

Spanish Pomponii. A Study in Nomenclature

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I. Rare names are a rare delight, and often instructive. When non-Latin by shape or origin, they denote the immigrant in Spain, some going back to the epoch before certain regions of Italy received the Roman franchise. Baetica parades the prime exhibits, before all at Italica and Corduba. The litoral of Tarraconensis, from Barcino down to Carthago Nova, can also offer attractive specimens.

By contrast, the ordinary names in their plethora: Fabii, Licinii and the like. The phenomenon reflects consuls or praetors of the imperial Republic, enhanced by choice or fashion. The two types combine in the nomenclature of M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curvatus Maternus (consul suffect in 83), the great man from Liria of the Edetani.

At the same time, the indistinctive nomen is ambiguous: either the enfranchised native or the immigrant. «Pomponius» belongs to this class. Pomponii are common enough at Rome and throughout Italy. Yet, as it happens, no Pomponius can be discovered as a governor in the Spanish provinces¹.

A catalogue has been presented of the names on highest frequency in *CIL* II, sixty specimens or more². Pomponii do not much exceed a total of thirty; and they are not a promising collection. The most presentable is T. Pomponius Avitus, a high priest of the imperial cult at Tarraco. He carries for tribe the «Aniensis», which points to Caesaraugusta as the *patria*³.

¹ For names in Spain, Gallia Transalpina and Africa that may reflect holders of *imperium* see E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae* (1958), 309 ff.

² For the twenty names matched with Narbonensis, see *Tacitus* (1958), 783. And, for further statistics about frequency, R. C. Knapp, *Ancient Society* IX (1978), 187 ff.

³ *CIL* II, 4235. L. Pomponius Avitus of Tarraco (4395) cannot safely be adduced as a kinsman. The cognomen is desperately common in Spain: over a hundred specimens.

No fewer than seventy one of these *flamines* are on record, from the reign of Vespasian to the time of Commodus: precious documentation that has been analysed in an exemplary fashion⁴. Some of the results bring a surprise. Even amongst the earliest *flamines*, who come from cities on the coast or in its vicinity, the social rank is not as high as might be expected. Only three produce sons who become senators and consuls⁵.

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II. For Spanish Pomponii, meagre and sporadic compensation accrues from literature. Pomponius Mela, as he states, came from Tingentera, on the Strait of Gades; and Pliny, who had been procurator in Tarraconensis, relates how Sex. Pomponius, «Hispaniae citerioris princeps», discovered by accident a remedy against gout⁶. For the rest, recourse is had to inscriptions found in other countries, not without inference, argument, conjecture.

When Galba made his proclamation in the spring of the year 68, he convoked an assembly of the provincial notables: «e primoribus prudentia atque aetate praestantibus, velut instar senatus»⁷. To younger men the usurper allocated military rank or tasks. Thus Raecius Gallus was appointed a tribune (RIT 145); and the inscription on the arch at Lepcis recording the career of Q. Pomponius Rufus shows him in charge of the coasts of Tarraconensis and Narbonensis «bello qu[od] imp. G[a]lba pro [re p.] gessit»⁸.

Some identified Galba's man with Q. Pomponius Rufus, commanding a cavalry regiment in 64 (CIL XVI, 5). That was premature, and illicit. His tribe is «Collina», not verifiable anywhere in Spain. Commonplace nomenclature engendered homonyms in all grades of Roman society. For example, Vibii Maximi cause a lot of trouble. No profit therefore to adduce a Q. Pomponius Rufus of the better sort, who was priest in a Samnite town⁹. And any who may be moved to seek the origin of a senatorial C. Pomponius Rufus will do well to neglect a freedman at Regium Lepidum¹⁰.

Galba's man earned adlection to the Senate, probably from Vespasian in his censorship. Pliny's friend Sex. Pomponius is styled «praetorii viri pater» (NH XXII, 20). Likewise another «Hispaniae princeps» (no name) who cured himself of a disease by wearing round his neck the root of the herb purslane (XX, 215)¹¹. Either son or both might however have acceded to the «amplissimus ordo» by the normal path.

⁴ G. Alföldy, *Flamines Provinciae Hispaniae Citerioris* (Madrid, 1973).

⁵ Viz. L. Licinius Silvanus Granianus (*suff.* 106); C. Calpurnius Flaccus (?125); M. Valerius Propinquus (126).

⁶ Pliny, NH XXII, 120.

⁷ Suetonius, *Galba* 10, 3.

⁸ IRT 537 (completing ILS 1014).

⁹ CIL IX, 2161 (Caudium), cf. 2189 («litteris bonis»).

¹⁰ AE 1946, 210 (Regium Lepidum).

¹¹ Amalgamated with Sex. Pomponius in RE XXI, 2335.

Pliny collected friends from his occupations in the western provinces and bequeathed them to his nephew—whose «circle», by the way, acknowledges nobody from Baetica¹². In August of 79 a Spanish guest was staying with the admiral of the fleet at Misenum. He upbraided the youth who quietly went on with his appointed task (reading Livy and making excerpts) long after the volcano had erupted (*Epp.* VI, 20, 5).

Meanwhile the admiral, intent in any case on a close inspection of the phenomenon, had set out with warships, under added impulsion from a message sent by a lady called Rectina, whose mansion lay on the coast beneath Vesuvius (VI, 16, 8). He could not land there, but he changed direction, with a firm command to the steersman: «pete Pomponianum» (16, 11). Pomponianus, as the next sentence in the letter states, was at another part of the bay, at Stabiae. Pliny joined him, and they dined together.

Rectina perished (as the reader did not need to be told), and the admiral succumbed the next day in the vicinity of Stabiae. Rectina and Pomponianus arouse curiosity, and have aroused perplexity. Wife and husband, such is one incautious assumption¹³. Nothing in the narration speaks for it¹⁴.

The narration registers the husband's name in «Rectinae Tasci». That is the reading preferred by the latest text (OCT 1964). A «Tascus» or a «Tascius» is not inconceivable. He would have to be Celtic, on the analogy of various personal and place names¹⁵. But not in any way plausible. The plain answer is «Cascus»¹⁶. That cognomen is preternaturally rare. It was borne by Cn. Pedius Cascus, consul suffect in 71: enigmatic in his prominence, for he stood next to the consuls who opened that year.

Rectina has some relevance to Spain. It is a rare cognomen. Spain exhibits nine out of fourteen specimens of «Rectus», four out of six of «Rectinus»¹⁷. Among the latter belongs Popillia L.f. Rectina, the wife of Voconius Romanus, the friend and coeval of the younger Pliny (*CIL* II, 3866: Saguntum). As concerns the provenance of Cn. Pedius Cascus, there is no call to adduce a pair of facts: Q. Pedius proconsul of Citerior in 45 B.C., and no Pedii in *CIL* II. The consul probably derives from old Latium.

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III. Q. Pomponius Rufus made a spectacular entrance into history in the year 68 —and he was to reach a consulate, not rapid or easy, in 95. On the inscription (*IRT* 537), the first senatorial post is praetorian. That masks the fact of adlection, as can happen¹⁸.

¹² *Harvard Studies* LXXIII (1969), 230 ff. = *Roman Papers* (1979), 768 ff.

¹³ Thus A. N. Sherwin-White in his *Commentary* (1966), *ad loc.*

¹⁴ C. P. Jones, *Phoenix* XXII (1968), 127; J. H. D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples* (1979), 222 f.

¹⁵ For a number of specimens, *JRS* LVIII (1968), 140 = *Roman Papers* (1979), 702.

¹⁶ Adopted by M. Schuster (Teubner, 1952).

¹⁷ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (1965), 252.

¹⁸ Thus *ILS* 1015 (L. Javolenus Priscus); 8819 (A. Julius Quadratus).

Briefly put, the career works out as follows. Rufus was *iuridicus* in Tarraconensis and thereafter commander of a legion¹⁹. For all that can be known, he might have taken up the first post as early as 75, the second as late as 90. In any event, many years have to be allowed for during which Pomponius Rufus was out of active employment.

The dating of the Spanish post, in itself a problem, is complicated by extraneous evidence. As shown by the *tabulae defixionum* that came to light at Emporiae, a man called Rufus held it when T. Aurelius Fulvus was governor of the province (*AE* 1952, 122). Like the identity of that Rufus, the tenure of Fulvus is in question²⁰.

More important, the legion. Rufus is styled merely «leg. leg. V». Two legions bore that number. The one, V Macedonica, had its station at Oescus on the lower Danube, the other, V Alaudae, is also to be assigned to the garrison of Moesia. After 70 reinforcement of the frontier had become expedient. And another factor comes in. Evidence indicates that a Roman legion was wiped out in the invasion of Dacia conducted by Cornelius Fuscus, Domitian's Guard Prefect²¹.

Whichever the legion, Rufus may have been its commander at some time during the campaigns between 85 and 89, on and beyond the river. If it was V Alaudae, two phenomena find a single explanation. First, the omission of the legion's title from the inscription on the arch at Lepcis, dedicated by the proconsul Pomponius Rufus. Second, retardation in his career. A legate enjoying success or favour will proceed to one of the praetorian provinces, with clear prospect of a consulship.

In the face of seductive speculation, caution is prescribed. Rufus might have been appointed to the command of V Macedonica in 89, when the Dacian War terminated. Even so, that was late in the career of a man who had been adlected «inter praetorios» some fifteen years previously.

However that may be, Rufus acceded to a praetorian province in 92 or 93. A diploma dated to the latter year by the imperial titlature discloses him as governor of Dalmatia (XVI, 38). Normally consular, that province had in fact forfeited its legion in 85. For its change of status at this juncture precisely some other reasons might be canvassed. For example, a shortage of consulars after a sequence of unhealthy seasons. Or again, emergency caused by the decease of a governor. In Cappadocia — Galatia Antistius Rusticus died, and the province was split for a brief season²².

¹⁹ On the inscription the order and formulation «leg. Aug. pro pr. provinc. [M]oesiae Dalmat. Hisp.» caused trouble. Rufus was held for a time to be a consular governing Tarraconensis. For Rufus as a *iuridicus*, *Gnomon XXXI* (1959), 512; *Danubian Papers* (1971), 193 f.; G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses* (1969), 71 ff.

²⁰ For one solution, Alföldy, *o. c.*, 19 ff. For present purposes the problem may be waived.

²¹ E. Ritterling, *RE XII*, 1569 f. For indications that V Alaudae was sent to Moesia in 70 see *Danubian Papers* (1971), 82, cf. 105 (a veteran at Scupi).

²² As argued in *JRS LXVII* (1977), 42: from *ILS* 1017 (Pisidian Antioch), the inscription of (L. Caesennius) Sospes, who had been a legionary legate in 92. Not all scholars accept this solution. Thus R. K. Sherck, *AJP C* (1979), 167 f.

A further anomaly ensued. A fragmentary inscription at Curictae styles Pomponius Rufus «leg. imperatoru[m]»²³. The emperors in question must be Domitian and Nerva. Rufus held the *fasces* for the last four months of the year 95. He was consul in absence, it follows²⁴. Moreover, Rufus continued in his mandate into the first year of Trajan. In 98 another governor, a certain Macer, went to Dalmatia, as is made clear by the language of Martial —and, by the reference to his own imminent departure to Spain²⁵.

From Dalmatia Rufus now passed to Moesia Inferior, where he is attested by two diplomas of 99 (XVI, 44 f.). Not for long tenure. Another consular held the command in 100²⁶. Despite his Danubian experience (a legion and Moesia Inferior), Rufus took no part in the Dacian campaigns that began the year after. Trajan had other friends and allies.

Rufus in the sequel held the post of *curator operum publicorum*²⁷. When his year arrived for the sortition he became proconsul of Africa, for the tenure 110/11. He was then aged about sixty five.

Emphasis has been put on the slow advance in the career of honours. It comes out on comparison with some of his coevals, such as Cornelius Nigrinus (*suff.* 83) or Javolenus Priscus (*suff.* 86), both adlected to the same rank²⁸. A setback has been suspected, if he was legate of V Alaudae.

On the other hand, influences worked in his favour. They baffle detection. Cornelius Nigrinus held Moesia for a brief spell (85/86) early in Domitian's Dacian War, remaining in charge of Moesia Inferior when the command was divided²⁹. Nigrinus may have helped to promote the interests of a fellow Tarraconensian. Yet local ties are in some danger of being overestimated; the province included diverse regions —and no clue to the *patria* of Q. Pomponius Rufus.

However it be, luck or patronage served him well at two significant junctures. First of all, the praetorian province, which he acquired in 92 or 93. The latter year erupted in embarrassments for the government, when factional rivalries led to notable prosecutions for high treason. On the lowest count, senators from Spain and Narbonensis are not conspicuous in the ranks of Caesar's enemies or critics. Most of them remained firm adherents of the Flavian dynasty.

Next, when that dynasty ended abruptly, when from the crisis in Nerva's reign one of the generals came to the power, advantage accrued to Pomponius Rufus, the legate of Dalmatia. Among his early promotions (a

²³ Published by A. and J. Šašel, *Inscr. Lat. Jug.* (1978), 942.

²⁴ For a parallel (or parallels) in 70, cf. *JRS* XLVIII (1958), 6 f.; *Roman Papers* (1979), 387 ff. And see further below on T. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 94) in Cappadocia-Galatia.

²⁵ Martial X, 78, cf. *Danubian Papers* (1971), 198. For problems of date and identity concerning the Dalmatian governorship of a Cilnius Proculus see W. Eck. *RE Supp.* XIV, 97; 271 f.

²⁶ M. Laberius Maximus (*suff.* 87), cf. *CIL* XVI, 48.

²⁷ The post was not yet collegiate or held in immediate sequence to a consulate.

²⁸ Nigrinus had been legate of a legion and governor of Aquitania (*AE* 1973, 283); Javolenus after a legion and Numidia was *iuridicus* in Britain (*ILS* 1015).

²⁹ See the demonstration by G. Alföldy and H. Halfmann, *Chiron* III (1973), 356 ff.

noteworthy company), Trajan advanced Rufus to the charge of Moesia Inferior: with three legions, ranking among the foremost military commands³⁰.

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IV. No other consular Pomponius of the period demands or deserves a comparable exposition. About «C. Pomponius[»], consul suffect in 74 (*AE* 1968, 7) not a word can be said. A gap then intervenes, and in the vicinity of Rufus (*suff.* 95), the *Fasti* exhibit a cluster of four, from 94 to 100.

1) T. Pomponius Bassus (94). His antecedents baffle enquiry. He first turns up in 79/80 as legate in Asia (*ILS* 8796). The proconsul was M. Ulpius Traianus (*suff.* 70)—and Bassus later proved highly acceptable to the son of the proconsul. If he was a legate of praetorian status (some were quaestorian) he may have owed adlection to Vespasian. That entails a further consequence. Given the date of his consulship, Bassus suffered for a time a retardation comparable to that of Pomponius Rufus.

Yet merit, patronage, or luck spoke their word. Bassus was to hold one of the military provinces. The legates chosen for those commands had generally advanced by the command of a legion and a governorship in one of the eight praetorian provinces in the portion of Caesar. The employments of Bassus (as of sundry others) would be worth knowing. He clearly stood well with Caesar and Caesar's friends during more reigns than one. Domitian appointed him to Cappadocia-Galatia. He remained there through a momentous season for a tenure longer than normal, until the year 100³¹.

Something new has recently come up. Coins of Caesarea register Bassus in Cappadocia in years 14 and 15 of Domitian. That is, October 93/4 and October 94/5³². Bassus' consulate embraced the last four months of 94. He therefore went to his province in 94, when still only consul designate. The parallel to Pomponius Rufus (continuing in Dalmatia although meanwhile consul) will be duly noted. In the case of Bassus, his appointment terminated the void caused by the death of Antistius Rusticus in 93 or 94³³.

Returning from his province, Bassus in 101 was put in charge of the recently instituted Alimenta (*ILS* 6106, cf. 6675). In a letter to Bassus, of 104 or 105, Pliny warmly commends the fashion in which he spends the leisure of retirement: «ita senescere oportet virum qui magistratus amplissimos gesserit, exercitus rexit», etc. (IV, 23, 2). That would not preclude a change of mind, should a proconsulate offer, in 108 or 109. Asia is full, but there are vacancies in Africa.

2) C. Pomponius Pius (98). Known only as a consular date, yet remarkable in that he shared the *fasces* with Trajan, in succession to four

³⁰ Britain and Syria had three legions each, and there were now four in Pannonia.

³¹ *CIL* III, 6896 f.

³² P. R. Franke, *Chiron* IX (1979), 277 ff.

³³ The widow brought his ashes back to Italy (Martial IX, 30). In the interim Caesennius Sospes had acted as governor in Galatia (as inferred from *ILS* 1017).

«consules iterum». He is patently the son of the homonymous *suffectus* of 65, a person of some influence in the late Neronian epoch: he went rapidly to one of the important military commands, taking the place of Plautius Silvanus Aelianus in Moesia (*SEG* I, 329: Histria).

The ostentatious cognomen declares loyalty to a family or to a political cause. This man might be a son of Q. Pomponius Secundus (*suff.* 41), who came to grief in the proclamation of Camillus Scribonianus (cf. *PIR*¹, P 564). The other consular involved was Caecina Paetus. The husband of his daughter took over the cognomen: P. Clodius Thræsea Paetus.

3) C. Pomponius Rufus (98). To be identified as the Pomponius Rufus who prosecuted Julius Bassus and is styled by Pliny «vir paratus et vehemens» (IV, 9, 3). Otherwise on record only as a proconsul of Africa, in 113/4.

Thubursicu Numidarum yields the principal documents, viz. *I.I. Alg.* I, 1230; 1231; 1232; 1233; 1382. All fragmentary. There are also pieces of inscriptions at a place in southern Tunisia (*I.I. Afr.* 13) and at Lares (*CIL* VIII, 1777).

The proconsul emerges as a *polyonymus*. In standard works he figures as «C. Pomponius Rufus Acilius [?Prisc]us Coelius Sparsus»³⁹. One is impelled to question the validity of the cognomen attached by conjecture to the second item of the nomenclature. It finds no justification at Thubursicu. The answer comes from the fragment at Lares, which has suffered strange neglect³⁵. It reveals, as its last surviving line, the words «]scus Coe[».

Therefore not «[?Prisc]us» but «[?Pri]scus». Curiosity is still not assuaged. Granting the need for a short cognomen (on one of the Thubursicu inscriptions), why «Priscus»? Scholars, it appears, have allowed themselves to be influenced by the existence of an Acilius Priscus. That is to say, M. Acilius Priscus, the Ostian magnate (*AE* 1955, 169) whose name is prefixed to that of an Egrilius Plarianus, who was consul *suffect* c. 129 (*PIR*², E 48).

Nothing commends the attachment of Pomponius Rufus to the well documented nexus at Ostia. For the cognomen, «Fuscus» or «Tuscus» would do as well. The latter shows high frequency in Spain³⁶. Passing comment may go to Pomponia Q. f. Tusca at Corduba (II, 2301). She was used to supplement (cf. *PIR*¹, P 568) the name of a senator as «[Q. Pomp]on[ius... T]usc[us]» (VI, 1557). Plain sense deters —and no need to counter the conjecture with, for example, Cn. Antonius Fuscus (*suff.* 109).

Acilii, with thirty four specimens in *CIL* II, rank with Pomponii for frequency; and, as with Pomponii, no holder of *imperium* in the Spains is

³⁴ B. E. Thomasson, *Die Statthalter der römischen Provinzen Nordafrikes* II (1960), 58; W. Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian* (1970), 176.

³⁵ Gsell duly referred to *CIL* VIII, 1777 in his annotation on *I.I. Alg.* I, 1230, but did not quote it, merely stating «qui peut fort bien se rapporter au proconsul de nos inscriptions». It was not printed by Thomasson along with the other six documents.

³⁶ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (1965), 188: of epigraphic instances 23 out of 48. He noted only one specimen of «Tuscillus», i.e. L. Memmius Tuscillus Senecio (XIV, 3597; *ILS* 1042: Tibur), the son of Senecio Memmius Afer (*suff.* 99). Add *CIL* II, 157; 236; 2279; 5175.

available to explain the name. Baetica yields Acilii of the better sort. For example, Acilius Lucanus of Corduba, maternal grand-father of the poet (*PIR*², A 74) or P. Acilius Attianus of Italica, Prefect of the Guard in 117 (A 45). Again, P. Postumius Acilianus, procurator of Syria early in the reign of Trajan³⁷. And one might wonder about the origin of L. Acilius Strabo (*suff.* 771)³⁸. As concerns the other province, M. Acilius Rufus of Saguntum was an imperial procurator in the early epoch³⁹.

Instructive on various counts, these Acilii from Spanish cities (more attractive than Ostia) offer no clear approach to C. Pomponius Rufus. One turns for succour to the third member of his nomenclature, «Coelius Sparsus».

Spain yields twenty Coelii, Narbonensis fifty five. The name will be taken to reflect the presence in both provinces of C. Coelius Calvus, the consul of 94 B.C.⁴⁰. Some subsequent member of the family may also have contributed to spreading the name.

The prime document of early date at Barcino records walls, towers and gates built by a *dumvir* (*CIL* I² 2673 = *RIB* 51). It has been the subject of abundant and lengthy discussion among those whom with justice the date and origin of that *colonia* preoccupies⁴¹. The nomenclature of the magistrate failed to excite attention. He is «C. Coelius Atisi f.». The father's name, «Atisus» or «Atisus» is Celtic. Verona supplies three specimens of «Atisius»⁴².

In the context of Tarraconensis, M. Roscius Coelius deserves a brief mention (*suff.* 81). Roscii exploited the mines in the hinterland of Carthago Nova. Their tribe is «Maecia» (*ILS* 8706), which indicates an ultimate origin from Lanuvium; and Lanuvium itself yields an acephalous fragment (*Eph. Ep.* IX, 612), clearly belonging (cf. *ILS* 1025) to L. Roscius Aelianus (*suff.* 100). Along with «Coelius», «Roscius Murena» (that significant cognomen) turns up in the nomenclature of Q. Pompeius Falco (*suff.* 108)⁴³.

Next, «Sparsus», which happens to be extremely rare: on epigraphic record in Italy and in the provinces of the West to be found (apart from XII, 3558: Nemausus) only in Tarraconensis⁴⁴. Licinius Sparsus was one of the high-priests (II, 4198), and «Licinia Sparsi fi(lia) Procilla» is on show at

³⁷ *CIL* II 2213 (Corduba); *IGR* III, 928 (Rhosus).

³⁸ His name recurs, along with «C. Curiatius Maternus», in the nomenclature of Clodius Nummus, consul suffect in 114 (*PIR*², A 83); while the adoptive son (C 1423) and relatives (1450 f.) betray Spanish elements.

³⁹ *CIL* II, 3840; *ILS* 1376. Probably «Marcus» not «Manius» (as in *ILS* and in *PIR*, A 79), cf. *CIL* II, Add. p. 967; *Ep. lat. de Saguntum* (1980), 41.

⁴⁰ For his career, especially the Gallic command, E. Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (1964), 91 ff. Observe the coins of his grandson the *monetalis*, C. Coelius L. f. C. n. Calvus (who was quaestor in Cilicia in 50). On which, *BMC*, R. Rep. I, 475; M. H. Crawford, *RRC* I (1974), 457 ff. One type has the legend HISP. That is, an earlier proconsulate, in Citerior (298).

⁴¹ A. Balil, *Colonia Julia Augusta Paterna Faventia Barcino* (Madrid, 1964); J.-N. Bonneville, *Rev. Ét. anc.* LXXX (1978), 37 ff. (a lengthy study).

⁴² W. Schulze *LE* 70. Add now C. Atisius Pollio, praefectus of Drusus Caesar (*AE* 1955, 291).

⁴³ See further «Spaniards at Tivoli», *Ancient Society* XIII (1982), forthcoming.

⁴⁴ Attention was directed to «Sparsus» in *Harvard Studies* LXXIII (1969), 231 f.; *Roman Papers* (1979), 769.

Asturica. She married a man called L. Lusius⁴⁵. Attention has duly been drawn to Lusius Sparsus, a procurator at Alexandria in 139, and to C. Lusius Sparsus, consul suffect in 156 or 157 (*PIR*², L 442 f.).

With this encouragement, three further items can be adduced.

1) Sparsus on a coin at Osca of Augustan date⁴⁶.

2) Fulvius Sparsus, a rhetor frequently mentioned and cited by Seneca (*PIR*², F 560). Perhaps, like others in the congregation, from Spain. The most conspicuous were from Baetica, but two or three from Tarraconensis should be conceded.

3) Sparsus who owned a palace (along with a vineyard) inside the walls of Rome. Martial addressed him the one poem only, at a late date (XII, 57). To be assumed Sex. Julius Sparsus, consul suffect in 88, otherwise only a name. The two letters which a Julius Sparsus received from Pliny (IV, 5; VIII, 3) have little to say, and nothing to suggest a senior ex-consul⁴⁷.

For «Sparsus» as an epigraphic rarity one may compare «Rarus» itself: only three specimens⁴⁸. Or «Densus», with only two, both in Tarraconensis (II, 2815; 2818), whereas Tacitus brings in Sempronius Densus, a centurion in the Guard (*Hist.* I, 43, 1) and the knight Julius Densus (*Ann.* XIII, 10, 2).

«Coelius Sparsus» disengages a Tarraconensian affinity in the consular. What does it amount to? Polyonymous senators are responsible for vexatious problems. Adoption or maternal ascendance, explanations diverge. To take the simplest, binary nomenclature. In most instances the second member recalls the mother. That is sharply relevant to M. Cornelius Nigrinus Curiatius Maternus (*suff.* 83): on this showing not a Curiatius either by birth or by adoption⁴⁹.

As abundantly clear, Pomponii Rufi can occur anywhere. For this consular the sole discoverable link is Tarraconensian (i. e., «Coelius Sparsus», taken from the father of his mother or his grandmother). Let it be accorded provisional validity. And a chance could be admitted that he is a brother or cousin of Q. Pomponius Rufus.

One of the inscriptions conveys the name of his wife, Bassilla (*I.l. Alg.* 1282). The cognomen «Bassus» is extremely common⁵⁰. It would be hazardous indeed to conjecture a relationship to T. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 94); and, as will emerge later on, more families than one of Pomponii Bassi should be postulated in the time of Trajan.

⁴⁵ *CIL* II, 2648, where the last three lines are reproduced as «Luci/Lusi/Asturicae»; and so the last letter appears («vidi»). Presumably the lady's second cognomen, «Asturica».

The city also discloses Lyde, slave of Q. Lusius Saturninus (2656). Elsewhere in Spain three Lusii, viz. 1003 (Ceret); 1490 (Astigi); 3479 (Carthago).

⁴⁶ M. Grant, *FITA* (1946), 167.

⁴⁷ He is equated with the consul in *PIR*², J 586.

⁴⁸ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (1965), 103. Add C. Cornelius Rarus Sextius Naso (*suff.* 93), a proconsul of Africa (*IRT* 523).

⁴⁹ It was assumed by Alföldy and Halfmann (*o. c.*, 346 f.) that the orator Curiatius Maternus (the main character in the *Dialogus* of Tacitus) took in adoption a Cornelius Nigrinus. Better, the consular general was the son of a Curiatia.

⁵⁰ About seventy entries in *PIR*², B.

If the tribe of any of the consular Pomponii so far under inspection were attested, their region might become apparent, and even the *patria*. By good fortune the next consul in the group avows a tribe.

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V. 4) T. Pomponius Mamilianus (100). At Deva a dedication to Fortuna Redux defines him as «leg. Aug.» (VII, 164 = *RIB* 445). That is, not governor of Britain but the commander of XX Valeria Victrix⁵¹. Therefore towards the end of Domitian's reign or even as late as 97. Rapid promotion by way of a praetorian province might accrue to a legate in this season.

This man is found holding a military command about the year 108. Writing to Mamilianus, Pliny alluded to «aquilas vestras» (IX, 25, 3). A previous letter shows that he had been hunting (IX, 16). The province eludes conjecture. Contrary to what students of administration might be prone to expect, legionary legates in Britain (or elsewhere) seldom return as consulars⁵².

For present purposes what matters is the full nomenclature disclosed at Deva. He is [T.] Pomponius T. f. Gal. Mamilianus Rufus Antistianus Funisulanus Vettonianus». Which is more than is convenient for interpretation.

The tribe «Galeria» at once brings encouragement. It can often form the basis for rational conjecture about a Spanish origin⁵³. Elsewhere only two provincial cities are enrolled in «Galeria», viz. Lugdunum and Thysdrus.

Three items in the nomenclature invite inspection. First, «Mamilianus». Of ancient and legendary fame, the Mamiliii had their last known praetor in 206 B.C. (Q. Mamilius Turrinus). Five Mamiliii on Spanish inscriptions therefore go back to low class immigrant stock. One of them is T. Mamilius Silonis f. Praesens, a high priest at Tarraco (II, 4227 = *ILS* 6934). Not of early date, and he came from Tritium Magallum in the far interior⁵⁴.

Next, «Antistianus». Both provinces testify. C. Antistius Vetus was proconsul of Ulterior in 68/7 B.C.; and his son (*suff.* 30) served as legate under Caesar Augustus in the campaigns of 26 and 25. An origin from Baetica is assumed (and patent) for L. Antistius Rusticus (*suff.* 90)⁵⁵. Nor will

⁵¹ Thus *JRS* XLVII (1957), 122; *Ten Studies in Tacitus* (1970), 112; A. R. Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* (1981), 235 (registering two recent aberrant notions).

In *RE* XXI, 2342 Mamilianus was described as «Statthalter von Britannien und Kommandant der leg. [II Augusta]».

⁵² A. R. Birley, *o. c.*, 29.

⁵³ Even for Senecio Memmius Afer (*ILS* 1042), despite an inscription at Carthage in honour of his great-grandson (VIII, 24586).

⁵⁴ The others are all Tarraconensian, viz. 3371 (Aurgi); 6171 (Barcino); 4162 and 4388 (Tarraco).

⁵⁵ A homonym was magistrate at Corduba (II, 2242). Not noted in *PIR*², A 765. His wife, Mummia Nigrina (Martial IX, 30), can be claimed for Baetica.

one neglect the station Antistiana on the high road eastwards from Tarraco, taking its name from a local owner of estates⁵⁶.

Finally, the portentous «Funisulanus Vettonianus». It recalls L. Funisulanus Vettonianus (*suff.* 78), legate in succession of Pannonia and Moesia Superior in the Dacian campaigns of Domitian (*ILS* 1005). The rare nomen is Sabine, so it appears⁵⁷. «Vettonius» also turns out to be most uncommon⁵⁸.

Funisulanus had for tribe the «Aniensis». He received a dedication at Forum Popillii on the Aemilia (XI, 571). That town (tribe not verified) has been taken for his *patria*. The document permits a different explanation: Funisulanus had been a curator of the Via Aemilia.

The chance offers of something better, although it may seem remote. In Tarraconensis the tribe points to Caesaraugusta, where coins of early date disclose a magistrate called «L. Funi. Vet.»⁵⁹. A citizen of that *colonia* entering the Senate at the beginning of Nero's reign is no scandal.

What then follows for Pomponius Mamilianus? His father, or better, his grandfather, may have married into that family. Local brides are often the choice of municipal aristocrats before they have attained to success at the metropolis, with superior alliances.

Funisulanus left no male heir, so far as can be ascertained⁶⁰. Mamilianus could not obtrude on the *Fasti* the name of the eminent consular. He used it where he could, and he bequeathed it to his son (see below).

* * *

VI. So far five Pomponii consuls in the period 94-100. For three of them an origin in Spain has been advocated, on various pleas. The next group arrives a generation later: four in the years 118-121. For convenience they divide into two pairs, the first of which presents no problems.

1) T. Pomponius Antistianus (121). He is patently the son of Mamilianus. Shortly before his consulship he governed Lycia-Pamphylia. On the monument at Rhodiapolis that commemorates benefactions of Opramoas he appears as «Pomponius Antistianus Funisulanus Vettonianus» (*IGR* III, 539, 14). Since the document is a letter indited by the governor, the style of nomenclature should represent his own preference.

An Antistianus a generation later is in danger of being overlooked. The subject of the rescript he received from Antoninus Pius suggests the governor of a province⁶¹.

⁵⁶ Like Palfuriana, the preceding station. One is impelled towards P. Palfurius (*suff.* 56) and his son Palfurius Sura, a person of some notoriety (*PIR*¹, P 46).

⁵⁷ Schulze, *LE* 86 f. Add Funisulana T. f. (Not. Scavi 1896, 105: Forum Decii, near Bacugno).

⁵⁸ No specimen in Schulze. In towns of Italy, only *CIL* V, 751 (Aquileia); 1780 (Forum Iulium); 2090 (Aquileia).

⁵⁹ J. Vives, *La Moneda Hispanica* IV (1924), 82; G. F. Hill, *Notes on the Ancient Coinage of Hispania Citerior* (1933), 83.

⁶⁰ He died in 97 or 98 as is deduced from *AE* 1936, 95, cf. *PIR*², F 570.

⁶¹ *Cod. Just.* VI, 24, 1: «qui deportantur, si heredes scribantur, tamquam peregrini capere non possunt». Not in *PIR*.

2) Q. Pomponius Marcellus (121). He was legate under his father, the proconsul C. Pomponius Rufus. One of the fragments at Thubursicu preserves his name entire: «Q. Pomponio Rufo Marcello» (*I.l. Alg.* I, 1282). On another inscription, after the name (missing), was supplemented «cos. d]esig. sodal[e] Titio» (1230). That a son had that seniority when his father was proconsul is highly dubious. Therefore «pr. d]esig.»⁶². Hence a small fact, but valuable. Marcellus passed in seven years from praetor to consul. Not all were so fortunate. The intermediate stages might be worth knowing.

A Marcellus was on attestation as proconsul of Africa (*I.l. Afr.* 591; *IRT* 304). Q. Pomponius Marcellus appeared the best candidate. An inscription recently discovered brings a revision and a welcome accession to knowledge. He was proconsul of Asia, to go in 136/7⁶³.

A brother was legate along with him, viz. «C. Pompo[nio...» (*I.l. Alg.* 1230). The cognomen began with «P» (1231), and apparently ended in «-tus» (*I.l. Afr.* 13). Hence perhaps «Potitus» or «Pacatus». The former is select, the latter at first sight unprepossessing, but not to be rejected for a senator in this period⁶⁴.

* * *

VII. And now, the second pair in the group.

1) L. Pomponius Silvanus (121). Only a name, and no kinsfolk discoverable. Conjecture will add a son. A quaestor of Macedonia in 116 bears the name «L. Pomponius Maximus Flavius [...]ianus»⁶⁵. The last word can be read as «[Sil]vanus»⁶⁶. As with C. Pomponius Rufus (*suff.* 98), the son's age indicates a father not consul until about fifty.

2) L. Pomponius Bassus (118). Likewise only a name, but sometimes assumed a son of T. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 94). New and novel information has recently turned up on a fine marble slab at Albano:

L. Pomponio L. Bassi cos.
et Torquatae filio
Horatia, Basso Casco
Scriboniano, cos.
auguri, fetiali, sodali
[Tit]iali, praefecto urbis
[f]eriarum La[tin]arum.

⁶² E. Birley, *JRS* LII (1962), 222 f.

⁶³ Reported in *Anatolian Studies* XXIII (1973), 42, and adduced in a revision of African proconsulates in *ZPE* 37 (1980), 2 f.

⁶⁴ As witness C. Ulpius Pacatus Prastina Messallinus (*cos.* 147). For «Potitus», I. Kajanto, *o. c.*, 354.

⁶⁵ As published in *AE* 1947, 4 (Samothece).

⁶⁶ Thus P. M. Fraser in *Samothece* II (1960), 51.

⁶⁷ The inscription was published by S. Panciera, *Rendiconti della Pontificia Acc. Rom. di Archeologia* XLV (1972/1973), 105 ff., with photograph and ample commentary. Whence *AE* 1973, 200. Duly noted by W. Eck, *RE* Supp. XIV, 438 f.

⁶⁸ Registered on *ILS* 308 (Athens). Not in the *HA*.

This consul, a son of the *suffectus* of 118, demands a small excursus, for reasons that will soon become apparent⁶⁹.

His social distinction is declared in a triple fashion. First, the honorific post of *praefectus urbi*, held when the consuls departed to preside at the Latin Games on the Mons Albanus. It was restricted to youths of the high aristocracy. Exceptions are rare and remarkable. That P. Aelius Hadrianus was *praefectus urbi* (probably in 94) is powerful testimony to the influence accruing to a certain group in the last years of Domitian⁶⁸.

Second, Torquata his mother. To be identified as a daughter of L. Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas Torquatus, the consul of 94, consul for the second time in 128. The line went back to Piso the Pontifex, whose daughter married L. Nonius Asprenas (*suff.* 6).

Third, the cognomen «Scribonianus». Given the resplendent pedigree of the mother, it should likewise reveal lineage. In the reign of Tiberius Caesar a notable match united M. Crassus Frugi (*cos.* 27) to Scribonia, with fateful consequences for their four sons, among them Crassus Frugi (*cos.* 64) and Piso Licinianus, whom Galba chose for son and successor⁶⁹.

Two consular sons followed in the next generation. First, that Calpurnius Crassus who conspired against Nerva and Trajan in turn (so it was alleged), and who was killed by an imperial procurator when escaping from his penal island in the first days of Hadrian (*PIR*², C 259). He is identified as C. Calpurnius Piso Licinianus (*suff.* 87). Second, Libo Rupilius Frugi, now at last acquiring shape and substance from diverse testimony.

1) Libo Frugi, a consular named by Pliny as a speaker in the year 101 (III, 9, 33).

2) Frugi, discovered as a consul *suffectus* of 88.

3) Libo Rupilius Frugi, on a lead pipe at Rome.

4) «Rupili [Li]bonis» recuperated by a palmary emendation of HA, Marcus 1, 4⁷⁰. Hence *PIR*², L 166: (?L. Scribonius) Libo (?Rupilius) Frugi.

From this aristocratic group therefore derives the ascendance of the new consul L. Pomponius L. f. Bassus Cascus Scribonianus. At first sight his father (*suff.* 118), had married a Scribonia. On the inscription she is styled «Torquata», and is identified as a daughter of the eminent Nonius Asprenas (*cos.* 94). He, it follows, had for wife a Scribonia.

The new consul, however, also bears «Cascus» in his nomenclature. That evoked the enigmatic Cn. Pedius Cascus, consul *suffectus* early in 71. The maternal grandfather (i.e. Nonius Asprenas) had married his daughter, so it was conjectured⁷¹. That is legitimate, and may be the correct inference⁷². Yet «Cascus» might go back a generation earlier in these Pomponii Bassi.

⁶⁹ For the stemma, *PIR*², L (facing p. 40).

⁷⁰ A. R. Birley, *Historia* XV (1966), 249 f.

⁷¹ S. Panciera, *o. c.*, 114 f.

⁷² The cognomen (not listed by Kajanto) being not merely rare but unique. *TLL* offers a «Casco», a «Casconius» and two Cascii. The cognomen «Casca» is confined to a branch of the Servilii.

A different explanation could be proffered. The inscription happily furnishes the tribe «Horatia». That points to Aricia. The family may have desired to advertise an origin from primeval Latium. Archaic writers like Ennius were coming back. Apart from that fashion, men might recall the line «quam prisci casci populi tenuere Latini»⁷³. Which, by the way, suggests that Pedius Cascus himself avows ancient Latin stock.

A new consul has emerged in the reign of Pius: for short, «Cascus Scribonianus». The tribe «Horatia» enables another member of the family to be established. The fourth name on a decree of the Senate in the year 139 stood as «Q. Pompeius Q. f. Hor. Bassianus» (*ILS* 7190: Cyzicus). Strong doubts could not fail to be conceived about the name as supplemented. Revision confirms⁷⁴. This senator is a Pomponius (and perhaps polyonymous)⁷⁵.

Pomponius Bassianus may be assumed a close relative of Cascus Scribonianus, perhaps a first cousin, his father Quintus being a brother of L. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 118). Also perhaps to be added to the nexus is Pomponia Q. f. Bassilla, owner of property that produced bricks in the suburban vicinity of Rome⁷⁶.

* * *

A further step was taken, not to be commended. As parent to Q. Pomponius Q. f. Bassianus (senator in 139) the stemma annexed Q. Pomponius Marcellus (*suff.* 121), supposing him a son of T. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 94)⁷⁷. That cannot be. Marcellus (with «Rufus» in his nomenclature) is the son of C. Pomponius Rufus (*suff.* 98), proconsul of Africa.

The obtrusion of T. Pomponius Bassus arouses grave and general dubitation. The Pomponii of Aricia assert social pretensions. L. Bassus marries a Torquata; and the inscription of his son confines his public offices to consulate, priesthoods and the function he exercised in extreme youth. Although only a Pomponius, that son is enrolled at once in the high aristocracy that was content with wealth and pomp and pedigree. Other senators had to make their way in the service of the Caesars.

T. Pomponius Bassus, legate for six years of Cappadocia-Galatia, looks like an isolated figure. Let him remain in that condition. The cognomen, although not as bad as «Rufus», is very common. He might have come from anywhere⁷⁸. To postulate unrelated families of Pomponii Bassi entails no

⁷³ Quoted by Varro, *De l. l.* VII, 28: whence fr. 24 V.

⁷⁴ S. Panciera, *o. c.*, 111. He made careful inspection of Gradenwitz' photograph.

⁷⁵ Further, perhaps the Tisianus who was consul suffect with L. Annius Fabianus, presumably in 141 (*AE* 1959, 38). See now L. Vidman (*Fasti Ostienses*, ed. 2, 1982), who suggests Q. Antonius Cassianus.

⁷⁶ *CIL* XV, 1376-1378: about the middle of the century. Otherwise she might be a daughter of Q. Pomponius Rufus Marcellus (*suff.* 121), whose mother was a Bassilla (*I. l. Alg.* I, 1282).

⁷⁷ S. Panciera, *o. c.*, 111, cf. the stemma (*ibid.* 116).

⁷⁸ Spain not excluded.

discomfort. Eggius Ambibulus of Aeclanum (*cos.* 120) carried «Pomponius» in his nomenclature (*ILS* 1054), with M. Pomponius Bassulus for maternal uncle (2953, cf. *PIR*², E 6). His tribe is «Cornelia». A C. Pomponius Bassus somewhat later (*suff.* c. 196) has the «Veturia» (VI, 31696).

* * *

VIII. Pomponius Bassianus and Cascus Scribonianus carry the theme into the early years of Antoninus Pius. It will be suitable to pursue it until the end of the reign.

1) Q. Pomponius Maternus (*suff.* 128). Apart from the consulate known only as the owner of a villa on the bay of Puteoli⁷⁹. The nomenclature appears indistinctive. Nevertheless, the cognomen could be brought into play. This Pomponius is the first consul to bear it. «Maternus» is very frequent in Spain. In fact, that phenomenon was used to refute the notion that Curvatus Maternus, senator and orator, was a Gaul⁸⁰.

2) C. Pomponius Camerinus (*cos.* 138). That Camerinus held the eponymate in the last year of Hadrian is significant in itself. Origin, parentage and descendants are out of reach. The cognomen stood for aristocratic descent, as Juvenal was well aware (VII, 90; VIII, 38). It recalled the patrician Sulpicii Camerini, extinct so far as known since the consul of 46 (*PIR*¹, S 713), and Scribonianus Camerinus (S 205), a son of Crassus Frugi (*cos.* 64), and therefore grandson of a Scribonia. The consul of 138 may well be related to his coeval, Scribonianus Cascus. His own cognomen took its origin from ancient Cameria, a colony of Alba Longa.

3) Q. Pomponius Musa (*suff.* ?159). A homonym was *monetalis* in the last epoch of the Republic. His coins carry the head of Apollo on the obverse, on the reverse each of the Nine Muses in turn⁸¹. Only the ingenuous will fancy that his cognomen is Greek. Observe the nomen «Musanus»⁸².

On a brick stamp the consul's name is «Q. Pomponi Mussus» (*CIL* XV, 1375). He is attested at Velitrae (X, 6568), along with Julia Magnilla (6584), presumably his wife. She also occurs at Tibur (XIV, 3716).

Lineal descent from the *monetalis* is not easy to credit. Ancient *cognomina*, especially those of extinct families, were liable to be revived and annexed. The Pedanii of Barcino employ «Salinator», which appertained to the Livii in the old time; and T. Julius Maximus of Nemausus (*suff.* 112) includes «Servilius Vatia» in his nomenclature (*ILS* 1010).

Haste or pedantry might aggregate to the catalogue T. Pomponius Proculus Vitrasius Pollio (*suff.* c. 151, *cos.* II, 176), registered as *PIR*¹,

⁷⁹ J. H. D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples* (1970), 223: discussing a lead pipe with his name (*Eph. Ep.* VIII, 378).

⁸⁰ *Tacitus* (1958), 798. Apart from the consular of Liria, Spain could show only II, 954 (Ilipula); 1109 (Italica); 2211 (Corduba).

⁸¹ M. H. Crawford, *RRC* I (1974), no. 410 (437 ff.).

⁸² *CIL* I², 2100 (Interamna). Observe the equestrian C. Musanus (*AE* 1954, 163: Lucus Feroniae), of early imperial date.

P 558⁸³. Generally styled «T. Vitrasius Pollio», he carries the prefix to his name on his earliest attestation when governor of Moesia Inferior c. 157 (*AE* 1911, 11 and *SEG* II, 454; Histria), and much later, after the second consulate (*ILS* 1114: set up by his wife). For what reasons a senator who was adlected to the patriciate by Pius, who married a cousin of Marcus Aurelius, assumed and kept this drab and indistinctive piece of nomenclature, that is a question beyond an answer.

«Proculus» belongs along with «Rufus» and «Maximus» to the six most banal *cognomina*⁸⁴. In default of other clues (or to corroborate them) appeal can sometimes be made to an ordinary cognomen when it happens, like «Maternus» or «Avitus» to be fancied in certain provinces. The hazards inherent in this procedure are obvious. On the other hand, as has been shown, «Rectus» and «Sparsus» turn out on investigation to be much rarer than any might suspect. Hence a tempting recourse⁸⁵.

* * *

Consuls engross the enquiry, and nothing can be done with C. Tullius Capito Pomponianus, *suff.* 84. A brief word may go to a pair of ladies of some minor interest. Pliny inherited from Pomponia Galla, widow of an Asudius (V, 1, 1): a sister surely, hardly a daughter, of C. Pomponius Gallus Didius Rufus, proconsul of Crete and Cyrene in 88/9 (*AE* 1954, 188). As for Pomponia Galeria, who set up an altar at Rome in the year 107, she might well belong to a senatorial family⁸⁶.

* * *

IX. The enquiry bore upon two clusters of Pomponii, five in the years 94-100, four in 118-121; and in the sequel four were added, between 128 and 159 (including the new accession, Cascus Scribonianus). Among the first nine, no fewer than five have been claimed for the Peninsula. The result may appear paradoxical in view of the dearth of direct evidence from Spain itself. One is reduced to invoking the high priest from Caesaraugusta, T. Pomponius Avitus, and Sex. Pomponius father of a senator of praetorian rank. However that may be, Q. Pomponius Rufus, the partisan of Galba, brings some comfort.

Those five consuls may stimulate (if it be necessary) sundry reflections in general on the rise provincial aristocracies. Galba's proclamation brought

⁸³ The article in *RE* XXI, 2344 ff. is riddled with errors; and the parent of the bis consul (*suff.* ?137) is not listed among the Vitrasii in *IXA*, 416 ff.

⁸⁴ That is, going by the evidence of *PIR*. The other three are «Priscus», «Sabinus», «Severus». No account is here taken of African proliferations such as «Fortunatus» or «Victor».

⁸⁵ And no call to reiterate warnings against a method which at the same time makes appeal both to the rare and the common.

⁸⁶ *CIL* VI, 622.

immediate benefit to Tarraconensis and to Narbonensis. It was enhanced by Vespasian. A long process, which civil war accelerated, was already well under way.

In the course of the next thirty years emergencies both military and civilian improved the prospects of the new senators. Despite generosity in the allocation of consulates early in the reign of Domitian, a blockage can be detected. It may have contributed to retard the career of Q. Pomponius Rufus⁸⁷.

Domitian's wars were propitious for legionary legates. When they ceased in 92, various embarrassments of the ruler lent impulsion to intrigue and patronage. Pomponius Rufus managed to acquire the province of Dalmatia, hence his consulship assured.

Next, the crisis of the imperial succession. Pomponius Mamilianus legate of a legion in Britain was in good posture, although, as in 69, the decision rested with the army commanders on Rhine and Danube.

The *Fasti* of Trajan's first years proclaim his adherents, in all their variety of rank and origin. Spaniards were to be expected among the numerous consuls. A casual detail attracts. A new fragment of the *Ostienses* contributes L. Fabius Tuscus from Baetica, consul *suffect* in 100⁸⁸.

By the same token, Hadrian's chief allies and kinsmen stand as *consules ordinarii* from 118 to 121. Among the *suffecti* is the second cluster of Pomponii.

* * *

X. «Spain» and «Spaniards», those are comprehensive terms, and all too often deceptive. Baetica was a small country, easily defined, prolific in cities, and in senators, many of whom can be detected. Tarraconensis is a vast conglomerate, embracing heterogeneous regions. To establish (or at least render plausible) an origin from the Peninsula will not take the enquirer very far.

Of the five consuls here invoked and inspected, not one can be assigned a *patria*. Deplorable, but no surprise if some of them issued from Tarraconensis. Certain cities yield a paucity of inscriptions, notably the colonies Celsa and Caesaraugusta⁸⁹. Another factor supervened. The successful departed. The life of a senator detained them and broke their ties with the old country. A group, mainly from Baetica, took up residence in villas at Tibur⁹⁰.

⁸⁷ Or that of T. Pomponius Bassus (*suff.* 94), probably of praetorian rank before 79.

⁸⁸ A homonym was magistrate at Ulia (II, 1537). Noted by W. Eck in *RE Supp.* XIV, 117.

⁸⁹ The dearth at Celsa was emphasised in *Tacitus* (1958), 791: discussing the *patria* of Licinius Sura. As concerns Caesaraugusta, let it be observed that no fewer than six high priests at Tarraco have «Aniensis» for tribe: G. Alföldy, *Flamines Provinciae Hispaniae Citerioris* (1973), nos. 17, 31, 24, 45, 52, 54.

⁹⁰ «Spaniards at Tivoli», *Ancient Society* XIII (1982), forthcoming.

Like the rise of families, their decline and extinction furnishes instruction. In these pages three Pomponii, consuls between 95 and 98, are assumed Spanish. Two sons followed in the next generation. Their posterity vanishes. The phenomenon finds parallel in other new families, whether provincial or Italian. On that note may terminate a modest and limited contribution to the constant renewal of the upper order in Rome of the Caesars.

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Inscripciones latinas del sur de la provincia de Córdoba

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En el presente trabajo voy a presentar una serie de inscripciones, tanto nuevas como ya conocidas, que he tenido la oportunidad de estudiar en el marco de la revisión de la epigrafía latina cordobesa para el proyectado suplemento al CIL II¹.

1

Hace unos cuatro años, el albañil don Santiago Muñoz Linares, vecino de Carcabuey, encontró, al hacer obras en la casa número 5-7 de la calle Capitán de dicho pueblo, enterrada en el suelo batido de la casa, una piedra escrita la cual se llevó a su casa. Luego fue depositada en el Grupo Escolar de este pueblo, donde se conserva en la actualidad (*vidi* 18-11-1982).

Se trata de una pequeña ara² de caliza local, de color gris claro, que ha perdido la cornisa superior y que está muy gastada en la zona inmediata a la fractura. La base está separada del dado central por una sencilla moldura en forma de S. Alt. 39 cm (17 corresponden a la base), anch. 22, grues. 14 (base anch. 27, grues. 18 cm). Letras 2,3-2,7 cm (T final = 4 cm). Los interespacios entre los rr. 1/2 y 3/4 (1,5 cm) son un tanto más grandes que el existente entre los rr. 2/3 (1 cm). La interpunción, con las reservas debidas a la pésima conservación de la lápida, parece ser de forma triangular, aunque hay que

¹ Agradezco sinceramente la ayuda inestimable que me han prestado a los amigos don Juan Bernier (Córdoba), don Cristóbal Garrida Ortega (Cabra), don Joaquín Rueda (Carcabuey) y don Alfonso Sánchez Romero (Doña Mencía), así como a doña C. Puerta y a don J. L. Gamallo, que me han revisado el manuscrito. El mapa fue dibujado por don Uwe Städtler. Todas las fotos son del autor.

² Si la inscripción no lo dijera así, podría tratarse también de un pedestal para una estatuilla de la diosa.