



# TYCHE

## Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer  
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 16, 2001

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Papyrologie und Epigraphik**

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**Band 16**

**Hermann Harrauer  
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## I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S

Michel Christol (Chilly-Mazarin), Thomas Drew-Bear (Lyon), Mehmet Taşlıalan (Yalvaç – Isparta): L'empereur Claude, le chevalier C. Caristianus Fronto Caesianus Iullus et le culte impérial à Antioche de Pisidie (Tafel 1–2) . . . . .	1
Hans Förster (Wien): <i>Ich grüße meinen alltugendhaften Herrn</i> . Frag- ment eines koptischen Briefes (P.Vindob. K 33) (Tafel 3) . . . . .	21
Matthias Haentjens (Amsterdam): Die Sonderabgaben in den Pachtur- kunden aus dem römischen Ägypten . . . . .	27
Francisca A. J. Hoogendijk (Rossmoyne), Klaas A. Worp (Amster- dam): Drei unveröffentlichte griechische Papyri aus der Wiener Sammlung (Tafel 4–5) . . . . .	45
Éva Jakab (Graz): Berenike vor Gericht. Apokeryxis, Gesellschaft und Buchführung in P. Oxy. XXII 2342 . . . . .	63
David Jordan (Athen): A Prayer Copied by Dioskoros of Kômê Aphro- ditês (PGM 13a) . . . . .	87
Nico Kruit (Leiden), Klaas A. Worp (Amsterdam): P.Vindob. G 31701 verso: A Prefectural (?) Hypographe (Tafel 6) . . . . .	91
Peter van Minnen (Cincinnati): P.Harrauer 48 and the Problem of <i>papas</i> Heraiscus in P.Lond. VI 1914 . . . . .	103
Amphilochios Papatthomas (Athen): A New Testimony to the Letter to the Hebrews (2. 9–11 and 3. 3–6) (Tafel 6) . . . . .	107
Victor Parker (Christchurch): Sallust and the Victor of the Jugurthine War . . . . .	111
Marijana Ričl (Belgrad): Donations of Slaves and Freeborn Children to Deities in Roman Macedonia and Phrygia. A Reconsideration (Tafel 7– 12) . . . . .	127
Joshua D. Sosin (Cambridge, Mass.): Accounting and Endowments . . .	161
Martin Steskal (Wien): Zu den Stiftungen des M. Claudius P. Vedius Antoninus Phaedrus Sabinianus und ihrem Echo in Ephesos . . . . .	177
Jean-Yves Strasser (Athen): La grande prêtrise dans trois inscriptions de Cilicie . . . . .	189
Argyro B. Tatakis (Athen): Σάων, Ἰθαμβος and Other Names from LGPN III.B . . . . .	205
Rudolf Wächter (Basel): <i>Ter tricennalia?</i> Zur Inschrift auf der Decenna- lien-Platte des Constans . . . . .	211
Georgios A. Xenis (Limassol): A Papyrus Fragment with Mention of a Loan upon Mortgage (Tafel 12) . . . . .	217
Ekkehard Weber, Martina Peditšček (Wien): <i>Annona Epigra- phica Austriaca 1999–2000: Text</i> . . . . .	221
Index . . . . .	267
Konkordanzen . . . . .	271
Bemerkungen zu Papyri XIV (<Korr. Tyche> 373–396) . . . . .	279

Buchbesprechungen .....	287
Michael Alpers, <i>Das nachrepublikanische Finanzsystem. Fiscus und Fiscii in der frühen Kaiserzeit</i> , Berlin, New York 1995 (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 45) (R. Wolters: 287) — Armin Daniel Baum, <i>Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum: mit ausgewählten Quellentexten samt deutscher Übersetzung</i> , Tübingen 2001 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament: Reihe 2, 138) (H. Förster: 290) — Diodoros, <i>Griechische Weltgeschichte, Buch XI–XIII</i> . Übers. v. Otto Veh, eingel. und komm. von Wolfgang Will, Stuttgart 1998 (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 45) (G. Dobesch: 292) — Johannes Engels, <i>Augusteische Oikumenegeographie und Universalhistorie im Werk Strabons von Amaseia</i> , Stuttgart 1999 (Geographica Historica 12) (G. Dobesch: 294) — Günter Figal, <i>Sokrates</i> , 2. überarbeitete Auflage, München 1998 (Beck'sche Reihe: Denker 530) (P. Siewert: 296) — Jörg-Dieter Gauger, <i>Authentizität und Methode. Untersuchungen zum historischen Wert des persisch-griechischen Herrscherbriefs in literarischer Tradition</i> , Hamburg 2000 (Studien zur Geschichtsforschung des Altertums 6) (G. Dobesch: 297) — Markham J. Geller, Herwig Maehler (Hrsg.), <i>Legal Documents of the Hellenistic World. Papers from a Seminar</i> , London 1995 (F. Winter: 299) — <i>Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike</i> . Hrsg. von Tonio Hölscher. München, Leipzig 2000 (G. Dobesch: 300) — Éva Jakab, <i>Praedicere und cavere beim Marktkauf. Sachmängel im griechischen und römischen Recht</i> , München 1997 (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 87) (R. Wolters: 307) — Luigi Loreto, <i>Il comando militare nelle province procuratorie 30 a. C.–280 d. C. Dimensione militare e dimensione costituzionale</i> , Napoli 2000 (Publicazioni della Facoltà di giurisprudenza della seconda Università di Napoli XII) (E. Weber: 308) — D. Lührmann, <i>Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache herausgegeben, übersetzt und eingeleitet in Zusammenarbeit mit Egbert Schlärh, Marburg 2000</i> (H. Förster: 309) — Eustathios Papapolychroniou, <i>Greek Papyri in the Benaki Museum. From the Collections of the Historical Archives</i> , Athens 2000 (A. Papatomas: 309) — Francisco Pina Polo, <i>Contra arma verbis. Der Redner vor dem Volk in der späten römischen Republik</i> . Aus dem Spanischen von Edda Liess, Stuttgart 1996 (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien, 22) (G. Dobesch: 312) — Reinhard Rathmayr, <i>Der antike Mensch in der Jahreszeit des Winters</i> , Hamburg 2001 (Schriftenreihe Studien zur Geschichtsforschung des Altertums 9) (P. Siewert: 313) — Eberhard Ruschenbusch, <i>Ein altgriechisches Gesetzbuch aus dem Kontext von Platons Gesetzen herausgehoben und in das Deutsche übersetzt</i> , München 2001 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Antiken Welt 38) (P. Siewert: 314) — Panagiota Sarischoyli, <i>Spätptolemäische Urkunden aus dem Herakleopolites</i> (BGU XVIII.1), Berlin 2000 (Ch. Armoni: 315) — H. K. Σβέρκος, <i>Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Άνω Μακεδονίας τών ρωμαϊκῶν χρόνων (πολιτική ὀργάνωση-κοινωνία-ἀνθρωπωνυμία)</i> , Thessaloniki 2000 (S. Zoumbaki: 322) — Markus Sehlmeier, <i>Stadtrömische Ehrenstatuen der republikanischen Zeit. Historizität und Kontext von Symbolen nobilitären Standesbewußtseins</i> , Stuttgart 1999 (Historia Einzelschriften 130) (P. Amann: 324) — <i>Bononia / Bologna. Scritti di Giancarlo Susini</i> , Bologna: Patron Editore 2001 (E. Weber: 325) — <i>Wege zur Genese griechischer Identität. Die Bedeutung der früharchaischen Zeit</i> . Hrsg. von Christoph Ulf, Berlin 1996 (G. Dobesch: 326) — <i>Alexander der Große. Eine Welteroberung und ihr Hintergrund</i> . Vorträge des Internationalen Bonner Alexanderkolloquiums, 19.–21. 12. 1996, hrsg. v. Wolfgang Will, Bonn 1998 (Antiquitas, Reihe I: Abhandlungen zur Alten Geschichte 46) (G. Dobesch: 329) — Claudia Wiotte-Franz, <i>Hermeneus und Interpres. Zum Dolmetscherwesen in der Antike</i> , Saarbrücken 2001 (Saarbrücker Studien zur Archäologie und Alten Geschichte 16) (G. Dobesch: 333)	
Indices (A. Pokorny: griechisch; H. Förster: koptisch) .....	335
Eingelangte Bücher .....	338
Tafel 1–12	

## VICTOR PARKER

### Sallust and the Victor of the Jugurthine War\*

After Q. Caecilius Metellus had returned from Numidia early in 107, he celebrated (in 106) a triumph for his military success and, like P. Cornelius Scipio before him, received as *agnomen* the ethnic adjective of the land in which his victory had taken place: Numidicus<sup>1</sup>. If we knew only those two facts, we would immediately conclude that Metellus had won the war in Numidia. But Sallust, in the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, has this to say of Metellus' return to Rome from Numidia:

*Metellus interea Romam profectus contra spem suam laetissimis animis accipitur, plebi patribusque, postquam invidia decesserat, iuxta carus* (88, 1).

Metellus, meanwhile, returned to Rome and was received, contrary to his expectation, with gladsome spirits. After his unpopularity had dissipated, he was dear to the *plebs* and the Senate alike.

Although the words are polite (even friendly)<sup>2</sup>, we hear nothing of a triumph, nothing of the *agnomen*<sup>3</sup>. Instead we read in the following chapters how C. Marius won the Jugurthine War. In fact, we have learnt from the preceding chapters how Metellus has engaged in dilatory tactics for several months in order to avoid fighting against Jugurtha — out of a dislike for Marius who is about to take over the command in the war and whose work Metellus will not do for him.

As usual with Sallust, the first step towards the true historical circumstances is taken when we realise what thesis he wishes to impress upon us. One overriding thesis of the final two-thirds of the *Bellum Iugurthinum* is simply this: that Marius

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\* I thank Fritz Gschnitzer for kindly reading a draft of this article. References to Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum* are by chapter and paragraph only.

<sup>1</sup> *Inscriptiones Italiae*, XIII,1, p. 85. Livy presumably mentioned this triumph as well since it appears in several of the various epitomes: Eutropius, IV 27, 4; Velleius Paterculus, II 11, 2; [Aurelius Victor], *De viris illustribus*, 62, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the (now mostly lost) accounts of the war in Numidia presented Metellus in extremely unflattering fashion (see e.g. Appian, *Numidica*, frs. 2 and 3). Others (e. g. Cassius Dio, XXVI Boissvain) presented Metellus in a highly positive light. Sallust takes a middle course, but this is — in spite of the opinions of some — no guarantee of accuracy. As will become clear, Sallust is not necessarily advancing a partisan case as to whether Metellus was a good or a bad person — he is making another case entirely.

<sup>3</sup> K. Vretska, *Studien zu Sallusts Bellum Iugurthinum* = SÖAW 229, Wien 1955, 95, argues that Sallust has not suppressed Metellus' triumph in order to denigrate Metellus. Quite the contrary, Vretska opines, Sallust pays Metellus a great compliment by implying (only of him) that he overcame the partisan battles between *nobiles* and *plebs* by being dear to each alike. Whether or not this be true, it misses the point completely: Would not a mention of the triumph have given occasion for showing how dear Metellus was to both „parties“?



won the war; and for this reason Metellus' triumph and *agnomen* cannot be mentioned.

In the following pages we will look at how Sallust builds up this thesis — that Marius and not Metellus was the real victor in Numidia<sup>4</sup>.

### I. The Taking of Thala and Capsa

The war in Numidia devolved for the Romans into a process of denying Jugurtha of bases, of taking towns one by one and placing garrisons in them<sup>5</sup>. That much is clear, yet this process is wearying not just for the soldiers involved, but also for any potential historian, as it mandates iteration and re-iteration of the same military actions. One of the worst documented episodes of Alexander the Great's conquests involves the waging of this sort of war in the Sogdianê: no-one (certainly not Arrian) had any interest in telling the story of countless little sieges and stormings of insignificant, far-away places that had strange-sounding names anyway<sup>6</sup>. In Sallust's case, since he could hardly document each in itself unimportant action, choice became necessary: the whole war consisted mostly of such actions. Of the campaigns of Metellus and Marius, the taking of only five fortified places (Zama, Vaga, Thala, Capsa, and an unnamed fortification on the Muluccha) is described in any detail. Particularly worthy of comparison are Thala (Metellus) and Capsa (Marius). Sallust makes sure we know to make the comparison since at 89, 6, while telling of the taking of Capsa, he brings a cross-reference to Metellus' capture of Thala:

*Eius potiundi Marium maxuma cupido inuaserat, quom propter usum bellum quia res aspera uidebatur et Metellus oppidum Thalam magna gloria ceperat, haud dissimiliter situm munitumque, nisi quod apud Thalam non longe a moenibus aliquot fontes erant, Capsenses una modo atque ea intra oppidum iugi aqua, cetera pluuiâ utebantur.*

An extremely strong desire to gain control of it [Capsa] had laid hold of Marius not only because of its utility in the war, but also because it seemed a thorny task and because Metellus had to great glory captured Thala, which was rather similar as to position and defensive works, only that in the case of Thala several springs lay around it not far from the walls whereas the inhabitants of Capsa made use of a single ever-flowing spring, and that within the town no less, and otherwise relied on rain-water.

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<sup>4</sup> Without wishing to impugn the work of e.g. Karl Vretska, I propose to steer attention away from Sallust's use of complimentary words (such as *magnus* or *uirius* with reference to Marius and Metellus) as indications of Sallust's judgements and instead to concentrate on the arrangement, selection, and description of events on the assumption that even in narrative we will know them by their deeds.

<sup>5</sup> Sallust seems aware of the fact (see 54, 6–8 and 89, 1), but will not explain the Numidians' tactics on this basis: Sallust's overall presentation of the Numidians and their tactics, in fact, still requires exact analysis.

<sup>6</sup> The few lines of Arrian, IV 16, 2–3, undertake to describe an entire year's campaigning to put down the Sogdians' revolt town by town in a vast sweeping action through the Sogdianê by an army divided into five columns.



We are meant then to compare the two operations. We follow Sallust's presentation:

First, both cities lie in the middle of deserts with large tracts of wasteland all around them<sup>7</sup>. But in the case of Thala, several springs round about the city provide drinking water for any besiegers, whereas Capsa has one single spring which lies within the city. Clearly, then, Capsa is the much tougher nut to crack. Second, while both Metellus (75, 3–6) and Marius (91, 1) omit nothing in preparation for their respective marches across wastes, Metellus is aided both by unexpected rains and better than expected supply<sup>8</sup>. In Marius' march on Capsa no mention is made of any such unexpected help: the army must rely completely on Marius' ability and native intuition<sup>9</sup>, whereas Metellus' is never put to the test. Third, in both cases the troops feel that heaven is on the Romans' side — in Metellus' case only because of the providential rains<sup>10</sup>; but in Marius' precisely because of Marius' spectacular success<sup>11</sup>. Fourth, Metellus must actually besiege Thala for forty days before it falls (76, 5). Marius, however, arranges the attack on Capsa so well, that it falls without a

<sup>7</sup> 89, 4: *erat inter ingentis solitudines oppidum magnum atque ualens nomine Capsa*, „In the middle of an immense waste lay a town, great and powerful, by the name of Capsa.“ 75, 1–2: *ea fuga Iugurtha ... in solitudines, dein Thalam peruenit, in oppidum magnum atque opulentum ... inter Thalam flumenque proximum in spatio milium quinquaginta loca arida atque uasta esse cognouerat*, „In his flight Jugurtha traversed a desert and came to Thala, a town great and wealthy ... [Metellus] knew that between Thala and the nearest river lay great tracts of arid land for a space of fifty (Roman) miles.“

<sup>8</sup> 75, 7–8: *tanta repente caelo missa uis aquae dicitur, ut ea modo exercitui satis superque foret. praeterea conmeatus spe amplior, quia Numidae, sicuti plerique in noua deditione, officia intenderant*, „it is said that suddenly such a great rain fell that this alone was more than enough for the army. Furthermore, supply exceeded expectation since the Numdians, as is the case with most who have just surrendered, had striven to fulfil their duties.“

<sup>9</sup> In 90, 1 and 92, 2 Sallust has been interpreted as criticising Marius in that (Sallust says) no-one could have had the foresight to prepare for everything on this expedition and in that part of the plan was „not fully thought through“ (*non bene consultata*). See E. Koestermann, *C. Sallustius Crispus. Bellum Iugurthinum*, Heidelberg 1971, 323 and 328. On the other hand, as Koestermann also notes, „Sallust ... kann seiner Verwunderung darüber [the taking of Capsa] nicht genug Ausdruck verleihen.“ This seems to me the correct thread to follow, that these passages contain not so much „Tadel“ as „Verwunderung“: Marius' intuition is going beyond what can be achieved by normal processes of ratiocination. Otherwise Vretska (n. 4) 122; W. Steidle, *Sallusts historische Monographien* (Historia Einzelschriften 3), Stuttgart 1958, 81. One must compare a later passage (94, 7) which indicates the same thing — even Marius' rashness, once corrected by chance, snatches for him glory from the jaws of blame. The point is that everything redounds to Marius' glory, he has that quality which Napoleon valued most highly in his generals: luck. H. A. Gärtner, *Erzählformen bei Sallust*, Historia 35 (1986) 456–462, and C. D. Gilbert, *Marius and Fortuna*, CQ 67 (1973) 104–107, have concentrated on the literary conceit of *fortuna/τύχη* and the rôle it plays in Marius' career. This stock theme — Polybius is only its best known exponent — of Hellenistic historiography need hardly express a negative evaluation.

<sup>10</sup> 75, 9: *rati sese dis immortalibus curae esse*, „they thought themselves in the care of the immortal gods.“

<sup>11</sup> 92, 2: *omnes ... credere illi aut mentem diuinam esse aut deorum nutu cuncta portendi*, „everyone believed either that he had divinely inspired thoughts or that everything was revealed to him by a wink from the gods.“

siege's even becoming necessary (91, 4–6). Fifth, Metellus takes no booty in Thala because the inhabitants destroy it first (76, 6) while Marius is able to divide the booty amongst his troops and destroys Capsa himself (91, 6). Sixth, the siege of Thala is particularly draining on the troops<sup>12</sup>, whereas Marius takes Capsa without loss of a man (92, 1).

We have put the two incidents side-by-side as the deliberate cross-reference encouraged us to do. In every aspect Marius emerges as Metellus' superior in the art of war. We have as few ways to prove that Sallust chose representative sieges as we have to prove that he chose unrepresentative ones. Yet selected details we can check.

First, Sallust says there was no source of water outside of Capsa and that desert surrounded the city on all sides. This is not quite true. Some four-and-a-third miles to the southeast of Capsa (modern Gafsa in Tunisia) lies the oasis of Lala<sup>13</sup>. In reality, then, Marius' situation, assuming that he had adequately scouted the area, was hardly as dire as Sallust would have us believe. Now it may well be that Sallust honestly believed that there was no source of water for Marius' troops in the neighbourhood of Capsa. If so, he was misinformed. One should also note that the modern town has several springs, not just one<sup>14</sup>. We need not seek to salvage Sallust's reputation here: he is so habitually underinformed on matters of Numidian topography and so perfectly capable of arranging it according to the purposes of his narrative<sup>15</sup>, that it may be that he added these details because he needed the contrast to what he had written about Thala.

If Thala has been rightly identified with a modern town still called Thala<sup>16</sup>, then Sallust's detail concerning springs in the area around the town turns out to be true<sup>17</sup>. Unfortunately, the distance from the the modern Thala to the nearest river is six-and-a-quarter miles (not the ca. 46 [= 50 millia passuum] indicated by Sallust at 75, 2). Either Sallust has once again arranged the topography to suit his purpose — in this case to provide a perfect parallel to Marius' taking of Capsa which does lie far from any river —, or we have yet to identify the ancient Thala. All the same, we are left with the feeling that we have two arranged situations in front of us which have been „parallelised“ so that Sallust might make his point.

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<sup>12</sup> 76, 5: *multo ante labore proeliisque fatigati*, „worn out beforehand through much labour and battles.“

<sup>13</sup> Les guides bleus. *Algérie Tunisie*, (Paris: 1950), p. 550. According to the „guide“ this oasis supported a population of 1000 in 1950.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 549. S. Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord* 5, Paris <sup>2</sup>1929, 278, n. 8, cites several post-classical travellers who noted more than one spring.

<sup>15</sup> The description of the siege of Cirta in chapters 23 and 25, as has long been recognised, bears no resemblance to the actual topography of the city's site.

<sup>16</sup> L. Teutsch, *Das Städtewesen in Nordafrika in der Zeit von C. Gracchus bis zum Tode des Kaisers Augustus*, Berlin 1962, 5, identifies Sallust's Thala with the modern town of the same name with no hesitation — otherwise Gsell (n. 14) 276–277, who remains sceptical. For further discussion see G. M. Paul, *A historical Commentary on the Jugurthine War* = *Arca* 13, Liverpool 1984, 194.

<sup>17</sup> Gsell (n. 14) 276–277.

Independent accounts of the two battles are almost non-existent. Florus<sup>18</sup>, interestingly, does mention both battles (Orosius<sup>19</sup> only Capsa) as though the ultimate source for his Epitome had singled these two battles out for special consideration. Whether that source be Sallust<sup>20</sup>, we cannot know for sure, though it does seem odd that another source should have independently singled out precisely these two actions out of what must have been scores of similar ones. Plutarch, in the opening chapters of his biographical essay on Marius, mentions neither — if Plutarch followed Poseidonius, then Poseidonius, writing independently of Sallust's concern to underpin a thesis, may not have bothered to single out any of these actions for detailed treatment.

The other actions against fortified positions which Sallust mentions are Zama, Vaga, and the fortress near the Muluccha. The action at Zama is curious for what Sallust does not tell us. In chapters 56–61 we read about Metellus' siege of the city. The account is a conventional siege description; and in the end Metellus is forced to break off the siege owing to the strength of the fortifications and Jugurtha's counter-ambushing. Yet by the time Metellus leaves Numidia in early 107 he controls Vaga (68) (to the north of Zama) and Cirta (81 and 82)<sup>21</sup> (far to the West) and Thala (75–76) (which despite its uncertain exact location<sup>22</sup> did certainly lie to the south of Zama). To the east lay the Roman province of Africa. It is inconceivable that while Metellus was installing garrison after garrison in town after town<sup>23</sup> and „laying waste all Numidia“<sup>24</sup> and taking control of territory to the South, West, and North of Zama, he should not have gained control of this important town. Sallust simply does not bother to tell us when<sup>25</sup>. By leaving the episode involving Zama hanging in the

<sup>18</sup> Florus, I 36, 11 and 14.

<sup>19</sup> Orosius, V 15, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Even a brief perusal of the various epitomes makes clear that ultimately they rely heavily on Livy, but not just Livy.

<sup>21</sup> The text of Cassius Dio, XXVI, fr. 89, 5 Boissevain, which (apparently) refers to Cirta surrendering while Marius was commander, is presumably more corrupt than the editors indicate. All manuscripts have σκίρτας, which is easy enough to correct to Κίρτας, only no other source mentions Marius' taking Cirta. Read Κάψας instead. The transmission of proper names in this section of excerpts from Cassius Dio is somewhat erratic: at 89, 4 Γαύδας must be read for the mss.' μάριος; at 89,1 the mss.' γνοίος makes little sense in the context, whereas Γαύδας might make some.

<sup>22</sup> See above n. 16.

<sup>23</sup> 61, 1: *in iis urbibus, quae ad se defecerant satisque munitae loco aut moenibus erant, praesidia inponit*, „into those towns, which had come over to him and which were sufficiently protected either by their natural position or through manmade fortifications, he placed garrisons“; 66, 1: *Iugurtha ... civitatis, quae ab se defecerant, formidine aut ostentando praemia adfectare ... et eos ipsos, qui in praesidiis erant, pecunia temptare*, „With threats or through promising rewards Jugurtha made an attempt on cities which had fallen away from him ... and even tempted with money the very men who were in the garrisons.“

<sup>24</sup> Livy, *Periocha*, LXV: *totam ... Numidiam uastavit*; cf. Orosius, *Aduersum paganos*, V 15,7: *[Iugurtha] uidit ... et uastari Numidiam suam et non posse defendi*, „[Jugurtha] saw not only that his Numidia was being laid waste but also that it could not be defended.“

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Paul (n. 16) 192; n. b. his summary of an article by C. Courtois, *La Thala de Salluste*, Recueil de notices et mémoires de la société archéologique de Constantine 69

air<sup>26</sup>, by showing us Metellus being forced to break off a siege without result, he forces us to take cognisance of a failure of Metellus. We never see Marius failing in this way.

With regard to Vaga there occurs an event which ought to have been commonplace owing to the nature of this type of warfare. After Metellus has taken control of the city, it revolts against its garrison (66, 2)<sup>27</sup>. Metellus retakes the town and settles things there with some severity. In particular Metellus has the garrison commander, T. Turpilius Silanus, executed<sup>28</sup>. We never see Marius having to re-take towns which he had already taken possession of.

The other main action in which we see Marius concerns an attack on a far-away fortress without a name on the River Muluccha (92–94)<sup>29</sup>. Since the mouth of the Muluccha lies over 500 miles to the West of Cirta (the westernmost place which Sallust otherwise mentions as under Roman control) as the crow flies, Marius must have marched a phenomenal distance — assuming, of course, that we can rely on

(1955–56) 57–69 — not available to me — in which Courtois proposes a *lacuna* to explain the absence of any report in Sallust of the taking of Zama. That procedure seems radical to the present author, but it at least attempts to explain a real problem in Sallust's narration of the Jugurthine War.

<sup>26</sup> Sallust's presentation seems to be behind Florus' statement at I 36, 11: *Zamam quidem frustra adsiluit*, „[Metellus] attacked Zama in vain.“

<sup>27</sup> According to 66, 1 Jugurtha tries to persuade any number of cities to revolt. It is difficult to believe that only Vaga ever did so, but we have no other information than what Sallust concedes to us.

<sup>28</sup> For this incident we have two parallel accounts. Appian, *Numidica*, fr. 3, presents a version extremely hostile to Metellus, who allegedly had the entire „council“ of Vaga put to death with Turpilius. Metellus is also said to have cut the hands off some Thracian and Ligurian deserters whom Jugurtha had handed over to him, while others he had buried up to their stomachs, had arrows shot at them, and then had them set alight while still alive. Plutarch, *Marius*, 8, on the other hand presents a version extremely hostile to Marius: here Turpilius is an hereditary *hospes* of Metellus', whom Metellus only very reluctantly has put to death because the investigating council, spurred on by Marius, demanded the highest punishment. Afterwards, Turpilius turned out to be innocent of the charge against him, and all consoled Metellus except for Marius who boasted that he had set a „guest-friend-murder-avenging destroyer“ onto Metellus. From Appian and Plutarch we do at least realise how contentious Metellus' actions in Vaga had been — especially Plutarch's (source's) attempt to transfer the guilt from Metellus to Marius makes clear that even some partial to Metellus felt that he had acted too severely and that some sort of apologetic fiction was required. — Sallust seems to steer a middle course as far as condemning Metellus goes (something which shows that viewing Sallust as a partisan pamphleteer only aids our understanding of him so much), but had we only his version, we would have no idea just how severely Metellus' actions had inflamed sentiment. — If Vaga had been one of many towns to revolt (*a priori* likely), Metellus may out of exasperation have had it punished severely and have made an example of its commandant. Because, however, Sallust gives us no context in which to view Metellus' actions at Vaga, we cannot judge the issue. — Turpilius Silanus is not known outside of the aforementioned sources. Turpilius' legal status as *civis ex Latio* (Sallust), ἀνήρ Ῥωμαῖος (Appian), ξένος/*hospes* of Metellus (Plutarch) and ἔχων τῶν τεκτόνων ἀρχήν/*praefectus fabrum* (Plutarch) — see Paul (n. 16) 179–180, 182–185, with references — is a much-vexed, much-discussed problem.

<sup>29</sup> Frontinus, *Strategemata*, III 9, 3, retells Sallust's story of the Ligurian; Florus, I 36, 14 also refers to the story and calls the Muluccha a „city.“

Sallust's effortlessly faulty geography. Sallust may well mean a different river entirely<sup>30</sup> — unless, of course, this expedition against an unnamed fortress should be viewed as an entirely literary production<sup>31</sup>. At any rate Marius takes this fortress, apparently Jugurtha's last, in what appears to be a literary set-piece (especially the story of the Ligurian who by chance — picking up snails along the foot of the sheer cliff — figured out how to climb it to get into the fortress)<sup>32</sup>.

To conclude this section: Events relating to a certain type of military action — „reduction“ of fortified places — have been selected and, in detail perhaps, tailored to leave the impression that Metellus was the inferior general.

## II. Genuine Battles

Sallust describes how Jugurtha avoided pitched battles whenever he could<sup>33</sup>. Both Marius and Metellus had to learn to deal with this; and both, naturally enough, dealt with it in exactly the same way: by laying garrison in town after town so as to deprive Jugurtha of bases systematically or to force him to fight in the open<sup>34</sup>. Since Jugurtha's army was no match for the Roman legions, the rugged topography of Numidia allowed him to wage war with a strategy of hit-and-run attacks, of raids and ambushes. Obviously, when circumstances favoured Jugurtha, he was willing to risk a pitched battle<sup>35</sup>; and did so in the campaigns of 109 to 107 on at least one occasion.

We read about this battle on the River Muthul in chapters 48–53. The site of the battle has never been convincingly located<sup>36</sup>, but given the imprecision of Sallust's geographical references, this does not entirely surprise. According to Sallust, Jugurtha had chosen the site particularly well. In the full knowledge that the topographical

<sup>30</sup> Thus e.g. Sir Ronald Syme, *Sallust*, Berkeley 1964, 147–148. Cf. Paul (n. 16) 230.

<sup>31</sup> I do not know if someone else has considered this radical step. Let us merely note: the geographical detail given for this „fortress without a name“ does not encourage confidence, nor do the literary touches in the story (see below, next note).

<sup>32</sup> One of many examples of similar stories: In Herodotus, I 84, tells how Cyrus the Great captured Sardis, a city which was untakeable because its walls were protected by a magic charm since King Meles had carried around the wall the lion-cub which his concubine had borne him. Of course he omitted to carry the cub along one part of the wall; at precisely this spot (a sheer drop) a Mardian soldier in Cyrus's army saw a Lydian soldier, who had lost his helmet, climb down and back up. The Mardian noted how the Lydian had done this and so the Persians took Sardis. N.b. that in Sallust the soldier is also identified by ethnicon — and in both cases it refers to a people dwelling in a mountainous region. (For the Ligurian see H. U. Instinsky, *Sallust und der Ligurer (Bellum Iugurthinum 93/94)*, *Hermes* 86 (1958) 502–504; for the literary permeation of the story see esp. H. A. Gärtner (n. 9) 458–462 esp. 462: „die Erzählung [ist] ... ganz von der Kunst der dramatischen hellenistischen Geschichtsschreibung geprägt.“) Cf. also H. C. Avery, *Marius Felix (Sallust, Jug. 92–94)*, *Hermes* 95 (1967) 324–330 (who also, 327, views Herodotus' narration of the taking of Sardis as a comparandum).

<sup>33</sup> For straightforward passages see e. g. 56, 1; hence Metellus' misunderstanding of Jugurtha's plan at the Muthul (50, 1); cf. 61, 1 and 89, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Metellus: 66, 1; Marius: 89, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Sallust explicitly says this of Jugurtha at 61, 1.

<sup>36</sup> See Paul (n. 16) 144–147 with references to further literature. Whence Paul takes his confidence (147) that Sallust's rendering derives entirely from an eye-witness account, I do not know.

details cannot be proved accurate, Sallust's description of the battleground follows (48, 3–4):

The River Muthul ran parallel to a mountain chain at some nineteen miles' remove. Between river and mountains lay a plain. Perpendicular to river and mountains ran a chain of hills (schematically: an Aitch). Metellus entered the plain from a pass through the chain of mountains, marching in front of and parallel to the chain of hills. Jugurtha lay in wait behind that same chain of hills. We are therefore watching Metellus walk into a trap. To Metellus' credit, he does realise Jugurtha is about to spring some sort of attack. On the other hand, as Sallust very clearly tells us, Metellus misjudged Jugurtha's intentions:

*sed ubi Numidas quietos neque colli degredi animaduortit, ueritus ex anni tempore et inopia aquae, ne siti conficeretur exercitus, Rutilium legatum cum expeditis cohortibus et parte equitum praemisit ad flumen, uti locum castris antecaperet, existumans hostis crebro impetu et transuorsis proeliis iter suorum remortaturos et, quoniam armis diffiderent, lassitudinem et sitim militum temptaturos* (50, 1).

But when [Metellus] noticed that the Numidians lay quiet and did not come down from the hill, on account of the time of year as well as the lack of water he was afraid that the army might be overwhelmed by thirst. So he sent [P.] Rutilius [Rufus] ahead to the river with the lightly armed auxiliaries and with part of the cavalry in order to occupy in advance a site for the camp — on the assumption that the enemy would try to delay his march with frequent ambushes and attacks on the flank and, because they shrank from direct fighting, would try to make use of the soldiers' weariness and thirst.

Unbeknownst to Metellus, Jugurtha in fact intended a full-scale assault. As soon as Metellus' rearguard had passed, Jugurtha despatched a contingent to the defile through which Metellus had entered the plain to cut off any retreat in that direction (50, 3). By sending Rutilius to the river in advance, Metellus actually improved the chances of success for Jugurtha's attack — he had separated a portion of his army from the rest and had sent it ahead for no military purpose, or rather for a military purpose which the enemy's plan rendered useless in advance.

Now the Romans did win this battle; and Sallust makes very clear what favoured them (52, 2: *Metello uirtus militum erat, aduersus locum*, „in Metellus' favour was the quality of his soldiers, though the battlefield was against him“) and what favoured the Numidians (52, 2: *Jugurthae alia omnia praeter milites opportuna*, „everything“ — including, obviously, the battlefield — „spoke in Jugurtha's favour — with the exception of his soldiers“). In other words Metellus has walked open-eyed into a trap; has allowed the enemy to dictate the battlefield; has misjudged the enemy's intentions; but is saved in the end by his troops' superior quality. This is the one actual battle fought by Metellus of which Sallust informs us; and we do not see Metellus as a good general in it. Instead we see Jugurtha coming very close to evening the odds by good pre-battle generalship.

Now Jugurtha never tricks Marius into fighting on terms disadvantageous to the Romans. The one time Jugurtha did try to lure Marius into fighting on his terms — with a confusing attack near Cirta designed to get Marius to divide his troops into several units —, Marius figures it out and stays put (101, 1–2). When we do find Marius fighting against Jugurtha just before and again after this incident, we read comments such as (of a surprise attack by Marius on Jugurtha’s camp):

*denique omnes fusi fugatique arma et signa militaria pleraque capta, pluresque eo proelio quam omnibus superioribus interempti* (99, 3)

Finally all [of the enemy] were confounded and fled, and more standards and arms were captured, and more [enemies] killed in this battle than in all earlier ones.

Or (after a description of the utter devastation wrought by the Romans against the Numidians on the battlefield):

*post ea loci consul haud dubie iam uictor peruenit in oppidum Cirtam* (102, 1)

After the events at this place the consul [= Marius] arrived in the town of Cirta, already, with scarcely a doubt, a victor.

Steidle has rightly emphasised the importance of these passages in this section as expressing Sallust’s judgement on Marius’ military ability,<sup>37</sup> which clearly exceeds Metellus’.<sup>38</sup>

Rarely do we have any independent reportage on events of this war against which to check Sallust, but as regards Metellus’ campaigns the *Periocha* of Livy notes: *Q. Caecilius Metellus cos. duobus proeliis Iugurtham fudit, totamque Numidiam uastauit*<sup>39</sup>; „Q. Caecilius Metellus, consul, defeated Jugurtha in two battles and laid all Numidia waste.“ Which was the second battle? Sallust tells us of only one<sup>40</sup>; Livy apparently recounted two which went beyond the mere skirmishes and ambushes and takings of innumerable little towns. Other selections of material could obviously be made; we have no idea which battles Livy viewed as important and how Metellus appeared in them. Eutropius even speaks of *uarii proelii* in which Metellus defeated Jugurtha!<sup>41</sup> One thing, however, remains clear: Sallust has carefully selected one battle (and possibly arranged the details thereof — we have no way of telling) to make a point.

<sup>37</sup> Steidle (n. 9) 81.

<sup>38</sup> On the comparison of Metellus with Marius in these battle descriptions see also P. Fiedler, *Die beiden Überfallsschlachten auf Metellus und Marius im Bellum Iugurthinum des Sallust*, WS 78 (1965) 108–127. We are in agreement in that Metellus and Marius are being compared, but in little else.

<sup>39</sup> Livy, *Periocha*, LXV; cf. Orosius, *Aduersum paganos*, V 15, 7 (cited below), and Velleius Paterculus, II 11, 2.

<sup>40</sup> W. Schur, *Sallust als Historiker*, Stuttgart 1934, 120, asserts that the second battle was a „Reitergefecht“ at the beginning of the year 108 — I imagine he means the attack of Numidian cavalry in Metellus’ service on Vaga (68).

<sup>41</sup> Eutropius, IV 27, 1.



## III. Negotiations for Jugurtha's Surrender

Given the type of warfare being waged, we should not feel surprised that both Metellus and Marius attempted to achieve Jugurtha's surrender through negotiation, whether by himself (subjective genitive) or through others (objective genitive). On several occasions we see Metellus carrying out such negotiations. The first time comes at the very beginning of Metellus' activity in Numidia. Jugurtha has sent envoys to Metellus who promptly (in Sallust's version of the story) attempts to turn the envoys against Jugurtha; what will it take for them to deliver Jugurtha — alive, or if not possible, then dead — up to him (46, 3–4)? Nothing comes of this first attempt. After Metellus defeats Jugurtha at the River Muthul but is forced by Jugurtha to break off the siege of Zama, he makes approaches to Bomilcar, a confidant of Jugurtha's. Bomilcar then attempts to persuade Jugurtha to perform *deditio* (again<sup>42</sup>) (61–62).

On Sallust's presentation of events — and for once we can confirm it; see below — Jugurtha did perform the action — after the *deditio*, the *dediticius*, would normally be asked to hand over arms and whatever else the general, to whom he had surrendered himself and his country, might demand<sup>43</sup>. This does occur — Metellus demands twohundredthousand pounds of silver, all Jugurtha's elephants, and a certain number of horses and arms (62, 5). Jugurtha gives this. Then (*quae postquam sine mora facta sunt*, „after these things had been done without delay“) Metellus asks for the surrender of all deserters (62, 6). They too are given. Then (*ubi armis uirisque et pecunia spoliatus est*, „when [Jugurtha] was stripped of arms and men and money“), Metellus demands that Jugurtha come to Tisidium (62, 8). This time Jugurtha demurs. Delays ensue; Jugurtha begins the war anew; the Senate assigns to Metellus the province of Numidia (62, 9–10).

We possess an important parallel account in Cassius Dio, who tells us that Metellus made his demands singly, i. e. one by one: *πολλὰ καθ' ἑν ἕκαστον ὡς καὶ μόνον ἐπέταξε*, „[Metellus] imposed [on Jugurtha] many demands, one by one, as if each one were the last.“<sup>44</sup> This tallies exactly with Sallust's version which also states that the demands were made *seriatim*. Since Cassius' is an account which is rabidly pro-Metellus<sup>45</sup> and unlikely to owe anything to Sallust, we can probably accept this detail as genuine. It is as though Metellus were trying to reel Jugurtha in slowly because he knew that his catch would snap the line if he tried to pull it in too quickly. And still Jugurtha wrenched himself free at the last second.

<sup>42</sup> Jugurtha had performed *deditio* once before (29).

<sup>43</sup> On *deditio*: D. Nörr, *Aspekte des römischen Völkerrechts* (ABAW 101), München 1989; E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, Oxford 1958, 4–7. For discussion with regard to Jugurtha's specific case K. von Fritz, „Sallust und das Verhalten der römischen Nobilität zur Zeit der Kriege gegen Jugurtha (112–105 v. Chr.),“ in: V. Pöschl, *Sallust* (Wege der Forschung 94), Darmstadt 1970, 174–188; Steidle (n. 9) 45–47 (against von Fritz); H. W. Ritter, *Rom und Numidien. Untersuchungen zur rechtlichen Stellung abhängiger Könige*, Lüneburg 1987, 106–109.

<sup>44</sup> Cassius Dio, XXVI, fr. 89, 1 Boissevain.

<sup>45</sup> Thus much is made of Marius' alleged rabble-rousing and his allegedly seditious behaviour towards Metellus. Cf. Velleius Paterculus, II 11.

After the wearying campaigns of the year 108 Metellus goes into winter quarters near Cirta. Once again he tries to negotiate Jugurtha's surrender (83). Sallust — and this we cannot confirm — gives us an ulterior motive for Metellus' activity, a motive which applies only to these negotiations and not to the earlier ones. Marius, much to Metellus' annoyance, has not only won the consulate, but Numidia has been assigned to him as his province by extraordinary decision of the people (82, 2). Metellus, according to Sallust, refuses to do work for which another will take the credit (*quia suiltitiae uidebatur alienam rem periculo suo curare*, „as it seemed a fool's errand to do another's work while bearing all the risks oneself“ — 83, 1). Metellus accordingly negotiates with Jugurtha only for appearance' sake so as to cause a hiatus in the war. Since these negotiations are a sham, they naturally lead to nothing.

We need carefully to separate Sallust's interpretation from the facts he mentions — that Metellus negotiated with Jugurtha from Sallust's imputed motive. First, Sallust sees nothing wrong with Metellus' previous negotiations. Second, Metellus is in winter quarters anyway though Sallust will not say so specifically (cf. 61, 2 when Metellus pulls back to the province of Africa to go into quarters for the winter of 109 to 108 — Sallust has no objection to Metellus' intrigues with Bomilcar to get Jugurtha to surrender during that winter). Exactly what fighting does Sallust expect Metellus to carry on while in winter quarters? Sallust's interpretation does not fit the actual situation which he has described — a sure sign with Sallust that not only is the fact genuine, but it also suggests an interpretation (in this case: negotiation as usual) which runs counter to Sallust's thesis. Third, Marius too will negotiate for Jugurtha's surrender when he goes into winter quarters later on. Why should things be different only for Metellus' negotiations during the winter of 108 to 107? In the next section we will see why Sallust felt he needed to deviate from his presentation of Metellus' previous and Marius' later negotiations for Jugurtha's surrender.

To return: when Marius takes over in 107, the war resumes in earnest. The taking of Capsa and the fortress without a name on the Muluccha we have already discussed. After various campaigns Marius proceeds towards winter quarters (97, 3; cf. 100, 1, 103, 1). Jugurtha and Bocchus carry out an attack on Marius which fails (97, 3–99). Marius continues his march towards Cirta with the enemy nearby (100). However, after attempts to lure Marius into a trap meet with no success (101, 1–2), Jugurtha decides on another attack which Marius again beats off (101, 3–11). Marius finally arrives in Cirta and shortly thereafter negotiations for Jugurtha's surrender begin between Marius and Bocchus (102). This time the negotiations — L. Cornelius Sulla functions as mediator<sup>46</sup> — lead to Jugurtha's being handed over to the Romans. Jugurtha is brought to Rome and the war ends (103–114). Under Marius' command what Metellus failed at thrice succeeds on the first try.

The point Sallust is trying to make emerges clearly.

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<sup>46</sup> Sulla's rôle introduces another thesis of Sallust's, having to do this time with Marius' and Sulla's later rivalry. Treatment of this here would lead us too far astray.

## IV. The Position of Jugurtha at the Beginning of 107

We have now had occasion to compare Metellus with Marius under three separate heads — always being careful to realise that we are seeing the two generals side-by-side only as Sallust wishes us to see them. The few instances where we could independently control Sallust's information suggested that Sallust sometimes selects information to make his point and occasionally even improves it; we have also seen the common Sallustian trick of stating an event and then imposing an interpretation on it which does not necessarily proceed from it. We have seen (as Sallust wished us to see) that Metellus is inferior in every respect in the comparison of the capture of Thala with that of Capsa; we have seen Metellus in only one true battle and there seen him out-generaled by Jugurtha (whom everything favoured except the poor quality of his soldiers); we have seen Metellus fail thrice at ending the war through negotiation whereas under Marius' command this succeeds without need of repetition. These are Sallust's arguments for his thesis.

Let us now look at the position of Jugurtha at the end of the year 108, Metellus' last year of command in Numidia in order to see if Sallust's thesis fits the facts he has mentioned that bear on this issue. Sallust has told us that Metellus controls Vaga, Cirta, and Thala<sup>47</sup>. We must presume he also controlled Zama<sup>48</sup>. Metellus has, Sallust tells us, placed garrisons in many of the Numidian towns<sup>49</sup>. What exactly of Numidia Jugurtha still possesses is hardly clear. When he appears in Numidia at all, he is leading a raid (88, 3 — early during Marius' tenure in 107). We can even confirm Metellus' general control of Numidia from the Livian tradition, reflected in the *Periocha* and Orosius, *uidelicet*, that Metellus was ranging across all Numidia at will by this time<sup>50</sup>. Furthermore, Jugurtha has, according to Sallust and independently confirmed, lost much of his treasure and military equipment in the course of the *deditio* at the end of 109<sup>51</sup>. Sallust mentions as Jugurtha's chief supports in 108 the Gaetulians who live in the desert to the South of Numidia proper<sup>52</sup>. Jugurtha is also already trying to persuade Bocchus, the King of Mauretania to the West, to enter the war (80, 3–81). Some of Metellus' negotiations at the end of 108 in fact aim at preventing Bocchus from aiding Jugurtha (83, 1). On Sallust's own presentation of events, when we look behind that interpretation of Metellus' and

<sup>47</sup> See above to n. 21.

<sup>48</sup> See above to Nn. 21–26.

<sup>49</sup> See above n. 13.

<sup>50</sup> A significant difference may also emerge out of Metellus' choice of winter quarters: in 109–108 he wintered in the province of Africa; in 108–107 in Cirta.

<sup>51</sup> See above to Nn. 43–45.

<sup>52</sup> 80, 1–2: *Jugurtha ... per magnas solitudines ... pervenit ad Gaetulos, genus hominum ferum incultumque ... eorum multitudinem in unum cogit ac paulatim consuefacit ordines habere, signa sequi, imperium observare, item alia militaria facere*, „Jugurtha ... crossed enormous deserts and came to the Gaetulians, a wild and uncivilised race of men ... he gathered together a great number of them into one body and little by little accustomed them to maintaining ranks and files, to following signals, to observing orders, to doing all the other things pertaining to an army.“ From Sallust's presentation of events it would seem that Jugurtha barely has an army left with which to oppose Metellus and accordingly must train a new one from the tribesmen far away in the South.

Marius' campaigns which is suggested to us by the selection and arrangement of details, it emerges that Metellus, first, controls the better part of Numidia and, second, has slowly deprived Jugurtha of Numidians as troops — Jugurtha has to raise a new army from the Gaetulians and to make an alliance with Bocchus, King of Mauretania, in order to be able to carry on the war. In other words Metellus' garrisoning of towns has slowly borne fruit — Jugurtha scarcely has any opportunities left to levy troops within Numidia itself. The one thing which yet eludes Metellus is the person of Jugurtha himself whom Metellus has for two years been trying by hook or crook to get.

On the basis of these circumstances, as Sallust presents them to us, we can now see why it became so important for Sallust to impute an ulterior motive for Metellus' negotiations in the winter of 108 to 107. Let us simply ask the question: Had Metellus managed to achieve Jugurtha's surrender through negotiation at the end of 108, what would Marius have had to do in 107? The question only needs to be asked in order to see what the real reason behind Metellus' negotiations during the winter of 108 to 107 was — depending on our view of Metellus, either to end the war himself or, if that were not incentive enough, to end it before Marius arrived.

Because influential circles at Rome more or less concluded that Metellus really had won the war, Metellus celebrated a triumph in Rome in 106 and received the *agnomen* Numidicus. Although Jugurtha was still at large, the war was, according to this line of thinking, for all intents over. This conclusion Sallust wishes us not to draw. The one fact, militating against this conclusion, which Sallust has to work with, is the failure to capture Jugurtha — the story of this not surprisingly dominates the final thirteen chapters of the book. By clever selection and tailoured presentation of material, however, Sallust can build on this. By omitting to speak of Zama's eventual capture or capitulation, he can make the situation regarding this town appear unresolved and dwell on a failure of Metellus'. He can show us Metellus and Marius in counterpoint to make Marius seem the superior commander. He can tell of a victory by Metellus, while highlighting Metellus' deficiencies as a commander. He can repeatedly tell of fruitless negotiations carried out by Metellus to get possession of Jugurtha's person — and let Marius (or Marius' operative) succeed at this on the first attempt. Metellus' triumph, of course, is not mentioned. Nor would anyone reading only Sallust even guess at it.

## V. Chronology<sup>53</sup>

The straightforward chronology of Metellus' campaigns requires no discussion: Sallust mentions winter quarters explicitly for the winter of 109 to 108 and indirectly for that of 108 to 107. Then Marius' campaigns begin. The first indication of time we

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<sup>53</sup> On the chronology see e. g. Paul (n. 16) 228–229; K. Vretska, *Zur Chronologie des Bellum Jugurthinum*, *Gymnasium* 60 (1953) 339–343; R. Weynand, *Marius*, 14, *RE Suppl.* VI 1381. The main point of contention is whether the assault on the fortress without a name occurred in 106 (thus Weynand, Vretska) or during the winter of 107 to 106 (thus Paul). We have no way of telling as Sallust gives no indications of date or elapsed time; and the geography of the campaign as told by Sallust may contain errors anyway.

receive comes when Marius undertakes the assault on Capsa: the Summer is far advanced (90, 1). Then Marius marches on the fortress without a name; thereafter we hear how he goes into winter quarters (97, 3; 100, 1; 103, 1). Anyone simply reading Sallust would assume that this is the winter of 107 to 106; when Jugurtha's surrender takes place, it seems to be still the same winter. Only two specific military actions of Marius' are mentioned (as compared to several of Metellus'). The amount of space devoted to Marius' campaigns is far less than that devoted to Metellus' — we receive the impression that Marius fought for less time than his predecessor in the command.

And yet Marius did not return to Rome with Jugurtha in tow until Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> of 104. Marius spent three years in Numidia compared to Metellus' two. Sallust's blurring of the chronological framework serves one obvious purpose: it seems as though Marius has wrapped up the war with despatch just as he promised he would (64, 5; 65, 3; cf. 85, 48 [from Marius' speech, the whole of which exudes the confidence that he will end the war *sine die et mora*]). We saw in Section IV that Metellus might have ended the war already in 108 if his negotiations for Jugurtha's surrender had borne fruit; and that there seemed little for Marius to do except to lay hold of Jugurtha's person.

Marius cannot have carried out very many spectacular campaigns during his three years in command for if he had, Sallust would surely have informed us of them since any such campaigns would have reinforced what we have already seen to be Sallust's major theses in this regard. All that Marius did for three years was to pursue Metellus' policies of garrisoning towns, denying Jugurtha bases and supply, dealing as best as possible with Jugurtha's hit-and-run attacks from the deserts to the South and West, and negotiating for Jugurtha's surrender<sup>54</sup>. This Sallust, of course, cannot say; namely that for three years Marius waged a basically static war of garrison duty until Jugurtha finally was handed over to the Romans. But if Marius had done anything more spectacular than this, why should Sallust have suppressed it? or reduced it to the capture of two fortified places, one of which may be purely literary anyway? Why should he have fast-forwarded the chronology to make it appear that less than three years had elapsed? Why should he have been at such pains to deny that Metellus was negotiating for anything less than the war's end in the winter of 108 to 107? to select and to arrange events to make Metellus appear a far inferior general to Marius?

### Conclusion

It, however, remains a fact that Marius too celebrated a triumph for his campaign in Numidia — and this one Sallust does not fail to mention (114, 3)<sup>55</sup>; and that the

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<sup>54</sup> Steidle's counter-arguments ([n. 9] 80) I cannot understand. According to him Metellus wages a scorched-earth policy, but avoids the capture and destruction of well-fortified cities. Steidle does note that according to Sallust Metellus did attack two well-fortified places and comments: „nur im Falle von Thala und Zama ... weicht [Metellus] von diesem Prinzip ab.“ Marius, however, according to Steidle (80) turns his attention „ausdrücklich und von vornherein“ to fortified cities and either destroys or occupies them. On Sallust's testimony Marius attacked exactly two well-fortified positions (Capsa and the fortress without a name). The number which for Metellus constitutes an exception, for Marius constitutes a rule. Steidle's other arguments in this context are somewhat worse.

<sup>55</sup> Also: Plutarch, *Marius*, 12, 2; Velleius Paterculus, II 12, 2.

reputation which Marius gained from his campaigns in Numidia<sup>56</sup> served him as a springboard to greater things during the invasion of the Cimbri and the Teutones in the following years. Obviously, a considerable element at Rome viewed Marius (and not Metellus) as the victor in the war against Jugurtha. It is this opinion which Sallust is trying to undergird with apparently reasoned historical argumentation while, of course, undermining the other<sup>57</sup>.

Sallust's intentional distortions and artful obfuscations occasionally provide us with an opportunity to glimpse behind his text to see the actual framework of accepted facts in the tradition with which he was working. In particular we see what Sallust has to argue against:

- 1.) Metellus' driving Jugurtha from Numidia proper;
- 2.) Metellus' general control of Numidia proper;
- 3.) Metellus' inauguration of „war by garrison“;
- 4.) Metellus' success at denying Jugurtha opportunities to recruit Numidians;
- 5.) Metellus' patient use of negotiations which, with luck, might have ended the war before Marius even arrived in Numidia.

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<sup>56</sup> It may well be that Jugurtha with Bocchus' help was able to carry out a raid directed at Cirta (97–101) that was dangerous enough that beating it back justified the comment in the Livian *Periocha*, 66, *Jugurtha pulsus a C. Mario Numidia cum auxilio Bocchi Maurorum regis adiutus esset*, „Jugurtha was driven from Numidia by C. Marius after he had been aided by reinforcements from Bocchus, the King of the Maurians.“ Cf. Orosius, *Aduersum paganos*, V 15, 9–10; Florus, I 36, 15.

<sup>57</sup> M. Holroyd, *The Jugurthine War: Was Marius or Metellus the real Victor?*, JRS 18 (1928) 1–20, many years ago made a competent case for Metellus as victor.