



<https://publications.dainst.org>

iDAI.publications

ELEKTRONISCHE PUBLIKATIONEN DES
DEUTSCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTS

Dies ist ein digitaler Sonderdruck des Beitrags / This is a digital offprint of the article

M. Gwyn Morgan Calendars and Chronology in the First Punic War

aus / from

Chiron

Ausgabe / Issue **7 • 1977**

Seite / Page **89–118**

<https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron/1424/5773> • urn:nbn:de:0048-chiron-1977-7-p89-118-v5773.9

Verantwortliche Redaktion / Publishing editor

Redaktion Chiron | Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73 b, 80799 München

Weitere Informationen unter / For further information see <https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron>

ISSN der Online-Ausgabe / ISSN of the online edition **2510-5396**

Verlag / Publisher **Verlag C. H. Beck, München**

©2017 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

Email: info@dainst.de / Web: dainst.org

Nutzungsbedingungen: Mit dem Herunterladen erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) von iDAI.publications an. Die Nutzung der Inhalte ist ausschließlich privaten Nutzerinnen / Nutzern für den eigenen wissenschaftlichen und sonstigen privaten Gebrauch gestattet. Sämtliche Texte, Bilder und sonstige Inhalte in diesem Dokument unterliegen dem Schutz des Urheberrechts gemäß dem Urheberrechtsgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Inhalte können von Ihnen nur dann genutzt und vervielfältigt werden, wenn Ihnen dies im Einzelfall durch den Rechteinhaber oder die Schrankenregelungen des Urheberrechts gestattet ist. Jede Art der Nutzung zu gewerblichen Zwecken ist untersagt. Zu den Möglichkeiten einer Lizenzierung von Nutzungsrechten wenden Sie sich bitte direkt an die verantwortlichen Herausgeberinnen/Herausgeber der entsprechenden Publikationsorgane oder an die Online-Redaktion des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (info@dainst.de).

Terms of use: By downloading you accept the terms of use (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) of iDAI.publications. All materials including texts, articles, images and other content contained in this document are subject to the German copyright. The contents are for personal use only and may only be reproduced or made accessible to third parties if you have gained permission from the copyright owner. Any form of commercial use is expressly prohibited. When seeking the granting of licenses of use or permission to reproduce any kind of material please contact the responsible editors of the publications or contact the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (info@dainst.de).

M. GWYN MORGAN

Calendars and Chronology in the First Punic War

Although the cardinal importance of the First Punic War for the history of Rome has always been recognized, that recognition has taken different forms at different times. For Polybius it was the war which introduced the Romans to the world outside Italy, and so led to their conquest of the oecumene. His purpose, therefore, was to give an accurate and reasoned account of its principal events and to bring out the significance of Rome's taking to the sea. At the start of the present century, when the disciples of RANKE still held sway, the main topics for discussion were the war's chronology and, more particularly, the relationship between the Roman calendar and the Julian Year, both questions involving inter alia thorough examination of every single campaign in the war. Argument followed argument in dizzying succession, and conclusions varied widely, even though there could be but two main schools of thought: those who maintained that the two calendars were significantly out of phase throughout the war, and those who held that they always agreed more or less exactly.¹ Only the latter view survived the 'Deluge' which was World War I, however, to be repeated in work after work of reference.² There can

¹ See the bibliography and comments in G. DE SANCTIS, *Storia dei Romani* III 1, Turin 1916, 248 f. This work will be cited hereafter by author's name and page number only, the system used also for the following books and articles: K. J. BELOCH, *Griechische Geschichte* IV 2², Berlin 1927; T. R. S. BROUGHTON, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* I, New York 1951; P. BUNG, *Q. Fabius Pictor: der erste römische Annalist*, Diss. Köln 1950; A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae XIII 1: Fasti consulares et triumphales*, Rome 1947; A. HEUSS, *Der Erste Punische Krieg und das Problem des römischen Imperialismus*³, Darmstadt 1970; L. HOLZAPFEL, *Römische Chronologie*, Leipzig 1885; V. LA BUA, *Filino-Polibio Sileno-Diodoro*, Palermo 1966; F. LUTERBACHER, *Beiträge zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Ersten Punischen Krieges*, *Philologus* 66, 1907, 396–426; O. MELTZER, *Geschichte der Karthager II*, Berlin 1896; M. G. MORGAN, *Polybius and the Date of the Battle of Panormus*, *CQ* 22, 1972, 121–129; W. SOLTAU, *Römische Chronologie*, Freiburg 1889; J. H. THIEL, *A History of Roman Sea-Power before the Second Punic War*, Amsterdam 1954; F. W. WALBANK, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius I*, Oxford 1957. A similar system will be used for two articles by the same author: F. REUSS, *Zur Geschichte des Ersten Punischen Krieges*, *Philologus* 60, 1901, 102–148, will be cited as REUSS I; F. REUSS, *Der Erste Punische Krieg*, *Philologus* 68, 1909, 410–427, will be cited as REUSS II. All dates are B.C.

² See, e. g., WALBANK 70; R. WERNER, *Der Beginn der römischen Republik*, Munich 1963, 64 n. 2; E. J. BICKERMAN, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, London 1968, 46; M. CARY and H. H. SCULLARD, *A History of Rome*³, London and New York 1975, 597 n.

be no doubt that its triumph was due in very large measure to GAETANO DE SANCTIS' masterly discussion of the subject, first published in 1916; but brilliant as it was, it did not solve all the problems created by supposing that the two calendars were in agreement throughout the war. Nonetheless, neither a revival of interest in ancient chronology generally nor specific complaints about shortcomings in the *communis opinio* have elicited a detailed reassessment of the evidence.³ Contemporary scholars – possibly war weary, certainly adherents of more subjective schools of historiography – continue to eschew the purely military aspects of the struggle, either concentrating on its causes and the aims and motives of the combatants, or seeking to analyze the purposes and preconceptions of the sources. It seems high time, therefore, to look at the evidence once more, not only in the hope of reaching firmer conclusions about the relationship between the Roman and the Julian calendars, but also of throwing fresh light on certain episodes in the war, on the accuracy of our sources (Polybius especially), and on one or two of the larger issues under discussion today.

The subject, of course, is not without its perils. As DE SANCTIS showed, many of the most cherished theories advanced by proponents of the several schemes just cannot stand. Thus it is hazardous to date an event by claiming that a consular year in Polybius' narrative is equivalent to a campaigning season.⁴ Nor can anything be made of the way in which the writers of the Livian tradition employ the word *consul*; they do not distinguish carefully between the consuls and the proconsuls of this era.⁵ Again, where the Roman calendar is concerned, it cannot simply be assumed that the Romans inserted intercalary months on any kind of regular system; unless some kind of proof is adduced, we are entitled to conclude only that there was an intercalary month at the start of 259, when C. Duilius celebrated his triumph *de Sicul(eis) et classe Poenica*.⁶ And as for the official Roman

12 – a particularly casual statement of this view. The same scheme underlies THIEL'S discussion of the war.

³ Not to mention a spate of articles devoted to specific periods other than this war, the revival of interest in chronology is well attested by the works of BICKERMAN (note 2), MICHELS (note 6), SAMUEL (note 9), and WERNER (note 2). For specific complaints about the *communis opinio* see HEUSS 51 n. 74.

⁴ The claim has been made most recently by WERNER, *Beginn* 64 f.; it is disproved, as we shall see, by the events of 255 and 241, when consuls fought battles in campaigning seasons which *ex hypothesi* would have belonged to their successors in office.

⁵ DE SANCTIS 259 f., 262 f.; cf. MORGAN 121 f. Admittedly, R. DEVELIN, *Latomus* 34, 1975, 716–22, claims that the Romans were reluctant to appoint proconsuls at this period; but he presents no ancient evidence for this, only his own opinion that on various occasions proconsuls were not necessary.

⁶ DEGRASSI 76 f. The theory of regular intercalation has been supported both by champions of the *communis opinio* (e. g., LUTERBACHER, *passim*), and by its opponents (e. g., BELOCH 256 ff.), but it simply cannot stand; see AGNES K. MICHELS, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic*, Princeton 1967, 145 ff., especially 170 ff.

year, we can be tolerably certain only that it began on or around (Roman) 1 May. As a glance at the *acta triumphalia* for the period demonstrates, a magistrate could celebrate a triumph qua magistrate as late as the Ides of April in the calendar year following that of his entry into office.⁷ Since the Kalends of May is the next 'dividing day' in the sequence, and since the beginning of a month is perhaps the logical time at which to start an official year, scholars have generally concluded – rightly, I think – that consuls entered office on Roman 1 May during the war.⁸ So, as SAMUEL has remarked, «the date of any event must be argued from the evidence bearing on the event itself.»⁹ Which poses further problems. There are some years in which no datable events are recorded, for example, 264 or 246–243. For other years we have a date or dates, Roman and/or Julian, and no way of drawing useful conclusions from them; such is the case for 263, 257 and 247.¹⁰ Fortunately, however, a few years remain for which data are preserved, 262–258, 255/4, 250, 249/8, and 242/1, and it is my contention that an examination of the evidence will show that the Roman calendar actually underwent a change during the course of the war; initially out of phase with the Julian Year, it was brought into rough agreement with it by 255 and this correspondence was preserved through the end of the conflict, a fact which not only confirms Polybius' accuracy but bears directly on the Romans' conduct of the war.

1. The Years 262–258

As we shall see below, the evidence for the years 255–254 and 250 suggests very strongly that at those particular times the Roman and the Julian calendars coincided almost exactly, while the evidence for 242–241 is more easily accommodated to that view than to any other. Hence it has frequently been thought simplest to assume that the correspondence extended throughout the war. This is rendered problematical,

⁷ Thus C. Aurelius Cotta (*cos.* 1 252) celebrated a triumph *de Poeneis et Siculeis* on the Ides of April 251 (DEGRASSI 76 f.).

⁸ See especially W. SOLTAU, *Die römischen Amtsjahre*, Freiburg 1888, 12 ff., especially 16 f.; DE SANCTIS 248 f.; BELOCH 272 f.; WERNER, *Beginn* 64 n. 2. Of course, the Kalends were not the only possible «dividing day» (the term is from MICHELS, *Calendar* 19). Between 222 and 154 the official year began on the Ides, not the Kalends, of March (Livy 22, 1, 5; 30, 34, 5; etc.). Unfortunately, this point is not taken into consideration by J. MOLTHAGEN, *Chiron* 5, 1975, 116 ff., and so he sets the triumph of M^p. Valerius Messalla (*cos.* 263) in 263, instead of 262.

⁹ A. E. SAMUEL, *Greek and Roman Chronology*, Munich 1972, 163. It is because this is a point of fundamental importance that I have not argued from the various synchronisms in Polybius, even though these have figured largely in previous discussions of the war's chronology. There is, however, no difficulty in reconciling the synchronisms with the scheme to be advanced here, as consultation of WALBANK will show.

¹⁰ See below, parts I, II and V.

however, by Polybius' report that A. Atilius Caiatinus and C. Sulpicius Paterculus, the consuls who entered office on Roman 1 May 258, were in Sicily early enough to attack Carthaginian forces *wintering* at Panormus. It is customary to argue that the term used (τὸ παραχειμάζειν) ought not to be forced, since Polybius means us to understand only that the Carthaginians had failed promptly to vacate the quarters they had occupied during the preceding winter.¹¹ But though inactivity could descend on Punic generals at the most inopportune moments,¹² correspondence between the two calendars would have the Carthaginians still in winter quarters in late May or early June, which is hard to credit; and Polybius' use of the term elsewhere is too precise to justify our watering down its force here.¹³ Once his statement is taken literally, on the other hand, several other scraps of evidence fall into place, all of them combining to show that in the early years of the war the Roman calendar was regularly a month or more ahead of the Julian.

For the first year of the war, 264, we have no evidence whatever to illustrate the relationship between the two calendars. The same holds true for 263. Though Zonaras declares that the consuls, M'. Valerius Messalla and M'. Otacilius Crassus, withdrew to Rhegium at the end of the campaigning season διὰ τὸν χειμῶνα, while the *acta triumphalia* record that Messalla triumphed *cos. de Poeneis et rege Siculor(um) Hierone* on Roman 17 March 262, there need be no connexion between these events.¹⁴ The consuls' leaving Sicily for Rhegium has indeed been seen as the first stage in a journey back to Rome;¹⁵ were that so, we could reasonably ask why Zonaras gives their destination as Rhegium, instead of saying (as he does on

¹¹ Polybius 1, 24, 9. DE SANCTIS 256; WALBANK 81. True, Polybius is wrong to say that both consuls served in Sicily, since C. Sulpicius Paterculus campaigned in Sardinia (BROUGHTON 206); but as was observed by MELTZER 566 n. 48, one error does not justify our assuming others.

¹² See especially THIEL 164 n. 312: «The Carthaginians were thorough adepts in the delightful art of being late.»

¹³ The statement is taken literally by HOLZAPFEL 291, rightly so in view of Polybius' usage elsewhere. Altogether, Polybius uses the verb παραχειμάζειν on fifteen other occasions (1, 24, 9; 2, 12, 2; 2, 54, 5; 3, 13, 7; 3, 15, 3; 3, 33, 5; 3, 77, 3; 3, 106, 7; 4, 29, 1; 5, 29, 5; 16, 24, 2; 18, 43, 1; 1; 21, 10, 9; 21, 41, 1; 28, 3, 1); in none of these cases are there grounds for doubting that the word is used with its full and proper force. I wish to thank Prof. Dr. MAUERSBERGER and Dr. GLOCKMANN for making this material available to me from the files of the Polybios-Lexicon of the «Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR».

¹⁴ Zonaras 8, 10, 1; DEGRASSI 74 f. Under 263 the *fasti Capitolini* record the appointment of a dictator *clauis figendi causa* (BROUGHTON 204); provided that he was supposed to drive the sacred nail into the temple of Jupiter on Roman 13 September (Livy 7, 3, 5; WERNER, *Beginn* 26 ff.), we can conclude that the consuls had left Rome by that date (cf. BELOCH 536; WALBANK 68); but there is no other date with which this can be related.

¹⁵ DE SANCTIS 254; WALBANK 70. In a kind of compromise LUTERBACHER 403 suggested that Messalla stayed in Rhegium while Otacilius Crassus continued on to Rome, but neither is this what Zonaras says, and what Zonaras says is both unusual and specific.

other occasions) that the consuls departed οἴκαδε or εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην. There is a better way. Given that as yet the Romans had firm control only over the area around Messana, and that this part of the island had already seen two years of heavy fighting, it is surely preferable to maintain that the consuls withdrew to Rhegium, and only to Rhegium, in order to secure adequate supplies for their troops during the winter of 263/262. They could then have returned to Sicily in early spring and have remained in the island until it was time to leave for Rome.¹⁶

For 262, however, there is evidence enough to permit deductions about the calendar. Polybius, so it is usually said, reports that the consuls of 262, L. Postumius Megellus and Q. Mamilius Vitulus, had no sooner arrived in Sicily than they set about the siege of Agrigentum, beginning its investment ἀμμοαζούσης τῆς τοῦ σίτου συναγωγῆς;¹⁷ and this, it is commonly argued, would have been perfectly feasible if the Roman and the Julian calendars coincided. Entering office on Roman May 1, the consuls would have needed about two weeks to prepare their departure from the city. No doubt they had to levy four new legions,¹⁸ but this they could certainly have done inside a fortnight; in 169 a praetor raised four legions in eleven days, and there is nothing to suggest that this was particularly remarkable.¹⁹ There must necessarily be some uncertainty whether the consuls marched their troops from Rome to Rhegium or rather instructed them to assemble at Rhegium by a certain date,²⁰ but in either case the 450 mile journey should not have taken more than three weeks or so.²¹ Two or three days should have sufficed to ferry the troops from Rhegium to Messana, and two weeks ought to have been ample time for the legions to march the 170 miles or so overland to Agrigentum,²² leaving one more week for the consuls to get the siege under way. Thus the total time required between the

¹⁶ Polybius states that the difficulties encountered with supplies by *previous* forces led Messalla and Crassus to welcome Hiero's overtures (1, 16, 6–7), and that once a treaty had been concluded, Hiero supplied the Romans' needs (1, 16, 10). Perhaps the supplies began to flow only after the treaty was ratified in Rome, since Zonaras 8, 9, 12–10, 1 has the consuls coming to an agreement with Hiero and then withdrawing, even so, to Rhegium.

¹⁷ Polybius 1, 17, 6–9; the passage is so interpreted, misleadingly, by MELTZER 271; DE SANCTIS 118 f.; and WALBANK 70.

¹⁸ Throughout the war the Romans adhered, whenever possible, to an annual levy: Polybius 1, 16, 2 and 6, 19, 5–7; cf. MORGAN 125 and, for a general defence of Polybius' accuracy in Book 6, E. RAWSON, *PBSR* 26, 1971, 13 ff.

¹⁹ Livy 43, 15, 1. For further discussion see F. FRÖHLICH, *Das Kriegswesen Cäsars I*, Zurich 1891, 6 f.

²⁰ For the former view see BELOCH 287; for the latter (based on the procedure reported by Polybius 3, 61, 9–10) see DE SANCTIS 254.

²¹ The distance is given by Itin. Ant. 107 ff., and 20 miles per day would be a reasonable rate of travel in the circumstances: see Vegetius, *de re mil.* 1, 9 with F. STOLLE, *Das Lager und Heer der Römer*, Straßburg 1912, 24 ff.

²² For the distance see Itin. Ant. 86 ff.; cf. DE SANCTIS 254 f. G. UGGERI, *A & R* 15, 1970, 107 ff., adds nothing of value for our present purposes.

consuls' entry into office and the start of the siege would have been between seven and eight weeks, and seven or eight weeks from May 1 takes us to mid- or late June and the height of the harvest.²³

There are a number of difficulties in the way of this reconstruction, however. Firstly, Polybius does not in fact say that the siege began when the harvest was at its height. Rather, he reports that when the consuls reached Sicily, they learnt of the Carthaginian plan to make Agrigentum their main base of operations; so they abandoned all their other activities and hurriedly invested the town. Now, since it was the height of the harvest and the Romans anticipated a long siege, their men scattered to collect grain. The Carthaginians, attempting to take advantage of the foragers' carelessness, made a sortie, drove them back in confusion, and then attacked the main Roman forces, only to be defeated and forced back into the town.²⁴ This battle, in other words, is reported in some detail to explain why the Punic forces in Agrigentum submitted so tamely to a lengthy siege; they were disheartened by their lack of success in this early encounter. And the details about the harvest are reported, not to date the episode, but to explain what triggered encounter; as so often, Polybius is more concerned with the causal than the chronological aspect.²⁵ Nevertheless, it is clear from what he says that the siege began after the start of the harvest and before it reached its peak, in Sicily the period between the end of May and the middle of June.²⁶ Furthermore, his narrative also implies clearly that there was some time-lag between the consuls' arrival in Sicily and their decision to move against Agrigentum, a period in which they engaged in unspecified activities dropped once the decision was made. If the two calendars agreed, in other words, the consuls must have been able to cram into five or six weeks work which – as we can now see – would have required more than eight weeks to complete, and that is most unlikely.

It was such considerations which led BELOCH and others to maintain that the siege must have been started in the summer of 261.²⁷ That is too drastic a step, however, disregarding the *prima facie* meaning of Polybius' text, and requiring the conclusion, hardly acceptable, that 262 must then have passed without inci-

²³ LUTERBACHER 404; DE SANCTIS 254; WALBANK 70; J. MOLTHAGEN, *Chiron* 5, 1975, 116 and 123.

²⁴ Polybius 1, 17, 6–9. Although much emphasis has been placed on the Romans' making haste (§ 8: φέροντες), insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that this haste was triggered by Carthaginian preparations, not by a decision made earlier in Rome (§§ 5–7), and that the Romans now dropped other operations in favour of a bolder plan (§ 8; cf. LA BUA 43).

²⁵ See below, part V. The importance of this passage is appreciated by BUNG 86 ff., but he is mainly concerned with the identity of its source.

²⁶ F. OLCK, *Hat sich das Klima Italiens seit dem Altertum geändert?*, *Fleckeisens Jahrb. f. class. Philol.* 135, 1887, 469 f.; cf. also MELTZER 271; K. D. WHITE, *Roman Farming*, London 1970, 483 n. 1; D. S. WALKER, *A Geography of Italy*, London 1958, 203.

²⁷ BELOCH 287; cf. P. VARESE, *Klio* 10, 1910, 39; HEUSS 51 f.

dent.²⁸ Besides, this interpretation fails no less signally than the orthodox view to take account of a second difficulty. A conflation of Polybius and Diodorus shows that the siege lasted into the seventh month.²⁹ So placing its start around the middle of June entails setting Agrigentum's capture sometime in January. Granted that the taking of the city was too important to be put off just because the campaigning season was supposed to end around mid-October, Polybius says nothing whatever about the onset of winter, while Zonaras states in terms that it was *after* Agrigentum's capture that the consuls withdrew to Messana διὰ τὸν χειμῶνα.³⁰ It is possible to discount the silence of the one author, but not to dismiss the explicit evidence of the other. We can only conclude that Agrigentum was occupied by mid-December, before conditions became intolerable and the consuls withdrew to Messana διὰ τὸν χειμῶνα.³¹ In short, it is best to place the beginning of the siege around Julian 1 June and its conclusion around Julian 15 December; and since the consuls, entering office on Roman 1 May, would have needed eight weeks or more before they could get the siege under way, it follows that the Roman calendar was something over one month ahead of the Julian, Roman 1 May being equivalent to a Julian date no later than 1 April.

No useful chronological data have been preserved for 261, but two incidents which belong under 260 confirm the existence of a discrepancy between the two calendars. Firstly, there is the episode of C. Caecilius. The consuls elected for 260 were Cn. Cornelius Scipio and C. Duilius, and as is well known, the former hastened to Sicily by sea at the beginning of their year of office and promptly fell into a Carthaginian trap at Lipara.³² At this point, so says Zonaras, the Punic general Hamilcar launched an attack on Segesta, where most of the Roman infantry were quartered. The military tribune C. Caecilius tried to help them, but Hamilcar ambushed him and killed many of his men. When this news was received in Rome, they at once sent out the praetor and urged Duilius – engaged in readying the first Roman fleet – to make haste.³³ Previous discussions have tended to focus on the mention of the praetor and a Naevian fragment which may allude to him.³⁴ The point which has escaped notice is C. Caecilius' status. He cannot have been one of Duilius' military tribunes, since that worthy had not reached Sicily at the time of the

²⁸ Cf. DE SANCTIS 254; WALBANK 70.

²⁹ Polybius 1, 18, 6 and 19, 6; Diodorus 23, 9, 1; cf. MELTZER 563 n. 46; LA BUA 45 n. 13.

³⁰ Zonaras 8, 10, 6.

³¹ So MELTZER 273; LUTERBACHER 404; DE SANCTIS 121. The coldest months are December through March: WALKER, *Geography* 95 ff.

³² For the sources see BROUGHTON 205.

³³ Zonaras 8, 11, 1. Although his account differs in important respects from Polybius' (the latter makes Scipio commander of the fleet, Duilius of the legions, whereas Zonaras reverses their roles), there is no reason to reject what he says about C. Caecilius.

³⁴ Naevius, *Bell. Poen.* 36 MOREL = 37 MARMORALE; cf. C. CICHORIUS, *Römische Studien*, Leipzig 1922, 32 f.; F. ALTHEIM and D. FELBER, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Geschichte*, Frankfurt a/M 1961, 102 f.

ambush; but nor can he have been one of Scipio's officers, since we are told expressly that his military tribunes were captured with him at Lipara.³⁵ So Caecilius must have been a military tribune for 261/260, not for 260/259 as is usually assumed, and he must have been left behind, like the troops in Segesta, when the consuls of that year returned to Rome.³⁶ Since there is no reason to suppose that Hamilcar gained any significant advantage by holding back his attack until Scipio had fallen into Carthaginian hands,³⁷ it is simplest to maintain that the start of the consular year coincided with the start of the campaigning season. Scipio Asina (as he became known after his capture) would have entered office on Roman 1 May 260, and would have reached Lipara inside a week;³⁸ so the date of his capture – let us say Roman 8 May – would coincide with a Julian date in late March, somewhere between 15 and 30 March.

If this were the only incident from 260 to which a date could be attached, the argument could not be considered decisive. However, there is also Zonaras' statement that C. Duilius returned to Rome at the end of the summer season (εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην τοῦ θεροῦς παρελθόντος ἀνεκομίσθη), while the *acta triumphalia* show that he celebrated his triumph on the first day of the intercalary month of 259.³⁹ If we equate the end of the summer with the end of the campaigning season, mid-October by Julian reckoning, the assumption that the two calendars were in agreement would force us to conclude either that Duilius returned to Rome solely to preside at the elections for the coming year and then travelled back to Sicily before quitting the island for good early in 259, or that he needed a full four months (mid-October 260 through late January 259) to make his way from Sicily to Rome. The

³⁵ Zonaras 8, 10, 9. THIEL 187 f. misdates the Caecilius episode after Duilius' arrival in order to link it with Polybius 1, 23, 1; DE SANCTIS 127 dates it correctly, but fails to realize the implications for Caecilius' status.

³⁶ Zonaras 8, 10, 8. It seems to have been after, and perhaps as a result of, this mishap that the Romans regularly prorogued the *imperium* of one or both consuls, so that there would be a commander in the field until the new consuls actually arrived with fresh levies. Such prorogation is attested for 259/258, 256/255, 255/254, 254/253, 251/250 and 242/241 (BROUGHTON 207, 209, 210, 212, 213 f., 219 f.; cf. also DEVELIN, Latomus 34, 1975, 719). In other years, apparently, they kept one consul under arms as long as possible, but without employing prorogation: so in 252/251 (below, part III on C. Cotta), 250/249 (see Zonaras 8, 15, 12), and perhaps in 260/259 (see below, on the praetor).

³⁷ Since the Carthaginians were very active at this time (Zonaras 8, 10, 8; cf. THIEL 169 f.), Hamilcar was obviously not holding back in order to lull Scipio into a false sense of security. And while the morale of the land forces in Segesta must have been depressed by the consul's capture, they were no less leaderless before his capture than they were after it.

³⁸ Scipio sailed to Sicily (Polybius 1, 21, 4), a voyage which took no more than three days (cf. L. CASSON, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton 1971, 284), and he left Rome before preparations for the new campaign were complete (Polybius 1, 21, 4; Zonaras 8, 11, 1).

³⁹ Zonaras 8, 11, 5; DEGRASSI 76 f.

first alternative is certainly possible,⁴⁰ but seems in this case very unlikely. On the one hand, it would require our setting the consular elections for 259 at a date distinctly earlier than appears to have been usual at this period.⁴¹ On the other hand, there was no real reason for Duilius to return to Sicily at all, since the praetor sent out to replace Scipio Asina could safely have remained in the island to command the troops there. The second alternative is no less improbable. Even if we allow Duilius two weeks to collect the beaks of his 31 Punic prizes for the *columna rostrata*,⁴² a month to make a leisurely progress from Rhegium to Rome, and another two or three weeks to apply for his triumph and await the senate's approval of his request, we can still fill only two out of the four months available.⁴³ It is obviously simpler to assume that the Roman calendar, once again, was ahead of the Julian. Now the various scraps of evidence will certainly fit together in a single coherent pattern. If the Roman calendar was at least thirty days ahead of the Julian in 262 (as is suggested by the details of the siege of Agrigentum), this discrepancy, uncorrected, would have grown to 40+ days by early 260 (which fits what we know about the episode of C. Caecilius), and to 50+ days by early 259 (which solves the problem created by the date of Duilius' triumph and helps to explain why an intercalary month was inserted into the Roman calendar at that time). So Duilius left Sicily around Roman mid-December 260 (= Julian mid-October), and celebrated his triumph just over two months later, a time-lag fully in accord with the calculations advanced above.

Which brings us back to the episode from which we started, the campaign for 258. If the argument offered here is correct, it enables us to do what we ought in any case to do, namely, to take literally what Polybius says about the campaigning season for 258. Though there was intercalation in 259, inserting 27 days into a calendar which was by then 50+ days ahead of the Julian Year would not have brought the two into alignment, and by early 258 another ten days would have been added to the discrepancy. So Roman 1 May 258 ought to have corresponded to a Julian date in the last week of March. Provided that the Romans by now were transporting their legions to Sicily by sea, reducing the time needed to reach the

⁴⁰ Compare the case of C. Aurelius Cotta in 252/251 (Zonaras 8, 14, 7).

⁴¹ The evidence suggests that the elections were held at the start of the calendar year in which the successful candidates entered office, and certainly not earlier than Roman 1 December of the previous year (A. LIPPOLD, *Consules*, Bonn 1963, 108 n. 129); but if the two calendars were in agreement and Duilius sailed back to Rome, he would have arrived before even Roman 1 November 260.

⁴² On the number of ships captured see MELTZER 565 n. 47; THIEL 185 f.

⁴³ At some point before 258 the Romans subjected Mytistratum to a seven-month siege (Diodorus 23, 9, 3), but there is nothing to show whether this belongs in 261, 260 or 259 (cf. DE SANCTIS 127). The military operations for which Duilius was undoubtedly responsible (ILS 65 = ILLRP 319) would not have required more than the campaigning season proper, whatever the sequence in which they are placed (DE SANCTIS 127; THIEL 187–90).

island from some five weeks to under three,⁴⁴ A. Atilius Caiatinus and his troops could undoubtedly have reached Panormus before Julian mid-April 258, and could reasonably have found the Carthaginians still in winter quarters there.

In sum, the evidence we possess for the years 262–258 suggests that the Roman calendar was a month ahead of the Julian in 262, some six weeks ahead in early 260, nearer to two months ahead in early 259, and despite the intercalary month of 259, still a month ahead in early 258. At no point within these limits is there justification for assuming that the two calendars coincided.

II. The Consulship of Fulvius Nobilior and Aemilius Paullus, 255/254

For the period from early 258 through late 256 we have only isolated data which cannot be put together to illustrate the relationship between the Roman and the Julian calendars. The *acta triumphalia* record the dates at which six different magistrates or promagistrates celebrated their triumphs, but only three of the actual dates have been preserved and they are not the ones it would be helpful to know.⁴⁵ The *fasti Capitolini*, by reporting the appointment of a dictator to celebrate the Latin Festival in 257, show that the consuls of that year must have left Rome almost immediately after they took office,⁴⁶ but there is nothing to be done with this. Nor are the literary sources more forthcoming. Polybius, describing the launching of the invasion of Africa by the consuls of 256, L. Manlius Vulso Longus and M. Atilius Regulus (in fact *consul suffectus*), limits himself to the observation that the Romans completed their preparations «for the coming summer» (εἰς τὴν ἐπιφερομένην θερείαν) before sending out these commanders; and Zonaras remarks only that Manlius Vulso returned to Rome when the winter of 256/255 approached (χειμῶνος ἐπιγενομένου).⁴⁷ For the consulship of Ser. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Paullus, by contrast, we have information enough for this to have become one of the most discussed years in the entire war and a veritable test-case or touchstone for chronological schemes.

⁴⁴ As indicated above (note 38), the voyage to Sicily took three days; if readying the ships went on concurrently with the levy, therefore, the consuls could have left Rome within two weeks of entering office, and after their experiences in 260, they surely appreciated the need for speed. On the length of the intercalary month see MICHELS, *Calendar* 160 ff.; SAMUEL, *Chronology* 160 ff.; H. CHANTRAINE, *Hermes* 104, 1976, 116 ff.

⁴⁵ L. Scipio (*cos.* 259) triumphed *cos. . . . de Poeneis et Sardin. Corsica* on 11 March 258; C. Aquillius Florus (*cos.* 259) triumphed *pro cos. de Poeneis* on 4 October 258; C. Sulpicius Paterculus (*cos.* 258) triumphed *cos. de Poeneis et Sardeis* between 5 October 258 and 1 May 257 (cf. DEGRASSI 548); A. Atilius Caiatinus (*pr.* 257: BROUGHTON 208 and n. 2) triumphed *pr. . . . ex Sicilia de Poeneis* on 17 January 256; C. Atilius Regulus (*cos.* 257) triumphed *cos. . . . de Poeneis* between 23 January and 1 May 256; and L. Manlius Vulso (*cos.* 256) triumphed *cos. de Poeneis* in late 256 or early 255. See DEGRASSI 76 f.

⁴⁶ Cf. LUTERBACHER 409; DE SANCTIS 256; BROUGHTON 207 f.

⁴⁷ Polybius 1, 25, 7; Zonaras 8, 13, 1.

Polybius states that when the Romans learnt of the disastrous defeat inflicted on M. Regulus by Xanthippus and the Carthaginians, they devoted all their efforts to fitting out a fleet to rescue the survivors, who had collected at Clupea. This expedition they entrusted to the new consuls, Nobilior and Paullus, and they sent them on their way τῆς θερείας ἀρχομένης.⁴⁸ Since HOLZAPFEL and SOLTAU pointed out that this phrase denotes a Julian date around the middle of May,⁴⁹ it has regularly been thought simplest to hold that the Roman and the Julian calendars now corresponded almost exactly, and justly so. To prepare the fleet would have involved no more than making ready for sea, since the warships they used were those brought back to Rome by Manlius Vulso at the close of the preceding campaigning season;⁵⁰ and as we have seen already, the *dilectus* could also have been completed inside a fortnight. Once we assume that the consuls split these duties between them, there is no reason why they should not have been ready to leave Rome within two weeks of entering office.⁵¹ Thus Roman 1 May can be equated with Julian 1 May.

This is not all. We also have datable events on either side of the consuls' departure from Rome to demand the equation. On the one side, we know that the campaigning season for 255 opened some time before the new consuls entered office. As Polybius says, M. Regulus opened negotiations with the Carthaginians because he feared that he might otherwise be unable to finish off the war before his successors arrived.⁵² The negotiations themselves are not likely to have occupied much time, since his terms were too harsh to be acceptable to the Carthaginians. It was after their rejection that the Spartan Xanthippus arrived in Carthage, and time had then to pass in which Xanthippus persuaded the Punic government to follow his advice and whipped their troops into shape, and time in which the battle with Regulus was fought and the news of his defeat travelled to the senate in Rome.⁵³ These events cannot have taken up less than a month; but nor will they have occupied much more than that, since Polybius states expressly that Xanthippus had been recruited earlier on, and emphasizes repeatedly the speed with which the

⁴⁸ Polybius 1, 36, 5–10.

⁴⁹ HOLZAPFEL 291; SOLTAU 208 f.; cf. P. PÉDECH, *La méthode historique de Polybe*, Paris 1964, 461.

⁵⁰ Cf. SOLTAU 209; DE SANCTIS 258; THIEL 225 n. 530 and 230; WALBANK 95.

⁵¹ So also DE SANCTIS 258.

⁵² Polybius 1, 31, 4. Neither the truth nor the origin of the statement need concern us (on such matters see WALBANK 90); the point is that this is our best guide to the chronology. For calculations from Regulus' activities between Manlius Vulso's departure in the autumn of 256 and his own defeat yield a date for the catastrophe anywhere between March and June 255 (DE SANCTIS 258 ff.; cf. THIEL 229; WALBANK 91), nor is it clear whether Regulus was technically consul or proconsul at the time of his defeat (DE SANCTIS 259 f.).

⁵³ Polybius 1, 31, 5–34, 12 and 36, 5–10; Orosius 4, 9, 1–5. On Appian, Lib. 3 see DE SANCTIS 259.

Carthaginians moved after his arrival – and this stress on speed makes sense only if the Carthaginians feared the arrival of fresh Roman forces before they could deal with Regulus. So unless the campaigning season in Africa opened before Julian 15 March, Roman 1 May 255 must be equivalent to a Julian date some time in the last two weeks of April.⁵⁴

The other limit is set by Polybius' statement that the consuls lost their fleet in a storm off Sicily μεταξὺ . . . τῆς Ὠρείωνος καὶ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς, in other words, in mid-July by Julian reckoning.⁵⁵ Admittedly, the one full account we have of their activities in the interim, derived from Zonaras, is sufficiently detailed for some scholars to have placed the shipwreck in mid-July 254, a full year later,⁵⁶ but this is unnecessary. According to Zonaras, the consuls sailed first to Sicily and replenished garrisons there before pushing on to Africa. Driven out of their course by a storm, they were carried to the island of Cossura (Pantellaria), plundered it, and left a garrison there. Setting out for Africa once again, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Punic fleet off Hermaeum and picked up the survivors of Regulus' forces at Clupea. Some raids into the African hinterland followed, and then came the departure for Sicily and the wreck off Camarina.⁵⁷ There is no reason to doubt that all these events could have occurred within eight weeks, if only because Polybius' silence on all save the sea-battle and the rescue of the survivors at Clupea shows how utterly unimportant the remaining operations were. Nor is it difficult to compose a satisfactory schedule. One week would have been ample time for the voyage from Ostia to Sicily, another for the disembarkation of the troops earmarked for garrison duty in the island. A third week would accommodate the voyage to Cossura, its plundering and its garrisoning. A fourth week would allow for the sea-battle with the Carthaginians, the retrieval and organization of the 114 Punic ships captured in the engagement,⁵⁸ and the recovery of the survivors at Clupea. Two or three weeks would then have been available for the raids into the African hinterland, clearly face-saving razzias rather than serious campaigns,⁵⁹ and one more week would have covered the return to Sicily and the ship-

⁵⁴ Polybius 1, 32, 1 (for Xanthippus), 2, 3, 5 and 8 (for speed). The importance of this emphasis on speed was seen by MELTZER 302, LUTERBACHER 410 and DE SANCTIS 150; more commonly, however, it has been missed, as by HOLZAPFEL 291 and n. 6 (with dire results for his proposed chronology), or used only to prove that Philinus is Polybius' source here (cf. BUNG 114; LA BUA 77 f.).

⁵⁵ Polybius 1, 37, 4, correctly interpreted and set under 255 by SOLTAU 209; MELTZER 308; DE SANCTIS 258; THIEL 235 f.; WALBANK 96 f.; WERNER, Beginn 64 n. 2. Against the attempt of LUTERBACHER 412 to move the time of the wreck to December see REUSS II 418.

⁵⁶ BELOCH 288; REUSS I 108 ff., II 417 ff.; BUNG 116; LIPPOLD, RhM 97, 1954, 270 n. 74; HEUSS 64.

⁵⁷ Zonaras 8, 14, 1–3; cf. the *acta triumphalia*, quoted below (note 61); Polybius 1, 36, 10–37, 6; Eutropius 2, 22, 1–3; Orosius 4, 9, 5–8; Diodorus 23, 18, 1; Livy, Epit. 18.

⁵⁸ For the numbers see THIEL 233 and n. 556.

⁵⁹ Cf. MELTZER 307; THIEL 234 f. The raids are discounted altogether by DE SANCTIS 157 n. 26.

wreck off Camarina. The wreck, therefore, should indeed be set under 255, and in combination with the other data it suggests very strongly that the two calendars were now in close agreement.⁶⁰

After all this, of course, it may seem strange that the two men only celebrated their triumphs as proconsuls in mid-January 253, a full eighteen months after the shipwreck, and much has naturally been made of this point by those who prefer to set the mishap under 254.⁶¹ However, it is much easier to explain how these two men could have spent those eighteen months than it is to accept the later dating for the shipwreck and then be forced to account for the ability of a small band of survivors to hold out at Clupea for no less than fifteen months.⁶² Given, then, that the orthodox view remains more likely, it is simplest to assume that Paullus and Nobilior spent the remainder of 255 in salvage operations, retrieving and repairing the ships which had survived the wreck, in putting Roman defences in Sicily into order in case the Carthaginians attempted an offensive to capitalize on Regulus' defeat,⁶³ and – most important – in restoring discipline and morale within their forces. Since we know that 80 ships spent the winter in Sicily,⁶⁴ the consuls presumably remained there into the new year. Then, since we hear nothing of a dictator *comitiorum habendorum causa*, one or other of them must have returned to Rome to hold the elections for 254. Which event is best set in Roman January: according to Polybius and Zonaras, the Romans built a new fleet in only three months,⁶⁵ but though that feat has been set by some scholars immediately after the shipwreck off Camarina,⁶⁶ it is more logical to place it in early 254, after the consular elections and before the start of the new consular year. The senate, after all, would hardly have deliberated on this subject in vacuo, without heeding the men who would become the commanders of any operations slated for the year. So, if the fleet was built in February–April 254,⁶⁷ the elections must have been held in January. In the event, Paullus and Nobilior, now proconsuls, must have com-

⁶⁰ See the authorities cited above, note 55.

⁶¹ The two men triumphed *de Cossurensibus et Poeneis*, Nobilior on 18 January, Paullus on 19 January 253 (DEGRASSI 76 f.). This is stressed by BELOCH 263 and 288 f.; REUSS I 111 and II 419.

⁶² This is justly emphasized by LUTERBACHER 411 and DE SANCTIS 257. And certainly the praise of the survivors by Polybius 1, 36, 6–7 and (if relevant) Naevius, *Bell. Poen.* 42 MOREL = 43 MARMORALE, striking as it is, remains much less effusive than would be warranted by their managing to hold out for a full fifteen months.

⁶³ That the Carthaginians mounted no major offensive, because of unrest in Africa (DE SANCTIS 162), is beside the point.

⁶⁴ Cf. THIEL 241 n. 576 on Polybius 1, 38, 7.

⁶⁵ Polybius 1, 38, 6; Zonaras 8, 14, 4. On the elections for 254 see DE SANCTIS 260 f.

⁶⁶ BELOCH 263 and 288; REUSS I 111; WERNER, *Beginn* 63 n. 4, rejecting the reason usually given for the later dating, the need to let the wood for the ships season.

⁶⁷ Cf. SOLTAU 209 f.; LUTERBACHER 414; DE SANCTIS 261; THIEL 242 and n. 578; WALBANK 98.

manded the fleet which participated in the combined operations which led to the capture of Panormus in 254; for though the new consuls, Cn. Scipio Asina (*cos. I 260*) and A. Atilius Caiatinus (*cos. I 258*), obviously were the supreme commanders, they took personal charge of the legions operating on land.⁶⁸ In which case Paullus and Nobilior would finally have left Sicily at the close of the campaigning season for 254, and would have had no difficulty in arriving in Rome to celebrate their triumphs (as we have seen already) in mid-January 253.⁶⁹

In short, the evidence for the consulship of Ser. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Paullus is most easily understood if the Roman and the Julian calendars coincided at this period.

III. The Battle of Panormus, 250

For the period from early 253 through mid-250, as for the years 258–256, only isolated data survive which cannot be assembled into any pattern establishing the relationship between the Roman and the Julian calendars. The *acta triumphalia* record three triumphs, that of Cn. Scipio Asina *pro cos. de Poeneis* on Roman 23 March 252, that of C. Sempronius Blaesus (*cos. 253*) *cos. . . de Poeneis* on Roman 1 April 252, and that of C. Aurelius Cotta (*cos. I 252*) *cos. . . de Poeneis et Siculeis* on Roman 13 April 251.⁷⁰ The literary sources add little of significance for our present purposes. Polybius states that the consuls for 253, Cn. Servilius Caepio and C. Sempronius Blaesus, left Rome τῆς θερείας ἐπιγενομένης, by Julian reckoning (as we have seen) mid-May.⁷¹ So it is perfectly possible that the two calendars were again or still in agreement at this time, since these two men would – like the consuls for 255 – have needed no more than two weeks to complete their preparations.⁷² However, it is also perfectly possible that the Roman calendar was somewhat in advance of the Julian, giving them additional time in which to get everything ready. The one certainty is a negative conclusion: the Roman calendar cannot have been running *behind* the Julian, since Caepio and Blaesus could not possibly have departed in less than two weeks after their entry into office. As for 252, an anecdote in Zonaras establishes only that the consular elections for the following year were held before (Roman) 13 April 251. Cotta, we are told, undertook the siege of Lipara, then left the military tribune Q. Cassius in command while he

⁶⁸ Cf. DE SANCTIS 160 and n. 32; THIEL 244.

⁶⁹ Polybius 1, 38, 10 states that the Roman commanders, meaning the consuls of 254, sailed back to Rome after Panormus' capture; in fact, it was the proconsuls who did so, triumphing in January 253 (above, note 61); Scipio at least remained in Sicily, perhaps at Messana (Diodorus 23, 18, 5), his command prorogued until he triumphed in March 252 (below, note 70). On Dio, frag. 43, 29a and Zonaras 8, 14, 5 see THIEL 245 f.

⁷⁰ DEGRASSI 76 f.

⁷¹ Polybius 1, 39, 1; cf. above, part II.

⁷² Cf. DE SANCTIS 163 ff. and 261; THIEL 247 ff.

himself sailed home (*ἀπῆρεν οἴκαδε*); on his return he found that Cassius had disobeyed orders, and degraded him.⁷³ The one plausible reason for Cotta's going back to Rome is that the senate asked him – for whatever reason – to conduct the consular elections for 251, and since he celebrated his triumph on April 13 of that year, those elections were clearly held some time earlier.⁷⁴ Under the year 250, however, we find the second major test-case for discussions of the war's chronology, the battle at Panormus in which L. Metellus (*cos. I 251*) crushingly defeated the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal.

Previous discussions of this battle have concentrated almost totally on the year in which it was fought, 251 or 250, rather than on the precise time of year at which it occurred. But since the arguments in favour of the later dating have been presented elsewhere,⁷⁵ only the calendar problems need be considered here. The crucial piece of evidence is Polybius' statement that Hasdrubal marched on Panormus ἀκμαζούσης τῆς συγκομιδῆς, by Julian reckoning the first half of June.⁷⁶ We are also told that Metellus' colleague, C. Furius Pacilus, had already returned to Rome, obviously to conduct the consular elections for 250, and that the successful candidates were C. Atilius Regulus (*cos. I 257*) and L. Manlius Vulso Longus (*cos. I 256*).⁷⁷ But though it is not clear from Polybius' narrative whether the new consuls had actually entered office when the battle took place, some degree of chronological precision is attainable. For Hasdrubal's strategy proves that the Roman calendar cannot have been out of phase with the Julian Year. It needs to be emphasized that Hasdrubal's taking the field was not the immediate consequence of Furius Pacilus' departure for Rome, even though it left Metellus conveniently unsupported. The war on land had been at a standstill since 253 because of the Romans' refusal to fight on open ground, and the Carthaginian had therefore to find a sure way of provoking Metellus to fight. He used the harvest, expecting – correctly – that the need to protect the allies' crops would bring Metellus out of Panormus. If his plan was to work, therefore, he had to wait until the harvest reached its ἀκμή.⁷⁸ So Furius Pacilus, in theory at least, could have left Sicily in Julian February 250 and

⁷³ Zonaras 8, 14, 7. A similar tale, involving a military tribune named P. Aurelius Pecunia, is told by Valerius Maximus 2, 7, 4 and Frontinus, *Strat.* 4, 1, 31.

⁷⁴ It does not follow from Zonaras' account that the elections were held actually during the campaigning season, of 252 or 251, or that they fell during the sailing season properly so called (cf. DE SAINT-DENIS, REL 25, 1947, 196 ff.). So these elections too may be placed in the period around December and January (cf. above, note 41).

⁷⁵ MORGAN 121 ff.

⁷⁶ Polybius 1, 40, 1; above, note 26.

⁷⁷ Polybius 1, 40, 1 and 39, 15 respectively; cf. MORGAN 125.

⁷⁸ For the background see MORGAN 123 f. The importance of the harvest, clear from Polybius' two references (1, 40, 1 and 5), was recognized by MELTZER 316 and REUSS II 420 f., but seems to have been forgotten since. In arguing that Metellus dedicated a temple to Ops Opifera (Phoenix 27, 1973, 38 and n. 22) I suggested that Roman prestige had to be upheld by defending the crops; the point which should have been made is that Metellus

Hasdrubal would still have begun his offensive no earlier than Julian May. What must now be asked is how Hasdrubal planned to cope with the arrival of new consuls; to judge by past performance (as it has been argued here, at any rate), the new consuls could be expected to arrive in Sicily toward the end of Roman May, and if the two calendars were in agreement, they too would put in an appearance just as the harvest reached its ἀκμή, thus thwarting the plan to attack Metellus while he stood alone.⁷⁹ A detail in Zonaras provides the answer, the statement that a Carthaginian fleet appeared off Panormus during the actual battle. Since there was little the fleet could contribute to the battle itself, or to a blockade of Panormus before fresh Roman forces arrived (the evidence, indeed, suggests that the Carthaginians hoped to take the city by treachery), it is simplest to suppose that the fleet's assigned task had been to intercept any new Roman forces before they could join up with Metellus, and that when those forces failed to appear, the fleet returned to Panormus to lend Hasdrubal what little aid they could.⁸⁰ In which case, the two calendars were in almost exact agreement, a date no earlier than the last week in Roman May being equivalent to the first week in Julian June.

There is other evidence to confirm this conclusion. The *acta triumphalia* record that Metellus triumphed *pro cos. . . de Poeneis* on Roman 7 September 250.⁸¹ To set off his triumphal procession Metellus chose to herd more than 100 captured elephants from Panormus to Messina, to ship them across to Rhegium on vast floating farmyards, and then to march them the 450 or so miles to Rome.⁸² If the elephants were driven twenty miles a day without a break, this undertaking cannot have occupied less than five weeks, and it is unlikely that so rigorous a pace was enforced on animals so slow moving by nature. A trek of eight weeks' duration seems much more probable, since this would have allowed the elephants time to rest, their attendants time to collect the large quantities of fodder they needed, and the local population time to come and view these wondrous beasts.⁸³ If to this we

risked losing the entire crop if defeated; so the vow to Ops was intended to save and safeguard as much as possible of the harvest.

⁷⁹ As it happened, the consuls of 250 were still in Rome when the news of Metellus' victory arrived (Polybius 1, 41, 1-3), but they must have been delayed by the senate's decision to mount a major naval offensive and by the preparations it entailed (Polybius 1, 39, 15 with MORGAN 125 ff.).

⁸⁰ Zonaras 8, 14, 10. Rejected outright by DE SANCTIS 167 n. 51, the episode is taken by MELTZER 316 f. and THIEL 261 f. as part of a plan for a combined assault on Panormus. On the possibility of treachery see Zonaras 8, 14, 8 and D. ROUSSEL, *Les Siciliens entre les Romains et les Carthaginois*, Paris 1970, 119 ff.

⁸¹ DEGRASSI 76 f.

⁸² Zonaras 8, 14, 12; Frontinus, *Strat.* 1, 7, 1; Pliny, *N. H.* 8, 16. To transport the elephants across the Straits of Messina will have been no easy task: cf. H. H. SCULLARD, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World*, London 1974, 158.

⁸³ SOLTAU 210 seems to be the only modern scholar who appreciates the difficulties involved in this trek, and he offers no estimate of the amount of time it would have taken.

add a week in which Metellus could formally request his triumph and the senate debate and approve it, it follows that Metellus left Panormus no later than Roman 1 July. His successors in office will have needed three days to reach Sicily, just as the news of Metellus' victory will have needed three days to reach Rome; and to this we should probably add another two weeks for the consuls to ready their departure; for as has been argued elsewhere, the news of the victory led the senate to rethink their plans for the campaign of 250, transforming a naval operation into a combined operation by land and sea, and time will have been needed both to debate the change in plan, and to carry out any additional tasks it involved.⁸⁴ All of which takes us back to a Roman date in the first week of June as the latest likely time for the battle itself, and that coincides almost exactly with the Julian date given by Polybius.

In sum, the Roman calendar and the Julian Year appear once again to have been in close agreement. This cannot be argued solely from the Polybian date for the battle of Panormus. But a consideration of the strategy which Hasdrubal pursued beforehand and of the Romans' activities thereafter points to the conclusion that the engagement occurred in the first half of June 250 by Roman as well as Julian reckoning.⁸⁵

IV. *The Consulship of P. Claudius Pulcher and L. Iunius Pullus, 249/248*

If the information we have about L. Metellus' activities in 250 permits fairly precise conclusions about the state of the Roman calendar at that time, the reverse seems to be true for the consulship of P. Claudius Pulcher and L. Iunius Pullus in 249/248. For here Polybius has made a major error, taking Iunius as Claudius' successor instead of his colleague in the consulship, and provides circumstantial detail which has been held to prove that the Roman calendar was significantly out of phase with the Julian Year.

From the several accounts to have survived, it is clear that Claudius left for Sicily soon after his entry into office, and that after assuming command at Lilybaeum he attempted to catch the Carthaginian fleet unawares; the attempt failed and his catastrophic defeat at Drepana followed.⁸⁶ For these events we cannot very well allow anything less than two months; in which case the defeat at Drepana

On the elephant's food requirements see SCULLARD, *Elephants* 20; the spectacle the beasts provided is reported by Orosius 4, 9, 15.

⁸⁴ Polybius 1, 41, 4 with MORGAN 125 ff.; cf. MELTZER 318; THIEL 262 n. 651.

⁸⁵ It may be noted that if these calculations are correct, Metellus cannot after all have fought as consul, the Livian tradition notwithstanding (cf. MORGAN 121 f.).

⁸⁶ Polybius 1, 49, 1–52, 3; Zonaras 8, 15, 13–14; Diodorus 24, 1, 5–7; Livy, *Epit.* 19; Orosius 4, 10, 3; Eutropius 2, 26; Florus 1, 18, 29; Frontinus, *Strat.* 2, 13, 9; Gellius, *N. A.* 10, 6, 2; Schol. Bob., p. 90 STANGL. See further DE SANCTIS 170 ff.; THIEL 272 ff.

would have occurred in July by Roman reckoning.⁸⁷ Now comes the problem: Polybius reports that when the Romans heard of this setback, they decided to press on regardless; «so, since the time for the elections was now close, they elected new consuls and immediately sent off one of them, Lucius Iunius, with grain for the troops besieging Lilybaeum and the other provisions and supplies the army needed.»⁸⁸

Since there can be no doubt that Iunius did indeed leave Rome some time after Claudius,⁸⁹ there is only one plausible way of defending Polybius' statement that elections were held before his departure. As BELOCH saw, this is to maintain that Iunius actually conducted the elections for 248, held around December 249 or January 248, and then left for Sicily before his own term of office expired, i. e., at the start of the campaigning season for 248 and before the new consuls took office.⁹⁰ As Iunius' command was not prorogued, this explanation demands a crowded schedule, but it is just possible if we are willing to assume that the Roman calendar was now running some two months behind the Julian Year. Not that the problem lies so much in Iunius' activities. If we allow him time to sail to Sicily, to wait an unspecified period at Syracuse (to let stragglers catch up and to collect further supplies), to lose his fleet off Cape Pachynus, and then to transfer to operations on land and seize a position on Mount Eryx,⁹¹ these events could perhaps be compressed into a six or eight week span; six or eight weeks from Julian 15 March, the beginning of the campaigning season, would bring us to a date in the first half of May, and if the two calendars were now in agreement, new consuls would now have been able to arrive and take over the command. What creates the problem is that new consuls did not replace Iunius. Instead, we are told that the senate instructed Claudius to nominate a dictator, that when his nomination of M. Claudius

⁸⁷ Cf. MELTZER 330; DE SANCTIS 174 n. 71 and 263 f.; THIEL 284 n. 730. Since Claudius marched his men overland from Messina to Lilybaeum to deceive the Carthaginians (Polybius 1, 49, 3-4), he can scarcely have begun operations within a month of taking office. The question is whether he would delay after that; there is nothing in Polybius 1, 49, 3-7 or Zonaras 8, 15, 3 to suggest that he did, but Diodorus 24, 1, 5 has him attempting to block the harbour of Lilybaeum before the defeat at Drepana, and this would have taken time, even if it were only a stratagem to deceive the Carthaginians further. Other reasons for thinking that he was slower to move than is usually assumed will be presented below.

⁸⁸ Polybius 1, 52, 4-5.

⁸⁹ Both MELTZER 330 f. and REUSS I 119 maintain that the two consuls must have left Rome at more or less the same time, on the ground that Iunius' fleet would not have sailed blithely along the southern coast of Sicily once the news of Claudius' defeat at Drepana was known (cf. WALBANK 116). But the very fact that he followed this route points rather to the conclusion that he hoped thereby to avoid Carthaginian fleets active between Drepana and Lilybaeum on the northern coast (cf. THIEL 284 n. 728, not fully realizing the implications).

⁹⁰ BELOCH 289; cf. BUNG 63; A. KLOTZ, *Hermes* 80, 1952, 333.

⁹¹ Polybius 1, 52, 5-55, 10; Diodorus 24, 1, 7-11; Zonaras 8, 15, 14; Orosius 4, 10, 3; Eutropius 2, 26, 2. See further DE SANCTIS 174 ff.; THIEL 281 ff.

Glicia was adjudged unsatisfactory, A. Atilius Caiatinus (*cos. I 258, II 254*) was appointed dictator *rei gerendae causa* (this in the period between the shipwreck off Pachynus and Iunius' seizure of Eryx), and that Caiatinus was the first dictator to take an army outside Italy, presumably holding command in Sicily until the consuls for 248 arrived.⁹² There is nothing to show whether Caiatinus served out the full six-month term normally given a dictator, but the very fact that he was sent to Sicily suggests that he spent a fair amount of time in the island; otherwise, it would hardly have been worth sending him there at all. And if we suppose that he spent at least two months in the island, restoring morale rather than actively campaigning,⁹³ those two months must somehow be fitted into the schedule for early 248. Which requires the conclusion that the Roman calendar was now running behind the Julian Year.⁹⁴

One major objection must be raised against this reconstruction, however. Why would the Romans have appointed a dictator so late in the consular year 249/248 and have sent him off to Sicily, when the consuls for 248/247 had *ex hypothesi* been elected already, and when Iunius himself was still active? The appointment of Caiatinus, let it be remembered, occurred *before* Iunius seized Eryx.⁹⁵ No matter how seriously the senate regarded the situation, the circumstances were such that it would have been much simpler to let Iunius serve out the few remaining weeks of his command and then to send out the new consuls, both of them men who had held the office before and were experienced in warfare, P. Servilius Geminus and C. Aurelius Cotta.⁹⁶ And since this is an objection not lightly to be brushed aside, it is worth considering whether Iunius' luckless campaign can better be placed under 249, and whether this will permit the claim that the two calendars coincided now as they had done in 250 and would do again in 242/241.

Proponents of this view tend to assume that Iunius left Rome for Sicily in June or July 249, the month they prefer depending on their willingness to allow him knowledge of Claudius' misfortune at Drepana, and it has been argued that Iunius' shipwreck off Cape Pachynus occurred – like that which had befallen Ser. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Paullus in 255 – in the month of July.⁹⁷ However, there is a difficulty in this view also. For Polybius tells us that Iunius set out from Rome with grain for the troops besieging Lilybaeum, and that he requisitioned further

⁹² Zonaras 8, 15, 14 is the only source to indicate when Caiatinus was appointed (cf. below, note 95); the other sources are collected by BROUGHTON 215.

⁹³ Zonaras 8, 15, 14; Dio 36, 34, 3; cf. MELTZER 334; DE SANCTIS 178.

⁹⁴ Even BELOCH does not allow sufficiently for Caiatinus' activities, as is remarked by DE SANCTIS 264 and WALBANK 115.

⁹⁵ This is doubted by DE SANCTIS 177 n. 74 and THIEL 291 n. 741, but without reason. There could certainly be no objection on procedural grounds: TH. MOMMSEN, *Römisches Staatsrecht II*³ 146 ff. and 155 f.

⁹⁶ Cf. DE SANCTIS 264 and, for the consuls, BROUGHTON 215.

⁹⁷ MELTZER 330 f.; DE SANCTIS 264; THIEL 284 n. 730 and 291 n. 741. More caution is shown by WALBANK 116 and 118.

supplies while he waited at Syracuse.⁹⁸ It seems not to have been asked why grain had to be transported over such distances if it was now June or July, the period immediately following the harvest. Nor can an answer be found in Diodorus' statement that the Carthaginians, in the period after Claudius' defeat, somehow managed to make off with Roman supplies of grain at Panormus;⁹⁹ even if Iunius knew of this raid, we would still lack an explanation for the need to bring grain all the way from Italy so soon after the harvest.¹⁰⁰ These details, it seems to me, would make more sense if Iunius travelled to Sicily at a time when grain was in short supply there and not easily to be replaced. By September 249, for example, the grain would have been harvested and its possessors much less likely to find any quantity surplus to their own requirements. So if we allow Claudius until August to go down to defeat at Drepana, there is nothing against the view that Iunius left Rome only in September; and whatever the reasons for his being delayed in the city until then, this increases to four months the gap between Claudius' departure and his own, and makes it more understandable that Polybius should have taken them to be commanders in different years. Nor is this all. Placing Iunius' loss of his fleet in the middle of September would still leave him a month before the end of the campaigning season in which to seize Eryx;¹⁰¹ and it would set Caiatinus' appointment as dictator around the end of September, and would allow him to serve out the full six-month term a dictator normally received between October 249 and March 248. There may then have been a brief interregnum before the consuls for 248, Geminus and Cotta, arrived in Sicily, probably in May 248, but it is no less possible that Caiatinus remained in command – in spite of any constitutional niceties – during that brief period, so closing the gap between the end of his own term and the new consuls' arrival.¹⁰²

If these are considered adequate grounds for placing Iunius' activities in 249 and for adhering to the view that the two calendars were in agreement after all, there remains Polybius' statement that Iunius was Claudius' successor and that elections were held before he set out for Sicily. There being nothing to support, let alone

⁹⁸ Polybius 1, 52, 5–8.

⁹⁹ Diodorus 24, 1, 6. Both DE SANCTIS 174 and THIEL 281 f. take this to mean that the Carthaginians intercepted a Roman convoy, but Diodorus mentions no convoy.

¹⁰⁰ The shortage is not to be explained by a failure of the Sicilian grain crop, nor by Roman consideration for a war-torn island; Iunius was able to collect grain in the neighbourhood of Syracuse, and showed no hesitation about doing so.

¹⁰¹ The amount of time Iunius needed to seize Eryx tends, I think, to be exaggerated (cf. DE SANCTIS 264; WALBANK 115), mainly in order to place the appointment of Caiatinus at the most likely time, the end of the campaigning season for 249 (cf. MELTZER 334). From Polybius 1, 55, 5–6 it is possible to conclude that Iunius acted with all possible speed.

¹⁰² Cf. MOMMSEN, Staatsrecht II³ 161: «Wenn ein Dictator bei Ablauf seines Commandos keinen geeigneten Magistrat vorfand, an den dasselbe übergehen konnte, so muß er dasselbe wohl fortgeführt haben, bis ein solcher eintraf.» As MOMMSEN goes on to say, there is no definite example of this, but Caiatinus may be considered a possibility.

recommend, the view that the consuls for 248 were elected in the late summer of 249 (be the month July or September), some explanation is clearly necessary. It is customary to remark that Polybius took Iunius as Claudius' successor because he was following Philinus rather than Fabius Pictor, «errore scusabile e comprensibile in un Greco . . . e non in un Romano che aveva sotto occhio i fasti consolari.»¹⁰³ Such «Quellenkritik» explains very little. As KLOTZ observed, Philinus would not have mentioned elections in Rome;¹⁰⁴ and neither would Fabius Pictor at this point. In other words, Polybius himself inserted the reference to the elections, and he must have done so in order to link his narrative together, explaining thereby how Iunius could have set out for Sicily so much later than Claudius, and at the same time demonstrating once again the Romans' determination in the face of defeat. Which is to say that Polybius thought the causal aspect far more important than the purely chronological, and that point will help to explain his account of the war's last year, to which we may now turn.

V. *The Battle of the Aegates Insulae, 241*

The years 247–243 are an almost complete blank. We are told very little about the campaigns of the various consuls, let alone the times of year at which they fought.¹⁰⁵ But for the battle which ended the First Punic War the sources once more offer plentiful detail; and since they do not or, better, seem not to agree amongst themselves, there has been considerable discussion of the subject, the chronology being one of the principal bones of contention.

Polybius tells us that the Roman commander, C. Lutatius Catulus (*cos.* 242), left for Sicily ἀρχομένης τῆς θερείας, i. e., around the middle of May by Julian reckoning and *prima facie* in the year 242.¹⁰⁶ It is clear from his account that some time passed before the decisive battle was fought at the Aegates Insulae, since he mentions that Catulus in the interim put Drepana under siege and completed the training of his

¹⁰³ LA BUA 133; cf. DE SANCTIS 174 n. 71 and 228; BUNG 63 n. 2; WALBANK 115.

¹⁰⁴ KLOTZ, *Hermes* 80, 1952, 333. REUSS I 120 suggested that Polybius mistook as the elections for 248 Caiatinus' appointment as dictator, an idea rightly rejected by BUNG 63 n. 3.

¹⁰⁵ I have argued elsewhere that L. Metellus (*cos.* II 247) dedicated his temple to Ops Opifera on Roman 19 December 247 (*Phoenix* 27, 1973, 41); that rests on the assumption that the Roman calendar was then in fairly close agreement with the Julian Year, since Metellus was in charge of the siege of Lilybaeum (*Zonaras* 8, 16, 5), and could have returned to Rome only during the winter. It is perhaps worth noting one other detail about this period: the consuls for 246 apparently did not return to Rome to hold the elections (BROUGHTON 216).

¹⁰⁶ Polybius 1, 59, 8; cf. MELTZER 347; DE SANCTIS 264 f.; THIEL 305; WALBANK 124 f. It will not do to dismiss Polybius' statement as an error (so LUTERBACHER 422 f., to support the contention that Catulus set out at the end of the summer of 242).

crews, and that when the Carthaginians heard of all this activity, they had to collect their ships together and send them across to Sicily. But there is nothing in Polybius' account to suggest that this interval was lengthy (he says, indeed, that Catulus trained his crews «in a short time», and that the Carthaginians assembled their ships «at once»), and there is certainly nothing to suggest that the battle took place in a year or a campaigning season different to the one in which Catulus left Rome.¹⁰⁷ Other sources, however, indicate that the battle took place in what by Roman reckoning was early 241; thus Eutropius actually dates the engagement on Roman 10 March 241; Zonaras reports that after the battle Catulus was ready to make peace, because his term of office would soon expire and the glory of ending the war would go to another; and the *acta triumphalia* record that Catulus triumphed as proconsul *de Poeneis ex Sicilia* on Roman 4 October 241.¹⁰⁸

It seems generally to be agreed that the Eutropean date for the battle should not be dismissed, if only because it is one of the very few calendar dates he gives and ought therefore to rest on good authority.¹⁰⁹ But there is more reluctance about equating Roman March with the same month in the Julian Year. Hence it has been asserted, for example, that a sea-battle could not have been fought so early in the Julian Year.¹¹⁰ Which is patently absurd, particularly in this case; since the Carthaginians were attempting to run for Drepana when Catulus' fleet intercepted them, DE SANCTIS and THIEL may well be right to suggest that the Carthaginians were trying to take advantage of the fact that it was not the sailing season.¹¹¹ Relying nonetheless on Polybius' failure to mention a winter, BELOCH and others have argued that Catulus must have set out in the spring of 241 by the Julian calendar, not the spring of 242, and that the battle was fought some time during that same campaigning season; in which case the Roman calendar would have been running some months behind the Julian.¹¹²

Against this interpretation those who prefer the more orthodox view that the two calendars coincided have not offered a very convincing case. They tend to discount Polybius' failure to mention the winter of 242/241,¹¹³ and the only

¹⁰⁷ Polybius 1, 59, 9–61, 8; see especially 59, 12 and 60, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Eutropius 2, 27, 2; Zonaras 8, 17, 3; DEGRASSI 76 f. There is no difficulty in the time-lag between the battle and Catulus' triumph; cf. MELTZER 585 n. 53; LUTERBACHER 425.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. SOLTAU 211 and n. 1; MELTZER 349; BELOCH 261. In spite of the small number of such calendar dates in Eutropius (1, 1; 4, 7, 1; 10, 16, 2; 18, 2), W. DEN BOER, *Some Minor Roman Historians*, Leiden 1972, 131 f., is content to consider its inclusion «largely . . . a matter of chance.»

¹¹⁰ BELOCH 261.

¹¹¹ DE SANCTIS 266 f.; THIEL 309 and 312; cf. also MELTZER 584 n. 53; E. DE SAINT-DENIS, *REL* 25, 1947, 201 f.

¹¹² BELOCH 261 f.; P. VARESE, *Klio* 10, 1910, 39 f.; BUNG 72; HEUSS 68. Against the attempt of REUSS I 121 ff. and II 426 f. to set the battle in 242 see DE SANCTIS 265 and WALBANK 125.

¹¹³ SOLTAU 211 and n. 1; LUTERBACHER 424.

detailed defence of this view rests on the proposition that Polybius was following Philinus here, and was misled by the emphasis which the pro-Carthaginian writer put on the speed of the Carthaginian reaction to the Romans' new offensive.¹¹⁴ For the rest, it has been customary to accept LUTERBACHER's suggestion that the Carthaginians would in fact have needed some six months to assemble their fleet and sail to Sicily.¹¹⁵ What seems not to have been noticed, however, is that Orosius gives us what amounts to a Julian date for the battle, a date which may fairly be held to agree with the Roman dating. Under the year 241 Orosius reports that the victory at the Aegates Insulae was preceded by various dire portents, the first among them a severe flood caused by the Tiber: *repentina subuersio ipsius Romae praeuenit triumphum Romanorum . . . nam Tiberis insolitis auctus imbribus et ultra opinionem uel diuturnitate uel magnitudine redundans omnia Romae aedificia in plano posita deleuit.*¹¹⁶ In antiquity, as JOEL LE GALL has pointed out, the Tiber overflowed its banks on this kind of scale in the opening months of the year, the Julian Year.¹¹⁷

But if this argument seems to confirm the view that the two calendars were in agreement after all, there remains Polybius' failure to mention the winter of 242/241 and this stands in need of an explanation which does not invoke the uncertainties of 'Quellenforschung'. In fact, the obvious explanation is that Polybius did not mention the winter because it was irrelevant to the matter at hand; if the Carthaginians required some six months to ready their fleet, the battle obviously could not take place before the opening months of 241 and there was no point in mentioning the intervening winter. Which is not only in accord with Polybius' practice in describing other campaigns in other wars.¹¹⁸ It is also in agreement with the procedure he follows when he does mention the time of year. In the *prokataskeue*, as PETZOLD has emphasized, the chronological aspect is much less important than the causal.¹¹⁹ So, on the two occasions on which Polybius mentions the harvest, under the years 262 and 250, it is to explain the outcome of events and the strategy being pursued at the time.¹²⁰ When he reports that the

¹¹⁴ WALBANK 125. That Polybius 1, 60, 1-4 derives from Philinus is the view also of BUNG 73 and LA BUA 162.

¹¹⁵ LUTERBACHER 423 f.; cf. MELTZER 347 ff.; DE SANCTIS 265 f.; THIEL 306 ff.; WALBANK 125.

¹¹⁶ Orosius 4, 11, 5-6.

¹¹⁷ J. LE GALL, *Le Tibre, fleuve de Rome, dans l'antiquité*, Paris 1953, 27 ff. He attributes this divergence from the modern pattern (now the Tiber tends to flood in the last months of the year) to colder winters and a later melting of the snow. The same conclusion was reached by OLCK, *Fleickens Jahrb. f. class. Philol.* 135, 1887, 467 f.

¹¹⁸ For a close parallel see M. G. MORGAN, *The Defeat of L. Metellus Denter at Arretium*, CQ 22, 1972, 309 ff., especially 320 f.

¹¹⁹ K.-E. PETZOLD, *Studien zur Methode des Polybios*, Munich 1969, 141, 184; cf. BUNG 86 n. 5; MORGAN 125 and n. 4.

¹²⁰ See above, parts I and III.

consuls set out «at the beginning of summer,» the emphasis is not so much on the time of year as it is on the zeal with which the Romans prosecuted the war, no matter what reverses they had to make good;¹²¹ in one case, as we have seen, he even invents consular elections to help make his point.¹²² And when he specifies that Ser. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Paullus lost their fleet *μεταξὺ . . . τῆς Ὠρίωνος καὶ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς*, it is because this was a notoriously stormy time of year and he wants to emphasize the Romans' insouciance – as he sees it – in matters maritime.¹²³

In short, it may safely be said that the Roman calendar and the Julian Year agreed yet again in 242/241. If Polybius fails to mention the winter which intervened between Catulus' departure from Rome in 242 and his defeat of the Carthaginian fleet in 241, that is because he rated causal above chronological considerations, and the winter did nothing to explain the battle. Eutropius, however, provides us with the Roman date for the engagement, Orosius with what amounts to a Julian date for it, and the two point to the same time of year, and thus to the correspondence of the two calendars.

VI. Conclusion

If the arguments advanced here are valid, it has been shown that the Roman calendar and the Julian Year coincided in 255/254, in 250, in 249/248, and in 242/41. On this basis, it is simplest to assume that the correspondence extended through the entire period from 255 to 241. However, it would be unwise – I think – to extend the correspondence back into the first part of the war. Though we can tell nothing about the relative state of the two calendars in 264/263 or 263/262, it seems very likely that the Roman calendar was between one and two months in advance of the Julian Year in 262/61, 261/60 and 260/59, that the intercalary month inserted in early 259 remedied the situation only in part, and that the Roman calendar was still a month ahead of the Julian in spring 258.

In this case, the two calendars must obviously have been brought into line between the spring of 258 and the spring of 255 by the insertion of two intercalary months.¹²⁴ The important question, however, is why this step was taken and

¹²¹ Polybius 1, 36, 10; 39, 1; 59, 8; cf. 25, 7.

¹²² Polybius 1, 52, 5; see above, part IV.

¹²³ Polybius 1, 37, 4–10 (there will be more to say of his criticisms in part VI, below); cf. THIEL 236 n. 569; WALBANK 97. Even Cicero complained of the perils of seafaring in July (Ad Att. 5, 12, 1).

¹²⁴ If the Roman calendar was 30 days ahead of the Julian Year in spring 258 (above, part I), this discrepancy would have grown by 10 days a year (11 in a leap year) without correction; for reasons to be offered below, I suggest that one such month was inserted in 257, the other in 255; it is also possible that a pair of months were inserted at a single

why, once taken, it continued to be observed through the end of the war. Since the Romans exhibited on occasion a somewhat casual attitude toward the matter of time,¹²⁵ it seems reasonable to conclude that the decision was the result of serious consideration, and the one Roman action to spark such consideration is precisely the one for which Polybius himself thought the war so important, their taking to the sea. So long as the Romans fought only on land, as they did through 264–261, they could function adequately enough with a calendar that was out of synchronization with the solar year. But once they took to the sea, it was soon borne in upon them that they must show a little more respect for the seasons or, more accurately perhaps, have a clearer idea of the opening and closing dates of the sailing season.

This suggestion, of course, seems to fly in the face of the strictures which Polybius levels against the Romans in his discussion of the shipwreck off Camarina in 255. For he says explicitly that on this occasion the two commanders, Ser. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Paullus, disregarded the warnings of their captains, and he attributes this disregard to a general Roman determination to win through in the face of any obstacles.¹²⁶ These comments are not to be explained away by *Quellenforschung*, since they have been attributed with more or less equal plausibility to Philinus, to Fabius Pictor, and to Polybius himself.¹²⁷ It is worth noting, however, that the Roman senate was evidently disposed to take a different view of the subject, inasmuch as Nobilior and Paullus were granted naval triumphs in January 253. The two men had certainly won a major victory over the Carthaginian fleet off Hermaeum in 255, and seem to have soldiered competently through 254. But to grant them triumphs after the shipwreck off Camarina surely implies that a majority in the senate thought them blameless as well as victorious. The triumph was too signal an honour to be scattered broadcast among commanders who manifested a determination to press on through a storm,¹²⁸ and there is no more to recommend the view that they were awarded to help

point. Unfortunately, Polybius' only reference to the seasons within the period is not helpful (1, 25, 7).

¹²⁵ Witness the story of Pliny, N. H. 7, 213 that the first sundial which was set up in Rome was taken from Catania in 263, and was used for 99 years before the Romans realized that it was designed for a more southerly latitude (cf. E. BUCHNER, *Chiron* 1, 1971, 458). Note also the humorous tirade against sundials put into the mouth of a parasite by a comic poet apparently named Aquilius (frags. 1–9 R³ = Gellius, N. A. 3, 3, 5; see further WISSOWA, *RE* II 323; H. BARDON, *La littérature latine inconnue* I, Paris 1952, 36 f.; J. WRIGHT, *Dancing in Chains*, Rome 1974, 80 f.).

¹²⁶ Polybius 1, 37, 4–10; cf. 1, 39, 6 on 253; 1, 53, 4–8 on 249; 6, 52 (no more favourable, despite WALBANK 97, but briefer).

¹²⁷ See the conspectus provided by LA BUA 105 n. 8.

¹²⁸ For the importance of the triumph see, e. g., E. BADIEN, *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic*², Oxford 1968, 12 ff. Only 17 or 18 triumphs were awarded in the entire First Punic War (cf. LIPPOLD, *Consules* 312 ff.).

keep up Roman morale.¹²⁹ Granted, then, that the Roman commanders were considered blameless, a reason for this can be found easily enough, the very same reason probably as underlay their confident disregard of their captains' warnings, namely the fact that the shipwreck occurred in the sailing season and in the sailing season the inexperienced Romans were supposed to sail and expected to sail safely.¹³⁰

Be that as it may, we have still to find an event or events which would have persuaded the Romans to bring their calendar into line with the seasons. It will not suffice to argue that Duilius first urged this course on the senate as a result of his experiences in 260; though an intercalary month was inserted in early 259, this was at best half-hearted compliance with any advice he may have purveyed, and the calendars were still out of phase in early 258. There might, at first sight, seem more plausibility in the view that the Romans brought their calendar into agreement with the seasons, in order to improve the chances of the major African expedition they sent to Africa in 256 under L. Manlius Vulso and M. Atilius Regulus, and that they acted on the advice of a Greek ally such as Hiero of Syracuse. But in that case too they should have acted by 258, since it looks very much as though they had decided by then on the African expedition. As MELTZER recognized, there is only one plausible explanation for Roman naval strategy between Duilius' victory at Mylae in 260 and the invasion of Africa in 256: the senate realized that Mylae was beginner's luck, that the Roman fleet needed further training and experience before it could tackle a major expedition, and that the waters off Sardinia and Corsica offered a school where that instruction could be gained with relatively little danger – hence the campaigns of L. Cornelius Scipio (*cos.* 259) and C. Sulpicius Paterculus (*cos.* 258), before C. Atilius Regulus (*cos.* 257) tried his hand at naval operations off Sicily.¹³¹ Which leaves us with two incidents, both reported under 259 and both relevant to the question under discussion.

¹²⁹ At the material level awarding a triumph to two commanders who had lost so many men could scarcely raise morale; this was hardly snatching victory from the jaws of defeat «à la Dunkerque». On the spiritual level, it should be remembered that a triumph was a way of thanking the gods, Jupiter in particular, for success; that the Romans could do only if they had been following all proper procedures at the time of the shipwreck which undid their victory.

¹³⁰ The conduct of the two commanders is defended by MELTZER 308, DE SANCTIS 158, and WALBANK 96, but the criticisms of THIEL 237 f. are well founded. It may be worth wondering, however, whether it was disillusionment caused by the vagaries of the sailing season which led the Romans to think of the sea as a trap even when calm (Lucretius 5, 1004: *placidi pellacia ponti*). It is certainly worth stressing that their attitude to the sea was seldom trusting (cf. J. H. THIEL, *Studies on the History of Roman Sea-Power in Republican Times*, Amsterdam 1946, 1 ff.), since this in fact contradicts Polybius' criticisms of their overconfidence.

¹³¹ MELTZER 283; cf. DE SANCTIS 130 f. (for the consuls see BROUGHTON 206 ff.). THIEL 192 offers a machiavellian interpretation according to which the senate used these cam-

First, according to Orosius and Zonaras, there was serious unrest in Rome during 259, involving some 3,000 slaves and – more significant for our present purposes – 4,000 *socii nauales*.¹³² General reasons for unrest among the *socii nauales* are easy enough to find, a certain residue of hostility toward Rome and a reluctance to serve, in whatever capacity, in the Roman fleets. But there is nothing here to give a reason for unrest precisely in 259, only a year after Duilius' great victory at Mylae.¹³³ Since there should have been nothing to fear from expeditions to Sardinia and Corsica as such, I suggest that the root cause was a lack of confidence in Roman commanders who, among other things, disregarded the elementary rules of seafaring. Which brings us to the second incident, a case of such disregard. LEUZE long ago suggested that L. Scipio (*cos.* 259) vowed his temple to the Tempestates on the anniversary of the day on which he escaped shipwreck off Corsica, and such seems to be Ovid's meaning in the passage in which he dates the temple to Roman 1 June.¹³⁴ The *fasti Antiates maiores* have since revealed that the temple was originally dedicated on Roman 23 December,¹³⁵ but we need not therefore abandon the Ovidian link between the storm and the temple's dedication date; that could still rest on a genuine tradition. We know that Scipio conducted an energetic, if not entirely successful campaign in Corsican and Sardinian waters and – more important – that he triumphed *de Poeneis et Sardin. Corsica* only on Roman 11 March 258.¹³⁶ It is quite conceivable, in these circumstances, that he was still at sea on Roman 23 December 259, and that by Julian reckoning would be late November and outside the limits of the sailing season.¹³⁷ Now, if it was only at some date between late December 259 and early March 258 that he returned to port, we can link this with the unrest among the *socii nauales*. It is not clear from

paigns to school a reluctant populace to accept wars fought further and further afield. This is most improbable (cf. C. G. STARR, CPh 51, 1956, 65), as is also the view that rival factions within the nobility urged attacks on different areas as they came to power (LIPOLD, Consules 112 ff.); most such changes are readily explicable by the military exigencies.

¹³² Orosius 4, 7, 12; Zonaras 8, 11, 8–9. The best modern discussion is that by MARIA CAPOZZA, *Movimenti servili nel mondo Romano in età repubblicana I*, Rome 1966, 77 ff.

¹³³ See further CAPOZZA, *Movimenti* 86 ff.; cf. HEUSS 61. Since Orosius clearly plays up the servile element in the unrest for his own purposes (cf. CAPOZZA 90), I can see no reason to give more weight to his version than to Zonaras' account, where the *socii nauales* are given most attention. THIEL 74 f., it may be noted, thinks that the slaves were also intended for naval service.

¹³⁴ O. LEUZE, *Klio* 10, 1910, 409 f., after Ovid, *Fasti* 6, 193 f. (cf. ILS 2–3 = ILLRP 310).

¹³⁵ G. WISSOWA, *Hermes* 58, 1923, 385. Unfortunately, THIEL 195 n. 426 was not aware of this.

¹³⁶ For the campaign see THIEL 193–6; for the triumph, above, note 45.

¹³⁷ On the state of the calendars at the time see above, part I. DE SANCTIS 255 f. saw that the late triumph needed explanation, but was only able to suggest that Scipio spent time policing the Etruscan or Campanian coast; which seems lame. For clarity's sake, however, it may be emphasized that I am not claiming that Scipio spent the entire winter at sea, only that he returned to port at some date after Roman 23 December 259.

the sources whether the unrest occurred before or after Scipio's return, but neither does it matter; either way, the *socii nauales* would have cause to worry about serving under commanders who failed to return before the end of the sailing season. And since Scipio celebrated his triumph only in March 258, nothing could be done about inserting an intercalary month into the calendar before 257, and so it is hardly surprising that the Roman calendar was still ahead of the Julian Year in the opening months of 258.

In short, it is my contention that the senate was persuaded to bring the Roman calendar into synchronization with the Julian Year as a result of two incidents in 259, unrest among the *socii nauales* and L. Scipio's narrow escape from a storm. Nothing could be done to remedy the situation before 257, but then the critical step was taken by means of further intercalation, and the two calendars were kept in agreement for the rest of the war. The results, to be sure, were not entirely satisfactory, inasmuch as the Romans would still suffer three major shipwrecks during the sailing season (in 255, 253, and 249), but at least they could comfort themselves (and their allies) with the thought that they were doing everything in their power to guarantee their eventual victory in the war.

It will perhaps be as well to close with a tabulation of the dates defended or proposed in this paper. The first table covers the years 262–258, is based on the discussion of this period in Parts I and VI, and is designed primarily to illustrate the discrepancies between the Roman calendar and the Julian Year. The second table, based on the discussion in Parts II–V, is concerned rather with the sequence of events in the years under consideration and with the calendar dates at which they occurred.

Table I. The Years 262–258

Year	Events	Roman Date	Julian Date
262/61	New consuls enter office	1 May	1 April at latest
	Siege of Agrigentum started	1–15 July	late May/early June
	Agrigentum is captured	15–29 Jan.	mid-December
260/59	New consuls enter office	1 May	8–14 March
	Scipio Asina captured	ca. 8 May	ca. 21 March
	Defeat of C. Caecilius (<i>tr. mil.</i> 261)	May	1–14 April
	Arrival of C. Duilius in Sicily	? June ?	? May ?
	Duilius leaves Sicily for Rome	mid-Dec.	mid-October
	Duilius celebrates triumph	1 intercal.	mid-December
259/58	Unrest among <i>socii nauales</i> and slaves	Nov.-Jan.	October-December
	L. Scipio escapes shipwreck	23 Dec.	late November
	Scipio celebrates his triumph	11 March	1–15 February
258/57	New consuls enter office	1 May	23–31 March
	Caiatinus finds Carthaginians in winter quarters	ca. 21 May	mid-April

Table II. *The Years 255–241*

Year	Month	Events
255/54	March/April	Opening of the campaigning season for 255
	April	Defeat of M. Regulus by Xanthippus
	mid–May	New consuls Paullus and Nobilior, leave Rome
	early June	Consuls defeat Punic fleet off Hermaeum and rescue survivors at Clupea, before raiding African coast
	mid–July	Consuls lose their fleet in a storm
	January	Elections for 254 conducted
	February–April	New fleet built in three months
254/53	May–October	Combined operations leading to Panormus' capture
	18–19 January	Paullus and Nobilior celebrate naval triumphs
250	February (?)	Furius Pacilus returns to Rome to hold elections
	May	Hasdrubal begins an offensive against Panormus
	May	New consuls, for 250/49, enter office
	Early June	Metellus, proconsul, defeats Hasdrubal
	Late June	New consuls leave Rome for Sicily
	ca. 1 July	Metellus leaves Panormus, taking two months to return to Rome with his captured elephants
	7 September	Metellus celebrates his triumph
249/48	1 May	Claudius Pulcher and Iunius Pullus take office
	ca. 1 June	Claudius arrives in Sicily
	August	Claudius defeated at Drepana
	Early September	Iunius Pullus leaves Rome for Sicily
	Mid–September	Iunius loses his fleet off Cape Pachynus
	Late September	Atilius Caiatinus is appointed dictator
	Mid–October	Iunius captures position on Mt. Eryx by this date
	October–March or May	Atilius Caiatinus serves as dictator in Sicily
242/41	mid–May	Lutatius Catulus leaves Rome for Sicily
	June–October	Training of crews and sundry operations
	Early–March	Carthaginians send a fleet to Sicily after some six months of preparation; they perhaps hope that it will arrive before the sailing-season proper begins
	10 March	Battle of the Aegates Insulae

