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THE ORIGIN OF CORNELIUS GALLUS.

C. CORNELIUS GALLUS requires brief introduction or none at all. A poet in his own right, the friend of Virgil and of Pollio, Gallus is enshrined for ever in literature—and in literary legend, for the inept fictions of Servius and his tribe will survive the most damaging of revelations, remembered even when refuted.¹ Not only that—Gallus is a conspicuous figure in the social and political history of the revolutionary age.

The first appearance of Gallus puts him at once in select and lettered company. Pollio describes him as a friend.² Gallus cut a dash in high society—the freed-woman Volumnia, commonly known as Cytheris, the most accomplished courtesan of the day, accorded for a time her favours and inspiration to the poet. But Gallus was not only a poet and a lover. His earliest adventures in war and politics from 43 B.C. to the War of Actium have left no mark in authentic historical record.³ Pollio was a friend and adherent of Antonius; when Gallus turns up again, it is as one of the most prominent members of the faction of Octavianus. Active in the conquest of Egypt, he remained in the land as its first viceroy. His rule in Egypt, signalized by military exploits and the erection of magniloquent inscriptions,⁴ was the cause—or at least the pretext—of his ruin. Threatened with prosecution or actually condemned, Gallus took his own life (27 or 26 B.C.).

All this is part and parcel of common knowledge. 'Gallus et Hesperii et Gallus notus Eois'.⁵ There is one fact, however, that does not seem to have received the attention that it deserves—the place of his birth. According to the Chronicle of St. Jerome (under the year 27 B.C.), the poet was born at Forum Iulii—'Cornelius Gallus Foroiuliensis poeta, a quo primum Aegyptum rectam supra diximus, XLIII aetatis suae anno propria se manu interficit'.⁶ The notice, in so far as concerns Gallus' origin, is unimpeachable. Jerome derived most of his facts from Suetonius. His dates for the birth and death of literary figures, however, are sometimes his own.

Now comes a small difficulty. There were two places called Forum Iulii. When the name 'Foroiuliensis' is employed without qualification, which is meant, the naval harbour and colony of Roman veterans in Gallia Narbonensis (the modern Fréjus) or the *municipium* (Cividale di Friuli) in Italy beyond the Po? The first

¹ W. B. Anderson and E. Norden may fairly be held to have demolished at last Servius' allegation that the second half of the *Fourth Georgic* was originally devoted to the laudation of Gallus ('Gallus and the Fourth Georgic', *CQ* XXVII (1933), 36 ff.; 'Orpheus u. Eurydice', *Berl. S.B.* 1934, 627 ff.), and the present writer cannot dissemble his conviction that the stories about Pollio's son Saloninus and Pollio's capture of the town of Salonae are merely 'gelehrte Namenfabelei'—and not so 'gelehrt' at that ('Pollio, Saloninus and Salonae', *CQ* XXXI (1937), 39 ff.). Norden's observations about the value of the scholia on the Latin poets are timely and trenchant: they will support scepticism about Virgil's estate and Gallus' rôle in its recovery (below, n. 3).

² *Ad. fam.* 10, 32, 5, 'etiam praetextam, si

voles legere, Gallum Cornelium, familiarem meum, poscito'. Gallus is probably referred to in the earlier letter as well (31, 6).

³ He may well have served on Pollio's staff in Gallia Cisalpina in 42-40 B.C.: but the details of his activity as a land-commissioner or the like, and his service in saving the farm of Virgil, explicitly but not always consistently related by the scholiasts and ancient lives of Virgil (*Diehl, Die Vitae Vergilianae*, 51 ff.; *PIR* II², s.v. 'C. Cornelius Gallus'), may not safely be invoked. For this reason I cannot follow the learned and elegant reconstruction of J. Bayet, 'Virgile et les "triumviri agris dividendis"', *Rev. ét. lat.* VI (1928), 270 ff.

⁴ Dio 53, 23, 5 ff.; *ILS* 8995 (Philae).

⁵ Ovid, *Am.* 1, 15, 29.

⁶ *Chron.*, 188 ol., p. 164 H.

choice should be for the former, without question or comment.¹ Yet some, in scruple praiseworthy but excessive, are unable to make up their minds;² and Camille Jullian, the historian of Gaul, in all the eight volumes of his massive work makes no mention of Gallus at all and by implication at least denies him a place among the Narbonensians illustrious in politics and in literature. Of the poets he writes 'en dehors de Varron, la Gaule n'a donné aucun grand nom à la poésie durant les trois premiers siècles de l'Empire'.³

Exclusion is brutal, doubt a supererogation. Had it not given a name to a region of Italy (Friuli), who today would know of that obscure settlement of the 'Feroiulienses cognomine Transpadani', whom the statistical Pliny the Elder mentions only because he must, and damns in the same breath, 'quos scrupulosius dicere non attineat'?⁴ On the other hand, the famous Narbonensian colony, 'vetus et illustris Feroiuliensium colonia', as Tacitus appropriately designates the home of his father-in-law,⁵ neither receives nor requires any regional qualification. There could be no confusion.

Jerome, dating Gallus' death to 27 B.C., says that he was then forty-three years old. That is to say, he was born in 70 B.C., coeval with Virgil. The date should not be pressed too closely; and quiet scepticism in the face of precise chronology in matters that were never easy to ascertain, never widely made public—or of any real importance—will do nobody any harm. Thus there were even differences of opinion among ancient scholars about the year of birth of the Emperor Tiberius.⁶ As for Gallus, the synchronism with Virgil may well excite suspicion; 70 B.C. was indeed an epochal year for students of Roman literary history.⁷ It will further be recalled how the chronology of Lucretius was established with reference to the life of Virgil. But this is irrelevant. Gallus was born about 70 B.C., that is near enough. At that time the Roman colony of Forum Iulii had not yet come into existence. What is one to make of that?

The history of the site and its neighbourhood will provide an explanation. The date of the foundation of the veteran colony is not quite certain. Some, such as C. Jullian,⁸ would take it back to the Dictatorship of Caesar, to 46 or 45 B.C. This is perhaps too early. The year 36 B.C. after the termination of the war against Sex. Pompeius, should not be at once excluded. However that may be, Kromayer argues (and most scholars since have followed him) that the colony was established soon after the Battle of Actium.⁹ But this was not the beginning of Forum Iulii; the place owed its name and organization to Julius Caesar. It was one of those *fova*, or

¹ E.g. Schanz-Hosius, *R. Literaturgesch.*, II⁴ (1935), 170; *PIR* II², s.v. 'C. Cornelius Gallus'; F. Plessis, *La poésie latine*, 290; Wight Duff, *A Literary History of Rome*² (1927), 550.

² C. Pascal, 'De Cornelia Galli vita', *Riv. di fil.* XVI (1887), 399; A. Stein, P-W, s.v. 'C. Cornelius Gallus', 1343 and *Der v. Ritterstand* (1927), 384.

³ *Histoire de la Gaule* VI, 147.

⁴ *NH* 3, 130.

⁵ *Agr.* 4.

⁶ Suetonius, *Tib.* 5.

⁷ Jerome dates the death of Gallus to 27 B.C., Dio, however (53, 23, 5 ff.), to 26 B.C. It is sometimes assumed that Dio must be right here (R. Helm, 'Hieronymus' Zusätze in Eusebius' Chronik und ihr Wert für die Literaturgeschichte', *Philologus*, Supp. XXI, II (1929), 60). But, given Dio's methods of composition, that is by no means certain. It is therefore unjustifiable to accept Jerome for the age of Gallus but

not for the date of his death and so put his birth in 69 or 68 (as Schanz-Hosius, *R. Literaturgesch.* II⁴ (1935), 170). That surely misses the point of the alleged synchronism with Virgil. (I would assume that Jerome's original datum, whether right or wrong, was the year 27 B.C. Hence, given the synchronism with Virgil, the age of Gallus could be calculated.) Note also that one, but strangely only one, of the Virgilian scholiasts (Probus, *Ecl. praef.*) makes Virgil a 'condiscipulus' of Gallus—possibly true but not authentic.

⁸ *Histoire de la Gaule* IV, 31.

⁹ J. Kromayer, 'Die Militärkolonien Octavians und Caesars in Gallia Narbonensis', *Hermes* XXXI (1896), 1 ff.; E. Kornemann, P-W, s.v. *Colonia*, 529; E. Meyer, *Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompejus*³ (1922), 488; A. Donna-dieu, *La Pompéi de la Provence: Fréjus* (1927), 12 ff.

market-places, without full municipal rights, which were so frequently established at suitable points along the great roads. Forum Iulii lacked a good natural harbour, it is true; but the site was of great strategic importance, on the main route from Italy to Spain, the environment fertile and attractive. It would be tempting to assume that there was some kind of settlement here or nearby before Caesar's foundation, perhaps before the Roman conquest. So at least Jullian plausibly conjectures.¹ It is to be regretted that the neighbourhood can show as yet none of that archaeological evidence which makes the town of Glanum (Saint-Remy de Provence) so unequivocal a document of the early Hellenization and early Romanization of Gallia Narbonensis.²

At once the question arises, was Cornelius Gallus of native or of Italian extraction? The Romans founded a colony with full citizen rights at Narbo in 118 B.C.; and the province was invaded by Roman traders, business men and bankers.³ At the same time, the Roman citizenship spread among the natives, through patronage and gift of proconsuls, at a quite early date. The agency of C. Valerius Flaccus (82-80 B.C.) and of Cn. Pompeius Magnus is splendidly attested. Flaccus gave the franchise to Caburus, the chieftain of the Helvii: his son, C. Valerius Procillus (or Troucillus), a cultivated and admirable young man, was a friend of Julius Caesar.⁴ A dynast of the Vocontii fought for Pompeius in the Sertorian War and was suitably rewarded; his son, Pompeius Trogus, was the private secretary of Caesar; his grandson took to writing history.⁵

When the Romans established a provincial colony, they often associated in the foundation certain of the better sort of the natives with grant of the citizenship.⁶ In some places there were already Roman citizens to be found antedating the colony. Thus at Arelate the ancestors of Pompeius Paullinus probably go back before the Caesarian colony;⁷ likewise, at Forum Iulii itself, the family of Cn. Iulius Agricola presumably possessed the franchise before 30 B.C., having received it from Caesar. It may be conjectured that the great-grandfather was a local dynast, Celtic or rather perhaps Celto-Ligurian, wealthy, civilized and respected, resident in the neighbourhood of Forum Iulii. Is the origin of Cornelius Gallus to be discovered in this class?

Nomenclature often helps. Gallus was the son of a Roman citizen, his full name being C. Cornelius Cn. f. Gallus.⁸ His *cognomen* may suggest, but cannot alone prove, native extraction. What of the gentile name 'Cornelius'? It seems too common to be of any use. Sulla the Dictator liberated ten thousand slaves; and Cornelii were so frequent at Rome, says Cicero, that they could form a guild of their own.⁹ Like the 'common soldiers' whom Sulla put into the Senate, the serried ranks of his freedmen exercise a baneful and perverse influence upon history; and the proportion of knights and senators of servile extraction in the first century of the Principate has been grossly exaggerated by prejudice or ignorance.¹⁰ Hence it has

¹ *Histoire de la Gaule* II, 459, 'je crois Fréjus une station commerciale antérieure à la conquête'.

² P. Jacobsthal and E. Neuffer, 'Gallia Graeca', *Préhistoire* II (1933), 1 ff.; P. de Brun, *Assoc. Guillaume Budé, Congrès de Nîmes* (1932), 136 ff.; H. Rolland, *Saint-Remy de Provence* (Bergerac, 1934).

³ *Pro Fonteio* II, 13, 15, etc.

⁴ Caesar, *BG* I, 19, 47 and 53; 7, 65. On the name, Procillus or Troucillus, cf. Rice Holmes' discussion, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*², 652.

⁵ Justin 43, 5, 11 f. Caesar's secretary is perhaps, but not necessarily, the interpreter Cn. Pompeius (*BG* 5, 36).

⁶ Tacitus, *Ann.* II, 24, 'cum specie deductarum

per orbem terrae legionum additis provincialium validissimis fesso imperio subventum est'.

⁷ Pliny (*NH* 33, 143) describes him as 'paterna gente pellitus'. If correct, and Pliny should have known, for he had served under Paullinus in Germania Superior (he uses the word 'scimus' when describing the legate's silver plate), this means that Pompeius Paullinus of Arelate was of native extraction: an ancestor will have got the franchise from Pompeius.

⁸ *ILS* 8995.

⁹ Asconius, in *Cornelianam* 67 (Clark, p. 75).

¹⁰ Not to be believed is the speaker in Tacitus (*Ann.* 13, 27), 'et plurimis equitum, plerisque senatoribus non aliunde originem trahi'.

sometimes been stated as a fact that Cornelius Gallus was the son of a freedman.¹

Gallus had been raised by the favour of Augustus from low estate, 'ex infima fortuna', as Suetonius says.² This looks bad. The statement has been accepted and enhanced by modern scholars.³ What does it really amount to? Gallus is already in high society (Pollio and Cytheris) before he makes his way as a partisan of Octavianus. The term 'ex infima fortuna' is relative—it must be interpreted in its own context, with reference to the station of viceroy of Egypt, without precedent or parallel. But that is not all. If the social terminology of Roman literature is coolly examined, it is seen that allegations of humble and obscure origin, common enough even when there is no patent hostility or prejudice, are attached by convention to *novi homines* in virtue of their lack of previous distinction in public life.⁴ Thus the first Pompeius to become consul at Rome is described as 'humili atque obscuro loco natus'.⁵ Such disgusting upstarts of lowly or unknown antecedents usually turn out to be highly respectable Roman knights and municipal aristocrats of ancient standing and wealth—'domi nobiles'.

Cn. Cornelius the father of the poet need not be regarded as a freedman or a man of lowly station in society. But the question still remains: if native and not a Roman by birth, where did he get the name 'Cornelius'? When a foreigner acquired the franchise, he had to assume, officially at least, a *praenomen* and *nomen*. If he did not Latinize or translate his own family name, he might adopt the name of the proconsul or magistrate empowered by law (or usurping the right) to grant the citizenship. Hence the names of C. Valerius Caburus and (Cn.?) Pompeius Trogus. But not always; a Roman friend, patron or benefactor might provide the gentile name of the new citizen. Thus the Sicilian P. Cornelius Megas, who received the franchise from Caesar, was so named to do honour to Cornelius Dolabella, as is expressly recorded.⁶ Again, certain Roman gentile names were favoured for historical, sentimental or social reasons. Sicilians were in the habit of usurping the name Cornelius, possibly a tribute to the Scipios, but largely because its very frequency baffled detection and encouraged impostors—'quorum civis Romanus nemo erat, sed Graeci sacrilegi iam pridem improbi, repente Corneli'.⁷

The name 'Cornelius' seems quite hopeless as a clue. Light comes from an obscure and kindred problem. L. Cornelius Balbus, the Gaditane magnate, certainly owed the citizenship to Pompeius.⁸ Why then did he not take the name of Pompeius, as did so many others? It is an old problem. Some have invoked the *Lex Gellia Cornelia* of 72 B.C., which ratified Pompeius' *acta* in Gaul and Spain. That is not very likely. There is more to be said for the view propounded by Manutius centuries ago. Balbus, as later emerges, was bound by especial ties of friendship and gratitude to L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus.⁹ The origin of the relationship is unknown—but Lentulus may well have been with Pompeius in Spain at the time of the Sertorian War.

On this principle and parallel, it remains to look around for a patron or friend for the poet's father, called Cn. Cornelius. Not in vain. One has the choice of

¹ F. Plessis, *La poésie latine*, 290, 'c'est sans doute comme fils d'affranchi qu'il portait le nom de la gens Cornelia'.

² Suetonius, *Divus Aug.* 66, 'Salvidienum Rufum quem ad consulatum usque, et Cornelium Gallum, quem ad praefecturam Aegypti, ex infima utrumque fortuna, provexerat'.

³ F. Plessis, *o.c.*, 290, 'd'une très humble origine'; P-W, *s.v.* 'C. Cornelius Gallus', 1343, 'aus ganz ärmlichen Verhältnissen'; cf. E. Bickel, *Gesch. der r. Lit.* (1937), 533. Skutsch,

who nowhere mentions Gallus' Narbonensian origin, actually bases an argument upon his 'niedrige Herkunft' (*Gallus u. Vergil* (1906), 126).

⁴ Cf. above all M. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der r. Republik*, 11 ff.

⁵ Cicero, *In Verrem* II, 5, 181.

⁶ Cicero, *Ad fam.* 13, 36.

⁷ Cicero, *In Verrem* II, 3, 69.

⁸ Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, *passim*.

⁹ Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 8, 15a, 2; 9, 7b, 2; Velleius 2, 51, 2.

Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus the Pompeian consul of 72 B.C. or Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (*cos.* 56). Both were legates of Pompeius in the war against the pirates, and both may also have served earlier under Pompeius, in Spain and Gaul. The one at least, Marcellinus, was probably Pompeius' quaestor c. 74, to judge by coins.¹

At the beginning of his special command in the West Pompeius seems to have held authority over Gaul. Not only did he fight wars and make dispositions on his way to Spain:² he wintered in Narbonensis in 77/6—and even again in 74/3. It might therefore be conjectured that the parent of the poet Gallus was a Narbonensian personage of some importance who rendered service to Rome and her representatives, and who, befriended by a Cn. Cornelius Lentulus, took the name of his patron when he received the reward of the Roman citizenship.

To resume: if the foregoing argument is correct, Gallus was not of *colonia* Roman or of freedman stock, but, like Caesar's friends Trogus and Procillus, the son of a local dynast of Gallia Narbonensis. These men came of a class that was eminently presentable and highly civilized, Greek before they were Roman; they are the precursors of the famous Narbonensian senators of the first century of the Empire. Caesar the Dictator admitted to the Roman Senate several members of this class, distinguished men and comparable to the Corneli Balbi from Spain.³ Their names have not been recorded. Nor are the Narbonensian senators known under Augustus. Cornelius Gallus, the Prefect of Egypt, helps to bridge the gap. A knight of such exalted rank is the social equal of senators, politically a greater power than most consuls in the revived and fraudulent Republic of Augustus. Gallus is a phenomenon but not a portent; he is remarkable but not unique.

Gallus and the other Narbonensians cast a vivid and convincing light upon a process otherwise forbidding because it is in the main impersonal, the Romanization of the provinces of the West, and help to fill out a thin and neglected chapter in the social and political history of provinces and Empire. No less conspicuous, no less solid, is the gain for the study of Latin literature. Of the two great Narbonensian poets, the one, Gallus, was native in origin, not colonial Roman. Perhaps also the other. P. Terentius Varro, the poet of the *Argonautica*, is given by some authors the cognomen 'Atacinus';⁴ and Jerome states that he was born at the village of Atax in Narbonensis.⁵ Now the Atax (Aude) is the river that runs by the colony of Narbo; the geographer Mela describes Narbo itself as 'Atacinarum Decimanorumque colonia'.⁶ What is the explanation? We observe that Varro is nowhere called a citizen of the colony of Narbo. It is quite possible that he was, that 'Atacinus' is merely an unofficial, perhaps in origin familiar, depreciatory or poetical epithet applied to Varro to avoid confusion with the learned antiquary from the Sabine country, Varro Reatinus. If Jerome is right, however, and there really was a village called Atax, it may have been a native settlement in, or adjacent to, the territory of the colony of Narbo, into which it was subsequently incorporated with equal rights and full Roman citizenship.⁷ Certainty cannot be obtained here.

¹ H. A. Grueber, *BMC, R. Rep.* II, 491 f. For Pompeius' legates in the Pirate War, cf. Appian, *Mithr.* 95. The history of his relations with the Corneli Lentuli deserves investigation (cf. above for L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus).

² Cf. esp. *Pro Fonteio* 14, 'ex Cn. Pompei decreto'. Similarly, C. Valerius Flaccus was active in both regions and triumphed 'ex Celtiberia et Gallia' (Granius Licinianus 39, Bonn).

³ Tacitus, *Ann.* II, 24, 'num paenitet Balbos ex Hispania nec minus insignis viros e Gallia Narbonensi transivisse'. On the social status and origin of Caesar's provincial senators, cf. R.

Syme, 'Who was Decidius Saxa?' *JRS* XXVII (1937), 127 ff. Saxa was probably of colonial Roman stock: not so the younger Balbus, the only other provincial recorded by name.

⁴ E.g., Horace, *Sat.* I, 10, 46; Quintilian 10, 1, 87.

⁵ Jerome, *Chron.*, under 82 B.C. (p. 151 H.), 'vico Atace in provincia Narbonensi'.

⁶ Mela 2, 75.

⁷ As Mela's description of Narbo suggests—'Atacinarum Decimanorumque colonia'. Julian's view that Atax was a town-ward of Narbo (*Histoire de la Gaule* VI, 145) is not very helpful.

Whatever be thought of 'Atax' and the adjective 'Atacinus', Varro himself *may* not have been a Roman citizen by birth. One would like to know how and from whom he acquired the name of P. Terentius Varro. Gallus' poems were highly Hellenistic; but Varro, if Jerome be believed, did not learn Greek until the thirty-fifth year of his life.

Narbonensis can show two great poets, Varro and Gallus; and it will be recalled that the historian Cornelius Tacitus, who married the daughter of a senator from Forum Iulii, may himself be a Narbonensian—for certain indications point to that province or to provincial Italy, the land beyond the Po.¹ Once again the name 'Cornelius'—and no suspicion of freedman origin.

In the first century of the Roman Empire, Gallia Narbonensis stood in high repute—'agrorum cultu, virorum morumque dignatione, amplitudine opum nulli provinciarum postferenda breviterque Italia verius quam provincia'.² The convergent testimony of archaeology, history and literature will demonstrate how deep lie the roots of this splendid efflorescence of Graeco-Latin civilization.

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For doubts about the existence of a place called Atax, see F. Lenz, P.-W., s.v. 'P. Terentius Varro', 692; on the name 'Atacinus', O. Hey, *Archiv für lat. Lexikographie* XIV (1906), 269, and J. Wackernagel, *ib.*, 10 'abweichend *Atacinus* : *Atax*

als Ethnikon des bekannten Dichters; ich kann es nicht erklären'.

¹ Cf. M. L. Gordon, 'The *Patria* of Tacitus', *JRS* XXVI (1936), 145 ff.

² Pliny, *NH* 3, 31.