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Some Roman Elements in Roman Egypt

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My purpose here is not to attempt a comprehensive survey of a large and often elusive subject. I will merely comment on a few texts that appear to deserve more attention, with larger questions in mind though they may not be stressed. No one would claim that in Egypt Roman influence was as penetrating and significant as in Gaul or Spain. Additions and changes that in some sense are specifically Roman may often seem as superficial and inconsequential as the inscriptions carved on the statue of "Memnon" or the graffiti of tourists of the Roman period in the nearby royal tombs. But even the seemingly superficial and ephemeral may prove to have some interest and significance, while what is basic and hardly changing through the centuries may often be taken for granted, once grasped. In any event, not everything Roman in Egypt was entirely superficial.

1. *P.Mich.* III 169 = *FIRA* III 4 = *CPL* 162

This diptych, found in Karanis and dated in A.D. 145, contains the birth certificate of illegitimate twins, *MM. Sempronii Sp(urii) filii Sarapio et Socratio*.¹ The choice of *cognomina* seems to reflect a concern for balance and shows more imagination than Gemellus and Geminus, for example, recorded in an inscription from Rome (*CIL* VI 19012). The twins are described as *ex incerto patre*. The mother, Sempronia Gemella, made the declaration, with the help of a *tutor*, C. Iulius Saturninus. Obviously, she was a Roman citizen and had this declaration prepared for that reason. Her sons' civic status, it will be seen, depended on hers. Gibbon remarked that among the "solid advantages" of Roman citizenship was "the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances."² The advantages might involve troublesome

¹ First published by H. A. Sanders, *AJA* 32 (1928) 309-329.

² E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1896) I 37 (ed. Bury).

complications for individuals. But though situations differed, at the time of this text citizenship often continued to have important consequences in everyday life.

It will suffice to give the inner text of the diptych:³

II

Sempronia Gemella t(utore) a(uctore) C · Iulio Satur-
nino testata est eos qui signaturi
erant se enixam esse ex in-
certo patre · XII Kal · Aprel(es) q(uae) p(roximae) f(uerunt)
natos masculinos geminos eosque
vocetari M M Sempronios Sp · filios
Sarapionem et Socrationem
ideoque se has testationes in-
terposuisse dixit quia lex

III

Aelia Sentia et Papia Poppaea
spurius spuriasve in albo profiteri
vetat · d · e · r · e · e · b · t · ss ·
Actum Alex(andriae) ad Aeg(yptum) III · K · Maias Imp(era-
tore)
Caesare T · Aelio Hadriano Antonino
Aug(usto) Pio IIII M · Aurelio Caesare II cos ·
anno VIII Imp(eratoris) Caesare T. Aeli Hadriani
Antonini Aug(usti) Pii mense Pachon
die · IIII ·

The first editor of the diptych, H. A. Sanders, suggested that the *tutor* Saturninus was in fact the father of the twins and a soldier.⁴ More recently H. C. Youtie has referred to this possibility with understandable interest in an article on illegitimacy, remarkable for its penetration and humanity.⁵ Pertinent legal texts make it clear that the phrase *ex incerto patre* need not be taken literally. Herennius Modestinus states, *vulgo concepti dicuntur qui patrem demonstrare non possunt, vel qui possunt quidem, sed eum habent, quem habere non licet*.⁶ A decision of Caracalla provides an example in the second category.⁷ A woman found that she had unwittingly married a slave, named Eros, believing him to be free. The emperor ruled that she could recover her *dos* and whatever else Eros owed her, and adds regarding their children, *filiis autem tuis, ut ex libera nati incerto tamen patre, spurii ingenui*

³ The numerals II and III are added by the editor in *P.Mich.*

⁴ Specifically a legionary, *AJA* 32 (1928) 328.

⁵ "ΑΠΑΤΟΡΕΣ: Law vs. Custom in Roman Egypt," *Le Monde Grec . . . Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels, 1975) 723-740. For the diptych see 728-729, 736.

⁶ *Dig.* I 5.23.

⁷ *Cod. Iust.* V 18.3.

intelleguntur. It seems reasonable to conclude that the father of the twins was probably also illicit rather than unknown. At any rate, Gemella was not always careless and improvident, and she acted as a concerned but hopeful mother once her sons were born. The declaration was prepared to help protect a desirable civic status, and the copy we have was evidently thought worth keeping in the family records for a time.⁸

But should we assume that the father was probably a soldier? Such an assumption would not be unnatural in many periods.⁹ More specifically, it is well known that till the time of Severus Roman soldiers could not marry, and that their illegitimate children were numerous.¹⁰ Further, one may reasonably suspect that Sempronia Gemella's citizenship had been inherited from a father, or more remote ancestor, who had served in the army.¹¹ If so, she may have had family connections in military circles. Quite possibly, too, some or all of the men named in the text may have been soldiers or veterans.¹² But none is identified as such, and it seems necessary to consider the matter further.

The three other *testationes* that concern illegitimate children may prove instructive (*CPL* 159-161).¹³ In date, they run from A.D. 127 to 138. All three were made by the fathers, who were soldiers serving in auxiliary cohorts; the mothers are merely named. The declarations were drawn up and signed in the *hiberna* of the soldiers' units.¹⁴ In that prepared by Gemella one finds merely *Alex(andrae) ad Aeg(yptum)*, with no reference to a camp or unit.¹⁵ In the only text in which the names of witnesses are

⁸ It came from house B 7, "in which were found datable papyri of the second century A.D.," *AJA* 32 (1928) 309. Whether any may be connected with the diptych, I do not know.

⁹ For the problem in France in the early eighteenth century, e.g., see A. Corvisier, *L'armée française de la fin du XVII^e siècle . . . : Le Soldat* (Paris, 1964) II 885-886. A soldier found to be responsible might be imprisoned.

¹⁰ See J. Lesquier, *L'armée romaine d'Égypte* (Cairo, 1918) 262-279; H. Nesselhauf, *CIL* XVI 154-155; G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (London, 1969) 133-140. The number of legionary recruits *ex castris* was considerable; for Egypt see Lesquier, 211, 214. H. C. Youtie discusses illegitimate children of soldiers, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 737-740.

¹¹ R. Cavenaile lists 26 Sempronii in his "Prosopographie de l'armée romaine d'Égypte d'Auguste à Dioclétien," *Aegyptus* 50 (1970) 294-295. The name is common in Karanis, and Sempronii Gemelli are known there and in the army. The twins may have been given her father's *praenomen*. The fact that her *tutor* is not her father may mean that he had died.

¹² Sanders quite reasonably suggested legionaries, *AJA* 32 (1928) 328. There seems, however, to be no reason to think that Gemella was a freedwoman, as he does, pp. 327-328.

¹³ For some comments on *CPL* 159 see J. F. Gilliam, *Hommages à Claire Préaux* 771-773.

¹⁴ In *CPL* 161 *ad hib(erna)*. A town is also named in each.

¹⁵ In *FIRA* III 47 = *CPL* 221 (A.D. 142) *in castris Aug(ustis) hibernis leg(ionis) II Tr(aianae) For(tis) et alae Mauretanae* is added. Cf. also *CPL* 102 (A.D. 92) and 189 (A.D. 153).

preserved, they identify themselves in the regular military fashion by their century or *turma* and sometimes by rank (*CPL* 159). In all three *testationes* those making the declarations explain their situation and thus the form of the document (which is not the *professio* made for legitimate children) as *propter districtionem militarem*. In one the father adds a specific reason for preparing it: *ut possit post honestam missionem suam ad epicrisin suam adprobare filium naturalem esse* (*CPL* 159). These *testationes* concerning children of soldiers obviously differ from that of Gemella in significant ways. But the most striking one is the role of the father in the former, and his complete absence in the latter, made more emphatic by the substitution of *Spurius* and *incertus pater*. The absence of any military titles and terminology has already been stressed.

As has been noted, the fathers in *CPL* 159–161 were all auxiliaries. But there is no reason to suppose that a legionary could not make use of such a document. A well known letter of Hadrian, which was posted in the camp of the two legions in Egypt in A.D. 119, specifically established the right of children who were acknowledged during the period of military service to succeed to their fathers' property.¹⁶ A *testatio* would have been an obvious way of acknowledging a child for this purpose or others. As regards auxiliaries, after some date between A.D. 140 and 144 children were no longer granted citizenship upon their father's discharge.¹⁷ But this does not seem to provide an adequate explanation of the absence or suppression of the father's name in our text.

In considering a soldier's restrictions and especially his inability to have a legal marriage, it should be kept in mind that he had a great deal of freedom as regards relations with women and responsibilities to children. No vow of celibacy was required. He could take an unofficial wife or concubine, if he was not content with more casual connections, and acknowledge children without concern about disciplinary action. A *testatio* concerning illegitimate twins should not have caused trouble unless there were other complications. The military *diplomata*, from the time of their first appearance under Claudius, gave auxiliary soldiers *conubium* with the informal *uxores* they might already have, when they approached or reached the time of discharge.¹⁸ The grant of citizenship to their children until

¹⁶ *BGU* 140 = Mitteis, *Chrest.* 373 = *FIRA* I 78. Cf. the fragmentary opening lines of *P.Oxy.* XLII 3014 (a new text of the *Gnomon Id. Log.*).

¹⁷ As is evident from the *diplomata*; see e.g., G. Alföldy, *Historia* 17 (1968) 217, and now esp. H. Wolff, *Chiron* 4 (1974) 479–510.

¹⁸ In the formula commonly used the emperor granted to those listed, *conubium cum uxoris, quas tunc habuissent, cum est civitas iis data, aut, siqui caelibes essent, cum iis, quas postea duxissent dumtaxat singuli singulas*.

Antoninus Pius has already been mentioned. In *BGU* 140, as we have seen, Hadrian assumed that soldiers might formally recognize children and be interested in their welfare. Nevertheless, the wives of soldiers, to give them this courtesy title, were particularly dependent on the good will and sense of responsibility of their husbands. They had very little legal protection,¹⁹ and whatever social pressures might be exerted on their behalf would depend on circumstances such as the unit's location and its movements, and on the proximity and importance of their relatives.²⁰

Further, unlike peasants and villagers in Egypt or elsewhere, soldiers obviously did not need wives to share their work,²¹ and though many nevertheless had and retained them, many others did not. Tacitus writes of some veterans settled in Italy in the time of Nero, *neque coniugiis suscipiendis neque alendis liberis sueti orbas sine posteris domos relinquebant* (*Ann.*, XIV 27.2). Gravestones of soldiers very often name *commilitones* or brothers as heirs, with no mention of wives or children. Of the auxiliary *diplomata* that are sufficiently preserved to settle the matter in the period from Claudius to 140, 28 include wives, children, or both, but in 38 neither wives nor children are found. At the end of this period, however, especially in a province as relatively quiet as Egypt, the proportion of soldiers having wives and children presumably became substantially higher.²² But whatever the exact figure may have been, no doubt it was considerably lower than that of the same age group in the civilian population. On the other hand, one may suspect that the proportion of disappointed women and abandoned children was higher around military camps than in ordinary villages.

¹⁹ They could not recover any money that had been given as a concealed *dos*; see *P.Cattaoui* = *Mitteis, Chrest.* 372. The state made no provision for soldiers' widows, though nearly half of auxiliary soldiers might be expected to die before they completed their twenty-five years term of service.

²⁰ Obviously daughters or sisters of soldiers in the unit might be expected to have an advantage.

²¹ If soldiers had inherited or acquired property, wives might be useful, as any bride also might be who had land or money.

²² Of the auxiliary *diplomata* from Claudius through Trajan 10 included wives and children, 4 children only, and 30 neither wives nor children. Of those from 117 to 140, 5 included wives and children, 8 children only, 1 a wife only, and 8 neither wives nor children. The figures are too small to allow one to reach any firm conclusions, but they suggest that more soldiers were forming families in the first part of the second century, which should be kept in mind in considering the withdrawal of grants of citizenship to children ca. 140. To judge from the figures we obtain from this source, sailors showed little interest in family life. Of their *diplomata* up to 140, 1 included a wife and a child, 2 children only, and 12 neither wives nor children. Inscriptions record more marriages and children, but it is hard to know how representative they are.

To return to the diptych, it seems to me very doubtful that the twins were born in a legally irregular but stable family of a soldier, and very doubtful too that Saturninus was their father. If he were, he would appear to be in effect disowning them, in direct contrast to the soldiers in *CPL* 159–161. Perhaps Gemella did not know or would not name the father. Or whoever she named may have felt uncertain and unwilling to accept responsibility. Perhaps the father was too closely related; e.g., Roman citizens could not marry sisters or aunts.²³ If the father was a *peregrinus*, Roman citizenship could not have been claimed for the twins if he were identified.²⁴ Or he may have been married to someone else or unmentionable for other reasons. The document simply does not provide enough information to settle the questions it raises.

Evidence from other sources would be welcome. As it happens, a C. Iulius Saturninus and a Sempronia Gemella are linked again in an entry in the great tax roll from Karanis of 171/172 and in another in the roll of 172/173.²⁵ The wax tablet of 145, it will be recalled, was found in Karanis. It is entirely possible that the two persons with these names in the tablet were still alive twenty-seven years or more later. Gemella was presumably quite young when her sons were born. Unfortunately, the tax rolls do not state the relationship of their Saturninus and Gemella. She merely pays some taxes for which Saturninus was responsible, as his agent or perhaps as a lessee. She did the same for other land owners, on what basis is also not recorded.²⁶ The combination of the names makes it tempting to conclude that the Saturninus and Gemella of the tablet and of the tax rolls were the same. If so, their relationship was evidently a continuing one, whether or not he remained her *tutor*. Further, in another papyrus from Karanis of 176/179 a Iulius Saturninus is described as a veteran and landowner, *P.Mich.* IX 535. It seems certain that he is the man found in the tax rolls.²⁷ If he was also Gemella's *tutor* in 145, which seems to me probable, he was no doubt at that time still a soldier on active service.²⁸ The most simple explanation of his role may be that he was a

²³ It seemed to be necessary to record the prohibition in *Gnomon Id. Log.* 23.

²⁴ In keeping with the *lex Minicia*. For instances of those affected see R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri*² (Warsaw, 1955) 108, n. 18.

²⁵ *P.Mich.* IV 223, lines 3289–3291 and 224, lines 3901–3903.

²⁶ *P.Mich.* IV 223, lines 2144–2147 and 3292–3297 and 225, lines 2423–2425; cf. 223, lines 2906–2908, 224, lines 4913–4917, and 358 B, lines 19–21. But these entries require an expert's commentary. Close relatives (a brother and sister?) and a workman or lessee with an Egyptian name seem to be involved.

²⁷ This is the view of the editor, E. M. Husselman.

²⁸ If Saturninus had enlisted in a legion, ala, or cohort in 140, for example, he would have been discharged ca. 165 when about forty-five.

family friend from Karanis, who took the place of Gemella's deceased father in making arrangements for her *testatio*.

To turn to the witnesses, the names of several require revision or comments. The signatures are copied in this text, and it is helpful to have all of them in the same hand. But some are poorly preserved. They have been read as follows:²⁹

- M. Vibi Pollionis
- M. Octavi Sereni
- L. Aemili Maximi
- L. Caponi Saturnini
- 5 C. Aebut Saturnini
- C. Vibievi Crassi
- M. Holconi Ampiss[i]

In line 4 one should read *L. Aponi Saturnini*. This eliminates the name Caponius which, as Professor Sanders remarked, appears not to be attested. Nor does Ampissus in line 7 seem to be found elsewhere. Here I would suggest *Ampliati*. In line 6 the *gentilicium* appears not as yet to have been read satisfactorily. It may have ended *-usi*, but I have nothing to propose for the beginning.³⁰ *Crassi* is not right. *Carisi* is an attractive possibility, as Professor Youtie has observed.³¹

The seven names, considered as a group, have a correct, distinctly Latin aspect. Misleading or ambiguous as this may be, Holconius at least is a very rare *gentilicium*, otherwise known only in Pompeii.³² L. Aponius

²⁹ I have depended on the plates published in Sanders' article (above n. 1), but H. C. and L. C. Youtie have most generously and helpfully examined the originals and checked my suggestions.

³⁰ Arangio-Ruiz' *Vibieni* is an emendation.

³¹ He proposed this after I had suggested *Car-*. The alternatives that I had not mentioned but had in mind were *Carisi* or *Carini*. The name is probably to be taken as *C(h)arisius* rather than the Latin *Carisius*. In regard to the *cognomen* in line 7 he writes "Your *Ampliati* is attractive, especially with respect to *l*, although *p* is hard to fix definitely on the photo."

³² Sanders had noticed this, *AJA* 32 (1928) 320. The occurrences in texts published more recently, so far as I know, are all from Pompeii. For the family see M. della Corte, *Casa ed abitanti di Pompei*³ (Naples, 1965) 239-242. *Ampliatius*, which I read as *Holconius'* *cognomen*, is most often found as a name of slaves and freedmen. But it appears to be more widely used in towns of Central and Southern Italy, in the areas included in *CIL* IV, IX, X, and XI. In view of the *gentilicium* the occurrences in Pompeii are particularly interesting, e.g., L. Popidius L. f. *Ampliatius* and N. Popidius *Ampliatius*; for their family see della Corte, 151, n. 4. When and how this *Holconius Ampliatius*, or whoever first brought the name, came to Egypt is of course quite uncertain. *Ampliatius* himself may have been born there, needless to say. The fact that recruits from Italy, including one from Nuceria, were sent to the *legio II Traiana* in A.D. 132 or 133 illustrates the wide range of possibilities; see F. Gilliam, *AJP* 77 (1956) 363.

Saturninus has a name which, though much more common, also attracts one's attention. The senatorial Aponii Saturnini of the first century may have made the *cognomen* seem especially appropriate for an Aponius in a number of areas. A M. Aponius Saturninus was a conspicuous landowner in the Fayum in the time of Tiberius.³³

C. Aebutius Saturninus raises particularly interesting possibilities. The *gentilicium* is familiar to students of the Republic and Roman Law,³⁴ but there were no conspicuous figures with this name in the second half of the first century B.C. or in the Early Empire who might have caused it to be assumed by large numbers of new citizens. It was widely if thinly spread, however, and in Egypt is found from the early first century.³⁵ In 142 an Aebutius (only his *gentilicium* is given) was a decurion in the *ala I Thracum Mauretana*, stationed in Alexandria in the same camp as the *legio II Traiana*.³⁶ This was of course only three years before the *testatio* of Gemella, also written in Alexandria. In view of the comparative rarity of the *gentilicium* and the coincidence in time and place, there seems to be a substantial possibility that C. Aebutius Saturninus was the decurion, and if so that all the witnesses as well as C. Iulius Saturninus were members of the *ala*.³⁷ The document in which the decurion was named was an elaborate

³³ For the senatorial Aponii Saturnini see *PIR*² A 936, 938. For the landowner, Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*² 671. One part of his property was in the vicinity of Karanis. *P.Mich.* V 312 records him as sharing ownership of land with Ti. Claudius Balbillus, which indicates a high social standing however he is to be identified. The most recently published papyrus mentioning him is *P.Mich.* XII 633. Cavenaile (n. 11) lists three Aponii. The witness has a *praenomen* different from that of the landowner and the consul. For legionary Aponii Saturnini in Africa see *CIL* VIII 2554, 2564, 2810.

³⁴ Notably because of the fifth century consular Aebutii and the *lex Aebutia*. Others are listed in *R.E.* I cols. 442-443. See also *Th.L.L.* I cols. 905-906. Of the less conspicuous Aebutii one may note the three members of the *consilium* of Cn. Pompeius Strabo, each with a different *praenomen* and tribe, *CIL* I² 709 (B.C. 89).

³⁵ To those listed in the *Namenbuch* and Foraboschi, *Onomasticon*, one should add the early Latin text *PSI.* XIII 1321 = *CPL* 187; cf. my comments in *Hommages à Claire Préaux* 774.

³⁶ *FIRA* III 47 = *CPL* 221, cited above in n. 15. Published by O. Guéraud and P. Jouguet, *Études de Papyrologie* 6 (1940) 1-21, pls. I-VI. Because of the value of Cavenaile's "Prosopographie" (above, n. 11), it should be noted that the soldiers named in this text were omitted.

³⁷ To entertain such a possibility, after stressing the absence of military titles and terms, may seem to require some justification. The declaration was made by a civilian and otherwise concerns directly only her children. No question of military status or privileges is involved. The tutor and witnesses are acting simply as Roman citizens, not as *milites* or *commilitones*. The person who prepared the *testatio* may have felt that irrelevant terms and the like were out of place. Some other legal documents involving women of Roman citizenship with illegitimate children are equally concise, though the circumstances may

and carefully prepared *testamentum per aes et libram*, written on a well preserved polyptych and containing the will of an *equus* in the *ala*.³⁸ One conspicuous element which the will and the *testatio* have in common is that both are strictly Roman in form.

Whatever the circumstances of the *testatio* may be, in its language and content it reminds one that Roman law and status had real significance for tens of thousands of persons in Egypt at this time, even for an illiterate woman, new-born illegitimate children, and a *tutor* who wrote his *subscriptio* in Greek. Such important matters as marriage, testaments, and inheritances were involved, and in some cases a sense of identity, one may assume. The quite mixed group of resident Roman citizens was becoming larger, and its existence contributed to important developments that became much more apparent in the centuries that followed.³⁹

2. *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2553

E. G. Turner has presented this important but fragmentary text with a careful and instructive commentary. He describes it, quite accurately, as a calendar of cult offerings and cites as a parallel *P.Oslo* III 77. A distinctive and conspicuous element, it should be added, is that the route and stopping places of the presiding magistrate⁴⁰ are included, as well as the prescribed sacrifices. The editor was inclined to conclude that Oxyrhynchus was the place concerned, but Alexandria is probably to be preferred, as others have suggested.⁴¹ The hand is assigned to the end of the second or beginning of the third century. Emperors and even Antinous have a conspicuous role in the calendar. Professor Turner quite rightly remarks that "the text offers new evidence regarding the penetration of Roman cult in Egypt." But a *Lageion* is mentioned repeatedly as well as a *Sebasteion*. There are also

have been different in each case. In one the mother was a freedwoman, and one may suspect her *patronus* was the father, *SB* I 5217 = *FIRA* III 6 (A.D. 148). She had made the *testatio*, as had the mothers in *BGU* IV 1032 (A.D. 173) and *P.Oxy.* XII 1451 (A.D. 175).

³⁸ His heir was his son, a minor and presumably illegitimate. His citizenship was derived from his mother, Antonia Thermutha. She is described as *mater heredis mei*.

³⁹ In the third century a few began to receive equestrian posts which had been accessible much earlier to provincials elsewhere, and formed large estates. The evidence for one of them I have examined in *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston* (Paris, 1974) 217-225. In the fourth century administrative and other substantial careers became more common for natives of Egypt.

⁴⁰ It is not certain who the subject of the verbs is.

⁴¹ C. Préaux, *Chron. d'Égypte* 42 (1967) 218 and P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972) II: Notes, p. 101. The editor had recognized that Alexandria was a possibility. The suggestion presented in this note may make Alexandria seem more likely; cf. below, n. 44.

shrines or temples of Apollo and Heracles. One can assume some continuity with festivals of the Ptolemaic period, though nothing on the scale of the great *pompe* of Ptolemy Philadelphus described by Callixeinus. Such processions were of course common throughout the Greek and Roman world, and from an early time in Egypt.

Despite the wide and varied interest of the text, I will confine myself to comments on line 2 in the first entry:

Fr. i

[9/10] .ς τοῦ Διὸς καὶ ἐκθεώει Ἀντινόου
]ησιον οἶκον τὸν Βρεταννικοῦ κ[
]ειο(ν) καὶ εἰς τὸ Τυχαιό(ν) καὶ εἰς τὸ Ζαπα[
].[Ἀ]ντινόου θύει ἵππικ() αρ[.] . . .[

Who is Britannicus? The editor comments only that "after Claudius no emperor till Commodus . . . took this title." But it seems unlikely that such a title would be used by itself alone to identify either emperor or any of their successors in this context. There was only one Britannicus, the ill-fated son of Claudius, who could be so identified, just as there was only one Germanicus. On some contemporary coins from Asia Minor, for instance, he is called simply *Βρεταννικός* or *Βρεταννικὸς Καῖσαρ*.⁴² At the end of line 2 in the papyrus, incidentally, I believe that *K[αῖσαρος]* should be restored.⁴³

It may seem strange, and doubtless it is, that Britannicus should have an *oikos* in Alexandria⁴⁴ and be mentioned in a religious calendar at the end of the second century or later. The interval in time is not in itself extraordinary. Germanicus, for instance, is found in the *Feriale Duranum*. But Britannicus was poisoned by Nero and brutally disposed of before his fourteenth birthday, before he could distinguish himself in any way or confirm the promise that some saw in him. He died too late for Seneca to display his skills by including him in the *Apocolocyntosis*.

A partial explanation may be found in Suetonius, *Titus* 2. After telling us that Titus was brought up at the court with Britannicus, he adds:

erant autem adeo familiares, ut de potione, qua Britannicus hausta periit, Titus quoque iuxta cubans gustasse credatur gravique morbo adflatus diu. quorum omnium mox

⁴² For coins see F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 48 (1915) 85-93; for the second version of his name cited in the text, pp. 91-92. The use of Britannicus in the authors is familiar; e.g., Cassius Dio LX 12.5; 22.2.

⁴³ Suggested by the editor with *κ[αί]* as an alternative.

⁴⁴ Quite apart from other arguments, it seems more likely that something as unusual as a shrine of Britannicus would be found in Alexandria rather than in Oxyrhynchus. But for the point that I am discussing the location makes little difference.

memor statuum ei auream in Palatio posuit et alteram ex ebore equestrem, quae circensi pompa hodieque praefertur, dedicavit prosecutusque est.

To this may be added the *sestertius* bearing the portrait and name of Britannicus, which was struck under Titus in A.D. 80 in connection with his "restored" series of coins of honored predecessors.⁴⁵ They included Augustus, Agrippa, Tiberius, Drusus, Livia, Nero Drusus, Germanicus, Agrippina I, Claudius, and Galba. Caligula, Nero, Otho, and Vitellius are omitted. The series served to emphasize the continuity between the new dynasty and the old, but with careful discrimination.

The Alexandrians were not reluctant to grant honors to their rulers and members of their families, as the famous letter of Claudius, for example, and that of Nero more recently discovered show.⁴⁶ In giving an *oikos* to Britannicus they were doing no more or little more than Titus did in having the ivory statue included in the *pompa circensis*.⁴⁷ The *oikos* may well have been built or assigned during Titus' short reign, perhaps in 80 at the same time as the "restored" series of coins.⁴⁸ But quite possibly Titus arranged this, e.g., in 71, when he was in Alexandria, or earlier or later during his father's reign.⁴⁹

It would be naively cynical to deny Titus any sense of shared experience, personal obligation, or pity, but, for those who remembered the connection at the time or were informed of it, gestures honoring Britannicus would bring to mind both Nero's crimes and a Flavian link with the Julio-Claudian prince whose place Nero had taken. For Alexandrians a hundred years or more later, Britannicus could have little or no personal significance. A certain number may have known that he was the son of one of the rulers of the empire of which Alexandria and Egypt were now a part. But not

⁴⁵ H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* II (London, 1930) lxxvii-viii, 293, no. 306. See also C. H. V. Sutherland, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy* 31 B.C.-A.D. 68 (London, 1951) 196.

⁴⁶ H. I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (London, 1924) = *Sel. Pap.* II 212. There is a reference to a *pompe* in lines 38-40. For the letter of Nero see O. Montevecchi, *Aegyptus* 50 (1970) 5-33.

⁴⁷ An honor given to *divi*. It was granted to Caesar in his life time. For Cicero's reaction see *ad Attic.* XIII 28.3; 44.1. Cf. Cassius Dio XLIII 45.2.

⁴⁸ It would not be surprising if Alexandrian envoys came to Rome early in Titus' reign, with requests and prepared to do something that might please the emperor. For Titus and Alexandrians as represented in the fragmentary "Acta Hermiae" see C. H. Roberts *J.R.S.* 39 (1949) 79-80 and H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* (Oxford, 1954) 32.

⁴⁹ As is well known, the most direct and important contacts of Vespasian and Titus with Alexandria came soon after the former's proclamation. See A. Henrichs, *ZPE* 3 (1968) 51-80; C. P. Jones, *Historia* 22 (1973) 306-308.

much more would have been known, or needed to be known, about most of those formally and fully included in the imperial cult.

3. PSI XIV 1448

1 (*traces*) [
 anno provinciae centesimo et tert[io
 2d H. Callistianus Aug[ustinus] ... [
 Nicostrati vicari mei (denarios) [
 5 [- ca. 12 l. -]....§ Ruf[us]

This scrap, of unknown provenance and incomplete on three sides, seems to have attracted little attention, not surprisingly perhaps. There are two hands. The second, in lines 3-5, is that of an Imperial slave, probably a *dispensator* or the holder of some other financial post to judge from the fact that he had a *vicarius*.⁵⁰ We may assume that from an early age he had been trained for a clerical career; quite possibly his hand may serve as an example of those in use in the great bureaux in Rome. The editor, V. Bartoletti, dated it in the second or third century.

The readings in lines 2-4 are certain except at the end of line 3. The plate suggests that *Augg* may be possible, but Professor Manfredi has kindly examined the original and confirms that there is only one *g*.⁵¹ The traces that follow must be remnants of *ser[us]* (*vus*).⁵² Of the possibilities to be considered, they are compatible only with this; moreover, *vicari mei* in the next line clearly points to a slave, not a freedman.

Little remains to indicate the content or even the nature of the text. Following a suggestion of Arangio-Ruiz, the editor concludes that the text probably concerned the sale of the *vicarius*.⁵³ No sensible person is eager to differ with Arangio-Ruiz, but the *vicarius* of an Imperial slave was not simply his personal slave and merely part of his *peculium*. The *vicarius* was

⁵⁰ For *vicarius* see P. R. C. Weaver, *J.R.S.* 54 (1964) 117-128; *Familia Caesaris* (Cambridge, 1972) 199-206.

⁵¹ In a letter of 2 December 1969. The reading is important for attempts to date the text. Thus in A.D. 208, a possibility if the era is that of the province of Arabia, *Augg* would be expected.

⁵² In a note the editor comments, "*Aug(usti) ser[vus]*? Ma le tracce sono incertissime." *Servus* is almost certainly abbreviated. For various designations of Imperial slaves, their forms, and dates see H. Chantraine, *Freigelassene und Sklaven im Dienst der römischen Kaiser* (Wiesbaden, 1967) 180-188.

⁵³ Accepted e.g., by R. Taubenschlag, *JJP* 11-12 (1957-1958) 356 and M. Amelotti, *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris* 24 (1958) 386.

his deputy and in effect also a member of the civil service.⁵⁴ A sale such as is suggested was probably very unusual. It seems much more likely that the *vicarius* was somehow involved in the transaction, whether it was public or private in character, as the deputy or agent of Callistianus. I would suggest that the subscription that we have in lines 3–5 began something like this: *Callistianus Aug(usti) şer[(vus) accepi per personam] | Nicostrati vicari mei (denarios) [*.⁵⁵

The writing runs across the fibres. One possibility to consider perhaps is a double document of the kind that those who were self-consciously Roman, or those who prepared legal papers for them, continued to use occasionally, even in Egypt after the form was generally abandoned there.⁵⁶ But too little remains of the text to make conjectures valuable.

As the editor remarked, the date in line 2 suggests that the document was not written in Egypt; at least, the date is not Egyptian.⁵⁷ In the Latin West a provincial era was in common use only in Mauretania Caesariensis. Inscriptions contain hundreds of examples of the formula found here, ordinarily abbreviated (*a. p.* or the like) but occasionally written out as in this papyrus.⁵⁸ Year 1 of the era was A.D. 40. In the East the only provincial era which might be considered here seems to be that of Arabia, in which year 1 = A.D. 106.⁵⁹ I am inclined to prefer the Mauretanian era, because it is so commonly used and because its form is so regular and fixed. Further, though Imperial slaves might use Latin anywhere, it is natural to assign a Latin document to Mauretania rather than Arabia. But caution is in order. If the Mauretanian era is that used, year 103 = A.D. 142; year 113, if one restores *tert[io decimo]*, would be of course A.D. 152. The corresponding years in the Arabian era would give A.D. 208 or 218. The stereotyped official Latin hands are particularly difficult to date,⁶⁰ and I have no confidence in my ability to choose between the eras on the basis of the two hands we have here.

We do not know who the other party in the transaction was, to whom

⁵⁴ See Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* (above n. 50) 200–206.

⁵⁵ Without looking further, for *per personam* I may cite *P.Aberdeen* 61 = *FIRA* III 147 = *CPL* 186 = *ChLA* IV 224 (A.D. 48/49).

⁵⁶ For such a text recently published, and for a reference to one in another papyrus, see J. F. Gilliam, *Bonner Jahrb.* 167 (1967) 233–243; *JJP* 16–17 (1971) 63–70. In such a document the scrap discussed here would correspond roughly to lines 19–22 of *P.London* 229 = *ChLA* III 100.

⁵⁷ Conceivably the date is taken from another document being cited.

⁵⁸ See the index of *CIL* VIII, Suppl. V, pp. 179–180.

⁵⁹ For the day and year see G. W. Bowersock, *J.R.S.* 61 (1971) 231. I find that C. Préaux has suggested this era as a possibility in a review, *Chron. d'Égypte* 35 (1960) 303–304.

⁶⁰ Cf. R. Marichal, *Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes Études* 101 (1968–1969) 272.

Callistianus⁶¹ acknowledges receipt of a sum in *denarii*.⁶² Presumably it was he who brought the document to Egypt, rather than Callistianus. Nevertheless, it is not entirely out of place to remark that Imperial slaves and freedmen should not be overlooked when one is considering Latin and Latin influences in Egypt, for instance in official terms. Louis Robert has commented on their importance in this respect in the Greek East generally.⁶³ In Egypt the emperor's slaves and freedmen are comparatively unobtrusive, because of the nature of the administration of this province and because we have relatively few papyri from Alexandria. More might be found there than elsewhere. But it would be worth-while to collect the evidence. There are some striking texts as early as the time of Augustus.⁶⁴

4. *A monastery library*

Two of the three texts that have been discussed in this paper are in Latin. It is well known that in the East the use of Latin never became common, despite the long continuation of Roman rule, the grants of citizenship and its consequences, and the penetration of much else that was Roman in origin and character.⁶⁵ As regards languages, for centuries Greek was the chief beneficiary, as well as one of the most important instruments, of processes we describe as Romanization. Descendants of Latin speaking immigrants or veterans seem as a rule to have been absorbed, within a few generations at most, into the Greek communities among which they lived. In Egypt, as elsewhere in the East, the appearance of Latin in any period requires an attempt at explanation.⁶⁶

The papyrus and parchment codices acquired by the Bodmer Library some twenty-five years ago are among the most notable discoveries of their kind. Some are intact and others are preserved in large part. Those which have been published in the series P. Bodmer⁶⁷ include books of the Iliad,

⁶¹ For names of slaves ending in *-ianus* in the second century see Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* (above, n. 50) 89-90.

⁶² The *denarius* was used in Egypt in military accounts and in other formally Roman and administrative documents, but still it supports the assumption of a non-Egyptian origin.

⁶³ *L'Antiquité Classique* 37 (1968) 439-444.

⁶⁴ See e.g., W. Schubart, *Archiv. f. P.* 5 (1913) 41, 116-118. For restrictions on *Caesariani* and *vicarii* see *Gnomon Id. Log.* 109, 110.

⁶⁵ For one example see L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*² (Amsterdam, 1971).

⁶⁶ The admirable paper of U. Wilcken, "Ueber den Nutzen der lateinischen Papyri," *Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Milan, 1936) 101-122 remains valuable.

⁶⁷ The first volume was published in 1954.

comedies of Menander, parts of the Old and New Testaments, and Christian texts of various kinds, in Greek and in Coptic. Considered individually, without regard to where they were found and in what context, many of the texts are highly important, some even unique. But it seems clear that they all come from the same source, and should be considered as a group, along with a few other parts of the find that are now in other collections.

What is most important here is the presence of Latin texts in the find. This was first recognized as a possibility when W. H. Willis published a scrap of the First Catilinarian, found between leaves of a Coptic codex, part of which is now in Mississippi, part in the Bodmer Library.⁶⁸ After R. Roca-Puig presented the Latin *Psalmus responsorius*,⁶⁹ a comparison of the hands immediately suggested a connection. Professor Roca-Puig soon confirmed that the fragment in Mississippi came from his papyrus codex in Barcelona, which contained in addition to the *Psalmus* the first two Catilinarians, as well as Greek texts.⁷⁰ There is other evidence, not yet published, for believing that the Barcelona codex and those in the Bodmer Library had once been together. In short, we have the remnants of a monastery library, from the Thebaid and more specifically, it appears, from the vicinity of Panopolis,⁷¹ which in the fourth century contained at least three Latin texts.

It should be emphasized that the Barcelona codex does not appear to be a stray, brought from abroad perhaps by some ecclesiastic who found himself in this part of Egypt.⁷² The ornamentation at the end of the *Samia*

⁶⁸ *TAPA* 94 (1963) 321-327. The two parts of the codex have been published in *P. Bodmer XXII*.

⁶⁹ *Himne a la Verge Maria 'Psalmus Responsorius': Papir Llatí del Segle IV²* (Barcelona, 1965).

⁷⁰ *Aegyptus* 46 (1966) 124. The "Anafora greca" included in the codex was described in the same volume of *Aegyptus*, pp. 91-92. More information about the Catilinarians, including their number, variant readings, and a good photograph of one leaf, was presented in a small but instructive publication, *Selecció de variants a les Catiliniàries de Ciceró. P. Barc., I et II in Catilinam* (Barcelona, 1971). The Barcelona fragment of the *Samia* should be noted as confirming connections with the Bodmer codices; published by R. Roca-Puig, *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 32 (1967-1968) 5-13. More recently he has described some Latin "Hexameters on Alcestis" also included in his Barcelona codex, *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrologists*.

⁷¹ Eric Turner, *Greek Papyri* (Oxford, 1968) 52-53.

⁷² I have in mind Lucifer of Calaris, banished to the Thebaid in the mid-fourth century. Known to me through K. M. Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* (New York, 1941) 92-93.

resembles that at the end of the First Catilinarian.⁷³ In general, it looks like a local product rather than an import, whether from a Western province or a good *scriptorium* in Alexandria. The combination in this small codex of texts that are both Greek and Latin and at the same time Christian and pagan may perhaps suggest local work. Ignorance, as well as carelessness, seems required to explain errors in the *Psalmus*, though the hand shows practice in writing Latin.

It is striking to find seemingly diverse elements brought together in this setting: Greek classics, Coptic texts that represent a new literary language and reflect the development of a distinctive form of Christianity, and both Ciceronian and Christian Latin. To be sure, Homer and Menander were not really out of place in an essentially Coptic monastery.⁷⁴ But Latin is more unexpected, at least for one not at home in such establishments. Diocletian's insistence on the use of Latin in administration and even on coins struck in Alexandria should be recalled. Under the Tetrarchy too Egypt became more fully integrated into the Empire. For a variety of reasons, there came to be far wider opportunities for young men from Egypt with talent, ambition, and education to have careers that had long been open to others. In ecclesiastical matters, which might have wide consequences, the opinions of Egyptian bishops and monks had to be taken into account; in the second century no one in the capital cared much about the views on large questions of Alexandrians and the population of Egypt proper. For law and administrative posts in the fourth century the study of Latin was necessary. Claudian of course was the most accomplished Latin poet of the Later Empire, quite extraordinary and exceptional but still the product of the study of Latin in Alexandria.⁷⁵ In his case as in many others, conspicuous accomplishments in Greek or Latin

⁷³ See the photograph of the last leaf of the First Catilinarian mentioned above in n. 70. This should be taken into account in dating the Menander codex. For the ornamentation see C. Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Zierbuchstaben* (Stockholm, 1970) 116.

⁷⁴ Cf. H. G. Evelyn White, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition. The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, Part II (New York, 1926) 320-321, for school pieces found on walls of cells including lines of the Iliad and *sententiae* from Menander (end of the sixth/beginning of the seventh centuries). For a combination of the same three languages as those found in the codices see W. Schubart, "Ein lateinisch-griechisch-koptisches Gesprächsbuch," *Klio* 13 (1913) 27-38 (fifth or sixth century).

⁷⁵ The whole of A. Cameron's *Claudian* (Oxford, 1970) should be read but see especially pp. 19-21, and for his reading in Latin, pp. 315-321. The volume contains much information about the large number of Egyptian poets in this period and their wanderings, e.g., pp. 22-29; see also Cameron's article in *Historia* 14 (1965) 470-509. For an Egyptian member of the Museum who became *praefectus vigilum* in the early third century see my article cited above, n. 39.

rhetoric had substantial rewards. Latin had become important enough that it might well be thought desirable to have it represented in a monastery in Upper Egypt. As a practical consideration, Latin might be useful or desirably ornamental in dealings with high authorities. The Catilinarians were a standard elementary text, then as now. The *Psalmus* is harder to explain, and reflects an interest without obviously practical ends.

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