

EARTH: On the Trail of Hannibal's Army - and Elephants - in the Alps

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alexandria, VA - During the Second Punic War, Hannibal, in a brazen move, led a massive army over the Alps, surprising the Romans from the supposedly impenetrable northern border. The exact route Hannibal took is unknown, although some geographic information can be gleaned from historical accounts such as those of the Roman writer Polybius. Armed with this information, and the knowledge that tens of thousands of men, horses and elephants must have left some trace, geoscientists are hunting down possible locations using deduction and chemistry to test hypotheses.

In Polybius' writings, he notes that Hannibal's soldiers described features such as a two-tiered rockfall near where the army camped. The team behind the new paper found a rockfall that they believe matches Polybius' description at the Col de la Traversette, and when they tested a bog 2,600 meters below it, they found disturbed sediments and chemical evidence for humans and horses. The date of this layer even gives a carbon-14 age that is consistent with Hannibal's invasion. Other scientists, also using Polybius' accounts, believe the Col de la Traversette does not contain enough similarity to the historical documents to be the pass Hannibal took. Read this month's EARTH Magazine to decide for yourself if these scientists are en route to authenticating the trail of Hannibal's army: <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/trail-hannibals-army-and-elephants-...>

The August issue of EARTH Magazine features stories that will engage and excite readers. This month, readers explore the submerged site of a mastodon butchered by pre-Clovis people, hypotheses about how Asian bats resist White Nose Syndrome, and one of this month's features, "Illustrating Geology: Great Images that Transformed the Field," where readers get to see maps, figures and diagrams that changed how we think about our world. For these stories, and many more, explore www.earthmagazine.org.

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