

JULIA'S CHILD

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ex nepte Iulia post damnationem editum infantem adgnosci aliquē vetuit (Suetonius *Div. Aug.* 65.4)

The disgrace of the younger Julia and the exile of Ovid have attracted such an enormous bibliography that there appears to be little scope for saying anything new on so hackneyed a subject.¹ Paradoxically, however, an important and relevant detail has rarely been exploited in the context of Julia's downfall. Why did Augustus, who tried so hard to obtain a successor of his own blood, order the exposure and death of his own great-grandchild? The fact tends to come into modern accounts of the events of A.D. 8 as an afterthought.² For once, therefore, let the discussion of Julia start from her pregnancy.

The condemnation of L. Aemilius Paullus, consul in A.D. 1 and the husband of Julia, for conspiring against Augustus is mentioned only by Suetonius (*Div. Aug.* 19.1; *Claud.* 26.1) and in the scholia on Juvenal (6.158).³ Neither source explicitly indicates a date, and neither states that Paullus and Julia were disgraced together and for a joint crime. That husband and wife were condemned together is no more than a modern hypothesis or assumption. The ancient evidence, sparse though it is, suggests otherwise. Suetonius, in his list of conspiracies against Augustus, links Paullus closely with one Plautius Rufus (*Div. Aug.* 19.1: *coniurationesque complures . . . exin Plauti Rufi Lucique Pauli progeneri sui*). The joint conspiracy, however, leaves no trace in Dio unless Rufus be identified with the Publius Rufus who managed popular agitation in the

¹J. C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley 1964) 125 ff., lists more than one hundred hypotheses. See subsequently R. A. Bauman, *The Crimen Maiestatis in the Roman Republic and Augustan Principate* (Johannesburg 1967) 242 ff.; E. Meise, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der julisch-claudischen Dynastie* (Munich 1969 [*Vestigia* 10]) 223 ff.; B. M. Levick, *Latomus* 35 (1976) 301 ff.; R. Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford 1978) 206 ff.

²B. M. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (London 1976) 61, uses the child as an indirect argument that Julia may have married her lover D. Junius Silanus (Tacitus *Ann.* 3.24.3).

³P. Wessner, *Scholia in Iuvenalem vetustiora* (Leipzig 1931) 84.2-4: "Iuliam neptem Augusti significat, quae nupta Aemilio Paulo, cum is maiestatis crimine perisset, ab avo relegata est." The pluperfect implies separate disgraces, but that cannot be pressed, since the scholiast goes on to have Julia recalled, then exiled again—probably through confusion with her mother (cf. R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* [Oxford 1939] 432).

city of Rome in A.D. 6 (Dio 55.27.2). Even though Dio's narrative of A.D. 8 is almost entirely lost, it seems simpler to identify Plautius Rufus and Publius Rufus than to suppose that Suetonius and Dio each record a conspiracy against Augustus which the other omits.⁴ If so, L. Paullus will have been exiled in A.D. 6, two years before Julia. On the other hand, the fact that in May of A.D. 14 the Arval brethren coopted a new member to replace a deceased colleague with the name of L. Paullus (*ILS* 5026) implies that Julia's husband lived on in exile until 14.⁵

Julia's pregnancy in 8 may now take on a new significance. Unfortunately, Suetonius does not state exactly how long after her condemnation Julia gave birth to her child, so that it is theoretically possible either that she conceived after condemnation or else that her pregnancy was not far enough advanced or widely enough known to be relevant to her disgrace. However, since Julia was condemned precisely on the charge of adultery with D. Junius Silanus (Pliny *NH* 7.149; Tacitus *Ann.* 3.24.3; 4.71.4), it is surely a far more plausible and attractive hypothesis that Julia's pregnancy was the cause of her exile rather than an accidental concomitant. If Julia's husband had been exiled in 6, then he could not be the father of the child she was carrying in 8—and Julia was ineluctably guilty of adultery. If Julia's husband was already in exile, it becomes comprehensible that Augustus could feel compelled to punish his granddaughter for adultery and to have her child exposed.⁶ Suetonius, be it observed, gives the refusal to rear Julia's child as an example of how Augustus endured the death of relatives more easily than their disgrace (*Div. Aug.* 65.2).

What of Ovid? Ovid was a member of the smart set among whom Julia diverted herself, and he saw something compromising (*Tristia* 2.103 ff.). If the prevalent (and plausible) assumption that his exile was connected with the disgrace of Julia is correct, then Ovid need have done no more than attend a party where Julia enjoyed herself with her lover.

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⁴In favour of identity, *PIR*¹ P 360. J. Klein, *Die Verwaltungsbeamten der Provinzen des Römischen Reichs bis auf Diocletian* 1.1 (Bonn 1878) 102, 137 ff., had proposed to emend Dio's Πουπλίου τινὸς Ρούφου to Πλαυτίου τινὸς Ρούφου.

Syme (n. 1) 212 argues that the identification is "wrecked" by Suetonius' statement that Claudius, while still *admodum adulescens*, repudiated his bride Aemilia Lepida before consummating the marriage *quod parentes eius Augustum offenderant* (*Claud.* 26.1). But Suetonius need not imply that Paullus and Julia had offended Augustus at the same time: his words do not exclude separate offences (in 6 and 8).

⁵J. Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales* (Paris 1975) 91 ff.; Syme (n. 1) 210 f. Pliny, *NH* 18.6, states that a *frater Arvalis* could only be removed from the college by death, not by disgrace or exile.

⁶The argument advanced by Syme (n. 1) 209 ff. that Julia's offence was primarily political rather than moral depends on the prior thesis (here denied) that "husband and wife are linked by a common fate."