

# ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. XXV

HELSINKI 1991 HELSINGFORS

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## L. MUMMIUS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AGONISTIC LIFE IN THE MID SECOND CENTURY BC

LEENA PIETILÄ-CASTRÉN

Lucius Mummius, the consul of 146 BC and the destroyer of Corinth, has been taken by some ancient authors as an archetype of the rude and ignorant Roman.<sup>1</sup> In a previous publication I tried to show that Mummius was rather a victim of a hostile literary tradition which presented him as the counterpart of P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus.<sup>2</sup> Some more recent evidence from Greece, mostly epigraphic, connected with literary material we already know, can shed more light on Mummius' character and interests. Among the many inscriptions in Greece concerning him there are four documents which can more or less directly be linked with his agonistic activities. One of them comes from the isle of Euboea, two refer to the Nemean area, and the fourth is from Argos, also in the northeastern Peloponnesus.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vell. 1,13,3–4; Dio Chrys. 37,42, or rather Favorinus under Dio's name.

<sup>2</sup> L. Pietilä-Castrén, *Arctos* 12 (1978) 122–123; L. Pietilä-Castrén, *Arctos* 16 (1982) 142.

<sup>3</sup> Eretria: SEG XXVI 1034–1035 = SEG XXVIII 722; Nemea: SEG XXV 541; SEG XXIII 180; Argos: SEG XXX 365.

## Eretria

From the passages by Polybius and Livy we could already suspect that Mummius had personally visited the isle of Euboea,<sup>4</sup> and now the epigraphic document from Eretria permits us to conclude that this was indeed so. A rectangular block with inscriptions which had been reutilized as part of the paving was discovered in the excavations of an early Roman road. It is a fragment of a Doric frieze with two triglyphs and a metope, on which crowns of foliage were engraved under two inscriptions. They give the names of two persons, Βιοττοκλής Βιόττου and Πύρρος Σωβίου, who were winners of two races, each of a stadion. One of the races was run in honour of L. Mummius, while the other was in honour of the goddess Artemis:

Λευκίου Μομμίου	Αρτέμιδος
στάδιον	στάδιον
Βιοττοκλής	Πύρρος
Βιόττου	Σωβίου

I do not think it is possible that the race bearing Mummius' name could by any means reflect a real cult to him, as has been claimed.<sup>5</sup> We actually have an earlier example of a festival in honour of a foreign statesman in Eretria; in the 280's a *Demetria* was organized to honour Demetrios Poliorketes.<sup>6</sup> Thus, in the case of the Roman commander as well, the Eretrians paid their homage to him by simply naming one of the two races in a contest after Mummius. Furthermore, it is possible that the contest was primarily open only to the native insular participants, as the name Βιοττοκλής Βιόττου appears to indicate.<sup>7</sup> As to the name Πύρρος Σωβίου, Σώβιος seems to be unknown elsewhere, but Pyrrhos is of course well known from Epirus.

<sup>4</sup> Polyb. 39,6,5; Liv. perioch. 52.

<sup>5</sup> P.G. Themelis, Eph. Arch. (1978) 84–85.

<sup>6</sup> IG XII 9,207. I.R. Metzger, Eretria 2. Ausgrabungen und Forschungen (1969) 10 and n. 14.

<sup>7</sup> D. Knoepfler, BCH 103 (1979) 183 n. 91. Cf. also Βιότηη from Eretria in IG XII 9,564.

The inscription has led scholars to believe that there is a stadion to be discovered in Eretria.<sup>8</sup> This inscription in itself does not justify the existence of a local stadion, because the races could have been carried out at a gymnasium, for instance. It was quite usual everywhere in Greece to use either a covered track, *xystos*, or an open air track, *paradromis*, for the races.<sup>9</sup> We also have the examples of Corinth and Athens, where races were simply organized in the *agora*.

The Eretrian inscription would have been a commemorative stele with architectonic details rather than an actual fragment from the stadion structure.

The contest must have been held sometime during the winter of 146–145 when Mummius visited several Greek cities and cult places. His trip is well documented by literary sources as well as by several other inscriptions.<sup>10</sup> This was not the first time that a Roman commander would travel about Greece and see the sights, showing his goodwill to the conquered after the aestival military campaign. After the battle at Pydna in 167 Aemilius Paullus also travelled through Greece.<sup>11</sup> It was in Amphipolis that Aemilius Paullus organized a *ludicrum* which was announced by both envoys and personal invitations during the trip. The games consisted of horse races, scenic games, and athletics,<sup>12</sup> in other words, they were games on a full scale.

The Eretrian inscription mentions not only L. Mummius, but also the goddess Artemis. She was a ubiquitous goddess in Euboea and the surroundings, having been worshipped at the northern point of the island, at the modern Cape Artemision, in Eretria and Amarynthos, and across the strait in Aulis. Magnificent views opened out from all these temples, and they dominated the

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<sup>8</sup> A.K. Orlandou, *Eph. Arch.* (1976) 21; P.G. Themelis, *Eph. Arch.* (1978) 84–85. G. Touchais, *BCH* 101 (1977) 629. For the site of the stadion see P. Auberson – K. Schefold, *Führer durch Eretria* (1972) 193 n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> J. & L. Robert, *BE* 9 (1978–80) 468; *SEG* XXVIII 722; O. Tsakhou-Alexandri, *The Gymnasium, an institution for athletics and education, in Mind and Body* (1989) 34.

<sup>10</sup> For the documentation see F. Münzer, *RE* 16 (1935), Mummius n:o 7a, 1202–1203; H. Philipp – W. Koenigs, *AM* 94 (1979) 195, 200–202.

<sup>11</sup> *Liv.* 45,27,5–11; 28,1–5; Philipp – Koenigs 196, 201.

<sup>12</sup> *Liv.* 45,32,8–9; 33,5. The totally Greek character of the festival has been pointed out by J.-L. Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et impérialisme* (1988) 560–562.

seashore impressively, but in Eretria and Amarynthos the goddess must have been primarily the protectress of the state and warfare.<sup>13</sup> In Eretria itself she was worshipped as Artemis Olympia and her temple was most probably located on the acropolis. Here the cult seems to have been discontinued after the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 198.<sup>14</sup>

The other race in honour of Artemis must have been connected with the annual festival in Amarynthos. There the ceremonies in her honour included a *pompe* and contests. From the archaic period onwards they were held at a site some ten kilometres eastwards from Eretria. It was actually the most important Eretrian temple to Artemis.<sup>15</sup>

The inscription was discovered, however, at Eretria, not in Amarynthos. It is easy to explain, however, that when the paving for the new road in the city was laid in the first century BC, material was brought from nearby "quarries". The size of the stones does not hinder this kind of transport. We may suppose that after the 190's and certainly by 146 the cult may have been somewhat neglected, but creating a race in honour of Mummius can have meant a stimulus for the entire cult. In the light of our present knowledge, the program of this contest was not a grandiose one. It rather gives the impression of a reminiscence of the old tradition of competing in a simple race of a stadion, with the prize being an equally modest crown of foliage.<sup>16</sup> The leaves depicted in the block are quite certainly laurel, as is appropriate in a race honouring Apollo's sister.

Another more political motive for organizing the contest in honour of the Roman commander might come from the border conflict which took place between Eretria and Chalcis around 146.<sup>17</sup> In this way the Eretrians would have wished to gain advantage for their cause.

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<sup>13</sup> Auberson – Schefold 28.

<sup>14</sup> Id. 105–107.

<sup>15</sup> Philippson, RE 6 (1909), Eretria n:o 1, 425.

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Mind and Body, 211 n:o 102.

<sup>17</sup> H. Pomtow, Klio 15 (1918) 15,20; J. & L. Robert, REG 81 (1968) 498 n:o 414.

## Isthmos and Nemea

The northeastern corner of the Peloponnesus is intimately connected with Greek agonistic life through the Isthmian and Nemean games. According to Polybius, L. Mummius repaired the site of Isthmus, τὸν ἐν Ἰσθμοῦ τόπον, which is supposed to mean the course itself.<sup>18</sup> This interpretation is actually most likely, as Mummius is also referred to in a later source as the ἀγωνοθέτης of the Isthmian games.<sup>19</sup> It is thought that by imitating T. Quinctius Flamininus when he announced the liberation of Greece at the Isthmian games in 196, Mummius also liberated the Greek states, Corinth excluded, at Isthmus.<sup>20</sup>

We also have some documents testifying to Mummius' presence at the Nemean site. An older Mummiian inscription discovered in Nemea is part of a base which once supported a votive offering and was dedicated to the gods,<sup>21</sup> quite a usual formula in Mummius' inscriptions in Greece. Nevertheless, the most important thing in this connection is that he actually visited Nemea, meaning that there must have been something there to see. It is not likely that he would have honoured a site in worthless condition with a dedication.

Mummius' intimacy with Nemea is also verified by another inscription. This shows that during his proconsular year he tried to settle the old controversy between Argos and Kleonai over the Nemean games.<sup>22</sup> This is, in fact, the only inscription in which Mummius is clearly stated to be a proconsul, ἀνθύπατος, on line 10, thus giving the exact date for the document, the year 145. We do not possess the whole *arbitrium*; maybe it was finally a compromise according to which the cities would have shared the authority over the games. It is not impossible, however, that the games were held, even if only temporarily, back in

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<sup>18</sup> Polyb. 39,6,1; Philipp – Koenigs 200; F.W. Walbank, *A Historical commentary on Polybius* 3 (1979) 735–736.

<sup>19</sup> Dio Chrys. 37,42.

<sup>20</sup> Zon. 9,31; Münzer 1198; Philipp – Koenigs 194.

<sup>21</sup> SEG XXV 541.

<sup>22</sup> SEG XXIII 180.



Nemea in connection with Mummius' visit.<sup>23</sup> We could anticipate another contest on a modest scale, perhaps in the Eretrian way.

### Argos

I wonder if another fragment of a base discovered in Argos might shed light specifically on the Nemean *arbitrium*. The base once supported an equestrian statue and it was erected by the Argives to the consul L. Mummius.<sup>24</sup> To judge from the consul's title, ὑπατος, this monument was erected in 146, that is before the *arbitrium* was made, possibly not without the idea of influencing the consul's opinion and thereby guaranteeing a positive solution for Argos as concerns the Nemean games.

The monument itself, an equestrian statue, must have been very flattering, as this type of honorary statue did not have very long-standing traditions in the hellenistic cities. The custom of erecting equestrian statues was revived by the Diadochs, especially during the third century. Typically made of gilt bronze,<sup>25</sup> these monuments were usually placed in Delphi or Olympia.

Mummius was by no means the first Roman consul to be honoured in this manner by the Greeks, nor was the Argive monument the only one of its kind in his honour. We have another base of an equestrian statue for Mummius in Olympia erected by the Eleans.<sup>26</sup> In Greece monuments of this kind were always erected for important political or military reasons,<sup>27</sup> and we have already suggested a motive concerning internal politics for the Argive statue. A political motive is also suggested for the Olympian statue, if we claim that the Eleans had

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<sup>23</sup> D.W. Bradeen, *Hesperia* 35 (1966) 328–329. According to C.K. Williams the xenon, that is the hotel for the athletes, was used after 150, in Bradeen 328. According to S.G. Miller, instead, the games themselves were without doubt in the middle of the second century back in Argos, *Hesperia* 48 (1979) 80 and *Hesperia* suppl. 20 (1982) 106–107.

<sup>24</sup> SEG XXX 365; M. Piérart & J.-P. Thalmann, *BCH* suppl. 6 (1980) 277.

<sup>25</sup> H. v. Roques de Maumont, *Antike Reiterstandbilder* (1958) 29–30.

<sup>26</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 676.

<sup>27</sup> v. Roques de Maumont 47.

had an ambivalent attitude to the Achaean League during the war,<sup>28</sup> that is, they had a guilty conscience. In any case, erecting an equestrian statue in Argos must have been very exceptional.

In this connection, it is worth remembering that the tradition of erecting equestrian statues was hardly begun in Rome. The literary sources claim that the son of M'. Acilius Glabrio placed a gilded statue of his father in his temple to Pietas in the Forum Holitorium, and that it was the first of its kind in Italy.<sup>29</sup> The few other examples from the second century as well as the statues from the first century all demonstrate that in Rome the erection of an equestrian statue was primarily an homage paid to the ancestors and family.<sup>30</sup>

## Rome

After returning to Rome in 145 L. Mummius celebrated a triumph, and during the festivities scenic games were organized with great care:

*et possessa Achaia Asiaque ludos curatius editos, nec quemquam Romae honesto loco ortum ad theatrales artes degeneravisse, ducentis iam annis a L. Mummi triumpho, qui primus id genus spectaculi in urbe praebuerit.*<sup>31</sup>

The passage has accounted for the idea that it was only now that the common people were first allowed to be seated, and furthermore, that the senators and the equites had their reserved places during the performances.<sup>32</sup> Actually the senators had acquired their proper seats as early as 194 at the Roman games.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Philipp – Koenigs 198; Th. Schwertfeger, *Der Achaiische Bund von 146 bis 27 v.Chr.* (1974) 15–16. Another motive behind the Olympian statue can have been the renewing of asylum for the Eleans by the Romans in 145; see J.-L. Ferrary 280–281.

<sup>29</sup> Liv. 40,34,5; Val. Max. 2,5,1.

<sup>30</sup> v. Roques de Maumont 39–42.

<sup>31</sup> Tac. ann. 14,21,1.

<sup>32</sup> G. Colin, *Rome et la Grèce* (1905) 637–638.

<sup>33</sup> Liv. 34,44,5; 54,4; Cic. har.resp. 24.

Another interpretation of Tacitus' passage is that Mummius was the first to construct an entire wooden Greek theatre in Rome.<sup>34</sup> These two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, they complement each other, instead, referring to a sitting audience in the cavea, constructed according to the Greek models, even if of wood. In general the only kind of theatrical construction allowed in Rome was a wooden platform for the actors, next to which the audience stood, for instance on the stairs of a nearby lying temple. In every case the wooden structures were to be demolished right after the performances. After the year 179 there seems to have began a period with semi-permanent seats. There are also temporary stages at the site of the later theatre of Marcellus at the temple of Apollo.<sup>35</sup>

Already in 154 the censors wanted to build a theatre of stone, but the Senate decided to pull down the almost finished building, claiming that it defied traditions and was improper for the Roman people.<sup>36</sup>

It was also in 154 that, according to Valerius Maximus, a *senatusconsultum* was passed forbidding anyone to be seated while attending a performance in the city area itself or closer than one thousand paces distant.<sup>37</sup> If the audience could, however, sit nine years later in a cavea constructed for Mummius' scenic games, the intermediate conservative phase had been of short duration<sup>38</sup> or in this special case, at least, it must have been the intention for the Greek features to be conspicuous at all possible points, as would befit a performance given by a commander who had been victorious in Greece. This is why the exception was allowed and the performances of 145 could even signify considerable changes in attitudes.

In this connection it is worth remembering that in Greece Mummius had had to judge in the question of the privileges of the τεχνῖται,<sup>39</sup> that is the associations who furnished the performers and actors for almost any kind of

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<sup>34</sup> D. Mancioli, *Giochi e spettacoli* (1987) 34. See also Philipp – Koenigs 204.

<sup>35</sup> F. Coarelli, *BCAR* 80 (1965–67) 69–70.

<sup>36</sup> Val. Max. 2,4,2; Vell. Pat. 1,15,3; App. civ. 1,28.

<sup>37</sup> Val. Max. 2,4,2.

<sup>38</sup> Coarelli 71.

<sup>39</sup> P. Roesch, *Études Béotiennes* (1982) 198–202; Ferrary 521 n. 58.

festivals, but especially for the scenic games.<sup>40</sup> It would have been no wonder if it would have occurred to Mummius to carry some of these τεχνίται to Rome for the festivities during his triumph over Greece.

There is another passage by Vitruvius which can also illuminate L. Mummius' scenic activities in Rome:

*Etiamque auctorem habemus Lucium Mummium, qui diruto theatro Corinthiorum ea aenea (sc. vasa) Romam deportavit et de manubiis ad aedem Lunae dedicavit.*<sup>41</sup>

As is evident from Vitruvius' whole chapter 5,5, it was customary to improve the tonal quality of the voices and amplify them in a stone theatre by placing vases of bronze, more seldom of clay, upside down on three different levels around the cavea. They thus formed acoustic cells.<sup>42</sup> Vitruvius does not give any detailed description of these vases, but when speaking of a clay variant he calls it a *dolium*. Some of these original clay ones have been discovered and we know that they were relatively large jars resembling the *pithoi* usually used for storing wine or olive oil.<sup>43</sup>

The vases Mummius had brought from the theatre of Corinth were not permanently needed to improve the acoustics in Rome. We may suppose that they were exhibited in one way or another during the scenic games, but afterwards, some other solution had to be found. Mummius gave them from his personal share of the booty as a dedicatory offering to the temple of Luna on the Aventine.

The relatively recently discovered Mummian inscriptions from Greece provide further information on the places visited by the Roman general in addition to making it more evident that his route around Greek sites bore even greater similarities to the trip made by Aemilius Paullus some twenty years earlier. Our sources from Eretria, Isthmia, Nemea, and Argos show L.

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<sup>40</sup> W.H. Gross, KP 5 (1975) 553–554.

<sup>41</sup> Vitr. 5,5,8.

<sup>42</sup> H.C. Montgomery, CJ 54 (1958–1959) 244.

<sup>43</sup> P. Thielscher, Die Schallgefäße des antiken Theaters, in Festschrift Franz Dornseiff (1953) 336. I am most grateful to Mr. Bjarne Huldén for helping me in the question of these vases.

Mummius' obvious interest in interfering in an area which traditionally had been regarded as very Greek, the agones. There the mutual interests of the Greeks and the Roman consul can also be explained on purely political grounds. His contributions to the *theatrales artes* in Rome, whatever their ultimate nature, show that he also must have been interested in other appearances of the Greek agones. I think that L. Mummius was a very cunning person, who, relatively well aware of Greek traditions and culture, knew when to use Greek means to serve his immediate purposes.