Eduqas GCSE Latin

Support Materials for
Component 3A:
Latin Literature (Narratives)

Livy,
Hannibal crosses the Alps

For examination in 2026 and 2027

Acknowledgements

HANNIBAL CROSSES THE ALPS

LIVY 21. 1, 4, 22, 28, 32, 35-37

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A note on the use of these resources

The notes and commentaries presented here have been designed to support both teachers in preparing their students for Eduqas GCSE Latin, component 3A, and potentially the students themselves during their initial reading and subsequent revision. The extent to which these notes are made available to the students is left to the individual preference of the teacher: there is no expectation that all or even some of these notes need to be learned by students. The examination requires no knowledge outside the text except when it is needed in order to understand the text.

The notes will provide help with linguistic complexities, which should be of particular assistance to those teachers with limited experience of Latin. Students may also find such notes helpful, though they will not be required to comment in the examination on matters of syntax or grammar, unless they are relevant to the discussion of a particular stylistic feature that the student may choose to comment upon. If an examination asks for discussion of the language of a piece of Latin, there is no expectation that an answer will include comments on syntax, but rather choice of words and word order, along with any wordplay.

The notes will also cover contextual matters, which are considered helpful for the development of a full understanding of Livy's references to people, places and events that he himself does not immediately contextualise.

Finally, the notes will mention important stylistic features, since the examination will test students' ability to handle these in a meaningful way. It is important to point out that there will be no attempt to include every instance of alliteration or other minor stylistic devices; the expectation is that students will be encouraged to identify and evaluate these for themselves as they encounter them during their reading.

The notes for each section will conclude with a series of questions on context and style, which may be used or ignored by the teacher. Their aim is to test the student's understanding and appreciation of what has been read, while at the same time giving practice in handling the sort of questions that will be encountered in the examination.

Livy: his life and works

Titus Livius was born in 59 BC in Northern Italy, and died in AD 17; thus he was a contemporary of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, who reigned from 27 BC until his death in AD 14. In his home town of Patavium he studied philosophy and rhetoric and wrote a number of minor works on these subjects, which have not survived. At the age of about 30 (at a time when Augustus was consolidating his power) he moved to Rome and began writing his only surviving work: A History of Rome, its traditional title in Latin being *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*: 'Books from the Foundation of the City'. Although he may have intended the work to comprise 150 books, ending with the death of Augustus, he had completed only 142 books, ending in 9 BC, when he died. Of these 142 books, only 35 have survived, including books XXI to XXX, which cover the Second Punic War.

Livy appears to have enjoyed the favour of Augustus, despite the fact that his writings show a distinct nostalgia for the past, i.e. the period of history when Rome was a republic. He was even responsible for encouraging the future emperor Claudius to take up the writing of history. Livy also enjoyed a high reputation in Rome and the empire.

Livy's approach to historiography differs from that of most historians today, who generally focus on themes and pursue them from original causes through to final consequences. Livy, on the other hand, adopted the approach of annalists, of whom there had been many in Rome before him on which he could model his work. The annalists dealt with events year by year, which meant they switched from theme to theme. Writing as he did two centuries after the events of the Second Punic War, he had to rely on the writings of previous historians and annalists; unfortunately very few such works survive (the Greek historian Polybius is the notable exception), and Livy hardly ever named his sources; this in turn makes it very difficult for the modern reader to evaluate the reliability of Livy's account. The only hope of doing so is to compare Livy's account with that of Polybius, who appears to have been Livy's main source. What we find is that Livy follows Polybius closely, here and there simplifying accounts and occasionally misinterpreting him.

It is clear from his account that Livy had little knowledge of or interest in warfare: his descriptions of battles are sketchy and unclear. He was equally uninterested in geography and politics. What did interest him was the theme of Rome's rise to greatness through the efforts of men of great character, making his History a patriotic work. He enjoyed rhetoric, as has been seen, and used this to good effect in his writing, especially in the carefully constructed speeches he placed in the mouths of his protagonists. His rhetorical skills are also evident in the periodic structure of his sentences, with often complex but carefully balanced clauses. It may be noted in these extracts that Livy is very fond of using ablatives absolute and gerunds or gerundives: few sentences lack one or other of these. Another favourite usage is his use of neuter plural adjectives as nouns, such as *invia* and *inferiora.*

The section dealing with Hannibal's crossing of the Alps displays a keen desire to make his account dramatic and intense, making the most of the difficulties and how the Carthaginians countered them. Livy's narrative style here makes little use of special effects, relying instead on vivid and picturesque description, which is quite sufficient to make the account interesting and enjoyable to read. At his best, as he generally is in the passages in this prescription, he generates images of almost photographic quality, enabling the reader to picture each episode in realistic detail.

The Punic Wars

The Second Punic War was a pivotal moment in Rome's development from a city-state to the capital of an empire. The war was fought against Carthage, situated on the North African coast on the site of modern Tunis. Carthage was a colonial foundation of the Phoenicians (Latin *Poeni*), whose homeland occupied what is now largely Lebanon, at the opposite end of the Mediterranean Sea. Legend has it (as best learned from Virgil's *Aeneid*) that the city was founded by queen Dido, who had been forced to flee her homeland to save her life. By the 3rd century BC Carthage had developed into the capital of an empire, embracing much of the North African coast, Spain, Corsica, Sardinia and Western Sicily, together with most of the smaller islands between Africa and Europe. Her wealth came from trade and exploration, in both of which she excelled, while her maintenance of power depended on her maritime hegemony. Until the middle of the 3rd century BC, Rome had shown little interest in Carthage's expansion, having no history her own of overseas trade. But in 264 BC Rome allowed herself to become embroiled in a dispute between the town of Messana in NE Sicily and Carthage. Thus began the First Punic War, which lasted from 264 to 241 BC, ending with the destruction of the Carthaginian fleet. Rome, now a successful sea power herself, was in a position to demand the full withdrawal of Carthage from Sicily. Soon afterwards, much of Sicily became the first overseas province of Rome, paying tribute to the new overlords.

In 238 Rome intervened in Carthage's affairs once again, and forced the Punic city to cede the island of Sardinia to her, and by 225 both Sardinia and Corsica had been pacified and were formed into Rome's second overseas province. The loss of Sardinia caused lasting resentment in Carthage, which allowed the rise to power there of the anti-Rome, pro-expansionist faction headed by Hamilcar Barca. He believed that Carthage's long-term interests would be best served by increasing the proportion of Spain under Carthaginian control. Accordingly he sailed across to Spain in 237 BC, accompanied by his son, Hannibal, who was nine years old at the time. After considerable military success, Hamilcar drowned while crossing a river in 228 BC; his place was taken by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, who continued Hamilcar's expansionist policies. In 221 Hasdrubal was assassinated and his place was taken by the now-25-year-old Hannibal. He proceeded to conquer further tracts of Iberian territory, but was resisted by the city of Saguntum, situated half-way along the eastern seaboard. Saguntum had for some years been an ally of Rome; under threat from Hannibal, the city's rulers appealed to Rome, but after several failed attempts by Roman ambassadors to intervene on behalf of their ally, Saguntum was left to its fate, being forced to surrender after a long siege. The fall of Saguntum was the immediate cause of the outbreak of the Second Punic War, which was declared by Rome in 218 BC.

Since Rome now enjoyed naval supremacy, she decided to try to fight the war across the sea in Spain and Africa, while blockading Carthage and preventing her from sending reinforcements to Spain. Hannibal, however, had other ideas: he realised that the only way to defeat Rome was to attack her on her own ground, by invading Italy. Thus began his epic march across the Alps.

The Third Punic War took place in 146 BC, when Rome, groundlessly fearful of a resurgence in Carthaginian power, used an excuse to destroy the entire city of Carthage. When Carthage rose again from the ashes a century later, it was as the capital of a Roman province.

Further reading

Levene, D. S. (2010). *Livy on the Hannibalic War.* Oxford University Press*.* ISBN: 9780198152958

Mineo, Bernard (ed.) (2015). *A Companion to Livy*. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-1-118-30128-9

De Beer, Sir Gavin (1967)*. Hannibal's March*. Sidgwick and Jackson.

Passage A

This is the point where Livy introduces a new major theme: the Second Punic War. He interrupts the narrative to impress upon the reader the historical importance of the War, which he believes eclipsed all previous wars in the dangers it posed and in the consequences it had for the principal powers of the time.

He says that many historians have made the same claim; perhaps he is thinking of the Greek historian, Thucydides, who had made the same claim for the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC).

It is interesting that he claims that the war was 'waged against the Roman people'; naturally enough for a Roman, he sees Carthage as the aggressor rather than Rome. Today unbiased historians see fault on both sides.

'The arts of war', i.e. military weaponry and tactics, had evolved very little in the interval between the end of the First War and the start of the Second.

'Those who had been in danger were those who conquered': an epigrammatic phrase, meaning that Rome was more severely exposed to the risk of conquest and for longer than was Carthage, but still emerged victorious.

'Greater hatred': Rome considered Hannibal's invasion of Italy to be unprovoked aggression, despite the fact that it was technically the Roman envoy, M. Fabius Buteo, who made the declaration of war in Carthage. Conversely Carthage believed that Rome had broken terms of the peace treaty that ended the first war by seizing Sardinia.

'After the campaign in Africa': in 238 BC Hamilcar Barca defeated an uprising of mercenary soldiers who had seized a large slice of territory near Carthage and threatened the city itself. The following year he sailed to Spain with his 9-year-old son, Hannibal.

'Made him swear': this anecdote is generally considered authentic. Livy liked to include anecdotes of a personal nature, because these helped to build a more complete picture of the main characters around whom the history revolved.

Questions

1. What are the reasons for Livy claiming that the 2nd Punic War was so important?

2. Does Livy show any bias towards Rome in this passage?

3. Why do you think Livy includes the episode in lines 15-22?

Passage B

1 missus Hannibal in Hispaniam: the reference is to the request of Hasdrubal for Hannibal to be sent to Spain to gain military experience. Despite political adversaries in Carthage arguing that Hannibal was by nature and birth unsuited to the task, the army and their supporters in Carthage gained their wish. **primo ... adventu:** ablative of time.

2 Hamilcarem iuvenem: either 'that Hamilcar had returned as a young man' or 'that a young Hamilcar had returned'; this suggests that Hannibal very much resembled his father, as Livy goes on to show.

3 veteres milites: i.e. those soldiers who had served under Hamilcar in Spain.

4-5 vigorem, vimque, habitum, lineamenta: these are all objects of *intuebantur*. The *v*- alliteration gives added force to the examples.

5-6 ut pater ... minimum momentum ... esset: a result clause dependent on *effecit*: 'that his father was of minimal importance'. **in se:** 'in his case', i.e. 'in relation to Hannibal'. **ad favorem conciliandum:** 'for winning him favour' or 'in gaining him support' (*ad* + gerundive expresses the purpose of the *momentum*). What Livy means is that Hannibal no longer needed to rely on the fact that he was Hamilcar's son to win the favour of the soldiers.

7-8 numquam ingenium idem ... habilius fuit: 'never was the same nature more suited'. **parendum atque imperandum:** the two gerunds are in apposition to *res diversissimas*, and so are equally dependent on *ad*. Livy means that obeying and giving orders are opposites, and Hannibal was equally competent at both.

9 discerneres: potential subjunctive: 'you would (not easily) decide'.

10 alium quemquam: 'anyone else'.

11-12 ubi quid ... esset: 'whenever anything was'; the subjunctive makes the temporal clause indefinite. **alio duce:** ablative absolute: 'were more confident or daring when anyone else was in command'.

12-14 plurimum audaciae: 'a very great amount of recklessness'; *audaciae* is a partitive genitive, as is the parallel *consilii*. **erat:** supply *ei*: 'there was to him', i.e. 'he had' or 'he possessed'.

15 patientia: supply *erat*, of which *patientia* would be the subject. **caloris ac frigoris:** objective genitives, dependent on *patientia*. **cibi potionisque:** dependent on *modus*.

15-16 modus finitus: supply *erat*: 'the quantity of his food and drink was limited'. **desiderio, voluptate:** instrumental ablatives.

16-17 discriminata tempora: supply *erant*. **vigiliarum somnique:** both are dependent on *tempora*.

17-18 id quod ... superesset: 'whatever (time) was left'; the subjunctive makes the relative clause indefinite. **gerendis rebus:** lit. 'to doing things', i.e. 'to carrying out tasks'; the dative is dependent on *superesset*, but is best translated as 'after carrying out his tasks'. **datum:** supply *erat.*

18-19 ea: i.e. *quies*. **arcessita:** supply *erat*.

19-21 multi ... conspexerunt: supply *eum* as the object, with *iacentem* in agreement. **sagulo:** he wore an ordinary soldier's cloak, rather than something more appropriate to an officer. **humi:** locative case.

21-22: nihil: adverbial: 'in no way'. **excellens:** supply *erat*: 'was superior'. **inter aequales:** lit. 'among his companions', and so 'to that of his companions'.

22 conspiciebantur: 'attracted attention'.

22-23 idem: combined with *-que* it has the effect of 'both ... and'.

23-24 princeps: the opposite of *ultimus*. **conserto proelio:** ablative absolute.

24-25 ingentia vitia: after summarising all Hannibal's positive qualities, of which there were obviously many (*tantas*), Livy now turns to his *vitia*, or negative qualities. Note the alliteration of *v-*, which has the effect of highlighting the combination of virtues and vices, all in one man.

26 plus quam Punica: i.e. more than was considered by the Romans to be normal for the Carthaginians. **nihil veri, nihil sancti:** partitive genitives; *sancti* can be translated here as 'moral goodness'.

27 nullum ius iurandum: lit. 'no swearing of oaths', and so 'no care for an oath sworn'.

28 virtutum atque vitiorum: descriptive genitives defining *indole. **triennio:** 'for three years' (ablative of duration of time, more usually accusative).

29 meruit: he would have served as a junior officer, in the same way as a young Roman nobleman would serve as a tribune in order to gain experience of army life and discipline.

29-30 nulla re ... praetermissa: lit. 'with nothing omitted' (ablative absolute). **quae agenda videndaque ... esset:** 'which needed to be done and seen' (gerundives of obligation). **magno futuro duci:** dative of the agent: 'by one destined to be a great leader'.

Discussion

Livy devotes a large section to describing the early career and character of Hannibal. His intention is to make clear to the reader just how powerful and charismatic a leader Hannibal was, justifying his status as probably the single most dangerous enemy ever encountered by Rome. He is also preparing the ground for explaining the series of major defeats he inflicted on the Roman armies sent against him. His positive qualities are well illustrated and his vices merely summarised with no examples. The rest of our passages shed little light on Hannibal either as a man or as a leader, as the narrative focuses on the difficulties encountered in crossing the Alps.

Questions

1. Based on this passage, what sort of man would you say Hannibal was?

2. Which of the qualities listed in the passage would have made Hannibal popular among his men?

3. How does the list of negative qualities differ from the list of positive ones?

Passage C

The Romans firmly believed in the significance of dreams, which they regarded in a similar way to divination and portents, as a clear indicator of the future. The difference between dreams and the other indicators was that the former clothed the supposed future in more detail. Like other Roman historians, Livy treated all forms of future-guessing as historical events, to be recounted in detail.

'With natural human curiosity … he was unable to control his eyes': Livy was a keen observer of human nature.

Questions

1. Do you think this episode is appropriate for inclusion in a historical work?

2. What effect do you think this dream would have had on Hannibal?

Passage D

'I believe': these words suggest that Livy has found different versions in his various sources and, as he goes on to say, he puts together what he thinks is the most likely version, without ever justifying his conclusion.

'Elephants': it is believed that there were 37 of these.

'Different accounts … One account': Livy often hints at his use of written sources, but hardly ever names them. The fact that the two possible methods that Livy describes are so different from one another indicates that there were no reliable eye-witnesses to these events that Roman historians had access to - hardly surprising when it is realised that any such witnesses would have been enemies of Rome and speaking a foreign language.

'It is more generally agreed': again Livy's treatment of his sources is unspecific, making it impossible for us to evaluate his judgement.

'Rafts': these would have been made of logs from felled trees, lashed together with ropes. With so many men at his disposal, Hannibal would have been able to have these constructed very quickly.

'This would seem to be the safer option and easier to believe' - tenuous reasons believing one particular version.

'Led by the females': this is normal elephant behaviour.

'Their terror itself quietened them': Livy implausibly attempts some animal psychology.

Questions

1. How does Livy make this account of the transportation of the elephants across the Rhone interesting?

2. How believable do you think this account is?

Passage E

1 Hannibal: Hannibal has now successfully reached the foothills of the Alps, on his way to Italy, by-passing the Roman army commanded by Cornelius Scipio with no more than a cavalry skirmish. He has been given help by local Gallic tribesmen. **maxime:** its position indicates that *maxime* qualifies *campestri itinere*: the terrain through which he marched was mostly flat. **ad Alpes:** to be taken with *pervenit* rather than *itinere*.

1-2 cum bona pace incolarum: lit. 'with good peace of the inhabitants', and so perhaps 'with peace well maintained by the inhabitants' or 'with no opposition from the inhabitants'. **ea loca:** dependent on *incolarum* as if the latter were a verb meaning 'inhabiting'.

2-4 tum: the order for translation is *tum, quamquam res prius praecepta erat fama, qua incerta solent ferri in maius vero*. Thus *fama* is ablative of instrument, dependent on *praecepta erat*; *qua*, referring to *fama*, is similarly instrumental ablative dependent on *ferri*; *incerta* is nominative neuter plural, subject of *solent*. **incerta:** 'uncertain things', and so perhaps 'uncertain dangers'. **in maius vero ferri:** lit. 'to be taken into (something) greater than the truth', and so 'to be exaggerated'. **res:** 'the reality' (the subject of *praecepta erat*).

4-9 visa ... altitudo: this nominative phrase, along with all the following ones, is the subject of *terrorem renovaverunt* (line 9). **nivesque caelo prope immixtae:** 'snows almost merging with the sky'; *caelo* is dative dependent on the compound verb. **rupibus:** similarly dative dependent on the compound verb *imposita*. **torrida:** an interesting use of the word, as it is usually used to show the effect of heat; combined with *frigore*, it forms a sort of oxymoron. **frigore:** causal ablative, dependent on *torrida*. **intonsi:** in Livy's day most male citizens shaved; an unshaven man was therefore considered uncouth. **animalia inanimaque:** a good play on words, as both words derive from *anima*, 'life'. **cetera:** 'everything else'. **visu quam dictu foediora:** lit. 'more dreadful in seeing than in telling', and so 'more dreadful to see than to speak of'; *visu* and *dictu* are rare so-called second supines, i.e. verbal nouns in the ablative case, being ablatives of respect. Note the vivid use of colourful words and phrasing, and the way the long sentence steadily builds to a climax.

9-11 erigentibus ... agmen: lit. 'to those leading the army up'; the dative is dependent on *apparuerunt*. **in primos ... clivos:** 'to the first slopes', i.e. the foothills of the Alps. **imminentes:** 'looking over them', agreeing probably with *tumulos* rather than *montani*, though it would make sense taken with either noun. **tumulos:** direct object of *insidentes*. Note the hyperbaton (mixed-up word order), with *agmen* interrupting the phrase *in primos clivos*; also to be noted is the general word order: indirect object - direct object - verb - parenthesis - subject; the effect is to generate suspense, as the reader does not know until the very end who is responsible for the threat.

11-13 si ... insedissent ... dedissent: a past unfulfilled condition. **valles occultiores:** direct object of *insedissent*, paralleling *tumulos insidentes.* In effect, *imminentes tumulos* and *valles occultiores* are opposites: very obvious heights and more hidden valleys; probably Livy uses the same verb with both to highlight the contrast. **repente:** best taken with *coorti*. **dedissent:** 'would have caused'. Livy suggests that, although the mountain-dwellers appeared threatening, by making themselves visible they actually reduced the threat they offered to the Carthaginians.

Discussion

Here Livy makes the most of the impact of the Alpine environment on the Carthaginians. Whether from actual sources or his own imagination, he paints a graphic picture of the wildness of an Alpine winter and all its dangers, whether real or perceived. He indulges in a little realistic psychology when he suggests that the reality outdoes expectations. Although much of this passage is written in the form of a list, he avoids monotony through the vividness of his descriptions and his use of word order.

Questions

1. How do the first two lines contrast with those that follow?

2. How does Livy make this a graphic account of the Carthaginians' journey?

Passage F

1 nono die: we have to assume that Livy means the ninth day since Hannibal began the ascent of the Alps. **iugum:** i.e. the summit of the pass. **per invia:** i.e. through terrain without established paths; *invia* is neuter plural used as a noun (it can be imagined to agree with *loca*).

2 (per) errores: 'though errors', i.e. 'after deviating from the route'. **qui:** the relative pronoun (antecedent *errores*) introduces two possible causes of the *errores*. **ducentium fraudem:** 'the deception of their guides' (subjective genitive); local tribesmen were acting as guides for the crossing of the Alps but had proved unreliable.

3 ubi fides iis non esset: lit. 'whenever there was no trust for them', i.e. 'whenever they did not trust them'. **valles intrabant:** valleys would appear more inviting than steep mountainsides, but they often turned out to have no egress. **temere:** 'without due care' because they did not send scouts into the side-valleys to determine their usefulness.

4-5 labore ac pugnando: causal ablatives. **data:** supply *est*. **fessis:** qualifies *militibus.*

5-7 iumenta: the animals that carried the army's equipment, probably mostly mules. **sequendo:** 'by following'.

7-8 fessis: the indirect object of *adiecit*. **taedio:** ablative giving the cause of the soldiers' tiredness: 'from the exhaustion. **tot malorum:** descriptive genitive, dependent on *taedio.* **nivis ... casus:** 'a fall of snow'.

9-11 per omnia nive oppleta: 'through everything filled with snow', i.e. 'across ground completely covered with snow'. **cum:** 'when', introducing *incederet*; these words needs to be translated first in the sentence*.* **signis ... motis:** ablative absolute: lit. 'with the standards having been moved'; the phrase is a military expression, meaning 'when the camp was broken'.

11-13 praegressus signa: 'advancing ahead of the standards.

13 iussis militibus: either an ablative absolute or the indirect object of *ostentat*. **ostentat:** this is the frequentative form of *ostendit*, and implies time and effort given to the display: perhaps 'carefully pointed out'; also, this is an historic present (the first appearance of one in these extracts), used to add dramatic significance to the verb.

14 Alpinis montibus: dative dependent on the compound participle *subiectos*. **Circumpadanos campos:** 'the plains lying along both sides of the Po'; the river Po flows from West to East across most of Northern Italy.

15-16 eos tum transcendere: indirect statement dependent on a verb to be supplied, such as *dicens* or *affirmans*; the present infinitive is used instead of the more natural future to indicate that the conquest of Italy was not just a vague future ambition but was already happening. **moenia:** used here in two senses: the first is 'the ramparts of Italy', i.e. the Alps, which defended the whole country against invaders; the second is 'the city walls of Rome'. **urbis Romanae:** an alternative to *urbis Romae.*

16 cetera plana, proclivia fore: this continues the indirect statement dependent on a supplied verb of saying: '(he said that) the rest (of their route) would be level (or) downhill'. **fore:** future infinitive of *sum*, and alternative to *futura esse.* Note the asyndeton, linking the two adjectives more closely.

16-18 uno ... proelio: instrumental ablative. **habituros:** supply *eos* and *esse* to complete the continuing indirect statement. **arcem et caput Italiae:** i.e. Rome; an *arx* was literally a citadel, i.e. the central, most highly defended part of a city, usually on the top of a hill; here it is used figuratively, indicating that Rome was the central, most highly defended part of Italy; by calling Rome the 'capital of Italy', Hannibal assumes correctly that Rome was in control of the whole of the peninsula. **in manu:** lit. 'in hand', and so 'in their possession'.

18-20 nihil ne hostibus quidem ... temptantibus: ablative absolute: lit. 'with even the enemy not attempting anything'. **ne ... quidem:** 'not even'. **hostibus:** the local Gallic tribesmen, who had been pestering the Carthaginian army all the way across the Alps. **parva furta:** 'small-scale surprise raids'. **per occasionem:** 'as the opportunity arose'.

20-22 ceterum: 'but'. The order for translation is *ceterum iter fuit multo difficilius quam in ascensu fuerat*. **iter:** i.e. the way down from the summit of the pass. **ut:** 'as', with the indicative *sunt*; the present is used because the description continues to be true throughout time. **ab Italia:** 'on the Italian side'. **sicut ... ita:** 'just as ... so', and so 'proportionately', the notion being that because the route down was shorter, it was also proportionately steeper.

23-25 ut: introduces a result clause. **neque ... nec:** 'neither ... nor'. **possent:** the subject is the soldiers. **qui:** contracted for *ei qui*. **haerere:** dependent on *possent*. **adflicti:** 'once thrown down'. **vestigio suo:** dative dependent on *haerere*: lit. 'to keep to their footprints', and so 'to keep their footing'.

25-26 aliique super alios occiderunt: 'men fell on top of each other'. **in homines:** an alternative to *super homines*, to give variety to the expression (a stylistic device called *variatio*). **occiderent:** to be translated twice.

Discussion

Livy covers the ascent of the Alps in a single sentence, preferring to concentrate on the difficulties of the descent, which were far greater. Hannibal makes a solitary appearance, in which he attempts to strengthen the will of his men; any resulting enthusiasm for their quest proved short-lived in the face of the horrors of the descent.

Questions

1. To what extent do you think Livy shows a sound geographical knowledge of the route taken by Hannibal or the problems he encountered?

2. How effectively does Livy describe the difficulties of the journey across the Alps?

3. How did Hannibal try to encourage his men?

4. In what way did he mislead them?

Hannibal's Journey across the Alps, 218 BCE

Passage G

'A much narrower cliff': the Latin word *rupes*, which means 'cliff', must have a less usual meaning of 'cliff path' if we are to make sense of Livy's account here; he apparently thinks of the path as running more-or-less straight down the cliff face. By 'narrower' he must mean that the path was narrower than the one they been following up to that point.

'A recent landslide': it is far from clear exactly what Livy has in mind here; we have to assume that the path itself had been torn away by the landslide.

'Found the going easy': walking on untrodden snow is easier than walking on snow that has been compacted into ice or turned to slush.

Questions

1. How clear do you find Livy's description of the terrain?

2. Does Livy give a clear description of the hazards encountered by the Carthaginian army?

3. What makes this an interesting account?

Passage H

1 nequiquam: to be taken with *fatigatis*, which forms an ablative absolute: 'when (they) had been worn out to no purpose'.

2 castra posita: supply *sunt*. **in iugo:** 'on a ridge'; whether this is one they had already traversed or a different one cannot be determined; but a ridge would be more likely to provide some level ground, needed for an encampment, than a steep valley. **ad id ipsum:** 'for that very purpose', i.e. for pitching a camp. **loco ... purgato:** ablative absolute.

3 tantum nivis: 'so much snow'; *nivis* is a partitive genitive, common after neuter adjectives of quantity. **fodiendum, egerendum:** gerundives of obligation: 'needed to be...' or 'had to be...'.

3-5 milites ducti: *milites* is the subject of the verbs *faciunt*, *succendunt* and *putrefaciunt*, with a fourth verb, *ducti*, reduced to a participle; therefore *milites* must be translated first. **ad rupem muniendam:** this is the purpose for which the soldiers were *ducti*; the *rupes* is the same one they had already failed to descend. The soldiers' task was to excavate, reinforce and stabilise the pathway down the cliff. **per quam unam:** 'along which alone'; after scrabbling about unsuccessfully on nearby terrain, Hannibal had realised that the cliff, despite its landfall, provided the only possible way down.

5 saxum: i.e. the rock of the cliff face needed cutting back, to provide a wide enough ledge for the troops and animals to walk on safely. **caedendum:** gerundive of obligation.

5-6 arboribus ... deiectis detruncatisque: two ablatives absolute. **detruncatis:** the branches of the trees had to be cut off to provide the kindling.

7-9 eamque: i.e. the pile of branches; it is the object of *succendunt*. **cum et:** 'when also', or simply 'and when' or 'and since'. **vis venti apta:** 'a suitable force of the wind', and so 'a wind strong enough to be suitable'. **faciendo igni:** 'for lighting a fire'. **ardentia saxa:** i.e. when the rocks of the cliff face were red-hot. **infuso aceto:** ablative absolute; the vinegar was probably sour wine, carried in goatskin flasks; possibly the idea was that, being acidic, it would help to dissolve the limestone of the cliff. Alternatively, there is the simpler possibility that it had been discovered that pouring cold water on hot rock would make it shatter; on this occasion it would make more sense to use undrinkable wine than fresh water; both would have been equally cold and effective.

9-11 torridam ... rupem: the heat of the fire dried out the rock of the cliff; probably what Livy is referring to is the practice of alternating heat and cold liquid to speed up the disintegration of the rock. **incendio:** causal ablative. **ferro pandunt:** 'they open it (*rupem*) with iron', i.e. they opened up a pathway using iron tools. **molliuntque ... clivos:** i.e. they reduced the angle of descent down the slope. **anfractibus modicis:** 'with moderate (i.e. gently sloping) zigzags', a standard way of making steep slopes negotiable. **ut:** introduces a purpose clause.

12-13 consumptum: supply *est*. **iumentis ... absumptis:** ablative absolute. **prope fame:** 'almost (worn out) through hunger'.

13-14 sunt: present because they still were in Livy's day. **si quid est pabuli:** 'if there is any pasture'; *pabuli* is partitive genitive.

14-16 inferiora: 'the lower slopes' (subject of *habent*). **apricos ... colles:** at higher altitudes, low peaks would have been in the shadow of taller ones. **rivosque prope silvas:** 'and streams running by woodland'. **et iam:** 'and by this point'. **loca:** another object of *habent*. **humano cultu:** '(suitable) for human cultivation'; *dignus* takes an ablative.

16-17 missa: supply *sunt* (as also with *data*); here Livy returns to the events of the march. **muniendo:** 'by the road-construction' (ablative of cause, explaining *fessis*).

17-19 triduo: 'over the course of three days'. **et iam locis mollioribus et incolarum ingeniis:** 'where both the places and the characters of the inhabitants were now gentler'; probably an ablative absolute, rather than a dative of goal of motion (which would be a poetic usage).

Discussion

The method used by the Carthaginians to fracture the cliff face is probably correctly described by Livy, despite ridicule being directed at it by some commentators. The use of alternating heat and cold water was well known in the ancient world, and there is evidence that at certain times in history vinegar was seen as an improvement on water. The use of the word *anfractibus* gives a realistic image of the method of descent. To have made the pathway wide enough for the elephants to descend safely was a superb achievement. The abrupt switch from describing the brutal problems of the higher altitudes to the almost idyllic rural properties of the *inferiora* provides an effectively contrasted coda.

Questions

1. How does Livy emphasise the difficulties encountered by the Carthaginians?

2. How did the Carthaginians manage to descend the cliff? Answer in your own words.

3. How effective is the contrast between lines 1-14 and 14-19?

Bust of Hannibal

The Carthaginian army crossing the Alps