

HIST 30103 Ancient Historians
Paper 2 • 1000 words
Due March 21 by 5 pm

A key problem for ancient historians is understanding how later sources can reinterpret earlier historians, and how this affects our understanding of events. Unfortunately we rarely have both an original historian and the later adaption for comparison. An exception is Livy's account of the 2nd Punic War, which is largely based on Polybius.

For this assignment you are going to examine how Livy has adapted a passage of Polybius dealing with the defeat of Minucius and his rescue by Fabius. Both texts are included below, with the individual sentences numbered for easy reference. Explain what Livy has changed, and what he is trying to accomplish or show with these changes. Some items you may wish to consider:

- Does Livy add or remove details that Polybius has included? How does that affect the narrative?
- How are the three generals (Hannibal, Fabius, and Minucius) portrayed differently?
- How do the two authors apportion credit or blame differently?
- What details does Livy embellish, and how does that affect his account?
- How does Livy use dialogue?

You should not worry about historical accuracy - this assignment is about better understanding ancient historians and how they work. Avoid being judgmental and remember that ancient historians have different standards than modern historians. Quote sparingly, when you want to illustrate something very specific. Otherwise, paraphrase or summarize. In either case, provide a citation to the sentence you refer to parenthetically: (Livy 5) (Polybius 2). You are to limit your analysis to the texts of Polybius and Livy – DO NOT look at modern scholarship or any other sources including AI. I want to read what you have to say, not what someone else has to say. Looking at or using outside sources will result in an automatic F on the assignment.

Use Times New Roman or a similar serif font, double-spaced, with 1" margins all around. Don't forget to put a page number at the bottom of each page. Papers are due on March 21 by 5 pm. Upload your paper as a .doc, .docx, .pdf, or .rtf attachment on Blackboard. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergencies.

Polybius on the defeat of Minucius

- 1.** In order to prevent their being spotted by Roman foragers leaving their camp in the morning, at first light Hannibal had his mobile troops occupy the hill.
- 2.** When Minucius saw this, he thought it was his lucky day. He sent his light-armed troops out straight away, with orders to engage the enemy and contest possession of the hill, and then the cavalry, and, bringing up the rear, he next personally led out the heavy infantry in close formation. These had been his tactics on the previous occasion, and he did the same again.
- 3.** It was not long after dawn, and all minds and eyes had been drawn to the engagement on the hill. No one suspected that there were men in hiding, waiting to spring a trap. Hannibal kept sending out reinforcements to the men on the hill, and then came up himself with the cavalry and the bulk of his army.
- 4.** Before long the cavalry contingents of both sides became engaged, and then the Roman light-armed troops were forced into retreat by the numbers of the Carthaginian cavalry. As they fled, they disrupted the ranks of the heavy infantry, and just then the signal was given to the ambushers. They appeared from all sides and fell on the enemy, and then it was not just the light infantry that was in trouble: the entire Roman army was in grave danger.
- 5.** Fabius could see what was happening. It looked to his horror as though the Carthaginians might win an outright victory, so at this juncture he took to the field with his forces and sped over to the rescue. His approach inspired the Romans with fresh courage and even though there was nothing left of their original formation, they rallied around the standards and began to retreat and fall back under Fabius' protection.
- 6.** Large numbers of the light-armed troops had been killed, and even more legionaries, including many of their best men. But the freshness and discipline of the Roman reinforcements alarmed Hannibal, and he called off the pursuit and brought the battle to an end.

Livy on the defeat of Minucius

1. In order that, however, the movement of anyone who might carelessly step out or the glint of arms should not betray the ruse in a valley so bare and open, Hannibal dispatched a small party at dawn to seize the hill already mentioned and draw off the enemy's attention.
2. The Romans no sooner spotted them than they laughed at their small numbers, and everybody asked to be assigned the duty of dislodging the Carthaginians and capturing the place.
3. Their general Minucius, himself as fatuous and rash as anyone, called the men to arms and railed at the enemy with idle threats. First he ordered out the light infantry; then he sent the cavalry off in a solid column; finally, when he saw that the enemy too were bringing up supports, he set forth with his legions in battle array.
3. Hannibal likewise, as the struggle grew fiercer and his men were being defeated, sent in reinforcement after reinforcement, horse and foot, until he had a regular army in the field, and both sides were engaged with all their forces. The Roman light infantry, as they were advancing from the lower ground on to the height which the enemy had already occupied, was the first to suffer a repulse, and as they were driven downhill, caused a panic among the cavalry, which was coming up behind them, and fled to the standards of the legions.
4. The legions alone maintained their line undaunted, when all the rest were in full flight, and it looked as if, had the battle been a regular front-to-front engagement, they would have proved fully equal to their enemy—so encouraged had they been by the successful action a few days before.
5. But the men in ambush, suddenly springing out and charging them on both flanks and in the rear, worked such havoc and alarm that not one of them had any courage left for fighting or any hope in flight.
6. "There it is," said Fabius, when first the cries of the frightened soldiers were heard, and then the confusion in the distant battle-line became discernible; "misfortune has overtaken rashness as quickly as I feared. Though made equal to Fabius in authority, Minucius finds Hannibal his superior, both in courage and in fortune. But another time will do for upbraiding and resentment; for the present, march out from your trenches, and let us wrest from the enemy his victory and from our fellow citizens a confession of their blunder."
7. By this time large numbers of the Romans had either been slain or were casting about for a way to escape, when suddenly Fabius and his army appeared, as though they had come down from heaven to help them; and before they got within a javelin's range or struck a blow, had checked both the headlong flight of the Romans and the reckless fury of the enemy's attack.
8. Those who had quitted their ranks and dispersed this way and that came running up on every side to the unbroken line; those who had retreated in a body faced about to meet the enemy and, forming a circle, at first slowly retreated, but presently, being more compactly drawn together, stood their ground.
9. And now the beaten army and the fresh one had pretty much united into a single line and were ready to advance against the enemy, when Hannibal sounded the recall, declaring openly that he had beaten Minucius, but that Fabius had beaten him.