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The Military and Administrative Reforms of the Emperor Gallienus

by P.D. Britton

Abstract

The military and administrative reforms of Gallienus affected the tactical organisation of the army, the composition and structure of the officer corps, and the social composition of the provincial administration.

Gallienus' tactical reforms created a powerful body of cavalry, which represented the culmination to a century of increasing mobility and depth in defence. This "battlecavalry" was not the direct ancestor of the later comitatenses, but its tactical value and elite status paved the way for a "dual" system of defence involving frontier garrisons and centralised field-armies. His reforms of the officer corps involved the replacement of senatorial officers by equestrians, and the introduction of the protectorate. He hoped thereby to bind military commanders more closely to himself. The administrative reforms involved increasing the number of equestrian governors. Though senatorial governorships continued to occur, senators were henceforth without any real military power. Whether Gallienus ever issued an "edict" to this effect is uncertain, as is the motive behind the reform. Most scholars see in it an attempt to improve the quality of military leadership, but there is little evidence for this. It is preferable to agree with Aurelius Victor, that Gallienus feared the senators, and so deprived them of their commands.

Together, Gallienus' creation of the "battlecavalry" and his reforms of the officer corps and provincial administration created the pre-conditions for the recovery of the Roman empire under the Illyrian emperors, and laid the foundations to the "Military Monarchy" of the later Roman empire.

The Military and Administrative Reforms
of the
Emperor Gallienus

A Thesis
submitted for the Degree
of Master of Arts
at the
University of Durham

by
Peter David Britton

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- 1981 -



22. MAY 1974

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Abbreviations

A.E.	L'Année Epigraphique: revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine, Paris, 1888ff.
A.J.A.	American Journal of Archaeology.
A.J.P.	American Journal of Philology.
A.N.R.W.	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung, ed. H. Temporini, Berlin.
ASS.	Acta Sanctorum.
Acta Arch. Acad. Sc. Hung.	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
Anal. Boll.	Analecta Bollandiana.
Arch. Anz.	Archaeologische Anzeiger.
Arch. Ertesito	Archaeologiai Ertesito.
B.C.H.	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique.
B.J.	Bonner Jahrbucher des rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn.
B.S.A.	Annual of the British School at Athens.
Barbieri	G. Barbieri, L'Albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino (193-285), Rome, 1952.
C.A.H.	The Cambridge Ancient History: 11, The Imperial Peace, A.D. 70-192, (1936); 12, The Imperial Crisis and Recovery, A.D. 193-324 (1939).
C.I.L.	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum I-XVI, Berlin, 1863-1936.
C.J.	Codex Iustinianus, Berlin, 1877.
C.S.E.L.	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna.
Class. Phil.	Classical Philology.
Denskschr. Wien. Akad. Phil. - Hist. Kl.	Denskschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Wien.
Eph. Ep.	Ephemeris Epigraphica.
Epigr. Stud.	Epigraphische Studien.



- F.H.G. Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, C. Mueller, Paris, 1874-85.
- Forsch. Eph. Forschungen in Ephesos, Osterreichischen archaologischen institut, Wien.
- H.A. Scriptores Historiae Augustae, ed. Magie, London, 1954.
- I.G.R. R. Cagnat, Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes, I-IV, Paris, 1906-27, Rome, 1964.
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- Inscr. Cret. M. Guarducci, Inscriptiones Creticae.
- J.R.S. The Journal of Roman Studies.
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- M.E.F.R. Mélanges d'Archeologie et d'Histoire de L'Ecole Francaise de Rome.
- M. and S. H. Mattingley and E.A. Sydenham, The Roman Imperial Coinage, V, 1-2, ed. P.H. Webb, London, 1927.
- Not. Dig. Notitia Dignitatum, ed. O. Seeck, 1962.
- Opusc. Rom. Opuscula Romana.
- P.B.A. Proceedings of the British Academy.
- P.I.R.² Prosopographia Imperii Romani, saec. I, II, III, 2nd ed. by E. Groag and A. Stein, continued by L. Petersen, 4 vols.
- P.L.R.E. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale and J. Morris, The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, vol. 1., A.D. 260-395, Cambridge, 1971.
- P. Oxy. B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Parts I-XVII, London, 1898-1927.
- Patrolog. Graec. Patrologia Graeca.
- R.E. Pauly - Wissowa - Kroll - Mittelhaus - Ziegler, Realencyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, 1893ff.
- R.F.A.C. Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum.

- R.I.B. R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright, The Roman Inscriptions of Britain, vol. 1., Inscriptions on Stone (1965).
- Rev. Hist. Revue Historique.
- Rh. M. Rheinisches Museum.
- Saxer R. Saxer, Untersuchungen zu den Vexillationen des römischen Kaiserheeres von Augustus bis Diokletianus. Epigr. Stud. 1, Cologne, 1967 (=B.J. Beiheft 18).
- S.E.G. Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.
- T.P.A.P.A. Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.

Introduction

The Roman world of the fourth century A.D. presents, to the modern observer, a dramatically different picture from that of the second century. The second century brings to mind a world of prosperous bourgeoisie, steeped in the pagan classical culture of Greece and Rome and living in well-ordered, self-governing cities scattered across a vast territory stretching from Syria in the east to Spain in the west, and from Britain in the north to Egypt in the south. At the centre of this world lay Rome, the mother of cities, from whence (figuratively if not in practice) senatorial governors and equestrian procurators were sent to represent the emperor in the provinces. In exchange for the various benefits of empire, Rome protected her dominions from the barbarians beyond her frontiers with her legions. These, assisted by auxiliary troops, were stretched in a thin but by now permanent cordon along her borders, and were under a system of rigid discipline exercised by mainly senatorial generals and equestrian officers. This was Gibbon's "Golden Age," a period of peace, prosperity, and cultural stagnation: the climax of the ancient world.

By contrast, the centre of social and economic gravity in the fourth century Roman world was shifting from the city to the countryside. The towns had shrunk, in the west especially, to a fraction of their former size. Their decline had been accompanied by that of the bourgeoisie, their prosperity squeezed from them by a harsh and greedy government, ruling them with a rod of iron through a huge and corrupt bureaucracy. Society had become rigidly stratified, with, at the base, a peasantry tied to the soil, and at the top a christian, oriental-style court frequently dominated by eunuchs, low-born bureaucrats and barbarian generals. The senatorial aristocrats had for the most part been relegated to a life of decorative ease, while Rome itself was

no longer the actual capital of the empire. Militarily, the legions had become second-class border units; the elite troops of the Roman army were now the mobile field armies stationed permanently behind the frontiers, and including important contingents of cavalry.

In virtually all aspects, the Roman worlds of the second and fourth centuries A.D. seem ages apart; yet were separated by a mere hundred years. When seen against the background of Rome's history, the metamorphosis of the third century is remarkable. From her origins as a small city-state on the banks of the Tiber, the evolution of her institutions - political, military, and social - can be traced as they slowly adapted themselves to meet new conditions and new challenges. The Principate can thus clearly be recognised as the offspring of the late Republic. For the Roman world of the later empire, however, such continuity is far less apparent. Its institutions are so changed, their roots so obscure, that it gives the impression of springing from the dark years of the third century ready formed, virtually without any antecedents. It seems, in fact, to be part of a different civilization. While the Roman empire of the second century definitely belongs to ^{the} world of antiquity, that of the fourth century has a distinctly medieval quality.

When did this vast transformation take place? Scholars have singled out various points between the late second and early fourth centuries when the institutions of the early empire gave way to those of the late empire. The reign of Marcus, with its invasions and plague, is frequently seen as bringing to a close the good years of the Principate⁽¹⁾, while Commodus is noted for ending the mild rule of the Antonines⁽²⁾. Septimius Severus has been held responsible for introducing an "Oriental Despotism" or "Military Monarchy", and for ending the predominance of the senate⁽³⁾, while at the other end of the third century, Diocletian has also been blamed for the

introduction of an "Oriental Despotism" because of his reorganisation of society along rigidly "caste" lines and his creation of the Tetrarchy⁽⁴⁾. Similarly, Constantine is regarded in many ways as the founder of the late empire, and indeed of medieval Europe, in that he was the founder of both Constantinople and of the Christian state⁽⁵⁾.

The truth of course is that the transformation of the Roman empire was accomplished by a slow evolution rather than by swift revolution. The process of change was already well under way by the beginning of the third century, and had still to be completed by its end. No single reign can be held responsible.

And yet, despite this, there was a decisive reign when the old system can be said to have given way to the new. This was the reign of Gallienus. Occurring at the peak of the third-century crisis, it saw the complete collapse of the Principate, and its consequent replacement by the "Military Monarchy" of the late third and fourth centuries. By Gallienus' accession, the institutions of the empire had undergone considerable change, and at his death still had much further development to experience. But it was in his reign that the essential reforms were effected which, taken together, gave rise to the "Military Monarchy," in that they shifted the political base of the government more directly on to the army and away from the senatorial class.

This thesis will examine the reforms of Gallienus, particularly the tactical reorganisation of the empire's defences around the "battlecavalry", and the replacement of the senatorial officers by equestrians⁽⁶⁾. It will argue that, although these two measures arose from different motives, together they made the military establishment of the empire into an effective and reliable tool upon which to build a stable political system. They thus laid the found-

dations for the "Dominate" of the late empire. The fall of the senatorial order will also be discussed, and it is hoped to show that this was central to the fall of the Principate, and that the causes were political rather than military.

Gallienus has been comparatively neglected by modern scholarship. Given the dearth of historical data for the mid-third century, this is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, these years were crucial for the development of late Roman institutions, and they deserve more attention. A recent exception to this is the work by de Blois⁽⁷⁾, which is devoted entirely to the policies of Gallienus. In so far as the military and political policies of the emperor are concerned, however, this study suffers from almost too much attention to detail. Not enough attention is paid to the previous and subsequent developments of the institutions affected by the reforms, and by thus isolating them from their historical context, their true significance is lost. This in turn leads to a complete failure to appreciate the significance of Gallienus' reign. De Blois concludes that Gallienus was not a reformer, but an opportunist, and that he favored the military too much. "In the year 259 he (Gallienus) was confronted by numerous anti-emperors and enemies abroad, and he may well have had the impression that Valerian's generals and senators did not wish him to succeed his father. So he relied exclusively on his army"⁽⁸⁾. Not only was this about the only option open to him, however; his reliance upon the army almost certainly saved the Roman empire from extinction in the third-century. It was the keystone in the erection of a new, stable power-structure, and thus provided the essential pre-conditions for survival. That Gallienus was able to depend upon the army, moreover, is in itself a testimony to his effectiveness as a reformer. As we shall hope to show, it

was Gallienus rather than Diocletian or Constantine who should be regarded as the real founder of the new dispensation of the later Roman empire.

Sources

As has been noted already, the source-material relating to the mid-third century is scanty and confusing. This applies to both main kinds used in this study, namely epigraphic material and written histories.

So far as epigraphy is concerned, the supply of comparatively full career-inscriptions dries up after the reign of Severus Alexander, and does not start up again until the period of the Tetrarchy⁽⁹⁾. We are almost entirely dependent upon fragmentary epigraphic references to single offices. A mere handful of inscriptions survive which give even the barest details of a man's career, most of which are to some extent controversial in interpretation⁽¹⁰⁾. An inscription found at Sbeitla setting out the mid-third century career of an unknown senator is a typical example:

[...]

[...]tricis quaestor [.....]

[...]uridico per Flaminiam et [....]

[.]cris faciundis praes prov Pan [....]

[.]c[.]niae Dalmatiae agenti vice prae [....]

[...] (11).

The first stages of this senator's career are fairly clear. Starting off with a tribunate in a legion surnamed Adiutrix or Victrix, it proceeds through the stages of a typical "inactive" senatorial career - the quaestorship, praetorship (which is lost), an Italian iuridicate, and a priesthood. Then the problems start. The inscription gives the next stages of the career as governor of

one or both of the Pannonian provinces, then of Macedonia, and then of Dalmatia. The first and third of these were consular legateships, while the middle one was a praetorian proconsulate. At any rate, that was the arrangement under the Principate. This gives rise, therefore, to questions such as whether the inscription has given the offices in the correct order. If not, is it evidence that the division between senatorial and imperial provinces has entirely broken down by the mid-third century? And why is a senator whose only previous military experience was as a tribune taking on a governorship, and therefore presumably the command-in-chief, in the most threatened sector of the empire?

These are the sort of problems associated with much of the epigraphic evidence of the period; and unfortunately, the written sources are equally obscure, and even more controversial. Reliable contemporary sources, namely the works of Cassius Dio and Herodian, stop short in the reigns of Severus Alexander and Gordian III respectively. After that, only small fragments of the works of Dexippus of Athens have come down to us⁽¹²⁾. For the rest, we are dependent upon later histories of questionable accuracy.

The best known of these histories is that purportedly written by the Scriptores Historiae Augustae. For the mid-third century, this is of very dubious value. Probably written a hundred years or more after this period, and in some places little more than a work of fiction⁽¹³⁾, it is not to be followed unless supported by external evidence.

Another source for the mid-third century is the work of Aurelius Victor, a litterateur and provincial governor who wrote in c. 360⁽¹⁴⁾. This source is particularly important for Gallienus' reign, as it is the only one which mentions the so-called "edict," whereby senators were excluded from holding military command⁽¹⁵⁾.

Most scholars regard this "edict" as more or less fictitious. In his recent work on the third century, for example, Brauer states that there was certainly no edict, but that the replacement of senators by equestrians was accomplished by a gradually unfolding policy⁽¹⁶⁾. Although other scholars are less dogmatic, this statement represents the general view of Gallienus' exclusion of senators⁽¹⁷⁾. Victor's work is not therefore regarded as being accurate in this matter, though it is thought to be generally reliable⁽¹⁸⁾. At least it was an honest attempt at writing the history of this period, and, while sharing a common source, is of greater value than the *Historia Augusta*.

Both the sources referred to above represent the "senatorial" historical tradition. That is to say, they were written by and for men who belonged to the aristocratic culture of the Latin west. Harboured and cultivated by the senators of Rome, this culture looked back to the past when the ordo enjoyed more political influence than in the fourth century. It is consequently hardly surprising to find that Gallienus is seen in a very poor light, and both these works paint a very hostile picture of an effeminate and luxury-loving emperor who made jokes about Rome's misfortunes⁽¹⁹⁾. Fortunately, this is not the only image we are given of Gallienus. In contrast to the Latin, senatorial tradition, the Greek histories convey a much more virile and active impression.

There are two main Greek sources for Gallienus' reign: the works of Zosimus and Zonaras⁽²⁰⁾. Of these, Zosimus' "New History" is the most valuable, in that it was chronologically nearest to the third century, being written sometime between c.450 and 503⁽²¹⁾. It also drew on contemporary sources, which for the mid-third century was Dexippus⁽²²⁾. It is certainly not a very outstanding work of history, and is marred in places by notable inaccuracies⁽²³⁾.

But it does have a real value in presenting another side to Gallienus' reign, and thus allowing a more balanced assessment of it.

Epigraphic and written sources provide the great bulk of the evidence used in this study. Other pieces of evidence, however, are provided by a few coins and laws, and also by the late Roman list of official positions, the Notitia Dignitatum⁽²⁴⁾. These are only of marginal value in helping to build up a picture of the period.

Why there should be such a dearth of evidence is something of a mystery. Why, for example, does the flow of senatorial career-inscriptions dry up in the mid-third century? Of all people, the senators' lifestyle was presumably least effected by the troubles. Indeed, judging by their fourth-century opulence their wealth actually increased during these years. Again, why are the histories concerning this period so unreliable? Was civilization so disrupted as to leave no reliable record for succeeding generations? It is hard to believe that the men of the fourth century had such a hazy idea of what happened in their fathers' and grandfathers' times. These questions, however, are not within the scope of the present study.

Historical Background

The third-century troubles, which reached their zenith under Gallienus, had their genesis in the reign of Marcus. The last of the five "good" emperors, he presided over Rome when she finally lost the initiative against her neighbours. From then on, she went more and more over to the defensive along all her frontiers.

The military crisis under Marcus, the tyranny of Commodus and the ensuing civil wars brought an end to the "golden age" of the Antonines, and raised the Severan dynasty to power. The Severi, if one includes the brief reign of Macrinus, gave the empire forty years of comparative stability. To establish themselves, however, and to meet the increasing pressure on the frontiers, the rule of the early Severi was harsher and more 'militaristic' than that of previous emperors⁽²⁵⁾. This was followed by the mild but ineffectual reign of the last Severan, Alexander. Neither style of government was able to check the growing social unrest throughout the empire, even in Italy itself. Nor were they able to deal an effective blow against the growing strength of the barbarians. The rise, moreover, of a virile new dynasty in Persia, the Sassanids, during Severus Alexander's reign put an added strain upon the defences of the empire. The widespread demoralisation that arose from both internal and external pressures, which affected the soldiers in particular, consequently undermined confidence in the regime, and resulted in the mutiny which brought Maximinus to power in 235.

The fall of Severus Alexander was seen by ancient authors as the end of the Principate, and the accession of Maximinus correspondingly as the opening of the third-century crisis⁽²⁶⁾.

Certainly, Maximinus' rule, while militarily successful, did offer the Roman world a foretaste of the more abrasive style of govern-

ment that was to prevail later. It was an experience little to its liking, and led to one of the most remarkable episodes in the entire history of Rome, the 'senatorial revolt' of 238. Against all expectations, and despite initial reverses, this revolt succeeded. Maximinus was killed by his own troops outside Aquileia in northern Italy.

So ended the first experiment in undisguised military rule; under the youthful Gordian III (238-244), the empire returned to the more 'constitutional' style of the Principate⁽²⁷⁾. The problems that beset the Severi had not disappeared, however. Foreign invasion and internal unrest continued, contributing to the further demoralisation of the Roman army and people. To deal with these problems, Timesitheus, whose daughter Gordian married, was appointed Praetorian Prefect. But time was not on their side. The Persians mounted a massive invasion of the east, and both Gordian and Timesitheus went out to command the armies there. Shortly afterwards, Timesitheus died, and the new Praetorian Prefect, Philip, organised the assassination of the young emperor⁽²⁸⁾.

Philip's reign (244-249) was marked by an equal inability to solve the problems facing the Roman world. Like his predecessor he took a pro-senatorial line, and on becoming emperor he immediately made a disadvantageous peace with Persia, and remembering the fate of Maximinus, hurried back to present himself to the senate at Rome⁽²⁹⁾. Soon, however, he was faced with troubles both from outside and within the frontiers. Large-scale invasions across the Danube, coupled with revolts such as those of Marius and Antoninus, led to a serious crisis. Apart from postponing the celebration of the thousandth birthday of Rome, they led to the appointment of Decius, who was the most distinguished senator at this time, as commander in Illyricum. Predictably enough, Decius

soon received the acclamation of his troops, and, marching on Rome, overcame Philip (killed by his own men) and was installed as emperor.

Although Decius was brought to power by the Danubian soldiery, the historical tradition relating to him is favourable⁽³⁰⁾, and this suggests that his reign too was "senatorial" in style. It was cut short - as was his persecution of the christians - by another massive invasion of the Balkan provinces by the Goths and Carpi, which brought about his death in battle at Abrittus. This tragedy may in part have been due to the treachery of the legate of Moesia, Gallus, who thereupon marched on Rome and had himself installed as emperor. During his rule (251-253), Gallus apparently remained at Rome, and unlike other emperors, did not venture out to deal with the frontier troubles in person⁽³¹⁾.

The increasingly short reigns of the emperors of these years shows that the pace of events was quickening, and that the forces of anarchy were gathering strength⁽³²⁾. The growing strength of the invasions, and the correspondingly more widespread devastation of the provinces - particularly the Danubian provinces - was matched by the repeated marches on Rome by rebellious armies and their leaders. Gallus' reign was brought to an end by such an episode. A governor of Moesia, Aemilianus, on repelling a Gothic invasion, was saluted emperor by his troops. On overcoming Gallus, however, his reign lasted a mere three months. News reached Rome that Valerian, who had been dispatched by Gallus to collect and lead an army against Aemilian, had been proclaimed emperor, and Aemilian was assassinated by his own soldiers at Rome⁽³³⁾.

Valerian (253-260) like Decius before him, was a leading senator, and his reign was "senatorial" in character⁽³⁴⁾. It was also marked by devastating invasions of the Illyrian and Asian provinces by the Goths and others from across the Danube, and by

the Persians across the Euphrates. To deal with these, Valerian went out in person to the east, leaving his son, Gallienus to cope with barbarian incursions across the Rhine and Upper Danube. Apart from purely military reasons, this arrangement undoubtedly had the political purpose of forestalling revolt on the part of the generals, and it was carried further in the installation of Gallienus' sons, Saloninus and Valerian, as Caesars⁽³⁵⁾. Another political measure by which Valerian tried to shore up the unity of the empire was the renewed persecution of the christians.

By such means, Valerian managed to preserve a precarious stability during his reign. He was able to make very little headway against external enemies, however, and he finally suffered the ultimate humiliation of being captured by the Persians at Edessa.

The circumstances leading to the accession of Gallienus as sole ruler can hardly have been less auspicious. The capture of Valerian was the signal for virtually all the armies of the Roman empire to proclaim their own nominees as emperor. In the east, the Macriani; on the Danube, Ingenuus; and on the Rhine, Postumus; these, together with lesser rebels, such as Piso and Valens in the Balkans and Mussius Aemilianus in Egypt, either declared a virtual independence or aimed at the whole empire and began their march on Rome⁽³⁶⁾.

Faced with what must have looked like the final triumph of anarchy, Gallienus had, during his campaigns in Gaul, equipped himself with a weapon that was to bring him through the crisis. This was the "battlecavalry" under the command of Aureolus. In a brilliant series of campaigns, Aureolus defeated the revolts of the Macriani and of Ingenuus⁽³⁷⁾. The overthrow of the Macriani was followed by the proclamation of Ballista in the east, and on the Danube Ingenuus' place was taken by Regalianus⁽³⁸⁾. Ballista,

however, was defeated and killed by Odenathus, ruler of Palmyra, while Regalian's revolt was overcome by Aureolus and the battle-cavalry. The lesser rebels had vanished one way or another, and the situation finally resolved itself with Postumus in control of Gaul, Britain and Spain, Odenathus - professing loyalty to Gallienus - in practical control of the east and Egypt, and Gallienus in control of the rest - namely Italy, the Balkans and Africa.

On becoming sole emperor, Gallienus reversed many of the policies of his father. He put an end to the persecution of the Christians, and he did not continue the "senatorial" character of Valerian's reign. Apart from the exclusion of senators from military command, for example, the proportion of equestrian governors under Gallienus rose significantly.

Gallienus' troubles were by no means ended with the suppression of the revolts at the beginning of his reign. In 267 a Gothic invasion in Illyricum called for his personal intervention. In his absence, Aureolus, the commander of the cavalry, rebelled in northern Italy⁽³⁹⁾. Gallienus, leaving the general Marcianus in charge of the Illyrian campaign, immediately hurried back to Italy. There, while besieging Milan, he was assassinated by his own officers. Such was his popularity with his troops that the conspirators had to bribe the soldiers to keep quiet and accept the authority of their nominee, Claudius (268-270)⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Claudius was the first of the "Illyrian" emperors who saved the Roman world and restored it to something like its previous glory. He and his successors re-united the whole empire under one regime, and succeeded in checking the invasions of the barbarians. They thus laid the foundations for the comparative stability that the empire enjoyed during the fourth-century. In their turn, however, they were building upon the foundations laid by Gallienus, which are the subject of this thesis.

Notes and references

- 1) See, for example, E. Renan, Marc. Aurèle et la fin du Monde Antique, Histoire des Origines de Christianisme, vol. 7, Paris, 1881; Eng. tr., London, 1903; P. Charanis, "Observations on the transformation of the Roman world in the Third Century," A.N.R.W. 2, 2, 1975, p.553.
- 2) Such a judgement is implicit in Gibbon's famous remark that, "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus": E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chapter three. This reflects the contemporary view of Dio Cassius, who, when commenting on Marcus' death, wrote, "My history now descends from a kingdom of gold to a kingdom of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans at that time" (Dio 71, 36, 3).
- 3) Von Domaszewski saw Severus as planting "the despotism of the east on the soil of the west," or, again, as "sacrificing the Mediterranean culture to a pitiless soldiery": Geschichte des röm. Reiches, 2, p.262. Previously, Gibbon had designated Severus "the principal author of the decline of the Roman Empire": Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ch. 1. Platnauer took a more favourable view; although he also saw the growth of military despotism, he regarded Severus' regime as a "Platonic tyranny": M. Platnauer, The life and reign of the emperor Lucius Septimius Severus, Oxford, 1918, p.15f. and 166f.
- 4) Gibbon certainly regarded Diocletian's reign as a watershed in the history of Rome: "Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire," and later, "Like the modesty affected by Augustus, the state maintained by Diocletian was a theoretical representation; but it must be confessed, that of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to disguise, and the object of the other to display, the unbounded power which the emperors possessed over the Roman world." E. Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chapter thirteen.
- 5) P. Charanis, "Transformation of the Roman World," p.559.
- 6) I do not intend to look at Gallienus' monetary policies in this thesis. Although his reign was important in this respect, it has no direct bearing upon the transformation of the military and political institutions of the period. It is with these that this study is concerned.
- 7) L. de Blois, The policies of the emperor Gallienus, Leiden, 1976.
- 8) de Blois, Gallienus, p.116ff., and p.208ff.; see especially p.210.

- 9) Very few good career-inscriptions are known from the period between the reigns of Severus Alexander and Diocletian: see below, chapter 5, "Gallienus and the senate," p.161f.
- 10) For example, the careers of Virius Lupus (C.I.L. VI 31775; cf. below, p.110), Marcianus (AE 1965, 114; cf. below, p.80f.; 83ff.; 140. and Traianus Mucianus (I.L.S. 9479; cf. below, p.77ff).
- 11) H. Lieb, "Der Praeses aus Sbeitla," in W. Reidinger, Die Statthalter des ungeteilten Pannoniens und Oberpannoniens, Bonn, 1956, p.240.
- 12) For this source, see F. Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus," J.R.S. 59 (1969), p.12ff.
- 13) For a modern view of this source, see R. Syme, Ammianus and the Historia Augusta, Oxford, 1968, passim; e.g. p.156ff; p.206f; and p.171ff.
- 14) See H.W. Bird, "A reconstruction of the life and career of S. Aurelius Victor," CJ. 70(4), 1975, p.49ff.
- 15) Aur. Vict., de Caes. 37, 5; cf. 33, 33f.
- 16) G.C. Brauer, The age of the soldier emperors: imperial Rome, A.D. 244-284. (Noyes Classical Studies.) Park Ridge, N.J., 1975, p.141.
- 17) See below, chapter five and note 5.
- 18) See J. Osier, "The emergence of third century equestrian military commands," Latomus 36, 1977, p.675f., which quotes an unpublished dissertation: C.E.V. Nixon, An historiographical study of the Caesares of Sextus Aurelius Victor, Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 1971.
- 19) See, in particular, H.A. v.Gall. 6, 3ff.; also 1, 2; 4, 3; 9, 3ff.; and 16, 1.
- 20) Zosimus, Historia Nova, The translation I have used here is that of J.J. Buchanan and H.T. Davis (San Antonio, Texas, 1967). Zonaras, Epitome Historiarum,
- 21) Buchanan and Davis, p.iv. Zonaras, on the other hand, wrote in the twelfth century.
- 22) Buchanan and Davis, p.ix.
- 23) For example, Zosimus is very confused about the events of the year 238; according to him, the elder Gordians were drowned on their way to Rome: Zos. 1, 16.
- 24) Notitia Dignitatum, ed. O. Seeck, 1962². For its date, see below, chapter one, p.40 note 65.
- 25) H.M.D. Parker, A history of the Roman world (A.D. 137-337), 2nd ed., London, 1966, p.119f.

- 26) See, for example, Aur. Vict., de Caes. 24, 7-11.
- 27) C.A.H. 12, p.82ff.; X. Lorient, "Le première armées de la grande crise du III^e siècle: de l'avenement de Maximin le Thrace (235) à la mort de Gordian III (244)," ANRW 2, 2, 1975, p.729ff.
- 28) Another version is that Gordian was killed in battle: Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordian III," p.772ff.
- 29) Zos. 1, 19.
- 30) C.A.H. 12, p.222f.; cf. p.196.
- 31) C.A.H. 12, p.168.
- 32) C.A.H. 12, p.165.
- 33) Zos. 1, 29.
- 34) This also is implied in the favourable picture of him, particularly in the senatorial tradition: see esp. H.A. v.Val. 5, 1ff.; cf. C.A.H. 12, p.183, 196; de Blois, Gallienus p.24.
- 35) For Valerian's dynastic arrangements, see E. Marni, "Gallienus," R.F.A.C., 8, 1972, col. 963f.
- 36) For a brief survey of these years, see de Blois, Gallienus, p.2ff.
- 37) For the defeat of the Macriani: H.A. v.Gall. 2. 7; v.Trig.Tyr. 9. 3.; Gutr. 9, 8; Zon. 12, 24. For the defeat of Ingenuus: Aur. Vict. de Caes. 33, 2; H.A. v.Trig.Tyr. 9. 3.; Eutr. 9, 8; Zon. 12, 24.
- 38) Ballista: H.A. v.trig.tyr. 14. 1; v.Gall. 3. 1-2; Zon. 12, 24; cf. P.L.R.E. p.146, Ballista Regalianus: Aur Vict. de Caes. 33, 2; H.A. v.trig.tyr. 10. 2.
- 39) Zos. 1. 40.
- 40) H.A. v.Gall. 15. 2.

The mid-third century marked the lowest ebb of Rome's fortunes. In these years, characterised as they were by devastating invasion and almost continuous civil war, Roman urban civilization received a blow from which it never fully recovered. It is hardly surprising that under such circumstances Gallienus' policies should bear most fruit in the military sphere.

During his reign, the Roman army experienced a restructuring in its strategic organisation which set the pattern for its whole future development. The radical transformation of the officer corps will be discussed in the next chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to look at the strategic reorganisation which Gallienus effected in the Roman defence system, and which gave rise to the famous third-century "battlecavalry"

No ancient historian tells us explicitly that Gallienus created a cavalry army. However, it is quite evident from our sources that he reformed Roman strategy in such a way as to give the cavalry a much more prominent role than hitherto. An obscure but revealing passage in Cedrenus, for example, describes Gallienus as being the first to establish a separate cavalry formation⁽¹⁾. Again, Zosimus describes Gallienus' general, Aureolus, as the "Commander of the entire cavalry."⁽²⁾ Since Aureolus was the outstanding general of the reign, acting as Gallienus' right hand man, this reference points to the central importance of the cavalry force.

Numismatic evidence here corroborates the assertions of the historical sources, in the form of gold coins bearing the legend FIDES EQUIUM⁽³⁾. These were issued by Gallienus at Milan, and they underline the increased importance which that emperor attached to his cavalry.

This new prominence is reflected in the campaigns of Gallienus' immediate successors. In Claudius' Gothic campaign, Zosimus records that the invaders lost three thousand men to the "Dalmatian Cavalry" before being defeated by the main body of the Roman army⁽⁴⁾. This is the first mention of a cavalry-type that figures prominently in the later Roman army, although the first hint of its existence occurs under Gallienus. If the *Historia Augusta* is to be believed, Gallienus' murderer, Cecropius, had the title dux Dalmatarum⁽⁵⁾. Later in Claudius' campaign, the "Roman cavalry" harried the Goths to the Haemus range, between Moesia and Thrace⁽⁶⁾. A peculiar incident followed. Friction apparently arose between the infantry and cavalry armies. In an ensuing battle against the Goths, the infantry were routed. The cavalry then put in an appearance and saved the day for Rome.

Under Aurelian, the cavalry were present in the campaign against Zenobia. At the battle of Edessa, in which the Palmyrene power was broken, Aurelian's forces included both the "Dalmatian" and "Moorish" cavalry⁽⁷⁾. In spite of its previous string of victories, however, the Roman cavalry was routed by the heavy oriental cavalry of Palmyra⁽⁸⁾.

Under Gallienus and his immediate successors, therefore, the cavalry evidently enjoyed more importance than hitherto. Indeed, some have depicted Gallienus as calling into being a standing cavalry army ready to support the frontier troops whenever and wherever needed⁽⁹⁾. Whether this was in fact the case needs further discussion. So, too, does the contribution which Gallienus' cavalry-reform made to the emergence of the late Roman defence system, involving the "central field armies" stationed behind the frontiers. The military developments of the third-century are notable above all for beginning the decline of the legion, until then the mainstay

and symbol of Roman power, into a unit of no particular prestige, often composed of second-rate frontier troops. What part, if any, did Gallienus' military reform play in this process? It is with such questions in view that the significance of Gallienus' "battle-cavalry" is to be assessed.

Historical Background

Under the early Principate, Roman strategy was based on the "aggressive" principles of the later Republic. Consequently, legions were grouped into armies which, like those of the Rhine and of Syria, were ready when need be to move deep into enemy territory⁽¹⁰⁾. From the later first century, however, emphasis was increasingly placed upon consolidation rather than conquest. Strategically, this meant that the Roman army went over more and more to the defensive. By the second century, the legions were stationed in permanent fortresses on or near the frontier, which was itself frequently guarded by defence-works and auxiliary forts⁽¹¹⁾. The whole pattern of deployment was that of a thin, linear perimeter, providing continuous security for civilian life and property, and insulating provincial from barbarian⁽¹²⁾. Clearly, the consolidation of the imperial frontiers was the natural outcome of the Romanisation of the provinces.

For most of the second century, a strategy based almost exclusively upon frontier defence was appropriate and adequate. As the century wore on, however, the pressures on the limes increased, and under Marcus, a serious penetration occurred which reached as far as northern Italy. The new situation called for greater depth and mobility in defence, which was achieved largely by an increasing use of vexillations⁽¹³⁾. From the later second century onwards

large formations of these mobile units were frequently assembled and employed on campaign, and by Gallienus' accession such forces must have been a regular feature of the military establishment.

Until the reign of Marcus Aurelius, troop concentrations were achieved mainly through the re-deployment of whole legions from one frontier to another, and on the outbreak of the Persian war at the start of Marcus' reign, the same policy was adopted. Three legions were dispatched from the Rhine and Danube frontiers to the east⁽¹⁴⁾. The northern frontiers were thus weakened at strategic intervals, and it was now found that the traditional assumption of Roman defence policy, that the barbarians would not take advantage of the temporary weakness involved in the removal of units to other parts, was no longer valid⁽¹⁵⁾. As A. Birley has remarked, the unmistakable signs of future turmoil in central Europe had been noted. For the duration of the eastern war, however, the northern governors were instructed to deal with disturbances by diplomacy wherever possible⁽¹⁶⁾; but when the Marcommanic war broke out a few years later, instead of transferring whole legions to the appropriate sector, Marcus simply made greater use of vexillation formations.

There was nothing particularly revolutionary about this policy. As early as the reign of Tiberius we hear of a formation of legionary and auxiliary detachments four-thousand strong, under the command of a legionary legate⁽¹⁷⁾. The commander's rank shows that this was a 'task-force' of the same type that was used increasingly under Marcus, since these too were under senators who were holding, or who had just held, legionary commands. The forces at their disposal must have been roughly equivalent in strength to a legion, if not greater⁽¹⁸⁾. Troop concentrations could therefore be as easily achieved by the formation of such temporary task-forces as by the re-deployment of whole legions, without involving the same risks.

It is hardly surprising that Marcus resorted increasingly to these formations in his long wars. During his Persian war, two such 'task-forces' are attested: P. Iulius Geminius Marcianus was sent to the east with detachments of the Danubian legions⁽¹⁹⁾, while M. Claudius Fronto was appointed leg. Augg. pr.pr. exercitus legionarii et auxillior. per Orientem in Armeniam et Osrhoenam et Anthemusiam ductorum⁽²⁰⁾. These supplemented the whole legions that were dispatched to the war. For his northern war, three field-commands of this type are known: A. Iulius Pompilius Piso, praepositus legionibus I Italicae et IIII Flaviae cum omnibus copiis auxilliorum dato iuri gladii⁽²¹⁾; M. Valerius Maximianus, praep(ositus) vexil(lationum) Leugaricione hiemantium⁽²²⁾; and C. Vettius Hopes, praepositus vexillationibus ex Illyrico ab imp. divo M. Antonio ad tutelam urbis⁽²³⁾. Apart from these - and possibly others - Marcus raised two legions for the northern war, the II and III Italicae. As we have noted above, however, he did not redeploy any legions from other frontiers. He thus set a pattern for future developments. Henceforth, the legions remained permanently at their stations, guarding their particular sector of the frontier. The major campaigns were fought largely by vexillation formations collected together from the various frontiers, supporting the legions already stationed in the theatre of war.

For his Persian war, Marcus' purpose in raising 'task-forces' was clearly to collect a large body of troops together. Thus, Marcianus was sent to the east with Danubian detachments in order to strengthen the Roman army in that area. In the northern war, however, there seems to have been another motive as well. Only in the case of Vettius Hopes' force is the origin of the component detachments known, and here the troops were drawn from the Danubian frontier - that is, the very region under attack. This formation

at least can hardly have been assembled to help strengthen a particular frontier. Rather, its purpose, judging by the phrase ad tutelam urbis, seems to have been to stand between the barbarian penetration and the capital. Hospes' force thus represents an example of the use of such formations to introduce a greater degree of flexibility into the imperial defences.

This greater emphasis on flexibility during the Marcommanic war is also apparent from the occurrence of several task forces commanded by equestrian officers of procuratorial status. These were presumably not as large as the senatorial commands noted above, but they would still have ^{constituted} significant bodies of troops in action in the interior of the empire. Two 'procuratorial' commanders are known⁽²⁴⁾, holding between them four mobile commands of this type. One of these must have lasted several years, since after chasing invaders out of Greece and Macedonia, it was transferred to Spain to deal with Moorish rebels⁽²⁵⁾.

The use of vexillation-formations during the Marcommanic war for strategic concentration and for tactical mobility set a pattern for military developments during the third century. In the years of Septimius Severus' reign, for example, three large field-commands are known: those of Ti. Claudius Candidus, dux exercitus Illyrici expeditione Asiana item Parthica item Gallica, of L. Marius Maximus, dux exerciti Mysiaci apud Byzantium et apud Lugdunum, and of Ti. Claudius Claudianus, praepositus vexillation(um) Daciiscar(um)⁽²⁶⁾. The first two belong to the civil war years of 193 to 196. The third too, probably occurred in the same period; Claudianus came to this command from the legateship of the V Macedonica, which he held in 195⁽²⁷⁾, so it is likely that he took part in the campaign against Albinus in 196. It is likely, also, that Claudius took over the command of a formation that had been in existence for two years,

since the other two task-forces were in being throughout the civil wars.

Here, then, we have two, probably three, vexillation-formations which continued in being for three years, and travelled hundreds of miles. They probably did so, moreover, as the individual corps of a powerful field-army. In 193, L. Fabius Cilo was praepositus vexillation(ibus) Perinthi pergentib(us)⁽²⁸⁾. As a consular, Cilo would have been senior to the praetorian commanders mentioned above, so this title refers to the supreme command over the various task forces drawn from Septimius' power-base, the Danubian army. Whether this field-army remained in being throughout the civil wars is another matter, although the continued existence of Marius Maximus' and Candidus' corps suggests that this was the case. In any event, in 196 Cilo again appears to have held a field command, as dux vexill(ationum) per Italiam. This may refer either to his re-appointment to his old command or to an appointment over a new field army being assembled in Italy for the march against Albinus in Gaul.

Mobility was the keynote of Septimius' campaigns against his rivals Niger and Albinus, and it is perhaps hardly surprising to find large mobile forces in operation during these years. What is more remarkable is that there are two senatorial task-force commanders attested later in his reign: Claudius Gallus, who as praeposit[us] vexillationum [leg(ionum)] IIII Germanicar(um) took part in the second Parthian war⁽²⁹⁾, and C. Julius Septimius Castinus, who acted against unspecified defectors and rebels as dux vex(illationum) IIII Germ(anicarum)⁽³⁰⁾.

Whether the same task-force is involved in both these instances or not, they indicate that for much of Septimius' reign there must have been large mobile forces perhaps continuously in being, as E. Birley has suggested⁽³¹⁾.

After Septimius Severus, we know of two further senatorial task-force commanders, who, like their predecessors, held their mobile commands after their legionary legateships⁽³²⁾. C. Octavius Appius Suetrius Sabinus commanded a vexillation-formation in Caracalla's German campaign⁽³³⁾, and Rutilius Pudens Crispinus commanded a task-force in Severus Alexander's Persian war, probably while he was governor of Phoenice⁽³⁴⁾. Both these commands formed parts of larger armies assembled on the frontiers for major campaigns.

Given the size of the troop concentrations achieved during the third century without resorting to the re-deployment of whole legions, the formation of such task-forces must have become a regular feature of campaigns. Herodian describes Alexander as assembling "picked men from Italy and from all the Roman provinces" for his Persian war, while later, "travelling rapidly, he came to Antioch, after visiting the provinces and garrison camps in Illyricum; from that region he collected a huge force of troops"⁽³⁵⁾. Clearly, vexillations were drawn from all the frontier armies for Alexander's eastern expedition; and the same is true for another eastern campaign, under Valerian. The composition of Valerian's army is referred to in Sapor's victory-inscription, and apart from the eastern troops to be expected in such a campaign, they refer to troops from most European and African frontier provinces⁽³⁶⁾. This inscription also suggests the size of some of these armies. Sapor boasts of annihilating a force of sixty-thousand men near Antioch, after which the main force came against him with seventy-thousand men⁽³⁷⁾.

Apart from these major concentrations of troops for frontier wars, the middle years of the third century must also have seen a greater deployment of mobile forces a long way behind the limes. From Philip's reign onwards, a series of invasions penetrated deep

into the empire. To meet these, field armies drawn from the various frontiers would have been formed and campaigned in the interior of the empire. It must have been such an army that was destroyed in the disaster which overtook Decius in 251⁽³⁸⁾. This tragedy, and others like it, would have been just as serious as Varus' loss of three whole legions at the beginning of the empire, and since during the third century very few legions were lost, none of them Danubian, this indicates that the field-armies which were raised to repel the invaders did not contain whole legions⁽³⁹⁾. Similarly, the recurrent civil wars would have given greater prominence to vexillation 'task-forces', like those that participated in Septimius' campaigns. Thus, according to Zosimus, Gallus sent Valerian to fetch the "Celtic and Germanic" troops to deal with the usurper Aemilianus⁽⁴⁰⁾. This presumably refers to a command over a mobile field-army drawn from the Rhine limes, and, since it is unlikely that even imperial ambition would have led such generals as Decius and Aemilianus to take whole legions away from the frontiers at this period, similar forces will have been used in their marches on Rome.

Field-forces, then, composed of detachments drawn from the stationary units of the frontiers must have been frequently called into being in the third century, both to strengthen specific sectors and to give the Roman defence a greater degree of flexibility. These objectives, moreover, lay behind another military development of this period, namely, an increase in the number of troops based in and around Rome.

The author of this increase was Septimius Severus⁽⁴¹⁾, who, when he replaced the Italian guardsmen with his Illyrians, doubled the size of the Praetorian cohorts. At the same time, the Urban Cohorts were tripled in strength⁽⁴²⁾. With the addition of the

legio II Parthica, these measures amounted to a considerable increase in the size of the Rome garrison, from, according to E. Birley's estimate, a combined total of eleven and a half thousand men to nearly thirty thousand⁽⁴³⁾.

In carrying out these reforms, a political motive can hardly have been absent. The first years of Septimius' reign were fraught with political uncertainty⁽⁴⁴⁾, and it would have been a sound move for him to strengthen the forces at his immediate disposal. Nevertheless, a more purely military purpose must also have been present. As an intelligent observer of events, and belonging as he did to a generation that had seen the first barbarian invasion of Italy since the second century B.C., Septimius must have been aware of the danger of overmuch reliance upon a thin cordon of frontier troops. His enlarged Rome garrison surely represented an attempt to make up for this inadequacy. With the reformed garrison's total strength equivalent to that of a major armed province, Rome and Italy were no longer left unprotected once the frontier defences had been breached.

It is possible, therefore, to see the reform of the Rome garrison as a first step towards introducing a second line of defence into the imperial defence system. Of more practical importance, however, was its role as a strategic reserve, lending its support to the frontier forces on campaign. The Praetorians, for example, are heard of in the east under Alexander and again on the Danube under Maximinus⁽⁴⁵⁾, with only a handful of veterans left behind in the capital⁽⁴⁶⁾. The II Parthica is also mentioned in Maximinus' army⁽⁴⁷⁾, and had presumably been taken to the east by Severus Alexander; and before that it is attested in the east under Macrinus and Elagabalus⁽⁴⁸⁾, which in turn means that it must have accompanied Caracalla on his German and Parthian wars.

Whether or not Septimius intended his reformed Rome garrison as a strategic reserve, therefore, it is clear that his successors used it to help achieve the necessary troop concentrations for major campaigns. With a fighting strength equivalent to three legions, the Rome garrison must have been extremely valuable for this purpose, especially since it included the cream of the Illyrian army. In effect, Severus had thus created the 'nucleus of a centralised field army,' to use Platnauer's phrase⁽⁴⁹⁾.

By the beginning of the third century, although the defence system was still essentially that of the Principate, the seeds had been sown for the emergence of the later Roman army. The threefold need to concentrate forces at one point without weakening any other sector of the frontier, to achieve tactical mobility, and to form a second line of defence, had led to the regular use of mobile task-forces composed of detachments drawn from the frontier, and to a new role for the Rome garrison as a strategic reserve. Both these developments represented a move away from the second century defence strategy based entirely on a strong, stationary frontier army. Even if taken together, however, they do not fully explain the next step towards the emergence of the dual system of the fourth century, namely the creation of Gallienus' cavalry army. This can only be understood in the context of the increasing prominence of mounted troops during the third century.

Greater use of cavalry was in fact a feature of the new emphasis on mobile troops. As early as Marcus' reign we hear of a strong cavalry formation of auxiliary vexillations, commanded by M. Valerius Lollianus⁽⁵⁰⁾, and in the civil wars of 193 to 196, Septimius Severus' cavalry is recorded as operating as an independent strike force⁽⁵¹⁾. Severus' cavalry commander against

Niger, Valerius, may be the same as L. Valerius Valerianus, praepos(itus) vexil(lationum expeditionis) felicis(simae) urbic(ae) itemq(ue) Asiana(e) peregrinarum adv(ersus) hostes publicos p(opuli) R(omani)⁽⁵²⁾. If this is the case, the peregrini of Valerius' command will almost certainly have included Moorish javelin men, who at this period were establishing themselves amongst the most valued troops in the Roman army.

After the reign of Severus, cavalry units figure prominently in the various campaigns about which we have any details. Under Macrinus, the "Moroccan javelin men" are mentioned as being stationed on the wings with the cavalry⁽⁵³⁾, and when Alexander proceeded to the German war he "brought with him many Moroccan javelin men and a huge force of archers from the east and the Osrhoenian country"⁽⁵⁴⁾. Maximinus inherited these forces, and the size of the Osrhoenian contingent in particular is suggested by the fact that they felt strong enough to support - albeit unsuccessfully - a coup against the emperor⁽⁵⁵⁾.

In his description of Maximinus' German campaigns, Herodian refers to the reason why these mounted troops were becoming so highly valued. "The Moorish and Osrhoenian missile men are especially troublesome to the Germans: the Moroccans hurl their javelins from a distance and attack and retreat nimbly, while the archers, far removed from their targets, easily fire their arrows into the bare heads and huge bodies of the Germans: but when the Germans attack at full speed and fight hand to hand, they are often the equal of the Romans"⁽⁵⁶⁾. It was not only against the Germans that these troops were considered indispensable. Their presence in the east has already been noted, under Macrinus and Alexander; and Maximinus gave them a prominent place in his battle order in his march on Italy: "leading his army down into level country, Maximinus

drew up his legions in a broad, shallow rectangle in order to occupy most of the plain.... on each flank marched the squadrons of armed cavalry, the Moroccan javelin men and the archers from the east" (57). Zosimus' description of the same event is of less value, but it is even more suggestive of the cavalry's importance for Maximinus' army, which is referred to by the vague designation "Moorish and Celtic troops" (58).

These passages make it abundantly clear that the early third century witnessed a much greater use of cavalry - and particularly of Moorish and eastern horsemen - than hitherto. This trend continued into the middle years of the century. Under Philip, an invasion of the Carpi was defeated because, according to Zosimus, they were "unable to sustain the charge of the Mauretians" (59). If, moreover, independent cavalry commanders are known from the time of Septimius Severus, later cavalry troops were probably organised into autonomous "strike-forces." The "Mauretians" under Philip may therefore have been grouped into a powerful corps, much like the Dalmatians under Claudius. Indeed, given the continuing military crisis under Philip's successors, it is possible that the Mauretanian corps was never disbanded, to be incorporated into Gallienus' new cavalry force.

By Gallienus' reign, then, the Roman defence system was characterised to a considerable extent by powerful cavalry forces and by large mobile formations, often operating for long periods in the interior of the empire. Such forces were composed of troops detached from parent units, but they must frequently have remained together long enough to be recognisable as distinct entities. The Osrhoenian archers, for instance, had by Maximinus' reign achieved enough esprit de corps and cohesion to stage a revolt against that emperor, and Gallienus' reign itself affords an example of a major

field-force which was composed of detachments that had been cut off from their mother-units by the revolt of Postumus. The command of [V]italianus, praepositus of vexillations drawn from the German and British frontiers⁽⁶⁰⁾, must have been assembled during Gallienus' campaigns in Gaul while he was still co-emperor; and after the Gallic secession, it remained in being as an autonomous corps.

The fact that this corps remained in being after Postumus' revolt means that it was not in Gaul at that time. Gallienus must have employed it elsewhere, either in Illyricum or in northern Italy: quite possible, it accompanied the emperor on campaign as part of his military entourage. Here clearly is an example of a large mobile field-force being used as a strategic reserve, to give additional strength and flexibility to Rome's defences. This is the background against which Gallienus' creation of his "battlecavalry" is to be placed. It was essentially a field-force of a type which had become increasingly common in the third century, which by virtue of its size and tactical superiority achieved a unique place in Roman military history.

The Formation of Gallienus' Battlecavalry

The precise date of the creation of Gallienus' battlecavalry is not known. M. R. Alföldi thinks it occurred in 259-60, when Gallienus issued a series of coins celebrating particular legions, many of which would not have come under his control since they were stationed in regions obedient to usurpers⁽⁶¹⁾. These 'legionary' Antoniniani presumably refer to vexillations drawn from the various frontiers, and according to Alföldi, they celebrate a re-organisation of Gallienus' mobile forces into a standing field-army. This re-organisation, she argues, included the incorporation of cavalry into this army, as the gold coins bearing the legend FIDES EQUITUM and

FIDES MILITUM show.

It is possible, however, that these coin-issues commemorate an army that had been in existence for several years, but which had now distinguished itself in a special way. A. Alföldi, for example, regards the year 257 as a likely date for the creation of the battlecavalry. In that year, Gallienus began numbering the victories he had won under his own auspices, and not those of his father; and he now appears on a Cologne coin-issue cum exer(citu) suo⁽⁶²⁾. This indicates to A. Alföldi that Gallienus was thus emphasising his independent authority, probably because of an estrangement with his father. He would now have his hands free to carry out the reforms he wanted, and to call into being his battlecavalry.

Whether such circumstances would in fact have been necessary for Gallienus to introduce a military reform of this nature may be doubted. The formation of the cavalry force amounted essentially to a tactical re-organisation of the troops under his command, which surely lay within his prerogative as co-emperor. For most of the joint reign, Valerian was busy in the east and in no position to exercise even a distant authority over the western armies; Gallienus must have been given a free hand in the west to deal with the situation as he saw fit.

It is only possible to say, then, that the cavalry army came into being some time in the years 254 to 260. It had certainly been formed by the later date, when it is recorded in action against Ingenuus⁽⁶³⁾.

During these years, Gallienus' main opponents were the Alemanni. These were renowned horsemen⁽⁶⁴⁾, and the formation of a powerful cavalry field-force would have been an appropriate tactical response to this challenge. As has been noted already, Roman armies of the mid-third century included large numbers of mounted troops, on whom Roman generals were increasingly dependent, both against barbarians and each other. They were in all probability grouped

together into mobile formations, and their further concentration into one very powerful field-force would have given Gallienus the capacity to strike at selected points with decisive tactical superiority in cavalry. The power and mobility of this new weapon would have made it a battle-winner. Certainly, its subsequent history revealed it to be a highly effective force. Under Aureolus, it won victory after victory for Gallienus, against both the barbarians and Roman armies. It was only when it encountered the Palmyrene cavalry of Zenobia, which had a long Oriental tradition of mounted warfare to draw on, that it met defeat.

In forming his new force, Gallienus incorporated the disparate elements of cavalry within his army into one command. So far as its composition is concerned, it is possible to determine with some precision the material upon which Gallienus drew to build his cavalry force. In the *Notitia Dignitatum*, many units bearing the simple designation equites appear, and although the *Notitia's* army lists were compiled long after it had been disbanded⁽⁶⁵⁾, there is strong evidence that many of these units belonged at one time to the third-century battlecavalry. In particular, four types of cavalry units, equites Dalmatae, - Mauri, - Promoti, - Scutarii, all bearing the surname Illyriciani, appear in a regular distribution among the eastern duchies⁽⁶⁶⁾. The systematic nature of their distribution points to a common origin in a single formation which had at some date been broken up and its troops dispersed along the frontier⁽⁶⁷⁾. The term Illyriciani suggests further that this formation had belonged originally to the Danubian army. Since Gallienus and his immediate successors had controlled only the central trunk of the empire, and only the Danubian army, this formation must clearly have been none other than the third-century battlecavalry. The occurrence of Dalmatian and Moorish units

confirms this identity, since both of these kinds of cavalry appear in the campaigns of Claudius and Aurelian⁽⁶⁸⁾.

Of these cavalry-types, only the Moorish horsemen are explicitly recorded under Gallienus. They took part in the campaign against Ingenuus⁽⁶⁹⁾, and so must have belonged to the cavalry force at the beginning. It is likely, indeed, that Gallienus inherited a strong corps of Mauri from his predecessors, since they figured prominently in Philip's campaign against the Carpi (see above, p.12), and it may well be that he built his cavalry army around this nucleus. In any event, the Moorish horsemen had long played an important part in Rome's wars, with a military tradition going back at least to Trajan's reign⁽⁷⁰⁾.

This is not the case with the Dalmatae. On the contrary, Dalmatian cavalry units are hardly heard of before Gallienus' time,⁽⁷¹⁾ and yet they evidently formed a part of Gallienus' cavalry force, since he was murdered by an officer entitled dux Dalmatarum⁽⁷²⁾. Judging by the distinguished part they played under Claudius, moreover, the Dalmatians formed a very important contingent of the cavalry⁽⁷³⁾. This is also suggested by the Notitia lists, which furnish more units of Dalmatae than any other equites-type⁽⁷⁴⁾. While this represents a situation prevailing over a century after Gallienus' time, it is probably indicative of the relative strength of the various third-century corps. It seems therefore that Gallienus systematically raised a completely new cavalry corps from the unexhausted man-power of Dalmatia⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Neither of the other two equites-types, the Promoti and the Scutarii, bearing the surname Illyriciani in the Notitia are mentioned under Gallienus or his immediate successors, although their surname and their appearance in the same sequence as the Dalmatian and Moors does suggest that they belonged to the third-century battlecavalry⁽⁷⁶⁾.

While the origin of the Scutarii remains obscure⁽⁷⁷⁾, the title Promoti was borne by the cavalry attached to each legion. Legionary cavalymen were not merely privates, they were of non-commissioned officer rank - principales - and this led them to be called promoti⁽⁷⁸⁾. There were originally one hundred and twenty such cavalymen to each legion, but by Gallienus' time this number may have risen to seven hundred and sixty⁽⁷⁹⁾. By detaching the legionary cavalry from their individual units and concentrating them together, Gallienus could therefore have called into being a powerful cavalry corps. Certainly, when this corps was at length disbanded it furnished a comparatively large number of regiments⁽⁸⁰⁾.

These four equites-types, then, the equites Dalmati, Mauri, Promoti, Scutarii, can be traced back to the cavalry force of the third century. Apart from these, however, there are two other types of cavalry unit which do bear the surname Illyriciani, but which appear regularly in the Notitia lists, and so may also have a common origin in third-century cavalry corps. These are the equites Sagittarii and the equites Stablesiani.

The equites Sagittarii were oriental mounted archers. Since no such units bear the name Illyriciani, they presumably did not belong to the cavalry force of Gallienus. Indeed, all except four of the equites Sagittarii units along the eastern limes bear the surname indigenae⁽⁸¹⁾. This, together with the occurrence of equites promoti indigenae, may indicate that at the same time as 'Danubian' cavalry units were distributed along the eastern frontier, similar cavalry units were also raised from local troops. It seems, moreover, that some of these newly raised troops were enrolled into the main cavalry forces, since there is evidence in the Notitia that units of equites Sagittarii and equites Promoti were later systematically distributed together along the Danubian frontier⁽⁸²⁾.

Eastern archers enjoyed a distinguished record in the Roman army, going back at least as far as that of the Moorish javelin men. Indeed, the Sagittarii shared with the Mauri the prominent part played by the cavalry in the early third century. It seems odd, therefore, that Gallienus should not have availed himself of these troops. It is difficult to agree with Alföldi that Gallienus saw in them a danger to the state⁽⁸³⁾, and it is possible that Valerian took all sagittarii units that were stationed in the west with him on his campaign against Persia. They would then subsequently have come under the control of the Palmyrene regime, to be re-incorporated into the Roman army only under Aurelian.

The equites Stablesiani similarly do not bear the surname Illyriciani in the Notitia, although the explanation here is more straightforward: there are no such units on the eastern frontier. Why this should be is not so clear; however, as Hoffman points out, the title stablesiani is so extraordinary that it is difficult to account for so many units - fifteen regiments in all⁽⁸⁴⁾ - coming to bear it independently of one another. Presumably, therefore, they may be traced back to a common origin in a third-century cavalry corps⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The origins of both the name and the corps are obscure. The word stablesianus is basically a Greek word-form, and means stablegroom or cavalryman's servant. This suggests the idea that the equites Stablesiani were recruited from the stablegrooms of the central cavalry-stables of the new cavalry army⁽⁸⁶⁾. Speidel has pointed out, however, that several thousand men would have originally been needed to form a cavalry corps, and while all the regiments in the Notitia need not have been created simultaneously, inscriptions show that many Stablesiani regiments had become extinct before the Notitia was compiled⁽⁸⁷⁾. The assumption that the battlecavalry had a huge central stable staffed by thousands of stableboys seems unwarranted, and even

if there was such an institution, it would have been staffed by men of all ages, with a high proportion of slaves.

A more plausible idea is that suggested by Speidel⁽⁸⁸⁾, that this corps was formed out of the stratores of the provincial governors. Although these have sometimes been regarded as mere stable-grooms on the governor's staff, they were in fact an elite body of legionary-soldiers, perhaps two-hundred strong, forming a part of the governor's guard. If all governors had such a guard, their number would have been sufficient to form at least the nucleus of a cavalry corps. If this is the case, then the designation stablesiani may have originated with an existing unit somewhere in the Greek east which had already been formed out of a governor's stratores⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Six corps, then, at some time or other probably belonged to the third-century battlecavalry: equites Dalmatae, Mauri, Promoti, Scutarii, Sagittarii, and Stablesiani⁽⁹⁰⁾. There is little to indicate how large these corps were, but if we assume with Hoffmann that the units later distributed over the frontier were one hundred to two hundred men strong, the Dalmatian corps alone would have numbered approximately ten thousand men⁽⁹¹⁾. Similarly, if it is true that by Gallienus' reign the legionary cavalry had been increased from one hundred and twenty men per legion to seven hundred and sixty⁽⁹²⁾, then Gallienus would have been able to raise a corps of over ten thousand Promoti from the legions under his authority. If the other corps were of equal size, the battlecavalry as a whole would have been in the order of fifty-thousand men strong.

This, however, is hard to believe. A cavalry-force of such massive proportions would have been prohibitively expensive for a regime able to count only on the resources of the central parts of the empire. It is preferable to regard Gallienus' battlecavalry

as a much smaller formation. Returning to the size of the Dalmatian corps, therefore, even if the figure of ten thousand men reflects its strength at the time of dismemberment, it is in all probability the result of the raising of more units of Dalmatian horsemen under Gallienus' successors. Likewise, in the case of the Promoti, even if there were seven hundred and twenty-six cavalrymen per legion under Gallienus, it is unlikely that all were stripped away. Under Diocletian, units of equites Promoti are encountered which still retain an association with their parent legion, suggesting that not all legionary cavalry were absorbed into the third-century battle-cavalry⁽⁹³⁾. It is thus possible that, under Gallienus at least, the new cavalry force represented a body of troops of the same order of size as the Praetorian guard. If, for example, the Dalmatian corps was half the strength it later became, that is, five thousand strong, and if, as both the Notitia's figures and the record of the third-century campaigns suggest, this was the largest corps, we may arrive at a total strength of between ten and fifteen thousand men. This certainly seems to be a realistic figure in the light of Gallienus' resources.

The Significance of Gallienus' Battlecavalry

Sometime between 254 and 260, then, Gallienus called into being his cavalry force. His army already included a strong contingent of Moors, and to these he added legionary cavalry, detached from their respective units. He also began recruiting new cavalry troops from Dalmatia. All these, together with other cavalry elements like the Stablesiani and Scutarii, he brought together under one command. By the year c.260 the battlecavalry was fully established, with a total strength perhaps similar to that of the Praetorian cohorts, or about ten to fifteen thousand men. In about that year it was stationed at

Milan, under the general Aureolus⁽⁹⁴⁾.

Scholars have generally regarded the third-century battlecavalry as forshadowing the fourth-century comitatenses. The situation had become so critical that the old method of filling breaches in the defence, namely through the temporary transfer of troops from one frontier to another, was no longer adequate. Gallienus therefore instituted a "dual" system whereby the frontier troops remained continually at their posts, while special, permanent mobile forces in the hinterland were ready to rush to any point when needed. Although this dual system was later abandoned in favour of a more conservative approach based on strong frontier defence, the fact that Constantine re-instituted Gallienus' strategy suggests to some scholars that the latter was the true founder of the late Roman army⁽⁹⁵⁾.

This assessment of the battlecavalry's significance may be questioned, however. Did Gallienus truly appreciate the strategic principles of a dual system, for example? More important, did the battlecavalry ever really constitute an independent field-army?

In answering the first question, we can only conjecture as to what Gallienus' motives were in calling his cavalry force into being. For a long time before his accession the Roman army had been familiar with mobile formations composed of troops temporarily detached from stationary frontier units. Sometimes such formations were grouped into very large field armies. Gallienus' initial creation of the battlecavalry was therefore no revolutionary step, organisationally speaking. Like similar forces it was a grouping together of formations into one powerful field-force.

Neither does the fact that the cavalry was soon stationed at Milan necessarily mean that it was initially established as a permanent institution. With Postumus to the north-west, and the Alemanni to the north-east, it is not surprising that such a force,

once created, should be stationed in northern Italy, and should not be allowed to disperse until the strategic situation had altered⁽⁹⁶⁾. It is quite possible, therefore, that Gallienus concentrated his cavalry into one force to meet a particular threat, namely the Alemannic invasions, and that the circumstances remained such as to discourage him from returning the component troops to their respective units.

There are indications, however, that Gallienus did in fact regard his cavalry force as something more than just another temporary concentration of mobile formations. The raising of a whole corps of Dalmatians, with all the effort involved in such a process, not only emphasises his appreciation of the military superiority of cavalry, but suggests also that he was thinking of the long-term importance of this arm. Moreover, the example of the large corps of vexillations drawn from Britain and Germany, which were cut off from their parent units by the Gallic secession, shows that at least some task-forces were taking on a degree of permanence under Gallienus, even if it was enforced. It is possible that Gallienus intended from the outset that his battlecavalry should have a more permanent existence than previous field-forces.

In any event, the battlecavalry's continuance throughout his reign justifies to some extent its recognition as a standing army, and whatever Gallienus' intentions, it fulfilled the functions of a standing, mobile reserve, much like the later comitatenses. Whether this force represented the totality of Gallienus' strategic reserve, however, or whether it was only one element in it, is another matter.

The existence of a powerful field-force of British and German vexillations shows that there were mobile forces in being under Gallienus besides the battlecavalry. So also does the occurrence

of task-forces of vexillations stationed behind the frontier, at the strategic towns of Poetovio and Lychnidus. At Poetovio, two vexillation-formations are known, one drawn from the legions of lower Moesia, the other drawn from the four Pannonian legions⁽⁹⁷⁾. In spite of the difference in the number of legions providing each of these formations, they were probably of similar strength, as their commanders were both viri egregii. At Lychnidus, only one formation is specifically recorded, drawn from the II Parthica and III Augusta legions⁽⁹⁸⁾. The inscription makes it clear, however, that this formation, under the command of the praepositus Synforianus, belonged to a larger force under the dux Aurelius Augustinianus.

These cases make it quite apparent that there were considerable forces stationed behind the frontiers. It is likely, therefore, that Gallienus' battlecavalry did not form a complete mobile army on its own, but rather represented only a part of such an army. Thus, although the vexillation-formations at Lychnidus and Poetovio have been regarded as belonging to an "inner line" of defence⁽⁹⁹⁾, it is by no means certain that these troops were permanent garrisons guarding important routes into Italy. They may just as easily have been mobile forces in the fullest sense, temporarily stationed at these towns.

Such a mobile army, composed of both infantry and cavalry, is also indicated by a series of coins issued by Gallienus. These 'legionary' Antoniniani, as has already been noted⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, apparently refer to vexillations drawn from legions outside Gallienus' authority. Such a coin-series, commemorating legions stationed in all parts of the empire, was very exceptional⁽¹⁰¹⁾, and it indicates that these mobile troops may have been of special value to him, and therefore belonged to his strategic field-army. Again, gold-coins bearing the legend FIDES EQUITUM are matched by coins with the legends

FIDES PRAET and FIDES MILITUM⁽¹⁰²⁾. This of course need not mean a great deal, since it is quite obvious that the battlecavalry did not constitute the totality of Gallienus' defence system. If, however, these coins refer to his special troops, perhaps based in Italy as was clearly the case with the Praetorians and the Cavalry, then they suggest the existence of large infantry forces fulfilling the same function as these, that of a strategic reserve.

The existence of large infantry forces in northern Italy along with the cavalry may also be inferred from Aurelius Victor's reference to the general Aureolus commanding the legions in Raetia⁽¹⁰³⁾. This title suggests that Aureolus had under his orders not only the battlecavalry in Milan, but also other forces in a region including northern Italy and Raetia. In other words, he commanded a garrison spread over a wide area, whose purpose it was to protect Italy and Rome. Aureolus was, however, very much a mobile commander. This is clear from his defeat of Ingenuus at Mursa⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. His command, therefore, must have been a mobile one, not so much over a given area as over the forces which were normally stationed in that area. All these forces, both infantry and cavalry, would then have constituted one large strategic reserve.

This idea is confirmed to some extent by an inscription dating from the reign of Gallienus' successor, Claudius, which attests the existence of a task-force at Grenoble under the Prefect of the Vigiles composed of both equites and vexillationes⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. At the very least this shows that the battlecavalry was not the only force being used in the mobile campaigns of the time, and if this task-force is interpreted as a spearhead attack on the Gallic empire by troops based in northern Italy, as the equites in it presumably were, then it implies the inclusion of infantry formations within Gallienus' tactical forces.

This inscription also shows that the third-century battle-cavalry did not always fight as a single unit. Indeed, it is clear that even under Gallienus himself the cavalry was not always concentrated together in one place. In spite of Aureolus' designation as "commander of the entire cavalry"⁽¹⁰⁶⁾, Claudius too was evidently a cavalry commander⁽¹⁰⁷⁾. Since he was Gallienus' immediate successor as emperor, and since Aureolus, then in revolt, survived Gallienus by a short time, Claudius must have commanded Gallienus' cavalry while Aureolus was still in Milan. It follows then that a large body of cavalry was detached under Claudius from the main force at Milan, almost certainly to take part in Gallienus' campaign in Illyricum. When Aureolus revolted, Claudius would have been left in command of that part of the cavalry which remained loyal to the legitimate emperor. Certainly, the presence of a section of the battlecavalry in Gallienus' army besieging Milan is implied also by the fact that he was murdered by an officer of the Dalmatians⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

After Claudius had become emperor, there is further evidence that the battlecavalry did not fight as one single formation. The presence of equites in Gaul has already been noted, and the continued threat from the Gallic empire and from the Alemanni will presumably have kept a large force of cavalry at Milan. Meanwhile, most of the cavalry must have been with the emperor on his campaigns against the Goths. Even here, Zosimus' special mention of the Dalmatians indicates that the cavalry fought in separate corps rather than as one mass⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

To regard the battlecavalry as a "cavalry army" in the sense that it always fought as a single formation, then, is not entirely accurate. The battlecavalry was in fact only one element in Gallienus' mobile forces, and for much of the time was split up amongst the various campaign armies which Gallienus and his succes-

sors fielded against their foes.

It would be wrong to conclude from this that the creation of the third-century battlecavalry was not an important step. Whilst it is probable that Gallienus called it into being to meet a specific situation and not consciously to initiate a dual system of defence based on a standing field-army; and whilst it is true that it frequently did not operate as a single, independent unit; the battlecavalry, once created, must soon have developed its own sense of identity and esprit de corps as an elite group. This is a possible explanation for the obscure incident recorded by Zosimus in which friction broke out between the cavalry and infantry⁽¹¹⁰⁾. That such friction arose, with its attendant jealousies and grievances, implies that the cavalrymen had a sense of their corporate identity, and that in practical terms they had the cohesion to make their corporate interests felt.

This identity is suggested by the occurrence, already noted, of gold coins bearing the legend FIDES EQUITUM. Although such coins are matched by more numerous issues commemorating the Praetorians and the milites in similar fashion⁽¹¹¹⁾, they at least indicate that the equites were officially recognised as constituting a separate, identifiable element within Gallienus' defence system, and a major element at that. The fact that the Praetorians are the only other troops mentioned by name in these aurei-types allows the conclusion that the equites constituted a military elite in much the same way as the Guards⁽¹¹²⁾.

The elite status of the equites is illustrated in the story of the Moorish Christian who in A.D. 320 said, "my grandfather was a soldier, he had served in the comitatus, for our family is of Moorish origin"⁽¹¹³⁾. Since the speaker, Victor, had already been a grammaticus in 303, his grandfather must have served in the comitatus before Diocletian's accession. His allusion to his

Moorish origin suggests very strongly that his grandfather was a soldier in the equites Mauri, and Victor's statement implies, as Jones points out⁽¹¹⁴⁾, that these units were well known as belonging to the emperor's entourage. The battlecavalry, therefore, obviously enjoyed a special relationship with the emperor that recalled to fourth-century minds the status of the comitatenses.

Clearly, Gallienus regarded his battlecavalry very highly. A further proof of this is afforded by his transfer of the mint from Rome to Milan⁽¹¹⁵⁾. Milan may thus be seen as acting as his capital, and that the cavalry forces were stationed there shows their prime importance. It is hardly surprising that this should be the case. With a total strength of perhaps ten to fifteen thousand men, they were a powerful and highly mobile concentration of troops. They undoubtedly formed the nucleus of Gallienus' strategic reserve, which in turn represented the corner-stone of his defence policy.

The key importance of the battlecavalry is nowhere more clearly revealed than in the pivotal role played by successive cavalry commanders. Aureolus was Gallienus' most outstanding general, and undoubtedly the most effective prop to his regime. When Aureolus withdrew his support, his master swiftly fell. Gallienus' successors, Claudius and Aurelian, were both cavalry commanders before rising to the purple, as almost certainly was Probus⁽¹¹⁶⁾. The cavalry command was now the most effective power-base in the empire, and its holder had replaced the Praetorian Prefect as the emperor's right-hand man. In short, he who controlled the battlecavalry, controlled the empire.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The break-up of the battlecavalry

By the time of the Notitia the bulk of the equites were stationed on the frontier. The seniority of the Diocletianic

lanciarii regiments in the comitatenses, moreover, shows that it was these infantry units rather than the third-century battlecavalry which formed the nucleus of the later field-armies⁽¹¹⁸⁾. Gallienus' cavalry force was not therefore the direct ancestor of the comitatenses of the fourth-century, and its component troops had evidently been dispersed along the frontiers by Diocletian's time.

There is in fact no evidence for the continued existence of the battlecavalry after the reign of Aurelian. Ritterling indeed held this emperor responsible for the break-up of the cavalry force⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

He regarded the systematic distribution of equites along the eastern frontier as occurring after Aurelian's conquest of Zenobia. By using his cavalry troops in this way, to garrison regions of the empire that had been recently re-united to Rome, he put an end to the equites as a mobile field-force.

There are serious objections to such a view, however⁽¹²⁰⁾. Before his accession, Aurelian had commanded the cavalry, and would have been well aware of its tactical advantages. As the outstanding general he undoubtedly was, it is most unlikely that he would have deprived himself of such a weapon. After his victory over the Vandals in 270, he sent "the greater part of his infantry and cavalry forces to Italy"⁽¹²¹⁾, and it is probable that he similarly kept his main forces concentrated together after his other victories. The evidence of the Sagittarii, too indicates that, since they probably did not belong to the battlecavalry before the re-conquest of the east, this corps at least, and quite possibly other equites, were added to the main battlecavalry force after Zenobia's defeat⁽¹²²⁾. These would have made good the loss of such equites, if any, which had been left behind to garrison the recently pacified regions.

These objections have led other scholars to regard Diocletian as the emperor responsible for dispersing the battlecavalry⁽¹²³⁾.

Zosimus refers to this emperor's care for the frontiers, and Malalas describes Diocletian's fortification of the eastern lines ⁽¹²⁴⁾.

According to Van Berchem, moreover, the eastern fortification-line based on the road called the strata Diocletiana, to which Malalas' passage almost certainly refers, was not merely a second-century foundation refurbished and expanded by Diocletian; the design similarities between these fortifications and those built elsewhere under the Tetrarchy point to an actual origin during this period ⁽¹²⁵⁾.

Diocletian certainly appears to be a more likely candidate than Aurelian for the dubious honour of breaking up the battlecavalry. But it still remains a problem why such an effective military body should have been broken up. It is difficult to agree with the suggestion of Seston that the cavalry force was suppressed because it was growing too powerful ⁽¹²⁶⁾. For any emperor who controlled this powerful force, it surely represented his best guarantee against provincial revolt and secession. It is on the other hand hard to understand why Diocletian should put so much emphasis on linear defence as to break up an instrument of war that had proved its superiority under his predecessors time and again, both against usurper and barbarian.

It seems doubtful, in fact, whether the picture painted by scholars, of the third-century battlecavalry being disbanded at one stroke, is an accurate one. If a gradual break-up of the equites took place, their dispersal becomes much more intelligible. Even under Gallienus, as we have seen, equites are attested on campaign away from the main body at Milan, and under his successors, they appear in different campaign-forces simultaneously. It is possible that after the re-unification of the empire, the mobile forces, which under Gallienus and his immediate successors appear to have been largely concentrated into one main body, were gradually dis-

persed into regional field-armies to meet the defence needs of the whole empire. Then, with Diocletian's policy of strengthening the limes, these regional field-armies were themselves broken up and systematically dispersed along the frontiers. If this is what happened, then the equites would have shared the experience of the other mobile troops, first being increasingly divided among the regional field-armies, and then being moved near to the limes to become frontier units.

Given the dearth of evidence for this period, particularly concerning the battlecavalry, any discussion is necessarily speculative. Nevertheless, there are some indications that such a gradual dispersion did take place. In a passage in the *Historia Augusta*, Probus is praised for having trained a school of famous generals, "whom our fathers admired, and several of them emerged as good emperors"⁽¹²⁷⁾. This reflects a situation where the emperor had to entrust the defence of different parts of the frontier to his subordinates, who thus had the chance to win considerable distinction in independent commands. Eleven generals are named, including the later emperors Carus, Diocletian and Maximianus, and the Praetorian Prefects Hannibalianus and Asclepiodotus. Syme dismisses the passage as a mere fictional device to create a sense of continuity between this and later reigns. The last name of the list, Gaudiosus, gives the lie to the passage, and is a typical example of 'fun and fantasy': according to Syme, it simply means 'Christian'⁽¹²⁸⁾. Zosimus, however, seems also to deliberately draw attention to the activities of Probus' generals. He specifically says, for instance, that one of the two campaigns waged simultaneously against the barbarians was led by one of his generals, while a little later he says that Probus defeated the Franks "through the agency of his generals"⁽¹²⁹⁾. Again, a revolt in Egypt was defeated "through the

(130)

agency of those who were currently commanding his (Probus) forces" ,
and an uprising by the Isaurians was put down, not by Probus him-
self, who was presumably busy elsewhere, but by one of his generals⁽¹³¹⁾.
Finally, it is noteworthy that Zosimus emphasises Probus' personal
responsibility for the defeat of the Burgundians and Vandals by the
use of skilful tactics⁽¹³²⁾.

Under Probus, then, the defence of the different frontiers was,
according to this source, in the hands of various commanders-in-chief,
who would undoubtedly have had large numbers of mobile troops at
their disposal, including strong contingents of equites. Certainly,
a field-army sent to put down a revolt in Egypt under the Tetrarchy
contained units of equites⁽¹³³⁾. Indeed, it is possible that the
numbers of equites increased after Aurelian's re-unification of the
empire, as we have seen. Apart from the likelihood that Aurelian
himself enrolled new formations of equites Stablesiani, Promoti and
Sagitarii into his cavalry forces⁽¹³⁴⁾, it may have been at this time
that the Dalmatian cavalry reached the size of ten thousand men that
is suggested for it by the Notitia⁽¹³⁵⁾.

By Diocletian's accession, however, most equites units were in
all probability distributed amongst field-armies operating in the
different parts of the empire. In contrast to his predecessors
Claudius, Aurelian and probably Probus, Diocletian does not seem to
have been a cavalry commander at the time of his bid for the throne.
He was, rather, a senior court general, perhaps the commander of the
protectores⁽¹³⁶⁾. This implies that the battlecavalry had lost its
place as a strong concentration of troops which had made it a spring-
board for previous commanders' imperial ambitions. With the gradual
settlement of affairs that occurred during the long reign of
Diocletian, and with his policy of strengthening the limites, it
would have been a comparatively small step to distribute the mobile

forces piecemeal along the frontiers⁽¹³⁷⁾.

It is preferable to regard the dispersal of such a potent weapon as the third-century battlecavalry, therefore, not as a sudden deliberate act, but as a gradual process. Diocletian's emphasis on frontier defence is not to be seen as a clear reversal of policy away from a strategy based on centralised field-armies towards a more conservative approach. He was, rather, consolidating trends which must have been apparent since the re-unification of the empire under Aurelian.

Conclusion

Gallienus' concentration of his cavalry into one force was in keeping with military trends dating from Marcus' reign, in which task-forces were increasingly used to achieve mobility and depth in defence, as well as to form the necessary troop-concentrations for major campaigns. The cavalry formation which Gallienus called into being was soon stationed at Milan, and became an elite body of troops more or less attached to the emperor's entourage. Although they never led to the creation of a standing army in the sense that the later comitatenses were, Gallienus' military reforms did have great significance for later developments.

Until Gallienus' reign, field-armies were composed of troops temporarily detached from the frontiers. Under Gallienus, however, large numbers of troops were based, at least semi-permanently, behind the limes, particularly in northern Italy. This may well have been largely fortuitous, with detachments being cut-off from their parent units by revolts and secessions. Nevertheless, over the years, they must have acquired a sense of permanence in their role as mobile forces⁽¹³⁸⁾.

In the case of the equites, it is quite clear that Gallienus

deliberately gave them a status not unlike the Praetorian Guard, and that he regarded them specifically as a strike force. As such, they not only formed the nucleus of the mobile forces of Gallienus and his successors; they were also the first troops in the Roman army to have a specialised role as mobile reserves.⁽¹³⁹⁾ The battle-cavalry thus laid the foundations for the later distinction between mobile troops and frontier troops, in which the former enjoyed a considerably higher status, both in terms of prestige and military value.

It is possible that the status of the legions had been gradually declining throughout the third-century. With Caracalla's general grant of Roman citizenship the main social distinction between legions and auxiliary units was removed. There are signs too, that from the Severan period on, frontier troops were becoming increasingly stationary, and this may have had an adverse effect upon their military value⁽¹⁴⁰⁾. The appearance under Gallienus of mobile troops with great tactical value, elite status and close association with the emperor, must have significantly enhanced the social and military decline of the frontier troops. The legions in particular never regained their distinctive place as the symbol and mainstay of Roman military power.

Closely related to this process was the rise in the status of the cavalry at the expense of the infantry. The third-century had seen a steady increase in the tactical importance of mounted troops, and by Gallienus' time, conditions were ripe for a change in the relevant status of infantry and cavalry. This was accomplished through the institution of the battlecavalry. One of the principal differences between the fourth-century defence system and that of the Principate was the prominent place which the cavalry had in the late Roman army. From taking a secondary place in the order of

battle, they had come to enjoy at least the same importance as the infantry. This fundamental change occurred during the third-century, mainly as a result of the achievements and fame of the equites of Gallienus and his successors⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

Although the third-century battlecavalry did not lead directly to the comitatenses of the fourth-century, therefore, it did play a vital part in the development of the late Roman army. The strength of the tradition concerning the battlecavalry, occurring as it does in virtually all of the histories of the period, even if somewhat obliquely⁽¹⁴²⁾, suggests that it made a very strong impression on contemporaries. Although the re-unification of the empire reduced its strategic value, at least as a single concentration of mounted troops, and led to its eventual absorption into the frontier forces, yet the third-century battlecavalry must surely have set an example which Constantine could later follow.

Neither does this exhaust the significance of this remarkable institution. Indeed, its political ramifications were arguably more important than its strictly military effects. For the vital years it remained in being, it was a weapon which was used to defeat both invaders and rebels. As such it contributed decisively to the re-unification of the empire and the restoration of some order under the Illyrian emperors. Furthermore, as the most powerful body of troops in the empire, it formed an excellent power-base for these rulers. It therefore constituted the key to the development of the military monarchy which took shape in these years, and which survived the third-century battlecavalry to become the political form of the later Roman empire. These political aspects will be discussed more fully in chapter six.

Notes and references

- 1) Cedrenus, 454 (Bonn). This passage is not strictly accurate, in that Gallienus was by no means first to establish autonomous cavalry formations, as this chapter hopes to show. Nevertheless, it is a striking illustration of the way later generations associated Gallienus with a radical innovation in Roman military history, particularly since Cedrenus devotes only two sentences to the entire reign.
- 2) Zos. 1, 40.
- 3) S. and M. V, 1, p.133, no.33.
- 4) Zos. 1, 43.
- 5) H.A. v.Gall., 14, 4-9. cf. Zos. 1, 40. Cecropius was possibly a tribune rather than dux: P.L.R.E. p.189, Cecropius 2.
- 6) Zos. 1, 45.
- 7) Zos. 1, 52.
- 8) Zos. 1, 53.
- 9) See, for example, H.G. Pflaum, "Zur Reform Des Kaisers Gallienus," Historia 25, 1976, p.110; and A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.217; cf. p.189, where reference is made to Gallienus' "flying army."
- 10) E.N. Luttwak, The grand strategy of the Roman empire, from the first century A.D. to the third, London, 1976, chapter 1. A good example of this strategy in action is the invasion of Britain in A.D. 43 by four legions.
- 11) Luttwak, Grand strategy, p.72.
- 12) Luttwak, Grand strategy, p.75f.
- 13) Vexillations were detachments drawn from regular units, both legions and auxiliaries, ranging in size from very small formations under centurions to powerful "task-forces" under senior equestrian and senatorial commanders. An early example of the large-scale use of vexillations in a mobile campaign occurs under Domitian, when the equestrian general C. Velius Rufus commanded an expeditionary force of detachments drawn from nine legions.
- 14) I Minerva, II Adivtrix, and V Macedonica: A.R. Birley, Marcus Aurelius, London, 1966, p.165.
- 15) R.E. Smith, "Army reforms of Septimius Severus," Historia 21, 1972, p.481ff.
- 16) H.A. v.Marci, 12, 13.
- 17) Tacitus, Annales 6, 4.

- 18) Luttwak makes the point that the military effectiveness of a vexillation might have been out of proportion to its size when compared to that of a legion. The 'tail' - the administrative and support staff - would by and large have remained with the parent legion, and the detachment would presumably have been composed of the younger and fitter men. The older, married men would have remained at their station, which, being their home, they could be counted on to defend with their lives. (Luttwak, Grand Strategy, p.125).
- 19) C.I.L. VIII 7050 = I.L.S. 1102 = [P(ublio) I]ulio P(ubl[i]o) Fil(io) Quir(ina) [Ge]minio Marciano ... leg(ato) Aug(ustorum) su[per] vexillationes in Cappa [dol]cia, leg(ato) Aug(usti) leg(ionis) X Geminae; = Saxer, no.63.
- 20) C.I.L. III, 1457 = I.L.S. 1097, 1098.
- 21) C.I.L. VIII 2582 = I.L.S. 1111; cf. C.I.L. VIII 2745.
- 22) A.E. 1956, 124 = Saxer, no.68.
- 23) A.E. 1920, 45 = Saxer, no.73.
- 24) The two equestrian commanders are:
- 1) C.I.L. VI, 31856 = I.L.S. 1327: L. Iulio Ve[hil]io Gr[at]o Iuliano ...[proc(uratori)] Aug(usti) et praep(osito) vexil[la]tion- (ibus) tempore belli [Germanici II, pr]oc(uratori) Aug(usti) provinciae Lusit[aniae] et Vett[oniae, proc(uratori) A]ug(usti) et praepos[ito] vexillationis per [...], proc(uratori) Aug(usti) et praef(ecto) classis Po[ntic]ia[e, proc(uratori) Aug(ustorum) e]t pra[ep]osito] vexillationis per Achaia[m] et Macedoniam et in Hispanias adversus Castabocas et Mauros rebelles, praeposito vexillationibus tempore belli Germanici et Sarmat(ici), praef(ecto) alae Tampi[an]ae Dated c.166-180: Pflaum, Carrières p.456, no.180 = Saxer, no.67.
 - 2) A.E. 1956, 124: M. Valerio Maximiano... praef(ecto) al(lae) I Aravacor(um) adeptus procurationem Moesiae inferioris, eodem in tempore praeposito vexillationibus et at detrahendam Briseorum latronum manum in confinio Macedon(iae) et Thrac(iae) ab imp(eratore) misso proc(uratori) Moesiae super(ioris) Pflaum, Carrières, p.476, no.181; cf. Dio, 71, 3, 1-2; H.A. v.Pert., 2,4.
- 25) A.R. Birley, Marcus Aurelius, p.225f.
- 26) Ti. Claudius Candidus: C.I.L. II 4114 = I.L.S. 1140; L. Marius Maximus: C.I.L. VI 1450, 1452 = I.L.S. 2935; Ti Claudius Claudianus: C.I.L. VIII 7977, 7978 = I.L.S. 1147.
- 27) C.I.L. III 905; cf. Barbieri, no.147; Saxer, no.80f.
- 28) I.L.S. 1141, 1142 = C.I.L. VI 1408, 1409; cf. Lambrechts, no.166; Barbieri, no.213; G.J. Murphy, The reign of the emperor L. Septimius Severus from the evidence of inscriptions, (Diss. Univ. Pennsylvania), 1945, p.11ff.; Saxer, no.77ff.

- 29) A.E. 1957, 123 = Saker no.84.
- 30) C.I.L. III, 10471 = Saker no.86.
- 31) E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman army," Epigr. Stud. 8, 1969, p.66f.
- 32) The only exception here is Claudius Candidus (I.L.S. 1140), but even he held his command at the same place in the career as a legionary legateship.
- 33) C.I.L. X 5398 = I.L.S. 1159: C. Octavio App(ia) S[ue]trio Sabino legato [Aug(usti)] pr(o) pr(aetore) prov(inciae) Raet(iae), praeposit(o) vexi[ll(ariis)] Germ(anicae) expedit(ionis) Comit(i) Aug(usti) n(ostri), legat(o) [leg(ionis) II] et vicensim(ae) Pri[m]ilg(eniae)... Dated 213; Saker, no.89f.
- 34) A.E. 1929, 158; cf. I.G. 4483 for vexillation command; Lambrechts, no.659; Barbieri, no.1147.
- 35) Herod. 6, 3, 1; 4, 3. The translation is taken from E.C. Echols [tr. and ed.], Herodian: History of the Roman empire from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the accession of Gordian III, Berkeley, Univ. of California P., 1961.
- 36) A.T. Olmstead, "The mid-third century," Class. Phil. 37, 1942, p.412. The list runs as follows: "the people of Germania (i.e. German mercenaries, according to Olmstead, since Germania also appears lower down in the list), Rhetia, Noricum, Dacia, Pannonia, Mysia, Amastris (the chief city of Paphlagonia), (Hisp)ania, Africa, Thracia, Bithynia, Asia, Campania, Assyria, Lycaonia, Galatia, Lycia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Syria, Phoenicia, Judaea, Arabia, Mauretania, Germania, Lydia, Asia, and Mesopotamia, a force of seventy thousand men."
- 37) Olmstead, "The mid-third century," p.403 and 411f.
- 38) Zos. 1, 23.
- 39) Of the legions of the Severan army, only the IV Ferrata of Palestine and possibly the III Parthica of Mesopotamia seem to have disappeared completely in the interval between 235 and 284: see Luttwak, Grand Strategy p.227, note 135, and G.L. Cheesman, Auxilia, Oxford, 1914, p.140f.
- 40) Zos. 1, 28.
- 41) E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman army," p.64f.
- 42) Vigiles also were increased from 3500 to 7000 (E. Birley, op.cit., p.64). Whether this had any military significance is doubtful, however, since they presumably remained a corps of nightwatchmen.
- 43) E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman Army," p.65.
- 44) A.R. Birley has pointed out that Septimius was haunted by his struggle for power for the rest of his life. Thus, the night before Plautianus was murdered, he dreamt of Albinus; and in

his autobiography he vilified both Albinus and Niger, (A.R. Birley, Septimius Severus, the African emperor, London, 1971, p.240). There is no need, on the other hand, to see in the strengthening of the Rome garrison an anti-Italian policy (see, e.g., M. Platnauer, The life and reign of the emperor Lucius Septimius Severus, Oxford, 1918, p.158ff).

- 45) Herod. 6, 9, 4., and 8, 5, 9.
- 46) Herod. 7, 2, 2; cf. X. Lorient, "Les première années de la grande crise du III^e siècle de l'avenement de Maximin le Thrace (235) à la mort de Gordian III (244)," A.N.R.W. 2, (2), 1975, p.696ff., and E. Birley, "Some militaria in the Historia Augusta," Bonner Historia - Augusta Colloquium, 1966/7, p.48.
- 47) Herod. 8, 5, 8.
- 48) Dio 78, 13, 4; 34, 5; cf. F. Millar, A Study on Cassius Dio, London, 1966, p.167.
- 49) Platnauer, Septimius Severus, p.162.
- 50) Saxer, no. 64.
- 51) Dio 75, 7, 3; 76, 6, 8; cf. E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman army," p.66.
- 52) A.E, 1966, 495. Valerianus had previously served as procurator of Cyprus, which gives some indication of the seniority of this command, and therefore of its size.
- 53) Herod. 4, 15, 1.
- 54) Herod. 6, 7, 8.
- 55) H.A. v.Sev.Alex. 61, 8; v.Max. 11, 1 and 7.
- 56) Herod. 6, 7, 8; cf. Herod. 7, 2, 2 and H.A. v.Max. 11, 7.
- 57) Herod. 8, 1, 2.
- 58) Zos. 1, 15.
- 59) Zos. 1, 20.
- 60) C.I.L. III 3228; cf. p.2328¹⁸² = I.L.S. 546: [Io]vi monitori [p]ro Salute adque incolumitate d(omini) n(ostri) Gallieni Aug(usti) et militum vexill(ationum) leg(ionum) [G]ermaniciana [rum] e]t Britannic(arum) [cu]m auxiliis [e]jarum [...V]italianus [p]ro]t]ect(or) Aug(usti) n(ostri) [p]raepos]litus [v(ir)] p(er)fec-tissimus) = Saxer, no.101 = P.L.R.E. p.969, [V]italianus l. Mommsen in C.I.L., and Dessau in I.L.S., render the last phrase [somno mon]itus p(osuit). On the question of legionary vexillations cut off from their parent units, see M.R. Alföldi, "Zu der Militärreformen des Kaisers Gallienus," Vorträge des dritten internationalen Limeskongresses, Basel, 1957 = Limestudien 14, 1959, p.13ff.
- 61) M.R. Alföldi, "Militärreformen," p.13ff.
- 62) A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.182.

- 63) Aur. Victor de Caes. 33, 2; H.A. v.Trig.Tyr. 9, 3; Zon. 12, 24. The date is uncertain, and Jones et al. are content to say c.260 (P.L.R.E. p.457 Ingenuus, and p.138, Aureolus). H.M.D. Parker dates the battle of Mursa to 259, without giving any reason for it (History of the Roman World, A.D. 138-377, 2nd ed. London 1966, p.168).
- 64) Aur. Victor, de Caes., 21. 2.
- 65) A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, Oxford, 1973, vol. 2, p.1417ff. According to Jones, the eastern section was revised up to either c.395, when the division of the empire took place, or c.408, when diplomatic relations were restored after the fall of Stilicho; and the western section was revised up to c.420.
- 66) Equites Dalmatae Illyriciani: Not.Dig.Or. 35, 15; 33, 25; 32, 21; 34, 18; 37, 16. Equites Mauri Illyriciani: Not.Dig.Or. 35, 17; 33, 26; 32, 18; 34, 21; 37, 17. Equites Promoti Illyriciani: Not.Dig.Or. 36, 20; 35, 16; 33, 17; 34, 19; 37, 15 (and 32, 20, mistakenly called indigenae; O. Seeck, Not.Dig. p.68 note 3). Equites Scutarii Illyriciani: Not.Dig. Or. 36, 19; 33, 16; 32, 19; 34, 20; 37, 14.
- 67) E. Ritterling, "Zum römischen Heerwesen des ausgehenden dritten Jhs.," Festschrift Hirschfeld, 1903, p.346f.; R. Grosse, Römische Militärgeschichte, Berlin, 1920., p.19f.; A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12., p.217.
- 68) See above, p.68.
- 69) Zon, 12, 24.
- 70) Under Trajan, Lusius Quietus used Moorish troops in large numbers (R.E. 13, 2(1927), 1874ff.), and they were regularly employed in the Roman army from the time of Antoninus Pius (E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman Army," p.65f.). See above, p.
- 71) Ritterling, "Römischen Heerwesen," p.345f.; D. Hoffman, "Das Spätromische Bewegungsheer Und Die Notitia Dignitatum," Epigr. Stud. 7(1), 1969, p.248.
- 72) See above, note 5 for references.
- 73) Zos. 1, 43.
- 74) Hoffman, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.247.
- 75) A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.216.
- 76) Hoffman ("Spätromische Bewegungsheer," Epigr.Stud. 7(2), 1969, p.102, note 430) suggests that an obscure passage in John Lydus (De Mag. 1, 48), in which the armed retinue of the Republican Magister Equitum is described as promoti, refers not to Republican legionary cavalry but to the third-century cavalry corps. The N.C.O. grades which John Lydus quotes in this context are more appropriate to the late third-century than to the Republic.
- 77) The word Scutarii simply means shield-bearers.

- 78) Ritterling, "Römischen Heerwesen," p.348.
- 79) M. Besnier, L'empire romain de l'avènement de Sévère au concile de Nicée, Hist. Anc. 3, Hist. rom. 4, 1., Paris, 1936, p.190; W. Ensslin, C.A.H. 12, p.379.
- 80) Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer, p.250.
- 81) Hoffmann ("Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," Epigr.Stud. (2) p.104, note 473), thinks that these four were also indigenae.
- 82) The equites Sagittarii are present in exactly the same distribution as the Promoti in the West Danube duchies: Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," p.251.
- 83) A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.216.
- 84) M. L. Speidel, "Stablesiani," Chiron, 4, 1974, p.541ff.
- 85) Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," p.252; Speidel ("Stablesiani," p.545) points out that the prominence of the name Valerius in a certain unit of stablesiani suggests a pre-Diocletianic date.
- 86) Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," P.252.
- 87) Speidel, "Stablesiani," p.543.
- 88) Speidel, "Stablesiani," p.543ff.
- 89) Speidel ("Stablesiani," p.544) mentions a proconsul of Asia who recruited stratores from cohorts stationed in his province, and it is possible that such a unit, already existing in an eastern province by the mid-third century, may have served as a model for their use as a strike-force, and thus inspired the empire-wide use of the strangely Grecized word 'Stablesiani'.
- 90) Apart from these six equites-types, the only other type which appears more than once in the Notitia are the Armegerii, (Not. Dig.Or. 39, 17; 40, 14 and 15; Occ. 6, 54, 66 and 80; 7, 173, 184 and 198). Whether these belonged to the third-century battlecavalry is entirely uncertain (Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," p.252f.).
- 91) Hoffmann, "Spätrömische Bewegungsheer," p.256.
- 92) Vegetius gives the number of Promoti as seven hundred and sixty per legion (Vegetius 2, 6), and E. Stein dates this increase to Gallienus' reign: Histoire du Bas-Empire, vol. 1 (284-476), Paris, 1959, (tr. ed. by J.R. Palanque) p.55 and note 216 (vol. 2, p.430); cf. H.M.D. Parker, "The Antiqua Legio of Vegetius," C.Q. 26, 1937, p.137-49.
- 93) From a papyrus dated 300 (P. Oxy, 43), we know of equites (secundi) Promoti leg. II Traianae stationed in the Thebaid. These had clearly been recently detached from their parent legion. Similarly, the Notitia Dignitatum records equites Promoti indigenae

on the eastern frontier: Not. Dig.Or. 32, 22 and 23; 33, 19 and 27; 34, 23 and 24; 35, 18 and 19; 36, 23 and 24; 37, 18 and 19. That there were two units to each province suggests that they were detached from the legions stationed in those provinces under the Tetrarchy, and never belonged to the third-century "battlecavalry." Presumably the Promoti which had been included in the "battlecavalry" soon lost their links with their parent legions, as was certainly the case with the equites Promoti Illyriciani stationed on the eastern frontier.

- 94) M.R. Alföldi, "Militärreformen," p.13ff. L. de Blois, The policy of the emperor Gallienus, Leiden, 1976, p.26ff.
- 95) A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.213; 217; Pflaum, "Zur Reform Des Kaisers Gallienus," p.110.
- 96) De Blois, Gallienus, p.28f.
- 97) A.E. 1936, 57, = Saxer no.104: [pro salute legionum VI] M(acedonicae) et XII [I g(eminiae) G]allienarum [Fl]avius Aper (vir) e(gregivs) [pra]epositus; A.E. 1934, 223 = Saxer, no.107: [... milites? le]g(ionum) IIIII Pan[noniar(um), qui su]nt in vexil[latione sub] cura Ael(ii) [...]: v(iri) e(gregii) duci[s.....]
- 98) A.E. 1934, 193 = Pflaum, Carrières, no.919 = Saxer, no.102..... Vexill(ationes) leg(ionum) II Parth(icae) III Aug(ustae) sub cura Aur(elii) Augustiani ducis iustissimi et C(ai) [E]uf (...) Synforian[i] praep(ositi) vexillationum.... dated under Gallienus.
- 99) E. Manni, "Gallienus," R.F.A.C. 8, 1972, col. 968; W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, Paris, 1946, p.305; De Blois, Gallienus, p.30ff.
- 100) See above, p. 38 and note 61. For Gallienus' "legionary" Antoniniani, see M. and S., V, 1, p.92ff., nos 314-369; dated 257-259. Praetorian cohorts also appear in this series - p.97, nos 370-372.
- 101) See M.R. Alföldi, "Militärreformen," p.13ff. Similar "legionary" coin series, like those of Mark Antony, Clodius Macer and Septimius Severus, only celebrated those legions faithful to themselves.
- 102) FIDES EQVITVM; M. and S., V, 1, p.133, no.33 (Rome mint). p.169 no.445 (Milan mint).
FIDES PRAET: M. and S., V, I, nos. 36 and 37 (Rome mint).
FIDES MILITVM: M. and S., V, I, p.131, nos. 10-13; p.133, nos. 38-41 (Rome mint); p.170, no.447 (Milan mint).
The legend FIDEI EQVITVM only appears on gold coins. The other two legends appear also on Gallienic Antoniniani: M. and S., V, I, p.172, nos.475, 476, 48 and 481 (Milan mint); and the legend FIDES MILITVM appears on numerous other coins too.
- 103) Aur. Vict. de Caes. 33, 17. "...cum per Raetias legionibus praee-esset."
- 104) See above, note 63 for reference.

- 105) I.L.S. 569.
- 106) Zos. 1, 40.
- 107) Zos. 12, 26; Zos. 1, 40, 2; cf. Hoffmann, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.247; Epigr.Stud. 7 (2) p.101, note 413; cf. note 411.
- 108) See above, note 5 for references.
- 109) Zos. 1, 43.
- 110) Zos. 1, 45: "After this, the Emperor's infantry and cavalry, being at variance with each other, he decided that the former should fight it out with the enemy; after a strenuous battle, the Romans were routed - but the cavalry put in an appearance and moderated the infantry's sense of failure" (Buchanan and Davis' translation).
- 111) See above, p.48f. and note 102.
- 112) A. Alföldi ("Der Usurpator Aureolus and die Kavalleriereform des Gallienus," Studien zur Geschichte der Weltkrise des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr., Darmstadt, 1967, p.1-16) even suggests that the cavalry in Milan constituted a pendant to the Praetorian guards in Rome.
- 113) Opatatus Milevitanus, Appendix I (C.S.E.L. 26, 185f).
- 114) Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.52f.
- 115) De Blois, Gallienus, p.28.
- 116) Claudius: see above, note 107. Aurelian: H.A., v.Aur. 18, 1; cf. A.Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.190; Hoffmann, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.247, and Epigr.Stud. 7 (2) p.101, note 414. Probus: Epit de Caes. 36, 2; Hoffmann, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.247, and Epigr. Stud. 7 (2) p.101, note 415. The assumption that Probus was a cavalry commander is based largely on his surname 'Equitius' which appears both in the Epit de Caes. and on coins.
- 117) The only exception here is Aureolus, whose revolt failed. It is clear, however, that he did not control all the cavalry at the time of his revolt (see above, p.50), in spite of Zosimus' description of him as "Commander of the entire cavalry" (Zos. 1, 40).
- 118) H.M.D. Parker, "The legions of Diocletian and Constantine," J.R.S. 23, 1933, p.185ff. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.52f.
- 119) Ritterling, "Römischen Heerwesen," p.348.
- 120) Hoffmann, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.256.
- 121) Dexippus, Frg. 24 = F.H.G. 3,686.
- 122) See above, p.44f.

- 123) Domaszewski, Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres, Bonn, 1908, p.191, note 10; A. Alföldi, C.A.H. 12, p.217; Hoffmann, "Spätromische Bewegungsheer," p.256f.
- 124) Zos. 2, 34. Malalas, Chron. 12, 308 (Bonn); cf. Am. Marc. 23, 5f.
- 125) D. van Berchem, L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme Constantinienne. Paris, 1952, p.10ff.
- 126) W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.298ff.
- 127) H.A. v.Prob. 22, 3.
- 128) R. Syme, Ammianus and the Historia Augusta, Oxford, 1968, p.173; cf. his Emperors and biography, Oxford, 1971, p.213f.
- 129) Zos. 1, 67, 68.
- 130) Zos. 1, 71.
- 131) Zos. 1, 69, 70.
- 132) Zos. 1, 68.
- 133) P. Oxy, 43.
- 134) See above, p.43; ^{44f.; 53;} According to A. Alföldi (C.A.H. 12, p.217f), Aurelian did much to re-organise the army, including adding catafractarii units.
- 135) See above, p.44f.
- 136) The protectores were later called domestici, and Diocletian is referred to as commanding the domestics before his accession: Aur. Victor. de Caes. 39, 1; H.A. v.Cari 22, 3. See P.L.R.E., p.253f., C. Aur. Val. Diocletianus 2.
- 137) In the fourth century, frontier troops were classified in two grades. The old auxiliary alae and cohortes made up the lower grade, or limitanei. Above these were ranked the legions, along with other units such as equites and milites. The distinction goes back to Diocletian's time (van Berchem, Armée de Dioclétien, p.17ff). The reason for this distinction was that by the end of the third century, the old auxiliary troops had lost much of their military efficiency and mobility, and so, under Diocletian, were supplemented by mobile reserves. These later units had probably all belonged to the mobile field armies of Gallienus and his successors, and their distribution to points behind the limes, therefore, marks the final stage in the deconcentration of mobile forces which had been going on since Aurelian's re-unification of the empire.
- 138) The fact that they were returned to the frontier under Diocletian does not disprove this. The equites and other troops were not re-united with their parent units, with whom they had completely lost touch over the years, nor were units simply returned to their old stations. Rather, Diocletian's policy entailed the systematic distribution of hitherto mobile troops (whatever their ultimate origin) along the frontier.

- 139) The function of the Praetorian guard and other troops of the Rome garrison was primarily to defend the emperor and the capital. Their role as a strategic reserve, though important, was incidental.
- 140) This may be inferred from the increasing amount of "home comforts" allowed to soldiers from Septimius' time onwards: Cheesman, Auxilia, p.116ff.; E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman army," p.63f., 69.
- 141) The rise to prominence of the cavalry, especially under Gallienus, may well have caused resentment amongst the infantry legionaries. This may have been an ingredient in the incident under Claudius when friction between cavalry and infantry threatened the success of his campaign (see above, p. 51 and note 110).
- 142) For example: Zos 1, 40, 43, 45, 52, 53; H.A. v.Gall. 14, 4, 9; v.Aur. 18, 1; Zon. 12, 24, 25 and 26; Cedrenus, 454 (in connection with which, see above, note 1).

Introduction

The strategic changes discussed in the previous chapter were accompanied by another development which took place in the third-century, and which profoundly altered the character of the Roman military leadership. This was the replacement of senatorial commanders by equites.

The topmost military appointments, those of legionary commander and above, had traditionally gone to members of the senatorial order. This was still by and large the case at the beginning of the third century. In spite of the existence of a handful of equestrian posts which involved major military command, like the Praetorian Prefecture, the Prefectures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the Prefectures of four legions, the principle of senatorial military leadership remained essentially unchallenged. This is shown by the appointment of senators to the command of the growing number of mobile task-forces raised from the reign of Marcus onwards⁽¹⁾. By the end of the century however, the situation had changed dramatically. The only measure of military authority senators retained was as governors of armed provinces, and even this may have been more theoretical than real⁽²⁾. Otherwise, military office went entirely to professional soldiers of equestrian rank.

According to one ancient source, Aurelius Victor, it was Gallienus who was responsible for this turn of events⁽³⁾. This assertion has been questioned, however; some modern historians have preferred to see the replacement of senatorial commanders by equestrians as a gradual evolution rather than as a sudden revolution⁽⁴⁾. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the process by which the legionary senatorial officers - the tribuni laticlavii and legati legionum - and the senat-

erial vexillation commanders were replaced by equites, and to seek to determine how this transformation came about⁽⁵⁾.

The legionary officers

The latest precisely datable tribunus laticlavus is Tinius Tiberianus, tr(ibus) mil. leg. X G(eminæ) p.[f. D]ecianæ, in 249⁽⁶⁾. There are, however, other instances of such officers who belong to the mid-third century. M. Aelius Aurelius Theo, who was legate of Arabia under Valerian, held the tribunate of two legions, probably sometime in the 240s⁽⁷⁾, and the anonymous senator whose career is recorded in a very fragmented inscription from Sbeitla held a tribunate at about the same time or a little later, though probably not after c.260⁽⁸⁾. The tribunate of P. Balsamius Sabinianus, on the other hand, must have been held after the accession of Valerian, since his father bore the title protector Augusti⁽⁹⁾. Balsamius' designation as clarissimus puer, however, together with the fact that he seems to have accompanied his father in Dalmatia when the latter was procurator of that province, may indicate that his tribunate was little more than a sinecure⁽¹⁰⁾. At any rate, this is the only tribunate we know of which occurred with any probability after Gallienus' accession⁽¹¹⁾.

As for legati legionum, examples are known up to and during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. One legateship is definitely datable to this reign⁽¹²⁾, and another senator, T. Flavius Postumianus, is recorded as a legatus in Britain in an inscription found at Caerleon⁽¹³⁾. Whether he was the legionary legate of the II Augusta or the provincial legate of Upper Britain is not known, although since the II Augusta was stationed at that town the former seems the more likely. Neither is the precise date known, but since he was Prefect of the City in 271⁽¹⁴⁾, his British post must have been under Valerian, or before.

A third senator, Q. Mamilius Capitolinus, is described as leg. Aug. per Asturiam et Gallaeciam, dux legionis VII[G(eminæ)]⁽¹⁵⁾ in

an inscription dedicated to "Sol Invictus," which suggests a date in the mid-third century. Since his previous appointment had been as iuridicus of the regions of Flaminia, Umbria and Picenum, a post which probably belonged to the period before Gallienus' sole rule⁽¹⁶⁾, Capitolinus' command as dux probably occurred under Valerian. The title dux is rather surprising. Pflaum thinks that it was inserted instead of legatus because Capitolinus had been successful in warfare⁽¹⁷⁾. It may, on the other hand, suggest that he only commanded a 'mobile' detachment of the VII Gemina, not the entire legion. It is tempting to read into this inscription a situation in which the iuridicus of Asturia and Gallaecia is faced with an emergency, and calling upon a detachment from the nearby legion, leads it against the enemy - who may have been either Moors or Baugadae⁽¹⁸⁾. In any case, Capitolinus' command can hardly have occurred after Gallienus' accession as sole emperor, as the VII Gemina would then have been under the control of the Gallic emperors; which would have precluded Capitolinus' move from Spain to Rome on his appointment as praefectus of the Aerarium Saturni⁽¹⁹⁾. The only other possibility is that he held his command after Aurelian's re-unification of the empire. The dedication to "Sol Invictus" supports this date to some extent, but the probability that his Italian iuridicate belonged to the period before Gallienus' accession makes it unlikely. In any event, the uncertain nature of Capitolinus' command means that it cannot be taken as an example of a duly appointed legionary legate occurring after Gallienus' reign.

Although both tribuni laticlavii and legati legionum occur up to this date, therefore, only one senatorial legionary officer, P. Balsamius Sabinianus, may have held his post after the end of Valerian's reign, and even this may not have been a substantive military office. On the other hand, before Gallienus' sole reign we know of very few possible cases of equites commanding legions outside the

recognised equestrian preserves of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Italy, and none of these is convincing..

The first example is the command of L. Artorius Castus, dux leg(ionum) [duarum]m Britanicimiarum adversus Arm[oricanos]⁽²⁰⁾. Pflaum sees this as a command over two British legions, and while Ritterling dates it to the mid-third century on the grounds that it must post-date the edict of Gallienus⁽²¹⁾, Pflaum dates it to Commodus' reign, during a war in Britain in which Perennis "dismissed certain senators and put men of the equestrian order in command of the soldiers."⁽²²⁾ Castus' command would then be datable to 184, since Perennis' fall occurred in 185. Dio specifically describes this campaign as taking place in northern Britain, however, while Castus' command is in Brittany. It is also most unlikely that Britain would be stripped of two complete legions to fight across the sea. It is safer to see Castus' command as being rather more limited in scope; namely, over vexillations drawn from two British legions, perhaps sent over the Channel against Maternus' revolt or other similar manifestations of third-century peasant unrest⁽²³⁾. This interpretation is supported by the place of the command in Castus' career, since it comes immediately after his primipilate and before an appointment as praefectus castrorum.

The title dux legionis, which Castus bore when he held his special command against the Armoricans, occurs also in two other cases. Valerius Claudius Quintus was primus pilus of the II Italica before becoming dux of the III Italica, and then dux et praepositus of the III Augusta⁽²⁴⁾; and the career inscription of another officer at the time of Philip (244-249) runs as follows: [...praef(ectus)] veh[icul-(orum), proc(urator)] lud(i) ma[gni, proc(urator)] Lusit(aniae), trib(unus) p[raet(orianus)] Philipporum A[ug(ustorum)], p(rimus) p(ilus), dux leg(ionum) Dac(iae), [centurio], corn(icularius) praef(ectorum) pr(aetorio)⁽²⁵⁾. In both cases, as with Castus, the title

dux legionis has been taken to imply legionary command. Thus, in the case of Quintus, Pflaum supposed that he held the command of the III Italica instead of the senatorial governor of Raetia during the civil war which brought Valerian to the throne in 253; and as a reward for his services, was then given the command of the reconstituted III Augusta, still on the Danube⁽²⁶⁾. In the case of the anonymous equestrian, Pflaum suggested that he may have been appointed to command the Dacian legions in order to support the new, insecure regime of Philip⁽²⁷⁾.

In neither case, however, is there any more reason to suppose that these equestrian duces actually commanded entire legions than there is in that of Castus. Like Castus, both held their commands at about the same time as their primipilates, while Philip's dux actually held his Dacian post before going on to a primipilate. It is difficult to believe that a centurion would be given authority over two whole legions, and thence be 'promoted' to a primipilate. These careers on the other hand seem much less extraordinary if the title dux legionis is regarded either as signifying the legionary camp commandant⁽²⁸⁾ or, more likely, the commander of a vexillation, for whom the title dux and praepositus were synonymously used⁽²⁹⁾. Certainly a fourth equestrian who was [dux per qua[dr(iennum) leg(ionis)] XI Cl(audiae)]⁽³⁰⁾ can hardly have commanded the whole legion. The inscription was found in the Crimean Chersonese, and it is preferable to interpret it as referring to a legionary detachment from the nearest provincial garrison - that of Lower Moesia - sent to aid in the defence of the Greek cities in the Crimea⁽³¹⁾, than to think that the XI Claudia spent four years across the sea from its base, which was always one of the most threatened sectors of the frontier.

The epigraphic evidence thus yields no convincing example of an eques commanding a whole legion before the accession of Gallienus.

Senatorial legates, on the other hand, appear frequently. Between the fall of the Severi in 235 and the accession of Gallienus at least five examples are known, and possibly eight⁽³²⁾. There is, then, no evidence that the first half of the third century saw senators gradually giving way to equites in the command of legions.

After Gallienus' accession as sole emperor the picture changes abruptly. The disappearance of senatorial military officers is matched by the sudden appearance of equestrian legionary commanders in the epigraphy under Gallienus.

1) P. Aelius Aelianus, praefectus leg(ionis) s(uora) s(criptae) (=II Adivtricis) protector Aug(usti) (CIL III 3529; cf. A.E. 1965, 9). Since Aelianus' command occurred under Gallienus, and since also in 267 Marcellinus (no. 3 below) was in command of the II Adivtrix, while in June of the following year Aurelius Frontinus (no. 4 below) was in command, his praefecture cannot have occurred after about 266⁽³³⁾. He is probably therefore the first equestrian legionary commander known to us, his only rival being -

2) Aurelius Syrus, v.e., praef(ectus) III Aug. (A.E. 1971, 508). Syrus' command occurred under the governorship of C. Iulius Sallustius Saturninus Fortunatianus, legate of Numidia under Gallienus⁽³⁴⁾.

3) Valerius Marcellinus, praef(ectus) leg(ionis) prot(ector) Aug(usti) n(ostris) a(gens) v(ice) l(egati) (C.I.L. III 3424 = I.L.S. 545: the inscription was found near Aquincum, and so refers to the II Adivtrix). Dated 267. Since he had been succeeded by Frontinus (no. 4 below) by June 268, he probably took command in 266⁽³⁵⁾.

4) Aelius Frontinus, praef(ectus) leg(ionis) (II Adivtricis) (C.I.L. III 10492 = I.L.S. 2457). Although his title does not specify that he was a legionary commander as distinct from a camp prefect, it is reasonable to suppose that this is the case, because his name is immediately preceded by that of Clementius Silvius, a.v.p., in exactly

the same way as is Marcellinus' name in his inscription (see above no. 3). Frontinus' command is dated 268⁽³⁶⁾.

5) Aurelius Superinus], [p]r[ae]f(ectus) leg(ionis) I Adi(vtrici)s a(gens) v(ice) l(egati) (C.I.L. III 4289). Dated 269.

6) M. Aurelius Fortunatus, v.e., praef(ectus) leg(ionis) III Aug. Aurelianae (C.I.L. VIII 2665). Dated 270/5.

7) Aelius Paternianus, v.e., praef(ectus) leg(ionis) II Adiv(ricis) a(gens) v(ice) l(egati) (C.I.L. III 3469). Dated to 284 (under Carinus).

Apart from these seven examples of equestrian legionary commanders under Gallienus and his successors, there are further cases which are not dated:

8) T. Flavius Victor, [a(gens)] v(ice) l(egati) p(?) praefe(ctus) leg(ionis) II Ad(ivtrici)s - (C.I.L. III 3426)⁽³⁷⁾.

9) Ulpianus, v.e., praef(ectus) leg(ionis) III Aug. (C.I.L. VIII 2685).

10) ...anus, v.[e] praef. leg. VII Gem. Spaniae (C.I.L. V 5835).

This evidence clearly suggests that Gallienus' reign saw a decisive and sudden change in the system of legionary command. There is no sign of an intermediate stage of development: the new system of equestrian appointments appears full-grown in the epigraphy.

The new equestrian commanders

The question of who these new equestrian legionary commanders were has been much debated. Were they merely the old praefecti (castrorum) legionum left in command of the legions in the absence of the senators, or were they more senior equestrian officers specifically appointed to legionary command, like the commanders of the equestrian legions of Egypt and Mesopotamia under the Principate?

Since the time of Domitian, each legion had had its own fortress,

and consequently its own praefectus castrorum. This officer therefore had in the course of time become known by the title praefectus legionis⁽³⁸⁾. There was, however, a clear distinction between the praefectus (castrorum) legionis and the praefecti legionum who commanded the Egyptian and later the Parthica legions. Whereas, after the time of Claudius, the former were ex-principili serving in a last post before retirement, the latter were ex-principili bis, who had previously served in the three grades of the tribunates of the Rome garrison and who were therefore very senior officers, probably known personally to the emperor.

Whether the prefect of an Egyptian legion was also the prefect of the camp is a moot point. Certainly while there were two legions in the province sharing a single castra there was a separate praefectus castrorum⁽³⁹⁾, but the situation that prevailed later, when Egypt had only one legion, is not at all certain⁽⁴⁰⁾. As for the rest of the empire after Gallienus, scholars have tended to argue that the two officers, camp commandant and legionary commander, were merged in the new praefectus legionis⁽⁴¹⁾.

The exact responsibilities of the new equestrian commanders are only of importance in relation to the question of whether these officers were left in command of the legions by the absence of the senators - by default, as it were - or whether they were specifically appointed to their posts. Thus, Keyes thought that the career inscription of Traianus Mucianus showed that there was a continuing distinction between the two posts, and that the legionary commanders were, like those in Egypt and Mesopotamia, senior equites specially appointed from amongst the capitoline tribunes.

Mucianus' career, although undated, clearly falls in the latter half of the third century, as is apparent from his protectorates as well as from his legionary commands⁽⁴²⁾. After serving as centurio

protector in the capitoline units, he was appointed praefectus legionis IIII Flaviae, and then dux legionis VII Claudiae et IIII Flaviae. He then went on to a series of rather obscure commands, which apparently had the same rank as the capitoline tribunates⁽⁴³⁾. Subsequently he acquired the title ducenarius and went on to command legions - the XIII Gemina and II Traiana, according to Domaszewski⁽⁴⁴⁾.

In a very difficult career inscription, not the least of the difficulties is why Mucianus' first legionary prefectures were separated from his later ones by a series of lesser appointments. Domaszewski's explanation is far from convincing. He argues that whereas the later legionary commands were over legions which had, since the time of Augustus, been under primpili bis, and which remained so, Mucianus' earlier prefectures, while actual legionary commands, were over legions which had only received equestrian commanders since the time of Gallienus. According to this view, then, Gallienus' new legionary prefects were of comparatively low rank, in contrast to the traditional equestrian legionary commanders of the Principate, and it follows that they could easily have merely been the old camp commandants assuming the command of the legions in the absence of the senatorial commanders. Unfortunately, Domaszewski's view is dependent upon his belief that the XIII Gemina was in Italy at this time, at Aquileia, rather than in Dacia, its usual base. This would have put it in the same category as the II Parthica, stationed near Rome, and the other equestrian legions of the Principate; according to Domaszewski, it had been transferred from Dacia by Philip⁽⁴⁵⁾. In fact, the legionary units attested at Aquileia under Philip were almost certainly vexillations drawn from the Dacian legions, rather than the complete legions themselves⁽⁴⁶⁾. Domaszewski's theory cannot therefore explain the differences between the ranks of Mucianus' earlier and later legionary posts.

Keyes' explanation is more acceptable, that Mucianus' first post as praefectus legionis was not in fact a legionary command, but a prefecture of the camp of the IV Flavia. This would mean that his subsequent appointment, that of dux legionis VII Claudiae et IIII Flaviae, need not have been a command over two full legions, but a vexillation command over units drawn from the two Moesian legions. This is much more convincing than to regard these earlier posts as legionary commands, especially in the light of the other examples of duces legionum which we have noted above, who were also vexillation rather than legionary commanders⁽⁴⁷⁾. It would have been perfectly in order for Mucianus to have gone on from such a command to a tribunate of Guard units, and eventually to the command of legions.

Mucianus' career inscription thus points to the continued distinction between the praefectus legionis and the praefectus (castrorum) legionis, and - more importantly - to the senior rank of the new legionary commanders. In any event, these officers can hardly have been simply the old praefecti (castrorum) legionum taking over the command of the legions in the absence of the senatorial legates. Keyes points out that the camp prefect was not the most senior of the equestrian legionary offices⁽⁴⁸⁾. Even if Malcus is correct in his view that a primuspilus bis was not attached to each legion, the legionary tribunes had, since the time of Claudius, been senior in rank to the camp prefect⁽⁴⁹⁾. It follows that the new prefects did not just assume command by default, but that they were senior equites specially appointed to their post; that is to say, the system which had previously applied only to the Egyptian and Parthica legions was, under Gallienus, applied throughout the empire. This is not only born out by the career of Mucianus, who as we have seen probably only held legionary command after a series of Rome tribunates or their equivalent; it is also suggested by the recorded ranks and titles of

the praefecti under Gallienus and his successors. They are either viri egregii, which makes them considerably more senior than the old camp commandants, or they are protectores, a title which under Gallienus denoted very senior officers⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Vexillation commanders

The legionary command was not the only sector of the military leadership affected by the changes of the mid-third century. The increasing use of large 'mobile' formations of vexillations has been discussed in the previous chapter, and by Gallienus' reign, they constituted a major part of Rome's defences. These 'task-forces' came under the command of senators of praetorian rank, and they occurred at about the same place in a senator's cursus as his legionary legateship, or just after. Several examples are known from the reigns of Marcus and Septimius. Very few appear subsequently, and no senatorial duces or praepositi are known after the reign of Severus Alexander⁽⁵¹⁾. It is not until the reign of Gallienus that major task-force commands are again specifically attested, when at least two cases are known. Both of these were held by equites. [V]italianus, [protect(or) Aug(usti) n(ostri) [praepos]itus [v(ir)] p(erfectissimus)⁽⁵²⁾, who commanded vexillations drawn from the legions and auxiliary units of Britain and Germany under Gallienus; and Aur(elius) Augustinianus, who figures in an inscription from Lychnidus in Macedonia: vexill(ationes) leg(ionum) II Parth(icae) (et) III Aug(ustae) sub cura Aur(elii) Augustiniani ducis iustissim(i) etc. [R]ufi Synforiani praep(ositi) vexillationum⁽⁵³⁾. This inscription, dated under Gallienus, refers to the chain of command in which Synforianus is praepositus of a vexillation-unit drawn from two legions which is part of a task-force under the orders of Augustinianus.

Another officer of this type may well have been the Marcianus

who in a Greek inscription is described as vir perfectissimus protector domini nostri invicti Gallieni Augusti, Tribunus praetorianorum et dux et stratelates⁽⁵⁴⁾. The inscription praises him for saving Philippopolis, probably from the Goths, and he is to be identified with the Marcianus whom Gallienus appointed commander-in-chief in Illyricum when he himself went to deal with the revolt of Aureolus⁽⁵⁵⁾. The last-named office, that of stratelates, refers to a major independent command⁽⁵⁶⁾. The office of dux, which comes after his praetorian tribunate and before the independent command, thus signifies some intermediate command, presumably of a formation in Gallienus' army. A less certain example of such a commander is found in the inscription to Aurelius Marcellinus, v.p. dux duc(enarius)⁽⁵⁷⁾.

The system of mobile commands is thus very different under Gallienus from that prevailing earlier. The evidence does not allow certainty as to when exactly the transformation took place, or whether it was swift or gradual. However, since the reign of Gallienus saw a rapid and complete replacement of senatorial by equestrian legionary commanders, it is reasonable to suppose that the mobile command structure experienced a similar transformation at the same time. The alternative supposition, that the replacement was accomplished before Gallienus' accession, is less convincing. With the exception of Maximinus the emperors between Severus Alexander and Gallienus by and large pursued policies favourable to the senate⁽⁵⁸⁾, and would not therefore have removed senators from mobile commands for political reasons; and as for "military" reasons, it is hard to imagine that senatorial task-force commanders would be replaced by equites when legionary legates were kept in their places, since there were presumably far fewer task-forces than legions, with a correspondingly greater possibility of choosing suitable commanders. Gallienus seems the most likely emperor to have placed the mobile commands, like the

legions, in the hands of the equites⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Protectores

In carrying out the replacement of senatorial by equestrian commanders, Gallienus transformed the military leadership of the Roman army. The mid-third century also saw the introduction of a new institution which was to have great importance in the late Roman army, namely the protectorate. The first known protector is probably L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus, trib(unus) coh(ortis) primae Praet(oriae) protect(or) Augg.mn.⁽⁶⁰⁾. Since this Volusianus is to be identified with Gallienus' Praetorian Prefect who was consul in 261 and Prefect of the City in 267, the emperors referred to in this inscription must be Valerian and Gallienus. His protectorate probably came towards the end of the joint-reign of these emperors, as they are also referred to in his earlier command of praepositus equitum singular(ium) Augg.mn., after which he held four posts before becoming protector.

Other protectors are datable to the beginning of Gallienus' sole reign, or before. The unknown trib(unus) coh(ortis) XI urb(anae), trib(unus) coh(ortis) VI praet(oriae) et protector Auggg.mn.⁽⁶¹⁾, belongs to this period, as, almost certainly, does Aurelius Sabinianus, tribunus protec(tor...Augusti) n(ostri), proc(urator) duc(enarius) prov(inciae) Dalmat(iae), v(ir)e(gregius)⁽⁶²⁾. Sabinianus' son was, as has already been noted⁽⁶³⁾, tribunus laticlavus, a post not otherwise found after Gallienus' accession.

The institution of the protectorate thus took place before Gallienus' accession as sole emperor. Nevertheless, all these cases occur in the west, under Gallienus' jurisdiction throughout most of the joint-reign, and it is likely that it was he who introduced the office. Certainly it was he who, as sole emperor, developed the protectorate into a regular institution, as is shown by the following

cases known from his reign:

1) [V]italianus, [prot]ect(or) Aug(usti) n(ostri) [praepos]itus [v(ir)] p(er)fectissimus (See above, p. 80 and note 52). Dated under Gallienus to 260⁽⁶⁴⁾.

2) M. Aurelius Victor, v.e., pr(ae)ses prov. Mauretaniae Caesariensis protector eius i.e. Gallienus (A.E. 1920, 108). Dated 263.

3) Marcianus, vir perfectissimus, protector domini nostri invicti Gallieni Augusti, tribunus praetorianorum et dux et stratelates. (A.E. 1965, 1114). The date of the inscription is probably about 268⁽⁶⁵⁾, at which time Marcianus was Commander-in-chief of the Gothic campaign in Illyricum. His protectorate would therefore not be dated after the mid-sixties.

4) P. Aelius Aelianus, praefectus leg(ionis) s(upra) s(c)riptae (=II Adiutricis) protector Aug(usti) (C.I.L. 3529, c.f. A.E. 1965, 9). The date must be somewhere between 260 and 266⁽⁶⁶⁾.

5) Valerius Marcellinus, praef(ectus) leg(ionis) prot(ector) Aug(usti) n(ostri) a(gens) v(ice) l(egati) (C.I.L. III 3424 = I.L.S. 545). Dated 267.

Including the three mentioned previously, we thus know of eight protectores from the sole reign of Gallienus or just before. Three of these were praetorian tribunes, and a fourth, Aurelius Sabinianus, may well have been one too⁽⁶⁷⁾. The others were all important officers - a commander of a large task force (No. 1), a provincial governor (No. 2) and two legionary prefects (Nos. 3 and 4). The protectorate was at the outset clearly reserved for very senior equites, and this is confirmed by the fact that of the three tribuni who held the protectorate, and whose later careers are known, one went on immediately to hold the prefecture of the vigiles and thence to the Praetorian Prefecture, while another was swiftly promoted to an important independent command. Such men were obviously not only senior officers,

but trusted men of the emperor.

The precise nature of the protectorate at this period is difficult to determine. By the fourth century, it was an autonomous corps of officers with its own commander, functioning as both a guards unit and an officer-cadet corps⁽⁶⁸⁾. Some scholars have seen the protectorate in Gallienus' time in this light. Nagy interprets the inscription of [V]italianus (No. 1) as showing that officer serving in the imperial praetorium as a protector before going on to command the vexillation-formation of German and British legionaries⁽⁶⁹⁾. Similarly Pflaum thinks that Marcianus (No. 3) was first protector, and then praetorian tribune⁽⁷⁰⁾. It is difficult, however, to reconcile this view with those cases in which the protectorate clearly appears as an adjunct to the titulature of a substantive office (Nos. 2, 4 and 5), and it is preferable to interpret the protectorates of both [V]italianus and Marcianus in the same way, namely as an honorary title rather than as a real post⁽⁷¹⁾.

The difficulties, unfortunately, do not end there. In some inscriptions, the protectorate is definitely linked to a particular office. Thus, Aurelius Sabinianus is described as tribunus protector. Even more clearly, the career-inscription of Volusianus shows that his protectorate was associated only with his praetorian tribunate, and not with any previous or subsequent command. In the inscription for Marcianus, on the other hand, if we reject the view of an independent protectorate at this date, the title seems to apply to the officer personally, and not to any particular post. The positions that some of the protectores hold are remarkably varied (Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5), moreover, and it is safer to regard the protectorate in these cases as a personal title rather than one attached to their posts.

In determining the nature of the early protectorate, then, it is necessary to see it both as a personal honour, and as one associated

with a particular post. This apparent contradiction is resolved if the protectorate was awarded on appointment to a certain post, and then retained by the recipient as a personal honour for the remainder of his career⁽⁷²⁾. This would account for the variety of positions held by Gallienic protectores, although the command to which the protectorate was linked was certainly the praetorian tribunate. Three officers are specifically attested as holding this office (Volusianus and the anonymous, p.15, and Marcianus, No. 3), and a fourth, Aurelius Sabinianus, is described as tribunus protector; in the light of the seniority of other known protectors, it is hard to imagine a non-praetorian tribune being selected for the honour.

Against this, it has been recently argued that the protectorate was originally associated with Gallienus' new field-army, and was granted to all officers of this army, from the rank of centurion upwards⁽⁷³⁾. This view is based on the evidence of the career of Traianus Mucianus⁽⁷⁴⁾, who was centurio protector in the legion XIII Gemina, then in the vigiles, the Urban cohorts, and in the cohors V praetoria, and was finally princeps protector before going on to further commands. The inscription is undated, but Christol plausibly argues that this stage of his career occurred at about the end of Gallienus' reign⁽⁷⁵⁾.

There are, however, difficulties with this idea that the protectorate was so widely spread at such an early date. It certainly does not agree with the impression gained from the protectores known from Gallienus' reign, who were all senior equestrian officers, and in any case such a widely-spread honour would have been virtually meaningless. Also, if there was as strong an association between the protectorate and the mobile army as Christol suggests, how does a governor of Mauretania Caesariensis come to hold it, or even two legionary commanders? All that can be safely inferred from Mucianus' career is

that at about the end of Gallienus' reign the protectorate widens to include a few select centurions - and Mucianus certainly seems to have been marked out for quick promotion. As Christol points out, his centurionates in the vigiles and urban cohorts was probably virtually fictitious, and may have been little more than a formality to take him immediately to his praetorian centurionate⁽⁷⁶⁾.

For the most part, the protectorate remained the preserve of senior equites, as the occurrence of ducenarii protectores under Claudius shows⁽⁷⁷⁾. In the early years of Gallienus' reign, the protectorate was undoubtedly a select honour, the gateway to which was the tenure of a praetorian tribunate. This early connection between the praetorian tribunate and the protectorate makes the personal nature of the relationship between the emperor and the protectores, which is implied by the title, more meaningful. Tribuni praetorianorum had always functioned as staff officers to the emperor. At the time of Caracalla's assassination, for example, he was accompanied on a visit to a temple by the praefectus legionis II Parthicae, the commander of the escort, and two praetorian tribunes, plus an N.C.O. groom⁽⁷⁸⁾. It is therefore possible to see in the origins of the protectorate the starting point for its later development as a corps of staff officers. If it had originally been merely an honour-title given to certain senior equites, its subsequent development would be more difficult to understand. It was later always associated with the imperial headquarters, and within a few years of Gallienus' reign, the protectorate emerges as a separate, autonomous institution.

The process by which the protectorate acquired its mature shape, as a comparatively junior officer corps, is very difficult to trace. As has been noted, it still denoted senior equites of ducenarial rank under Claudius, although Mucianus' career shows that at about this time centurions were beginning to be admitted. Other centuriones

protectores are known⁽⁷⁹⁾, showing that the protectorate soon lost the exclusiveness of its early days. At the same time, there are glimpses of its developing into an independent institution, not associated with any other post. As early as Aurelian's reign, two brothers, Claudius Dionysius and Claudius Herculanus, each style themselves simply protector Aureliani Augusti⁽⁸⁰⁾, and its growing autonomy may be inferred from the appearance of the phrase ex-protectoribus in inscriptions⁽⁸¹⁾. This clearly indicates that it was no longer simply a personal honour-title, but had become a real post and a definite step in a man's career. By the time of the Tetrarchy, the protectorate had taken on the general characteristics of the fourth-century institution. It had become a body of staff-officers at the start of their officer-careers⁽⁸²⁾. This is shown by three careers dating from this period. Firstly, Constantius I's career prior to becoming Augustus is described in the following manner: "protector primum, exin tribunus, postea praeses Dalmatiarum"⁽⁸³⁾. Next, there is Valerius Thiumpus militavit in leg(ione) XI Cl(audia), lectus in sacro comit(atu) lanciarius, deinde protexit annis V, missus, pr(a)ef(ectum) leg(ionis) II Hercul(iae).....⁽⁸⁴⁾. Finally, Maximinus Daia held the following posts: scutarius, protector, tribunus, and then Caesar⁽⁸⁵⁾. In all three cases, the protectorate was followed by rapid promotion, which suggests that the institution had by no means lost its elite quality.

Conclusions

The transformation of the Roman officer corps which took place in the mid-third century embraced two distinct elements. Firstly, the senatorial commanders of the large military formations - the legions and the task-forces - were replaced by equites. Secondly, a new institution, the protectorate, was introduced. These two changes laid the foundations of the fourth century command structure, which was so utterly different from that of the early empire. By breaking down the social barrier which largely confined the high command to members of the senatorial order, they opened the way to the most senior posts to the common soldier, and soon also to barbarians. They also encouraged the growth of a distinctively military career, and of a professional officer corps, which, particularly at the more senior levels, Rome had not hitherto possessed.

The replacement of senators by equites in command of the large formations was, according to the epigraphic evidence, carried out swiftly under Gallienus. This is certainly the case with the legi- onary command, and probably with the leadership of the task-forces too. There is no sign of a slow evolution whereby equestrians gradually took over from senators; all the evidence points to a sudden and comp- rehensive supersession of one class of commanders by another.

The change which was thus accomplished went contrary to centuries of Roman practice. The increasing use of equestrian vicars as gover- nors - examined in the next chapter - may have prepared the ground to some extent, and indeed there are signs of previous efforts to limit senatorial influence in the military sphere⁽⁸⁶⁾. Under Commodus there was, according to Dio, a brief and disastrous attempt to remove senators from military command⁽⁸⁷⁾. A similar anti-senatorial move under Maximinus was almost as short-lived⁽⁸⁸⁾. The senators' hold on senior military posts remained remarkably intact, until it was

suddenly and decisively broken under Gallienus. The speed and comprehensiveness of this transformation clearly points to its being the fruit of deliberate policy.

This impression is re-inforced by the appearance at this time of the protectores. Whatever the motives which lay behind the removal of senators from leadership, the introduction of the protectorate at a time when the way to high command was opened to equites⁽⁸⁹⁾ strongly suggests an attempt to strengthen the ties between the emperor and his generals. If the interpretation of the nature of the protectorate under Gallienus given above is correct, most of the new appointments - the legionary and task-force commands - as well as the highest commands went to those who were not only more dependent upon the emperor for their position than any senator would be, but who had also served by the side of the emperor as his staff officers and **companions-in-arms** who knew him and were known by him.

The restructuring of the Roman command-structure that occurred under Gallienus can therefore be seen to be the result of governmental reforms. Whether an edict was ever issued removing senators from their commands, as Victor claims⁽⁹⁰⁾, is another matter, and will be discussed in chapter five. The reasons for the reforms are also matters for further discussion. At this stage it is enough to say that the epigraphic evidence corroborates Victor's statement in so far as it suggests that the transformation of the military leadership took place under Gallienus, and that this transformation was carried out as a deliberate policy.

Notes and references

- 1) See chapter 1, p.27ff.
- 2) See chapter 4 for a discussion on the military authority which governors retained after Gallienus' reign.
- 3) Aur. Vict. de Caes. 33, 34; quoted below, chapter 4, p
- 4) See, for example, B. Malcus, "Notes sur la révolution du système administratif romain au troisième siècle," Opusc. Rom. 7, 1969, p. 214ff.; R. Syme, Emperors and biography, Oxford, 1971, p.241; and M.T.W. Arnheim, The senatorial aristocracy in the later Roman empire, Oxford, 1972, p.37.
- 5) We shall defer discussion on the reasons for this change to chapter 5. This chapter is concerned with examining the evidence for the transformation, and with seeking to determine whether it came about gradually or swiftly. Neither is this chapter concerned with the highest levels of commands; the appointment of senators and equestrians as commanders-in-chief of large forces or areas will therefore not be discussed. For this, see chapter 4.
- 6) C.I.L. III 4558 + p.2328⁴⁰.
- 7) I.L.S. 1192: trib. militum laticlavus leg. XII Claudi. item trib. militum laticl. leg. XII Fulm[il]natae. B. Malcus (Systeme administratif p.217 note 2), dates Theo's tribunes to c.250, but it is more probable that they occurred somewhat earlier. He was governor of Arabia under Valerian and Gallienus, and since there is no reason to doubt that the senatorial cursus was still intact at this period (see chapter 5), his tribunes would fall at the latest between the years 243 and 248. They could hardly have occurred later than 250.
- 8) See Introduction, p.13 for this inscription; for dating of the tribunate to c.260, see Appendix A., p.212f.
- 9) C(larissimus) p(uer) trib(unus) laticl(avius): C.I.L. V, 1985 = 8571. For the origins of the protectorate under Valerian and Gallienus, see below, p.82ff.
- 10) Pflaum, Carrières, p.934; B. Malcus, "Systeme administratif," p.217.
- 11) Another case of a tribunus laticlavus of this date has been suggested. This was Axilius Honoratus, [c.] v...trib. laticl. leg. III... C.I.L. V 8921. This inscription is undated, however, and the only evidence that it belonged to the mid-third century is that an Axilius Iunior who was curator c[ivitatis] under Diocletian may have been Honoratus' son (Barbieri, no. 11485).
- 12) That of Vitulastus Laetianus, legate of the II Augusta at Caerleon: C.I.L. VII 107 = I.L.S. 537 = R.I.B. 334 = Barbieri 1764.

- 13) C.I.L. VII = R.I.B. 316.
- 14) P.L.R.E. p.246f., T. Fl. Postumius Varus 2. Throughout the sole reign of Gallienus, Britain was under the Gallic emperors, so an Urban Prefect of 271 can hardly have held a British post during these years.
- 15) C.I.L. II 2634 = I.L.S. 2299.
- 16) See below, Appendix A, p.212f.
- 17) Pflaum, Carrières, p.917f.
- 18) For the Baugadae and their successors, see E.A. Thompson, "Peasant revolts in late Roman Gaul and Spain," Past and present 2, 1952, pp.11-23.
- 19) The only circumstances in which Capitolinus could have gone straight from his command as dux to be praefectus Aerarium Saturninus after Gallienus' accession as sole emperor would be if his command was in Italy, rather than in Spain. This is most unlikely, however, since no senator of praetorian rank is recorded leading a detachment drawn from only one legion - such commands normally went to centurions.
- 20) C.I.L. III 1919 (cf. p.1030, 8513, 12813) = I.L.S. 2770 = Pflaum, Carrières, no. 196. According to Mommsen in C.I.L., the inscription should read: dux leg(ionum) c[ohort. alaru]m Britanicimiarum.
- 21) Ritterling, RE, 12, col. 1606.
- 22) H.A. v.Comm. 6, 2; cf. Dio 72, 8.
- 23) For which, see above, note 18.
- 24) C.I.L. III 4855 = I.L.S. 2772.
- 25) C.I.L. VI 1645 = I.L.S. 2773.
- 26) Pflaum, Carrières, p.918f.
- 27) Pflaum, Carrières, p.874.
- 28) See G. Lopuszanski, "La transformation du corps des officiers supérieurs dans l'armée romaine du 1^{er} au III^e siècle après J.C.," M.E.F.R. 55, 1938, 1-4, p.178.
- 29) J.F. Gilliam, "Notes from the 'Dux Ripae' at Dura," T.P.A.P.A. 72, 1941, p.164.
- 30) I.L.S. 9203 = A.E. 1908, 177.
- 31) See, for this view, Ritterling, R.E. 12, col. 1534, and Pflaum, Carrières, p.917.
- 32) The certain cases of legati legionum after Severus Alexander's reign are:

- i) ...us Annianus, leg.leg. XXI[pri]m[ig](eniae) p.f. Gordianae: C.I.L. XIII 6763 = I.L.S. 1188 = Barbieri 1128;
- ii) C. Luxilius Sabinus Egnatius Proculus, leg.leg. X Gem. Gordian(ae): C.I.L. X 6338 = I.L.S. 1187 = Barbieri 1637;
- iii) P. Petronius Polianus, leg.leg. XIII[G(eminae)] Gord(ianae): A.E. 1909, 19 = Barbieri 1690;
- iv) Pistorius Rugianus, legat.leg. XIII G(eminae) Gord(ianae): C.I.L. III 1125 = I.L.S. 3736 = Barbieri 1695;
- v) Vitulasius Laetianus, leg.leg. II Aug. under Valerian and Gallienus: C.I.L. VII 107 = I.L.S. 537 = R.I.B. 334 = Barbieri 1764.

The less certain cases are:

- i) M.Aur. Consius Quartus, legionis.. Ser..., C.I.L. II 1270 = I.L.S. 1249 = Barbieri 1539 - undated, but since he was probably the father of a Diocletianic senator, a mid-third century date is likely:
 - ii) T. Fl. Postumius Varus, legatus in Britain, probably under Valerian and Gallienus, and probably of the legion II Augusta (see above, p.71 and note 14):
 - iii) Q. Mamilius Capitolinus, dux legionis VII[G(eminae)]], for whom, see above, p.71f.
- 33) See T. Nagy, "Commanders of the legions in the age of Gallienus," Acta Arch. Acad. Sc. Hung. 1965, p.299.
 - 34) See J.R. Martindale, "Onomography of the later Roman empire: addenda et corrigenda to volume 1," Historia 23, 1974; p.246.
 - 35) Nagy "Commanders," p.299.
 - 36) See above, note 35.
 - 37) Nagy, "Commanders," p.301, gives date of post-270, but gives no reason.
 - 38) C.W. Keyes, The rise of the equites in the third century of the Roman empire, Princeton, 1915, p.18ff.; Lopuszanski, "Officiers Supérieurs," p.139ff.
 - 39) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.26ff.; Lopuszanski, "Officiers supérieurs," p.148ff.
 - 40) Keyes thought that the praefectus (castrorum) legionis and the praefectus legionis were two separate offices in Egypt (Rise of the equites, p.26ff); cf. Domaszewski, Rangord. p.120f. Lopuszanski, on the other hand, thought that they were one and the same post ("Officiers supérieurs," p.157f); cf. Mommsen, Archaeolog. Zeit. 27, 1869, p.123ff., and Wilmanns, "De praefecto castrorum et praefecto legionis," Eph. epigr. 1, 1872, p.81-108.

- 41) See, for example, Wilmanns, "De praefecto castrorum et praefecto legionis;" Domaszewski, Rangord., p.185ff.; Malcus, "Système administratif," p.228f. Against this view, see Keyes, "Rise of the equites" p.18ff., and Lopuszanski, "Officieurs supérieurs," p.165ff.
- 42) Domaszewski, Rangord., p.185. See below, p.85.
- 43) Domaszewski, Rangord., p.188f.
- 44) Domaszewski, Rangord., p.189.
- 45) Domaszewski, Rangord., p.187f.
- 46) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.39ff.; cf. B. Dobson, in notes to Domaszewski, Rangord. p. LVIII.
- 47) See above, p.73f.
- 48) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.38ff.; cf. R. Grosse, Römische Militärgeschichte, Berlin, 1920., p.6ff.
- 49) Lopuszanski, "Officiers Supérieurs," p.146f.
- 50) See below, p.83.
- 51) See above, chapter 1, p.32.
- 52) C.I.L. III 3228 and p.2328 = I.L.S. 546; cf. P.L.R.E. p.969, Vitalianus 1. See also above, chapter 1, p. and note 60.
- 53) A.E. 1934, 193 = Pflaum, Carrières no. 919 = Saxer, no. 102.
- 54) A.E. 1965, 114: ὁ διασημότατος, προτήκτωρ τοῦ ἀνειρημένου δεσπότη ἡμῶν Γαλλιανοῦ Σε(βαστοῦ), τριβοῦνος πραετωριανῶν καὶ δοῦξ καὶ στρατηλάτης
- 55) P.L.R.E. p.553-4, Marcianus 2.
- 56) H.G. Pflaum, "Zur reform des Kaisers Gallienus," Historia 25, 1976, p.110f.
- 57) C.I.L. 3329 = I.L.S. 544.
- 58) See above, Introduction, p.18ff.
- 59) See also Saxer, p.12, for the same opinion.
- 60) C.I.L. XI 1836 = I.L.S. 1332; P.L.R.E. p.980-1, L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus 6. An earlier career-inscription, dating from Severus Alexander's reign, came to light recently, referring to an anonymous centurion: A.E. 1974, 648:... mil(itavit) eq(ues) ann(is) IIII, protector ann(is) IIII, opt[io] ann(is) XIII, (centurio) ann(o) I.... According to the editor, the term protector here probably means speculator, but in any case the post is so junior that it can bear no relationship to the later protectorate of the mid-third century (see p.83). Even when it later became a more junior post, in the fourth century, the protectorate was never an N.C.O. rank.

- 61) C.I.L. III 3126.
- 62) C.I.L. III 1985 = 8571; P.L.R.E. p.790, M. Aurelius Sabinianus 7.
- 63) See above p. 71.
- 64) See C.I.L. III p.2382; cf. T. Nagy, p.301.
- 65) P.L.R.E. p.553-4, Marcianus 2.
- 66) See above, p. 75.
- 67) See below, p. 85.
- 68) C. Jullian (De protectoribus et domestici Augustorum, Paris, 1883) thought that the protectores were an imperial bodyguard, possibly the successors to the equites singulares. E-C. Babut, on the other hand, emphasised the significance of the protectorate as a preparation for high command ("Recherches sur la Garde Impériale et sur le corps d'officiers de l'armée Romaine au IV et V siècle," Rev. Hist. 114, 1913, pp. 225-60; and 116, 1914, pp. 225-293). For a modern discussion of the protectorate, see R.I. Frank, Scholae Palatinae: the Guards in the Late Roman Empire, American Academy in Rome, Papers and Monographs, 23, 1969.
- 69) Nagy, "Commanders," p.302.
- 70) Pflaum, "Zur reform des Kaisers Gallienus," p.112.
- 71) cf. T. Mommsen, "Protectores Augusti," Eph.Ep. 5, (1884), pp.121-141 Mommsen was the first to suggest that the protectorate was originally merely an honour-title rather than a substantive post.
- 72) In the same way, perhaps, as a modern professorship is retained as a title for the rest of a man's life.
- 73) M. Christol, "La carrière de Traianus Mucianus et l'origine des protectores," Chiron 7, 1977, p.393-408.
- 74) I.G. Bulg. III² 1570 = I.L.S. 9479 = I.G.R.I. 1496 = P.L.R.E. p.609, Traianus Mucianus 5.
- 75) Christol, "Traianus Mucianus," p.397ff.
- 76) Christol, "Traianus Mucianus," p.399ff.
- 77) C.I.L. XII 2228 = I.L.S. 569: vexillationes adque equites itemque praepositi et ducenar. protect. tendentes in Narb. prov. sub cura Jul. Placidiani v.p. praefect. vigil. = dated 269. Other examples of ducenarii protectores are: Aurelius Florus, prot(ector) duc(enarius), A.E. 1964, 256; Aurelius Romanus, protector ducenarius, C.I.L. XII, 2576; Aurel(ius) Baia, ducenarius protector, and his brother, Aurelius Victor; C.I.L. III 14165!
- All these are undated, but the last inscription was found at Heliopolis in Syria, which suggests a date after the conquest of Palmyra by Aurelian.

- 78) Dio 78, 5, 2f.; cf. R.I.Frank, *Scholae Palatinae*, p.31.
- 79) Examples of other centuriones protectores are: Acesonius Kalendinus, centurio protector, C.I.L. III 10509; T. Flavius Constans, (centurio) protec(tor), C.I.L. XIII 8291; Superinus Romanus, centurio protect(or) d(omini) n(ostris), C.I.L. XIII 8273; Iulius Spectatus, eq(ues) leg(ionis) XXII, prot(ector) p(rimi) p(ilaris), C.I.L. XIII 7535a; and the anonymous of A.E. 1954, 135:... II protec[toris]...., item primip[ili]a[ri] protectori, item centurio(ni) IIII Fl. et protectori, item ce[nturio]o(ni) leg. III Aug., item [praep?]alae Parthoru[m]... item....
None are dated, but if the Gallic empire did not borrow the idea of protectors, at least three of the above - Flavius Constans, Superianus Romanus and Iulius Spectatus - must be dated after c.273, since they occur in Germany.
- 80) C.I.L. III 327 = I.L.S. 2775.
- 81) Examples are: M. Aurelius Valerius, v.e., ducenarius, ex protectorib(us) lateri[s] divini: C.I.L. III 1805 + p.2328¹¹⁹ = I.L.S. 5695; and Aurel(ius) Firminus, pr(a)ef(ectus) leg(ionis) II A[dil]vtricis ex prot(ectore): C.I.L. III 10406.
- 82) That the protectorate has now become an established unit is indicated by the occurrence of an actuarius protectorum: C.I.L. III 6059 = 6988 = I.L.S. 2779. Although the inscription is undated, it almost certainly belongs to the period of the Tetrarchy, because the nomen of the man, Valerius Vincentius, was prevalent at that time, and because also it was found at Nicomedia, Diocletian's headquarters. Furthermore, as has been noted elsewhere, Diocletian himself was in all probability the commander of the protectores before he became emperor (see above, chapter 1, p.56 and note 56), which suggests that by his accession they formed a distinctive unit.
- 83) Anon. Valesianus 1. 2.
- 84) C.I.L. III 6194 = I.L.S. 2781.
- 85) Mart. Pers. 19. 6.
- 86) I do not count the adlection of equestrians to the senatorial order to take up senior military commands amongst these measures to limit senatorial influence. I shall discuss this question in chapter 5, and it is sufficient here to say that, far from limiting the influence of the ordo, it was a means of making it more effective in its leadership role, and therefore of proping up the senatorial system. The emperor who is most noted for adlecting equites, Marcus Aurelius, was not noted for an anti-senatorial bias.
- 87) H.A. v.Comm. 6, 2: (Loeb): "because in the war in Britain (Perennis) had dismissed certain senators and had put men of the equestrian order in command of the soldiers, this same Perennis was declared an enemy of the state... and was thereupon delivered to the soldiers to be torn to pieces."
- 88) Herod. 7, 1, 3: Maximinus apparently removed Alexander's senatorial friends from his army.

- 89) The way to high command had of course been open to equites previously, by means of adlection into the senatorial order (see note 86, for brief comment); but only now does it become possible for equites as such to rise to senior commands. The point here is that the exclusion of senators from high command is linked in some way to the introduction of the protectorate.
- 90) Aur. Vict. de Caes. 37, 5.

Introduction

Throughout the centuries of Rome's rise and power, the senatorial order had held an overwhelming pre-eminence in the official life of the state. With a few exceptions, all the highest officials were drawn from amongst members of the senate, and senators were regarded as the natural and inevitable rulers of the empire. The establishment of the Principate by Augustus and his successors had altered the situation in so far as the political power was transferred bodily from the senate to the emperor; but the senators still kept their near-monopoly of the most important executive offices.

This was at any rate true for the provincial administration, where the great majority of provinces continued to be governed by senatorial proconsuls or legates. A few provinces - for example the Alpine regions, Judaea, the Mauretaniae - were placed under equestrian officials, but these were small, backward and without a legionary garrison. The one conspicuous exception was Egypt. Although governed by an equestrian Prefect, it was both wealthy and armed, garrisoned by one or two legions. The reason for its unique position was that, as a granary of Rome, and holding such a strategic place in the east, it contributed a vital support to the emperor's personal power.

Apart from these cases, for the most part of little enough importance, the provincial administration remained in the hands of senatorial governors throughout the Principate. That the senators' hold on the provincial governorships was not weakened during the first two centuries is shown by the change from equestrian to senatorial governorship which took place when a province received a legionary garrison. Thus, under Vespasian a praetorian legate replaced the procurator of Palestine, and under Marcus Aurelius the same thing happened in Noricum and Raetia.

During the first two centuries, the main dividing line in the provincial administration lay not so much between equestrian and senatorial provinces as between those provinces under the official control of the senate and those under the direct authority of the emperor. In other words, the distinction between most governors was not to which social class they belonged, but rather whether they were proconsuls or imperial legates.

The third century, however, saw a complete change. The distinction between senatorial and imperial provinces, already tenuous, was completely removed, and of much greater significance - almost everywhere senatorial proconsuls and legates were replaced by equestrian praesides⁽¹⁾.

Developments before Gallienus

The first stages of this transformation are to be seen under Septimius Severus. Although the institution of Mesopotamia as a second armed equestrian province with Egypt is a clear indication of things to come, a more significant development of this period is the frequent occurrence of equestrian vicarii.

During the first two centuries, on the rare occasions when a governor was absent from his province for some reason, or when a governor died, his place was temporarily taken by the next senior officer on the spot. In the case of a large armed province, this was usually a legationary legate, while in smaller armed provinces or in unarmed provinces, an equestrian procurator would shoulder the responsibility⁽²⁾. From the time of Septimius Severus there is a rise in the number of temporary governorships, and they increasingly tend to be held by equestrians, even in the large armed provinces⁽³⁾. Eight or nine equestrian vicarii occur under Septimius and Caracalla; under the later Severi (217-235) four or five cases are attested; and from 235-260, between seven and nine are known.

These figures are too small to allow a firm conclusion that there was an increase in the number of equestrian governors during the first half of the third century, and in view of the total number of governorships recorded for each of these periods it does not appear that they constituted a very significant proportion. A reign-by-reign ^{shows} survey [^] that under Severus Alexander between thirty-eight and fifty senatorial governors are attested, as against three or four equestrian vicars ⁽⁴⁾. For Maximinus' reign the figures are from eleven to nineteen senators, with two to four equites ⁽⁵⁾. For Gordian III's reign, between twenty-one and thirty-six senators are known, and no certain, but up to three possible, equites ⁽⁶⁾; and from Philip's reign, there are nine to fourteen senators to no certain, but three possible, equites ⁽⁷⁾. Finally, the period between Decius' accession to Gallienus' accession as sole emperor (249-c.260) shows between sixteen and twenty-five senators to two equestrians ⁽⁸⁾. Because of the inadequacy of the evidence, it is difficult to determine precise ratios between senatorial and equestrian governors during these reigns, but the proportion of equites probably never rises above about one fifth of the total, and more usually remains at, or below, one tenth ⁽⁹⁾.

The senatorial hold on provincial governorships seems therefore to have remained largely intact up to Gallienus' reign. Nevertheless, there was an undoubted increase in the number of equestrian vicars during these years, despite the fluctuations under different emperors, and it is apparent that, when compared with the situation under the early Principate, their occurrence is a very significant development.

The laws of the period reflect the increased importance of equestrian vicarii at this time. A law of Caracalla alludes to the distinctions between financial procurators and procuratorial governors with the phrase "procurator meus qui vice praesidis non fungatur;" and similar phrases occur in two laws of Gordian III: "procurator nostro

non vice praesidis agente," and, "non valet procuratoris sententia si vicem praesidis non tuetur"⁽¹⁰⁾. These laws almost certainly do not refer to the procuratorial governorships of the regular equestrian provinces of the Mauretaniae, the Alps, and others, since such governors would not have needed such a distinguishing clause, their position being self-evident⁽¹¹⁾.

Of the above list of equestrian vicarii, the title procurator is only missing in one case, that of Aurelius Marcus. The significance of this exception is unclear, but for the rest it is certain that they were essentially procurators temporarily acting as governors. This does not necessarily mean that all equestrian vicariates happened to occur through the accidental absence of a senatorial governor. When Timesitheus was acting governor of lower Germany, for example, his official procuratorial post was in fact a comparatively junior one. This, together with the fact that he seems to have been especially appointed to this province, in the vicinity of the emperor Severus Alexander, gives the clear impression that his procuratorial post was little more than a legal pretence⁽¹²⁾. That he, and probably others, were appointed specifically to a province to act as its governor presages future developments; nevertheless, whatever the real reason for such appointments, they remained legally procuratorial posts, with gubernatorial authority temporarily added. This is emphasised by their rank - that of vir egregius, which all the equestrian vicars (whose rank is recorded) hold, both in senatorial provinces and in imperial⁽¹³⁾.

Developments from Gallienus' time

From the time of Gallienus, provincial administration by equites takes on an increasingly regular character, so that by the end of the century, the Roman provincial system is characterised by the regular equestrian governor, the vir perfectissimus praeses. The process will be traced, as far as the evidence allows, province by province.

Achaia was, under the Principate, a senatorial province governed by a proconsul.. The Historia Augusta mentions a proconsul, Valens, who rebelled in 261⁽¹⁴⁾, and if this is correct, then he is the last known proconsul of Achaia in the third century. Sometime in the later part of the century, two governors are recorded with the title praeses et corrector. Certainly one, and probably both, are senators⁽¹⁵⁾. Towards the end of the Tetrarchy a v.p. praeses occurs⁽¹⁶⁾, but under Constantine the province again receives proconsuls, who continue to govern it throughout the fourth century⁽¹⁷⁾.

Africa, one of the two consular senatorial provinces, continued to be governed by proconsuls throughout the third and fourth centuries.

Aquitania, under the Principate, had been governed by a senator as legatus Augusti pro praetore of praetorian rank. The only governor attested for the middle or later third century was Tetricus, who became the last Gallic emperor. He was a senator⁽¹⁸⁾, and as such, though described as praeses in fourth century sources, was probably a legatus Augusti.

Arabia, an armed province with one legion, was, from the time of Trajan, under a legatus Augusti of praetorian rank. At least one of these, and probably two, are known from the reign of Gallienus, although dates are lost⁽¹⁹⁾. At the same time, two equestrian governors are also recorded under Gallienus: Statilius Ammianus, v.e. agens vice praesidis in 262/3,⁽²⁰⁾ and a governor whose title was ... τοῦ διασημοτάτου ἐνκεχ-
(εἰρισμένου) τῆν ἡγεμον(ίαν)⁽²¹⁾. Because of his perfectissimate, it has been suggested that he was a praeses rather than an agens vice praesidis⁽²²⁾, though there is at least one other example of a v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis) in an imperial province (see below under Noricum). Another Arabian governor, Iunius Olympus, who was in the province in 262/3, is usually regarded as an equestrian praeses, although Petersen thought he might have been a senator⁽²³⁾.



Asia like Africa, remained proconsular throughout. The only equestrian governor in this period was Iulius Proculus, v.p. proc(urator) agens vice proco(n)s(ulis), in 276⁽²⁴⁾. This was clearly only a temporary post.

Baetica was a proconsular province of praetorian rank, and during the middle to late third century was governed by two senatorial praesides, whose exact dates are unknown⁽²⁵⁾. The first recorded equestrian governor was Aurelius Iulius, v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis), dated under Florianus and Probus (276/82)⁽²⁶⁾. The next governor whose rank is known does not occur until Constantine's reign, when the province is under a v.p. praeses⁽²⁷⁾.

Under the Principate, Britannia Superior was governed by a senior consular, and at least one such is recorded under Valerian and Gallienus⁽²⁸⁾. No more definite governors are known for Britannia Superior. As for Britannia Inferior, previously under a senatorial legate of praetorian rank, a v.c. praeses is attested under the Gallic empire⁽²⁹⁾. Another senatorial governor, Hierocles Perpetuus, v.c. cur[ator aedium sacrarum (?), praesles provinciae Britanniae...] is also known, and although his date is not recorded, the formula may suggest a date in the late third or early fourth century⁽³⁰⁾. A regular equestrian v.p. praeses is known under the Tetrarchy (293/305), and again in the mid-fourth century⁽³¹⁾.

Cilicia, previously under a senatorial legate, is during the reign of Gallienus governed by a v.p. praeses⁽³²⁾. Another appears under the Tetrarchy (293/305)⁽³³⁾.

Creta et Cyrenaica remained under proconsuls throughout the third century, the last recorded example being under Diocletian and Maximian (286/93)⁽³⁴⁾. A little later, however, under the Tetrarchy, the province is under a v.p. praeses⁽³⁵⁾.

For Cyprus, previously proconsular, the only governor known in the later third century is Antistius Sabinus, v.p. praeses, dated under

the Tetrarchy (293/305)⁽³⁶⁾.

The last known consular governor of Dacia is probably to be dated to the years 240/244⁽³⁷⁾, but there is no evidence that the province was regularly governed by equestrians in the period before it was lost to the empire. The case of the equestrian governor of Maluensis⁽³⁸⁾ is not to be taken as evidence for equestrian rule, since this region had always been governed by a procurator⁽³⁹⁾. As for Aurelian's newly created Dacian province, no governor's rank is known.

Dalmatia was, during the first and second centuries, under consular governors, and during the later half of the third century two senatorial praesides are known⁽⁴⁰⁾. Both held office at unknown dates, but the first is probably to be assigned to Gallienus' reign, or a little after⁽⁴¹⁾. The date of the second, M. Aurelius Iulius, remains uncertain⁽⁴²⁾.

Equestrian governors are known in 277 and 280, both v.p. praesides, and in c.282/4, Fl. Val. Constantius was p(raeses) p(rovinciae) Delm(atiae)⁽⁴³⁾.

Germania Superior remained under a legatus Augusti up to the mid-third century, and the usurper Postumus may well have been legate of one of the Germanies⁽⁴⁴⁾. Under the Gallic empire, however, a v.p. praeses occurs, and another is attested under the Tetrarchy, either of Germania Superior or of the newly created Sequania⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Senatorial legates are attested for Hispania Tarraconensis up to the 280s⁽⁴⁶⁾; under the Tetrarchy, v.p. praesides take their place⁽⁴⁷⁾.

For Lugdunensis, the only possible governor known for this period is the vir perfectissimus before whom Eumenius delivered an oration in Augustodunum in 298⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Lusitania, like Lugdunensis under a praetorian legate before the third century, shows only one governor belonging to the later third century whose rank is known. He was Aurelius Ursinus, v.p. p(raeses), probably to be dated to 293/305⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Two governors of Lycia-Pamphylia, previously a proconsular province,

are recorded for this period whose rank is known, both v.p. praesides: Flavius Areianus Alypius, and Terentius Marcianus ⁽⁵⁰⁾. For neither is a precise date known, both belonging to the late third or early fourth century.

Macedonia was governed by proconsuls under the Principate, and a senatorial praeses is attested under, or shortly after, Gallienus, but whether he was a proconsul or a legate is not recorded ⁽⁵¹⁾. The next governor we know of, dated 276, was an Aurelius Valentinus, who had the title v.p. tribunus Batavorum agens vice praesidis ⁽⁵²⁾. That a tribune of an ala should act as a governor, and that he should receive the perfectissime, is quite extraordinary and may reflect the disorder to which the provinces of the eastern Balkans especially were subject during these years. A little later, however, in 282/3, the province is under a regular v.p. praeses ⁽⁵³⁾.

Moesia Inferior was governed up to the mid-third century by consular legates ⁽⁵⁴⁾. If Claudius Natalianus is to be dated to the later third century, then he served as senatorial legate under either Claudius, Aurelian or Probus ⁽⁵⁵⁾. At any rate, a senatorial legate is definitely recorded under Aurelian ⁽⁵⁶⁾, and another legatus is mentioned in the Acts of the Christian Martyrs in 303 ⁽⁵⁷⁾. Long before this, however, M. Aurelius Sebastianus was probably v.p. p(raeses) of this province in 270/1 ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Noricum was still under a senatorial legate in about 260 ⁽⁵⁹⁾. Thereafter, two or three equestrian governors are attested, none of whose dates are known. Two of these bear the title a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis), and at least one of these is a vir perfectissimus ⁽⁶⁰⁾. The third has no recorded title, but was almost certainly governor, since he was also a vir perfectissimus ⁽⁶¹⁾. The province was later divided into two provinces, each under a v.p. praeses ⁽⁶²⁾.

Numidia shows senatorial legates under, and probably after,

Gallienus, while the legateship of L. Ovinius Pudens Capella, although undated, may belong to the reign of Aurelian, as one of his inscriptions is a dedication to Sol⁽⁶³⁾. Another senatorial governorship, that of Acilius Clarus, v(ir) co(n)s(ularis) p(raeses) p(rovinciae) N(umidiae) is also undated, but since this man is probably the same as the Acilius Clarus who was corrector in Italy in 286, his Numidian governorship is probably in the 280s. Equestrian governorships were also occurring at this time, the first certainly datable being that of M. Aurelius Decianus, v.p. p(raeses) in 283/4⁽⁶⁴⁾. But he may well have been preceded by others. If Tenagino Probus was an equestrian, Numidia would have received an equestrian governor in 267/9⁽⁶⁵⁾. The governorship, too, of Severinus Apronianus, v.p. p(raeses) may be of the same date, since a man who figures on Apronianus' inscription, Domitius Secundinus, figures on another inscription dated 268⁽⁶⁶⁾. After the 280s Numidia was under v.p. praesides until Constantine's reign, when it received consulares⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Pannonia Inferior had, since Caracalla's time, been under legates of consular rank, and P. Cosinius Felix governed the province as such in 252⁽⁶⁸⁾. Towards the end of Gallienus' reign, however, the province was under a v.e. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis)⁽⁶⁹⁾, and probably soon after, under a v.p. praeses, if the governor L. Flavius Aper is the same as the Flavius Aper who was praepositus under Gallienus⁽⁷⁰⁾. The governorship of the senator M. Aurelius Valentinianus is not dated,⁽⁷¹⁾ but since he is almost certainly the same as the M. Aurelius Valentinianus who was legate of Tarraconensis in 283 (see above), his office will belong to that period. It is also just possible that the Honoratus who received imperial edicts in 289 and 293 at Sirmium and who was in all probability governor of Pannonia Inferior, is to be identified with Paetus Honoratus, v.[c...?]corrector Itali[ae]⁽⁷²⁾. The next governors of known rank do not appear until the mid-fourth century,

when the province was under v.c. consulares⁽⁷³⁾.

Pannonia Superior was under senatorial legates during the Principate, examples of whom are known up to the end of the Severi⁽⁷⁴⁾. The next governor for whom a rank is known belongs to the reign of Constantine, and is a regular equestrian v(ir) p(erfectissimus) p(raeses)⁽⁷⁵⁾.

A senator whose name is lost was praes(es) prov(inciae) Pan[noniae]... under or a little after Gallienus⁽⁷⁶⁾.

Pontus et Bithynia seems to have been under senatorial consular governors up to the end of Gallienus' reign, as we know of a consular legatus Augusti in the province in 269⁽⁷⁷⁾. Ten years later, in 279, a regular equestrian governor is attested, and thereafter other v.p. praesides are recorded, at least for Pontus⁽⁷⁸⁾.

From the time of Marcus Aurelius, Raetia was under praetorian legati. In the later third century a series of equestrian governors are known, beginning with a governor entitled v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis) in 280⁽⁷⁹⁾, but continuing with v.p. praesides until the division of the province under Constantine⁽⁸⁰⁾.

Syria Coele remained under senatorial consulars at least until the period of the Tetrarchy⁽⁸¹⁾.

Syria Phoenice also received senatorial legates throughout most of the third century, of praetorian rank. The last known perhaps occurred early in Diocletian's reign⁽⁸²⁾. Later, sometime between 293 and 303, a v.p. praeses is attested⁽⁸³⁾. Later still, Phoenice became a consular province⁽⁸⁴⁾.

For Thracia, the only governor who probably belonged to this period whose title is known was M. A(urelius) Apollinarius, v.p. praeses⁽⁸⁵⁾. Otherwise the situation in this province is unknown, unless we include the Gallonius Avitus whom the *Historia Augusta* describes as a 'legatus Thraciarum', or the Apellianus mentioned in the Acts of the Christian

Martyrs⁽⁸⁶⁾ as proconsul of Thrace.

From this province-by-province survey of the replacement of senatorial by equestrian governors in the later third century, it is possible to distinguish various stages in the process. As we saw above (p.100), up to Gallienus' accession equestrian governors were - officially at any rate - temporary vicars. With one exception, they retained the term procurator in their titulature. From Gallienus' accession onwards, on the other hand, this word is almost invariably dropped. It occurs only once, in 276 in Asia, a province which in any case remained senatorial throughout the period. Otherwise, equestrian governors have the title agens vice praesidis, which has been interpreted as signifying an "independent vicariate"⁽⁸⁷⁾. Thus, whereas previously a procurator had been given temporary powers to act as governor in the absence of his superior, equestrian vicars were now specially appointed to provinces as governors, although with a title that maintained the legal fiction that they were only acting in the place of the normal governor. Soon even this legal camouflage was dropped and the simple term praeses came to denote a regular governorship.

The evolution of the regular equestrian governorship was of course by no means as tidy as this scheme suggests. The various stages overlapped considerably. As we have seen, the term procurator was dropped in one case before Gallienus' time, while the first occurrence of the simple title praeses was in Gallienus' reign, in Cilicia; and the title agens vice praesidis does not disappear until Probus' reign (see above, under Macedonia and Raetia). This untidiness is reflected also in the provinces which had always been equestrian. The term procurator does not finally disappear here until 283⁽⁸⁸⁾, although even before Gallienus' reign the simple title praeses had occurred in Mauretania⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Originally, as noted above, the procuratorial vicars of the period

before Gallienus held the rank of vir egregius - in other words, the same rank as normal procurators. The 'independent vicars' in the years after Gallienus' accession held either the egregiate or the perfectissimate. Pflaum thought that their rank depended purely on whether their post was in a senatorial or an imperial province⁽⁹⁰⁾, with a vicariate in a senatorial province carrying with it the perfectissimate, and in an imperial province, the egregiate. There are, however, cases of virii perfectissimi in imperial provinces (see above, under Noricum, Raetia and Arabia), and it seems more realistic to see in the gradual prevalence of the perfectissimate an increasing recognition of equestrian governorships as a regular institution. When the simple term praeses appears as the regular title of the equestrian governor, it is associated with the rank vir perfectissimus.

The Sequence of change

The appearance of a regular equestrian governor, the v.p. praeses, in a province has frequently been taken to show that the province in question has been made "equestrian," like the Mauretaniae and the Alps under the Principate. If this was so, after receiving a regular equestrian governor, a province could not have been governed by a senator. While the evidence does not permit firm conclusions, however, there are several probable instances of senators following v.p. praesides in a province. This suggests that provinces were not officially designated "equestrian," but that the replacement was carried out in a rather more haphazard way.

In Numidia, for example, a senatorial legate, L. Ovinus Pudens Capella, governed the province probably under or after Aurelian, and another senator, Acilius Clarus, was in office around the year 286. Before this, there were two probable cases of regular equestrian governors in the province, Tenagino Probus and Severinus Apronianus. A. Stein identified Probus with Claudius' Prefect of Egypt, which would

make him an equus⁽⁹¹⁾. E. Birley, on the other hand, preferred to regard him as a senator, because of his north Italian nomen⁽⁹²⁾. Since there is at least one other example of a prominent Italian equestrian from this period, the Praetorian Prefect Volusianus, this is not conclusive. It is safer to leave Probus' rank undetermined, while admitting the likelihood of an identification between this governor and the Prefect of Egypt⁽⁹³⁾. As for Severinus Apronianus, the uncertainty here surrounds the date of the governorship, not the rank. Apronianus' office probably belongs to Gallienus' reign, or just after, because one of his inscriptions mentions a man who appears on another inscription which definitely belongs to this period. Although it is possible that the appearance of the same man in both inscriptions does not necessarily mean that the inscriptions were less than twenty years apart, as Petersen points out⁽⁹⁴⁾, it is safer to regard them as more or less contemporary. Clarus' senatorial governorship, on the other hand, cannot have been long before 286, since he held his correctorship in that year⁽⁹⁵⁾.

In Pannonia Inferior the governorship of L. Flavius Aper, v.p. praeses, probably occurred long before that of M. Aurelius Valentinianus, leg.Aug. pr.pr. (see above p.105). Petersen doubts the identity of Flavius Aper, the praepositus of Gallienus' reign, with the equestrian governor⁽⁹⁶⁾, but his only reason for doing so is that he assumes that the province did not "go equestrian" until much later. There is no real reason to doubt the identity, and it is therefore probable that Aper's equestrian governorship belongs to the period of Gallienus. As for the senatorial legateship of Valentinianus, Lieb sees no reason why this should occur after Gallienus' reign⁽⁹⁷⁾, since he prefers to regard the legate of Tarraconensis in 283 (see above p.103) as the son of this man. This again is possible, but it seems more likely that they are one and the same senator, going from one consular

province to another in the time-honoured fashion. If so, his Pannonian office came after an equestrian had governed the province.

In Arabia, too, it is probable that senatorial and equestrian governors were not appointed in strict succession. Iunius Olympus, governor in 262/3, was probably an equestrian praeses, and Petersen regards Ammianus, in the province at about the same time, as a v.p. praeses rather than a v.e. agens vice praesidis⁽⁹⁸⁾. If either of these two men were regular equestrian governors, then only two or three years at the beginning of Gallienus' reign are left in which to fit probably two senatorial governorships. Coc(ceius?) Rufinus was definitely a senator, and his governorship was definitely under Gallienus. For the governorship of Virius Lupus there is more doubt. Keyes dates his governorship not long before 278, on the grounds that his consulship in 278 was his first, and that his Arabian and Syrian governorships were just previous to this year⁽⁹⁹⁾. It is easier, however, to agree with Gilliam that Lupus was consul iterum in 278⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Allowing about ten years between the two consulships therefore brings us back to an Arabian governorship towards the end of Gallienus' reign. It is possible in fact that this post was rather earlier, in the early or middle years of Gallienus' reign, since Lupus went on to hold the Syrian governorship, presumably before the split between Rome and Palmyra in c.268⁽¹⁰¹⁾. Whatever the exact date, it is probable that two senatorial governorships were in Arabia under Gallienus, and it is difficult to fit them in before c.262. The best solution is that Arabia was governed by senators after being governed by equestrians. Finally, a senator who governed Moesia Inferior some time under Aurelian is likely to have come after M. Aurelius Sebastianus, whose governorship is dated to 270/1. The latter was probably an eques⁽¹⁰²⁾.

The weight of evidence thus suggests that senators could follow v.p. praesides in the governorship of provinces, and that therefore the

provinces did not simply become "equestrian" in the way the Mauretanian and Alpine provinces had been under the Principate. Indeed, this would not be the most natural course of action in the light of previous developments. During the years before Gallienus' accession as sole emperor, the increasing use of procuratorial vicars had paved the way for the general replacement of senatorial by equestrian governors, and there would have been no need for emperors in the late third century to turn successive provinces officially into equestrian preserves. If the occurrence of a v.p. praeses indicated an "equestrian" province, moreover, those provinces which had been "equestrian" since the Principate would presumably have been under such governors from a comparatively early date. In fact, the term procurator appears in the title of the governor of an Alpine province as late as 283⁽¹⁰³⁾.

The changeover from senatorial to equestrian administration in the provinces was in all probability a haphazard process, with a province receiving now an equestrian governor, now a senatorial governor, in no strict order. As the third century progressed, however, the incidence of equestrians continually increased, until they had almost completely ousted the senators from the governorships.

The rate of change

The data that we have is too limited and unreliable to arrive at any accurate or detailed conclusions about the pace with which the replacement was carried out; but it does allow us to see that this was no sudden and complete reform. The process is well under way by the mid-third century, and is by no means complete by Diocletian's accession. Nevertheless, the situation in the later third century is clearly very different from that of the preceding period, and it is Gallienus' reign which marks the transition. Whereas previously equestrians had constituted only a small minority of all governors, under Gallienus there

is a significant shift in their favour, possibly even placing them in a majority⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. Under Gallienus' immediate successors, Claudius and Aurelian (268-275), the situation apparently remains about the same, with the very scanty figures showing equal numbers of equites and senators⁽¹⁰⁵⁾, while during the next few years (275-284) there is a further dramatic shift in favour of equites⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Under Diocletian, the ratio of known senatorial to equestrian governorships is about one to five⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

Reasons for the replacement

Despite the impact of Gallienus' reign on this process, it is clear that the exclusion of senators from the provincial governorships cannot be directly associated with their exclusion from military commands. Whereas the transformation of the provincial administration was the result of a slow evolution, the change in military leadership was sudden and comprehensive, accomplished within the reign of Gallienus⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

Nevertheless, some scholars have seen in the transformation in the provincial government an imperial policy aimed at weakening the senate by correspondingly increasing the role of the equites.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ If this had been so, however, the first provinces to be assigned to equestrians would surely have been those from which successful military revolt might be launched, namely the large armed provinces. In fact, these were the last areas to be affected. Syria, Tarraconensis and probably Pannonia Inferior all show senatorial governors at about the time of Diocletian's accession, and throughout the third century it was mainly the unarmed provinces of the interior which received equestrian governors⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

While there is no reason to believe that the replacement of senators by equestrians was the fruit of a sustained imperial policy to

reduce the influence of the senators, it is difficult to agree with Seston that the process was of little importance⁽¹¹¹⁾. It is true that since the beginning of the empire the imperial provinces had been governed by the emperor's agents, either senatorial or equestrian, and that no official rule had ever definitely partitioned the provinces between knights and senators. Nevertheless, given the force of custom in the Roman world, and the almost total monopoly that the senatorial order had enjoyed in the government of the provinces from the very earliest days of Rome's overseas empire, there must have been some powerful forces at work which led to that monopoly being decisively broken, and to equestrian rule spreading from the most backward and least important provinces to the rest of the empire. These forces were the product of the new conditions which the third century brought to the Roman world.

So far as the administration of the empire was concerned, the imperial system of the Principate involved two important principles. Firstly, it depended upon co-operation between the agents of the central government on the one hand and the municipal governments on the other. The latter were responsible for such functions as the collection of taxes, the upkeep of roads and other public works, and the maintenance of law and order within their jurisdiction; the large measure of administrative autonomy that the cities enjoyed freed the imperial authorities from these tasks and allowed the bureaucracy to be kept remarkably small.

The second principle was that, amongst the agents of the central government, there was a division between the fiscal officials on the one hand and the military/administrative officials on the other. This was underpinned by social considerations, manifest in the distinctive equestrian and senatorial career-structures. This was deliberately designed by Augustus and his successors to increase the central government's control over its provincial functionaries, by encouraging

mutual rivalry and jealousy between them⁽¹¹²⁾. The resulting tension is revealed in such episodes as the conflict between the procurator Classicianus and the legate Paulinus in Britain, and in the fact that Tacitus finds it remarkable that Agricola did not quarrel with the procurator while he was governor of Aquitania⁽¹¹³⁾.

These two features of the provincial system of the Principate were possible in the comparatively peaceful and prosperous years of the first and second centuries. With the coming of the third century, however, harsher conditions led to their disappearance. Economic and social pressures undermined the municipal governments' ability to fulfil their responsibilities and thereby destroyed the basis of co-operation between local and central authorities. This, coupled with the decline in law and order throughout the empire, intensified the pressure on imperial officials, and under such conditions the division between the two classes of imperial official became an expensive and expendable luxury.

Even during the first two centuries municipal government had come to be a very expensive burden, resting upon the shoulders of a very narrow section of society, the curiales. From the end of the second century onwards there is evidence of an increasing reluctance to shoulder the expense. As early as A.D. 156 we hear of a man from Oxyrhynchus unwilling to undertake a liturgy⁽¹¹⁴⁾, and the laws of the Severan jurists make plenty of provision for compelling unwilling candidates to serve in office, and for securing the collection of the Summa honoraria which each office holder-elect had to contribute⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

This trend was part of a wider picture of declining prosperity from the late second century onwards. The wars of Marcus Aurelius' reign, coupled with the ravages of the plague, must have placed a harsh strain on the resources of the empire, and the increased pressure on the frontiers in the third century allowed no relaxation. The situation was aggravated by internal troubles - the civil wars of 193 to 196,

the harsh policies of the new and insecure Severan dynasty, and the confiscations and exactions of subsequent regimes, notably that of Maximinus Thrax, but also of gentler regimes⁽¹¹⁶⁾. With the mid-third century came civil wars, invasions and currency inflation⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

The equilibrium between the central and municipal governments was thus undermined, and co-operation between the two came under ever greater strain as the economic pressure ate away at the resources of the municipia. At a time when the emperor needed revenue as never before, co-operation inevitably gave way to compulsion. As a result, the need was increasingly felt for procurators to have the judicial and coercive powers traditionally held by the senatorial governors, and the situation must have aggravated the friction already common between the two provincial officials. This is certainly suggested by a law of Gordian III against procurators usurping the authority of the governors.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

At the same time, increasing social unrest became a serious problem in the Roman world. The wars, plague and economic hardships of Marcus Aurelius' reign demoralised the army and people of the empire, and produced the disturbances in Commodus' reign which occurred under the name of Maternus' revolt. These insurrections, for it was more than one revolt, were the work of army deserters, brigands, slaves and peasants, operating over a wide area from Lugdunensis down into Spain⁽¹¹⁹⁾. They seem to have had the support of the local population and at times were so powerful that they could successfully attack large cities⁽¹²⁰⁾. Peasant revolts became a recurrent hazard in the western provinces from the third century onwards, and brigandage spread to different parts of the empire, including Italy⁽¹²¹⁾. It remained a problem throughout the third century⁽¹²²⁾.

Apart from aggravating the economic problems of the empire, this social unrest would have added greatly to the difficulties of the provincial administration; and together with the increasing problems of

collecting revenue and the friction between the governors and the procurators, it would have led to a highly unsatisfactory situation. The essential inefficiencies of the old system would not only have been more apparent, but also much less welcome. Clearly, there was a growing need for a new provincial functionary who united in himself both the fiscal responsibility of the procurator and the judicial and coercive powers of the governor. This fusion took place only gradually, starting with a procurator from time to time acquiring a governor's authority as a procurator agens vice praesidis. Later, an official was specifically appointed to a province as an 'independent vicar,' or agens vice praesidis, and finally the regular equestrian governor, the vir perfectissimus praeses, emerged.

Legal aspects

The fusion of the procuratorial and gubernatorial functions in one official involved a legal process whereby the powers associated with the title legatus Augusti pro praetore, were absorbed into the office of praeses.

The word praeses had a long history, going back to Cicero and Pliny the younger⁽¹²³⁾. Statius used it to characterise the role of kindly administrator assumed by Domitian⁽¹²⁴⁾. In the course of the second century, it found its way on to inscriptions. At first it is found purely as an honorific epithet, but under Septimius Severus the term appears as part of the official titulature not only in senatorial inscriptions, but in equestrian ones too⁽¹²⁵⁾. This addition was not only due to a tendency for increasingly voluminous and resounding titles⁽¹²⁶⁾; it had real legal significance.

The procurator Augusti of the Principate was not, in theory, a public official. That is to say, he was not invested with the imperium of a Roman magistrate. He thus had far fewer powers than the legatus

Augusti, who had imperium delegated to him by the emperor⁽¹²⁷⁾. Within his province, the legatus had authority second only to that of the emperor, and undertook the duties of all the magistrates at Rome. He was, indeed, allowed a much freer hand. All the petitions, which had various judges at Rome, belonged to the legate in his own province, and his cognitio, or power to conduct a first hearing of a case, was equal to that of any magistrate at Rome. He also had a wide range of coercive and punitive powers, especially the ius gladii, or right to inflict capital punishment, and the power to condemn criminals to the mines⁽¹²⁸⁾.

The equestrian procuratorial governor, on the other hand, had much fewer powers. He did not, for example, possess the ius gladii, as is shown by the special mention of this power being granted under extraordinary circumstances⁽¹²⁹⁾.

Such was the situation up to the time of Septimius Severus. A passage in Cassius Dio shows that under the Severi a change has occurred⁽¹³⁰⁾. Here Dio lists those officials who have the power to inflict capital punishment, and he includes procuratorial governors on this list. The extension of this power to procuratorial governors has been necessitated by an enlargement of the scope of the ius gladii. Previously it could only be used against legionaries; now it was applicable to all Roman citizens⁽¹³¹⁾. All Governors, therefore, whether legate or procurator, needed to have this power.

The actual process by which procuratorial governors acquired the ius gladii is manifest in the occurrence of the phrase agens vice praesidis in their titulature from the reign of Septimius onwards. In the Digest, the term praeses is used to signify the office of legatus Augusti, with all its associated powers and responsibilities⁽¹³²⁾. In receiving the additional titulature agens vice praesidis, therefore, it is apparent that procuratorial governors received also the full authority of a legatus Augusti, including the ius gladii.

Under Septimius, then, procuratorial governors acquired the same legal powers as legates, an adjustment which made possible the subsequent replacement of senatorial by equestrian governors. The procurator agens vice praesidis united in himself the full magisterial authority of the legatus with the fiscal responsibilities of the procurator. Where he governed, coercive and judicial powers could be applied to the collection of revenue, and other government functions could be undertaken under conditions free of wasteful friction and rivalry. Clearly he constituted a very useful official, and the advantages which he represented became more apparent as the emperors' need for revenue escalated.

The career of one such equestrian official, Timesitheus, amply illustrates the advantages inherent in the use of procuratorial vicars. According to Pflaum, Timesitheus held the vicariate of Arabia and lower Germany during the campaigns of Severus Alexander in the east and in Germany respectively⁽¹³³⁾. Both these regions will have been important supply bases for the massive troop concentrations involved in these wars, and the appointment of an equestrian governor would have facilitated the resultant requisitioning. Again, under Maximinus, Timesitheus was appointed procuratorial governor of Bithynia and Asia in turn. These were two of the wealthiest eastern provinces, and he would thus have had a key role in the harsh fiscal policies of that emperor⁽¹³⁴⁾.

It was natural that as the third century progressed, and as the empire came under increasing military and economic pressure, procuratorial vicars should be appointed with increasing frequency. Similarly as frequency gave way to regularity, it was natural that the procuratorial vicar, the procurator agens vice praesidis, should evolve into the "independent vicar," agens vice praesidis, and thence into the regular equestrian governor, the v.p. praeses⁽¹³⁵⁾.

Provincial administration under Gallienus and his successors

The official entitled vir perfectissimus praeses first appeared under Gallienus. At the same time the proportion of equestrian governorships rose from a maximum of about one fifth to about one half. While there was not the dramatic transformation which took place in the military sphere, therefore, Gallienus' reign clearly witnessed a significant acceleration in the evolution of the late Roman administrative system.

The reason for this is a matter for conjecture. The sharp decline in the empire's fortunes before and during Gallienus' reign, and the corresponding increase in the need for revenue, helps to account for the more frequent appointment of equestrian praesides who enjoyed both financial and coercive authority. The building and fortifying activity which occurred, most apparently in the walls which sprouted around towns throughout the empire⁽¹³⁶⁾, would also have had the same effect, as it would have increased the workload of the governors. Furthermore, Gallienus' reforms of the military leadership must also have encouraged the appointment of more equestrian governors. The replacement of senators by equites in senior military posts would have led to a significant expansion in the number of equestrians qualified to govern a province, and to a greater need on the emperor's part to reward these equites with such promotion. Under Gallienus' successors, several governors are known with military backgrounds. Valerius Marcellinus, praeses of Mauretania Tingitania in 277-80, was prefect of the II Adivtrix under Gallienus⁽¹³⁷⁾, while Aelius Aelianus, who was praeses of Mauretania Caesariensis at about the same time, may well be identifiable with the P. Aelius Aelianus who commanded the II Adivtrix, again under Gallienus⁽¹³⁸⁾. Similarly, Flavius Aper, praeses of Pannonia Inferior, is probably the same as the Flavius Aper who commanded a vexillation-formation under Gallienus⁽¹³⁹⁾. Later, two

praesides of Numidia record previous posts respectively as princeps peregrinorum and cornicularius praef. praet. (140), and the Traianus Mucianus whose military career is known up to the command of legions and other senior posts, may be the same as the governor of Raetia of the same name under Diocletian (141). More examples are known, and the nomenclature of other governors suggests humble origins and military careers (142). Clearly, Gallienus' military reforms not only placed the army command in the hands of professional soldiers, but also gave the provincial administration largely over to them, at least for a time (143).

These factors - the enhanced need for revenue and the rise of the equites in the military sphere - are perhaps sufficient to account for the increase in the number of equestrian governors under Gallienus. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to discount political motives completely. It has been noted that there seems to be some correlation between the attitude of an emperor to the senatorial order and the proportion of equestrian to senatorial governors during his reign (144). This was probably not primarily due to senatorial indignation with the appointment of equestrian governors, but to resentment about the harsh fiscal measures that their appointment implied. Senators were as a rule drawn from the curiales, and they retained strong links with their places of origin (145). Their sympathies would have been very much with that class, which bore the main brunt of the increased demands of the emperors. Certainly, it was the harshness of Maximinus' revenue-collectors which sparked off the senate-led revolt of 238 (146). In this context, Gallienus' raising of the number of equestrian governors to a significantly greater proportion than hitherto, after a period in which very few equites seem to have been appointed, suggests that he did not rate the feelings of the senators very highly (147).

Whatever the reasons for the shift in favour of equestrian governors under Gallienus, there could be no going back under his successors. The

proportion of equestrian governors never again fell below one half of the total. The need for tighter provincial administration grew as municipal impoverishment spread. Particularly in the west, the later third century saw the social gravity shift to large country estates which belonged to aristocrats not subject to the ordinary burdens of municipal citizenship⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. This, along with the collapse of the currency, heightened the need for unified authority in the provinces, and all governors, whether equestrian or senatorial, were increasingly responsible for the collection of revenue, since the responsibility for assessing and levying requisitions in kind was in their hands⁽¹⁴⁹⁾. Diocletian virtually completed this process, in that he reorganised the hitherto irregular requisitions, which now largely superceded old money taxes⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. At the same time, the workload of the governors had much increased as they had taken over many of the functions of the municipal authorities⁽¹⁵¹⁾, and Diocletian's subdivision of the provinces was a response to this problem⁽¹⁵²⁾. By the end of Diocletian's reign the framework of the late Roman provincial system had by and large been erected.

Conclusion

The replacement of senators by equites in the government of the provinces was a gradual process which lasted throughout the third century. It was the outcome of the emperor's need for more efficient control, especially in the financial sphere, than was available under the old system in which responsibility was divided between governor and procurator. As the old basis of imperial rule, the co-operation between local and central authorities, gave way under the pressures of economic and military crisis, a new system based on compulsion arose. With this new provincial system there emerged a new provincial governor, in whom the central government invested all judicial, fiscal and coercive powers.

This was the equestrian praeses. While Gallienus' reign did not see anything like the dramatic transformation in the provincial administration that it saw in the military sphere, it did witness a more widespread replacement of senators by equestrians. In this respect it formed an important stage in the evolution of the late Roman provincial administration.

Notes and references

- 1) Apparent exceptions to this rule were the proconsulates of Africa, Asia and Achaia, which survived into (or in the case of Achaia, were resurrected in) the fourth century. Even here, however, the office of governor conformed to the new pattern, with the same duties as other praesides (see below, p.121 and note 149).
- 2) C.W. Keyes, The rise of the equites in the third century of the Roman empire, Princeton, 1915, p.3f.
- 3) This trend is shown in the following list of equestrian vicarii of the period from Septimius Severus to Gallienus:
 1. VITELLIANVS, proc. a[(gens) v(ice) procos.] - M.A.M.A. 4, 328. Dated 196.
 2. HILARIANVS, procurator qui tunc loco proconsulis (Africae) Minucii Timiniani defuncti ius gladii acceperat - Ruinart., Acta Martyrum, Paris, 1689, p.88., cf. Marquardt, Staatsverw., 1, p.556, 9. Dated 202.
 3. HERENNIVS GEMELLINVS, v.e., proc.Augg.nn. agens v(ice) p(raesidis) (Daciae Apulensis) - C.I.L. III 1625, 7901, under Septimius and Caracalla.
 4. AELIVS AGLAVS, v.e..proc.Augg. et vice procos. Asiae, Dankschr. Wien. Akad. Phil. Hist. Kl., 57, 1(1914), No.55. Dated under Septimius Severus and Caracalla.
 5. VLPIVS.... proc.Aug...[prov.] Dac. Apul. a.v.p., C.I.L. III 1464 = I.L.S. 1370. Dated c.211.
 6. C. IV[L(IVS)]SENECIO, v.e., proc.prov. Galat. item vice praesidis eius(em) prov(inciae) - C.I.L. III 251 = I.L.S. 1373; A.E. 1930, 144. Dated 198-211.
 7. L. TITINIVS GLODIANVS, e.v., proc.prov. Numidiae partes praes(idis) agens - A.E. 1911, 100; cf. I.L.S. 9490. Dated under Caracalla and Geta, 211.
 8. AEDINIVS IULIANVS, in provincia Lugdunensi quinquefascalis cum agerem - C.I.L. XIII 3162, dated c.220; cf. Pflaum, Carrières, p.771f.
 9. BADIUS COMNIANVS, procur(ator) e[st] vice praesidis agen[s] (provinc. Gall. Lugd.), - C.I.L. XIII 3162, dated c.223.
 10. C. FVRIVS SABINIVS AQUILA TIMESITHEVS.... proc.prov. Asiae ibi vice XX et XXXX itemq. vice procos., proc. prov. Bithyniae Ponti Paphlagon. tam patrimoni quam rat. privatae, ibi vice proc. XXXX, item vice (praes. or procos.), proc. patrimon. prov. Belgic. et duarum Germaniar. ibi vice praesid. prov. German. Inferior.... proc. prov. Arabiae ibi vice praesid. bis.... - C.I.L. XIII 1807 = I.L.S. 1330, under Elagabalus, Severus Alexander and Maximinus.
 11. C. TITIVS SIMILIS,.... proc.prov. Mysiae Inferioris, eiusdem provinciae ius gladii - C.I.L. II 484 = I.L.S. 1372. Dated sometime between 194 and 238 - see A. Stein, Moesien, p.114.
 12. Q. AXIVS A(ELIANVS).... proc.prov. Dac. Apul. bis vice praesidis - C.I.L. III 1456 = I.L.S. 1371. Dated 238.

13. AVR. MARCVS, v.e., a.v.p. (prov. Daciae Apulensis) - Karlsruher Jahrbucher, 12, p.137 = A. Stein, Dazien, p.72 - Under either Maximinus or Philip.

14. ANON... [... proc. prov.] Maced. proc. pro[v....] ubique vice praes[idis....], iuf[ri]dicus Alexandreae] vice praef. Aeg[yp]ti - C.I.L. VI 1638, cf. Domaszewski, Rh. M. 54, p.159f. = I.L.S. 1331; Pflaum, Carrières p.831ff. Dated under Philip.

15. ANON: "actis etiam publice habitis apud procuratorem ducenarium" (in Tarraconsis). - St. Cyprian, Ep. 67, 6, cf. Hirschfeld, Verw., p.389, 3. Dated c.250.

16. ANON: "Procurator qui defuncti proconsulis (Africae) partes administrabat," Ruinart, Acta Martyrum, p.235, dated 258/9.

17. ANON: Φυλαττομένης τῆς ἀρχῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπιτρόπου τῆς πόλεως τοῦ ἐν Πατάροις (prov. Lyciae) Date uncertain; Martyrum SS. Leonis et Paregorii, 2. (Patrolog. Graec. 114, p.1451ff).

18. [S]EPT. MARIA [NVS, proc. vice le]g. pro pr. Pont(i) - very doubtful, and date uncertain. - C.I.L. VI 1630.

19. CAECILIUS ARELLIANVS, ἐπίτροπος Κιλικίας λόγου πρεβιάτης ὁ καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἐγχειρισθείς - Forsch. Ephesus III 1923, p.140, no.54 = A.E. 1924, 83. Date uncertain. There is also the Minicius Martialis "memoratur in titulo inedito Mithraei Durae Europi constructi loco praesidis, vices cuius Fortasse egit" - Rostovzeff, Munch. Beitr. z. Papforsch. 29, p.374, 24. Dated 209-11. Mentioned by Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.135, no.5.

- 4) These and the following figures exclude the procensulates of Asia and Africa, which remained in the hands of senators throughout the third century on the one hand, and on the other, those provinces that had always been in the hands of equestrians. The data for senatorial governorships is taken from G. Barbieri, L'albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino, Rome, 1952. For Severus Alexander's reign, the following are known: Barbieri 931, 953, 959, 965, 972, 988, 992, 1003, 1005, 1012, 1027, 1029, 1035/6, 1037, 1039, 1045, 1061, 1062, 1065(x2), 1067, 1068, 1069(x2), 1073, 1096, 1104, 1106, 1108, 1128, 1147(x2), 1187a, 1188, 1190, 1191, 1193, 1198; and possibly 998, 1003, 1007, 1023, 1024(x2), 1058, 1121, 1128, 1147(x2), and 1196. (Nos. 1003, 1128 and 1147 held one or more governorships which definitely belong to this period, and others which are not so precisely datable). For equestrian governors, see above, note 3, nos. 9, 10(x2), and possibly 11.
- 5) For senatorial governors under Maximinus, see Barbieri 983, 988, 1008, 1012, 1017, 1042, 1133, 1159(x2), 1203, 1632; and possibly 1003, 1011, 1058, 1128, 1147, 1687, 1752, and 1756. For equestrian governors, see above, note 3, nos. 10(x2), and possibly nos. 11 and 12.
- 6) For senatorial governors under Gordian III, see Barbieri 958(x2), 1008, 1019(x2), 1020, 1071, 1137, 1147(x2), 1159, 1199, 1498, 1597, 1602, 1642, 1672, 1696, 1700, 1707, 1770; and possibly 1011, 1016(x3), 1159, 1187, 1439, 1627, 1648, 1687, 1690(x2), 1716, 1752 and 1828a. For equestrian governors, see above, note 3, possibly nos. 12 and 14(x2).

- 7) For senatorial governors under Philip, see Barbieri 1418, 1439, 1494, 1517, 1522, 1589, 1705, 1775, 1781; and possibly 1159, 1439, 1627 and 1690(x2). For equestrian governors, see above, note 3, possibly nos. 13 and 14(x2).
- 8) For senatorial governors under Decius, Gallus, Aemilian and Valerian (249-c.260), see Barbieri 1407, 1528, 1547, 1581, 1599, 1625, 1639(x2), 1652, 1703, 1712, 1744, 1749, 1755(x2), 1918a; and possibly 1504, 1519, 1610(x2), 1690, 1731, 1756, 1793a and 1942a. For equestrian governors, see above, note 3, nos. 15 and 16.
- 9) If we confine ourselves to those governorships which are precisely datable to a given reign, we arrive at the ratios of senatorial to equestrian governorships given in the left hand column of the table below. The ratios in the bracketed right hand column are attained by taking some account of those governorships which probably or possibly belong to given reigns, assuming (quite arbitrarily) that one half are correct.

Severus Alexander	c.13.5 : 1	(c.12.5 : 1)
Maximinus	5.5 : 1	(5.0 : 1)
Gordian III	10.0 : 0	(19.0 : 1)
Philip	9.0 : 0	(c. 8.0 : 1)
249-c.260	8.0 : 1	(c.11.0 : 1)

The numbers of governorships involved are clearly not large enough to give a completely accurate picture, but they do allow a general trend to be discerned, in the rather more frequent occurrence of equestrian vicars at the end of the period than at the beginning. The figures in the right-hand column were included to balance the data in the left-hand, and the resulting differences show up the poverty of the available evidence. Both, however, agree in showing a dramatic increase in the proportion of equestrian governorships under Maximinus, who was of course noted for his anti-senatorial bias. This may suggest some correlation between an emperor's use of equestrian governors and his "constitutional" policies. For further discussion on this point, see below, p.120; and chapter 5, p.179f.

- 10) Law of Caracalla: C.J. IX, 47, 2(dated 217); laws of Gordian III: C.J. IV, 20, 4(dated 239); C.J. III, 3, 1(dated 242).
- 11) As Petersen suggests: H. Petersen, "Senatorial and equestrian governors in the third century A.D." J.R.S. 45, 1955, p.4.
- 12) H.G. Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.815ff.
- 13) See above, note 3, nos. 4 (senatorial province) and 3, 6, 7 and 13 (imperial provinces).
- 14) H.A. v.Gall. 2,2; cf. v.tyr.trig. 19, 1.
- 15) L. Turranius Grattianus, v.c. corr(ector) prov. Achaiae: C.I.L. III 6103, dated 285/90; possibly 285/6, since Diocletian is not yet called Aurelius (P.L.R.E. p.402, L. Turranius Grattianus 3 - who was Urban Prefect in 290-1). The other Achaian governor is an unknown (p)raes(es) et corr(ector) pr(ov)inciae Achaiae B.S.A. 29, 1927/8, p.53, no. 80.

- 16) L. Sul. Paulus: Corinth 8, 2, 23-25 = P.L.R.E. p.685, Lucius Sul. Paulus 2.
- 17) P.L.R.E., fasti, p.1077.
- 18) Entrop. 9, 10; Victor, de Caes. 33, 14; H.A. v.tyr.trig. 24, 1.
- 19) Coc(ceius) Rufinus, [νου τοῦ λαμ] προτότου ἡμ[ωνήγεμ (όνος)] 260/8 = Syria 29, 1952, 310-11; cf. P.L.R.E. p.776, Coc(ceius) Rufinus 13; and Virius Lupus, cl(arissimae) m(emoriam) v(ir)... praes... Arabiae - C.I.L. VI 31775 = I.L.S. 1210. For probable date under Gallienus see above, p.110
- 20) Statilius Ammianus - I.G.R. III 1287: ὁ κρᾶτιστος δὲ ἔπων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν cf. P.L.R.E. p.54, Statilius Ammianus 5.
- 21) A.E. 1922, 13 = Syria 29, 1952, p.314f.
- 22) See P.L.R.E. p.1025, Anon 134.
- 23) Iunius Olympus = ὁ διασημώτατος ἡγεμῶν I.G.R. III 1286 = Syria 29, 1952, p.312; cf. P.L.R.E. p.648 Iunius Olympus 4. Dated 262/3. For Petersen's suggestion that this man was a senator see J.R.S. 1955, p.48 note 8, + Appendix, p.56.
- 24) Forsch. Eph. III, 1923, p.110-11, no.20.
- 25) Senatorial praesides: 1. Q. Pomponius Munatianus Clodianus, v.c. praeses prov. Baetic[ae]: Arch.Anz. 1973, 636f. = W. Eck, Chiron 1974, p.532-40. For a date in the mid-to-late third century, see Eck, p.536f., where it is argued from Pomponius' Macedonian quaestorship and plebian tribunate that his career cannot have been later. 2. A. Caecina Tacitus, v.c. praeses provinciae Baeticae: C.I.L. VIII 10988. Undated.
- 26) C.I.L. III, 115 = I.L.S. 593.
- 27) See P.L.R.E. p.328, Egnatius Faustinus 9; dated 337.
- 28) Desticius Iuba: C.I.L. VII, 107. A less certain case is that of T. Flavius Postumius Varus, v.c. leg.: C.I.L. VII, 95; cf. C.I.L. VI, 1416, 1417. It is unknown whether this legateship was provincial or legionary. According to Keyes, however (Rise of the equites, p.9), it is most unlikely that a senatorial officer would serve under an equestrian governor, and whether or not Postumius' post was a governorship, its occurrence may be regarded as evidence that a senatorial legate governed Upper Britain under Gallienus. Apart from these, there is also the possible case of M. Martiarnius Pulcher, v.c. or v.e. leg. Augg. pro praet.: R.P. Wright et al., "Roman Britain in 1975, II: Inscriptions," Britannia, 7, 1976, p.378-9; undated. If V.E. is correct, the stonemason presumably left out the letters V.A. for v(ice) a(gens), thus denoting a third-century equestrian governor of Upper Britain. If this is the case, then the wording of the inscription is unique for an equestrian governorship. The nearest example is that of the very doubtful [S]ept. Maria[nus], proc. vice leg. pro. pr. Ponti (see above, note 3, no.18). It is surely preferable to regard Pulcher as a senatorial legate not particularly datable to the third century. After the mid-third century, no more certain governors are known for Upper Britain.

- 29) Octavius Sabinus: R.I.B. 1, 605 = I.L.S. 2548. Dated 263/6.
- 30) C.I.L. VI, 1223, cf. P.L.R.E., p.689, Hierocles Perpetuus 4.
- 31) Tetrarchic governor: Aur. Arpagius, v.p. p(raeses), R.I.B. 1, 1912 = A.E. 1930, 114, A.E. 1931, 82. Mid-fourth century praeses: I.L.S. 5435 = R.I.B. 1, 103.
- 32) A. Voconius Zeno, v.p. praeses, A.E. 1915, 51, cf. Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.265; Carrières, n.348.
- 33) Aemilius Marcianus, v.p. praef(es) Ciliciae: C.I.L. III 223. The H.A. names two proconsuls of Cilicia - the emperor Carus (v. Cari 4, 6) and Aurelianus, Aurelian's grandson (v.Aur. 42, 2); and Lysias, governor in 285=7, is also called a proconsul: Acta 55, Cosmae et Damiani (= ASS Sept. VII, 474). These examples are presumably fictitious.
- 34) Inscr. Cret. IV, 281 = AE 1934, 259: Aglaus Proconsule.
- 35) M. Aurelius Buzes: Inscr. Cret. IV, 282=3.
- 36) Antistius Sabinus: P.L.R.E. p.792, Antistius Sabinus 9.
- 37) D. Simonius Proculus, v.c., praeses Daciae, C.I.L. III 1573; C.I.L. VI, 1520; cf. A. Stein, Dazien, p.72f.
- 38) M. Aurel. Cassianus: C.I.L. III 13704.
- 39) See A. Stein, Dazien, op.cit., 40, 86 and 87.
- 40) An unknown praeses prov. Pan(noniae, Macedoniae, Dalmatiae), for whom, see above, introduction, p. 13 and M. Aurel. Iulius, v.c. augur praeses provinciae: C.I.L. III 1938 = 8565 = I.L.S. 3710 - undated.
- 41) See Appendix A, p. 212f.
- 42) Petersen dates Iulius' governorship to before 277, on the grounds that a senator would not govern a province after it had become "equestrian". Malcus on the other hand assigns it a probable date of 299/304: B. Malcus "Notes sur la révolution du système administratif romain au troisième siècle," Opusc. Rom. 7, 1969, p.220; cf. Barbieri 1474. Diocletian's great persecution took place in these years, and a judge called Aurelius, or Maurelius, is mentioned in the Acts of the Christian Martyrs. This, however, seems very flimsy evidence for the dating of Iulius' governorship, which thus remains uncertain.
- 43) Aur. Marcianus, v.p. praes. prov. Del(matiae): C.I.L. III 8707, dated 277; M. Aur. Tiberianus, v.p., praes. prov. Del(matiae) C.I.L. III 1805 = I.L.S. 5695, dated 280; Fl. Val. Constantius, C.I.L. III 9860. Petersen ("Governors" p.50 note 50) thinks that Constantinus' inscription might be a forgery.
- 44) P.L.R.E. p.720, M. Cassianus Latinus Postumus 2.
- 45) Governor under Gallic Empire, C.I.L. VI 1641; cf. Pflaum, Carrières, no. 355, Aurelius Proculus, v.p. pr[ae]ses prov.: C.I.L. XIII 5249 = I.L.S. 640, dated 294. According to Jones, Proculus was probably governor of Sequania (P.L.R.E. p.747, Aurelius

- Proculus 7). Petersen doubts this, since there is no proof of Sequania's existence at this date (Petersen, p.52f).
- 46) The last known senatorial governor was M. Aurelius Valentinianus, v.c., p(raeses) p(rovinciae) H(ispaniae) C(iterioris) leg(atu)s Aug(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) = C.I.L. II, 4102 = I.L.S. 599; cf. C.I.L. II 4103; dated 283. Apart from Valentinianus two other senators held posts in this province at this period: Allius Maximus, v.c. leg(atu)s iur(idicu)s prov. H(ispaniae) Tarraconens(is): P.L.R.E. 3738 = I.L.S. 597, dated 280; and... us Flaminius Priscus, v.c., iur(idicu)s totius provinciae Tarraconensis: A.E. 1923, 102 and 103, dated under Probus and Carus. Tarraconensis was thus under senatorial governors during these years.
- 47) Iulius Valens, v.p. p(raeses) H(ispaniae) C(iterioris): A.E. 1929, 233, dated 286/305; Postum(ius) Lupercus, v. perf. praes. prov. H(isp. Cit.): C.I.L. II 4104, dated 288/9; M. Aur. Vincentius, v.p. praeses: C.I.L. II 4112 cf. P.L.R.E. p.966, M. Aur. Vincentius; undated, but probably belonging to the late third or early fourth century. See also P.L.R.E., p.1021, Anon. 105.
- 48) Pan.Lat. 5, passim; cf. P.L.R.E. p.1022, Anon. 107.
- 49) C.I.L. II 5140; cf. P.L.R.E. p.987, Aur. Vrsinus 3.
- 50) Flavius Areianus Alypius: A.E. 1958, 201 - undated; Terentius Marcianus: I.G.R. III 434 = B.C.H. XXIII (1899), 292, no.6. - undated.
- 51) See above, Introduction, p.13; and for dating, below, Appendix A, p.212f.
- 52) A.E. 1900, 169; P.L.R.E. p.936, Aur. Valentinus 8: τον διασημότατον τριβούνον Βαταδώνων και διέποντα τα μέρη της ήγεμονίας
- 53) Aur. Nestor: A.E. 1939, 191.
- 54) See A. Stein, Moesien, 84-101.
- 55), Natalianus' governorship took place under an emperor whose name is erased, but who bore the titles Gothicus Max Parthicus Max = I.G.R. I, 582. According to Leib (H. Lieb, "Der Praeses aus Sbeitla," in: Reidinger, W., Der Statthalter des ungeteilten Pannoniens und Oberpannoniens, Bonn, 1956, note 57, p.255), this does not necessarily indicate a late third century date.
- 56) Anonymous, ... leg.Aug.pr.pr. C.I.L. III 11460.
- 57) Bassus: Acta Dasi (Anal. Boll, 16, 1897, pp. 11ff.) cf. P.L.R.E. p.151, Bassus 4.
- 58) M. Aur. Sebastianus, v.p., p(raeses) p(rovinciae): A. Stein, Moesien, p.106. Petersen, thinking that this man ought to be a senator because all other governors of lower Moesia at this period were ("Governors," Appendix, p.56f), suggests that this inscription has been misinterpreted. In this, however, he is opposed by Malcus ("Administratif," p.221).

- 59) C.I.L. VIII, 2615 = I.L.S. 1194.
- 60) M. Aur...lius v.p.? a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis) = A.E. 1955, 119 (C.I.L. III 259*); Ael(ius) Restutus, v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis): Röm. Limes in Osterr. 11, 1910, 150, 42; A.E. 1968, 413.
- 61) M. Aur. Marinus, v(ir) p(erfectissimus): Röm. Limes in Osterr. 11, 1910, 151, 43, cf. P.L.R.E. p.560, M.Aur. Marinus 6.
- 62) P.L.R.E., fasti, p.1092.
- 63) L. Ovinus Pudens Capella: Atti III Cong. Epigr., 1959, p.236, 240; cf. B. Malcus, "Administratif," p.222, note 2.
- 64) C.I.L. VIII 2529 = I.L.S. 2291; cf. C.I.L. VIII 2530; C.I.L. VIII 2643; C.I.L. VIII 4578 = I.L.S. 3091; C.I.L. VIII 7002 + p.1847 = I.L.S. 607.
- 65) C.I.L. VIII 2571 + 18057; A.E. 1936, 58: [pr(aeses)] prov(inciae).
- 66) Severinus Apronianus: C.I.L. VIII 266 = I.L.S. 5788: cf. P.L.R.E. p.87, Severinus Apronianus 7.
- 67) P.L.R.E., fasti, p.1086.
- 68) Arch. Ertesitö 78, 1958, 1951, 46-7, (48), no.6.
- 69) T. Clementius Silvius = C.I.L. III 3424 = I.L.S. 545, dated 268.
- 70) L. Flavius Aper: C.I.L. III 1515: cf. P.L.R.E. p.81, L. Flavius Aper 3.
- 71) C.I.L. III 3418 = I.L.S. 3654.
- 72) Honoratus: C.J. VII 56 3⁺ + IX 2. 9⁺, dated Aug. 19, 289, and C.J. II 3. 23⁺ dated Nov. 15, 293; Paetus Honoratus: C.I.L. V 2817 = I.L.S. 614; cf. P.L.R.E. p.438 Honoratus 1, and p.441, Paetus Honoratus 11, for possible identification.
- 73) P.L.R.E., fasti p.1091.
- 74) E. Ritterling, "Die Statthalter der Pannonischen Provinzen," Arch. Epigr. Mitt. Oest. 20, 1897, p.32ff.
- 75) Val(erius) Catullinus, v.p. p(raeses) p(rovinciae) P(annoniae) S(uperioris): C.I.L. III 4121 = I.L.S. 704, dated 312/37.
- 76) See above, introduction, p.13; and, for date, Appendix A, p.212f.
- 77) Velleius Macrinus: I.G.R. III 39-40. This is the last recorded legatus Augusti of a 'provincia inermis': P.L.R.E. p.529, Velleius Macrinus 3.
- 78) Ael(ius) Casinus Atianus, v.p. pr(aeses) pr(ov). P(onti): A.J.A. 1905, p.329 n. 78 and 1906, p.433 = A.J.P. 1906 p.449 n. 3. Dated 279. For later v.p. praesides, see P.L.R.E., fasti, p.1102 = 1103.
- 79) ...imus, v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis) prov(inciae) Raet(iae) F. Wagner, Neve Inschriften aus Raetien, n. 30.

- 80) Valerius Venustus v.p. p(raeses) p(rovinciae) R(aetiae): C.I.L. III 5862. Venustus rebuilt a temple to the 'Deus Invictus Sol', so his governorship is probably not before the reign of Aurelian. Septimius Valentio, v.p. p(raeses) p(rov) R(aetiae): C.I.L. III 5810 = I.L.S. 618 - dated 290; and Anonymus, v.p. p(raeses) p(rovinciae) R(aetiae): C.I.L. III 14370¹², dated before 314, when the province was divided.
- 81) Several known senatorial governorships belong to the Diocletianic period: Artorius Pius Maximus, v.c. leg(atus) eorum pro p(raetore): A.E. 1939, 58, dated 286/98; L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius, praeses Syriae Coele(s): C.I.L. VI 1673 cf. 31901a = I.L.S. 1211 = P.L.R.E. p.260, L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius 12; Latinus Primosus, praeses Syriae = C.J. VII 33, 6^a, dated 293/305 (whose senatorial rank is known from his occurrence on a list of senators who contributed towards the cost of a building = C.I.L. VI 37, 118; cf. P.L.R.E. p.725, Latinus Primosus and p.253, Cassius Dio); and Verinus, praeses Syriae C.J. II, 12, 20, dated either 294, 300, 302 or 305, cf. C.J. III 12, 1, (dated 305), in which he is addressed "Verine carrissime," thus suggesting senatorial rank (cf. P.L.R.E. p.950, Verinus 1). Syria Coele, the most important of the consular imperial provinces, may never have been governed regularly by equestrian praesides. The next certain governor of known rank, although not of senatorial origin, was a consularis: P.L.R.E. p.259, Fl. Dionysius 11.
- 82) Crispinus, praeses Phoenices, dated 292/3, was addressed "carrissime," suggesting that he was a senator: C.J. IX 2, 11 (March 25th 292); C.J. VII 35, 4⁺; 1, 23, 3^a, C.J. IX 9, 25⁺; C.J. X 62, 3⁺.
- 83) Sossianus Hierocles: C.I.L. III 133 = 6661; cf. P.L.R.E. p.432 Sossianus Hierocles 4. Hierocles was perhaps governor of Phoenices Libanensis.
- 84) See P.L.R.E., fasti p.1109.
- 85) S.E.G. XV 460 = A.E. 1955, 215, undated. Formula suggests a date in the later third century: see P.L.R.E. p.84, M. Aurel.) Apollinarius.
- 86) Gallonius Avitus: H.A. v.Firmi et al, 15, 5-6. Apellianus: Passio Severi, Memmonis et al (= Anal. Boll 31, 1912, p.192ff., ASS Aug. IV 30f.), cf. P.L.R.E. p.80, Apellianus.
- 87) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.8; Domaszewski, Rh. M. 58(1903), p.228.
- 88) Latinus Martinianus, v.e. proc. Aug. (Graiarum): C.I.L. XII 110 = I.L.S. 605.
- 89) M. Aurel(ius) Vitalis, v.e. p(raeses) p(rovinciae) Maur(etaniae) Caesarien(sis) = C.I.L. VIII 20827 = I.L.S. 3000, dated 254; cf. Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.131ff.
- 90) Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.136f.
- 91) A. Stein, Klio 29, 1936, p.237ff., and Die Präefekten von Aegypten der römischen Kaiserzeit, Bern, 1910, p.148ff.

- 92) E. Birley, "Governors of Numidia," J.R.S. 40, 1950, p.66.
- 93) See P.L.R.E. p.740f., Tenagino Probus 8, cf. H.Lieb, "Der Praeses aus Sbeitla," p.255 note 57.
- 94) Petersen "Governors," p.54f.
- 95) Malcus ("Administratif," p.223 and note 1) makes the point that Clarus' Numidian post cannot be long before his correctorship, since at that time the latter was held at the beginning of the consular career.
- 96) Petersen ("Governors," p.51) dates Aper's governorship to after the accession of Carus or Diocletian.
- 97) Lieb, "Der Praeses aus Sbeitla," p.254f., note 57.
- 98) For Iunius Olympus, see above, p.101 and note 23. For Statilius Ammianus, see above, p.101 and note 20; cf. Petersen, "Governors," p.48.
- 99) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.15f., note A.
- 100) J.F. Gilliam, "Governors of Syria Coele - from Severus to Diocletian," A.J.P. 79, 1958, p.237, note 40; cf. P.L.R.E. p.522, Virius Lupus 5.
- 101) C.A.H. 12, p.179.
- 102) See above, p.104 and note 58.
- 103) See above, note 88.
- 104) See above, p.98 and note 9 for figures and ratios of senatorial to equestrian governors up to Gallienus' accession as sole emperor. For Gallienus' reign, two certain, and five more possible senatorial governors are known, as against four certain, and three possible, equestrians. This and the following data is taken from the province-by-province survey (see above, pp.101ff. and from Jones et al., Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire; and, as previously, it excludes the proconsulates of Africa and Asia, and the traditionally equestrian provinces.
- 105) Under Claudius and Aurelian, two each of senatorial and equestrian governors are recorded, together with one possible senatorial governorship.
- 106) From Tacitus to Carinus, one certain senatorial governor is known, together with one possible; on the other hand, ten equestrian governors are known, plus one possible.
- 107) Four certain and two possible senatorial governors are known under Diocletian, against twenty-four certain, and two possible, equestrians. These figures exclude the new provinces created during the Tetrarchy.
- 108) See above, chapter two, p.88f.

- 109) L. Home, "Les privilèges administratifs du sénat romain sous l'empire et leur disparition graduelle au cours du III^e siècle," Revue Hist. 137, 1921, p.162ff, and 138, 1921, p.1ff.; Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.49ff.; N.H. Baynes, "Three notes on the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine," J.R.S. 15, 1925, p.195ff.; J.G.C. Anderson, "The genesis of Diocletian's provincial re-organisation," J.R.S. 22, 1932, p.24ff.; P. Lambrechts, La composition du sénat romain de Septime Sévère à Dioclétien, Budapest, 1937, p.96ff.
- 110) cf. Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.15; Petersen, "Governors," p.55.
- 111) W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, Paris, 1946, p.316.
- 112) Malcus, "Administratif," p.233; cf. Pflaum, Procurateurs p.214.
- 113) Tacitus, Annales 14, 38; Agricola, 9.
- 114) H. MacLennan, Oxyrhynchus, Amsterdam, 1968, p.21f.; cf. C.E. van Sickle, "Diocletian and the decline of the Roman municipalities," J.R.S. 28, 1938, p.10ff.
- 115) Van Sickle, "Municipalities," p.10.
- 116) See X Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordian III," ANRW 2,2, 1975, p.732f., for continued fiscal exactions under Gordian III.
- 117) Van Sickle, "Municipalities," p.10f.; de Blois, Gallienus, p.9ff.
- 118) C.J. III 3, 1; cf. C.J. IX 20, 4.
- 119) See E.A. Thompson, "Peasant revolts in late Roman Gaul and Spain," Past and Present, 2, 1952, p.11ff.
- 120) Thompson, "Peasant revolts," p.13; cf. dig. 1, 18, 13.
- 121) H.M.D. Parker, History of the Roman World 138-337, 2nd ed., London, 1966, p.119ff.
- 122) R. MacMullen, Soldier and civilian in the late Roman empire, Cambridge (Mass) 1963, p.51ff; cf. Parker, Roman World, p.119ff.
- 123) Cicero, pro domo Suo, 53; pro Sest., 65. Pliny, Paneg. 94, 1.
- 124) Statius, Silv. III 3, 183-4.
- 125) For a list showing the increasing use of the term in governors' titulatures, see Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.111ff.
- 126) Pflaum Procurateurs, p.116f.
- 127) Dig. 1, 18, 4. cf. S.W. Perrin, "'Legatus' in medieval Roman Law," Traditio 29, 1973, p.362ff.
- 128) Perrin, ibid.
- 129) For example, in the case of Caponius, equestrian governor of Judea, in A.D. 6: Joseph. B.J., 2, 117; Ant. Jud. 18, 1, 1; and cf. Velius Rufus, procuratorial governor of Raetia under Domitian: A.E. 1903, 368 = I.L.S. 9200.

- 130) Dio 53, 14, 4, - 15, 1.
- 131) For the earlier, more limited scope of the ius gladii, see Dio 53, 13, 6-7; for the later, more extended scope, see Dig. 1, 18, 13; cf. Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.117ff.
- 132) Dig. 1. 18. 1; cf. Ferrin, "Legatus," p.359ff.
- 133) Pflaum, Carrières, p.814ff.
- 134) Pflaum, Carrières, p.816ff.
- 135) It has been argued, however, that the word procurator was not dropped in such a natural fashion, but that this only occurred in a given province after a specific measure had been passed lifting the restrictions on the competence of the procuratorial governor (see Pflaum, Procurateurs, p.133; Malcus, "Administratif," p.219). Thus, Mauretania Caesariensis would have been so effected as early as 254, when it was governed by a v.e. p(raeses) p(rovinciae) (C.I.L. VIII, 20827 = I.L.S. 3000). Furthermore, Pflaum thinks that the provinces previously under senators became "equestrian" by such acts. But there are difficulties to this view. Firstly, since there are several possible cases of senators governing provinces which had previously received a v.p. praeses, as we have seen, it is unlikely that the replacement of senatorial by equestrian governors was carried out by individual provinces changing status. Secondly, the term procurator appears in the titlature of governors of Sardinia long after v.p. praesides had appeared in the province, and it is hard to agree with Pflaum that this is merely an example of Roman antiquarianism (Procurateurs, p.138). It is safer to regard the dropping of the term procurator as having no formal significance, at least so far as the powers of the governor were concerned. Finally, it is clear that equestrian vicars disposed of magisterial 'imperium' long before 254. Pflaum himself notes that they had the right to be preceded by lictors, the sign of duly constituted public authority (Le marbre de Thorigny, Paris, 1948, p.13; Procurateurs p.137; cf. C.I.L. XIII, 3162, col. 2). What need, then was there for separate measures to make individual provinces "equestrian" when the relevant reforms had been carried through under Septimius Severus (see above, p.116ff)? The discarding of the term procurator was surely the natural consequence of the more frequent and regular appointment of equestrian governors.
- 136) E. Manni, "Gallienus," R.F.A.C., 8, 1972, col. 968.
- 137) Legionary command: C.I.L. III 3424 = I.L.S. 545; provincial governorship: I.L. Afr. 609, 610, 621.
- 138) Provincial governorship, C.I.L. VIII 21486 = I.L.S. 4495; legionary command: C.I.L. III 3529; cf. A.E. 1965, 9.
- 139) See above, p.105 and 109, and note 70.
- 140) M. Aurelius Decianus: C.I.L. VIII 18840. Fl. Flavianus: C.I.L. VIII 2539 = 18040.

- 141) See P.L.R.E. p.609f., Traianus Mucianus 5; Governor of Raetia: C.I.L. III 5785.
- 142) Aelius Restutus was probably the son of a centurion of the same name, and rose to be a v.p. a(gens) v(ice) p(raesidis) (A.E. 1968, 413; cf. C.I.L. VIII 2788); and Constantius Chlorus held the successive posts of protector, tribunus, praeses (of Dalmatia) (Vol. 1). For the nomenclature of governors, see Pflaum, "Zur reform des Kaisers Gallienus," Historia 25, 1976, p.113f. Almost half the equestrian governors bear the nomen Aurelius.
- 143) Because of the preponderance of soldiers in the provincial administration, Pflaum thought that these governors could not be equated with the financial procurators. ("Gallienus," p.113f). However, even under the Principate, men with a military career went on to hold financial posts, particularly those who had risen through the tribunates of the Rome cohorts. The military background of the governors does not mean that the governorships themselves were not descended from the old-style financial procuratorships. In any case, men of non-military background no doubt continued to be appointed governors. A Voconius Zeno, who governed Cilicia under Gallienus and who was a Studios either before or after this (A.E. 1915, 51; cf. P.L.R.E. p.993, A. Voconius Zeno 9), was probably not a soldier.
- 144) See above, p.99 and note 9.
- 145) See below, chapter five, p.156ff.
- 146) See X. Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordien III," p.690ff.
- 147) For further discussion on this point, see below, chapter five, p.179f and chapter six, p.200 and p.205f.
- 148) Van Sickle, "Municipalities," p.12; de Blois, Gallienus, p.9ff.
- 149) A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.441f. Egypt was the only exception, with finance still in the hands of procurators. These were abolished under Constantine.
- 150) A.H.M. Jones, ibid.
- 151) Thus, under Diocletian, there is the case, of the provincial governor seizing funds allocated for games and expending them on the fortification of cities (C.J. XI, 42, 1), and in Mauretania Caesariensis, the town of Rapidum, destroyed many years before by invading tribesmen, was rebuilt and fortified by Ulpian Apollonius, governor of the province (Eph. Ep. VI 946 = I.L.S. 638). The late third-century was a period of reconstruction, and the emperors Aurelian, Probus and above all Diocletian, were noted for their rebuilding and fortification activities (Van Sickle, "Municipalities," p.12f). Diocletian's official panegyrist describes ruined cities, overgrown by trees and bushes and haunted by wild beasts, blossoming once more into life (Eumenius, pro Instaurandis Scholis 18,1). Clearly, governors must have had a great deal to do at this time.
- 152) A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.45f.

The reign of Gallienus undoubtedly witnessed a decisive step in the rise of the equites in the third century A.D. In the previous two chapters, the replacement of senators by equites in the legionary and vexillation commands, and in the provincial governorships, has been examined. In the case of the military commands, it was suggested that the swiftness of the replacement pointed to a deliberate policy, thus confirming the statement of Aurelius Victor that it was Gallienus who deprived senators of their military powers⁽¹⁾. The change in the provincial government, however, took place much more slowly, and while Gallienus' reign seems to have been significant in this area too, senators were still to be found as governors of large armed provinces both then and later. How, then, could Gallienus be said to have taken military authority away from senators - as Victor claims - if he continued to appoint them to governorships which entailed the command of powerful military forces?

Many modern scholars see no problem here. They reject Victor's assertion that Gallienus ended the senators' military powers because he feared them⁽²⁾; their replacement in the command of the legions was rather due to their unsuitability for military leadership. There was therefore no need for Gallienus to prevent senators from holding governorships, even if these placed important military forces at their disposal. Even if this view is accepted, however, - and the reasons for Gallienus' anti-senatorial measures will be discussed in the next chapter - the occurrence of senatorial governors of armed provinces after the replacement of senatorial legionary commanders still poses a problem. If senatorial military leadership was deemed inadequate at the legionary level, how much more inadequate would it have been at more senior levels of leadership? For the period of Gallienus himself, this is not in fact too serious a problem. Presumably, there were men

within the senatorial order who had had sufficient experience as legionary legates to stand them in good stead for wider command as consular governors; and since the number of vacancies of consular rank were fewer than those for legionary command, the possibility of choosing an able candidate was correspondingly greater, even given the increased responsibilities of the job. Within a very few years, however, this would no longer have been true, since senators would not have had the opportunity to acquire experience as legionary legates. Nevertheless, as late as Diocletian's reign, senators are found governing large armed provinces such as Lower Pannonia and Syria Coele⁽³⁾. If such governors retained their full civil and military authority, then critical sectors of the frontier would have been under men who had had no previous military experience at all, and who could not have been appointed for their suitability as commanders.

Some scholars, on the other hand, see the continuing examples of senatorial governors as exceptions to the general rule that, after Gallienus, governors belonged to the equestrian order⁽⁴⁾. According to this view, it is hardly surprising that one or two senators appear in the provincial administration, since the emperor might want to favour some senator or other⁽⁵⁾; mostly, however, equites govern the provinces, and therefore hold the military commands. Gallienus' exclusion of senators from military leadership is thus generally effective at all levels.

Unfortunately for this view, an examination of provincial governors during this period shows that, although there is a decline in the number senators after Gallienus' reign, they seem not to have been significantly outnumbered by equestrians until some years later⁽⁶⁾. Furthermore, it is precisely the large armed provinces which remain most consistently in senatorial hands⁽⁷⁾. Such governors, therefore, can hardly be regarded as exceptions. Rather, the evidence suggests that senators

continued to be a regular feature of the provincial administration, particularly where the frontier provinces were concerned.

The continued occurrence of senatorial provincial governors led Keyes to think that Gallienus instituted a formal 'separation of commands,' leaving them with civil powers only⁽⁸⁾; and in spite of some possible cases of senators holding military commands as governors, there is no firm evidence that they did so. Thus, Arnheim argues that M. Aurelius Valentinianus' title as governor of Tarraconensis, praeses... leg. Aug. pr.pr., indicates that he held both civil and military power⁽⁹⁾. But there is no reason to believe that the phrase legatus Augusti should particularly imply military command, since it had been born regularly by senatorial governors who had had no armed forces at their disposal⁽¹⁰⁾; moreover, this same combination of titles is applied to a governor of Numidia in 242, when the province had no legion stationed in it⁽¹¹⁾.

Arnheim also points to the case of Locrius Verinus. This senator was Vicar of Africa in 318-21 and Prefect of Rome in 323-5, and was praised by Symmachus the elder for distinguishing himself as "dux" against the Armenians⁽¹²⁾. In what capacity Verinus acted as "dux", however, is not known, and it is possible, as Chastagnol suggests⁽¹³⁾, that he was an equestrian officer adlected into the ordo by Constantine. Another possibility of a senatorial governor exercising military leadership is the Saturninus who rebelled against Probus. At the time of his revolt he seems to have been holding an important command in the east, and Seston regards him as a senatorial governor of Syria Coele⁽¹⁴⁾. Although Zosimus says that he was entrusted with the government of Syria,⁽¹⁵⁾ however, other sources denote a more purely military office, designating him by the title dux limitis or magister exercitus⁽¹⁶⁾, and Saturninus' rank and status is far from certain. He cannot safely be used as evidence for continued senatorial military leadership after Gallienus' reign.

Nevertheless, how a 'separation of powers' would have worked out in practice is hard to see. The praefecti legionum can hardly have been left on their own, free from any higher military authority⁽¹⁷⁾; this would have seriously weakened the capacity of the defence-system to react to any major threat, due to a lack of any co-ordinating higher command. In the conditions of the middle and later years of the third century, such a situation would have been most inappropriate. A more likely solution is that, where a senator was appointed to a frontier province, an equestrian dux was also appointed⁽¹⁸⁾; but here, too, there are difficulties. Apart from a total lack of epigraphic evidence for such duces before Diocletian's reign, there would have been serious administrative problems in an arrangement whereby one governor exercised military responsibilities while another governor did not⁽¹⁹⁾. This is particularly so as senatorial and equestrian governors probably followed one another in office in no strict order, without provinces "going equestrian."⁽²⁰⁾

Certainly, equestrian governors continued to hold military power. Thus, in Britain, Aurelius Arpagius, v.p. praeses, is attested supervising military building under Diocletian, as are praesides in Numidia, Arabia, Augusta Libanensis and Tripolitania⁽²¹⁾. The praeses of Mauretania Caesariensis even carried out military operations against invaders in neighbouring Mauretania Sitifensis, again under the Tetrarchy⁽²²⁾. In spite of the lack of evidence for senators retaining military responsibilities, then, it seems probable that they in fact did so; indeed, the division of civil and military authority seems not to have become generally prevalent until well into Diocletian's reign⁽²³⁾.

That there was no formal 'separation of powers' does not mean that the traditional system of the Principate remained wholly intact, however. Early in Diocletian's reign a panegyric drew a distinction between duces and iudices⁽²⁴⁾, and while this need not imply a formal division of

power between the military dux and the civilian praeses at this date⁽²⁵⁾, it does suggest an awareness of a difference in function between military and civilian officials. Such a distinction would have been virtually meaningless in the second century, and it must only have become apparent during the third century. Thus, the scope of the military responsibilities of senatorial governors of the later third century are not necessarily to be equated with those of the consular generals of the first two centuries.

Indeed, it is questionable to what extent any governor, whether senatorial or equestrian, continued to exercise real military leadership. The instances of military involvement by Diocletianic governors referred to above are mostly concerned with the upkeep of fortifications, and not with the tactical command of troops. The one exception - the governor of Mauretania Caesariensis - cannot be taken as representative, since even in the fourth century, when a division of powers was general throughout the empire, the governor of this province was unusual in holding both civil and military powers⁽²⁶⁾.

The one firm example of a senatorial governor exercising military authority after the accession of Gallienus as sole emperor is comparable with this picture of limited military involvement. C. Iulius Sallustius Saturninus Fortunatianus, legate of Numidia sometime under Gallienus, specifically describes himself in one inscription as commanding the legion III Augusta⁽²⁷⁾. In another inscription, he records his rebuilding of the military baths of that legion⁽²⁸⁾. In this, however, he is associated with Aurelius Syrus, v.e. praef(ectus) leg(ionis), whose senior equestrian rank denotes that he was not merely the camp prefect, but the "de facto" commander of the III Augusta⁽²⁹⁾. The legate's military involvement must in consequence have been severely restricted, with tactical responsibility in the hands of the equestrian prefect. Such an arrangement is in marked contrast to that prevailing

earlier, in which the legate of Numidia had direct and total command of the legion within his province: indeed, it was only in Septimius Severus' reign that Numidia had been recognised as a province, and the legate of the III Augusta designated as governor⁽³⁰⁾.

That the appearance of the equestrian legionary commander leads to a division of responsibilities in Numidia suggests that in other provinces, too, a similar development occurred, and the situation under Gallienus would certainly have favoured such a development. His introduction of the battlecavalry emphasised the strategic shift away from frontier defence to mobile, in-depth defence⁽³¹⁾, and the outstanding military figures of his reign were mobile commanders. Thus Gallienus' cavalry commander, Aureolus, was undoubtedly the most powerful person in the empire besides the emperor, and in the absence of the emperor he would inevitably have taken over the command-in-chief of all forces involved in a campaign. Again, when Gallienus left Illyricum for northern Italy to deal with the revolt of Aureolus, he left his general Marcianus in control of the war against the Goths⁽³²⁾. As commander-in-chief, Marcianus would have had overall command, not only over the mobile forces of the campaign army, but also over the provincial garrisons which lay within the theatre of operations. The military role of the provincial governors of the relevant provinces would therefore have been of only secondary importance. Furthermore, Gallienus' "supremos" were not consular senators like their predecessors - Avidius Cassius, Fabius Cilo, Decius or Valerian, for example. The new commanders-in-chief were equites. Marcianus' career is given as protector, praetorian tribune, dux and στρατηλάτης⁽³³⁾. Others, such as Aureolus, Claudius and Aurelianus, were of humble Danubian origin⁽³⁴⁾. Under such circumstance, it is unlikely that senatorial governors would have been willing to accept a subordinate place in the chain of command, taking orders from their social inferiors, and the tactical control of

the troops within their provinces would have slipped from their hands. Indeed, though the replacement of senatorial legionary commanders by equestrians has received most attention, it is possible that this change was not of prime military importance in itself, but was necessitated by the appointment of equites to the topmost commands.

Under Gallienus, then, the main responsibility for defence lay with the professional generals of equestrian rank, who had under their authority the main fighting strength of the empire. The military responsibilities of the governors were in all probability limited by and large to the administrative upkeep of the material aspect of frontier defence, and the continued appointment of senators to the governorships of major armed provinces need not imply that they continued to wield a great deal of military power.

It is in fact likely that there had been a growing division between military and civilian functions in the years before Gallienus' accession. Certainly, there seems to have been an increasing number of men specifically appointed at very senior levels to undertake purely military tasks, who must to some extent have limited the scope of the governors' commands.

There was nothing particularly new in such a development. As early as the time of the late Republic, the advantages of having one man in command of troops in more than one province had been appreciated. In Pompey's campaign against the pirates, his superior military authority over that of the various governors had been carefully defined within certain limits, and Cicero, when recommending that Pompey be appointed to the supreme command against Mithridates, had emphasized the importance of having one man in command of operations⁽³⁵⁾. With the coming of the empire, and the division of the frontier armies amongst the various provincial legates, the need for supreme command at times of crisis was

intensified. During the first two centuries, the emperor or a member of the imperial family took over personal command in major campaigns. Only very occasionally was it necessary to entrust supreme command to a "commoner," such as Corbulo under Nero, or Avidius Cassius under Marcus.

During the third century, however, Rome increasingly faced serious military threats on more than one frontier simultaneously. Supreme commanders had, consequently, to be appointed more frequently. Thus, Philip entrusted the supreme command of the Illyrian war to Decius⁽³⁶⁾. Aemilian may also have held a similar command over the Danubian frontier under Gallus, as may Ingenuus under Valerian⁽³⁷⁾. Valerian seems to have placed the Rhine frontier under the unified command of Postumus⁽³⁸⁾. G. Alföldy believes that all the frontiers were permanently under "supremos" at this period⁽³⁹⁾.

These supreme commanders would presumably have devoted most of their energies to purely military duties, and the resulting division between civilian and military functions which their appointment implied would have been enhanced by the greater use of mobile troops. From Marcus' reign onwards, mobile 'task-forces' played an increasingly important part in defence, and under Septimius Severus such 'task-forces' were grouped together into powerful field-armies which defeated Pescennius Niger in the east and Clodius Albinus in Gaul. Although evidence concerning military developments is very slight, it is likely that in the troubled years of the third-century, field-armies of this type became a regular feature of the military scene⁽⁴⁰⁾. When not under the personal command of the emperor, these forces were commanded by senior senatorial generals. Septimius entrusted his field-army to the command of Fabius Cilo, while, much later, Gallus ordered Valerian to collect an army from the Rhine frontier and march against the usurper Aemilianus. The commands of Decius, Ingenuus and Postumus may also have been of this type. In any case, the commanders of large, mobile

armies will certainly have taken the local frontier forces under their overall tactical control, so as to co-ordinate the total military capacity of the threatened region.

Even before Gallienus' accession as sole emperor, then, the main responsibility for imperial defence probably no longer rested with the governors of the individual frontier provinces, but with generals whose sphere of influence embraced several provinces. Presumably the provincial governors retained their military powers subject to the higher authority of these commanders, but their place in the chain of command may well have been increasingly theoretical: at this time they were becoming increasingly occupied with the collection of revenue and other administrative duties⁽⁴¹⁾. Gallienus' reforms merely enhanced the division which was already evident between military and civilian functions. By setting the seal on the strategic shift away from the frontier, his introduction of the battlecavalry further reduced the military importance of the frontier governors, and his appointment of equites to legionary and higher commands drove a social wedge between senatorial governors and real military power. Under Gallienus, therefore, senators were in practice, if not in form, excluded from military leadership at all levels.

There is no indication that this state of affairs changed under Gallienus' successors, in spite of some references to a "senatorial restoration" under Tacitus and Probus⁽⁴²⁾. Under Claudius and Aurelian important regional commands were entrusted to equites. Thus, an expeditionary force operating in south east Gaul was under the command of Placidianus, first as prefect of the vigiles and then as Praetorian Prefect⁽⁴³⁾. Any 'loyalist' forces in the area would certainly have come under his authority. Again, after Aurelian's re-conquest of the east, an independent command seems to have been set up. Aurelian left Marcellinus in the east with very broad powers⁽⁴⁴⁾, and a little later,

Probus, according to the *Historia Augusta*, was charged with the defence of the whole east by Aurelian⁽⁴⁵⁾. The fact that he was acclaimed emperor by the eastern armies suggests that he had preeminent military authority in that area.

As emperor, Probus is said to have trained a school of famous generals, and, as has been noted previously, the autonomous activities of his generals are apparent in Zosimus' account of his reign⁽⁴⁶⁾. This reflects the situation prevailing at the time, in which large groups of mobile troops must have been operating on or behind separate frontiers independently of one another, under generals who will have been given wide-ranging authority in their theatre of operations. These commanders-in-chief were undoubtedly equites, as is suggested by the list of names given in the *Historia Augusta*, which includes the future emperors Carus, Diocletian and Maximianus as well as the future Praetorian Prefects Hannibilianus and Asclepiodotus.

Under the Tetrarchy, there was a marked policy of strengthening the frontier defences, and hitherto mobile units were systematically distributed along the limes⁽⁴⁷⁾. What implications this had for governors of frontier provinces is not clear, but it can hardly be assumed that Diocletian restored full military powers to them. Senators were still being appointed to key frontier provinces, particularly Syria Coele, and such a pragmatic ruler would not have entrusted their defence to men who would by this time have been entirely untried in military command⁽⁴⁸⁾. Moreover, despite the increased emphasis on frontier-defence, the need for regional "supremos" was still clearly felt, as is apparent in the establishment of the regionalised imperial college⁽⁴⁹⁾. Responsibility for defence rested at the highest level with the four emperors and, beneath them, their Praetorian Prefects, like Hannibilians and Asclepiodotus. The military power exercised by these men far outweighed that of any governor. Furthermore, this period saw the

introduction of a new officer into the command-structure of the empire: the provincial dux. Though the origins of the duces are obscure, it is clear that they were representatives of the centralised tactical control of troops, not taking their orders from the provincial governors. Indeed, it has been argued that they originally commanded those forces which had belonged to the centralised field-armies of Diocletian's predecessors and which were now being deployed along the frontiers⁽⁵⁰⁾. This certainly seems more plausible than the idea that Tetrarchic governors exercised full military powers⁽⁵¹⁾. Be that as it may, the appearance of the dux marks the final stage in the "separation of powers" between civilian and military officials at the provincial level.

As a result of Gallienus' reforms, then, senators lost all real contact with military power. The replacement of legati legionum by equestrian praefecti legionum put an end to their direct command of the legions, and the appointment of senior equestrian "supremos" effectively excluded senators from the higher direction of military affairs. Despite the continued occurrence of senatorial governors of frontier provinces, therefore, Aurelius Victor is essentially correct in his assertion that it was Gallienus who deprived senators of their military posts.

This raises the question of whether the so-called 'edict' of Gallienus was ever issued. Aurelius Victor seems to have been generally reliable as an historian⁽⁵²⁾, and, as we have noted, the epigraphic evidence certainly supports his claim that Gallienus was responsible for the senators' loss of military command. Although neither the "edict", nor Gallienus' measures against senatorial command, are mentioned in other sources, even in those, like the *Historia Augusta*, hostile to the emperor, it has been suggested that the common pool of historical knowledge was used subjectively by fourth-century historians; Victor, with his special interest in the senatorial class would naturally

have mentioned this change⁽⁵³⁾. It has also been suggested that Victor, or rather Victor's source, had access to the state documents of Gallienus' reign, amongst which he found policy decisions to the effect that senators were to be replaced in their commands⁽⁵⁴⁾. His reference to an "edict", therefore, if not to be taken literally, may contain a kernel of truth.

Although the state of the evidence does not allow firm conclusions, therefore, it is possible that Gallienus published his intention to exclude senators from military posts in some form or other, either in an official document or in a public proclamation. That there was no need for him to have done so is irrelevant: rulers do not always confine themselves to doing what is absolutely necessary, particularly in times of great tension. Moreover, an announcement of such a policy would undoubtedly have strengthened his position with his troops, and with the equestrian officers who stood to benefit most, particularly if he was confronted by a usurper of a more conservative kind. But whether an edict, or something like it, was ever issued is not in itself of great consequence. What is of decisive importance is that henceforth military affairs were to be firmly in the hands of men who, from the emperor down, had spent a lifetime in the army. Gallienus thus ended a tradition of senatorial military leadership which had hitherto been one of the basic assumptions of Roman institutional life. Under both the Republic and the Principate, Rome had entrusted the command of her armies to senators, first as proconsuls and then as legates. Now, her generals were to be low-born, even barbarian, soldiers, of a type frequently resembling a Charlemagne more closely than a Scipio.

Notes and references

- 1) Aur. Victor, de Caes. 33, 34: "Et patres quidem praeter commune Romani malum orbis stimulabat proprii ordinis contumelia, quia primus ipse metu socordiae suae, ne imperium ad optimos nobilium transferretur, senatum militia vetuit et adire exercitum."
cf. de Caes. 37, 5f.: "Abhinc militaris potentia convaluit ac senatui imperium creandique ius principis ereptum ad nostram memoriam, incertum an ipso cupiente per desidiam an metu seu dissensionum odio. Quippe amisso Gallieni edicto refici militia potuit concedentibus modeste legionibus Tacito regnante, neque Florianus temere invasisset, aut iudicio manipularium cuiquam bono licet, imperium daretur amplissimo ac tanto ordine in castris degente."
- 2) See below, chapter five, note 7, for a list of scholars who reject Victor's evidence.
- 3) See above, chapter three, p. 105 and 106.
- 4) L. Homo, "Les privilèges administratifs du sénat romain sous l'Empire et leur disparition graduelle au cours du III^e siècle," Rev. Hist. 137, 1921, p.161ff.; 138, 1921, p.1ff.; and more recently H. Thylander, "Senatum militia vetuit et adire exercitum," Opusc. Rom. 9, 8, p.70f.
- 5) Thylander, "Senatum," p.71.
- 6) See above, chapter three, p. 111f. and notes 105 and 106.
- 7) This point was noticed by C.W. Keyes: The rise of the equites in the third century of the Roman empire, Princeton, 1915, p.15; see also above, chapter three, p. 112.
- 8) Keyes, Rise of the equites, p.49ff. He was followed in this by N.H. Baynes, "Three notes on the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine," J.R.S. 15, 1925, p.199; J.G.C. Anderson, "The genesis of Diocletian's provincial organisation," J.R.S. 22, 1932, p.24ff.; P. Lambrechts, La composition du sénat romain de Septime Sévère à Dioclétien, Budapest, 1937, p.100f.; and G. Lopuszanski, "La transformation du corps des officiers supérieurs dans l'armée romaine du I^{er} au III^e s. av. J.C.," M.E.F.R. 55, 1938, p.17f.
- 9) I.L.S. 599; cf. M.T.W. Arnheim, The senatorial aristocracy in the later Roman empire, Oxford, 1972, p.37.
- 10) The term praeses in the official titulature of a governor meant that he held all the powers and responsibilities of the traditional legatus Augusti (see above, chapter three, p.116ff). Thus, the coupling of the two terms cannot have had any formal significance. Under the Principate, most of the imperial governorships held by praetorian senators were essentially civilian posts.
- 11) A.E. 1923, 95-98; cf. F. Porra, "L'editto di Gallieno e la divisione dei poteri nelle province imperiali," Critica Storica, 14, 1977, p.3f.

- 12) Symmachus, Ep. 1, 2, 7: 'Virtulem, Verine, tuam plus mirer in armis, Eoos dux Armenios cum caede domares.'
- 13) A. Chastagnol, Les fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire, Paris, 1962, p.75-76.
- 14) W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, Paris, 1946, p.311.
- 15) Zos. 1, 66.
- 16) H.A. v.Firmi 7, 2; cf. 9, 1; Hier., Chron., s.a. 281; Jordan., Monum. Germ. hist. auct. antiq. 5, p.38; Syneellus, Chron., p.723.
- 17) As a recent study suggests: Porra, "L'editto di Gallieno," p.1ff.
- 18) See above, note 8, for reference.
- 19) Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.311f.
- 20) See above, chapter three, p.108ff.
- 21) Aurelius Arpagius: R.I.B. 1, 1912(297/305); Numidia: C.I.L. VIII 2529 = I.L.S. 2291(283/4); C.I.L. VIII 2572 = I.L.S. 5786(286/293); A.E. 1942/3, 81(307); C.I.L. VIII 4764 = I.L.S. 644(303); Arabia: C.I.L. 14149 = A.E. 1895, 182(293/305); Augusta Libanensis: C.I.L. III 6661 (293/303); Tripolitania: C.I.L. VIII 22763 = I.L.S. 9352(before 303).
- 22) C.I.L. VIII 8924(290/293). For a governor of Mauretania Caesariensis attested supervising military building, see C.I.L. VIII 20215 = I.L.S. 6886 (after 293).
- 23) Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.312f.
- 24) Pan. X(II), 3: in tam arduo lumanarum rerum stare fastigio, ex quo... vicissim oculis ac mente conlustres... qui institiam vestram iudices aemulentur, qui virtutis vestrae gloriam duces servent.
- 25) Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.308.
- 26) This at least may be inferred from the occurrence of a comes et praeses in the mid-fourth century (Fl. Hygenus, C.I.L. II 2210 = I.L.S. 6116).
- 27) C.I.L. VIII 2797 and p.1739.
- 28) A.E. 1971, 508.
- 29) Porra, "L'editto di Gallieno," p.5f.
- 30) A.R. Birley, Septimius Severus: the African emperor, London, 1971, p.217.
- 31) See above, chapter one, passim.

- 32) Zos. 1, 40.
- 33) See above, chapter two, p. 81 and note 54.
- 34) Aureolus: Syncellus, Chron. p.717; Claudius: H.A. v.Claud. 11, 9, 14. 2; Aurelianus: Aur. Victor, Epit. 35, 1, H.A. v.Aur. 3, 1-2.
- 35) Cicero, pro lege Manilia, 19f.
- 36) Zos. 1, 21 - Decius' appointment was to command in "Moesia and Pannonia."
- 37) Aemilian was called legate of "Moesia" in some sources (Joann. Antioch. Epit. 31, 1; Eutrop. 9, 5), and legate of "Pannonia" in others (Zos. 1. 28, 1). Ingenuus was designated governor of "Pannonia" (Aur. Victor, de Caes. 33, 2; H.A. v.Trig.Tyr. 9, 1).
- 38) According to the H.A., Postumus was "Transrhenani limitis dux et Galliae praeses" (v.Trig.Tyr. 3, 9; cf. Zos. 1, 38.; Aur. Victor, de Caes. 33, 8: "Barbieris per Galliam praesidebat").
- 39) G. Alföldy, "Die Generalität des römischen Heeres," B.J. 169, 1969, p.245.
- 40) See above, chapter one, p.27f. for a full discussion of this development.
- 41) See above, chapter three, p.15ff. for this development.
- 42) For which, see below, Appendix B, p.215ff.
- 43) I.L.S. 569 (Prefect of vigiles under Claudius); C.I.L. XII 1551 (Praetorian Prefect); cf. P.L.R.E. p.704, Iulius Placidianus, 2.
- 44) Zos. 1, 60f.
- 45) H.A. v.Prob. 7, 4.
- 46) See above, chapter one, p.55f. cf. Zos. 1, 67, 68, 71.
- 47) See above, note 3.
- 48) See, for example, the career of L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius, which is given as curator Operum Publicorum, curator Aquarum et Miniciae, corrector utrusque Italiae, and praeses Syriae Coele, iudex sacrarum cognitionum Totius Orientis (C.I.L. VI 1673, cf. 31901a = I.L.S. 1211). He later became proconsul of Africa and Prefect of the City (P.L.R.E. p.260, L. Aelius Helvius Dionysius 12). Only Dionysius' consular career is recorded, reflecting a decline of the praetorian career in the second half of the third century (cf. Malcus, "Système administratif," p.223ff).
- 49) Jones, Later Roman Empire, 1, p.38ff.
- 50) D. van Berchem, L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme Constantinienne, Paris, 1952, p.17ff., see also above, chapter one, p.56f. and note 18.

- 51) As is suggested by Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.311ff.
- 52) See above, Introduction, p.4f. and note 18.
- 53) C.E.V. Nixon, An historiographical study of the Caesares of Sextus Aurelius Victor, Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Mich., 1971, p.330f.
- 54) Malcus, "Système administratif," p.211ff.

Introduction

The previous chapters have traced the rise of the equites in the military leadership and provincial administration during the third century. This process, together with the corresponding decline of the senatorial class, constitutes one of the outstanding features of the period. The swiftness with which it took place, particularly in the military sphere, is remarkable, especially in the light of previous developments. Roman conservatism is never more apparent than in the evolution of political institutions: the slow adaptation of old practices to changing conditions is an ever-present element in the story of Rome - until, that is, the third century. Then, quite suddenly, the political system is radically transformed as one of its keynotes, the principle of senatorial pre-eminence, is utterly swept away.

Some scholars have been inclined to regard this change as merely superficial⁽¹⁾. Both senators and equites had, since the beginning of the empire, been no more than servants of the emperor. What, then, did it matter that emperors now chose to use one social group instead of another? After all, equestrians had wielded more power as Praetorian Prefects than any senator had done; and anyway, of what importance was senatorial rank, other than as a mere social distinction? To think this, however, is to miss a very important point. Social distinctions were extremely important in the Roman world. The emperors may have taken effective power away from the senate-house, but they had on the whole carefully preserved the privileges of the senatorial class. The decline of the old Republican nobiles had not been accompanied by any full-scale attack upon the senators' hold on military and administrative office⁽²⁾, and though new families had come forward, firstly from

amongst the Italian gentry, and later from the provincial elites, the senatorial aristocracy had absorbed these with little apparent effort. The ordo had thus adapted itself to new conditions, becoming the focus for the legitimate social ambitions of all influential classes throughout the empire. It is improbable that its prestige had declined, and at a time when Roman citizenship was becoming more widespread and less valued, and when the population of the empire was being more and more divided into honorati and humiliores⁽³⁾, social distinctions were becoming increasingly important. Certainly, the fourth century senators enjoyed immense prestige⁽⁴⁾. The exclusion of senators from many high offices which had traditionally belonged to them and their forebears was therefore a highly significant development, of which the men involved would have been acutely aware.

What caused this dramatic change, which put an end to a tradition of senatorial leadership going back to the beginning of the Republic? The technical advantages of equestrian praeses who united in themselves the financial responsibilities of the old procurator and the judicial powers of the senatorial legate have been discussed in a previous chapter⁽⁵⁾. But this does not explain the much swifter and more comprehensive transformation of the military command which occurred under Gallienus.

The only reference to this change in the ancient sources is found in Aurelius Victor, who states that Gallienus put an end to the senators' military commands because he feared them⁽⁶⁾. Many modern scholars, however, have found difficulty in believing this claim⁽⁷⁾. The senatorial order, they say, had for long been of no political significance whatsoever, and it is absurd to think that Gallienus should have feared it. A much more likely explanation is that the military crisis of the period called for professional soldiers of equestrian rank to lead the troops, not "soft gentlemen from the capital"⁽⁸⁾. The replacement of

senators is to be seen not as a political move, but one taken purely to achieve greater military efficiency.

This view represents the modern scholarly consensus concerning Gallienus' ending of senatorial military commands; but the question is not closed. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss further the motives behind this measure, and to show that Victor's claim - that it was inspired by fear of the senatorial order - is neither absurd nor improbable. We will begin by examining the assertion that the senatorial order was no longer able to produce the necessary leaders in the third century military crisis.

The political system which came to an end in the middle years of the third century was the product of the Augustan settlement. This was essentially a remodelling of Republican institutions to suit the monarchical requirements of the Principate. It thus confirmed the Republican principle of senatorial rule, in so far as senators kept in their hands the great majority of the most important military and administrative appointments. The difference was that, whereas before these posts had been directly or indirectly elective, they now fell directly or indirectly under the patronage of the emperor. This original picture of senatorial office-holding was increasingly modified by the growing number of equestrian officials beneath and, in a handful of cases, alongside the senatorial posts; but by and large the ordo's hold on the provincial and military leadership of the empire remained intact throughout the Principate.

The resulting arrangement meant that military leadership from the legionary command level upwards was mostly in the hands of amateurs with little or no previous military experience. There was no systematic attempt to groom men for high office⁽⁹⁾, and even the most important commands sometimes went to men who had never before held a military

appointment⁽¹⁰⁾. Such concepts as professionalism and expertise were largely anachronistic to the Roman mind⁽¹¹⁾, and senators were expected to serve the state in whatever capacity it demanded. This is as true for periods of military activity as for any other: under examination, some of Trajan's "Marshals" turn out to be jurists and men of letters⁽¹²⁾.

It is nevertheless important not to exaggerate the lack of experience and ability of the men whom the senatorial order produced to command the legions. The majority of consular generals had previously served perhaps three years as legionary legates⁽¹³⁾, and most of these had at least become acquainted with military life as tribuni laticlavii (14). Presumably, moreover, good reports in lower office were advantageous when seeking higher office. Certainly, Pliny tells of candidates for senatorial office being canvassed partly on the strength of their performance as military tribunes⁽¹⁵⁾, and although this refers to the earlier Principate, there is no reason to think that good service counted for less in later periods. It is surely true to say that competence took its place alongside such factors as social status and "influence" in taking a senator through the ranks of the cursus honorum to important military command. Indeed, the senatorial system of the Principate calls to mind another career-structure in which patronage was the key to promotion - namely, that of the British naval officer corps in the eighteenth century. In both cases, mediocre leaders were frequently to be found in important commands, but when the need arose there were always men of real ability ready to take over. Thus, the senatorial order could produce such generals as Varus and the "foolish Gaul" Severlianus; but it could also put forward a Corbulo when called for, or an Agricola, or an Avidius Cassius, and many others of considerable military talent. It was, after all, under senatorial generals such as these that Rome, first under the Republic and then under the Principate, rose to rule her vast empire.

Senators and imperial service in the third century

Why, then, were senators deprived of their military commands in the mid-third century? Some scholars have sought an explanation in a progressive withdrawal on the part of the senatorial order from active participation in the affairs of state. For various reasons, they think, senators became less and less inclined to pursue full careers in the imperial service, and more inclined to spend their time in leisured enjoyment of their wealth⁽¹⁶⁾.

If such a development occurred, there must have been powerful forces at work undermining senatorial ambitions. Two anecdotes from the period of Domitian illustrate the lengths to which senators would go under the Principate to achieve office. In the first the philosopher Epictetius asks a senator called Maximus, who has just been appointed corrector (or curator) of the free cities of Achaia, what his qualifications to act as judge are. Maximus' answer is that the emperor wrote him a codicil of office, to which Epictetius replies, "but how did you come to be a judge? Whose hand did you kiss - Symphorus' or Numerianus'? Before whose bedroom door did you sleep? To whom did you send presents?"⁽¹⁷⁾. In the second anecdote, Philostratus claims that Apollonius of Tyana saw an old man at the court of Domitian fawning on the emperor in order to obtain a governorship⁽¹⁸⁾. Although both stories draw attention to the unhealthy aspects of the patronage system under the Principate, they do reflect an environment in which the competition for public office was keen and lively, not to say unscrupulous and undignified.

In spite of this active pursuit of office, however, there was certainly a decreasing senatorial involvement in the formal sessions of the curia, as is witnessed by the diminishing attendance figures. Thus, in A.D. 23, the number present for a senatus consultum was 405 or 409⁽¹⁹⁾. In A.D. 45, 383 senators were present for a senatus consultum⁽²⁰⁾. A

century later, in A.D. 138, the number was somewhere between 250 and 299,⁽²¹⁾ and a century after that, under Severus Alexander, we are told that a quorum of seventy senators was sufficient to give a senatus consultum the force of law⁽²²⁾.

This is clearly an impressive trend, and certainly represents a declining interest in the meetings of the curia. Whether it is an index of declining participation in the wider affairs of state is another matter, however; it is hardly necessary to look further for the reason than to the progressive decline in the senate's formal power in the empire. During the first two centuries of the empire, moreover, this trend is accompanied by a growing senatorial involvement in the executive functions of government, as is indicated by the greater number of posts in the senatorial career. The diminishing number of senators attending the increasingly meaningless sessions of the curia cannot be taken to signify a growing unwillingness to hold administrative or military office; as early as Claudius' reign we hear complaints about the lack of interest in attending senate meetings⁽²³⁾.

According to Lambrechts, the rising number of provincial, and particularly oriental, senators led to a declining participation in public affairs on the part of the senatorial class⁽²⁴⁾. During the first two centuries, provincial senators had mainly come from the Latin-speaking west. They felt at home in Rome and Italy, and participated fully in the affairs of the senate. Under the first Severi, however, the senate for the first time came to include a large proportion of oriental senators. These did not feel at ease in a city whose language and customs were strange to them. They would have held only the minimum number of magistracies to gain the rank and status of senator, before hurrying back home to their kith and kin in the provinces.

This idea may contain some truth. There is little evidence of oriental families emigrating to Italy. On the contrary, Trajan's

attempt to induce provincial senators to live in Italy by making them invest a third of their wealth in Italian property⁽²⁵⁾, and Marcus' subsequent relaxation of this requirement to a quarter⁽²⁶⁾, reflects a tendency on the part of senatorial families to retain strong local roots in the provinces. There is also considerable evidence for oriental senatorial families in particular holding local municipal office and priesthoods⁽²⁷⁾, and as Lambrechts points out, many orientals are known with the rank of senator who did not, as far as we know, follow an active senatorial career⁽²⁸⁾. These particular cases, however, were certainly examples of senators who had neither the ambition nor ability to pursue an active career in the service of the empire, and such examples need not imply that orientals were generally less ambitious than their western colleagues. Plutarch commented on the restless ambition of Greeks to attain ever higher rank and office⁽²⁹⁾, and the long line of distinguished oriental consulars, from Quadratus Bassus onwards, supports this statement.

Neither does the fact that oriental families retained their provincial ties imply that they felt ill at ease in Rome and in public affairs, nor that they remained entirely 'provincial' in their outlook. Millar emphasises that such men as Cassius Dio had no difficulty in combining Greek origins with the role of a Roman senator⁽³⁰⁾. In intellectual outlook Dio, a second-generation senator from Bithynia, is 'Roman' in that he views events, both historical and contemporary, from the viewpoint of a Roman aristocrat. Imperceptibly and naturally he takes the traditional political and social attitudes of the old Romans as his own⁽³¹⁾. At the same time, he clearly feels Bithynia to be his home: at the close of his career, he set off "home" to pass the remaining part of his life in his "native land."⁽³²⁾

The situation which gave rise to this fusion of attitudes is reflected in the Digest in which it is stated that the senator has a

double domicilium, Rome and his patria; ⁽³³⁾ and this in turn reflects the fact that the strong connections which many oriental families maintained with their places of origin long after entering the senate were not kept up at the expense of wider horizons, as Lambrechts suggests. The family of Herodes Atticus for example, although cited as an example of Greek 'provincialism' in that it maintained strong links with Athens down to at least the third generation of senators, had by that time intermarried with the Italian patriciate ⁽³⁴⁾. Again, the Lycian family tree descended from the procurator C. Julius Demosthenes, in which no Italian appears in the lines of descent until the fifth generation ⁽³⁵⁾, does not exhibit a uniquely oriental exclusiveness. The emperor Hadrian's family had entered the senate in the last years of the Republic ⁽³⁶⁾, over a century before he was born, yet his personal connections with Spain are well known: he was a nephew of the Spaniard Trajan, and he himself married a lady from Gades ⁽³⁷⁾. Other strong provincial connections can be adduced for other western families ⁽³⁸⁾, which shows that the maintenance of such ties was not a specifically oriental characteristic. It was rather the natural outcome of a situation in which the senatorial families' fortunes remained for the most part rooted in the provinces from whence they had come.

It was clearly possible for families both to retain strong links with their places of origin and to play an active part in public affairs, and there are no grounds for thinking that the increasing numbers of oriental senators should have led to a decline in the proportion of the senatorial order actively engaged in imperial service. This cannot then be taken as a reason for the diminishing number of senators pursuing an active career.

There may have been another reason for such a trend, however.

E. Birley has suggested that as the number of senatorial appointments

increased, and as there was no corresponding increase in the number of senators engaged in imperial service, active senators spent an even greater proportion of their careers away from Rome and the life of the average senator⁽³⁹⁾. Because of this, imperial service became less and less attractive to members of established senatorial families. This process was, according to Birley, accelerated by the uncertainties which civil war held for those on "imperial service," and by the expansion of the civil administration, which made it possible for senators to enjoy a full public life without offering themselves for a military career. Gallienus' exclusion of senators from military command was accordingly a consequence primarily of the senatorial class giving up its military ambitions.

In spite of the expansion in the number of senatorial posts that occurred during the later second century, however, the epigraphic evidence does not bear witness to a corresponding increase in the number of posts held by individual senators, even between the praetorship and consulship. Under the Flavians and Antonines (70-193), senators held an average of about three praetorian posts each, and there is only a slight increase under the early Severi⁽⁴⁰⁾. It follows that the greater number of posts were being spread amongst a proportionately larger number of senators, so that those who would previously have expected to gain no praetorian office could now expect to fill one of the junior "civilian" appointments at least. Neither does the fact that this increase in the number of senatorial posts was almost wholly accounted for by an expansion of the civilian administration mean that senators were less inclined to take up military commands⁽⁴¹⁾. The new civilian posts were mainly held by junior praetorii, and they did not lead on to active consular careers in the same way that legionary commands and praetorian governorships did⁽⁴²⁾. For the ambitious senator, a "civilian" career was as restricted as ever. There had,

moreover, been no great proliferation in the number of appointments in the "imperial service." Severan senators show on average no more such posts than do their Antonine or Flavian predecessors⁽⁴³⁾. Imperial service did not take senators away from Rome any more than under the earlier Principate, therefore. As for the influence of civil war, this only became endemic after about 249; and in any case, the troubles of the late Republic hardly led to a slackening in the competition for office.

It is possible, indeed, that, far from discouraging the ambitions of senators, the social conditions of the third century actually encouraged competition for office. Ever since the first century, new senators had held a disproportionately large share of administrative and military appointments. Patricians in particular became less and less likely to fill important offices. Even if they had wanted consular posts, their privilege of holding the consulate only two or three years after the praetorship was too short for gaining the requisite experience, or for the emperor to obtain the necessary information about their suitability for high command⁽⁴⁴⁾. For new senators, on the other hand, the best way of establishing oneself and one's family within the senatorial aristocracy was by achieving high consular office. This tendency increased as the consulate itself - or the suffect consulship, at least - was progressively devalued through its lavish bestowal⁽⁴⁵⁾. The speed with which senatorial families died out has frequently been noted⁽⁴⁶⁾. The ordo would consequently have contained sufficient numbers of new men to pursue "active" careers. This social mobility seems to have been particularly apparent under the Severi. A. Stein comments that the senate of the third century was composed almost exclusively of former equites or their sons⁽⁴⁷⁾. This increase in the number of novi homines would presumably have intensified the competition for office and honours, and the third-century senate, far from being

less committed to imperial service, would on the contrary have been correspondingly more active⁽⁴⁸⁾.

An examination of senatorial careers in the third century does not confirm the idea that senatorial military ambitions were waning, despite the fact that the proportion of senators holding military tribunates under the early Severi was significantly smaller than previously⁽⁴⁹⁾. The decline in the number of tribunates occurs very suddenly - too suddenly to be the result of a long-term social trend⁽⁵⁰⁾; and its coincidence with the accession of Septimius Severus points to a deliberate act of policy on the part of that emperor to restrict the number of appointments of tribuni laticlavii.

The precise nature of this policy depends to some extent upon how many posts of tribunus laticlavus there were. If, as some scholars believe, there was one senatorial tribunate to each legion (except those legions commanded by equites)⁽⁵¹⁾, it follows that such tribunates were being held for a longer period. They would therefore have been of greater value as training grounds for high military command. If, on the other hand, tribuni laticlavii were not so restricted in number, and were merely ordinary tribunates which happened to be held by members of the senatorial order⁽⁵²⁾, the effect of such a policy becomes less clear. Whatever the situation, however, the effect would have been an increased tendency to restrict the tenure of tribunates to those senatorials who showed a definite interest in military matters and who would, like their first-century predecessor Agricola, have made good use of their tour of duty⁽⁵³⁾.

For the period of the later Severi and up to the accession of Gallienus (217-260), the first impression gained is of a further decline in the number of military tribunates held⁽⁵⁴⁾. Closer examination reveals a very different picture, however. Of the twenty-two senators for whom the early stages of the cursus are known, at least

thirteen are patricians, and as may be expected, they hold between them a mere three or four tribunates⁽⁵⁵⁾. Of the eight plebeian senators, on the other hand, only one does not serve as tribune, and two hold the post twice⁽⁵⁶⁾. This hardly suggests a withdrawal from military service on the part of the senatorial order; indeed it represents at least as active a military commitment as ever⁽⁵⁷⁾.

In the case of the legionary command, there is similarly little suggestion of a "withdrawal" from military office, particularly if patrician careers are discounted. There may have been a slight decline in the proportion of senators holding such posts in the first half of the third century, though the difference is so small and the evidence so inadequate that firm conclusions are out of the question⁽⁵⁸⁾. In any case, the picture remains substantially unaltered, with a significant majority of plebeian senators offering themselves for praetorian military service.

Indeed, the occurrence of members of established senatorial families in major consular office suggests that imperial service retained its former attraction. Thus Anicius Faustus Paulinus, governor of Moesia Inferior in 230, and L. Egnatius Victor Lollianus, certainly one of the most influential senators of his generation and a prolific office-holder⁽⁵⁹⁾, were both sons of consular governors under Septimius Severus. Sex. Cadius Clementinus Priscillianus, governor of lower Germany in 231 and of Cappadocia between 236 and 238, is a member of an established senatorial family, and perhaps even a patrician, since he was ordinary consul in 230⁽⁶⁰⁾. Likewise, the names of T. Flavius Aper Commodianus, governor of lower Germany in 222/3, and of Desticius Juba, governor of Britain under Valerian, suggest descent from second century senators, and sometime later, the Virius Lupus who governed Arabia and Syria Coele in the mid-third century was a third-generation senator⁽⁶¹⁾. Finally, and most famously, Cassius Dio himself was the

son of a consular⁽⁶²⁾.

There is, then, no evidence that senatorial military ambitions declined in the period before Gallienus' reign; but this does not necessarily mean that senatorial families were able to produce a sufficient number of good generals to deal with the third century barbarian invaders. Nor does the evidence that senators were holding as many posts as their predecessors mean they were necessarily gaining sufficient experience in the course of their careers to face the growing military crisis. By the third century, there were eighteen annual praetors, and between eight and twelve annual vacancies for legionary command⁽⁶³⁾. Given the fact that for most senators, their previous military experience would have amounted to only one tour of duty - perhaps a mere one year in duration - as a tribunus laticlavus, would it have been possible to find enough men with sufficient calibre and experience to fill these vacancies? If the choice was confined to "born" senators - and this term should include sons of equites who had been granted the laticlavus in time to embark on a senatorial career from the start - the candidates for legionary command may not have been sufficiently able or experienced, although modern views may be biased somewhat by the comparatively recent tradition of specialisation and professionalism. The choice, however, was not so limited, being extended by the time-honoured practice of adlection.

The practice of adlection goes back to the Republic, when it was used by the censors to fill gaps in the senate. Under the Principate, the emperors had gradually appropriated the censorial function for themselves. Thus Vespasian adlected senators to fill gaps left by the civil war of 69, and to reward equestrian officers who had supported him in that struggle⁽⁶⁴⁾. It was only under Marcus, however, that the practice was used systematically to introduce experienced military men

into the senate. Plague had thinned the ranks of the order, and the military crisis called for effective leadership⁽⁶⁵⁾. Such men as Pertinax, Macrinus Vindex, Valerius Maximianus, and doubtless others, were adlected inter praetorios in the midst of campaigning, and posted directly to the command of a legion. It is interesting that Valerius Maximianus held no less than five legionary legateships⁽⁶⁶⁾, which suggests that it was precisely at this rank that the main weakness in the command structure lay.

If Marcus used adlection extensively to meet a serious military crisis, why did Gallienus not follow this precedent? Why should Gallienus have risked the extreme unpopularity which his policy would entail of appointing equites to commands traditionally held by senators, when he could have accomplished his object by adlecting his commanders?

It has been argued that during the third century soldiers became less and less interested in attaining senatorial rank. According to Syme, the Illyrian soldier's ambition was "not to sit beside the senators in decorative ease but to compete in real power."⁽⁶⁷⁾

Such an assertion, however, presupposes either brilliant foresight on the part of the Illyrians at a time when senators still held the vast majority of high military commands, or an almost ideological opposition to the senatorial class and all it stood for. Certainly there is evidence of social tension in the army at this time, particularly in Illyricum. The best known manifestations of this tension are the difficulties encountered by Cassius Dio in Pannonia in handling the mutinous soldiers, and the dramatic events leading to Maximinus' accession in 235⁽⁶⁸⁾. Men have always been willing to rise in social rank, however, and there is no reason to suppose that the Illyrians formed an exception to this rule. There might well have been widespread contempt amongst the soldiers for some of the "soft gentlemen from the capital," but there are no grounds for seeing in this a deep-

seated cleavage between the senators and the soldiers. The latter continued to respond to good senatorial leadership, under Decius, for example, or Valerian.

There was, nevertheless, a marked absence of Danubians in the senate⁽⁶⁹⁾. The major reason for this was undoubtedly the nature of the region of Illyricum itself, as Syme points out⁽⁷⁰⁾. It was a land which, because of various geographical and historical factors, was unsuited to supporting a wealthy landed aristocracy, and its Romanisation and urbanisation were retarded. As the senate represented the cream of the landed class, and was recruited primarily from the urban aristocracies, it was inevitable that the Illyrians should not be well represented in the curia.

Such restrictions were not of course applicable in the case of adlecti. These were promoted to the senate on the basis of merit rather than of wealth - although wealth presumably followed where merit led. Such was the case of the Pannonian M. Valerius Maximianus, who, although of curial extraction, clearly owed his adlection by Marcus to his military ability⁽⁷¹⁾. With the rise of the Danubian soldiery in the third century, moreover, there were doubtless some who, having risen in the equestrian career, were able to see that their sons were granted senatorial rank. At about the mid-century, the son of the procurator and protector Augusti M. Aurelius Sabinianus, who was in all probability of Danubian extraction, appears as a clarissimus puer. trib. mil. laticl.⁽⁷²⁾. It is interesting to note that the son has changed his nomen, from Aurelius to Balsamius, which presumably belonged to his mother. It is possible that the recent Danubian origins of other senators are hidden by such a change of name. Similarly, the wealth that came with promotion would no doubt have been invested in more favourable lands than Illyricum could offer, and this may also have covered up the roots of senatorial families in the surviving evidence.

In any case, the dearth of evidence for the period when a significant influx of Danubians into the senatorial order might be expected, makes it impossible for us to conclude that Danubians were loath to sit in the senate, and the examples of Triccianus, and perhaps of Decius and Regalianus⁽⁷³⁾, suggest otherwise.

There may have been another reason why Gallienus was not able to follow Marcus' example in adlecting equites into the senate. Morris has argued that the practice of adlection ceased after Marcus' time because it met with resistance from senators, and that Gallienus was therefore forced to abolish the whole senatorial system in order to place good generals in command of his troops⁽⁷⁴⁾. This was especially so because it created more candidates for the consulship, and this is reflected in the measure of Pertinax giving seniority of rank to those who actually held the praetorship over those who were praetorii by virtue of adlection⁽⁷⁵⁾.

It is quite possible that the frequent adlection of equites did cause irritation in the senate. This resentment, however, is unlikely to have taken major proportions. If it had, presumably the beneficiaries would have suffered in reflected unpopularity, and of this there is little sign. Such men as the Egyptian Coeramus and the ex-barber Claudius Agrippa arouse comment from Dio for their low origins and shady past⁽⁷⁶⁾, but Cicero makes the same kind of comments about perfectly respectable senators⁽⁷⁷⁾. Slurs of this nature are an integral part of the Roman literary tradition. On the other hand, Pertinax seems not to have suffered from being an adlectus. He was respected by the senate, and seems to have been connected by marriage to a good senatorial family⁽⁷⁸⁾. In any case, even if the policy of large scale adlection met with fierce opposition, it is difficult to see how this could have seriously affected the emperor's policies⁽⁷⁹⁾.

There is, moreover, no reason to believe that the practice of

adlection ceased after Marcus' reign. Under Septimius Severus, admittedly, there are few known examples⁽⁸⁰⁾, and these adlecti whom we do know, and who go on to hold senatorial office, were mostly connected to Septimius' family by marriage⁽⁸¹⁾. It is unlikely, however, that that emperor would have been seriously affected by the grumblings of the senators, and the lack of adlecti is probably a testimony to the adequate functioning of the traditional processes of senatorial promotion in a period of comparative peace and stability. Certainly Septimius was not frightened of adlecting men inter praetorios, as we know from the case of Marius Maximus⁽⁸²⁾. Under Caracalla, we know of four adlecti⁽⁸³⁾, and in the period immediately after Caracalla's murder, more examples are known⁽⁸⁴⁾.

From the reign of Severus Alexander onwards, there are no directly attested adlecti. It is nevertheless safe to presume their existence, although Severus Alexander's Praetorian Prefects probably do not come into this category. L. Domitius Honoratus v.c., who appears on the "Album" of Canusium, is probably to be identified with a Domitius Honoratus, Prefect of Egypt in 222 or 226, and with a Praetorian Prefect named Honoratus, but this does not signify much, since Praetorian Prefects before this date had been styled clarissimi, presumably after being granted consular ornamenta⁽⁸⁵⁾. The same is true for Aedinius Iulianus, whose name appears on the "Album" of Canusium; but Aedinius Iulianus had previously governed Lugdunensis. An earlier editor of the Marble of Thorigny described Iulianus as legatus Augusti, but Pflaum thinks that this was a mistake, and that he was in fact an equestrian vicar. Referring to his governorship, Iulianus used the verb "agere" rather than "esse", and this, according to Pflaum, indicates that he was "acting" as governor⁽⁸⁶⁾.

In general, however, there can be little doubt that adlection was practised extensively as the third century drew on⁽⁸⁷⁾, to make

good the inadequacies of the 'born' senators as military commanders and to produce the required military leadership. The evidence suggests, indeed, that while the military commanders before Gallienus' accession continued to be members of the senate, they had very varied backgrounds. Some, like Valerian, were of impeccable senatorial descent⁽⁸⁸⁾, and Regalianus was probably of the same type, since he seems to have been connected by marriage to a good senatorial family⁽⁸⁹⁾. Others, on the other hand, were men of low birth and military background. Decius' birthplace is given as Budalia in Pannonia⁽⁹⁰⁾, and this may indicate a humble Danubian origin, although a later source claims for him consular ancestry⁽⁹¹⁾. Aemilianus, governor of Moesia and usurper in 253, is described as being of African origin, "obscurissime natus, obscurius imperavit"⁽⁹²⁾. A passage in Zosimus may indicate a previous career in the army: "when (Aemilianus') men saw that their leader approached matters in the manner of a soldier rather than that of an emperor, they killed him as being unsuitable to reign"⁽⁹³⁾. Here quite possibly is an example of a soldier of humble origin promoted to the senate and thence rising to high consular command. The Gallic usurper, Postumus, is also definitely stated as being of humble birth⁽⁹⁴⁾.

The wars of the mid-third century probably led to considerable social mobility, which would of course have taken place within the framework of the senatorial system before Gallienus' reign. Drawing on both 'born' and adlected senators, there is no reason why the ordo should not have been able to produce the generals required to meet the barbarian invasions⁽⁹⁵⁾. What apparently prevented commanders from dealing effectively with external pressure was not so much a lack of military skill but rather a lack of political stability which tempted them to turn their attention away from the external threat inwards on the capital. The revolts of Decius, Gallus, Aemilian, Valerian and others illustrate this tendency. It is also discernable in Valerian's

feeble handling of the Persian war, in which he was paralysed by a fear of his generals⁽⁹⁶⁾. This is not a reflection on the actual generalship of the commanders, only upon their priorities. Neither can the case of Cassius Dio in Pannonia be considered typical of the quality of military leadership displayed by senators, as it is sometimes made out to be⁽⁹⁷⁾. Dio was no soldier, and his career at this stage was highly untypical⁽⁹⁸⁾. Other occasions show that Roman troops could be well served by their senatorial generals, whether 'born' or adlected. Successes were achieved not only under such men as Decius or Aemilian, but also under less famous figures like Crispinus and Menophilus in 238, or Decianus under Valerian and Gallienus. Indeed, Gallienus himself was a member of the senatorial aristocracy. These examples show that the senatorial system continued to produce capable generals right up to the middle of the century.

There is no reason to think, then, that by Gallienus' time the senatorial system was in a state of collapse. We have seen that there is no evidence of the ordo's giving up its military ambitions; and we have seen, too, that there is no reason to believe that the age-old senatorial ability to absorb new blood and expertise failed at this time, or that the curia did not continue to attract ambitious new men of energy and ability, who under the prevailing circumstances would have been viri militares. The view that Gallienus replaced senators with equestrians in military command because of the decline of the senatorial order does not therefore fit the evidence. Indeed, it seems to be based largely on assumptions about the aristocracy which are held independently of the evidence. This is reflected in the use of such descriptions of senators as "soft gentlemen from the capital," or in the idea that soldiers had no wish "to sit beside the senators in decorative ease."⁽⁹⁹⁾ Undoubtedly some senators were idle, and some soft. Others equally were energetic, ambitious and capable. The picture depicted by some

scholars of senators tending more and more to live in idleness on their estates⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ surely applies more to the fourth century rather than to the first half of the third. This devotion to otium is to be seen more as a result of the reforms of the mid-third century than as a cause.

It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere for the causes of the military and administrative reforms of Gallienus than to the inadequacies of the senatorial system which he inherited from his predecessors.

Political aspects

It is not hard to imagine that an emperor of the mid-third century should fear potential rivals. The period was characterised by chronic political instability; revolt and conspiracy posed a constant threat to the current regime. Ancient sources placed the responsibility for this instability largely with the rank-and-file of the soldiery. According to Zosimus, for example, the troops forced Decius to choose between the purple and death⁽¹⁰¹⁾. We may doubt with Jones this lack of ambition on the part of these generals, however: it looks suspiciously like an attempt to save the reputation of the emperor concerned⁽¹⁰²⁾. Syme, moreover, draws attention to the recurrence of the 'reluctant usurper' theme as a literary device amongst ancient writers⁽¹⁰³⁾. In the absence of a strong central authority or a stable dynasty - and both were lacking in the mid-third century - it would have been comparatively easy for ambitious generals to harness the opportunism of the troops to their own purposes.

The question then, is not so much whether ambitious generals were a threat or not; there can be little doubt that they were. Rather, were such generals the more dangerous for being senators?

It has been argued that the senatorial order was losing its identity as an autonomous group within the social and political

structure of the third century empire, and that senatorial rank was counting for less and less⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. That the senate was a cipher, to use Arnheim's term⁽¹⁰⁵⁾, was undoubtedly more apparent now than previously. In the series of dynastic changes that occurred the curia stood by as a passive spectator, duly granting imperial honours to the new emperors, who had been brought to power by force. Even when the low-born Maximinus seized the throne after murdering the 'senatorial' emperor Severus Alexander, imperial titles were inevitably bestowed as usual, while in 217 Macrinus awarded himself the titles Caesar, Imperator and Augustus without awaiting a vote of the senate⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.

This political impotence, however, dates back to the beginnings of the Principate - to the moment when Augustus concentrated in his own hands the powers of patronage and coercion. Rémondon's statement that, as a political organ, the senate's authority was lost by the third century⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, is equally appropriate to the second and even the first century. Since the foundation of the empire, moreover, all office holders had effectively been the nominees and servants of the emperor. For both equites and senators, a successful career was more or less dependent upon imperial favour.

During the first two centuries of the empire, the emperors came to rely increasingly upon equestrian officials. From Sejanus' time the Praetorian Prefect was the most powerful man in the empire after the emperor himself, and the third century shows at least two examples of these officials being related by marriage to the imperial house⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. The third century also saw a process whereby equestrian vicarii were increasingly used to govern provinces temporarily - more or less - in the place of senators. Indeed, some scholars see a general breaking-down of the social and official barriers which separated the senatorial and equestrian orders at this time, especially apparent in the hybrid careers held by men who enjoyed both equestrian and senatorial office.

M. Oclatinus Adventus, for example, who was Praetorian Prefect under Caracalla, was, on his colleague Macrinus' elevation to the purple, appointed Prefect of the City and consul for the year 218⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. Under Elagabalus, an anonymus a studiis was promoted to the senate and went on to hold both senatorial and equestrian posts, culminating in the Praetorian Prefecture⁽¹¹⁰⁾. It is possible that two of Severus Alexander's Praetorian Prefects, Aedinius Iulianus and Domitius Honoratus, had similar careers, although, as we have seen, this is far from certain⁽¹¹¹⁾. Under Gallienus, the Praetorian Prefect Volusianus held the ordinary consulship in 261 and the Urban Prefecture in 267-8⁽¹¹²⁾.

These examples suggest that the senatorial order was ceasing to constitute a largely hereditary aristocracy, and was increasingly becoming merely the highest class of an imperial officialdom. Lambrechts thought that a 'fusion of the orders' was taking place during the third century, and de Blois thinks that by Gallienus' time the clarissimate had become little more than another official rank, like the egregiate and the perfectissimate, which marked a man's progress to the top⁽¹¹³⁾.

The decline of the ordo, however, is not to be exaggerated. There is ample evidence that the senatorial aristocracy of the Principate, or at least several families thereof, continued into the third century, and indeed through to the fourth⁽¹¹⁴⁾. While the senatorial aristocracy continued to recruit new blood, perhaps on a greater scale than hitherto it retained its predominantly hereditary character. The fact that newcomers in the third century showed descendants in the fourth bears this out⁽¹¹⁵⁾, and illustrates its continued capacity to renew itself. Clearly for some men promotion to the senate did mark one step in their career; but this was nothing new to the third century, and there is no reason to think that it ceased to be exceptional. All the examples cited above were, or later became, Praetorian Prefects, a sufficient proof of their high standing with the emperor.

Indeed, the Praetorian Prefecture was such a unique post that its development and the careers of its holders cannot usefully be identified with the equestrian order as a whole. The Prefect had long possessed a power and prestige outweighing any senator. An obscure passage in the *Historia Augusta*, therefore, according to which the Prefect seems automatically to have become a senator from the time of Severus Alexander, can hardly be taken as evidence for a 'fusion of orders' (116). Neither can the disappearance of the term adlectus from the epigraphic evidence after the reign of Caracalla, which, according to Lambrechts, signified the disappearance of the barrier between the two orders (117). Apart from Elagabalus' unknown Praetorian Prefect, who became a senator after holding the post a studiis, the only equestrian officials whose careers are recorded who entered the senate did so after holding the Praetorian Prefecture. The absence of the term adlectus is therefore hardly surprising. Indeed, it is doubtful whether this term had the significance it has been made out to have, since it is missing from the inscription of an adlectus of the second century (118).

For the most part, then, the clarissime did not merely represent an official rank. It continued to delineate an exclusive, hereditary aristocracy, whose wealth and social status were as much dependant upon inheritance as upon current imperial favour. This measure of independence was reflected in, and re-inforced by, the traditions and esprit-de-corps of the senate, which were handed down through the generations, and which were firmly rooted in a sense of the past. Indeed, many senators claimed to trace their origins, albeit through their female ancestry, back several centuries, and so nourished a personal connection with historical figures and events (119).

This does not mean that newcomers to the senate were immune from such influences. On the contrary, new men seem to have cherished the

senatorial traditions as lovingly as did the members of long established families. Examples can be taken from all periods of Roman history. The Republic produced novi homines such as the conservative Cato and Cicero, and under the Flavians, the senatorial opposition to the monarchy was led for a time by Helvidius Priscus, the son of a primus pilus⁽¹²⁰⁾. At the end of the second century, Pertinax, the son of a freedman and until recently an equestrian official, was, on his elevation to the purple, a constitutional and "senatorial" ruler⁽¹²¹⁾. In the third century, although not a new man, since his father was a consular, Cassius Dio was a Greek-speaking Bithynian; and he was clearly steeped in the traditions of the ordo⁽¹²²⁾. It is quite apparent that these traditions, and the esprit de corps of the senate, exercised a powerful grip.

Senators, then, even new men intent upon a good career for which imperial favour was required, must have been conscious of a certain independence of identity and status - a consciousness perhaps tinged even now with an element of republican ideology. According to Jones, the appointment of two senatorial co-emperors in 238 "is an interesting proof of the survival of republican sentiment in the senate"⁽¹²³⁾. More important, the senators' sense of identity was strengthened by the numerous ties - family and personal - that bound them to each other. Arnheim describes the fourth-century senatorial class as an 'aristocratic cousinhood'⁽¹²⁴⁾, and the situation in the third century and earlier is unlikely to have been very different. This must have greatly added to the cohesion of the order, and to its comparative autonomy within Roman society⁽¹²⁵⁾.

There is no sign, therefore, of the senatorial order ceasing to constitute a mainly hereditary aristocracy, and although the curia had long since lost all significance as a political institution, there can be little doubt that senators continued to enjoy immense prestige.

In the fourth century, members of the Roman senate were at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy⁽¹²⁶⁾, and while it is possible to regard this as resulting from Constantine's policy, continued by his successors, of appointing senators to high office, it is more likely that this policy was the result rather than the cause of the ordo's social pre-eminence. In the first half of the third century, moreover, senators held a greater proportion of high office, particularly military office, than they did in the fourth, and the ordo's prestige would presumably have been correspondingly greater. Jones points out that the remarkable events of the year 238, when the senate organised a successful revolt against Maximinus, constitute striking testimony to the prestige which it still enjoyed⁽¹²⁷⁾.

It is worth noting that the prestige associated with senatorial rank belonged to new men as well as members of established senatorial families. As early as 69, Roman armies had backed Vespasian, the son of an egues, in his bid for the throne. A few years later an adlectus, Saturninus, felt himself strong enough to revolt against Domitian⁽¹²⁸⁾. Again, on Commodus' murder in 192 another adlectus, Pertinax, was chosen as his successor. The mention of adlecti also recalls the fact that for certain commands, the dignity of senatorial status was thought to be essential. Thus, Marcus felt the need to promote his most promising officers to the senate before they could command legions and armies. Clearly, when a man entered the senate his political status as well as his social position was greatly enhanced; however low his origins - and Pertinax was the son of a freedman - he now became a member of the most revered, exclusive body in the empire, and became eligible for the most ancient honours and offices. As Arnheim put it, "once a man became a senator he was marked off by title, dress and office from lesser mortals and his own past life"⁽¹²⁹⁾.

In the conditions of the mid-third century, when short reigns led

to weakened central authority and to the breakdown of whatever dynastic principles had operated under the Principate, the social pre-eminence accruing to senatorial status - whether old or new - would have been politically advantageous in a general's bid for the throne. This was particularly so in the deeply conservative and traditionalistic world of the Roman empire. At any period, the senatorial legates must have held almost Olympian stature in the eyes of most of the provincials and troops over whom they ruled. So long as the distant emperor was indeed looked upon as a god⁽¹³⁰⁾, there was no great danger in this. When, however, the emperor was new and unheard of, and especially if he had attained the purple by a coup, with his legitimacy open to question, the prestige of the local commander must have taken on a new and dangerous power.

Quite probably, however, social prestige was not the only advantage conferred by membership of the senate. Unlike the equestrian order, which may by the third century have numbered tens of thousands scattered throughout the empire, the senatorial order was a very small, exclusive body of men, still largely based at Rome⁽¹³¹⁾. If not related, senators must have known one another more or less intimately. This is not to say that they stood united against external pressure. F. Millar has argued that Septimius Severus was able to exploit differences among them to maintain his control, and X. Lorient has pointed to the factionalism that broke out amongst senators in the course of their revolt against Maximinus in 238⁽¹³²⁾. Earlier, Tacitus remarked on the failure of the senators to put up a 'united front' under the early Principate⁽¹³³⁾. Nevertheless, the ties of blood and friendship which did permeate the senatorial order would have given them a strong sense of identity and of mutual self-interest, and would have greatly facilitated the processes of conspiracy. These processes can be glimpsed now and then, inspiring and encouraging provincial revolt.

The case of Saturninus' revolt against Domitian, for example, is strongly suggestive of conspiracy: the victorious general destroyed letters that fell into his possession after Saturninus' defeat, an act which did not prevent Domitian from carrying out a purge of the senate⁽¹³⁴⁾. Later, under Marcus, when the rebel Avidius Cassius' correspondence fell into Marcus' hands, he ordered it to be burned unopened⁽¹³⁵⁾. Again, the episode of Albinus' revolt at the beginning of Septimius' reign, preceded as it was by much correspondence between the rebels in Britain and Gaul and the senators in Rome, illustrates the point that usurpation could be encouraged from Rome⁽¹³⁶⁾, and that the emperor, especially a newly-established one, could not afford to ignore the danger of senatorial conspiracy. Septimius' attitude towards the senate contained suspicion, even fear. After his victory over Albinus the full weight of his vengeance was felt by his rival's supporters, and Septimius was ever afterwards haunted by this struggle for power: executions of senators continued intermittently throughout his reign⁽¹³⁷⁾.

The revolts of both Saturninus and Albinus failed - which is perhaps why the evidence of conspiracy has come down to us. There can be little doubt that similar processes lay behind more successful attempts⁽¹³⁸⁾. Certainly Septimius Severus' fear of the senate is repeated in other reigns, inspiring some emperors to over-react in vicious purges. Caligula and Commodus are perhaps the most brutal examples, but even such an enlightened emperor as Hadrian felt the need, at the beginning of his reign, to put senators to death⁽¹³⁹⁾. Such incidents merely highlight an almost continuous tension between emperor and senate under the Principate, which on one occasion literally broke out into open war. This was the episode of the senatorial revolt against Maximinus in 238.

The really remarkable event of this year was not so much the

initial revolt of the Gordians in Africa, as the extension of the revolt by the senate in Rome. It was this that led to the fall of Maximinus. It has been argued that the revolt was initiated and organised by a prominent group of senators; that the revolt went ahead, after the failure of the African insurrection, was a result of the prompt and effective action of the senate, especially in appointing vigintiviri, and then the two co-emperors; and this reveals, according to Townsend, a forethought and determination based on careful planning (140). The dispatch of envoys and letters to municipal councils in Italy and to provincial governors abroad is further evidence of preparation. Syme, however, points out that it is hardly likely that conspirators would choose an octogenarian governor of an unarmed province as the initiator of a revolt⁽¹⁴¹⁾. More probably, the African revolt was sparked off by local grievances, and the extension of the revolt by the senate was an act of desperation⁽¹⁴²⁾. Nevertheless, the promptness and effectiveness of the senate's measures do reveal the cohesion of the senatorial order. The immediate dispatch by the Gordians of private letters to their numerous and influential friends and relatives in Rome, followed by the senate's prompt espousal of the Gordians' cause⁽¹⁴³⁾, implies a mutual confidence and close understanding based not on previous preparation but upon personal and family connections. Similarly, the senate's dispatch of letters and envoys to the local councils and provincial governors would certainly have relied for their effectiveness largely upon the less formal links of blood and friendship that senators maintained amongst themselves and with their places of origin⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

How effective these connections were is apparent in the geographic extent of the revolt; it is precisely those parts of the empire that contributed nine-tenths of the senate's membership, namely Italy, Africa and the east, that supported the senatorial cause⁽¹⁴⁵⁾.

The only significant exception to this pattern is Numidia, under Capellianus. He is said to have had a personal grudge against Gordian⁽¹⁴⁶⁾, and so may not have been amenable to pressures exerted from Rome, but this exception does serve to remind us that the fate of the revolt in any given province depended ultimately upon the attitude of the governor, or perhaps the legati legionum⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. The adhesion of the armed province of Palestine and Cappadocia in particular⁽¹⁴⁸⁾, and of the east in general, indicates that it was not merely a case of unarmed provinces going over to senate. Although the ancient sources concentrate on events in Africa and Italy, the support of the provincial governors for the senatorial cause is a clear reminder that the emperor's power was decisively dependent upon the loyalty of his various army commanders. At this date, these belonged to the senatorial order⁽¹⁴⁹⁾; by antagonising this class, Maximinus had fatally jeopardised his position as emperor.

The events of the year 238 were of course quite exceptional. Nevertheless, they do at least warn against the unquestioning assumption that the senatorial order was of no importance whatever. Although the senatorial revolt was a unique episode, it does not follow that for the rest of the time the emperor was able to ignore senators as a political factor. That so many emperors persecuted them shows that they considered them to be a potential source of danger.

During the third century, the situation may have been aggravated by a further factor. In chapter three it was seen that the proportion of equestrian governors in a given reign seems to have borne some connection with the attitude which the emperor had towards the senate, and it was suggested that this reflected senatorial resentment with the harsh fiscal policies which the appointment of equestrian governors implied⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. The gradual breakdown of co-operation between the municipal and central authorities, and its replacement by compulsion, may well

have led to a growing disgust amongst senators with the revenue-raising activities of the imperial government, and whilst this can hardly have produced a concerted senatorial opposition to imperial government itself, it probably did encourage a feeling of dissatisfaction with all but the most "senatorial" regimes. The first reign in which harsh fiscal policies made themselves felt on a large scale was that of Maximinus, who needed the revenue to pay for an aggressive frontier policy⁽¹⁵¹⁾. The antagonism that he thus aroused led directly to the senatorial revolt of 238, and, by helping to deprive him of the support of his provincial governors, ensured its success. Subsequent emperors must have been confronted by a serious dilemma in choosing whether to pursue strong measures and court senatorial wrath or to play for safety and take a soft line both at home and abroad. To judge by the comparative dearth of equestrian governors from Gordian's reign onwards, the emperors prior to Gallienus' accession as sole emperor opted for the soft approach, forcing them into a weak and defensive position in their dealings with the barbarians.

Senatorial generals, then, were dangerous not only because of their prestige, but also because they belonged to a small and exclusive group, not easily amenable to imperial control; moreover, they cherished values and interests which were often antagonistic to the emperor's policies. By no means all the emperors before Gallienus were of senatorial rank before their accessions, a fact that has led some scholars to conclude that anyone who had the right backing was a threat, whether senator or equestrian⁽¹⁵²⁾. It is worth noting, however, that all successful usurpations by equites were accomplished in proximity to the emperor. Macrinus slew Caracalla by a stratagem in the east, and Philip probably did away with Gordian III by similar means⁽¹⁵³⁾. Both Macrinus and Philip were Praetorian Prefects at the time of their takeovers, both accompanying their respective masters on a major campaign.

Most important, both were able to confront the mass of the soldiers with a fait accompli. In neither case is there any question of their having to rely on the support of a large force to back their coups in a long drawn-out struggle.

The third example is more complex. Like the others, it was carried out while the emperor was with the army on campaign, but Maximinus was not a Praetorian Prefect, and he was apparently brought to power by a spontaneous movement of the Illyrian troops against Severus Alexander, who was restraining them from fighting, and was instead trying to buy off the enemy with gold⁽¹⁵⁴⁾. As with the coups of Macrinus and Philip, however, Maximinus' elevation did not involve a civil war, nor even a long campaign - only a short, brutal mutiny.

None of these cases, therefore, proves conclusively that an eques would have been able to command the kind of prestige and influence necessary to challenge and overthrow a reigning emperor in a long drawn-out armed struggle. By comparison with senators, equestrian commanders and officials in the provinces were less prestigious, less influential and more isolated figures. This was equally true for Augustus' time, when Egypt was placed under an equestrian prefect, as for Septimius Severus' time, when Mesopotamia was added as a second armed equestrian province. Equites could only acquire great influence when in personal contact with the emperor: this was the key to the power of the great Praetorian Prefects, such as Sejanus and Plautianus. The rank and status of equestrians were directly dependent upon the emperor, particularly if they had risen from the ranks. This was far less true for senators, who enjoyed the prestige attached to membership of the ordo, as the traditional leaders of society, and who could count on the support of influential friends and relatives.

What such support was able to accomplish is difficult to tell. A senatorial general perhaps sought to secure the allegiance of other

army commanders and governors through the influence of his allies in Rome. This was apparently what Gordian's connections accomplished, although it availed him nothing. Alternatively, a senatorial faction opposed to the emperor, by exploiting obligations of family and friendship, would have been able to secure the allegiance of key army commanders. Such precautions may well have been taken by the murderers of Commodus in 192⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. In a quite different context, it has been observed that members of a social class "maintain closer connections among each other, understand each other better, co-operate more easily, join together among themselves and close ranks against outsiders"⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. This must have been true of the ordo, and to have such a class within an autocratic system, and near the apex of that system, with its members entrusted with the great majority of army commands, was to invite instability. The mere fact that communication between senatorial generals and their potential supporters both at Rome and in the field was facilitated by the numerous and subtle ties binding them together will have been sufficient to make the order into a source of danger, potential or real, to an insecure emperor.

If any emperor had cause to fear the senatorial order, that emperor was Gallienus. He came to the throne as sole emperor at a time of unparalleled political instability. Although he was the son of an emperor, this was a liability rather than an advantage after his father Valerian's capture by the Persians. The prestige of the throne, or at least of the ruling house, must have been at a very low ebb. The social pre-eminence of the senators would therefore have been correspondingly more dangerous, a danger compounded by the demoralisation of the troops, now seriously on the defensive and in all probability ready to follow any man who promised to give them victory. In the years immediately preceding the accession of Valerian and Gallienus as joint

emperors, a series of revolts by consular generals had brought to power a rapid succession of ephemeral emperors: Decius, Gallus, Aemilian, and Valerian. Valerian himself is said to have been rendered ineffectual as a commander because of his fear of his generals, who in his day would have been senators⁽¹⁵⁷⁾; and his capture sparked off another round of revolts, such as those of Regalianus, Ingenuus and Postumus, against which Gallienus had to contend. Seen against such a background, it would hardly have been surprising if Gallienus had been afraid of senatorial commanders, and the tradition recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus that Gallienus had a particularly strong hatred of conspirators⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ suggests that this was indeed the case.

Conclusions

Aurelius Victor's statement, that Gallienus prevented senators from holding military commands because he feared them, is not absurd. The senate, for long politically dead, still contained members whose prestige and influence made them dangerous in troubled times. The system established by Augustus, dependent as it was upon a controllable senatorial class holding most of the key posts, could only operate effectively when the throne was stable and prestigious enough to dwarf the position of any would-be rivals. As the third century progressed, the throne became less and less stable, and the senatorial commanders correspondingly more and more dangerous. By Gallienus' time the Augustan system had broken down completely, not, as we have seen, through its inability to produce effective generals, but because it was unable to check revolts by consular commanders with the prestige and influence to challenge weak emperors. It is natural that Gallienus should have undertaken a reorganisation of the military leadership, placing commands in the hands of men who were entirely dependent upon the emperor for their present and future status⁽¹⁵⁹⁾.

If Gallienus' preoccupation had been with the quality of military leadership alone, he could have worked within the existing framework of the senatorial system, as had previous emperors, notably Marcus Aurelius. Instead, he chose to change the system, and put an end to the centuries-long tradition of senatorial command. If he were to survive, he had no choice. There was no room for an embattled monarch on the one hand, and an influential senatorial order on the other. This is the meaning behind Victor's claim that Gallienus feared the senators, and so deprived them of their military powers.

Notes and references

- 1) See, for example, L. de Regibus, "La decadenza del senato Romano nel terzo secolo," Atti della Accad. Ligure di scienze e lettere 9, 1, 1953, p.228ff.; and M.T.W. Arnheim, The senatorial aristocracy in the later Roman empire, Oxford, 1972, p.37.
- 2) For the senators' continued hold on military office, see above, chapter 2, p. 70 for administrative office, see chapter 3, p. 97.
- 3) P. Garnsey, Social status and legal privilege in the Roman empire, Oxford, 1970, p.221ff.
- 4) See A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1973, p.525; M.T.W. Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.103f.; and J. Matthews, Western aristocracies and imperial court, A.D. 364-425, Oxford, 1973, p.30. cf. Ann. Marc. 28, 4, 6; Jer. Ep. 77, 2; 127, 1.
- 5) See above, chapter 3, p. 113ff.
- 6) Aur. Victor, de Caes. 33-4. For quote, see chapter 4, note 1.
- 7) See, for example, G. Lopuszanski, "La transformation du corps des officiers supérieurs dans l'armée romaine du I^{er} au III^e siècle après J.C.," M.E.F.R. 55, 1938, p.168.; W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, Paris, 1946, p.317, note 2; L. de Regibus, "La decadenza del senato," p.228ff.; B. Warmington, in H.M.D. Parker, A History of the Roman World, A.D. 138-337, 2nd ed., London, 1966, p.394; B. Malcus, "Notes sur la révolution du système administratif romain au troisième siècle," Opusc. Rom., 7, 1969, p.214ff.; R. Syme, Emperors and biography, Oxford, 1971, p.241; M.T.W. Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.37; L. de Blois, The policy of the emperor Gallienus, Leiden, 1976, p.39ff.; J. Osier, "The emergence of third century equestrian military commanders," Latomus 36, 1977, p.678ff; H. Thylander, "Senatum militia vetuit et adire exercitum," Opusc. Rom. 9, 8, p.71.
- 8) C.A.H. 12, p.197.
- 9) B. Campbell, "Who were the 'viri militares'?", J.R.S. 65, 1975, p.17.
- 10) Thus T. Pomponius Pollio had held neither a military tribunate nor a legionary legateship before going on to a consular career which included the governorships of Moesia Inferior and Tarraconensis under Antoninus Pius (I.L.S. 1112); L. Dasumius Tullius Tuscus only held one praetorian post, as praefectus aerarium Saturni, before holding the consular governorships of Pannonia Superior and Germania Superior (I.L.S. 1081); and M. Nummius Albinus held neither praetorian office nor military tribunate before his appointment as governor of Tarraconensis (I.L.S. 1149) under Septimius Severus.
- 11) B. Campbell, "Who were the 'viri militares'?", p.27.
- 12) B. Campbell, "Who were the 'viri militares'?", p.14ff.

- 13) The list of consular legates provided by Campbell shows that, of the seventy-three known cases, fifty-seven definitely held one or more legionary commands, a further two may have done (nos. 24 and 54 - both of these also held the military praetorian governorship of Pannonia Inferior), and one held equestrian military office (no. 12). Only eleven held no praetorian military office at all, although two more governed praetorian armed provinces without first having commanded a legion (nos. 48 and 68) ("Who were the 'viri militares'?", p.28ff).
- 14) A look at the senatorial careers listed in H. Dessau, Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, vol. 1, Berlin, 1892, and in G. Barbieri, L'albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino, 193-285, Rome, 1952, shows that, of the eighty-two legionary legates (or equivalent) whose pre-senatorial careers are known, sixty-nine held military tribunates (I.L.S. 987, 989, 990, 991, 996, 1002, 1005, 1016, 1017, 1021, 1026, 1035, 1038, 1039, 1047, 1050, 1052, 1053, 1056, 1057, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1065, 1066, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1076, 1077, 1080, 1086, 1092, (equestrian), 1093, 1096, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1110, 1111, 1138, 1140, (equestrian), 1141, 1144, 1145, 1152, 1153, 1155, 1165, 1180, 1182, 1187, 1188, 1192, 1196, 2935; Barbieri, 97, 173 (equestrian), 228, 270, 274, 281 (equestrian), 469, 517 (equestrian), 640, 747, 791, 1104, 1147). Thirteen did not (I.L.S. 986, 1022, 1029, 1040, 1055, 1068, 1097, 1158, 1159, 1164, 1174, 1179; Barbieri 312). Although these figures are at least thirty years out of date, they still represent a random sample of known cases.
- 15) Pliny the younger, Ep. 3, 20, 5, 'testes et laudatores dabat, vel eum sub quo militaveret.' This was for the praetorship.
- 16) See, for example, P. Lambrechts, La composition du sénat romain de Septime Sévère à Dioclétien (193-284), Budapest, 1937, p.93; and B. Malcus, "Système administratif," p.235ff.; L. de Blois, Gallienus, p.65ff.
- 17) Epictetus, Diss. 3, 7, 29-31.
- 18) Philostratus, V. Ap. Tyr. 7, 31.
- 19) C.I.L. VI 32272; cf. Moore O'Brien, "Senatus," RE Suppl., B. 6 (Col. 1935).
- 20) C.I.L. X 1401.
- 21) C.I.L. VIII 23246 = 11451; cf. P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.93.
- 22) H.A. v. Alex. Sev., 15, 6ff.; cf. J. Crook, Consilium Principis Cambridge, 1955, p.89f.
- 23) Berl. Griech. Urkunden 611.
- 24) P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.94ff.
- 25) Pliny the younger, Ep. 6, 19.
- 26) H.A. v. Marci 11, 8.

- 27) P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.95; cf. F. Millar, A Study of Cassius Dio, Oxford, 1964, p.182; 187f.
- 28) P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.95.
- 29) Plutarch, De tranquillitate animi 470c. For the whole question of the relationship between the Greek upper classes and Rome, see C.P. Jones, Plutarch and Rome, Oxford, 1971.
- 30) F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.182ff.; 189f.
- 31) F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.190.
- 32) Dio, 80, 5, 2.
- 33) Dig. 1, 9, 11.
- 34) PIR² C 802: A 720. This family is used as an example of Greek 'provincialism' by Lambrechts (Composition p.94).
- 35) PIR² 2, p.166 and 230; cf. F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.13.
- 36) H.A. v. Hadr. 1, 2; cf. T.P. Wiseman, New men in the Roman senate, 139 B.C. - A.D. 14, Oxford, 1971, p.21: Aelius Marullinus, a senator under the first Triumvirs, was, if Hadrian's autobiography is correct and correctly transmitted, Hadrian's great-great grandfather.
- 37) PIR² A 184. cf. R. Syme, Tacitus, Oxford, 1958, p.603.
- 38) For example, the families of Agricola and Marcus Aurelius. Both were of Gallic origin, and both inter-married with other Gallic families. See R. Syme, Tacitus, p.20f.; 604ff.
- 39) E. Birley, "Senators in the emperor's service," P.B.A. 1953, p.199 and 207f.
- 40) More precisely, for the Flavian and Antonine period (70-193), seventy-two senators whose praetorian careers are recorded hold between them two hundred and seventeen posts (i.e. almost exactly three posts each). For the early Severan period (193-217), twenty-five senators hold eighty-three posts between them (i.e. 3.4 posts each). This data is taken from the same sources used in note 14, and the senators with reasonably complete praetorian careers are, for the first period, I.L.S. 986, 989, 990, 991, 1002, 1003, 1011, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1029, 1035, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1043, 1044, 1046, 1047, 1049, 1050, 1052, 1053, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1092, 1093, 1096, 1097, 1101, 1102, 1104, 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1117, 1118, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1145, and Barbieri 469; and for the second period, I.L.S. 1144, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1155, 1156, 1159, 1164, 1165, 1182, and Barbieri 120, 173, 239, 240, 270, 274, 281, 297, 312, 319, 517, and 551. No figures have been included for the period after the early Severi, since the dearth of reasonably complete senatorial careers does not allow for accurate statistics.
- 41) As, for example, de Blois argues: Gallienus p.72ff.

- 42) Of the twenty-seven or twenty-eight "active" consulars known from between the accession of Septimius Severus and that of Gallienus (193-260), and for whom something of their praetorian career is known, only six or seven held no military praetorian office (I.L.S. 1149, 1186, 1190, 1195,; Barbieri 319, 1173 and possibly 1439). Of these, four held "active" consular office only at Rome, as one of the consular curators (I.L.S. 1186, 1190; and Barbieri 319 and 1173. All except the third were patricians). A fifth consular's career is known only from a metric inscription (I.L.S. 1195), and its reliability may be doubted. This leaves only I.L.S. 1149, M. Nummius Albinus and possibly Barbieri 1439, Antonius Hiero, as examples of consular governors who had not previously served in a military capacity as praetorii. The former, Albinus, had enjoyed the normal, apparently idle, career of the patrician before his appointment as governor of Tarraconensis, while Hiero had served as praefectus aerarium [Saturni?] and then legatus with a special mandate in Galatia. For similar examples from the first and second centuries, see above, note 10. There is no case of a plebeian senator being appointed to an "active" consular post after having held only iuridicates and curatorships. The consulars from this period with military experience were: I.L.S. 1140, 1141, 1144, 1145, 1147, 1153, 1159, 1165, 1174, 1182, 1189, and 2935; Barbieri 164, 274, 281, 312, 469, 519, 1023 (who although he held a praetorian military command, went on to a series of civilian consular posts), 1147 and 1690.
- 43) Both under the Flavians and Antonines (70-193), and under the early Severi (193-217), the average number of praetorian posts in the "imperial service" per senator is 1.8. The same careers were surveyed as in note 40.
- 44) J. Morris, "Leges annales under the Principate: legal and constitutional," Listy Filologické, 87, 1968, p.336; "political effects," Listy Filologické, 88, 1968, p.27.
- 45) J. Morris, "Leges annales: political effects," p.29.
- 46) See, for example, A. Stein, Der römische Ritterstand, Munich, 1927, p.359; P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.91; M. Hammond, "Composition of the Senate A.D. 68-235," J.R.S. 47, 1957, p.74ff.; esp. p.76.
- 47) A. Stein, Römische Ritterstand, p.359.
- 48) The idea that the dearth of 'born' senators restricted the ordo's capacity to produce good leadership (see L. de Blois, Gallienus, p.68) is therefore unfounded.
- 49) Under the Flavians and Antonines, sixty-nine senatorials out of a total of eighty-six whose pre-quaestorian career are known held military tribunates; seventeen did not. Under the early Severi, thirteen out of twenty-five senatorials held tribunates. This represents a drop from 80% to 52% of senatorials serving as tribuni before entering the senate. This does not merely reflect a drop in the proportion of senatorials holding tribunates; there seems also to have been a decline in the actual number of such appointments. Whereas under the Flavians and Antonines the eighty-six senatorials held between them eighty tribunates (that is, c. 0.9 tribunates per man), under the early Severi the figure is fifteen tribunates for twenty-five senatorials (or 0.6 per man).

Thus, the decline in the proportion of senatorials holding tribunates was not compensated for by those who did opt for military service holding more such posts.

In arriving at these figures, the same sample was used as above (see notes 14 and 40). Senators for whom pre-senatorial posts are known are: from the Flavian and Antonine period: I.L.S. 986, 987, 989, 990, 991, 996, 999, 1000, 1002, 1005, 1016, 1017, 1021, 1022, 1025, 1026, 1029, 1029b, 1035, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1044, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1080, 1081, 1084, 1086, 1087, 1093, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1117, 1118, 1122, 1126, 1127, 1138, 1141, 1144, 1145, 1149, 1152, 1165, 1182, 2935; Barbieri 270, 312, 469, 806 and 838; from early Severi: I.L.S. 1153, 1155, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1164, 1168, 1174, 1175, 1179, 1196; Barbieri 52, 65, 93, 319, 433, 441, 458, 551, 640, 673, 747, 998, 1104, 1147 (praef. cohortis).

- 50) Such as, for example, a gradual decline in senators' military ambitions. If the pre-senatorial careers of those who came right at the end of the Antonine period are surveyed, that is I.L.S. 1126, 1127, 1138, 1141, 1144, 1145, 1149, 1152, 1165, 1182, 2935, Barbieri 270, 312, 469, 806 and 838 (most of whose later senatorial career came under Septimius Severus), fourteen of the sixteen cases show tribunates (c.88%), and between them fifteen such posts were held (0.9 tribunates per man). This is clearly a different situation from that prevailing a few years later under Septimius.
- 51) See, for example, E. Birley, "Senators in the emperor's service," p.200f.
- 52) B. Campbell, "Who were the 'viri militares'?", p.18.
- 53) Tacitus, Agricola, 5,2. The reforming qualities of Septimius Severus have frequently been noted, and his invigorating influence was felt in other areas of the administration. It is quite conceivable that his experience as a senator led him to believe that high command required more training and experience than a brief tenure of a tribunate was able to give, and that the military post required more suitable and experienced candidates to fill them than the system had previously allowed for. His restriction of the number of vacancies as tribunes may well have represented an attempt at placing the military commands in the hands of a smaller but more experienced and able group of senators. For assessments of Septimius' administrative qualities, see M. Hammond, "Septimius Severus, Roman bureaucrat," Harvard St. in Class. Phil., 51, 1940, p.137ff.; E. Birley, "Septimius Severus and the Roman Army," Epigr. Stud., 8, 1969, p.64ff.; R.E. Smith, "Army reforms of Septimius Severus," Historia 21, 1972, p.481ff. See also above, chapter 1, p.34.
- 54) See I.L.S. 1171, 1180, 1181, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1190, 1192; Barbieri 936, 951, 998, 1011, 1113, 1173, 1187, 1410, 1439, 1583, 1584, 1771, 1772. Of these twenty-two, only ten held tribunates (0.45 per man). See above, note 49, for figures for previous periods.

- 55) I.L.S. 1171, 1181, 1185, 1190, Barbieri 936, 951, 998, 1173, 1187, 1583, 1584, 1771, and 1772. Another senator (I.L.S. 1186) was adlected inter patricios sometime before his quaestorship.
- 56) I.L.S. 1180, 1187, 1188, 1192, Barbieri 1011, 1113, 1410 and 1439. These eight plebeian tribunes thus hold between them nine tribunates (an average of 1.13 per man).
- 57) If the average figure of 1.13 tribunates per plebeian senatorials for the period 217-260 is compared with earlier periods, it is found that the Flavian and Antonine reigns show seventy-one plebeian senatorials (excluding four later adlected inter patricios) holding seventy-one tribunates (i.e. 1 tribunate per man), while the early Severi show twenty plebeians holding twelve tribunates (i.e. 0.6 tribunates per man). These figures are taken from the same samples as in note 49.
- 58) Using the same sample as above, note 40, of the sixty plebeian senators for whom a reasonably complete praetorian career is known under the Flavians and Antonines, fifty-two held a legionary legateship or some other praetorian military command. Under the early Severi, sixteen out of twenty plebeian senators did so. For the period between 217 and c.260, eleven out of fifteen plebeian praetorian careers show military commands (see I.L.S. 1158, 1168, 1174, 1177, 1179, 1180, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1196, Barbieri 433, 959, 1104, 1147 and 1439). The approximate proportions of praetorii holding military posts for the respective periods are, for 70-193, five-sixths; for 193-217, three-quarters; and for 217-c.260, two-thirds. The total decline only amounts to a factor of one-sixth, which, given the small numbers of careers for the later periods, cannot be regarded as having great significance.
- 59) Anicius Faustus Paulinus: Barbieri 931; L. Egnatius Victor Lollianus: Barbieri 1023.
- 60) Sex. Cadius Clementinus Priscillianus: Barbieri 988.
- 61) T. Flavius Aper Commodianus: Barbieri 1039; Desticius Juba: Barbieri 1547; Virius Lupus: Barbieri 1762.
- 62) Cassius Dio: Barbieri 122. The fact that Dio's career was not that of a typical vir militaris does not detract from his willingness to hold consular office.
- 63) J. Morris, "Leges annales under the Principate: legal and constitutional," p.323; "Leges annales: political effects," p.25f.
- 64) W. Eck, Senatoren von Vespasien bis Hadrian, München, 1970, p.103ff.
- 65) H.A. v.Marci 10, 4-5; cf. J. Morris, "Leges annales: political effects," p.28f., and A.R. Birley, Marcus Aurelius, London, 1966, p.247.
- 66) A.E. 1956, 124.
- 67) R. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.180f.

- 68) For Dio's unpopularity in Pannonia, see Dio 80, 1, 2; 4, 2.
- 69) P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.87; A.R. Birley, Septimius Severus, p.283; R. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.180f.
- 70) R. Syme, "Senators from Dalmatia," in Danubian papers, Bucharest 1971, p.110ff.
- 71) R. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.180.
- 72) C.I.L. III 1985 = 8571.
- 73) Triccianus, a Danubian adlected into the senate by Macrinus, Dio 78, 13, 3f; cf. A.E. 1953, 11; Decius, for whose origins, see below, p.168. Regalianus is described by the H.A. as 'gentis Daciae, Decibalibus ipsius, ut fertur adfinis' (Tyr. Trig. 10, 8; cf. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.211). In spite of the absurd claim of this passage, it may reflect Danubian origin (but see below, p.168 and note 93).
- 74) J. Morris, "Leges Annales: political effects," p.29f.
- 75) H.A. v.Pert., 6, 10.
- 76) Coeranus: Dio 76, 5, 3-6; Agrippa: Dio 78, 13, 2-4.
- 77) See T.P. Wiseman, New men in the Roman senate, passim, e.g. p.52f.; cf. Syme, Roman Revolution, Oxford, 1939, p.150ff.
- 78) P.I.R.², 4, H73; 3, F444; cf. H.A., v.Pert. 5, 4.
- 79) The alternative method of promoting equites to legionary commands - by appointing them without first having adlected them to the senate - seems also to have been tried at about this time, by Commodus' Praetorian Prefect Perennis (H.A. v.Commod. 6, 2; cf; Dio 72, 9). However, this caused even greater offence, not so much among the senators, but among the soldiers - so much so that the resulting unrest led to Perennis' death. This episode has interesting implications for the argument that senatorial leadership was less and less welcome to the soldiers, and it certainly does not suggest that this course of action was any more politically expedient than adlection, as Morris thinks.
- 80) One famous example is that of the Egyptian Aelius Coeranus (Dio 76, 5, 3-5); but his adlection was not followed by an active senatorial career.
- 81) Sex. Varius Marcellus (G.I.L. X 6569 = I.L.S. 478; cf. Dio 78, 30, 2); C. Iulius Alexianus (A.E. 1921, 64; cf. Barbieri, 281). Apart from these imperial relatives, the only adlectus who appears in Barbieri's list who went on to hold a substantive senatorial office was Aelius Antipater (Barbieri, 4). After holding the post of ab epistulis Graecis, he was adlected inter consulares by Septimius and appointed legatus Augusti of Bithynia.
- 82) Marius Maximus was already a senator, of tribunician rank: I.L.S. 2935f.

- 83) These are L. Lucillius Priscillianus, who, after serving as procurator of Asia was adlected inter praetorios and appointed governor of Achaia (Dio 78, 21, 3-5; cf. Barbieri, 337); Marcus Claudius Agrippa, adlected inter praetorios after a rather checkered equestrian career and appointed to command the fleet in the Parthian war (Dio 78, 13, 2-4); Antigonus, adlected inter praetorios by Caracalla (Dio 77, 8, 1-2), and later suffect consul (I.G.R. 1 407; cf. Barbieri, 33 and A.E. 1966, 262), and Gessius Marcianus, husband of Iulia Avita Mamaea, and father of Severus Alexander (Dio 78, 30, 3; cf. Barbieri, 264/5).
- 84) Including, under Macrinus, Aelius Triccianus, appointed legate of Pannonia Inferior (Dio 78, 13, 3-4; cf. C.I.L. III 3720, 3724, 3725); under Elagabalus, the unknown Praetorian Prefect who held the extraordinarily hybrid career: a studiis, legatus legionis, consul, praefectus annonae, pontifex minor and praefectus praetorio (I.L.S. 1329 = C.I.L. VI 3839); and a couple of centurions who were adlected into the senate by Elagabalus (Claudius Pollio: Dio 78, 40, 1; 79, 2, 4 and 3, 1; cf. Barbieri 991 + p.617; and ...s Verus, Dio 79, 7, 1-2; cf. Barbieri 1181).
- 85) See M.T.W. Arnheim, "Third century Praetorian Prefects of senatorial origins: fact or fiction?" Athenaeum, 49, 1971, p.78ff.
- 86) H.G. Pflaum, Le Marbre de Thorigny, Paris, 1948, p.19f. and 35f.; cf. Arnheim, "Praetorian Prefects," p.82ff.
- 87) Although no adlecti are definitely known, several possibilities are listed by Barbieri (p.540ff), mostly on the basis of shared names with equites.
- 88) P.L.R.², 5, fasc. 1, L 258.
- 89) M & S. V(2) p.286ff.; Syme, Emperors and biography, p.197f.
- 90) Eutrop. 9, 4; Epit. 29, ;.
- 91) Zos. 1, 29,
- 92) Eutrop. 9, 6.
- 93) Zos. 1, 29.
- 94) Eutrop. 9, 9, 1; cf. P.L.R.E. p.720, M. Cassianus Latinus Postumus 2.
- 95) As for the reign of Gallienus himself, it is difficult to believe that this emperor would have been deflected from a policy of adlecting able soldiers into the senate out of difference to the grumblings of the senators. The appointment of equites direct to the command of legions was in any case a far more drastic measure (cf. above, note 79).
- 96) Zos. 1, 36.
- 97) See J. Morris, "Leges annales: political effects," p.30; de Blois, Gallienus, p.70f.

- 98) F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.24ff.
- 99) See above, notes 8 and 67.
- 100) See esp. B. Malcus, "Système administratif," p.236f.
- 101) Zos. 1, 22.
- 102) A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.24.
- 103) Syme, Emperors and Biography, p.198.
- 104) P. Lambrechts, Composition, p.110f.; de Regibus, decadenza del senato p.228ff.; W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.316; de Blois, Gallienus, p.41f.; Syme, Emperors and biography, p.160 and 180f.
- 105) Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.30.
- 106) For the senate's recognition of Maximinus, see X. Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace a Gordien III," A.N.R.W. 2, 2, 1975, p.670ff; and for Macrinus' bestowal of imperial titles upon himself, see F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.160.
- 107) R. Rémondon, La crise de l'empire Romain de Marc Aurèle à Anastase, Paris, 1970, p.100f.
- 108) The two Prefects in question were Septimius' Prefect, Fulvius Plautianus, whose daughter married the emperor's son and heir, Caracalla, and Gordian III's Prefect Timesitheus, whose daughter married the reigning emperor. Plautianus was also a kinsman of Septimius, as was Papinian (A.R. Birley, Septimius Severus p.294f., for Plautianus; p.237 for Papinian). Later, Philip appointed his brother Priscus as Praetorian Prefect and Rector of the east.
- 109) F. Millar, Cassius Dio, p.161.
- 110) See above, note 84; see also the curious career in C.I.L. VI 31747 = 3836, in which the equestrian post of ab epistulis Graecis occurs in an otherwise senatorial cursus (Barbieri, 1385).
- 111) Arnheim, "Praetorian Prefects," p.86ff.
- 112) P.L.R.E. p.980, L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus 6.
- 113) Lambrechts, Composition p.110f.; de Blois, Gallienus p.41f.
- 114) For a survey of the ancestry of fourth-century senatorial families, many of whom showed senatorial forbears in the second century A.D., see Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.103-142. The outstanding example of continuity is the family of the Acilii Glabriones, whose consular rank went back to the second century B.C.

- 115) The Anicii, the greatest family of the late empire, rose to prominence under the Severi (see Arnheim, op.cit. p.109ff). A rather less conspicuous example is that of the Rufii Festi, who, being descended from a late second-century procurator, acquired senatorial rank at about the same time as the Anicii (see J.F. Matthews, "Continuity in a Roman Family: the Rufii Festi of Volsinii," Historia 16, 1967, p.484ff.).
- 116) H.A. v. Sev. Alex. 21, 3, 5. The reason for the change, according to this passage, was to end the situation whereby senators could be brought to trial before their social inferiors. It did not open the Praetorian Prefecture to the senatorial order - this did not happen until the fourth century. See Arnheim, "Praetorian Prefects," p.74ff.
- 117) Lambrechts, Composition p.110f.; cf. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétrarchie, p.317f.
- 118) I.L.S. 1107 = C.I.L. VI 1449: M. Macrinus Avitus Catonius Vindex.
- 119) See Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.103ff.; cf. J. Morris, "Munatius Plancus Paulinus," B.J. 165, 1965, p.88ff., for an attempt to trace a fourth-century senatorial family's descent, indirectly at least, to a prominent senator of the first century B.C. The senators' consciousness of continuity is, according to F. Millar, "shown perhaps even more clearly by false assertions of descent from Republican families than by the one genuine case (the Acilii Glabrones) which can still be attested" (Emperor in the Roman World, p.341).
- 120) Tacitus, Histories 4, 5.
- 121) C.A.H. 12, p.1ff.
- 122) See above, p.157.
- 123) A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.21.
- 124) Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.103ff.
- 125) This of course does not mean that the senatorial aristocracy was immune from factionalism: see below, p.176.
- 126) See above, note 4.
- 127) A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire, p.22.
- 128) P.I.R.², I, A 874.
- 129) Arnheim, Senatorial aristocracy, p.31.
- 130) R. MacMullen, Roman government's response to crisis A.D. 235-337, London, 1976, p.34ff.
- 131) See above, p.156ff. for the continued presence of senators at Rome, though not necessarily in the curia.

- 132) Millar, Cassius Dio, p.148ff.; Lorient, "De Maximin à Gordien III," p.710f. and 718ff.
- 133) D. Dudley, The world of Tacitus, London, 1968, p.116ff.
- 134) C.A.H. 11, p.26 and 172f.
- 135) Dio 72, 26, 38.
- 136) Herod. 3, 5, 2f.
- 137) A.R. Birley, Septimius Severus, p.198f., 238ff.; 279ff.
- 138) It has been suggested, for example, that the swiftness with which Valerian established himself in power indicates organised support in Rome (see M. Christol, "Les règnes de Valérien et de Gallien," A.N.R.W. 2, 2, 1975 p.808f).
- 139) C.A.H. 11 p.303.
- 140) P.W. Townsend, "The revolution of A.D. 238: leaders and aims," Yale Class. St., 14, 1955, p.49ff. For the revolt of 238, see Herod. 7, 4ff.
- 141) R. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.175f.
- 142) H.G. Mullens, "Revolt of the civilians, A.D. 237-8," Greece and Rome 17, 1948, p.65.
- 143) P.W. Townsend, "The revolution of 238," p.64f.; X. Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordien III," p.696ff.
- 144) Herod. 7, 4-5; cf. above, p.156ff. for senators' continued links with places of origin.
- 145) P.W. Townsend, "Revolution of A.D. 238," p.66ff.; cf. X. Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordien III," p.696ff.
- 146) Herod 7, 9, 2.
- 147) In Lower Moesia, for instance, the pro-senatorial governor met with resistance from some of his troops, which was speedily put down: A.E. 1935, 165; cf. P.W. Townsend, "Revolution of A.D. 238," p.73.
- 148) For the adhesion of Syria-Palestine to the "senatorial" cause, see A.E. 1971, 475; for Cappadocia, see C.I.L. III, 69, 24 etc.; cf. P.W. Townsend, "Revolution of A.D. 238," p.68f.
- 149) Thus, senatorial legates are attested under Maximinus in the consular provinces of Cappadocia (Sex. Cadius Clementinus Priscillianus: C.I.L. III, 6924), Moesia Inferior (Domitius Go...in(us?): C.I.L. III 14429, and L. Flavius Honoratus Lucilianus: A.E. 1926, 98; 1934, 111), and Tarraconensis (Q. Decius Valerinus: C.I.L. II, 4756 etc.). For a full list of governors under Maximinus, see G.M. Bersanetti, Studi sull' imperatore Massimino il Thrace, Rome, 1940 (2^{ed.} 1965), p.37-53.

- 150) Chapter 3, p.99 and note 9; cf. p.120.
- 151) See X. Lorient, "De Maximin le Thrace à Gordien III," p.681ff., and 690ff.; cf. Herod. 7, 3.
- 152) L. de Regibus, "La decadenza del senato," p.234f.; W. Seston, Dioclétien et la tétarchie, p.317, note 2. The emperors in question were Macrinus (217-8), Maximinus (235-8), and Philip (244-9).
- 153) For Philip's accession, and the question as to whether or not he murdered Gordian III, see X. Lorient, "De Maximin à Gordien III," p.770ff.
- 154) Herod. 6, 7, 9ff.
- 155) For the conspiracy against Commodus, see A.R. Birley, "The coups d'etat of the year 193," BJ 169 (1969) p.247; cf. his Septimius Severus, p.131ff. Though the actual assassination was carried out by courtiers, the frontier armies seem to have been in safe hands.
- 156) S. Schumpeter, "Die sozialen Klassen im ethnisch homogenen Milieu," Aufsätze zur sozialogie, p.152, quoted in K. Deutsch and L. Edinger, Germany rejoins the powers, Stanford, Calif., 1954, p.125.
- 157) Zos. 1, 36.
- 158) Ann. Marc. 21, 16, 9ff., which refers to Gallienus' ruthlessness towards suspected conspirators; cf. Ann. Marc. 14, 1, 9. Such passages seem to reflect lingering memories - probably amongst the senatorial order - of something approaching a reign of terror.
- 159) For further discussion on the effects of this reform, see below, chapter 6, p.202.

The reforms of Gallienus fall under two basic heads: first, the strategic reforms, centering on the creation of the "battlecavalry," and second, the social reforms, involving the replacement of senatorial officers by equites. The strategic innovations, whilst at first sight looking like dramatic departures from the previous situation in which the defence was built around infantry legions stationed on or near the frontier, are in fact to be seen in the context of military developments dating back to the late second century. These involved a gradual shift away from a "linear" frontier defence towards a more mobile, in-depth strategy. The replacement of senatorial by equestrian officers, on the other hand, was achieved by a sudden and comprehensive change.

These two reforms, although both military in nature, are mostly discussed in isolation from one another by modern scholars. This is hardly surprising, since both are important in their own right, and they have different roots. Nevertheless, their real importance lies in their combined impact on the Roman political system, in that they laid the foundations upon which Gallienus' successors were to build the "Military Monarchy" of the later Roman empire. By the mid-third century, the political edifice of the Principate was in a state of collapse. Military and political power had largely deserted the capital for the frontiers, to be fragmented amongst powerful senatorial generals, who, from their power-bases, were able to launch successful bids for the throne, but were unable to maintain themselves there. Once on the throne, their power swiftly evaporated, leaving them at the mercy of their "overmighty subjects." By his reforms, Gallienus again tipped the balance of power towards the centre, as he concentrated the formidable military power of his cavalry behind the frontier, and placed high military command in the hands of equites. All or most of the latter were members

of the newly-established protectorate, and would, Gallienus hoped, be the "King's men"⁽¹⁾. In short, Gallienus restructured the empire's political framework to rest more securely upon military foundations.

The political system of the empire had of course been based on military foundations since its inception. The Augustan settlement had given the Princeps a constitutional monopoly of all military power. The effectiveness of any such legal arrangement, however, naturally depended upon the loyalty, first, of the empire's soldiers, and secondly, of the emperor's lieutenants. The latter were for the most part members of the senatorial order.

While the senate itself rapidly lost its political importance under the Principate, the old ruling class of the Republic retained its position of pre-eminent power and prestige in the state, with senators continuing to hold the great majority of provincial and military commands. The legionary or provincial legates were no mere puppets, whether in the hands of emperor or soldiers, and their loyalty was therefore indispensable. Tacitus' account of the civil wars of 68-69 shows that they were frequently shrewd and ambitious men, willing and able when opportunity arose to exploit their commands to launch bids for supreme power. Membership of the ordo gave them the social prestige and the political connections to help win support at the capital and in the provinces. Being an exclusive and tightly-knit group, the senatorial class was not easily amenable to imperial control, since the ties binding senators together fostered an atmosphere in which conspiracy could flourish. Their inherited wealth and status, moreover, coupled with the "Republican" traditions of the order, meant that senators must have regarded themselves as being to some extent independent of the imperial system, and not utterly dependent upon the emperor for their material or social position. This is suggested not least by the periodic purges with which some emperors sought to terrorize the senators into submission.

The danger of rebellion was never far away under the Principate. Even the stable regime of Marcus had to contend with the revolt of Avidius Cassius. Generally, however, conditions in the first two centuries favoured stability. While Rome still held the military initiative against the barbarians the morale of the troops remained high, and this, together with the ordered, "dynastic" successions lent credibility to most regimes. They were thus able to retain the active or passive support of troops and senators. When, on the other hand, emperors were unknown by, or unpopular with, the troops, senatorial generals had the social prestige to attract the support of the soldiers, and the political connections to gain useful friends and allies in their bid for the purple. As the third century drew on, conditions increasingly favoured such rebellion.

Under the impact of the harsh conditions of the third century, the inherent instabilities of the Principate system surfaced. From the time of Severus Alexander in particular, military setbacks made the support of the soldiers harder to retain⁽²⁾. This peace-loving prince met his end in a bloody mutiny which brought Maximinus Thrax to power. The new emperor thereupon attempted to base his rule entirely upon the army, never even bothering to go to Rome during his reign. In many ways, Maximinus can be regarded as the first of the Illyrian soldier-emperors, but conditions did not yet allow the establishment of a "Military Monarchy." In spite of his attempts to win the support of the soldiers, Maximinus' power-base seems not to have extended much beyond the troops under his immediate control. This was no doubt largely due to the regionalisation of the frontier armies, which had appeared as a political factor as early as 69; but it was also due to the influence of the senatorial legates, and their adhesion to the senatorial cause in 238⁽³⁾. The remarkable events of the year 238 emphasised the inadequacy of a purely military power-base, and underlined the key importance of the ordo

in supporting a regime. Not surprisingly, subsequent emperors cultivated the favour of the senators. Gordian III pursued actively "senatorial" policies, and his successor, Philip, though an eques, hurried to Rome on his accession to gain the support of the senate for his regime. Later emperors, notably Decius and Valerian, were conservative and "senatorial" in their style of government⁽⁴⁾.

By cultivating the support of the senate, these emperors hoped to win the loyalty of the senatorial legates. Unfortunately, conditions did not favour them. In order not to offend the senators, they may well have been unwilling to resort to the harsh fiscal policies which had provoked the senate's revolt against Maximinus, but which, under prevailing circumstances, were the necessary pre-requisites for aggressive and expensive campaigns. The military situation continued to deteriorate, along with the morale of the troops. This provided temptation for senatorial generals to capture the loyalty of the soldiers under their commands to further their own ambitions. Thus, barbarian invasions in Illyricum led Philip to turn to the senate for support; but his appointment of a leading senator, Decius, to command the Illyrian theatre spelt his doom⁽⁵⁾. Even such "senatorial" emperors as Decius and Valerian were by no means secure. Though both reigns were brought to an end in battle against external foes, Decius faced internal revolt during his reign⁽⁶⁾, and Valerian is said to have felt so insecure that he was virtually incapacitated in his conduct of the Persian war through fear of his generals⁽⁷⁾.

The so-called "Anarchy" of the mid-third century was in fact the death-throes of the political system of the Principate. The support of both army and ordo was essential for stability: yet to gain the support of the soldiers was to risk the opposition of the senators, and to seek the support of the senators meant jeopardising popularity with the troops. Neither power-base was sure. Sections of the army were willing and able

to take a general to the throne, but not to keep him there. The cycle of civil war and barbarian invasion gathered momentum, until by the mid-third century the total collapse of the empire's internal cohesion and external frontiers seemed imminent. Attempts to find a way out of this impasse were doomed to failure so long as they remained within the framework of the Principate. In particular, so long as the senatorial order retained its key position in the political structure, the emperor could have no firm influence upon his or the empire's destiny. It was Gallienus' achievement to break the hold of the senators. In so doing, he brought the Principate to an end, and inaugurated the "Military Monarchy" of the later Roman empire.

The awful condition into which the empire had fallen at the accession of Gallienus aided him in carrying through his reforms. The de facto secession of the east under Palmyra and the west under the "Gallic" emperors meant that only one of the great regional army groups - the Danubian army - was under his authority. The newly-created "battlecavalry," together with the other field forces stationed in northern Italy, were thus able to act as an effective counter-weight to the military power on the frontier. Although Gallienus had probably formed his cavalry force while still joint-emperor with his father, and to solve strictly military problems, he had thus acquired a highly mobile and efficient body of troops. When he became sole emperor, they rapidly became the main prop to his regime and took a pivotal position in Gallienus' defensive arrangements against both barbarians and usurpers. While his cavalry remained loyal to himself - and judging by the need to pacify the soldiers after his assassination⁽⁸⁾, this seems to have been the case throughout his reign - Gallienus possessed an instrument with which to control other elements of the army. Thus curbed, the military establishment was capable of acting as an effective political power-base, able not only to place an emperor upon the throne, but to keep him there.

There can be little doubt that from the start senators were kept well away from the "battlecavalry", and on his accession as sole emperor, Gallienus secured his control over the provincial forces by placing equestrian officers at the head of his legions. These would undoubtedly have been trusted men, officers who had probably served on his personal staff as praetorian tribunes, and who had been awarded the newly created title of protector. These officers were also appointed to important field commands as duces and even as commanders-in-chief, as in the case of Marcianus. Gallienus thus placed the high command of his forces in the hands of professional soldiers who were not only entirely dependent upon the emperor for their rank and position but who were known and trusted by him. Clearly, Gallienus' purpose was to build up a professional army command personally loyal to himself.

Senators continued to hold provincial governorships, and therefore retained a place in the chain of military command. This can hardly have been more than theoretical, however. Removed from the direct command of the legions on the one hand, and on the other hand displaced from the higher field commands by equestrian generals, their military role must henceforth have been of only secondary importance. Senators of no military experience were consequently soon governing some of the most threatened provinces of the frontier.

Through these measures, Gallienus tightened imperial control over the military establishment. Unfortunately, developments took on an unexpected, and for him tragic, turn. He had delivered the high command into the hands of new men who formed a distinctly homogeneous group. Most if not all came from Illyricum, and they shared long years of professional service in the army. By attempting to bind the new commanders to himself through the institution of the protectorate, Gallienus had created a situation in which close links of friendship and patronage could be forged. It is possible, moreover, that many of the new men

came from a fairly small area, around Sirmium, and may even have been connected by family ties⁽⁹⁾. At any rate, the plot against Gallienus reveals glimpses of links which, at the highest level, embraced the three most powerful officers in the empire, the Praetorian Prefect, Heraclianus, the cavalry commander, Claudius, and the commander-in-chief of the field-army in Illyricum, Marcianus. Also included in the conspiracy was a subordinate officer of the cavalry, the dux Dalmatarum, and doubtless many other officers too⁽¹⁰⁾. It is difficult to imagine that such a plot could have been organised except amongst men who knew and trusted one another, and quite possibly these men had served together on the emperor's staff as protectores.

The new high command had, therefore, a great deal of cohesion and autonomy. Their awareness of themselves as a group may have been further strengthened by senatorial contempt and animosity. They may also have been increasingly conscious of their new-found power. Gallienus' years at Rome while sole emperor may well have weakened his hold on the army, or at least on the loyalties of the new commanders. His dependence upon them for the maintenance of his rule probably increased both their self-awareness as the guardians of order and their ambition to have one of themselves on the throne. Gallienus had placed the reins of power in their hands; this led their loyalty to themselves to overcome their loyalty to the emperor. The latter's downfall inevitably followed as they replaced him with one of their own.

Gallienus' assassination, though brutal and tragic, may therefore be interpreted as the formalisation of a situation which he himself had brought about: as indeed, the logical outcome of his own reforms. Certainly, with the accession of Claudius Gothicus, the "Military Monarchy" has definitely arrived, as ultimate political power passes into the hands of the new military elite.

The murder of Gallienus raises the question of whether his reforms

did indeed achieve anything more than the replacement of one close-knit and ambitious elite by another. In spite of the fact that he was murdered by his own men, however, Gallienus' reforms did bring about a new and more stable political situation. It is true that emperors continued to follow one another in fairly rapid succession, but whereas previously this had been the result of successive bouts of revolt and civil war, the changes of emperor were now rather less destructive affairs. Claudius died of natural causes - the first emperor to do so since Septimius Severus - as probably did Tacitus⁽¹¹⁾. Aurelian and Probus died at the hands of soldiers, but these incidents seem to have been localised mutinies rather than organised revolts⁽¹²⁾. Even at the times when the succession was disputed, one contender seems to have had the bulk of the army's support, and swiftly overcame his rival. Thus, Aurelian swiftly emerged as the successor to Claudius, and Probus easily overcame Florianus after Tacitus' death⁽¹³⁾.

Significantly, Claudius, Aurelian and Probus all seem to have been cavalry commanders before their elevation, and this points to the vital part which the "battlecavalry" - acting as the backbone to the larger array of field forces - played in creating more stable conditions. The man who controlled the equites was able to count on the support of the bulk of the army. The ambitions of provincial commanders could thus be effectively checked, and the sort of scramble for power which occurred during the "Anarchy" prevented. Also of importance in maintaining stability was the nature of the new elite. As individuals, they had nothing like the social prestige nor the wealth of their senatorial predecessors, and were dependent upon the emperor for their status and promotion to a far greater extent. Under the Illyrian emperors, moreover, the court must have come to resemble a military staff, and, unified by such factors as comradeship and discipline under a respected soldier-emperor, the atmosphere can hardly have been conducive to conspiracy.

Even with the re-unification of the empire, and with the consequent weakening of the emperor's ability to dominate frontier or regional forces with those under his personal control, there was no return to the anarchy of the mid-third century. Centrifugal forces of course inevitably reappeared. Several revolts are recorded under Probus, and at the time of his death, his general Carus was in revolt⁽¹⁴⁾. The reigns of Carus and his two sons Carinus and Numerian were also punctuated by revolts, as was that of Diocletian. By and large, however, the discipline and loyalty of the military leadership retained its force, and commanders were generally content to get on with the job of defence and reconstruction rather than politics. A notable instance of this is the case of Marcellinus, whom Aurelian had placed in command of the east after the defeat of Zenobia. Though incited to rebel against his master by the Palmyrenes, he remained loyal⁽¹⁵⁾. Again, Probus' reign was characterised by vigorous campaigns against the barbarians, made possible by the remarkably high degree of loyalty amongst his generals: this was in marked contrast to Valerian's conduct of the Persian war, weakened as it was by his distrust of his subordinates. The discipline and cohesion of the high command are also demonstrated in the remarkable events following the death of Aurelian and the elevation of Tacitus. Although it is most unlikely that the *Historia Augusta* is correct in its account of a repentant army inviting the senate to choose one of its own as emperor⁽¹⁶⁾; and although it is much more likely that the army commanders themselves chose Aurelian's successor⁽¹⁷⁾; yet the episode remains a clear testimony to the unity and discipline of the new military leaders of the empire, and to the new political conditions prevailing in the empire.

Apart from creating more stable political conditions, Gallienus' reforms also had another beneficial effect upon the empire's fortunes. In taking effective power away from the senatorial order, and putting it in the hands of a new military elite, Gallienus made possible a stronger

internal policy. As professional soldiers, the new elite had little contact with the urban upper classes of the provinces, and little sympathy with their sense of oppression by the agents of the central government. With the senators out of the way, this cause had effectively lost its champions. The new rulers were concerned only with dealing with the military crisis, and with the strong, if harsh, government that it entailed. From Gallienus' reign onwards, therefore, the main agents of this more vigorous fiscal policy, the equestrian praesides, rapidly came to predominate as the representative of central government in the provinces⁽¹⁸⁾.

Gallienus' reforms thus had a profound and lasting effect upon political conditions. The army was made into a stable base for imperial power, and on this foundation a new system of imperial government, the "Military Monarchy," was established. The "Anarchy" was finally brought to an end, and the barbarians were defeated and driven out - for the time being at least. Indeed, the system of government of the later Roman empire was inaugurated at this time rather than under Diocletian or Constantine.

With the decline of the ordo as the ruling class, Rome itself lost its place as the political capital of the Roman world. Even up to the mid-third century, Rome had been the initial prize of any usurper. That this was not solely to lend credibility to a new regime is shown by the fate of Maximinus, the only exception to this rule. As the home of the senatorial order, the emperor's presence at Rome was often required, to cultivate the support of the senators or secure their loyalty by other means⁽¹⁹⁾. The Illyrian emperors of the later third century, however, spent most of their time on campaign, and their capitals were garrison towns like Sirmium or Milan⁽²⁰⁾. Freed from the need to keep their eye on the senators, they were able to base themselves at more strategic places near the frontiers - where, incidently, they could no doubt find

an atmosphere more congenial to a Danubian soldier.

The decline of Rome as the political capital is strikingly illustrated in the contrast between Philip's behaviour in 244, when he hurriedly patched up a peace with Persia and went to Rome to gain the senate's backing for his new regime, and Diocletian's, who did not bother to go to Rome until the twentieth (and last) year of his reign. While continuing to be the most honoured city of the empire, real power henceforth resided elsewhere. This situation was formalised under the Tetrarchy, with none of the four emperors taking Rome as their capital⁽²¹⁾. Indeed, although it had been rumoured that Caracalla and Geta might divide the empire between them after Septimius' death⁽²²⁾, there was no real possibility of a geographical division of power while the ordo based at Rome retained its influence⁽²³⁾. Nor could Constantine's foundation of "New Rome" have been possible if imperial power had not been firmly based upon the army. The setting of the later Roman courts at strategic sites was a physical expression of the political shift away from the Roman senators to the army which Gallienus' reforms accomplished.

Many of the contrasts between institutions of the earlier and later Roman empires are to be seen as stemming from the reforms of Gallienus, whether directly or otherwise. The distinction between central and frontier units; the low-born, often barbarian, personnel of the senior military ranks; the more "professional" career structures of both civilian and military hierarchies, and the resultant division between civil and military officials; the harsher style of government; all these were made possible by the changes which took place under Gallienus. The monolithic structure of the late Roman state contrasts strongly with the more varied and less hierarchical Principate. This is a result of the militarisation of government which took place in the later third century, which was at the heart of the broader changes taking place in Roman society. Such developments as the decline of the "middle classes," the

shift away from the towns, the systematic compulsion, and the increasing size of the bureaucracy, all amounted to a dramatic transformation of the Roman world. Indeed, the whole character of Roman civilization was changing: a change epitomized by the rise of Christianity. The crisis of the third century can be said to have brought an end to the classical world, and to have given birth to the new world of medieval Europe.

The reforms of Gallienus, then, were both a response to changed conditions, and a cause of further changes. They represented the decisive point in the evolution of the new political structure of the later Roman empire.

This evolution had commenced by the end of the second century, and was not completed until Constantine's reign. Before Gallienus, the old institutions gradually responded to new conditions. The army developed a more mobile strategy, and cavalry was given increased tactical importance. In the provinces, the need for tighter fiscal measures led to the appearance of procuratorial vicars. But these innovations were increasingly inadequate as the political structure of the Principate proved less and less suitable. In particular, the prominence of the senatorial order made for political instability and weak leadership. Just as the empire seemed on the point of disintegration, Gallienus overhauled the whole political system. He deprived the senators of effective political influence by taking their commands away from them, and on the basis of the new cavalry force he established the "Military Monarchy." Although this cavalry force did not last long, at a crucial time it played a key role in dominating the army and so enabling it to become the basis of a stable political structure. The strong leadership that this made possible enabled the empire to rally, and then gradually to recover. Under Gallienus' celebrated successors, the Illyrian emperors, traditional features of the Principate, such as the senatorial predominance in the

provincial administration, rapidly gave way under the impact of the new system, and the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine gave the final shape to the new order. These reforms were made possible by, and set the seal to, the reforms of Gallienus.

Notes and references

- 1) See R.I. Frank, Scholae Palatinae: the Palace Guards in the later Roman empire, American Academy in Rome, Papers and Monographs 23, 1969, p.40, for this description.
- 2) The military situation seems to have taken a decisive turn for the worse under Severus Alexander. In the east, the overthrow of the Parthian empire by the Sassanids meant that Rome now had a more formidable and aggressive foe in that quarter, and to the north, the reign saw a significant increase of barbarian pressure on the limes (H. Schonberger, "The Roman frontier in Germany: an archaeological survey," J.R.S. 59, 1969, p.174ff).
- 3) See above, chapter 5, p.177ff.
- 4) For references, see above, Introduction p.18ff.
- 5) Zos. 1, 20ff.
- 6) C.A.H. 12, p.166f.
- 7) See above, chapter 5, p.183 and note 157.
- 8) H.A. v.Gall., 15, 1ff.; cf. Zos. 1, 41.
- 9) As Syme suggests: R. Syme, "Danubian and Balkan emperors," Historia 22, 1973, p.310-316.
- 10) A. Alföldi argues that the fact that the seige of Milan continued without interruption suggests the complicity of the whole staff (C.A.H. 12, p.190).
- 11) For Claudius' death: H.A. v. Claud. 12, 2; Zos. 1, 46. For the probability that Tacitus died of natural causes rather than by assassination, see C.A.H. 12, p.312.
- 12) For Aurelian's assassination, see Zos. 1, 62; H.A. v.Aurel 35, 5-36; v.Tac. 2, 4; Aur. Victor, de Caes. 35, 8; For Probus' assassination, see Zos. 1, 71; H.A. v.Probi 20, 1; Aur. Victor de Caes. 37, 4.
- 13) For Aurelian's accession, see C.A.H. 12, p.193, 297; for Probus' accession, see C.A.H. 12, p.312f.
- 14) Zos. 1, 71.
- 15) Zos. 1, 60.
- 16) H.A. v.Tac. 3, 7; v.Aurel. 41, 15; cf. Aur. Victor, de Caes. 36, 1.
- 17) See R. Syme, Emperors and biography, Oxford 1971, p.242f.
- 18) See above, chapter 3, p.120f.
- 19) Syme, Emperors and biography, p.175ff.

- 20) For the move away from Rome in the later third century, see F. Millar, The emperor in the Roman world, London, 1977, p.40ff.
- 21) C.A.H. 12, p.385ff.
- 22) Herod. 4, 3, 4ff.
- 23) The only real attempt at such a division had been that between Antony and Octavian, and the instability of the arrangement had resolved itself only in the triumph of Octavian. Apart from the ambitions of the two leaders, a permanent split between east and west could hardly have developed when the chief lieutenants of both were senators whose social, spiritual and political home was Rome.

Appendix A: The dating of senatorial careers in the mid-third century

In the case of one or two senatorial careers, namely those of Q. Mamilius Capitolinus and the anonymous senator whose inscription was found at Sbeitla⁽¹⁾, whose dates are otherwise unknown, it is possible to assign an approximate date by the Italian iuridicate which they held⁽²⁾.

Marcus organised Italy into several regions, each under a iuridicus⁽³⁾. This was a senator in the early stages of his praetorian career. In northern Italy, Marcus established the iuridicate of Flaminia et Umbria, which was held by the following senators:

- 1) C. Sabucius Maior Caecilianus (C.I.L. VI, 1509 = I.L.S. 1123), under Marcus.
- 2) C. Cornelius Felix Italicus (C.I.L. II, 377), under Marcus.
- 3) L. Annius Italicus Honoratus (C.I.L. III, 6154 = I.L.S. 1174), under the Severi (he governed Moesia inferior in 224).
- 4) P. Aelius Coeranus (C.I.L. XIV, 3586 = I.L.S. 1158), under the Severi.

All these senators belonged to the Severan period or before⁽⁴⁾. By the middle of the century, the boundaries had been changed, as may be seen from the career of M. Aelius Aurelius Theo, iuridicus per Flaminiam et Umbriam et Picenum⁽⁵⁾. Since Theo later became governor of Arabia under Valerian and Gallienus, his iuridicate belongs to this period or just before⁽⁶⁾. This arrangement, however, did not last long. The "Anonymous of Sbeitla" was iuridicus per Flaminiam et P(icenum)...⁽⁷⁾ and, according to Lieb, it is unlikely that this is completed by Umbria, to make per Flaminiam et P(icenum et Umbriam), because this would be the reverse order of the normal inscription⁽⁸⁾. He prefers to see in this inscription a region consisting only of Flaminia and Picenum, foreshadowing the late Roman correctorship.

The change from the mid-third century iuridicate of Flaminia-Umbria-

Picenum to that of Flaminia-Picenum cannot have been very late in the third-century. A corrector totius Italiae is attested in the 260s or early 270s⁽⁹⁾, and more correctors are recorded in the later third century⁽¹⁰⁾. The iuridicate system was probably superseded at this time, therefore. The establishment of the Flaminia-Picenum iuridicate in place of the Flaminia-Umbria-Picenum iuridicate must consequently have occurred somewhat earlier.

On the strength of these boundary changes, it is thus possible to give a rough date to the careers of the two senators referred to above. Q. Mamilius Capitolinus, like M. Aelius Aurelius Theo, was iuridicus per Flaminiam et Umbriam et Picenum; he therefore probably held this post at about the same time as Theo, namely during or shortly before the joint-reign of Valerian and Gallienus. The "Anonymus of Sbeitla" must have held his iuridicate of Flaminia-Picenum rather later, but probably not after c.270. It follows that his senatorial tribunate probably did not occur after c.260.

Notes and references

- 1) See above, chapter 2, p. 71f
- 2) What follows is largely based on R. Thompson, "The Italic regions from Augustus to the Lombard invasion," Classica et Mediaevalia, Dissertationes, 4, Copenhagen, 1947, p.164-178, esp. p.172 and 174f.
- 3) Dio 78, 22, 1., and H.A., v.Marci, 11, 6.
- 4) As, probably, did the anonymous senator referred to in the fragmentary C.I.L. VIII, 2754.
- 5) C.I.L. II, 376 = I.L.S. 1192.
- 6) See above, chapter 2, p. 71.
- 7) A.E. 1957, 325 = H. Lieb, "Der Praeses aus Sbeitla," in: W. Reidinger, Der Statthalter des ungeteilten Pannoniens und Oberpannoniens, Bonn, 1956, p.239-246.
- 8) Lieb, "Praeses aus Sbeitla," p.242.
- 9) Pomp(onius) Bassus: C.I.L. VI, 3836 = 31747 = P.L.R.E. p.155, Pomp(onius) Bassus 17. Since Bassus was Cos. I in 259, then Procos. Africae, comes Augusti, corrector totius Italiae, and finally Praefectus Urbi before being Cos. II in 271, he must have held his Italian correctorship under Gallienus or Claudius.
- 10) See P.L.R.E., Fasti, p.1092.

According to the senatorial historical tradition, the political history of the third century was characterised by a conflict between senate and army, and the emperors are judged according to their position in relation to these two institutions. This conflict did not cease, as one might expect, with the ending of senatorial military command under Gallienus. The *Historia Augusta* says that Tacitus restored to the senate its traditional authority, including the right to choose emperors⁽¹⁾, and that Probus also granted it certain rights and privileges⁽²⁾. Victor goes so far as to claim that, had the senators *not* yielded to the delights of otium, they might have had their military commands restored to them⁽³⁾.

On the basis of these passages, Homo thought that the later third century was marked by a political see-saw between the senate and the emperors⁽⁴⁾, centring on the question of military command. According to Homo, the edict of Gallienus was repealed under Tacitus, re-imposed under Florian, partially repealed again by Probus, and re-established once and for all under Carus and Carinus. Other scholars have shared this view, at least with regard to the repeal of the edict of Gallienus under Tacitus⁽⁵⁾.

More recently, however, it has been pointed out that such an interpretation of late-third century politics goes beyond the available evidence⁽⁶⁾. Even setting aside the question of the value of these passages as history, neither the *Historia Augusta* nor Aurelius Victor states that the edict of Gallienus was repealed. This edict is never mentioned by the *Historia Augusta*, and Victor says only that, if the senators had been a little more active, they might have regained their military commands which Gallienus had taken away from them. Under

Tacitus, in other words, the circumstances were favourable for a restoration of senatorial commands, but such a restoration did not in fact materialise⁽⁷⁾.

In any case, the passages in both sources are far too anachronistic to be taken literally, especially when they refer to the senate being able to choose the emperors⁽⁸⁾. Apart from a brief moment in 238, the senate had had no real say in the succession since the beginning of the Principate. Syme points out that Tacitus was probably chosen by army officers, much like Valentinian in the fourth century; he was not elected by the senate⁽⁹⁾. Nor was he a blameless old senator, as the senatorial tradition would have us believe. In all probability he was a Danubian soldier of the same type as Claudius and Aurelian, who had previously been adlected into the senatorial order⁽¹⁰⁾.

Neither in Tacitus' nor Probus' reign is there any appreciable change in the command structure of the late third century empire. There is no epigraphic evidence at all for any return to the pre-Gallienic system⁽¹¹⁾. By Tacitus' accession, moreover, ten years at least had elapsed since senators had generally held military commands, and Victor is quite unreasonable to blame the senators for not eagerly seeking commands for which they were totally unprepared.

There was, then, no "senatorial restoration" under Tacitus and Probus. The passages referred to above, and the generally favourable view of these emperors in the senatorial tradition, may suggest that they showed the senate more formal respect than their immediate predecessors. Tacitus had spent some time as a member of the senate, and this in all probability endeared this institution to him - rather in the same way, perhaps, as labour life peers enjoy being members of the House of Lords. In Probus' case, he may have thought it wise to keep as many friends as possible in troubled times, especially when it cost nothing to treat the senate with formal respect. Marcus has

pointed out that the recently-discovered career of a prominent senator may suggest some sort of pro-senatorial policy on this emperor's part⁽¹²⁾. There was, however, no restoration of any real powers and privileges. What "senatorial restoration" there was under Tacitus and Probus took place largely in the senators' imagination, not in substance.

Notes and references

- 1) H.A. v.Tac. 19, 2-4.
- 2) H.A. v.Prob. 13, 1.
- 3) Victor, de Caes. 37, 5-7.
- 4) L. Homo, "L'empereur Gallien et la crise de l'empire romain au IIIes.", Rev. Hist. 38, 1913, p.20ff.
- 5) See, for example, A. Stein, Der römische Ritterstand, Munich, 1927, p.453; P. Lambrechts, La composition du sénat romain de Septime Sévère à Dioclétien, Budapest, 1937, p.96f; M. Rostovtzeff., Social and economic history of the Roman Empire, London, 1957 (2nd. ed.), p.463f.
- 6) See, for example, J.G.C. Anderson, "The genesis of Diocletian's provincial organisation," J.R.S. 22, 1932, p.27f., and R. Syme, Emperors and biography, Oxford 1971, p.240f.
- 7) J.G.C. Anderson, "The genesis of Diocletian's provincial organisation," p.27f.; cf. N.H. Baynes, "Three notes on the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine," J.R.S. 15(1925), p.196f.
- 8) H.A. v.Tac. 19, 2-4; Victor, de Caes. 36, 1; 37, 5.
- 9) cf. above, chapter 6, p. 205.
- 10) R. Syme, Emperors and biography, p.242.
- 11) No senatorial legionary commanders are known after Gallienus' reign, and the replacement of senatorial by equestrian governors in fact gains momentum under Probus (see above, chapter 3, p.111f.
- 12) B. Malcus, "Notes sur la révolution du système administratif romain au troisième siècle," Opusc. Rom. 7, 1969, p.236, note 2. L. Caesonius Ovinus Manlius Rufinianus Bassus was electus a divo Probo ad pre[side]ndum iud(icio) mag(no) (A.E. 1964, 223; cf. P.L.R.E. p.156, L. Caesonius Ovinus Marlius Rufinianus Bassus 18). Barbieri suggests that the iudicium magnum was a court of appeal at Rome, composed of senators (AK. IV Congr. Epigr. 1964, p.44ff) As Bassus was a very prominent senator, this appointment may point to a conciliatory policy towards the ordo on Probus' part.

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