

# POLYONOMY IN THE LATE ROMAN ARISTOCRACY: THE CASE OF PETRONIUS PROBUS \*

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## I. THE PROBLEM

No aristocrat of the fourth century A.D. was so brilliantly successful or so widely hated as S. Petronius Probus. Greedy for public office when his peers preferred opulent leisure, more at home amid the intrigues of court than the salons of Rome, a Christian when most of his peers were still pagan, he rose to a pinnacle of wealth and power.

His unusually long career is abundantly documented by literary, legal and epigraphic sources. But the details have always been problematic. And in 1971 G. Barbieri published a new dedication from Capua that raised a whole new set of problems.

Its chief novelties are (1) a new name, Claudius; and (2) the fact that it has generally been held to imply concurrent tenure of the praetorian prefecture and proconsulate of Africa, a cumulation previously unheard-of and surely incredible.

Since the inscription mentions Probus' consulate of 371, the prefecture at issue must presumably be his long tenure in Illyricum, Italy and Africa from 368 to 375. The proconsulate (mentioned in several other inscriptions) had hitherto been assigned to 358.

Barbieri, however, accepting the apparent synchronization of prefecture and proconsulate, and seizing on the new name Claudius, suggested identifying as Petronius Probus the Petronius Claudius attested as proconsul of Africa between 368 and 370.<sup>1</sup> He was at once supported by S. Mazzarino,<sup>2</sup> and now in a more detailed study by A. Giardina.<sup>3</sup>

This hypothesis raises a number of questions. Is simultaneous tenure of prefecture and proconsulate possible? What would it imply about the spheres of competence of the two offices? Is it what the dedication says in any case? Most important of all, however, if a polyonymous person might really be known by different names at different times and places, much of the prosopography of the age may have to be rewritten.

Almost no systematic research has been done on late Roman nomenclature, and it has often been assumed that there were no rules at all. I hope to show that, in aristocratic society at least, the rules were simple and all but invariable.

## II. THE INSCRIPTION

Here is the new inscription:

CLAUDIO PETRONIO PROBO V.[C.],  
PROCONSVLI AFRICAE ET S[(acra) V(ice) IVD(icanti)],  
VNO EODEMQVE TEMPORE ET[IAM]  
PRAETORIO PREFECTVRA POL[LENTI]  
CONSVLI ORDINARIO, NOBILITA[TE]  
MVNIFICENTIAQVE PRAESTANTI,  
ORIGINALI PATRONO, REGIONES  
[?ET OMNIA] COLLEGIA POSVERVNT

Mazzarino effected one notable improvement on Barbieri's text: S[(acra) V(ice) IVD(icanti)] for Barbieri's superfluous S[imul]. It is especially common to find a reference to the

\* I am grateful to A. Chastagnol, A. Giardina, M. Peachin and D. Vera, and to the Editorial Committee for comments on an earlier draft.

<sup>1</sup> 'Nuove iscrizioni di Capua', *Terza miscellanea greca e romana* (Studi pubblicati dall' Istituto Italiano per la Storia Antica, 1971), 298 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Antico, tardoantico ed era costantiniana* 1 (1974), 334-8.

<sup>3</sup> 'Lettura epigrafica e carriere aristocratiche: il caso

di Petronio Probo', *Riv. di Fil.* 111 (1983), 170-82, developing ideas already expressed in *Helikon* 15/16 (1975/6), 308-11; and *MEFRA* 95 (1983), 268-72. In an appendix (pp. 178-82) I argue that the reconstruction of Probus' prefectures offered by Mazzarino and Giardina is also mistaken. The long tenure of 368-75 (or even a little later) is his third, not first prefecture. This would make it all the more incredible that he should wish to hold a lower office as well.

proconsul's appellate jurisdiction, often abbreviated S.V.IVD. or V.S.IVD., often too preceded by an *et*.

But his other restoration, ET [INDE] at the end of l. 3, though accepted by Giardina, is less happy. In the first place *inde* is a literary word never to my knowledge found in the restricted vocabulary of *cursus* inscriptions. Second, it was standard and all but invariable practice to list offices without connectives of any sort, whereas Mazzarino's text offers *two*, both *et* and *inde*. Thirdly, so far from helping out the idea of contemporaneity, *inde* clearly introduces an implication of *sequence*. This is conspicuously true of the one literary example to which, paradoxically enough, both Mazzarino and Giardina refer: 'Ampelium . . . ad proconsulatum geminum, *indeque multo postea* ad praefecturae culmen evectus' (Amm. Marc. XXVIII. 4. 3). Barbieri's innocuous ET[IAM], if not inevitable, at least avoids the anomalous connective.

Before discussing the historical problems raised by the apparent synchronization of proconsulate and prefecture, let us first see if this really is the synchronization implied by the text. The synchronization we might have expected to be noted in such an inscription at such a moment of Probus' career is that between his prefecture and his consulate. For in 371 Probus was indeed both praetorian prefect and consul; for twelve months he held simultaneously the two highest offices open to a private citizen, a far more significant cumulation than (even if it were possible) that of proconsul and prefect.

Chastagnol did his best to get a synchronization between prefecture and consulate out of the text by supplementing the end of l. 2 ET [IN] and l. 4 POL[LENTI ET].<sup>4</sup> But Giardina has re-examined the stone and reports that there is just not room in l. 4.

On much weaker ground, Giardina also objected that such a synchronization 'would reduce the first prefecture of Probus to just the year of his consulate, which is unthinkable.' But why should anyone think this, then or now? Everyone knew that a man was consul for a calendar year and PPO for an indefinite period,<sup>5</sup> usually longer than a year. And no one expected a dedication to record the duration of a man's offices, only their sequence. No one was likely to assume that offices said to be held simultaneously were quite literally assumed and laid down on the same day, only that they overlapped for a period. In practice Mazzarino and Giardina make this very assumption themselves, since they acknowledge that Probus continued as PPO for at least four years after Claudius ceased to be proconsul.

It is in fact on the Mazzarino-Giardina interpretation that there is a problem about the extent of this alleged synchronization between proconsulate and prefecture. Since the inscription mentions Probus' consulate, it cannot be earlier than 371, a year *after* Petronius Claudius is last attested as proconsul. So the alleged synchronization was *past* at the time the inscription was erected. Mazzarino claimed that his *inde* covered this situation: 'l'aggiunta *et [inde]* era utile a mostrare che la prefettura di Probo s'era estesa oltre il suo proconsolato' (p. 336 n. 17). That is to say, in effect he is claiming that 'A uno eodemque tempore et inde B' means: 'A and B simultaneously, and subsequently B alone'. This is surely incredible and impossible. On the other hand, if the inscription *was* erected at a moment when Probus was no longer proconsul, this is what the inscription should be saying. But nothing in the wording as it stands suggests this, nor would an *inde* or any other possible supplement to l. 3 permit any such inference. The writer would have had to employ a quite different formulation: e.g. 'uno eodemque tempore proconsuli et praefecto, postea praefecto', or something similar (compare the inscription of Proculus, cited below p. 170).

In any case, why emphasize the (on any hypothesis now lapsed) synchronization of proconsulate and prefecture in preference to the more significant and recent (and perhaps still current) synchronization of prefecture and consulate? Giardina objects that synchronization of prefecture and consulate 'era una circostanza relativamente banale che molti altri avrebbero potuto vantare' (p. 181). It is true that praetorian prefects were not

<sup>4</sup> 'L'inscription de Petronius Probus à Capoue, *Tituli* 4 (1982), 547-50.

<sup>5</sup> To save space I use the convenient ancient acronyms PPO for *praefectus praetorio* and PVR for *praefec-*

*tus urbi Romae*. And I do not give references for uncontroversial careers where the details can be found easily enough in *PLRE*.

infrequently rewarded with the consulate, and that this alleged cumulation of proconsulate and prefecture would be *statistically* speaking rarer and so more *interesting* to the modern historian. But *as an honour* it could not compare with the cumulation of prefecture and consulate. The fact that others before Probus had been so honoured (the last were Sallustius in 363 and Mamertinus in 362) did not alter the fact that it was a high honour and that in 371 it fell to Probus. We are fortunate enough to possess the speech in which the prefect Mamertinus thanked Julian for his consulate in 362. It is clear that he at least was most impressed by the double honour:

Quid quod nihil speranti mihi de honoris augmento—neque enim ultra praefecturam se votorum meorum modestia porrigebat—perfertur nuntius consulem me creatum . . . (*Pan. Lat.* XI. 15. 5; cf. 22; 23. 3; 31. 5).

And though he does not happen to use the formula *uno eodemque tempore* when evoking incredulously his rapid rise from CSL to PPO and finally consul within twelve months, he refers to himself as being 'uno in anno ter . . . honoratum' (*ibid.* 21. 5). A few years later Probus' friend the poet Ausonius became consul while PPO. We have his *gratiarum actio* as well. Passing in review the honours of earlier imperial tutors, he naturally thought of Fronto, a consul like himself—but not a prefect too ('quem . . . sic consulatus ornavit ut praefectura non cingeret', 7).<sup>6</sup>

It might seem surprising that none of the seventeen other Probus inscriptions or four Claudius inscriptions mentions Giardina's synchronization. We may well agree with him that in many if not most it would for one reason or another not have been appropriate or possible (for example, once the emphasis had fallen on the more remarkable phenomenon of Probus' four prefectures). None the less there is one Roman dedication which to all appearances is exactly parallel (*CIL* VI. 1751 = *ILS* 1265):

. . . Petronio Probo v.c., proconsuli Africae, praefecto praetorio per Illyricum Italiam et Africam, consuli ordinario, ob insignia erga se remediorum genera Veneti atque Histri peculiares eius, patrono praestantissimo.

Since the prefecture is listed before the consulate, the reference must again be to that same long tenure of 368–75. Indeed the dedication is precisely dated to 8 August 378; Giardina dates the Capua dedication between 371 and 379. Even the nature of the dedication is the same: an offering from a group of local worthies to their patron. So why is there no reference here to synchronization? What is it that marks off one dedication from the other in this respect? On the Mazzarino-Giardina interpretation, nothing (it seems). But on the other interpretation there is a simple and entirely satisfactory explanation: the date. The Capua stone, I suggest, dates from (or soon after) 371, the year of Probus' consulate. In the year when Probus *was* simultaneously consul and prefect, it would have been natural and appropriate to note that synchronization.<sup>7</sup> But the moment Probus had ceased to be consul and was just prefect once more, there was little point in stressing the synchronization. And by 378 none at all. In all probability, then, the Capua dedication dates precisely from 371.

### III. FORMULAE OF SYNCHRONIZATION

To recapitulate. There is clearly more to be said for a synchronization between prefecture and consulate than between proconsulate and prefecture. But can it be got out of the Latin? Chastagnol's double *et* would have put it beyond doubt, but we must apparently do without them. I should like to develop Chastagnol's point in a different way.

<sup>6</sup> And he later reports Gratian's remark that it was Ausonius' seniority as prefect that determined his seniority as consul (*ibid.* 12).

<sup>7</sup> In the six surviving consular dating formulae in

papyri for the year 371 Probus is invariably styled PPO as well as consul: see R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (1978), 113.

There is one exact parallel to the synchronization formula of the Capua dedication, from a dedication to Probus' kinsman (by marriage) Anicius Auchenius Bassus, PVR in 382-3:

Anicio Auchenio Basso v.c., quaestori candidato, *uno eodemque tempore* praetori tutelari, proconsuli Campaniae, praefecto urbi, trini magistratus insignia facundiae et natalium speciosa luce virtutis ornanti . . . (CIL VI. 1679 = ILS 1262)

No one (it seems) has ever been in any doubt about the posts held simultaneously by Bassus: the quaestorship and praetorship.<sup>8</sup> If so, then the identical structure 'A uno eodemque tempore B' in so similar and nearly contemporary a dedication must be held to provide strong support to the Mazzarino-Giardina interpretation of the Probus dedication. But is cumulation of quaestorship and praetorship likely in itself? Surely not.

Both quaestorship and praetorship were now held very early in a rising senatorial career. The only career where we have exact dates for both is that of Q. Fabius Memmius Symmachus, son of the orator: born in 383/4, he was quaestor in 393 and praetor in 401, that is to say at the age of 9 and 18 respectively. The gap of almost a decade between the two posts in even so precocious a career as this is significant in comparison with the usual interpretation of Bassus' boast. For the quaestorship was no longer a magistracy proper at all; it had become no more than an obligatory *munus*. The praetorship too involved games, but it still remained a genuine annual magistracy with a fair number of genuine judicial functions.<sup>9</sup> So while the quaestorship could easily be held by a child so long as his father was willing to put on games in his name, the praetorship was the first active step in a young senator's public career. A substantial gap between the two posts must have been normal; simultaneous tenure would have been improbable—and not obviously honorific. Since the praetorship was not likely to be held earlier than 17, it would have implied an exceptionally late quaestorship, nothing to boast about.

The praetorian games were expected to be on such a scale that by a law of 372 praetors were designated ten years in advance so as to give their fathers time to budget for the expense. Symmachus himself is said to have spent 2,000 lb. of gold on Memmius' praetorian games, a sum equivalent in purchasing power to well over \$100,000,000 to-day.

It might thus seem unlikely that any father would choose to give his son's quaestorian and praetorian games in the same year—for three different reasons. First and most obviously, the sheer expense. Secondly, the multifarious logistical problems of organizing the games: getting hold of the best gladiators, horses, rare animals, charioteers, actors and so forth. It might have seemed that all this could be delegated to some competent agency, but some sixty letters from Symmachus' correspondence reveal that Memmius' praetorian games were his main preoccupation between the end of 398 and the beginning of 401.<sup>10</sup> If putting on one set of games in the style expected could absorb this much of the personal time and effort of Symmachus himself, no one would willingly undertake it twice in one year. Thirdly, in the richest senatorial families (such as the Symmachi and Anicii), the point of giving such lavish games was to outdo one's rivals, to demonstrate by conspicuous and calculated extravagance that one was the richest and most powerful patron of all. When preparing for Memmius' praetorian games, Symmachus several times worried that he was the victim of his own earlier extravagance, that he was obliged to exceed the standards set by Memmius' quaestorian and his own consular games: 'we must satisfy the expectation which has increased because of our example' (Symm., *Epp.* iv. 58, 2; cf. 59, 2; 60, 2). To give both quaestorian and praetorian games within a few months of each other was wantonly to compete with oneself.

It is difficult to see why Bassus' family should have planned so badly as to saddle themselves with the dubious honour he has so far been supposed to claim so proudly. Is it not more likely that what he is claiming is to have been praetor and proconsul of Campania

<sup>8</sup> Even Chastagnol concedes this.

<sup>9</sup> See Chastagnol, *Revue Historique* 219 (1958), 237-52, and in *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique: Caen 25-26 avril 1969* (1970), 190-4.

<sup>10</sup> For all the details see now S. Roda, *Commento Storico al libro ix dell'epistolario di Q. Aurelio Simmaco* (1981), pp. 44 f., 116 f.

simultaneously? If it was customary to hold the praetorship as late as 18 or 20, that was quite old enough for one of the junior provincial governorships. Indeed one of Probus' contemporaries, Julius Festus Hymettius, held his praetorship *after* his first governorship (the correctorship of Tuscia-Umbria). Bassus need only have taken up his post in Campania before the end of his year as praetor.

There is one last detail. After the list of Bassus' four offices, the inscription goes on to praise the way he adorned *trini magistratus insignia*. What does this phrase mean? *PLRE* oddly refers it to the quaestorship and praetorship, with the comment 'evidently regarded as a single magistracy' (I, 152). But they make not three but two magistracies. It is difficult to see what one threefold magistracy could be, and I suggest that it is just pompous Latin for 'three magistracies'. Now if three out of Bassus' four magistracies are being grouped together, it must surely be the last three rather than the first three. The praetorship did carry some administrative responsibilities, and was held in adult years. If *trini* does exclude the quaestorship, that would amount to a further argument against assuming a cumulation of quaestorship and praetorship.

I submit that we have not one but two cases of 'A uno eodemque tempore B C' where it makes better historical sense to link B and C rather than A and B. And there may be one more. An unfortunately very fragmentary stone of an earlier age records an unidentifiable equestrian official (*CIL* VI. 1647 = X. 1710):

[. . . proc]ur(ator) monet(ae)  
 [?et e]odem temp(ore)  
 [procur(ator)] ludi  
 [?aere con]lato[

On the face of it, a man who was simultaneously *procurator monetae* and *procurator ludi*. Yet these were posts of different rank in the equestrian hierarchy, with different salaries (the first *centenarius*, the second *ducenarius*). A man normally rose from the first to the second. It would be distinctly odd for a man to *boast* of holding a post he had risen above together with his promotion. The stone is so damaged that almost any restoration is possible, but ought we not to consider whether the *cursus* continued with a third post, and that it was this that was held simultaneously with the *procuratura ludi* (l. 4 might be read [. . . procu]rato[r]?)

All is uncertain, and we are not even dealing with exactly the same formula. None the less, it does look like another problematic case of 'A eodem tempore B'.

Chastagnol quoted three more literary examples of the phrase *uno eodemque tempore et . . . et . . .*<sup>11</sup> and one epigraphic example of *uno eodemque anno . . . et . . .* (*I. R. Trip.* 567). Giardina disallowed all four on the grounds that in each case there were only two items and the pairings were clearly sign-posted with at least one *et*. If there is no room to insert the double *et* in the Probus dedication, it must be conceded that these texts do not provide a real parallel for the point at issue. None the less, they do have one significant feature in common with the Bassus and Probus dedications as here interpreted. In every case the *uno eodemque tempore* formula *precedes* the items being synchronized. If the formula was always used in this way, it may have made no difference whether or not the synchronized items were linked by *et*. It may never have occurred to a contemporary reader of 'A uno eodemque tempore B C' to refer the formula backwards and synchronize A and B.

#### IV. PREFECTS AND PROCONSULS

Chastagnol argued that the alleged cumulation of proconsulate and prefecture was an 'administrative nonsense', given the different rank of the posts. Giardina replied that this was too inflexible a view of the Roman administration, pointing out that the proconsul of Africa exercised a jurisdiction to some extent independent of the PPO of Illyricum, Italy and Africa.

<sup>11</sup> Cicero, *de domo* 102; *Pan. Lat.* xi. (3) 7. 1; Jerome, *Ep.* 59. 5.

This is true enough, but it does not follow that the PPO of Illyricum, Italy and Africa, who directly administered a vast enough territory already, would wish actually to hold the proconsulate of Africa himself as well. Although the proconsul might in theory defy the PPO and appeal directly to the Emperor, in practice no proconsul who wanted to make PPO himself one day was likely to do so. If a PPO wanted to ensure that he got his way inside the jurisdiction of the proconsul, rather than burden himself with the responsibility of the office itself, he would surely have followed the time-honoured procedure of filling it with a safe man, preferably (since he was a member of a large and ambitious family) a kinsman.

And this is surely just what Probus did. It is no coincidence that the proconsul of Africa during the first two years of Probus' prefecture bore the name Petronius Claudius. But not (of course) Claudius Petronius Probus himself. He was a kinsman, perhaps a younger brother. The moment Ausonius became PPO he too filled the proconsulate of Africa with kinsmen, first his son and then his son-in-law.<sup>12</sup> Not only was it a key strategic position; it was also one of the plum pieces of patronage at the PPO's disposal.

The case of the prefecture of Rome is another good illustration of the principle. This too was an important post not under the direct administrative control of the PPO, and being (unlike the proconsulate) of equal rank, it was occasionally held concurrently with the praetorian prefecture. The only certain examples are Ulpian Limenius, between 347 and 349, and Hermogenes, 349–50, in both cases surely PPO of Italy alone; the poet Cyrus was PPO of the East and prefect of Constantinople between 439 and 441. But the more natural and satisfactory solution for a PPO who wanted both to win co-operation from the city of Rome and to reward his kin was to control the appointment of the prefect. Thus Ausonius secured the appointment of his nephew Arborius (380), and Probus first his father-in-law Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius (368–70) and then another kinsman, Clodius Hermogenianus Caesarius (374). Nor can it be coincidence that Olybrius' son, another Olybrius, is attested as *consularis* of Tuscia in 370. And it is probably to some moment during Probus' prefecture that we should date the recently identified consular governorship of yet another kinsman, Anicius Claudius.<sup>13</sup>

Probus' blatant use of patronage was legendary,<sup>14</sup> and in the context of the age kinship rather than identity is both a more natural and a more satisfactory explanation of the similarity between the names of Probus and the proconsul Petronius Claudius.

The only circumstances under which the doubling of proconsulate and prefecture by Probus might have been conceivable is if he had first been appointed as proconsul and then promoted. The only remotely parallel career Giardina is able to cite is that of L. Aradius Valerius Proculus Populonium, proconsul of Africa c. 331–2, whose sphere of jurisdiction was extended while he was in office to all the other African provinces with prefectorial authority. Yet close though the parallel is in some respects, ultimately it works against Giardina. For two inscriptions carefully spell out his functions as follows (omitting the list of provinces where his authority ran): 'proconsuli provinciae Africae vice sacra iudicanti eidemque . . . perfuncto officio praefecturae praetorio' *CIL* VI. 1690 = *ILS* 1240 and VI. 1691). In effect Proculus was the first prefect of Africa, and from 333 on praetorian prefects of Africa were regularly appointed.

But even during this transitional period, there is no suggestion that Proculus actually held the office of prefect while still proconsul. Rather he was a proconsul performing the duties of a prefect, a quite different and doubtless not uncommon situation. To give an (inevitably inexact) modern analogy, it is easy to imagine circumstances in which a colonel might assume the responsibilities of a general or a general the command of a colonel. The first man would have the permanent rank of colonel and acting rank of general; the second would simply continue in the rank of general. This is not a question of 'inflexibility'. The higher automatically absorbs the lower rank. Since Probus undoubtedly held the rank of

<sup>12</sup> A. Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire* (1952), 87.

<sup>13</sup> Cameron, 'Anicius Claudius (*J. Cret.* IV. 322)', *ZPE* 57 (1984), 147–8.

<sup>14</sup> *Amm. Marc.* xxvii. 11. 2; cf. Claudian, *Pan. Ol. et Prob.* 45 f., and D. M. Novak, *Klio* 62 (1980), 482–4.

prefect, he could no more simultaneously hold the lower rank of proconsul than a general could simultaneously hold the rank of colonel.

Proculus seems not actually to have been promoted to the rank of prefect at the time. But what makes his case so directly relevant to the Probus/Claudius question is the fact that a few years later he seems to have decided that his service in Africa did after all retrospectively entitle him to the rank of prefect, and he is so styled in a later dedication from Rome (*CIL* VI. 1693 = *ILS* 1241):

Hic bis praefectus patriae [i.e. Rome], praefectus et idem  
hic Libyae, *idem* Libyae proconsul *et ante*.

With unusual precision for a verse dedication, it is made quite clear that Proculus was *first* (*et ante*) proconsul and *then* prefect. That is to say, the only governor in the history of Roman Africa who might, if he had chosen, have described himself as proconsul and prefect simultaneously, chose instead to allege, not quite accurately, that he had been promoted from proconsul to prefect. And this was long before the formal division of proconsuls and prefects between the two separate classes of *virī spectabiles* and *virī illustres*.<sup>15</sup> By Probus' day there would have been even less incentive for anyone promoted to an illustrious post choosing to hang on to the lower title.

But in the alleged case of Probus/Claudius we are not even in a position to assume promotion from the lower to the higher office. For Probus is securely attested in his prefecture by March 368; in fact his predecessor (Amm. Marc. xxvii. 11. 1) Rufinus is not attested in office after 367. But Petronius Claudius is not attested in his proconsulate until 1 December 368; and his predecessor was still in office on 9 June. So Probus had been prefect for at least six months before Claudius became proconsul. It seems to me impossible to accommodate this sequence to the Mazzarino-Giardina hypothesis. On the other hand, it fits the explanation suggested above very well. Probus waited for the first vacancy in the proconsulate and filled it with a kinsman.

More decisive still, it is clear from Ammianus, Ausonius and the subscriptions to laws addressed to Probus as PPO,<sup>16</sup> that he administered his prefecture more or less continuously from Sirmium during the two years of Claudius' proconsulate. It follows that he cannot have been simultaneously PPO and proconsul of Africa, if only because a provincial governor could only exercise his office *inside* his province. Even if it had been possible, there was simply no point in being proconsul of Africa and living near the Danube.

In the case of Probus and Claudius we can be more precise. Laws were addressed to Claudius as proconsul (and so presumably residing at his seat in Carthage) on 1. 12. 368 and 2. 2. 369 (*Cod. Theod.* xiv. 3. 12; xii. 12. 6); and to Probus as PPO at Sirmium on 7 and 19. 1. 369 (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 6. 15; xiii. 3. 7). Probus can hardly have made the trip from Carthage to Sirmium and back again so quickly. He is known to have made it once, but in his capacity as PPO, not proconsul; he is attested at Carthage as PPO on 1. 4. 369 (*Cod. Theod.* xiii. 1. 7),<sup>17</sup> though by 6. 6. 369 he was back again at Sirmium (vii. 23. 1). We also have three more laws addressed to Claudius, in July 369 and February and April 370. It passes belief that he was dashing to and fro between Sirmium and Carthage every few days.

According to Giardina, the different names borne by the two sets of laws addressed to Probus in his two capacities during this period merely reflect the different sources used by the compilers of the Code.<sup>18</sup> It is true that the files of the proconsul's office at Carthage were one of the major sources used by the compilers,<sup>19</sup> but even so Giardina's argument simply does not work.

First, because the addresses prefixed to laws—*ad Probum PPO* and the like—were put there by the sender, not the recipient. That is to say, laws were addressed to proconsuls

<sup>15</sup> For the growth of these classes, see A. Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine* (1960), 433; A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 1 (1964), 143.

<sup>16</sup> The sources are collected in *PLRE* 1. 737–8.

<sup>17</sup> I am inferring this from the fact the law was posted

at Carthage, but the main point is hardly affected even if Probus was not there in person.

<sup>18</sup> *Riv. di Fil.* 1983, 178.

<sup>19</sup> O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste* (1919), 10 f.

and prefects alike from the same central office, wherever the imperial court happened to be.

Secondly, there is that law addressed to Probus, *not* Claudius, as PPO posted at Carthage (*Cod. Theod.* XIII. 1. 7). It must have been preserved in the files of the proconsul's office. Clearly, then, Probus was not known as Claudius inside the province of Africa *proconsularis*.

More important, this law provides a concrete illustration of the way Probus dealt, as PPO, with the anomaly that the proconsul of Africa was not technically his direct subordinate. He simply ignored the technicality. Instead of confining himself to one of the six other African provinces where his authority ran, he set up his temporary headquarters in Carthage, and received and posted his laws there. Nor was he the only PPO so to act. *Cod. Theod.* XII. 1. 88 addressed to Syagrius while PPO was also posted at Carthage, on 9. 4. 382. More specific still is *Const. Sirm.* 12, addressed to the PPO Curtius in 407 and posted at Carthage on 5. 6. 408. The final clause of the law instructs Curtius to circulate it to 'the governors (*rectores*) of the provinces'. The only copy that has survived we owe to the diligence of the clerks at Carthage, the one that was officially posted there under his own authority by the proconsul Porphyrius, 'proposita Carthagine in foro sub programmate<sup>20</sup> Porphyrii proconsulis'.

In practice (it seems) the PPO paid little attention to the theoretical independence of the proconsul. Which is hardly surprising. The high prestige and anomalous status of the proconsul of Africa in the late fourth century was out of all proportion to his actual responsibilities and power, and to the shrunken territory he now administered.<sup>21</sup> Thus disappears the only reason there ever was for believing that Probus might covet the proconsulate in addition to the prefecture.

#### V. THE PROBLEM OF POLYONOMY

There remains the question of what Giardina calls the 'oscillation of diacritical name', the alleged variation Probus/Claudius. It should be noted that we are being asked to believe, not merely that Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus could be designated, in one-name contexts, either Probus or Claudius; but also that the very sequence of his names was not fixed, that in the latter case he could be designated Petronius Claudius. Are there parallels for such variation? 'On sait quelle fantaisie préside au Bas-Empire à l'utilisation des noms propres', wrote the author of a recent study of Macrobius.<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, I would submit that in the period *c.* 300 to 500 the use of proper names among the Roman aristocracy was governed by far stricter and more uniform rules than in the early Empire.

Giardina rightly observed that no comprehensive study of late Roman nomenclature exists. It would be presumptuous to suppose that this need could be filled in a couple of pages, but a few simple guide-lines may be of value.

To start with, due attention must be paid to the context. Obviously people are liable to be known by different names in domestic or literary contexts from those they bear in official documents. The writer on Macrobius was misled by the informal use of names in the urbane literary dialogue of the *Saturnalia*. For example, Caecina Albinus is normally Albinus but, for the sake of variety, occasionally Caecina ('tum Caecina', VI. 4. 1). Rufius Albinus is also usually Albinus, but occasionally Rufius ('adhuc dicente Rufio', III. 18. 1). Vettius Agorius Praetextatus is both Vettius and Praetextatus—and addressed as 'Agori' by his wife on his tombstone (*ILS* 1259). Nicomachus Flavianus is both Nicomachus and Flavianus; Q. Aurelius Symmachus is usually Symmachus, but never (it seems) just Aurelius, rather Q. Aurelius (e.g. I. 5. 17). Nonius Atticus, *cos.* 397, always Atticus in official contexts, is Nonius in a poem by a friend (*Ep. Bob.* 48. 6). I have noticed only one example of an affectation common in the early Empire but presumably no longer fashionable, the reversal of *nomen* and *cognomen*: Albinus Caecina (*Sat.* I. 7. 34). Naturally

<sup>20</sup> For other examples of this formulae, see Seeck, *Regesten*, 10.

<sup>21</sup> See Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I, 385-6.

<sup>22</sup> J. Flamant, *Macrobe et le néo-platonisme latin à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (*EPRO* 58, 1977), 92, with my review in *CP* 77 (1982), 378-80.



we cannot generalize from such purely literary variation. All these people are called by the same name, their last, in the Codes.

There is one other category of evidence that must also be set on one side, the use of *signa*. These often fanciful names were presumably intended for domestic rather than public use, though some were more widely used. For example, C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus *signo* Lampadius (PVR 365) and Q. Flavius Maesius Egnatius Lollianus *signo* Mavortius (PVR 342) appear as Lampadius and Mavortius respectively even in the history of Ammianus (Mavortius in Firmicus Maternus too). But both men are invariably Volusianus and Lollianus in official contexts (e.g. the Codes). The author of the treatise *de diis et mundo*, Julian's PPO Orientis, is known from inscriptions as Saturninius Secundus, but generally called by his *signum* Salutius; Ammianus once refers to him as Secundus Salutius. But in the addresses to laws he is invariably Secundus.<sup>23</sup>

Naturally, these *signa* can be a source of perplexity and error for the present-day prosopographer. For example, Volusianus *signo* Lampadius is known from no fewer than thirteen inscriptions,<sup>24</sup> not one of which mentions his *signum*. In fact, but for a combination of Ammianus' reference to a young man called Lollianus being 'son of the ex-prefect Lampadius' with our knowledge that Volusianus' wife was called Lolliana, we might never have identified the prefect Volusianus of the Codes and inscriptions with the prefect Lampadius of Ammianus and Zosimus. There are sure to be one or two cases where we have failed to make such identifications through lack of such a key. One case that must still be considered *sub iudice* is the PVR Sallustius/Aventius. Seck and Chastagnol saw just one man, Sallustius Aventius (with Aventius presumably a *signum*), PVR 383–4. But Vera more plausibly argues for two different men, with Aventius PVR in 383–4 and Sallustius in 385.<sup>25</sup>

None the less, it must be clearly recognized that the suggested variation between Probus and Claudius is of a quite different order. The two differentiating marks of a *signum* are, first, that when mentioned on a dedication, it is separated off from the rest of the text and put in the genitive. For example, a typical dedication to Lollianus *signo* Mavortius is set out as follows:

#### MAVORTII

Q. Flavio Maesio Egnatio Lolliano, c.v. . . . (ILS 1224a; 1224b; 1224c; 1225)

And second, *signa* are never used for the addressees of imperial laws. Yet the Claudius of the Capua dedication is not set off from the rest of the inscription in the genitive, and the proconsul Claudius is so addressed in six different laws.<sup>26</sup> Clearly Claudius cannot be a *signum*.

What other evidence is there for variations of names? Most men with three or four (or more) names tended (as in the early Empire) to be referred to by just two of them, usually though not invariably by the same two. For example, Symmachus refers to Anicius Auchenius Bassus (PVR 382–3) as both Anicius Bassus and Auchenius Bassus. Eight out of his nine inscriptions call him by all three; in the Codes (of course) he is invariably just Bassus. Or take again Volusianus *signo* Lampadius. Of his thirteen inscriptions, four give all four names; four more, either Caius or Ceionius Rufius Volusianus; and six give Rufius Volusianus. Of Probus' eighteen inscriptions eight call him just Petronius Probus, only three giving Sextus. It is not, therefore, particularly surprising that only the Capua stone offers Claudius, though there is obviously some reason to believe that this was not a name he was particularly fond of.

But there were some contexts—most obviously (in our documentation) the addresses of imperial laws—in which it was necessary to single out, not two names, but one, the so-called diacritical name. In all but a handful of cases, imperial laws bear addresses like 'ad

<sup>23</sup> O. Seck, *Die Briefe des Libanius* (1906), 265–6, gives a fuller collection of evidence than *PLRE* I. 814.

<sup>24</sup> All set out in Chastagnol, *Fastes* 164–9, not counting for this purpose the Greek inscription *IG* XIV

1019 = *CIL* VI. 30966 where he is called Lampadius alone.

<sup>25</sup> *SDHI* 44 (1978), 47–54.

<sup>26</sup> *PLRE* I. 208, missing however *CJ* XI. 75. 2.

Probum PPO, ad Claudium proconsulem Africae'. In the vast majority of cases (at least 95 per cent) this was the last name. Very occasionally, the penultimate was used to avoid confusion with a father or brother. For example, Caecina Decius Albinus (PVR 402), son of Publilius Caecionius Caecina Albinus, was always known as Decius, in legal as well as literary sources. Decius Marius Venantius Basilius, *cos.* 484, was known as Venantius, evidently to distinguish him from his older brother, Caecina Decius Maximus Basilius, *cos.* 480—not to mention his father, Caecina Decius Basilius, *cos.* 463. More unusually, Claudius Hermogenianus Caesarius (PVR 374) was known as Claudius (so the Codes, as well as Ammianus). But even in these variations from the norm, the name used was always the same.

Are there any exceptions to the rule? Mazzarino cites the case of Macrobius; Giardina adds the 'typical case' of the agricultural writer Palladius. A particularly unfortunate pair of examples.

According to the latest study of Palladius,

l'auteur de l'*Opus agriculturae* s'appelait, selon tous nos manuscrits, Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, et à ses *tria nomina* s'ajoutait, conformément à l'habitude courante depuis l'époque des Antonins, le 'sobriquet' de Palladius, par lequel les modernes ont coutume de le désigner.<sup>27</sup>

This is a wanton distortion of the facts. The distinction between the old *tria nomina* had by now almost entirely disappeared. It is true that this could not easily be learned from the grammarians of late antiquity, who carry on talking about the importance of distinguishing between *praenomen*, *nomen*, *cognomen*, and *agnomen*, quoting the same hoary examples (e.g. P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus).<sup>28</sup> But one of them, the garrulous early-fifth-century African Pompeius, gives the whole game away in one frank aside:

hoc recessit ab usu penitus: non possumus dicere hodie, 'quod tibi cognomen est?' ridemur, si hoc dixerimus. tamen secundum artem . . .<sup>29</sup>

You would have been laughed at if you asked a man which was his *cognomen*! The fame of Q. Aurelius Symmachus tends to make us overlook how exceptionally rare the use of the *praenomen* had become, even in the oldest families. Nor is there any way of telling from its place in the sequence which was the family name. For example, Symmachus (in origin obviously a *cognomen*) rather than Aurelius (often abbreviated to Aur.) was Symmachus' family name, as shown by the ivory diptych issued jointly by the families of Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus with the inscription SYMMACHORVM NICOMACHORVM. Or take the case of the great fifth-century house we know from contemporary references to have been called the Decii. The names of the three brothers who held the consulship in 480, 484 and 486 were: Caecina Decius Maximus Basilius, Decius Marius Venantius Basilius, and Caecina Mavortius Basilius Decius. The family name can apparently come first, last or in the middle indifferently. In the case of the great fourth-century house of the Anicii, the name Anicius itself was usually placed first, and there are other examples of family names so placed (e.g. Rufius, Macrobius).

To return to Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, there is nothing whatever to mark Palladius off from the other names. There are some forty Palladii in *PLRE* I–II, none of them seemingly *signa*. In fact Palladius may actually be the family name.<sup>30</sup> In conformity with standard usage, the man we now mistakenly call Palladius was known to contemporaries by his last name, as the testimony of Cassiodorus proves. When and why he came to be called Palladius is a question for medievalists.<sup>31</sup> But there is certainly no ancient evidence, and evidence would be needed to support a hypothesis so contrary to

<sup>27</sup> R. Martin, *Palladius, Traité d'agriculture* I (livres i et ii) (1976), p. vii.

<sup>28</sup> The relevant passages from the grammarians are conveniently assembled in B. Doer, *Die römische Namengebung* (1937), 21; 39; 46; 68–9.

<sup>29</sup> *Gramm. Latini* v. 140. 35 Keil.

<sup>30</sup> The well-known Gallic family of the Palladii: see *PLRE* II, nos. 4 and 13–15.

<sup>31</sup> R. H. Rodger's account in *CTC* 3 (1976), 195–9, not being aware of the issue, gives less help than it might.

usage. It is high time to abandon the frivolous game of identifying this Aemilianus with friends of Symmachus and Rutilius Namatianus called Palladius.

The writer we similarly miscall Macrobius—in full Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius—was likewise not so known till medieval times. The ancient evidence for Theodosius is abundant and unequivocal.<sup>32</sup> Neither writer can be held an example of ‘oscillation of diacritical name’. No more can the writer we miscall Cassiodorus, Senator to his contemporaries, until that name was misunderstood by later ages as a title.

In fact it is no coincidence that most of the apparent or alleged cases of ‘oscillation’ are writers, who have been called in ignorance by the wrong (usually first) name by some early editor or translator, unfamiliar with the principles of late Roman nomenclature. For example, Martianus Minneius Felix Capella (as the MSS of his *de Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* style him), known as Felix Capella to Fulgentius and Cassiodorus—and himself. It is Gregory of Tours (*HF* x. 31), it seems, who started the medieval and modern fashion of calling him Martianus. Another example is the astrological writer and later Christian polemicist Julius Firmicus Maternus *junior* (as he is styled in MSS). For no good reason he has generally been called Firmicus in modern times. In this case there are no ancient testimonia, but there is no reason to believe that his diacritical was anything but Maternus.

Then there is the historian Ammianus Marcellinus. There is one letter of Libanius indisputably addressed to Ammianus (as we generally call him today)—styling him (as we might have expected) simply Marcellinus. But modern scholars have often been tempted to identify him with one or more of the Ammiani mentioned by Libanius (for example, the soldier Ammianus of 360 in *Ep.* 233): W. Ensslin, for example, who referred to Seeck for examples of ‘such variation in nomenclature’.<sup>33</sup> Seeck had quoted just three examples, all accounted for in the preceding pages: Sallustius/Aventius (probably two different men); and two straightforward cases of men known in formal and informal contexts by diacritical and *signum* respectively: Secundus *signo* Salutius and Volusianus *signo* Lampadius. Libanius’ Ammiani must be sharply distinguished from the historian.<sup>34</sup>

No different is the case of the Gallic poet Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, following the sequence of names given in the most reliable MS.<sup>35</sup> Since he says, in 417, that he has been *magister officiorum* (*De reditu* I. 563–4), and *Cod. Theod.* VI. 27. 15 attests a Namatius in this office in 412, the probability is that we should correct Namatius to Namatianus. If so, then his diacritical was Namatianus, not Rutilius, as he has been generally known since the Renaissance.

At I. 579 f. the poet gives a full account of the career of his father Lachanius, who began as *consularis* of Tuscia and Umbria and ended as a prefect. Since no Lachanius is attested in either of these (or any other) offices, it has usually been assumed that Lachanius was a *signum* and that the man was officially known by the ‘family name’ Claudius.<sup>36</sup> As a consequence, editors (followed by *PLRE*) routinely refer to Claudius, *consularis* of Tuscia and Umbria in 389, and Claudius, the *praefectus urbi* of 396, as possible identifications. But quite apart from the fact that the latter was prefect of Constantinople at a time when it is most improbable that a westerner would hold the post, there is no good reason to believe that the family name was Claudius. Claudius was an extremely common name in the fourth-century aristocracy, borne (to quote only familiar examples) by both Petronius Probus and his kinsman Hermogenianus Caesarius, in neither case as a family name. Secondly, we have already seen that family names (which are not always easy to identify by the fourth century) are by no means normally used as diacriticals. In particular, a glance at the numerous Claudii in *PLRE* I will show that, while common enough as a family name, it is almost never a diacritical. In the circumstances, even to state (with the latest editor)<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See *JRS* 56 (1966), 25 f., developing a suggestion of Mazarino, *Rend. Ist. Lombardo* 71 (1938), 255 f.; cf. too *CP* (1982), 379–80. On the MS tradition of Macrobius see now B. C. Barker-Benfield in *Texts and Transmissions: a survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (1983), 222–32.

<sup>33</sup> *Zur Geschichtsschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Klio Beiheft* 16 (1923), 4–5; cf. O. Seeck, *Regesten*, 94.

<sup>34</sup> Note that in his *Briefe des Libanius* (1906), 58,

Seeck himself sensibly rejected such identifications with the historian, on the ground that ‘Libanius ihn Marcellinus nennt’. This is not to exclude the possibility that one of the Antiochene Ammiani was related to the historian.

<sup>35</sup> See E. Doblhofer’s edition, I (1972), 22–3; M. Ferrari, *IMU* 16 (1973), 1–41; M. D. Reeve, in *Texts and Transmissions*, 340.

<sup>36</sup> So even *PLRE* I. 491.

<sup>37</sup> Doblhofer, I, 24 n. 39.

that the identification with Claudius, the *consularis Tusciae et Umbriae*, 'must remain open' goes too far. There is no reason to believe that Lachanius bore the name Claudius at all,<sup>38</sup> still less that it was his diacritical. It is true that Lachanius, being a name of Greek origin ending in -ius, has the two characteristics of a typical *signum*. But fourth-century aristocrats were increasingly adopting such fancy formations for their regular names too.<sup>39</sup> For example, in the early fourth century we find Asterius as a *signum* among the Turcii; by the close of the century it had been upgraded to a *nomen*—indeed it became a standard family diacritical.<sup>40</sup> In default of any evidence to the contrary, there seems no sufficient reason to doubt that Lachanius was the diacritical *nomen* of Rutilius' father.

A slightly less clear-cut case is the Gallic rhetor Latinus Pacatus Drepanius. As might have been expected, he is Drepanius in the Codes, and in Sidonius. But there are three letters of Symmachus addressed to someone called Pacatus, 'quasi sicuramente' the rhetor, according to S. Roda, following such predecessors as *PLRE* and Seeck. But nothing in these three routine epistles (VIII. 12; IX. 61; 64) lends any positive support to the identification, and there are other candidates no less likely: e.g. Claudius Iulius Pacatus *v.c.*, *consularis* of Campania.<sup>41</sup>

Ausonius addresses the rhetor several times as both Pacatus and Drepanius, but this is in poems, where the four short syllables of Drepanius fit the metre less well. We may contrast the prose titles to the *Eclogarum liber*, 'Ausonius Drepanio filio'; and to the *Ludus septem sapientium*, 'Ausonius consul Drepanio proconsuli salutem'. And even if the less well-balanced heading to the *Technopaegnon*, 'Ausonius Pacato proconsuli', is correctly preserved, even this would hardly amount to evidence of 'oscillation' in public contexts.<sup>42</sup> In the circumstances, there is little to be said for the identification of Drepanius with an undatable anti-Christian writer known simply as Pacatus.<sup>43</sup>

Another example from a poem, proving nothing, is Turcius Apronianus, called by both names in Paulinus of Nola, *carmen* XXI (60 and 210). But then there is the case of Rufius Turcius Apronianus *v.c.* from an undated seat in the Colosseum (*CIL* VI. 32103). Against the traditional identification with Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius, *cos.* 494, there is not merely the absence of the Asterius (the diacritical name by which the consul was known in all consular documents), but also the different sequence of Turcius and Rufius.<sup>44</sup> Surely two different men (all known members of this family bear the same few names in different sequences).<sup>45</sup> Then there is Nonius Atticus 'Maximus', *cos.* 397. The evidence quoted in *PLRE* (I. 586) suggests that he was called both Atticus and Maximus. But the truth is that the Maximus should be altogether stricken from the record; it rests on a mistaken inference from one bungled consular inscription.<sup>46</sup>

If the principles here outlined were better understood, we should have fewer of the wild conjectural identifications that continue to be both published and taken seriously. To take a recent example, in support of his (already fragile) hypothesis that the builder of the splendid Sicilian villa of Piazza Armerina was Valerius Proculus *signo* Populonium, *cos.* 340, A. Carandini identifies him with the 'Balerius comes' whose wife Adelfia was buried in a Christian sarcophagus at Syracuse (*ILCV* 174):<sup>47</sup> 'potrebbe facilmente essere

<sup>38</sup> Rather than be swept off our feet by the coincidence that a Claudius is attested in one of the posts Lachanius is known to have held, we should rather pause to reflect on the disturbing fact that only one other holder of this office, normally an annual appointment (see n. 83), is attested in the 90 years between 370 and 459 (see the fasti in *PLRE* I, p. 1094 and II, p. 1279)! If Lachanius' career were known to us (like many others) from one inscription rather than one well-known poem, scholars would be less anxious to remedy the lack of confirmation from other sources. Only one of the posts held by Rutilius himself (which must have included at least one junior post in addition to *mag. off.* and PVR) is independently attested—and that by only one law in a corrupt form.

<sup>39</sup> G. (W.) Schulze, *Graeca Latina* (1901) = *Orthographica et Graeca Latina* (reprint 1958), 95 f.

<sup>40</sup> See *AJA* 89 (1985), 141–5.

<sup>41</sup> See *PLRE* I. 656.

<sup>42</sup> In the heading to the *Ludus* Ausonius as consul balances Drepanius as proconsul; in the heading to *Ecl.*, there are no titles on either side.

<sup>43</sup> And yet P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources* (1969), 226 n. 10, emphatically rejected the linguistic arguments brought against the identification by W. A. Baehrens, *Hermes* 56 (1921), 443–5.

<sup>44</sup> Further discussed by Alan Cameron and Diane Schauer, *JRS* 72 (1982), 145.

<sup>45</sup> See the stemma of the family as reconstructed in *AJA* 1985, 145.

<sup>46</sup> See *Epigraphica* 1985.

<sup>47</sup> A. Carandini, A. Ricci, M. de Vos, *Filosofiana: La Villa di Piazza Armerina* (1982); a possibility already taken seriously by L. Cracco Ruggini, 'La Sicilia tra Roma e Bisanzio', in *Storia della Sicilia* III (1980), 68 n. 57. See now below, 66–8.

identificato', he casually writes. Not so easily. In fact it is inconceivable that a man who had held three prefectures and a consulship under the name Proculus (Populonium to his intimates) should have been buried under the name Valerius and the humble rank of *comes*. It is high time that some discipline was imposed on such frivolous guesswork.<sup>48</sup>

The two closest examples I have been able to find of genuine 'oscillation' (of a sort) are the Greek Strategius Musonianus, whose distinguished career under Constantine and Constantius II was crowned with the prefecture of the East from 354 to 358; and the Roman aristocrat Aurelius Valerius Symmachus Tullianus (if that was really his name), *cos.* 330. Strategius was a man bilingual in Greek and Latin who assisted Constantine in the theological researches of his later years. In recognition of these literary talents, Constantine himself dubbed Strategius 'Musonianus' (Amm. Marc. xv. 13. 2). This origin of the name seems to be confirmed by an allusion in Himerius, *Or.* LXII to the man who was the 'eponym' of the Muses. His Greek friends, such as Libanius, continued to call him Strategius, but in most other sources, including imperial laws, he appears as Musonianus.<sup>49</sup>

The case of Symmachus is less clear-cut. One Roman inscription and three papyri from early in the year give the consul's name as (Valerius) Tullianus, with no mention of Symmachus; all later consular documents (papyri, inscriptions, fasti) give (Valerius) Symmachus, with no mention of Tullianus. Here again one obvious explanation is that we are dealing with two different men, Symmachus succeeding a disgraced Tullianus. But for various reasons (the shared Valerius; a eulogy of Tullianus the consul in Firmicus Maternus a few years later), it seems more likely that we are dealing with one man known by both names. The solution is surely that Tullianus, like Musonianus, was neither a regular given name, nor a *signum*, but a literary sobriquet, what the grammarians call an *agnomen*.<sup>50</sup> Whether or not this was still the current designation, we may accept their definition, a name acquired 'ex aliqua ratione aut virtute'.<sup>51</sup> It is surely no coincidence that the only other datable examples of the name Tullianus in late antique Rome are the granddaughter and great-granddaughter of the famous mid-fourth-century Ciceronian scholar Marius Victorinus.<sup>52</sup> The consul of 330, I suggest, like his son, grandson (*cos.* 391) and great-great-great-grandson (*cos.* 485), was a celebrated orator. He may well have been generally known as Tullianus, though it is understandable that, as the first consul in the family, he should have thought it more appropriate for the family name to appear on the fasti. In the Codes he is always Symmachus.

Symmachus and Strategius provide partial examples of designation by two names—but only partial. Such honorific *agnomina* are clearly on a different footing from either regular family names or *signa*. Claudius and Probus are undoubtedly both regular names.

If Mazzarino and Giardina were right, Petronius Probus would be (to the best of my knowledge) the *only* example of a Roman aristocrat known by two different, genuine, diacritical names in official contexts. Of course, if there were no doubts about the synchronization of proconsulate and prefecture, then we should just have to accept this unique example of 'oscillation'. But even then there would be two further objections from nomenclature to be met.

First, even in the few securely documented cases where the diacritical name is other than the last, there is never any alteration of sequence when the names are written out in full. If there were (of course), then the diacritical name could never be anything but last. Take again the case of Claudius Hermogenianus Caesarius. There is no doubt that Claudius was his diacritical name, but it still appears first in his full style (*CIL* vi. 499 = *ILS* 4147). The full style of the man who was indisputably inscribed in all consular fasti (*s.a.* 484) as Venantius remained Decius Marius Venantius Basilius, as three

<sup>48</sup> D. Vera, *Opus* 2 (1983), 583–4 could have been more emphatic in his rejection of this conjecture.

<sup>49</sup> O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius* (1906), 282–4; *PLRE* 1, 611–12.

<sup>50</sup> See the texts cited by B. Doer, *Die römische Namengebung*, 68–73.

<sup>51</sup> Another case (it would appear), though his

'agnomen' was not formed in the same way, is the famous calligrapher Furius Dionysius Filocalus (information in A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana* (1942), 21–35).

<sup>52</sup> *ILCV* 104, with P. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses œuvres* (1971), 16–17.

dedications erected during his consular year in the Colosseum conspicuously proclaim (*CIL* VI. 32094 a, b, c).

That is to say, while it is remotely possible that Claudius Petronius Probus could be identified with a proconsul known simply as Claudius, it is impossible that he could be identified with a proconsul who on four separate inscriptions is uniformly styled Petronius Claudius.<sup>53</sup> That would violate not one but two of the principles here established. There would be no parallel whatever for such a rearrangement of a man's names.

Secondly, what of the omission here of the most famous of Probus' names: Probus? Giardina suggests that the reason Probus was known, as proconsul, by his 'secondary diacritical' Claudius, was to avoid confusion with an earlier proconsul of Africa called Probus (in 358).<sup>54</sup> At first glance this might seem logical enough, even plausible. But it will not survive close scrutiny. It was not while he was acting in his official capacity that the current proconsul was liable to be confused with a predecessor. Laws that arrived on the proconsul's desk addressed 'ad Probum proconsulem Africae' were not liable to be confused with laws sent ten years earlier to a homonym. Nor did it much matter if they were. What *did* matter was that a man should not lose the credit for his euergetism, self-advertising benefactions paid for out of his own pocket. How could a man ensure that the credit for his benefactions did not go to a homonym? Certainly not by changing his name. On the contrary, it was all the more essential to use one's fullest style, adding a *signum* or a *iunior* if confronted with an exact or even near homonym (so, for example, Caecina Decius Albinus, confronted by a province glittering with the benefactions of his nearly homonymous father).<sup>55</sup> The last thing an overwhelmingly ambitious man like Petronius Probus is likely to have done in such a situation is rearrange his names and drop the one he was best known by.

Three of the four inscriptions that attest Petronius Claudius as proconsul of Africa date his tenure to the reign of Valentinian, Valens and Gratian (367–75). He must, therefore, be the proconsul Claudius attested by laws between 368 and 370—and so *not* Sex. Claudius Petronius Probus.

When was Probus really proconsul of Africa? There seems no reason to question the date of *Cod. Theod.* XI. 36. 13, addressed 'ad Probum proconsulem Africae' on 23 June 358, issued at Sirmium on a day Constantian is known to have been at Sirmium.<sup>56</sup> That he was proconsul (as we should expect) under the name Petronius Probus is proved by an unfortunately illiterate and damaged inscription (misquoted by Giardina as referring to Petronius Claudius)<sup>57</sup> from Lares (modern Lorbus) in Africa *proconsularis* (*CIL* VIII. 1783):

]Petronio P(ro)bo<sup>58</sup> v.c. pro[consuli  
]e vicentibus decoratu[  
]publices insigni conspectu[

To judge from the location and what survives of the text, this refers to routine building activity by a proconsul in office. It is, therefore, by at least a dozen years the earliest extant epigraphic commemoration of Petronius Probus. Giardina had assumed that the Capua dedication was the earliest, one of the last occasions on which Probus employed the 'secondary diacritical' that he soon 'abbandonò (o mise in secondo piano)' (p. 178). There is probably room for a *Claudio* before the *Petronio* here too, but, supported as it is by *Cod. Theod.* XI. 36. 13, in general the Lares stone confirms that, from first to last, in Africa as elsewhere, Petronius Probus was publicly known by those two names in that order.

<sup>53</sup> *ILS* 5557; *ILT* 1192; *Ann. Epigr.* 1955, 52; 1972, 873.

<sup>54</sup> In fact, as we shall see, Petronius Probus himself.

<sup>55</sup> See my discussion in *ZPE* 56 (1984), 167.

<sup>56</sup> Seeck, *Regesten*, 205.

<sup>57</sup> *Riv. di Fil.* 1983, 176.

<sup>58</sup> The stone itself gives the name in the nonsensical form PACIBO. Mommsen was surely correct to suppose that the stonecutter misread his copy. A can often look like R in capital script, and a badly formed O could be misread as CI. In what should be *vigentibus* in l. 2 the man clearly misread a G as a C.

So we do not after all learn anything much from the new inscription. We already knew that Probus was consul while PPO, and it is small gain to learn that he was also called Claudius. There seems to be little significance in the fact that this name appears on only one inscription, especially since it is not the earliest. It was presumably a name he did not care for, one that did not advertise any useful connection.<sup>59</sup>

But there is one important (if negative) gain. The new inscription cannot be used as a basis for playing fast and loose with the rules of late Roman nomenclature. Exceptions there may be to these rules, especially at the lower levels of society. But until a well-documented example has been produced, identifications that presuppose simultaneous or even sequential use of two diacriticals are not to be lightly proposed.

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#### APPENDIX. PROBUS' PREFECTURES

Posthumous dedications by his family make it clear that Probus held four praetorian prefectures, no more and no less.

*praefecto praetorio quater* (CIL vi. 1752 and 1753 = ILS 1267 and 1268);

*bis gemina populos praefectus sede gubernans* (CIL vi. 1756, B 7);

*praefectus quarto* (ibid., A 5);

[*praefecto*] *praetorio qua(ter)* (*Ann. Epigr.* 1934, 160).

We may, therefore, ignore a recent attempt to give him six,<sup>60</sup> though there is in fact evidence of one sort or another for six prefectures, with dates and regions as follows:

- (1) 364 (Illyricum)
- (2) 366 (Gaul)
- (3) 368–75 (Illyricum, Italy and Africa)
- (4) 380 (Gaul and Italy)
- (5) 383–4 (Illyricum, Italy and Africa)
- (6) 387 (Illyricum, Italy).

Most of what needed to be said was said already by A. H. M. Jones in 1964:<sup>61</sup> it is (4) and (6) that have to be eliminated. But J. R. Palanque<sup>62</sup> and now S. Mazzarino<sup>63</sup> have argued strongly against (1) and (2). Jones's view was enshrined in *PLRE* (unfortunately without discussion of alternatives), and briefly restated by D. M. Novak.<sup>64</sup> But the Palanque-Mazzarino reconstruction was taken for granted by Giardina, and is enshrined both in the new edition of Piganiol<sup>65</sup> and in the other standard prosopography of the age, by R. von Haehling.<sup>66</sup> In view of the new issues raised by the Capua inscription, a fortified refinement of Jones's reconstruction will not be superfluous.

We may begin with what might seem the strongest argument against (1) and (2)—further strengthened since Palanque's day. The Roman inscription (ILS 1265) quoted above gives Probus' *cursus* in 378 as: *proc. Africae, PPO per Illyricum Italiam et Africam, consuli ordinario*. To this we must now add the Capua *cursus* (ignoring the synchronizing formula): *proc. Africae, PPO, consuli*. Both inscriptions might seem to imply only one tenure of the prefecture, begun before Probus' consulate in 371; that is to say, the tenure of 368–75, which would be his first. And there is also a dedication from Gortyn, honouring Probus as ἀπὸ ὑπάτων ἑπαρχὸν τοῦ πραιτωρίου (*I. Cret.* iv. 312). Here the implication is that Probus was still in office as prefect after his consulate; once again, clearly the tenure of 368 to 375, with no indication of previous tenure.

<sup>59</sup> If Petronius Claudius the proconsul was in fact the younger brother of Petronius Probus, we might guess that the Claudius came from their mother's family—a connection of no interest to Probus once he had contracted his own match with the principal heiress of the Anicii. He did not pass the name on to any of his three sons, whose names are known in full.

<sup>60</sup> M. T. W. Arnheim, *The Senatorial Aristocracy of the Later Roman Empire* (1972), 196–7.

<sup>61</sup> 'Collegiate Prefectures', *JRS* 54 (1964), 78–89 = *The Roman Economy* (1974), at 387–91.

<sup>62</sup> *Essai sur la préfecture du prétoire du Bas-Empire* (1933), 109–18.

<sup>63</sup> 'Sulla carriera prefettizia di Sex. Petronius Probus', *Helikon* 7 (1967), 414 f. = *Antico, tardoantico ed era costantiniana*, 328–33.

<sup>64</sup> 'Anicianae domus culmen, nobilitatis culmen', *Klio* 62 (1980), at 475–80.

<sup>65</sup> *L'Empire chrétien*<sup>2</sup> (1972), 269 n. 2; Giardina, *MEFRA* 95 (1983), 268–72.

<sup>66</sup> *Die Religionzugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des Römischen Reiches seit Constantins I. Alleinherrschaft bis zum Ende der Theodosian. Dynastie* (1978), 297.

But the argument from silence has little force, as may be clearly and simply illustrated by a single case where we happen to have rather full documentation. Thanks to the vanity so memorably described by Ammianus (xxvii. 3. 7), Rome is full of dedications from the urban prefecture of Volusianus *signo* Lampadius (365).<sup>67</sup> Volusianus had been (like Probus) praetorian prefect of Gaul ten years earlier,<sup>68</sup> but out of eight dedications, only three refer to this prefecture. The other five style him simply 'praefectus urbi iterum vice sacra iudicans', where the *iterum* implies an earlier post with appellate jurisdiction, but without specifying that it was the illustrious post of praetorian prefect rather than (as might have been expected with a Roman aristocrat) the *spectabilis* post of proconsul of Africa. As it happens the Gallic prefecture is expressly mentioned by Ammianus (xv. 5. 4), but if we had only the five latter inscriptions, the fairly scanty legal evidence would no doubt have been questioned on the basis of the same argument from silence. In fact a number of urban prefects style themselves just 'praefectus urbi iterum s. v. iudicans' on routine dedications. Another good example is Volusianus' homonymous grandson, PVR 417-18. Two Roman dedications dating from his prefecture (*CIL* vi. 1661; 1194) mention neither his proconsulate of Africa nor even his previous tenure of the illustrious post of *quaestor sacri palatii*.

There would be nothing surprising in three out of the four dedications dating from or soon after Probus' third prefecture not mentioning the earlier two. On any hypothesis all three inscriptions give a very abbreviated *cursus*, the last not even mentioning the proconsulate of Africa. They were not bound to include what we shall see were two brief tenures of the more circumscribed prefectures of Illyricum and Gaul. But there is another inscription that does.

It is extraordinary how little close attention has been paid to the famous Verona inscription, *ILS* 1266, which must be the most systematically misunderstood document of its kind:

Petronio Probo v.c. totius admirationis viro, procons. Africae, praef. praetorio Illyrici, praef. praet. Galliar. II, praef. praet. Italiae atque Africae III, cons. ordinario . . .

It was Seeck who launched the unfortunate notion that these prefectures are not being listed in chronological order, but grouped in geographical areas,<sup>69</sup> the numbers (allegedly) indicating how often Probus governed each area. This assumption has haunted the literature ever since. I quote from the account in Mazzarino:<sup>70</sup> '*Evidentemente, l'iscrizione di Verona ripartisce le prefetture di Probo per grandi unità territoriali . . .*' But in order to save his hypothesis, like Seeck before him,<sup>71</sup> he was obliged to do violence to the text of the inscription by giving more weight to the incompetent early transcription of Ferrarino, who (together with a number of other careless errors) gave IIII for the obviously preferable III preserved by Sirmond.<sup>72</sup> With IIII for III, we would have one prefecture in Illyricum, two in Gaul, and *four* in Italy and Africa. It might have seemed that this would result in an unwelcome total of six or (with IIII) seven prefectures in all. But we are then told that since some overlapped (e.g. that of Illyricum with Italy and Africa), the total can be reduced to the required four after all.

It is only one of the objections to so bizarre a form of *cursus* that it is entirely without epigraphic parallel. More serious still, what possible purpose could it serve? There were two recognized ways of dealing with multiple tenures of an office like the prefecture on *cursus* inscriptions. One, the commonest, was to list them all separately in sequence with iteration numbers. The other, far rarer, was to record the total number of tenures together, with or without a summary of the details. For example, the full *cursus* of the future western emperor Petronius Maximus would have run (omitting details): 'PVR, PVR II, PPO, cos. ord., PPO II, cos. ord II'. Instead of this, *CIL* vi. 1197 gives the abbreviated style: 'IIII praefectus et bis consul ord.' The imprecise 'praefectus' alone, because the total of four comprised two urban

<sup>67</sup> Chastagnol, *Fastes*, 164-9.

<sup>68</sup> *PLRE* 1. 979.

<sup>69</sup> 'Die Reichspräefektur des vierten Jahrhunderts', *Rhein. Museum* 1914, 25.

<sup>70</sup> *Antico* . . ., 330; see too his full, earlier discussion in *Stilicone* (1942), 8-22, a masterpiece of misplaced erudition and ingenuity.

<sup>71</sup> On p. xcix of his edition of Symmachus, Seeck postulated a massive double 'error lapicidae'.

<sup>72</sup> The original is lost, but in addition to Ferrarino we have the more accurate and evidently independent transcription of Sirmond (see Mommsen's commentary on *CIL* v. 3344; Mazzarino refers to Dessau's ambiguous comment (on *ILS* 1266) that the inscription was

'fortasse non plus semel descripta saec. xv', but this was surely not intended to imply that Sirmond depended on Ferrarino, for Dessau prints Sirmond's text throughout). Mazzarino misapplies here the criterion of *lectio difficilior*. The essential point is that virtually all Ferrarino's other divergences from Sirmond are errors, so obviously so that Dessau did not even bother to report them in his edition. E.g. (Sirmond first): 6, [Illyrici] *Illyici*; 7/8, [praef. praet. Galliar.] *prae. et praefec.] Galliar.*; 14, [eruditissimo] *-imum*; 18, [cons.] *cons.* Ferrarino also abbreviates (e.g. *atq., omnib.*) where Sirmond writes out the text in full. The IIII must surely be treated as the merest slip.



and two praetorian prefectures. Such a summary style befitted the great, whose achievements did not need to be spelled out in full.

So it was with Probus. For example, the two Roman dedications by his sons (*ILS* 1267–8):

praefecto praetorio quater Italiae  
Illyrici Africae Galliarum.

The essential point can be taken in at a glance: four prefectures over one or more of the areas listed. For the purposes of these two dedications the exact sphere of each individual prefecture did not need to be specified; the emphasis falls on their number.

Consider again now the Verona inscription. What would be the point in this alleged grouping by areas? Here nothing could be taken in at a glance; neither the total number of prefectures nor the area of any individual prefecture. Only someone who *already* knew both how many prefectures and which areas would be able to decipher so unhelpful an arrangement, a *cursus* neither full nor abbreviated, but simply confused.

We need only observe that the numerals appear in rising sequence, and the conclusion is inescapable that they are after all exactly what they appear to be, simple iteration numbers, enumerating the three prefectures Probus had held up to the date of the dedication. But there is one further conclusion that, though obvious enough, and drawn long ago by Mommsen,<sup>73</sup> has been generally ignored since, and stands in urgent need of emphatic restatement.

All three prefectures are listed *after* the proconsulate and *before* the consulate. Now one of the basic principles of the *cursus* inscription, from the Republic down to the last days of the Empire, was to list offices *in chronological sequence*. It follows that all three prefectures *followed* Probus' proconsulate (of 358) and *preceded* his consulate of 371. The only way to avoid this inference is to suppose that the inscription was carelessly drafted. Yet it is by far the most detailed and to all appearances most meticulously drafted of all the eighteen extant Probus inscriptions. The most solid and specific of reasons would be needed to impugn this natural implication of the Verona *cursus*.

The more so in that it is corroborated down to the last detail by the legal evidence for prefectures nos. (1) and (2) that Palanque and his followers have so cavalierly swept aside. The evidence for the Gallic prefecture of 366, though sparse, is particularly solid. *Cod. Theod.* xi. 1. 15, 'ad Probum PP', was issued by Valentinian at Rheims on 19 May 366. Valentinian is known to have been at Rheims on that very day,<sup>74</sup> and there is a clear gap in the fasti of the Gallic prefecture between April 366 and June 367.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, there is *Cod. Just.* vii. 38. 1, a law which has unfortunately lost its consular date but was issued in the name of Valentinian and Valens (i.e. between 364 and 368), and is expressly addressed 'ad Probum PP. Galliarum'. Since (*pace* Seeck and Palanque<sup>76</sup>) there is no other occasion on which Probus can plausibly be assigned a Gallic prefecture, there is no other prefecture of his for this law to have got transferred from. Supported as it is by both the text and the sequence of the Verona *cursus*, the combined evidence of these two laws should never have been doubted.

The Illyrican prefecture of the Verona *cursus* is attested by only one law, *Cod. Theod.* i. 29. 1, 'ad Probum PPO', of 27 April 364. But the law does directly concern the administration of Illyricum, and no easy or obvious error can be invoked to impugn its consular date (the only consulate of Jovian and his son Varronian). Mamertinus was PPO from 22. 2. 362 to 26. 4. 365, 'continuously in Italy and Africa; interrupted by Probus in Illyricum' (*PLRE* i. 1050). Jones suggests that Probus was appointed by Julian or Jovian and 'dismissed before the beginning of 365, when Mamertinus' prefecture included Illyricum as well as Italy.<sup>77</sup>

These Gallic and Illyrican prefectures are perfectly sound postulates in themselves and directly supported by the Verona *cursus*. The only possible objection<sup>78</sup> is the argument from

<sup>73</sup> In his note to *Cod. Theod.* xi. 1. 15 (p. 574).

<sup>74</sup> Seeck, *Regesten*, 228.

<sup>75</sup> Jones, *Roman Economy*, 393.

<sup>76</sup> See Palanque, *Essai*, 115–16.

<sup>77</sup> *Roman Economy*, 391, citing Amm. Marc. xxvi 5. 5, 'Italiam vero cum Africa et Illyrico Mamertinus [regebat]'.  
<sup>78</sup> Mazzarino advanced another objection (*Antico* . . . , 328–9). According to Ammianus (xxx. 5. 4), writing of 375, Probus 'praefecturam praetorio tunc primum nactus, eamque multis atque utinam probabilibus modis in longum proferre gestiens . . . plus adulationi quam verecundiae dedit'. According to Mazzarino, Ammianus is saying that Probus' 368–75 prefecture was his first. But why should Ammianus have made this

point near the close of Probus' long prefecture in 375 rather than when describing its start in 368 (xxvii. 11. 1)? In fact we must almost certainly accept Heraeus' insertion of a *non* before *tunc primum*. This was a favourite turn of phrase with Ammianus: cf. xvii. 11. 1, 'quod non tunc primum accidit'; xxiii. 5. 16, 'non nunc primum (ut maledici mussitant) . . .' If so, then the passage could equally well be used as evidence that this was *not* Probus' first prefecture! More probably, however, Ammianus' point is that *although* Probus had held his prefecture for a long time by 375, he was none the less still anxious to hang on to it, at what Ammianus saw as the price of his self-respect. Clearly this passage cannot provide any firm evidence either way on the chronology of Probus' prefectures.

silence drawn from the Roman and Capuan dedications. But to press this argument from silence entails entirely disregarding the express and more detailed testimony of the Verona dedication.

What now of the three other prefectures for which evidence of some description exists? Nos. (4), (5) and (6): 380, 383-4 and 387.

The prefecture of 383-4 seems secure enough, since we have the direct statement of Socrates (*HE* v. 11), repeated by Sozomen (*HE* vii. 13), that Probus was PPO in 383. It is, however, unfortunate that the dates of the only two laws that seem to belong to this prefecture cannot be correct as they stand: *Cod. Theod.* xi. 13. 1 (19 January 383) and vi. 30. 6 (26 October 384). For Probus' predecessor was still in office on 28 May 383 and his successor by 13 March 384. If a prefecture in 383 is accepted (and there seems to be general agreement on this) then both dates simply have to be emended. The simplest way to deal with the second is to change the year to 383, but with the first the more arbitrary procedure of correcting the month is indicated.

387 can be disposed of at once. Sozomen carelessly repeats in the context of 387 (*HE* vii. 13) the description of Probus as prefect in 383, which he had copied from Socrates (*HE* v. 11). There can be no question of Sozomen's statement having any independent authority—as Palanque and Jones for once agreed.<sup>79</sup> It is thus unfortunate that Mazzarino includes 387 among Probus' four prefectures without comment.<sup>80</sup>

For 380 ('Gratiano V et Theodosio cons.') there are again two laws with dates that must be wrong: *Cod. Theod.* vi. 28. 2 (12 March) and vi. 35. 10 (27 June).<sup>81</sup> For Hesperius was PPO on 14 March (x. 20. 10) and Syagrius in office on 18 June (xi. 30. 38). The legal evidence for 380 is thus on the same footing as that for 383. The key difference is that we have the corroboration of Socrates for 383, and so both a motive and guidelines for correcting the two faulty dates. For 380 we have neither. Even if we alter the dates by only a week or two, we have reduced the prefecture to barely a month. And in any case, where dates in the Codes are demonstrably wrong, it is usually the year rather than the day or month that is wrong. Almost certainly (as Jones suggested) we should transfer both laws to a year during Probus' 368-75 prefecture when Gratian was consul with someone other than Theodosius.

It should be clear that the evidence for 380 and 387 is far weaker in itself than that for 364 and 366, and it does not have the corroboration of the Verona *cursum*.

In all probability, then, Probus' four prefectures were:

- (1) 364 (Illyricum)
- (2) 366<sup>82</sup> (Gaul)
- (3) 368-75 (Illyricum, Italy, Africa)
- (4) 383-4 (Illyricum, Italy, Africa).

This squares perfectly with another dedication from Gortyn, designating Probus as ἀπὸ ὑπάτων καὶ ἀπὸ ἐπαρχῶν πραιποριῶν γ' (*I. Cret.* iv. 318). It is one of (at least) eight statues to Roman aristocrats erected by Oecumenius Dositheus Asclepiodotus, *consularis* of Crete, between 382 and 383 (*I. Cret.* iv. 314-22). They were not all put up at the same time. For example, the dedication to Valerius Severus describes him as if currently PVR (no. 315), an office he held between April and August 382; his successor Anicius Bassus was in office by November. But the statue to Bassus (no. 314) describes him only as ex-proconsul of Campania. Evidently both statues must be earlier than November 382. On the other hand, Hypatius (no. 317) is described as ex-PPO as well as ex-PVR (379); he was PPO till at least 28 May 383, when he was succeeded by none other than Probus, who was in office himself (as we saw) till (probably) early 384.

The question is, was Probus' statue erected before or after his prefecture of 383-4? Unless we assume that it was considerably the latest of the bunch, the chances are before. An additional (if minor) argument is that we should not assume too long a tenure of office for

<sup>79</sup> *Essai*, 117; cf. Jones, *Roman Economy*, 388; confirmed by the full discussion of Novak, *Klio* 62 (1980), 477-8.

<sup>80</sup> *Antico* . . . , 330.

<sup>81</sup> I am assuming (following Jones) that we need no longer consider the possibility of a collegiate prefecture.

<sup>82</sup> *Ep.* i. 58 of Symmachus refers to Probus undertaking a second term of office: 'Sit tibi animus aequus et patiens muneris imperati. Saepe usu venit *ut in secundis labores* virtus probata reparatur.' Unless Symmachus merely means 'again', this should be a reference to

Probus' second prefecture of 366. If so, this would be the earliest datable extant letter of Symmachus (Seeck dated it to 378/9 on the basis of a theory of Probus' prefectures he later abandoned himself; Callu to 'vers 383'). All Symmachus' letters to Probus should be early, while they were still on speaking terms. If the unnamed 'civis emeriti' of *Ep.* iii. 88 is (as often suspected) Probus, then Symmachus was reprimanded from court for not writing the usual letter of condolence on Probus' death.

Asclepiodotus; governorships seem seldom to have been held for more than a year or two.<sup>83</sup> If so, then all fits into place. The three prefectures to which Asclepiodotus alludes will be the same three as those of the Verona *cursus*: 364, 366, 368–75.

There are two corollaries, one a minor problem, the other a distinct advantage. First, the problem: the Verona *cursus* gives the spheres of Probus' three prefectures as (I) Illyricum, (II) Gaul and (III) Italy and Africa (*ILS* 1266). Now on my 'chronological' interpretation, this third prefecture is that of 368–75, described on *ILS* 1265 of 378 as including Illyricum as well as Italy and Africa. Is this a significant discrepancy? One possible explanation is that Probus' sphere changed during his long tenure. For example, he may have begun his 368–75 tenure as prefect of just Illyricum, as Jerome in fact describes him.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps at some later stage he lost Illyricum. On the other hand, Illyricum may simply have been taken for granted as part of the Italian prefecture, as Africa sometimes was. For example, *Cod. Theod.* xv. 1. 26 and 28 (390), where Polemius, who we have no reason to doubt was PPO of Illyricum, Italy and Africa, is described as 'PPO Illyrici et Italiae'. Or to take an epigraphic example, on *CIL* vi. 1777 (= *ILS* 1258) Vettius Agorius Praetextatus is described as 'praef. praetorii Illyrici, Italiae et Africae', whereas on both *CIL* vi. 1779 (= *ILS* 1259) and vi. 1778 the very same prefecture is described as 'praef. praet. Italiae et Illyrici'.<sup>85</sup>

It might be added that this problem is as nothing compared with the problems raised by the 'geographical' interpretation. For example, on any hypothesis two of Probus' prefectures included Italy, Africa and Illyricum. First, the long 368–75 term, on the evidence of *ILS* 1265 of 378; second the 383 term, guaranteed by *Cod. Theod.* xi. 13. 1 to extend 'per omnem Italiam, tum etiam per urbicarias Africanasque regiones ac per omne Illyricum'. And yet on the 'geographical' interpretation, the Verona *cursus* allots Probus only one prefecture in Illyricum. More problematic still, how do we find him two Gallic prefectures? Needless to say, a variety of ingenious explanations has been devised. But over and above the intrinsic improbability of the 'geographical' interpretation itself, most (if not all) of these explanations involve doing violence to the text of the inscription—and changing far more dates in the Codes than the 'chronological' interpretation. It is high time that so ill-favoured a hypothesis was finally allowed to slip into oblivion.

Now the advantage. If the interpretation of the Verona dedication here defended is correct, we have come back to our starting point. For the proconsulate of Africa is here listed before the first of the three prefectures. It must, therefore, have fallen before 364. There can no longer be any doubt about the dating of Probus' proconsulate to 358.

<sup>83</sup> Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 380–1. Our lists of governors are of course full of gaps, but there are clear indications none the less that both consulars and pro-consuls were in principle appointed for a period of one year: see Barbieri (n. 1), 299 n. 2; Mazzarino, *Antico* . . ., 304–6; T. D. Barnes, *Phoenix* 1985.

<sup>84</sup> *Chron. s.a.* 372. He certainly spent a lot of time in Illyricum at this period: cf. *PLRE* 1. 738.

<sup>85</sup> I pass over here the question of the false iteration number II: cf. Palanque, *Byz.* 9 (1934), 355–9; 706–7; Chastagnol, *Fastes*, 177–8.