Hannibal at the Gates:

An Analysis of the Punic Invasion of Italy in the Third Century BCE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Hannibal Barca and his role in the Second Punic War while scrutinizing his battle tactics to gain perspective on his military campaigns. Hannibal was the first Carthaginian general known to have been educated in Greek warfare. This training coupled with his natural affinity for warfare gave him a distinct advantage because the Greeks had developed the most advanced military theories and tactics of the time. There are no extant autobiographies of Hannibal or Carthaginian works on Hannibal, which has resulted in a historiographical bias. This thesis focuses on Hannibal's battle tactics in order to present this argument in as direct and unbiased a format as possible. A reexamination of Hannibal's tactics makes dissecting the imbalance between the ancient, primary sources and modern, secondary sources possible while ultimately giving a more realistic view of Hannibal.

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DEDICATION

*This work is dedicated to God
and to my wife, Brenna.*

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CH 1: HISTORIOGRAPHY

The historiography on Hannibal suffers from a Roman bias. The struggles of Carthage's greatest son are reflected in the scattered historical writings of Rome, its most hated enemy. The lack of contemporaneous sources and the poor state of existing evidence have made it difficult for scholars to analyze Hannibal's accomplishments. Educated Greeks such as Silenus and Sosylus traveled with Hannibal and wrote about him during his campaigns, but none of their work survived.

Modern historiography often portrays Hannibal in the kind light of hindsight and hero worship. Historians like Dodge are impressed to the point of bias by Hannibal's exploits, but they do not fully explore the possibility that his Greek education may have helped make Hannibal a great general. This thesis addresses the imbalance between the ancient and modern works, with an emphasis on the theory that his Greek education was fundamental to his success.

This chapter analyzes the accounts of Polybius and Livy as basic evidence for our knowledge of Hannibal. It also includes some briefer remarks on Nepos' *Life of Hannibal*, Plutarch's *Life of Fabius Maximus*, and Silius Italicus' *Punica*. The remainder of the chapter discusses key points of agreement and contention in the modern scholarship on Hannibal. The Latin and Greek translations are from the Loeb Classical Library.

The Ancient Sources

Ancient sources on Hannibal are addressed chronologically. First, Silenus and Sosylus were Greek writers who traveled with Hannibal in Spain and Italy during the war. Their works are no longer extant. Second, the writings of Polybius and Livy, one Greek and one Latin, are the most abundant surviving historical sources on the Punic general. They wrote around a century apart, but the fullness and completeness of their works make them primary sources. Third,

authors such as Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch studied Hannibal in both a historical and cultural context, making them useful for understanding and assessing Hannibal's legacy.

The loss of all contemporaneous works is a major obstacle to historians. Silenus and Sosylus were key individuals in the Carthaginian camp. Sosylus was Hannibal's tutor in Greek language and literature, and Silenus wrote an official history of the campaign, which Polybius, Coelius Antipater, and Livy later used as a source.[1] The loss of their work diminishes our understanding of their role, but allusions to them by later Roman authors point to their importance. Both historians were writing for a larger, Greek-speaking audience, and they chronicled the Second Punic War from the Carthaginian perspective. It is important to remember their loss while reading later authors on the subject.[2]

Polybius

Polybius was a Greek historian of the second century BCE.[3] He was born into a wealthy family in Megalopolis in the Peloponnese, where Rome and Macedon struggled for domination. The Achaean League, a confederation of the towns of Achaea threatened by Sparta, allied itself with Macedon to protect its interests. Their combined success gave the Achaean League control over the Peloponnese, where it became increasingly difficult to maintain political independence from Rome. In 168, Rome defeated Macedon in the battle of Pydna and forced the Achaean League to surrender hostages from its leading families. Polybius, being from a prominent family, became a hostage in Rome. He thrived in the Scipionic Circle, a philhellenic group of Roman

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[1] F.W. Walbank, "Silenus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford, U.K: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1407.

[2] See Polyb., 3.20.5 for criticism of Sosylus.

[3] All dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

aristocrats with coherent cultural, literary, and political ideals under the leadership of Scipio Aemilianus.[4]

In Rome, Polybius quickly formed a friendship with and became the advisor of Scipio Aemilianus. The Scipiones were an influential Roman family. Their patriarch, Scipio Africanus Maior, was the general who ended the Second Punic War (201 BCE) by defeating Carthage in Spain and North Africa. The Scipionic Circle gave Polybius access to essential members of the Roman ruling class, family archives, and possibly even state historical archives. This access allowed him unparalleled research access for a foreign historian, and his pro-Roman perspective reflects this privilege and biased view.[5]

Using his newfound patronage, Polybius wrote world history and traveled extensively. For his research on the Second Punic War, he toured Spain, Gaul, and North Africa. He interviewed important individuals and eyewitnesses to the conflict, including Massinissa, the Numidian king crucial to Rome's victory against Hannibal. In 146, Polybius witnessed the destruction of the city of Carthage by Scipio Aemilianus, which ended the Third Punic War. Morbidly inspired by the loss of the great city, he trekked along the North African coast and retraced Hannibal's route from Spain through the Alps. In southern Italy, Polybius consulted a bronze table Hannibal had left with an inscription of his exploits, his *res gestae*, which provided Polybius with accurate numerical data and a primary source from Hannibal himself.[6]

Polybius' goal in writing a world history was to explain the rise of Roman power to the rest of the world, especially his fellow Greeks. He was loyal to his native land despite the long

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[4] P. Derow, "Polybius," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1209.
[5] Ronald Mellor, *The Historians of Ancient Rome* (Routledge: New York, 2013), 11.
[6] Polyb., 3.20. The Latin and Greek translations are from the Loeb Classical Library.

years spent abroad. He wrote in Greek, not only because it was the current universal Mediterranean language but because he was struggling to explain the events which led to the end of Greece's political autonomy to the Greek people.

Rome's conflict with Carthage became the focus of Polybius' work because the Punic wars propelled Rome to the status of world power. His universal history covered events throughout the world, including Greece and the Near East. Compared to the titanic struggle in the western Mediterranean, however, the conflicts of the Greek peninsula and the Near East seemed like a distraction from the main event. Polybius used this comparison to show other states' obliviousness to Rome's rise, and that, before the destruction of Corinth, Rome had not demonstrated any interest in expanding further eastward. It is through Polybius' history that we know Hannibal enjoyed a brief political career in Carthage after the Second Punic War. He was later forced into exile, where he traveled to different Eastern kingdoms, warning them about Rome. In 189, the Seleucid Antiochus III went to war with Rome on Hannibal's advice; Antiochus led his army into Greece, but the Romans rebuffed him near Thermopylae. Rome later subsumed the Seleucids as well.

The structure of Polybius' narrative ingeniously combined chronological and geographical events. Polybius divided his narrative vertically by Olympiads and horizontally with each year in a fixed progression from west to east beginning in Italy and proceeding to Greece, Macedonia, Asia, and Egypt. His methodology included the study of documents, written memoirs, geography, and eyewitness interviews. His focus was on political actions, but his definition of political was broad in scope.[7] Polybius aimed to explain events in a multifaceted

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[7] Polyb., 3.12.25

way rather than to assign responsibility to one person or group. "Beginnings are actions; actions are preceded by decisions to act; decisions to act are processes involving various elements: a proper explanation, for Polybius, must delineate these processes and identify these various elements."[8]

Polybius is the extant source written closest to the events of the Second Punic War. Unfortunately, Polybius wrote his work from the victors' point of view. He was heavily influenced both by his Roman patrons and his desire to show the Scipio family in a good light. Positive descriptions of the Scipiones can be found throughout the *Histories*, especially the elder Publius Cornelius Scipio.

Polybius explained not only the methods by which Rome conquered the world but also the reasons for Rome's success. On an abstract level, the Greek historian attributes Rome's rise to Tyche (Fortune), but Polybius credits Rome's superior morals, system of government, and military organization as the tools which allowed the Romans to conquer the Mediterranean.[9] Ancient historians all moralize to some degree, and Polybius is no different. As a historian, he followed in the footsteps of Thucydides. Polybius' motives for writing his universal history were political in origin,[10] and his narrative was not sufficient for himself without his giving an examination of cause and effect. He frequently attacked other authors, like Timaeus, for not meeting the standards of historical writing he developed throughout his career.[11]

Polybius' standards have remained a measure by which to judge other historians. These standards, like those of Thucydides, include personal political experience, in-depth geographic

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[8] P. Derow, "Polybius," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1210.
[9] Polyb., 1.1.5, 6.1.1.
[10] Mellor, *Historians of Ancient Rome*, 10.
[11] P. Derow, "Polybius," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1210.

knowledge (by personal travel), and documentary research. His assessment of sources exemplifies a critical practice for all historians. Other critical practices included personal interviews with eyewitnesses, the examination of inscriptions, and a review of documents from the period.[12] Polybius' historiographic standard and his near contemporaneity with his subject matter make his work the most reliable surviving source available on Hannibal and the Second Punic War. In book 3, which deals with the Second Punic War, Polybius shows little bias when he discusses the factors that led to it. He charges both Rome and Carthage with misconduct, brinksmanship, and treachery. However, his biases surface in his conclusion that the explanation for the war was the hatred of Rome by Carthage's elite military family, the Barcids.

Livy

Livy lived long after Polybius and did not meet the Greek historian's methodological standards. Polybius had personal political and military experience, travel experience across the Mediterranean, and access to private records and probably Roman state archives. Livy had none of these. Livy grew up in northern Italy and never held high political office or served in the Senate. He had no military experience, and his apparent lack of travel led him to rely almost entirely on books for geographical and topographical information. Without political connections Livy had little, if any, direct access to relevant state or personal documents. He leaned heavily on Polybius and previous annalists such as Coelius Antipater. The princeps Augustus sponsored his work on a history of Rome, which encapsulated the idealism of the early Republic, the *Ab Urbe Condita*.[13]

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[12] Mellor, *Historians of Ancient Rome*, 11.
[13] J. Briscoe, "Livy," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 878.

Polybius would have faulted Livy's historical method. Livy's heavy reliance on secondary sources hinders his perspective on historical causes. Livy's basic value as evidence lies in the cohesive linear and narrative quality of his work. His goal, much like that of Polybius, was to write a history of Rome, but his *Ab Urbe Condita*, intended for a Roman audience, is a synthesis of legend, history, patriotism, and drama. He wrote it more than one-hundred-fifty years after the Second Punic War, and he repeats errors present in previous sources. Livy's account of Hannibal's route through the Alps, for example, is copied almost word for word from Polybius.[14] Livy's work reflects the moralistic bias common to ancient historians; he portrays individuals as entirely good or evil, with Roman characters mainly in the former category. The speeches given in his work are fictitious, but Livy presents them as direct quotations. This practice follows in Thucydides' historiographic tradition, which provides the *locus classicus* for discussing speeches in all ancient histories:

> My habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.[15]

Livy uses quotes from earlier sources, then builds epic monologues around the idealized personas he created in his text.

Hannibal was one of the most challenging characters for Livy. Like all other authors, Livy acknowledged the Punic general's military acumen. He accused Hannibal of cruelty, treachery, impiety, and "a total disregard for […] all that other men hold sacred."[16] His

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[14] See Polyb., 3.54.4-55; Livy, 21.35.10-37.
[15] Thuc., 1.22.
[16] Livy, 21.4.9.

subsequent lionizing of the elder Scipio Africanus is a reflection of his own Roman bias and the bias of earlier sources such as Polybius. This is because Roman authors needed someone equal in talent and superior in morality in order to assert the Roman sense of their own moral superiority. The wickedness of Hannibal also brings up the idea of alleged Punic "reliability" (*fides Punica*), which will be addressed in chapter five.

Livy was the first to introduce a fully developed periodic structure into Latin historiography. His mixture of direct and indirect speech became a feature of his technique, as well as his use of poetic or archaic words, a practice avoided by writers such as Cicero and Caesar. This language was specific to individual episodes in Roman history in the first decade of Livy's work, which treats Rome's legendary origins. Later episodes that share this practice include the story of the Bacchanalia and the account of the death of Cicero.[17] Livy was a patriotic writer but never refers to the Romans in the narrative as "our men" or "our army." He aimed to chronicle the rise of Rome and highlight the virtues responsible for their success. Like other ancient historians, his work tried to reinforce and improve the morality of its audience.[18]

Without any personal experience in war, politics, or travel, Livy's value as evidence can be confusing. Tacitus states that Livy was famous for his eloquence and truthfulness.[19] His *Ab Urbe Condita* inspired the citizens of imperial Rome with an idealistic vision that recalled a bygone age. He belonged to a historiographic tradition that included Sallust, though he did not follow the methodology of Thucydides and Polybius as carefully as Sallust did.[20] Roman authors

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[17] J. Briscoe, "Livy," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 878. See Livy, 39 for Bacchanalia; Livy, *Per.* 120 for the death of Cicero.
[18] Livy, pref. 10
[19] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.34.1.
[20] J. Briscoe, "Livy," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 878.

built their visions of Rome based on Livy's extensive work. The poet Silius Italicus used Livy as the main source for his *Punica*, an epic on the Second Punic War which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. Sixteenth-century scholars across Europe translated Livy's work, and, untranslated, it became a standard for teaching the Latin language. Livy's influence is widespread because so much of his work is extant. Although his Roman bias is palpable, his writing is strong enough to act as a counterbalance. Apart from Polybius, Livy is the most comprehensive source modern readers have on the Second Punic War. In J.F. Lazenby's words, "if where Polybius fails us, we reject Livy's account of the war, we must abandon any attempt to write a history of it."[21]

Other Ancient Evidence

The next group of sources consists of biographers, historians, and others removed from the conflict by centuries. These sources reflect Hannibal's legacy in the ancient world. It is a legacy warped by surviving pro-Roman sources, and, as such, needs correction. Carthaginian sources would be the best way to counteract Roman biases, but the libraries of both Carthage and Alexandria were destroyed, the former by conquering Roman legions and the latter through arson. There is no telling what information resided in the library of Carthage or the famed library at Alexandria that could have balanced the historiographic perspective on Hannibal.

The genre of biography, which developed through the works of authors such as Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch, began as a component of historical writing, but ultimately developed into a genre of its own, unrestrained by the rules of historical method. The lives of great men, such as kings, generals, politicians, philosophers, and poets, became case studies for generals and leaders

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[21] J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1978), 260.

to emulate or learn from their mistakes. Military leaders were a necessary focus, given the importance of warfare in the ancient world. The works of Nepos and Plutarch were separated by more than a century, but both chose to write on famous generals, including Hannibal. Their works influenced later Roman writers such as Tacitus, Lucian, and Suetonius.

Cornelius Nepos was a first-century Roman author who pioneered biography as a genre. His only extant works are biographies of famous military commanders, including Hannibal. Nepos' work was biographical rather than historical, so Polybius' standards do not apply. He was not involved in politics and did not serve in the army. He was wealthy but nonpolitical, though he did correspond with the likes of Cicero and Catullus. This lack of experience necessitated his reliance on previous works such as Polybius.[22]

His work makes him the earliest extant biographer in Latin. He is labeled an "intellectual pygmy" by Nicholas Horsfall because his writing includes hasty, careless composition and a lack of control over his material. Horsfall describes Nepos' everyday style as "eulogistic, with an ethical aim, apparently aimed at a 'middlebrow' Roman audience with limited knowledge of Greek."[23] His goal likely was to make the great men of history accessible to a broader Roman audience.[24]

Nepos appreciated Hannibal as a general without vilifying him, and his unwillingness to slander the Punic general is a welcome respite from other Roman authors.[25] Unfortunately, his work lacks military detail and gives no new insight into Hannibal as a commander or a person.

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[22] J.C. Rolfe, "Cornelius Nepos," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 396.
[23] Nicholas Horsfall, "Prose and Mime," in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature,* eds. E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 286.
[24] Ibid., 287.
[25] Nepos, *Hann.* 9.2, praises Hannibal as *callidissimus* (crafty).

Colorful episodes like the ruse of the Falernian cattle and the deception of the Cretans portray the Punic general with dramatic flair but do nothing to illuminate his character beyond showing his general cleverness. Ancient biographies focused on the narrative of life but also needed to draw moral lessons. Nepos' pure, clear writing style targeted the public at large rather than the educated elite. The moral lessons Nepos draws from Hannibal's life are not as heavy-handed as those of other authors. Rather than explicitly moralizing, Nepos relies on anecdotes to highlight desirable qualities in his subjects, which allowed Roman readers to learn about the moral character of his biographical subjects without prior knowledge of them.

Silius Italicus was a Roman politician and poet. He lived during the early Roman Empire. His best-known work is the *Punica*, an epic poem on the Second Punic War written in the style of Virgil. It is the longest surviving poem in Latin at over twelve thousand lines in seventeen books. He organized his fifteen-year history of the war around the battle of Cannae in 216. Books eight through ten describe the battle, with seven books before and seven afterward. Livy was the historical source behind the poet's work.

The poem states that the Second Punic War is the fulfillment of Dido's curse against Aeneas, the legendary ancestor of Rome's founders.[26] This mythological dimension is a thematic issue throughout the work. Hannibal is presented as a tool of Juno's rage, not just as a human antagonist. The gods are divine characters in the poem, which follows the traditional view of the divine sanction for Rome's imperial destiny. Modern critics censure Italicus for not following Lucan's example and removing divine characters from the narrative. The goals of epic poetry are not the same as historical works, however, and Italicus' poem brims with nostalgia for a simpler,

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[26] Virg. *Aen*. 4.622-9.

nobler past. It is also brimming with apprehension that Rome's victory over Carthage might have held the seeds of its contemporary decline in imperial times. This acts as the second major theme of the *Punica*, which other authors, such as Livy, also explored.[27]

Claire Stocks discusses the process of cultural integration in Silius Italicus' *Punica*. Her study treats the *Punica* as a cultural biography, and, in this context, she discusses Italicus' work alongside other ancient biographers. Stocks explores Hannibal's status as a cultural icon, setting him up as being "both model for, and reflection of, Rome's *uiri*," sometimes, even as more Roman than they.[28] Multiple Roman heroes, such as Marcellus and Scipio Africanus, are needed "as the positive, multiple exemplars to offset the ostensibly negative, individual, Hannibal."[29] Stocks concludes that Hannibal is the one enemy that best exemplifies the ideal of *Romanitas*.[30] This theme parallels the view of other Roman authors, who like Italicus, saw the seeds of Rome's moral decline begin with its defeat of Carthage in the Second Punic War.[31]

Plutarch was a philosopher and biographer who lived in the late first and early second century CE He spent most of his life in Greece but visited Italy and Egypt, and he lectured in Rome. He was a priest at Delphi during the last thirty years of his life and posited a partnership between Greece as a cultural educator and Rome as a high power. He wrote dialogues in the style of Aristotle and Cicero, marked by long speeches, characterization, and observations. The object of his work was not to write continuous political history but to exemplify virtue or vice

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[27] D. Feeney, "Silius Italicus," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1407.

[28] Claire Stocks, *The Roman Hannibal: Remembering the Enemy in Silius Italicus' 'Punica'* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 18; 232.

[29] Ibid., 12.

[30] Ibid., 79.

[31] John Jacobs, rev. "Claire Stocks, The Roman Hannibal" (Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 2015), http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2015/2015.02.5

individually in the careers of great men. He paid particular attention to education, anecdotes, and the development and revelation of character. The general pattern of his *Lives* includes (1) family; (2) education; (3) public debut; (4) climaxes; (5) change of fortune; (6) latter years; and (7) death.[32]

Hannibal is portrayed indirectly in Plutarch's *Life of Fabius Maximus*, a depiction noteworthy for its lack of Roman bias. Literary critics point out that Plutarch dwells on the strengths rather than weaknesses of his characters. Since ancient biographies focus on the moral interpretation of the individual, emphasizing strengths is an expected byproduct.

The Life of Fabius Maximus provides perspectives on both Hannibal and his main Roman adversary. Plutarch presents Fabius as the type of character Rome needed in order to survive as a state. Religious observance is paramount in Fabius' character. Only his observance of the auspices, for example, kept Fabius from being ambushed by Hannibal.[33] Roman writers decried military tactics like ambushes as treacherous and cowardly. The term Punic faith, or *fides Punica*, was used ironically to describe the tricks and deceptions used by Carthaginians in warfare, diplomacy, commerce, and other aspects of life. Although mostly a stereotype, the term came to define the disdain early Romans had for tactics and strategies that relied on subterfuge rather than brute force. Fabius Maximus was critical in adopting deceit as a Roman tactic, and he did so directly in response to Hannibal's success in Italy.[34]

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[32] D. Russell, "Plutarch," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1200.

[33] Plut., *Fab*, 19.6.

[34] J.E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2005), 205-208.

Plutarch credits Roman success against Hannibal to Fabius' delaying strategy and the enervating power of the city of Capua.[35] Plutarch posits that Capua reduced the effectiveness of Hannibal's army's as a fighting force. This analysis is an apparent moral hyperbole that Plutarch uses to decry the corruption of city life in Rome. He often overstates situations for dramatic effect, for example, describing an earthquake that "destroyed several cities, diverted rivers from their channels and split off great fragments of cliffs" during the battle of Lake Trasimene.[36] Other dramatic events include: (1) the trap at Casilinum, which resulted in the legendary ruse of the flaming oxen; (2) Hannibal's mispronouncing a Latin name as the reason his guides led the army astray; and (3) a windstorm at Cannae sweeping into the Roman front line, impairing the soldiers' sight.[37] After Cannae, Plutarch states that Hannibal "brought the whole of Italy under his control,"[38] a deliberate exaggeration to illustrate the shift in momentum at that point in the war.

Plutarch's works are some of the main sources for understanding the Greek and Roman world. The pitfalls of his work, including the lack of historical perspective and simplistic moral attitudes, sometimes lead to doubt about its viability as source material. If treated with caution, ancient biographies like Plutarch's can help to piece together Hannibal's legacy. Romans vilified Hannibal for invading Italy. Roman society as a whole was damaged psychologically, and after his death, vengeful Roman writers purposely maligned Hannibal's reputation. His legacy occasionally outshone this bias, as we begin to see in the biographies of Nepos and Plutarch.

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[35] Plut., *Fab,* 23.2.
[36] Ibid., 3.2.
[37] Ibid., 16.4.
[38] Ibid., 17.2.

Their admiration and respect point to a new chapter in Hannibal's historiography, which in turn has allowed for the revival of his legacy in modern times.

Modern Scholarship

Modern scholarship has scrubbed Hannibal's reputation spotless. History now considers him one of the three greatest ancient military leaders alongside Alexander and Caesar. It is interesting that of these men, Hannibal is the only one who lost the war he started. Alexander's empire fell apart before his body turned cold, and Caesar died before he could shape the foundation of the Roman Empire. These chance events overshadow their military accomplishments. Hannibal's defeat in the Second Punic War breaks this pattern. Scipio Africanus defeated him at the Battle of Zama in 202. Unlike Alexander and Caesar, victorious but ultimately unsuccessful in their goals, Hannibal was neither victorious in the long run nor successful in achieving his primary goal of defeating Rome and restoring Carthaginian power in the Mediterranean. Livy's popularity in Europe during the Neo-Classical period might explain this trend among modern writers to lionize Hannibal. Napoleon himself praised Hannibal as an admirable leader.[39]

> Theodore Dodge credits Hannibal with changing warfare entirely:
>
> That war could be waged by avoiding in lieu of seeking battle; that the results of a victory could be earned by attacks upon the enemy's communications, by flank-maneuvers, by seizing positions from which safely to threaten him in case he moved, was not understood. That it did so was due to the teaching of Hannibal.[40]

He then compares Hannibal to Alexander the Great in terms of vision and ability. However, the tactics he refers to were already well established in Greek warfare, as chapter two illustrates.

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[39] Napoleon Bonaparte, *Memorial de Sainte-Helene*, ed. E. de las Cases (Paris, 1823), 2.338.

[40] Theodore Ayrault Dodge, *Hannibal: A History of the Art of War among the Carthaginians Down to the Battle of Pydna, 168, with a Detailed Account of the Second Punic War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), 151.

Hannibal's Greek education, including its military side, gave him an advantage over other Carthaginian and Roman generals. This was the first time these tactics were fully brought to bear against the Romans, which caused a paradigm shift in their method of warfare. The extent to which Hannibal changed warfare is discussed further in chapter five.

This idealizing trend is recognized by Hans Delbrück when he compares Hannibal and Napoleon as the two great commanders of world history. They are "so great that history has always been tempted to judge their conquerors more sternly than it judged them, just so that the idea would not arise that the conqueror was greater than the conquered."[41] Delbrück places the victorious Scipio Africanus at Hannibal's side as an equal , in contrast to other modern scholars' grudging admission of Scipio's competence, which in turn contrasts with ancient authors' resentful praise of Hannibal.

J.F. Lazenby compares Hannibal to both Napoleon and Robert E. Lee and finds them both wanting. He argues that Hannibal's ability to campaign for so long in Italy is the true mark of his military ability rather than his stunning campaign. When these two generals faced defeat in Russia and at Gettysburg, respectively, their surrenders afterward were swift compared to Hannibal's. He refused to admit defeat for over a decade after Cannae, which, although technically a victory, did not force Rome to capitulate as expected. His government finally had to recall him to protect his threatened homeland.[42]

According to Serge Lancel, Hannibal should be considered the first international hero. He points out that Hannibal was not limited by his culture, as was Alexander the Great. His tactical

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[41] H. Delbrück, *History of the Art of War within the Framework of Political History*, trans. W. Renfroe, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1975), 384-5.

[42] Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 255-7.

genius and leadership were not limited to Carthaginian, Greek, or Latin culture. He superseded cultural barriers and became a great leader who fought for the honor of his country.[43] Hannibal's army consisted largely of mercenaries uniquely equipped both materially and tactically. It is to Hannibal's credit that he was able to wield this multifaceted tool effectively.

Richard Gabriel provides the most telling example of the modern bias toward Hannibal yet. Gabriel claims that no general, ancient or modern, equals Hannibal. His criteria for this claim include the fact that no other Western general (1) campaigned for so long; (2) fought so many battles; (3) won so many victories; and (4) extricated his army so successfully from a war zone. By these standards, Gabriel claims Hannibal was "greater than Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Wellington, and even Alexander."[44] He was only defeated at Zama "under conditions so unfavorable that it is unlikely that any general could have succeeded where Hannibal failed."[45]

These examples illustrate a more significant issue. Modern scholars portray Hannibal with hindsight and hero worship. These historians are impressed to the point of bias by Hannibal's exploits and admire the Carthaginian general as a tragic underdog. Scholars in the future need to have a more balanced perspective. Hannibal Barca was a brilliant general whose accomplishments should be studied for what they were, not for what they might have been, and not for what critics wish they were.

Modern criticisms of Hannibal are few and far between. B.D. Hoyos comes closest to providing an accurate assessment of Hannibal's strategic and tactical acumen. The author provides a critical reassessment of Hannibal's strategy in invading Italy, as well as his conduct of

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[43] Serge Lancel, *Hannibal*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 224.
[44] R. Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity* (Westport, CT, 2001), 144.
[45] Ibid., 145.

the war after Cannae, including his decision not to march on Rome after the battle of Cannae. He questions modern depictions of the Punic general as a "military genius with limitations" by criticizing the timetable of Hannibal's Alpine crossing, Carthage's failure at naval rearmament, its wasteful reinforcement strategy, and Hannibal's delay in investing Rome after Cannae. Hoyos holds Hannibal responsible for all these strategic failures, citing Polybius' assertion that the Carthaginian general made all wartime decisions.[46] The author commends Hannibal for his leadership capabilities but rejects the idea of Hannibal as a Hellenistic military genius.

This chapter has covered a wide range of introductory topics concerning the Second Punic War. The state of the primary sources is the crux of the historiographical issue. There is a dearth of pro-Carthaginian sources or even third-party authors that could balance the issue. The Greek Polybius repaid Rome's patronage with a dazzling portrait of Scipio Africanus. His standards for historical writing provided a framework to which future historians and contemporaries alike could aspire. Livy, the Roman patriot, leaned heavily on Polybius and earlier sources, now lost, to create his magnum opus. His history of Rome created a bright, burning nationalism in the Empire that carried the image of Rome through the Dark Ages and down to the present day. Plutarch, the provincial biographer, provides an outside perspective on Hannibal and his war, using a moral framework of the events to create a template for future generals and kings to follow. Lastly, Cornelius Nepos, the poet, shows through his biography the cracks in Rome's long-standing hatred of the Carthaginian invader. Respect breaks in, and history no longer condemns Hannibal. Each of these sources is crucial to understanding the

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[46] Dexter Hoyos, "Hannibal: What Kind of Genius?" in *Greece & Rome* 30 (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 175.

information available on the Second Punic War and its most famous general. They also reveal pro-Roman bias.

Modern scholarship on Hannibal lacks appreciation for the Greek education he received under the guidance of his father, Hamilcar. His brothers were also recipients of this education, and it was the primary reason for the caliber of their generalship, which far outstripped that of the average Carthaginian leader. This thesis provides an offset to the positive bias in modern scholarship while still giving credit to Hannibal for his strategy and tactics.

CH 2: CARTHAGINIAN BACKGROUND

Carthage was a Phoenician colony of Tyre founded in 814. Located in modern Tunisia, Qart-ḥadašt, or "new city," was founded, according to legend, by Queen Dido. It remained a dependent of Tyre until 650. Carthage was a thalassocracy. It relied on its network of maritime trade routes for wealth and manpower. The string of Phoenician merchant cities along the coast of North Africa, southern Spain, and the islands of the western Mediterranean formed the foundation of this network. Carthage established a commercial monopoly in the western Mediterranean by the end of the sixth century.[47] These circumstances were the result of the battle of Alalia in 535, in which a Carthaginian-Etruscan alliance defeated a Greek fleet off the coast of Corsica. This military victory excluded Greeks and others from Spain, though Greek merchant cities had already been established in southern France, a fact that would become important in the geopolitical situation later on. Until the First Punic War, Carthaginian ships ruled the western seas.

The First Punic War lasted from 264 to 241. Maritime supremacy was critical to Rome's victory over Carthage. Despite being able to field a superior land army, Rome was powerless to support it because of its lack of a strong navy. Sicily became the focal point of the war. Rome was unable to effectively besiege coastal cities on the island until it controlled access to the sea, which would prevent the Carthaginian navy from being able to supply their cities with food and reinforcements. On land, the Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca used hit-and-run guerrilla tactics to counter Roman numerical superiority.

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[47] H.H. Scullard, "Carthage and Rome," in *The Rise of Rome to 220 BC* , eds. F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen, R.M. Ogilvie, 2nd ed. CAH 7.2 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20.

After Carthage's last fleet sank at the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241, the Carthaginian Senate ordered Hamilcar to come to terms with Rome. Unable to be resupplied, Hamilcar surrendered and returned to Carthage. Despite the protraction of the conflict and the massive loss of life, Hamilcar did not agree with his government's decision to abandon Sicily.[48]

Carthage's prospects fell after the war. It abandoned Sicily, and war debt was placed firmly on the city's shoulders. Rome was in control of the western Mediterranean Sea, and Carthage's navy was nonexistent. Hamilcar returned to his estates embittered. There was a possibility that the city fathers would crucify him for his failure. That danger passed, however, as Carthage plunged into another conflict.

The Truceless War, as it came to be known, was a rebellion that occurred from 241-237 in North Africa. The mercenary army that Hamilcar had brought back to Carthage rebelled after the Senate attempted to renegotiate their payment. Freed slaves, Libyans, and other tribes flocked to the rebellion. Their initial military successes sidelined Carthage's traditional allies, the Numidians. Local tribes began to waver as different chieftains considered siding with the rebels. Sardinia quickly rebelled as well. Cut off from the rest of North Africa, Carthage recalled Hamilcar Barca to resume leadership of the army. He fought fiercely for two years until he defeated the rebel army at the battle of the Saw in 237. North Africa was brought back under Carthage's control, and the city was secured.[49]

In 238, Rome took advantage of Carthage's predicament during the rebellion to seize Sardinia. Neither Rome nor Carthage sent troops to Sardinia during this diplomatic stand-off. Without a navy and having just recovered from an almost fatal rebellion, Carthage was in no

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[48] Polyb., 3.9.6
[49] Ibid., 3.1.65-88.

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position to argue. It agreed to surrender Sardinia. To add insult to injury, Rome, fearing

Carthage's returning economic power, added twelve hundred talents to the already substantial

war debt.[50] Rome's unprovoked treaty-breaking concerning Sardinia poisoned diplomatic

relations with Carthage and paved the way for another war between the two powers.

Though weakened, Carthage was secured. Hamilcar had saved his country from an

unmitigated disaster. Determined to find new sources of wealth, men, and resources, Hamilcar

left for Spain with an army to expand Carthage's territory. Trading outposts along the southern

coast and nearby islands had existed for centuries. The mineral wealth, including silver, lay in

the interior. Hamilcar's plan to reestablish Carthage went through Spain.

Carthage in Spain

Hamilcar arrived in Gades, Spain, in 237. The whole coastal strip of lower Andalusia was

already within Carthage's sphere of influence, but it did not directly control the region. Lancel

describes Carthage as a "privileged commercial and cultural partner," along with the Greeks,

who were competing with Carthage to distribute glazed pottery and other trade items to the local

Spanish tribes.[51] Polybius describes Hamilcar's expansion as a reconquest aimed at "re-

establishing the Carthaginians' affairs in Iberia."[52] For nine years, Hamilcar fought against the

Iberian tribes to bring southern Spain under Carthage's control. He founded the city of Akra

Leuke in 231 to solidify his holdings and pacify the newly conquered region.[53]

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[50] Scullard, "Carthage and Rome," 569.
[51] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 35.
[52] Polyb., 2.1.2
[53] Lancel, 36.

The reconquest of Spain had immediate benefits for Carthage. Hamilcar reorganized the mines in the Sierra Morena and began distributing silver coinage.[54] In 231, a Roman embassy traveled to Spain to meet with Hamilcar. They asked him what his purpose was in Spain, and he replied that he was fighting to pay off Carthage's indemnity to Rome.[55] This diplomatic answer belied the growing political tension between the two powers. In 229, Hamilcar died in battle against the Iberian tribes. At the time of his death, Carthage had extended its territory from Gades to Alicante and had extended out to Cap de la Nao on the eastern tip of the Peninsula. His son-in-law, Hasdrubal the Fair, then took command.

Hasdrubal had served as Hamilcar's faithful lieutenant in Spain for years. He also played a critical political role before Hamilcar's departure for Spain. In addition to marrying Hamilcar's second daughter, Hasdrubal had used his political influence to help Hamilcar escape prosecution by the Carthaginian Senate following the Truceless War.[56] The Senate had tried to blame Hamilcar for the rebellion by accusing him of making promises to his mercenaries that he could not guarantee while his army campaigned in Sicily. Hasdrubal had gained influence through bribery and political corruption. He continued these tactics after inheriting Hamilcar's position in Spain, which earned him political enemies in Carthage.[57]

Hasdrubal's first action was to avenge Hamilcar's death. He assembled a force of fifty-six thousand men and two hundred elephants. Diodorus Siculus states that Hasdrubal seized the "twelve towns of the Oretani and all the towns in Iberia."[58] Carthage now effectively controlled

[54] Scullard, "The Carthaginians in Spain," 25.
[55] Dio, 12.fr.48.
[56] Appian, *Roman History*, 6.4
[57] Nepos, *On Great Generals,* 22.3.
[58] Diod. Sic. 25.12.3.

southeast Spain. Hasdrubal further solidified this conquest by marrying the daughter of an

Iberian chieftain. Iberian cultural ideas of loyalty centered on a person rather than a state. Allied

or subjugated tribes saw their alliances with Carthage to be dependent on the Barcid family. This

attitude created problems of loyalty for Carthage during Rome's invasion of Spain. It also gave

credit to the idea that the Barcids had attempted to set up their own independent kingdom.[59]

Hasdrubal was then named supreme chief of the Iberians. The title he chose, according to

Diodorus, was *strategos autokrator*, the same title that was given to Alexander the Great by the

League of Corinth in 335.[60] Lancel argues that every ancient general emulated Alexander's

actions and that Hasdrubal's title is an example of *imitatio Alexandri*.[61] The title from Diodorus

does not necessarily point in this direction, in any case. Diodorus was Greek and may well have

been translating an utterly different title from the Carthaginian or Iberian tongue. It might be

Diodorus who was influenced by Alexander.

Hasdrubal's next objective was to establish a new capital to reorganize and center

Carthaginian Spain on his new conquests. He founded the city of Qart Hadasht, which was later

called Carthago Nova by the Romans and is known to the modern world as Cartagena. Polybius

describes it as "a magnificent palace built by Hasdrubal when he aspired to royal power."[62]

In 226, another Roman embassy arrived in Spain to negotiate with Hasdrubal. Greek

trading cities along the Mediterranean coast in northeastern Spain and southern Gaul were

growing wary of Carthage's growing power in the peninsula. The quick ascent of the

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[59] Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage: The Punic Wars, 265-146 BC* (London: Phoenix, 2003), 138.

[60] Diod. Sic. 25.12

[61] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 38.

[62] Polyb., 3.10.8

Carthaginian Empire frightened cities such as Emporia and Massilia. They worried that Carthage would expand into northern Spain and take away their valuable trade network. Emporia and Massilia held diplomatic connections with Rome, and they continually sent embassies to Rome warning about Carthage.[63] Their entreaties led to the first Roman embassy to Hamilcar in 231, and now the Romans arrived again in 226 to negotiate with his son-in-law Hasdrubal. The result was a treaty that stated that Hasdrubal would maintain the Ebro River as Carthage's political boundary in Spain. He agreed that no army would cross the river armed, effectively containing Carthaginian expansion to southern Spain. [64] Hasdrubal was assassinated five years later by a slave in Cartagena.

The Barcids emphasized diplomatic techniques to acquire new territory for Carthage, including political marriages between the Barca family and Spanish royalty. In Hasdrubal's brief time as commander, he controlled the entirety of southeastern Spain and founded the city of Cartagena, which became the Punic stronghold in Iberia until the end of the third century, when Scipio Africanus conquered it. Often his famous in-laws, Hamilcar and Hannibal, overshadow Hasdrubal the Fair, but he was an essential member of the Barcid family who made Hannibal's invasion a feasible strategy.

Carthaginian Empire or Barcid Empire?

Historians today debate whether the Barcids aspired to set up their Spanish kingdom. Polybius states that Hamilcar planned to use Spain's wealth to fuel another war against Rome. Hamilcar's motivation, according to Polybius, was anger for being forced to surrender in Sicily

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[63] Donald Kagan, *Problems in Ancient History: The Roman World* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 120.

[64] Ibid., 119.

during the First Punic War. Rome's seizure of Sardinia was another motivation for Hamilcar. The "Wrath of the Barcids" then is listed as the leading cause of the Second Punic War. [65] The question is whether there is enough evidence to support Polybius' interpretation.

It is difficult to judge the intent of a long-dead general. Hamilcar left behind no written records that could give insight into his motivations. No Carthaginian sources survive that can verify Polybius' claim. Hamilcar founded a large city and began to distribute coinage, the acts of a possibly aspiring Hellenistic monarch but not a warmonger. Although later a faction in the Carthaginian Senate did attempt to blame the Second Punic War on the Barcid family, this was during negotiations for surrender at the end of the war and, given the circumstances, must be treated with caution. [66]

Other evidence of a Barcid kingdom in Spain includes the coins minted at Gades following the Barcids' arrival. The silver mined from the Sierra Morena was used to mint new coinage that Carthage circulated throughout its empire. On the face of one of the coins in this issue is an effigy that is possibly Hasdrubal. Lancel cites the manner of representation as being very similar to coins minted by the Ptolemaic dynasty.[67] Hannibal later placed his father's portrait in the guise of Herakles-Melkart on the silver issued at New Carthage, according to Scullard.[68] The images of Herakles-Melkart are displayed with and without a beard. These features denote both Hannibal and Hamilcar. Later issues display a profile without laurel wreath or Heracles' club. Scullard believes these are Hannibal because of the lack of symbols such as a

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[65] Polyb. 3.9.6-10.7
[66] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 170.
[67] Ibid. 40.
[68] Scullard, "The Carthaginians in Spain," 25.

diadem or club and variation in facial hair. The coins displayed the Barcids as "Hellenistic rulers with a suggestion of the divine." [69]

The actions of the Barca family do not seem to reflect a desire to engineer a second war with Rome. Hamilcar expanded his country's holdings to repair the losses from the previous war. Hasdrubal continued to expand but did so through political alliances to establish stability. The Barcids took Spanish wives and then negotiated a boundary treaty with Rome in 226. This behavior seems counter-intuitive to an aggressive Barcid strategy bent on conflict with Rome.

The non-literary evidence available lends credit to the idea of a Barcid monarchy in Spain. Coin designs are a useful guide to the Barcid "image." The choice of divine symbols is the main testament to the idea that the Barcids were divine. Conclusions to historical questions based on numismatic evidence, however, are often subjective.[70] It is apparent that the Barcids ruled in Spain as vice-regal governors, but the literary evidence states that the Barcids ruled in Spain with the approval of the Carthaginian Senate. Founding cities and distributing new coinage, while typical behavior of Hellenistic monarchs, is not enough evidence to prove any Barcid attempt at an empire. Any exaggeration of Barcid ambition in Spain in the literary evidence is the result of an anti-Barcid tradition.[71] The extent and definition of that exaggeration, of course, remain subjective without new evidence.

After twenty years of peace, Carthage had again established itself as a contending power for the hegemony of the Mediterranean. Thanks to the military ambitions of the Barcid family,

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[69] Ibid. 40.

[70] Debate that the coin profiles represent the Barcids has been accepted by Richter 1965, Blázquez 1976, and many others but rejected by de Navascués 1961-2, and Villaronga 1973.

[71] Scullard, "The Carthaginians in Spain," 21, 27. See Appian, *Hisp*. 4-5. 13-18, *Hann*. 2.3-4; Diod. Sic. 25.8.

the city's coffers were full of silver, gold, and the assorted wealth of southern Spain. Ironically, the Carthaginian Senate had allowed the Barcid faction to set themselves up as rivals, as well as representatives of Carthage. Hasdrubal's new capital of Qart Hadasht began to rival old Carthage as the Punic cultural center of the western Mediterranean. It centered on a large, magnificent palace built to reflect the wealth and power of a Hellenistic monarch. This paradox continued throughout the third century as the Barcids sought to regain their lost power. Their relocation to Spain made the Barcids outsiders to the governing structure at Carthage, but their popularity and continued military success ensured political support from their mother city on the brink of another war with Rome.

Lancel refers to this interlude as more of an armed peace. He argues that the First and Second Punic Wars amalgamate into one larger Punic War because of the cold war that occurred between Rome and Carthage. The seizure of Sardinia, the alliance with Saguntum, and the Ebro treaty of 226, are all examples of Rome's attempt to curtail Carthage's revival. [72]

Formation of Hannibal

Examining Hannibal's youth and education provides a fresh perspective on the tactics and strategies he used in the war against Rome. Hannibal was born into one of the most preeminent military families in Carthage. He received extensive education and military training, accompanying his father Hamilcar to Spain at the age of nine, eventually serving as a faithful captain in the Carthaginian army. In 221, Hannibal was elected as general by his fellow soldiers.

The education and experience he gained in his youth were critical to his military success. Understanding aspects of Hannibal's youth, such as his formal Greek education, military

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[72] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 31.

training, and his experience in warfare before 218 are critical to better understanding the factors that motivated his strategic and tactical decisions in the Second Punic War. Hannibal's Greek education and his father's influence are two main topics examined here. Greek influences on Carthage, in general, and, more specifically, the influence of Greek warfare on the rest of the Mediterranean, are taken into account. Carthage's military development before 221 is an essential factor to consider, including the influence of the Barcid family on military strategy. Hannibal's military experience in Spain likely influenced his method. The historical figures of Xanthippus and Sosylus and their influence on Hannibal are a significant focus as well.

Hannibal's Oath

The oath is the major episode of Hannibal's youth. According to the tradition, Hamilcar made a sacrifice to Ba'al Hammon just before his expedition to Spain. Hannibal was only nine years old. The omens proved favorable, and Hamilcar asked Hannibal to join him on the dais. Hamilcar asked his son if he wanted to join the expedition to Spain. Hannibal agreed. His father made him swear an oath on that day that he would "never be a friend of the Romans." This oath stayed with Hannibal for the rest of his life. He related the story to King Antiochus III, nearly forty-four years later, in order to gain his trust.[73] This story emphasizes the influence Hannibal's father had on his young son. The imposition of a life-long oath on a young child does not endear Hamilcar to the modern reader, but there is no reason to reject its authenticity. Roman historiography later condemns Hannibal's actions based on the story of this oath, but there is a question of whether they understood its context properly.

Historians, such as Polybius, used this oath to further their claims that the Second Punic War was the result of Hamilcar Barca's desire for revenge. Because of Hannibal's war against

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[73] Polyb., 3.11-12.

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Rome, his post-Carthaginian career, his connection to Antiochus, and a hostile Roman historiographical tradition, the ancient interpretation of the oath seems to have changed to an explanation based on enmity,

Before viewing Hannibal's invasion of Italy as the fruit of this oath, it is essential to remember that he was an eager child at the time of the oath, likely desperate to join his father on an adventure. The fact that Hannibal eventually carried out a protracted war against Rome does make it easier to argue that the oath came from respect and then possibly grew into enmity.

After the war, Hannibal served as a government official at Carthage but was forced into exile by Roman intrigue. Hannibal's post-Carthaginian career further serves Roman historiographical tradition. Rather than retiring quietly into exile, Hannibal traveled throughout the eastern Mediterranean, serving multiple Eastern monarchs. The most famous of these was Antiochus III of Syria. Hannibal served in Antiochus' court as an advisor as the Seleucid monarch prepared to wage war against Rome. Roman historians blame Hannibal for inciting Antiochus to war, but Rome's wars against Macedon and the Achaean League were a more pressing concern for the monarch. Antiochus was defeated by the Romans at Thermopylae in Greece in 191 and then at Magnesia in Anatolia in 190, effectively curtailing Seleucid ambition in Greece. Hannibal commanded a Seleucid fleet in this war but was defeated by Rhodes at Eurymedon in 190. Rhodes was an ally of Rome against the Seleucids. There is nothing in the record that gives reason for Antiochus' giving Hannibal a command at sea rather than on land. Fearing arrest, Hannibal fled Antiochus' court for Crete. He later found refuge in Bithynia and served King Prusias I until the Carthaginian was forced to commit suicide.

Hannibal's post-Carthaginian career was framed by Roman historians to fit into the anti-Barcid tradition. From their perspective, a lifetime in the service of kings opposed to Rome after

prosecuting a sixteen-year war in Italy appears motivated by enmity, especially since one of those kings invaded Greece. This perspective has become a hostile historiographical tradition which, ironically, is also motivated by enmity. Hannibal, prior to exile, attempted to faithfully serve his country in peace as he had in the war. The reforms he made during his time in office were mainly tax based in order to pay off the war indemnity. The wealthy Carthaginians that were being hurt financially by these reforms plotted with the Romans to hand over the retired general.[74] His flight into exile was brought about by Rome's subterfuge. If Antiochus had given command of his army to Hannibal, the Romans likely would have faced a monster of their own making invading Italy for the second time. As it was, Hannibal served various kings as an advisor and general. Rome, however reluctantly at first, continued to expand into the eastern Mediterranean. Rather than paint a picture of a warmongering Hannibal slinking from one Eastern despot to another, desperate to try his hand once more against the Romans, the image of an exile warning other nations of Rome's growing shadow seems more appropriate.

The wording of the oath is critical. Polybius relates that Hannibal swore he would never be "the friend of Rome," but later tradition records that he swore eternal enmity.[75] Polybius' wording probably relates to a diplomatic relationship. Hamilcar's charge to his son meant that he should never allow Carthage to become subservient to Rome. This change in wording is part of a Roman historiographical tradition hostile to Hannibal. Placing the war guilt on Hannibal and Carthage justified Rome's later vilification of the Punic general.

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[74] W.V. Harris, "Roman Expansion in the West," in *The Rise of Rome to 220 BC* , eds. F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen, R.M. Ogilvie, 2nd ed. CAH 7.2 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 143.

[75] Appian, *His*. 9.34; Livy 21.1.4.

Hannibal before Saguntum

Hannibal's Greek education served him well in Spain before he led his army into Italy and when he was still winning his spurs against the Iberian tribes. At the Tagus River in 220, Hannibal utilized a feigned retreat, then doubled back across a river to strike the enemy army with his cavalry. At the same time, he organized his elephant corps to trap enemy troops in the river. He abandoned his heavy baggage and siege equipment in Spain, making Hellenistic-style siege warfare impossible, and focused instead on superior mobility to force the Romans to battle. Much in the style of Alexander, Hannibal plunged into the heart of Italy in the hopes of bringing the Romans into a pitched battle. This strategy worked brilliantly at Cannae in 216.

Hannibal Barca had considerable military training before his arrival in Italy. He spent two years campaigning in Spain to expand Carthage's empire there. By 220, central and southern Spain were entirely under Carthage's control thanks to Hannibal. The Punic commander had marched first against the Olcadi, in what is now La Mancha, taking their capital of Althaia by storm. Next, he captured Hermandica, now known as Salamanca, from the Vaccaei tribe. He then put down a revolt of the Carpetani tribe in the modern-day region of Toledo. After pacifying the population of Toledo, Polybius states that no people remained south of the Ebro River who could resist Hannibal or the might of Carthage.[76]

A political analysis of Saguntum at the start of the Second Punic War is essential to understanding the war's leading cause. Saguntum was an Iberian city that had formed some sort of treaty relationship with Rome. Scholars debate the date and nature of this alliance. Polybius assigns it to 220, but whether it was before or after 226, the year of the Ebro treaty, is the crux of the matter. The nature of the agreement is controversial as well. It cannot be regarded as a formal

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[76] Polyb., 3.14.9.

alliance because Rome did not go to Saguntum's aid when Hannibal besieged it. *Deditio in fidem* is most likely, literally "to commit to oneself in good faith" but in reality "to surrender unconditionally."[77] The legality of the action is a moot point. Hannibal had to know that by attacking a city under Rome's protection, despite its being within the political boundaries of Punic Spain, he was risking war with Rome.

In the winter of 220-219, a group of Roman ambassadors arrived at Qart Hadasht to meet with Hannibal; this was the third embassy that Rome had sent to the Barcids in Spain. After the Romans allegedly had the pro-Punic leaders in the city murdered, Rome worried at the growing power of Carthaginian Spain and sent an embassy to Hannibal to remind him that Saguntum was under their protection.[78]

Every Barcid general had hosted a Roman delegation by this point. It was a sign not only that Rome took an interest in affairs in Spain but that the Barcids had gained recognition as the power brokers of Carthaginian politics. Despite each appointment and treaty being ratified by the Senate in Carthage, it became increasingly apparent to the international community that the Barcid family was in firm control of Carthage's Spanish policy.

Hannibal's treatment of the delegation reflects that attitude. The Roman ambassadors informed the Barcid general that Saguntum, a city situated south of the Ebro, had placed itself under Rome's protection. As such, it was immune from harassment by Carthage's armies. Hannibal scorned the ambassadors. According to Polybius, Hannibal was "totally unreasonable, instead of giving the true causes of his conduct, he took refuge in pretexts without foundation."[79]

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[77] Scullard, "Carthage and Rome," 26; see Polyb. 20.9 for *deditio in fidem* defined
[78] Polyb. 3.30.1.
[79] Polyb., 3.15.6.

The Roman embassy traveled to Carthage itself to hold Hannibal responsible for his conduct. Hamilcar Barca had advised his son Hannibal to avoid conflict with Saguntum in order to avoid Rome's interference in Spain. By 219, Hannibal had completed his father's conquest of southern Spain by taking Saguntum, but it came at the cost of war with Rome.

Hannibal's Knowledge of Greek

Hannibal's formal Greek education shaped the foundation of his military knowledge. Carthage had fought in Sicily against the Greeks for hundreds of years. The cultural exchange that occurred between Carthage and the Greek cities in Sicily informed Carthage on Greek developments in warfare. Carthage also relied on Greek mercenaries to protect its maritime empire. These troops fought in the Greek manner and appointed their own captains, who were often Greek and were proficient in the Greek art of war.

A famous example is the Spartan Xanthippus, who took command of Carthage's army in 255 and defeated a Roman invasion of North Africa in the First Punic War. Xanthippus trained the army in the use of disciplined phalanx formations and likely borrowed from the Spartan training regimen.[80] Like Rome, Carthage was willing to learn from its enemies.

The tradition of 4th c. military handbooks allowed educated Carthaginians to have access to the science of war. Hamilcar Barca fought in Sicily for six years and saw firsthand Rome's ability to persevere and overtake an enemy technologically. Carthage had been the preeminent sea power for centuries, but within a few decades, Rome had defeated it. Hamilcar returned to Carthage determined that his country would not fall behind in the *techne* of generalship. He raised each of his sons with a Greek education. From the fourth century onward, military

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[80] J.F. Lazenby, *The First Punic War* (Routledge: New York, 2016), 102-103.

manuals became increasingly sought after. There was no organized method of producing and distributing these manuals, however; so circulation was limited. Military manuals written by authors such as Aelian, Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, and Onasander circulated in the Hellenic world. Histories, in general, were regarded as both political and military manuals as well. Thucydides, Xenophon, and especially Homer were essential reading for men of any standing.[81] Hannibal was well-read and implemented Greek reforms in his army.

The most significant Greek influence on Hannibal was the historian Sosylus. According to Cornelius Nepos, "Hannibal's deeds of arms have been recorded by many writers, among them two men who were with him in camp and lived with him so long as fortune allowed, Silenus and Sosylus of Lacedaemon. Moreover, it was this Sosylus whom Hannibal employed as his teacher of Greek."[82] This Greek historian likely influenced Hannibal through advanced instruction in the Greek language. Despite being a Spartan and presumably a tactician, Sosylus likely taught first-rate Greek to Hannibal, which would have allowed the Punic leader to understand better the military handbooks and histories that were in circulation at the time. In all probability, Sosylus accompanied Hannibal for much of the Spanish campaign.

His influence on Hannibal was likely significant. Though there is little directly known about the relationship between Sosylus and Hannibal, the archetype example of mentor and student occurs throughout history. Though Hannibal was an adult by the time he set off for Italy, his tutor's lessons should have influenced his perception of the Greek world. The texts that Sosylus used to teach Hannibal are unknown, but Hannibal would have focused on the available

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[81] I.G. Spence, *Historical Dictionary of Greek Warfare* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 210.

[82] Mellor, *Historians of Ancient Rome*, 117.

military manuals, handbooks, and histories to improve his military knowledge. Sosylus also knew neo-Punic, which would have facilitated the transfer of knowledge. The possible ways that Sosylus could have affected or influenced Hannibal can only be guessed, but his emphasis on Greek is revealing. According to Cornelius Nepos, during his exile Hannibal dedicated some time to literature. Though no longer extant, Hannibal also wrote multiple books in Greek on various subjects including one addressed to the Rhodians on the acts of Cnaeus Manlius Vulso in Asia.[83] This desire and ability to write later in life highlights Hannibal's education in general and in Greek especially. Sosylus' impact on Hannibal seems great, but this view could change with new evidence.

Hannibal and Greek Intellectual Life

Hannibal's Greek education presumably influenced his strategic and tactical perspective. An example is the envelopment tactic he used at the Battle of Cannae in 216. This formation was remarkably similar to the Greek formation at the Battle of Marathon in 490. At Cannae, according to Polybius, "after thus drawing up his whole army in a straight line, [Hannibal] took the central companies of the Spaniards and Celts and advanced with them in contact with these companies, but gradually falling off, to produce a crescent-shaped formation, the line of the flanking companies growing thinner as it was prolonged."[84] Herodotus describes a similar formation being used by Miltiades against the Persian invasion force. He says that "the Athenian formation at Marathon that day was something like this: their line was the same length as the Persian line, but their center was only a few rows deep. The center was the weakest part of the line, while each flank reinforced in great strength."[85]

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[83] Nepos, 23.13.
[84] Polyb., 3.11.3.
[85] Hdt., 6.111.

These two formations are remarkably similar in their description. The two battles mirrored one another as well. Herodotus recounts that "the barbarians eventually won the battle in the center of the line…[they] broke through and started chasing the Athenian center inland; meanwhile, the Athenians and Plataeans won at both flanks. Then the two flanks of the Athenian army joined forces, advanced against the Persian troops that had broken through in the middle, engaged them in battle, and defeated them."[86] Polybius states that the "Roman maniples easily penetrated the enemy's front, however, following up the Celts and pressing on to the center, progressed so far that they now had the heavy-armed Africans on both of their flanks. The consequence was that the Romans were caught between the two divisions of the enemy."[87]

The almost identical formations of both the Greek and the Carthaginian armies, as well as the subsequent tactical maneuvers, suggests that Hannibal utilized his knowledge of the Battle of Marathon to his own advantage. Hannibal most likely read about the tactics used at Marathon. Realizing he was in a similar situation, being vastly outnumbered by Roman forces, he used the momentum of Rome's heavy infantry against them.

Lessons that Hannibal did not implement from his Hellenic predecessors included the emphasis on siegecraft. Philip II developed a corps of military engineers to be able to build siege equipment on site, which was invaluable to besieging fortified cities that Alexander encountered during his conquest of the Persian Empire, the emphasis being on catapults and siege towers. Hannibal did not share Alexander's preference for siege warfare. Hannibal's capture of Saguntum took nearly eight months before the city finally fell. For practical reasons, Hannibal

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[86] Ibid., 6.113.
[87] Polyb., 3.115.5.

left his siege equipment and heavy baggage with his lieutenant Hanno before crossing the Pyrenees in 218. This suggests that his strategy focused less on siege warfare and more on the confrontation between armies.[88]

Daly describes Hellenistic armies as using the "cavalry as the arm of decision and the infantry as the platform of maneuver."[89] The Carthaginians took this strategy and emphasized it. The uneven terrain of Sicily made the infantry phalanx vulnerable and ineffective. They recognized that infantry needed to be more versatile in order to adapt to a changing battlefield more quickly. The Carthaginian military, therefore, emphasized cavalry as the decisive strategic unit in battle. The infantry served as the "platform of maneuver" for the Carthaginian cavalry and was remarkably successful against both Pyrrhus and the Sicilian Greek cities. This success continued to shape Carthaginian military tactics. The emphasis on cavalry led to the favored double envelopment strategy. Executing this maneuver was notoriously tricky for Greek and Hellenistic armies, but Carthage had more success because of their emphasis on superior cavalry.

Hannibal's education in Classical Greek warfare invariably influenced his army composition, military tactics, and overall strategy. The balanced variety of troop types in his army shows that Hannibal had learned not to rely on the standard heavy infantry too much. The abandonment of his heavy equipment and camp followers, before he crossed the Pyrenees in 218, was an attempt to circumvent the supply issues that come with an army trying to cross a mountain range. He also tried to eliminate his army's uniform and equipment issues by equipping his Libyan infantry with plundered Roman weapons after the Battle of Lake

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[88] Ibid., 3.35.5.

[89] Gregory Daly, *Cannae: The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 36.

Trasimene.[90] His strategy concerning mercenaries is typical. Carthage had a history of relying on its citizen levies only in the most dire circumstances. Hannibal recruited his army from Libyan veterans, Spanish tribesmen, and Celtic auxiliaries. His cavalry were Numidians, and his light infantry and missiles were Balearic Islanders. He managed to keep this diverse army together for fifteen years while campaigning in Italy. The loyalty he was able to inspire in his troops is a crucial part of his military legend. Hannibal utilized his knowledge of Greek military history to construct a balanced fighting force out of disparate, albeit specialized, units.

In conclusion, Carthage represented one of the three major cultural powers in the western Mediterranean. The Punic culture had spread from the Levant to North Africa and then Spain. Greek culture dominated in southern Italy and Sicily while central and northern Italy were Latin. Sicily quickly became a battleground between the three cultures. Spain became the province of Carthage after its defeat in the First Punic War. It became a Carthaginian Empire with the Barcids serving as its colonial governors. There is not enough evidence to suggest that the Barcids ruled independent of Carthage though their position was vice-regal, as shown by their distribution of coinage, treaty-making with Rome, and the founding of cities. The home government in Carthage later ratified each of these actions. The actions that followed, such as war with Rome, were also supported by Carthage. The story of Hannibal's oath should be accepted as true but with qualification. Contrary to tradition, it was not an oath originally based on enmity but on the issue of diplomatic friendship.

The Roman tradition preserved the memory of the Barcids to glorify Carthage's eventual defeat. The political power the Barcids enjoyed was a result of their prowess as generals. The

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[90] Livy, 22.46.

Barcids stand out in the history of Carthage's generals because Hamilcar trained his sons in the Greek style of warfare. He had witnessed a Roman army defeated by Xanthippus, a mercenary skilled in Greek warfare who molded both its employer's citizen levy and its mercenaries into a proper fighting force. In Spain, Hamilcar ensured that his sons received a Greek education while traveling with him on a campaign against the Iberian tribes. The campaign gave his sons experience applying Greek methods against an unconventional, guerrilla-style enemy . This blending of unorthodox and classical gave Hannibal a well-balanced knowledge of war. As an adult, Hannibal employed a Greek historian to tutor him. Greek military handbooks were probably translated, thus enhancing Hannibal's ability to keep up with the latest methods. Hannibal's campaign in Italy was likely modeled on Alexander the Great's invasion of the Persian Empire.

CH 3: FROM SPAIN TO ITALY

Saguntum was a small city one hundred miles south of the Ebro River. The Saguntines had diplomatic dealings with Rome as early as 231 and were under its nominal protection. There was no formal alliance or protectorate established, though it is likely that in order to receive protection, the Saguntines had to present Rome with a *deditio in fidem*, giving the Romans the right to dictate foreign and domestic policy in Saguntum.[91]

Hannibal led his army to besiege Saguntum. It took eight long months before the city finally fell. The news arrived in Rome soon after the siege had begun, but both consular armies were elsewhere. When the city fell, the Roman Senate debated whether a war should be declared. Saguntum was of little value, but Roman prestige was at risk. The Senate appointed an embassy to travel to Carthage and demand satisfaction. Following the siege, Hannibal received news of a Roman embassy that had met with the Carthaginian Senate in response to the fall of Saguntum. The Romans had demanded that Hannibal be given over into their custody, or Carthage itself take responsibility for his actions. A war between Carthage and Rome was declared.

Hannibal's Strategy

Hannibal's march was the most critical decision of the campaign because it defined the strategic parameters of the war for Carthage. The choice to invade Italy was logical but risky. Carthage reduced its navy after the First Punic War. Rome's fleet now guarded Italy's coastline. North Africa, Sardinia, and Sicily, the previous areas of conflict, were not viable options for Hannibal. Sicily in particular, although in reach of Carthage's remaining navy, presented a military quagmire the Punic general was not willing to repeat. The First Punic War had been

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[91] Dexter Hoyos, *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 85.

fought in the Carthaginian territory. Hannibal chose not to wait for Roman legions to arrive in Spain. Without an adequate navy, an overland march was the next option.

Strategy and logic aside, the fame of Hannibal's march is owed to the Roman annalists who propagated its legendary status. Hannibal's invasion shattered Rome's sense of invulnerability and wounded the Roman psyche on a level that took decades to remedy. Hannibal's fame was matched only by the hate it earned him.

Alpine Route

Uncertainty surrounds the question of what route the Carthaginian army took in Hannibal's Alpine expedition. Over the last century, scholars have settled on three passes near Mont-Cenis, France: the Petit Mont-Cenis, the Col du Clapier, and the col du Savine-Coche. Most scholars in the twentieth century favored the col du Clapier. Marc de Lavis-Traffort, a humanist and doctor, spent years of his life hiking the Alps, texts in hand, applying what Lancel describes as a "cautious historico-philological approach." His choice of the col du Savine-Coche led other scholars to reconsider their position.[92]

Regardless of the exact route he took through the Alps, the Romans were caught unprepared. P. Cornelius Scipio's march to Pisa reveals he expected Hannibal to come through the Pennine Alps at the Little St. Bernard Pass. Roman intelligence had not discovered the pass through the Mont-Cenis region.

Polybius states that Hannibal set off from Carthago Nova with ninety thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry. He then proceeded to cross the Ebro River and conquer numerous Spanish tribes, including the Ilurgetes, Bargusii, Aerenosii, and Andosini. Hannibal was able to advance to the foot of the Pyrenees Mountains before the end of the campaigning season. He

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[92] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 79.

then left his lieutenant Hanno in command of the territory north of the Ebro River. Hannibal gave Hanno ten thousand infantry and one thousand cavalry from his army. According to Polybius, Hannibal also sent an equal number of troops back to Spain to reinforce his brother Hasdrubal, not to be confused with his brother-in-law Hasdrubal the Fair.

Hannibal advanced through the Pyrenees and arrived at the Rhone River in August 218. According to Polybius, his army was reduced to fifty thousand infantry and nine thousand cavalry, a loss of forty-three thousand men. [93] Polybius accounts for twenty-two thousand missing soldiers, half placed under Hanno, the other half sent home to Spain, though it is difficult to believe that Hannibal had suffered twenty-one thousand casualties this early on.

P. Cornelius Scipio was given a consular army and sent to Spain. He arrived by sea at the mouth of the Rhone at the same time as Hannibal. Scipio now had an important strategic choice to make. He could either turn his army about and give chase to Hannibal or continue marching to Spain. The former decision required him to abandon the plan to invade Spain and commit his forces to destroy Hannibal. There was a possibility that he might be able to confront Hannibal before he made it to Italy. Defeating Hannibal in Cisalpine Gaul could have brought the war to a quick conclusion.

Scipio chose instead to leave the army in command of his brother Gnaeus and return to Italy by ship transport. This decision allowed him to raise another army to confront Hannibal in northern Italy and also allow the invasion force to continue to Spain. This turned out to be one of the most important strategic decisions made during the war because Scipio's foresight allowed Rome to fight Carthage on two fronts.

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[93] Polyb. 3.35.7

Hannibal in Italy

Historians compare Hannibal's crossing of the Alps to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon as a momentous historical event. Carthage was traditionally a naval power. Hannibal sent envoys to the Gallic tribes of the Po Valley in order to gain safe access through the mountains. Polybius describes Hannibal as a prudent commander who took great care to prepare for his campaign. Any other evaluation of Hannibal is preposterous, according to the Greek historian.[94] Even with careful preparation, the crossing of the Alps was an enormous accomplishment.

Hannibal's Alpine march has been enshrined in legend since he arrived in Italy in November 218. Lancel compares this accomplishment to Alexander the Great's march into the Persian Empire. He then goes on to describe it as an effort of "Herculean prowess."[95] This comparison to Hercules and Alexander does little to keep a grounded, historical perspective on Hannibal. Celtic bands had been traversing the Alpine passes since the 400s. Polybius' description takes the wonder out of the feat but is overall a more balanced view.

According to the inscription Hannibal himself left in Italy at Cape Lacinium, he reached Italy with only twenty thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry.[96] Overall, Polybius' casualty estimates for Hannibal's army are questionable, despite the overall difficulty of the march itself. He likely overestimated Hannibal's original numbers. Lancel numbers his army between sixty and seventy thousand men. No commander could have maintained a force with the number of casualties that Polybius gives.

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[94] Ibid., 3.48.1-8.

[95] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 71.

[96] Polyb., 3.56.4.

The men who had survived the march were the remnants of one of the most massive armies the western Mediterranean had ever seen. The infantry consisted of twelve thousand African and eight thousand Spanish soldiers. Hannibal's cavalry numbered at six thousand and consisted mainly of Numidian auxiliaries. He also had an elephant corps of about twenty-seven African forest elephants. None of these elephants survived through the winter of 218. [97]

By the time the Punic army arrived in Italy, it had suffered over fifty percent casualties. Hannibal's diplomatic, strategic, and logistical decisions had placed his force in an untenable position before his army had even entered Italy. The Punic army lived off the land. Compared to Spain and Cisalpine Gaul, the fields of Italy were brimming with food. It was this expectation of Italian agriculture that Hannibal was relying on when his men made their descent into Italy. He rested his troops at Piedmont. The army's numbers were skeletal in comparison to Polybius' original estimation of over one hundred thousand men. Now there were fewer than thirty thousand, frozen and starving.

Celtic support did not initially meet Hannibal's standards either. Polybius and Livy each present a stereotypical view of the Celtic tribes. They were imposing men, courageous in battle, but greedy and easily corrupted by wealth. Their fickleness was their main vice to the Romans. Polybius describes how easily the Celtic peoples turned from one side to the other, even during battle.[98] Hannibal's army began making their way through the Po Valley and met with the same initial lukewarm reception.[99] The Celts were waiting to see whether the Carthaginian army stood a chance against the Romans.

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[97] Ibid., ibid.
[98] Polyb. 2.32
[99] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 81.

Hannibal responded like any general of the period. He besieged the capital of the Taurini, a local Celtic tribe, and killed everyone there that offered resistance. Lancel describes this act of terrorism as a necessity.[100] Hannibal needed to spur the Gauls of the Po Valley to support his cause and give the Romans reason to fear his arrival. He was arguably successful in the latter. The Romans recalled their commander in Sicily, Ti. Sempronius Longus, to protect northern Italy against the Carthaginian threat. The former, however, is a thinly veiled attempt by Lancel to protect Hannibal's image. The lack of supplies and the near-starved state of his men were motivation enough. Not every Celtic tribe was happy to see a large, foraging army in their territory. Their wealth and, more importantly, their harvest, were his for the taking, effectively bringing resources of the Celtic tribes of the Po Valley to Hannibal's side.

Carthage's Army at the time of the Second Punic War

The composition of the Carthaginian army was essential to Hannibal's military success. The difference between the quality of the army that marched into Italy and the army that fought at Zama decided the battle and possibly the war.

Carthage was a maritime trade empire that heavily relied on its naval fleet to control its territorial possessions. At its height, the Carthaginian navy at its full strength could field up to twohundred quinqueremes. On land, the Carthaginian military consisted of mercenaries recruited from its numerous territories. These soldiers were not Carthaginian but constituted a wide variety of different peoples brought under Carthaginian hegemony, including peoples from Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, Spain, and North Africa. Celts and Italians were also later recruited by Hannibal during his Italian campaign. Diversity was common in the Carthaginian

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[100] Ibid., ibid.

military. Its armies eventually included Phoenician, Libyan, Libyophoenician, Numidian, Greek, Celtic, Iberian, Celtiberian, and Italian soldiers. Generals who commanded the army were exclusively from aristocratic Carthaginian stock.[101]

The African infantry were Libyan subjects under Carthage's control. These men were legendary for their endurance. Carthage had used them as their primary infantry unit throughout the history of their empire. Most of the soldiers that Hamilcar had led back from Sicily at the end of the First Punic War were Libyans. Each man carried "a few javelins, a dagger and a small round shield, the cetra."[102] These men quickly adapted once they arrived in Italy, however. Hannibal's Libyan infantry stripped dead Romans of their armor and weapons after the Battle of Lake Trasimene. They fought alongside their Spanish and Celtic allies.

Hannibal recruited eight thousand infantry from Carthage's territories in Spain. Spanish tribesmen used a "short double-edged sword, equally useful for cut and thrust, and also a curved saber, the falcata."[103] Some used the cetra shield, but others adopted the long, oval shield favored by the Celtic infantry that Hannibal recruited after his Alpine crossing. The Celts proved an important infantry component as well.

The rest of Hannibal's foot soldiers consisted of mercenaries recruited from Carthaginian territory, including Spanish tribesmen who were not under Carthage's control, such as the Celtiberi, as well as slingers from the Balearic Islands. Ligurian tribesmen enlisted from north-western Italy.[104] These mercenaries constituted a small contingent of the army.

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[101] Ibid., 62.
[102] Ibid., 60.
[103] Ibid., 61.
[104] Ibid., ibid.

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Hannibal's cavalry was primarily Numidian. They used similar weapons to those of their African counterparts in the infantry. Their small, round shields and javelins allowed them to mercilessly pursue fleeing units. This cavalry proved to be fast and effective at hit-and-run tactics. Hannibal relied on them to outmaneuver and defeat their Roman counterparts and to execute his great encirclement and flanking tactics. Numidia's eventual defection to the Roman side proved critical to Hannibal's defeat at Zama.

History remembers Hannibal as a commander able to inspire exceptional loyalty in his troops, which is especially remarkable considering the diverse variety of elements in his army. Understanding the motivation of these men is critical to being able to appreciate their triumphs and tribulations fully.

Hannibal, by all standards, was a gifted military commander. However, his troops did not follow him only because he was a great general. It also had to do with his family's legacy. Primarily, though, Hannibal's troops saw him as such an endearing commander because he provided them with wealth and plunder. These were necessities to a soldier in the ancient world. Carthage did not rely on an armed civilian militia, as the Romans did. The men who joined the Carthaginian armies were soldiers forged in the crucible of war; their loyalty to Hannibal was forged through the promise and delivery of wealth. They were not a professional army.

Hannibal's success in leadership is often unfairly attributed by scholars to him and his tactical brilliance alone. While he was an excellent general, credit is also due to his armies' skill and willingness to fight at their absolute best for him, even in the face of adversity. Hannibal deserves much of the credit for being able to weld such a heterogeneous group of men into a formidable fighting force. The trials, triumphs, and tribulations of the Punic army that he led into Italy, however, belong to the rank and file soldiers who fought for him. It speaks not only to

Hannibal's resolve but to the entire army's *esprit de corps* that the Carthaginian was able to effectively campaign in Italy for fifteen years.

Ticinus/ Ticinum

Hannibal and Scipio met at the River Ticinus near Pavia. Polybius describes it as a cavalry skirmish. The two sides engaged so quickly that Scipio's skirmishers had no time to throw their javelins. The two lines of cavalry met head-on, eventually dismounting and engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Polybius makes a distinction between Hannibal's bridled cavalry and his Numidian cavalry. Hannibal himself led the heavy cavalry while his light, Numidian cavalry flanked the Romans on both sides. Scipio's skirmishers had retreated to the rear after failing to throw their javelins and were subsequently flanked by Hannibal's Numidian cavalry. They were routed, and the Carthaginian cavalry was able to encircle and rout the Roman army. They managed to wound Scipio himself in the fight.[105]

This first skirmish displays textbook tactical examples of Hannibal's military leadership. The Numidian cavalry's effectiveness at hit-and-run tactics countered the Roman heavy cavalry's fighting style, which quickly devolved into infantry combat after an initial charge. Hannibal's use of encirclement and flanking tactics depended on his superior cavalry. This advantage remained constant throughout Hannibal's campaign in Italy.

Trebia

After Publius' defeat, the Celts in the Roman army defected to Hannibal's side. They waited until dark and then slew the sentries and Roman soldiers near their camp. There were two

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[105] Polyb. 3.64-5.

thousand infantry and about two hundred cavalry. Hannibal welcomed them and sent them back to their towns to report their actions. His goal was to draw more Celtic tribes into the conflict. [106]

Publius retreated with his army to Placentia. Sempronius Longus, the other consul, had returned from Sicily and joined his forces with Publius. Polybius states that Publius advised Sempronius against engaging Hannibal in a decisive battle, his reasons being that an inactive winter allowed more time to train the army, restrict Hannibal's ability to supply his forces, and provide an opportunity to win back Celtic support. [107] Sempronius, however, was determined to engage the enemy before his term as consul ended. It is suspicious that this eerilyaccurate assessment comes from Scipio. Scholars must recall Polybius' relationship with Scipio's family.

This assessment, convenient and succinct, shows the two competing military strategies for defeating Hannibal in the Roman military. The cautious, containment approach favored by generals such as Publius, and later Fabius Maximus, was initially overruled by ambitious, overconfident generals eager to expunge an invader and win personal glory for themselves. Roman generals did not adopt the former strategy until the dictatorship of Fabius Maximus. Their failure to do so resulted in three of the most massive defeats in Roman military history in two years.

In late December 218, the Carthaginian and Roman armies fought a decisive battle at the river Trebia. Hannibal's camp was west of the river while the Romans were on the east bank. The day before the battle, Hannibal placed his brother Mago with two thousand hand-picked troops, half infantry and half cavalry, in an ambush near a stream with steep, overgrown banks. On a set day, he ordered his Numidian cavalry across the river to skirmish with the Roman army.

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[106] Polyb., 3.67.
[107] Ibid., 3.70.

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Their objective was to draw the Romans across the river and fight the battle on the west bank. The light cavalry, adept at hit-and-run skirmishing, achieved their goal. Sempronius sent his entire cavalry corps against them and quickly ordered his skirmishers and infantry to follow suit. In a few hours, the entire Roman army had forded the river and deployed into line of battle.

Hannibal took his time deploying his forces. He sent eight thousand light infantry to support the cavalry skirmish and form a screen for his main force. He deployed his line only a mile outside of his camp. His men had the entire morning to eat and mentally prepare. The center consisted of a single line of close-order infantry that numbered twenty thousand. It consisted primarily of Hannibal's Celtic allies flanked by Spanish and Libyan contingents. Hannibal consistently placed his Celtic infantry in areas where the highest casualties were likely. He used his allied infantry to hold the heavier Roman infantry in place while his superior cavalry flanked and encircled them. This strategy, while useful, angered his Celtic allies, who complained about their share in the plunder versus their casualties.

When the two armies finally met, the Roman cavalry and skirmishers were tired and heavily outnumbered. They spent most of their javelins in the fighting earlier in the day. As the two lines of infantry met, Hannibal's skirmishers retired to the flanks to support his cavalry. The Spanish and Gallic heavy cavalry charged the exhausted Roman wings and routed them. Mago's forces sprang from hiding and attacked the Roman rear. The Carthaginian center held long enough for the trap to close. The Roman infantry eventually broke through the center, but not before the rest of their army was flanked and routed. The Roman infantry that broke through,

seeing the battle was lost, marched north in formation, eventually crossing the Trebia and retiring at Placentia.[108]

The defeat at Trebia marked the first victory in Hannibal's Italian campaign. The Senate was shocked by the defeat, but the war was far from over. Both sides spent the winter recovering and preparing for the next round of fighting. Rome could not allow an invader to remain on its soil without losing the respect of both its Celtic and Latin allies. The victory bolstered the Carthaginian army's morale. It suffered considerable casualties during the winter, however, including all but one of the elephants. Friendly Celtic tribes maintained their supply lines, and the Carthaginians supplemented that by foraging and raiding. By the end of winter, though, Hannibal was lean on supplies, and another battle was necessary to keep his army's momentum.

Trasimene

In spring 217, Hannibal had two options to continue his Italian invasion. The Apennine Mountains divides the Italian peninsula in two. There were only a few places an army could cross, either east and down the Adriatic coast, or south then west into Etruria. The Senate placed one consular army in Ariminum and one in Arretium to oppose both possible threats. Caius Flaminius, the other consul elect, took office at Arretium rather than at the capital. Flaminius refused to preside over the consular rituals that year, which alienated many members of the Senate and provided a religious context for his failures as a commander back in Rome.

Hannibal crossed the mountains into Etruria then marched his army through the Arno swamps. In three days and nights, his army suffered numerous casualties from the unsuitable terrain. Many pack animals died, and Hannibal himself lost sight in one eye to ophthalmia. After a few days' rest, Hannibal marched his army south past Arretium and into the Etrurian plains.

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[108] Polyb., 3.64-74; Livy 21.46-48, 52-56.

Hannibal decided not to engage the Romans at Arretium in order to lure them into a battle he could design. This emphasis on maneuver and geography is a typical Hannibalic strategy. Marching south into the fertile plains let Hannibal resupply his exhausted forces while instilling terror in the countryside and further humiliating the Roman government. Flaminius, inflamed by Carthaginian pillaging, marched south from the safety of Arretium. The Roman army, comprised of farmer-soldiers and a landowning officer corps, were eager to avenge the devastation.

In June 217, Hannibal's army came to Lake Trasimene. Hannibal pitched his camp at the far end of the pass in plain sight. The route past the lake led through a defile bordered by a line of hills. During the night, Hannibal formed his army into columns and marched them behind the hills. The African and Spanish infantry were positioned closest to the Carthaginian camp with the Celts forming the center and the cavalry on the farthest flank, ready to encircle the Romans. The next day, Flaminius marched into the pass oblivious of the danger. Polybius reports that a heavy mist from the lake obscured the soldiers' vision.[109] Flaminius marched nearly five kilometers to the far end of the pass before the trap was sprung.

In three hours, the Roman army that had marched into the defile perished. Flaminius died in battle. The Roman vanguard, about six thousand soldiers, managed to push through and escape, much like at Trebia, but were surrounded and captured in a few days. Hannibal's Celtic allies suffered the highest casualties again. The Punic commander stripped the dead and re-equipped his Libyan infantry with mail, a bronze helmet, and an oval shield. A few days later, Hannibal learned that Geminus, the other Roman consul, had sent his cavalry to reinforce Flaminius. Hannibal sent Maharbal to ambush this new cavalry threat. The Roman cavalry,

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[109] Polyb., 3.84.

around four thousand, were surprised and defeated. Hannibal enslaved the Romans among them but released their Latin allies. Rome's army in the field now had mostly no cavalry. [110] Hannibal moved into central and southern Italy and remained there for the next decade. This was the last battle of the war in northern Italy until 207.

The Battle of Lake Trasimene was another military disaster for Rome. In six months, Hannibal had destroyed two consular armies and killed a consul in battle. The scale and execution of Hannibal's ambushes and deceptive tactics had only increased as the war went on. Rome's armies had never contended with a general so determined to fight on his terms. Hannibal's careful choice of the battleground and emphasis on reconnaissance, ambush, and encirclement put Rome on the defensive.

The Senate responded to the crisis by electing a military dictator, a magistrate with the entire imperium, for six months or until the crisis was resolved, whichever came first. This man would determine Rome's future strategy for defeating the invader. The assembled centuries of the People ratified Quintus Fabius Maximus. His first act as dictator was to blame Flaminius' defeat on his refusal to adhere to the city's religious rites. He ordered that the rituals be carried out and for consultation of the Sybilline Books, a series of prophecies regarding the city's future. The Sybilline Books conveniently revealed that a return to traditional Roman virtues would save the city. Fabius was careful to observe all the rites and rituals of his office. Romans were wary of dictators who grew too fond of their power.

Roman sources portray Hannibal as a treacherous enemy who engaged in unmanly tactics such as ambushes, deception, and bribery. The massive defeats at Trebia and Trasimene

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[110] Polyb., 3.77-85; Livy 22.2-6

convinced Fabius Maximus that a change in strategy and tactics was necessary. Roman sources continued to vilify Hannibal for tactics that their commanders later adopted. Scipio Africanus' campaigns in Spain and Africa, for example, are textbook Hannibalic wars.

Plutarch describes Hannibal as a "skillful wrestler that brought into play all the arts and stratagems of war."[111] Fabius recognized Hannibal's tactics and strategies as the mark of an experienced military commander and a Hellenistic military leader. Fabius' strategy for defeating Hannibal was attrition. After Trasimene, Hannibal marched to the Adriatic coast and rested his army, plundering and pillaging along the way. He advanced down the coastal plain of eastern Italy, capturing Luceria, and then south-west towards Aecae. Here Hannibal encountered Fabius' army, at least forty thousand men, and drew up his army to fight. Fabius, unlike previous Roman generals, had scouted ahead to determine the enemy's location. He refused to give Hannibal battle on a field of his choosing, especially with such an inexperienced army.

Instead, Fabius followed Hannibal's army as it marched through the Italian countryside. He refused to fight a pitched battle, choosing instead to ambush Carthaginian foraging parties and destroy animals and food where possible. This strategy of attrition became known to the Romans as "kicking the enemy in the stomach" and did not align with their martial culture.[112] Hannibal decided to invade Campania to provoke Fabius to battle. His army stormed the Falernian plain, looting, and burning, while Fabius watched from the mountains.

The Roman general's patience had finally paid off. Winter was approaching. Hannibal needed to find a base to rest his army. Mountains encircle the Falernian plain, and only a few passes were suitable for Hannibal to march through. Fabius correctly guessed which pass the

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[111] Plutarch, 5.3.
[112] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 193.

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Carthaginian would attempt to use and occupied it first. Hannibal was trapped. Unable to escape, and with the Romans refusing battle, Hannibal was at the mercy of the elements. A foraging army quickly strips the land of supply. The only option was to force a battle Hannibal had not planned out beforehand. The likelihood of casualties was high, and Hannibal could not afford to lose men. He could not raise a new army like the Romans. The solution was a deception of the highest form.

Hannibal gathered his army's cattle and tied torches to the cattle's horns. That night, his soldiers lit torches and drove the cattle onto the ridge to meet the Romans. Javelinmen deployed behind the cattle. When the Roman force holding the pass saw the mass of torches, they left their position to engage the enemy. They were confused to find the cattle, and they got a shower of javelins for their trouble.

Meanwhile, Hannibal marched through the pass with his entire army and all their plunder, even managing to extricate his javelin men from their skirmish. Fabius, unsure of the circumstances, refused to engage in a night battle with his still inexperienced troops. Hannibal had made his escape.[113]

Fabius had been humiliated. His strategy went against the Roman military ethos, and without direct results, he could not convince the Senate to continue it after his term ended. For his trouble, the people nicknamed Fabius 'Hannibal's *paedagogus*,' a slave that accompanied children to school, and he was given the cognomen 'the Delayer' for his refusal to act decisively. His strategy was abandoned. The Senate decided to raise the most massive army Rome had ever fielded to end the invasion once and for all. It was a grand vision that contrasted sharply with

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[113] Polyb., 3.88-94.

Fabius' strategy. Rome's military might was to be concentrated into one iron fist to smash

Hannibal out of Italy. The defeat of this vast army would change the Roman military forever.

CH 4: BATTLE OF CANNAE

The period 218-216 marks the high point of Hannibal's Italian campaign. The trio of victories at Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae devastated the Roman military and left Italy completely vulnerable. Cannae was the greatest of these victories. Hannibal defeated the most massive Roman army ever assembled. His success against the Romans' homogenous manipular army merits praise, given the inherent difficulty in communication, coordination, and loyalty generally found in a mercenary force.

Fabius Maximus' delaying tactics had given Rome six months to recover from the defeat at Lake Trasimene. Hannibal's continued presence in Italy galled the Senate. In 216, the consuls conscripted armies of four legions each.[114] These were in addition to Roman forces already deployed in Spain and Sicily. Another army marched north to face the rebellious tribes of Cisalpine Gaul. The extent of Rome's human resources was on full display. Despite two significant defeats, Rome had enough men to meet the threat of invasion and send armies abroad. This theme continued throughout the war. Despite Hannibal's undefeated streak of military victories, he was outnumbered and unable to meet Rome on every front.

In August, 216, the combined armies of consuls Caius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus marched to meet Hannibal. Their army totaled eighty thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry. Hannibal fielded forty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry.[115] The Punic general moved south from Gerunium in Apulia with the Roman army following close behind. The Romans scouted ahead carefully to prevent a Trasimene-like ambush. Despite their protests against Fabian tactics, Rome's leaders had learned too well the cost of facing Hannibal

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[114] Polyb., 3.107.
[115] Ibid., 3.114.5

unprepared. Hannibal captured Cannae, a Roman supply depot, and camped in the hills south of the river Aufidus. The Roman army camped across the river and debated their next move.

The consuls Varro and Paullus alternated command of the army daily. Sources disagree on the consuls' preference for battle. Livy describes Varro as a demagogue, raised to power by the people, eager for battle, and Paullus as a supporter of Fabian tactics, though the likelihood of that being Paullus' actual strategic alignment is minute given the support that Varro received from the Senate during that year's consular elections. Pro-Scipionic sources, such as Polybius, preserved Paullus' legacy, and Livy's works were based on those accounts.[116] Paullus advising against battle in Rome's most significant defeat is too convenient for his reputation. Varro, on the other hand, was a new man vulnerable to propaganda. He survived the battle and became a scapegoat for the aristocracy and Livy's historical tradition, which blamed disasters that befell the state on radical, populist politicians.[117] The sense of impending defeat in Livy's narrative is false. The Romans meant to decide the war at Cannae, and no army marches against an enemy expecting defeat.

Varro advanced the army across the plain and camped on the bank of the Aufidus, only a few miles from the Carthaginian camp. The consuls were determined to fight. Their army was too close to the enemy to disengage safely. Rome's citizen-soldiers were anxious to fight and avenge the destruction of the countryside. A tactical retreat would have led to a loss of morale and in-fighting among the Roman officer corps.[118] The three armies were also quickly running

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[116] Ibid., 3.110.3
[117] Goldsworthy, *Fall of Carthage*, 199.
[118] Poly., 3.112.5

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out of supplies. Hannibal had not established a supply base in Italy. The size of the Roman army made supplying it unsustainable.

Lendon describes the conflict between Roman virtue and discipline as the underlying source of success of Rome's armies during the middle Republic. Rome's military philosophy was changing during this period. Through the Hellenization of the Roman aristocracy, generals were taught to be masters of trickery, general tactics, flanking maneuvers, and applied scientific knowledge. Rome's citizen-soldiers, however, preferred quick campaigns that were decided by set-piece battles. Roman virtue was displayed through bravery in war and was the path to wealth for the soldier and to power for the politician. [119] Deception is a universal tactic practiced by all armies. Fabius Maximus went against the Roman military ethic by placing trickery and deception ahead of meeting the enemy in a pitched battle. Hannibal's success accelerated this change.

Only the Aufidus now stood between the Roman soldiers and their vengeance against Hannibal. Paullus divided the army and sent the smaller portion across the river. This second camp protected Roman foraging parties that crossed over to the Carthaginian bank. Hannibal responded by marching his army down from the hills and crossing to the Roman bank. He sent his Numidian light horse to harass the slaves gathering water for the camp and waited.

On August 2, 216, Varro assembled his army and marched it across the Aufidus to rejoin the smaller Roman contingent. He deployed his infantry in a single line with the Roman cavalry on the right flank, the Latin and allied cavalry on the left. His infantry numbered fifty-five thousand heavy foot soldiers and fifteen thousand *velites* (skirmishers). Polybius states that Varro placed the maniples "closer together than was formerly the usage and making the depth of

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[119] Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts*, 210-11.

each many times exceed its front."[120] It is unclear how much deeper the Roman infantry was at Cannae, but the battle's narrow front called for an altered formation.

The Roman strategy was simple. In every battle, Rome's infantry vanguard had managed to break through Hannibal's center and escape capture. Nearly ten thousand men had escaped the terrible trap at Trasimene. With a deeper formation and narrow front, Varro and Paullus planned for the Roman center to smash through Hannibal's lines, negating the Carthaginian superiority in cavalry as long as the flanks held long enough for the infantry to breakthrough. The river and hills prevented either army from flanking one another, and the Romans were confident their cavalry could hold against the Carthaginian cavalry for long enough.

Hannibal accepted the Roman challenge to battle and quickly crossed the river and reformed his army. His cavalry mirrored the Romans on each flank. On his right, the Numidians were placed opposite the Latin allies, while on the left, Hannibal's heavy cavalry opposed the Romans. He placed his infantry in the center with the Spanish and Gauls at the front and the Libyans on either side. Hannibal fought with his infantry in the center while Hasdrubal led the heavy cavalry, and Maharbal rode with the Numidians.

The Carthaginian center advanced first. Hannibal led his Spanish and Gallic infantry forward, concealing his Libyan columns in a crescent-shaped formation. The two sides skirmished with their light infantry until Hasdrubal engaged with the Romans on the left-wing. Quickly engaging the cavalry was in the best interests of the Carthaginians because it meant less time that the center had to hold out against the Romans. Polybius describes the cavalry engagement as barbaric. The two sides charged, but once engaged, they dismounted and fought

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[120] Polyb., 3.113.4

man to man. This is unusual for cavalry contests, which consisted mostly of wheeling evolutions, charges, and pursuits.[121] The Romans were routed, but their escape was cut off by the river. The Carthaginian cavalry pursued them briefly, but Hasdrubal quickly rallied. This level of discipline was critical to executing the flanking and encircling tactics that Hannibal favored and would have been impossible without an experienced cavalry corps.

Meanwhile, the Romans and Celts clashed in the center. The convex, crescent formation of Hannibal's army was steadily pushed back and inverted. The Celtic infantry performed admirably, steadily withdrawing without breaking rank; their performance flies in the face of the literary cliché of the fickle and quickly-tired barbarian. The Roman maniples pushed the Celts back until they exposed their flanks to the Libyan infantry. Suddenly, Hannibal had the Roman formation surrounded on three sides.[122] The depth of their formation left the Romans unable to maneuver to meet this new threat.

On the right flank, Maharbal engaged the Latin allied cavalry. The Numidian skirmishing tactics kept the Latins occupied while the rest of the battle progressed. There was not the dismounted, hand-to-hand fighting that occurred on the left flank, keeping the allied cavalry out of the fighting. Hasdrubal, having gathered his soldiers from chasing down the Roman cavalry, wheeled his horses behind the Roman center and attacked the Latins as well.[123] The Latin cavalry fled the field, and Hasdrubal allowed the Numidians to pursue them. He rallied his heavy cavalry again and charged into the Roman rear. The trap was sprung.

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[121] Ibid., 3.115.2
[122] Ibid., 3.115.8
[123] Ibid., 3.116.5

The depth of rank that was supposed to be the Roman army's strength became its undoing. The momentum that had carried the center into Hannibal's trap now prevented the infantry from maneuvering to face the new dangers. The infantry could no longer maintain their formation. The fighting devolved into single combat or by companies. Surrounded, the Romans valiantly fought on. Paullus died in the fighting. Varro had fled earlier with the Latin cavalry. Still, the sheer number of Roman soldiers dragged the battle on for hours afterward. Carthaginian casualties were fifty-five hundred infantry and two hundred cavalry. Rome lost forty-five thousand infantry and twenty-seven hundred cavalry.[124] The Romans were beaten, and their esteemed military reputation was shattered.

Hannibal was now the master of Italy, and the Romans were terrified. A few days after Cannae, news reached the Senate that the Celts ambushed the army the Senate had sent to Cisalpine Gaul and destroyed it. Polybius says that "Fortune was taking part against them and meant to fill the cup to overflowing." [125] Their armies in Spain and Sicily were struggling as well. Hannibal's gamble to march into Italy was seemingly paying off.

Cannae was the high water mark of Hannibal's Italian campaign. A large part of southern Italy, including part of Samnium, defected to Hannibal.[126] The greatest of these cities were Tarentum and Capua. The majority of the peoples that defected withdrew their support for Rome. Hannibal claimed he had come to free Italy from the Romans. The Latin and Greek cities in southern Italy took him up on his offer but were largely unwilling to take the fight back to Rome. Lack of a port city in Hannibal's control created logistical supply problems. Repeated attacks

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[124] Livy, 22.49.15
[125] Polyb. 3.118.6
[126] Ibid., 3.118.1

against Naples and Cumae were unsuccessful. Without the ability to resupply, the war in Italy was at a stalemate.

Hannibal's invasion force was the greatest threat to Rome's Italian hegemony. His army, previously forced to forage and plunder to survive, now had an open road to their enemy's capital. The critical point is Hannibal's decision not to march on Rome after his triumph at Cannae and exploit the likelihood of a successful siege. Two significant assumptions distort modern historical views on the question. First, that Hannibal was not capable of mounting an effective siege of Rome; second, that the capture of Rome was not part of Hannibal's campaign strategy.

Hannibal was entirely capable of siege warfare. Livy gives multiple examples of cities the Carthaginian besieged before and after Cannae: Petilia, Nola, Acerrae, Casilinum, Cumae, and Tarentum. Large baggage trains were unnecessary for ancient siege warfare. Engineers built siege works and weapons from wood on site. Hannibal likely employed multiple "siege experts": mercenary engineers hired to design and oversee construction of siege weapons. These professionals were readily available during the Hellenistic era, and it is unlikely that a student of Alexander the Great would have neglected siege warfare. Hannibal's primary objective was likely to defeat Rome in Italy. Hannibal would have considered the possibility of besieging the city itself but he had made a reputation for himself by refusing to fight on the enemy's terms. He specialized in drawing the enemy out into prearranged traps, not into long, costly sieges.

Capturing Rome might not have even been part of Hannibal's strategy. It comes from a speech attributed to Hannibal by Livy, in which the Carthaginian commander promises captured

soldiers that his goal was not the destruction of Rome itself.[127] Modern authors such as Hallward, Delbrück, Picard, Bagnall, Caven, and others, support the theory that Hannibal's strategy was to detach Rome from her Latin allies, isolating the city by building a coalition of Celtic tribes, Latin city-states, and southern Greek cities. [128] Capturing Rome could have accomplished all of Hannibal's strategic and tactical objectives. Deconstructing the Roman confederacy, liberating the Latin and Greek cities, restoring Carthaginian hegemony, and even avenging his father's defeat were all achievable by taking Rome. The answer to Hannibal's passing up such an opportunity lies in the mundane world of logistics.

Hannibal had not established a logistical base in Italy from which to supply his army before the battle of Cannae.[129] The Roman army Hannibal encountered at the Rhone River in 218 isolated him from being supplied by his "province" in southern Gaul or Spain. The Celtic tribes in northern Italy which had eased his way across the Alps could not be relied on as he campaigned into central and southern Italy. There was no city or base from which Hannibal could be resupplied from Spain or North Africa. Much of Hannibal's strategy against different cities in Italy was an attempt to establish such a base. In 215, for example, Hannibal attempted to capture Cumae and use it as a naval base.

Thus, Hannibal was dependent on the number of pack animals that his army could maintain. These animals determined the amount of food in supply and number of days the army could march. Casualties in the baggage train posed a threat to the entire army, which was never

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[127] Livy, 22.6.12.
[128] John F. Shean, "Hannibal's Mules: The Logistical Limitations of Hannibal's Army and the Battle of Cannae, 216," in *Historia* 45, no. 2 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 162.
[129] Ibid., 168.

more apparent than during the original two-week journey over the Alps. Mountainous terrain could not supply the necessary amount of forage to maintain such a sizeable army.

Lack of supplies forced the Carthaginian to make drastic strategic changes. In 217, Hannibal marched his army through Arno marshland for four days to reach adequate forage. The casualties in men and animals included the loss of Hannibal's eye to ophthalmia. Before Cannae, Hannibal was almost wholly reliant on plunder and forage from the Roman countryside and was helpless against the hunger of his men.

Hannibal was a Hellenistic military leader. In the manner of Alexander, Hannibal planned to strike into the heartland of his enemy and defeat their armies in their own land. His strategy was to rely on forage and plunder to provision his army for a quick campaign. His plan, by ancient standards, was working correctly and peaked at Cannae. His spectacular victories made his forces the undisputed master of the Italian Peninsula. No force could stand against Hannibal in the field. After a defeat like Cannae, tradition dictated that Rome should come to terms.[130] In the tradition of Alexander, Hannibal had performed brilliantly.

The distance between the battlefield and Rome's city walls was over two hundred miles, at least a two-week march for Hannibal. Rome's standing army was vanquished, but its walls still stood. The Senate and the People of Rome prepared for a siege. Months, even years, would have been required to conquer the capital. Flouting long-standing practice, the Romans refused to seek terms after their crushing defeat at Cannae, the first step to negating Hannibal's strategy. His war had turned from a lightning campaign to a long, drawn-out war of attrition. The lack of a logistical base in Italy turned the war's momentum against Hannibal.

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[130] Eve MacDonald, *Hannibal: A Hellenistic Life* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 134.

The Revival of Fabius Maximus' Plan

Rome's response to its defeat at Cannae shocked the ancient world. Despite the Senate losing one-third of its members and the population suffering ten percent in casualties, they determined to continue the war. Also, the Senate refused to ransom the prisoners taken at Cannae and sent the survivors to Sicily to serve out the war in disgrace. Enfranchised slaves, criminals, debtors, and youths enlisted to form six new legions, equipped with foreign armor and weapons stripped from the temples, nearly twenty-five thousand strong.[131]

Roman tradition carried on in this time of crisis, and a dictator was elected, Marcu Junius Pera. The Senate prescribed religious duty as the path to reviving Rome's fortunes and decreed that mourning for the dead was not to exceed thirty days. They consulted the Sibylline Books and performed human sacrifices in the Forum. Fabius Pictor was sent to Delphi to consult the Oracle of Apollo.[132] The Senate wanted to steer the population from despair through dedication. These measures reassured the city and Rome's allies that the war was far from over.

Hannibal spent the remainder of the 216 campaign season establishing his presence in southern Italy. Many states had defected to Hannibal, including parts of Apulia, Samnium, Bruttium, and Campania. The invading mercenary army now had supply bases to conduct their operations and a network of allies to defend from Rome. For the next decade, Hannibal was ensconced in the south, venturing into central Italy every year to fight Rome and its allies.

After 216, however, the nature of the Second Punic War changed. Rome was no longer interested in offering up armies as a sacrifice to Hannibal. Fabius Maximus' plan was revived to defeat Hannibal through attrition. Rome's superior manpower allowed its commanders to operate

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[131] Appian, 7.5.27.
[132] Livy, 22.56. 4-5, 57. 2-9.

in concert across multiple theaters. While Hannibal struggled to gain access to a port city, Rome began to systematically retake the cities that had defected. Hannibal was paralyzed, trying to protect all of his new allies at once. The Italian cities that rebelled often had to rely on their own forces. Without Rome as a political nexus, the loyalty of different cities was to themselves. Their lack of structure made them an ineffective coalition, which made reconquering them easier for the Romans. The Italian campaign became centered on controlling principal towns rather than pitched battles, and it dragged on for over a decade.

In 212, Hannibal captured the city of Tarentum through treachery. The citadel remained in Roman hands, however, and control of the port remained contested. Capua was besieged by Rome that same year, and in 211, the city fell. In 209, Tarentum was recovered by Rome, leaving Hannibal confined to the southernmost tip of Italy. The Punic commander's only triumphs were at Herdonea in 212 and 210, where he defeated Roman forces of sixteen and thirteen thousand, respectively. He also managed to kill the consul Marcellus in an ambush in 208. These battlefield victories at Herdonea did nothing to change the war's momentum.

Tarentum is an excellent example of the siege tactics successfully utilized by both sides. Its change of hands between Rome and Carthage highlights the role treachery and deception played in ancient sieges. Rome recaptured Tarentum by using the same tactics which later authors condemned in Hannibal's case and which model Rome's evolving standards for battle.

Siege warfare in the ancient world was a large, bloody business. Frontal assaults against walled settlements had high rates of failure and casualties. The two preferred methods to ending a siege were to starve out the defenders or gain access to the city through treachery. In 212, the motivation for Tarentum's nobility to betray their city came from Rome. The Romans executed

political hostages from Tarentum for attempting to escape their confinement.[133] A group of nobles decided to turn the city over to Hannibal in response. Their demands were political independence for their city without paying tribute or accepting a Punic garrison. These conditions were similar to those Hannibal granted the city of Capua after its defection.

To carry out the deceit, Hannibal provided Philomenus, one of the Tarentine nobles, with cattle from his baggage train to bring back to the city. Philomenus shared his gains with the sentries at the gate he consistently used to reenter the city. He used a specific whistle to announce his arrival, and the guards became used to this routine. Hannibal marched his army in secret to Tarentum. He divided his forces into three, leading an assault on the main gate himself while Philomenus led a thousand Libyans to his side gate. The other Tarentine noble conspirators plied the Roman commander with drinks that night then killed the sentries at both gates, allowing Hannibal and Philomenus to gain access to the city quickly.[134] By dawn, Tarentum had fallen to Hannibal's "treacherous" tactics.

The Roman recapture of Tarentum in 209 highlights Rome's adoption of trickery and deception as viable military tactics. Fabius Maximus led an army against the city in what was to be his last campaign. Before the attack, Fabius learned that the sister of a Tarentine man in his army was in love with a commander in the city garrison. The consul ordered the man to defect to the enemy and make contact with the lovesick commander. He was persuaded by Fabius' man to defect to Rome. When Fabius attacked the city, the commander and his men allowed the Roman soldiers to scale their section of the wall and helped the army enter Tarentum.[135] This treachery

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[133] Polyb. 8.24.125.
[134] Polyb., 8.24.4-34.
[135] Livy, 27.15. 4-16.

allowed Rome to retake the city with minimal casualties. Rather than chastising Fabius, Romans praised him for not directly assaulting the walls, a stark contrast to the censuring Fabius received for not fighting Hannibal head-on during his dictatorship. Tarentum shows the evolution of tactics and strategy that occurred in the Roman military during this period.

In 207, the battle at the river Metaurus solidified Hannibal's strategic predicament in Italy. Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal, led an army from Spain into northern Italy but was defeated. The only significant attempt made by Carthage to reinforce Hannibal in Italy during the war failed. Carthage raised multiple levies but chose to send them to Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia to protect their interests abroad.[136] Hannibal, willingly or not, operated independently throughout the entire war. The decision by the Carthaginian government to not reinforce Hannibal was one of the significant factors that decided the war in Rome's favor.

Hasdrubal defended Spain while Hannibal invaded Italy. The two brothers had planned to reunite in Italy, but Roman success in Spain hindered their plan. Hasdrubal fought with varying success against the Romans for ten years. Eventually, he decided to join Hannibal despite the vulnerability this decision created for Carthage's Spanish holdings. His army suffered a defeat at Baecula as they were attempting to depart, but their march over the Alps was much less painful than Hannibal's had been years prior, likely because of the vast amounts of wealth Hasdrubal gifted to the native tribes. [137] Where Hannibal had smashed through the Alps like a Herculean legend, suffering horrific casualties, Hasdrubal took the more diplomatic approach.

Hasdrubal arrived in Italy in the spring of 207. He marched through the Po valley to Placentia and besieged it. He sent riders to find his brother, but the Romans captured them.

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[136] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 112-113.
[137] Livy, 27.36.1-4

Hasdrubal gave up the siege after a short time and began to march down the east coast of the peninsula until the armies of Salinator and the praetor Licinus intercepted him. The armies set up camp and eyed one another warily. Meanwhile, unknown to Hasdrubal, Caius Claudius Nero force-marched his army two hundred and fifty miles to reinforce his colleagues with eight thousand men,.[138]

Hasdrubal recognized from the separate trumpet fanfares in the consul's camp that another commander had reinforced the enemy army. He decided against offering battle and attempted a night retreat. His forces became confused in the dark and began following the river Metaurus in an attempt to find a crossing. The Roman army pursued Hasdrubal in the dark and caught up to them the next morning as the Punic army was attempting to set up camp.

Both sides deployed their forces and waited. Hasdrubal stationed ten elephants in front of his main infantry line which was divided into two divisions, the Spanish on the right and the Gauls on the left. Hasdrubal occupied the high ground and placed his Gallic troops there to defend his camp. The Romans deployed in their traditional formation with an estimated forty thousand troops.[139]

The battle began when Hasdrubal led his men against the Roman left. The Spanish infantry held their own against the Romans, and the Gauls were secure in their defensive hilltop. Hasdrubal's elephants disrupted the Roman center initially but quickly panicked. The battle was deadlocked until Nero, who commanded the right flank, marched his men behind the Roman formation and around the Punic right flank. The Spanish infantry crumbled at an attack from this

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[138] Ibid., 27.43.4-46.
[139] Ibid., 27.46. 6-49.

unexpected direction, and Hasdrubal's army was routed as a result. Hannibal's brother died, and his head was delivered to Hannibal in southern Italy as a final insult.[140]

The Battle of the Metaurus was the last significant engagement of the war in Italy. Unable to be reinforced but still unbeaten in battle, Hannibal crossed southern Italy like a caged beast. In 203, Rome's success in Spain and Sicily provided it with a dangerous opportunity to invade Africa. Hannibal retreated to defend Carthage itself, and the war in Italy ended. Hannibal's invasion of Italy had lasted over a decade. His victory at Cannae brought Rome to its knees. The Senate's refusal to concede defeat left Hannibal without a strategic alternative. Hannibal was trapped, unable to bring Rome's armies to a pitched battle and without the manpower to besiege their cities. The war had come full circle from the Spanish peninsula, over the Alps, through Italy, and finally to the heart of the Carthaginian Empire.

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[140] Polyb., 11.1.1-2.

CH 5: FIDES PUNICA

Hannibal's invasion of Italy during the Second Punic War was a catalyst for a mental shift in the Roman style of warfare. Not unlike World War I, which saw the horrors produced by mixing advanced technology with outdated tactics, the emphasis Hannibal placed on cunning and intelligence forced the Romans to fight a new type of war. Before Hannibal, the Romans had fought its traditional enemies in traditional ways. The Greek hoplite/phalanx style of warfare suited the Romans during their wars against the Etruscans, Samnites, and the Greeks themselves. This disciplined manner of fighting was effective in fighting the Celtic and Germanic tribes as well. Throughout the fourth and third centuries, the Roman military slowly moved away from the phalanx to the three-line maniple system they would employ until the Marian Reforms in 107 and after. This gradual shift focused on troop deployment, weapons, and utilization of cavalry. The manner of fighting, however, remained largely the same. A conflict between two armies usually lasted a day or two. The opposing lines would clash, using arrows and spears and slings, pushing and shoving with shields until eventually one line broke and fled, leaving the victors in possession of the field.

Hannibal and Deception

Hannibal's emphasis on deceit, military trickiness, and strategies, however, forced the Romans to use deceit and military tricks as an element of strategy as well. Hannibal destroyed three armies before the Romans finally conceded that subduing their enemy would require a new method. Faced with an unpredictable, wily enemy, the Romans had to become tricksters themselves. This transformation took time and was incredibly unpopular with the Roman people. The two most successful Roman generals, Fabius Maximus and Scipio Africanus, realized that survival was more important than their Roman pride. It is thanks to these two generals' willingness to adapt their strategies in their respective theatres that Rome was able to prevail.

Deceit, as an element of strategy, is an essential component of warfare. The Roman reluctance to fully adopt deceit into Rome's military repertoire is an outlier in the ancient world. Even the Greeks, who prided themselves on their hoplite warfare had, Odysseus and Metis. *Metis*, in particular, was seen by the Greeks, especially the Athenians, as a quality to be emulated. Originally a mythical goddess, *metis* connoted "magical cunning" and was used to describe the actions of characters like Prometheus. Hannibal was to Rome as Odysseus was to the Cyclops, using intelligent trickiness to turn the Cyclops' own strength and size against it. Hannibal's stratagems followed in the Homeric tradition. By condemning Hannibal's campaign decisions as *fides Punica*, the Romans exposed themselves as being out of touch.

It was not until Rome embraced stratagems and military tricks that they managed to stem Hannibal's onslaught. Rome's cultural expectations for how their military conducted itself did not change overnight. It took multiple defeats, desperate people, and new leaders willing to adapt. Fabius Maximus recognized that Rome could not continue to fight Hannibal in its conventional manner. It was not until Publius Cornelius Scipio (Africanus) assumed command in Spain that a Roman general was willing to fight the Barcids in their own game. By putting the Romans so thoroughly in a corner, Hannibal planted the seeds of his own destruction. He was so successful that the next Roman military generation had to emulate him. Scipio became his best student: a Roman Hannibal. He used the stratagems that had defeated Italy's most exceptional and turned it against Hannibal's allies in Spain. At Zama, Scipio chose the terrain, ensured cavalry superiority, and nullified Hannibal's war elephants.

The concept of *fides Punica*, however, goes back further than Hannibal, Fabius, and Scipio. Punic cultural stereotypes concerning deception and treachery were used by later Roman authors to vaunt Rome's superior culture. Especially in the late Republic and imperial periods,

Romans decried what they perceived as a moral deterioration of their society. Their essays looked back to when Rome, in their eyes, stood faithful and loyal to its allies in defense of the brooding Punic menace across the sea.

Recent scholarship is revising the idea that a consistent negative Punic stereotype existed in the Latin, Greek, or Punic cultural spheres before the destruction of Carthage in 146.[141] The revision follows in a similar vein to the increase in academic interest regarding the Punic world generally. This stereotype coalesced into a specific Roman prejudice.

In the Greek world, Phoenicians (and by extension their Punic descendants) received recognition for their mercantile and seafaring prowess. Homer calls them "noble." Herodotus praises their practice of silent barter with Iberian natives.[142] Aristotle praises their government, and these praises are later echoed by Polybius, though the latter does place Carthage's government second to Rome because of accusations of corrupt electoral processes.[143] The charges he levels against Carthage read like projections of the issues Roman politics were experiencing at the time of his writing.

That is not to say that Greek sources are all positive and pro-Punic. Aristotle did criticize the practice of letting a citizen hold more than one office at once. There were also references to Punic avarice and trickery concerning only mercantile activities. Herodotus, however, praises the loyalty of the Phoenicians, specifically in regard to the Carthaginian cousins.[144] On the whole,

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[141] Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 116.
[142] Hdt. 4.196.
[143] Aristotle *Pol*. 1272b, 1273b, 1273a.
[144] Hdt. 3.19.

the Phoenicians are treated fairly by Greek sources. It is only in later Roman authors, or Greeks patronized by Romans, that the oxymoron of Punic loyalty forms.[145]

There is no foundation for a decidedly negative Punic stereotype in Greek literature. There are also no extant sources written during the Punic Wars themselves, Roman or otherwise. To be clear, the stereotype referenced in this paper includes public accusations of disloyalty, treachery, and deception in the diplomatic sense. Polybius describes in detail the Roman embassy to Carthage after Hannibal's siege of Saguntum with both sides arguing over which state had broken the peace.[146] The sacredness of the treaties is apparent. Polybius acknowledges the sanctity of Punic treaties by having the Carthaginians argue to uphold the terms. He then attributes the leading cause of the war to the Roman seizure of Sardinia, which he judges as unjust. As Gruen states, "charges of treaty violations, a regular feature of rationales for war, are quite different from accusations of an ethnic propensity for perfidy.[147]" Accusations of treaty-breaking were not the same thing as an attack on national character.

This chapter focuses on deception as a vital part of the strategy employed during the Second Punic War by both sides. During the Second Punic War, the Romans learned to embrace stratagems. It is essential to discuss the origin of the idea about *fides Punica* before going further because the deception, trickery, deceit, and stratagems that both sides employ are not an offshoot of a treacherous Punic national character. Hannibal employed deception as a tool of military strategy because he was an elite, trained general. His Roman rivals (Fabius and Scipio) embraced these military tricks to defeat a military threat, not an ideological one.

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[145] Polyb., 9.11.2.
[146] Polyb., 3.21.1–8.
[147] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 125.

The phrase *Punica fides* occurs in explicit form no earlier than Sallust among extant texts. The stereotype characterizing Carthaginians as oathbreakers began after the destruction of Carthage in 146. Roman opinion had divided over whether to go to war a third time with their Punic rivals.[148] International opinion had divided as well, especially after Rome destroyed the city.[149] Roman authors often regarded the destruction of Carthage as the start of the moral decline of the Roman people and used the extinction of the Carthaginian people as an opportunity to mold opinion about the vanquished in order to put Rome in a positive light.

Two authors, Cicero and Livy, are the extant authors whose work most prominently touts the idea of *fides Punica*. Cicero inconsistently charges Carthaginians with lying, deceiving, and treaty-breaking, a tradition carried down from their Phoenician forefathers.[150] In one speech, Cicero judges their entire race to be liars, based only on their lineage; in another, it is their livelihood as seafaring traders that condemns them to a life of dishonesty.[151] His inconsistency and distance make him an unreliable source on Punic national character. His conflicting perspective on Hannibal himself furthers his viewpoint. In his *De Officiis*, he compares the Punic general with his rival Fabius Maximus, positively measuring them as being equal in cunning.[152] Cunning being positively attributed to a Roman denotes the Romans' acceptance of deceit as a strategic element. Acceptance of deceit also appears in Livy's work, though he describes Hannibal's treachery as "beyond Punic."[153]

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148 Plut. *Cato* 26–27; Appian *Pun*. 69.
149 Polyb. 36.9
150 Cic. *Scaur*. 42
151 Ibid. *Leg. Agrar*. 2.95
152 Ibid.. *De Off*. 1.108.
153 Livy. 21.4.9; 22.22.15

Because treaties of the time were so deeply intertwined with piety, Hannibal's treaty with Philip V of Macedon contradicts Roman accusations of his impiety. Hannibal ratified the treaty with an oath taken before the Greek and Phoenician gods as witnesses to the agreement.[154] Hannibal demonstrates his piety amply. After crossing the Rhone, Hannibal gave a benediction and prayed to the gods on behalf of his army.[155] Livy tells us how Hannibal went to Gades to fulfill a vow after his victory at Saguntum, where he took on new vows to ensure the success of his Italian expedition.[156] At the Po River, Hannibal called on Jupiter, the same deity addressed in his childhood oath, to witness the promises made to his soldiers.[157] Hannibal held the temple of Juno Lacinia in such high esteem that he frequently headquartered near it while in Italy. This temple is also where he set up the bronze tablet inscribed with his achievements.[158]

Other Roman authors did not share the same perspective on Punic character. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, it is the eventual founder of Rome that is charged with treachery when he leaves his lover Dido, queen of Carthage, and absconds to Italy. The dishonored queen curses Aeneas and his descendants before committing suicide. That an author writing during the principate of Augustus charges his and Rome's ancestor with crimes of that nature against a Punic character indicates that Roman culture did not have a deep prejudice against their Carthaginian neighbors. Gruen states the new argument succinctly:

> In the age of the Punic Wars, the Romans did not require a construct of Carthaginians as barbarous, wicked, and faithless to bolster their self-esteem or exhibit their superiority. The concept of *Punica fides* in Roman thinking emerged late, after the destruction of Carthage, and the phrase itself later still (at least in our extant sources). Insofar as it had

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[154] Polyb., 7.9.1.
[155] Ibid.., 3.44.13.
[156] Livy, 21, 21, 9.
[157] Ibid., 21, 45, 8.
[158] Polyb., 3, 33, 18.

value for Roman self-perception, this may have come once Carthage was wiped off the map, and Romans felt a need to explain why such an act made sense. [159]

Cannae was the catalyst for the Roman military elite adopting deceit as an element of strategy. After the titanic defeat of Hannibal, Fabius Maximus was seen as a man of forethought rather than cowardice. He proposed multiple measures to restore order to the city, including outlawing public mourning. Austerity brought Rome back to its senses. For the next seven years, Fabius practiced his war of attrition against Hannibal, refusing to fight him head-on. His cat and mouse strategy finally paid off in 209 when, by employing treachery, he retook Tarentum, Hannibal's stronghold in southern Italy.

Fabius Maximus, the Romans, and Deception

Fabius' strategy was twofold. First, he gave orders to the garrison at Rhegium to overrun Bruttium and take Caulonia, both of which were under Hannibal's protection. Hannibal rushed out of his fortress to defend his Latin allies. As discussed in the previous chapter, Livy reports that a captain of the guard was in love with the sister of an officer in Fabius' army. The Roman commander used this relationship to his advantage and bribed the commander with the woman's hand in marriage. While Hannibal was chasing the Rhegine garrison across the countryside, Fabius besieged Tarentum. The city fell within five days thanks to the turncoat who allowed Fabius' forces to scale his section of the wall unchallenged. Upon losing the city, Hannibal commented, "It seems that the Romans have found their own Hannibal, for we have lost Tarentum in the same way that we took it.[160]"

The taking of Tarentum through treachery crystallizes the change in Roman military thinking. It was the clearest expression of Fabius' tactical philosophy. Roman citizens could

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[159] Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 131.
[160] Livy, 27.16.9.

finally see the fruit of the Delayer's work after years of stalking Hannibal through the Italian countryside and striking out at foragers and pickets. Political infighting had seen Fabius removed from command once already, with the disastrous result at Cannae to show for it. Hannibal had narrowly escaped Fabius once on the Falernian plains. This time, Fabius took his strategy to its logical end and fought only when sure of Hannibal's absence, capturing a critical supply base as a result. Hannibal's praise and comparison to his own way of thinking reveals how much the Roman high command changed in order to defeat their enemy.

These tactics, including avoiding pitched battles, targeting supply lines, maintaining the high ground, and ambushing foraging patrols, were part of a broader strategy to wear Hannibal's army down through attrition. Fabius' willingness to engage in tactics widely considered unbecoming of a Roman was propagated by the next generation of military commanders. One in particular, Scipio Africanus, the eventual conqueror of North Africa, had Fabius Cunctator to thank. Over a thousand years later, the American general George Washington became known as the "American Fabius" by adopting these same tactics to defeat the British army in the American War for Independence.

Scipio in Spain – The Roman Hannibal

Spain was the pivotal battlefield of the Second Punic War. It is important to remember that Hannibal would not have been able to prosecute the war in Italy without the material and human resources he acquired in Spain. After the war, the wealth that Carthage had gained allowed it to pay off its war indemnity to Rome quickly and fueled an economic revitalization. The Roman success in Spain prevented Hannibal from being adequately reinforced, and the Punic defeat in Spain also created an opportunity for Rome to invade North Africa. Hannibal's place in history was determined in Spain by his family and by his strategic successor, Scipio Africanus.

The quality of Carthage's generals was low, excluding Hamilcar and his sons, so Hannibal's success gained in Italy was not matched in the battles that took place in Spain. Hasdrubal was like neither his father nor his brother. This lack of leadership was the main disadvantage that the Carthaginians had to contend with throughout the war. Their reliance on mercenaries and indigenous and other allies also proved costly. In 216, the Tartessii tribe in southern Spain rose in rebellion against their Carthaginian rulers. In 214, Hasdrubal returned to North Africa to put down a Numidian revolt as well. These disruptions in the Carthaginian heartland led to a division of its forces, halted any countermeasures against Rome, and prevented the Carthaginians from adequately supporting Hannibal's army in Italy.

The Romans were mostly victorious in Spain because Scipio Africanus adapted Hannibalic tactics. By 212 B.C., Saguntum was recaptured. Besides one disastrous defeat in 211, the Roman army steadily pushed back Punic expansion in Spain. In 209, Scipio conquered the Punic capital in Spain. The next year, Carthaginian influence in Spain ended after their defeat at the Battle of Ilipa. There, Scipio won by using a double pincer maneuver taken straight from Hannibal. At Ilipa, Scipio also met the Numidian king Massinissa. Rome was then able to lead an expedition to North Africa, forcing Hannibal to return from his campaign.[161]

In 215, Hasdrubal had quelled the trouble in central Spain. His brother Mago arrived with over ten thousand reinforcements, including twenty elephants. The two armies clashed outside the town of Hibera. News of Hannibal's victory at Cannae had already reached Spain by then. Hasdrubal attempted to repeat the victorious tactics his brother used at Cannae. He placed his Spanish troops in the center, with African infantry flanking each side. This strategy exemplifies

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[161] Ibid., 57.

the similar military training the two Punic generals underwent beneath their father's tutelage. There was a distinct difference between Hannibal and his younger brother Mago in martial skills, however. The type of encirclement tactic used at Cannae took precision, skill, and a bit of luck to pull off. The Roman infantry pushed back the Carthaginian center as planned but then broke through and attacked each flank at the same time. Hasdrubal's cavalry had already fled. Mago soon followed in another bitter defeat.[162]

This second defeat put a stop to any plans to reinforce Hannibal. Despite his elder brother's repeated entreaties, as well as the stringent orders of the Senate, Hasdrubal was fighting for his life in the heartland of Carthaginian Spain. The sources are mixed about what took place over the next three years. Carthage was busy attempting to maintain its tenuous alliance network with the numerous tribes in southern Spain. The Scipio brothers solidified their hold in northern Spain while dealing with financial troubles regarding the army's payment. In 212, the Roman army managed to recapture Saguntum and restore its independence from Carthage.[163] This defeat was both a military and a symbolic defeat for Carthage.

211 was a notable reversal for the Romans in Spain. The Roman army, victorious there for the last eight years, was almost annihilated. Hasdrubal and his brother Mago each led a Carthaginian force that year against separate targets. The Scipio brothers, confident in their new Celtiberian allies, split their forces as well. Gnaeus Scipio chose to face Hasdrubal, his old enemy, while the newly arrived Publius went to attack Mago. Disaster struck when Hasdrubal bribed Gnaeus' Celtiberian tribesmen to abandon the Romans in enemy territory. The Romans

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[162] Ibid., 166.
[163] Ibid., 168.

beat a hasty retreat. Gnaeus chose to die fighting rather than surrender. His brother Publius had been slain in battle four weeks earlier. Roman survivors managed to form and hold a defensive line along the Ebro River, but both Scipios were dead.[164]

The Roman Senate responded quickly. In 210, Gaius Claudius Nero went to reinforce the Ebro in Spain with twelve thousand foot soldiers and one thousand cavalry. Later that year, another Publius Cornelius Scipio (hereafter referred to as Scipio or Scipio Africanus) was elected to replace Nero in Spain. He was the eldest son of the recently killed Publius Scipio. He arrived in Spain with eleven thousand troops.[165] Roman strength in Spain was completely restored. Quick action and communication by the Roman Senate and its commanders had saved Rome's position in the region.

Scipio accepted the position in Spain to avenge his family. His father and uncle were killed in 211 by Hasdrubal at the Battle of the Upper Baetis (mentioned above). He had also fought against Hannibal in Italy at the Ticinus and Cannae.[166] These early experiences were invaluable later on in Spain. Scipio had learned much from seeing the Romans defeated in Italy. When he arrived in Spain, the Carthaginians witnessed Hannibalic tactics firsthand from their young Roman enemy.

In 209, Scipio marched to Nova Carthago, the capital of Punic Spain. Hasdrubal, Mago, and Hasdrubal Gisco had spread their forces throughout the territory. None of their armies were within ten days' march of the capital. In a few days, Scipio managed to take the capital.[167] This defeat was catastrophic for the Carthaginians. Scipio released the Spanish tribesmen that had

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[164] Hoyos, *Mastering the West*, 144.
[165] Ibid., 174.
[166] Polybius, 10.3.5; Livy, 22.53.
[167] Hoyos, *Mastering the West*, 175.

been held in Cartagena as political hostages by the Carthaginians. Their return led to a storm of defections to the Roman side. Northeastern Spain was in Roman hands. Central Spain and the principal tribes south of the Ebro were up in arms.

Cartagena is the first significant example of Scipio's use of trickery, deception, and treachery (Hannibalic tactics). The city was on a peninsula connected by a narrow isthmus. To the north, the city was protected by a lagoon that fed into a canal to the west of the city; to the south, the bay protected the confident defenders from attack. These features guaranteed that any assault on the city would be a costly endeavor.

One thousand Carthaginian troops and two thousand citizen militia were garrisoned inside the city when Scipio arrived with over twenty-five thousand men. There were only around ten days before reinforcements arrived to rescue the city, so Scipio had to act fast. Before he could strike, however, the commander Mago sent out his militia to attack the Roman camp. The fight was long and bloody. The defenders were eventually driven back to the walls with the Romans in pursuit. Scipio ordered a full assault, but the defenders drove the Romans back. The next day, a Roman fleet appeared and assaulted the seaward walls. Again they were thrown back, but only just.[168]

Finally, Scipio took a page from Hannibal's playbook and utilized knowledge of the terrain. Before his campaign began, Scipio had consulted with fishers who knew the waters near Cartagena well. According to them, the lagoon that protected the northern walls of the city was fordable during low tide. Scipio brought a few fishermen to guide his army just in case. Now, with the walls standing after two direct assaults, Scipio made use of this information. He picked

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[168] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 271.

five hundred soldiers to lead a delayed assault on the north wall. Mago had positioned his men elsewhere. The secret detachment met with no opposition and quickly captured the walls. They helped Scipio's main force capture the main gate. Within hours, the Carthaginian capital in Spain had fallen.[169]

Scipio's intelligence gathering, use of guides, feint assaults, and surprise marches were all deceptive tactics showcasing the change in Roman thinking. He could not resist conventional Roman thinking in assaulting the walls after breaking the sally, however. Once he had met with stiff resistance, he did not continue trying the same tactic over again. This is a stark difference from Hannibal after his lightning campaign from 218-216, when he did not achieve the expected surrender from the Romans and chose to remain in Italy. In that regard, the reluctant student eventually surpassed his mentor and enemy.

When Scipio marched south again in 208, Hasdrubal faced him alone. The two other commanders were occupied throughout the region, putting down rebellions. The Battle of Baecula, as it became known, was a severe defeat for Hasdrubal. Scipio's forces outmaneuvered and surprised the Carthaginian forces while they were trying to defend a hilltop.[170] Hasdrubal retreated south, where he rejoined Mago and Hasdrubal Gisco. He soon decided to take his army and finally march for Italy. His departure left the other two Carthaginian commanders to deal with the victorious Roman commander steadily pushing them further south.

Africanus continued to pressure the Carthaginian front. In 206, Scipio led the Roman army south in an attempt to bring about a decisive battle. Hasdrubal Gisco obliged him. The

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[169] Ibid., 272-273.
[170] Hoyos, *Mastering the West*, 178.

Battle of Ilipa, as it came to be known, is famous because it is the first time the Roman infantry organized itself into cohorts.[171] New tactics allowed for incredible mobility and maneuverability. During the battle, the Roman army went from line formation to marching columns and back again as it charged the Carthaginian center. The quick maneuver allowed the entire Roman column to attack at once. Scipio also utilized a double pincer that mirrored Hannibal's own at Cannae.[172] The result was a terrific victory for Scipio. Hasdrubal Gisco fled to North Africa, his army destroyed.

Scipio's double pincer maneuver at Ilipa highlights how much the Roman commander had learned from watching Hannibal beat his countrymen in Italy. He spent multiple days before the battle deploying his soldiers in a consistent formation (Romans in the center, auxiliaries on the wings). Scipio lulled the Carthaginians into a false sense of security. Then he switched these units and marched on the Punic camp early in the morning to prevent them from eating breakfast. His Roman veterans now on the wings, Scipio deployed a curved battle line. It was too late for Hasdrubal to redeploy his forces once he realized the trick. Their flanks routed while the Roman center was held back by Scipio, keeping the Punic middle from being redirected elsewhere. The result was a complete envelopment of the Punic army.[173]

This deceptive deployment, including the intentional timing of bringing the Punic army to battle, was designed to give Scipio's army every advantage. Ilipa was not Cannae, where the Romans relied on their brute force and numbers. Scipio was in hostile territory, attempting to

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[171] Ibid., 183.
[172] Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 144-150.
[173] Ibid., ibid.

win over allies and defeat multiple enemy armies, and he used similar tactics and strategies to Hannibal because the two commanders were in the same military situation.

Spain was wholly in Roman control by the end of 206. Scipio consolidated his hold over the Iberians and Celtiberian tribesmen. He sailed to Africa, to the court of Syphax of Numidia, where he impressed both the king and Hasdrubal Gisco (there to enlist Numidian aid against Rome).[174] Although he eventually failed to prevent Carthage and Numidia from siding against him, Scipio did manage to enlist the aid of a young Numidian nobleman, Masinissa, whom Scipio had defeated at Ilipa. Masinissa had returned home and fought a guerrilla war for his father's crown but was defeated multiple times, and yet always evaded capture. When Scipio invaded Africa in 204, Masinissa and his rebels joined him, with the promise of the Numidian crown for his assistance. Scipio needed Masinissa's cavalry to counter Syphax. The Roman general had seen the effect of superior cavalry at Cannae.[175]

Scipio and Hannibal faced off in 203 at the Battle of Zama, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. Scipio was victorious and was the first Roman general to earn the agnomen of the country he conquered (Africanus). The Second Punic War ended shortly afterward, but the focus here is to highlight how Scipio learned from his conflict with Hannibal. He became not only the best general at Rome's disposal but one of the first to embrace deception and trickery as a viable military strategy. Scipio went further than Fabius. The Delayer had adapted to the circumstances created by fighting Hannibal, but Scipio's generalship was molded by that fighting. He conquered Spain by going after Carthage's armies directly, as Hannibal had done, and ignored the infighting and seducing of the Iberian tribes that had led to his father's and

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[174] Ibid., 151.
[175] Ibid., 198.

uncles' defeat. By attacking Carthage's outlying dependencies, Scipio changed the momentum of

the war.

CH 6: THE BATTLE OF ZAMA AND THE END OF HANNIBAL

The Battle of Zama needs scholarly scrutiny because it was Hannibal's only defeat and proved to be the most decisive battle of the war. There are multiple problems with the description of the battle by ancient sources. The issues are the battle's location, the elephant corps, and the pro-Roman sources that describe the battle.

The exact location of the battle is still unknown. No known monuments, statues, or steles indicate the site. It is hard to believe that the Romans did not commission any monuments, but archaeologists often cannot locate decisive battles sites.

Hannibal fielded eighty war elephants against Scipio. Zama was the first time since Trebia that Hannibal had been able to deploy elephant cavalry. Fighting in his homeland with a trained corps of war elephants seems like a huge advantage, but there are no elephant troops mentioned in the battles leading up to Zama. Scipio had already fought Carthaginian armies at Utica and the Great Plains before Hannibal arrived in North Africa, and at neither point did he encounter elephants. However, at Zama, Hannibal was supposedly able to call up nearly eighty of them. The elephants allegedly became frightened by the yelling, shield banging, and other noises. This behavior is unlikely, despite their natural tendency to panic, given that animals trained for war tend to disregard the general noises that accompany a battle.

Polybius and Livy detailed Scipio's strategy to negate the elephant charge. Scipio set long corridors in his infantry formation and screened the corridors using skirmishers. Hannibal's elephants passed through these aisles and at the end of them were killed with javelins, driven away, or turned back into their formations. Driven mad by their wounds, these elite war beasts ran amok. Each elephant carried a mahout on its back. If the mahouts did lose control of their mounts, each one carried a hammer and chisel to kill a rampaging animal with a quick strike to

the head, as at the earlier battle of the Metaurus.[176] Hannibal's mahouts likely tried to use the same tactic, but they were severely wounded by missiles or thrown off their elephants.

According to Polybius, Hannibal's cavalry was driven off early on by Massinissa. The Greek historian describes Hannibal's mercenaries and his Carthaginian regulars turning against each other. As the mercenaries attempt to withdraw, Hannibal orders his men to lower their spears, forcing the mercenaries to "take refuge on the wings or make for the open country."[177] The idea that Hannibal, a man who had campaigned for fifteen years in hostile territory, was unable to coordinate his regular and mercenary troops is questionable. Polybius' description of the cowardice of the Carthaginian regulars makes little sense since these men's lives, honor, and wealth, as well as their wives and children, were at risk. There was no gain in hanging back and allowing the outnumbered mercenaries to fight the battle. Hannibal likely led his line of battle with his mercenary and inexperienced troops, followed by his veterans. As each of these lines lost ground to the advancing Roman formation, they fell back and reorganized on the wings, leaving the spent Roman hastati and principes to face fresh, veteran troops while being slowly flanked.[178] This strategy is similar to Cannae without the complete cavalry entrapment, though this might have been part of his complete plan.

In Polybius's account, Scipio reorganized his line of battle to equal the width of the Carthaginians. He placed his veterans on the wings to avoid Hannibal's flanking maneuver. This report is difficult to accept from Polybius without question. At the pivotal point, with Rome's

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[176] Livy, 27.49.1.

[177] Polyb., 15.13.9.

[178] Y.D. Mosig and I. Belhassen, "Revision and Reconstruction in the Second Punic War: Zama – Whose Victory?" *International Journal of the Humanities* (Globeedu Group, 2007), 177.

cavalry bound to return at any moment, it seems strange that Hannibal, master of ambush tactics, would have allowed Scipio time to reorganize his line of battle. Instead, the two sides met, "being nearly equal in numbers, spirit, courage, and arms, and the battle was for a long time undecided."[179] The two sides were equally matched in strength and number. The Romans had fought through two lines of Carthaginian infantry and were likely more tired than their counterparts. Emboldened, the Romans charged the ordered ranks of Hannibal's veterans in a single line. The battle raged for an unknown amount of time, until the Numidian cavalry allied to Rome returned and attacked the Carthaginian rear and flanks, routing Hannibal's army.

Hannibal's advantage in pitched battle always resided in the superior quality and number of his cavalry. Surprise, flanking maneuvers, and ambush only served to empower his cavalry as the arm of decision. Without them, his trickery and skill had no means of expression. At Zama, though, it was Scipio who had the advantage in cavalry. His Numidian allies had the skill and strength in numbers to negate Hannibal's usual tactics. That is why Hannibal arrayed his infantry into three lines to mirror Roman tactics and formation. Each component of his infantry (his veterans, Carthaginian/Libyan infantry, and the Ligurian, Gallic, and Balearic cohorts) were distinct groups that had not served together long enough to be a coherent and effective force. Hannibal's creation of three lines was likely to make it easier to deploy the disparate elements in his army, but the battle was lost because the Romans had better cavalry in higher numbers. Their infantry was superior as well, evenly matching Hannibal's veteran infantry. Three years of hard fighting in Spain had welded the Roman infantry into one of the most capable armies the Roman

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[179] Polybius, 15.14.5.

military system ever produced. The only argument for Roman trickery or deception at Zama was in Scipio's apparent handling of the Carthaginian elephant corps.

Elephants at Zama

Indian armies were the first to use elephants as shock cavalry. Alexander the Great encountered them in 331 in the Indus valley. This new weapon traveled back with Alexander's successors to the Mediterranean. In the 270s, Pyrrhus of Epirus used elephants in Italy against the Romans and in Sicily against the Carthaginians. Hannibal's forebears were quick to adapt to this tactic. They domesticated the now-extinct African forest elephants and used them as cavalry. Elephants subsequently became synonymous in the ancient world with Carthage. In Spain, Carthaginian coins depicted an elephant on one side.

Logistics and numbers limited pachyderm effectiveness during the Second Punic War. The amount of forage required to keep an elephant fit for battle is enormous. Elephants create a supply problem that virtually negates their advantage in battle. Shean estimates nearly two hundred pack animals were needed to transport their rations.[180] The only battles where Hannibal deployed elephants were at the river Tagus, Trebia, and Zama in 220, 218, and 202, respectively. At Trebia, Hannibal's elephants disrupted the Roman infantry formation and scattered their Gallic auxiliaries. The discord that the elephants caused among men and horses not used to their presence made them worth the risk to Hannibal.

At Zama, Scipio Africanus used the flexible manipular formation to defuse the elephant charge. For the sake of argument, if Scipio's formation did negate the eighty-odd elephant charge, then the alleys created by the Roman infantry formation is a deceptive tactical maneuver.

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[180] Shean, *Hannibal's Mules*, 175.

There was no other subterfuge before or during the battle. Hannibal and Scipio both arrayed their infantry in three lines opposite each other with cavalry on both flanks. The only difference was that Hannibal had a large corps of war elephants stationed at the front of his lines. Everyone on the field knew Hannibal's plan was a mass elephant charge, the exact tactic used by Xanthippus during Regulus' invasion in the First Punic War. Scipio's response was by the book. Here is Polybius describing the battle as it regards the elephants:

> The rest of the elephants charged the Roman velites in the spaces between the maniples of the line, and while inflicting much damage on the enemy suffered severely; until, becoming frightened, some of them ran away down the vacant spaces, the Romans letting them pass harmlessly along, according to Scipio's orders…[181]

Scipio's taking advantage of the size of the battlefield and allowing his forces to space themselves accordingly was his deception. Hannibal might have figured that the number of his elephants and the skill of their mahouts would overcome the enemy they faced.

The Battle of Zama was the final pitched battle of the war. After his defeat, Hannibal returned to Carthage and advised the Senate to sue for peace. The terms were harsh. Rome confiscated Carthage's overseas territories, destroyed its fleet of warships, and charged a tribute of ten thousand talents a year for fifty years. Most galling of all, the Carthaginians gave up their sovereign right to make war. The noble families of the city gave up political hostages to ensure observance of the treaty terms. The title "Friends and Allies" of the Roman people meant avoiding annihilation, but it was clear that Carthage had become subordinate to Rome in their own African homeland.

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[181] Polybius 15.12

Almost five hundred ships, according to some of Livy's sources, were burned in the open water outside of Carthage's harbor. It seems odd that Carthage still had five hundred ships since (a) Hannibal did not have the ships to mount a maritime invasion of the Italian Peninsula, (b) Roman domination of the western Mediterranean prevented reinforcing Hannibal in Italy, and (c) Carthage could not prevent a Roman landing in North Africa. Building of these ships, training their crews, and equipping and maintaining both the ships and the men require time and money, which are further restricting factors. If Carthage had or gained enough resources during the war to build five hundred ships, there was no reason not to use their naval potential better. Carthage had reinforced Hannibal in Italy a few times through its Greek ports in the south. Over his ten years in Italy, though, it does not seem that they actually supplied nearly enough. While the claim that Hannibal was operating on his own against the will of the Carthaginian government is false, it does seem as if factions in Carthage prevented the full might of its military from supporting Hannibal.

By 196, Hannibal was elected suffete.[182] He spent his time in office attempting to institute financial and political reform in Carthage. Hannibal revised the tax system to alleviate the burden of the war indemnity from ordinary citizens. In doing so, he attacked the oligarchical faction in the Council of Elders, who were misappropriating state funds. His work led to the repayment of all the sums embezzled by the Elders and the full payment of the war debt to Rome. It appeared for a time that the Barcid dynasty was still influential in Carthage.

Barcid political hegemony was coming to an end. The oligarchs who had been targeted by Hannibal's financial reforms sought revenge against the former Barcid general. They wrote

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[182] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 181.

letters to the Roman Senate, accusing Hannibal of plotting another war. An embassy was sent to Carthage to take Hannibal into custody, but he managed to escape into exile. He went first to Tyre, the city from which Carthage's founder Dido had reportedly sailed almost six centuries before. He spent the rest of his life in the courts of Eastern monarchs and even convinced Antiochus III of the Seleucid Empire to begin a war with Rome. Hannibal hoped that this Hellenistic monarch could succeed where he had failed in stopping Roman expansion. When Antiochus failed, and being without further recourse, Hannibal committed suicide in 183 in Bithynia.[183] The Barcids had spent almost eight decades attempting to defeat Rome. Their failure eventually led to the downfall of Carthaginian civilization.

CONCLUSION

Hannibal's personal experience in war, the legacy of his father Hamilcar, his Greek tutor Sosylus, and, most importantly, the formal Greek education he had received directly influenced his strategic and tactical decisions in Italy. His battle at Cannae is the prime example and product of his Greek education. The double envelopment executed through superior cavalry and infantry on the flanks is typical Barcid military strategy. His father's tactics in Sicily convinced Hannibal that lightning-style raiding was more profitable than long, vulnerable sieges such as the one Hannibal had endured at Saguntum from 219-218. Hannibal learned the value of speed, surprise, and guerrilla tactics from his wars against the Spanish. Overall, the war in Italy reflected his understanding of the Greek art of war. Though ultimately beaten, Hannibal deserves to stand alongside the other master tacticians and strategists of the ancient world.

How Hannibal saw himself is imperative for understanding the decisions that he made

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[183] Ibid., 208.

while on the campaign and the effect he had on the overall outcome of any given operation. Hannibal saw himself among the greatest generals in history, as he himself told Scipio Africanus years after the war, while he was an advisor in the Seleucid court.[184] Hannibal reasoned that he had conquered Iberia and led an army over the Alps like Hercules. His military accomplishments were formidable despite his ultimate failure. Throughout his Italian campaign, his army never lost any significant, decisive engagements. Hannibal defeated three separate Roman consular armies, and at Cannae he had defeated the greatest Roman force ever assembled. No significant conspiracies or mutinies plagued his army, which behaved as a well-trained fighting force entirely at the disposal of its commander. Though ultimately unsuccessful, Hannibal's tactical and strategic genius are underestimated by scholars. Overall, Hannibal's legacy was defined by the objectives he failed to meet: he never managed to defeat Rome or stop its expansion throughout the Mediterranean.

Hannibal was a great leader, but he was human and made avoidable mistakes. He was not the godless terror that the Roman sources paint, but neither was he the infallible underdog some modern writers want to idolize. His initial campaign strategy was bold and promised a big payoff, but after 216, Hannibal did not adapt his strategy to compete against a government unwilling to surrender or compromise. He continued to use innovative tactics, but the Romans eventually saw their worth and began to copy them. Scipio adapted to great effect in Spain when he cut Hannibal off from his supply base and eventually forced him back to North Africa, where Hannibal met his defeat at Zama. Even in defeat, Hannibal's tactics and strategies earn him a place alongside Alexander and Caesar in a listing of the ancient world's greatest military minds.

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[184] Lancel, *Hannibal*, 193.

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