

Political and military events witnessed by the first consulate (88 BC)

Raed Mohammed Ali Mustafa ⁽¹⁾ , Assist. Prof. Dr. Maitham Abd Al-Kadhim Al-Noori⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾Master. Student. College of Arts-Department of History/ University of Baghdad, Iraq.

⁽²⁾College of Arts-Department of History/ University of Baghdad, Iraq.

r07823167872@gmail.com

Abstract

This research draws attention to the most prominent political and military events that Rome witnessed during the first consulate of Sulla in (88 BC). This period of the history of the Roman Republic witnessed political conflicts between military leaders, the most serious of which was the one that erupted between Marius and Sulla after the latter assumed the position and assignment of the consul. With the mission of war in the east against King Mithridates VI, which aroused the envy and hatred of Marius, he sought by various means to achieve his dream of leading this war, which caused a civil war in which the lives of many men and political leaders were lost, and Rome witnessed for the first time in the history of the Roman armies crossing its sacred enclosure.

Keywords: Consulate, events, political, conflict, Sulla

Introduction

In the last century of the republican era, Rome witnessed a great development in various fields, especially the political ones, as great leaders appeared in the political and military field such as Marius, Sulla, Caesar, great pompeii and many others. Imposing their sovereignty and achieving their goals, political life took the form of a party struggle based on class and gradually developed into civil wars.

Behind these wars was the ambition of leaders fueled by the interests of the aristocracy and the general class that did not benefit politically and economically, in addition to that the emergence of the cavalry class and its competition with the aristocracy, which began to fuel those conflicts by approaching this or that class according to its interests, so the interests of these classes differed and intertwined and the emergence of leaders Leaders from every class who defend the interests of this or that class is the reason for the outbreak of these wars.

The jealousy and envy between Marius and Sulla caused a civil war in Rome that caused bloodshed and the deterioration of Rome's political, social and economic conditions. It was the beginning of other wars, such as the one that occurred between Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus, or that occurred during the reign of Octavius.

In fact, the importance of the civil war that occurred between Marius and Sulla and its impact on Rome is the reason for choosing this topic as the title of this research, in which we will try to shed light on the first Sulla Consulate and the most prominent political and military events that accompanied it.

Preamble:

The military successes that Sulla achieved in the war of the allies and the end of the war in favor of Rome caused him to be elected consul in the year (88 BC). He was chosen to lead the military operations against Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, and the matter was approved by all the persons entitled to vote, including his consular colleague Pompeius, which angered Marius and led to a conflict between the two parties.

First: Sulla assumed the first consulate (88 BC):

Politically Sulla was on the line of the aristocracy, he was aware of the interests of his class, and he had worked since assuming the position of consul to control the Senate, and he calmed the fears of his fellow nobles by restricting the entry of new citizens into the Roman tribes(1) So Sulla was supported by Members of this class, and was chosen to lead the military operations against Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, and the matter had the approval of all the persons who had the right to consent, including his consular colleague Pompey (2).

Sulla had a long military record of victories and achievements, and his experience in dealing with Mithridates when he was appointed governor of Cilicia in the year (96 BC. M) qualified him to take charge of the war in the east (3). As for his personal life, Sulla did a job that guaranteed

him a change on the level of political life. He formally separated from his third wife, Claudia, due to infertility, in order to marry Cecilia Mitella, a member of the great family of Metellus 4(), in line with Roman legal custom, and with this marriage, Sulla was able to be associated with one of the most important families in Rome(5), and Sulla was able, through the victories he achieved in the war of the allies, to make a local name for himself, to the extent that in the year (88 BC. M) he was elected consul with his colleague Pompeius Rufus easily(6).

The election of Sulla to the post of consulate aroused the hatred and envy of some Roman nobles and military leaders, especially Marius, especially after the Senate authorized Sulla to lead the military campaign against Mithridates, a matter that Marius always sought to obtain fame and reap the many spoils (7), and this situation caused a conflict between the two leaders, this conflict had its roots in Marius' victory over Jugurta.

Second: The conflict between Marius and Sulla:

Several sources indicated that there are differences and conflicts between Marius and Sulla, and behind these conflicts was a set of reasons, including the association of Sulla, and since the first meeting with the Mauritanian King Bocuse, a close friendship, and he was impressed by the strength of the personality owned by Sulla, and soon the understanding between these two dissimilar personalities was achieved although that The communication between them was through interpreters, because each person, as it is known, belongs to a cultural background different from the other(8), and trust and friendship increased between Bocuse and Sulla when the king's envoys went to the camp of Marius in order to meet him, and then go to Rome, and on the way they encountered To attack a group of Gaitoli and plunder them, they resorted to Sulla, who was Marius's deputy, as he kindly received them and gave them gifts and advised them on the way of talking that they should talk to Marius and the Senate when they go to Rome (9). After the negotiations that took place between King Bocuse and Sulla and the delivery of Jugurta to him, who in turn handed him over to his commander Marius, and took him to Rome and celebrated the victory procession(10), Sulla claimed that he was the one who was credited with arresting Jugurta, which angered Marius, and increased the tension between the two King Bocuse sent a group of statues and artifacts to Rome, including a picture showing the delivery of Yogurta to Sulla, which angered Marius and decided to raise the statues from the Capitol building (11), but another group supporting Sulla refused to raise the statues and a conflict almost erupted between them if not for the Allies declared their revolution against Rome, which put a temporary end to this conflict (12).

Among the reasons that led to the conflict between Marius and Sulla, Sulla succeeded in the war of the Germanic tribes in the year 104 BC. During this war, Sulla succeeded, under the leadership of Marius, to carry out two tasks, the first is to eliminate the resistance of the Tectusages tribes in southern Gaul by By arresting their chief, and the other by separating the Marsi tribes from the rest of the tribes and convincing them to become friends and allies of Rome (13),

Which prompted Marius to look at him with jealousy, and he did not promise to give him any other opportunity in order to present himself in this war, and decided to transfer him to the tutelage of his consular colleague Catullus, who had no military experience in order to write off Sulla's military record and reduce it in the eyes of the Roman people, especially since Sulla began to brag about himself after the Yoghurt war and that he was the one who ended this war, and therefore soon the separation between them was made when Marius took his fourth consulate in the year (102 BC) (14),

And when Sulla moved to work with Catullus, he proved that he was up to the responsibility. Upon his arrival, Catullus was entrusted with the task of gathering supplies and supplies, and Sulla succeeded in this task (15), in addition to achieving a victory over the Alpine tribes ⁽¹⁶⁾.

In the opinion of researcher Lynda Telfor⁽¹⁷⁾, the reason why Marius transferred Sulla to the crew of his colleague Catullus, is that the latter was not a competent commander, had no military experience, was aristocratic and very likely to be somewhat arrogant, which It is difficult for Marius to deal with him and to rely on him, and it is possible that a situation like what happened in Eurasia, where the aristocratic leader refused to work wisely with others, so Marius decided to put a leader with a military experience like Sulla.

However, this opinion is debatable. Marius was aware of the failures and calamities that the Roman armies suffered at the hands of the Germanic tribes, one of the reasons for these failures was the lack of experienced military leaders in all military ranks, and therefore it is not easy for Marius to overlook this shortcoming. In the military leaders of one of his officers known for his diplomatic sophistication and military experience, in addition, Marius, since his election as consul in the year (107 BC), was resentful of the leaders of the aristocracy who had failed to conduct the war against Yugurta and accused them in front of the people of prolonging the war in order to obtain Some gains, it is not

reasonable for Marius to present a gift to these aristocrats in order to achieve victories counted for them, especially if we know that Marius was confident that Sulla would give his best in this war.

So we see that the rivalry between Marius and Sulla was the main reason for this separation, moreover, Sulla believed that working with Catullus, who had no military experience, would shine his star and become brighter, and the doors of glory would open for him to obtain high positions in the Roman Republic.

The successes that Sulla achieved in Cilicia as a pro-praetor after being commissioned by the Senate in the year (96 BC), caused the intensification of the conflict between Marius and Sulla, and after successfully completing the task he returned home full of pride ⁽¹⁸⁾ And the aristocratic party began to seek Sulla and woo him in order to agree to take over his leadership, which aroused the anger and envy of Marius, which ignited party rivalry and personal jealousy, which began to inflame the fire of hostility between them ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Among the reasons that contributed to the exacerbation of the conflict between Marius and Sulla is the war of the allies. Sulla had a great role in this war, as he was able to achieve overwhelming victories, especially his victory over the Samni, and he was finally able to end the war by besieging the city of Nola, the last stronghold of the revolutionaries. Sulla benefited from the war in contrast to Marius, as he was elected consul in the year (88 BC) ⁽²⁰⁾, and in the same year Publius Sulpicius Rufus ⁽²¹⁾, was elected as an education to the public by the assembly of the people, despite the fact that He belonged to one of the ancient aristocratic families ⁽²²⁾.

Third: The political and military events in Rome during the first consulate of Sulla:

Solpicius had worked as a delegate in the war of the allies and had a friendly relationship with Pompeius Rufus and through him contacted Sulla, especially since he was a supporter of some of the proposals of Drusus the Younger ⁽²³⁾. Solpicius was seeking to distribute the Italians among all the existing Roman tribes after they had been placed in eight tribes so that their votes would not have any value in the elections, so he developed a plan for the redistribution of Italians ⁽²⁴⁾, and he strongly opposed the nomination of Caesar Strabo for the Consulate General (88 BC). on the pretext that he did not assume the praetorian position, even though Solpicius himself did not assume the duties of his tribune until December 10 in the year (89 BC) ⁽²⁵⁾. In order to win the elections and consuls would then be willing to support his proposals for the Italians, Sulla, who enjoyed popular support, had no real need for Solpicius, his own views on the Italian question were completely inconsistent with those of Solpicius ⁽²⁶⁾, who felt insulted after the opposition he was met with by Sulla and his colleague Pompeius and began looking for another ally in order to support his project and found in Marius the ally who would fulfill his demands, especially since Marius has strong relations with the Knights class, and in order to strengthen the support of Marius presented his proposals that Including ⁽²⁷⁾ summoning the exiled victims of Varius Severus Hybrida ⁽²⁸⁾, as well as summoning Varius and his companions, expulsion of every member of the Senate whose debts amount to (2000) dinars, the inclusion of new citizens in the Roman tribes, and finally, through the tribal assembly, he obtained attribution Leading the war against Mithidades to Marius instead of Sulla ⁽²⁹⁾ The last proposal was not constitutional because it encroached on the authority of the Senate on the one hand, and Sulla had a reliable war record on the other hand ⁽³⁰⁾, but Solpicius used force to protect himself and intimidate others by establishing A small army composed of (600) men of young cavalry hostile to the Senate, and the maintenance of an armed force of (300) men of veterans ⁽³¹⁾ and as the day of voting on the bills of Solpicius approached, the consuls issued a decree ordering a direct suspension of For all public business, Solbicius declared this illegal, and mobilized all his supporters, and declared the consuls' decision invalid, and a clash took place in the Forum, in which Pompey's son Rufus was killed, and his father succeeded in escaping and Sulla was forced to take refuge in the house of Marius ⁽³²⁾.

From there he issued his order forcing the annulment of the decision to suspend public works, and then quickly left Rome to his forces that are still besieging Nola and which continued to resist alone after the suppression of the Allied revolt ⁽³³⁾. What happened in Rome in order to obtain their support, and shows them that they were denied participation in the spoils that they would obtain from the re-occupation of the eastern provinces in Asia ⁽³⁴⁾ and with the departure of the consuls outside Rome, the laws of Selepcius were approved ⁽³⁵⁾, and when Marius sent his envoys to the city of Nola in order to bring the existing forces the army refused to join Marius and stoned the envoys to death ⁽³⁶⁾, Sulla decided to march to Rome at the head of six legions, or more than 35,000 soldiers, which is a very important event in the history of Rome, as it is for the first time The Roman army bypasses its sacred enclosure and seizes the capital of the Roman Republic ⁽³⁷⁾. During its march to Rome, the Senate sent two Praetorians to negotiate with Sulla: Marcus Junius Brutus and Servilius ⁽³⁸⁾, as well as The Senate, sent other envoys They received the same reply ⁽³⁹⁾, and Sulla was anxious to avoid violating the pomerium ⁽⁴⁰⁾, the sacred enclosure of Rome as possible, so he expressed his readiness to

hold a meeting of senators with Marius and Solbicius in the Campus Martius, and at the same time the Senate sent other envoys to negotiate with Sulla, their tone this time more conciliatory, because Sulla's forces were five miles away From the city, Sulla was asked not to advance any further, and was told that the Senate had voted for him and that he should enjoy his rights. ⁽⁴¹⁾ Sulla halted his forces and ordered them to build their camp, and at the same time when the envoys left, Sulla sent cavalry and infantry under the command of Lucius Minusius Basil. (Lucius MinuciusBasilus) and Caius Mummius to occupy the strategic points of the wall of Rome before Marius and Solbicius prepared to organize their defenses⁽⁴²⁾, and when Sulla's forces entered the city and crossed the wall, he was surprised by the resistance of the population who began throwing bricks at Sulla's army, and they had taken from The roofs of their nearby houses were a place to resist the forces, forcing them to retreat, and when Sulla reached his forces, he ordered them to fire flaming arrows at the houses, to expel the defenders and open a way for himself and his forces that took control of all the neighborhoods City ⁽⁴³⁾.

And after Sulla had completed control of Rome, he obtained a decree from the Senate declaring Marius, his son, Solpicius, and ten others enemies of the state, and rescinded all the laws of Solpicius for their illegality, as they had been passed during the suspension of public business ⁽⁴⁴⁾, and Sulla began to pursue Marius, who succeeded in escaping to Africa and join the veterans, and Solpicius was betrayed by one of the slaves accompanying him, he was arrested and killed ⁽⁴⁵⁾ and ordered Sulla to hang his head on the pulpit on which he was preaching and offered a reward to the slave for his service and granted him freedom and then ordered to kill him for betraying his master ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Sulla worked to strengthen the authority of the Senate, by issuing some amendments to Roman law, including not submitting anything to the people except after the approval of the Senate in advance ⁽⁴⁷⁾ A new law was issued or an old law was reinstated limiting the amount of interest that can be collected on loans, and partial cancellation of debts by 10% in order to alleviate the distress of debtors ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Since the people were unable to oppose the most unfair legislative reforms of Sulla, the people had the upper hand in the consular elections of the year (87 BC), as Sulla's candidates were removed and other candidates were chosen, Gnaeus Octavius ⁽⁴⁹⁾, who was Of the good men and Siena, who was known to be inclined towards Marius⁽⁵⁰⁾, the greater part of the Roman people was angry at Sulla's unprecedented behavior in his march to Rome and his violation of their most cherished beliefs⁽⁵¹⁾. When Sulla saw that he could do nothing, he asked Siena and Octavius To swear an oath not to violate the legislation established by him and grant him the title of pro-consul and to lead the Roman campaign against the king of Pontus, and the two men agreed to this, and swore before a number of witnesses in the Capitol, and threw a stone while they took the oath, to indicate that their word would not be broken and reverted (52). In order to ensure that no other army would enter Rome during his absence, he transferred the leadership of the army in Italy from Pompeius Strabo to his consular colleague Pompeius Rufus, but the army was completely loyal to his commander and did not accept the matter. his soldiers are bugs The new commander came within a short period of time and returned to Strabo to lead his army ⁽⁵³⁾.

After the expiration of the consulate of Sulla, the general consuls (87 BC) attacked him and demanded his trial. Sulla had nothing but to leave the city and lead the campaign against Mithridates as a pro-consul ⁽⁵⁴⁾.

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Distinguished Metellus was a terrible thing, and some of the nobles criticized Sulla, for his adherence to this marriage, in order to obtain more support from her family, but we find that many of the nobles who criticized him did not think of marrying a woman who had no money or An important family situation.

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the envoys assured Sulla that they did not support either party and that both of them should respect the legitimacy and ordered Sulla to return with his forces and not to enter Rome. .

- 31- Pomerium: A line established by Romulus and Romus around the walls of the ancient city when it was founded, and Servius Tullius laid the foundations of the wall on the same day that the city was founded on April 21, and the city of Rome was located within this wall only.
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