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C.D. Grabbe's Hannibal: A New Translation for the American Stage

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**C.D. GRABBE'S *HANNIBAL*: A NEW TRANSLATION FOR THE AMERICAN
STAGE**

A Thesis Presented

by

MARGARET INNERS

Submitted to the Graduate School of
The University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

May 2008

Theater

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

[Grabbe] ließ in der ersten Ausarbeitung dieses Stücks ... dem schrecklichsten Hohn ganz freien Lauf. So erinnere ich mich, als Hannibal gezwungen war, Italien zu verlassen, hielt er einen Kriegsrat und während nun seine Generale weise beraten, stellt er sich beiseite und schlägt sein Wasser ab. „Wartet erst einmal!“, sagt er verächtlich zu seiner Umgebung, „ich muß erst einmal p...“ Als er wirklich abreist, verrichtet er erst seine Notdurft, indem er spricht: „Das ist mein Denkmal, welches ich hinterlasse.“

[In the first draft of this piece [Grabbe] gave free rein to the most terrible mockery. I remember, when Hannibal was forced to leave Italy, he held a war council and while his general advised him, he stepped aside and passed water. “Wait a second!” he says scornfully to his entourage. “I have to p[iss] first.” When he really departs, he empties his bowels, while explaining: “This is my memorial, which I leave behind.”]¹

The moment which Christian Dietrich Grabbe’s friend Karl Ziegler describes above did not make it into the final text of *Hannibal* in 1835. Its excision makes sense in the light of Grabbe’s ultimate project, for it would be confusing for Hannibal so performatively to disrespect a land to which he holds more of an ideological allegiance than to his own country. Yet the mere fact that Grabbe felt impelled to write it deserves examination for what it reveals about what drove him in his life and works. On the most basic personal level, this scene captures Grabbe’s own bitterness and visceral response to his lack of commercial and critical success as a writer: Hannibal’s disillusioned and spiteful excreting on the land he failed to conquer enacted Grabbe’s own disgust at what he viewed as the sentimental and ignorant artistic tastes of the Biedermeier public, who rejected him. Yet more importantly, the fact that Grabbe’s initial impulse in representing this respected historical character was to portray him in

the distinctly earthy act of urinating on an enemy's land encapsulates the project and the struggle that drove the writer throughout his career: to create a less idealized type of tragic hero and to modernize the tragic form, which he felt failed to correspond to his distinctly pessimistic view of human nature and civilization.²

That the text has remained until now unavailable to a non-German-speaking audience is not entirely surprising in light of certain complaints leveled against the play. In his essay on *Hannibal*, Winfried Freund summarizes the harsh criticisms frequently leveled against that text and others of Grabbe's as well: "Rohheit warf ihm schon die zeitgenössische Kritik vor, von Nihilismus, Glaubenskrise, Destruktionswut, Heroenkult, Geschichtspessimismus, Formlosigkeit, und Menschenverachtung spricht die moderne Literaturkritik." [Contemporary criticism reproached him for crudeness; modern literary criticism speaks of nihilism, crisis of faith, a fury for destruction, hero worship, historical pessimism, formlessness, and misanthropy.]³ Despite Grabbe's undeniable influence on the development of modern drama, his works have hardly found their way into the German theatrical repertoire, let alone that of the United

¹ Alfred Bergmann, ed., *Christian Dietrich Grabbe: Ein Brevier* (Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1955), 266-267.

² For an in-depth examination of how Grabbe's use of dramatic language, in particular, reflected his attempts to establish a new tragic form, see David A. Horton's article "'Die Verselden Ketten': The Development of Grabbe's Dramatic Language," *The Modern Language Review* 79.1 (Jan. 1984): 97-113.

³ Winfried Freund, "Die menschliche Geschichte und der Geschichtliche Mensch in Christian Dietrich Grabbe's *Hannibal*," *Grabbes Gegenentwürfe*, Ed. Winfried Freund (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1986), 83.

States.⁴ In short, Grabbe's work is widely studied by scholars of German literature but rarely produced in his home country or abroad.

My decision to translate *Hannibal* stems from my conviction that this neglect on American and German stages is unwarranted. The thematic concern of *Hannibal*, the death of individual heroism in the face of a superficial commercial society, couched in a form which, revolutionary for its time, takes issue with the Enlightenment belief in the possibility of progress and human advancement, lends this drama a distinctly gritty and contemporary feel. Grabbe's grim treatment of war, colonialism, and capitalism and his examination of cultural questions of heroism and individualism meet in an almost cinematic form that still feels fresh and edgy. Yet, even if the *Hannibal*'s story were not as resonant to the American political and cultural situation as it currently is, the play would also work on the level of examining a misunderstood artist-character's timeless struggle to change his world's way of seeing. This play's structural uniqueness and levels of significance led to my strong belief that this play deserved, and indeed *needed*, to be translated for the 21st-century American stage.

Before speculating about *Hannibal*'s artistic potential on the American stage, I will summarize the significance of the play in two periods of particular import in the life of the text: the life of Christian Dietrich Grabbe and the German situation of the 1820s and 1830s out of which *Hannibal* emerged, and the period when it enjoyed its widest success, between 1918 and the end of World War II.

⁴ See Ulrich Weinzierl, "Grabbe in Regie-Wettbewerb," *Welt Online*, July 26, 2006, http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article231679/Grabbe_im_Regie-Wettbewerb.html (accessed May 18, 2007), and Horst Richardson, "Plays from the German-Speaking Countries on American University Stages 1973-1988," *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German* 23. 1 (1990): 77.

Grabbe's Epoch and Some of Its Manifestations in *Hannibal*

Christian Dietrich Grabbe was, as this essay's introductory anecdote suggests, not a successful or happy man by any account. *Hannibal* was his second-to-last full-length play, written just one year before his death at age 35, and it emerged in June of 1835 after a four-year writing hiatus due to alcoholism and various personal crises. A.W. Hornsey claims, based on letters Grabbe was writing while he composed *Hannibal*, that that work is the "most intensely personal of Grabbe's historical studies." Taking into account Grabbe's well-documented disillusionment and disappointment with his lack of commercial success and critical recognition for his plays—only one of his pieces was even staged in his lifetime—, he argues convincingly that Grabbe empathized with the plight of Hannibal and viewed the Carthaginians as "essentially not different from the German people who were indifferent to his genius."⁵ Grabbe's friend Karl Ziegler recorded some illuminating personal memories about the writer that support Hornsey's claim. He recalls Grabbe lamenting, after yet another domestic conflict with his wife, "Wer versteht mich hier?" His life outside the home was equally unsatisfying; of Grabbe's experiences in society, Ziegler writes,

Von den Detmolder Damen grüßten ihn manche kaum, wenn sie ihm auf der Straße begegneten, sondern gingen scheu an ihm vorüber, denn die elegante oberflächliche Vornehmheit legt ja in der Regel mehr Wert auf einen artigen Menschen, der hübsch tanzen und die Flöten blasen kann, als auf das Genie, welches Geheimnisse ganzer Weltverhältnisse aufdeckt und die tiefsten Blicke in die verborgensten Winkel der Seele tut, wenn dieses Genie nämlich etwas saloppe Sitten hat.

[Many of the ladies of Detmold hardly greeted him when they met him on the streets, but instead went past him timidly, because as a rule elegant, superficial refinement assigns more worth to a well-behaved person, who can dance nicely

⁵ A.W. Hornsey, *Idea and Reality in the Dramas of Christian Dietrich Grabbe* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966), 106.

and play the flute, than to a genius, who reveals mysteries of the world and looks deep into the most hidden corners of the soul, but who has somewhat sloppy manners.]⁶

While *Hannibal* so successfully documents Grabbe's increasing personal bitterness and pessimism, however, it would be a mistake to read *Hannibal* as merely an autobiographical, idiosyncratic stab at the artistic tastes of Biedermeier culture. His play is steeped in the social and political conditions of the Biedermeierzeit, and he has couched a great deal of far-reaching contemporary social criticism in the work. At the time of its completion, a reader (I refrain from using the term audience in relation to the piece's earliest reception, for *Hannibal* did not appear on stage until 1918) would have recognized in the Carthaginian self-centeredness and market-mania of which Grabbe's text is so clearly critical a reference to Germany's own changing social and economic situation, as Detlev Kopp explains:

Der kaufmännische Egoismus, der für den ökonomischen Entwicklungstand des noch kaum industrialisierten Deutschland der 20er Jahre durchaus noch kennzeichnend ist, wird von Grabbe aufgefaßt als den Interessen und Bedürfnissen einer Allgemeinheit entgegenlaufende Tendenz, deren negativen Effekte bis in die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen wirksam sind.

[Grabbe considered the commercial egoism, which is absolutely typical for the economical state of development of 1820s Germany, which was still hardly industrialized, as a tendency which went against the interests and needs of the general public, and as a tendency whose negative effects could be seen even in interpersonal relations.]⁷

Grabbe's disdain for Germany's developing market economy is significant not merely in how it situates him as an outsider, an anomaly, but more importantly in how it reflects his overall approach to the concept of historical progress. Grabbe rejected his

⁶ Bergmann, *Brevier*, 266-267.

peers' Enlightenment mentality, which held that humanity was moving ever onward and upward, and *Hannibal* oozes its author's dismay from every line. Grabbe's play is arguably at its core about a man who, through no fault of his own, has been left behind by "progress," whose ideals are no more than a liability in the changing world around him. The most important feature of Grabbe's legacy, however, is the dramatic structure which he developed to match his unusual treatment of content and tone. Of course, discussions of early 19th century dramatic innovation in the German-speaking world generally begin with Grabbe's contemporary Büchner, who is, deservedly, touted as the most significant and groundbreaking Biedermeier-era playwright. Grabbe is frequently mentioned tangentially as a very distant second. Yet it is important not to see Grabbe as merely a second-string, less successful Büchner.⁸ The playwrights' works were extremely different, for Grabbe was, unlike the younger, iconoclastic Büchner, striving for a new and uncomfortable dramaturgy while still trying to maintain certain ties to dramatic tradition. David Horton explains that Grabbe was struggling to find a way to reconcile traditional tragic forms with his pessimistic notions about life, to "adapt the serious and timeless issues of genuine art to the needs of a new, 'unpoetic' world, whilst at the same time avoiding the contemporary ills of triviality and superficiality."⁹

Though Grabbe's approach to dramatic structure was, and still too often is, harshly criticized as formless or rough, his style was truly revolutionary for its time. Dramatic structure had, from the Greeks to the Renaissance up until the 19th century,

⁷ Detlev Kopp, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft in den Dramen Christian Dietrich Grabbes* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1982), 176.

⁸ For a comparison of the dramatic styles of Büchner and Grabbe, see Lothar Ehrlich, *Christian Dietrich Grabbe: Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983), 74-79.

implied, relied upon, and perpetuated the idea of human progress: the very notion of a dramatic arc—of a status quo disrupted, of a series of suspenseful events marching inevitably towards a climax, and of a resolution which ties up loose ends and provides the audience with a sense of completeness and satisfaction—plays into a human desire for logic and a rightness and forward movement in the world. Yet Grabbe, who structured his play loosely, relying very little on suspenseful structures, allows an audience no sense of that comfortable inevitability or rightness of action.¹⁰ His drama refuses to move forward in a way that is satisfying to a traditional audience or readership, but instead jumps from place to place, scene to scene, until Hannibal, as Grabbe described it, “findet ... das kleine Ende im unermeßlichen Chaos der Gemeinen” [meets... a small end in the immeasurable chaos of baseness.]¹¹ The contrasting tonal textures of the play create the experience of a tragic world dissolving into a satirical world, a revolutionary and devastating dramaturgy.

Grabbe’s relationship to language and dialogue is a major factor in lending *Hannibal* the shape and tone which was so unique in Grabbe’s milieu. He originally planned to write the piece in verse, in keeping with the long classic tradition of using elevated language for tragic narrative, but at the urging of his friend Karl Immerman he turned instead to prose. Grabbe reasoned in a letter to his friend that this would allow the more formal, self-important language of the more “pompous” characters to be differentiated among the other characters’ more straightforward speaking styles. He

⁹ Horton, “Verselden Ketten,” 97.

¹⁰ For an examination of Grabbe’s approach to dramatic structure, see Wolfgang Hegele, *Grabbes Dramenform* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970), 236.

¹¹ C.D. Grabbe to Karl Immerman, 27 January 1835, in *Werke und Briefe: Briefe II*, 1833-1836, ed. Alfred Bergmann (Emsdetten: Verlag Lechte, 1973), 148.

wrote to Immerman, “Der jüngeren Scipio mußte and muß ich ferner besonders wachsen lassen. Nichts mir fataler als Schauspiele, wo alles sich um einen Götzen dreht...” [I needed, and need still further, to allow the younger Scipio to develop. Nothing is more deadly to me than plays where everything revolves around a tin soldier ...]¹² Significantly, Grabbe’s attempt to create a canvas of complex and human characters, with language which differentiates between the characters, points towards the later development of Realism as much as his formal choices, as we shall see, point toward Expressionism and Modernism.

Grabbe’s “Golden Age”: *Hannibal* in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich

It was more than eighty years after his death that Grabbe’s work first garnered any real attention in the theatrical world. Though, as Margaret Anne Sutherland points out in her exhaustive study of *Hannibal*’s reception in the German theater between 1918 and the early 1950s, the National Socialists wished to give the impression that it was they who first discovered and could appreciate the dramas of Grabbe, his work had been produced as early as 1918.¹³ Sutherland points to two factors which made the piece appealing at that particular historical juncture: “its stylistic affinity with Expressionist drama and its glaringly recognizable parallels with contemporary political developments.”¹⁴ That “stylistic affinity” makes itself visible primarily in the play’s epic structure, being a loosely-woven group of scenes focused alternately on the fate of the city of Carthage, on the Scipios’ military campaigns, and on Hannibal’s struggles

¹² Grabbe to Karl Immerman, 14 December 1834, in *Briefe II*, ed. Bergmann, 115.

¹³ Margaret Anne Sutherland, *The Reception of Grabbe’s *Hannibal* in the German Theatre* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1984), 110.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

and eventual downfall, as well as in the extent to which the play indulges in representing a profoundly subjective world-view. Also appealing to the Expressionist aesthetic, I would argue, was the strange texture which arises from Grabbe's juxtaposition of a tragic style of storytelling with a satirical style, and the linguistic tone which Hegele calls a "Hannibalatmosphäre, ... der lakonische, dauernd kurz umschlägliche Prosastil" [a Hannibal-atmosphere, ... the laconic, perpetually curt, enveloping prose style] which permeates not merely Hannibal's style of speech but every character's, to lend the whole text a feeling of pained or exhausted language.¹⁵ Furthermore, the moments in which Grabbe calls for striking shadow-play imagery, as when Grandfather Barca somewhat hysterically mistakes the much-elongated shadow of an approaching maiden for an enormous Dido, point forward to a time when filmmakers like Murnau and Lang would harness the power of the shadow in their Expressionist film experiments.

While Sutherland points to many very specific elements of the plot which, according to the reviews of the time, resonated strongly with the socio-political situation of 1918 Germany, I limit myself here to general topical concurrences. The historical situation at the time of *Hannibal's* premiere, to summarize Sutherland, was one of revolt and dissatisfaction. Following a dismal defeat in World War I, Germany struggled economically, bitter about what it viewed as the utterly harsh demands of the Treaty of Versailles. Audiences saw parallels between the Carthage-crushing peace terms of the Romans and the Germany-crushing peace terms of the Allies. Furthermore, the *Dolchstoßlegende* was gaining in popularity at this juncture, as former

¹⁵ Hegele, *Grabbes Dramenform*, 240.

military commanders fed the misperception that revolutionaries at home had undermined the potentially victorious German army. Critics and audiences alike drew an analogy between Grabbe's play, in which a great and capable leader is undermined by an unsupportive country, and the situation of their own land.¹⁶ Even the young Bertolt Brecht wrote an adaptation of Grabbe's play, slated to be performed in 1922 by the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, but never left fragmentary and unperformed. According to Detlev Kopp, Brecht's project seemed like it would minimize the heroic side of the protagonist, and instead turn him into a sort of "perfect soldier." He claims that Brecht wanted to prevent the audience from identifying with Hannibal or seeing anything monumental about him or his death.¹⁷ Margaret Sutherland for the most part seems to agree with Kopp's analysis of the fragments, yet further suggests that Brecht attempted to humanize and ground the character of Hannibal as a rejection of his milieu's theatrical trend towards enormity and excess.

With the ascendance of the National Socialist government, as the old feelings of injury melded with new ideas about ways to act on them, interpretations of *Hannibal* shifted. Various aspects of Grabbe's biography, worldview, and works, as we shall see, appealed to the Nazis, who advocated performances of his plays, including *Hannibal*, for their potential to be socially instructive. In her book, Sutherland details many of the productions—there were nineteen documented between 1934 and 1944—and which elements of Nazi ideology were emphasized in them. I will recap from her examination

¹⁶ Sutherland, *Reception of Grabbe's Hannibal*, 80.

¹⁷ Kopp, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 182.

the main points which made this work acceptable for the oppressive National Socialist government.¹⁸

First of all, Grabbe himself was of Lower Saxon and therefore “Aryan” origins, and his views on art and life were deemed acceptable by the National Socialists, who praised his style and philosophies as appropriately down-to-earth, austere, and knotty. (His pieces nonetheless allowed for the sort of wild, monumental spectacle which the Nazis were so well able to harness to their advantage.) They perceived him as a sort of maverick who longed for military activity during the peaceful Biedermeier and rejected the sentimental strain of literature of his time. Furthermore, a comment he made in one letter about his distaste for his studies allowed the Reich’s propagandists to declare him a folk-artist, rather than an intellectual.

The Third Reich’s censors admired Grabbe’s tendency to portray in his work the “great men of history,” those peerless, solitary characters whose genius allowed them to rise above the rabble. Indeed, this was a time when, as Max Lederer points out in his 1946 article, “the party line prescribe[d] first of all, in emulating Shakespeare, the creation of great historic drama.”¹⁹ At the same time, they praised the weight his pieces granted to the role of the *Volk*, based on whose support the onstage world could rise or fall. This, they believed, could instruct the German people about their “collective responsibility” for working towards victory at war.²⁰ Finally, the implicit claim in *Hannibal* that self-seeking economic interests could cause the destruction of a

¹⁸ Sutherland, *Reception of Grabbe’s Hannibal*, 123.

¹⁹ Max Lederer, “Recent Drama in Germany,” *The German Quarterly* 19.3 (May, 1946): 178.

²⁰ Sutherland, *Reception of Grabbe’s Hannibal*, 142.

whole civilization supported Hitler's desire to replace material concerns with ideal virtues.²¹

It seems likely that the Nazi party's "discovery" of Grabbe's work during their time in power tainted his name somewhat, and their overwhelming endorsement of his work has, I believe, contributed to his declined popularity in Germany and his invisibility on the American stage. One could argue that the work of an artist like Wagner, who was beloved by the Nazis, managed to withstand their appropriation and has maintained its presence on international stages, but it is important to remember that Wagner had already established his reputation and his place in the canon long before the Nazis adopted his operas and essays to promulgate their abhorrent political and social ideas. Grabbe's place in Germany's theaters, on the other hand, was far from established when the Nazis began to extol the virtues of his dramas, and therefore his work may seem more inextricably tied up in the mess that was the Third Reich.

A Place for *Hannibal* Today

It is not difficult, I think, to see why *Hannibal* is a play of great importance in cultural and theatrical history. Yet this could be said of many plays, and that claim would not in itself justify the creation of a translation designed for the contemporary American stage. A look at the critical response to a rare recent staging of *Hannibal* may, however, begin to illuminate what is so timely and theatrically viable about that play. The 2002 production of *Hannibal* at the Staatstheater Stuttgart received some encouraging critical responses mixed in with predictable complaints. Introduced by a gentler critic as a "Grabbe-Rarität," by a more sensationalist one as "ein

²¹ Ibid., 120.

Theatermonstrum,” the production was praised for its curious texture and its undeniable timeliness.²² Though the Stuttgart staging preceded by a few months the United States’ invasion of Iraq, Jürgen Berger was already noticing the piece’s very 21st-century world-political ramifications: “Reibungsverluste, die entstehen, wenn eine große Wirtschaftsmacht plötzlich nur noch machtpolitische Expansionsgelüste zur Staatsräson erhebt, markieren ein untergründige Linie, die die Punischen Kriege und den demokratischen Imperialismus der heutigen Bush-Regierung verbindet.” [Attritional losses that come about when a large economic power suddenly elevates power-political lust for expansion to its key national interest demarcate a subsurface line connecting the Punic Wars and the democratic imperialism of today’s Bush government.]²³ In response to the Stuttgart production, Georg Leisten exclaimed, “So grandiose wie jetzt in Stuttgart, so sinnlich, süffig und staubfrei war Geschichtstheater schon lange nicht mehr!” [Historical theater hasn’t for a long time been as grandiose, as erotic, as pleasant and as dust-free as it is now in Stuttgart!]²⁴

These critical responses suggest that the play is not in fact “unstageable,” as both public critics and scholars either cacklingly or dismissively contend, nor a museum piece merely interesting for what it reveals about the history of theater; rather, it is in fact a rich and problematic blueprint for a potentially rich and problematic, and far from

²² Ulrike Kahle, “Schlachtschiff Hannibal Saisonstart am Staatstheater Stuttgart mit einer Grabbe-Rarität,” *Tagespiegel.de*, October 13, 2002, <http://www.tagespiegel.de/kultur/art772,2053570> (accessed March 22, 2008), and Georg Leisten, “Stahlgewitter und archaische Knochenmühlen,” *Morgenweb.de*, October 23, 2002, <http://www.morgenweb.de/service/archiv/artikel/404823216.html> (accessed March 22, 2008).

²³ Jürgen Berger, “Karthago ist überall,” *Taz.de*, October 10, 2002, <http://www.taz.de/index.php?id=archivseite&dig=2002/10/10/a0177> (accessed March 22, 2008).

dull or dated, theatrical experience. Indeed, if a contemporary German audience can notice certain parallels between Hannibal's world and the troubled colonialist enterprises of the United States, how much more deeply might such a drama resonate with a contemporary *American* audience!

The implications of staging a play about the death of individual heroism in a country supposedly overrun with heroes are profound. The play suggests that Hannibal is the last of "his kind," a great and far-thinking leader who has, in his self-centered culture, become an anachronism. This becomes powerfully apparent in Hannibal's move into a satirical world in Act V. Moments of comedy peek up throughout the text, but Prusias's self-importance and pretensions to artistry are so laughable and consistent in this act that we must feel the impossibility of a man like Hannibal surviving long in such an environment. The final event of the play, a theatrically self-reflexive turn in which Prusias transforms Hannibal's death into an excuse for *performing* heroism and nobility, suggests the historical transition in which *real* honor has been usurped by self-conscious play-acted honor.

Another potentially fruitful site of theatrical power arises in Grabbe's satirical look at Carthage's commerce-crazed myopia in the two bustling market scenes. This is a comedic, unheroic world profoundly in conflict with Hannibal's impulse towards individual excellence.²⁵ An American audience could without difficulty draw connections between the mass of Carthaginians who are more interested in what an arriving caravan has to sell than in the events of the wider world and the mass of

²⁴ Leisten, "Stahlgewitter."

²⁵ Manfred Schneider, *Destruktion und Utopische Gemeinschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag GmbH, 1973), 296.

Americans who sleepwalk through malls, anesthetize themselves with internet shopping, and whip themselves into a frenzy at department store sales. A director might choose to make these community-dissolving, even nation-destroying, qualities of such single-minded acquisitiveness visible in shaping performances and staging to reflect misdirected energies, disconnected people, and spiritual emptiness.

The seemingly huge production demands of *Hannibal* need not discourage theater artists intrigued by the text. While its epic scale seems to cry out unabashedly for the sort of visual excess that today's high-end, vastly-scaled theatrical or cinematic spectacles, backed by technology and money, can finally permit, the play at the same time lends itself to a more economical approach. Its avant-garde form and over-the-top staging suggestions might tantalize a small, more experimental theater looking for a piece which invites, indeed demands, collaborative imagination and play to meet the script's challenges. With actors performing multiple roles, thoughtful edits, and a thrift-fueled ingenuity in staging choices, a small company could, as in Stuttgart, allow Grabbe's play to sparkle.

With this translation, then, I hope to lift the dust of years and of neglect from a drama of both historical and artistic value. Having been dismissed by his contemporaries, misread and tainted by the Nazis, and thereafter unjustly ignored, Grabbe's *Hannibal* deserves a new life in a time when, finally, its audience may be ready to hear what it really has to say.

CHAPTER 2

HANNIBAL

Dramatis Personae

The Carthaginians

BARCA

HANNIBAL, his grandson, commander of the Carthaginian army

ALITTA, Barca's great-granddaughter

BRASIDAS

HANNO

MELKIR

GISGON

the Three Men, secret rulers of Carthage

TURNU, an African Chieftain

HANNA, an old slavewoman of Alitta's house

MELKIR'S TRUSTED SERVANT

HOUSEKEEPER

SOME SLAVES

of Gisgon's house

PEDDLERBOY

A CARTHAGINIAN

A MERCHANT

TWO SLAVEDEALERS

TWO FASHIONABLE YOUNG MEN

THREE PEDDLERWOMEN

A PASSERBY

AN OLD MAN

A MESSENGER

A SHEIKH, who leads the Ethiopian caravan

A CUSTOMS OFFICER

MESSENGER FROM THE SYNEDRION AND BARCA

A MESSENGER FROM HASDRUBAL

A YOUNG CARTHAGINIAN

A SOLDIER

TWO CARTHAGINIAN ENVOYS

A CAPTAIN OF HANNIBAL'S

TWO MEN

A HEROLD

ANOTHER TWO CARTHAGINIAN ENVOYS, the second a silent role

GATEKEEPER

A BOY

A WOMAN

TWO PRIESTS OF MOLOCH

A WARRIOR

In addition, the people of Carthage, barkers, peddlers, Numidian cavalrymen, Balearan slingshoters, sailors.

The Romans

CATO THE ELDER/CATO CENSOR
SCIPIO THE ELDER
SCIPIO THE YOUNGER
TERENCE
FABIUS MAXIMUS
FABIUS' CAVALRY COMMANDER
MASSINISSA, King of the Massyli, ally of the Romans (silent role)
TITUS FLAMINIUS, a praetor
FIRST CONSUL
SECOND CONSUL
PRAETOR
A SENATOR
A CURULE AEDILE
TWO LICTORS
A SOLDIER
A HIGH PRIEST
AN ATELLAN
AN OLD MAN
A ROMAN DISGUISED AS A CARTHAGINIAN SOLDIER
A VELIT
TWO ROMAN ENVOYS

In addition, senators, tribunes, celeres, vintners and vintneresses.

The Capuans

THE DESPOT OF THE CITY
THREE CITIZENS
A HIGHBRED CAPUAN
FOUR OF THE DESPOT'S SLAVES

In addition, slaves.

The Numantians

A PRISONER
A WOMAN
A BOY

The Celtiberians

ALLOCHLIN, a Celtiberian prince

HIS BRIDE

A CELTIBERIAN, the son of Ullos

In addition, attendants to the Celtiberian prince Allochlin.

The Bithynians

PRUSIAS, King of Bithynia

PANTISAALBADERTHILPHICHIDIS, footboy of the king

TWO COURTIERS

PROTOVESTIAR

A PAINTER

A SLAVE

In addition, the king's retinue.

Act I- Hannibal ante portas!

Scene 1- Carthage.

Hall in Alitta's House

On stage are Alitta and Brasidas.

BRASIDAS

You love me?

ALITTA

That eternal question. Must I constantly repeat something that I can hardly say without profaning the depths of my heart?

BRASIDAS

Then be my happy star again!

ALITTA

Me? An orphan?

BRASIDAS

You're not—The plague ripped your parents from you, yes, but you still have ...

ALITTA

What?

BRASIDAS

A friend. And Carthage. Our shared mother.

ALITTA

Oh yes, she! A stone mother, with a bunch of apathetic siblings! Nothing's more terrible than a family's only daughter weeping at her parents' pyre, and millions of people outside in a strange whirl: a little funeral candle in a wide desert night!

BRASIDAS

Get that out of your head—

ALITTA

That's easily said.

BRASIDAS

Let's relive those old nights, where we sat here and talked about Hannibal and his victories.

ALITTA

The chairs in which my parents sat then are empty—And indeed! How is it that you speak of the black-and-yellows outside of Rome? But what are you doing?

BRASIDAS

You're angry? Just like that? I'm trembling!

ALITTA

At the furrowed brow of a girl? Now it's clear to me.

BRASIDAS

What?

ALITTA

It wouldn't be much of a riddle for a real man. You quake before the brow of your lover, as you did earlier before the gates of Rome!

BRASIDAS

Ha!

ALITTA

You prostrate yourself before the dandies, those vermin who dirty the streets they strut down, like flies on a plate. They carp about victories, but they avoid battle. Our protector, our victor, do I even need to say his name? Hannibal, he's getting shamefully little support. Not even two thousand citizens are with him. He must torture himself from victory to victory with blacks, nomads, rabble of all sorts, fruitlessly and thanklessly. Be better, make an example, volunteer to fight at his side! *She wrings her hands.*

Holy Astaroth, what have I said!

BRASIDAS

The truth. I wallow in love and forget to deserve you. This very day I'll depart.

ALITTA

And you want to love me?

BRASIDAS

Didn't you yourself demand the trip?

ALITTA

I don't know—You, impaled on Roman spears ...

BRASIDAS

We'll have a deadly sandstorm in front of us—Balearan throwers and Numidian cavalry, so the Romans will have to wash their eyes before they aim.

ALITTA

No—I sense—listen!—Rome emerged before me in a dream, last night, truly! Its bricks glowed: a red sun, everything melting! Then there was a she-wolf again, with eyes, big,

wide, like the sea, when it looks out from its silent deeps after a storm. And in her eyes lay sunken cities!

BRASIDAS

Forget about wolf-dreams and red suns—Isn't there also black? Doesn't Hannibal darken Italy?

ALITTA

Midnights are lovely, and the loveliest—you haven't forgotten?

BRASIDAS

The look of that night's stars plays eternally in my heart—when you said for the first time—"I'm yours."

ALITTA

You haven't? So you'll stay?

BRASIDAS

Am I worthy of you, if I don't fight?

ALITTA

Never.

BRASIDAS

Then I'll take this kiss on your breast with me into the field, and it will often warm me, when I lie tentless in the cold night!

ALITTA

Shameless!

BRASIDAS

I have sanctified my lips. May a false or base word never issue from them! Farewell!

ALITTA

Am I dreaming?

She presses on her head.

Wake up!—He's—off to the ship? *At the window.* Agony! the sails are already spreading—porters, slaves, warriors hurrying on board—There he is, I'm sure he doesn't feel right in that strange crowd. Is he looking back at my window? No, he doesn't dare, his heart would grow too heavy. It is heavy—his shaky walk betrays that—May the breath of love blow over him!—They're hoisting the anchor, listen, jubilant trumpets blare even through the pain of parting and the flags spring happily in the air, and each second the only one I love is carried farther and farther away by the sea!

She holds her heart.

Poor thing, you only know what you had when it's gone!—Hanna!

Hanna, an old slave, enters.

HANNA

My lady!

ALITTA

Sit by me today while you embroider. *Hanna sits and embroiders.*
Can it be? She embroiders with my tears?
She hides her head.

Scene 2- Large Marketplace in Carthage.

BARKERS

From all sides.

Come on and buy! Here's some blacks! Girls, women, men, widows, wet nurses, all finest quality!

PEDDLERWOMEN

Vegetables!

OTHER PEDDLERWOMEN

Dates, sago, fish, tuna fish!

PEDDLERBOY

Get your tuna fish! Tuna fish from Syracuse! Always fresh! Only the best!

1ST PEDDLERWOMAN

Even hungry hyenas don't yowl the way that boy does when he hollers about his goods!

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

Got it from his mother. If you'd heard her—

3RD PEDDLERWOMAN

Don't talk about that foghorn. In my dreams I still hear her shrieking out of her grave, "Cabbage and kale, kale and cabbage!"

CARTHAGINIAN

A pound of sago?

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

Five pieces of silver.

CARTHAGINIAN

Three—

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

Alright, since it's you ...

CARTHAGINIAN

With surprise and confusion. Do we know each other?

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

I, ahhh ...you've—yes you—*To a neighbor.* You're wearing silk? That means ...?

MERCHANT

This one?

1ST SLAVEDEALER

Four thousand drachmas.

MERCHANT

A eunuch, I hope?

1ST SLAVEDEALER

Of course. I know the tastes of gentleman husbands and adjust my wares accordingly.

MERCHANT

Bring him along after me. I'll pay at home.

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Those, the two black girls—precious!

2ND FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Coals that want to burn.

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Great Moloch! They're burning already! Embers on their lips!

2ND FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Lend me some money. I'm buying them.

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Reaches for his pouch and then acts dismayed. Don't have anything with me.

2ND FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Aside. The liar, I hear it clinking!

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Anyway, friend, let's take a look at the wares.—My good man, what do the two girls cost?

The two girls weep bitterly during the following examination.

2ND SLAVEDEALER

Gentlemen, pleasing young things! Yes, I should hardly say it, [he speaks louder] but feel the velvet of their skin, see how they tremble at the slightest movement, that's from their tender upbringing, because, between us, they are princesses, from Gambia, and a real bargain! *Very loud.* Bargain princesses!

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

Nice frisky creatures. Try the inside of the hand, no callouses!

2ND FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

A lovely skin!

2ND SLAVEDEALER

The items cost—

1ST FASHIONABLE YOUNG MAN

We'll come again.

2ND SLAVEDEALER

Looking after the dandies. Always sampling, never buying! Baal can give you a sample of Hell for all I care!—Hey! That crane there? Is it going nuts? It's working on something with those long iron arms!

PASSERBY

It's lifting messenger-ships from Italy onto the land.

2ND SLAVEDEALER

So—? More reports of victory, but no wheat. Since the Barcas gave up business to become soldiers, we've gotten the bare north, instead of the rich Sudan, iron instead of gold, raids instead of trade, recruits instead of roast mutton!

OLD MAN

Leaning on a cane, has been listening with a serious face. That is unfortunately all too true. *He goes on, shaking his head.*

MESSENGER

Hurrying through the crowd. Victory at Cannae! Measureless victory!

TOWNSPEOPLE/ MERCHANTS

Variously. Good./ You don't need to scream about it./ It's coming, there it is, the Ethiopian caravan!/ Haha! Camels, horses, ostriches!/ Look at how the elephants behind them raise their trunks and trumpet! The lions, look at 'em gnash at the bars of their cages, how the panthers roar, how the giraffes crane their necks!/ Splendid!

The caravan arrives.

LEADING SHEIKH

Stop the caravan. The last customs check is under the thousand columns there.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Honored father, where have you come from?

SHEIKH

From deep in the Sudan.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

And you're leading ...?

SHEIKH

Elephants, camels, slaves, gold dust, in addition many rare animals, purchased from peoples beyond Morocco, where complexions are again as light as ours.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Palm wine, too? There's none of it in the market and it's much in demand.

SHEIKH

That too. Take the manifest, and compare.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

So have your people pull off, and unload your cargo in the city hall.

SHEIKH

May the stars embrace you and the dwellers of this city as they embraced us during our nocturnal journey through the desert: guiding deities in glittering vestments!
He lays his arm over his breast prayerfully for a moment, and then moves on with the caravan into the customs area.

Scene 3- Carthage. Evening.

A chamber in Hanno's palace.

Candles burning on a small round table, around which Hanno, Melkir, and Gisgon sit.

MELKIR

Is the envoy chained up?

HANNO

So his veins are bleeding!

MELKIR

And what else do we have in mind?

HANNO

Everything, as long as Gisgon doesn't lose his temper in public.

GISGON

We are the Three Men, chosen secretly by lottery, and no one knows for sure that we three are they. They know only that three moons stand in the heavens under which the Suffets and the people move about. Each of us has his followers in the lordly Synedrion and among the good hundredmen of the masses; each of us argues with the others publically while supporting them secretly behind tenfold closed doors.

All this I know, and I utter it as softly as a snake slinks through fallen leaves. For that reason, by God, don't insult me. I may seem to be the youngest, but the climate of this cramped room will soon make me ancient too.

HANNO

Calm yourself! Such tempestuousness is always harmful. Quietly.

GISGON

Yes, that's right. One should engage in evil quietly.

HANNO

Thus, the Barcas must fall. Soon. As soon as possible. They're becoming too important. They're winning too much. Some people are already admiring them.

GISGON

And others would rather see them dead than as anchors of this city made of masts. Yet I'll let myself be educated.

MELKIR

You're smiling, Hanno? What is it?

HANNO

I should not smile?

MELKIR

Nor cry. Both betray.

HANNO

I'm happy that Gisgon will let himself be educated. Gisgon, the Barcas have powerful mines in Spain—

GISGON

And we have splendid catacombs in which to bury all of the Barcas. *To himself.* When it's time. But it's not time to show these repulsive old billygoats that I understand their bleating.

HANNO

They have Italy—

MELKIR

—and only fight on that one strip of land. We on the other hand know and use the Atlantic that stretches from pole to pole.

HANNO

When Hannibal traipsed across the Alps, he shook their snowy head so that Italian flakes darkened everything and it even got wintry here for his opponents. Now he's repeating that enormous victory—

MELKIR

After which he'll need a long time to catch his breath!

HANNO

But there's also the extensive Barcas family—

GISGON

Admittedly, with their connections they seem to entwine the entire city.

HANNO

Tear down the ivy!

GISGON

We will! But how?

MELKIR

Easy. Don't give Hannibal any further support and he'll break down at Rome.

HANNO

He must have a bit of help, for appearances' sake. We'll send him some six thousand troops, pathetic mercenaries, and we'll spread it around that they are six thousand fine articles. We'll be adored by Carthage and the world.

GISGON

To himself. Anybody who doesn't feel sick around these two has a heart of stone.

MELKIR

Why even these mercenaries? They could end up helping him. He knows how to use very little.

HANNO

Melkir! A few lousy troops, seemingly plentiful; secret orders against him, with the public pretence of our good will ... That's better in any case than a public struggle with him and his party.

MELKIR

After thinking it over. True enough—But I want to choose the troops.

GISGON

Aside. He'll find some good ones! Poor Hannibal!

Aloud. The imprisoned envoy was so loud on the streets, that he certainly has more in that copper throat. He must die.

HANNO

Pushes a spring-loaded button hidden in the wall, and smirks.

Now he is dead, my dear Gisgon.

Gisgon looks very surprised.

Because, my good man, I have followed Melkir's example—

MELKIR

With his face growing long. Hann—Hanno?

HANNO

Why not just tell him, when our associate should learn of it sooner rather than later?

Again to Gisgon. That is, I have equipped my house with wire springs that operate the vaults below, so that any of them will collapse when I press the appropriate spring.

This tiny spring has just now buried the envoy in dirt and debris, possibly also squashed him, and only we three know that.

GISGON

Jumping up. A spider's web! I have to go! My cloak!

To himself. Big talker. My house is much better rigged than his.

HANNO

Don't worry. We are friends.

GISGON

Sitting. Ahh—I forgot.

MELKIR

Gisgon! Hanno's criticisms of your tempestuousness are not unfounded.

Scene 4- Rome. The Capitol.

A session of the Senate.

1ST CONSUL

Are you certain?

PRAETOR

Quietly and firmly. Yes.

2ND CONSUL

Then to the business of the day.

1ST SENATOR

Here's a proposition that would require a guardian to give an annual account of his ward's fortune.

CATO THE ELDER

Add to that: the guardian is liable for double every error!

1ST CONSUL

Do you assent to the law and Cato's addition?

ALL

Aye.

1ST CONSUL

Lictor, tack it up under the twelve tablets at the Forum.

A lictor exits. Deep silence. To himself. I, a consul of Rome, may not even wipe the sweat from my brow without people noticing. I've lost two sons, and my wife wastes away in sorrow. Still I must contain the storms in me, let the clouds rain out only in my breast. Because—what are sons, compared to Rome?

CATO

If we're gathered to be silent, we may as well go home.

Sudden reverberating noises, from the distance.

SOME SENATORS

Ha! Now he's announcing himself! Now he knocks!

2ND CONSUL

Stay seated. Anyone who moves is a traitor! The walls and gates are amply protected, and only the word of the consul, of the tribune, not the war-machines of a foolhardy Carthaginian, will break up this meeting of the Senate. Tribunes, do you veto?

TRIBUNES

No! We must repel the enemy!

PRAETOR

It seems he's being repelled without us. The roar is dying away.

CATO

But now something worse is roaring—the women in the streets!

CURULE AEDILE

Let them! Sixty-thousand of their sons fell at Cannae.

CATO

“Let them!” Let the women rave? This I hear from the Curule’s seat? If sixty-thousand of their sons fell, they might see to it to bear another sixty-thousand. Marriage and children are becoming too rare already.

CURULE AEDILE

Such misfortune requires some indulgence.

CATO

Not if it involves howling!

Again, women’s cries from outside.

Listen, more squawks about “Cannae” and “Vengeance!” It would be a sad end, brown half-breed children, a final defeat for the women of our illustrious history! Away with them, back home, where they belong! And every one who is not sitting at her spindle within the hour will be arrested and will have a sense of modesty beaten into her—And I’ll revoke her husband’s citizenship.

Several Celeres exit.

2ND CONSUL

After a pause, in which the streets become quiet. Internal order has returned. It’s now appropriate to discuss the external danger. Hannibal stands before the gates: what does the Senate decide?

CATO

Lifts his hand. That Carthage must perish!

ALL

Second it!

2ND CONSUL

The Carthaginian army crossed the Alps in order to surprise us by land. Let’s take a lesson from our enemy, and do something similar. We’ll cut across the sea and hit him in Spain in that boldly bared neck.

CATO

So be it! Even if Hannibal has a chain of victories behind him, he’ll never break through into our streets with that ragged bunch, even if only a few of us fight back. They’re only accustomed to skirmishing.

So select a young team, as many as possible, and off to Spain with them—the rest of the citizens will stay strong as ever and hold the gates against these grim African dogs.

2ND CONSUL

Then let's have four legions selected, and they'll go right on their way to Carthage's favorite daughter: Numantia.

CATO

Who will lead them?

2ND CONSUL

You.

CATO

Excuse me. My position as Censor does not allow it.

1ST CONSUL

Aside. Cultivating his lands, writing books about it, studying Greek at his advanced age (God knows why), and speechifying, that he can do despite his position as Censor—but battlefields! Beet fields are more his style.

Aloud. Let me make a suggestion: Appoint both of the Scipios as Proconsuls and entrust armies to them. They have many times proven themselves capable in combat and in the forum, and the city needs their youthfulness.

SENATORS

Well said—We salute you, men, proconsuls!

SCIPIO THE YOUNGER

Blushing. You have chosen us. We will do what we are able.

He presses his brother's hand furtively. Brother, how happy our mother will be!

SCIPIO THE ELDER

The four legions?

2ND CONSUL

Will be selected this evening, and tomorrow night you will move out through the gates not yet occupied by the enemy.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

May we take part in the selection? Watch, choose, also reject?

2ND CONSUL

That is not merely permissible for a commander, but advisable.

CATO

But what about that Macedonian tyrant? He's allied himself with Hannibal against us.

2ND CONSUL

Empty words. He has too much baggage with what Alexander left behind to worry seriously about us.

CATO

Thus for the time being war is declared against him—

2ND CONSUL

—In words, and in time he'll face death in the hunger tower.

A LICTOR

He's attacking again, the Carthaginian! The walls are shaking and giving out!

2^{N3} CONSUL

The Senate?

PRAETOR

Shall arise, and follow their consul to danger. Vengeance for the defeat at Cannae will be paid with steel!

The consuls stride out, and the others follow, hands on their swords.

Scene 5- Outside Rome.

HANNIBAL

Leading his troops back from the assault. Set up camp.

They do.

So we're not to attack these brick hovels? Wiles, bravery, strategy, all for nothing. Or at least that's what people worried about Carthage's purse would want for us. But that's not what any army of mine would choose.

TURNU, AN AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN

Sir, Rome is an ulcer which infects the world.

HANNIBAL

Did I ask?

TURNU

Pardon me! No!

MESSENGER

Enters. Commander—

HANNIBAL

The letters. *He opens them.* This one's from Grandfather Barca—I kiss your handwriting, noble old man! *As he reads.* Almost a centigenarian, but even you

lament? Did you reach this great age just to be miserable?—Yes, they wish to suppress us Barcas—Yet Melkir and Hanno, this sword, damp with blood, still sways over you; it knows combat as well as you know treachery! “Conspiracies in Hanno’s house, designating only a little help to you.” Well, if Rome’s walls repel me, I will not fail at Carthage’s so soon.—The Barcas know of the Tin Islands and Atlantis as well as you, and put enough money away there. But they don’t lock it up, they sow it, and soldiers grow who will throw open the money boxes full of defenseless coins while you run away. The half-wits! Forgetting Rome’s terrifying nearness for the west’s golden glint in the distance—sacrificing the essential for the external.

To the messenger. Aren’t you bringing letters from the Synedrion too?

MESSENGER

Here, a package.

HANNIBAL

A mighty seal, with so little behind it.

MESSENGER

The great men of the Synedrion have sent me, in fact.

HANNIBAL

Is that a fact?

As he reads. “Greetings and congratulations for Cannae.” A cheap price for sixty-thousand Roman corpses! “A fitting amount of support is coming.” Yes, you *would* fit it first; if you cut up the heavens into a shirt, the stars would suffocate and even the thunder would get shortwinded. “Right honorable commander,”—right honorable! They’re also measuring out words? I’m amazed they don’t fob me off with more middling honor—“representatives accompany the envoys in order to receive the rings that you seized in Cannae.” Ha, the priceless court rings, that’s what they are sticking their noses out for. After all, their eyes long ago gave up seeing and they now favor smells and stinks. Luckily the best is already put aside for my men.

To the messenger. The representatives may come and receive the rings, with a receipt. But you, come closer. Man, don’t step in to my left, here, in front of my right eye—Thrasymene struck the other with blindness. All of Carthage must know that.

MESSENGER

Yessir! I can see that now.

HANNIBAL

After observing him for a time. You are a doubled-man.

MESSENGER

Distraught, looks himself over. My lord, I wouldn’t know—double limbs? No—He’s saying—Baal, does that mean something?

HANNIBAL

It does. You bring messages at the same time from Barca and from his adversary the Synedrion.

MESSENGER

That's what you mean? Oh, sir, I have nine poor little worms (I mean children) and since I have to feed them—

HANNIBAL

you become a louse?

MESSENGER

So, since I was paid on either side by your grandfather and by the Synedrion, I took on both jobs.

HANNIBAL

Friend—

MESSENGER

Friend! The merciful lord! Our chief almost never says that to my sort of people, no matter how willingly you offer him your back.

HANNIBAL

If my grandfather allows it, on my behalf touch his foot with your right hand, which I now press to mine.

MESSENGER

Sir, I'll kiss his feet!

HANNIBAL

No, they get dirty easily.— And say to him, in the whole wide world the most precious thing for me would be a greeting from him.—When that's accomplished, go into the Synedrion and report: If I don't start receiving better support soon, before they know it there will be two Scipios standing outside the city, in a blaze of fire which is already making me sweat—Then: That those in the Synedrion should be unified, no one envying the other's purse. And that otherwise our fatherland will go under in familial disputes, and the families with it!

Messenger exits.

I must move out with my seventeen-thousand men, cobbled together from so many nations.—But where to?—Capua! The city is big, full of provisions, not far from Rome, closer to Carthage, with cheaper auxiliary troops from Africa—Cheaper! May Satan practice his swordplay on haggling merchants!

To the African chief Turnu. Do you have fast-working poison?

TURNU

Sir?! I wouldn't have what every lad in Nubia possesses?

He produces a poison bottle.

I personally extracted the snake's fangs, carefully (it resisted but I stroked it, which in Nubia also helps with the women). Whoever savors this yellow poison from its fangs goes mad, writhes and dies in the same fury and fear as the viper, when it realized that it no longer possessed anything poisonous in it. You doubt it? Try, you'll be amazed, your guts will become a teeming snake nest.

HANNIBAL

Your name?

TURNU

Turnu.

Hannibal takes the bottle and hides it on himself.

Good God, Commander, you're taking my last resort. Father and mother and brother sleep in the grave—only this poison—

HANNIBAL

—remains for you. Well, Moor, poison is a last resort, and therefore I, more surely than you are able, will keep it for you and me.

TURNU

Then it is in the best hands!

Captains awaiting orders file on.

HANNIBAL

To the captains. The army decamps tonight.—What are you goggling at? I want strict obedience!—We're pounding down the road to Capua. Take care of our necessities, quietly and swiftly.

Captains exit.

To Turnu. And if your countrymen ask you why we're decamping, tell them, because the winter's near, and it's warmer to camp in Capua!

TURNU

I understand!

HANNIBAL

He understands more than I do.

Act II- Numantia and Kapua

Scene 1- The ruins of Numantia, still glowing and steaming.

TERENCE

Still not morning? I'm wasting away in the chill. Here's a fine fire, but what kind! Kindling of houses and human bones.—But I'm freezing—I have to warm myself on this steaming atrocity!

He crouches low to the ruins.

Miserable evening! Terrible night! Scipios, you monsters, you have really shown your true colors! This younger Scipio, he could smile so gracefully when I would read him one of my pieces in his room—What was he four hours ago? Storm, murder, fire, his countenance a working armory. He doesn't even acknowledge me anymore. "Now is not the time! There're more important things to do!"—those were his answers when I wanted to talk to him. He'd rush by with that wildly snorting steed, and I had to lose myself in the baggage train, in danger of being run over or beaten by any of his soldiers who don't know me—

Finally, the first rays of sunlight are quivering through the fog, and—it's getting even colder from the white curdling frost and the quickening gusts of wind. O God, just over there what's left of Numantia's inhabitants wring their hands, while the soldiers, fists toughened by swords, drag in new prisoners they've found in the smoke!

Scipio the Elder and Scipio the Younger enter with retinue.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

To one in the group. Bring this key, to Numantia's stormed main gate, to my mother, Cornelia. May she recognize that her sons strive to be worthy of her teachings.

SCIPIO ELDER

And report that we are healthy. Hopefully she as well.

Messenger exits.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Terence? Are you warming yourself on Numantia's coals? That would be the stuff of a comedy, better than one by the Atellans, not just strange—funny, too, but with a broad historical background.

TERENCE

You've made the matter so tragic that I don't have the power to recompose it into a funny one.

SCIPIO ELDER

Eh, freedman, what is tragic is also funny, and vice versa. Indeed, I have often laughed at tragedies, and have been almost moved in comedies.

TERENCE

To Scipio the Younger. Sir, last night you didn't acknowledge me.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

There were more important things to do just then.

TERENCE

That old tune again.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

To soldiers and lictors. Prisoners are to be brought in packs, thirty heads to a pack, and put on the ship heading for Ostia. Ask the Senate if they are to be sold there or in Rome.

SCIPIO ELDER

And take note where husband and wife or relatives are standing next to each other. Pull them apart, so they don't conspire.

More lictors and more soldiers exit. Soon they drive and drag the prisoners by on the way to the coast.

PRISONER

Wife, my wife! Where are they dragging you, and by your hair? In strange arms!

WIFE

The lucky ones burned themselves up!

BOY

Watch out, mother, they're coming to tie you up!—Ow, now me too! People, be gentle! What did I do to you?

LICTOR

To his underling. Slash that screaming throat! Do I have to remind you to do your job?

The scream dies off in a whine.

TERENCE

Horrific!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Well, friend, it is a habit with us to wage war until the other side is eradicated or made into slaves. We do not like partial peace. It only gives the enemy time to fortify itself for a new war. Ughh, don't act so stupid! Whole cohorts are staring at you.

TERENCE

To himself. Flagellation with lead-tipped whips: a habit! O you gods, what might Romans consider a bad habit?

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Who approaches?

SOLDIER

A Celtiberian prince.

PRINCE ALLOCHLIN

Enters, throws himself at the feet of Scipio the Younger. Sir! Sir! Sir!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Three times the same is too much. What do you want?

ALLOCHLIN

Sir, my bride! I am the prince Allochlin, and she and I are not Numantian, we are original inhabitants, not Phoenician or Carthaginian colonists—she was simply on a visit to Numantia, when she was wrongly captured—O you stars! My bride!

ATTENDANT TO ALLOCHLIN

You stars! His bride, the blooming bride!

SCIPIO ELDER

She has a lot of lovers. I would not want to be her husband.

ALLOCHLIN

There she is, among the prisoners.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Pretty girl.

ALLOCHLIN

Like the moon glowing over the dark mountain woods!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Carthage is more of an ancient enemy to you than Rome is. If you fight with me against them, your request is granted.

ALLOCHLIN

At this very moment I present 11,000 warriors to you. They all followed me, when they heard of my misfortune, moved as I was.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Bring the girl over here.

Two of his followers exit.

ALLOCHLIN

Here she comes! That is she! Those precious, lovely features, again so near! O grasses and flowers—my blessed eyes!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Princess, your bridegroom has pleaded for you. Be free and make him happy.—Allucius (forgive me, I can only pronounce your name according to my native dialect), now show me your soldiers.

ALLOCHLIN

They were watching your grace, and now approach with happy steps. I'll place myself at their head, my beloved at my side, and parade them past you.

BRIDE

To herself, looking at Scipio the Younger. Such a lordly form with the most tender of faces—is he the son of a god, wrapped in earthly iron?—I could—

ALLOCHLIN

You tarry?

BRIDE

No, playmate of my youth, even gods won't make me untrue!

Allochlin's army marches up. He pulls out his sword, places himself at the front with his bride, who is received jubilantly, and leads them past.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Brother, this is a unique kind of army.

SCIPIO ELDER

With the twittering, the bare legs, the feathers on the heads, you might easily mistake it for a gaggle of big ducks. But ducks follow the drake leading them in a row. This bunch just shove past each other willy-nilly.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

And instead of the tuba, string instruments!

SCIPIO ELDER

Battles with them must be funny.—I'm embarrassed to have such allies.

SCIPIO ELDER

Why? In war everything has its use.

TERENCE

Who has been attentively listening, standing sideways. To himself. Use! The poor rabble fill up the ravines with their corpses and the Romans use them as a bridge!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

That tall one's calling out. I want to talk to him.

SCIPIO ELDER

How? He looks like the biggest moron of them all!

TERENCE

Sir— *He stumbles and looks fearfully at the Scipios.*

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Don't swallow your thoughts. Poets burst when they have to keep their wisdom to themselves.

TERENCE

Emboldened, to Scipio Elder. Your brother wants to generalize from the worst to the best. Is that not safer, than if he inferred the other way?

SCIPIO ELDER

That would make a good speech for one of your little diversions.

TERENCE

Sorrowful, to himself. Comedies, deliberated upon for years, reworked day and night— Diversions! That is my reward!

The summoned Celtiberian enters.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

You are?

CELTIBERIAN

The son of Ullos, who was called "The Cudgel."

SCIPIO YOUNGER

And your name?

CELTIBERIAN

Too bad, don't have a name yet. I still haven't stuck my lance in the heart of any enemies that I could name myself after. With us that's the only way to get a name.— The cowards! They all ran away, the way I lift my spear! *He wields his spear.*

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Now, calm down. Do you want to enter my service?

CELTIBERIAN

If my lord gave me to you.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

He did.

CELTIBERIAN

I am your slave.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

In some leisure time, you should tell me about your people.

CELTIBERIAN

Just tell? I want to sing about them!

SCIPIO ELDER

Dryly. Are all of your people big braggarts like you?

CELTIBERIAN

I hope I'm not the least of them.

SCIPIO ELDER

You windbag! Is that what you hope?

CELTIBERIAN

The bards sing that fencing with the tongue is harder than with the sword.

SCIPIO ELDER

That strikes me as a peculiar axiom.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

He must believe it to be true, though, he says it so un-self-consciously.

TERENCE

A backwards upbringing makes man a ridiculous thing!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Son of Ullos, join my retinue.

SCIPIO ELDER

While we've been besieging here, Hasdrubal has escaped into Spain with Carthage's last army. He's already climbing the Alps to Hannibal. We must follow.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

No. He won't reach his brother. Consul Nero has long been awaiting him with three legions in Liguria. Surprises don't work twice the way Hannibal prepares them, and one learns to plan.—The horses!

The Scipios and the riders of their following mount the horses. Scipio the Younger rides to the front of the army, with raised commander's staff.

But we want to step right on the head of that African snake. The thousand tails that he flaps in all directions flounder when they no longer feel a head! Do you understand?

The army turns the eagles, battering rams, ballistas, catapults, and war instruments to the south.

SOLDIERS

It will be done! *Scipio the Younger nods approval. All exit to the south.*

Scene 2- Capua

Hall in Hannibal's apartments.

Hannibal paces back and forth intensely with Brasidas.

HANNIBAL

And your ships, which arrived *today*, sailed with the ship that brought that messenger, who claimed the courtly rings from me eight months ago? Truly, my countrymen are eagles when they collect, and snails when they send.

BRASIDAS

Our ships were bad—

HANNIBAL

Deliberately supplied so—

BRASIDAS

They soon began to leak. Then off to the Gulf of Gabes, for caulking.

HANNIBAL

Not just backwards, but sideways too? The vipers!

BRASIDAS

The work went slowly. There wasn't any—

HANNIBAL

—wood, pitch, tar, they knew that as well as I!

BRASIDAS

The admiral became visibly impatient—

HANNIBAL

Still going too fast for that well-taught toadie?

BRASIDAS

Finally we could take to the sea, and steered to Gades.

HANNIBAL

Even cats chased by boys through the streets, even greyhounds on the hunt don't bound around so much!

BRASIDAS

Awaiting us there were five-hundred newly recruited Numidians whom we were supposed to bring along to you.

HANNIBAL

Was your admiral also commanded to loop around the outermost horn of Africa, to bring me a pound of cinnamon from India?

BRASIDAS

Then—

HANNIBAL

Enough! They're operating so sloppily that my contempt barely allows me room for anger.—And the two thousand support troops you've brought are quite select! Either I'm mistaken, or I recognize the haggard finger that has picked out the chaff from the wheat for me. When I was examining the bunch, my horse got spooked from all the hunchbacks, crooked legs of the cripples, and brandings of the galley slaves!—But, Brasidas, I am thankful to you and to my niece Alitta. Had one single vein of yours ever throbbled in the Synedrion, Rome would lay defeated!—What was being said about me, when you left Carthage?

BRASIDAS

Not much. They were awaiting the Ethiopian caravan. Many thought that you shouldn't have left Rome unconquered so long.

HANNIBAL

That would be a more reasonable opinion, had I had the means to conquer it. —My stopover in Capua?

BRASIDAS

They didn't know anything about it yet.

HANNIBAL

And I'm supposed to unwind here, and my army too. I, who never touched a woman or a cup of wine! And the army? I let the exhausted fellows eat themselves full, rest up, these men with whom I could no longer hold the field. Even my last elephant died, and,

unless I wholly deceive myself about the clever animal, as he died he looked with rage towards Carthage.

BRASIDAS

The lordly Melkir—

HANNIBAL

He?

BRASIDAS

—is practically the only one to praise all your endeavors.

HANNIBAL

May hell protect me from the praise of my enemies! It is the most dangerous currency!

A messenger enters.

You, you're the one I sent to Hasdrubal—Will he risk the ire of the Three Men and follow my invitation?

MESSENGER

He had hardly read it when he called out, "Brother, I am coming! Send a messenger ahead of us, so that I don't pass him!" And as I departed I already heard the resounding signal for decampment!

HANNIBAL

Thank you gods, for once I can pray to you! Terrible Moloch, I often believed that we roasted our infants in vain, that you drew the precious smoke into that lordly nose as if it were an unremarkable tribute.—No, finally you want to rescue Carthage. 'Til now you have only tested us—I have been wrong about you! Hasdrubal and I—the Capitol is crushed, as soon as we unite—Where is he landing?

MESSENGER

For that Numantia was chosen. Since that place fell, he believed he could do nothing better than to follow your footsteps. He has the Pyrenees behind him and is high up in the Alps.

HANNIBAL

And—yes—a chair—

MESSENGER

What is it?

BRASIDAS

Calling offstage. A doctor!

HANNIBAL

At first drooping and faint, gradually coming back to himself.

A doctor certainly cannot save Hasdrubal now, and me only if my little apothecary were at hand.—Messenger, go.

Messenger exits.

Moloch, I lied! I was indeed mistaken in you! Why did you not give Hasdrubal the slightest warning? He, with that little army in the Alps? Brasidas, doesn't he know that the Alps pulverized my large army to half its size, to feed their vultures? That we, to make a path, filled ravines with rocks and corpses? Hasdrubal, you'll find plenty of old acquaintances in those false bridge, but poor guides, with feet of ice and eyes of glass!

BRASIDAS

You yourself finished the crossing.

HANNIBAL

And for that reason I know of Hasdrubal's end. I would not try it again until the sun had melted it down for centuries. Never again nights where we buried ourselves deep in the snow so as not to freeze, where over my half-dead army stars glittered in the clearest sky, as if nothing were happening, where, sleepless, I had to think for everyone, weighing in the cold bivouac whether to push forward or return. And when we finally sledged on our shields down into Italy, Consul Nero wasn't there to intercept us immediately with spears, the way he stands there now, with his foot on the Cisalps, once free but now occupied!—Yet since they did this stupid trick, we must try to help them. They are our countrymen.

BRASIDAS

We won't get out of the city. The dictator Fabius Maximus stands outside with four times our strength.

HANNIBAL

Maximus! By Satan, I can still laugh!—Man, he is Minimus, and since the Romans didn't have anyone better at hand, they gave him that great title, and the present and future world will parrot it back religiously. We march out, he moves aside, like always; we trek through the rich valleys, he clambers after us along the barren heights—He calls that prudence!

TURNU

Enters. The admiral who arrived today with the support troops is waiting in the entrance hall, to pay his respects to you.

HANNIBAL

He comes at an opportune time—

Turnu turns to go.

Wait! Take six soldiers of my guard, and tell them they should accompany the admiral to his ship—

TURNU

As an honor guard?

HANNIBAL

—and immediately tie him to the highest mast, because he and his fleet came too late.

TURNU

By God, I think he still came too early, and he himself will not disagree! *Exits.*

BRASIDAS

What will they say in Carthage?

HANNIBAL

Whatever they want. *Exits with Brasidas.*

Scene 3- Street in Capua

1ST CITIZEN

They're pulling out! We're free!

2ND CITIZEN

Until they come back.

1ST CITIZEN

What sort of patriot thinks that way?

3RD CITIZEN

Not one occupier left behind!

2ND CITIZEN

Oh yes: many little Punics. With the women.

1ST CITIZEN

Hang sparkling shields on the walls, wreath wine-flushed brows with cool ivy and vines, and cry out freedom!

ALL

Freedom!

FORMER DESPOT OF THE CITY

Entering with a large armed entourage.

Rightly so, you citizens, and with that I step again into my old privileges, which Hannibal so pompously ripped from me. I advise you, above all, to maintain order, without which no true freedom is conceivable. Enjoy your newly-won freedom, but, on pain of death, do not utter its so easily misunderstood name. Confidently behold in me the true lawful agent of total freedom. Go home, children, I will take care of everything.

To 1st citizen. You hesitate, friend?—Slaves, put him in chains. The citizen is fettered by a few of the despot's slaves.

Go home, the rest of you; in the lap of your families blooms your finest happiness. *Since the despot's armed men make threatening looks at the citizens, they silently disperse on all sides.*

1ST CITIZEN

The overfed fool, with that greasy, grinning mug! The gooey snail, who climbed so high on his own slime! You, we went to school together—

DESPOT

In our school years I often warned you, comrade, about your impetuous nature, kept you from many blameworthy escapades—unfortunately, as one can see, without success.

1ST CITIZEN

You held me off? Didn't we sneak into Ater's orange garden *together*? Didn't you suggest it yourself?

DESPOT

That is just the worst thing about any vice: instead of seeing into its own viciousness and doing away with it, it rushes on to another vice and slanders those who want to improve it.—You make my heart sad, but your untameable tongue is to blame for your demise.

1ST CITIZEN

As he's led away. It wouldn't be so bad if I were throttled by Hannibal, as he's a foreigner, but this, a familiar—
His mouth is stopped up. All exit.

Act III- Departure from Italy

Scene 1- A valley near Casilinum

Illuminated red by the sinking sun, here and there craggy rock faces overgrown with scrubs and oaks, and only two bottlenecks in and out, on the heights of which can be seen the advance guard of the Roman legions. Hannibal with his army in the valley, making a stop.

HANNIBAL

Crucify the guides!

BRASIDAS

They just made a mistake, confused Casilinum with Casinum.

HANNIBAL

All the same! Crucify them!

BRASIDAS

As you command! *He sends soldiers off.*

HANNIBAL

Looks around. This would be a tight, stone-crude shroud drenched by the bloody sun. Now even that is sinking, and it's getting dark as a tomb.

BRASIDAS

No salvation?

HANNIBAL

We have fallen in the clamps of Maximus— No, from now on I shall call him by his proper name, of Fabius! Completely surrounded—I looked around so little, as I trusted the messenger so much! There's still a meager hope: I'm facing my mistakes, and so it's still possible to fix them.—Turnu!

TURNU

I'm sweating!

HANNIBAL

Why?

TURNU

Because you're thinking so hard!

HANNIBAL

How many oxen do we still have in our train of provisions?

TURNU

Four thousand.

HANNIBAL

Have the men search for brushwood, cover it in pitch, and tie it to the horns of the cattle!

TURNU

I'm hurrying!

HANNIBAL

Go, Brasidas, give the men drink and food, be merry.

Brasidas exits.

If the trick would work! Listen, the Roman sentries are calling to each other, and you can tell where they are standing. Well, if they are that careless, I can certainly get them with the oxen.

TURNU

Entering again. The oxen are ready! Now to ignite the twigs, and push them on to the Romans!

HANNIBAL

How do you know where they should go?

TURNU

What else, then?

HANNIBAL

You'll try to drive them through the northern pass, through which we need to push forward?

TURNU

Everything is already taken care of, and the drivers stand ready. After they've lit the kindling bundles in the front, they'll stick burning sponges in the oxen's rumps. First with burning horns in the front, and then with a burning behind, an ox will lose its reason, and storm ahead, to extinguish its backside!

HANNIBAL

Disguise the animals' faces and bodies, make them look like great troops of soldiers, tie shields on their heads, lances on their sides, and pay attention. As soon as I order, chase them onto the enemy with enormous shouting, trumpets, cymbals; the army should follow in close ranks.

Turnu exits.

Scene 2- On the heights of the northern bottleneck by Casilinum

Fabius Maximus, his cavalry commander, and the higher-ups of his army.

FABIUS

Young friend, what do the Scipios want now with their Spanish victories? The originator of all this evil, he's stuck down there in a cage!

COMMANDER

Let's roar down upon him like the yellow Tiber, when in February it floods Rome's fields and obliterates the snow.

FABIUS

Let's have none of these broad similes, where proper contemplation is necessary. We don't need to climb down. He must come up or starve down there.

COMMANDER

And by Pluto, it seems to me that he is coming up—there's stirring and trampling in his camp!

FABIUS

Will he really dare? Against our formidable position?

COMMANDER

I wouldn't put such foolhardiness past him.

FABIUS

Really, really, they're blowing battle signals, raising battle cries—It may come to combat!—Thank Jupiter, our army is in order because of my caution—Now—A person cannot do too much good—You priests, sacrifice eight completely white sheep to Jupiter Stator, and pray to the other gods as well—But no, he might take that last thing the wrong way.

HIGH PRIEST

We have only seven sheep like that. The eighth died last night.

FABIUS

A dead sheep! A bad omen! Terrible misfortune!

COMMANDER

We could, however, promise the god that next time we will bring the eighth.

FABIUS

Good thought. Sacrifice the seven, for now! Promise the eighth for the next time!
More priests exit.

COMMANDER

The valley is getting light, and huge masses are moving through it, towards us.

FABIUS

Could he have gotten reinforcements through some trick? By God, that's it! A cavalcade with torches! That—they're jumping! And the screams! If only I had a Carthaginian prisoner at hand, to translate it for me!

COMMANDER

It sounds like the screaming of a few thousand oxen.

FABIUS

Oxen? They couldn't do that—Oh, you still don't recognize a crazed human voice: only *it* screams so dreadfully, with the power of an agitated spirit!—Look there, exactly: they are wearing caps with two points, shields like shelves in front of the heads—that's the crest of Utica, it's the newly arrived Uticans ...

For a moment, he holds his hand in front of his head, astounded.

COMMANDER

They will be here in a minute. It's imperative that we hold our position.

FABIUS

At night? Against a still unknown enemy? And here especially against the fearless, well-practiced cavalry which threatens to surround us, is in fact already starting to? Look, with what unprecedented boldness they climb the crags, leap into woods and set fire to the trees—No, we must wait for day to first look these men in the eyes, and to determine their weak sides—Legions, quickly, back over that summit towards Casilinum!

All exit. A pause.

HANNIBAL

With his army.

Laughing. If our luck continues like this, I can still hope to tell Hasdrubal that cattle opened the way through a dictator's army! Onwards!

Scene 3- A lovely broad meadow by Cajeta, in the fullest glory of autumn.

Vintners and vintneresses at a grape harvest.

ALL

Evoc Bacchus! Jo! *They bedeck themselves with vines and grapes.*

OLD MAN

Atellans, the full wine sacks are smoothed with oil. Now go to your tricks with them!

YOUNG MAN

Let the pipes play! The bells ring out!

1ST GIRL

First give them this fresh fruit wine!

APELLAN

Thanks!—But perform now? Don't you see that the Romans there on the mountains are moving in like clouds?

1ST GIRL

We've been used to the sight for months. The clouds don't rain, and they never descend!

APELLAN

But Hannibal is following behind in the lowlands!

1ST GIRL

He's welcome. He was always friendly to Cajeta's meadows, and he won't disturb us.

OLD MAN

Now evoke! Play your piece: the one where the fawn snatches the nymph!

APELLAN

Numidian cavalry!

A CAVALRYMAN

Springing down. Stay calm! We will not harm you. The commander forbids it and calls you friends.

1ST GIRL

So take this and taste of this year's autumn! *They proffer wine.*

OLD MAN

Where you headed?

CAVALRYMAN

To Rome, and hopefully for the last time, to leave it behind us in ruins.—Ha, our army! *The Carthaginian army moves on; Hannibal on horseback, among the vanguard.*

OLD MAN

To 2nd girl. You, the prettiest, fill and hand him up this cup!

2ND GIRL

Walks over to Hannibal with a filled cup. Great commander—accept Cajeta's compliments!

HANNIBAL

Climbs down from horse, as do all the other mounted attendants. I accept it, but since I may not enjoy the wine, I pour it out for the gods of the meadows, mountains, streams, and valleys of Campania, and entreat them to receive it favorably as a guest's sacrifice,

made for this land's health!—Now begin your games. The army is resting here anyway. We want to watch. We haven't seen such a thing for a long time.

He and his attendants sit down in the grass. An Atellan dressed as a satyr positions himself to the left side of the oilsacks and plays on a fife, a second, painted up as Pomona, on the right, plays jingling bells, while two others, one dressed as a faun, the second as a nymph, try to climb up the oiled sacks, but slip again and again with funny twists.

ALL

First-rate!/
Faun, you're great at toppling!/
Too slippery for you, nymph? What'll happen when the faun grabs you?

HANNIBAL

Laughs heartily. You have funny plays, father, they are amusing even before they begin. *To a young Carthaginian.* What do you think?

YOUNG CARTHAGINIAN

Out in the field, where one does not have access to Carthage's fine spectacles, this is watchable.

HANNIBAL

Certainly.—The sky is so pure, the air so invigorating, it seems that it blows through my very spirit. The people so cheerful, like their laughing fields—I feel too good, and almost fear that a misfortune stands before me.

A ROMAN

Dressed as a Carthaginian warrior, seems to have a package under his cape, steps to Hannibal's side.
To himself. It stands beside you!

HANNIBAL

My happiness would be complete, if I could see my brother's precious face!

ROMAN

Throws Hasdrubal's head at his feet.
Here it is!

ALL

Various expressions of horror.

HANNIBAL

Good! The play ends as it must! With a *coups de theatre*! Rome, you comfort me: if you have sunk so low from your seven hills as to fight your enemy with disgusting little jokes, soon you'll sink yet further. I had your fallen commanders buried with honor, as if they had died among Romans, and you—What Rome? *He takes Hasdrubal's head.*

Brother, you—yes, they’re your curls, your features—Alas, I was nine years old, when I left home, then you scrambled secretly after your older brother into that high dark ship, and wouldn’t part from him, until you were pulled away, and since then I never saw you again. But your face remained etched into my heart, and grew there with the years like a signature carved in an oak’s bark! Let me embrace you—But there’s no body left to embrace! *To the Roman.* And you’re smiling, you bastard?

ROMAN

I’ve gotten my wish. I saw the archenemy cry.

HANNIBAL

You did see it. Turnu, bury Hasdrubal’s head.

TURNU

So that I’m not noticed by anyone who might dig it up and defile it?

HANNIBAL

That’s right.

To Brasidas. Order the retreat to Capua; we won’t stay here any longer. The cheerful countryside is becoming a sea of fog to me.—But the march will restore me. *Brasidas exits.*

Carthage, you boasted: “I am the most beautiful of all who promenade along the sea.” May your towers not sink like my brother’s head, and your regal purple garments not be shredded in the winds!

Scene 4- Capua

A room in the despot’s palace.

The despot and many slaves. These latter are busy with packing up gold and costly goods.

DESPOT

Somewhat faster, friends.

1ST SLAVE

Aside to the others. Are we friends again like two days ago, when he seized control with our help?

DESPOT

The Carthaginians are coming back, and we must rescue ourselves, not just because of the imminent plundering, but also—

SLAVES

Ourselves?

DESPOT

What sort of smirky question—?

2ND SLAVE

Everything is packed.

1ST SLAVE

Everything but the most important thing—him!

ALL SLAVES

Cheering. Ha, put the tyrant in the chest! Yes!

DESPOT

What's that strange noise??

1ST SLAVE

Broken chains!

DESPOT

Friends, you do me an injustice—I fed you—

1ST SLAVE

—so that you could luxuriate in the fruits of our labor!

DESPOT

I was humane to you—

1ST SLAVE

So humane that our backs could feel it!—Into the chest! If you'd please, gracious sir?

DESPOT

Have mercy!

The slaves throw him in the chest and close it on him.

1ST SLAVE

Now plunge the master into the deepest cellar of his house—In his dying hours, he could wish for no better memorial above him than his own palace. *Knocking on the chest.* Isn't that right, my lord?

And now we'll call upon our comrades, open the gates to the Carthaginians, and then it's murder, fire, and rape for the cowardly Capuans and their women!

Scene 5- In front of Capua's northern gate

HANNIBAL

With his army. Closed gates? Do the Sybarites want to ape Rome and resist?—Heda, get the prisoners spades and lead them to the moats, so that they can divert them. Ready the siege ladders, bring the Balearans up for the protection of the workers!

BALEARAN SLINGSHOTTERS

Jump up. Huzzah!

HANNIBAL

Stop! The gate is opening and the drawbridge is lowering. By ancient Moloch, the slaves are coming out and bringing their masters!

A train of Capuan slaves with their fettered masters.

SLAVE

Great commander, take these tyrants among your slaves, and, if you don't reject us, take us among your warriors.

HANNIBAL

Had you come like this years ago, I would have had time to shape you into warriors, but now, since departure is looming—

BRASIDAS

Departure?

HANNIBAL

That's what it's called—

Again to the slaves. I can only pick out the heartiest among you. I'll also take as many of your Capuan prisoners as my ships' space permits—

A HIGHBRED CAPUAN

My old friend!

HANNIBAL

I certainly can't have remained that, now that you've become a new-made slave.

HIGHBRED CAPUAN

That damned Punic word-play!

HANNIBAL

Again to the slaves. —in order to sell them in Africa. Those of you who stay behind can keep the rest. Now lead me to the public treasury, which hopefully you haven't touched, as it's holy—

SLAVES

And unviolated!

2nd SLAVE

Not so! Commander, punish me! I broke this little dragon head from the foot of the lattice. Since it helped to protect so many treasures, it seemed to me a splendid fetish to protect me too.

HANNIBAL

So keep your fetish as a reward for your truthfulness.
Again to the slaves. —and with remaining treasure reserved for Carthage, I hand over Capua to you and my army for any plundering.
All exit.

Scene 6- An elevated area with a thick, dark chestnut wood near Capua.

The roar of the nearby sea is audible.

On his horse, Hannibal loops around quickly through the thicket, climbs up a little grassy plot, and hangs the horse's reins on a low bough.

HANNIBAL

Horse, you should know how a long repressed pain vents itself, so don't make a noise, or I'll thrash you!
He throws himself onto the earth, and grasps it with both hands.
Italia! The magnificent, whom I courted for seventeen years, whom I adorned with my own blood and with that of consuls, must I leave you like this? Nothing remains of you that I'd like to carry away across the sea? You, wholly different from gloomy Carthage and her hot dull red firmament, you resplendent with heroes who only know of fame and iron, nothing of gold. You yourself possess that golden brilliance, not won with hirelings— triumphs glimmering to the Capitol. You were never more grand than when I imagined you to be at my feet, and you straightened up to the arch of your eternally blue sky!— I'll snatch these grasses away from you and bury them next my heart; may my years of misfortune excuse me this moment of sentiment!

VOICES OF COMMANDING
FLEET OFFICERS

Coming from the sea from all sides. Tighten the ropes! Sea water on 'em!—Another twenty oarsmen on the fifth bench here!—Quick, the land breeze is freshening!— The army's nearing for embarkation!—Rafts, barks on the shore—Get a pontoon bridge lashed up here—and there—Ready the sail—Southwards—south on the forward decks—You there, on the anchor! Bring it home!—Where's the commander dawdling?

HANNIBAL

Calls loudly. He's watched your drive from this height, and he approves! [He rides to the shore.]

Scene 7- On the beach

*The fleet, primed for sailing. There are still troops boarding.
A soldier enters with two Carthaginian envoys.*

SOLDIER

Wait here. The commander will be here shortly. You heard him call.

1ST ENVOY

Is this how you handle members of the Synedrion?

2ND ENVOY

Are we just two lost grains of wheat?

SOLDIER

Don't know, I treat you as I'm ordered to.—Here he comes. Bow.

1ST ENVOY

Bow? But we are to be supervising him!

HANNIBAL

Looks at them, still on his horse, and rides to them. Don't worry, the horse is tame.

1ST ENVOY

We are sent by Carthage—

HANNIBAL

—to call me back to Africa, to defend the hometown within its walls because the Scipios will soon be arriving there—

2ND ENVOY

That's right.

HANNIBAL

I knew it. That billowing sail is proof. Look around at the countryside, venerable fathers. It is lovely, green and fertile. It would have been ours, had you and your comrades wanted it. You won't be getting any tribute from it, so satisfy yourself with the joys of nature. Only beware the daggers of the Romans. They will spare no more Carthaginians.

1ST ENVOY

You want to leave us here?

HANNIBAL

Indeed, in memory, but I'm taking your ship. If you were not corrupt like your brother Melkir—I know you two, even if I haven't seen you for twenty years—and you not cowardly like your cousin Hanno, you could have been kings here!

BOTH ENVOYS

Have pity!

HANNIBAL

The vermin have the nerve to sigh to heaven! Were the gods to hear their complaints, how they would thunder down! *He rides to the main ship and boards; the fleet strikes off from land.*

Scene 8- Quarterdeck of the main Carthaginian ship

Hannibal stands on the deck and looks towards Italy, Brasidas beside him.

BRASIDAS

This Capua has a splendid bay.

HANNIBAL

The ships still reek of pitch and tar.

BRASIDAS

The blue mountains in the distance—

HANNIBAL

To himself. What is he saying about my veins, so swollen with rage?

BRASIDAS

—I'd like to have a thousand eyes, in order to see my fill of them, these clear waves, those fragrant valleys.

HANNIBAL

If one had no eyes at all, one wouldn't need to forget it.

BRASIDAS

Half aloud. Those trellises, with the grapevines swelling up bit by bit to the eternal stars—It's as if—

HANNIBAL

—it's getting dark. Helmsman, turn the wheel to the right—don't you see that rock spur?

A flock of cranes flies high above the fleet away to the south.

SEAMEN

Look! Cranes! A harbinger!

HANNIBAL

To himself. Look at them, yes, when May comes they turn back to the nests in Thule. I too had made a nest in the north. *Looking again at Italy.* But I'll never turn back! *Aloud.* We're out of the bay—Pilots, don't hold too close to the coast, fresh into the sea!

BRASIDAS

The coast is still pouring a bunch of brown autumn leaves on the deck.

HANNIBAL

It's getting satirical.—Collect the leaves in sacks, they're appropriate garlands for the Hannos, or better yet, this'll strike them as more profitable, bedding for their cattle.

Turnu climbs over the edge of the ship.

Brasidas, clear the deck of everyone who doesn't need to be here, have them called to supper, and bring the men to rest.

BRASIDAS

And you?

HANNIBAL

I'll watch the wave heights.

Brasidas exits. Turnu swings himself onto the deck, and lies down at Hannibal's feet. Both speak quietly.

TURNU

I was on all the ships and was beaten worse than the damnedest mutt deserves when he has stolen the best piece of meat.

HANNIBAL

How?

TURNU

I started to criticize you, said everyone knows that I'm your most loyal, diligent servant, and yet I hardly receive the slightest morsel from your table, and even that always peppered with insults, beatings, slaps, ear-boxings.

HANNIBAL

They answered?

TURNU

"Bastard, if he treats you like that, then you deserve it—he has never been unjust to anyone," and as I began to remark, that we are actually serving Carthage, but you always lead us according to your own mind—

HANNIBAL

Well?

TURNU

"Carthage!" was the answer, everyone in chaos. "I've not even seen the pit"—"I know it, it's a nest of shame"—"The good mighty commander, it betrayed him"—"The

commander has given me bread and gold, there I was chafed with chains”—“We should be devils and steal Cannae’s rings from them.”

HANNIBAL

Ha, Synedrion, have your own hirelings bound up the rods I’ll use to beat you?

TURNU

And when I wanted to move on, a volley of fists fell on me. Had I been a senseless rice paddy, a grain wouldn’t have been left on the stalks. But they gave me joy, because they were doing it out of love for you, and—don’t take this the wrong way—I am fond of you—yes, how do I say this?

HANNIBAL

Don’t trouble yourself. You are expression enough.

TURNU

So that’s how I spoke, suffered, and disported myself on every ship, then when it got too bad on one, I jumped in the sea and swam to another, and again there was the same conversation and the same beatings.

HANNIBAL

Take this key to my cabin. Eat there and change into dry clothes. I’ll be there soon.

Act IV- Gisgon

Scene 1. Carthage. Afternoon.

A room in Melkir's palace.

Melkir, Hanno, and Gisgon.

MELKIR

It's a muggy day. Let's sit down and refresh ourselves with cool wine, and then—
He clinks glasses with Gisgon and Hanno, who act as if they are sipping on the wine, but in fact set the cups, untouched, to the side.

To himself. Bastards! They've noticed the poison!

GISGON

Hannibal may still arrive today. As much as we need him against the approaching Scipios, it's dangerous to let him into the city with his army.

MELKIR

And he won't be coming in with them. It's taken care of: he will rest outside for a few hours, and then go right up against the Romans.

HANNO

That's the way it will be, Gisgon.

He lays a large letter on the table.

This letter from the Synedrion directs it, and the pilot stands ready. He'll deliver it as soon as the ship's banner becomes visible. You doubt it? *With weight.* Yes yes, the pilot stands ready!

GISGON

And if Hannibal doesn't follow the orders?

HANNO

How could he dare not to? How could he justify himself?

GISGON

He could do so easily. He says, "I didn't read the orders," and he breaks through the harbor into the city.

MELKIR

Won't work. The outer and inner harbors will keep him out with chains and with iron doors so strong the gates of Hell needn't be ashamed of them.

TRUSTED SERVANT OF MELKIR

Enters. Our Italian fleet is approaching on a full wind.

MELKIR

Your letter, Hanno. *To servant.* Have it sent directly to the waiting pilot.
Servant exits.

Come to the window. From here we overlook the sea, so let's watch if everything goes according to our orders.

GISGON

The fleet looks quite shabby. But also damned serious. Their sails are patched, their fronts blackened by time and full of chinks. But for all that the fleet comes off looking like an angry, grieving face instead of a humbled one.

HANNO

The pilot is heading towards the main ship—he's climbing aboard with the letter.

GISGON

I'm so curious, if—Moloch, the whole fleet is hoisting flags, to salute Carthage's orders. —Your forgiveness, Melkir and Hanno, you knew matters and people better than I.

HANNO

There, the pilot is climbing into the boat again with a captain and heading back here.

MELKIR

Servant!

Servant enters.

Hurry to meet that captain and lead him in here. *Servant exits.*

GISGON

Dear Hannibal, you are still just a warhorse. Now I understand how you could triumph everywhere, and yet overcome neither Rome nor Carthage.

CAPTAIN

Enters. Which of you is the noble Melkir?

MELKIR

I am Melkir.

CAPTAIN

My commander sends me to you: he knows how much he owes for all of your support in particular, also for the great Hanno's, and Gisgon's endeavors—

MELKIR

Those two are here also.

CAPTAIN

Greetings to you as well!—Furthermore, he knows your influence with the mighty Synedrion, and since during the long campaign he has become unaccustomed to

speaking in such a high assembly, he requests that you be his intermediaries. He asks that you relay to him the necessary instructions, which will dictate how he proceeds with the advancing Roman army, and where he should lay anchor now, whether it be in the outer or inner harbor, or in some other spot.

MELKIR

Our greetings to him, once again. He should not put down anchor in either of the harbors, but rather go up against the Scipios by the plateau in the west end of the city.

CAPTAIN

That was his initial opinion too.—A part of our crew is seasick. He wants a few reinforcements, if that's possible.

MELKIR

He shall have the sailors of both our harbors. Here, the authorization.
The captain exits.

HANNO

Exposing the harbors like that?

GISGON

Either Hannibal's or our stupidity is so great, that this strikes me as titanic courage!

MELKIR

You are young, Gisgon, at most 36. At that age the vain glory of war can still dazzle, and make you unwilling to believe that a useful general like Hannibal might not be so smart outside of his element.

GISGON

His fleet's on the move!

MELKIR

To the west, just as we prescribed.

HANNO

Isn't it moving a little to the east now?

MELKIR

Just to gain the east wind. It's going west again.

GISGON

And now again to the east, damn it!

MELKIR

They're tacking.

GISGON

Arise, gods of the underworld, and wrench these tackers into your depths!—Ha, look, they're turning, straight on, to the east, storming the harbors! The chains burst under the attack, the rotten iron gates fly apart—He's in the city and we've all been duped!

HANNO

And there's the commander jumping onto land with a bare saber in his fist and a couple of armed Africans behind him— that face that was once so servile is now a furious flame-red cloud.

MELKIR

Mistakes can be made, but the wise man is prepared. *Snidely.* And had you drunk my wine, Hannibal wouldn't crucify you. In that way, I am saved. *He sinks.*

HANNO

He—this—

GISGON

Follow me—Here's a hidden door in the wall that he told me about long ago. We'll escape more comfortably than he will!
They escape through the door, which they shut behind them.

HANNIBAL'S CAPTAIN

That's the seat of the three-headed hound of hell! What? Gone?—Pulverize the whole house so that everything suffocates, down to the last mouse!

Scene 2- The large marketplace in Carthage.

MARKETBOY

Fresh fish! Get your Hannibals!

CROWD

Let's see 'em!

MARKETBOY

They're called that because Hannibal won't eat any other kind! Thirty drachmas apiece.

1ST MAN

Expensive, but my wife would nag me 'til I'm sick if I didn't bring her one home.

2ND MAN

They'll take me for a follower of the old Synedrion if I don't buy a few.

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

The boy outdoes his own blessed mother. Before he only shouted like her. Now he lies too. It's so awful and outrageous, my heart shudders.

A herold enters, a big mass of troops behind him.

HEROLD

Loudly. Hear me!

The market gets quiet.

2ND PEDDLERWOMAN

To herself. Another barker, just a different kind.

HEROLD

Our noble commander Hannibal, deeply shocked by the baseness of the Synedrion and the Three Men who dragged the city to destruction and who did not dare to appear before him when he stepped before the empty thrones of the Suffets with just one simple question,—

A CARTHAGINIAN

[quietly, to another]—and with 30,000 men, who asked no questions at all!

HEROLD

—has taken the danger upon himself and will rule alone as long as the Roman legions continue to be a threat. He welcomes any citizen who feels himself called to defend the fatherland; he will compel no one.

Many in the crowd exhale a sign of relief.

Passage to and trade with all parts of the world he grants for free; only foreigners pay duty on their wares. He merely requests good care for his warriors during the short time they abide here. And any freeman who brings him a member of the Synedrion, dead or alive, receives 12,000 drachmas! Each slave the same amount, of which he must hand over 4,000 drachmas to his master.

CROWD

Hannibal is Carthage's true son!/ Hail Hannibal and his worthy ancestors!

Scene 3- Hall in the palace of the old Barca.

Grandfather Barca and Alitta.

BARCA

Dearest niece, you visit in these eventful days, while he who should be even nearer to my heart doesn't come, forgets me in his happiness!

ALITTA

No, old man. I don't think that's true of him. He certainly wants to come see you, but he'll do so with even more joy, once he has taken care of everything.

BARCA

You speak like a sensitive woman. He is an emotionless warrior.

ALITTA

He's more than that! Great deeds like his grow from a deeper place than the head. That's simply where they blossom. I feel that in my soul, in my small way.

BARCA

Have you ever seen him?

ALITTA

I wasn't born 'til some years after he'd already left, great uncle, but I was always told about him, since I could begin to understand.

BARCA

He was an extraordinarily headstrong boy.

ALITTA

Perhaps just extraordinary.

Hannibal and Brasidas appear in the background.

HANNIBAL

He kneels at your feet!

BARCA

Up, up!—You would kneel, you before whom hundreds of thousands fell? Get up! It frightens me! *Hannibal stands up.*
Nephew! Your brow is like a sea frozen over during a storm!

HANNIBAL

There were many storms, until finally the frost came and the waves remained.

ALITTA

These are the hands that waved everyone on to victory from Cannae's heights? I'm trembling, such terror and joy!

BARCA

Your hair's already graying—

HANNIBAL

My head reacts just like iron—if it's tempered badly, it gets white. *To Brasidas.* Is this she?

BRASIDAS

Alitta, don't you know me?

ALITTA

Brasidas!—And he's fought bravely, hasn't he?

HANNIBAL

That I assure you.

ALITTA

Thus I love him a thousand times more!

BARCA

Let us bow our heads—the trumpets of the priests are calling us to prayer.

HANNIBAL

It's the priests of sacrifice, my forefather, we don't want to offer them our necks voluntarily.

BRASIDAS

Not priests of sacrifice—they only know singing, not trumpeting.

HANNIBAL

Uncle, the Scipios are arriving at the city, and what we hear are the long tones of the Roman tuba, calling for tents to be packed up.

ALITTA

The enemy at the gates!—Hannibal, hero, save us! Brasidas, help him!—It's echoing again! They are grasping high over the walls into the city with their eerie northern tones! Save us!

HANNIBAL

I'll try! Europe and Africa are at stake. But the dice are loaded against me. I only have 30,000 hastily gathered soldiers pitted against a power with four to five times our strength, who feel that they fight for the honor of their shared fatherland. Yet I must try. I want to see it if I can't improve our fortune, even if it's by using my tongue.

BARCA

Oh if only I were able to go with you!

ALITTA

Oh if only I were allowed to go with you!—But come what may, I know—

HANNIBAL AND BRASIDAS

Farewell! *Both exit.*

Scene 4- Near the town of Zama.

Morning. Roman camp. In front of the Scipios' tent. The army and the auxiliary forces in battle formation.

Scipio the Elder, Scipio the Younger, Allochlin, Massinissa, Terence, and the Celtiberian are gathered.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Massinissa! Take your Lybian cavalry and go up against that of your rival king, the half Carthaginian Syphax—Allochlin, go skirmish around those villages. The enemy's gathering behind them.

ALLOCHLIN

Sir, allow my men an hour of rest first. They were on duty three days and three nights again. Three quarters of my army has fallen apart during your campaign—I pity the poor men. I have purchased my bride at a high price indeed!

SCIPIO ELDER

She's no longer as pleasing to your tastes as she was at the start?

SCIPIO YOUNGER

A deal is a deal, barbarian. A true man doesn't carp on it afterwards. Obey my orders. And you ten Centaurions there, stick by his side and kill him the moment he betrays us. The little scum's weepy blathering makes me fear him.

ALLOCHLIN

O! Exits with the Centaurions.

TERENCE

To himself. Is he going to get it now, like I predicted?

VELIT

Enters. Carthaginian peace envoys at the outer checkpoint.

SCIPIO ELDER

Send them back.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Let me hear them. That buys time for you to organize the army as we agreed.

SCIPIO ELDER

Until I come back, stretch the conversation out like a tapeworm, which always grows again in the front when you cut it at the back. Then we'll cure it and the Punic patients with the sword of death.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Have the envoys sent in.

Velit exits.

Son of Ullos, what are you goggling at?

TERENCE

To himself. He talks and jokes with the barbarian.—He's more pleasing to his palate than our earlier Athenian-style conversations.

CELTIBERIAN

Sir, for the first time last night I saw many powerful spotted toads yonder, yellow with black humps, but miles wide, like that city. And what sort of black giants jut out over all the roofs and towers, their hands reaching towards heaven, smoking, like they're presenting burnt offering?

SCIPIO YOUNGER

It's the iron figures of the gods. When there's a threat the Carthaginians lay their children in their glowing hands as sacrifices, entreating salvation.

CELTIBERIAN

Ah—the more I think about that, the more it seems like a damn good idea. They get freed of the accidental little pimples, get saved, and please the gods too! I'll recommend that we follow their example in Celtiberia.

Two Carthaginian envoys enter; throughout this exchange, the 2nd does nothing but nod while the 1st speaks.

1ST ENVOY

Hannibal sends us. He wishes to avert the impending battle with a compromise, and to speak to you there in the open field between the two armies.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

And where has he set up his ambush?

1ST ENVOY

He chose the open field in order to prevent that suspicion. Also, he wishes to meet you on foot only, accompanied by just two men, and asks that you do the same.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

To himself. I would indeed like to see him. Besides, this will win my brother time.

To the envoys. I'll come shortly.

The envoys exit.

Scene 4- The field between the two armies.

HANNIBAL

With his two men. So he's coming—It's taking a long time.—Now I must learn how to wait, too?—Ha!

Scipio enters with two men. Hannibal motions his men to move back somewhat; Scipio does the same with his. Both commanders walk towards one another and look at each other silently.

Scipio, I must be the first to speak in such a situation, as I'm the elder.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

You are.

HANNIBAL

Why should we prolong the fight between Rome and Carthage? Haven't the endless wars taught us both to see that everyone is happiest when Rome confines itself to Italy, Carthage to Africa?

SCIPIO

Did you think so, when you conquered Spain and crossed the Alps?

HANNIBAL

No. But since then my campaigns have taught me that we should think that way.— Youthful commander, you stand at the apex of your glory, everything which you have undertaken 'til now has been successful. Yet consider how easily capricious Fortune can change, how quickly everything can shift in these critical times that are gathering over our heads! Look at me: the Hannibal who blanketed your land with your defeats, now—

SCIPIO YOUNGER

It's very bad timing that you remind me of this, as I stand here to repay them.

HANNIBAL

The wise man chooses the greatest good and the lesser of evils, if he must choose. If you win today, will that make you happier? You have enough laurels. If you *lose* today, all your hard-earned glory is lost.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

What is Carthage offering?

HANNIBAL

All its possessions outside of Africa, and full satisfaction to the Numidian princes who are your allies.

SCIPIO YOUNGER

But not Carthage itself and you, at our mercy?

HANNIBAL

Roman mercy—No, we would sooner go up against your mercilessness one more time!

SCIPIO YOUNGER

Turns to go, coldly. Well then, await your fate in battle with your scraggly mob. If you had my superior army, you wouldn't behave any differently in my place. *Exits with his two men.*

HANNIBAL

Await it? No, I summon it, it has always been a helpful goddess to me! *To his army.*
Battle! *Exit.*
The battle begins.

Scene 5- The lookout over one of Carthage's main gates.

The gatekeeper with his small son.

GATE KEEPER

Watch, child, for today you witness something that you can talk about in a hundred years. And luckily we have clear weather.

BOY

The funny music! The shiny armor!

GATEKEEPER

Do you see the two dust clouds?

BOY

Those there on the left, the ones that make the sky dark and swirl through each other?

GATEKEEPER

That's the Numidian cavalry in combat with the Roman. Thank the gods, our men are advancing!

BOY

What's that squirming and crawling behind them on the ground, as if something wants to stand up and go, but can't?

GATEKEEPER

The wounded and dying, son.

BOY

Won't anyone help them?

GATEKEEPER

Afterwards. In the midst of the battle, it's a waste of time and dangerous. That's what our neighbor the surgeon says.

BOY

In the middle of the troops, father—Wow, look at how all the lances stick up, just like Grandmother's hair when she nags!

GATEKEEPER

Thwacks him. You little hellion, don't talk badly about Grandmother!

BOY

Crying. But can't I say what I saw? *Tries to go.*

GATEKEEPER

You'll stay, boy.

BOY

School—I'll be late.

GATEKEEPER

I'll excuse you.—Look, the two are clashing!

BOY

But the enemy's pulling out its swords and rolling itself up, like the hedgehog did the other day.

GATEKEEPER

It won't help them, our lances are longer.

BOY

The enemy is knocking them aside—Oh no, they're really at each other's throats.

GATEKEEPER

Ah the devil—and it's gotten so awfully quiet, and you can see everything so clearly. Finally there's the thunder again and all the desert whirls and steams, to drown out and veil this quiet choking and carnage!—Ha, there goes the noble Brasidas with cavalry to help!

BOY

And there's a Roman sticking his knife under his ribs, so that the blood spatters on the ground, and he falls off his horse! Whoa.

GATEKEEPER

And how they fight over the corpse! He'll make another hundred!

BOY

I can't watch anymore! I wish I was dead too!

GATEKEEPER

What's come over you, boy?

BOY

Screams. The Romans are breaking through!

GATEKEEPER

Quiet—Hannibal has caught them in a snare—Ha! You see? There he is, surprising them from his hideout, fresh infantry, fresh cavalry behind him. By Moloch, when he makes his way, he really makes his way! He's got the body of Brasidas there, lifts him with a strong hand, holds him up for the army to see and calls for revenge—

BOY

It's breaking my ears!

GATEKEEPER

—and throws him on his horse—Hell, now it's letting loose—The sparks spray off the chainmail, my eyes are trembling.

BOY

Father, father! He doesn't have enough men! The enemy's overwhelming him!

GATEKEEPER

Pah, what's that? Look, he's swimming through. He's in pickle, but he's still spraying blood skyhigh! *The boy covers his eyes.* Take your hands away—Carthage is winning!

BOY

But what's that bulky iron thing coming from the distance? Cold, flashing, quiet, but pushing forward—Our teacher says that's how it is at Thule with the icebergs!

GATEKEEPER

Monkey, that's the last Roman force,—Hannibal himself is jumping up, sharpening his sword on it, and chopping the ice to pieces.

BOY

He does, but it freezes and closes up again and again—our men are getting weak.

GATEKEEPER

He breaks it up with just a few—look, the holes!

BOY

Yeah, and there he comes, drenched in blood, with a just a couple of men!

GATEKEEPER

A hell of a mess!

BOY

He's beckoning for help from all those men standing in front of us, so nicely armed in silver! They don't move!

GATEKEEPER

They'd need to be fools, to stake their expensive armor and their priceless lives. Enough that they stand there and look impressive to the enemy. Speak more carefully about them, lad. Those are the sons of our most respected families. It will be up to them someday whether you will be my successor or not—They're called the Immortals!

BOY

Because they run away, before anyone can kill them?

GATEKEEPER

Hold your tongue about things you don't understand. *He looks towards the city.* Melkir, Hanno and Gisgon, the outlaws, each with his huge wild mob of supporters—Not long ago they were at odds with one another, but they seem to be of one spirit again! A lost battle can do anything!

BOY

Mother says, where there's an ass—

GATEKEEPER

Quiet, you brat!

MELKIR

Hanno, Gisgon, occupy those walls!
As he climbs up.
I'll take up this one!—Is that blowhard losing?

GATEKEEPER

You mean—?

MELKIR

Hannibal, that goon, for whom you other goons have such high hopes, and who achieves nothing.—Ha, he is defeated, everyone is fleeing, the Immortals at the front! Open the gates for them, but shut the gates on the noses of the other fugitives.

GATEKEEPER

On the commander too?

MELKIR

Yes! And with a mighty slam!

GATEKEEPER

Come on, boy. *Exits with his son.*

MELKIR

My old heart, tremble with joy that you have reached such a great age! The Romans couldn't have done me a greater favor than winning! Hannibal's good name is lost, he himself will be shut out of the city, and should they besiege us, they'll perish on our triple-thick solid rock wall, even worse than Hannibal did on Rome's low mortared ones. Ah, there he is!

Hannibal explodes through the Immortals, who shyly give way before him; he's spit out in front of them with a small group of riders going towards Carthage. When he sees Hanno, Gisgon, and Melkir with their people up on the battlements, he reaches his hand towards the sky, and drives on, fast as an arrow towards the east.

He's fleeing!—Such a sight does an old man good! But such a great joy always brings greater worries with it: that gaping ape Gisgon and that blowhard Hanno must go at all costs. Hanno inherited a pack of hangers-on from his family, and Gisgon diligently acquires new ones—But the old Melkir outwits them both. He will be Carthage's only master, or his name isn't Melkir!

Scene 6- In Carthage.

Square in front of the giant bronze ornamented statue of Moloch. His hands glow red and smoke.

Mothers with their children in their arms kneel around it with unbound hair, flowing to the ground. Priests move coldly between them and the idol, to and fro, and one by one take the children from the women, in order to sacrifice them. The stage is filled with many people.

WOMAN

Looks at her child's face. My little boy—he smiles and waves at the flaming fists reaching out for him!—Child, how I suffered in giving birth to you, and yet how infinitely worse it is that they rip you from me.—Your dark loving eyes—soon smoke! The woman before me, the priests are taking her girl, it's my turn!

1ST PRIEST

The boy.

WOMAN

Take me, burn me, and let him live! He's still so young, so innocent!

1ST PRIEST

Moloch wants innocent blood.

A second priest steps over and takes the child from the woman.

2ND PRIEST

What can you be disputing about with this woman for so long? The god must have offerings, the state is in distress.

WOMAN

I am too! *She presses her hands first at her breast, then on her forehead.* Oh, sea, extinguish these two sparks. *She sinks.*

Melkir, Gisgon, and Hanno enter with their retinues.

MELKIR

It's lovely, Carthaginians, that you commemorate the gods with such celebration!
The mothers shudder.

Never before has greater danger threatened us, so never before have they demanded greater sacrifice. We must not balk at the greatest of them, even if it breaks our heart, for the enemy threatens assault, and only Moloch can save us!

GISGON

To himself. It strikes me that this speech is supposed to affect me like the smell of bacon in a mousetrap, and I'm supposed to be the mouse.

Aloud to Melkir. Most exalted, wisest, noblest man—

MELKIR

Stop that...

GISGON

It will be hard to find noble citizens who will consecrate themselves to the fatherland; it's too much for them.

MELKIR

Not at all. The two best I see before me: you and Hanno.

CROWD

True! Cheers for Melkir! Hanno and Gisgon, come! To Moloch!

HANNO

Melkir, I wouldn't have expected this of you, friend—

MELKIR

Necessity breaks even bonds of friendship.

HANNO

Must it be, then? Then let me at least be strangled first, and not get burned alive!

MELKIR

The god only takes the quick, not corpses.

GISGON

Melkir, most exalted! How modest you are, modest like every great man!

HANNO

Dying men can really rave! He's praising our murderer!

GISGON

You, the eldest of the Three Men, decorated with the most deserved honors, you can count for all of Carthage—

MELKIR

Thanks! Now stop!

GISGON

—have overlooked yourself today!

HANNO

Exhales. Aha! That divine boy!

GISGON

Carthage's people nominated you to choose the greatest for sacrifice, and you hardly thought that he who chooses must be much greater than all those who are chosen—Therefore—*He takes hold of Melkir's shoulder and shakes him.*—celebrate, spin in circles three times for joy, like that, because up there will you will burn for our salvation!

CROWD

Gisgon! Wisest of men!

GISGON

And here, my armed men, step forward—Hanno, have yours step up as well. A sword to the throat of any who tries to stop us!

MELKIR

Viper—! *He is led away.*

SOLDIER

Enters with a Roman envoy. A messenger from the enemy.

ENVOY

I bring fair offers of peace.

GISGON

Hmm, things not going so well with Carthage's wall?

ENVOY

Rome does not wish for a worthy rival like your city to be ruined.

GISGON

The noble enemy—what does it demand?

ENVOY

You relinquish all countries, apart from Africa—

GISGON

We'll do it.

ENVOY

Then you surrender to us your weapons, your warships, all but twenty. You may maintain and replace that number, but never add to it.

GISGON

So be it.

HANNO

Huh?

GISGON

Softly. All that can be built up again. Send men to spoil the ships to be surrendered as much as possible.

HANNO

Alright. *He exits.*

ENVOY

Furthermore, you help the Massinissans take possession of the land of your ally Syphax, and salary 10,000 mercenaries.

GISGON

This condition is harsh—Yet it will be met.

ENVOY

Finally, 20,000 talents in restitution to Rome—

CROWD

20,000 talents!

GISGON

Quiet, people! Get acquainted with the wealth of a noble Carthaginian and his self-denial! I'll pay it!

CROWD

Gisgon's the greatest of all! The richest of all!

GISGON

To envoy. And you don't demand anything further?

ENVOY

No.

GISGON

So come with me, and be my guest.

Scene 7- Hall in Gisgon's house.

A SLAVE

Hurrying in. Housekeeper, fellow slaves, slavewomen! *The housekeeper enters.*

HOUSEKEEPER

Light some ambergris! The pearl-covered ophite goblets, the golden cups of Atlantis next to them! This wretched cedar table out, the alabaster one with diamonds, in! *The slaves bring in and organize everything according to his commands.*

GISGON

Entering with the Roman envoy. Do you like my place?

ENVOY

Too splendid for a citizen of a besieged city.

GISGON

I thought it would please you. *Both sit down for the meal.*

HANNO

Enters. Gisgon, I'm inviting myself to your meal, and noble Roman, all conditions for peace have been met, ships, money, arms, everything as you wished, have been surrendered.

ENVOY

The confirmation?

HANNO

Here, signed by your Quaestor.

ENVOY

Right. *To himself.* We would have had them, the foxes!

HOUSEKEEPER

A second envoy from the Roman camp.

GISGON

He is welcome! *Housekeeper exits.* What does he want yet!

ENVOY

The Scipios will have noted how quickly you handed everything over, complied with everything. Perhaps they wish for a few more annotations, provisions—

GISGON

We have, I believe, annotated and provided enough.

HANNO

Stands up. This food doesn't taste good anymore.

2ND ENVOY

Enters, to Hanno and Gisgon. The Scipios send me to convey their pleasure—

GISGON

Pleasure?

2ND ENVOY

—at the quick execution of the treaty. Only—

GISGON

Only—?

2ND ENVOY

—they demand one more thing, which will ensure everlasting peace between Rome and you, will curb every hostile encounter. Rome does not lie on the sea—

HANNO

What! The sea! our mother! our nursemaid! on whose undulating bosom we were suckled to greatness, who continually nourishes us, we are to lose *her*?

GISGON

Hanno, are you getting poetic?

HANNO

And are you, contrary to your fashion, getting so deeply prosaic?

GISGON

Who wouldn't, in the presence of such good Latin prose? *To the 2nd Envoy.* The city of our fathers should therefore—

2ND ENVOY

—be razed. You could build a new one inland, forty stadia from the sea, but with a new name.

GISGON

You won't even leave us the name.

2ND ENVOY

No.

GISGON

With a thundering voice. Now you've pushed us so far that we want to hold on to both the name and the thing itself; we must stem, turn, and tear away from you thieves both the stolen goods and the clothes on your back!

HANNO

Rise out of your graves, ancestral spirits!

GISGON

Not necessary! Thousands of ghosts awaken already in my own breast!—And you Romans, for whom pride, bravery, defiance of death are only another type of currency, like our silverlings—be ashamed that you use them to defraud like this!
To the 1st envoy. Villain, you knew that the second envoy was coming, after you coaxed away our arms—
To the 2nd envoy. And you were ordered to destroy the rest of Carthage, when we became defenseless—O, the great Scipios, how high they stand above all hypocrisy, deception, vice! As two St. Elmo's Fires, two Dioscuri, will they shine from the pinnacles of the Capitol long into posterity! But they are only broad-shouldered, crooked ratters!

1ST ENVOY

Then that would make who the rats?

GISGON

Calling out. Slaves!
Slaves come on in thick masses. Gisgon to the envoys. Here are a few!
To the slaves. You are free, and everyone who struggles bravely against the Romans becomes a citizen. Fetch weapons, the best are still hidden under the floor of the arsenal, provisions for years next to them—You Romans, how were you so stupid as to believe us so stupid?—And slaves, cry out through the streets that “The Scipios have broken the treaty! They want to see the city displaced in the desert so it will wither there like a dessicated cabbage!”

1ST ENVOY

We—

GISGON

To the slaves. Call all Carthaginians to resistance, call out: “There’s no danger in having courage now, because without it, we’ll lose life, home, court, goods, everything that was spared in our cowardice!”

SLAVES

We’re heading out!

GISGON

Wait—Go up to the Temple of the Gods, knock over the ornamented columns, so they can be melted into weapons. Make their hall into an arms workshop!

HANNO

Gisgon! Wounding the gods?

GISGON

Haven’t they let us be wounded? Can they serve us any better now than as weapons? *To the slaves.* Carthage’s wives and daughters—they’re the most beautiful on earth, too beautiful for any ruffian to dare get near them—

HANNO

The women?

GISGON

A woman founded Carthage, women will help to save it. They’re nobler than the men here! (Though I only know of one.)
Again to the slaves. Call up mothers and daughters. They should trade places with the goddesses in the temple, and be more than the goddesses were. For they won’t just stand there dumb and idle, but use their golden jewelry and treasures to cast and adorn spears, swords, helmets, and harnesses. Each woman should keep aside only the best, the bridal jewelry, whether it’s been worn or still awaits a wedding day, for it may come time to wed the dying fatherland!—Hanno! Hanno! Had I always been that which my misfortune makes me today! Had I followed my better nature and not followed you and Melkir’s guiles, by all the heavens and earths—*Looking at the Roman envoys.*—these two sweaty hounds wouldn’t hunt us into our homes, and Hannibal would be in theirs, with me as a lowly servant under him!

1ST ENVOY

We’ll take our leave. Our presence would only disrupt your activities.

GISGON

Not at all!—Slaves, seize them! *The envoys are seized.*

2ND ENVOY

This is what you offer envoys?

GISGON

And even more, if the envoys are little pricks. Onto the cross with them, hard and high, so that, drenched in blood, they can watch Carthage arm itself all around them!

HANNO

Let's not be hasty ...

GISGON

The most reckless haste is the greatest necessity if we want to recover what we've lost!—Away with them both! If only I could have the Scipios crucified face to face with them!

2ND ENVOY

To 1st envoy. Don't answer any questions, and think about how the noble Regalus died!

GISGON

Go ahead and wrap yourselves in the sheepskin of memories, it's still true that flesh-and-blood wolves are underneath. And even if you don't flinch during your punishment, it's still going to hurt! *The envoys are sent off.*

Why are you frightened, Hanno? Do you think with the Romans there can ever be peace? They won't get bolder, the tamer we act? Someone who betrayed us once like they have won't think to betray us further? If we tear down this city and head defenseless into the open country to build a new one, they'll just sell us to Massinissas as slaves!

Act V- King Prusias

Scene 1-Capital city of Bithynia.

Throne room in King Prusias' palace.

King Prusias enters with his retinue and sits on the throne. Profound silence. A courtier sneezes.

PRUSIAS

What do I hear?

COURTIER

Great monarch, forgive— I—an irresistible impulse—

PRUSIAS

With a subdued voice. Every impulse of nature can be conquered by skill, as you should have learned in that school at Byzanz, where I sent you at my cost. Your snorting sounded in fact like a jibe against my ancestral name—

COURTIER

May the gods protect me from such sacrilege—I did not snort, I only sneezed.

PRUSIAS

With kings, a mere suspicion already counts as the offense, for among this crowd of flatterers and secret enemies surrounding us we cannot tell whether a fool wants to gush over us or an enemy wants to ridicule us. Be gone, and don't reappear in my court until twenty years have passed and you have improved your manners.

Courtier exits.

Protovestiarios, is Hannibal waiting outside?

PROTOVESTIAR

He awaits an audience.

PRUSIAS

Is he dressed appropriately for an audience?

PROTOVESTIAR

Simply, but respectably, as is fitting for one who begs asylum.

PRUSIAS

He has in one respect injured me. Why did he not come to me directly, but instead went first to the Syrian Antiochus, who took advantage of Hannibal's counsel, and then abandoned him?

PROTOVESTIAR

In times of misfortune a dazed man often chooses backwards.

PRUSIAS

I'm pleased that the work of my leisure hours bears fruit, and you have noted this speech from my tragedy "Sesostris."—Lead Hannibal to the edge of the purple carpet in front of my throne's dais.

To the courtiers.

Don't be astonished—Rather note that I have received counsel from all sides, and have found that Hannibal, while indeed not an illustrious person, is yet a noble person, who in view of his deeds as a warrior and the long line of his forefathers *could* be illustrious, had these latter not been merchants. For this reason he may advance up to the carpet's gold-fringed edge.

Hannibal enters, accompanied by the Protovestiar. He bows respectfully towards the king three times, who sits more stiffly on the throne, and he kneels with the right knee on the corner of the carpet. A profound silence.

PRUSIAS

Who has watched very seriously, after a silence. Arise!

Hannibal stands.

Your demand?

HANNIBAL

Great sir, I have no demand, only a plea. *To himself.* This person has a crackling voice, like a frightened servant crossing a hallway on sand freshly laid for a holiday!

PRUSIAS

To himself. His conduct isn't bad—

HANNIBAL

I offer you my services as a soldier.

PRUSIAS

That I cannot yet allow. *To a courtier.* Give!

The courtier hands over a rolled up map, Prusias unfolds it and points out to Hannibal the appropriate places.

I have studied up on your military expeditions, and find that you have often handled things quite carelessly.

HANNIBAL

Carelessly, sir?

To himself. Before I would have suspected that he would accuse me of excessive care—Yet he and these courtiers—a new type of battlefield! We will try with other weapons, with obeisances and such things—

Aloud. Instruct me, King.

PRUSIAS

I will. Your whole campaign started off diagonally—

HANNIBAL

To himself. Am I to be a schoolboy?

PRUSIAS

Why attempt the dangerous adventure of climbing over the Pyrenees and Alps, when you could speed across the sea to Italy much more quickly and less dangerously?

HANNIBAL

To himself. Even a blind sow finds an acorn! He's right!
Aloud. My once youthful spirit tempted me.

PRUSIAS

And you, as I have heard, harshly criticized your brother Hasdrubal for a similar crossing.

HANNIBAL

I am sorry for that.

PRUSIAS

Such is Man—he sees the most distant nebula sooner than he see his own mistakes.—
Then, my good man, there is absolutely no system in your battles. Sometimes you position your cavalry on the right, sometimes the left, then in the middle, and with your infantry it's the same.

HANNIBAL

My excuse would be that I must adjust for opportunities based on timing and location—

PRUSIAS

They count for nothing, either in art or in war: only the *system* is eternal, and according to *this* standard one must arrange armies and structure stories. The system does not die, even if mischance befalls it.

HANNIBAL

Your highness, your knowledge seems to spring from such deeply contemplated experience—

PRUSIAS

Yes indeed. My father let me train at the Byzantine court as an honorary officer in his bodyguard. *He stands up.* Pantisaalbaderthilphichidis!

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Of that name, steps forward. Sir?

PRUSIAS

Accompany Hannibal to the room prepared for him. *With complacency.* Do you hear, Pantisaalbaderthilphichidis?

All except Prusias exit.

A painter steps out of the background.

Have you sketched out the very memorable scene between me and Hannibal that has just occurred before you?

PAINTER

As you ordered, and without being noticed. Here is the sketch—

PRUSIAS

Holds it up in the light. On the whole, good—But your nib is here and there too sharp. Hence my hair has something scanty about it, as if I wore dry hay on my head—your nervous hand is responsible, break yourself of that. Uninterrupted practice is the best defense against it.—Hannibal’s kneeling, good—You’ve elongated him somewhat at my feet, however that is the Byzantine style, and doesn’t detract from my grandeur, which is in all things paramount.

Scene 2-Carthage

Night. Large hall in Barcas’ palace, illuminated festively with lanterns and candles.

BARCA

With his head laid on a pillow, awaking from slumber. Heavens, what has Alitta arranged with such soft steps while I slept?—The hall shimmers of golden lanterns and candles and dazzling light! Smells of ambergris! Is today a family celebration? *Roman tuba sounds, first in the far distance, then ever closer and stronger, swelling up from all sides.*

O Sea, shroud me from these advancing sounds, each day more terrible! *Getting up.* What’s that?—*Noticing huge shadows on the walls.* This hall is a hundred steps up; what kind of a giant woman looks in at the window—and—cleaves apart the wall before my eyes?—sweeps the streets, the streets themselves away?—There, you, you’re the one, mightier than anyone, what’s that you’re weeping into my house? I don’t need your tears, already have enough miseries—A glittering king’s crown upon her head?—Elissa—Dido—is that you standing outside my window? Have you risen to see your city once more before its demise? Woe to Carthage! She nods, covers her head, and disappears with her lady companion in the sea!—Am I dreaming? No, it’s too terrible for that!

Alitta enters with the highborn young women of Carthage, all in luminous jewelry, burning torches in their hands.

BARCA

Girls, myrtles in your hair? With flurries of diamonds and pearls? In our present distress?

ALITTA

Most precious ancestor, we all have worked day and night to arm our soldiers. They are now fallen, all but a few, and our work can no longer benefit them. What's the point of grief now? We want to lighten our sorrows and celebrate our weddings. That's why I had candles and torches lit!

BARCA

Your Brasidas lies dead.

ALITTA

So we're celebrating not an earthly wedding, but the lovelier and more imminent heavenly one! Listen! Their music accompanies us!

BARCA

That's the attack signal of the enemy army!

ALITTA

So much the better! Even the enemy plays along for our festivities, and the music's powerful!—Old one, Carthage's maidens and matrons know that the Romans will break open the walls, although Gisgon, so noble in his last days, had sealed them with his blood. We know that all resistance is in vain, and for that reason we have all decided, none excluded, (just look, how it's also getting light in the neighboring homes and palaces)—

BARCA

But not ...

ALITTA

Firmly/celebratorily.—to burn the city and ourselves!

BARCA

Pause. — — Give me a torch too!

TURNU

Pressing forward. There!

ALITTA

The Moor, who sought Hannibal here after Zama's battle, and whom I protected—You will stay alive!

TURNU

Must I?

ALITTA

In order to sneak through the Romans, and tell Hannibal about what has happened here.
Turnu exits.

And now friends, playmates, better that we become gray ash than blooming slave girls! —I'll begin! *She throws her torch onto the carpet; the others do the same; the palace begins to burn, the neighboring homes also light up at this signal. Everyone embraces.* Ancient father, how are you?

BARCA

Better than ever!

Scene 3- Capital city of Bithynia

A room in King Prusias's palace

Prusias and an advisor.

PRUSIAS

So it's a Roman envoy?

ADVISOR

He requests an audience.

PRUSIAS

Does the man come alone?

ADVISOR

He has only one servant with him. But there are somewhere between six and ten Roman warships cruising around our coast.

PRUSIAS

Laughable pomp! What does this Roman subject want, arriving in such defiance?

ADVISOR

The surrender of Hannibal.

PRUSIAS

Will never be conceded. He is my guest.

The praetor Titus Flaminius enters. Prusias to himself. He does not bow? Does not even open his mouth to speak?—In truth, I must begin—*Aloud.* Who are you?

FLAMINIUS

A praetor of Rome, sent to you.

PRUSIAS

What does Rome request?

FLAMINIUS

Rome wants you, on the spot, to surrender the commander of the defeated Carthage, now named the province of Africa—Hannibal.

PRUSIAS

A peculiar request— *To the courtier.* Note it in the files for the time being.

FLAMINIUS

That will not do. *He unfurls his toga and then replaces it.*
Choose! War or peace!

PRUSIAS

Hasty people, you! *To the courtier.* What do you think?

ADVISOR

Softly. Our troops right now are hardly—

PRUSIAS

Disturbing my good people in a war for the sake of a displaced man? Would it be right, fair, wise? No, though much in me speaks for him, I must o’ermaster it, for greater affairs are against him! Yes, that’s how it is.

To the courtier. Surrender Hannibal to the Praetor.—I’m going stag hunting.

Scene 4- A villa outside of Bithynia’s capital city.

A room.

HANNIBAL

Sits at a table. If Prusias wanted it, we’d soon take Asia Minor’s tiny states by surprise, but he thinks I’m too stupid—Carthage: whatever else you may be, you will always be my home, and doubly precious to me now because you are so unhappy!—

Standing up. Is that a floorboard creaking? Do my ears deceive me? It is Turnu! From Carthage!—Hannibal, compose yourself, be stronger than an oak, and don’t let your leaves shake at the storm’s approach! *He opens the door.* Come in!

TURNU

Oh sir! You!

HANNIBAL

Calm down!

TURNU

I can’t, Lord, Prince, Father, Mother, you my everything!

HANNIBAL

What news do you bring?

TURNU

I was sent by Alitta.

HANNIBAL

To himself. Things must still stand well with Carthage. She would not have survived its downfall.

TURNU

She charged me with telling you how everything happened.

HANNIBAL

Tell.

TURNU

The Scipios were tired of trying in vain to conquer Carthage.

HANNIBAL

To himself. So, finally pulled it off! [Aloud] Report it to me, as well as you can, as it happened.

TURNU

When the Romans came before the city, they made a hellish pandemonium that could shake a person's eyes and ears loose! Ships burning in the harbor sizzled—

HANNIBAL

And?

TURNU

—and burst! Then they came with siege towers that teetered on the walls, brought out huge iron beams, but we chucked flaming tar-wreaths at them and the tower, and men burned!

HANNIBAL

You fought bravely.

TURNU

I think so. Unfortunately our weapons were soon in shreds, our munitions exhausted— Then (in Nubia no one believes this!) the womenfolk came and brought new ones!

HANNIBAL

Go on!

TURNU

It was terrifying: every temple buzzed like a wasp's nest, like a bridal bed, day and night no rest: one woman picked out dressings for wounds, another hammered the shields, the third ground spears, and so it went with all of them—Only Alitta embroidered honorary decorations for heroic deeds, and that was smart, for when she affixed the little frippery to a man, he went forth a thousand times braver than he had come in.

HANNIBAL

The Romans?

TURNU

Weren't idle. They blockaded our harbor.

HANNIBAL

And all of you?

TURNU

Dug a new one in only one night, just off to the right of the old one.—Then the Scipios started ashore—Sleeping, eating, drinking, knowing the difference between day and night gave way to fighting and blood, until—

HANNIBAL

The Scipios languished?

TURNU

Hold up! They made a breach!

HANNIBAL

Damn it!

TURNU

And they were also damnably tricked!

HANNIBAL

I can breathe again!

TURNU

When Gisgon and Brasidas fell—

HANNIBAL

They're dead?

TURNU

No one gives two hoots about them anymore.—And when there was no longer any capable man who could resist, the women stepped forth once again, Alitta at their head.

HANNIBAL

Happily. Ah!

TURNU

Female cunning is unfathomable, sir. The Romans got duped in a humiliating way. They imagined that they already had Carthage with its treasures in their hands, when the

women gathered in the palaces and burned themselves, and your grandfather, who was quite gleeful about it, and the city from top to toe. Twenty-seven days Carthage burned, and Alitta threw the first torch! Had you seen it, you'd still hardly believe it. Soon the flames rippled in the wind, as if all of Africa's lions had become one, whose mane was mirrored in the sea. The gulled Romans had to wait a long time before they could move in, and found only—ashes, which the wind still blows into the sea today.

HANNIBAL

Coldly. How did you get away from the city?

TURNU

Since Alitta ordered me to flee and rush to you, I crept to the Romans and acted as if I belonged to Massinassa's troops—I got away with it, because Massinassa's army is made up of all colors, and there's not a lot of discipline to it.

HANNIBAL

Stick to the point!

TURNU

And from there the burning city looked splendid! By day the sun shone red-orange through the steam, by night the glittering-red stars paled before the fire, like the whites of my eyes—And the palaces thundered down one after another, the flames reached up towards the heavens, as if they wanted to burn them up too.

Hannibal looks like he wants to say something, but can't.

The peak of Atlas stood by lit up like day, with its crags, fields and woods, all permeated by the fire's resplendence! The animals of the mountains and deserts emerged: terrifying snakes curled themselves around trees, lion eyes, hyenas stared into the fire—

HANNIBAL

The Scipios?

TURNU

They had it good. They came in time, and it looked magnificent when the burning city was reflected in the breastplate of the younger one, as he stood on a rise above the camp. He also knew how to pose himself, so that everyone saw it, and he returned frequently. But when he came in the twenty-seventh night, he became melancholy—the city went out, and with the last embers tears fell from his eyes.

HANNIBAL

Nice weeping, you Romans! At the most convenient time, when you have won everything!

TURNU

Sir, let me wipe—you've got something in your eye there—

HANNIBAL

Leave it! an old eye problem.

TURNU

Never noticed it before.—Then the younger Scipio also spoke some verses. A lanky guy who always followed him around fauningly, like a cat's tail (they called him something with a "T, Terence, I think), wrote them in a tabula, but I stole it from him when he was deep in thought and holding it loosely at his side.

HANNIBAL

Show me.—It's Greek. *Reads.* Once the day will come, when the holy Ilios sinks away, Priamos too, and the folk of the skilled lanceman-king." The boy makes an Homeric reminiscence out of Carthage!

A SLAVE

Hurries in. Master, good master, do not betray me—A foreigner is coming, dressed in white, with purple trim, before him six men with axes, beside him many soldiers of our great king, and the whole villa is already surrounded!

HANNIBAL

Even my underground exits?

SLAVE

They've been betrayed! *He exits.*

HANNIBAL

After stepping for a moment to the window. Turnu, Romans are coming. That coward Prusias has handed me over to them.

TURNU

Any way that I could get at Prusias' throat?

HANNIBAL

Leave him to himself. That's punishment enough.
He pulls out the bottle of poison. —So then—

TURNU

Do we have to?

HANNIBAL

You're not the one they're after—save yourself!

TURNU

Without you? I'll molt with you.

HANNIBAL

Molt?

TURNU

We throw off the old skin, like snakes in springtime, and you'll see, we'll get another somewhere else.

HANNIBAL

Yes, we won't fall out of this world. We are part of it. Drink!

TURNU

After drinking. There, take the rest—It tastes strong—Devil, what's happening? Am I spinning around the world, or the world around me? I'm sweating, and—*Weakly touching his forehead.*—it—is hot ice—commander—?
He dies.

HANNIBAL

You have conquered. Now, Romans, an exiled old man, before whom you have trembled even until his last breath, has eluded you—*He drinks the rest of the poison.* Poison to your health!—Isn't it working yet for me? It's taking so long!—Ha, there—it's coming—Black pilot, where are you?—
He dies.

King Prusias enters with followers and Flaminius.

PRUSIAS

Here you'll meet him.

FLAMINIUS

Sees Hannibal's and Turnu's bodies. Yes, dead.

PRUSIAS

Dead?—Could you ask for more?

FLAMINIUS

Yes, we wanted him living, to lead him in triumph.

PRUSIAS

If I hadn't been on the hunt, perhaps you would have had him living—

FLAMINIUS

You should have left the hunt. I'll advise Rome of all of this, and the Senate will decide how you will be punished. *Exit.*

PRUSIAS

What—? But I'll worry about that later, and there'll be advice on how to deal with it.

With a very hushed and solemn voice.

Now the moment has arrived, where it is right to do that which I have often ominously written about in tragedies: to be noble and kingly towards the dead!

He removes his red cloak.

Hannibal was a rash and inconsiderate man, as I've often said—the hospitality which I showed him came hard to me—but he was nonetheless once my guest, and therefore may his mistakes, his lineage be forgotten. He, and they, I enshroud with this kingly robe! Alexander did it just so with Dareios!

FOLLOWERS

Starting to exclaim in admiration. O—

PRUSIAS

Wait—this fold on the corner of the robe isn't lying right—That is not too lowly a thing for me to deal with!

FOLLOWERS

Long live Prusias, greatest of Kings!

End of Play.

CHAPTER 3

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

As some of the sources cited in my introductory essay may suggest, Grabbe's personal correspondence provided me with invaluable access to his state of mind and to his professed artistic goals throughout the process of creating *Hannibal*. Of course, while such documents are helpful in "getting inside the brain" of the author of the source text, it is incumbent upon a translator to convey what is actually present *in* the text, and not to allow an author's articulated intentions and goals for the piece to color the act or product of translation too heavily. Too much attention to what the author was *trying* to accomplish, and not enough attention to what he *did* accomplish, could result in a translator subconsciously attempting to help the author along in achieving those goals by "improving" upon his work as he or she transposes it into a new culture or language. This danger is particularly present in working with a text like *Hannibal*, which in many ways does seem to fall short of what Grabbe would have liked the piece to be. Yet attempting to reduce the discrepancy between intention and reality is not the task of the translator; he or she must, even in trying to create a stageable script, carry over that gap between the intended destination and the actual distance covered. The text ultimately must stand as the sole documentation of its own intention, and of its success or failure at realizing that intention.

My goal in creating this translation was to recreate the spirit of Grabbe's German text in contemporary, stageworthy American English, while remaining loyal enough to the original text to avoid falling into the more nebulous realm of adaptation. While Grabbe's text seems to move between conventions of "literary" drama and drama

intended expressly for the stage—he was writing for the immediate purpose of publication—I have chosen to embrace the overarching theatricality of the piece.

Therefore, in the interest of making the format of the text accessible to directors and actors, I have taken certain liberties which would not be taken were this an exclusively “scholarly” translation. Three major editorial choices require some explanation. The placement of stage directions, first of all, was a site of my intervention: while Grabbe frequently includes stage directions, in a somewhat more literary fashion, *after* the action is to have begun, I have systematically reinserted those directions earlier in the course of the scene, simply to make the order of events more immediately understandable for theater artists looking at the piece for production purposes.

Also, while avoiding cuts to Grabbe’s sometimes prolix 19th-century dialogue, I have nonetheless strived to give Grabbe’s characters an immediacy and activeness in their language which is not only necessary to today’s American actors but extremely helpful in maintaining the interest of a contemporary American audience accustomed to the quicker pace of cinematic and televisual narrative. I have accomplished this in part by creating more and shorter sentences out of Grabbe’s fewer and longer, more complex, more “readerly” sentences. This, I believe, is a fairly standard practice among German-to-English translators working in drama, as German is a language which, even in its spoken form, relies more upon dependent and relational clauses than spoken American English does. As Robert Bly explains, “German gains energy at times by delaying the verb, and even the main noun, so it appears late in the sentence. English

gains energy the opposite way, by embarking the main noun immediately and the verb soon after.”²⁶

Finally, one glance at the German text of *Hannibal* will reveal a significant stylistic peculiarity of Grabbe’s, and an editorial challenge for a translator: his copious use of dashes, not only to suggest a character’s interrupted or inchoate thoughts, but also to link full and frequently related sentences to one another. Working with this “Grabbische” affinity for this type of punctuation in an American dramatic environment in which dashes have a very particular meaning for actors is a delicate task. I have therefore limited my use of dashes to places that, I believe, suggest a change in thought pattern, a realization, an interruption, or a state of confusion. I have chosen other sorts of punctuation for moments which seem to suggest linkages or continuations of thought.

These aforementioned approaches to Grabbe’s language do not, I believe, betray the integrity of the play by distorting the natural rhythms of his dialogue or misrepresenting his characters’ speaking styles, but hopefully instead succeed in capturing the spirit of his drama while taking into consideration the tastes and perceptions of today’s theater-goers. That being said, it is of course worth noting that all of the previous German productions of *Hannibal* have cut the text to shorten the running time and emphasize the themes that particularly interested the production teams. I prefer to leave such cutting decisions to any future directors and dramaturgs, should they choose to take up this script.

²⁶ Robert Bly, *The Eight Stages of Translation* [Boston: Rowan Tree Press, 1983]: 22.

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