

## HANNIBAL AND SCIPIO

The second Punic war between Carthage and Rome began in 218 BCE and ended in 202 with the dramatic defeat at the battle of Zama of Carthage's commander Hannibal by his adversary, the Roman Scipio. The two men were born about a decade apart but died in the same year, 183, following brilliant but ultimately unhappy careers. In this absorbing joint biography, celebrated historian Simon Hornblower reveals how the trajectory of each general illuminates his counterpart. Their individual journeys help us comprehend the momentous historical period which they shared, and which in distinct but interconnected ways they helped to shape. Hornblower interweaves his central military and political narrative with lively treatments of high politics, religious motivations and manipulations, overseas commands, hellenization, and his subjects' ancient and modern reception. This gripping portrait of an epic rivalry will delight readers of biography and military history and scholars and students of antiquity alike.

SIMON HORNBLOWER, FBA, is a former senior research fellow in Classical Studies at All Souls College, Oxford, and was previously (from 2006 to 2010) Professor of Classics and Grote Professor of Ancient History at University College London. Over the past fifty years he has written, edited, or co-edited twenty-five books, including *Commentary on Thucydides* (3 volumes, Oxford, 1991–2008), *Herodotus: Histories Book V* and *Book VI* (Cambridge, 2013 and 2017) and, most recently, *Livy: Ab urbe condita Book XXII* (Cambridge, 2020) and *Lykophron: Alexandra* (Oxford World's Classics, 2022).

‘A prominent ancient historian of the Classical Greek period like Simon Hornblower does not entertain the idea of writing an intertwined history of two equally prominent figures from the Roman Republic and Ancient Carthage unless he intends to enjoy the ride. Despite the fact that Hannibal and Scipio were seen together only once, producing an intertwined narrative of their lives is wholly sensible – and no sustained attempt to do so has yet been made. The author has built his project into a magnificent piece of scholarship.’

*Toni Naco del Hoyo, ICREA Research Professor, University of Girona*

‘The parallel lives of two of antiquity’s greatest commanders, as told by one of today’s greatest classicists. Assuming the role of a modern-day Plutarch, Hornblower delves into the families, formative years, military exploits, political struggles, and fraught twilight years of these colossal adversaries.’

*Michael J. Taylor, Professor of History, University of Albany*



Fresco painting of Hannibal and Scipio confronting each other, by Luigi Ademollo (1812), in the Museo Civico of Lucignano, province of Arezzo, Italy. Reproduced by permission of the Comune of Lucignano.

# HANNIBAL AND SCIPIO

*Parallel Lives*

SIMON HORNBLOWER



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*To the memory of Peter Brunt  
(23 June 1917 – 5 November 2005)*

Contents

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>List of Maps</i>  | <i>page</i> xiv |
| <i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>  | xv              |
| <i>Notes for the Reader</i>  | xviii           |
| <i>Family Tree 1 Hannibal</i>  | xix             |
| <i>Family Tree 2 Scipio</i>  | xx              |
| <i>Timeline</i>  | xxi             |
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i>   | xxiii           |
| <br>Prologue   | <br>I           |
| 0.1 Introduction   | 1               |
| 0.2 Ancient and Renaissance Explorations of the Parallels  | 3               |
| 0.3 Modern Explorations of the Parallels   | 5               |
| 0.4 Alan Bullock   | 6               |
| 0.5 Roman and Carthaginian Imperialism   | 7               |
| 0.6 The ‘Past Presumptive’ Tense   | 7               |
| <br>1 Hannibal and Scipio on Themselves  | <br>9           |
| 1.1 Introduction   | 9               |
| 1.2 Hannibal’s Record: A Guess   | 11              |
| 1.3 Scipio’s Epitaph or <i>Elogium</i>   | 13              |
| 1.4 How Much Did Hannibal’s Bronze Tablet Say?   | 16              |
| 1.5 ‘In Their Own Words?’ The Limits of the Evidence   | 20              |
| 1.6 What Did Hannibal and Scipio Look Like?  | 24              |
| Appendix 1.1 Sources; Speeches   | 28              |
| Appendix 1.2 Plutarch’s Lost <i>Lives</i> of Scipio  | 31              |
| Appendix 1.3 The ‘Roving Anecdote’   | 34              |
| <br>2 Origins: Hannibal: 247–221, Birth to Aged 26 Years,<br>Scipio: 235–218, Birth to Aged 17 Years | <br>41          |
| 2.1 Introduction   | 41              |
| 2.2 Names  | 45              |
| 2.3 What Did ‘Barca’ Signify?  | 47              |
| 2.4 Childhood and Early Youth: Hannibal  | 50              |

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 2.5 | Family, Childhood, and Early Youth: Scipio                     | 53  |
| 2.6 | The 230s and 220s: Hannibal and His Carthage                   | 59  |
| 2.7 | The 230s and 220s: Roman Events in Scipio's Youth              | 70  |
|     | Appendix 2.1 Objections to a New Theory about the Name Barca   | 72  |
| 3   | Hannibal Victorious, 221–216: Aged 26–31 Years                 | 79  |
| 3.1 | Hannibal as Commander in Iberia                                | 79  |
| 3.2 | Saguntum and the Causes of the War with Rome                   | 80  |
| 3.3 | War Declared; Hannibal Leaves for Italy                        | 83  |
| 3.4 | Across the Alps and into North Italy                           | 85  |
| 3.5 | The Battles at the Ticinus and Trebia, 218                     | 88  |
| 3.6 | The Battle at Lake Trasimene, 217                              | 90  |
| 3.7 | The Battle of Cannae, 216                                      | 96  |
| 3.8 | After Cannae   | 105 |
|     | Appendix 3.1 Hannibal Increasingly Isolated?                   | 107 |
|     | Appendix 3.2 How Many Maharbals?                               | 111 |
| 4   | Scipio 216–205: Aged 19–30 Years                               | 113 |
| 4.1 | The Aedileship   | 113 |
| 4.2 | Scipio's Father and Uncle in Iberia, 218–211                   | 114 |
| 4.3 | Young Scipio Appointed to the Iberian Command, 210 (Aged 25)   | 117 |
| 4.4 | New Carthage and Neptune, 209                                  | 119 |
| 4.5 | The Battles of Baecula (208) and Ilipa (206)                   | 123 |
| 4.6 | Scipio's Foundation of Italica (206): A Hadrianic Myth         | 128 |
| 4.7 | Home in 206 to the Consulship for 205, but Not Yet a Triumph   | 135 |
| 5   | Hannibal Frustrated in Italy, 216–208: Aged 31–39              | 137 |
| 5.1 | Downs and Ups in Campania                                      | 137 |
| 5.2 | Hannibal's Treaty with Philip V of Macedon, 215                | 141 |
| 5.3 | Syracuse   | 145 |
| 5.4 | Tarentum   | 148 |
| 5.5 | Capua  | 149 |
| 5.6 | Conclusion   | 152 |
| 6   | Overseas Commands: Freedoms and Perils                         | 155 |
| 6.1 | Introduction   | 155 |
| 6.2 | How Much Communication with the Authorities at Home?           | 155 |
| 6.3 | Peripheral Imperialism: Decision-Making by the Man on the Spot | 158 |
| 6.4 | A Case Study: Italian Locri, 215–204                           | 163 |
| 7   | Politics and Factions at Carthage and Rome                     | 172 |
| 7.1 | Introduction: Carthage   | 172 |
| 7.2 | Rome   | 173 |
| 7.3 | The Political Aspect to the 'Trials of the Scipios'            | 180 |



## Contents

xi

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 8    | The Tipping Point: The Battle at the Metaurus or Sena, 207, Hannibal Aged 40         | 182 |
| 8.1  | Introduction   | 182 |
| 8.2  | The Political and Religious Prelude at Rome  | 183 |
| 8.3  | The Campaign and Battle  | 186 |
| 8.4  | Reception: The Poets   | 193 |
| 8.5  | Conclusion   | 195 |
|      | Appendix 8.1 Livius Salinator: Both <i>Decemuir</i> and Consul?                      | 196 |
|      | Appendix 8.2 The Metaurus Vow and Other Vows before or during Battles                | 197 |
|      | Appendix 8.3 Salinator's Triumph – or Nero's Also?                                   | 201 |
|      | Appendix 8.4 The Name of the Battle: Cicero in the <i>Brutus</i> , and Other Writers | 202 |
| 9    | Hannibal and Scipio Meet and Fight at Last: Zama, 202, Aged 45 and 33                | 207 |
| 9.1  | Scipio in Africa: Battle of the Great Plains   | 207 |
| 9.2  | Hannibal Leaves Italy  | 212 |
| 9.3  | Futile Diplomacy: Hannibal and Scipio Meet and Talk at Last                          | 214 |
| 9.4  | The Battle of Zama   | 218 |
| 9.5  | After Zama   | 220 |
| 10   | The Religion of Hannibal and Scipio  | 222 |
| 10.1 | Introduction: Rituals, Divination, Sacrifice, Oaths                                  | 222 |
| 10.2 | Priesthoods  | 230 |
| 10.3 | The Hannibalic Legend  | 232 |
| 10.4 | The Scipionic Legend (i): Supernatural Birth   | 235 |
| 10.5 | The Scipionic Legend (ii): New Carthage and Neptune                                  | 239 |
| 10.6 | Dreams and Epiphanies  | 240 |
| 10.7 | Conclusion   | 242 |
| 11   | Scipio Triumphant, 202–193: Aged 33–42   | 244 |
| 11.1 | Introduction   | 244 |
| 11.2 | Scipio's Triumph, 201  | 245 |
| 11.3 | Scipio and Flamininus  | 248 |
| 11.4 | Censor and <i>Princeps Senatus</i> , 199   | 251 |
| 11.5 | Scipio's Interventions, or Lack of Them, in the 190s                                 | 253 |
| 11.6 | The Visit to the East: Did Scipio and Hannibal Meet and Talk?                        | 259 |
| 12   | Hannibal as Political Reformer at Carthage, 196: Aged 51                             | 266 |
| 12.1 | Introduction: The Contrast with Scipio   | 266 |
| 12.2 | Hannibal as Reformer   | 267 |
| 13   | Hannibal, Scipio, and the Greek World  | 274 |
| 13.1 | Introduction   | 274 |
| 13.2 | Scipio at Syracuse; Scipio and Greek Culture   | 275 |
| 13.3 | Hannibal at Capua; Hannibal and Greekness  | 279 |

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 13.4  | Greekness at Rome and Carthage in the Time of Hannibal and Scipio                                    | 283 |
| 13.5  | City Foundations in Iberia: The Barcids  | 291 |
| 13.6  | Conclusion   | 295 |
|       | Appendix 13.1 Hannibal and 'Learning Greek <i>Litterae</i> '   | 296 |
| 14    | Hannibal Flees to Antiochus III; His Intrigues; 195–193: Aged 52–54                                  | 298 |
| 14.1  | Introduction   | 298 |
| 14.2  | The Flight from Carthaginian Territory: How Did He Manage It?  | 299 |
| 15    | Hannibal and Scipio as Military Advisers in the Late 190s: The Road to Magnesia, 190: Aged 57 and 45 | 303 |
| 15.1  | Introduction: The Seleucids  | 303 |
| 15.2  | Antiochus in the Mid-190s  | 307 |
| 15.3  | The Ariston Affair   | 310 |
| 15.4  | Hannibal's Childhood Oath Again  | 314 |
| 15.5  | The Roman Decision for War   | 316 |
| 15.6  | The War until Magnesia   | 320 |
| 15.7  | Hannibal as Adviser: Conclusions   | 327 |
| 15.8  | Scipio as Adviser  | 328 |
| 15.9  | Conclusion: Two Advisers Compared  | 334 |
| 15.10 | Magnesia   | 335 |
| 16    | Hannibal and Scipio: The Military Comparison   | 337 |
| 16.1  | Introduction   | 337 |
| 16.2  | First Rule: Stay Alive!  | 339 |
| 16.3  | Family Inheritance   | 344 |
| 16.4  | The Creation of a New Sort of Army: Hannibal?  | 346 |
| 16.5  | The Creation of a New Sort of Army: Scipio   | 349 |
| 16.6  | Logistics  | 351 |
| 16.7  | Weaponry   | 356 |
| 16.8  | Battle Tactics   | 357 |
| 16.9  | Punic Deception – or Roman?  | 358 |
| 16.10 | Other Sorts of Fighting  | 360 |
| 16.11 | The Political Dimension: 'Hearts and Minds'  | 362 |
| 16.12 | Man Management   | 366 |
| 16.13 | Conclusion   | 367 |
| 17    | Hannibal's Years of Wandering, 190–183: Aged 57–64   | 369 |
| 17.1  | Introduction   | 369 |
| 17.2  | First Stop Crete   | 370 |
| 17.3  | Second Stop Armenia  | 373 |
| 17.4  | Third Stop Bithynia  | 374 |

|  |      |
|--|------|
| <i>Contents</i>  | xiii |
| 17.5 Hannibal and City Foundations in Asia Minor                             | 377  |
| 17.6 Fourth and Final Stop a Bithynian Country Estate: Hannibal's Death, 183 | 379  |
| 17.7 Hannibal's Grave  | 382  |
| 18 The Downfall and Death of Scipio, 187–183: Aged 48–52                     | 384  |
| 18.1 Introduction  | 384  |
| 18.2 The Attacks of 187  | 388  |
| 18.3 The Attack on Publius Alone in 184                                      | 391  |
| 18.4 A Campanian Villa: Scipio's Death, 183                                  | 392  |
| 19 Afterlives  | 395  |
| 19.1 'Hannibal's Legacy' in Italy  | 395  |
| 19.2 Hannibal's Dream: The Devastation of Italy                              | 398  |
| 19.3 Manpower and the Land   | 401  |
| 19.4 Hannibal's Legacy at Carthage   | 405  |
| 19.5 Hannibal's Literary Legacy  | 406  |
| 19.6 Scipio's Legacy   | 415  |
| 20 Conclusion: Parallel Lives  | 427  |
| <i>References</i>  | 436  |
| <i>Index</i>   | 466  |

*Maps*

|   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1 | Iberia in the time of Hannibal and Scipio | <i>page</i> 40 |
| 2 | Italy and Sicily                          | 78             |
| 3 | North Africa                              | 206            |
| 4 | Greece and the east Mediterranean         | 272–3          |

## *Preface and Acknowledgements*

This book is a joint scholarly biography of two of the greatest generals of the ancient world, the Carthaginian Hannibal and his eventual opponent and victor the Roman Scipio Africanus. But although they were ‘generals’, the scope and interest of their careers goes far beyond the purely military. And by the forbidding word ‘scholarly’, I mean only that it has plentiful footnotes and provides full references to ancient evidence and to modern discussions. But all Greek and Latin is translated (as are most of the quotations from works in modern foreign languages), and technical terms are defined and briefly explained at their first occurrence.<sup>1</sup> So I hope that it will be accessible to non-specialists. On the other hand, this is not a pair of popular biographies. There are, in several languages, many such individual biographies of both Hannibal and Scipio, which are not listed here or in the References.<sup>2</sup>

In summer 2022, Denis Feeney read and much improved the whole book by his perceptive comments, large and small, on an earlier and shorter draft. I am much indebted to him for this generous help. But the usual exculpatory clause applies.

Then three expert referees commissioned by Michael Sharp at Cambridge University Press saved me from much error and omission. Their very full reports drew my attention to much modern scholarship I had missed (or underestimated). I am grateful to all the referees; and also to Michael for identifying them, and persuading them to do the job so promptly; and generally for his support and encouragement throughout. I also thank Katie Idle at Cambridge University Press for cheerful and efficient work at the production stage, Liz Davey, calmly helpful content manager, and Kathleen Fearn for excellent, vigilant, and thoughtful copy-editing.

<sup>1</sup> Roman institutional terms are defined at their first appearance. Known Carthaginian terms are very few (the literary sources usually render them by what they take to be their Greek or Latin equivalents) and are explained in the course of Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> But see the end of Chapter 19, ‘Afterlives’.

In autumn 2020, after John Briscoe and I published our Cambridge ‘green and yellow’ edition of and commentary on book 22 of Livy, Michael asked if either of us would now be interested in writing biographies of either Hannibal or Scipio. We both said no, but I countered with a suggestion of a parallel pair of biographies on the Bullock model, aimed at both non-specialist and academic readers. Michael reacted positively and encouraged me to have a go.

Chris Pelling helped me over those parts of Chapters 11 and 17 for which Plutarch’s *Life* of Titus Quinctius Flaminius is important evidence: Plutarch there narrated both Scipio’s alleged meeting with Hannibal at Ephesus in 193, and Hannibal’s death ten years later. Chris not only read a draft of Chapter 17 but also very kindly scanned and sent me the entire original typescript English versions of his Italian introductions to and commentaries on the *Lives* of Philopoemen and Flaminius (Pelling 1997, a scarce book in this country) before I was eventually able to acquire a copy of my own from Italy.

The late Jim Adams, among many email conversations, supplied me with valuable thoughts on the meaning of *litterae* in connection with Hannibal’s education in Greek, a topic discussed in Appendix 13.1 where I quote one of his emails. Stephen Colvin and Alan Griffiths helped me with the meaning and interpretation of ‘those around someone’, οἱ περί τινος (p. 111), and Benet Salway with the name Hannibalianus (p. 414). In connection with the Iberian place name Gracchuris, David Levene kindly supplied me with his then-forthcoming commentary on *Periocha* 41 of Livy (see now Levene 2023). Fiona McHardy generously sent me a copy of her excellent forthcoming chapter on the symbolism of battlefield mutilation and decapitation and allowed me to cite it as forthcoming. I had heard and watched, via Zoom, her lecture on the topic at Trinity College Dublin (12 May 2023), because of its relevance to the posthumous decapitation of Hasdrubal after the Metaurus battle and the consul Nero’s insulting use of it (Livy 27.51.11; see p. 191). In August 2022, Lily Herd, Assistant Editor at the *TLS*, supplied me with a copy of the anonymous December 1965 review of Toynbee’s *Hannibal’s Legacy* and helped me to identify its author as A. H. M. Jones. Thanks to all of them.

I learned much from John Briscoe about Livy’s Latin during our collaboration on our ‘green and yellow’ book 22, and I thank him for this. At Oxford, for many years I taught Roman history of the period covered by the present book to some very able undergraduate pupils, whom I remember with affection and gratitude. I then came back to

*Preface and Acknowledgements*

xvii

Livy and Hannibal circuitously, via work after 2010 on the historically minded poet Lycophron, who in my opinion shows some obliquely expressed awareness of Hannibal. Finally, Esther Eidinow helped me in various ways throughout the writing and preparation of the book, and I am deeply grateful.

For permission to use the photographs on the cover, and for providing them, I express warm thanks to the authorities, in particular Omar Nappini, at the Museo civico at Lucignano, Tuscany. For this choice of illustration, see Notes for the Reader.

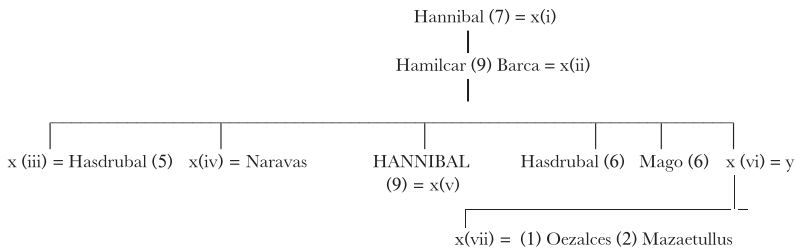
## *Notes for the Reader*

When Carthaginian names are followed by a number, as for example ‘Hanno (18)’, the bracketed reference is to the numbering in Geus 1994, a prosopography of all Carthaginians down to 146 BCE attested in literary sources. But this will not be done mechanically and invariably. *Digital prosopography of the Roman Republic (DPRR)* numbers for Roman individuals are usually given at first mention, very occasionally more often. For priests and priesthoods, I have used the English translation of Jörg Rüpke’s *Fasti sacerdotum* (Rüpke 2008), half of which consists of alphabetized biographies.

I have cited *OCD* by the fourth edition of 2012. There is a fifth and purely online edition with new or revised entries, general editor Tim Whitmarsh, but this is (slowly) ongoing and far from complete at the time of writing. Most of the entries I have looked for during the writing of this book have not yet been written, revised, or replaced since 2012.

Finally, a note about the dust jacket. I would have liked to have illustrated the book with reliable ancient portraits of both Hannibal and Scipio. This can be more or less plausibly done for Scipio, but not for Hannibal. (See p. 27.) I have therefore abandoned the search for veracity and have used instead an early nineteenth-century fresco depicting the pair, from the Italian town of Lucignano. It was drawn to my attention by Denis Feeney, who saw it *in situ* in 2023.

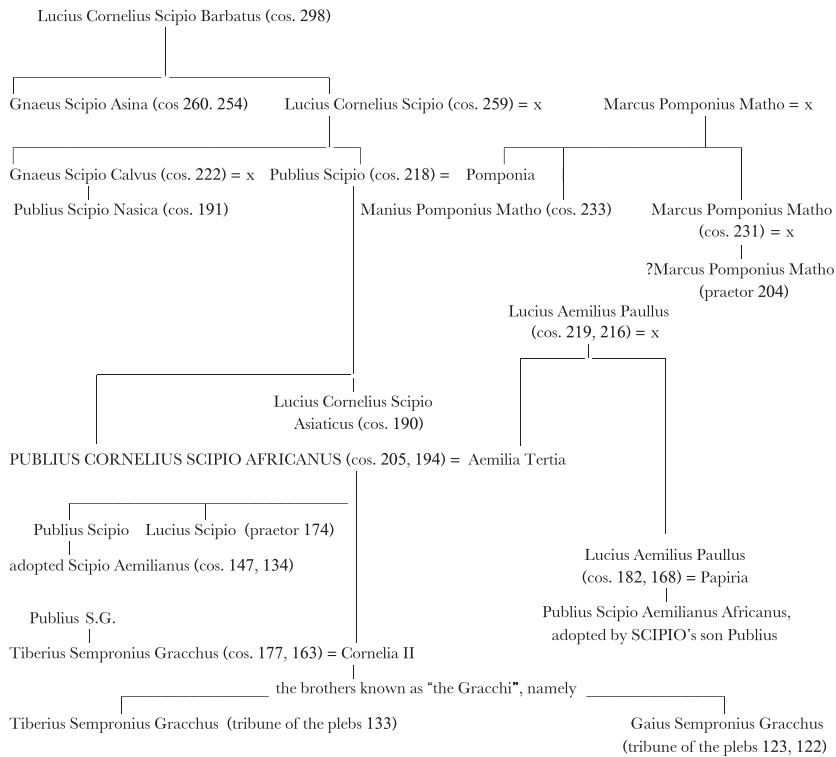




Family Tree 1: Hannibal

Notes

- 1 The bracketed numbers after the named Carthaginians (all male) are those of the excellent Carthaginian prosopography of Geus 1994. For his Barcid genealogical tree see p. 267, ‘Stammtafel II’. But I do not agree with all his findings, and his tree includes individuals whose existence his own text rejects (e.g. he gives Hamilcar (10) as an additional brother of HANNIBAL (9) and fourth son of Hamilcar (9), but with an asterisk to mark uncertainty; see Chapter 2 p. 50 n. 58).
- 2 ‘x’ = woman whose name is unknown, y = an unknown man
- 3 For Hamilcar’s father Hannibal (7), see Nepos, *Hamilcar* 1.1.
- 4 For HANNIBAL’s siblings, see in detail Chapter 2 p. 50. The order of births given above is conjectural, except for that of his brothers.
- 5 For x (iii), see Livy 21.2.4 with p. 50 n. 61, rejecting Diod. 25.12, who says his wife was Spanish. This Hasdrubal is the non-Barcid who succeeded Hamilcar in the Spanish command. Geus 1994: 77 and 188 makes Mago (9) a son of this marriage, but this is conjectural. He was certainly a Barcid relative of HANNIBAL: Livy 23.41.2.
- 6 For x (iv), see Polybius 1.78.8–9.
- 7 For x (v), HANNIBAL’s Iberian wife, see Livy 24.41.7. The tradition (Silius Italicus) that her name was Imilce, and that she had a son by HANNIBAL, is not accepted in the present book. See p. 43.
- 8 For x (vi), a daughter of Hamilcar (9), see Livy 29.29.12. Geus’ tree (and see 1994: 77–8 and 121 n. 691) differs because of his belief (see §10) that Hanno (22) was a nephew of HANNIBAL and that this Hanno’s sister married Oezalces.
- 9 For x (vii), granddaughter of Hamilcar (9), and daughter of x (vi) and an unknown father, see §8 and p. 50.
- 10 The tree at Geus 1994: 267 includes, as Hamilcar (9)’s second daughter, a wife of a Bomilcar and mother of Hannibal (11), Maharbal (3), and Hanno (22). But this is based on Appian’s description of a Hanno at Cannae (*Hannibalike* 20.90, 216 BCE) as Hannibal’s ‘nephew’, in an unreliable military context; see Chapter 3 p. 102 n. 148.



Family Tree 2 Scipio

Notes

- 1 References to the *Digital prosopography of the Roman Republic (DPRR)* are not included here but will usually be provided at the first mention of the individual, many at the start of Chapter 2. SCIPIO, the subject of this book, is *DPRR* CORN o878.
- 2 Individuals and marriage relationships not mentioned in the present book are not included.
- 3 ‘cos.’ means consul
- 4 ‘x’ means a woman whose identity is unknown; ‘=x’ means married to an unknown woman
- 5 It is not certain whether Marcus Pomponius Matho the praetor of 204 was son of Manius or Marcus, hence ‘?’.
- 6 The theory that Aemilia and SCIPIO AFRICANUS had another son, Gnaeus, is highly unlikely and not accepted in this book. See p. 58 n. 113.
- 7 For the paternity of Cornelia’s husband Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, see p. 146 n. 53.

Timeline

|         | Hannibal                                 | Both                               | Scipio                               |
|---------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 264–241 |  | First Punic war                    |                                      |
| 247     | born                                     |                                    | born                                 |
| 235     |  |                                    | brother Lucius born                  |
| 233     |  |                                    |                                      |
| 229     | death of father Hamilcar                 |                                    |                                      |
| 221     | takes command in Iberia                  |                                    |                                      |
| 219     | captures Saguntum                        |                                    |                                      |
| 218–201 |  | Second Punic war                   |                                      |
| 218     | crosses Alps, wins at<br>Ticinus, Trebia |                                    | saves father at Ticinus              |
| 217     | wins at Trasimene                        |                                    | marries Aemilia                      |
| 216     | wins at Cannae                           |                                    | military tribune at<br>Cannae        |
| 215     | treaty with Philip V                     |                                    | ?Salian priest (till death)          |
| 213     |  |                                    | curule aedile                        |
| 212     | captures Tarentum                        |                                    |                                      |
| 211     | marches on Rome                          |                                    | father and uncle killed<br>in Iberia |
| 210     |  |                                    | takes command in<br>Iberia           |
| 209     | loses Tarentum                           |                                    | captures New Carthage                |
| 208     |  |                                    | wins at Baecula                      |
| 207     | brother Hasdrubal killed<br>at Metaurus  |                                    |                                      |
| 206     |  |                                    | wins at Ilipa                        |
| 205     |  |                                    | first consulship                     |
| 204     |  |                                    | crosses to Africa                    |
| 203     | leaves Italy for Africa                  |                                    | wins at Great Plains                 |
| 202     |  | Scipio defeats Hannibal<br>at Zama |                                      |
| 201     |  |                                    | celebrates triumph at<br>Rome        |
| 199     |  |                                    | ensor, <i>princeps senatus</i>       |

|         |   |  |                                |
|---------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| xxii    | <i>Timeline</i>   |  |                                |
| (cont.) |   |  |                                |
|         | Hannibal  | Both   | Scipio                         |
| 197     |   | Flamininus defeats Philip V at Cynoscephalae |                                |
| 196     | <i>sufete</i> at Carthage; his reforms (and earlier years?) |  |                                |
| 195     | flees Carthage; to Antiochus III                            |  |                                |
| 194     |   |  | second consulship              |
| 193     |   | ?Hannibal and Scipio talk at Ephesus         | to Carthage and East           |
| 191–190 |   | Rome at war with Antiochus                   |                                |
| 190     | defeated at sea   | Lucius Scipio wins battle of Magnesia        | adviser to Lucius              |
| 189–183 | to Crete, Armenia, Bithynia                                 |  |                                |
| 187     |   |  | suffers first forensic attacks |
| 184     |   |  | more forensic attacks          |
| 183     | dies by poison in Bithynia                                  |  | dies at Liternum (Campania)    |
|         |   | (149–146 Third Punic war)                    |                                |