

## “Hannibal the Historian at Ticinus and Cannae”

This paper offers an analysis of Hannibal’s battlefield speeches in Polybius’ *Histories* and argues that the methods through which Polybius characterizes Hannibal as an internal narrator mark the Carthaginian as an ideal *pragmatikos* figure. He is capable of ascertaining and communicating the historical truth from a situation in a “Polybian” fashion. In so doing, I build upon the well known scholarship that notes that the didactic quality of Polybius’ historical narrative is at the center of his thought and overall design (Walbank 1972 and 2002; Sacks 1981; Marincola 2001: 125-40; Foulon 2001; Thornton 2013). I also engage with recent scholarship on Polybian narratology, in which critics analyze internal audiences (Davidson 1991) and the intrusive role that the historian himself plays in his overt comments regarding this historiographic didacticism (Rood in de Jong et al. 2004: 147-64; Pausch 2010). Scholars have also amply discussed the speeches of the *Histories* in general (e.g. Pédech 1964: 254-302; Champion 1997 and 2000; Rumpf 2006; Usher 2009). Apart from Wiater’s (2010) recent chapter on the speeches as functional elements of Polybius’ narrative, however, the historian’s use of secondary narrators as exemplars or teachers of pragmatic history remains largely unexplored.

I begin with a brief survey of the role of *opsis* and autopsy in Polybius’ own construction of authority as a historian and suggest that Polybius relies on the language of spectacle in the *Histories* to evoke in the mind of the reader a clear image of the events described in order to accomplish its didactic aims (e.g. 1.1.2-4, 1.4.1-2, 1.35.17, or his well-known attack of Timaeus in 12.25g.1-4). Polybius guides his audience to understand the past and subsequently to learn by directing their gaze through his narrative. I then argue that Polybius creates a similar aura of visual expression within his depiction of Hannibal throughout the general’s campaign in Italy. The historian portrays the Carthaginian as an ideal student of history, who comes to recognize the truth through autopsy. Hannibal subsequently demonstrates his ability to manipulate others by controlling their *opsis*, as he does with his use of visual signals for his troops (3.43), or his manipulation of his own physical appearance (3.78), or how he employs visual deception at Trasimene (3.84). As Polybius concentrates these two skills—the identification of fact through visual recognition and the subsequent management of others’ sight—in his depiction of Hannibal, he makes his role as external historian and that of the Carthaginian general, *qua* internal narrator, parallel to each other.

I conclude by drawing together the elements of controlled *opsis* and historical didacticism in an analysis of the battlefield speeches of Hannibal at Ticinus (3.62-3) and Cannae (3.111). As a secondary narrator, Hannibal shows how he comes to recognize the action needed in a given situation and conveys these facts to his army-audience, effectively mirroring the function that Polybius constructs for himself as external historian. Furthermore, Hannibal first creates highly visualized spectacles (*paradeigmata*), such as the combat between Gallic captives (3.62), to encourage his troops to action but later shows how their own practical experience (*erga*) can fulfill this role in his speech before Cannae (3.111). As the roles of these primary and secondary narrators converge through these speeches and their associated displays, Polybius weaves into the larger narrative of the *Histories* a depiction of an internal audience—the Carthaginian army as led by the internal narrator-historian Hannibal—progressing through the same didactic process he envisions for his readers. Just as Polybius followed Hannibal’s footsteps through the Alps, the student of Polybian history is meant to follow the path of the Carthaginian army in the development of his or her own historical knowledge and understanding.

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