

Views of Carthage from Rome:

**Polybius and Livy on Hannibal in the Age of Imperial
Growth**

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Introduction

This thesis evolved from looking at the various, sometimes contrasting, portrayals of Carthage in the works of Roman historians. I wondered if some pattern existed in how each historian of Rome portrayed Carthage and whether such characterizations followed a linear evolution or branched from a common point. As I began to explore this question, I noticed two antiquated beliefs that still permeated in some 20th-century works: Carthage had no culture to offer to the modern world, and only Rome and its association with the diffusion of Greek culture could have contributed to a recognizable Western World.¹ However, this perception seemed outdated because, from what I saw in my classes and readings, Carthage possessed such a defining impact on Republican Rome. Hannibal too was such a prominent topic for authors that I was sure I would find compelling conclusions related to how Roman historiography treated such a complicated subject. This thesis explores these observations through the following format: the first chapter discusses the first major extant historian who has an extensive interest in Carthage and Hannibal, Polybius;² the second chapter examines Livy,³ whose work incorporates Carthage and Hannibal within a long-term history of Rome; and the final chapter includes a synthesis of related ideas about the two authors' collective portrayal of Hannibal.

¹ See Livy (1937), translated and edited by Butler, 11; Cottrell (1961), 247; Livy (1903), xx; Caven (1980), 294.

² For translating Polybius, unless otherwise specified, this thesis relies on Polybius (1927) translated by W. R. Paton.

³ For translating Livy, this thesis, unless otherwise specified, primarily relies on Livy (1919-1959) translated by B. O. Foster, Frank Gardner Moore, Evan T. Sage, Alfred Cary Schlesinger, and Russel M. Geer. I translated some Latin passages, which are indicated as such.

While this thesis could have explored the development of Hannibal in many avenues, such as examining Nepos' *Life of Hannibal*⁴ and Silius Italicus' *Punica*,⁵ I wanted to focus on historians of Rome since my passion for the Classics lies in studying the development of history and historiography. Additionally, my interest in this topic stems from my experience in my Roman history courses, and so, I wanted to honor the historians rather than a biographer or a poet. I also could have looked at other historians like Fabius Pictor,⁶ but I ultimately decided to balance my perspective of Hannibal with Polybius and Livy because I believed their insights on Hannibal were more memorable. Yet, even though the other works do not feature prominently in this thesis, they served as reliable reference points. Using other authors' treatment of Hannibal, I noticed biases that seemed specific to Polybius or Livy (and in the case of Silius, I examined the effect of Livy's portrayal on later Roman literature).

I also should mention the intense (and still growing) development of interest in Carthage in the last decades. Hoyos' many works on Carthage and Hannibal have undoubtedly contextualized Carthage and cultivated interest in Punic culture. Likewise, comprehensive overviews of Carthage and Hannibal⁷ provide a vital framework for understanding how modern scholarship views Carthage; I contrast these attitudes with Livy's and Polybius' portraits at the heart of the thesis to gain a broader perspective on the character of Hannibal. Furthermore, the massive amounts of works analyzing the campaign and military exploits of Hannibal⁸ critically promote curiosity about Carthage and Hannibal. After all, history remembers Hannibal for his

⁴ For an overview of Nepos and the context with which he writes about Hannibal, see Mulligan (2015) and Stem (2012).

⁵ For a good analysis of how Rome understood Hannibal through the lens of Silius' *Punica*, see Stocks (2014) and Tipping (2010).

⁶ For an overview of other sources of the Punic Wars, see Mineo (2011).

⁷ See Lancel (1998), MacDonald (2015), De Beer (1969), Hoyos (2020), Hoyos (2010).

⁸ See Bagnall (2005), Hoyos (2011), Gabriel (2011).

military success. Thus, any discussion of Hannibal inevitably delves into establishing whether he was a tactical genius and what one can glean from his revolutionary battles.

In terms of structure, I felt the three-chapter format of examining each author individually and then synthesizing would be easier to follow. For one, the first two chapters follow a parallel organization, which orients the reader on what he/she will learn about Polybius and Livy. The structure also allows the reader to compare specific sections if he/she desires. In both chapters, I begin with reviewing the historians' relation to Hannibal, the goals of their work, and their intended audience, followed by an evaluation of their sources. It seems more helpful to talk about Polybius' sources and goals together, rather than individually comparing Polybius' sources with Livy's sources and Polybius' goals with Livy's goals. Organizing the material this way creates a strong connection between the various factors that influenced Polybius' and Livy's work, allowing us to appreciate how (and why) Polybius and Livy constructed their version of Hannibal. This approach also allows me to consider the interconnecting factors of Polybius' (and Livy's) audience, his sources, his method, and the goals of his work without baffling the reader, who may find it difficult to distinguish the characteristics if they were introduced together.

The next sections of the first two chapters cover the positive traits of the historian's portrait of Hannibal and the negative traits of Hannibal. I then conclude these traits with an overall assessment of the collective characterization and a general summary of the chapter. I began my analysis with Hannibal's positive traits because such an organization defies expectations surrounding Hannibal. For a figure so famed for his negative traits in literature, I thought that his *good* traits would be more surprising to read about before contrasting them with

his more famous negative ones.⁹ Additionally, describing the negative characteristics provided an easy transition to analysis since, for the most part, the negative traits are more concentrated with, as I suggest, preconceived notions (about Hannibal and Carthage) than the positive ones. This process makes sense given that neither historian was writing about a figure from their own people. Therefore, they would, in theory, have had less of a reason to possess biases in favor of Hannibal.

Specific characteristics of Hannibal are treated in the separate author chapters because Polybius and Livy stressed different aspects of Hannibal that harmonized with their respective methods of writing history. For instance, Polybius favored a comparison of composure and rage for generals, whereas Livy portrayed a more inconsistent Hannibal who could be a hero or villain. These traits (rage compared to the heroism of Hannibal) are difficult to compare directly because the traits themselves are quite dissimilar. Nevertheless, they served quintessential roles in the historians' individual narratives, and therefore, should be discussed in the context of the historians' perceptions of Hannibal. Additionally, some of the material from Chapters One and Two could have been organized in the synthesis chapter (for instance, both authors commented on the frequency with which soldiers grow disheartened). However, I found that the relationship between these traits fits more naturally when discussed against the respective author's overall picture of Hannibal and the author's intended goals of his work. The trait of growing disheartened, for example, seemed easier to understand when applied to the overall framework of Polybius' specific biases.

⁹ I.e., Hannibal was one with "a kind of heroic notoriety far exceeding that of all his enemies" (Diodorus, 9.19); Sallust blames Punic faith for Bocchus' betrayal (Sallust, *Jugurthine War*, 108.3); Cicero stated that "the Carthaginians violated treaties; Hannibal was cruel" (Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.38); see Starks (1999) 257-259 for more.

Finally, Chapter Three included topics that both authors addressed somewhere in their narratives. These topics are thought-provoking and illustrate the central arguments of the thesis well. This chapter follows this structure because I noticed that since the characterizations of Hannibal in Polybius and Livy differ, it seemed logical to analyze the positives and negatives in each author's respective portrayals side by side. Breaking the characterizations down by comparing negative and negative and then positive against positive would be less engaging as one would inevitably re-read the same descriptions of negative traits for Hannibal since Livy used Polybius as a source. For this reason, the third chapter analyzes specific themes in tandem.

Looking at these specific topics, Chapter Three first compares the use of speeches, which became necessary, as I learned that Polybius made less use of speeches than other historians while Livy used them frequently. Even though the authors employed the same rhetorical device (albeit at frequencies), they conveyed distinct ideas about Hannibal through their speeches. Therefore, a direct comparison, rather than isolating the trait in the first two chapters, seemed like a better fit. The synthesis chapter also scrutinized some elements that Chapters One and Two briefly covered: background and biases, which loomed large in how they affected the overall portrait of Hannibal. Specifically, the contradictory ways in which authors represented Hannibal's *pietas* (or lack thereof) and the authors' extreme discrepancy in military experience. The latter category drastically shaped the characterization of Hannibal because Polybius keenly focused on Hannibal's skill as a general while Livy abridged these areas in favor of more 'interesting' traits.

Another vital component of the final chapter is the parallels between Hannibal and other historical figures. My discussion centers on the comparison of Scipio and Hannibal since both authors used him as a frequent point of reference. The connection between Scipio and Hannibal

ultimately leads to an investigation of the tragic aspects of Hannibal and whether either history deserves the label of tragedy. The topic of tragedy then invites the synthesis chapter to answer how one should view Hannibal: as a lesson to be learned or avoided. There is, I argue, a fundamental difference between these beliefs on Hannibal, and therefore, it makes more sense to address this issue together. After all, presenting the ideas together magnifies the subtleties between them, whereas introducing them separately may make some nuances appear less obvious. Finally, the thesis reflects by appreciating that, regardless of which author's answer to the question of Hannibal is correct, one can learn a lot from Hannibal and how his perception changes. After all, if the reader can gain insights into the development of Roman historiography, see how a victorious nation remembers a defeated one, and discover memorable takeaways from examining the exploits of Carthage's most famous hero, then the thesis has achieved its purpose.

Chapter One: Polybius

Polybius and Hannibal

The first of two historians this thesis examines is Polybius of Megalopolis. Writing in the middle of the second century BCE, Polybius' *Histories* relayed events that closely preceded his birth. Holding a military office early in his life, he became one of 1000 hostages sent to Rome after the Achaean League's defeat.¹⁰ His time in exile allowed him to join the intellectual sphere of Scipio Aemilianus where he received access to the private libraries of Rome and the ability to travel throughout Italy.¹¹ Since his work is one of the few surviving histories that is somewhat contemporary to the events,¹² Polybius serves as a crucial authority for the modern understanding of Hannibal the man. Currently, of Polybius' forty Books, only five survive intact, while the others vary in how much of their material survived.¹³ Luckily, for our purposes, most of the narrative surrounding the Punic Wars survives, providing a unique glimpse into the portrayal of the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, and how Polybius received Hannibal's tactics.

The Goals and Structure of Polybius' History

Initially intending to write a history of the Achaean League, Polybius eventually switched to writing the *Histories*.¹⁴ From the onset of his work, Polybius laid out how a potential reader should view his writing. At the beginning of Book One, he described that his work answered the question, "by what means and under what system of polity [did] the Romans in less than fifty-

¹⁰ Mellor (2013), 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For a more comprehensive survey of Polybius, see Walbank (2002), 2-5.

¹³ Mellor (2013), 11.

¹⁴ Ibid.

three years [use to succeed] in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government — a thing unique in history” (Polybius, 1.1.5). Through this introduction, Polybius directly states to his reader that he/she will learn about the rise of Rome and the factors that led to Rome’s meteoric rise: an undertaking that implies Rome will likely take center stage in Polybius’ *Histories*.¹⁵ In immediately presenting his purpose, Polybius also held himself accountable to his task because a reader could notice if he deviates from this goal.

Along with explaining his work’s purpose, Polybius provided insight into how the reader should contextualize his work. While Polybius’ initial objective was to write a universal history in Greek from 200 to 168 BCE in thirty books, he later added ten more books to stretch the narrative to 144 BCE.¹⁶ Polybius articulated that he wrote the work because “none of [his] contemporaries [had] undertaken to write a general history” (Polybius, 1.4.2). Although Polybius frequently used the term ‘universal history’¹⁷ to describe his work, the term appears fluid since Polybius suggested that he was the first to write a universal history and implied that he had predecessors in this task.¹⁸ Despite these somewhat vague descriptions and modern historians debating how to understand Polybius’ works, Polybius clearly wrote with a set topic in mind.¹⁹ After all, Polybius, as Walbank points out, stood “out among ancient historians in his anxiety to define the sort of history he wrote”.²⁰ Therefore, any digressions from his style of analyzing Rome’s rise serve as an important indicator for valuable details (like his thoughts on Carthage) since he believed these tangents were important enough to justify disrupting the flow of the

¹⁵ For a greater discussion on Polybius’ aims related to Rome see Derow (1979); and Polybius (2010) translated by W. R. Paton and revised by F. W. Walbank, Christian Habicht, xiv-xv.

¹⁶ Mellor (2013), 11.

¹⁷ “The Romans have subjected to their rule not portions, but nearly the whole of the world” (Polybius, 1.2.7).

¹⁸ “This is obviously how Polybius... understood the term in describing Rome’s control of the *oikoumene*” (Sacks (1981), 96).

¹⁹ See Polybius (2010) translated by W. R. Paton and revised by F. W. Walbank, Christian Habicht, xiv-xv.

²⁰ Walbank (2002), 6.

narrative. These digressions also fall in line with his overall methodology and present a glimpse into his personal thoughts.²¹

Polybius' Intended Audience

The topic of explaining the rise of Rome's power²² seems logical when combined with the idea that Polybius wrote in Greek for a Greek audience.²³ Polybius' phrasing throughout his *Histories* implied that he wrote for Greeks who knew of Rome but did not necessarily understand Rome's rise. One such example is Polybius' statement that if "we Greeks [were] well acquainted with the two states which disputed the empire of the world, it would not perhaps have been necessary for me to deal at all with their previous history" (Polybius, 1.3.7). Such a phrase suggests that he wished to inform the Greeks specifically of the rise of Rome since many did not know the origins. And yet, though the Greeks were likely his intended audience, Polybius acknowledged that "this work will be perused by Romans above all people, containing as it does an account of their most splendid achievements" (Polybius, 31.22.8). Thus, Polybius recognized that other people would read his work outside of his target audience (though, as Walbank points out, his audience is unclear at times).²⁴

Since Polybius acknowledged that his actual audience may differ from his primary audience, he carefully considered how to portray these events to all his readers. He established at the beginning of Book Three that a factual account would not suffice for him.²⁵ With these

²¹ For more discussion on Polybius' methods, see Walbank (2002), 6-13.

²² Polybius, 3.1.4.

²³ Mellor (2013), 10.

²⁴ Walbank (1957), 7.

²⁵ See further, Mellor (2013), 11.

considerations in mind, any stereotypes of Punic heritage Polybius mentioned may reveal a stereotype that his audience held since any reader of Polybius' time could have challenged a false stereotype. Similarly, since Polybius had some knowledge of his audience, the terms he failed to define imply that he believed such a concept would be acceptable and recognizable to his audience. For instance, he used Book Six to explain the Roman constitution, which would be foreign to a non-Roman, suggesting he believed his audience did not know the topic.²⁶ In contrast, he presented certain stereotypes without justification, such as when he described an act as having Punic artifice (Polybius, 3.78.1). This act received no further elaboration beyond the fact that a Carthaginian had done it, and evidently, Polybius thought his readers would accept this statement as true even without justification (otherwise, he would have explained the meaning behind his phrase like he had with the Roman constitution).

The Sources of Polybius

For evidence, Polybius used a wide array of sources; he employed so many that this thesis will focus mainly on the sources he relied on for the three Punic Wars. Though a vast amount of literature exists discussing Polybius sources, much of the evidence he used can no longer be recovered. As Walbank points out, Polybius interwove the sources in his *Histories* making it difficult to 'see' the evidence he had used.²⁷ However, four historians received special mention in Books One and Two: Aratus and Phylarchus on Greek events, and Fabius Pictor and Philinus for the First Punic War,²⁸ although Polybius likely used Timeus as well for the First

²⁶ See Polybius 6.2.

²⁷ Walbank (1957) 26.

²⁸ Walbank (1957), 27.

Punic War.²⁹ As Walbank assures, “it is reasonable to assume that in addition [to Fabius for the Hannibalic War] Polybius read as widely as possible among writers on both the Roman and the Carthaginians sides”.³⁰ Furthermore, certain principles, such as not depending on earlier historians, and instead, conducting research through the use of archival materials, inscribed monuments, inter-state treaties, and personal visits to sites guided Polybius in writing his history.³¹ This commitment influenced his portrayal of Hannibal because Polybius could cultivate his own sense of Hannibal, untainted by the opinions of others. Additionally, since he traveled to the sites and read the inscriptions, Polybius developed a personal connection to and appreciation for Hannibal and his journey that Polybius could not have achieved from simply reading about Hannibal in another’s work.

Polybius’ Influences and Biases

Having established some context for Polybius’ works, this chapter will now heed Polybius’ advice, which relayed that the reader and writer of history should examine the events beyond the bare statement of facts (Polybius, 3.31). One influence on Polybius’ narrative was Aemilius Paulus, Polybius’ patron in Rome. The gens Aemilia and the gens Cornelia (of which Scipio is a member) are intimately tied to Hannibal,³² with Aemilius Paulus’ son conquering Carthage and Paulus’ friend, Scipio Africanus, defeating Hannibal. Due to this friendship, Polybius had a reason to portray Hannibal in a venerable light because a more intimidating

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Walbank (1957), 28. These sources would include Chaereas and Sosylus of Lacedaemon, whom Polybius mentions by name, Silenus of Caleacte, Eumachus of Naples, and Xenophon. On the Roman side, the sources would be L. Cincius Alimentus, C. Acilius, and possibly Cato, Hemina, and Ennius. For further discussion of all of Polybius’ sources, see Walbank (1957), 26-35.

³¹ See Mellor (2013), 11.

³² Mellor (2013), 10.

opponent would indirectly glorify his friend. His patronage was also intimately tied to this history, meaning he would receive more support if he painted a better picture of his patron. These influences could also explain his tendency to vilify anti-Scipio Romans.³³

Polybius especially did not hide Aemilius Paulus' son's influence on his narrative, since, by his own admission, Polybius maintained a strong relationship with Scipio Aemilianus, who was also the adopted son of the famed conqueror of Carthage, Scipio Africanus. In fact, Polybius claimed that Scipio Aemilianus' "friendship and intimacy with the author grew so great that this report about them not only spread to Italy and Greece, but that even further afield their liking and intercourse were a matter of common knowledge" (Polybius, 31.23.3). One finds another example of their strong relationship when observing that Polybius wrote, "Fabius and Scipio, the sons of Lucius Aemilius Paulus, exerted all their influence with the praetor that Polybius might be allowed to remain in Rome (Polybius 3.29). Thus, Polybius outright acknowledged that he had reason to portray Scipio Aemilianus well since they shared a friendship that allowed him to continue his research. This friendship combined with Aemilius Paulus's patronage implies that Polybius had many motives to explain Carthage's achievements.³⁴ After all, Carthage would otherwise not have been a worthy adversary for these families to boast about defeating.

Yet, Polybius was not simply writing a tale to glorify his patron and his patron's son. Though he presented Carthage as a worthy foe, he counterbalanced his obvious loyalty to Scipio Aemilianus through his desire to avoid Pro-Carthaginian sentiments. He sarcastically commented against Pro-Carthaginian authors, remarking, "no further criticism, indeed, of such works as those of Chaereas and Sosylus is necessary; they rank in authority, it seems to me, not with

³³ Mellor (2013), 12.

³⁴ For further discussion of Polybius' patronage, see Serrati (2006), 121, n. 30.

history, but with the common gossip of a barber's shop" (Polybius 3.20.5). In these words, Polybius concluded that straying from the historian's task or including propaganda would be the same as writing gossip, meaning he had a conscious thought to avoid them in his own work. These common polemics of Polybius³⁵ show a critical assessment of his sources and contemporaries that give some confidence to his credibility as a writer.

He also believed that he could remain objective since he offered similar remarks on the Roman sources.³⁶ With statements like this regarding other historians, Polybius' reader becomes aware that Polybius accounted for certain events and actively attempted to remain at least somewhat unbiased in his portrayal of the histories. Additionally, Polybius tried to paint truths in his narrative to the best of his ability (as exemplified by his tangents, which he knows distract from the narrative,³⁷ but provide crucial context for understanding the situation). A less thorough historian could have glossed over these details, but Polybius demonstrated a willingness to describe them to ensure that his narrative followed his idea of accuracy. Although this process is admirable, we will explore some of the consequences associated with sticking to his idea of the truth in the next section.

Foremost, while Polybius could have employed his skill in writing to misrepresent the facts, he did not use this ability to entirely distort the truth.³⁸ After all, the reader of his work would have been contemporary to these events, meaning the reader would have noticed blatant misinterpretations of events in Polybius' narratives. Yet, it is also undeniable that there are obvious connections between Rome and Polybius, so much so that much of the recent work on

³⁵ For more on these polemics, see the works presented in Walbank (2002), 12.

³⁶ "An equally powerful motive with me for paying particular attention to this war is that, to my mind, the truth has not been adequately stated by those historians who are reputed to be the best authorities on it, Philinus and [the Roman] Fabius" (Polybius, 1.14.1).

³⁷ See Polybius, 6.50.1.

³⁸ Polybius (2010), translated by W. R. Paton and revised by F. W. Walbank, Christian Habicht, xxii-xxiii.

Polybius focuses on Roman affairs.³⁹ Despite these possibly obvious influences, historians like Eckstein, are very willing to argue that Polybius does not follow Roman propaganda. In fact, he believes Polybius effortlessly avoided Roman indoctrination, noting “the idea that Polybius' description of Hannibal in 3.15 derives from Roman propaganda would explain nothing, of course—even if it were true. Polybius was a highly sophisticated intellectual, not a mindless copier; if Hannibal appears as he does in 3.15 it is because Polybius consciously chose, at that point, to present him in that light”.⁴⁰ To support this claim, Eckstein compares Hannibal to Philip, a central figure in Greek history who would not benefit from Roman propaganda. These comparisons seemed similar in description, and therefore, Eckstein argues that the descriptions reflect Polybius' thoughts, untainted by indoctrination.

Additionally, Polybius' thoroughness as a historian allows him to avoid appearing obviously biased. As Eckstein points out,

“Walbank downplays the ethical significance of this passage [3.15], arguing that Polybius's praise of Punic behavior here merely reflects the bias of his source, the pro--Punic writer Philinus of Agrigentum. But even if Polybius based his account of 256/255 on Philinus, Polybius was a sophisticated intellectual, not a copying machine—and he was well aware of Philinus's biases (see 1.14.3)”.⁴¹

With such analysis, historians like Eckstein suggest that Polybius had the skill to avoid bias because he avoided merely copying his sources. Since he did not copy, Polybius showed dedication, or at least, a sense that he wanted to tell the story his way, rather than whatever his sources said. Depending on how persuasive one sees Polybius' lack of copying, one could then understand why some historians argue for Polybius' ability to avoid Roman indoctrination in his work. It is important to note, however, that while this argument is the predominant thought on

³⁹ Walbank (2002), 13.

⁴⁰ Eckstein (1989), 10.

⁴¹ Eckstein (1995), 63.

Polybius' attitude toward Rome, historians have argued that Polybius was pro-Roman from 167 BCE onwards⁴² and that Polybius did still paint Carthage as an imperialistic threat to Rome.⁴³

In terms of stereotypes, Polybius was not fond of foreigners, as expected of the common Hellenic sense of superiority against all things non-Greek.⁴⁴ Yet, since Polybius wrote about the Romans, one may expect him to treat them as different from the other races, despite them also being barbarians. The answer to this assumption about the Romans is, unsurprisingly, complicated.⁴⁵ However, the Romans are regarded as barbarians on occasion, though these circumstances do not come from Polybius' words.⁴⁶ For other foreigners, it is fair to say that while Polybius was not fond of foreigners by any stretch, he did not discriminate based on race; instead, his judgments relied on the differences between specific mores and morality within societies.⁴⁷ Likewise, despite a tendency for bias against foreigners, as Pitcher concludes, Polybius typically did not have a set pattern on whether a race would be indicative of a specific character's overall strengths.⁴⁸

Passages in Book One may reveal a hatred of foreigners, such as his tirade against mercenaries, where he stated,

“one can see very clearly from all that took place what kind of dangers those who employ mercenary forces should foresee and take early precautions to avert, as well as in what lies the great difference of character between a confused herd of barbarians and men who have been brought up in an educated, law-abiding, and civilized community” (Polybius, 1.65.7).

⁴² Walbank (2002), 19. For more discussion on Polybius and Rome, see Walbank (2002), 13-21.

⁴³ Champion (2004), 109.

⁴⁴ Gruen (2018), 13. For an overview of the development of barbarians in Polybius see Champion (2004), 30-63.

⁴⁵ See Gruen (2018), 15, n. 20.

⁴⁶ Gruen (2018), 15.

⁴⁷ Gruen (2018), 33.

⁴⁸ Pitcher (2018), 193.

However, these traits could derive, not from his hatred of foreigners, but from his sweeping distrust of employing mercenaries since this quotation indicated that men of different backgrounds are burdensome to unite. He certainly has demonstrated a consistent distrust of mercenaries because he later noted that mercenaries seem prone to mutiny.⁴⁹ Thus, the emphasis of this statement may fall on the mercenaries, rather than the foreignness of the soldiers. This theory seems plausible since, as Gruen assesses, most of the time when Polybius uses barbarian, it does not carry a negative connotation, rather it serves as a description meaning non-Greek.⁵⁰

Having examined some examples or arguments for or against Polybius' biases, one can turn to a key-case study that explores whether Polybius may have been unduly sympathetic to Rome. This element is whether one believes in the supposedly non-existent treaty that Philinus, a source of Polybius, mentioned. Philinus, whom Polybius described as a Carthaginian sympathizer,⁵¹ talks of a fourth treaty, which, if it existed, would effectively paint the Romans as aggressors in the First Punic War. Aside from the ramifications of this treaty in ruining Polybius' revenge narrative of Hannibal, the treaty's existence would suggest the common Roman insult of *fides Punica* would instead cover Rome's shame at being the initial betrayers. Depending on how one interprets this existence, Polybius' account of the beginnings of the Punic Wars could either be truthful or a somewhat dubious narrative. Since Polybius evidently wished to paint Rome's incredible success to its governmental structure (and likewise Carthage to its own folly), one could interpret Polybius as having a reason to believe this treaty did not exist. Yet, as such a thorough historian, it seems strange that Polybius would intentionally ignore such a treaty if it existed. Therefore, whether one believes the treaty existed or not, it seems unlikely that Polybius

⁴⁹ See Polybius, 2.1.3; and Polybius, 3.9.8.

⁵⁰ Gruen (2018), 14.

⁵¹ Polybius 1.14.3.

would intentionally ignore it, and if it did exist, one could attribute the mistake could to a lack of research or resources rather than intentional censorship.⁵²

Positive Traits in Polybius' Hannibal

With all these biases now established, we can scrutinize Polybius' descriptions of Hannibal the man. To undertake this task, it would be prudent to separate Hannibal's personality from the qualities of generalship that Hannibal exuded. After all, while one can learn a lot from how Polybius viewed character from his analysis of generalship, one can also find insight into Polybius' style by examining whether he praised Hannibal outside of his skills as a general. Separating the two qualities is difficult, though. As a commander himself, Polybius placed an extraordinary emphasis on generalship. Therefore, the competency of officers played a pivotal role in Polybius' understanding of many events in his *Histories* (even those outside of the Punic Wars).⁵³ For instance, as Baronowski points out, "in Books 1-29, Polybius often condemned Rome's enemies for engaging in military conflict against the stronger power... [however,] Polybius considered Hannibal's actions noble".⁵⁴ Hannibal is the exception given that he outright wrote that "Hannibal [was] a good general in very many ways" (Polybius, 33.1), and Polybius could rhetorically ask, "who can refuse admiration to this general" Polybius (9.9.1)? For Polybius, the general was the main reason that people won. Therefore, with all his victories,

⁵² The debate on this treaty's existence is expansive and beyond the scope of this thesis. For some discussion, see Walbank (1945). For support of the treaty's existence see Eckstein (2010) and see a refutation of the treaty's existence in Hoyos (1985).

⁵³ Eckstein (1995), 161.

⁵⁴ Baronowski (2011), 127.

Hannibal certainly fell in line with the ideal general that Polybius believed was necessary to challenge a mighty empire like Rome.

Having briefly established Hannibal as the ideal general,⁵⁵ this chapter will now investigate how Polybius portrayed Hannibal's character. Polybius saw Hannibal as a composed man who could rein in his emotions. Whereas other authors of Polybius' time allegedly mocked Hannibal's path for being dangerous, Polybius analyzed the journey across the Alps and confidently stated that "of course Hannibal did not act as these writers describe, but conducted his plans with sound practical sense" (Polybius, 3.48.10). Since many authors tell of the dangers and losses of men in the journey, Polybius alleged that some historians thought Hannibal to be incompetent for taking such a path. Polybius argued that a competent and composed person like Hannibal would never take such a path of ruin. Instead, Polybius believed that Hannibal knew that the path was less dangerous and that other authors simply embellished the journey to create a sense of danger and excitement, an exaggeration Polybius saw as untrue history. Therefore, Polybius committed himself to the idea that Hannibal was competent and composed enough to recognize this danger; he also acknowledged this composure as one of the defining traits of Hannibal that he wished other historians would recognize in Hannibal.

In contrast to Hannibal's composure and competency, his opponents sometimes displayed emotion that ultimately caused their loss to Hannibal. Earlier in the narrative, Polybius talked of how Hannibal, as a great general, exploited the weaknesses of his enemy, Flaminius "who had rashness on the other hand on his part and undue boldness and blind anger, as well as vaingloriousness and conceit, [which] are easy to be taken advantage of by his enemy and are

⁵⁵ For further analysis, see the section on Background in Chapter 3.

most dangerous to his friends” (Polybius, 3.81.9). Polybius used these emotions as an excuse for why the Romans lost many of their battles despite the overwhelming superiority of the Roman constitution. However, this interpretation of Flaminius’ attitude could result from Polybius’ emphasis on emotions producing victory, rather than fact. As both Walbank and De Sanctis analyze, “had Flaminius really intended a battle, he would have caught Hannibal emerging from the marshes; but in fact the consuls had arranged that he should keep in touch with Hannibal”.⁵⁶ This new interpretation would demonstrate that Flaminius’ emotions may not be the actual reason for defeat. Instead, it is plausible that Flaminius lost to Hannibal’s superior ability to deploy troops and not to his superior control of emotions. Thus, Polybius’ views could have induced him to exaggerate the significance of emotions in the battle.

Negative Traits of Hannibal (and Carthaginians) in Polybius

Polybius’ emphasis on Hannibal’s skill and emotional composure creates a riddle he had to resolve. Polybius needed to explain why Carthage ultimately lost the war despite excellent generalship from their leaders (even in the case of Hannibal’s father who received similar remarks).⁵⁷ To accomplish this feat, Polybius typically minimized Carthaginians not named Hannibal, describing them as having bouts of rage that prevented them from winning battles. Through these negative portrayals, he set up a situation where all the pressure of winning the war fell on Hannibal. As Harris notes, “in Polybius some of the principal opponents of Rome are irascible characters: this applies to Hamilcar Barca, and to the Carthaginians as a nation in the

⁵⁶ Walbank (1957), 414.

⁵⁷ See Eckstein (1995), 176-177 for thoughts about Hamilcar as a ‘rational Polybian hero’.

period prior to the Second Punic War”.⁵⁸ In downplaying Hannibal’s peers and family, Polybius set up Hannibal as the last remaining hope for Carthage. Whereas other figures suffer from their disadvantages, Hannibal overcame these emotions with experience. Hannibal’s ability to succeed where others failed provides Polybius with an explanation for why Hannibal became *the* general for the Carthaginians, and why the Romans focused their hatred on him. However, this tendency only explains why Polybius Hannibal was better than the other Carthaginians. Polybius still needed to address the issue of explaining how such a once-in-a-generation general lost.

To back himself out of this corner, Polybius chose to accentuate the incompetence of Hannibal’s soldiers. He described the Carthaginian soldiery as easily discouraged.⁵⁹ Given Polybius’ beliefs on morality and degeneracy, a contradiction arises. If a good general remains moral and inspires his troops to follow, how can Hannibal be a good general when his soldiers were still so easily disheartened. Likewise, with so many veterans in his army, why does the general receive all the credit? Experienced soldiers, like Hannibal’s, would have been able to look after themselves. As a modern experienced soldier like Bagnall points out, “it says a lot for the stamina and recuperative powers of the [Carthaginian soldiers who survived crossing the Alps] that, after only the three days allowed to them for rest and reorganization, they were ready to open the campaign in Italy”.⁶⁰ It seems strange to characterize the soldiers as easily discouraged when they accomplished all the tasks that Hannibal set for them. Therefore, Polybius may have exaggerated these qualities to downplay the help Hannibal received

⁵⁸ Harris (2001), 198.

⁵⁹ See Polybius, 3.44.12 where Hannibal begs his soldiers to keep going; and Polybius, 3.87.1-3 where the soldiers lose spirit, in part, because they do not have the oil to which they were accustomed even after their magnificent victory at Lake Trasimene.

⁶⁰ Bagnall (2005), 167.

One could also observe that Polybius pointed to the negative traits of Hannibal as a deciding factor for his loss. Though plenty of discussion regarding whether Polybius regarded Hannibal as universally good exists,⁶¹ Polybius did assert that Hannibal was not perfect in the *Histories*. Specifically, Hannibal's emotions controlled his actions from time to time. Despite being the man who inspired troops and displayed unparalleled morality, Hannibal had a vivid oath of revenge⁶² that is etched into the minds of any high schooler learning about the Punic Wars for the first time. Similarly, Polybius noted that Hannibal could be influenced by anger.⁶³ Since Polybius regarded emotion as an explanation for failure, this portrayal, therefore, left Polybius with an easy way to justify how Hannibal lost.

This idea may have influenced his portrayal of Hannibal's renowned *crudelitas*, which became the typical stereotype for Hannibal. In a particularly gruesome scene, Hannibal gave the order "to put to the sword all adults who fell into their hands, [which Polybius believed was because of Hannibal's] inveterate hatred of the Romans" (Polybius, 3.86.11). Such insatiable bloodlust is a stark contrast to the calm and composed general that Polybius continued to praise throughout his work. However, by creating this hatred and bloodlust, Polybius provided a way to show how a successful general could be defeated. After all, one could explain Hannibal's losses as him simply falling victim to his bloodlust and losing his rational decision-making skills. Likewise, the bloodlust certainly painted Hannibal as a menace who needed to be defeated. Whether intentional or not, Hannibal truly became the embodiment of evil whom Rome stopped. These emotions would largely play a role in Hannibal's later perceptions, since authors like Seneca would remark, "When Hannibal saw a trench flowing with human blood, he is said to

⁶¹ Moore (2020), 36.

⁶² Polybius, 3.11.7.

⁶³ See Polybius 3.86.11.

have exclaimed, “O beauteous sight!” (*De Ira*, 2.5.4). These ideas could later evolve with the Roman’s perception of Carthage as a combination of western barbarism and cruelty along with the treachery of the East.⁶⁴

Analysis of Polybius’ Hannibal

Yet, in examining Hannibal’s actions closer, one notices that most of his actions follow pragmatism, rather than a so-called insatiable desire for revenge. For instance, the siege of Saguntum (219 BCE), which lay far south of the agreed-upon Ebro River outlined in the treaty of 226 BCE, never violated the treaty. In fact, it may have been a response since, as Hoyos points out, “the Romans were implicitly demanding that Carthage’s future actions in Spain... be subject to their approval”.⁶⁵ Overall, the Carthaginians found themselves under Rome’s hegemony, and instead of accepting their fate, decided to push against unstated terms that Rome had begun to enforce. Thus, based on Polybius’ own account of the evidence, bloodlust may not have been Hannibal’s primary motivation for attacking. Instead, he was following the consensus of Carthage itself.

The siege of Saguntum was not the only instance where Polybius himself indirectly attributed pragmatism to Hannibal’s actions (since Polybius did not know that the Ebro was north of Saguntum). Polybius also acknowledged a rather large contradiction in the form of Carthage allowing Hannibal to attack. He rhetorically asked his reader, “how opportunity could have better favored the Carthaginians' wishes or what could have been a juster act and more in their interest (since, as he says, they had disapproved Hannibal's action from the outset) than to

⁶⁴ See Starks (1999), 257-271 for more consideration of various Punic Stereotypes and their evolution.

⁶⁵ Hoyos (2020), 71.

yield to the Roman demand, and by giving up the man who had caused the offense” (Polybius, 3.8). With this question, he created an inconsistency, since he later relayed, “when news reached them from their armies that the soldiers had unanimously chosen Hannibal as their commander, they hastened to summon a general assembly of the commons, which unanimously ratified the choice of the soldiers” (Polybius, 3.13.4). Such an explanation is puzzling. If Carthage did not support Hannibal, then why would his soldiers continue to follow him, and why would the government have permitted Hannibal to start a possible new war? Since such a situation seems illogical, it seems more likely that, by Polybius’ own admission, Hannibal had the support of the people. Thus, perhaps a more plausible explanation for Hannibal’s attack on Rome is not revenge (as Polybius envisioned), but rather a pragmatic defense of Carthaginian interests in the future, meaning Polybius, in seeking a way to create fault for Hannibal, shifted the narrative.

However, it would be unfair to suggest that Polybius did not realize that he painted a contrasting picture of Hannibal as a loser (because of revenge) and as a brilliant, composed general. Therefore, Polybius avoided some of these contradictions by not blaming either the soldiers or Hannibal, but on the timing of the campaign. In Book 11, Polybius assessed “therefore we cannot but justly admire Hannibal in these respects and pronounce with confidence that had he begun with the other parts of the world and finished with the Romans none of his plans would have failed to succeed” (Polybius, 11.19.6). Instead of blaming either the soldier’s incompetence (which would be Hannibal’s responsibility as general) or Hannibal’s rage, Polybius concluded that Rome itself was simply in the right place and that Hannibal lost, in part, to bad timing and fate. Thus, Polybius diverted the issue of his somewhat conflicting portrayal of Hannibal because he introduced a new culprit for Hannibal’s loss that did not require him to downplay Hannibal or exaggerate his accomplishments.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter first looked at how Polybius relates to Hannibal, establishing their connection through Scipio Aemilianus. This chapter also discussed Polybius' goals of telling a universal history, analyzed the potential and the intended audience of his work, and looked at sources of the Punic Wars (and what they had to say about the fabled fourth treaty) specifically to gauge what biases (like those against foreigners and mercenaries) may have influenced Polybius and his writing. After examining Polybius' biases, this chapter looked at Polybius' laudations of Hannibal's skill and composure compared to other generals. It also examined Hannibal's faults of rage and explained how many of the Carthaginians' faults fell upon the soldiers, who were prone to grow disheartened. Through looking at Polybius' Hannibal, this chapter found that Polybius' account of Hannibal was quite a nuanced take, with surprisingly high praise at times. However, while Polybius was a skilled historian, and therefore, could hide his biases well, the respect Polybius held for Hannibal is unmistakable and did not necessarily stem from his desire to simply advertise Hannibal as a figure worth conquering. Instead, he attempted to portray Hannibal fairly (though he overrated some of Hannibal's qualities). Yet, as this chapter also noticed, this lionizing of Hannibal and Polybius' focus on moralizing induced Polybius to rely too much on emotion, whereas modern historians see different reasons for Hannibal's failure.

Chapter 2: Livy

Livy and Hannibal

The other main historian this thesis will analyze is Livy, the historian from the intellectual backwater of Padua,⁶⁶ who wrote around 200 years later than Polybius in the Augustan age of Rome. Despite never serving as a Senator or any high-ranking official like many other historians of Rome,⁶⁷ Livy certainly compensates for this general lack of political knowledge with his high-quality background in Latin literature⁶⁸ to produce an enormous history, which he at times contemplated abandoning.⁶⁹ With his many speeches, which are undoubtedly all made up,⁷⁰ Livy imagined words for Hannibal, which inevitably influenced how Roman audiences understood the great Carthaginian general. Additionally, since teachers of rhetoric, according to Juvenal, used Livy's Hannibal as a subject of debate,⁷¹ Livy's portrayal sowed the seeds for the predominant Roman understanding of Hannibal and the admiration of Hannibal by modern readers.⁷²

The Goals and Structure of Livy's History

To begin his Twenty-first Book, which covers the Third Decade, Livy affirmed that he was “‘putting on record the story of the greatest nation in the world[.] [He was] now about to tell the story of the most memorable war in history: that, namely, which was fought by Carthage

⁶⁶ Mellor (2013), 118.

⁶⁷ Livy (1919), xxvi-xxvii.

⁶⁸ Mellor (2013), 118.

⁶⁹ Walsh (1961), 9.

⁷⁰ Mellor (2013), 119.

⁷¹ Livy (1965), translated by Aubrey De Sélincourt, edited by Betty Radice, 9.

⁷² Livy (1919), xxii.

under the leadership of Hannibal against Rome” (Livy, 21.1.1). With such an elaborate explanation, Livy affirmed that his narrative would focus on Rome. Most of the context would also have had the benefit of hindsight given Livy’s readers would already know the result of the war when they read these books. Therefore, to create a sense of danger and threat, Livy needed to designate moments at which the war seemed hopeless, to portray what could have been, potentially skewing the narrative. Additionally, from his description, one can gather that he envisioned Hannibal as the main character of his story because he named Hannibal as a leader while not doing the same for any Roman leaders.

Due to covering such an expansive topic, Livy’s survey of Rome also became increasingly complex as it needed to focus on more events. One way to understand Livy’s work is to realize that, as Walsh notes, “Livy’s work should be read in pentads, as it was clearly written in pentads”.⁷³ Therefore, in looking at Hannibal in Livy, this thesis will address the specific pentads and treat them as crucial for understanding the narrative. After all, the structure Livy used reveals how he interpreted the Hannibalic War in his head.

Aside from these divisions, Livy’s history leaned heavily on the annalistic tradition for sources and organization.⁷⁴ This framework, which centered around a series of descriptions for each consular year, induced Livy to rely on two principles of organization: *repetitio* and *variatio*.⁷⁵ These methods allow for a relatively easy-to-understand narrative with many underlying patterns. For modern historians, Walsh assesses that *varatio* “is instructive [because one can] observe how [Livy sacrificed] continuity and clarity by alternating between them in the

⁷³ Walsh (1961), 5.

⁷⁴ Vasaly (2014), 220-221.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

interests of such variation”.⁷⁶ Yet, the structure was also beneficial for Livy’s reader. As Vasaly points out, “repetition of various elements, many of them peculiar to historiography, creates structure and predictability, while variation keeps repetitive patterns from exhausting the attention of the reader and allows instances of deviation to take on special significance”.⁷⁷ Therefore, these elements allow for readers, modern and ancient alike, to perceive disruptions of the pattern and notice important details that Livy implicitly emphasized.⁷⁸ For our purposes, these disruptions allow us to examine when Livy broke from tradition to uphold his potential biases against Carthage.

Livy’s Intended Audience

In terms of audience, Livy wrote in Latin during the time of Augustus, meaning he expected a Roman audience for his work. In this setting, Livy had limitations in what he could portray, especially since he was a fan of Pompeii, a rival of Augustus’ adoptive father, Julius Caesar.⁷⁹ Specifically, it was dangerous for Livy to write about his own time because the commentary would be too political.⁸⁰ Since he was writing under the eyes of Augustus who was reforming the Roman *mores*, he also consciously needed to avoid seeming unpatriotic. Outside of these considerations, Livy used narrative techniques to divert his audience’s attention. One notable technique is where Livy depicted his internal audience responding to an event or person in the same way that he wanted his intended audience to react.⁸¹ In doing so, he could direct his audience’s attention to certain characteristics without outright articulating that the audience

⁷⁶ Walsh (1961), 174.

⁷⁷ Vasaly (2014), 220.

⁷⁸ Further insight into Livy’s methods goes beyond the scope of this thesis, see Walsh (1961), 138-172.

⁷⁹ Levick (2014), 34.

⁸⁰ Levick (2014), 26.

⁸¹ See Chaplin (2000), 51; and Solodow (1979), 257-259.

should believe what he wrote. This writing tactic, therefore, suggests he had some subtlety to his writing in how to influence his audience.

The Sources of Livy

In following the prevailing Roman tradition of historiography, Livy did not explicitly write his work with primary evidence.⁸² This process does not, however, imply that he lacked proper sources. He consulted a variety of sources that could range from the *annales maximi* and Polybius.⁸³ In examining Polybius as a source for Livy, Champion points out, “Livy relied heavily on the history of Polybius, whose great authority he readily acknowledged, but even here he was not afraid to go his own way, not always with the happiest of consequences”.⁸⁴ For his process of sourcing, Walsh assesses that

“Livy follows one source in the description of an event... then, at the end of this main description, he often quotes the views of other sources who voice other interpretations... such a method would be forgivable if Livy had consulted the secondary authorities *before* composing his main account... instead, he allows his main narrative to rest on the factual information of a single authority”.⁸⁵

Some scholars have also examined how Livy treats specific sources. For instance, Luce breaks down Livy’s treatment of Polybius into three common methods: close adaptation, a recasting of certain points (i.e. moving the order around or omitting minor details), and extensive abridgment.⁸⁶ Many modern scholars criticize Livy’s habit of abridging historians because many regard Polybius as the superior historian in facts and methodology.⁸⁷ Therefore, they believe he

⁸² Walsh (1961), 110.

⁸³ For further discussion of sources, see Walsh (1961), 110-137.

⁸⁴ Champion (2014), 201.

⁸⁵ Walsh (1961), 141.

⁸⁶ Luce (1977), 205.

⁸⁷ For further discussion, see Luce (1977), 205-220; and Walbank (1971), 47-72.

abandoned the superior analysis of Polybius in favor of a less accurate description. Livy's tendency to mistranslate various passages from Polybius also lowers his credibility. For instance, as Walsh points out there is a mistranslation "in one passage Livy, [confuses] θύρεούς (shields) with θύρᾱς (doors)".⁸⁸ Thus, while Livy had access to a wide array of sources, he displayed issues with accurately relaying their information, and his abridgments caused more problems than they solved.

Livy's Influences and Biases

Aside from accidental errors in translation, one observes how Livy blatantly stereotypes in many ways. He wrote with a noticeable distinction between his idea of Romanness and the framework in which he viewed barbarians. As Bernard expounds,

"The universal axis of Romanness is matched by the universal axis of barbarity in such notions as 'savagery' (*feritas*), indomitability (*ferocitas*), perfidy (*perfidia*), temerity (*temeritas*), pride (*superbia*), and vanity (*vanitas*). In this binary system, Romans incapable of mastering their passions are unworthy of Romanness and become non-Roman".⁸⁹

For instance, even Marcellus, a tragic figure whom Livy typically praised,⁹⁰ was not immune to criticism when acquiring foreign loot. While analyzing Marcellus' campaign in Syracuse, Livy articulated that "these were certainly spoils taken from enemies, and acquired according to the laws of war; but hence was the origin of the admiration of the products of Grecian art, and to that freedom with which at present all places, both sacred and profane, are despoiled" (Livy, 25.40.2). Notably, Livy did not chastise Marcellus' looting of the populace. Instead, he focused on the idea that looting *foreign* objects hurt Rome in the long run because these objects brought

⁸⁸ Walsh (1961), 143.

⁸⁹ Bernard (2014), 41-42.

⁹⁰ For an in-depth picture of Marcellus' characterization in Livy, see Carawan (1984).

an influx of foreign corruption to Rome. For Livy, the problem with looting was not in the potential ramifications of an angered populace, but rather, in the detriment that foreign objects caused Rome. Therefore, he revealed his bias against foreign art, since he saw actions as wrong only because they resulted in Romans adoring cultures that he viewed as barbarian and corrupt.

Based on the title of Livy's work and his various opening paragraphs to his Books, one could argue that Livy was quite open about his favor toward Rome. Thus, his analysis also unsurprisingly revealed a distinct bias for Rome. For instance, Livy claimed that Alexander would not be able to defeat Rome (Livy, 9.16-19). Such a claim seems quite controversial given that Alexander's skill in conquest was unmatched, and many saw him as the greatest general at that point. This bias toward Rome caused Livy to occasionally, as Walsh points out, distort the truth for patriotic or moral reasons that depict leaders such as Scipio and Flaminius as leaders of complete integrity.⁹¹ Such biases are altogether unsurprising because Livy was writing during a period when Augustus kept a strong watch over the works Roman authors produced. Although, sometimes, he could have avoided biases, such as when he intentionally idealized the Senate and downplayed their fear while the rest of Rome panicked.⁹² In summary, Mellor says it best when he writes that Livy's style, though poetic, strayed from "the realms of history when he relied on jingoist Roman 'annalists' who invented facts to serve their political purpose."⁹³

However, Livy's bias seems most apparent when he attempted to paint Carthaginian unrest against Hannibal. According to Livy, Hannibal's campaign followed Carthage's general wishes (discounting tales of revenge and warnings). Only one doubter existed: Hanno, someone whom Livy, with the benefit of hindsight, presented as a voice against Hannibal's and Carthage's

⁹¹ Walsh (1961), 151.

⁹² Walsh (1961), 152.

⁹³ Mellor (2013), 119.

desire for revenge. Hanno cautioned, “‘You have sent to your armies,’ he went on, ‘as though heaping fuel on a fire, a youth who burns with lust for sovereign power and sees but one way to obtain it—if, by sowing seeds of war’” (Livy 21.10.4). Through this speech, Livy attempted to discredit Hannibal because the alternative would mean that Hannibal had support from his city. This alternative would discredit Livy, since it would imply that Hannibal had followed Carthage’s overall wishes, meaning that Hannibal’s oath of revenge against Rome in 21.1.4 would be an ulterior motive rather than the main motivator of revenge that Livy assigned. And, if Hannibal’s motivation lay entirely in line with his own city’s wishes, then his actions could also be considered strictly political, making Livy’s claims more dubious. Certainly, it is possible for both the revenge narrative and political reasons to exist. However, Livy’s portrayal still seems odd given that historians like Toynbee acknowledge that Carthage fought wars mainly for defensive purposes.⁹⁴

Looking closer at Carthage, in contrast to his passion for Rome, as Hoyos describes, “on the Carthaginian side, naturally, [Livy’s] details are thin—Carthage was not his focus—and nearly all his reports on affairs there concern military matters.”⁹⁵ Even though he wrote ten books, which should leave enough room to cover an extensive amount of history and background, Livy provided little details about the adversaries. Although the title of Livy’s work provided some reasonable expectations for favoritism, this presentation bordered on outright bias and distortion of facts. As Hoyos notes, “although in places [Livy] still [tried] to guide the reader’s views via the artificial (and un-novelistic) device of set speeches or by playing down a discreditable act (thus, Scipio attacks the enemy camps only after supposedly informing Hasdrubal and Syphax

⁹⁴ Toynbee (1965), Vol 1., 28-29.

⁹⁵ Hoyos (2014), 370.

that talks are at an end [30.4.8–10], a claim unmentioned by Livy's main source Polybius, and almost certainly invented)".⁹⁶ Manipulating information was clearly a problem with Livy, and, when comparing him to Polybius, a known source for Livy, it is a bit concerning to see such outright omission of facts in his history.

For another example of clear bias against Carthage, as Hoyos points out, going back to the treaties between Rome and Carthage, Livy had Hanno remind his own people that Carthage violated a treaty.⁹⁷ As Hanno remarked, "Tarento id est Italia, non abstinueramus ex foedere" (Livy 21.10.8).⁹⁸ Ignoring the fact that the speech would not have been in Latin, Hanno's words appear odd since a leading Carthaginian would likely not spout such a pro-Roman sentiment (in fact, some may call it laughable).⁹⁹ After all, it is not a very persuasive speech for rallying troops, and it all but recognized that Carthage should accept full responsibility for the war. Given that this outcome would have been neither politically savvy nor morale-boosting, Livy likely invented this description to subtly convey that the war was Carthage's fault since they technically 'admitted' to breaking a previously agreed-upon treaty. Additionally, by recounting this event, Livy gave credence to his claims of the Punic stereotypes of being an oath-breaker with *fides Punica*.

Livy also did not hide this bias against barbarians and other cultures. Despite this blatant favoritism, his words aligned with the widespread Roman sentiment against Carthaginians at the time,¹⁰⁰ and therefore, he knew that his audience would not find his thoughts jarring. The Carthaginians may have received the worst of these stereotypes, since, as Starks assesses,

⁹⁶ Hoyos (2014), 377.

⁹⁷ Hoyos (1985), 95.

⁹⁸ We could not abstain from Tarentum, from Italy that is, as per the treaty (My translation).

⁹⁹ Groves (2013), 122.

¹⁰⁰ See Tipping (2010), 51-55, 61-83.

“Carthage was a mix of the worst of the western and eastern Mediterranean worlds. Its western side was represented in signs of a barbarous lack of culture (e.g., inhumane cruelty, wanton lust, and intemperance), while its eastern roots shone through in its excess of culture (e.g., effeminacy, laziness, fickleness, subtlety leading to trickery and lying—like Odysseus—or treaty-breaking, impiety, and arrogance—like the Parthians and Carthage's Phoenician ancestors) Carthage was almost uniquely western and eastern in the Mediterranean world, so Romans could easily attribute many seemingly inconsistent character flaws to this people whom they believed represented the worst traits of both worlds ”.¹⁰¹

However, although his audience may not have found his ideas problematic, his recounting of the story left a lasting understanding that could now be considered questionable. For instance, as Hoyos points out when Livy contrasts Romans and Non-Romans, “Scipio [showed] uncomfortable similarities to Alexander the Great and Hannibal, and (worst of all) Marcellus in Sicily [behaved] like a prefigure of Verres and then [infected] Rome with profligate admiration for Greek art”.¹⁰² This quotation also showed that, while Livy showed inherent and understandable favoritism toward Rome, he possessed biases against many other civilizations in his narrative besides Carthage.

In fairness to Livy, despite his purpose and patriotic tendencies, one could attribute Livy’s bias against Carthage to his sources. As Walsh points out, “Livy’s dating of the siege of Saguntum in 218 instead of 219 must have originated with Fabius; the motive for such distortion was to minimize Rome’s neglect of her ally by emphasizing the alleged suddenness of the attack”.¹⁰³ Thus, some of his lack of credibility as a historian may not stem from an explicit goal to distort the narrative. Instead, it may derive from his faulty sources. Though one could argue a savvy historian would avoid such errors for the sake of appearing unbiased, with Livy, it would be understandable that this is a true error on his part rather than a conscious decision.¹⁰⁴ Overall,

¹⁰¹ Starks (1999), 160; and see n. 13 especially.

¹⁰² Hoyos (2014), 376.

¹⁰³ Walsh (1961), 118.

¹⁰⁴ For further discussion, see Walsh (1961), 138-190.

since these biases are readily noticeable, they are easier to avoid. This ease is in contrast to Polybius, who, with his skill as a historian, made it more difficult to discern reality when he was biased.

Positive traits in Livy's Hannibal

Despite these biases against foreigners, Livy recounted details that praised Hannibal's strength while also not commenting on obvious instances where Hannibal demonstrated character flaws. As Livy looked at the latter half of the Hannibalic War, he reflected that he did not know whether Hannibal deserved more admiration in adversity or prosperity because Hannibal had effectually united a group of people who differed in language, oaths, and customs by one bond, so that no disturbance ever arose either among the soldiers themselves (Livy, 28.12.2-5). As Hoyos points out, this description is well-known praise of Hannibal, which is based on Polybius (Pol. 11.19.1-5), but a totally antagonistic Livy could have easily ignored Polybius.¹⁰⁵ Leaving this part of Polybius' narrative suggested that Livy did not view Hannibal in the same negative light as the Carthaginians. It also shows that Livy was not keen to paint Hannibal as merely a menacing figure since he left in praise that he easily could have removed.

Additionally, as Chlup points out, Livy did not consistently call Hannibal an oath-breaker even when presenting a few instances where Hannibal broke his oaths.¹⁰⁶ For instance, in Book 23, Hannibal promises to the Campanians "that Capua should soon become the capital of all Italy, and that the Romans as well as the other states should receive laws from it" (Livy, 23.10.2-3). While Livy's reader at the time would have understood that such a promise was difficult to

¹⁰⁵ Hoyos (2014), 373.

¹⁰⁶ For more instances, see Chlup (2009), 26.

maintain, this example could conceivably have proven Hannibal to be an oath breaker because he failed to keep this promise. And yet, instead of pursuing low-hanging fruit and pointing this fact out to discredit Carthaginians and Hannibal, Livy did not use this scene as an instance of the famed *fides Punica*. Therefore, Livy revealed that Hannibal was not entirely terrible since Livy did not deem it necessary to comment on Hannibal's perfidy at every opportunity.

Whereas Livy chose to leave in scenes of valor or lavished Hannibal's ability to unite his armies, he usually referred to the Carthaginians as oath-breakers and their soldiers as lazy (though the latter could be attributed to Polybius' own views).¹⁰⁷ One explanation for this emphasis on Hannibal could come from Burck's explanation where "with the figure of Hannibal we approach the question of whom Livy see as the chief characters of historical action",¹⁰⁸ For Livy, the aptly named Hannibalic war, pits Hannibal¹⁰⁹ against Rome. In using such descriptions for the war, Livy presented this war as a battle between a single genius and Rome. Such an explanation seems logical given that he began the tale with a war, emphasizing that it was fought by Hannibal in particular whereas he does not name a single Roman general in the introduction to Book 21.

Livy even left room for an interpretation that Hannibal could be a hero. As Chlup notes, Hannibal's portrayal in the Tarentum storyline of Book 25 did not necessarily resemble the claims that Livy threw out in earlier books. Tarentum could see Hannibal as trustworthy and a hero against the threat of Rome.¹¹⁰ When negotiating with the Tarentines, Hannibal talked of the *superbia* of the Romans while respecting the *libertas* of the Tarentines, a promise that he kept.

¹⁰⁷ See Polybius 3.111 as an example where the soldiers seem to be easily discouraged.

¹⁰⁸ Burck (1971), 31.

¹⁰⁹ Livy, 21.1.1.

¹¹⁰ Chlup (2009), 31.

By including promises Hannibal kept, one could see how a sympathetic reader of Livy may see Hannibal as a savior and reliable man. After all, from this perspective, Hannibal honored his allies, showed an incredible ability to unite peoples, and maintained his promises.

However, despite leaving a possible interpretation of Hannibal as a heroic figure, Livy's overall perception of Carthage began to shift in Book 23. As Rossi notices, the luxury aspect of Carthage plays a significant role in their downfall.¹¹¹ Livy marked Hannibal's capture of Capua as the turning point, suggesting that the army started with a semblance of discipline as opposed to the common Carthaginian stereotypes of vice and softness. Even from the beginning of the affair, Hannibal took center stage, rallying his troops, whose minds

“were possessed with an ardent desire to commence the assault, especially after a golden mural crown had been promised, and the general himself had reproached the conquerors of Saguntum with the slowness of their siege of a little fort situated on level ground; reminding them, each and all, of Cannae, Trasimenus, and Trebia” (Livy, 23.18.7-8).

However, after Capua, the tide shifted, and all this discipline dissipated. Luckily for Hannibal, Livy levied the responsibility of the loss on Hannibal's army, swearing “by Hercules, [it was] as though he marched out of Capua with another army, it retained in no respect any of its former discipline” (Livy, 23.18.14). Although one could argue Livy's compliment was backhanded since it implied Hannibal did not have the skill to maintain the discipline of the army. Either way, most of the insults were directed at the soldiers, which could show signs of a Polybian influence.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Rossi (2004), 370.

¹¹² Given Polybius' views on soldiers outlined earlier in Chapter 1.

Negative traits of Hannibal (and Carthaginians) in Livy

Moving beyond any compliments directed at Hannibal, Livy had a habit of presenting Hannibal as calculating. Throughout his narrative, Livy acts as though Hannibal only holds back his savagery when the situation favored Hannibal. For instance, after the surrender of Clastidium (222 BCE), Livy described Hannibal as acting pragmatically, relaying that “the surrendered garrison were spared, as Hannibal wished to gain at the very outset a reputation for clemency” (Livy, 21.48.10). In ascribing pragmaticism to Hannibal’s actions, Livy failed to give Hannibal the benefit of the doubt. Even though Hannibal had several instances outside of this event where he showed mercy, such as his treatment of the dead at Cannae,¹¹³ Livy saw these events as simply Hannibal hiding his true emotions. As a reader, one would therefore notice the inference that Livy implied but did not state: if Hannibal does not seem cruel, it is merely because he has an ulterior motive. This thought process could stem from Livy’s differing views between Romans and barbarians, namely in that barbarian actions always clash with Roman characteristics.¹¹⁴

Yet, Livy did more than imply Hannibal’s poor character. In introducing Hannibal to the narrative, Livy commented, “excessive vices counterbalanced these high virtues of the hero; inhuman cruelty, [perfidy that was] more than Punic, [and] no fear of the gods” (Livy, 21.4.9). Due to these descriptions being some of the first characteristics that Livy assigned to Hannibal, these three qualities: *cruelitas*, *perfidia*, and *impietas* carve the understanding of Hannibal

¹¹³ Hannibal freed allies of Rome like in previous battles (Livy 22.58.2) and was ready to discuss peace terms and ransom soldiers (Livy 22.58.7).

¹¹⁴ See Bernard (2014), 41.

throughout the narrative. These qualities orient the reader in how to perceive Hannibal and serve as a counterbalance to Livy's short praise of Hannibal earlier.

The first term Livy used for Hannibal was his famed *cruelitas*. With Livy's impact, even young Romans studying grammar learned to remember Hannibal's cruelty (and by proxy Carthage's).¹¹⁵ In Livy, several scenes of Hannibal's supposed cruelty exist such as Sempronius Tuditanus, exclaiming "would you rather, then, be captured by the most rapacious and cruel enemy, and have a price set upon your heads, and have your value ascertained... in order that from your miseries and indignities honor may be sought for another?" (Livy, 22.50.6). Such a speech implies that the Romans thought being captured by Hannibal would easily amount to more pain than death. One could also look at the scene where Hannibal crucified a guide who told Hannibal that "on that day he would lodge at Casilinum... and Casinum lay at a great distance in another direction" (Livy, 22.13.8). Such an event, if true, would undoubtedly be a cruel overreaction. However, this account seems dubious since killing his guide would not benefit Hannibal in any way, and this act violates the image of a supposedly pragmatic Hannibal who benefited from hiding his cruelty.¹¹⁶ Either way, these grueling scenes caused hatred and fear amongst Roman readers who would have viewed Hannibal as some monster in wartime.

The other negative description of Hannibal was his perfidy, or his inability to keep oaths, as a Carthaginian. As Lancel comments,

"In Roman eyes, Hannibal was *perfidus* on both scores. In the first sense of the word, he was so by original sin, so to speak, as a Carthaginian, for the crime of belonging to a nation with which Rome had concluded treaties in the late sixth century [BCE], and it was blamed him for betraying them. And Hannibal from the start had compounded that original sin by attacking Saguntum, then crossing the

¹¹⁵ "Who are they who have waged war with severest cruelty? The Carthaginians. Who are they who have marred the face of Italy? The Carthaginians. Who are they who now ask for pardon? The Carthaginians" (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 14).

¹¹⁶ Livy, 21.48.10.

Iber (Ebro) with his army. From the very start of his venture he had thus become a ‘treaty-breaker’ (*foedifragus*), an epithet that would cling to him”.¹¹⁷

Hannibal’s epithet of *perfidia* could be slightly accurate, as Hannibal does break oaths from time to time,¹¹⁸ even though Livy does not always comment on these infractions. However, the characterization seems disingenuous once one looks at how Livy followed up on this characterization. Outside of the beginning of Book 21, Livy did not outright use *perfidia* or variations of the word to speak of Hannibal’s character or his actions for much of his narrative on the Hannibalic War. In fact, the word, when used, describes the Carthaginians as a whole, and even then, Livy only employed the term sparingly in Book 21¹¹⁹ and Book 30.¹²⁰ For someone described as having “perfidy worse than Punic” (Livy, 21.4.9), it is surprising that Livy never defended this portrayal with more uses of the term. Even when Livy did employ it, the term was only generalized to Carthaginians and their lack of faith in the treaty that began the Second Punic War rather than to other events that could have warranted such a derogatory term. Therefore, while the trait became associated with Hannibal, Livy certainly did not explicitly elaborate as to why Hannibal warranted the description.

The trait of perfidy also overlaps with Hannibal’s irreverence since a failure to keep oaths also implies that one cannot maintain his oaths to the gods. In labeling Hannibal as a *perfidus*, Livy invited the connection between the two. Thus, this relationship could also indicate why people may see Hannibal as irreverent and an oath-breaker. Hannibal’s *impietas* will be

¹¹⁷ Lancel (1998), 218.

¹¹⁸ See (Livy, 23.10.2) for the promise and (Livy, 23.10.4) for the breaking of said promise.

¹¹⁹ Livy uses *perfidia* twice in Book 21, although only the usage in 21.4.9 refers to Hannibal, the other applies to the Boii (Livy, 21.52.7).

¹²⁰ See Livy, 30.31.3; Livy, 30.32.7; Livy, 30.36.9; Livy, 30.37.1; Livy, 30.42.40.

Outside of these two Books, the term applies to non-Carthaginians like, for instance, in Livy, 25.3.2 and Livy, 28.32.2.

discussed later in Chapter Three with a comparison of biases between Livy and Polybius because it serves as an important distinction between the two author's characterization of Hannibal.

Analysis of Livy's Hannibal

Throughout his work, Livy talked about Hannibal's vices matching his skill as a general. However, despite emphasizing Hannibal's cruelty, Livy did not praise Hannibal's honorable acts, such as when he dutifully tried to search for Flaminius' body and give it a proper burial.¹²¹ Livy also neglected to mention all the massacres the Romans instigated. For instance, he had no comments on the excessive brutality of the presentation of Hasdrubal's head to shake Hannibal.¹²² Additionally, Briscoe notes, the Romans' treatment of defectors was far grimmer than the records of Hannibal's slaughters.¹²³ Acts of inhumanity like these played into the idea that Hannibal had good reason to be seen as a champion against the Romans. After all, Hannibal was not the only figure in the war committing acts of savagery.

Livy even acknowledged the Romans were no stranger to butchering either, despite only Hannibal receiving the reputation on the Roman side. In describing Scipio's victory over the Carthaginians, he assessed that "after this it was no longer a fight, but a butchering as of cattle, till the general himself, who was the first to run away, made his escape to the neighboring hills with about six thousand men half armed; the rest were slain or made prisoners" (Livy, 28.16.6). Notably, Livy called the general a coward, emphasizing that the general was the first to run away. While a general should follow his men in battle, if one follows Polybius' logic,¹²⁴ then the general had a legitimate reason to run away, meaning Livy's presentation was biased. Such

¹²¹ See Livy, 22.7.5.

¹²² See Livy, 27.51.11.

¹²³ Briscoe (1989), 77; for more discussion, see Briscoe (1989), 75-78.

¹²⁴ See Polybius, 10.24.2-3.

butchering also seemed unjustifiable, given that, as Lancel points out, later Roman authors like Florus estimated that “neither Hannibal nor Pyrrhus before him had caused as much damage in Italy as the ‘Social War’, in other words the one that broke out between Rome and its Italian allies”.¹²⁵ Therefore, the terror Rome had received was not as much as they had experienced from their own threats; and yet, Livy only focused on the gruesomeness in foreign battles.

However, it would be unfair to suggest that Livy’s portrayal of Hannibal was altogether cruel and exaggerated. Livy presented a scene where Hannibal “then called up the Romans also and spoke to them with a mildness he had never shown before. He was waging, he said, no war of extermination with them, but was contending for honor and dominion” (Livy, 22.58.2-3). Through this lens, Hannibal could come across as sympathetic since Livy commented that Hannibal could show a soft side and fight for honor rather than to satisfy his bloodlust. And again, Livy could have easily thrown out such depictions if he truly intended to portray Hannibal as simply bloodthirsty.

Additionally, despite Livy’s intentions, Livy’s reader may have viewed Livy’s sympathetic scenes as dishonest rather than as heartfelt. After all, Hannibal was their enemy, and he had just destroyed many legions at Cannae. The idea of Hannibal being an enemy of Rome alludes to an important point that Burck’s study of the Third Decade points out, “both modern historians and those of antiquity are agreed that the Second Punic War exposed the Romans, with all their military, material, physical and moral strength, to a struggle for survival such as was not seen in any other epoch of Roman history”.¹²⁶ For the Roman reader, Hannibal would have been the enemy due to all the pain and strife he caused. A Roman after Cannae would have

¹²⁵ Lancel (1998), 219.

¹²⁶ Burck (1971), 21.

experienced true despair at the prospect of Hannibal potentially marching on Rome with so many victories under his belt. Additionally, the consequences left by the Hannibalic War left an unmistakable mark on Rome's war and economic capabilities. The Punic Wars occurred so closely together that they are referred to as 'Double Great Wars', which Toynbee acknowledges as a rare occurrence.¹²⁷ As Toynbee also notes, "the consequent damage suffered by these states [which remained loyal to Rome but fell to Hannibal] might be grievous or even irreparable".¹²⁸ Given the vast number of casualties suffered, Rome certainly had reason to see Hannibal as a terrifying threat.¹²⁹

And yet, as Harris assesses, "the interpretation which more than any other has colored modern writing on Roman imperialism can conveniently be called 'defensive imperialism'... all Rome wanted... was to rid itself of 'frightening neighbors'".¹³⁰ For Rome, and Livy writing in Rome, Carthage needed to be the scary villain. If Carthage was the villain, then Rome could take on the role of a heroic defender. In justifying the war as an act of self-defense, especially in Hannibal's campaign in Italy, Rome could explain its brutality by citing a desire to defend the homeland. And, in contrast, Hannibal's savageness becomes altogether more convincing since he was *attacking* foreign lands and homes, rather than defending his own. With these roles, Rome could justify its policy against Carthage¹³¹ since any mistreatment of their territory and peoples would be more brutal than if it had happened to someone else.

¹²⁷ Toynbee (1965), Vol 1., 2.

¹²⁸ Toynbee (1965), Vol 2., 20.

¹²⁹ For further discussion, see Toynbee (1965), Vol 2., 66-72.

¹³⁰ Harris (1985), 163.

¹³¹ For a better discussion on Roman Imperialism, see Harris (1985) and Morley (2015), 14-37.

Conclusion

Similar in structure to the first chapter, this chapter first looked at how Livy relates to Hannibal and how Livy's interpretation became the predominant view of Hannibal for the Romans. After, this chapter analyzed Livy's goals of educating people about Rome, the repetitive and varied structure of his annalistic history, his Augustan audience (which influenced what he could and could not say), and his sources to gauge what biases may have prejudiced Livy's work. Along with these influences, this chapter had a long look at the various stereotypes that influenced Livy's writing, specifically in the dichotomy of traits assigned to the Romans and barbarians. With all the preconceived notions established, this chapter then examined Livy's praise of Hannibal's generalship and charisma and how he, a central figure in the Punic Wars, may have appeared as a hero to non-Romans. In addition to the good traits, this chapter considered the traits of *cruelitas* and *perfidia*, which dominate the overall perception of Hannibal in Rome's eyes. From there, the chapter discovered that while Livy's biases negatively influenced his perception of Hannibal, overall, a Roman of his time would likely have believed some of his interpretations because of the Punic War's lasting devastation on Rome and its allies. Thus, while Livy's presentation is by no means flawless, especially since it neglected to mention when the Roman committed similar atrocities to Hannibal, it had a conclusion that his audience would not see as strange and still acknowledged him as a competent leader.

Chapter 3: Hannibal as Authorial Tool

Overview

As this thesis has shown so far, Polybius and Livy portray Hannibal differently. From these differences, we can draw some striking conclusions on how to interpret Hannibal and how a Hellenistic author and early Imperial writer viewed Carthage. Though more topics can (and should) be examined, this chapter will attempt to examine the historians' use of speeches, what biases they had toward/against Carthage, and how the backgrounds of the historians influenced their perceptions. Through these lenses, the chapter will examine how Polybius and Livy viewed Hannibal in comparison to other figures in their works, their opinion on the tragic nature of Hannibal, and what lessons the historians drew/observed in the story of Hannibal.

Use of Speeches

In establishing the different nuances between Livy and Polybius' portrait of Hannibal, this thesis will now explain how each author's use of speeches contributed to a distinct gaze into the life of Hannibal. In Polybius' case, he did not use speeches to emphasize national character like other historians like Thucydides¹³² (or Livy). Since Polybius discussed Hannibal through the lens of an introspective narrator, he had a more objective feel to his portrayal even though he added his own bias and skewed the reader in one direction. This guidance makes sense given Polybius' extensive thoughts on how historians should act.¹³³

In contrast, Livy's portrayals involved more drama when compared to Polybius. As Ebeling assesses, "in Polybius there is no scenery, no surprise... Livy is more condensed; his

¹³² Pitcher (2018), 192.

¹³³ See Polybius, 1.4.2.

story advances in a masterly dramatic style”.¹³⁴ In following his goal to present ideas more beautifully than those before him, most of Livy’s speeches follow according to the division of rhetorical theory.¹³⁵ With the addition of these speeches, Livy invoked a sense of drama that did not necessarily appear in Polybius’ digressions and analysis. Though Livy’s speeches do not receive an enthusiastic reception from many modern scholars,¹³⁶ Livy certainly paid more attention to them even compared to the artistic arrangement of his overall narrative.¹³⁷

With Polybius, an added challenge occurs since he used fewer speeches than other ancient historians. As Nicolai argues, typically, “when we find the same idea in speeches and narratives, we can be confident that the consideration belongs to the historian”.¹³⁸ For Polybius, this concept is less helpful since his work had fewer speeches. However, even though Polybius employed fewer speeches than other ancient historians, modern historians still scrutinize their accuracy.¹³⁹ Indeed, Polybius’ speeches were not always factual, despite their relatively low number. Polybius also saw the importance of sprinkling in speeches to create drama and parallels. As Walbank comments, “since Scipio did not expect a major battle at this stage, his speech is clearly unhistorical, and included partly to balance Hannibal’s, partly to inflate Scipio into a figure comparable with his opponent... this treatment may go back to Polybius’s source, perhaps Fabius”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ Ebeling (1907), 34.

¹³⁵ Walsh (1961), 222.

Further discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis, see Walsh (1961), 222-227 for a bigger discussion on the technique involved with writing speeches.

¹³⁶ Walsh (1961), 219.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Nicolai (2018), 118.

¹³⁹ Nicolai (2018), 127, n. 32 and n. 35.

¹⁴⁰ Walbank (1957), 397.

And yet, the speeches in Polybius served more functions. Although the purpose of Polybius' speeches was a moral one, they also performed a second function: being rhetorical so that the reader can guess who the victor was based on the effectiveness of the speech.¹⁴¹ Though he did not use them relatively often, Polybius did not hate speeches. In fact, Marincola states that Polybius "[indicated] that a historical character's advice... [was] bound up in a causal relationship with the action that follows from that advice: the advice [explained the action and distorting the speech removed] the readers' ability to *understand* why certain actions were taken".¹⁴² Thus, Polybius used speeches quite effectively in his narrative and took advantage to ensure they provide the reader with a higher level of understanding, rather than using them as simply rhetorical explanations of moral points.¹⁴³

Biases against Carthage

Usage of speeches aside, despite both authors having inherent biases against whom they deemed barbarians, Livy is the bigger culprit when it comes to disrespecting Carthage. One cause for this difference is the context in which they worked. For Livy, he wrote in the Augustan age, whereas Polybius composed his history under the patronage of Aemilianus Paulus. Due to the increasing pressures of Augustus, Livy had more reason to praise Roman efforts. After all, political motivations encouraged a judicious treatment of Rome, especially as Livy's narrative progressed past the second Punic War.¹⁴⁴ Polybius, in contrast, had to consider his friendship when writing,¹⁴⁵ but only when presenting those of his circle in a negative light. Therefore, he

¹⁴¹ Nicolai (2018), 127-128.

¹⁴² Marincola (2007), 305.

¹⁴³ An in-depth discussion on speeches in historiography is beyond the scope of this thesis; see Marincola (2007), 294-324 for further reading.

¹⁴⁴ Syme (1959), 57-58.

¹⁴⁵ Carsana (2022) translated by Joseph Dodd, 113.

had more freedom to be critical of Rome. Likewise, since Polybius began writing his work with the Punic Wars still in the background, there existed some possibility in his narrative that Carthage could win. Thus, he had less hindsight to guarantee Rome's victory. As such, Polybius attributed some supernatural qualities to fortune,¹⁴⁶ implying that Rome could have lost if fortune had favored Carthage instead. In Livy's case, the opposite is true, he and his readers already knew the full result. Therefore, he could write with the idea that it was inevitable for Rome to defeat Carthage.

The difference in bias also seems justifiable because Polybius analyzed foreigners while Livy portrayed foreigners attacking his own people. Thus, Polybius could remain more objective since the destruction that he described never affected his homeland. This distinction may have influenced Livy to consistently talk about *fides Punica* when describing the Carthaginians and their vices. With Hannibal, he commented, his good qualities "were equaled by his monstrous vices... his perfidy [was] worse than Punic... [he had no regard] for sanctity, no fear of the gods, no reverence for an oath, no religious scruple" (Livy, 21.4.9). While Chapter Two discussed the first two negative qualities associated with Hannibal, for biases, we will now consider the third: *impietas*. Obviously, to the Romans, Hannibal would have been seen as impious because he did not worship the Roman Pantheon. However, Hannibal was not as irreverent as Livy claimed, given Hannibal's name literally means 'the will of Baal'.¹⁴⁷ Thus, Livy, in his attempt to discredit Hannibal, ironically labeled someone whose name means devotion to God as impious and an oath breaker to these gods.

In comparison, Polybius had a fairer portrayal of Hannibal (and, by extension Carthage) as undoubtedly pious. In a rare instance of his characters having speeches, Polybius recounted

¹⁴⁶ Walbank (2007), 746.

¹⁴⁷ Krahmalkov (2000), 190.

that “the Carthaginians, [Hannibal] said, would not overlook this violation of good faith for it was from of old the principle of Carthage never to neglect the cause of the victims of injustice” (Polybius, 3.15.7). With his vehement appeal to Carthage’s cultural ideals, Hannibal’s speech suggested that his action was not anomalous. He announced that he was following the customs, implying any Carthaginian would follow the same course of action that he took. Polybius’ inclusion of this speech suggested that Polybius would agree with Hannibal’s assertion that the Carthaginians did not break their oaths. Likewise, Polybius set the stage for Hannibal to calm his men before battle. Hannibal announced, ““in the first place then thank the gods for this; for it is they who working to aid you to victory have led the enemy on to such ground”” (Polybius, 3.111). By painting Hannibal through a pious lens, Polybius showed that, in comparison, Livy inherently wrote with a set bias regarding an unfounded stereotype.¹⁴⁸ To sum up their differences, Erdkamp assesses in Livy’s “case [that the advantage was] always to... the Romans, or at least the favored group of the Roman nobles. There was every reason for later Roman writers to distort the [sic] for the Romans unflattering course of affairs”.¹⁴⁹

Yet, Livy’s portrayal of Hannibal as untrustworthy even contrasted with a Roman contemporary, Nepos, who acknowledged more of Hannibal’s respectable (in the eyes of the Romans) traits. Nepos related a syncretism for Hannibal, having him swear his oath to Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Nepos, *Life of Hannibal*, 2.3-2.4). In having Hannibal swear to Jupiter, Nepos committed a syncretism of culture, since Hannibal would obviously have been pious toward his gods, and not the Roman ones. Yet as Stem analyzes,

“the whole point of the anecdote is that Hannibal bound himself by oath never to acquiesce to Roman rule, and yet Nepos [had] him swear by the deity that the Romans believed most guaranteed their rule (as in, e.g., Virgil, Aeneid 1.254–

¹⁴⁸ More examples exist of Carthage’s piety, such as Carthage being “untainted by morals at the beginnings of its war with Rome” (Polybius, 1.13.12).

¹⁴⁹ Erdkamp (1992), 145.

96). The syncretism may seem jarring, yet for Nepos, the act of respectfully taking an oath before one's chief deity [was] the template in use here".¹⁵⁰

By committing this syncretism, Nepos built the credibility of Hannibal and presented a more sympathetic, relatable Hannibal to a Roman audience. He explained that Hannibal was not simply unfaithful as the Romans would have regarded him; he would have been as faithful to his gods as a Roman general would have been to Jupiter. Through this connection, Nepos demonstrated that even some Roman writers thought that Livy's description of Hannibal's irreverent nature was exaggerated.

Background

One critical difference between the authors is, of course, their own (biographical) upbringings, specifically, regarding military operations. With no personal experience, Livy had no 'professional' insight into the political and military worlds in which Hannibal excelled. In contrast to Livy's background (or lack thereof), as Mellor points out, coincidentally, "it was Polybius who first argued passionately... that a historian should have political insight into the everyday practices of politics".¹⁵¹ Since Livy was aware of Polybius' requirements,¹⁵² Livy demonstrated a conscious effort to challenge the rule that Polybius believed should be commonplace. Due to this difference, while Polybius and Livy agreed that Hannibal was skilled as a general, they used different means to justify this assessment.

For Polybius, Hannibal's talent as a commander was innate, meaning Hannibal just needed to acquire practical experience.¹⁵³ Polybius presented Hannibal as a litmus test for what a

¹⁵⁰ Stem (2012), 148.

¹⁵¹ Mellor (2013), 11.

¹⁵² Walsh (1961), 138.

¹⁵³ Moore (2020), 67-68.

great general should embody. Though the magnetic charisma of Hannibal could be exaggerated, Polybius' overall thoughts on Hannibal hold some merit. Due to his background as a general himself, holding the position of *Hipparch*, Polybius possessed the credentials and experience to analyze tactics and present military details accurately and critically. These skills combined with his genuine passion for military history empowered him to use Hannibal as an example of generalship. Polybius could explain moments where less experienced people may not have had the necessary insight, meaning his reader could benefit from Polybius' talents as an insightful analyst and author.

Furthermore, in contrast to other authors, Polybius praised Hannibal's (and others') ability to prioritize his own safety, demonstrating a different level of understanding of generalship. While talking about one of his heroes, Philopoemen,¹⁵⁴ Polybius remarked that the general did not ride "at the head of them as [was] done by the generals of our day, who fancy that the foremost place [was] the proper one for a commander. What, [he] should like to know, can be less practical or more dangerous than a commander's being seen by all his troops, but seeing none of them?" (Polybius, 10.24.2). Polybius evidently understood the practicality of this approach even though it challenged the prevalent thoughts of Polybius' time. In applauding generals who could challenge popular theory, he demonstrated Hannibal's peerless aptitude without explicitly complimenting Hannibal. Therefore, Polybius provided an easy answer for the success of Carthage: Hannibal. After all, Hannibal's forward-thinking tactics brought much success to Carthage in battle.

¹⁵⁴ Eckstein (1995), 77.

Looking at Polybius' background, one could also explain Polybius' thoughts on generalship as, perhaps, an attempt to compensate for his (Polybius') own defeat against the Romans. As a *Hipparch*, Polybius may have faced similar situations and felt as though the soldiers let him down, not him for his own men. This concept presents a potential problem with Polybius' analysis, however. After all, as Eckstein points out, Hannibal must have had experienced soldiers in the form of mercenaries, who would be more resilient than the average soldier, meaning they should not be demoralized by the smallest of setbacks.¹⁵⁵ These contradictions sow, perhaps, the seeds for the stereotypes with which the Carthaginians become associated in later histories. Ideas of laziness would also not be surprising given the stereotypes that Polybius had already attributed to the Phoenicians and Carthaginians.¹⁵⁶ However, with these incompetent soldiers contrasted against Hannibal's greatness, perhaps it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the prevailing stereotype developed from Polybius' desire to focus on Hannibal as the sole reason for Carthage's success.

Conversely, Livy, despite using Polybius as a source, did not have the battle expertise of Polybius, as shown through their differing opinion on Fabius' tactics.¹⁵⁷ As Eckstein analyzes,

“Livy has none of [Polybius' battle analysis]. His focus [was] on chaos and excitement, not rational battle-management. For purposes of drama, he [exaggerated] the foggy conditions that Polybius reported: “fog as dark as night” [caused] the Macedonian army's morning march to fall apart, and [caused] the Romans to fear ambush”.¹⁵⁸

And while Livy respected Hannibal as a commanding figure and commended his leadership, some point out that Livy may have understated Hannibal as a general.¹⁵⁹ This lack of

¹⁵⁵ Eckstein (1995), 168-169.

¹⁵⁶ “Phoenicians are innately (emphuton) disposed towards greed and the love of domination (9.11.2)” Pitcher (2018), 192.

¹⁵⁷ For a thorough comparison of Livy and Polybius regarding Fabius' tactics, see Erdkamp (1992), 127–147.

¹⁵⁸ Eckstein (2014), 414.

¹⁵⁹ Tipping (2010), 57; Walsh (1961), 105.

knowledge¹⁶⁰ also caused Livy to abridge some events that Polybius described since he did not see the value in explaining the tactics closely (or, perhaps, even accurately). Therefore, as some historians have argued, Polybius is the preferred account of military events, given his internal consistency (although no source, Polybius included, has the guarantee of being 100% reliable).¹⁶¹

Livy's overall assessment of the Fabian strategy against Hannibal also presented interesting conclusions related to Roman historiography. To create a more favorable narrative shift that suggests the strategy preceding Fabius' as a failure, Livy included details that made Hannibal, ironically,¹⁶² appear more successful. Three main differences exist in the accounts of Polybius and Livy: the obstruction of Punic Troops, the decree of Fabius, and the food shortages in the Punic army.¹⁶³ All three either show a failure of the Romans or put Carthage at a greater disadvantage than Polybius suggested. Yet, due to Livy's lack of experience in military tactics, he did not see the rise of such contradictions and how the inclusion of these details would be improbable. Thus, in following his narrative structure of making Hannibal seem invincible as a general until Hannibal needed to lose, Livy committed errors. Interestingly, however, these details were not simply a problem with Livy. As Erdkamp concludes, though Appian also included the issue of Hannibal's food shortage, this similarity was a characteristic of the historiographic tradition of Rome.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, perhaps Roman understanding of the early events of the 2nd Punic war clouded their authors' judgments, causing them to believe the war was hopeless until the eventual success of Fabius Cunctator.

¹⁶⁰ "If Livy had had ready access to the aids of the modern historian... his armchair existence would have brought fewer penalties. But the absence of such aids... was a severe handicap for a man with no personal experience of warfare, who apparently traveled little, and who held no political appointment" Walsh (1961), 138.

¹⁶¹ Erdkamp (1992), 143.

¹⁶² "Strangely enough, in comparison with his Greek counterpart the Roman author downplays the accomplishments of a Roman general" Erdkamp (1992), 131.

¹⁶³ Erdkamp (1992), 128.

¹⁶⁴ Erdkamp (1992), 147.

Polybius also regarded Hannibal's generalship as a direct relationship to his ability as a leader and a statesman. In reflecting on Hannibal after Hannibal's death, Polybius commented, "it is a remarkable and very cogent proof of Hannibal's having been by nature a real leader and far superior to anyone else in statesmanship" (Polybius, 23.13.1). Through this proclamation, Polybius revealed the existence of a strong relationship between a magnificent politician and a general, an association he hoped his audience would remember. In aiming for a portrayal of Hannibal as the perfect general, and therefore statesman, Polybius accomplished his goal of using the past to educate and provide experience for the practical politician.¹⁶⁵

And yet, even though they differed in life experience, ultimately, Polybius and Livy arrived at the same conclusion: Hannibal was an admirable general. In Polybius' eyes, Hannibal was the *par excellence* Carthaginian, the epitome of generalship who rose even above Philopoemen, one of Polybius' childhood heroes.¹⁶⁶ Throughout his work Polybius lavished Hannibal with praise regarding his generalship, which seemed to exceed any man in capability. Hannibal's magnetic charisma and generalship extended to the point of hyperbole since Polybius claimed that Hannibal's words "built up his horses and restored the physical and mental condition of his men" (Polybius 3.87.3). This claim seems dubious given that words could not literally motivate tired horses. However, one could consider Livy's praise of Hannibal's skill as even more laudatory. Even at the onset of Book 21, Livy wrote that Hannibal omitted "nothing that should be done or seen by one who was to become a great commander" (Livy, 21.4.10). Though Livy could not substantiate this claim as well as Polybius could, this statement is still high praise and showed undeniable respect for Hannibal's leadership. Therefore, since two

¹⁶⁵ Walbank (1957), 6-7.

¹⁶⁶ Eckstein (1995), 77.

historians with differing methods and motivations saw Hannibal's tactical genius, we, as modern historians, can conclude this trait as probable fact.

Parallels between Hannibal and other figures

Another point of comparison in generalship is the parallel between Hannibal and other figures. For instance, discussion exists regarding the parallels between Hannibal and Cyrus in Polybius' narrative.¹⁶⁷ And, Moore notices that in Polybius' final assessment of Hannibal in Book 23, Polybius compared the lives of Philopoemen, Hannibal, and Scipio Africanus, who allegedly all died in the same year.¹⁶⁸ Since Polybius' reader would have likely lived through some of the events Polybius recounted, these comparisons served as a helpful reminder as to what figures of the era (and even those before) matched Hannibal. In contrast, there also exists many compelling analyses of the relationship between Livy's Hannibal and Sallust's Catiline,¹⁶⁹ a person whose memory would be quite relevant for comparison for any of Livy's readers. Since Hannibal was a distant memory in the time of Livy, Clauss points out that through Hannibal as Catiline, "the reader is invited to see – perhaps even feel – what it must have been like to face this more distant, and by then less formidable, enemy".¹⁷⁰ While Livy's skillful references to Catiline undoubtedly created a clearer image of Hannibal for Livy's readers, Livy's presentation of Hannibal cast Hannibal in an even more negative light. After all, Catiline was truly despised for his time, meaning that any association with him would ruin Hannibal's already poor reputation. Therefore, Livy's, superficial attempt to make Hannibal more relatable (or, more

¹⁶⁷ See Seritaki and Tamiolaki (2018), 225-239.

¹⁶⁸ Moore (2020), 67; see Polybius 23.12-14.

¹⁶⁹ For further discussion, see Rossi (2004), 376-380; Livy (1985) edited by Walsh, 127; and Sallust (1984) translated by J.T. Ramsey, 70.

¹⁷⁰ Clauss (1997), 180.

accurately, detestable) to his audience tainted Hannibal's legacy more than simply insulting Hannibal.

Livy also drew a comparison between Hannibal's reaction and other Roman generals' reactions after their victories and defeats. Specifically, Livy's Book 27 and Book 22 show an exchange of the roles of victor and conquered between Rome and Carthage.¹⁷¹ Claudius' triumphant return at the end of Book 27,¹⁷² serves as a counterpart to the defeated return of Varro in Book 22.¹⁷³ In both scenes, a courageous citizenry praised and celebrated the generals for their efforts, even though Varro lost. Through this ability to maintain composure even at their darkest hour, the Romans displayed a strength that Hannibal and Carthage could not match, given that when Hannibal faced similar devastation,¹⁷⁴ his reaction demonstrated a total loss to the point where he saw the war as being unwinnable.

However, the most important parallel in both narratives transpired in the form of a comparison between Scipio and Hannibal. In Livy, one of the best ways of understanding Hannibal's portrayal comes with his contrast to Scipio who serves as Hannibal's parallel and equal.¹⁷⁵ Burck identifies that "whilst the presentation of Hannibal remains essentially unchanged from the beginnings of Roman historiography up to Livy, the character of Scipio is hotly debated".¹⁷⁶ From Scipio's introduction, Livy sees the young Scipio as the *fatalis dux* of the war (Livy, 22.53.6). Therefore, Scipio arrives in the narrative with a sense of importance,

¹⁷¹ Jaeger (1997), 96-98.

¹⁷² His march was attended by smaller throngs, because no messenger had come in advance, but by rejoicing so great that people were almost beside themselves for joy (Livy, 27.50.2).

¹⁷³ In that very hour there was such courage in the hearts of the citizens that when the consul was returning from that defeat for which he himself had been chiefly responsible, a crowd of all sorts and conditions went out to meet him on the way, and gave him thanks because he had not despaired of the state (Livy, 22.61.14).

¹⁷⁴ This scene in Livy 27.51.12 allegedly causes Hannibal to recognize the fate of Carthage.

¹⁷⁵ For more insight, see Rossi (2004).

¹⁷⁶ Burck (1971), 33.

someone who can match Hannibal in terms of competence. Just as Hannibal is the monstrous figure for Livy, so too does Scipio serve as Livy's ideal Roman.¹⁷⁷

Yet despite being an ideal figure, Scipio is, as Hoyos points out, “full of non-Roman features, beginning with his lifelong ostentatious piety, an ostentation that Livy describes with wry skepticism (26.19.1–9). The young leader is ruthless when it comes to slaughtering foes”.¹⁷⁸ Even Livy explicitly recognizes that Scipio was a bit different from Romans. When Scipio joined the narrative, Livy noted that, “fuit enim Scipio non ueris tantum uirtutibus mirabilis, sed arte quoque quadam ab iuuenta in ostentationem earum compositus”.¹⁷⁹ As Beltramini and Rocco remark, “in the Roman view, with its traps and stratagems *ars* is dangerously close to *perfidia*, a lack of *fides*”.¹⁸⁰ And yet, despite displaying such skills close to Hannibal's, to the point where they were almost non-Roman characteristic entirely, Scipio did not receive the same lambasting that Hannibal received throughout the narrative because Livy remarked, “*Ibi non bello aperto sed suis artibus, fraude et insidiis, est prope circumventus*” (Livy, 21.34.1).¹⁸¹ Therefore, Livy, despite creating the parallel and even introducing Scipio with similar characteristics as Hannibal, did not see how he gave Scipio the benefit of the doubt more often than with Hannibal.

Polybius, meanwhile, also draws a comparison between the two and recognizes the non-Roman traits in Scipio. While Hannibal's speech after the Battle of Zama first describes the Polybian idea of the fickleness of fortune,¹⁸² it also creates several parallels between Hannibal

¹⁷⁷ Walsh (1961), 93.

¹⁷⁸ Hoyos (2014), 376.

¹⁷⁹ Scipio indeed was not only remarkable for his genuine virtues but also thanks to a certain skill he developed from his youth to their display (My translation).

¹⁸⁰ Beltramini and Rocco (2020), 238.

¹⁸¹ Here Hannibal, not in open fighting, but by the practices that he himself employed, falsehood and treachery, nearly escaped destruction (My translation).

¹⁸² Polybius, 15.6.6.

and Scipio, ranging from being elected as generals at a young age to their success in Spain.¹⁸³

Yet, Polybius also observed cleverness in Scipio that resembled Hannibal's and was non-Roman in a sense. In his assessment, Polybius acknowledged, "it is generally agreed that Scipio was beneficent and magnanimous, but that he was also shrewd and discreet with a mind always concentrated on the object he had in view would be conceded by none except those who associated with him and to whom his character stood clearly revealed" (Polybius, 10.3.1).

In terms of differences between how the two historians treat Scipio, Beltramini and Rocco assess that "whereas Polybius was interested in arguing against historians who were incapable of grasping Scipio's military merits, Livy's main concern is to show his readers how the commander could have played such a crucial role in the most important war in Roman history".¹⁸⁴ Similar to their views on generalship, Polybius, again, took on the role of defending a general against historians who lack military experience. Livy, in contrast, did what Polybius detested, and focused on the character of Scipio rather than the value of his skill as a tactician. Therefore, Scipio adds to the narrative of both authors,¹⁸⁵ though in completely distinct manners.

For Livy's comparison of Hannibal and Scipio, Hoyos observes, "Hannibal still [committed] crimes down to Book 30, but Livy's variety of presentation [made] him no more a standardized villain than Scipio's vividly depicted qualities [made] him an unquestioned Roman saint".¹⁸⁶ In short, whereas Livy eventually turned Hannibal into a generic villain, so too, did Livy's Scipio become more hero-like than he perhaps should have. Special attention should also go to the relationship between Livy Book 21 and Polybius Book 3, which has received a great

¹⁸³ Rossi (2004), 360.

¹⁸⁴ Beltramini and Rocco (2020), 236.

¹⁸⁵ Examining Scipio's portrayal specifically is beyond the scope of this thesis. For an approximate examination of how Polybius and Livy treat Scipio, see Beltramini and Rocco (2020), 234-236.

¹⁸⁶ Hoyos (2014), 377.

deal of attention from scholars over the years.¹⁸⁷ Since both books fully introduced Hannibal into the narrative, they mark a good starting point for observing signs of Hannibal's destined fall. In summarizing the parallels between the two generals, Bernard's opinion is that

“if [Scipio] is at first the antithesis of Hannibal, the incarnation of the *uirtus romana* against the deception and bad faith of the Carthaginians, he ends up being placed on the same level as the Punic leader, adopting the same strategy of attacking the enemy on their own territory, with identical stratagems; and after the war, he underwent a kind of metamorphosis, drifting away from Romanness in his relationship with the Republic, especially during his violent conflict with the tribunes at the end of his life, just as Hannibal was criticized by the Carthaginian Senate”.¹⁸⁸

Thus, Scipio's fate, which eventually mirrors Hannibal's, seems to bring an interesting element of tragedy.

Tragic Figure of Hannibal

As the destinies of both Scipio and Hannibal suggest, one can find a potential relationship between tragedy and the writing of history. From a morphological standpoint, both genres seem intertwined since they both copy aspects from other genres and owe much to epic because both genres talk about politics and conflict.¹⁸⁹ Both historians also invite comparisons to tragedy because Hannibal's story appears tragic in both works. After all, as De Beer analyzes “there were many reasons, political and social... [that made] Hannibal's task... hopeless from the start”.¹⁹⁰ With an unachievable goal already set before him, one can see how Hannibal's narrative begins with tragedy because he will never achieve his goal.

¹⁸⁷ See Baron (2018), 212-215 for a chart of comparisons; and see Baron (2018), 203-205 for an extensive overview of the evolution of scholarship on the relationship between Livy and Polybius.

¹⁸⁸ Bernard (2014), 47.

¹⁸⁹ Rutherford (2007), 1034.

¹⁹⁰ De Beer (1969), 305.

Hannibal as a tragic figure in Polybius is especially interesting since Polybius did not want to write a tragedy and criticized the ‘tragic’ stylings of Phylarchus.¹⁹¹ Yet, as Rutherford mentions, “there are undeniably places in which the agonies of an individual or the downfall of an army are described in powerful and moving language... [however,] there is a danger that ‘tragic’ may be diluted to mean little more than ‘dramatic’”.¹⁹² In the case of Polybius, his account of Hannibal’s story clearly has tragic elements, rather than simply dramatic ones. Polybius in Book 15 paints a picture of a man coming so close to his goal but inevitably missing and losing everything. After the Battle of Zama, Hannibal reflected, telling Scipio that

“I, then, am that Hannibal who after the battle of Cannae became master of almost the whole of Italy, who not long afterward advanced even up to Rome, and encamping at forty stades from the walls deliberated with myself how I should treat you and your native soil. And now here am I in Africa on the point of negotiating with you, a Roman, for the safety of myself and my country”
(Polybius 15.7.3-4).

Such a speech garners sympathy for Hannibal, due to its emphasis on what Hannibal had lost. It also plays with the element of Tyche, which was a favorite theme of Polybius.¹⁹³ Though the speech was not intended to be overly dramatic, the words nevertheless resonate as one can see the pain and experience behind Hannibal’s advice to Scipio. Therefore, this speech still has elements of tragedy, even if this speech and others in Polybius’ *Histories* alone do not warrant describing the work as a tragic history.

Livy’s history, in contrast, presented more tragic elements because he did not have the same aversion to drama that Polybius possessed. Book 26 of Livy’s narrative acts as a pivotal shift to the narrative of the Third decade, beginning a new Pentad.¹⁹⁴ It marked the fall of

¹⁹¹ Rutherford (2007), 1035.

¹⁹² Rutherford (2007), 1045-1046.

¹⁹³ Tyche is a central theme in Polybius that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. For further discussion, see Walbank (2007), 739-752.

¹⁹⁴ See Beltramini and Rocco (2020), 238, n. 38.

Hannibal and the rise of Scipio as his successor in the narrative. As soon as Scipio entered the narrative, one sees him slowly usurp the main role in Livy's work. Meanwhile, Hannibal eventually evolved from Rome's greatest challenge to a figure with, at the very least, tragic elements. Such an evolution makes sense, given Livy's propensity toward Romans. Yet, interestingly enough, Hoyos specifies that "Hannibal [grew] in human stature as his greatness [shrunk]. His sufetship and exile [were] reported in entirely favorable terms (33.45–49), and even though he then [served] Antiochus, there [was] little Livian rancor in the telling".¹⁹⁵ With these traits, it seems fair to assess that even Livy saw Hannibal as a pitiable victim.¹⁹⁶

The use of Hanno and his two speeches as a wise warner in the formula of Herodotus also reflects elements of tragedy.¹⁹⁷ Livy's Hanno foreshadowed that some sort of tragedy would occur since, like in a tragedy, the warmongering hero ignored the warning signs. Additionally, the fact that Hanno warned Carthage twice is quite important since the repetition of tragic elements created a sense of objectivity behind them.¹⁹⁸ Likewise, Hannibal's speech at the end of Book 30 demonstrated an introspective understanding of his fate. In comparison to his portrait at the beginning of Book 21, Hannibal displayed more restraint,¹⁹⁹ meaning he learned some lesson, an important trait of tragedy. Crucially, Mader also compares this speech with that of Silius' from the *Punica* and notes that Silius took inspiration from Livy.²⁰⁰ Evidently Livy's portrait of Hannibal contained enough tragic elements for other authors, who were attempting to convey emotion and drama through epic poetry, to reference and mimic such writings.

¹⁹⁵ Hoyos (2014), 373.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Mader (1993), 211-216.

¹⁹⁸ Mader (1993), 211.

¹⁹⁹ Mader (1993), 206.

²⁰⁰ Mader (1993), 221.

Literary analysis aside, Hannibal's story also seems tragic because the victors (and his country) mostly remember him, as the loser, for his cruel traits. Due to Hannibal's association with Catiline through Livy, an entire generation who had never met Hannibal remembered him as a hated enemy of the state. Even more tragically, his own country looked back on him as a loser. In the form of Hanno, Hannibal received doubt that was ultimately proven correct, meaning he lost credibility as a political figure. Hannibal's countrymen also dishonored his memory by offering him to the Romans, forcing Hannibal to flee from the very nation he had fought earnestly to protect.²⁰¹ As Reeve summarizes, "Hannibal here joins a line of tragic figures, the more tragic because he confronted two enemies, Rome and Carthaginians at home. Livy allows him neither foreknowledge, which he could not have, nor an execration".²⁰²

Yet, Hannibal's story did not end with his death. Beyond the time of Polybius and Livy, there was a significant development in understanding the Punic Wars as the beginning of the decline of Rome. As Stewart analyzes, "the fall of Carthage was not regarded as such when Sallust wrote... Sallust was unique in his time in making this particular judgment about it. But for later Romans his judgment became Canonical".²⁰³ In the context of Roman morality declining after the Punic Wars, the glory of Hannibal became more fondly remembered. As he fell from grace, and his status grew more tragic, Romans and historians alike began to see him as a pitiable figure. As Plutarch, writing in the 1st century CE related, once Flaminius killed Hannibal, many of the senate "thought the conduct of Titus odious, officious, and cruel; for he had killed Hannibal when he was like a bird permitted to live a tame and harmless life because too old to fly and without a tail" (Plutarch, *Life of Flaminius*, 21.1). Given all the atrocities

²⁰¹ Livy, 33.48.2.

²⁰² Reeves (1987), 320.

²⁰³ Stewart (1968), 302.

Hannibal committed against Rome, to which both Livy and Polybius attest, such sympathetic thoughts toward Hannibal seem strange. Perhaps, one could argue that Romans did not treat their enemies in such inhumane ways (though the brutality of the Romans in the Punic Wars suggested otherwise).²⁰⁴ Yet, the overarching theme seemed to be that, as Hannibal lost status as a true threat, he became an object worth pitying and remembering to the point where his former enemies (and their historians) saw the killing of him as disgraceful.

In fact, the same treatment could be said for Carthage itself. As Toynbee indicates, “the adverse moral effect of Rome’s series of invidious successes was enhanced... [whereas] what was applauded by contemporaries and was remembered by posterity was the heroism of... the Carthaginians”.²⁰⁵ For introspective historians and peoples looking at Roman history, the result seemed to be that the Carthaginians, as the losers, fought admirably, whereas the cruel victorious Romans began to lose their sense of identity and morals as the winners. This fate seems ironic given that Carthage, by losing, gains a sense of recognition that they would not have achieved as the winners. And yet, “the *fortuna* of Carthage is the same as it was before: to be defeated by Rome again, and again”,²⁰⁶ a truly tragic fate like that of Sisyphus who is destined to push a boulder for all eternity.

Overall, there is a cruel irony in the destiny of Hannibal and the understanding of Carthage. With Polybius and Livy’s fixation on Hannibal as the central figure in the war, his reputation grew until he became the most famous Carthaginian. In becoming, arguably, the greatest Carthaginian as well, he acts as an embodiment of Carthage. And yet, this fate seems ironic because, as MacDonald points out, Hannibal spent most of his life as an outsider from

²⁰⁴ See Livy 28.16.6, for instance.

²⁰⁵ Toynbee (1965), Vol 2., 86.

²⁰⁶ Jaeger (1997), 95; and see n. 3 especially.

Carthage.²⁰⁷ Additionally, despite Hannibal being a great general, and perhaps, Carthage's greatest general, he nevertheless brought about the fall of a once-great empire. Could he have been such a genius for his time, if he still brought the fall of an Empire with comparable strength to Rome?²⁰⁸ Perhaps, one could say that Hannibal may simply not have been a general who was good enough to defeat Rome, after all, he was defeated at Zama by his own tactics.²⁰⁹ Even in modern times, Hannibal fares poorly to an uncritical reader because his narrative exists through the eyes of his enemies (given that Carthage does not have extant histories written in Punic).²¹⁰ Therefore, it seems fair to assess that accounts found in both historian's writings show some elements of tragedy;²¹¹ even if, as Rutherford specifies, history does not adopt the form of tragedy because history uses prose and tragedy uses verse.²¹²

Lesson or Example?

In the aftermath of the Punic Wars, Carthage had lost its status as a dangerous enemy. With Carthage effectively declawed, both historians took advantage of Carthage's inability to defend itself to point out certain stereotypes associated with faithlessness that contrasted against Rome. Likewise, Carthage's inability to defend itself, meant that Carthage shouldered the combined faults of itself and Rome, acting as a mirror from which Rome used to learn from its mistakes. Since both historians wrote from the perspective of the victor, this portrayal makes sense because it would have been difficult to explain how a faithless Rome could win. Thus, the

²⁰⁷ MacDonald (2015), 226.

²⁰⁸ See Polybius, 1.13.12.

²⁰⁹ Hoyos (1983), 179.

²¹⁰ Hoyos (2020), 143.

²¹¹ For more discussion on Tragedy and History, see Rutherford (2007), 1034-1054.

²¹² Rutherford (2007), 1039-1040.

faults of Carthage became magnified in comparison to an idealized Rome that already seems like a distant memory as Rome moved from Republic to Empire.

Viewing Carthage as an *exemplum*,²¹³ Livy saw Hannibal as an example to be avoided. Since all his evil traits rivaled his good ones,²¹⁴ Hannibal had too many negatives to emulate. Specifically, the traits Livy assigned to Hannibal (*cruelitas*, *perfidia*, and *impietas*) were the exact opposites of the idealized Roman virtues of *clementia*, *fides*, and *pietas*.²¹⁵ For someone who wished to honor Romanness, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to justify emulating someone who possessed so many anti-Roman traits. Likewise, Hannibal's fate may suggest that readers should pity Hannibal but certainly not imitate Hannibal. After all, Livy reminded his reader that "Hannibal had always foreseen such an end to his life, both from his knowledge of the insatiable hatred of the Romans for him and from his lack of faith in the loyalty of kings" (Livy, 39.51.4). Thus, Livy clearly stated that Hannibal knew this fate would arrive while implicitly warning his reader that following Hannibal's path would lead to this sad fate. Since Livy's audience would likely want to avoid the sad final fate of committing suicide, they likely would have heeded Livy's warnings about Hannibal.

However, Polybius took a different approach to Hannibal and Carthage. He viewed them as an example from which people can and should learn. With the benefit of hindsight, Polybius ultimately drew upon the idea that Rome could learn from its mistakes as the ultimate deciding factor for Rome's victories. This idea falls in line with Polybius' thoughts on moralizing history and his stance that one should learn from history.²¹⁶ Hannibal was not only propped up because

²¹³ For a better discussion on *exemplum* in Livy, see Chaplin (2000).

²¹⁴ Livy 21.4.9.

²¹⁵ See Bernard (2014), 41 and 47.

²¹⁶ See Polybius 3.31 and Polybius, 1.2.8.

he faced Scipio Africanus, though this purpose was a distinct possibility. Instead, Hannibal became his own figure, the genius that Rome must overcome, to demonstrate that one individual could no longer defeat the innovation of Rome's collective identity. This thought aligns with Polybius' thoughts about history that "mankind typically *fails* to learn even lessons readily available from well-known historical events".²¹⁷

Polybius also wrote with the benefit of hindsight when commented on Rome's prodigious ability to learn from its past. After all, the result of the Punic Wars was not obvious at the time of the wars themselves. Indeed, as Rosenstein points out, Republican Rome recognized "generals who deliberately put themselves in danger during the heat of battle, who refused to surrender or even survive when all was lost".²¹⁸ With such a policy, Rome quickly lost many battles since their commanders would face unwinnable situations and continue, rather than strategically retreating to fight another day. Therefore, at that moment, it would have been difficult to say that Rome would learn from its past and rise, given its early losses to Hannibal's strategies.

More importantly, as Polybius established earlier, his *Histories*' main goal was to explain to his audience why Rome rose to the top of the ancient world so quickly. As Moore mentions, Polybius consistently set up a battle between the lone genius Hannibal, and the ever-adopting Rome.²¹⁹ From this explicit main goal, one can discern a second, ulterior role for Hannibal: acting as the final test. Polybius portrayed Hannibal as the last barrier that could conceivably stop Rome from ascending to its destiny as the greatest Empire in the world. In embodying the epitome of generalship, the genius Hannibal represented the ultimate trial of checking whether Rome's institutions could allow them to overcome one great man. A constitution founded upon

²¹⁷ Moore (2020), 70; see Polybius 5.75.6.

²¹⁸ Rosenstein (1990), 130-131.

²¹⁹ Moore (2020), 112; see Moore (2020), 111-128 especially.

both the ideas of individualism and collaboration could have faced no greater challenge than the might of a once-in-a-generation genius. After all, had Hannibal won, he would have proven that individuality could triumph over any institution.

Additionally, as Gruen points out, though Polybius saw Rome's constitution as superior, Carthage's version also provided a blend between monarchy, democracy, and aristocracy, meaning Carthage could act as a benchmark by which Rome measures its success.²²⁰ As Polybius' readers would know, Rome eventually triumphed, and as Polybius assessed, this victory was due to flexibility of their constitution and Rome's ability to adapt.²²¹ For, even though the Romans also had to rely on the genius of one man to rival that of Hannibal, they only arrived at this conclusion due to their experiences with Xanthippus earlier.²²² The Romans simply have a prodigious ability, due to their collective nature, to learn from the past whereas their enemies cannot match the pace (as evidenced by Carthage's inability to regain their naval supremacy).²²³ Due to Rome's flexibility in their constitution, which much of Book 6 explained, Hannibal, as the final obstacle, finally lost, leaving room for only Rome to ascend to the top of the Ancient World.

Overall, both authors saw the value in Hannibal and his story, even if they disagreed on what elements of Hannibal produced this importance. The many ancient works that discussed Hannibal also proved that Livy and Polybius had correctly assessed the significance of the tale of Hannibal. From works on anger like Seneca's *De Ira*,²²⁴ to the grammar books of school children

²²⁰ Gruen (2018), 25; for more discussion on Polybius' treatment of Carthage, see Gruen (2018), 23-25.

²²¹ Moore (2020), 125-127.

²²² Moore (2020), 125-127.

²²³ Moore (2020), 117.

²²⁴ *De Ira*, 2.5.4.

like *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*,²²⁵ to the *Satires*²²⁶ of Juvenal, to epic presentations of Hannibal like Silius' *Punica*, to the biographic *Lives* of Plutarch and Nepos, and the Dialogues of Cicero,²²⁷ Hannibal captured the minds of many. And, while he served as a warning for some, a figure to emulate for others, he was undoubtedly a thought-provoking figure for all.

Final Thoughts

Overall, this chapter covered many topics that saw the parallels and differences in Polybius' and Livy's treatment of Hannibal. The chapter first discussed the historians' use of speeches and how these speeches influenced the authors' ability to portray Hannibal as a character, with Polybius' style adding layers to Hannibal and Livy's method adding more dramatization that would be interesting to his reader. From there, the chapter examined the biases and who possessed a more unfair assessment of Hannibal overall (in this case, this chapter found Livy to be less generous). Following this discussion, the thesis addressed how the difference between Livy's literature background and Polybius' military experience shaped their overall understanding of Hannibal. For Livy, his background caused him to gloss over critical military tactics but create a more fascinating narrative. On the other hand, Polybius, focused heavily on generalship, perhaps, overemphasizing it due to his similar background.

Afterward, the chapter examined comparisons between Hannibal and other characters in the authors' respective works, ultimately establishing the comparison of Scipio and Hannibal as a defining feature of both narratives. Since Livy places a huge emphasis on Scipio, and Polybius,

²²⁵ *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, 14.

²²⁶ *Satire*, 10.19.

²²⁷ *De Oratore*, 2.75-76.

likewise, has many praises for him, he serves as a thought-provoking figure to compare with Hannibal, as an equal for Polybius, and, for Livy, as potentially a greater character. Beyond the discussion of Scipio, this chapter turned to the tragedy of Hannibal's replacement. It examined the tragic elements in both accounts of Hannibal's story, ultimately determining that while both histories are not truly tragedies, they share tragic elements given Hannibal's ironic fate as the most famous Carthaginian who ruined the city. Finally, the chapter examined what one could glean from Hannibal's portrait and what the authors wanted the reader to understand. The section noticed a slight divide in that Livy wanted his reader to avoid Hannibal while Polybius wanted them to emulate him (and by proxy use Carthage as a benchmark for success). These nuances create a provocative conclusion that, regardless of what each author thought of Hannibal, both still saw him as an example to be studied.

Conclusion

Overall, it is rewarding and humbling to think that what started as a passion for looking at how ancient historians portrayed figures eventually evolved into a complete discussion on the merits of such portrayals and what a modern reader could take away from such paradoxically nuanced and biased characterizations. In following this path, I learned, through many late nights, more about myself and how to approach a daunting task, like Hannibal himself must have experienced in his various trials throughout Rome.

While I hope this work will be at least half as enlightening to read as it was to write, I also recognize that this thesis barely scratched the surface of all the literature written on Hannibal, Livy, and Polybius. With such an expansive subject, this thesis undoubtedly missed interesting considerations, scholarship on Hannibal and Carthage, and may have under elaborated on certain topics like speeches in historical writing and the impact of tragedy; I also realize that there will be more discussion on the relationship between the two authors that may make this thesis seem outdated. However, this outcome is ultimately inspiring since it ensures that scholarship on such a worthwhile topic will continue for future generations to enjoy.

As I reflect on the experience of this thesis, Moore's summary of Polybius' purpose continues to draw my attention. It states, "if one is to avoid the sufferings and misfortunes which also marked Hannibal's career, personal experience must be combined with the study of history. This is how Polybius' reader can hope to succeed even where one of the world's greatest leaders has failed".²²⁸ In reading through the account of Hannibal from the pens of Polybius and Livy, it seems clear that one can learn much from Hannibal's actions, both in terms of how to control

²²⁸ Moore (2020), 69.

emotions and how one's legacy may be looked at. And, I think, in a sense, that is the purpose of history, to learn from the mistakes and to use the experience of others to better oneself and avoid experiencing the same tragedy. After all, one takeaway from Hannibal's story is that even a genius could not follow his path. This result, of course, indicates that to succeed, one must either be even more talented than a once-in-a-generation figure or try a new path to avoid the same mistakes that Hannibal made. Since the former sounds daunting, if not impossible, that leaves only the latter path as a potential path toward success. Another takeaway could involve emotions. From Hannibal's story, one can observe that losing control can result in disastrous consequences, as Hannibal's experience later in the Punic Wars demonstrated. Therefore, we must realize that while controlling emotions is difficult and a part of being human, our emotions should not define us because, ultimately, we define our emotions.

The study of history and Hannibal's story also reminds us that we do not control what others remember. This fate too is quite tragic since, in the end, like Hannibal, we may be remembered by those who have no reason to see us as we or our loved ones see us. While this destination seems terrifying, one could also look at it from the perspective that our lives need not end as a tragedy. After all, although death is certain for everyone, we still have control over how, and, to a certain degree, when we end the story for ourselves (like how Hannibal continued even after being ousted from Carthage and chose to die by his own hand). Therefore, even if others may distort the narrative later, if we leave behind a legacy that someone deems as worthy of being remembered, eventually, as is the case with Hannibal today, someone may attempt to discover a different perspective from the established view that may resemble the real truth.

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