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Hannibal and Scipio's War: The Second Punic War

By

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Under the mentorship of Timothy Teeter

ABSTRACT

The Second Punic War (218-201 BC), setting Rome against its rival state Carthage, is remembered because of the strategic maneuverings between Hannibal of Carthage and Scipio of Rome which would determine the master of the Mediterranean, laying the ground works for eventual plans for empire. Rome would eventually beat Carthage and historians since antiquity have tried to understand how Rome did so. Nigel Bagnall, in his book on the second Punic war describes the war in its entirety, making it a good overview. Polybius, a source written during the time of the Third Punic War, is one of the main sources the paper will use for he was present at the burning of Carthage; this means his information is the closest to the primary source of the war. Livy's account will be very useful to use as well, for this author focuses on battles in depth as well as give overviews to the whole war. The first two case studies will focus on the use of strategies and tactics, respectively. The last case study will focus on the political struggles that Hannibal and Scipio had during the war. This paper shall focus on the individuals and their dealings in the war, as well as the fighting that took place. It is important to write about because many have forgotten the role that the war and the generals have played in the history of the Mediterranean and the ancient world.

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Out of the many clashes of armies in antiquity, one of the most famous wars of antiquity was the second Punic War (218-201 B.C.). This was a fight between Rome and Carthage to see who would come to dominate the Mediterranean world. The war has managed to keep a place in history, thanks in part due to the generals that lead the armies; Rome's Scipio Africanus and Carthage's Hannibal Barca. These two men and their tactics and strategies helped to shape the war, leading to the conclusion that history now tells us. To better understand how the war was waged, one must study the campaigns and the lives of the leading generals to get a clear picture. To do this, the origins of the conflict are an important first step.

Background to the Second Punic War

In the years before the Punic Wars erupted, the Roman state generally had no conflict with the Carthaginian Empire. This would come to change when the powers began to fight over a piece of territory between their borders; the island of Sicily. Originally belonging to Greek colonies, Carthage moved in and took Messina, so that the city of Syracuse could not dominate the strait.¹ The Mamertines sent an envoy to Roman to ask for assistance in regards to these developments. This request left the senate divided; some were of the mind to take Messina from Carthage to take control of both sides of the strait while others were hesitant for this would be a breach to their treaty with Carthage.² The popular assembly decided to go with the taking of Messina, an act that would start off the first Punic War. This act of imperialistic ambition is one of the main reasons why Bagnall believes that Rome was the cause of the series of Punic Wars.

¹ Nigel Bagnall, *The Punic Wars* (New York: St. Martin's Press) 43

² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 44

The First Punic War broke out in 264 B.C. and would have Sicily as the fighting grounds for the first few years. As hostilities broke out both sides hastily gathered up their forces to prepare for a long and costly war that they were unprepared for. The first stages of the war went well for Carthage for they used their strong navy to their advantage, being as Rome had very little in terms of naval power. This could be seen in Rome's failed attempt to take Carthage on in Africa. As time went on, Rome would use its substantial resources to build and train better fleets, which helped to turn the tides of war back towards Rome. In the year 242 B.C., Rome would finally defeat Carthage and gave them a crushing peace agreement. This war and its peace agreement would have far reaching consequences, for Carthage and its people would not forget this loss in the near future. Rome's victory was one of opportunism for as Bagnall wrote, 'Though they gravely underestimated the consequences, the Romans had the muscle and they used it.'³

The years between the two wars would not see peace for the two powers for they would have other external factors to deal with. Carthage had a mercenary revolt and a struggle for Spain, while Rome dealt with the Gauls to the north and the Greeks to the west. Even as all these conflicts came to an end around 218 B.C., Carthage attacked Saguntum in Spain and the besieged people asked Rome for assistance. The man that led this attack was Hannibal Barca, the son of Hamilcar who fought in the first Punic War. Hannibal essentially engineered the outbreak of war, for his family has hatred of Rome, and to avenge the humiliation of Carthage and the loss of their territories.⁴ Rome's aggression and harsh peace terms helped to provide kindling to Carthage's desire for revenge, which would lead to one of the most destructive wars of the ancient era.

³ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 101

⁴ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 151

Outbreak of the Second Punic War

Once the war started, Hannibal quickly began to plan an audacious attack on Rome from his Spanish territories. He crossed the Ebro River at the head of ninety thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, quickly crushing some tribal resistance in the Pyrenees.⁵ During his march, Hannibal had resistance from groups of Gauls in his path, but he dealt with them with considerable ease. As the Carthaginian army made progress on their march, the Senate decided to send some legions to the region, led by Cornelius and Publius Scipio. Hannibal sent a unit of Numidian riders to see the Roman camps position and strength. While spying out the defenses, the horsemen came across some Roman cavalry and had a battle in which the Romans were victorious. Livy wrote that this marked the start of the war and as an omen to Rome's eventual victory after a bloody and hard-fought war.⁶ Despite the presence of the Roman army, Hannibal continued to march for the Alps and headed more inland so as to avoid the enemy forces. Publius did not move to engage Hannibal during this time, which has drawn much criticism by modern scholars. Publius eventually did make a decision; his brother would go on to Spain to do the Senate's bidding while he would head back to Italy to deal with Hannibal.⁷ As this was going on, Hannibal was about to embark on one of his most famous moments; the crossing of the Alps.

Hannibal's decision to cross the Alps to reach Italy was highly dangerous and full of risk, but it also had the advantage of catching the Roman forces by surprise. To get

⁵ Livy, *Hannibal's War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 21.23

⁶ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.29

⁷ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 165

through the pass, Hannibal and his forces had to deal with numerous mountain tribes and treacherous terrain. After nine days of hard fighting and marching, the men made it to the crest of the Alps, where while they were resting they had a new trial come to them in the form of snow fall.⁸ From there, the army pressed on, losing men, pack animals, elephants every step. Fourteen days after entering the pass, Hannibal's army finally made it to the plains of Italy at great cost to personal and supplies. While accounts differ on the amount of men and animals lost, it is generally agreed that the force that made it out of the Alps was significantly smaller than the original size. Despite this small set back, Hannibal was now in Italy and the Romans would soon get to experience Carthage's fury.

Roman Setbacks in Italy

As Hannibal rested his army after a taxing experience in the Alps, Publius Scipio quickly made his way to the river Po from Pisa so as to attack the invaders before they recover fully.⁹ Hannibal was waging war against a tribal town when news of the approaching Romans reached him and he made his way back to the river Po. The two armies made camp near Victumulae, and they prepared for the first major battle on Italian soil. The Carthaginians had cavalry superiority, which made things problematic for the Romans since the battle took place in flatlands.¹⁰ After Hannibal's forces crossed the river, the center lines fought a furious battle. As this clash was going on, the Numidian cavalry circled around the Roman flanks and struck at the light infantry from behind. The Roman forces, including Publius who was wounded, were surrounded and some cut their way free from the enemy and fled across the bridge over the Ticinus River. While several

⁸ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.33

⁹ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.39

¹⁰ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.47

sources have different sources for how Publius was rescued from the battle the most popular came from Livy who said that his son, who would be later on known as Scipio Africanus, saved him.¹¹ While Scipio survived the battle, the battle was a first of many defeats for the Roman forces in Italy.

After this first defeat the senate sent Consul Sempronius from his position in Sicily to aid Scipio's efforts against Hannibal. Once both consular armies joined together, the Consuls began discussing their next course of action. Sempronius was very much eager for a fight against Hannibal, especially after a skirmish with Carthage turned out to be a victory for Rome.¹² Scipio was more of the mind of being patient and letting the enemy's enthusiasm run out. Despite being at odds, the Roman forces began to prepare for an engagement with Hannibal. Hannibal was pleased by this report, for he heard that one of the Consuls was hot headed by nature and known for being impetuous.¹³ Relying on this weakness on the part of Sempronius, Hannibal found a suitable place between the two camps that had space for him to put Celtic troops for an ambush on the Romans giving Mago the honor of leading the attack.¹⁴ With this taken care of, Hannibal sent some cavalry across the river to lure the Roman forces into a fight. Sempronius, being the hot headed general he was, quickly ordered his men to give pursuit without being fed or clothed to counteract the cold conditions.¹⁵ After an initial skirmish between the cavalry forces, Sempronius gathered his men into formation and marched towards Hannibal. The Carthaginian cavalry, as soon as the battle commenced, attacked the

¹¹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 172

¹² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 174

¹³ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.53

¹⁴ Polybius, *The Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 3.71

¹⁵ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.72

Roman horseman who they outnumbered and began to push them back. Hannibal's elephants also added to the Roman's troubles for the horses panicked at the sight and smell of the foreign animals. These odds made it difficult for the Roman cavalry to continue and they were driven back, leaving the flanks of the infantry exposed to the elephants and javelin men. Despite the attack on the sides, the Roman infantry continued to hold their ground against the enemy. As time went on the Romans, who were fighting on empty stomachs, slowly began to lose ground to the well-fed and rested forces of Hannibal.¹⁶

Eventually, Mago's hidden forces sprung the ambush on the Roman forces, who still fought on despite the numerous setbacks they had encountered during the battle. The Carthaginians finally scattered the Roman allies after sending their terrified elephants, effectively surrounding the remaining infantry. Ten thousand men broke through to escape towards Placentia, while the majority of the remaining troops fell as they ran back towards the river.¹⁷ Naturally, Sempronius does his best to keep news of the extent of the defeat away from Rome. This is most likely due to the fact that such a major defeat would adversely affect his chances to reelection to Consul. Unsurprisingly word of the battle's conclusion did make its way to Rome, causing panic among the citizens who now feared the enemy would now head straight for Rome.¹⁸ Amid the panicked reaction, the Roman government quickly began preparations to deal with the eventual arrival of the enemy forces.

¹⁶ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.55

¹⁷ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 176

¹⁸ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 21.57

As new legions were being gathered together throughout the republic, two new consuls were elected to deal with rising crisis; Gnaeus Servilius and Gaius Flaminius. With new leaders and forces being raised up, the Romans were strengthening their position after the debacle at Trebia. Hannibal during this time raided the Italian countryside, one particularly well-known case being the pillaging of Victumulae and the horrid treatment of the populace by Hannibal's forces. Once spring arrived, Hannibal moved back towards Placentia where he came across the forces of Sempronius. The Romans pushed Hannibal to his camp but they were unable to take it before nightfall, leaving the battle as a draw between the two men. As this went on in Italy, Gnaeus Scipio took an army to Spain where upon arriving he did battle with Hanno. At the battle of Cissis the Romans defeated the Carthaginian forces, capturing the commander and numerous riches from Hannibal's campaigns.¹⁹ Hasdrubal, hearing of the defeat, avoided direct battle with Scipio, instead enticing revolts among the tribes in the region which kept Scipio on the alert. Back in Italy, Hannibal moved out from Bologna and made his way into Etruscany where he would soon have another crushing victory against the Romans.

As Hannibal made his way through some marshlands, his army came upon Flaminius and his army. Flaminius, despite the advice of his men to wait for Servilius to reinforce them, decided that it was best for the Romans to engage Hannibal quickly.²⁰ Hannibal stationed troop along ridges around the Borghetto defile so as to ambush the Romans when they marched into the defile to engage him. The Roman forces went in with no reconnaissance and as they came upon more open territory, they broke out of the

¹⁹ Livy, Hannibal's War, 21.60

²⁰ Bagnall, The Punic Wars, 180

column to position themselves better. As soon as the bulk of the Roman forces made it in the trap, the hidden Carthaginians moved out of their positions and attacked the Romans on all sides. Flaminius and his centurions were completely taken by surprise, therefore making for a slow reaction to the attack. Many men were killed in the confusion in this first stage, including Flaminius himself, as he fought Celtic warriors. As many as fifteen thousand men died in the valley, with more dying in the lake as some drowned trying to swim away and others being picked off by Hannibal's cavalry.²¹ As this battle came to an end, Hannibal heard reports of Consul Servilius marching towards them to support his fellow consul. Maharbal was sent with some troops to deal with the new force and in a great clash, the Roman force was defeated with half of the men dying and the other half becoming prisoners to Carthage.²² Once the city of Rome heard of these defeats, the citizens were grasped by terror and began to demand for a dictator to be elected to lead the forces now. While this deed is normally done by the ruling consul, he was out of the city at the time and the citizens themselves elected Quintus Fabius Maximus as their dictator.²³ Maximus, upon his ascent to this position, began to fortify the walls of Rome to prepare for the perceived arrival of Hannibal's forces.

Hannibal did not head towards Rome after the battle of Lake Trasimene, opting instead to pillage the regions around Rome facing little to no opposition from the Latin forces. On the Adriatic coast, in area where there was plentiful crops, Hannibal stopped to rest his forces. The men and horses suffered from numerous ailments from their time wintering in Gaul and Hannibal used this time and resources to allow them to recover

²¹ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.84

²² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 183

²³ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 22.9

physically and mentally.²⁴ Once his forces recovered, he continued to make his way down the coastline on his continued path of destruction. Fabius eventually moved away from Rome with four legions under his command to deal with the crisis, eventually camping at a place called Aecae which was close to the Carthaginian camp. Hannibal tried to lure out the Roman forces to do battle but he received no response from Fabius, who believed it was more important to keep his men safe and avoid direct conflict. This made Fabius seem like a coward to his troops at first, but Fabius' reasoning was a sound one; the Carthaginians were accustomed to continuous warfare and were extremely confident at this point in the war.²⁵ Fabius began to rely on the Roman strength in supplies and manpower to outlast his enemy. For several days the Roman forces shadowed Hannibal as he made his way into the countryside around Capua. Minucius, second-in-command to Fabius, grew irate at Fabius' caution towards the forces of Carthage during this time. When Fabius went to Rome to perform some rituals, Minucius pursued a more aggressive stance towards the enemy during his time as commander. Even when Fabius returned Minucius was reckless towards Hannibal's forces, almost resulting in another grave Roman defeat. In a skirmish with Carthaginian forces, Minucius was caught in an ambush after recklessly charging the enemy positions being saved only by the timely arrival of the rest of the Roman forces under Fabius. This clash was the only true major clash between the forces during the time of the dictators who, after stepping down, were replaced by the two new consuls Marcus Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus. These consuls would have the unfortunate pleasure in playing a part in one of Roman military's greatest defeats; the battle of Cannae.

²⁴ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.87

²⁵ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.89

Hannibal, after some time of inactivity in regards to the Romans, decided on a plan to draw out the enemy into open battle, setting his sights on the city of Cannae which was being used by the Romans as a store house for their grain stores.²⁶ In response, the senate authorized the consuls to head for the enemy with a force of eight Roman legions to fight Hannibal with. The two armies camped at Cannae, where Hannibal quickly arrayed his battle lines to draw out the Roman forces. The Romans were off to a bad start to the battle for the two consuls were divided on the course of action; Paullus wanted to take a more cautious approach, reminding Varro of the recklessness of Sempronius and Flaminius while Varro decried Fabius' cowardly tactics of waiting out the enemy.²⁷ This difference in command was seen in Paullus' reaction to a Numidian force riding up to the gates of the smaller Roman camp, trying to draw the Romans to battle which failed being as Paullus did not mobilize the troops after this unit. The next day Varro was in charge and he ordered the troops to advance without consulting Paullus on this course of action. This brash move by Varro forced Paullus to advance his forces as well, for while he disapproved of this sallying forth, he did not want to refuse his ally assistance.²⁸ The opposing armies set up their battle lines across from each other and waited for the inevitable clash of arms. Hannibal started off the battle well by positioning his men with their backs towards the local winds so that the Romans, and not his men, would get dust blown into their eyes. The armies charged and the infantry lines in the city began to fight, as the light infantry and cavalry fought on the sides of the lines. The Roman center over time began to push the Spaniard and Gaullic forces back, cutting them down as they approached the African lines. As they continued to push

²⁶ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.107

²⁷ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 22.44

²⁸ Livy, *Hannibal's War*, 22.45

forward however, the African forces on the flanks enveloped the charging Romans effectively surrounding them. As the situation began to deteriorate in the center, Aemilius made his way to the men there to rally them in their struggle and Hannibal did the same for the Carthaginian forces.²⁹ The Roman allies on the flanks eventually broke to the enemy forces, and were chased down by the Numidians. The Roman forces in the center were alone and surrounded, constantly being charged in their rear lines by Hannibal's men. The result of this engagement became a massacre as countless infantry, among whom was the consul Aemilius who died on the field fighting with his men, were cut down by the frenzied Carthaginian forces. While the infantry were lost to the enemy, some of the cavalry troops escaped the battle including Varro, who brought great shame to his country as a consul.³⁰

The results of the Battle of Cannae were crushing to the Roman republic as this fight became one of their greatest defeats suffered in war. While the sources differ on the amount of casualties the Romans suffered during the battle, it can be agreed that it a staggering amount of the troops that were lost to Hannibal on that day. This battle brought the war to a critical point for both forces, as the balance of power now tipped towards Hannibal. The Romans had lost a grievous amount of men and supplies while the Carthaginian forces gained allies, as Italian city-states began to surrender to the victorious army of Hannibal. Hannibal now had free reign to march across Italy while Scipio started to make headway in the Iberian Peninsula against the forces of Hasdrubal. Before going on to the later stages of the war, a case study of the tactics used during these early wars will help to better understand Hannibal's success in this early stage.

²⁹ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.116

³⁰ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.116

Case Study I: Tactics

The first stage of the Second Punic War looked to be a Carthaginian victory, as Hannibal's quick strike into the Italian peninsula threw the Roman forces on the defensive. This was helped along further by the massive defeats suffered by Rome at battles like Lake Trasimene and Cannae. While historians for many years have debated on the main reasons the Romans suffered so grievously during this part in the campaign, many can agree that the superior tactics that Hannibal employed aided Carthage greatly in their victories. This skillful use of tactics was essential, for Hannibal's forces were heavily outnumbered in their battles that they had with the Romans in the heart of the republic's lands.

One of the first major battles of the war took place at Trebia, where Hannibal clashed with the Roman forces under the command of the consul Tiberius Sempronius Longus and general Publius Cornelius Scipio. As the forces sat in their respective camps, the Roman consuls bickered on their course of action. This tended to be a problem with the two consul system in the Roman republic, particularly in cases like this where Scipio's plan of waiting the enemy out was at odds with Sempronius' desire to do battle with Hannibal. Hannibal naturally saw the opportunity this presented him as he focused on drawing out the impetuous Sempronius. Before he would draw his enemy out to battle, Hannibal positioned some forces under the command of Mago in a place to ambush the Romans; a tactic he would employ to great effect in latter battles. Hannibal then sent skirmishers to taunt Sempronius and his men, which would succeed as the consul orders his men to advance. This was a tragic error for, as discussed earlier, the Roman forces marched out without proper clothing or eating their meals. This move

greatly disadvantaged the legionaries for by the time the battle commenced the Romans were cold and hungry in the snowy weather. This was a great boon to Hannibal and his men for he made sure his troops were well rested and fed to keep their strength up in the battle. The new Roman recruits, between the frigid conditions and the larger and fresher army of the Carthaginians, simply could not hold the lines and the army was defeated after a hard struggle. Both Livy and Polybius write about the rashness of consul Sempronius in marching out his force unprepared for fighting Hannibal in winter weather. This failure by the consul to better prepare for the battle played a significant role in the defeat of the Roman forces.

While the battle of Trebia ended in defeat for the Romans, it was not an extremely terrible setback, as new legions were quickly formed to go deal with Hannibal. As time went on however, the Romans would be defeated yet again, this time at Lake Trasimene. Hannibal decided to lure in the Roman forces, under the command of Flaminius, into a defile near the lake with a force hidden nearby to attack the Roman forces from behind. Hannibal relied on Flaminius' rashness in much the same way as he did with Sempronius at Trebia. Flaminius led his forces into the defile with little if any investigation of the surrounding areas. Perhaps if Flaminius had taken a more cautious course of action in the battle, the results would have been more favorable for the Roman forces. As it happened Roman forces marched into the defile, where the Carthaginians waited for the perfect opportunity. When most of the forces were past the ambush units, the men attacked the Roman army from all sides, quickly taking them by surprise. Hannibal's plan worked to great effect as the Roman forces, while effective when they are in fighting formation, were not expecting a large ambush and were therefore unable to

put up great resistance. Things were further complicated for the forces of Rome when Flaminius was killed while fighting Celtic forces, depriving the troops of their leader and morale. Many of the men were killed in the frenzied retreat, whether it was by swords, getting trampled, or drowning in the lake. Once again, Hannibal took advantage of Roman division and lack of preparation while making sure his forces were rested and prepared for the battle. Hannibal used the Roman numbers against them when he lured the legions into the defile which would keep them from mounting any kind of useful defense. Hannibal's tactics in this battle helped him to inflict maximum damage to Rome while keeping his losses low, since he was deep in enemy territory and therefore could not afford heavy losses. While this battle did cause panic in the Roman government, the real blow to the military machine was at the battle of Cannae.

In the history of military tactics and battles, few in the ancient era has the fame of the battle of Cannae, hailed as one of Hannibal's finest victory and one of Rome's worst defeats. As Hannibal moved farther south Gaius Varro and Lucius Paullus led a large army of around eighty six thousand Roman troops and their allies. The number of troops involved in the battle vary between Livy's and Polybius' accounts, so it is unsure how many men did indeed take part in the battle. Since the Romans outnumbered the Carthaginian forces, they decided to make the infantry lines deeper rather than wider like in the usual formations; they believed this would help them to break through Hannibal's central lines much quicker than in the conventional formation. Varro also believed that the breakthrough would cause a rout as well, seeing as Hannibal's had their backs to the Aufidus River which would trap the panicking men. While the Romans had their plan set, Hannibal had his course of action prepared as well. He took into account his different

units strengths and weaknesses and deployed them in a manner that would provide his army the greatest benefit.

When the battle eventually commenced, Hannibal sent his cavalry to the flanks to fight the Roman horsemen while his main force fought with the massed Roman line. Hannibal had formed his line into a crescent formation so as to slow the enemy advance. As the battle went on, Hannibal ordered a controlled retreat in the center, so as to allow the heavy infantry of the Rome to push further through the line. He wanted to use the Roman strength to eventually provide himself an opportunity. The Romans eagerly charged the weaker Carthaginian infantry, seeing as they were retreating, causing the formation to bow in the center. This played perfectly into Hannibal's plan, as his heavy African troops on the flanks of the line were then able to swing to the sides of the Romans trapping them on three sides. As this happened in the center, the Roman cavalry was defeated, allowing Hannibal's horsemen to swing around and attack the Romans in the rear. This move effectively boxed the Roman forces in between Hannibal's forces which quickly stopped their advance. The infantry, unable to escape the enemy forces, were cut down in large numbers for they were not prepared for this turn of events. In a stunning reversal, the Romans had lost all but around fourteen thousand men, according to some accounts, including the consul Varro, who fought to the death with his men. With this victory, Hannibal had effectively destroyed the Roman army as a fighting force for the time being, with several city states joining his forces after the battle.

After reviewing the tactics used in these three early battles of the war, it is clear that the Carthaginian forces displayed much more tactical prowess than the armies of the Romans did. One of the main underlying reasons for this was the fact that the Roman

armies were generally led by two commanders. While that is not a flaw in itself, the commanders usually had different tactical and strategic plans that they wanted to implement against Hannibal. This would cause strife and rash actions, such as Sempronius' sally out at the battle of Trebia. Meanwhile, the Carthaginians were united under the control of Hannibal, which allowed for easier and swift implementation of his tactics during the battles. Another reason Hannibal's tactics worked so well was his ability to adapt to his surroundings and his enemy. In the battles of Lake Trasimene and Trebia, for example, he took into account the rashness of one of the Roman leaders and set ambushes to attack the enemy when he drew them out. At the battle of Cannae, where there was no areas to have ambush units, Hannibal adapted his plans and beat the enemy forces yet again. Lastly, the Romans suffered these defeats to decisions that could have been avoided for the most part. At Trebia, the Romans rushed the enemy without proper clothing or being fed which gave them a great disadvantage in the drawn out battle. At Cannae and Lake Trasimene, the Roman forces advanced towards Hannibal's forces without proper reconnaissance being done. While both of these battles had different factors involved, this mistakes cost the Roman forces dearly early on in the war. As it will be seen later on however, as the war went on, the Romans would learn from their mistakes and avenge these losses.

IV. Campaigns in Spain

While Italy was the largest and most important of the theatres of the war, there were other areas of conflict as the war progressed. Spain was an important goal for the Romans to take on for by taking Hannibal's powerbase in Spain, it would severely weaken his ability to continue the struggle in Italy. As discussed earlier, the Roman

forces under Publius and Gnaeus Scipio had several successful battles with the Carthaginian forces there. The Carthaginian commander in Spain, Hasdrubal, kept his distance from the Roman forces for he did not feel that his troops were not ready to fight them off.³¹ After repeated letters asking for assistance, he received several thousand troops from Africa. This arrival of fresh troops from Carthage helped to make Hasdrubal more confident in his men and began to march north to deal with the Scipios and their forces.³² The Romans at this time were laying siege to a city called Ibera for they were trying to make a way for their forces to head into the interior of Spain. This battle would be very important for both forces, as a victory for either side would advance their overall goal for the war. As the forces arrayed themselves for battle, the armies differed greatly in their degrees of confidence. The Romans, despite being in a far off enemy territory, knew they were fighting for Roman and her interests.³³ The troops of Hasdrubal were much less enthused for battle, which would provide an edge to the Roman troops.

As the battle commenced, Hasdrubal employed a tactic similar to the ones used in Italy; he would put pressure on the Roman lines from the flanks and try and surround the enemy men. The Romans pushed through the center of Hasdrubal's troops much faster than he planned however, and the Romans effectively divided the opposing force into two separate lines. The advantage lay with the Romans as they took a heavy toll on the forces of Carthage. Many of the enemy forces were cut down, with others like the Numidians and some of the Spanish troops fleeing from the battle once they saw that Roman had the

³¹ Livy 23.26

³² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 203

³³ Livy 23.29

advantage.³⁴ Hasdrubal fled as well leaving behind his camp and his army in tatters. This victory allowed the Scipios to consolidate the territories they gained north of the River Ebro, while the Carthaginians tried to gather their strength back.

For several years both sides built up their armies to continue the struggle for the Spanish territories. In 211 the Scipios split their armies in two and launched an offensive against the three armies of Carthage now present in Spain.³⁵ This rushed offensive did not go well for the Roman forces, as Gnaeus and Publius' legions were nearly annihilated by the Carthaginian forces. These losses, including both of the Scipio's lives, were an answer to demands from Rome for early advance according to Nigel Bagnall. While the loss of these generals and these men were a setback for the Roman forces, the early victories the Scipio's had made it necessary for Carthage to send troops to reinforce Spain, at the cost of leaving very little support for Hannibal in Italy.³⁶ Initially after these developments, Hasdrubal and his men did not take advantage of the weakened enemy, allowing for the arrival of Publius Cornelius Scipio to arrive in Spain in 210 B.C.

Once Publius Scipio had arrived in Spain he gathered the Roman forces and their allies at Tarraco where, according to Livy, he gave a speech to the veterans of the Spanish campaign and the newly arrived forces to inspire them for the coming battles.³⁷ After this speech to the men he crossed the river Ebro with most of his forces to deal with the Carthaginians in the region. At first, some of his men pressed Scipio to attack the closest of their enemy forces. This advice was most likely offered with the intent to beat

³⁴ Livy 23.29

³⁵ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 204

³⁶ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 205

³⁷ Livy, 26.41

the three armies one by one. Publius Scipio countered their thoughts, saying that by enacting such a plan the three armies would join forces to attack them and put them in a disadvantaged situation.³⁸ Instead, Scipio believed that striking straight for New Carthage would be more effective for it was a great storage area for the Carthaginian forces and a good staging ground for an eventual march into Africa. Scipio also planned to reach New Carthage by land around the same time that his naval forces, led by Gaius Laelius, so that the Romans could truly surround the city from all sides. Upon arriving at the city however, Publius Scipio found the city's position and defenses were much more imposing than he originally had thought them to be.³⁹ After making camp the day of his arrival, Scipio's forces attacked the city the following day. The Romans attacked sections of the walls from land and sea, with Scipio himself being present with his land forces, protected by shield bearers and shouting encouragement to his men as they fought to take the walls from the enemy.⁴⁰ This provided the best inspiration for the troops, for Scipio was able to see first-hand the acts of bravery as well as the acts of cowardice that the troops displayed during the battle. The Roman attempts to scale the walls were pushed back, as the height of the walls and the citizens zeal to protect the city halted the Roman advance.

Scipio wasted no time launching a second assault on the walls by replacing the tired troops with fresh men to continue the fight. Around this part of the battle, Scipio received word from some fisherman that there was a shallow part of the lagoon near the

³⁸ Livy, 26.42

³⁹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 208

⁴⁰ Livy, 26.44

city that his men would be able to cross to attack the far side of the city.⁴¹ When Scipio heard this, he led some 500 men to go that way, which went by undetected as the Carthaginians were busy focusing on the second assault on the walls for which they believed was the critical struggle at that point.⁴² With very little opposition on the far side of the wall, Scipio and his small detachment made it into the city and helped the other troops overwhelm the defenders and take the city. Scipio's planning in this battle was clear evidence of his tactical foresight, which will aid him greatly as the war progresses.

The amount of loot that the Romans got from the stores at New Carthage was enormous, ranging from a vast amount of siege weapons, thousands of pounds of silver and gold, and a great amount of wheat.⁴³ This great loss of men and supplies was a blow to Carthaginian morale to the point they at first attempted to downplay the importance of the Roman victory. The leaders dismissed it as a ploy of trickery by an upstart general who was trying to avenge the death of his family members who died in battle.⁴⁴ Publius Scipio waited the winter out, preparing his forces for the coming campaign and attempted to gather the support of some of the local tribes. Several of the tribal chieftains, such as Indibilis and Mandonius, swore to provide Scipio with their aid; this shift of sympathy to the Romans gave them many new allies while lowering Hasdrubal's list of allies.⁴⁵ With his confidence and forces increased, in the year 208 B.C., Publius Scipio decided to take the fight to the enemy before they could join their armies together. From Terraco, the Roman forces marched towards Baecula where Hasdrubal's forces were preparing to

⁴¹ Livy, 26.45

⁴² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 209

⁴³ Livy, 26.47

⁴⁴ Livy, 26.51

⁴⁵ Livy, 27.17

march towards Scipio so as to have a decisive confrontation.⁴⁶ Upon hearing of the Roman advance, Hasdrubal shifted his forces to a small plateau to the south of the town. This was a move most likely taken due to the fact that the location would give his smaller force a more defensible position against the larger Roman army. Undeterred by the high ground that the Carthaginians had, Scipio led his light-armed troops up the slope to do battle. The Romans were assailed by missiles and stones, but thanks to their experience at New Carthage, they were able to make it to the top and engage the enemy skirmishers who were not proficient in hand-to-hand combat. As the Roman troops pushed back the Carthaginians, the front lines began to crumble which allowed the rest of the Roman forces to launch an assault on the center lines since they were weakened.⁴⁷ The Carthaginians were quickly scattered by the Romans as they began to swarm over the hill and cut off their ways of escape.

Hasdrubal escaped from the battle with a number of the survivors. Eventually he met Mago and Hasdrubal son of Gisgo, where they discussed further plans for the conflict in Spain. While Hasdrubal Gisgo thought that they could still hold out in Farther Spain the other two men saw the situation dismal and they decided to take forces to other theatres of war; Hasdrubal would take his forces into Italy to assist his brother Hannibal.⁴⁸ Publius Scipio, while enjoying the advantage of a victory, did not attempt to stop Hasdrubal's withdrawal to Italy. This decision by Scipio has been looked upon with criticism by modern historians. Some, like Bagnall, believe that he was wise not to pursue Hasdrubal for Scipio did not have the intelligence or the logistics to chase after an

⁴⁶ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 210

⁴⁷ Livy, 27.19

⁴⁸ Livy, 27.20

enemy army in unfriendly territory.⁴⁹ Despite the withdrawal of Hasdrubal from Spain, in 207 B.C. Hasdrubal son of Gisgo returned to Spain to try and attack Publius Scipio's forces yet again. With aid from his fellow commander Mago, Hasdrubal Gisgo raised an army of roughly fifty thousand infantry and forty five hundred horsemen according to Livy's writings. The two generals and their men stationed themselves at Silpia where they awaited the Romans to do battle.

When Scipio heard of this large Carthaginian force gathered there, he decided to march against them, gathering allied Spanish auxiliaries along his route towards the town of Silpia. When he arrived at his destination his forces of both Roman and barbarian troops numbered around forty five thousand men.⁵⁰ As the Romans set about putting up defenses around their camp, they were set upon by a cavalry charge by Mago's who was trying to catch the Romans unprepared. Scipio outmaneuvered Mago as he had some Roman cavalry stationed on a hill nearby to aid their fellow troops should an attack like that have occurred.⁵¹ Thanks to the aid from the hidden cavalry forces, the Romans were able to regroup at the camp and launch a coordinated attack on Mago's men, who were forced to retreat after a long fight. After this initial skirmish, the two forces spent the next several days getting arrayed into battle lines to only retreat at the end of the day. The two lines were similar in composition; the allied barbarian and tribal forces composed of the flanks for both forces, with the centers made up of Roman and Carthaginian troops respectively. Publius Scipio let Hasdrubal set up his formations first each day as he studied their setup and the Carthaginians got accustomed to how the Roman forces were

⁴⁹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 212

⁵⁰ Livy, 28.13

⁵¹ Livy, 28.13

positioned in their lines.⁵² When Scipio saw that Hasdrubal's planned to face the conventional battle lines that they had seen the last several days, he ordered his men to change positions the following day; the Roman troops would be on the flanks and the Spanish would comprise of the center. By allowing the Carthaginians to set up first every day, this new strategy would cause surprise among Hasdrubal's ranks when the battle finally took place.

When the day of battle dawned, Scipio ordered a full frontal assault by his mounted troops towards the enemy camp. As Hasdrubal went outside to see the commotion, he was surprised by the Roman advance and he quickly assembled his army to meet the Romans; he arrayed his men in the usual formation, unaware of the Romans reversed formation.⁵³ As the Carthaginian line began to advance forward, Scipio ordered his wings to advance so as to engage the enemy forces before the center units met each other battle. By doing this, the elite Roman forces on the flanks were able to begin battle while the Carthaginians in the center had not yet met the slowly advancing Spanish forces.⁵⁴ By the time the units in the center finally were able to do battle, the Carthaginian troops were tired from hunger and fatigue due to their rushed preparations for battle. This, combined with the fact that their elephants panicked amid the fighting and ran towards the central lines, caused the Carthaginians to become demoralized and withdraw from the battle.⁵⁵ The battered forces went back to their camp where they began to make ready defenses for an eventual Roman assault the next day. As the night began, many of Carthage's allied forces began to desert to the Romans to the point that Hasdrubal Gisgo

⁵² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 213

⁵³ Livy, 28.14

⁵⁴ Livy, 28.14

⁵⁵ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 214

left with his men in the middle night to keep the desertions to a minimal.⁵⁶ When Publius Scipio heard of the flight, he pursued with his forces and cut off Hasdrubal Gisgo's passage across the River Baetis, causing the enemy to make a push for the ocean. The Roman forces eventually forced the Carthaginians into prolonged melee where it went from a battle to the slaughtering of animals as Livy described it. With his army devastated, Hasdrubal Gisgo and Mago fled Spain and allowed the Romans to subdue the western Mediterranean and cut off Hannibal from his base of operations.⁵⁷ With Spain subdued, the Roman forces could now deal with other areas of conflict back in Italy and the East. Publius Scipio now began to look towards Africa as his next target, wanting to take the conflict to the Carthage homelands.⁵⁸ Before taking a closer look to the final act of the war it is important to look back at the events of Hannibal in Rome the years after the battle of Cannae.

V. The Italian Campaign in the Later Years

After the grave defeat at Cannae, the Romans decided that a new strategy must be implemented for they knew that their forces could not match Hannibal in the field. Instead, they would keep a defensive line of cities where their forces would fall back when Hannibal went on the offensive and then march against the city-states that defected once Hannibal stopped offensive maneuvers.⁵⁹ The city-state allies strewn across Italy became a focus of both forces as they tried to gain the advantage in the region. This would provide most of the conflict between the years 215 and 214 B.C., as Hannibal used

⁵⁶ Livy, 28.15

⁵⁷ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 216

⁵⁸ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 217

⁵⁹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 233

diplomacy and physical might to get several allied cities of the Romans to defect. While we know relatively little of the numerous clash of arms during this time Livy provides descriptions, at points highly exaggerated, of the battles between Hannibal and the Romans. In 213 B.C., Hannibal moved south towards Tarentum where he tried to take the city with very little success.⁶⁰ The city might have stayed on Rome's side if it wasn't for the treatment Roman forces provided hostages there when they tried to escape. With the aid of some disgruntled citizens, Hannibal's forces were able to take control of the city except for the citadel which held out for some time.⁶¹

While he succeeded in pacifying Tarentum, Hannibal's attention was quickly called towards Capua, where his forces were under assault by three Roman legions. At first he tried to lift the siege by assault, he then decided to lift the siege a different way; he would march for Rome to force the Roman legions to lift the siege to defend their capital.⁶² His presence near Rome did indeed cause the desired effect, as panic began to spread among the citizens when the city heard of his approach. He withdrew after a short time to head back to Capua but found it to still be under siege. With little he could do at this point, Hannibal went to his winter quarters to plan his next moves. With no outside help to be seen, the city of Capua surrendered to the Romans, giving the legions a much needed confidence boost. This confidence continued into the early stages of the campaign season where they had some early victories. Hannibal took advantage of the stretched Roman lines as he marched towards Herdonea whose citizens were contemplating going back over to the Romans. Hannibal surprised the two Roman legions there who, led by

⁶⁰ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 245

⁶¹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 247

⁶² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 252

Gnaeus Fulvius Centumalus, tried to do battle with him.⁶³ Hannibal made short work of these forces and went on to destroy Herdonea before heading towards Lucania. In the year 209 B.C., the Roman forces began a double offensive so as to keep Hannibal moving from one breakthrough to the next one. These actions made it very difficult for Hannibal to gain the initiative, for he was preoccupied to reacting the Roman moves taking place during the campaign seasons.⁶⁴

As winter season began, the Romans received word that Hasdrubal, who had fled from Spain previously after being defeated by Publius Scipio, was preparing to cross over the Alps. The Roman forces, under Gaius Nero and Marcus Salinator, quickly gathered their forces to try and keep the brothers from joining forces. Hasdrubal sent a letter to Hannibal, most likely inquiring of the future campaign strategies, which was intercepted by a Roman party when the Carthaginian scouts took a wrong route to reach Hannibal.⁶⁵ This made it difficult for the brothers to establish communications, with Hannibal moving towards the Apulia region to wait for Hasdrubal and his forces. Hasdrubal took a path south along the Adriatic coast, missing his brother and running into Marcus Salinator's forces near the Metaurus River. Gaius Nero quickly advanced to join forces with Salinator so that they could launch a concentrated assault on Hasdrubal. Hasdrubal, upon seeing the growing Roman forces, tried to retreat during the night along the river's side; this was a costly mistake as the men were confused by the winding river and made hardly any progress before the Romans caught up at dawn.⁶⁶ When the battle initially started, the Roman right flank was unable to attack due to the position on the hill they

⁶³ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 256

⁶⁴ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 259

⁶⁵ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 263

⁶⁶ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 264

were standing on. As Salinator and Hasdrubal's men were engaged in battle, Nero took cohorts from the right flank and swung them around to the left to the surprise of both the Carthaginians and the Romans.⁶⁷ As time went on, the Roman forces slowly began to push back Hasdrubal's men. As the chances of victory began to deteriorate, Hasdrubal charged straight towards a Roman cohort and died a warrior's death worthy of the Barca name.⁶⁸

According to Livy's accounts, the Carthaginian forces suffered over fifty seven thousand casualties in that battle. Whether this number is accurate or an exaggeration to inflate the Roman victory, this battle was one of the few clear Roman victories over the Carthaginians. The news of this victory and the death of Hasdrubal brought great joy to the Roman people for this was seen perhaps as a sign of the changing tides of favor. When Hannibal received word of this defeat he proclaimed that he now clearly saw the destiny of Carthage and began to regroup his forces in Bruttium, to keep them better protected and decide on a new course of action.⁶⁹

Case Study 2: Strategies in Italy and Spain

In the years following the battle of Cannae, the Roman forces shifted their overall war strategy to better deal with Hannibal and his forces. Being as the Romans could not hope to defeat Hannibal directly in battle, the numerous consuls during the Italian

⁶⁷ Livy, 27.48

⁶⁸ Livy, 27.49

⁶⁹ Livy, 27.51

campaign waged a much more defensive war, relying on their strong city defenses to keep Hannibal back. The Romans also relied on their skills in siege warfare to retake some of their old city-state allies that defected to Hannibal after the Cannae defeat. Hannibal, unable to draw the Roman troops into large pitched battles, began to focus on the numerous cities in Central and Southern Italy. He would take cities through diplomacy, deceit, or force to try and continue to put the Romans on the defensive. This was seen in his siege of Tarentum where through a mix of deceit and force he was able to take the city. While he had several successes in these years, he was unable to capitalize on them for he did not have the troops to keep his cities for long. The Romans, while tactically inferior to Hannibal, had the numbers to negate much of his advantage. As scholars like Bagnall state the Romans had around twenty five legions at their disposal for much of the war. This allowed them to send troops to other regions around the Mediterranean, which helped to keep Carthaginian forces too occupied to send a large relief force to Hannibal. This numerical advantage became very useful for Rome, particularly between the years 209-206 B.C., for the Romans were able to launch campaigns on multiple fronts against Hannibal. This kept him from mounting any major campaign of his own for he was forced to react to Roman incursions.

One of the great strategic moves made by the Romans was the invasion of Punic Spain. By striking at Hannibal's base of operations, the Romans would be able to cut off supplies and reinforcements that Hannibal needed in his Italian campaigns. At first the Roman invasion was too rushed being as the senate wanted good news after their many defeats. While the Romans achieved some success, the troops were eventually defeated alongside of their two generals. The stalemate in Spain quickly changed with the arrival

of Publius Scipio, who was given command of the forces in this theatre of the war. Scipio decided to launch a new strategic offensive: instead of fighting the armies of Carthage in the field, he would strike for New Carthage which was their base of operations in Spain. This change of strategies took the Carthaginians by surprise, who began to be put on the defensive after the fall of New Carthage. Scipio then proceeded to attack the enemy armies quickly so that they were unable to join their forces together. With Publius Scipio's strategic planning and tactical skill in battle, the Romans were able to drive the Carthaginians out of Spain. This gave the Romans a chance to put more pressure on Hannibal in Italy and begin preparations to attack Carthage itself.

The Roman move from an offensive to a defensive campaign in Italy was a prudent move for them strategically. By keeping Hannibal's forces from getting large victories in the fields, the Romans were able to slow the drive of the Carthaginian forces. The ability for the Romans to continually replenish their forces was critical as well, being as that allowed the Romans to better hold their defenses. With Hannibal penned down in central Italy, the Romans were able to take the fight to other areas such as Spain and Sicily. This addition of numerous other theatres of war made it difficult for Carthage to effectively strengthen their campaigns at any one place. Scipio's command in Spain proved to be another good move, for his strategy made it possible to gain possession of this Carthaginian stronghold. As the strategies began to succeed in these regions, Rome and her people were now able to look to repay Hannibal's destruction of Italy with an invasion of the African homelands.

VI. Africa and the Battle of Zama

Despite the death of Hasdrubal Barca and the weakening of Carthage's power in Italy, for some time the Romans were unsure of their next move. The senate was embroiled in a heated debate on the matter, with Fabius championing a quick end to the war and the removal of Hannibal from Italy.⁷⁰ Publius Scipio countered that a fight taken to Carthage would be more beneficial for it would weaken their power and influence. This was problematic to the supporters of Fabius who, according to Bagnall, believed that would not work for the Roman people were simply weary of the war at this point. Despite the Senate's stance on the issue, Publius Scipio began to plan his expedition into Africa in the year 204 B.C.⁷¹ Naturally, the Carthaginians were perturbed by the thought of an invasion of their homeland and they did everything they could think of to keep Scipio from launching his invasion. One of the plans involved Hannibal assisting Hamilcar's assault of the city of Locri. Despite Hannibal's arrival, the Roman forces in the city held them off long enough for Scipio to arrive with reinforcements; Hannibal withdrew for he did not want to become embroiled in a lengthy campaign over the city.⁷²

While there was an incident involving mistreatment of citizens of Locri by one of his commanders, Scipio was able to convince the senate that his forces were ready for Africa. He was allowed to choose troops from Sicily to take with him, where he chose to take the survivors of Cannae as the core of his force.⁷³ Sources differ on the size of Scipio's invasion force; with some saying there was around sixteen thousand and others

⁷⁰ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 269

⁷¹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 270

⁷² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 273

⁷³ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 274

over double that amount.⁷⁴ Livy actually does not give us an estimate, saying that the question of the army size was moot. After a short detour to Sicily, Scipio's fleet made its way to Africa and was able to set up camp on the coast with very little opposition. The people of Carthage began to panic for they had no good army or leading commander to go against the Roman forces now present in their country.⁷⁵ Initially Hanno, the nephew of Hannibal, was sent with a cavalry force to deal with the Roman camp in a bid to buy time for the forces of Hasdrubal Gisgo and Syphax to provide relief for the city of Carthage. Hanno camped at a small town called Salaeca which prompted Scipio, upon hearing of this development, to exclaim that this leader was of a sorry caliber.⁷⁶ Scipio sent on an allied king, Masinissa, to trick Hanno and his men to come out of the city to do battle. Once Hanno took the bait and engaged in battle with the cavalry, Scipio's horsemen charged out from behind a hill and surrounded which resulted in the death of Hanno.⁷⁷

With this victory, Publius Scipio was able to focus his effort on the taking of the Carthaginian city of Utcia. The city's inhabitants awaited the arrival of Hasdrubal, who was waiting for Syphax's forces to arrive before he marched towards Scipio. Being as Scipio on several occasions defeated Hasdrubal Gisgo in Spain, he was being cautious in his dealings with the Roman commander. When the two Carthaginian forces joined together their numbers reached over eighty thousand troops which put Scipio at a disadvantage and he withdrew from his siege in failure.⁷⁸ As the winter months came,

⁷⁴ Livy, 29.25

⁷⁵ Livy, 29.28

⁷⁶ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 276

⁷⁷ Livy, 29.34

⁷⁸ Livy, 29.35

Scipio sent letters to Syphax to convince him to leave the Carthaginians and join with the Romans. As these negotiations were taking place, Scipio noted how the enemy camps were compiled of wood and other burnable materials. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Scipio prepared for a fire attack on the camps that were in a state of lax security as the negotiations were going on.⁷⁹ Scipio also deceived the enemy forces by making it seem that he would launch an assault on the city of Utcia, so that his fire attack would very much be a surprise to Hasdrubal. Some of Scipio's forces attacked the camp of Syphax first, causing a great amount of panic and confusion, as many of the Carthaginians thought it was an accidental fire and rushed unarmed to douse the flames.⁸⁰ The unarmed Carthaginians eventually ran into the Roman columns who made short work of the confused and ill-prepared enemy. Amidst the ensuing slaughter and inferno, the two Carthaginian generals escaped with several thousand of their men while the vast majority was killed by flames and steel.⁸¹

When news reached Carthage of this debacle of a battle, the citizens and senate alike were fearful at the thought of the possibility of Scipio's eventual march to Carthage. When it was known that he was continuing the siege of Utcia, the senate began to ponder on the next course of action for the Carthaginian military to take. The senate decided that, instead of recalling Hannibal to Carthage, they would simply muster another army to deal with the Roman troops at Utcia.⁸² This army was quickly defeated by Scipio, for his well-trained and seasoned troops simply overwhelmed the poorly trained Carthaginian

⁷⁹ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 279

⁸⁰ Livy, 30.6

⁸¹ Livy, 30.6

⁸² Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 280

recruits.⁸³ With this fresh defeat, the Carthaginian senate had no choice but to recall Hannibal and awaited his forces return in Africa. For a time it seemed that the two powers would come to terms and end the war. Scipio however wanted to return back to Italy with a great victory, not a peace settlement. When the two great generals met each other to discuss terms, an agreement could not be met and the two generals prepared their forces for the decisive battle of the war.⁸⁴

The two men wasted no time to prepare their forces for battle, being as the victor in this battle would likely go to win the war. Scipio arranged his troops into three different lines but kept them in loose rather than close formation. He did this so that Hannibal's elephants would be driven through the lines so as to not disrupt his formations.⁸⁵ This was implemented for Hannibal had brought eighty elephants into this battle to cause worry and fear among Scipio's men. Hannibal set his forces up according to their nationalities, for he had many different groups from throughout the Mediterranean region. When all the preparations were made, the elephants charged towards the Roman lines, where most turned back on the Carthaginian lines when the Romans made a great noise with their trumpets.⁸⁶ This panic caused by the elephants allowed the Roman cavalry to keep the Carthaginian horsemen from providing support in the infantry fight. The Roman infantry quickly broke through the frontlines of Hannibal's troops, as their confidence and strength was greater than that of the enemy. The Carthaginians began to retreat from the advance of the Roman forces, but Scipio eventually reformed his lines when he saw the ranks become disrupted in the pursuit of

⁸³ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 281

⁸⁴ Livy, 30.31

⁸⁵ Livy, 30.33

⁸⁶ Livy, 30.33

the enemy.⁸⁷ The fighting became much more violent as the Romans finally clashed with the elite African troops under Hannibal's command. The return of the Roman's allied cavalry finished off the Carthaginians for they were set upon from both the front and the rear of their lines. Hannibal, despite his tactful command of the battle lines, was unable to turn the tide of battle and fled the field. The Carthaginians forces were effectively destroyed, being either killed or captured by the victorious Roman troops. As Scipio Africanus pillaged the enemy camp, Hannibal returned to Carthage after some time and announced his defeat in the battle and war and urged the senate to sue for peace. After receiving crushing terms of surrender from the Roman forces the Carthaginians, with few alternatives left to them, accepted the peace terms. Rome, after a war that claimed many lives and vast amounts of materials, was now able to consolidate its hold in the Mediterranean as a power of unmatched military might.⁸⁸

Case Study 3: The Political Struggles of Hannibal and Scipio

While these two generals were successful for the most part in the military campaigns they waged throughout the war, both Hannibal and Scipio Africanus had difficulty founding common ground with their respective senates. This was due to political issues that plagued these two great powers during the war. In this section, Hannibal's and Scipio's political struggles will be detailed briefly to give a glimpse of the political processes of the time.

One of the more prominent problems among the Roman senate was the fact that families would strive to advance its own members, even if they were at odds with another

⁸⁷ Livy, 30.34

⁸⁸ Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, 299

political family.⁸⁹ This would cause divisions amongst the senators on several matters throughout the war. During the war there were three families that had a high status within the Roman senate; the Fabian, Claudian and Fulvian families.⁹⁰ The Fabian family in particular, headed by Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator, provided much opposition to the political advancement of the young Scipio Africanus⁹¹ As the war went on and Scipio gained more fame and victories, the senators began to look at him with a degree of suspicion. This was due to his rising fame in Spain where the local chieftains hailed him as a king; they feared of what might happen if he were to conquer Carthage itself and make Africa his clientela.⁹² From what could be gathered from the sources, Scipio's career was plagued with opposition from the senate majority. Being as he was a rising young military commander who enjoyed fame across Italy, it is reasonable to assume that the senators were weary of his power and did their best to limit him. Scipio Africanus was rarely deterred by this opposition, going so far as to make preparations for his African invasion when the senate essentially told him not to head towards Carthage. Scipio Africanus was shown to be somewhat of a loose cannon for he would generally disregard the senatorial decrees and conduct the campaigns he saw fit. While this served him well in his military endeavors, it would also earn him the animosity of the political leaders of Rome, who would do their best to discredit his achievements after the war's completion.

Hannibal's time in Italy around the time of Cannae was the highpoint of Carthaginian military successes. As the war reached its later years, however, Hannibal

⁸⁹ Scullard, *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*, 163

⁹⁰ Scullard, *Scipio Africanus*, 165

⁹¹ Scullard, *Scipio Africanus*, 165-66

⁹² Scullard, *Scipio Africanus*, 168

did not have the necessary troop numbers or supplies to score any more notable military victories. The senators of Carthage generally sent supplies to other theatres of war, as Rome successfully took the war to places like Spain and Sicily which effectively spread Carthage's forces thin across the Mediterranean. This was also possibly due to the faction amongst the elders that opposed the Barcid family, who some probably blamed started this war with Rome. Despite this lack of support, Hannibal was able to hold out in Italy for many years. Even when Scipio Africanus was waging war in Africa, the elders waited until some large military disasters before they summoned Hannibal back. It seems that Hannibal faced more opposition from his political leaders than Scipio did in Rome or at least was unable to act on that opposition like Scipio did. While there is little information concerning the political aspects of Hannibal and Scipio's career, at least when compared to the military aspects, it was clear to see that both men had a fair share of opposition in their respective states. This was common among the ancient kingdoms and states, for those in power tended to be wary of the fame and influence that the military generals would gain in war. While Hannibal was hamstrung at times by the council of elders, Scipio was able to go around the senate to accomplish his military goals, which played a part in the Roman victory in the Second Punic War.

VII. Conclusion

After seventeen years of fighting and the loss of many tens of thousands of troops, the Roman Republic defeated the state of Carthage in their bid for supremacy in the Mediterranean. While Hannibal brought about several significant Carthaginian victories in the early years of the war, he was unable to fully capitalize on them as the war went on. The Roman forces' ability to adapt their strategy against Carthage played a significant

role in their eventual victory over the Punic state. While Roman struggled to maintain consuls and generals who were effective in the war, Scipio Africanus eventually became the Latin answer to Hannibal' tactical and strategic might. As the war drew to a close, the rivalry between Scipio Africanus and Hannibal came to a head in the monumental battle of Zama. This war is still remembered many years after its conclusion thanks to the tactics and strategies employed by the likes of Hannibal and Scipio. The Second Punic War was the epitome of power struggles between states in the ancient era and will be forever immortalized due to the actions and legends of Hannibal Barca and Publius Scipio Africanus.

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