

THE AFFAIR OF LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII IN 205/204 BC*

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The events that took place in the city of Locri Epizephyrii in southern Italy in 205 BC occupy a prominent place in extant ancient tradition¹. The reasons for which ancient writers devoted so much attention to a seemingly unimportant episode of the Second Punic War, i.e. the recapture of one city occupied by Hannibal's forces, were the events that occurred in Locri after the Carthaginians had left: the earliest Roman plundering of a temple treasury attested in the sources, the first fratricidal battle of Romans against Romans and finally, as a result, the last attempt to scuttle the African expedition of P. Cornelius Scipio. For all these reasons, this affair has often been examined by modern historiography, either in the wider context of the Second Punic War or as a separate research topic². It seems, however, that all these works present the events in Locri in a false light due to the uncritical acceptance of a specific viewpoint imposed by the sources. In attempting my own assessment of these events in Locri, I will first present the course of events according to the evidence in the sources and their interpretation according to today's historians in order to underline the issues that, in my opinion, are not explained in a satisfactory way.

Livy³ has transmitted the circumstances of the seizing of Locri. As the result of treachery on the part of several inhabitants, a Roman contingent forced their way into the city, commanded by the military tribunes M. Sergius and P. Matienus

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¹ Liv. XXIX 6–9; 16, 4–22, 12; Diod. XXVII 4; Dio Cass. XVII fr. 62 (57); Zon. IX 11, 8 (Boiss. I, p. 258); App. *Han.* (55) 230 f.; Val. Max. I 1, 21; III 6, 1.

² B. KRYSINIEL-JÓZEFOWICZOWA, *De antiquissimo Romanorum sacrilegio*, Eos XLV 1951, fasc. 1, pp. 137–147; F. GROSSO, *Il caso di Pleminio*, GIF V 1952, pp. 119–135, 234–253; A. TOYNBEE, *Hannibal's Legacy*, vol. II, Oxford 1965, pp. 613–621; H.H. SCULLARD, *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*, New York 1970, pp. 112–115. Cf. also U. KAHRSTEDT, *Geschichte der Kathager von 218–146*, vol. III, Berlin 1913, pp. 329–333, 541, and n. 2; G. DE SANCTIS, *Storia del Romani*, vol. III 2, Firenze ²1968, pp. 498–501.

³ Liv. XXIX 6, 1–8, 5; cf. Zon. IX 11, 8; App. *Han.* (55) 230.

(detached by Scipio from the Sicilian army) and the propraetor Q. Pleminius, assigned as commander by the consul. In spite of Hannibal's efforts to come to the rescue of the city, the expedition was successful, primarily because the Locrians, at first passively witnessing the fighting, then joined in the battle on the side of the Romans.

The events that followed are transmitted by two sources, Diodorus and Livy. Diodorus writes⁴ that Pleminius looted the treasury of the temple of Persephone, the richest sanctuary in Italy, which angered Sergius and Matienus. Their primary concern was not the sacrilege, but rather that their leader did not allow them a share of the plunder and they threatened to report him to the authorities. This quarrel became a fight, during which the tribunes' subordinates beat and mutilated Pleminius, who retaliated in his turn by seizing Sergius and Matienus, having them tortured and finally having them killed. At the news of these events, the Senate sent an aedile and two tribunes of the people to bring Scipio to Rome, provided that Pleminius had acted with his cognizance and agreement, as Scipio's enemies were alleging. Before the envoys could reach Sicily, however, Scipio arrested Pleminius on his own initiative and all that the envoys of the Senate had to do was to send him to Rome, where he shortly died in prison. The Senate restored the losses of the treasury of Persephone from public funds and then ordered the Roman soldiers under penalty of death to return the looted riches of the goddess; the Locrians, on the other hand, were given back their freedom.

According to the much more extensive account of Livy⁵, the violence in Locri was the work of Pleminius, and not just the temple itself but the whole city fell victim to it, given over to the army as spoils. The battle between the Roman forces was evoked by the intervention of Sergius and Matienus in defence of one of the inhabitants who had been robbed by one of Pleminius' soldiers. Pleminius placed the responsibility for the brawl that resulted between the subordinates of the tribunes and those of the propraetor on the shoulders of Sergius and Matienus, and he ordered them flogged. This was stopped by their subordinates who assaulted the propraetor and his men and mutilated him. Command was returned to Pleminius only when Scipio, who had heard of these events, arrived from Sicily and ordered the tribunes to be imprisoned. After Scipio left, Pleminius had Sergius and Matienus tortured to death and then turned his anger against the Locrians, oppressing them even more than previously. The distraught inhabitants finally turned to the Senate, which was used by Scipio's enemies, led by Q. Fabius Maximus, to launch a general attack against him. The Locrians were deemed allies (*socii et amici populi Romani*), all their plundered goods were to be returned, as were the treasures of the temple, and Pleminius and his associates were to be arrested. Only the demand for Scipio to be recalled to Rome and

⁴ Diod. XXVII 4, 1–2, 4–8.

⁵ Liv. XXIX 8, 6–9, 12; 16, 4–22, 12.

even to be stripped of his *imperium* was refused. This was to be investigated by a commission led by the newly elected praetor of Sicily, M. Pomponius Matho (Scipio's cousin) and it was to decide if the crimes had been committed with the knowledge and consent of the consul. The findings of the commission were of course negative, all the more because the Locrians themselves did not dare accuse Scipio directly. Any associates of Pleminius were probably acquitted and he himself died in prison before the end of the hearing.

The main differences in the two accounts, leaving aside the fact that Livy's, being much more ample includes many more details, are the following: (1) the circumstances of the fratricidal brawl – according to Diodorus, it was caused by the envy of the tribunes who had been disappointed in their hopes of acquiring part of the spoils while according to Livy, it was their intervention in defence of the residents of Locri, (2) the second sojourn of Scipio in Locri (the first time, he had come to the city at the news of Hannibal's attempt to prevent the Romans from regaining the city; seeing that the situation was under control, Scipio returned to Sicily leaving Locri in Pleminius' hands)⁶ – Diodorus does not mention it: Pleminius, beaten and mutilated in the fight, arrests the tribunes with his own men while in Livy's account, the mastery of the situation and the returning of power to Pleminius is done by Scipio during his second sojourn in the city, (3) the arrest of Pleminius – according to Diodorus this was accomplished by Scipio, while Livy reports that this was done by the commission of the Senate.

In addition to the basic version of events presented above, Livy's account includes traces of at least two different traditions. The first is the same one as used by Diodorus: Livy, while relating the differences in the sources pertaining to the circumstances of Pleminius' arrest, includes the version in which this was done on Scipio's order⁷. The second tradition is contained in the speech of the Locrian envoys in the Senate: according to this tradition, the violence in the city and the looting of the temple were the work of both Pleminius and the tribunes, while the fight between the Romans (the outcome of the anger of Persephone) was the result and not the cause of the sacrilege⁸.

Thus there must exist at least three versions of the events that happened in Locri. The account of Diodorus, favourable to Scipio, seems to indicate the Polybian tradition⁹; Livy or his source knows this version but almost completely ignores it¹⁰. The account in the *Ab urbe condita* is based on some type of annalistic

⁶ Liv. XXIX 7, 1–8, 5.

⁷ Liv. XXIX 21, 2.

⁸ Liv. XXIX 17 f.

⁹ DE SANCTIS, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 647 f.; cf. T. ZIELIŃSKI, *Die letzten Jahre des zweiten punischen Krieges*, Leipzig 1880, pp. 83–136.

¹⁰ ZIELIŃSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 135; KAHRSTEDT, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 332 f.

account; the version of the Locrian envoys, which is highly unfavourable to Scipio, also seems to belong to this same tradition¹¹.

The number of traditions does not rule out the thesis that, in his description of the events in Locri, Livy was using only one source, and that this was also the source for the account of Diodorus. The consideration of the Polybian tradition and the emphasis on the role of divine intervention in the Locrian version would point to Coelius Antipater, who is also considered by modern historiography as one of the primary sources of book XXIX of the *Ab urbe condita*. This opinion, expressed by KAHRSTEDT¹², is refuted by the majority of scholars who admit that Coelius was the basic source for Livy, but that both Livy and Diodorus drew the Polybian version from another source, Polybius himself or some intermediary account¹³. In all this, the discussion about the direct sources of Livy and Diodorus is of secondary importance; much more relevant is undoubtedly the determination of the basic differences in ancient tradition pertaining to the events in Locri. The question arises as to what could have caused these differences.

It seems that these differences should be connected with the attempt to strip Scipio of the African command. It is doubtful if, for ancient historiography, the fate of either Pleminius or the residents of Locri had much meaning in isolation; these matters gain importance only when linked with Scipio Africanus. What was important was not just presenting the events that happened in Locri in 205 BC, but rather answering the question whether and to what degree Scipio was responsible for them. It seems that modern historiography has fallen into the same trap: research into the affair at Locri investigates it primarily from the point of view of Scipio's involvement in it, and as a result, they condemn or absolve him. To the accusers belong B. KRYSINIEL-JÓZEFOWICZOWA, F. GROSSO, A. TOYNBEE and, to some extent, G. DE SANCTIS¹⁴. They assert that Pleminius was Scipio's instrument in obtaining the treasure that Scipio badly needed to equip the army that would accompany him to Africa, for which the Senate had refused adequate funding. The apologetic view is represented by H.H. SCULLARD¹⁵, who rejects the above hypothesis and considers that Scipio's only fault lay in his excessive lenience towards Pleminius.

Apart from a basically Scipionic perspective, all versions of ancient tradition emphasize the anger of Persephone as the primary cause of the bloody

¹¹ A. KLOTZ, *Livius und seine Vorgänger*, vol. II, Leipzig–Berlin 1941, pp. 191 f.

¹² KAHRSTEDT, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 332 f.

¹³ ZIELIŃSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 135; KLOTZ, *op. cit.* (n. 11), pp. 190–194; DE SANCTIS (*op. cit.* [n. 2], pp. 627 f.) is inclined to see the influence of the Polybian tradition in the description of the taking of Locri in Livy (XXIX 6–9), but see KAHRSTEDT, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 329 f.

¹⁴ KRYSINIEL-JÓZEFOWICZOWA, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 145; GROSSO, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 129; TOYNBEE, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 619–621; DE SANCTIS, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 500.

¹⁵ SCULLARD, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 114 f.

disturbances in Locri¹⁶. The distinctly non-Polybian explanation in the account of Diodorus is particularly worth noting. We know from Polybius' own words that he was in close contact with the residents of Locri¹⁷, and in this way the tradition ascribing these tragic events to the anger of the goddess could have entered his work. Nor is it surprising to find the identical motif in the annalistic work, even if, as in the case of the basic version imparted by Livy, the description of events does not leave room for divine intervention. For there can be no doubt that the accusations of the Locrian envoys and the discussion in the Senate that followed focused above all on the sacrilege committed by the Romans and its eventual consequences, particularly for Scipio's army (cf. below). Modern historians also concentrate on the looting of the temple of Persephone, but focus primarily on the material aspect and try to reduce the entire affair to an attempt by Scipio to obtain the funds he needed for the African expedition.

It would seem, then, that two factors have negatively influenced the presentation of the events in Locri in ancient sources and their interpretation by modern historiography: the domination of the narrative by the character of Scipio and the influence of the local Locrian tradition emphasizing the theme of sacrilege. In this case, we should re-examine the mutual relationship between Pleminius and Scipio and the true role that the latter played in the events in Locri, as well as the true causes of the fighting between the Romans.

Livy and Diodorus and modern historians after them present Pleminius as Scipio's legate. This is a mistake, in my opinion. Pleminius bore the title of *propraetor*¹⁸, which denotes that he wielded an independent command that could only have been the command of Rhegium. This can be inferred from Livy's account. He first writes that the contingent which forced its way into the city was composed of three thousand soldiers from the garrison in Rhegium, under the command of the tribunes appointed by Scipio, who in their turn were under the command of Pleminius ("tribuni militum [...] missi"; "iussique ab Regio tria milia militum Locros ducere; et Q. Pleminio propraetori scriptum, ut rei agenda esset")¹⁹. This account is wrong, and for several reasons. Later events irrefutably show that the force in Locri was not homogeneous, as would seem from the description given above. The soldiers from Rhegium were under the direct command of Pleminius, not the tribunes, which Livy himself asserts in a different place: "militum pars sub eo quam ipse [*scil.* Pleminius] ab Regio duxerat, pars sub tribunis erat"²⁰. The man with the rank of *propraetor* who commanded the soldiers from Rhegium

¹⁶ Liv. XXIX 8, 9–11 (basic version), 18, 1–19 (Locrian version); Diod. XXVII 4, 2, 8.

¹⁷ Polyb. XII 5; cf. DE SANCTIS, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 627.

¹⁸ Liv. XXIX 6, 9 (cf. below).

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Liv. XXIX 9, 1.

could only be the commander of that town who held an independent command. Rhegium, which was cut off by the revolt of the Bruttii from the remaining Roman armies in Italy, was in fact a small, distinct province, all the more important because, as the only Roman stronghold on the southern edge of the peninsula, it allowed the Romans to keep the enemy in check from the rear²¹. This is the reason why Pleminius bore the title of *propraetor* even though he did not hold any higher office, similarly to Scipio in Spain in 209–206 BC. Since neither Rhegium nor, more importantly, Locri, were located in Scipio's province of Sicily²², Pleminius could not have been Scipio's subordinate. Those three thousand soldiers under the command of the tribunes did not belong to the garrison of Rhegium, but rather to the Sicilian army, and were reinforcements granted by one commander (Scipio) to another (Pleminius). The role of the consul was at first to grant aid to the commander of Rhegium for the carrying out of the extremely risky action of seizing an enemy city under Hannibal's nose. Events transpired in such a way that Scipio's intervention proved unavoidable, but his stay in Locri was as brief as possible. To recapitulate: the force in Locri was composed of members of the garrison of Rhegium with Pleminius at their head as well as soldiers of the Sicilian army under the command of Sergius and Matienus, with the overall command belonging to Pleminius due to his rank and the command he held rather than to Scipio's favour.

In such a situation, the bloody events in Locri were simply a revolt of the tribunes against their commander. In order to save his own position, Scipio was obliged to stand behind Pleminius against his own officers. The exigencies of the hour justified aiding Locri and even leaving his own province in order to do so, but the revolt of his own subordinates threatened unforeseeable consequences for a leader who already had the reputation of being unable to keep his army under control²³ and who was at the time preparing for a venture as risky as landing in Africa. The second visit of Scipio to Locri had nothing to do with violence or looting in the city, as Livy asserts. Its aim was solely curbing his disaffected tribunes and soldiers of the Sicilian army in order to save his own political position. Livy is completely mistaken when he places Scipio in the position of judge, freeing one

²¹ The true significance of Rhegium was made clear in 209 BC, when a diversion by that garrison made it possible for Fabius to seize Tarentum (Liv. XXVII 12, 4–6; 15, 8; 16, 9; Plut. *Fab.* 22).

²² In 210 BC consul M. Valerius Laevinus transferred 4000 men from his province of Sicily to Rhegium for the purpose of looting the territory of the Bruttii (Polyb. IX 27; Liv. XXVI 40, 15), who in the following year, however, were under the command of the commander in Italy, Q. Fabius Maximus (cf. n. 21).

²³ Cf. the mutiny of a part of the Spanish army at Sucro in 206 BC: Polyb. XI 25–30; Liv. XXVIII 24–29; App. *Iber.* (34–36) 137–147; Dio Cass. XVI fr. 47 (57) (ed. U.Ph. BOISSEVAIN, vol. I, Berolini 1895, p. 250).

side and assigning guilt to the other²⁴. In reality, only the tribunes were guilty, but because they had been victorious in the fighting, Scipio had to intervene in Locri on the side of the legitimate leader, not as Pleminius' superior (since he did not have any power over him), but as the commander-in-chief responsible for his disaffected Sicilian troops.

Given these relations between the two leaders, the thesis that Pleminius was a 'tool' in Scipio's hand loses its credibility. If Scipio had actually been counting on the Locrian treasure, the agents of his plans would have been his own subordinates, Sergius and Matienus. Also mistaken is SCULLARD's view that Scipio took pity on the beaten and mutilated Pleminius and wanted to give him "a second chance"²⁵, but was mistaken in his assessment of the latter. Pleminius, not Scipio, was master in Locri.

The second problem that needs clarification is the reason for the fight between the Romans. This was certainly not a quarrel about the division of the treasure of Persephone, as is asserted by Diodorus and by the Locrian envoys in *Ab urbe condita*. This is shown by the course of events according to Livy: one of the soldiers of Pleminius stole a silver cup from an inhabitant of Locri and, in his flight from his victim, came upon the tribunes who confiscated the stolen article, doubtless in order to return it to its rightful owner. A quarrel ensued, which soon was transformed into fighting between the subordinates of Sergius and Matienus and those of Pleminius²⁶. This version differs from the others all the more because in it, the situation in Locri is completely different from that which normally prevailed in a city given over as spoils to the enemy. The Roman soldier did not claim the cup as plunder but he stole it, and the Locrian felt he had the right to pursue him as a common thief. Thus the residents neither felt themselves to be at the mercy of the garrison nor were they considered as such by the Romans. This is also indicated by the conduct of the tribunes: similar interventions, which were probably common in the allied cities in which the Roman army was quartered²⁷, were unthinkable when dealing with a defeated enemy. Here we come to the heart of the matter, namely the status of Locri after the withdrawal of the Carthaginians. The incident which elicited the fighting among the Romans proves without a doubt that the active participation of the Locrians in the recapture of the town from Hannibal placed them above the status of ordinary *dediticii*, not just in their own eyes, but, more importantly, in the eyes of the Romans. Except for condemning to death the leaders of the Carthaginian supporters, Scipio made

²⁴ Liv. XXIX 9, 8: "...Scipio [...] cum causam Plemini et tribunorum audisset, Pleminio noxa liberato relictoque in eiusdem loci praesidio, tribunis sontibus iudicatis et in vincla coniectis..."

²⁵ SCULLARD, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 113.

²⁶ Liv. XXIX 9, 2 f.

²⁷ Cf. M. Porcius Cato, in: *Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta*, ed. E. MALCOVATI, Torino ³1967; cf. also Liv. XLIII 7, 5–11.

no other decisions about the fate of the inhabitants of the city; in any case he did not have the authority to do so. Livy asserts that he ordered them to appeal to the Senate²⁸, which seems like an anachronism, suggested perhaps by the later debate and decree of the Senate regulating the situation in the city and its legal status towards Rome (more properly they should have approached the second consul of 205, P. Licinius Crassus, whose province was Bruttium). In any case, we know nothing about the horrors which normally accompanied the taking of a city by the Romans: the violence, carnage and plundering, so vividly painted by Livy in the speech he places in the mouth of the Locrian envoys in the Senate²⁹, took place only after the outbreak of fighting between the Romans. As the looting of the temple of Persephone was only one (if the most grave) of the crimes of the garrison, the bloody settling of accounts between Pleminius and the tribunes took place even before the looting of the sacred treasure and therefore could not have followed it. The versions of Diodorus and the Locrian envoys in Livy's account are therefore false.

It seems that the sole reason for the disturbances in Locri was the lack of homogeneity in the Roman force and the peculiar character of its constituent parts. The garrison in Rhegium had for years conducted plundering raids into enemy territory³⁰ and rapine, an unescapable but collateral aspect of all acts of war, constituted the order of the day in the war fought by the soldiers under Pleminius' command. Keeping them disciplined must have been particularly difficult, if not impossible, when they found themselves for the first time as conquerors in a relatively large and wealthy city. The soldiers of the Sicilian army, however, were in a completely different position, and their obedience must have been augmented by the fact that they were fighting outside their own province. Scipio must have demanded that the tribunes ensure discipline in the detachments under their command. The relations between such mismatched partners must have been far from correct: we can imagine that Sergius and Matienus reacted all the more against the misdemeanours of Pleminius' unruly men because they were obliged to impose a stricter discipline among their own men. The behaviour of an army in any city, even an allied one, was rarely blameless; in the case of Locri, this specific character of the soldiers from Rhegium made the task of keeping them under control among the residents of the city even more difficult. There was no lack of opportunity for confrontation, which a trifling incident finally transformed into armed conflict.

If this is the case, then why did the looting of the treasure of Persephone play such a prominent role? Because, under the circumstances, it was the only

²⁸ Liv. XXIX 8, 3.

²⁹ Liv. XXIX 17, 15: "omnes rapiunt, spoliant, verberant, vulnerant, occidunt, constuprant matronas, virgines, ingenuos raptos ex complexu parentium; cotidie capitur urbs nostra, cotidie diripitur...".

³⁰ Cf. Liv. XXVII 12, 4–6; XXIX 6, 2 f.

grievance which the residents of Locri could register in Rome against Pleminius. Although their participation in the battle against the Carthaginians had in fact placed them above ordinary *dediticii*³¹, officially they remained rebels, returning under the rule of Rome without any prior agreement to guarantee them better treatment. In theory, Pleminius could do with them as he wished. The grievances against the behaviour of the propraetor's soldiers which the inhabitants of Locri brought to Scipio during his second sojourn in the city³² were perfectly justified, given the incident which elicited the fighting between the Romans. But these grievances, pertaining only to wrongdoings of the same caliber, and the fact that the disturbances had caused the tribunes to act in defence of a Locrian, were the reasons why the dishonoured and horribly mutilated Pleminius (they cut off his nose and ears and slashed his cheeks³³), once he had regained control of the city, expressed his anger not only on Sergius and Matienus but also on the city, which he gave over to his soldiers as spoils. Even the greatest atrocities, however, would not have allowed the Locrians to obtain the favour of the Senate if not for the looting of the temple of Persephone. The speech of the Locrian envoys presented by Livy is so skilful and at the same time so different from the previous narrative that it seems to reflect an actual address of the envoys. The dramatic description of the crimes of the garrison is only the introduction to the gist of the matter: the looting of the treasures of the goddess and the unforeseeable consequences threatening the republic if it does not make amends to Persephone³⁴. For this reason the envoys recall the misfortunes of Pyrrhus (the only one who, in the past, had dared to rob this temple), all of them due to the anger of the goddess: the destruction of the fleet that was carrying the treasure away, the leaving of Italy, even the death of the king in Argos. For the same reason they present the fratricidal fighting of the Roman forces as a punishment for the sacrilege which they were furiously inflicting upon themselves. This is the reason why in the Locrian envoys' version it is both sides, Pleminius and the tribunes, that are responsible for all the crimes, although the better tradition lays the guilt only on Pleminius' shoulders. Having made the Senate aware of the ways that Persephone's power had manifested itself in the past, the envoys unambiguously make it clear that the sacrilege can bring defeat upon Scipio's

³¹ During the Second Punic War two other towns in Italy, Arpi and Salapia went over to the Roman side in similar circumstances (participation in a battle with the Carthaginians). Of them, Arpi was spared according to a pact (Liv. XXIV 45–47), while the fate of Salapia is not known, but since in the action against the Punic garrison Roman adherents and the one-time Carthaginian supporters fought side-by-side, it is almost certain that it, too, was spared; Liv. XXVI 38; App. *Han.* (45–47) 191–206.

³² Liv. XXIX 9, 11; 19, 1.

³³ Liv. XXIX 9, 7; Diod. XXVII 4, 2.

³⁴ Liv. XXIX 17, 10–18, 20.

expedition unless this crime is publicly expiated³⁵. To this end, the Locrians suggest that during his second sojourn in Locri, Scipio had been obliged to settle the same affair that they have presented to the Senate³⁶. In this light, Scipio's intervention truly seemed to have been a granting of support to one criminal against other criminals, and thus as an assent to the violence, slaughter and, most of all, to the sacrilege committed. This is clear from the reply that, according to Livy, the envoys gave to Fabius' question of whether they had previously presented their grievances to Scipio:

responderunt missos legatos esse sed eum [*scil.* Scipionem] belli apparatus occupatum esse et in Africam aut iam traiecisse aut intra paucos dies traiecurum; et legati [*scil.* Pleminii] gratia quanta esset apud imperatorem expertos esse cum inter eum et tribunos cognita causa tribunos in vincla coniecerit, legatum aequae sententiae aut magis etiam in ea potestate reliquerit³⁷.

Without accusing Scipio directly, they are indirectly making him responsible, presenting his intervention as support for the perpetrator of the sacrilege and murderer, and by this associating the looting of the temple and the possible anger of Persephone with Scipio, and then to the expedition that he was shortly to lead to Africa, an expedition that all realized was to decide the fortunes of the war.

The looting of the temple of Persephone paradoxically proved to be a blessing to the Locrians. Sacrilege constituted only one of the crimes of the Roman garrison, and because of this, condemning it automatically meant condemning all the actions of Pleminius and his men. Thanks to this, the Locrians obtained a more than just compensation from the Senate for all the violent acts committed by the Romans in their city. None of the sources give the full amount of the Roman loot; there is some evidence that the "looting of the treasure of Persephone" was robbery on a very small scale³⁸. For the Locrians, however, the very fact that sac-

³⁵ TOYNBEE'S speculations (*op. cit.* [n. 2], p. 617) as to whether the senators at the time of the Second Punic War actually believed in the feasibility of Persephone's revenge are completely out of place. TOYNBEE refers to Polybius' account of the extremely cynical attitude of the Roman ruling class towards religion (Polyb. VI 56, 6–9), but, in the first place, this account pertains to the grandsons of those who decided the fate of Locri and, in the second place, Polybius himself admits that he is presenting here his personal view of the 'religiosity' of the Romans.

³⁶ Liv. XXIX 19, 1 f.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ The temple of Persephone was not plundered completely, as attested by the decree of the Senate: "pecuniam, quanta ex thesauris Proserpinae sublata esset, conquiri" (Liv. XXIX 19, 7, cf. 21, 4). We know that some looting occurred, but not how much. Also characteristic is Livy's wording of the description of the looting of the sacred treasure: "iam avaritia ne sacrorum quidem spoliatio abstinuit, nec alia modo templa violata, sed Proserpinae etiam intacti omni aevo thesauri [...] spoliati dicebantur" (Liv. XXIX 8, 9). Thus it is certain that other temples were looted, but in the case of this temple, the looting is only alleged. We can consider this a stylistic turn of phrase, but the fact that the praetor Pomponius was ordered as expiation to bring into the treasury of the temple a sum equal to that which had been looted (Liv. XXIX 19, 7) seems to indicate that the Senate knew

rilege had been committed was enough to present the violence in the city as the result of the anger of the goddess, just as this was enough for Scipio's enemies to hatch a plot against him, which, although it came to nothing, led to the granting of full satisfaction to the Locrians. In this way, the Locrian version of events predominated in the tradition, although even in Livy's time accounts existed that presented the events in Locri in the proper sequence and proportion.

To summarize, it is possible, in my opinion, to formulate the following conclusions pertaining to the events in Locri in 205 BC: (1) Pleminius was not Scipio's subordinate, thus it is quite unlikely that he could serve as his instrument in the looting of the treasury of Persephone, (2) the fighting between the Romans broke out before the looting of the city and the temple, and was caused by clashes between the soldiers from Rhegium and those reinforcements which had been sent by Scipio from the Sicilian army, (3) the versions that change the order of events (the violence and sacrilege preceding the outbreak of fratricidal confrontations) stem from the Locrian tradition, which, sanctioned by the decree of the Senate, finally came to dominate ancient tradition.

that only a small part of the treasure of the richest temple in Italy had been looted: the equivalent sum was paid by the praetor from his *ornatio provinciae*, so, even assuming that he had been granted some special funding for this purpose, the amount of treasure looted by Pleminius and his men could not have been very great.