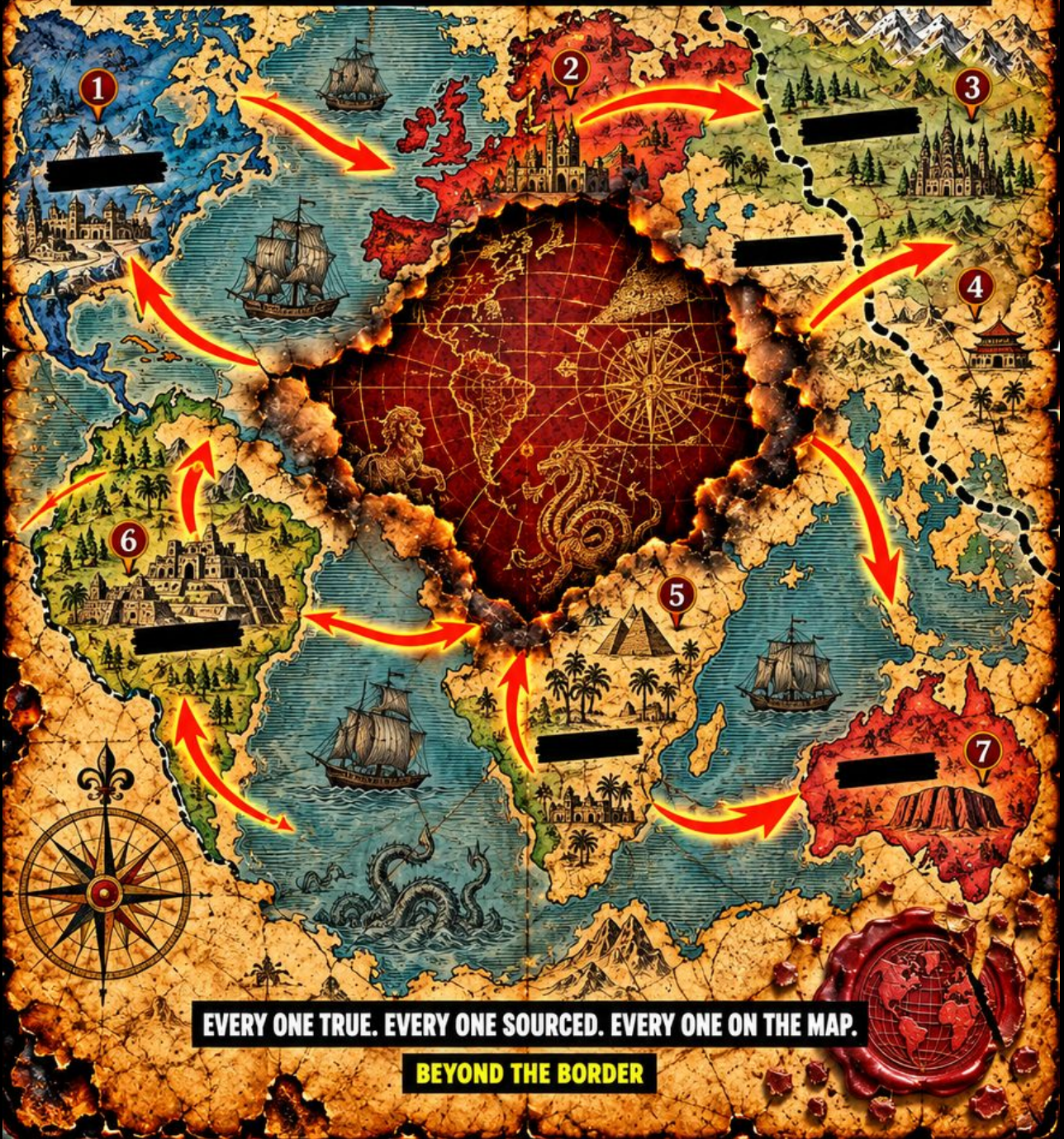


50

HIDDEN TRUTHS

HISTORY WANTS YOU TO FORGET

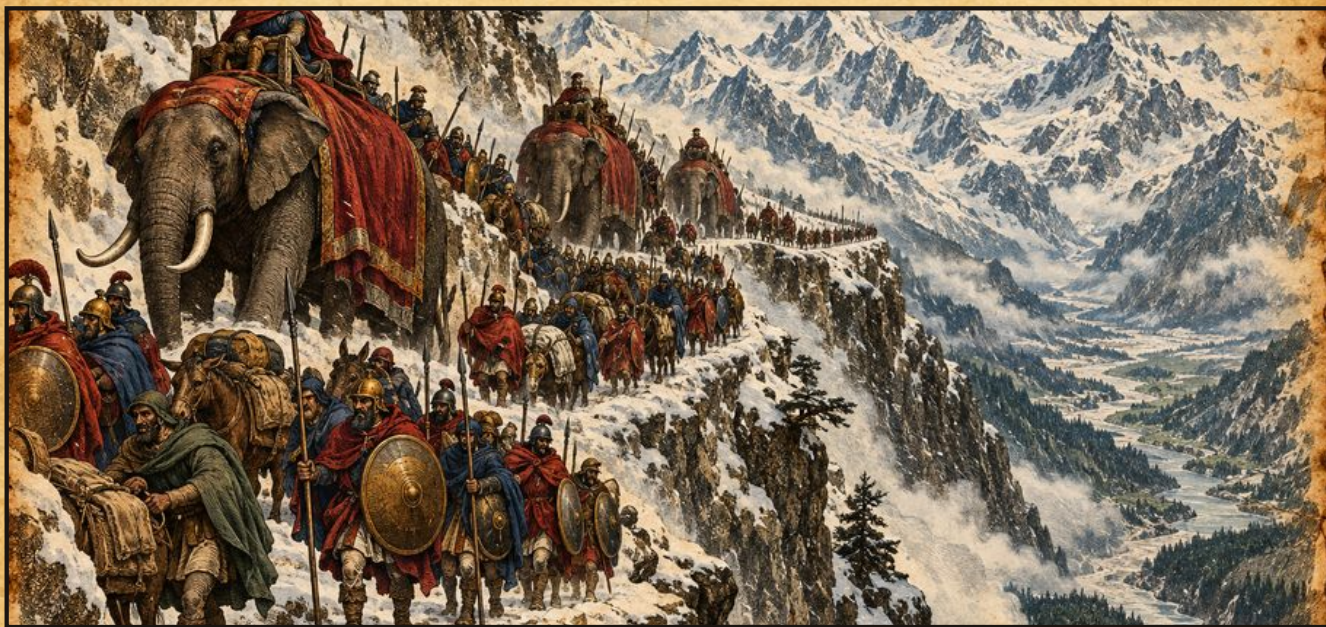


EVERY ONE TRUE. EVERY ONE SOURCED. EVERY ONE ON THE MAP.

BEYOND THE BORDER

HE WON EVERY BATTLE.

HE LOST THE WAR.



Autumn, 218 BC. Hannibal's army on the pass. Which pass is still not known.

WHAT YOU WERE TOLD

Hannibal marched elephants over the Alps, crushed Rome's armies, and is remembered as one of the greatest generals who ever lived. The story usually stops at his greatest victory.

WHAT IS LEFT OUT

He never lost a major battle in Italy in fifteen years. He destroyed three Roman armies in twenty months. And none of it mattered. Rome refused to make peace, raised new legions faster than he could kill them, and won the war without ever beating him on Italian soil. **The greatest winning streak in ancient warfare ended in total defeat.**



HANNIBAL BARCA, 247 TO ABOUT 183 BC

WHAT HAPPENED

In the spring of 218 BC Hannibal left New Carthage, in Spain, and walked to Italy, because Rome ruled the sea. The Greek historian Polybius gives him 90,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry at the start. By the Pyrenees he had 59,000 men. By the Rhone, 46,000.

Then came the Alps: fifteen days of ambushes, snow and a track that had fallen off the mountain. Hannibal later had his own count cut into a bronze tablet, which Polybius read. He came down into Italy with 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry. **He had lost almost half his army before he met a single Roman legion.**

With those 26,000, and the Gauls who joined him, he won at the river Trebia in December. In June 217 he hid his whole army in the hills above Lake Trasimene and destroyed a Roman army in one morning: about 15,000 dead and as many captured.

On 2 August 216 BC, at Cannae, Rome sent the largest army it had ever fielded, some 80,000 infantry. Hannibal let his centre bend backwards, closed his African veterans on both flanks and brought his cavalry round the rear. Polybius counts 70,000 Roman dead. Livy counts 48,200. Either figure is one of the bloodiest days in the history of war.

His brother Mago sailed to Carthage and poured the gold rings of dead Roman knights onto the senate floor. Hannibal sent an envoy to Rome to discuss terms.

The Senate would not let him into the city.

It refused to ransom its prisoners, armed 8,000 slaves, and voted more legions. Carthage, in fifteen years, sent Hannibal one convoy.



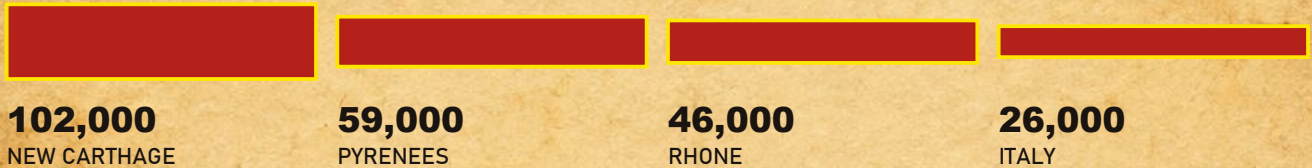
Carthage, 216 BC. Mago pours out the rings taken at Cannae (Livy 23.12). The senate sent almost nothing back.

THE ARMY THAT COULD NOT BE REPLACED MET THE STATE THAT WOULD NOT STOP.

ON THE MAP

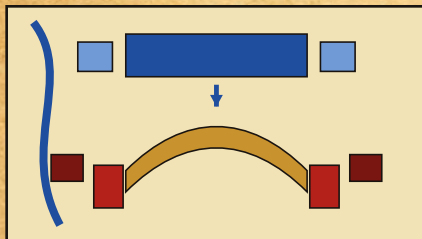


THE BAND IS THE ARMY. ITS WIDTH IS HOW MANY MEN WERE LEFT.

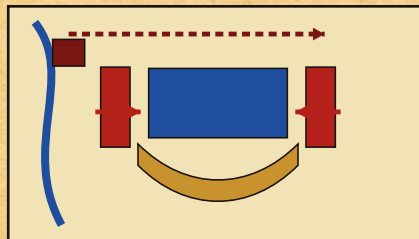


Polybius 3.35, 3.56 and 3.60. The first figure is probably too high. Strengths between these points are not recorded.

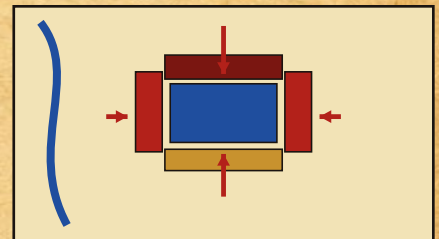
CANNAE, 2 AUGUST 216 BC



1. Rome packs its legions deep to smash the centre. Hannibal's line bulges forward.



2. The bulge gives way. The legions pour in, past the Africans waiting on each side.



3. The Africans turn in. The cavalry closes the rear. About 70,000 men are in a box.

■ Roman legions
 ■ Roman cavalry
 ■ Gauls and Spaniards
 ■ African veterans
 ■ Carthaginian cavalry

THE PROOF

Army at the start	90,000 foot, 12,000 horse	Polybius 3.35. Some modern historians think the infantry figure too high.
Army on reaching Italy	20,000 foot, 6,000 horse	Polybius 3.56, from Hannibal's own bronze tablet at Cape Lacinium.
The Alps	15 days	Polybius 3.56. The pass is unknown: at least five have been argued for.
Trasimene, Roman losses	15,000 dead, 15,000 taken	Polybius 3.84 to 3.85.
Cannae, Roman dead	70,000 or 48,200	Polybius 3.117 against Livy 22.49. Most modern historians prefer Livy.
Cannae, Hannibal's dead	5,700 or 8,000	Polybius 3.117 against Livy 22.52. Two in three were Gauls.
Men Rome could call up	700,000 foot, 70,000 horse	The register of 225 BC, Polybius 2.24. Romans and allies together.
Help sent from Carthage	4,000 Numidians, 40 elephants	Livy 23.13. One convoy, landed in 215 BC.
Rome's legions	8, then 12, then over 20	216, 215 and by 212 BC. Livy, books 22 to 25.
Years in Italy	15	218 to 203 BC. He left undefeated and lost at Zama in 202.

WHERE HISTORIANS STILL DISAGREE

The pass. Polybius crossed the Alps himself and never names it. A 2016 study found churned mud and horse dung of about the right date below the Col de la Traversette. It is not settled.

Could he have taken Rome? Livy has his cavalry commander say he knew how to win a victory but not how to use one. Rome had walls and a garrison, and Hannibal had no siege train. Most historians think the march would have failed.

WHY IT MATTERS

Wars are not decided by who wins the battles. They are decided by who can keep going. Rome lost more than 120,000 men in under three years and never once asked for terms.



Rome after Cannae: no peace, more legions.

FROM THE BEYOND THE BORDER FILM "HOW HANNIBAL ALMOST DESTROYED ROME".

FURTHER READING: POLYBIUS, HISTORIES, BOOK 3. LIVY, BOOKS 21 TO 30. J. F. LAZENBY, HANNIBAL'S WAR.

THIS IS ONE OF 50.

A FEW OF THE OTHERS:

- + Napoleon lost most of his army in Russia before the snow fell
- + A civil war in China killed more people than the First World War
- + The shortest war in history lasted about 38 minutes
- + Africa's borders were drawn in Berlin with no African in the room
- + Poland disappeared from the map for 123 years
- + There is a piece of land no country wants
- + A king owned the Congo as his private property
- + Britain went to war to keep selling opium to China
- + Haiti paid France for its own freedom until 1947
- + Nobody was burned at Salem
- + The Roman Empire did not fall in 476. It lasted until 1453
- + Cleopatra lived closer to the Moon landing than to the Great Pyramid
- + One Soviet officer may have stopped a nuclear war by doing nothing

Every truth gets four pages: what you were told, what happened, the map, and the proof. Every number has its source. Where the historians disagree, you get both sides.

EVERY ONE TRUE. EVERY ONE SOURCED. EVERY ONE ON THE MAP.

BEYOND THE BORDER