Prologue

0.1 Introduction

In the late first century CE, Plutarch wrote paired *Parallel lives* of Greek and Roman individuals, all of them men, except that the later chapters of his (*Mark*) *Antony* are about the life or rather death of Cleopatra. But the model for the present project is not so much Plutarch's biographies as Alan Bullock's 1,158-page late-life masterpiece *Hitler and Stalin. Parallel lives*, which treats its two subjects in alternate narrative and analytical chapters.[1] His method was chosen so as to bring out the differences between his subjects as well as the similarities.[2] I hope to do the same in this joint biography.[3] Naturally, I also hope that examination of each career will illuminate the other and will contribute to the understanding of the momentous historical period which the two men shared, and which in their distinct but interconnected ways they helped to shape. More about Bullock and his book later.

Twenty years ago, I published a mainly literary monograph comparing two fifth-century BCE Greek authors who may or may not have met each other, Thucydides and Pindar.[4] This juxtaposition raised some eyebrows, but I was not the first to offer it, because the acute ancient critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus put them side by side as the two main exponents of what he called the 'severe style'.[5] I now try to do something approximately similar for two later figures, the Carthaginian Hannibal and the Roman Scipio, but this time as a mainly historical undertaking. But that distinction between literary and historical is far too simple: the evidence for the

[1] Bullock 1993. [2] Bullock 1993: xxii.
[3] This prologue includes no theoretical defence of the sometimes disparaged and patronized genre of biography. Syme 1958: 91, writing in his own person, claimed that 'biography offers the easy approach to history'. I have not found this to be so.
[4] Hornblower 2004. [5] *On the arrangement of words*, ch. 22.

lives of Hannibal and Scipio is after all mainly literary, and some of the salient parallels between them are in effect literary devices.[6] The evidence available to Bullock was not only vastly different in quantity from the evidence about Hannibal and Scipio, but also in nature (he was able to exploit archives, documents, statistics, first-hand memoirs, and works by other modern biographers).

Nobody should be surprised at the juxtaposition of two of the greatest military commanders of any period of history, who met on the north African battlefield of Zama in 202 BCE, where Scipio effectively ended the second Punic war by defeating Hannibal, who had invaded Italy from Iberia in 218.[7] Before the battle, they met and parleyed formally, as representatives of their two powers. (This certainly historical meeting means they were unlike Hitler and Stalin, who never met, not even during the two years of the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact of 1939–41.)[8] They were close contemporaries, twelve years apart in age. Hannibal was born in 247.[9] Scipio was born in either 236 or 235.[10] Of these, 235 is here preferred, although certainty is not possible.[11] Twelve years after Zama, in 190, the Romans under one of their two consuls for the year, Scipio's brother

[6] For the ancient sources used in the present book, see Appendix 1.1.

[7] For the three wars between Carthage and Rome, I retain the traditional 'second Punic war' (and 'first' and 'third' ditto) for convenience, and not by way of privileging a Roman perspective. For the Carthaginians, they were presumably the 'Roman wars'. Toynbee 1965 wrote of the 'Romano-Carthaginian double war of 262–201', an accurate but clumsy locution, at which several of his reviewers rightly protested. For the dates, see Timeline.

[8] Hitler nevertheless keenly studied photographs of the meeting between the two foreign ministers, so as to satisfy himself that Stalin's ear lobes were not joined to his head, which he believed, in accordance with some crackpot genetic or physiognomic theory, would be evidence that he was Jewish: Bullock 1993: 668–9. The lobes were separate and 'Aryan'.

[9] The famous Hannibal is Geus no. (9); see Family Tree 1 n. 1 for Geus numbers. In 202, just after his defeat at Zama, Hannibal says he had left Carthage at age nine and returned after thirty-six years (Livy 30.37.9, cf. 30.35.10 and 35.19.4; in the corresponding passage at Pol. 15.19.3, he is made to say he had returned at age 'over forty-five'). So his return to Africa was in 203, aged forty-four, to Carthage itself in 202, and he was born in 247. The best discussion is at Seibert 1993a: 7 n. 2, rejecting some other ancient passages.

[10] Scipio is *DPRR* CORN0878. The most reliable indications of his age are (i) Pol. 10.3.4, he was seventeen when he saved his father at the battle of the Ticinus (10–15 October 218), which would make his birth year 236 if born after mid-October, or 235 if his eighteenth birthday was before mid-October; (ii) Pol. 10.6.10: Scipio was twenty-seven in 209 when he was about to march to New Carthage in Iberia, but this must mean 'in his twenty-seventh year' i.e. he was twenty-six, in view of (i). See also (iii) Livy 26.18.7, Scipio was 'about twenty-four' when he offered himself for the Iberian command in 211 (but this was really in 210). The fullest and best modern discussion is Sumner 1973: 35–6.

[11] A birthday in the first three-quarters of the year might seem preferable to one in the last quarter on grounds of simple statistical probability (see previous n.). But against that is the danger that the sources may have exaggerated Scipio's precocity, cf. *HCP* 2: 199: 'his age at the Ticinus can have been reduced for effect'. It is slightly easier to believe he was military tribune at Cannae (216) at age twenty than at nineteen. But that is far from conclusive, and nineteen is here preferred.

Lucius, fought and defeated the huge army of the Seleucid king Antiochus III at Magnesia in Asia Minor. In the run-up to this campaign, Scipio and the exiled Hannibal each acted as military and political adviser to one of the opposing commanders, a further striking parallel. Even more remarkably, Antiochus benefitted from the advice not only of Hannibal in the period before Magnesia, but also of Scipio, at two private meetings with the king's emissaries on the eve of the battle. But for different reasons, neither Hannibal nor Scipio was actually present at the battle itself.

They died in the same year, 183. In the second century BCE, the Greek historian Polybius, our most important surviving source, noticed this synchronism and provided obituarial notices for both men in the year of their death, and for a third death of that year, his personal hero the Greek leader Philopoemen, on whom he had already published a separate but now lost monograph.[12] The last years of both Hannibal and Scipio were sad. Both were brought down by their domestic enemies. Hannibal, a hunted exile in Asia Minor, was forced to take poison; Scipio died in a kind of internal self-imposed exile. But the parallels are more numerous and go deeper than any of this, as I hope the chapters of this book will show.[13] In particular, both men fought far from home for many years and maintained armies without easy or frequent communication with their home authorities. These overseas commands had consequences for decision-making in their respective fatherlands.

0.2 Ancient and Renaissance Explorations of the Parallels

Plutarch wrote no *Life* of Hannibal or of any other 'barbarian' except the fourth-century BCE Persian king Artaxerxes II.[14] He did, however, write two *Lives* of closely related Romans called Scipio, both now lost. One of them was

[12] See 23.12–14 of his main historical work. These three obituaries survive only in extracts. At 9.24–6, he gave another valuable character sketch of Hannibal.

[13] For a list of parallels, large and small, see the index under 'parallels between Hannibal and Scipio'.

[14] Hannibal features importantly in his *Lives* of the Romans Fabius, Marcellus, and Flamininus, and – more unexpectedly – of Lucullus (see p. 373–4 for Hannibal in Armenia in the 180s). There are briefer allusions in other *Lives*; see Ziegler and Gärtner 1980 (the index vol. of the Teubner ed. of Plutarch's *Lives*): 31, esp. the long list of incidental mentions at the end of the Ἀννίβας entry, prefaced by 'cf.'. Plutarch would also have had much to say about Hannibal in whichever of the two lost Scipio *Lives* was devoted to Africanus; frag. 2 (a self-reference at *Pyrrhus* 8.5) shows that one of these included a famous anecdote about how Scipio talked to Hannibal at Ephesus in 193 (p. 33 n. 105). Hannibal also features occasionally in Plutarch's non-biographical collection of writings, the *Moralia*, e.g. for not being good at public speaking, δημηγορεῖν (812e), cf. Mossman 2018: 78 (and 75 for other mentions of Hannibal in Plutarch). But we will see in the present book that Hannibal is, rightly or wrongly, given some eloquent speeches in the ancient literary tradition.

free-standing (that is, it had no Greek pair), the other was in the *Parallel lives* series, paired with that of the fourth-century BCE Theban commander Epaminondas. The best scholarly opinion is divided as to whether the paired Scipio was Africanus, the Roman subject of the present book, or his grandson by adoption Scipio Aemilianus. For the problem, see Appendix 1.2. Either way, it is clear that Plutarch did write a *Life* of Africanus somewhere. The idea that Hannibal and Scipio Africanus might be paired in Plutarchan fashion is an obvious and attractive one, so the humanist Donato Acciaiuoli in 1470 took the next logical step and wrote (in Latin) such a pair of *Lives*, which were added to the multi-authored translation of the *Lives* printed by G. A. Campano. In a spirit far different from the kindly Plutarch, Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince* (1513) praised Hannibal for his cruelty and deplored Scipio's leniency.[15] Plutarch's paired *Lives* are of Greeks and Romans, and the inclusion of Hannibal in the series would to that extent have been an anomaly – unless, that is, we were to accept a recent theory according to which Hannibal's family took their surname Barcas from the Greek city Barke in Cyrenaica to the east of Carthage, which would make Hannibal into a sort of Greek. But this theory will be rejected later.[16] Most of Plutarch's Greek and Roman pairs are widely separated in time, but Philopoemen and Flamininus were close contemporaries, as were Scipio Africanus and Hannibal.

Polybius' three adjacent obituaries, although apparently brief, were serious and perceptive. In the second century CE, the Greek satirist Lucian again brought Hannibal and Scipio together, in his twelfth *Dialogue of the dead* (sections 380–9 in the modern referencing convention). Alexander the Great also took part in this fantasy debate, and the president was the mythical judge of the underworld, Minos. Hannibal is made to claim that he did all he did without calling himself son of the Egyptian god Ammon or narrating in details his mother's dreams (382). In other words, he was unlike Alexander – or Scipio. Hannibal is also tendentiously made by Lucian to speak of himself as an 'untutored barbarian'.

[15] Ziegler 1949: 316; see Mossman 2018. Acciaiuoli's Scipio is certainly Africanus. Another Renaissance scholar, Simon Goulart, wrote a Plutarchan *Epaminondas*; see Mossman 2018: 82–3. Machiavelli's comparison between Hannibal and Scipio: *The Prince* ch. 17 (= Bondanella 2005: 58–9). Cf. Lintott 1999: 237. Ancient literary insistence on Hannibal's cruelty was a cliché: see p. 408. Scipio's (relative) leniency was sometimes misplaced: see Chapter 6.4 for the Pleminius affair, which Machiavelli acutely gave as his example.

[16] On Hall 2020, see Appendix 2.1.

0.3 Modern Explorations of the Parallels

Andreola Rossi in 2004 published an excellent article with the title 'Parallel lives: Hannibal and Scipio in Livy's third Decade' (that is, books 21–30 of his history, in effect a monograph on the Roman war against Hannibal).[17] Professor Rossi has kindly allowed me to use what is in effect her title.[18]

Rossi, whose focus is a particular long section of Livy, is far from being the only modern author to have examined Hannibal and Scipio side by side. There are for example Meyer 1923 (essay by an outstanding ancient historian on 'Hannibal und Scipio' in a multi-authored volume on 'Meister der Politik', great politicians in history, not just ancient) and Christ 1970 (a brief contribution to a similar large-scale edited work). Fisher 2016 (*Hannibal and Scipio*), is a short, readable, popular monograph in the 'Pocket Giants' series. For his concluding assessment, see the end of my own concluding Chapter 20. Two other recent works call for more extended discussion.

Brizzi 2007a is a joint book-length treatment of Hannibal and Scipio, worth a mention because the author is a distinguished expert on Hannibal.[19] It is a confusing hybrid between scholarly work and popular novel.[20] Part 1, 'Scipio on the eve of Zama' begins 'Publius did not sleep much that night' (7); part 2 begins in exactly parallel fashion 'Hannibal did not sleep much that night'; and so on. That creates the expectation of a historical novel. And there are many other such touches of pure invention. For example, 'Publius [Scipio] saw his doctor that morning' (there is no evidence for this or for the doctor) prepares us in lively fictional fashion for his death. The author admits that he has allowed himself such liberties, *licenze*, elsewhere in the book.[21] But how is the innocent reader to tell what is invented and what is not?

[17] Rossi 2004. This (a ten-book unit) is a specifically Livian sense of 'Decade', so I capitalize it, to distinguish it from the word's usual sense of a ten-year period, and I do the same for 'Pentads', units of five books. See also Mineo 2009 on Livy's presentation of the parallels between Hannibal and Scipio.

[18] Livy's narrative of the second Punic war has stimulated other explorations of parallels between individuals. Strunk 2021 argues that Livy intended to suggest a parallel between Hannibal and his political opponent Hanno on the one hand, and Caesar and the Younger Cato on the other.

[19] Halfway through writing my own book, I bought a copy of Brizzi 2007a online, attracted by book title and name of author (I could find no review in any language). Until it arrived, I wondered if I had been wasting my time, and the author had already done in Italian what I had set out to do in English.

[20] The same author's 'Moi Hannibal . . . ' (Brizzi 2007b) is a readable full-length 'autobiography' of its subject and is naturally a blend of fact and imagination.

[21] Brizzi 2007a: 179, 337, and 381.The invented doctor is even given a name, 'Philocles'. At 380, it is conceded that the name is imaginary, but the idea of a Greek doctor at Rome in that period is claimed to be plausible, *verosimile*. So too Hannibal's son (who on the better view is a late poetic fiction, see p. 43) is called 'Hamilcar', after his grandfather: 180, 336, an invention admitted and defended in the Note (382). Only a pertinacious reader of the main text could be expected to track down this sort of thing in the Note. There is a place for imaginative or partially imaginative

Moore 2020, a more conventional book, examines the ways in which Polybius presents Hannibal and Scipio as learning from experience: Moore concludes that in Polybius' opinion (1) they both do, but (2) in the end, the comparison is to Scipio's advantage. At one point, Moore says that his interest is not in the views of Hannibal himself but in Polybius' characterization of him.[22] In practice, he finds it understandably hard to keep these apart.[23] It is a weakness of Moore's book that he examines only Polybius' own surviving text, not the many portions of Livy which draw closely on Polybius.[24] He has nothing, for example about the final chapters of Livy book 33, the events at Carthage in 195 BCE which led to Hannibal's flight.

0.4 Alan Bullock

Alan Bullock (1914–2004, Lord Bullock from 1976) studied classics and ancient history as an undergraduate at Wadham College, Oxford from 1933 to 1936 – he had the good fortune to be taught Greek history by H. T. Wade-Gery and Roman by Ronald Syme – before switching to a second degree in modern history (1936–8).[25] He was awarded first-class honours in both degree courses. He was well aware that in his 1993 book he was following in the footsteps of Plutarch. But he also makes clear in the preface to that book that the more important ancient influences on him were Aristotle and Thucydides on tyranny and tyrants. His first and best-known book had been *Hitler, a study in tyranny*.[26]

I have imitated Bullock's layout by providing alternating treatments of my two 'parallel lives' (I will use that expression to denote the two human subjects of my book), covering their careers at different phases of their lives, but interspersed with thematic chapters. Like Bullock, I have given the respective ages of the two lives in the chapter titles. By coincidence, one of my lives, Hannibal, was about a decade older than the other, Scipio, just as Stalin was ten years older than Hitler. But Stalin outlived Hitler by eight years, whereas Hannibal and Scipio died in the same year, 183 BCE.

reconstruction in a work of history (see pp. 10, 22, and 373 for examples in the present book), but it should be flagged clearly in the text for what it is.

[22] Moore 2020: 63 n. 21

[23] On his treatment (at 41–4) of Hannibal's inscribed monument recording his own achievements, see p. 19 n. 50.

[24] Moore 2020: 58 seems to imply that we know little of Polybius' treatment of Hannibal's development after book 3 because of the fragmentary state of the text of Polybius thereafter. But this called for discussion of the extent of Livy's use of non-extant Polybius for the rest of the Hannibalic War, Livy books 23–30. Thereafter (books 31–45), heavy use of Polybius by Livy is not in doubt.

[25] For Bullock's own biography, see Dickson and Harris 2008.

[26] Bullock 1952.

0.5 Roman and Carthaginian Imperialism

The nature of Roman imperialism has been warmly debated in the past four decades or so (much more than Carthaginian).[27] The present book is offered as a comparative biographical study – albeit a discursive one – and not primarily intended as a contribution to the debate. But I ought to state a position. Rather than allowing it to emerge gradually during the course of the book, I do so here. I prefer the modern view that the Romans in the period covered by this book were unusually, even uniquely militaristic, aggressive, and belligerent. This is not to deny that other Hellenistic states behaved in militaristic and belligerent ways (the 'anarchy' thesis). In particular, I do not think that Carthage, where support for Hannibal in his Italian years was less than whole-hearted, was militaristic to anything like the same degree as Rome – certainly not before the middle of the third century BCE.[28] To condemn Roman imperialism is nothing new. 'The hero of the third century was the Semite who defended the liberty of his country – Hannibal.' That was Momigliano, summarizing the position of De Sanctis, in unexpected language.[29]

0.6 The 'Past Presumptive' Tense

Peter Thonemann had nothing to do with the writing of this book and has read no word of it. But I am grateful to him for his implied warning about what he wittily called the 'past presumptive' tense,[30] a warning conveyed in his *TLS* review (Thonemann 2018) of a book about Vercingetorix (headed in the online version 'the trouble of writing a biography based on almost

[27] For which see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.

[28] Erskine 2010, Smith and Yarrow 2012a, and Burton 2019 provide useful reviews of the debate. Nobody nowadays seriously regards Roman imperialism as defensive, except in the sense implied by Brunt's famous comparison of Roman reactions to the possibility of a threat as those of 'a nervous tiger, disturbed when feeding' (1990b: 307 (originally 1978)). The view to which I still subscribe is that of Harris 1979 and 1984; also briefly 2016: 42, where he approves what I said in 2007 at *CHGRW*: 30, 38–9. Gruen 1984 was mainly concerned with the east Mediterranean and argued that the Greeks themselves were responsible for inviting Roman intervention. Rich 1993 and 2001: 63 regarded both Harris 1979 and his targets as offering too monocausal an explanation. Eckstein 2006 was more theoretical and wider-ranging geographically than Eckstein 2008, which was confined to the Greek east (he was a pupil of Gruen). Eckstein, scornfully dismissed by Harris 2016: 42, argued in terms of 'anarchy', ceaseless struggle between equally belligerent powers. (Against Eckstein's 'one-sided' use of 'Realist' theory, see Tröster 2009.) Taylor 2020a likewise devotes as much attention to the military strengths of Rome's enemies as to Rome's. Burton 2011 argues that Roman decision-makers respected ideals of friendship seriously in their foreign policy.

[29] Momigliano 1994: 67. 'Condemn' is Momigliano's word, not mine.

[30] Not the same as another recent coinage, the 'plupast' of Grethlein and Krebs 2012. That term is applied when a historian refers to events which happened earlier than the historian's own narrative.

nothing'). He made fun of formulations such as 'the family of Vercingetorix would have owned', 'Vercingetorix would have come to know', and so on. I expect there are too many assertions in the past presumptive in the present book, but at least I am conscious of the danger, in a period for which the sources, although voluminous and chatty (I think especially of Livy), have frustrating limits. When on holiday in Orkney in summer 2022, I visited the excavated Neolithic village at Skara Brae, and I was impressed by the honest method explicitly adopted in the nearby museum and exhibition. In the explanatory panels, the many conjectural assertions were printed in italics (language, religion, social and political arrangements), incontrovertible facts in normal font. On that system, some of the present book would have to be printed in italics, but at least we are a lot better off than for the Neolithic period.

CHAPTER 1

Hannibal and Scipio on Themselves

1.1 Introduction

Famous modern generals and politicians write their memoirs, sometimes with help from ghostwriters; and their biographies are written by other people.[1] There are some rough ancient equivalents to military memoir-writing: the best-known surviving examples are Xenophon's lengthy and heavily autobiographical *Anabasis* (the 'march up country') and Julius Caesar's accounts of his campaigns.[2] Both men used the third person singular about themselves, and both had self-exculpatory motives for writing. Biographies existed in the ancient world.[3] The same Xenophon wrote an encomiastic sketch, with biographical elements, of his friend the Spartan king Agesilaus. Neither Scipio nor Hannibal wrote memoirs in the modern sense, or even in the limited, campaign-focussed way that Xenophon and Caesar did; and biographers did not tackle their lives until much later. So if we want a sense of how Hannibal and Scipio might have presented themselves and their careers, we must improvise and use our imaginations.

The present book begins, it may be thought, back to front, with two partly imaginary inscriptions which purport to celebrate retrospectively much of the career of Hannibal, and all the career of Scipio. Hannibal's will be based on a genuine surviving and at one time inscribed document, which does not survive complete as an inscription, but which was partially summarized by our two main surviving sources, Polybius in Greek and

[1] This chapter anticipates facts and discussions to be provided later in the book, and in this chapter itself; to keep the text and footnotes as uncluttered as possible, I give very few detailed forward references.
[2] There are other attested but lost examples, as we shall see later in this chapter. See Section 1.4, p. 19.
[3] Momigliano 1971 (50–1 on the *Agesilaus*).

Livy in Latin. They were primarily interested in the military statistics which it supplied.

Scipio's is an entirely imaginary creation by me, but it lists known facts in the simple succinct manner of such Roman commemorations. I hope these two items will serve as an introduction to most of the themes of the book, and to many Roman constitutional terms, and will provide a narrative outline. Both, even Scipio's, are incomplete: they cover only the successes of each man, not the unhappy years before their deaths in 183 BCE. That is because we know that Hannibal's record stopped in 205 when he inscribed it; and Scipio's fictitious contemporary epitaph can naturally be assumed to have contained nothing explicitly negative.[4] This chapter will end by asking how far our two parallel lives speak to us in their own words and will discuss the limitations of our evidence, including the difficulty of knowing what the two men looked like.

I have provided modern BCE dates in the two 'documents', for the convenience of readers. Republican Roman epitaphs did not give dates; if they had done, they would have been in the form 'in the consulships of x and y': there were two consuls a year, and they were the highest Roman 'magistracy'. The Romans went on dating in this way until Justinian in the sixth century CE.[5]

Hannibal's bilingual tablet (Punic and Greek) is much likelier to have been dated than Scipio's. The Punic half would have done so in one of two ways: either to 'the 195th [or whatever exact year] from the [creation of the] office of *sufete*', an annual eponymous Carthaginian magistracy instituted around 600 BCE; there are earlier inscribed precedents for this formula. Or he may have dated it by the *sufete* of the particular year in which he inscribed the text.[6] Not only the Romans, but many Greek cities and therefore Greek historians also dated in this way. The Greek version might – again, if it had dates at all – have used the more international 'Olympiads', the dating system by the Olympic festival in Greece, held in midsummer every four years and believed in antiquity to have begun in 776, so that 220/219 is the 'first year of the 140th Olympiad'.[7] This usefully international system was devised by the important Greek historian

[4] There survives a very brief genuine, but much later inscribed, *elogium* of Scipio: p. 13.

[5] Bickerman 1980: 69. 'Republican' as a dating term means the period between about 500 BCE, when the Romans got rid of their kings, until the start of the principate of Augustus, conventionally 31 BCE – that is, of the Roman Empire in the chronological sense. Rome had an empire with a small 'e' long before that, in fact from the mid-third century BCE.

[6] For the first method, see Huss 1985: 460 (cf. Hoyos 2006: 11). For the second, see Huss 1985: 473 and n. 58. For *sufetes*, see further p. 12, cf. 64.

[7] As at Pol. 3.16.7.