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Scutum di Dura Europos, unico esemplare pervenuto.
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The Legions of Cannae

The First Professional Army of the Roman Republic

by SAMUELE ROCCA

ABSTRACT. This article traces the evolution of the well-known *Legiones Cannenses* from a citizen army into a professional force, possibly the first in the history of the Roman army. I shall focus on three main aspects of this transformation. First, I shall deal with the split of the legionaries from civic life, in the wake of the battle of Cannae. The Roman senate in 215 BCE decided to strip the survivors of the battle of their civil rights and sent them to garrison Sicily. The decision of the Senate created a mercenary force, different from the rest of the Roman army. Then, I shall examine the peculiar commitment of the soldiers to some of the most important warlords, such as Marcellus, Scipio, and Flamininus, who in turn were in command of the *Legiones Cannenses* during the Second Punic War and the Second Macedonian War. The last topic discussed in this part are the changes in the tactical composition of the *Legiones Cannenses*, evident in the African campaign. By then, the tactical composition of the *Legiones Cannenses* looked very much akin to that of the Late Republican legions. The *cohors* had taken the place of the *manipulum* as the main tactical unit.

KEYWORDS: ROMAN REPUBLIC; CANNAE; CITIZEN ARMY; PROFESSIONAL ARMY; SCIPIO AFRICANUS.

THE CREATION OF A PROFESSIONAL FORCE

1.A. *The Split from Civic Life*

The soldiers who served in the *Legiones Cannenses* were Roman citizens. The Roman Republic, not differently from the Greek city states, possessed a citizen army. Each Roman citizen was obliged to serve for sixteen years, although, according to Polybius during the Second Punic War, citizens could serve for no less than twenty years. After sixteen years of military service, a citizen was considered *emeritus*. *Equites*, or citizens who served in the cavalry, however, served only for ten years. Roman citizens who served in the army, were divided in *iuniores* and *seniores*. *Iuniores* were the citizens called to

duty between the age of 17 till the age of 46, while *seniores* were older citizens, from the age of 46 till the age of 60 years old. After the age of 60, Roman citizens were exonerated from military service. Their enlistment, oath and training were not different from that of their fellow citizens.¹

Once the Senate passed the relative decree to decide how many men must be levied, the two consuls began the *dilectus* (in Latin selection) or levy. By the end of the second century BCE, each year were generally levied four legions, two for each consul. According to Polybius, first, the consuls appoint all the 24 tribunes, of whom 14 already had seen five years of military service and 10 had seen already ten years of service. The *dilectus* itself began when a red flag was raised on the Capitol to indicate the beginning of the levy. Then, all the citizens were called up and divided according to their tribe. Of all the citizens called up, however, were selected according to lots only the quantity necessary to form four legions. Afterwards, the 14 younger tribunes called the names of the citizens selected by lot and divided them in four groups as the four legions. Subsequently, the tribunes, or the junior officers, were assigned to the legions. At the same time that the *dilectus* was performed in Rome, the consuls sent a message to the Italic allies, or *socii*, requiring to levy a contingent. The local authorities administer the oath to the soldiers of the allied contingent.²

After the levy, all the citizens soldiers, by now each assigned to his own unit, or *legio*, took the oath of allegiance. This oath was symbolic because it represented for the citizen the transition between the civic environment with its laws to the military discipline, to which he was now subjected. The oath of allegiance to the Roman Republic was taken under the auspices of *Fides*, a goddess that embodied the virtue of good faith or trust. The idea of *fides* stood at the foundation of the Roman state. To the virtue of *fides* was associated the idea of *fas*, or what was right in the eyes of the gods. Once an agreement was made under the aegis of *fides*, it was perceived as *fas*, or right in the eyes of the gods. On the other hand,

1 See Polybius, Histories VI, 19. See Varro, Nonius, 523, 24. On the Legiones Cannenses, see Sandra PERE-NOGUES, «Note sur les legiones Cannenses : soldats oubliés de la deuxième guerre punique ?», Pallas 46, Mélanges Claude Domergue 1 (1997), pp. 121-130.

2 See Polybius, Histories VI, 19-21. See Claude NICOLET, Le métier de citoyen dans la Rome républicaine, Gallimard, Paris 1976, pp. 133-140. See also Peter CONNOLLY, Greece and Rome at War, Greenhill Books, London 1981, p. 129. See also Gregory DALY, Cannae, the Experience of battle in the Second Punic War, Routledge, London 2005, pp. 49-54.

when the agreement was broken by one of the two parties, this was perceived not just as a breach of the agreement, but as an act *nefas*, or unjust in the eyes of the gods. The oath symbolized the obligation that the soldiers owed to the Roman Republic and the other way around as *fides* was always reciprocal. Therefore, when the Roman citizen soldiers were defeated at Cannæ, they broke the *fides* they owned through the oath of allegiance to the Roman Republic. More than that, they had done something *nefas* in front of gods, causing their displeasure, and, therefore, they had to be punished.³

Once in the army, the relationship between the Roman citizen and the state was modified by the needs of military discipline. The Roman citizens had a well-defined relationship with the Republic. This relationship was governed through the exercise of their duties and rights, even if these differed according to the social status of the citizen. However, once the Roman citizens became soldiers and part of the army, their civic rights were now altered by the needs of military discipline. In this process their civic identity shifted from that of individuals, each part of a social class, to that of a collective body, the Roman legion. Its internal framework differed from those of collective bodies, which they habitually confronted as citizens, such as the *comitia* or assemblies. Usually Roman soldiers were punished for their own misdemeanor, sometimes harshly with fustigation or even with death. However, collective punishment, such as decimation, was also enforced.

3 Some modern historians, such as Maurice Holleaux, accepts Livy's concept of *fides*, as standing behind the foreign policy of the Roman Republic, and therefore that the Romans always reacted, not acted, that their foreign policy developed under their enemies' coercion and constraint, and that, whenever possible, the Romans always tried to go back on their conquests. Therefore, the Romans resorted to war as their last choice, to uphold the broken *fides*, and to rebuild what is *fas*, or right in the eyes of the gods. This thesis had been lately proposed once more by Erich S. Gruen. On the other hand, other historians, such as Robert Harris, argue that the Roman Republic aimed from the beginning at conquest and developed an articulated imperialist policy of war and intervention. See E.S. GRUEN, "Polybius and Josephus on Rome", in J. Pastor, P. Stern, M. Mor (eds.), *Flavius Josephus, Interpretation and History, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* 146, Brill, Leiden 2011, pp. 149-162. See also W. HARRIS, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome: 327-70 B.C.*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1985 and Maurice HOLLEAUX, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques au IIIe siècle avant J.-C. (273-205)*, E. de Bouccard, Paris 1935. On the concept of *fides*, see also Giovanni BRIZZI, *Storia di Roma. Dalle origini ad Azio, Pàtron, Bologna 2011*, passim; Giovanni BRIZZI, "Liv. XXIV, 46-47 e XXVI, 29-32: variazioni sul tema della *fides romana*", in *Carcopino, Cartagine e altri scritti*, Ozieri 1989, pp. 117-142.

The harsh discipline of the Roman army made a strong impression on Polybius, although he was well aware that it was no less severe than in the Hellenistic mercenary armies. However, the Greek statesman turned in historian was conscious that the strict discipline imposed on the citizen soldiers was one of the main foundations on which rested the victories achieved by the Roman Republic.⁴ Thus, the fact that these citizens were collectively punished because they had broken their oath of allegiance is nothing unusual in the history of the Roman Republic. What was unusual is that the Roman soldier, even if misbehaved, was never cast out from the society. On the contrary, even after a punishment, individual or collective, the soldiers remained members of the civil society. Yet, after the defeat of Cannae, the Roman senate in a *senatus consultum* hold in 215 BCE, around a year after the battle, established that the survivors of the battle should have to be punished for their behavior on the field as they had broken their oath of allegiance. As consequence, the soldiers who survived the battle, Roman citizens as well as the allied contingent, were completely cut off from Roman society and lost their status of citizen soldiers.

The *senatus consultum* can be reconstructed from indirect evidence. In the year 212 BCE, when Marcellus was in Sicily, the soldiers of the *Legiones Cannenses* sent him a petition. The soldiers asked to take parts in the military operations in Sicily.⁵ Although we cannot know if this letter was a real document used by Livy, maybe quoted by Polybius or by other earlier historians of the Second Punic War, or if the petition was just created by Livy with the purpose of adding more drama to his narrative, yet, it is possible to suggest a sketchy reconstruction of the *senatus consultum* hold three years earlier.

The *senatus consultum* could be divided in two parts, a first part that deals with the legal status of the commanding officers and a second part which deals with the legal status of the *equites* and the common soldiers. Accordingly, the commanding officers, the surviving consul Terentius Varo as well as the *tribuni militum*, the junior officers, were exonerated from any responsibility or mismanagement in the defeat. Both the consul as well as the tribunes could continue

4 See Polybius, Histories VI, 37-38.

5 See Livy, History of Rome XXV, 5-6. See for the translation is that of Daniel SPILLAN and Cyrus EDMONDS, Livy, History of Rome, Bohn's Classical Library, G. Bell and Sons, London 1850.

their *cursus honorum*, or career, undisturbed. In the petition one of the soldiers could bitterly complain that “for my own part, I, as a soldier, will never say a word of my commander, particularly when I know that he received the thanks of the senate for not having despaired of the state; and who has been continued in command through every year since his flight from Cannae.” Clearly the soldiers refer to Terentius Varro, the commander responsible for the disaster. Later in the petition, the soldiers could state to Marcellus that “we have heard that others also who survived that disaster, who were military tribunes, solicit and fill offices of honor, and have the command of provinces.”⁶

The decree does not state the punishment met by the *equites*, the soldiers who stemmed from the equestrian class. Possibly they shared the fate of the common soldier. Maybe, they were deprived of their state horses as punishment. Besides, their military service could have been lengthened. Each cavalryman was obliged to serve ten more years with a horse purchased at his own expenses.

It was the common soldiers who became the scapegoat of the defeat. The soldiers wrongly accused of cowardice in front of the enemy, as they complained in the petition, “but is there a man who can bring a charge of cowardice or running away against the army which fought at Cannae, where more than fifty thousand men fell”, were stripped of their civil rights and sent to Sicily in exile till the end of the war or till any Carthaginian army was in Italy. Livy clearly stated that there was “an understanding that they should not be brought home before the conclusion of the Carthaginian war.” Moreover, the soldiers were denied the possibility to face the enemy in battle and they could not be awarded any military decoration. As the soldiers wrote in their petition to Marcellus, stating their case, “now we are in a worse condition than those who were taken prisoners in the time of our fathers; for they only had their arms, the nature of their service, and the place where they might pitch their tents in the camp altered; all which, however, they got restored by one service rendered to the state, and by one successful battle. Not one of them was sent away into banishment; not one was deprived of the hope of completing the period of his service; in short, an enemy was assigned to them, fighting with whom they might at once terminate their life or their disgrace. We, to whom nothing can be objected, except that it is owing to us that any Roman soldier has survived the battle of Cannae, are removed far away, not only from

6 See Livy, History of Rome XXV, 5-6.

our country and Italy, but even from an enemy; where we may grow old in exile, where we can have no hope or opportunity of obliterating our disgrace, of appeasing the indignation of our countrymen, or, in short, of obtaining an honorable death.” Besides, as stated elsewhere by Livy, the soldiers forfeited their pay for a whole year.⁷ However, this also means that, from then onwards, the common soldiers would have received their pay. Thus, the legal status of the survivors of Cannae changed from that of citizen soldiers to that of mercenaries. They were paid, but they were not considered any more citizens.

Livy does not deal at length with the legal status of the allied soldiers who survived the battle, Latins and allies from colonies of Ardea, Nepotes, Sutrii, Alba, Carseoli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Sezia, Cales, Narnia and Interama. As the political system of these cities, especially the Latin cities and the colonies, mirrored that of Rome, there is no motivation to think that their fate would have been different. Probably, the common Italic soldiers shared the fate of the legionaries. On the other hand, as with their Roman counterparts, the Italic junior officers and cavalrymen were probably punished less harshly. However, the soldiers of the Italic contingent reacted differently from their Roman comrades. In 209 BCE the Italic contingent mutinied at Herdonea.⁸ Possibly because, they were afraid to antagonize their closest allies in a very difficult moment, the Senate reacted quickly and the mutinous Italic soldiers were sent home.

According to the Senate’s judgment, so well-illustrated by Livy, these soldiers did not stand and fought at the onslaught of Cannae and died as Romans, as it was expected by them, but fled away ignominiously from the fury of the enemy. They had broken the oath of allegiance and, therefore, they had to be punished. Moreover, because of their behavior they had lost the right to be considered full-fledged citizens of the Roman Republic. But this punishment was different from

7 “The senate decreed, the first day they deliberated in the Capitol, that double taxes should be imposed for that year, one moiety of which should be immediately levied, as a fund from which pay might be given forthwith to all the soldiers, except those who had been at Cannae.” See Livy, *History of Rome* XXIII, 31.

8 In 212 BCE the praetor Cnaeus Fulvius Flaccus was defeated with a loss of 16.000 outside Herdonea, when Hannibal repeated his trick from Trebia of concealing men behind enemy lines. See Livy, *History of Rome* XXV, 21-22 and XXVII, 7. See also John F. LAZENBY, *Hannibal’s War, A Military History of the Second Punic War*, Aris and Phillips, Warminster 1978, p. 174. On the mutiny see Livy, *History of Rome* XXVII, 9; ivy XXIX, 15, Livy XXIX, 24.

the one usually met by Roman legions in similar cases. This time, as they failed their fellow citizens, they had to be dramatically separated from the whole citizen's body and cast out from the civic society. And yet, on the other hand, the state gave to these soldiers a second chance to redeem themselves. This civic exile was reduced in terms of time and it was not definitive.

Probably cowardice was not the real issue. It was clear to everyone that someone had to pay for the defeat, "pour encourager les autres". On one hand, the culprits could not have been searched among the members of the senatorial class, nor the consul, nor the *tribuni militum*. Even if the officers were the real culprits, however their punishment would have exacerbated the division of the Roman political class in a delicate moment, when it was necessary its unity behind a common goal, the defeat of Hannibal. On the other hand, the legionaries, the common soldier, coming from the lower classes as well as the Italic allies were punished harshly because the punishment made clear that the war had to be fought till the bitter end. The lower classes were coerced to the policy pursued by the senate. It was a warning for all the other soldiers.

I.B. The Peculiar Commitment and Loyalty to the Warlords

One of the results of the *senatus consultum* was that it created a force of mercenaries, skilled and professional soldiers, more devoted and faithful to their commanders than to the Roman Republic. This is easy to explain. Once the survivors of Cannae had become a mercenary force, they were aware that their interests were best served by their commander on the field and not by the far away Republic that had in fact disavowed them. In fact, their commanders needed them not only to defeat the enemy, the primary purpose of the army, but also to advance their political interests. Thus, mutual interests bound the survivors of Cannae to their commanders. This bond, created first with Marcellus, was then extended first to Scipio the Younger and then to Flamininus. All these three warlords were imbued of Greek culture as well as of Hellenistic values, and molded themselves on the figure of Alexander the Great. Therefore, all these leaders were formed to the cult of the personality and on the image of absolute leadership, and thus, their politic prototype was quite different, if not in total opposition, to the traditional collectivistic values of the *patres conscripti* of the Roman Republic, such as Quintus Fabius Maximus and of course Cato the Elder. Hence, the soldiers

of the *Legiones Cannenses* established a new informal relationship of trust with their commanders. Although they still owed the oath of allegiance to the Roman Republic, however their *fides* or trust, was devolved to their own commanders, warlords imbued of Hellenistic values, alien to the spirit of Rome.

These legions, immediately after the defeat of Cannae, were handed over to Marcellus with the immediate purpose of defending the very city of Rome and keeping Hannibal at bay. Once the immediate danger to Rome was gone, the *Legiones Cannenses* were sent far away in exile to Sicily. Although the original purpose of their stay in the province of Sicily was to serve as garrison, the military developments brought the *Legiones Cannenses* once more under the orders of Marcellus. Notwithstanding a possible disaffection of some elements, the veterans of Cannae renewed the bond with the Claudian patrician. The well-bloodied veterans distinguished themselves in the siege of Leontini and in the well-known siege of Syracuse, in the last stage of the war in Sicily. It is worth of note that the Senate gave to Marcellus the possibility to use these units in the field, although the *patres conscripti* would have preferred to keep the *Legiones Cannenses* away from the battlefield. As these units were the most professional and trained at his disposition, and as the soldiers had already served under his command, Marcellus did not hesitate to avail himself of their services. But in so doing, he in fact forged a peculiar bond between himself, the warlord, and the soldiers under his command. Was the Senate aware of the risk that comported the creation of a peculiar close bond between one of the most successful Roman commanders and a bunch of soldiers, that were revealing their professionalism, but who were disaffected to the Republic? We cannot know, but, once the province was won back to Rome, Marcellus left the soldiers in Sicily. The premature death of the Roman warlord put an end to his bond with the *Legiones Cannenses*.

An analysis of the text of the petition sent by the soldiers to Marcellus can be used to explain the nature of the bond that united the soldiers to the warlord. First and foremost, the soldiers addressed the warlord as such, not as a representative of the Republic. Livy writes that “with the permission of Lentulus, these men sent the most distinguished of the cavalry and centurions, and a select body of the legionary infantry, as ambassadors to Marcellus, to his winter quarters.” Once admitted in the presence of the warlord, the soldiers read their petition. According to Livy the soldiers stated that “we should have approached you, Marcus Marcellus, when consul in Italy, as soon as that decree of the senate was passed respecting

us, which, though not unjust, was certainly severe, had we not hoped, that being sent into a province which was in a state of disorder in consequence of the death of its kings, to carry on an arduous war against the Sicilians and Carthaginians together, we should make atonement to the state by our blood and wounds....” The soldiers required from Marcellus only one thing, to fight against the enemy, to make atonement of their sins, spilling their blood and showing their prowess. They begged from the warlord to be given a chance to redeem themselves. While the soldiers did not complain that the decree of the senate was undeserved or unfair, this would have amounted to mutiny, they, however asked from Marcellus to fight under his direct command. In exchange for Marcellus’s protection, the soldiers would give their best. The soldiers wanted to establish a personal bond with the warlord. The soldiers in their petition were quite explicit, “and yet, for what fault of ours, conscript fathers, did you then, or do you now, feel displeasure towards us; for when I look upon you, Marcus Marcellus, I seem to behold both the consuls and the whole body of the senate; and had you been our consul at Cannae, a better fate would have attended the state as well as ourselves.” They put their trust in Marcellus, they offer their *fides*. The Roman warlord, who was in sheer need for experienced troops, accepted.⁹

After the war in Sicily, the *Legiones Cannenses* passed once more a long period garrisoning Sicily, with their moral at the lowest ebb. But then, once again, the veterans of Cannae had a further opportunity to stand out as one of the crack units of the Roman Republic. Publius Cornelius Scipio the younger, elected consul, was sent to his province, Sicily. As Marcellus previously, also Publius Cornelius Scipio had forged a personal bond with some of the veterans of Cannae. Once we consider the bond that united the *Legiones Cannenses* to Scipio, it is worthwhile to remember that Scipio was the first warlord that created a formal bond with his men. In 209 BCE, Publius Cornelius Scipio the Younger, after the conquest of Carthage, allowed his own soldiers to sack the city. Polybius, a keen observer, narrates how the Romans painstakingly collected the plunder ransacked during the sack of the city and distributed it back among the soldiers. Polybius does not state it, but one of the most important consequences of successful plundering and its successive redistribution, was the creation of a close personal bond between the commander and his soldiers. While the soldiers provided the commander

9 See Livy, History of Rome XXV, 6.

through their efforts with victory and honor, which brought with it political primacy, the commander let his soldier collect the plunder, enriching them. There was no law, which obliged him to hand off the bounty to the *aerarium*. It is no coincidence that Livy states that Scipio soon afterwards was acclaimed *imperator* by his own soldiers. Because of “morale and politics”, this was the wisest thing to do. Therefore, once a military commander distributed the plunder between his own soldiers, he would have created a closer bond with his soldiers. Once back to civic life, they could or would back their former commander as his *clientes*.¹⁰ Scipio, who campaigned in Africa had not too much plunder to offer to the survivors of Cannae, but he could, and he indeed offered, to his soldiers, turned in his *clientes* once back to civic life, not just a pardon, but also the allotment of lands.

In fact, the ambitious patrician was probably one of the military tribunes of the two original legions, then, under the command of his father.¹¹ The relationship between Scipio and his soldiers, as the bond that tied him closely to some of the veterans, which was extended to all the penal units, was peculiar. On one hand, this bond mirrored the traditional relationship between the *patronus* and his *clientes*. Thus, after the war in Africa, Scipio would do his best to distribute allotments of land to the veterans of the *Legiones Cannenses*, exactly as a *patronus* would have took care of his *clientes*. In turn the soldiers would or could have supported Scipio’s political ambitions. However, as the veterans of Cannae were outcasts and not Roman citizens, the bond between the warlord and its soldiers transcended the relationship that a Roman commander had with the citizen soldiers under his command. The close association between Scipio and the veterans of Cannae was quite analogous to that the Hellenistic warlords, such as Antigonus

10 See Polybius, *Histories* X, 15-16; see also Livy, *History of Rome* XXVII.19. See als Erich S. GRUEN, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* I-II, University of California Press, Berkeley (Cal.) 1984, pp. 289, 290-291, 348. On the distribution of bounty, see Israel SHATZMAN, “The Roman General’s Authority over Booty”, *Historia* 21, 1972, pp. 177-205; According to Shatzman, holders of *imperium* acted lawfully and legitimately when they took the booty for themselves, the *manubiae*. Besides, there is no unambiguous case of *de peculatu* on the seizure of booty. Last but not least, Roman generals were free to decide how to divide the booty, and if share it with their soldiers. See also Ferdinando BONA, “Sul concetto di *manubiae* e sulla responsabilità del magistrato in ordine alla preda”, *Studia et Documenta Historiae Iuris* 26, 1960, pp. 105-175.

11 On the young Scipio during the battle of Ticinus, see Polybius, *Histories* X, 3-5; On Scipio at Cannae, see Livy, *History of Rome* XXII, 53.

Monophtalmus or Hannibal, had with the mercenaries under their command.¹²

The *Legiones Cannenses* fought successfully with Scipio at Zama. Once back in Italy, Scipio was partial successful in settling the Cannae's veterans in the most fertile lands of Italy. More than that, Scipio quashed the *senatus consultum* that had established the *Legiones Cannenses* more than fourteen years earlier, bringing the veterans back to the citizen body. Brizzi, emphasizes that even before the African campaign, Scipio did his best to send home the oldest of the veterans coming from the *Legiones Cannenses*. Scipio had a special legislation passed by the senate and he personally supervised the distribution of land allotments in Apulia and Samnium to his veterans.¹³ These lands had been confiscated to the original Samnite and Apulian owners, as they had switched their allegiance from the Roman Republic to its enemy, Hannibal. Some of the *decemviri*, appointed in 201 BCE to assign land to Scipio African's veterans were probably among his close collaborators. The allotment of lands to veterans was an old established custom in the Roman Republic. However, this time Scipio followed a new pattern, very different from that instituted in the past. For the first time, it was the victorious general who settled his soldiers through his preponderant influence in the Senate and on the Roman political scene, and not the Senate as a body that took the decisions. Thus, the Senate was no more seen as the main actor in the allotment of lands, but only as a passive bystander, whose only task was to give his passive acquiescence. These lands were seen as the legitimate bounty that the victorious generals could distribute after his victory to his own faithful soldiers. The veterans of Cannae were grateful not to the Senate that had revoked their citizenship and had took away their civic rights but to the warlord who gave them back not just the lost civil rights but also land parcels that would help them to start

12 On Antigonus Monophtalmus, see Richard A. BILLOWS, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley (Cal.), University of California Press, 1997, pp. 155-156. According to Billows, Antigonus in 315 BCE was not just the wealthiest and most powerful of the dynasts, but he also possessed the best military and administrative record. He was alone among the Diadochs, who could aspire to renew Alexander's kingship. In fact, Antigonus created the Hellenistic state. The king and his army took the place of the polis and its citizens as the main element that expressed the concept of state.

13 See Livy, *History of Rome XXXI*, 4. See Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy*, p. 647. On Scipio, see Howard H. SCULLARD, *Scipio Africanus, Soldier and Politician*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1970, pp. 111-115. See also Giovanni BRIZZI, *Scipione e Annibale, La guerra per salvare Roma*, Laterza, Bari 2009, p. 151. See also Gastone BRECCIA, *Scipione l'Africano. L'invincibile che rese grande Roma*, Salerno Editrice, Roma 2007.

a new life. The Cannae's veterans were well aware that they owned these lands to Scipio, and of course their best interest was to continue to serve their *patronus* as faithful *clientes*. This close relationship between the Scipio, the victorious commander, and his veterans, the *Legiones Cannenses*, reflected the more later settlement of veterans of Marius and Sulla, as well as those of Pompey and Julius Caesar, and of course the well-known veteran's settlement of Augustus in Italy on confiscated land after Philippi and Naulochos.¹⁴

Once the Roman Republic was entangled with Philip V of Macedonia in a new conflict, the Second Macedonian War, part of the veterans, possibly those who did not receive any land allotment presented themselves as volunteers, becoming the core of the army levied by the consul Publius Sulpicius Galba Maximus in 200 BCE. According to Livy, less than a year after they arrived in Macedonia, the first group of veterans, circa 2000, mutinied. The soldiers complained that they did not had given their consent to further military service and that they had been embarked by the military tribunes against their will. Once these mutual obligations were not met, the soldiers mutinied. This behavior, almost unknown during the Middle Republic, characterized the Roman armies of the Late Republic, which more than once mutinied to their commanders, with the hope of negotiating better terms. The consul replied that their demand for discharge deemed to be right, and he promised to write to the Senate. Possibly, Sulpicius Galba, their commander, who was not related to Scipio and his political group, was not very empathetic to the veterans. However, his colleague, the consul Publius Villius Tappulus, closely associated to Scipio, immediately capitulated. The soldiers, then, were put, first under the command of Publius Villius Tappulus, consul in 199 BCE, together with Lucius Cornelius Lentulus, and then Titus Quinctius Flaminius, consul in 198 BCE with and Sextus Aelius Paetus Catus. Apparently, it is quite puzzling how the veterans of Cannae, who had established a strong personal bond first with Marcellus and then with Scipio, were sent to fight in the Roman army

14 See on the settlements of veterans in the Late Republic Erich S. GRUEN, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, University of California Press, Berkeley (Cal.) 1995, mainly pp. 10, 37, 378, 387-404, 501. See also Patricia SOUTHERN, *Augustus, Roman Imperial Biographies*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, p. 66-67 on Philippi, p. 87 on Naulochos. See also note on p. 226 with bibliography. See also Lawrence KEPPIE, *Colonization and Veteran settlement in Italy, 47-14 B.C.*, The British School at Rome, London 1983.

under the command of Flamininus. But then, Flamininus was a close friend and a political partner of Scipio the Younger. In fact, two of the *decemviri*, who were appointed in 201 BCE to assign land to the African veterans were Publius Villius Tappulus and T. Quintius Flamininus. We do not know if the veterans of Cannae established a peculiar bond also with Flamininus, but a few thousands served till the end of the campaign.¹⁵

1.C. The Evolution and Changing of the Tactical Composition of the Legions

At Cannae the Romans fielded an army of eight legions and an allied contingent. According to Goldsworthy, the legions that were present at Cannae were the four legions commanded by Fabius Maximus, the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th and the four new legions levied by the two consuls at the beginning of the year, the 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21th. Yet this possibility raises a problem as all these units had no battle experience whatsoever. Therefore, another possibility is that the legions which took part in the battle were legions which had previous battle experience. These would have been the two legions, the 1st and the 2nd, levied by the consul Publius Cornelius Scipio in 218 BCE, which took part in the battles of Ticino and Trebbia. Two more legions were the 12th and the 13th legions, levied by the consul Gnaeus Servilius Geminus in 217 BCE. The four more legions, the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th, levied by the *dictator* Fabius Maximus, although had no experience in pitched battle however took part in various clashes. The Italic contingent included soldiers stemming from Latin and Roman colonies, Ardea, Nepotes, Sutrii, Alba, Carseoli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Sezia, Cales, Narnia and Interama.¹⁶

15 On Flamininus and Scipio see Édouard WILL, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, 323-30 av. J.-C., Paris, Points 2003, p. 154. See also Ernst BADIEN, "The family and early career of T. Quinctius Flamininus, *Journal of Roman Studies* 61, 1971, pp. 102-111, John BRISCOE, "Flamininus and Roman Politics, 200-189 B. C.", *Latomus* 31, 1972, pp. 22-53, Filippo CASSOLA, *I gruppi politici romani nel III secolo a. C.*, Università degli Studi di Trieste, Istituto di storia antica, 2, Istituto di Storia antica, Trieste 1962, and "La politica di Flaminino e gli Scipioni", *Labeo*, 1960, pp. 105-130. See on the battle of Cynoscephalae, Polybius, *Histories* XVIII, 18-27, Livy, *History of Rome*, XXXIII, 3-10, Plutarch, *Life of Flamininus* 8. See also CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, pp. 205-207.

16 On the legions that fought at Cannae, see Polybius, *Histories* III, 107 and Livy, *History of*

According to ancient sources, Polybius and Livy, the two consuls decided to reinforce the legions, bringing the number of men for each legion from 4000 infantrymen and 200 horsemen to 5000 infantrymen and 300 cavalrymen. Possibly these soldiers stemmed from the four new legions levied in 216 BCE, the 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21th. This episode can point to the fact that four of the eight legions present at Cannae would have been the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd, and the 4th, well under strength after all the unrelenting fighting and lacking cavalry. The new reinforcements, a fifth of the soldiers, probably had no time to integrate between the veterans, and were completely inexperienced.¹⁷

Polybius states that the Roman army at Cannae numbered 80.000 infantrymen, of whom 10.000 made up the strategic reserve and served as garrison in the camps, and more than 6000 served as cavalrymen. Of these, the Romans fielded eight legions, circa 40.000 Roman soldiers and at least 2.000 cavalrymen. Once we consider the allies, whose contingents often made up half of the Roman army, we can only make guesses. The allies would probably have fielded no more than 32.000 infantrymen, as nor Polybius nor Livy do state that their contingent was strengthened. On the other hand, the cavalry contingents of the was bigger than that of the Romans, maybe 4000 cavalrymen, as Polybius states that the Roman army included slightly more than 6000 cavalrymen. Modern scholarship is still quite divided on the total number of the Roman army at Cannae. Brunt, for example argues that the 10.000 new recruits sent to reinforce the Roman army, in fact came not just from the Roman army but also from the allied contingent. Other scholars, such as Dorey and Dudley had posited that, giving all the uncertainties, the Roman army was between 45.000 and 60.000 strong.¹⁸

Rome XXII, 36. On the Italic contingent, see Livy, *History of Rome* XXVII, 9. See Adrian GOLDSWORTHY, *The Fall of Carthage, The Punic Wars 265-146 BC*, Cassell Military Paperbacks, London 2003, pp. 198-200. See DALY, *Cannae, the Experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, pp. 49-54, 64-79.

17 See Polybius, *Histories* III, 107 and Livy, *History of Rome* XXII, 36. See CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, p. 183 and See GOLDSWORTHY, *The Fall of Carthage*, p. 198.

18 See Polybius, *Histories* III, 113. See DALY, *Cannae, the Experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, pp. 25-27, 157-163. See Thomas A. DOREY and Donald R. DUDLEY, *Rome against Carthage, A History of the Punic Wars*, Seeker and Warburg, London 1972, p. 63. On the Italic contingent, see Virgilio ILARI, *Gli Italici nelle strutture militar romane*, Università di Roma, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Diritto Romano e dei Diritti dell'Oriente Mediterraneo, 49, A. Giuffrè Editore, Milano 1974. See also Michael J. TAYLOR, "The Evolution of the Manipular Legion in the Early Republic", *Historia* 69, 2020, pp. 28-56.

The Roman legions that fought at Cannae presented a tactical composition, an armament and equipment identical to that of all the other legions towards the end of the second century BCE, the manipular legion. Thus, the appearance and tactical composition of the legions that fought at Cannae mirrored that of the manipular legion of the Second Punic War as described by Polybius and by Livy. First it shall be useful to describe the manipular legion, that till the battle of Cannae, was the framework of the eight legions who took part in the fatidic clash. According to Livy, the typical legion of the Second Punic War, includes 4000 infantrymen and 300 cavalrymen. According to Polybius, however, a Roman legion numbered generally 4200 infantrymen and 300 cavalrymen.¹⁹ The manipular legion was essentially an infantry unit reinforced by a small unit of cavalry. The infantry was divided in light troops and heavy infantry. The light troops or *velites* fought as skirmishers. In a legion there were 1200 *velites*. However, most of the soldiers, 3000, ought to be classed as heavy infantry, dived in three lines, the *triplex acies*. Of these, the youngest 1200, or *hastati*, formed the first line, those older, the *principes*, formed the second line, and the veterans or *triarii*, 600 in a legion, formed the third line. The main tactic subdivision of the Roman legion in this period was the *manipulum*. A legion was divided in 30 *manipula*. Each *manipulum* was composed by 120 men heavy armed (*hastati* and *principes*), and circa 50-60 light armed *velites*, that brought the total strength of a *manipulum* to 180 men. However, a *manipulum* of *triarii* was composed by 60 men and 40 *velites*. It seems that the main difference in the armament between the *hastati* and *principes*, on one hand, and the *triarii*, on the other hand, is that while both were defended by the large convex oval *scutum*, and had the *gladius*, the sword, the *hastati* and *principes* were defended by a bronze pectoral and were armed with the *pilum*, the *triarii* were defended by the chain mail body armor of Celtic origin, and they were armed with the *hasta*, or spear. The 300 cavalrymen, present in a legion, were divided in 10 *turmae*, each composed of 30 men, divided in 3 *decuriae*, commanded by a *decurio*, seconded by an *optio*. The *socii*, or allies' contingents had a similar organization to that of the Roman legion. Thus, each contingent consisted in 4200 infantrymen divided in 30 *manipula*. However, Polybius emphasizes that the allies had 900 cavalrymen divided in 30 *turmae*, or thrice the number of cavalrymen in a Roman legion. The hierarchy of command

19 See Livy, History of Rome XXI, 17 and Polybius, Histories VI, 20.

started with the consul, who commanded two legions and the correspondent allied contingent. The legion itself was commanded by six *tribuni militum*, who were, irrespective of their age, the senior officers. The *tribuni* selected the junior officer. Thus, for each *manipulum*, an officer, the *centurio prior*, was selected. This officer in turn chose as subordinate another officer, the *centurio posterior*. The only centurion who was considered as senior officer was the first centurion of the first *manipulum* of the *triarii*, or *primus pilus*, who sat in council with the *tribuni*. Centurions also appointed for each manipule two rearguard officers or *optio*. Other officers were the *signifer*, or standard bearer, *cornicen*, or musician, and the *tesserarius*, who distributed the daily corvées.

The tactic followed was quite simple, to attack, smash through the center of the enemy flanks, and put them to flight as quickly as possible. First the legion was drawn up in three lines, *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*, with the *velites* in the front. The three lines of heavy infantry were drawn as on a checkerboard, leaving gaps between the *manipula*. The *velites*, who opened the fight, distracted the enemy with constant throws of darts, covering the maneuvers of the Roman heavy infantry behind them. Once the *velites* had destabilized the enemy front, they withdrew from the battlefield, taking their place behind the three lines of heavy infantry, the *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*, turning around the flanks of the formation, thus avoiding any disruption. The *velites* were followed by the *hastati*. These, once closed the gaps between the *manipula*, advanced towards the enemy lines with a rhythmic step. When the distance narrowed to around 15 meters, each successive line of *hastati* had to throw their respective two *pila*, or javelins, then draw the sword, or *gladius*, and run, charging the enemy lines. If the *hastati* were unable to defeat the enemy, they retreated at a slow pace. The *principes* opened the gaps between the *manipula*, allowing the *hastati* to reform their lines with opened gaps between the *manipula* behind them. If even the *principes* fought without much success, they would retreat. Then, or the *principes* would have changed their place with the *hastati*, or they would form on two lines, in a formation without gaps, where a *manipulum* of *hastati* would have been flanked by a *manipulum* of *principes*. Then, if the attack was still unsuccessful, the *hastati* and the *principes*, would retreat behind the *manipula* of *triarii*, who would close the ranks and, in a single uninterrupted array, throwing themselves on the enemy. The *triarii*, the veterans, were also used to prevent the two previous lines from withdrawing without having received the necessary authorization. According to

some scholars, the Roman order in battle was on two lines, *duplex acies*, with a third line used as a reserve.²⁰

Ancient sources give a dramatic account of the aftermath of the battle of Cannae. Polybius narrates that no less than 70.000 Roman and allied soldiers were killed, and no less than 10.000 infantrymen were captured fighting. Only 3000 infantrymen successfully escaped to the neighboring towns. According to Livy, whose figures are more convincing, 45.000 infantrymen and 2.700 cavalrymen were killed, 19.300 were captured, while 14.550 escaped. According to Lazenby, as the survivors of the battle were formed in two legions, the number given by Livy, 14.550, is the one generally accepted by most scholars. Thus, the 14.550 men who survived the battle included the Roman as well as the allied contingent, roughly half and half. Not all scholars agree. According to Caven there were 10.000/15.000 survivors.²¹ Thus, after the battle of Cannae, the survivors were organized in two legions, possibly keeping the same tactical formation. In the aftermath of the desertion of Capua these two legions, together with a legion made of sailors, were put under the command of Marcellus and sent to the Casilinum area at Suessula, where he was joined by an army commanded by the *dictator* Marcus Junius Pera. Marcellus had the task of relieving Nola. His army successfully skirmished in front of the walls of Nola. Then, Marcellus successful retired for winter quarters at Suessula. For the first time the two legions had fought, quite successfully, under the command of Marcellus.²²

20 See CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, pp. 129-142. See also DALY, *Cannae, the Experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, pp. 54-63 on the organization of the manipular legion, and pp. 64-76 on the armament of the legions, and pp. 76-79 on the allies. See also Giovanni BRIZZI, "I manliana imperia e le riforme manipolari: l'esercito romano fra ferocia e disciplina", *Sileno* 16, 1990, pp. 185-206; TAYLOR, "The Evolution of the Manipular Legion in the Early Republic", pp. 28-56; Jon E. LENDON, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, Yale University Press, New York (N.Y.) – London 2005, pp. 427-429..

21 See Polybius, *Histories* III, 117 and Livy, *History of Rome* XXII, 49, 50-56. See DALY, *Cannae, the Experience of battle in the Second Punic War*, pp. 201-202. See also LAZENBY, *Hannibal's War*, pp. 84-85. See CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, p. 188. See for a different opinion GOLDSWORTHY, *The Fall of Carthage*, pp. 213-214 on the Roman losses at Cannae. See Brian CAVEN, *The Punic Wars*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1980, p. 152. See also Giovanni BRIZZI, *Canne, la sconfitta che fece vincere Roma*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2016.

22 See Livy, *History of Rome* XXIII, 2-10, 16. See LAZENBY, *Hannibal's War*, p. 91.

Then, in the aftermath of the *senatus consultum*, the two legions as well as the Italic contingent, were sent to Sicily in garrison duty under the command of the *praetor* Appius Claudius Pulcher.²³ There, the two units were used in siege war, first at Leontini, and then at Syracuse. Possibly in this period, the *hastati* and the *principes* would have adopted heavier armor taken from the enemy to get better protection during the sieges. Besides, as time went by, the younger *velites*, by now less and less young, and thus, unable to perform their task of skirmishers, could have entered in the ranks of the heavy infantry. Till the African campaign, no replacements joined the two units. After the end of the hostilities in 210 BCE, the *Legiones Cannenses* continued to garrison Sicily till 205 BCE. Two episodes ought to be recorded. First the amalgamation of the *Legiones Cannenses* with the survivors of Herdonea. This was an additional group of soldiers that had misbehaved on the battlefield. They were sent as reinforcement to the *Legiones Cannenses*, probably to replenish their ranks after all the fighting in Sicily. Then, there was the mutiny of the Italic contingent. The consuls decided to send immediately the mutineers back home, although probably most of the soldiers of the Italic contingent, who did not take part in the mutiny, remained in Sicily, sharing the fate of the *Legiones Cannenses*.²⁴

The situation of the *Legiones Cannenses* changed dramatically at the beginning of 205 BCE. Publius Scipio, the newly elected consul wished to bring the war to Africa. The Senate assigned him Sicily as province. However, the senate, possibly fearful and jealous of the young warlord, did not allocate any soldiers to Scipio. Instead, the senate gave to Scipio the permission to choose volunteers for his expedition. As Livy does not mention any legion levied in the year 205 BCE, it is probable that by then, the Roman war effort was exhausted, and no more manpower was available. As soon as Scipio reached Sicily, he addressed the two *Legiones Cannenses*, garrisoned in Sicily, offering to the soldiers to take part in the military operations in Africa. Scipio was not only giving the soldiers a possibility to redeem themselves, but maybe, something more, a way back to civil life. Livy states that Scipio, once he inspected the legions, chose the soldiers

23 Livy, *History of Rome* XXIII, 31.

24 See on the amalgamation with the survivors of Herdonea, Livy, *History of Rome* XXV, 21-22 and XXVII, 7. See also LAZENBY, *Hannibal's War*, p. 174. See on the mutiny of the Italian contingent, Livy, *History of Rome* XXVII, 9; XXIX, 15; XXIX, 24. See LAZENBY, *Hannibal's War*, p. 172.

that already fought under Marcellus, because they had a better military discipline and because they already had experience in besieging cities as Syracuse.²⁵ Scipio managed every effort to convince the veterans of *Legiones Cannenses* to join him. The two legions were now under the command of the praetor M. Pomponius Matho, to whom the province of Sicily had been allocated by the senate in 204 B.C.E., so Scipio, to whom the command was prorogated, had to ask for his permission to bring the unit to Africa. Possibly the senate was aware that the two legions were on one hand disaffected to the Republic and on the other hand ready to forge a bond with a warlord, who, in the aftermath of his victory, could have taken care of them. No matter what, there is a general agreement among scholars, such as Brunt, Caven, De Sanctis, that the two legions that followed Scipio in Africa were the *Legiones Cannenses*.²⁶ Yet, although the *Legiones Cannenses* were the bulk of the Roman army, very important was the Italic contribution. Circa 7000 volunteers, who came from Italic cities and populations, followed Scipio in Sicily, and then in Africa. Also, the Italic allies paid the funds to create the war fleet necessary for the expedition to Africa.²⁷

Livy reports various and conflicting information on Scipio's total strength. According to one of the sources, the army under the command of Scipio numbered 10.000 infantrymen and 2200 cavalrymen. On the other hand, according to a second source, Scipio's army amounted to 16.000 infantrymen and 1600 cavalrymen. According to a third source Scipio's army totaled 35.000 men. The numbers given by Livy are quite puzzling. Thus, the first two sources can only refer to the *Legiones Cannenses*, although the high number of cavalrymen is puzzling. Possibly, the Italic *socii* contributed a large number of cavalrymen. The second source points to an army, of which half was composed by Roman soldiers, the *Legiones Cannenses*, and half by the Italic allies. However, in this case the Italic allies did not provide a strong cavalry contingent. The third source, possibly the more plausible of the three, refers to the composition of the Roman army be-

25 See Livy, History of Rome XXIX, 1.

26 Livy, History of Rome XXIX, 11, and 24. See CAVEN, The Punic Wars, p. 236. Caven brings the positive opinion of Brunt. See Peter A. BRUNT, Italian Manpower, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1971, pp. 419-420, 648, 652, 654-656. See also CONNOLLY, Greece and Rome at War, p. 201. See on Toynbee and De Sanctis, TOYNBEE, Hannibal's Legacy, pp. 648-649. See LAZENBY, Hannibal's War, p. 195.

27 See Livy, History of Rome XXVIII, 45. For example, the Camertes gave a cohort of 600 men.

fore the battle of Zama. According to Connolly, the army under the command of Scipio included 30.000 infantrymen and 6000 cavalrymen. Once we deduct circa 8.000 soldiers, the two *Legiones Cannenses*, the contingent sent by Massinissa, who by then had mastered the resources of the kingdom of Syphax, providing 6000 infantrymen and 4000 cavalrymen, it looks like that the Italic contingent numbered no less than 18.000 men. Of these, at least 3600 served as cavalry. On the other hand, according to Lazenby, the army under the command of Scipio at Zama, which included the two *Legiones Cannenses*, the Italic contingent who served at Cannae but did not mutiny in 209 BCE, the 7000 Italic volunteers, the contingent commanded by Massinissa, for a total of 29.000 infantrymen and 6000 cavalrymen. Yet, it is clear that the *Legiones Cannenses* were the backbone of his army.²⁸

It seems that the *Legiones Cannenses* that faced Hannibal at Zama were much more similar in their strength, composition, and tactical division to the legions of the Late Republic and of the early Empire than to those described by Polybius and Livy.²⁹ However, the motivation is not completely clear. Many possibilities are open. First and foremost, after the battle of Cannae, and mainly during the years in Sicily, following the empirical needs of the moment, the legions slowly changed in their tactical composition. Did the fact that the *Legiones Cannenses* were penal units influenced the tactical change? Possibly the tactical change of these units was made easy by the fact that the units were under the direct command of a warlord, and, therefore, their tactical composition was dictated by the needs of the warlord, who felt free to change the tactical composition. On the other hand, once we consider that these changes to the tactical composition of the legions become evident only during the African campaign, it is possible to postulate that this metamorphosis came in the wake of theoretical requirements.

Scipio's tactical reorganization of these units probably entailed a new numeration, an increase in number of the soldiers, adding replacements, and the grouping of the *manipula* in *cohortes*. The *Legiones Cannenses* received a number, and

28 See Livy, *History of Rome* XXIX, 25. See also CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, p. 204. See Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pp. 195, 220-221. On Scipio, see SCULLARD, *Scipio Africanus, Soldier and Politician*, pp. 111-115. On Scipio see also BRIZZI, *Scipione e Annibale, La guerra per salvare Roma*. See also Gastone BRECCIA, *Scipione l'Africano. L'invincibile che rese grande Roma*.

29 See Livy, *History of Rome* XXI, 17 and Polybius, *Histories* VI, 20.

now these appear as the 5th and 6th legions. Possibly the purpose of numbering the two legions served to emphasize that the units were no more a penal unit, but that the soldiers had more or less recovered their status of citizen soldier. Besides, Scipio increased the numbers of soldiers in each legion from 4200 to a total of 6200 infantrymen and 300 cavalrymen. According to Livy, Scipio achieved this purpose adding new soldiers that he brought from Italy. Scipio, thus, created a unit much more similar to the late Republican and early Imperial counterparts, which numbered 5500 men.³⁰ However the most striking change was the tactical composition of these units. The *manipula* of heavy infantry, the *principes*, *hastati*, and *triarii* were grouped together in a *cohors*, which possibly lacks the *velites*, or light infantry. Thus, Livy narrates that as soon as Scipio arrived to Sicily, he divided the volunteers in *centuriae*.³¹ Moreover, in his account of the battle of Zama, Livy narrates that the *cohortes* were the main division of the army. Besides, Polybius as well as Livy state that Scipio, while drawing up his army in their normal three lines, he gave order that the *manipula* were to be drawn up one behind the other leaving gaps through the legions, creating de facto a formation drawn up on *cohortes*. The reorganization of Scipio presents striking similarities with the Roman legion of the late Republic after the reforms conducted by Marius. In fact, only with Marius reforms, the *centuria* is attested as the main tactic subdivision of the legion, taking the place of the *manipulum*. Besides, it seems that Scipio separated the *velites* from the *manipulum*, grouping them together in a different formation. This can be easily explained. As we have noticed, the *Legiones Cannenses* did not receive any replacements till the beginning of the war in Africa. Thus, the new replacements, probably younger than the veterans of the legions formed from the survivors of Cannae, could have been trained as *velites*. They were younger and they did not share a common experience with the other soldiers, and, thus, it would have been better to separate the two groups, the replacements and the veterans. Besides, the soldiers who all these years fought in Sicily would by then have had a similar experience, and they would all have adopted the heavy body armor, the chain mail cuirass of Celtic origin, that char-

30 This is not accepted by Lazenby. See LAZENBY, *Hannibal's War*, p. 202. On the duplex acies, see Nic FIELDS, *The Roman Army of the Punic Wars 264-146 BC*, Osprey Publishing, London 2007, p. 42.

31 On the *cohors*, see Livy, *History of Rome XXIX*, 1. On Zama, see Polybius, *Histories XV*, 9 as well as Livy, *History of Rome XXX*, 33.

acterized the *triarii*. This, the similarity of equipment reached after all the years in Sicily among the *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*, could have provided Scipio with the scheme to group them in *cohortes*.

Yet, it is quite difficult to know how the *Legiones Cannenses* looked like after Scipio's tactical reorganization. There are two possibilities. First, the legion conserved the traditional organization of the *cohortes* of the manipular legion as described by Polybius. This consisted in three *manipula*, each composed of two *centuriae*. A *cohortes* would have grouped two *manipula* of *hastati* and *principes*, for a total of 120 men each, and a *manipulum* of *triarii* numbering 60 men. Each of the three *manipula* would have included 40 *velites*, although once we consider the tactical reorganization of Scipio, who separated the *velites* from the heavy infantry, makes the presence of *velites* quite unlikely. In this case the legion was divided in twenty *cohortes*. Therefore, in this case the *centuria* would not have played any important part in the tactical reorganization. But then, how to cope with Livy's statement? Another possibility is that in fact the legion was divided in *cohortes*, but it was the *centuria*, each numbering 80 men, that became the basic tactical unit of the legion. Each legion would have been divided in thirteen *cohortes*. Each *cohortes* would have included three *manipula* of 160 men. Each *manipulum* would have been divided in two *centuriae* of 80 men. In this case the *manipula* composed by *triarii* units would have numbered the same as those composed by *hastati* and *principes*. This second reconstruction, definitely more similar to that of the late Republic and early Imperial legions, seems to be more probable, because it put its emphasis on the *centuria* as the basic unit of the legion.³² This possibility also could well explain the passage of Livy referring to the *centuriae* previously quoted, otherwise difficult to explain.³³

32 See CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, pp. 216-217.

33 In fact, the *centuria* as basic subdivision of the legion existed in name but not in fact inside the manipular legion. Thus, a legion at the time of the Second Punic War was composed by 60 *centuriae*, each numbering 60 men. Two *centuriae* thus formed a *manipulum*. However, during the Second Punic War, the Roman army fought as *manipula*, not as *centuriae*. Livy narrates that the *cohortes* were the main division of the army. See also CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, pp. 130, 204. On the organization of Scipio's army see BRIZZI, *Scipione ed Annibale. La guerra per salvare Roma*, pp. 166-168. On the tactical organization of the army of the Late Republic, which focused on the *cohortes*, see Adrian GOLD-SWORTHY, *The Complete Roman Army*, Thames & Hudson, London 2003, pp. 46-47; see also Michael M. SAGE, *The Republican Roman Army: A Sourcebook*, Routledge, London 2008, p. 199, 200-208.

In the wake of the battle of Zama, the *Legiones Cannenses*, as the rest of the Roman army was demobilized. However, some of the veterans of Cannae did not reach the new land allotments distributed by the Senate. In 200 BCE, when the Second Macedonian War began, the consul Sulpicius Galba was given permission to enlist volunteers from Scipio's African army. According to Livy, the senate made a provision that no volunteer was to be enrolled against his will. Probably, less than 5000 volunteers coming from the *Legiones Cannenses* answered to the Rome's call to arms and fought in the Second Macedonian War.³⁴ After a mutiny, less than a year after they arrived in Macedonia, while some veterans were sent home, other continued to serve. According to Livy, once consul, the next year, in 198 BCE, Titus Quinctius Flaminius enlisted 3000 infantrymen and 300 cavalrymen, coming from the veterans of Cannae and from the soldiers who were under the command of Scipio in Spain, as supplement to the legions.³⁵ We do not know how many were the veterans of Cannae who took part in the Macedonian campaign. Probably they were less than 5000, as the number provided by Livy, included also Scipio's veterans who had fought in Spain under his orders. Most probably, the veterans of Cannae and of Spain were distributed among the legions. When in the spring of 197 BCE, at Cynoscephalae, Flaminius defeated Philip V of Macedonia, his army numbered 18.000 Romans and Italics as well as 8000 Greeks, mostly Aetolians. By this time, the veterans of Cannae were a small minority.³⁶ We do not know if this time they played an important role in the Roman victory. What happened to the veterans of the *Legiones Cannenses* after Cynoscephalae is unknown.

34 See Livy, *History of Rome* XXXI, 8.

35 See Livy, *History of Rome* XXXII, 3; 8-9. See also SCULLARD, *Scipio Africanus*, pp. 181-182. See WILL, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, pp. 142 and 148-149, 154. See CASSOLA, *I gruppi politici romani nel III secolo a. C.* See also BADIAN, "The family and early career of T. Quinctius Flaminius", pp. 102-111; BRISCOE, "Flaminius and Roman Politics, 200-189 B. C.", pp. 22-53.

36 See on the battle of Cynoscephalae, Polybius, *Histories* XVIII, 18-27, Livy, *History of Rome* XXXIII, 3-10, Plutarch, *Life of Flaminius* 8. See also CONNOLLY, *Greece and Rome at War*, pp. 205-207.

I.D. Conclusion

The *Legiones Cannenses* can be perceived as the first example in Roman history of a professional unit that served together with the other legions that were all units made of citizens. These units presented all the elements found in the later professional army of the Late Republic and Early Empire. First of all, these soldiers were separated from civic life.

Second, the soldiers formed a close bond with their commanders, but not with the Roman state, the Republic. Besides, the internal organization of the *Legiones Cannenses* had evolved in a unit which mirrored the tactical composition of the Roman legions after Marius's reform. Last but not least, once the soldiers felt unsatisfied, they mutinied. This behavior mirrors that of the late Republic and early Empire Roman legions.

Yet, no less important is the concept of quality versus quantity. According to Lazenby, the main reason for Rome's victory in the Second Punic War was its huge pool of manpower. Thus, in 218 BCE, on a total population of 325.000 male



Altare di Domizio Enobarbo, Museo del Louvre. Particolare Foto Jastrow (2007) released in Public Domain (wikimedia commons)

adults, the Roman army could field 240.000 men. However, the total number of Roman citizens who fought in the *Legiones Cannenses* after Cannae did not reach more than 10.000 individuals. Although the total number of the soldiers who fought in the *Legiones Cannenses* was negligible, once compared to the manpower which the Roman Republic could field, yet, it is clear that their contribution to the final victory was probably crucial, as these were the first professional soldiers in the story of Rome.

The *Legiones Cannenses* were not the only example of the Pre Marian-professionalization of the army. Gabba shows that during the Second Punic War the enrolment of both the *capitecenses* or *proletarii* and the volunteers can be seen as a foreshadowing of the professionalism of the Roman army. Gabba argues that during the Second Punic War the successive reduction of the original Servian census of the rating of the fifth class bring to a proletarianization of the Roman city militia. The minimum census qualification decreased dramatically during the Second Punic War. Thus, in Servian Constitution the census qualification of fifth class was less than 11.000 asses, but Polybius reports that during the Second Punic war 4000 asses was the minimum census qualification for the fifth class. This decrease of census qualification for fifth class was introduced in 214 BCE, and its original purpose was to obtain the sailors necessary to man the fleet. Besides, the introduction of the *velites* in the Roman Army was one of the consequences of the decrease of census qualification for fifth class. Moreover, Gabba emphasizes that during the Second Punic War for the first time appeared voluntary enlistment “en masse”.³⁷

37 See Emilio GABBA, *Republican Rome, The Army and the Allies*, Berkeley, University of California Press 2021, pp. 1-2, 4-5, 11.

Appendix I

Total of the legions levied in the Second Punic War in A.J. TOYNBEE, *Hannibal's Legacy, The Hannibal War's effects on Roman Life, Rome and her Neighbours after Hannibal's exit*, London 1965, p. 647.

Year	Toynbee
218	6
217	11/13
216	17/13
215	14
214	20
213	22
212	25
211	23
210	21
209	21
208	21
207	23
206	20
205	18
204	19
203	20
202	16
201	15

Appendix II

The Roman Army from the Beginning of the Second Punic War to the end of 216

Year	De Sanctis	Connolly
218	6 legions: 1, 2, 3, 4 (Gallia), 5, 6 (Spain)	6 legions: 1 (levied in the preceding year), 2 - levied by Scipio to Gallia), 3, 4 (Longus - Gallia), 5, 6 (Publius Scipius / Cneus Scipio-Spain).
217 before Trasimenus	11 legions: 1, 2 (Gallia), 3, 4 (Etruria), 5, 6 (Spain), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia), 10, 11 (Rome)	13 legions: 1, 2, 12, 13 (Geminus), 5, 6 (Spain - Scipiones), 3, 4, 10, 11 (Flaminius), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia).
217 after Trasimenus	13 legions: 1, 2, 12, 13 (Lucania and Bruttium), 5, 6 (Spain), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia), 10, 11 (Rome). 3+, 4+ (Etruria- destroyed at Trasimene).	13 legions: 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 (Campania/ Apulia - Fabius Maximus and Minucius Rufus), 5, 6 (Spain - Scipiones), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia).
216 before Cannae	17 legions: 5, 6 (Spain), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia), 10+, 11+ (Gallia - destroyed by Celts), 14, 15 (Roma), 1+, 2+, 12+, 13+, (Apulia - destroyed at Cannae)	16/7 legions: 1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 (Aemilius Paulus and Terentio Varro - legions at Cannae), 18, 19 (Gallia under Postumus destroyed by Celts), 20, 21 (Roma - urbanae), 5, 6 (Spain - Scipiones), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia).
216 after Cannae	13 legions: 16, 17 (Roma), 14, 15, C, C, V, V (Campania), 5, 6 (Spain), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia)	15 legions: 5, 6 (Spain - Scipiones), 7, 8 (Sicily), 9 (Sardinia), 22, 23 (Roma - urbanae), 20, 21, V, V, C, C, N (Campania).

C = Legio Cannensis, V = Volones, N = Legio Nautica

The Cannae Legions in Sicily and Africa according to De Sanctis, in A.J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy, The Hannibal War's effects on Roman Life, Rome and her Neighbours after Hannibal's exit*, London 1965, pp. 648-649).

Sicily

215 CC

214 CC

213 CC+16th and 17th

212 CC+16th and 17th

211 CC+16th and 17th

210 CC+16th and 17th

209 CC

208 CC

207 CC

206 CC

205 CC

204 CC/ 39th and 40th

Africa

204 CC

203 CC

202 CC

201 CC

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Archimede prima di essere ucciso da un soldato romano.

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