

Nada Bulić - Maria Mariola Glavan – Daniel Nečas Hraste<sup>1</sup>

## Hannibal's Elephants and the Liburnians

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The Second Punic War is a relatively well-known episode from Roman history. Reliable, detailed ancient sources such as Livy and Polybius, however, don't say much on the topic of Hannibal's provisions. The authors of this paper believe that Hannibal's path to Cannae was part of a premeditated military plan, according to which the Carthaginian army needed to pick up supplies near Cannae, with the Liburnians playing an important role. Facts supporting this theory are examined in the paper, with a close examination of the two most important literary sources on the topic, Livy and Polybius, reexamined in the light of recent archaeological findings from the Liburnian region.

**Key words:** Hannibal, Liburnia, Livy, Polybius, Second Punic War, provisions, elephants

*Obraz Hannibala jest skomplikowaną mozaiką* – P. Matusiak begins her study on Hannibal with these words,<sup>2</sup> and nothing less could be said of the war that made him famous.

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1 Daniel Nečas Hraste (August 15th, 1959–November 1st, 2018), classical philologist, our dear friend and colleague of many years, a great lover of Livy. He participated in the creation of the idea for this paper, but soon after proposing the paper for the conference held in Pula in 2018, he fell ill with an illness that took his life much too soon, and he was unable to attend, passing away days after the conference. We would like to dedicate this article to him, with love.

2 Matusiak 2015: 9. The study offers a detailed analysis of the description of the character of Hannibal as it is given in ancient literature, from various aspects (such as *Hannibal Poenus*, *Hannibal hostis*, *Hannibal dux*, *Alter Hannibal*). See also Hoyos 2003.

The Second Punic War (219-202 BC), rightfully also called Hannibal's War in literature, is a relatively well-known episode of Roman history.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise reliable sources such as Livy or Polybius don't tell us much about Hannibal's supplies and the reinforcements from his native Carthage. The question of his supplies must have formed part of his tactical planning and operative concept. The strategic goals of different parts of his war campaign, much like the wider strategic goals of his warpath are even today the subject of academic debate, which ranges from the view that Hannibal's ultimate goal was the complete defeat of Rome to the view that his goal was limited, in political terms, to the dissolution of the alliance of Italian cities with Rome.<sup>4</sup> It is precisely his relationship with Rome's allies, along with Hannibal's impressive character,<sup>5</sup> that is the most striking feature of this war; on the one hand, viewing it from the position of Rome, because the strength of the Roman army secured, as an instrument of sanction, the political authority of the Roman Republic within the

3 There are various literary sources from which we have data on the Second Punic War. The most expansive of these are the works from historiographers (Polybius, Livius, Florus, Appian, Dio Cassius, and to a lesser degree Aurelius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus) and biographers (Cornelius Nepos, Plutarchus, and to a lesser degree Aurelius Victor), along with the literary works belonging to authors of various different genres (Plautus, Cicero, Silius Italicus).

4 Bagnall 2002: 56: "Whether this plan was conceived with a measured intellectual approach or, as seems more probable, opportunistically and pragmatically, is not known, but however arrived at, it was both grandiose and imaginative in its design. We already know Hannibal's operational concept for isolating Rome from her allies, but we need to look briefly at his wider strategic concept for the encirclement of the Italian peninsula." Healy 1994: 12: "The crux of Hannibal's strategy – for his invasion of Italy was never predicated on the assumption that Rome's defeat could be secured solely by military means. His employment of his army was above all directed towards the realization of an explicitly political aim. By invading Italy, Hannibal sought to undermine Roman power by destroying the political confederation that linked the Republic with her allies." See also Hoyos 2008. and Fields 2010. A comparative analysis of the strategies of both sides of the war can be found in Parker 2001.

5 Nor can Livy in his restrained decription, despite the general pro-Roman tendentioness of his *Historiae*, hide his admiration of the Carthaginian general: "nunquam ingenium idem ad res diversissimas, parendum atque imperandum, habilis fuit. Ita que haud facile discerneres utrum imperatori an exercitui carior esset; neque Hasdrubal alium quemquam praeficere malle, ubi quid fortiter ac strenue agendum esset, neque milites alio duce plus confidere aut audere. Plurimum audaciae ad pericula capessenda, plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula erat; nullo labore aut corpus fatigari aut animus vinci poterat; caloris ac frigoris patientia par; cibi potionisque desiderio naturali non voluptate modus finitus; vigiliarum somnique nec die nec nocte discriminata tempora; id quod gerendis rebus superesset quieti datum; ea neque molli strato neque silentio accersita; multi saepe militari sagulo opertum humi iacentem inter custodias stationesque militum conspexerunt. Vestitus nihil inter aequales excellens; arma atque equi conspiciebantur. Equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in proelium ibat, ultimus conserto proelio excedebat". (Liv. XXI 4, 3-9).

alliance, and because the allies bound to Rome with contractual obligations filled the Roman army; on the other hand, from the viewpoint of Carthage, due to the fact that the entire plan relied on Hannibal's success and, with the exception of victory over the Roman army in open battles, on the reaction and coaxing of allies to defect from Rome in order to ensure that the troops were manned, as well with as all the accompanying military logistics. In this paper, therefore, along with the issue of supply, we also link the issue of Hannibal's possible communications with his native Carthage.

## THE MATHEMATICS OF ELEPHANTS

One of the questions regarding supply is the question of where Hannibal's elephants came from after the battle of Cannae in 216 BC. When he crossed the Pyrenees and the river Rhône in 218 in a swift march,<sup>6</sup> Hannibal also had a brigade of 37 elephants in his army.

Livy reports the testimony of a former prisoner of Hannibal's, stating that when crossing the Rhône, Hannibal also lost some horses and draft animals, without specifying neither which type nor how many (Liv. XXI 38, 3-5: *L. Cincius Alimentus, qui captum se ab Hannibale scribit..., ex ipso autem audisse Hannibale, postquam Rhodanum transierit, triginta sex milia hominum ingentemque numerum equorum et aliorum iumentorum amisisse*).<sup>7</sup>

6 On the difficulties and technicalities of the crossing of the Rhône river: Polyb. III 47, 12; Liv. XXI 28, 5-10; Plin. VIII 28; Wilkinson 1911: 14-17; Edwards 2001; on the transportation of the elephants across the river see Nossov 2008: 22: "When Ptolemy I (r. 305-283 BC) heard that there were plenty of elephants to the south of Egypt, in the lands of modern Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, he ordered the delivery of elephants to be organized for his army. The Kushites (Ethiopians), inhabiting the area at that time tamed elephants but are not known to have used them in combat. The Ptolemies sent one expedition after another, each comprising several hundred soldiers. Special ships combining high freight-carrying capacity with a shallow draft for river travel were built to transport the captured elephants. Ancient commentators state that Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 285-46 BC) already had at least 300 African elephants in his corps. Some of the drivers were Kushites, but most were recruited in India, where Ptolemy II sent special envoys." Comparatively, Livy describes the crossing of the Rhône in the section above: "Ratem unam ducentos longam pedes, quinquaginta latam a terra in amnem porregerunt, quam, ne secunda aqua deferretur, pluribus validis retinaculis parte superiore ripae religatam pontis in modum humo iniecta constraverunt, ut beluae audacter velut per solum ingrederentur. Altera ratis aequae lata, longa pedes centum, ad traiciendum flumen apta, huic copulata est; tum elephantum per stabilem ratem tamquam viam praegredientibus feminis acti". (Liv. XXI 28, 7-8).

7 All citations from Livy are cited according to *Titi Livi Ab Urbe Condita (Libri XXI-XXV)*, eds. Charles Flamstead Walters and Robert Seymour Conway, Oxford 1929.

In his legendary and painstaking crossing of the Alps, Hannibal suffered great losses, for the most part among his infantry. Speaking of the number of soldiers and accompanying animals which survived the crossing of the Alps and arrived in Northern Italy, Polybius and Livy offer differing information,<sup>8</sup> and the route upon which Hannibal moved as well as the real, numerically expressed losses are even today a topic of debate and academic speculation.<sup>9</sup> Further warfare led Hannibal to Trebbia where he clashed with the Romans in a battle that would be the first of three (Trebbia, Trasimene, Cannae), tactically brilliant in the Roman execution line.<sup>10</sup> A certain number of elephants survived the battle, and after the Battle of Trebbia, according to Livy, Hannibal suffered great losses to his men, horses, as well as elephants in the fierce storm that hit the Carthaginian army as it crossed the Apennines. In the source it is written seven of the elephants which survived the Battle of Trebbia perished in the storm: *multi homines, multa iumenta, elephanti quoque ex iis qui proelio ad Trebiam facto super fuerant septem absumpti*. [Many men and many horses perished, and seven of the elephants that had survived the battle on the Trebia.] Livy XXI 58, 11.<sup>11</sup>

Livy's account of Hannibal's movements immediately after the Battle of Trebbia is challenged by some historiographers.<sup>12</sup> After the battle, Hannibal decided to go through the Etruscan swamp, which the Romans believed to be impassable due to the overflowing waters of the Arno

8 Cf. Polyb. III 55, 5 and Liv. XXI 38, 2-3.

9 Briscoe 2008: 47: "There has been enormous controversy about the route by which Hannibal crossed the Alps. The balance of probability is in favour of the view that Hannibal arrived in Italy in the area of Turin (in mid-October, about a month-and-a-half after crossing the Rhone), and if this is so the choice for Hannibal's pass lies between Mt Genevre, Mt Cenis and, the solution preferred by the two most recent writers, the Col de Clapier. Hannibal had incurred considerable losses on his journey from Spain, though, as so often with troop numbers, the precise extent of the casualties cannot be measured."

10 Some contemporary historiographers believe that the Carthaginian army, despite the harsh winter and the long and exhausting crossing of the Alps, was better prepared than the Roman army in the Battle of Trebbia. See Miles 2011: 94: "Although the whole Roman force forded the river and drew up into their battle lines in good order, the troops were cold, wet and hungry after being mobilized before they had breakfasted. In contrast, the Carthaginian troops had been well prepared and fed."

11 All translations of Livy in this paper are cited from: Livy, *History of Rome, Volume VI: Books 23-25*, transl. J.C. Yardley, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Cambridge 2014, and Livy, *History of Rome, Volume V: Books 21-22*, transl. J.C. Yardley, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Cambridge 2019.

12 Referring to Liv. XXI 58-59,9, "Livy's story of an attempt by Hannibal to cross the Apennines immediately after the battle of the Trebbia and of a drawn battle between Hannibal and Sempronius is to be rejected." (Briscoe 2008: 49).

River. In that crossing, Hannibal, likely suffering from an allergy and having an infection in one eye that he could not treat in those conditions, lost his eye. The source tells us that after the crossing through the Etruscan wetlands only one elephant of the initial 37 was left:

*ipse Hannibal aeger oculis ex uerna primum intemperie uariante calores frigoraque, elephanto, qui unus superfuerat, quo altius ab aqua exstaret, uectus, uigiliis tamen et nocturno umore palustri que caelo grauante caput et quia medendi nec locus nec tempus erat altero oculo capitur.*

[Hannibal himself, whose eyes were suffering in the first place from the trying spring weather, alternating betwixt hot and cold, rode upon the sole surviving elephant, that he might be higher above the water. But lack of sleep, damp nights, and the air of the marshes affected his head, and since he had neither place nor time for employing remedies, he lost the sight of one of his eyes.] Livy XXII 2, 10-11.

The Battle of Lake Trasimene ensued, in which the Romans were caught in the narrow passage by the lake, badly defeated, and suffered great losses. After the battle, Hannibal marched through Umbria and across the Apennines, breaking through to the the Adriatic Sea by Picenum. This arrival at the Adriatic coast is of great significance for many reasons, as Hannibal with it gained access to the sea for the first time after two years of the war campaign. It is important to emphasize here that, according to Polybius' report, Hannibal sent messengers to Carthage as soon as he arrived at the Adriatic coast to report on the achievements they had made and to request reinforcements. We have no news as to whether or not these reinforcements came and when they would have arrived:

ὥς ἂν γεγινώς κύριος τοσοῦτων σκύλων. ἐξαπέστειλε δὲ κατὰ θάλατταν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ καὶ τοὺς διασαφήσοντας εἰς τὴν Καρχηδόνα περὶ τῶν γεγονότων· τότε γὰρ πρῶτον ἦψατο θαλάττης, ἀφ' οὗ τὴν εἰσβολὴν ἐποίησατο τὴν εἰς Ἰταλίαν. ἐφ' οἷς ἀκούσαντες μεγαλείως ἐχάρησαν οἱ Καρχηδόνιοι καὶ πολλὴν ἐποιούντο σπουδὴν καὶ πρόνοιαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατὰ πάντα τρόπου ἰσχυροῦν καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ἐν Ἰβηρίᾳ πράγμασι.<sup>13</sup>

13 Polybius, *Polybii historiae*, Vols. 1-4, ed. Teubner Büttner-Wobst, Leipzig, 1905.

[... being, as he now was, in possession of a very large quantity of captured arms. He also sent at this time messengers to Carthage by sea with the news of what had happened, this being the first time he had come in touch with the sea since he invaded Italy. The news was received with great rejoicing by the Carthaginians, who hastened to take steps to support in every possible manner the two campaigns in Italy and in Spain.] Polyb. III 87.3-88.2.<sup>14</sup>

Continuing his war plan, on the road to the south, Hannibal held the regions along the Adriatic coast; the importance of this fact with regard to this paper will be elucidated later in the text. Immediately following his victory at Cannae in 216 BC,<sup>15</sup> Hannibal enters Samnium along with his army, where the city of Comps surrendered to him with no resistance, and it is here that he divides his army into two. Mago takes over part of the command, whom Hannibal orders to take over cities in the region who had defected from Rome, and to report his victory to Carthage, along with a request for logistics. Hannibal himself penetrates into Campania in an effort to obtain the coast as well as the opportunity to invade Neapolis in order to secure a seaport and safe passage from which Carthaginian ships could deliver reinforcements. The Carthaginian senate, having heard Mago's report<sup>16</sup> and considered their options, decides to send military aid to Hannibal, among which 4000 Numidians and 40 elephants:

*itaque ingenti consensu fit senatus consultum ut Hannibali quattuor milia Numidarum in supplementum mitterentur et quadraginta elephanti et targentia talenta, tdictatorque cum Magone in Hispaniam praemissus est ad conducenda uiginti milia peditum, quattuor milia equitum, quibus exercitus qui in Italia quique in Hispania erant, supplerentur.*

[Accordingly the senate with great unanimity decreed that four thousand Numidians should be sent to Hannibal as a reinforcement; also forty elephants and ... silver talents. And ... was sent in advance to Spain with Mago, for the purpose of hiring twenty

14 Polybius, *The Histories*, Vol. II: Books 3-4. Trans. W. R. Paton. Revised by F. W. Christian Habicht Walbank, Loeb Classical Library 137, Cambridge 2010.

15 Polyb. III 106-117; Liv. XXII 41-50. Fry 1897: 748-752.

16 Mago's report in Liv. XXIII 11-13.

thousand infantry and four thousand horse, to reinforce the armies that were in Italy and those in Spain.] Livy XXIII 13, 7-8.

The information available in the sources does not indicate that the aid arrived, for the situation in Hispania also required reinforcements from Carthage; thus, Mago was sent there, a fact to which we shall return later.

Hannibal, however, as we had mentioned before, continued on through Campania to the sea and gained access to a secure harbour; the sources tell us, however, that when Hannibal arrived at the coast near Neapolis, he found that Roman prefect Marcus Iunius Silanus had already arrived there in order to defend the city at the behest of its inhabitants, which thwarted Hannibal's plans at the time and forced him to adapt to the new situation in which he found himself:

*sub aduentum praetoris Romani Poenus agro Nolano excessit et ad mare proxime Neapolim descendit, cupidus maritimi oppidi potiundi, quo cursus nauibus tutus ex Africa esset; ceterum postquam Neapolim a praefecto Romano teneri accepit – M. Iunius Silanus erat, ab ipsis Neapolitanis accitus – Neapoli quoque, sicut Nola, omissa petit Nuceriam.*

[Upon the arrival of the Roman praetor, the Carthaginian left the territory of Nola and came down to the sea near Neapolis, desiring to gain possession of a coast town to which ships might have a safe passage from Africa. But on learning that Neapolis was held by a Roman prefect — it was Marcus Junius Silanus, who had been called in by the Neapolitans themselves — he turned aside from Neapolis also, as he had from Nola, and made for Nuceria.] Livy XXIII 15, 1-2.

This meant that the harbour was obstructed for the Carthaginians and that supplies and reinforcements from Carthage had to arrive from some other direction. Turning away from Neapolis back through Campania, however, with battles in the cities of Nuceria, Nola (again) and Acerrae, we find that Hannibal already leads a brigade of elephants at the Siege of Casilinum:

*postremo Hannibal castris ante ipsa moenia oppositis paruum urbem paruumque praesidium summa ui atque omnibus copiis oppugnare parat, ac dum instat lacessitque corona undique circumdatis moenibus, aliquot milites et promptissimum quemque e muro turribusque ictos*

*amisit semel ultro erumpentes agmine elephantorum opposito prope interclusit trepidosque compulit in urbem satis multis ut ex tanta paucitate interfectis; plures cecidissent ni nox proelio interuenisset.*

[Finally Hannibal pitched his camp directly before the walls and prepared to assault the small city and small garrison with the greatest violence and with all his forces. And while he was pressing the attack, the walls being completely encircled by his men, he lost a considerable number, the most active at that, being hit by missiles from the wall and the towers. When they actually sallied out once, he almost cut off their retreat by sending a column of elephants against them, and drove them in alarm into the city, after a good number, for so small a force, had been slain. More would have fallen if night had not interrupted the battle.] Livy XXIII 18, 5-6.

It is not clear from where this brigade of elephants came. In the literature, this question is largely avoided.<sup>17</sup> It is certain that it could not have arrived through Neapolis, as this is clearly confirmed in our sources. After the failed siege of Casilinum, Hannibal returned to winter in Capua. Thus, this brigade of elephants appears during the interval between the Battle of Cannae (in the summer of 216 BC) and the end of the war season in the winter of the same year. This interval is important, as the elephants were obviously brought during this period through some harbor which would have been accessible to the Carthaginians, which is a factor which greatly limits the possibilities keeping in mind the repercussions of the First Punic War and the fact that the Roman fleet controlled the western and central Mediterranean.

In addition, Hannibal, in the first place, accepted a dangerous, risky land march towards Italy not only due of the element of surprise, which is certainly not negligible, but also due to the fact that there was no possibility of moving the army to Italy by sea because there was no harbour safe enough to receive them that was not contro-

17 "The elephants sent by order of the Carthaginian senate (xiii. 7) must have arrived." Livy *History of Rome*, transl. by Frank Gardner Moore, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press 1960.



lled by the Romans.<sup>18</sup> Sources refer to the assistance requested by Mago of the Senate of Carthage at the aforementioned command of Hannibal after the Battle of Cannae in the following citation in which are described the forces of reinforcement for Hannibal that Mago prepared for the journey to Italy when circumstances on the theatre of war in Hispania led to a change in plans and a reallocation of forces:

*Interim Carthaginem, unde Mago, frater Hannibalis, duodecim milia peditum et mille quingentos equites, viginti elephantos, mille argenti talenta in Italiam transmissurus erat cum praesidio sexaginta navium longarum, nuntius adfertur in Hispania rem male gestam omnesque ferme eius provinciae populos ad Romanos defecisse.*

[Meanwhile Carthage, from which Mago, Hannibal's brother, was on the point of transporting into Italy twelve thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry, twenty elephants and a thousand talents of silver, with a convoy of sixty warships, received the news that in Spain operations had failed and nearly all the tribes in that province had revolted to the Romans.] Livy XXIII 32, 5-7.

The developments in Spain, where the Scipioni<sup>19</sup> were conducting a well-organized military campaign, resulted in Mago, as noted above, being sent with his troops to Spain, and the same amount of equipment and manpower was assigned to Hasdrubal, who was appointed commander of the forces of Sardinia, as can be seen from the following citation. One should keep in mind, however, that this happened in the year 215 BC, one year after the Battle of Cannae and the campaigns in Campania, which we have discussed,

18 "Carthage may have ruled the waves for over 300 years, but since the disastrous defeat in the First Punic War the western Mediterranean had become a Roman sea. Indeed, the Punic fleet in Spain at the start of the Second Punic War consisted of only thirty-seven seaworthy quinqueremes and triremes. Between them Scipio and Longus had over three times that number of ships. Moreover, the Romans controlled many of the bases and much of the coastline by which any fleet would have had to pass in making its way from Spain to Italy" (Miles 2011: 84).

19 "The two Scipio brothers, Gnaeus and Publius, had landed in Spain and conducted a well-executed land and sea campaign. However, lacking the resources, they had been unable to achieve anything decisive" (Bagnall 2002: 55). "Theater strategy is executed through campaigns that consist of operations synchronized in time and space. Rome successfully linked their operations in Italy, Iberia, Sicily, Macedonia, and eventually North Africa. Roman operations in Iberia and Sicily drew off reinforcements meant for Hannibal while Hannibal was isolated in southern Italy by surrounding Roman armies." (Parker 2001: 25).

and therefore could not chronologically affect the siege of Casilinum described above, in which Hannibal used an elephant brigade.

*... Magonem cum classe sua copiisque in Hispaniam mittunt, in Sardiniam Hasdrubalem deligunt ducem et tantum ferme copiarum quantum Magoni decernunt.*

[... sent Mago with his fleet and his forces to Spain. For Sardinia they chose Hasdrubal as general, and voted him about the same number of troops as to Mago.] Livy XXIII 32, 11-12.

We must also point out here that Mago did not immediately leave for Carthage after separating from Hannibal at Compsa but stayed back in order to obey his command to take over the cities in the region which, some by grace and some by force, rebelled from Rome and crossed over to the side of the Carthaginians. From Mago's report to the Senate of Carthage we learn that the Bruttians and Apulians and some of the Samnites and Lucanians had revolted to the Carthaginians and that Capua, the capital of Campania, had surrendered to Hannibal.<sup>20</sup> This report from Mago is even more significant insofar as it alludes to the possibility of supplies which were opened due to the defection, that is, that the reinforcements from Carthage could arrive through one of their harbours. Indeed, this is confirmed by our sources, but only of one such case with a positive outcome; in 215 BC the Locrians, after receiving supply ships from Carthage, prevented Roman ships from entering the port.

*Per eosdem forte dies et Bomilcar cum militibus ad supplementum Carthagine missis elephantisque et comteatu Locros accessit. Quem ut incautum opprimeret, Ap. Claudius per simulationem provinciae circumeundae Messanam raptim exercitu ducto vento aestuque suo Locros traiecit. Iam inde Bomilcar ad Hannonem in Bruttios profectus erat, et Locrenses portas Romanis clausurunt; Appius magno conatu nulla re gesta Messanam repetit.*

<sup>20</sup> *Bruttios Apulosque, partem Samnitium ac Lucanorum defecisse ad Poenos. Capuam, quod caput non Campaniae modo sed post adflictam rem Romanam Cannensi pugna Italiae sit, Hannibali se tradidisse.* Liv. XXIII 11, 11). Compare to the list of all the peoples of Italy who revolted and seceded from the Roman alliance, at one time or another during the war with Hannibal: *Defecere autem ad Poenos hi populi: Campani, Atellani, Calatini, Hirpini, Apulorum pars, Samnites praeter Pentros, Bruttii omnes, Lucani, praeter hos Uzentini et Graecorum omnis ferme ora, Tarentini, Metapontini, Crotonienses Locrique, et Cisalpini omnes Galli.* (Liv. XXII 61, 11-13).

[About the same time, moreover, as it happened, Bomilcar arrived at Locri with the soldiers sent as reinforcements from Carthage and with elephants and supplies. In order to take him unawares Appius Claudius, with the pretence of making the round of his province, led his army in haste to Messana, and with wind and current in his favour crossed over to Locri. Already Bomilcar had left that place, to join Hanno among the Bruttii, and the Locrians closed their gates against the Romans. Appius, having accomplished nothing by his great effort, returned to Messana.] Livy XXIII 41, 10-12.

The entire operation was evidently well-planned and synchronized, for it is obvious in our sources that Hanno waited for Bomilcar with supplies so that he could join Hannibal, who had departed to besiege Nola, with reinforcements. This also indicates that Hannibal at the time had good communication with his native Carthage as well as with certain parts of his army. Of the elephants which were brought in this contingent, two were taken alive by the Romans during the Siege of Nola, while four were killed in the battle.<sup>21</sup>

*Cum hoc responso muneribusque amplis legatos dimisit; ipse praesidio modico relicto in Tifatis profectus cetero exercitu ire Nolam perguit. Eodem Hanno ex Bruttiiis cum supplemento Carthagine advecto atque elephantis venit.*

[With this answer and also with ample gifts he sent the ambassadors away. He himself set out, leaving a moderate force on Tifata, and proceeded with the rest of his army to Nola. Hanno also came thither from the land of the Bruttii with reinforcements brought from Carthage and with the elephants.] Livy XXIII, 43, 5-6.

In conclusion, all of the facts mentioned above do not offer an answer to the question of where the elephants of Hannibal used during the siege of Casilinum came from; also, the sources mentioned do not indicate how Hannibal managed to communicate with Carthage and request reinforcements after the Battle of Lake Trasimene, having made his way to the sea after two years

<sup>21</sup> *Hostium plus quinque milia caesa eo die, vivi capti sescenti et signa militaria undeviginti et duo elephantis, quattuor in acie occisi; Romanorum minus mille interfecti* (Livy. XXIII, 46, 4).

of military campaigns, concretely to the Adriatic coast. Given the timing and event sequence as seen in the sources, however, the elephants appearing at the siege of Casilinum must have been part of the contingent that came to Hannibal from Carthage in response to his very request.

## THE LIBURNIANS

In the following section of this paper, we shall examine the sources cited above on Hannibal's journey after the Battle of Lake Trasimene from a strategic point of view. Namely, the Second Punic War was fought over a large portion of the Mediterranean, both on sea and on land, which required strategists from both sides to have a great capacity for coordination and, of course, open channels of communication. Hannibal's strategic aim has been reconstructed after the fact in academic research on the basis of his movement and operations, both in antiquity and today.<sup>22</sup> One significant element of such a reconstruction deals with the question of why Hannibal did not move directly towards Rome after the Battle of Lake Trasimene, that is, why he went to Cannae. From the sources we discover the Romans, after receiving the news of their terrible defeat at the Battle of Lake Trasimene, began preparing defenses for the city right away as "they would have to fight for their City and their homes since they had not been able to save Italy".<sup>23</sup> From this we conclude that in antiquity they believed that such a move would have been both expected and logical on Hannibal's part.

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22 The question of "why Hannibal did not attack Rome after the Battle of Cannae" represents a *topos* in historiography, especially of martial history. Even in antiquity it was subject to strategic analysis and was considered a great mistake by the Carthaginian general, as well as a later lapse in military discipline. "For sleep and wine, and feasts and harlots, and baths and idleness, which habit made daily more seductive, so weakened their bodies and spirits that it was their past victories rather than their present strength which thereafter protected them; and this was regarded among the military experts as a more serious failure in their commander than that he had not led his men from the field of Cannae forthwith to the city of Rome. For that delay could be regarded as having merely retarded the victory, this mistake as having robbed him of the power to win" (Liv. XXIII 18, 12-13). "After such an overwhelming victory the question arises as to why Hannibal did not then march on Rome. Instead he continued to try to bring about the dissolution of the Roman Confederation. Many explanations are possible, but even with hindsight it would be unwise to pass judgment on a complex decision about which we only have the most rudimentary knowledge" (Bagnall 2002:55).

23 *Pro urbe ac penatibus dimicandum esse quando Italiam tueri nequissent* (Liv. XXII 8, 7).

Hannibal, however, went in the other direction, to the Adriatic Sea, to the territory of Picenum. In the citation by Polybius cited above, Polybius clearly states that, as we have already mentioned, Hannibal sent a messenger by sea to Carthage as soon as he arrived at the Adriatic coast and asked for reinforcements. Polybius thus enlightens Hannibal's move after Trasimene, for he had wished to get to the sea so that he could communicate with Carthage. Seeing as Rome controlled maritime passages, the question arises of whom Hannibal counted on with regard to transport.

We don't have any information on this in literary sources, but here we must point out the coincidental fact that on the other side of the Adriatic, in which archeological findings from the Liburnia-Iapodia region show an enormous amount of Carthaginian and North African coins dating back to the Second Punic War. As Šešelj and Ilkić show in their study<sup>24</sup> on the typology and spatial distribution of these findings found in 30 Liburnian native settlements, the greatest concentration is in the region that was most densely populated during the Hellenistic era; with regard to typology, the most common type of coin is of late Carthaginian origin, dating to the second half of the 3rd and the first half of 2nd century BC, depicting the head of Tanit or Persephone, with a horse facing to the right, or with the horse facing to the right with its head turned. The authors conclude that "there is no doubt that the occurrence of this coinage must be related to Liburnian maritime trade. Relations with the western coast of the Adriatic, especially the area of Picenum and Apulia, were well established from the early Iron Age onwards and persisted during the Hellenistic period"<sup>25</sup>.

Archeological findings of coins from Cape Ploča, where a votive sanctuary for sailors sailing on route through Liburnian waters is found, show the same typological picture.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the fact that among the coins found in Liburnia-Iapodia there are also coins from Apulian cities (Luceria, Teate, Arpi) which otherwise aren't widely found outside of Italy, and which also date from the time of the Second Punic War; to these should be added findings of coins from more southern points, such as Bruttium and Brundisium, is of incredible importance to us.

24 Šešelj – Ilkić 2014: 43-54.

25 *Eidem*: 50.

26 *Ibidem*. On maritime routes see Arnaud 2005. On the results of the archeological excavations on Ploče see Bilić-Dujmušić 2002: 485-497. and Bilić-Dujmušić 2004: 123-140.

Keeping this in mind, we believe that the Liburnians must have played some sort of role in trade or communications with Carthage from the moment that Hannibal arrived at the Adriatic coast after the Battle of Lake Trasimene (as stated above by Polybius), aiding him in establishing communications with Carthage, in other words, that the Liburnians offered the support in maritime transport which he had been counting on. With regard to provenance the findings of coins also coincide with Hannibal's movement to the south, as has been described in literary sources.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Cannae itself, along with the fact that at that time it was a large grain storage area and thus a military target, was near (which was important to Hannibal) the harbour of Aufidusa, one of the rare suitable harbours upon which Hannibal could count to be less protected than more northern harbours, such as Ariminum.<sup>28</sup>

In conclusion, it is due to the reasons examined here that we believe that Hannibal's journey to Cannae after the Battle of Lake Trasimene was part of a premeditated military plan in which, in order to secure a channel of communication with his mother country, Carthage, and consequently the delivery of the reinforcements, he counted on the Liburnians taking on a significant role. Whether this could explain the appearance of elephants during the siege of Casilinum remains to be explored, as are, among others, the possibilities of transporting them, which, when it comes to elephants, are specific and extremely demanding.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, political entities on the eastern Adriatic coast conducted anti-Roman policies during the Second Punic War, in coordination with Macedonia among others; Macedonia, in fact, became Hannibal's ally,<sup>30</sup> and entered a war with Rome in 214 AD. Keeping this in mind when viewing the wider context from the aforementioned position, one should also keep in mind the fact that there were two Illyrian wars just before and just after the war with Hannibal.

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27 "... Hannibal now shifting his camp from time to time continued to remain in the country near the Adriatic." Polyb. III 88, 1. Polybius 2010.

28 "Central to Roman strategy was the critical advantage of Roman sea supremacy. Their ability to control the sea lines of communication of central and western Mediterranean enabled them to move and resupply large forces at will. The Romans maintained this advantage throughout the war and they were quickly able to respond to problems arising in distant areas. This stands in marked contrast with Carthaginian naval efforts. Carthage possessed a potent naval force but never successfully deployed it against the Romans" (Parker 2001: 14).

29 Nossov: 2008.

30 Miles: 2010.

## CONCLUSION

The problem with the elephants which Hannibal brought with him to the Siege of Casilinum in this paper has shown itself to be one part of a much wider problem, that of the channel of communications between Hannibal and his native Carthage, the channels of transportation and reinforcements which arrived from Carthage. An analysis of literary sources has shown that they themselves are not sufficient for a complete understanding of the system of operations, but they do point to a possible explanation for the strategic moves of Hannibal after the Battle at Lake Trasimene and open the possibility of deliberating a transport-trade-communication relationship between Hannibal, the Liburnians, and Carthage. The thesis is further strengthened by the numismatic situation on the other side of the Adriatic in Liburnia-Iapodia, in which during the time of the Second Punic War a large quantity of coins from Carthage are in circulation in a large number of settlements in the region. The context provided opens additional possibilities for interpretation as well as the need for further research regarding communication, transportation options and techniques, and their place in the context of the anti-Roman political coalition's operations during the Second Punic War.

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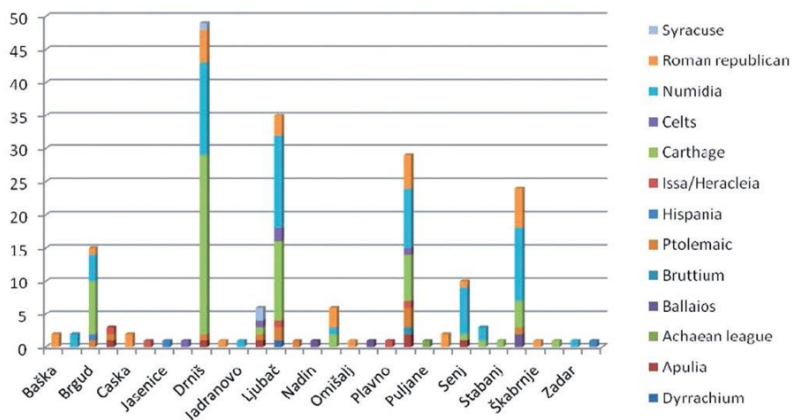


Figure 1. Areal distribution of coins. Taken from: ŠEŠELJ – ILKIĆ 2014: 45.

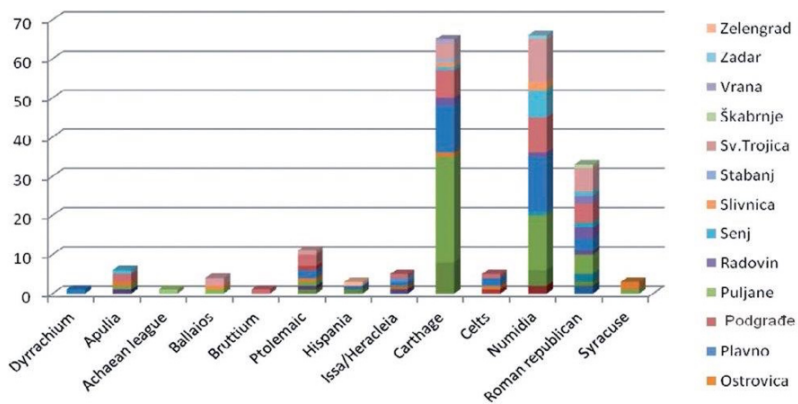


Figure 2. Typological distribution of coins. Taken from: ŠEŠELJ – ILKIĆ 2014: 45

## SUMMARY

### Hannibal's Elephants and the Liburnians

The second Punic war is a relatively well-known episode from Roman history. Reliable, detailed ancient sources such as Livy and Polybius, however, don't say much on the topic of Hannibal's provisions from his native Carthage. One of the questions related to the provisions is where Hannibal's elephants came from after the battle of Cannae, as after traversing the Etrurian swamp Hannibal only had one elephant left (Livy XXII 2). Immediately after the victory at Cannae Hannibal sends a delegation requesting logistics and the Carthaginian senate decides to send him military aid, among which were 4000 Numidians and 40 elephants (Livy XXIII 11-13). In the meantime, Hannibal penetrates Campania already accompanied by elephants at the Siege of Casilinum (Livy XXIII 18).

The authors of this paper believe that Hannibal's path to Cannae was part of a premeditated military plan, according to which the Carthaginian army needed to pick up supplies near Cannae, with the Liburnians playing an important role in opening channels of communication and supplies. Several facts support this theory, most importantly the following:

- one of the few suitable ports that Hannibal could count upon to be less guarded by the Romans than more northern ports, such as Ariminum, is found near Cannae;
- an enormous amount of money from Africa is in circulation in Liburnia right at the time of the war with Hannibal;

It is known that political entities on the eastern coast of the Adriatic had an anti-Roman political agenda during the time of the second Punic war, coordinating themselves with Macedonia among others, which became an ally of Hannibal and with which Rome went to war in 214 B.C, with which the two Illyrian wars right before and right after the war with Hannibal are related. The authors believe that the sources point to a sort of coalition for transport, trade and communication between Hannibal, the Liburnians and Carthage, which should be viewed in the context of the operations of the anti-Roman coalition of political entities on the eastern shores of the Adriatic.

## SAŽETAK

### Hanibalovi slonovi i Liburni

Drugi punski rat relativno je dobro poznata epizoda iz rimske povijesti. Ipak, inače pouzdani, pa i dosta detaljni antički izvori – prije svega Livije i Polibije – ne govore detaljno o Hanibalovoj komunikaciji i opskrbi iz matične Kartage. Jedno od pitanja vezanih uz opskrbu je odakle Hanibalu slonovi nakon bitke kod Kane. Naime, nakon prolaska kroz etrurske močvare Hanibalu je ostao samo jedan slon (Livije XXII 2). Odmah nakon pobjede kod Kane, Hanibal u Kartagu šalje izaslanstvo s molbom za logistiku i kartaški senat mu odluči poslati vojnu pomoć, među ostalim 4000 Numidana i 40 slonova (Livije XXIII 11-13). U međuvremenu Hanibal prodire u Kampaniju i tamo već u opsadi Casilinumima ima slonove (Livije XXIII 18).

Autori članka smatraju da je Hanibalov put jadranskom obalom prema Kani, nakon bitke kod Trazimenskoga jezera, dio unaprijed smišljenoga vojnog plana, prema kojem se kartaška vojska trebala opskrbiti upravo kod Kane, i da su pritom u ostvarivanju komunikacije i opskrbljivanju značajnu ulogu trebali odigrati Liburni. Tomu u prilog govori nekoliko činjenica, prije svega ove:

- kod Kane je jedna od rijetkih prikladnih luka za koje je Hanibal mogao računati da će ih Rimljani manje štiti nego sjevernije luke, npr. Ariminij;
- na području Liburnije upravo u vrijeme rata s Hanibalom kola iznimno mnogo afričkoga novca.

Autorice smatraju da izvori upućuju na svojevrsan saveznički transportno-trgovinsko-komunikacijski odnos između Hanibala, Liburna i Kartage koji treba dodatno sagledati u kontekstu djelovanja proturimske koalicije političkih tvorevina na istočnoj obali Jadrana.

**Ključne riječi:** Hanibal, Liburnija, Livije, Polibije, Drugi punski rat, opskrba, slonovi