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STRATEGIES OF THE SECOND PUNIC WAR

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Introduction

Introduction

The Second Punic War between Carthage and Rome has captured the interest of historians and military leaders alike for centuries. The boldness and suddenness of the Carthaginian invasion shocked the Roman world in the third century B.C.[1] and was quickly followed up by an unprecedented series of Carthaginian victories, forever etching into the Roman psyche the names of places like Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae. The war was also fought on a scale previously unimagined. The slaughter at Cannae in 216 was so great that many modern historians argue that this contest resulted in one of the largest single days of killing in the history of warfare up until the dropping of the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima.[2] Such was the hatred of the Romans for the Carthaginians that in later years the Roman senator, Cato the Elder, is said to have finished off his speeches in the senate with the expression, "*Carthago delenda est*" or "Carthage must be destroyed!"[3] Despite this rhetoric, the two nations engaged in a sixteen year long struggle for supremacy with each side defending and attacking a strategic centre of gravity.

The bitterness of the contest and the outcome of the Second Punic War solidified Rome's position as a Mediterranean superpower. And yet an analysis of the national strategies demands answers to two key questions: Why did Carthage lose the war in spite of their many, significant tactical victories? And: Why did it take Rome so long to win the war if they possessed a clear

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[1] All dates in this text unless otherwise stated are dates B.C.

[2] Keith Milton. "Hammer of the Romans," *Military Heritage.* (June 2002): 52. Adrian Goldsworthy, *Cannae: Hannibal's Greatest Victory* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), 159. Goldsworthy uses Martin Middlebrook's statistics for casualties at the Somme. Martin Middlebrook, *The First Day on the Somme: 1 July 1916.* (London: Alan Lane, 1971): 262-4, and appendix 2.

[3] The exact words vary a bit in the ancient sources, but the hostile sentiment is generally accepted and attributed to Cato the elder. Charles Little, "The Authenticity and Form of Cato's Saying "*Carthago Delenda Est*" *Classical Journal* (1934), 429-435.Little vouches for the expression and reminds us that it is possible that the original source was Polybius, but that these books are lost. See also Cicero *de senectute* VI.18; Plutarch, *Cato* XXVII.1 (Plutarch says much the same thing, but in Greek); Pliny *Natural History* 15.20.

advantage in troops and resources? Many have attempted to answer these questions. For the

Carthaginian strategy it has often been argued that Carthage lost the war because she

underestimated the loyalty of Rome's Italian allies. For the Romans it has been argued that they

suffered from Hannibal's military genius until they employed the strategy of delay which bought

them time until Scipio Africanus could finish the war in Africa. Unfortunately these arguments

tend to understate the strategic setting and tend to oversimplify the strategic plans of both the

Carthaginians and the Romans.

This paper will argue that Carthage's strategy while bold and multifaceted was unable to

defeat a highly resilient Roman centre of gravity which, in turn, impaired the Roman ability to

effectively target the true Carthaginian centre of gravity resulting in a prolonged and costly

Second Punic War. This will include an analysis of the national goals of the warring states and

the application of their political, economic, and military strategies.

On the Ancient Sources

Prior to our analysis of the strategies employed in the Second Punic War, a few words

about the ancient sources are necessary. Any analysis of the classical world is necessarily

dependent on ancient sources which are not always credible. The writing of history in the ancient

world was impacted by many factors including the desire for glory, propaganda, and bias to

name a few. In fact many ancient generals took along biographers or war-correspondents during

their campaigns. The emperor Titus had Josephus with him at the siege of Jerusalem in A.D.

70.[4] Scipio Aemilianus took along Polybius who was present at the sack of Carthage during the

Third Punic War. Biographies can provide the modern historian with eye-witness yet biased

accounts.

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[4] Adrian Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome.* (London: Phoenix books, 2007), 19. It is noteworthy that Josephus's
earlier account of the Jewish War was as a Jewish commander who fought against the Romans.

Although such writings are invaluable, it is also common that ancient writings often have not survived the centuries. During the Second Punic War, Hannibal took along the writers Sosylus and Silenus. Though neither of their works has survived, fragments appear in Polybius who apparently had access to them.[5] We also know that the famous poet Ennius, possibly a client of Scipio Africanus, wrote of the Second Punic War but very little of his works survive.[6] So endeared was he to the Scipio *gens,* a memorial was set up for him in the tomb of the Scipios.[7] Since it is clear that personal relationships and political motives exist in the ancient texts, it is wise to approach them with caution.

The two principal sources of the Second Punic War are Livy and Polybius. The birth and death of Titus Livius Patavinus is disputed in the extant manuscripts. But whether one ascribes a birthdate of 64 or 59 is irrelevant. Either way, Livy did not begin his *History of Rome* until more than 150 years had passed since Scipio's victory at Zama. By contrast, Polybius was born around 209 or 208[8] and, though only a child, was a contemporary of the Second Punic War. He would have had ready access to documents, survivors, and other eyewitness accounts. The fact that Livy used Polybius as a source is also well established.[9] But it is also clear that Livy had access to sources aside from Polybius. There are many accounts such as the Carthaginian's failed raid on Lilybaeum[10] which are unique to Livy. Unfortunately if a piece of evidence appears in Livy and it is not cross-referenced elsewhere, the modern historian must choose to either accept it as

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[5] Polybius III.20.5.

[6] Of Ennius' *Annales* only about 600 lines survive. Books IX and X of the *Annales* deal with the Second Punic War. He also wrote a panegyric of Scipio Africanus (the elder).

[7] Cicero. *pro Archia.*22.1. carus fuit Africano superiori noster Ennius itaque etiam in sepulcro Scipionum putatur is esse constitutus ex marmore. "Our Ennius was dear to the elder Africanus and so he is also thought to have been set up in marble in the tomb of the Scipios".

[8] Polybius. Books 1&2. Ed. Jeffrey Henderson, Trans. W.R. Paton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), vii. Richard Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus: Rome's Greatest General* (Washington: Potomac Books Ltd., 2008), xiv.

[9] H.L. Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius: Their Style and Methods of Historical Composition," *The Classical Weekly*. Vol. 1. No. 4. (Oct 1907): 26.

[10] Livy.XXI.49.5

reliable or not. If we question every piece of evidence from ancient manuscripts that cannot be validated by other means, we would be left with very little source material indeed.

Some modern authors question the motives of ancient historians, suggesting that they often wrote "for its moral effect" or "for the sake of entertaining."[11] One such historian who was a contemporary of Livy was Gaius Sallustius Crispus (Sallust). He admitted in one text that he was motivated by fame (*clarum*)[12] but nevertheless stated that he would write as truthfully (*verissime*) as possible. However in the first four sentences describing the antagonists' character, he betrays his bias through the use of words like murder (*caedes*), pillage (*rapinae*), reckless (*audax*), deceitful (*subdolus*), covetous (*appetens*), and ablaze (*ardens*).[13] These portrayals helped to make villains seem more villainous and heroes seem more heroic.

The aim of such writers must have been plain: to buttress the fame and glory of their patrons. For this work they were rewarded well. In later years the Greek writer Theophanes of Mitilene so impressed his patron Cn. Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) that he was actually granted Roman citizenship.[14] In another, less glorious example, the client of Lucius Lucullus – a writer by the name of Aulus Licinius Archias – was prosecuted, presumably as a political attempt to defame Lucullus who was Pompey's political rival.[15]

Such a patron-client relationship would have been well known to Polybius as it is one from which he certainly benefitted.[16] On the other hand little is known of Livy's early life and so whether or not he benefitted from a patronage is uncertain. In the end we have texts which include history, commentary, and panegyric. So many factors make historical analysis difficult.

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[11] Ebeling, "Livy and Polybius," 26.
[12] I.e. The War with Catiline. Sallust. *Bellum Catilinae*.III.1.
[13] Sallust.V.1-4.
[14] Cicero. *pro Archia*.24.5.
[15] Archias was planning on writing a historic account of Lucullus' Mithridatic campaign. Such a history would have competed with Pompey's account of the war. Daniel Stepaniuk, "Cicero: *pro A. Licinio Archia poeta oratio.*" Undergraduate Thesis. McMaster University, 1992.
[16] The patronage of Scipio Aemilianus.

As Alfred Godley has remarked, "It is impossible to generalize where popular belief and ascertained fact, hearsay and ocular evidence are blended."[17] Or as the great Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner observed, "Here, as in estimating all the classical writers, we are faced with a dilemma: wherever a detail is confirmed by trustworthy external evidence, that confirmation renders the statement in some degree superfluous; where such evidence does not exist, our confidence can seldom be sufficient to carry complete conviction."[18]

Often the facts by ancient writers cannot be confirmed. In other instances the ancient writers often got their details muddled or hopelessly incorrect. Herodotus, whose work Gabriel describes as a "dramatic novel"[19] claimed that the upper Nile flowed from west to east.[20] Livy, one of our principal sources of the Punic wars did not have a military background occasionally got his details wrong from a lack of knowledge. On one such occasion he "mistranslated Polybius' description of the Macedonian phalanx lowering its pikes into the fighting position to say that they dropped their pikes and fought with their swords."[21] In other instances it is the modern historian who encounters difficulty interpreting the ancient sources. Polybius, our most reliable source for the Punic Wars, tells us that the point of a Roman javelin (γρόσφος) carried by the *velites* (νεωτατοι) intentionally "bent" on first impact so that it could not be thrown back by the enemy.[22] This has been interpreted by many to mean that all javelins (*pila*) were designed to bend on impact - a fact vigorously denied by Adrian Goldsworthy.[23] Goldsworthy explains that only the spears of the *velites* and not the *pila* of the *hastati* and *principes* were designed to bend

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[17] Herodotus. *The Histories.* Ed. Jeffrey Henderson. Trans. A. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), x.
[18] Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 6.
[19] Richard Gabriel, "Can we Trust the Ancient Texts?" *Military History.* (March/April 2008): 66.
[20] Herodotus. *The Histories*, xii.
[21] Adrian Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome.* 19.
[22] Polybius VI.22.4.
[23] Adrian Goldsworthy, *Caesar* (London: Phoenix Books, 2006), 236. Goldsworthy calls this a "deeply entrenched myth." Curiously, Goldsworthy had previously endorsed the concept of the bent pilum, Goldsworthy, Adrian. *The Roman Army at War 100 BC – AD 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 198.

and that the archaeological evidence does not support the notion that such *pila* were ever

designed to bend.[24]

But none of this should suggest to the reader that ancient sources should be discarded

entirely. The ancient writers cannot be faulted for their lack of knowledge of modern geography

or for the transcription errors made by monks in the subsequent intervals.[25] As Richard Gabriel

notes, monks were particularly prone to transcription errors of numbers and this raises serious

concerns regarding distances, weights, rates of march, and casualty figures.[26] Nevertheless, it is

hardly plausible to think that a writer like Polybius would significantly change crucial aspects of

the campaign planning of the Second Punic War since many of those who read his works

actually participated in the campaigns. Knowing this, the modern researcher of ancient history,

wary of bias and propaganda, can expect the facts to be occasionally embellished with rhetoric,

values, and national themes.

One such theme in ancient writings about Rome is that of *pietas*. Polybius endows

Publius Scipio the elder with *pietas* when he credits him with the rescue of his father at the Battle

of the Ticinus river.[27] In this passage, Scipio is said to have ridden recklessly to the rescue of his

father by himself as a 17 year old.[28] Livy presents one contrary view of the rescue from the

writer Coelius who claims that it was a Ligurian slave that rescued Scipio's father, but

nevertheless prefers to support the view that Scipio rescued his father.[29] The theme of *pietas* is a

heroic theme which embodied the Roman notions of duty, honour, and religious devotion.

Aeneas, as one of the fathers of the Roman state, is credited with pietas when he rescued his

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[24] Adrian Goldsworthy, Email to the author. From UK to Brantford, Ontario. March 2, 2014.
[25] Gabriel, "Can We Trust the Ancient Texts?" 65.
[26] Gabriel, "Can We Trust the Ancient Texts?" 66.
[27] Polybius X.3.3-6.
[28] Polybius X.3.3-6. Polybius' source is Gaius Laelius, a friend of Scipio.
[29] Livy XXI.46.10. Lucius Coelius Antipater lived in the later part of the 2nd Century B.C.

father from Troy. This theme was often portrayed on coins of the republic[30] and became a centre-piece of Vergil's *Aeneid.* In light of this and the obvious propaganda value to be derived from such a feat, acts such as Scipio's apparent rescue of his father can only be viewed with a high degree of skepticism.[31]

Despite these questionable anecdotes, there is much that we can accept as fact. In addition to major themes, there are also included in the ancient sources many candid descriptions of things that the writers knew or saw. In this way, modern historians are able to collect, cross-reference, and infer data from a wide range of sources. Thus, in spite of the obvious limitations, it is possible to reconstruct a fairly accurate picture of the war between Carthage and Rome.

Causes of the War

If we are to believe Polybius, the causes of the war were three: First Hamilcar Barca[32] felt aggrieved by the treaty at the end of the First Punic War (264-241) since he felt that his army had not been defeated on land.[33] Second, the Roman annexation of Corsica and Sardinia in 238 and an additional war indemnity of 1,200 talents were felt to be unreasonable.[34] Finally, Polybius suggests that the conquest of much of Spain and the acquisition of many resources emboldened the Carthaginians to think that they could defeat Rome after the First Punic War.[35]

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[30] For a detailed analysis of pietas on republican coins, see Dan Stepaniuk, "Aeneas or Amphinomous: Alternative Explanations of Pietas on Denarii of the Late First Century B.C." *The Journal of the Classical and Medieval Numismatic Society* Series 2, Vol. 4, No. 4 (December 2003): 181-186.

[31] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 9 suggests that "there is no good reason to doubt Polybius' account." However, the obvious propaganda value of the claim would seem to be reason enough. Polybius VI.39 mentions many benefits accorded to those who were granted honours including fame, honorary gifts from the consul, position in religious processions. Macrobius *Saturnalia.*I.II.26 attests that a slave rescued Scipio's father, but he wrote this more than 500 years after the Punic Wars. Pliny in his *Natural History.*XVI.5 says that Scipio was offered a *corona civica* but that he refused it. Pliny wrote more than 200 years after the war.

[32] Hannibal's father.

[33] Polybius III.9.7.

[34] Polybius III.10.3-4.

[35] Polybius III.10.7.

Other ancient writers disagreed with Polybius. In a lost work, the annalist Q. Fabius

Pictor[36] argues that the siege of Saguntum in 219 coupled with Hasdrubal's ambition and love of

power were the true causes.[37] Others suggest that the siege of Saguntum itself and the crossing

of the Ebro in violation of the Roman treaty were the true causes.[38] But are any of these causes

true or valid? Here one must consider how the underlying causes would impact the development

of the subsequent Carthaginian strategy.

For example, if the Carthaginians simply wanted to punish the Saguntines and deny the

Spanish peninsula to Roman influence, could they have accomplished this without going to war

in Italy? Did they gamble that the Romans would ultimately not get involved, militarily, in

Saguntine affairs? Were the Carthaginians seeking retribution or vengeance on Rome for the

loss of their overseas possessions (Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica)? In this case could Hannibal have

pressed for a peace treaty following his rapid victories at Ticinus (218), Trebia (218), and

Trasimene (217)? Could the loss of Roman interests in Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul, an area

already full of tribes hostile to Rome, have provided sufficient pressure on Rome to negotiate a

new treaty? Or could Hannibal have pressed for a renegotiated treaty after the disaster at

Cannae? This is something which he certainly attempted.

If the aim of the Carthaginians was to punish Rome or seek vengeance on Rome, how

was this to be accomplished? Obviously Hannibal did not besiege or attack Rome itself, so what

would have constituted sufficient pressure for the Carthaginians to feel that the conditions for

war had been met? Were they seeking a new treaty which ceded lost territories back to the

Carthaginians? In order to understand the political strategies of the Carthaginians and the

Romans, it is necessary to understand the causes of the war, the systems of alliances, the nature

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[36] Not the consul.
[37] Polybius III.8.1.
[38] Polybius III.6.1.

of their treaties (including non-aggression pacts), the types of government, the levers of

influence, the motivations of leaders, extraordinary resolutions, political flexibility, and the goals

which each side sought from the war. Understanding these factors will help the reader to

understand the centres of gravity for the opposing forces and the win-conditions for the conflict.

In truth it appears that Carthage's goal was to establish a regional hegemony free from

the adverse or negative influence of Rome. This motivation is more than the economic

motivation suggested by Gabriel,[39] or the personal motivation suggested by Polybius.[40] Von

Clausewitz calls this the "political object of the war" and asserts that this determines "both the

aim of the military force and also the effort to be made."[41] The quest for a regional hegemony

necessarily included several aspects. It included the desire for freedom of movement and

freedom of action. It included the desire to make allies and establish treaties free from the

dominance and influence of a rival hegemonic power. It included the desire to provide security

not only for Carthage herself, but also the ability to provide security for those under the umbrella

of the protection of Carthage. This would necessarily include diplomatic or military assurances

that Rome would not seek retribution should they be defeated in a Second Punic War.

Carthage viewed Rome as a rival hegemonic power. Since the First Punic War was

ostensibly fought over spheres of influence and ended with a treaty, it is likely that Carthage's

goal in the war was to limit the effective spread of Rome's sphere of influence. By wreaking

havoc in the Italian peninsula, by destabilizing Rome's alliances, and by compelling Rome to

field huge and expensive armies, Carthage intended to halt or reverse Rome's foreign policy and

conclude the conflict with a treaty favourable to Carthage. Such a return to the "*status quo ante*

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[39] Richard Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 27.
[40] Polybius III.9.6. See also Richard Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity* (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 121.
[41] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War,* Trans. J.J. Graham (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949): 11.

bellum"[42] as Gabriel calls it, could have compelled Rome to cede land, ships, and to pay a financial indemnity. Such were the instruments of the First Punic War and there is little evidence to suggest that Carthage had hoped for more.

Rome on the other hand appears to have had a different motivation during the Second Punic War. It is easy to see how some might conclude that Rome's motivations were essentially the same as the Carthaginians. Indeed, following the First Punic War, Rome confiscated land and exacted an immediate and annual war indemnity from Carthage.[43] Even Polybius increasingly calls the Romans hegemonic (ἡγεμονικοί)[44] Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that Rome was interested in more than the protection of a local or regional hegemony. William Harris argues that what Rome sought was imperialism by self-defence.[45] This is the notion that Rome had to fight wars in order to protect her vital interests.[46] He goes on to say, "The Romans were always careful to offer a *pretext* for going to war; they took care not to appear to be the aggressors, but always to seem to be defending themselves and entering war under compulsion."[47] These beliefs seem to have manifested themselves in the public psyche and contributed to the Roman notion of a just war. [48] This contributes to the notion that Rome had embraced expansionism as a national policy in support of its national security and that Rome fought the Second Punic War somewhat reluctantly.

On the other hand, there are others who do not believe that Rome was coerced or compelled to fight. Among those are Goldsworthy who notes, with curiosity or suspicion, the

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[42] Richard Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 124.
[43] Polybius III.13.1, I.88.12, I.62.8-I.63.3
[44] Polybius.VI.50.3-6.
[45] William Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 163.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 172. See also Polybius XV.20.3.
[48] Harris, *War and Imperialism,* 166-7.

alliance[49] that Rome secured with Saguntum.[50] It is hard to imagine that the Romans had

imperialistic designs for the Iberian peninsula in 226. At this time there was no Roman presence

in this part of the world, certainly no military or permanent diplomatic presence. When

Saguntum raised the ire of Hannibal and was besieged in 219, Rome did nothing to protect her.[51]

Goldsworthy argues that this may have been due to the fact that Rome *expected* Carthage to back

down after the Romans sent their embassy in 219.[52] Is it plausible to believe, as Polybius

suggests, that the destruction of Saguntum was the cause of the war (τίθησι του πολέμον)?[53]

Perhaps Rome baited Carthage or set conditions whereby a military confrontation was inevitable.

Another alternative view proposed by Gabriel suggests that Carthaginian interests in

Spain were economically motivated, in large part, due to the loss of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily

and their corresponding markets.[54] According to Gabriel, Rome feared a "war of revenge" and

awaited a *casus belli* as a pretext for war and that this was the sack of Saguntum by Hannibal. [55]

Another economic motivator not mentioned by many writers about the Second Punic War was

Roman trade – not in goods – but in slaves. During the period from 262 to 241, Harris estimates

that Rome profited in the trade of more than 68,000 slaves.[56] He further estimates that some

18,000 slaves were taken by Scipio in the African campaign of 204-202.[57] Certainly war was

profitable for the victors and it is also clear that the Roman economy was heavily dependent

upon slaves. Although the economic benefits are clear, it is not clear that this motivation

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[49] Livy calls them *sociis* XXI.vi.4.
[50] Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage* (London: Phoenix Books, 2000), 144.
[51] Ibid., 145. Livy XXI.ix.3. During the siege Rome sent only ambassadors. These ambassadors then made their way to Carthage and war became imminent. Polybius III.32.2-4.
[52] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 149.
[53] Polybius III 30.3.
[54] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 27-8.
[55] Ibid., 28.
[56] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 63. Harris mentions only slaves captured from the major conquests. Polybius notes that Aemilius Paullus (the son, not the consul who died at Cannae) took 150 000 slaves during the Third Macedonian War. XXX.15.
[57] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 83.

superseded Rome's fear of Carthaginian expansionism. Gabriel seems to accept Polybius's causes for the war,[58] namely the treaty violation and sack of Saguntum, yet these factors seem to be smaller components of the national goals which contributed to the war.

Finally, there are two other aspects which hint that Saguntum was not the key factor and that Carthage and Rome were on a military collision course regardless of the outcome at Saguntum. First there is the rapidity with which Hannibal was able to mobilize his forces for his invasion of Italy in 218. This is significant and suggests that planning had been in the works for some time. In order to march in the spring, Hannibal must certainly have begun mobilization for the invasion of Italy after he returned to winter quarters in 219.[59] Secondly, it is also possible that the *comitia centuriata* in Rome had already voted for war if their emissaries had failed in Carthage.[60] These factors suggest that both sides were on a war trajectory regardless of the outcome at Saguntum.

The Strategy of Carthage

Understanding why Carthage and Rome went to war with each other is essential to understanding the conflict. It also does much to explain the strategy adopted by each nation. Carthage was careful in both timing and preparation. It would be wrong to suggest that Carthage was cornered into a war by Rome or that a Roman emissary held the power for peace or war in the folds of his toga.[61] Such a belief reduces the Carthaginian strategy to a caricature.

The Carthaginians employed many strategic considerations. They include:

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[58] This is essentially an acceptance of the causes outlined by Polybius. See also Milton, Keith. "Hammer of the Romans," 47.
[59] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 145.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Polybius III.323-4.

1. Carthage needed to resolve or conclude her own wars and rebellions. Carthage could not afford to wage a war with Rome and fight her neighbours (i.e. the Mercenary war)

2. Carthage waited for a time when Rome was weary from other conflicts or engaged in them (i.e. Gaul and the two Illyrian wars) that would draw their attention and their resources.

3. If Carthage were to invade Italy, she would need to establish or negotiate sufficient alliances or non-aggression pacts along a land route or Carthage would need sufficient naval power to project an army onto the Italian mainland

4. Carthage needed a sufficient revenue stream and access to recruits and supplies in order to wage war

Carthage also made a number of strategic assumptions which include:

1. Not all of Rome's allies would defect and this would require Carthage to fight in Italy with potential enemies in all directions. This would require an offensive strategy coupled with an elastic defence or mobile defensive strategy[62]

2. Rome could not be annihilated, nor all of her armies defeated through force of arms.[63]

3. Carthage would not wage a large and costly naval war as they had done in the First Punic War. However, it was assumed that the Romans might commit strategic resources to their navy if they expected the war to be fought in the same manner as the First Punic War.[64]

4. Rome's strategic interest in the east would exceed their strategic interest in the west.

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[62] Basil Liddell-Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 163.
[63] This aspect is strongly emphasized by Gabriel. For a detailed analysis of mobilization numbers see Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity*, 123.
[64] Livy XXI.xxii.4.

5. Rome could be forced to negotiate a treaty through a combination of military defeats, defections of allies, loss of territory, and impact on the economy.

6. Rome would try to pressure Carthage into an early decision, presumably by sending a force to Carthage itself.

7. The war could not be won by the conduct of siege warfare

8. Rome would expect the war to be fought off Italian soil[65]

There have been various suggestions regarding the Carthaginian centre of gravity over the years. For Gabriel, the Carthaginian centre of gravity was Spain. Gabriel calls it Hannibal's "strategic platform"[66] and identifies this Iberian centre of gravity as the "key to defeating Carthage."[67] In his estimation, Carthage depended greatly on Spain for manpower and coinage to finance the war.[68] This position is supported by Moyer who suggests that the Spanish mercenaries and financial support were keys to Carthage's success.[69] A thorough discussion of the role of Spain in the Second Punic War occurs later in this text. For the present, the following details should be noted: Scipio's ultimate victory at Ilipa in Spain in 206 was not sufficient to recall Hannibal from Italy or to halt his war efforts there.[70] This shows that the Carthaginians themselves considered Italy to be their main-effort[71] and were willing to sacrifice Spain if they could realize further gains in Italy. Furthermore, Hannibal successfully waged war in Italy for

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[65] Polybius III.16.1. Rome believed that the conflict would be waged in Spain, perhaps with Saguntum as a base although the sack of Saguntum impacted this.
[66] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 124.
[67] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,*150. Richard Gabriel, *Thutmose III: The Military Biography of Egypt's Greatest Warrior King* (Washington: Potomac Books, Inc., 2009), 132.
[68] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 150-51.
[69] Anita Moyer, "A New Way to Look at an Old War: A Strategic Study of the Second Punic War," US Army War College, Pennsylvania (1997): 8.
[70] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 221, note 13.
[71] Livy XXVII.xx.6-8. According to Livy, Hasdrubal Barca considered Italy the main effort in the war when he prepared to bring his force to Italy in 209.

nearly a full decade without requiring any reinforcement from Spain.[72] So any insistence that

Spain was the critical pressure point of influence against Carthage is questionable.

Another potential centre of gravity comes from James Parker who suggests that it was the

political will of the Carthaginian senate.[73] Identifying the political will as a centre of gravity for a

nation is common in military strategic discourse. But such statements are exceedingly vague

since there are many instruments to attack the "will" of a nation and to compel them to seek

peace. Hans Delbrück notes that victory, in general terms, would typically require the defeat of

the enemy's forces in the field, the capture of the capital, and if that didn't work, the "total defeat

of the enemy."[74] Could the political will of the senate be forced with a direct threat to the city of

Carthage? Only the threat to Carthage itself was sufficient to force Hannibal to retire from the

Italian peninsula. The city formed the nucleus of their regional hegemony and the survival of the

city ensured the survival of Carthage. This was clearly demonstrated after the First Punic War

when Carthage's sphere of influence was reduced, but not destroyed. Therefore any credible

threat to the city could spell the destruction of the Carthaginian people and would move the

senate to offer terms leading to the cessation of war. But we also know that the *pax Scipionis* of

202 did not involve the sack of Carthage. It is also not clear that Scipio was prepared to lay siege

to the city in order to force the issue.[75] So with the city not realistically threatened, was this the

lever of greatest influence in the war against Carthage?

Although these centres of gravity are tempting, there is something lacking in each which

leads us to dig deeper. What aspect, once destroyed or compromised, would render any

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[72] There is only one mention of reinforcements coming from Spain. This occurred in 208 when Hasdrubal crossed the Alps with a reinforcing army. Livy XXVII.xxxvi.1-4.

[73] James Parker, "Comparing Strategies of the 2nd Punic War: Rome's Strategic Victory Over the Tactical Operational Genius, Hannibal Barca," US Army War College, Pennsylvania (2001): 1.

[74] Hans Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* Trans. Walter Renfroe Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 337.

[75] It took three years to destroy Carthage by siege in the Third Punic War. See also Harris, *War and Imperialism,* 138.

Carthaginian victory impossible? This centre of gravity was the belief of Carthaginian invincibility in the minds of Hannibal's Italian allies. It is true that some joined Hannibal willingly and others were coerced by fear. But so long as Hannibal continued to destroy Roman armies and move indiscriminately throughout Italy, the Carthaginian allies were comforted and reassured that they would not face Roman reprisals. Furthermore, the defection of key Roman allies encouraged more and more communities to follow suit. The loss of more and more Roman allies and their corresponding troop and tax contributions was critical to a Carthaginian victory. After entering Italy, Hannibal had laid waste to many an army. However, if Rome were to demonstrate that Hannibal was vulnerable and unable to fulfill his promise of a better Carthaginian hegemony, this would shake the confidence of the Carthaginian allies in Italy and cause their loyalty to waver.

Hannibal depended upon his allies. He used them for troops, supplies, and bases for operations including winter quarters. In 211 Carthage suffered the first of an irreversible series of set-backs when the Romans recaptured Capua.[76] Soon afterwards, the Carthaginians lost Tarentum in 209. After Hannibal had lost the loyalty of his Italian allies, there was no way that he could secure a victory. He lacked the total manpower and without cities, safe havens, or port facilities, his forces would be whittled down until attrition, desertion, or exhaustion forced him from the field.

<div align="center">The Strategy of Rome</div>

It would be wrong to suggest that the political strategy of Rome was similar to the strategy of Carthage. The Roman strategy appears to have been impacted by their previous

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[76] Polybius IX.4-7. Livy XXVI.iv-vi.

campaigns and the successes or failures during those campaigns. The Roman strategic considerations included:

1. Rome considered Carthage to be a significant threat.

2. The First Punic War was very costly in terms of resources and manpower. Rome did not feel that she could wage war with a multiple of nations and hastened to conclude the Second Illyrian War in 219 in order to focus entirely on Carthage

3. Rome used fear and the threat of reprisals or punitive action to enforce her various treaties. This meant that Rome could exact compliance from belligerents without deploying forces. In this case, Carthage was considered a belligerent and Rome believed that she could intimidate Carthage into a resolution without fighting a major war.

4. In any War with Carthage, Rome would need to draw heavily on the levies of her Italian allies

5. Following Rome's victory at the Aegates Islands in 241, Rome believed that her navy and naval forces were superior to those of Carthage and was confident of her ability to meet maritime forces in battle.

Strategic assumptions

1. Any war with Carthage would be fought in Spain or in Africa or both.[77] Rome believed that the war with Carthage would be resolved by putting pressure on the Carthaginian senate and that this would be accomplished by threatening the city of Carthage itself

2. Carthage could not be annihilated, nor all of her armies defeated through force of arms.[78]

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[77] Polybius III.16.1. Rome believed that the conflict would be waged in Spain, perhaps with Saguntum as a base although the sack of Saguntum impacted this.

[78] This aspect is strongly emphasized by Gabriel. For a detailed analysis of mobilization numbers see Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 123.

3. Hannibal could be dealt with quickly and his soldiers were inferior and could be easily defeated

Concerning Rome's centre of gravity there has been much discussion. No modern writer believes that the centre of gravity was the Roman army itself. In fact, it is fairly well unanimously agreed that Rome could not be defeated by military attrition.[79] Gabriel believes that the centre of gravity was "the political will of the Roman Senate and the loyalty of its Italian allies"[80] – a position supported by Parker.[81] According to Delbrück, Carthage may have sought to compel the Roman senate, not by using attrition or annihilation,[82] but by subjecting Rome to what he calls "strategic exhaustion."[83] By this it would appear that he means a combination of military defeats, economic duress, pressure from her allies, and fear. Indeed, Edward Togo Salmon notes that "the devastation of some districts, the enemy occupation of others, the diversion of men and resources to serve the needs of war, the interruption of imports, and the break in agriculture brought chaos to the established routines of everyday life and disrupted normal channels of trade."[84] In Clausewitzian terms, Carthage had to "raise the price of success"[85] to a level where Rome could no longer bear the cost. Certainly it would have the end-result of impacting the will of the senate, but the actual mechanism for Carthage was much more complex. Therefore it would be safe to say that the Roman centre of gravity was not the will of the senate, but rather the apparatus of state.

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[79] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 30. Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 336.
[80] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 33. Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 124.
[81] Parker, "Comparing Strategies of the 2nd Punic War," 1.
[82] Livy 22.lviii.2-3. This statement is attested to in a speech of Hannibal. Most speeches must be viewed with suspicion.
[83] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 338.
[84] Edward Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982)*,* 84.
[85] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 32.

The Roman apparatus of state involved the treaties formed by the Romans with their allies, their economic policy, and their ability to levy and sustain armies. This apparatus of state included the ability of the Romans to respond to the various exigencies made necessary by the war including the ability to select magistrates and military leaders, raise and collect taxes, mint coins, transport troops, conduct trade, and communicate via embassy with her agents and allies. Although the apparatus of state was controlled by the senate, it existed by treaty, law, and constitution independent of the senate. In much the same way, one would expect the bureaucracy of the USA to continue unimpeded if the President were to be assassinated or if a bomb were to destroy Congress. Similarly, the Roman apparatus of state was complex. This complexity enabled the system of government to continue to function efficiently despite the loss of soldiers, fleets, rulers, aristocrats, crops, trade, and towns. In support of this assertion, Goldsworthy notes, "the Carthaginian war effort lacked such clear direction, imposed at a fundamental level on the Roman state by its tradition of annual magistracies."[86] Therefore the greatest threat to a Carthaginian victory was the apparatus of state. In order to succeed in the war, the Carthaginians would have to simultaneously target and erode the various appendages of the apparatus of state itself before the controlling senate could be expected to submit.

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[86] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 246.

Part 2

Political and Economic Strategy

The Political Strategy of Carthage

If we accept that Carthage was on a war trajectory regardless of the outcome at

Saguntum, then one might expect to find evidence of this in her political strategy. There is little

doubt that the seeds of the Second Punic War were sewn at the conclusion of the First Punic War

in much the same way that the causes of the Second World War can be found in the Treaty of

Versailles. Despite the unfavourable treaty, Carthage herself was never directly threatened

during the First Punic War and there is no reason to suspect that her hegemonic ambitions were

permanently quashed. However, Carthage was dealt significant setbacks which included a loss of

territory and a heavy war indemnity. In order to further her hegemonic ambitions Carthage

needed a robust political strategy which targeted the Roman apparatus of state.

Alliances

One of the key pillars of Carthaginian strategy involved Carthage's employment of

alliances. Thus, Carthage endeavoured to employ a political strategy that would set conditions to

help ensure the "probability of the result [of war]" in her favour.[87] Before Carthage could embark

on any serious campaign against Rome following the First Punic War, Carthage first needed to

stabilize the situation with her existing allies. During the First Punic War, Carthage had

employed a large number of mercenaries in the army and at the conclusion of the war, they

returned from the campaign disgruntled and concerned about the pay promised to them. This

resulted in the Mercenary War[88] which Carthage fought between 240 and 237. The defeat of

Carthage, at the end of the First Punic War, left Carthage financially needy. When the mercenary

forces refused the terms presented by the Carthaginian general, Hanno, war was inevitable. The

war was concluded by Hamilcar Barca (Hannibal's father) at the Battle of the Saw in 238. The

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[87] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 32.
[88] Also called the Truceless War.

conclusion of the war brought about a political stability that allowed Carthage to expand her

hegemonic sphere into Hispania.

In addition, Carthage employed the Clausewitzian strategy of gaining "new alliances"

and raising "political powers"[89] in support of her war-making effort. Such a strategy was unlikely

to determine the outcome of the war, but it was intended to lessen the military effort of the

Carthaginian forces. These alliances, according to Williamson Murray, provided a state like

Carthage with resources for "military tasks and perhaps for economic support."[90] Not only did

Carthage stabilize her immediate political alliances, she also took steps to build new alliances

with the Hispanic tribes. This was done, according to Gabriel, with a "judicious combination of

military force, diplomacy, bribery, and, when needed, the execution of tribal leaders."[91] The end

result was a significant levy of soldiers from the Iberian tribes – an essential component for the

Italian invasion force.[92] Unfortunately the relations of the Carthaginians with the local Spanish

tribes remained shaky at best and the tribes were prone to mutiny or desertion.[93] This required

Carthage to garrison Hispania so as to maintain order. As a newly pacified province, Spain was

not tied to Carthage with the enduring treaties and relationships that bonded Rome to most of

Italy.[94]

Not only did Carthage win the support of many Spanish tribes, she also took additional

political steps to build relations with the Gallic tribes. Carthage was well aware of the poor

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[89] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 32.

[90] The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War. Ed. Williamson Murray, Richard Sinnreich, & James Lacey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25.

[91] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 115.

[92] Ibid., 123-4. A quantity of the light and heavy infantry used by Hannibal in the initial Italian campaign came from Spain.

[93] According to Livy, one of the reasons that Hasdrubal marched to Italy in 208-207 was not just to link-up with Hannibal, but to get his Spanish troops as far from Spain as possible to lessen the possibility of desertion. Livy XXVII.xx.6-8.

[94] Naturally there were exceptions such as Tarentum which remained fairly hostile towards Rome and ultimately defected to the Carthaginian cause. Most of the dissatisfaction with Roman rule occurred in the south of Italy.

relations between the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul and Rome. With this knowledge in hand, Hannibal

sent ambassadors ahead of his march into Gaul for the purpose of negotiating safe passage with a

number of Gallic and Celtic tribes between Spain and Italy.[95] Not all tribes welcomed the

Carthaginians and Hannibal did have to fight his way through some territory resulting in some

heavy losses. However, he also managed to bribe tribes[96] and obtain Gallic guides. [97] Employing

the same style of diplomacy as Otto Von Bismarck in the 19th century, the Carthaginians

negotiated non-aggression pacts with some neighbours in order to prevent future conflict. These

pacts, which were negotiated with the Boii and Insubres,[98] were instrumental in facilitating the

army's march into Italy.[99] This ensured that the Carthaginians had provisions, security, and

reinforcements upon their arrival in the Po valley.[100]

At the same time, this strategy targeted the Roman centre of gravity by creating enemies

of Rome which consumed state resources. This was not simply a strategy to force Rome to

deploy soldiers. Every deployed soldier put a strain on the apparatus of state including the

treaties, recruitment, equipment, training, financing, transportation, and resupply. The revolt of

the twelve tribes in 209 makes it clear that this strategy was having an effect. Even though these

communities did not revolt to Hannibal's cause, they made it clear to the Romans that quotas

could not be met. Livy writes, "The townsman who was enlisted by the Roman was lost to them

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[95] Livy XXI.8, XXIII.1.

[96] Polybius III.41.6-8.

[97] Polybius III.41-6-8

[98] Polybius III.34.1-4. Not only did the non-aggression treaty ensure that Carthage would not have to fight their way into Italy, it also helped to ensure that the Celts and Gauls would not side with Rome. In fact some did, but after the battle of Ticinus defected over to Hannibal. Polybius III.67.1-3.

[99] This was undoubtedly made easier after the Romans established colonies along the Po River at Cremona and Placentia in 218. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 78. It should be noted however that there were an abundance of Celtic and Gallic tribes between Hannibal and Italy and that notwithstanding his statesmanship, he still had to fight a number of battles before gaining his foothold in Italy.

[100] Goldsworthy, *The fall of Carthage,* 172. Goldsworthy notes that real Gallic support did not occur until after the Battle of Ticinus in November of 218.

more completely than a man taken by captive by the Carthaginian."[101] In response to this crisis,

Rome had to tap into her financial reserves[102] and increase the levies of other allied communities.

All of this put great strain on the Roman apparatus of state to maintain the war effort.

While Carthage used these alliances in support of her own military forces, Carthage also

used her system of alliances to spur peripheral conflicts which would consume further Roman

resources and impair their ability to wage war against the Carthaginians. In 225 Rome was

forced to fight after the Insubres, the Boii, and the Gaesatae had mobilized to march on Rome.[103]

Although Rome had defeated the Gauls at the battle of Telamon in 225, relations with the tribes

remained fragile. And so when Hannibal marched on Italy, it inspired further Gallic revolts to

occupy Roman resources.

Since such revolts were successful in tying up Roman resources within Italy, it is certain

that Carthage was also keen to see Roman resources tied up outside of Italy in the east. Carthage

was surely aware of the strategic environment within the wider Mediterranean. Although there is

no firm evidence of an alliance between Demetrius of Pharos and Carthage, the Carthaginians

would have been aware of the Roman war in Illyria in 220. Knowledge of this drain on Roman

resources and the absence of both consuls would surely have supported the Carthaginian decision

to act, first at Saguntum in 219, and then to march on Italy in 218.[104] Unfortunately, the abrupt

conclusion to the Second Illyrian War in 219 meant that the Romans could focus their full efforts

on the war in the Italian peninsula. The Romans knew that a prolonged war in the east would

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[101] Livy XXVII.viii.3.
[102] Livy XXVII.x.11.
[103] Such was Rome's fear of the Gallic invasion, that they signed a treaty with Hasdrubal the Fair, a Carthaginian General, granting him freedom to expand into Spain.
[104] What Carthage would not have known is that Rome appears to have hurried to wrap up operations in Illyria in anticipation of conflict with Carthage. Polybius III.16.1. This was undoubtedly one of the reasons why Rome sent no aid to Saguntum.

drain precious Roman resources. However, the Carthaginians also knew that a renewed war in the east could put added pressure on Rome.

This opportunity to apply this increased pressure on the Romans came in 216. Following the great victory at Cannae, the Carthaginians sent an embassy to Rome in order to demand a ransom for the prisoners and at the same time to determine if the Romans were inclined to negotiate a cessation of hostilities.[105] Had the Roman senate been less confident, perhaps the war might have ended in 216. When it did not, Hannibal proceeded to subsequently enter into an alliance with Philip V of Macedon in the east.[106] Although the sources suggest that Philip approached Hannibal and not the other way around, this new alliance further served Carthage's strategy. Firstly it emboldened Philip and ensured that war would be rekindled in the east and the result was the First Macedonian War which broke out between Macedon and Rome in 214. Secondly, it also had other strategic effects on Roman natural resources like metals and ore.[107] Unfortunately the full impact on the Roman apparatus of state was never fully realized. Rome sent only a single legion to fight in the east and her involvement was largely diplomatic. By effectively marshalling their Greek allies, The Roman consul Laevinus was able to withdraw his legion as early as 210, even though the First Macedonian War did not end until 205.[108]

Carthage took many deliberate steps to build alliances to aid in the fight against Rome, but also sought to achieve a strategic advantage by eroding or compromising Rome's alliances. This can only be seen as a direct blow to Rome's centre of gravity. First it had the potential to sway forces away from Rome and to the side of Carthage. This would increase Carthage's military force while decreasing the military forces available to Rome. Second, this would

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[105] Livy XXII.lviii.7-9.
[106] Polybius VII.9
[107] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 85.
[108] Livy XXVI.xxviii.2.

provide Carthage with safe havens and bases of operation while operating in Italy.[109] Third, this

strategy had the potential to erode Roman confidence in her own system of alliances. The theory

was that if enough communities defected to Carthaginian control, this would compel the Roman

senate to sue for peace with or without further military action – a strategy favoured by

Clausewitz because it brought about the desired end-state without having to "[rout] the enemy's

forces."[110]

Much has been written about Hannibal's efforts to sway the Italian allies of Rome with

many suggesting that this was Hannibal's primary strategy and that its failure meant the failure

of the overall campaign. Togo Salmon asserts that, "the universal revolt that Hannibal was

hoping for did not materialize."[111] Gabriel calls Hannibal's overall strategy "high risk" and

contends that he "failed to comprehend the political sociology of Roman rule in Italy."[112]

Ultimately the support of Hannibal's alliances and their confidence in his campaign would

become the Carthaginian centre of gravity.

For Hannibal to be successful, it was essential for Roman allies to defect.[113] To encourage

this, he tended to treat colonies with clemency. After Cannae, Hannibal released the allied

prisoners with no ransom,[114] no doubt hoping for their communities to defect. And indeed, many

communities did defect including Salapia, Herdonia, Arpi, and the major city of Capua.[115] In

many ways, Carthage's inability to reorganize their newly allied towns into new regional

hegemony prevented these communities from realizing shared benefits such as troop

contributions. While Capua is often hailed as a great success for Hannibal, his treaty with the

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[109] Hannibal regularly used conquered communities or cities that defected for winter quarters and supplies.
[110] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 32.
[111] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 79.
[112] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 32-33.
[113] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 78.
[114] Livy XXII.lviii.1. As he did at Clastidium in 218. Polybius III.69.1-4. This was a common strategy of Hannibal.
[115] Livy XXIII.vii.1-2. The terms of his alliance with Capua were very favourable to the Capuans.

Capuans exempted them from military service unless they volunteered.[116] Yet when pressed by the Romans, the Capuans insisted that the Carthaginians defend them from the Romans. Of course, when communities would not defect, they were destroyed as at Nuceria and Acerrae in 216, but even so, the citizens were spared.[117]

Similar to his strategy in Spain, Hannibal used a combination of clemency, intimidation, and fear to secure the support of a large number of allies in Italy itself. Such alliances helped to sustain the Carthaginians in Italy (mostly in the south) for sixteen years, but not without cost. Hannibal's alliances came with obligations of protection. For certain, no community would have willingly gone over to Hannibal unless assured of protection from Rome. In this manner the Carthaginian alliances became both a benefit but also a burden.

The Political Strategy of Rome

By the time of the Second Punic War, the Roman political apparatus was complex and effective and this led to the employment of a deliberate political strategy in support of the war. The sheer number of diplomatic missions sent abroad prior to the outbreak of war are somewhat indicative of the emphasis that Rome placed on her political influence. In the century before 218 Rome had successfully fought a number of difficult wars and negotiated treaties with a large number of adversaries. This included successes against forces in Illyria (229-228 and 220-219), Gaul (225-222), Carthage (264-241), and the Samnites (326-304 and 298-290). Such victories probably made Rome arrogant, but also enabled her to develop systems of enduring alliances. These alliances were held together by intimidation in some cases, but in others by mutual goals which might include defence, trade, power sharing, and even autonomy. Regardless, these

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[116] Livy XXIII.vii.1-2.
[117] Nuceria was starved into submission and the city looted and burned. Livy XXIII.xv.4-6. Acerrae was abandoned when destruction seemed imminent and indeed Hannibal put the city to the torch. Livy XXIII.xvii.7.

alliances were maintained by diplomatic effort with a menagerie of treaties and these alliances,

as part of the Roman apparatus of state, became a key feature of the Roman strategy during the

Second Punic War.

Alliances

The Roman system of alliances was somewhat different than that of Carthage. In Spain,

alliances were gained through pacification. Carthage secured other alliances by sending

emissaries ahead of its main expeditionary force to Italy with various promises attempting to lure

Gallic tribes and Roman allies to their cause. While the Carthaginian system was more unstable,

the Roman imperial system was more entrenched and resilient and this system was essential to

her war-making strategy. The organization of Roman Italy was, on the whole, complete before

the outbreak of the First Punic War.[118] Indeed, as Togo Salmon points out, Rome had established

no less than eighteen new colonies in seventy years prior to the First Punic War.[119] Although

these colonies had Latin rights and not full citizenship, there were other characteristics that

bonded them to Rome aside from trade and self-defence. These included the predominant usage

of a common language, political habits, and architecture.[120] All of these things might be

combined and simply called culture, but the result was a general *pax Romana* which resulted in

"enhanced prosperity…for Italians as well as Romans."[121] Nevertheless an alliance with Rome

did not permit complete freedom of action. For example, none of the tribes were able to pursue

an "independent foreign policy."[122] As a result, Rome at the time of the Second Punic War should

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[118] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 73.
[119] Ibid., 64.
[120] Ibid., 65.
[121] Ibid., 82.
[122] Ibid., 67.

be considered a nascent imperial state[123]as opposed to Carthage which was a regional hegemonic power.

Notwithstanding the strength of the political bond which Rome shared with her allies, we are reminded that the system of Roman alliances was particularly complicated. Togo Salmon sums up the situation as follows:

> It would be truer to say that the Roman system in Italy was divisive, not federative. So far from forming a confederacy, non-Roman Italy was a congeries of Rome's subject allies. Not one of them was genuinely independent, and all of them were controlled by Rome and linked to her by their bilateral treaties. The system judiciously entangled allied Italy with Roman Italy so as to make it hopeless for any single community, acting alone, to challenge Rome's hegemony.[124]

So it would seem that Italy possessed far less of the peninsular solidarity that we know from the later Roman Republic. As a result, it seems clear that some regions allied with Rome, not out of any desire to cooperate with Rome, but rather out of their own self-interest such as the many communities in Apulia who were anxious to halt the expansionist interests of the Tarentines.[125] But these self-interests were acceptable to Rome so long as the community's interests did not conflict with Roman foreign policy.

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[123] Here we should not confuse the word "imperial" to mean the Roman Empire in the post-Augustan age. Here I use the term to refer to aspects of "hierarchy and heterogeneity" as described by Walter Scheidel, "Republics Between Hegemony and Empire: How Ancient City-States Built Empires and the USA Doesn't (anymore)" *Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics.* Stanford: Stanford University, 2006: 3-4

[124] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 71.

[125] Tarentum's involvement in the Pyrrhic Wary (280-275) against Rome was probably a strong indication that they would defect to Carthage at the first opportunity and they did. Polybius III.118.2-3. We know that after the Battle of Cannae in 216, some other communities in Apulia joined the forces of Carthage. These included Aecae, Arpi, and Herdonia. Livy XXII.lxi.11. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 79. It is likely that some joined Hannibal out of fear. Nevertheless, it is clear that many communities, sometimes far from Rome, allied with Rome out of fear of their neighbours rather than out of any sense of Roman patriotism. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 66.

Regardless of their individual reasons for wanting to ally themselves with Rome, the Roman political strategy built alliances which contained elements of mutual self-interest. Thus when communities were faced with the prospect of staying loyal to Rome or defecting to Carthage, most of Italy remained loyal. Roman alliances were built upon the will of the participants. The result was a large series of enduring alliances which created a resilient apparatus of state that was not easily eroded or compromised by the Carthaginians.[126]

Ultimately, these alliances enabled Rome to draw on a vast pool of manpower providing Rome with what von Clausewitz called the "superiority of numbers."[127] This numeric superiority provided Rome with a significant strategic advantage both in terms of soldiers levied for service and in terms of battlefield replacements. This is immediately evident following the Roman's crushing defeat at Cannae in 216. One comparison done by Gabriel suggests that the initial manpower pool enjoyed by Rome and her allies was somewhat greater than five times the number of Carthaginian soldiers.[128]

While Carthage was able to recruit new soldiers from her allies in Italy and from those communities that defected from Rome, Carthage also needed to leave significant garrisons behind to defend Spain and Africa against Roman attack. This was critical to the Carthaginian campaign. Failure to do so would cause Carthage to lose her centre of gravity. In the case of Spain, the Carthaginian army also helped to ensure the continued loyalty of the Spanish tribes. This was doubly necessary since Rome had sent ambassadors into Spain, presumably for the purpose of destabilizing the Carthaginian alliances.[129] These military obligations depleted the

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[126] Many towns held out resolutely in favour of Rome in spite of the harsh consequences. Nuceria and Acerrae were looted and burned for remaining loyal to Rome.
[127] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 192.
[128] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 30.
[129] Livy XXII.xxi.1-2

overall numbers of soldiers available for the Italian campaign and this drain contributed to

Rome's overall numeric advantage.

There were however limits on the demands that Rome could place on her allies. If there

were benefits to an alliance with Rome, there were burdens as well. One of these was the

requirement that each ally muster soldiers for legionary service according to a stipulation in their

treaty or *ex formula togatorum.*[130] During the first ten years of the war, Rome suffered many

defeats. The defeats at Ticinus (218), Trebia (218), Trasimene (217), and Cannae (216) are

perhaps best known and cost Rome an estimated twenty percent of all males of military age.[131]

After these battles, Rome suffered further defeats at Casilinum (215), Tarentum (212), Silarus

(212), Herdonia (212), and Herdonia again in 210. The draw upon Italian manpower in order to

raise new legions was immense.[132] This is what caused the twelve colonies to send emissaries to

Rome in 209 in order to protest the punishing levies.[133] Rome grudgingly granted these colonies a

brief reprieve. But in 205, after Carthage had lost her momentum in the war, Rome doubled the

levy for these colonies and imposed a further tax on these colonies as a grim warning and

reminder of Rome's dominance.[134] Meanwhile, during the period of 209 – 205, the muster for the

legions had to be made up by other loyal colonies.

The true strategic advantage of Rome's alliances lay in the resilient apparatus of state

which enabled Rome to continue to recruit and muster new legions and secure resources even

after the destruction of many a consular army. Despite the inability of some allied communities

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[130] Livy XXII.lvii.10. See also E.G. Hardy, "The Transpadane Question and the Alien Act of 65 or 64 B.C." *Journal of Roman Studies* 6 (1916): 70.

[131] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 49.

[132] Livy XXV.iv.5 notes that the consuls were still having difficulty filling the levy of soldiers for the defence of the city and for replacements in the legions in 212.

[133] These colonies included Ardea, Nepete, Sutrium, Alba, Carsioli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Setia, Cales, Narnia, and Interamna. Livy XXVII.ix.7. This was probably not due to disloyalty but on the drain on manpower. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 81.

[134] Livy XXIX.xv.

to meet their treaty obligations in 209, the remainder of the 30 colonies continued to provide men

for service, even exceeding their quota when required.[135] As proof of the resilience of the Roman

system, after the battle of Cannae Rome immediately raised no fewer than four new legions[136]

and subsequently raised three and a half more.[137] Since a legion is made up of approximately

5,000 men, this meant that Rome was soon able to levy an additional 38,000 men in seven and a

half legions in spite of the disaster at Cannae. When we consider that somewhere in the

neighbourhood of 10,000 men survived the slaughter at Cannae,[138] the number increases to

48,000. This does not include approximately eight legions deployed elsewhere in the territory of

the republic like Sicily and Sardinia.[139] Gabriel describes this incredible resilience as "strategic

endurance"[140] or the ability to sustain the fight over the full duration of the conflict. There can be

no doubt that Rome's resiliency attributed to her complex apparatus of state was one of the key

strategic factors that kept her undefeated until Rome was able to set conditions allowing her to

switch the campaign from defensive to offensive.

Citizenship versus Latin Rights

It has often, incorrectly, been assumed that Rome used citizenship as a reward or an

enticement in order to secure the support of her allies. However, real grants of citizenship did not

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[135] Livy XXVII.ix.3-9. The remaining colonies were Signia, Norba, Saticula, Fregellae, Luceria, Venusia, Brundisium, Hadria, Firmum, Ariminum, Pontiae, Paestum, Cosa, Beneventum, Aesernia, Spoletium, Placentia, and Cremona.
[136] Livy XXII.lviii.10.
[137] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 345.
[138] Livy XXII.liv.4-5.
[139] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 345. Delbrück notes that there were 10 legions already in existence. I have subtracted the 10,000 survivors (in approximately 2 legions) from this total to arrive at the number of 8.
[140] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus*, 25.

occur until well after the 2nd Punic war.[141] From that point forward there were a number of censuses and enrolments and the body of citizenship grew gradually until the Social war or 91-89 when most of Italy was enfranchised including those north of the Po River in Transpadane Gaul.[142]

In a unique exception, the Roman Senate did offer citizenship to eight hundred soldiers from Praeneste during the Second Punic War for their steadfast defence of Casilinum in 216 but the Praenestini refused.[143] It is not known why. Perhaps they were concerned about the obligations of citizenship and military service. Perhaps they did not want to stand out among the residents of their colonies or perhaps they wanted to retain a degree of autonomy from the Roman state. Either way, the offer of citizenship did not appear to serve as an incentive. On the contrary, it would appear that Rome maintained her allies through her complex series of treaties and the mutual self-interest of the various communities.

<div align="center">Political Flexibility</div>

For a lack of a better term, it would seem that the Roman political system was politically flexible and that this flexibility provided a distinct strategic advantage over the Carthaginians. This is a strategic advantage that was inherent within the system and not one that was consciously debated upon the senate floor. Polybius describes the Roman constitution as being "adequate to all emergencies."[144] It provided the state with the political flexibility to elect

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[141] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 94-95. Soon after the Second Punic War, Rome began the establishment of additional citizen colonies. This is not the same thing as granting citizenship en masse to allied communities. The social war, which resulted in massive citizenship grants, did not occur until 91-89.
[142] Hardy, "The Transpadane Question," 67.
[143] Livy XXIII.xx.1-2.
[144] Polybius VI.18.1.

Quintus Fabius Maximus as dictator in 217.[145] The recognition that the state-at-war and in-crisis

needed undivided leadership[146] made possible the Fabian strategy of delay which will be

discussed in greater detail later in this paper.

Roman political flexibility also permitted the state to rapidly and efficiently change laws,

as necessary, to meet immediate needs. After the disaster at Cannae, the senate voted to levy

soldiers who were still *praetextatus*[147] or under the age of 17. Such measures were taken again in

212.[148] During the dictatorship of Marcus Junius Pera, the extreme decision was made to free

6,000 convicts for service in the legions.[149] Following Cannae the senate also voted to pay for the

freedom of 8,000 slaves to be enrolled in the legions.[150] This flexibility enabled Rome to respond

effectively to crises and changes in the overall campaign.

The Economic Strategy of Carthage

In order to effectively wage war against the Romans, Carthage needed to have a stable

economy and the means to wage war. This included the financial ability to pay soldiers and build

fleets, but also the ability to resupply troops in the field and to acquire essential commodities. At

the end of the Mercenary War, Carthage was politically stable but still suffering financially due

to further concessions to Rome.[151] Such concessions inevitably led Carthage to shift its

hegemonic interests into Spain.

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[145] Livy XXII.viii.6. The normal process could not be followed since one consul, Gaius Flaminius Nepos, had been ambushed and killed at Lake Trasimene (27 April 217) and the other, Gnaeus Servilius Geminus, was absent. Thus the decision fell to the *comitia centuriata.*
[146] After Fabius, several other dictators were elected.
[147] Livy XXII.lvii.9.
[148] Livy XXV.v.5-8. In this year, two commissions were established to search rural towns for under-aged boys to serve in the legions.
[149] Livy XXIII.xiv.3.
[150] Livy XXII.lviii.11.
[151] Following the Mercenary War, Rome seized Sardinia and Corsica and demanded a further indemnity of 1200 talents of gold. Polybius I.88.11-12.

As Carthage expanded her sphere of influence into Spain, she also benefitted financially from this. As T. Rickard notes, the silver mines near New Carthage profited Carthage immensely.[152] We also know that the Romans had taken notice of Hamilcar's conquests in Spain from a fragment of Cassius Dio.[153] In this fragment, a Roman embassy is sent to Hamilcar in 231 to inquire about the reasons for his numerous conquests. In reply Hamilcar claimed that he needed to raise revenues to pay off the Carthaginian war indemnity to Rome resulting from the First Punic War. Such details demonstrate that the Carthaginians were busy developing a new regional hegemony in Spain and that such efforts were profitable. It would also signal a level of Roman alarm concerning Carthaginian interests in Spain more than a decade before the outbreak of the Second Punic War.

But the political stability enjoyed by the conclusion of the Mercenary War and Carthage's hegemonic domination of most of Spain would not have provided sufficient economic support for the waging of war in Italy. Since it took Hannibal's entire army simply to get into Italy, it was also hardly realistic or feasible for Carthage to send pay or commodities via an overland route. Without a secure sea port in Italy, it would have been difficult to resupply the Carthaginian army by sea.[154] A full discussion of military logistics will occur later in this paper. For now it is important to recognize that Hannibal campaigned in Italy for sixteen years and the majority of his needs were not met by reinforcement or resupply. This means that the

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[152] T. Rickard, "The Mining of the Romans in Spain." *The Journal of Roman Studies.*Vol. 18 (1928): 133. Rickard also notes that the per diem maintenance for slaves at the mines must have been large and therefore the total profit somewhat less than the overall ore recovered.

[153] Goldsworthy*, The Fall of Carthage,* 148. Cassius Dio.Fragments.48.

[154] Hannibal did eventually secure the sea port of Tarentum, but not until 212. Even then, he was unable to capture the citadel which overlooked the harbour. Livy XXV.ix-xi. With their shallow draught, warships did not need a port to operate from since they could be beached, however larger cargo ships would likely have needed a port.

Carthaginians in Italy had no real access to the Carthaginian economy[155] and had to create a micro-economy in Italy.

In one twist of irony, following the battle of Cannae, an emissary from Hannibal returned to Carthage bearing all of the gold rings collected from the dead. After delivering the war booty, he proceeded to ask for both grain and pay for the soldiers.[156] The destruction of even such a large army as at Cannae provided enormous spoils of weapons and armour, but very little currency or precious metal.[157] Much of the wealth for Hannibal's micro-economy in Italy was drawn from the sacking of towns, the support from allied towns, and the ransom of defeated soldiers back to the Romans. However, following the battle of Cannae, Rome refused to pay the ransom for the soldiers.[158] This was done because the Roman senate judged that Carthaginian solvency was a strategic weakness that could be attacked and thus impact Carthage's war-fighting effort.[159] Unfortunately, when the ransom was denied, the captured soldiers were sold as slaves.[160] This example demonstrates how both the Romans and the Carthaginians were conscious of the economic requirements of their war making and were prepared to attack the economic capabilities of their enemies.

The Economic Strategy of Rome

When compared to the economic strategy of Carthage, the strategy of Rome appears to have been somewhat more advanced.[161] If Hannibal's strategy was to sustain his army with spoils

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[155] Livy XXIII.xii.1-2. In this passage, Hannibal sends war booty to Carthage. This amounted to 2-8 dry gallons of gold rings removed from the dead after the battle of Cannae. The rings, however, were probably meant to be representative of war trophies and not economic spoils.

[156] Livy XXIII.xii.5, XXIII.xiii.7-8. Unfortunately Livy XXIII.xiii has several lacunae which make it impossible to determine the exact nature of the resupply.

[157] Livy XXII.lii.5. Most of the silver captured at Cannae was used found on horse tack.

[158] Livy XXII.lxi.3.

[159] Livy XXII.lxi.1-2

[160] Livy XXXIV.l.6. Many Romans were subsequently returned to Rome after being bought and freed by Achaea in Greece.

[161] This may be due to the imbalance of surviving sources. We have more Roman sources than Carthaginian sources.

and support from defecting states, Rome's was to mobilize the full power of her nascent imperial economy. Even though Rome did not marshal the state's resources with a "totalitarian single-mindedness of modern states," Rome's economic strategy was a deliberate and significant manifestation of her effective apparatus of state. First, Livy reminds us that the senate of Rome kept a financial reserve. This reserve, kept in gold bars, was the windfall of a five percent tax on manumitted slaves.[162] In 209, when the emissaries from the twelve colonies went to Rome to seek exemption from the tribute which was owed, Rome tapped into this strategic financial reserve. This meant that five hundred pounds of gold were given to each of the consuls, to two proconsuls, and to one praetor for emergency use. It is significant that this gold reserve was not tapped following the disaster at Cannae. Despite the loss of Roman soldiers and arms, the senate did not believe that it would serve their strategic interest to tap into their financial reserve, even in the face of that grave crisis. As a result, they waited until their ability to tax and levy were seriously depleted and this occurred in 209.

Next it is clear that the Romans employed and debated financial policy with respect to the support of the war. This was not new for Rome. In 242 when the public treasury was fully expended, the state exacted loans from leading citizens to sponsor a ship-building program.[163] At this time, the Roman state raised enough funds to build two hundred quinqueremes which were sufficient to defeat the Carthaginians and bring the First Punic War to a conclusion in 241. So it would seem that the Romans also used borrowed money to help finance the Second Punic War. Following Cannae, Livy asserts that one senator had argued that the prisoners taken by Hannibal

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[162] Livy XXVII.x.11-13.
[163] Polybius I.59.7-9.

after Cannae ought to have been ransomed so that the Roman state could use the money to

guarantee loans.[164] In this way the Romans used financial policy effectively to help fund the war.

In addition, when the senate ultimately refused the ransom demanded by Hannibal in 216,

they did so knowing that the cost to manumit slaves for service in the legions exceeded the cost

to free the captives.[165] In this case the Roman state was willing to take a self-imposed financial

penalty rather than see Carthage profit from a financial windfall. This also demonstrates that the

Roman apparatus of state was able to withstand self-imposed economic duress as a strategy in

order to support their forces and deny similar supports for the army of Carthage.

While these strategies supported the war effort, Rome also took the extraordinary step of

re-tariffing her national currency. During the war, Rome suffered from a lack of raw metal for

coinage and yet she also had considerable military expenditures. The war in Spain and later in

Macedon also "prevented supplies of [silver] from reaching Italy."[166] Bronze was also in short

supply and Togo Salmon reminds us that bronze was needed for weapons and not just coins.[167]

By 212 Carthage was at her zenith. Not only had Rome suffered many costly defeats, but

the loss of Capua, Tarentum, and other communities meant that Rome had to equip, field, and

maintain many legions and ships of the fleet.[168] As a result the state took strategic measures to

protect its currency, economy, and its war-making ability. We are told that "during the first 7

years of the conflict they halved the size and weight of the *as* no less than three times."[169] It

would seem that Rome also struck her first gold coins in 218, a fact which Carol Sutherland

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[164] Livy XXII.lxi.4-5.
[165] Livy XXII.lvii.12.
[166] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 85.
[167] Ibid. This would probably also include armour and other military equipment. At this time, although gold coinage did exist, it was not widely used. David Sear, *Roman Coins and their Values, Volume 1: The Republic and The Twelve Caesars 280 BC – AD 96* (Spink: London, 2000): 75. The predominant coinage of the republic was bronze and silver.
[168] Twenty-five legions were fielded in 212. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 86.
[169] Ibid., 85.

attributes to the emergency of the outbreak of the war.[170] Most significantly however was the replacement of the so-called *quadrigatus*[171] with the now-famous *denarius* in 211.[172] Such extreme, but essential decisions were necessary to stabilize the economy during the war years and they were highly successful. After 211, only minor changes were made to the monetary system.[173] Togo Salmon sums it up nicely:

> [By this time] Syracuse was captured, Capua recovered, and Macedon tamed. War booty and the improved strategic balance brought ampler supplies of metal, and from 211 on Rome was able to put enormous numbers of coins into circulation.[174]

Following Rome's victory in Spain[175] and after retaking Capua and Tarentum, Rome's financial stress lessened. With the mines near New Carthage under Roman control, they produced approximately "25,000 drachma a day…for the Roman state"[176] even though the overall profit from the mines must have been considerably less.[177] Rickard notes that, "The silver mines of Spain were one of the incentives to the Second Punic War: not only did Hannibal draw money for his campaigns from them, but the Romans counted the mines among the choicest fruits of their conquest."[178] Thus it is clear that the Roman apparatus of state enabled Rome to following a

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[170] C.H.V. Sutherland, *Roman Coins* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974), 40.

[171] So-named because the coin had a four horse chariot on the reverse. A four horse chariot is called a *quadriga*.

[172] A denarius was now worth 10 asses. Gold coins were tariffed at 20, 40, and 60 asses. Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 86. Daniel Stepaniuk has provided a detailed analysis of Roman coins during this period in "Roman Coinage in the 3rd Century B.C." Unpublished. A Speech Delivered to the Chedoke Numismatic Society. 2004. Sutherland notes that various dates have been proposed from 269 to as late as 187. He personally favours a date of 213 or 212 which are still likely too early. *Roman Coins,* 46.

[173] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 87.

[174] Ibid., 86.

[175] Rickard, "The Mining of the Romans in Spain," 133. Rickard reminds us that "The silver mines of Spain were one of the incentives to the Second Punic War: not only did Hannibal draw money for his campaigns from them, but the Romans counted the mines among the choicest fruits of their conquest."

[176] Harris, *War and Imperialism,* 69.

[177] Rickard notes that the per diem maintenance of the slaves must have been large due to the large number required to operate the mine. Rickard "The Mining of the Romans in Spain," 135.

[178] Ibid., 133.

very carefully deliberate economic strategy. This supported Rome's complex war effort, in three

separate theatres, throughout the duration of the war.

Part Three

The Military Strategy

The Military Strategy

Sometimes diplomacy combined with political and economic strategies is sufficient to bring a conflict to a resolution. Certainly these strategies were sufficient for Rome in 238 when Sardinia and Corsica were seized and an additional indemnity was imposed on Carthage without unsheathing a single sword. However, von Clausewitz reminds us that these strategies are not means unto themselves, but means of raising the cost of success for the enemy.[179] When the cost has not been made sufficiently high, it may fall to one side or the other to use military action to raise the cost to an unbearable level and therefore force a peace or to disarm the enemy. This was the case between Carthage and Rome.

Here it should be noted that the clash of armies was always inevitable. Despite the political and economic strategies employed by Carthage and Rome, most of these were employed to reinforce armies or erode support for the enemy's army over the long haul. None were expected to bring the war to a rapid conclusion. Indeed, many of Hannibal's political strategies could not be employed until he was *in* Italy. Many of the Roman economic reforms took years to unfold. This means that military action was unavoidable and that military strategy would have to be employed.

The Military Strategy of Carthage

If we accept the notion that Hannibal's principal strategy in the war was to target the Roman apparatus of state by waging a war of exhaustion against Rome, then it becomes clear that his military forces were going to play a significant role in this. Certainly Carthage needed to demonstrate superiority on the battlefield and they did so on countless occasions. However to defeat the Romans, the Carthaginians could not defeat the Romans simply by defeating the Roman legions. They needed to use their military forces to target the full apparatus of state. This

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[179] Von Clausewitz, *On War,* 29.

included the destruction of lands and towns, the capture of equipment and supplies, the

nullification of Roman treaties, and the erosion of the faith and loyalty of the Roman's Italian

allies.

In order to analyze this military strategy, many questions must be answered. Was it

strategically sound to invade Italy via the overland route considering Hannibal's apparent and

significant losses? What role, if any, did strategic resupply have on Carthage's ability to wage

war in Italy? What was the strategic function of Carthage's navy during the war? What was

Carthage's strategy in Spain? Why did Hannibal not attack the city of Rome itself either after

Cannae in 216 or later? Answering these questions will give us a clearer picture of Carthage's

overall military strategy.

Following Hannibal's mobilization in 219, he began the arduous overland trek from

Spain to Italy. If the ancient sources are correct, Hannibal suffered incredible losses in his effort

to battle a number of tribes in order to enter Italy by crossing the Alps in 218. This begs two

questions: (1) are these numbers reliable, and (2) if so, why did Hannibal not go by sea? Gabriel

tells us that Hannibal left New Carthage with approximately 80,000 men.[180] By the time he

crossed into Gaul, Gabriel tells us that he had only 59,000 men suggesting a loss of 21,000 men

before the Carthaginians reached the Rhone.[181] Then we are told that Hannibal arrived in the Po

valley with 23,000 men and 10 elephants out of the original 37 elephants.[182] This would represent

a loss of seventy-two percent of his total force before his arrival in Italy without having fought a

single Roman. Even Polybius estimated that 44,000 Carthaginians crossed the Rhone and 26,000

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[180] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 127.
[181] This number supported by Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 159.
[182] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 129. Polybius says that all of the elephants except one died following the battle of Trebia, III.74.11. Livy agrees (XXI.lvi.6-8) that most of the elephants died after Trebia. It would seem that most or all of the elephants survived the crossing of the Alps as well as the battles of Ticinus and Trebia, only to succumb to the cold.

arrived in the Po valley.[183] If Polybius's numbers are correct, they represent staggering losses. In

spite of Hannibal's subsequent victories, if his army experienced such losses due to combat and

the elements *prior* to his arrival in Italy, this would render Hannibal little more than a strategic

fool.

In light of this, a closer examination must be made of Hannibal's decision to march

overland from Spain into Italy. The source for Polybius' numbers is a bronze tablet erected by

Hannibal himself on the Lacinian promontory before he left Italy in 203.[184] On this tablet, he

recorded military strengths which Polybius found reliable. Fortunately there are good reasons to

suspect this source and there may be explanations for the numbers provided.

Perhaps, as Goldsworthy has suggested, the majority of losses were not combat-inflicted,

but were made up by deserters.[185] He argues that many of the troops were newly raised and

inexperienced and therefore "lacked both the enthusiasm and the stamina" to endure the

hardships expected of Hannibal.[186] Delbrück counters by suggesting that Hannibal's soldiers

were not draftees or young men, but soldiers who were "capable of withstanding every kind of

fatigue."[187] Since all ancient sources state that Hannibal's losses were significant, Goldsworthy

says that "it is probably best to accept them."[188] However, not all historians agree.

To writers who unquestioningly accept Polybius' reckoning as correct, Delbrück offers a

sharp rebuke. In a highly detailed analysis of the numbers, he states that the march-losses

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[183] Polybius III.56.4, III.60.5-7. Polybius' numbers state that 38 000 foot and 8 000 horse crossed the Rhone and that 20 000 foot and not more than 6 000 horse arrived in Italy. Polybius states that this latter number was taken from an inscription that Hannibal left at Lacinium.
[184] Polybius III.33.17-18.
[185] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 159.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 357.
[188] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 167. When writing about Cannae, Goldsworthy notes that Polybius puts the number of Roman casualties at Cannae as higher than the total force that started the battle (p.213). Clearly numbers in ancient texts must be viewed with a high degree of suspicion.

suffered by Hannibal were certainly less than 10,000 and possibly only a few hundred.[189] In

evidence he observes that if Polybius is correct, and the Carthaginians lost 13,000 soldiers

between the Pyrenees and the Rhone, this would be more than the Carthaginians lost at Trebia,

Trasimene, and Cannae combined.[190] And those battles were fought against Roman legions.

Delbrück also reminds us that military losses to barbarian tribes even up to the time of Caesar

were generally very low.[191] There is strong evidence, therefore, that the Lacinian tablet referred

to by Polybius is incorrect and that the combat actions of the Celts against the Carthaginians

were greatly exaggerated.[192] In summary, Hannibal probably started with a total force of

approximately 82,000 men from which he allocated 26,000 for the defence of Spain and another

20,000 for the defence of Africa.[193] This meant that Hannibal started his journey with some

36,000 men and crossed the Alps with about 34,000 men and may have lost up to 2,000 along the

way.[194] This, I think, puts to rest any notion that Hannibal was strategically reckless at the very

start of his campaign.

<center>Annihilation or Attrition or Exhaustion</center>

When one regards the rapid and successive victories won by Hannibal, it is hard not to

conclude that his grand strategy was the annihilation of Rome. But it was not. If Hannibal

recognized that the Roman centre of gravity was their apparatus of state, then it is clear that his

military actions were intended to subject the Roman senate to strategic exhaustion. The

destruction of Roman armies was part of this plan. However, Carthage could not hope to destroy

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[189] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 358.
[190] Ibid., 360.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid. For comparison, Delbrück also notes that Caesar, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon also understated their armies' strengths in their bulletins and memoirs, p. 362.
[193] Polybius III.33. The numbers provided by Polybius are actually smaller than the number calculated by Delbrück. Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 360.
[194] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 362.

every Roman army. Even though Hannibal soundly defeated a numerically superior Roman army

at Cannae in 216, the Roman reserves of manpower were vast. Gabriel reckons that the

Carthaginians could muster a maximum of 150,000 men for military service in both the army and

the navy.[195] By comparison, he estimates that the Romans could draw from a pool of some

770,000 infantry and cavalry.[196] In his words, "any attempt by Carthage to fight a war of attrition

or to engage in multiple theatres of operations had to eventually fail."[197] Delbrück agrees that

annihilation was not Hannibal's strategy, and suggests that it was one of exhaustion, but only

insomuch as the destruction of some Roman forces was needed to force a new treaty.[198] The fact

that Carthage speaks about Rome, albeit in a weakened state, in her treaty with Philip V of

Macedon indicates that Carthage expected Rome to exist at the end of the war.[199]

To Attack or not to Attack Rome

If there is one aspect of Carthaginian strategy which has caused historians much angst, it

is to be found in the varied commentaries regarding Hannibal's decision not to attack the city of

Rome. Following Hannibal's victory at Cannae, his cavalry commander Maharbal urged him to

march directly on Rome. When Hannibal refused, Maharbal is said to have quipped, "you know

how to gain a victory Hannibal: you know not how to use one."[200] Gabriel says that Hannibal

made an enormous strategic error by not investing the city of Rome earlier in the campaign after

the Battle of Trasimene in 217.[201] Goldsworthy, on the other hand, says that Hannibal lacked the

military capacity to sack the city, but muses whether a siege would have been sufficient to alter

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[195] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 30.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 362-3.
[199] Polybius VII.9.
[200] Livy XXII.li.4.
[201] Richard Gabriel, "Hannibal's Big Mistake." *Military History.* (November 2011): 71.

the disposition of the Roman senate after Cannae in order to negotiate a truce and a new treaty.[202] Meanwhile Livy reminds us that Hannibal had attempted to storm Spoletium after his victory at Trasimene in 217 – and was repulsed.[203] This apparently served as a sober reminder to Hannibal that Rome would be difficult to invest and that victory would be an enormous undertaking (*quanta moles*).[204] Clearly there are many who agree that Hannibal made a strategic blunder by not attacking Rome in 217, 216, or even in 211. So why did Hannibal not attack Rome and was his decision supportive of his overall strategy or not?

In order to attack the capital, Carthaginian forces would have been forced to lay siege. While Hannibal was experienced at siege warfare, it was not something that was easily accomplished. During the siege to capture Saguntum in 219, Polybius tells us that Hannibal participated personally in the "battering operations."[205] Nevertheless it took eight full months before Hannibal was able to take that city by storm.[206] However Rome was not Saguntum. During the Second Punic War, the city of Rome was ringed by the Servian Wall which dated to the early part of the 4th century B.C.[207] This impressive battlement was 33 feet high with a perimeter of some 7 miles.[208] Furthermore, at the time, Rome had a population of a half million people and could easily muster 10 000 defenders.[209] When the younger Scipio besieged and sacked the similar sized city of Carthage during the Third Punic War, it took him three full years to take the city.[210] Although this appears, on the surface, to have been a sure way for Hannibal to target the

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[202] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 216.
[203] Livy XXII.ix.1.
[204] Livy XXII.ix.1.
[205] Polybius III.17.8-9.
[206] Polybius III.17.10.
[207] Livy VI.xxxii.1; VII.xx.9
[208] Gabriel, "Hannibal's Big Mistake," 70.
[209] Gabriel, "Hannibal's Big Mistake," 71.
[210] The siege occurred between 149-146. Only fragments remain in Polybius' 38th book. The principal sources for the Third Punic War are Silius Italicus and Appian who lived in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD respectively.

Roman apparatus of state, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible for Hannibal to lay siege to the entire city with allies and other legions harrying him.

Even if we accept Gabriel's notion that Hannibal should have attacked Rome after Trasimene (217)[211] and not Cannae (216), the Romans still had a significant advantage. Despite the loss of Flaminius' legions at Trasimene, there were still at least nine legions elsewhere in Italy.[212] Even if some were far away in places like Tarentum, Sardinia, Sicily, or other places,[213] a serious threat to the capital would have instantly recalled legions from abroad.

According to Polybius, it took only forty days for Tiberius Sempronius Longus to march his forces from Lilybaeum to Ariminum in 218.[214] Also, as early as 225, Polybius estimates the available manpower pool of Rome at some 700,000 Romans and allied soldiers.[215] Even if we account for 15,000 Romans lost at Trasimene[216] and another 4,000 cavalry under the proprietor Gaius Centenius,[217] this hardly represented a significant reduction in the total number of military forces that would have been rallied to protect the capital. Had Hannibal invested the city of Rome, he would have been forced to fight outside the walls or lift the siege. In neither of these scenarios would Hannibal have captured the city in spite of the obvious value of Rome as the seat of government.

Furthermore, following the battle of Trasimene in 217, Gabriel reminds us that Hannibal was just 10 days march from the city of Rome.[218] In doing so he implies that Hannibal could have marched to Rome and secured a rapid victory. Even if it had been Hannibal's strategic desire to seize the Roman capital, there is some question as to whether he possessed adequate siege

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[211] Gabriel, "Hannibal's Big Mistake," 71.
[212] Iblid., 69.
[213] Polybius III.75.4.
[214] Polybius III.68.14.
[215] Polybius II.24.14.
[216] Livy XXII.vii.2.
[217] Livy IIXX.viii.1.
[218] Gabriel, "Hannibal's Big Mistake," 69.

equipment to do so. We know that when Hannibal left Spain, he left behind all of his "heavy baggage."[219] We are not told the contents of the heavy baggage, but it would be safe to assume that this included tools and fittings which would be used with artillery in siegecraft.[220]

The Carthaginians were skilled in siegecraft. During the siege of Saguntum, we know that Hannibal used several engineering strategies including penthouses, towers, and battering rams.[221] We also know that the Carthaginians in Spain had ballistae (catapults) and scorpions (stone slingers) because they were noted as being part of the Carthaginian booty in Spain when Scipio captured Carthago Nova in 210.[222] However, there appears to be no mention of siege artillery in any of Hannibal's Italian operations. Such pieces of siege equipment are quite a bit more sophisticated than a siege tower or a battering ram which could easily built on site. Even though the Romans claim that they could build a ballista in 10 days, this is probably a ballista built from partly constructed parts and not a ballista built from raw materials.[223] And the Carthaginians undoubtedly did not have these resources, having certainly left them in Spain. Without artillery, this would have left the Carthaginians with the lengthy, intensive siege processes of contravallation, circumvallation, mining, battering, and breaching with towers.[224] It is hardly likely that the Carthaginians could have breached the walls before the Romans were reinforced. Since Hannibal was unable to attack the Roman seat of government that was in the city of Rome, this explains why Hannibal chose to attack the apparatus of state indirectly.

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[219] Polybius III.34.5-6.

[220] Although most of the components of an ancient artillery weapon such as an ancient *ballista* were made out of wood, many parts were not. Presumably parts of heavy artillery were brought along in the baggage train since their fabrication would be very difficult during a siege. Each of the torsion springs of the cross-bow shaped *ballista* were held in place by massive bronze or iron fittings called *modioli.*

[221] Livy XXI.x.10.

[222] Livy XXVI.xlvii.5-6.

[223] Märss, Jaan. "The Ballista Under Construction" http://jaanmarss.planet.ee/juhendid/Kaugrelvad_Antiik-Kreekas/andmebaas/palintoni%20rekonstr/ConstructionPics.htm (Accessed 29 May 2014).

[224] *The Roman Army,* Ed. Chris McNab (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2010), 192-194. Contravallation was the process of ringing a town with a ditch to protect besiegers from missiles. Circumvallation was the process of building a second ditch to protect besiegers from harrying forces or relief armies.

During the course of the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians did participate in a number of sieges of smaller settlements. The corn depot of Clastidium was taken by treachery in 218.[225] Casilinum was besieged in 218. Although there is evidence of battering and mining operations, there is no mention of artillery in Livy.[226] The city finally submitted to terms. Hannibal besieged Acerrae in 216 although it seems not to have been invested with siege engines, but rather with earthworks.[227] Hannibal also besieged Nuceria in 216 and it is uncertain whether he used siege engines here either. What is clear is that Nuceria surrendered and was not sacked by force.[228] Hannibal was unable to take Nola despite three attempts in 216, 215, and 214. Capua defected to Hannibal in 216 and Tarentum was taken by treachery in 212.

In fact, during all of the sieges laid by Hannibal, siege engines (*machinationes*) are only mentioned during the failed investment of the citadel at Tarentum.[229] *Ballistae, scorpiones,* and *catapulta* are not mentioned at all in relation to any of Hannibal's operations. It is clear that when necessary, Hannibal used the indirect strategies of starvation or treachery as his principal siege tools rather than direct offensive action. This evidence strongly suggests that siegecraft played a very small role in the overall strategy of the Carthaginians and that the actual capture of the Roman capital was never a strategic objective.

Hannibal did march on the city of Rome once in 211. However, this would appear to be in response to the Romans besieging the town of Capua. It was Hannibal's hope that, by marching on Rome, he would force the Romans to lift their siege.[230] The fact that he did not begin to invest the city is evidence that his action was a counter-move that was made in an effort

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[225] Livy XXI.xlviii.9.
[226] Livy XXIII.xviii-xix. We do hear of artillery being employed, but by the Romans and not the Carthaginians such as when the Romans besieged Capua in 211: Livy XXVI.vi.4.
[227] Livy XXIII.xvii.5.
[228] Livy XXIII.xv.4-6.
[229] Livy XXV.xi.10.
[230] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 79.

to shape the forces of the Romans and compel them to respond and react. Strategically it was important because it was necessary for Carthage to provide support for the Capuans who had defected to his cause early in the war. In this instance it was essential for Hannibal to relieve pressure on Capua or risk losing his centre of gravity, which was his invulnerability in the eyes of his Italian allies. In spite of the fact that Hannibal did march on the city, there is no sound evidence to suggest that it was ever a strategic goal of Hannibal to capture the city of Rome. Nor is there any sound evidence to suggest that it was even physically possible.

<div align="center">The Naval Strategy of Carthage</div>

It is popularly believed that the Carthaginians were well outmatched on the seas during the Second Punic War and that this fact accounts for the tiny number of naval engagements. In addition, Gabriel argues that Hannibal's decision to march overland into Italy was not strategic but incidental because Carthage had too small a navy to transport his army.[231] Gabriel further argues that "Carthage's inability to protect its sea-lanes placed severe limits on its strategic capability."[232] By this he is referring to Carthage's ability to resupply its forces, reinforce its army, and protect the coast of Africa from raiding.[233]

It has also been suggested that Hannibal lacked the ships to effectively transport his remaining force back to Africa in 203.[234] The source of this claim is Diodorus Siculus, a Greek writer who wrote during the first century B.C. He does not claim that Hannibal lacked naval transports, but rather he claims that Hannibal slaughtered 3,000 horses and innumerable pack

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[231] Richard Gabriel, "Masters of the Mediterranean." *Military History*. (December 2007): 39.
[232] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 32.
[233] Ibid.
[234] J. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World, Volume 1, From the Defeat of the Spanish Armada to the Battle of Waterloo* (New York: Da Capo, 1954),

animals.[235] Appian of Alexandria, another historian who wrote more than 300 years after the battle of Zama (202) puts the number at 4,000 and claims that it was due to a lack of ships.[236] It is likely that Appian used Diodorus as his source. However, these claims need to be examined more closely.

In the same passage, Diodorus claims that Hannibal tricked and then executed 20,000 Italian allies who did not want to embark with him to Africa.[237] Livy tells a similar tale, though he does not tally the allies that were killed. He says that they were rounded up in the temple of Juno Lacinia and killed.[238] This temple is hardly large enough to contain 20,000 men or even 2,000 men and it is doubtful that Hannibal would risk the lives of his fighting force to kill his Italian allies. Frank Moore says that "the whole story seems to be fictitious."[239] If we are to accept that the slaughter of the men in the passage is a literary embellishment why do we accept that the slaughter of the horses in the same passage was not?

Diodorus also mentions that 4,000 cavalry of Masinissa defected to Hannibal (in Africa) and that he had them all killed, but gave their mounts to his own soldiers.[240] Are we to believe that Hannibal killed 4,000 trained Numidian cavalrymen who had defected from his enemy and volunteered to fight for him? Lastly Appian says that Hannibal built ships to transport his army back to Africa and that Italy provided an abundance of wood.[241] This statement defies belief. While it is true that Hannibal travelled with engineers who helped build siegeworks, rafts, and

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[235] Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* XXVII.9.

[236] Appian *History of Rome.- The Hannibalic War* 9.59

[237] Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* XXVII.9.

[238] Livy XXX.xix.6. The temple is 38.15m wide x 16.9m long.

[239] Livy. *History of Rome.* Vol. VII. Ed. Jeffrey Henderson. Trans. Frank Moore (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940-2004), 441, note 2.

[240] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* XXVII.10

[241] Appian *History of Rome - The Hannibalic War* 9.58. Livy merely says that he put his ships into a state of readiness XXX.xix.5.

bridges,[242] it is hardly believable that he possessed skilled shipwrights and the time to build any quantity of seaworthy vessels to transport troops back to Africa.[243] All of this is to say that many of the details in these passages are not trustworthy and so it would be rash to conclude that Hannibal slaughtered his own cavalry mounts due a lack of transports.[244] Ultimately Hannibal did transport his army to Africa and landed unopposed at Hadrumentum. This suggests that the Carthaginian navy was not as weak as has been suggested and that the so-called Roman control of sea-lanes has been overstated.

In sharp contrast to any notion that Rome controlled sea-lanes during the Second Punic War, Basil Liddel-Hart calls the concept of Rome's command of the sea "absurd."[245] He suggests that the primitive nature of the vessels and poor intelligence on naval matters prevented any serious naval counter-measures.[246] If one naval force did observe another naval force it was doubtful or impossible that the pursuing vessels could overtake the fleeing vessels. This was clearly demonstrated at Pisa in 217. [247] Far from the notion that the Romans commanded the seas, Liddel-Hart points to a passage in Polybius which states that early in the war, the Romans were fearful lest the Carthaginians should "make a more serious effort to regain the command of the sea."[248] With such diverse positions it is important to analyze the impact of the naval strategy on the outcome of the war.

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[242] Polybius III.46.1-5. This passage describes how Hannibal's engineers fashioned rafts in order to get his elephants across the Rhone River.

[243] In addition to timber, ancient cargo and war vessels required a large quantity of specialized supplies including rope, sailcloth, pitch, caulking, metal fittings, and possibly bitumen. Morrison and Coates, *The Athenian Trireme,* 180-191.

[244] Polybius XV.3.5-6 says that Hannibal tried to obtain horses from Tychaeus, a relative of Syphax in Africa. So Hannibal may have arrived in Africa weak in cavalry.

[245] Liddell-Hart, *Strategy,* 44.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Ibid. A Roman fleet pursued a Carthaginian fleet in 217 as it fled from Pisa, but the Romans could not overtake vessels of roughly the same construction at sea. Polybius III. 96.11.

[248] Liddel-Hart, *Strategy,* 44. Polybius III.97.2-3.

The naval strategy of the Carthaginians can be broken down into several components: strategic raiding, strategic resupply, blockades, and direct naval action. At about the same time that Hannibal was fighting at Trebia, Carthaginian naval forces were already at work. One of the first strategic objectives was naval raiding along the coast of Italy.[249] Such action with twenty quinqueremes was doubtless intended to support the land campaign by wreaking havoc along the coast. Such action would consume Roman naval resources by obligating them to deploy naval patrols in a defensive posture along the coast. But this initial naval raiding was also a feint.

While these raiding parties were moving along the coast, the main armada of thirty-five quinqueremes was sailing from Carthage with the intent of seizing the major military port of Lilybaeum on the island of Sicily. This objective, like many others, supported the Carthaginian offensive by targeting the Roman's apparatus of state. First it was a major Roman port on the island of Sicily. Capturing the port and any part of the garrison or fleet would have signalled to the Romans and their allies that the Roman state was incapable of protecting their holdings on the island of Sicily. This would have been hailed as a great victory in Carthage since Sicily had been wrested from them back in 241. Secondly, a success in Sicily early in the war might have allowed Carthage to seize the island and use it as a base from which to launch operations in southern Italy or as a base for resupply.

So important was the objective of Lilybaeum that the Carthaginians timed their departure from Africa so that they might arrive in the dark. With the marines on board, the thirty-five vessels likely carried about 1,750 marines. Unfortunately a Carthaginian sailor captured from another vessel betrayed the plan and a Roman watch detected the fleet before they could assault an unprepared enemy. With the planned night attack having been abandoned, the fleet arrayed themselves for combat on the sea, but the Carthaginian force was defeated with a loss of some 7

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[249] Livy XXI.xlix.1-6.

ships and a total of 1700 sailors and marines.[250] More importantly, Carthage had lost an early

opportunity to seize the initiative in Sicily which undoubtedly had an impact on subsequent

operations at Syracuse and elsewhere in Italy proper.

The failure of the Carthaginians to capture a port in Sicily was matched only by the

failure of the main force to do so in the Italian peninsula. Despite Hannibal's relative control

over most of Campania from 216 onwards, he was unable to capture any major port such as

Sinuessa (actually in Latium near Campania), Cumae, Naples, or Puteoli[251] even though such was

his desire.[252] Ultimately Hannibal destroyed Nuceria in 216, but Nuceria is not a port and was

situated about nine miles from the sea.[253]

On the opposite, Adriatic coast, Polybius tells us that Hannibal passed through the

territories of Praetutia, Hadriana, Marrucina and Frentana and marched towards Iapygia which is

in the heel of Italy near Brundisium. This is south of Cannae. The whole trip is covered in only a

handful of lines in Polybius, but Hannibal is along the coast the whole time and unable or

unwilling to attack major sea ports. [254] For six years following his invasion of Italy in 218,

Hannibal did not control a major port. Strategically this meant that the Carthaginians possessed

no major base for maritime operations on the Italian peninsula from which to interdict Italian

trade. If the Roman centre of gravity was the apparatus of state, it was essential that Hannibal not

only sway towns to his cause and destroy armies, but also disrupt Roman daily life by affecting

trade. A disruption in maritime trade would have had an impact on all of Rome's allies and not

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[250] Livy XXI.xlix.5-6.

[251] Also called Dicaearchea in Greek by Polybius. Polybius III.91.4.

[252] The Romans under Sempronius Gracchus resisted Hannibal at the siege of Cumae: Livy, XXIII.xxxv-xxxvii. Although Hannibal laid waste right up to the town of Sinuessa, he was unable to capture the town: Livy XXII.xiii.10. Hannibal turned aside from Neapolis after learning that the city was held by Marcus Junius Silanus: Livy XXIIIxv.1. Hannibal attacked Puteoli from every direction before abandoning the attempt: Livy XXIV.xiii.6-7.

[253] Pliny, *Natural History.*3.62. Polybius III.91.4 mentions Nuceria in a list of Campanian sea ports, but it is not clear that it was a major port since the town was situated inland. It likely had some sort of dock facilities near the coast. However there is no mention that Hannibal ever targeted Nuceria due to its utility for naval operations.

[254] Polybius III.88.

just the city of Rome itself. While Hannibal achieved this goal to a certain extent with his land campaign, he was not as successful with maritime trade.

This changed - somewhat - in 212. In this year Hannibal managed to breach the walls of Tarentum, on the gulf of the same name, by treachery. He had set his sights on Tarentum, in part because the other major sea port in Calabria was Brundisium and it was controlled by a strong Roman garrison.[255] Unfortunately his attack on Tarentum did not allow him to capture the citadel. This citadel was virtually unassailable and it controlled the mouth of the harbour.[256] So long as the citadel controlled the harbour, the Romans within could be resupplied by sea. To counter this, Hannibal directed that Tarentine ships trapped inside a small bay should be dragged through the city streets on wagons and dropped into the sea whence they could sail around to blockade the mouth of the harbour.[257] In spite of this tactical ingenuity, Hannibal did not ever capture the citadel and did not ever benefit from the full use of the harbour at Tarentum.

Notwithstanding these strategic failures, we know of several occasions when Hannibal made strategic use of the sea. Soon after the battle of Trasimene in 217, Hannibal sent messengers to Carthage in order to share news of his safe passage into Italy and of his victories at Ticinus, Trebia, and Trasimene.[258] This news was received with great eagerness and Carthage immediately sent reinforcements to both Spain and in Italy. However, for reasons unknown, Hannibal's reinforcements arrived at Pisa on the west coast of Italy while Hannibal was in Picenum on the Adriatic (eastern) coast. When news of a large Roman fleet nearby reached the ears of the Carthaginian admiral, he embarked and returned to Carthage, presumably without any

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[255] Livy XXIV.xiii.6.
[256] Livy XXV.xi.1-2; XXV.xi.10-14.
[257] Livy XXV.xi.16-20.
[258] Polybius III.87.3-5.

reinforcements reaching the main army.[259] In spite of this failure, the Carthaginians did receive

reinforcements once in 215 when Bomilcar arrived at Locri Epizephyrii near the Gulf of

Scylacium with troops, supplies, and elephants.[260] It is possible that Hannibal did receive

additional reinforcements by sea at other times which were not recorded by either of the two

most reliable sources. However such speculation is pure conjecture. To the best of our

knowledge, the remainder of Hannibal's resupply and reinforcement missions came overland.

Despite these actions, the Carthaginian strategic interest in Sicily had not slackened.

However, instead of setting their sights on Lilybaeum, this time the focus was on Syracuse. The

Carthaginian navy commander, Bomilcar, first sailed unchallenged in the harbour at Syracuse in

213, but quickly retired as he judged that his fleet was outnumbered by the Romans two to one.[261]

Not long after he returned with ships of the Carthaginian fleet.

By 212 the situation in Syracuse was dire. With part of the city captured by the Romans,

Bomilcar ran a Roman blockade during a storm with 35 ships, leaving 55 ships behind.[262] Several

days later he returned with 100 ships.[263] After some unspecified engagements, Bomilcar sailed

back to Carthage and returned again to Sicily, this time with 130 warships and 700 transports.[264]

For once it seemed that the Carthaginians actually achieved naval superiority and the Roman

commander Marcellus deployed his fleet to prevent Bomilcar from reaching Syracuse.[265] At this

point something very odd occurred. Perhaps it was Bomilcar's lack of confidence or perhaps the

memory of Carthage's great failure at the Aegates islands in 241 haunted him.[266] Whatever his

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[259] Polybius III.96.10-11.
[260] Livy XXIII.xli.10-11.
[261] Livy XXIV.xxxvi.7-8.
[262] Livy XXV.xxv.11-13. A bold move, probably made possible by skilled crews.
[263] Ibid. John Lazenby, *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 117.
[264] Livy XXV.xxvii.3-4.
[265] Livy XXV.xxvii.9.
[266] The main naval battle won by the Romans that ended the First Punic War.

reason, Bomilcar withdrew without contest and made for Tarentum with his fleet after

dispatching the transports back to Carthage. In this way the fate of Syracuse was sealed and any

serious hope of a strategic second front in Sicily was doomed. John Lazenby calls this the

"turning point of the war."[267] This is probably overstated since Hannibal still controlled both

Capua and Tarentum in 212. But the loss of Syracuse was certainly a blow to the Carthaginians.

While these naval actions were occurring in Italy and Sicily, other naval actions were

occurring in the third theatre of operations – Spain. A surprise attack by the Romans on

unprepared Carthaginian-Iberian crews early in 217 was disastrous. It cost the Carthaginians

dearly. Between the vessels sunk and those captured on the beach, the Carthaginians lost thirty-

one of forty vessels – a painfully high cost for a single action early in the war.[268] In a counter-

stroke, the Carthaginians captured a resupply fleet headed for Spain from Ostia.[269] This

demonstrates the ability of the Carthaginians to perform maritime interdictions at sea. Neither of

these naval actions had profound impacts on the outcome of the war. But Rome did increase its

naval patrols to prevent naval raiding. The brothers Scipio (Publius and Gnaeus) were dispatched

to Spain with instructions to prevent reinforcements from reaching Hannibal in Italy. No major

reinforcements arrived by sea until 205 when Mago arrived with some 14,000 troops and

immediately captured Genoa.[270] By 204 he was reinforced with some 6,000 infantry, 800 cavalry,

and 7 elephants.[271] However, by this time Hannibal had lost the initiative in Italy and Mago's

reinforcements became strategically irrelevant. Although Mago's intent was to link up with

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[267] Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 115.
[268] Livy XXII.xix-xx.
[269] Livy XXII.xi.6. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War,* 68. Lazenby argues that the Roman ships were captured by the same fleet that hoped to meet with Hannibal at Pisa in 217.
[270] Livy XXVIII.xlvi.7-8. Although Hannibal was not reinforced until 205, the Carthaginians did reinforce their effort in Sicily in 211 when they sent 8 000 infantry and 3 000 Numidian cavalry to their second front in Sicily. Livy.XXVI.xxi.14.
[271] Livy XXIX.iv-v

Hannibal, he was unable to do so and was largely confined to northern Italy until the end of the war.

In summary, Hannibal's lack of effort to control or interdict sea ports can only be viewed as a singular strategic failure. Not only did he deny himself the opportunity to be resupplied by sea, but he also failed to interdict Roman trade and to deny his enemy access to these ports. If Rome's centre of gravity was, in fact, their apparatus of state, it is certain that naval operations which targeted this centre of gravity, including major military and trading ports, could have helped to pressure the Romans into a settlement.

The Naval Strategy of Rome

Like the Carthaginians, the Romans employed a naval strategy. We know that in the opening days of the war, Rome sent Publius Scipio to Iberia with 60 ships and Tiberius Sempronius Longus to Africa with 160 quinqueremes.[272] The purpose of such naval operations was clear: Publius was to engage Hannibal in Spain and Tiberius was to besiege Carthage.[273] Had these two forces arrived and engaged their respective opponents, two things might have happened. Doubtless Publius' forces, which were wholly outmatched, would have been destroyed by Hannibal. On the other hand, perhaps Hannibal would have been forced to retire to Africa by Tiberius. Of course neither of these things occurred because Hannibal pre-empted these options by attacking Italy from the north. These actions do, however, speak of Rome as a nation with a deliberate and focussed naval strategy. This naval strategy was initially characterized by speed, offensive action, and expeditionary warfare. Unfortunately neither of

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[272] Polybius III.41.2.
[273] Polybius III.61.8-9.

these Roman naval actions early in the war served their intended purpose and much effort was expended with minimal results.

First, the naval squadron under Publius Scipio's command in 218 took the less perilous route towards Spain via the sea. In fact, so fast was his deployment that he arrived at the mouth of the Rhone even as Hannibal was attempting to cross it thereby surprising both armies.[274] Next was the expeditionary fleet of Sempronius. This fleet was one of the largest fleets mentioned at any time during the war with 160 ships.[275] It was deployed rapidly before intelligence had been gathered regarding Hannibal's march into Italy. Far from thinking of Hannibal as a threat in Italy, it is clear that the Roman senate viewed Carthage in Africa as the strategic centre of gravity and sought to invest it at the earliest opportunity.[276] This would have been an entirely sensible course of action had Hannibal not marched into Italy.

Once Hannibal's true intentions were divined, Sempronius was forced to abandon his plan and move his legions from their embarkation point in Lilybaeum to the north (Ariminum) in order to engage Hannibal.[277] When Hannibal's invasion was discovered, the Romans viewed the Carthaginian army in Italy as the enemy's centre of gravity. From this point the Romans had lost the initiative. They abandoned all hopes of a siege of Carthage and their naval forces in Africa were relegated to raiding parties only.[278] Though these raiding parties were somewhat successful, they served to have an economic impact on Carthage at a time when the Carthaginian army in Italy was economically independent.

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[274] Polybius III.44.3. Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 162.
[275] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 115. Goldsworthy notes fleets of 350 vessels and perhaps as large as 464 ships in the Roman fleet at Cape Hermaeum in 255.
[276] Polybius III.61.8.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Livy XXIII.xli.8-9; XXVII.iv.1-2. In one significant raid, the Roman naval commander Titus Otacilius sailed into the harbour at Utica with eighty quinqueremes and captured 130 cargo vessels filled with grain. This grain was sent to Syracuse. Livy XXV.xxxi.12-15. This proved timely since the Romans soon recaptured Syracuse which was in dire need of supplies.

Maritime warfare was new to the Romans during the third century B.C. The nature of naval warfare had changed and the Romans were not quick to recognize this. The principal war vessel of the Mediterranean during the 4th and 5th centuries was the trireme made famous by the Athenians and their wars with the Persians. This was a vessel with three banks of oars with one rower to each oar. However, technological improvements made the trireme nearly obsolete by the third century B.C. John Morrison and John Coates credit the Carthaginians with the invention of fours.[279] Diodorus credits Dionysius I of Syracuse with the invention of fives.[280]

Roman vessels were inferior at this time until the Romans captured a Carthaginian vessel that had run aground during the First Punic War.[281] It is not certain that this was a quinquereme since Polybius calls it a cataphract and uses a different word – *penteres* - (πεντήρης) to describe actual quinqueremes. Whatever its size and design, the Romans felt that it was a superior vessel and used it as a blueprint for their entire fleet during the early part of the First Punic War.[282] Later, in 242, the Romans captured a second vessel, this one a tetrareme.[283] For the second time the Romans used a Carthaginian vessel as a blueprint for a new fleet of ships.[284]

One of the reasons for changing from the trireme to the quinquereme was the necessity of carrying catapults and marines. Triremes won battles at sea by ramming other vessels and

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[279] J. Morrison & J. Coates, *The Athenian Trireme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 46. See also Pliny *Natural History* 7.207.

[280] Diodorus 14.41.3, 44.7. Nobody knows the true oar configuration of either fours or fives. It has been proposed that a four might be a four banked vessel with one rower to each oar and that a five might be a five banked vessel with one rower to each oar. However, such configurations would necessarily increase the freeboard of the war vessel thereby making it more unstable in the water. It would also greatly increase the weight by increasing the number of oars. It is more likely that a "four" was a two banked vessel with two rowers per oar and that a "five" was a three banked vessel with rowers configured 2-2-1 to the oars.

[281] Polybius I.20.15-16. Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 104.

[282] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 104.

[283] Polybius I.47.9-10.

[284] Polybius I.59.8.

disabling them or sinking them.[285] Tetraremes and Quinqueremes were larger and heavier

vessels. Heavier ships made them less manoeuvrable. Therefore ramming was no longer a key

mode of waging war. Instead it became more common for vessels to grapple and for marines to

board a vessel and to kill or take over the crew. This was certainly the case when Hannibal the

Rhodian lost his vessel to Roman marines in 242.[286]

In order to make such boarding easier, the Romans modified their war galleys to include

a boarding ramp. This device, called a *corvus,*[287] was essentially a bridge. Attached at one end to

the foremast of a war vessel, it could be swung over the deck of an opposing vessel and dropped

into place. A large spike in the bottom of the bridge would help to keep it secured in the deck of

the opposing vessel and prevent it from becoming dislodged.[288] The *corvus* is not mentioned

during the Second Punic War. This has led some to believe that this invention was discontinued,

even before the end of the First Punic War in 241.[289] In fact, it is popularly believed that the

weight of the *corvus* would "destabilize the Roman galley[s] and cause [them] to capsize."[290] As

a result some have suggested that the boarding bridge was responsible for significant losses at

sea in 255, 253, and 249.[291]

However, this position is vigorously refuted by Bradley Workman-Davies. In his very

detailed analysis of the *corvus* including reconstructions, he has concluded that "the *corvus* as a

naval weapon was never removed from the quinqueremes of the Roman navy, which is contrary

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[285] There is some discussion that these war vessels rarely sank at all and that, if punctured, the vessels would swamp but not sink. This would allow the victors to tow damaged vessels to shore after a battle for repairs or plunder. This might account for the fact that no oared galleys have been discovered by any nautical archaeologist.

[286] Polybius I.47.9-10.

[287] Also called a *harpago* in Latin or κόραξ in Greek.

[288] This spike may have inspired the name "Raven" by resembling the beak of the carrion bird.

[289] Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 38.

[290] B. Workman-Davies, *Corvus: A Review of the Design and Use of the Roman Boarding Bridge During the first Punic War 264-241 B.C.* (Raleigh: Lulu press, 2006), 171.

[291] Ibid. Gabriel, *The Fall of Carthage,* 115-116.

to the accepted view that the *corvus* was abolished during the course of the First Punic War."[292]

This may account for some of the Roman successes at sea during the Second Punic War and in particular the number of vessels captured. More importantly, the capturing of enemy vessels and the gradual improvement of those vessels speaks to a strategic innovation harnessed by the Romans in a way not fully embraced by the Carthaginians. While the Roman prowess at sea hints at a significant strategic capability, the Roman navy was underutilized during the Second Punic War. The navy did little to target the Carthaginian centre of gravity until late in the war when the Roman land forces had already captured Capua and Tarentum.

The Land Strategy of Carthage

The Carthaginians never intended to destroy Rome. Indeed, they could not. The treaty between Philip of Macedon and Hannibal makes this quite clear since it speaks of Rome *post bellum* as a distinct – if weakened – power.[293] However, in spite of the rather complex and comprehensive strategies discussed up to this point, the Carthaginians knew that the destruction of the Roman centre of gravity – the apparatus of state – could only be achieved with victory over the legions. In order to achieve this success, the Carthaginians hoped to use an indirect strategy to apply various levers of pressure onto the Romans in order to compel them to seek terms. According to Liddel-Hart, one who uses an indirect strategy employs both psychological and physical pressures on the enemy.[294] Hannibal was certainly well accustomed to using psychological weapons. The first of these psychological weapons was fear and anxiety caused by uncertainty. Hannibal's actions and victories routinely infused the Romans, including their senators, with terror. This, in turn, often caused the Romans to make hasty and ill-thought out

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[292] Workman-Davies, *Corvus,* 1.
[293] Polybius VII.9.
[294] Liddell-Hart, *Strategy,* 25.

decisions. So long as the Romans were reacting defensively to Hannibal's actions, they were unable to direct the type of offensive action that was necessary to attack Carthage's centre of gravity.

Perhaps the greatest example of strategic surprise during the war was Hannibal's decision to invade Italy directly via an overland route which included a passage through the Alps. Even though this move did not achieve the full strategic surprise that Hannibal had hoped for,[295] when news of this reached the Roman senate they were "astounded" and "filled with alarm."[296] Following the Roman defeat at Trasimene, Polybius tells us that the mood in the senate registered "consternation"[297] since the Romans were unaccustomed to defeat. Following Cannae in 216 the Roman senate were terrified and beginning to lose hope for Roman supremacy in Italy.[298] When Hannibal marched on Rome in 211 in order to relieve the Roman siege of Capua, the senate in Rome was in a panic.[299] In this way, the Carthaginian use of deliberate and selective land engagements contributed to the erosion of the Roman the apparatus of state. With this strategy, Carthage had hoped to exhaust Rome into seeking terms.

In Italy Carthage was particularly successful in selecting purposeful land engagements. By outmanoeuvring the Romans and anticipating their movements, Hannibal was able to compel the Romans into a series of reckless decisions. First the overconfident Publius Scipio, upon discovering Hannibal's army at the Rhone in 218, marched upriver in order to engage the enemy. This was a highly reckless act which surely would have resulted in his army being destroyed had he actually caught up with Hannibal. Next he sent his army on to Spain with his brother while he

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[295] Publius Scipio had discovered that Hannibal was moving east when he stopped at the Rhone. Polybius III.41.8.
[296] Polybius III.61.9.
[297] Polybius III.85.8.
[298] Polybius III.118.3-5; Livy XXII.lvii.2.
[299] Polybius IX.6.1.

returned to Italy. There he hoped to meet Hannibal before he emerged from the Alps.[300] He arrived in the Po valley in time to meet Hannibal and although outnumbered in both infantry and cavalry, he engaged Hannibal and was both defeated and wounded.[301] In a similar act of brazen recklessness the consul Gaius Flaminius was lured into an ambush in 217 when Hannibal passed his position and forced him to double back. The overconfident Flaminius was not using adequate reconnaissance.[302] In this way, the Carthaginians repeatedly compelled the Romans to react to their movements resulting in battle conditions which favoured the Carthaginians.

In addition to the Carthaginian emphasis on strategic manoeuvre, they also placed an enormous emphasis on the strategic make-up of their combined arms force. That the Carthaginians placed such a critical emphasis on their cavalry is highly significant. They knew very early in the war that the effective deployment of cavalry was going to be a key factor in fighting Roman armies. In speaking of the Carthaginian commitment to cavalry, Polybius notes that it was better to fight with half the infantry of the enemy so long as you had an overwhelming force of cavalry.[303] Time and again, the cavalry and, in particular, the Numidian light horse contributed to Carthaginian victories.[304] Cavalry played a key role in the defeat of Tiberius at the Trebia River in 218. Though outnumbered in total forces, Hannibal's cavalry greatly outnumbered the Roman cavalry.[305] Furthermore, even though the Romans outnumbered the Carthaginians at Cannae in 216, the Carthaginians still had almost twice as much cavalry.[306] The day was lost when Varro and his Roman cavalry quit the field leaving the Spanish and Gallic

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[300] Polybius III.49.4.
[301] Polybius III.65.7-11.
[302] Polybius III.79.1-4. This was the Roman defeat at Trasimene.
[303] Polybius III.117.4-5.
[304] Polybius III.72.10-11.
[305] Polybius III.72.6.
[306] Goldsworthy, *Cannae,* 95, 108.

cavalry of the Carthaginians to attack the Roman rear.[307] Hannibal viewed his cavalry as a strategic asset and made significant efforts to ensure that they remained strong and fit for battle.

This is certainly the reason that Hannibal chose the overland approach from Spain; he intended to arrive in Italy with a full complement of cavalry.[308] This is not the only reason that Hannibal marched from Spain. There can be no denying the assertion of Liddel-Hart and others that Hannibal went overland to secure allies.[309] But was this the *reason* for him to march overland or the *result* of his decision to march overland? Gaetano De Sanctis agrees that rallying allies was one of Hannibal's motivations. He also agrees somewhat with Gabriel and states that it would have been very costly for Hannibal to build the naval capacity necessary to contend with the Romans on the sea.[310] However, De Sanctis also argues that Hannibal's principal reason for travelling by land was because there was no other way to transport his cavalry.[311] He maintains that the cavalry was "that part of [Hannibal's] army on which he relied more for victory."[312] So it would seem that Hannibal's primary rationale for invading Italy by land was strategic. It was not out of fear of naval losses as many would have us believe, but rather in order to deploy the full capability of his combined arms army. This included his large and effective cavalry.

In Italy, Hannibal employed his military forces to support his strategic aim of attacking the Roman apparatus of state. In order for the Carthaginian strategy to be successful, Hannibal would have to sufficiently erode Roman warfighting capability. We have already established, above, that he could never win a war of attrition. However, he intended to convince them that he

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[307] Goldsworthy, *Cannae,* 146-151. The Numidian light cavalry of the Carthaginians pursued Varro off the field of battle.
[308] Ibid., 95, 108.
[309] Liddell-Hart, *Strategy,* 44.
[310] Gaetano De Sanctis, *Storia Dei Romani. Volume 3: L'Eta Delle Guerre Puniche Parte II,* Trans. V. Visca, (Rome: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1917), 11-12.
[311] De Sanctis, *Storia Dei Romani,* 11-12. De Sanctis makes several arguments here, suggesting that the high cost of a fleet was one factor and the availability of troop reinforcements from allies was another consideration.
[312] Ibid.

could cause them to suffer great losses. The losses included not only soldiers, but also a great number of Roman aristocracy. In addition to the Roman losses at Trasimene, they also lost a consul. At Cannae, the Romans lost another consul, "the quaestors of both consuls…twenty-nine military tribunes…[and] eighty senators."[313] Later in 216, the defection of Capua saw the Carthaginians hand over 300 Roman of high birth to the Capuans as hostages.[314] And at Herdonia in 210 the Romans lost another consul and eleven military tribunes.[315] It is clear that Hannibal intended to inflict military defeats onto the Romans with the corresponding losses of aristocrats, soldiers, and equipment.[316] When the Romans did not capitulate after Cannae, Hannibal boasted of a future defeat greater than Cannae.[317]

Although the greatest Carthaginian battlefield victory occurred at Cannae in 216, Hannibal won many more victories. At Herdonia in 212 Hannibal engaged the army of the praetor Gnaeus Fulvius with a loss of 16,000 Romans[318] – more than were lost by Flaminius at Trasimene. In 212, while pursuing the consul Appius Claudius from Capua, he crushed an army led by a centurion with the loss of nearly 15,000 soldiers and volunteers in Lucania.[319] Again near Herdonia in 210 Hannibal destroyed the army of the consul Gnaeus Fulvius[320] with the loss of somewhere between 7,000 and 13,000 men.[321] However, in these instances it should be noted that the Carthaginians did not engage Romans for the sake of battle and certainly not for the sake of attrition. The cities of Capua and Herdonia had defected to the Carthaginian cause soon after

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[313] Livy XXII.xlix.15-17.
[314] Livy XXIII.vi.2.
[315] Livy XXVII.i.12-13.
[316] Goldsworthy, *Cannae,* 95, 148. By the time of the battle of Cannae in 216, many of the Carthaginians were outfitted in the gear of Roman soldiers from the spoils taken at Trebia and Trasimene. Following Cannae, Hannibal must have had enough equipment to last him till the end of the war.
[317] Livy XXIII.xlii.4.
[318] Livy XXV.xxi.10.
[319] Livy XXV.xix.8-17. The centurion's name was Marcus Centenius Paenula. It is unknown why the senate would entrust the command of three legions to a centurion. Even the *primus pilus* of a regular legion commanded only a cohort of about 800 men.
[320] Not the same man.
[321] Livy XXVII.i.12-13.

Cannae in 216. In response the Romans were eager to retake those cities. If we agree that Hannibal's centre of gravity was the belief in his invulnerability in the eyes of his Italian allies, then it was essential for him to protect such settlements from Roman reconquest. Hannibal's credibility and his promise to his allies of freedom from Roman rule was dependent upon his ability to protect them from Roman retaliation if they should defect to his cause. His entire campaign hinged upon the continued loyalty of these new allied communities. Therefore it was essential that he protect them.

The Land Strategy of Rome

From the very outset of the war, the Romans were hampered by an unfocussed land strategy. Once the Romans had determined that their diplomatic threats had failed, they sought a quick victory through military intimidation. The Romans must have thought that their actions in 219-218 would have been as successful as they had been in 238 when Carthage ceded Sardinia and Corsica without fighting. It is therefore likely that Scipio's army was sent to Spain in 218 with the intent to strip the Carthaginians of Spanish possessions once the Roman main force under Sempronius Longus was successful coercing the Carthaginian senate in Africa. Naturally this did not come to pass, but it does illustrate how the Roman strategy – early in the war – was characterized by a degree of institutional arrogance and overconfidence. The Romans expected the Carthaginians to respond to diplomatic threats and when these failed, they expected the Carthaginians to respond to military threats. When this was not successful, the Romans fully expected their military forces to prevail.

At the outset of the war, the Roman military strategy sought to contain the army of Hannibal and to coerce the senate in two separate military actions. When the senate realized that

containment was impossible, the Roman strategy changed. Instead the strategy intended to prevent resupply of the main army in Italy while they intentionally and deliberately destroyed the main force. Though not overtly stated in either Livy or Polybius, the Romans surely considered Hannibal's main army to be the primary centre of gravity of the Carthaginians and that this army – and not their political masters – presented the greatest threat to the Roman people. However, this strategy of attrition failed to effectively target the Carthaginian true centre of gravity which was the Carthaginian allies' trust in Hannibal. Furthermore, the Roman land strategy was also made more complicated by the very centre of gravity which gave Rome strength – namely their apparatus of state.

The Roman people were governed by a senate and two elected consuls. In times of war, each consul commanded his own consular army and the apparatus of state provided for the rapid levying and equipping of armies.[322] However the consulship was also a pathway to power, prestige, and wealth in Rome in the third century BC. As such it often created rivalry between the two consular colleagues which, in turn, sometimes resulted in military decisions based on a consul's personal quest for glory. In the opening actions of the war, Publius Scipio tried to take on Hannibal's army alone and was quickly routed and severely wounded at the Ticinus in 218. When two consular armies fought together, the consuls commanded on alternate days.[323] Yet at the Trebia in 218, Sempronius Longus commanded his force *and* the remnants of Scipio's force owing to Scipio's injury and he was eager to keep it that way. Polybius tells us that he was motivated by "ambition and unreasonable confidence in his fortune."[324] Sempronius Longus hoped to defeat Hannibal himself before Scipio recovered or the consuls-designate for the

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[322] As occurred after Cannae. See above p. 35.
[323] Goldsworthy, *Cannae,* 49.
[324] Polybius III.70.5-8. It is unclear whether Scipio's so-called pleas for caution can be trusted. However, the rivalry between various commanding consuls is well documented. With Scipio wounded, it is highly likely that Sempronius Longus was hopeful of a military victory for his personal gain.

following year could take over.[325] Reckless for time, this caused him to engage Hannibal prematurely resulting in a second defeat. Following Sempronius Longus' defeat, consular command passed to Gaius Flaminius, the consul-designate for 217.[326]

Polybius characterizes Flaminius as eager and rash "with no talent for the practical conduct of war."[327] In fact this was Flaminius' second term as consul with the first term having occurred in 223. Flaminius was hated by a good number of the senate. Many even attempted to annul his previous consulship and to block his military triumph for victory over the Insubres.[328] Though it is possible that Livy wrote his critical account of Flaminius with the benefit of hindsight in a reverse-historical attempt to explain *why* Flaminius was ambushed and killed, it would appear that he was in conflict with the senate. Thus it is likely that he had something to prove to the senate. While his consular colleague was absent in Rome, Flaminius acted selfishly and rashly. His attempt to seek a quick decision with Hannibal resulted in the destruction of most of his consular army at Trasimene in 217 and his own death.

<div align="center">The Fabian Strategy</div>

It should be noted that the Romans employed other land strategies during the war. One of the most discussed is the so-called Fabian Strategy of Quintus Fabius Maximus. Following the defeat at Trasimene in 217 Fabius Maximus was appointed as dictator of the state. Much has been written about his strategy of shadowing the Carthaginian force and delaying.[329] Although Livy calls the policy of avoidance "skilled" or "expert,"[330] he also notes that members of the

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[325] Polybius III.70.7-8.
[326] His consular colleague, Gnaeus Servilius was still at Rome levying his legions. Livy XXII.i.1. He would later move to the area around Ariminum before taking command of the fleet.
[327] Polybius III.79.3. See also Milton. "Hammer of the Romans," 48.
[328] Livy XXI.lxiii.2-3.
[329] Milton, "Hammer of the Romans," 50.
[330] Livy XXII.xxiii.1.

senate did not see it this way. In the view of some, Fabius' actions resulted in the regions of Campania, Cales, and Falerii being laid waste.[331] Indeed, his shadowing of Hannibal's army suggests that he too considered it to be the Carthaginian centre of gravity. While Fabius' actions kept his army in contact with Hannibal's and may have restricted his freedom of movement to some degree, Fabius' unwillingness to prevent Hannibal from ravaging Campanian territory likely exacerbated some of the allies' hatred for Rome. This actually *strengthened* Hannibal's centre of gravity – at least for the present.

We should swiftly dispel the popular notion that Fabius' strategy granted Rome a reprieve or "breathing space" in order to rebuild its mauled legions. To validate this, one need only look at the numbers. It is true that Hannibal had routed Publius Scipio's forces at the Ticinus, but Hannibal did not pursue him. The losses are not recorded, but were probably low. Hannibal did capture 600 of Scipio's men who were left to fight a rearguard action at the Po river, but not before they destroyed their bridge of boats.[332] Though the losses at the Trebia in 217 are not known, they were certainly heavy.[333] And at Trasimene, we know that the losses were heavy though Livy and Polybius cannot agree on the numbers.[334] All told, the Romans likely lost the equivalent of one consular army between November 218 and April 217.

Though this was hardly good for the Republic, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that this was a great test for the Romans necessitating a strategy of delay. In fact, while Flaminius was ambushed by Hannibal, his consular colleague – Gnaeus Servilius Geminus was in the district of Ariminum and though he lost his cavalry to Maharbal, his army was otherwise

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[331] Livy XXII.xxv.7.
[332] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 171.
[333] Ibid., 180.
[334] Livy XXII.vii.1-3; Polybius III.85.1-2.

intact.[335] We have already noted that Hannibal was neither capable nor willing to besiege Rome. Instead he moved swiftly south along the Adriatic coast seeking allies and strengthening his army.[336] Delbrück suggests that Fabius' strategy was not merely that of delay, but one where he used "secondary methods"[337] – namely by depriving Hannibal of the ability to resupply his army. However there is little evidence that his actions had any meaningful impact. In spite of Fabius' actions, Hannibal's army was fresh and strong enough to annihilate Paullus' and Varro's legions at Cannae a year later. The real value of Fabius' actions had no real strategic impact on the war although they likely provided Rome with a temporary moral victory in that their armies suffered no major defeats while Fabius was dictator.[338] Apparently the Romans thought little of his actions for the following year they abandoned the dictatorship and returned to the system of two-consul rule.

Spain

The Romans long believed that Spain was an essential part of their land strategy during the Second Punic War. Certainly Gabriel believes that Spain provided Carthage with the "manpower and money to continue the war."[339] There is no doubt that Hannibal did, in fact use Spanish resources to prosecute the war. But was Spain truly his centre of gravity? If we are to believe that Spain was Carthage's centre of gravity and that Rome successfully targeted this centre of gravity, then we would have to demonstrate that:

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[335] Polybius III.85.4-7. 4000 cavalry were lost.

[336] This was accomplished by pillaging the countryside around communities. It should be remembered that Hannibal's army suffered considerably prior to Trasimene. Polybius III.79.9-12 tells us that Hannibal lost most of his pack animals. He also lost all but one of his elephants. His own army may have been buoyed by success, but they were hardly in a position to carry out sustained operations.

[337] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 363.

[338] During Fabius' absence from the army, some 5,000 soldiers were lost in a wasteful engagement. Though the Carthaginians had lost more, this was hardly seen as a victory for the Romans. Livy XXII.xxiv.12-14.

[339] Gabriel, *Great Captains of Antiquity,* 150-151.

1. The Carthaginian war effort was dependent upon Spanish money and troops;

2. The Roman war effort in Spain successfully prevented strategic resupply from occurring which resulted in the erosion of Hannibal's army in terms of troops, resources or both; and

3. This failure of resupply led directly to the failure of Hannibal to achieve his strategic objectives in Italy.

Unfortunately it is not possible to demonstrate any of these things and this calls into question the validity of any argument that Spain was critical to the Carthaginians and central to the ultimate Roman victory.

That Hannibal's army incorporated Spanish forces is undisputed. But by the time of Cannae, Hannibal's main army had not been reinforced. Therefore, accounting for casualties at Ticinus, Trebia, and Trasimene, at Cannae Hannibal probably fielded less than 2,000 Spanish cavalry, some light infantry, and not more than 4,000 Spanish close order troops.[340] This is something less than twenty percent of his total army and possibly less than fifteen percent. By comparison, the Gauls supplied 19,000 – 21,000 foot in the main line[341] and as much as 4,000 – 5,000 cavalry.[342] What this tells us is that in the short time between Hannibal's first contest in Italy and the battle of Cannae in 216 his dependence on Spanish forces had decreased substantially. Indeed, by Cannae, more than fifty percent of his total force was locally recruited.

In order to evaluate the Carthaginian's dependence upon Spain, it will be useful to examine the Carthaginian pattern of reinforcements. Hannibal received reinforcements and attempts at reinforcement on a number of occasions. The first occasion was in 217 when a fleet

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[340] Goldsworthy, *Cannae,* 110.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Ibid., 108. (My calculations based on Goldsworthy's force estimates.) 10 000 cavalry fought for Hannibal at Cannae. He arrived in Italy with 6 000 Numidian and Spanish cavalry. Accounting for casualties since 218, this leaves something in the order of 4 000 – 5 000 cavalry that must have come from the Gauls.

attempted to resupply Hannibal at Pisa.[343] This was the fleet that was unable to link-up with Hannibal and returned, presumably without having left any reinforcements. The next occasion occurred in 215 when Bomilcar brought reinforcements to Italy when he landed at Locri Epizephyrii.[344] These reinforcements, including troops and elephants were eventually brought to Hannibal by Hanno.[345] Both of these resupply missions came from Carthage.

The fact that both of these reinforcement missions came from Carthage is significant. First, it signalled that the national war policy was being controlled centrally from Africa. By 217 the government of Carthage recognized that the war, at this point, was a two theatre war. Optimistic from their success in Italy, eager to maintain their offshore possessions in Spain, they decided to reinforce both theatres *from Carthage.* Notwithstanding the fact that the 217 mission did not link-up with Hannibal in Italy, it was clearly not essential as it had no effect on the Carthaginian's stunning victory at Cannae. By 215 Hannibal was operating far in the south. When Bomilcar and Hanno reinforced Hannibal through Locri, it made good strategic sense for these reinforcements to come from Carthage because the distance was shorter and, contrary to popular belief, the Romans did not control the sea lanes.[346]

Attempts were also made to reinforce Carthage by land during the war. The first attempt occurred in 215 when Hasdrubal, brother to Hannibal, was ordered into Italy by the Carthaginian senate.[347] Hasdrubal had warned the senate that such an act would leave Spain undefended, but the senate insisted that the main effort of the war should be in Italy with Hannibal. Unfortunately Hasdrubal's defeat at the hands of the Romans at Dertosa prevented Hasdrubal from making the

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[343] Polybius III.87.4-5.
[344] Livy XXIII.xli.10-11.
[345] Livy XXIII.xliii.5-6
[346] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 32.
[347] Livy XXIII.xxvii.9.

march.[348] Some might cite this as the effective use of Roman strategy and that by targeting Spain as a strategic platform for resupply they prevented these reinforcements from reaching Hannibal. As tempting as this hypothesis is, it does not stand up to greater scrutiny. First, the defeat of Hasdrubal did not prevent reinforcements from reaching Hannibal. He received them in any event, by sea, from Carthage. Second, by 215 Hannibal was supreme and undefeated in Italy. The lack of Spanish reinforcements had no impact on his victory at Cannae in 216 and had no impact on his ability to sway most of Campania to his cause including the key city of Capua in 216.

It is true that later in the war Hannibal had to make strategic choices and sacrificed Capua in favour of Tarentum.[349] Some might suggest that this was the cumulative effect of Carthaginian troop depletions and failed reinforcements brought about by the effective strategy of the Romans in Spain. However, to arrive at this conclusion, one would have to believe that the Romans, in 218, had decided on a slow war of attrition with the Carthaginians and that by 211 they were starting to see some results – seven years later. Unfortunately such a conclusion is not supported by the historic record.

The initial Roman force in Spain was sent, not to prevent reinforcements from reaching Italy, but to engage Hannibal who had violated the treaty with Rome by crossing the Ebro.[350] It is likely, judging by the small size of the expeditionary force sent to Spain, that the Romans expected a quick resolution and possibly a new treaty granting Rome greater rights in Spain. Far from regarding Spain as a strategic platform, Rome did not even know what war they were fighting in 218. Rome still viewed Carthaginian hegemony in Spain as the main threat and was

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[348] Livy XXIII.xxix.16-17.
[349] Livy XXVI.iv.1-2. Hannibal made several attempts to relieve Capua, but ultimately the Capuans yielded to the Romans.
[350] Polybius III.40.1-2.

attempting to use diplomacy and military force to retaliate for the sack of Saguntum and to either re-establish the Ebro treaty or to force a new one. Meanwhile, Hannibal and the Carthaginian senate viewed Italy as the main theatre of operations and had left Hasdrubal to defend Spain from Roman attack which they viewed as imminent and which subsequently occurred.[351]

In many respects, the Romans found themselves at war, in Spain without an actual campaign plan or national strategy of any sort. The opening strategic moves by the Romans in 218-217 were disastrous with the Romans always reacting and one step behind the Carthaginians. By overestimating their own capabilities and underestimating the Carthaginians,[352] the Romans had sent all of their expeditionary forces away from the theatre with the most significant threat. Up until 216, the Romans still believed that they could outwit Hannibal in Italy and defeat him in open battle. By the time that the Romans realized that Spain was inconsequential to Hannibal's victories in Italy, the Romans were heavily embattled in a second front in Spain. Disengagement from the Carthaginians at this point was improbable, if not, impossible. This was particularly true since the Romans were terrified that a second Carthaginian army might make its way into Italy the same way that Hannibal's had and with the same results.[353]

During the seven years between 218 and 211, the Carthaginians did suffer a number of defeats in Spain at the hands of the Romans including at Cissa (218),[354] the Ebro river (218) and Dertosa (215). The progress of the brothers Scipio suggests a steady erosion of Carthaginian forces. The defeat of Hasdrubal at Dertosa in 215 was hailed as a great victory by the Romans.

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[351] Polybius III.33.5-7. In his article "Rome vs. Carthage," Lee Levin suggests that Carthage left Hasdrubal with "leftovers" for troops and inferior commanders. Lee Levin, "Rome vs. Carthage: The Day the World Trembled." *Military History.* (June 2002): 62.

[352] This was complicated due to a lack of effective intelligence.

[353] Livy XXIII.xxix.16-17. Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 245.

[354] During this battle, the general Hanno was captured along with all of the heavy baggage that Hannibal had left behind prior to his trek over the Alps. Livy XXI.lx.8-9.

However the situation in Spain at this time was much more tenuous and more of a stalemate, a position supported by Gabriel.[355] Indeed, in 211 Hasdrubal Barca (defeated at Dertosa) rallied and defeated two Roman armies commanded by Publius Scipio (the general who engaged Hannibal at the Ticinus in 218) and his brother Gnaeus. Both brothers were killed in the engagements and their armies destroyed.

All of this is to say that the Romans in Spain were hard pressed to hold their own. They were dragged into the Spanish campaign by their own overconfidence and recklessness. Even after Scipio Africanus was sent to Spain and won his first victory at the Baecula, he was unable to prevent Hasdrubal Barca from marching to Italy with a sizeable army in 208. This was one of his reasons for being there. The simple fact is that Hannibal did what the Romans believed to be impossible. This represents a lack of strategic vision, on behalf of the Romans, which translated into a lack of effective strategy to counter the actions of the Carthaginians.

But if the Carthaginians were prosecuting a war of strategic exhaustion, the Romans were practicing strategic resilience. In spite of their political wrangling which interfered with the national strategy and their short-sightedness which led to many military defeats, the Romans did learn and they adapted their strategy. By 211 the Romans began to recognize that the defection of Roman allies to the Carthaginian banner posed the greatest threat to the state.[356] These cities provided Hannibal with supplies and bases to operate from. Therefore Livy tells us that in 211 the whole war effort was directed at Capua (*inter haec vis omnis belli versa in Capuam erat*).[357] When Hannibal could no longer defend Capua and the Capuans had gone over to the Romans, the Romans targeted Tarentum in 209. In commenting on the Roman siege of Tarentum by the consul Fabius Maximus, Livy states:

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[355] Gabriel, *Scipio Africanus,* 52.
[356] Livy XXVI.i.3-4.
[357] Livy XXVI.iii.1.

With [Tarentum] taken from him … the enemy, beaten back on every side, and having no

place where he might make a stand nor any loyal support to look to, would also find no

reason for lingering in Italy.[358]

This was the true centre of gravity of the Carthaginians. With the loss of Capua, Delbrück

asserts that "it was no longer possible for Hannibal to conquer Rome."[359] One indication that

Carthaginian dominance was on the decline is evidenced by the fact that the Romans employed

four fewer legions in 210 and 209 than they had in 211 – the year of Capua's recapture by the

Romans.[360] Once the Romans had shattered the belief in Hannibal's invulnerability, it became

impossible for him to convince his allies that a powerful Carthaginian hegemony would provide

security and a better way of life than Roman imperialism.

Africa

The battles that ended the Second Punic War and the treaty that ensued occurred in

Africa, not Spain and not Italy. After defeating the Carthaginian army in Spain, the elder Scipio

made for Africa in 204 as Sempronius Longus had done in 218 before being recalled to

Lilybaeum. Soon afterwards, in 203, Hannibal was recalled by the Carthaginian senate to repel

this impending threat to Carthage.[361] Does this mean that the true Carthaginian centre of gravity

was the city of Carthage all along? Did the Romans correctly divine this in 218 and then take

fourteen years before the opportunity presented itself again to renew their threat of the city of

Carthage? Or is Gabriel correct in ascertaining that Spain opened the way for Scipio to attack

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[358] The dictator who had advocated the strategy of delay. Livy XXVII.xi.3-4. Though he was successful in retaking Tarentum, he argued against sending the elder Scipio to Africa.
[359] Delbrück, *Warfare in Antiquity,* 343.
[360] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 81.
[361] Richard Gabriel, "Zama: The Turning Point in the Desert." *Military History Magazine.* (Jan-Feb 2008): 52.

Africa? But if Africa were truly the Carthaginian centre of gravity, why did Scipio sail for Spain in the first place in 210? Why did he not sail directly for Africa and bring the fight before the walls of Carthage?

The answer is that neither Spain nor Africa was the true centre of gravity for the Carthaginians. Indeed, the loss of the brothers Scipio at the Baetis river in 211 probably served as a personal motivation for the elder Scipio to take the Spanish command. At the same time, the Romans remained highly concerned that a reinforcing army might descend upon northern Italy with the same impact as Hannibal's army in 218. And so, even in 204, it becomes clear that the Romans were still not fully aware of the Carthaginian true centre of gravity. Togo Salmon notes that the tipping point for Carthage was the loss of Capua in 211. Afterwards "Hannibal was able to retain communities only by force; and his force had become a wasting asset."[362] After fourteen years of war in the Italian peninsula, Hannibal was unable to create a regional hegemony based on respect and clemency and could not control any part of the region except by force. Even if Hasdrubal and Hannibal had somehow managed to link up in 207,[363] it is unlikely that Hasdrubal's force would have had any significant impact on the former Carthaginian allies in Italy. The war had already been lost. Hannibal's army would have been relegated to the role of nuisance marauders until the Roman apparatus of state generated enough military forces for Hannibal to be defeated through attrition.

So what was the significance then of the African campaign? In true Roman fashion, the war was not concluded until the senates of the respective countries had signed a treaty. Scipio can hardly be credited with an inspirational or strategic victory over the Carthaginians. Even at

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[362] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 82.
[363] Hasdrubal invaded in 207 and fought the battle of the Metaurus River and was defeated by the consuls Marcus Livius and Gaius Claudius Nero. Livy XXVII.xlix.4.

the decisive battle of Zama, his infantry was only equally matched to that of the Carthaginians.[364]

Gabriel writes that "neither side was able to gain the advantage" until the cavalry arrived.[365] The

cavalry to which he refers was made up of an enormous component of Numidian light cavalry

provided by the former Carthaginian ally Masinissa. Masinissa had approached Scipio in 204

after coming into conflict with another Carthaginian ally, Syphax. Fully two thirds of the Roman

cavalry came from Masinissa.[366] In fact, these cavalry forces were essential to Scipio's force and

had Scipio not linked up with Masinissa in Africa before Hannibal linked up with his ally

Vermina,[367] the battle of Zama may have gone differently.

Although the Romans celebrated Scipio's victory over Hannibal at Zama in 202 and the

eventual treaty with Carthage, there is evidence that these matters were hastily negotiated to

satisfy the personal desires of the Roman commander.[368] Even though he won the final victory

over Carthage, Scipio Africanus also sought power and prestige. He apparently concluded the

final treaty with Carthage hastily in 202. Goldsworthy tells us that "he may have been once more

concerned about keeping his command and retaining the glory which his victory had won."[369] He

was clearly worried that Claudius Nero, the consul designate for 201 might arrive and claim his

hard won glory.[370] We will never know what impact this decision may have had on the

succeeding years. We do know that Hannibal was never captured and the city of Carthage was

left undamaged and unplundered. Therefore Scipio's desire for personal glory may have

inadvertently set the conditions for the Third Punic War to be fought. Ultimately the African

campaign probably brought a swifter, formal end to the conflict by placing direct pressure on the

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[364] Livy XXX.xxxiv.12-13.
[365] Gabriel, "Zama: The Turning Point in the Desert," 57.
[366] The number is about 4,000.Livy XXX.xxix.4.
[367] The son of Syphax.
[368] Scipio was awarded the agnomen "Africanus" after his victory at Zama in 202.
[369] Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage,* 308.
[370] Livy XXX.xxxvi.10-11.

Carthaginian senate, however it should be noted that the win-conditions for the war had already been lost by Hannibal in Italy and by 209 a Roman victory was certainly inevitable.

Part Four

Conclusion

Conclusion

Despite the sound strategic planning of the Carthaginians during the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians were ultimately unable to destroy the complex Roman centre of gravity which was the Roman apparatus of state. The Roman apparatus of state provided the greatest resilience to the Romans, but was also the source of their greatest weakness. The apparatus of state enabled the Romans to function efficiently during periods of crushing hardship, great loss, and political uncertainty. However, it also caused the Romans to misinterpret the true Carthaginian strategy resulting in unfocussed campaign planning which was consistently unsuccessful. This resulted in many failed efforts, unnecessary military actions, and wasted resources which ultimately prolonged the war

Both the Carthaginians and the Romans utilized an array of political, economic, and military strategies in support of their war efforts during the Second Punic War. Although the strategies have often been oversimplified, the strategies of both nations represent a high degree of complexity. These strategies were dependant on their national goals. For Carthage this was the desire to create a regional hegemony free from interference and influence from Rome. For Rome this was the desire for an expansionist imperialistic state with security for its vital interests. These goals, in turn, gave rise to the national strategies of both nations and helped to define their national centres of gravity.

The Roman apparatus of state bound together a disparate range of states with mutual goals and mutual self-interest. Although Rome was the regional imperialistic power in Italy and was not averse to using intimidation, there was a great sense of pan-Italian harmony and concord within the peninsula. Although this was not true for all communities in the third century B.C., it was true for most. Hannibal knew, early on, that to defeat the Romans he would need to disrupt

and render the apparatus of state ineffective. He would have to shatter the confidence in Roman national policies and practices – both in Rome and in the minds of the Roman allies. Our examination of the overall strategy shows, for the most part, that Hannibal and the Carthaginians remained true to this strategy. Hannibal disrupted trade, turned cities, sacked others, rewarded loyalists, and destroyed armies. Between 218 and 209 Carthage turned the Roman world upside down. Carthage eroded the confidence of the Roman allies and caused despair in the walls of the senate house. In short, Carthage waged war using the only strategy that had any real hope of defeating Rome.

Statements that Hannibal ought to have besieged Rome or failed to turn enough Italian allies do not do enough to adequately explain the Carthaginian defeat. Such notions imply that the Roman centre of gravity was simple and could be targeted with simple strategies. Any suggestion, to this day, that Carthage could have besieged Rome remains preposterous. Yes, it would have targeted the Roman centre of gravity, but such an option was impossible and Hannibal knew this. In fact the Roman centre of gravity was highly complex. Since Carthage could not compel Rome into a settlement through a contest of arms, Carthage's only recourse was to disentangle the Roman imperial hegemony in Italy. At this, Carthage had considerable success.

Unfortunately Carthage's war efforts fell short. Although Carthage was able to put stress on the Roman apparatus of state including many aspects of the Roman economy, Carthage did not succeed in totally disrupting the Roman economy. This was due, in a large part, to Carthage's inability to seize and hold any large Roman port aside from Tarentum. This meant that much sea-trade continued unimpeded. While Carthage was able to disrupt the imperial hegemony of the Romans, especially in the south, Carthage was also unable or unwilling to

establish a corresponding Carthaginian hegemony that would bind the loyal tribes and communities to Carthage. Togo Salmon sums it up nicely:

> [Hannibal], a stranger from overseas, of alien ways and unintelligible speech, was hardly the one to correct those aspects of the Roman system that rankled most. He might guarantee, but was more likely to curtail their autonomy, and he was perfectly capable of inflicting his fearsome Gallic troops upon Italian communities.[371]

Ultimately, Hannibal needed to offer the Italians something better than what the Romans were offering and he did not. This included protection from the Romans. Since the war dragged on for many years, Carthage eventually lost even their key allied cities to Rome's efficient recruiting engine which provided a vast supply of troops. Though Carthage had intentionally and deliberately targeted the Roman apparatus of state, they were not fully successful and Rome's strategic endurance prevailed.

The great irony of the war is that the Roman apparatus of state which provided the greatest stability during the war was also the state's greatest impediment. It produced an institutional arrogance which led to false confidence – both in the senate and on behalf of the military leaders. This caused the state to repeatedly underestimate the Carthaginian strategy. This aspect, combined with the personal self-interest of a number of her generals, created a fragmented and ineffective Roman strategy. In the end, Rome was forced to continually react to the effects of the Carthaginian strategy and was unable to even identify the Carthaginian centre of gravity until late in the war. When they finally did in 211 the Carthaginian campaign faltered and this led directly to the Carthaginian defeat in 202. While the African campaign sped up the conclusion to the war, the Carthaginians had already lost.

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[371] Togo Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy,* 81-82.

What this analysis shows us is that Carthage was unequally matched against Rome from the outset of the Second Punic War. This required Carthage to adopt a bold and multifaceted strategy if she were to have any hope of victory. This strategy was sound, but not prosecuted as effectively as it could have been. One wonders how the Roman apparatus of state would have stood up if Carthage had adopted a campaign of terror against towns that resisted or specifically targeted magistrates for assassination. Or what impact might have been felt if Hannibal had brought sufficient siege equipment to Italy to capture Neapolis, Sinuessa, or Beneventum – key ports and centres of trade in the south? Or what might have happened if Carthage had adopted a more aggressive naval strategy and Bomilcar had crushed the Roman navy at Syracuse in 212 opening the way for major Carthaginian gains in Sicily? The answers to these questions we will never know. And so we are left to wonder whether Carthage ever possessed the resources needed to win the war or whether any Carthaginian strategy would have been sufficient dismantle the Roman apparatus of state. What we do know is that with the Carthaginian failure to target the Roman apparatus of state to their fullest extent, the Carthaginians were doomed to lose from the outset.

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