

Macrobius *The Saturnalia* 1.16 is a disquisition on what days in the Roman calendar were allowed for what activities.

1.16.15-24. As for battle days, I shall not treat of them as distinct from the "law days", namely, the thirty consecutive days during which, after orders to the army to muster, a red flag is placed on the citadel, all battle days, however, being days on which it is lawful to seek restitution of property or to attack an enemy.

Now when the Latiar, that is, the celebration of the Latin Festival, is proclaimed, and during the days of the Saturnalia, and also when the entrance to the underworld is open [24 August, 5 October, 8 November], religion forbids the joining of battle, and for the following reasons: during the Latin Festival, because it was unfitting to begin a war at the time at which a truce was publicly concluded of old between the Roman people and the Latins; during the festival of Saturn, because his reign is believed to have been free from any tumult of war; and when the entrance to the underworld is open, this being a sacred occasion dedicated to Father Dis and Proserpine, and men deemed it better to go out to battle when the jaws of Pluto are shut. And that is why Varro writes: "When the entrance to the underworld is open, it is as if the door of the grim, infernal deities were open. A religious ban therefore forbids us not only to engage in battle but to levy troops and march to war, to weigh anchor, and to marry a wife for the raising of children." As regards the levying of troops, this was also avoided of old on days marked by association with some disaster. It was avoided too on rest days, for as Varro writes in his work on *Augurs*: "Men may not be levied for the army on a rest day; if such a call-up has been made, an act of expiation is necessary." Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that it was only if the Romans were themselves declaring war that they recognized the need to choose a permissible day of battle; when they were being attacked, the nature of the day did not debar them from defending themselves and the honor of Rome. For what room is there for regarding a religious observance, if one has no choice in the matter?

The days after the Kalends, Nones, and Ides were regarded by our ancestors as days to be avoided for any undertaking; and they would seem to have shown their condemnation of those days by giving them the ill-omened style of "black" days, although some people, as though to modify such expression of disapproval, have called the days "common" days [as being unlucky for all alike]. The reason for this belief is given by Gellius in the fifteenth book of his *Annals* and by Cassius Hemina in the second book of his *Histories*.

In 363 AVC [389 BCE] the military tribunes Verginius, Manlius, Aemilius, Postumius, and their colleagues discussed in the senate the reason for the many disasters which had befallen the state within the space of a few years; and by order of the senators the soothsayer Lucius Aquinius was summoned to the house to be questioned on matters relating to religious observances. He replied that a military tribune, Quintus Sulpicius, when about to attack the Gauls at the Allia, had offered sacrifice, for success in battle, on the morrow of the Ides of Quintilis. At the Cremera too, he said, and on many other occasions and in many other places, defeat in battle had followed the offering of a sacrifice on the morrow of such a day of observance. Whereupon the senate ordered the question of these religious observances to be referred to the college of pontiffs, who declared that the morrow of all Kalends, Nones, and Ides were to be regarded as "black" days; so that these days were neither days on which battle might be offered, nor days free from religious restrictions, nor days on which assemblies of the people might be held.

Livy. During the Latin War (340-338 BCE). The consuls in 340 are T. Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus (for the third time) and P. Decius Mus. Decius offers his own life to the gods in return for a Roman victory; the practice is known as *devotio*.

[8.9] The battle took place near the base of Mount Vesuvius, where the road led to Vesperis. Before leading out their armies to battle the consuls offered sacrifice. The *haruspex*, whose duty it was to inspect the different organs in the victims, pointed out to Decius a prophetic intimation of his death, in all other respects the signs were favourable. Manlius' sacrifice was entirely satisfactory. "It is well," said Decius, "if my colleague has obtained favourable signs." They moved forward to battle in the formation I have already described, Manlius in command of the right division, Decius of the left. At first both armies fought with equal strength and equal determination. After a time the Roman *hastati* on the left, unable to withstand the insistency of the Latins, retired behind the *principes*. During the temporary confusion created by this movement, Decius exclaimed in a loud voice to M. Valerius: "Valerius, we need the help of the gods! Let the Pontifex Maximus dictate to me the words in which I am to devote myself for the legions." The Pontifex bade him veil his head in his *toga praetexta*, and rest his hand, covered with the *toga*, against his chin, then standing upon a spear to say these words: "Janus, Jupiter, Father Mars, Quirinus, Bellona, Lares, ye *Novensiles* and *Indigetes*, deities to whom belongs the power over us and over our foes, and ye, too, Divine Manes, I pray to you, I do you reverence, I crave your grace and favour that you will bless the Roman People, the *Quirites*, with power and victory, and visit the enemies of the Roman People, the *Quirites*, with fear and dread and death. In like manner as I have uttered this prayer so do I now on behalf of the commonwealth of the *Quirites*, on behalf of the army, the legions, the auxiliaries of the Roman People, the *Quirites*, devote the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy, together with myself to the Divine Manes and to Earth." After this prayer he ordered the *lictors* to go to T. Manlius and at once announce to his colleague that he had devoted himself on behalf of the army. He then girded himself with the *Gabinian cincture*, and in full armour leaped upon his horse and dashed into the middle of the enemy. To those who watched him in both armies, he appeared something awful and superhuman, as though sent from heaven to expiate and appease all the anger of the gods and to avert destruction from his people and bring it on their enemies. All the dread and terror which he carried with him threw the front ranks of the Latins into confusion which soon spread throughout the entire army. This was most evident, for wherever his horse carried him they were paralysed as though struck by some death-dealing star; but when he fell, overwhelmed with darts, the Latin cohorts, in a state of perfect consternation, fled from the spot and left a large space clear. The Romans, on the other hand, freed from all religious fears, pressed forward as though the signal was then first given and commenced a great battle. Even the *rorarii* rushed forward between the companies of *antepilani* and added strength to the *hastati* and *principes*, whilst the *triarii*, kneeling on their right knee, waited for the consul's signal to rise.

[8.10] When Manlius heard the fate of his colleague, he honoured his glorious death with tears no less than with the due meed of praise. Meantime the battle proceeded, and in some quarters the weight of numbers was giving the advantage to the Latins. For some time Manlius was in doubt whether the moment had not come for calling up the *triarii*, but judging it better for them to be kept fresh till the final crisis of the battle, he

gave orders for the accensi at the extreme rear to advance to the front. When they came up, the Latins, taking them for the opposing triarii, instantly called up their own. In the desperate struggle they had tired themselves out and broken or blunted their spears, but as they were still driving the enemy back by main force, they imagined that the battle was decided and that they had reached their last line. Then it was that the consul said to his triarii: "Rise up now, fresh and vigorous against a wearied foe; think of your country and your parents and wives and children; think of your consul lying there dead that ye might win the victory!" They rose up fresh and resplendent in their armour, as though a new army had suddenly sprung up, and after letting the antepilani retire through them they raised their battle-shout. The front ranks of the Latins were thrown into disorder, the Romans thrust their spears into their faces, and in this way killed the main support of their army. They went on without being touched through the remaining companies as though through a crowd of unarmed men, and they marked their advance with such a slaughter that they left hardly a fourth part of the enemy. The Samnites, too, who were drawn up close to the lowest spurs of the mountain, were threatening the Latins on their flank, and so adding to their demoralisation.

The chief credit for that successful battle was given by all, Romans and allies alike, to the two consuls - one of whom had diverted on to himself alone all the dangers that threatened from the gods supernal and the gods infernal, whilst the other had shown such consummate generalship in the battle itself that the Roman and Latin historians who have left an account of it, are quite agreed that whichever side had had T. Manlius as their commander must have won the victory. After their flight the Latins took refuge in Minturnae. Their camp was captured after the battle, and many were killed there, mostly Campanians. The body of Decius was not found that day, as night overtook those who were searching for it, the next day it was discovered, buried beneath a heap of javelins and with an immense number of the enemy lying round it. His obsequies were conducted by his colleague in a manner befitting that glorious death. I ought to add here that a consul or Dictator or praetor, when he devotes the legions of the enemy, need not necessarily devote himself but may select any one he chooses out of a legion that has been regularly enrolled. If the man who has been so devoted is killed, all is considered to have been duly performed. If he is not killed, an image of the man, seven feet high at least, must be buried in the earth, and a victim slain as an expiatory sacrifice; on the spot, where such an image has been buried, no Roman magistrate must ever set his foot. If, as in the case of Decius, the commander devotes himself but survives the battle, he can no longer discharge any religious function, either on his own account or on behalf of the State. He has the right to devote his arms, either by offering a sacrifice or otherwise, to Vulcan or to any other deity. The spear on which the consul stands, when repeating the formula of devotion, must not pass into the enemy's hands; should this happen a *suovetaurilia* must be offered as a propitiation to Mars.

[8.11] Although the memory of every traditional custom relating to either human or divine things has been lost through our abandonment of the old religion of our fathers in favour of foreign novelties, I thought it not alien from my subject to record these regulations in the very words in which they have been handed down.

Livy. During the Second Samnite War (298-290 BCE). The consuls in 293 are L. Papirius Cursor and Sp. Carvilius Maximus. Papirius will win a great victory over the Samnites near Bovianum Vetus. A *pullarius* is a man in charge of the sacred chickens.

[10.38] The year following was marked by the consulship of L. Papirius Cursor, who had not only inherited his father's glory but enhanced it by his management of a great war and a victory over the Samnites, second only to the one which his father had won. It happened that this nation had taken the same care and pains to adorn their soldiery with all the wealth of splendour as they had done on the occasion of the elder Papirius' victory. They had also called in the aid of the gods by submitting the soldiers to a kind of initiation into an ancient form of oath. A levy was conducted throughout Samnium under a novel regulation; any man within the military age who had not assembled on the captain-general's proclamation, or any one who had departed without permission, was devoted to Jupiter and his life forfeited. The whole of the army was summoned to Aquilonia, and 40,000 men, the full strength of Samnium, were concentrated there. A space, about 200 feet square, almost in the centre of their camp, was boarded off and covered all over with linen cloth. In this enclosure a sacrificial service was conducted, the words being read from an old linen book by an aged priest, Ovius Paccius, who announced that he was taking that form of service from the old ritual of the Samnite religion. It was the form which their ancestors used when they formed their secret design of wresting Capua from the Etruscans. When the sacrifice was completed the captain-general sent a messenger to summon all those who were of noble birth or who were distinguished for their military achievements. They were admitted into the enclosure one by one. As each was admitted he was led up to the altar, more like a victim than like one who was taking part in the service, and he was bound on oath not to divulge what he saw and heard in that place. Then they compelled him to take an oath couched in the most terrible language, imprecating a curse on himself, his family, and his race if he did not go into battle where the commanders should lead him or if he either himself fled from battle or did not at once slay any one whom he saw fleeing. At first there were some who refused to take this oath; they were massacred beside the altar, and their dead bodies lying amongst the scattered remains of the victims were a plain hint to the rest not to refuse. After the foremost men among the Samnites had been bound by this dread formula, ten were especially named by the captain-general and told each to choose a comrade-in-arms, and these again to choose others until they had made up the number of 16,000. These were called the "linen legion," from the material with which the place where they had been sworn was covered. They were provided with resplendent armour and plumed helmets to distinguish them from the others. The rest of the army consisted of something under 20,000 men, but they were not inferior to the linen legion either in their personal appearance or soldierly qualities or in the excellence of their equipment. This was the number of those in camp at Aquilonia, forming the total strength of Samnium.

[10.39] The consuls left the City. The first to go was Spurius Carvilius, to whom were assigned the legions which M. Atilius, the previous consul, had left in the district of Interamna. With these he advanced into Samnium, and while the enemy were taken up with their superstitious observance and forming secret plans, he stormed and captured the town of Amiternum. Nearly 2800 men were killed there, and 4270 made prisoners. Papirius with a fresh army raised by senatorial decree successfully attacked the city of

Duronia. He made fewer prisoners than his colleague, but slew a somewhat greater number. In both towns rich booty was secured. Then the consuls traversed Samnium in different directions; Carvilius, after ravaging the Atinate country, came to Cominium; Papirius reached Aquilonia, where the main army of the Samnites was posted. For some time his troops, while not quite inactive, abstained from any serious fighting. The time was spent in annoying the enemy when he was quiet, and retiring when he showed resistance - in threatening rather than in offering battle. As long as this practice went on day after day, of beginning and then desisting, even the slightest skirmish led to no result. The other Roman camp was separated by an interval of 20 miles, but Carvilius was guided in all his measures by the advice of his distant colleague; his thoughts were dwelling more on Aquilonia, where the state of affairs was so critical, than on Cominium, which he was actually besieging.

Papirius was at length perfectly ready to fight, and he sent a message to his colleague announcing his intention, if the auspices were favourable, of engaging the enemy the next day, and impressing upon him the necessity of attacking Cominium with his full strength, to give the Samnites no opportunity of sending succour to Aquilonia. The messenger had the day for his journey, he returned in the night, bringing word back to the consul that his colleague approved of his plan. Immediately after despatching the messenger Papirius ordered a muster of his troops, and addressed them preparatory to the battle. He spoke at some length upon the general character of the war they were engaged in, and especially upon the style of equipment which the enemy had adopted, which he said served for idle pageantry rather than for practical use. Plumes did not inflict wounds, their painted and gilded shields would be penetrated by the Roman javelin, and an army resplendent in dazzling white would be stained with gore when the sword came into play. A Samnite army all in gold and silver had once been annihilated by his father, and those trappings had brought more glory as spoils to the victors than they had brought as armour to the wearers. It might, perhaps, be a special privilege granted to his name and family that the greatest efforts which the Samnites had ever made should be frustrated and defeated under their generalship and that the spoils which they brought back should be sufficiently splendid to serve as decorations for the public places in the City. Treaties so often asked for, so often broken, brought about the intervention of the immortal gods, and if it were permitted to man to form any conjecture as to the feelings of the gods, he believed that they had never been more incensed against any army than against this one of the Samnites. It had taken part in infamous rites and been stained with the mingled blood of men and beasts; it was under the two-fold curse of heaven, filled with dread at the thought of the gods who witnessed the treaties made with Rome and horror-struck at the imprecations which were uttered when an oath was taken to break those treaties, an oath which the soldiers took under compulsion and which they recall with loathing. They dread alike the gods, their fellow-countrymen, and the enemy.

[10.40] These details the consul had gathered from information supplied by deserters, and his mention of them increased the exasperation of the troops. Assured of the favour of heaven and satisfied that humanly speaking they were more than a match for their foes, they clamoured with one voice to be led to battle, and were intensely disgusted at finding that it was put off till the morrow; they chafed angrily at the delay of a whole day and night. After receiving the reply from his colleague, Papirius rose quietly in the

third watch of the night and sent a *pullarius* to observe the omens. There was not a man, whatever his rank or condition, in the camp who was not seized by the passion for battle, the highest and lowest alike were eagerly looking forward to it; the general was watching the excited looks of the men, the men were looking at their general, the universal excitement extended even to those who were engaged in observing the sacred birds. The chickens refused to eat, but the *pullarius* ventured to misrepresent matters, and reported to the consul that they had eaten so greedily that the corn dropped from their mouths on to the ground. The consul, delighted at the news, gave out that the omens could not have been more favourable; they were going to engage the enemy under the guidance and blessing of heaven. He then gave the signal for battle. . . .

While the consul was busy with these arrangements an altercation began between the *pullarii* about the omens which had been observed in the morning. Some of the Roman cavalry overheard it and thought it of sufficient importance to justify them in reporting to Spurius Papirius, the consul's nephew, that the omens were being called in question. This young man, born in an age when men were not yet taught to despise the gods, inquired into the matter in order to make quite sure that what he was reporting was true and then laid it before the consul. He thanked him for the trouble he had taken and bade him have no fears. "But," he continued, "if the man who is watching the omens makes a false report, he brings down the divine wrath on his own head. As far as I am concerned, I have received the formal intimation that the chickens ate eagerly, there could be no more favourable omen for the Roman people and army." He then issued instructions to the centurions to place the *pullarius* in front of the fighting line. The standards of the Samnites were now advancing, followed by the army in gorgeous array; even to their enemies they presented a magnificent sight. Before the battle-shout was raised or the lines closed a chance javelin struck the *pullarius* and he fell in front of the standards. When this was reported to the consul he remarked, "The gods are taking their part in the battle, the guilty man has met with his punishment." While the consul was speaking a crow in front of him gave a loud and distinct caw. The consul welcomed the augury and declared that the gods had never more plainly manifested their presence in human affairs. He then ordered the charge to be sounded and the battle-shout to be raised.

10.41] A savagely fought contest ensued. The two sides were, however, animated by very different feelings. The Romans went into battle eager for the fray, confident of victory, exasperated against the enemy and thirsting for his blood. The Samnites were, most of them, dragged in against their will by sheer compulsion and the terrors of religion, and they adopted defensive rather than aggressive tactics. Accustomed as they had been for so many years to defeat, they would not have sustained even the first shout and charge of the Romans had not a still more awful object of fear possessed their minds and stayed them from flight. They had before their eyes all that paraphernalia of the secret rite - the armed priests, the slaughtered remains of men and beasts scattered about indiscriminately, the altars sprinkled with the blood of the victims and of their murdered countrymen, the awful imprecations, the frightful curses which they had invoked on their family and race - these were the chains which bound them so that they could not flee. They dreaded their own countrymen more than the enemy. The Romans pressed on from both wings and from the centre and cut down men who were paralysed by fear of gods and men. Only a feeble resistance could be offered by those

who were only kept from flight by fear. . . . The bulk of the infantry who survived the actual battle were driven either into their camp or to Aquilonia, the nobility and cavalry fled to Bovianum. The cavalry were pursued by cavalry, the infantry by infantry; the wings of the Roman army separated, the right directed its course towards the Samnite camp, the left to the city of Aquilonia. The first success fell to Volumnius, who captured the Samnite camp. Scipio met with a more sustained resistance at the city, not because the defeated foe showed more courage there, but because stone walls are more difficult to surmount than the rampart of a camp. They drove the defenders from their walls with showers of stones. Scipio saw that unless his task was completed before the enemy had time to recover from their panic, an attack on a fortified city would be a somewhat slow affair. He asked his men whether they would be content to allow the enemy's camp to be captured by the other army, whilst they themselves after their victory were repulsed from the gates of the city. There was a universal shout of "No!" On hearing this he held his shield above his head and ran to the gate, the men followed his example, and roofing themselves with their shields burst through into the city. They dislodged the Samnites from the walls on either side of the gate, but as they were only a small body did not venture to penetrate into the interior of the city.

[10.42] The consul was at first unaware of what was going on, and was anxious to recall his troops, for the sun was now rapidly sinking and the approaching night was making every place suspicious and dangerous, even for victorious troops. After he had ridden forward some distance he saw that the camp on his right hand had been captured, and he heard at the same time the mingled clamour of shouts and groans arising in the direction of the city on his left; just then the fighting at the gate was going on. As he approached more closely he saw his men on the walls and recognised that the position was no longer doubtful, since by the reckless daring of a few the opportunity for a brilliant success had been won. He at once ordered the troops whom he had recalled to be brought up and prepared for a regular attack on the city. Those who were within bivouacked near the gate as night was approaching, and during the night the place was evacuated by the enemy. The Samnite losses during the day amounted to 20,340 killed and 3870 made prisoners, whilst 97 standards were taken. It is noticed in the histories that hardly any other general ever appeared in such high spirits during the battle, either owing to his fearless temperament or to the confidence he felt in his final success. It was this dauntless and resolute character which prevented him from abandoning all idea of fighting when the omens were challenged. It was this, too, that made him in the very crisis of the struggle, at the moment when it is customary to vow temples to the gods, make a vow to Jupiter Victor that if he routed the legions of the enemy he would offer him a cup of sweetened wine before he drank anything stronger himself. This vow was acceptable to the gods and they changed the omens into favourable ones.

Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 2.6-8. This work is a dialogue; the speaker at this point is Q. Lucilius Balbus, a Stoic.

2.6 In our own society, as in that of all others, ritual worship of the gods and religious observances are continually enhanced in quantity and quality. This does not happen at random nor by chance, but for two reasons. First, the gods often make their effective presence felt. For example, during the war with the Latins at Lake Regillus, when the dictator Aulus Postumius was engaging in battle with Octavius Mamilius of Tusculum, Castor and Pollux appeared fighting on horseback in our battle-line. A more recent recollection: these same sons of Tyndareus brought tidings of victory over Perseus. Publius Vatinius, the grandfather of our young contemporary, was on his way to Rome from his magistracy at Reate when two young men mounted on white horses told him that king Perseus had been captured that day. When he reported this to the senate, he was initially thrown into prison for making reckless claims about state business, but then a letter arrived from Aemilius Paulus confirming that very day of victory, and the senate conferred on Vatinius a gift of land and exemption from military service. A further example: when the Locrians won a very considerable battle over the Crotonians at the river Sagra, it is reported that on that very day the outcome of the fighting was heard at the games at Olympia. Voices of Fauns have often been overheard, and apparitions of gods have often been seen; these have compelled each and everyone who is not dull-witted or sacrilegious to admit that gods were at hand.

2.7-8 Second, there are prophecies and premonitions of future events. These constitute nothing less than a declaration that the future is being revealed, indicated, portended and predicted to men; hence the words "revelation", "indication", "portent", and "prediction". Even if we regard the stories of Mopsus, Teiresias, Amphiraus, Calchas, and Helenus as falsehoods of romantic fantasy (and if the facts had been totally opposed, they would not have been incorporated as seers into those legends), will we refuse to accept the divine power as established even when we are enlightened by examples from home? Will we not be struck by the rash behavior of Publius Claudius in the First Punic War?¹ His mockery of the gods was meant as a mere joke; when the chickens were let out of their pens, but refused to feed, he ordered them to be thrown into the water to make them drink since they were unwilling to eat. But that pleasantry was the cause of many tears to Claudius himself, and of great calamity to the Roman people, for the fleet suffered overwhelming defeat. And did not Claudius' fellow-consul Lucius Junius during that same war lose his fleet in a storm because he had not observed the auspices? The outcome was that Claudius was condemned by the people, and Junius took his own life. Coelius records that Gaius Flaminius perished at Trasimene through neglect of religious observances, and did great harm to the state. The ruin of these men can help us understand that the interests of our state were enhanced when the top commands were held by men who obeyed the dictates of religion. If we seek to compare our Roman ways with those of foreigners, we shall find that in other respects we merely match them or even fall below them, but that in religion, that is, in worship of the gods, we are much superior.

¹ An incident from the First Punic War (264-241 BCE). The consuls of 249 were P. Claudius Pulcher and L. Iunius Pullus. Claudius was anxious to engage the Carthaginians at sea off Drepanum.

Livy. Incidents from the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE). Flaminius was one of the consuls of 217; he was blamed for the great Roman defeat at Lake Trasimene. Fabius, surnamed the Delayer, was consul a number of times before and during this war, and dictator for six months after the consulship of Flaminius. Marcellus, also consul several times, was one of the great Roman generals of the war.

[21.63] One of the consuls elect was C. Flaminius, and to him was assigned by lot the command of the legions at Placentia. He wrote to the consul giving orders for the army to be in camp at Ariminum by the 15th of March. The reason was that he might enter upon his office there, for he had not forgotten his old quarrels with the senate, Suspecting, therefore, that they would endeavour to detain him in the City by various devices, such as falsifying the auspices or the delay necessitated by the Latin Festival, or other hindrances to which as consul he was liable, he gave out that he had to take a journey, and then left the City secretly as a private individual and so reached his province. When this got abroad there was a fresh outburst of indignation on the part of the incensed senate; they declared that he was carrying on war not only with the senate but even with the immortal gods. "On the former occasion," they said, "when he was elected consul against the auspices and we recalled him from the very field of battle, he was disobedient to gods and men. Now he is conscious that he has despised them and has fled from the Capitol and the customary recital of solemn vows. He refuses to approach the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the day of his entrance upon office, to see and consult the senate, to whom he is so odious and whom he alone of all men detests, to proclaim the Latin Festival and offer sacrifice to Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban Mount, to proceed to the Capitol and after duly taking the auspices recite the prescribed vows, and from thence, vested in the paludamentum and escorted by lictors, go in state to his province. He has stolen away furtively without his insignia of office, without his lictors, just as though he were some menial employed in the camp and had quitted his native soil to go into exile. He thinks it more consonant with the greatness of his office to enter upon it at Ariminum rather than in Rome, and to put on his official dress in some wayside inn rather than at his own hearth and in the presence of his own household gods." It was unanimously decided that he should be recalled, brought back if need be by force, and compelled to discharge, on the spot, all the duties he owed to God and man before he went to the army and to his province. Q. Terentius and M. Antistius were delegated for this task, but they had no more influence with him than the despatch of the senate in his former consulship. A few days afterwards he entered upon office, and whilst offering his sacrifice, the calf, after it was struck, bounded away out of the hands of the sacrificing priests and bespattered many of the bystanders with its blood. Amongst those at a distance from the altar who did not know what the commotion was about there was great excitement; most people regarded it as a most alarming omen. Flaminius took over the two legions from Sempronius, the late consul, and the two from C. Atilius, the praetor, and commenced his march to Etruria through the passes of the Apennines.

[22.1] Spring was now coming on; Hannibal accordingly moved out of his winter quarters. . . . About the same time Cn. Servilius entered upon his consulship at Rome, on the 15th of March. When he had laid before the senate the policy which he proposed to carry out, the indignation against C. Flaminius broke out afresh. "Two consuls had been elected, but as a matter of fact they only had one. What legitimate authority did this man possess? What religious sanctions? Magistrates only take these sanctions with

them from home, from the altars of the State, and from their private altars at home after they have celebrated the Latin Festival, offered the sacrifice on the Alban Mount, and duly recited the vows in the Capitol. These sanctions do not follow a private citizen, nor if he has departed without them can he obtain them afresh in all their fulness on a foreign soil." To add to the general feeling of apprehension, information was received of portents having occurred simultaneously in several places. In Sicily several of the soldiers' darts were covered with flames; in Sardinia the same thing happened to the staff in the hand of an officer who was going his rounds to inspect the sentinels on the wall; the shores had been lit up by numerous fires; a couple of shields had sweated blood; some soldiers had been struck by lightning; an eclipse of the sun had been observed; at Praeneste there had been a shower of red-hot stones; at Arpi shields had been seen in the sky and the sun had appeared to be fighting with the moon; at Capena two moons were visible in the daytime; at Caere the waters ran mingled with blood, and even the spring of Hercules had bubbled up with drops of blood on the water; at Antium the ears of corn which fell into the reapers' basket were blood-stained; at Falerii the sky seemed to be cleft asunder as with an enormous rift and all over the opening there was a blazing light; the oracular tablets shrank and shrivelled without being touched and one had fallen out with this inscription, "MARS IS SHAKING HIS SPEAR"; and at the same time the statue of Mars on the Appian Way and the images of the Wolves sweated blood. Finally, at Capua the sight was seen of the sky on fire and the moon falling in the midst of a shower of rain. Then credence was given to comparatively trifling portents, such as that certain people's goats were suddenly clothed with wool, a hen turned into a cock, and a cock into a hen. After giving the details exactly as they were reported to him and bringing his informants before the senate, the consul consulted the senate as to what religious observances ought to be proclaimed. A decree was passed that to avert the evils which these portents foreboded, sacrifices should be offered, the victims to be both full-grown animals and sucklings, and also that special intercessions should be made at all the shrines for three days. What other ceremonial was necessary was to be carried out in accordance with the instructions of the decemvirs after they had inspected the Sacred Books and ascertained the will of the gods. On their advice it was decreed that the first votive offering should be made to Jupiter in the shape of a golden thunderbolt weighing fifty pounds, gifts of silver to Juno and Minerva, and sacrifices of full-grown victims to Queen Juno on the Aventine and Juno Sospita at Lanuvium, whilst the matrons were to contribute according to their means and bear their gift to Queen Juno on the Aventine. A lectisternium was to be held, and even the freedwomen were to contribute what they could for a gift to the temple of Feronia. When these instructions had been carried out the decemvirs sacrificed full-grown victims in the forum at Ardea, and finally in the middle of December there was a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn, a lectisternium was ordered (the senators prepared the couch), and a public banquet. For a day and a night the cry of the Saturnalia resounded through the City, and the people were ordered to make that day a festival and observe it as such for ever.

[22.3] The consul's overbearing temper, which had grown steadily worse since his last consulship, made him lose all proper respect and reverence even for the gods, to say nothing of the majesty of the senate and the laws, and this self-willed and obstinate side of his character had been aggravated by the successes he had achieved both at home and in the field. It was perfectly obvious that he would not seek counsel from either

God or man, and whatever he did would be done in an impetuous and headstrong manner. By way of making him show these faults of character still more flagrantly, the Carthaginian [Hannibal] prepared to irritate and annoy him. He left the Roman camp on his left, and marched in the direction of Faesulae to plunder the central districts of Etruria. Within actual view of the consul he created as widespread a devastation as he possibly could, and from the Roman camp they saw in the distance an extensive scene of fire and massacre. Flaminius had no intention of keeping quiet even if the enemy had done so, but now that he saw the possessions of the allies of Rome plundered and pillaged almost before his very eyes, he felt it to be a personal disgrace that an enemy should be roaming at will through Italy and advancing to attack Rome with none to hinder him. All the other members of the council of war were in favour of a policy of safety rather than of display; they urged him to wait for his colleague, that they might unite their forces and act with one mind on a common plan, and pending his arrival they should check the wild excesses of the plundering enemy with cavalry and the light-armed auxiliaries. Enraged at these suggestions he dashed out of the council and ordered the trumpets to give the signal for march and battle; exclaiming at the same time: "We are to sit, I suppose, before the walls of Arretium, because our country and our household gods are here. Now that Hannibal has slipped through our hands, he is to ravage Italy, destroy and burn everything in his way till he reaches Rome, while we are not to stir from here until the senate summons C. Flaminius from Arretium as they once summoned Camillus from Veii." During this outburst, he ordered the standards to be pulled up with all speed and at the same time mounted his horse. No sooner had he done so than the animal stumbled and fell and threw him over its head. All those who were standing round were appalled by what they took to be an evil omen at the beginning of a campaign, and their alarm was considerably increased by a message brought to the consul that the standard could not be moved though the standard-bearer had exerted his utmost strength. He turned to the messenger and asked him: "Are you bringing a despatch from the senate, also, forbidding me to go on with the campaign? Go, let them dig out the standard if their hands are too benumbed with fear for them to pull it up." Then the column began its march. The superior officers, besides being absolutely opposed to his plans, were thoroughly alarmed by the double portent, but the great body of the soldiers were delighted at the spirit their general had shown; they shared his confidence without knowing on what slender grounds it rested.

[There follows an account of the battle of Trasimene; Flaminius is killed along with at least 15,000 Romans - other authorities give a larger number of dead.]

22.9] Q. Fabius Maximus was now Dictator for the second time. On the very day of his entrance upon office he summoned a meeting of the senate, and commenced by discussing matters of religion. He made it quite clear to the senators that C. Flaminius' fault lay much more in his neglect of the auspices and of his religious duties than in bad generalship and foolhardiness. The gods themselves, he maintained, must be consulted as to the necessary measures to avert their displeasure, and he succeeded in getting a decree passed that the decemvirs should be ordered to consult the Sibylline Books, a course which is only adopted when the most alarming portents have been reported. After inspecting the Books of Fate they informed the senate that the vow which had been made to Mars in view of that war had not been duly discharged, and that it must be discharged afresh and on a much greater scale. The Great Games must be vowed to

Jupiter, a temple to Venus Erycina and one to Mens; a lectisternium must be held and solemn intercessions made; a Sacred Spring must also be vowed. All these things must be done if the war was to be a successful one and the republic remain in the same position in which it was at the beginning of the war. As Fabius would be wholly occupied with the necessary arrangements for the war, the senate with the full approval of the pontifical college ordered the praetor, M. Aemilius, to take care that all these orders were carried out in good time.

[22.10] After these resolutions had been passed in the senate the praetor consulted the pontifical college as to the proper means of giving effect to them, and L. Cornelius Lentulus, the Pontifex Maximus, decided that the very first step to take was to refer to the people the question of a "Sacred Spring," as this particular form of vow could not be undertaken without the order of the people. The form of procedure was as follows: "Is it," the praetor asked the Assembly, "your will and pleasure that all be done and performed in manner following? That is to say, if the commonwealth of the Romans and the Quirites be preserved, as I pray it may be, safe and sound through these present wars - to wit, the war between Rome and Carthage and the wars with the Gauls now dwelling on the hither side of the Alps - then shall the Romans and Quirites present as an offering whatever the spring shall produce from their flocks and herds, whether it be from swine or sheep or goats or cattle, and all that is not already devoted to any other deity shall be consecrated to Jupiter from such time as the senate and people shall order. Whosoever shall make an offering let him do it at whatsoever time and in whatsoever manner he will, and howsoever he offers it, it shall be accounted to be duly offered. If the animal which should have been sacrificed die, it shall be as though unconsecrated, there shall be no sin. If any man shall hurt or slay a consecrated thing unwittingly he shall not be held guilty. If a man shall have stolen any such animal, the people shall not bear the guilt, nor he from whom it was stolen. If a man offer his sacrifice unwittingly on a forbidden day, it shall be accounted to be duly offered. Whether he do so by night or day, whether he be slave or freeman, it shall be accounted to be duly offered. If any sacrifice be offered before the senate and people have ordered that it shall be done, the people shall be free and absolved from all guilt therefrom." To the same end the Great Games were vowed at a cost of 333,333 $\frac{1}{3}$ ases, and in addition 300 oxen to Jupiter, and white oxen and the other customary victims to a number of deities. When the vows had been duly pronounced a litany of intercession was ordered, and not only the population of the City but the people from the country districts, whose private interests were being affected by the public distress, went in procession with their wives and children. Then a lectisternium was held for three days under the supervision of the ten keepers of the Sacred Books. Six couches were publicly exhibited; one for Jupiter and Juno, another for Neptune and Minerva, a third for Mars and Venus, a fourth for Apollo and Diana, a fifth for Vulcan and Vesta, and the sixth for Mercury and Ceres. This was followed by the vowing of temples. Q. Fabius Maximus, as Dictator, vowed the temple to Venus Erycina, because it was laid down in the Books of Fate that this vow should be made by the man who possessed the supreme authority in the State. T. Otacilius, the praetor, vowed the temple to Mens.

The year is now 209 BCE and the Romans under Fabius recapture Tarentum. At different times, Hannibal lays traps for Fabius and Marcellus.

[27.16] After the carnage followed the sack of the city. It is said that 30,000 slaves were captured together with an enormous quantity of silver plate and bullion, 83 pounds' weight of gold and a collection of statues and pictures almost equal to that which had adorned Syracuse. Fabius, however, showed a nobler spirit than Marcellus had exhibited in Sicily; he kept his hands off that kind of spoil. When his secretary asked him what he wished to have done with some colossal statues - they were deities, each represented in his appropriate dress and in a fighting attitude - he ordered them to be left to the Tarentines who had felt their wrath. The wall which separated the city from the citadel was completely demolished.

Hannibal had in the meanwhile received the surrender of the force which was investing Caulo. As soon as he heard that Tarentum was being attacked he hurried to its relief, marching night and day. On receiving the news of its capture, he remarked, "The Romans too have their Hannibal, we have lost Tarentum by the same practices by which we gained it." To prevent his retirement from appearing like a flight he encamped at a distance of about five miles from the city, and after staying there for a few days he fell back on Metapontum. From this place he sent two of the townsmen with a letter to Fabius at Tarentum. It was written by the civic authorities, and stated that they were prepared to surrender Metapontum and its Carthaginian garrison if the consul would pledge his word that they should not suffer for their conduct in the past. Fabius believed the letter to be genuine and handed the bearers a reply addressed to their chiefs, fixing the date of his arrival at Metapontum. This was taken to Hannibal. Naturally delighted to find that even Fabius was not proof against his stratagems, he disposed his force in ambush not far from Metapontum. Before leaving Tarentum Fabius consulted the sacred chickens, and on two occasions they gave an unfavourable omen. He also consulted the gods of sacrifice, and after they had inspected the victim the augurs warned him to be on his guard against plots and ambushes on the part of the enemy. As he did not come at the appointed time, the Metapontines were again sent to him to hasten his movements, and were promptly arrested. Terrified at the prospect of examination under torture, they disclosed the plot.

Later in the same book, Marcellus rides into a trap set by Hannibal, and is killed (27.23-27). Marcellus is said to have gone out despite bad omens:

[27.26] Some writers assert that whilst Marcellus was sacrificing on that day, the liver of the first victim was found to have no head; in the second all the usual parts were present, but the head appeared abnormally large. The haruspex was seriously alarmed at finding after misshaped and stunted parts such an excess of growth.

[27.27] Marcellus, however, was seized with such a keen desire of engaging Hannibal that he never thought that their respective camps were near enough to each other.