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M.' CURIOUS DENTATUS AND THE PRAETOR'S RIGHT TO TRIUMPH*

This paper reexamines an old puzzle: what was the status of L. Caecilius Metellus Denter (cos. 284) when he met his death at the hands of Gauls before Arretium in 283, and what was the position of the man Polybius reports was chosen in his place, M.' Curius Dentatus (cos. 290)? It has long been recognized that we have two different and contradictory basic traditions on the Roman campaigns of 284-283 against the Gauls and Etruscans. Polybius' account (probably based directly on Fabius Pictor) differs in several important respects from what we may call the Livian tradition (represented by Periocha 12, as well as Florus, Eutropius and Augustine). A few other sources (most notably Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Appian) add some details pertaining to these years which are not easily reconciled with the Polybian and Livian versions, confusing matters further. Many scholars, starting with Mommsen, have attempted either to harmonize the very different chronologies and points of detail offered by our various accounts, or (more often) have tried to show the superiority of one tradition over the other.1 In my view, no scholar has yet offered a satisfactory solution to the

*I am indebted to Professor E. Badian, whose valuable advice and careful criticism have helped me a great deal in the preparation of this article. Responsibility for any shortcomings, however, is of course my own. – All dates are B.C.

central problems of M. Caecilius Denter's defeat and M.' Dentatus' command. Here, I argue that Polybius tells a coherent and plausible story – misunderstood in several essentials by almost all who have treated it – which Appian further elucidates. There is no compelling reason why a straightforward interpretation of Polybius' narrative should not receive our acceptance. Incidentally, I suggest that the praetor won the right to triumph not in the First Punic War (as is generally believed), but as early as the 280s, when M.' Curius Dentatus as praetor suffectus was awarded an ovatio. A new supplement should be added to our reconstruction of the triumphal Fasti.

I

Polybius (2.19.7-12), in his brief sketch of the history of Gallic movements against Rome,\(^2\) reports that, when ten years had elapsed after the battle of Sentinum (295), a large force of Gauls laid siege to Arretium. The Romans came to the aid of the town (which we can assume was friendly to them),\(^2\) and in the battle which ensued, a Lucius scripiwigas was defeated and killed. (We shall see that this man must be L. Caecilius Metellus Denter, who had been cos. 284.) In his place the Romans elected M.' Curius Dentatus (cos. 1 290) (Μάνων ἐπισκοτ- ἐστισθήν κίν Κόριου).\(^4\) Curius sent out legati to Gaul to treat for the return of the prisoners (i.e. the former troops of "Lucius"). When these legati were treacherously slain by the Gauls, the Romans immediately marched out into the field (τάν ἐν τοῖς Ἰρμάνοις ἐν χαρτε ἐσπρατευσαόμενοι). They were met by the Gallic tribe of the Senones, whom they soundly defeated: the Romans toûς ἐν πλειστον ἐπεκτείνουσι, τοῦς ἐν λοιπον ἔξεβαλον, τῆς ἐν χαρτε ἐρε- ντοπό πάσης έγκρατες. The Romans planted in the former territory of the Senones – what was to be Roman Picenum (Polyb. 2.21.7) – the colony of Sena, the first in Gaul.

It should be emphasised that Polybius does not state it was M.' Curius Dentatus who marched against the Senonian Gauls or planted the colony, an erroneous supposition which has caused much confusion.\(^5\) Nor does he date the foundation of Sena to this year: he says only that it was placed in the territory of the Senones once they were driven out. In Polybius' account, the revenge on the Senones is followed by a major success at Lake Vadimon over the Boii (who were alarmed at the fate of the Senones) and Etruscans (2.20.1-3 – no commander named). In the following year (τυ κατὰ πάσας ἐπισκοτυ – 2.20.4), the Romans inflicted a further – in fact, decisive – defeat on the Boii and Etruscans.\(^6\) This took place "in the third year before Pyrrhus crossed into Italy [i.e. spring 280] and in the fifth year before the destruction of the Gauls at Delphi [autumn 279]'" (2.20.6).

There are a number of problems which have been noted regarding the Polybian passage, apart from the question of the status of L. Caecilius and M.' Curius. First, Polybius' relative chronology. Polybius states διεσερνουμένον ἐν πάλι πάντοτε έτος δέκα (sc. after Sentinum in 295) παρεχθέντοις τοίον μετὰ μεγαλίας στρατας, πολιορκηθεὶ την 'Αριστίνων πόλειν. Walbank argues "the present reference to ten years...can be applied to the period 295-284, by the exclusion of both terms, but hardly to 295-283".\(^7\) The chronological phrase διεσερνουμένον... ἐτος occurs no place else in Polybius, so we have no real basis for comparison. But Walbank does have a point: prima factce, it does seem as though Polybius thought of Gauls arriving to besiege Arretium in 284.\(^8\) Nevertheless, as M.G. Morgan has pointed out, this does not necessarily mean L. Caecilius ὁ στρατηγός actually fell in that year.\(^9\) This possibility will receive further attention below (in Section II). Polybius however does seem to place Vadimon and the final peace with the Boii firmly in 283 and 282 respectively.\(^10\)

5 Rightly pointed out by Corbett 660-661.
6 Polyb. 2.20.4-5—no commander named; for the identity of the Roman general as Q. Aemilius (Papus) (cos. 282), see Dion. Hal. 19.13.1; cf. Front. Srr. 1.2.7 'Aemilius Paullus'. On this victory, see Morgan 314-315.
7 Commentary 1.188.
8 For διεσερνουμένον... πάλι πάντοτε ἐτος as denoting a ten year interval, reckoned exclusively from 295, see Morgan 320-321. One might adduce as a parallel for the Greek Appian's famous report of Sulla's reforms as dictator (BC 1.100.466): τοῦ δὲτ την τὴν αὐτής ἑδρεὺς ἐπισκοτυ λαξάσα, ἐπεὶ ἐτος διεσερνουμένος. Polybius probably would have said διεσερνουμένον... ἐτος if he wanted to denote consular year 285. Cf. e.g. immediately above the present Polybius passage, at 2.19.5: μετά τοῦ ἐδρεύτα (a Gallic tumulus of 299: see Liv. 10.10.12 with Walbank Commentary 1.27 'Aemilius Paullus'). On this victory, see Morgan 314-315.
9 Commentary 1.188.
10 Polybius' synchronism, see Walbank Commentary 1.190: "Pyrrhus' crossing was in Ol. 124.4 = 281/0 (in fact May 280), the Gallic destruction in Ol. 125.2 = 279/8 (probably autumn 279). On the reasonable assumption that consular years are equated with the Olympi­ ad year in which they begin, the peace with the Boii in 282 was, by inclusive reckoning,
Second, it is stated that the Romans sent legati to the Senonian Gauls to recover prisoners-of-war who were captured in the battle at Arretium, an attempt which has been criticized by Morgan as "very un-Roman." But we know little about Roman practice on the recovery of prisoners of war except through patrician sources giving exempla of Roman gravis in the Punic Wars (e.g. Liv. 22.58-61.10). It may be noted that Polybius makes no mention of a ransom or exchange.

Finally, in Per. 11 (which covered the years 292 to 285 or 284) we are told coloniae deductae sunt Castrum Sena Hadria. On the basis of the position of this notice in the Periocha – the last of a series of res externae – De Sanctis took the foundation of Sena to belong to the period 290-288; considering the evident scope of Livy Book 11, I would suggest that the date can be extended even further down. Yet it is a problem. Mommsen, who was struck by the fact that the mention of Sena in the Periocha followed a notice pertaining to the consulship of M.' Curius Dentatus in 290, went so far as to suggest that Curius' "Senonesieg" in Polybius must belong to this period as well. A good guess, but Polybius does not name Curius – or any other commander – as responsible for the "Senonesieg", just as he leaves the victor of Vadimon and the magistrate who defeated the Boii and Etruscans in 282 unnamed. I would maintain that these latter two issues – the slaughter of the legati and the foundation of Sena – are somewhat clarified by two fragmentary passages from Appian.

Two excerpts of Appian (Celt. 11.1-4 and Samn. 6.1-4, both from the Byzantine compilation "Concerning the Embassies") omit all mention of the death of L. Caecilius. (Of course, Appian may have recounted this disaster in passages now lost.) These summaries of Appian however do contribute some details pertaining to this very period which are not found in other authors. The slaughter of the legati is put in the context of an Etruscan war. The Romans sent legati to the towns of the Senones, an έλθος ἐνσωπονδόν ... 'Ρομαίοις, because they had furnished mercenaries to the Etruscans. It will be noticed that this is a different reason than the one Polybius offers for the sending of the envoys. The Gaul Britomaris (the name only here), who had lost his father in this war, killed the legates with his own hand.

The consuls of 283 immediately avenged this deed. First, (P.) Cornelius Dolabella (Dolabella) οὐτοί μύσοις ... ἐν δόθη πυθόμενος τὰ μὲν Τυρησίων ἐξεσάν (Samn.); this may indicate that the Senones' action took place at the beginning of the campaigning season. Dolabella marched through Sabine and Picentian territory, devastated the land of the Senones and killed "all the adult males". Dolabella tortured Britomaris, and (later) led him in a triumph (Appian is the only source to mention that Dolabella gained this honor).

When the Senonian Gauls who were serving in Etruria as mercenaries heard of the disaster which befell their homeland, they convinced the Etruscans to march against Rome. After various mishaps (πολλάκις μεταχείρησεν – Samn.; cf. Óστερναν – Celt.), Dolabella's consular colleague (Cn.) Domitius (Calvinus) won a victory against the Gallic component of this joint force. The Senones, who by now had no homes to go to, had rashly attacked the consul. Many were killed (Samn.), and some after their defeat committed suicide (Celt.). In this way, Appian tells us, the Romans exacted vengeance for the murder of their envoys (καὶ διὴ μὲν ἤρθε παρανομίας ἐς προσβείς ἐργέτον Σένωναν – Celt. 11.4, Samn. 6.4).

Neither the first of these Roman victories (that of Dolabella) nor the second (that of Cn. Domitius Calvinus) can be equated with the great battle at Lake Vadimon against the Etruscans and Boii (Polyb. 2.20.2). The first victory should correspond with Polybius' statement that, after the massacre of the Roman embassay, the Romans marched out, killed the majority of Senones, and drove the rest from their land (2.19.10). This campaign of P. Cornelius Dolabella is not "simply a confusion with the battle of Vadimon." Dionysius of Halicarnassus (19.13.1, a retrospective notice) also knows of Dolabella's "quick strike" expedition: δέ ...διακεκάκαν Κελτῶν έθνος δόν τούς καλυμένους Σένωνας ἐξήρθε τοὺς 'Ρομαίων ὀνόματος πολεμῶν ἑπάνως ήσσον κατεσφάζασιν. The mention of the Senones as "most bitter enemies of the Romans" may mean that Dionysius also regarded this tribe as responsible for the murder of the envoys.

The second victory of 283, that of Cn. Domitius Calvinus over the Senonian mercenaries in Etruscan service, is found only in Appian. It is not immediately clear what Appian is talking about. Some scholars have (wrongly) thought Appian is referring to Vadimon. In Polybius' account, the Roman attack on the land of the Senones is followed directly by their major success at Lake Vadimon over the Boii and Etruscans (2.20.1-3). Though Polybius does not name the Roman commander in this battle, later tradition unanimously ascribes the victory to P. Dolabella (Flor. 1.8.21; Dio fr. 39.2; Eutrop. 2.10 'Cn'. Corneliu Dolabela). Dolabella must have hurried back from the land of the Senones to return to his original mission, a campaign against the Etruscans.

I would suggest that Cn. Domitius Calvinus' conflict with the Senonian Gauls belongs to the period immediately following Vadimon, but still in his consular year of 283. The way the Constantinian excerptor has edited Appian's story in our Samnite and Gallic History fragments has confused scholars. It must be recognized that the excerptor is interested in showing in both places only how the
Romans requited the Senones for their crime against the legates. He alludes to the much more consequential Roman victory over Etruscan Gauls at Vadimon with the simple phrase polion metoicov (Samn.1).

A fragment from Dio (fr. 38.1) may help support this interpretation. Dio describes in detail the decision of an (unspecified) multinational enemy force to take flight: "δς εδων οι ένασται και έτερον στρατηγον έλλαντα, του μεν κοινον της στροτείας σφαν ύμελησαν, της δ ε ίδιαν έκστασιν στοιχηρών διεσκόταν," etc. It has long been thought that οι ένασται are the Etruscans, Boii and Senones, at the time of Vadimon: this must be correct. I would further suggest that the έτερος στρατηγος is the consul Cn. Domitius, who had now moved into Etruria (from a defensive position near Rome?) to support his colleague P. Cornelius Dolabella. It is not impossible that, after defeat at Vadimon and the splintering of the coalition (described here by Dio), a band of desperate Senones attacked Domitius - with dire results.

One last point. Appian's statement that the Senones were an ενυος έστατον ... Ρομαίοι (Celt. 11.1; Samn. 6.1; cf. Polyb. 2.19.9 παρασπονδισταντες) at the time of the sending of the legates may help in our attempt to resolve the problem of the foundation of Sena. The relative date provided by the Livian Periocha 11 - the early 280s - is unlikely to be wrong. Long ago, De Sanctis offered a reconstruction of these events, which I find entirely convincing. The initial founding of the colony may have been in a restricted area of land following the conclusion of the Third Samnite War (when the Senones assumedly were made έστατον). The colony will have been strengthened, with the incorporation of larger portions of the land of the Senones, following the events of 283. Polybius is correct in placing the confiscation of the ager Gallicus where he does, but mistaken in his belief that this later date was the actual occasion of the foundation of Sena.17

We may now turn to the much more succinct Livian tradition. Periocha 12 and two late sources (Orosius 3.22.12-14; Augustine Civ. Dei 3.17) describe two Roman disasters which occurred in quick succession. In 283 (Oros. Domitio et Dolabella consulis) the Lucani, Bruttians, and Samnites as well as the Etruscans and Senones were in arms (Oros., Aug.). When the Romans sent an embassy to beg off the Gauls (Oros. Romani ad exorandos Gallos misere legatos - the location is not stated), they slaughtered the Roman envoys (Per; Oros.; Aug.). On account of this crime war was declared on the Gauls (Per) and a L. Caecilius praetor ob ulciscendam legationem necem et comprimendum tumultum hostium cum exercitu missius (Orosius 3.22.13; Per. and Aug. also call him praetor). This


17 Storia II 2 358 and n. 1 and 375; cf. Walbank Commentary I 189. Salmon’s (25) and Corbett’s (657 n. 3) criticisms of De Sanctis are not compelling, as Morgan (314f.) shows.

L. Caecilius was cut down by the Senones (Per.), or a combination of Etruscans and Senones (Oros., Aug.) along with 13,000 of his soldiers and seven military tribunes (Oros., Aug.).

There are few points of contact between the Polybian and Livian versions of the Gallic campaigns of 284-283. Both traditions must refer to the death of the same Roman commander (presumably L. Caecilius Metellus Denter, the cos. 284, the only L. Caecilius known to be active at that time) and the same occasion. Our Latin sources (two epitomes, Florus and Eutropius) however know of only one victory in 283, at Vadimon over Gauls and Etruscans. The Roman commander in this battle is said to be P. Cornelius Dolabella (cos. 283) (Flor. 1.8.21; Eutrop. 2.10, with wrong praenomen); Orosius and the Periocha do not even bother to mention it. My reconstruction of our Greek sources (Polybius and Appian, with Dionysius) adds two more Roman successes. The slaughter of the legates is quickly avenged (by P. Cornelius Dolabella – Appian and Dionysius), thanks to a victory over the Senonian Gauls in their own territory. In addition, Appian seems to have related that Dolabella’s consular colleague, Cn. Domitius, defeated a band of Senones after the battle of Vadimon. The fact that the Latin epitomes do not tell us of the retaliatory expedition of Dolabella into the territory of the Senones or the presence of Domitius in Etruria certainly should not lead us to reject the evidence we do have on these events from the Greek authors, which may well be reliable.

II

Morgan’s thorough but very different analysis of these events expends particular effort on elucidating the status of L. Caecilius Metellus Denter at the time of his death. One old view - which has had a long life - is that Metellus fell as a consul, and so in 284. Yet it is apparent that Metellus cannot have been consul when he fell in battle. His death is not recorded in the Fasti, and there is no place for a suffect in the entry for 284;18 what is more, the Periocha, Orosius and

18 The first to articulate this view was Mommsen, in RF II 367: "in der That muß er vielmehr Consul gewesen sein und auch M. Curius dasselbe Amt bekloffen haben". Mommsen is followed by M. in RE s.v. Caecilius 92 and Curius 9; De Sanctis Storia II 2 376 n. 2; Beloch RG 133; Salmon 296f.; Walbank Commentary I 188; R.M. Errington, JRS 57 (1967) 101; cf. Harris Rome 81. It is interesting that Mommsen seems to have changed his mind on this (St.-R. II 195 n. 1): "im J. 469 [=283] focht der Prator L. Caecilius bei Arezzo gegen die unvermutet anrückenden Gallier."

19 MRR I 188 n. 1. Morgan (312 with n. 1) points up two apparent exceptions to the regular practice of the Fasti to mention deaths in office (see the list in Inscr. lat. XIII 1 614), one of which does not convince: there was a tradition that P. Decius Mus, cos. 279, survived his consular year (MRR I 192 with 193 n. 1). I do grant, however, that the omission in the Fasti of the death of C. Atilius Regulus as cos. 225 (Morgan’s other example) is an error. Other instances can be adduced, namely Sex. Quinctilius, cos. 453; L. Genucius, cos. 362; L.
Augustine all term L. Caecilius praetor. Morgan thus rightly asks "how it was that Metellus rather than one of the consuls for 283 should have fought the Gauls at Arretium in that year." On the basis of a close examination of Polybius' terminology for magistrates with imperium (as well as a strong disbelief that Metellus could possibly hold this command as a praetor), Morgan concludes that Polybius' term στρατηγής must be understood as pro cos. This assertion, not ironclad even on the basis of Polybius' regular usage, is flatly contradicted by the Livian evidence. Morgan is misguided in his appeal to the now well-known principle that "Livy and the sources which follow or epitomize his work... show no...precision about praetor, using it of men who in fact were praetors or proprae­ tors or proconsuls." Although it is true that praetors and prorogued praetors invested with consular imperium are sometimes simply termed praetores in

Aemilius Paullus, cos. II 216; and M. I. Juvenalis Thalna, cos. 163. This particular failing of the Fasti was noticed even in antiquity: a later hand has corrected the initial omission of the death in office of Q. Cassius Longinus, cos. 164. But all known suffect consuls find a place in the Fasti, with only one possible exception: a Sp. Furius, said by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (10:53.6) to be suffect (briefer?) for 453 (the antiquarians who compiled the list must have rejected him). If the Romans indeed elected a suffect to replace L. Caecilius Metellus Denter (as Polyb. 2.19.8 states), it would be most surprising for the Fasti to miss a consular suffect. (The Fasti of course pay no attention to praetors or praetores suffect.) The quotations which follow are from Morgan 322-325.

20 The quotations which follow are from Morgan 322-325.
21 Morgan 322: "when, at 2.19.8, he terms Metellus Denter στρατηγής alone, without prior warning or further qualification, he cannot possibly have thought or meant the reader to think Metellus a praetor. He must have understood him to be a consul or proconsul. And since Metellus' defeat and death are best placed in 283, we have excellent reason to maintain that in this passage Polybius is talking about a proconsul.

22 Morgan 322: "normally, [Polybius] uses στρατηγής alone to refer to a praetor only when the man in question is active in Rome" (examples follow). Yet at 6.53.7 (a description of the wearing of imagines by actors representing deceased magistrates in the funeral procession), στρατηγής is used as the generic term for praetor, not just city praetor. In addition, at 21.10.4 L. Aemilius Regillus (pr. Fleet 190) is termed στρατηγὸς τοῦ Ρωμαίων; Morgan states "though this ought to denote a consul or proconsul, Polybius has provided the information proving this not to be! the case only two chapters earlier (21.8.1)." Yet 21.8.1 provides no information other than the fact that L. Regillus and Eumenes received a letter from the consul L. Cornelius Scipio and (his legatus) F. Cornelius Scipio—hardly explicit, and not necessarily "two chapters earlier", if we had the full text of Polybius (rather than just the fragments of this book). Morgan however does make a valid point regarding Polybius' narrative of the Gallic campaigns (318): "we have to remember that his account of this war was no more than a digression from his main theme, so that there are no grounds for thinking he used another source as a control on Fabius' account in the way he employed Philinus in his narrative of the First Punic War...[Fabius] undoubtedly constructed his account of this period capitatively, and so almost certainly devoted no more space to it than does Polybius." If Morgan's explanation is correct, this may explain Polybius' use of στρατηγής with no qualifying adjective: his source (in Greek) may have offered him nothing more.

Livy, there is no real parallel in Livy for a prorogued consul (holding consular imperium) being called praetor. Morgan is probably correct in his view that Metellus was given a command in the area of Arretium as consul in 284, when the Gauls made their inroad, πολιορκήσαντες τὴν Αρετάνιαν τοῦ πόλιν (Polyb. 2.19.7). Metellus seems to have failed to bring the Gauls to a decisive battle within his actual year of office; I would suggest that he then was elected praetor for 283, probably in absentia. This finds an exact parallel in the case of Ap. Claudius Pulcher, cos. 296 and elected praetor in absentia for 295 (Liv. 10.22.9), who stayed in his consular provincia of Etruria until relieved by one of the consuls of that year (10.24.18; 25.9). As in 295, the Romans faced a war on several fronts: Orosius (3.22.12) and Augustine (Civ. Dei 3.17) relate that in 283 the Romans were threatened by Lacaniants, Bruttians and Sannites, as well as Etruscans and Senones. We obviously cannot tell whether in 283 the Senate planned for L. Caecilius Metellus to remain in Etruria until affairs in that provincia were settled, or decided that one of the consuls of the year should supersede him in due course.

T.R.S. Broughton and R. Develin have suggested that L. Metellus was praetor, and not pro cos., in 283; yet neither envisages election in absentia. Develin in fact takes Orosius' phrase L. Caecilius praetor...missus to mean he was sent from Rome: "if Metellus was indeed sent to the front, he had been in Rome and could have been elected." I do not think that this is the correct interpretation of

23 Especially the praetors invested with consular imperium who served as governors of the Spanish provinces in the second century: see A.H. McDonald, JRS 53 (1953) 143-144; cf. R.E. Smith, Service in the Post-Marian Roman Army (Manchester 1958) 111.
24 At Liv. 30.43.9 praetor is used in its old sense of consul. Yet this is a conscious ritual archaism: Livy is reporting a senatus consultum of 201, made at the behest of the fetiales who were to arrange the peace treaty with Carthage. The language of the SC is clearly influenced by the formula of the fetiales, a survival (or more likely) an antiquarian reconstruction of the terminology of early Roman religion.
25 Morgan 324.
26 For a praetorship immediately following a consulship, note also M. Atilius Regulus cos. 294, pr. 293 (Liv. 10.45.4); L. Papirius Cursor cos. 293, pr. 292 (Liv. 10.47.5); and perhaps Q. Marcus Philippus cos. 281, pr. 7280 (Cass. Hem. fr. 21 Peter= Non. x.w. proletarii 94-95 L.; additional sources and discussion in O. Skutsch, The Annals of Q. Ennius (Oxford 1983) 337-338). Under the year 257 the Fasti triumph record that A. Atilius Calatinus (cos. 258) triumphed on 19 January pr. ex Sicilia de Poenis. If the entry is correct (it is accepted by both Degrassi Insct. Ital. XIII 154 and Broughton MRR I 208), this would give us not only another successive consulship and praetorship, but also the first example of a full praetorian triumph. I will argue in a future work that the report of Calatinus' triumph should be accepted: he received his triumph however not for his activities as praetor in 257 (an uneventful year), but for his successes of the previous year as consul, when he acted in conjunction with the pro cos. C. Aquilus Florus (cos. 259).
27 Broughton MRR I 189 n. 2; Develin 722.
the Orosius passage. The verb *mittere* is recognized in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* as sometimes having little more in force than *mandare*.28 At least in Livy, *mittere* seems to be used as a technical term for appointing a man as a commander against a specified enemy. It tells us nothing about where the appointee was. An episode from the Second Punic War in this very theater is instructive for this sense of *mittere*. In 208, C. Hostilius Tubulus (pr. urb. 209, pro pr. 208) and C. Terentius Varro (with a special grant of praetorian imperium) both operated in the same provincia, Etruria.29 In the arrangements for 207, Livy tells us C. Terentius Varro in Etruriam pro pr. missus ut ex ea provincia C. Hostilius Tarentum...iret (27.35.2). As far as we can tell, C. Varro was already in this provincia (coincidentally, like Denter, at Arretium) at the beginning of the year and was not actually "sent" from Rome.30 Thus if *mittere*, in this (quasi-)archival style, simply means "designate as commander", then, even if it does imply "sending" him out, this is incidental. It is (in that case) not a matter of *mittere* normally meaning "send out" and sometimes not.

### III

Next, the problem of M.' Curius Dentatus. Scholars have been particularly imaginative in devising positions for him in the crisis of 284-283.31 Most recently, Morgan, in presenting his argument for Metellus as *pro cos*. In 283, was forced to dismiss Polybius' mention of M.' Curius Dentatus as due to an error on the part of Fabius Pictor.32 There is obviously no such thing as election of a suffect for a praetorship in this year.33 The usage occurs twice more in Livy, at 21.17.7 and 29.13.7.

30 The usage occurs twice more in Livy, at 21.17.7 and 29.13.7. The possibilities raised have been *cos. suff.* in 284 (Mommsen in RF II 366-367; Münzer RE x.r. Caecilius 92 col. 1213 and Curius 9 col. 1842; Beloch RG 454; Salmon 30 n. 36); *dict. 284* (Bechlo RG 454); *legatus* in 284 (Torelli Fontes 83); *pr. suff. 283* (Broughton MRR 1 188 with n. 2); and *tr. mil.* in 283 (Corbett 660).

31 The individual entries in the *Fasti triumphales* are usually two and sometimes three lines (sub annis 340, 326, 301, 299, 298, 295, 280, 278, 276, 275 (bis), 273, 272 (bis), 263, 260, 254 (bis), 241, 231, 197 etc.), but very rarely four (196 Ca. Cornelius Blasio) or five (222). Degrassi (Inscr. Ital. XIII I 545) suggests six possible triumphs and an ovatio (Curius’) which may belong to this period.

32 See Degrassi in Inscr. Ital. XIII I 22 on the triumphal Fasti. Note e.g. under 326 Q. Pabuliatus Philo, primus pro cos.; under 260 C. Duilius primus navalem...egit; and under 231 C. Papiatus Maso, primus in monte Albano.

33 Note M. Fabius Ambatus, who as *cos. in 360 is listed in the Fasti triumphales as ovatio de Hermecies, and as *cos. III in 354 (his next appearance in these Fasti) is reported to triumph II (cos. III) de Tiburtis.

34 Morgan 316 n. 4.

35 Mommsen in CIL 1 171; MRR I 184; cf. Torelli Fontes 58.
Degrassi, in a variation on this guess, speculates that Curius may have celebrated it as pro cos. in 289.38 These explanations are unconvincing. Two regular triumphs celebrated in the same year by the same man are rare enough, with only two known examples after Curius (who was the first to achieve such an honor) in 290.39 No magistrate in the Republic is known to have celebrated more than two in the same year, until Caesar did so as dictator in 46 (four), followed by Octavian in 29 (three).40

If M.' Curius Dentatus indeed had achieved the honor of two triumphs and an ovatio resulting from a single consular command, it is exactly the type of thing we would expect to be picked up somewhere in our sources: even the miserable Per. 11 duly notes the unusual item that Curius bis in eadem magistratu triumphavit. Another objection to this view is that there was probably no occasion for a campaign against the Lucanians in the period 290-289. The Lucanians were on the whole quiet (as far as our information goes) from 298 through the Third Samnite War, even supplying troops to the Roman war-effort (Liv. 10.33.1 – 294).41

Faced with these difficulties, Salmon42 conjectured that the report in the De vir. ill. of Curius’ ovatio de Lucanis “may be inexact.” On the basis of Polybius (2.19.8-9), he argues that Curius earned – as cos. suff. 284 – an ovatio de Senonibus et Etruscis! We need not seek such desperate remedies. The last item in Per. 11 mentions trouble with the Lucanians: res praeterea contra Vulsinenses gestas continet, item adversus Lucanos, contra quos auxilium Thurinis (thus Pighius; codices have Tyrreniis or Tyrrius) ferre pluceret. It is unfortunate that the phrase res praeterea...continet prevents us from dating this campaign relative to the chronology of events provided in the summary of Livy Book 11. It can have taken place anywhere in Book 11, which covers the period 292 down through perhaps 285 or 284 (Book 12 opens with the notice of L. Caecilius praetor, in 283).

There is some additional evidence to suggest that the Romans campaigned against the Lucanians in the mid-280s. Pliny the Elder tells us that the first perhaps 285 or 284 (Book 12 opens with the notice of L. Caecilius praetor, in 283).

For fighting against the Lucanians in 298, see the elogium of L. Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, cos. 298 (ILLRP 309, with Degrassi’s note); Front. Str. 1.6.1-2. Cf. Liv. 10.11.11-12.3, which speaks of a foedus in that year. There was some agitation in 296 (Liv. 10.18.8).

Salmon 30 with n. 35; cf. 31.

38 *Inscr. Ital.* XIII 1 545. Forni (207 with n. 5), who is inclined to doubt this notice, made the absurd conjecture that it should refer to the years when Curius held successive consulsips in 275 and 274—where the Fasti Triumphales are complete!

39 D. Junius Pera and N. Fabius Pictor both, as cosss. in 266 (Fasti triumph. ). Note also M. Claudius Marcellus as pro cos. in 211, who celebrated a triumph in monte Albanus followed by an ovatio (MRR 1274).

40 Sources in Degrassi *Inscr. Ital.* XIII 1 566-567; 568.

41 For fighting against the Lucanians in 298, see the elogium of L. Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, cos. 298 (ILLRP 309, with Degrassi’s note); Front. Str. 1.6.1-2. Cf. Liv. 10.11.11-12.3, which speaks of a foedus in that year. There was some agitation in 296 (Liv. 10.18.8).

42 Salmon 30 with n. 35; cf. 31.
celebrated may even point toward the explanation that the Lucani were still technically of allied status at the time of this particular defeat (see Gellius NA 5.6.20-21). Major campaigns against this people start in 282, continue for a decade, and merit full triumphs (there are triumphs de Lucaneis in six or seven of the years 282 through 272).

In what capacity can M.' Curius Dentatus have celebrated an ovatio? He did not hold the consulship between 290 and 275, when he was elected cos. II. He is not known to have held the dictatorship; this however is less certain, since we do not have the Fasti Capitolini for the years 292 through 285. Nevertheless, as matters stand we have four known dictators of uncertain date who must be placed in these eight years;\(^56\) to posit M.' Curius Dentatus as a fifth - and as a dictator rei gerundae causa, an office which virtually disappears after the fourth century - would raise major difficulties. Münzer's guess,\(^48\) that he received an "ausser dendiches Commando" in the period 285-282 (and hence only an ovatio for his actions), seems impossible: he can hardly have gained even an ovatio in this period sine magistratu (see below).

The simplest expedient is to suppose that he held a command against the Lucani as praetor. There is no hint of any law restricting praetorian triumphs in the Republic, and no one in the debates of the years 241 and 200 preserved in our sources alleges that such triumphs were contrary to mos maiorum.\(^49\) In fact, by the time of the Second Punic War, it is positively attested that the triumph was regarded as open to any holder of imperium, so long as he was a magistrate (or prorogued magistrate) and met the necessary technical considerations for the honor.\(^50\) It is likely that when praetors were concerned in major actions (almost invariably as subordinates to a holder of consular imperium), they were not fighting under their own auspicia. This of course would constitute a legal impediment, and it is the major point in issue in the first recorded debate regarding a praetor's claim to a triumph, Q. Valerius Falto in 241. Yet Curios may have held an independent command in the south. It is impossible to ascertain in what years (if any) in the period before 282 consul fought against the Lucani - we know next to nothing of the consular provinciae of the years 289 through 284 - and thus in what years we must exclude the possibility of a praetorien ovatio de Lucanis.

Polybius must be correct in reporting the election of M.' Curius Dentatus as praetor suffectus in 283 (2.19.8). Polybius does not state that Curios fought against the Senonian Gauls when elected in the praetor L. Caecilius' place; he merely sent envoys to this tribe. As we have seen, campaigns against the Lucanians were related in Livy Book 11 (which covered the period just down to the disaster of L. Caecilius Metellus Denter). In 283 we are told explicitly that the Lucanians and Bruttians were in arms (Oros. 3.22.12 and Aug. Civ. Dei 3.17), thereby compounding the Roman troubles in the north. Since the consuls of 283 were occupied with the wrongdoing of the Senones in Picenum and the threat from the Boii, Etruscans and their Senonian mercenaries, it is not too much to imagine that Curios as praetor was dispatched to south Italy to manage the (less pressing) war on that front.

IV

In reconstructing the chronology of the events which led to the death of L. Caecilius Metellus Denter one must choose between the Polybian version, in which the legates are killed after the death of the praetor, and the version of the Livian epitomators, in which the disaster of the slaughter of the legates is compounded by the subsequent disaster of the praetor. It is impossible to reconcile these two versions.\(^51\)

The detailed Polybian version - supplemented by Appian - offers a more or less coherent and plausible series of events, and should be preferred to the Livian tradition. The Polybian account speaks of an embassy to regain Roman prisoners of war after the defeat of the praetor. The unfortunately fragmentary account of Appian provides an apparently more mundane reason for the embassy: the Romans, who were engaged in Etruria, were protesting a treaty violation of the Senones. These two accounts are not necessarily contradictory. When taken together, the Polybius and Appian passages may show that the legati made several demands from the Senones, who were still technically socii: it would be pointed out inter alia that as allies they had no right to hold Romans as prisoners. Again, it

46 MRR I 185, 187.
47 Two known examples after the fourth century in "normal" Republican constitutional practice: M. Claudius Glicia (suff. A. Atilius Calatinus) in 249, and M. Iunius Pera in 216.
48 RE s.v. Curius 9 col. 1842.
49 Val. Max. 2.8.2 (the spensio between C. Lutatius Catulus and Q. Valerius Falto in 241, over Falto's right to triumph pro pr.); Liv. 31.48.1-49.3 and Dio fr. 57.81 (L. Furius Purpurio's request to conduct a triumph as pr. in 200).
50 P. Cornelius Scipio Africanaus was refused a triumph by the Senate on his return from Spain in 206 on the grounds that neminem ad eum diem triumphasse qui sine magistratu ("without having held a magistracy") res gessisset (Liv. 28.38.8; cf. Dio fr. 57.56; Val. Max. 2.8.5). L. Cornelius Lentulus also applied for a triumph on his return from Spain in 200. Although the Senate admitted that he had achieved res triumpho dignas he was nonetheless refused the honor since exemplum a maioribus non accepisse at qui neque dictator neque consil neque praetor res gessisset triumpharet (Liv. 31.20.3). Both these men had received special grants of consular imperium. For the technical regulations for a triumph (and an ovatio) in the developed Republic, see H.S. Versnel, Triumphus (Leiden 1970) 160ff.
51 A most tentative suggestion. It is not impossible that the original text of Livy Book 12 had the chronology where Caecilius' death follows that of the envoys only as an alternative version: note Per. 35 ini. which reports only a variant story, evidently rejected by Livy (compare 35.14.2-5—not in the summary—with 14.5-12).
must be emphasized that no ransom or exchange is mentioned. Nevertheless, Appian brings in a “personal” element in the figure of the Gaul Britomaris, and feels obliged to describe in detail exactly how foully the Senones dealt with the bodies of the legati. The events of 283 evidently offered much material for historical fiction!

The Livian epitomes hint at an even more dramatic story. The massacre of the envoy is a causa beli (as in Polybius), but the death of the praetor L. Caecilius Metellus Denter follows. This version is a bit illogical: it may be asked why the praetor was at Arretium ob uliscendam legatorum necem if the Senones killed the Roman legati in their native land, as all the sources seem to agree.52

The following is probably the most we can make out of our conflicting sources. Near the end of consular year 284, certain Gauls (Boii? Senonian mercenaries in the pay of dissident Etruscans? or both?) besieged pro-Roman Arretium. The Romans sent the consul L. Caecilius Metellus to relieve the town; unable to achieve his object, he was elected praetor in absentia for the following year. In early 283, Caecilius, still in charge of what had been his consular army, moved forward (now from his winter quarters in Etruria) once again to attack Arretium. Caecilius was unsuccessful in the field against the Gauls — now joined by rebel Etruscans — and he met his death at the hands of their combined forces (Oros.). As it was still quite early in the year, the Romans elected a praetor suffectus, the experienced consul M.’ Curius Dentatus, to replace L. Caecilius Metellus.

One of the consuls for 283, P. Cornelius Dolabella, prepared to advance into Etruria. In connection with this campaign, M.’ Curius Dentatus sent legati to the Senones in an effort to regain Roman prisoners-of-war (as Polybius has it) and to dissuade them from assisting the Etruscans as mercenaries (Appian). The praetor suffectus M.’ Dentatus then was sent to contain the Lucanians. We do not know what role Dolabella’s consular colleague Cn. Domitius Calvinus was to play in all this: he may have been expected to adopt a defensive posture near Rome. When the consul P. Cornelius Dolabella heard of the slaughter of the Roman legati, he interrupted his operations against the Etruscans, and marched out of his way (Appian) against the Senones in retaliation. Dolabella punished the Senonian Gauls with expulsion from their land; the Boii, now quite concerned for their own safety, joined with the Etruscans to take offensive action (Polybius). A combined force of Boii, Etruscans and mercenary Senones were able to advance as far as Lake Vadimon — only forty-five miles north of Rome — before they were met and defeated by the consul Dolabella. The other consul, Cn. Domitius Calvinus, may have moved into Etruria: this seems to have caused the final fragmentation of the coalition against Rome (Dio). Appian tells us Domitius annihilated a band of Senonian Gauls, surely stragglers after Vadimon. It is possible the two consuls celebrated a triumph for their successes against the Senones, Boii and Etruscans, while M.’ Curius Dentatus received an ovatio de Lucanis.

Although this reconstruction must of course remain highly conjectural, it has the merit of reconciling Polybius’ ambiguous στρατηγός and the decidedly non-ambiguous praetor found in three Livian authors. It also supports the evidence of Polybius on M.’ Curius Dentatus as (praetor) suffectus and the Roman demand for the return of prisoners, and explains the occasion for the ovatio of M.’ Curius Dentatus reported by De vir. ill. (and supported by the Fasti triumph.). Degrassi, à propos the notices in the Fasti triumph. for the praetorian triumphs of 257 and 241, finds it strange that the first of these should pass without special mention: the Fasti, as we have seen, do point up res notabiles. I would like to suggest that this omission may point toward the explanation that someone — namely M.’ Curius Dentatus — had already celebrated a lesser form of the honor, over the Lucanians in 283. The Fasti triumphales, in a portion now unfortunately lost, may even have added the annotation primus pr. to the report of Curius’ ovation.

52 For Arretium as the probable location of L. Denter’s disaster also in the Livian tradition, see Oros. 3.22.13 Caecilius praetor...ab Etruscis Gallisque oppressus interitii. Like Polybius (2.19.9-10) and Appian (Suum. 6.1-2; Celt. 11.1-2), Per 12 states the legates were killed a Gallis Senonibus; cf. Oros. 3.22.13 Galli. No source implicates the Etruscans in that particular outrage.

53 See Degrassi Inscr. Ital. XIII 1 545.