

Splitting the Minotaur: New Directions in the Prosopography of the Statilii

At his death the Augustan marshal and *novus homo* Titus Statilius Taurus left behind exceptionally varied testimony for his long and varied public life: the first stone amphitheater in Rome, a columbarium for his freedmen decorated in ideologically proper frescoes (Holliday 2005), his namesake guardians, two consulships, an established patrician *gens* that would provide several future consuls, and a host of clients in Boeotia and Dyrrachium. Recent scholarship has provided illumination as to the place of the Statilian amphitheater in the Augustan building program (Welch 2007) and the relationship of Taurus to his Boeotian dependants (Thériault 2009, Kajava 1989), but the circumstances of how the Statilii gained entry into the inner circles of Roman government have gone largely unexplored.

Some inscriptional evidence and names from early Roman history have tied Statilius Taurus to a possible Lucanian origin; Syme's explanation that Taurus owed his early career advancement in the 40s BC to a partnership with the earlier "new man" Gaius Calvisius Sabinus has gone essentially unchallenged (Syme 1939). The major iota of evidence for their partnership comes from a Ciceronian reference to the two of them as *Minotauri, id est Calvisi et Tauri* (Ad Fam. 12.25.1). While this unsubtle jab clearly links the two men in time, place, and perhaps political allegiance, it does not wholly explain the process of how Taurus, as well as Calvisius, rose from obscurity to lead tremendously distinguished careers.

This paper investigates the evidence for the connection between Taurus and Calvisius, as well as enquiring into possible alternative explanations for the rise of the Statilii under Augustus. It argues that the genesis of the Statilii's entry into major public

life was not primarily through the Calvisian connection, but through the patronage of another prominent statesman. Sallust records that one of the prominent conspirators in the Catilinarian conspiracy was an equestrian named L. Statilius; after the plot was unmasked, the accused were temporarily held in the private households of allies and kin before their execution. Statilius, out of all his co-conspirators, was alone held in the household of Gaius Julius Caesar (BC 47).

In this presentation I will argue that the Sallustian evidence sheds new light on the rise of Statilius Taurus and other Augustan *novi homines*. Instead of relying on Calvisius alone for his entry into the Senate and his achievement of the consulship, Taurus was receiving the benefits of a familial relationship of *amicitia* with the most powerful man in Rome. If Caesar and L. Statilius had once been bound by patronage, this information contributes to our understanding of how and why T. Statilius so wholeheartedly embraced the rhetoric of empire and rebirth under his own master, Augustus.

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