Under the year AD 24 Tacitus (ann. 4,22) duly notes the case of the praetor Plautius Silvanus who was brought to trial by his father-in-law L. Apronius, cos. suff. 8, on the charge of having thrown his wife out of the window of his house. The incident had political significance as well since the accused happened to be the grandson of Urgulania, the influential friend of Livia, the emperor's mother.¹

On the evidence of the Fasti Arvalium (CIL 1³, 1, p. 71) Plautius Silvanus bore the praenomen Marcus and he has also been identified with a M. Plautius Silvanus who held the duumvirate of Trebula Suffenas in AD 23.² It has furthermore been generally accepted that M. Plautius Silvanus, praetor urbanus in AD 24, was the son of M. Plautius M.f.A.n. Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC and prominent vir triumphalis of the Augustan era.³

Recently an inscription found at Ciciliano⁴ and published by Lorenza Berni Brizio (CSDIR 2, 1969–70, 146 = AE 1972, 162) has necessitated a reappraisal of the genealogical position of M. Plautius Silvanus, praetor AD 24, vis-à-vis M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC. The text on a travertine slab, the dimensions of which are given as 0,85 × 0,69 × 0,26 m, reads as follows:

M(arco) Plautio A(uli) f(ilio) Silvan(o) / pr(aetori) VII vi(ro) / epulon(um) dedit / patron(o) ex d(ecurionum) d(ecreto).⁵

In view of the filiation this M. Plautius Silvanus praetor cannot have been the son of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC. Hence Signora Berni Brizio moots two possibilities:

* I wish to express my gratitude to Professor W. Eck for bringing the publication to my attention and for providing me with pertinent photocopies which I was unable to obtain otherwise.

3. Cf. among others P. v. Rohden, PIR 3,47, nr. 362 and stemma of the Plautii on p. 46; L. Halkin, AC 3 (1934) 130; M. Hofmann, RE 21,33, nr. 44; L. Ross Taylor, op. cit. 20.24.27f.
5. Judging by the photograph (nr. 9 on p. 147 of CSDIR 2,1969–70) the transcription fails to satisfy. A final R of VIR can be seen distinctly – hence VII VIR(O) – and the lacuna between EUPLOI(N) and DEDIT shows traces of a letter N – hence, conceivably MVN- (ICIPVM), to supply the subject of DEDIT. For Trebula Suffenas as municipium cf. CIL 14,3502.

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(a) The newly attested praetor and VII vir epulonum is to be identified with M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus, the father of the consul of 2 BC and husband of Urgulania. Nothing is known of his career, but his name is almost certainly to be restored in a fragmentary inscription, likewise from Ciciliano (CIL 14, 3509: [M. Plautius] A.f. Silvan[us]).

(b) The newly attested praetor and VII vir epulonum is to be identified with the praetor of AD 24. In this case he must have been the son of an otherwise unknown and unattested younger brother of the consul of 2 BC, whose nomenclature would then have been A. Plautius M.f. Silvanus.

It is evident that Signora Berni Brizio herself favours the second alternative, but there seem to be some valid reasons for considering the former alternative as preferable.

A. Plautius, tribune of the plebs in 56 BC, curule aedile in 54 BC and praetor in 51 BC, seems to have been the ancestor of two consular lines of Plautii in Julio-Claudian times. The elder line, presumably descended from a son who bore his father’s praenomen and of whom nothing else is known, shows up A. Plautius, cos. suff. IBC, A. Plautius, cos. suff. 29, Q. Plautius, cos. ord. 36, and Plautius Lateranus, cos. des. 65. On the evidence now available the ascendancy of the younger line to a position which brought it into relationship with the domus principis, seems to have commenced when M. Plautius A(uli) (nepos) Silvanus, the first of his family to accede to the fasces, held the consulship of 2 BC not only as ordinarius but also as colleague of Augustus during the latter’s thirteenth consulate. It has been surmised that this singular honour was due to the friendship of Livia which his mother Urgulania enjoyed. The questions obtruding themselves here are how Urgulania came to be introduced to court circles or, alternatively, why her son was the only one to profit from her intimacy with Augustus’ wife. In both cases the identification of M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus, her husband, with M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus, praetor and VII vir epulonum, would furnish a satisfactory explanation.

6. For the filiation of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC, cf. CIL 14,3606 = D.921 = III 4,1,123.
7. Although it has been suggested by, among others, H. Furneaux (on ann. 4,22) that Urgulania might have been the wife of Lartia Cn.f., the wife of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC (cf. L. Petersen, PIR3 5,22, nr. 114, for the testimonials on Lartia).
9. Unfortunately the stemma provided on p. 148 of CSDIR 2,1969–70 tends to obfuscate rather than to illustrate the point: the name of the praetor AD 24 is given as (A. Plautius M.f. Silvanus), that of his presumed father as M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus.
10. Cf. also the commentary on AE 1972,162.
M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC, was the father of A. Plautius Urgulanius, who bore his grandmother's name and died at the age of nine, of P. Plautius Pulcher, quaestor of Tiberius Caesar in AD 31, of Plautia Urgulanilla, wife of Claudius Caesar, and presumably also, by testamentary adoption, of T. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, cos. suff. 45. Since the first-born son usually carried the paternal praenomen, M. Plautius Silvanus must also have had a homonymous eldest son, who should logically be identified with M. Plautius Silvanus, the praetor of AD 24, whose year of birth must have fallen in 6 BC or thereabouts.

On the showing of M. Hoffman Lewis a family tradition tended to build up in the sodalitates as well as in the major colleges of priests. Hence it is not inconceivable that M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC, who was a VII vir epulonum since about 18 BC, was either a member of the college at the same time as his father – the assumption being that M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus, praetor and VII vir epulonum, is to be identified with M. Plautius A.f. Silvanus, the father of the consul of 2 BC – or that he inherited his father's priesthood.

The fact that M. Plautius Silvanus, praetor AD 24, was apparently not buried in the great family tomb erected by M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC, for himself and his family has been variously explained: M. Hofmann assumed that M. Plautius Silvanus praetor may have been excluded from the family sepulchre because he had been the defendant in a cause célèbre prior to committing suicide, whereas Signora Berni Brizio takes it as proof for her view that M. Plautius Silvanus praetor cannot have been a son of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC. In either case the argumentum e silentio does not seem to be very cogent. According to I. Mancini and L. Halkin at least two more epitaphs may have been inscribed on either side of those of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC (CIL 14,3606 = D. 921 = I It 4,1,123), Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, cos. suff. 45 (CIL 14,3608 = D. 986 = I It...
4,1,125) and P. Plautius Pulcher, quaestor in AD 31 (CIL 14,3607 = D. 964 = II 4,1,124), and it is likely that these were the funerary inscriptions of M. Plautius Silvanus praetor AD 24 and of Plautia Urgulanilla.

'Res pro certo non diiudicari potest', to use a phrase much in favour in prosopographical research. Nevertheless it seems more plausible to identify the newly attested praetor and VII vir epulonum M. Plautius A. f. Silvanus with a M. Plautius A. f. Silvanus who is known to have existed as the father of M. Plautius Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC, than to vindicate him as the son of an unattested A. Plautius M. f. Silvanus and, thus, as the cousin of a M. Plautius M. f. Silvanus, who must needs still be accounted for.

Instead of modifying the 'albero genealogico dei Plautii' on the lines suggested by Signora Berni Brizio and subscribed to by the editors of the *Année philologique* the stemma of the Plautii proposed by L. Ross Taylor should be allowed to stand as follows:

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A. Plautius, pr. 51 BC
    |                      |
    M. Plautius A. f. Silvanus, pr.; VII vir = Urgulania
    |                      |
    M. Plautius M. f. A. n. Silvanus, cos. ord. 2 BC = Lartia Cn.f.

M. Plautius Silvanus A. Plautius P. Plautius Plautia
pr. 24, ob. 24 ob. act. 9 q. 31; pr. = Claudius
Urgulanus Pulcher Urgulanilla
Caesar
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28. Cf. e.g. E. Groag, *PIR²* 1,305.
30. Cf. commentary on *AE* 1972, 162.
32. Cf. CIL 14,3599 taken in conjunction with *CSDIR* 2,1969–70, 146 = *AE* 1972, 162.

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