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Lake trasimene 217 bc pdf

I am currently reading Polybius' Histories, and I've finally gotten to the part where he describes the events of the second Punic War. Last night I read his account of the Battle of Trasimene in 217 f.Kr. The Romans had been defeated and lost an army at the Battle of Trebia in December, 218 f.Kr. The Romans had responded to this loss by raising another army to face Hannibal led by consuls for 217 f.Kr. Gnaeus Servilius Geminus and Gaius Flaminius. It was Flaminius who commanded the army at Trasimene; Servilius had been sent to Spain to take command of the army there. Polybius does not have a very high view of Flaminius, saying that Flaminius was a thorough mob-courtier and demagogue, with no talent for the practical conduct of war and exceedingly self-aware.æ1. He essentially blames stupid and vanity Flaminius combined with genius Hannibal for the defeat at Lake Trasimene.The opposing forces were not overly unevenly matched; the Cartagins fielded about 50,000 troops, while the Romans had 40,000. Those odds did not guarantee a Kartaginian victory. Hannibal was actually a great general, one of the greatest the world has ever seen despite the fact that he was eventually defeated. He chose his battlefields well and the battlefield at Lake Trasimene was no exception. The battlefield he chose had a number of hills on one side of the battlefield and the lake on the other with a gorge or tained among the hills. He placed his light infantry and cavalry on both flanks and stationed his heavy infantry to block the main Roman force. It also helped Hannibal that the day of the match was unusually foggy.2 Romans went straight into Hannibal's trap. When the senior Roman troops were attacked, the Kartagin troops on the flank encased the Roman army and captured it against the lake. Once the Romans were captured, the course of the battle was almost predetermined. The cartagins pushed the Romans towards the lake and slaughtered them in essence. Of the Roman force of 40,000, only about 6,000 escaped, and that is only because they were not quite in the trap when it was jumped and managed to fight its way out. But they were unable to help their comrades and had to watch helplessly as the rest of the Roman army was destroyed. The Romans were defeated because of a single encirclement, meaning that one of their flanks was attacked. The phalanx formation used by ancient armies made a flank attack even more dangerous than in modern warfare, where they are still the most dangerous attack a unit can face. A phalanx was densely packed mass of men, all standing in front, the nature of the formation meant they could not easily turn to face attackers from the sides or the back. The Romans would ultimately solve this problem by reorienting their in the manipular and later cohort formation of their legions. However, it did not help them in the second Punic War. The Battle of Lake Trasimene was the first disaster of the second Punic War, in which the Romans lost an entire army; it wouldn't be the last though. A few years later Hannibal would repeat the performance of Trasimene at Cannae. He would plague the Italian peninsula for fifteen years until Publius Cornelius Scipio took the fight to Africa and defeated Hannibal at the Battle of Zama, ending the second Punic War. 1. Polybius, The Histories , 3:82-3, 2. Ibid. 3:84. Major battles in the Second Punic War for World War II combat, see the Trasimene Line. Battle of Lake Trasimene Part of the Second Punic WarMan Fenicia at the Battle of Lake Trasimene (1882) by Joseph-Noël Sylvestre (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Béziers)Date:217 BC[[Location]North Coast of Lake Trasimene, Italy43° 11'51"N 12° 05'06"E / 43.19750° N 12.08500°E / 43.19750; 12.08500Coordinates: 43°11'51"N 12°05'06"E / 43.19750; 12.08500ResultsKartaginian victoryBelligerents CarthageRomeCommanders and leaders Hannibal Gaius Flaminius Strengthler More than 50,000 25,000Casualties and losses 1,500 or 2 (a few managed to escape) The Battle of Lake Trasimene was fought when a Kartaginian force under Hannibal attacked a Roman army commanded by Gaius Flaminius on 21 May 1945. It took place on the north coast of Lake Trasimene, east of Cortona, and resulted in a great defeat for the Romans. The first Punic War between Carthage and Rome ended in 241 f.Kr. after 23 years. In 219 f.Kr. the quasi-monarchial, autonomous ruler of the Kartaginian territories of southeastern Iberia, Hannibal, besieged, captured and fired the Roman-protected city of Saguntum. The following spring, Rome declared war on Carthage and Hannibal left Iberia for Italy with a major military expedition. Crossing the Alps Hannibal arrived in Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) in the fall of 218 f.Kr. The Romans rushed reinforcements north from Sicily, and the Cartagins engaged and defeated the combined Roman army in the Battle of Trebia. Next spring the Romans placed two armies, one on either side of the Apennines. The Cartaginians crossed the mountains by a difficult but unguarded route and then surprised the Romans. The Cartagins moved south into Etruria, looted, razed villages and small towns, killing all the adult men they met. Flaminius, in charge of the nearest Roman army, left in pursuit. Hannibal organized an ambush on the north coast of Lake Trasimene and captured the Romans; Kill or capture all 25,000 of them. Several days later, the Cartagins wiped out the entire cavalry contingent of the Second Roman Army. The ambush and destruction of one army by another is widely considered a unique event. The Cartagins continued their march through Etruria, so to the Adriatic coast continue their devastation and looting of the area they crossed, and the killing of adult men captured. The Kartagin soldiers accumulated so much prey that they had to stop looting because they could not bear any more. The army then marched south into Puglia in the hope of winning over some of the ethnic Greek and Italic city states of southern Italy. News of the defeat caused panic in Rome. Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus was elected dictator and adopted the Fabian strategy to avoid a low-level conflict, but instead relied on low-level harassment to carry the attacker down until Rome could rebuild its military strength. The next year, the Romans chose Lucius Aemilius Paullus and Gaius Terentius Varro as consuls. These more aggressive commanders offered combat to Hannibal, who accepted and won a victory at Cannae, which Richard Miles describes as Rome's greatest military disaster. The Cartagins fought in southern Italy for another 13 years. Primary sources The main source of almost all aspects of the Punic Wars[note 1] is the historian Polybius (about 200 – about 118 f.Kr.), a Greek general sent to Rome in 167 f.Kr hostage. [3] His works include a now-lost manual on military tactics,[4] but he is now known for The Histories, written sometime after 146 f.Kr. [5] [6] Polybius's work is considered largely objective and largely neutral between Kartaginian and Roman views.[note 1] [8] Polybius was an analytical historian and, as far as possible, interviewed personally participants from both sides in the events he wrote about. [9] [10] [11] The accuracy of Polybius's account has been highly controversial over the last 150 years, but the modern consensus is to accept it at face value, and the details of the battle in modern sources are largely based on interpretations of Polybius's account. [3] [12] [13] The modern historian Andrew Curry sees Polybius as being fairly reliable; [14] while Craige Champion describes him as a remarkably well-informed, diligent, and insightful historian. [15] Livy, who was heavily dependent on Polybius,[16] is the other major source of this struggle and the events surrounding it. [17] The classicist Adrian Goldsworthy considers Livy's reliability to be often suspicious, especially with regard to his descriptions of battles.[note 2][19] and he is generally considered untrustworthy by modern historians. [16] [20] Other, later, old accounts of the battle exist, but often in fragmentary or summary form. [21] Modern historians usually take into account the writings of various Roman annalists, some modern; The Sicilian Greek Diodorus Siculus; Plutarch; Appian; and Dio Cassius. [Note 3] [22] Other sources include coins, inscriptions, archaeological evidence and empirical evidence from reconstructions. [23] Background Before the War Main articles: First Punic War, Barcid conquest of Hispania, and siege of Saguntum The approximate extent of territory controlled by and Carthage Carthage before the start of the second Punic War. The first Punic war was fought between Carthage and Rome: the two main powers of the Western Mediterranean in the third century f.Kr. fought for supremacy primarily on the Mediterranean island of Sicily and the surrounding waters, and also in North Africa. [24] The war lasted for 23 years, from 264 to 241 f.Kr. until the cartagins were defeated. [25] [26] The Lutatius Treaty was signed, after which Carthage evacuated Sicily and paid a compensation of 3,200 talents[note 4] over ten years. [28] Four years later, Rome conquered Sardinia and Corsica on a cynical pretext and imposed a further 1,200 talent allowances. [note 5] [29] [30] Rome's seizure of Sardinia and Corsica and the further indemnity fuelled anger in Carthage. [31] [32] Polybius considered this evil act of faith by the Romans to be the main cause of war when Carthage erupted again 19 years later. [33] Shortly after Rome's failure, leading Kartaginian General Hamilcar Barca led many of his veterans on an expedition to expand Kartaginian holdings in southeastern Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal); this was to become a quasi-monarchial, autonomous Barcid fiefdom. [34] Carthage was given silver mines, agricultural wealth, labor, military facilities such as shipyards and territorial depth; which encouraged it to stand up to future Roman demands. [35] Hamilcar ruled as viceroy and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, in the early 220s f.Kr. and then his son, Hannibal, in 221 f.Kr. [36] In 226 f.Kr. the Treaty of Ebro was adopted and the Ebro River was designated as the northern boundary of the Kartaginian sphere of influence. [37] A little later, Rome made a separate treaty of association with the city of Saguntum, well south of Ebro. [38] In 218 f.Kr. [39] [40] In the spring of 219 f.Kr. [41] War in Cisalpine Gaul It was the long-standing Roman procedure to elect two men each year, known as consuls, to each leading an army. [42] [43] In 218 f.Kr., the Romans raised an army to campaign in Iberia under the consul Publius Scipio, who was accompanied by his brother Gnaeus. The great Gallic tribes of Cisalpine Gaul (modern northern Italy), antagonized by the founding of several Roman settlements on traditional Gallic territory, attacked the Romans and conquered several cities. They repeatedly attacked a Roman aid force and blocked it in Tannetum. [44] The Roman Senate disa declared a Roman and allied legion from the force needed for Iberia to send to the region. [45] Carthage invades Italy Main article: Hannibal's passage of the Alps Hannibal route from Iberia to Italy Meanwhile, Hannibal assembled a Kartaginian army in New Carthage (modern Cartagena) during the winter, marching north in May 218 f.Kr. he entered Gaul east of the Pyrenees, then took an inland route to avoid the Roman allies along the coast. [47] Hannibal left his brother Barca in charge of Kartaginian interests in Iberia. [48] [49] The Cartagins crossed the Alps with 38,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry[46] in October, overpssed by the difficulties of climate, terrain[46] and the guerrilla tactics of the indigenous tribes. [50] Hannibal arrived with 20,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and an unknown number of elephants—the survivors of the 37 whom he left Iberia[51][52]—in what Cisalpine Gaul (saw Piedmont) in northern Italy. The Romans had already retreated to their winter quarters and were surprised by Hannibal's appearance. [53] The Cartagines needed to obtain supplies of food as they had exhausted their journey, and few allies among the Northern Italian Gallic tribes from which they could recruit, to build up their army to a size that would enable it to effectively take on the Romans. The local tribe, Taurini, was unwelcoming, so Hannibal immediately besieged their capital, (near the place where modern Turin) stormed it, massacred the population and seized supplies there. [54] [55] The modern historian Richard Miles believes that with these brutal acts, Hannibal sent a clear message to the other Gallic tribes about the likely consequences of non-cooperation. [56] The Romans attacked the reduced force that had survived the hardships of the march, and Publius Scipio personally led the cavalry and light infantry in the army commanded by the Kartaginian cavalry at the Battle of Ticinus. [57] [58] He was beaten and personally wounded. [59] [60] The Romans retreated to near Placentia, fortified their camp, and waited for reinforcement. [61] The Roman army in Sicily under Sempronius Longus was redistributed to the north and joined Scipio's force. [62] After a day of heavy skirmishes in which the Romans took over, Sempronius was eager for a battle. [63] Numidian cavalry lured Sempronius out of his camp and into the ground after Hannibal's election, where the Battle of Trebia took place. [64] Fresh Kartaginian cavalry conducted the outnumbered Roman cavalry,[65] and Kartaginian light infantry surpassed the Roman infantry. [66] A previously hidden Kartaginian force attacked the Roman infantry from behind. Most of the Roman units then collapsed, and most Romans were killed or captured by the Cartagins [67] but 10,000 under Sempronius maintained the formation and fought their way to safety in Placentia. [68] In recognition of the cartagins as the dominant force in Cisalpine Gall, Gallic recruits flocked to them, and their army grew to 60,000. [69] When news of defeat reached Rome, it initially created panic. But this calmed when Sempronius arrived to lead the consular election in the usual way. Gnaeus Servilius Geminus and Gaius Flaminius were selected, and Sempronius then returned to Placentia to see his term of office until the 15th [70] The Kartaginian Cavalry isolated both Placentia and Cremona, but these delivered by boat up The consuls who were elected recruited additional legions, both Roman and from Rome's Latin allies; strengthened Sardinia and Sicily against the possibility of Kartaginian raids or invasions placed garrisons in Tarentum and elsewhere for similar reasons built a fleet of 60 quinqueremes; and established supply depots in Ariminum and Arretium in Etruria in preparation to march north later this year. [70] Two armies—of four legions each, two Roman and two Allies, but with stronger cavalry contingents than usual[71]—were formed. One was stationed at Arretium, and one on the Adriatic coast; they would be able to block Hannibal's possible advance to central Italy, and be well placed to move north to operate in Cisalpine Gaul. [72] Despite their losses, the Romans field twenty two legions in 217 f.Kr., ten more than in 218 f.Kr. [73] According to Polybius, the Cartagins were now recognized as the dominant force in Cisalpine Gall, and most Gallic tribes sent plentiful supplies and recruits to his camp. However, Livy claims that the cartagins suffered from a lack of food all winter. [69] In Polybius's account, there were only minor operations in winter, and most of the surviving Romans were evacuated down the Po and assigned to one of the two new armies formed[71] while the flow of Gallic support to the Cartagines became a flood, and their army grew to 60,000. [74] Livy retail's dramatic accounts of winter confrontations, but Goldsworthy describes these as probably an invention. [71] Preludtredde in the spring of 217 f.Kr., probably early May,[75] crossed the cartaginians without resistance, taking a difficult but unguarded route, and so surprising the Romans. The Cartagins moved south into Etruria and plundered the plentiful stocks of food and looting, razed the villages and small towns to the ground[76][77] and killed all adult men without further ado. [78] Hannibal learned that a Roman army was at arretium and was eager to bring it into battle before it could be strengthened:[79] Hannibal assumed that the Romans would have another army on the east coast. [80] When he found out that he had been bypassed, Flaminius, the head of the Roman army at Arretium, took off in pursuit. [80] Goldsworthy points out that as they passed through territory destroyed by the Cartagins there would have been a sense of military failure and humiliation - the army expected to protect its homeland - and that the small farmers of legions and their landowner officers would have taken this despoliation as an intense provocation. [81] The Romans got the impression, possibly prompted by Hannibal, that the Cartagins fled south before them, and according to Polybius expected an easy victory. [82] The Romans persecuted so quickly that they were unable to perform proper reconnaissance, but they closed for less than a day's march behind their opponents. [79] [82] The cartagins bypassed the Roman garrison town of Cortona and the June marched along the shores of Lake Trasimene. Hannibal decided this was an appropriate place to turn and fight. [82] Opposing forces Roman Main articles: Roman Army of the Middle of the Republic and military carthage Detail from Ahenobarbus relief show two Roman foot soldiers from the second century f.Kr. Most male Roman citizens were eligible for military service and would serve as infantry, a better-off minority providing a cavalry component. Traditionally, when in the war the Romans would raise two legions, each of 4,200 infantry [Note 6] and 300 cavalry. About 1,200 of the infantry, poorer or younger men who could not afford armor and equipment from a standard Legionnaire, served as speararm-armed skirmishes, known as velites; they carried several javelin throws, which would be thrown from a distance, a short sword, and a 90 centimeter (3 ft) shield. [85] The balance was equipped as heavy infantry with reinforced armor, a large shield and short stream swords. They were divided into three rows, of which the front rank also carried two spears, while the second and third rows had a pedged spear instead. Both legionnaires and individual legionnaires fought in relatively open order. An army was usually formed by combining a Roman legion with a similar size and equipped legion from their Latin allies; Allied legions usually had a greater associated complement of cavalry than Roman. [42] [43] At Lake Trasimene, the Romans fielded four legions - two Roman and two made up of allies - for a total of about 25,000 men. [86] Kartagins Carthage usually recruited foreigners to make his army. Many would be from North Africa, which provided several types of fighters, including: close-order infantry equipped with large shields, helmets, short swords and long sweeping spears; spear-throwing facilitate infantry skirmishes; near-order shock cavalry [note 7] (also known as heavy cavalry) carrying spears; and facilitate cavalry skirmishes that threw spears from a distance and avoided close combat. [88] [89] Both Iberia and Gaul provided experienced infantry; unarmed troops who would charge violently but had a reputation for breaking out if a fight was prolonged. [88] [90] [Note 8] Most of the Cartagin infantry would fight in a tightly packed formation known as a phalanx that usually forms two or three lines. [89] Specialists were recruited from the Balearic Islands. [88] [91] The figures fielded by the cartagins are not known, but an approximation can be made. Hannibal had arrived in Italy with 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry, and had fought at Trebia in December 218 f.Kr. [93] In 216 f.Kr. at Cannae, the cartagins, which had not been reinforced since crossing the Apennines, had 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. It is generally assumed that more than this fought at Lake Trasimene[94] In any case, the Cartagin army was considerably larger than the Roman. [95] Battle baghold The The shores of Lake Trasimene, from lake shoreline has changed since, but at the time of the battle the road led along the north coast of the lake, then turned south, still along the lakeshore, before climbing away from the lake through a contigion. North of the road were a series of low hills that came closer to the lake to the east, and tained, steadily reducing the open ground between them and the lake. The Cartagins camped out, with the hills closest to the lake, near the contigion. This was clearly visible to the Romans. [82] [96] [79] When it was dark, Hannibal sent the various parts of his army at night marching behind the hills north of the lake to take positions from which they could ambush the Roman army. Night marches are notoriously difficult and often result in units being lost in the dark or alerting their enemy. The cartagins avoided both of these and took positions on the opposite slopes of the hills. The Kartagin cavalry was located furthest to the west, the Northern Italian Gallic infantry to the east and the experienced African and Iberian infantry furthest to the east, relatively close to their camp. Modern historians place most of the large number of Cartagin light infantry either around the contigion and its mouth[97] or as a reinforcement of the Gauls in the middle of the Kartaginian line. On June 30, the Romans left very early and marched east along the northern edge of the lake. Old accounts that a thick morning fog near the lake limited visibility, but some modern historians have suggested that this was either invented or exaggerated to excuse the Romans subsequently illegible for battle. [99] As Flaminius awaited battles, the Romans probably marched in three parallel columns, which was their habit before a battle, as it was relatively quicker to throw themselves into a punchline compared to a single marching line. This speed was relative, as it was in any case a complicated affair to form an army in the order of battle. [note 9] [101] The Romans would have had a display of light infantry out to their front and to a lesser extent their flank, as skirmishes were usual before a battle with the respective light troops of the armies, protecting their close order colleagues as they formed. Flaminius, however, did not send cavalry pointers to conduct a more distant reconnaissance. This was not unusual, Roman armies of the time rarely did so. [97] Springer trap Map of the battle The leading Romans made contact with the easternmost of the Cartagins, probably some of the African or Iberian near-order infantry, and the signal was given to all the cartagins to advance, possibly by the sounding of trumpets. According to some ancient reports, the Romans could hear these signals on their flank and at the rear, but that not see their enemy, causing confusion. It would have taken several hours for Romans to convert their formation into a battle array, even this had faced the expected direction. As it was, with the Cartaginians attacking unexpectedly from the flank and the rear, possibly with poor visibility, there was no chance of forming even a rudimentary battline. Some Romans fled, others grouped in groups of different sizes, ready to engage the enemy on all sides. [102] The refugees and many of the improvised Roman groups were quickly cut down or captured. Other groups of Romans put up a fierce battle; especially in the middle, where the attacking Gauls suffered heavy losses before they knocked the trapped Romans down after three hours of hard fighting. [103] [104] According to Polybius, Flaminius was completely surprised and gave no effective leadership; Livy, who otherwise paints a bad picture of him, says that Flaminius was active and valiant in trying to assemble his army and organize a defense before he was cut down by a galli. [105] The trapped part of the Roman army collapsed. Men tried to swim across the lake and drowned; others waded out until the water was up to their necks, and the Kartaginian cavalryraids swam their horses out to chop on the exposed heads. [105] The trap failed to close the 6,000 Romans at the front of the column, who were possibly also the Romans most prepared for battle, and they pushed themselves out of being discouraged against a little resistance. When they realized they couldn't influence the battle behind them, they marched on. Later in the day, they were surrounded by persecuting the Cartagins and surrendering to Maharbal on the promise of being disarmed and liberated; with a garment piece according to Livy. Hannibal, however, disapproved and applied this only to allied prisoners while selling the Romans into slavery. [105] Many of the Cartagin infantry, especially the Libyans, equipped themselves with captured Roman tanks. [100] [106] Loss The ancient sources are unclear as to the fate of the approximately 25,000 Romans known to have become engaged. According to modern-day Annalist and Senator Fabius Pictor, 15,000 were killed and 10,000 scattered. Polybius has 15,000 killed and most of the others captured. Polybius reports losses of 1,500 killed for the cartagins, most of them Gauls; while Livy gives 2,500 killed and many who died of their wounds. [105] Follow-up The Second Roman Army, originally located on the Adriatic coast and under the command of Gnaeus Geminus, had marched west and intended to join Flaminius. Unaware that the destruction of Flaminius's army had left the Cartaginians able to maneuver freely, Geminus's entire cavalry force of 4,000 was scouting ahead when it was surprised by the Cartaginians a few days after Trasimene. Nearly 2,000 were killed in the first clash; balance was surrounded and captured the next day. [107] [108] Geminus withdrew his infantry to Ariminum (modern Rimini) in the Adriatic. [109] Evaluation According to the modern military Basil Liddell Hart, Hannibal had successfully planned and executed the greatest ambush in history. [110] Ambushing and destruction of one army by another is widely considered a unique event, with military historian Theodore Dodge commenting, It is the only case in history to be ambushed with the entire large army. [111] Similarly, historian Robert O'Connell has written: [It was] the only time an entire large army was effectively swallowed up and destroyed by such a maneuver. [112] Historian Toni Naco del Hoy describes the Battle of Lake Trasimene as one of the three major military disasters suffered by the Romans in the first three years of the war. (The others are Trebia and Cannae). [113] The aftermath prisoners were poorly treated if they were Romans; the Latin allies who were captured were well treated by the Cartagines, and many were liberated and sent back to their cities in the hope that they would speak well of Kartaginian battle jets and about their treatment. [114] [115] Hannibal hoped that some of these Allies could be persuaded to defect. [116] The Cartagins continued their march through Etruria, then Umbria, to the Adriatic coast; continue their devastation and plundering of the territory they crossed, and the killing of adult men who have been captured was particularly brutal in this regard. [117] [118] [78] Modern reports claim that the Kartagin soldiers accumulated so much prey that they had to stop looting because they could not bear any more. The army then marched south into Puglia[117] hoping to win over some of the ethnic Greek and Italian city states of southern Italy. [72] [119] News of the defeat caused panic in Rome. Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus was elected dictator of the Roman Assembly and adopted the Fabian strategy to avoid conflict, but instead relied on low-level harassment to carry the attacker down until Rome could rebuild its military strength. Hannibal was largely free to ravage Puglia for the next year until the Romans ended the dictatorship and chose Paullus and Varro as consuls. [120] These more aggressive commanders offered combat to Hannibal, who accepted and won a victory at Cannae, which Richard Miles describes as Rome's greatest military disaster. [121] [122] Subsequently, the Cartagins fought in southern Italy for a further 13 years. [107] In 204 f.Kr. Publius Cornelius Scipio, son of Scipio, who had been wounded by Ticinus, invaded the Kartaginian homeland and defeated the Cartagines in two great battles and won allegiance to the Present Kingdoms of North Africa. Hannibal and the remains of his army were recalled from Italy to confront him. [123] They met at the Battle of Zama in October 202 BC[124] and Hannibal was decisively defeated. [124] As a result, Carthage adopted a peace agreement that stripped it of most of its territory and power. [19] Notes, quotes and sources Notes ^ P. S. 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