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The Last Postumii Albini*

ABSTRACT: The genealogy of the Postumii Albini from the second half of the second century BCE onwards is uncertain and debated. This article attempts a new discussion of the evidence. Its main contention is that A. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 99, should be distinguished from the homonymous legate, brother of Sp. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 110; that the two moneyers A. Postumii Albini were, in all likelihood, not directly related to each other and were probably sons of the last two consuls of the family; and, as a consequence, that at least two lines of descent between the second and the first century BCE can be discerned. On the basis of these results, a new stemma of the ancient patrician family of the Albini is put forward.

Keywords: Postumii Albini, prosopography, Roman nobility, genealogy, moneyers, *quaestio Mamilia*

The Postumii were an ancient and distinguished patrician family, whose importance and influence is apparent in the historical tradition from the very beginning of the Republic. P. Postumius Tubertus was reportedly consul in 505 and 503 and it is related that the Romans vanquished the Latins at the Lake Regillus under the command of the dictator A. Postumius Albus (499 or 496), the ancestor of the Postumii Albini.¹ This victory earned Albus and his descendants the *agnomen* Regillensis. It is, however, quite a hopeless task to sift the substrate of truth from the multifarious additions, falsifications or manipulations in the historical tradition and in the early republican *fasti*, which list numerous Albi (or Albini) Regillenses.² What seems nonetheless quite certain is that

* I am very grateful to Prof. Federico Santangelo (Newcastle University) and Prof. Dr. Hans Beck (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität) for their valuable comments and suggestions on earlier drafts. All dates are BCE. A new stemma of the Postumii Albini is provided at the end of this paper (fig. 3). The following abbreviations are used: MRR = T. ROBERT S. BROUGHTON, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, 3 vols., New York 1951–1986; RRC = MICHAEL H. CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vols., Cambridge 1974.

1 MRR I 7–8, 10, 12. An A. Postumius Tubertus is also known at the end of the fifth century as *magister equitum* in 434 and dictator in 431; cf. MRR I 62–63. On the tradition concerning the dictatorship of the great forefather of the Albini, see JAMES H. RICHARDSON, ‘Firsts’ and the Historians of Rome, in: *Historia* 63.1, 2014, 17–37: 23–24, 30.

2 Sp. Postumius Albus Regillensis, *cos.* 466, *Xvir cos. imp. leg. scrib.* 451; A. Postumius Albus Regillensis, *cos.* 464; Sp. Postumius Albus (Regillensis), *trib. mil. cos. p.* 432; M. Postumius Albus Regillensis, *trib. mil. cos. p.* 426, 403?, *cens.* 403; P. Postumius Albinus Regillensis, *trib. mil. cos. p.* 414; A. Postumius Albinus Regillensis, *trib. mil. cos. p.* 397; Sp. Postumius Albinus Regillensis, *trib. mil. cos. p.* 394, *cens.* 380; L. Postumius (Albinus) Regillensis, *trib. mil. cos. p.* 389, 381; A. Postumius (Albinus) Regillensis *trib. mil. cos. p.* 381; – Postumius Regillensis Albinus, *cens.* 366. Cf. MRR *ad annos*; ROBERT E. A. PALMER, A New Fragment of Livy Throws Light on the Roman Postumii and Latin Gabii, in: *Athenaeum* 78.1, 1990, 5–18: 6–7. On the distorted picture of the early republican consulships and consular tribunates, see JAMES H. RICHARDSON, The Roman Nobility, the Early Consular *Fasti*, and the Consular Tribunate, in: *Antichthon* 51, 2017, 77–100.

the Postumii enjoyed eminence and power until ca. 380, when they disappear from the consular *fasti* for fifty years.

The Albini ephemerally re-emerged with Sp. Postumius Albinus (*cos.* 334, *cos. II* 321), whose career was inevitably compromised by his involvement in the shameful defeat at the Caudine Forks in his second consulship.³ However, the ancient name of the Postumii was revived in the following years by the Postumii Megelli, whose exact relationship with the Albini is impossible to determine.⁴ The talented, but haughtily ambitious L. Postumius *L.f. Sp. n.* Megellus obtained the consulship three times (305, 294, 291)⁵ and his homonymous son or grandson was elected consul in 262 and censor in 253.⁶ Then the lineage of the Megelli died out.

In the year 242, with the consulship of A. Postumius Albinus (later censor in 234), the Albini resurged from their deep-seated political decline:⁷ they had one hundred and fifty years of eminence, prestige and steady presence in the higher magistracies of the Republic ahead of them, on a par with the noblest families and the patrician *gentes maiores*.⁸ A. Postumius Albinus' son, Lucius, became consul in 234 (in the same year as the father's censorship) and 229, and led victorious campaigns against the Ligurians and the Illyrians.⁹ During his second praetorship in 216, he was elected consul *in absentia* for the third time in the challenging times after Cannae, but died fighting valorously against

- 3 Sp. Albinus was also censor in 332 and *magister equitum* in 327; see FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 891–893: 892; MRR I 140, 142, 146, 150–151; PALMER, A New Fragment of Livy, 12; KARL-JOACHIM HÖLKEKAMP, Die Entstehung der Nobilität. Studien zur sozialen und politischen Geschichte der Römischen Republik im 4. Jh. v. Chr., Stuttgart 2011, 132. According to Diod. 17.87.1, an A. Postumius was consul in 328 – but see HÖLKEKAMP, Entstehung der Nobilität, 114 n. 2.
- 4 MÜNZER, Postumius, 892: 'die Verbindung [des dreimaligen Consuls Megellus] mit den Albini ist nicht zu erkennen'; cf. HANS BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie. Die römische Aristokratie und die Anfänge des *cursus honorum* in der mittleren Republik, Berlin 2005, 129 n. 23. For some speculation cf. PALMER, A New Fragment of Livy, 12.
- 5 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 55, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 935–941; MRR I 166, 179, 182–183. On Megellus' consular iterations (and prorogation of the praetorian command in 295), cf. HÖLKEKAMP, Entstehung der Nobilität, 133–135, 137–138, 189. On Megellus' career and personality, see *ibid.* 187–189; KARL-JOACHIM HÖLKEKAMP, Senat und Volkstribunat im frühen 3. Jh. v. Chr., in: WALTER EDER (ed.), Staat und Staatlichkeit in der frühen römischen Republik, Akten eines Symposiums (12.–15. Juli 1988), Stuttgart 1990, 437–457, re-edited in: KARL-JOACHIM HÖLKEKAMP, *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. Die politische Kultur der Republik. Dimensionen und Deutungen, Stuttgart 2004, 85–103: 98–101; BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie, 89–90, 191–192; CHRISTOPH LUNDGREEN, Regelkonflikte in der römischen Republik. Geltung und Gewichtung von Normen in politischen Entscheidungsprozessen, Stuttgart 2011, esp. 236–239.
- 6 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 56, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 941–942; MRR I 204, 211; III 175; BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie, 124 n. 6, 226 n. 42. For some stimulating reflections on the Postumii Megelli and the historical tradition, see PALMER, A New Fragment of Livy. On the consul of 262 cf. also BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie, 127 and n. 12.
- 7 MRR I 218, 223–224. L. Postumius Albinus, *rex sacrorum* in 275/274, was probably the grandfather of the consul of 242; see FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 39, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 911–912; MRR I 196; JÖRG RÜPKE / ANNE GLOCK, *Fasti sacerdotum*. Die Mitglieder der Priesterschaften und das sakrale Funktionspersonal römischer, griechischer, orientalischer und jüdisch-christlicher Kulte in der Stadt Rom von 300 v. Chr. bis 499 n. Chr., Munich 2005, 1232 no. 2818.
- 8 Cf. BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie, 134, 139, 144–145.
- 9 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 40, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 912–914; MRR I 223, 228; III 174; on L. Postumius Albinus' iterations, see BECK, Karriere und Hierarchie, 103–104, 107–108, 250, 280–281.

the Ligurians in the same year.¹⁰ L. Postumius Albinus surely had two brothers, Aulus and Spurius, who must have prematurely died: from these three brothers derived the family branches, which flourished throughout the second century.¹¹

In the first half of this century, the Albini reached their prime.¹² In the 180s and 170s, *Familiennester* are clearly recognisable and bear eloquent witness to the political importance of the family.¹³ Sp. Postumius Albinus, the famous chief suppressor of the *Bacchanalia*, was consul in 186; the next year, his cousin A. Postumius Albinus Luscus became praetor, followed two years later by his brother, Sp. Postumius Albinus Paullulus. In 180, A. Albinus Luscus obtained the *maximus honos*, while his brother L. Postumius Albinus became praetor. The sudden interruption in the sequence of magistracies in the following years is attributable to the implementation of the *lex Villia annalis* and its minimum age requirements.¹⁴ In 174, however, Luscus became censor, his brother Sp. Albinus Paullulus consul, and, in the same year, L. Albinus was elected consul for 173.

Familiennester of the Postumii Albini in the second and third decade of the second century

186	Sp. Postumius L. f. A. n. Albinus	consul
185	A. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus Luscus	praetor
183	Sp. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus Paullulus	praetor
180	A. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus Luscus	consul
	L. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus	praetor
174	A. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus Luscus	censor
	Sp. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus Paullulus	consul
173	L. Postumius A. f. A. n. Albinus	consul

The brothers A., Sp., and L. Albini were also active protagonists in the diplomatic initiatives before and after the war against Perseus of Macedon, so much so that A. Albinus

10 MRR I 2.49, 253; cf. BECK, *Karriere und Hierarchie*, 99 and n. 12, 293.

11 Cf. MÜNZER, *Postumius* 40, 914.

12 On the importance and influence of the Postumii Albini in the Roman politics in this period, see FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien*, Stuttgart 1920, 212–216; MÜNZER, *Postumius*, 892; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 31, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 902–908; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 41, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 914–918: 917; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 46, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 925–929; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 47, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 929–930. The presence of Postumii in the magistracy lists has value in its own right, regardless of Münzer's view and interpretation of Roman politics, on which see MANFREDI ZANIN, *Rileggere Friedrich Münzer. Römische Adelsparteien und Adelsfamilien* cento anni dopo, in: RSI 2020 (forthcoming), with further references. Cf. also HOWARD H. SCULLARD, *Roman Politics 220–150 B. C.*, Oxford 1973², 190 (within his well-known mechanistic understanding of the Republican political struggle), and the posthumously published paper of RONALD SYME, *The Predominance of the Fulvii*, in: RONALD SYME, *Approaching the Roman Revolution. Papers on Republican History*, ed. by FEDERICO SANTANGELO, Oxford 2016, 26–43, which heavily relies on Münzer's analyses.

13 On the 'Familiennest' or 'Familiencluster' category, see BECK, *Karriere und Hierarchie*, 127–129, 153–154. On what follows, see MRR I *ad annos*; III 173–174.

14 On the law, see the fundamental study of ALAN E. ASTIN, *The lex annalis* before Sulla, Brussels 1958. Among the most recent studies and discussions, see notably BECK, *Karriere und Hierarchie*, esp. 51–61 with further references.

Luscus, the most distinguished man in Rome after M. Aemilius Lepidus (*cos.* 187, *cens.* 179, *cos.* II 175, *pontifex maximus* and *princeps senatus*), led the ten legates sent to assist L. Aemilius Paullus in the reorganisation of Macedon and Greece.¹⁵

One final period of significant success may be located in the middle of the second century, when members of the three family branches reached the higher magistracies. In 155, A. Postumius Albinus (son of Luscus, known also as *annalist*), was praetor, and in the same year his cousin L. Postumius Albinus, son of the consul of 186, was elected consul for 154.¹⁶ In 151 A. Albinus reached the consulship; perhaps in the same year, Sp. Postumius Albinus Magnus, another cousin and consul in 148, became praetor.¹⁷ Furthermore, A. Postumius Albinus participated in the embassy sent to end the war between Attalus II and Prusias II (154) and, as his father before him, was a senior member (if not the leader) of the ten-man commission who assisted L. Mummius after the end of the Achaean War.¹⁸

This long period of eminence came to an end at the turn of the century. In 110, the consul Sp. Postumius Albinus was entrusted with the war against Jugurtha. When the time of the elections came, he returned to Rome to hold the *comitia* and left his brother, Aulus, in charge of the legions in Africa as *legatus pro praetore*.¹⁹ Aulus recklessly attacked Jugurtha's forces: the Romans were routed and the consul's brother was compelled to accept a shameful surrender to save what remained of the army and his own life.²⁰

News of the defeat reached Rome in 109, while Sp. Albinus was still in charge. The anger of the people erupted and the enemies of the nobility triggered their offensive: the tribune C. Mamilius Limetanus proposed a bill to establish a court to trial those who had been bribed by Jugurtha and other enemies of Rome; the jurors of the *quaestio*, the notorious *Gracchani iudices*, also took their revenge against the enemies and traitors of the Gracchi.²¹ In "Brutus" (128), speaking of the talented orator C. Sulpicius Galba and his *aequales*, Cicero mentions some names, including Sp. Albinus, *cos.* 110:

15 Cf. MÜNZER, *Adelsparteien*, 216; MÜNZER, *Postumius* 46, 929; MRR I 412–413, 418, 435; cf. also BERNHARD SCHLEUSSNER, *Die Legaten der römischen Republik*, Munich 1978, 92 n. 310–311.

16 MRR I 448–449. On A. Postumius Albinus, see MÜNZER, *Postumius* 31 and more recently: MARTINE CHASSIGNET, *L'annalistique romaine. I: Les annales des pontifes et l'annalistique ancienne*, Paris 1996, esp. LXXIX–LXXXV; HANS BECK / U. WALTER, *Die frühen römischen Historiker I*, Darmstadt 2001, esp. 225–227; SIMON J. NORTHWOOD, A. Postumius Albinus, in: TIMOTHY J. CORNELL, *The Fragments of the Roman Historians. I: Introduction*, Oxford 2013, 185–190. The last paper written by Münzer in 1938/1939 focused on A. Postumius Albinus; it was sent to Ronald Syme for submission to the *Journal of Roman Studies*, but was never published. Münzer's manuscript has recently been discovered in Badian's Nachlass by T. Corey Brennan; see ANTHONY R. BIRLEY, *Select Correspondence of Ronald Syme, 1927–1939*, Newcastle upon Tyne-Venice 2020, 163 n. 314.

17 MRR I 454–455, 461; III 174.

18 MRR I 450–451, 467–468; III 173.

19 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 32, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 908–909; MRR I 544; SCHLEUSSNER, *Legaten*, 192 n. 307, 230 no. 116; T. COREY BRENNAN, *The Praetorship in the Roman Republic*, New York 2000, 540, 586. Cf. also DANIEL J. GARGOLA, *Was There a Regular Provincia Africa in the Second Century?*, in: *Historia* 66.3, 2017, 331–361: 350, 357.

20 Sources in MÜNZER, *Postumius* 32, 908 and MRR I 544; III 173.

21 On the *quaestio Mamilia*, see Cic. *Brut.* 127–128 (below); Sall. *Iug.* 40.1: *interim Romae C. Mamilius Limetanus tribunus plebis rogationem ad populum promulgat, uti quaeretur in eos, quorum consilio Iugurtha senati*

*nam invidiosa lege*²³ C. Galbam sacerdotem et quattuor consularis, L. Bestiam C. Catonem Sp. Albinum civemque praestantissimum L. Opimum, Gracchi interfectorem, a populo absolutum, cum is contra populi studium stetisset, Gracchani iudices sustulerunt.

For by that hated law, Gracchan jurors got rid of the priest C. Galba and four ex-consuls – L. Bestia, C. Cato, Sp. Albinus, and the most excellent citizen, L. Opimius, the slayer of Gracchus, who was absolved by the people, even though he had taken a stand against the people's interest.

Nothing is mentioned about the destiny of A. Albinus, brother and legate of Sp. Albinus. What is clear enough is that the family did not ever recover from that severe blow.²³

The history of the last known Postumii Albini is not a distinguished one, and is marred by several uncertainties. In 100, the last consul of the family was elected, namely A. Postumius Albinus,²⁴ who likely was the legate A. Albinus who was stoned to death by his soldiers in 89, during the siege of Pompeii in the Social War. Plutarch calls him στρατηγικός ('of praetorian rank')²⁵, Orosius instead *vir consularis*²⁶; the latter is probably correct.²⁷

Most scholars argue that the consul of 99 was none other than A. Albinus, the legate responsible for the Roman defeat against Jugurtha, who might have managed to revive his career and be elected consul.²⁸ Yet their arguments are not convincing. It is true that Aulus' conviction at the hands of the *Gracchani iudices* is not attested by any source, but the very

decreta neglegisset, quique ab eo in legationibus aut imperiis pecunias accepissent, qui elephantos quique perfugas tradidissent, item qui de pace aut bello cum hostibus pactiones fecissent ('Meanwhile, at Rome, the plebeian tribune C. Mamilius Limetanus proposed to the people a bill authorising legal proceedings against those who had counseled Jugurtha to disregard decrees of the senate and those who had accepted money from him while serving as envoys or commanders, those who had handed back elephants and deserters, likewise those who had colluded with enemies concerning peace or war' – transl. JOHN C. ROLFE / JOHN T. RAMSEY, slightly modified). Useful discussion in GARY D. FARNEY, *The Fall of the Priest C. Sulpicius Galba and the First Consulship of Marius*, in: MAAR 42, 1997, 23–37.

- 22 I follow ENRICA MALCOVATI's Teubner edition (M. Tullius Cicero. *Brutus*, Leipzig 1970²); see its critical apparatus.
- 23 Cf. MÜNZER, Postumius, 892–893; LEONIE HAYNE, *The Condemnation of Sp. Postumius Albinus* (*cos.* 110), in: AClass 24, 1981, 61–70: esp. 66–67.
- 24 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 33, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 909; MRR II 1.
- 25 Plut. *Sull.* 6.16; a closely similar wording is to be found in Polyæn. 8.9.1. Cf. MRR II 37; GIULIO FIRPO, *Silla e i Postumii: un 'processo' storiografico?*, in: MARTA SORDI (ed.), *Processi e politica nel mondo antico*, Milan 1996, 153–168, 153 n. 1.
- 26 Oros. 5.18.22–23. The full name is recorded in Liv. *per.* 75 (*A. Postumius Albinus legatus cum classi praeesset, infamis crimine perduellionis, ab exercitu suo interfectus est*); cf. also Val. Max. 9.8.3 (*A. Albinus, nobilitate, moribus, honorum omnium consummatione civis eximius*).
- 27 Cf. FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 34, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 909–910; MRR II 37; SCHLEUSSNER, Legaten, 229 no. 92; BRENNAN, *Praetorship*, 376, 875 n. 219. BENGT E. THOMASSON, *Legatus*. Beiträge zur römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte, Stockholm 1991, Anhang I, no. 109 follows Plutarch. On this episode, see FIRPO, *Silla e i Postumii*.
- 28 MRR II 1; GRAHAM V. SUMNER, *The Orators in Cicero's Brutus: Prosopography and Chronology*, Toronto-Buffalo 1973, 83–84; ERNST BADIEN, *The Death of Saturninus: Studies in Chronology and Prosopography*, in: Chiron 14, 1984, 101–147: 124; MRR III 173; ERNST BADIEN, *The Consuls, 179–49 BC*, in: Chiron 20, 1990, 371–413: 388 and 404 n. 19. On the point cf. also ERICH S. GRUEN, *Roman Politics and the Criminal Courts, 149–78 B.C.*, Cambridge (MA) 1968, 147; SCHLEUSSNER, *Legaten*, 97–98 n. 331; MICHAEL C. ALEXANDER, *Trials in the Late Roman Republic, 149 BC to 50 BC*, Toronto-Buffalo-London 1990, 29; FIRPO, *Silla e i Postumii*, 154–155.

author of the Roman defeat in Africa could hardly have escaped the same judgement that befell his consular brother, who was, in all likelihood, compelled to exile like the other convicted.²⁹ Our ignorance about his fate probably depends on the fact that Cicero (*Brut.* 127–128), our sole source on the men convicted, focuses only on some personalities, namely the gifted orator C. Sulpicius Galba ('he was the first member of a priestly college to be convicted in a public criminal trial since the founding of Rome'³⁰) and the four men of consular rank convicted by the *Gracchani iudices*.³¹ A. Albinus was apparently not remembered as a talented orator and was certainly not a *consularis* at the time of the trial. His absence from the list can hence be explained. As Friedrich Münzer saw, the consul of 99 probably belonged to a family branch that was not directly involved in the Jugurthine affaire.³²

In the Sullan age, two more Postumii Albinii are safely attested: the moneyers A. Postumius *Sp. f.* Albinus (RRC 335) and A. Postumius *A. f. Sp. n.* Albinus (RRC 372), the former elected in the nineties, the latter about the year 81.³³ The first one was elected together with L. Caecilius Metellus and C. Publicius Malleolus. Michael Crawford dated their coin series in 96, but this chronology must certainly be ruled out on prosopographical grounds.³⁴ L. Metellus was probably praetor in 71 and consul in 68.³⁵ According to the *lex annalis*, L. Metellus was born by 111 and probably reached the higher magistracies not far from the minimum age, like his brother Q. Metellus Creticus, *praet. cand.* 75 and *cos.* 69.³⁶ L. Metellus could not have become moneyer at barely 15/16 years, and no other Metellus may be invoked as a potential candidate. The same reasoning applies to C. Malleolus, who became quaestor in 80 and was killed in the same year, when he was probably about 30 years old.³⁷ The chronology of the joint coinage of Metellus, Albinus, and Malleolus

29 Cf. ALEXANDER, *Trials*, 26–28. On the exiles of L. Opimius and C. Porcius Cato, cf. also GORDON P. KELLY, *A History of Exile in the Roman Republic*, New York 2006, 170–171.

30 Cic. *Brut.* 127: *hic, qui in conlegio sacerdotum esset, primus post Romam conditam iudicio publico est condemnatus.*

31 Cf. also GARGOLA, *Provincia Africa*, 350: 'Sallust never identifies any of the court's victims. Cicero (*Brut.* 128) provides the only extant, albeit partial list'.

32 MÜNZER, *Postumius* 32; MÜNZER, *Postumius* 33; cf. also FIRPO, *Silla e i Postumii*, 155.

33 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 35–36, in: *RE* 22.1, 1953, 910–911. A. L. Postumius was praetor in 91/90 and died prisoner of the Samnites during the Social War; see below p. 484.

34 See already HAROLD B. MATTINGLY, *Coinage and the Roman state*, in: *NC* 137, 1977, 199–215: 203–204; HAROLD B. MATTINGLY, *Roman Republican Coinage*, ca. 150–90 B. C., in: ANDREW M. BURNETT / UTE WARTENBERG / RICHARD WITSCHONKE (eds.), *Coins of Macedonia and Rome. Essays in Honour of Charles Hersh*, London 1998, 151–164, re-edited in: HAROLD B. MATTINGLY, *From Coins to History. Selected Numismatic Studies*, Ann Arbor 2004, 199–222: 202. In the reprint of RRC (1983), CRAWFORD corrected his dating: 'late 90s'. The *terminus ante quem* must be placed in 89 because the types of RRC 335 were reproduced on the coinage of the Italian insurgents; see PIERRE ASSENMAKER, *Zur Datierung der stadtrömischen Münzprägung der Jahre 88–82*, in: FLORIAN HAYMANN / WILHELM HOLLSTEIN / MARTIN JEHNE (eds.), *Nomismata. Historisch-numismatische Forschungen 8: Neue Forschungen zur Münzprägung der römischen Republik, Beiträge zum Internationale Kolloquium im Residenzschloss Dresden 19.–21. Juni 2014*, Bonn 2016, 99–124: 106.

35 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Caecilius* 74, in: *RE* 22.1, 1897, 1204–1205; RRC 335. Cf. MRR II 122, 137.

36 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Caecilius* 87, in: *RE* 22.1, 1897, 1210–1212; MRR II 102, 131.

37 Cf. FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Publicius* 19, in: *RE* 23.2, 1959, 1900; MRR II 80; RRC 335. On the minimum age for the quaestorship, see FRANCIS X. RYAN, *The Minimum Age for the Quaestorship in the Late Republic*, in: *MH* 53, 1996, 27–43; those elected were usually not much older. See also FRANCISCO PINA POLO / ALEJANDRO DÍAZ FERNÁNDEZ, *The Quaestorship in the Roman Republic*, Berlin-Boston 2019, 54, 302.

must thus be lowered by five or six years (ca. 91/90). Both Metellus and Malleolus were, at that time, about twenty years old; their colleague Albinus was probably not much older. As a result, A. Postumius *Sp. f.* Albinus cannot be identified with the father of the second moneyer, who was elected only ten years later at about 28.³⁸

At this point, the question arises how all these Postumii Albini were related to each other. As seen above, the family of the Albini had had a number of branches since the first decades of the second century and our sources are not sufficient to entirely reconstruct its stemma, especially from the middle of the second century onwards. Münzer himself was aware of these problems and was wisely sceptical about the possibility to solve a jigsaw, of which several pieces are missing.³⁹

A possible clue is offered by the coinage of the last known Postumius Albinus, D. Iunius Brutus Albinus (son of D. Brutus, *cos.* 77), adopted by a member of the ancient patrician family.⁴⁰ Brutus Albinus became moneyer in 49 and signed some coin series, who bear reference to Brutus' participation in Caesar's campaigns (RRC 450/1a–b), to Caesar's moderation and reconciliation motifs (RRC 450/2, 451), and to Decimus' noble lineage (RRC 450/3a–c). The signature ALBINVS BRVTI·F clearly identified the moneyer and above all boasted his double distinguished ancestry, while the obverse of the coin series RRC 450/3a–c bore a portrait of one of his adopted ancestors, identified by the legend as A·POSTVMIVS·COS. The type, in all likelihood, reproduced the *imago maioris* together with its *titulus*.



Fig. 1. Denarius struck by the moneyer D. Iunius Brutus Albinus (RRC 450/3b; 49 BCE)

Lehrstuhl für Alte Geschichte der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt – Numismatische Bilddatenbank Eichstätt, RRC 450/3b.

38 See also BADIAN, *The Consuls*, 404 n. 19 (following Mattingly's suggestion). On the ages of the moneyers after the Sullan civil war, see WILHELM HOLLSTEIN, *Die Stadtrömische Münzprägung der Jahre 78–50 v. Chr. zwischen politischer Aktualität und Familienthematik. Kommentar und Bibliographie*, Munich 1993, 385–386.

39 Cf. n. 49. BADIAN's judgement (*Consuls*, 404 n. 19) on Münzer's RE-articles is unwarranted ('Münzer's treatment of the Postumii, published posthumously in 1953 is (regrettably) unsatisfactory in its suggested genealogies, and the stemma coll. 915–6 should not be used').

40 MÜNZER, *Römische Adelsparteien*, 405; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Iunius 55a*, in: *RE Suppl.*-Bd. 5, 1931, 369–385; BERNHARD WOYTEK, *Arma et nummi. Forschungen zur römischen Finanzgeschichte und Münzprägung der Jahre 49 bis 42 v. Chr.*, Vienna 2003, 135–136; KLAUS ZMESKAL, *Adfinitas. Die Verwandtschaften der senatorischen Führungsschicht der römischen Republik von 218–31 v. Chr.*, 2 vols., Passau 2009, I, 151–152. On D. Brutus and his adoption, see also OLLI SALOMIES, *Adoptive and Polynomous Nomenclature in the Roman Empire*, Helsinki 1992, 12–13.

It is uncertain whom this consul A. Postumius must be identified with. There are several candidates: the A. Postumii of the early Republic (Tuberti and Regillenses); A. Albinus, *cos.* 242; A. Albinus Luscus, *cos.* 180; A. Albinus, *cos.* 151; A. Albinus, *cos.* 99. The iconographic and epigraphic features of similar coin series point to the last consul of the family.⁴¹ Portraits of ancestors dating back centuries (like the kings Numa and Ancus Marcius in the coinage of the Marcii or Servilius Ahala and Iunius Brutus in the coin series of M. Iunius Brutus) are always combined with legends recording exclusively their onomastic elements.⁴² We can hence exclude the A. Postumii of the early republican age. Busts of ancestors marked not only by names, but also by mentions of their offices are, on the contrary, portraits of very recent or direct relatives, as exemplified by the coin series of C. Coelius Caldus (RRC 437) and Q. Pompeius Rufus (RRC 434).⁴³ An exception may be represented by the obverse of P. Lentulus Marcellinus' coins (RRC 439): it is uncertain whether the obverse depicts the father of the moneyer, the homonymous consul of 56, or the glorious ancestor M. Claudius Marcellus, conqueror of Syracuse (*cos.* 222, *cos.* II 215, *cos.* III 214, *cos.* IV 210, *cos.* V 208).⁴⁴ If the latter interpretation is correct (as I think it is),⁴⁵ the exception is explained by the representative purposes of the moneyer, who imbued obverse and reverse exclusively with the outstanding symbolic capital of the Marcelli and their most distinguished member, leaving aside the traditions of the Cornelii Lentuli.⁴⁶ That is not at all the case with Brutus Albinus' coinage, which blends the pride of the still flourishing Bruti and of the declining Albinii. The signature and the portrait directly or indirectly recall the double consular lineage of the moneyer, recently re-affirmed by his father, D. Iunius Brutus, *cos.* 77, and his adopted grandfather, A. Albinus, *cos.* 99.

41 Cf. GÖTZ LAHUSEN, *Die Bildnismünzen der römischen Republik*, Munich 1989, 21–23. See also WOYTEK, *Arma et nummi*, 135 n. 419, with a slightly different argument. The relationship between Brutus Albinus and the consul of 99 was suspected by MÜNZER, Iunius 55a, but he identified the consul portrayed with the 'Stammvater' of the Postumii; cf. also MÜNZER, Postumius, 892. BADIEN, *Consuls*, 404 n. 19 identified the man portrayed with the consul of 99, but without detailed discussion.

42 RRC 346, 425, 433/2; cf. HOLLSTEIN, *Die Stadtrömische Münzprägung*, 266–272, 340–345.

43 For C. Coelius Caldus' coinage see RRC 437: C·COEL·CALDVS COS; note also the representation of the moneyer's father on the reverse of RRC 437/2–4: L·CALDVS VIIIVIR·EP. For Q. Pompeius Rufus see RRC 434/1: SVLLA·COS // RVFVS·COS; RRC 434/2: Q·POMPEI·Q·F·RVFVS COS // SVLLA·COS. On Caldus' coinage, see lastly BERNHARD WOYTEK / ANNA ZAWADZKA, Ockham's Razor. A Structural Analysis of the *denarii* of Coelius Caldus (RRC 437), in: NC 176, 2016, 135–153; on Pompeius Rufus' coin series, see HOLLSTEIN, *Die Stadtrömische Münzprägung*, 346–352.

44 See respectively RRC 439 and HOLLSTEIN, *Stadtrömische Münzprägung*, 376–379, following LAHUSEN, *Die Bildnismünzen*, 20–21.

45 The portrait is accompanied by a *triskeles* and a legend that records exclusively the *agnomen* Marcellinus, which was probably meant as the name of the moneyer. On the contrary, the reverse depicts the deposition of the *spolia opima* by M. Claudius Marcellus, clearly identified by the legend MARCELLVS COS QVINQ. As a consequence, it seems far more probable that the man portrayed on the obverse is to be identified with Marcellus himself. Cf. also MATTEO CADARIO, *I Claudii Marcelli: strategie di propaganda in monumenti onorari e dediche votive tra III e I sec. a. C.*, in: *Ostraka* 14.2, 2005, 147–177: 168–172.

46 Still different is the coin series signed by C. Plautius Hypsaeus (RRC 420): the legend C·YPSAE·COS CEPIT PRIV is evidently reproducing formulae typical of honorary inscriptions, *elogia*, and historical narratives to strengthen his genealogical claim (the conqueror of Privernum was in fact C. Plautius Decianus, *cos.* 329). Cf. also HOLLSTEIN, *Stadtrömische Münzprägung*, 238–243.

We thus have a lead: Brutus Albinus was adopted by a son of A. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 99.⁴⁷ His adoptive father was probably the moneyer A. Postumius A. *f. Sp. n.* Albinus, the last Albinus A. *f.* known to us – if not the last Postumius Albinus of the bloodline at all;⁴⁸ the consul of 99 was hence son of a Spurius.

At this chronological level of the genealogy of the Postumii Albini, even Münzer threw in the towel, especially as far as the position of the brothers Spurius (*cos.* 110) and Aulus in the family stemma is concerned.⁴⁹ What follows must be considered a reasoned, but still theoretical attempt to chart their family tree. A. Albinus, *cos.* 99, was probably father of the moneyer 81, son of a Spurius, and belonged to another branch than Sp. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 110, and the legate Aulus. Since the moneyers A. Postumius *Sp. f.* Albinus and A. Postumius A. *f. Sp. n.* Albinus were not closely related, it is likely that the first one was a son of the consul of 110, Sp. Albinus, as argued by most scholars.⁵⁰

It remains to identify the fathers of the last consuls of the family. The descendants of L. Albinus (*cos.* I 234, *cos.* II 229) are on the whole well attested and there is no evidence for unknown Auli or Spurii among L. Albinus' offspring. Moreover, no descendant of Sp. Albinus Paullulus and L. Albinus, consuls respectively in 174 and 173, is known. The only candidates available as fathers of the last consuls are A. Albinus, *cos.* 151, and Sp. Albinus Magnus, *cos.* 148.

If the consul of 99 was the son of a Spurius, then he must have been a son of Sp. Albinus Magnus. It follows that Sp. Albinus, *cos.* 110, and his brother Aulus were sons of A. Albinus, *cos.* 151.⁵¹ Their genealogical position, however, seems puzzling. The steady inheritance of the *praenomen* Aulus from father to first son in the family branch of A. Albinus Luscus, *cos.* 180,⁵² may indeed make it suspicious that Sp. Albinus, *cos.* 110 – apparently the elder brother – and Aulus were sons of the consul of 151. Nonetheless, one can assume that Spurius was the younger one, even though he reached the consulate first. Similar cases are not unknown and a strong parallel for our reconstruction is provided by the coeval careers of the Minucii Rufi. The elder brother was Quintus, the younger

47 The identification of the consul of 99 with the adoptive father must be ruled out because he almost certainly died in 89 (see above, p. 478), while D. Brutus was born about 85 (he probably became quaestor in 50 and praetor in 45: MRR II 307; III 112–113).

48 Cf. T. PETER WISEMAN, Two Friends of Clodius in Cicero's Letters, in: CQ 18.2, 1968, 297–302: 301; BADI-AN, The Death of Saturninus, 146; BADIAN, Consuls, 404 n. 19.

49 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Postumius 45, in: RE 22.1, 1953, 923–925: 924: 'Aber es scheint aussichtslos, den genealogischen Zusammenhang des Consuls Sp. von 644 = 110 und seines Bruders A. Nr. 32 mit den älteren Albini herstellen zu wollen, solange keine neuen Quellen zur Verfügung stehen [u. s. w.]'.

50 Cf. THEODOR MOMMSEN, Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens, Berlin 1860, 559 n. 291; ERNEST BABE-LON, Monnaies de la République Romaine, 2 vols., Paris 1885–1886, I, 377–378; MÜNZER, Postumius 35–36; RRC 372; ZMESKAL, *Adfinitas*, 230.

51 Cf. also the genealogical reconstruction attached to the RE-articles (MÜNZER, Postumius 41, 915–916); RRC 372; ZMESKAL, *Adfinitas*, 230. *Contra* BADIAN, Consuls, 404 n. 19, who makes Sp. Magnus, *cos.* 148, the father of the brothers Sp. and A. Albinus.

52 A. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 151, was son of A. Postumius Albinus Luscus, *cos.* 180, the elder brother of Sp. and L. Postumius Albinus, consuls respectively in 174 and 173. They were in turn sons of an A. Postumius Albinus, brother of L. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* I 234, *cos.* II 229. See above, p. 476.

Marcus;⁵³ the latter became consul in 110 (he was the very colleague of Sp. Albinus) and campaigned in Macedonia and Thracia until 106. Quintus served under his brother as legate, probably when he was already a senator of praetorian rank.⁵⁴ The same pattern may be applied to the Albini brothers.

An objection may be raised against the theoretical reconstruction proposed here. The types of a coin series (RRC 372/2) signed by the moneyer A. Postumius A. f. Sp. n. Albinus, who has been identified as son of A. Albinus, *cos.* 99, and grandson of Sp. Albinus Magnus, *cos.* 148, clearly recall the military victories of L. Albinus (*cos.* 173), achieved in Hispania Ulterior during his propraetorship, which earned him the triumph.⁵⁵



Fig. 2. Denarius struck by the moneyer A. Postumius A. f. Sp. n. Albinus (RRC 372/2; ca. 81 BCE) Classical Numismatic Group, LLC (<https://www.cngcoins.com/>) Auction 115, Lot number 559 (16.09.2020)

From that one may infer that the moneyer was not a descendant of Sp. Albinus Magnus, but instead of L. Albinus or one of his brothers.⁵⁶ The argument is not compelling. The history of the Postumii Albini was not studded with military achievements and triumphs, especially in recent times. One could list the successes of P. Postumius Tubertus (*cos.* 505, *cos. II* 503), the glorious victory of the Lake Regillus won by the dictator A. Postumius Albus Regillensis (not surprisingly recalled by A. Postumius Sp. f. Albinus' coinage)⁵⁷, the victories of L. Postumius Albinus (*cos.* 234, *cos. II* 229) over Ligurians and Illyrians, and L. Albinus' campaign in Hispania Ulterior. Because of the need to boast a glorious and recent military glory of the family – especially at a time when Spain was a critical theatre of war – A. Postumius A. f. Sp. n. Albinus may have turned to the achievement of L. Albinus, even though he was not a member of his branch.

53 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Minucius 54, in: RE 15.2, 1932, 1962–1963; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, Minucius 56, in: RE 15.2, 1932, 1964–1965.

54 MRR I *ad annos*; SCHLEUSSNER, Legaten, 230 no. 115.

55 Cf. MRR I 392, 395; III, 174.

56 MÜNZER, Postumius 35–36, 910.

57 RRC 335/9–10; cf. JUSSI VÄLIMAA, I Dioscuri nei tipi monetali della Repubblica Romana, in EVA MARGARETA STEINBY (ed.), *Lacus Iuturnae I*, Rome 1989, 110–126, 120–121 (he follows Crawford's original dating: 96?).

That would not have been an implausible tactic, especially when members of other families resorted to similar and even more dubious stratagems. There is no need to list here the ancestral, regal and even divine genealogical claims of renowned and humbler families, or Cicero's statements about the multifarious falsifications in the historical tradition.⁵⁸ One telling case will be sufficient: thanks to his *praenomen* and *cognomina*, L. Aemilius Paullus Lepidus (*praet.* 53, *cos.* 50) claimed descent from both the Lepidi and the Paulli and signed coins (RRC 415) that made reference to L. Aemilius Paullus, although it was well known that all the sons of the latter had died, except for P. Cornelius Scipio and Q. Fabius Maximus Aemilianus. If Paullus Lepidus could claim a position in the non-existent offspring of Paullus – or at least recall his military glory, in spite of not being one of his descendants – the moneyer A. Postumius Albinus was surely far more entitled to recall the triumph of the member of a collateral family branch.⁵⁹

There remain two Postumii, whose positions in the family tree must be discussed. L. Postumius, *praet.* 91/90, killed during the Social War, may have been an Albinus;⁶⁰ if he was, he must have been a son of L. Postumius Albinus, moneyer in ca. 131, who is probably to be identified with the *flamen Albinus* mentioned in a passage of “Brutus”.⁶¹ Secondly, a Sp. Postumius is mentioned by Plutarch as political opponent of Ti. Gracchus.⁶² Postumius and Gracchus were equal in age (ἡλικιώτην τοῦ Τιβερίου) and rumour had it that Tiberius' ambition and political program were urged by his grudge against Postumius, who earned a considerable reputation as an advocate while Gracchus was serving in the Numantine War. According to the family tree of the Postumii Albini, that has been charted so far, he may have been the firstborn of Sp. Postumius Albinus Magnus, *cos.* 148, and therefore elder brother of A. Postumius Albinus, *cos.* 99.⁶³

58 Cic. *Brut.* 62; cf. RICHARDSON, *The Roman Nobility*, 87–88. The coin series signed by Roman republican moneyers are famously pervaded by such genealogical claims and manipulations (cf. e.g. above n. 46). For a useful, though non-exhaustive overview of the subject, see ÖRJAN WIKANDER, *Senators and equites V. Ancestral Pride and Genealogical Studies in Late Republican Rome*, in: *Opuscula Romana* 19.7, 1993, 77–90.

59 On Paullus Lepidus' coinage, see also HOLLSTEIN, *Stadtrömische Münzprägung*, 202–209.

60 FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 13, in: *RE* 22.1, 1953, 897–898; MRR II 26; BRENNAN, *Praetorship*, 372.

61 Cic. *Brut.* 135: *quae laus eadem in A. Albino bene loquendi fuit; nam flamen Albinus etiam in numero est habitus disertorum* ('A similar reputation for excellence of diction was enjoyed by Aulus Albinus. As for the flamen Albinus, he too held a place in the ranks of eloquent speakers' transl. GEORGE L. HENDRICKSON). The first Albinus mentioned by Cicero must not be identified with the second one: on the meaning of *nam* in this passage, see ThLL, s. v. *nam*, 23 II A (*inducitur novum argumentum ... transitur ad aliam partem argumenti maioris*); on the identification, see FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 43, in: *RE* 22.1, 1953, 920–921; SUMNER, *Brutus*, 82–84 (who identified the legate of 110 and the consul of 99); RRC 252; RÜPKE/GLOCK, *Fasti sacerdotum*, 1232–1233 no. 2819. A. Albinus may have been the consul of 99.

62 Plut. *TG* 8.8; FRIEDRICH MÜNZER, *Postumius* 23, in: *RE* 22.1, 1953, 900–901.

63 See also MÜNZER, *Postumius* 23, 900; GRUEN, *Roman Politics*, 147 and n. 52.

An Albinus is also known to have died at the battle of the Colline Gate in November 82, fighting under Pontius Telesinus.⁶⁴ It is altogether unclear whether he was Italian or Roman – and hence a member of the Postumii Albini, who sided with Sulla’s enemies.⁶⁵ The question must be left open.

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64 App. BC 1.93.431: ἔκτειναν δὲ καὶ τῶν στρατηγῶν Τελεσίνον τε καὶ Ἀλβίνον καὶ τὰ στρατόπεδα αὐτῶν ἔλαβον.
65 MÜNZER, Postumius 35–35, 910 suggested that Albinus could be identified with the moneyer A. Postumius Sp. f. Albinus, but he was conscious of the significant degree of uncertainty. Cf. also EMILIO GABBA, Appiani bellorum civilium liber primus, Florence 1967², 249; FIRPO, Silla e i Postumii, 159; BRENNAN, Praetorship, 381, 745.

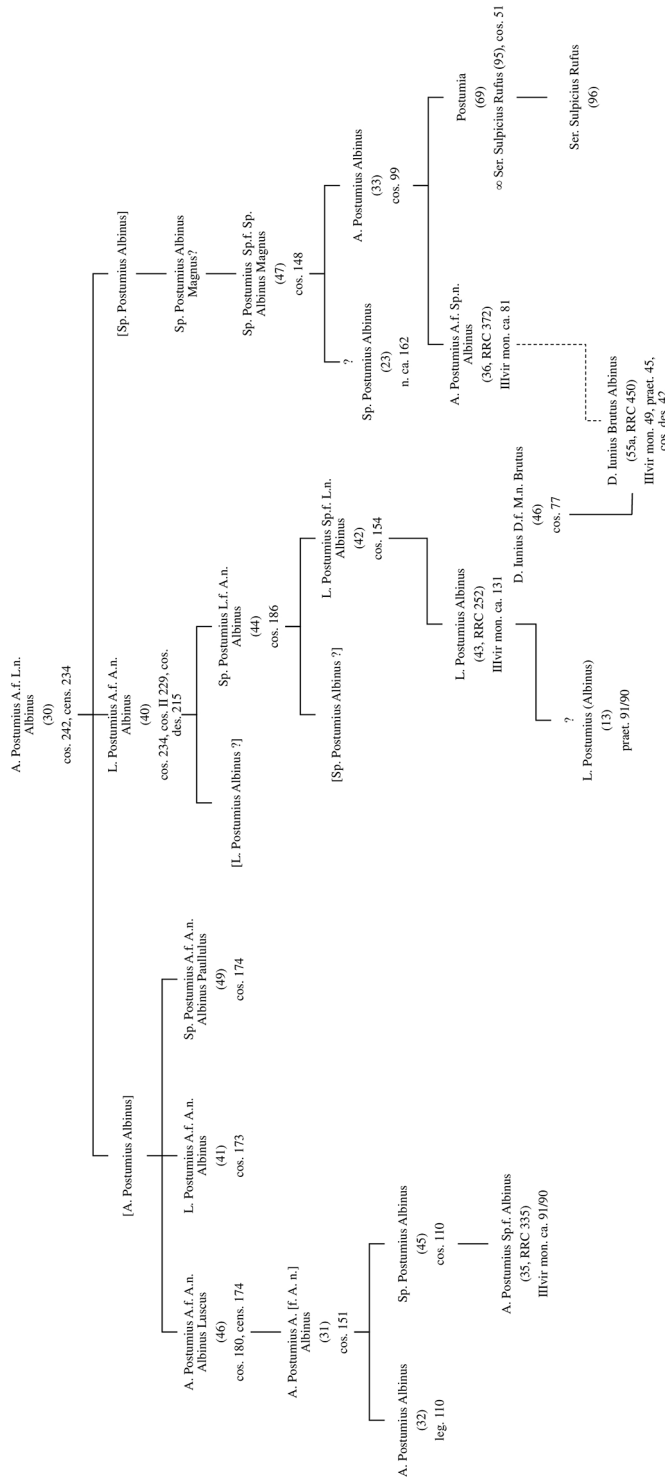


Fig. 3. Stemma of the Postumii Albini drawn by the author