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A Most Fateful Encounter: How Scipio Africanus Defeated Hannibal Barca at the Battle of Zama

Harry C. Rol

A MOST FATEFUL ENCOUNTER: HOW SCIPIO AFRICANUS DEFEATED HANNIBAL BARCA AT THE BATTLE OF ZAMA

An honors paper submitted to the Department of Classics, Philosophy, and Religion
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Harry C Rol
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Harry Rol
(digital signature)

05/01/15

A MOST FATEFUL ENCOUNTER

HOW SCIPIO AFRICANUS DEFEATED HANNIBAL

BARCA AT THE BATTLE OF ZAMA

A THESIS BY

HARRY C. ROL

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FOR DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN CLASSICS

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Liane Houghtalin   Angela Pitts   Joseph Romero

Autobiography

Born on September 2nd, 1992, I am a fifth-year student at the University of Mary Washington and a double major in Latin and Computer Science. Ever since 7th grade when I received my first homeschooled lessons in Latin from my mother (a Classics major herself), I have been fascinated by the history of ancient Rome, particularly the enormous successes of its famous legionary armies (this can also be heavily attributed to a game named *Rome: Total War* that I received as a gift in 8th grade). My interest in it was so strong that I saved up my money to buy not one, but two sets of Roman armor, and to this day I will still put on the steel *lorica segmentata* for costumed events and guest exhibitions in classes (ranging from elementary school to CLAS 110 here at UMW). It was unsurprising therefore that I should choose a topic revolving around one of the Romans' greatest victories for my senior thesis, especially since the main question the thesis asks is one that I myself have often wondered at throughout the years. And it is my sincere hope that you will enjoy exploring this topic as much as I have.

Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of why Hannibal Barca suffered such a decisive defeat at the hands of Scipio Africanus in the Battle of Zama. I begin by conducting a thorough analysis of the two ancient sources that have provided us with the bulk of what is known about the battle and the events leading up to it. My analysis of them primarily concerns itself with determining how objective and trustworthy these accounts are, and as such how much faith can be placed in the details they provide. Using these sources, I then proceed to examine the events leading up to the Battle of Zama itself, specifically Scipio's campaign in North Africa and how his strategic decisions and maneuvers ultimately forced Hannibal to return to North Africa and confront him. I then conduct an analysis of the battle itself and each general's tactical performance. Before drawing my own conclusions as to why Hannibal lost, I review the texts of scholars who have also written on the subject to determine what they believe were the factors responsible for Hannibal's defeat, categorizing them into two major schools of thought. Finally, I choose one side and then add my own contributions as to why Scipio Africanus triumphed in the end.

On my honor, I attest that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.
Signed,

Table of Contents

Introduction and Thesis Statement

On October 19, 202 BC, six Roman legions under the command of Publius

Cornelius Scipio confronted a Carthaginian army led by the most dreaded general of

the ancient world: Hannibal Barca, scourge of Italy and the man responsible for some

of the most humiliating defeats Rome would ever suffer in its long history. The stakes

could not have been higher for either side; a Carthaginian victory would leave the

recent Roman conquests of Spain completely vulnerable to a counter-attack by

Hannibal's triumphant army, and the reclamation of the country would give Carthage

both the resources and location it needed to continue its war against Rome.[1] On the

other hand, a Roman victory would spell the end of Carthage as a power in the

Mediterranean. With its economy and military in ruins, it would be completely at the

mercy of Scipio and the Roman senate, who would be free to force upon the

Carthaginians whatever terms they wished. And after a long and bloody struggle

between the two armies, now known as the Battle of Zama, this second scenario is

exactly what ensued. His army routed, Hannibal was forced to flee, and with him fled

any hopes of Carthage defying Rome. Scipio earned the title of "Africanus" for his

decisive victory and imposed a peace treaty that destroyed what little remained of

Carthage's navy and finances, leaving Rome free to pursue its conquest of the rest of

the Mediterranean world.[2] Such was the price of Hannibal's failure.

But how did this come to pass? How did a general who is credited with some

of the most remarkable victories in all of history suddenly suffer a crushing defeat to

an army that he outnumbered, and in his own homeland of North Africa no less? I

intend to show through this paper that Hannibal Barca lost the Battle of Zama long

before it even began. Scipio Africanus gained the strategic advantage over him with a series of brilliant maneuvers and battles in Spain and North Africa that crippled the rest of Carthage's military forces and allies, leaving Hannibal no choice but to depart from Italy and return to a homeland that he had not stepped foot on since he was nine years old. Scipio then pressed the advantage and forced Hannibal into fighting a battle that the Carthaginian army was unprepared for, and on a battlefield that gave a very strong tactical edge to the Romans. By the time the fighting commenced, Hannibal was left with chance for victory, and what little opportunity he did have to turn the tide of the battle fell through. In the end, despite his extraordinary accomplishments as a general, Hannibal lost Zama because he could neither match the strategic prowess of Scipio Africanus, nor find a way to overcome his Roman adversary's tactics.

In order to demonstrate this, we must first turn to the two men who have provided us with the vast majority of what we know about Zama: Titus Livius Patavianus, or simply Livy, and Polybius. I shall conduct an analysis of their reliability, and then turn to examining the events leading up to and during the Battle of Zama as depicted by them, beginning with Scipio's landing on the coast of North Africa. Following this, I will include a review of scholarship that has also been done on this subject, before drawing my own conclusions regarding why the battle played out in such a fashion.

Analysis of Polybius as a Historian

Of these two ancient historians, Polybius is probably the lesser known, but this is in no way a reflection of his credibility as a historian. On the contrary, Polybius

has developed a reputation for being one of the most objective and reliable historians

in all of classical antiquity, and his *Histories* are frequently consulted by those who

wish to learn more about the Roman wars waged against Carthage and Macedon.[3]

Polybius himself makes it very clear in his *Histories* that he believes the role of the

historian is to offer the truth and nothing but the truth, no matter what their personal

feelings on the matter at hand might be:

> ὅταν δὲ τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνῃ τις, ἐπιλαθέσθαι χρὴ
> πάντων τῶν τοιούτων καὶ πολλάκις μὲν εὐλογεῖν καὶ κοσμεῖν τοῖς
> μεγίστοις ἐπαίνοις τοὺς ἐχθρούς, ὅταν αἱ πράξεις ἀπαιτῶσι τοῦτο,
> πολλάκις δ᾽ ἐλέγχειν καὶ ψέγειν ἐπονειδίστως τοὺς ἀναγκαιοτάτους,
> ὅταν αἱ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἁμαρτίαι τοῦθ᾽ ὑποδεικνύωσιν. ὥσπερ γὰρ
> ζῴου τῶν ὄψεων ἀφαιρεθεισῶν ἀχρειοῦται τὸ ὅλον, οὕτως ἐξ ἱστορίας
> ἀναιρεθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται
> διήγημα.
>
> Polybius *Histories*, 1.5-6

> But he who assumes the character of a historian must ignore
> everything of the sort, and often, if their actions demand this, speak
> good of his enemies and honor them with the highest praises while
> criticizing and even reproaching roundly his closest friends, should the
> errors of their conduct impose this duty on him. For just as a living
> creature which has lost its eyesight is wholly incapacitated, so if
> History is stripped of her truth all that is left is but an idle tale.[4]

Polybius' devotion to the preservation of fact, free from bias and with no

details excluded, is further supported by the remarkable extents to which he would go

to research his subject matter. In addition to the great number of connections he

developed in order to obtain as much information as possible, among them Scipio

Aemilianus, the adopted grandson of Scipio Africanus himself and the commander of

the Roman army that ultimately sacked Carthage in the Third Punic War, Polybius

also personally traveled to the locations of some of the Second Punic War's most

important events.[5] The most outstanding of these, and the one that best illustrates his

incredible diligence, is his crossing of the Alps in order to follow in the footsteps of

Hannibal's army.[6]

Polybius was especially well suited to the analysis and writing of military

history due to his own military background. He served under the Romans in their

campaign against the Galatian Gauls of Asia Minor in 189 BC, and he would later

become a *hipparchus*, a cavalry officer, of the Achaean League during the third war

between Macedon and Rome.[7] His friendship with Scipio Aemilianus resulted in him

being invited to take part in the negotiations that preceded the Third Punic War, and

afterwards he accompanied Scipio to Africa where he experienced firsthand the siege

and subsequent sacking of Carthage. He was even present for the razing of Corinth in

the same year.[8] This extensive experience gave Polybius a profound understanding of

classical warfare, which is frequently demonstrated by his lengthy and superbly

detailed descriptions of tactics, equipment, formations, army composition, and troop

types.

We cannot however rely solely upon Polybius' *Histories* as our primary source

for Zama and the Second Punic War in general, the predominant reason being that of

the forty volumes he wrote, only the first five have survived the ages fully intact.

Another reason can be inferred from a statement that Polybius makes in Book XII

regarding how he collects most of his information:

> ἐπειδὴ γὰρ αἱ μὲν πράξεις ἅμα πολλαχῇ συντελοῦνται, παρεῖναι δὲ τὸν
> αὐτὸν ἐν πλείοσι τόποις κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν ἀδύνατον, ὁμοίως γε
> μὴν οὐδ᾽ αὐτόπτην γενέσθαι πάντων τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην τόπων
> καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἰδιωμάτων τὸν ἕνα δυνατόν, καταλείπεται
> πυνθάνεσθαι μὲν ὡς παρὰ πλείστων, πιστεύειν δὲ τοῖς ἀξίοις πίστεως,
> κριτὴν δ᾽ εἶναι τῶν προσπιπτόντων μὴ κακόν.
>
> Polybius *Histories,* 12.4c.4-5

For since many events occur at the same time in different places, and one man cannot be in several places at one time, nor is it possible for a single man to have seen with his own eyes every place in the world and all the peculiar features of different places, the only thing left for an historian is to inquire from as many people as possible, to believe those worthy of belief and to be an adequate critic of the reports that reach him.

"To believe those worthy of belief" implies that in many cases Polybius had no means of corroborating a person's account beyond his own judgment call regarding their trustworthiness, meaning that there could be numerous cases throughout the *Histories* where the only evidence for what was presented as fact was the testimony of an individual that Polybius deemed to be "worthy of belief". It should be noted though that we are doing almost exactly the same thing by placing our faith and trust in Polybius and his alleged adherence to the truth in the cases where we have little to no other evidence available.

The final reason as to why we should be cautious in relying exclusively on Polybius is one that he himself acknowledges:

ὃ δὴ κἂν ἐγὼ παρακαλέσαιμι περὶ αὐτοῦ τοὺς καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ τοὺς ἐπιγινομένους, ἐὰν μὲν κατὰ πρόθεσιν εὑρισκώμεθά που κατὰ τὴν πραγματείαν διαψευδόμενοι καὶ παρορῶντες τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀπαραιτήτως ἐπιτιμᾶν, ἐὰν δὲ κατ᾽ ἄγνοιαν, συγγνώμην ἔχειν, καὶ μάλιστα πάντων ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς συντάξεως καὶ διὰ τὴν καθόλου περιβολὴν τῶν πραγμάτων.

Polybius *Histories*, 16.20.8-9

And I too will beg both my contemporaries and future generations in pronouncing on my work, if they ever find me making misstatements or neglecting the truth intentionally to censure me relentlessly, but if I merely err owing to ignorance to pardon me, especially in view of the magnitude of the work and its comprehensive treatment of events.

A very understandable shortcoming given the age in which he lived, but one nonetheless that we should be mindful of. An example of this can be found when

Polybius describes the location of Zama, where Hannibal encamped shortly before the

battle took place:

> μετὰ δέ τινας ἡμέρας ἀναζεύξας ἐκ τῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἀδρύμητα τόπων
> προῆλθε καὶ κατεστρατοπέδευσε περὶ Ζάμαν· αὕτη δ᾽ ἐστὶ πόλις
> ἀπέχουσα Καρχηδόνος ὡς πρὸς τὰς δύσεις ὁδὸν ἡμερῶν πέντε.
>
> Polybius *Histories*, 15.5.3

> After a few days he shifted his camp from the neighborhood of
> Adrumentum and advancing encamped near Zama. This is a town
> lying five days' journey to the west of Carthage.

"Five days' journey to the west of Carthage" is a very vague description

regarding the location of a town, and it has made the task of determining the

battlefield's location considerably difficult, and to this day the only proof regarding

the location of Zama has been speculative at best.[9] For this reason, and for those

listed above, it would be prudent to consult a second primary source, and for this

purpose we shall now turn to Livy and his *Ab Urbe Condita*.

Analysis of Livy as a Historian

The first thing that should be noted about Livy is how different he is from

Polybius. Whereas Polybius had an extensive military background and was well-

versed in the affairs of politics, Livy was a scholar with minimal personal experience

in either.[10] This different background can be readily seen from the very different style

with which Livy writes compared to Polybius; whereas the latter is so focused on the

wholesale depiction of the truth that his style can sometimes suffer from it and

become rather dry and tedious in its analytical nature, Livy's focus upon writing

history as a means of entertaining and of portraying a moral to the events of the past

shows in his 'exuberant and abundant' style that frequently dramatizes the subject

matter.[11] And indeed, Livy himself states the following in the preface of *Ab Urbe*

Condita:

> ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quae vita, qui
> mores fuerint, per quos viros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et
> parturn et auctum imperium sit; labente deinde paulatim disciplina
> velut desidentis primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis
> magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites, donec ad haec
> tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus perventum
> est.
>
> <div align="right">Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 1.pr.9</div>

> To those things for me anyone should fiercely direct their attention,
> what life, what morals were; through these men and by these arts of
> home and military service the empire was brought forth and increased;
> then gradually by slipping the disciplines how morals first fell
> followed by the mind, then how they slipped more and more, then
> began to go headfirst until we arrived at these times in which we are
> able to suffer neither our vices nor the remedies.[12]

Unlike the objective-minded Polybius, Livy clearly has an agenda in writing the *Ab Urbe Condita*, and as will be demonstrated shortly, we must be vigilant for cases where his agenda could be harming the objectivity of his account.

This is not to say though that Livy completely distorts the truth or is not diligent enough in his research; indeed, reading through any of his books (XXI-XXX) on the Punic Wars makes it readily apparent that Livy frequently consulted Polybius' *Histories,* particularly when it came to describing how the battles played out. An excellent example of this, along with the difference between the two men's styles, can be found in the two authors' depictions of the cavalry engagement at Cannae:

> ἅμα δὲ τῷ τοὺς Ἴβηρας καὶ Κελτοὺς ἱππεῖς ἀπὸ τῶν εὐωνύμων
> πελάσαι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐποίουν οὗτοι μάχην ἀληθινὴν καὶ
> βαρβαρικήν· οὐ γὰρ ἦν κατὰ νόμους ἐξ ἀναστροφῆς καὶ μεταβολῆς ὁ
> κίνδυνος, ἀλλ᾽ εἰσάπαξ συμπεσόντες ἐμάχοντο συμπλεκόμενοι κατ᾽
> ἄνδρα, παρακαταβαίνοντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων. ἐπειδὴ δ᾽ ἐκράτησαν οἱ
> παρὰ τῶν Καρχηδονίων καὶ τοὺς μὲν πλείστους ἀπέκτειναν ἐν τῇ
> συμπλοκῇ, πάντων ἐκθύμως καὶ γενναίως διαγωνιζομένων τῶν
> Ῥωμαίων, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς ἤλαυνον παρὰ τὸν ποταμὸν φονεύοντες...
>
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 3.115.2-4</div>

But when the Spanish and Celtic horse on the left wing came into collision with the Roman cavalry, the struggle that ensued was truly barbaric; for there were none of the normal wheeling evolutions, but having once met they dismounted and fought man to man. The Carthaginians finally got the upper hand, killed most of the enemy in the melee, all the Romans fighting with desperate bravery, and began to drive the rest along the river, cutting them down mercilessly...

deinde equitum Gallorum Hispanorumque laevum cornu cum dextro Romano concurrit, minime equestris more pugnae: frontibus enim adversis concurrendum erat quia nullo circa ad evagandum relicto spatio hinc amnis hinc peditum acies claudebant. in derectum utrimque nitentes stantibus ac confertis postremo turba equis vir virum amplexus detrahebat equo. pedestre magna iam ex parte certamen factum erat; acrius tamen quam diutius pugnatum est, pulsique Romani equites terga vertunt.

<div align="right">Livy Ab Urbe Condita, 22.47.1-3</div>

Then the Gallic and Spanish horse which formed the left wing engaged with the Roman right in a combat very unlike a cavalry action. For they had to charge front to front, there being no room to move out round the flank, for the river shut them in on one side and the ranks of infantry on the other. Both parties pushed straight ahead, and as the horses came to a standstill, packed together in the throng, the riders began to grapple with their enemies and drag them from their seats. They were fighting on foot now, for the most part; but sharp though the struggle was, it was soon over, and the defeated Roman cavalry turned and fled.[13]

The details provided by each author match up almost perfectly, leaving little doubt that Livy used Polybius as his reference for this passage. The only difference between the two lies in their presentation. Whereas Polybius uses terse, military terminology ("νόμους ἐξ ἀναστροφῆς καὶ μεταβολῆς ὁ κίνδυνος", "εἰσάπαξ συμπεσόντες ἐμάχοντο συμπλεκόμενοι κατ᾽ ἄνδρα") when describing how the combat played out, Livy instead opts to present a more vivid and dramatic description of the fighting ("frontibus enim adversis concurrendum erat quia nullo circa ad evagandum relicto spatio", "equis vir virum amplexus detrahebat equo. Pedestre

magna iam ex parte certamen factum erat"). This divergence in style owing to

differences in background can be further seen when Livy chooses to insert a speech as

a substitute for Polybius' analysis of consul Gaius Flaminius' actions prior to the

Battle of Lake Trasimene:

> παρεκάλει δ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἐν νῷ λαμβάνειν τί λέγειν εἰκὸς τοὺς ἐν τῇ
> πατρίδι τῆς μὲν χώρας καταφθειρομένης σχεδὸν ἕως πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν
> Ῥώμην, αὐτῶν δὲ κατόπιν τῶν πολεμίων ἐν Τυρρηνίᾳ
> στρατοπεδευόντων.
>
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 3.82.6</div>

> Begging them to consider what would be said in Rome if, while the
> country was laid waste almost up to the walls, the army remained
> encamped in Etruria in the rear of the enemy.

> "immo Arreti ante moenia sedeamus" inquit; "hic enim patria et
> penates sunt. Hannibal emissus e manibus perpopuletur Italiam
> vastandoque et urendo omnia ad Romana moenia perveniat, nec ante
> nos hinc moverimus quam, sicut olim Camillum a Veis, C. Flaminium
> ab Arretio patres acciverint."
>
> <div align="right">Livy Ab Urbe Condita, 22.3.10</div>

> "Ay, truly! Let us sit still under the walls of Arretium, for here are our
> native city and our household gods; let Hannibal slip through our
> fingers and ravage Italy, and, laying waste and burning everything,
> march clear to Rome; and let us not move from this spot, till the
> Fathers, as once they summoned Camillus from Veii, shall summon
> Gaius Flaminius from Arretium."

The content is again extremely similar, leaving little doubt that Livy again used

Polybius as his source. But instead of presenting it in an analytical manner as

Polybius has, Livy chose to use his education in rhetoric to present a more

entertaining version of the story.

There are several instances however where there are discrepancies between

the actual content of Polybius and Livy. For many of these it is probable that Livy

may have chosen to use sources other than Polybius. But for others, it may be the case

that Livy purposefully chose to exaggerate or distort what Polybius had presented as fact. One of the more egregious examples of this can be found when Livy presents his own version of how Hannibal's Numidian cavalry participated at Cannae:

> segne primo et a Punica coeptum fraude. quingenti ferme Numidae, praeter solita arma telaque gladios occultos sub loricis habentes, specie transfugarum cum ab suis parmas post terga habentes adequitassent, repente ex equis desiliunt parmisque et iaculis ante pedes hostium proiectis in mediam aciem accepti ductique ad ultimos considere ab tergo iubentur. ac dum proelium ab omni parte conseritur, quieti manserunt; postquam omnium animos oculosque occupaverat certamen, tum arreptis scutis, quae passim inter acervos caesorum corporum strata erant, aversam adoriuntur Romanam aciem tergaque ferientes ac poplites caedentes stragem ingentem ac maiorem aliquanto pavorem ac tumultum fecerunt.
>
> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, 22.48.2-5

> It began with a Punic ruse. About five hundred Numidians, who, in addition to their customary arms and missiles, carried swords concealed under their corslets, pretended to desert. Riding over from their own side, with their bucklers at their backs, they suddenly dismounted and threw down bucklers and javelins at the feet of their enemies. Being received into the midst of their ranks they were conducted to the rear and ordered to fall in behind. And while the battle was getting under way at every point, they kept quite still; but no sooner were the minds and eyes of all absorbed in the struggle, than they snatched up the shields which lay strewn about everywhere amongst the heaps of slain, and assailing the Romans from behind and striking at their backs and hamstrings, effected a great slaughter and a terror and confusion that were even greater.

While Polybius does indeed include the Numidian attack on the rear of the Roman army, nowhere does he mention anything about it coming about due to a Carthaginian ruse. Instead, it simply occurs after the Roman cavalry wing has collapsed, and Hasdrubal leads the cavalry in an attack against the unprotected Roman infantry rearguard as part of Hannibal's entrapment plan.

Livy also occasionally differs from Polybius in what he presents as the causes for why an event played out in such a fashion. In his passage on the Battle of Lake

Trasimene, Polybius attributes the success of the Carthaginian ambush to Hannibal's

knowledge and exploitation of the vices of the Roman general Gaius Flaminius:

> προπέτειά γε μὴν καὶ θρασύτης καὶ θυμὸς ἄλογος, ἔτι δὲ κενοδοξία καὶ
> τῦφος εὐχείρωτα μὲν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, ἐπισφαλέστατα δὲ τοῖς φίλοις.
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 3.81.9</div>

> Rashness on the other hand on his part and undue boldness and blind
> anger, as well as vaingloriousness and conceit, are easy to be taken
> advantage of by his enemy and are most dangerous to his friends.

Livy also mentions the short temper and arrogance of Flaminius, but he makes no

mention of Hannibal's exploitation of said traits, instead drawing attention to a very

different set of consequences:

> consul ferox ab consulatu priore et non modo legum aut patrum
> maiestatis sed ne deorum quidem satis metuens.
> <div align="right">Livy Ab Urbe Condita, 22.3.4</div>

> The consul had been proud and headstrong since his former
> consulship, and lacked all proper reverence, not only for the laws and
> for the senate's majesty, but even for the gods.

Livy says that Flaminius' downfall was ultimately caused not by Hannibal

taking advantage of his impetuous nature, but rather his refusal to respect the will of

the gods. Livy demonstrates how the gods had shown their disfavor with the inclusion

of not one, but two evil omens prior to the battle: the collapse of Flaminius' own

horse beneath him, and the inability of the standard-bearer to lift the standard from

the ground.[14] Both of these Flaminius chooses to ignore, and he, along with most of

his army, perish in the subsequent battle. Livy is so determined to prove Flaminius'

irreverence as being responsible for the Roman defeat that he depicts Quintus Fabius

Maximus, the dictator who would soon experience great success against Hannibal and

a figure of respect to the Roman reader,[15] as coming to this conclusion following the

battle:

> ab dis orsus cum edocuisset patres plus neglegentia caerimoniarum auspiciorumque quam temeritate atque inscitia peccatum a C. Flaminio consule esse, quaeque piacula irae deum essent ipsos deos consulendos esse
>
> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita,* 22.9.7

> Taking up first the question of religion, he convinced the Fathers that the consul Flaminius had erred more through his neglect of the ceremonies and the auspices than through his recklessness and ignorance.

All of this is notably absent from Polybius' account, which leads us to conclude that this either came from an alternative source or was Livy's own invention. Even if the former is the case, the enthusiasm with which Livy latched on to the auspices is enough to make us suspicious of just how impartial Livy is. It is quite clear from examples such as this that he does have an agenda of glorifying traditional Roman virtues, and that this agenda does indeed affect the objectivity of his account.[16] Furthermore, as discussed previously, Polybius' personal experience in political and military matters combined with the extraordinary lengths he went to in conducting research make him far more qualified than Livy when discussing the intricacies of classical warfare.[17] Because of this, it is generally wiser to place more faith in the *Histories* than in the testimony of *Ab Urbe Condita*. But this is not to say that Livy is of no aid to us. At the very least, Livy provides us with a means of verifying the claims of Polybius through a second source. Furthermore, especially due to the fragmented nature of books V-XXXIX of the *Histories*, Livy often provides us with information that we could not find in Polybius' work. Even if much of this should not be taken at face value, it is pertinent nonetheless and should at least be taken into consideration.

Examination of Scipio's Invasion of North Africa

It is now time to turn our attention to the main task at hand: the examination and analysis of Scipio's and Hannibal's actions both leading up to and during the battle, as detailed in the accounts of Polybius and Livy. Please note that I have opted to disperse the review of scholarship throughout the next few sections of the paper rather than address it all at once. This is due to many of the sub-topics each having their own separate scholarly discussions, making it more convenient to address them as they come up. One other detail I must draw attention to before beginning is the critical distinction between 'tactics' and 'strategy' in military matters: 'tactics' generally refer to small-scale maneuvers that are carried out during a battle by units of soldiers with the intent of achieving a specific objective, whereas 'strategy' refers to the overall campaign plans by which a leader or faction hopes to accomplish certain goals.[18] An example of tactics would be a centurion ordering the legionaries under his command to rush through a gap in the Macedonian defensive line. An example of strategy would be Scipio choosing to stage an invasion of Carthaginian-controlled Spain in order to deny them much needed men and resources. With that resolved, I shall now begin my analysis in earnest.

> ὅτι πάντων εὐδαιμονιζόντων τὸν Πόπλιον μετὰ τὸ τοὺς Καρχηδονίους
> ἐξελάσαι τῆς Ἰβηρίας, καὶ παρακαλούντων ἀναπαύεσθαι καὶ ῥᾳθυμεῖν,
> ἐπεὶ πέρας ἐπιτέθεικε τῷ πολέμῳ, μακαρίζειν αὐτοὺς ἔφη διότι
> τοιαύτας ἔχουσι τὰς ἐλπίδας, αὐτὸς δὲ νῦν καὶ μάλιστα βουλεύεσθαι
> τίνα τρόπον ἄρξηται τοῦ πρὸς Καρχηδονίους πολέμου· τὸν μὲν γὰρ
> πρὸ τούτου χρόνον Καρχηδονίους Ῥωμαίοις πεπολεμηκέναι, νυνὶ δὲ
> τὴν τύχην παραδεδωκέναι καιρὸν εἰς τὸ Ῥωμαίους Καρχηδονίοις
> ἐξενεγκεῖν πόλεμον.
>
> Polybius *Histories*, 11.24a.1-3

> When everyone congratulated Scipio on having driven the
> Carthaginians out of Spain and entreated him to rest and take his ease,

as he had put an end to the war, he said he considered them happy in
having such hopes, but that for his own part now especially the time
had come when he had to consider how he should begin the war
against Carthage; for up to now the Carthaginians had been making
war on the Romans, but now chance had given the Romans the
opportunity of making war on the Carthaginians.

It was with these words in mind that Scipio set about raising an army for the

purpose of invading North Africa, and in the spring of 204 BC, a Roman fleet landed

on the North African coast just sixteen miles northeast of the city of Utica.[19] His

ultimate purpose? To threaten Carthage enough so as to draw Hannibal out of Italy

and back to Carthaginian soil where he could inflict a decisive defeat on him.[20] A

survivor of Cannae, Scipio knew what Hannibal was capable of, and realized that this

was the only way he could ensure the overall defeat of Carthage in the war.[21] Upon

landing, Scipio linked up with the Massylian prince Massinissa, whose allegiance he

had already secured prior to the invasion, and whose cavalry contributions would be

vital to the success of Scipio's campaign.[22]

After defeating a small Carthaginian cavalry contingent sent against him,

Scipio conquered the nearby Carthaginian town of Salaeca, and then proceeded to lay

siege to the port city of Utica where he had originally landed. But his siege was cut

short by the arrival of Carthaginian forces under the command of Hasdrubal and their

allied army of King Syphax's Numidians. Badly outnumbered and wary of being

caught between the city and the two armies, Scipio withdrew to a defensible

promontory just east of Utica and prepared to encamp for winter.[23] While there can be

little doubt that the original attempted siege of Utica was a strategic error, Scipio

recovers quickly and turns the situation to his advantage. After sending several

envoys to see if Syphax's allegiance to the Carthaginians can be swayed in the same

manner that Massinissa's was, Scipio takes note of a promising opportunity:

τῶν γὰρ διαπεμπομένων πρὸς τὸν Σόφακά τινες ἀνήγγειλαν αὐτῷ διότι συμβαίνει τοὺς μὲν Καρχηδονίους ἐκ παντοδαπῶν ξύλων καὶ φυλλάδος ἄνευ γῆς ἐν τῇ παραχειμασίᾳ κατεσκευακέναι τὰς σκηνάς, τῶν δὲ Νομάδων τοὺς μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ καλάμων, τοὺς δ᾽ ἐπισυναγομένους ἐκ τῶν πόλεων κατὰ τὸ παρὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς φυλλάδος σκηνοποιεῖσθαι, τοὺς μὲν ἐντός, τοὺς δὲ πλείους αὐτῶν ἐκτὸς τῆς τάφρου καὶ τοῦ χάρακος. νομίσας οὖν ὁ Πόπλιος παραδοξοτάτην μὲν τοῖς πολεμίοις, πραγματικωτάτην δὲ σφίσιν εἶναι τὴν διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐπιβολήν, ἐγένετο περὶ ταύτην τὴν κατασκευήν.

<div align="right">Polybius Histories, 14.1.6-8</div>

Some of his messengers to Syphax reported that the Carthaginians in their winter camp had made their huts from all kinds of wood and branches without any mixture of earth, that the first Numidians to arrive had constructed theirs with reeds, while the others who kept joining the army from the cities had used nothing but branches for the present, some of them being encamped inside but most outside the trench and palisade. Scipio, therefore, thinking that an attempt to fire the camp would be a complete surprise for the enemy and very serviceable to himself, began to take the necessary measures.

Scipio continued the talks for some more time, often sending in officers disguised as slaves with the envoys so as to gather intelligence on the enemy numbers and camp fortifications. And when the first signs of spring began to appear, Scipio enacted his plan. In order to properly catch the Numidians and Carthaginians off-guard, Scipio launched his fleet and stationed two thousand infantry on the hill where he had previously encamped during his siege of Utica, as if he were about to lay siege to the city once again.[24] This served the double purpose of protecting his camp against an attack by the garrison at Utica.[25] But once night fell, Scipio readied the rest of the army and divided it into two forces, one under Scipio's direct command and the other under Massinissa and Scipio's own cavalry commander, Laelius. Under the cover of darkness, Laelius' contingent set fire to the Numidian camp, causing the Carthaginians, under the false impression that the fire was accidental, to emerge from

theirs, only to be attacked by Scipio's troops. Although Hasdrubal and Syphax

managed to escape, most of their forces did not, and the operation was so successful

that Polybius offers the following analysis:

> διὸ καὶ τὸ γεγονὸς οὐδὲ καθ᾽ ὑπερβολὴν εἰκάσαι δυνατὸν οὐδενὶ τῶν
> ὄντων ἐστίν· οὕτως ὑπερπεπαίκει τῇ δεινότητι πάσας τὰς
> προειρημένας πράξεις. ᾗ καὶ πολλῶν καὶ καλῶν διειργασμένων
> Σκιπίωνι κάλλιστον εἶναί μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτο τοὖργον καὶ παραβολώτατον
> τῶν ἐκείνῳ πεπραγμένων.
>
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 14.5.14-15</div>

> So it is not possible to find any other disaster which even if
> exaggerated could be compared with this, so much did it exceed in
> horror all previous events. Therefore of all the brilliant exploits
> performed by Scipio this seems to me the most splendid and most
> adventurous.

And a disaster for the Carthaginians it most certainly was. With one daring

and decisive strike, Scipio had effectively crippled Carthaginian forces in North

Africa. Hasdrubal and Syphax would manage to round up and mobilize another army

to oppose Scipio later that same spring, but they were quickly confronted and routed

by Scipio and his legions at the Battle of the Great Plains. Syphax and Hasdrubal

again managed to escape, although Syphax's reprieve was only temporary as he was

pursued and subsequently captured by Laelius and Massinissa, thereby removing

Carthage's most powerful ally. With their army now thoroughly in ruins, the

Carthaginian senate convened for the purpose of determining how to salvage the

situation. They made three decisions: first, to fortify the city to the best of their ability

against an attack. Second, to send their fleet against Scipio's in an attempt to whittle

down his support. And the third decision would prove to be the most fateful:

> ἐπί τε τὸν Ἀννίβαν πέμπειν ἠξίουν καὶ μηδεμίαν ὑπερβολὴν
> ποιησαμένους ἐξελέγχειν καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐλπίδα.
>
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 14.9.8</div>

They also demanded that Hannibal should be summoned to return and that resource put to the test without any delay.

Hannibal was to return to North Africa. Scipio's campaign had completely succeeded in attaining its primary goal of removing the Carthaginian threat from Italy. The stage was set for a decisive confrontation between two of the greatest generals of their time.

Upon Hannibal's Return to North Africa

But it did not happen immediately. After the failure of their naval attack to inflict any substantial damage against Scipio's forces, the Carthaginian senate sued for peace, and Scipio agreed after imposing fairly heavy reparations.[26] This truce ultimately proved to be short-lived however when in the early spring of 202 BC fifty Carthaginian warships under the command of Hasdrubal captured a fleet of Roman transport ships that had been washed ashore due to a storm.[27] Attempts at reconciliation only exacerbated the situation when Scipio's envoys were led into a trap by the Carthaginians and barely escaped with their lives.[28] Livy states his belief that the Carthaginians never truly intended to uphold the treaty:

> ita dimissi Carthaginienses nullas recusandas condiciones pacis cum censuissent quippe qui moram temporis quaererent dum Hannibal in Africam traiceret.
>
> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.16.14

> Dismissed in such a way, the Carthaginians decreed that no conditions of peace should be refused, since surely they were seeking a delay of time while Hannibal crossed into Africa.[29]

And indeed, it hardly seems coincidental that the breaking of the truce happened to occur *after* Hannibal landed on the shores of North Africa at Hadrumentum.[30] Whatever the case, hostilities had been renewed between the two

nations, but Hannibal refused to move from his newly established base, opting instead to try and build up his army.[31] With his army diminished from the campaign in Italy, this was probably the soundest strategic move Hannibal could make in such circumstances.[32] Scipio, knowing that waiting only gave Hannibal more time to organize his army, decided that the moment had come, and sent a messenger to Massinissa (who had been consolidating power in his own kingdom) requesting that he bring whatever cavalry he could muster and rendezvous in the densely populated and rich Medjerda valley. Recognizing the importance of this valley to the Carthaginians due to their reliance on its supplies, Scipio began laying waste to the region, sacking town after town.[33] The ploy worked, and a panicked Carthaginian senate sent a delegation to Hannibal urging him to stop Scipio. Hannibal's initial response to the delegation was one of dismissal:

> ὁ δὲ διακούσας τοῖς μὲν παροῦσιν ἀπεκρίθη τἄλλα σκοπεῖν, περὶ δὲ τούτου ῥᾳθυμεῖν· διαλήψεσθαι γὰρ τὸν καιρὸν αὐτός.
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 15.5.2</div>

> After listening to the messengers he bade them in reply pay attention to other matters and be at their ease about this; for he himself would judge when it was time.

This refusal most likely stemmed from Hannibal believing that his army was not properly prepared for an engagement with Scipio. But just a few days later, Hannibal broke camp and prepared his army to march. Barry Strauss makes an interesting observation in his book, *Masters of Command*, that Hannibal may have missed an opportunity here because Massinissa's cavalry had yet to link up with Scipio's army. If Hannibal had moved quickly, he might have been able to engage Scipio before the latter got his much needed cavalry reinforcements. However,

Strauss also notes that there was no guarantee that Scipio would choose to meet

Hannibal in battle at such a time, and Hannibal would have had little means of forcing

him to do so.[34]

It was at this stage that Scipio was in almost total control. Hannibal had to

fight him on *his* terms, at a battlefield of *his* choosing. And when his forces caught

several Carthaginian spies attempting to gather intelligence on his location and forces,

Scipio chose to not only spare them but actually have a military tribune escort them

around camp, pointing out all of the important aspects of Scipio's army.[35] This seems

like a very questionable decision on Scipio's part until it is revealed that Massinissa's

forces did not arrive until the very next day, so therefore Hannibal was given false

information regarding how strong his enemy was.[36] However, Livy reports that

Massinissa and his forces had already arrived by the time the spies were caught, in

which case Scipio may have instead been attempting to lower Carthaginian morale by

demonstrating the superiority of his own army.[37] Regardless of the reason, this

prompted Hannibal, supposedly impressed by Scipio's magnanimity, to send word

that he wished to meet with the Roman general one-on-one. With Massinissa's forces

now reinforcing his own, this presented Scipio with an opportunity that he did not

squander:

> ἀνέζευξε, καὶ παραγενηθεὶς πρὸς πόλιν Ναράγαρα
> κατεστρατοπέδευσε, πρός τε τἆλλα τόπον εὐφυῆ καταλαβόμενος καὶ
> τὴν ὑδρείαν ἐντὸς βέλους ποιησάμενος. κἀντεῦθεν ἐξέπεμψε πρὸς τὸν
> τῶν Καρχηδονίων στρατηγόν, φάσκων ἕτοιμος εἶναι συμπορεύεσθαι
> πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς λόγους. ὧν ἀκούσας Ἀννίβας ἀνέζευξε, καὶ συνεγγίσας,
> ὥστε μὴ πλεῖον ἀπέχειν τριάκοντα σταδίων, κατεστρατοπέδευσε πρός
> τινα λόφον, ὃς τὰ μὲν λοιπὰ πρὸς τὸν παρόντα καιρὸν ὀρθῶς ἔχειν
> ἐδόκει, τὴν δ' ὑδρείαν ἀπωτέρω μικρὸν εἶχε· καὶ πολλὴν ταλαιπωρίαν
> ὑπέμενον οἱ στρατιῶται περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος,
>
> <div align="right">Polybius Histories, 15.5.14-6.2</div>

He then broke up his camp and on reaching a town called Naragara encamped there, selecting a spot which was favourably situated in other respects and had water within the throw of a javelin. From here he sent to the Carthaginian general saying that he was now ready for the meeting. When Hannibal heard this he broke up his camp and on getting within a distance of not more than thirty stades of the Romans encamped on a hill which appeared to be convenient for his present design, but was rather too far away from water, and indeed his men suffered considerable hardship owing to this.

Scipio had secured yet another advantage for himself, for a well hydrated man will generally perform better in battle than a dehydrated one. The meeting itself failed to achieve any reconciliation between the two factions, although whether either of them was expecting it to do so is doubtful, and so each general prepared his army for the battle that would take place the very next day.

The Battle of Zama Begins

ad hoc discrimen procedunt postero die duorum opulentissimorum populorum duo longe clarissimi duces, duo fortissimi exercitus, multa ante parta decora aut cumulaturi eo die aut euersuri.

Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.32.4

On the next day, to this battle advanced two of the most renowned leaders, and two of the strongest armies, of two of the wealthiest peoples, on that day either for the many distinctions acquired before to be heaped upon, or to wipe them clean.

Such was the scale of this battle. It is difficult to determine how many troops each general had since neither Polybius nor Livy offer any overall figures for this, but most scholars have come to the consensus that Hannibal's infantry outnumbered Scipio's by a fair margin (Lazenby provides an estimate of 36,000 to 29,000), while Scipio had a significant advantage in cavalry (Lazenby's estimates put these at 6,100 to Hannibal's 4,000).[38] Hannibal also had eighty of the dreaded war elephants at his disposal which were drawn up in front of his army.[39] The two armies had formed up

in fairly standard formation: each had divided their infantry into three battle lines, with Hannibal placing his mercenaries in the first row, his recently recruited Carthaginian levies in the second, and the battle-hardened veterans of his Italian campaign in the third row. Scipio meanwhile had, as was the usual custom of the Roman army prior to Gaius Marius' reforms, placed the younger and lesser experienced *hastati* in the first line, the more experienced and better-armed *principes* in the second line, and the veteran *triarii* in the final line. However, Scipio had deviated slightly from the typical formation in that the maniples of *principes* were stationed directly behind those of the *hastati*, rather than in between them, thereby forming neat battle lanes that extended throughout his entire army. Scipio then stationed his skirmishers, the *velites*, in the intervals between the *hastati* maniples, a curious tactic to be sure.[40] As for the cavalry, both generals separated them into two groups and placed one on each flank, with Scipio putting Massinissa's cavalry on the right flank, and Laelius' on the left. The battlefield that the two armies had assembled on had been chosen well by Scipio: flat plains, so that Massinissa and Laelius could exercise the Romans' superiority in cavalry unimpeded by any obstacles or rough terrain.

The beginning of the battle quickly revealed why Scipio had arranged his infantry in such an unusual manner:

> τεροι. ἐπειδὴ δ᾽ ἑκατέροις ἦν εὐτρεπῆ τὰ πρὸς τὸν κίνδυνον, πάλαι
> τῶν Νομαδικῶν ἱππέων πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀκροβολιζομένων, τότε
> παρήγγειλε τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἐλεφάντων Ἀννίβας ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἔφοδον ἐπὶ
> τοὺς ὑπεναντίους. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ συμπεσόντα τοῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων
> γροσφομάχοις ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ χωρίῳ τῶν παρατάξεων πολλὰ μὲν ἔπασχε
> κακά, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἐποίει τοὺς ὑπεναντίους, ἕως ὅτου πεφοβημένα τὰ μὲν
> διὰ τῶν διαστημάτων ἐξέπεσε, δεξαμένων αὐτὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων
> ἀσφαλῶς κατὰ τὴν τοῦ στρατηγοῦ πρόνοιαν, τὰ δ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ δεξιὸν μέρος

παραφυγόντα διὰ τῶν ἱππέων συνακοντιζόμενα τέλος εἰς τὸν ἔξω τόπον τῶν στρατοπέδων ἐξέπεσεν...

Polybius *Histories*, 15.12.1-4

When all was ready for battle on both sides, the Numidian horse having been skirmishing with each other for some time, Hannibal ordered the drivers of the elephants to charge the enemy. When the trumpets and bugles sounded shrilly from all sides, some of the animals took fright and at once turned tail and rushed back upon the Numidians who had come up to help the Carthaginians, and Massanissa attacking simultaneously, the Carthaginian left wing was soon left exposed. The rest of the elephants falling on the Roman *velites* in the space between the two main armies, both inflicted and suffered much loss, until finally in their terror some of them escaped through the gaps in the Roman line which Scipio's foresight had provided, so that the Romans suffered no injury, while others fled towards the right and, received by the cavalry with showers of javelins, at length escaped out of the field.

The majority of the forces on each side had yet to engage, and already Scipio had turned the battle in his favor by not only neutralizing Hannibal's war elephants with minimal loss to his own troops, but also with his cavalry taking advantage of the panic caused by the elephants running amok to catch the opposing cavalry off-guard. Laelius followed shortly after Massinissa, and together they easily routed the Carthaginian cavalry on both flanks. Whether or not the flight of his cavalry was intentional on Hannibal's part is a point of contention among scholars, and one which we will return to shortly. Regardless of whether it was feigned or not, the retreat of the Carthaginian cavalry took Scipio's cavalry out of the battle for the time being due to their pursuit. All that was left on both sides were the infantry, and this was where the hardest fighting of the battle would take place. Both armies advanced upon each other, and when the two front lines had drawn near the other, the *hastati* charged Hannibal's mercenaries. Here is where discrepancies between Livy's and Polybius' accounts emerge; Livy states that:

> Igitur primo impetu extemplo movere loco hostium aciem Romani.
> <div align="right">Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.3</div>

> Therefore immediately upon the first attack the Romans moved the
> battle line of enemies from that place.

Nor do the second line of Carthaginian levies fare much better against the Romans in Livy's account. Polybius on the other hand depicts the *hastati* as encountering more resistance:

> πάσης δ᾽ οὔσης ἐκ χειρὸς καὶ κατ᾽ ἄνδρα τῆς μάχης [διὰ τὸ μὴ δόρασι
> μηδὲ ξίφεσι χρῆσθαι τοὺς ἀγωνιζομένους], τῇ μὲν εὐχερείᾳ καὶ τόλμῃ
> προεῖχον οἱ μισθοφόροι τὰς ἀρχάς, καὶ πολλοὺς κατετραυμάτιζον τῶν
> Ῥωμαίων, τῷ δὲ τῆς συντάξεως ἀκριβεῖ καὶ τῷ καθοπλισμῷ
> πιστεύοντες οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι μᾶλλον ἐπέβαινον εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν.
> <div align="right">Polybius *Histories*, 15.13.1-2</div>

> As the whole battle was a hand-to-hand affair the men using not spears
> but swords, the mercenaries at first prevailed by their courage and
> skill, wounding many of the Romans, but the latter still continued to
> advance, relying on their admirable order and on the superiority of
> their arms.

As discussed earlier, Livy's openly pro-Roman bias makes him the less reliable source here, but even so it should be noted that even in Polybius' version the casualties suffered by the Romans against the mercenaries, and subsequently against the levies, could not have been all that heavy due to Polybius' after battle report of the Romans suffering 1,500 dead, especially since the majority of these casualties would undoubtedly have occurred when they went up against Hannibal's veterans. Although the specifics of the enemy's resistance differ between the two, both Polybius and Livy agree that Hannibal's mercenaries soon give way and are prevented from withdrawing into the ranks of the Carthaginian levies in the second line, and the levies supposedly end up having to fight both the mercenaries and the advancing Roman *hastati*, inflicting some damage upon both before also retreating. And just like the

mercenaries, they are not admitted into the final line of Hannibal's veterans, and the survivors of both the first and second lines are forced to go around while being fought and pursued by the *hastati*, who actually break rank during their engagement with and subsequent pursuit of the levies, forcing the officers of the *principes* to initially advance their own troops and restore the order of the Roman first line.[41]

Now all that remained of Hannibal's army were his veterans, the men who had fought with him through thick and thin in Italy, and with whom he now stood ready to face the legionaries' assault. The fighting did not start between the two immediately; Hannibal, perhaps noting the difficulty that Scipio's troops would have in crossing a battlefield that was now covered with corpses and abandoned weapons, held his position, waiting for Scipio to make his move.[42] And Scipio for his part chose not to press the attack immediately, instead giving his exhausted front line a much needed break and then reforming the entire army up into one row, with the *principes* and the *triarii* on the wings and the *hastati* in the center.[43] With this carried out, the final stage of the battle began:

> ὄντων δὲ καὶ τῷ πλήθει καὶ τοῖς φρονήμασι καὶ ταῖς ἀρεταῖς καὶ τοῖς καθοπλισμοῖς παραπλησίων ἀμφοτέρων, ἄκριτον ἐπὶ πολὺ συνέβαινε γενέσθαι τὴν μάχην, ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς χώραις ἐναποθνησκόντων τῶν ἀνδρῶν διὰ φιλοτιμίαν, ἕως οἱ περὶ τὸν Μασαννάσαν καὶ Λαίλιον ἀπὸ τοῦ διώγματος τῶν ἱππέων ἀνακάμπτοντες [καὶ] δαιμονίως εἰς δέοντα καιρὸν συνῆψαν. ὧν προσπεσόντων τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἀννίβαν κατόπιν οἱ μὲν πλεῖστοι κατεκόπησαν ἐν τῇ τάξει, τῶν δὲ πρὸς φυγὴν ὁρμησάντων ὀλίγοι μὲν τελέως διέφυγον, ἅτε τῶν ἱππέων ἐν χερσὶν ὄντων καὶ τῶν τόπων ἐπιπέδων ὑπαρχόντων.
>
> Polybius *Histories*, 15.14.6-9

> As they were nearly equal in numbers as well as in spirit and bravery, and were equally well armed, the contest was for long doubtful, the men falling where they stood out of determination, and Massanissa and Laelius, returning from the pursuit of the cavalry, arrived providentially at the proper moment. When they fell on Hannibal's

army from the rear, most of the men were cut down in their ranks, while of those who took to flight only quite a few escaped, as the cavalry were close on them and the country was level.

And so ended the Battle of Zama. Hannibal managed to escape, but the defeat was so disastrous that when he came to the senate house at Carthage, he advised the senators to accept the treaty that the Romans proposed. The senators offered no opposition, and immediately sent envoys with orders to accept the terms at once.[44] Scipio, now known as Scipio Africanus, had succeeded in defeating the most formidable general of the age and bringing the greatest threat to Roman power to its knees.

Review of Scholarship

But what was ultimately responsible for Hannibal's defeat? What prevented him from repeating his extraordinary victories from the beginning of the war? Polybius and Livy (whose conclusion was most likely drawn from Polybius' due to their striking similarities) are largely unhelpful on this matter. Both reiterate Hannibal's overall battle plan, drawing attention to his infantry tactics of letting the first two lines weary the legionaries so that by the time they got to Hannibal's fresh veterans they would be fatigued and their swords dulled.[45] And both conclude that Hannibal had taken every possible measure to secure victory:

> εἰ δὲ πάντα τὰ δυνατὰ ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ νικᾶν ἐσφάλη τὸν πρὸ τούτου χρόνον ἀήττητος ὤν, συγγνώμην δοτέον: ἔστι μὲν γὰρ ὅτε καὶ ταὐτόματον ἀντέπραξε ταῖς ἐπιβολαῖς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν, ἔστι δ᾽ ὅτε πάλιν κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν.
>
> Polybius *Histories,* 15.16.5-6

> If he, who had never as yet suffered defeat, after taking every possible step to insure victory, yet failed to do so, we must pardon him. For there are times when Fortune counteracts the plans of valiant men, and again at times, as the proverb says, "A brave man meets another braver

yet," as we may say happened in the case of Hannibal. They fail to specify anything beyond the battle though, and one cannot help but wonder if, especially in Livy's case, they were extolling Hannibal's tactical prowess for the purpose of making Scipio's victory over him seem all the more magnificent.

Modern scholars meanwhile are divided on this. The two most predominant schools of thought are: 1) That Hannibal's loss had little to do with mistakes on his part. The forces arrayed against him were simply too strong for what he had been given. 2) Scipio proved to be the better general on the strategic level, outmaneuvering Hannibal and gaining the advantage over him well before the battle even began.

For those who subscribe to the first theory, the chief examples being J.F. Lazenby, Harold Lamb, Theodor Mommsen, and Hans Delbruck, their most commonly cited shortcoming of Hannibal's forces are his cavalry, which I had mentioned earlier as being a point of contention.[46] These scholars maintain that Scipio simply had too strong an advantage in his cavalrymen, especially due to their numerical superiority. With Hannibal at such a disadvantage in horsemen, it is unsurprising that the cavalry engagement played out as it did. And with Scipio's veteran legionaries ultimately proving capable of matching even Hannibal's best infantrymen, this superiority in cavalry gave Scipio all he needed to prove victorious in the ensuing battle. Several authors, including those who aren't full advocates of this theory such as Gabriel and Lancel, note that the routing of his cavalry and their pursuit by the Romans may have been fully intentional on Hannibal's part, suggesting that he was fully aware of his weakness in cavalry and by having them retreat and draw away their Roman counterparts, he could perhaps gain the advantage with his

greater numbers of infantry and the presence of his veterans from the Italy

campaign.[47]

Lazenby points out however that this is purely conjecture, and that even if this

were his plan, it involved a great deal of risk in assuming either that the Roman

cavalry would not then turn on his infantry's flanks or that they would not return in

time to attack his rear. Regardless of how he handled his weakness in cavalry, the

proponents of this school of thought place special emphasis on how lopsided the two

factions' cavalry forces were, with Lazenby, Lamb, and Delbruck even going so far as

to claim that the battle might have gone very differently if Scipio did not have his

advantage in cavalry.[48] Lazenby and Strauss have also stated that they believe

Hannibal to have had a disadvantage in his infantry as well, due to his veterans being

lesser in number than the veteran legionaries of Scipio, and especially since a third of

Hannibal's infantry were nothing more than levies.[49]

Lazenby in particular takes this even further by offering several paragraphs of

reasons why Scipio was no better a general than Hannibal in the end, going so far as

to use the following sentence at one point: "As strategists, too, both men were clear-

sighted and bold, but it is **astonishing** that anyone should rate Scipio higher in this

respect, for although the strategy in Spain was skillful and successful, the problems

he had to face were **nothing** compared to the problems Hannibal had to face in

Italy."[50] While some of Lazenby's arguments are fairly sound, others are quite

speculative, and his choice of vocabulary in the above quote leads me to question

how neutral he is on the subject, especially since he continues to use similar

vocabulary in the subsequent passages.[51] I will provide my own counter-arguments to

this shortly.

Those who subscribe to the second theory, the chief proponents here being James Lacey (along with co-author Williamson Murray), Victor Davis Hanson, Barry Strauss, and Richard Gabriel, most commonly refer to the battle's prelude, and how Scipio effectively determined where and when the battle would take place, in a very similar manner to how Hannibal forced the Romans to fight on battlefields of his choosing during his rampage through Italy several years prior. And indeed, there can be little doubt that the younger Scipio learned his strategy in maneuvering of the army from the very man he was destined to face on the plains before Zama. But whereas Hannibal had achieved very little strategic success in Italy even after the greatest of his victories at Cannae, Scipio achieved remarkable results, excelling not only in using maneuvering to his advantage, but also political intrigue.[52] He had shown this in Spain, and he showed it again in North Africa through his siege of Utica, the defeat of the Carthaginian and Numidian armies that were sent to relieve it, and how he handled the Carthaginians suing for peace.[53]

This strategic prowess is further demonstrated in his attacking the valley of Medjerda, which caused a panicked Carthaginian senate to place pressure on Hannibal to defeat Scipio quickly and decisively.[54] In addition to forcing Hannibal to fight on Scipio's terms, this move also denied Hannibal the time he needed to recruit and sufficiently train the army that would be going up against Scipio's experienced and disciplined legionaries.[55] In this manner, proponents of this school of thought are arguing that the previous theory (i.e. that Hannibal lost due to a shortage of reliable troops and therefore the loss had little to do with Scipio being the better general) is

moot since Scipio was actually already responsible for Hannibal's disadvantage in troops.

Furthermore, the choice of location had left Hannibal more than eighty miles away from his original base, and on open terrain no less.[56] This meant that there could be absolutely no retreat for Hannibal's forces, since Scipio's cavalry, with no rough terrain to hinder the horses, could easily run them down should they try to flee. In this way, Scipio had all but ensured not only a tactical defeat of Hannibal's army, but also a strategic defeat of Carthage in general, since it would be left with no armed forces to resist the victorious Romans.[57] Hence, according to this theory, while Hannibal ultimately lost the battle because the odds were so heavily stacked against him, the only reason they were so heavily in Scipio's favor was because Scipio himself had already made them that way through his careful planning and intrigue, leaving the Carthaginian army with so little a chance at victory that, as Strauss puts it, "Hannibal should have known, even if his countrymen did not, that he could not pull off a miracle."[58] It is to this second school of thought that I subscribe, for all of the reasons listed above, and along with my own arguments that Hannibal made mistakes, both strategic and tactical, that he could not afford to make given his position.

My Thoughts on the Causes of the Battle's Outcome

My argument will be made in the context of addressing the points made by Lazenby, whom I consider to be the staunchest proponent of the first theory. As I mentioned earlier, Lazenby stated in *Hannibal's War* that he was in disbelief that anyone could rate Scipio higher than Hannibal as a strategist, calling Scipio's invasion of North Africa "obvious and pedestrian" compared to the "breathtaking boldness"

with which Hannibal invaded Italy.[59] He continues by stating that one should not judge each of these campaigns solely based on how well they achieved their ultimate goals, but rather in how much they accomplished proportional to the amount of resources at their disposal.[60] It is certainly true that Hannibal's invasion of Italy through the Alps was utterly impressive, and that by comparison Scipio's amphibious invasion is hardly outstanding. It is also quite true that the amount of opposition Hannibal faced in Italy was far stronger than anything Scipio faced in either Spain or Africa, due not only to the greater manpower that Rome had at its disposal, but also because the legionaries he was fighting against were the world's deadliest infantry.[61] In light of this, it can be said that Scipio's victories prior to Zama pale in comparison to the magnificence of Hannibal's victories, particularly at Cannae.

But my response to this is to point out that these are testaments to Hannibal's tactical genius, not his strategic genius. Each of his victories, while brilliant in and of themselves, ultimately had little to no strategic effect on Rome's capabilities. Even after the catastrophic losses suffered at Cannae, Rome had legions retrained and ready to fight in no more than a year following the battle.[62] For all of its "breathtaking boldness," Hannibal's campaign in Italy accomplished nothing more than killing a lot of Roman soldiers (along with their Italian allies). And yet, despite the obvious overall failure of his campaign, he persisted at this for nearly two decades, with steadily diminishing returns.[63] Contrast this to Scipio's campaigns in both Spain and Africa, in which every one of his victories brought him steadily closer to achieving his ultimate goal: the surrender of Carthage.[64]

And then of course there is Hannibal's involvement, or almost complete lack

thereof, in preventing Scipio's African campaign from gaining any ground. Scipio's

invasion of Africa was in no way a surprise to the Carthaginians. Indeed, they were so

aware of his designs that while he was assembling an invasion force in Sicily, the

Carthaginian senate sent envoys to entice King Philip V of Macedon to stage an

invasion of either Sicily or Italy, promising great compensation were he to do so.[65]

They also sent Carthaginian reinforcements under the command of Mago to Italy for

the purpose of tying down some of Rome's legions in Italy, thereby preventing them

from aiding in the invasion. And during all this time, Hannibal accomplished nothing

of strategic importance other than posing a small threat to Italy. As shown earlier, he

would not make any effort to stop Scipio's advance until the Carthaginian senate's

delegation arrived in Italy and demanded that he return at once to North Africa.

Lazenby is quick to undermine Scipio's victory by noting the inferior quality of the

majority of Hannibal's troops, particularly the hastily raised levies,[66] but he fails to

note that these were all that were left of Carthage's military forces because Scipio had

already destroyed everything else. Had Hannibal arrived earlier, he might have been

able to take command of Hasdrubal's army and stand a better chance at defeating

Scipio, especially since at that stage the Romans would have been pinned down at

Utica. By choosing to ignore Scipio's invasion in favor of maintaining his fruitless

Italian campaign, Hannibal ultimately left himself with little means of defeating

Scipio.

Furthermore, I am not at all convinced that Hannibal's tactical performance at

Zama was any better than Scipio's, as Lazenby and Lamb implied through their

assertion that the battle might have gone very differently if Hannibal did not have

such a disadvantage in cavalry numbers or troop quality overall.[67] This is not to say that Hannibal's tactics in the battle were poor; given the disadvantage Scipio had placed him in, he and his army acquitted themselves quite well. But it is my belief that whatever chance Hannibal's tactics had at being called superior to Scipio's was ruined by the fiasco that was his elephant charge, and more significantly his inaction when an opportunity presented itself at a crucial moment in the battle.

I find it, at the very least, to be surprising that none of the authors on Zama offered anything more than a cursory overview of the elephant charge. If we are to take Polybius' word for it, the attack did not just fail to inflict any actual damage upon the Roman forces (Polybius stated that some of the *velites* suffered losses from the elephants, but it should be noted that we do not see any more references to these skirmishers for the duration of the battle, thereby implying that the part they played afterward, if any, had little to no effect on the battle's outcome); it actually proved to be a liability to Hannibal's army since some of the elephants ran amok and subsequently created a panic among the Carthaginian cavalry.[68] This proved to be disastrous, since the outnumbered Carthaginian cavalry were put at an even greater disadvantage by Laelius and Massinissa catching them off-guard and unprepared due to their panic.[69] Hannibal needed them to hold off Scipio's cavalry for as long as they were able (as proven by their return instantly turning the infantry stalemate into a crushing Roman victory), and the failure of the elephants cost him precious time in this regard. One could argue that the elephants were not properly trained and therefore Hannibal was not at fault for this; but this too I am unable to credit, since it not only recalls the argument that Hannibal's overall lack of preparedness for the

battle was ultimately Scipio's doing, but also because Hannibal should have recognized the risks involved in using untrained war elephants, and therefore he is responsible for all of the consequences. Perhaps this was Hannibal recognizing that he was at a disadvantage in this battle, and he was willing to take the risk if it could potentially give him the edge he needed. But I doubt this is the case, mainly because most of Hannibal's decisions were made based on caution rather than on risk-taking, as I shall demonstrate in this next argument.

Recall, if you will, the interlude between the Roman routing of the second infantry line of Hannibal's army and the melee battle between Hannibal's veterans and Scipio's remaining legionaries. At this moment, much of Scipio's army (primarily his *hastati* and some of his *principes*) was exhausted from having to cut through the Carthaginian mercenaries and levies, and has just had to reform after the ranks of the *hastati* were temporarily broken.[70] Meanwhile, Hannibal's veteran infantrymen are completely fresh and ready for battle. Rather than pressing the attack, Scipio chooses to hold position temporarily while his men convey the wounded to the rear and then reform their entire battle line.[71] Hannibal does the same, choosing to stand his ground rather than march across the corpse-ridden ground. This I believe was a tactical misstep on his part.

Consider the circumstances: Scipio's army is in the process of reorganizing, and a large portion of his men are already battle fatigued and therefore not in the best condition to fight. And while Scipio's disciplined legionaries would have been able to form very quickly to receive the attack, they most likely would not have been in an ideal position to withstand the assault.[72] It is entirely possible though that Hannibal's

ranks would have broken up too much passing over the fallen and their scattered weapons, and this would have given Scipio the opportunity to repeat his favored tactic of enveloping the enemy with his *principes* and *triarii*.[73] A risk to be sure, and one that could have proven disastrous, so perhaps Hannibal had wisely decided to let Scipio make the risky move of advancing.

But these are the actions of a general who has time on his side and does not have to worry about any external factors other than the army that is currently facing him. And this was not at all the case for Hannibal and his army. For somewhere out on the plains near the battlefield were the cavalrymen of Massinissa and Laelius, and it was only a matter of time before they decided to stop their pursuit of the Carthaginian horsemen and return to the main battle. And as history has demonstrated, their arrival would herald the doom of Carthage should Hannibal's veterans still be locked in combat with Scipio's legionaries. It was nothing short of folly for the Carthaginians and their general to play the waiting game (and serves as additional evidence that Hannibal's tactics were in no way superior to Scipio's), for of all the great military commanders in history, few were more aware of what a well-placed and well-timed cavalry attack could do to an army than Hannibal Barca.[74]

Conclusion

It is on account of these reasons that I have come to the conclusion that Hannibal lost to Scipio Africanus at the Battle of Zama because he not only proved to be incapable of countering Scipio's superb strategy leading up to the confrontation, but also failed to outplay Scipio on a tactical level. While it is debatable whether or not there was anything he could have done to ultimately prevent Scipio's strategy,

what I believe is not debatable is that he did not even try to until it was already too

late. He failed to learn from the failure of his strategic goals in Italy, and this

ultimately led not only to his eventual defeat, but also to the ultimate destruction of

Carthage half a century later, thereby ensuring the rise of Rome to dominion of the

Mediterranean.

1 James Lacey and Williamson Murray, *Moment of Battle: The Twenty Clashes that Changed the World,* (New York: Bantam Books, 2013) 63.
2 Lacey and Murray, *Moment of Battle*, 62.
3 H. L. Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius: Their Style and Methods of Historical Composition," 1907: 26.
4 All Polybius translations by W. R. Paton.
5 Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius," 26; R. J. H. Shutt, ("Polybius: A Sketch," 1938): 52. Shutt gives the details regarding how Polybius knew Scipio Aemilianus.
6 Ebeling, ("Livy and Polybius," 27) also lists Italy, Spain, Gaul, Africa and even some unspecified locations in the East as regions that Polybius visited during his lifetime.
7 Polybius (*The Histories*, 28.6.8-9) himself is our source for this, and interestingly enough he refers to himself in the third person when he declares that he was once Hipparchus.
8 Shutt, "Polybius," 52.
9 Serge Lancel, *Hannibal*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 173-174. Lancel offers possible locations for both the site of Hannibal's camp near the city of Zama, for which the battle is named, and the site of Scipio's camp, going by the name of Naraggara. Lancel states that neither of the locations have been ascertained with any true confidence, though he considers the site of 'Jama' to be the most probable candidate. See Desanges (1980: 322-323) for more details on this particular site. Richard A. Gabriel (*Scipio Africanus: Rome's Greatest General*, Washington D.C: Potomac Books, 2008: 181) provides a superb map detailing the movements of Scipio's and Hannibal's armies in North Africa from Utica up to Zama, including his rough estimates of where Naraggara and Zama are located.
10 Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius," 26.
11 Shutt, "Polybius," 55; R. B. Steele, "Livy," *The Sewanee Review* 15, no. 4 (October 1907): 431; Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius," 26.
12 My own translation.
13 All Livy XXI-XXII translations by B. O. Foster.
14 Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, 22.3.11-12
15 Polybius, *Histories*, 3.89-90
16 Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius," 26; Steele, "Livy," 430, 443.
17 Refer to endnotes 4-6.
18 These are my own definitions.
19 Gabriel, *Scipio,* 154, 156.
20 B.H. Liddel Hart, *Strategy: The Classic Book on Military Strategy,* (New York: Meridian, 1991), 31.
21 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 140-141; Barry S. Strauss, *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership*, (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2013), 129. Gabriel in particular offers excellent information on more of the reasoning behind why Scipio chose not to battle Hannibal in Italy, stemming mainly from Scipio's realization that a victory on Italian soil, even if it did come with the defeat of the mighty Hannibal, would not put an end to the threat that Carthage posed.
22 Lancel, *Hannibal*, 159, 165. Consult 159 specifically regarding details as to how Massinissa came to be in the service of Scipio.
23 Lancel, *Hannibal*, 165.
24 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 164; John F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1978), 208. Both Gabriel and Lazenby note that this deception was carried even for Scipio's own soldiers, with only the officers possessing knowledge of the actual plan Scipio intended to execute.
25 Lancel, *Hannibal*, 167.
26 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 213.
27 Lancel, *Hannibal*, 172.
28 Polybius, *Histories*, 15.2
29 All translations from Livy XXX are my own.
30 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 215. Lancel, *Hannibal,* 171
31 Lancel *Hannibal,* 173; Harold Lamb, *Hannibal: One Man Against Rome,* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), 242.
32 This should not however be used as evidence of Hannibal being an excellent strategist, since

Hannibal is directly responsible for the circumstances being so dire (refer to pages 32 and 33 of this thesis for the full analysis of why this was the case).

33 Hart, *Strategy,* 32. Hart notes that this further helped Scipio because it took him in the direction of Massinissa's reinforcements.

34 Strauss, *Masters of Command*, 213; Gabriel, *Scipio*, 178. Strauss attributes mostly to Hannibal having no means of forcing Scipio into battle. Gabriel meanwhile notes that even if the situation took a turn for the worse, Scipio could always have fallen back to the towns he had captured along the Bagradas river the previous river, providing him with an effective means of defense even without Massinissa's cavalry at his disposal.

35 Polybius *Histories*, 15.5.4-7

36 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 182.

37 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 182-183. I am once again inclined to go with Polybius' version of the story. Livy most likely deviated from Polybius here because it made Scipio seem more honorable (in that he wasn't attempting to trick Hannibal with the size of his army), and therefore an example of the virtuous men of old times that Livy is so focused upon portraying in his history.

38 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 220-221. Lazenby provides the most detailed description of troop numbers and types, as pieced together from Polybius and Appian. Gabriel (*Scipio,* 184) offers a larger number of Carthaginian infantry because he believes the mercenaries would have been of greater number, judging from the numbers of that Mago had at his disposal in Italy and the casualties he suffered. This number is also higher because he includes the 4,000 Macedonian phalangites that appear in Livy's account (*Ab Urbe Condita,* 30.26.3, 30.26.33), and as Lancel (*Hannibal,* 175) notes, this should be called into question due to their very notable absence in Polybius. I have chosen to go with Lazenby's numbers though because his numbers are more grounded in fact than speculation, and also because they are the same that Strauss (*Masters of Command*, 213) provides. Other authors, such as Lamb, Lacey, and Murray, offer only vague numbers for the troops.

39 Lacey and Murray, *Moment of Battle*, 58.

40 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, p. 221

41 Polybius (15.13.5-8) is not entirely clear on why this confusion occurs. It is most likely the result of the *hastati* not expecting the levies to fight with such remarkable courage (15.13.6), and were therefore temporarily pushed back, although Polybius also mentions the chaotic nature of the three-way fight between mercenaries, Romans, and Carthaginians, so this could also be attributed to the confusion. Livy (30.34.10-12) claims though that confusion did not occur until after both the mercenaries and levies had been routed. The reasons he provides are the enthusiasm of the *hastati* in chasing those fleeing and the difficulty in maintaining formation due to the sheer number of bodies on the battlefield. Gabriel (*Scipio*, 194) depicts both Polbyius and Livy's accounts as being true to the battle, and Polybius does indeed later refer to Scipio having to recall the *hastati* before engaging the final line (15.14.3) of Hannibal's army, so it is reasonable to assume that such was the case. Both of these proved to be minor setbacks which Scipio recovered from quickly.

42 Polbyius, *Histories*, 15.14.1-2

43 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.11

44 Polybius, *Histories*, 15.19.7-8

45 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.35.7-9; Polybius, *Histories*, 15.16.3-4.

46 Hans Delbruck, *Warfare in Antiquity, Volume I*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome, Volume 2*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1862).
It is worth mentioning though that while Delbruck does very much subscribe to this first school of thought (as can be seen in endnote 47), he does offer far more praise of Scipio's abilities as a tactician (373-374) and as a strategist (383) than Lamb and Lazenby do. Mommsen on the other hand is very objective on the matter, offering little in the way personal opinion. He does nonetheless belong to this first school of thought though because the superiority in Scipio's cavalry is the only thing to which he attributes the Roman victory (187).

47 Gabriel, *Scipio,* 188; Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 223; Strauss, *Masters of Command,* 217; Lancel, *Hannibal,* 175; Delbruck (*Warfare in Antiquity,* 371). Gabriel is confident that this was Hannibal's plan, draws attention to Hannibal's alleged awareness of Scipio's cavalry lacking the discipline of

the legionaries, and therefore being more susceptible to falling for a feigned retreat and pursuing their foe for far too long. Delbruck draws attention to how difficult it was in classical warfare to ensure that a cavalry force, upon successfully routing the enemy cavalry, would turn about and attack the infantry, and cites several battles where victorious cavalrymen never actually returned to help out their infantry. Delbruck also declares that the ease with which Scipio's cavalry defeated Hannibal's is significant proof that Hannibal did indeed plan to lure off the Romans with the flight of his own cavalry. Strauss and Lancel are not nearly so confident though, and state only that it was possible Hannibal had planned this out ahead of time.

48 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War* 226; Lamb, *One Man,* 250; Delbruck *Warfare in Antiquity,* 374; Delbruck states that "it appears that they [the Roman infantry] were very close to succumbing when the Roman cavalry returned…" This is inference on his part, as Polybius' wording does not state anywhere that it was specifically the Roman line that was about to collapse (*Histories*, 15.14.6-7).

49 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 226; Strauss, *Masters of Command,* 216. Note that Strauss is not a member of this school of thought, but in this particular case he does reinforce Lazenby's assertions.

50 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 226. Please note that the placing of **'astonishing'** and **'nothing'** in bold is my own doing so that I could more easily draw attention to Lazenby's choice of vocabulary.

51 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 226.

52 Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power,* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 111; William Weir, *50 Battles that Changed the World,* (Pomptom Plains: The Career Press, 2005), 134. Hanson does also draw attention to Rome's incredible ability to fight on and recuperate from its losses as reasons for Hannibal's lack of accomplishing any strategic goals after Cannae. This is of course something Hannibal should have realized and accounted for, but no evidence is shown for this. Weir meanwhile focuses less on Hannibal's strategic failures and more on Scipio's great success in political intrigue, specifically through gaining allies such as Massinissa.

53 Lacey and Murray, *Moment of Battle,* 50-53.

54 Hart, *Strategy,* 32.

55 Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 179. Gabriel states that Hannibal's levies and elephants were most likely insufficiently trained.

56 Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 182-183.

57 Hart, *Strategy,* 33.

58 Strauss, *Masters of Command,* 212.

59 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 226.

60 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 227. Lazenby states "Nothing, finally that Scipio ever did can compare with Hannibal's ability to maintain himself in a hostile land for fifteen years, faced with overwhelming resources in manpower…" He even goes on to compare Hannibal to Napoleon, stating that Napoleon would have had to carry the war out into 1820 in order to compare with Hannibal's measure of success.

61 Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 110, 115. Hanson notes that Hannibal was well aware of the legionaries' reputation as being the finest soldiers in the ancient world, and that shattering the myth of Roman military invincibility by defeating the legions in a head-on fight was one of his primary goals in the Italian campaign, since he believed that success in this matter would lead to the defection of Rome's Italian allies, who no longer had to fear Roman retribution.

62 Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 111.

63 Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 110.

64 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 140. Gabriel calls labels Scipio's grand plan for the defeat of Carthage as a "strategy of annihilation." Discover and defeat the enemy's main armed forces in battle, then forced a peace treaty upon the enemy.

65 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 146.

66 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 226.

67 Refer to endnotes 47 and 48.

68 Polybius, *Histories*, 15.12.1-4.

69 Polybius, *Histories*, 15.12.5-6.

70 Polybius *Histories,* 15.14.3-4; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.9-11.

71 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.11.

72 Gabriel, *Scipio*, 195. Gabriel does not note that Scipio's battle line, even though it could reform very quickly, would be in a less than ideal position if Hannibal suddenly attacked.

73 Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 225.

74 Lacey and Murray, *Moment of Battle*, 59. Lacey and Murray include Scipio as being among these few, and states that he no doubt personally remembered (being a survivor of Cannae) the devastating damage that Hannibal's cavalry had inflicted upon larger Roman armies.

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