

# The Trojan Genealogy of the Iulii before Caesar the Dictator

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In one of his last publications, the late Ernst Badian detailed the history of the patrician Iulii from its beginnings to the time of Caesar the Dictator. There he discussed what others have also long noticed: that the Dictator was not the first Iulius or the only Iulius in his own time to claim a Trojan ancestry.<sup>1</sup> This paper proposes to add to Badian's insightful remarks and examine in more detail the Julian claims that Caesar and Augustus inherited—rather than invented—that are visible in the surviving literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources.<sup>2</sup>

The first detectable trace of a Trojan pedigree for the Iulii appears in the *Origines* of Cato the Elder in the first half of the second century BC. Cato tells the story of the founding of Alba Longa and the killing of King Mezentius by Ascanius, son of Aeneas, claiming that Ascanius got the name Iulus because he performed these deeds just as he was old enough to have the first signs of a downy beard (in Greek, a *ioulos*).<sup>3</sup> Ascanius died childless, Cato continued, and his half-brother, a son of Aeneas and Lavinia named Silvius, inherited Ascanius' throne and founded the line of the Alban kings, the Silvii. Of course, the name "Iulus" provided the patrician family's *nomen*, "Iulius," but various *fasti* (the earliest dating to the Augustan period) and literary sources also assign the name "Iullus" as a *cognomen* to the Iulii of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.<sup>4</sup>

One can detect advertisement of the Trojan genealogy by the Iulii themselves not long after Cato's *Origines*. Indeed, one line originating from Sextus Iulius Caesar, *cos.* 157, was extremely conscious of his *gens'* putative Trojan origins. A son of the *cos.* 157, also a Sextus Caesar, minted coins with Venus and Cupid on them ca. 129. Venus was the mother of Aeneas and Cupid was therefore both half-brother of Iulus Ascanius and emblem of Venus in his own right. That moneyer's nephew, Lucius Caesar, later *cos.* 90, also placed Venus and Cupid on coins in his own moneyership a generation later, ca. 103 BC.<sup>5</sup> The *cos.* 90 was

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<sup>1</sup> Badian (2009). He opens the paper (at p. 11): "The origin of the Iulii was shrouded in myth deriving their ancestry from Aeneas and Venus long before the age of Caesar." See Burkert (1962) who also emphasizes Caesar was following a family tradition by playing up his genealogy, and 362-364 for earlier scholarly recognition of the Julian genealogy before Caesar.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is also an expansion upon my own earlier observations of the Julian genealogical claim before and after Caesar the Dictator in Farney (2007) 56-58.

<sup>3</sup> See Cato ap. Serv. et Auct. *A* 1.267 = *FRH* 3F1.9a, Cato and Caesar (L. Caesar, *cos.* 64?) ap. *OGR* 15.5 = *FRH* 3F1.9b, Cato ap. Serv. et Auct. *A* 4.620 = *FRH* 3F1.10 and Cato ap. Serv. *A* 6.760 = *FRH* 3F1.11, discussed by Badian (2009) 13. For the date of the *Origines*, see Beck and Walter (2001) 150 "um 170 BC," and Badian, *ibid.* the 170s.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., C. Iulius Iullus, *cos.* 489; C. Iulius Iullus, *cos.* 482; Vopiscus Iulius Iullus, *cos.* 473; C. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* 438; L. Iulius Iullus, *cos.* 430; Sex. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* 424; C. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* II 405; L. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* 403; L. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* II 397; and L. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* II 379. To this group one should probably add C. Iulius (Iullus?), *cos.* II 435, and perhaps C. Iulius (Iullus?), *dict.* 352. For all of whom see *MRR s.a.* for sources and discussion of sources.

<sup>5</sup> RRC258 of Sex. Iulius Caesar, later *pr.* 123, dated to 129 by Crawford. RRC320 of L. Iulius Caesar, later *cos.* 90, dated to 103 by Crawford; it is inscribed "L. Iuli L.f. Caesar," showing he was not the son of the previous

also a patron of Ilium (the believed site of Homer's Troy) as we know from inscriptions honoring him and his children.<sup>6</sup> In addition, a Lucius Caesar of the first half of the first century BC, the *cos.* 90, or his like-named son, the *cos.* 64, was the author of a work on the origins of Rome and the descendants of Aeneas. One can presume that the author recorded his own family as some of these Aeneadae.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, Mark Antony "revived" the name Iullus by giving it as a *praenomen* to his son born in 43 BC, no doubt to honor his dead friend and mentor, Caesar the Dictator; but one must also not forget that Antony's mother was a Iulia, the daughter of the *cos.* 64 and the granddaughter of the *cos.* 90.<sup>8</sup>

All of these Iulii Caesares were from a branch of the family that the Dictator was only distantly related to.<sup>9</sup> Closer to Caesar, however, one notes that the younger Gaius Marius, son of Caesar's aunt Iulia and therefore the Dictator's cousin, was at the end of his life known as the "son of Venus."<sup>10</sup> It is hard not to interpret this description in light of the Julian connection to Venus, especially since the consuls of 90 and 64 BC were so active in advertising this same claim in this very period.

There is also evidence that members of the *gens Iulia* other than the line of the Caesares—people who are quite obscure to us—made allusions to their Trojan ancestors in the late Republic. One, a Lucius Iulius Bursio, minting in the middle of the 80s BC, put Cupid on the reverse-side of one of his coin-issues.<sup>11</sup> Another, a Gnaeus Iulius, son of Lucius, a

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moneyer, and see Badian (1990) 389 that he must be his nephew instead since his complete filiation is listed as "L.f. Sex.n." on another inscription.

<sup>6</sup> See Weinstock (1971) 17 n. 5 for sources and discussion. L. Iulius Caesar, *cos.* 90, exempted the land of Ilium from taxes as *cens.* 89 and was honored with a statue (*ILS* 8770 = *IGR* 4.194), as was his daughter (*IGR* 4.195; see *MRR* 3.110 for the idea that this statue base inscription should actually refer to his son, the homonymous *cos.* 64, and his putative censorship in 61). The *cos.* 64 also participated in the festival of Athena there as *Q. 77* (*IGR* 4.197).

<sup>7</sup> For ancient sources and modern theories on L. Caesar's work and identity, see Weinstock (1971) 17. Bickel (1957) asserts that the writer was the *cos.* 64. See note 3 for a citation of "Caesar," presumably this man, following Cato about Iulus Ascanius (see Beck and Walter [2001] 140 and 162).

<sup>8</sup> For Iullus Antonius, *cos.* 10, Antony's son via Fulvia, who later committed suicide after conviction for adultery with Augustus' daughter and conspiracy in 2 BC, see Gröbe *RE* s.v. "Antonius (22)" 2584-2585. Antony's other son was Antyllus, whose rather parallel name ("Little Anto") celebrates his father's claim's to Herculean ancestry from a son of Hercules named Anto: Plu. *Ant.* 4, (cf. 36.5-7, 60.4-5), App. *BC* 3.16, 19 and *RRC* 494/2 (dated to 42 BC); see with Huttner (1995) for a discussion of Antony's genealogy. For Antyllus himself, see Gröbe *RE* s.v. "Antonius (32)" 2614: he took the *toga virilis* shortly after Actium and was killed by Octavian.

<sup>9</sup> As noted, the filiation of the *cos.* 90 was "L.f. Sex.f." compared to Caesar the Dictator's which was "C.f. C.n." See Sumner (1971) 262-264 and Sumner (1976) for conjectures on the family's inter-relationships. See also Badian (1990) 389 and Badian (2009) 11-15.

<sup>10</sup> Plu. *Mar.* 46.5-6: after the elder Marius died in 86 BC the younger Marius acted despotically until his death in 82; and so, whereas when he was younger he was known as "the son of Mars", he was later called "the son of Venus." As Weinstock (1971) 17 argues, I believe it is just possible this could be an (humorous?) allusion to the promotion of his maternal family identity. Perhaps it was a claim put forward in part to counter Sulla's own famous attachment to Venus.

<sup>11</sup> *RRC* 352/2, dated to 85 BC by Crawford. For a technical study of Bursio's coins (with no suggestions, however, about his identity), see De Ruyter (1996).

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Roman *quaestor* in the last century of the Republic, is named on bronze *quadrantes* minted at Spanish Corduba that depict both Venus and Cupid.<sup>12</sup> These men are otherwise unknown and their connection to the *gens Iulia* is also quite uncertain. The presence of Cupid and Venus on their coins, however, suggests that both men claimed to be descendants of Aeneas and so asserted some connection to the patrician Iulii. Yet, at least the first man, Lucius Bursio, does not seem to have used the *cognomen* Caesar—unless Bursio was used as a second *cognomen* (like the polyonymous Gaius Iulius Caesar Strabo Vopiscus below). It is unclear if the other man was a Caesar either, since he does not provide a *cognomen* for himself at all on his coinage, though he does provide a filiation.<sup>13</sup> Both or either could be from a collateral branch of the Iulii, though if so they still bought into the legendary genealogy promoted by the Caesares for the *gens*.

From all of this evidence, it seems clear that Caesar the Dictator was following a Julian tradition—and perhaps not even solely a Caesarian one—in loudly proclaiming an origin from Venus and Aeneas. Hand in hand with this, and perhaps “proving” their Trojan origins by linking legendary periods together, was the Julian claim to the throne of Alba Longa. We have already seen that this claim was known to Cato in the second century BC where the name Iulus was believed to have been earned by Ascanius and passed through the Silvan dynasty and the founding of Alba Longa. Alba was widely believed to be the supposed metropolis of the Latin people, including the Romans.<sup>14</sup> A putative dynasty of Alban kings also seems to have helped solve an early chronological problem of early Roman history/myth, meant to bridge the gap between Aeneas (believed to have lived in the twelfth century BC), and the rule of Romulus and the foundation of Rome (believed to be in the eighth century). A period of rule at Alba also provided genealogical justification for the close relationship between Rome and the other Latin communities, and it was a fruitful opportunity for aristocratic families, like the Iulii, to claim legendary Alban ancestors. Accordingly, we inherit fifteen different lists of kings who ruled at Alba between Aeneas and Romulus.<sup>15</sup> It only helped (if it was not in fact the origin of) the Julian claim that their family’s ancient seat of power was a site very near to Alba, at Bovillae, to which it was later rationalized the cults of Alba were translated to be cared for by the Iulii after the

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<sup>12</sup> For these coins see *MRR* 2.287 and 3.110 (they are not in Crawford; the moneyer is also not in the *RE* or the *DNP*). The dating of this issue is very uncertain; numismatists have dated them anywhere from the 120s to the 40s BC.

<sup>13</sup> His *praenomen* Gnaeus is almost unique among the patrician Iulii, but it is (possibly) found in the name of C(n.?) Iulius Mento, *cos.* 431 (*MRR* 3.111). It could have been a rarely needed fourth *praenomen* for the *gens*, after the more commonly used Gaius, Lucius and Sextus in the family. For the occasional necessity of third and fourth *praenomina*, see Badian (1971) for the Quinctii, and Sumner (1971) 262-264 and Sumner (1976) for the Iulii themselves. As Gnaeus was commonly abbreviated as “Cn.” it could have easily become the commoner *praenomen* Gaius (“C.”) in transmission, and so we could have lost some other “Gnaei Iulii.” For similar problems with the *praenomen* Manius (abbreviated “M.” as opposed to Marcus as “M.” or Mamercus as “Mam.”), see Sumner (1964).

<sup>14</sup> For more on Alba and the Alban kings, see Farney (2007) 53-55.

<sup>15</sup> For discussion of the list and its creation, see Farney (2007) 54-56, 60-61, citing Ogilvie (1965) 43-46, Laroche (1982), Forsythe (1994) 113-123, Forsythe (1995) and Brugnoli (1996). Brugnoli, *ibid.* and Forsythe (1994) *ibid.* both contain useful charts of all the various king-lists found in the extant literature modeled on Trieber (1894) 124.

supplanting of Alba by Rome. Accordingly, both Caesar the Dictator and later members of the imperial family drew upon symbols, like the supposed costume of the Alban kings, and other advertisements, to show their familial link to the ancient Latin mother-city.<sup>16</sup>

At any rate, legendary Iulii were adduced and made active during Rome's regal period to connect the dots between Aeneas, Alba Longa and the early Republic. It is now impossible to say when or who created these figures, but Augustus knew of enough "famous" Iulii to fill a hemicycle in his new forum inaugurated in 2 BC.<sup>17</sup> It is tempting to say it was at the behest of Caesar or Augustus that these family-members were brought to light or "rediscovered," although one should not rule out the above-noted writer, Lucius Caesar, the *cos.* 90 or 64, or even the source of Cato's story about Iulus Ascanius, a century before that.

There are two traditions for the arrival of Iulii to Rome from Alba Longa which bear looking at for my purposes. In the first and best known version, the Iulii simply came with a number of other Alban families (i.e. the Tullii, Servilii, Quincti(li)i, Geganii, Curiatii, Cloelii and Metilii) when Alba was conquered by the Roman king, Tullus Hostilius.<sup>18</sup> In the other tradition, known to Cicero and various later writers, the Iulii may have already been in Rome at the time of Romulus: a Proculus Iulius reported to the Senate and Roman people that he had seen Romulus become the god Quirinus after his death. This man is described, sometimes all at once, as a colonist from Alba, a farmer or a descendent of Ascanius.<sup>19</sup> According to (another?) legend Proculus was also a leading Latin candidate to become the next king after Romulus, but that the Sabine Numa was elected by the Senate instead. Accepting Numa's election, Proculus and another "runner-up," the Sabine Velesus, a legendary ancestor of the patrician Valerii, then went to Cures to persuade Numa to be the new king of Rome.<sup>20</sup>

These versions are not completely irreconcilable: some of the Iulii could have stayed at Alba when Proculus left (if he did leave) only to move to Rome some generations later under Tullus Hostilius. But the Proculus story is certainly the more prestigious one for the

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<sup>16</sup> For more on Alba, Caesar and the Julio-Claudian emperors, see Farney (2007) 56-58. Possibly relevant to their connection to Alba, or at least, something that could have supported their Alban claims: Sex. Iulius Caesar, *cos.* 91, uncle of the Dictator, just eluded assassination at the annual Alban Festival at the outbreak of the Social War (Flor. 2.6.8).

<sup>17</sup> See Geiger (2008) 129-137 for a catalog of the known statues in the Forum Augustum. Aside from Alban kings and recent relatives of Caesar and Augustus, only one other Iulius is known to have a statue, C. Iulius Iullus, *cos.* II 482 and *Xvir* 451; there are niches for dozens more, although Geiger advocates a broad definition of who was included among the "Iulii." See Fusco (2000) for another proposal for the arrangement of the statues. It seems probable to me that some or all of the other, early consular Iulii Iulli, listed in note 4, as well as other consular/high office-holding Iulii, had statues in the Forum.

<sup>18</sup> D.H. 3.29.7 and Liv. 1.30.2. For other sources on the Alban and Trojan origins of these and other families, see Farney (2007) 58-61.

<sup>19</sup> Cic. *Rep.* 2.20, *Leg.* 1.3, D.H. 2.63.2-3, Liv. 1.16.5-8, Ov. *Fast.* 2.499-512, Plu. *Rom.* 28 and *Num.* 2.3. Burkert (1962) 363 notes that a similar sighting of Augustus' apotheosis occurred on his death by a man of praetorian rank named Numerius Atticus (citing D.H. 56.46.2; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 100.4).

<sup>20</sup> Plu. *Num.* 5.1. For traditions about Velesus/Volusus, ancestor of the Valerii, see Farney (2007) 90, 101-104 and Farney (2010) 150, 154.

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Iulii. It provides a connection for an early Iulius with Romulus by having him witness his deification; it also claims that a Iulius was almost king of Rome; and, finally, it has the Iulii arrive at Rome before many other Alban families, at the very beginning in fact, in the time of Romulus. At any rate, both Alban stories serve to link the Julian family tree from the time of Aeneas to Rome's regal period, and both serve to explain how or assume that the Iulii arrived in Rome in that time. We cannot know for certain when either story was invented. Since the Proculus story was well-known to Cicero, however, we can suspect that it at least is older than something created by/for the Dictator.

Nevertheless, the Iulii have several early Republican members in the consular lists, but their appearance is only spotty after the early fourth century BC.<sup>21</sup> This may explain why the later family, "revived" with Sextus Caesar, *cos.* 157, is so eager to promote its legendary origins: to show they belonged among the ruling elite though they had not been prominent recently. This is also likely why the noted orator, Gaius Caesar Strabo, *aed. cur.* 90, took a third *cognomen*, Vopiscus, in order to reinforce his branch's claim to descent from Vopiscus Iulius Iullus, *cos.* 473, an ancestor who lived in the "glory days" of the early patrician Iulii. He and other Iulii would seem to have been at pains to demonstrate that Julian claims were based on descent from multiple, early consuls of Rome, as well as gods and kings.<sup>22</sup>

Julius Caesar's subsequent behavior must be put into this context. He was following a family tradition in promoting Venus, Aeneas and early Iulii, just as he was relying upon recent history in playing up his family connections to the great general Marius and the orator and politician Caesar Strabo.<sup>23</sup> This is not to deny Caesar's or Augustus' insight and genius in manipulating this legendary genealogy to their political advantage. Rather, it is to point out that their revolutionary attitudes and actions were at least partly rooted in some longstanding Julian traditions and identity. And, it seems to have been a well-developed narrative that described in some detail their arrival from Troy, their rule at Alba, their immigration to Rome, and their early political success and standing.

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<sup>21</sup> See Badian (2009) 13-14 and *MRR s.a.*: between L. Iulius Iullus, *tr. mil. c.p.* II 379 and Sex. Iulius Caesar, *cos.* 157, there is only C. Iulius (Iulus?), *dict.* 352, L. Iulius Libo, *cos.* 267, Sex. Iulius Caesar, *pr.* 208, L. Iulius, *pr.* 183 and L. Iulius Caesar, *pr.* 166.

<sup>22</sup> For use of the *cognomen* Vopiscus by Strabo, see Sumner (1971) 262-263 and Badian (2009) 15. These names are properly called *cognomina*: the word *agnomen* has no Classical usage and seems to be an invention of later grammarians, as Badian (1988) 6 observed.

<sup>23</sup> Caesar's rehabilitation of Marius is well-known (e.g., Suet. *Jul.* 6, Plu. *Mar.* 6.2 and *Caes.* 5.1-2); for his promotion of Caesar Strabo, see Suet. *Jul.* 55.2.

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