

Caput I. Hannibal Transits the Alpes

Cum demum Romani primo Punico bello Poenos devicerant, constituit Hannibal exercitum in Hispania parare, atque trans Alpes Italiam invadere, the operative word in the opening sentence that focuses the Roman mind is the noun **Poenus**, a mountain's highest point, its **pinnacle**, its **peak**. The narrative continues transfixed by the danger the Carthaginian soldiers confront in their route across the Alps: **Milites vero eius longum et periculi plenum iter timebant**. For the Romans, the Alps are a 'false friend', allowing invasion

Hannibal, from his base camp in Spain, uses the Rhone River as his initial route before ascending an Alpine re-entrant into Italy, **Rhodanum, magnum illud flumen, transitis Alpes in conspectus habetis, quarum altero in latere est Italia**. Though Hannibal had teams of bulls, **taurini** to pull his military train, for surely the difficulty in the route-march was **cum liberis et coniugibus**, with children and spouses

The unknown Roman speaker describes the peoples of **cisalpine Gaul** as **gens Gallorum**

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Concise and complete, the speaker provides a personal insight into a significant event of Roman history

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Cum demum Romani primo Punico ¹ bello Poenos ² devicerant, constituit Hannibal ³ exercitum in Hispania parare, atque trans Alpes Italiam invadere. Milites vero eius longum et periculi plenum iter timebant. Itaque Hannibal sic eos hortatus est: "Hispaniam iam totam ab occasu solis usque ad ortum eius vicistis: Rhodanum ⁴, magnum illud flumen, transitis Alpes in conspectus habetis, quarum altero in latere est Italia. Quid nunc timetis? Saepe iam Galli cum liberis ⁵ et coniugibus ⁶ agmen trans Alpes duxerunt: aut illis virtute cedendum est aut Roman contendendum"

Tum cum in summa tandem montium longo labore defessi pervenissent, consistere iubet et campos Italiae infra iacentes ⁷ conspiciere: omnia nunc facilia fore promittit. Sed res aliter evenit: namque via augusta et praecepta erat, ita ut laberentur ubique, et homines et equi multi perirent. Tandem in Taurinos, quae gens Gallorum ⁸ cum Italis mixta est, descenderunt

Tum Scipio ⁹, qui Hannibalem Rhodanum transeuntem frustra retinere conatus est, nave reversus legiones contra Hannibalem duxit. Consulem graviter vulneratum filius iuvenis pugna eripuit; is erat quem ob victoriam a Poenis in Africa reportatam postea Africanum appellaverunt. Sed eo tempore Romani equitatu Punico perterriti terga verterunt

- Footnotes:**
- Punicus**, -a, -um. 1 / 2 adj, proper noun. To or of Punic, Carthage
 - Poenus**, -i. 2m adj, proper noun. Originally a Celtic loan word with the sense of: *Pennine* 'of the Alps'. Roman sense is: *peak* (of a mountain). Post-Hannibal the noun evolved to *Poenus*. Some authors use *Poenus* interchangeably with *Punicus*, in reference to persons, places or, events of the Punic Wars
 - Hannibal**, is. 2m sg only, proper noun. Conquering Carthaginian general, just missed defeating Rome
 - Rhodanus**, -i. 2m sg only, proper noun. The Rhone River
 - liberi**, -orum. 2m pl only, noun. The children
 - coniux**, **coniugus**. 3m / f noun. Pertaining to conjugal: the spouse, married, partner
 - iacens**, **iacentis**. 3 part, 1-end. Lying prostrate, lying down, reclining
 - gens Gallorum**. Phrase composed of: a) *gens*, *gentis*. 3f noun. The Roman clan and b) *gallus*, -i. 2m noun. A cock, rooster. The Gallic tribes presented Latinized, as a Roman clan. In our era, one of the enduring symbols of the Republic of France is the Gallic Cock
 - Publius Cornelius Scipio** with the *agnomen* of **Africanus**. Roman general and statesman, a leading personage in Rome's victory against Carthage in the Second Punic War. Scipio was regarded as the foremost military commander and strategists of his era. His greatest victory was against Hannibal at the Battle of Zama, 202 BCE. The victory earned for him the title of Africanus, 'the African'