

Hannibal's life and conquest



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Research Paper Hannibal's Life and Conquest Hannibal is one of the greatest generals of his time. To better understand Hannibal and his crusades against the Romans you must know a bit about his family history. Hannibal was only 25 years old when he was put in command of the Carthaginian armies and the Carthaginian government in Spain. Even at a young age he knew his responsibilities, so he kept his father's plan of military conquest and his brother-in-law's policy of strengthening Carthaginian power by democracy. He is one of the sons of Hamilcar Barca, a Carthaginian leader.

He had several sisters and two brothers, Hasdrubal and Mago. His brothers-in-law were Hasdrubal the Fair and the Numidian king Naravas. So his family is either well known or rich. He was still a child when his sisters married, and his brothers-in-law were close associates during his father's struggles in the Mercenary War and the Punic conquest of Iberia. To better understand Hannibal's rise to greatness one needs to look into his father's history. After Carthage's defeat in the First Punic War, Hamilcar set out to improve his family's and Carthage's fortunes.

With that in mind and supported by Gades, Hamilcar began the subjugation of the tribes of the Iberian Peninsula. Carthage at the time was in such a poor state that its navy was unable to transport his army to Iberia (Hispania); instead, Hamilcar had to march it towards the Pillars of Hercules and transport it across the Strait of Gibraltar. Hannibal had once asked his father and begged to go with him to war; Hamilcar agreed and demanded that he swear that as long as he lived he would never be a friend of Rome.

There was a story stating that, Hannibal's father took him up and brought him to a sacrificial chamber. Hamilcar held Hannibal over the fire roaring in

the chamber and made him swear that he would never be a friend of Rome. According to that tradition, Hannibal's oath had taken place in the town of Peniscola, today part of the community of Valencia, Spain. Hannibal's father soon went on the conquest of Hispania. His father soon died in the battle. Soon after Hannibal's brother-in-law Hasdrubal gained command of the army. Hasdrubal made Hannibal serve as an officer under him.

Hasdrubal then pursued a policy of consolidation of Carthage's Iberian interests, even signing a treaty with Rome whereby Carthage would not expand north of the Ebro River, so long as Rome did not expand south of it. Hasdrubal also tried to consolidate Carthaginian power by doing diplomatic relationships with native tribes. As a part of his deals Hasdrubal arranged the marriage between Hannibal and an Iberian princess named Imilce. So Hannibal got hooked up with a wife. Soon enough though there was assassination of Hasdrubal around 221 B. C. E.

It was the rise of the Great Hannibal was proclaimed as the commander-in-chief by the army and confirmed in his appointment by the Carthaginian government. This meant that not only was the leader of the military but also the political leader as well. Hannibal had spent two years consolidating his holdings and completing the conquest of Hispania south of the Ebro River. Rome however was started getting scared because of the growing strength of Hannibal in Iberia. Rome decided to make an alliance with the city of Saguntum, which lay a considerable distance south of the River Ebro and claimed the city as its protectorate.

Which in a previous agreement they were breaking their treaty. Hannibal obviously perceived this as a breach of the treaty signed with Hasdrubal. So

this forced Hannibal with his hands tied behind his back to siege to the city, which fell after eight months. Rome reacted to this (of course) apparent violation of the treaty and demanded justice from Carthage. Rome declared war on Carthage. This begins the second Punic War. I believe this was just all done to invoke a war. Because Hannibal's great popularity, the Carthaginian government did not make a fuss about Hannibal's actions.

Hannibal was now determined to carry the war into the heart of Italy by a rapid march through Hispania and southern Gaul. After hearing the declaration of war Hannibal immediately starts off towards Rome. The problem was he had to go by land because Rome controlled the seas. Hannibal takes an army of thirty-five to forty thousand men, some on foot and others on horse, along with fifty war elephants across the Pyrenees and the Alps. Bad luck falls into Hannibal's lap as early snows and landslides kill many of his men and almost all of his war elephants.

While traveling through the Alps he fights battles at Arausio and Genua, easily defeating the Roman warriors, although his troops are in horrible shape. He enters Italy with only twenty-six thousand men and five or six war elephants in September 218. Hannibal and his troops spent the winter in Po Valley. In the spring Hannibal was joined by the Gauls, northern Italians who were subdued into fighting the Romans. Now Hannibal had a sufficient army of infantry and cavalry. The hardened Carthaginian troops easily crushed the Roman armies in their way, but without siege equipment the Carthaginians could not destroy the Roman cities.

So instead of trying to siege the city they simple killed the Roman soldiers and moved on. (He was a bad ass mofo if you know what I mean.)

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Sometimes the Romans would retreat into their city surrounded by high walls so that they would not die. In 217 Hannibal won a major battle at Lake Trasimene. The Romans counterattacked with some 25, 000 men, but their consul, Gaius Flaminius, was defeated and killed in an ambush between the hills and the Trasimene lake. Two legions were annihilated. One legion for a Roman army comprised about 5, 000 men.

Hannibal's army along with the Gauls would roam the Italian countryside and destroy any opposing army. In 216 he defeated a huge Roman army at the city of Cannae in southwestern Italy. At Cannae the Romans loss was much greater than that of Hannibal suffered. The Romans lost twenty-five thousand men and ten thousand were captured, on the other hand Hannibal only lost five thousand and seven hundred men. Hannibal, being a military genius, let the Romans advance at his main infantry, while his cavalry charged around the sides easily defeating two other groups of Roman infantry.

Then after destroying the two side groups of Romans the cavalry swept around the back of the main Roman attack force. Hannibal used this strategy often because it worked so good that and the Romans had no to much pride in their formations. Even though he was killing Roman soldiers he was not destroying any cities. They were very frustrated and annoyed of Hannibal they needed him to get out of Italy, so the Romans sent armies led by Scipio, a great Roman general, to attack Carthage in Africa. Carthage ordered Hannibal to Africa to protect the city of Carthage.

This was the clash of the titans, Hannibal vs. Scipio. They met at Zama, a city near Carthage. This would end up to be the final battle of the Second

Punic War, and the great Hannibal would be the loser. Of course he lost with the exhaustion of all his troops and heading all the way back to Africa. Hannibal escaped but his army didn't. After the war Carthage had to pay Rome a very large sum of money and agree to terms that they could only wage war in Africa, even to the point where they needed Rome's permission. Hannibal returned to Carthage and became one of the two chief magistrates. He then challenged the aristocrats of being corrupt; the aristocrats told Rome that Hannibal was planning another attack on Rome with Antiochus III of Syria. Rome, already very pissed off with Hannibal, decided to deport Hannibal out of Carthage. Hannibal traveled to Syria and was made a member of the Syrian court. Vowed to his father's words embedded in his heart and mind he had advised Antiochus III to declare war against Rome. Antiochus III decided to go on this advice and wage war on Rome, this turned out to be called the Syrian War.

Though soon after Syria was defeated and Hannibal left to become a member of the Prussian court. Hannibal and his awesome persuasion skills convinced Prussia to go to war against Rome. Instead of directly attacking Rome, Prussia attacked Rome's ally Pergamum. Rome came into the fight and demanded that Hannibal be handed over to them. Instead of being humiliated Hannibal took his own life. Hannibal Barca, being eternal enemies with Rome, fulfilled his father's words and while doing so became one the greatest generals of his time.

He could almost come close to being as great as Alexander the Great. So the start of his greatness all started with his family and the first Punic War. If people were to talk about the Punic war it would be about 2nd Punic war and

Hannibal. Just to spite the Romans in the end he ended up taking his own life so no Roman can have the justice to say they killed the Great Hannibal.

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