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TOWARDS A CHRONOLOGY OF THE ‘TRUCELESS WAR’, 241–237 B. C.

I

In the year 241 B. C. the Carthaginians, finally defeated by the Romans in the First Punic War and forced to concede Sicily and a large indemnity, were confronted by an even more visceral danger. The multinational mercenary contingents, now evacuated from Sicily to Africa, mutinied over long-due arrears of pay; they in turn instigated rebellion among Carthage's oppressed Libyan subjects; and under the skilful leadership of the Campanian Spendius and the Libyan Mathos they were able to blockade Carthage itself and imperil the very existence of the Punic state. Only by desperate efforts, plus help from abroad including from their recent foes, the Romans, and notably by appointing Hamilcar Barca to the chief command, did the Carthaginians succeed in crushing the rebellion. Its savagery (which inspired Gustave Flaubert to pen his historical novel, *Salammô*) prompted Polybius, the main source for its

events, to describe it as ‘truceless’, in other words a war waged outside every normal convention.¹

Despite Polybius’ circumstantial account, many details of the war – including strategies and politics on both sides – are difficult to follow. Most difficult of all is its chronology, the topic to be studied here.

II

Polybius gives minimal indications. The chief one is that the Libyan War, as he usually terms it, followed the war with the Romans (1,65,1 and 3) and lasted ‘three years and some four months’ (τρία μὲν οὖν ἔτη καὶ τέτταράς που μῆνας, 1,88,7). This needs to be connected with other time-statements: the Carthaginians then ‘promptly’ (εὐθέως) sent Hamilcar to Spain (2,1,5), he spent ‘nearly nine years’ there (ἔτη σχεδὸν ἐννέα, 2,1,7; similarly Livy 21,2,1 and Nepos, Hamil. 4,2) and he died ten years (ἔτεσι δέκα, 3,10,7) before the Second Punic War broke out in early 218. This dates his arrival in Spain to about mid-237 and means that the Libyan War had ended shortly before, thus early in 237 or late in 238.²

Diodorus’ four years and four months (Diod. 25,6) is either a copyist’s error or, less probably, generalises for the whole period from the peace that ended the First Punic to the end of the Libyan War. Less probably, because this would mean that the latter did not end until the second half of 237 and that Hamilcar left for Spain even later, which does not fit his time-span there. Livy’s five years can only be just such a generalisation, further rounded up by inclusive reckoning (21,2,1).³

1) ἄσπονδον πόλεμον: Polyb. 1,65,6; cf. F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius I* (Cambridge 1957) 131. The most recent attempt at a chronology is by L. Loreto, *La Grande Insurrezione Libica contro Cartagine del 241–237 a. C.* (Roma 1995) 211–213, but it is not wholly persuasive.

2) ‘Libyan War’: e.g. 1,70,7; 88,5; 2,1,3; 3,27,7; also Diod. 26,23; Appian, *Iberica* 4,15. Hamilcar’s years in Spain: G. V. Sumner, *Roman Policy in Spain before the Hannibalic War*, *HSPh* 72 (1967) 213 n. 27; B.D. Hoyos, *Unplanned Wars: the Origins of the First and Second Punic Wars* (Berlin and New York 1998) 139. Loreto (n. 1 above) 213 n. 17, reckons that Hamilcar reached Spain at the end of 237, which does not however allow for the nineteen years reported by Polybius (2,1,7 and 3,10,7) between then and the outbreak of the Second Punic War – which Loreto in fact dates to the end of 219.

3) Cf. Walbank (n. 1 above) 149, but he is sceptical of this explanation of Diodorus’ figure and suggests instead that Diodorus is reckoning from the end of

The Libyan War began some while after peace was made with the Romans. Negotiations with the Roman commander Lutatius had opened fairly soon after his victory at the Aegates Islands in March 241, and must have taken at least two months, perhaps quite some time longer. After all, negotiations were protracted and it was only the revised version of the treaty that was finally accepted at Rome (Polyb. 1,62–63,3; 3,27,1–6). This would not be earlier than summer.⁴

The mercenaries were then carefully sent over to Africa in separate groups, which would take a while. They spent time in or around Carthage becoming a nuisance to the authorities who could not pay them their due, next were marched off inland to Sicca where they negotiated fruitlessly with the Punic general Hanno. Eventually they marched back to Tunes near Carthage, where they negotiated with Hanno's replacement as negotiator, Gisco, equally fruitlessly. At last they launched their revolt, putting Carthage itself under blockade from Tunes, enticing the subject Libyans to join them and laying siege to the old Phoenician cities of Utica and Hippou Acra on the coast to Carthage's north (1,66–70.73). These hostilities can hardly have started earlier than autumn or early winter 241.

Other starting-points, summer 241 or spring 240, have been suggested. But the first is much too early, for peace with Rome was barely concluded by then. The second would again mean that Hamilcar did not leave for Spain until the later half of 237, against the evidence cited above.⁵

hostilities with Rome, in 241, to 237. A copyist's error: G. de Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani*, 2nd edn. III 1 (Firenze 1967 [originally published Torino 1916]), 385 n. 30; Loreto (n. 1 above) 211; Hoyos (n. 2 above) 138.

4) Battle of the Aegates dated to 10 March 241 by Eutropius 2,27,2; confirmed by M. Gwyn Morgan, *Calendars and Chronology in the First Punic War*, *Chiron* 7 (1977) 109–12. For the vicissitudes of the negotiations: Polyb. 1,62–63,3; 3,27,1–6; Walbank (n. 1 above) 126–27, 335; J. F. Lazenby, *The First Punic War* (London 1995) 157–59; Hoyos (n. 2 above) 118–21. Any month during mid-241 seems possible for the conclusion of peace although Loreto 211 tries to narrow it to “gli inizi del giugno 241 al più tardi” because “altrimenti avremmo una data implausibile per i nuovi comizi consolari”. This scarcely follows. Lutatius need not still have been consul when the treaty was ratified: he accompanied his brother, consul in 241, on a circuit inspection of Sicily (Zon. 8,17) and triumphed ‘pro consule’ in October (*Acta Triumphalia*; cf. T. R. S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic I* [1951] 219–20). He had thus received a prorogatio imperii and is hardly likely to have returned to Rome at mid-year.

5) W. Huß, *Geschichte der Karthager* (München 1985) 258, 266–67, seems to favour summer 241; cf. J. Seibert, *Hannibal* (Darmstadt 1993) 14, 22–23, suggesting 241–238 for the war. War starting around autumn 241: de Sanctis (n. 3 above) 385

III

Once the rebellion did begin, the Carthaginians had to put together forces to confront it. As Polybius tells it, they had to recruit fresh mercenaries and also citizen troops, train the city's cavalry and refit what was left of the navy (1,73). Urgently as they no doubt acted, yet it is probable that – as several scholars have surmised – Hanno's march to relieve Utica from siege (74) took place no earlier than the start of 240. On the other hand it need not be assumed that he awaited springtime itself: a coastal North African winter, though cold, need not prevent all campaigning, and the situation was urgent.⁶

His chequered operations against the rebels and the further military preparations at Carthage, with the appointment of Hamilcar Barca to a command, should then take us to about mid-year. Hamilcar first won a victory over Spendius at the river Bagradas near Utica (75–76) and then pursued operations across the countryside, winning over some towns and storming others, while Spendius and the Gallic warlord Autaritus came after him from Tunes (76–77).

These exertions would fit the summer of 240 and perhaps the start of autumn. A series of manoeuvres ensued: Hamilcar's near-entrapment by the rebels, the vital defection to him of the Numidian lord Naravas and his Numidian cavalry, and their victory over the enemy (77–78).

Hamilcar then carried on what seems like mopping-up and harassing operations around the countryside (82,2), while Hanno presumably kept watch on the rebel emplacements at Tunes. All

(implied); also implied by H. H. Scullard, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edn., VII (Cambridge 1989) 567; explicitly argued by Hoyos (n. 2 above) 138–39. Loreto (n. 1 above) 212 specifies November 241, by relying on detailed estimates for the various preliminary events, but this is rather insecure precision. Starting in winter 241–240: S. Gsell, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord II* (Paris 1921) 125; cf. B. H. Warmington, *Carthage* (Harmondsworth 1964) 201–2. E. Meyer, *Kleine Schriften II* (Halle 1924) 382 n. 2 prefers spring 240; similarly G. and C. Charles-Picard, *Life and Death of Carthage* (New York 1968) 11, 203–9. Summer 240 is, exceptionally, the starting-date for B. Caven, *The Punic Wars* (London 1980) 70, with the end falling in early summer 237 – which can hardly total 3 years 4 months.

6) North African winters: G. Veith in: J. Kromayer and G. Veith, *Antike Schlachtfelder III 1* (Berlin 1912) 508. Not many mercenaries hired abroad would have arrived before the start of safe sailing in spring 240 (cf. n. 8) but others could meanwhile have come overland, e.g. from Cyrene and Egypt. In any case the newly recruited professionals were put under Hamilcar's command (75,2), after Hanno had departed. (Loreto's argument [n. 1 above] 122–23, 136–37, that Hanno brought his army back to Carthage and Hamilcar then led out part of it again is not persuasive.)

this should have taken up what was left of 240; and probably the start of 239 too, as we shall see.⁷

Polybius then reports how 'about the same time' the mercenaries holding Sardinia rebelled and took control of the island (79,1–7). We learn later (83,11) that at this time they offered to hand Sardinia over to the Romans and that the Romans refused. These events too must have taken some while. Polybius' indication that they started at the time of Hamilcar's confrontations with Spendius and Autaritus is supported by a later item. When these two defeated leaders rejoined Mathos afterwards, the three forged a letter supposedly from the rebel mercenaries in Sardinia to rekindle their followers' fury (79,9–10). In other words, by the time Spendius, Autaritus and Mathos put their heads together – in late 240 or early 239 on the calculation above – the rebellion in the island was known in Africa.

So the revolt in Sardinia can be placed in roughly autumn 240, the 'letter' in the winter. This would have 'arrived' well after safe sailing conditions had ended but, if queried, the rebel leaders could claim that fellow-feeling had caused their confrères to risk sending it. The gruesome killing of Gisco and the other captives (79,11–80,13) will likewise date to that winter. This and the rebels' implacable policy of frightfulness towards captured Carthaginians and their allies led Hamilcar to abandon mild methods and treat rebel prisoners in the same way henceforth (81,3–4; 82,2): another pointer to operations by him in late winter and early spring.⁸

7) Hanno's march to Utica in spring 240: de Sanctis (n. 3 above) 375; Walbank (n. 1 above) 139, 149; Warmington (n. 5 above) 202; Huß (n. 5 above) 258; Scullard (n. 5 above) 567. Loreto (n. 1 above) 212 more closely dates it to April 241, the start of spring. He assigns Hamilcar's departure from Carthage to September 240, at the end of the drier months of the year ("[i] mesi di minor precipitazione piovosa"), on the ground that this dryness helped cause the shallowness at the river Bagradas' mouth which enabled Hamilcar to take the rebels near Utica by surprise (Polyb. 1,75,8; Loreto *ibid.*, though not in his narrative [139]). Polybius on the other hand ascribes this phenomenon to a strong wind from the sea – and if lack of rain had in reality produced it by lowering the river-level, it is odd for him (75,5–6) to stress that the river was unfordable because of its volume of water, or to emphasize the rebels' possession of the only bridge, only some 8 km or 5 miles inland (Walbank [n. 1 above] 141; Loreto [n. 1 above] 138). – Huß (n. 5 above) implausibly thinks that Hamilcar in his turn did not start until early 239; he also thinks the mercenaries in Sardinia revolted during 239 (262 n. 78). On Hamilcar's operations after his victory: Loreto (n. 1 above) 159–60, likewise dating (213) the victory to autumn 240.

8) Mercenaries in Sardinia revolted in autumn 240: so too H. H. Scullard, *A History of the Roman World 753–146 B. C.*, 4th edn. (London 1980) 185; Loreto (n. 1 above) 213. S. Lancel, *Hannibal* (Paris 1995) 44 thinks in 239. Sardinia offered

The Carthaginian expedition to recover Sardinia, which turned out to be a fiasco (79,3–4), was most likely sent in the first half of the new year 239. Sending an expedition earlier, in autumn's or winter's dangerous weather, would have meant risking valuable troops and ships. True, Polybius narrates it before returning to the doings of Mathos, Spendius and company at Tunes, but his aim is to keep together the sequence of Sardinian events. Thus he includes here how the native Sardinians later expelled the rebels from the island, though this took place near the end of the Libyan War as he later makes clear (88,8, there with *κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον*). Even if the mercenaries in their turn sent their handover-offer to the Romans in winter 240 – to them the sailing risk might seem worthwhile – the Roman refusal should probably be put in spring 239 for the same seasonal reason.

IV

The next events in Polybius are Hanno joining forces with Hamilcar, the two men quarrelling, and Hamilcar being chosen by the troops as supreme commander; the loss in a storm of a major supply convoy sailing up the coast from the Emporia region to Carthage; next the sudden defection of Hippou Acra and Utica, and Carthage besieged (81,1; 82).⁹

These happenings may be approximately dated to the second and third quarters of 239, say between March and September. Hanno's and Hamilcar's mutual obnoxiousness went on for some while, since Polybius asserts that it both caused them to miss opportunities against the rebels and gave these in turn many openings against them (82,4): in other words there was further campaigning, though he does not state where. The destructive storm happened at

to Romans during 239: de Sanctis (n. 5 above) 386 (also Utica); T. Frank, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 1st edn., VII (Cambridge 1928) 803; Walbank (n. 1 above) 144 (cf. n. 10 below); Scullard (n. 5 above) 185; Huß (n. 5 above). On the forged-letter-episode cf. Walbank *ibid.* (on Polyb. 1,79,1). Sailing season: Vegetius, *De re militari* 4,39 absolutely rules out 11 November to 10 March, and pronounces the two months on either side of these dates risky; on this see L. Casson, *Ships and Seaman-ship in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1971) 270–73; D. Wachsmuth, Seewesen, *KlPauly* V (München 1975) 69; Hoyos (n. 2 above) 138.

9) S. Lancel, *Carthage* (Paris 1992) 393 dates to 238 Hamilcar's election by the troops as supreme commander; but the war ended twelve months later (or less), which would impossibly foreshorten its remaining events: cf. the chronological résumé.

the same period (ἄμα δὲ τούτοις, 82,6), therefore was not a winter tempest. This is credible enough. In the previous war, sudden storms at other times of year had befallen Roman fleets more than once, with unpleasant effects. The convoy was heavily laden with desperately needed food and supplies, which very probably contributed to its vulnerability in poor weather.

Significantly, the Uticans on defecting tried in their turn to hand their city over to the Romans, who rejected this offer as they had the one from Sardinia. Such messages over the sea point again to the good season of the year, whereas squeezing them and the other associated events back into 240 – along with all that had preceded – is not at all plausible.¹⁰

V

Polybius’ report on Punic-Roman relations during the war (83,5–12) may also throw some light on chronology. The Italian merchants trading with the rebels, an activity which led to the Carthaginians arresting hundreds of them early in the war, again broadly required good sailing times although some venturesome entrepreneurs may have tried to keep going in winter. Trading no doubt began before the actual revolt, of course, while the disgruntled mercenary veterans were camped at Tunes, for the Carthaginian authorities had set up provision-markets for the men. But the arrests can have been made only after hostilities broke out. Then, after a Roman protest freed the 500-odd merchants, the Romans began to give their ex-enemies a good deal of support in various ways. It was ‘after this’ (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, 83,11) that the mercenaries in Sardinia revolted.

The Roman protest could conceivably have been sent near the end of 241 just after hostilities began, but that is rather too early for the Carthaginians already to have arrested as many as five hundred traders. More likely it was sent in the first half of 240. The Romans’ first ensuing act of helpfulness, releasing over 2700 pris-

10) Loreto (n. 1 above) 213 puts the convoy-shipwreck in January/February 239, “[i] mesi climaticamente peggiori”. Appeal to Rome from Utica: de Sanctis (n. 3 above) dates it to 239 too, but places it and the one from the mercenaries in Sardinia after Hamilcar’s final destruction of Spendius and his army (386–87 and n. 33); also Walbank (n. 1 above) 144, 146. That victory, though, should be dated to 238: see § VI below. Hoyos (n. 2 above) 126 suggests Utica appealed in late 239 or early 238, but this looks rather too late.

oners of war ransom-free, would then have taken place around the time that the Carthaginians were organizing a second army – the one with which Hamilcar won the battle at the Bagradas, in mid-240 as estimated above. He may have found useful recruits among the returnees.

Other help included forbidding Italian merchants to trade with the rebels and, according to Appian and Zonaras, allowing the Carthaginians to hire fresh mercenaries in Italy – activities also involving sea-communications. And the atmosphere of goodwill that developed between the two powers ensured that the Sardinia mercenaries' appeal to Rome later on was turned down, as well as that from Utica later still. Moreover, once the rebels formed their siege of Carthage, overseas aid became virtually the city's sole lifeline. This is why Polybius pauses at that point to summarise the earlier stages of relations with her two chief suppliers, Syracuse and Rome.¹¹

VI

The siege or rather blockade of Carthage lasted a good while, starting around mid-239. But with Hamilcar and his new colleague Hannibal squeezing their supplies, the besiegers were reduced to a worse state than the city they were besieging (84,1–2). They probably hung on as long as they could all the same, for no alternative strategy offered a better hope of success. The siege may well have lasted to the end of the year or into early 238. In spring 238 at latest, resumption of supplies from overseas to the city would only confirm to the besiegers that their effort was hopeless.¹²

When they were driven to abandon it, they held on to Tunes but detached a substantial force – once more under the hapless Spendius and Autaritus, now with another Libyan leader named

11) Provision-markets at Tunes: Polyb. 1,68,5; Walbank (n. 1 above) 134; Loreto (n. 1 above) 65. Romans released Punic PoWs: Polyb. 1,83,8; Valerius Maximus 5,1,1; Eutropius 2,27. Other Roman concessions to the Carthaginians: Polyb. 1,83,9; Appian, *Sicelica* 2,10; Zonaras 8,17. For the Carthaginians' recourse to foreign aid Huß (n. 5 above) 263 implausibly suggests the end of 239, i.e. the middle of the stormy season.

12) Loreto (n. 1 above) 213 estimates the siege of Carthage as lasting from about March to September 239. But he also supposes – plausibly, cf. § III above – that Spendius rejoined Mathos in the December/January preceding. If so all the events in Polyb. 82,1 and 82,3–10, including the further military operations of the quarrelling generals, must be squeezed into the first two months of 240, implausibly.

Zarzas – against Hamilcar and his colleague. There followed a fairly protracted campaign in the hinterland (84,3–85,7) that ended with Hamilcar’s capture of these leaders and destruction of their entire force at a place called The Saw (ὁ Πρίων in Polybius). Then he and Hanno brought most of Libya back to obedience, and finally turned the tables on the rebel diehards at Tunes by laying them in turn under siege (86).¹³

How long all this took can only be roughly estimated, but several months must surely be allowed. If the siege of Carthage was lifted in spring 238 or even rather earlier, catastrophe at The Saw plausibly befell Spendius and company during the summer. This leaves the rest of 238 for the next stages of the struggle: the fighting around Tunes, the defeat and death of Hanno’s replacement Hannibal, Hamilcar’s reconciliation with the recalled Hanno, and the remaining rebels’ breakout southwards to the region ‘around Lepcis [Minor] and some other cities’, where further campaigning ended with a decisive Punic victory and the collapse of the rebellion apart from Hippou Acra and Utica (86–87).¹⁴

VII

The last task of all was forcing these cities to capitulate. This happened ‘quickly’, writes Polybius (τοχέως, 88,4). But how quickly?

He stresses how pessimistic the two cities were about their chances for mercy after their pitiless slaughter of resident Carthaginians – and how important a lesson this should be to others about the need for moderation. Diodorus echoes these salubrious maxims (25,5,3). Stressing the pessimism would be odd, and the lesson feeble, if in fact Hippou Acra and Utica surrendered right away. At least several more weeks, perhaps two or three months, in late 238 and maybe into early 237 should be reckoned for the operations against them.

Possibly they were left under blockade for some time while the two generals terrorised hostile districts of Numidia into sub-

13) The Saw – apparently a mountain ridge (Veith [n. 6 above] 545–54; Loreto [n. 1 above] 177–78) – corresponds to Flaubert’s far more evocative, but imaginary, “défilé de la Hache” (Salammbô, ch. 14).

14) Lepcis Minor lay close to Hadrumetum on the Byzacium coast. Loreto (n. 1 above) 187 is tempted to identify the place in Polybius (87,7 τὴν Λέπτιν) as Lepcis Magna, but this lies 300-odd miles, 500 or so kilometres, to the east, which does not look plausible for these operations.

mission. Diodorus reports such an operation though not Polybius, and Hippou and Utica, bereft of their rebel allies, would be no threat meanwhile. In the winter the chances of supplies getting through to them would be minimal (and from where?), making surrender the only remaining recourse. Peace will then have returned to Africa by early 237. That comfortably allows three years and four months to have elapsed since the revolt erupted late in 241.¹⁵

This in turn fits what we know of the crisis which suddenly blew up with the Romans over Sardinia. This ended before the late spring of 237: Hamilcar was in Spain by then, for when he died in the winter of 229–228 he had spent ‘almost nine years’ there. The Carthaginians’ preparations to retake the island, along with those for the Spanish expedition, could start while Hippou Acra and Utica were still holding out, for their surrender was inevitable and Hamilcar had bigger, Spanish fish to fry.¹⁶

VIII

The chronology thus worked out can only be tentative. But it fits the meagre available indications of seasons, synchronisms and elapsed times, and does not involve any improbabilities. Polybius’ account is internally coherent, with no obvious chronological in-

15) Loreto (n. 1 above) 213 sees the siege of Tunes (after the rebel disaster at The Saw) and ensuing operations around Lepcis taking up most of 238 and, by implication, the beginning of 237 (if beginning in November 241 [n. 5 above], the war must have ended in February 237). He accounts for the Sardinia crisis and the Numidian war that supposedly followed by having Hamilcar move to Spain at the end of 237 (213 n. 17). But this would not allow enough time for the almost nineteen years that Polybius reports as elapsing between then and the outbreak of the Second Punic War early in 218 (§ II above) – still less if the outbreak were to be dated, with Loreto, to the end of 219.

16) De Sanctis (n. 3 above) 383 has the siege of Tunes at the end of the campaigning season of 239, the generals reconciled over the winter that followed (i. e. winter 239/238), and the war ending at the close of 238 (“sullo scorcio di 238”). Implausibly, that requires these last stages of the war to take almost twelve months. Scullard (n. 5 above) 568, has the war end “probably in 237 rather than 238”, whereas the Chronological Table for the same volume (671) doubtfully opts for 238. On the Sardinia crisis see for instance H. H. Schmitt, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums III* (München 1969) 185–89 for sources; J. W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion* (Bruxelles 1976) 64–71; W. V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327–70 B. C.* (Oxford 1979) 190–92; Barbara Scardigli, *I Trattati Romano-Cartaginesi* (Pisa 1991) 231–43; Lancel (n. 8 above), 42–44; Hoyos (n. 2 above) 132–43, with bibliography. The chronology of the crisis, 238 or 237, is debated (cf. also nn. 2 and 14); Hoyos (n. 2 above) 138–40 argues for early 237.

consistencies. He does manage to get through his entire narration of the war without once mentioning a summer or a winter or a change of year – in remarkable contrast not just with the practice of a predecessor like Thucydides, but even with his own in narrating the First Punic War – but at least he gives us the valuable total of 'three years and some four months'.

By including relevant overseas developments he allows a few other useful deductions to be made as well. There is nothing implausible in his aligning the mercenaries' mutiny in Sardinia with Hamilcar's operations against Spendius and Autaritus (§ III above), or with his placing the convoy disaster during the period of Hanno's and Hamilcar's counterproductive wrangles (§ IV). His retrospective on Punic-Roman relations in the first part of the war is again chronologically useful (§ V).

The table below sets out the likely datings of the chief events in the Libyan War. Dead-reckoning, or dead-guesstimating, is obviously unavoidable for many items; some of the events could be placed in a different season (or, occasionally, year) from the one proposed. None the less the proposed chronology matches Polybius' internal consistency of narrative, and helps to clarify both the length of the war and also the immensity of effort which the Carthaginians had to make for victory in the most severe challenge to their existence since the invasion of Agathocles.

Chronological résumé

Preliminaries: fruitless negotiations with the veterans (Polyb. 1,66–69)	<i>mid- to late 241</i>
Veterans and then Libyans revolt (1,70)	<i>late 241</i>
Hippou and Utica besieged; Carthage cut off by rebels at Tunes (73)	<i>late 241</i>
Hanno's operations around Utica (74); Roman protest about arrested traders; traders freed; Romans begin to assist Punic war-effort (83)	<i>early to mid-240</i>
Hamilcar appointed general; battle of the Bagradas (75–76)	<i>mid-240</i>

Hamilcar's campaign in the hinterland; alliance with Naravas; defeat of Spendius and Autaritus (77–78)	<i>later half of 240 (and early 239?)</i>
Mercenaries in Sardinia revolt; forged letter episode at Tunes (79)	<i>autumn/winter 240</i>
Murder of Gisco and other prisoners by rebels (79–80)	<i>winter 240–239</i>
Romans reject appeal from mercenaries in Sardinia (83)	<i>spring 239 (?)</i>
Abortive Punic expedition to recover Sardinia (79)	<i>first half of 239</i>
Hamilcar and Hanno join forces but quarrel; Hanno loses his command (82)	<i>early 239</i>
Supply convoy from Emporia lost in storm; Hippou Acra and Utica revolt; Utica's unsuccessful appeal to Romans (82–83)	<i>spring/summer 239</i>
Rebels besiege Carthage; further Roman and Syracusan aid to Carthaginians; Hamilcar and Hannibal press hard on besiegers (82–84)	<i>summer/autumn 239</i>
Siege of Carthage abandoned (84)	<i>end of 239/early 238</i>
Hamilcar's second campaign inland; rebel disaster at The Saw (84–85)	<i>early to mid-238</i>
Siege of Tunes; Hamilcar and Hanno reconciled (86–87)	<i>mid-238</i>
Operations in Byzacium; final defeat of rebel forces (87)	<i>mid- to late 238</i>
Surrender of Hippou Acra and Utica (88)	<i>winter 238–237</i>
Romans provoke crisis over Sardinia (88)	<i>spring 237</i>