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INDEX

	SILVIA GAZZOLI	Marmorare, incrustare: <i>Lessico tecnico nell'epigrafia dell'Italia Romana</i>	9
	THOMAS J. GOESSENS	<i>Another Spanish Alienum in Canterbury? New Insights on RIB 2324</i>	33
	KYLE HELMS	<i>An Unread Safaitic Graffito from Pompeii</i>	51
	WOLFGANG HÜBNER	<i>Ketos und Kepheus bei Arat. 629–652,</i>	55
	LASSI JAKOLA	<i>Corpses, Living Bodies and Stuffs: Pre-Platonic Concepts of σώμα</i>	85
	URPO KANTOLA	<i>Miszellen zu römischen Namen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri</i>	127
	ABUZER KIZIL, LINDA TALATAS AND DIDIER LAROCHE	<i>Honorific Statue Base for the Demos of the Mylaseans at Euromos</i>	133
	MARIA PANAGIOTOPOULOU	<i>The Children of Hephaestus: Some Thoughts on the Female Power over Patriarchal Masculinity</i>	143
	LEENA PIETILÄ-CASTRÉN	<i>Forgotten and Unknown – Classical Bronzes from the National Museum of Finland</i>	159
	OLLI SALOMIES	<i>A Group of Romans in Ephesus in 35 BC</i>	193
	KIRSI SIMPANEN	<i>The Symbolism behind the Draco Standard</i>	221
	HEIKKI SOLIN	<i>Analecta Epigraphica 337–340</i>	247
	HEIKO ULLRICH	<i>Textkritische Bemerkungen zu Echtheit und Stellung von Lucr. 1,136–148</i>	255
	EEVA-MARIA VIITANEN	<i>Pompeian Electoral Notices on Houses and in Neighborhoods? Re-Appraisal of the Spatial Relationships of Candidates and Supporters</i>	281



MANFREDI ZANIN

The Domitii Ahenobarbi in the Second Century BCE

319

De novis libris iudicia

337

Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum

441

Libri nobis missi

445

Index scriptorum

457

THE DOMITII AHENOBARBI IN THE SECOND CENTURY BCE

MANFREDI ZANIN*

Abstract: *This paper deals with the controversial identities of three Domitii Ahenobarbi and argues that two of them belonged to a collateral branch of this senatorial family, contrary to the commonly accepted view. A new stemma of the Domitii Ahenobarbi in the second century BCE is thus proposed.*

In 192,¹ Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus was elected to the consulship: he was the first member of the family to reach the *amplissimus honos*. From that year onwards, the Ahenobarbi established a steady presence at the head of the *res publica* and in the consular *fasti* until the first decades of the Principate.² Their genealogy can be reconstructed fairly easily, but questions remain, notably on the identities of three Domitii attested in the second century. Their identification is crucial to correctly chart the family tree and to understand the early history of the Ahenobarbi.

A. Livy states that a Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus was co-opted as pontifex in 172, when he was still very young (*oppido adulescens sacerdos*).³

* I am very grateful to Federico Santangelo for his helpful comments. For valuable suggestions, observations, and criticisms I am much indebted to the referees of *Arctos*.

¹ All ancient dates are BCE, unless otherwise noted.

² On the history of the family, see Carlsen 2006.

³ Liv. 42,28,13: *suffectus in Aemili locum decemvir M. Valerius Messalla; in Fulvi pontifex Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, oppido adulescens sacerdos, est lectus*.

- B. A Cn. Domitius (CN·DOMIT) was moneyer in ca. 130. Michael H. Crawford dated his coins in 128, while Harold B. Mattingly argued for 131/130.⁴ Apart from exceptional cases, it is daring to date the Roman Republican coin series of the second century to a specific year;⁵ therefore, the best one can say is that Cn. Domitius' coins were issued around 130. The moneyer's belonging to the Ahenobarbi lineage was questioned by Crawford, as we shall see in some detail below.
- C. A L. Domitius Cn. f. is known from the *SC de agro Pergameno*;⁶ his identity as an Ahenobarbus is taken for granted by all scholars.

A start may be made with the identity of the moneyer Cn. Domitius (B). According to the commonly accepted genealogy of the Ahenobarbi, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, *cos.* 122, stands out as the only available candidate; yet Crawford questioned this identification.⁷ In his view, the time-gap between the coin issues of this Cn. Domitius (*RRC* no. 261, ca. 130) and those of Cn. Domitius (*RRC* no. 285, ca. 116/115),⁸ likely the homonymous son of the consul of 122, is too short: 'it is difficult to regard both moneyers as Domitii Ahenobarbi in the same line of descent. This moneyer [*scil.* Cn. Domitius, ca. 130] is perhaps a Cn. Domitius Calvinus⁹ or a Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus from a collateral branch of the family'.¹⁰

Despite Crawford's caution, this moneyer should not be considered a Cn. Domitius Calvinus. First and foremost, all the Domitii who are known to have held the office of moneyer, and who were, in all likelihood, Ahenobarbi, did not

⁴ *RRC*, 286 no. 261; Mattingly 1998, 158 = 2004, 211.

⁵ Cf. e.g. Wolters 2017, 155–56.

⁶ *RDGE* 12 = *ISmyrna* 589 = *I.Adramytteion* 18 = *Ambascerie*, no. 324; see also Magie 1950, 1055–56 n. 25; Mattingly 1972; De Martino 1983, 161–90; *MRR* III, 23–24, 83; Badian 1986; Di Stefano 1998.

⁷ *RRC*, 286.

⁸ *RRC*, 300–1 no. 285.

⁹ So also Eilers 1991, 172 n. 35.

¹⁰ As proof of this collateral branch, Crawford points precisely to the Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus known as *oppido adulescens sacerdos* and to the L. Domitius mentioned in the *SC de agro Pergameno*. Their identities will be discussed below. Mattingly 1998, 158 = 2004, 211 maintained that the moneyer of ca. 130 was the later consul of 122.

sign their coin issues with the *cognomen*, but with *praenomen* and *gentilicium*, just as is the case with our Cn. Domitius.¹¹ As a matter of fact, it seems that the Ahenobarbi did not promote their *cognomen* in the coinage they produced in the second century, just like other senatorial families (e.g. the Cassii Longini and the descendants of the Servilii Gemini)¹²; it seems that even during the first century the *gentilicium* Domitius was preferred to the *cognomen* Ahenobarbus.¹³ The latter did feature, though, in the imperial coinage of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus in 41/40.¹⁴ The choice was probably prompted precisely by the new renown of the Domitii Calvini, especially of the prominent Caesarian Cn. Domitius Calvinus (*cos.* 53, *cos.* II 40), whose forces had been destroyed at sea by the same Ahenobarbus and L. Staius Murcus in 42.¹⁵ During the second century, when the Calvini were still immersed in the political obscurity in which they sank after the ephemeral success between the fourth and third century,¹⁶ an association of the gentilician Domitius with the noble and successful family of the Ahenobarbi would have undoubtedly been more obvious than one with the Calvini. The decision not to display the *cognomen* Calvinus would have been counterintuitive and possibly damaging for the Calvini; furthermore, that choice would represent a startling exception, if compared to the usual distribution and representative use of the onomastic elements (especially the *tria nomina*) in families belonging to the same *gens*.¹⁷

Although the moneyer Cn. Domitius was, in all likelihood, an Ahenobarbus, he was not probably a member of the consular lineage. The only candidate for an identification with the moneyer should be Cn. Domitius

¹¹ *RRC*, 218 no. 147 (CN·DOM, ca. 189–180), 298–301, nos. 282, 285 (respectively 118 and ca. 116/115; CN·DOMI).

¹² See Zanin 2019; Zanin 2020, 219 n. 18. Note, however, the *cognomen* in Cn. Domitius Ahebobarbus' (*cos.* 122) milestone from Narbonese Gaul: *CIL* I² 2937 = *CIL* XVII 294 = *ILLRP* 460a: *Cn(aeus) Domitius Cn(aei) f(ilius) / Ahenobarbus / imperator / XX*; cf. lastly Kreiler 2020, 34, 210–12, 483.

¹³ Salomies 2021, esp. 555, 558–59, 570.

¹⁴ *RRC*, 527–28, nos. 519, 521.

¹⁵ *MRR* II, 361, 363. On Calvinus, see Carlsen 2008.

¹⁶ Cf. the careers in *MRR* II, 460; Zmeskal 2009, 113. For possible members of the family in the second century cf. Mattingly 1998, 158 = 2004, 212–13.

¹⁷ For some reflections about the representative use and the distribution of onomastic elements among branches of the same *gens* cf. Zanin 2020 and Zanin 2021b, 209–38.

Ahenobarbus, *cos.* 122. A well-known fragmentary decree, issued by the city of Bargylia (*IBargylia* 612) in honour of a certain Poseidonios on account of his services, states that this Ahenobarbus served as ἀντιστράτηγος under M'. Aquillius, *cos.* 129, during the Aristonicus campaign in Asia Minor. The term, originally meaning the 'enemy commander', denotes in the Greek sources that refer to Roman institutions someone 'acting as στρατηγός' (in this case, as a substitute of the στρατηγός Aquillius), and translates the Latin title *pro praetore*. Filippo Coarelli maintained that Ahenobarbus was not a *legatus pro praetore*, as argued from Maurice Holleaux onwards,¹⁸ but a *propraetor*, meaning by that a prorogued praetor.¹⁹ That he was indeed left behind as (*legatus*) *pro praetore* is, however, clearly borne out by the expressions that characterise his *propraetorian* command.²⁰ Coarelli's interpretation does not offer, therefore, a viable argument to prove Ahenobarbus' election to the praetorship in 130. Nevertheless, we know that the *terminus ante quem* for his election to the praetorship is the year 125, as he was consul in 122,²¹ and that, on this scenario, he had to be in Rome in 126 to present and support his candidature. M'. Aquillius returned to Rome precisely in 126 and celebrated the triumph on November 11.²² It is thus extremely doubtful

¹⁸ Holleaux 1919, 4 = 1968, 182; Schleißner 1978, 196–97 no. 334; Eilers 1991, 174. Cf. more recently Daubner 2006², 135; Kreiler 2020, 23, 34, 206–207. On the term ἀντιστράτηγος, see also Mason 1974, 106–8.

¹⁹ Coarelli 2005, esp. 231–33. On the Republican institutional terminology and its Greek equivalents, and specifically on the terms *pro praetore* and ἀντιστράτηγος, see e.g. Giovannini 1983, 59–65; Ferrary 2000, 184–85 = 2017, 345–46; Brennan 2000, e.g. 73, 603; Thonemann 2004; Díaz Fernández 2015, esp. 66–85, 582–83; Kreiler 2020, esp. 22–25.

²⁰ See esp. ll. 13–16: Μανίου τε / Ἀκυλλίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγοῦ κτλ ἀπολιπόντος δὲ / ἐν τῇ [ιχώρ] α[ι] ἀντιστράτηγον Γναίων Δομέτιον Γναίου κτλ; 'The commander of the Romans (i.e. the consul) Manius Aquillius ... leaving as substitute commander (i.e. delegating the *imperium pro praetore* to) Gnaeus Domitius, son of Gnaeus, in the region ...' (not: 'leaving *the* *propraetor*'; see Holleaux 1919, 4 = 1968, 182–83: 'si ἀντιστράτηγος signifiat ici "propréteur", l'article serait indispensable'). Cf. also ll. 21–22, albeit mostly restored: [- - Κοῖντος Καπίων - - δια-]/[δεξά]μενος τὴν ἐν[κεχειρισ]μέ[νην] τ[ῶ]ι [Γ]ναίωι [ἀρχὴν κτλ]; '[Quintus Caepio] succeeding to the office (or power) that Gnaeus had been entrusted with ...'. Cf. Brennan 2000, 246, 354 n. 153. For a parallel case, see Habicht – Brennan – Blümel 2009.

²¹ This is obviously inferred from the provisions of the *lex annalis*, on which see above all A.E. Astin 1958, and, more recently, Beck 2005, esp. 51–61; Lundgreen 2011, 74–78.

²² *CIL* I² pp. 49, 176 = *It.* XIII 1, p. 559: *M'. Aquillius M'. f. M'. n. pro co(n)s(ule) an. DCXXVII / ex A[sija] III idus Novembr.*

that Ahenobarbus had returned to Rome in time to present his candidacy: it is likely, indeed, that Ahenobarbus served as M'. Aquillius' legate until the end of his task in Asia Minor.²³ The easiest and most plausible solution is that he was elected to the praetorship before the year 130.²⁴

The extremely short chronological gap (or even coincidence) between the moneyership of Cn. Domitius (ca. 130) and Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus' military service in Asia (129-126) leads one to rule out an election of the latter to the moneyership around the same years.²⁵ The moneyership was usually held by young men, still far from the minimum age for the praetorship.²⁶ The mention of the legate's sons Gnaeus and Lucius (*cos.* 96, 94) in the Barygia decree corroborates this reconstruction as well.²⁷ The moneyer Cn. Domitius, who held

²³ Cf. *MRR* I, 505–507, 509.

²⁴ This part of Coarelli's argument is valid (2005, 232–33), but his assumption that Ahenobarbus may have been one of the ten legates sent to assist Aquillius is incorrect, since he was one of the consul's 'personal' legates and was left *pro praetore* to guard the coastal regions. On the distinction between 'personal legates' and legates *lecti publice*, see Linderski 1990, 53–54 = 2005, 301–302; Linderski 1996, 389 = 2007, 83 n. 63. Furthermore, some parallel cases of significant time gaps between praetorship and consulship mentioned by Coarelli 2005, 232 concern men involved in the Sullan civil war: P. Servilius Isauricus, Ap. Claudius Pulcher, Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius, and L. Gellius Poplicola, who could also have been hindered by his *novitas*; their exemplarity is hence severely weakened. Coarelli's remarks on the chronology of Cn. Ahenobarbus' career stages are instead more compelling.

²⁵ That the moneyers were elected is the most straightforward and coherent solution; see Mattingly 1982, 10–11 = 2004, esp. 228–29; Crawford 1985, 56 n. 6; Hollander 1999, 14–27. The opposite view, advocated by Burnett 1977, namely that the moneyers were appointed by the consuls, is unpersuasive; Burnett himself (1987, 17) later revisited it.

²⁶ Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, *praet.* ca. 130 and *cos.* 122, would have been elected *triumvir monetalis* at the age of ca. 40 years – too old for a moneyer, even in this period. From ca. 130, moneyers seem to be mostly in their thirties (30–35), but still not near to the forties; see *RRC*, 710–11. The strangeness of the moneyership to the fixed *cursus honorum* structure in these years (for instance, the possibility to become moneyer after the quaestorship, sometimes around the mid-thirties) does not represent an obstacle to our reconstruction. For a famous case of moneyership certainly held after the quaestorship, see *CIL* I² p. 200, xxxii–xxxiii = *CIL* VI 1283, 31586 (and p. 4669) = *ILS* 45 = *Itt* XIII 3, 70 a–b, with the discussions by Kreiler 2008 and Tansey 2021.

²⁷ *Ilasos* 612, ll. 37–40; see Coarelli 2005, 233; cf. also Eilers 1991, 174–75. Note that the first-born, Cn. Ahenobarbus, *cos.* 96, was probably both one of the commissioners appointed for the foundation of Narbo Martius in 118 (*RRC*, 298–99, no. 282) and moneyer in ca. 116/115 (*contra* Mattingly 1998, 158 = 2004, 212). Crawford's doubts (*RRC*, 301) about the brief chronological gap between the moneyership of Ahenobarbus' colleague, M. Iunius Silanus, and his alleged consulship in 109 are

office around 130, must therefore be considered a member of a collateral branch of the Ahenobarbi.

Let us move on to the analysis of the other two Domitii mentioned above. The case of L. Domitius *Cn. f. (C)*, a member of the *consilium* of the *SC de agro Pergameno* and most likely an Ahenobarbus, can easily be solved. He must not necessarily be considered the member of a collateral family branch, despite the caution voiced by Crawford, who still worked on the traditional chronology of the document, dating it to 129.²⁸ It is now quite certain that the *SC* was issued in 101;²⁹ as a consequence, L. Domitius *Cn. f.* can be identified with L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, *cos. 94*.³⁰ In the *SC*, the praetorian senators are listed from the third to the eleventh or twelfth position, while L. Domitius occupies the thirty-third place: he may have been ‘the most senior *quaestorius*’, as Mattingly proposed; he did not exclude also a recent aedileship, but this seems unlikely.³¹ We only know that the latest possible date for his praetorship in Sicily is the year 97, since he was consul in 94.³² The short gap between his hardly flattering position in the *SC* of 101 and the election to the praetorship does not represent an argument against the identification: it would have been sufficient an election to the praetorship, for instance, in 100 or 99 to significantly enhance his standing in the Senate.

The case of *Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (A)*, on the contrary, is rather perplexing. He was co-opted as pontifex in 172, at a very young age: *oppido adulescens sacerdos*.³³ The term *adulescens* is, of course, very pliable and, in

solved thanks to the new reading of *IPriene* 121 = *IPriene*² 75: the moneyer Silanus was probably the homonymous praetorian governor of Asia province at the end of the second century; see Eilers 1996 and Ferrary 2000, 171–72 = 2017, 333–34.

²⁸ See n. 10.

²⁹ See the studies listed in n. 6.

³⁰ See already Magie 1950, 1055–56 n. 25; Mattingly 1972, 419; De Martino 1983, 170–71; Eilers 1991, 172 n. 35 and Carlsen 2006, 35–36, even though he still favours the old dating. Although the database incorporates Broughton’s Supplements (*MRR* III, 23–24 with reference to some important studies on the *SC*; cf. esp. *DPRR*, *AQU11614*), the *DPRR* entries on the senators of the *consilium* still date the *SC* to 129 (for L. Domitius, see *DPRR*, *DOM13173*).

³¹ Mattingly 1972, 419.

³² *MRR* II, 7; Brennan 2000, 480 and n. 26 (835), 707, 746.

³³ On the meaning of *oppido* see *ThLL*, s. v. *oppido*, esp. 1b.

this case, its meaning is linked to Livy's focus on priestly offices,³⁴ but the usual identification of the pontifex with Cn. Ahenobarbus, *cos. suff.* 162,³⁵ must be ruled out: just ten years separate the co-optation into the pontifical college from the year of the consulship.³⁶ Moreover, the later consul of 162 was, in all likelihood, a member of the ten legates sent to assist Paullus in organising Macedonia and Greece after Pydna; he is listed by Livy (45,17,2–3) immediately after the *consulares*:

in Macedoniam † culpmi † nominati A. Postumius Luscus C. Claudius, ambo illi censorii, <Q. Fabius Labeo ... >³⁷, C. Licinius Crassus, collega in consulatu Paulli; tum prorogato imperio provinciam Galliam habebat. his consularibus addidere Cn. Domitium Ahenobarbum, Ser. Cornelium Sullam, L. Iunium, T. Numisium Tarquiniensem, A. Terentium Varronem.

The rank of Ahenobarbus, Sulla, Iunius, and Numisius is uncertain, and the position of A. Terentius Varro, *praet.* 184,³⁸ at the end of the list is not helpful, as the seniority order after the *consulares* has surely been altered. The last five legates were certainly not all *praetorii*,³⁹ but it would be quite startling if Varro

³⁴ Cf. *ThLL*, s. v. *adolescens*, esp. II. *Adolescens* can equally be referred to men in the age range of ca. 18 to 40 years, according to the context and the intended effect. See e.g. Liv. 44,36,12–14; 38,1 where *adolescens* is referred to Nasica Corculum, *aed. cur.* 169, therefore at least 38 years old in 168; here Livy strikingly shapes a contrast between the rashness of Nasica and the military experience of L. Aemilius Paullus. *Adolescens* tends, however, to be related to very young people, especially when stressed by adverbs like *oppido*, *admodum*, etc.; see e.g. Liv. 33,42,6: *Q. Fabius Maximus augur mortuus est admodum adolescens, priusquam ullum magistratum caperet*. He was the grandson of the Cunctator, died in 196; see Münzer 1909.

³⁵ Münzer 1905, 1322; *MRR* I, 414; *DPRR*, DOM11366.

³⁶ See also Crawford (cf. n. 10, after Mattingly); Eilers 1991, 172.

³⁷ I follow J. Briscoe's Teubner edition (*Livius. Ab Urbe condita libri XLI–XLIV*, Stuttgartiae 1986). Q. Fabius Labeo's name is certain: his mission to destroy the city of Antissa is one of the many actions undertaken by members of the ten legates; see Liv. 45,31,14; cf. *MRR* I, 435; Briscoe 2012, 656. Uncertain is instead Q. Marcius Philippus' name (*cos.* 186, *cos. II* 169), but it is accepted and restored by many scholars; see *MRR* I, 435; Schleussner 1978, 92–93 n. 311; Petzold 1999, esp. 83 = 1999, 420; Briscoe 2012, 656 ('that is plausible enough but far from certain'). If this is the case, the restoration should follow the seniority order: < Q. Marcius Philippus, Q. Fabius Labeo >.

³⁸ *MRR* I, 375.

³⁹ Cf. Briscoe 2012, 657.

was the only senator of praetorian rank. One can surmise that such a crucial committee – charged with the settlement of the Greek East after the defeat of Perseus – consisted mostly of experienced and high-ranked members. We may recall, for instance, the *decem legati* sent to Asia Minor in 189/188 to assist Cn. Manlius Vulso in carrying out the treaty with Antiochus and the settlement of the region: all the members were *praetorii* or *consulares*.⁴⁰ In the case of the committee of 167, five senators were *consulares* (including two *ensorii*) and had, in varying degrees, direct experience of Hellenic matters, above all the senior member, A. Postumius Albinus Luscius (*cos.* 180, *cens.* 174).⁴¹ As far as the other members are concerned, Ser. Sulla is, in my view, a better candidate than M. Cornelius Mamulla for being the Cornelius known as praetor for 175, whose *imperium* was prorogued for 174.⁴² T. Numisius Tarquiniensis was not a senator of praetorian rank, but led an embassy in 169 to resolve the conflict between Antiochus IV and the Ptolemies: although the mission was unsuccessful, Tarquiniensis must have been a man of promise.⁴³

⁴⁰ *MRR* I, 363. The sole exception is Cn. Cornelius Merula, but his *cognomen* is perhaps a mistake for Merenda, *praet.* 194; see *MRR* I, 365 n. 8. Unfortunately, Livy does not provide us with a complete list of the *decem legati* sent in 196 to assist T. Quinctius Flamininus, but at least five members were of consular or praetorian rank (six, if we include M. Caecilius Metellus, highly uncertain): *MRR* I, 337–38.

⁴¹ On the presence of ‘experts’ in this committee, see Clemente 1976, 350–51; Schleussner 1978, 92 n. 311. On the Postumii Albini, see Münzer [1938/39] 2021 with Zanin 2021a, 121, 126–133; Zanin 2021c.

⁴² Liv. 41,21,2 (*Cornelio prorogatum imperium, uti obtineret Sardiniam*); see *MRR* I, 402; Briscoe 2012, 110. See Brennan 2000, 148, 899 n. 88, especially for J. D. Morgan’s proposal of M. Cornelius Mamulla: ‘[Morgan] rightly notes that Ser. Sulla appears in second place (not “immediately,” as reported in *MRR* I 402) after the *consulares* in the list of *decem legati* sent to Macedonia in 167 [...], and so need not be a *praetorius* identical with the Cornelius who was *pr.* 175’. Morgan’s argument fails to persuade, because the seniority order after the *consulares* has been altered, as I have already pointed out. In my view, it is more likely that the praetor was the later member of the ten legates, rather than Mamulla, who, ‘in Livy’s list of legati for 173’ – as Brennan correctly states – ‘is fourth of five, after two individuals whose status as *praetorii* is merely possible, not certain’.

⁴³ *Exc. leg.* p. 323 (78) de Boor = Polyb. 29,25,3–4; cf. Münzer 1937b; *MRR* I, 425; Walbank 1979, 402; Briscoe 2012, 657. In 170 he was one of the two witnesses of the senatorial decree that instructed the praetor Q. Maenius to choose five senators who would settle the new political, social and economic order of Thisbe, firmly controlled by the pro-Roman faction; see *SIG*³ 646 = *RDGE* 2 = *Ambascerie* no. 97; cf. Gehrke 1993, 145–54. T. Numisius may also have been a member of the committee. T. Numisius was possibly the younger brother of C. Numisius, *praet.* 177; Münzer 1937a. Note, however,

What about Cn. Ahenobarbus? Some arguments allow us to infer that he was by then a *praetorius*. First, he was sent in 169, at Paullus' request, as legate to Greece to investigate military conditions together with A. Licinius Nerva, *praet.* 166, and L. Baebius.⁴⁴ The fact that Ahenobarbus' name comes first suggests that he was at the head of the committee and that Nerva, *praet.* 166, was younger than Ahenobarbus.⁴⁵ Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus plausibly reached the praetorship before Nerva. Second, we learn from a Polybian excerpt (30,13,8–10 = *exc. leg.* p. 329 [80] de Boor) that Ahenobarbus was sent along with C. Claudius Pulcher (*cos.* 177, *cens.* 169) to the Achaean League to carry out the orders of the *decem legati* and to investigate the alleged sympathies of Achaean notables for Perseus. In this passage, Polybius described the two senators as the 'most distinguished members of the ten legates' (τοὺς ἐπιφανεστάτους ἄνδρας τῶν δέκα, Γαῖον Κλαύδιον καὶ Γναῖον Δομέτιον). Polybius was certainly wrong: Albinus Luscus was senior to Pulcher (*cos.* 177, *cens.* 169) and several legates possessed a higher rank and were nobler than Ahenobarbus.⁴⁶ Polybius' regard for the latter is nonetheless meaningful. Combining these pieces of evidence, we can confidently assume that our Ahenobarbus was a *praetorius* when he was appointed member of the *decem legati*, and that he had been elected to the curule magistracy for the year 170.⁴⁷

the filiation of Τίτος Νομίσιος Τίτου υἱός in the *SC de Thisbensibus* (RDGE 2, l. 5): it cannot be ruled out that T. Numisius was the older brother.

⁴⁴ Liv. 44,18,5–6: *senatus Cn. Servilio consuli negotium dedit ut tres in Macedoniam quos L. Aemilio videretur legaret. legati biduo post profecti, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, A. Licinius Nerva, L. Baebius; MRR I, 426.*

⁴⁵ Compare also the seniority order of the embassy sent to Crete in 171, of which Nerva was a member (Liv. 42,35,7): *in Cretam item legatos tres ire placuit, A. Postumium Albinum [scil. cos. 180] C. Decimium [scil. praet. 169] A. Licinium Nervam [scil. praet. 166]; cf. MRR I, 418.*

⁴⁶ Some scholars, probably influenced by Polybius' passage, argued that the legate Cn. Ahenobarbus may be identified with the father of the suffect consul of 162, namely the consul of 192; see e.g. *MRR I, 422 n. 2.* That would mean, however, arbitrarily setting aside Livy's evidence, which relied probably on official documents or dependable sources, as suggested by the accuracy in citing the legates of censorial and consular ranks; see Walbank 1979, 436, even though he accepts the identity of the legate with the pontifex co-opted in 172; cf. also Briscoe 2012, 657.

⁴⁷ The only possible gaps in the lists of praetors for the 170s are for the years 178, 175, 174, and 170; cf. Brennan 2000, 733–35 and esp. 899 n. 96.

Now that the *terminus ante quem* for the election to the praetorship of Cn. Ahenobarbus, *cos. suff.* 162, has been ascertained, we can return to Livy's text about the Ahenobarbus of 172 (42,28,13): *suffectus ... in Fulvi (locum) pontifex Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, oppido adulescens sacerdos, est lectus*. The term *adulescens*, strengthened by *oppido*, can hardly refer to a minimum 38-year-old man co-opted into the pontifical college. This raises strong doubts about the established stemma of the Ahenobarbi (*fig. 1*).⁴⁸ Claude Eilers argued that the pontifex was a son of the consul of 162 and father of the consul of 122 (*fig. 2*).⁴⁹ His solution cannot be ruled out, but the traditional genealogy of the consular lineage is also plausible, as recognised by Eilers himself: the consul of 162 may have become a father at the age of ca. 40.⁵⁰ In my view, it is safer and more economical to assume that the pontifex was not a member of the main lineage of the Ahenobarbi. The existence of a collateral branch of the family has been already inferred from the prosopographical analysis of the moneyer Cn. Domitius (ca. 130), and the young pontifex Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus would fit very well with this genealogical reconstruction as father of the moneyer.

To chart this less successful line of descent, we shall postulate the existence of other family members, unknown to us or prematurely died.⁵¹ First, an elder brother of Cn. Domitius *L. f. L. n.* Ahenobarbus (*cos.* 192), named Lucius; second, a first-born of the latter bearing, in his turn, the *praenomen* Lucius. This new reconstruction of the genealogy of the Ahenobarbi (*fig. 3*) would also explain the sudden change of *praenomen* that intervened in the family at the end of the third century and already caught the attention of Suetonius.⁵² *Notetur*

⁴⁸ These problems led Carlsen 2006, 32–33 to regard the pontifex and the consul as the same person; cf. also Rüpke –Glock 2005, 947 no. 1476.

⁴⁹ Eilers 1991, 172–73.

⁵⁰ As has been argued above, the consul of 122 was likely elected praetor before 130; by virtue of the *lex annalis* (cf. above n. 21), it is possible to date his birth before 169, about the time his father was elected praetor.

⁵¹ That case would be consistent with the genealogies of other senatorial families: compare, for instance, the uncertainties in reconstructing the whole stemma of the *gens Servilia* or our ignorance about genealogy and magistracies of the Claudii Neroni in the second century; see respectively Zanin 2019 and Münzer 1899, 2773–74; cf. also Zmeskal 2009, 71; Zanin 2021b, 221–23.

⁵² Suet. *Ner.* 1.2: *ac ne praenomina quidem ulla praeterquam Gnaei et Luci usurparunt eaque ipsa notabili varietate, modo continuantes unum quodque per trinas personas, modo alternantes per singulas. nam primum secundumque ac tertium Ahenobarborum Lucios, sequentis rursus tres ex*

Domitiae familiae peculiaris quaedam et ut clarissima ita artata numero felicitas, wrote Velleius;⁵³ more probably, not all the scions of the Ahenobarbi achieved prominence and renown.

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

ordine Gnaeos accepimus, reliquos non nisi vicissim tum Lucios tum Gnaeos. See Bradley 1978, 27–28; Salomies 1987, 225; cf. also Eilers 1991, 173 n. 38; Carlsen 2006, 27–28. Suetonius's approximation can be explained precisely by his unawareness of the existence of other family members, prematurely died or of lesser importance.

⁵³ Vell. 2.10.2; Paterculus continues his inflated and erroneous praise: *VII ante hunc nobilissimae simplicitatis iuvenem Cn. Domitii [scil. cos. 32 CE] fuere, singuli omnino parentibus geniti, sed omnes ad consulatum sacerdotiaque, ad triumphum autem paene omnes pervenerunt insignia.* On this passage, see Carlsen 2006, 11–12.

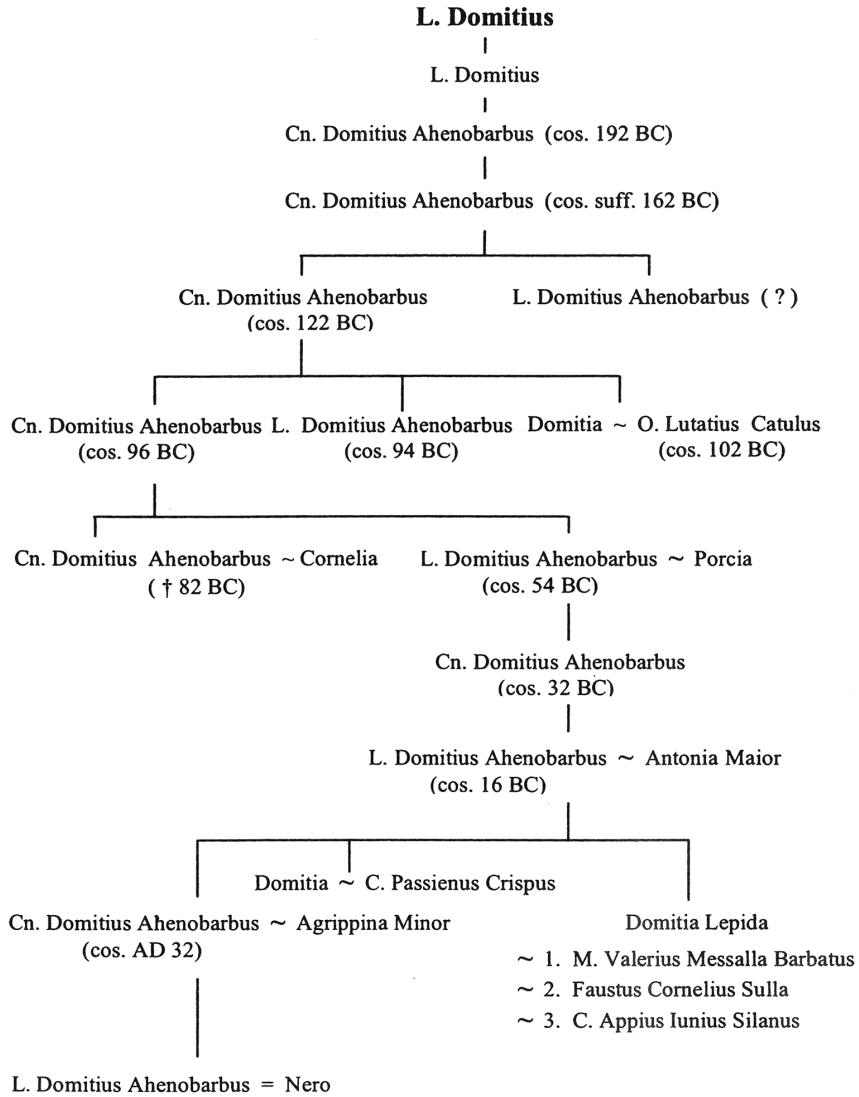


Fig. 1: Genealogy of the Domitii Ahenobarbi according to Carlsen 2006, 10 (© Southern Denmark University Press).

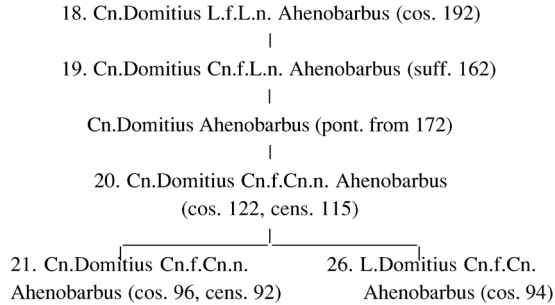


Fig. 2: Genealogy of the Domitii Ahenobarbi according to Eilers 1991, 173 (© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH).

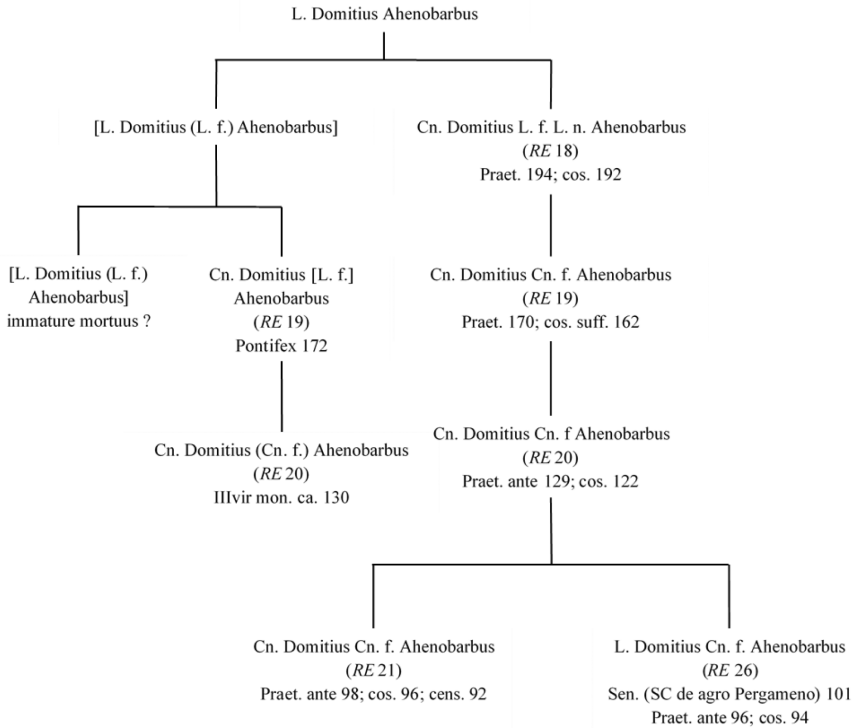


Fig. 3: New reconstruction of the genealogy of the Domitii Ahenobarbi in the second century BCE.

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