



A pair of 17th century engravings of the Battle of Cannae, 216BC

RALEIGH, Walter.  
 [Two plans of the Battle of Cannae.]

London, c.1620. Two plates, each c.300 x 390mm.

£300

Two maps demonstrating how the Carthaginians and their allies, led by Hannibal, surrounded and slaughtered a much larger Roman army, in one of the most lethal single days of fighting in history. Cannae was fought in Apulia on 2nd August 216BC, during Hannibal's invasion of Italy in the Second Punic War. The first plate shows the Carthaginians approaching the Romans in a crescent formation, with the cavalry on the flanks in bitter mêlée. The second plate shows the defeat of Roman cavalry, allowing the African infantry to carry out one of the first recorded pincer movements. Thus the Romans found themselves caught by infantry on three sides and Hasdrubal's cavalry cutting off their escape. With nowhere to move, the Romans were massacred: Livy estimated that of 86,400 Romans, over 48,000 were killed and 19,000 captured, and only 14,000 escaped. The Carthaginians had 5,700 killed. From Book Five of Sir Walter Raleigh's 'The Historie of the World in Fives Bookes', written while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, having been convicted of treason.



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