

various offshoots of the Ligurians across most of northwestern Italy. The archaeological record indicates that they were a people of farmers with a relatively low level of material culture and political organization. They lived in scattered settlements in forest clearings, cultivated rye and other coarse grains, and kept herds of sheep and pigs. They seem to have absorbed some cultural influences from the Celts who became their neighbors. All traces of their language have vanished, except for some characteristic place-names ending in *-asca* or *-asco*, which are found here and there across the region. Two Ligurian tribes inhabited the area of Piedmont where Turin would later arise: they were the Insubres and the Taurini. The latter tribe would give its name to the city, Augusta Taurinorum, that the Romans later founded on the banks of the Po, which is the ancestor of modern Turin. Their tribal name has been linked etymologically to their supposed totemic animal the bull (*taurus*), but this is probably incorrect. (Nonetheless the city's emblem today is a rampant bull). The name more probably derives from a word meaning "mountaineer", for Latin writers use the terms "taurinus" and "montanus" interchangeably. The Taurini thus probably took their name from the mountains in whose shadow they lived.

The Taurini enter the historical record in 218 B.C.E, at the start of the Second Punic War, when they unsuccessfully opposed Hannibal's march into Italy. Intending to attack and destroy Rome, Hannibal and his Carthaginian troops advanced from their base in Spain through southern France. They would have crossed the Alps by the shortest available route, which must have been one of the passes leading down through the valley of Susa. They debouched into the Piedmontese plain and found their path blocked by what was in all likelihood the chief tribal settlement of the Taurini, probably occupying the site on which the Romans would later found their city. At that moment the Taurini were at war with their neighbors the Insubres; since the latter apparently favored Hannibal's invasion, the Taurini opposed it, and suffered direly in consequence. The Greek historian Polybius records that in the space of three days Hannibal's professional soldiers captured the settlement of the Taurini and put its inhabitants to the sword. His path now clear, Hannibal marched on into Italy to engage the Romans in the Second Punic War. After almost two decades of bitter fighting, the Romans finally emerged victorious, becoming the unchallenged masters of the Mediterranean and the Italian peninsula. Eventually their power would reach out to engulf the territory in which the Taurini lived, radically transforming its economy, its political structure, its language, and its culture.