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Munatius Plancus Paulinus

CIL. VI 1743 reads<sup>1</sup>

Munatio / Planco / Paulino / V. C. Praesidi / Pann. per ann. XVII // Crepereius Amantius  
V. C. / et Ca(ei)onia Marina C. F. eius / ababo / suo.

This interesting stone has deterred attention. The date and ancestry of Amantius and Marina have passed without comment, and Plancus Paulinus does not appear in the modern printed lists of governors of Pannonia<sup>2</sup>. Yet so unusual an inscription deserves close scrutiny rather than oblivion. A senator and his wife in the fourth century believed that a remote<sup>3</sup> ancestor had governed Pannonia for seventeen years, but there are few similar inscriptions that enable us to judge whether they are likely to be telling the truth. For the many statements about details of Roman history that depend upon the testimony of a single inscription have to be accepted or rejected according to their credibility, in default of confirmatory proof or disproof. One of the principal reasons for accepting most such statements is that important people are usually honoured in or near their own lifetime, in the idiom appropriate to their own day, not in the language of a later century, and it is the oddity of describing an office held in the early principate in the technical language of the fourth century that has robbed the inscription of proper consideration. The credibility of the stone must therefore be tested not by its language, but by the probability of the assertions it makes, and the supporting evidence that bears on them.

The stone makes two distinct assertions, that Plancus governed Pannonia, and that Crepereius or Caeionia, or both, were descended from him. The first assertion has nothing against it. Any provincial command held for so long a time directs attention to the reign of Tiberius; and no legate of Pannonia is known between Iunius Blaesus, in office on Tiberius' accession, and Calvisius Sabinus, in office at or about the time of

<sup>1</sup> cf. VI 3195. The stone was seen 'in aedibus cardinalis Crescentii' by Sirmondus and Donius, who also preserves copies by Milesius and Zaratinus. CIL. rightly prints Sirmondus' text. The variants are few. Three of the MSS read XXVII for XVII, and 'C. Erius' for 'C. f. eius'; one reads 'Calidistia', another 'Calistidia' for 'Ca. . . ionia' in the other two, and one reads 'Amanteus' for 'Amantius'. For the rest of the text, the concordance of four readings is sufficient warrant.

<sup>2</sup> He is not named by Mócsy (RE. Suppl. IX 589 ff. s. v. Pannonien [1962]) or in Reidinger's earlier list (Statthalter des ungeteilten Pannoniens und Oberpannoniens von Augustus bis Diokletian, *Antiquitas* I 2 [Bonn 1950]). In RE. XVI 1,553 s. v. Munatius 33, Ensslin cautiously cites the first five lines 'nach CIL. VI 1743' without comment. PIR. ed. 1. ignores the inscription. To Syme there is 'no legate known (in Pannonia) in the indeterminate interval between Q. Iunius Blaesus, who was in Pannonia in 14, and C. Calvisius Sabinus, first attested under Caligula' (*Gnomon* 29, 1957, 515).

<sup>3</sup> 'Abavus' means ancestor in general, not here avus avi; thus, Appius Caecus is to Cicero 'abavus' of Clodius (de Harusp. resp. XVIII [38]), and thus Seneca styles Iupiter 'abavus' of the Argives (*Agamemnon* 406). Further examples are cited in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s. v.

his death, twenty three years later<sup>4</sup>. But it is possible to draw up a short list of likely legates, for we know the names and circumstances of a dozen of Tiberius' army commanders, out of a total of fifteen or sixteen, and a number of specific qualifications were required. All appointments went to consulars, either veterans who had commanded armies before, or men fairly fresh from the consulate; almost all were patricians, or bearers of very great names. All the consulars are known, and the subtraction of those who were dead, too old, otherwise employed or recorded to have been elsewhere than Pannonia, leaves a list of possibles; the further subtraction of the new men and of the notables known to have been in ill-favour or otherwise unemployable leaves a list of scarcely more than a dozen probables. This list of probables includes Munatius Plancus, consul in 13, grandson<sup>5</sup> of the founder of Lugdunum, consul in 42 B.C. and censor in 22 B.C., with Paullus Aemilius Lepidus.

The fourth century statement fits the facts of Tiberius' day, and its credibility is strengthened rather than weakened by the additional information it provides. For neither the *Fasti* nor Tacitus nor any other source give Plancus the additional cognomen Paulinus; yet there is a quite evident explanation of how he came to bear it. In the fashion of Augustus' middle years, such a name, strange to the gens, ought to derive from a marriage between a man of the father's gens and a woman of a gens who commonly used Paulus or Paulinus, a marriage between a Munatius and an Aemilia. It was a common and sensible practice of Augustus and his successors to associate in office close relatives; and it is not at all improbable that the censors of 22 B.C., Plancus and Paullus, were related by marriage<sup>6</sup>. If Amantius and Marina had made up their text from vainglorious fancy, or even plain ignorance, it is unlikely that they would have chanced upon so much that is probable, so little that is unlikely. They selected the only army whose known commanders leave room for so long a tenure, and the only time

<sup>4</sup> For these persons, and others subsequently named, evidence assembled in the entries in PIR (ed. 2. to H, ed. 1 from I) and RE. is not normally cited, since it may conveniently be consulted in these works.

<sup>5</sup> Hardly his son. Plancus was not a youth on his consulate in 42 B.C., while by the time of Plancus Paulinus' consulate in 13, the normal age for consuls of distinguished ancestry had long been established at 32 or 33. The consul of 13 will have been 60 or more years younger than the consul of 42 B.C. Munatius, who accompanied Tiberius to Armenia in 20 B.C. and quarrelled with the poet Iulius Florus (*Horatius*, Epp. 1, 3, 30 ff.), is presumably father of the one and son of the other.

<sup>6</sup> There is no knowing which Munatius married which Paulla. The censor Plancus might have married his colleague's sister. But Propertius suggests a different possibility. His last elegy consoles Paullus for the premature loss of his wife Cornelia, in the consulate of her brother, probably Scipio, consul in 16 B.C. Her shade briefly apostrophises her two boys, named not in the order of their age, but in the order that suits the metre,

tu, Lepide, et tu, Paulle, meum post fata levamen;  
condita sunt vestro lumina nostra sinu  
(4, 11, 63–64)

Patricians, consuls in 1 and 6 A.D., they will have been about 15 and 10 years old at their mother's death, too young to inspire characterisation. But Cornelia is made to advise her daughter more pertinently.

filia, tu specimen censurae nata paternae  
fac teneas unum nos imitata virum,  
et serie fulcite genus  
(4, 11, 67–69)

These are counsels fitly addressed to a girl betrothed, or married, perhaps already a mother. The words 'by birth a pattern of your father's censura' cannot wisely be strained to mean that she was born during her father's tenure of office; they enjoin a standard of conduct, and praise her for living up to it. The standard set by the mother contrasts with the example of the girl's much married grandmother, the first wife of Caesar Augustus. The girl is told to be content with a single husband and to 'maintain (his) family with a succession (of heirs)'. The injunction would be appropriate if the first of the series were already born. If the girl were the eldest of the three children, she would be of an age to be wife to Munatius, the comes of Tiberius, and mother of the consul of 13 A.D., who would have been born about 20 B.C. She would then be about 20 at her mother's death.

when a consular Plancus was qualified to command it, and they record an unknown cognomen appropriate to his family history. All this is too sober for fiction, for late antiquity was not lacking in bold imagination when it chose; if they had looked for invented ancestors to honour their house, the taste of their age would have directed them towards Agamemnon or Anchises rather than to a forgotten consular of the early empire.

The second assertion claims Plancus as an ancestor. There is supporting evidence to make this credible for Marina, though not for her husband. A number of names born by senatorial families in the intervening centuries point to the main lines of the inheritance of Plancus, and others signal the ancestry of the fourth century Ceionii. Various names connect the two. But though the main stages are clear, the detail of how these stages were reached admits of several alternative explanations. Our ignorance of detail, however, does not effect the substance of the family descent; for the fact that names were transmitted is not in doubt, though not every step can be traced with certainty.

No source gives any hint as to whether Plancus had or had not children. But his cognomen, peculiar to his gens among the nobility, is recorded by one senatorial lady of the mid-first century, Cornelia Cethegilla Aemilia Plancina<sup>7</sup>. The probable and natural explanation of her names is that her parents were named Cornelius Cethegus and Aemilia Plancina. The father's name is interesting, but no problem. Ser. Cornelius Cethegus, consul in 24, was the son of a Cornelius, probably a Lentulus, who revived the usage of an extinct family praenomen and cognomen; for the age of Augustus, like the fourth century, was conscious of its ancestors, and delighted in calling its children by antique names. Thus the Valerii revived the fine old names of Volesus and Potitus; but, like the fourth century, they brought back into use names proper to their own gens, to which they had at least some semblance of a claim. Cethegus would have been father, or, more probably, grandfather of Cethegilla, passing to her the names, and doubtless the inheritance of the Cornelii Lentuli, together with a tradition of ancestral pride in the families whose names she bore. Her mother's name, however, is more informative. It argues a marriage, not elsewhere recorded, between an Aemilius and a Plancina, the proper root of the name Aemilia Plancina. There are several possibilities. Plancus Paulinus had two sisters. One of them, the widow of Piso, Germanicus' enemy, outlived her husband by some fifteen years, and might have married again. The other<sup>8</sup>, who died in 19, at an age hardly much under forty, was old enough to have been a wife and mother. She might have married a Lepidus, the consul of 11, or of 6, or his half-brother Regillus. Perhaps a more likely connection is a marriage between a daughter of Plancus Paulinus and the son of the consul of 6; she would have been of the right age to be mother of the last patrician Aemilius, who married Drusilla, and, under the aegis of Lentulus Gaetulicus, failed to succeed Gaius on the throne. But whichever of the possibilities may be preferred, it is plain that there were enough people of the right age and right names in the later years of Augustus and early years of Tiberius to provide parents for Aemilia Plancina.

The heirs of Cornelia Cethegilla Aemilia Plancina are not recorded for over a century. Then, the consul of 150, M. Gavius Squilla Gallicanus of Verona, is attested in the

<sup>7</sup> CIL. VI 16 431.

<sup>8</sup> Tac. Ann. 2, 43.

letters of Fronto and in separate inscriptions as the father of Cornelia Cethegilla, and also of Cornelius Cethegus, consul in 170. In the fashion of Antonine names, children commonly bore the names of several ancestors in the male and female lines for a number of generations back; occasionally, on full inscriptions, they display a full list, but more usually select two or three for common use, commonly either the most honourable, or those which have brought them the most considerable inheritance, or proberty in the district where they are honoured. Thus, the consul of 149, the year before Gallicanus, set down forty-seven names on one inscription, and other inscriptions of the family name the marriages that account for most of them; but his heirs preferred to use his maternal grandfather's nomen *Sosius* rather than the paternal, perhaps provincial, *Pompeius*. It is probable that the *Gavii* had in the past married a *Cornelia*, perhaps a *Gallicana*, since one of the family freedmen was named *M. Gavius Cornelius Agathemeris Avenianus*<sup>9</sup>; and the most probable reason why the *Gavii* of the later second century chose to be known as *Cornelii Cethegi* is the same motive which led the *Pompeii Falcones* to call themselves *Sosii Prisci*, the preference for the more distinguished name of a distant ancestor in the female line. It is extremely likely that *Cornelia Cethegilla Aemilia Plancina* was among the ancestors of the *Gavii*.

Direct descendants of the *Gavii* are not known after the end of the second century, but a daughter of the family evidently married into the *Fulvii Rustici* of Milan, to produce the names of *L. Fulvius Gavius Numisius Petronianus Aemilianus*, consul about 172. He was related to the equestrian *C. Rufius Festus* of *Volsinii*, for the sons of both families bore the names of a *Laelius Firmus*. Such names can of course arise from testamentary adoption; but the majority of heirs were relatives of some sort, and it is probable that at some stage both the *Rufii* and the *Fulvii* married *Laeliae*.

There seems to have been some connection between the property of the two families, for freedmen of the *Gavii* made tiles from estates in *Volsinii*, the home town of the *Rufii*<sup>10</sup>. The *Rufii* were as yet a comparatively modest family, not to reach eminence until the fourth century, but the *Fulvii* became one of the two great families of the Severan age, receiving five ordinary consulates in a little over forty years. Their peers were the *Nummii Umbrii Albini*, who inherited the name, and doubtless much of the estates, of the *Ceionii*, when the male line ended with the deaths of the emperor *Verus* and his cousin *Silvanus*. The *Nummii* record six, perhaps nine, ordinary consulates in the third century, and shared two of them, in successive generations, with the *Fulvii*; and from the middle of the century, they seem to have assigned the main cognomen of the *Fulvii*, *Aemilianus*, to one branch of their family. Repeated joint consulships are unusual, and the most prominent previous instance, of the *Ceionii* and *Vettuleni* early in the second century, was certainly a result of intermarriage between the families. One or more marriages between the families are probable; the long continued eminence of both families would make such alliance natural, even if the evidence of joint consulships and a common cognomen did not point to its fulfilment.

The *Fulvii* are not recorded after *Aemilianus*, consul ordinarius iterum in 249, but the *Nummii* persisted to the end of the fourth century, reaching their greatest distinction immediately after the disappearance of the *Fulvii*, in the years of crisis in the middle of the third century, holding three, perhaps five, ordinary consulates in the five years

<sup>9</sup> CIL. V 3382 (Verona).

<sup>10</sup> CIL. XI 6691, 17.

258–263. Somewhere about this period, they married into the rising family of the Rufii, connected in the previous century with the Fulvii. The names of a young priestess of Beneventum<sup>11</sup>, Gaia Nummia Ceionia Umbria Rufia Albina, C. P. point to the nature and probable time of the connection. Her praenomen is that of the Rufii, and of no other of the families whose nomen she bears, and suggests a marriage between a C. Rufius and a Nummia Ceionia Umbria Albina. The inscriptions of Beneventum reveal the connections and property, on her mother's side, that caused her to be honoured there. They include a Ceionia, a name rare outside its Etrurian and Aemilian homeland; there are seven or eight Umbrii, also a not over common name, most of them C. Umbrii, and most of them better placed in the third than any other century, many of them perhaps her own freedmen, since the consular Umbrii used praenomen M. One of the two Gavii is named on the same stone as a Munatius, and one of the five Munatii is a Munatius Aemilianus. Plancus, the consul of 42 B.C., had settled veterans at Beneventum, and doubtless left there freedmen and property that passed to his heirs. But neither Rufius nor Fulvius is to be found at Beneventum, though one of the names of the Fulvii, Numisius, is recorded four times, once with an Umbrus Numisius. This pattern of local names fits well with a Rufia who inherited her mother's property in the Beneventan region.

The names of the young priestess look forwards as well as backward. The combination Gaia Ceionia Rufia Albina evokes the fourth century. She was evidently closely related to C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus, corrector Italiae under Carus and consul ordinarius under Maxentius and Constantine, and his son Ceionius Rufius Albinus, ordinary consul and prefect of the city in 335, who was presumably father and grandfather of the C. Ceionii Rufii Volusiani of the middle and late fourth century, the last of whom St. Augustine argued out of apprehensions lest the doctrines of Christianity prove subversive of property. The first Volusianus was presumably a younger brother of Rufius Festus, named with him as quindecimvir about 300 A.D. who will have been grandfather of the poet and geographer, Rufius Festus Avienus; for, to have held consular office under Carus, Volusianus must have been born before rather than after the middle of the third century, aged nearer seventy than sixty at the time of his consulate and prefecture under Constantine. Since he and his heirs for three generations used the nomen Ceionius as well as Rufius, it is likely that he inherited a substantial part of the patrimony of the Ceionii, by the same line of descent as the Beneventan priestess Ceionia Rufia Albina. Her date, and therefore her precise relationship to him, is uncertain. The praenomen spelt in full, the retrograde P in C(larissima)P(uella), and the local priesthood of a high born child point to the third century, with perhaps the greater likelihood of a date nearer the middle than the beginning of the century; there can be no certainty, but she may well have been Volusianus' sister.

Volusianus was fortunate in his political allegiance to Constantine, and his descendants continued to hold numerous prefectures throughout the fourth century. The elder line of the Nummii also remained prominent, but was less happy in its choice of politics;

<sup>11</sup> This important inscription is in the Museum of Benevento. On first discovering its existence, in the notes of the late Arthur Stein, transcribed into the interleaved master copy of PIR, ed. 1, against p. 420, in the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin, I invoked the services of the newly founded international epigraphic association, ARIEL. The prompt response of its director, M. Pflaum, and the kind offices of Professor Barbieri, speedily produced an excellent photograph. I am deeply grateful both of them, and appreciative of the value of ARIEL.

two successive Albini involved themselves in the conspiracies of Magnentius and of Silvanus. The Rufii Festi held the routine posts proper to their station but did not attain the same distinction, and the younger line of the Nummii seem, like some branches of other great families, to have retired to their provincial estates, in their case in *Tarraconensis*. There, in the middle of the century, one of them became Bishop of Barcelona; he may, like St. Ambrose of Milan a generation later, have been son of a Praetorian Prefect. But when the emperor Theodosius was summoned from Spain to Constantinople, he was accompanied by the Bishop's son, Nummius Aemilianus Dexter, whose last recorded office was the Praetorian Prefecture of Italy, under Honorius<sup>12</sup>. His name and career prompt reflections on his cognomen. Aemilianus is common in all ages and all social levels throughout the Roman empire, and usually has no direct connection with the patrician Aemilii. But, with the Nummii, its retention may be the exception to the rule. They were apparently descended from the patrician Aemilii; they owned a sufficient patrimony in *Tarraconensis*, and only one or two other families of the Italian nobility are known to have done so, at any time. One of these was the patrician Aemilii, who left numerous clients in the province with their tribe, *Palatina*, and, entirely exceptionally, are recorded in two inscriptions of the early empire honouring members of the patrician gens locally. Such connections might explain why the undistinguished cognomen Aemilianus, not usually evocative enough to become a main inherited family name, was adopted as the principal cognomen by some ten generations of Fulvii and Nummii. To them it may have marked the transmission of the blood and the estates of the old Aemilii.

Though these considerations indicate the likelihood of the descent of the fourth century Ceionii Rufii and Nummii Ceionii from Plancus Paulinus, they make no sure connection with *Caeionia Marina*. She might have been a daughter of one of the Ceionii Iuliani, whose origin is less easy to signal; or she might have been a Nummia or a Rufia. But since the Nummii used the name only incidentally, while the younger line of the Rufii made it their first name for four generations, she is more likely to have been a Rufius; if she were a Nummia, she is unlikely not have born any of their names. Her date lies fairly early in the fourth century, for she calls Plancus Paulinus 'praeses'. Throughout the third century and in the early fourth, the word was commonly used as a neutral generic term for governors of all kinds, but under Constantine it became the official designation of the lower grade of governors, usually equestrian. From the later years of Constantine onward contemporary office is regularly distinguished between the higher grade of 'consularis' and the lower grade of 'praeses'. The old fashioned generic usage may have remained a little longer in colloquial use, but not much longer; had Marina erected her inscription under Valentinian or his successors, she would certainly have called Plancus 'consularis Pannoniae', and such usage would be expected under the sons of Constantine. A date later than about 340 is therefore unlikely. Such

<sup>12</sup> Hieron. *de vir. ill.* 132: Österr. Jahresh. 44, 1959, Beiblatt 267-8: CIL. II 4512: Codex Theod. VI 4, 27; VIII 5, 53, 54; VIII 8, 5; IX 23, 2; XI 28, 2; XII 1, 146 (18 March to 15 June 395). Codex Justin. VII 38, 2 (387). He is Dexter in the Codes, and in Hieronymus, who names his father the Bishop, with variant readings, Paccianus and Pacatianus. His full names are in the inscription of Barcelona, erected by the province of Asia, without date, which was treated as his by Seeck, but claimed by Groag for Aemilianus, consul 259, a view which prevailed until the publication of the Ephesus inscription (in 1959), erected by him (Numm. Aemilianus) to the memory of Theodosius the elder, father of the emperor.

a date would place Marina in the right generation to be a daughter of Albinus, consul in 335.

This date gives a possible clue to the identity of her husband. Crepereii are not uncommon in the fourth century, and appear to descend from L. Crepereius Rogatus, signo Secundinus, and his wife L. Baebia Sallustia Crescentilla, whose names link them to the African, rather than the Pisidian, Crepereii of the principate, a family that is unlikely to have been accepted into marriage by the great patricians of the third century, and were in earlier ages simple local curials. Amantius however is rare among prominent people, recorded only for the consul of 345, Flavius Amantius, who, like many of the mid-fourth century Flavii, will have had an inherited nomen. The two Amantii are contemporary, and Crepereius was, at least by marriage, of a station eligible for a noble consulate. They might be identical. But there are further indications. Amantius was consul prior in 345, taking precedence over his colleague Nummius Albinus. Such precedence, certainly not due to birth, ought to indicate precedence in rank, for in all the surrounding years, the consul prior is a praetorian prefect. Further, though the pattern of the consulates of the 340s is not entirely consistent, in a majority of years the private consuls were selected one from Constantius' western dominions, one from Constantius' eastern parts. In 345 the western prefects are known, but Constantius' prefect is not. It is therefore rather likely that the consul Amantius was that prefect, and most of Constantius' early prefects were administrators of humble origin. These considerations would argue against the identity of the two Amantii, but are not conclusive; for the first prefect whom Constantius appointed in Constantinople, Septimius Acindynus, was the son of a senator of Rome, of a standing and background not dissimilar to Crepereius Amantius. During Constantine's lifetime, his presence in Constantinople attracted to the new capital senators ambitious of attracting the emperor's notice, and not all returned to Italy on his death. The identity must therefore remain an open question. If Crepereius Amantius were the consul of 345, the inscription was certainly set up before that year, for he does not call himself consul; and if Amantius moved to Constantinople before Constantine's death, it will be some ten or fifteen years earlier, dating not far from the year 330.

Caecilia Marina's claim of descent is therefore plausible. The fourth century Caeciliae certainly descend from the nexus of interrelated patrician families of the Antonine and Severan senate; as these families rose to wealth and dignity during the second century, their children became eligible matches for the heiresses of the earlier nobility of the Flavian and Julio-Claudian senate. The names instanced above indicate certain possible marriages and transmissions of property and tradition, some of them highly probable, others merely possible. But over and above these particularities, the body of the evidence outlines the rise and fall of families that loom large in the annals of the Roman senate, each new family absorbing something of the name, property and traditions of their predecessors, whose male line had ended or declined. Both the detail and the outline require to be summarised in a stemma.

The principle difficulty in setting down a stemma is to avoid oversimplification that outstrips the evidence, without presenting a maze of question marks and alternatives that make it incomprehensible. Considerable study of the stemmata printed in P. I. R. and in Pauly-Wissowa and specialist articles, together with the experience of preparing stemmata for the Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire warns that greater care

in the form of presentation is advisable than is now usual. In particular, it is necessary to distinguish between what is evidenced and what is supposed with that same strictness that has long been observed in printing the restorations to a fragmentary inscription; and, if improbable assumptions and downright error are to be avoided, it is necessary to indicate as closely as the evidence permits the probable approximate date of birth of each individual.

Certain conventions are therefore observed in the attached stemma. Names and relationships explicitly evidenced are printed in Roman capitals and continuous lines, those that are inferred are shown in italic type and dotted lines. Information about individuals is given in lower case Roman types. Any stemma necessarily shows a little ascertained fact, and much inference. Alternative deductions are always possible, and some detail is given *exempli gratia*. The stemma shows probability, not fact. An approximate date of birth is appended to most names, in italic type unless the actual date of birth is recorded, usually calculated from a consulate or other fixed date, or from the interval between generations; when there is no formal evidence of the generation to which the individual belongs, this date is placed between round brackets.

No stemma has a value beyond the convenient presentation of the relevant evidence<sup>13</sup> and of the inferences therefrom. It summarises the argument of the text, whose conclusion is, in this instance, that the statements of CIL. VI 1743 are as credible as the statements made by great majority of Roman inscriptions. The conclusion prompts some reflexion. For it may at first sight seem odd that of so many distinguished ancestors, Marina should select the not very distinguished consul of 13, a man certainly much less eminent than his grandfather. There are many possible explanations, but the most obvious is that the surviving inscription is one of a series. Even so, if Marina had put up statues and inscriptions to all her memorable ancestors, she would have required a large patrimony and an immense space; for the stemma connects her not only with Plancus, but with the Lentuli, the Scipiones, the Aemilii, and through them, with most of the great names of republican Rome. There must have been a selection of ancestors; it is very likely that there was in Rome a *Domus Planci*, that may have passed to her by inheritance, and prompted her to honour the several Planci. Other explanations may occur to the ingenious; but such explanations serve principally to show that the apparent oddity is not a historical problem, but simply a detail whose cause we do not know.

I hope on another occasion to comment on the significance of Plancus' appointment to the army of Pannonia, at much the same time as his brother-in-law Piso commanded the army of Syria, for the history of the reign of Tiberius. The most striking conclusion that invites discussion here is the fact that in the early fourth century a senator and his wife put up one or more inscriptions or statues to the memory of long dead ancestors. It is odd; but what is odd is merely the form of the dedication. Plenty of fourth century senators remembered their ancestry; T. Flavius Postumius Titianus, consul ordinarius iterum in 301, recorded on stone that he was pronepos of M. Postumius

<sup>13</sup> I omit a large number of persons who are clearly connected with these families, but who do not seem relevant to the main lines of descent here traced. They include Barbuius Fulvius Aemilianus, the Q. Gavii Fulvii of Caietia, the Gavii Maximi, the second century child Aemilia Cornelia C. f. Scribonia Maxima, C. P., and Ae(mili[an?])a Gaviana, and also the bulk of the ramifications of these families in the fourth century, including their Christian ascetic relatives, and the Ceionii Iuliani. Aemilia Paulina Asiatica is evidently a relative of M. Lollius Paulinus Valerius Asiaticus Saturninus, consul iterum ordinarius in 129, and is therefore not connected with the Aemilii Paulli.



Festus, orator and consul under Pius, a century and a half before<sup>14</sup>, and Marina's relative, Festus Avienus, put in verse his descent from Musonius Rufus, who lived barely a generation after Plancus Paulinus. Several other writers credit their friends and patrons with ancestors as remote and as distinguished. Marina's oddity is simply that whereas her contemporaries are content to honour themselves by claiming descent from notables of the past, her more sophisticated form is to erect a stone in honour of the ancestor. It is a curious chance that his legation is otherwise unknown.

Marina's knowledge of her ancestry is therefore not an isolated freak, but one among many examples of the tenacity of the noble families of the principate, of their continuity into the fourth century and beyond. This continuity is not always adequately recognised, for neither inscriptions nor ancient writers commonly preserve detail pedigrees for any period of the empire; the stemmata that may be studied in print are the product of modern scholars, labouring abundantly upon the detail records of the republic and the principate, studying the manner in which names and titles change from generation to generation. But very little work has been done upon the records of late antiquity, and the unwary are therefore left with the impression either that family continuity was snapped in the crisis of the third century, or that evidence is wanting. The impression is false, for there are not many periods in the history of Rome or any other state when a large number of noble families maintain their identity over several centuries in the direct male line. In most aristocratic societies there are childless individuals who bequeath their estates on condition that their heir takes their name; this outlook, unusually widespread and formalised by the institution of adoption, lends a somewhat exaggerated appearance of continuity to the nobility of the Roman republic, which in turn begets an exaggeration of the discontinuity under the empire. Changes there were in social attitudes and the forms of names, but not in biology. What was left of the republican patriciate foundered in the troubles of the mid first century A. D., and thereafter men ceased to believe that an extinct line was worth preserving artificially by a change of name. But the basic problem of an aristocrat proud of his family remained; in the absence of a law and custom of primogeniture, to beget too many sons risked a dwindling patrimony, only to be restored in periods of conquest and expansion, to beget too few sons risked extinction by the natural risks of early death, low fertility, or a run of daughters.

In default of sons, property, names and tradition passed through heiresses. The late Antonine fashion of an eclectic selection of honourable maternal nomina was short lived; both before and after, men remembered their ancestors by cognomina, and by their imagines. Some generations were more conscious than others of their predecessors, and the fourth century nobility of western Rome, unlike their parvenu fellows in the senate of Constantinople, were rich in inherited lands and inherited tradition. Their jejune historical writing show their desperate attachment to the great days of the past, when their ancestors had enjoyed a greater political influence. But in seeking to revive the power and glory of the senatorial families, they were impelled not only by a general nostalgia for the former eminence of their class and their order, but also by the proud traditions of their individual family ancestors. That is why Marina and Amantius remembered their ancestors, and remembered them accurately.

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to M. Pflaum and Professor A. H. M. Jones, both of whom have kindly read and commented on the draft of this article. Neither, of course, are responsible for any of the views of statements made therein.