

THE CAREERS OF EQUESTRIAN A RATIONIBUS: THE ISSUE OF 'SPECIALISM'*

The 2nd century did not merely continue the 'epigraphic boom' that started with Augustus' reign¹ it was also the time when the hierarchy of equestrian procuratorial offices formed.² Thus it appears justified to analyze and compare the careers of the *equites* who held the highest financial office;³ they are mostly repre-

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¹ G. Alföldy, 'Augustus und die Inschriften: Tradition und Innovation. Die Geburt der imperialen Epigraphik', *Gymnasium* 98 (1991), 289–324; J. Bodel, *Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian*, in R. Saloman (ed.), *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions*, New York 2001, 8–9; F. Beltrán Lloris, 'The 'Epigraphic Habit' in the Roman World', in C. Bruun, J. Edmondson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*, Oxford 2015, 139–141. Despite there being fairly numerous inscriptions from this period it is not certain whether they are fully representative for the purposes of research into the careers of equestrian officials. See e.g. P. Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems in der römischen Kaiserzeit. Die Entstehung einer 'personalen Bürokratie' im langen dritten Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2005, 104.

² A. N. Sherwin-White, 'Procurator Augusti', *PBSR* 15 (1939), 11; H.-G. Pflaum, *Abrégé des procurateurs équestres. D'après l'article paru en allemande dans l'Encyclopédie classique (Pauly-Wissowa)*, Paris 1974, 7–8; R. Saller, 'Promotion and Patronage in the Equestrian Careers', *JRS* 70 (1980), 46; P.A. Brunt, 'Principes and Equites', *JRS* 73 (1983), 44; R. Duncan-Jones, *Power and Privilege in Roman Society*, Cambridge 2016, 106.

³ During the reign of Marcus Aurelius a *rationibus* was the first procuratorship to receive the *trecenarius* rank, H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut – Empire Romain. Supplément*, Paris 1982, 25, 28, 63; Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems*, 162. While the first such official is only confirmed during the reign of Septimius Severus (IG XIV 1480=IGR I 227=IGUR 424), the specific career path (*tres militiae*–*centenarius*–*ducenarius*–a *rationibus*) of the *equites* who held the position of a *rationibus* under Marcus Aurelius may be an argument for that post having risen to *trecenarius* rank before that. See H. Zwicky, *Zur Verwendung des Militärs in der Verwaltung der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Zürich 1944, 39.

sented in epigraphic sources, and were part of the administration elite of the *Imperium Romanum*.⁴ In the context of such an analysis we must see as important especially those inscriptions which present the military' and (or) the 'civilian' stage of an official's career, as well as those that yield information on the specific offices. The epigraphic material comes mostly from the 2nd century and consists primarily of 'cursus inscriptions'. Its interpretation rouses certain methodological problems,⁵ but it does make it possible to re-construct the complete or nearly complete *cursus* of many equestrian officials known to us.

This paper aims to trace the promotion paths of twenty equestrian *a rationibus* (whose careers are known, if only in part)⁶ and then hopefully answer the question of whether under the early principate it is possible to discern any pattern to those careers as regards obtaining experience in financial matters. Historical

⁴ Members of *uterque ordo*, the senators and the *equites*, both had much greater opportunities to self-present in epigraphic material than the rest of the Roman society. See W. Eck, 'Senatorial Self-Representation. Developments in the Augustan Period', in F. Millar, E. Segal (eds), *Caesar Augustus. Seven Aspects*, Oxford 1984, 129–167; C. Bruun, 'Senators and *Equites*: Prosopography', in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*, 202–203. Still, compared to equestrian careers the hierarchy of senatorial offices is much better known, which makes it much more feasible to compare the *cursus honorum* of senators. See F. Millar, 'The Equestrian Career under the Empire', in F. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, vol. 2: *Government, Society, and Culture in the Roman Empire*, Chapel Hill-London 2004, 151–152; I. Mennen, *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, AD 193–284*, Leiden 2011, 135.

⁵ Bruun, 'Senators and *Equites*: Prosopography', 220. The difficulties of researching the careers of officials presented in so-called 'cursus inscriptions' are discussed in W. Eck, 'There Are No *cursus honorum* Inscriptions. The Function of the *cursus honorum* in Epigraphic Communication', *SCI* 28 (2009), 79–92.

⁶ See Appendix. Cf. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire Romain*, vol. 3, Paris 1961, 1019; Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire Romain. Supplément*, Paris 1982, 109; B. Rossignol, 'Le personnel administrative de la paye des soldats', in *De l'or pour les braves! Soldes, armées et circulation monétaire dans le monde Romain*, ed. M. Reddé, Bordeaux 2014, 44–47. The listings of *a rationibus equites* referred to above depend on several elements to do with assessing the preserved (or, known) epigraphic material: primarily the type of the inscription, the degree to which it is preserved and the specific way of indicating the order in which offices (military and civilian) were held. Very often, damaged inscriptions make it impossible to re-construct the *cursus honorum* even if the inscription type does not. There is also some doubt as to whether the list of an official's positions is complete (even if the inscription itself is). See e.g. *CIL VI 41118=AE 1961, 280*. Unfortunately it is often quite impossible to reach definite conclusions on that issue. In such cases the only aid can be obtained from sources (mostly other inscriptions) which present the career of the same official and allow one to verify the several positions held and their order. In my opinion B. Rossignol (*Le personnel administrative*, 44–45) has no grounds to include among the equestrian *a rationibus* two *praefecti Aegypti*, Valerius Eudaemon and Flavius Titianus II, especially as we cannot be certain in addition to the *officium a rationibus* they did not also hold the *annona* prefecture, which tended to make the next career rank of the highest financial officials. In this paper I omitted six equestrian *a rationibus*, because we do not know other offices held by them. For full list of twenty six equestrian officials of *a rationibus* see Kłodziński, 'Officium a rationibus', 305–378.

literature tends to refer to that process and its result as ‘specialism’, although that term is not all that fortunate, as has been stressed by Werner Eck.⁷ The issue has been researched for many years now and makes an important part of the reflection on the role of patronage and merit in the promotion of equestrian officials in Roman administration,⁸ as well as reflection on the personal policies of Roman emperors, who had the most say in appointing high-ranking officials, not only *equites* and senators, but also imperial freedmen.⁹

Earlier historians (such as Otto Hirschfeld, Arthur Stein, and Hans-Georg Pflaum) emphasized that as an organized system, Roman administration (and procuratorial administration in particular) functioned according to bureaucratic principles, just like the ‘civil service in a modern sense’;¹⁰ more modern scholars, on the other hand (such as Paul A. Brunt, Richard Saller, or Anthony R. Birley) came to see the problem differently, insisting ‘such specialism was alien to Roman traditions’.¹¹ However, that departure from the old view seems overly radical.¹²

Despite this break modern historical research has taken with the bureaucratic view of Roman administration, it would seem some issues remain at least partly unexplained, and the way procuratorial administration functioned is still

⁷ W. Eck, ‘Spezialisierung in der Staatlichen Administration des Römischen Reiches in der hohen Kaiserzeit’, in L. de Blois (ed.), *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Policies in the Roman Empire*, Amsterdam 2001, 1: ‘Doch Erfahrung und Spezialisierung sind nicht dasselbe. Spezialisierung setzt zwar Erfahrung voraus; doch Erfahrung muss keineswegs zu Spezialisierung führen. Beides ist somit getrennt zu behandeln, will man das jeweils Spezifische erkennen’. When using the word ‘specialism’, I do not mean Marek Żyromski’s definition, which is largely about ‘regional specialization’, or highest ranking provincial officials (mostly *legati Augusti pro praetore provinciae* or *legati legionis*) holding a number of positions in the same province or provincial region. See e. g. M. Żyromski, ‘Specialization in the Roman Provinces of Moesia in the Time of the Principate’, *Athenaeum* 79 (1991), 59–102. Żyromski’s reflections come down to looking into whether in the case of senatorial provincial governors there is rotation or regional specialization.

⁸ See W. Eck, ‘Imperial Administration and Epigraphy: in Defence of Prosopography’, in A. Bowman, H.M. Cotton, M. Goodman, S. Price (eds), *Representations of Empire. Rome and Mediterranean World*, New York 2002, 149.

⁹ See F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 BC-AD 337*, London 1977, 286–290. Cf. G. Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis impériaux sous le Haut – Empire romain. Rôle politique et administratif*, Napoli 1970; P.R.C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris. A Social Study of the Emperor’s Freedmen and Slaves*, Cambridge 1972.

¹⁰ O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian*, Berlin 19052; A. Stein, *Der römische Ritterstand: ein Beitrag zur Sozial – und Personengeschichte des Römischen Reiches* (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 10), München 1927; H.-G. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs équestres sous le Haut – Empire romain*, Paris 1950. Cf. Saller, ‘Promotion and Patronage’, 52.

¹¹ P.A. Brunt, ‘The Administrators of Roman Egypt’, *JRS* 65 (1975), 141. See also Saller, ‘Promotion and Patronage’, 44–63; Brunt, ‘Princeps and Equites’, 42–75; A.R. Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus? Zum Beförderungssystem in der Hohen Kaiserzeit*, Opladen 1992, 16–17.

¹² S. Demougin, ‘Considérations sur l’avancement dans les carrières procuratoriennes équestres’, in *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment*, 27–29.

largely unclear.¹³ Based on his analysis of extant material (which I believe incomplete), Saller concluded in the case of equestrian *procuratores a rationibus* there was no specialism concerning finances and they were all unskilled amateurs.¹⁴ This opinion, inspired by the findings of Brunt, who, in his investigation into the prefects of Egypt, argued that they demonstrated no noticeable specialism 'either in task or in region',¹⁵ seems to me to go to far, and the issue of 'specialism', by which I mean the financial skills gained by the *a rationibus* through experience (*experientia*) during their civil service, certainly calls for re-examination.

As early as the beginning of the 20th century scholars were attempting to classify the specific career paths of *equites*, but their findings have failed to stand the test of time.¹⁶ The classification formulated by Pflaum,¹⁷ on the other hand, remains in its general outline valid; based on the hierarchy of the military and civilian ranks of the *equites*, as well as the first posts to be held by them, it distinguished four major types of equestrian procuratorial careers.¹⁸ Military service was no doubt the introductory stage of an equestrian career,¹⁹ but of around 2250 *equites* (c. 4% of all who probably existed in the time between Augustus and Gallienus) listed by Hubert Devijver most did not advance beyond the *militiae*, although a significant number of them did go on to procuratorial careers.²⁰ Over 80% of known procurators had served as officers. While the pattern of an equestrian career made up of a 'military' stage followed by a 'civilian' stage (consisting

¹³ Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems*, 103–104.

¹⁴ Saller, 'Promotion and Patronage', 54–55.

¹⁵ Saller, 'Promotion and Patronage', 54.

¹⁶ A. v. Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des Römischen Heeres* (Bonner Jahrbücher 117), Bonn 1908. See also W. Liebenam, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des Römischen Kaiserreiches*, I. *Die Laufbahn der Procuratoren bis auf die Zeit Diocletians*, Jena 1886.

¹⁷ Pflaum, *Les procurateurs, passim*; Pflaum, *Abrégé des procurateurs équestres*. It should be noted that the schemata of equestrian officials' careers formulated by Pflaum (which had numerous exceptions) have been to a large extent verified and clarified, but remain accurate in principle. See M. Christol, 'L'ascension de l'ordre équestre', in *L'Ordre Equestre. Histoire d'une aristocratie (II siècle av.J.C. – IIIe siècle ap.J.C.)*. Actes du colloque international organisé par S. Demougin, H. Devijver et M.-Th. Raepsaet-Charlier (Bruxelles-Leuven, 5–7 octobre 1995), Roma 1999, 618–619; Demougin, 'Considerations sur l'avancement', 24–34.

¹⁸ Pflaum, *Abrégé des procurateurs équestres*, 56–59. Cf. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs*, 237–238, 252.

¹⁹ Mennen, *Power and Status*, 135 n. 3: 'Equestrian men usually started their career by filling a sequence of military posts (...)'; C. Bruun, 'Senators and Equites: Prosopography', 219: 'Most equestrians for whom we have information began their public service as army officers'; P. Garnsey, R. Saller, *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture*, with J. Elsner, M. Goodman, R. Gordon, G. Woolf, M. Hirt, London-New York 20142, 38: 'Military service must be seen as the basis of the equestrian career'.

²⁰ We can also suppose that with their longer *cursus*, equestrian *procuratores* had a better possibility of being commemorated than *equites* from the *militiae*. See Duncan-Jones, *Power and Privilege in Roman Society*, 106.

of civilian procuratorial positions) was common, it need not have applied every single time; some of those officials, trained in and skilled at a specific discipline (sophists for instance, or orators, or jurists) may have held only civilian administrative posts.²¹

One particularly interesting (and controversial) issue seems to be that of the 'civilian' equestrian careers of the *a rationibus*. According to Saller, out of the ten *a rationibus* whose careers are known, only four held the so-called 'urban financial procuratorship', and none of them held a *ducenarius*-rank post more than once. Saller goes on to note that while emperors tended not to appoint *equites* with purely civilian experience to military procuratorships, they did usually entrust the highest financial office to *equites* who had military experience.²² In my opinion his results, which Saller took to decisively indicate the equestrian *a rationibus* officials did not specialize financially, are open to a discussion, and only his hypothesis that most of the *a rationibus* were appointed from among military officers looks sound. In fact, it can be confirmed by analyzing the 'military' *a rationibus* careers, with the reservation that this particular office was not exceptional in that respect.²³ Still, it would be difficult to agree with Saller that entrusting the *officium a rationibus* to equestrian commanders, including the eminent 'military man' L. Iulius Iulianus, meant any financial specialism was impossible for those officials.²⁴ The 'civilian' stage of the *cursus honorum* of a *a rationibus* procurators appears more complex, particularly in the light of those careers having been more numerous. It is not my objective to analyze the types of the several promotions and ranks within the civilian procuratorial administration, only to trace the course of those careers, mostly as regards at the least two, but more often three important financial offices

²¹ G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1967, 50–57. Cf. N. Lewis, 'Literati in the Service of Roman Emperors: Politics Before Culture', in L. Casson, M. Price (eds), *Coins, Culture, and History in the Ancient World. Numismatics and Others Studies in Honor of Bluma L. Trell*, Detroit 1981, 149–154. For example Sex. Cornelius Repentinus (PIR² C 1428), *ab epistulis*, and later *praefectus praetorio* from 160 to 166/167 had prior to those positions only held civilian posts in Rome, but had no military experience. It can be surmised he was an intellectual (Fronto, *Ad Amic.*, 2.4). See G. Camodeca, 'La carriera del Prefetto del Pretorio Sex. Cornelius Repentinus in una nuova iscrizione Puteolana', *ZPE* 43 (1981), 43–56.

²² Saller, 'Promotion and Patronage', 55.

²³ K. Kłodziński, 'Wojskowe kariery ekwickich urzędników *a rationibus*' ['Military careers of equestrian *a rationibus* officials'], in H. Kowalski, P. Madejski (eds), *Armia, systemy obronne i ideologiczno-religijne aspekty wojny w imperium rzymskim* [*The Army, Defense Systems and Ideological and Religious Aspects of War in the Roman Empire*], Lublin 2015, 43–64. Cf. Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus*, 41–54, ideas on the military careers of *ab epistulis* officials.

²⁴ Saller's claim is a generalization, but it should be pointed out that the 'military men; who held the office of a *a rationibus*, just like the equestrian *ab epistulis Latinis*, in fact only came into those important administrative positions under two emperors, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, who made a point of promoting eminent military commanders from the Marcomannic Wars.

of *centenarius* and *ducenarius* rank, which might have confirmed the acquisition of some experience (*experientia*) in the case of a *rationibus equites*. Later careers of those officials after they attained to the *officium a rationibus* are not without significance for my analyses either. This kind of broader perspective will allow me to capture the issues in question more fully.

When it comes to the financial administrative positions which preceded being promoted to *procurator a rationibus* or a *rationibus*, four are of particular importance: *procurator monetarum*, *procurator XX hereditarium*, *procurator hereditarium*, and *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*. The first of those posts was held by two *a rationibus*, L. Vibius Lentulus and M. Petronius Honoratus,²⁵ both of whom had held other financial posts before. For Lentulus, those were *procurator Pannoniae et Dalmatiae*, *procurator Asiae*, and *procurator a lorica*, while Honoratus' two important procuratorships had been *procurator XX hereditarium* and *procurator provinciarum Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum*. As many as five *a rationibus* officials administered either the *vicesima hereditarium* or the *hereditates*: they were T. Statilius Optatus, Anonymus I, M. Petronius Honoratus, Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo and C. Iunius Flavianus. The last of the four positions listed above, that of *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*, was especially important in the context of the careers of the officials in question here, and four *a rationibus* had been appointed to it, namely Cn. Pompeius Homullus, Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo, C. Iunius Flavianus and Q. Baienus Blassianus. That Gallic procuratorship, included by Pflaum in his fourth group of crucial *ducenarius*-rank posts, was a vital financial office,²⁶ which frequently paved the road to the *officium a rationibus*, to palace (or, secretarial) positions, and ultimately to the major prefectures.²⁷ Interestingly enough, three of the *a rationibus* – Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo, C. Iunius Flavianus, and

²⁵ See M. Peachin, 'The Procurator Monetae', NC 146 (1986), 106: 'It also appears that those who had been *procurator monetarum* frequently went on to hold other posts in the financial realm of the administration (e.g. *a rationibus* or *procurator XX hereditarium*)'.

²⁶ Pflaum, *Abbrégé des procurateurs équestres*, 63. A. Magioncalda ('I procuratori-governatori delle due Mauretaniae: un profilo (titolatura e carrier)', in M. Christol, A. Magioncalda, *Studi sui procuratori delle due Mauretaniae*, Sassari 1989, 110 n. 532), called the position 'procuratela finanziaria'.

²⁷ See Pflaum, *Les procurateurs*, 254; Pflaum, *Les carriers*, Paris 1960, 321, no. 134; G. Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo praefectus annonae in un'inedita iscrizione puteolana', in S. Demougin, J. Scheid (eds), *Colons et colonies dans le monde romain. Actes de la XV^e rencontre franco-italienne d'épigraphie*, Paris 4–6 octobre 2008, Paris 2012, 313 n. 37. Procurators of the two Gallic provinces also held palace positions in Rome; I mean C. Iunius Celsus (CIL XIII 1808=ILS 1454: *a libellis et censibus*) and M. Aemilius Laetus (CIL XIII 1779=ILS 1469: *a studiis*; CIL XIII 1809: [*proc(urator)*] *a studiis*), although this path of promotion was much rarer than that to the *officium a rationibus*: Magioncalda, 'I procuratori-governatori', 110 n. 532. Furthermore in the case of those two officials the promotion to a post in an imperial secretariat was the highest of each of their careers; of the *a rationibus* who held the significant Gallic procuratorship, only for Cn. Pompeius Homullus was the *officium a rationibus* the crowning point of his *cursus honorum*.

Q. Baienus Blassianus – each held the same series of three financial offices: *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*, *procurator a rationibus*, and *praefectus annonae*.²⁸

The several careers of those *a rationibus* who held a number of other positions in the financial administration would also seem important for the problems in question. Their specialism can be beautifully illustrated by the career of T. Statilius Optatus, referred to as an ‘homme d’argent’ by Sabine Lefebvre.²⁹ Optatus was certainly an *eques* with profound experience in finances, including management and taxes. The series of financial procuratorships held by Optatus and the broad range of competence his offices required, from positions to do with calculating the wealth and population census (*ad census*) in Britain and Gaul, to managing mines (*ferrarium*), presumably also in Gaul, to managing imperial affairs: the emperor’s property (*ad patrimonium*), inheritance taxes (*hereditatium*), and the *fiscus* (*a rationibus*), all made him qualify fully for the highest ranking financial offices of the Empire. In his case, skill and qualifications will have played a key role in his appointment to *procurator a rationibus*.³⁰

In the case of other book-keeping officials, too, it is possible to demonstrate a series of financial positions. Before attaining to the *officium a rationibus*, L. Valerius Proculus held a number of important financial provincial posts (‘procuratèles financières de province’)³¹ of *ducenarius* rank: *procurator provinciae ulterioris Hispaniae Baeticae*, *procurator provinciae Cappadociae Paphlagoniae Galatae*, *procurator provinciae Asiae* and *procurator provinciarum trium Belgicae et Germaniarum*.³² M. Petronius Honoratus was equally experienced in financial matters, having held the offices of *procurator monetarum*, *procurator XX hereditatium*, *procurator Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum*, *a rationibus*, and *praefectus annonae*. Perhaps at the beginning of his reign Antoninus Pius appointed those two officials to the *officium a rationibus*, Proculus and Honoratus, who had successively held the procuratorship *trium Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum*.

²⁸ Already R. Syme (‘Guard Prefects of Trajan and Hadrian’, *JRS* 70 [1980], 78) saw a certain correlation between *equites* holding the office of *a rationibus* and having held financial procuratorships in Gaul, which were to ‘retain or extend their potency’. See also H. Pavis d’Escurac, *La préfecture de l’annone service administratif impérial d’Auguste à Constantin* (BÉFAR 226), Rome 1976, 340, 345; Magioncalda, ‘I procuratori-governatori’, 110 n. 532.

²⁹ S. Lefebvre, ‘Profils de carrière douze procurateurs des Gaules et Germanies’, *CCG* 9 (1998), 264.

³⁰ Although there are attested similar careers of *equites* with financial experience, none of them was as impressive as Optatus’. See e. g. Q. Domitius Marsianus (*AE* 1960, 167=*AE* 1962, 183). For more on him, see recently G. Migliorati, *Iscrizioni per la ricostruzione storica dell’Impero Romano da Marco Aurelio a Commodo*, Milano 2011, 489–491.

³¹ Pavis d’Escurac, *La préfecture de l’annone*, 72.

³² 2nd-century epigraphic material confirms some other titles of that procuratorship as well: *procurator provinciae Belgicae et utriusque Germaniarum*, *procurator provinciarum Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum* (see M. Petronius Honoratus) and *procurator Belgicae*. See W. Meyers, *L’administration de la province romaine de Belgique*, Brugge 1964, 16 n. 3.

Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo, on the other hand, held two positions in succession: that of *procurator XX hereditatium* and *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*, and C. Iunius Flavianus as many as five positions relating to finances: *promagister XX hereditatium*, *procurator Alpium maritimarum*, *procurator Hispaniae Citerioris per Asturiam et Callaeciam*, *procurator hereditatium*, and *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*, all of which testify to his specializing in finances in some capacity.³³ The orator T. Taius Sanctus, who most likely did only civil service, had held another important financial office directly before he was made a *rationibus*, that of *procurator rationis privatae*. Sanctus' career, at any rate, proves he was, as Corbier put it, a 'spécialiste des problèmes financiers',³⁴ for as an equestrian procurator he dealt with the funds which were part of the emperor's private estate (*ratio privata*), the public imperial funds (*fiscus Caesaris*) and the province of Egypt (*praefectus Aegypti*), while later, after being promoted to the *ordo senatorius*, his duties included the care of the *aerarium Saturni*.³⁵ Then we have Q. Marcius Dioga, who held functions in palace secretariats, the *officium a rationibus* and prefectures, but only after he had held four strictly financial offices: those of *procurator ad alimenta*, *procurator ad censum Ambianorum, Murrinorum, Atrebatium* (or *Trebatium*), *procurator ad dioecsin Alexandriae* and *procurator patrimonii*.

However, after attaining to the position of a *rationibus* many officials' careers continued, with those *equites* coming into the so-called major equestrian prefectures, and the office of *praefectus annonae* in particular. In the 2nd century, most prefects of the *annona* had been *procuratores a rationibus* right before.³⁶ Still, the earliest appointments of a *rationibus* procurators to *praefectus annonae*, as well as the number of those promotions that can be determined based on extant material, are somewhat controversial, with the discrepancies stemming mostly from differing interpretations of fragments of damaged *cursus* inscriptions. According to Henriette Pavis d'Ecurac, the office of *praefectus annonae* was attained to by six a *rationibus*,³⁷ and her findings were confirmed by Pflaum in his critical review of her work, which considerably expanded the prosopographic catalogue, maintaining six out of the nine a *rationibus* whose full *cursus* is known held the function of *praefectus annonae*.³⁸ A similar opinion was expressed by Robert Sablayrolles, who wrote six *procuratores a rationibus* certainly did hold it, while

³³ Magioncalda, 'I governatori delle province procuratorie: carriere', in *L'Ordre Equestre*, 410.

³⁴ M. Corbier, *L'aerarium saturni et l'aerarium militare. Administration et prosopographie sénatoriale* (CÉFR 24), Rome 1974, 295.

³⁵ Corbier, *L'aerarium saturni*, 295–296.

³⁶ Pavis d'Ecurac, *La préfecture de l'annone*, 70–71.

³⁷ Pavis d'Ecurac, *La préfecture de l'annone*, 70.

³⁸ H.-G. Pflaum, 'La préfecture de l'annone (à propos d'un ouvrage récent)', *RHD* 56 (1978), 53–54.

nine might have.³⁹ The we have Giuseppe Camodeca's slightly different findings, according to which in the period from Antoninus Pius to Caracalla it is certain for five and likely for as many as nine *a rationibus* to have been *praefecti annonae* during their careers.⁴⁰ In fact, I believe it quite likely from Hadrian to Caracalla eleven *a rationibus* were promoted directly to *praefectus annonae*. Chronologically, they were: T. Statilius Optatus, L. Valerius Proculus, M. Petronius Honoratus, Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo, C. Iunius Flavianus, Q. Baienus Blassianus, T. Furius Victorinus, T. Flavius Piso, L. Iulius Vehilius Gallus Iulianus, Iulius (Aelius?) Iulianus and Q. Marcius Dioga.⁴¹ Towards the end of the 1st century, though, the position directly preceding the *annona* prefecture was not *procurator a rationibus*, but rather *procurator provinciarum Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*, as indicated by the career of C. Minicius Italus.⁴² Pflaum explained Italus' 'unusual and rare promotion' to *praefectus annonae* by the fact at the end of the 1st century the office of *a rationibus* was still held by a freedman and would only become equestrian under Trajan, and while Pflaum's conclusions are undoubtedly sound, they lack some precision for the appearance of *equites* as the major *a rationibus* officials did not immediately change the career paths of the future *praefecti annonae*; after all, for two equestrian *procuratores a rationibus* active in the period from Trajan to Hadrian, L. Valerius Proculus and Cn. Pompeius Homullus, and possibly for three,⁴³ the *officium a rationibus* was the highest rank in their careers. We may suspect it was only towards the end of Hadrian's reign that *a rationibus* came to be appointed by emperors directly to the position of *praefectus annonae*, as T. Statilius Optatus' example shows. And from then on, that is from the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century, the book-keeping office was, to quote Pflaum, 'l'antichambre des préfectures'.⁴⁴

Nor was the *annona* prefecture the only prefecture *procuratores a rationibus* held in their *cursus honorum*. Present-day scholars are not unanimous about the number of specific promotions needed before being appointed to the office of

³⁹ R. Sablayrolles, 'Fastigium equestre. Les grandes préfectures équestres', in *L'Ordre Equestre*, 78 n. 36.

⁴⁰ Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo *praefectus annonae* in un'inedita iscrizione puteolana', in *Colons et colonies dans le monde romain*, 307. The Italian epigraphist used that number as his starting point when introducing a new *a rationibus* and *praefectus annonae*.

⁴¹ Cf. Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo *praefectus annonae*', 307 n. 7. In my opinion T. Furius Victorinus was a *praefectus vigilum*, not *annonae*, although due to the damaged inscription a number of interpretations are possible.

⁴² *CIL* V 875=ILS 1374; Pflaum, 'La préfecture de l'annone', 66.

⁴³ The post of *a rationibus* may have been the highest in the career of Anonymus I, who held it under Hadrian.

⁴⁴ See e.g. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs*, 257, 294; Pflaum, *Les carrières*, 285.

praefectus vigilum. According to Sablayrolles, two *a rationibus* held that position,⁴⁵ while Camodeca thought as many as four went on to hold it.⁴⁶ Now my calculations are in accord with those of Camodeca, although we differ somewhat as regards identifying the several *equites*.⁴⁷ I believe four *equites*—M. Bassaeus Rufus, Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus, Anonymus 2 and Q. Marcius Dioga—had careers conforming to that pattern, although in Dioga's case the promotion from *a rationibus* to *praefectus vigilum* was not direct.⁴⁸

Seven others – L. Valerius Proculus, M. Petronius Honoratus, T. Furius Victorinus, Q. Baienus Blassianus, M. Bassaeus Rufus, T. Flavius Piso, and T. Taius Sanctus⁴⁹ – went on to become *praefecti Aegypti*, and perhaps as many as five *equites* (L. Valerius Proculus, M. Petronius Honoratus, T. Furius Victorinus, Q. Baienus Blassianus, and T. Flavius Piso) went the three-grade, final path of equestrian career, from *procurator a rationibus* to *praefectus annonae*, to *praefectus Aegypti*.⁵⁰ Interestingly, Sablayrolles supposed some of the four or five *praefecti annonae* (Iulius Ursus, M. Mettius Rufus, Ser. Sulpicius Rufus, and M. Rutilius Lupus) in whose case we only know their highest position achieved, and who came into the prefecture of Egypt in the period from the reign of the Flavians to the half point of the 2nd century, had held the office of *a rationibus* too.⁵¹ It is a risky hypothesis, especially as regards the starting point, that is the Flavian reign, since during that time there were still *liberti Augusti* active as *a rationibus*.⁵² Concerning the end point, though i. e., the first half of the 2nd century, his theory seems rather likely, although the lack of sources makes it impossible to prove. A number of *procuratores a rationibus* also reached the highest equestrian office, that of *praefectus praetorio*. As mentioned above, the crowning point of the *cursus honorum* of three of the *a rationibus* known to us, T. Furius Victorinus, M. Bassaeus Rufus, and L. Iulius Vehilius Gallus Iulianus, was exactly that post.

Interestingly enough, in his statistics of top rank offices held by palace secretaries active towards the end of the 2nd and at the onset of the 3rd century,

⁴⁵ Sablayrolles, 'Fastigium equestre', 364.

⁴⁶ Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo *praefectus annonae*', 307–308.

⁴⁷ Unlike Camodeca and Alföldy (CIL VI 41143) I have excluded T. Furius Victorinus as a *praefectus vigilum*.

⁴⁸ Interestingly, under the principate the position of *praefectus vigilum* was attained to less often by *a rationibus*, and more often by the palace officials *ab epistulis* and *a libellis*, and in the 3rd century, by those responsible for the *ratio privata*. See Sablayrolles, *Libertinus Miles. Les Cohortes de Vigiles* (CÉFR 224), Roma 1996, 78–79; Sablayrolles, *Fastigium equestre*, 364.

⁴⁹ G. Bastianini, 'Lista dei prefetti d'Egitto dal 30a al 299p', ZPE 17 (1975), 289–299.

⁵⁰ Cf. Sablayrolles, 'Fastigium equestre', 363, 375. Among those officials, only Victorinus went on to become *praefectus praetorio*.

⁵¹ Sablayrolles, 'Fastigium equestre', 375 n. 32.

⁵² Stat. Silv. 3,3, 86–105; CIL VI 8410; CIL X 6640=ILS 3338; AE 1990, 70.

Jean-Pierre Coriat saw a sequence of no more than three positions (*a rationibus*, followed by *res privata* or *ab epistulis*, followed by *a libellis*), most often succeeded by the *praefectus* either *vigilum*, or *praetorio*.⁵³ There is, however, some doubt as to how representative the careers of those particular *a rationibus* were.⁵⁴

It ought not to be forgotten the preserved source material only makes it possible to re-construct a small part of the puzzle that was the Roman administrative structure.⁵⁵ For the same reason, any generalizations as to appointments to the *officium a rationibus* in a broader time scope are doomed to fail, but in my opinion, the prestigious office of *a rationibus* was not a random component of the equestrian procuratorial administration then gradually forming. The analysis carried out here makes it possible to conclude that in the case of many equestrian *a rationibus* careers 'specialism' did apply, and the acquired experience and competence as regards finances did constitute an important criterion for many appointments to that office. Nor can the officials thus appointed be termed non-professional amateurs.

Any strict division into those *a rationibus* who had purely military or civilian experience can be likewise misleading, as in some cases the fact an *eques* was experienced in military matters need not have precluded him having administrative (and financial) skills.⁵⁶ The mixed 'military-civilian' career of M. Bassaeus Rufus provides an example. No doubt personal decisions by emperors and their advisors (*amici et comites*, and later, beginning in around the second half of the 2nd century, also *consilarii*)⁵⁷ determined specific career paths of many specialized

⁵³ J.-P. Coriat, *La prince législateur. La technique législative des Sévères et les methods de création du droit impérial a la fin du Principat*, (BÉFAR 294), Rome 1997, 265–273.

⁵⁴ B. Schöpe, *Der römische Kaiserhof in severischer Zeit (193–235 n. Chr.)*, Stuttgart 2014, 334–335 n. 316. If not for the single career of Q. Marcius Dioga, Coriat (*La prince législateur*, 272 n. 279) would have had to modify his conclusions quite a lot, and it is impossible to demonstrate any other similar careers existed.

⁵⁵ Although the inscriptions known to us are rather few, too few in fact to form grounds for deducing any rules (if such in fact existed!) regulating promotion in the Roman administration, still, present-day historians, following in the footsteps of Brunt, Saller or Birley, have been hasty to rule out practical experience as a factor in an *eques*' nomination to a top rank office. See Schöpe, *Der römische Kaiserhof*, 320. Demougin's balanced opinion on the issue is the most apt, and the lack of reliable data (since Pflaum's and Brunt's statistics are not completely convincing) makes it impossible to thoroughly plot out all the factors determining the promotions of equestrian officials. See Demougin, 'Considerations sur l'avancement', 28: 'Il vaut mieux considérer que l'administration romaine est pragmatique: il arrive que soient nommés effectivement des non-professionnels, mais, en général, les compétences sont utilisées'.

⁵⁶ See Brunt, 'Princes and Equites', 48: 'Least of all can ex-centurions have been trained in finance and law. But in scores of careers civilian and military or partly military posts are interspersed'.

⁵⁷ W. Eck, 'Der Kaiser und seine Ratgeber: Überlegungen zum inneren Zusammenhang von *amici, comites* und *consilarii* am römischen Kaiserhof', in A. Kolb (ed.), *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis – Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im römischen Kaiserreich*, Berlin 2006, 67–77.

officials from the circles of so-called ‘intellectuals’, to use Millar’s term.⁵⁸ It seems that M. Cn. Licinius Rufinus, an eminent jurist active in the early 3rd century (a *rationalis*, either *summarum rationum* or a *rationibus*) only had experience at civil administration (primarily financial),⁵⁹ but there is some controversy surrounding the careers of two earlier *a rationibus*, Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus and T. Taisus Sanctus, who were also *ab epistulis Graecis* (as well as being promoted to the senatorial order and appointed into consulships). We know that the former held the equestrian offices of *ab epistulis Graecis*, *a rationibus* and *praefectus vigilum*, while the latter those of *ab epistulis Graecis*, *procurator rationis privatae*, *a rationibus* and *praefectus Aegypti*, but nothing is known of the positions they had held earlier (if any), including possibly military ones. Still, the secretariat *ab epistulis Graecis* was for the most part entrusted to men of letters (sophists and orators), not army commanders,⁶⁰ thus the uncertainty regarding a military stage of their careers. Not that it can be ruled out completely, since it bears emphasizing that Marcus Aurelius did appoint eminent military commanders tested in the Marcomannic Wars to *ab epistulis*,⁶¹ although we can surmise neither Tertullus nor Sanctus belonged to that group.

Saller was right to point to the ‘militarized’ *a rationibus* careers as deserving of attention. Undeniably some of those officials held primarily military positions. T. Furius Victorinus and L. Iulius Vehilius Gallus Iulianus each had an excellent ‘introductory’ military stage to their careers as well as commanding fleets in Misenum and Ravenna before coming into the *officium a rationibus*. In their case, it acquiring any extensive experience in finances seems extremely unlikely.⁶² However, it is worth noting (although Saller did not) that neither Victorinus nor Iulianus ended their careers as *a rationibus* (or *praefecti annonae* or *Aegypti*); rather, after holding a series of prefectures each, they were appointed to the highest equestrian office, that of *praefectus praetorio*, which retained its military character

⁵⁸ Millar (*The Emperor in the Roman World*, 83–101) did not distinguish between sophists, rhetors and jurists, considering them a unified group instead.

⁵⁹ *AE* 1997, 1425. See P. Herrmann, ‘Die Karriere eines prominenten Juristen aus Thyateria’, *Tyche* 12 (1997), 111–123; Millar, ‘The Greek East and Roman Law: The Dossier of M. Cn. Licinius Rufinus’, *JRS* 89 (1999), 90–108.

⁶⁰ Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, 105; Lewis, ‘Literati in the Service of Roman Emperors’, Christol, ‘L’ascension de l’ordre équestre’, 622–623. Cf. Schöpe, *Der römische Kaiserhof*, 334, note 315.

⁶¹ Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus*, 18–28; P. Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History*, Oxford–New York 2007, 227; O. Hekster, *Rome and its Empire, AD 193–284*, Edinburgh 2008, 41. Most likely the tasks of the *ab epistulis Graecis*, unlike those of *ab epistulis Latinis*, are purely civilian in nature. See Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus*, 47.

⁶² Victorinus’ career is difficult to assess unambiguously in that respect. Next to a number of military positions, after the *tres militiae* he held three civilian offices: those of *procurator Galatiae*, *procurator Hispaniae citerioris Tarraconensis* and *procurator ludi magni*.

throughout the principate. Thus we must regard Victorinus' and Iulianus' careers as exceptional.⁶³

And yet there are among the *a rationibus* such officials as T. Statilius Optatus, and I believe in their case we are dealing with a specifically directional, professional administrative career path involving obtaining experience (*experientia*) in finances. Moreover, as many as fourteen of the officials I have studied each held two or more important procuratorial financial posts (e. g. *procurator monetae*, *procurator XX hereditatium*, *procurator hereditatium* or *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*). Likely as many as eleven were promoted to *praefectus annonae*. And interestingly, there were among the *procuratores a rationibus*: two *equites* who successively held the positions of *procurator Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum*; *procurator a rationibus*; *praefectus annonae*; *praefectus Aegypti*; three, whose career path included the series of *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*; *procurator a rationibus*; *praefectus annonae*; and presumably five, whose careers included the crucial posts of *procurator a rationibus* and *praefectus annonae* followed by that of *praefectus Aegypti*.⁶⁴

Finally, one ought to emphasize an important connection between the offices of a *rationibus* and *praefectus annonae*, which does not come down to the fact that it was mostly a *rationibus* who came to hold the prefecture; the two offices co-operated as regards supplying the army as well.⁶⁵ Pavis d'Escurac pointed out another crucial aspect of the opportunity to prepare for holding the *annona* prefecture: 'compétence et expérience financières ou qualification juridique semblent avoir été les qualités plus particulièrement requises des *praefecti annonae*'.⁶⁶ Her opinion was summarily criticized by Saller, who claimed *praefecti annonae* were appointed with no regard to their qualifications. Based on statistical data, he was of the opinion those prefects' careers were particularly 'militarized', and so they must not be considered specialists or anything, as, say, on financial matters. And while Saller confirmed many *a rationibus* went on to become *praefecti*

⁶³ Victorinus' promotion to *praefectus praetorio*, conferred by Antoninus Pius, may have provided a model of sorts for Marcus Aurelius' appointment decisions. While the *procurator a rationibus* M. Basseus Rufus, an eminent military commander, had never commanded a fleet, his promotion to *praefectus praetorio* was preceded by holding major prefectures.

⁶⁴ The officials who covered the administrative path from Gallic procuratorships via the *officium a rationibus* and *praefectus annonae* to (in some cases) *praefectus Aegypti* were referred to by Syme ('Guard Prefects of Trajan and Hadrian', 78) as 'several potential candidates for the Guard'.

⁶⁵ In the 2nd century the *a rationibus* would probably calculate and control the costs of supplying the army, while the *praefectus annonae*, once he had the moneys at his disposal, would be responsible for provisioning the units stationed in the provinces, i. e. he would plan, organize and supervise obtaining and transporting the grain and food. See J.P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 B.C.–A.D. 235)*, Leiden–Boston–Köln 1998, 262; Mennen, *Power and Status*, 145; M. Zahariade, 'Logistics (Roman)', in R.S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C.B. Champion, A. Erskine, S.H. Huebner (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, vol. VIII, Malden 2013, 4137.

⁶⁶ Pavis d'Escurac, *La préfecture de l'annone*, 79.

annonae, he believed that hardly unusual, since most of the *equites* who held the other major prefectures had been a *rationibus* too.⁶⁷ That claim of Saller's seems to be incorrect, in particular in the light of the statistical tables of the several ranks of *cursus honorum* of the 'major prefects' made by Sablayrolles.⁶⁸ Namely, *praefecti praetorio*, *praefecti Aegypti*, and *praefecti vigilum* would much more often have held secretarial posts (those of *ab epistulis* and a *libellis*) than the *officium a rationibus*. Moreover, the example of prefects of Egypt, just like that of *annonae* prefects, is special, as in their case I believe there to have been clear specialization, or directed acquisition of experience in the field of financial administration. My calculations (to the effect that likely as many as eleven *praefecti annonae* had been a *rationibus* before, with five of those going the career path of *procurator a rationibus* to *praefectus annonae* to *praefectus Aegypti*) confirm that when deciding on the appointment of the prefect responsible for providing for Rome and the army, as well as the prefect of Egypt, emperors often did consider the candidates most familiar with managing imperial finances, that is, a *rationibus* officials.

Now while far be it from me to jump to conclusions, the data quoted above makes it plausible that financial qualifications acquired during the civil service were an important factor in deciding the promotions of many a *rationibus*, next to their social status, individual aptitude, virtues, what recommendations they may have had, or patronage (*suffragium*). Clearly it is for a reason, then, that an inscription dated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius emphasized both the moral virtues of an equestrian official (his *innocentia* and *diligentia*) and the experience (*experientia*) he had.⁶⁹ In a letter to Marcus Aurelius (*ad Marcum Caes.* 5, 52) Fronto wrote the following: *Aridelus iste, qui tibi litteras meas reddit, a pueritia me curavit a studio perdicum usque ad seria officia. Libertus vester est; procuravit vobis industrie: Est enim homo frugi et sobrius et acer et diligens*, although he meant the imperial freedman Aridelus as an already seasoned official, not an *eques*. Presumably the same character traits, but also the same kind of experience gained (*procuravit vobis industrie*) as those mentioned by Fronto should be found in equestrian procurators.⁷⁰

The curious thing is that other high ranking officials involved in the *fiscus Caesaris*, the *advocati fisci*, also frequently gained experience in (financial) administrative matters.⁷¹ Some of those high ranking *equites* (the so-called 'vrais spécial-

⁶⁷ R.P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire*, Cambridge 1982, 99 n. 57.

⁶⁸ Sablayrolles, 'Fastigium equestre', 362–364.

⁶⁹ AE 1962, 183=AE 1971, 491. See C. Bruun, 'Roman Government and Administration: Prosopography', in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*, 290–291. This inscription confirms the principles expressed by Pliny the Younger in his recommendation letters to Trajan (Plin. Ep. 10,4–6, 10–12). Cf. Cass. Dio LX 17,5; Tac. Ann. XIV 50,1.

⁷⁰ Pflaum, *Les procurateurs*, 199, 210; Demougin, 'Considerations sur l'avancement', 24.

⁷¹ W. Zwalwe, 'Valerius Patruinus' Case. Contracting in the Name of the Emperor', in L. de Blois, P. Erdkamp, O. Hekster (eds), *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power: Pro-*

istes' in Demougin's terminology), especially ones who managed the emperor's finances or the member of his council, may have been highly qualified financial or legal specialists, with their promotion dependent first of all on their merits.⁷² Lukas de Blois noted an important change in the appointment policy of emperors in the 3rd century regarding their closest circle of advisors. The so called 'learned jurists' (Papinian, Paul or Ulpian) and 'juridically skilled bureaucrats' held vital functions or offices (those of *consiliarius*, *a libellis*, *a cognitionibus* and *praefectus praetorio*) under the Severi, whereas starting from c. 241, '(...) specialists in administration, taxation in money or in kind, and military tactics and logistics (...) had a crucial role to play in the government and the imperial administration.⁷³ That replacement within the imperial council and the highest ranking cadres was closely related to the competences and experience of military commanders and administrators which those 'unmilitary intellectuals' lacked, useful during the many military struggles of the time.⁷⁴

Promotions to the office of *a rationibus* varied depending on the will of the several emperors, and possibly their advisors. It seems Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius appointed officials who had primarily civil service (financial administration) experience, while Marcus Aurelius and Commodus generally preferred the best military commanders from the time of the Marcomannic Wars. That may have been related to the administrative and financial prerogatives of the *officium a rationibus* as regards provisioning the Roman army,⁷⁵ which I believe to have been 'institutionalized' as late as under Septimius Severus as the *collegium rationalium* was formed (CIL VI 1585 a--b) and the special tax of *annona militaris* introduced,⁷⁶ its collection from the very beginning certainly under the control of the central financial administration.⁷⁷

Who else and what else could have affected the promotion of particular *eques* to the *officium a rationibus*? An important part in that regard may have

ceedings of the Third Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 B.C. – A.D. 476), Amsterdam 2003, 166: '[...] usually seasoned administrators rather than highly trained lawyers'.

⁷² Demougin, 'Considerations sur l'avancement', 27–28, with examples of such officials. In the case of the *a libellis* and *praefecti praetorio* active during the reign of the Severan dynasty, the situation is quite clear: legal skill is an important factor in defining the specialists, or 'the equestrian clerical elite'. See Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems*, 353–355.

⁷³ L. de Blois, 'Roman Jurists and the Crisis of the Third Century A.D. in the Roman Empire', in L. de Blois (ed.), *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Policies in the Roman Empire*, Amsterdam 2001, 141–142.

⁷⁴ Blois, *Roman Jurists*, 148–149.

⁷⁵ See n. 65.

⁷⁶ See Kłodziński, *Officium a rationibus*, 163–168, 204–224.

⁷⁷ Cf. Mennen, *Power and Status*, 174–175, n. 163.

fallen to certain palace officials, such as for instance the *ab epistulis*, who probably compiled the information on candidates for offices.⁷⁸ According to Birley, T. Varius Clemens,⁷⁹ an *ab epistulis* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, influenced the acceleration of the careers and the appointments of five would-be outstanding military commanders: two *equites* (later included in the Senate) – P. Helvius Pertinax and M. Valerius Maximianus – and three senators – Claudius Fronto, Martius Verus and Avidius Cassius.⁸⁰ It is also possible that Varius Clemens, while he was the secretary in charge of the imperial correspondence, took the decisions on some ‘military men’, such as M. Bassaeus Rufus, becoming a *rationibus*. It would be very difficult to demonstrate any relationship to the geographical origin of the *a rationibus* based on the extant material. It cannot be ruled out that in some cases (such as that of Q. Marcius Dioga, who came from Leptis Magna, the *origo* of Septimius Severus, whose reign it was) that factor did play a role in the choice of new *a rationibus*, but family connections and the support of influential people or of the emperor himself (be it *suffragium* or *amicitia*) may have meant more. We do have reasons to believe Cn. Pompeius Homullus had Trajan’s support, and it is possible Marcus Aurelius personally determined the careers, not only of the highest ranking military commanders, but also *literati* such as Tertullus and Sanctus. Then when M. Petronius Honoratus was promoted to an *a rationibus*, his brother M. Petronius Mamertinus may have played a part (he was *praefectus praetorio* from 139 to 143),⁸¹ whereas in the case of Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo we have the senatorial family of Caesernii Statii Quinticii Macedones of Aquileia.⁸²

However, in the context of appointments to the *officium a rationibus* it is not possible to discern any specific appointment policy in the sense of established and pre-defined rules (or criteria) that could be applied to the individual decisions. Nor can it be ruled out that in picking some *a rationibus* the emperors based their decisions not only on their social standing, recommendations, qualifications or

⁷⁸ Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus*, 18. Cf. Blois, ‘Roman Jurists’, 149, n. 52; Mennen, *Power and Status*, 154.

⁷⁹ *PIR*² V 274.

⁸⁰ Birley, *Locus virtutibus patefactus*, 23–27; Blois, ‘Roman Jurists’, 149. For more on those commanders, see *PIR*² H 74; *PIR*² V 125; *PIR*² C 874; *PIR*² M 348; *PIR*² A 1402.

⁸¹ *PIR*² P 288; A. Passerini, *Le coorti pretorie*, Roma 1939, 300, no 37; M. Absil, *Les Préfets du prétoire d’Auguste à Commode 2 avant Jésus-Christ 192 après Jésus-Christ*, Paris 1997, 170–171, no. 35.

⁸² B. Dobson, *Die Primipilares. Entwicklung und Bedeutung Primipilares Laufbahnen und Persönlichkeiten eines römischen Offiziersranges*, Cologne 1978, 242; C. Zaccaria, *Palatina tribus. Cavalieri e senatori di origine libertina certa o probabile ad Aquileia. II. – Claudii e Statii*, in P. Mauritsch, W. Petermandl, C. Ulf (eds), *Antike Lebenswelten. Konstanz-Wandel-Wirkungsmacht. Festschrift für Ingomar Weiler zum 70. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden 2008, 425; O. Salomies, *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature in the Roman Empire*, Helsinki 1992, 89.

skills, but also how ready they were to subject themselves to the financial policies (including fiscal and monetary ones) that he and his advisors followed, as proven by the example of Domitian and Claudius Etruscus' father.⁸³

Appendix

EQUESTRIAN *A RATIONIBUS*⁸⁴

1. L. Vibius C(ai) f(ilius) Aem(ilia) Lentulus (AE 1913, 143a–b=I.Eph. 2061(I–II); AE 1924, 81=I.Eph. 3046; I.Eph. 736:)⁸⁵ – ἐπίτροπος ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων c. 112;
2. Cn. Pompeius Sex(ti) f(ilius) Quir(ina) Homullus Aelius Gracilis Cassianus Longinus (CIL VI 1626=ILS 1385)⁸⁶ – procurator Augusti a rationibus between 103–114;
3. T. Statilius Optatus⁸⁷ (CIL VI 31863=AE 1893, 120=ILS 9011) – procurator Augusti a rationibus during the reign of Hadrianus;
4. Anonymus I (AE 1976, 676=W. Eck, 'Miscellanea consularia', ZPE 25 (1977), 227–231)⁸⁸ – ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων τῶν καθόλου during the reign of Hadrianus;
5. L. Valerius L(uci) f(ilius) Qui(rina) Proculus (CIL II 1970=ILS 1341)⁸⁹ – procurator a rationibus Augusti c. 140
6. M. Petronius M(arci) f(ilius) Quir(ina) Honoratus (CIL VI 1625a; VI 1625b=ILS 1340; XIV 4458=AE 1913, 197)⁹⁰ – procurator a rationibus Augusti c. 142;
7. Ti. Claudius Ti(beri) f(ilius) Secundinus L. Statius Macedo (CIL V 867=ILS 1339=IA I 486b; Brusin (1934) 77–78=AE 1934, 232=IA I 486a; CIL XIV 2008a=XV 7740=ILS 8686)⁹¹ – a rationibus Augusti c. 144 or 144–146;⁹²

⁸³ Stat. Silv. 3, 3, 145–149; 155–156; 161; I. Carradice, 'The Banishment of the Father of Claudius Etruscus: Numismatic Evidence', LCM 4 (1979), 101–103; Weaver, *Familia Caesaris*, 290; L. Claes, 'A Note on the Coin Type Selection by the *a rationibus*', *Latomus* 73 (2014), 163–173.

⁸⁴ I only cite those inscriptions which list the title of *a rationibus* (or ἐπὶ τῶν καθόλου λόγων or ἐπίτροπος ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων or καθολικὸς ἐπίτροπος) and the basic literature on the subject (PIR²; Pflaum, *Les carriers*; Pflaum, *Les carriers, Supplément*; H. Devijver, *Prosopographia Militiarum Equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum*, Leuven 1976–1980) Cf. n. 6 and Kłodziński, 'Officium a rationibus', 305–378.

⁸⁵ PIR² L 167; Pflaum *Carrières*, 156–158, no. 66; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 864–865, no 97.

⁸⁶ PIR² P 617; Pflaum *Carrières*, 188–189, no. 89.

⁸⁷ PIR² S 838; Pflaum *Carrières*, 289–292, no. 119; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 751–752, no. 69.

⁸⁸ Pflaum, *Carrières. Supplément*, 38–40, no. 119a; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 909–910, no. 33 bis.

⁸⁹ PIR² V 178; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 274–279, no. 113; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 825–826, no. 29.

⁹⁰ PIR² P 281; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 283–286, no. 117; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 634–636, no. 24.

⁹¹ PIR² C 1015; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 262–264, no. 109.

⁹² Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo praefectus annonae', 307 n. 7.

8. T. Furius L(uci) f(ilius) Pal(atina) Victorinus (*CIL* VI 39440=VI 41143=AE 1907, 152=ILS 9002)⁹³ – *procurator a rationibus* c. 152 or 155–157;
9. C. Iunius C(ai) f(ilius) Quir(ina) Flavianus (*CIL* VI 1620=VI 3163=ILS 1342; XIII 1812)⁹⁴ – *procurator a rationibus* between 130–161;
10. Q. Baienus P(ubli) f(ilius) Pup(inia) Blassianus (*CIL* XIV 5341, 5353, 5382, 5406=AE 1959, 61=1966, 161=1972, 70=1974, 123)⁹⁵ – *procurator a rationibus* c. 162;
11. M. Bassaeus M(arci) f(ilius) St(el(atina)) Rufus (*CIL* VI 1599=VI 31828=ILS 1326)⁹⁶ – *procurator a rationibus* c. 165;
12. Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus (*CIL* III 6574=III 7126=ILS 1344=I.Eph. 651: *a rationibus Auggustorum*; ἐπὶ τῶν καθόλου λόγων; I.Selge 13: καθολικός ἐπίτροπος)⁹⁷ – since July 175 to 177;
13. T. Flavius T(iti) f(ilius) Pal(atina) Piso⁹⁸ – *a rationibus* (?) between 6 July 177–12 Mai 179;
14. T. Taius Sanctus (*CIL* VI 41118=AE 1961, 280)⁹⁹ – *a rationibus* c. 178 or 179;
15. L. Iulius Veh[il]ius Ga[llus?] Iulianus¹⁰⁰ (*CIL* VI 31856=VI 41271=AE 1888, 66=ILS 1327; *CIL* V 4343) – *a rationibus* c. 183 or c. 185/186;¹⁰¹
16. [Iu]lius ([Ae]lius?) Iulianus (AE 1994, 421=AE 2010, 284)¹⁰² – *a rationibus* end of 2nd c. (?);
17. Aurelius Felix (*IG* XIV 1480=IGR I 227=ILS 8854)¹⁰³ – τοὺς καθόλου λόγους ἐπιτροπεύσας c. 193–211;
18. M. Aurelius Iulianus (*CIL* VI 1596=XIV 2463)¹⁰⁴ – *a rationibus* end of IInd c.;
19. Anonymus II (*CIL* IX 5440) – *a rationibus* in 2nd c.?

⁹³ PIR² F 584; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 326–331, no. 139; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 391–392, no. 100.

⁹⁴ PIR² I 753; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 320–322, no. 134; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 498, no. 144.

⁹⁵ PIR² B 131; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 304–313, no. 126; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 178–179, no. 14.

⁹⁶ PIR² B 69; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 389–393, no. 162.

⁹⁷ PIR² C 1049; PIR² V 528; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 683–684, no. 252.

⁹⁸ PIR² F 249. Pflaum (*Carrières. Supplément*, 48, 109) thought that among the *signatores* of the *Tabula Banasitana* (AE 1971, 534) it was Q. Larcus Euripianus (PIR² L 89) who held the office of *a rationibus*. In my view T. Flavius Piso, *praefectus annonae* on May 12 179 and *praefectus Aegypti* from 180 to 181 had also held it, which would conform to the three-part career path of many prefects of Egypt.

⁹⁹ PIR² S 173; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 1002–1007, no. 178 bis.

¹⁰⁰ PIR² I 615; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 456–464, no. 180; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 492–493, no. 136.

¹⁰¹ Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo *praefectus annonae*', 310.

¹⁰² Camodeca, 'La carriera di un nuovo *praefectus annonae*', 305–321.

¹⁰³ PIR² A 1503; Pflaum *Carrières*, 696–697, no. 260; Devijver, *Prosopographia*, 149, no. 226.

¹⁰⁴ PIR² A 1537.

20. Q. Marcius Dioga (*CIL* VI 41277=XIV 4468–4470=AE 1960, 163–164=ILS 9501)¹⁰⁵ – *a rationibus Augusti* c. 211 or 212/213.

Table 1. Financial equestrian civil positions of *sexagenarius* and *centenarius* rank held before the appointment to *a rationibus*¹⁰⁶

	A							B		C			
<i>a rationibus</i> official	A ₁	A ₂	A ₃	A ₄	A ₅	A ₆	A ₇	B ₁	B ₂	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄
1. L. Vibius Lentulus													X
2. Cn. Pompeius Homullus													
3. T. Statilius Optatus		X		X				X					
4. Anonymus 1									X				
5. L. Valerius Proculus													
6. M. Petronius Honoratus													X
7. Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo													
8. T. Furius Victorinus												X	
9. C. Iunius Flavianus							X			X			
10. Q. Baienus Blasianus			X										
11. M. Basseus Rufus													
12. Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus													
13. T. Flavius Piso													
14. T. Taius Sanctus													
15. L. Iulius Iulianus													
16. Iulius (Aelius?) Iulianus													
17. Aurelius Felix													
18. Anonymus 2													
19. M. Aurelius Iulianus													
20. Q. Marcius Dioga	X										X		

¹⁰⁵ *PIR*² M 231; Pflaum, *Carrières*, 719–725, no. 271; Pflaum, *Carrières. Supplément*, 58; M. Christol, 'Un fidèle de Caracalla: Q. Marcius Dioga', *CCG* 2 (1991), 165–186.

¹⁰⁶ The division of the equestrian procuratorial positions used in Tables 1 and 2 is largely based on Pflaum's classification. See H.-G. Pflaum, *Abrégé des procurateurs équestres. D'après l'article paru en allemande dans l'Encyclopadie classique (Pauly-Wissowa)*, Paris 1974, 60–63.

Table 2. Financial equestrian civil positions of *ducenarius* rank, secretarial positions of *ducenarius*

<i>a rationibus official</i>	D ₁	D ₂	D ₃	D ₄	D ₅	D ₆	D ₇	D ₈	D ₉
1. L. Vibius Lentulus								X	
2. Cn. Pompeius Homullus			X						
3. T. Statilius Optatus									
4. Anonymus 1									
5. L. Valerius Proculus				X			X		
6. M. Petronius Honoratus									
7. Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo									
8. T. Furius Victorinus						X			
9. C. Iunius Flavianus					X				
10. Q. Baenus Blassianus									
11. M. Basseus Rufus					X				
12. Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus	X								
13. T. Flavius Piso									
14. T. Taius Sanctus	X								
15. L. Iulius Iulianus		X							
16. Iulius (Aelius?) Iulianus			X						X
17. Aurelius Felix									
18. Anonymus 2									
19. M. Aurelius Iulianus									
20. Q. Marcius Dioga									

A – Sexagenarii:A₁ procurator ad census Ambianorum, Mur-
rinorum, AtrebiatumA₂ procurator ad census BritanniaeA₃ procurator ad census accipiendos Cappa-
dociae Armeniae minoris Ponti mediter-
raniA₄ procurator ad census GallorumA₅ Procurator ab alimentis (ad alimenta)A₆ procurator ludi matutiniA₇ promagister XX hereditarium**B – Centenarii (the lower class):**B₁ procurator ferrariarumB₂ procurator Pannoniae Superior (or Infe-
rior)**C – Centenarii (the higher class):**C₁ procurator Alpium maritimarumC₂ procurator ad dioecesis AlexandriaeC₃ procurator GalatiaeC₄ procurator monetae**D – Ducenarii (class 1):**D₁ procurator ab epistulis GraecisD₂ procurator Lusitaniae et VettoniaeD₃ procurator BritanniaeD₄ procurator ulterioris Hispaniae BaeticaeD₅ procurator Hispaniae Citerioris per
Asturiam et CallaeciamD₆ procurator Hispaniae Citerioris Tarracon-
ensisD₇ procurator Cappadociae Paflagoniae
GalatiaeD₈ procurator Pannoniae et DalmatiaeD₉ procurator Ponti et Bithyniae**E – Ducenarii (class 2):**E₁ procurator ad patrimonium (patrimonii)E₂ procurator Asiae

and *trecenarius* rank held before, and any prefectures held after the appointment to *a rationibus*

	E ₁	E ₂	E ₃	E ₄	E ₅	E ₆	F ₁	F ₂	G ₁	G ₂	H ₁	H ₂	H ₃	I ₁	I ₂	J ₁	J ₂	J ₃	J ₄
1.		X									X								
2.										X									
3.	X			X												X			
4.					X								X						
5.		X							X							X		X	
6.					X				X							X		X	
7.					X					X						X			
8.						X										X		X	X
9.				X						X						X			
10.			X				X			X						X		X	
11.								X	X								X	X	X
12.																	X		
13.																X		X	
14.												X						X	
15.																X			X
16.			X													X			
17.																			
18.																	X		
19.																			
20.	X													X	X	X	X		

E₃ *procurator Mauretaniae Tingitanae*

E₄ *procurator hereditatium*

E₅ *procurator XX hereditatium*

E₆ *procurator ludi magni*

F – Ducenarii (class 3):

F₁ *procurator Raetiae*

F₂ *procurator Norici*

G – Ducenarii (class 4):

G₁ *procurator Belgicae et duarum Germaniarum (or procurator trium Belgicae et Germaniarum)*

G₂ *procurator Lugdunensis et Aquitanicae*

H – Ducenarii (class or position indeterminate):

H₁ *procurator a loricata*

H₂ *procurator rationis privatae* (according to Pflaum *trecenarius* from the times of Septimius Severus on)

H₃ *procurator provinciae* (ε)

I – Trecenarii:

I₁ *a libellis*

I₂ *ab epistulis Augusti* (Graecis or Latinis)

J – Praefecturae:

J₁ *praefectus annonae*

J₂ *praefectus vigilum*

J₃ *praefectus Aegypti*

J₄ *praefectus praetorio*

Table 3. Geographical origin of the equestrian *a rationibus*¹⁰⁷

Name of the <i>a rationibus</i> official	Rome and Italy	Western provinces	Eastern provinces
1. L. Vibius Lentulus	X		
2. Cn. Pompeius Homullus		X	
3. T. Statilius Optatus	X		
4. L. Valerius Proculus		X	
5. M. Petronius Honoratus	X		
6. Ti. Claudius Secundinus Macedo	X		
7. T. Furius Victorinus	X		
8. C. Iunius Flavianus	X		
9. Q. Baienus Blassianus	X		
10. M. Basseus Rufus	X		
11. Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus			X
12. Q. Larcus Euripianus		X	
13. T. Taius Sanctus		X	
14. P. Licinius Papirianus		X	
15. Iulius (Aelius?) Iulianus			
16. L. Iulius Iulianus	X		
17. Aurelius Felix			X
18. Anonymus 2	X		
19. M. Aurelius Iulianus	X		
20. Q. Marcius Dioga		X	

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¹⁰⁷ In Table 3 I included two equestrian *a rationibus*, Q. Larcus Euripianus (PIR² L 89) and P. Licinius Papirianus (PIR² L 229), whose origin is rather certain. The same as Demougin (*L'ordre équestre sous les julio-claudiens*, Roma 1988, 520–522) and Alföldy (*Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninen. Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Führungsschicht*, Bonn 1977, 61–64, 80) I am counting *Africa Proconsularis* as a ‘Western’ province. The *equites* from this province are Q. Larcus Euripianus, P. Licinius Papirianus and Q. Marcius Dioga. Excluding this highly Romanized and urbanized province (or African provinces other than Egypt in general) from the Western group would only be justified when investigating more officials originating in that part of the Empire, as illustrated by research into the Severan era senators. See D. Okoń, *Imperatores Severi et Senatores. The History of the Imperial Personnel Policy*, Szczecin 2013, 158–162.