

römische Kultur unbeschadet der Germanenstürme allmählich und stetig in die christliche Kultur des Mittelalters über, und man versteht, daß hier nicht wie bei den Goten des Wulfila ein tiefgehender Einschnitt das Schriftwesen des Christentums von der heidnischen Zeit abhebt, sondern das im Austausch mit dem romanisierten Gallien ein steter Kulturstrom in die Germanenwelt herüberries, wie dies in den verschiedenen Worten für Tinte rein äußerlich zum Ausdruck kommt. Aber gegenüber diesen und den vielen anderen jüngeren Germanenworten des Schriftwesens führen die Worte *Buch* und *schreiben* in die ältesten Zeiten zurück, wo germanische Aufnahmebereitschaft und Lernfreude vorerst einmal der führenden Schichten im rheinischen Grenzland römische Sprache und Schrift erstmals aufgriff, um zum vollgültigen Verhandlungspartner der Römer oder zum Teilnehmer an ihrer Kultur und Organisation zu werden.

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## ROME'S DECLARATION OF WAR ON CARTHAGE IN 218 B. C. <sup>1)</sup>

In a recent paper W. Hoffmann has made an important contribution towards the solution of the vexed question of the Roman declaration of war on Carthage in 218 B.C. <sup>2)</sup> He follows the view of those scholars who reject a literal acceptance of Polybius' record of the terms of the Roman message to Hannibal in the late autumn of 220 (which amounted to a declaration that an attack on Saguntum would mean war with Rome: Pol. III, 15, 5; cf. 20,2) because it appears to be inconsistent with Rome's subsequent policy of non-intervention not only during Hannibal's siege of Saguntum but also after its fall probably in November 219. He also rightly rejects Polybius' statement (III, 20, 6) that on the fall of Saguntum the Romans immediately (*παραχρημα*) sent Fabius and his colleagues to deliver the ultimatum at Carthage <sup>3)</sup>. He then

1) I am grateful to Professor A. Momigliano for having read and discussed this note with me.

2) *Rheinisches Museum*, LXXXIV (1951), pp. 69 ff.

3) It is unnecessary to list here the modern literature, but the writers quoted in Hoffmann's article there should be added the magisterial work of G. De Sanctis, for whose rejection of these two points see *Storia dei Romani*, III, i, p. 424 n. 86. On the Schuldfrage in general see his *Problemi di storia antica*, pp. 161 ff.

takes the argument a stage further. The Roman declaration of war in 218 is usually placed in late March or April (i.e. at the earliest date after the entry of the new consuls into office and the beginning of the campaigning season) because, on Polybius' view, Rome was committed to war on behalf of Saguntum. Hoffmann, however, believes that to reject the terms of the Roman ultimatum of 220 removes any motive for the Roman declaration of war in the spring of 218 and that therefore the precise date of the declaration in 218 can remain an open question. He then argues that Rome first decided on war *after* Hannibal crossed the Ebro (c. end of May, 218), and not on the fall of Saguntum: it was Hannibal's violation of the Ebro treaty by his crossing the river with a large army that started the war (which cannot therefore have been declared until June), while the view that his attack on Saguntum was the crucial factor in the development of Roman policy was only advanced later by writers who sought to justify Rome's conduct and her neglect of her ally Saguntum during 219. Thus after the fall of the city the Romans decided to „write off“ Saguntum, because senatorial opinion had not been united on this issue<sup>4</sup>), and turned to war only when provoked by a fresh act of aggression.

This theory is attractive, but it involves certain difficulties, not least the assumption that Polybius' whole account of the discussion at Carthage, which was provoked by the delivery of the Roman ultimatum, is wrongly based (III, 21; 29). It is difficult to believe that, if in fact Hannibal's crossing of the Ebro was made the basis of the Roman ultimatum, all reference to it should have been eliminated from Polybius' account, which instead turns upon the question of Saguntum, the very point which it might be thought the Romans would wish to minimise in view both of their recent conduct and of the doubtful legal status of the relations of Saguntum and Rome in the light of the earlier treaty of 241 and the Ebro convention. The purpose, therefore, of this note is to suggest that Hoffmann's thesis should be followed up to a given point, but that some difficulties may be better met by an alternative interpretation.

It may be agreed that the Roman ambassadors to Hannibal in 220 had not irrevocably declared that an attack on Sa-

<sup>4</sup>) As recorded by Chaereas and Sosylus (Pol. III, 20) and Dio (Zon. VIII, 22). Cf. Scullard, *Roman Politics, 218—150 B. C.*, p. 40 f.

guntum would be regarded as a *casus belli*<sup>5)</sup>, and that therefore during 219 opinion in the Senate may have remained divided, the Aemilian-Scipionic faction urging action on behalf of Saguntum and the Fabians counselling caution. The latter may have conveniently „written off“ Saguntum and even after its fall (c. Nov.) have been willing to let sleeping dogs lie: under the agreement with Hasdrubal the Carthaginians were confined to Spain south of the Ebro so that Rome need have no worries. But in the early months of 218 news would reach Rome that Hannibal was making immense preparations<sup>6)</sup> and thoughtful senators must have been asking themselves the reason. Vague misgivings would take more definite shape when it became known that Hannibal had left New Carthage about the end of April with an army which may have numbered over 100,000 men<sup>7)</sup>. This would not appear a direct threat to Rome or Italy, but it surely could mean only one thing: that Hannibal, having conquered Spain south of the Ebro, now intended to conquer the whole peninsula up to the Pyrenees. To what other end could this immense force be directed? But if this was his objective, then he must cross the Ebro and that would infringe the delete agreement which his predecessor Hasdrubal had made with Rome and which Rome insisted was a valid treaty<sup>8)</sup>. It was surely this threat of treaty-breaking that united the Senate and led to the despatch of an ultimatum to Carthage: those senators who hitherto may have hesitated either because they were doubtful of the legal position of Saguntum or because they wished to avoid foreign entanglements so far afield in the west, now hesitated no longer. Carthage must be told in no uncertain terms that either Hannibal must be given up (and thus the validity of the Ebro treaty be acknowledged by the Carthaginian government) or else Rome would declare war. Saguntum and appeasement belonged to the past.

5) Or if their message was in fact couched so strongly, the wisdom of implementing such a threat may subsequently have been questioned by many Roman Senators.

6) If Rome did not have definite agents in Spain, friendly Spanish tribes (as the Bargusii: cf. Pol. III, 35,4), not to mention Massilia, would keep Rome supplied with up-to-date information.

7) So Pol. III, 35,1. Even if the figure is somewhat exaggerated (cf. De Sanctis, op. cit. III, i i, p. 83 f.), the force was menacingly large.

8) Polybius (III, 40, 2) implies that early in 218 the Romans were expecting Hannibal to cross the Ebro (he crossed sooner than they expected: προσπεσόντος δὲ θάπτον ἢ προσεδόκων Ἀννίβαν διαβεβηγμένοι τὸν Ἴβηρα ποταμὸν μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως).

The Roman embassy, which was doubtless sent off to Carthage without delay, could not denounce any fresh breach of the Ebro treaty, since this, although in their belief imminent, had not in fact yet occurred: it may indeed have been happening about this very time, but news of it would take time to come. Thus the ambassadors would have to base their case upon Hannibal's treatment of Saguntum and its indication of his general aggressive behaviour; and it is precisely upon Saguntum that, in Polybius' account of the proceedings, the argument turned. The Romans, if they elaborated their bald ultimatum in any way, probably emphasised the Ebro treaty, both because they alleged that under its terms Saguntum should have been immune from Carthaginian attack and because they suspected that it was about to be violated again by Hannibal in the near future, and this time without any extenuating doubts. The Carthaginians, however, Polybius tells us (III, 21), „were silent about the agreement with Hasdrubal, considering it to be not existent, or if existent, as not concerning them, since it had been negotiated without their approval“; by denouncing its validity they disclaimed any responsibility for the Saguntine affair and, by implication, for what Hannibal was about to do. Instead, they harped on the status of Saguntum in relation to the treaty of 241. The Romans then indignantly refused to discuss the Carthaginian attempt at self-justification: their indignation must have been fanned by feelings of self-reproach as they reflected on their past relations with Saguntum, and by more justifiable anger when they thought of Hannibal advancing, even then, northwards along the coast of Spain. Polybius then records (III, 29) what later Romans conceived would have been the ambassadors' reply if they had not preferred silent indignation: first of all they would have insisted on the validity of the Ebro treaty, drawing attention to the clause that „The Carthaginians shall not cross the Ebro in arms“, and secondly they would have rejected the Carthaginian interpretation of the status of Saguntum under the treaty of 241. The reference to crossing the Ebro would obviously receive greater prominence in later views of what might have been said. But the fact that during the actual meeting at Carthage the Saguntine question bulked so large was not altogether to Rome's disadvantage, since, whatever precisely was said at the time, later Roman annalists could claim with some justice that war had been declared by Rome for the sake of her wronged ally.

If this interpretation approximates in any way to the truth, there is no need to try to explain away, with Hoffmann, the emphasis laid on Saguntum in Polybius' account. Hoffmann, believing that the Roman ultimatum was delivered only after Hannibal had violated the treaty by actually crossing the Ebro, thinks that in the discussion at Carthage the Romans, when denouncing Hannibal, would refer to his past crimes (Saguntum) as well as his latest one (the Ebro crossing), and that his attack on Saguntum first gained importance when linked with the Ebro incident, i.e. when Roman politicians saw in it his first step against Rome, while previously they may have regarded his attack on this distant and almost unknown city as an outrage, but not one sufficiently serious to affect Roman policy. Thereafter when the Saguntine incident was regarded as important, later writers were able to work it up as an example of the maxim that it was Roman policy to protect an ally. But such distortion of the prehistory of the war in relation to Saguntum does not seem to be necessary.

One or two further points raised by Hoffmann may be briefly discussed. First, the late departure of the consuls of 218 for their provinces seems to him to require an explanation more adequate than the usual one, namely that P. Scipio was delayed by the need to raise new troops after the diversion of his original legions to deal with the Gallic outbreak in N. Italy. He finds the explanation in his belief that news of the Ebro crossing did not reach Rome until June, after which war was declared and only then of course were military preparations set on foot: thus Scipio could not reach Massilia until nearly the end of August<sup>9</sup>). If the alternative explanation

9) Hoffmann (p. 78) rejects the usual explanation, because (a) our sources do not link the delay with the Boii, (b) it would not be difficult to raise new forces, and (c) the objection does not apply to Sempronius who first reached Sicily in the second half of August and by the beginning of November was still not ready to cross to Africa. While it is certain that Scipio cannot have left Pisa for Massilia until some time in August, it is true that Polybius' narrative (III, 41) does not give the impression of undue delay: he says that the consuls set sail *ὑπὸ τὴν ὥραταν* (41,2), precisely the same phrase that he uses in connexion with the departure of Aemilius Paullus the previous year for Illyricum (16,7) and Aemilius can hardly have started late as he had finished his campaign in time to return to Rome for a triumph the same autumn. Too much stress perhaps should not be laid on Sempronius' movements: it need not be assumed from Polybius (41,2) that he left Rome at *precisely* the same time as Scipio, while his continued presence in Sicily at the beginning of November may have been due, not to his late arrival but to his intention not to

offered above is accepted, the ultimatum will have been delivered in Carthage before the end of May, that is before Hannibal actually crossed the Ebro and about a month earlier than Hoffmann suggests<sup>10</sup>). It may well be that, if allowance

invade Africa that year: he may well have made ostentatious preparations (41,3) in Sicily in order to hold Carthaginian attention and, with the fate of Regulus' expedition to suggest caution, he may deliberately have postponed thought of a full-scale attack on Africa until the next year when it would be clear how the expected campaign in Spain was faring. Thus while clearly the consuls of 218, or Scipio at any rate, were delayed in starting, the delay need not have been quite as long as Hoffmann suggests nor brought about by the same cause.

10) If the Romans, knowing about Hannibal's preparations during the winter and spring of 218, decided to act before he moved, then of course the ultimatum could have been delivered at Carthage late in March. More probably, however, they waited until he actually left New Carthage and sent their embassy to Carthage in May. The chronology of 218 has to be reconstructed from the fact that Hannibal reached N. Italy 5 months after leaving New Carthage (Pol. III, 56,3) and that he crossed the Alps about the setting of the Pleiads and with snow on the pass (54,1). Hoffmann, following Kahrstedt (*Geschichte der Karthager*, p. 370, n. 2 & p. 375 n. 2) who sets more emphasis on the Pleiads than the snow, does not discuss the reconstruction by De Sanctis who places Hannibal's arrival slightly earlier, but this does not affect the point at issue since both agree in placing Hannibal's crossing of the Ebro at about the end of May.

Regarding the story of Hannibal's dream, Hoffmann (p. 86) suggests that the incident belongs to the Ebro crossing: it presupposes a decisive moment in Hannibal's life, and thus it would lose point if the fall of Saguntum had made war inevitable and gain point if crossing the Ebro was Hannibal's decisive act; thus Silenus, the original source of the story, saw the Ebro crossing as the beginning of the war. This interpretation, however, naturally depends on where the dream episode is to be located. Zonaras, VIII, 22, places it at the Ebro, but Cicero (*De Div.* I, 49) says „Hannibalem, cum cepisset Saguntum, visum esse in somnis...“, while Livy (XXI, 22,5) says „Inde (sc. Carthagine Nova) profectus praeter Onusam urbem ad Hiberum.... ducit. Ibi fama est in quiete...“. Livy himself presumably must have thought that the Ebro was the place, since to take his „ibi“ to refer to Onussa, though not impossible, would be to strain slightly the natural meaning of the Latin. But does Zonaras (and Livy?) or Cicero represent more accurately the original statement of Silenus? Ed. Meyer (*Kl. Schr.* II, 368 n. 3) supported Zonaras and the Ebro (he also has shown how Coelius, the intermediary source between Silenus and the later Roman writers, has altered the original account of the dream itself, but here we are concerned only with the place where it occurred). No one, however, seems to have raised the question why Livy bothered to mention so unimportant a place as Onussa, which is referred to elsewhere only twice (Livy, XXII, 20,4 and Polyaeus, VIII, 16,6) and is probably to be identified with Peniscola which lies some 30 miles south of the Ebro (cf. A. Schulten, *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae*, III, p. 66 f.). He must surely have found the name in his source (Silenus via Coelius) and Silenus who wrote from the Carthaginian side and was „cum eo (sc. Hannibale)

is made for the delay caused by the diversion of Scipio's troops against the Boii, three months (June-August) is not an unduly long period for the raising of the armies and their transport to Massilia.

Hoffmann further believes (pp. 79 ff) that Polybius' narrative is wrong in giving the impression that Hannibal's movements from New Carthage to the Po were all parts of a campaign which was conceived and planned as one. Rather, there were two stages: the campaign in N. Spain and the attack on Italy. Hannibal crossed the Ebro and in two and a half months reduced much of N. Spain but not all (e.g. not the coastal cities of Tarraco and Emporiae): why then did he break off his plan and suddenly march on Italy? According to Hoffmann because news came of Rome's declaration of war: in order to forestall a Roman invasion of Spain, Hannibal by brilliant improvisation divided his forces and marched with the more effective part to the Alps. Such a division of Hannibal's plan into two phases may be basically sound in the sense that he would hardly have thought of invading Italy if he had found his campaign in N. Spain too difficult or too costly, but it need not involve the assumption that Rome had not declared war until some time after he had crossed the river. Whenever precisely news of Rome's action reached him (and on Hoffmann's timetable it will have been in June or at latest early July), Hannibal would surely still openly have concentrated on N. Spain as a smoke-screen for his plans for the future, the more so if in fact the Roman declaration came a month earlier. So far from breaking off in N. Spain because of news of the Roman declaration of war (*pace* Hoffmann, who believes that until the news came Hannibal was hoping that the Romans might overlook his action at the Ebro as previously they had overlooked Saguntum), it may be suggested that Hannibal deliberately stayed there as long as possible to hoodwink the Romans and then made a hurried dash for-

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in castris . . . quamdiu fortuna passa est" (Nepos, *Hann.*, 13), is not likely to have mentioned the town unless he knew that something of importance happened there. It may well be, if the order of events suggested above, is correct, that Hannibal received some critical message there, either that the Romans had sent their embassy to Carthage or that war had actually been declared: in either case it would be a decisive moment for him, one to which the story of his dream might suitably be attached. Thus, if the news was that Rome was delivering an ultimatum at Carthage, Onussa will have been the place where he took his final decision to advance and cross his Rubicon, the river Ebro.

ward when this seemed feasible: he masked his intention as long as possible, and indeed his intention to attack Italy, though probably a conscious desire ever since he had left New Carthage, could only crystallise after he had seen how his campaign in N. Spain was prospering.

An incidental consequence of Hoffmann's view of Hannibal's plans is that he is forced to reject (p. 83) Polybius' belief (III, 34, 1—6) that in the winter of 219/18 Hannibal reached a close agreement with the Gauls. This, however, in itself need not be used as an argument against Hoffmann, since he is probably right in the sense that Hannibal would scarcely have confided in the Gauls his hopes for a possible invasion of Italy. He would, however, have entered into negotiations with them even in the winter 219/18, as Polybius tells us, both because of their nuisance-value against Rome and as providing some cover for his operations in N. Spain, as well as for the help they might provide later if ever he did decide to go beyond Spain to Italy.

To sum up. Hoffmann has made a valuable contribution to this old and vexed question, especially by his demonstration that the date of the Roman declaration of war may have been later than is usually supposed. With him we may believe that in the winter 219/18 Rome (or at least many Romans) was willing not to provoke war but to regard the Saguntine incident as closed. The factor, however, which provoked the subsequent Roman ultimatum was not (as Hoffmann) Hannibal's crossing of the Ebro and the breach of the treaty, but more probably was the news that Hannibal had left New Carthage on the warpath with a large army. Roman preparations were delayed by the diversion of troops against the Boii (contra Hoffmann) and in any case they were not unduly hurried because no-one in Rome dreamed that Hannibal had any other objective than N. Spain, a belief which Hannibal deliberately encouraged by the length of his campaign there. Such a view may seem more in accord with Polybius' account of the negotiations in Carthage and at the same time explain how Polybius (III, 6, 1—2; cf. 15,5) could regard *both* the attack on Saguntum *and* the crossing of the Ebro as the incidents which precipitated the war.

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