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A GUARDSMAN AS OFFICER OF IRREGULARS

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A singularis consularis promoted to centurion or decurion of a numerus

An inscribed votive stone from Apulum bears a dedication to Iuppiter Dolichenus or Depulsor (fig. 1).¹ Broken on all sides (plate XVIIIa), the inscription reveals only a part of the dedicant's identity: M. Iul(ius) Gracilis, *ex sing(ularibus)*.



Fig. 1. Inscription of Iulius Gracilis from Apulum

Gracilis clearly came from the governor's guard of *equites* or *pedites singulares*, but what was his rank? The ligature before the word *ex* so far has been taken for *b(ene) f(iciarius)* - wrongly so, for a third letter, an I, sits atop the two others. *Tib(iscensium)* is the only meaningful expansion of the three letters. Gracilis, therefore, had become under officer in a unit of *Tibiscenses*. Two such units are known,² and since four or five letters have to be restored on the left, Gracilis was either

¹ I.I.Russu, 'Note Epigrafice, Inscriptii din Apulum', *Studii Clasice* 12, 1970, 161-170, no 2 (whence our drawing and photograph); M.P.Speidel, *Guards of the Roman Armies. An Essay on the Singulares of the Provinces*, Bonn 1978, 90 (whence AE 1978, 662); M.Hörig-E.Schwertheim, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni*, Leiden 1987, 155; E.Schallmayer et al., *Der römische Weihebezirk von Osterburken I*, Stuttgart 1990, 394f.

² For irregular units see P.Southern, 'The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army', *Britannia* 20, 1989, 81-140. To the literature given there add; M.Lenoir, *Pseudo-Hygin, Des Fortifications du Camp*, Paris 1979, 78ff; G.Forni, *Esercito e Marina di Roma Antica*, (= *Mavors* 5), Stuttgart 1992, 454 (index); M.P.Speidel, *Roman Army Studies II*, (= *Mavors* 8), Stuttgart 1992, 424 (index); for their under officers idem, 'Der Circitor und der Untergang des Numerus Cattharensium beim Fall des Obergermanischen Limes', *Saalburg Jahrbuch*

[7 (centurio) n(umeri) Pal]m(yrenorum) Tib(iscensium)

or

[dec(urio) n(umeri)] M(aurorum) Tib(iscensium).

It is even possible, though not likely, that Gracilis became *p(rae)p(ositus)*, commander of one of these units.

The inscription thus may have read:

[I(ovi) O(ptimo)] M(aximo) D(olicheno).

[Pro salu]tem do-

[minoru]m nnn(ostrorum) [Se-]

[veri et An]tonini e[t]

[Getae, sua], suorumq(ue)

[omnium], Iul(ius) Gracilis

[7 (centurio) n(umeri) Pal]m(yrenorum) Tib(iscensium) ex sing(ularibus)

[co(n)s(ularis) ---

Alae and auxiliary cohorts often received under officers from the governors' *singulares* guards to uphold their training and discipline. Our inscription shows, for the first time, that the irregular units of the *numeri* were treated in the same way. Dating to the years 198-211, our text adds to the evidence for a growing Romanization of such foreign-recruited units.

The phrase *ex singularibus* is noteworthy, for here the dedicant is still alive, hence a transfer or promotion from the *singulares* must be meant.³ By contrast, on a gravestone, or when no other unit is given, the same phrase might merely indicate the unit of the deceased or dedicant. The promotion of Gracilis, in turn, adds to the likelihood that in other cases promotions are meant as well.⁴ The guards of the governors, like those of the emperors, thus served as schools for officers. It is not all coincidence that *singulares consularis* as members of the staff (*officium*) of a governor were *officarii*, the term from which comes our word 'officer'.⁵

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46,1991,148. *Mauri Tibiscenses*: IDR III/I, 156 (Tibiscum); CIL VIII, 9368 = 20944 (Cherchel); *Palmyreni Sagittarii*: IDR III/I, p.278 (index).

³ Likewise on dedications of the emperors' horse guard: M.P.Speidel, *Die Denkmäler der Kaiserreiter*, Bonn 1994, nos. 15; 37; 60, 751, 752.

⁴ See Speidel 1978,51. Indication of one's current unit with *ex* is unlikely, according to Th.Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, Berlin 1913, 429ff. For promotions being meant see M.A.Speidel, 'Miles ex cohorte. Zur Bedeutung der mit *ex* eingeleiteten Truppenangaben auf Soldateninschriften', ZPE 95,1993,190-196, esp. p.194.

⁵ M.P.Speidel, *Riding for Caesar. The Roman Emperor's Horse Guard*, London 1994 (forthcoming). *Singulares in officio eius*: CIL III, 14387 f; Speidel 1978,19f.

