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THE PERILS OF PROSOPOGRAPHY: THE CASE OF THE CORNELII DOLABELLAE

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 130 (2000) 265–271

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The discovery of the *Fasti Tauromenitani* has once and for all established the identity of the consul suffect of 35 B.C. Formerly known only as P. Cornelius, it is now known that the consul suffect was a scion of the illustrious patrician Cornelii Dolabellae. The discovery has some important implications. It has a vital bearing on a vexing and long-standing prosopographical problem concerning the husbands of Scribonia *Caesaris*. It also impels us to reconsider the *stemma* of the Republican and Imperial Dolabellae.

First, we must clear away the wreckage of a related and long-standing prosopographical conundrum.

In 40 B.C. in an attempt to win the support of Sex. Pompeius, Octavian took to wife Scribonia, the sister of L. Scribonius Libo one of Sextus' most prominent adherents. Scribonia was twice married prior to her short and tempestuous marriage to Octavian, but no ancient authority certifies the identity of Octavian's predecessors. Suetonius failed to name them, but asserts that both Scribonia's previous husbands were consulars.¹ The identity of one was long ago revealed by an inscription discovered in Rome – namely, Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (cos. 56 B.C.).² Clues to the identity of the other were divined in Propertius IV 11. Therein Propertius has Cornelia, the daughter of Scribonia, address her husband, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (cos. suff. 34 B.C.), from beyond the grave. In the course of her monologue Cornelia claims descent in the paternal line from Scipio Africanus and Scipio Aemilianus and states that she died in her brother's consulship. That prompted the obvious and natural assumption that the brother of Cornelia was none other than P. Cornelius P. f. P. n. Scipio the consul of 16 B.C.³ It followed, therefore, that the second husband of Scribonia was a P. Cornelius P. f. Scipio.

That seemed a tidy solution. But problems remained. According to the testimony of Suetonius, Scribonia's first two husbands were consulars – hence this putative Scipio must have been consul. Yet suitable Scipionic consulars were in short supply. However, a remedy was to hand. The fragmentary *Fasti Biondiani* disclosed that one of the two consul suffects of 38 B.C. was a Cornelius. Biondi in the hope of resolving the puzzle identified the consul suffect as a (P.) Cornelius (Scipio), husband to Scribonia, and father of P. Scipio (cos. 16 B.C.) and Cornelia the wife of Paullus. And despite other difficulties, Biondi's solution was widely endorsed.⁴ It came therefore as something of a shock when the discovery of the *Fasti magistrorum vici* proved that the consul suffect of 38 was in fact a Lucius, not a Publius.⁵ And shortly thereafter another find revealed that the consul suffect of 38 was a Lentulus, not a Scipio.⁶

¹ Suetonius, Aug. 62.2: *Mox (Octavian) Scriboniam in matrimonium accepit, nuptam ante duobus consularibus, altero etiam matrem . . .*

² CIL VI 26033: *Libertorum et / familiae / Scriboniae Caesar(is) / et Corneli Marcell(ini) / f(ili) eius*. See R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy*, Oxford 1986, 248ff.

³ See Luigi Biondi, *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 6, 1835, 273–380, esp. 321ff; Klebs, PIR¹ C 1206; Groag, RE IV 1438–9 nos. 332 and 333, 1597 no. 419; M. Fluss, RE II A 1 891 n. 32. Later Groag, PIR² C 1395, 1437, 1438 expressed some reservations.

⁴ Klebs, PIR¹ C 1147, 1174, 1206, Dessau, PIR¹ S 220 and Groag, PIR² C 1306, 1395, 1437, 1438 all observed that Biondi's and Borghesi's solution presupposed that Suetonius erred twice. Firstly, 'P. Scipio cos. suff. 38' would not have been a consular at the time of the marriage as Suetonius implies. Secondly, Suetonius says that Scribonia only had children by one of her first two husbands. Yet according to Biondi and Borghesi, Scribonia had a son by Marcellinus and a son and a daughter by Scipio.

⁵ See I. It. XIII 1, no. 20.

⁶ See B. Forlati Tamaro, *Epigraphica* 3, 1941, 271–6; AE 1945, 66. The praenomen and cognomen of the consul suffect are now also certified by the *Fasti Tauromenitani*.

With that Biondi's solution lapsed. The consul suffect of 38, now known to be a L. Cornelius Lentulus, was eliminated as a potential husband for Scribonia. But while the *Fasti magistrorum vici* refuted Biondi's solution, it brought compensation in the form of a previously unknown consul suffect of 35 – one P. Cornelius. That allowed Biondi's hypothesis to be revived in slightly altered form. The consul suffect of 35 rapidly assumed the prosopographical mantle formerly bestowed on the consul suffect of 38. P. Cornelius (cos. suff. 35) was equipped with the cognomen Scipio and awarded paternity of the homonymous consul of 16 B.C. and Cornelia.⁷ This identification was fast becoming orthodox, but the discovery of the *Fasti Tauromenitani* establishes that the consul suffect of 35 was in fact a Dolabella.⁸ Consequently, the search for the second husband of Scribonia *Caesaris* will have to resume once more.⁹

With the misapprehensions and red herrings cleared away we can attempt to set the consul suffect of 35 in his rightful place. Ironically, as we shall see that will entail placing him once more in proximity to the *domus Augusta*.

The consul suffect of 35 now has a name, but we know precious little else about him. He seemingly escapes all mention prior to his consulate.¹⁰ And like a number of consuls in the 30's his political allegiances are a mystery. Likewise the fate of the consul suffect subsequent to his consulship is a matter for speculation.¹¹

Definitive pronouncements are also precluded regarding the ancestry of the consul suffect.¹² The one thing of which we can be sure is that the consul suffect of 35 was not a son of Cicero's least favourite son-in-law – P. Dolabella (cos. suff. 44). According to Appian, the consul suffect of 44 was consul at 25 years of age.¹³ Appian's testimony is often queried, but there is no doubting the fact that Dolabella was consul very young. And though the consul suffect of 44 had sons, they would not have been old enough to be consul in 35 – even allowing for the youthful consuls of the period.¹⁴ The most economical solution is to make the consul suffect of 35 a descendant of Cn. Cornelius Dolabella the

⁷ See Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford 1939, 229 n. 7, 244, 527, and (n. 2) 246ff, *Athenaeum* 65, 1987, 13ff; I. It. XIII 1, 288; MRR II 406, 555, III 72; R. A. Billows, *AJAH* 7, 1982 [1985] 60ff. One of the few dissenting voices was J. Scheid, *BCH* 100, 1976, 485–91.

⁸ *AE* 1991, no. 894. See also O. Salomies, *Arctos* 22, 1988, 130–2 and *ZPE* 86, 1991, 187–192, esp. 190–1; and J. Bodel, *ZPE* 96, 1993, 259–266 and *ZPE* 105, 1995, 279–296, esp. 279, 285f.

⁹ As we now possess a full record of ordinary and suffect consuls in the period, there is no chance that a previously unknown Scipionic suffect will materialize. And of the consular Cornelii in the period only one, L. Cornelius (cos. suff. 32), is of unknown family. He is usually reckoned a Cinna following the conjecture of Groag, *PIR*² C 1313, 1338. Evidence is lacking, but the consul suffect of 32 cannot in any case be Scribonia's second husband if her son who laid claim to a Scipionic heritage is P. Scipio (cos. 16) since the consul of 16 was P. f P. n. and the consul suffect of 32 was a Lucius. Perhaps then Scribonia's Scipio was one of the ten *praetorii* granted *consularia ornamenta* by Caesar in 44, or was among those so honoured by Augustus.

¹⁰ Unless he is connected with the P. Cornelius attested on a rare and enigmatic series of bronze coins issued in Sicily (see M. Bahrdfeldt, *Revue suisse de numismatique* 12, 1904, 331–445 and M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas A Historical Study of Aes Coinage in the Roman Empire 49 B.C.–A.D. 14*, Cambridge 1946, 52f). Grant entertained the possibility that Cornelius was a Dolabella (but cf. A. Burnett, M. Amandry, P. Ripollés, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, 1992, I 1 167).

¹¹ As Salomies, *ZPE* 86, 1991, 191 recognized the young Dolabella in the entourage of Octavian in 30 (Plut., *Antony* 84) and the consul suffect of 35 must be distinguished. But it could be that the consul suffect is the Dolabella who accompanied Augustus on his tour of Gaul c. 16–13 B.C. (Quint., *Inst.* 6.3.79). It has been suggested this Dolabella is the ἐπιφανὴς νεανίσκος attested at Alexandria in 30, but the date makes that unlikely. If the youth present at Alexandria was still alive c. 16–13 and remained an intimate of Augustus, it is curious, to say the least, that he was never consul.

¹² Unfortunately, the filiation of the consul suffect is not attested.

¹³ Appian, *B.C.* 2.129, cf. 3.88. The figure 25 is sometimes emended to 30, or 35 (see E. Wegehaupt, *P. Cornelius Dolabella*, Munich–Gladbach 1880, 4f; T. Rice Holmes, *The Roman Republic and the Founder of the Empire*, New York 1923, III 516; and G. V. Sumner, *Phoenix* 25, 1971, 261–2, 363–4).

¹⁴ So rightly Salomies, *ZPE* 86, 1991, 191. On the sons of the consul suffect of 44 see further below.

praetor of 81.¹⁵ The praetor had an unknown number of offspring, who were left *in egestate atque in solitudine* as a result of his conviction and exile in 78.¹⁶ If the consul suffect was a child of the praetor, he must have been born before the praetor's exile and so came late to the consulship by the standards of the day. That is by no means impossible, but it is perhaps preferable to make him a grandson of the praetor.¹⁷ However, the most economical solution may not be the correct one and there are a number of other possibilities. The consul suffect of 35 might be a grandson of the consul of 81, or even a son of P. Dolabella the praetor of 69. The former is not known to have had any progeny, but the evidence is such that this cannot be considered conclusive. The latter is usually reckoned the father of the consul suffect of 44, but the consul suffect of 35 now emerges as a possible rival candidate.¹⁸

Though we can say little of substance about the person or origins of the consul suffect of 35, we can be more positive about his descendants.

Traditionally, it has invariably been assumed that the Dolabellae of the Principate descended from the consul suffect of 44. Superficially, a number of factors favoured that assumption. The consul suffect of 44 was known to have had sons. Praenomina and filiation seemed to indicate a link. The consul suffect bore the praenomen Publius and was the son of a Publius, while the consul of A.D. 10 was also a Publius and the son and grandson of a Publius. In addition, the consul of A.D. 10 was approximately the right age to be a grandson of the consul suffect of 44. Finally, Occam's razor suggested assigning the Dolabellae of the Principate to the consul suffect of 44 so as to avoid multiplying otherwise unknown individuals. Yet this hypothesis has one serious, perhaps fatal, flaw. The consul suffect of 44 was a plebeian from the year 48 B.C. whereas the Dolabellae of the Principate were patricians.

The facts may be stated briefly. In 48 the future consul suffect of 44 renounced his patrician status and transferred to the plebeian order so that he might become tribune of the plebs and push through some radical reforms.¹⁹ We are not told by what method Dolabella affected his change of status. Either we must suppose Dolabella underwent a *transitio ad plebem*, or that he was adopted by a plebeian. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the latter method. P. Clodius' failed attempt to secure a *transitio ad plebem* in 60 had shown that that procedure was fraught with difficulties, and that adoption was much the easier alternative. Moreover, adoption best explains the fact that in some sources Dolabella²⁰ and his short-lived son by Tullia²¹ are referred to as Lentulus – a cognomen belonging to a distinct *stirps* of the Cornelii. Consequently, there is little doubt that Dolabella affected his transfer to the plebs by means of an adoption by a plebeian Lentulus.²²

The patrician status of the Dolabellae of the Principate is also easily demonstrated. In 38 or 39 A.D. a Dolabella, almost certainly the future consul suffect of A.D. 55 or 56, was co-opted into a priestly

¹⁵ Salomies, ZPE 86, 1991, 191 suggested that the consul suffect might be a son, or grandson, of Cn. Dolabella (134) the consul of 81, or Cn. Dolabella (135) the praetor of 81 (cf. AE 1991, 894).

¹⁶ Cicero, Verr. 2.1.77 refers to *liberi*, but the plural was sometimes used when referring to a single child (see Gellius, N. A. 2.13.1f; J. Briscoe, JRS 64, 1974, 126 n. 16).

¹⁷ The consuls in the period 39–30 B.C. exhibit a wide range of ages. Most of the *nobiles* were youthful consuls, reaching the consulship in their 30's. But even amongst the *nobiles* there are some notable exceptions. M. Valerius Messalla (cos. suff. 32) was consul in his late 40's and L. Volcatius Tullus (cos. suff. 33) in his 50's see Syme, (n. 2) 30, 228 and Sumner, (n. 13) 257, 270.

¹⁸ Given the age and the filiation (P. f.) of the consul suffect of 44, he could conceivably be a grandson of the consul, or praetor of 81.

¹⁹ See Dio, 42.29.1 and MRR II 487.

²⁰ See Asconius, 5.10 C; Plutarch, Cicero 41.4; and Macrobius, Saturnalia 2.3.3.

²¹ See Cicero, Ad Att. 12.28.3, 30.1.

²² See most recently D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Two Studies in Roman Nomenclature², Atlanta 1991, 18–20, 58, 72 and M. J. Slagter, *Transitio ad Plebem: The Exchange of Patrician for Plebeian Status*, Bryn Mawr Dissertation 1993, 117–9, 256–72.

college.²³ Mommsen argued persuasively that the college in question was the *salii Palatini*.²⁴ In addition, the Dolabella consul suffect in A.D. 113 was a *salius Palatinus* and *flamen Quirinalis*.²⁵ Both the *salii* and the *flamines maiores* were exclusively patrician priesthoods.

The crux is patent. The Dolabellae of the Principate were patricians, while their purported progenitor, the consul suffect of 44, was a plebeian after 48 B.C. The anomaly did not escape Mommsen.²⁶ How then are we to explain this discrepancy?

At first glance a convenient explanation is ready to hand. The consul suffect of 44 was twice married. His first marriage, to a patrician Fabia, ended in divorce early in 50.²⁷ Later he was briefly married to Cicero's daughter Tullia. He probably had sons by both wives. It is likely, as has traditionally been asserted, that the Dolabella, described by Plutarch as a noble youth, in the entourage of Octavian at Alexandria was a son of consul suffect of 44 by his first marriage.²⁸ Dolabella also had sons by Tullia. The first, born in May 49, seems not long to have survived.²⁹ A second was born in January 45 after the divorce and shortly before Tullia's death.³⁰ He is not heard of after March 45 and in all probability soon expired.³¹ As a result it is normally conjectured that the Dolabellae of the Principate descended from Dolabella's son by Fabia who was born by 50 (i.e. prior to the adoption). Ergo he and his descendants remained patricians. However, this line of argument is faulty. The consul suffect of 44 was *sui iuris* by 48.³² It follows, that he underwent the type of adoption known as *adrogatio*. Consequently anyone in Dolabella's *potestas* at the time of the adoption, including any children born prior to the adoption (i.e. any by his marriage to Fabia as well), would have undergone a corresponding change in name and status – they would have become grandsons of Dolabella's adoptive father and so plebeian Lentuli.³³

Another obvious solution may be excluded. It might be conjectured that some of the Imperial Dolabellae descended from the consul suffect of 44, but that the patrician consul suffects of A.D. 55/6 and 113 did not. However, the evidence suggests that the Dolabellae from the consul of A.D. 10 to the consul suffect of A.D. 113 were all of one line. The consul suffect of 55/6 married a Petronia hence the agnomen of the consul of A.D. 86, Ser. Dolabella Petronianus, establishes beyond doubt that he was their son.³⁴ Further, the consul suffect of A.D. 113 advertised his filiation in detail – proclaiming himself the son of Servius, grandson of Publius, great-grandson of Publius, and great-great-grandson of Publius – which suggests that he was the son of the consul of 86, grandson of the consul suffect of 55/6,

²³ CIL VI 37162 = ILS 9339.

²⁴ Mommsen, *Hermes* 38, 1903, 125–9. Mommsen has been followed by all subsequent commentators. A new fragment of the inscription was discovered more recently (see AE 1985, no. 41).

²⁵ CIL IX 3153–4.

²⁶ Mommsen (n. 24) 127 n. 3.

²⁷ Caelius apud Cic., *Ad Fam.* 8.6.2.

²⁸ There is some suggestive circumstantial evidence. Plutarch, *Antony* 84 relates that the young Dolabella was fond of Cleopatra and so warned her of Octavian's intentions. Dolabella's attitude becomes intelligible when it is recalled that Cleopatra had aided the consul suffect of 44 when he was besieged by Cassius in 43 (*App.*, B.C. 3.78, 4.59, 61, 5.8; *Dio*, 47.30.3–4, 31.5). Further, the young Dolabella was a member of the *cohors amicorum* of Octavian and it was Octavian who had rescinded the *hostis* declaration against the consul suffect of 44 (*App.*, B.C. 3.95).

²⁹ Cicero, *Ad Att.* 10.18.1. Cicero stated that the child was a poor specimen and it is not mentioned subsequently.

³⁰ Cicero, *Ad Fam.* 6.18.5.

³¹ Cicero, *Ad Att.* 12.18a.2, 28.3, 30.1. The last mention of the boy occurs in *Ad Att.* 12.30.1 dated 27.3.45.

³² Despite repeated reference to Dolabella in the correspondence of Cicero, there is no mention of his father and the details of Dolabella's marriages, divorces, and finances indicate he was *sui iuris*.

³³ See Gaius, *Inst.* 1.107; *Digest* 1.7.15 pr; Justinian, *Institutes* 1.11.11; W. W. Buckland, *A Textbook of Roman Law*³, revised by P. Stein, Cambridge 1963, 121ff; J. Linderski (ed.), *Imperium Sine Fine: T. Robert S. Broughton and the Roman Republic*, Stuttgart 1996, 150. In the case of a *transitio ad plebem* any children born prior to the *transitio* (and their descendants) would retain their patrician status.

³⁴ See Groag, *RE* IV 1298, *PIR*² C 1347, 1351 and G. Camodeca, *ZPE* 63, 1986, 212 n. 45, 215.

and great-grandson of the consul of 10.³⁵ It would seem therefore that all the Imperial Dolabellae belonged to one branch – ergo all were patricians.

Yet there are possible explanations of the discrepancy.

It might be argued that the consequences of the adoption were ignored. According to Cicero's admittedly jaundiced testimony, Clodius ignored the legal consequences of his adoption when it suited him. And we know that Dolabella continued to use his old name after his adoption.³⁶ But we do not know how much licence was permitted in this regard. The flexibility of nomenclature is one thing, but could the putative descendants of Dolabella conceivably have ignored not only the change of name, but the change of status as well?³⁷

Alternatively, the consul suffect of 44 could have emancipated his son by Fabia prior to his adoption. Dolabella's son would then have become *sui iuris* and so have been unaffected by his father's change of status.

Or else, the alleged descendants of the consul suffect of 44 might have regained their patrician status by being subsequently re-adlected into the patriciate.

Thus it is possible to explain the difference in status between the consul suffect of 44 and his supposed descendants by various hypotheses, some more credible than others, but it is far simpler and more plausible to accept the alternative – that the Dolabellae of the Principate descended from the consul suffect of 35.

There is some additional evidence that the Dolabellae of the Principate did not descend from the consul suffect of 44. Corroboration comes from an unlikely source – the story of the *equus Seianus*. The horse, which originally belonged to a Cn. Seius, was celebrated for its beauty and fabulous lineage and became a much sought after prize. But in retrospect it seemed the horse was cursed and it became proverbial for ill-fortune. In fact, as Gellius relates it was said that whoever owned the horse “came to utter ruin, as well as his whole house, his family and all his possessions.”³⁸ The horse's first owner, Seius, was executed by M. Antonius. Next P. Dolabella (cos. suff. 44) acquired the horse and shortly thereafter he was declared a *hostis* by the senate, his property was confiscated, and he committed suicide on the capture of Laodicea. The horse then passed to C. Cassius and after Cassius' death at Philippi to Antonius, who in turn died a violent death in Egypt. Thus the horse's owners all unquestionably came to a bad end, but what of their progeny? Dolabella, Cassius and Antonius all had sons, and Antonius a grandson. Antonius' oldest son M. Antonius Antyllus was executed in 30, and his younger son Iullus Antonius was killed, or forced into suicide, in 2 B.C.³⁹ His grandson L. Antonius, the son of Iullus, died prematurely in exile at Massilia in A.D. 25.⁴⁰ The sole surviving son of Dolabella is not heard of subsequent to his appearance at Alexandria. And the son of Cassius disappears from view after the *Ides* of March 44.⁴¹ Hence it appears that the curse of the *equus Seianus* proved potent. The ultimate fate of the

³⁵ CIL IX 3154: Ser. f. P. nep. P. pronep. P. abnepos. As Camodeca (n. 34) 212–3 rightly argued there is no reason to insert a generation between the consul of A.D. 10 and the consul suffect of 55/6. The cause of the prolonged generation gap was the extended overseas appointments of the consul of 10. The consul was already established as legate in Dalmatia in A.D. 14 and remained there until A.D. 19–20. Evidently, the consul of 55/6, whose birth should be dated around the year A.D. 22, was conceived between his father's return from Dalmatia and his appointment as proconsul of Africa (A.D. 23–4).

³⁶ See Shackleton Bailey (n. 22) 18–20, 58, 72.

³⁷ Unfortunately, evidence is lacking. It is unknown for instance whether the son and daughter of Clodius were considered patricians or plebeians.

³⁸ N. A. 3.9.

³⁹ On Antyllus see RE n. 32; on Iullus see RE n. 22, PIR² A 800.

⁴⁰ See Tacitus, *Annals* 4.44.3 and PIR² A 802. Iullus may have had another son who died in infancy (see PIR² A 801). M. Antonius of course also had two daughters, and Iullus possibly had a daughter (see Syme (n. 2) 144), but strictly speaking daughters could not continue the line.

⁴¹ Plutarch, *Brutus* 14.4. It is probable that he died, or was murdered, in the aftermath of the conspiracy (there is no mention of male heirs at the funeral of his mother Iunia in A.D. 22 see Tac., *Ann.* 3.76). The Imperial Cassii Longini are thought to have descended from the cousin of the conspirator (see Groag, PIR² C 502).

house of Cn. Seius is unknown, but Antonius' line certainly came to an end, and so apparently did Cassius'. If, however, the Dolabellae of the Principate descended from the consul suffect of 44, the parable and proverb of the *equus Seianus* were patently untrue, for in that event rather than perishing utterly, the house of the consul suffect of 44 endured in splendour for over a century. While it would be unwise to look for perfect historical accuracy in such cases, a discrepancy of this magnitude between the legend and reality is difficult to credit. The clear implication is that the line of P. Dolabella (cos. suff. 44) also faltered, thereby excluding the possibility that the Dolabellae of the Principate were his descendants.

If the argument advanced above is accepted, the consul suffect of 35, not the consul suffect of 44, was the progenitor of the Dolabellae of the Principate. What was the precise relationship? Two possibilities suggest themselves: either the consul of A.D. 10 was a son, or a grandson of the consul suffect of 35 B.C. The former hypothesis implies one long generation, the latter two short ones.⁴² On balance it seems preferable to make the consul of 10 a late born son of the consul suffect of 35, rather than posit an otherwise unattested intervening generation. It will be noted that the gap of 45 years between the consulates of father and son is precisely paralleled by P. Dolabella (cos. A.D. 10) and his son P. Dolabella (cos. A.D. 55/6).⁴³ The gap is also paralleled by a number of near contemporaries of the consul suffect of 35.⁴⁴

If then the consul of A.D. 10 was a son of the consul suffect of 35 B.C., a number of important consequences follow. The date of his son's birth establishes that the consul suffect of 35 survived his consulate by some years. What is more, since the filiation of the consul of A.D. 10 declares him the grandson of a Publius, we can supply part of the missing filiation of the consul suffect of 35 – i.e. he must be the son of a Publius. And whilst this clue does not permit a definitive solution to the question of the ancestry of the consul suffect of 35, it does help narrow the range of possibilities. If the consul suffect of 35 descended from Cn. Dolabella, the praetor of 81, or the homonymous consul of 81, the conjecture that he was a grandson, not a son, receives confirmation.⁴⁵ On the other hand, it also strengthens the possibility that the consul suffect of 35, rather than the consul suffect of 44, was a son of the praetor of 69. If the consul suffect of 35 was the father of the consul of A.D. 10, he also thereby acquires a wife of some significance. The father of the consul of A.D. 10 married a Quinctilia, sister to the ill-fated P. Quinctilius Varus (cos. 13 B.C.).⁴⁶ That link with the Quinctilii Vari placed the consul suffect of 35 and his son in the heart of the dynastic nexus painstakingly built up by Augustus. The marriage made them *adfines* of the Appuleii (the nephews of Augustus), of L. Nonius Asprenas (the close personal friend of Augustus), and of M. Agrippa and Tiberius.⁴⁷

Despite an unpromising start, the consul suffect of 35 B.C. now begins to emerge from the shadows of history. He forfeits the cognomen Scipio, and Scribonia as wife, but he acquires the cognomen Dolabella, a Quinctilia as consort, and a long and distinguished line of descendants. Moreover, in spite of the

⁴² In other words, either the consul suffect of 35, who was born c. 69 B.C., fathered the future consul of A.D. 10 not later than the year 24 B.C. Or else, the consul suffect of 35, fathered an otherwise unknown P. Dolabella about 44 B.C., who in turn fathered the future consul of A.D. 10 c. 24 B.C.

⁴³ Vide supra. Camodeca (n. 34) 213 n. 54 cites other comparable cases in the early First Century A.D.

⁴⁴ Sex. Appuleius (cos. 29 B.C.) was the father of the homonymous consul of A.D. 14; Paullus Fabius Maximus (cos. 11 B.C.) was the father of the consul of A.D. 34; C. Norbanus Flaccus (cos. 24 B.C.) was the father of the consuls of A.D. 15 and 19; M. Licinius Crassus Frugi (cos. 14 B.C.) was the father of the consul of A.D. 27; and L. Cornelius Cinna (cos. suff. 32 B.C.?) was the father of the consul of A.D. 5. Note that Sex. Appuleius (cos. 29), like the father of P. Dolabella (cos. A.D. 10) married a Quinctilia and Appuleius' son was also late born (he saw the light of day c. 21 see Sumner (n. 13) 362). Thus the cousins P. Dolabella (cos. 10) and Sex. Appuleius (cos. 14) were both late born sons and about the same age.

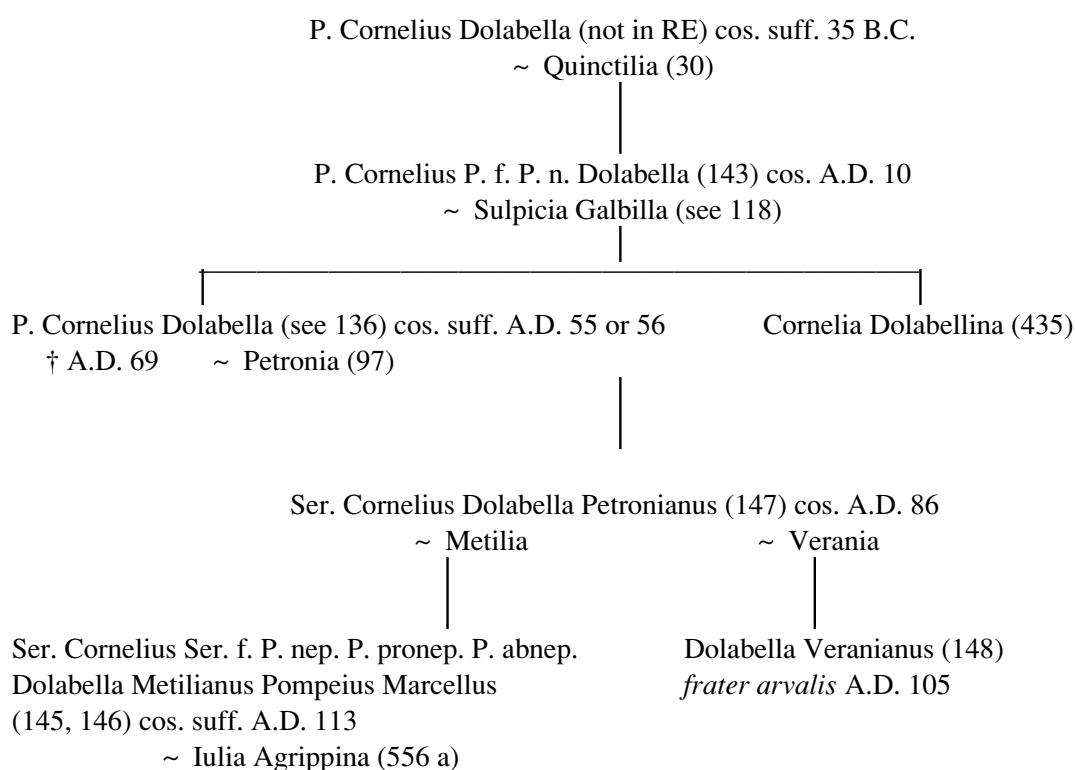
⁴⁵ As per Salomies, ZPE 86, 1991, 191 n. 19.

⁴⁶ As emerges from Tacitus, Annals 4.66.2.

⁴⁷ Sex. Appuleius (cos. 29) and L. Asprenas (the son of the consul suffect of 36, father of the consuls of A.D. 6 and 8, and friend of Augustus) both married sisters of P. Quinctilius Varus (cos. 13). And the first wives of Tiberius and P. Quinctilius Varus were daughters of M. Agrippa.

loss of Scribonia the consul suffect retains a place within the orbit of the *domus Augusta*. Indeed, the proximity of the Dolabellae to the Imperial house almost proved fatal. In later years the family came even closer to the seat of power. In addition to the inherited links adduced above, the consul suffect of A.D. 55/56, was a relative of the emperor Galba and married the ex-wife of the emperor Vitellius. In virtue of these connections, the consul suffect of A.D. 55/56 was first relegated to Aquinum by Otho and then executed as a possible rival by Vitellius. Nevertheless, the family maintained a position of honour into the Second Century A.D. and was one of the few original patrician families that succeeded in doing so.⁴⁸

Stemma



Sydney

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⁴⁸ I should like to acknowledge my debt to Martin Stone, Peter Brennan, R. K. Sinclair, B. D. Hoyos, Kathryn Welch and Tom Hillard with whom I discussed various aspects of my argument and especially to Lea Beness and Andrew Bayliss.