

LAKE TRASIMENE 217 BC

Ambush and annihilation of a Roman army



NIC FIELDS

ILLUSTRATED BY DONATO SPEDALIERE

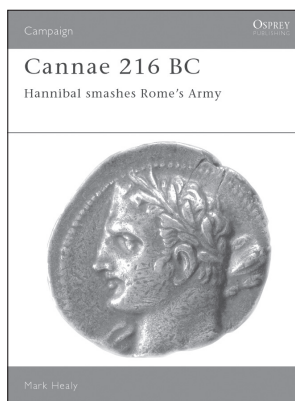
Author

Dr Nic Fields started his career as a biochemist before joining the Royal Marines. Having left the military, he went back to university and completed a BA and PhD in Ancient History at the University of Newcastle. He was Assistant Director at the British School at Athens, Greece, and then a lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Edinburgh. Nic is now a freelance author and researcher based in south-west France.

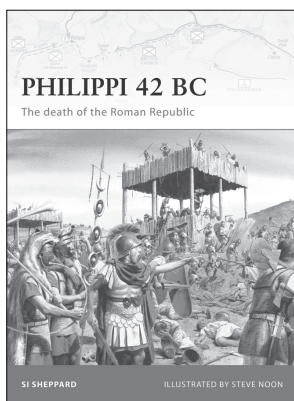
Illustrator

Donato Spedalieri was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, and moved to Tuscany, Italy, at the age of ten, where he still lives today. He has studied in Florence, and served in the Italian Army as a paratrooper. Since 1995, he has worked as a professional freelance illustrator for publishers in Italy and abroad. His artworks are to be found in many books, encyclopedias, magazines, and museum collections. Recently he has worked on two movies, providing concept designs and matte paintings, as well as acting as the special effects supervisor for the film *Obulus*.

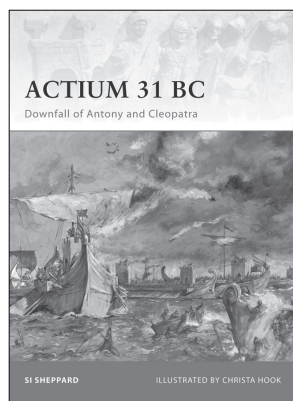
Other titles in the series



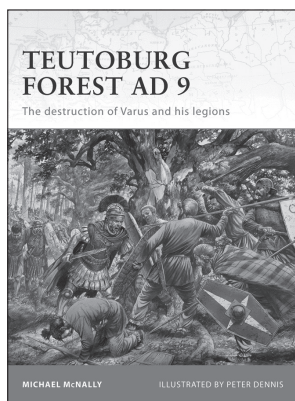
CAM No: 36 • ISBN: 978 1 85532 470 1



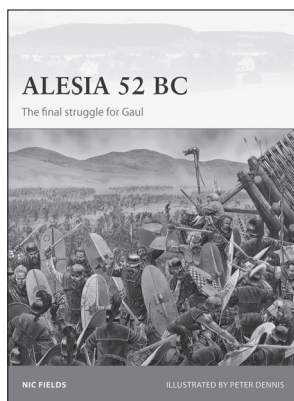
CAM No: 199 • ISBN: 978 1 84603 265 3



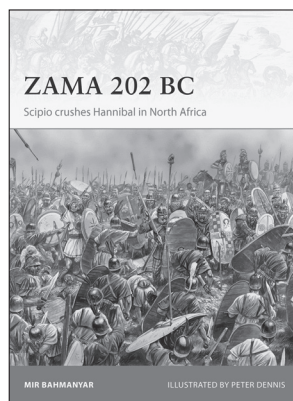
CAM No: 211 • ISBN: 978 1 84603 405 3



CAM No: 228 • ISBN: 978 1 84603 581 4



CAM No: 269 • ISBN: 978 1 78200 922 1



CAM No: 299 • ISBN: 978 1 4728 1421 0

CAMPAIGN 303

LAKE TRASIMENE

217 BC

Ambush and annihilation of a Roman army



NIC FIELDS

ILLUSTRATED BY DONATO SPEDALIERE

Series editor Marcus Cowper

This electronic edition published in 2016 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain in 2017 by Osprey Publishing,
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com

Osprey Publishing, part of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
© 2017 Osprey Publishing Ltd

All rights reserved

You may not copy, distribute, transmit, reproduce or otherwise make available this publication (or any part of it) in any form, or by any means (including without limitation electronic, digital, optical, mechanical, photocopying, printing, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 9781 4728 1631 3
PDF e-book ISBN: 9781 4728 1633 7
e-Pub ISBN: 9781 4728 1632 0

Editorial by Ilios Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK (www.iliospublishing.com)
Index by Alan Rutter
Typeset in Myriad Pro and Sabon
Maps by Bounford.com
3D bird's-eye views by The Black Spot
Battlescene illustrations by Donato Spedaliere
Originated by PDQ Media, Bungay, UK

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.ospreypublishing.com. Here you will find our full range of publications, as well as exclusive online content, details of forthcoming events and the option to sign up for our newsletters. You can also sign up for Osprey membership, which entitles you to a discount on purchases made through the Osprey site and access to our extensive online image archive.

ARTIST'S NOTE

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. The Publishers retain all reproduction copyright whatsoever. The artist can be contacted via the following email address:

alina@alinaillustrazioni.com

The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

THE WOODLAND TRUST

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity. Between 2014 and 2018 our donations are being spent on their Centenary Woods project in the UK.

NOTES ON CLASSICAL CITATIONS

The references in this work to classical texts are given (for example) as Polybius 2.21.8–9, which refers to the cited work of Polybius, Book 2, chapter 21, lines 8 to 9.

AUC

ab urbe condita ('from the founding of Rome', i.e. 753 BC) – a year-numbering system used by some ancient Roman historians to identify particular Roman years.

CIL

T. Mommsen et al., *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1862–) – a comprehensive collection of ancient Latin inscriptions.

Fasti triumphales
fr.

A list of triumphs celebrated by Roman generals.
Refers to a fragmentary source material.

ABBREVIATIONS

cos.	consul
cen.	censor
d.	died
dict.	dictator
r.	ruled

Key to military symbols

XXXXX



Army Group

XXXX



Army

XXX



Corps

XX



Division

X



Brigade

III



Regiment

II



Battalion

I



Company/Battery



Infantry



Artillery



Cavalry

Key to unit identification



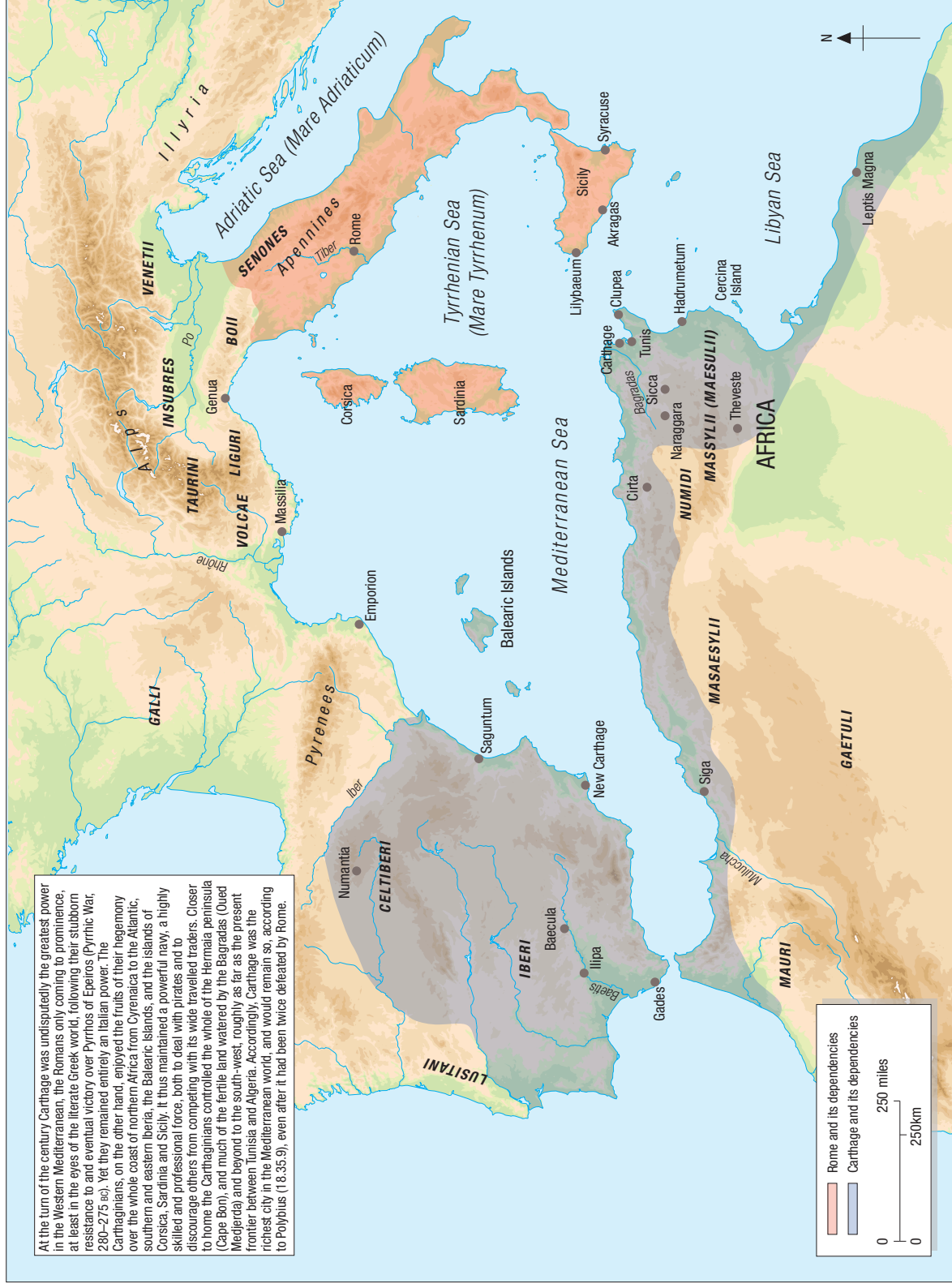
(+) with added elements
(-) less elements

CONTENTS

ORIGINS OF THE CAMPAIGN	5
CHRONOLOGY	11
OPPOSING COMMANDERS	12
Caius Flaminius ■ Hannibal Barca	
OPPOSING FORCES	19
Flaminius' army ■ Hannibal's army	
OPPOSING PLANS	48
Flaminius' plan ■ Hannibal's plan	
THE CAMPAIGN	53
The Ticinus and the Trebbia (November–December 218 BC) ■ Between the Trebbia and Lake Trasimene (December 218 BC–June 217 BC) ■ Lake Trasimene (June 217 BC)	
AFTERMATH	85
THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY	90
GLOSSARY	92
FURTHER READING	93
INDEX	95

The Western Mediterranean, 218 BC.

At the turn of the century Carthage was undisputedly the greatest power in the Western Mediterranean, the Romans only coming to prominence, at least in the eyes of the literate Greek world, following their stubborn resistance to and eventual victory over Pyrrhos of Epeiros (Pyrrhic War, 280–275 BC). Yet they remained entirely an Italian power. The Carthaginians, on the other hand, enjoyed the fruits of their hegemony over the whole coast of northern Africa from Cyrenataca to the Atlantic, southern and eastern Iberia, the Balearic Islands, and the islands of Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily. It thus maintained a powerful navy, a highly skilled and professional force, both to deal with pirates and to discourage others from competing with its wide travelled traders. Closer to home the Carthaginians controlled the whole of the Hermaia peninsula (Cape Bon), and much of the fertile land watered by the Bagradas (Oued Medjerda) and beyond to the south-west, roughly as far as the present frontier between Tunisia and Algeria. Accordingly, Carthage was the richest city in the Mediterranean world, and would remain so, according to Polybius (18.35.9), even after it had been twice defeated by Rome.



ORIGINS OF THE CAMPAIGN

On the right bank of the Ofanto River, barely 6km from the Adriatic, a great rock still casts its shadow over the flats of Cannae where, in the high summer of 216 BC, the Punic invaders under Hannibal Barca had inflicted on the Romans one of the bloodiest and most disastrous defeats in their long history. The eight Roman *legiones* (and equal number of Latin-Italian *alae*) mobilized for the battle were not expected to lose, much less to be annihilated. Yet on the hot, dusty, treeless plain of Cannae the Romans were poorly deployed, as it made no sense for the legions to mass like old-fashioned phalanxes. Crammed like sardines, individual soldiers lost open space and the crucial ability to use their *pila* and *gladii* with advantage. Lured forward into the jaws of Hannibal's outnumbered army, some 50,000 Romans and their allies were led to the slaughter. For Hannibal, however, this was not the first of its kind; he had drenched with their blood Lake Trasimene the summer previously.

Fighting his first battle on Italian soil along the Trebbia, a meandering tributary of the Padus (Po) near Placentia (Piacenza), in bitter winter conditions, Hannibal had cleverly used seemingly flat open country to mask an ambush. He was a commander who knew how to be patient and energetic at the same time. His success was to be rapid and complete. The Romans, having emerged from their tents on empty stomachs and waded across the swollen Trebbia that snowy, solstice forenoon, lost two-thirds of their half-starved and rheumatic army before nightfall. It is said the goddess Fortune is fond of crafty men, but she also smiles upon those who thoroughly prepare themselves for her gift of victory. That morning Hannibal had ordered his men to enjoy a hearty breakfast and to rub their bodies with olive oil around their camp fires (Polybius 3.71.6). As a waxen, wintry light at length announced the dawn of a new day, the balance of Fortune tipped in favour of the Carthaginian commander.

The first stage of Hannibal's long march to Italy took him across the Iber (Ebro) and to the foot of the Pyrenees. This is a view of the Ebro Delta near Ruimar, Catalonia. This river was the effective dividing line between Carthaginian and Greek (i.e. Massiliote) spheres of influence in Iberia. It also gave its name to the treaty signed in 226 BC between Rome and Hamilcar's son-in-law, Hasdrubal, which prevented the Carthaginians crossing 'the Iber bearing arms'. (Till F. Teenck)





The route followed by Hannibal from Emporion (Ampurias) in north-east Iberia to Illiberis (Elne) in south-west Gaul is not precisely known, but he presumably traversed the Pyrenees somewhere at their eastern extremity. This is Banyuls-sur-Mer, France, with the Pyrenees in the background. Hannibal may have crossed this mountain chain by the Col de Banyuls (361m) nearby, 37km from Emporion and 33km to Illiberis, where he encamped. (Palauenc05)

Hannibal was a great exponent of the early morning ambush, and Lake Trasimene, his next major engagement on Italian soil, was to be based on one giant sunup snare. Marching along the northern shoreline of the lake, Hannibal very visibly pitched camp at the eastern end of the line of hills that ran parallel to, and overlooked the lakeside. During the night he divided his troops into several columns and led them round behind the same lakeside hills, taking up positions parallel with the path the army had traversed earlier that day. Most, if not all, of the troops were positioned on the

reverse slopes of the high ground, concealed from the enemy's view when the sun came up. The victory of Lake Trasimene was the execution of this army-sized ambush.

As the first glimmerings of opalescent dawn dissolved the darkness, Caius Flaminius, the Roman consul, hurried his men with the expectation of closing with his quarry. The morning was misty; the line of hills was mostly obscured by a clinging white veil, but it is possible that the straining eyes of Flaminius could just glimpse the Carthaginian outposts at the far end of the narrow defile across the flat basin. While the consul sat upon his finely accoutred horse and dreamed of martial glory, those further down the pecking order shambled through the morning mire and dreamed mostly of more mundane things, each man isolated within the small island of their own visibility.

Doubtless Hannibal had counted on this early morning mist to rise over the lake and its miry margins – it was around the time of the summer solstice – and from the moment that the ambush was sprung his victory was certain. The Roman and Latin-Italian soldiers could see little, since the heavy mist still blanketed the basin and visibility was limited. Instead they heard outlandish war cries and the clash of weapons from many different directions



simultaneously. In its world of mistaken shadows and magnified sounds, the mist-blinded consular army was soon thrown into utter confusion. “In the chaos that reigned,” records Livy, “not a soldier could recognize his own standard or knew his place in the ranks – indeed, they were almost too bemused to get proper control over their swords and shields, while to some their very armour and weapons proved not a defence but fatal encumbrance” (22.5.5). By the time the sun was high enough to burn off the last wisps of white mist, some 15,000 men had perished in battle, if that is what it can be called, and the consul himself had fallen heroically, dispatched by a Gaulish spear.

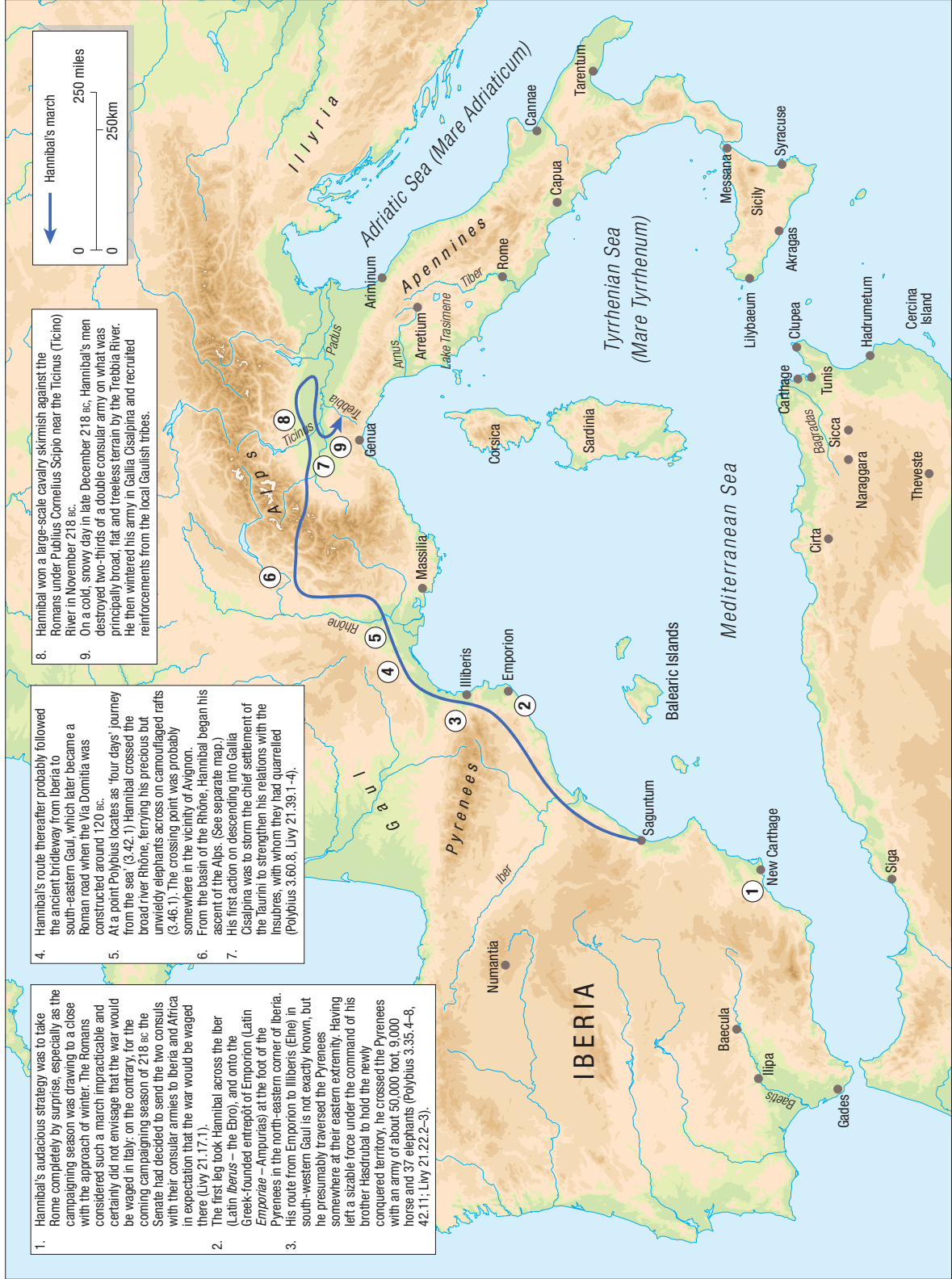
Ironically enough that winter Hannibal had lost the sight of an eye while travelling through the wetlands around the river Arnus (Arno). By then he had also lost almost all his elephants. Yet the Carthaginian commander, the consummate tactician and trickster, had never envisaged a decisive role for elephants in his cunning battle plans. And so it was at Lake Trasimene in Etruria, his one eye still clear-sighted enough to outwit another Roman consul and his consular army, Hannibal had made use of a novel ruse. The battle had been an ambush on the grand scale, one of those rare instances in the annals of military history in which a whole army lies in wait and accounts for almost the whole of the opposition’s army.

Seen through the telescope of history, Hannibal was the most significant commander of his time. He, like his father before him, had been a soldier all his working life, and by comparison the opposition were but babes in the wood. Not for the first or indeed the last time had an enemy underestimated his tactical brilliance – a brilliance that was to seem twisted and tricky to his less urbane opponents. He was a thinker, a deceiver, a master of executing bold unexpected manoeuvres, and few military commanders have been able to repeat Hannibal’s feat of ambushing and effectively destroying an entire army. The carnage of that summer forenoon must have flooded the lakeside meadows with Roman blood. The Carthaginian commander was legendary: not only a demon to frighten little Roman children with, but also a creature fixed on conquest, in love with blood and butchery, and was, in fact, a demon capable of any imaginable atrocity. ‘Those who tell the stories rule society’ is a quote attributed to both the Athenian philosopher Plato and the Hopi American Indians. The unfair advantage of the written word triumphs in the end.

The Rhône (left) and the Durance (right), just south of Avignon. Hannibal crossed the broad Rhône somewhere in the vicinity of Avignon, ferrying his elephants across on specially camouflaged rafts. For the infantry, smaller rafts and tree trunks were used; the cavalry got across either by embarking the horses in larger boats, or by horses and men swimming across together, or by the horses swimming with their bridles held by men in the stern of boats. (Pemelet)



Hannibal's march from Iberia to Italy.



The reality could not have been more different. Flaminius fell, foxed and fogged, into Hannibal's trap. Hannibal was not the man to fight a straight battle. He sought to destroy the enemy's strength with the least fuss. For him any military methods were justified by a successful result – victory. Not only could successful stratagems be justified by victory, they could also save lives – at least on one side. Further, his hot hatred of Rome (boyhood's memories are tenacious) expressed itself as reality in trickery as well as violence. He took as blithe a pleasure in deceiving the Romans by some shrewd means, as is the case of Lake Trasimene.

It is a truism that all wars get cleaned up as they age in our memory, getting more chess-like and less bloody as they are copied and re-copied into chapters to be studied. Thus, if you are reading about Hannibal in your armchair in London, Paris or New York, it all looks very neat and clever. If you are a Roman remembering what it was like to flee the red field of slaughter with piles of corpses showing where the Carthaginians were steadily advancing through the mist, you have a much more realistic take on war *à la* Hannibal. It was the professional strategist Clausewitz who once said: 'So long as a successful general has not done us any harm, we follow his career with pleasure' (book 2, chapter 5, p. 195 Howard-Paret). The experiences of men in combat produces emotions stronger than civilians can know, emotions of terror, panic, anger, sorrow, bewilderment, helplessness, uselessness, and each of these feelings drain energy and mental stability. There is no such thing, then or now, as getting accustomed to combat. The Hannibalic War was not fought according to strict rules because war rarely is.

It is also a truism that 'no plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first contact with the main hostile force'. This is attributed to the supreme military genius Helmuth von Moltke (1893, pp.33–40), a man who knew his business, though the principle that in the fog of war all operation plans are necessarily provisional had been known for a long time when he epitomized his own strategy. Hannibal, the one commander of the past that most haunted the Roman imagination, certainly knew of it when he stood above Lake Trasimene, and his masterpiece that day was according to plan – a complete and successful ambush of the enemy's army. But of course Lake

The Alps, seen from the air. Hannibal did not recognize any barriers except as obstacles to overcome. Indeed, mountains, like rivers and deserts, have never served as fixed military frontiers in history; they are only promoted to such a dignity by victorious nations in the process of expansion. Of course, seen from afar on a clear day, the towering Alps must have appeared as a daunting obstacle. (Warburg)





The Hindu Kush near Kabul. Military historians have agreed that as a feat of leadership and endurance Alexander's crossing of the Hindu Kush via the Khawak Pass (3,848m) early in 329 BC far surpasses Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. The Macedonian army struggled through snow drifts and biting winds, and suffered from chronic fatigue, snow blindness and altitude sickness. Often, the only thing that kept it moving was their king's indefatigable willpower. Then again, Alexander never took on Rome. (Davric)

Trasimene required the Romans' complete cooperation. There again, Hannibal was one of the few commanders who understood the strength and weakness of the Roman army, which can be summed up in one word: discipline. As Hans Delbrück wrote, the 'meaning and power of discipline was first fully recognized and realized by the Romans' (1920/1990, p.253).

Seldom have the dangers of misapplying military history been more graphically demonstrated than by those commanders who

have been trying to duplicate Hannibal's 'art of war' ever since. Most have failed, because the enemy generally will not be as obliging as Caius Flaminius was that fateful June day. On the other hand, Hannibal was in Italy in the first place because the Romans believed it well-nigh impossible to cross the immense barrier of the Alps on the edge of winter with an army. We can understand their self-confidence in this respect, especially as winter came early in this high and forsaken part of the world, and both Polybius (cf. 3.54.1, 55.9) and Livy (21.35.6) reported fresh falls of snow while the Carthaginian army was on the pass, as is common enough in autumn on any of the Alpine passes. Before Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus crossed the western Alps on his way to fight Quintus Sertorius in Iberia in 77 BC, it was a marvel to the Romans that an army could cross the Alps at all. 'Our forefathers regarded as a prodigy the passage of the Alps, first by Hannibal, and more recently, by the Cimbri', wrote the elder Pliny (*Historia naturalis* 36.1.2) a century and a half later. Small wonder, therefore, Pompeius was naturally proud to have blazed a trail across the Alps when no Roman commander had ever led an army across them before. As Appian explained some 200 years later, Pompeius 'climbed resolutely into the Alpine ranges, not by the route, which was Hannibal's great achievement, but by opening another near the source of the Rhône and the Eridanus [Po]' (*Bellum civilia* 1.109). Pompeius in fact used the Col de Montgenèvre (Sallust *Historiae* 2.98.4), the lowest and easiest of all the passes in the western Alps, which Strabo (4.1.3, 12, cf. Ammianus Marcellinus 15.10.8) described as the shortest route between Italy and the Rhône valley.

What we need to bear in mind at this juncture is the fact that though impassable in the 21st century in winter, the Alpine passes were negotiated in all seasons by ancient travellers, either travelling as individuals or in small parties. Polybius crossed the Alps himself 'to obtain firsthand information and evidence' (3.48.12) concerning Hannibal's Alpine march. People of earlier ages were less deterred by physical hazards than their more comfortable descendants. More to the point, the Romans had expected to fight the war aggressively in Iberia and North Africa. Surprise can have a dramatic impact in warfare. Yet for all that, surprise is an event that takes place in the mind of an opposing commander. Mountains, as both Alexander the Great and Hannibal Barca proved, provide no defence against armies that are resolute in their pursuit of an objective. Mountains defend nothing but themselves.

CHRONOLOGY

218 BC

Mid-July	Hannibal crosses the Iber.
Late August	Hannibal crosses the Pyrenees.
Late September	Hannibal crosses the Rhône.
Mid-October	Hannibal begins 'ascent towards the Alps' (Polybius 3.50.1).
Late October	Hannibal advances 'towards the highest pass of the Alps' (Polybius 3.53.6).
Early November	Hannibal reaches Gallia Cisalpina.
Mid-November	Hannibal storms and sacks the chief settlement of the Taurini.
Late November	The battle of the Ticinus.
Late December	The battle of the Trebbia.

217 BC

January–April	Hannibal winters in Gallia Cisalpina.
Early March	Caius Flaminius and Cnaeus Servilius Geminus take office as consuls.
Mid-April	Flaminius' consular army is at Arretium (Arezzo). Servilius' consular army is at Ariminum (Rimini).
Early May	Hannibal crosses the Apennines.
Mid-June	The battle of Lake Trasimene.

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

If Hannibal had marched up the middle reaches of the River Durance in the south, he could have traversed the Alps by one of five passes, namely the Col de Larche (1,991m), Col de Mary (2,654m), Col de Roure (2,829m), Col de la Traversette (2,947m) seen here, or the Col de Montgenèvre (1,854m). The Col de la Traversette, a little-used pass on the rugged northern slopes of Monte Viso (3,841m), is the highest and most difficult of all the Alpine passes that have been proposed for Hannibal's crossing. The route across this pass is still only a rough track. (Luca Bergamasco)



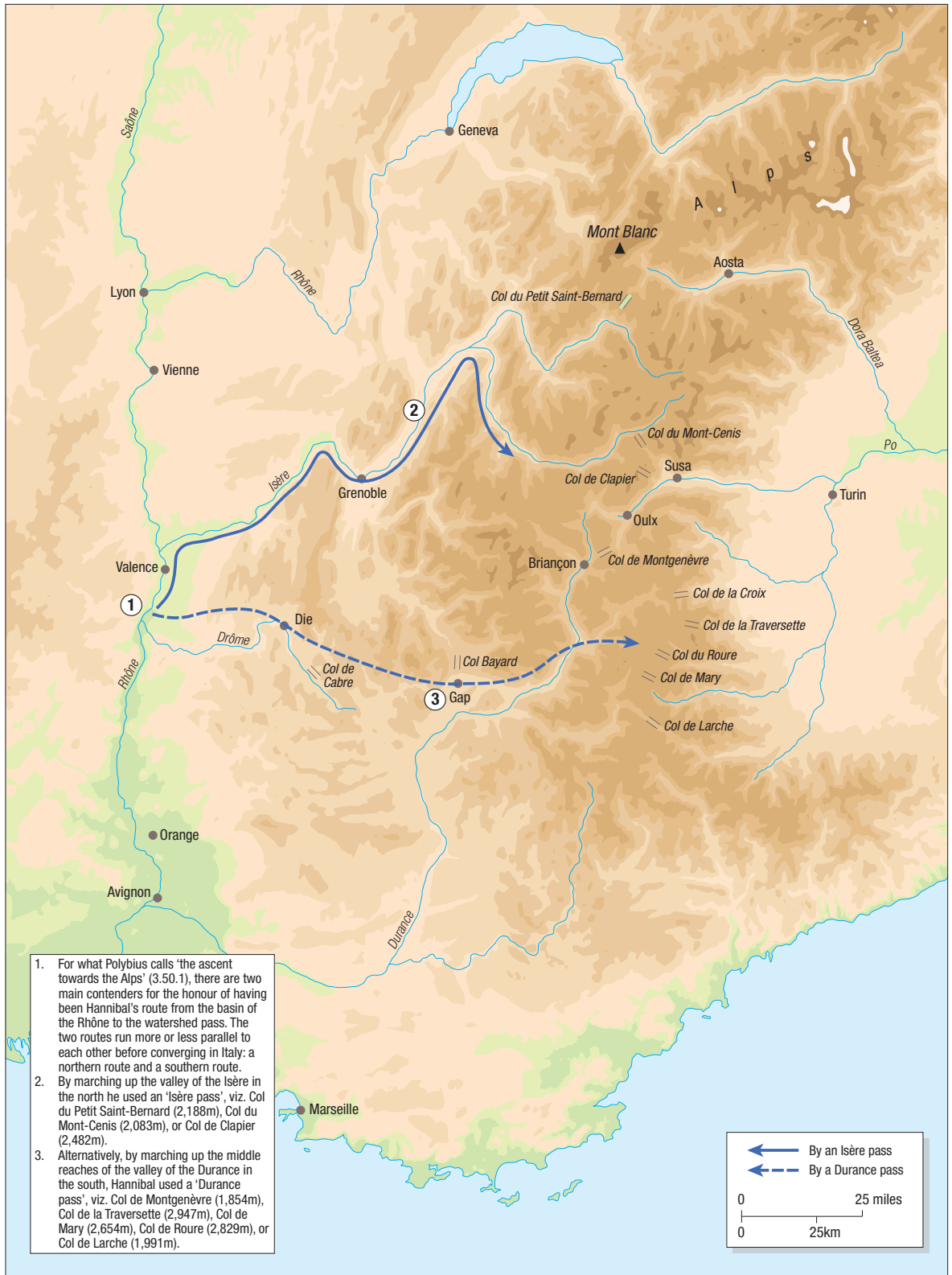
It is worthwhile pausing at this point to consider an important question: is war to be considered an art or a science? You cannot reduce every system of war to absolute forms; war is an art and not a science (says Jomini). In science, your demonstrations should be repeatable. In war, even if you could repeat all other conditions, which is impossible, you could not repeat surprise. Nor the weather. Nor the mood the men are in. War is one of the most multifaceted of all human actions. It is shrouded in fog and uncertainty (according to both Clausewitz and Moltke); it is twisted by the goddess Fortune (in Machiavelli's view).

We mortals may ponder and weigh and debate. But military commanders worth their salt appraise, decide and act. As for the actual business of war, this can be summed up briefly with five *general* rules. The first rule is never to split your forces unless it is necessary for survival. The second rule is to attack if you are going to fight, and if you are not going to attack, avoid battle. The third rule is to choose the time and place of battle and never leave that choice to the enemy. The fourth rule is to avoid encirclement at all costs. And the fifth and final rule is to attack and destroy the enemy where he is weakest. These are simple rules, but not lacking in profundity. Though Maurice de Saxe professed that unlike other sciences, the science of war has

no guiding principles or rules (*Mes rêveries* preface), the above five rules are certain enough to be teachable. But then there is the irrational, which is like the kingfisher flashing across the water, and in that lays the test of commanders.

Hannibal proved to be singularly agile at guessing what his enemy would do, and could act on it with speed and effect. This was undoubtedly true with regards to Caius Flaminius. Polybius (3.80) imparts that Hannibal knew what sort of man he faced prior to Lake Trasimene, and deliberately set out to provoke him. Where Flaminius

Hannibal's route across the Alps.



was practical, outspoken and opinionated, a man of action and physical courage, Hannibal was more intellectual and devious, more politic, full of dark corners. Colonel Ardant du Picq, a brilliant military writer and critic, would later advise: 'A leader must combine resolute bravery and impetuosity with prudence and calmness, a difficult matter!' (1903/1946, p.165). A difficult matter indeed.

CAIUS FLAMINIUS

Caius Flaminius (*cos.* I 223 BC, *cen.* 220 BC, *cos.* II 217 BC) was a *novus homo*, a 'new man', one of that rare breed in any generation of Roman politics who were the first in their family to hold Rome's highest magistracy, the consulship. This esteemed office was usually dominated by a small group of noble families with an active political tradition. Both Polybius (3.80.3–82.8) and Livy (21.63.1–15, 22.3.3–14), looking through the prism of the Roman nobility, portray him as a belligerent demagogue, a player to the gallery, an overconfident man of bold words but little martial talent who had based his career on pandering to the desires of the poorest citizens. Yet Rome was neither a society in which birth did not count nor one in which 'a butcher's son' can easily become a consul.

There are no surviving images of Caius Flaminius in the corpus of Roman art. While serving as tribune of the plebs (232 BC) he had succeeded in passing a farsighted plebiscite (*lex de agro Gallico Piceno viritim dividundo*) to divide up and distribute much of the *ager Gallicus*, land south of the Latin colony of Ariminum (Rimini) taken from the Senones, to poorer families. This measure was much to the chagrin of the senatorial nobility, and Polybius claims (2.21.8–9) that this popular policy was the cause of the *tumultus Gallicus* of 225–222 BC, since many Cisalpine Gauls, especially the Boii, went to war in the belief that Rome was no longer satisfied with seeking to control them but wanted to exterminate them. This obviously echoes the hostility of Flaminius' contemporary senatorial enemies, but it may nonetheless be largely true that Flaminius' legislation was the cause of the invasion.

If Hannibal had marched up the valley of the Isère in the north, he could have traversed the Alps by one of three passes, namely the Col du Clapier (2,482m), Col du Mont-Cenis (2,083m), or Col du Petit Saint-Bernard (2,188m) seen here. This was the pass Polybius took when he crossed the Alps on his exploration of Hannibal's march into Italy. Near its saddle the Romans would later erect a temple dedicated to Jupiter and a *mansio* (an official stopping place) to serve passing travellers. (Muneaki)



Bitter senatorial hostility or not, whilst serving as a praetor (227 BC) Flaminius had been the first governor of Sicily (Solinus 5.1), Rome's first overseas province. He discharged his duties so well that the province still warmly remembered him 30 years later when his son became aedile. As censor (220 BC), Flaminius initiated two great civil engineering projects: the Via Flaminia (the great consular road that ran from Rome to Ariminum and the newly colonized lands in the north) and the Circus Flaminius.

When the invasion of the Gauls had finally been repelled, the Romans not surprisingly pursued the war with determination. They formed the hope, says Polybius, of completely expelling the Gauls 'from the plain of the Padus' (2.31.8). So it was as consul in 223 BC that Flaminius had commanded in the field in Gallia Cisalpina with considerable success – yet success against northerners was no real preparation for facing a commander of Hannibal's calibre. It is said he had kept the senatorial missive forbidding him to fight unopened until he had secured the victory over the Insubres at the Clusius River. The first to lead a Roman army over the Padus (Po) and his daring made him the hero of the Roman people.

Having defeated the Insubres and returned triumphant to Rome, it is important to note that it was the Roman people who voted Flaminius a triumph in spite of the opposition of the majority of the Senate (*Fasti Triumphales*, 530 AUC). So it is not surprising that the people would turn to him when Rome was threatened and elect him consul again. And Flaminius, a man of pride and energy, was ready to be their hero again. Even before he kept the deadly lakeshore rendezvous, Flaminius' career had certainly been controversial, but it had also been exceptionally distinguished, even by the standards of the period, and especially so for a *novus homo*. It seems the maverick Flaminius had made many enemies en route, men who saw him as a godless fool, a corrupter of the people who rode to his death, and would savage his reputation thereafter. The *apologias* and the searches for scapegoats serve as substitute for critical analysis. More to the point, a defeated commander is never treated very leniently by history; when, however, the historians all belong to the camp of the opposition, we are bound to examine their charges and implications very narrowly.



The Col du Clapier (2,482m), with Turin just visible at the upper left. Polybius and Livy both describe how Hannibal displayed to his dispirited troops from the pass the rich lands along the Padus spread out below. The question naturally arises, which are the passes that command such a view? There are only two: the Col de la Traversette, which gives a view down into the Po valley from the pass itself, and the Col du Clapier, where a still more extensive view is offered from a nearby spur. (Edward Boenig)

HANNIBAL BARCA

Presumed marble portrait bust of Hannibal (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli), found near Naples. Strong suspicions exist that this is actually a Renaissance work and not a Roman portrait, and in fact we have no authentic likeness (unlike Alexander or Pyrrhos) of the great Carthaginian commander. At Lake Trasimene he had just turned 30, although he had already lost the use of one eye. (ste.trinite.free.fr)



Hannibal's story was quite different. Removed from his native city before he was 10 years old and raised in his father's camp in Iberia, Hannibal came to manhood in a martial environment. He came to Hellenism through family tradition and education, but also through personal inclination. Perhaps it was Hamilcar's admiration of the Lakedaimonian adventurer Xanthippos, who, while no genius had some years before, at the head of a Carthaginian army, destroyed Regulus' army in Africa *non virtute sed arte*, thanks not to courage but to skill, which led him to choose the Lakedaimonian Sosylos as tutor to his son. It was Sosylos who taught Hannibal Greek, and was to accompany him on his long march and write his biography. Hannibal thoroughly studied the campaigns of Alexander the Great and Pyrrhos of Epeiros, as well as treatises of more recent military history, and became familiar with the most recent developments in strategy and tactics.

Superior to both Alexander and Pyrrhos, to whom ancient tradition often compared him, the commander being formed in these informative years was

without doubt the greatest exponent of the Hellenistic military school: on the battlefields of Italy he would apply the encircling tactics typical of the school, bringing them to incomparable perfection. Hannibal, however, was a singular commander and therefore cannot be considered simply as a product of a particular school. For on the battlefields of Iberia under the tutelage of his father, Hannibal learned to fight in the small wars of that peninsula, becoming skilled in the tactics of ambush and ruse, the use of disguise, dissimulation and spies. He was daring as he was devious, fierce with the sword but ever ready to use stratagem too.

In truth, Hannibal was a genius, not a general, and unsurprisingly his genius has seldom been questioned. It rested on a mixture of bluff and double bluff, and a truly remarkable ability to use all types of troops to their best advantage. There is only one opinion about this: ageless admiration. His third Italian battle, Cannae, remains a chef-d'oeuvre to which generations of subsequent generals have aspired

but never surpassed nor even equalled, mainly because they did not study military history, but copied it. The most striking example of this must be the grand scheme of Alfred von Schlieffen for a decisive western envelopment, a wheel through neutral Belgium. The bestknown and most controversial strategist of his time, Schlieffen's enticing and gigantic vision was greatly influenced by the methodological description of the encircling movement at Cannae written by Hans Delbrück (1920/1990 pp.281–302). The distinguished narrative historian Barbara Tuchman explains the influence of Cannae on the German strategy for the rapid and total overthrow of the French Army during the opening stages of World War I:

To achieve decisive victory, Schlieffen fixed upon a strategy derived from Hannibal and the battle of Cannae. The dead general who mesmerised Schlieffen had been dead a very long time. Two thousand years had passed since Hannibal's classic double envelopment of the Romans at Cannae. 'Field gun and machine gun had replaced bow and slingshot', Schlieffen wrote, 'but the principles of strategy remain unchanged. The enemy's front is not the objective. The essential thing is to crush the enemy's flanks ... and complete the extermination by attack upon his rear'. (Tuchman 1962, p.20)

This was to be a Cannae on a gigantic scale, with a neutral frontier and mountain ranges replacing the second envelopment wing. Yet even the fanatical theorist Schlieffen was not to realize that for all his cerebral penetration he was to fail to plumb to its full depth the craft and cunning of Hannibal Barca. The truth was that the ruthless and rigid theorizing of Schlieffen's mind and personality devised the most grandiose, the most rigidly classical work of strategic architecture ever to be designed. There was little or no margin for the unpredictable effects of what Clausewitz called 'friction', and the whole operation was virtually one enormous manoeuvre a priori, a gamble under acute pressure of time. In almost every way it was not Hannibalic.



Close view of a marble statue of Hannibal embodying perseverance, mausoleum of Engelbrecht II van Nassau (1451–1504), Church of Our Lady, Breda. In his design to bring Rome to its knees, Hannibal was certainly persistent. For 14 long years after Lake Trasimene he would remain at large in what was often hostile territory, leading his mercenary raggle-taggle from one victory to another. (Vassil)

Be all that as it may, perhaps the clearest light on Hannibal's character is shown by the fact that although he maintained his mercenary raggle-taggle permanently on active service in what was often hostile territory for almost 16 unbroken years, he kept it 'free from sedition towards him or among themselves, although his troops he used were merely not all of the same nation, but not even of the same race (for he had Libyans, Iberians, Ligurians, Celts or Gauls, Carthaginians, Italians, Greeks) ... the ability of their commander forced men so radically different to give ear to a single word of command and yield obedience to a single will' (Polybius 11.19.3, 5). In these few lines lies perhaps the essence of Hannibal's quality as a commander.

If this is how the pro-Roman Polybius saw Hannibal, then his inspirational leadership and canny man management must have been unsurpassed. As well as a great strategist he must also have been a great contriver, a practical expert who clearly knew how to compromise in order to accommodate the broad ethnic diversity of the assorted national and tribal contingents that constituted his mixed army of disinterested soldiers and warriors. The realm of true genius is to be found in the perfection of this man who could use Africans, Iberians, Celts and Italians, infantry, cavalry and elephants, regulars and irregulars, stratagems and deceptions, each in its best fashion. For those 16 or so years he held his army between his fingers like a craftsman's tool.

We have a bird's-eye view of these far distant times. Hannibal was without question an outstanding military commander. In the light of modern techniques his success at Lake Trasimene and his record of successes generally in Iberia and Italy may seem of little moment, but the idea of adding art and imagination to brute force was new. He did not accept that the smaller army must always concede victory to the larger, as he was to deftly demonstrate on the dusty plain of Cannae, and he proved that a battle may be decided by forethought and planning, as demonstrated by his two victories at the Trebbia and Lake Trasimene. He also had the gift to inspire as well as discipline his men even when they came from such diverse origins. Hannibal rose to his station because he was peerless when it came to shaping the world around him to his will, in compelling other men's hearts and minds. In order to achieve this it was necessary for him to create a narrative. But the most compelling storyline requires a villain at its centre, and for Hannibal that was of course Rome.

In the field his 'appreciation of the situation', as soldiers call it today, must have been one of his greatest abilities. He must often have accurately sized up the strength, the character and the likely moves of his opponents before he fought his battles. He was in sole command and he saw to it that his orders were meticulously carried out. But as a politician he constantly miscalculated the strength, the character and the future moves of his opponents. There could be no absolute victory over Rome. As a soldier, until his final defeat at Zama, he was nearly always master of events. As a politician events in the end would master him.

OPPOSING FORCES

Polybius, our main primary source for these matters, only makes brief analyses of the Carthaginian military system, an exercise purely as a contrast to what he regards as the far superior Roman system, the subject of his sixth book. He observes that the:

Carthaginians entirely neglect their infantry, though they do pay sole slight attention to their cavalry. The reason for this is that the troops they employ are foreign and mercenary, whereas those of the Romans are native and of the soil and citizens ... The Carthaginians depend at all times on the courage and bravery of mercenaries to safeguard their prospects of freedom, but the Romans rely on the bravery of their own citizens and the help of their allies. (Polybius 6.52.3–4)

Although heavily biased in favour of the Roman military system, after all it was the one that caused the downfall of his Greek world, Polybius nevertheless (despite his orgy of rhetorical antitheses in this comparison of two nations) was substantially correct in his description of the Carthaginian army. Certainly, as we shall discuss below, Hannibal did employ a wide range of ‘foreign and mercenary’ troops. Yet even a stellar commander such as Hannibal could not achieve much without good troops and weapons, disciplined men who were the instruments of his elaborate tactical conceptions.



Two legionaries and an *eques* on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. Ma 975) equipped with the arms and armour of the last two centuries of the Roman Republic. The legionaries wear Etrusco-Corinthian helmets and mail shirts, and carry Italic *scuta*. The *eques* wears a mail shirt and a plumed Boiotian helmet, as is evident from its crinkly rim. This was a popular style with Graeco-Italic horsemen of the period as it combined excellent protection with unimpaired vision and hearing. (© Esther Carré)

FLAMINIUS' ARMY

By the time Rome was no longer the hilltop village on the Tiber bank, Roman warfare had become an adaptation of Greek warfare and the hoplite ideology of the decisive battle. Yet when Rome was no longer the humble city of the seven hills, but plundering Rome at the time of Hannibal, the army had assumed the more familiar form of the manipular legion. In both these instances, the model is that of the disciplined infantry formation in a set piece battle, first with the rigid phalanx and then with the more flexible legion, but both with an excellence in and a preference for the head-to-head encounter that seeks to destroy the enemy. In this decisive clash of opposing armies, which tended to settle the issue one way or another, the Roman legion usually performed very well, returning any blows vigorously and viciously. The Roman citizen soldier, like his Greek counterpart, excelled at close-quarter combat, but his legion could be manoeuvred more readily than the phalanx. In contrast to the one solid block of the Greeks, the legion was now divided into several small blocks, with spaces between them. The Romans, in other words, gave the phalanx 'joints' in order to secure flexibility (Delbrück 1920/1990, p.275), and what is more, each soldier had twice as much elbow room for individual action, which, as we shall discover, involved swordplay.

We have two accounts of the manipular legion's organization. First, the Roman historian Livy, writing more than three centuries after the event, describes the legion of the mid-4th century BC. Second, the Greek historian Polybius, living and writing in Rome at the time, describes the legion of the mid-2nd century BC. The transition between the Livian and Polybian legion is somewhat obscure, but for the sake of brevity and clarity, we shall just concern ourselves with the Polybian legion. Indeed, for the actual organization of the republican legion *terra firma* is reached only with Polybius himself, who breaks off his narrative of the Second Punic War at the nadir of Rome's fortunes, following the three defeats of the Trebbia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae, and turns to an extended digression on the Roman constitution (6.11–18) and the Roman army (6.19–42).

A pair of reconstructed *caligae* (MuséoParc Alésia). These were heavy-soled hobnailed footwear worn by those legionaries who could afford them (after the Marian reforms they would be standard issue for all). They consisted of a fretwork upper, a thin insole and a thicker outer sole made of several layers of cow or ox leather glued together and studded with hobnails. The one-piece upper was sewn up at the heel and laced up the centre of the foot to the top of the ankle with a leather thong. The open design allowed for free passage of air (and water), reducing the likelihood of blisters. (© Esther Carré)



The Polybian legion

In our chosen period of study, the Roman army was based on the principle of personal service by the citizens defending their state. It was not yet a professional army. The term *legio*, 'levy', obviously referred to the entire citizen force raised by Rome in anyone year, but by at least the 4th century BC it had come to denote the most significant subdivision of the army. Then, as Rome's territory and population increased, it was found necessary to levy two consular armies, each of two legions, *legiones*.

All citizens between 17 and 46 years of age who satisfied the property criteria, namely those who

owned property above the value of 11,000 asses, were required by the Senate to attend a selection process, the *dilectus*, on the Capitol. Although Polybius' passage is slightly defective here, citizens were liable for 16 years' service as a legionary, *miles*, and ten for a horseman, *eques* (6.19.2). These figures represent the maximum that a man could be called upon to serve. In the 2nd century BC, for instance, a man was normally expected to serve up to 6 years in a continuous posting, after which he expected to be released from his military oath. Thereafter he was liable for enlistment, as an *evocatus*, up to the maximum of 16 campaigns or years. Some men might serve for a single year at a time, and be obliged to come forward again at the next *dilectus*, until their full 6-year period was completed.

At the *dilectus* height and age arranged the citizens into some semblance of soldierly order. They were then brought forward four at a time to be selected for service in one of the four consular legions being raised that year. The junior military tribunes, *tribuni militum*, of each legion took it in turns to have first choice, thus ensuring an even distribution of experience and quality throughout the four units. They then ordered the soldiers to take a formal oath. Though the exact text of the oath is not given by Polybius, he does say a soldier swore 'he would obey his officers and carry out their commands to the best of his ability' (6.21.1). To speed up the process the oath was sworn in full by one man, and each of the rest swore that he would do the same as the first, perhaps using the phrase *idem in me*, 'the same for me'. They were given a date and muster point, and then dismissed to their homes. Though we are in the habit of imagining Roman legions springing forth everywhere in abundance, as though from the furrows of Thebes, it should be borne in mind, however, that it took time to raise and train a consular army. This is a matter confirmed by a letter of Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus to the Senate in which he recorded, with evident pride, that he had got an army ready to start on an expedition to Iberia in 40 days from the day on which he was granted the *imperium* (Sallust *Historiae* 2.98.4).

The standard complement of the Polybian legion was 4,200 foot and 300 horse, in theory if not practice (Polybius 6.20.8–9), though elsewhere Polybius refers to the standard complement of 4,000 infantry and 300 cavalry (1.16.2) and of 4,000 infantry and 200 cavalry (3.107.10), and does suggest that there were sometimes fewer

Full-scale reconstruction of an Italic oval, semi-cylindrical body shield (Aquilaia, Taberna Marciana), conventionally known as the *scutum*. To give it an effective mixture of flexibility and resilience, the *scutum* was constructed out of three layers of birch plywood, canvas and calfskin. The stylized wing, thunderbolt and lightning flash design (the emblem of Jupiter) is a popular modern reconstruction; Polybius himself gives us no clues with regard to legionary shield devices. (© Esther Carré)





A Montefortino helmet (Volterra, Museo Etrusco, inv. MG 9737). Proving popular with the Romans, the Montefortino pattern was probably adopted by them from the Senones. The bulbous-shaped helmet was held in place by leather thongs that ran from rings under the protecting neck guard, crossed under the chin and attached to metal loops, hooks or studs on the lower part of each cheek piece. (Thomas Quine)

than 4,000 infantry per legion (6.21.10). Whatever its exact number, the Polybian legion consisted of five elements – the heavily armed infantry, the *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*; the lightly armed infantry, the *velites* (*grosphomachoi* in Polybius' Greek); and the cavalry *equites* – each equipped differently and having specific places in the legion's tactical formation. Its principal strength was the 30 maniples of its heavy infantry, the *velites* and *equites* acting in support of these. Its organization allowed it only one standard formation, the *triplex acies* with three successive, relatively shallow lines of ten maniples each, these fighting units supporting each other to apply maximum pressure on an enemy to the front.

Hence, the legion was divided horizontally into three lines, and vertically into maniples (*manipuli*), with the first line containing 1,200 *hastati* in ten maniples of 120, the second line 1,200 *principes* organized in the same way, and the third line of 600 *triarii* also in ten maniples. The *hastati* ('spearmen') were men in the flower of youth, the *principes* ('chief men') in the prime of manhood and the *triarii* ('third-rank men') the oldest and more mature men (6.21.7). The same

order for the three lines appears elsewhere in Polybius' narrative (14.8.5, 15.9.7), and in Livy's also (30.8.5, 32.11, 34.10) as well as in other antiquarian sources (e.g. Varro *De lingua Latina* 5.89). Of the 4,200 legionaries in a legion, while 3,000 served as heavy infantry, the remaining 1,200 men, the youngest and poorest, were serving as light infantry. Known as *velites* or 'cloak wearers', that is, they lacked any form of body armour, they were divided for administrative purpose among the heavy infantry of the maniples, each maniple being allocated the same number of *velites* (Polybius 6.21.7, 24.4). Finally, accompanying the legionaries were 300 fellow citizens on horseback.

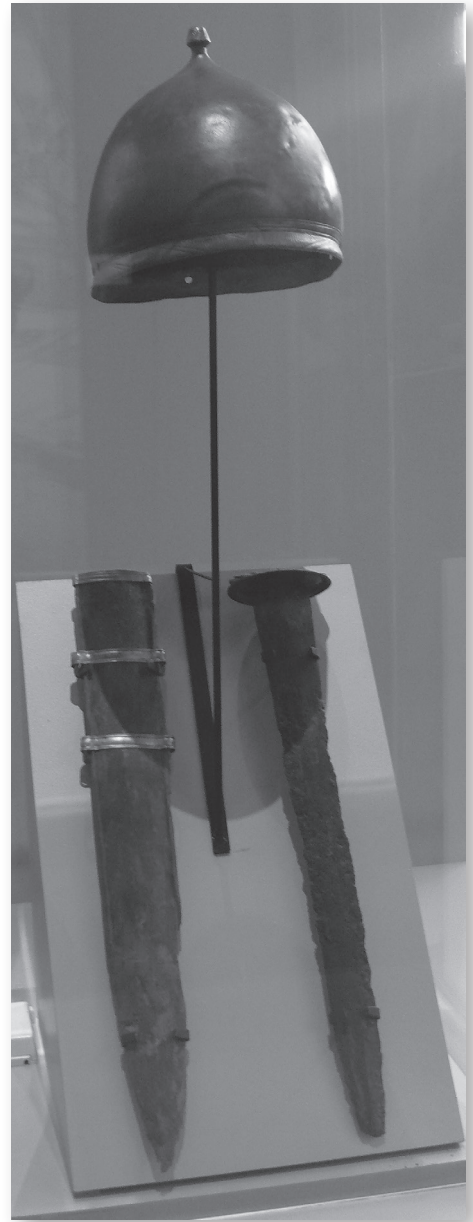
The Polybian legionary

The Romans attached a great deal of importance to training, and it is this that largely explains the formidable success of their army. 'And what can I say about the training of legions?' is the rhetorical question aired by Cicero. 'Put an equally brave, but untrained soldier in the front line and he will look like a woman' (*Tusculanae disputationes* 2.16.37). The basic aim of this training was to give the legions superiority over the 'barbarian' in battle, and even as late as the 4th century AD, Vegetius attributed 'the conquest of the world by the Roman people' to their training methods, camp discipline and military skills (1.1). Having said all that, the Romans took great pride in their ability to learn from their enemies too, copying weaponry (and tactics) from successive opponents and often improving upon them. This was one of their strong points and, as Polybius rightly says, 'no people are more willing to adopt new customs and to emulate what they see is better done by others' (6.25.10).

The *hastati* and *principes* carried the Italic oval, semi-cylindrical body shield, conventionally known as the *scutum*, the famous Iberian cut-and-thrust sword (*gladius Hispaniensis*), and two sorts of *pila*, heavy and light. The *triarii* were similarly equipped, except they carried a long thrusting spear (*hasta*) instead of the *pilum* (Polybius 6.23.6). This 2m weapon survives from the era when the Roman army was a hoplite militia, thus Dionysios of Halikarnassos says that ‘cavalry spears’ (20.11.2), viz. hoplite spears, were still being employed in battle by the *principes* during the war with Pyrrhos (280–275 BC). The *hasta* was perhaps obsolete in Polybius’ day, though probably still in use during the *tumultus Gallicus* of 225–222 BC, when they are, for the only time, mentioned in action (Polybius 2.33.4), while the annalistic tradition does not notice it at all. The close-quarter, battering power of the legion was thus provided by the legionary wielding *pilum* and *gladius*, and the combination of *pilum* shower and blade work rendered the Roman army so deadly.

In the Livian legion there is no reference to the *pilum*, which, if Livy’s account is accepted, may not yet have been introduced. The earliest reference to the *pilum* belongs to 293 BC during the Third Samnite War (Livy 10.39.12, cf. Plutarch, *Pyrrhos* 21.9), though the earliest authentic use of this weapon may belong to 251 BC (Polybius 1.40.12). The *pilum*, therefore, was probably adopted from Iberian mercenaries fighting for Carthage in the First Punic War. Polybius distinguishes two types of *pilum* (*byssos* in his Greek), ‘thick’ and ‘thin’, saying each man had both types (6.23.9–11). Surviving examples from Numantia (near Burgos, Spain), the site of a Roman siege (134–133 BC), confirm two basic types of construction. Both have a small pyramid-shaped point at the end of a narrow soft-iron shank, fitted to a wooden shaft some 1.4m in length. One type has the shank socketed, while the other has a wide flat iron tang riveted to a thickened section of the wooden shaft. The last type is probably Polybius’ ‘thick’ *pilum*, referring to the broad joint of iron and wood. This broad section can be either square or round in section, and is strengthened by a small iron ferrule. The iron shank varies in length, with many examples averaging around 70cm.

All of the weapon’s weight was concentrated behind the small pyramidal tip, giving it great penetrative power. The length of the iron shank gave it the reach to punch through an enemy’s shield and still go on to wound his body, but even if it failed to do so and merely stuck in the shield it was very difficult to pull free and might force the man to discard his weighted-down shield and fight unprotected. A useful side effect of this ‘armour piercing’ weapon was that the narrow shank would often bend on impact, ensuring that the enemy would not throw it back. The maximum range of the *pilum* was some 30m, but its effective range something like half that. Throwing a *pilum* at close range would have improved both accuracy and armour penetration.



A Montefortino helmet discovered in the Rhône in 1969, dated to 100 BC, and an Augustan-period ‘Mainz’ type *gladius* excavated at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in 1998 (Arles, Musée de l’Arles et de la Provence, inv. X-16069, inv. X-15990). The ‘Mainz’ pattern of *gladius Hispaniensis*, with its exceptionally long stabbing point, was little changed since its adoption from the Iberians at the time of the First Punic War. (Ad Maskens)



Attic-style helmet (Paris, Musée de l'armée, inv. E.4) from southern Italy, dated to the late 4th century BC. With excellent ventilation, hearing and vision without sacrificing too much facial protection, the Attic pattern was popular with those who fought in a fluid fashion, such as the *velites* and the *equites*. The embossed horse's head on the hinged cheek piece suggests the helmet once belonged to a horseman. With the Attic style, what was previously a nasal guard became an inverted 'V' over the brow. (© Esther Carré)

Iberian dagger (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional) from Almedinilla necropolis, Córdoba, dated to 4th/3rd century BC. The short blade of the dagger was sharpened on both edges and had a long, tapered stabbing point. This weapon reminds us that the Romans copied the Iberian dagger pattern as well as that of the Iberian cut-and-thrust sword. (Luis García)

A Byzantine lexicographer from the 10th century AD, possibly following Polybius' lost account of the Iberian War, says the *gladius Hispaniensis* was adopted from the Iberians (or Celtiberians) at the time of the war with Hannibal, but it is possible that this weapon, along with the *pilum*, was adopted from Iberian mercenaries serving Carthage during the First Punic War (Polybius fr. 179 [96] with Walbank 1957, p.704). It was certainly in use by 197 BC, when Livy (31.34.4) describes the Macedonians' shock at the terrible wounds it inflicted. The Iberians used a relatively short, but deadly sword. This was either the *falcata*, an elegant curved single-bladed weapon derived from the Greek *kopis*, most common in the south and south-east of Iberia, or the cut-and-thrust sword, straight bladed weapon from which the *gladius* was derived (Polybius 3.114.2–4, Livy 22.46.6).

The body of militaria, for which the use by middle Republican legionaries can certainly be

proven, is minimal. The earliest Roman sword specimens date to the turn of the 1st century BC ('Mainz' type), but a 4th-century BC sword of similar shape has been found in Spain at the necropolis of Los Cogotes (Avila), as is an earlier Iberian example from Atienza some 100km north-east of Madrid. The Roman blade could be as much as 64–69cm in length and 4.5–5.7cm wide and waisted in the centre. It was a fine piece of 'blister steel' with a triangular point between 9.6 and 20cm long and honed down razor-sharp edges, and was designed to puncture armour. It had a comfortable bone handgrip grooved to fit the fingers, and a large spherical pommel, usually of wood or ivory, to help with counterbalance. Extant examples weigh between 1.2 and 1.6kg (Ulbert 1967). The story of the *gladius* is an object lesson of the Roman way of taking the best of what others have learned and making it their own.

The legionary also carried a dagger, *pugio*. The dagger – a short, double-edged, stabbing weapon – was the ultimate weapon of last resort. However, it was probably more often employed in the day-to-day tasks of living on campaign. Like the *gladius*, the Roman dagger was borrowed from the Iberians and then developed.

Polybius says (6.23.14–15) all soldiers wore a bronze pectoral, a span (*spithamê* in his Greek) square, to protect the heart and chest, although those who could afford it would wear instead an iron mail shirt (*lorica hamata*). He also adds that a bronze helmet was worn, without describing it, but the



Attic, Montefortino, and Etrusco-Corinthian styles were all popular in Italy at this time and were probably all used, as they certainly all were by later Roman troops. He does say (6.23.12–13) helmets were crested with a circlet of feathers and three upright black or crimson feathers a cubit (*pêchus* in his Greek) tall, so exaggerating the wearer's height. Interestingly, Polybius (6.23.8) clearly refers to only one greave being worn, and Arrian (*Ars Tactica* 3.5.), writing more or less three centuries later, confirms this, saying the 'ancient' (viz. Republican) Romans used to wear one greave only, on the leading leg, the left. Doubtless, many of those legionaries who could afford it would actually have a pair of bronze greaves covering the leg from ankle to knee.

To complete his defensive equipment, each soldier carried the *scutum*, an Italic body shield probably derived from the Samnites (Walbank 1957, pp.703–04, Cornell 1995, p.170). Polybius (6.23.2–5) describes the *scutum* in detail, and his account is confirmed by the remarkable discovery in 1900 of a shield of this type at Kasr-el-Harit in the Fayûm, Egypt (Connolly 1998, p.132). It is midway between a rectangle and an oval in shape, and is 128cm in length and 63.5cm in width with a slight concavity. It is constructed from three layers of birch laths, each layer laid at right angles to the next, and originally covered with lamb's wool felt. This was likely fitted damp in one piece, which, when dry, had shrunk and strengthened the whole artefact. The shield board is thicker in the centre and flexible at the edges, making it very resilient to blows, and the top and bottom edges may have been reinforced with bronze or iron edging to prevent splitting. Nailed to the front and running vertically from top to bottom is a wooden spine (*spina*). Good protection came at a price, for the *scutum* was heavy, around 10kg, and in battle its entire weight was borne by the left arm as the soldier held the horizontal handgrip behind the bronze or iron boss (*umbo*), which reinforced the central spine of the shield.

Finally, lest we forget, these short-term citizen soldiers provided their own equipment and therefore we should expect considerably more variation in clothing, armour and weapons than the legionaries of the later professional legions. There is no good reason to believe, for instance, that they wore tunics of the same hue or that shields were adorned with unit insignia. In fact, Polybius makes no mention of shield decoration, despite his detailed description of legionary equipment down to the colour of their plumes. This seems to be supported by sculptural evidence, such as the Aemilius Paullus monument or the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, which show *scuta* left plain.



A full-scale reconstruction of an Italian form of the Attic style helmet. Improved versions of this pattern had a cranial ridge for better protection and hinged cheek pieces that allowed for improved ventilation. This legionary replica has the three upright black or crimson feathers as described by Polybius. (CptKeyes)

Socii

Accompanying each Roman legion were soldiers provided by Rome's Latin and Italian allies, the *socii* (Polybius 6.26.7). Their principal unit was known as the *ala*, 'wing', which deployed the same number of infantry as the Roman legion. By the time of Hannibal, if not before, in a standard consular army the two Roman *legiones* would form the centre with two Latin-Italian *alae* deployed on their flanks – they were known as the 'ala of the left' (*ala sinistra*) and the 'ala of the right' (*ala dextra*), a positioning obviously reflecting the term *ala*, wing (6.26.9).

Although Polybius assumes the infantry camped in *manipuli*, the *cohors* was the standard unit both for recruitment and tactics well before the Romans employed it and at least as early as the Second Punic War. It may originally have been a Samnite unit, so some allies may have used it before their incorporation into the Roman army. Allied *cohortes* of 460, 500 and 600 men are recorded by Livy (23.17.8, 11, 28.45.20), and the variance in strength probably reflects the differing sizes of each community's population. Maniples probably existed as subunits within the cohort, with ten cohorts drawn from different communities placed together to form an *ala*. Roman officers called *praefecti Sociorum*, apparently three per *ala*, commanded the allies (Polybius 6.26.5). Appointed by the consuls, the prefects' role was probably similar to that of the military tribunes in a legion. At lower levels the allies evidently provided their own officers – we know the name of the *cohors* commander of the soldiers from Praeneste at Casilinum, Marcus Ancius (Livy 23.17.11).

The pick of the Latin and Italian allies, one-third of the cavalry and one-fifth of the infantry, were separated from the *alae* to form a detached corps known as the *extraordinarii*, who camped near the consul's tent, *praetorium*, and were at his immediate disposal. In a standard consular army, therefore, four *cohortes* of infantry and 20 *turmae* of cavalry formed the *extraordinarii*. As a rule they were placed at the head of the column, but during a retreat they dropped back and formed the rearguard instead of the vanguard. Although the *extraordinarii* had a special position in the *agmen*, line-of-march, and in camp (Polybius 6.31.6, 8, 40.4, 8), they do not seem to have had a special role in battle and may have simply stood with the rest of the allies, that is, as part of their parent *ala*.

Polybius' silence on the subject strongly suggests that the allies were organized and equipped along Roman lines, which would certainly have been desirable as it would have enabled them to interact smoothly with the legions. Presumably their traditional arms and tactics were gradually replaced by Roman methods and weaponry (Lazenby 1978, p.13).

An Etrusco-Corinthian helmet (Milan, Museo Archeologico di Milano). This pattern was still used by legionaries and is associated with the *triarii* and senior officers. This example is without cheek pieces and the characteristic crest holder. Developed from the Corinthian type much used by Greek hoplites, the Etrusco-Corinthian pattern still preserved the now redundant eyeholes and nasal guard of the original facial area for decoration. (José Luiz)



Lightly armed infantry

The *velites* were armed with a sword, the *gladius Hispaniensis* according to Livy (38.21.15), and a bundle of javelins, with long thin iron heads a span (*palmus* in his Latin) in length, which bent at the first impact. As for the actual number of javelins carried, Polybius does not specify. Livy, on the other hand, says (26.4.4) *velites* had seven javelins apiece, whilst the 2nd-century BC Roman satirist Lucilius (*Satires* 7.290) has them carrying five each. For protection they wore a helmet without a crest – perhaps the Italian form of the Greek Attic pattern – and carried a round shield (*parma*) but wore no armour.

They appear not to have their own officers, being commanded by the centurions leading the maniples in the main battleline, yet they could be quite effective in combat, and probably relied on ‘natural leaders’ for tactical command. In order to be distinguished from a distance, certain *velites* would cover their plain helmets with a wolf’s skin or something similar so that they would be visible to their centurions from a distance (Polybius 6.22.3); such individuals, being keen to impress, could well have led by example.

Cavalry

Each legion had a small cavalry force of 300 organized in ten *turmae* of 30 horsemen each (Polybius 6.20.8–9, 25.1, cf. 2.24.13, Livy 3.62). The military tribunes appointed three *decuriones* to each *turma*, of whom the senior commanded with the rank of *praefectus*, prefect. Each *decurio* chose an *optio* as his second-in-command and rear-rank officer (Polybius 6.25.1–2). This organization suggests that the *turma* was divided into three files of ten, each led by a *decurio* (‘leader of ten’) and closed by an *optio*. These files were obviously not independent tactical subunits, for the *turma* was evidently intended to operate as a single entity, as indicated by the seniority of one *decurio* over his two colleagues.

Marble bas-relief (Rome, Campidoglio Tabularium, inv. 1020814) from the Lacus Curtius, Roman Forum, dated to the 2nd century BC. The young Roman *eques*, Marcus Curtius, wears a crested Etrusco-Corinthian helmet, a short (bronze?) cuirass with two rows of *pteruges*, and carries a large Greek-style cavalry shield with a metal boss recessed in the centre. He is armed with a sturdy spear, which possibly carries a butt-spike like the Macedonian *xyston*. (Lalupa)



The cavalry or *equites* formed the most prestigious element of the legion, and were recruited from the wealthiest citizens able to afford a horse and its trappings (Polybius 6.20.9). By our period these included the top 18 centuries (*centuriae*) of the voting assembly, the *comitia centuriata*, who were rated *equites equo publico*, the equestrian elite, obliging the state to provide them with the cost of a remount should their horse be killed on active service. Cato was later to proudly boast that his grandfather had five horses killed under him in battle and replaced by the state (Plutarch, *Cato major* 1.3). Being young aristocrats, the *equites* were enthusiastic and brave, but better at making a headlong charge on the battlefield than patrolling or scouting. This was a reflection of the lack of a real cavalry tradition in Rome, as well as the fact that the *equites* included the sons of many senators, eager to make a name for courage and so help their future political careers. Before being eligible for political office in Rome a man had to have served for ten campaigns with the army.

The allied cavalry force was generally two or three times larger than that of the citizens (Polybius 6.28.7–8). These horsemen were organized in *turmae* probably the same strength as the Roman one, and were presumably also from the wealthiest strata of society. This is certainly suggested by Livy's references (23.7.2, 24.13.1) to 300 young men of the noblest Campanian families serving in Sicily, and to the young noblemen from Tarentum who served at the battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae. The cavalry were commanded, at least from the 2nd century BC, by Roman *praefecti equitum*, presumably with local *decuriones* and *optiones* at *turma* level. Like their citizen counterparts, as well as having a higher social status, allied horsemen were much better paid than those serving as foot soldiers (Polybius 6.39.14–15).

Polybius (6.25.3–8) discusses the changes in the Roman cavalry in some detail, emphasizing that the *equites* were now armed in 'the Greek fashion', namely bronze helmet, stiff linen corselet, strong circular shield, long spear, complete with a butt-spike and sword, but he observes that formerly (perhaps up to the Pyrrhic War) they had lacked body armour and had carried only a short spear and a small ox-hide shield, which was too light for adequate protection at close quarters and tended to rot in the rain. Polybius actually compares its shape to a type of round-bossed cake, namely those that are commonly used in sacrifices. This earlier shield may be the type shown on the Tarentine 'horsemen' coins of the early 4th century BC, with a flat rim and convex centre. For what it is worth, Livy mentions 'little round cavalry shields' in use as early as 499 BC (*equestris parma*, 2.20.10, cf. 4.28), but this may be anachronistic.

Intriguingly, the sword now carried by the *equites* appears to have been the *gladius Hispaniensis*, for when Livy describes the horror felt by Macedonian soldiers on seeing the hideous wounds inflicted upon their comrades, the perpetrators were Roman cavalrymen. If true, then the *gladius* used by the *equites* may well have been a little longer than that of the infantry. Livy refers to 'arms torn away, shoulders and all, heads separated from bodies with the necks completely severed, and stomachs ripped open' (31.34.4).

Contrary to popular belief, the lack of stirrups was not a major handicap to ancient horsemen, especially those 'born in the saddle' like the Numidians. Moreover, Roman cavalry of the time were perhaps already using the Celtic four-horned saddle, which provides an admirably firm seat. The saddle was certainly a part of Roman cavalry equipment in the time of Caesar, a

concession, so he says (*Bellum Gallicum* 4.4.2), considered effete by the Germans. The padded saddle with four horns made by internal bronze stiffeners appears for the first time on Roman sculptures (Arc d'Orange, Mausoleum at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence) of the early Principate. Like most equestrian equipment, it was almost certainly of Celtic origin as it is depicted on the Gundestrup cauldron, which was likely made in the Balkans sometime during the late 2nd century BC.

This is how the saddle worked. When a rider's weight was lowered onto this type of saddle, the four tall horns (*corniculae*) closed around and gripped his thighs, but they did not inhibit free movement to the same extent as a modern pommel and cantle designed for rider comfort and safety. This was especially important to spear- and sword-carrying cavalry favoured by the Romans, whose drill called for some almost acrobatic changes of position. In an age that did not have the stirrup, the adoption of the four-horned saddle, as experimental work has shown (Hyland 1990, pp.130–34), allowed the horseman to effectively launch a missile while skirmishing, or confidently use both hands to wield his shield and spear (or sword) in a whirling *mêlée*.

The main function of its wooden frame was to protect the horse's spine from shock during a charge, and its design transferred the rider's weight to the animal's flanks. The saddle was secured with breast strap, haunch straps and breeching, and a girth that passed through a woollen saddlecloth under which a smaller cloth of fur may have been placed to give the horse greater protection from chaffing.

Battle tactics

Polybius does not offer his readers an account of the legion in battle, but there are a number of combat descriptions both in his own work and that of Livy. However, very few accounts describe tactics in detail; a contemporary Roman (or Greek) audience would take much for granted. Even so, the legion would usually approach the enemy in its standard battle formation, the *triplex acies*, which was based around the triple line of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*, with the *velites* forming a light screen in front. As we know, each of these three lines consisted of ten maniples. When deployed each maniple may have been separated from its lateral neighbour by the width of its own frontage (c. 18m), though this is still a matter of some debate (e.g. Taylor 2014). Livy tells us that the maniples were 'a small distance apart' (8.8.5), which does not really help us a great deal. Moreover, the maniples of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* were staggered, with the more seasoned *principes* covering the gaps of the *hastati* in front, and likewise the veteran *triarii* covering those of the *principes*. This battle formation is conveniently called the *quincunx* by modern commentators, from the five dots on a dice cube (e.g. Adcock 1940, p.9, Keppie 1998, p.39, Goldsworthy *Roman Warfare*, p.44).



Oblique rear view of a full-scale reconstruction of a four-horned saddle. The padded, leather saddle with four horns made by internal copper-alloy stiffeners first appears, in a Celtic context, on the Gundestrup cauldron. The four tall horns give a secure seat even without stirrups; the rear pair stands vertical to secure the rider's rump, while the front pair angle outwards, effectively hooking over the rider's thighs. Modern experiments are proving that Gaulish and Roman horsemen could perform all the roles expected of the mounted arm without the need of the stirrups saddle. (Matthias Kabel)

Mars, god of war, on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. Ma 975) dressed in the uniform of a senior Roman officer, most probably that of a *tribunus militum*, military tribune. He wears a short muscled cuirass with two rows of fringed *pteruges*, greaves and a crested Etrusco-Corinthian helmet. The knotted sash around his waist probably denotes his rank. (© Esther Carré)



Battle would be opened by the *velites* who attempted to disorganize and unsettle enemy formations with a hail of javelins. Livy (31.35.4–6, 38.21.12–13) describes them successfully skirmishing from a distance by throwing their javelins and then fighting at close quarters with their swords, using their shields to protect themselves. This done, they retired through the gaps in the maniples of the *hastati* and made their way to the rear. The maniples of the *hastati* now reformed to close the gaps, either by each maniple extending its frontage, thus giving individuals more room in which to handle their weapons, or, if the maniple was drawn up two centuries deep, the *centurio posterior* would move his *centuria* to the left and forward, thus running out and forming up alongside the *centuria* of the *centurio prior* in the line itself (Keppie 1998, pp.38–39).

The *hastati* would discharge their *pila*, throwing first their light and then their heavyweight *pila*, some 15m – the effective range of a *pilum* – from the enemy. The term *hastati*, spearmen, should be taken to mean armed with throwing spears, namely *pila*, instead of thrusting ones. This is after all the sense it bears out in our earliest surviving example of it, in Ennius' line *hastati spargunt hasti*, 'hastati who hurl hasti' (*Annales* fr. 284 Vahlen), and their name probably reflects a time when they alone used *pila*. If the *pila* did not actually hit the enemy, they would often become embedded in their shields, their barbed points making them difficult to withdraw. Handicapped by a *pilum* the shield became useless. Additionally, the thin metal shaft bent or buckled on impact thus preventing the weapon being thrown back.

During the confusion caused by this hail of *pila*, which could be devastating, the *hastati* drew their swords and, said Polybius, 'charged the enemy yelling their war cry and clashing their weapons against their shields as is their custom' (15.12.8, cf. 1.34.2). He also says (18.30.6–8) the Romans formed up in a much looser formation than other heavy infantry, adding this was necessary to use the sword and for the soldier to defend himself all round with his shield. This implies the legionary was essentially an individual fighter, a swordsman. Yet Cato, who served during the Second Punic War as an *eques* and a *quaestor*, always maintained that a soldier's bearing, confidence and the ferociousness of his war cry were more important than his actual skill with a blade (Plutarch *Cato major* 1.4).

In his brief description of the *gladius Hispaniensis* Polybius evidently says the sword (*Iberikós* in his Greek) was 'worn high on the right thigh' so as to be clear of the legs – a vertically held scabbard would normally be impractical for walking let alone for fighting –

adding that it was an excellent weapon ‘for thrusting, and both of its edges cut effectually, as the blade is very strong and firm’ (6.23.6–7). The wearing of the sword on the right side goes back to the Iberians, and before them, to the sword-swinging Celts. The sword was the weapon of the high status warrior, and to carry one was to display a symbol of rank and prestige. It was probably for cultural reasons alone, therefore, that the Celts carried the long slashing sword on the right side. Usually a sword was worn on the left, the side covered by the shield, which meant the weapon was hidden from view.

If, at this early date, the legionary already carried his sword on the right-hand side suspended by a sword (waist) belt, it would not be for any cultural reason. As oppose to a scabbard-slide, the four-ring suspension system on his scabbard enabled the legionary to draw his weapon quickly with the right hand, an asset in close-quarter combat. In view of its relatively short blade, inverting the hand to grasp the hilt and pushing the pommel forward drew the *gladius* with ease. With its sharp point and four-ring suspension arrangement, the Delos sword, firmly dated to 69 BC, shows all the characteristics of the *gladius* described a century earlier by Polybius. Another such example is the Mouriès sword, found in a tomb in association with a group of pottery and metal artefacts, notably a bronze washing-kit with an Italic jug and *patera*. This assembly can be dated to around the turn of the 1st century BC (Bishop-Coulston 2006, p.53; Feugère 1993, p.79). From Polybius’ day there is the Šmihel sword, dated to around 175 BC (Cascarino 2007, p.143).

Polybius, in an excursion dedicated to the comparison between Roman and Macedonian military equipment and tactical formations, says the following:

According to the Roman methods of fighting each man makes his movements individually: not only does he defend his body with his long shield, constantly moving it to meet a threatened blow, but he uses his sword both for cutting and for thrusting. (Polybius 18.30.6)



A full-scale reconstruction of a ‘Mainz’ pattern of *gladius Hispaniensis* (Aquileia, Taberna Marciana). A fine piece of ‘blister steel’ with a triangular point and honed down with razor-shape edges, the *gladius* was designed to puncture armour. It had a comfortable bone handgrip grooved to fit the fingers, and a large spherical pommel, usually of wood or ivory, to help counterbalance the weight. Extant examples weigh between 1.2 and 1.6kg. (© Esther Carré)

What we are witnessing here is the intelligent use, by a swordsman, of the sword. It appears, therefore, that the tactical doctrine commonly associated with the Roman legion of the Principate was already in place during Polybius' day. We know from the archaeological record that the *gladius* of the Principate ('Pompeii' type) was an amazingly light and well-balanced weapon that was capable of making blindingly fast attacks, and was suitable for both cuts and thrusts. However, Tacitus (b. c.AD 56) and Vegetius (fl. c.AD 385) lay great stress on the *gladius* being employed by the legionary for thrusting rather than slashing. As Vegetius very rightly observes, 'A slash-cut, whatever its force, seldom kills' (1.12), and so a sword thrust was certainly more likely to deliver the fatal wound. Having thrown his *pilum* and charged into contact, the standard drill for the legionary of the Principate was to punch the enemy in the face with the shield-boss and then jab him in the belly with the razor-sharp point of the sword (Tacitus *Annales* 2.14, 21, 14.36, *Historiae* 2.42, *Agricola* 36.2).

One of the greatest of all the many battles between the Cisalpine Gauls and the Romans occurred in 225 BC at Telamon (Talamonaccio), on the Tyrrhenian coast midway between Pisae (Pisa) and Rome. It was here that a booty-laden Gaulish army, a coalition force of Insubres, Boii and Senones, was trapped and virtually destroyed by two consular armies. The Gauls, deployed to face both directions, north and south, still managed to terrify the Romans with their, in the words of Polybius, 'fine order' and their 'dreadful din' (2.29.6). The Greek author, in his vivid description of the engagement (probably following Fabius Pictor's eyewitness account), tells us that 'Roman shields ... were far better designed for defence, and so were their swords for attack, since the Gaulish sword can only be used for cutting and not for thrusting' (2.30.9). Despite their terrible losses that day, the Cisalpine Gauls upheld the struggle against Rome. Soon after Telamon, when Polybius covers the *tumultus Gallicus* of 225–222 BC, it is disclosed that legionaries 'made no attempt to slash and used only the thrust, kept their swords straight and relied on their sharp points ... inflicting one wound after another on the breast or the face' (2.33.6). In a much later passage Polybius (6.23.4) hints that they were trained to take the first whirling blow of the Celtic long slashing sword on the rim of the *scutum*, which was suitably bound with

Military re-enactors equipped and armed as Polybian legionaries. From left to right, two *velites*, an *eques* in a Boiotian helmet, five legionaries, and a *velites*. In periods of history from which soldiers' diaries, printed regulations and a wealth of physical material simply do not survive, reconstruction and experiment make great inroads into our relative ignorance of warfare in the ancient world. (CptKeyes)



iron. The principal weakness of a wooden shield was that it could be split in two with a well-aimed sword blow, leaving a soldier virtually defenceless.

The use of the thrust also meant the legionary kept most of his torso well covered, and thus protected, by his *scutum*. The latter, having absorbed the attack of his antagonist, was now punched into the face of the opponent as the legionary stepped forward to jab with his *gladius*. Much like the riot-shield of a modern policeman, the *scutum* was used both defensively and offensively to deflect blows and hammer into the opponent's shield or body to create openings. As he stood with his left foot forward, a legionary could get much of his body weight behind this punch. Added to this was the considerable weight of the scutum itself.

Ideally, the *hastati* fought the main enemy line to a standstill, but if they were rebuffed, or lost momentum, the *principes* advanced into the combat zone and the process was repeated. Hand-to-hand fighting was physically strenuous and emotionally draining, and the skill of a Roman commander lay in committing his second and third lines at the right time. Obviously the survivors of the *hastati* and the *principes* now reinforced the *triarii* if it came down to a final trial of strength. The phrase *inde rem ad triarios redisse*, 'the last resource is in the *triarii*' (Livy 8.8.9), passed into the Latin tongue as a description of a desperate situation (viz. carrying on to the bitter end). Victory would eventually go to the side that endured the stress of staying so close to the enemy for the longest and was still able to urge enough of its men forward to renew the fighting. It was the inherent flexibility of the manipular system that made the legion a formidable battlefield opponent. In Polybius' measured analysis:

The order of battle used by the Roman army is very difficult to break through, since it allows every man to fight both individually and collectively; the effect is to offer a formation that can present a front in any direction, since the maniples that are nearest to the point where danger threatens wheels in order to meet it. The arms they carry both give protection and also instil great confidence into the men, because of the size of the shields and the strength of the swords, which can withstand repeated blows. All these factors make the Romans formidable antagonists in battle and very hard to overcome. (Polybius 15.15.7–10)

Hellenistic armies, for instance, preferred to deepen their phalanx rather than form troops into a second line, and made little use of reserves, as the commander's role was usually to charge at the head of his cavalry in the manner of Alexander the Great. The deepening of the pike-armed phalanx gave it so much stamina in the mêlée, but even the men in the rear ranks were affected by stress and exhaustion of prolonged combat. The Roman system, on the other hand, allowed fresh men

A member of the Tarragona-based re-enactment group LEGIO PRIMA GERMANICA equipped and armed as a veteran legionary, a *triarius*, from the time of the war with Hannibal. As we can see, the third line of the manipular legion still wielded the old hoplite spear (Greek *dóru*, Latin *hasta*), a weapon not for throwing but for thrusting. (Graham Sumner)



to be fed into the fighting line, renewing its impetus and leading a surge forward, which might well have been enough to break a wearying enemy.

In battle, physical endurance is of the utmost importance and all soldiers in close contact with danger become emotionally if not physically exhausted as the battle proceeds. When writing of ancient warfare, du Picq notes the great value of the Roman system was that it kept only those units that were necessary at the point of combat and the rest 'outside the immediate sphere of moral tension' (1903/1946, p.53). The legion, organized into separate battle lines, was able to hold one-half to two-thirds of its men outside the danger zone – the zone of demoralization – in which the remaining half or third was engaged. Obviously the skill of a Roman commander lay not in sharing the dangers with his men but in committing his second and third lines at the right moments. Left too late then the fighting line might buckle and break. Too soon and the value of adding fresh soldiers to the *mêlée* might be wasted. This, then, was the military system that Hannibal had to face (and overcome) when he decided to take on the Romans on their own turf.

HANNIBAL'S ARMY

Detail of a ceramic bowl (València, Museo de Prehistoria de València) depicting two well-equipped Iberian warriors, from El Tossal de Sant Miquel de Lliria, dated 3rd/2nd century BC. (Falconaumann)



Both in equipment and ethnic composition, the army that Hannibal led into Italy was in some respects an anomaly in its time. On the whole it was the professional soldier who supplied its backbone and, unlike its Roman opponent therefore, Hannibal's army was a heterogeneous assortment of races. Half mercenary, half foreign, not at all national, this was the *ad hoc* gathering of men that was the Carthaginian invasion army. Generally, during the period of the Hannibalic War we hear of Libyan levies, Numidians and Mauri from the wild warrior tribes of the North African interior, Iberians, Celtiberians and Lusitanians from the Iberian Peninsula, deadeye shooters from the Balearic Islands, Cisalpine Gauls, Ligurians, Oscans, Etruscans and Italo-Greeks, a who's who of ethnic fighting techniques from around the western Mediterranean world (Polybius 3.33.11, 16, 72.7, 83.3, 113.6, 11.1.2, 3.1, 19.5, 14.7.5, 15.11.1, etc.). Hannibal successfully welded these widely dissimilar peoples into an army Rome could not match.

Thus, within Hannibal's polyglot army there was a willingness with which each foreign element cooperated with the other for the common end. The secret of this unity of action lay in the personality of the Carthaginian commander. In reality, Hannibal had erased the word impossible from his mental lexicon and had at the same time engendered in his troops' minds a blind confidence in his leadership. As we shall see at Lake Trasimene, Hannibal's army had the advantage of terrain and a far greater advantage in being a coherent body, the core troops experienced and hardened together in several skirmishes and battles, professional, and far better led. Their absolute confidence in their commander was not ordered, but was merited.

Horse lords

Though the best warriors were horsemen – especially those from the arid steppe areas of the Sahara where the nomadic cattle-rearing life still prevailed – the bulk of Numidian armies were composed of barefoot tribesmen with legs strong from the peripatetic life. Their weaponry was generally light, with javelins and bucklers much more common than spears or swords, though better-equipped (or wealthier) warriors could carry a sword, mostly taken from (or given by) the Romans. A 2nd-century BC prince's tomb at Es Soumâa near El Khroub, Algeria, contained, along with some iron javelin heads and pointed iron butt-spikes, a sword with a blade approximately 60cm long (Connolly 1998, p.150, Cascarino 2007, p.143). According to Feugère (1993, pp.79–81), the sword was originally 70.5cm long (now actually 67cm) and should perhaps be included among the group of known Roman republican swords, viz. the characteristic legionary sword, *gladius Hispaniensis*. Perhaps it was taken in battle, thus providing its new owner with a trophy of war. The tomb, which also contained an iron conical helmet, with ears embossed at the sides, and an iron mail shirt, dates from between 130 and 110 BC, much closer to the time of Jugurtha and Marius than of Hannibal and Scipio.

The chief missile of all North African peoples was unquestionably the broad-bladed javelin rather than the bow, although the Numidian contingent sent to support the Romans during their siege of Numantia (134–133 BC) included a dozen elephants (African forest) 'and a body of archers and slingers who usually accompanied them in war' (Appian *Iberica* 16.89). According to Caesar (*Bellum Gallicum* 2.7, 10), Numidian archers and



Limestone relief (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional) from Osuna, Seville, depicting an Iberian horseman, dated to 300/100 BC. Iberia was famed for its horse breeding, and the Iberian horse was accustomed to difficult and mountainous terrain. Though not as naturally skilled as the Numidians, Iberian horsemen counted as 'bridled' and thus deployed in the role of contact cavalry on the battlefield. They used a couple of light spears, a *falcata* (just visible in this horseman's right hand) and a *caetra*. (© Esther Carré)

slingers served under him in Gaul. However, though he employed archers in his tactical armoury, he rarely used them in large numbers. In Africa, at Ruspina, he mustered just 150 bowmen alongside 30 cohorts of legionaries (Anon., *Bellum Africum* 12). Some weeks later, at the Cercina Islands, he received reinforcements from Italy, which included two more legions, 800 Gaulish horsemen and a thousand slingers and archers (*ibid.* 34).

With helmets or body armour being virtually non-existent, in battle warriors usually wore minimal clothing, consisting of a baggy tunic, probably of undyed wool and very little else. Livy speaks of Numidian 'horsemen without armour [viz. unshielded], and without weapons [viz. side arms], apart from the javelins they carried' (35.11.7); Polybius (3.71.11) also speaks of javelins. Herodotos (4.175) speaks of North African shields made of 'ostrich skin', and Strabo (17.3.7) of rawhide, and what we can imagine here is a small, round, boss-less, hide shield, which was slightly convex with a narrow rim. All in all, the impression to be gained from the literary evidence confirms that it is highly unlikely that all Numidians were equipped in an identical manner.

For really close work, when their store of javelins should have been exhausted, and delivering the coup de grâce to one's fallen enemy, the favoured weapon was the dagger. Generally, the blade of this shock weapon was short and double-edged, and was designed primarily for stabbing, rather than slashing, to penetrate deep into the body of an opponent – though only

Numidian horsemen played a vital part in Hannibal's victories. Riding without either bridle or saddlecloth almost from infancy, the Numidians rode small, swift horses that appeared scrawny but were capable of enduring where heavier, stall-fed mounts – such as that ridden by the Roman *eques* here on the right – could not. (Painting by Richard Hook © Osprey Publishing)



creating a narrow wound. Of course, a dagger was also useful for those more mundane chores in the field, such as skinning and butchering game, and was commonly regarded as a utilitarian tool as well as a personal weapon. The earliest daggers are made from a single sheet of flat metal, whilst later examples are made with a clearly defined mid-ridge to the blade, which gives additional strength. Handles were of organic materials, such as wood, bone or ivory, and scabbards of wood or leather were used to protect the blades when not in use. These early examples are small enough to be carried tucked into the belt of the warriors' tunic. Otherwise, they could be carried on a band around the arm. The arm dagger is a weapon habitually worn by peoples of Saharan and Sudanic Africa, amongst them the Tuareg, a branch of the Berber race. The style here is to keep it in a sheath attached to the inner side of the left forearm by a loop, the sheath and loop usually of leather but sometimes of metal, such as decoratively engraved brass. The blade points to the elbow and the flat hilt rests against the inside of the wrist, from which position it can be quickly drawn with the right hand (Spring 1993, p.30, 43).

The greatest tool, and the focal point for all warfare in their society, was the horse. Often ignored, and frequently abused, it was the horse that offered the Numidian the obvious advantages of speed, mobility and freedom of targeting. As he was unarmoured, and it was never his intention to arm himself to fight pitched battles but rather for the dash of hit-and-run tactics, his defence lay in his horse too. This is not to say that the Numidian was lacking in courage. Being lighter-armed and equipped, he was able to move with greater speed and agility than his opponents. If things were going well, he would stand his ground, but if any time the foe began to gain an advantage then he would fade from the scene, prepared to take up the fight again when the advantage now lay with him.

Though obviously he was one with his mount, it seems more likely that the Numidian horseman rode bareback, or with a thin saddlecloth rather than the four-horned rigid saddle employed by contemporary Celtic and Roman cavalry, and guided his mount with a bozal. This was a neck-rein of leather or rope to which a lead-rein was attached without using a metal bit in the horse's mouth. One thing the Graeco-Roman sources do have in common, however, is praise for the Numidians' mastery of their desert horses, so much so that these sources make much of Numidian 'bareback horsemen', who rode

Iberian cut-and-thrust sword and iron scabbard frame with three suspension rings (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 1986/81/I/TD/I/1, inv. 1986/81/I/TD/I/2), from Alcácer do Sal, Portugal, dated 4th/3rd BC. Housed in its iron-framed scabbard, the sword was suspended from a waist belt using a ring suspension system. This example has an 'atrophied antennae' pommel, the characteristic feature of Iberian straight-bladed weapons. (Asqueladd)



‘without bridles’ (Livy 21.46.5, 35.11.7, Anon. *Bellum Africum* 48.1, 61.1, Silius *Italicus Punica* 1.215-19, Lucan *Pharsalia* 4.685). They also appear as such on the later Trajan’s Column in Rome, but the unique ‘Rastafarian’ hairstyle of these horse warriors may be artistic licence and not necessarily dependent on autopsy, an instance, if you will, of ‘Burnt Cork Zulus’.

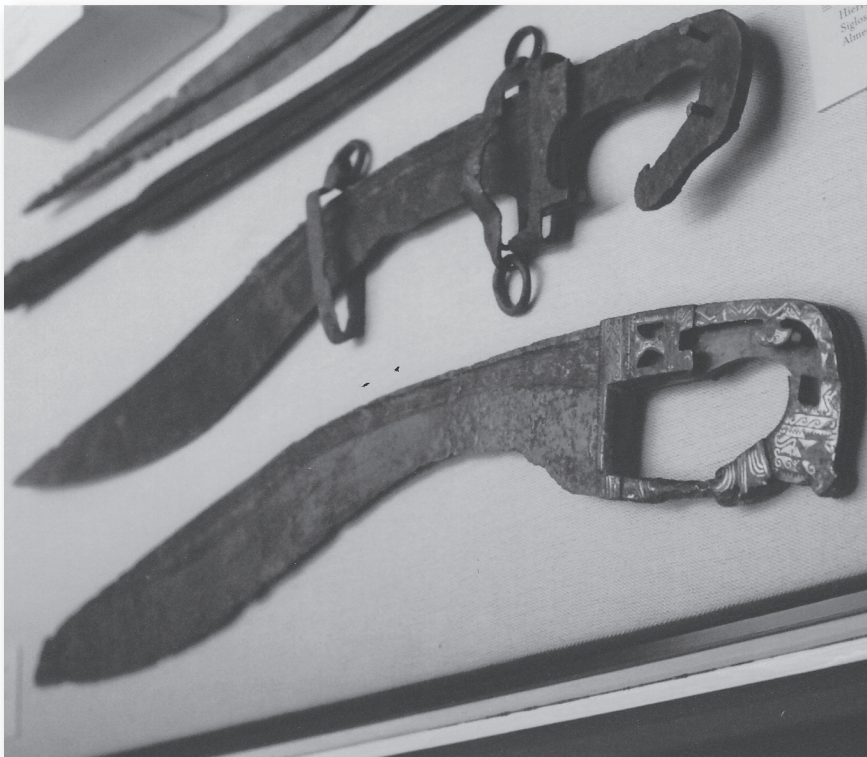
The Numidians seem to have been frequent victims of negative stereotyping, a veritable carnival sideshow of human oddities viewed from a distance. For though their powers of endurance were often remarked upon (Polybius 3.71.10, Appian *Bellum Punicum* 2.11, 10.71), their greatest accomplishment, as Polybius (1.47.7, cf. Sallust *Bellum Iugurthinum* 54.4, 74.3, Frontinus *Strategemata* 2.1.13) will have us believe, was self-preservation, for if beaten in battle they had a habit of fleeing for up to three days. In a similar vein, Livy (25.41.4, 28.44.5, 29.23.4, 30.12.18) scorns them as untrustworthy, undisciplined, hot-tempered, and with more violent appetites than any other so-called barbarians. Aelian, while praising their ability to endure fatigue, denigrates the care that Numidians gave their horses, saying ‘they neither rub them down, roll them, clean their hooves, comb manes, plait forelocks, nor wash them when tired, but when dismounted turn them loose to graze’ (*De natura animalium* 3.2). Lazy or not, turning a horse loose to graze immediately after a tough ride is the best treatment he can have and often prevents muscle and limb ailments. Livy depicts both horses and riders as ‘tiny and lean’ (35.11.7) in a passage that praises Numidian horsemanship but ridicules their appearance. Strabo (17.3.7) comments on the size and speed of African horses in general, and they are prominent in the chariot-racing inscriptions at Rome (e.g. *CIL* 4.10047, 10053) – Numidian horses appear to have been small hardy animals (Hyland 1990, p.12).

Note here too an appliqué terracotta plaque of south Italian origin, *circa* mid-3rd century BC, depicting a Numidian horseman (Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. 5223), and a series of pre-Roman *stelae* from Algeria showing bearded men on horseback armed with two or three javelins and a small, round, boss-less shield (*Encyclopédie Berbère* 1, sv ‘Abizar’). Numidian horsemen were what we moderns would recognize as light irregular horse, excellent for skirmishing, harassing, terrifying, by their unearthly war whoops and their unbridled gallop. Instability incarnate, they were unable to hold their own against steady, ‘bridled’ horse, that is to say, the spear- and sword-carrying cavalry favoured by the Romans. Yet they were men who had been on their mounts since childhood, who could launch javelins with deadly accuracy at a gallop, and slash and hack away with daggers at close quarters as easily mounted as on foot. They were but a swarm of desert flies that always plagues and kills at the least mistake; elusive and perfect for a long pursuit and the massacre of the vanquished to which the Numidians gave neither respite nor quarter. With the Numidian, war remained a matter of agility and cunning, and in the actual moment of violence their battleline was right on the heels of the enemy. Hunting was his principal pastime and the pursuit of game taught him the pursuit of man (cf. Xenophon *Kynegetikos* 12). The mature and seasoned hunter was as keen, cunning and hardy as the prey he sought, and he knew the peculiarities of nature. The Numidians, savage but skilful horsemen, inspired a veritable terror by the incessant alarms they caused. They fatigued without fighting and slaughtered by stealth. In Italy they were to prove to be one of Hannibal’s greatest martial assets.

The Libyan backbone

As for the Libyan subjects, who already made up one-quarter of Carthage's army in 310 BC and would be the foundation of the army Hannibal brought to Italy, some 12,000 of his 20,000 infantry being Libyans, we cannot be entirely sure about these (Diodoros 19.106.2 [310 BC], Polybius 3.56.4 [218 BC]). Ultimately the official status of the Libyans was probably largely irrelevant, as their true loyalty was neither to their half-forgotten families nor fatherland nor to the distant paymaster that was Carthage, but rather to their comrades and to their commander (Griffith 1984, p.232). All we can say for certain is that by Hannibal's day, at any rate, they were worse armed than Roman soldiers. Polybius says (3.87.3) that Hannibal issued his Libyans with Roman war gear plundered from the booty of the Trebbia and Lake Trasimene, and Livy notes (22.46.4) that thereafter they could easily have been mistaken for actual Romans. But does this mean the Libyans reequipped themselves only with Roman helmets, body armour, greaves and *scuta*, or did they take *pila* and *gladii* too? If the later, then we have to assume the Libyans were primarily trained, like Roman legionaries, as swordsmen, since it is unlikely that Hannibal would have risked retraining his best infantry in the course of a campaign (Lazenby 1978, p.14, cf. Bagnall 1999, p.170). Besides, extensive, uninterrupted training time was a luxury which the Libyans simply did not have.

Tentative evidence against their adoption of Roman weaponry comes from Plutarch, in a passage referring to a period after the assumption of Roman legionary equipment, when he says 'Carthaginians were not trained in throwing the javelin and carried only short spears for hand to hand fighting' (Plutarch *Marcellus* 12.8). Plutarch of course uses the term



Iberian iron *falcata* and Greek iron-silver *kopis* (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 10470, inv. 10475) from Almedinilla necropolis, Córdoba, dated to 4th/3rd century BC. The *falcata* (top), a development of the single-edged *kopis*, was single-edged for the first half of its length, the remainder of the blade being double-edged and sharply pointed at its tip. In the form of a horse's head, the hilt was forged as one piece with the blade, and curves back to guard the knuckles. The missing insets would have been of organic material, perhaps bone or ivory. There are three suspension rings attached to what is left of the scabbard frame. (© Esther Carré)

‘javelin’ (*akóntion* in his Greek), but probably wrote with *pilum* in mind. Also, for ‘Carthaginians’ read ‘Libyan spearmen’, because in the same breath Plutarch talks of Iberians and Numidians deserting to Marcellus, and we know from the much more reliable Polybius that Libyans and Iberians made up the bulk of Hannibal’s infantry force (e.g. 3.56.1). In other words, just prior to contact with Roman legionaries, Carthaginian spearmen would have to endure a lethal hail of *pila* to which they had no response.

However, we quickly detect that in this particular passage Plutarch makes reference only to the *pilum*, not to the *gladius*. Prior to Italy the Libyans had fought in Iberia under the Barca family for nigh on two decades, and it is possible that they had adopted a very efficient Iberian cut-and-thrust sword from which it is believed the Roman *gladius* developed (Daly 2002, p.90, even if he argues for the notion that Hannibal’s Libyans took the full Roman panoply, *pilum* as well as *gladius*). This was a straight-bladed weapon with parallel edges and a tapered, sharp point. Hannibal’s Libyans at Cannae were ‘veteran troops of long training’, says Frontinus, ‘for at hardly anything but a trained army, responsive to every direction, can carry out this sort of tactics’ (*Strategemata* 2.3.7). He of course is referring to Hannibal’s celebrated double envelopment. In other words, whatever they were originally, namely subject levies or hired mercenaries, the Libyans had grown old in the service of the Barca family and were now professional soldiers serving in a private army.

Limestone relief (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 38424), dated to 300/100 BC, from Osuna, Seville, depicting an Iberian warrior wearing a short linen or woollen tunic, usually white (sun bleached?) with crimson (mixture of indigo and madder) borders, and wielding a *falcata* and carrying an oval body shield much like the Italic *scutum*, hence the Latin name *scutarus*. (© Esther Carré)



Iberian levies

Carthage had been employing mercenaries from the Iberian Peninsula for a long time before its wars with Rome, but with the involvement there of the Barca family following the defeat in the first war many of the Iberian warriors serving thenceforth in the Carthaginian armies did so as levies (Livy 21.11.13, 21.3, 24.42.6, Polybius 10.35.6). They were nevertheless physically robust, brave and resourceful fighters, regularly handling weapons and living a life of tribal warfare.

As those levied from tribal societies were taken from individual subsistence-level communities, and since the Carthaginians preferred not to homogenize their armies, allowing their troops instead to fight in their ethnic style, warriors like the Iberians doubtless stood in the fighting line alongside close friends and family members. Small, closely related bands of warriors from kin groups would have contributed to a high level of esprit de corps, which in turn consolidated their fighting qualities, feelings of comradeship and friendly rivalry.

Generally, body armour seems to have been very rare and the combination of shield, sword

and short spear(s) or javelin(s) formed the equipment of most Iberian warriors. Here Graeco-Roman authorities make a clear distinction between two types: the *scutarus* (pl. *scutarii*) and the *caetratus* (pl. *caetrati*), the reference being to two types of shield. The first type carried a flat oval body shield, much like the Italic *scutum*, hence the name *scutarus*, while the second carried a small round shield with a central boss, the *caetra*. Though a levy, nature had designed the Iberian warrior, whether a *scutarus* or a *caetratus*, as an athletic and agile practitioner of the warring way of life.

The combination of sword and buckler, *caetra* and *falcata*, was apparently the most favoured war gear among Iberian warriors, and certainly would have been much more effective than the long slashing sword of the Gaul in a jammed situation, since the latter required not only a strong sword arm but room to swing the long weapon. The *caetra* was made of hardwood, around 30 to 45cm in diameter, with metal fittings and ornaments on the face, and a bowl-shaped metal boss that protected a stout metal handgrip on the inside. Gripped in the fist, which was positioned



Full-scale reconstruction of an Iberian *scutum*. This is an oval body shield, which, unlike the Italic version, is flat and not semi-cylindrical. To prevent splitting, copper alloy or iron binding protect its head and foot. Nailed to the front and running vertically from top to bottom is a wooden spindle boss. This is reinforced with a sheet-metal boss plate. (Dorieo)



Panoply of a *caetratus* (Museo de Ciudad Real) from Alarcos necropolis, Ciudad Real, dated 4th/3rd century BC. This Iberian warrior was interred with his iron-silver *kopis*, his spear (its iron spearhead and butt spike survive) and his *caetra* (its iron handgrip survives). In battle the *caetratus* would launch his missile weapon(s), then close in on the enemy and fight as an individual with his 'sword and buckler'. (Ismael Díaz)



directly behind the boss, its size made it poor protection against missile weapons but extremely handy at deflecting the blows from bladed weapons. Additionally, the shield's overall lightness allowed the warrior not only to parry enemy blows but to punch with the hefty boss or chop with the rim of the *caetra* too. When not in use, the *caetra* was conveniently suspended over the left shoulder by a long carrying strap to hang on the back of the warrior behind his right arm. The *falcata* was a curved single-edged weapon derived from the Greek *kopis*. Its blade was some 35–55cm in length, while the hilt was usually in the form of a horse's head curving back to guard the knuckles of the sword hand. Blade and hilt were forged as one piece. Occasionally the blade was sharpened on the back end near the point to enable it to thrust as well as cut.

Iberian warriors in fact used two types of sword, the curved *falcata* and a straight cut-and-thrust sword. The second type had a

Limestone relief (Saint-Germaine-en-Laye, Musée d'archéologie nationale) from Osuna, Seville, dated to 300/100 BC, depicting two Iberian warriors with *caetrae*. The *caetra*, from which this type of warrior takes his Latin name, *caetratus*, was a round buckler with a prominent iron boss. It was held by a central handgrip, also of iron, and had a shoulder strap by which it could be slung on the back when not in use. (© Esther Carré)

Iron boss from a *caetra* (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 1976-40-1), from El Cuarto necropolis in Griegos, dated to 5th/4th century BC. A bowl-shaped protrusion, with a diameter of 33.5cm and a thickness of 2mm, this boss gave ample room for the shield hand. In combat the *caetra* was not only effective in parrying blows, but was a useful secondary weapon, the *caetratus* using the hefty boss to punch his opponent. (Luis García)



relatively short blade sharpened on both edges and with a long, tapered stabbing point. Housed in a framed scabbard, the sword was suspended from a waist belt using a ring suspension system, which, like the sword itself, was to be copied by the Romans. This clever arrangement allowed a warrior to draw his sword quickly in combat without exposing his sword arm. By inverting the hand to grasp the hilt and pushing the pommel forward he drew the weapon with ease, an asset in a close-quarter situation.

Other weapons would have included a bundle of javelins, each with a hard iron tip. Obviously this allowed the *caetratus* to attack the enemy from a distance before closing in for close-quarter combat. To increase the throwing distance, a javelin could be equipped with a finger loop, a thin leather thong that provided leverage and acted like a sling to propel the javelin. As the javelin was launched the thong unwound, having the same effect as the rifling inside a rifle barrel; it spun the javelin to ensure a steadier flight. Wrapped around the javelin shaft, the index finger and, usually, the second finger of the warrior's throwing hand would have been inserted into the loop, while the two smallest fingers and thumb would have tightly gripped the shaft. Javelins were made from a hardwood such as cornel or a fine-grained elastic wood like yew.

Gaulish flamboyance

As for Hannibal's allies from Gallia Cisalpina, what Polybius calls *Keltoi* and the Romans *Galli*, their characteristic tactics were furious charges in loose bands of sword-swinging warriors. Gaulish war bands were not subtle. Tactics – if tactics we may call them – were unsophisticated and relied on a wild, headlong rush by a churning mass of yelling warriors in a rough phalangial order headed by their war leaders, followed up by deadly close-up work with ashen spear and long sword. As was common in tribal armies, the unmilitary (but exceedingly warlike) warriors were poorly disciplined and lacked training above the level of the individual; drill and discipline of the Roman kind were regarded as foreign trickery unworthy of Gaulish warriors. And so, after a violent and savage onslaught launched amid a colossal din, the individual warrior battered his way into the enemy's ranks, smashing with his shield, stabbing with his spear or slashing with his sword.

The importance of the warrior aristocracy in social organization was one of the Gaulish peoples' dominant

Montefortino helmet
(Karlsruhe, Badische
Landesmuseum, inv. AG 197),
dated to the 3rd century BC.
Based on a tried and tested
Celtic design, the Montefortino
helmet was basically a
hemispherical bronze bowl
beaten into shape, with a
narrow peaked neck guard and
an integral crest knob, which
was filled with lead to secure a
crest pin. (© Esther Carré)



Gaulish Montefortino helmet (Germaine-en-Laye, Musée d'archéologie nationale) from Gallia Cisalpina. One of the commonest designs throughout Italy, the Montefortino helmet offered good defence from downward blows. Large cheek pieces protected the face without obscuring the wearer's vision or hearing, and those of this 3rd-century BC example are identical in design to an Oscan triple-disc cuirass. It also has spiralled feather holders. (Siren-Com)



features. In such society, according to Polybius, they 'treated comradeship as of the greatest importance, those among them being the most feared and most powerful who were thought to have the largest number of attendants and associates' (2.17.12). Indeed, as Livy reports, there is absolutely no doubt that one of the dominant traits of this society was the importance given to warrior qualities (10.26.11, 23.24.11–12). These elite warriors were, however, far outnumbered by the mass of ordinary warriors, whose ranks were composed of all free tribesmen able to equip themselves. Yet, privileged or plebeian, the Gauls of the late 3rd century BC were fearsome fighters; they continued to enlist as mercenaries, and to be held in high regard by their paymasters, in every conflict that affected the Roman and Hellenistic world. As Strabo noted, 'the whole race is war-mad, and both high-spirited and quick for battle' (4.4.2).

The tribesman appears to have gone to war in a band based on clan, familial or settlement groupings, which made his fellow men into witnesses of his behaviour. It is likely too that the boldest (or more foolhardy) and best equipped naturally gravitated to the front rank of a war band. Equipment in general was fairly scanty, the combination of shield with an iron boss, long

slashing sword and short thrusting spear(s) forming the war gear of most warriors. Body armour seems to have been very rare, and a warrior probably went into battle dressed only in a pair of loose woollen trousers.

It was the horsemen that provided the highest quality warriors in any Gaulish army. They were drawn chiefly from the nobles and their retainers and clients. Given that they were recruited from the wealthier and more prestigious warriors, equipment was of good quality and consisted of a shield, one or two javelins, a short spear, the ubiquitous long slashing sword, and often a helmet and mail body armour. Added to this was the aforementioned Celtic four-horned saddle. The morale of these horse bands was usually very high. Tactics were normally straightforward: a shower of javelins was thrown, followed up by a charge using spears and swords. Discipline was, as for their foot brethren, poor, so they were difficult to rally from pursuit or rout.

Celtic iron swords of La Tène period were originally short – La Tène A-B2 (460–260 BC) blades are generally 55–65cm long – but improvements in iron technology resulted in the fearsome slashing

sword we usually equate with the Gaulish warrior – La Tène C (260–150 BC) blades of 75–80cm were commonplace. This was a blunt-ended long sword, which was wide, flat, straight and double-edged, clearly designed to deliver powerful over-the-shoulder blows, ‘which is the peculiar and only stroke of the Gauls’ (Diodoros 2.33.5). It was certainly not contrived for finesse, or even to slice someone into ribbons, but a weapon designed to either hack an opponent to pieces or to beat him to a bloody pulp. In combat, therefore, Gaulish warriors ‘raised their arms aloft and smote, throwing the whole weight of their bodies into the blows as if they intended to cut the bodies of their opponents into pieces’ (Dionysius of Halikarnassos 14.10.1). Such an extraordinary long sword, blunt ended too, required a warrior to have a fair amount of elbow room on the field of battle in order to operate proficiently.

Polybius describes (2.33.3, cf. 30.8) how some Gaulish slashing swords were made of poor metal; sometimes they bent double like a strigil on impact, thereby requiring the owner to retire and stamp the blade back into shape with his foot before re-entering the fray. This view is contradicted by modern analysis of Celtic blades, which suggests they were very well forged, with a good edge and great flexibility. Few of these blades descend to the poor



Full-scale reconstruction of a Gaulish mail shirt with shoulder doubling (MuséoParc Alésia). It is believed the Romans first met mail-clad Gauls in Gallia Cisalpina, and soon after adopted this Celtic technology for their own use. The earliest evidence for iron mail is that found in a 3rd-century BC Celtic grave at Ciurmești, Romania. (© Esther Carré)



Full-scale reconstruction of S-shaped pectoral hooks (MuséoParc Alésia) attached to the shoulder doubling of a reenactor's well-made Gaulish mail shirt. Combining strength with flexibility, mail consisted of a matrix of alternatively riveted and solid wrought iron rings, each being linked through its four neighbours, two in the row above and two in that below, the '4-to-1' pattern common to Europe. (© Esther Carré)

quality described by Polybius. To be sure, Polybius' description of the sword bending is undoubtedly exaggerated, for according to Philo of Byzantium, a contemporary of the Hannibalic War, so as to test the excellence of their swords the Gauls would:

[G]rasp the hilt in the right hand and the end of the blade in the left; then laying it horizontally on their heads, they pull down at each end until [the ends] touch their shoulders. Next, they let go sharply, removing both hands. When released, it straightens itself out again and so resumes its original shape, without retaining a suspicion of a bend. Though they repeat this frequently, the swords remain straight. (Philo *Belopeika* 4.71)

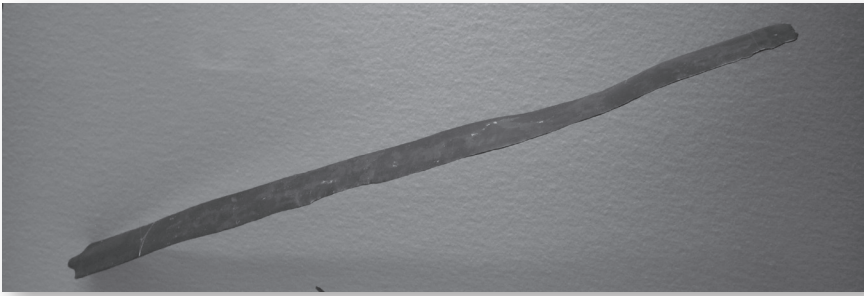
Full-scale reconstruction of a Gaulish shield (MuséoParc Alésia). These were usually flat boards of wood, and it is probable that they were faced with leather to protect them from the elements, finished with a wooden spindle boss reinforced with a sheet-metal boss plate. In shape they were often tall chopped ovals, as here, or long rectangles with rounded ends. For most Gaulish warriors the shield was their only form of protection. (© Esther Carré)

Hanging at the right hip, the long slashing sword was usually suspended from a bronze or iron chain around the waist, which passed through a suspension loop on the back of the scabbard and kept the weapon upright, helping to prevent the sword from becoming entangled with the warrior's legs as he walked or ran. In fact, it is fairly easy to draw even a long blade from this position. Interestingly, according to Strabo (quoting Ephoros), the Gauls would 'endeavour not to grow fat or potbellied' (4.4.6), adding that a fine was imposed upon those who became too obese to do up their sword belts.

Gaulish shields were normally flat boards of wood, and it is probable that they were usually faced with leather to protect them from the elements. Examples from the La Tène stand 1.1m tall, but later depictions of warriors leaning on them suggest that in our period of study some were larger, perhaps 1.3m tall, like the contemporary Italic *scutum*. In shape they were often chopped ovals or long rectangles with rounded ends.

Though the Romans had heard of the Gauls, they first encountered them as imposing warriors, who adorned themselves with torques and wore hair that was slaked with lime-wash to make it stand up like a horse's mane. It was in battle that their enormous size and outlandish appearance first struck them with alarm; even the most grizzled, battle-hardened legionary *triarius* would likely have felt fear if a sword-swinging Gaul got close enough to slash him. However, a word of caution is in order. When thinking of the Gaulish warriors who fought and died at Lake Trasimene, one should not imagine they were all so terrifying. Even though bound to a local chieftain by dues of clan service, the majority of them were farmers who planted crops and raised cattle. There would have been a few raw youths and greying men feeling their years too. Uniformity was never a characteristic of any tribal war band, and the quality of weapons and equipment would vary widely, ranging from the abundant to the minimal. With the exception of all





Fine example of the fearsome La Tène long slashing sword (Niort, Musée ethnographique et archéologique du Donjon). This was a blunt-ended long sword, wide, flat, straight and double-edged, with an overall length, in La Tène C (260–150 BC), of 75–80cm. It was a weapon designed to hack an opponent to pieces or to hammer him senseless. (© Esther Carré)

but a few wealthy warriors, body armour was not worn and the existence of metal helmets rare. Men of fewer means, the warrior farmers who formed the backbone of war bands, were without armour and almost certainly armed with a shield for protection, a spear for thrusting and a sword for slashing.

Fighting styles

Hannibal's army differed more from Hellenistic and Roman armies, based as they were around heavily equipped infantry deployed either in a phalanx or a legion, than the latter two did from each other. As previously noted, Hannibal used the different capabilities of his troops to the best advantage. Fighting with their native weapons, the mercenaries from the Balearic Islands were employed as skirmishers armed with slings, the accurate use of which the islanders were renowned for (Strabo 3.5.1, Diodoros 5.18.3–4, Florus *Epitome* 1.43.5, Vegetius 1.16); their role was to open the hostilities, and then to irritate the enemy during the various stages of the battle. Hannibal also used his Numidian horse to harass the enemy and provoke them into battle; with the notable exception of Fabius Maximus, Roman commanders usually obliged. The Numidians played a central part in Hannibal's victories.

The levies from the Iberian Peninsula were armed with either the *falcata*, a curved single-bladed weapon much like a Gurkha kukri, or a straight bladed, sharp-pointed sword from which the Roman *gladius* was probably derived, while the Gaulish warriors from Cisalpine Gallia wielded the long, blunt-pointed sword that was only effective in sweeping, slashing blows. The Iberians were close-fighting warriors, the Gauls adopted a much looser formation, yet both nonetheless carried javelins and stabbing spears too.

Hannibal's superior 'bridled' horse would chase off their Roman and Latin-Italian opponents and then, instead of a relentless pursuit, fall on the flanks and rear of the *legiones* and *alae*. This was to be Hannibal's tactic at the Trebbia and again at Cannae. These two battles show the unusually high degree of discipline and control Hannibal had instilled into his cavalry.

Gaulish waist belt of iron chain (Niort, Musée ethnographique et archéologique du Donjon), dated to La Tène A (460–400 BC). Belts were often worn as a sign of manhood, particularly the waist belt of the warrior, which was generally a chain of bronze or iron. Long slashing swords were worn on the right-hand side, with the waist belt passing through a suspension loop on the back of the scabbard. (© Esther Carré)



OPPOSING PLANS

Even the dullest military practitioners know that the only certainty in war is that chance and confusion will lay waste to all predictions and plans. Information will never be perfect and no technology, however rudimentary, will assure victory, for the goddess Victory blesses those with the most courage, the strongest will to sacrifice and therefore to win, and especially those with the greatest luck. Hannibal did not eschew the need to chance his luck and take risks, recognizing that success in war must come from such – and indeed the crossing of the Alps was plainly the greatest of these – but the point is that they were always calculated. This much was recognized by Polybius, who says Hannibal ‘pursued his plans with sound common sense’ (3.48.9). His intellectual mastery of the diverse elements of strategy manifest itself in the temperament inclined to ‘favour the unexpected solution’. Thus at Lake Trasimene, we see him employing his imaginative intellect to secure a devastating victory over his opponent, Caius Flaminius.

Most wars tend to be wars of contact, both forces striving into touch to avoid tactical surprise. War *à la* Hannibal, however, was not of that style. Morale, if built on knowledge, is broken by ignorance. Hannibal at Lake Trasimene knew all about the enemy and was at ease. Many centuries later the military theorist and victor of Fontenoy (1745), Maurice de Saxe, would argue that an able commander could wage war all his life without being

A superb example of a Gaulish gold torque (Niort, Musée ethnographique et archéologique du Donjon). The Gauls had a reputation for ferociousness, even among the militaristic Romans, and there can be little doubt that initially the latter were terrified by these larger-than-life warriors, who adorned themselves with gold torques and armbands, wore long moustaches and stiffened their hair with lime-wash. (© Esther Carré)



compelled to fight a battle (*Mes rêveries*), while much closer to Hannibal's own day Sun Tzu, with all his brilliant advice on strategy and tactics, had urged that the best solution was to win without fighting a battle. Such views would have been rejected with contempt by Roman commanders (dictator Fabius Maximus being the notable exception), who favoured the tactical doctrine of the attack pushed 'body to body', which for them was the symbol of superiority. Hannibal, however, was not of their stamp; his men were more precious and he could not afford unwarranted casualties. The corollary of all this was accurate intelligence so that plans could be made with certainty, leaving no room for chance. This brings us back to knowledge. Flaminius' foolhardiness would be Hannibal's helpmate, and this he knew. Insight into the mind of others, so essential a quality of greatness in a commander, Hannibal did not lack.

FLAMINIUS' PLAN

Caius Flaminius and his colleague Cnaeus Servilius Geminus were camped on opposite sides of the Apennines, at Arretium and Ariminum respectively, to await Hannibal's advancing army. When Flaminius broke up his camp at Arretium to hang on the rear of Hannibal's forward march on the road to Perugia, he sent post-haste to Servilius to march down the Via Flaminia – the road, as we know, commissioned by himself. The plan was thus for the two consular armies to converge on the enemy at the point where the two roads meet.

However, like so many other well-laid plans, it was not carried out as conceived. Although the expression had yet to be coined, it was a case of a failure to factor the problems of execution, what Clausewitz called 'friction', into his calculations. A commander cannot act in the same manner under all circumstances, and war, far from being an exact science, depends for its outcome upon a number of moral and physical complications. War never follows neat and predictable lines. Chaos and confusion is the very soul of the beast. The secret is to cherish the vortex, not to fear it.

Flaminius' strategy was not at fault, but he had not reckoned on Hannibal's Carthaginian cunning and matchless military skill. He only pressed on along the road from Cortona to Perugia, never for a moment doubting that his Punic enemy was also pressing on to surprise Rome. Nothing was further from his intention than to fight with Hannibal until he had at least affected a junction with the army of Servilius. As the shadows of the summer's day lengthened, Flaminius ordered a marching camp to be thrown up near a rivulet that ran into the north-west angle of Lake Trasimene. The next morning he intended to enter the nearby defile and pursue his prey along the northern shores of the lake.

A life-size manikin of a 3rd-century BC Celtic warrior (Kraków, Muzeum Archeologiczne). Men of fewer means, the warrior farmers who formed the military backbone of Gaulish war bands, were without armour and were almost certainly armed with a plank shield for protection, an ashen spear for thrusting and a long iron sword for slashing. (Silar)



Tactics, as Flaminius would have certainly appreciated, is the art of handling troops in immediate contact with the enemy. In battle a commander has to ask himself two questions. First, how am I to dispose the different elements of my army? Second, in what sequence shall I bring those different elements into the fight? The two considerations, the one involving problems of space and the other problems of time, are fundamental to all military engagements, ancient or modern. When an army is composed of simple elements, the solution of these problems is correspondingly easy. When, as in modern times, an army consists of many highly specialized categories of men and machinery, the great number of possible tactical combinations tends to eliminate from battle that quality of routine which was characteristic of the less complex fighting of earlier times. As we discussed earlier, Roman consular armies consisted of a mass of heavy infantry trained and equipped for hand-to-hand fighting and auxiliaries of more mobile troops armed for the most part with missile weapons. For that reason, the orthodox Roman battle formation comprised shock elements in the centre, bordered by mounted elements on the wings, and supported by skirmishing elements screening the main battleline, these last two elements being almost entirely incidental to the success or failure of Roman warfare.

HANNIBAL'S PLAN

Hannibal Barca is a name synonymous with military genius, and Lake Trasimene is arguably the best example of his military genius at work. Normally an army marching in column of route across the front of an enemy in position ought to be knocked to pieces at the first shock, since it has to form front to flank in a rush, and has no reserves – all the troops being strung out along the direction of march. Such is the manner in which Hannibal would provoke Flaminius, select the ground and array his army so that the battle would be over before it had begun.

What is not always remembered is that Hannibal had one obvious weakness: he could not take casualties. As his army was not so numerous or resilient as that of Rome, he justified avoidance of pitched battles on the ground that the explicit purpose of any engagement was to wear down the enemy without suffering undue losses. This was making a strategic virtue out of a tactical necessity. In fact, Hannibal was a commander who harkened to necessity, not glory. It is said necessity knows no law, yet Hannibal was an ardent advocate of one basic law of war: the design was to make it unfair in your favour. For that reason Hannibal had to depend on his one great asset: good generalship. It was essential that in the coming battle, unlike most ancient engagements, the enemy should be taken by surprise. But this did not mean that Hannibal showed a defensive mindset, a fear of taking casualties above all. Generalship for him was a matter of patient arrangement and careful planning. The cultivating of an eye for terrain, reconnaissance before action, the utilization of natural features in battle, and attention to climatic and meteorological changes were practised by Hannibal.

There were two ways in which, when it came to facing Caius Flaminius, Hannibal could handle it. He might choose a strong position across his line-of-march, thus challenging him to a pitched battle. Obviously, in such a



scenario he would take unnecessary casualties. But another plan was open to Hannibal. He could assail the consul's army where it was stretched out in a long column of route at a location lacking in sufficient elbow room. It is in a tight spot that an army on the march can be overwhelmed. However, to do so takes patience, discipline and good timing.

As any modern soldier knows, an ambush is a surprise attack, by a force lying in wait, upon a moving or temporarily halted enemy. It is usually a brief encounter and does not require the capture and holding of ground. Almost invariably the action will take place at close range. There are two types of ambush, namely deliberate (by design) and immediate (by an inspiration of the moment). The first type is planned and executed as an independent operation. Frequently it will be easier to achieve success with a small ambush rather than a large one. The second type is one set with a minimum of planning to anticipate imminent enemy action. The total success of its execution relies on the initiative and agility of the commander and the ability and discipline of his men.

In selecting a killing area, that is to say, the location where you intend to achieve your purpose, you want terrain in which obviously the enemy is going to enter; it has terrain that can channel the enemy; and is spacious enough so that the ambush force can destroy the enemy. Surprise and ambush of course are linked together; an ambush after all depends on surprise being achieved. Surprise is twofold, namely, surprise brought about by doing something that the enemy does not expect (moral surprise), and surprise brought about by doing something that the enemy cannot counter (material surprise). Likewise, simplicity in your planning is a must. As in any military plan, it must be clear and concise. Each element conducting the ambush must understand completely its purpose and its task. Too many moving parts are not an option. Finally, a detailed knowledge of the enemy is vital as it will influence the plan and should include the likely enemy method of movement.

The Gundestrup cauldron (Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet), gilded silver, dated to the late 2nd century BC. Shown here is interior plate E depicting in its upper register a procession of horse warriors, who provided the highest quality troops in any Gaulish army. In the lower register is a procession of foot warriors, the last of which wears a helmet with a crest in the form of a wild boar (a chieftain, perhaps), while at the end are three warriors blowing carnyxes, Celtic war trumpets. (Malene Thyssen)

Mausolée de Glanum, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, a funerary monument of the Iulii dated 30/20 BC. In this relief (pedestal, south face) we witness a cavalry battle between Romans and Gauls. On the fallen, riderless horse (bottom left) there is a good rendition of a padded saddle with four horns. It is assumed that this is a Gaulish horse, as the Romans did not depict their own men in difficulty or defeated on their monuments. Like most equestrian equipment, the four-horned saddle was almost certainly of Celtic origin. (Cancre)

When it comes to positioning the ambush, the site selected should be easy to conceal, so that from an enemy point of view it appears unoccupied. There should be no offer of an easy escape out of the killing area once the ambush has been sprung. The location should be such that it allows lookouts timely warning before the first enemy enter the killing area. It should have a good covered approach avoiding contact with the enemy or local inhabitants. As the commander cannot see the whole of his command, the need for maintaining concealment, and the absence of movement, noise and smell whilst in hiding, is an absolute must. Ultimately, a cleverly concealed ambush will not only achieve surprise but also catch the enemy when he is least expecting to be ambushed.

Returning to the Carthaginian commander, it is clear that Hannibal possessed one of the two characteristics of the military genius, what Clausewitz calls *coup d'oeil*. This is the essentially intellectual component of genius, which gives the ability to quickly recognize 'a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss or would perceive only after long study and reflection' (*On War*, book 1, chapter 3, p.118 Howard-Paret). Knowing what to do, however, is only half the battle, if that. The commander still must overcome fear and friction to do it. This requires tremendous determination, which is the second half of the Clausewitzian conception of genius (*On War*, book 1, chapter 3, pp.115–31 Howard-Paret). Hannibal possessed this too. As we shall see, his ambush at Lake Trasimene would give him a complete and cheap success.



THE CAMPAIGN

For about five months (Polybius 3.39.6–11, 56.3, Livy 21.38.1, 27.39.4, cf. Appian *Hannibalica* 8.52) Hannibal's army, initially consisting of 50,000 foot, 9,000 horse, a host of pack animals and 37 elephants (Polybius 3.35.4–8, 42.11, Livy 21.22.2–3), had marched some 1,500km from New Carthage (Cartagena) to north Italy. It had passed through eastern Iberia and southern Gaul before ascending Europe's greatest mountain range. In the Alps, the Carthaginian army had suffered attacks by mountain tribesmen, weakening the massive force. In addition to the unfriendly locals, the soldiers had to contend with the Alps' high-altitude climate. Many of the soldiers, largely mercenaries from North Africa and Iberia, had probably never seen snow and ice before. Not only that, but glacial winds would have cut open the skin; fingers would have lost power; shivering muscles would have ached witlessly. Burned by sun and wind, soaked by snow and sleet, their 15-day passage (Polybius 3.56.3, Livy 21.38.1) of the Alps must have been punishing beyond conception.

THE TICINUS AND THE TREBBIA (NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 218 BC)

Descending slowly with bruised lungs and battered limbs from the icy Alpine ridges into the territory of the Taurini (Livy 21.38.5–6, Polybius 3.60.8, cf. 56.3), the Carthaginian army at last came down into the snow-free temperate lowlands watered by the tributaries of the Padus (Po). Hannibal was now safely beyond the obstacle of the Alps. The Taurini were mortal enemies of his allies the Insubres, who lay to the east of the Ticinus (Ticino) in the neighbourhood of modern Milan. Little wonder, therefore, that their tribal elders rejected Hannibal's overtures. In response he stormed their chief settlement – probably the site of modern Turin – and massacred its inhabitants. This calculated act of terror convinced other neighbouring Gaulish tribes (*Keltoi* in Polybius' Greek) to join him.

It was here too in Gallia Cisalpina that Hannibal scored his first victory against the Romans. Rather than being a pitched battle, this was to be a fairly small affair, a cavalry skirmish in truth. It took place not far from the Ticinus, perhaps somewhere near modern Lomello, north of the Po (Walbank 1957, p.399). Foraging parties of both sides having given notice that the enemy was nearby, both commanders decided to make a reconnaissance in force. The consul Publius Cornelius Scipio led all of his cavalry, almost certainly some

Hannibal in Gallia Cisalpina.



2,000 strong including Romans, Latin-Italian and Gaulish allies, with the support of his *velites*. Hannibal, who had the bulk of his 6,000 horse with him, placed his heavier or 'bridled' cavalry, the Iberians, in the centre, with the Numidian horse on either wing charged with enveloping the Romans (Polybius 3.65.5–6). Here we witness Hannibal's favourite tactic of pinning the enemy's centre and sweeping around his flanks and rear. With this tactic, Hannibal severely mauled Scipio's contingent, the *velites* being ridden down before they could cast a single volley. The consul himself barely escaped with his life (Livy 21.46.7, cf. Polybius 3.66.2). According to one tradition (Polybius 10.3.3–7, Livy 21.46.7–8), his life was saved by the bravery of his 18-year-old son and namesake. The Romans promptly withdrew to Placentia (Piacenza). Though subsequent manoeuvres failed to lead to a second encounter, the action was to continue soon at the Trebbia River.

In a cold, snowy late-December, Hannibal was camped on the west bank of the Trebbia close to its confluence with the Padus, south-west of Placentia. Over on the east bank were the consuls, Tiberius Sempronius Longus and Publius Cornelius Scipio, with four legions (I to IIII) and, perhaps, six Latin-Italian *alae*. They also had the support of the Cenomani, the only Gaulish tribe in Gallia Cisalpina to remain loyal. Scipio was recovering from the severe wound he had received at the Ticinus and so temporarily *hors de combat*. He was present, but in his tent. The effective command of the two consular armies passed to his colleague who was all out for giving battle there and then, and Hannibal was aware of this. So he set out deliberately to lure Sempronius into a trap on the flat, open terrain between the two camps.

The land west of the Trebbia is wide, flat and treeless, yet Hannibal, during a personal reconnaissance, had located a watercourse crossing the open country and running between two steep and heavily overgrown banks. Lying behind and south of where he expected to lure the Romans to fight a pitched battle, it was in the low scrub and other flora of this natural feature that he set an ambush under the command of his young brother Mago

The Ticino at Pavia, ancient Ticinum. There is some doubt exactly where the first encounter on Italian soil took place, but it was near the Ticinus (Ticino), which flows out of Lacus Verbanus (Lago Maggiore) into the Padus (Po) from the north. The troops that came into contact were mostly horsemen, 6,000 of Hannibal's against 2,000 of Scipio's who also had *velites* with them. (Massimo Macconi)



(Polybius 3.71.9). The day before the expected encounter a picked force of a thousand foot and a thousand horse, mostly the centaur-like Numidians, was formed for this vital task. Under the cover of darkness Mago inserted his men into the ambush position, where they were completely hidden from the view of the Romans. The stage was thus set for the first major confrontation of Hannibal's war.

Polybius says (3.72.11–13) the Roman army contained 16,000 Roman and 20,000 Latin-Italian foot, and 4,000 horse (half of them demoralized by their recent trouncing at the Ticinus), while Livy (21.55.4) adds a contingent (of doubtful value) from the Cenomani. If the figures given for Hannibal's army are correct, and if Mago's 2,000 men are to be added to the total, the Carthaginian army had been swelled by more than 14,000 Cisalpine Gauls – 9,000 foot and 5,000 horse – for Hannibal had entered the Italian Peninsula with only 20,000 foot – 12,000 Africans and 8,000 Iberians – and 6,000 Iberian and Numidian horse (Polybius 3.56.4, Hannibal's inscription at the Lacinian promontory). He also commanded, we guess, some 30 or so elephants, having started his epic journey with 37 of these rather risky weapons (Appian *Hannibalica* 1.4, cf. Polybius 3.42.10).

At first light the following morning – the day was around the turn of the year according to Polybius (3.72.3), or the time of the shortest day according to Livy (21.54.7) – a small band of Numidian horsemen mounted and dashed across the river to skirmish around the Roman outposts and provoke Sempronius into premature action, while the rest of the Carthaginian army stayed by their campfires to eat a hearty breakfast and rub their bodies with olive oil to keep out the biting cold (Polybius 3.72.6, Livy 21.55.1). Sempronius reacted just as Hannibal had hoped, sending all his cavalry out against the audacious Numidians, closely followed by some 6,000 *velites*. The consul, eager to engage, then gave orders for his legionaries to stand to arms and prepare to march out against the enemy, thereby giving them little

The Trebbia at Rivergaro. A few kilometres from Placentia (Piacenza), the Trebbia, coming from the Apennines to the south, flows into the Padus (Po). It was on a bitter, late December morning that the Roman army was led breakfastless through the swollen icy waters of this meandering river against the waiting Hannibal. (Dani4P)



or no time to take their morning meal. At this point the raiders, following their strict instructions, began to give way and gradually retire toward the river. The bait had been taken.

When the Romans proceeded to cross the river, ice-cold and swollen breast-high by recent rain, Hannibal threw forward 8,000 lightly armed troops to support the Numidians and form a screen behind which his army could safely deploy. Then, and only then, his main body left the camp and advanced a little over a kilometre (Polybius 3.72.8), where they fell into a line-of-battle. This was formed by a single line of foot, Libyans and Iberians 20,000 strong, with his new Gaulish allies in the centre, and his 10,000 horse, including the rallied Numidians, equally divided on each flank. Hannibal also divided his elephants, and probably stationed them in front of the two wings of his infantry line (Polybius 3.72.9, cf. Livy 21.55.2).

Having struggled across the river, Sempronius deployed his legionaries, now half frozen, completely soaked and very hungry, in the customary battle formation, the *triplex acies*, with the 4,000 cavalry, now recalled from their fruitless but fatiguing pursuit of the Numidians, and the Cenomani on their flanks (Polybius 3.72.11, Livy 21.55.4). During what must have been a long drawn-out process, more so as the army was uncommonly large (in effect, a double-consular army) and relatively inexperienced, the snow of that frigid morning turned to driving sleet and rain.

The battle opened with the usual exchanges between the skirmishers of both sides, and here the Romans were soon at a disadvantage. Not only were the *velites* outnumbered, but they had already been engaged with Hannibal's Numidian horsemen and had thus expended much of their missile supply. After a short engagement, therefore, they fell back through the intervals between the maniples, and Sempronius, who remained full of confidence and was still in an offensive mode, ordered a general advance. It was a false picture. For at this point, Hannibal, taking advantage of his superiority in this particular arm, let loose his cavalry.

The citizen and allied cavalry, heavily outnumbered and already haggard from chasing the agile Numidians, gave way at the first shock of these fresh troops, broke and fled in rout for the river, with the Iberian and Gaulish horse in merciless pursuit. The Numidians coming up behind, however, at once swung inwards upon the exposed flanks of the legionaries just as the elephants and lightly armed troops similarly engaged them. At this point Sempronius realized, probably, that he was no longer on the offensive.

The Roman and Latin-Italian infantry, despite their cold and hunger, had managed to hold their own with Hannibal's infantry and might have prevailed. Then the elephants, in cooperation with the lightly armed troops, began to attack the Roman centre. It was at this point that Mago, timing his attack to a nicety, sprung his ambush and charged into the Roman rear. Thereupon, at last, Sempronius' command began to break up (Polybius 3.74.1). Still, some 10,000 legionaries in the centre of the first and second lines (viz. *hastati* and *principes*), refusing to accept defeat, hacked their way through the Gauls who made up Hannibal's centre. Then, seeing all was lost and that a return across the angry river to their camp was completely cut off, they marched off in good order and made their escape to the walls of Placentia. Hannibal made no attempt to stop them. His men were weary and his victory was assured.







WATERY OVERTURE: THE BATTLE OF THE TREBBIA, LATE DECEMBER, 218 BC (PP. 58–59)

It is early morning around the time of the winter solstice in Gallia Cisalpina. Under an iron grey sky, snow flurries fall on the River Trebbia, which has become a winter torrent, swollen breast-high by recent rain. The Romans (1), cold, half-awake and breakfastless, are attempting to cross the river. Numidian horsemen (2) and Balearic slingers (3) are harassing them as they do so.

The Roman *hastati* (4) have already entered the river, their *scuta* (5) and *pila* (6) held out of the water and above their heads. The *principes* (7) are just behind on the riverbank. On the opposite bank the Numidian horsemen, supported by Balearic slingers, are engaging the Romans with heavy missile fire. The Romans are taking casualties.

Such was the battle of the Trebbia. Its result was a terrible disaster for Rome. Though we do not have a figure for the Roman losses, the rest of the Roman army must have suffered heavily in the rout towards the river. Likewise, the sources are vague for Hannibal's casualties, although Polybius says (3.74.11) that the heaviest losses were suffered by the Gauls in the centre. Moreover, in the cold snap that followed the battle, many of his men and horses and all but one of the elephants died.

The decisive outcome of the battle of the Trebbia, which proclaimed so many valuable lessons to those who had ears to hear, showed to all the superiority of Hannibal's generalship. In particular, cooperation was the keynote of his battle tactics, and it was the cooperation of all arms, and not the preponderance of one, which decided the day in favour of Hannibal. At Lake Trasimene (as will be seen) the same lessons would be taught with yet greater cogency.

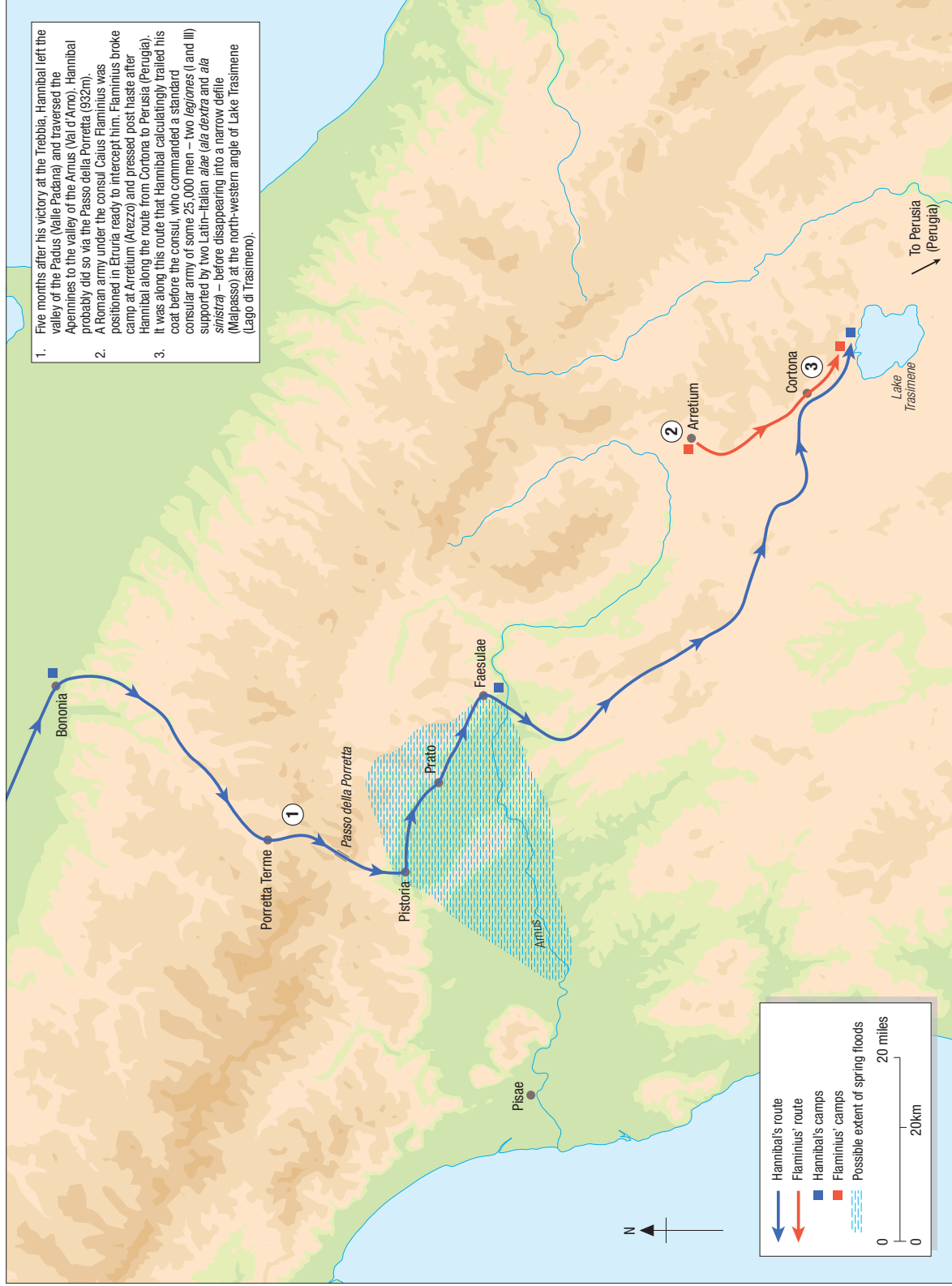
BETWEEN THE TREBBIA AND LAKE TRASIMENE (DECEMBER 218 BC–JUNE 217 BC)

On the Ides of March the new consuls for the year took office (Livy 21.63.1). Once their armies had mustered they marched north, Caius Flaminius to Arretium (Arezzo) and Cnaeus Servilius Geminus to Ariminum (Rimini), in an attempt to cut Hannibal off from the most obvious routes into central Italy (Polybius 3.77.1–2, 80.1, 86.1, Livy 22.2.1, 4). Both consuls appear to have been given the standard consular army of two *legiones* (Flaminius *legiones* I and III, Geminus *legiones* II and IIII) and two *alae*, composed of newly raised soldiers (Polybius 3.75.5) and remnants of the consular armies defeated at the Trebbia (Livy 21.63.1, Appian *Hannibalica* 2.8). Geminus' consular army is said to have included at least 4,000 cavalry, probably Latin-Italian allies in the main (Polybius 3.86.3, Livy 22.8.1).



The Passo della Futa near Traversa. The most direct and easiest route from the valley of the Padus to that of the Arnus was the old Etruscan bridleway that connected the historic centres of Bologna (ancient Felsina) and Florence, today the well-beaten tourist trail known as the Via degli Dei. By taking this route Hannibal would have crossed the Apennines via the Passo della Futa (903m). Yet, Hannibal wanted to avoid trans-Apennine routes that were both easy and familiar to the enemy. (LigaDue)

The route to Lake Trasimene.



There were two obvious routes by which Hannibal could enter central Italy: by crossing the Apennines into the valley of the Arnus (Val d'Arno); or by marching down the valley of the Padus (Valle Padana) to Ariminum, then following the Metaurus valley (Valle del Metauro) into the Apennines and crossing what is now called the Passo della Scheggia (632m) into the valley of the Tiber (Val Tiberina). This was the route of the Via Flaminia, now the Strada Statale 3 Via Flaminia (SS 3), and was the easier but by far the longest route. There are about half a dozen possible routes from the valley of the Padus to that of the Arnus (Arno). The easiest is the old Etruscan bridleway that connected the historic centres of Bologna (the ancient Felsina) and Florence, today the well-beaten tourist trail known as the Via degli Dei. By taking this route Hannibal would have crossed the Apennines via the Passo della Futa (903m) to the low-lying area between Pistoia and Florence. From long experience of dealing with Gaulish incursions the Roman Senate knew it must post its consular armies at Ariminum on the Adriatic coast, covering the exit from the valley of the Padus, and at Arretium in the valley of the Arnus, covering the access through Etruria.

Hannibal did not risk taking the route via Ariminum, for he knew if he did it would be easy for Flaminius, setting out from Arretium, to join Servilius. The route he chose remains in part conjecture. Polybius says that, after carefully gathering intelligence, he decided to avoid routes that 'were not only long but were thoroughly familiar to the enemy' (3.78.6). In the late

After wintering in Gallia Cisalpina, Hannibal left the valley of the Padus (Valle Padana) and traversed the Apennines to the valley of the Arnus (Val d'Arno). He probably did so by taking the Passo della Porretta (932m), seen here under wintry conditions, which now carries the SS 64 from Bologna to Pistoia. (ilciclismo.it)



spring, therefore, Hannibal made the crossing of the Apennines, not via the Passo della Futa but probably by way of the Passo della Porretta (Kromayer-Veith 1912, pp.104–47). A pass of modest altitude (932m), it now carries the Strada Statale 64 Porrettana (SS 64) between Bologna and Pistoia. Descending from the Apennines, by whichever pass he took, Hannibal arrived in the uppermost part of the Arnus river basin. It may have been an uncomfortable crossing for his men and animals as the Apennines are notorious for the *tramontana*, a raw easterly wind that howls down the mountains towards the sea. Yet worse was to come.

As Hannibal plunged through the marshy terrain of the upper Arnus basin, he encountered further difficulties as recent floods and melting snows had swollen the river (Livy 22.2.2), and the water level was too high for his suffering men to make proper camp. Most of the pack animals perished too, although they apparently rendered one last service to the troops by providing them with somewhere firm to stretch and snatch some shuteye (if at all), since their carcasses were not totally submerged beneath the mire (Polybius 3.79.10). Hannibal personally made the miserable march on the last remaining elephant, and lost an eye from an inflammation that he was unable to attend to.

It took four days and three nights with little rest for Hannibal's army to force their way through the quagmire (Polybius 3.79.8), eventually taking a well-earned respite near Faesulae (Fiesole) while Hannibal gathered intelligence about the enemy. He then marched south into Etruria down what is now the Val di Chiana, looking as though he was heading for Rome. The hand-tended land of the 'Etruscan miracle' was rich and fertile. Cypress stood

The upper Val d'Arno. Having safely traversed the Apennines, Hannibal brought his army down into the upper basin of the Arnus (Arno). The river was so mightily swollen from the melting of the snow on the Apennines and the spring rains that the low ground was a marshy swamp, in crossing which his troops and their animals suffered great hardships. (L30)

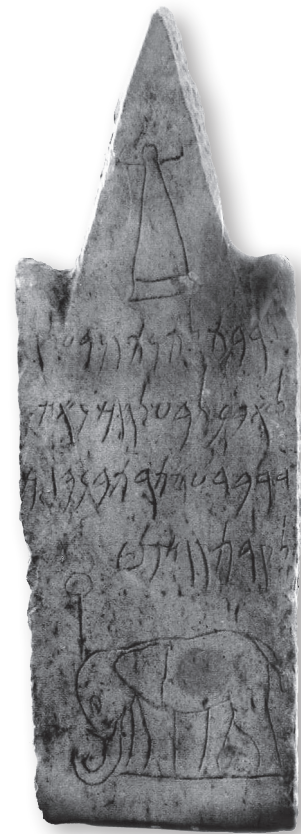


out against the rich blue sky, vineyards and silver olive trees clung to the terraces. The Carthaginian army penetrated harshly in a progress that was not peaceful but deliberately provocative. Yet despite the destruction it caused en route, and the tempting offer of its flank as it passed the Roman camp at Arretium, Flaminius refused to be provoked into action, preferring instead to shadow his opponent while waiting to affect a junction with his fellow consul Servilius, who was presumably marching from his camp at Ariminum. In all probability, Hannibal cannot have been unaware of the Roman intention to converge and trap him.

LAKE TRASIMENE (JUNE 217 BC)

Not only had Hannibal lost the sight of an eye while travelling through the wetlands around the river Arnus, but he had also by then lost all but one of his elephants. Yet the Carthaginian commander, the talented tactician and trickster, had never envisaged a decisive role for elephants in his cunning battle plans. Thus, at Lake Trasimene in Etruria, his one good eye still clear-sighted enough to outwit another Roman consul and his army, Hannibal made use of a novel ruse. The battle was to be an ambush on the grand scale, one of those very rare instances in the annals of military history in which an entire army lies in wait and accounts for almost the whole of the opposition. To use Livy's portentous phrase, the trap was to be sprung in a place 'naturally created for ambushes' (22.4.2).

On the road from Arretium (Arezzo) to Perugia (Perugia) Hannibal had trailed his coat before the consul Caius Flaminius, who commanded a



Punic funerary stele of limestone (Byrsa, Musée national de Carthage), dated to 3rd/2nd century BC. Below the Punic inscription is a representation of the long-extinct African forest elephant, easily identified by its concaved back, large ears and 'two-fingered' trunk. It is said that when Hannibal crossed the great morass that was the Arnus basin, the Carthaginian commander rode his sole surviving but larger pachyderm, an Indian elephant called Surus. (Mushii)



Ponte d'Augusto e Tiberio at Rimini, ancient Ariminum, a five-arched bridged across the Marecchia begun by Augustus (AD 14) and finished by Tiberius (AD 21). It was at Ariminum that the consular army of Servilius was stationed in order to block the most obvious routes into central Italy from Gallia Cisalpina. From Ariminum, for instance, ran the Via Flaminia to Rome. (Alain Rouiller)







HANNIBAL LOSES AN EYE: THE UPPER ARNUS BASIN, SPRING 217 BC (PP. 66–67)

In the uppermost part of the Arnus river basin (Val d'Arno), Etruria, the Carthaginian army is plunging its way with great difficulty through the marshy terrain inundated by recent floods and melting snow. Hannibal (1) personally makes the miserable march on the last remaining elephant, the Indian called Surus (2). He will lose his left eye from an inflammation that he will be unable to attend to whilst crossing the mire.

Hannibal, wrapped in his woollen cloak and with his inflamed left eye bandaged beneath his helmet, sits astride Surus. He and his elephant are escorted by some of his senior officers (3). In the background, Hannibal's Gaulish allies (4, who suffered most severely) struggle through the marshy terrain of the basin.

standard consular army of around 25,000 men, before disappearing into a narrow defile north of Lake Trasimene. The stage was set by this sham dalliance by Hannibal to draw the impetuous Flaminius onto a battleground of his own choosing. This he found along the reed-fringed northern shores of the lake. Livy (22.3.15–18), never at a loss for omens, reports like a censorious chronicler that before the operations began, there was an extraordinary run of ill omens: on mounting his horse, the consul's mount stumbled and threw him; one of the standard bearers could not lift his standard out of the ground and had to dig it out. All omens, in all probability *ex post facto*, of a forthcoming disaster to Roman arms.

The battle of Trasimene has been the subject of much scholarly debate about the site of the army-sized ambush and the positions taken up by Hannibal's army. The arena of battle (if we can call it that) was a natural amphitheatre bounded on all sides by hills or water, a perfect killing ground for an unsuspecting foe. This certainly fits well with the laconic description given by Polybius, our primary written source, of 'a flat-bottomed valley, this having along its long sides high and continuous hills, and on its short sides, in front a barren, steep crest, and in the rear the lake, leaving a very narrow way through the valley along the lower slopes' (3.83.1). Hannibal's ambush site consisted of a flat basin between the Malpasso, the defile just east of the village of Borghetto, and the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno. Here, facing the lake, a semicircle of hills forms a natural amphitheatre. For his ambush Hannibal had at his disposal roughly 55,000 men, of which 20,000 were war-worn veterans and 25,000 recruits from the anti-Roman Gauls in Gallia Cisalpina (Polybius 3.33.11, 72.9).

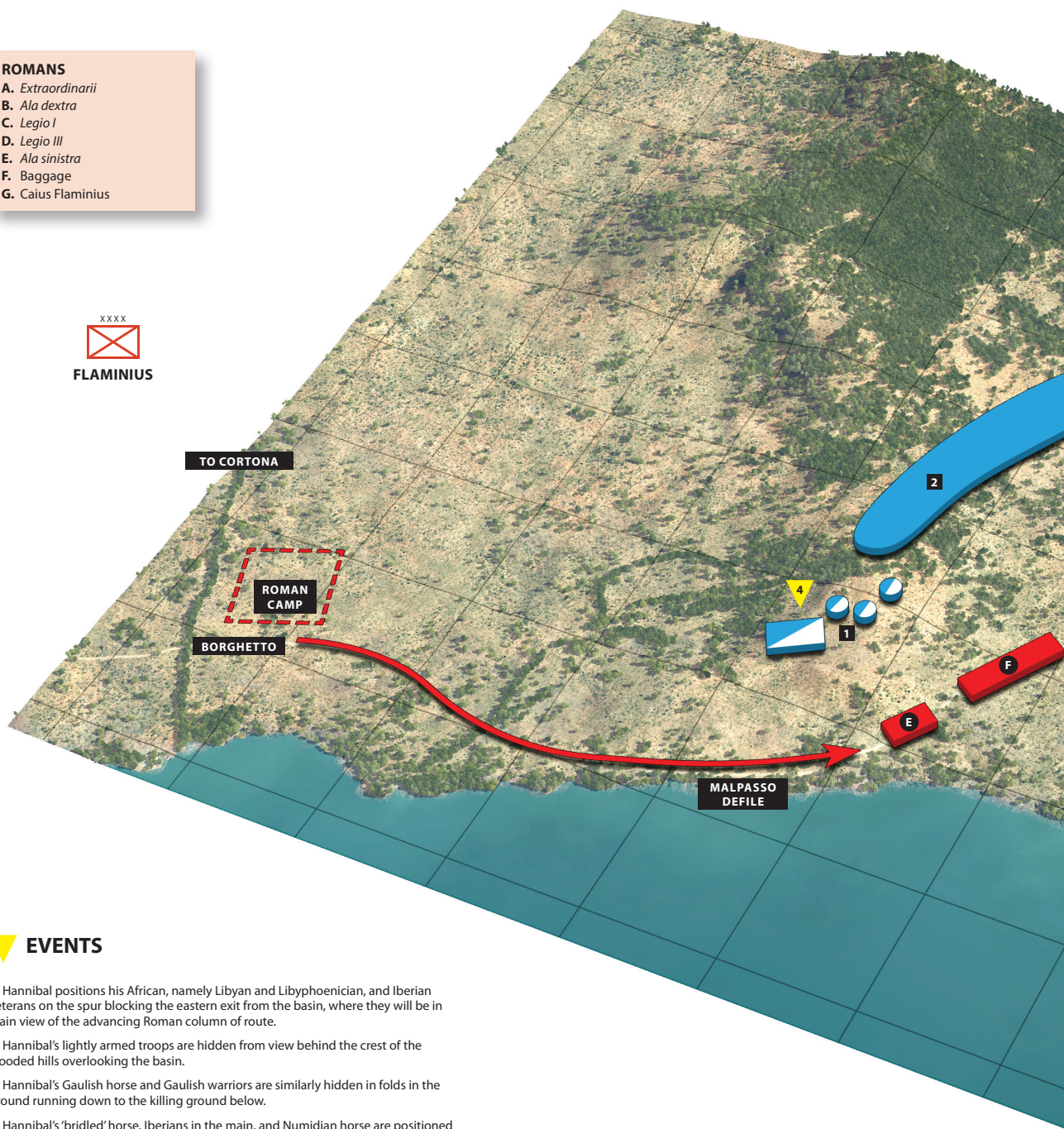
Hannibal set his stage with care. As a deliberate piece of deception he deployed his African and Iberian veterans on the spur upon which the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno now sits (Polybius' 'barren, steep crest') – thus blocking the eastern exit from the killing ground – where they would be clearly visible to the advancing Romans in the basin below. The ploy here was to grip and distract the enemy. On the other hand, his lightly armed troops, along with the Gaulish horse, were hidden from view behind the crest of the forested hills facing the lake (Polybius' 'high and continuous hills'),



Remains of the Roman amphitheatre at Arezzo, ancient Arretium. The reason for the stationing of Flaminius' army at Arretium was to deny Hannibal the easier passes over the Apennines from the valley of the Padus into Etruria; crucially, Arretium sat at the confluence of the Val d'Arno and Val di Chiana. But Hannibal was not to be so obliging. (Phil Tazzini)

ROMANS

- A. *Extraordinarii*
- B. *Ala dextra*
- C. *Legio I*
- D. *Legio III*
- E. *Ala sinistra*
- F. Baggage
- G. Caius Flaminius



EVENTS

1. Hannibal positions his African, namely Libyan and Libyphoenician, and Iberian veterans on the spur blocking the eastern exit from the basin, where they will be in plain view of the advancing Roman column of route.
2. Hannibal's lightly armed troops are hidden from view behind the crest of the wooded hills overlooking the basin.
3. Hannibal's Gaulish horse and Gaulish warriors are similarly hidden in folds in the ground running down to the killing ground below.
4. Hannibal's 'bridled' horse, Iberians in the main, and Numidian horse are positioned near the western entrance to the basin. Their task is to block this entrance off once the Roman column of route has passed through.
5. Flaminius orders the Roman vanguard (*extraordinarii* and *ala dextra*) to deploy to attack the Carthaginian blocking force (African and Iberian veterans) holding the Tuoro spur.

THE TRAP IS SET AT LAKE TRASIMENE

Hannibal laid a careful trap at the lake. He deliberately deployed his African and Iberian veterans on the spur near modern-day Tuoro sul Trasimeno, thus blocking the eastern exit from the killing ground. The door was closed on Flaminius' column to the west once it had entered the trap. As the day of battle dawned, a heavy mist covered the area – Caius Flaminius further aided Hannibal's plans by neglecting to send out scouts.

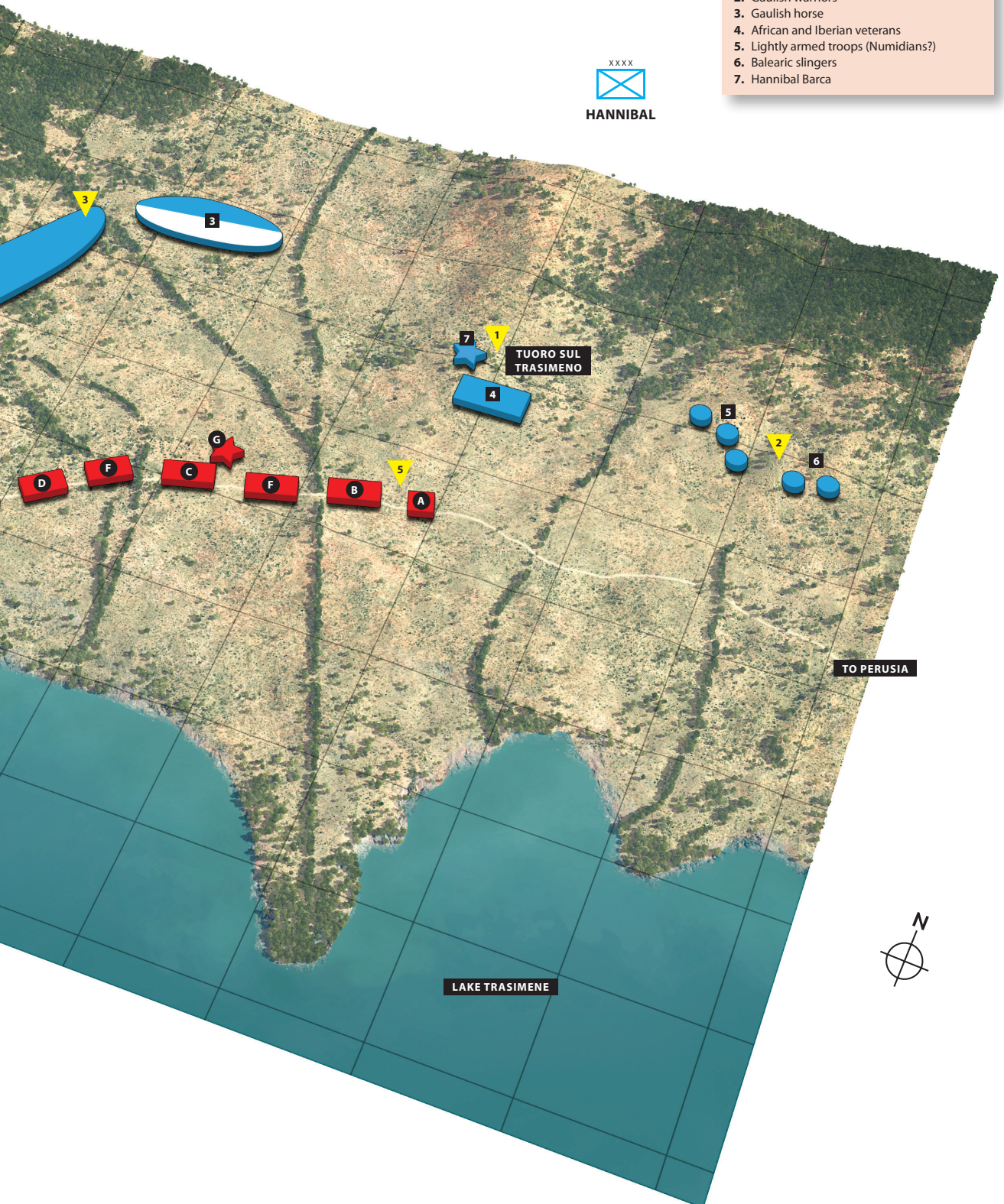
Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 500m (1,640ft)

CARTHAGINIANS AND ALLIES

1. Iberian and Numidian horse
2. Gaulish warriors
3. Gaulish horse
4. African and Iberian veterans
5. Lightly armed troops (Numidians?)
6. Balearic slingers
7. Hannibal Barca



HANNIBAL



the Gaulish warriors similarly hidden in wooded folds in the ground running down to the basin, and his cavalry, Iberians in the main, and Numidian horse near the western entrance to the basin where they could block it off once the Romans had passed through and prevent their escape. As a consequence, the entire area encircled by the hills was dominated by the Carthaginian army. As a final ruse, Hannibal ordered his men to light campfires on the hills above the Tuoro spur, at a considerable distance, so as to convince the Romans that his forces were further away than they actually were (Polybius 3.83.2–4). Dispositions made and orders issued, the Carthaginian army settled down for the night. Hannibal was far too intelligent a commander to let the enemy dictate the site or timing of an engagement. In the meantime, the unsuspecting Romans had made camp near what is now Borghetto.

At dawn – according to Ovid (*Fasti* 6.767–8) 21 June in our calendar, the summer solstice – Caius Flaminius set out after his apparent prey, in thick mist rising from the lake and marshy vegetation, with no apparent attempt at reconnaissance (Polybius 3.84.1). It seems the consul was eager to meet his enemy. As the proverb says, ‘He who urges in haste follows the path to woe’ (Sophokles fr. 785 Nauck, *apud* Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 24). Flaminius might have delayed his march until the late morning sun broke through, or he might have sent scouts on ahead for safety’s sake. After all, energetic reconnaissance will enable a commander to screen his own operation and at the same time to discover those of his adversary and consequently forestall them. It is difficult not to think that this gross error sprang from a profound streak of stubborn pride in himself.

Imagine yourself as Caius Flaminius. It is early morning and you cannot see what is ahead of you. But you do know that you are a consul of Rome and therefore far better than the man you are pitched against. Your confidence in victory is the result of a string of military and political successes on your part. However, today you suffer from the arrogance of ignorance. Unknown to you, your despised foe is nearer than you think. His unusual deployment is about to change the script.

A panoramic view of Val di Chiana, looking south-west from Monte Lignano (837m). Instead of making directly for Arretium (Arezzo) to confront Flaminius head on, Hannibal marched right past the Roman camp. He then took a more southerly route down the 100km-long valley of the Chiana to Cortona and Lake Trasimene. (PMM)



As the mist wreathed and billowed quietly in the early morning, Caius Flaminius had advanced confidently into Hannibal's carefully prepared trap. If we follow the testimony of Polybius on this matter, Flaminius' consular army would have been arrayed as follows:

As a rule the *extraordinarii* [*epilèktoi* in his Greek] are placed at the head of the column; after them come the right wing of the allies [*ala dextra*] and behind them their pack animals. Next in order is the first of the Roman legions [viz. Flaminius' *legio I*] with its baggage behind it, after which comes the second [viz. Flaminius' *legio III*] followed by its pack animals, together with the baggage train of the allies, who bring up the rear, the left wing of the allies [*ala sinistra*] providing the rearguard. The cavalry sometimes ride in the rear of their respective divisions, sometimes along with the baggage animals, so as to keep them together and protect them. (Polybius 6.40.4)

On seeing the Libyan and Iberian outposts on the ridge ahead, perhaps the consul believed he glimpsed victory. The doomed consular army was ordered to form up for the attack, only to be completely surprised by the rest of the Carthaginian army plunging downhill out of the clinging white veil into its left flank and rear. In the sky a flat white disc of sun; on the ground a blanket of mist, treacherously varying in thickness from the levels to the hills. Indeed,



Flaminius broke camp at Arretium (Arezzo) and pressed after Hannibal through the valley of the Chiana (Val di Chiana), and then along the road from Cortona to Perugia (Perugia). At the north-western angle of Lake Trasimene (Lago Trasimeno), seen here in the middle distance looking south-east from Cortona, he made camp, intending to pursue his quarry along the northern shoreline early the next morning. (Bonjoisavo)



Lake Trasimene (Lago Trasimeno) from Castiglione del Lago, looking north-east from Rocca del Leone towards Isola Maggiore. It was along the northern shoreline of this lake that Hannibal first truly demonstrated that he was master of ambushes, reaching victory without a large-scale pitched battle, by pressing his advantage not physically but psychologically. (Adbar)







THE SNARE IS SPRUNG AT LAKE TRASIMENE (PP. 74–75)

We shall never know what possessed Caius Flaminius to walk into Hannibal's lethal trap, and his failure to reconnoitre is hardly explicable except by lack of caution. What followed was more butchery than battle. Thousands were cut down at the water's edge or driven into the lake itself. Hannibal's spectacular ambush and annihilation of Flaminius' consular army took place in a flat basin along the northern shores of Lake Trasimene. By blindly entering the confined space that was bordered by the hills to the north and the lake to the south and sealed off by blocking forces to the east and to the west, the unsuspecting consul and his men were doomed from the very outset.

Hannibal did not like to commit himself to a full-scale pitched battle unless he had it all planned out in his head and knew he

was going to win. This battle was to be brief and inglorious, and would last only two or three hours. At Lake Trasimene Hannibal had shaped his tactical theory in the mould of topographical actuality.

In this reconstruction we witness the ambushers (Iberian warriors, **1**, and Gaulish horsemen, **2**) charging out of the mist screaming at the top of their lungs determined to cut the Romans (*legio I*, **3**) down. To the right we see Flaminius (**4**) endeavouring to organize some species of battleline, his legionaries having been caught in marching order and unable to form their standard formation, the *triplex acies*. But, as the ambushers loom and lunge through the shifting vapour, the consul's army is about to collapse in confusion and chaos.



Hannibal's spectacular ambush and annihilation of Flaminius' consular army took place in the Sanguinetto basin just to the south-west of the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno, seen here from Isola Maggiore. By entering the killing ground between the wooded hillside and the water, the unsuspecting Romans and their Latin-Italian allies were doomed from the very outset. Hannibal's African and Iberian veterans would have been positioned on the spur where the town now sits. (Adrian Michael)

the mist would have been thinner on the hills than down in the basin, so that the ambushers could have coordinated their charge. Coordinated or not, they had the smell of victory in their nostrils, and once fighting men begin to smell victory, they are unbeatable. The killing began.

Now as the consular army faced the supreme battle crisis it needed an inflexible driving will – moral courage amounting to faith. This is the core of generalship. Flaminius could not see and was not told what was happening to his flank and rear; he could only sense that he faced annihilation. Hannibal, in the words of du Picq, 'believed in terror and he knew the value of surprise in inspiring it' (1903/1946, p.75).

Unable to organize any effective resistance, most of the Romans and their Latin-Italian allies were cut down while they were still in marching order and unable to support each other; some, undoubtedly scared witless, trying in their terror to scramble out of reach of the pursuing victors, even drowning in the quiet waters of the lake as they tried to flee. 'In the chaos that reigned,' records Livy, 'not a soldier could recognize his own standard or knew his place in the ranks – indeed, they were almost too bemused to get proper

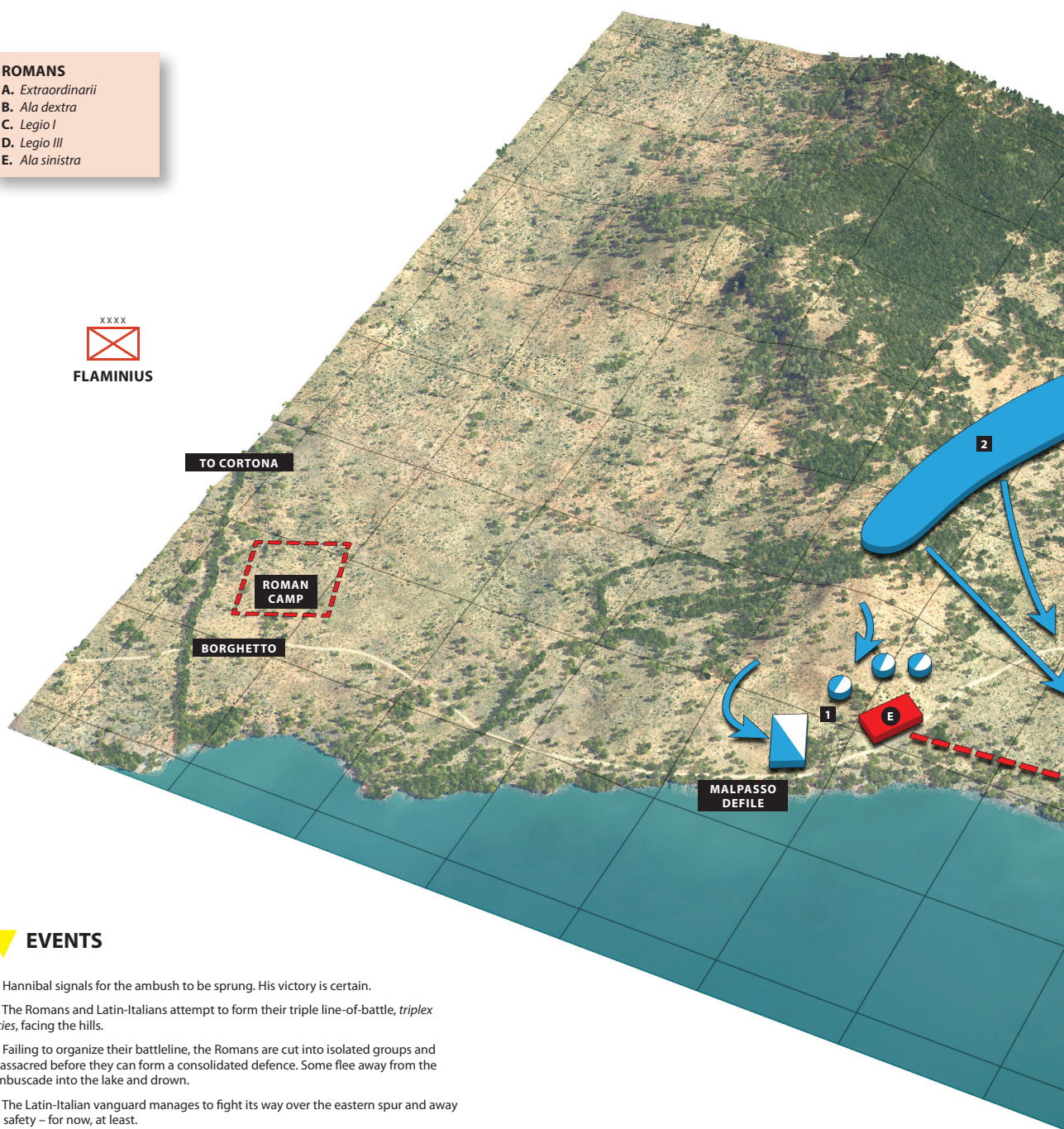


Lake Trasimene battlefield, looking north from the lake. The consular army entered the Sanguinetto basin through the defile on the far left and skirted the northern shoreline of the lake. The bulk of Hannibal's army was hidden in ambushade within the wooded hills in the middle distance. Troops were also positioned to block the exits, west and east, from the basin, which in effect became a killing ground. (Tom Bennett)

A. *Extraordinarii*
B. *Ala dextra*
C. *Legio I*
D. *Legio III*
E. *Ala sinistra*



FLAMINIUS



EVENTS

1. Hannibal signals for the ambush to be sprung. His victory is certain.
2. The Romans and Latin-Italians attempt to form their triple line-of-battle, *triplex acies*, facing the hills.
3. Failing to organize their battleline, the Romans are cut into isolated groups and massacred before they can form a consolidated defence. Some flee away from the ambushade into the lake and drown.
4. The Latin-Italian vanguard manages to fight its way over the eastern spur and away to safety – for now, at least.

As the Roman vanguard was forming up, the ambushing Carthaginians descended from the mist-cloaked wooded hills and fell on the left flank of the Roman column of route before the soldiers had enough time to deploy, simultaneously closing the rear of the trap with horsemen (Iberians in the main). As Hannibal had intended, the ambush achieved complete surprise. Flaminius died early in the fighting; more than half of his army died along with him, either in the desperate fighting or drowning trying to escape the chaos and carnage. It was noteworthy that the only portion of Flaminius' army to escape virtually intact was the vanguard – those Latin-Italian soldiers fought their way through Hannibal's best infantry to do it. It surely was not through lack of bravery that the consular army met disaster at Lake Trasimene.

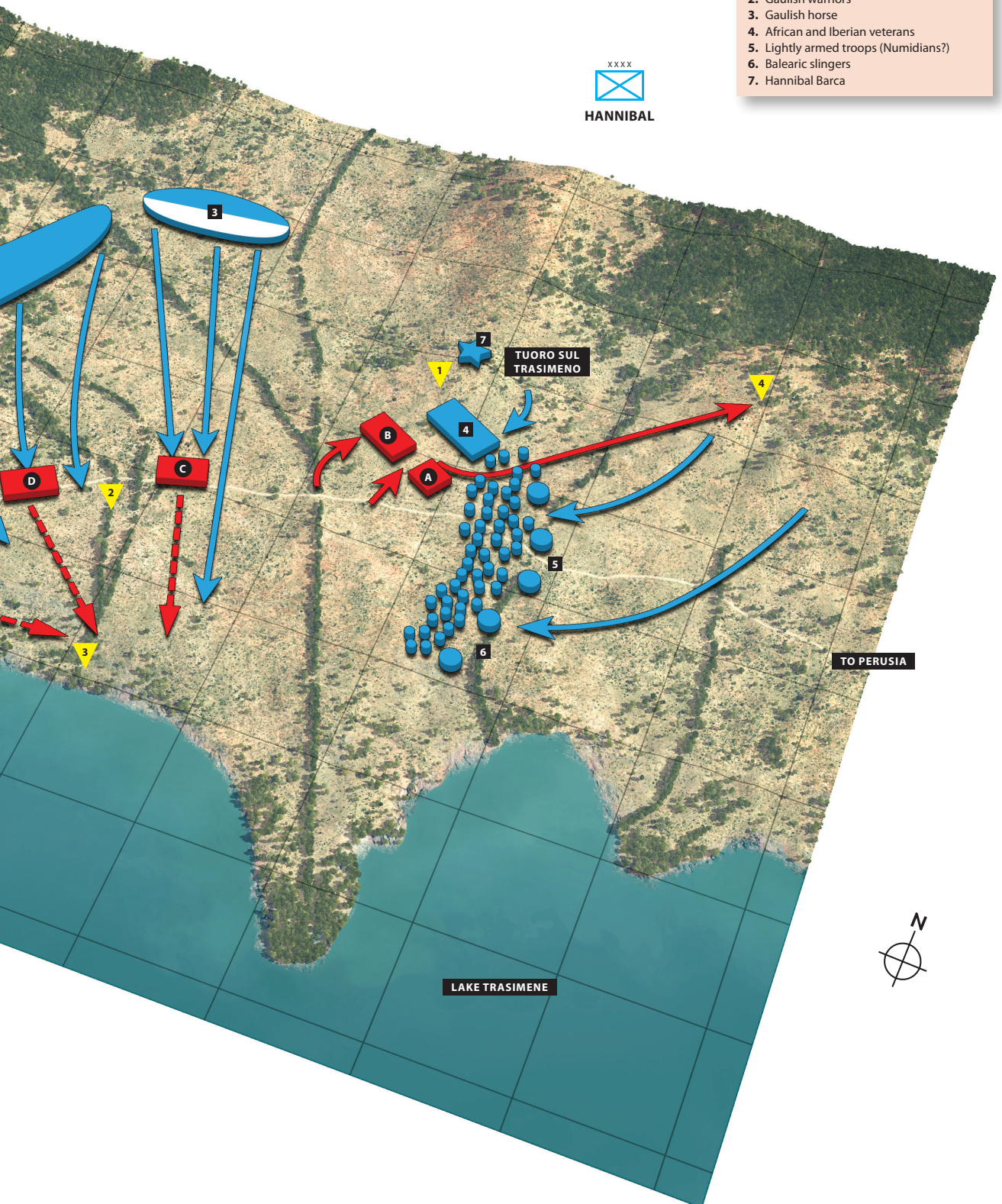
Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 500m (1,640ft)



HANNIBAL

CARTHAGINIANS AND ALLIES

1. Iberian and Numidian horse
2. Gaulish warriors
3. Gaulish horse
4. African and Iberian veterans
5. Lightly armed troops (Numidians?)
6. Balearic slingers
7. Hannibal Barca



control over their swords and shields, while to some their very armour and weapons proved not a defence but fatal encumbrance' (22.5.5). Here Livy is undoubtedly alluding to those unfortunate souls who attempted to flee by swimming the lake. Those who attempted to hide in the reeds were hunted down and butchered by the Numidians. Adrenaline and shock, a cocktail of terror. Betrayed, in effect by their commander's arrogance (or was it his incompetence?), the Romans felt the hot breath of annihilation before they even realized what was happening, and while they were still wondering how they should react.

Yet it was not only the soldiers in the ranks that paid the ultimate price for the failure of their commander. For here too, in this blind basin, somewhere amid the crowd hurrying to oblivion, fell the brave consul, slain by 'a band of Celts', according to Polybius (3.84.6), by a horse warrior of the Insubres named Ducarius according to Livy (*Insuber eques*, 22.6.1–4), who recognized Flaminius as the man responsible for the defeat of his people six years before. As a literary historian untrammelled by military experience, Livy could (and did) take liberties with his stylus. It is difficult for the majority of us to understand this, having never stepped out of peacetime, never felt the reality of leadership in inspiring and driving men on through the death and muddle of a battle, never been inspired by close comradeship with soldiers in the field.

Quickly realizing that the majority of their comrades were in jeopardy, some 6,000 men at the head of the Roman column cut their way out and made it to safety over the ridge to their front. These men were presumably spearheaded by the *extraordinarii*, the elite force of allied horse (20 *turmae*) and foot (four *cohortes*) who generally led the consular army on the line-of-march, *agmen*. The rest would have belonged to *ala dextra*. Unhappily for these Latin-Italian soldiers, having escaped the ambush, they were to be

surrounded and captured the following day close to what Appian calls the 'Plestine marsh' (*Hannibalic* 2.11), today's Lake Plestia (not far from Assisi), by a force of Numidians led by Maharbal, Hannibal's very able cavalry commander. To complete the victory, three days later Servilius' advance party of 4,000 horse under Caius Centenius were killed by or fell into the hands of the Carthaginians (Polybius 3.86.1–5, Livy 22.8.1).

The numbers present at any ancient battle are always hotly debated. It should be borne in mind, however, that old adage that it is the victor that writes history. With that in mind, it seems an inescapable conclusion from any realistic evaluation of the figures given in any one source that there is always a tendency to exaggerate both the size of armies and the number of casualties. Polybius says (3.84.7) some 15,000 Romans and Latin-Italians perished in that misty basin, but this was probably the total of all who were killed, as Livy (22.7.1), citing the contemporary account of Fabius Pictor, makes clear, and Polybius' total of more than 15,000 prisoners (3.85.2) is probably highly pessimistic too – Livy says (22.7.2, cf.

A military re-enactor equipped and armed as an Iberian *caetratus*. The *caetra* was commonly used in conjunction with the *falcata*. Renowned for their ability (and agility) in what we would call 'sword-and-buckler' combat, *caetrati* were obviously sufficiently skilled to fight with their short swords and small shields in a much tighter tactical formation than Celts. (Dorieo)



Appian *Hannibalica* 2.10) that 10,000 escaped, but since he makes no mention of prisoners, this figure perhaps included all those who survived the day and were taken prisoner, though no doubt some individuals did manage to slip away. No matter. The crucial element was Hannibal's disproportionate losses: some 1,500 in all, according to Polybius (3.85.5) most of them Cisalpine Gauls, while Livy (22.7.3) gives the higher figure of 2,500 killed in action with many more dying later of their wounds.

Still, whichever figures we choose to take as gospel, the fact remains that thrift in lives had been one of the dominant themes in Hannibal's plan.

Such was the murder at Lake Trasimene, for battle it was not. It had taken just three hours to reach its dreadful decision. Hannibal had carried the field because it was he and not his foe who had chosen where and when to fight. He may have been handicapped by being short of an eye, and his apparent fondness for wisecracks showed his human side, but he had made victory over the Romans a habit. Hannibal's fortunes were at the crest; these were to be happy days for the irresistible Carthaginian.

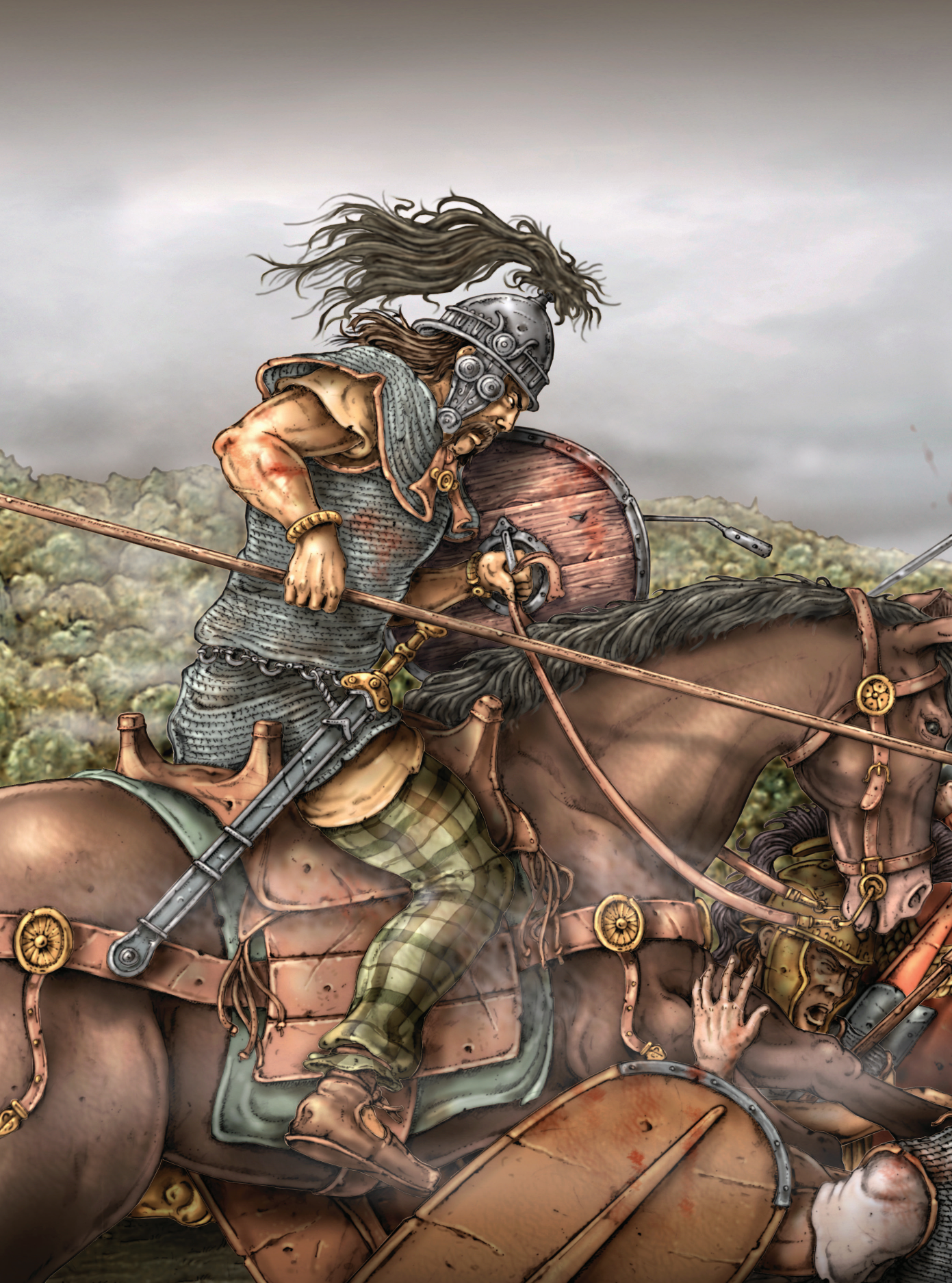
As he had done before, Hannibal kept the Romans in chains but released all his Latin-Italian prisoners with a parting message that the war was not against them, but against Rome alone. He obviously hoped to bring over the Latins and Italians to his side, for he knew well they held little love for Rome. There is a tradition that Hannibal ordered the consul's corpse to be recovered for proper burial. It is quite possible. Nevertheless, the consul's corpse was never found – apparently, it had been decapitated *à la gaulois*.



Now occupied by the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno (shown here), it was on this spur running south-west towards Lake Trasimene that Hannibal positioned his African (Libyan and Libyphoenician) and Iberian veterans. Their outposts would have been in plain view of the consular army as it entered the Sanguinetto basin from the west. It was over this spur that the Latin-Italian vanguard fought its way to safety. (Simone Milloti)



Old tree stumps in Lake Trasimene. A closed lake with no natural outlets, its northern shoreline in Hannibal's day was not as it is now. Whereas up until recently it was believed that at the time of the battle the lake had a wider extension, lately the opposite theory has gained ground, according to which the size of the lake was smaller than it is now. If this was the case, then the area of battle would have been considerably more widely spread. (Stefanomencarelli)







THE CONSUL'S DYING MINUTES (PP. 82–83)

Here too, in this misty, blind basin, Caius Flaminius was slain, by 'a band of Celts', according to Polybius (3.84.6), by a Gaulish horse warrior of the Insubres named Ducarius according to the more dramatized account of Livy (22.6.1–4), who recognized the hated consul as the man responsible for the earlier defeat and humiliation of his people (223 BC).

In this reconstruction we have followed Livy's narrative: having cut his way through the *triarii* protecting Caius Flaminius (1), Ducarius (2) is seen in hot pursuit of the consul. The *triarii* (3) were the veterans of the legion, older men seasoned in battle over many campaigning seasons. Armed with a long thrusting spear,

hasta (4), as a rule they would have taken up a posterior position in the *triplex acies*, just behind the *principes* and forming the legion's reserve. We are assuming they were generally wealthier enough to equip themselves with a mail shirt, *lorica hamata* (5), and the more elaborate Etrusco-Corinthian helmet (6). The shield designs for this period are conjectural; Polybius makes no mention of decoration despite his detailed description of legionary equipment down to the colour of their plumes.

The consul is on foot (his horse has bolted), and two hard-bitten centurions, acting as his personal bodyguard, stand before him, *gladii* drawn.

AFTERMATH

In the wake of the disaster at Lake Trasimene, Rome took the traditional remedy of appointing a dictator, unused for three decades, a single magistrate with supreme powers. Quintus Fabius Maximus (*cos.* I 233 BC, *cen.* 230 BC, *cos.* II 228 BC, *dict.* 217 BC, *cos.* III 215 BC, *cos.* IV 214 BC, *cos.* V 209 BC) was now 58 years of age, rather old for a Roman general, and had served as a green youth in the First Punic War, subsequently being twice elected to the consulship (as he would again for a further three times). He was to gain the pejorative cognomen *Cunctator*, ‘the Delayer’, because, recognizing that he was not able to cope with Hannibal on the red field of battle, he wisely chose to conduct a campaign of delays and small war, the one thing Hannibal could not afford, but also the one thing the Romans could not tolerate or understand. His officers and soldiers contemptuously called him ‘Hannibal’s *paedagogus*’ after the slave (Greek, invariably) who followed a Roman schoolboy carrying his wax tablet and stylus (Plutarch *Fabius Maximus* 5.3). But what had at first been an insult later became a title of appraisal as his unspectacular strategy of harassment earned for Rome a precious breathing space.



Dying Gaul (Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. MC 747), Roman copy of a 2nd-century BC Pergamene original. In the omnium gatherum that was his army, it would appear that Hannibal used his Gauls as ‘cannon fodder’, suffering casualties and receiving few rewards. Yet this wild, warlike race fought in an undisciplined throng, rushing and swinging long swords, and it would be altogether wrong to think that Hannibal rode to victory over the backs of his fallen Gaulish allies from Gallia Cisalpina. (© Esther Carré)

Marble statue of Hannibal
(Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. MR 2093) by Sébastien Slodtz and François Girardon (1704). Hannibal is portrayed counting the senatorial and equestrian gold rings torn from the lifeless fingers of one consul, both quaestors, 29 military tribunes, and no fewer than fourscore men who were either already senators or who could have expected to become senators in virtue of having held high office, all eminent Romans that had been left for dead on the bloody field of Cannae. (© Esther Carré)



Habit has an especially tenacious grip when, as in our period of study, the pace of change is glacial. Indeed, apart from Fabius Maximus (d. 203 BC), the Romans had yet to learn that Hannibal was not to be treated like other men, and above all that the mechanical fulfilment of senatorial orders must be suspended by the promptness and daring of a true master of war, if Hannibal was to be beaten in the field. The amateurish efforts of Roman commanders early in the war compared poorly with those of Hannibal. The Roman custom of electing two consuls each year and entrusting them to conduct military operations was unsound when incompetent commanders were elected. As an arrangement for the governance of a military campaign, this had flaws. It obviously reflects the Roman obsession with collegiality, which was basic to the Roman constitution; more fundamentally, it reflects the absence of a concept of unity of command. With no commander-in-chief able to impose a strategic plan, the consuls vied for the glory of a place in the annals of Rome.

The Romans paid the price at the Trebbia for Tiberius Sempronius Longus, at Lake Trasimene for Caius Flaminius, and would do so most notably at Cannae for Caius Terentius Varro. It was this inability to learn or unlearn, which recalls the political attitude of the Roman Senate, that undoubtedly accounts for its failure to rid the Italian Peninsula of Hannibal for 14 long years.

But what of Hannibal himself? He was now within 120km of Rome, and there was nothing but his own choice to hinder him from appearing at the Porta Ratumena within the week. Fabius ordered the beefing up of the defences of Rome, but Hannibal did not march on the city. Why not? He was on the Via Flaminia, which seemed to point to the goal of his ambition, and Flaminius lay dead behind him. Within the week he could have been watering his horses on the banks of the Tiber. The answer is brief, yet sufficient. He perceived, and is reported to have said, that Italy could only be subdued by the strength of Italy. Besides, he was not one to make the most popular of mistakes: in the flush of immediate success, the victor would underrate his enemy, forget his discipline and staying power, his fighting qualities and ability to hit back. Thus, he must entice the Roman dependencies from their allegiance, before he could hope to enter Rome; he did not yet know how different they were from the broken, emasculated, ill-treated subjects of Carthage.

Small wonder, therefore, much has

From Lake Trasimene to Cannae.





been written about Lake Trasimene and its aftermath. Not a few modern commentators have been too quick to condemn Hannibal, criticizing his strategy for failing to comprehend the nature of the Roman-led confederation – the daring individual braving Leviathan with a lance. Yet there is no doubt that his invasion of Italy was the only way that Carthage could ever have defeated Rome. Naturally he had counted on a simultaneous uprising against Rome by the imperfectly subjugated Italian Peninsula. He was right about the Gauls, but almost entirely wrong about the Etruscans and the Greeks, who in the end preferred Rome to their longstanding enemy, Carthage. With the heart of Italy refusing to back Hannibal, his long-term strategy was not going to be a success. In fact he overestimated the spirit of rebellion against Rome, and here he was perhaps five decades too late, and to many Italic peoples there was more reason to identify with rather than against Rome. The evidence from negotiations between those who did defect (mainly Samnites, once fierce enemies of Rome) and Hannibal shows that what they really

Three centuries after Hannibal, Juvenal (*Satires* 7.160–4) would write satirically of schoolboys doomed to discuss as rhetorical exercises whether Hannibal ought to have followed his victory at Cannae by a march on Rome. This is a view (looking north-west on Piazza dei Cinquecento) of a small stretch of the fortifications that encompassed Rome at the time of Hannibal, the so-called Servian Wall. (Salvatore Falco)

wanted was autonomy and the chance to determine their own fate. Defection to Hannibal, who was after all an outsider, was changing one master for another, or so many feared.

This brings us back to Fabius Maximus. There can be little doubt, by exercising the privilege of hindsight, that at this time his strategy of caution and delay was the correct one, and that his appointment prevented yet another consular army being served up to meet its almost inevitable doom at Hannibal's hands in 217 BC. As Polybius sagely remarks (3.89.8–9), in refusing to be drawn into pitched battles, Fabius Maximus was falling back on one crucial factor in which the more robust and resilient Rome had the advantage, namely inexhaustible supplies of men and matériel. This factor, however, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that Hannibal still held his ground in Italy, undefeated, for 14 years, during which he continuously proved himself to be clever, crafty and subtle, and that certainly suited the genius of a commander who always preferred skill and spruceness to brute force. Marching and countermarching up and down Italy, Hannibal won every major engagement against the Romans and captured every city except Rome itself. He formed and reformed successful armies without major reinforcements from his strategic base. That makes us call Hannibal the greatest of ancient commanders.

Of course it could be argued that any commander opposing a military genius might as well pack up, snuff out the lights, and go home, leaving a surrender note behind. Yet Fabius Maximus recognized, as Clausewitz was

later to do, that the moral forces – all influences on events not material in nature: the morale and experience of the troops, or the skill of the commander, for example, as opposed to numbers of troops, quality and quantity of arms, and so on – were quite important in war, and yet were essentially impossible to measure. Hannibal might be the epitome of genius, but his invasion of Italy was nonetheless subject to the common sense rule that every attack loses impetus as it progresses. This Fabius Maximus understood all too well.

A genius, rather, was simply someone who possessed to an exceptionally high degree a pair of talents, together composing ‘genius for war’, which all commanders possess to a greater or lesser extent, namely, as with Hannibal, the abilities to, first, recognize and, second, apply the rules which govern the reality of warfare, in all their non-linear complexity. What makes the great commander great, thus, is not an ability to ‘rise above the rules’, for ‘genius, dear sirs, never acts contrary to the rules’ (Clausewitz, *‘Tactische Rhapsodien’*, quoted in Gat 1989, p.176). Geniuses are, rather, distinguished by exceptional ability to grasp and to apply the rules, intuitively, in the trying circumstances of military command, and then, overcoming friction, to execute the course of action that, as the rules of cause and effect take their course, will lead to the outcome desired. If Hannibal was vanquished at Zama, it was because geniuses cannot accomplish the impossible.

A more recent military genius, Napoléon, wrote a glowing assessment of Hannibal: ‘This most daring of all men, perhaps the most astonishing; so bold, so assured, so broad of vision in all things; who at the age of 26 conceives what is scarcely conceivable and carries out what is deemed impossible; who, giving up all communication with his own land, passes through hostile or unknown peoples whom he must attack and conquer, scales the Pyrenees and the Alps, that were thought insurmountable, and comes down into Italy paying with half his army merely to attain a battlefield and the right to fight; who occupies, overruns and rules this same Italy for 16 years, on several occasions places the terrible and fearsome Rome within inches of its downfall, and leaves his prey only when Rome profits from the lessons he has taught to go and fight him on his home ground’ (*Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Vol. II, p.338).

Yet, as with all things in the Hannibalic War, the Romans adjusted. Hannibal trained a series of Roman commanders through their experience fighting with him. Marcus Caius Marcellus (*cos.* I 222 BC, *cos.* II 214 BC, *cos.* III 210 BC, *cos.* IV 208 BC) and Caius Claudius Nero (*cos.* 207 BC) became adequate if certainly not equal to Hannibal. There was at the Ticinus and the Trebbia a young commander, with volition of iron and an eye of fire. He was Publius Cornelius Scipio, who would eventually earn the *cognomen* Africanus. He was Hannibal’s most apt pupil.



Steel shield (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 34.85) of the tournament-loving Henri II of France (r.1547–59), embossed and damascened with silver and gold and attributed to the Parisian goldsmith Étienne Delaune. The embossed battle scene at the centre of the shield illustrates Hannibal’s victory at Cannae, a metaphor for France’s struggle against the Holy Roman Empire. (Fordmadoxfraud)

THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

A number of important archaeological discoveries and some recent surveys regarding the ancient water levels of Lake Trasimene have aided scholarly studies to better pinpoint the location of Hannibal's lakeshore ambush site. The common consensus (at least amongst Italian scholars) now favours the Malpasso – Navaccio plain – Tuoro spur. The upshot of all this work is that Hannibal's ambush site can be placed in a locale stretching from the Malpasso, just east of the village of Borghetto, to the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno, with the central point at the village of Sanguinetto. The killing ground itself was in the Sanguinetto basin.

Long ago it had been agreed that the ambush took place in one of the two basins (Sanguinetto or Tuoro) along the northern shoreline of the lake (Nissen 1867, Fuchs 1904, Pareti 1912, de Sanctis 1917). Later, when a number of *ustrina* (incinerator pits for mass cremation) were discovered, the ambush site was narrowed down to the Sanguinetto basin between the Malpasso and the Tuoro spur, the low-lying plain known locally as Navaccia, which means 'pool of water' (Susini 1960, 1964). Quite recently, the configuration of the former shoreline was redefined, and the remaining doubts regarding the unfolding of the battle have been resolved (Brizzi-Gambini 2007). At this point it should be understood that the topographical conformation of the area of the lake has changed considerably over the centuries with consequent modification of the shoreline.

Lake Trasimene is a closed body of water, with no natural outlets; at present it has an average surface area of about 122km² and a maximum depth of less than 6m. The lake level varies considerably and is very sensitive to

meteorological and climatic conditions, that is to say, it is strictly linked to local rainfall. Either the Etruscans or the Romans dug an underground outlet in order to control the water level of the lake, but though mentioned by Strabo, the date and exact location of any such construction is unknown. During what is called the Mediaeval Warm Period (roughly between AD 1000 and 1300) the water level was rather low, but it rose again during the Little Ice Age (caused by an advance of polar and alpine glaciers beginning around AD 1400) and the lake flooded large areas then used for agriculture. In AD 1421 the *condottiere* Braccio Fortebraccio of Perugia

One of the 12 viewing points (complete with illustrated panels) that make up the *Percorso Annibalico* or Hannibalic Path, an open-air battlefield itinerary for Lake Trasimene. Beyond is the Sanguinetto basin, the killing ground of Hannibal's army-size ambush. In the distance are the small islands of Isola Maggiore (right) and Isola Minore (left). The itinerary allows the visitor to fully appreciate the workings of Hannibal's genius at Lake Trasimene. (Adrian Michael)



built a canal at the south-east corner of the lake to evacuate its waters into the nearby River Nestore. Whereas up until recently it was believed that at the time of the battle the lake had a wider extension, lately the opposite theory has gained ground, according to which the size of the lake was smaller than it is now. If this was the case, we have to visualize the area of battle as being considerably more widely spread, the Sanguineto basin nevertheless remaining as the killing ground.

The ambush was sprung around 0700hrs and lasted for the next three hours. Leaving their camp at Borghetto around dawn and hindered by the mist, the Romans could not have reached as far as Passignano within these time limits, as anyone would appreciate having hiked the route themselves. The consequence of this is that the learned schemes that make the Roman army follow the modern shoreline of the lake to Passignano and beyond, in the direction of Perugia, are out of the question (Kromayer-Veith 1912, followed by Lazenby 1978, Bath 1981, Goldsworthy *The Punic Wars*, Fields 2007). Thus, it becomes clear that the entire ambush/battle took place in the first basin, the one of Sanguineto, which runs from the village of Pieve Confini on the west, through the village of Sanguineto at the head of the basin, to the town of Tuoro sul Trasimeno on the east. As to the actual positions of the ambushers: the Iberian and Numidian horse were positioned where the basin broadens out along the course of the Fosso Macerone and the Fosso di Cerrete; the lightly armed foot and the Cisalpine Gauls were drawn up post montes, viz. behind the plain of Navaccia, and the Libyan, Libyphoenician and Iberian veterans on the Tuoro spur.

For those who wish to visit the site of the battle, a must is the *Percorso Annibalico* or Hannibalic Path, which is an open-air battlefield itinerary for Lake Trasimene. The route runs entirely within the Sanguineto basin between the hills and the shores of the lake. It includes 13 viewing points with standing illustrated panels (with artwork by Donato Spedalieri) written in four languages on various themes relevant to the battle (e.g. Area 2: The trap of Hannibal, Area 4: The Carthaginian army, Area 6: The death of consul Flaminius, Area 10: The escape of the six thousand).

There is also the *Centro di documentazione permanente su Annibale e la battaglia del Trasimeno* at Tuoro sul Trasimeno, housed in the Palazzo del Capra (Via Ritorta, 1), which, local legend has it, houses the tomb of the consul Caius Flaminius. The town is also believed to be the site of several *ustrina*, or cremation pits, for those killed in the battle. These yielded ashes, which analysis had shown to contain organic matter. Arrowheads and spearheads were also found in them. The Permanent Documentation Centre, as well as housing

BELOW LEFT

Bronze portrait bust (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. 5634) of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (d.185 BC). Seeing the deficiencies of the rather static traditional Roman tactics, Scipio experimented with small tactical units that could operate with greater flexibility. His tactics were inspired by Hannibal's, and they needed good legionary officers as well as generalship to implement. (Miguel Hermoso Cuesta)

BELOW

Marble bust of Pyrrhos of Epeiros (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. 6150). Hannibal was a warrior chief like Pyrrhos, but there are fundamental differences between the two of them. Whereas Pyrrhos shone brilliantly as a Homeric Achilles in combat, Hannibal was a consummate trickster, a shape-shifter, more of an Odysseus. Pyrrhos thus chose the way of honour and violence, while Hannibal chose the way of guile and expediency. Occidental minds tend to prefer the spirit of Achilles, bittersweet, ferocious and brilliant, not cunning battle plans and false missives. (Marie-Lan Nguyen)



relevant written and physical material to do with the battle, has a fine display of battle maps, information boards, dioramas and full-size reconstructions of arms and armour. It also serves as a conference and exhibition centre.

Finally, the contribution that folklore has made to the study of the battle relates to place names. These can be notoriously unreliable, as the number of *camp de Cesar* that abound in France clearly attests. Yet three place names, which are genuinely based on local tradition, can be of use to us. A stream running through the land there ran red with blood for three days and took the name of Sanguineto, ‘bloodied’, while the hill just north of Tuoro sul Trasimeno became known as Monte Sanguineto. And then there is the Gorghe di Annibale, a height north of the village of Sanguineto from which the whole battlefield can be surveyed. Was this where Hannibal directed operations from his headquarters? Local people still recount that ‘the lake turned red with blood’. Back then it was the locals’ task to burn the bodies in the *ustrina* in which the corpses of the slain were laid in layers with wood between each layer: as one layer caught fire, it lit the layer above. Several other local places have names seemingly connected with the battle, for example Sepoltaglia, ‘place of burial’, and Pugnano, ‘place of battles’. Although very suggestive of Hannibalic carnage and the like, in truth they have nothing to do with Hannibal’s battle.

GLOSSARY

<i>acies</i>	line-of-battle	<i>optio/optiones</i>	second-in-command of <i>centuria</i> / <i>turma</i> (q.v.)
<i>agmen</i>	line-of-march		
<i>ala/alae</i>	‘wing’ – Latin-Italian unit comparable to <i>legio</i> (q.v.)	<i>parma</i>	small, round shield carried by <i>velites</i> (q.v.)
<i>as/asses</i>	small copper coin	<i>pilum/pila</i>	throwing spear
<i>caetra</i>	small, round shield of Iberian origin	<i>praefectus</i>	‘prefect’ – senior <i>decurio</i> (q.v.) commanding <i>turma</i> (q.v.)
<i>centuria/centuriae</i>	‘century’ – administrative subunit of <i>manipulus</i> (q.v.)	<i>praefectus (-i)</i>	one of three prefects commanding <i>ala</i> (q.v.) <i>Sociorum</i>
<i>centurio/centuriones</i>	‘leader of a hundred’ – officer in command of <i>centuria</i> (q.v.)	<i>princeps/principes</i>	‘leading man’ – legionary in prime forming <i>legio</i> (q.v.) second rank
<i>cohors/cohortes</i>	tactical subunit of Latin-Italian <i>ala</i> (q.v.)	<i>pugio/pugiones</i>	double-edged, broad-bladed dagger carried by Roman legionaries
cubit	ancient unit of measurement equal to the distance from the elbow bottom to the middle finger tip (444mm)	<i>scutal/scutum</i>	oval, semi-cylindrical body shield of Italic origin
<i>decurio/decuriones</i>	‘leader of ten’ – file commander in <i>turma</i> (q.v.)	span	ancient unit of measurement equal to the distance across a man’s outstretched hand (223mm), two spans equalling one cubit (q.v.)
<i>dilectus</i>	‘choosing’ – levying of Roman army	<i>triarius/triarii</i>	‘third-rank man’ – veteran legionary forming <i>legio</i> (q.v.) third rank
<i>eques/equites</i>	‘horseman’ – Roman cavalryman	<i>tribunus (-i) militum</i>	military tribune
<i>falcata</i>	curved, single-edged Iberian sword	<i>turma/turmae</i>	tactical subunit of Roman/Latin-Italian cavalry
<i>gladius/gladii</i>	cut-and-thrust sword carried by Roman legionaries	<i>veles/velites</i>	‘cloak wearer’ – young (and poor) Roman legionary who acts as skirmisher
<i>hasta/hastae</i>	thrusting spear	<i>umbol/umbones</i>	shield-boss, usually metallic
<i>hastatus/hastati</i>	‘spearman’ – young legionary forming <i>legio</i> (q.v.) front rank		
<i>legio/legiones</i>	‘levy’ – principle unit of Roman army		
<i>lorica hamate</i>	mail armour		
<i>manipulus/manipuli</i>	‘handful’ – tactical subunit of <i>legio</i> (q.v.)		

FURTHER READING

PRIMARY SOURCES

No less than seven accounts of Hannibal's war up and down the Italian Peninsula are said to have been written during his lifetime or very soon afterwards, two of them by Greeks who accompanied him on the long march from Iberia, and two of the others by Romans who fought against him. Polybius, writing some 30 years after the death of Hannibal, found fault with three of them for their errors, and when Livy was writing, about 130 years later, the truth about Hannibal and his war had already become a subject of controversy. Even so, the texts of Polybius (Book 3) and of Livy (Book 22) serve as our primary sources for the Lake Trasimene campaign. In an attempt to write a balanced account, Polybius did refer to Quintus Fabius Pictor for a Roman perspective, and to Philinos of Agrigentum who had favoured the Punic cause. Polybius is clearly the more reliable main source compared to Livy and meets a stricter criterion of honesty and truthfulness. Livy, by comparison, was a literary historian who sat in a library and compiled. He lacked the contact with men and affairs, and the habits of travel and observation, which specifically qualified Polybius to be a military historian.

For those who wish to delve further into the battle, supplementary information can be gleaned from Appian (*Bellum Punicum*, *Hannibalica*, *Iberica*), Dio Cassius, Silius Italica (*Punica*), Plutarch (*Fabius Maximus*) and Cornelius Nepos (*Hamilcar*, *Hannibal*). The last wrote eulogistic histories in the 1st century BC, and he tells us that Hannibal was accompanied by a number of Greek writers (two, at least) who formed a literary circle in his camp.

SECONDARY WORKS

- Adcock, F.E., *The Roman Art of War under the Republic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940
- Ardent du Picq, C. (trans. Col. J. Greeley and Maj. R. Cotton 1920, repr. 1946), *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern*, Harrisburg, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1903
- Bagnall, N., *The Punic Wars: Rome, Carthage and the Struggle for the Mediterranean*, London: Pimlico, 1990 (reprinted 1999)
- , *The Punic Wars, 264–146 BC*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd. (Essential Histories), 2002
- Bath, T., *Hannibal's Campaigns*, Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1981
- de Beer, G., *Alps and Elephants: Hannibal's March*, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956
- , *Hannibal's March*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967
- , *Hannibal*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1969
- Bishop, M.C. and J.C.N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (2nd edn.), Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2006
- Brett, M. and E.W.B. Fentress, *The Berbers*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996
- Brizzi, G., *Annibale: Strategia e Immagine*, Città di Castello, 1984
- , 'Hannibal's expedition', in S. Moscati (ed.), *The Phoenicians*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1997 (reprinted 2001), pp.66–83
- , *Il Guerriero, l'Oplita, il Legionario: Gli Eserciti del Mondo Classico*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002 (reprinted 2008)
- , *Annibale: Come un'Autobiografia*, Milano: Bompiani, 2003
- and E. Gambini, 'Di nuovo sulla battaglia del Trasimeno: qualche ulteriore considerazione', *Rivista Storica dell'Antichità*, 37 (2007), pp.77–100
- Brunt, P.A., *Italian Manpower, 225 BC–AD 14*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971
- Brunaux, J.-L., *Les Gaulois*, Paris: Guides Belle Lettres des Civilisations, 2005
- Camps, G., *Aux Origines de la Berbérie: Monuments et Rites Funéraires Protohistoriques*, Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1962
- Cascarino, G., *L'Esercito Romano: Armamento e Organizzazione*, Vol. I: *Dalle Origini alla Fine della Repubblica*, Rimini: Il Cerchio, 2007
- Clausewitz, C. von (trans. M. Howard and P. Paret 1976, reprinted 1984, 1993), *On War*, London: Everyman's Library, 1832
- Cornelly, P., *Greece and Rome at War*, Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 1981 (reprinted 1988, 1998)
- Cornell, T.J., *The Beginnings of Rome*, London: Routledge, 1995
- , N.B. Rankov and P. Sabin (eds.), *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, London: University of London Press (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 67), 1996
- Daly, G., *Cannae: The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War*, London: Routledge, 2002
- David, J.-M., *The Roman Conquest of Italy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994 (trans. A. Nevill 1996, reprinted 1997)
- Davoli, P. and C. Miks, 'A new "Roman" sword from Soknopaiou Nesos (El Fayyum, Egypt)', *Institute of the Study of the Ancient World Papers* 9, 2015
- Dawson, D., *The Origins of Western Warfare*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996
- Delbrück, H., *History of the Art of War within the Framework of Political History*, Vol. I, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1920 (3rd edn. trans. W.J. Renfroe Jr. 1975, reprinted 1990)
- de Sanctis, G., *Storia dei Romani*, Vol. 3.2, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1968 (2nd edn.)
- Dodge, T.A., *The Great Captains*, Stevenage: Strong Oak Press, 1889 (reprinted 2002)
- , *Hannibal*, Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1891

- Erdkamp, P. (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007
- Febvre, L., *La Terre et l'Évolution Humaine*, Paris, 1922 (reprinted 1970)
- Feugère, M., *Les Armes Romains de la République à l'Antiquité Tardive*, Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1993
- Fields, N., *The Roman Army of the Punic Wars, 264–146 BC*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd. (Battle Orders 27), 2007
- , *Carthaginian Warrior, 264–146 BC*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd. (Warrior 150), 2010
- , *Hannibal*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd. (Command 11), 2010
- , *Roman Conquests: North Africa*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2010
- Gambini, E., *Le Oscillazioni di Livello del Lago Trasimeno*, Perugia: Grafiche Piemme (Quaderni del Museo della Pesca del lago Trasimeno), 1995
- Gat, A., *The Origins of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989
- Goldsworthy, A.K., *Roman Warfare*, London: Cassell, 2000
- , *The Punic Wars*, London: Cassell, 2000
- , *In the Name of Rome: The Men Who Won the Roman Empire*, London: Phoenix, 2003 (reprinted 2004)
- Griffith, G.T., *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World*, Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1935 (reprinted 1984)
- Grundy, G.B., 'The Trebbia and Lake Trasimene', *Journal of Philology*, 24 (1896), pp.83–118
- Gsell, S., *Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, Vol. II, Paris, 1928 (3rd edn.)
- Horvat, J., 'The hoard of Roman weapons from Grad near Šmihel', *Arheološki Vestnik*, 53 (2002), pp.117–92
- Hoyos, D., *Hannibal's Dynasty: Power and Politics in the Western Mediterranean, 247–183 BC*, London: Routledge, 2003 (reprinted 2005 with maps)
- , *Hannibal: Rome's Greatest Enemy*, Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2008
- Hoyle, J., *Trunk Road for Hannibal*, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960
- Hyland, A., *Equus: The Horse in the Roman World*, London: Batsford, 1990
- James, S., *Rome and the Sword: How Warriors and Weapons Shaped Roman History*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2011
- Jolly, A.R., 'Hannibal's Pass: Results of an Empirical Test', *The Alpine Journal*, 67 (1962), pp.243–68
- Jones, B.W., 'Rome's Relationship with Carthage: A Study in Aggression', *The Classical Bulletin*, 49 (1972), pp.5–26
- Keppie, L.J.F., *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire*, London: Routledge, 1984 (reprinted 1998)
- Kromayer, J. and G. Veith, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Vol. 3.1, Berlin, 1912
- Lancel, S., *Carthage*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992 (trans. A. Nevill 1995)
- , *Hannibal*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995 (trans. A. Nevill 1998, reprinted 1999)
- Lazenby, J.F., *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978
- , *The First Punic War: A Military History*, London: University College London Press, 1996
- Le Bohec, Y., *Histoire Militaire des Guerres Puniques*, Paris/Monaco, 1996
- Lendon, J.E., *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, New Haven: University of Yale Press, 2005
- von Moltke, H.K.B., *Militärische Werke*, Vol. 2.2, Berlin: E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1893
- Picard, C.G. and C. Picard, *The Life and Death of Carthage*, London, 1968 (trans. D. Collon, 1969)
- Porter, B., 'At Lake Trasimene Hannibal Barca Combined Tactics and Psychology to Destroy a Roman Army', *Military History*, 18 (2001), pp.12–18
- Proctor, D., *Hannibal's March in History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971
- Quesada-Sanz, F., 'Gladius Hispaniensis: An Archaeological View from Iberia', *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies*, 8 (1997), pp.251–70
- , 'Not so Different: Individual Fighting Techniques and Battle Tactics of Roman and Iberian Armies within the Framework of Warfare in the Hellenistic Age', *Pallas*, 70 (2006), pp.245–53
- Rostovtzeff, M., 'Numidian Horsemen on Canosa Vases', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 50 (1946), pp.263–67 with plates 11 and 12
- Sabin, P., 'The Face of Roman Battle', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 90 (2000), pp.1–17
- Sage, M.M., *The Roman Republican Army: A Sourcebook*, London: Routledge, 2008
- Seibert, J., *Forschungen zu Hannibal*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993
- , *Hannibal*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993
- Susini, G., *Ricerche sulla Battaglia del Trasimeno*, Cortona (*Annuario dell' Accademia Etrusca di Cortona* 11), 1959/60
- Taylor, M.J., 'Roman Infantry Tactics in the mid-Republic – A Reassessment', *Historia*, 63 (2014), pp.301–22
- Tuchman, B.W., *The Guns of August*, London: Macmillan, 1962
- Ulbert, G., 'Gladii aus Pompeii. Vorarbeiten zu einem Corpus römischer Gladii', *Germania*, 47 (1969), pp.97–128
- Vitali, D., *Tombe e Necropoli Galliche di Bologna e del Territorio*, Bologna: Istituto per la Storia di Bologna, 1992
- von Schlieffen, A., *Cannae*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command & General Staff School Press, 1936
- Walbank, F.W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957
- , *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. II, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970
- Wilkinson, S., *Hannibal's March*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911
- Wise, T. and M. Healy, *Hannibal's War with Rome: The Armies and Campaigns 216 BC*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1999 (reprinted 2002)
- Wyman, E., 'On Hannibal's Trail: The Clues Are in the Geology', *EARTH*, 55 (2010), pp.46–53
- Zhmodikov, A., 'Roman Republican Heavy Infantryman in Battle (IV–II centuries BC)', *Historia*, 49 (2000), pp.67–78

INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** refer to illustrations and their captions.

Aelian 38
 Aemilius Paullus, the 25
 Alexander the Great 10, 10, 16, 33
 Alps, the 9
 Hannibal's crossing 10, 12, 13 (map), 14, 15, 53
 passes 12, 14, 15
 Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus 25, 30
 ambushes 51–52
 Apennines, the 61, 63–64, 63
 Appian 10, 80
 Ariminum 49, 65
 armour 19, 24, 27, 28, 30, 40, 44, 45, 82–83 (84)
 Arnus (Arno) river 7, 63, 64, 64, 66–67 (68)
 Arretium (Arezzo) 49, 61, 65, 69, 72, 73
 Arrian 25
 Atienza 24

 Balearic slingers 58–59 (60)
 Banyuls-sur-Mer, France 6
 Borghetto 91

 Caesar, Julius 35–36
caligae 20
 Cannae, Battle of 5, 16–17, 18, 40, 86, 89
 Carthaginian forces 18
 adoption of Roman weaponry 39–40
 advance to Lake Trasimene 61, 62 (map), 63–65, 63, 64, 66–67 (68), 72
 casualties 61, 81
 cavalry 19, 35–38, 35, 36, 37, 44, 47, 53, 74–75 (76)
 cross the Rhône 7
 elephants 53, 56, 57, 61, 64, 65, 65, 66–67 (68)
 fighting styles 47
 Gaulish 43–47, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 47, 49, 51, 52, 56, 57, 66–67 (68), 69, 74–75 (76), 81, 82–83 (84), 85
 Iberian levies 40–43, 40, 41, 42, 47, 57, 74–75 (76)
 infantry 19, 39–40, 53
 at Lake Trasimene 69, 72, 74–75 (76), 80
 leadership 34
 Libyans 39–40
 mercenaries 19
 Polybius on 19
 polyglot army 34
 strength 53
 training 39
 at Trebbia 56, 57, 61
 Castiglione del Lago 73
 casualties
 Lake Trasimene 7, 80–81, 85
 Trebbia 61
 Cato 28, 30
 Celts, the 31
 Cenomani, the 55, 56, 57
 Centenius, Caius 80
Centro di documentazione permanente su Annibale e la battaglia del Trasimeno 91

Cercina Islands 35–36
 chronology 11
 Cicero 22
 Circus Flaminius 15
 Cisalpine Gauls 14, 15, 32–33, 56, 81
 Clausewitz, C. von 9, 12, 17, 49, 52, 88–89
 Clusius River, battle of 15
 Col de Banyuls 6
 Col de la Traversette 12
 Col de Montgenèvre 10
 Col du Clapier 15
 Col du Petit Saint-Bernard 14
 combat 33–34
 Cortona 49, 73

 Delbrück, Hans 10, 17
 Diodoros 45
 Dionysios of Halikarnassos 23

 elephants 53, 65
 advance to Lake Trasimene 64, 66–67 (68)
 cross the Rhône 7
 at Lake Trasimene 7, 65
 at Trebbia 56, 57, 61
 Emporion (Ampurias) 6
 Etruria 64–65

 Fabius Maximus, Quintus 85–86, 88–89
 Faesulae (Fiesole) 64
 First Punic War 23, 24, 85
 Flaminius, Caius
 advance to Lake Trasimene 61
 appointed Roman commander 61
 career 14–15
 character 12, 14, 49
 death of 80, 82–83 (84)
 at Lake Trasimene 6, 9, 10, 65, 69, 72–73, 73, 74–75 (76), 77, 86
 plans 49–50
 folklore 92
 Fontenoy, battle of (1745) 48
 footwear 20
 formations 20, 22, 29, 50
 Fortebraccio, Braccio 90–91

 Gallia Cisalpina 53, 54 (map)
 Gauls
 advance to Lake Trasimene 66–67 (68)
 appearance 46, 48, 49
 armour 44, 45
 casualties 81, 85
 cavalry 44, 51, 52, 74–75 (76), 82–83 (84)
 equipment 44
 fighting style 47
 helmets 43, 44, 51
 at Lake Trasimene 69, 72, 74–75 (76), 81, 82–83 (84), 85
 organization 43–44
 quality 46–47
 shields 46, 46, 49
 tactics 43, 44
 at Trebbia 57
 weapons 44–46, 47, 49
 Gorghe di Annibale 92
 greaves 25, 30

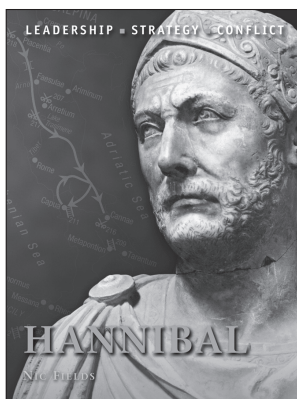
Gundestrup cauldron 51

 Hamilcar 16
 Hannibal Barca 16, 17, 86
 advance through Italy 86, 87 (map), 88–89
 advance to Lake Trasimene 61, 62 (map), 63–65, 63, 64, 66–67 (68), 72
 avoidance of pitched battles 50, 88
 at Cannae 5, 16–17, 18
 career 16–18
 character 12, 18
 crossing of the Alps 10, 12, 13 (map), 14, 15, 53
 first victory 53, 55, 55
 in Gallia Cisalpina 53, 54 (map), 55
 generalship 50, 61
 genius 16, 18, 50, 52, 88–89
 hatred of Rome 9
 influence 17
 at Lake Trasimene 6–7, 9, 9–10, 18, 65, 69, 72, 74–75 (76), 81
 leadership 18, 19, 34
 legacy 9
 loss of eye 7, 64, 66–67 (68)
 march to Italy 5, 5, 6, 8 (map), 53
 Napoleon on 89
 plans 48, 50–52
 and risk 48
 status 7, 9–10
 style of war 48–49
 tactics 6, 9, 16, 47
 at Trebbia 18, 55, 57
 understanding of Roman army 10
 at Zama 18, 89
 Hasdrubal 5
 helmets
 Attic-style 24, 25, 25
 Boiotian 19, 32
 Etrusco-Corinthian 19, 25, 26, 27, 30, 82–83 (84)
 Gauls 43, 44, 51
 Montefortino 22, 23, 25, 43, 44
 Roman 22, 23, 24–25, 24, 25, 26, 27, 27, 28, 30, 32, 82–83 (84)
 Henri II, King of France 89
 Herodotos 36
 Hindu Kush, the 10

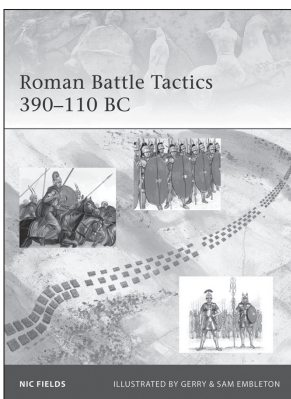
 Iber (Ebro) river 5
 Iberia, spheres of influence 5
 Iberians 23, 24, 24, 31, 34, 40, 80
 armour 40
 cavalry 35
 fighting style 47
 in Gallia Cisalpina 55
 at Lake Trasimene 72, 74–75 (76)
 shields 40–42, 40, 41, 42, 80
 at Trebbia 56
 weapons 37, 39, 40–41, 41, 47
 Illiberis (Elne) 6
 incinerator pits 90, 91, 92
 Insubres, the 15
 intelligence 49, 63
 Italy, Hannibal's invasion of 86, 87 (map), 88–89

- Juvenal 88
- Kasr-el-Harit 25
- Lake Trasimene 73, 77, 81, 90–92, 90
- Lake Trasimene, battle of 9, 18
 advance to 61, 62 (map), 63–65, 63, 64, 66–67 (68), 72
 ambush 6–7, 9–10, 51–52, 65
 ambush set 69, 70–71 (map), 72, 81
 ambush sprung 74–75 (76), 77
 Carthaginian forces 69
 casualties 7, 80–81, 85
 death of Flaminius 80, 82–83 (84)
 duration 74–75 (76), 81
 elephants 7
 Hannibal's attack 78–79 (map)
 killing ground 77, 90, 90, 91
 location 90, 91
 mist 6–7
 prisoners 80–81
 Roman advance 73
 Roman deployment 72–73
 Roman response to defeat 85–86
 Roman survivors escape 80
 terrain 69
 today 90–92, 90
- Libyans 39–40, 57
- Livy 7, 14, 20, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 36, 38, 39, 44, 56, 65, 69, 77, 80
- Lomello 53
- Los Cogotes (Avila) 24
- Lucilius 27
- Mago 55–56
- Maharbal 80
- Malpasso river 69
- Marcellus, Marcus Caius 89
- Mars, god of war 30
- Mausolée de Glanum 52
- Moltke, Helmuth von 9
- Monte Sanguineti 92
- Napoléon 89
- Nero, Caius Claudius 89
- Numantia 23
- Numidians 28, 35–38, 47
 archers 35–36
 horses 36, 37–38
 in Gallia Cisalpina 55
 at Lake Trasimene 72, 80
 at Trebbia 56, 57, 58–59 (60)
- Ofanto River 5
- omens 69
- Osuna, Seville 35, 42
- Ovid 72
- Padus river 63
- Passignano 91
- Passo della Futa 61, 63–64
- Passo della Porretta 63, 63
- Passo della Scheggia 63
- Pavia, 55
- Percorso Annibalico*, the 90, 91
- Perusia (Perugia) 49, 65
- phalanx, the 20, 33
- Philo of Byzantium 46
- physical endurance 33–34
- Picq, Colonel Ardant du 14
- Pictor, Fabius 80
- place names 92
- Placentia 55, 57
- plans 48–49
 Flaminius 49–50
 Hannibal 48, 50–52
- Pleistine Marsh, the 80
- Pliny the Elder 10
- Plutarch 39–40
- Polybius 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 20–22, 22, 23, 24, 24–25, 26, 27, 28, 30–31, 32, 33, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45–46, 56, 63, 73, 80, 81, 82–83 (84), 88
- Pompeius Magnus, Cnaeus 10, 21
- Ponte d'Augusto e Tiberio 65
- Pyrenees, the 6
- Pyrrhic War 28
- Pyrrhos of Epeiros 16, 23, 91
- Quintus Sertorius 10
- Rhône river 7
- Rocca del Leone 73
- Roman forces
 advance to Lake Trasimene 61
 armour 19, 24, 27, 28, 30, 82–83 (84)
 at Cannae 5
 casualties 61, 80
 cavalry (*equites*) 19, 21, 22, 24, 27–29, 27, 29, 32, 36, 52, 57
 the *extraordinarii* 26, 73, 80
 formations 22, 29, 50
 greaves 25, 30
hastati 22, 23, 29–30, 33, 57, 58–59 (60)
 helmets 22, 23, 24–25, 24, 25, 26, 27, 27, 28, 30, 32, 82–83 (84)
 infantry 21–22
 at Lake Trasimene 72–73, 74–75 (76), 77, 80–81, 82–83 (84)
 legion strength 21–22
 legionaries 19, 22–25, 32, 73
 maniples 22
 Marian reforms 20
 military tribunes 21, 30
 mobilization 21
 oath of service 21
 organization 20, 20–22, 26, 27
 Polybius on 19
praefecti equitum 28
praefecti Sociorum 26
principes 22, 23, 29–30, 33, 57, 58–59 (60), 82–83 (84)
 shields 21, 23, 25, 27, 27, 28, 31, 32–33
socii 26, 28, 73
 strength 61
 tactics 20, 29–32, 49, 50
 terms of service 20–21
 training 22
 at Trebbia 56, 57, 58–59 (60), 61
triarii 22, 23, 26, 29–30, 33, 33, 82–83 (84)
 variation 25
velites 22, 24, 27, 29–30, 32
 weapons 23–24, 23, 27, 27, 28, 30–32, 31, 33, 33
- Rome 20, 85, 88, 88
- saddles 28–29, 29, 52
- Samnites 25, 26
- Sanguineti basin 77, 90, 90, 91
- Saxe, Maurice de 48–49
- Schlieffen, Alfred von 17
- Scipio, Publius Cornelius 53, 55, 89, 91
- Second Punic War 20, 26, 30
- Sempronius Longus, Tiberius 55, 56–57
- Sepoltaglia 92
- Servilius Geminus, Cnaeus 49, 61, 65, 80, 86
- shields 27
 cavalry 27, 28
 devices 21, 25
 Gauls 46, 46, 49
 Iberians 40–42, 40, 41, 42, 80
 Numidians 36, 38
 Roman 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32–33
- Sicily 15
- socii* 26, 28, 73
- Sosylos 16
- Strabo 10, 36, 44, 46, 90
- strategic situation 5–8
- Sun Tzu 49
- Tacitus 32
- tactics 6, 9, 16, 20, 29–32, 43, 44, 47, 49, 50
- Taurini, the 53
- Telamon, battle of 32
- theatre of operations 4 (map)
- Third Samnite War 23
- Ticino (Ticino) river 53, 55
- Trajan's Column 38
- Trebbia, battle of the 18, 47, 55–57, 58–59 (60), 61
- Trebbia river 5, 56
- Tuchman, Barbara 17
- Tuoro sul Trasimeno 69, 77, 81, 90, 91, 91–92
- Turin 53
- Val d'Arno 64, 66–67 (68)
- Val di Chiana 64, 72
- Varro, Caius Terentius 86
- Vegetius 22, 32
- Via degli Dei 63
- Via Flaminia 15, 63, 86
- war, rules of 12
- weapons
 cavalry 27, 28, 35, 35
 daggers 24, 24, 36–37
falcata 24, 35, 39, 41, 42, 42–43, 47
 Gauls 44–46, 49
gladius 23, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30–32, 31, 33, 40
 Iberian sword 37, 40–41, 42–43
 javelins 27, 35, 38, 43
kopis 24, 42
 La Tène slashing sword 44–46, 47, 49
 Numidians 35, 38
pila 23, 30, 40
 Roman allies 26
 spears 23, 27, 28, 30, 33, 35, 49
- Western Mediterranean 4 (map)
- World War I 17
- Xanthippos 16
- Zama, battle of 18, 89

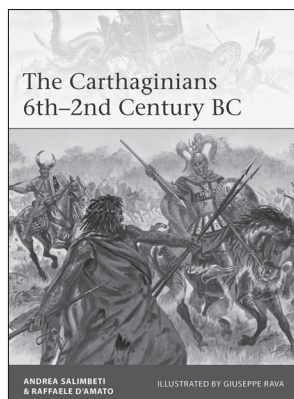
Discover more at www.ospreypublishing.com



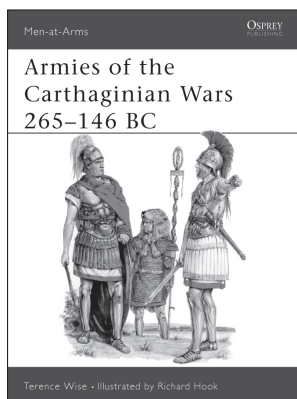
CMD No: 11 • **ISBN:** 978 1 84908 349 2



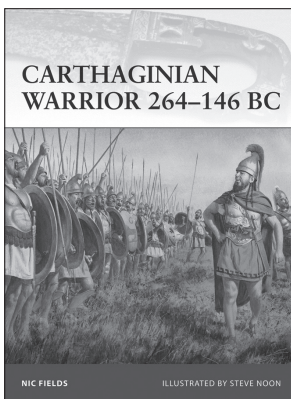
ELI No: 172 • **ISBN:** 978 1 84603 382 7



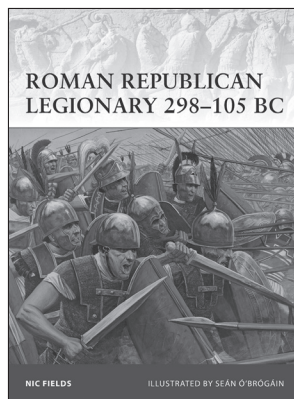
ELI No: 201 • **ISBN:** 978 1 78200 776 0



MAA No: 121 • **ISBN:** 978 0 85045 430 7



WAR No: 150 • **ISBN:** 978 1 84603 958 4



WAR No: 162 • **ISBN:** 978 1 84908 781 0

SIGN UP FOR THE OSPREY NEWSLETTER AND WIN! 5 OSPREY BOOKS

Sign up to the *Osprey e-newsletter* to get all the latest news, great special offers, information about new releases and get an exclusive look inside life at Osprey. You will then be in with a chance to win some great prizes in our monthly prize draw.

Every month we will be selecting **one newsletter recipient** who will **receive any 5 Osprey books of their choice**. A range of other prizes, from exclusive artwork prints to free ebooks, will also be given away throughout the year to newsletter recipients.

Go to: www.ospreymailing.com

Enter your email address to register

