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THE CASTRA PEREGRINA AND THE 'PEREGRINI'

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 74 (1988) 148

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On the basis of an inscription from Tuccabor, it has been argued¹ that there existed a separate category of (citizen) troops known as 'Peregrini'. The inscription refers to C.Sulgius Caecilianus as *optioni peregrinorum et exercitatori militum frumentariorum*. On the face of it, this looks like a man in charge of one class of troops being involved in the training of men from another group. But a closer look suggests that there is no real evidence for these 'Peregrini'. Wherever the word *peregrinorum* appears, it can more plausibly be regarded, not as a genitive plural of *peregrini*, but as a genitive plural of *peregrina* with *castra* understood. Thus Caecilianus in the inscription above was *optio (castrorum) peregrinorum*. Although the title *princeps peregrinorum* (and *subprinceps peregrinorum*) commonly appears, the full correct form of the title is demonstrated by the dedication by L.Ceius Privatus (CIL VI 354 = ILS 2218): *....quod....subprinceps voverat, princeps castr(orum) peregrinorum v.s.l.m.* *Princeps* was a title which could be combined with the name of an organization (rather than a body of men), e.g. *princeps praetorii*, and the full formal title of the head of the *castra peregrina* is clearly *princeps castrorum peregrinorum*. The correct title of the Rome headquarters of the *frumentarii* was not *castra peregrinorum*, as often given, but *castra peregrina*, as is confirmed by Ammianus Marcellinus.² And although the wording of CIL VI 3328: *optio mil. peregr.* suggests the possibility that *milites peregrini* may have been wrongly applied, in popular usage, to the men who served in the *castra peregrina*, 'Peregrini' can be dismissed as the official name for any formal body of troops.

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¹ CIL VIII 14854 = ILS 2764: P.K.Baillie Reynolds, JRS XIII, 1923,173-4, accepted by W.G.Sinniogen, MMAR 27.1962,213 note 3.

² XVI, 12,66: *in castris peregrinis, quae in monte sunt Caelio.*