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A Note on Loricitis

The late military writer Vegetius noted that the Roman army of the Imperial era kept detailed records of the day to day running of the units, including all financial transactions, and that the paperwork and administration were more complex than anything in civilian life<sup>1</sup>. He also stated that each unit operated a banking system, whereby some of the money due to a soldier was automatically deducted and banked for him (*seposita*), while he could also deposit savings of his own accord (*deposita*). These accounts were administered by the *signiferi*<sup>2</sup>:

'An inspired regulation of the ancients was that half of every bounty the soldiers received was retained at the standards and preserved there for the men, to prevent the other ranks from wasting it through extravagance or the purchase of useless articles. Many men, particularly the poor ones, spend all that they have. This method of compulsorily retaining the money is firstly of use to the men themselves; since they are maintained at public expense, their camp spending-money is increased by a half of every bounty. Secondly, a soldier who knows that his money is deposited at the standards, has no thoughts of deserting, has a greater regard for them, fights more bravely in their defence in battle, as is only human nature; the result is that he has the greatest concern for them, because he sees that his own livelihood depends on them. This money was kept in ten leather money-bags, one for each cohort. There was also an eleventh bag, in which the whole legion placed a small contribution, to ensure a proper funeral; if any other rank died, the cost of burial was met from the money in the eleventh bag. These accounts were kept in chests by the standard-bearers. Therefore men who were chosen as standard-bearers were not only reliable but also educated, so that they would know how to look after these deposits and give accounts for each individual.'

There are many papyri that confirm that such records were in fact kept of the amount of money each soldier received and the various deductions made, of the compulsory and voluntary banking systems, and of the unit's funds<sup>3</sup>. One of the most interesting

<sup>1</sup> Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* 2,19. Cf. SHA, Alexander 21.

<sup>2</sup> Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* 2,20. Cf. Suetonius, Domitianus 7.

<sup>3</sup> The best selection is contained in Sergio Daris, *Documenti per la storia dell'esercito romano in Egitto* (1964) nos. 30-37. The book must be used, however, with a certain amount of caution; cf. my review in *Journ. Rom. Stud.* 56, 1966, 242-243 and that of J. F. Gilliam in *American Journal of Philology* 88, 1967, 99-101.

of these documents is P. Berlin 6866, which has been studied by various scholars<sup>4</sup>. This gives the details for the pay and savings-bank system of an unidentified auxiliary cohort in Egypt in the year A. D. 192. It consists of a series of accounts in tabular form arranged according to the year of enlistment for more than a score of men. A typical example will show the method used<sup>5</sup>:

PRESENTE II ET CONTIANO II COS.

*Rinoc(oruræ) PATHERMUTHIS PTOLEMEI · HELIOPOL(ITANUS)*

*Loricitis in dep(osito) (denarios) C, in viatico (denarios) LXXV  
 accepit stipendi (denarios) LXXXIV ob(olos) XV (dodrantem)  
 ex eo collatio (denarios) IIII ob(olos) XXII s(emis)  
 reliquos tulit (denarios) LXXIX ob(olos) XXI (quadrantem)  
 b[a]bet in dep(osito) (denarios) C, in viatico (denarios) LXXV.*

The collatio is probably the contribution for the burial fund and the equivalent of the four drachmas ad signa deducted from the legionaries<sup>6</sup>. Each of the pedites withdrew as much of his pay as he could and the rest was kept to cover expenses from official sources, such as clothes and equipment. Most of the men have only this amount of savings and enlistment bonus, three have more, and at least six were in debt.

The only difficulty of interpretation of this document is the term *loricitis*, which regularly occurs as the first word of the entry recording the amount of *deposita* and *viaticum* the soldier had. In two instances, however, the word is *loricem*<sup>7</sup>. Various explanations have been put forward for the meaning of the term<sup>8</sup>, but none has as yet been fully accepted. Most scholars have drawn some connection with the Latin word for a breastplate (*lorica*), but differ sharply in their interpretations. There is only one administrative term, which resembles the rather unusual phrase *loricitis*. There was a procuratorial post at Rome called *a loricata*. There are several inscriptions of the first century recording that various freedmen held this post, and there is only one known instance of a member of the Equestrian order holding this office, L. Vibius Lentulus. The title *a loricata* was derived from a statue of Julius Caesar wearing a cuirass (*lorica*); near this statue were kept the Imperial stores of precious metals, for which these procurators were responsible<sup>9</sup>. In view of the close similarity of spelling it is worth considering the possibility that there may in fact be other similarities between the two phrases.

It is well known that the cult of the Imperial Family featured prominently in the official worship of the Roman army, as is revealed most clearly in the *feriale Duranum*<sup>10</sup>. Most units had an *imaginifer*, who carried attached to a pole a bust (*imago*) of the reigning Emperor, just as other soldiers carried the standards (*signifer*

<sup>4</sup> Daris, *op. cit.*, no. 35 gives a detailed bibliography. The best study is that of Robert Marichal, *L'Occupation romaine de la Basse Égypte: le statut des auxilia* (Paris 1945). For the date see R. O. Fink's note in *Syntelexia* Vincenzo Arangio-Ruiz (1964) 233.

<sup>5</sup> P. Berlin 6866, 61–67.

<sup>6</sup> P. Gen. lat. 1 recto Ia 19 and Ib 18; Daris, *op. cit.*, no. 30.

<sup>7</sup> P. Berlin 6866, 95 and 141.

<sup>8</sup> Marichal, *op. cit.*, 61–62, cites and discusses them.

<sup>9</sup> H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (1960–61) 156–158, especially 157, no. 66. I owe the reference and suggestion to Professor J. F. Gilliam; cf. note 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Yale Classical Studies* 7, 1940; P. Dura 54.

or vexillarius), and in the case of a legion the eagle (aquilifer)<sup>11</sup>. There is also good reason to believe that units had statues of the Emperor, which were kept with the various standards in the sacellum in the headquarters building. It was presumably these imagines or statues that Pilate<sup>12</sup> introduced into Jerusalem and that Petronius<sup>13</sup> was to place in the Temple there on the instructions of Gaius. It was the act on the part of the men of legio I and legio V Alaudae at Bonn and Vetera of hurling stones at the *Galbae imagines* at the ceremony of renewing the annual oath of allegiance on 1st January, A. D. 69, that signalled the outbreak of the rebellion in Lower Germany; the troops of legio IV Macedonica and legio XXII Primigenia at Mainz in the Upper province actually tore down the *imagines Galbae*<sup>14</sup>. News of the rebellion was brought to Vitellius, it will be noted, by an aquilifer. It was also time for the next payment of money to the soldiers, and hence, no doubt, the presence of the procurator Pompeius Propinquus at Mainz<sup>15</sup>. Benches on which statues stood, are known in the sacellum at the forts of Chesterholm and Castell Collen. In the third century underground strong-room at Bewcastle were discovered the stone base of an Imperial statue, part of an iron thunderbolt from such a statue, seven iron ferrules from oak shafts for the poles of standards, and a broken shaft sheathed in bronze<sup>16</sup>. Statues of Emperors have been discovered in the sacellum in various forts in Germany: a bronze one of Pius at Saalburg, another in bronze to an unidentified Emperor at Theilhofen, and examples are also known at other forts, including Butzbach and Murrhardt<sup>17</sup>.

The chapel of the standards (sacellum) was the most important part of what was the most important building, as the term *principia* shows<sup>18</sup>. Consequently, a small guard was posted each day to keep watch at the standards<sup>19</sup>. This was partly due to the

<sup>11</sup> A. von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* (1908); revised edition by B. Dobson (Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher Bd. 14 [1967]) 313, 315, 317, 318, for references. – v. Domaszewski, *Die Fahnen im römischen Heere* (1885) *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18,55–59; *Bell. Jud.* 2,169–174.

<sup>13</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18,262 ff.; *Bell. Jud.* 2,184 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* 1,55.

<sup>15</sup> H.-G. Pflaum, *Les procurateurs équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (1950) 155.

<sup>16</sup> *Transactions of Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, new series 38, 1938, 195–237. The base of a statue was also found in the underground strong-room at Corbridge, RIB 1127. A bronze statue-base inscribed with the letter L was removed from a Roman fort somewhere in Scotland, and presumably came from the sacellum. It was designed to fit on the top of a pedestal; on the top of the base were two dowel-holes to hold a statuette. With this were found the foot and lower part of the right leg of a gilded bronze statue of an Emperor, probably of second century date; RIB 2215. Note also the altar found in the underground strong-room at High Rochester associating the genius of the Emperor with the signa of the units, RIB 1262.

<sup>17</sup> R. Cagnat, *L'Armée romaine d'Afrique et l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique sous les empereurs* (second edition 1913) 481. The statue at Murrhardt is described as being in a cave, and presumably comes from an underground strong-room.

<sup>18</sup> For the term *principia* see, for example: RIB 1092 = ILS 2621 (Lanchester); RIB 1912 (Birdoswald); RIB 2145 = ILS 9176 (Rough Castle). – For the chapel, note AE 1962, 258 = *Journ. Rom. Stud.* 51, 1961, 191–192, no. 1 (Reculver): *aedem p[rinci]piorum*; for an improved date for the inscription, *Journ. Rom. Stud.* 55, 1965, 220, no. 1. – Tertullian, *Cor.* 11,3, refers to the temple and the guard at the standards: *Et excubabit pro templis quibus renuntiavit?* – A document of the third century, perhaps a morning report, refers to *in aedem aqui[lae]*, P. Mich. 455a verso 14. Cf. also Cagnat, *op. cit.*, 345.

<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive study of the evidence, see J. F. Gilliam's discussions in *Yale Classical Studies* 11, 1950, 209 ff. and in C. B. Welles, R. O. Fink, J. F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report V, Part I: The Parchments and Papyri* (1959) 270 ff. Cf. also the *excubitorium ad tutel(am) signor(um) e(t) imagin(um) sacrar(um)* at Aquincum (CIL III 3526 = ILS 2355) and Tertullian, *loc. cit.*

great honour in which the standards were held, but the sacellum was also used for another purpose. Vegetius, as has already been noted, stated that the funds of a unit were kept *apud signa*. Excavation has shown that at the fort of Chesterholm there was a special pit in the sacellum, in which the chests containing the money-bags were kept<sup>20</sup>. In many forts there was an underground strong-room under the sacellum, or in some cases under an adjacent office but with the entrance in the chapel. Examples are known from the frontier area of Britain at South Shields, Corbridge, Chesters, Great-chesters, High Rochester, and Bewcastle<sup>21</sup>. One had even been built in the timber principia at Inchtuthil in the time of Agricola<sup>22</sup>.

There is also evidence to show that there were statues of the Emperors outside the sacellum. At the Roman fort at Brough-by-Bainbridge, immediately outside the sacellum and to the right as one entered it, was a large moulded plinth with a dowel-hole in the middle and two T-shaped cramp-holes in front, in one of which part of a bronze clamp still remained; this was presumably intended for a statue, as altars were not normally clamped to their bases<sup>23</sup>. There is also an underground strong-room at this fort; William Camden noted in 1586 that a life-size statue of an Emperor, now known to have been Maximianus Hercules, was discovered on top of a re-used inscription<sup>24</sup>. At Brough-on-Noe was discovered part of the base of an Imperial statue with an inscription, which was later recut; on the top were slots and sockets to secure the statue<sup>25</sup>. At York was discovered the head of a statue of Constantine; it was twice as large as life-size and depicted the Emperor wearing the corona civica. There is good evidence to suggest that it came from the principia and had stood in the open<sup>26</sup>. At the Roman fort at Saalburg two plinths were found flanking the entrance to the sacellum and also the remains of a bronze life-size statue<sup>27</sup>. There are also plinths in similar positions at the forts at Niederberg, Holzhausen, Butzbach, Heddernheim, Buch, and Wiesbaden<sup>28</sup>. In the principia at Bonn were discovered the plumes of a life-size statue, probably of Caracalla, part of a leg, again life-size, and part of the base of a statue of Severus<sup>29</sup>. In A. D. 129 a *primus pilus* set up a statue to Hadrian beside the sacellum at Lambaesis<sup>30</sup>. In the basilica of the principia at this fortress there was a statue-base in front of each of twelve columns<sup>31</sup>. Perhaps the best example is the fort at Gemellae. In the portico of the principia to the left of the sacellum there was the base of a statue with joining marks still on the pedestal; an inscription records that *cohors I Chalcidenorum equitata* in A. D. 126 *statuam de suo posuit*. Opposite this statue there was one of Pertinax, and in the corresponding position to the right

<sup>20</sup> Arch. Aeliana, fourth series 13, 1936, 221.

<sup>21</sup> References will be found under the name of each fort in E. Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (1961). See below for further examples at Brough-by-Bainbridge and Brough-on-Noe, above at Reculver.

<sup>22</sup> Journ. Rom. Stud. 44, 1954, 85.

<sup>23</sup> Proc. of Leeds Philosoph. Soc. 1, 1928, 273.

<sup>24</sup> RIB 723.

<sup>25</sup> Journ. Rom. Stud. 53, 1963, 160, no. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Antiqu. Journ. 29, 1949, 5.

<sup>27</sup> H. Schönberger, *Führer durch das Römerkastell Saalburg* (22. Auflage 1964) 14.

<sup>28</sup> I am indebted for this information to Dr. D. Baatz.

<sup>29</sup> H. Lehner, *Die antiken Steindenkmäler des Provinzialmuseums in Bonn* (1918) no. 17.

<sup>30</sup> CIL VIII 2533; Cagnat, op. cit., 441.

<sup>31</sup> Cagnat, op. cit., 476-478. It seems that each *primus pilus* at the end of his year of office set up a statue to the reigning Emperor.

of the sacellum there was yet another statue, this time to Gordian<sup>32</sup>. It might well be expected that a statue set up in the very heart of the fort would depict the Emperor in military uniform and wearing a lorica<sup>33</sup>. It will be remembered that Gaius, who had received his nickname Caligula from wearing an item of military uniform, on occasions wore the full dress of a triumphing general and the breastplate of Alexander the Great, the most distinguished of the generals of the ancient world<sup>34</sup>. A sword discovered at South Shields depicts an eagle and two standards on one side and the god of war Mars, dressed as a Roman officer and wearing a lorica, on the other<sup>35</sup>.

A procurator holding the post *a loricata* was responsible for Imperial supplies of precious metal. In a Roman fort the unit's funds, which would of course be mostly coins of a reasonably high denomination, were kept in or under the sacellum. In this chapel there were imagines and statues of the Emperor. There is evidence from several forts that there were statue-bases outside the sacellum; these statues must have been of the reigning Emperor, his family, or the Emperor who had the fort built. In order to identify the Emperor with the soldiers – as imperator he was commander-in-chief – he would be depicted wearing his lorica in the most prominent position in the fort. Thus a soldier might easily refer to money kept with the unit's funds as being stored at the statues; the phrase would be the equivalent of the term *apud signa* used three times by Vegetius. Such a use of the locative case and the spelling might not perhaps have received the approbation of Cicero, but it throws light on the important role of the Imperial cult in Roman military life and the paperwork and banking methods of the army. It was the Emperor who was responsible for providing the pay of the soldiers. It was therefore only right that the statues of the Emperor, suitably clad in the lorica, should watch over the savings of his troops, even if, as in this instance, the amounts of money were not large.

<sup>32</sup> J. Baradez, *Fossatum Africae* (1949) 103–104 with 102, photos A and B; *AE* 1950, 58–60. Colonel Baradez believes that the statue to Hadrian was set up there before work on the principia was completed.

<sup>33</sup> The statues of Caracalla at Bonn and Constantine at York in particular strongly suggest this.

<sup>34</sup> Suetonius, *Gaius* 52. For the historical setting and interpretation see J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius* (1934) 51 ff.

<sup>35</sup> J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans* (1964) 300 and pl. LXVII.