INTRODUCTION

1 LIVY’S LIFE AND WORK

Jerome placed Livy’s birth in 59 BC and his death in AD 17, dates which are now generally accepted. He was born and died at Patavium (Barr. Map 19 D4; mod. Padua; Padova in Italian). It is not known when he came to Rome or how much time he spent there, but he was on familiar terms with Augustus, who ‘twitted him with being a Pompeian’, and he encouraged the young future emperor Claudius to write history. Books 21–30 were composed in the mid to late 20s BC.

L. wrote a history of Rome in a total of 142 books, from the legendary events preceding the foundation of the city to the death of Drusus, the younger brother of the emperor Tiberius, in 9 BC. Only books 1–10, covering the period down to 292 BC, and books 21–45, covering the years from 218 to 167, survive (and books 41–45, mainly concerned with the Third Macedonian War, in one manuscript, written in late antiquity but lacunose and highly corrupt). For the rest, we have only (i) a number of fragments, most of them non-verbatim citations in other authors, (ii) summaries of all the books except 136 and 137, known as the periochae and preserved in a normal manuscript tradition, and (iii) papyrus fragments (known as the Oxyrhynchus epitome) of a summary of books 37–40 and 48–55.

Until the advent of the compressed and abbreviated Gothic script (in the thirteenth century) no more than ten books of L. could be fitted into

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1 See also Ogilvie 1965: 1–5; Kraus 1994: 1–9.
2 Syme 1939: 317, citing Tac. Ann. 4.34.3.
3 Suet. Claud. 41.1.
5 Some manuscripts, including the Puteaneus, have ab urbe condita, but it cannot be regarded as certain that this was L.’s own title. It first appears in a printed edition in the 1820s and became established following Weissenborn’s first Teubner edition of 1850–1.
6 See OCD’s ‘Livy’ for a summary of the evidence. The most recent edition of the periochae and the Oxyrhynchus epitome is that of Jal 1984. A commentary on the periochae and fragments (see below) by David Levene is in preparation; and see Levene 2015a: 318–22 for the end of the periocha of book 22; for the text of the periochae, see Rossbach 1910 (Teubner ed., including the Oxyrhynchus epitome). Chaplin 2007 provides a translation of all the periochae, with brief notes, at the end of her World’s Classics tr. of books 41–45. There are 76 fragments (citations from later authors), printed in Jal 1979; they include thirteen fragments of books 11–20.
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a single parchment codex. For that reason his work became known as the decades, and the story of the transmission of his text varies from decade to decade. Whether L. himself planned his work in blocks of five or ten books (pentads or decades), with divisions at historically significant points, is a different question. The existence and content of what is effectively a second preface at the beginning of book 6 shows beyond doubt that L. conceived of the first five books as a unit and books 21–30, again with a preface of its own (21.1.1–3) are devoted to the Second Punic or Hannibalic War (see further section 2 below). There is another preface at the beginning of the fourth decade (31.1.1–5), which is mainly concerned with Rome’s wars with Philip V of Macedon and the Seleucid king Antiochus III, the latter beginning in book 36, and concludes with the death of Philip V of Macedon, leaving the Third Macedonian War, which brought about the end of the Macedonian monarchy, to the final surviving pentad. There is no discernible break at the end of book 10, but the First Punic War begins in book 16. The internal structure of the third decade and the question of a clear division between books 21–25 and 26–30 are discussed in section 4 below. Attempts have been made to discern pentadic and decadic division in books 46–142, but they are artificial and force the evidence.

2 THE COURSE OF THE WAR

(a) The Background

Rome began life in the early first millennium BC (much earlier than the conventional foundation date of 753) as a small hilltop settlement in central Italy. By the end of the seventh century it had become a proper city-state,
with a small territory and a mixed population, but some monumental build-
ings and a civic meeting place. It was by then in touch with the wider world and receptive to Greek culture; many of the cities of southern Italy were in fact Greek foundations. The Romans themselves claimed descent from Trojan refugees led by Aeneas who came west after the destruction of their city, as narrated in Greek epics; but this mythical story had somehow to be combined with chronologically incompatible stories of local founding rulers, Romulus and his shadowy twin Remus. At around 500, Rome ceased to be a monarchy and became a republic under two consuls, elected annually; by 300, a senate of life-members was in firm control of the direction of policy. After the end of the Samnite Wars in the early third century, the Romans controlled, directly or indirectly, much of Italy; and Rome began to be a naval power in a small way as early as the 330s. A Greek poem called the *Alexandra*, ostensibly by a poet called Lycophron who lived in the early decades of the third century, made the Trojan princess Cassandra predict Roman ‘sceptre and monarchy of land and sea’, evidently describing the state of affairs prevailing in the poet’s own time (*Alexandra* 1229). But if taken seriously, as it should be, such pan-Mediterranean power is impossible before the war of 264–241 against the maritime power Carthage (the ‘First Punic’ War); this gave the Romans their first overseas possession, the province of Sicily. So the poem may well be pseudonymous and date from perhaps the late 190s BC. By the end of that decade the Romans had, in rapid sequence, defeated Hannibal’s Carthage (Zama, 202), Philip V of Macedon (Cynoscephalae, 197) and the Seleucid king Antiochus III (Magnesia, 190). Cassandra’s ‘prophecy’ had now come true.

(b) The Causes and Opening Phase of the Second Punic or Hannibalic War

A few years after the end of the First Punic War (238/7), the Romans seized Sardinia, and the second-century BC Greek historian Polybius, although an admirer of Roman institutions and a friend of prominent

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12 ‘Punic’ (Latin *Poenus*) means ‘Phoenician’; Carthage was supposedly founded from Phoenician Tyre in the eastern Mediterranean. For the role of Carthage in the formation of Phoenician ethnic identity, see Quinn 2017.

13 For the Hannibalic War, see De Sanctis 1968 [originally 1916; see below, n. 261]; *MRR* I 296–323; Briscoe, *CAH* VIII ch. 3; Lazenby 1978; Seibert 1993a and b; Hoyos 2011 part 3 and 2015a and 2015b (and numerous other works by this author). For the ancient sources see section 3. Hannibal himself wrote something in Greek ‘to the Rhodians’ about the campaigns of Manlius Vulso in the 180s BC. This gets him into Jacoby’s collection of the fragments of the Greek historians, but it was probably only a letter (*FGrHist* 181 F1, the only fragment). On the anti-Roman warnings to the Rhodians which it might have contained, see Meyer 1924: 455 n. 2.
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individual Romans, nevertheless regarded this as a grave injustice and a cause of the Second War two decades later (218–201). It generated active Carthaginian resentment, which took the form of the assertion and expansion of Carthaginian power in Spain by three related commanders, Hamilcar Barca (until his death in 229), then his son-in-law Hasdrubal, and then (from 221) Hamilcar’s son Hannibal. This resentment was symbolised by the story – romantic but not necessarily false – that the nine-year-old Hannibal was made by his father to swear an oath of enmity to the Roman people. Two pieces of Roman diplomacy in the 220s made it clear that the Romans also had interests in Spain: in combination, these were provocations and made a collision with Carthage inevitable. The first in time was an alliance with the city of Saguntum, the second, by which the Carthaginians undertook not to cross i.e. go north of the river Ebro under arms (Pol. 2.13.7), was an implied renunciation by Rome of territory south of the river (see map 3). In itself the second was not a casus belli, but it was inconsistent with the first, because Saguntum was south of the Ebro (there is some confusion in the sources about this), and if the Carthaginians attacked Saguntum, the Romans would be bound to defend their new allies. When Hannibal looked certain to attack Saguntum, its citizens appealed to Rome for help. A Roman embassy warned Hannibal off, but in late 219 the city fell after an eight-month siege and without a Roman declaration of war. This declaration duly followed at the beginning of the new consular year, 218 (the delay does not indicate pacific Roman intentions). Hannibal marched against Italy across the Pyrenees and Alps. In north Italy Hannibal defeated the Romans in a minor cavalry engagement at the river Ticinus and a larger battle at the river Trebia.

(c) Trasimene and Cannae

Most of the events of 217 and 216 are covered by book 22 itself, so the story can be quickly told (for modern work on Trasimene and Cannae see the introductory nn. to 4.1–7.5 and 40.4–50.3). In the morning fog of an early summer’s day in 217, the consul Flaminius was caught by Hannibal in an ambush by Lake Trasimene in Etruria. He and 15,000 of his men were

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14 Pol. 3.30.4, cf. 28.1–2. (201 is the date of the final settlement following Zama the previous year.)
15 Pol. 3.10.5.
16 L. 21.1.4, introduced by the distancing but not dismissive formula fama est.
17 On the causes of the war, a much-disputed topic, see (for the view here taken) Harris 1979: 200–5; Briscoe CAH VIII 44–5. Seibert (1993b: 117–20) devoted three closely-printed pages to a list of the most important bibliography since 1876.
killed: ‘we have been defeated in a great battle’, as the praetor announced at Rome. After the battle, Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, the ‘delayer’ (Cunctator), was appointed dictator by the people, with M. Minucius Rufus as his Master of the Horse, i.e. lieutenant and deputy. Fabius now implemented an extreme form of his famous policy of attrition and avoidance of pitched battles in conditions favourable to Hannibal. Tensions between dictator and his rash deputy led to the equalisation of their imperium; but these were resolved after Fabius rescued Minucius from a tight spot. Hannibal had moved by a circuitous route from Etruria to Apulia, and the consuls for the new year 216, L. Aemilius Paullus and C. Terentius Varro, fought and lost an even greater battle at Cannae, with even greater losses. Paullus was killed but Varro survived, and was thanked at Rome for ‘not despairing of the res publica’.

(d) The Rest of the War

After Cannae, there was no full-scale battle in Italy for nearly a decade: not until the battle of the Metaurus river in Umbria (207), at which Hannibal’s brother Hasdrubal, who had led his men from Spain in an attempt to join his brother, was killed in the course of his army’s defeat by the combined forces of the consuls M. Livius Salinator and C. Claudius Nero. His head was cut off and thrown before Hannibal’s camp in southern Italy. (See section 4 p. 18.)

During the intervening years, Hannibal made only one attempt to probe the defences of the city of Rome (26.10, in 211). His aim was never to destroy Rome (58.3), but to dismantle the Roman system of Italian alliances and friendships. He failed in this, despite some defections (see esp. 61.10–15) and internal divisions, not all on class lines, despite a famous passage of L. to that effect: 24.2.8, claiming that the local senates generally favoured Rome in the conflict, the plebs favoured Carthage. In fact it was the aristocrats at Tarentum (Greek Taras, a city with a fine harbour, see below) who went over to Carthage in 213; the city was not regained for Rome until 209. But the manpower losses at Trasimene and Cannae, and the Fabian policy of delay, cunctatio, and non-engagement (see below, section 9) called for mobilisation on a large scale and across several theatres, and this placed enormous strains on the Roman economy. L. reports many harsh financial expedients in the years after 216.18

The war could not be won by cunctatio, although it could have been lost by the costly mistakes risked by the opposite strategy. Hannibal’s

18 Nicolet 1963. See 61.1n. on pecuniae ....
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strengths, and therefore the Roman weaknesses which had made the surprise outcome of Cannae possible, lay in his superior numbers of skilled cavalry and greater flexibility on the battle-field (45.5–49.18n.). His main weakness was that without numerous Italian allies or other reinforcements, his power and popularity must diminish yearly while he lived off the land, whereas Roman capacity for replacement was virtually unlimited (as Pol. says explicitly: 3.89.9). He could hope for fresh forces and supplies only by land from Spain or by sea from North Africa (or from Spain, if Rome had not possessed naval dominance). Hasdrubal’s death at the Metaurus closed off the first option for good. As for the second, Roman control of the sea lanes was almost absolute (see 2.10n. for the arrival of some replacement elephants from Carthage), and was a vital factor in the winning of the war: not for nothing did Lycophron make Trojan Cassandra predict Roman rule over land and sea. Hannibal showed early awareness of the importance of the naval factor when he moved against Rome’s rich and loyal maritime ally Naples straight after Cannae (23.1.5), but the Neapolitans stayed firm and their great harbour was denied to Carthage. Hannibal turned to Capua instead. For Tarentum see above.

It was a blow to Rome when in 215 the new client ruler of another great naval city with a fine harbour, Sicilian Syracuse, went over to Carthage; but in 212 Claudius Marcellus recaptured it. (In the next year Capua, too, was recovered five years after its defection to Hannibal in 216, and was treated with exemplary savagery.) Marcellus’ reckless death in a trivial skirmish in south Italy (208) was a waste of a good military talent; as a man of over sixty, he should have known better, says L.: 27.27.11; Pol. 10.32 delivers a much longer lecture here. There remained the young Scipio.

The Roman effort in Spain, under the Scipio brothers Publius and Gnaeus, went very well until 211, when both were killed in rapid succession. Their son and nephew Publius, the future Africanus, replaced them as a privatus cum imperio. His military reforms corrected the inflexibility which had contributed to the catastrophe at Cannae (the second Roman weakness noted above), and they enabled him to defeat Hannibal’s brother Hasdrubal at Baecula (208) and then another Hasdrubal, son of Gisgo, at Ilipa (206). The former managed to slip out of Spain into Italy; but only to meet with defeat and death at the Metaurus (above).

Scipio returned to Rome to hold the consulship of 205, and Africa was added to his command, although not without a domestic struggle. L. narrates the Zama campaign in book 30, but he has sprinkled some

19 Hannibal’s treaty of friendship with Philip V of Macedon (Pol. 7.9, a more sensational version at L. 23.33) had little effect on the course of the Second Punic War.
forward allusions as early as book 21 (section 7(i) below). A crucial factor in Scipio’s victory – achieved by clever diplomacy – was the help of the cavalry forces of the Numidian prince Masinissa. This corrected the first of the Roman weaknesses noted above: cavalry deficiency (but see below, section 10(a) for allied cavalry). The final settlement of 201 left Carthage intact, but with a massive indemnity to pay over fifty years. They paid it; but Carthage was destroyed in 146 after the brief Third Punic War, by Scipio Aemilianus, grandson of the consul Aemilius Paullus who fell at Cannae, and adopted grandson of Africanus.

Strong personalities such as Hannibal, Fabius, Marcellus and Scipio have encouraged historians ancient and modern to view the war and its outcome in terms of the achievements and shortcomings of individuals, and of the clashes between them: most obviously, battle-field clashes of Roman commanders against Carthaginian, but also political struggles at home between the protagonists on each side and their rivals and detractors. Such a view has plenty of justification, but Polybius was right to devote his book 6 to an analysis of the Roman system of government, on the grounds that the recovery after the disaster of Cannae, and the eventual Roman victory, and mastery of the Mediterranean region, were owed to structural features. He saw the Roman constitution as a matter of checks and balances, but there was no check on the power of the senate. And it was the steady and implacable refusal of the senate to compromise, even when the outlook was blackest, which meant that the Hannibalic War as a whole represented the high point of collective senatorial control of policy, before the days when it was possible for powerful individuals to exercise quasi-regal domination in the senate, regnum in senatu. That uncompromising attitude is illustrated by the stern senatorial decision, near the end of book 22, to follow Manlius Torquatus’ advice not to ransom the prisoners after Cannae – although many of the senators had relatives among the prisoners, and less drastic solutions had been aired (61.1, 60.3–4). Polybius’ analysis in book 6 is aware of the allied military contribution to Rome (6.26.7 and 10.30.2, 34.1 and 4.39.13–14, 52.5), but does not seek to explain why so many Italian communities preferred Rome to Carthage (but see n. 23 on Pol. 2.23 and 3.90.14). L.’s class-based explanation for this preference may have been flawed (above): nor was it the only sort of explanation available. For one thing, fear of eventual Roman reprisals must have made Italians of all classes think twice before going over to the Carthaginian side (see again n. 23

20 L. 38.54.6, a charge levelled by the Petillii at the Scipios in 187; neither fairly nor historically, see Briscoe 2008: 191 on the passage. Perhaps L. had in mind later figures like Pompey.
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for what Pol. called the awe, κατάπληξις, which the allies felt for Rome). But L. was right to ask, by implication, why it was that the cry Hannibal ad portas was not enough to open the gates of more of the Italian cities to the invader, notwithstanding Hannibal’s selective blandishments after Trasimene and Cannae.21 Too many of their citizens had too much to lose – and fear of Roman retaliation, and perhaps also and more positively admiration for Roman values, culture and tenacity, were in some quarters too great (what Pol. called καταξίωσις, respect: see again n. 23).22 Another sort of fear was relevant: the Italian allies looked to Rome for protection, notably against the Gauls (who were perceived as unspeakably frightful, cf. 46.5n., and some of whom fought for Hannibal), and this perhaps generated something like a sense of unity among the peoples of the peninsula.23

3 SOURCES

In the second half of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth century a great deal was written, almost entirely in Germany (it was the great age of source criticism (Quellenkritik)), about L.’s sources, particularly in the third decade.24 Polybius, who lived from c.200 until after 118 BC,25 related the Hannibalic War in parts of books 3–15 of his history; only books 1–5 survive completely, but the events of the first three years of the war are 21 L. 7.5 (Trasimene); Pol 3.85.3 and L. 58.1 (Cannae, and see 58.2n.). As early as L. 21.48.10, Hannibal is said to have wanted a reputation for clemency, fama clementiae. See also Pol. 3.77.4.

22 The author of the Alexandra, with which this section began, may be an example of such a pro-Roman Greek from south Italy. See Hornblower 2018: 193. Cf. Yarrow 2006 for such attitudes among Greek authors in the late Republic.

23 Sense of unity: Badian 1958: 144, citing L. 27.9–10 and 27.45.6–7 for the continuing adherence to Rome of eighteen of the thirty Latin colonies despite their difficulties in meeting Roman demands, and for the enthusiasm which greeted Nero on his forced march north to the Metaurus in 207. The loyalty to Rome of Bruttian Petelia was taken to legendary extremes: L. 23.30.1–3. The Gallic factor is stressed by Gabba, CAH VIII 208, citing Pol. 2.23.12–14 (11–13 in Loeb ed.). On that passage see also Harris 1984b: 98 (who however interestingly suggests that Pol. implies that this was not the normal allied attitude). See also 13.11n. on iusto et moderato … imperio, based on Pol. 3.90.14: ‘allied awe and respect, κατάπληξις καὶ καταξίωσις, for Rome, a passage cited by Harris 2016: 31–2: Rome’s alliance with local elites combined with ‘a more general Italian recognition of Rome’s energy, resources, and determination’.

24 Ancient historical writers, unlike modern ones, did not normally indicate their sources. L. usually does so only to mention a variant to his main source or to criticise something in it.

25 Cf. HCΠ I n. 1.
Sources

contained in book 3 and it is therefore possible to make a detailed comparison with L.’s narrative in books 21 and 22. The following table indicates both the passages of book 22 which correspond to a passage of Pol. and those which do not.

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It can be seen that for a substantial part of the book there is nothing corresponding in Pol.; moreover, in the parts where there is a corresponding passage of Pol., L. adds things which do not appear in Pol., omits things which do and alters Pol. in a significant way: the last two of these categories may reflect changes made, for one reason or another, by L. himself. The first, however, clearly indicates the use of a source other than Pol., as, of course, do the passages which have no correspondence in Pol. The identity of these sources will be considered later; the immediate question is whether L. used Pol. directly or whether the similarities between L. and Pol. are due to L.’s source himself using Pol. or both that source and Pol. deriving from the same earlier source(s).

For long the prevalent view, particularly in Germany, was that L. did not use Pol. directly, even though Nissen (1863) had demonstrated beyond doubt that this was not true for books 31–45; many thought that the differences between L. and Pol. in the third decade were much greater than in

26 For the views of different scholars see Oakley 2019: 154–5 n. 3.
27 Peter 1863 was an exception.
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the later books and this was incompatible with direct use. That is no longer accepted, particularly as a result of Levene’s strong arguments to the contrary. As far as the differences between books 21–30 and 31–45 are concerned, while L. realised the pre-eminence of Pol. for events in the East between 200 and 167, for the Hannibalic War he may not (and with some justification) have thought him so clearly superior to Roman writers; moreover, the differences are not as great as has sometimes been thought: thus, while little survives of Pol.’s account of the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War, what does survive shows marked differences to the beginning of book 31; and L. had no compunction about adding fabrications by earlier writers to Pol.’s report of the peace treaty with Philip V in 196 (33-30).

In books 31–45, though L. was far from merely translating Pol., the verbal similarities between L.’s Latin and Pol.’s Greek show beyond doubt that the latter was his immediate source, but that is certainly not true of book 22. In later books of the third decade, however, the verbal parallels between L. and what survives of Pol.’s accounts of events at Syracuse and Tarentum, and particularly those of the First Macedonian War and the final campaign in Africa, suffice to refute the view that Pol. was not L.’s direct source in these passages.

Acceptance of the view that L. was using Pol. directly both justifies and necessitates detailed comparison of L.’s text with the corresponding passage of Pol., for which see section 7 below and the relevant parts of the commentary.

Many previous historians had written about the Hannibalic War. Among Greeks, apart from and preceding Polybius, were Silenus, who accompanied Hannibal to Italy and was used by Coelius (cf. FRHist I 261–2), Chaereas and Sosylus, mentioned dismissively by Pol. (3,20,5), Eumachus (FGrHist 178) and Xenophon (FGrHist 179): there is no reason to think that L. consulted any of these. The first Roman to write history, Q. Fabius Pictor, also wrote in Greek, but there was a Latin version of his work (cf. FRHist I 169). L. cites Fabius six times, five in books 1–10 and at 7.4; L. also mentions Fabius’ mission to Delphi after the battle of Cannae (57,5,23.11.1–6). 7.4 constitutes FRHist 1F23 and is the latest dateable fragment of Fabius; the likelihood is that his narrative did not continue for long after 217. It cannot be determined whether L. used the Greek or the Latin version of Fabius.

L. Cincius Alimentus (FRHist 2) was a contemporary of Fabius who also wrote in Greek; L. cites him at 21.38.3 (= FRHist 2F5), but it is uncertain

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31 Cf. FRHist I 167.