speeches in the Senate

After the defeat at Trasimene, Fabius was made dictator in order to save Rome from Hannibal. His strategy of drawing Hannibal out and avoiding battle while Rome rebuilt its forces was extremely divisive among Romans at first, but was soon vindicated. Fabius was thereafter accounted one of the key heroes of the war with Hannibal.

Optional Extra Credit

EC. Explain one key thing that you think either (a) Rome did to win, or (b) Hannibal did to lose, the Second Punic War.

Hannibal had considerable advantages at the outset. In his march toward Italy through Spain and Gaul, and later in Italy itself, Hannibal collected allies from among the local peoples who marched with him to end the looming threat of Rome. This gave him great numbers as well as making parts of Italy itself hostile territory. Two successive annihilations of Roman forces, at Lake Trasimene and at Cannae, demoralized the leadership and terrified the populace. — While the Romans were so stricken and divided over the best response to Hannibal, however, Hannibal did not capitalize on this advantage by attacking Rome directly. Instead he allowed Rome to gain time to rebuild its nerve and its strength. The dictator Fabius pursued a strategy of avoiding battle and harassing Hannibal's marching army, earning him the nickname Delayer, while attacking, taking, and punishing Italian, Sicilian, and Spanish cities allied with Hannibal one by one. Slowly Hannibal was hemmed in to the south, where his army was depleted and softened. Finally Scipio won support for a bold stroke against Carthage itself while its armies were holed up in Italy. — The militarization of Roman society and their deep reserve of manpower (which the invader Hannibal did not have) meant that even after the destruction of its forces it was able to equip, assemble, and field new armies for the next year's campaign. Perhaps just as importantly, Roman military leadership was not pegged to a single mastermind like Hannibal; every year a new pair of trained and experienced generals was elected consul, allowing continued leadership even if consuls were killed in battle (as at Trasimene and Cannae); and dictators like Fabius could be appointed at need from the most seasoned and admired of Rome's nobility. The senate was the repository of all Rome's experience, including all the ex-magistrates. Thus, as it had against Pyrrhus and against the Samnites, Rome's capacity for perseverance, recovery, and adaptation meant that even costly defeat in battle was only the latest crisis to be overcome.