

**Hannibal's Barbarians: Depictions of the Gauls in Literary
Accounts of the Second Punic War**

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Abstract

The Second Punic War was a seminal moment in the History of the Mediterranean. Once again, the two superpower Republics of Carthage and Rome faced off with the central focus of Classical sources being the Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca. In every stage of the war in Italy Hannibal plays a central role in the accounts that survive. An often-times forgotten aspect of the war were his allies, particularly the Gauls of Cisalpine Gaul. This paper is a study into how literary sources treat the Gauls in the Second Punic War from the beginning of the war on down to the Battle of Cannae. This will investigate how Classical sources like Livy and Polybius treat the Gauls in their individual accounts of the Second Punic War. This will be done as a comparison to how those same sources treat Hannibal and other Carthaginians during the same period. On the one hand, Hannibal was seen by Roman authors as being the most noble of barbarians. He was a foe that could bring the Republic to its knees and was respected because of it. The other qualities of the ignoble barbarian were left to the Gauls who were the ones blamed for certain failures in Hannibal's invasion.

Introduction

Rome's relationship with the Barbarians of the ancient world is complicated and rife with conflict. The Punic Wars represent one of the largest clashes between Rome and its Barbarian neighbors. The Second Punic War showcased the Punic General Hannibal Barca who became emblematic of the dangerous "other" within Roman imagination. To Classical authors, Hannibal was the ultimate barbarian commander bent on destroying the Republic because of a promise he made to his father Hamilcar and the gods.¹ What is less discussed in the modern-day scholarly narrative of the Second Punic War are the other so-called barbarians who allied and fought with the Punic General, particularly the Gauls. The scope of this study is the events surrounding the Second Punic War with a specific focus on the literary depictions of the Gauls during the Second Punic War. By investigating these depictions, one can juxtapose them with how those very same sources treat and depict Hannibal to determine to what extent Hannibal is an ignoble versus a noble barbarian in the minds of the authors who wrote about him. The difference between being a noble and ignoble barbarian is the capacity for reason.

This study sits firmly within a well-established body of scholarship on Hannibal's depiction as a central figure of the Second Punic War. At the same time, studies into preceding events, like the Roman expansion into Cisalpine Gaul, feature the Gauls prominently. These studies, like Dr. Arthur Eckstein and Dr. Paul Erdkamp's discuss the reason for the Ebro Treaty between Rome and Carthage and debate the extent to which the Gallic Crisis necessitated a treaty between the two republics. Regardless of the stance taken regarding the reason for the Ebro Treaty, the start of the Second Punic War is often described as being because of Hannibal's breaking of the Ebro Treaty. This study is also concerned with long-standing debates regarding the depictions of barbarians within classical accounts. Wider discussion on modern scholarship will be discussed further below; what ancient authors thought of non-Romans or non-Greeks would guide how they wrote about those people groups under the umbrella term of Barbarian.

Defining the term Barbarian is difficult because of the connotation it brings to a modern audience. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the term as such: "a member of a group of people from a very different country or culture that is considered to be less socially advanced and more

¹ Polybius, *The Histories*, trans by Waterfield R. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) Book III.11 pp. 140

violent than your own.”² To use this definition of barbarian would not work well in this study because it relies on the assumption that this definition is consistent throughout the centuries. Other modern definitions of barbarian will not work either because they do not encapsulate what was meant by the term when it was used by ancient authors. The ancient definition is not consistent either. Ancient Greek authors would use the term to denote someone is from a non-Greek culture. In the minds of some Greek writers the world could be categorized into two groups; the Greeks (*Hellenes*) and non-Greeks (*Barbaroi*).³ This definition comes with one problem with understanding the so-called Greco-Roman mindset. The problem is that Greek authors would call Roman authors *Barbaroi* because they were non-Greeks. The Roman definition of Barbarian further complicates matters because this term is not native to the Latin language. At the same time, as Alexander Rubel suggests, the Romans were themselves Barbarians in Greek eyes which meant they needed to redefine what it meant to be a Barbarian.⁴ The most important Roman author for this study, Titus Livius in his work titled *Ab Urbe Condita*, uses the term Barbarian as a synonym for enemy. What this means is that the enemies of Rome, such as the Gauls and Carthaginians, are barbarians because of the role they play as enemies not because they are non-Roman.

That is not to say that Livy is completely unbiased in his view of the Gauls and other non-Roman combatants. As will be shown in this paper, Livy clearly uses the Gauls as a foil to Hannibal in his depiction of the Punic general. To accurately show what is meant by the term barbarian in this paper, it is important to define the term. Broadly speaking, the term Barbarian can be used as more of an adjective to mean that something is reserved only for non-Romans and non-Greeks. It is a derogatory term that denotes certain actions that are reserved for those who are not Roman or Greek. Examples of things that are often associated with barbarians in the Greco-Roman tradition are fickleness, treachery, greed, drunkenness, among others. Those traits are reserved for the ignoble barbarians, typically the Gauls in the timeframe of the Second Punic War. As for noble barbarians, like Hannibal Barca, their traits include the capacity for reason, intelligence both on and off the battlefield, and the ability to take advantage of the ignoble.

² ‘Barbarian’ in the Cambridge Dictionary Online <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/barbarian>>

³ Rubel, A. *What the Romans Really Meant When Using the Word ‘Barbarian’*, in “Rome and Barbaricum: Contributions to the Archaeology and History of Interaction in European Protohistory,” ed. by Curca, R.N., Rubel, A. Voss, H.U. (Summertown: Archaeopress Publishing 2020) pp. 3

⁴ Rubel, A. *What the Romans Really Meant When Using the Word ‘Barbarian’*. pp. 3

Defining who was and was not a Gaul is complicated by the fact that no contemporary accounts survive from those called Gauls. There is a 300-year gap between the earliest mentions of the Gauls in Classical literary sources to the earliest accounts of the Second Punic War which are still extant. Those sources that do survive from before the Second Punic War are from Greek authors like Polybius. This means that the author's idea of the Celts as barbarians was heavily influenced by his cultural understanding of who was and was not a barbarian. Within that time, areas under Gallic control had expanded to reach from Galatia in Central Anatolia to Galicia in North-Western Iberia. The reasons for this expansion, called the Celtic Migrations by Dr. Barry Cunliffe, are beyond the scope of this study. Regardless of the reasons for this expansion, which societal groups authors interacted with determined which name they would be known by. The earliest mention of the Gauls fully extant in classical texts today comes from the first historian Herodotus of Halicarnassus. His descriptions, because there are only two explicit mentions of a people group he calls the *Keltoi* (Celts), are mainly geographical in nature and do not include any type of ethnography.⁵

Outside of Herodotus, classical authors from Greece and Rome understood the Celts as one of the many groups of Barbarians. The conception of Celticness in some classical sources is geographical in nature. What this means is that the Celts are considered the barbarians north of the Alps.⁶ The problem with this understanding of what is meant by classical sources when the Celts or Gauls are mentioned is that it does not properly explain the definition of Celt or Gaul. The tribes of Cisalpine Gaul for example inhabit, as the name of the region suggests, areas just south of the Alps in Italy. For the purposes of this study, wherever terms such as Celt or Gaul are mentioned in classical sources to name a group of people will be considered as such. Although areas of Celtic control stretched from parts of Iberia and France in the West to central Anatolia in the East, the people who inhabit all these areas will be considered Celtic whenever they are mentioned in classical sources. The question of whether the people called Celts in classical sources considered themselves as such is not something to be considered in this study. Examples of places where the Celts came from in accounts of the Second Punic War include Southern

⁵ Herodotus *The Histories*, trans. by Selin-court, A. revised by Marincola, J. (London: Penguin Books 2003) Book II.33 pp. 108 & Book IV.49 pp. 256

⁶ Green, M.J. *Who were the Celts?* in "The Celtic World" ed by Green, M.J. (Milton Park: Routledge 1996) pp. 4

Gaul, Cisalpine Gaul in Northern Italy, and tribes called Celtiberian in Iberia. The terms Celt and Gaul, and their derivatives, will be used interchangeably in this paper.

The Gauls are not the only group of people called barbarians by classical authors. This term was applied to various “other” groups like the Scythians of the steppe and, most importantly for this paper, the Carthaginians of North Africa. As noted, the most prominent Carthaginian figure in the Greco-Roman imagination was Hannibal Barca. At the beginning of his account of the Second Punic War, Livy describes Hannibal’s virtues and vices. Speaking of his positive traits, Livy claims things like Hannibal’s apparent endurance for extreme temperatures as well as his simplicity in dress. Livy also discusses Hannibal’s negative traits, claiming that he was inhumanly cruel, more prone to perfidy than other Punic commanders, and disregarded things like honor and religion.⁷

Polybius echoes some of the same aspects of Hannibal’s character, after all his *Histories* are a source used by Livy in his own work. In terms of religion, Polybius describes how Hannibal swore an oath to the gods to never be friend to Rome, something mentioned previously. Polybius also claims that Hannibal was at times quick to act against the Romans out of his own sense of opportunism. When Hannibal began besieging Saguntum, Roman diplomats approached him claiming that the city was under Roman protection. Hannibal refuted the idea that Rome was a protector of Saguntum. He cited an incident where the Romans executed some of the leaders of the city before the Ebro treaty was in place. Hannibal claimed he was there to rectify that slight against the Saguntines.⁸ To Polybius, Hannibal is acting on his own sense of justice. In some ways, Hannibal’s attempt at capturing Saguntum mirrors the Roman seizure of Sardinia, both of which were considered breaches of the treaty from the First Punic War. Saguntum is also considered by Polybius to be a breach of the Ebro Treaty which was agreed upon by Hannibal’s predecessor as commander Hasdrubal Barca. Further examples of Hannibal’s character will be discussed later in this study.

The structure of this study is divided into three sections, each focusing on a key ancient text written by Polybius, Livy, and Silius Italicus. Adopting this structure enables a deeper

⁷ Livy, *The War with Hannibal: Books XXI-XXX of The History of Rome from its Foundation*, trans by De Selincourt A. ed by Radice B. (London: Penguin Books 1972) Book XXI.4

⁸ Polybius, *Histories*, Book III.15 pp.142

literary analysis. This approach is preferred to adapting a strict chronological order. While a recounting of events could lend itself to comparative analysis of sources, it can get confusing to talk about the same events repeatedly within the same section. Polybius is the earliest extant author of the Punic Wars. His work only partially survives, though we are fortunate to have books I-V surviving intact, which is of particular relevance for this topic. His work is important not only in its own right, but also because it acts as a source for many later ancient authors. Polybius as an author will be expanded upon later in this study.

Gallo-Roman Relations Before the Second Punic War

This study of the Second Punic War cannot begin without contextualizing the relationship between the Romans and their northern neighbors which ancient historians have called Gauls. Since the first recorded instances of Gauls appearing in the Roman historical record, the relationship between the Gauls and Rome has been rife with conflict. Polybius keeps the earliest instances of the Gauls in his narrative rather simple. He claims that the Gauls migrated into Italy and fought the Etruscans, driving them out of the Po Valley which was then settled by several tribes. From there, Polybius says that Gauls began expanding their territory eventually capturing the city of Rome save for the Capitoline Hill.⁹ One of the other sources for the early relations between the Gauls and Romans comes from Livy. Livy similarly claims that the Gauls migrated into Italy and began fighting the Etruscans. His account claims a specific city as a victim of a Gallic raid, Clusium. It was here that the Romans first met the Gauls when they attempted to intervene diplomatically in the Clusians' favor. When, according to Livy, the embassy from the Romans to the Clusians led to nothing the Romans joined in the battle between the Clusians and Gauls on the side of the former.¹⁰

Something to note about Polybius' account when compared to Livy's is the lack of specific details about the Gauls' invasion of the city of Rome. This may perhaps be a cultural difference between the two authors because Livy likely wanted to emphasize the destruction wrought by the Gauls. The image presented by Livy shows his belief in the treacherous nature of the Gauls. One such instance is the killing of some of the old Patricians sitting in defiance of the Gauls and how they were killed indiscriminately. This is immediately followed by the Gauls burning down many homes belonging to the Patricians.¹¹ The most important and endearing image in Livy's work that shows how the Gauls are treacherous, and is a common image used by later Roman authors, is when the Senate was about to surrender and pay off Brennus and his Gauls. As the gold was being weighed out, Livy has the Gauls use fake weights and when someone protested this, he describes how Brennus placed his sword on the scale and exclaims that famous Latin phrase "*Vae Victus*," often translated as "woe to the vanquished."¹²

⁹ Polybius, *Histories*, Book II.17-18 pp. 89-90

¹⁰ Livy, *History of Rome from its Foundation, the First Eight Books, Literally Translated*, in the Perseus Digital Library, Trans. by Spillan, A. (London: Henry G. Bohn. John Child and son, printers 1857) Book: V.35

¹¹ Livy, *History of Rome*, Book V.41

¹² Livy, *History of Rome*, Book V.48

Immediately following this passage describes how Camillus came to the rescue and saved Rome from being humiliated by the Gauls. This event, despite Rome's survival, started the concept called *metus Gallicus* often translated as the fear of the Gauls.¹³

Following Brennus' invasion in the early years of the 4th Century BCE, other conflicts erupted between the Gauls and Romans. The most important conflict to investigate before getting into this study is the Roman invasion of Cisalpine Gaul in the 220s BCE. While the First Punic War contributes to the causes of the Second Punic War, the Gauls did not play as big a role in that conflict so this study must consider the Gallic War of the 220s BCE first. The main source of this conflict is Polybius in the second book of his *Histories* while nothing on this conflict survives from the other two authors considered in this study Livy and Silius Italicus.¹⁴ The reason for this short focus on the Gallic War and its causes is important because this conflict immediately preceded the Second Punic War. Preparations for this war were directly caused by the need to prepare for an upcoming war between Rome and Carthage. Polybius records that some tribes in Cisalpine Gaul, particularly the Boii who bordered Roman territory, felt threatened by policies enacted by Gaius Flaminius. These policies include sending Roman citizens to Picenum to settle the region. This, according to Polybius, was seen by the Gauls as threatening their position and an attempt to evict the Gauls from Cisalpine Gaul.¹⁵

The reason this study focuses on the Gallic War here is because of a treaty made between the Romans and Carthaginians in Iberia. This treaty, called the Ebro Treaty has been a point of focus for scholars because of the possible threat posed by the Gauls in Northern Italy. By discussing the Ebro Treaty here, context is provided for claims about the Gauls encouraging Hannibal's crossing of the Alps in 218 BCE. Polybius' assertion that the Gallic threat almost forced the Romans into a treaty with Hasdrubal Barca is highlighted as an issue requiring detailed analysis by both Arthur Eckstein and Paul Erdkamp. What Polybius claimed was that the Roman Senate sent envoys to Iberia to set a limit to Carthaginian expansion there, which was set as the Ebro River. This limit was to prevent Hasdrubal from crossing into Italy while the Romans pacified the Gauls.¹⁶ Arthur Eckstein concluded that Polybius' claim was true. That the tribes of

¹³ Faszczka, M. *Livy and the Celts*, in "Rerum Gestarum Monumentis et Memoriae: Cultural Readings of Livy" ed by Gillmeister, A. (Warsaw: Akme Studia Historica 2018) pp. 155

¹⁴ Polybius, *Histories*, Book II.14-35

¹⁵ Polybius, *Histories*, Book II.21

¹⁶ Polybius, *Histories*, Book II.13

Cisalpine Gaul were a genuine threat to the Roman Republic, something that the Senate feared the Carthaginians might exploit.¹⁷ However, Paul Erdkamp offers an alternative interpretation. He notes that the Senate set up an alliance between the Republic and the Iberian city of Saguntum, which sat to the south of the Ebro River. This was done to halt the expansion of Carthage's influence in Iberia with little regard to Cisalpine Gaul.¹⁸ Regardless of whether or not one can truly ascertain the nature of the Gallic Crisis and the Ebro Treaty, the results of Rome's war against the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul contributed to the start of the Second Punic War.

¹⁷ Eckstein, A.M. *Polybius, the Gallic Crisis, and the Ebro Treaty*, in "Classical Philology, Vol. 107, No 3." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2012) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/665622> pp. 226

¹⁸ Erdkamp, P. *Polybius, the Ebro Treaty, and the Gallic Invasion of 225 B.C.E.* in "Classical Philology, Vol 104. No. 4." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2009) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/650983> pp. 507

Polybius

One of the problems with researching the Second Punic War is the paucity of sources that date to (or near to) the time of the conflict. This means that modern scholars are reliant on works written decades or even centuries later. Polybius and his work *The Histories* is one of the few classical works that (partially) survive to this day. Polybius was not a contemporary of the Second Punic War but relied on accounts from both Romans and non-Romans who lived during the conflict.¹⁹ Not only is Polybius' work one of the most widely available and read works on the Second Punic War, another classical author, Livy, clearly used it as a source for his history.²⁰ Polybius' treatment of the other is continued in future authors like Livy and Silius Italicus. How Polybius treated the Gauls in comparison to Hannibal showcases how the Gauls were the ultimate example of the other within his *Histories*.

Polybius was a Greek politician from the Achaean city of Megalopolis who was a political hostage in Rome. As such, an important thing to remember is that his upbringing and situation influenced how he approached writing his *Histories*. Looking back on the famous Greek philosophers, Aristotle wrote that groups of people who live in the North of Europe are both courageous and fond of liberty. This is in comparison to the peoples of Asia and Africa who are intelligent but lack the courage and desire for liberty. Aristotle finishes this description by stating that the Greeks live between the two extremes of courage and sensibility because they follow the laws made by intelligent men.²¹ The idea that geographical and climatic conditions determine a collective group's characteristics continues into Polybius' work.²² With this in mind, it is important to remember that the use of the term barbarian was not used as a pejorative every time. Instead, it was a term used to denote non-Greeks without the automatic negative connotations associated with the word today.²³ There are individual instances of the term barbarian being used by Polybius in a derogatory way, but those will be expanded upon later.

¹⁹ Champion, C.B. *Polybius and the Punic Wars*, in "A Companion to the Punic Wars" ed by Horos, D. (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing 2011) pp. 98

²⁰ Baron, C. *The Historian's Craft: Narrative Strategies and Historical Method in Polybius and Livy*, in "Polybius and his Legacy" ed. by Miltsios, N. and Tamiolaki, M. (Berlin: De Gruyter 2018) pp. 212

²¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, in Perseus Digital Library, trans. by Rackham, H. (London: Harvard University Press 1944) Book VII.1327b

²² Champion, C. *Polybian Barbarology, Flute-Playing in Arcadia, and Fisticuffs at Rome*, in "Polybius and his Legacy" ed. by Miltsios, N. and Tamiolaki, M. (Berlin: De Gruyter 2018) pp. 37

²³ Gruen, E.S. *Polybius and Ethnicity*, in "Polybius and his Legacy" ed. by Miltsios, N. and Tamiolaki, M. (Berlin: De Gruyter 2018) pp. 19

When discussing the Gauls specifically, Polybius habitually falls back on well-known tropes of describing the Gauls. In this way, he is continuing the Greek literary tradition of climactic determinism which situates the Gauls as both warlike and untrustworthy because of their position in the colder and more-humid parts of Europe. It is because the Gauls are susceptible to caving in to their passion (θυμός / *thumos* in the original Greek) that the Romans eventually beat them at the Battle of Telamon in 225 BCE.²⁴

Regarding the Battle of Telamon in 225 BCE, Polybius links the events of the war in Cisalpine Gaul to Hannibal's crossing of the Alps in 218 BCE. Polybius claims that a treaty between Hasdrubal and Rome was made to prevent the Carthaginians in Iberia from crossing into Italy to aid the Gauls in their fight against the Republic.²⁵ Modern scholars are split on the issue of whether the Roman Senate felt threatened by the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul and had thus brokered the Ebro Treaty. One paper by Arthur Eckstein concluded that the sources available today agree that the Gallic threat was treated as legitimate and pressing enough to influence the Senate's decision to put a northern limit on Carthaginian expansion in Iberia. This was done to both prevent Carthaginian intervention in Cisalpine Gaul and to prevent what would become the Second Punic War from starting in the 220s BCE.²⁶ Paul Erdkamp offers another reason for the Ebro Treaty. He believes that the sudden emergence of the Gaesatae, the Boii, and Insubres meant that the most immediate threat to the Republic were the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul, not the Carthaginians in Iberia. It is because of this, at least according to Erdkamp, that the Senate put its plans to fight Carthage on hold until the Gauls were dealt with. So, the Senate brokered the Ebro Treaty.²⁷

Although the Roman invasion of Cisalpine Gaul is outside of the purview of this paper, it is important to note what Polybius says about his reason for recording the events of that war. He wrote that, "If future generations are unaware of these events, they will be utterly distraught at sudden and unexpected barbarian invasions, when all they need to do is briefly bear in mind that

²⁴ Gieseke, J. *Polybios on Roman disciplina vs Gallic θυμός: A comparing view of the Celts at war during the late Roman Republic*, in "International Ancient Warfare Conference 2018" (Dublin: University College Dublin 2018)

²⁵ Polybius, *The Histories*, trans by Waterfield R. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) Book II.13

²⁶ Eckstein, A.M. *Polybius, the Gallic Crisis, and the Ebro Treaty* in "Classical Philology, Vol. 107, No 3." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2012) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/665622>

²⁷ Erdkamp, P. *Polybius, the Ebro Treaty, and the Gallic Invasion of 225 B.C.E.* in "Classical Philology, Vol 104. No. 4." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2009) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/650983>

any barbarian threat is temporary and easily disposed of.”²⁸ At the same time, Polybius believed that the best way to fight against barbarians, no matter their apparent fearlessness and armament, is by facing them rationally. In comparison to his treatment of Hannibal Barca in his account of the Second Punic War, Polybius shows the Gauls as unintelligent and easily swayed. Hannibal is nearly the opposite, intelligent or at least able to think rationally. He was not susceptible to his passion unlike the Gauls. Polybius immediately followed his reasoning for recording the Gallic War of 225 with the appointment of Hannibal as commander of Carthaginian forces in Iberia. He blames a Gaul for the death of his Brother-in-Law Hasdrubal because of an unknown grudge. Here the Gallic man is shown to have fallen victim to his own passion. As for Hannibal, Polybius claims that despite his youth the new Carthaginian general was chosen because of his well-known intelligence.²⁹ Before the Second Punic War begins in Polybius’ narrative, he is already comparing Hannibal and the Gauls. The rest of this section on Polybius is dedicated to developing this comparison further.

The outcome of the Roman campaign in Cisalpine Gaul helped influence Hannibal’s decision to march into Italy. Polybius claims that some of the chieftains of tribes in Cisalpine Gaul approached Hannibal at the foot of the Alps with the offer to aid the Carthaginian general in his fight against the Romans.³⁰ In some ways, Polybius blames certain decisions made by Hannibal in parts of the Second Punic War on outside influences. One paper about Hannibal’s atrocities, by Dr. Louis Rawlings, outlines how Polybius claims that another man named Hannibal Monomachos was to blame for Hannibal’s cruelty.³¹ To expand upon Dr. Rawlings’ assertion, Polybius general blames Hannibal’s negative traits on anyone but Hannibal himself. Examples of Polybius blaming the Gauls for these misgivings will be expanded upon later. Already Polybius claims that an outside source is partially to blame for Hannibal’s crossing of the alps.

Hannibal’s plan to march through the Alps is an oft discussed event in Ancient History texts. For the purposes of this paper, the Gauls are brought up by Polybius for two separate reasons. As discussed above, Polybius claims that Hannibal sent messages to the Chieftains of

²⁸ Polybius, *The Histories*, Book II.35

²⁹ Polybius, Book II.36

³⁰ Polybius, Book III.44

³¹ Rawlings, L. *Hannibal the Cannibal? Polybius on Barcid Atrocities*, in “Cardiff Historical Papers” (Cardiff: Cardiff School of History and Archaeology 2007)

the many tribes of both Cisalpine Gaul and those within the Alps. These messages were meant to ensure that those Gallic tribes would rise up when Hannibal approached Italy. This was because the Gauls had recently been beaten by the Romans. At the same time, according to Polybius, it was the only way Hannibal could take the fight to the Romans in Italy.³² With this confidence that Hannibal would be joined by Gallic Warriors he began his across the Ebro River to the Alps. As the Carthaginian army approached the Rhone River, Polybius claims that many barbarians gathered on the opposite side of the river.³³ This was even though Hannibal was supposed to have made some progress diplomatically with the many Gallic tribes there. Here Polybius is describing some of the Gauls as untrustworthy because they were supposed to have agreed to allow Hannibal to cross their territory. Not only were the Gauls untrustworthy because of their breaking of supposed agreements, but Polybius also describes how the Gallic warriors were unorganized. He says that while Hanno was crossing with a small force to attack the other side of the River, the Gauls ran out of their camp without bothering to form ranks.³⁴ The idea that Gallic warriors were great fighters, but they were not best tactically will be a common theme going forward. To Polybius, Hannibal employed a high-level stratagem in ordering a small contingent of men to cross the river and attack the Gallic camp. In comparison, the Gauls were disorderly and had even started challenging their enemy before being beaten back because of their uncouth behavior. Hannibal beat the Gauls in this instance because of the organization achieved by his army and due to his intelligence and rationality.

Polybius presents some of the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul, being fickle in their promises made to Hannibal before he crossed the Alps. When the Carthaginian army marched into the Po Valley one tribe, called the Taurisci by Polybius, fought against Hannibal. While Polybius does not give much detail to the event, he says that Hannibal had the inhabitants of the main Taurisci settlement were massacred for resisting him. Polybius then describes how the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul had grown terrified of Carthaginian reprisals because of the Taurisci massacre that they upheld their original pledge. The Gauls here are shown to be both untrustworthy and capricious because they sent emissaries to Hannibal with the promise of aid should he make it to Italy. When his army arrived, those same tribes did not join his campaign immediately. It took the fear

³² Polybius, *The Histories*, Book III.34

³³ Polybius, Book III.42

³⁴ Polybius Book III.44

of being massacred like the Taurisci were to entice the other tribes of the Po Valley to join. Polybius does note later in this same section that Roman legions had passed through the Po Valley on the way to Iberia for their campaign. He makes note of this because it meant that some of the fighting men of those tribes were forced into service in the legion. They were also fearful of an immediate Roman reprisal. While Polybius does make note of the reasons for the Gauls not joining Hannibal right away, he still shows them to be untrustworthy as allies.³⁵

So far, Polybius has depicted Hannibal as rational and intelligent in his account of the Second Punic War. One instance between Hannibal and his Gallic prisoners stands out as a particularly cruel act in Polybius' work. Before Hannibal and Publius Scipio were to meet at the Battle of Ticinus in 218, Polybius shows Hannibal encouraging his troops by using his prisoners as an analogy for their own predicament. Hannibal paraded some of his prisoners before the army with sets of kingly armor, horses, and weapons set out. He asked if any two men would want to duel for the chance to gain both their freedom and the prizes set out before them should one of them be victorious. Polybius also notes that whoever participated and lost the duel would be released from his current predicament.³⁶ Before the duel started, Polybius has Hannibal give a speech to his men. Polybius wrote that Hannibal compared the army's current predicament to the duel they had just witnessed. If the army were to win decisive battles, then they would earn great riches and acclaim while if they were decisively beaten then they would be released from their torment. Polybius says it worked and Hannibal's men were determined to continue their fight.³⁷

What is presented by Polybius is likely a misunderstanding of Gallic social norms in the 3rd Century BCE. Single combat became a regular appearance in later sources on wars with the Gauls.³⁸ Something to note about Polybius' work is that the Gauls consistently appear in the context of some type of conflict. These conflicts include his description of the Gallic War of the 200 BCE immediately preceding the Second Punic War.³⁹ With this in mind, what is likely depicted by Polybius is Hannibal's attempt at recruiting some of the captured Gauls into his

³⁵ Ibid. Book III.60

³⁶ Polybius, Book III.62

³⁷ Polybius, Book III. 63

³⁸ Diodorus Siculus claims this in his work titled *Bibliotheca* Book V.29 and Polybius described the armor given to the Gallic prisoners as something worn by their kings in single combat.

³⁹ Polybius is a major source for the Gallic Wars of the 200s BCE at Book II.17-23

retinue. Celtic society functioned through a complex web of clients and patrons.⁴⁰ By holding this duel, Hannibal presents himself as a patron much like those found within Celtic society during the 3rd Century BCE. Hannibal must have learned of the concept of clientship in Gallic society in his dealings with the Celtiberians. On top of this, Polybius depicts Hannibal as both inspirational and intelligent for using Gallic social norms to his advantage. This worked to his advantage because he ingratiated himself to some of the Gauls within his camp. The idea that this event is inspirational is based purely on Polybius', most likely constructed, speech that he has Hannibal do.⁴¹ Hannibal's intelligence came from understanding that the Gauls appreciated gifts and the chance to showcase their prowess in battle.

The Battle of Ticinus proved to be a turning point in Gallic and Carthaginian relations. While some of the tribes decided to join Hannibal after massacring the Taurisci, Polybius describes how the following engagement with the Romans at Ticinus led to more tribes sending emissaries to the Carthaginians. The explanation that he offers is that the Gauls wanted to "be on good terms with the Carthaginians."⁴² This shows that Polybius did not treat the Gauls as a single entity. Any historian living close to the time of the Second Punic War understood that the Gauls lived in separate political units called tribes which meant that some would join the Romans while others the Carthaginians. Another consequence of the Battle of Ticinus is an event Polybius describes as treacherous. One night, the Gauls serving under Publius Scipio betrayed the Romans by attacking some of the Romans camped nearby and decapitated those killed. The Gauls then brought their heads to Hannibal as a gift of friendship.⁴³ Louis Rawlings demonstrates that Hannibal understood Gallic-Customs by hosting the duel to the death described above.⁴⁴ Hannibal also understood Gallic customs by receiving the Roman heads as a gift from the Gauls who deserted Scipio's army. By this point in Polybius' narrative, most of the Gauls have joined Hannibal's cause.

Polybius wrote that Hannibal did not fully trust some of his new-found Gallic allies. While the Carthaginian army waited out the winter of 218 BCE, Polybius describes how

⁴⁰ Champion, T. *Power, Politics and Status*, in "The Celtic World" ed. by Green, M.J. (Milton Park: Routledge 1996)

⁴¹ (Footnote on speeches in the classical historiographical tradition here)

⁴² Polybius, Book III.66

⁴³ Polybius, Book III.67

⁴⁴ Rawlings, L. *Celts, Spaniards, and Samnites: Warriors in a Soldiers' War*, in "The Second Punic War a Reappraisal" (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996) pp. 89

Hannibal spied on some of his allies. Hannibal disguises himself in several different wigs to hide his identity while he spoke to some of his Gallic allies. According to Polybius, the Gauls did not like that the war was continuing on their own territory and preferred if they were to march into enemy territory. At the same time, while they expressed some dissatisfaction towards the Romans, Polybius notes that the Gauls cared more for the prospect of booty earned through victory in battle.⁴⁵ Hannibal's reaction to this news was to prepare to march his army out of Cisalpine Gaul and into the parts of Italy owned by the Roman Republic directly. This anecdote shows that Polybius believed Hannibal to be a capable commander. This is because he did not trust the Gauls, who were described by Polybius as duplicitous, but understood that he could satiate their lust for booty which is what kept them loyal to Hannibal. Questioning the historicity of this event is outside the purview of this paper, but what this anecdote provides is insight into Polybius as an author, more specifically what Polybius thought of Hannibal as a commander. Hannibal is cognoscente of what his newfound allies want.

The belief that the Gauls were fickle and prone to changing sides continues in Polybius' account of Hannibal's march through Etruria. Hannibal's intelligence is shown by his march order. In the front are what Polybius calls, "his best troops," the Libyans and Iberians. Towards the back of the line are the Gauls who are trailed by Hannibal's brother Mago and his contingent of cavalry. Polybius claims that this orientation was to, "safeguard against the Celts' lack of resolve." If the Gauls were to attempt at escaping their current predicament, "Mago could use the cavalry against them and stop them." Polybius in this section of the text notes how the Libyans and Iberians had little trouble marching through the marshes while the Gauls had never experienced anything like that before. As such, while the entire army suffered from exhaustion, Polybius says that the Gauls were more exhausted than the rest.⁴⁶ This short anecdote on Hannibal's march to Etruria serves two purposes. First, it explains how Hannibal ended up losing his eye on account of an infection he got while on the march. Second, it serves to compare the two different examples of the barbarian "other" in Polybius' *Histories*. Hannibal and his Libyans and Iberians represent the more noble barbarian who can withstand long marches and even infection to achieve their goal of fighting the Roman Republic. The Gauls are the other type of

⁴⁵ Polybius, Book III.78

⁴⁶ Polybius, Book III.79

barbarian. They are prone to complaint, easily swayed, and when things get tough, they are known to abandon those around them.

It is in this part of the text that Polybius delves into one of his famous digressions to answer the question of what makes a good commander. In this case, he does not delve into what makes Hannibal a good commander. Instead, Polybius used the Roman Consul for 217 BCE, Gaius Flaminius, as an example of a bad commander. While not specifically named by Polybius, Flaminius is described as a drunkard who cannot sleep without drinking wine beforehand while he is also addicted to sex. The worst qualities listed for Flaminius are cowardice and sluggishness coupled with irrationality and recklessness. Polybius says that these are signs of a bad commander and can often lead to the destruction of states.⁴⁷ It was because Hannibal understood that Flaminius had these qualities that he eventually won the next battle in the narrative. Polybius wrote this digression into the qualities of a bad commander because his work is morally didactic.⁴⁸ What this means is that readers were to compare the traits of the good commander with that of the bad commander. What is left for the reader to learn from this section of Polybius is that Hannibal is the opposite of Flaminius. Polybius' account of the Battle of Lake Trasimene has Flaminius get killed by a group of Gauls, a likely reference to Gallic dissatisfaction at how Gaius Flaminius spearheaded an expansion of Roman power in Cisalpine Gaul while also being a lesson from Polybius that those who are hot-headed and over-confident can still lose to the hot-headed and overconfident barbarians.⁴⁹

The topic of Celtic prowess is presented in several places throughout Polybius' text. Of note is the idea that the Celts suffered the most losses of any unit in the Battle of Lake Trasimene.⁵⁰ This can serve two purposes. First, Polybius may highlight the fact that Hannibal's army was comprised of mostly his Gallic allies. This would make sense because at this point in the war, most of the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul were allied to Hannibal and sent to serve in his army. The second purpose this note serves is a call-back to how the Celts fought. The implication of saying the Celts suffered the most losses is meant to show their general disorder and lack of tenacity. At the same time, a contemporary reading Polybius may imagine some of the Gauls

⁴⁷ Polybius, Book III.81

⁴⁸ Hau, I.L. *Polybius*, in "Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus Siculus," (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2016) pp.71

⁴⁹ Polybius, Book III.84

⁵⁰ Polybius, Book III.85

charging into the fight naked.⁵¹ This would also explain the large loss of life. In comparison then, the other non-Celtic soldiers of Hannibal's army are much more tenacious in the face of hardship while they are also better equipped. The idea that the Gauls fight naked and are thus not as effective fighters as their Libyan counterparts is a point made by Polybius later.

Cannae is such a good place to finish with Polybius' narrative because it shows both what Polybius thought of the Gauls and what he thought of Hannibal as a commander. Hannibal commanded a force of men from throughout the ancient world and as such he had to learn what strengths and weaknesses each group had. Polybius notes the specific placement of different warriors in Hannibal's army. He says that the Iberian and Celtic cavalry were stationed on the far left. The Numidian cavalry had their own contingent on the far right of the line. Bordering the cavalry on the wings were the Libyans which were noted by Polybius as wielding Roman arms and wearing Roman weapons.⁵² The middle was staffed by the remaining Iberian and Celtic infantry. Of note is the fact that Hannibal had the Celts and Iberians form a crescent shape bulging towards the Roman center. Polybius claims that this was done so that the Iberians and Celts could take the brunt of the fighting.⁵³ In this way, Hannibal is shown to be tactically intelligent because he understood that his Libyan infantry were far more valuable and harder to replenish than his Gallic allies. At the same time, the Gauls are known for their cavalry prowess and as such are given a position of prominence on the battlefield.

Polybius describes the arms and armor of many of the fighting men in Hannibal's army. The Libyans, as mentioned previously, were armed with Roman equipment. These men acted as Hannibal's heavy infantry and were placed on the wings near the cavalry. The arms of the Celts were described by Polybius as, "good only for cutting." This is in comparison to the Iberian sword which had a tip that was just as dangerous as its cutting edge. This meant that the Gauls were not as well equipped in terms of their weaponry. Polybius also wrote that the Gauls were naked, while the Iberians fought in their tunics with no description of any armor. The only protection for the Iberians and Gauls was their shield, which was of a similar design.⁵⁴ The image presented by Polybius would have been a familiar fixture for a Greek and Roman

⁵¹ The Gaesatae are described as fighting naked by Polybius in Book II.28-30

⁵² Polybius notes this in the section immediately following his description of Hannibal's battle formation in Book III.114.

⁵³ Polybius, Book III.113

⁵⁴ Polybius, Book III.114

audience. The image of a naked Gaul wielding only a shield and sword has an antecedent in the form of the Celtomachy Frieze. There is also the image of the Dying Gaul which was a statue commissioned by Attalus I of Pergamon following his victory over the Gallic tribes that would eventually become the Galatians. As such, depictions of Gallic nakedness come from an ethnic stereotype started in the Greek world which is continued by Polybius in literary form.⁵⁵ It is as if Polybius expects his audience to already have this image in mind when writing his descriptions. No other barbarian is mentioned as fighting naked by Polybius.

Polybius' account of the fighting at Cannae has the Gauls take center-stage. When battle commenced, Polybius describes how the Iberians and Gauls fought valiantly against the Roman legions. Hannibal's cavalry contingent, which was partially staffed by Gauls, had met with the Roman cavalry on the left side of the line. When the two met, instead of circling around the enemy and fighting on horseback, Polybius has the Gauls dismount and fight on foot.⁵⁶ The Gallic infantry though did not fare so well. The crescent formation described by Polybius eventually broke and the Gauls began retreating. This resulted in the Romans chasing after the fleeing Gauls and Iberians. This allowed the Libyan heavy infantry to swing in from behind and trap completely encircle the Romans. Polybius claims that, "this was exactly the result Hannibal had planned for."⁵⁷ Here is the penultimate example of Polybius' implicit bias against the Gauls in comparison to Hannibal. Polybius' claims of Hannibal's prowess as a commander are in full effect. He is commanding a multi-cultural army that has different strengths and weaknesses when it comes to fighting well enough to beat the near ethnically homogenous Roman legions.

To conclude this section on Polybius, the Gauls are treated as a separate form of the "other" in comparison to Hannibal and the other barbarians. It is important to note these differences in writing because they serve several purposes in Polybius' text. Noted previously is that idea that learning about the Gauls duplicitous and fickle nature is necessary for future generations. This is important to Polybius because those future generations can better understand how to deal with the Gauls in the future. As for Hannibal, he is a different form of the "other" in Polybius' work. The lesson to learned from Hannibal's invasion of Italy in the Second Punic War

⁵⁵ Cassibry, K. *The Tyranny of "The Dying Gaul": Confronting and Ethnic Stereotype in Ancient Art*. In "The Art Bulletin." (New York: College Art Association 2017)

⁵⁶ Diodorus Siculus records a similar event in his *Bibliotheka* Book V.29. The difference between himself and Polybius is that he has the Gauls ride in on chariots.

⁵⁷ Polybius, Book III.115

is that there are groups of people outside of the Greek world worthy of admiration for their intelligence and cunning. While this section ends with the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE, Polybius continues his narrative of the Second Punic War and there are more examples of Hannibal's prowess as a commander. Polybius' main purpose in inadvertently comparing the Gauls and Hannibal is to show his readers that men from places like Carthage are capable of intelligence and cunning. The Gauls serve as near foils to Hannibal's character because of their lack of intelligence and their susceptibility to their passions.

Livy

The next author considered here is the Early Imperial Era historian Titus Livius. Although he is not the earliest Roman annalist and historian, we are fortunate that his books on the Second Punic War survive.⁵⁸ He drew upon several earlier works, including much of Polybius' retelling of events. He was far removed from the events of the Second Punic War and thus could not interrogate survivors and veterans of that conflict, unlike Polybius. The purpose of investigating Livy's work in conjunction with Polybius is to juxtapose how one author treats the Gauls in comparison to the other. This shows the development of Roman historiography and its treatment of the other, both in the form of how it treats the Gauls and Hannibal.

Before investigating Livy's work, it is important to outline Livy's purpose and overall style. Livy says he ventured to write his work because he wanted to add to the annals of the "foremost nation in the world."⁵⁹ This phrase shows the patriotic nature of Livy's History to some modern scholars. Of note here is the fact Livy is an annalist not an antiquarian. Livy followed events and wrote them down in a year-by-year structure.⁶⁰ The alternative interpretation of Livy's reason for writing his history is that he wanted to present a narrative of the events which led to the rise of the Roman state. In this way then, 'foremost people' refers to the Roman Republic at the time of his writing the History of Rome which ruled over the Mediterranean. The word 'foremost' describes the most powerful and prominent state at the time, not that the Romans were special among all other peoples. Other authors argue that Livy's use of the term '*terrarum*' in the original Latin of his work indicates that the Romans ruled over others.⁶¹ Later in his preface, Livy claims that no other nation before had as many good examples of good men to follow.⁶² Livy's patriotism, insofar as his work could be considered patriotic, was derived from the investigation of specific men that made Rome what it was at the time.⁶³ At the center of this study of Livy's treatment of the *other* is his treatment of a specific Carthaginian man, Hannibal Barca.

⁵⁸ Mineo, B. *Principal Literary Sources for the Punic Wars (apart from Polybius)*, in "A Companion to the Punic Wars" ed by Horos, D. (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing 2011)

⁵⁹ Livy, *History of Rome*, Book I.pr.

⁶⁰ Levene, D.S. *Roman Historiography in the Late Republic*, in "A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography" ed. by Marincola, J. (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing 2011)

⁶¹ Vasaly, Ann, *Livy's Preface: A Reader's Guide to the First Pentad*, in "Livy's Political Philosophy: Power and Personality in Early Rome" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp 24

⁶² Livy, *History of Rome*, Book I.pr.

⁶³ Burton, P.J. *Livy's Preface and its Historical Context*. (Dunedin: Scholia 2008)

Outside of Hannibal, Livy's narrative of the other barbarians is much broader. Hannibal is the focus of Books XXI – XXV and as such his actions are presented as his own, whereas the Gauls feature less prominently in Livy's work beyond the sack of Rome in 390 BC. Michal Fazcza points out several aspects about the Gauls in Livy's work that will serve as a guide through the rest of this section. First, the Gauls served as primary opponents to the Roman state, but they did not serve as the primary drivers of Livy's narrative. Second, the Gauls were not treated as individuals but were instead described in ways that were familiar to a Roman audience when discussing the Gauls. Lastly, Livy does not offer clearer details about the different Gallic tribes, rather he treats them as a homogenous group.⁶⁴ These are important points to note because Livy's treatment of the Gauls in his account on the Second Punic War presents specific examples of Fazcza's conclusions. Of course, Fazcza does use some examples of events in the Second Punic War that uphold his conclusions that does not mean this paper will stop expanding upon instances where the Gauls are treated as a broad "other" as there are more to be investigated further. Instead, it will use Fazcza's list as a guide to analyzing Livy's assessment of the Gauls. In the introduction to her translation of Livy, Betty Radice states that Livy treats the many barbarian peoples with generalized statements and negative descriptions. The Gauls are unreliable and irresolute, while the Carthaginians are treacherous. The Romans he treats on a case-by-case basis. What this means is that individual Roman commanders will sometimes extol certain virtues, while other commanders will be described as barbaric by Livy.⁶⁵

It is also worth noting that there is a certain *topos* at play in Livy's work. The Second Punic War serves as an example of *metus hostilis*. When translated this means "fear of the enemy." In this conflict Hannibal served as the main antagonist of Rome, making him the primary example of *metus hostilis*.⁶⁶ Within this is another concept, that of *metus gallicus*, or fear of the Gauls. Livy used the fear of the Gauls as a driving factor in his description of Second Punic War.⁶⁷ This is because while Hannibal is offered as the main antagonist in his History, the Gauls still play a prominent role. It is also important to note that the Gauls were the closest to conquering the city.

⁶⁴ Fazcza, M. *Livy and the Celts*, in "Rerum gestarum monumentis et memoriae Cultural Readings in Livy" ed. by Gillmeister, A. (Warsaw: Studia Historia 2018)

⁶⁵ Radice, B. *Introduction*, in "The War with Hannibal" by Livy, trans. by De Selincourt. A. (London: Penguin Books 1965)

⁶⁶ Mineo, B. *Principal Literary Sources for the Punic Wars (Apart from Polybius)*, pp. 122

⁶⁷ Almeida, P.A.F. *Fearing the Enemy: Livy's Description of the Gauls*, in "Fearmongering in Greek and Roman Literature and Beyond" (London: Routledge 2025)

Livy plays into fear that it could have been conquered again by Hannibal and his other barbarians to extol the virtues of different Roman commanders in their ability to prevent that.

Livy's account of the beginning of the Second Punic War shares many parallels with Polybius' narrative, which is unsurprising as Polybius' work is a significant source for Livy's own history (as noted previously). The place where the war starts is the Iberian city of Saguntum. Livy claims that Hannibal, after taking command of the Carthaginian army in Iberia following his brother-in-law Hasdrubal's death, had started ravaging the lands surrounding Saguntine territory. This was done to provoke a retaliation from Saguntum which might bring the Romans in. In response, the Romans sent a delegation in an attempt to broker some type of peace while upholding the treaty signed following the First Punic War. Hannibal refused to meet with the Roman envoys which led them to approach the Carthaginian senate directly.⁶⁸ In this episode Livy introduces some of his general views of Hannibal through a speech given by a direct political opponent in Carthage named Hanno. Hanno calls Hannibal a "dangerous and ambitious man, hot with the desire for power."⁶⁹ In this way, Livy is blaming the beginning of the Second Punic War on Hannibal's temperament. His ambition and desire for power combined with a promise to the gods that he would always fight the Roman Republic were to blame for the war's beginning.

Livy's use of Polybius as a source has been called into question by several scholars over a number of years. While this paper is not focused on the question of whether Livy used Polybius as a source, it is worth noting here that the similarities in description must come from somewhere. Taking Christopher Baron's approach in comparing the two texts to determine if Livy used Polybius' work at all has yielded a mixed result. There are very clear instances of Livy mirroring his description of events in Polybius' work. While Baron focuses on the beginning of the war to determine this, there will be other instances that are worth noting when Livy is using Polybius as a source while adding his own Roman flair. It is because Polybius and Livy were from different areas and times that their foci may end up being different. Polybius blames the beginning of the war on factors that predate Hannibal's siege of Saguntum because he does not come from a Roman background. Polybius viewed factors like the treatment of Carthage by the Roman Senate

⁶⁸ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.5-9

⁶⁹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.10

following the First Punic War as a catalyst for the Second Punic War. Livy, meanwhile, uses the siege as the true beginning of the war, likely because of his Roman background.⁷⁰

With war having begun, the Romans set out to negotiate alliances with multiple different groups of people. Livy says that one envoy to Iberia was turned away by a tribe called the Volciani because of the lack of a Roman response to Saguntum's siege.⁷¹ The directness of this response is in direct contrast to the response rendered by the Gauls north of the Pyrenees. Livy states that immediately after hearing what was asked, chaotic shouts erupted from the younger warriors present. Livy also says that the Gauls did not want to help the Romans for a couple of reasons. First, the Gauls noted that they did not want to have the war fought on their lands for the protection of Roman lands in Italy. At the same time, the Gauls noted that their kin in Cisalpine Gaul were driven away from their lands and forced to pay tribute to the Romans. Livy finishes this story of the Roman embassies in Gaul with a note about how Hannibal had already negotiated with them. He includes this note, "that not even to Hannibal would the Gallic peoples, with their warlike and independent spirit, prove very tractable friends unless he mollified their chiefs from time to time with presents of gold – which all Gauls coveted."⁷² This anecdote showcases that the Romans were treating with the Gauls as they would with other states, while Hannibal approached the Gauls as a benefactor. Hannibal is shown to understand how barbarian peoples tended to work while the Romans were above trying to pay off the Gauls. Present scholars of Hannibal's tactics posit that his attempts at allying with the Gauls in Northern Italy, as well as the Greeks city-states in the South, served to weaken the Roman state in the years following the Second Punic War.⁷³ This idea has little basis in the literature but this type of strategy is not unheard of.

Outside of what was said, Livy's description of the event is interesting to note here. First, he claims that the council met in full armor, which was supposed to be customary.⁷⁴ Livy's readers must have understood this to be something different from their own cultural norms. Roman citizens during the republic understood that the city had a ceremonial boundary called the Pomerium where

⁷⁰ Baron, C. *The Historian's Craft: Narrative Strategies and Historical Method*, pp. 219

⁷¹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.19

⁷² Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.20

⁷³ Fronda, M.P. *Hannibal: Tactics, Strategy, and Geostrategy*, in "A Companion to the Punic Wars" ed by Horos, D. (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing 2011)

⁷⁴ Ibid.

generals and other military personnel were to not pass.⁷⁵ The idea that the Gauls met in their own councils to make important decisions in full armor implies that they did not follow certain civilized customs. At the same time, in this same interaction Livy claims that the response from the younger men of the Gallic congregation shouted and laughed at any Roman suggestion of working together.⁷⁶ This suggests that Livy wants to show the Gauls as being led by the younger members of society. While the older magistrates reigned them in, Livy suggested here that the Gauls were more prone to emotional outbursts than their Roman counterparts. All this suggests that Livy shows the Gauls as not having set civic traditions, which is a part of them being considered barbarians.

When Hannibal's army began to march it brought along a small contingent of Celtiberians from the Carpetani tribe. Livy treats this group of men in a similar vain to the other so-called fully Celtic tribes. He says that they did not want to march because of the length of the march ahead and the nearly impossible task of going through the Alps. In response to this, Hannibal dismissed the men in his army that showed signs of resentment at the campaign. This ended up with 7,000 men leaving which included the 3,000 Carpetani that refused to march.⁷⁷ This interaction is reminiscent of an event which Polybius mentions in III book in which Polybius wrote that the Gauls, when faced with the march through the Etruscan marshes, were some of the loudest to complain about it.⁷⁸ While in terms of ethnography, the Celtiberians are different from their counterparts both in Gaul and Italy, they still uphold some of the stereotypes about Gallic peoples. Livy shows the Celtiberians as unreliable and undisciplined despite their apparent desire to fight.⁷⁹

In Italy though, the Cisalpine Gauls rose up in revolt against the Republic once again. Livy claims that this had nothing to do with Hannibal's crossing of the Pyrenees. Instead, the Gauls were angry that the Romans had settled two separate colonies on Gallic land.⁸⁰ This is in stark contrast to Polybius who believed that part of the reason for Hannibal's crossing of the Alps was because of Gallic support in Northern Italy. In this revolt, Livy says that the Gauls had little experience with siege warfare. As such, they decided to resort to unorthodox tactics. Livy claims

⁷⁵ Carla, F. *Pomerium, Fines, and Ager Romanus, Understanding Rome's "First Boundary,"* in *Latomus* (Brussels: Société d'Études Latines de Bruxelles 2015)

⁷⁶ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.20

⁷⁷ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.23

⁷⁸ Polybius, Book III.78-79

⁷⁹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.23

⁸⁰ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.25

that while the Gauls were sieging Mutina, they asked to open negotiations for a treaty. When the Roman envoys approached, the Gauls captured them and refused to release them unless their hostages were restored.⁸¹ Livy puts this anecdote in because it shows that the Gauls did not follow accepted rules of warfare. Their uncivilized nature, combined with their lack of real cities like those built in Italy, influenced the Gauls to resort to capturing Roman envoys to get their desired outcome.

Livy's description of Gallic tactics being different from the accepted norm of pitched battles continues in this section of his work. Lucius Manlius, a praetor who attempted to lift the siege of Mutina formed a small force and marched north towards the colony. On the way, the army happened to cross a wooded area. It was there that a Gallic force ambushed the Roman force and Manlius led his men out into a more open part of the country. There he fortified his position until the men gained their morale back. From there they continued their march north and happened upon another wooded area which was ambushed again. After narrowly escaping from this second ambush, the Romans marched to Tannetum, which they had used as a fortified position.⁸² While Livy's description of this event partially places blame on Lucius Manlius for not using scouts to check for ambushes, he also meant to outline how the Gauls used dishonorable tactics to win. In this way then, Fazcaza's analysis that Livy purported specific stereotypes to the Gauls as signs of barbarity such as a lack of discipline and aggression, it can also be said that their way of fighting is also a part of their barbarity.⁸³ For Livy, the Gauls are barbaric because of their lack of real tactics, that is tactics used in pitched battles. Their barbarity is in direct contrast with Hannibal who employed real stratagems when commanding his armies.

Later, Livy details some battlefield practices from the Gauls in Hannibal's march across southern Gaul which he uses to contrast Hannibal's tactics. There he met with some unfriendly tribes, Livy specifically names the Volcae, who attempted to stop his crossing of the Rhone river. Seeing that the Gallic threat was holding a defensive position across the bank, Hannibal ordered a small contingent to march upriver and cross it without being seen. From there they were set up a smoke signal to tell Hannibal and the rest of the army to begin crossing on their rafts so that they may attack the Gauls from behind. As the Carthaginian army was crossing the river, Livy notes the

⁸¹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.25

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Fazcaza, *Livy and the Celts*, pp. 169

disorder of Gallic attack. They came forth, “howling and singing as was their custom, shaking their shields above their heads and brandishing their spears.” It was because of Hannibal’s strategic thinking in sending a small contingent to flank the Gauls that victory was his. Livy claims that despite a single attempt at resistance, the Gauls broke and fled back to their villages.⁸⁴ Here is another instance of the image of the wild Gallic warrior. Livy is showing his readers that the Gauls cared little for real stratagems because of their lack of organization. On top of that, he shows the Gauls as easy to defeat because of their lack of resistance when they were surrounded. Contrasting this with Hannibal who used the region to his advantage in hiding his famous flanking maneuvers.

Skipping ahead a bit, Hannibal made his famous crossing of the alps and began to befriend some of the Gallic tribes of Northern Italy. As he was doing so, Publius Cornelius Scipio returned to Italy and with the help of Lucius Manlius and Gaius Atilius began to mount a defensive against the Carthaginian threat. Much of Livy’s description of events from Hannibal’s crossing to the Battle of Ticinus mirrors Polybius’ account. Once again, some Gallic troops in the Roman army betrayed it in the night. Livy does not account as to why the Gauls betrayed Scipio, but he does give Hannibal’s response. He says that Hannibal offered them riches should they decide to influence their respective communities to revolt against the Republic. This is supposed to be a sign of a revolt amongst all Gallic tribes.⁸⁵ As previously stated, Hannibal is likely engaging in a more common social practice amongst the Gauls. He presents himself as a client to the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul. This clientship nets the Gallic tribes access to booty won through his conquests in Italy. In return, the Gauls provided Hannibal supplies and manpower. Hannibal’s position as patron is boosted by the fact that he had so many tribes following him.⁸⁶ Of course, it is important to note that the Gauls were likely to follow him for more reasons than just his patronage. They likely viewed Hannibal as a counter to Rome’s expansion into Cisalpine Gaul, which they had fought against previously. It is a sign of Hannibal’s own intellectual capacity that he could adapt to different cultures when the need arose to bring them under his patronage, something that was typically antithetical to Roman sensibilities.

Moving on to one of the most recorded battles of this time period, the Battle of the Trebia River, Livy offers some insight into Gallic duplicitousness. By this point in his narrative, the Gauls

⁸⁴ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.26-28

⁸⁵ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.29-48

⁸⁶ Champion, T. *Power, Politics, and Status*, pp. 92

had started to swear allegiance to Hannibal but with the full might of the Roman army nearby, they began to question their allegiance. Livy claims that the Gauls, specifically the tribes that lay between the Trebia and Po rivers, were going to wait for the outcome of the following battle before fully swearing allegiance. Livy then says that the Romans accepted this, so long as they did not fight the Romans much longer, while Hannibal was angered by this because he believed that it was the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul that invited him to liberate them from the Roman yoke in the first place. In his anger, Hannibal sent a force of 3,000 men, with some Gallic warriors intermixed, to raid the countryside. In response, the tribes between the Trebia and Po rivers sent emissaries to ask for Rome's assistance in exchange for their undying loyalty.⁸⁷

Here Livy brings out an example of what he meant in his early description of Hannibal as a man. While it has not been mentioned previously, it is pertinent that Hannibal's character according to Livy. He claims many virtues for the Punic general but also lists his faults, including, "inhuman cruelty, a more than Punic perfidy, a total disregard of truth, honor, and religion, of the sanctity of an oath and of all that other men hold sacred."⁸⁸ This description is juxtaposed to Hannibal's response to some of the Gauls having not yet joined him. He responds with violence when the Gauls decided to wait to join the side of the victor. While this may not be considered excessively cruel in comparison to examples made by Canter in 1929, it is worth noting that Livy's version of Hannibal was capable of violence towards so-called allies when they did not show themselves as capable of upholding their allegiance.⁸⁹ This violent reaction to Gallic impropriety shows that Livy's version of Hannibal is the more violent barbarian, while the Gauls were the less reliable barbarians.

The response of the Roman commanders to the Gallic plight continues to show Livy's attitude towards the Gauls. He says that Scipio reacted to the news with disdain. Scipio did not trust the Gauls because of their recent betrayal. The other consul for that year, Tiberius Sempronius Longus, responded quickly and believed that if he were to help the Gauls then they would be eternally loyal to Rome. While Scipio had hesitated to send aid to the Gauls, Sempronius sent a contingent of cavalry to stop Hannibal's raiders, which led to a Roman victory.⁹⁰ Livy wrote this

⁸⁷ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.52

⁸⁸ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.4

⁸⁹ Canter, H.V. *The Character of Hannibal*, in "The Classical Journal" (Natchitoches: The Classical Association of the Middle West and South 1929)

⁹⁰ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.52

exchange because he believed Scipio to be the better commander because of his lack of trust towards the Gauls. He is also shown to be more hesitant to respond in comparison to Sempronius' quick action. Of course, it is important to note that because of this engagement Sempronius became much more confident in his ability to beat Hannibal which may have contributed to his defeat at the Trebia River.

Despite Sempronius' aid to some of the Cisalpine tribes, there was not much support for the Romans from the Gauls at the Battle of the Trebia River. In his account for the numbers of troops on both sides Livy claims that the Romans had some contingents of men from the Cenomani. He notes that the Cenomani was the only tribe to remain loyal to the Republic.⁹¹ This could be for a couple of reasons. One reason is that Livy intended on writing some of the Gauls as unreliable in their promises. This is because he showed that those tribes asked for Roman aid in return for their loyalty, but when they received that aid, most ended up not joining the Romans. At the same time, the specific mention of the Cenomani offers an interesting insight. In later centuries following their being conquered by the Romans, the Cenomani of Brixia and Verona wanted to distance themselves from their Transalpine cousins and the barbarity that came with that relation. According to Williams in his book *Beyond the Rubicon*, the Cenomani wanted to distance themselves from the other Gallic tribes who arrived with Brennus so that Roman rights and protections could be extended to them.⁹² By Livy's time, the Cenomani were integrated into the Republic and as such Livy's inclusion of them in this part of the narrative shows his recognition that they could be reliable as allies unlike the other Gallic tribes.⁹³

Livy says that Hannibal had spent the Winter of 218 BCE in the lands of the Gauls. By the beginning of the following Spring of 217 BCE Livy claims that there was some dissatisfaction with the way the War was going amongst Hannibal's Gallic allies. It was because the war was primarily taking place in Gallic lands, and the fact that the Gauls had not been able to plunder other lands as they had been promised, that he says they, "forgot their hatred of Rome and turned all the force of their resentment against Hannibal." It was because of this that Livy once again mirrors a detail in Polybius where Hannibal had to put on several disguises to confuse the Gauls that

⁹¹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXI.55

⁹² Williams, J.C.H. *Beyond the Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy*, (Oxford: Oxford Historical Monographs 2001) pp. 123

⁹³ The Cenomani did eventually attempt to fight the Republic after the Second Punic War but according to Livy they remained loyal through the Second Punic War.

conspired to kill him. At the same time, Livy notes that the Gauls and their “mutual treachery” caused them to report when another Gallic contingent was plotting to kill him.⁹⁴ Once again Livy is somewhat mirroring his description of events to Polybius’ writing. One difference to note is that Livy claims Hannibal had to change his entire outfit as well as headgear while Polybius only has Hannibal changing into different wigs. Regardless of where Livy got this event from, both Polybius and Livy are claiming that the Gauls are untrustworthy as allies.

Soon after Hannibal marched his troops through Etruria, in particular Livy says he decided to take the shorter route which had recently been flooded out by the Arno River. Livy also notes the order of the troops in this march. He says that the Iberian and African troops took the front with the Numidian cavalry in the rear and the Gauls in the center of the line. This was done to, “keep a check on the Gauls in case (living up to the national character) they should become sick of the hardships involved in a long march and be tempted to slip away, or to refuse to proceed.”⁹⁵ The entire army even ended up suffering from the march. Hannibal himself is thought to have lost his eye in this march and is the reason why he is often depicted with an eyepatch in later depictions. Using the framework that it was in their nature to be unreliable, Livy explicitly states here that they were known for this. In previous examples Livy is writing down his interpretation of events. In this example, Livy clearly states that the Gauls were unreliable because of their lack of fortitude in facing adversity.

Without going into too much detail about the events leading up to it, the Battle of Lake Trasimene is another place where Gallic barbarity is shown. In the heat of the battle, the Roman commander Flaminius fought with his men surrounding him. Despite this, Livy says that his armor made him stand out to a Gallic cavalryman from the Insubres tribe named Ducarius. Ducarius charged the Consul and killed him with his lance. The men surrounding Flaminius had managed to save his body from being stripped by the Insubrian Ducarius.⁹⁶ Following the end of the battle, Hannibal wanted to bury his dead and attempted to honor Flaminius with a burial as well. Livy says that Flaminius’ body was never found.⁹⁷ The question that can be asked in this instance is why Livy would have this incident in the first place? The interpretation offered here is that Livy left

⁹⁴ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.1

⁹⁵ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.2

⁹⁶ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.6

⁹⁷ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.7

out a common practice amongst Gallic warriors. Diodorus Siculus, living roughly contemporary to Livy's time, describes how the Gauls practice headhunting.⁹⁸ With this in mind, Livy's audience likely understood that Flaminius' body had already been taken by the Gauls and that his head was dressed up in their traditional style. This is meant to make Hannibal into the more honorable barbarian because of his following certain funerary traditions.

Moving ahead to the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE, Livy lists the arrangement of both forces. Of note is the idea that Gauls and Celtiberians staffed the center of Hannibal's line. He also continues to use the typical description of the Gauls as fighting nearly naked.⁹⁹ Once the fighting started, Livy follows Polybius' description of the convex center, staffed by the Gauls and Celtiberians, which broke and started forming a concave line. This caused the Romans to be surrounded by the enemy, primarily Hannibal's African infantry which was equipped with Roman arms and armor.¹⁰⁰ Livy does not claim that Hannibal had specifically planned for the Gauls to be ineffective in the center like Polybius. The Gauls in Livy's description of the Battle of Cannae were just ineffective and that happened to work to Hannibal's advantage. Regardless of their effectiveness in battle, Hannibal still took advantage of the Gauls falling back to envelop the enemy, thus showing his prowess as a commander.

The final point to be made about Livy's depiction of the Gauls concerns his description of the aftermath of the Battle of Cannae. He claims that it was for Rome, "a defeat no less famous than the defeat on the Allia."¹⁰¹ Here Livy is explicitly comparing Hannibal's invasion with that of the Gauls under Brennus in the 300s BCE. The image presented by this allusion is that the Battle of Cannae is the closest Hannibal got to conquering Rome. One difference, something that Livy does note, is that Brennus was able to conquer the city. Hannibal on the other hand decided not to attack the city which Livy claims to mean that Cannae was, "less serious."¹⁰² Here the Gauls are depicted as being the more fearsome barbarians because they were able to take over most of the city. It might be said that Hannibal's reluctance showed his intelligent command, but Livy called

⁹⁸ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheka*, trans. By Oldfather, C.H. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1967) pp. Book V.29

⁹⁹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.46

¹⁰⁰ Livy says the African troops had Roman arms in XXII.46, the rest of the battle is XXII.47

¹⁰¹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXII.50

¹⁰² Ibid.

him a fool for not capitalizing on his victory at Cannae. Once again, this section ends with the author's depiction of Cannae.

Silius Italicus

The final author considered for this study is the Flavian poet Silius Italicus and his work titled *Punica*. The choice of poetry instead of prose in this final section is intended to show the final stages of the development of the Second Punic War in the Roman mind. By Silius Italicus' time, many centuries passed and what was considered important to different Romans had changed. On top of this, the city of Carthage, which had for so long been a symbol of the 'other' in the Roman psyche, had been razed and rebuilt into one of the richest Roman cities in the Mediterranean. The passage of time turned the Second Punic War into something of a legendary event. Silius Italicus is emblematic of this shift because he wrote his work on the Second Punic War along the lines of Vergil's *Aeneid*.¹⁰³ While Polybius was not a Roman by birth, he owed some of his political allegiance to the Roman state. Livy was also not born in the city of Rome but had become one of the foremost experts on Roman history because of his work. Both authors had been born during the Republic, while Silius Italicus was born well into the imperial period. As such, Silius Italicus' attitude towards Hannibal and other barbarians differ somewhat from the attitudes of the two previous authors used in this study.

Something to consider before delving into the content of *Punica* is the form the work takes. Unlike Livy's and Polybius' work, Silius Italicus wrote *Punica* as an epic poem. As such, certain descriptions of events are more exaggerated than they otherwise would have been had *Punica* been a prose text. Of course, *Punica* was not written in a vacuum. Determining which sources Silius Italicus may have read when he wrote the epic are outside the purview of this paper. Arthur Pomeroy said it best when he stated that, "the discovery of a correspondence between any passage in the *Punica* and one in another source may be little more than coincidence."¹⁰⁴ On top of this is the fact that *Punica* is not a work of history like the previous two authors. Silius Italicus did not write *Punica* to be anything more than a national epic like that of Vergil's *Aeneid*. As such, the efficacy of certain statements made by Silius Italicus towards barbarians like the Gauls cannot be ascertained to be an accurate description of them. Instead, *Punica* is useful as a work because it showcases a later Roman attitude towards the other that, while there may be some similarities in

¹⁰³ Stocks, C. *Epic Models*, in "The Roman Hannibal: Remembering the Enemy in Silius Italicus' *Punica*" (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2014)

¹⁰⁴ Pomeroy, A. *To Silius Italicus Through Livy and his Predecessors*, in "Brill's Companion to Silius Italicus." Ed. by Agoustakis, A. (Leiden: Brill 2009)

Polybius and Livy, ultimately differ in presentation. It is worth noting here that *Punica* is not the ultimate example of Roman attitudes towards Hannibal and the Gauls. Instead, it is better to say that it is useful as an example of a single ancient source for this study.

The reasons for the Second Punic War in *Punica* do share some similarities between Polybius' and Livy's histories, but with a flair that better fits with the epic style. Silius Italicus keeps the detail that survive in Polybius that Hannibal swore an oath at a sacrificial rite to fight the Romans no matter what. Instead of vaguely swearing to the gods though, Silius Italicus says that Hannibal swore it at an altar to Dido.¹⁰⁵ This is a clear intertextual allusion to Vergil's *Aeneid* where Dido curses the Carthaginians and Romans to always fight. Dido also called upon a future avenger to fight the Romans.¹⁰⁶ In both epics, Hannibal plays the part of the Carthaginian avenger, though the *Aeneid* does not call for him by name. The young Hannibal swore to repeat what happened to Troy and that nothing could stop him, not even legal means like a treaty or nature itself like the Alps.¹⁰⁷ While *Punica* still has the Carthaginians reeling at the thought of the Treaty of Lutatius, Silius Italicus turns the Second Punic War into an encounter fated by the Gods. This means that there is some divine intervention in *Punica* that is not present in Polybius and Livy, at least in a way like Silius' use of the Gods.

One of the first specific times the Gauls are mentioned in *Punica* comes from a catalogue of treasures captured from the enemies of the Republic. One such treasure is something Silius calls the, "wicked sword, the judge of measured gold."¹⁰⁸ This is a clear reference to Brennus' sack of Rome in 390 BCE when he used his sword to tip the balance of gold in his favor.¹⁰⁹ This catalogue is presented to the ambassadors of Saguntum who asked for aid in fighting Hannibal. Since the Romans had been able to defeat many of the same foes before, the Saguntines believed that Rome could do so again. Brennus' sack of Rome was referenced once more when the Romans approached Hannibal with a proposal for peace. Hannibal's reply shows that Silius intended for him to be another Brennus. He told the Romans this; "You'll fear for your own gates and hearths...but no amount of gold will ransom your lives once you are captured."¹¹⁰ Not only is Hannibal another

¹⁰⁵Silius Italicus, *Punica*, trans by Augoustakis, A. and Bernstein N.W. (New York: Routledge 2021) Book 1 81-143

¹⁰⁶ Aeneid 4.625-630

¹⁰⁷ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 1 113-118

¹⁰⁸ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 1 617-629

¹⁰⁹ This is the infamous *vae victis* found in Livy's history Book V.48

¹¹⁰ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 2 25-35

Brennus, but he is also worse in *Punica* because his desire for destruction could not be satisfied with gold. While in other works, Brennus did cheat and weigh down the scale with his sword, the very one mentioned by Silius Italicus, Hannibal's bloodlust could not be bought.

At the same time, *Punica's* Hannibal is shown to be an unknowing agent in Jupiter's plan to make Rome better. Hannibal in Jupiter's prophecy was meant to test the extent to which Rome could handle hardships. This is because Jupiter believed that at this point in time the Romans had become soft on account of their "inactivity" as *Punica* puts it. This is then contrasted with a positive prophecy in which Jupiter outlines that individual men will overcome the onslaught wrought by Hannibal which culminates in the final great man to lead the Romans in this conflict, Scipio Africanus and his victory over Hannibal.¹¹¹ Hannibal then is the embodiment of Jupiter's will and was sent by the God to test the Romans. This test was meant to bring out the *uirtus* present in individual Romans. Claire Stocks points out that Hannibal in *Punica* became a symbolic representation of war which was to aid in the development of the Roman man.¹¹² Hannibal as a representation of the "other" is meant to make Rome better.

Silius' attitude towards some groups of barbarians is shown by his catalogue of Hannibal's allies. If importance here is his mentioning of the Cantabrians whom he says were, "unconquerable by cold, heat, or hunger," and he also claims that "their only reason for existing is so that they can fight, and they hate life in peace."¹¹³ The reason the Cantabrians are mentioned in this study is because they are listed as one of the Celtiberian tribes in the Classical record. While this study does recognize that they may have been distinct from their Gallic brethren in Gaul, Classical attitudes about both are similar because of their similarities in culture. Other studies indicate that the historical territory of the Cantabrians coincides with areas of Celtic and Celtiberian archaeological finds.¹¹⁴ Silius Italicus does draw a distinction between the Cantabrians and the other Celtiberians by saying that the "Celts who were associated with the Iberians... believe that should a hungry vulture devour the dead limbs, the soul would be returned to heaven and the gods."¹¹⁵ This would have been seen as impious from a Roman point of view because the Romans practiced a different funerary tradition. These descriptions are meant to show *Punica's* readers that

¹¹¹ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 3 570-593

¹¹² Stocks, C. *Epic Models* pp. 77

¹¹³ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 3 325

¹¹⁴ Lenerz-de Wilde, M. *The Celts in Spain*, in "The Celtic World" ed by Green, M.J. (Milton Park: Routledge 1996)

¹¹⁵ *Punica* 3 340

while Hannibal is the more spiteful and destructive barbarian, some of his allies are also a part of the “other.” This is because some of their customs prevent them from living peaceful lives while they also practice different funerary traditions. These things would have been seen by *Punica*’s readers as aspects of barbarism.

Outside of that, *Punica* outlines another region ruled by tribes of Gallic descent that joined Hannibal’s cause and their cultural practices. They were said be, “shrewd as they were in the art of divination from the entrails, the flight of birds, and the fire from heaven.”¹¹⁶ What is being described here is the practice of augury, the divination via the flight patterns of birds, combined with other forms of divination. Other authors, like Livy, wrote that the Gauls were famous for their use of augury.¹¹⁷ Besides their use of augury and other forms of divination, *Punica* describes some of the unique cultural customs of the people of Gallicia, which in this case likely refers to North-Western Iberia. *Punica* records how in Gallicia the men focus more on war than anything else and leave all things that are not war to women.¹¹⁸ This is meant to show *Punica*’s readers the strangeness of the Gauls from Gallicia. The backwards culture of the people who joined Hannibal is in direct conflict with the social values of the Roman people. This ultimately culminates in the rest of the catalogue of allies in an army of many of Rome’s present and future enemies. *Punica* is ultimately a story about the perseverance of strong Roman men at the face of adversity. This means that the enemies of the Romans have a culture where things like agriculture is taken care of by women, something antithetical to *Romanitas*.

Hannibal’s representation as a harbinger of war and destruction is contrasted with his depiction as a good commander in *Punica*. Before the Battle of Ticinus the two opposing commanders in the Elder Scipio and Hannibal attempt to rally their troops. *Punica* says that, “Hannibal enticed the Gauls with gifts and flattered their vain spirits and the people’s unstable morals, uniting their forces to his.”¹¹⁹ Here the Gauls’ love of treasure is used by Hannibal to his advantage. *Punica* shows that Hannibal is a good commander because he understood how to bring the Gauls to his side. This is contrasted with the Elder Scipio’s arrogance at the face of the enemy. He tells his soldiers, “You have an enemy whom the snowy cliffs have shattered and frostbitten.

¹¹⁶ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 3 344

¹¹⁷ Livy claims that it was through Augury that the Gauls made it the Italy in the first place at 5.34.

¹¹⁸ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 3 347

¹¹⁹ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 39-50

They can barely drag their torpid limbs.”¹²⁰ Scipio here is telling his men that the enemy is weakened because of their recent trek through the Alps which means the battle will be easy. This arrogance eventually leads to a defeat because of the Elder Scipio’s overconfidence in the face of the enemy. Comparing the two in *Punica* shows how Scipio acts un-Roman because of his arrogance, while Hannibal is the good commander because of his understanding of Gallic social customs. The Gauls are thus shown to be greedy and immoral.

Moving on to the first encounter between Hannibal and the Romans at the Battle of Ticinus, where the King of the Boii, Crixus, takes center stage. In the description for the battle, Crixus claims descent from Brennus while wielding a shield that has a depiction of the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BCE. From this description on, *Punica* shows the fighting prowess of the Gallic king. The tumult was such that the Carthaginians could not enter the battle because a “Celtic madness filled the entire battlefield.” At the same time, another Gallic warrior named Vosegus claimed a head and used it to salute the gods. This slaughter, as *Punica* put it, ended with the elder Scipio running his spear through Crixus which caused the Gauls to panic and flee.¹²¹ *Punica* shows the Gauls to be a lesser form of the “other” because they are quick to run when their king dies. That imagery and callback to Brennus, the original outsider enemy of Rome, is contrasted with Hannibal’s approach following Crixus’ death. He grabs the king’s shield and with the allegorical figures of terror surrounding him, the Romans turned and ran.¹²² While the Gauls, represented by Crixus, are a force to be reckoned with, Hannibal is the embodiment of terror. *Punica* uses Hannibal and the Gauls at the Battle of Ticinus to start Jupiter’s lesson to the Romans. Despite the history between the Gauls and Rome, Crixus still presented himself openly and fought multiple opponents. The leader of the Romans, the Elder Scipio, embodied a bit of his *uirtus* by killing Crixus but both him and his fellow Romans were still not capable of stopping the ultimate representation of war in *Punica*, Hannibal.

Before moving in the text, it is important to note the physical description of the Boian King Crixus. Already noted is his supposed descent from the original outsider enemy in Brennus but *Punica*’s description of the man is interesting because it plays into certain stereotypes of the Gauls by Roman authors. Crixus is described as large enough to block the Romans. On top of that, he

¹²⁰ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 67-69

¹²¹ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 143-310

¹²² Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 324-336

wore things that were typical of descriptions of the Gauls. What he wore included things like torcs, bracelets, striped clothing and even wore a golden helmet which had a large crest.¹²³ Once again, Cassibry's "Tyranny of the Dying Gaul" shows itself in *Punica*. By this time the Romans, as well as the Greeks, had a set image of what a Gaul looked like. *Punica* has the larger-than-life Gallic King Crixus be able to stop the Roman advance through his large arms. At the same time, he wears the large neck torque and bracelets seen on the statue of Pergamon. The one major difference between the Dying Gaul and *Punica's* description of Crixus is that he does wear armor. The large, crested helmet described in *Punica* is emblematic of helmets found in areas of Celtic settlement in Gaul which had crests and birds on top with wings that flap as they walk.¹²⁴ On top of that, Crixus is not described as naked, something that is typical in earlier descriptions of the Gauls at war in Livy and Polybius.

Not only are the non-Romans of *Punica* depicted as examples of the other, but the very land is itself considered an outsider to Rome. Following the Battle of Ticinus, the Elder Scipio marched into the water of the Trebia River. The river responded by swelling up and attempted to wash away the Roman general. His response was to chastise the river by saying, "O Trebia, you traitor, great and well-deserved are the penalties you will pay to me. I will cut you into channels and spread you through the Gallic fields.... You wretch, what is this madness that suddenly made you a Carthaginian river?"¹²⁵ This is followed by the river being dried up by the flames of the God Vulcan because of the prayers of Scipio.¹²⁶ The Trebia River is a tributary of the Po River which sat in the land of Cisalpine Gaul. Despite the river being in Italy, the influence of the Gauls and Hannibal turned it into another outsider to Roman dominion. Within this episode, Hannibal honored the loss of the Trebia River as though it were the loss of one of his men. A signal that he understood that the Trebia River was an active ally. At the same time, the Trebia River is representative of the Gauls. Both rebelled against the Romans because their encroachment and Hannibal's arrival presented the opportunity to fight against the civilizing force of Rome in *Punica*.

The image of the Gauls as a force of terror shows up again before the Battle of Cannae. As the Romans approached the site of the battle, the Gods showed images of dread, both in reality and

¹²³ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 143-156

¹²⁴ Ritchie, J.N.G and Ritchie, W.F. *The Army Weapons and Fighting*, in "The Celtic World" ed by Green, M.J. (Milton Park: Routledge 1996) pp. 43

¹²⁵ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 637-648

¹²⁶ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 4 667-689

in their dreams, as an omen of things to come. These included omens like their javelins suddenly bursting into flame, bees swarming their position, and comets being sighted in the sky. As the Romans slept, the Gods sent dreams of the Gauls under the Tarpeian Rock rising from the dead with a river of blood surging from the temple of Jupiter. At the same time, the dreams included images of comets flying from Africa into the region of Latium.¹²⁷ Cannae represented the closest the Republic had been to being conquered by an outsider force since the Gallic sack of 390 BCE, as symbolically represented by the imagery of the Gauls coming back from the dead. The focus of these images was not the Gauls specifically, as they only represented one specific part of the invading force. Hannibal was represented by comets coming from Africa. After all, Hannibal was the ultimate figure of the other in *Punica*.

The Battle of Cannae does little to showcase the strategic brilliance of Hannibal. Instead, the battle conforms to the style of the Epic. Hannibal fights out in the open and slays many opponents. The difference between *Punica* and the other works used in this study is that Cannae showcases Hannibal's intelligence by placing the Gauls in the center. *Punica* has Hannibal fight and slay many opponents himself with little strategy involved. Silius mirrors descriptions of battle in Homeric epic making Hannibal into a legendary warrior like Achilles. As Claire Stocks put it, Hannibal's victory over Paulus is emblematic of Hannibal's ideological victory of the weaker Romans. This was meant to show that the Romans were led by weak men.¹²⁸ Following his victory at Cannae, Hannibal begins to turn more towards his vices. As he continues to fall into those vices, so too do his victories begin to falter.¹²⁹ Hannibal also began to change his perspective on the war. As Marco Fucecchi put it, *Punica's* Hannibal began to go away from his original goal of fighting for his home city of Carthage and began to see Italy as a new home. Thus his reason for fighting changed from saving Carthage to only fighting Rome for the sake of fighting.¹³⁰

The Gauls do not feature in the conflict beyond this point besides references to Brennus' sack of 390 BCE and the uprising of the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul. Hannibal, of course, continued to take center stage in *Punica* as the primary driver of the plot. It is because of this that Cannae is

¹²⁷ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, Book 8 622-655

¹²⁸ Stocks, C. *Out of the Darkness and into the Light*, pp.130

¹²⁹ Tipping, B. *Hannibal*, Ch. 3 "Exemplary Epic: Silius Italicus' *Punica*" (Oxford: Oxford Classical Monographs 2010) pp.59

¹³⁰ Fucecchi, M., *Hannibal as (Anti-)Hero of Fides in Silius' Punica*, in "Fides in Flavian Literature" (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2019)

the point at which this study ends. Unlike Polybius and Livy, Silius Italicus does not write much about the Gauls beyond Cannae. This is because *Punica* is a different category of writing in comparison to the other two authors. *Punica* is not a direct recounting of events with evidence from sources now lost. Instead, *Punica* is an epic poem meant to mirror the style of Vergil's *Aeneid* with the setting being the Second Punic War. It did not deal with the geopolitical reasons why Hannibal would declare war against Rome. *Punica* does mention that the Gauls have some grievances against the Republic, but it does not go into much detail of previous events predating the Second Punic War. While it is true that *Punica* is not a work of history like Polybius' and Livy's works, it is still useful when tracking the depiction of the Gauls and Hannibal after Livy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence presented shows that the Gauls are treated as one of the ultimate forms of the “other” in classical sources. This takes the form of the Gauls as the ignoble barbarian prone to duplicity and laziness. The Gauls as ignoble barbarians are contrasted with Hannibal’s nobility. Both groups are still treated as some form of the ‘other’ in the sources for this paper. In works of History, such as Polybius’ and Livy’s works, Hannibal is treated as the ultimate outside threat to the Republic due to his innate intelligence and strategic genius. The story of the Second Punic War was then transformed by the Flavian poet Silius Italicus into an epic poem mirroring Vergil’s *Aeneid* in style. With this change in style came the change of Hannibal as a character from the strategic genius to the wrathful barbarian bent on revenge against the Republic. The transformation from recent historical memory to propagandistic poem brought with it the transformation of the image of the Gauls as outsiders to Rome. In all three works considered here, the Gauls feature as enemies of the Roman state at some point. Their depiction as allies is consistent through all three works despite the changes in Hannibal’s character and the purpose of each work.

The Battle of Cannae as a stopping point served several purposes. First, at least in Polybius and Livy, the battle was emblematic of both the Gauls’ ineffectiveness as allies and Hannibal’s genius in taking advantage of that. Second, in all three sources, the battle is the closest Rome had gotten to being conquered by an outside force since Brennus’ sack in 390 BCE. Finally, having a common stopping point served as a good point of comparison between how Hannibal and the Gauls were treated in all three works. While there are events that happened after Cannae, Hannibal’s Gallic allies began to fall to wayside in descriptions of events. There are other instances of Gallic barbarity after the battle. One example comes from Livy when an army led by Lucius Postumius was ambushed by the Boii. The Roman general died in battle and his head was taken as a trophy to be stripped of its flesh and turned into a cup to drink out of.¹³¹ This reflects Livy’s attitude towards the Gauls as barbarians. Not only did the Boii ambush Lucius Postumius, an act considered dishonorable by the Romans, they also collected his head and turned it into a cup. These acts were considered a sign of barbarity by the Romans in Livy’s time.

¹³¹ Livy, *The War with Hannibal*, Book XXIII.24

Mentions of the Gauls beyond the end of the Battle of Cannae are scant. Polybius does discuss events that happened outside of Italy. One such event was the migration of the Gauls into Thrace under the Gallic King Comontorius. Polybius says this band broke away from a figure called Brennus during his attack on Delphi in the 270s BCE. From there they migrated to Thrace and found Byzantium affluent enough to threaten the city into submission. Once Byzantium submitted, the city paid a tribute of eighty talents a year. This continued until the reign of Cavarus in 212 BCE when the Thracians defeated and massacred the Gauls of Tylis.¹³² One can investigate this interaction between Byzantium and a group of Gauls as a mirror to Rome's interaction with Brennus in 390 BCE. In both instances a city-state was threatened by a group of barbarians and had even been forced to submission. The difference between Rome's and Byzantium's response was that the Romans fought back. Once again Polybius' idea in Book II section 35 is that barbarian threats are temporary was shown by the Gauls being defeated by the Thracians. The Byzantines did not respond like the Romans did and attempt to subjugate the Gauls or Thracians, thus they attempted to rely on outside help from Greece. The implied lesson being that Byzantium should have fought the barbarians.

The negative relationship between classical authors and the Gauls continued for some time thereafter. The Second Punic War was not the end of hostility between Cisalpine Gaul and Rome. Afterall, the tribes of Cisalpine Gaul allied with Hannibal and the Romans were not going to let that go unpunished. Further Roman expansion into Northern Italy began immediately following the Second Punic War.¹³³ Classical authors like Posidonius offer views of the Gauls that inform later depictions of that group of people.¹³⁴ While his work does not survive today, fragmentary references to it paint a picture of life in Gaul. Athenaeus records some of their eating practices from Posidonius quoting him as writing that the Gauls eat their food sitting on the ground at a short table while grabbing large portions of meat with their hands and cutting of pieces of meat that they cannot tear off with their teeth with a large knife at the table.¹³⁵ This would have been alien to other Greek and Roman authors throughout the classical period. The Gauls would play the role of

¹³² Polybius Book IV.45-46

¹³³ Rawlings, L. *The Roman Conquest of Cisalpine Gaul 201-191 BC*, in "The Encyclopedia of Ancient Battles" (New York: John Wiley & Sons 2017)

¹³⁴ Freeman, P. *The Philosopher and the Druids: A Journey Among the Ancient Celts*. (New York: Simon and Schuster 2006)

¹³⁵ Athanaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, Book IV.36, trans by Yonge, C.D. (London: Bohn's Classical Library 1854)

the “barbarian other” in both ethnographic and historical works well passed the Punic Wars and into the imperial period.

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