



# The Ghosts of Cannae: Hannibal and the Darkest Hour of the Roman Republic

*Robert L. O'Connell*

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For millennia, Carthage's triumph over Rome at Cannae in 216 B.C. has inspired reverence and awe. No general since has matched Hannibal's most unexpected, innovative, and brutal military victory. Now Robert L. O'Connell, one of the most admired names in military history, tells the whole story of Cannae for the first time, giving us a stirring account of this apocalyptic battle, its causes and consequences.

O'Connell brilliantly conveys how Rome amassed a giant army to punish Carthage's masterful commander, how Hannibal outwitted enemies that outnumbered him, and how this disastrous pivot point in Rome's history ultimately led to the republic's resurgence and the creation of its empire. Piecing together decayed shreds of ancient reportage, the author paints powerful portraits of the leading players, from Hannibal—resolutely sane and uncannily strategic—to Scipio Africanus, the self-promoting Roman military tribune. Finally, O'Connell reveals how Cannae's legend has inspired and haunted military leaders ever since, and the lessons it teaches for our own wars.

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