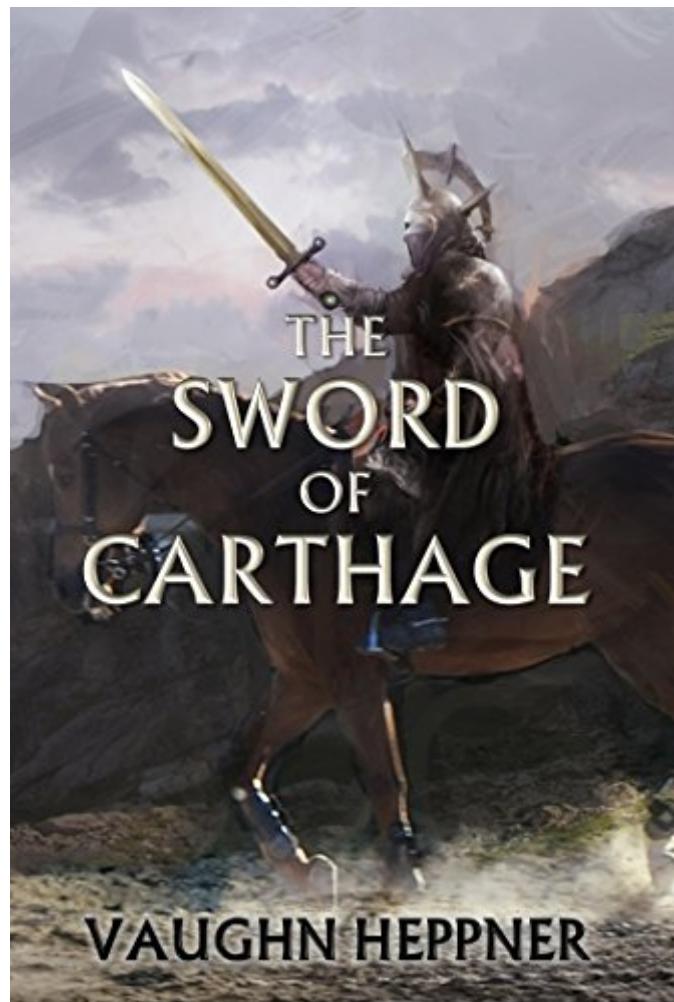


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# The Sword Of Carthage



## **Synopsis**

For centuries, Carthage has ruled a sprawling maritime empire. Now, a Roman armada sails from Sicily, landing four legions onto Africa. The legionaries are hard-bitten veterans, men of middle height, with powerful chests and shoulders and bronzed faces. They carry javelins, short keen swords and heavy shields. Consul Regulus leads them. His goal is more than victory, but the end of an ancient empire. In 256 B.C., the Carthaginian Empire is a seething, buckling realm of barbaric warriors, unstable generals and baffled seamen. At this pivotal moment, a young Hamilcar Barca thrusts himself forward. He befriends a canny Spartan mercenary and learns the intricacies of elephant warfare. Now, in a last, desperate battle, he faces the man who slew his brother, the conquering Roman who fights like a raving wolf. THE SWORD OF CARTHAGE is the recreation of a historical campaign of bitter savagery, filled with the dust, sweat and roar of battle. It is 123,000 words in length by Vaughn Heppner.

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## **Customer Reviews**

I usually write reviews of military history based on a number of criteria. Accuracy: No problems here. I am no expert historian but the historical facts represented here coincide with other accounts of the

first Punic War I have read and are backed up by a number of references and postscripts that are intelligently and unobtrusively placed after each chapter. This was seriously well researched. The fictional characters (would have liked to have been told for sure who these were) inter-related well with the known actual historical figures. Descriptions: Top quality accounts of the lives, struggles and a genuine feel for the hardships of life in this era. The political and religious powers and their conflicts to gain popular control of the masses are also well presented. The harsh punishment for failure as a Carthaginian general does make one wonder why more Carthaginians didn't just stick to the mainline commerce that Carthage built its power on, rather than soldiery. Characters: Do I care for them and their fates? Most definitely! The heroes are charming, resourceful, faithful and loyal and the villains are thoroughly boo-worthy. This book is extremely strong in filling out personalities, exposing flaws and creating a desire to see how each survives, or falls. Action: Battles scenes on land and sea are clearly and entertainingly described and there is enough "blood 'n guts" to satisfy most followers of this genre. I was able to follow most of the battleground tactics and manouvres more successfully than is sometimes the case in similar books. Top points for this one! Feelgood factor: I finished the book very happy to have shared the author's efforts. Looking forward very much to reading more of his historical novels. I am unlikely to delve into his SF work though. Just me! Negatives?: Just a small complaint about a number (not a great number) of annoying miss-spellings that always somehow seemed to confuse. The enemy made an effective "blockage" (instead of "blockade"). Her cheeks showed signs of "rogue" (instead of "rouge"). Even "thought" I had supported him (instead of "though"). Not a ball-buster though as far as enjoyment was concerned. Comes at the decent Kindle price and also comes very highly recommended.

The Sword of Carthage

The Sword of Carthage, by Vaughn Heppner, tells a tale of the first Punic war through the eyes of Hamilcar Barca, the father of Hannibal. In writing The Death of Carthage, my novel of the second and third Punic wars, I naturally tried to learn all I could about the first Punic war, but somehow it remained shrouded in mist. I could not wrap my mind around it. All of that changed when I read The Sword of Carthage. Vaughn Heppner brings ancient Carthage alive and paints in bold strokes a fine portrait of the city, its culture and its struggles with its deadly enemy, Rome. It is said that Rome worshipped Mars while Carthage worshipped Mammon. While that has some truth to it, it is an oversimplification. Carthage had a complex cast of Gods. One was Baal, and Baal had a consort-Tanit. Tanit is also associated with Ishtar, the goddess of love. Ishtar is similar to the Greek Goddess Aphrodite and to the Roman goddess Venus. But the Carthaginians also worshipped Melquarth whose name translates literally to King Of The City, and who bears a

great resemblance to Hercules. Melquarth was admired by the more warlike among the Carthaginians. Hamilcar Barca believes that he is the chosen of Melquarth. In the Sword of Carthage, young Hamilcar Barca, influenced by his uncle Malchus, longs to become a soldier. His father, Ithobal, a Suffete and a very successful merchant adamantly forbids it. He hires Bromilcar, a priest of Tanit, to tutor Hamilcar, and forbids any encouragement of military ambition. Ithobal's father had been a great general, but was killed by an elephant in the war against Pyrrhus and Ithobal despises the whole notion of military force. But Hamilcar comes under the influence of Cimon, an old Macedonian soldier who guards his father's estate and he becomes enthralled with Cimon's war stories. Ithobal is furious when he learns of Hamilcar's military ambitions."Soldiers are born in pigsites and mountain shacks." He tells Hamilcar. "Cunning men buy them with gold and high sounding slogans. Only a fool needlessly risks his flesh." Ithobal sets out to prove the point to his son. He dismisses the aged Cimon from his service and tells him that he will see that he never finds work again, but then offers him double weight gold shekels to flog the boy. Cimon, knowing that he will be destitute otherwise, reluctantly complies.Ithobal tell his son that the only two careers open to him are priest and merchant. While Hamilcar shows some aptitude for both occupations, he never gives up his desire to become a soldier.When Hamilcar is fifteen his father dies and Hamilcar believes that his father was poisoned by his step-mother Elissa and the evil priest Bromilcar who has become Elissa's lover. Bromilcar marries Elissa, and by a decision of the Suffete, Hamilcar become's Bromilcar's ward until the age of 21. Bromilcar continues to interfere in Hamilcar's attempts to achieve a military career. Hamilcar also suspects that Bromilcar wants to find a way to get rid of him in order to get his inheritance. Bromilcar sends Hamilcar off on a trading mission and and it becomes clear to Hamilcar that when they reach their destination, the caravan master will sell Hamilcar into slavery, a fate that Hamilcar evades by bribing Bromilcar's Celtiberian guards.Meanwhile the Romans are wreaking havoc. They defeat the Carthaginians at the battle of Agrigentum, driving them out of most of Sicily, and have dealt them several naval defeats. The Roman Consul Marcus Atilius Regulus has invaded north Africa with eight legions, and is laying waste to the countryside and conquering allied cities. Libyan and Numidian allies are deserting Carthage in droves.When all the other Carthaginian generals reject Hamilcar's services in deference to the increasingly powerful Bromilcar, He manages to attach himself to the aging alcoholic general Bostar, impressing him by taming a huge savage elephant that no one else had been able to handle. He convinces Bostar that the only possible salvation for Carthage lies in hiring Spartan mercenaries, and, indeed, the day is saved, at least temporarily, by the leadership of the Spartan king Xanthippus.The Sword of Carthage is superbly researched and seems to weave every shred of

evidence available into a convincing and exciting narrative. Anyone interested in the Punic wars will eagerly devour this book.

I love history, especially the ancients. *Sword of Carthage* throws the reader right in the middle of ancient Carthage. It was a rich empire cornering the Mediterranean trade and exploiting all the goods the lands had to offer. However a new power threatened ... everything. What a great book full of so much history with just as much author's interpretation and fiction. Another plus is the annotations at the end of each chapter giving the reader a bit more from historical texts and writers. There is always a but though...Numerous spelling errors and grammatical errors plague the story. It was a good enough story that it was easy to overlook them but they are there. Four stars nonetheless. Easy to read, full of action and drama and loads of facts perfectly intertwined into the story. I look forward to reading more of Vaughn Heppner.

What a great pleasure it is to discover a writer who can pluck a lesser historical figure from time and make him come alive! While everyone knows of Hannibal and his accomplishments, one never hears of his father or what sort of influence the father's life and exploits might have had on the well known historical hero. Vaughn Heppner uses his amazing skills of imagination and creativity to build an interesting tale of a time largely ignored by writers of historical fiction. Most appealing is his creation of believable dialogue to develop his characters and give them life and appeal to the reader of his work. Well done, Mr. Heppner!!! I will watch for other of your treatments of history in fiction.

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