

XV.—*Centuria Rufi, Centuria Rufiana, and the Ranking of Centuries*

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In a report published in 1947 on the organization of the *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum* as revealed by the Dura papyri,¹ I expressed the belief that not much more evidence on that topic could be got from them. The recognition and placing in 1950 of an additional large fragment of the largest rosters, DP 12, recto and verso, promptly demonstrated that that belief was premature and rendered much of my report obsolete. On the other hand, the new fragment brought about the identification of all the centuries in the extant portion of both of these rosters, and so pointed the way to the conclusions presented here.

The first new fact to emerge is that in spite of Hyginus Gromaticus' clear statement (*De munitionibus castrorum* 27) that a *cohors equitata miliaria* had ten centuries of *pedites*, the *XX Palmyrenorum* had only six centuries. The evidence for this appears conclusive. Not only do the two great rosters, DP 12, recto and verso, contain only six centuries each, but they are the same six, though in a different order; and three other name-lists (DP 11 recto, 16 recto, and 16 verso) continue to deal with the same six centuries with still further variations in order. Three additional texts which contain centurions' names (DP 11 verso, 3 recto, and 9 verso) never mention more than six; but one has that many (DP 9 verso) and another (DP 11 verso) probably did when complete. The third, it is true, states in its totals that 9 centurions are present (DP 3, col. i, 1 and 9): but it actually names only five, and in view of the evidence of the other texts it seems most probable that three of those present were supernumeraries.^{1a} The totals in the great rosters also favor the belief that the six centuries contained in the extant part represent the whole strength of the cohort's infantry force, for they amount to about 850–860 on the recto and 750–760 on the verso.

¹ "The *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum*, a *Cohors Equitata Miliaria*," *TAPA* 78 (1947) 159–70.

^{1a} DP 3 recto has been published in full by J. F. Gilliam, "Some Latin Military Papyri from Dura," *YCS* 11 (1950) 209–46.

These figures agree reasonably well with Hyginus' report of 760 *pedites* in a *cohors equitata miliaria*; but if one adds four more centuries the totals will run up to 1425 on the recto and about 1260 on the verso for infantry alone.

Unless therefore some cogent reason can be found for assuming the existence of 10 centuries in this cohort, it seems better to admit that there were only six; but how to explain the discrepancy between Hyginus and the evidence of the Dura papyri is another problem for the solution of which we have at present no materials. It is possible on the one hand that the entire structure of *cohortes equitatae miliariae* had been reorganized in the time between the *De munitionibus castrorum*² and the date of our papyri; but it is also possible on the other hand that the *XX Palmyrenorum* was unique in this respect.

The order of the centuries, mentioned above, can now be traced through seven texts which are distributed over the years A.D. 218, 219, 222, 222–228, 223–228, 232, and 233–235 — DP 11 recto, 12 recto and verso, 16 recto and verso, 11 verso, and 3 recto respectively. In the first the century of Danymus leads, followed by those of Marcus, Antoninus, and Marianus and the *centuria Malchiana* and *centuria Seleuciana* in that order; but in DP 12 recto the next year the former *Seleuciana*, now commanded by Alexandrus Castricius, has moved up to fourth place, just after the century of Antoninus, while that of Marianus has fallen to fifth place and *Malchiana* is last. Three years later, however, in DP 12 verso, *Malchiana*, possibly under a new centurion, though we do not know, has risen to first place; the centuries of Danymus and

² The date of this work, which traditionally goes under the name of Hyginus Gromaticus, is not readily determined. Domaszewski argues in his edition (Leipzig 1887), pp. 69–72, that it must have been composed in the first half of the second century, probably in Trajan's reign. This follows from the fact that it names as *symmacharii* and *nationes* — that is, irregulars without Roman organization who get orders by word of mouth and in their own language (ch. 43 and Domaszewski, p. 66) — Daci as well as Cantabri, Gaetuli, Palmyreni, and Brittones (ch. 29–30). Dacians would not have been found before Trajan; but in Hadrian's time and later all of these are found organized as either *numeri* or *cohortes* and *alae*.

Schanz-Hosius, however (*Gesch. d. röm. Lit.* 2⁴ [Munich 1935] 801), ignore Domaszewski's arguments and place the work in the third century on the grounds of language. But since the author speaks of himself as a *tiro* and claims "in brevi omnes auctores sum persecutus" (ch. 45), it seems very probable that the factual material in the *De mun. castr.* may belong to an early period even though the time of composition is late. This is also essentially the view of H. T. Rowell in *RE* s.v. "Numerus," cols. 1329–31. Certainly there is conscious antiquarianism in ch. 57: "Iniqua loca, quae a prioribus 'novercae' appellantur."

Marcus are second and third; that of Marianus has risen to fourth place; Castricius has been replaced by another Antoninus, here called *prior*, and his century is now in fifth place; and the century of the earlier Antoninus, now called *posterior*, has fallen from third to last place. The same order continues in DP 16 recto; but in 16 verso, between A.D. 223 and 228, *Malchiana* drops to last place again under a newcomer named Pudens and all the other centuries move up one place. A second newcomer, Gaianus, appears in 11 verso in A.D. 232. His century, too, has dropped to the foot of the list, pushing the centuries of Marianus, the two Antonini, and Pudens up one place further without changing their relative positions. Whether the century of Danymus or that of Marcus was taken over by Gaianus, and which of the two remained in top place, cannot be ascertained. Finally, DP 3 recto produces another new centurion, Nigrinus, who seems to have taken over the century of Antoninus *posterior* and who is certainly at the bottom of the list of centurions. Marianus, one Antoninus, Pudens, and Gaianus are also present, though nothing can be said of their rankings except that none of them is in first place and that Nigrinus is below Marianus and Gaianus below Antoninus. It should be emphasized that except in DP 3 the centuries have been identified, not merely by the names of their commanders, for these names are often missing, but by the names of the personnel composing the century. This outline of the shifts in the relative positions of the centuries appears to be ample proof of my former suggestion that when centurions were promoted or demoted within the same unit the entire century followed the fortunes of its commander.³

³ *Op. cit.* 166-67 and 170. But the referee for this paper calls attention to a difficulty here: "I believe that the author's statement . . . should be modified to state that the order varied with the seniority of the respective centurions. Not only is this the usual military terminology, but I question whether demotion was ever frequent. Demotion is a serious military penalty, imposed only for conspicuous failure or dereliction of duty, and if applied often it would demoralize the officer corps. On the other hand, promotion would occur according to priority in terms of service or by advancement over seniors in terms of service for conspicuous achievement. This does not mean the demotion of those passed by. The term 'seniority' covers all situations."

I am glad to have this clear statement from one who is obviously an experienced military man. There can be no question, I believe, that the principle of seniority of service was operative when Pudens, Gaianus, and Nigrinus all started their commands in the *coh. XX* at the bottom of the list. Similarly, 'seniority' of merit probably accounts for the advance of the last-place *centuria Seleuciana* to fourth place under Castricius in DP 12 recto, and of the *centuria Malchiana* from last place in DP 12 recto to first place in DP 12 verso. The fortunes of Antoninus *posterior*, however, though explicable on the same principle, appear quite possibly to have been a genuine case of

The vicissitudes of the *centuria Seleuciana* also make clear the meaning of the vacillation in our sources between designating a century or a cavalry squadron (*turma*) by the name of its commander in the genitive (*centuria Rufi*) and by using his name in the adjectival form (*centuria Rufiana*). Both are found in great numbers of inscriptions as well as many papyri; and in the absence of any obvious indication that there was a distinction in meaning, it was natural to conclude, as I once did, that the alternation of genitive and adjective was merely stylistic,⁴ just as one may speak of either *familia Caesaris* or *familia Caesariana*, of *imperium consulis* or *imperium consulare*. Now, however, the progression from *centuria Seleuci* in DP 13, A.D. 216, through *centuria Seleuciana* in DP 11 recto, A.D. 218, to *centuria Castrici* in DP 12 recto, A.D. 219, makes it clear that the adjectival form of the centurion's name was used only in an interim period when one centurion — in this case Seleucus — had been removed from active command by death, discharge, transfer, or some other cause and his successor had not yet been appointed. Under such circumstances there was no choice but to go on designating the century or *turma* by some form of the last commander's name.⁵ The designation with the genitive, on the other hand (*centuria Rufi*) showed that Rufus was in actual charge.

demotion. His century was in third place in DP 11 recto and 12 recto, with those of Castricius and Marianus and the Malchiana below him. But in the period between DP 12 recto and 12 verso, not only was the Malchiana moved up to first place, but also the century of Marianus was advanced to fourth place, following Marcus', and the century of Castricius, the former Seleuciana and now under a newcomer, Antoninus *prior*, is given fifth place, leaving Antoninus *posterior* in last place instead of third, by-passed by two new appointees and by Marianus, formerly his inferior, as well.

⁴ "The *Feriale Duranum*," *YCS* 7 (1940) 88, note 288.

⁵ I am pleased to discover that Prof. Eric Birley has arrived at this same view independently and on the basis of different evidence, apparently through a brilliant deduction from a single inscription; but since he has published his conclusions in a journal not particularly accessible outside of England ("Some Roman Military Inscriptions," *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 51 [1952] 71-72. Now also in book form, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* [Kendal 1953] 128-29. I owe the references to my friend Prof. J. F. Gilliam of the University of Iowa.) as an *obiter dictum* in an article concerned with other topics, and particularly because his evidence, though it led him to a correct inference, is something less than conclusive proof, it is worth while to report the data of the papyri and of other inscriptions which clinch the matter.

Birley's inscription is *CIL* VI 3211, in which P. Aelius Lucanus, a centurion of the Legio VII Gemina, appears as the heir of T. Aurelius Mansuetinus, an *eques singularis* of the *turma Lucaniana*. As Birley correctly saw, Lucanus was left Mansuetinus' heir because he was formerly Mansuetinus' *decurion*, and the *turma* retains his name even though he is now attached to a legion.

This interpretation is confirmed by a variety of evidence. In DP 11 recto, 12 recto, and 12 verso the rosters of the individual centuries all begin alike when the centurion's name is used in the genitive. In one line are the symbol for *centuria*, the centurion's cognomen in the genitive, and the year of the centurion's enlistment, followed in the next line by his title, expressed as the abbreviation *ord*,⁶ and his full name in the nominative. A typical example is DP 11 recto, col. 4, 16–17:

(centuria) Antonini, Victorino cos
ord(inarius) Domittius Antoninus

The rosters of the *turmae* begin in precisely the same fashion. But when the century is identified by a centurion's name in adjectival form, the second line contains the name of a different person and one of lower rank, as in DP 12 recto, col. 26, 13–14:

(centuria) Malchian[a], Diuo Seuero ii cos
[si]ng[ul(aris)] d[u]pl(icarius) Aure[l(ius)] d[. . .]d[. . .].

and DP 11 recto, col. 10, 27–28:

(centuria) Seleuciana, Tertullo cos
[Za]bdibolus Malaçheli

The consulships, too, in these entries are not those of the centurions' enlistments, but of the men whose names follow in the next line. This is proved both by the fact that Aurel(ius) Zaidibolus M[al-acheli] is found under the date *Tertullo cos* in DP 12 recto, col. 16, 15–16, when the *centuria Seleuciana* has become the *centuria Castrici*, and by the fact that *centuria Malchiana* is accompanied in the entry just cited by *Divo Severo ii cos* but in DP 11 recto, col. 8, 11 by *Anullino ii cos*. All of this simply means that the company was without a centurion for the time being; and so of course his year of enlistment and his name do not appear.

Subsidiary evidence in support of this view is found in DP 11 verso and 9 verso. The former of these, dated A.D. 232, has a *turma Cocei*; but the latter, about A.D. 240, has a *turma Coceiana*, though the names of all the other centurions and decurions are in the genitive. In the same way *CIL* VI 1064 and 1063 show a *centuria*

⁶ *ord(inarius)* or *ord(inatus)*. See J. Frank Gilliam, "The *Ordinarii* and *Ordinati* of the Roman Army," *TAPA* 71 (1940) 127–48.

Decembris in the earlier text and a *centuria Decembriana* in the later, where again the names of the other centurions are all in the genitive.⁷

Although this point may therefore be regarded as demonstrated, an entry in DP 12 verso occasions some difficulty. The first century on the verso, as stated above, is the century designated in DP 11 recto as the *centuria Malchiana*; but the first fifteen or twenty lines of the roll of this company are lost and with them its current designation. In the list of the *dromedarii*, however, who were attached to this century, one finds in col. 43, 15 (*centuria*) *Malchi*. This sudden revival of the genitive form after a year or so of *Malchiana* is disturbing; but it is susceptible of a variety of explanations: first, it may be the result of copying from an old record or of a clerk's lapse of memory; second, Malchus may have returned to the command of the century after a period of absence or duty elsewhere; third, since the name Malchus is very common at Dura, one centurion with the cognomen Malchus may have been succeeded by a different man whose cognomen was also Malchus. The position of the century at the head of the list may mean that it now has a centurion; but even that is not certain, for in *CIL* VI 1063 the *centuria Decembriana* has moved up to third place from fourth after losing its centurion.

The net result, then, of this further work on the Dura rosters is to show that the *coh. XX Palmyrenorum*, and perhaps all *cohortes equitatae miliariae* in the third century, had only six centuries of *pedites*, that these centuries changed their relative position in the lists according to the status of their centurions, and that the designation of a century by its commander's name in the genitive shows that he is in actual command, whereas his name in the adjectival form shows that the century is for the time being without a centurion.

⁷ Conversely, the presence of the *centuria Celeriniana* in *CIL* VI 32623 (*Ephemeris Epigraphica* 4. no. 892) line 24, is evidence that this inscription is later than *CIL* VI 32625 (= 2386), which has a *centuria Celerini*.