

CLAN: CAECILIUS
BRANCH: Metellus



*Coin of Metellus Pius
from Spain*

IMPORTANCE OF THE CLAN AND/OR BRANCH:

- There was no more remarkable rise of a plebeian family than the clan Caecilius. Making their mark by sterling performance in Roman wars of the third century B.C., members of the clan quickly claimed the highest magistrate and priestly offices.
- But that success was merely a prelude to an almost complete domination of the Roman state in the last quarter of the first century B.C. when the clan Caecilius championed a policy of expansion at the expense of barbarian peoples and by familial proliferation gained a virtual stranglehold over consulships and censorships.
- However, the rise of the popular faction, the ravages of the civil wars, and the lust for power of ruthless, ambitious men doomed even this mighty clan to oblivion.

KEY FIGURES:

Lucius Caecilius Metellus, Consul 251, 249; Pontifex Maximus 243-221

- 250 after defeating the Carthaginians in battle near Panormus in Sicily, as proconsul he captured 140 war elephants and transported them to Rome to be displayed in the Circus Maximus
- 241 he was blinded in a fire trying to save the Palladium (a sacred statue of Pallas Athena) from a fire in the Temple of Vesta

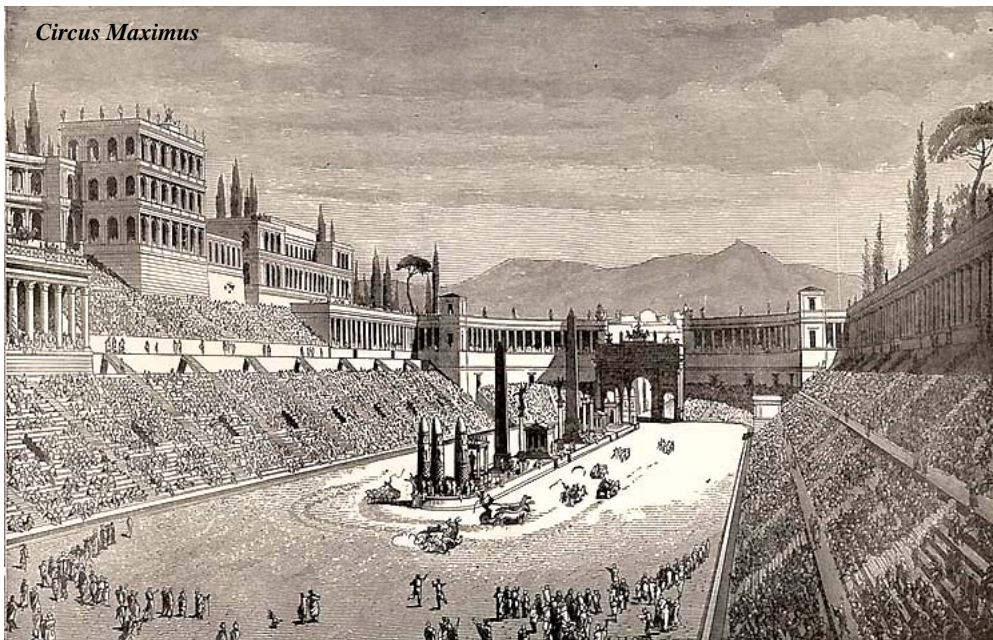
Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, Consul 143, Censor 131, Augur 141-115

- 148 when a certain Andriscus claimed to be son of the late King Perseus of Macedon, as praetor he crushed rebellion there and made Macedon a Roman province with a permanent governor
- 146 defeating a Greek Achaean army under Critolaus at Scarpheia in Locris, he was denied the honor of invading the Corinthian Isthmus and smashing the Achaean League when Consul Lucius Mummius arrived with his army
- 145 returning to celebrate a triumph in Rome, he took the agnomen Macedonicus
- 143 when the Lusitanian rebel Viriathus in Spain brought the Arevaci, Titthi, and Belli into his alliance, Caecilius Macedonicus marched against the Arevaci, defeating them in battle and besieging the remote stronghold of

Numantia; however he was unable to force its surrender and the rebellion dragged on another ten years

137 previously a supporter and friend of Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, he listened to entreaties from the rival political bloc of Appius Claudius Pulcher and even went so far in 134 as to encourage Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus in his reform program but reverted to conservative views when Sempronius Gracchus appeared to challenge the power of the Senate

131 as censor with Quintus Pompeius, also a plebeian, he violated the Atinian plebiscite law of 149 requiring



Circus Maximus

tribunes to be chosen for the Senate by passing over Tribune Gaius Atinius Labeo Macerio; Atinius ordered Caecilius Macedonicus arrested and thrown from the Tarpeian Rock, but other tribunes vetoed the punishment; undeterred by this episode, he gave a stern speech to the Senate urging compulsory marriage to keep the Roman citizen base strong
115 when he died, his body was borne to its funeral pyre by his four sons and two nephews, all of whom were or would be consul, four of whom were or would be censor, and one Pontifex Maximus

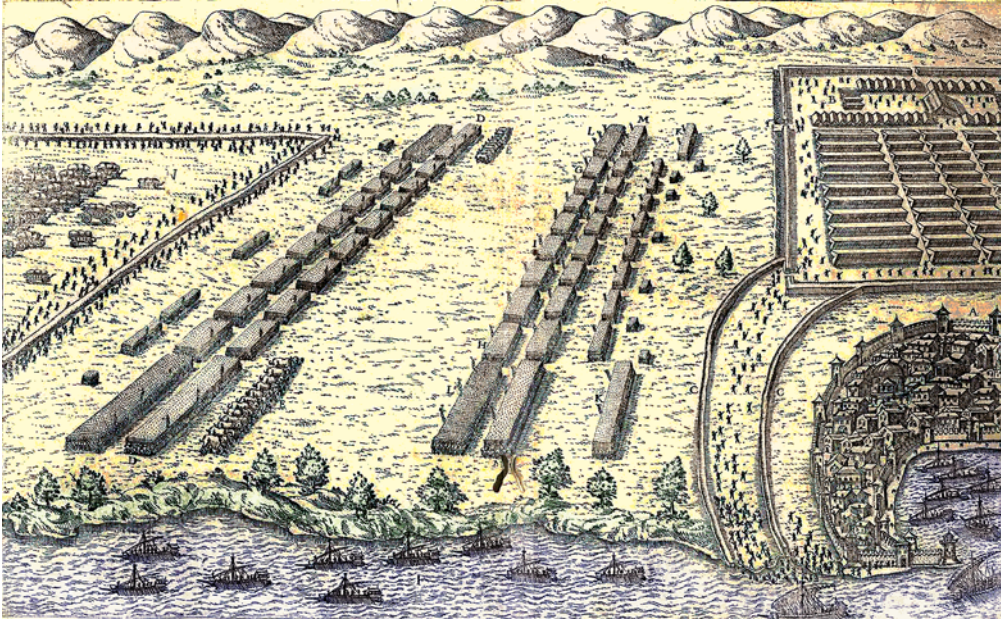
Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, Consul 109, Censor 102

109 as consul, he reinvigorated the legions in Roman Africa and defeated Jugurtha of Numidia at the Muthul River, then attacked Zama; but Jugurtha recruited a new army from the Gaetulians in western Numidia, sought the help of his father-in-law the Mauretanian king Bocchus, and avoided a decisive battle
108 aided by legate Gaius Marius, a brilliant soldier, Caecilius Metellus captured the stronghold of Thala, moved west against the Numidian capital Cirta, confronted the army of Jugurtha and Bocchus, and claimed the agnomen Numidicus but still could not end the war; when Marius then requested permission to return to Rome to stand for the consulship, he withheld his support; Marius finally won the consulship and returned to replace him and bring the war to a successful conclusion; Marius held a grudge against him and his clan that became entangled with the popular faction's animosity toward the Optimates
102 as censor, he blocked the accession into the knights class of a false Gracchus (really Lucius Equitius), put forward by Tribune and leader of the popular faction Lucius Appuleius Saturninus; when he attempted to expel Saturninus and Gaius Servilius Glaucia from the Senate, a riot forced him to abandon the plan
102 stubborn like his uncle Caecilius Macedonicus and concerned about the long-term welfare of the republic, he delivered a speech *On Marriage* to a male audience; he said that although women were annoying, "Life cannot in any way be lived without them."
100 Tribune Saturninus passed a land law over the veto of a colleague setting a low price for grain, assigning land once held by the Cimbri in Gaul, and providing 100 iugera plots for Marius' veterans in Sicily, Achaea, Macedonia, and Roman Africa in exchange for Marius releasing his legions to come to Rome to vote for his slate of political candidates rather than those backed by Caecilius Numidicus and the Optimates; however, Saturninus' most clever ploy was to force all senators to take an oath in five days to support the agrarian law or else lose their positions and pay a fine of 20 talents; when Caecilius Numidicus was duped by Marius' private pledge, publicly reversed, not to take the oath into refusing himself, he was indicted, refused fire, water, and shelter, and forced into exile at Rhodes
98 but Saturninus went too far and lost the support of Marius by murdering Gaius Memmius, a rival candidate against Servilius Glaucia for the consulship in the December 10, 100 election; after the Senate passed the Ultimate Decree, he was arrested and killed by a mob of Optimate supporters; Caecilius Numidicus was then brought back from exile by the efforts of his son of the same name, who receives the agnomen Pius (Faithful) for this feat

Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius, Consul 80, Pontifex Maximus 81-63

89 as praetor, he betrothed his sister Caecilia Metella to Lucius Cornelius Sulla, hero of the war against rebelling Italian peoples and soon to be chosen consul to fight King Mithradates of Pontus in the East
88 as propraetor, he captured Venusia and marched through Samnium to destroy Marsic leader Quintus Pompeius Silo in battle; yet when the First Roman Civil War broke out, he was unable to stamp out the last embers of rebellion
87 at command of a senatorial commission, he attempted to negotiate a peace with the Samnites so he could march back to Rome with his legions, but Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Cinna sent Gaius Flavius Fimbria to win Samnite support; when he did return to Rome with some cohorts to oppose the Marians, he turned down his officers' demand that he take overall command from Consul Gnaeus Octavius, who was blocking any compromise with the Marians; at request of the Senate, Metellus Pius arranged a meeting with Cinna but failed again to obtain a truce; when Marius and Cinna broke into Rome and killed Octavius, he fled to Africa
85 forced out of Roman Africa by the praetor there, he sailed to Liguria and began collecting troops to fight Cinna, Gnaeus Papirius Carbo, and the popular faction, who later declared him a public enemy
83 marching through Etruria into Umbria, in cooperation with Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus he defeated Praetor Gaius Carrinus on the Aesis River; subsequently, he beat Carbo at Faventia and took control of Cisalpine Gaul
79 as proconsul, he was sent by the Senate against the rebel Quintus Sertorius in Spain; campaigning again in

Battle of Thapsus



cooperation with Pompeius Magnus, he helped end the rebellion six years later

71 he marched his army back to Italy over the Alps and celebrated a triumph for his deeds in Spain

63 when he died a life-long, staunch supporter of the Optimiate cause and senatorial control of the republic, ironically he was succeeded as Pontifex Maximus by his antithesis Gaius Julius Caesar

Quintus Caecilius Metellus Scipio Nasica (95-46), Pontifex 63-46; Consul 52 c75 born Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, he

was adopted by Metellus Pius to perpetuate that line
52 because of violence at the December 53 elections instigated by Publius Clodius Pulcher, running for praetor against his political enemies, Pompeius Magnus was elected sole consul to restore order; however, when Metellus Scipio then married his daughter Cornelia to Pompeius, Pompeius supported Metellus Scipio for election as his colleague in the consulship
50 he negotiated unsuccessfully on behalf of Pompeius and the Senate with representatives of Julius Caesar to avert the Second Roman Civil War
49 as proconsul in Syria, he collected ships, troops, and money, often by force, and put Alexander of Judaea to death for resisting these exactions
48 at the battle of Pharsalia, he commanded the center for Pompeius against Caesar, then fled to Roman Africa after the defeat where he took command of Pompeian forces because of a prophecy that no Scipio could lose a battle in Africa; however, Caesar appointed an obscure Scipio to command his own forces
46 defeated by Caesar on April 6 in the battle of Thapsus, he committed suicide, the last member of the clan Caecilius to hold the consulship in the republic