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Silenus of Kale Akte and the propaganda process of building Hannibal's image*¹

Introduction

A passage in Cicero's *De divinatione* presents Roman annalist Lucius Coelius Antipater as a reader of the historical records composed by the Greek historian Silenus. According to Cicero, Coelius followed Silenus' detailed accounts of Hannibal's achievements: "hoc item in Sileni, quod Coelius sequitur, Graeca historia est (is autem diligentissime res Hannibalis persecutus est)"². However, Coelius' references to Silenus' work provide clues about allegedly miraculous events that unfolded in Hannibal's presence. In Cicero's accounts, the reference to Silenus could allude to previous information about Hannibal's attempts to pilfer Juno's temple at cape Lacinium³, and it directly recounts Hannibal's famous dream⁴. These observations suggest that Silenus could play a role in the process of shaping Hannibal's image for the needs of political propaganda. Historical annals composed by Lucius Coelius Antipater, a Roman jurist and historian, provide an interesting framework for drawing conclusions about Silenus' work. An analysis of formal and substantive principles in Coelius' annals supports the identification of similarities in both authors' works and the modifications introduced by the Roman historian.

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² Cic. *De div.* 1.24.49.

³ Cic. *De div.* 1.24.48.

⁴ Cic. *De div.* 1.24.49. Cicero clearly cites his sources, and he resorts to the same approach when quoting the story told by Agathocles.

The propaganda surrounding Hannibal's political prowess is of particular interest because it conveyed a powerful image of the Carthaginian general during his Italian campaign. These measures also delivered tangible results by forging strong links between the supporters of Rome and the Carthaginian invader⁵. Hannibal's main aim was to break up the Italian confederation, and the Greek model of depicting the general as a liberator played an important role in this process⁶. Propaganda efforts entailed religious and mystical elements which, according to Th. W. Africa, could have contributed to the emergence of a "mythology" surrounding Hannibal's accomplishments⁷. These conclusions can be derived based on an analysis of historical accounts describing the beginning and end of Hannibal's invasion of Italy, which – according to Cicero – served as a framework for building Hannibal's political image that was preserved for posterity with Roman modifications.

Historical references to Silenus of Kale Akte

A number of historical sources make a reference to the literary works of Silenus. However, these accounts are scarce, succinct, and dispersed across many historical sources, which significantly complicates prosopographical research. The first attempts to compile these sources were made by F. Jacoby⁸. From the scientific point of view, such efforts are not entirely undebatable, and certain assumptions have to be formulated in the initial stages of research. The author's name could have been spelled differently in various sources, which hinders unambiguous identification. Strabo made a reference to Silenus' work when describing the fresh water spring in the temple of Hercules in Cadiz. However, Strabo first relied on Polybius' account to explain the mechanism behind the fresh water spring. According to Strabo, Artemidorus rejected Polybius' explanation in favor of his own theory, and made a reference to Silenus' opinion on the matter. Ultimately, Stra-

⁵ K. Zimmermann, *Roman Strategy and Aims in the Second Punic War*, [in:] *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, ed. D. Hoyos, Blackwell 2011, pp. 280–298.

⁶ A. Erskine, *Hannibal and The Freedom of The Italians*, "Hermes" 1993, 121, pp. 58–62; K. Lomas, *Rome, Latins and Italians in the Second Punic War*, [in:] *A Companion to the Punic Wars...*, pp. 339–356; M. Wolny, *Wolność według Hannibala. Historiograficzna wizja polityki kartagińskiej wobec miast Italii (218–210 p.n.e.)* [Freedom According to Hannibal. A Historiographical Account of Carthaginian Policy Towards Ancient Italian Cities (218–210 BCE)], "Echa Przeszłości" 2022, XXIII/1, pp. 9–28.

⁷ Th.W. Africa, *The One-Eyed Man against Rome: An Exercise in Euhemerism*, "Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte" 1970, 19/5, pp. 536–537: "It is well known that real historical figures, such as Attila and Ermanaric, reappear warped by legend in later Germanic sagas. Possibly, tales of Arminius contributed some details to the Sigurd of Volsung fame. Gods, too, are usually compounded of earlier deities and even mortals, for the world of myth is highly eclectic. The high god of the Northern peoples, Odin, evolved from the Germanic war god, Wotan (...). Long before Hannibal, Sertorius, and Civilis, the god Wotan was worshiped by the tribes of Germany, but gods acquire attributes and myths over the years, and it is possible that the figure of Odin-Wotan absorbed the legend of the one-eyed man. Of course, this hypothesis is only a suggestion, incapable of proof, but it may have heuristic value".

⁸ F. Jacoby, *Silenos no. 1*, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft II*, Hlbd. 50, Stuttgart 1927, cols. 53–56.

bo concluded that none of these explanations were worth citing, and he argued that both Artemidorus and Silenus were ignorant about hydrogeological phenomena⁹. In the cited fragment, Strabo uses the name Σιλανός in reference to Silenus. Silenus is also described as συγγραφεύς, but Strabo did not regard the Greek historian as an authoritative source of knowledge, and the reasons for citing Silenus in his work remain largely unknown¹⁰.

Despite the element of confusion introduced by Strabo's account, F. Jacoby concluded that the described individual was in fact Silenus of Kale Akte¹¹, so the same person whose literary talent well served Hannibal's political ambitions¹². From the strictly scientific point of view, the identity of the person named Σιλανός can be questioned because the Greek spelling of the name does not raise much doubt. It is also unlikely that the Greek geographer had made an error because the name Σιλανός is mentioned twice in the cited passage, and it is spelled identically in both cases (in one instance, the name has a different grammatical case). Therefore, there is paleographic and grammatical evidence to equate the name Σιλανός with Silenus. However, it cannot be ruled out that the spelling of Σιλανός resulted from the application of different translation rules. If Silenus and his works had been known in Carthage, a Punic version of his name could have also existed. Strabo could be citing a source where Silenus' Greek name was used inadequately and incoherently with the Latin text¹³. The above fragment of Strabo's account is also valuable because it makes a reference to Silenus' literary works. However, the geographer ultimately concluded that Silenus texts do not merit a mention. Strabo searched for "mechanical" and "pragmatic" explanations for the fresh water spring in the submerged temple, and the fact that he rejected Silenus' hypotheses could indicate that these theories contained descriptions of miraculous events. This observation creates new opportunities for linking Σιλανός in Strabo's account with the propagandist who built Hannibal's political image through the use of fantastic and miraculous elements of literary narration.

Silenus was born in the Sicilian polis of Kale Akte, in a region referred to as Magna Graecia¹⁴. This is the main reason why Silenus had been credited with writing Σικελικά¹⁵.

⁹ Strab. 3.5.7: Ἀρτεμίδωρος δὲ ἀντειπὼν τούτῳ καὶ ἅμα παρ' αὐτοῦ τινα θεῖς αἰτίαν, μνησθεὶς δὲ καὶ τῆς Σιλανοῦ δόξης τοῦ συγγραφέως, οὗ μοι δοκεῖ μνήμης ἄξια εἰπεῖν, ὡς ἂν ἰδιώτης περὶ ταῦτα καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ Σιλανός.

¹⁰ Strab. 3.5.7.

¹¹ F. Jacoby, *Silenos no. 1*, col. 53.

¹² Nep. *Hann.* 13.3; D. Hoyos, *Hannibal's Dynasty: Power and Politics in the Western Mediterranean 247–183 B.C.*, London 2003, p. 214.

¹³ M. Wolny, *Studia nad statusem i kompetencjami dowódców kartagińskich w okresie przewagi Barkidów (237–201 p.n.e.)* [A Study on The Status and Competences of Carthaginian Commanders During the Period of Barcid's Dominance (237–201 BCE)], 2 ed., Oświęcim 2016, pp. 66–67.

¹⁴ Athen. 12. 542a (Causboni): Σιλανός δ' ὁ Καλακτίνος ἐν τρίτῳ Σικελικῶν περὶ Συρακοῦσας φησὶν κῆπον εἶναι πολυτελῶς κατεσκευασμένον ὃν καλεῖσθαι Μῦθον; F. Jacoby, op. cit., col. 53 confirms the validity of Holsten's correction.

¹⁵ Plin. *N.H.* 4.120; Athen. 12, 542a; cf. F. Jacoby, op. cit., col. 53; K. Meister, *Annibale in Sileno*, "Maia" 1971, 23, pp. 3–9.

Silenus was a contemporary of Eumachos of Naples who, according to Athenaeus, was the author of a literary treatise about “Hannibal’s war”¹⁶. This observation indicates that the intellectual community painted a favorable picture of the Carthaginian general.

This political favoritism was particularly evident in the last stages of the Second Punic War and the years that followed, as can be deduced from Polybius’ work or rather his suggestive reticence, which provides tentative evidence for further research. It is highly unlikely that the Greek author was unfamiliar with Silenus’ work. Therefore, if Polybius had any knowledge of Silenus’ writing, he was also probably familiar with its content. A conclusion can be drawn *ex silentio* based a treatise which undermined the historical veracity of Sosylus’ and Chaireas’ accounts, but “spared” Silenus¹⁷. However, there is no evidence to indicate that Polybius regarded Silenus as a reputable historian. In another passage, Polybius makes a clearly sardonic comment about writers who were unable to explain Hannibal’s crossing of the Alps in a rational manner and implicated deities and their sons in the process. Polybius cites passages alleging that Hannibal was led to Italy by gods or demigods (θεὸς ἢ τις ἥρως)¹⁸. Perhaps, his jeers were also directed at Silenus.

There are no surviving historical sources that make a direct reference to Silenus’ work or appraise its literary merit. Lucius Coelius Antipater was the only author who expressed serious interest in Silenus’ texts. However, Coelius’ work was only partly preserved, and his opinions about Silenus can be deduced indirectly from Cicero’s writing. This does not change the fact that the reconstructed version of the Greek historian’s annals requires deeper analysis.

Lucius Coelius Antipater – *exornator* and Roman reader of Silenus

Lucius Coelius Antipater is a renowned representative of Roman literary culture, and his writing attracted greater recognition from emperor Hadrian than the works of Sallust¹⁹. According to Cicero, Coelius was not only a historical narrator, but an *exornator* who skillfully adorned his historical narratives with artistry and provided them with literary depth²⁰. Coelius was a representative of a historiographic genre which, in formal terms, was closely associated with fine literature. Coelius frequently resorted to hyperbole as one of the rhetorical devices in his portrayals of historical reality²¹. For this very reason, Coelius’ work attracted criticism from Livy who was reluctant to quote his

¹⁶ Athen. 12.577a (Causboni): Εὐμαχὸς δὲ ὁ Νεαπολίτης ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τῶν περὶ Ἀννίβαν Ἱστοριῶν.

¹⁷ Plb. 3.20.5; F. Jacoby, *op. cit.*, col. 54.

¹⁸ Plb. 3.47.9; É. Foulon, *Le héros des alpes (Polybe III, 47, 6–48, 12): Mercure Alètés*, “Revue de l’histoire des religions” 2000, 217, p. 671.

¹⁹ I. Lewandowski, *Historiografia rzymska* [Roman Historiography], Poznań 2007, p. 56.

²⁰ Cic. *De orat.* 2.54.

²¹ HRR, fr. 39 (Coelius).

writing. A comparison of historical works by Livy (in particular the Third Decade of *Ab Urbe condita*) and Cassius Dio reveals not only formal differences, but also chronological discrepancies. The chronology of events in Cassius Dio's *Roman History* was emulated by Zonaras, but not Livy. According to A. Klotz, the above could imply that Cassius Dio relied directly on Coelius' accounts in the process of building his historical narrative²². These accounts were most probably abridged, but unlike in Livy's writing, they constituted the main source in Cassius Dio's work.

T.J. Luce notes that although the first two books of the Third Decade of *Ab Urbe condita* by Livy show certain similarities to Polybius' descriptions, they were based largely on the work of Fabius Pictor. Fabius attracted significant criticism from Polybius and Silenus who were responsible for the similarities and differences in the preserved fragments of both historians' works²³. However, Livy did not disregard Coelius, and according to R. Jumeau, he held his writing in higher esteem than the work of Polybius due to a more detailed description of the events that unfolded between the siege of Saguntum and the battle of Cannae²⁴.

These observations indicate that Coelius relied on a conceptual approach in his historical writing. Cicero cites *Bellum Punicum* as the title of Coelius' work²⁵, but the said chronicle deals mostly with the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE), which suggests that Cicero was in fact referring to *Bellum Punicum Secundum*. The historical treatise was also known under alternative titles (*Historiae* vs. *Annales*), and it was composed of seven books, of which sixty fragments have survived to this day. The methodological presentation in the first book, and a historical and pragmatic approach to descriptions of past events in successive books²⁶ suggest that Coelius could have been inspired by the political realism of Thucydides. However, Coelius' frequent appeal to emotion and highly dramatized descriptions of historical events could suggest that these poetic inclinations had been inspired by Naevius' poem about the First Punic War. The annalist also reported on incredible or miraculous events²⁷, and he could have relied on Silenus' work as a formal source of knowledge about the Second Punic War.

The associations with Greek literature become evident in this context. In Silenus' narrative about Hannibal's dream, which was preserved by Coelius, the symbolism of

²² A. Klotz, *Über die Stellung des Cassius Dio unter den Quellen zur Geschichte des zweiten punischen Krieges. Eine Vorarbeit zur Quellenanalyse der dritten Dekade des Livius*, "Rheinisches Museum" 1936, 85, p. 70.

²³ T.J. Luce, *Livy. The Composition of His History*, Princeton 1977, p. 177; M. Wolny, *Fragment przekazu Fabiusza Piktora w dziele Polibiusza (III, 8, 1–8)* [The Fragment of Fabius Pictor's Account in the Polybius' Work (III, 8, 1–8)], "Echa Przyszłości" 2004, V, pp. 11–23.

²⁴ R. Jumeau, *Un aspect significatif de l'exposé livien dans les livres 21 et 22*, [in:] *Hommages à Jean Bayet*, ed. M. Rennard, R. Schilling, Brüssel 1964, pp. 309–333.

²⁵ Cic. *Or.* 69.230.

²⁶ HRR, fr. 52 (Coelius), fr 56 (Coelius).

²⁷ HRR, fr. 39 (Coelius).

the serpent was used. In *The Iliad*, the snake was an omen symbolizing the fall of Ilion²⁸. This vision is a self-fulfilling prophecy which initiates a series of events that ultimately lead to the predicted outcome. In this sense, the snake acts as an intermediary between two worlds. A similar reference can be found in the work of Pausanias, where a serpent guides Atinoe²⁹.

An analysis of Coelius' work sheds some light on Silenus. The annalist's interests must have influenced the choice of literary sources for his writing³⁰. In this context, special attention should be paid to a passage in *De divinatione*, where Coelius is recognized as an author who gave serious consideration to Silenus' work: "hoc item in Sileni, quod Coelius sequitur, Graeca historia est (is autem diligentissime res Hannibalis persecutus est)"³¹. Cicero clearly implies that Coelius was a reliable source, which could be explained by the fact that he was familiar with the community of *optimates* who were the annalist's social milieu. *Bellum Punicum [Secundum]* was published after the death of Gaius Gracchus, i.e. after 121 BCE, which suggests that the author was born around 174 BCE and that most of his works were composed in the second half of the 2nd century BCE. The annalist's friendship with Lucius Aelius Stilo, who was probably younger than the author (born around 150 BCE), seems significant because Stilo was Cicero's teacher³². Cicero mentions that Lucius Licinius Crassus was Coelius' student³³, which narrows down the circle of influential Roman intellectuals. However, it remains unclear whether Cicero was truly convinced that Coelius' accounts painted a faithful picture of reality based on Silenus' work or whether his statement was dictated by political correctness.

These observations could suggest that Silenus had authored a historical chronicle of Hannibal's achievements. Such chronicles could be a part of a comprehensive narrative about the Second Punic War. This assumption is supported by F. Jacoby who described the criteria based on which Coelius selected his literary sources. Jacoby argued that if Silenus' work had not painted a comprehensive picture of the Roman-Carthaginian conflict, Coelius would not have selected his writings as the main historical source³⁴. However, this assumption appears to be based on intuition rather than evidence, and above all, it follows a certain research trend in scientific historiography. Two interpretations can be offered at this point. Firstly, it can be assumed that Coelius' work relied on a solid histo-

²⁸ *Il.* 2.299 i n.

²⁹ Paus. 8.8.4–6; D. Ogden, *Drakōn: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Oxford 2013.

³⁰ F. Jacoby, op. cit., col. 53.

³¹ Cic. *De div.* 1.49.

³² M. Pohl, *Coelius Antipater: Person und Werk*, "Historia Scribere" 2013, 5, pp. 423–426.

³³ Cic. *Brut.* 26.102; W. Herrmann, *Die Historien des Coelius Antipater. Fragmente und Kommentar*, Miesenheim am Glan 1979, p. 12.

³⁴ F. Jacoby, op. cit., col. 54: "Doch werden wir nicht zweifeln, das S(ilenos). Den ganzen Krieg behandeln hat, da Coelius ihn sich sonst schwerlich als Hauptquelle gewählt hätte".

riographic concept. Secondly, it can be argued that Silenus' work was consistent with the annalist's concept. These speculations are largely based on the assumption that Coelius' account of the Second Punic War drew upon Silenus' writing³⁵.

These speculations could suggest that Coelius was responsible for the popularity of Silenus' work. The situational context implies that Silenus composed his accounts taking into account the perspective of Roman readers, which undoubtedly influenced their literary value. A similar view was expressed by J. Seibert³⁶. The methodological aspects and the structure of Coelius' historical narrative imply that Silenus was an important source of inspiration, which is why the characteristic details and style of these episodes deserve in-depth attention.

Silenus as the author of historical accounts building Hannibal's political image

The account of Hannibal's dream plays a central role in the assumption that Silenus was the primary source of the story³⁷. As already mentioned, Cicero referenced Silenus, and his account appears to be consistent with historical facts. According to D. Briquel, there are no grounds for questioning the historical authenticity of the original authorship³⁸. Despite minor differences in the existing versions of Hannibal's dream, all of them posit that the Carthaginian general was summoned to invade Italy. Hannibal was cautioned not to look back, but carried away by curiosity, he disobeyed the divine order and saw massive destruction which prophesied the downfall of Italy³⁹. Disobedience to divine law was an act of sacrilege which deserved punishment. Yet Hannibal was not punished, which implies that his disobedience should be interpreted in the divine, rather than human realm. Only someone who is equal to the gods can disobey their commands without any consequences.

The persuasive intent of the primary source which, according to Cicero, can be traced back to Silenus, becomes apparent upon closer examination of one significant detail of

³⁵ H. Hesselbarth, *Historisch-kritisch Untersuchungen zur Dritten Dekade des Livius*, Halle 1889, p. 7.

³⁶ J. Seibert, *Forschungen zu Hannibal*, Darmstadt 1993, p. 184.

³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 184–185; J. Vogt, *Das Hannibal-Portrait im Geschichtswerk des Titus Livius und seine Ursprünge*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1953 (Diss.), pp. 98–99; A. La Penna, *Aspetti del pensiero storico latino*, Torino 1978, p. 105; Cipriani, *L'epifania di Annibale*, Bari 1984, pp. 116–117; D. Briquel, *La propagande d'Hannibal au début de la deuxième guerre punique: remarques sur les fragments de Silènos de Kalèaktè*, [in:] *Actas del IV congreso internacional de estudios fenicos y púnicos*, Cádiz, 2 al 5 de Octubre de 1995, vol. I, Cádiz 2000, pp. 123–127; I. D'Arco, *Il sogno premonitore di Annibale e il pericolo delle Alpi*, "Quaderni di Storia" 2002, p. 145; M. Wolny, *Hannibal w Italii (218–217 p.n.e.)*. *Studia nad uwarunkowaniami początkowych sukcesów kartagińskich* [Hannibal in Italy (218–217 BC). Studies on the Set of Factors of Initial Carthaginian Successes], Olsztyn 2007, pp. 253–263.

³⁸ D. Briquel, op. cit., p. 125.

³⁹ FGH, fr. 175 (Silenos von Kaleakte); Cic. *De div.* 1.49; por. HRR, fr. 11 (Coelius); Liv. 21.22.5–9; Val. Max. 1.7 ext. 1; Sil. 3.163–221; Zon. 8.22.

this report, namely the divine messenger's identity and origin, as well as the forces that commanded him to appear in Hannibal's dream⁴⁰. A passage in *De divinatione* states that the Carthaginian general was aided by an emissary of the gods who was a member of the *concilium deorum*. It is the divine messenger who instructs Hannibal not to look back⁴¹. In this account, the command is issued by a single deity, whereas in Livy's story, the ban was announced by the council of gods (*concilium deorum*)⁴².

In Zonoras' chronicles, Hannibal also receives his instructions from a single messenger⁴³. The latter account validates Cicero's statement which posits Coelius Antipater's involvement⁴⁴. It appears that Zonoras closely followed the annalist's narrative and cited facts in considerable detail, whereas Livy introduced some modifications to serve the needs of the Roman propaganda⁴⁵. According to J. Seibert, the destruction of Italy was intentionally described in considerable detail to emphasize that Hannibal would never conquer Rome⁴⁶. In turn, I. D'Arco notes that the manner in which the motif of Hannibal's dream had been incorporated in Roman literature suggests that the success of the general's Italian campaign was illusory because the final episode of the dream implies that the Carthaginian commander would ultimately suffer defeat from the Roman army⁴⁷.

Silenus' narrative about Hannibal's achievements can be characterized in greater detail based on the above interpretation. In Silenus' account, the Carthaginian general fails to obey the instructions of the divine messenger. The fact that Hannibal could willfully challenge the authority of the council of gods implies that he was portrayed by Silenus as a demigod with a nearly equal status to Roman deities. Hannibal's decision to disobey the divine order had no tangible repercussions, at least not in the immediate timeframe. It should be noted that in Livy's account, Hannibal's disobedience testifies to his impudence, lack of respect for the gods (*nulla religio*)⁴⁸, and prideful desire for prominence (ὄβρις)⁴⁹.

⁴⁰ Cic., *De div.* 1.49.

⁴¹ Ibidem: "quo illum utentem cum exercitu progredi coepisse; tum ei ducem illum praecipisse, ne respiceret".

⁴² Liv. 21.22.6: "proinde sequeretur neque usquam a se deflecteret oculos".

⁴³ Zon. 8.22.

⁴⁴ Cic., *De div.* 1.49: "hoc item in Sileni, quod Coelius sequitur, Graeca historia est (is autem diligentissime res Hannibalis persecutus est)". Also: HRR, fr. 11 (Coelius).

⁴⁵ In Livy's story, Hannibal was instructed to proceed and let the prophecy remain unknown – Liv. 21.22.9: "pergeret porro ire nec ultra inguieret sineretque fata in occulto esse"; D.S. Levene, *Livy on the Hannibalic War*, Oxford 2012, p. 46; M. Wolny, *Hannibal's Dream in Punica by Silius Italicus (3.163–221)* [in press].

⁴⁶ Cf. J. Seibert, op. cit., pp. 189–190.

⁴⁷ I. D'Arco, op. cit., p. 162: "Così il successo del superamento delle Alpi viene fatto apparire come momentaneo e illusorio: la chiusa del sogno lascia intuire la sconfitta finale di Annibale e quindi la vittoria dei Romani".

⁴⁸ Liv. 21.4.9; M. Wolny, *Inhumana crudelitas wodza Hannibala* [Inhumana crudelitas of Hannibal], "Echa Przeszłości" 2014, XV, p. 10.

⁴⁹ G. Mader, *Ἀντίος ὄβριστης: Traces of a <Tragic> Pattern in Livy's Hannibal in Book XXI?*, "Ancient Society" 1993, 24, pp. 205–224.

Cicero's account describing the miraculous events in Capo Colonna during Hannibal's retreat from Italy could imply that he was indirectly influenced by Silenus' story as cited by Coelius. This narrative posits that the Carthaginian general intended to steal a golden column from the Temple of Juno Lacinia. Hannibal ordered to drill a hole in the column to ascertain that it was made entirely of gold. Having determined that the column was solid gold, he decided to take it back to Carthage. In his dream, Hannibal was visited by a goddess who was identified as Juno in Cicero's account. The goddess warned the general that his decision would have disastrous consequences. Juno threatened Hannibal that he would lose his remaining good eye if the column were removed from the temple. Hannibal obeyed the warning, and to placate the goddess, he had a small statue of a heifer cast from gold shavings and mounted on the top of the column⁵⁰. This event emphasizes the power of divine admonition, and it testifies to Hannibal's humility before the gods. Contrary to the account of Hannibal's dream, in this case, the hero chooses to follow the goddess' instructions to avoid the dire consequences of his disobedience. Interestingly, Cicero cites Coelius directly ("Hannibalem Coelius scribit") in this case, whereas a reference to Silenus is made only in the introduction to the story about Hannibal's dream ("hoc item in Sileni, quod Coelius sequitur"⁵¹). Therefore, in Coelius' account, which could have been modified by the annalist based on Silenus' original narrative, Hannibal respects the will of the goddess who has been identified as Juno. The story of Hannibal's dream presents an opposite scenario, and the divine message is ignored by the Carthaginian general.

The chronological sequence of events is rather striking. Hannibal is guided by pride at the beginning of his Italian campaign, but painful experiences (the general loses his eye or vision when crossing the Arno River) prove to be an effective lesson in humility, and the general ultimately obeys the goddess at the end of his arduous journey. This change in narrative was undoubtedly a Roman modification that could have been introduced by Coelius himself. It seems that Coelius made selective use of the source material compiled by Silenus. Livy's account reveals yet another interesting event during Hannibal's stay in Capo Colonna. The general spent the summer of 205 BCE near the temple of Juno Lacinia, where he built and dedicated an altar with an extensive inscription of his achievements engraved in Punic and Greek: "propter Iunonis Laciniae templum aestatem Hannibal egit, ibique aram condidit dedicavitque cum ingenti rerum ab se gestarum titulo Punicis Grae-

⁵⁰ Cic. *De div.* 1.24.48: "Hannibalem Coelius scribit, cum columnam auream, quae esset in fano Iunonis Laciniae, auferre vellet dubitaretque, utrum ea solida esset an extrinsecus inaurata, perterebravisse, cumque solidam invenisset, statuisse tollere; ei secundum quietem visam esse Iunonem praedicere, ne id faceret, minarique, si fecisset, se curaturam, ut eum quoque oculum, quo bene videret, amitteret, idque ab homine acuto non esse neglectum; itaque ex eo auro, quod exterebratum esset, buculam curasse faciendam et eam in summa columna conlocavisse".

⁵¹ Cic. *De div.* 1.24.48–49.

cisque litteris insculpto”⁵². According to Polybius, the purpose of the inscription was to commemorate Hannibal’s triumphs. Polybius also reported on a document describing the composition of Carthaginian troops that had been found at Lacinium. This information was inscribed on a bronze plaque (χάλκωμα) upon Hannibal’s orders (κατατάσσω) during his stay in the region (καθ’ οὗς καιροῦς ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν τόποις ἀνεστρέφετο)⁵³.

A. Klotz argued that the records kept by the Greek historian Silenus were the main sources of knowledge in Polybius’ work⁵⁴. This argument is not unambiguously acceptable because Polybius could have resorted to various means to obtain such an important source of information. If Polybius’ decision to follow Silenus’ accounts was based on the assumption that they were reliable (ἀξιόπιστος)⁵⁵, he probably drew upon more than one source of knowledge. The German historian’s assertions concerning Livy’s sources appear to be more plausible. Klotz argued that Livy’s writing was also based on Silenus’ work, albeit only indirectly. According to Klotz, Coelius was the missing part of the puzzle linking Silenus with Livy⁵⁶.

However, the assertion that the altar commemorating Hannibal’s achievements in Capo Colonna was described by Silenus remains doubtful. Writers and historians who promoted Roman interests, in particular Polybius, could have learned about the engravings from other independent sources, including the Greeks⁵⁷. Therefore, the dissemination of knowledge about Hannibal’s accomplishments cannot be analyzed based solely on relationships between various literary sources, especially since a clear reference to oral tradition was made by Coelius⁵⁸.

Conclusions

M. Jaeger rightly notes that formal efforts aiming to commemorate Hannibal’s achievements were a part of Middle Eastern tradition⁵⁹. Therefore, the Carthaginian general relied on various means and tools to build his political image. These included a language of communication originating from a “hieratic” approach to glorifying own

⁵² Liv. 28.46.16.

⁵³ Plb. 3.33.18: “ἡμεῖς γὰρ εὐρόντες ἐπὶ Λακινίῳ τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ἐν χαλκώματι κατατεταγμένην ὑπ’ Ἀννίβου, καθ’ οὗς καιροῦς ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν τόποις ἀνεστρέφετο, πάντως ἐνομίσαμεν αὐτὴν περὶ γε τῶν τοιοῦτων ἀξιόπιστον εἶναι: διὸ καὶ κατακολουθεῖν εἰλόμεθα τῇ γραφῇ ταύτῃ”.

⁵⁴ A. Klotz, *Livius und seine Vorgänger*, Leipzig–Berlin 1941, p. 190.

⁵⁵ Plb. 3.33.18. M. Wolny’s presentation entitled *Commemorazione di grandi successi al momento della sconfitta – Annibale in Capo Colonna* [in press], delivered on 25 January 2023 during a scientific conference in Rome (“*Marciano con Annibale*”) initiated a discussion on this discovery.

⁵⁶ A. Klotz, *Livius und seine...*, p. 190; F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. I, Oxford 1957, p. 365.

⁵⁷ O. Cuntz, *Polybius und sein Werk*, Leipzig 1902, p. 63.

⁵⁸ HRR, fr. 17 (Coelius).

⁵⁹ M. Jaeger, *Livy, Hannibal’s Monument, and the Temple of Juno at Croton*, “*Transactions of the American Philological Association*” 2006, 136/2, p. 392.

achievements that had been widespread in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Mehmet-Ali Ataç believes that bas-relief sculptures in palaces depict “historical” events, mostly battles and military sieges⁶⁰. In this approach, the human world and the divine realm permeate each other, and rulers acquire miraculous attributes that guarantee military and political success. This example testifies to the broad reach of propaganda measures. According to R. Miles, Alexander the Great was the first ruler who fully grasped the significance of political propaganda in military campaigns. Faithful and well-trained troops were not the only resource that enabled Alexander to conquer the Middle East. The Macedonian king also relied on his advisors, courtiers, writers, and intellectuals to garner support for his campaigns. Despite the fact that many historical records describing Alexander’s achievements were composed after his death, stories about the king experiencing divine grace were widely circulated at a time of war in an attempt to acquire allies and weaken the enemy’s morale⁶¹. Numerous similarities indicate that Hannibal was inspired by Alexander’s propaganda machine. The measures initiated by the Carthaginian general served the same political goal. As in Alexander’s case, some historical and literary accounts of Hannibal’s accomplishments were written after his death, but many narratives were disseminated during the general’s life to aid his political career, including those that were based largely on the work of Silenus.

Due to a general scarcity of historical sources, definitive conclusions are difficult to formulate, but the existing evidence seems to indicate that Silenus resorted to rhetorical and dramatic devices, which were highly characteristic of his work, to portray Hannibal as a skillful military leader. Drama and rhetoric were popular tools in Hellenic literary tradition, which is why Silenus’ writing could have attracted the interest of Coelius. He introduced some modifications to Silenus’ original work, possibly with the intent of concealing his attempts at portraying Hannibal as a Carthaginian leader with divine status. These eclectic methods could have been used to build a propaganda narrative around Hannibal’s achievements also in later years, since Silenus accompanied Hannibal “for as long as fortune allowed” (*quamdiu fortuna passa est*)⁶². In a heuristic sense, it would also be necessary to consider whether, Silenus’ efforts to build Hannibal’s political image could have also served the general after the Second Punic War when he fled into voluntary exile and continued his anti-Roman policy.

⁶⁰ M.-A. Ataç, *Visual Formula and Meaning in Neo-Assyrian Relief Sculpture*, “The Art Bulletin” 2006, 88/1, pp. 70–71.

⁶¹ R. Miles, *Hannibal and Propaganda*, [in:] *A Companion to the Punic Wars...*, pp. 260–279.

⁶² Nep. *Hann.* 13.3.

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Silenus of Kale Akte and the propaganda process of building Hannibal's image

Summary: The article examines the role of Greek historian Silenus in building a strategic narrative about the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE) and Hannibal's image for the needs of political propaganda. Historical annals composed by Lucius Coelius Antipater, a Roman jurist and historian, provide an interesting framework for drawing conclusions about Silenus' work. An analysis of formal and substantive principles in Coelius' annals supports the identification of similarities in both authors' works and the modifications introduced by the Roman historian. Silenus was tasked with building a historical narrative in support of Carthage, and he resorted to various literary devices to paint a positive image of the Carthaginian general. These propaganda measures incorporated religious elements, as evidenced by two events described in

Cicero's *De divinatione*: Hannibal's dream at the beginning of the invasion in the Apennine Mountains, and the general's stay in Capo Colonna towards the end of the Italian campaign. These episodes were clearly derived from Silenus' works, which suggests that Hannibal resorted to various tools to build his political image. In addition to formal references to Hellenic literature, Hannibal's propagandist relied also on the language of communication derived from a "hieratic" approach to glorifying own achievements and Middle Eastern traditions. The aim of these literary manipulations was to convince the readers that the worlds of gods and humans are entangled, and that political and military leaders are endowed with miraculous powers that enable them to rise to victory. Coelius introduced some modifications to Silenus' original work, possibly with the intent of concealing his attempts at portraying Hannibal as a Carthaginian leader with divine status.

Keywords: Carthage, Hannibal, Silenus, Hellenistic historiography, Roman historiography, political propaganda

Silenus und der Prozess der propagandistischen Gestaltung des Bildes von Hannibal

Zusammenfassung: Der Autor dieses Artikels versucht, den Einfluss des Werkes des griechischen Historikers Silenus auf die Darstellungen des Zweiten Punischen Krieges (218–201 v. Chr.) und die Gestaltung des Propagandabildes von Hannibal zu bestimmen. Die Vorstellung von Silenus' Werk wird durch dessen Schilderung eines römischen Lesers seines Werkes, nämlich des Annalisten Lucius Caelius Antipater, beeinflusst. Das Erkennen von formalen und inhaltlichen Prinzipien dieses Berichts macht es möglich, kohärente Elemente im Werk beider Autoren aufzuzeigen und Aussagen in Bezug auf die Richtung der von Antipater vorgenommenen Veränderungen zu formulieren. Silenus griff als griechischer Historiker, der ein für die punische Seite günstiges Bild der Ereignisse konstruieren wollte, auf eine Reihe von literarischen Eingriffen zurück, um vor allem den karthagischen Feldherrn in ein günstiges Licht zu rücken. Bei der Kreation des Bildes dieses Feldherrn bezog er sich auch auf einige Elemente aus der religiösen Sphäre, was an zwei Episoden zu sehen ist, die in Ciceros *De Divinatione* nebeneinander stehen: Hannibals Traum zu Beginn der Invasion auf die Apenninenhalbinsel und der Aufenthalt des Feldherrn in Capo Colonna am Ende des Feldzugs in Italien. Eine Analyse dieser Episoden zeigt, dass sie auf Silenus zurückgehen, was die These stützt, dass Hannibal sein Propagandabild mit verschiedenen Mitteln aufbaute. Neben formalen Bezügen zur hellenistischen Literatur wurde auch eine Kommunikationssprache verwendet, die ihren Ursprung in der „hieratischen“ Darstellung der eigenen Leistungen hatte und sich auf die nächstliegende Tradition bezog. Das Wesen solcher Darstellungen bestand darin, zu zeigen, dass die Welten der Götter und der Menschen einander durchdringen und dass Herrscher dank „wundersamen“ Attributen der Macht, die sie erlangen, bereit sind weitere Erfolge zu erzielen. Die Methode, mit der Caelius den ursprünglichen Text von Silenus modifiziert hat, lässt sich als vermutlicher Versuch aufdecken, die Hauptintention, d.h. die Gleichstellung Hannibals dem karthagischen Götterhäuptling, zu verschleiern.

Schlüsselwörter: Kartagina, Hannibal, Silenus, hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung, römische Geschichtsschreibung, Propaganda der Macht

Silenus i proces propagandowego kreowania wizerunku Hannibala

Streszczenie: Autor artykułu próbuje określić wpływ twórczości greckiego historyka Silenusa na kształtowanie podstaw relacji dotyczącej drugiej wojny punickiej (218–201 p.n.e.) i konstruowanie propagandowego wizerunku Hannibala. Na wyobrażenie o twórczości Silenusa rzutuje przekaz pośredni, skonstruowany przez rzymskiego czytelnika jego twórczości, czyli annalistę Lucjusza Celiusza Antypatra. Rozpoznanie pryncypiów formalnych i merytorycznych tego przekazu sprzyja wykazaniu elementów koherentnych w twórczości obydwu autorów oraz ułatwia przyjęcie założeń, w jakim kierunku przebiegały rzymskie modyfikacje. Silenus jako grecki historyk zaangażowany w konstruowanie obrazu wydarzeń sprzyjających stronie punickiej uciekał się do szeregu zabiegów literackich, które przede wszystkim w korzystnym świetle prezentowały kartagińskiego dowódcę. Kreowanie wizerunku tego dowódcy zawierało w sobie również elementy odwołujące się do sfery religijnej, co można prześledzić na podstawie dwóch epizodów zestawionych w *De Divinatione* Cyncerona: snu Hannibala lokowanego na początku inwazji na Półwysep Apeniński i pobytu dowódcy w Capo Colonna u schyłku kampanii w Italii. Analiza tych epizodów wskazuje, że wywodzą się one od Silenusa, co sprzyja ugruntowaniu tezy, iż Hannibal budował swój propagandowy wizerunek przy pomocy różnych narzędzi. Obok formalnych nawiązań do literatury hellenistycznej wykorzystywano również język komunikacji, mający swoją genezę w „hieratycznym” sposobie obrazowania historii własnych dokonań i nawiązujący do tradycji bliskowschodniej. Istotą takich prezentacji było pokazanie, że światy bogów i ludzi przenikają się nawzajem, a władcy – zyskując „cudowne” atrybuty siły – gotowi są do odnoszenia dalszych sukcesów. Wykorzystany przez Celiusza sposób modyfikacji źródłowej „matrycy” pochodzącej od Silenusa przypuszczalnie odkrywa próby zamaskowania naczelnej intencji wskazującej na Hannibala jako równego bogom kartagińskiego wodza.

Słowa kluczowe: Kartagina, Hannibal, Silenus, historiografia hellenistyczna, historiografia rzymska, propaganda władzy

