

SABACO AND SALLUST

R. F. Rossi has recently made the provocative, if tentative, proposal that the Cassius Sabaco whom Plutarch cites as a close friend of Marius expelled from the Senate by the censors of 115 was the same man who Sallust emphasizes possessed an unimpeachable reputation during his praetorship (of 111)¹⁾. This praetor of 111 is widely and convincingly considered Marius's colleague in the consulship of 107, L. Cassius Longinus, son of Lucius²⁾; i.e., he was probably son of L. Cassius Longinus Ravilla, the consul of 127 and censor of 125³⁾, a severe *popularis* who himself possessed a reputation for integrity.

berührt wird (der Autor der Epimerismi Homerici oder seine Quelle wird Theognosts Regeln dann erweitert haben).

7) Entweder derjenige, der die Paradosis vorgezogen hat, ist identisch mit dem von Unglück und Armut Bedrängten, oder er ist es nicht. Dafür, daß er nicht mit ihm identisch ist, gibt es keinen Anhaltspunkt. Auch daß er nicht derjenige sein soll, der die πολλοὶ ἀντιλεγόμενοι selber gelesen hatte, kann dem Text nicht entnommen werden.

8) P. Egenolff, Zu Lentz' Herodian III, Philologus 62 (1903) 39.

9) Vgl. Herodiani Vita bei Herodian, ed. A. Lentz (oben Anm. 3), I, p. VI = Apollonii Dyscoli Quae supersunt, III, ed. R. Schneider (Grammatici Graeci II 3, Leipzig 1910), p. XI–XII. Man denkt in diesem Zusammenhang an die bekannte Anekdote über die Armut des Vaters Apollonios Dyskolos (τοσοῦτον δὲ ἦν πένης ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος, ὡς ἐν ὀστροῦ κω γράφειν τὰ ἑαυτοῦ συγγράματα διὰ τὸ μὴ εὐπορεῖν χάριτας πρίασθαι: a.a.O.), die aber in dieser Form schwerlich stimmen kann. Nach einer anderen Aussage der Vita hat Herodian bald nach Abschluß seiner Erziehung das väterliche Haus verlassen und ist nach Rom gezogen. Unser Text ließe sich also am ehesten mit den Jahren bald nach seiner Ankunft in Rom in Zusammenhang bringen. – Ich danke sehr herzlich Herrn Dr. David Blank, der eine Fassung dieses Beitrags gelesen und mit mir besprochen hat.

1) R. F. Rossi, Dai Gracchi a Silla, Storia di Roma, IV (Bologna 1980), 463–5 (cf. 476); Plut., Mar. 5.4–6; Sall., B. J. 32.1 (*L. Cassius*), 32.5 (*privatim . . . fidem suam interponit* [L. Cassius], *quam ille non minoris quam publicam ducebat: talis ea tempestate fama de Cassio erat*), 33.1.

2) See G. V. Sumner, The Orators in Cicero's *Brutus*: Prosopography and Chronology (Toronto and Buffalo 1973), 49–51, with stemma on p. 50.

3) *Ibid.*

On the one hand, it is true that Sallust can make astounding errors⁴⁾, whether due to ignorance, political bias, and/or the influence of his source(s). Also, of course, the expulsion of Sabaco in 115 by the censors L. Caecilius Metellus Diadematus and Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus may well have been to a great extent politically motivated, unfair, undeserved⁵⁾. The censors were strict, expelling thirty-two men from the Senate, most, probably, of low rank⁶⁾, though one was C. Licinius Geta, a consul of 116 and later censor of 108⁷⁾.

On the other hand, to gain a consulship after expulsion from the Senate was certainly out of the ordinary and, therefore, not to be accepted by us without explicit attestation or at least very strong supporting argument. Both are notably lacking in the case of Cassius Sabaco. Sallust, in his *B. C.*, does mention two other men who were expelled from the Senate. C. Antonius achieved his consulship of 63 after being expelled in 70, along with the consul of 71, P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, the praetor of 63⁸⁾. Nevertheless, Sallust does not specify that either had been expelled⁹⁾, and presents both negatively¹⁰⁾.

As for L. Cassius, the *pr.* 111 and *cos.* 107, he was, I believe, a special favorite of Sallust due, in part, to his having perished during his consulship, his career undeservedly cut short¹¹⁾, as had been that of Sallust himself, expelled from the Senate in 50, threatened with prosecution for his activities as governor in Africa, and never attaining a consulship. Admittedly, we do not know why Sallust so emphasized Cassius's unimpeachable reputation, a reputation Sallust alone of extant writers mentions. That Sallust would go out of his way to praise a man shortly before expelled from the Senate, while conceivable, would be outrageous even for Sallust. Moreover, that a son of the upright and still living Cassius Ravilla would be expelled from the Senate, even for political reasons, is *a priori* improbable, as is an unimpeachable reputation possessed by an expellee from the Senate. The *agnomen* Sabaco, apparently meaning 'weak' or 'effeminate'¹²⁾, is also discordant with both his descent and his high reputation.

Licinius Geta, it is true, expelled in 115 also, reached the censorship of 108. First, however, he had already held a consulship; hence, he already had a base of *auctoritas*. Second, by 109/8, when Geta was elected, Scaurus had been forced to resign from his censorship of 109, following the death of his colleague Livius

4) E.g., concerning Marius, compare Sall., B.J. 63.5, with Plut., Mar. 5–6.1.

5) Cf. J. Suolahti, *The Roman Censors. A Study on Social Structure* (Helsinki 1963), 419.

6) *Ibid.*

7) Cic., Cluent. 119; Val. Max. 2.9.9.

8) Ascon. p. 84 Cl: Antonius; Plut., Cic. 17.1 (cf. 17.2), and Dio 37.30.4: Lentulus.

9) Sallust may have provided such details in his longer *Historiae*, which covered the period from 78 to 67; see Hist. 4.52 M.

10) C. Antonius: Sall., B. C. 21.3, 26.1, 26.4; P. Lentulus: Sall., B. C. 47.2, 52.32, 55.5–6.

11) See my *Dolor, Invidia, and Misericordia* in Sallust, *Acta Classica* 24 (1981) 77, 80–82.

12) LSJ, s.v. *σαβακός*. Cf. Rossi, *Dai Gracchi a Silla*, 463, citing Sir R. Syme, *Missing Senators*, *Historia* 4 (1955) 59 (repr. in *Roman Papers*, I [Oxford 1979], 278–9), who maintains that Sabaco "... is clearly not a person of class or consequence"!

Drusus. The new pair of censors were Fabius Eburnus, *cos.* 116, victor over Scaurus for the office, and his colleague as consul, Geta. A reaction against Scaurus, attacks by the Mamilian *quaestio* upon friends of Scaurus, and support from a probable *amicus*, Fabius¹³), doubtless go far to explain Geta's censorship. In contrast, L. Cassius, according to Sallust, already had a remarkable reputation as praetor in 111, before Marius made his move for the consulship and the Mamilian *quaestio* struck at optimates. As son of the upright Ravilla, L. Cassius was following in his father's footsteps, a path not apt to lead to Senate expulsion.

In conclusion, the Cassius Sabaco expelled from the Senate in 115, although he could conceivably have been a Cassius Longinus as Rossi suggests¹⁴), is unlikely to have been the L. Cassius *pr.* 111 and *cos.* 107, the man whose integrity was so lauded by Sallust. To believe that the historian would have so praised one like himself expelled from the Senate, though tempting, is asking too much – or too little – of Sallust.

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13) As E. S. Gruen, *Roman Politics and the Criminal Courts*, 149–78 B. C. (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1968), 119, n. 73, aptly notes, it was during the same censorship of 115, when Geta was expelled, that Scaurus was named *princeps senatus*.

14) Dai Gracchi a Silla, 463–4 and 476. Cf. Gruen, *Roman Politics*, 124, n. 97: perhaps a client of the family.