

**Fabre-Serris, J. (2021) "Identity and Ethnicities during the Punic Wars: some reflections on Livy's portrait of the Carthaginian Sophonisba?", in *Identity, ethnicities and Gender in Antiquity*, J. Fabre-Serris, A. Keith and F. Klein (eds), De Gruyter, Berlin, 93-111.**

The chapter focuses on the narrative of the Hannibalic war in which Livy treats the events from the Numidian leader Masinissa's hasty marriage to Sophonisba (resulting from his sudden sexually arousal by his captive) to her death by suicide. Livy, convinced that the superiority of the Roman cultural model rests on the practice of virtues such as loyalty (*fides*), restraint (*temperantia*) and self-control (*continentia*), employs these concepts as elements of identity to explain and assess the differences in behavior between the Roman general, Scipio, and the Numidian leaders, Syphax and Masinissa. Both Numidians are described as subject to their sexual impulses, whereas the *temperantia* ('self-control') and *fides* embodied by Scipio are represented as peculiarly Roman. According to David Levene, Livy also makes a clear distinction between the two Numidian leaders: Syphax is "the unreliable 'barbarian', Masinissa 'the quintessentially loyal ally'." Scipio tries to ensure that Masinissa will not follow the same path as Syphax by suggesting to him that he imitate his own virtues, in particular his sexual continence. In this chapter, I argue that the comparison made by Livy in this episode between different behaviors supposedly resulting from membership in a particular ethnic group also aligns the Carthaginians with Sophonisba, described as an intractable enemy of Rome, who prefers to die rather than become a prisoner. Gender complicates the ethnic perspective adopted by Livy, especially as the historian interprets Sophonisba in the light of the recent Rome's history and, more precisely, of the threat posed by Cleopatra. Livy characterizes Sophonisba's manner of death with the adverb *ferocious*, which alludes to Horace's verses on Cleopatra's suicide in *Ode* 1.37. In so doing, he also highlights how, though courage and impassivity in the face of death are both values shared with their victors, the conduct of Cleopatra and Sophonisba differs from the practice of these virtues by the Romans because of their (female) ferocity, implicitly interpreted as a manifestation of the 'wild' nature of all women.