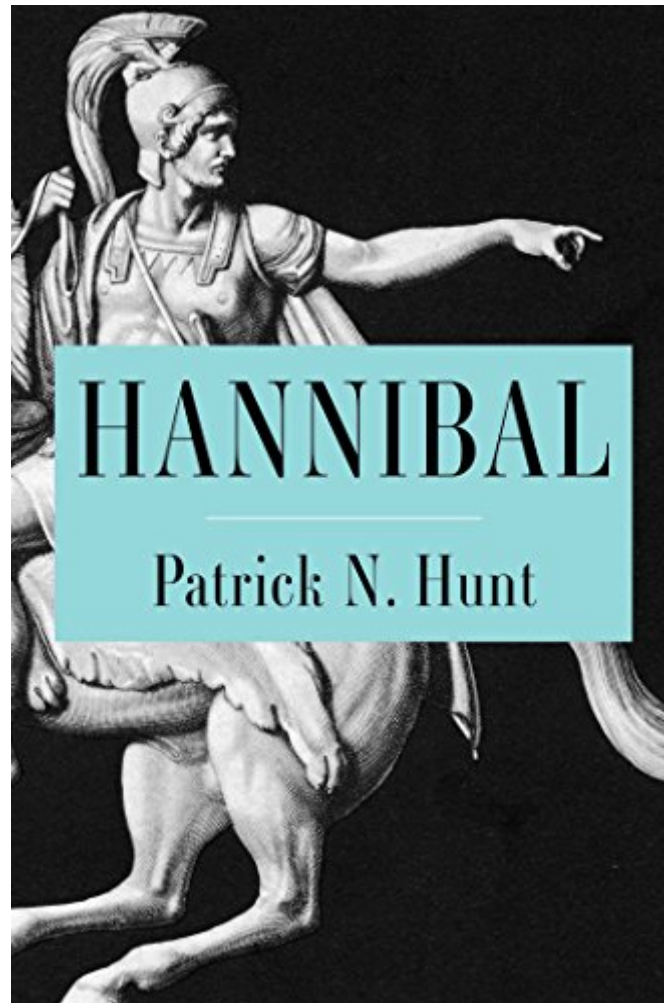




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# Hannibal



## Synopsis

One of the greatest commanders of the ancient world brought vividly to life: Hannibal, the brilliant general who successfully crossed the Alps with his war elephants and brought Rome to its knees. Hannibal Barca of Carthage, born 247 BC, was one of the great generals of the ancient world. His father, Hamilcar, was also a great strategist and master tactician who imposed Carthaginian rule over much of present-day Spain. After Hamilcar led the Carthaginian forces against Rome in the First Punic War, Hannibal followed in his father's footsteps, leading Carthage in the Second Punic War. From the time he was a teenager, Hannibal fought against Rome. He is famed for leading Carthage's army across north Africa, into Spain, along the Mediterranean coast, and then crossing the Alps with his army and war elephants. Hannibal won victories in northern Italy by outmaneuvering his Roman adversaries and defeated a larger Roman army at the battle of Cannae in 216 BC. Unable to force Rome to capitulate, he was eventually forced to leave Italy and return to Carthage when a savvy Roman general named Scipio invaded north Africa. Hannibal and Scipio fought an epic battle at Zama, which Hannibal lost. The terms of surrender were harsh and many Carthaginians blamed Hannibal, eventually forcing him into exile until his death. To this day Hannibal is still regarded as a military genius. Napoleon, George Patton, and Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr. are only some of the generals who studied and admired him. His strategy and tactics are still taught in military academies. He is one of the figures of the ancient world whose life and exploits never fail to impress. Historian Patrick N. Hunt has led archeological expeditions in the Alps and elsewhere to study Hannibal's achievements. Now he brings Hannibal's incredible story to life in this riveting and dramatic book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Great read full of memorable historical detail

Hannibal was the first general to defeat the forces of Rome, and Hunt is the man qualified to tell us about it. I read my copy free and early thanks to Net Galley and Simon and Schuster. This book becomes available to the public July 11, 2017. Early history has never been my area of concentration, but since retirement, I push myself out of my usual comfort zone, often to excellent result. This time it proved to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Hunt is unquestionably qualified to discuss this topic. He is an historian of renown and has dedicated years to the study of Hannibal, even embarking on an expedition across the Alps in order to see what Hannibal experienced—or the closest proximity to it in modern times. On the other hand, I confess I was in it for two things: military strategy and history, which does interest me, and of course, the elephants. Imagine riding into battle on the back of an elephant. Not only is an elephant massive, it is also impervious to most of the weaponry available at this time. Spears and javelins would just bounce off its hide. War elephants had their tusks sharpened, and being charged by such a force had to be terrifying. And in reading this history it occurred to me that Hannibal's men would have been bemused indeed if they had known that elephants would be regarded by many of us, in future days, with great sentimentality. They would never have believed the elephant might become endangered. Who could kill elephants? But these are my musings, not Hunt's. Hunt is meticulous in demonstrating what Hannibal did and why he did it. He starts with his family background, in particular that he was the son of the great general Hamilcar, who took him to a temple, made him stand at the altar where the live sacrifice had been made, and swear lifelong hatred of Rome, whose government and military made war against Carthage and caused a lot of suffering. Hunt carefully separates what actually happened, from what probably happened, from what maybe happened, but the speculative language—“may have, would have, almost

certainly slows me down, because each time the narrative picks up and I immerse myself in the text, I see the modifiers and draw back. I go back and reread in order to find out what is actually known, mentally removing all of the guesses and educated guesses, and then I am left with what is known. And although I appreciate that there are not vast treasure-troves of primary documents sitting around for Hunt to access, given the antiquity of the subject, I wish there were some way to read only the known facts. At the 70% mark I became frustrated and bailed. Hunt quotes often from Livy and Polybius, both of whom I read many years ago as an undergraduate, and which still grace my shelves. My initial impression was that it might be more useful to go dig up those books, reread them, and give this one a miss. However, what Hunt does is sift through their information and provide an analysis that is deeper and more objective than theirs. Livy was, after all, a Roman; he is renowned as a scholar, but not necessarily objective. And so those that have a serious interest in the history of Northern Africa and/or Southern Europe, or an interest in military history, can count this as a strong title to add to their historical libraries. To put it another way, what it lacks in terms of easy flowing narrative, it makes up for in accuracy and analysis. Recommended to those that have a serious interest in world history or military history.

Barca not Lecter. 56 years ago, I was in high school Latin class. Along with the language came a dose of history. One mention was of Hannibal, who crossed the Alps with a herd of elephants and his army to invade Italy. Much more was made of the powerful Roman armies in these classes, their conquests, their victories. This book provides a fascinating account of Hannibal Barca, from Carthage, who did indeed invade Italy. As I had an advanced copy there were a few editorial slips but nothing to detract from the account. I was impressed by the tactics of Hannibal. Apparently so were the Romans, for after Hannibal decimated their armies, killing tens of thousands in battle, the Romans began to copy his strategy. At that point, the Romans began to win some decisive battles. This is not a war story, although the chronology provides for a rich historical accounting of the Barca family, including Hannibal's father and brothers, their conquest of Spain with the riches of the silver mines on the Iberian Peninsula, the thinking and reason behind Hannibal's decision to invade Italy. Details of the Punic wars are outlined, the cause and the casualties. Small wonder that many noted Generals from recent history study Hannibal's tactics. Even to this very day he is studied by our nation's top military leaders, and no doubt other nations' militaries. This is not a book for a casual reading experience, but rather a comprehensive outline of perhaps one of the greatest military leaders of all time, certainly in the same category as Alexander the Great or Genghis Kahn, and others come to mind. The book is full

of strange places, though they exist today by different names. An abundance of unfamiliar individual names and even tribes from the time. Celtiberian was a new (to me) group of people, as just one example. I think at times the book was overly detailed with the numerous Roman names becoming a mental jumble. I can't speak for everyone with an interest in this type of history, but I consider this book a gem presenting a wealth of knowledge. Considering the lack of written and recorded documents the research put into and the resultant book is in my opinion outstanding, and easily a five-star historical tome.

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