

GCSE (9–1)

Prescribed Source Booklet

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198

For first teaching in 2017

Hannibal and the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC

Version 2



Overview of the depth study

Hannibal Barca is regarded as one of the greatest military leaders in history. After crossing of the Alps with his troops and elephants, his decisive victories at Trasimene and Cannae brought Rome to the brink of destruction. Yet after spending seventeen years in Italy and with the Second Punic War engulfing the Mediterranean, Hannibal was forced to return to Carthage. This depth study gives students the chance to understand the events of the Second Punic War, through the prism of Hannibal and his Roman opponents, most notably Fabius Maximus and Scipio Africanus.

This source booklet lists the sources following the chronological order of the events. This has been done as it felt that this is the easiest way for students to gain familiarity with the facts, sources and chronology of the period. The themes in the specification can be accessed at various points throughout the course.

Specification content

Key topics	Learners should have studied the following content:
Reasons for the outbreak of the Second Punic War	The impact of the First Punic War on the balance of power between Rome and Carthage; the impact of the Treaty of Lutatius on Carthage; the significance of the colonisation of Iberia by Hamilcar and Hasdrubal; the development of a war party within Carthage demanding revenge or renegotiation of the Treaty of Lutatius; Hannibal's personal motivations for war against Rome, including the influence of Hamilcar and the threat of Roman expansion into Iberia.

The nature and dynamics of Hannibal's leadership	Hannibal's leadership and tactics during the Siege of Saguntum, the battles on the Rhone and the crossing of the Alps; Hannibal's leadership and tactics during the invasion of Italy, including the battles of Trebia, Trasimene and Cannae; Hannibal's failure to march on Rome and inability to counter Fabian tactics, his failure to make peace with Rome and to retain alliances with Italian tribes made after Cannae, and his failure to keep supply routes open with Iberia and Carthage.
The changing nature of Rome's response to Hannibal	The leadership of Sempronius, Flaminius, Servillius, Varro and Paulus; Roman mistakes in the campaign and the reasons for them; the impact of Fabius Maximus upon Roman tactics, including his appointment as dictator and the use of religion to improve Roman confidence; Minucius' failure and Fabius' success in isolating Hannibal from his allies and cutting off his supply routes; the impact of Scipio Africanus on Roman tactics; Scipio Africanus' appointment and successful campaign in Iberia; debate in Senate between Scipio Africanus and Fabius Maximus; Scipio's invasion of Africa to draw Hannibal out of Rome
How did Rome defeat Carthage?	Reasons for Hannibal's withdrawal from Rome, including pressure from the Carthaginian senate and supply problems; the significance of the Numidian cavalry supporting Rome and regional unrest caused by the Roman invasion of Africa; Hannibal's refusal to fight and the murder of Hasdrubal; the battle of Zama; the reasons for Hannibal's defeat and its consequences for Carthage and Rome.



Reasons for the outbreak of the Second Punic War

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 8–12

3.8

[1] Fabius, the Roman historian, says that, along with the Carthaginian aggression against Saguntum, a cause of the war with Hannibal was Hasdrubal's ambition and desire for power. [2] He says that Hasdrubal had gained great control over Spain, but later went to Africa and tried to abolish the laws and constitution of the Carthaginians and turn it into a monarchy. [3] However, the leaders of the city, getting some idea of what his plan was, got together to oppose him. [4] Hasdrubal, suspecting this, left Africa for Spain where he governed from then on as he wished, taking no notice of the wishes of the Carthaginian Council. [5] Hannibal, from his early youth, had shared and admired Hasdrubal's principles. When he acquired command of Spain, he used the same methods as Hasdrubal in his dealings. [6] Fabius tells us that now he chose to start the war against the Romans on his own, for his own purposes, and against the opinion of the Carthaginians, since [7] none of the important leaders in Carthage approved of his actions concerning the city of Saguntum. [8] Having related this, Fabius says that after Saguntum was captured, the Romans came on the scene saying that they needed either to hand over Hannibal to them or undertake a war. ...

3.9

... [6] ... We must first consider the anger of Hamilcar Barca, who was the father of Hannibal. [7] His spirit remained undefeated after the war in Sicily, he felt that he had kept his army at Eryx¹ fresh and determined, and he had only been willing to come to terms due to the Carthaginians' defeat in the naval battle. He remained resolved and watched out for a chance to attack again. [8] If the Carthaginians

¹ an ancient city in the west of Sicily

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had not had to deal with the mutiny of their mercenaries, he would, as far as he was able, created some other opportunity and made preparations for war. As it happened, he was frustrated by the internal problems and his time was completely occupied with resolving these.

3.10

[1] After the Carthaginians had put down the revolt, the Romans announced that they were going to go to war with the Carthaginians. The Carthaginians at first submitted all the issues for negotiation, considering that they would succeed as they had a just cause. ...

[3] The Romans felt no need to negotiate; so the Carthaginians gave in to the situation. They felt very angry but they were powerless to act. They retreated from Sardinia and agreed to pay an extra 1,200 talents in addition to what had been paid previously in order to avoid war at that time. [4] This then must be seen as the second and greatest cause of the war which followed. [5] Hamilcar's own long-standing resentment was fed by the anger which his citizens felt at this insult. As soon as he had put down the mutiny of the mercenaries and strengthened the safety of his country, he made every effort to organise Spain, eager to use the resources as a springboard for war against Rome. [6] But then a third cause must be considered – the success of the Carthaginians in Spain. For trusting in the strength of these renewed resources, they went into the war with confidence. [7] Many facts might be found to show that Hamilcar contributed a great deal towards the outbreak of the Second Punic War, despite dying ten years before it started. However, the story I am about to relate will be enough to prove the point.

3.11

[1] After Hannibal had been finally defeated by the Romans, he went to stay with Antiochus². At that time the Romans, having already realised the intention of

² King of the Seleucid Empire

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the Aetolians, sent an embassy to Antiochus, wanting to learn the king's policy. [2] The envoys saw King Antiochus was taking some notice of the Aetolians and was inclined to make war on the Romans. So they paid attention to Hannibal, being eager to throw suspicion on him in the mind of the king. [3] And this was successful. For as time passed, the king became more and more suspicious of Hannibal. Eventually there occurred a meeting when they talked about the unspoken mistrust which was between them. [4] During the conversation, Hannibal produced many arguments in his defence, but being unable to find further ones, he carried on with the following story. [5] Hannibal said that at the time when his father was intending to make an expedition to Spain with his forces, he was about nine and was standing by the side of the altar while his father was sacrificing to Zeus. [6] When he had obtained good omens, his father poured a libation to the gods and performed the customary rites. He ordered the others around the sacrifice to stand back a little way, but he called to his son, and asked him kindly if he wanted to join him on the expedition. [7] Hannibal was pleased and readily agreed; like a boy would, he even asked to go. So his father, taking him by his right hand, led him to the altar and ordered him to touch the victims and swear never to be a friend to the Romans. [8] Now that Antiochus knew this episode clearly, Hannibal begged him, while his policy was opposed to the Romans, to be confident that he could trust him and consider that, in him, he had his truest supporter. [9] But if he ever made a settlement or an alliance with the Romans, then there would be no need for slanders, but Antiochus should mistrust him and guard against him. For he [Hannibal] would do everything he could to harm the Romans.

3.12

[1] When Antiochus heard this story, he was convinced that Hannibal was expressing his genuine feelings and speaking the truth, so put aside all his former mistrust. [2] For our part we should regard this as unmistakable proof of Hamilcar's hostility and of his general attitude towards Rome, and indeed this was confirmed by the facts, [3] for he succeeded in instilling into his son-in-law

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Hasdrubal and his son Hannibal an enmity towards Rome which it would be impossible to surpass. [4] Hasdrubal in fact died before these intentions could be fully demonstrated, but events gave Hannibal the opportunity to prove only too clearly the hatred of Rome which he had inherited from his father. [5] ... These then were the causes of the Second Punic War.

Hannibal besieges Saguntum and declaration of war (219–218 BC)

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 15–16

3.15

[1] But the Saguntines continually sent messages to Rome. They were worried for themselves, but at the same time saw what would happen, and also wanted the Romans to be informed of the growing success the Carthaginians were having in Spain. [2] The Romans, more often unwilling to listen to the Saguntines, this time sent a delegation to check on the situation. [3] Hannibal, at the same time, having achieved the conquests which he had planned for that period, was again at New Carthage with his forces in order to winter. This city was, as it were, the ornament and capital of the Carthaginian lands in Spain. [4] Hannibal found the delegation from the Romans and granted them a meeting and listened to what they had to report. [5] The Romans protested and told him to stay away from Saguntum, since it was under their protection and told him not to cross the River Ebro, as had been agreed with Hasdrubal.

[6] Hannibal was a young man, full of warlike enthusiasm, elated by recent success, and incited by his long-standing hatred towards the Romans, [7] replied to them that he was looking after the interests of the Saguntines. He accused the Romans, only a short time before, of having unjustly executed some leading citizens, when there was some political disorder and they were called to decide

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on the dispute. The Carthaginians, he said, would not ignore this breaking of the treaty. For it was an ancient custom of Carthage not to ignore anyone who has been treated unjustly. [8] He sent a message to Carthage to learn what he had to do, because the Saguntines, protected in their alliance with the Romans, were harming some who were subject to Carthage.

[9] Throughout this, he was full of irrational and violent anger, so he did not give the truest reasons, but resorted to unreasonable pretexts. This is what men usually do when they take no notice of what is right because of a long-held desire. [10] For how much better to aim for the Romans to return Sardinia to them and the tribute paid at that time, which the Romans had exacted unjustly from them using the miserable situation of the Carthaginians to their own advantage. And if they did not do so, to say they would go to war. [11] But now by keeping silent on the true cause, while making up a non-existent one about Saguntum, he seemed to start the war not only irrationally but also unjustly.

[12] The envoys of the Romans, when they realised plainly that there must be war, sailed to Carthage to make the same protests to them. [13] They did not expect that the war would be in Italy, but in Spain, and they would use the city of Saguntum as their base of operations for the war.

3.16

... [5] But they were mistaken in their calculations. For Hannibal acted before they could act and took Saguntum. [6] As a result, the war did not take place in Spain, but close to Rome itself, and in all the land of Italy.

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 20

... [6] The Romans, when they were told of the misfortune which Saguntum suffered, immediately chose envoys and hurried to send them to Carthage, offering them two choices. [7] One, it seemed, would mean disgrace and harm

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if the Carthaginians accepted it, the other would bring the beginnings of great hardship and extreme danger. [8] Either they must hand over Hannibal and the men in his council or war would be declared. [9] When the Romans arrived in Carthage and came before the Carthaginian Council and explained what was being offered, the Carthaginians became angry at the choices they were offered. [10] Nevertheless the Carthaginians put forward their most able speaker and began to justify their actions.

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 33–34

3.33

[1] ... The Roman envoys listened to what the Carthaginians had to say but said nothing else themselves. [2] Instead the chief envoy pointed to his pocket and told the Carthaginian Council that in it he had both war and peace, and said he would leave them with whichever of the two they ordered him to leave with. [3] The leader of the Carthaginian Council (*Suffete*) ordered *him* to decide. [4] When the Roman said that it was war, most of the Carthaginian councillors immediately shouted that they accepted it. The envoys and Council parted on these terms.

[5] Hannibal was wintering at New Carthage. First he sent away the Spanish soldiers to their own cities, wanting to make them ready and willing to provide resources in the future. [6] Secondly he instructed his brother Hasdrubal on how he should organise the administration and control of Spain, and what measures to take against the Romans while he was away. [7] Thirdly, he took measures to ensure the safety of Africa. [8] Making a very experienced and wise move, he transported soldiers from Spain to Africa and from Africa to Spain, in order to secure the loyalty of both groups towards each other by such an arrangement. ...

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3.34

[1] Hannibal, after organising in advance all the measures for the security of Africa and Spain, then waited for the expected arrival of messengers from the Celts. [2] He had wisely gained information about the excellent quality of the lands at the foot of the Alps and the around the River Po, the number of people living there, and their bravery in war but [3] most of all about their existing hatred of Rome arising from the previous war against the Romans. ... [4] For this reason he had great hopes. He had been careful to promise all things in his communications with the Celtic leaders both on his side of the Alps and in the Alps themselves. [5] He had assumed that the only way to establish the war against Rome in Italy itself was by overcoming, if it could be done, the difficult route, in order to reach their lands and use the Celts as partners and allies in his proposed campaign. [6] On the arrival of the messengers, they reported that the Celts had agreed and were waiting for him. Also they said that the crossing of the Alps was very hard and difficult, but not at all impossible. So Hannibal led his soldiers from their winter camp at the beginning of spring. [7] The report of the events in Carthage had only just now reached him; this news encouraged him and lifted his spirits. He trusted in the goodwill of the citizens. He now called publicly for the soldiers to join with him in a war against Rome. [8] He made clear to them the Roman demand that he and all the army leaders had to be handed over to the Romans. He pointed out the great prosperity of the land they were heading for, and the goodwill and alliance of the Celts. [9] When the crowd showed they were eager to join with him in his campaign, he praised their enthusiasm and ordered them to be ready on the day fixed for setting out on the journey; then he dismissed the assembly.

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The journey to Italy, including the crossing of the Alps

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 21, Chapter 22

[1] Hannibal was well aware that Spain too had to be protected, especially since he was only too aware that delegations from Rome had been doing the rounds of its tribal chieftains, hoping to stir them to rebellion. [2] So he handed over the province to his brother, the indefatigable Hasdrubal, and gave him a supporting garrison of mainly African troops ... [3] ... and a small contingent of 200 Ilergetean cavalry from Spain. Finally, he included 21 elephants, to make sure that he was adequately equipped with all types of land-based military forces. [4] For coastal defence, as he [Hannibal] was concerned that it was perfectly possible that the Romans might try to conduct further operations in a theatre of war in which they had enjoyed previous success. So, he also gave Hasdrubal a fleet of 50 quinquiremes, two quadriremes, and five triremes, though of these only 32 quinquiremes and the five triremes were fully equipped, and manned by a full complement of rowers. ...

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 21, Chapter 22

21.22

... [5] From Gades (Cadiz) Hannibal returned to the army's winter quarters in New Carthage. From there he marched his army via the city of Onussa to the River Ebro and the Mediterranean coast. [6] Legend has it that here a young man appeared to him in his sleep, who looked like a god, and said that he had been sent by Jupiter to guide him into Italy and for that reason he must follow him

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closely, without ever taking his eyes off him. [7] At first Hannibal was terrified and followed his guide without looking around or behind him. But in time his natural human anxiety as to what it was behind him that he was forbidden to look at so got the better of him. He could no longer control his gaze and looked back. [8] They say that he saw a snake of incredible size sliding along behind him, causing total destruction to the trees and bushes in its path, while behind it black storm clouds blew up, accompanied by the crash of thunder. [9] When he asked his guide what sort of omen this colossal phenomenon represented, he was told that it was the devastation of Italy. He must now continue on his journey and ask no further questions. It was not for him to seek to know the hidden plans of Destiny.

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 21, Chapters 26–29

21.26

[1] When the news of this sudden insurrection reached Rome, the Senate realised that as well as the war against Carthage, they now had a second war on their hands against the Gauls. They instructed the praetor, Gaius Atilius, to reinforce Manlius with one legion of Roman infantry and 5,000 allied troops, newly recruited by the consul. They reached Tannetum without a fight, because the enemy had scattered rather than face such a force. ...

[3] Meanwhile Publius Cornelius Scipio recruited a fresh legion to replace the one which had been sent off with the praetor, Gaius Atilius. He left Rome with 60 warships and followed the coast past Etruria, Liguria, and the Salluvian mountains. [4] When he reached the nearest of the estuaries of the Rhone (the river has a number of similar outlets to the sea) he encamped there. He still could not really believe that Hannibal had crossed the Pyrenees, but when he learned that in fact he was already planning a crossing of the Rhone, he was

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faced with a dilemma. He could not be sure where he would actually find him and his soldiers had endured a rough sea crossing, from which they had not yet fully recovered. As an interim measure, therefore, he picked 300 cavalry and sent them on ahead to reconnoitre the whole area and keep an eye on the enemy from a safe distance, with Massiliot guides and a support group of Gallic auxiliaries. ...

[6] Hannibal in the meantime had cowed into submission all the remaining tribes of the area by a mixture of terror and bribery and had already reached the territory of the Volcae, a powerful tribe whose lands occupied both banks of the Rhone. On this occasion they were not sure that they could keep the Carthaginians out of their lands on the western side of the river. They had therefore transported almost all their people to the eastern bank, which they were preparing to fight to hold, using the river as a line of defence.

21.27

[1] With all the preparations for crossing now complete, the enemy cavalry and infantry massed all along the opposite bank proved a serious deterrent.

[2] Hannibal needed to devise a counter-strategy. So he ordered Bomilcar's son, Hanno, to take a detachment of his force (mainly Spanish troops) and travel about twenty miles upstream (a day's journey), setting out as soon as night fell.

[3] As soon as they could, they were to cross the river as secretly as possible, and then slip round behind the enemy lines and launch an attack on their rear at the best tactical opportunity. ... [6] ... They were exhausted by their night march and the effort involved in the crossing, but recovered after a day's rest. Their commander was eager to carry out the plan as speedily as possible. [7] So he set out the next day, lighting smoke signals on high ground to indicate that his own crossing was complete and that they were now quite close. Hannibal reacted immediately to the signals and gave the signal for the main crossing to begin.

[8] The infantry had their boats suitably adapted and ready; the cavalry for the most part crossed with the riders swimming beside their horses. A line of ships

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anchored upstream acted as a breakwater against the force of the current, and so provided somewhat calmer water for the boats to cross lower down. Most of the horses swam across attached by leading-reins to the sterns of the boats; but a number were brought across in the boats, already saddled and bridled, so that they could be fully operational for the cavalry the moment they disembarked on the other bank.

21.28

[1] The Gauls formed up on the bank ready to meet them, howling and chanting as usual, shaking their shields above their heads and brandishing their weapons.

[2] The vast array of ships deployed against them was a terrifying spectacle, made yet more formidable by the roar of the river and the different shouts of the soldiers and sailors. Some of them were struggling to force their way forward against the force of the current, while other were shouting encouragement from the other bank to their comrades as they crossed. [3] The uproar in front was terrifying enough for the Gauls. But even more terrible were the shouts that now came from behind them, showing that their camp had been captured by Hanno. A moment later and he was upon them in person. Now they were overwhelmed by twin terrors: in front, a huge force of armed men pouring out of the boats onto dry land; behind, a totally unexpected attack on their rear from a second assault group. [4] The Gauls made one attempt to give battle on both fronts and then made a break for it, taking whatever route seemed the most obvious, and in total panic scattered in every direction back to their villages. By now Hannibal had little but contempt for Gallic resistance, so he completed a leisurely crossing of the river with the rest of his army, and set up camp. ...

21.29

[1] While the elephants were being ferried across the river, Hannibal sent out a force of 500 cavalry in the direction of the Roman camp, to identify its location and discover the size and intentions of their army. [2] They happened to encounter the force of 300 Roman cavalry sent ahead to reconnoitre by

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Scipio from his camp on the Rhone estuary, as reported above. A savage battle ensued, much worse than the numbers would have warranted. [3] As well as a large number of casualties, losses on both sides were pretty well equal. But the Numidians panicked and fled, and this gave the Romans the final victory, though by then they too were pretty well exhausted. Though victorious, they lost about 160 men, not all Roman, some of them Gauls; the defeated Numidians lost more than 200. [4] This was the opening encounter of the war, and it also proved to be a portent of its ultimate and successful outcome. It was to prove undeniably bloody and the result was often in doubt. But in the end Rome won.

[5] After these hostilities, both detachments returned to their generals. For Scipio it was clear that he had no option but to allow his opponent to take the initiative and then to react accordingly; [6] for Hannibal there was a choice between continuing with the invasion of Italy which he had already launched, or seeking an immediate showdown with the first Roman army that had dared to challenge him. The arrival of a delegation of the Boii, led by their chieftain Magalus, dissuaded him from any immediate confrontation. They promised that they would act as guides and share the risks, and recommended that he should concentrate the whole of his war effort on the invasion of Italy without squandering his resources elsewhere first. [7] Most of his army regarded the Romans as formidable opponents, since the memory of their previous war³ was still fresh in many of their minds. But they were much more apprehensive of the long march and the crossing of the Alps, which camp gossip made all the more terrifying to those who had no experience of such things.

³ First Punic War 264–241 BC

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Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 44

... [5] He [Hannibal] assembled his soldiers and introduced Magalus and other chieftains who had come to Hannibal from the plains around the River Po. Through an interpreter, he explained clearly to his men what they said the tribes had decided. [6] The strongest encouragement for the soldiers in all that was reported was, firstly, the visible presence of these men who were inviting them into their land and promising to join them in their war against the Romans; [7] secondly here was the trust in their offer to lead them by such routes as would take them quickly and, at the same time, safely into the Italy, while not lacking any of the supplies needed for their journey. [8] In addition, (so they said) there was the fertility of the land they were going, its great size, and even the enthusiasm of the men with whom they were going to fight against the armies of Rome. [9] Then the Celts, having said all this, withdrew. [10] After the Celts had addressed the troops, Hannibal stepped forward and reminded the soldiers of their past successes. He said they had experienced many perils and dangers but had never failed when they had followed his judgment and advice. [11] Next he told them to be courageous and confident because the hardest part of their task had already been achieved by forcing a crossing of the river (Rhone). They had also seen for themselves the good will of their Celtic allies and their willingness to support their cause. [12] He encouraged and begged them not to deal with matters which were his concern. They should obey their general's orders, and be brave men and worthy of their past achievements. [13] When the crowd indicated their approval and showed their enthusiasm and eagerness for his purpose, he praised them and offered a prayer to the gods on behalf of all. He then dismissed them, telling them to get ready and make speedy preparations, as they were to march out the next day.

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Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 21, Chapters 32–35**21.32**

[1] The consul, Publius Cornelius Scipio, reached Hannibal's encampment on the banks of the Rhone about three days after he had moved out. He had arrived in full battle formation, determined on immediate hostilities, [2] but found the defences deserted. Realising that he would not easily catch up with him when he was so far ahead, he returned to the sea and his fleet, planning instead to confront his opponent as he came down from the Alps on what he thought would be safer and stronger ground. [3] He did not want to leave Spain deprived of Rome's protection, since that was the province formally allocated to him. So he sent his brother, Gnaeus Scipio, there with the bulk of his army to challenge Hasdrubal, [4] to offer protection to Rome's long-standing allies, to win over new ones, and if possible drive Hasdrubal out of Spain altogether. [5] He himself headed for Genoa with a relatively small contingent, intending to defend Italy with the troops already stationed in the Po valley.

[6] From the Druentia, Hannibal approached the Alps through rolling countryside, unmolested by the local Gallic inhabitants. [7] Rumour tends to exaggerate reality and the soldiers had already heard plenty of rumours. But once they approached the mountains, the sheer height, the cloud-capped, snow-covered peaks, the crude dwellings perched above the precipices, the goats and cattle bristling with cold, the shaggy, primitive tribesmen, and the whole panorama of animate and inanimate nature congealed with ice: all these and other unimaginable and unspeakable horrors simply brought back all their previous fears. [8] As the column started up the first slopes, the mountain tribesmen appeared threateningly above them, standing on their high crags. Had they laid ambushes and attacked suddenly from the better cover of the valleys, they would have inflicted dire slaughter and panic on the army. [9] Hannibal ordered his column to halt and sent his Gallic guides forward to reconnoitre. Once he

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discovered that there was no way through, he set up camp in the widest valley he could find amid all the boulder-strewn terrain and precipitous mountain slopes. [10] His guides, whose language and way of life differed little from that of the mountain tribesmen, had also been present at their discussions. From them he learned that though the narrow passes were defended by day, at night the tribesmen all slipped away to their homes. At dawn the next day, therefore, he advanced towards the high ground as if determined to force a passage openly through the pass in daylight. [11] His soldiers spent the rest of the day on activities designed to conceal his real intentions, building fortifications round the camp in the same position where they had originally halted. Once he knew that the tribesmen had left their commanding positions on the heights and closed down their guard posts, he ordered fires to be lit to give the impression that far more troops were remaining in position than was actually the case. He then left all the baggage in the camp, along with the cavalry and most of the infantry, while he himself with a body of lightly armed men, elite soldiers every one, slipped rapidly through the narrow gorge and took up positions on the same heights that the enemy had occupied by day.

21.33

[1] At dawn the next day the army broke camp and the whole column began to advance. [2] When the alarm was raised, the tribesmen were already beginning to leave their fortified villages and to re-occupy their usual guard posts. Suddenly they realised that these strong points were already occupied and that they were threatened from above by one hostile force while another was advancing up the gorge. [3] These two factors, occurring simultaneously, for a time left them unable to believe their own eyes or to think clearly about what to do. Then they began to realise that the Carthaginian column was itself beginning to lose its nerve and was in considerable disorder, because in the narrow pass their own shouts were adding to the confusion, while the horses were panicking. [4] Convinced that whatever they could do to add to

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the general terror could only lead to the total destruction of the Carthaginian army, they charged down from the crags and rocky slopes, whose wild and trackless wastes were to them familiar terrain. [5] It was a bad moment. The Carthaginians had two simultaneous problems to deal with: first, the attacks of the enemy tribesmen, and second the extreme difficulty of the terrain; a complicating factor was their struggle with fellow-soldiers, as each man battled to ensure his own survival instead of warding off the enemy assaults. [6] On top of that, the horses caused particular mayhem in the Carthaginian column. They went mad with terror at the wild shouts, which echoed and re-echoed ever more loudly from the forests and mountain sides, while chance blows and wounds so panicked them that they wrought havoc among the men and their equipment alike. [7] The cramped conditions combined with the fact that there were sheer cliffs and precipices on either side meant that many (including soldiers in full armour) were hurled to their death. Worst of all, even baggage animals with full loads on their backs were sent tumbling to destruction.

[8] It was a terrible sight, but Hannibal stayed where he was and kept his troops back for the time being, fearing that they would only add to the tumult and confusion. [9] But then he saw that the whole column was beginning to fall apart, and that there was a serious risk that even if he brought the soldiers safely through it would be totally pointless if they had lost their equipment. He charged down from above and routed the enemy by the sheer force of his attack, though initially it also added to the shambles among his own men. [10] But the general disorder rapidly ceased once the flight of the tribesmen cleared the way ahead, giving them all a peaceful march through the gorge, which was completed almost in silence. [11] He captured the chief fortified village of the area, along with its surrounding hamlets, and seized sufficient crops and animals to feed his army for three days. Now that the mountain tribesmen had been defeated and on the whole the going was reasonably easy, in the next three days he covered a considerable distance.

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21.34

[1] He then reached another tribe, one that had considerable numbers for a mountainous area. Here he faced no open confrontation but was nearly outwitted by the treachery and deceit which were his own particular specialities.

[2] The elders of these fortified hill villages came in an embassy to him, claiming that the misfortunes of others had taught them a useful lesson and that they would prefer to gain the friendship of the Carthaginians, rather than test their strength. [3] They were happy, therefore, to follow orders and hoped he would accept supplies, guides for the next stage of his journey, and hostages as proof of their goodwill. [4] Hannibal was reluctant to trust them, but felt that it would be unwise to reject their overtures in case it would make them openly hostile. So he made a friendly response, accepted the offered hostages, and made excellent use of the food supplies which they had brought with them. He followed their guides, but took good care to keep the column tightly closed up, rather than in open order appropriate to travel through peaceful territory.

[5] He put the elephants and cavalry in the lead and himself followed immediately behind them with the cream of the infantry, very much on the alert, and suspicious of everything. [6] In due course they found themselves on a narrower section of the route, with an overhanging cliff on one side. Suddenly the barbarians came at them from ambushes on every side, attacking both the front and the rear of the column both in close combat and with long distance missiles, as well as rolling rocks down onto them from the cliffs above. [7] The main assault came from the rear. The infantry turned to face them, and the army would most certainly have suffered a catastrophic disaster there in the pass, if the rear of the column had not been so robustly defended. [8] Even so, it was a moment of crisis for their fortunes, and they avoided disaster by the narrowest of margins. Hannibal had been reluctant to send his own regiment into the pass, because he had failed to leave any reserves in support of his infantry in the rear, such as he himself was providing for the cavalry. [9] As a result the tribesmen

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had launched a flank attack, cut the column in two, and then established a position on the track itself. For one night Hannibal had found himself separated from his cavalry to the front and from his baggage train at the rear.

21.35

[1] However, on the next day, the barbarian attacks grew less intense and the two parts of his army were reunited. They cleared the pass successfully, but with some losses, mainly of baggage animals rather than soldiers. [2] The numbers of tribesmen was now considerably reduced, though their attacks continued, sometimes on the vanguard, sometimes on the rear. The point of attack varied according to the local situation and the opportunities offered by the tendency of those at the front to get too far ahead, or those at the back to fall behind. But the assaults resembled the raids of mountain bandits rather than genuine warfare. [3] In all this, the elephants proved something of a mixed blessing. Where the track was narrow and precipitous, they slowed things up considerably; but wherever they were placed in the column, they offered useful protection to the troops, because the natives had never come across them before and were frightened to go near them.

[4] On the ninth day they reached the watershed of the Alpine ranges. Much of the climb had been along trackless wastes; they had often lost their way thanks to the treachery of their guides or, when they lost faith in them, because they had taken risks and entered valleys relying only on guesswork. [5] They established a resting-camp for two days at the summit of the pass, and gave the soldiers a breathing space in which to recover from their tough climb and the hard fighting they had been through. A fair number of the baggage animals, which had lost their footing among the rocks, also managed to reach the camp by following the tracks of the column. [6] The soldiers were worn out by the effort of responding to so many misfortunes; but when, naturally enough with the approach of winter, it began to snow, it was the last straw and total demoralisation set in. [7] At dawn the order to march was given and the column

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shuffled off through a landscape totally obliterated by snow, with despair and utter exhaustion visible on every face. [8] Fully aware of this, Hannibal rode out ahead and found a vantage point with a panoramic view across the whole landscape below. Here he ordered the army to halt and pointed out to them the view of Italy and the plains of the Po valley spread out at the foot of the Alps, [9] declaring that they were even now not merely crossing the ramparts of Italy but scaling the very walls of Rome itself. The rest of their journey was a gentle stroll – downhill all the way. After one, or at worst a couple of battles, they would hold Rome’s citadel and the capital of Italy in their power and at their mercy. [10] The army marched off again, and the enemy gave them little or no trouble, apart from a few trivial opportunistic raids. But the journey down proved much more difficult than the ascent, for the simple reason that on the Italian side of the Alps the slopes are much steeper and the tracks much shorter. [11] Everywhere the going was steep, the track narrow, the surface icy. [12] As a result, they kept slipping and falling, many of them staggering around like drunken men, unable to stay upright, with men and animals all falling down on top of each other.

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 50–56

3.50

[1] Having marched upstream for about 800 stades⁴ in ten days along the banks of the River Rhone, Hannibal now started his ascent of the Alps and found that he had fallen into a very dangerous situation. [2] For as long as he had been crossing flat country, all the various tribal chieftains of the Allobroges had kept well clear of him, since they were terrified of his cavalry and their barbarian escort. [3] But once these barbarians had departed for their homelands and Hannibal’s army had begun to move into much more difficult terrain, the leaders

⁴ around 140 kilometres

Notes

of the Allobroges gathered a considerable force, and seized commanding positions ahead of the route by which Hannibal was bound to climb the passes.

[4] If they had only kept their intentions secret, they would have totally destroyed the Carthaginian army, but the news leaked out and though they did considerable damage to the army, they suffered no less themselves. [5] Once the Carthaginian general learned that the tribesmen had already occupied key strong points ahead, he simply pitched camp at the entrance to the mountain passes and advanced no further. Instead he sent some of his Gallic native guides forward to assess the enemy's intentions and the general situation. [7] Once they reported back, as instructed, the general realised that the enemy were guarding their positions in a thoroughly disciplined fashion by day, but at night they would withdraw to a nearby town. He reacted accordingly and devised the following plan. [8] He struck camp and with the whole of his army advanced openly until he was close to the key positions, which threatened his advance. There he set up a new encampment within easy reach of the enemy. [9] When night fell, he ordered the usual camp fires to be lit and left the majority of his troops in position. But he ordered his most highly trained troops to take off most of their heavy equipment and then slipped through the narrowest section of the pass by night. They then seized the positions previously held by the enemy tribesmen, who had as usual retired to the nearby town.

3.51

[1] When day dawned, the barbarians saw what had happened and were at first inclined to abandon their planned attack. [2] But when they saw the huge number of animals in the baggage train and the horsemen slowly struggling up the defile with great difficulty because of the rough terrain, they reverted to their original plan to block their passage. [3] This they did, and launched their attacks from several different directions. ...

[6] Hannibal took in the situation and decided that there would be no hope of safety, even for those who survived the immediate danger, if the baggage train

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was destroyed. So he collected the special forces with which he had seized the high points during the previous night and rushed to the support of those at the front of the column. [7] As a result the enemy suffered severe losses, because Hannibal had the advantage of charging down on them from higher ground. But their losses were matched by those of his own troops, [8] because the general chaos was increased at both ends of the column thanks to the shouting and confusion already described. [9] In the end he slaughtered most of the Allobroges and put the rest to flight, forcing them to retreat to their own territory. Only then were the surviving body of pack animals and horses able to struggle painfully and with great difficulty up the rocky track. [10] Meanwhile Hannibal himself reorganised as much of his column as he could after their ordeal and launched an attack on the town, which had acted as the base for the enemy's attack. [11] He found it almost deserted because all its inhabitants had come out in support of their own troops. He occupied the place and gained considerable advantages from it, both immediately and in the longer term. Immediately, he recovered a number of horses and pack-animals, together with the handlers who had been captured with them. But for the longer term, he acquired a more than adequate supply of corn and livestock for the next two or three days, and in addition so terrified the adjacent tribes that none of the inhabitants of the high mountains dared to attack him.

3.52

[1] After this, he set up a fortified encampment and stayed in position for 24 hours, before setting out again. [2] For the next three days he led his army safely through the pass until they reached a position where, on the fourth day, he again found himself in a very dangerous situation. [3] The tribesmen who lived in the area of the pass hatched a plot together, and then came out to meet him, with wreaths on their heads and olive branches in their hands. Virtually all barbarians regard this as a symbol of friendly intentions, like the herald's staff among Greeks. [4] Hannibal had his reservations about their good faith, and was extremely

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careful to find out whether their goodwill was genuine and to investigate their overall intentions. [5] They admitted that they were well aware of the capture of the town and the destruction of those who had attacked him, and explained that this was exactly why they had come, since they did not want to inflict or suffer injury. They also promised him hostages from among their number.

[6] For a long time Hannibal remained as cautious as ever and refused to believe their assurances. But in the end he calculated that, if he accepted their offered friendship, it was just possible that he might perhaps make their representatives more hesitant to attack him and more generally well-disposed. If he rejected their overtures, he would make them openly hostile. So he agreed to their proposals and pretended to accept their offers of friendship. [7] The tribesmen handed over their hostages together with a generous supply of livestock, and surrendered themselves totally and unconditionally into his hands. As a result Hannibal and his staff trusted them sufficiently to employ them as guides for the next difficult stage of their journey. [8] And so they advanced for the next two days. But then these same tribesmen, whom I have already described, gathered their forces and having dogged the army's footsteps finally attacked them while they were traversing a difficult and precipitous ravine.

3.53

[1] This time it was all too probable that Hannibal's whole army would have perished if he had not, even now, suspected some such outcome. In anticipation of it and as a precaution, he had placed the baggage train and the cavalry at the front of the column and kept his hoplites as a rearguard. [2] Since they were fully alert for an attack, casualties were less serious and they were able to beat back the tribesmen's attack. [3] Nevertheless the final outcome of these events was the loss of a significant number of men, pack-animals, and horses. [4] The enemy were in control of the higher ground and advanced along the hillsides in parallel with the army and from there either rolled rocks at them down the slopes or pelted them with rocks thrown by hand. [5] All this caused such wholesale and

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potentially disastrous confusion that Hannibal was forced to spend the night in a strong position protected by bare rocks, in order to give cover to his cavalry and baggage-train, from which he had been separated. In the end it took them all that night to extract themselves with great difficulty from the gorge.

[6] The next day the enemy slipped away and Hannibal was able to re-join the cavalry and the baggage train and lead them to the highest points of the Alpine passes. ... [9] After nine days he reached the summit and there pitched camp. He waited a couple of days to allow his surviving troops to recover and to gather up those who had fallen behind. During this time many of the horses that had panicked and broken loose caught up with them, somewhat unexpectedly, together with a large number of baggage animals, which had thrown off their packs, but had followed the army's tracks and reached the camp.

3.54

[1] Winter was now approaching and the early snows were now settling on the mountaintops. Hannibal realised that his men were demoralised as a result of the hardships they had already endured and the prospect of yet more to come.

[2] So he called them all together and tried to boost their morale. He had only one source of encouragement, and that was the sight of Italy, clearly spread out below. It lies so close up under these mountains that anyone gazing on both together would imagine that the Alps towered above Italy like an acropolis above its city. [3] He pointed out to them the plains along the River Po, and reminded them of the general goodwill felt towards them by the Gauls who lived there, and at the same time he pointed out the direction where Rome lay in relation to their present position. In this way he did manage to some extent to cheer them up.

[4] Next day he harnessed his wagon train, broke camp, and started his descent. [5] The track was narrow and the descent precipitous; the snow made it impossible for anyone to see where he was treading; if anyone strayed from the path or lost his footing, he fell from the heights to certain death.

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[6] Nevertheless, the men endured these trials stoically, since by now they were well used to such ordeals. [7] But then they reached a place which was so narrow that it was impossible for the elephants or the baggage animals to move forward at all. There had been a landslide some time previously across 1 ½ stades⁵ of the mountainside, and this had been made worse by a second and more recent landslip. Confronted with this, the army now became thoroughly disheartened and demoralised once more. [8] At first Hannibal was minded to work his way round the obstacle by a detour, but then a fresh fall of snow made movement impossible and he abandoned the idea.

3.55

[1] The situation was now highly unusual, if not almost unique. The fresh fall of this year's snow had settled on top of that from the previous year, which had remained frozen since last winter. As luck would have it, the surface crust was readily broken, because it was freshly fallen and very soft, though as yet it lacked any depth. [2] So when the soldiers set foot on it, they quickly broke through the surface to the long-standing frozen snow beneath. This was now solid ice, and so they no longer broke through, but instead slid further and further down, one foot after another, just as happens to someone on land who tries to walk across a muddy surface. ... [6] As a result, Hannibal gave up all hope of making progress and set up camp along the ridge, scraping away all the snow from the site. After that he ordered the soldiers to rebuild the foundations of the track along the slope, which they did with a great deal of painful effort. [7] Nevertheless in one day they had created an adequate pathway for the horses and pack-animals, so he immediately led them across and set up another camp in an area free of snow and put them out to grass. He then ordered the Numidians to work in relays to build up the path, so that after three days of agonising labour he got the elephants across as well, though starvation had reduced them to a sorry state.

⁵ around 270 metres

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3.56

[1] Hannibal now gathered his whole army together and continued his descent. Three days after leaving the precipitous area just described he reached the plains. [2] His loss of soldiers as a result of enemy action, river-crossings, and the whole expedition generally, had been very serious; the loss in men from the savage terrain involved in crossing the high passes had been no less costly, while that of his horses and pack-animals had been even more severe. [3] In the end the whole journey from New Carthage had taken five months, the crossing of the Alps fifteen days. And now he had come boldly down into the plains of the Po valley and the tribal lands of the Insubres. [4] His surviving forces numbered 12,000 African and 8,000 Spanish foot soldiers, together with a maximum of about 6,000 cavalry. He himself has confirmed this on the column at Lacinium, which is inscribed with the statistics of his armed forces.

[5] All this coincided, as I have stated above, with the moment when Publius Scipio sailed into Pisa with a small body of troops. He had left his army under the command of his brother Gnaeus in Spain, with orders to take overall charge of operations and to wage a vigorous campaign against Hasdrubal. [6] Publius himself marched north through Etruria (Tuscany). He requisitioned from the Praetors the frontier garrisons currently engaged in fighting the Boii, and having reached the plains of the Po valley, he set up camp and waited for the enemy, only too eager to challenge him to battle.

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Battle of Trebia (December 218 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 21, Chapter 54

[1] Between the armies there was a river, enclosed on both sides by high banks, which were strewn all over with marsh grass, bushes, and brambles; the kind which generally cover uncultivated land. When Hannibal himself rode over the ground and saw that it offered sufficient cover even for cavalry, he said to his brother, Mago: "This will be the place which you will occupy. [2] Pick out 100 foot soldiers and 100 cavalrymen, and come to me with them at first watch. Now is the time to rest." He spoke, and dismissed the council. Shortly afterwards, Mago arrived with his chosen band of men. [3] Hannibal said: "I see a strong group of men, but I think your numbers should be equally strong to match your valour. Each of you must go and choose nine men like yourselves from the ranks and companies. Mago will show you the place which you are to occupy; you have an enemy who is blind to these plans." [4] So, Mago having been sent out with his 1,000 cavalrymen and 1,000 foot soldiers, Hannibal instructed the Numidian cavalry to cross the River Trebia at first light. They were to ride up to the enemy's gates, bombarding his stations, and incite the enemy to battle. Then, when battle had been joined, they were to give ground little by little, and lead the enemy across to the other side of the river. [5] These were the instructions for the Numidians; for the other generals (of both cavalry and infantry regiments), the order was to tell their men to have breakfast, then to await the signal, saddled up and armed.

[6] When the Numidians began their skirmish, Sempronius, who was confident in his cavalry, led this part of his army out first, [7] followed by 6,000 infantry, and the rest of the troops behind. He had already fixed a goal in his mind beforehand, and was eager for battle. It happened to be the season when the days are the shortest, and snow falls in the area between the Alps and

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Apennines, and being close to the rivers and marshes made it particularly cold. [8] As a result, men and horses had been led out quickly, before eating any food or making any effort to protect them from the cold, and there was no warmth in them at all. The closer they came to the blast of the river, the sharper the cold wind blew upon their faces. [9] But when, pursuing the retreating Numidians, they entered the river (swollen to chest-height with the night rains), or at the latest, when they had reached the other side, their bodies were so numb with cold they could barely hold their weapons. At the same time, they were growing faint with tiredness, and hunger too as the day went on.

The Battle of Trasimene (217 BC)

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 80–87

3.80

[1] Having achieved the crossing of the marshes contrary to all expectations, Hannibal found Flaminius camped in Etruria before the city of Arretium. [2] He then camped his own army next to the marshes, with the intention of resting his army, and gaining information about the enemy and the area in front of him. [3] He learnt that this land was full of much potential plunder and also that Flaminius was a demagogue and had a talent for pleasing the mob while he had virtually no natural ability in handling the real practice of war, yet still felt complete confidence in his own talents. [4] He reckoned that, if he moved beyond the enemy's army and went into the territory in front of him, Flaminius would not be able to watch the land being destroyed because of his anxiety at the thought of being laughed at by his mob of soldiers. On the other hand, he would be very angry and ready to follow Hannibal anywhere he led, in his eagerness to defeat Hannibal without waiting for his fellow consul. [5] From this Hannibal concluded that Flaminius would provide many opportunities to attack him.

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3.81

[1] In this his calculations were both sound and thoroughly realistic. No-one in his right mind could reasonably argue that there is anything more important to the art of military command than an understanding of the character and temperament of the enemy general. ... [12] On this occasion Hannibal had certainly anticipated the plans of Flaminius, the Roman commander, and got the measure of his opponent. As a result his plan proved totally successful.

3.82

[1] As soon as he had struck camp and moved off from the area of Faesulae, he advanced a short distance beyond the Roman camp and launched a raid upon the surrounding countryside. [2] Flaminius was immediately beside himself with rage, convinced that this was a deliberate insult by his opponents. [3] When they then began to devastate the countryside and the smoke rising everywhere gave evidence of the general destruction, Flaminius completely lost control of himself, utterly outraged by this intolerable turn of events. [4] Some of his officers advised that he should not immediately engage in hot pursuit of the enemy, let alone join battle with him; rather he should be on his guard and bear in mind the great strength of the enemy cavalry, and above all wait for the arrival of the other consul. They could then confront this dangerous situation with their united forces. [5] Not only did Flaminius refuse to take their advice, but he would not even listen to their arguments. [6] Instead he suggested that they should think about what would certainly be said by their fellow citizens back in the city, when they saw their countryside being laid waste almost up to the very gates of Rome, while the army lurked behind enemy lines comfortably encamped in Tuscany. [7] He ended his speech by striking camp and marching out with all his forces, without giving a thought to the timing of his movements or prior reconnaissance of the ground. He was simply eager to fall upon his enemy, as if victory was already totally assured. [8] He had even inspired everyone with such optimism that the camp followers, (a motley crowd who followed the

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army in the hope of booty, and equipped with chains, leg irons, and other such paraphernalia), actually outnumbered the regular soldiers.

[9] Meanwhile Hannibal continued as before ... [10] ... he continued to devastate the countryside with fire and sword, with the deliberate intention of provoking his opponents to battle. [11] He now saw that Flaminius was already getting close. As he had identified a position ideally suited to his plans, he made ready for battle.

3.83

[1] His route lay through a narrow pass where the terrain was level. Along the length of it on both sides there was a continuous line of high hills, but straight ahead across the front there was another hill, very steep and hard to climb, while the lake beyond and behind it allowed only a very limited passageway between the side of the hill and the lake. [2] Hannibal marched along the side of the lake and through pass, and then personally led the occupation of the hill in front, on which he set up camp with his Spanish and Libyan soldiers. [3] He then sent his Balearic slingers and spearmen round to the front and stationed them to his right on the lower slopes of the hills that lay along the line of pass. [4] Meanwhile in a similar manoeuvre he led his cavalry and the Celts round the hills to his left, and stationed them in extended line so that their extreme left flank lay at the entrance to the pass itself (as already described) between the lake and the hillsides.

[5] Having made all these preparations during the night and set up his ambush by seizing the hills around the pass, Hannibal quietly held his position. [6] But Flaminius was following in hot pursuit, eager to overtake his opponent. [7] He had camped very late the previous night close to the lake itself. But the next day, as soon as dawn broke, in his eagerness to come to grips with his enemy he led his vanguard along the lake and into the pass.

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3.84

[1] It was an unusually foggy morning. The bulk of the Roman column was now well inside the pass and their vanguard was already in contact with his troops, so Hannibal immediately gave the pre-arranged signal for attack and sent similar orders by runner to those hiding in ambush. They all launched a concerted attack on the Roman line from every side. [2] Flaminius and his commanders were taken completely by surprise by their sudden appearance. The foggy conditions around them made it difficult to see; in many sectors their enemy was charging into the attack from higher ground; the Roman centurions and legionary tribunes could not bring support where it was needed; indeed they had no real idea about what was actually going on. [3] Their men were facing a simultaneous attack from the front, the rear, and both flanks. [4] As a result most of them were cut to pieces while still in their marching formations and unable to support one another, betrayed, in effect by their general's incompetence. [5] So they were annihilated before they even realised what was happening, and while they were still wondering how they should react. [6] This was the moment when Flaminius himself, at the height of his misfortunes and utterly at a loss, was attacked and killed by a detachment of Celts. [7] About 15,000 Romans fell that day in the narrow pass. Unable to adapt to the situation or take any effective action, they stuck doggedly to their traditional code of military honour, refusing either to flee or to break ranks. [8] But those who had been trapped between the lake and the steep hillside perished somewhat less honourably and certainly much more wretchedly, [9] for they were driven into the lake. Some of them totally lost their heads and tried to swim in full armour and consequently drowned; but most of them waded into the lake as far as they could and simply stayed there with only their heads above the water, until the cavalry went after them. [10] Faced with the prospect of certain death, they raised their hands in surrender and begged for their lives in any way they could. But in the end some of them were slaughtered by their enemies; others at their own request were killed by their comrades.

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[11] Some 6,000 of those trapped in the pass had managed to defeat the troops confronting them. But they could not bring support to their own men, nor could they work their way round behind the enemy lines to launch an attack, since they could not see what was happening. Had they been able to do so, they might have provided valuable support to the rest of their army. [12] Instead they pressed steadily forward, advancing in the conviction that sooner or later they would come across further enemy positions. In the end they broke through to the high ground unchallenged. [13] Once they reached the summit of the ridge, as the fog began to disperse, they became aware of the scale of the disaster. But there was nothing they could now do because the enemy had already achieved a total victory over the whole army and were in complete control of the battlefield. So they wheeled about and retreated to one of the nearby Tuscan villages. [14] When the battle was over, Maharbal was sent with the Spanish troops and the spearmen to lay siege to the village. The situation for the Romans was hopeless, whichever way they looked at it. So they laid down their weapons and having made a truce surrendered, on condition that their lives were spared. [15] These events marked the end of the whole campaign in Tuscany, fought between the Romans and the Carthaginians.

3.85

[1] The soldiers who had surrendered under the terms of the truce were brought to Hannibal, who assembled them together, along with all the other prisoners, numbering over 15,000 in total. [2] He began by announcing that Maharbal had no right to grant safe conduct to those who had surrendered on terms without his authority, and then delivered a scathing denunciation of the Romans generally. [3] When he had finished, he handed over the Roman prisoners to his various regiments to be kept under guard, but released the allied troops without ransom and sent them all home [4] declaring, as he had on previous occasions, that he had not come to make war on the Italians but to fight for their freedom against the Romans. [5] He then allowed his own troops time for rest and

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recuperation and gave formal burial to the most high-ranking casualties in his own army, about thirty in all. Total fatalities came to about 1,500, of whom the majority were Celts. [6] Having dealt with those matters, he held a council of war with his brother and colleagues to discuss where and how he should launch his main assault, since he was now wholly confident of ultimate victory.

[7] When the news of this defeat reached Rome, the political leaders were unable to gloss over or play down the truth of what had happened. It was a major disaster and they had no choice but to report to the people what had happened, so they summoned them to an Assembly. [8] The Praetor (Marcus Pomponius) addressed the Plebs from the Rostra, announcing that, "We have lost a battle – a big one."

The immediate reaction of those who heard these words was utter dismay – so much so that those who had been present at both these key events (the battle and the assembly) felt that the defeat now seemed a far more significant event than it had during the actual battle itself. This was entirely predictable. [9] For many years they had neither heard of nor experienced an openly acknowledged defeat. As a result they now proved unable to accept such a reversal of fortune with appropriate restraint or self-control. [10] Nevertheless, the Senate at least kept their heads as their status required. They gave careful thought for the future, debating what they should all do and how best they should do it.

3.86

[1] At about the same time as the battle [of Trasimene] was being fought, the consul in command of the areas around Ariminum, Servilius, got the news that Hannibal had invaded Tuscany and set up camp in direct opposition to Flaminius. [2] Ariminum lies on the coast of the Adriatic in the area where Cisalpine Gaul borders the rest of Italy, not far from the estuary of the River Po, where it discharges into the sea. [3] Servilius therefore decided to join Flaminius with the whole of his army, but found he could not do so because of their sheer weight of numbers. So he sent Gaius Centennius on ahead at full speed

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with 4,000 cavalry, hoping that in case of emergency they at least would get there before him. [4] The battle was already over when Hannibal heard the news of enemy reinforcements approaching. So he despatched Maharbal with spearmen and a detachment of cavalry to meet them. [5] They fell upon Gaius Centenius and wiped out nearly half his force at the first encounter, and pursued the rest of them to a nearby hill before taking them prisoner the following day. [6] In Rome it was now three days since the news of Trasimene had reached the city. It was the moment when the agony of defeat was everywhere at its most intense. Now, on top of all this, came the news of this fresh disaster. Not only were the common people utterly dismayed; the Senate too was distraught. [7] They decided to abandon the annual election of magistrates for the conduct of government, and to confront the crisis more effectively. The situation, they decided, required a general with the powers of a dictator to deal with the immediate emergency.

[8] Hannibal was now convinced that he was master of the situation and decided for the time being to stay well clear of Rome. He headed towards the Adriatic, ravaging the countryside as he went, absolutely unchallenged.

[9] He marched through the area known as Umbria and the district of Picenum, reaching the Adriatic coast on the tenth day. [10] He had captured an enormous quantity of booty, so vast that his army could not carry the spoils or drive away the cattle. They had also killed a large number of people on their march, [11] since his orders were to kill all those of military age who fell into their hands, as usually happens also when cities are sacked. Hannibal's orders were due to his long-standing hatred for Rome, with which he had been imbued from childhood.

3.87

[1] Hannibal now established an encampment on the shores of the Adriatic. The countryside was outstandingly fertile, offering all kinds of produce, and he made a serious effort to restore the health and well-being of his soldiers – and of

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his horses also. ... [3] Now that he controlled such a prosperous territory, he set about getting his horses into peak condition and restoring both the fitness and morale of his men. He altered the equipment of his African troops, giving them the best possible Roman weaponry, of which he now had ample supplies from his captured spoils.

[4] At the same time he [Hannibal] sent messengers to report back to Carthage on the turn of events, despatching them by sea, because this was the first time he had reached a coastline since invading Italy. [5] The Carthaginians were delighted by the news, and with great enthusiasm set about organising support for their armies in Italy and in the Iberian peninsula. ...

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 22, Chapters 7–8

22.7

[1] Such was the famous battle of Trasimene, a defeat as memorable as few others for the Roman people. [2] 15,000 Romans died in the battle array; 10,000, scattered throughout Etruria in their escape, travelled back to Rome by various different routes. 2,500 enemy soldiers died in battle, and many more afterwards, from their wounds. [3] Many more losses on both sides are recorded by others; I myself (besides the point that I would never exaggerate anything unnecessarily, which historians in general are [4] all too inclined to do), have taken Fabius, a contemporary of this war, as my primary source.

Hannibal dismissed all Latin prisoners without a ransom; Roman prisoners he put in chains. [5] He ordered that the bodies of his men should be separated from the heaps of enemy dead, and buried. He would have also given Flaminius a funeral, but despite searching for his body with immense care, he could not find it.

[6] In Rome, the first news of the defeat brought the people running to the

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forum in a great, frightened uproar, [7] whilst wives wandered the streets and demanded of everyone they met what sort of disaster had just been reported, and what were the fortunes of the army. And when the crowd, in the manner of a great public assembly, turned to the Curia and the Comitium and called upon the magistrates, [8] just as the sun was setting the praetor Marcus Pomponius announced: "There was a great battle, and we were defeated." And, although they heard nothing more definite from him, they still picked up rumours here and there. When they arrived home, they spread the news that the consul and a large number of his soldiers had been killed, [9] and that only a very few were still alive, either scattered across Etruria as refugees, or captured by the enemy.

[10] The poor fortunes which had befallen the beaten army were no greater in number than the worries which had occupied the minds of those whose relatives had served under the consul Gaius Flaminius. Each one was ignorant of their loved ones' fortunes, nor did anyone have much of an idea of what to hope for, or what to fear. [11] On the next day, and for several days after that, a great crowd (in which there were almost more women than men) jostled around the city gate, waiting for their relatives, or at least news of them. [12] They crowded around anyone who came along and interrogated them, unable to tear themselves away, especially from those they knew, until they had asked about every single detail. You would see a great variety of expressions upon their faces as they heard the news, whether the tidings were glad or sad; they would turn back and head for home with their friends around them, either congratulating or commiserating them. [13] The women in particular showed signs of joy and grief: one, when she suddenly met her son, safe, at the gate, expired (so they say) in his arms. Another, whose son had been falsely reported dead, sat at home mourning. When he arrived home, she died of excess grief. [14] The praetors kept the Senate in session for some days from sunrise till sunset, considering with which general or military force they could resist the victorious enemy.

22.8

[1] Before they had quite made up their minds on their plans, suddenly,

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another catastrophe was reported. 4,000 cavalry under the command of Gaius Centennius had been sent by the consul Servilius to assist his colleague. When they heard of the battle of Trasimene, they had marched into Umbria, where they were captured by Hannibal. [2] This news affected people in a variety of ways: some, whose spirits were occupied with greater sorrows, viewed this new loss of cavalry as insignificant compared to their previous losses. [3] Others would not consider what had happened an isolated event, but believed that, just as when a man is ill, any ailment (no matter how small) is felt more heavily than a worse one would be felt by a healthy man; [4] so, whilst the state was ill, and struggling, any poor fortune should be judged not by its magnitude but by the republic's diminished state, which was unable to withstand oppression. ...

Quintus Fabius Maximus appointed dictator (217 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 22, Chapter 8

22.8

... [5] And so, the Roman people took refuge in a remedy which for a long time had been uncalled for and unused: a dictatorial decree. And since the consul, who was supposed to be the only person able to make such a decree, was absent; and it was not easy to send him a letter, since Italy was occupied by Punic soldiers, they took [6] the unprecedented action and created a dictator via public election. They chose Quintus Fabius Maximus, and made Marcus Minucius Rufus the Master of the Horse. [7] The Senate gave them the task of strengthening the city walls and towers, and distributing its defences in the manner they saw fit, and breaking the bridges over the rivers. They would have to fight for their city and their household gods, since they had been unable to save Italy.

Notes

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 3, 87–89**3.87**

[6] The Romans meanwhile appointed Quintus Fabius as Dictator. He was a man of admirable character and supreme intelligence, and his descendants to this day bear the surname Maximus, “the Greatest,” in recognition of his victorious achievements. [7] The differences between a dictator and the consuls are as follows: each consul has an escort of twelve lictors, the dictator twenty four.

[8] In many areas of policy the consuls require the support of the Senate to carry through their proposals. But the dictator is a commander-in-chief with absolute powers, and on his appointment all the offices of state in Rome are immediately suspended, except the tribunate. [9] But I shall give a more precise account of all this elsewhere. At the same time Marcus Minucius was appointed Master of the Horse. This officer is subordinate to the dictator, but acts as his deputy, taking command when he is elsewhere.

3.88

... [7] Meanwhile Fabius took up his appointment, and having made his sacrifices to the gods set out with his colleague and the four legions, which had been recruited as a result of the crisis. [8] Near Narnia he met up with the relieving army of the consul, Gnaeus Servilius, en route from Ariminum. He relieved him of his command of the land forces and sent him back to Rome with an escort, instructing him to take all necessary steps to counter any naval activity launched by the Carthaginians. [9] He himself, together with his Master of the Horse, took control of the united forces. Near a town called Aecae, about six miles from the Carthaginians, he set up camp in a position to challenge the enemy.

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3.89

[1] As soon as he was aware of Fabius' arrival, Hannibal wanted to take the initiative and demoralise his opponent. So he marched his army out and deployed them in battle formation close to the defensive fortifications of the Roman camp. There he waited for some time, but when there was no response from the Romans, he withdrew to his own encampment once again. [2] Fabius had decided that he would avoid any direct confrontation and take no risks. His main objective was to ensure the safety of the troops under his command and he stuck rigidly to his decision. [3] At first he was widely criticised for this and provoked accusations of cowardice, with people suggesting that he was simply terrified of danger. But as time went on, he forced everyone to agree with his policy and to accept that no-one could have dealt with the prevailing circumstances more sensibly or skilfully. [4] It was not long before events fully vindicated his choice of strategy, for obvious reasons. [5] The Carthaginian soldiers had been trained from early manhood in non-stop warfare; they had a general who had been brought up among them and whose education had taught him the realities of warfare in the field; [6] they had won many victories in Spain and twice beaten the Romans and their allies in battle; but above all, they had closed off every other option and their only hope of safety lay in victory.

[7] By contrast, for the Roman army the situation was exactly the opposite. [8] Fabius could not stake everything on the outcome of a single battle, since there was a clear risk of defeat. So he turned to those factors which he calculated worked to the advantage of the Romans, exploited them to the exclusion of all else, and based his whole campaign strategy upon them. [9] For the Romans these advantages were: limitless supplies and inexhaustible manpower.

Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Fabius Maximus* Chapter 5

[1] Fabius tried to focus the minds of the common people on religious observances, so as to make them more optimistic about the future. But personally he relied entirely on his own ability to secure victory, since he believed that the gods would always allow courage and intelligence to succeed. He concentrated all his own thoughts on Hannibal. He had no plans for a single fight to the finish, since his enemy was at the peak of his strength. So his strategy was to wear him down over time, to use Rome's financial strength to counter his limited resources, and Italy's manpower to decrease his relatively small army.

[2] So he kept his army on the higher ground, always camping among the hills from where he could keep an eye on Hannibal, while staying well away from his cavalry. If his enemy was inactive, Fabius did nothing. If he moved off, he would come down from the hills by a roundabout route and show himself at a distance, always far enough away to ensure that he was never forced to fight against his will, but keeping his enemy on tenterhooks in the belief that after avoiding battle for so long he was at last about to stand and fight.

[3] The civilian population viewed such time-wasting tactics with contempt. He certainly had a poor reputation in his own army, but the Carthaginians went further, despising him as an insignificant coward. Only one man saw it differently – and that was Hannibal himself.

He alone understood his opponent's strategy and realised how intelligently he applied it. He realised that he must use every possible tactical device to bring him to battle. Otherwise the Carthaginians would be done for, unable to use the weaponry in which they were superior, while steadily losing their already inferior manpower and wasting their inadequate resources with nothing to show for it. He turned to all kinds of military tactics and devices, striving like a skilled wrestler to get to grips with his opponent. Sometimes he would make a direct assault,

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sometimes diversionary attacks, sometimes he tried to draw him out in almost any direction, always trying to persuade Fabius to abandon his safe, defensive strategy.

[4] Fabius, however, remained convinced that his tactics would succeed and obstinately stuck to his policy, refusing to be diverted. But he was enraged by his deputy, Minucius, the Master of the Horse, who was over-confident and eager to fight before the time was ripe. In fact he made a bid for popularity in the army, filling the soldiers with wild ideas of action and futile expectations of success. In their contempt for their general they made Fabius an object of mockery and nicknamed him Hannibal's 'minder'. By contrast, they had the highest regard for Minucius as being the sort of "real" general that Rome deserved.

[5] As a result he became increasingly arrogant and reckless, jeering at all their hilltop encampments and suggesting that the dictator was always providing splendid theatrical settings, from which they could watch the destruction of Italy by fire and sword. "Is he taking his army up to heaven," he would ask Fabius' friends, "because he has despaired of the earth, or is he just sneaking away from the enemy under cover of mist and cloud?"

[6] His friends reported all this to Fabius and urged him to take the risk of battle in order to counter such insults. "If I did that," he replied, "I would be an even greater coward than I now appear, since I would be abandoning my calculated strategy for fear of a few jokes and insults. There is no disgrace in being afraid for the future of one's country; but if a man is frightened of the insults and criticisms of popular opinion, he betrays his high office and become a slave to the fools over whom it is his duty as ruler to exercise control."

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Quintus Fabius Maximus and Minucius (217–216 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 22, Chapters 23–26

22.23

[1] ... In Italy the skilful delaying tactics of Fabius had achieved a brief respite from the non-stop run of Roman military disasters. [2] All this was a considerable source of anxiety to Hannibal, who realised that at last the Romans had chosen a master of military strategy, whose whole approach to warfare was based on good judgement and rational principles instead of luck. [3] His opinion was in marked contrast to that of the Roman people, soldiers and civilians alike, who viewed Fabius' conduct of the war with the utmost contempt, not least because in his absence his rash deputy, Minucius, the Master of the Horse, had fought an engagement whose outcome had given them, to tell the truth, a bit of good news at least, if not actual positive success. [4] Two factors added to the Dictator's general unpopularity. The first was the result of an act of treacherous deception by Hannibal. He had been shown by some deserters a stretch of land belonging to Fabius; he had told his men to leave this absolutely untouched by fire, sword and enemy devastation, while all the surrounding land was utterly destroyed. The intention was to suggest to the Roman people that this was some kind of payment for a secret deal between them. [5] The second factor was something for which Fabius was himself entirely responsible. It must have seemed somewhat suspicious at first, since he had not waited for the Senate to approve it, but in the end it certainly brought him the greatest possible credit. [6] There had been an exchange of prisoners, just as there had been in the First Punic War. An agreement was reached between the two opposing generals that whichever side got back more prisoners than it gave would pay compensation to the tune of two and a half pounds of silver per soldier. [7] Rome had received

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back 247 more prisoners than the Carthaginians, but there had been a delay in handing over the money due, because the Senate (which had responsibility for the state's finances) had not been formally consulted, though they had in fact debated the matter often enough. Fabius finally sent his son Quintus back to Rome to sell the estate which (as described above) had been left intact by Hannibal, and paid off at his own expense this public debt, as a matter of national honour. ...

22.24

Hannibal is camped at Gereonium; Minucius, in Fabius' absence, engages in a cavalry battle with losses on both sides (6,000 Carthaginian, 5,000 Roman). Minucius exaggerates the success in reporting to Rome. In Rome Metilius proposes that the Dictator and Master of the Horse should share powers equally.

22.25

[1] These events were hotly debated both in the Senate and in the popular assemblies. [2] Amid the general rejoicing, only the Dictator refused to trust either the rumours or the despatches of Minucius, insisting that even if it was all true, he was much more worried about good news than bad. [3] At this Marcus Metilius, the people's tribune, declared that the only intolerable fact about the whole situation was [4] that the Dictator was a major obstacle to success when he was present in person at the front, but that he was no less an obstacle to the proper conduct of the war when he was absent from his duties. He was putting all his energies into wasting time, so as to prolong his appointment and retain his dictatorial powers (*imperium*) both in Rome and in the field, [5] aided by the death of one consul on active service, and the fact that the other was miles away from Italy, allegedly in hot pursuit of the Carthaginian fleet. Furthermore, two *praetors* had been diverted to Sicily and Sardinia, even though neither province was short of a praetor at this time. [6] As for Marcus Minucius, the Master of the Horse, he was under virtual house arrest, to prevent him even

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catching sight of the enemy, let alone fighting a proper campaign. [7] And the result of all this was that Samnium, of all places, had been surrendered to the Carthaginians, as if it was a strip of land in some distant and outlandish colony (literally: beyond the River Ebro); and not only Samnium, but Campania, Calenum, and Falernum had all seen their lands devastated, while the Dictator and the armies of the Roman people spent their time defending his private estates. [8] The army and the Master of the Horse longing for a fight; but they had been kept locked up behind the walls of their camp, like prisoners of war deprived of weaponry. [9] But at long last, once they had seen the back of the Dictator, like a beleaguered garrison released from a siege, they had burst out of their defences, routed the enemy, and hunted him down. [10] For that reason, if only the Roman people had had the courage of their forefathers, he would have matched their spirit and boldly proposed a motion to deprive Quintus Fabius of his office. Instead he would now propose something somewhat less extreme: that the Dictator and his Master of the Horse should share those powers equally. [11] As a supplementary proposal, he would add that Fabius should not be sent out to rejoin the army, until he had overseen the appointment of a new consul to replace the dead Gaius Flaminius.

[12] The Dictator steered well clear of such popular assemblies, since he had no illusions about his unpopularity. Even in the Senate he was not given a sympathetic hearing, though he reminded them of their enemy's skill and the disasters of the last two years, suffered as a result of the rashness and incompetence of their generals. [13] As for the Master of the Horse, he should be charged with misconduct for disobeying orders and going into battle. [14] If the supreme command and full direction of strategy were left to him, he would very soon demonstrate to all and sundry that under an expert general the fortunes of the moment were matters of insignificance, while a systematic and coherent strategy was what really counted. [15] The fact that he had only just in time preserved the army's manpower without the sacrifice of its honour was a far more glorious achievement than the slaughter of many thousands of the enemy's forces.

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[16] His speeches, however, proved futile, and Marcus Atilius Regulus was duly appointed consul. Fabius, therefore, set off back to the army on the evening before the proposal to divide the powers of the dictator was due to be put to the vote, so as to avoid being present at the debate. [17] At dawn the following morning a popular assembly was held, at which there was far more unspoken criticism of the dictator and support for his Master of the Horse than there were speakers who dared to support openly a proposal of which the mob so manifestly approved. As a result, for all its popularity, the proposal lacked influential support. [18] Nevertheless, one sponsor for the legislation emerged in the shape of last year's praetor, one Gaius Terentius Varro, a man of humble, indeed disreputable origins. [19] Rumour suggests that his father had been a butcher, who even peddled his own meat, and had actually employed his own son to help him in this activity, which was more appropriate for a slave.

22.26

[1] As a young man, Varro had inherited the fruits of his father's "business" activities, and immediately conceived somewhat loftier ambitions. [2] Smart suits and political activity became his stock in trade and he began to make speeches on behalf of the dregs of society. By taking up such populist causes and denouncing the wealth and reputation of the better class of citizens, he soon won himself a national reputation amongst the common people, and thus gained political office. [3] He became a treasury official (*quaestor*), and was then twice elected a city magistrate (*aedile*), first as a deputy to the Tribunes (*plebeian aedile*), and then as a part of the city administration (*curule aedile*). Finally, having won the praetorship and completed his term of office, he had now set his eyes on the consulship. [4] He had sufficient low cunning to make political capital out of the Dictator's unpopularity, and when the proposal (to divide the powers of the dictatorship) was carried in the popular assembly, he alone got the credit.

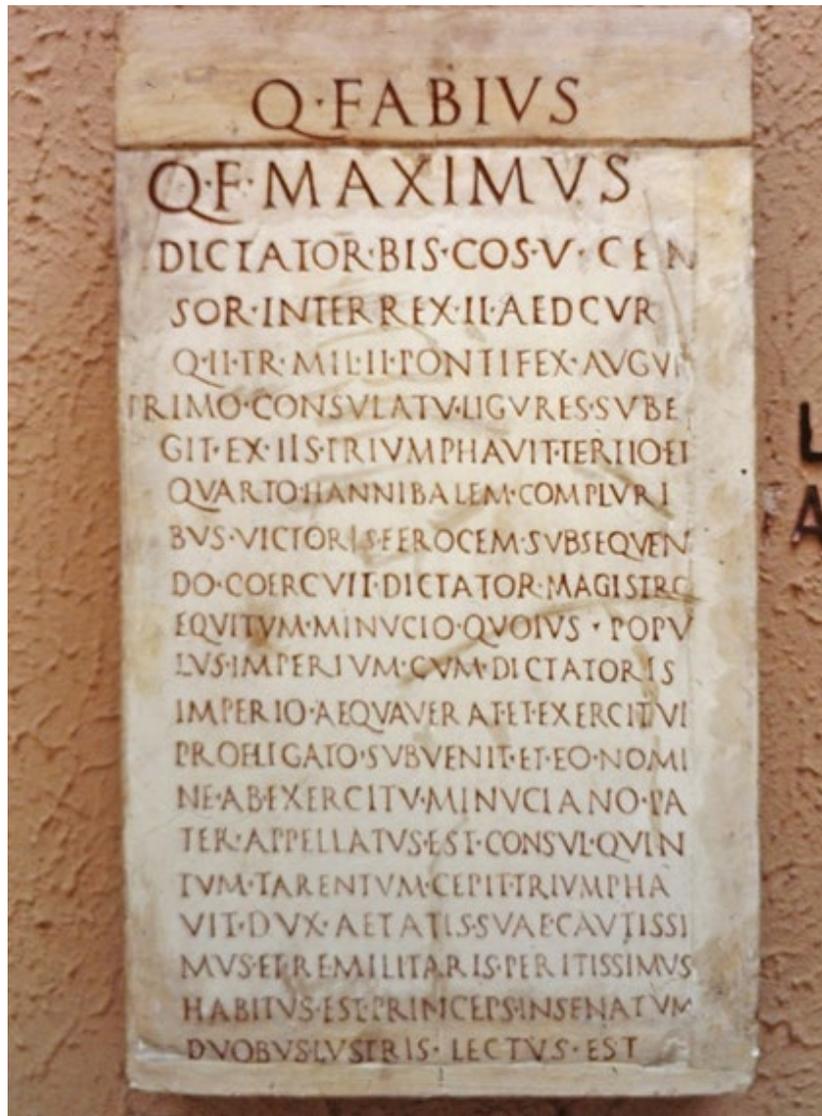
[5] Everyone in Rome and in the army, whether friend or foe to Fabius, regarded this decision as a calculated insult – except the Dictator himself. [6] With the

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same calmness and mental resolution as he had endured the denunciations of his enemies in the popular assemblies, he now bore this cruel injustice inflicted on him by an angry nation. [7] En route for the army, he received the despatches reporting the Senate's decree about the division of powers. But undaunted and undefeated by citizen or enemy alike, he re-joined the army, entirely confident that no legislation could enforce equality of military genius along with equality of military command.

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Dedication for Quintus Fabius Maximus



CIL 11.1828

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Translation:

Quintus Fabius Maximus, the son of Quintus; dictator twice; consul five times; censor; interrex twice; *curule aedile*; *quaestor* twice; tribune of the soldiers twice; pontifex; augur. In his first consulship he overcame the Ligurians. After this he celebrated triumphs in his third and fourth consulships, when he checked Hannibal, daring because of his numerous victories, by doggedly following him. When Minucius was made Master of the Horse, with power equal to that of the dictator, according to the people's wish, Fabius as dictator¹ came to the aid of the defeated army and, under the name (of dictator), was hailed as Father by the army of Minucius. As consul for the fifth time he captured Tarentum and held a triumph². He was regarded as the most cautious commander of his own age and the most expert in military affairs. He was enrolled in the Senate as *princeps* for two five-year terms.

¹ 217 BC² 209 BC

The Battle of Cannae and Hannibal's failure to march on Rome (216 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 22, Chapters 44–48

22.44

[1] In tracking the path of the Carthaginian army, the consuls had reconnoitred the route with considerable care. Once they reached Cannae and had a clear view of the Carthaginian position, they divided the army as before and established two separate fortified camps, about the same distant apart as at Gereonium. [2] The River Aufidus flowed between the two camps and allowed fatigue parties to draw water as opportunity offered; but there was always the risk of an enemy attack. [3] However, the smaller Roman camp was situated on the far side of the Aufidus, and this made the business of collecting water a much easier proposition, since the opposite bank had no enemy guard posts along it. [4] The terrain was ideally suited for a cavalry engagement, and Hannibal hoped that the consuls would offer him an opportunity to fight one. So he drew up his battle lines and tried to provoke his opponents with small assaults by his Numidians.

[5] Once again disorder broke out in the Roman camp, with the troops proving mutinous and the consuls incapable of agreement. Lucius Aemilius Paullus (Varro's colleague in the consulship) kept reminding Varro of what had been the results of the rash leadership of Sempronius and Flaminius; Varro sarcastically threw back at him Fabius' "wonderful" example, as a cowardly and unenterprising general, [6] calling on gods and men alike to bear witness that it was not his fault that Hannibal had captured the whole of Italy and was now treating it as his private property. He complained bitterly that thanks to his colleague his hands were tied; that the soldiers were furious at being disarmed, even though they were fired up and spoiling for a fight. [7] Paullus retorted that,

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if the legions suffered a defeat as a result of being treacherously ordered forward into an idiotic battle for which they were unprepared, then he would certainly not be to blame, though of course he would stand with them and share the risks, whatever the result. He only hoped that those whose tongues were quick to utter brave words, would show themselves no less courageous by their deeds once battle was joined.

22.45

[1] While in the Roman camp time was being wasted on such squabbles instead of tactical planning, Hannibal began to pull back to his camp the troops which he had kept lined up and ready for action during the greater part of the day.

[2] Meanwhile he despatched his Numidian cavalry to launch an attack on the fatigue parties from the smaller Roman camp, who were drawing water from the river. [3] The fatigue party was little more than a disorganised rabble, and the cavalry sent them into a noisy and panic stricken flight before they had even ridden across the river and onto the further bank. So they galloped on up to the guard post sited in front of the camp's defensive ditch, and almost as far as the gates of the camp itself. [4] To find that even a Roman camp could be thrown into such confusion by a small band of irregular cavalry was a keenly felt disgrace. The only thing that stopped the Romans from immediately crossing the river and forming up for battle was the fact that Aemilius Paullus held the supreme command for that day. [5] They had in fact drawn lots for it, and so on the next day, it was Varro's turn for command. Without a word to his colleague, he ordered the standards to be deployed and the troops drawn up for battle. Then he led them across the river, with Paullus following in his footsteps not because he approved of the plan, but because he felt he had to help where he could. [6] They crossed the river and linked up with the forces from the smaller camp and then deployed their forces, with the Roman cavalry on the right wing (the side nearest the river) and the infantry next to them. [7] The far left wing was held by the allied cavalry, with their infantry next to them on the inside,

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meeting up at the centre with the Roman legionaries. The javelin throwers from the rest of the light-armed auxiliary forces made up the front line. [8] The consuls commanded the two wings, Terentius Varro the left and Aemilius Paullus the right. Geminus Servilius commanded the centre.

22.46

[1] At dawn Hannibal sent his Balearic slingers and light-armed troops out ahead, and then crossed the river [2] with the main body of his army. He deployed them in position as they crossed, with Gallic and Spanish cavalry on the left wing, near the river bank, facing the Roman cavalry, [3] and the Numidian cavalry on the right wing. In the centre he stationed his infantry, strengthening the whole formation by putting his African troops on both flanks, with Gauls and Spanish soldiers placed between. [4] You would have thought that the Africans were an almost totally Roman battle line. Their weaponry consisted mainly of the spoils of Trasimene, but also of Trebia. [5] The Gauls and Spanish troops had shields that were broadly similar, but the swords differed in size and design, the former having long swords which had no points, the Spanish short and pointed ones, since their fighting technique was to stab rather than slash their enemy. The effect of these tribesmen was uniquely terrifying, both for their giant physique and ferocious looks. [6] The Gauls were naked from the waist up; the Spanish, with their linen tunics edged with purple, presented an extraordinary line of dazzling white. When fully deployed, their overall numbers came to 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. [7] Of their commanders, Hasdrubal led the left wing, Maharbal the right, while Hannibal held the centre, with his brother Mago. [8] The Romans faced south, the Carthaginians north, and fortunately for both, the early morning sun as a result was shining obliquely across both the battle-lines, possibly because they had deliberately taken up positions to achieve this, possibly by sheer chance. [9] But a south-easterly wind, which the locals call the Voltornus, sprang up and rolled heavy dust clouds into the eyes of the Romans, thus seriously obscuring visibility for them.

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22.47

[1] With a great yell the auxiliaries charged, and with the clash of light-armed troops, the battle began. Then the Gallic and Spanish cavalry on the Carthaginian left engaged the Roman right, though it bore little resemblance to a normal cavalry engagement. [2] The cavalry squadrons had to meet each other head-on, since with the river on one side and the infantry lines on the other there was no room for the more usual mobile manoeuvres. [3] For both sides it became a hand-to-hand struggle; the horses were jammed together and unable to move, so their riders had to resort to grabbing their enemies and trying to drag each other from their saddles. It became, in effect, almost entirely an infantry battle, ferocious while it lasted, which was not very long. The Roman cavalry were driven back and retreated. [4] As the cavalry engagement came to an end, the infantry battle began. At first the lines were evenly matched in strength and resolution, while the lines of Gauls and Spanish troops held firm. [5] But at last the Romans drove back the enemy's wedge formation, which projected forward from their main line of troops but lacked the weight and density needed to withstand them, as they attacked across the whole front with a greater depth of forces. [6] The Carthaginians were driven back and began to withdraw nervously, while the Romans pressed on forward, maintaining the impetus of their attack and driving through the enemy line, which was now in headlong and panic stricken flight. This brought the Romans up against the centre of the Carthaginian position, and then, finding little resistance, against the African reserves.

[7] These troops were positioned on both wings, which were drawn back somewhat from the projecting central wedge held by the Gauls and Spanish soldiers. [8] As the wedge was driven back it came level with the main lines of the Carthaginians central position. As they continued to withdraw, the centre of their line became concave, while the African troops on the two wings formed a pair of projecting horns, as it were, gradually enclosing the Roman troops as

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they charged unthinkingly on against the centre. The Carthaginians rapidly extended their wings and closed in on their opponents from behind. [9] The Romans were now in trouble: their initially successful first assault on the fleeing Gauls and Spaniards had to be abandoned, as they turned to face a new wave of attacks from the Africans behind them. The battle became an unequal struggle for them; they were totally surrounded, and though exhausted, were now compelled to face fresh and vigorous opponents.

22.48

[1] On the Roman left wing, where their allied cavalry faced the Numidians, battle was now joined, somewhat half-heartedly at first, thanks to a typically Carthaginian piece of treachery. [2] About 500 Numidians, had concealed swords under their tunics, as well as carrying their normal armour and weaponry. They now pretended to desert. [3] Leaving their own lines, they rode up to the Romans with their shields slung behind their backs, and then suddenly leapt from their horses, threw down their weapons and shields at their opponents' feet, and having been taken into the Roman lines, were duly passed back to the rear and told to remain there. As the battle developed in every quarter, they stayed there quietly. But when everyone's hearts and minds were completely focused on the wider struggle, [4] they grabbed their shields, which had been left scattered everywhere among the heaps of corpses, and launched an attack on the Romans from behind, stabbing them in the back, slicing their hamstrings, and inflicting massive slaughter and even greater panic and disorder. [5] In one section of the Roman battle line there was now panic stricken flight; in another, an obstinate determination to continuing fighting against all the odds. Hasdrubal, who commanded that section of the Carthaginian line, realised that the Numidians were fighting somewhat half-heartedly, so he withdrew them from the battle and sent them in pursuit of the fugitives who were scattering in every direction. To replace them he sent the Gauls and Spanish infantry to join the Africans, who were now rather more exhausted by slaughter than by actual fighting.

Notes

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 22, Chapter 51**22.51**

[1] In his moment of victory Hannibal was surrounded by his staff, crowding round to congratulate him and urge him after such a massive success to spend the remainder of the day and the following night resting himself, and giving his exhausted soldiers time to recover. [2] Maharbal, his cavalry commander would have none of it, urging him not to waste a moment. "I'll tell you what this battle has really achieved," he declared, "when in five days' time you are feasting on the Capitol. Follow up quickly. I'll go ahead with the cavalry, [3] and before they even realise we are coming, the Romans will discover we've arrived." For Hannibal it all seemed far too optimistic, an almost inconceivable possibility. He commended Maharbal for his imaginative idea, but said he needed time to think it through. [4] Maharbal's reply was short and to the point. "The gods do not give all their gifts to any one man. You can win a battle, Hannibal. But you have no idea how to exploit it."

That single day's delay, by common consent, proved the salvation of Rome and her empire.

[5] Next day, when morning broke, the Carthaginians turned to gathering spoils and inspecting the carnage, which even they found horrifying. [6] Thousands of Roman soldiers lay there, infantry and cavalry scattered everywhere, united in a death which the blind chances of battle or flight had brought upon them. A few, whose wounds had been staunched by the morning frosts, even rose from among the heaps of dead all covered in blood – only to be slaughtered there and then by their enemies. [7] Others were discovered, still alive, but lying there with their knees or hamstrings sliced apart, baring their necks or throats and begging their enemies to drain the rest of their blood. [8] Some were even found with their heads buried in the ground, having dug small pits for themselves and buried their faces in the earth, and then simply smothered

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themselves to death. [9] The most spectacular sight of all was a Numidian soldier, still alive but lying beneath a dead Roman, with his nose and ears torn to shreds. The Roman had fought to his final breath, and when his hands could no longer hold his weapon, his anger turned to madness, and he died tearing his enemy to pieces with his teeth.

The Battle of Dertosa, preventing reinforcements reaching Italy, 215 BC

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 23, Chapter 29

23.29

[1] For a few days, the camps were a distance of five miles apart, not without a few small engagements, but without assembling the ranks. [2] But eventually, on the same day, the signal for battle was presented by both sides as if by some prior agreement. With all their troops, both armies marched down to the plain.

[3] The Romans stood with their troops drawn up in three lines. Some of the light-arms were positioned between the leaders in front of the standards, and others were placed behind the standards. The cavalry surrounded the wings.

[4] Hasdrubal made the centre strong with his Spanish troops: he placed the Carthaginians on the right wing, and the Africans and mercenary auxiliary troops on the left. From his cavalry, he stationed the Numidians on the right wing of the Carthaginians, and the rest on the left with the Africans. [5] Not all the Numidians, however, were drawn up on the right; only those who rode two horses each like a circus rider, and had the habit of hopping in armour from the tired horse to the fresh one, often in the heat of the battle: so swift were these riders, and so trainable was their breed of horse.

[6] Whilst they were standing in this manner, the hopes of the generals on each side were fairly equal: neither army had a marked advantage in either number or

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type of troops. [7] There was a huge disparity, however, in the soldiers' spirits. For the Romans, although they were fighting far from their fatherland, it had been easy for their generals to convince them that they were fighting for Italy and for the city of Rome. And so, as they were men for whom their return home would depend on the outcome of the battle, they resolved either to win, or to die. [8] The men on the Carthaginian side had their minds made up less firmly. The majority were Spanish, and would have preferred to be beaten in Spain rather than dragged to Italy as victors.

[9] Thus, at the first engagement, when they had scarcely thrown their javelins, the infantry in the centre fell back, and retreated as the Romans marched forth in a strong offensive. [10] The fighting was far less sluggish on the wings. The Carthaginians bore hard upon them from one side, and the Africans bore hard from the other, [11] and a double-edged fight was fought against those who appeared to be surrounded. But, whilst the entire Roman array had managed to rush into the centre, it had enough strength to tear apart the enemy's wings. [12] As a result, there were two different battles.

The Romans were the unquestioned victors of both, as once the centre had been routed, they surpassed the enemy in the number and strength of their men. [13] A huge number of men were killed there, and had the Spanish not fled in such confusion when the battle had barely started, very few indeed from the entire army would have survived. [14] The cavalry were not used in battle at all, since as soon as the Mauri and the Numidians saw the centre collapsing, they fled from the wings at once; they completely exposed themselves in their flight, as they were driving the elephants in front of them. [15] Hasdrubal, having waited for the final outcome of the battle, escaped from the midst of the bloodbath with a tiny number of men. [16] The Romans captured and sacked his camp.

The battle joined to the Roman side all those in Spain who were still undecided. Hasdrubal, meanwhile, had no hope left, either of leading his army to Italy or

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even remaining in Spain with sufficient safety. [17] When later, these facts were made commonly known in Rome by the despatches of the Scipios⁶, people rejoiced; not so much over the victory, but that Hasdrubal's march into Italy had been prevented.

Rome and Capua, 211 BC

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 26, Chapters 11–12

26.11

[1] The next day, Hannibal crossed the River Anio and drew up his entire force, and Flaccus and the consuls did not decline the fight. [2] After the armies had been assembled on each side for a battle in which the city of Rome would be the victor's prize, a huge downpour mixed with hail threw the ranks into such disarray that, barely holding onto their weapons, they retreated to their camps, fearing nothing less than the enemy. The following day, the ranks were drawn up in the same place, and the same weather sent them away. [3] Each time they returned to their camps, to their astonishment, the sky cleared and brought with it a sense of calm. [4] This was made into an auspicious sign for the Carthaginians, and it is believed that Hannibal was heard to say that the first time the disposition to take Rome had been taken from him, and the second time, the fortune.

Two other things, one small, one great, lessened Hannibal's hope even further.

[5] The significant thing was that he heard that, although his army was set beneath the very walls of Rome, regiments, under their standard, had been sent to reinforce Spain. [6] The smaller matter was that he learned from a captive that around this time, the land where he had his camp happened to have been sold, without even a reduction in price. [7] It seemed arrogant and unbecoming to

⁶ Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Calvus and Publius Cornelius Scipio, Scipio Africanus' uncle and father

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him that in Rome a buyer had been found for the land which he had captured in war, and indeed of which he was the sole owner and occupier. So, he called for a herald and ordered that all the banks situated around the Roman forum were to be sold.

[8] Affected by these matters, he re-established his camp on the River Tutia, six miles away from the city. From there he marched to the grove of Feronia, a shrine known for its wealth at that time. [9] The Capenates and its other close neighbours used to take to it first-fruits and other gifts (according to their wealth), and had kept it well-decorated with gold and silver. Huge heaps of bronze were discovered after Hannibal's departure, as soldiers would deposit crude lumps of it out of religious fear. [10] There is no doubt amongst writers about the plundering of this temple. Coelius relates that Hannibal turned into it from Eretrum on his way to Rome, and marks his route from Reate, Cutiliae, and Amiternum. [11] He says that he came to Samnium from Campania, and from there he entered Pelignian territory. He passed the town of Sulmo into Marrucinian territory, then through Alban land into Marsian, then finally into Amiternum and the village of Foruli. [12] There is no uncertainty regarding his route, as the traces of such a great general with such a huge army could not possibly have been lost in such a short period of time. [13] There is only one contested point, and that is whether he took this route when he marched to Rome, or when he marched back from the city to Campania.

26.12

[1] The Romans' persistence in carrying out the siege of Capua, however, was not equal to Hannibal's in defending it. For across Samnium, Apulia, and Lucania he hurried into the land of the Bruttii, to the strait and to Regium, at such a speed that it was almost as if he was to overwhelm them unawares with his sudden arrival. [2] Capua, although it had been besieged no less viciously at that time, was aware nevertheless of Flaccus' arrival, and began to wonder why Hannibal had not returned at the same time. [3] Then, through conversation with the

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enemy, they learned that they had been deserted and abandoned, and that the Carthaginians had given up any hope of holding Capua. [4] The proconsuls also released a declaration, which was heralded and distributed amongst the enemy in accordance with a senatorial decree: [5] that there would be no punishment for any Capuan citizen who changed sides before a certain date.

There was, however, no changing of sides, for the Capuans were constrained more by fear than honour; during their revolt, crimes had been committed which were too serious to be forgiven. [6] But, as no one changed to the enemy side of his own volition, they made [7] no provision for the health of their society. The nobility had deserted the state, and could not be made to assemble in the Senate. [8] The office of magistrate was held by a man who had not added to his own honour, but had taken power and authority from the job he held through his sheer unworthiness. [9] Not one of the most renowned citizens showed his face in the forum any more, or any public place. Shut away at home, day by day they awaited the fall of their home city, and their own death.

Primary responsibility for the situation had fallen completely to Bostar and Hanno, commanders of the Punic defences; their concerns were [10] only to do with their own safety, not the lives of their allies. They composed a letter to Hannibal which was not only unrestrained, but harsh in character. In this letter, they proposed that it was not merely Capua which had been given into enemy hands, but also themselves, and the garrison, had been left to all kinds of torture. [11] They professed that he had disappeared to Bruttian country, as if he were turning his back so that Capua would not be captured before his eyes. But they also said, firmly, that the Romans could not be dragged away from sacking Capua by anything, even an assault upon the city of Rome: [12] the Romans were so much greater an enemy than the Carthaginians were an ally. Hannibal should return to Capua, and focus the whole war there, then both they and the Capuans would be ready for battle. [13] They had not crossed the Alps to wage war with the people of Regium and Tarrentum: the Carthaginian forces should

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be where the Roman legions were. [14] Thus, at Cannae and at Trasimene, by coming together, setting up camp close to the enemy and by tempting fate, they had reached some success.

A letter to this effect was sent to the Numidians who, with a reward offered to them, promised to deliver it. [15] Acting as deserters, they came before Flaccus at his camp, intending to choose the right moment and then depart (the long-lived famine in Capua gave every man a believable reason for deserting). Then suddenly, a Campanian woman, the mistress of one of the deserters, came to the camp and informed the Roman general that the Numidians had agreed to change sides, [16] and were conveying a letter to Hannibal. She also claimed that she was prepared to prove the accusation against one of their men, who had told her of the situation. [17] When this man was brought out, at first he steadfastly pretended that he did not know the woman. Then he was gradually subdued by the facts, and as he saw that torture was being called for and prepared, he confessed that it was true, and the letter was produced. The woman added to her information what they were trying to hide: namely, that other Numidians had gone away to the Roman camp acting as deserters. [18] More than 70 of them were arrested, and, together with the new deserters were whipped with rods and sent back to Capua, after their hands had been cut off. [19] The sight of this terrible punishment broke the spirit of the Capuans.

Notes

Battle of New Carthage, 209 BC

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 26, Chapters 46–47

After besieging New Carthage and an unsuccessful attempt to take the city, Scipio was informed by fishermen that they could cross the lagoon by foot. A group of 500 men made their way through the lagoon at low tide. These men were able to climb the undefended walls and attack the rear of the Carthaginian troops defending the city from the Roman frontal attack; the gates were destroyed and the Romans swarmed in.

26.46

.... [8] From there, Scipio [Africanus] saw the enemy fleeing down two streets: one group towards the east-facing hill, and held by a garrison of 500 soldiers; the rest into the citadel, to which Mago, with the majority of the armed men routed from the walls, had also fled. So, he sent some of his troops to storm the hill, and led another group to the citadel himself. [9] The hill was captured on their first attempt. Mago, although he attempted to defend the citadel, surrendered himself, the citadel, and its guard, as he saw the entire city filled with the enemy and realised there was no hope for him. [10] Up until the surrender of the citadel, there was mass slaughter throughout the city: they spared no grown adult whom they encountered. But then the signal was given from the citadel, and the massacre ended; the victors turned instead to their vast, endlessly varied spoils.

26.47

[1] Approximately 10,000 freemen were captured. Out of that number, Scipio released those who were citizens of New Carthage; he gave their city back to them, and all the property which the war had left them. [2] There were around 2,000 artisans, whom he announced would be made public slaves of the Roman

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people. They should have no hope at all of freedom if they were to engage themselves actively in producing war equipment. [3] The rest of the crowd, comprised of young non-citizens and strong slaves, he gave to the navy (which had been enlarged with eight captured ships) to pick out oarsmen. [4] Aside from this group were the Spanish hostages, who were cared for just as if they were the children of allies.

[5] A huge amount of military equipment was also captured: [6] 120 of the largest catapults; 281 smaller catapults; 23 large ballistae and 52 smaller; scorpions of every size; a vast quantity of arms and missile weapons; and [7] 74 military standards. Scipio also received a large quantity of gold and silver: there were 276 gold paterae (most of them weighing a pound); there were 18,300 pounds of unwrought and minted silver, and several silver vessels. [8] All of these, after weighing and counting, were delivered to the quaestor Gaius Flaminius. There were also 400,000 bushels of wheat and 270,000 of barley. [9] Then, 63 merchant vessels were attacked and captured in the harbour; some with their cargoes, grain, and arms, along with bronze and iron and linen and Spanish broom and timber for ship-building. [10] In the end, in the midst of this ample supply of captured war resources, New Carthage was the very smallest part of it all.

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Hannibal recalled to Carthage (203 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 30, Chapter 20

30.20

[1] The story goes that he gnashed his teeth, groaned, and came close to tears when he heard what the delegates had to say. [2] When they had explained their instructions, he exclaimed: "The men who tried to push me back by cutting off my supplies of men and money are now calling me back – not by devious means, but plainly and openly! [3] You see, the people who have vanquished Hannibal are not the Romans, who have been cut down and driven away so many times; they are the Carthaginian Senate, by means of their disparagement and envy. [4] It is not Scipio who will pride himself and exult over the disgrace of my return, no: it is Hanno, who has destroyed my house beneath the ruins of Carthage, since he could do it no other way."

[5] He had predicted what would happen, and readied his fleet in anticipation. He disposed of the unserviceable portion of his troops by distributing them (seemingly) as guards amongst the few towns which, more out of fear than loyalty, still obeyed him. [6] He moved the majority of his force to Africa. Many Italian natives refused to follow him, and withdrew into the temple of Juno Lacinia, a shrine which had remained pure until that day. [7] There, within the sacred precinct itself, they were gruesomely murdered. According to the historical record, rarely has any one left his native country to go into exile in such a miserable state as Hannibal did whilst leaving his enemies' country. He is said to have often looked back to the shores of Italy, blaming gods and men and even cursing himself for not having led his soldiers, still blood-stained, from the victorious field of Cannae straight to Rome. [8] He said that Scipio, who had never seen a Carthaginian in Italy during his consulship, had dared to [9] go to Africa; whereas he, who had slain 100,000 soldiers at Trasimene and Cannae, had

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wasted his energy round Casilinum, Cumae, and Nola. Amid these complaints and regrets he was taken from his long occupation of Italy.

The Battle of Zama (202 BC)

Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 30, Chapters 29–36

Hannibal moves to Hadrumentum and then to Zama; he sends out scouts; Scipio allows them to see everything in the camp and sends them back to Hannibal to report.

30.29

... [4] Hannibal derived no pleasure from their report. They told him that Masinissa had arrived that very day, with some 6,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, though he was particularly struck by his opponent's obvious confidence, which he felt must surely have some basis in reality. [5] He was fully aware that he himself was the reason for the war and that by his arrival he had broken the terms of the armistice and any hope of a permanent peace treaty. But he calculated that he was likely to get rather more generous terms, if he negotiated a peace before he was defeated and while his army was still intact. So he sent an envoy to Scipio to ask for a chance to hold discussions. [6] Whether he did this on his own initiative or on the instructions of his government, I have no way of telling. [7] Valerius Antias records that he was defeated by Scipio in a preliminary encounter, in which he lost 12,000 men and a further 1,700 taken prisoner. It was after this that he went to Scipio's camp as an official envoy with ten other colleagues.

[8] Scipio agreed to talks, so both generals advanced their camps, so that they could be close enough to meet more conveniently. [9] Scipio established his camp close to the city of Naraggara in a generally favourable position, very

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close to a source of water. Hannibal chose a small hill about four miles away, thoroughly satisfactory in all other respects, except that it was some distance from any water-source. Between the two a meeting place was chosen, in open ground to avoid any possibility of ambush.

30.30

[1] The armies were moved back from the meeting point by an exactly equal distance, and there the two generals met, each with a single interpreter. They were the two greatest generals of their age, the equals of any king or commander of any nation, in the whole of human history. [2] At first neither said a word, as if each was awe-struck at the sight of the other, each lost in admiration of his opponent. Hannibal was the first to speak.

[3] "It was I that first began this war against the Roman people. And though I seemed so often to have victory in my grasp, the Fates have willed it that I should also be the first to seek for peace. I come of my own free will, and I am glad that Chance ordained that it is you from whom I seek it; there is no-one I would rather ask it of. [4] I am glad, too, that it will not be the least of your many great achievements that it was you that Hannibal surrendered to, who had claimed so many victories over Rome's other generals, and that it was you that brought an end to a war made famous by your countrymen's defeats before my own. [5] Blind Chance makes a mockery of us all, and this is one of Chance's richest jokes that I first took up arms when your father was consul, I fought against him first of all Rome's generals, and now without my arms I am here to seek peace terms from his son. [6] It would have been better if the gods had given our ancestors a different attitude of mind, a willingness to be content with what they had: Rome with Italy, Carthage with Africa. [7] For you Sicily and Sardinia are barely adequate reward for the loss of so many fleets, and armies, and outstanding generals. But sadly though we may regret the past, we cannot change it. [8] We fought to capture what belonged to others; now we fight to defend what is our own. Our war was fought in Italy as well as Africa; yours in

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Africa as well as Italy. You saw the arms and standards of a Punic army at your gates and beneath the walls of Rome; we now hear the roar of a Roman camp from the walls of Carthage. [9] The luck has turned and Fortune is on your side – something we greatly feared and you desired above all else. But the issue we must now decide upon is peace; and for both of us peace is the greatest prize of all. Whatever we decide upon, our two states will ratify. All we now need is quiet and sensible discussions.

[10] As for myself, time sees me now an old man returning home to the native land he left while still a boy. Success and failure have long since taught me that philosophy is a better guide to action than any reliance upon blind Fortune.

[11] You are young and luck has always been on your side. This, I fear, will make you too aggressive when what we need is quiet diplomacy. The man who has never been deceived by Fortune rarely thinks carefully about the uncertainties of mortal destiny. [12] You stand today where I once stood at Trasimene and Cannae. Almost before you reached military age, you held supreme command. Whatever risks you took, however bold, good fortune never let you down.

[13] You avenged your father's and your uncle's deaths, and in so doing, from your family's calamities, like battle honours you won a glorious renown for courage and filial devotion. Spain was lost; you won it back by driving out four Carthaginian armies. [14] They made you consul, when others lacked the guts to fight for Italy; but you went further, and sailed out to Africa. There you slaughtered two armies, captured and fired two camps, took prisoner Syphax, our most powerful ruler, and seized innumerable cities in his kingdom and our empire. And now, finally, you have dragged me out of Italy after sixteen years of stubborn occupation of that land. [15] To men of action, victory can often seem a greater prize than peace. I too was once a man of action, indifferent to practical decisions; and once upon a time on me too Fortune smiled. [16] But if, when all goes well, the gods would only give us the blessing of good sense, we would bear in mind not only what has already happened, but also what may happen in the future. Forget everything else; I am proof enough of how luck

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changes. [17] Not so long ago I pitched my camp between the River Anio and Rome. You saw me preparing to attack, about to scale the battlements of Rome. Look at me now: bereaved of two brothers, heroes both and famous generals, standing before the walls of my beleaguered country, pleading with you to spare my city those ordeals with which I once threatened yours.

[18] The more Fortune smiles upon you, the less she should be trusted. You are basking in success; we are in the depths. Peace is yours to give, and the rewards will bring you many blessings. Peace is ours to beg for, and for us there are no honourable rewards; we beg because we must. [19] The certainty of peace is a better thing by far than a victory you can only hope for. Peace is yours to give; victory rests in the hands of the gods. Do not leave so many years of glorious success to depend upon the lottery of a single hour. [20] Compare your own strength with the power of chance and the risks of battle, which we share. For both of us, swords will be drawn and men's lives lost; nowhere less certainly than in battle does victory come in answer to our hopes. [21] If you prove victorious, you will add far less to the glory you can already claim by making peace, than you will lose, if for you the outcome is defeat. All the glory that you have and hope for may be lost by the fortunes of a single hour. [22] If you make peace, Publius Cornelius, yours is the world and everything that's in it; if not, then you must take whatever the gods may grant. [23] There are not many examples of courage linked to success. Remember Marcus Atilius Regulus, who once stood here victorious on Carthaginian soil. My ancestors sued for peace, which he refused. He rode his luck to the limits and failed to rein it in; it galloped away with him. The higher you rise, the further you fall – and his fall was truly terrible.

[24] The one that grants peace has the right to dictate the terms, not the one that seeks it. But perhaps we Carthaginians deserve to propose some penalties for ourselves. [25] We are willing to concede that all the territories for which we went to war belong to you: Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, and all the Mediterranean islands lying between Italy and Africa. [26] Since that is how the gods have

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ordained it, we are content to be confined within the boundaries of Africa and to see you an imperial power ruling over foreign kingdoms by land and sea.

[27] I cannot deny that Carthage's good faith must be suspect, because we lacked sincerity in seeking peace and patience in waiting for it when offered.

The integrity of any peace agreement much depends on those who seek it.

[28] I understand, Scipio, that your Senators turned down our overtures of peace, in part because our envoys lacked sufficient status. [29] But now it is I, Hannibal, that ask for peace. I would not ask for it unless I felt it was to our advantage, and that is why I shall defend the peace which I have asked for. [30] I was responsible for that war, and as long as heaven was on my side, I worked to see that none of my people regretted my decision. In the same way I shall now work with all my might to see that none regret the peace that I have gained for them."

30.31

[1] The Roman general's reply went roughly as follows: "I am very well aware, Hannibal, that it was the hopes raised by your return that led the Carthaginians to breach the terms of the armistice and wreck any hope of future peace.

[2] You have been very frank about it, while contriving to leave out of your current proposals anything in the terms of the original agreement that was not already in our possession.

[3] You want your fellow citizens to recognise what a huge burden you are lifting from their shoulders; but I too must strive to make sure that they make no profit from their treachery by excluding any of those previous conditions from the terms of any settlement on which we may agree today. [4] You are actually asking to profit from your treachery, even though you do not deserve to retain even the original conditions. Our ancestors did not start the war in Sicily; we did not start the war in Spain. In Sicily it was our allies, the Mamertines, who were under threat; in Spain it was the sack of Saguntum, which drove us to take up arms in two just and holy wars. [5] You have acknowledged, and the gods are witnesses to the truth of what you say, that you are the aggressors. Justice and

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the laws of heaven gave us victory in Sicily; they have given us victory in the recent war; and they will do so again if we fight here.

[6] As for myself, I am all too aware of human weakness, and there is no need to lecture me on the power of Fortune; I know very well that all our deeds are subject to a thousand strokes of luck. [7] I would be all too willing to admit that my conduct was arrogant and brutal, if of your own free will you had come to me to ask for peace before you abandoned Italy, embarked your army, and withdrew to Africa, and if I had rejected your proposals out of hand. [8] But now I have no such inhibitions, when we are here in Africa, on the eve of battle, and I have dragged you protesting and against your will to these negotiations. [9] So now, therefore, if you have anything you wish to add to the peace conditions previously proposed, as compensation perhaps for the losses to our ships and their supplies which you destroyed during the armistice, and for the violence done to our ambassadors, then I will have something to take back to our authorities. But if that is too much for you, prepare for war, since peace you clearly find intolerable."

[10] Peace negotiations had clearly broken down. They each returned to their own armies and reported that since words had failed, they must settle the matter with swords instead, and leave the fortunes of battle in the lap of the gods.

30.32

[1] When they returned to camp, both generals ordered their soldiers to prepare for battle and stiffen their sinews for the final struggle. For if they won and the luck was with them, they would be victors not just for a day, but forever after.

[2] Next day, before night fell, they would know whether Rome or Carthage would make laws for all the nations; the reward for victory was not just Italy or Africa, but all the world. But for those that lost the battle, the risk equalled the reward. [3] For the Romans, there would be no quick escape route home, here in an unfamiliar foreign land; for Carthage, with their last hope gone, immediate

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destruction loomed close at hand.

[4] And so, next day, they reached the moment of decision. The two most famous generals, the two most powerful armies of the two richest nations upon earth, came to do battle, destined either to double or destroy the countless battle honours they had previously won. [5] Hope sometimes filled their hearts, and sometimes terror. They gazed at the battle lines, first their own and then the enemy's, weighing by eye not number the strength of each, sometimes with hope, sometimes with growing fear, while their generals sought by advice and exhortation to supply whatever grounds for hope might not have naturally occurred to them already. [6] Hannibal reminded them of all they had achieved in Italy over those 16 years, all the Roman generals they had slain, all the armies they had destroyed; and as he came to individual soldiers, heroes of particular battles, he would remind them of the honours each had won. [7] Scipio recalled the wars in Spain and recent battles in Africa, and the enemy's admission that their fear had given them no option but to sue for a peace, which their habitual treachery guaranteed they could not keep. [8] In addition, since his negotiations with Hannibal were held in secret, he could make up anything he liked about them. [9] "I truly believe", he said, "that as our enemies come out to battle, the gods are sending them the self same omens as those they sent to our ancestors before their final victory in the First Punic War⁷, in the Aegatian Islands. [10] This war is coming to an end; our toil is almost done; the wealth of Carthage lies within our grasp; we are going back, my soldiers, to our parents, our children, our wives, and all the household gods." [11] The author Celsus tells us that as he spoke his whole stance and demeanour were so uplifted, so transported with happiness that you might have thought that he had already won the day.

30.33

[1] Scipio now marshalled his troops for battle: in front the spearmen (*astate*), and behind them the second rankers (*principes*), and then the third row men

⁷ 264–241 BC

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(*triarrii*), closing up the rear. He did not deploy his cohorts in conventional close order in front of their individual standards; instead he organised them by companies (*maniples*), with wide passages in between each, so that the enemy's elephants would not disrupt the battle lines as they charged. [2] He put Laelius in command of the Italian cavalry on the left wing. He had been his deputy commander (*legatus*), but for the current year was a special quaestor, appointed by senatorial decree instead of by lot. Masinissa and the Numidians were on the opposite wing, on the right. [3] He filled the open passages between the maniples with platoons of skirmishers (*velites*), who were lightly armed in those days, and gave them strict orders to retreat behind the front lines as soon as the elephants charged, or else to scatter to left and right and link up with the front line troops, thus opening up a route for the elephants to charge through and leave them vulnerable to fire from both quarters.

[4] Hannibal deployed his elephants in the front line, hoping to generate shock and awe among the Romans. There were eighty of them, more than had ever before been used in a battle line. [5] Behind them he placed his auxiliaries, Ligurians and Gauls, stiffened with additional Mauretanian troops and Balearic slingers. Behind them, in the second line, came the Carthaginians and Africans, together with a legion of Macedonian infantry. [6] A short distance behind all these he placed his reserves, Italian soldiers, mainly from Bruttium, of whom the majority had followed him in his retreat from Italy under compulsion, rather than of their own free will. [7] He too stationed his cavalry on the wings, Carthaginians on the right, Numidians on the left. [8] There was a confused roar, as his soldiers shouted encouragement to each other in a wide variety of languages: a vast army sharing neither language, culture, law, weaponry, clothes, nor appearance, and not even united in the reasons why they fought. [9] The auxiliaries were there for the money, and the prospect of increasing it by plunder; the Gauls had their own special and long standing hatred of the Romans; the Ligurians were drawn down from their savage mountain ranges by the hope of victory and the hope of new lands among the rich plains of northern Italy;

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[10] the Moors and Numidians were terrified by the prospect of a future tyranny under a Masinissa no longer impotent; [11] As for his Carthaginians, Hannibal reminded them of their city's walls, the gods of their homes, the tombs of their ancestors, their parents and children and wives all cowering in terror. He played upon their hopes and fears, picturing for them the two dire alternatives, with no middle way between: either slavery and death, or else dominion over the whole wide world.

[12] While he was still speaking to his Carthaginians and the various tribal leaders addressing their troops (mainly through interpreters, because of their mixed nationalities), from the Roman line the horns and trumpets blared, [13] raising such a noise that the elephants panicked and charged their own lines, especially on the left wing where the Moors and Numidians were stationed. Masinissa quickly added to the general panic and thus robbed that section of the line of its cavalry support. [14] A few of the elephants that had remained under control made a charge against the lines of light-armed skirmishers (*velites*) and wrought havoc among them, while suffering severe casualties themselves. [15] For by pulling back to the lines of regular infantry to avoid being crushed by the elephants, the skirmishers opened clear lanes between them and then caught them in cross fire by hurling spears against them from both sides. The javelins of the regular infantry kept up a hail of missiles from every [16] quarter, until the elephants were driven out of the Roman lines and turned against their own troops, putting to flight the Carthaginian cavalry on the right wing also. Laelius, with his cavalry on the Roman left, added to their panic as they fled.

30.34

[1] By the time the infantry battle was joined, the Carthaginian line had lost its cavalry support on both wings and was no longer a match for the Romans in morale or military strength. There were other factors involved, which may sound as if they were insignificant, but proved momentous in the actual event. The Romans' battle-cry was uniform and for that reason all the louder and more

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terrible; the Carthaginians' a cacophony of cries, as you would expect from a multitude of tribesmen, all with different languages. [2] The Roman assault held together, as their concentrated weight of numbers and heavy weaponry bore down upon the enemy, whose attack had speed but lacked force. [3] The result was that the Romans' first charge destabilised the enemy line. They then shouldered their way forward, hammering the enemy with their shield bosses as they failed to hold position, and made considerable advances, almost as if there was no resistance. [4] As they saw the line begin to crack, the Roman rear started to push forward, adding weight to the pressure on the enemy. [5] On their side, the Africans and Carthaginians in the second line could not hold back the weight of retreating auxiliaries, with the result that they too began to retreat, in case the enemy cut down the front lines, despite their obstinate resistance, and broke through to their own position. [6] As a result, the auxiliaries suddenly broke and turned tail. Some fled back to join the second line positions, and a number even attacked their own side, if they would not let them through, being angry that they had failed to support them and now would not even let them join their ranks. [7] Two different battles now developed simultaneously: the first between the Romans and the Carthaginians, and another between the Carthaginians themselves. [8] They simply refused to allow their terrified and angry auxiliaries back into the line; instead they closed ranks and forced them out towards the wings and the open fields beyond the battle, to prevent the troops, who were wounded and in panic stricken flight, from disrupting their own unbroken ranks which were still holding their position.

[9] A problem now arose: the piles of slaughtered soldiers and their weapons, which filled the area recently occupied by the auxiliaries, were so vast that it became almost more difficult for the Romans to advance through them than it had been to break through the enemy line. [10] And so the front rank troops (*astate*) lost formation and contact with their standards, as they followed up the enemy in hot pursuit as best they could through the heaps of corpses and weaponry. Seeing the line in front of them gradually disintegrating, the

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second rank troops (*principes*) began to lose formation also. [11] As soon as Scipio became aware of it, he ordered the recall to be sounded for the front rankers (*astate*) to re-group, pulled out the wounded and sent them to the rear, and led the second and third rankers (*principes* and *triarii*) out to the wings, so that the front rank (*astate*) could consolidate and secure the line. [12] That was the beginning of a completely new battle. The Romans now faced their real enemies, a match for them in quality of equipment, military experience, famed for their deeds, and with fears and expectation just as great as their own. [13] But now the Romans had the advantage both in numbers and morale, since they had already routed the elephants, and having broken the enemy front were now challenging their second line.

30.35

[1] At this critical moment, Laelius and Masinissa returned from a fairly long pursuit of the defeated cavalry, and charged the Carthaginian rear. This attack by the cavalry finally broke the Carthaginians. [2] Many were surrounded and slaughtered where they stood, many others scattered across the open fields in flight but died at the hands of the cavalry, who held all the escape routes. [3] 20,000 Carthaginians and their allies died that day; a similar number were taken prisoner, along with 132 military standards, and 11 elephants. The victorious Romans lost some 1,500 men.

[4] In the general confusion, Hannibal managed to escape with a band of cavalry, and fled to Hadrumetum. Before escaping from the battle, he had tried everything both in his preparations and his tactical decisions; [5] indeed, both Scipio and all the military experts agree that his tactical deployment of his troops on the day of battle was masterly. [6] He had placed his elephants in the front line, so that their random attacks and irresistible force would prevent the Romans from following their standards and holding their formations, which was for them one of their most important military principles. [7] His auxiliaries were drawn from the dregs of every tribe under the sun, lacked loyalty to any

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cause, and were driven only by their desire for pay. [8] So he had wisely placed them in front of his own Carthaginians, so as to ensure that they had no obvious means of escape, but would bear the brunt of the Romans' first assault, and dull the force and impetus of their charge – or at least blunt their opponents' swords with their own wounds. [9] Finally, his Carthaginians and Africans, in whom he placed his highest hopes and who were a match for any eventuality, had been stationed behind his auxiliaries, to give them the added advantage of fighting against soldiers already wounded and exhausted, while they themselves were fresh. The Italians were unreliable allies, and might turn traitor, so he had placed them in the rear, well separated from the main lines of battle. [10] It was the final demonstration of Hannibal's brilliance as a military commander.

Having escaped to Hadrumentum, he was summoned back to Carthage, returning there in the 36th year since he had left it as a boy. [11] In their Senate he acknowledged that he had lost not just the battle but the war, and that their only hope was to sue for peace.

30.36

[1] Immediately after the battle, Scipio stormed and destroyed the enemy camp, before returning to the coast and his fleet with a huge collection of booty.

[2] There news reached him that Publius Lentulus had reached Utica, just north of Carthage, with 50 warships and 100 transports, filled with all sorts of necessary supplies. [3] Scipio decided that he should inflict still further terrors from every direction on an already shattered Carthage. So he despatched Laelius back to Rome with the news of victory, ordered Gnaeus Octavius to lead his legions to Carthage by the overland route, and he himself united his existing fleet with that of Lentulus. He then set out from Utica for the port of Carthage. [4] He had nearly got there when a Carthaginian ship came out to meet him, bedecked with symbols of surrender, woollen fillets and olive branches. On board were ten ambassadors, leading citizens, sent to beg for peace at Hannibal's suggestion.

[5] They approached the stern of Scipio's flagship, holding out their olive

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branches with woollen fillets, tokens of supplication, begging and beseeching him for magnanimity and mercy. [6] Scipio made no reply, stating simply that he planned to move his camp to Tunis, and that they should meet him there. He himself sailed on in order to reconnoitre the site of Carthage, but entered the harbour with no real intention of exploring it for the moment; his aim was simply to demoralise the enemy. [7] He then returned to Utica and told Octavius to join him there. ...

[9] They [the Romans] then re-established their camp at Tunis, in the same location as before, and there a delegation of 30 envoys came to Scipio from Carthage.

They pleaded their cause in far more heart-rending terms than they had before. Fortune had forced such woes upon them; but the memory of their recent treachery won them proportionately less pity from the Romans. [10] They held a council of war, at which initially righteous anger and indignation encouraged them to wipe out the whole city. But then they began to calculate the sheer size of Carthage, and how long it would take them to besiege and capture somewhere so strong and formidably fortified. [11] In Scipio's mind was also the anxious thought that his successor would soon be on his way, and that he would enjoy the fruits of a victory, which had already been won by the efforts and dangers of his predecessor. In the end there was a consensus for peace.

The Carthaginians accept terms

Polybius, *The Histories* Book 15, 19

[1] Scipio presented these terms to the envoys, and after listening to him they hurried back to inform their countrymen in Carthage. [2] On this occasion it is said that, when one of the members of the Carthaginian Council was intending to oppose the acceptance of the terms and was starting to speak, Hannibal

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came forward and pulled him down from the platform. [3] The other councillors were angry with his action against accepted traditions. Hannibal then got up again and said that he agreed he had acted wrongly, but they must forgive him if he had acted against their traditions. For they knew that, when he had left Carthage, he was nine years old, but had returned at over 45. [4] He, therefore, thought it best not to consider whether he failed to follow tradition, but much rather whether he felt a true concern for the misfortunes of his country; for it was this feeling which had made him act disrespectfully.

[5] He said he thought it was amazing and completely inexplicable, that any citizen of Carthage who knew our policies and views against the Romans, held by both the state and individuals privately, did not thank his good luck to have received such concessions despite being at the mercy of the Romans. [6] He continued saying that if anyone had been asked a few days before what they expected their country to suffer should the Roman win the battle, they would not have been able even to voice their concern because the evils which then confronted them seemed so large and extremely alarming. [7] So he asked them not to debate the matter, but with one voice accept the proposals, sacrifice to the gods, and all pray that the Roman people may ratify the treaty. [8] Since his advice seemed sensible and the proper action at that time, they voted to make the treaty on the conditions already set out. [9] The Carthaginian Council at once sent envoys with orders to agree to the terms on their behalf.

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