



THE CORNELII AND JUPITER: A CASE STUDY IN THE MANIPULATION OF TRADITIONAL RELIGION BY AN ARISTOCRATIC ROMAN KINSHIP GROUP

The Cornelii were one of the oldest and most prestigious Roman *gentes*, extended family kinship groups, in Republican Rome. Various members and branches advertise some kind of connection to Jupiter, Jupiter Optimus Maximus in particular, notably Scipio Africanus, but he was certainly not the only Cornelius to do so. Numismatic evidence has long suggested some kind of claimed relationship between the Cornelii and Jupiter. The Cornelian connection to the religious office of *flamen Dialis* (high priest of Jupiter) is more proof that their claims to be associated with Jupiter were accepted by Roman society. Some later branches of the Cornelii, notably the Sullae, began to prefer Venus instead, but a connection with Jupiter was still explicable via the genealogy of the Trojan royal house.

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The *gens Cornelia* was one of the oldest and most eminent of all Roman aristocratic clans (*gentes*). One of the sixteen Roman voting tribes that king Servius Tullius supposedly created was named after the Cornelii, and like several other patrician *gentes* they had their own special religious holiday.¹ The *gens Cornelia* also seems to have been the largest patrician family in the Republic, with many branches (*stirpes*) discernible from the variety of *cognomina* they used: i.e., Arvina, Blasio, Cethegus, Cossus,

¹ For a sketch of the *gens*, to which this introduction is indebted, see F. Münzer, *RE* s.v. ‘Cornelius’, 1249. For the *tribus Cornelia*, see L. Taylor, *Voting Districts of the Roman Republic*, reprinted with updates by J. Linderski (Ann Arbor, 1960/2013), esp. 272. Their special holiday: Macrobian *Sat.* 1.16.7: ‘There are besides festivals for specific families, for example, the Claudian family or Aemilian, or Julian or Cornelian and each family observes some special festivals for the performance of their own household celebrations.’ (*sunt praeterea feriae propriae familiarum, ut familiae Claudiae vel Aemiliae seu Iuliae sive Corneliae et siquas ferias proprias quaeque familia ex usu domesticae celebritatis observat*).

Dolabella, Lentulus, Maluginensis, Mammula, Merula, Rufinus, Scapula, Scipio, Sisenna, and Sulla. Some of these branches, like the Lentuli and Scipiones, were themselves so numerous by the end of the Republic that their members often took second and even third *cognomina* in order to distinguish themselves from other members of their *stirps* (e.g. Scipiones Africani, Scipiones Nasicae, etc.).²

Politically and militarily, the Cornelii were also unmatched at Rome in terms of their success. They held more consulships than any other *gens* in the Republic. Famous Cornelii include: the fifth-century Aulus Cornelius Cossus, the first Roman since Romulus to win the ultimate war-trophy, the *spolia opima* (the ‘fattest’ or greatest trophy one could win), taken from the personal killing of an enemy leader while serving as commander of Roman forces; Scipio Africanus, the hero of the Second Punic War who finally defeated Hannibal and forced Carthage’s surrender, and then with his brother Scipio Asiaticus defeated Antiochus the Great in Asia; Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, who was the mother of the Gracchi brothers and a political and intellectual force in her own right; Scipio Aemilianus, who ended the great wars in Spain with the conquest of Numantia and destroyed Carthage in the Third Punic War; and the infamous dictator Sulla, who was victorious over the Cimbri, the Social War rebels, Mithridates VI of Pontus, and Roman forces in civil war. No period of Roman Republican history was without at least a few important Cornelii being squarely in the public arena.

The Cornelii, as a whole kinship group, also evince some kind of connection to Jupiter, often Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the most important Roman deity politically speaking. As we shall see, extant literary sources never make a specific link between the *gens* as a whole and Jupiter, but they do make it between the god and one specific member of the Cornelii, Scipio Africanus. In any case, it is worth looking at how different branches (*stirpes*) of the Cornelii, like the Scipios, celebrate this connection or, like the Sullae, recast it in the late Republic. Numismatic evidence in particular suggests a relationship of some kind claimed by various members of the

² For an attempt at creating family trees to explicate how some of the early and later Cornelii might have been related, see F. Münzer, *RE* s.v. ‘Cornelius’, 1,290 (for the Cornelii Maluginenses and Cornelii Cossi of the fifth and fourth centuries), 1,359–60 (for the Cornelii Lentuli), 1,429–30 (for the Cornelii Scipiones), and 1,515 (for the Cornelii Rufini and Cornelii Sullae). Second and third *cognomina* are sometimes termed *agnomina*, though the word *agnomen* has no Classical usage and seems rather to be an invention of later grammarians: E. Badian, ‘The House of the Servilii Gemini: A Study in the Misuse of Occam’s Razor’, *PBSR* 52 (1988), 6.

Cornelian family. Moreover, the clan's repeated tenure of the priesthood of Jupiter, the *flaminiūm Diale*, in light of their other connections to the 'father of the gods', indicate that the Cornelii were linked to the god in the minds of its kin if not in those of the Roman establishment.

The Cornelii Scipiones

Part of the legend of Scipio Africanus – ultimately inspired by stories about Alexander the Great – was that his real father was the god Jupiter, who had entered the bedroom of his mother Pomponia as a huge snake and impregnated her. One of our extant writers for this story cite as his sources Gaius Oppius and Gaius Julius Hyginus, freedmen of Caesar and Augustus respectively.³ Oppius wrote a biography of Scipio, of which only three fragments survive; Hyginus wrote several works, one of which was entitled *De familiis Troianis* (On Trojan Families), and it seems possible that it was there he recorded this story, following an earlier source who was attempting to establish a Trojan pedigree for the Cornelii.⁴ An ancestry from Jupiter would be in line with a Trojan genealogy, since the Trojan royal house was itself descended from Zeus/Jupiter (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 20.199–241). Certainly, the Cornelii Sullae, or at least the dictator Sulla, were interested in Trojan links for themselves, as we shall see below. For analogues among other Roman families, the patrician Aemilii asserted themselves as descendants of the Trojan king Assaracus and Jupiter,⁵ and the Sulpicii may have done something similar.⁶

³ Oppius and Hyginus ap. Gell. *NA* 6.1.6 = *FRHist* 40 F1–2 for Oppius and 63 F3–4 for Hyginus. Cf., Liv. 26.19.6–9, Val. Max. 1.2.1, Sil. *Pun.* 13.637–44 (Pomponia tells Scipio he is the son of Jupiter), Dio Cass. 16.39 (cf. Dio Cass. 17.63), and [Aur. Vict.] *De vir. ill.* 49.1. A. Mastrocinque, 'P. Cornelio Scipione Africano e la campagna d'Asia', *CISA* 8 (1982), 101–22 has suggested that this legend was based on propaganda in the build-up to the war with Antiochus III, setting up Africanus as Hercules/Alexander going eastward for conquest.

⁴ For Oppius, see C. Smith and T. Cornell, *FRHist* 3.483. For Hyginus, see P. Toohey, 'Politics, Prejudice, and Trojan Genealogies: Varro, Hyginus, and Horace', *Arethusa* 17 (1984), 5–28, R. Kaster, *C. Suetonius Tranquillus. De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (Oxford, 1995), 205–8, and B. Levick and T. Cornell, *FRHist* 3.553.

⁵ Sil. *Pun.* 8.293–6 (describing Aemilius Paullus, killed at Cannae in 216): his family's originator, Amulius, had Assaracus as his ancestor, and Assaracus Jupiter. Other myths of the Aemilii and Aeneas, e.g. Plut. *Rom.* 2.3: Aemilia, the daughter of Lavinia and Aeneas, was actually the mother of Romulus and Remus, and Paul. Fest. 22L: Aemylos and Iulus were sons of Ascanius. See T. Wiseman, 'Rome and the Resplendent Aemilii', in H. Jocelyn and H. Hurt (eds.), *Tria Lustra* (Liverpool, 1993), 111, for these linkages and more.

⁶ See T. Wiseman, 'Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *G&R* 21 (1974), 153, using primarily Suet. *Galb.* 2: Emperor Galba (of the Sulpicii Galbae) displayed a family tree in his

In any case, during his lifetime Scipio Africanus was very closely associated with Jupiter Optimus Maximus in other ways, and especially with his temple on the Capitoline Hill. Jupiter Optimus Maximus, of course, was the most religiously important deity of the Roman state.⁷ He shared his temple with Juno Regina and Minerva as the ‘king of the gods’, taking the central of the three *cellas* that made up the building. Together they constituted the ‘Capitoline triad’, the patron deities of the city of Rome whose blessings were sought through annual vows, the performance of which were the first official acts of the newly installed consuls, along with other regular ritual performances and festivals (e.g. the *Ludi Maximi* or *Ludi Romani*). Generals departing from the city took their auspices and made sacrifice here as they set out with their armies; if they returned victorious, they hoped to celebrate a triumph that would parade up the hill and reach its climax with a sacrifice to Jupiter himself. The senate met in the temple for their first meeting of the year, and used it as something of an archive, including keeping the Sibylline books there (until Augustus moved them to the Temple of Palatine Apollo). Together the Capitoline Triad were sometimes called the *summi imperatores* (the greatest leaders), and Jupiter himself was called ‘Imperator’ and there was a statue of him in this guise.⁸ Capitoline Jupiter and his temple served as a potent symbol of Rome’s hegemony, a focus for Rome’s imperial pretensions and the collective identity of the state.⁹

It was to this awe-inspiring temple that Scipio was known to make visits every morning for supposed communion with Capitoline Jupiter. Various sources report his behaviour, clearly drawing upon a

house’s atrium that made Jupiter his ancestor. Earlier, a C. Sulpicius had produced a coin possibly alluding to the Trojan claims of the Sulpicii (*RRC* 312/1, dated to 106); see Wiseman with G. Farney, *Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in Republican Rome* (Cambridge, 2007), 259–60. For the emperor’s other genealogical pretensions, see H. Jucker, ‘Der Ring des Kaisers Galba’, *Chiron* 5 (1975), 349–64, and O. Hekster, ‘Descendants of Gods: Legendary Genealogies in the Roman Empire’, in L. DeBlois, P. Funke, and J. Hahn (eds.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual, and Religious Life in the Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2006), 28–33.

⁷ See H. Flower, ‘The Destruction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in 83 BC’, in G. Gardner and K. Osterloh (eds.), *Antiquity in Antiquity. Jewish and Christian Past in the Greco-Roman World* (Tübingen, 2008), 74 ff., for ancient sources and earlier modern bibliography on the cultic and cultural significance of the Capitolium and Capitoline Jupiter.

⁸ All three called *summi imperatores* in *ILLRP* 192 (see with note). For Jupiter Imperator, see Liv. 5.29.8 (for the statue), Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.129, and Plin. *Pan.* 4.5.3–5.

⁹ For which, see A. Thein, ‘Capitoline Jupiter and the Historiography of Roman World Rule’, *Histos* 8 (2014), 284–319, and for more discussion of the literary sources for the temple and its especially on its foundation.

similar tradition: in most versions, he would visit the Capitolium before undertaking any major public or private action; he would go into the temple (sometimes specified as the *cella* of Jupiter in the temple) alone or with doors shut, and would spend a long time there, presumably getting divine advice. For colour, some sources note that even at night the guard dogs would not bark at him, clearly a sign of divine favour and his right to be in ‘Jupiter’s house’.¹⁰ We also hear that Africanus was allowed to sacrifice 100 white oxen on the Capitolium at a festival following his Spanish victories (Dio Cass. 17.56). Following his victories, Livy (38.56–12–13) also records that Africanus was awarded statues not only on the Capitolium and but even in the *cella* of Jupiter itself – Africanus, however, piously refused these.

Most sources, sometimes the same ones, mention his mystical or even prophetic behaviour beyond the Capitolium.¹¹ On the way toward his final showdown with Hannibal at Zama in Africa, Scipio performatively sacrificed to Jupiter and Neptune in Sicily (App. *Pun.* 50). In one extraordinary episode in Spain in 208, Appian (*Hisp.* 101–4) describes Scipio appearing before troops telling them that ‘the divinity which customarily came to him’ (at 101: τὸ δαίμόνιον ἦκειν τὸ σύνηθες αὐτῷ) had exhorted them to attack the enemy. Scipio even brought

¹⁰ Oppius and Hyginus ap. Gell. *NA* 6.1.6 (= *FRHist* 40 F1–2 for Oppius and *FRHist* 63 F3–4 for Hyginus): Scipio went up to the Capitolium late in the night, before the break of day, and gave orders that the *cella* of Jupiter not be opened while he presumably consulted him; the temple guards were amazed that the guard dogs didn’t bark at him. Liv. 26.19.1–9: Scipio acted mystically; he would go to the Capitolium before any public or private business and would sit down in the temple passing time alone; he did this throughout his life. Val. Max. 1.2.2: Scipio never engaged in public or private affairs without spending time in Capitoline Jupiter’s temple privately. App. *Hisp.* 88–9: Scipio seemed heaven-inspired; he went to Capitolium seeking advice and shut the doors behind him. Dio Cass. 16.38–9: Scipio possessed an exceptional mind and piety; he would never undertake any public or private matter without going to Capitolium and spending time there. [Aur. Vict.] *De vir. ill.* 49.2–3: Scipio would go up to the Capitolium at night and the guard dogs wouldn’t bark; he would stay a long time in the *cella* of Jupiter to receive the god’s advice. For discussion of these sources and Polyb. on Scipio’s divine pretensions, see F. Walbank, ‘The Scipionic Legend’, *PCPS* 13 (1967), 59–69, followed by H. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996) 50. Polyb. plainly stated that he would not deal in legendary matters, genealogical ones in particular (9.1–2). He argued that Africanus did not just benefit from divinely inspired good fortune, but rather did them by calculation and foresight (10.2–3). He preferred to view Africanus’ mystical behaviour, which he could not otherwise ignore, as a practical ruse to convince his troops that he was infallible (10.2.12; 10.5.4–8).

¹¹ To the previous note add: C. Laelius (*cos.* 190) ap. Polyb. 10.4–5, esp. 10.5.4–8: some people believed he communed with gods in his sleep, and later while awake. Oppius and Hyginus ap. Gell. *NA* 6.1.7–11 (= *FRHist* 40 F1–2 for Oppius and *FRHist* 63 F3–4 for Hyginus): Scipio predicts the future conquest in Spain publicly. App. *Hisp.* 73: Scipio, divinely inspired, said it was the gods’ will he conquer Spain. App. *Pun.* 25: Scipio had divine approval and heaven-sent advice in all matters.

divinatory priests with their sacrifices before the troops to confirm the good news, and he pointed out propitious birds flying by as he led the cheers of the soldiers. Clearly, his special relationship with the gods, Jupiter in particular, was a major part of his identity from the point of view of many of our surviving literary sources.

Even in death, Scipio Africanus was closely connected to Capitoline Jupiter. Africanus' *imago*, his wax ancestor-mask, was stored in the Capitoline temple in the *cella* of Jupiter after his death. In a speech attributed to Africanus' brother-in-law, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (*cos.* 177), Livy says that the placement of Africanus' *imago* there in triumphal attire and for retrieval during special events was one of many honours given to Africanus posthumously (38.56.13). Valerius Maximus says that 'for him alone the Capitoline temple was like an atrium' (8.15.2: *uniquè illi instar atrii Capitolium est*), the traditional showroom of a family's *imagines*. Appian adds that, even in his own day (i.e. mid-second century CE), the *imago* of Scipio was specially carried down from the Capitolium in (funeral?) processions while all other *imagines* came from the Forum (*Hisp.* 89). Because of this honour, Harriet Flower has noted that any funeral from the house of the Scipiones would have had to make a detour up the Capitoline and down the *clivus Capitolinus* ('Capitoline rise'), reversing the traditional triumphal procession route, to retrieve Scipio's *imago*.¹² She points out that all of this would have made the funerals of Africanus' descendants longer and more spectacular, clearly marking out this powerful *gens* from all others, by visiting one of the most important temples in Rome and passing family monuments along the way to the place of final interment at the family tomb along the Via Appia.

Furthermore, there is evidence that the traditional banquets held after aristocratic funerals would seem to have taken place on the Capitolium for some Scipiones, if not for all Cornelii.¹³ Three sources record the particularly frugal funerary banquet given by the Stoic enthusiast Lucius Aelius Tubero for his uncle Scipio Aemilianus, grandson of the great Africanus, in 129.¹⁴ One of these sources, Seneca the Younger, specifically mentions that Tubero conducted

¹² Flower (n. 10), 48–52.

¹³ For the funerary banquet, with some other known specific instances of them, see G. Sumi, 'Power and Ritual: The Crowd at Clodius' Funeral', *Historia* 46 (1997), 99–100.

¹⁴ Cic. *Mur.* 75–6, Val. Max. 7.5.1, Sen. *Ep.* 95.72 and 98.13.

this banquet on the Capitolium.¹⁵ Perhaps this was where all Cornelii, or at least the relatives of Africanus, had their funerary banquets. In any case, this is a striking statement about the Cornelian connection to Jupiter, especially via Africanus himself.

Later Scipios continue to maintain a close relationship with Jupiter. Africanus' brother, Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus (*cos.* 190), displayed a painting representing his Asian victories on the Capitolium (Plin. *HN* 35.22). Also, Africanus' son or grandson was inaugurated as a *flamen Dialis*, a priest of Jupiter, in the mid-second century.¹⁶ In the Third Punic War, Scipio Aemilianus was believed by some to be able to access the same support from the 'divinity' as his grandfather, Scipio Africanus, and the same ability to see the future.¹⁷ In fact, there was a belief, a 'divine inspiration', among his soldiers that only Scipio Aemilianus could end the war, and they wrote home to urge that the young Aemilianus be elected consul.¹⁸ There is numismatic evidence attesting to later Scipionic interest in Jupiter, as we shall see below, including Jupiter in African guises, that is, as Egyptian Zeus Ammon and Punic Baal.

Along the lines of equating Jupiter with Ammon and Baal, it is perhaps just worth mentioning the third *cognomen* of two Cornelii Scipiones Nasicae Serapiones (*cos.* 138 and 111). It comes from

¹⁵ *Ep.* 98.13: 'Tubero judged his frugality to be worthy of himself and the Capitolium, when by using earthenware vessels in a public dinner he showed that man ought to be content with those things the gods use even now.' (*Tubero paupertatem et se dignam et Capitolio iudicavit, cum fictilibus in publica cena usus ostendit debere iis hominem esse contentum, quibus di etiamnunc uterentur*). Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 95.72. From the context it is not entirely clear that Sen. understood it was a funerary banquet, and not some other kind of public one, but it is clear from the description of the objects used in the notorious banquet (similar to those described in Cic. and Val. Max. in the citations above) that he is referring to the same event, and that it was held on the Capitolium.

¹⁶ For discussion of the identity of the P. Scipio listed as a *flamen Dialis* in the 'Tomb of the Scipios', see Flower (n. 10), 167–8, who tentatively considers him to be Scipio Africanus' son. G. Sumner, *Orators in Cicero's Brutus* (Toronto, 1973), 36–7, followed by *MRR* 3.70, suggests that he was an otherwise unattested grandson. See more below on the priesthood.

¹⁷ App. *Pun.* 104: 'When from afar the army saw him [sc. Scipio Aemilianus] safe and having saved the others, against all expectation, they shouted out with joy and started to be believe that a divinity attended to him, the same one which also seemed to show to his grandfather Scipio the future.' και αὐτὸν ἡ στρατιὰ μακρόθεν ἰδοῦσα ἐξ ἀέλλπτου περισεσσωμένον τε καὶ περισώσαντα τοὺς ἐταίρους μέγα ἠλάλαξαν ἠδόμενοι καὶ δαιμόνιον αὐτῷ συλλαμβάνειν ἐδόξαζον, ὃ καὶ τῷ πάπῳ Σκιπίωνι προσημαίνειν ἐδόκει τὰ μέλλοντα.

¹⁸ App. *Pun.* 109: 'The army led Scipio to the ship saying words of good omen and praying that he return back to Libya as consul because he was the only person who could take Carthage. For a divine inspiration took hold of them, that only Scipio could take Carthage. And, many sent words back to their relatives at Rome to this effect.' και ὁ στρατὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ναῦν καταθέοντες εὐφίμου τὸν Σκιπίωνα καὶ ἠύχοντο ἵπαστον ἐς Λιβύην ἐπανελθεῖν ὡς μόνον αἰρήσοντα Καρχηδόνα. θεόληπτος γάρ τις αὐτοῖς ἦδε ἡ δόξα ἐνέπιπτεν, Σκιπίωνα μόνον αἰρήσειν Καρχηδόνα: καὶ πολλοὶ ταῦτα τοῖς οἰκείοις ἐς Ῥώμην ἐπέστελλον.

Serapis, the Roman name for the Egyptian god Osiris who was often considered to be Jupiter in another guise.¹⁹ We know the name was given as a jab at the *cos.* 138 by Gaius Curiatius Trigemini (*tr. pl.* 138) because of his resemblance to a low-born man named Serapio.²⁰ Most of our sources for this story note several other aristocrats who received extra *cognomina* in this fashion.²¹ Nevertheless, Curiatius might have had in mind the connection between Jupiter and the Cornelii (and their victories in Africa) as part of his joke, disparaging the *cos.* 138 an ‘Egyptian Jupiter’ as it were, playing on contemporary Roman prejudice against Egyptians, and especially on their contempt for Egyptian gods.²² It is worth noting that, although in theory insulting, the name was later consistently used with respect to the *cos.* 138, and was also kept and used by his son, the *cos.* 111. Perhaps its bestowal upon the *cos.* 138 was seen as auspicious somehow in light of the family’s Jovian interests, or at least that a renunciation of it would have been viewed as inauspicious.

Finally, one more bit of evidence links the Scipios to Jupiter. Africanus and other Scipios, including his father and uncle, are referred to by several Latin authors as *fulmina*, ‘lightning bolts’, in service of the Roman state.²³ Long ago, Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro felt that this probably implied an etymology of their *cognomen* from the Greek word *skeptos*, ‘lightning-bolt’.²⁴ The Late Antique author Macrobius, however, says that the Cornelii Scipiones gained their *cognomen* because

¹⁹ See J. Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, trans. and ed. by R. Gordon (Leiden, 2008), 60–2.

²⁰ Liv. *Epit.* 55, Val. Max. 9.14.3 (Serapio was the name of a *victimarius*, an attendant that performed the actual act of sacrificing animals), Plin. *HN* 7.54 (Serapio was the name of the ‘foul slave of a swine-dealer’, *suarii negotiatoris vile mancipium*), and 21.10 (Serapio was a swine-dealer, a ‘*negotiator suarius*’); cf. Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.57.

²¹ Plin. *HN* 7.54 mentions another Cornelius Scipio who got the name ‘Sallutio’ from a look-alike actor: he seems to mean P. Cornelius Scipio Salvitto, *cos. suff.* 35. Moreover, yet another Cornelius took a *cognomen* from his resemblance to an actor: P. Cornelius Lentulus, *cos.* 57, got the *cognomen* Spinther at a stage-performance during his consulship (Val. Max 9.14.4, Plin. *HN* 7.54, and Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.57). Like the first Serapios, Spinther’s son also kept this name, as we know from his coins: *RRC* 500 (dated to 43–2) of P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, *Q.* 44. Thus, we seem to know of three Cornelii who took extra *cognomina* from looking like low-born men – some kind of odd Cornelian family tradition? Or perhaps a kind of running joke that, while being high-born, they resembled low-born people?

²² For Roman attitudes towards Egyptians and their deities in the Republic, see B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004), 352–70, esp. 356–9.

²³ Lucr. 3.1034, Cic. *Balb.* 34, Verg. *Aen.* 6.842, Val. Max. 3.5.1, and Sil. *Pun.* 7.106.

²⁴ H. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari de rerum natura libri sex* (Cambridge, 1864), 2.273 ff., followed by T. Wiseman, ‘The Minucii and their Monument’, in J. Linderski (ed.), *Imperium Sine Fine* (Stuttgart, 1996), 68. Lightning bolts, as part of the iconography of Jupiter, do appear on some coin-issues of Scipios noted below. The first attested Scipio in our records is P. Cornelius Scipio, *tr. mil. c.p.* 395, probably from the Cossus or Maluginensis lines of the Cornelii:

of the piety of a young Cornelius who led around a blind member of the family with a *scipio*, a military baton or staff.²⁵ Whatever the case, it seems possible that the inventor(s) of this etymology – picked up on by a variety of later authors – were aware of the reputed Jovian connections of the *gens Cornelia* and suggested that the *cognomen* of this illustrious branch of the family arose from their divine patron's famous device, the lightning-bolt.²⁶

The Corneli Sullae

Although most modern scholars have focused on the dictator Sulla's claim to Venus as a divine patron, Sulla's connection to the goddess may in fact suggest a Trojan genealogy via the Trojan royal house,²⁷ a pedigree that might have included Jupiter, since the god was the ultimate ancestor of the Trojans (as noted above). Firstly, the connection between the Sullae and Venus is earlier than the dictator, which leads one to believe that it was not merely Venus as a personal deity of fortune that Sulla was advertising. The bronze coins of Publius Cornelius Sulla, uncle of the dictator, dated to about 151, have the reverse types of the prow of a ship with a female head decorating it. Michael Crawford regards the head as that of Venus and adduces this from a similar type in the coins of the Memmii who we know also venerated her and claimed Trojan descent.²⁸ Of course,

F. Münzer *RE* s.v. 'Cornelii (317ff.) Scipiones', 1,426, and H. Etcheto, *Les Scipions. Famille et pouvoir à Rome à l'époque républicaine* (Paris, 2012), 158.

²⁵ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.16.7. Of interest here, Etcheto (n. 24), 34–5, has rehabilitated an argument that the images of staves that appear on four coin-issues struck between 208 and 195 (i.e. *RRC* 106, dated to 208; *RRC* 112, dated to 206–195; and *RRC* 130–1, dated to 206–200 BCE) are *scipiones*, and that the moneyers are alluding to their own name or to that of Scipio Africanus. He points to a very similar depiction of a staff decorating an inscription from Delos honouring Africanus in the year 189 (*SIG* 617). For reservations about the identification of the staff depicted on coins and the *scipio*, see M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge, 1974), 194–6.

²⁶ See M. Daly, 'Seeing the Caesar in Germanicus: Reading Tacitus' *Annals* with Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', *Journal of Ancient History* 8 (2020), 118, for Alexander the Great being described as a 'lightning bolt', as Julius Caesar would be later. It seems possible that this tradition, like Scipio's birth legend, was inspired by Alexander.

²⁷ J. Balsdon, 'Sulla Felix', *JRS* 41 (1951), 1–10, and S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), 16–17; but see K.-W. Weeber, 'Troiae Lusus – Alter und Entstehung eines Reiterspiels', *AntSoc* 5 (1974), 189 ff., and N. Horsfall, 'The Aeneas-Legend from Homer to Virgil', in J. Bremmer and N. Horsfall (eds.), *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London, 1987), 23.

²⁸ Coin of P. Cornelius Sulla with head of Venus: *RRC* 205/2–6; at Crawford (n. 25), 250, are his comments comparing this coin with all denominations of *RRC* 313 of L. Memmius Gal. (dated to 106) with types of Venus and Cupid on them, and his discussion of their claimed Trojan origins.

plenty of coin and literary evidence links the dictator directly to Venus, as is well known,²⁹ but, importantly, Appian (*B Civ.* 1.97) mentions not only the *cognomen* Epaphroditus that Sulla had assumed, but also in the same breath brings up an oracle that addressed the Romans, saying that on Aeneas' line all power in Rome would soon reside. Appian (or his source) probably meant the Julii by this remark, but he might have had Sulla's interest in Venus and the Trojans in mind, too. Also, significantly, the dictator 'revived' the Trojan Games in about 80.³⁰

As for the Sullae and Jupiter directly, it may be significant that the first known member of the *stirps*, Publius Cornelius Sulla, was a *flamen Dialis* in the middle of the third century (see below). But later Sullae were more interested in Venus, perhaps because of her closer connections to Trojan Aeneas, though this might have been rooted in a traditional family connection (if not genealogy) from Jupiter. The dictator then may have just used his unique position in the state to magnify the claim of his *gens* to Trojan descent, employing Venus – as the mother of Aeneas – as his patron and ancestor.

Moreover, Sulla may have also had motivation to avoid connections to Capitoline Jupiter in his later years. As Flower has emphasized, Sulla was blamed, at least in part, for the burning of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in 83 while he was marching on the city through Italy. Sulla was not present in Rome at the time, but he seems to have gone some way to try to steer any blame away from himself. Perhaps this event encouraged him to double down on his focus on Venus and shy away from drawing connections between himself and Capitoline Jupiter.³¹

Jupiter on coins of the Cornelii

As noted several times already, there is a wealth of numismatic evidence – about a dozen coin-issues – that suggests a claimed relationship of some kind by various Cornelii. According to the Crawford catalogue of Republican coins and my own deductions explained below, of the thirty-six or so coin-issues of the Republic that allude to Jupiter directly

²⁹ Balsdon (n. 27). See Crawford (n. 25), 386 ff., for the coins in particular.

³⁰ Plut. *Cat. Mi.* 3.1. Weeber (n. 27) argued that Sulla was reinstating the Trojan games to advertise his Trojan descent via Venus.

³¹ Flower (n. 7), 74–92. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of this article for this point.

in some way, ten were struck by the patrician Cornelii.³² Moreover, when Cornelii were moneyers and were able to allude to Jupiter on their coins, they almost always did so.³³ In fact, regarding the preponderance of Jupiter on the coins of various members of the Cornelii, Michael Crawford once declared: ‘We should rather suppose that Jupiter... was the object of special veneration by the whole *gens Cornelia*; from this fact those parts of the Scipionic legend associated with Jupiter and the Capitol perhaps developed.’³⁴ A survey of the numismatic evidence by different individual members and branches of the Cornelii, therefore, seems useful here.

Among the Cornelii Lentuli, one of the coin-issues of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus (*cos.* 72, dated to 88) displays a head of Jupiter on his quinarius. The quinarius, a half-denarius, was an uncommon denomination to be struck and there was no deity who standardly appeared on it. Clodianus, then, seems to have had some choice about putting Jupiter on the coin.³⁵ In 74, P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (later *cos.* 57) strikes coins (*RRC* 397/1) with an unidentified male figure being crowned by a victory: he is bearded, seated on a curule chair with his head covered, but his clothes hang down to his waist in heroic fashion; he holds a cornucopia in his

³² Republican coins of the Cornelii alluding to Jupiter with their types: *RRC* 296, 310, 311, 345, 397, 439, 445, 459, 460, and 549. Coins of non-Cornelii with Jupiter: *RRC* 221, 227, 238, 241, 248, 256, 257, 269, 271, 273, 276, 279, 285, 325, 348, 350A, 358, 385, 391, 420, 422, 447, 449, 487, 509, and 546. This count does not include early coins with Jupiter-types on them, wherein no moneyer was identified (*RRC* 28–34, 42), nor those with Jupiter on them as the standard type for the victoriatum or half-victoriatum denominations, for which, see Crawford (n. 25), 864. The interpretations of these types, other than new observations I make below, are drawn from traditional ones for these coins, especially as they are noted in Crawford, who cites earlier bibliography.

³³ Several known Cornelian moneyers struck before ‘private-types’ on coins became common: *RRC* 62, perhaps of a L. Cornelius Lentulus, striking between 213 and 208; *RRC* 81, of Cn. Cornelius Dolabella, striking between 211 and 208; *RRC* 178 of a (L.?) Cinna, perhaps later *cos.* 178, striking between 169 and 158; and *RRC* 189 of P. Cornelius Blasio, also striking between 169 and 158. Various Cornelii Sullae, including the dictator, favour Venus on their coins, for possible reasons that have already been discussed. Otherwise, P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus, born a Claudius Marcellus, strikes coins (*RRC* 397) in 100 of relevance to his biological father’s family, the Claudii Marcelli (see Crawford [n. 25] 329–30, and Farney (n. 6) for discussion of these coin-types), and L. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther strikes coins (*RRC* 300) with Brutus and Cassius during the Philippi campaign, and their types are of Libertas and various priestly implements: they seem to be focused on the cause at hand instead of on family promotion. L. Cornelius Balbus, *cos. suff.* 40, struck coins in 41 with Caesar (*RRC* 518) that do not allude to Jupiter, yet Balbus was a native of Gades and not from the patrician *gens Cornelia*, who seems to have acquired citizenship through the agency of a Cornelius Lentulus at the instance of Pompey.

³⁴ Crawford (n. 25), 310–11.

³⁵ Coins of Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus: *RRC* 345/2, dated to 88 (but see *MRR* 3.67–8 for the earlier identification of this moneyer with P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus).

right hand and a sceptre in his left; his right foot rests on a globe and his left rests on an unidentifiable object (perhaps the prow of a ship?). Crawford does not believe the figure represents the Genius Populi Romani, an older identification of the type; he instead feels the image is an assertion of Roman authority against the rebel state led by Sertorius at the time.³⁶ I do not see why the bearded, royal-looking figure could not be Jupiter in one of his many guises, here serving the dual purpose of asserting Rome's hegemony *and* a family connection. Also significant, the gold stater of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (*cos.* 56) have an eagle on a thunderbolt, emblems of Jupiter, on the reserves of his issues.³⁷ A fourth Lentulus, Lucius Cornelius Lentulus Crus (as *cos.* 49) struck coins that display types of Jupiter with his consular colleague Gaius Claudius Marcellus during civil war. These coins, likely struck while the army was travelling, were certainly indebted to local influences, but various lieutenants of Pompey at this time struck enough coins with family types that we can perhaps say Lentulus had some influence in putting forward images of Jupiter for the ones his name appeared on.³⁸ Immediately thereafter, a coin of Publius Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (possibly the *Q.* 48) has types celebrating the winning of the *spolia opima* by Marcus Claudius Marcellus, (*cos.* V 208): it features a scene of Marcellus placing a trophy in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius.³⁹ By tradition, Aulus Cornelius Cossus had also placed his *spolia opima* in that temple in the fifth century, and so perhaps Marcellinus was pointing

³⁶ See Crawford (n. 25), 409.

³⁷ Coins of P. Marcellinus: *RRC* 549/1 (dated to 59–8), perhaps minted in Antioch, and dated to his praetorian governorship of Syria, so probably 59–8.

³⁸ *RRC* 445/1–3 (minted in Apollonia and then in Asia): some have head of Jupiter on obverse (3a–b), others Jupiter standing on reverse with eagle and thunderbolt (1–2). 3a notably has an image of Artemis of Ephesus on the reverse. For Pompey's lieutenants' coins and types chosen, see Crawford (n. 25), 737–8. By comparison, the obverse of 445/1a has the *triskeles*, the three-legged figure, a symbol of Sicily, in allusion to Marcellus' familial connection to Sicily, which was also a theatre of war at this time; also, while travelling with the army in 49, Cn. Calpurnius Piso minted 446/1 on behalf of Pompey, which has the obverse type of King Numa Pompilius, the claimed ancestor of the Calpurnii Pisones; 444/1–2 minted in part by the Pompeian C. Coponius, again while travelling, have types of Hercules, which allude to his family's origin from Tibur where Hercules Victor was the most important deity.

³⁹ *RRC* 439, dated to 50: obverse has what is assumed to be the head of M. Marcellus (*cos.* V 205) and the inscription MARCELLINUS; the reverse has Marcellus carrying a trophy into a temple with MARCELLVS and COS QVINQ inscribed on it. See *MRR* 3.69 for the moneyer's identity, following Crawford's suggestion. He was a descendant of a Claudius Marcellus adopted into the Corneli Lentuli, and hence his *cognomen* Marcellinus: see E. Badian, 'The Consuls, 179–49 BC', *Chiron* 20 (1990), 396. For Cornelius Cossus and the *spolia opima*, see *MRR* 1.59 with discussion of sources and different dates given for the event; 437 is the Livian date.

out his ancestral connection to both winners of the *spolia* and notably to his family's connection with this aspect of Jupiter. If these identifications are correct, this means that five Cornelii Lentuli alluded to Jupiter on coin-issues struck between 88 and 48 BCE.

As noted above, later Scipios also make various allusions to Jupiter on their coins, including ones with African versions of Jupiter. Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus (*cos.* 83) minted coins whose obverse and reverse types both had Jupiter in them.⁴⁰ Later, in the last years of the free Republic, there are coin-issues of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Scipio that have laureate busts of Jupiter on their obverses.⁴¹ Metellus Scipio, as his name indicates, was born a Cornelius Scipio and was the heir to both the Caecilii Metelli and the Cornelii Scipios. In the Empire, the coins of Publius Cornelius Scipio (*cos.* 12) in Asia depict a bust of the moneyer and one of Zeus Ammon, a god (as noted already) particularly associated with Egypt and Africa.⁴² Finally, there is the African coinage of Africanus Fabius Maximus (*cos.* 10), who was a descendant of the famous Scipio Africanus, as his *praenomen* indicates; accordingly, an image of the *cos.* 10 and Punic Baal, often equated with Jupiter, appear together on these coins.⁴³

Among other branches of the *gens*, the denarii of Gnaeus Cornelius Blasio of the late second century depict the Capitoline Triad of Juno, Minerva, and Jupiter, the first and only time the trio was represented on Republican coins.⁴⁴ At about the same time, Gnaeus Cornelius Sisenna mints denarii with a head of Jupiter on the obverse and Jupiter in a chariot hurling a lightning-bolt on the reverse.⁴⁵ To my mind, the references to Jupiter on this particular coin-issue, in light

⁴⁰ *RRC* 311/1a–e, dated to 106. The obverses have laureate heads of Jupiter and the reverses Jupiter in a *quadriga* holding a scepter and hurling a thunderbolt.

⁴¹ *RRC* 459/1 and *RRC* 460/1–2, both dated to 47–6.

⁴² A. Burnet, M. Amandry, and P. Ripollès (eds.), *Roman Provincial Coinage. Volume 1* (London, 1992), coin #2,392 of P. Scipio, dated to after 9, and minted at Pitane in Asia. Zeus Ammon was traditional to the coinage of Pitane, but here the moneyer's bust is juxtaposed with Zeus Ammon. C. Eilers, 'The Proconsulship of P. Cornelius Scipio (*cos.* 16 BC)', *CQ* 51 (2001), 201–5, discusses some of the issues surrounding the portraits of proconsular governors appearing on provincial coinage, and re-dates those of P. Scipio to '12/10 BCE?'.
⁴³ Burnet, Amandry, and Ripollès (n. 42), coin #710 from Hippo Regius, dated to 6/5. For other imperial Cornelii Scipiones descended from Metellus Scipio, see M. Castelli, 'Dedica onoraria di età tiberiana a due membri della famiglia degli Scipioni', *MÉFRA* 104 (1992), 177–208.

⁴⁴ *RRC* 296/1a–l, dated to 112/11.

⁴⁵ *RRC* 310/1, dated between 118 and 107.

of the predilection of the family to depict the god on their coins, proves that the Cornelii Sisennae claimed to be patrician Cornelii.⁴⁶ Finally, I have argued elsewhere that a contemporary coin-issue of a Cornelius Cethegus may have tried to portray images of Silvius, first king of Alba Longa, as a claim to Trojan–Alban heritage for the Cornelii (as the Sullae were doing); if so, this could possibly have been meant as an oblique allusion to their Jupiter connection.⁴⁷

The Cornelii and the *flamonium Dialis*

Four *flamines Dialis* of the Republic were Cornelii, and when Augustus revived the office in 11 BCE (after a hiatus of seventy-six years created by the suicide of Lucius Cornelius Merula), he selected Servius Cornelius Lentulus Maluginensis, who in turn was succeeded by his son in 23 CE.⁴⁸ All told, this means that six of the eight known *Dialis* flamens of the Republic and early Empire were from the *gens Cornelia*. In addition, the only known *flaminica Dialis*, wife of the *flamen Dialis* – a priestess in her own right⁴⁹ – was a Cornelia, the first wife of Julius Caesar, who had been designated to be *flamen Dialis* before Sulla took this priesthood away from him.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ E. Badian, ‘Waiting for Sulla’, *JRS* 52 (1962), 47, considers the Sisennae to be patrician Cornelii; cf. E. Badian, ‘Where was Sisenna?’, *Athenaeum* 42 (1964), 422, and E. Badian, ‘The Early Historians’, in T. Dorey (ed.), *The Latin Historians* (New York, 1966), 25. I would also note that the known *praenomina* of the Sisennae (P., L., and Cn.) are those favoured by most patrician branches of the Cornelii. *Contra*, E. Rawson, ‘Caesar, Etruria and the *disciplina etrusca*’, *JRS* 58 (1978), 150, and E. Rawson, ‘L. Cornelius Sisenna and the Early First Century BC’, *CQ* 29 (1979), 328–9, who believes that the Sisennae were not patrician. Curiously, *MRR* 1.86 ff. and 3.73 lists the historian as a patrician with a question mark, but earlier Sisennae are not marked as such.

⁴⁷ *RRC* 288/1, dated to 115 or 114, discussed in detail at Farney (n. 6), 255–6.

⁴⁸ P. Cornelius Sulla, (ca. 250), P. Cornelius Scipio (in the 180s or 170s: see *MRR* 3.70 and above, in discussion of the Cornelii Scipiones), Cn. Cornelius (174–?), and L. Cornelius Merula (?–87). For sources of these, see J. Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum* (Oxford, 2008), 630ff. Note also M. Cornelius Cethegus, a *flamen* of an unknown type who was forced to abdicate ca. 223: R. Palmer, ‘The Deconstruction of Mommsen on Festus 462/464L, or the Hazards of Interpretation’, in J. Linderski (ed.), *Imperium Sine Fine* (Stuttgart, 1996), 90, thinks he was a *flamen Dialis*.

⁴⁹ See M. DiLuzio, *A Place at the Altar. Priestesses in Republican Rome* (Princeton, 2016), 17–51, emphasizing the cooperative, complementary roles (and constraints) of the *flamen* and *flaminica*.

⁵⁰ Sources on Caesar and Cornelia’s *flamonia*: *MRR* 2.52 and 3.105. It is unclear if Caesar and Cornelia had taken up their priesthoods officially or not. For discussion, see, e.g., M. Leone, ‘Il problema del flaminato di Cesare’, in *Studi di storia antica offerti dagli allievi a Eugenio Manni* (Rome, 1976), 193–212. For the *flaminica Dialis*, see K. Hersch, *The Roman Wedding* (Cambridge, 2010), 279–86, citing for her religious role Paul. Fest. 82L: ‘the *flaminica* was accustomed to use flame-colored clothing, that is, the wife of the *Dialis flamen* and priest of

The dominance of the Cornelii in the priesthood of Jupiter is striking, and certainly seems significant for a proposed special gentilician devotion to the god – a connection that other scholars have, in fact, proposed before.⁵¹

Indeed, Jens Vanggaard in his study of the *flamonia* noted that the Cornelii must have maintained the archaic marriage ceremony of *confarreatio* (which few families must have still done) in part so that they could remain eligible for the major *flamonia* (of which the *flamonium Diale* was one) and the office of *rex sacrorum*.⁵² The parents of the prospective *flamen* (and *flaminica*?) and the priest himself had to be married in this special marriage ceremony that involved a sacrifice of a cake made of spelt-wheat (*far*) to Jupiter Farreus with the *flamen Dialis* and the *pontifex maximus* both present.⁵³ Further proof that marriage was an inseparable part of the priesthood comes from the fact that upon the death of either the *flamen* or the *flaminica* the survivor in the couple had to give up their office.⁵⁴ *Confarreate* marriage became so rare – no doubt in part because it was a type of *manus* marriage, a marriage in which the wife's property came under the control of her husband – that Tacitus reports the difficulties of finding three candidates born of *confarreate* parents for the *Dial* flamine in 23 CE, when it was eventually filled by a Cornelius Lentulus (*Ann.* 1.136, 4.16). Moreover, the ceremony may have been only available for patricians in practice, if not by law.⁵⁵

Eligibility for the greater *flamonia* or the office of *rex sacrorum* (another deeply important religious office held multiple known times by the Cornelii)⁵⁶ can explain why some patrician families maintained

Jupiter, whose weapon of lightning was the same color.' (*flammeo vestimento flaminica utebatur, id est Dialis uxor et Iovis sacerdos, cui telum fulminis eodem erat colore*).

⁵¹ For a collected list of all known *flamines*, see J. Vanggaard, *The Flamen* (Copenhagen, 1988), 70–3, to which Palmer (n. 48), 90–1, adds perhaps a few more. Vanggaard *ibid.*, 74–6, and Palmer *ibid.*, 90–1, specifically note the dominance of the Cornelii in the *flamonium Diale*.

⁵² Vanggaard (n. 51), 73–6.

⁵³ Sources and evolution of this ritual: J. Linderski, 'Religious Aspects of the Conflict of Orders: The Case of *confarreatio*', in K. Raafaub (ed.), *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome* (Berkeley, 1986), 244–61; S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage* (Oxford, 1991), 21–4; Hersch (n. 50), 277–82; and DiLuzio (n. 49), 19–23.

⁵⁴ This is emphasized by Linderski (n. 53), 245–56.

⁵⁵ See Linderski (n. 53), esp. 259–61.

⁵⁶ Cn. Cornelius Dolabella was *rex sacr.* 208–180: see Rüpke (n. 48), 634. On his death, his son or other relative (a nephew?), L. Cornelius Dolabella, was selected to be *rex* but refused to abdicate the office of *Ilvir nav.* 180 to take up the *regnum sacrorum* (Liv. 40.42.8–10). In the Empire, Cn. Pinarius Cornelius Severus served as *rex* in the 110s CE: see Rüpke, *ibid.*, 840.

the *confarreate* marriage ritual at all, given its difficulties.⁵⁷ One must not rule out, however, the symbolic value of such an act: performance of it was itself something few families *could* do, and so it was likely to have been an act of aristocratic pretension and display. While all other marriages in Roman society were by-and-large secular, this one was distinctly religious, with the two most important priests of the state in attendance. Since *confarreatio* involved a sacrifice to Jupiter *Farreus*, perhaps the Cornelii performed it out of respect to the god to whom they claimed an ancient connection. Other patrician families may have had their own particular motives for marrying this way. Nevertheless, I would argue that the Cornelii continued to marry by this archaic ritual in order to keep their children eligible for the greater *flamonia* and office of *rex sacrorum* – but particularly for the flamine of Jupiter, a deity to whom the *gens* Cornelia was tied uniquely. It is important to note how significant and desirable these religious posts were, and the prestige and privilege they provided: the opportunity for frequent and special public participation while wearing conspicuous religious clothing; the right to sit on a *curule* chair; the right to be escorted by a *lictor*, even when not holding public office; and the right to be present in senate meetings.⁵⁸

Another Cornelian family custom – which one could perhaps relate to the kind of personal physical taboos and sacrosanctity expected of a *flamen* and *flaminica Dialis* – was the inhumation of their dead family members,⁵⁹ a funerary habit very rare among the Roman aristocracy.⁶⁰ The *flamines* and *flaminicae Dialis* had many scruples (*caerimoniae*) they

⁵⁷ As noted by B. Rawson, *The Family in Ancient Rome* (Ithaca, 1986), 20.

⁵⁸ These are rightly noted by J. Rüpke, *On Roman Religion. Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome* (Ithaca, 2016), 34–6.

⁵⁹ The family tradition is mentioned to us in literary sources in reference to the dictator Sulla, who was believed to have been the first Cornelius to be cremated out of fear of desecration of his grave: Cic. *Leg.* 2.56–7 and Plin. *HN* 7.187; cf. App. *B Civ.* 1.105–6 stating that Sulla's body was first displayed in his funeral parade before being cremated in *Campus Martius*. There is also the fact that we have surviving elements of the 'Tomb of the Scipios' and from it several sarcophagi of Republican Cornelii: see L. Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1992), 359–60; Flower (n. 10), 159 ff.; and F. Zevi, *LTUR* s.v. 'Sepulcrum: (Corneliorum) Scipionum', 281–5, for the architecture and decoration of the Tomb.

⁶⁰ Among other senatorial Republican families, only the *Popillii* are also known to inhumed their dead (Cic. *Leg.* 2.55; see n. 65 below). The discovery of sarcophagi in the tomb of the senatorial *Domitii*, however, may indicate that they did as well; for the 'Sepulcrum *Domitorium*', see Richardson (n. 59), 355. For cremation and inhumation in the Roman world, see J. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca, 1971), 39–42, who points out that practices varied from time period to time period, but during most of the Republic and early Empire cremation was the norm (e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 16.6, who calls cremation the *Romanus mos*, i.e. the standard Roman custom).

had to observe, the strongest ones requiring them to separate their physical person from the taint of death: they could not step on a grave, touch a corpse, hear funerary flutes, or touch or mention ivy, beans, or a she-goat; their hair and nail clippings had to be buried under a fruitful tree; their boy attendants had to be *camilli*, that is, both of their parents had to be alive still while they served; as noted above, the *flamen* or *flaminica* had to abdicate when the other died; they could not see an army preparing for battle; they could not touch raw meat or wear shoes made from the skins of animals who had died naturally; and they may not have been allowed to leave the city of Rome while serving in their offices.⁶¹

One episode may further illustrate the family's carefulness about separating the office of the *flamen* from death. According to Appian (*B Civ.* 1.74), when the *flamen Dialis* Lucius Cornelius Merula committed suicide in 87, following a jerry-rigged trial arranged by Cinna and the Marians, he removed his *albogalerus* – headgear composed of a leather helmet (*galerus*) with a spike (*apex*), worn by the *flamines* and perhaps other priests – symbolically resigning his priesthood before his death as he was required to do. His death was still shocking, perhaps even taking place in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and was believed to foretell the continuing horrors of civil war and the destruction of the temple in 83.⁶² It was perhaps made all the more terrible coming from a Cornelius, from a family tightly connected to the flaminiate and Jupiter.⁶³ As noted above, it would be decades before he was replaced, and then only by a Cornelius.

⁶¹ For the taboos of the *flamen Dialis*, the main sources are N. Fab. Pict. ap. Gell. *NA* 10.15 (see Peter, *HRRel.* 1.114 for this as his F2 of the antiquarian N. Fabius Pictor) and Plut. *Mor.* 289E–91C; cf. Dio Cass. ap. Zonar. 7.21 and Tzetz. *Chil.* 13.51–3 for bells hanging from triumphal chariots and condemned prisoners so that those who might be tainted by looking upon them could avoid them. For a discussion and collection of the ancient sources on the *caerimoniae* of the *flamines*, see R. Palmer, 'Ivy and Jupiter's Priest', in *Homenaje a Antonio Tovar* (Madrid, 1972), 341–7; Vanggaard (n. 51), 88–104; and DiLuzio (n. 49), 34–36. G. McIntyre, 'Camillus as Numa: Religion in Livy's Refoundation Narratives', *Journal of Ancient History* 6 (2018), 72–3, has noted that Liv. 1.20.2 describes the *flamen Dialis* as *adsiduus*, sometimes translated as 'perpetual', but perhaps rather meaning 'always in attendance'; in other words, obliged to be in the city of Rome at all times, which would be another great restriction upon the priest.

⁶² Other sources of Merula's suicide: Val. Max. 9.12.5 (says Merula died *in Iovis sacrario*, in the *cella* of Jupiter in the Capitolium) and Vell. 2.2.2 (says Merula called curses down on Cinna and Rome's government, as App. does). Flower (n. 7), 80–1, draws the connection between Merula's suicide and the burning of the temple four years later.

⁶³ I would again like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me.

At any rate, in light of these taboos involving death and the maintenance of his physical body, it seems possible that one who had been a *flamen* or *flaminica Dialis* could not be cremated for burial either. The Cornelii then would have developed a family custom of inhumation because some family members were compelled by their priestly obligations to inter their bodies in this way. Along these lines, it is interesting to note that another family, the Popillii, who claimed a special role in the history of the *flamonia* (and descent from the goddess Venus), also inhumed their dead.⁶⁴ They had won their *cognomen* Laenas because a family member was thought to have invented, or to have been otherwise linked to, the sacrificial garment of the *flamines*, the *laena*.

Perhaps the Cornelii practiced these marriage and burial rituals to ensure their eligibility for the *flamonium Diale*, or even in active pursuit of the priesthood of Jupiter by some members of their *gens*. Their later claims of a Jovian connection and royal Trojan descent by different branches in the family certainly would have influenced this predilection.

Conclusions

All of the accumulated evidence points toward an intimate connection between the *gens* Cornelia and the god Jupiter, especially Jupiter

⁶⁴ Serv. Dan. 4.262: ‘The *laena* is a type of vestment. This is actually a double toga, an augural cloak. Some call it the “round cloak”: others the “double toga.” Girt in this the *flamines* perform their sacred acts. Some say that the wearing of the *laena* was endowed to a son of Venus, because the race of Venus claimed this cloak for itself: whence the Popillii, who claimed they were born from Venus, were called “Laenates” after this garment. Others hand down that the inventor of this garment was called Laenas from his invention of the vestment itself.’ (*laena genus est vestis. est autem proprie toga duplex, amictus auguralis. alii amictum rotundum: alii togam duplicem, in qua flamines sacrificant infibulati. quidam tradunt bene filio Veneris habitum laenae datum, quia hunc sibi amictum genus Veneris vindicavit: unde Popillii Laenates propter hunc habitum, qui se de Veneris genere ortos ferebant. alii inventorem huius vestis ab hac ipsa veste Laenatem appellatum tradunt*). However, Cic. *Brut.* 56 says that the first Popillius Laenas (as *cos.* 359) was performing his duties as *flamen* Carmentalis, high priest of the goddess Carmenta, when a riot broke out among the people; Popillius went before them still clad in his *laena* (as Cic. specifies) and, by wearing this badge of office and using his oratorical skills, he awed the people into quiescence. His narrative does not directly say so – but it seems safe to assume – that this was the moment when he thought the family got the *cognomen* Laenas. For the *laena*, see L. Cleland, G. Davies, and L. Llewellyn-Jones, *Greek and Roman Dress from A to Z* (New York, 2007), 108–9, and J. Edmonson, ‘Public Dress and Social Control in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome’, in J. Edmonson and A. Keith (eds.), *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture* (Toronto, 2008), 29: it has been hard to identify the *laena* in artistic media, but perhaps it is depicted on one of the figures on the Ara Pacis. For the *flamen* and *flaminica*’s clothing, and the latter’s role in weaving them from special materials, see DiLuzio (n. 49), 36–42. See n. 60 above for Popillian inhumation practices.

Optimus Maximus, who was housed on the Capitolium. The supposed nature or origin of this relationship is unclear, and it is possible that different Corneli promoted different explanations of it – something to be expected of a kinship group so ancient and with so many different branches. Nevertheless, we may be able to plot the development of elements of their putative relationship with the god chronologically throughout various lines of the *gens*.

At first, at least, their kinship claims were taken seriously enough to allow their regular holding of the *flamonium Diale*, and possibly of the *regnum sacrorum*, starting in the middle of the third century (if not quite earlier). Scipio Africanus' close association with Jupiter seems to indicate that the familial connection to Jupiter was strengthened (if not restated) by him in the late third century. His victories in Africa – and those of Scipio Aemilianus from 149 to 146 – spurred along this claim and seemed to show the favour granted to the Corneli (or at least the Scipios) by Jupiter, who was equated with the Punic god Baal and the Greco-Egyptian hybrid gods Zeus Ammon and Serapis. Their success in Africa even created a legend that the Scipios were always destined to be victorious there, a belief that was exploited by Metellus Scipio in the civil war against Julius Caesar in the African war-theatre (although ultimately this family propaganda was countered by Caesar).⁶⁵ Following suit, throughout the last centuries of the Republic and early Empire, various Cornelian moneyers put images relating to Jupiter on a dozen or so coin-issues.

However, also in the late Republic, when a Trojan origin was being more aggressively asserted for Rome, a legendary genealogy for the Corneli via the royal house of Troy could also be brought to bear, if it did not actually rationalize this ancient connection to Jupiter, too. Along these lines, it may be relevant that the 'best youth' selected to bring in the Phrygian Magna Mater to Rome in 205 – a deity associated with Troy – was the cousin of Africanus, Publius Cornelius Scipio

⁶⁵ For Scipionic invincibility in Africa, see Plut. *Caes.* 52, Plut. *Cat. Min.* 57.3, Suet. *Iul.* 59, and Dio Cass. 42.57.5–58.1. These testimonia in our sources appear in narratives just as Caesar is about to engage with Cato and Metellus Scipio in Africa as part of the civil war with the Pompeians (note Metellus Scipio's coins above). To counter this, Caesar brought with him P. Cornelius Scipio Salvitto (perhaps later *cos.* 35) as an officer and had him lead various attacks on the Pompeians. See *MRR* 3.72 and R. Billows, 'The Last of the Scipios', *AJAH* 7 (1982), 53–68, for more on this line of the Scipios. See n. 21 for the origin of the *cognomen* Salvitto. These Scipiones Salvittones (later Scipiones Salvidieni Orfiti?) will last until the Severan period, holding several consulships (see *PIR*² C1442–8 with a proposed stemma).

Nasica.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the Cornelii Sullae (and possibly the Cornelii Cethegi) promoted Venus more than Jupiter, probably wishing to tie the *gens* more obviously to the Trojans. The other branches (notably the Cornelii Scipiones and Cornelii Lentuli), however, were more interested in maintaining the traditional connection to Jupiter himself, which they continued to do into the early Empire by advertising the deity and his symbols on coins and holding the *flamonium Diale*.

It has been rightly questioned how much cohesion individual Roman *gentes* had by the late Republic.⁶⁷ Certainly, the various branches of the Cornelii had been separated from each other for many centuries and generations by then. Nevertheless, it is clear from the above narrative that, as a kinship group, they shared some customs and beliefs in common (i.e. burial and possibly marriage ones), and they even shared some religious traditions in common, too: a special holiday and, as I have suggested here, a connection to/descent from Jupiter. These were elements of a common kinship identity that they could deploy to their social and political advantage, each individual member or branch to their own preferred ends.

More broadly speaking, their investment in Jupiter and focus on him as part of their clan identity points to what was probably a widespread phenomenon in the Republic: that is, the manipulation of traditional religion by individual families for their own advancement and glorification. We can only detect it – as we can discern it in other large, famous families, especially those later connected to the imperial household – because of interest in them by our literary sources, which might also corroborate numismatic evidence (when we have it). But it is fair to imagine that most if not all the major deities and cults at Rome were staked out by the most important – and ambitious – Roman kinship groups. We should view the manipulation of Venus by the Julii in this light: they were just one kinship group, if ultimately the most important one, who were engaging in very old behaviour when they claimed primacy in Rome's political culture by associating themselves with an important Roman deity.⁶⁸ Indeed, it is important to

⁶⁶ See E. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden, 1990), 5–33, for the Trojan subtextual meaning of the advent of the Magna Mater to Rome.

⁶⁷ See C. Smith, *The Roman Clan* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. 299ff.

⁶⁸ So G. Farney, 'The Trojan Genealogy of the Julii before Caesar the Dictator', *AHB* 27 (2013), 49–54.

remember that Julius Caesar was just the first in a line of Julii to celebrate Venus in very much the same way that the Corneli had Jupiter. Indeed, one can imagine that if a Cornelius had become emperor, Jupiter might have replaced Venus as the focus of early imperial family cult.

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