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S O M E A S P E C T S O F T H E L I F E
O F L U C I U S M U M M I U S A C H A I C U S

L e e n a P i e t i l ä - C a s t r é n

Lucius Mummius is known to posterity only for his participation in the sack of Corinth in 146 BC and for the events of his censorial year 142. The judgements formed about him have often been very superficial. The only more profound study of some objectivity is F. Münzer's RE-article.¹ Its bibliographical material is not, however, complete. Furthermore, since its publication some new information has come to light. It is perhaps possible that a scrupulous study of all sources might shed new light on Lucius Mummius' origin and career, and the development of the literary tradition which has been hostile to him.

The origin of the *gens Mummia* has been rather widely discussed. Wiseman hesitantly proposes that Lucius Mummius came from Labici, south-east of Rome,² with reference to the origin of Mummia Achaica, the emperor Galba's mother. According to a myth she descended from queen Pasiphae of Crete,³ whose son Glaucus was given the name Labicus upon his arrival in Italy. It is doubtful, however, whether such a mythical piece of information can be taken into serious consideration. Its purpose was most likely to create an honourable descent for the emperor, who was not a blood relative of former emperors, nor was he adopted by the previous emperor.

1 N:o 7A, RE XVI 1195-.

2 Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate 139 BC - 14 AD*, 1971, 187 n. 6.

3 Suet. Galba 2 & 3,4.

On the other hand the Mummii might have had relations with Telesia, as it is there that a *Lucius Mummius Luci filius* appears as a *praetor duovir* in the last years of the Republic.⁴

The gentilicium *Mummius* (a short stem ending in double consonant + *ius*) belongs to a group of names which is common in a geographically quite limited area. The Gellii and the Lollii were Sabellians, the Memmii, the Tillii and the Tullii came from the Volscian territory, while the Mammii came from Praeneste and the Bennii, the Monnii and the Ninnii came from northern Campania.⁵ It is worth noting that the name *Mammius* appears in some inscriptions written with a single *m*, just like *Mummius* in the inscription of Nursia and Fregellae.⁶ It could be taken as a hypothesis that the *gens Mummia* also came from the area inhabited by the Volscians or from nearby areas inhabited by the Sabellian tribes.

Lucius Mummius was the first man of his family to become a consul. In the eyes of the old nobility he was still a *homo novus*, although his father had been praetor. Our knowledge of Lucius Mummius' forefathers is very scarce: his grandfather was a Roman citizen, if one may judge from his nomenclature in the Capitoline Fasti.⁷ The elder Lucius was a *tribunus plebis* in the year 187 together with his brother Quintus⁸ and he was elected one of the praetors for the year 178. On this occasion he was given by lot the province of Sardinia. Owing to the serious political situation Sardinia was made a consular province in that year,⁹ and Lucius Mummius the Elder was given the task of organizing the trials of those Latins who had moved to Rome to gain full citizenship and who had not returned to their former homes by a fixed limit of time.¹⁰ Perhaps he was particularly well-suited for this task because of his origin.

4 ILLRP 675 = CIL I 1747. Cf. Suolahti, *The Roman Censors*, 1963, 394.

5 See Castrén, *Ordo Populusque Pompeianus*, 1975, s.v.

6 See below page 121.

7 Fast.Cap. a. 146: *L.Mummius L.f. L.n.*

8 Liv. 38,44. Niccolini, *I fasti dei tribuni della plebe*, 1934, 111.

9 Liv. 41,8,1-3.

10 Liv. 41,9,9-11.

Spurius, the brother of Lucius Mummius, was a member of the commission of the legates in Corinth,¹¹ or more likely his brother's personal legate.¹² Spurius was also known for his friendship with Scipio Aemilianus.

There is no information available concerning the political career of Lucius Mummius until the time of his praetorship in Spain in 153-152, where he fought with the Lusitanians.¹³ After his Hispanian triumph in 152, which he celebrated, breaking tradition, as a praetor, he is not mentioned again until in 146, when he obtained the consulship, conquered Corinth and then destroyed it by order of the Senate.¹⁴

After the consulship Mummius remained in Greece as a proconsul organizing her affairs. There is epigraphical evidence of his activity in several Greek towns, such as Olympia,¹⁵ Tegea,¹⁶ Nemea,¹⁷ Epidaurus,¹⁸ Oropus,¹⁹ Thespieae,²⁰ Thebes²¹ and Aulis.²² From literary sources we know that he also visited Delphi²³ and Pheneus.²⁴ The inscriptions concern the gifts which Lucius Mummius distributed; usually he reutilized old monuments. Olympia and Epidaurus, being the most famous cult-places of Greece, were obvious recipients of these gifts. Tegea was well-known for her worship of Athena and Heracles, Nemea for the cults for Zeus and Heracles and the Nemean Games, Thespieae as the cult-place of Heracles and the Muses, Thebes

11 Cic. Att. 13,30.

12 Cic. Att. 13,5.

13 App. Hisp. 6,10,56-57.

14 Cic. Manil. 4,11. Cf. Paus. 7,16,7.

15 Furtwängler, Arch.Zeit. 36 (1879) 86, n:o 131 and 132, Arch.Zeit. 37 (1880) 146-147, n:o 291 and 292.

16 IG V 2,77.

17 SEG XXIII 180.

18 IG IV 1183.

19 IG VII 434.

20 IG VII 1808.

21 IG VII 2478 and IG VII 2478a. Keramopoullos, Arkh.Delt. 13 (1931) 106. IG VII 2413-14.

22 SEG XXV 541.

23 Polyb. 39,6,1.

24 Dio Chrys. 42.

for the cults of Apollo and Heracles, Aulis for the worship of Artemis, and Oropus for her famous oracle. It becomes clear from this list that Lucius Mummius visited all the important cult-places of mainland Greece. In addition, some partiality for Heracles is noticeable.

Returning to Rome with his army towards the end of the year 145,²⁵ Mummius celebrated his second triumph. In the procession were carried statues of bronze and marble, paintings and other works of art from the booty of Corinth.²⁶ Without analyzing further these works of art the sources reveal that most of the dedications in Rome and its environs originated from Corinth.²⁷

The most important Mummius-inscription comes from *mons Caelius* in Rome.²⁸ It is of peperino tufa and it is partly written in Saturnian metre:

- 1 *L(ucius) Mummius L(uci) f(ilius) co(n)sul duct(u)*
- 2 *auspicio imperioque*
- 3 *eius Achaia capt(a) Corinto*
- 4 *deleto Romam redieit*
- 5 *triumphans ob hasce*
- 6 *res bene gestas quod*
- 7 *in bello voverat*
- 8 *hanc aedem et signu(m)*
- 9 *Herculis Victoris*
- 10 *imperator dedicat*

It appears from the text that the victory over Achaëa was won by the personal leadership of Lucius Mummius in his consular year (1-3). During the battle he had made a vow to build a temple for Hercules Victor and a cult-statue in the case of victory (7-9). He dedicated this temple while celebrating the triumph and when he still had the proconsular imperium (10). Evidently it was immediately af-

25 Brunt, *The Italian Manpower 225 BC - AD 14*, 1971, 428.

26 Liv. Per. 51. App. Pun. 8,20,135.

27 Strab. 8,6,23.

28 CIL I 2,626.

ter his victory that he gave the order to build the temple in Rome, in order to be able to dedicate it upon his arrival.²⁹ Thus there remained roughly a year for construction of the temple. This would have been enough, if Pape is right in claiming that the temple was small.³⁰

The temple was certainly built of the same material as the inscription, that is peperino, for imported marbles were still at that time rare and expensive. And yet, if such a material had been used, the inscription, too, would have been written on the same material.³¹ In the inscription there is no evidence for the theory that the temple had been dedicated as late as 142, Mummius' censorial year.³² In this connection there is no need to refer to Plutarch's *praec. rei publ.* 816 (like the editor of CIL 1 suppl. does). This passage concerns another temple, Scipio's round temple of Hercules - *aedes Aemiliana Herculis*. It was situated not far from the *Ara Maxima* and the shrine of *Pudicitia Patricia*, in the *Forum Boarium*. Another Hercules-temple in the same area was the temple of *Hercules Olivarius*, the famous round temple near the Tiber.³³ Scipio's temple was dedicated in his censorial year, 142, but Mummius seems to have consecrated his temple some years earlier.

The place of discovery of the Mummius-inscription might explain why Mummius in his text calls himself *imperator*. It has been convincingly suggested that there on the Caelian hill a Hercules-cult was practised by the inhabitants of an extramural *pagus*.³⁴ If this is correct the temple was situated in the area between Ss. Quattro Coronati and the Lateran, where there also ran an underground branch

29 Kienast, *Zeitschr. Savigny-Stift.*, Rom. Abt. 78 (1961) 410-411.

30 Pape, *Griechische Kunstwerke aus Kriegsbeute und ihre öffentliche Aufstellung in Rom*, 1975, 18. The only support for this claim is, however, the fact that no traces of it have been found!

31 Even if the inscription had been later recopied, it is unlikely that a marble-inscription would have been remade on tufa.

32 Thus e.g. Platner-Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 1929, 256-257.

33 Coarelli, *Guida archeologica di Roma*, 1976, 287-288.

34 Colini, *Mem.Pont.Acc.* 3 VII (1944) 41 and 299. CIL VI 302.

of *Aqua Marcia* called *rivus Herculanus*.³⁵ This part of Caelius was evidently outside the republican walls, since the easily defendable hill of Ss. Quattro Coronati certainly formed a part of the system of defence.³⁶ In the inscription Mummius calls himself *imperator* because he had not yet entered the *pomerium* at the moment of the dedication. Thus it must have taken place in 145.

During the two years following the triumph Lucius Mummius seems to have been active in decorating Rome and other Italian towns with works of art, which were brought from Greece. His every step may have been carefully planned in order to facilitate his chances in applying for the censorship.

Mummius had every reason to set up one of his many donations in Italica in Spain,³⁷ where he had waged war successfully as a praetor, though he had not been able finally to pacify the country. Italica was founded by Scipio Africanus Maior in 206 as an outpost against the Lusitanian tribes. It is most likely that even Mummius had his stronghold in Italica. It was later a very famous producer of olive oil. Perhaps as early as in the second century there were immigrants from the oilproducing districts of southern Latium, who could have been Mummius' clients. This remains, of course, merely a hypothesis.

The Mummius-inscription in Parma was discovered in the theatre constructed in the second century AD.³⁸ Its original site is not known, but it might have represented Apollo or one of the Muses, as it was later placed in the theatre. Parma is recorded as a Roman colony in 183, when the *Via Aemilia* was built. It is the only town in Cisalpine Gaul where Mummius is known to have bestowed a statue. His connections with Parma were perhaps due to his earlier career,

35 Platner-Ashby, op.cit. 26.

36 Coarelli, op.cit. 21.

37 CIL I 2,630: [L(ucius) Mumm]ius L(uci) f(ilius) imp(erator)
[ded(it) Co]rintho capta
[?Vico Ital]icensi

38 CIL I 2,629: L(ucius) Mummius [L(uci) f(ilius)]
co(n)s(ul) p(opulo) P(armensi?)

like the period of his quaestorship in the late 160's. He wanted to be remembered in this way by the natives of Parma.

The inscriptions of Nursia,³⁹ Cures,⁴⁰ Trebula Mutuesca,⁴¹ and Pompeii (in Oscan letters)⁴² show the normal formula: *L(ucius) Mummius L(uci) f(ilius) co(n)s(ul) Achaea capta N.N.* The Fregellan inscription is the only one without a dedication to a community and without the expression that the monument in question came from Greece.⁴³ So the statue was perhaps of Mummius himself and was erected by the inhabitants of Fregellae to commemorate his deeds.

The Mummius-inscriptions which we possess are evidently only a small proportion of the original number.⁴⁴ It is the general opinion that Mummius distributed his booty during his censorial year 142-141. It is worth noting, however, that his title in these inscriptions is always *cos*, meaning *consularis*,⁴⁵ never *ensor*. Also the passage in Livy makes it clear that Mummius made his donations as a part of his propaganda campaign before the censorial elections, not during the censorship.⁴⁶

Considering the chronology of these years in general, it should be remembered that the censors took office late in the year.⁴⁷ This, too, supports the claim that the donations of Mummius are from the years before the censorship.

39 CIL I 2,628: *L(ucius) Mummius
co(n)s(ul) ded(it) N(ursinis)*

40 CIL I 2,631: [*L(ucius) Mummius L(uci) f(ilius)*]
co(n)s(ul) Achaea capta

41 CIL I 2,627: *L(ucius) Mummius co(n)s(ul)
vico*

42 Conway, *The Italic Dialects*, 1897, 80.

43 Bizzarri, *Epigraphica* 35 (1973) 141.

44 CIL I 2,632 does not belong to them. See e.g. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic II*, 1952, 643. The Mummius-inscriptions in general have been most lately discussed by G. Waurick (*Kunstraub der Römer: Untersuchungen zu seinen Anfängen anhand der Inschriften*), in *Jahrbuch des Römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums* 22 (1977) 1-46. The article leaves, however, many important questions open.

45 *cos* = *consularis*: CIL III 7731 and CIL VII 5.

46 Liv.Epit.Oxyr. 53.

47 Suolahti, *op.cit.* 75 and 78.

If we compare the two groups of inscriptions, we notice that in Greece they were dedicated to gods as a token of gratitude and as a part of Roman propaganda in a conquered country. On the other hand the inscriptions found in Spain, Cisalpine Gaul and Italy have another purpose: here Lucius Mummius wanted to remind the citizens of the climax of his career, undoubtedly wishing that the recipients would support his and his descendants' efforts in the future, too. The inscriptions of Italica and Parma shed new light on the first steps of his career. The fact that so many donations were concentrated in a relatively small part of Central Italy, and also that they were made to places of small importance, makes one suspect that the family of the Mummii or their allies had lands and clients in this particular area.⁴⁸ The exceptional inscription from Fregellae may prove that the colony and Mummius had a special relationship. Future excavations may show whether Lucius Mummius was a native of Fregellae or patron of the colony.

Mummius' patrician colleague in the censorship was Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus. During their political careers the two colleagues had many points in common and were therefore subjects of comparison favoured by many authors. According to Dio Cassius, Scipio performed his duty with the strictest integrity and impartiality, whereas Mummius was more popular and charitable.⁴⁹ In Velleius Paterculus Scipio was introduced as the champion of every form of learning, while Mummius was so uncultivated and primitive that he gave instructions for the statues and pictures made by the greatest artists to be replaced by new ones in case they were lost during the transportation from Corinth to Italy.⁵⁰

It is this passage of Velleius Paterculus that has greatly influenced the modern opinion of Lucius Mummius. The oldest and most

48 Bianchi Bandinelli, *Etruschi e italici prima del dominio di Roma*, 1976, 328.

49 Dio Cass. 76.

50 Vell. 1,13,3-4. See the comments of Münzer, n:o 7A, RE XVI 1200.

reliable sources such as Polybius and Cicero give a different, very positive picture of Lucius Mummius and his activity as a whole.⁵¹ In fact Velleius is the first Roman author who had such a negative attitude towards Mummius. The motives of Velleius Paterculus may have been, firstly, to use a pair of rhetorical contrasts and, secondly, he may have been influenced by the hostile literary tradition created among the partisans of Scipio.⁵²

The comparison of Mummius and Scipio is rewarding in that the former seems to have represented traditional Roman education, while the latter was a famous philhellene. Our sources on Lucius Mummius seem to derive from two different traditions: a positive one in the older sources and a negative one in some later sources.

51 E.g. Polyb. 39,3,3 and 39,6. Cic. Verr. 2,1,20,55. Cic. parad. 38.

52 See Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 1967, 330-331.