CHAPTER I

Introduction

PROLOGUE

At the end of a single, fateful day in the middle of the summer of 216 BC[1] –
2 August according to one Roman tradition, but perhaps sometime in
early July if the Roman calendar was running ahead of the solar months[2] –
near the small Apulian town of Cannae, Hannibal stood seemingly on the
brink of victory over the Roman Republic. He had just exacted a crushing
defeat upon the largest Roman field army mustered to that day. At least
fifty thousand Roman and allied soldiers lay dead on the field of battle;
thousands more were captured. One consul perished, while the second
managed to gather survivors and seek refuge in the neighbouring city
of Canusium. Perhaps most importantly, within a few days a significant
number of communities in southern Italy, hitherto allied with and loyal to
Rome, began to defect. The battle of Cannae was indeed a major turning
point in the Second Punic War, marking the end of its first stage, typified
by large-scale clashes between Hannibalic and Roman armies in Italy, and
the beginning of its second stage, a war of attrition whose outcome hung
in the balance at least until 211, when the tide of war turned decidedly
against Hannibal.

Viewed in a broader context, the battle of Cannae and the subsequent
defection and reconquest of Rome's Italian allies can also be understood as
a significant point of transition in a much longer development. That is, the
last two decades of the third century, occupied largely by the Second Punic

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[1] All subsequent dates are 'BC' unless otherwise noted.

[2] According to a fragment of Claudius Quadrigarius (Beck and Walter, *FRH* 14 F52 = fr. 53 Peter,
from Gell. 5.17.5; see also Macrob. *Sat.* 1.16.26) Cannae was fought on 2 August 216. This book
adopts the position that the Roman calendar was running well in advance of the seasons in the
early years of the war, with 2 August on the Roman calendar probably equating to around 1 July on
the solar calendar in 216 (following the calculations of Derow 1976). Although the accuracy of the
Roman calendar during the Second Punic War is highly debated, few if any of the arguments in
this book rest on the outcome.

I

War, stand in many ways as the closing act in the Roman conquest of the Italian peninsula south of the Po and Rubicon rivers, a process that had begun in earnest in the middle of the fourth century. From this perspective the Second Punic War was not only a 'global' conflict between two powerful Mediterranean states; rather, the war also shaped the local diplomatic and political context, providing an opportunity for Italian communities to exercise independent foreign policy and to break free from Roman rule. At the 'global' level, Rome's ultimate victory after Hannibal's crushing success in the early stages of the war paved the way for its conquest of the Mediterranean. Rome entered the Second Punic War as the dominant city in Italy and a regional hegemon, yet emerged as a 'world power'.[3] At the local level, Hannibal's strategic failure essentially signalled the end of Italian independence. Disloyal Italian states were reconquered and in many cases severely punished, and the post-war settlement allowed the senate to consolidate its position vis-à-vis the Italian allies. For more than a century Roman hegemony in Italy was unchallenged by local threats or outside invaders until the time of the Social War and the final political integration of the peninsula.

The purpose of this book is to examine the Second Punic War from the local perspective of Rome's Italian allies, in particular the specific factors (military, political, economic, etc.) that convinced some allied states to remain loyal to Rome while others decided to defect. My analysis focuses, therefore, primarily on diplomacy. Certainly Hannibal's defeat (or, if one prefers, Rome's victory) can be explained at least in part by looking at tactics, strategy, logistics, command, military and political institutions, and so forth, and I will outline some of these approaches below. In addition, however, Hannibal's and Rome's relative successes in conducting negotiations with Italian cities, the policy decisions of those cities, and interstate relations between different Italian communities also shaped the course and outcome of the war. Put simply, Hannibal's inability to win over more Italian communities – a diplomatic concern – contributed significantly to his overall strategic failure in the Italian theatre of the war, and thus ultimately to Rome's victory over Carthage. Yet, as indicated above, Hannibalic–Italian (and Roman–Italian) diplomacy during the

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[3] For a summary of Rome's rise from hegemon of Italy to Mediterranean power, see Crawford 1978: 43–57; Goldsworthy 2000: 316–21; see also Errington 1972: 119–28, according to whom, 'The seventeen years of the Second Punic War which led to the defeat of Carthage was the most decisive single phase of Rome's rise to world power' (p. 119). It should be noted that Rome was still consolidating its hold in the area of the Po Valley by placing colonies in northern Italy in the early second century (see Chapter 7, pp. 309–10).

Second Punic War cannot be divorced from the longer-term development of Roman power in Italy. Thus, this book situates the critical policy decisions made by the ruling classes of various Italian cities, especially in the wake of Cannae, in the context of interstate behaviour and patterns of diplomacy between the communities of the peninsula stretching back to the emergence of Rome as the hegemonic state in Italy in the fourth century. It is hoped that this analysis not only contributes to our understanding of the Second Punic War – a pivotal event in Mediterranean history – but also sheds light on Roman–Italian (and intra-Italian) relations during the period of the Roman conquest of Italy.

This book is organised broadly into three parts. Chapter 1 presents a series of related background discussions. I will briefly analyse Hannibal's strategy – his plan to break up the system of alliances between Rome and the cities in Italy – and various solutions proposed by modern scholars for why and how his strategy did not bring about a favourable outcome in the war. As we will see, such previous scholarship has gone a long way in explaining Hannibal's defeat in the Second Punic War, but it has not accounted adequately for the diplomatic aspect of his strategic failure. Chapter 1 also discusses the Roman conquest of Italy and the nature of Roman–Italian relations in the fourth and third centuries, thus foregrounding the events of the Second Punic War in the major developments of the preceding century. The nature of the ancient evidence is examined as well.

The core of the book, Chapters 2 to 5, deals with the pivotal phase of the Second Punic War. Each of these four chapters presents a regional case study: Apulia (Chapter 2), Campania (Chapter 3), Bruttium and western Magna Graecia (Chapter 4) and southern Lucania and eastern Magna Graecia (Chapter 5). The organisation follows Hannibal's path, both geographically and chronologically, throughout southern Italy as he tried to elicit allied defections after the battle of Cannae (between 216 and 212). In all four regions Hannibal's diplomatic success was in some way limited. Between 216 and 215 he and his lieutenants convinced a significant number of cities in Apulia, Campania and the 'toe' of Italy to rebel from Rome, but at no point did all of the cities in any of these regions defect. He was more successful in southern Lucania and eastern Magna Graecia, as every major city between Thurii and Taras switched sides. Yet this success was belated, since he did not begin to win these cities over until late 213 and early 212, and even then he was never able to control the citadel of the region's most important city, Taras.

That Hannibal's diplomatic success in these regions was mixed makes them intriguing subjects for analysing what particular conditions, factors

and considerations convinced individual cities to choose different courses
of action in the middle years of the Second Punic War. For each region I
attempt to identify, as much as the sources allow, the specific and in some
cases unique circumstances that shaped the decision of each city to remain
loyal to Rome or to ally with Hannibal. What emerges is a picture of indi-
vidual self-interested communities responding to the immediate internal
and external pressures brought on by a changing military, diplomatic and
political landscape. As I will discuss below, this is rather more nuanced
than typical interpretations of Italian (dis)loyalty, which tend towards
blanket explanations. At the same time, attempting to understand the
Second Punic War from the perspective of these individual communities
requires tracing, as much as possible, longer-term local political and diplo-
matic developments, which were often complex and multipolar. Thus, my
analysis maps out the history of each city in a given region and especially
that city's relationships with surrounding communities to see how local
intercity rivalries, bonds or other diplomatic patterns informed its dispos-
ition in the Second Punic War. Such an approach is made possible by the
fact that many of the communities in the regions studied in Chapters 2
to 5 were involved at various times in Rome's campaigns against the
Samnites and against Pyrrhus, for which we have a good deal of literary
evidence. Moreover, ancient literary sources also make occasional refer-
ence to tensions and conflicts independent of Rome between various cities
and groups within the four regions under examination. Finally, significant
archaeological research in southern Italy in the last thirty-five years or so
has revealed much about long-term economic and demographic develop-
ments, which further adds to our understanding of the 'back story' to
these cities in the Second Punic War.[4] Overall, therefore, while the case
studies appear to be concerned only with events within a narrow chrono-
logical period in the late third century, they explore and elucidate a much
larger swathe of the historical canvas.

The third part of this book, Chapters 6 and 7, considers how events
played out after the cities in these four regions made their initial policy
decisions following Cannae, responding either positively or negatively to
Hannibal's overtures. Both long-term and short-term implications are con-
sidered, so once again this third section operates on two levels. Chapter 6
is a synthetic discussion of the difficulties Hannibal faced after he achieved
only partial success in these four regions, focusing on the years 214 to 204,

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[4] The problematic nature of the ancient literary sources and the methodological difficulties in relat-
ing archaeological data to the literary evidence will be discussed below (pp. 5–13).

by which time nearly all of the defecting cities had been reconquered by Rome, forcing Hannibal to operate in an increasingly restricted corner of the peninsula. He was never able to lure the Romans into another potentially decisive battle after 216, nor to elicit enough allied revolts to force Rome to the bargaining table, so the conflict in Italy turned into a war of attrition that played increasingly to Roman strategic advantages. At the same time, some of the very same local conditions that Hannibal successfully manipulated in order to win over some of Rome's Italian allies, such as local intercity rivalries and intra-city political factionalism, contributed, ironically, to his inability to hold those cities.

Chapter 7 points ahead to how the Roman response to the cities that defected during the Second Punic War shaped developments in Roman–Italian relations in the second century.[5] The post-war settlement included the punishment of local elites who had promoted revolt, but also rewards for those members of the same class who convinced the Romans of their fidelity. This environment encouraged local aristocrats to forge stronger ties with members of the Roman aristocracy in order to secure their own political standing, which over time promoted fuller incorporation and unification. I will also consider what circumstances and policies allowed Rome to overcome the sorts of interstate tensions that bedevilled Hannibal and discuss what Hannibal might have done differently to win over more Italian allies, especially in those areas that remained more firmly loyal to Rome throughout the war (e.g. Etruria and Umbria).

SOURCES, PROBLEMS AND METHODOLOGIES

It is necessary to discuss briefly the problematic nature of the primary evidence brought to bear in the pages that follow. Of course, any ancient source, be it a literary text or not, should be approached with a cautious and critical eye, but this is especially true when dealing with the highly inconsistent sources for Roman (and Italian) history in the fourth and third centuries. Indeed, technical discussions weighing the relative historicity of individual passages or considering the relevant significance of archaeological data are found throughout this book; they are too numerous to be listed and summarised here, and the reader will have to judge the merits of the specific arguments as they are confronted. Still, it is appropriate to discuss in more general terms some of the major challenges posed

[5] For more on these relations see now Bispham 2007: esp. 74–160.

by the ancient evidence for this period, both literary and material, and the respective approaches that will be taken in this book to deal with them.

It must be admitted that the surviving relevant ancient texts for the period in question were written considerably later than the events they describe in the fourth and third centuries, though they contain occasional fragments of contemporary or near-contemporary sources. This is particularly the case with the surviving accounts of Rome's wars against the Samnites and the corresponding spread of Roman power into Campania and Apulia (*c.* 340–290), which provide much of the critical information for our reconstruction of the regional histories and long-term patterns of interstate behaviour that shaped events later in the Second Punic War. For this era we must rely heavily on the second pentad of Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, the only unbroken narrative source for Roman Italy in this period, supplemented by the accounts of Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cassius Dio/Zonaras and Appian, as well as a host of references gleaned from other, non-narrative sources (such as Strabo). Yet, despite the wide range of literary sources cited, Livy ultimately provides the backbone of the narrative, and thus also of our analysis of the later fourth and early third centuries.

The trustworthiness of Livy's account of this period is not a given: he wrote three centuries after the fact, relying on sources that were themselves late, derivative and problematic. The following are just some of the weaknesses of Livy and the historiographic tradition on which he based the narrative found in Books 6–10.[6] Livy (or his sources) tends both to glorify the achievements of Rome and to exonerate the Romans from any blame in the many wars they fought. It is assumed that he at least occasionally magnified, if not entirely fabricated, Roman victories, while downplaying or even suppressing altogether Roman military setbacks. Roman sources are also guilty of anachronism and retrojection, imposing later events, developments and concerns onto Rome's earlier history. Since Roman historiography began only with the work of Fabius Pictor (*fl. c.* 210–200), we need to ask what sorts of information, accounts and documents for the fourth century were available to Livy, either directly or through the sources that he consulted. Thus, we are left to ask: just how much genuine fourth- and early third-century material is preserved in the surviving accounts of Livy (principally) and the other ancient authors?

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[6] For a thorough discussion of Livy's sources and the literary techniques used by authors of the 'annalistic tradition', see Oakley 1997–2005: I.13–108 (esp. 72–99), on which much of the following discussion is based. See also Briscoe 1971; Oakley 1997–2005: IV.473–92.

This question has generated a spirited scholarly debate, which has inten-
sified in the last decade or so with renewed scholarly interest in the history
of the early (and 'early middle') Republic. Historians have tended to adopt
one of two opposing approaches, the 'conservative' and the 'sceptical', to
borrow Oakley's terminology.[7] Among recent scholars writing in English,
Cornell (1989c, 1995b) and Forsythe (2005), respectively, represent these two
approaches, though neither to the extreme. For Cornell, the ancient literary
tradition for Rome's early history (down to the First Punic War) preserves a
significant historical core – kernels of truth that form the narrative frame-
work – upon which additional layers of narrative detail and embellishment
have been superimposed. This approach, while not uncritical, tends to be
more trusting of the narrative sources than the 'hypercritical' approach of
past generations, who assumed that ancient authors invented the bulk of
early Roman history. While Forsythe does not completely follow in the
footsteps of the hypercritics, he is far more doubtful about the historicity
of the literary tradition. Thus, he tackles the sources for the same period
through a hermeneutic of suspicion: assuming rather more Roman chau-
vinism, embellishment, manipulation, and outright invention and fabrica-
tion within the literary record than do his more trusting colleagues.[8]

This book in general follows the 'middle path' between these two
approaches. It would be naïve to accept every narrative detail in the
ancient sources at face value.[9] Livy's account in Books 6–10 contains
obvious cases of invention, such as lengthy speeches ascribed to famous
Roman (and some non-Roman) generals. At the same time, the analysis
in this book assumes that the sources have preserved a good deal of fac-
tual information, including the names of magistrates and the locations of
battles and captured cities, some of which are so obscure that their very
mention argues against fabrication.[10] As indicated above, Livy's narrative
is the main source for much of the present discussion of the fourth and
early third centuries. He relied on as many as six early Roman sources for
this period; these include Fabius Pictor, who was born in the middle of

[7] Oakley 1997–2005: 1.100–4, citing Beloch 1926 and Salmon 1967 as 'too critical' while commend-
ing the balanced methods of De Sanctis 1956–69, Harris 1971 and Cornell 1989a, 1989b, 1989c; see
also Cornell 1995a: 1–30, 2004. For a similar approach, see Ogilvie and Drummond 1989.
[8] Also highly critical: Wiseman 1979, though see reviews by Briscoe 1981b and Cornell 1982.
[9] Thus, for example, in her analysis of Rome's foreign policy in the era of the Pyrrhic War, Hof
2002 tends to assume the reliability of such sources in the absence of explicit counter-evidence.
[10] For arguments on the authenticity of references to such obscure places, see Harris 1971: 60;
Oakley 1997–2005: 1.63–7. Indeed, Livy's account appears on the whole much more trustworthy
for the period dealing with the Samnite Wars, especially from the outbreak of the Third Samnite
War.

the third century and would probably have known men who were alive or even active during the Third Samnite War, and whose fathers and grand-fathers lived during the Second Samnite War and earlier.[11] Moreover, such information as the names of magistrates and triumphators, the foundations of colonies, the creation of new tribes, and so on, were probably recorded in official records, such as the Pontifical Tables.[12] Roman aristocratic families kept records of their ancestors' deeds, though the historical quality of these family histories must have been uneven and especially liable to intentional embellishment.[13] In addition, Rome's urban landscape was littered with monuments, both public and private, with inscriptions (including the consular and triumphal *fasti)* and in some cases even visual depictions that provided information about deeds of the past. Livy's sources may even have had access to occasional local histor-ies or chronicles of locales in the Greek-speaking part of Italy. Overall, a good deal of genuine material must have passed from archival and oral sources into the early annalistic sources, and eventually into the accounts of later authors.[14] Livy himself comments (6.1.1–3) on the improved qual-ity of his sources for the period after the Gallic sack of Rome in about 390. In a number of places he preserves multiple versions of the same event, which allows the modern reader a chance to evaluate his sources and select the more plausible.[15] We are fortunate that Appian, Dionysius

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[11] I follow the traditional convention in employing the terms First, Second and Third Samnite Wars as a matter of convenience. The terminology is, however, problematic: see below n. 31. On Fabius Pictor and the potential pathways for the preservation and transmission of authentic information, see Luce 1977: 139–84; Ungern-Sternberg and Reinau 1988; Cornell 1995a: 1–30; Oakley 1997–2005: 1.21–72; Beck and Walter 2001: 1.17–52, esp. 27–37; Forsythe 2005: 59–77. Livy explicitly cites Fabius Pictor, Piso, Claudius Quadrigarius, Licinius Macer and Aelius Tubero as sources for Books 6–10, and he probably also consulted Valerias Antias: Oakley 1997–2005: 1.13–16.

[12] Whatever one thinks about when the Pontifex Maximus stopped keeping annual records, or whether the *Annales Maximi* were published by P. Mucius Scaevola or some later author, there is little doubt that the Pontifical Tables were recorded from an early date (perhaps the fifth cen-tury if not earlier), probably transcribed into a chronicle or onto more durable material (also at an early date), and were an important source of information for the early Roman historians: see Rawson 1971 (who is more pessimistic about the survival of Pontifical material in Livy's narra-tive); Wiseman 1979: 9–26; Bucher 1987; Drews 1988; Oakley 1997–2005: 1.24–7; Frier 1999 (ori-ginally published in 1979); Beck and Walter 2001: 1.32–7.

[13] On falsehoods and exaggerations in family histories, which may have crept into the literary his-torical record, see especially Ridley 1983.

[14] Note for example Rich's (2005) recent re-evaluation of Valerias Antias, emphasising his archival research and use of archival material, contra Badian 1966 (among others). Rich also observes that '[m]uch of Livy's domestic material must derive ultimately from archival sources, particularly the routine material on such matters as provinces, armies and prodigies. The most important archive for this purpose would have been the reports of the senate's decrees …' (p. 156).

[15] Oakley 1997–2005: 1.13–16 provides a list of all variants that Livy cites, though he notes that they rarely differ greatly. In some cases, however, the versions differ significantly, such as 8.37.3–6,

of Halicarnassus, Diodorus Siculus, Valerius Maximus, Cassius Dio/
Zonaras and Polybius contain relevant passages that are either parallel to
or even independent of Livy's account; in both cases they offer potential
external checks on the dominant Livian narrative.[16] Indeed, it is remark-
able how often Oakley's magisterial four-volume commentary on Books
6–10 of *Ab urbe condita* – a work of inestimable value to the research and
writing of this book – demonstrates the plausibility of the core Livian
narrative.[17] Overall, therefore, although the second half of the fourth cen-
tury lay at the very fringes of the Roman historical tradition, we need not
despair entirely at the quality of our sources, even though they must be
dealt with cautiously.

In contrast to the rather abundant, albeit problematic literary source
material for the period down to about 290, there is a relative lacuna in our
sources for events in Italy during much of the middle of the third cen-
tury, the period from the end of the Third Samnite War to the outbreak
of the Second Punic War. However problematic Livy's extant history may
be, the loss of Books 11–20 (covering the years 292 to 220) is regrettable,
as we are left to rely instead on the rudimentary outline provided by the
periochae of these books. Similarly, Diodorus Siculus' account breaks off
in 302 except for a few fragments. Dionysius' Ῥωμαικὴ ἀρχαιολογία ori-
ginally covered the period down to 264, but all that survives concern-
ing the third century are significant fragments dealing with the Third
Samnite War and the Pyrrhic War. In addition, Plutarch, Cassius Dio/
Zonaras and Appian offer detailed if tendentious accounts of Pyrrhus'
invasion of Italy. The fragmentary narrative of Cassius Dio/Zonaras
does cover the Roman activities in the northern and southern penin-
sula in the 270s and 260s, though from 264 it focuses almost exclusively

where his sources disagreed whether a Roman army was sent to fight the Apulians or to defend
them against the Samnites.

[16] For example, Livy (8.22–3) and Dionysius (16.5–6) record parallel accounts of the events sur-
rounding Naples in 328/7. According to Oakley 1997–2005: 1.38, Dionysius' version is derived
ultimately from a Greek source. This episode will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

[17] In fact, the overall tenor of Oakley's introductory chapters on Livy's sources and the early Roman
historical tradition is, perhaps surprisingly, one of cautious optimism regarding the preserva-
tion of authentic historical material. It should be noted that Oakley amends some of his specific
arguments in the relevant section of his *addenda* and *corrigenda* (1997–2005: IV.474–92), but his
overall position on the survival of some authentic historical material even from before the third
century remains relatively unaffected by his additional arguments. Indeed, in the *addenda* and
corrigenda, Oakley calls attention to the potential role of aristocratic funerals and dramatic per-
formances in forming a Roman national story that included at least some historical material,
especially from the late fourth century, though he expresses overall scepticism about oral trad-
ition as a channel for conveying 'reliable facts' from a much earlier period (1997–2005: IV.478–9).
His most recent thoughts on the topic are found in Oakley 2009.

on Roman–Carthaginian relations at the expense of Italian affairs.[18]
Similarly, Polybius effectively starts his history with the events leading up
to the First Punic War, but he glosses briefly over the war with Pyrrhus
and otherwise makes only a few passing references to Italian cities (other
than Rome) before the Second Punic War. Overall, Italian affairs in the
third century, particularly the fifty years or so after Pyrrhus left Italy for
good, are rather unevenly documented.[19]

This gap in the narrative sources for the middle of the third century
poses a formidable but not completely intractable problem. The various
sources for Pyrrhus' Italian campaign do provide evidence for local polit-
ics and interstate relations in southern Italy, especially among the south-
ern Italian Greek cities, in the early third century, even if the coverage of
Italian matters between Pyrrhus and Hannibal is spotty at best. In addition
to the major narrative texts already discussed, some information about the
third century can be gleaned from a range of minor literary sources, such
as Strabo's *Geography*, Pliny's *Natural History*, Justin's *Epitome of Pompeius
Trogus*, Orosius' *Histories against the Pagans*, and the enigmatic, anonym-
ous *Liber coloniarum*. Although these additional sources are generally
very late, tralatitious in nature, of uneven historical scope and sometimes
belonging to genres outside those typically associated with historical nar-
rative, some genuine third-century nuggets may be extracted through a
critical reading, on a case-by-case basis. It is the contention throughout
this book that enough authentic material survives for us to be able to com-
bine it with the fuller evidence for the late fourth and late third centuries
and thus interpolate processes and developments in the early and middle
part of the third century.

Source material for the later third century, composed primarily of
accounts of the Second Punic War, is much more abundant: for this period
we have at our disposal Polybius and Livy, supplemented by Appian,
Cassius Dio/Zonaras, Plutarch and scattered notes in other sources.
Unfortunately, Polybius' continuous narrative of the Second Punic War
breaks off after his account of the battle of Cannae, so that, with the excep-
tion of a few fragmentary passages, we are forced to rely mostly on later
sources of often lesser quality for Italian affairs in the middle and later
years of the war. Therefore, Livy's narrative (especially Books 23–9) once
again provides the bulk of the data for our analysis of the internal politics
and policy decisions of Rome's allies from the wake of Cannae until the

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[18] Interestingly, Bleckmann 2002 has recently argued that Dio/Zonaras is a superior source to
      Polybius for the period of the First Punic War, but see the critical review by Hoyos 2004b.
[19] The fragmentary sources for 292–265 have been collected by Marina Torelli 1978.