

What's in a Name? Polyonymous Nomenclature and Ummidius Quadratus  
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The Ummidii were an ancient family from the Campanian town of Casinum who attained some prominence in Rome during the early part of the Empire. Pliny the Younger recorded an Ummidia Quadratilla, known also from epigraphy as a major benefactress of her town, and his friend, her grandson, Ummidius Quadratus (*Epp.* 6.26.1 and 7.24.3). Prosopographical and other familial evidence for various members of this family is incomplete, so the question is: who was Ummidius' father? Ronald Syme (*Roman Papers* vol. 3, pp. 1158-78) argued that the grandson should not have the same *nomen* as his grandmother. Throughout the Republic nomenclatural practices prescribed that *nomina* follow the agnatic line for male and for female children; during the Empire the custom is largely retained, but with increasingly complicated additions and reversals of order because of adoptions, emancipations, and attention paid to the prestige factors available through the maternal line. Syme concluded, therefore, that Ummidius must be polyonymous, that is, he added his prestigious maternal *nomen* to his name; thus, he has the same *nomen* as his grandmother (full names are not always recorded in literature or on inscriptions).

Syme based his argument primarily on an inscription published in 1977 (Radulescu and Munteanu in *Epigraphica*, 106ff), which was restored to read: *C. Ummidio Quadrato S[evero Serto]rio leg. Aug. pr. pr.* Syme postulated two options from this restoration. Ummidia Quadratilla married a Sertorius Severus, with whom she produced a son, also Sertorius Severus; the grandson added the higher status maternal *nomen* first to his name to become C. Ummidius Quadratus Sertorius Severus. In option two, Ummidia Quadratilla married an unknown man. She had a daughter with an unknown name who married Sertorius Severus. Their son added the paternal *nomen* of his grandmother to his own paternal *nomen*, privileging his higher status grandmother's *nomen* by placing it first. Syme supported this argument by adducing the case of T. Aurelius Fulvus Arrius Antoninus (cos. 120 CE), who added his father's name, T. Aurelius Fulvus, to his maternal grandfather's name, Arrius Antoninus, and by citing an example of a maternal *nomen* "extruding" the paternal *nomen*: C. Vitorius Hosidius Geta, son of M. Vitorius Marcellus had a high status grandfather, Hosidius Geta, so he wrote his name in an inscription as M. Hosidius M. f. Geta, i.e. completely leaving out his paternal *nomen*.

Work in polyonymous nomenclature done after Syme's death in 1989, especially O. Salomies, *Polyonymous and Adoptive Nomenclature in the Roman Empire*, (Helsinki 1992) allows me to show that Syme's solution, however elegantly argued, cannot be correct. Salomies does not discuss this Ummidius, but I am able to use his data on other cases of polyonymous men who add the maternal *nomen* to their name in presenting a new solution to the problem that also allows the fragmentary inscription to stand as restored. I don't think Syme would mind.