

XV. The Appointment of Auxiliary Centurions (*PMich.* 164)

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It is a common-place that the discipline and effectiveness of legions during the Empire, as earlier, were maintained largely by the centurions, though generals who had to prepare a disorganized provincial garrison for a campaign might have expressed reservations if so informed.¹ The assertion would apply at least as well to the *auxilia*, which made up approximately half of the Imperial Army. In an auxiliary *cohors* or *ala*, a battalion or regiment of some 500 or 1000 men, there was only one commissioned officer, to use our terminology, the equestrian prefect or tribune who commanded it. Many of these men doubtless were able officers, and some came to have considerable experience.² But a *cohors quingenaria* in particular was likely to have as its prefect a young man holding his first command with no previous military service, and all the equestrian officers would come and go, remaining with any one unit only a few years at most. Continuity and cohesion then depended in large part on the auxiliary centurions and on the decurions, their equivalent in cavalry formations. One may suppose, for example, that in the chaotic decades of the third century they often had more influence and control over the men than did the commanding officer. Their origins and background therefore are of some interest. The accepted view that they were promoted from the ranks or, especially in the earlier period, were brought in from among the lesser non-commissioned officers in the legions is probably substantially correct, though actually the evidence is scattered and by no means full and explicit.³ We may assume, consequently, that most auxiliary centurions, like the men under them, had

¹ The following will be cited by short titles: H. A. Sanders, "Papyrus 1804 in the Michigan Collection," *Classical Studies in Honor of John C. Rolfe* (Philadelphia 1931) 265-83 = Sanders, *Studies*; and A. Stein, *Die Präfecten von Ägypten in der römischen Kaiserzeit* ("Dissertationes Bernenses," ser. I, fasc. 1; Bern 1950) = Stein, *Präfecten*.

² The best discussion of these officers is by E. Birley, *Durham University Journal* 42 (1949) 8-19, reprinted in his *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (Kendal 1953) 133-53.

³ See notably A. von Domaszewski, "Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres," *Bonner Jahrb.* 117 (1908) 54, 57, 193; and G. L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Oxford 1914) 38-39. Cheesman observes quite rightly that transfers from the legions were not confined to the first fifty years of the Empire.

originally been ordinary villagers and peasants. But there appear to have been exceptions, and I propose to discuss some of these in the present paper. It will consist of two parts: an examination of a published military papyrus, and some general remarks on auxiliary centurions and decurions of higher social status, in effect a commentary on one entry in the papyrus.

1.

PMich. 164 was published by the late Henry A. Sanders in 1931 and was reprinted in 1936 with some new readings in *PMich.* III.⁴ The revised text which is presented here is based on excellent photographs provided by Professor Herbert C. Youtie and Dr. Enoch Peterson, director of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, whose prompt courtesy I gratefully acknowledge; one of these new photographs is reproduced here (Plate I). This is not intended to be a definitive edition, for which a patient study of the original would be necessary, but the number of suggestions which may be offered and the importance of the document seem to make a new version desirable. For one thing, several doubtful or erroneous readings have been accepted or cited in standard works and should be corrected before further use is made of them.

⁴ The first publication is cited in note 1; U. Wilcken reviewed it briefly in *ArchP* 10 (1932) 278–79. There is a plate, unfortunately in places shadowy and almost illegible, opposite p. 266. Sanders' text is reprinted in A. Calderini, *Papiri latini* (Milan 1945) 122–23, no. 53. For discussions of sections of the text see J. F. Gilliam, *TAPA* 71 (1940) 139–43 and R. O. Fink, *TAPA* 76 (1945) 274; for the hand see Jan-Olof Tjäder, *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700*, I (1955) 91, 108. R. Marichal includes it in his inventory of Latin papyri, *Scriptorium* 4 (1950) 124, no. 105.

I am much indebted to Professor O. M. Pearl who kindly consented to read my manuscript and check my readings on the original papyrus. His suggestions are noted in the commentary on lines 3, 10, and 21. Professor R. O. Fink generously sent me the transcription of the text as it appeared in his Yale dissertation of 1934, which I once saw a few years later. Because of his absence from the country, the transcription reached me only after my manuscript had been completed. Readings in which he anticipated those which I present here, in addition to those cited in the commentary on lines 2 and 4, are the following: line 6, the consular date; line 9, the numeral; line 10, *HIERAX*, agreeing with Hunt; line 22, *ord [e]x eq [leg?*

Since I shall be dealing largely with points where I differ from Professor Sanders in readings or interpretation, perhaps I should emphasize that I am quite aware of this eminent scholar's many contributions, which include the editing of more Latin papyri of the first three centuries than anyone else to date. Those who have dealt with these difficult texts will be aware of the problems they present.

The photograph shown in Plate I is reproduced by courtesy of the University of Michigan, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. A grant made by Dean W. F. Loehwing of the Graduate College, State University of Iowa, has provided the plate.

The papyrus, which was bought in Cairo, is incomplete below and both to the left and to the right; the top margin appears intact. In addition, there are many lacunae, and the surface is worn. It preserves the greater part of one column from a longer text (22 x 12 cm.). All lines are incomplete at one end or both,⁵ but the form and content of the column are quite certain. In the first fifteen lines the individual entries follow this basic pattern: a name in rustic capitals in a separate line roughly centered over two cursive lines containing a date (that of the man's enlistment),⁶ *factus dec(urio) ex eq(uite) leg(ionis)* (or whatever his previous post was), a (name) *praef(ecto) Aeg(ypti)*, and the day and year of appointment. In line 16 there stands a heading *COH III ITURAEORUM*, followed in the next line by a sub-heading *ORDD*, i.e., *ord(inati)* or centurions. Then come two more entries similar to those found above. The text can be securely dated 242-244: the first year is given several times as that of promotions, and since the *ala* in line 11 is called *Gordiana*, Gordian was still the reigning emperor. The cursive hand is rather irregular in size and spacing, which makes estimates of letters lost in lacunae only approximate. It is worth noting that it resembles closely some hands of about the same date in texts found at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates.⁷

The column, then, contains the names of decurions and centurions of two auxiliary units, with certain information about them. It is possible that the order in which they appear is determined by date of appointment or, what seems less likely, by date of enlistment.⁸ We have the end of a

⁵ In lines 9 and 20 twelve letters are lost at the right, but these complete entries and may not have been as long as the lines immediately preceding them. At the left I believe that in lines 2, 5, 6, 8, and 19 only the day and month are missing, and in line 20 a and a *cognomen*.

⁶ Sanders suggested that the consular year was preceded by *probatus* or the like. But the years are not vertically aligned as one would expect them to be if they were preceded by the same term; for example, the year in line 5 begins about five letters to the right of that in line 2. The irregularity seems too great to be explained by the occasional abbreviation of *probatus*. It appears likely that the day and month, which would of course vary in length, preceded the year. The date of enlistment, without *probatus*, is normally included in military rosters.

⁷ In particular P. Dura Inv. 3 verso (ca. 251), 9 recto (239), and 34 recto (ca. 250). The first two are published, but without plates, in *YCS* 11 (1950) 189-209, 215-18. The texts will be designated as *PDura* 97, 89, and 95 in the volume of Dura papyri now being prepared for publication.

⁸ Either arrangement would be possible for the first four men. Unfortunately the dates of the fifth man's enlistment and appointment are both uncertain; see commentaries on lines 14 and 15. A strong argument in favor of arrangement by date of appointment, or at least against one by date of enlistment, is that the first man named in the second unit had enlisted in 230. It seems highly improbable that none of the

list for an unknown unit, probably an *ala* but possibly a *cohors equitata miliaria*, and the beginning of the list for the *cohors III Ituraeorum*.⁹ There is no way of telling how much is lost before and after the column preserved. The document may have contained this information for several units, conceivably for all auxiliary units in Egypt, and may have included other matter. No other Roman military record of precisely this character is known, but there are a number which resemble it in part, some listing subordinate officers and others recording the names of governors responsible for promotions and the like.¹⁰ There are two points which may be noted here before the text is presented and discussed in detail. First, the prefect of Egypt is the officer responsible for the appointments of these auxiliary centurions and decurions.¹¹ Secondly, three of the six men whose previous posts are known had probably been

cohort's centurions had served more than 12–14 years. One of the decurions had served for at least 25 years (line 2); another, 21 years (line 5). The decurions and centurions would not be listed in an order determined by the *turmae* and *centuriae* which they commanded, in contrast to legionary centurions whose centuries had a fixed position in rosters as well as in formations. See R. O. Fink, *TAPA* 78 (1947) 166–67 and 84 (1953) 210–15; cf. P. K. Baillie Reynolds, *The Vigiles of Imperial Rome* (Oxford 1926) 71. It is reasonable to assume that seniority would be based ordinarily on date of appointment. Presumably Hierax in line 18 is *ordinatus* (i.e. *centurio princeps*) in his cohort.

⁹ Since there are five decurions the first unit is not a *cohors quingenaria*. There are two reasons for thinking it was probably an *ala*. First, of the five decurions three had previously served in an *ala*, two probably in a legion, and none in a cohort. Though men were often transferred when promoted, at least in the legions, it would seem a little strange if none of the five had been a member of the unit whose decurions are being listed, or even of one of the same type, and it is quite possible that one or both of the men in lines 5 and 8 are being promoted within the same *ala*. Secondly, at least four of the five were promoted in the same year (242). Since there were probably only five decurions in a *cohors miliaria equitata* (see Fink's articles cited in note 8), that proportion of vacancies would seem high, though not impossible. There were from sixteen to twenty-four decurions in an *ala*.

The second unit, the *cohors III Ituraeorum*, had long been part of the garrison of Egypt. See J. Lesquier, *L'armée romaine d'Égypte d'Auguste à Dioclétien* (Cairo 1918) 91.

¹⁰ For lists of subordinate officers see *POslo* 122 and Fink, *TAPA* 46 (1945) 271–78. For the citation of governors in connection with appointments and the *probatio* of men and horses see *BGU* 696, P. Dura Inv. 3 verso (see note 7), and *PMich.* 447. In the latter the records identified by the prefect's name in adjectival form may have been rolls of incoming letters in the unit's files.

¹¹ Sanders comments on this, *Studies* 281. See also *L'Année Épigraphique* 1917–1918, nos. 74–75. Legionary centurions and higher officers were appointed directly by the emperor; see Domaszewski (above, note 3) 5, 42, 53, 82 and E. Stein, *Die kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat* (Vienna 1932) 33, note 33.



legionary *equites*,¹² and at least four of the seven men in the papyrus were transferred from other units; in fact all were about whom we happen to be informed.¹³

In the commentary following the text I give Sanders' readings in *PMich.* III when they differ substantially from mine, ignoring minor variations in dotted and bracketed letters. I have expanded abbreviations on their first appearance if they seemed to present any difficulty.

1	AU]FIDIUS VICTORINUS	A.D.
2	P]raesente et [E]xtrica[to] ç[o]s, factus dec(urio) ex eq(uite) leg(ionis) [	217
3	] .[.] . . . . . nc . . . I]I] Nonas Apriles Attico et Prae[]textato cos]	242
4	] . . . . . ]S PET]SIRIS	
5	Gr]a]to [e]t Seleuco ç[o]s, [f]actus dec' ex sesq(ui)plicario) alae [	221
6	]b]r Attico et Praet]x]tato cos a Basileo p[raef Aeg]	242
7	A]NTONIUS AMMONIANUS	
8	] . M]ximo et Urban[o] ç[o]s, factus dec' ex sesq(ui) alae [	234
9	a Basil]eo y' p' praef[Aeg] IIII Kal Novembr Attico et	242
	Pr[]aetextato cos]	
10	] . . . . . ]IU]S HIERAX	
11	cos, factu]s d[e]ç' ex dupl(icario) alae Gall(icae) Gor[d]ianae	
12	a Basileo praef Aeg - -] Dec Attico et Praetexta[to] cos]	242
13	] ORIGEN[E]S	

¹² Lines 2, 14, 22. In the last two *leg(ionis)* is restored, and one should consider the possibility that the men were actually *equites singulares imperatoris*; see Domaszewski (above, note 3) 51. For an *eques legionis* made *decurio* see *CIL* III 7449 (Moesia Inferior, 155). For *equites legionis* see Domaszewski, 47; A. von Premerstein, *Klio* 3 (1903) 27, note 5; and Lesquier (above, note 9) 134-35.

¹³ For appointments of legionaries as auxiliary centurions and decurions see above, note 3. I do not wish to discuss the question here, but the papyrus obviously shows that legionaries were still being given these posts in the time of Gordian, and it suggests further the possibility that these auxiliary officers were often, perhaps even regularly, transferred to another unit when appointed. Cf. Sanders, *Studies* 281, who assumed however that the first unit was a cohort and the men who had served in an *ala* were necessarily transferred. Legionary centurions present many more complicated problems, but it may be worth noting that they were often transferred when promoted, probably not simply because a suitable vacancy might not exist in their own legion; cf. Domaszewski (above, note 3) and H. Dessau, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit* 1 (Berlin 1924) 244-45.

- 14]...[.].....ϕ.[.....]ϕ cos, f[actus dec]' ex eq
[leg
15].ϕ.riş...[...].[.....].u.α[...].le.α[
16 COH III ITURAE[O]R̄U[M
17 ORDD
18]. .EFOTES HIERAX
19 Ag[r̄iç[o]la et Clementino cos, factus dec' ex [230
20]o tunc praef Aeg' III· Kal Sept̄ Agricola et Ç[lementino 230
cos]
21]...LIUS A[R]POCRA[T]ION
22]s Agricola et Clementino ç[os, f]actus ord̄ [e]x eq [leg 230
23]...[]...ϕ...ϕ...[

1. Sanders: [. *AU*]FIDIUS. Sanders here and below assumed *praenomina* were given, perhaps rightly. At this period, however, one would not expect to find them in a military papyrus, or as a matter of fact in other texts as a rule.¹⁴ At first Sanders thought that two lines might have preceded this; accordingly, in *Studies* but not in *PMich.* III, the present line is numbered line 3. After examining the papyrus again he reported that no trace of ink was found in the upper margin, above what then became line 1. None appears in the photograph.

2. Sanders: *ex q(uaestionario) leg(ionis)*. The *e* of *eq.* is written in ligature with *x*. For the reading see Gilliam, *TAPA* 71 (1940) 140; R. O. Fink, *TAPA* 76 (1945) 274. For the promotion see above, note 12. To judge from line 11 the legion was probably named, though *eq. leg.* by itself would serve as a designation of rank. This applies also to other titles in the lines below such as *sesq. alae*. The only legion in Egypt at this time was the *II Traiana*. There is a dot after *eq.*, and a long stroke marks the abbreviation *dec.* in each of its appearances. At the beginning of this line and of those that correspond to it below, Sanders suggests *probatus* or the like, but I think the day and month more probable; see note 6.

3. Sanders: [*a Bas*]i[l]eq̄ praef Aeg II Nonas. *IIII Nonas* was read by Gilliam and Fink, *loc. cit.* (in commentary on line 2). Sanders remarks (*Studies* 268) that "*praef. Aeg.* has the letters strangely crowded and obscured." The reading, especially *praef.*, appears in fact quite impossible, and once the title is eliminated, the reason for trying to force oneself to read *a Bas*]i[l]eq̄ is removed. Thus this entry does not provide the earliest date for Basileus' prefecture, as has been thought (Stein, *Präefekten* 138). I am not prepared to propose, with any conviction, another reading of these poorly preserved letters,

¹⁴ They are not found e.g. in the military archives from Dura. For the disappearance of the *praenomen* in general see H. Thylander, *Étude sur l'épigraphie latine* (Lund 1952) 77-81.

which should contain the name and title of the official responsible for the promotion. A possibility, however, which has presented itself unsought and undesired is *tunc duc*(e ?). Palaeographically the principal objection is a trace of ink over what would be the first *u*. Another restraining factor is the problem of explaining the reading once it is made.¹⁵ Before these letters one might read *ei* followed by an oblique stroke or possibly *es*, either of which would be preceded by ambiguous traces of ink. Pearl, with equal misgivings, read]. . *v' p' tunc duc*() (see above, note 4).

4. Sanders: [. C]ORDIUS. I cannot confirm the reading of this *nomen* on the photographs, and doubt it. The name may end -MUS, as I now find Wilcken had already suggested (above, note 4).

5. Sanders: [.....] Grat[o el]. Some of the traces of ink at the beginning of the line must certainly be from *Grato*, but I find it practically impossible to identify individual letters.

6. Sanders: [et *praep*]osil coh[or et *praefec*[tus] arcis a Basileo p[raef Aeg. . .]. Sanders' reading of the first part of the line would be extremely difficult to understand at best, but I have no doubt that the consular year should be read instead; so also Fink (see above, note 4). The Octo[br] or Novem[br] that I read at the beginning is quite uncertain. At the end a *Basileo* is separated from what precedes by a blank space which could have held 6–8 letters. Evidently the phrase had been omitted at its proper place (before the date) and was then inserted at the close of the entry. It looks as if there is a looped, oblique stroke over the last letter in the prefect's name. This entry seems to be the only certain evidence that Basileus was prefect in 242; cf. Stein, *Präfecten* 138. Apparently in this line a title such as *vir perfectissimus*, which is found in line 9, did not follow the name, as one frequently did in the case of the prefect currently in office; see Stein, *op. cit.* 179.

8. The letter of which a trace remains at the beginning of the line may well be *ς*, as Sanders reads it. If so, it is probably the last letter in the name of a month.

9. Sanders: [a Ba]σιλεω *v' p'*, XVI Kal. The fact that Basileus was prefect in 242 justifies the reading and restoration of his name here. The reading of

¹⁵ *Tunc duc*(e), following a name, in itself is quite unobjectionable. It occurs several times in P. Dura Inv. 3 verso (above, note 7); cf. line 20 of the present text. One would not expect to find a *dux* in Egypt at this time, exercising a function which was ordinarily the prefect's. But as it happens, a Domitius Philippus is named in the fourth year of Gordian (240/41) with the title λαμπρότατος στρατηλάτης = *dux*, possibly (*PBerl. Leihgabe* 9). He appears again in *POxy.* 2231 (January 1, 241), identified as . . . ἐπάρχῳ, ο <ὅ> χι τότε ο[ὗ]ν στρατηλάτη. He was still prefect of Egypt in March, 242; see Stein, *Präfecten* 137–38 and *PIR*², III 51, no. 157. It is conceivable therefore that there was a high military officer with the title of *dux* in April, 242. But it must be emphasized that the character of Philippus' post before he became prefect is quite uncertain. If it was similar to that of the *dux ripae* at Dura, as Stein suggests (*Präfecten* 219, note 436), one might assume that he was in charge of the troops on the southern frontier of Egypt. However, such conjectures are of little value.

the abbreviation *v p* is not quite certain. For *vir perfectissimus*, applied only exceptionally to prefects of Egypt at this period, see Stein, *Präfekten* 162. Fink also read *IIII*, not *XVI* (see above, note 4).

10. Sanders: *LIUS CHIERAX*. I believe that A. S. Hunt (quoted by Sanders, *Studies* 270) was right in interpreting the curve before *H* as part of the cross stroke; so also Fink (see above, note 4). I had not read the *L* in the *nomen*, which I now accept upon Pearl's confirmation of the reading (see above, note 4).

11. Sanders: *f[ac]l[u]s*. The *ala* was part of the Egyptian garrison; see Lesquier (above, note 9) 76–80.

12. Sanders: *]. Oct.*

13. Sanders: *UŞ ORIGEN[E]S*. The traces of ink from the first part of the name seem too slight to be identified.

14. Sanders: *[.....]uş F[u]sco I[I et Dextr]e cos f[actus] d[ec]' ex sesq[.]*. This reading of the consular date (A.D. 225) is based on very scanty remnants, as Sanders remarks (*Studies* 271). Another possibility, which has the advantage of avoiding the assumed confusion of declensions, is *Com[azont]e cos* (A.D. 220), but not enough remains to make the suggestion of much value. The end of the line is faded and poorly preserved. On *eq.* [*leg.* cf. above, note 12.

15. Sanders: *ab Honoratia]no p v praef A[eg N]ove[mbr Se]ver[o et Quintiano cos]*. Sanders' reading of the whole line is difficult to accept, though I have little to propose in its place. In particular, *praef A[eg]* seems impossible; fortunately this does not affect Stein's reconstruction of Honoratianus' prefecture (*Präfekten* 131–34). At the beginning of the line one might read *Iul]i o Pri]s[co]*, which is not unattractive if one interprets a trace of ink above the line as an apex or simply a meaningless flourish over the missing *o*.¹⁶ But it is disputed whether Iulius Priscus, the emperor Philip's brother, was ever acting governor of Egypt, and one must hesitate before contributing an uncertain reading of partly preserved letters to an already difficult problem.¹⁷ A date almost certainly stood at the end of the line, but of the letters that remain only *e* seems to be beyond question. The most likely possibility appears to be *I]dus A[pr]ile]s A[.]*. In the month one has to accept a peculiar hook at the top of the *s*. The consulship would apparently have to extend farther to the right than the others, unless part of it was brought down to form a short separate line at the right edge of the column, as is possible. Stein would place Priscus' acting prefecture in the years 238–240. But if he is named in this line and if the first consul's name begins with *A*, most probably the year is again 242 and Priscus

¹⁶ Cf. the *o* in *Basileo* in line 6 and *PRylands* 79 (pl. 23) (second century).

¹⁷ On Priscus as acting prefect see Stein, *Präfekten* 135–37. H. G. Pflaum in *Latomus* 10 (1951) 477 denies that the fragmentary inscription (*ILS* 1331) which includes the acting prefecture is actually Priscus' cursus.

served between Domitius Philippus and Basileus.¹⁸ If Priscus is not named, the year might be *A[rriano et Papo cos]* (243). This would have the attraction of keeping the dates of appointment in chronological order.

16. Apparently the name of the cohort was not followed by *Gordiana*, unless the line was very badly centered.

17. Sanders: *OR DD*, to be expanded as *or(do) d(ecurionum)*. But the stroke above *OR* is surely from the base of the *C* in the line above, as Wilcken saw (Sanders, *Studies* 280), and the abbreviation should be expanded, again as Wilcken suggested, *ord(inati)* or possibly *ord(inarii)*, i.e. centurions.¹⁹ It seems to be unknown whether the unit was a *cohors equitata*. If it was, there would have been a corresponding sub-heading *DECC* farther on. One would expect centurions to be listed before decurions in a *cohors equitata*.

18. Sanders: *Ç[AL]EFOFES*. Sanders states in *PMich.* III that *]EFOFES* is read with certainty, but my preference for *]EFOTES* was strengthened when I discovered that Wilcken, in *ArchP* 10 (1932) 278, note 3, had rejected *C[al]-efofes* and suggested the name might end *-efotes*. In any event it is worth noting that the man does not have a name of the Roman form, though one need not conclude from this that he was not a citizen.

19. I cannot explain *dec.* here, where one would expect *ord.*, except as an error on the part of the clerk, who had been writing *factus dec.* at this point in such entries for some time. Needless to say, an explanation which requires such an assumption is offered with reluctance and invites close scrutiny.

20. Sanders: [...]*orjino praef Aeg' III Kal Sept Agricola et M[aximo II cos]*. The year should be considered first; it involves a point of considerable interest, and Sanders' reading, though he emphasizes its tentative character, has resulted in confusion and complications in several later works.²⁰ He explained the names he read and restored as the consuls of 234. But the short form of their names, in the correct order, is found in line 8 of this same document: *Maximo (II) et Urbano cos.* Further, it is at least uncertain whether the full version of Urbanus' name included *Agricola*, as Sanders assumed.²¹ Since the consul of 230 is the only *Agricola* in this whole period whose name came first in consular dates, there is no reason to hesitate to read *Agricola et Ç[lementino cos]*. It should be noted, too, that what is preserved of the initial letter of the second name makes a quite acceptable *C* but an unattractive *M*. The fact that Hierax received his appointment in the year in which he enlisted is discussed in the next section of this paper.

¹⁸ There is a longer period available for the acting prefect in 242 than Stein realized. See commentary on line 3.

¹⁹ For *ordinati* and *ordinarii* see *TAPA* 71 (1940) 127–48. *Ordinatus* at least, if not also *ordinarius*, was often used instead of *centurio* in the third century.

²⁰ G. Barbieri accepts Sanders' reading but interprets the date as 233 in his valuable *L'albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino (193–285)* (Rome 1952) 192–93, no. 928. A. Degraffi cites the reading under 234 in *I fasti dell'impero romano* (Rome 1952) 65.

²¹ Barbieri (above, note 20) 229, no. 1165, and 621.

At the beginning of the line Sanders originally read *ab Honorat[i]ano*, the prefect from 232 to 236. His revised reading led him to suggest an interruption in Honoratianus' tenure of office, and probable participation in a plot against Alexander Severus. Stein, who accepted Sanders' date, suggested as a possible solution of the problem an error in spelling: *Hono[ri(a)no* (*Präfekten* 133). Actually, an alternative mentioned by Sanders, *IoTyno*, comes close to what I believe the correct reading to be. For *tunc* used in references to past officials see P. Dura Inv. 3 verso (above, note 7). Cf. also the aorist participle ἡγεμονεύσας, commonly found when past prefects are named. The beginning of the line is probably to be restored *a Ianuari]o*; see Stein, *Präfekten* 130–31.

21. Sanders: *[A]E[MI]LIVS [.]EOCRATES*. He originally read *E[T]-EOCRATES*. I had found Wilcken's *A[R]POCRATES*, which Sanders rejects, more attractive, though noting that I was not sure that the last two letters were *ES*. The reading which I give in the text, *A[R]POCRA[T]ION*, I owe to Pearl (see above, note 4). It is, I believe, certain. Of the *nomen* Pearl writes: "I would incline to *IQ. LIUS* or, better, *IU. LIUS*." *[A]URELIUS* thus seems the most likely reading and restoration; so also Fink (above, note 4).

22. Sanders: *f]actus ord[de]c[et] ex*]. The first letter in the line, tentatively read, is presumably again from the end of a month. Sanders' *ord[de]c[et]*, which was suggested by Wilcken, would be without parallel and, in my view, unintelligible; see *TAPA* 71 (1940) 140–41. On *eq.* [*leg.* see above, note 12. For the reading cf. Fink (above, note 4).

23. Sanders: *....]a et Aes*]. Sanders identifies the letters he prints as part of a consular date. The two *e*'s may be correctly read, but if *et* is right, another letter, which looks rather like *f*, precedes his *A*.

2.

It will be recalled that Hierax (lines 18–20) was made centurion in the year in which he enlisted, and a direct appointment from civilian status seems more probable than promotion from a lower rank within a few months after entering service. We have relatively little information about how long auxiliary centurions served before attaining that rank, but though doubtless there was considerable variation, it is reasonable to assume that the great majority had spent many years in the army and had previously held a series of lesser posts.²² There is, however, one certain instance of a civilian being made an auxiliary centurion,²³ and

²² See above, note 3. The decurions in the papyrus discussed here, for whom the dates are preserved, served from eight to twenty-five years before reaching that rank.

²³ *BGU* 696, I, 20–25 (A.D. 156); see *AJP* 73 (1952) 75–78. On the basis of this text one may restore at the end of line 19 in the Michigan papyrus *ex [pagano*. Two funerary inscriptions from Cherchel may be mentioned here, *CIL* VIII 9389 and 21034. One is that of a *decurio alae* who died at 23 after having served four years; the other

even without the virtually certain second instance in the Michigan papyrus one might conclude that such appointments, though uncommon, were probably an established practice in the *auxilia*, as they are known to have been in the legions.²⁴ Two questions arise: who were the men whose influence and merit, combined in one proportion or another, won them these appointments, and, secondly, why would the posts be sought after by men with influence and merit? The second question will be dealt with first.

To a senator or to an equestrian, at least one who had attained one of the higher offices open to a member of his order, the position of an auxiliary centurion or decurion²⁵ doubtless seemed a very modest one. Still it may well have appeared attractive to many young men of some standing in the provinces, and to their families concerned with finding employment and a career for them. The attractions naturally would vary in different periods and places. To some in areas still having a strong military tradition a soldier's life at a rank carrying privileges and responsibilities would be quite appealing. Others, in Egypt for example in a peaceful period, may reasonably have regarded the army as a sort of bureaucracy in uniform, in which combat duty was only a remote possibility. The pay would make no one rich, but it permitted a comfortable life with the prospect of some savings at discharge.²⁶ For those ambitious to rise higher there was a possibility of advancement, greater presumably for those who had superior qualifications or useful connections to begin with.²⁷ But even if there were no promotion an auxiliary centurion

that of a *centurio singularium* on the governor's staff who died at 28 after having served three years and not quite eight months. They may simply have been promoted rapidly, perhaps after having been transferred from a legion, but direct appointments are a possibility to consider.

²⁴ See A. Stein, *Der römische Ritterstand* (Munich 1927) 136–38 and E. Birley, *Dissertationes Pannonicae* II, no. 11, 60–62 = *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (Kendal 1953) 122–23. It should be made clear that relatively few legionary centurions began their careers at that rank.

²⁵ In the pages that follow I will use "centurion" at times without adding "decurion" or distinguishing the three distinct posts men with these titles held in the *auxilia*. The *decurio alae* was higher in rank than the *centurio cohortis* and the *decurio cohortis*.

²⁶ For recent studies of pay in the Roman army, see P. A. Brunt, *Papers Brit. School Rome* 18 (1950) 50–71, especially 64–67 and 71; R. Marichal, *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 13 (1953) 399–421; and G. R. Watson, *Historia* 5 (1956) 332–40.

²⁷ Hierax, however, had not been promoted after twelve to fourteen years. On the occasional promotion of auxiliary centurions and decurions to the legionary centurionate and even higher posts see Domaszewski (above, note 3) 53–54, 56–57 and Stein (above, note 24) 157. The *decurio alae* was most often advanced, but even this appears unusual in all periods.

might reasonably appear to be a man of consequence, to himself and to those about him. The centurion in Matthew 7.8 and Luke 7.8 will serve as a familiar example. Some of the centurions in Egypt to whom petitions were addressed as police officials were auxiliaries; they, too, were important personages with considerable authority in their districts.²⁸

It is easier to argue that a direct appointment as an auxiliary centurion might seem worth having than to show what sort of men might obtain one. In fact, one is reduced largely to conjecture since we have no information about the two men known to have been given such appointments.²⁹ It is a reasonable assumption, however, that in the early Principate when an auxiliary unit might be levied from one tribe and even commanded by a tribal chieftain, some at least of the subordinate officers had had no previous service in the Roman army but were given a rank corresponding roughly to their position in their own community.³⁰ Again, with more uncertainty, it may be conjectured that from the beginning members of military families, for example sons of legionary centurions, might have had the necessary influence and qualifications for a direct appointment in the *auxilia*; sons of veterans often enlisted in the army, quite commonly beginning at a higher level than their fathers had. A third group, not entirely distinct from the previous two, seems a particularly interesting possibility: sons of curial families in the provinces, especially in smaller cities in more remote and less developed areas. It is not uncommon to find former auxiliary centurions serving in the *curia* and as priests or magistrates in such cities. Examples may be cited from Africa, Numidia, Mauretania, Noricum, Dalmatia, Dacia, Moesia, and even North Italy.³¹ Many of these were

²⁸ See, e.g., Lesquier (above, note 9) 235–36; P. M. Meyer, *Juristische Papyri* (Berlin 1920) 281–82; and R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri*² (Warsaw 1955) 540. The fact that decurions were employed in this way shows that some of the centurions must also have been from auxiliary units.

²⁹ The man in *BGU* 696 (see above, note 23) was named Sextus Sempronius Candidus, and conceivably was related to or connected in some way with the prefect of Egypt, Sempronius Liberalis, who appointed him. It is unfortunate that the name of -efotes Hierax (line 18 of the Michigan papyrus) is not more fully preserved. The second element of his double name is common in Egypt and not very instructive.

³⁰ C. Iulius Thiridatis f. who died at 26 while *decurio* in an *ala Parthorum* was presumably a member of a noble Parthian family in exile and given his appointment for that reason (*CIL* III 8746 = *ILS* 2532; early empire). See *PIR* III 324, no. 175 and Cichorius, "Ala," *RE* 1 (1894) 1256–57.

³¹ *CIL* VIII 12370 (Thuburbo Maius, middle second century); *AEpigr* 1915, no. 69 (Cuicul, late first or second century); *CIL* VIII 9052 (Auzia; cf. 9045 = *ILS* 2766); *CIL* VIII 21039 (Cherchel, 234), 21064 (Cherchel); *CIL* III 15205, 3 (Celeia, first

presumably self-made men whose municipal dignities reflected a higher social status won through successful service in the army and talents developed there. This is particularly true of new towns in which veterans settled, as in Dacia. But it seems quite possible that others had belonged to prominent local families³² before their enlistment and had entered the army only because they could do so on attractive terms.

There is at least one example of a member of a local aristocratic family serving as an auxiliary centurion, and closer study might discover others.³³ One of the centurions of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura-Europos in the time of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander was named Danymus. The name is so rare that he must almost certainly have belonged to an old Macedonian family which had held a leading position at Dura for centuries.³⁴ There is no evidence to show that he enlisted as a centurion, but it would be very surprising if a man of his background had entered the army as an ordinary soldier. Again, it is unknown whether he held office in Dura after his discharge, but it would not be strange if he did. At any rate, it is reasonable to suppose that other

half first century; cf. 5652); 1940 (Salonae, Trajan); 1100 = *ILS* 7141 (Apulum, Trajan; decurion also of Sarmizegetusa); *CIL* III 865 (Napoca, Commodus; two *decuriones alares* now *patronus* and *decurio coloniae*); 12587 (Sarmizegetusa, apparently a Palmyrene); 770 (Tomi, second century); *CIL* V 5006 (Brixia, first century?).

³² Their prominence naturally would be restricted to their own communities and be only relative; none of the men in the texts cited in the preceding note comes from one of the great urban centers of the Empire. Many *curiales* especially in smaller cities would be men of quite moderate means.

³³ There is apparently one example at Gerasa; see *IGRR* 3.1367 and C. B. Welles in *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven 1938) 393–94, no. 42 (probably second century). Cf. also the discharged *decurio* in the same city, expressly described as his *patria*, who played the role of a civic benefactor by building a *cuneus* of seats in a theatre (*AEpigr* 1930, no. 98 = Welles, *Gerasa* 399, no. 52).

³⁴ For the centurion see R. O. Fink, *TAPA* 84 (1953) 211–12. F. Cumont searched for other appearances of the name, which is probably Macedonian, but could find none except at Dura; *Fouilles de Doura-Europos (1922–1923)* (Paris 1926) 414. For various Danymi and the family see M. Rostovtzeff and others, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos . . . Preliminary Report of Fifth Season of Work . . .* (New Haven 1934) 190; . . . *Sixth Season of Work . . .* (New Haven 1936) 419–20, 428, 431; . . . *Seventh and Eighth Seasons of Work . . .* (New Haven 1939) 427–31.

C. B. Welles has presented a quite sombre account of the fate of Hellenic culture and the Greco-Macedonian aristocracy in third-century Dura in his stimulating article "The Population of Roman Dura," *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson* (Princeton 1951) 251–74. It is difficult to interpret the career of Danymus when we know nothing of the particular circumstances or of the motives and reactions of the man himself. One might regard it as illustrating the leveling uniformity brought by the Empire. At the same time it is an instance of successful adjustment to a new situation and survival on reasonably good terms.

auxiliary centurions, including veterans who were *curiales*, had a background similar to Danymus'.

The evidence discussed above is fragmentary and in part ambiguous, but it is possible to draw some conclusions which do not seem excessively venturesome. To begin with an established fact, auxiliary centurions were sometimes appointed directly from civilian status. It is not in itself surprising that any post might be obtained through patronage and special favor or granted in recognition of superior qualifications without the usual preliminaries, and it is an easy assumption that there might be men whose claims could procure them an auxiliary centurionate but nothing more. Some of these were probably members of curial families. From the point of view of the state one motive in making direct appointments might have been to obtain literate and educated men to help deal with the paper-work and administrative functions of the army.³⁵ Doubtless there were relatively few representatives of the curial class among auxiliary centurions even if one adds those men of humbler origin who might expect to enter it upon discharge. Still it would be wrong to suppose that all auxiliary centurions and decurions even in the third century were peasants grown old in service, largely ignorant of and at best indifferent to the culture and institutions developed in the cities of the Empire.³⁶

³⁵ On another level cf. Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris* 2.19: Sed quoniam in legionibus plures scholae sunt, quae litteratos milites quaerunt, ab his, qui tirones probant. . . in quibusdam notarum peritia, calculandi computandique usus eligitur. See also Stein and Birley, cited above in note 24.

³⁶ Among those who have stressed the barbarization of the army in the third century and its far-reaching importance are Domaszewski (above, note 3) and Rostovtzeff in his *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*. This is a large and complicated question, and the present paper obviously touches on only one limited aspect of it.