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THE ΣΤΡΑΤΑΡΧΗΣ OF *LEGIO VI FERRATA* AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF CAMP
PREFECTS AS VEXILLATION COMMANDERS

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THE ΣΤΡΑΤΑΡΧΗΣ OF *LEGIO VI FERRATA*
AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF CAMP PREFECTS AS VEXILLATION COMMANDERS¹

In November 66, during the early stages of the Jewish War, Cestius Gallus was taking the outer suburbs of Jerusalem and would have captured the city forthwith, we are told, had he not been diverted from an immediate attempt, primarily by Turranius Priscus, a στρατοπεδάρχης (*praefectus castrorum*) in his army.² Later attempts failed to take the city, and once Cestius had decided to withdraw, his army was quickly set upon by the rebellious Judaeans and consequently suffered numerous casualties during the retreat, one of whom Josephus says was ‘Priscus’ – this time, the ‘στρατάρχης of the Sixth Legion’.³ The two passages have often been overlooked,⁴ and the title στρατάρχης at *BJ* 2.544 has been translated both as *legatus legionis* and *praefectus castrorum*.⁵ Because of the varied interpretations of στρατάρχης, the above names, i.e. ‘Turranius Priscus’ and ‘Priscus’, have nearly always been dissociated as being those of different officers.⁶ However, an examination of the *Bellum Judaicum* and other evidence reveals that Josephus did not use the term στρατάρχης as the technical equivalent of any specific rank in the Roman army, but rather as a more general word for ‘commander’ or ‘leader’. The picture which emerges is that Turranius Priscus and Priscus were one and the same person, and that while this officer held the ‘rank’ of *praefectus castrorum*, (στρατοπεδάρχης) ‘his assignment’ at the time of Cestius’s campaign was as the commander (στρατάρχης) of a vexillation from the Sixth Legion. This is significant, as the notion that camp prefects could even command legionary vexillations on campaign from as early as the first century has only recently been raised.

Unfortunately, we have no epigraphic or other literary evidence for the commanders of the Sixth Legion between *c.* 19 and 70,⁷ which might otherwise confirm or disprove a translation of στρατάρχης

¹ I would like to thank Dr. D.J. Breeze, Dr. B. Dobson, Dr. L.J.F. Keppie and the staff of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland for their helpful comments, without in any way committing them to the views expressed.

² Joseph. *BJ* 2.531. All references which follow are from Josephus’s *Bellum Judaicum* unless otherwise stated.

³ 2.544.

⁴ E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ 175 BC–AD 135* (English version revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar, Vol. 1, Edinburgh 1973), 487f.; E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*, 2nd edn. (Leiden 1981), 296ff.; A.K. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War* (Oxford 1996), 84–90. All of the above works pass over the event without comment. M. Gichon, Cestius Gallus’s Campaign in Judaea, *PalEQ* 113 (1981) 39–63, 43, mentions the events and Priscus’s title but does not attempt to interpret στρατάρχης. See also E. Dabrowa, The Commanders of Syrian Legions, 1st–3rd c. AD, in *The Roman Army in the East*, D.L. Kennedy ed. (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series No. 18 (Ann Arbor, MI 1996)), 277–296, 285f., who, in view of the controversy over this term, is surprisingly silent on the passage.

⁵ ‘*Legatus legionis*’: H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis* (American Studies in Papyrology Vol. 13 (Toronto 1974)), 86. Similarly, ‘general of an army’ in H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised and Augmented by H. Stuart Jones (Oxford 1968), 1651; and ‘commander’ in H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Jewish War* (Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge Massachusetts 1927–28)), 532f. ‘*Praefectus castrorum*’: D.B. Saddington, *Early Imperial Praefecti Castrorum*, *Historia* 45 (1996), 244–252, 249. Cf. *PIR*¹ T 299 where στρατάρχης is translated as *praefectus castrorum* and στρατοπεδάρχης as *praefectus exercitus*.

⁶ De Rohden (or Dessau) in *PIR*¹ T 299 argues that the two men are scarcely the same person (*vix idem*). This is also the tacit implication of Mason’s translation of στρατάρχης and στρατοπεδάρχης (*op. cit.*, 86–87); and likewise Liddell and Scott’s (*op. cit.*, 1651 and 1653). Saddington (*op. cit.*, 249 and n. 19), in his chronological list of prefects, records the two names separately and states that “the relation of Priscus στρατάρχης τάγματος ἕκτου to Turranius Priscus is not clear”. R. Syme (*Praefecti Castrorum, Germania* 16 (1932), 108–11, 109, n. 7), on the other hand, tentatively lists the officer at *BJ* 2.544 as “(Turranius?) Priscus”, while R. Saxer (*Untersuchungen zu den Vexillationen des römischen Kaiserheers von Augustus bis Diocletian, Epigraphische Studien* 1 (Cologne 1967), No. 12, n. 61), following Ritterling (*Legio*, in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie*, Vols. 12.1 and 12.2, ed. G. Wissowa (Stuttgart 1924–25), 1186–1838, 1257), views the two men as one and the same person, but without justification or comment on the relevance of this association.

⁷ Dabrowa, 1996, *op. cit.*, 285f.

as meaning *legatus legionis*. Our dilemma, moreover, is not alleviated by the fact that Josephus uses the term στρατόρχης on only one occasion, i.e. to describe the above Priscus. An appropriate starting point, therefore, is to examine the language which Josephus uses to indicate the rank of *legatus legionis*. Mason lists three words which are used by Greek writers for this rank, two of which appear in Josephus, i.e. ἄγων and ταξίαρχος.⁸ While Josephus uses ἄγων (leading) on a single occasion to indicate that Sextus Cerealis was the legate of the Fifth Legion,⁹ the word, in itself, is not the technical equivalent of *legatus legionis*, but instead relies solely on the context of the sentence to take on this meaning. Similarly, Josephus does not appear to use ταξίαρχος as a term for this rank either, but rather as a term for ‘senior officers’ in general (e.g. οἱ ταξίαρχοι πάντες).¹⁰

Obviously Josephus employed another term for *legatus legionis* and this is ἡγεμών.¹¹ Of the eleven instances in which Josephus refers to legionary legates by name, ἡγεμών is used on ten occasions.¹² But on most occasions (26 in all) Josephus simply refers to anonymous ‘ἡγεμόνες’ under more senior commanders, such as Mark Antony, Vespasian, Mucianus and Titus.¹³ This use of the word is clearly meant to include the legionary commanders on most, if not all, occasions. Indeed, some of the best examples of the employment of ἡγεμών for *legatus legionis* appear in Josephus’s description of the Roman army’s order of march into Galilee,¹⁴ and in his account of the organisation of the Jewish army along Roman lines.¹⁵ This aside, Josephus curiously uses the word ἑπαρχος – a term widely attested as the equivalent of *praefectus*¹⁶ – on a single occasion to describe Sex. Vettulenus Cerealis, the legate of V Macedonia.¹⁷

That Josephus is usually consistent in the terminology he employs for Roman army ranks is supported by the fact that he nearly always describes commanders above the rank of legionary legate, such as Vespasian, by the term στρατηγός¹⁸ and those below the rank by terms such as ἑπαρχος (*praefectus*)¹⁹ and χιλίαρχος (tribune).²⁰ Thus, if Priscus had been a legionary legate, we would expect Jose-

⁸ Mason, *op. cit.*, 191. The third term which is not used by Josephus is ‘μυρίαρχος’ (see Polyaeus, *Strat.* 1).

⁹ 6.237: Σέξτου Κεραλίου τὸ πέμπτον ἄγοντος τάγμα.

¹⁰ 3.87. ταξίαρχος appears eight times in the *Bellum Judaicum*, each time in the plural, i.e. Roman officers: 3.84, 88; 5.121; and Judaean officers: 1.369, 461, 491, 673; 2.578.

¹¹ *Contra* Mason, *op. cit.*, 147f., who implies that, although ἡγεμών is common on inscriptions and in literature for *legatus*, there are only a few examples in Josephus where it is used for *legatus legionis* (notably ἡγεμών τάγματος: 2.510).

¹² Sex. Vettulenus Cerealis (legate of V Macedonia): 4.552, 6.131, 133, 237; M. Ulpius Trajan (legate of X Fretensis): 3.289, 4.450; A. Larcus Lepidus Sulpicianus (Trajan’s replacement as legate of X Fretensis): 6.237; Caesennius Gallus (legate of XII Fulminata): 2.510; Titus Flavius Vespasianus (legate of XV Apollinaris): 3.483; Titus Phrygius (Titus’ replacement as legate of XV Apollinaris): 6.237. M. Antonius Primus is also referred to as ἡγεμών, although Josephus 4.633 does not inform us that he was legate of VII Gemina. The only other word used to describe a named legionary legate is ἑπαρχος: 3.310.

¹³ 1.162, 198; 3.347, 532; 4.366, 377, 592, 603, 624, 627; 5.118, 126, 349, 491, 502, 503, 511, 554; 6.71, 243, 255, 260, 266, 284; 7.6, 31, 123.

¹⁴ 3.122.

¹⁵ 2.578. Not surprisingly, Josephus also employs ἡγεμών to describe a number of other leading personages, e.g. Jewish generals or leaders: 1.308, 356, 491, 673; 2.78, 434, 568, 577; 3.19, 20, 26; 4.224, 235, 271, 318, 521, 525; 5.250, 290, 309, 391; 6.92, 361, 378, 380, 381; 7.118; 441. Roman governors and prefects: 1.398, 537, 617; 2.239, 493; 7.59, 220, 304, 433, 439, 441. Roman commanders in chief: 1.165; 3.32, 443; 5.87, 93.

¹⁶ E.g. 3.122; *IG* 5.1.538; *AE* 1955, 260; Plut. *Galba* 8; Mason, *op. cit.*, 138–40. See also H. Devijver, Some Observations on Greek Terminology for the *Militiae Equestres* in the Literary, Epigraphical and Papyrological Sources, *Zetesis. Album amicorum E. de Strycker* (Antwerpen–Utrecht 1973), 549–565, 552f.

¹⁷ 3.310.

¹⁸ Vespasian: 3.33, 128, 188, 218, 238, 239, 281, 298, 340, 348, 410, 451, 456; 4.39, 410. Sex. Lucilius Bassus (legate of Judaea): 7.200, 206. L. Flavius Silva (legate of Judaea): 7.275, 407. Cf. 3.32, 443 for the use of ἡγεμών to describe Vespasian. Cf. also Josephus, who likewise counts himself as a στρατηγός: 3.386, 390, 436.

¹⁹ E.g. 2.450, 544; 3.122; 5.48. The same term is also used once for the Prefect of Egypt: 6.237, once for a Roman governor: 6.304 and once for the legate of *Legio V* Macedonia, see fn. 17.

²⁰ E.g. 1.230, 234, 235; 2.11 *bis*, 244, 335, 544, 578; 3.59, 87, 122, 324, 325, 344, 346; 4.636, 640; 5.48, 503 *bis*; 6.131, 238.

phus to have described him as the ἡγεμών (or perhaps as the ἑπαρχος) of the Sixth Legion. That he is not so described suggests that Josephus was not implying this rank by the use of στρατάρχης. We are still left, therefore, with the problem of what Josephus meant by στρατάρχης.

στρατάρχης is not a commonly attested word, surviving in only 67 literary and one epigraphic example,²¹ and an examination of its employment in a few of these cases will suffice to illustrate how Josephus most likely intended στρατάρχης to be understood. Regrettably, our sole epigraphic example is highly fragmentary and sheds little light on our understanding of the word:

- Κασσιανὸς δούξ ἰσχυ[ρὸς? -----]
 ἀνὴρ στρατάρχης ἐν -----
 ἵππασίαις κρᾶτιστος -----
 δεινὸς νο . . -----²²

The inscription gives Cassianus the title of δούξ (*dux*), which is attested from as early as the reign of Domitian, and was originally used to denote the commander of an operation or the commander of vexillations.²³ The fact that both δούξ and στρατάρχης appear on the same inscription appears to argue that they have quite different meanings, but just what the relationship is between the two is impossible to say.²⁴ All we can say is that Cassianus was a seemingly capable officer who is mentioned both as *dux* and στρατάρχης.

The surviving literary evidence of στρατάρχης, on the other hand, is far more helpful. Herodotus, Philo and Zonaras each use στρατάρχης in the sense of a ‘general of an army’.²⁵ This use of the word appears to support Liddell and Scott’s suggested translation of στρατάρχης, i.e. ‘general of an army’, and, in a Roman context, Mason’s translation as ‘*legatus legionis*’. But Philo elsewhere uses στρατάρχης as a word to describe God, or to denote a religious ‘leader’ of the people, such as Moses.²⁶ Obviously a translation of ‘general’ in these circumstances is inappropriate, and consequently casts doubt on the intended meaning of the earlier examples just cited, in which a translation of ‘commander’ or ‘leader’ fits equally well. However, it is Philo’s use of the word to describe the events leading up to the arrest of A. Avilius Flaccus (prefect of Egypt *c.* AD 32–38), which perhaps gives us the greatest insight into its use. Bassus, the centurion sent to effect the arrest, was anxious for military support upon his arrival and ordered one of the soldiers on duty in Alexandria to show him the house of the ‘στρατάρχης’, here clearly standing for the *praefectus castrorum Aegypti*,²⁷ which elsewhere is recorded in Greek as the στρατοπεδάρχης τῶν ἀπὸ Ἀλεξανδρείας δύο ταγμάτων.²⁸ Of central importance is the fact that Philo came from a wealthy family in Alexandria and lived all of his life under Roman

²¹ The word στρατάρχης is notably missing in the works of: Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Appian, Plutarch, Dio Cassius and Arrian. Although it survives in only one epigraphic example in relation to the command of soldiers, it is also attested on 15 occasions as a proper name, e.g. *IG XII*, 1, 46.

²² *Inventaire Thessalonique* 16, 8. Cf. *IG X 2*, 45.

²³ See *ILS* 9200; 1141–2; R.E. Smith, *Dux, Praepositus*, *ZPE* 36 (1979) 263–278, 273f.

²⁴ Cf. C. Velius Rufus (*ILS* 9200), who is described both as ‘*dux*’ and ‘*praefectus vexillariorum*’.

²⁵ *Hdt.* 3.157; 8.44; Philo, *De Virtutibus* 77; *In Flacc.* 111; Zonar. 8.21; 11.15 (covering Dio Cassius, *Fragments of Book 13* and 64.10).

²⁶ Philo, *De Decalogo* 53; *De Vita Mosis* 2.273; *De Praemiis et Poenis* 95.

²⁷ *In Flacc.* 111: γενομένης δ’ ἑσπέρας, ἡ μὲν ναὺς προσέσχευεν, ὁ δὲ Βάσσοσ μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων ἀποβὰς προῆει, μήτε γνωρίζων τινὰ μήτε γνωριζόμενος ὑπὸ του, στρατιώτην δὲ τινὰ τῶν ἐν τοῖς τετραδίσις φυλάκων καθ’ ὁδὸν εὐρῶν κελεύει δεικνύναι τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ στρατάρχου. The *praefectus castrorum Aegypti* was in charge of the double camp at Alexandria, see B. Dobson, *Praefectus Castrorum Aegypti* – a reconsideration, *Chronique d’Egypte* 57, No. 114 (1982), 322–37, 237; D.B. Saddington, *Early Imperial Praefecti Castrorum*, *Historia* 45/2 (1996), 244–252, 245.

²⁸ 6.238.

rule.²⁹ He, therefore, must have known the technical title of the military commander in Egypt.³⁰ But it may well be that the use of such a technical and specifically Roman term like στρατοπεδάρχης, with its implication of a camp commander, would have been less relevant to his Greek readers,³¹ and so Philo instead has Bassus refer to this officer as the στρατόρχης – clearly not meaning *legatus legionis* – but something more like ‘the military commander’.

στρατόρχης, therefore, should not be translated as a technical term which equates to a specific Roman military rank, such as *legatus legionis* or *praefectus castrorum*, but with a more general meaning, such as ‘commander’ or ‘leader’, and this is what Josephus has done in relation to Priscus. Shortly after informing us that Turranius Priscus held the rank of στρατοπεδάρχης (*praefectus castrorum*), Josephus gives us the additional information that he (Priscus) had fallen during the retreat from Jerusalem and emphasises the importance of this loss by telling us that Priscus was, at that time, the στρατόρχης (‘commander’ or ‘leader’) of the Sixth Legion. In this regard, it is important to remember that the whole of Legio VI Ferrata did not accompany Cestius on the campaign.

In preparation for the expedition, Josephus informs us that Cestius assembled the whole of Legio XII Fulminata and 2,000 vexillation-soldiers (ἐπίλεκτοι) from each of his other legions, in addition to numerous auxiliaries. The identity of the other legions which provided troops is regrettably still somewhat uncertain, but it is generally accepted that a vexillation of VI Ferrata did participate.³² Thus, when Josephus describes Priscus as the ‘commander of the Sixth Legion (στρατόρχης τάγματος ἕκτου), what he really meant was that Priscus was the commander [of the *vexillarii*] of the Sixth Legion (στρατόρχης ἐπιλέκτων) τάγματος ἕκτου).³³

Although we have a reasonable amount of evidence for the commanders of what could loosely be termed ‘legionary vexillation-groups’ (i.e. two or more vexillations under the one commander),³⁴ we have very little information on the men who actually commanded individual legionary vexillations on

²⁹ E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (Oxford 1962), 2f.

³⁰ Cf. *praef. castr. Aegy.* (Dobson, *op. cit.*, 325); *praef. ex(er)citu qui est in Aegypto* (CIL III 6809 = ILS 2696); *praefecto stratopedarci* (AE 1954, 163).

³¹ I am indebted to Prof. R.D. Milns for this suggestion. Although Goodenough (*op. cit.*, 31) may indeed be correct in his view that Philo probably wrote *Against Flaccus* as a warning for Flaccus’s successor, it is likely that Philo also intended it to be read by his Jewish supporters at large.

³² 2.500. IV Scythica and VI Ferrata = H.M.D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (Chicago 1980), 138; III Gallica, VI Ferrata and X Fretensis = Gichon, *op. cit.*, 43f.; L. Keppie, *Legions in the East from Augustus to Trajan in The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, P. Freeman and D.L. Kennedy eds. (Oxford 1986), 411–29, 417; cf. F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (Cambridge, MA 1993), 71; IV Scythica, VI Ferrata and X Fretensis = Shatzman, *Artillery in Judaea from Hasmonaean to Roman Times*, in *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, eds. D.H. French and C.S. Lightfoot (B.A.R. International Series 553 (ii) Oxford 1989), 471; III Gallica, IV Scythica, VI Ferrata and X Fretensis = D. Wagner, *Legio III Scythica in Zeugma am Euphrat*, in *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms 2* (Cologne 1977), 517–39, 518, n. 16; IV Scythica; V Macedonica; VI Ferrata; X Fretensis; and possibly III Gallica = Smallwood, *op. cit.*, 296, n. 11; and finally, the last four legions plus V Macedonica and XV Apollinaris = Saxer, *op. cit.*, 12; D.B. Campbell, *Auxiliary Artillery Revisited*, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 186 (1986) 117–32, 124. See also E. Dabrowa 1996, *op. cit.*, 277f. and 285. All of the above scholars agree that VI Ferrata contributed a vexillation, although Gichon alone acquiesces in a theoretical dropping of this legion from Cestius’s order of battle for the sake of his argument.

³³ Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.22) is also guilty of leaving out this type of detail, referring to the First, Fourth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth legions at Cremona in 69 as if they were present in full strength, when he elsewhere (2.100) informs us that there were only vexillations from these legions in the Vitellian army. Moreover, the evidence suggests that when a *legatus legionis* was given an independent mission away from the main army, the number of soldiers which were assigned to his command and deemed appropriate to his rank was normally between 3,000 and perhaps 5,000 men, e.g. 3,000 men (3.289), 3,600 men (3.307), 4,000 legionary *vexillarii* plus auxiliaries (Tac. *Ann.* 6.41).

³⁴ E.g. legates: Tac. *Ann.* 6.41; *Hist.* 1.61; 2.83; 4.24; CIL IX 2457 (= ILS 1076); Tribunes: XIV 3602 (= ILS 950); ILS 9200. Just how individual legionary war-vexillations were organised is still unclear, but is the subject of a forthcoming paper.

campaign.³⁵ Until quite recently, the accepted theory was that, prior to the Marcommanic Wars, only senatorial officers could lead these detachments, i.e. the commander of the legion (the *legatus legionis*) and his second in command (the *tribunus laticlavius*).³⁶ However, the career of M. Clodius, an equestrian tribune placed in command of *vexillarii* from *Legio V Macedonica* at some time under Claudius or Nero, clearly shows that equestrians were also considered suitable for these commands.³⁷ Since Clodius and other *tribuni angusticlavii* like him were on the fourth level of seniority in the legionary chain of command, we should not be surprised to find that the third in command of a legion³⁸ was also eligible for the command of *vexillarii* on campaign.

In a recent paper, Saddington has noted that camp prefects could be assigned to the command of vexillations (plural) on campaign during the first century.³⁹ But although his conclusion, in the view of the present writer, is quite correct, his statement is based on the example of Aeternius Fronto, the στρατοπεδάρχης τῶν ἀπὸ Ἀλεξανδρείας δύο ταγμάτων, who commanded the detachments drawn from Egypt for Titus's campaign in Judaea.⁴⁰ This office was clearly far more senior than the average post of *praefectus castrorum* in the legions outside Egypt,⁴¹ and cannot be used as evidence that all camp prefects were eligible for the command of vexillations.⁴² Indeed Dobson pointed out some twenty years ago that camp prefects were employed as the commanders of vexillations.⁴³ His statement is based on three epigraphic examples, two dating from the latter half of the second century and the other from the late third. However, the identification of Turranius Priscus in this role shows that camp prefects from the legions outside of Egypt were commanding war-vexillations in the first century. This is further supported, moreover, by other literary evidence, which is given here for clarity's sake, along with the epigraphic evidence cited by Dobson. The provinces and dates listed indicate where and when the detachments were operating.

1. Pannonia

AD 14

*Interea manipuli, ante coeptam seditionem Nauportum missi ob itinera et pontes et alios usus, postquam turbatum in castris acceperere, vexilla convellunt . . . praecipua in Aufidienum Rufum praefectum castrorum ira . . .*⁴⁴

³⁵ Tribunes: XIV 3612 (= *ILS* 1025); *ILS* 9491? and *CIL* VI 3505? Cf. M. Speidel, *Principes as a Title for Ad Hoc Commanders*, *Britannia* 12 (1981), 7–13, for the commanders of legionary vexillations in the early third century, all of which appear to be connected with 'work or garrison-vexillations', see Saxer, *op. cit.*, Nos. 125, 224, 284, 285, 287 and 300.

³⁶ A. von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heers*, Bonn, 2nd ed., B. Dobson (Cologne 1967) 172; Saxer, *op. cit.*, 120.

³⁷ S. Demougin, *Prosopographie des Chevaliers Romains Julio-Claudiens 43 av. J.-C.–70 ap. J.-C.* (Paris 1992) No. 627: *M(arcus) Clodius M(arci) filius Fab(ia tribu) Ma(---, praefectus) | ae(d)ilicia pot(estate), praefectus coh(ortis) Cantabr(or(um)), ---, | trib(unus) mil(itum) leg(ionis) III Scythicae, praef(ectus) vex(illiariorum) leg(ionis) | V Macedonic(ae), praef(ectus) fabr(um) . . .* Cf. *CIL* VI 3505 for an equestrian in command of a vexillation-group *Sex(tus) Attius Senecio | praef(ectus) alae (I) Fl(aviae) Gaetulorum | trib(unus) leg(ionis) X Geminae, missus | a divo Hadriano in expeditione Iudaica ad vexilla(tiones) deducendas in ---*). See also B. Dobson, *The Rangordnung of the Roman Army*, *Actes du VIIe Congrès International d'Épigraphie Grecque et Latine*, ed. D.M. Pippidi (Bucarest/Paris 1979) 191–204, 197.

³⁸ B. Dobson, *The significance of the centurion and 'primipilaris' in the Roman army and administration*, *ANRW* 2.1, H. Temporini ed. (Berlin/New York 1974), 392–434, 414; 1982, *op. cit.*, 243.

³⁹ Saddington, *op. cit.*, 244f.

⁴⁰ 5.44; 6.238. Cf. *AE* 1937, 236 and *PIR*² L 287.

⁴¹ Dobson, 1982, *op. cit.*, 330f.

⁴² It is not surprising, therefore, that this example pertains to the commander of a vexillation-group (i.e. Fronto commanded detachments from both III Cyrenaica and XXII Deiotariana), and not to the commander of an individual vexillation, as Priscus was. The presence here of such a senior officer in charge of only 2,000 *vexillarii* seems puzzling. But this is perhaps explained by the fact that he was not only in command of a vexillation-group, but he was, no doubt, also acting as a military adviser on the staff of the prefect of Egypt, Tiberius Alexander, who also accompanied Titus on the same campaign.

⁴³ B. Dobson, *Die Primipilares* (Cologne and Bonn 1978), 71.

⁴⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1.20.

2.

Germania
*at in Chaucis coeptavere seditionem praesidium agitantes vexillarii discordium legionum, et praesenti duorum militum supplicio paulum repressi sunt. Iusserat id M. Ennius castrorum praefectus . . .*⁴⁵

AD 14
3.

Britain
*praefectum castrorum et legionarias cohortes exstruendis apud Siluras praesidiis relictas circumfundunt.*⁴⁶

AD 51
4.

Armenia
*. . . Corbulo, ne inritum bellum traheretur utque Armenios ad sua defendenda cogeret, excindere parat castella, sibique quod validissimum in ea praefectura, cognomento Volandum, sumit; minora Cornelio Flacco legato et Insteio Capitoni castrorum praefecto mandat.*⁴⁷

AD 58
5.

Judaea
 Turranius Priscus – στρατόρχης [ἐπιλέκτων] τάγματος ἕκτου (see above).

AD 66
6.

Italy (?), Raetia and Noricum
*. . . praeposit(us) v[exillationum | per Ital(iam)?] et Raet(iam) et Noric(um) [bello | Germanico?, pra]efectus kastr(orum) Leg(ionis) II Tra[ianae Fortis, primo pilo . . .] . . .*⁴⁸

c. AD 167–180?
7.

Lower Germany
*[I(ovi) O(ptimo)] M(aximo) et Gen[io vexil(lationis) Leg(ionis) I M(inerviae) P(iae) F(ide)lis] . . . pro sal(ute) | im[p(eratoris)] M(arci) Aur(elii) Com[modi] Aug(usti) sub | Cla[u]d(io)] Apollin[are] I[eg(ato) Leg(ionis) I M(inerviae) | 5et Sa[bi]nio Nep[otiano] pr(a)ef(ecto) vexil(lationis) | sub c[ura] M(arci) C[laudii(?)] Va[lentis sig(niferi) | Leg(ionis) I [M(inerviae)] I[m]p(eratore) Commodus VI et Sep]t(imiano) co(n)s(ulibus).*⁴⁹

c. AD 190
8.

Gallia Lugdunensis
*. . . L(ucius) Artori[us Ca]stus . . . [pr]aef(ecto) Leg(ionis) VI Victricis, duci leg(ionum) [duaru]m Britanicianarum adversus Arm[orican]s . . .*⁵⁰

late third century

The evidence as a whole is not abundant, but it does show that camp prefects were commanding detached forces on campaign from as early as AD 14. Promotion to the rank of *praefectus castrorum* was considered an additional distinction to those who had already reached the primipilate,⁵¹ and men of such seniority and experience are not likely to have been overlooked for such responsible positions. Indeed,

⁴⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 1.38. Saxer (*op. cit.*, No. 3) cites this example under his list of war-vexillations, but without commenting on the significance of Ennius's rank, and while at the same time arguing that legionary war-vexillations could only be commanded by senatorial officers before Marcus Aurelius (*ibid.*, 120). See Dio 55.33, where Manius Ennius is mentioned as the garrison commander of Siscia in Pannonia in AD 8.

⁴⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 12.38.

⁴⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 13.39.

⁴⁸ *CIL* VI 31871; B. Dobson, 1978, *op. cit.* 263, no. 147; Saxer, *op. cit.*, No. 121. *Contra* Domaszewski, *op. cit.*, 136, who sees this command only as a result of the turmoil of the Marcommanic Wars.

⁴⁹ *CIL* XIII 7946. See also *CIL* XIII 8016 which describes Sabinius Nepotianus as '*praef. cast.*'; and B. Dobson, 1978, *op. cit.* 71.

⁵⁰ *CIL* III 1919; p. 1030; 8513; 12813 = *ILS* 2770 add.; B. Dobson, 1978, *op. cit.* 263, no. 151.

⁵¹ B. Dobson, 1974, *op. cit.*, 414.

when it came to the choice of which officer a legionary legate (perhaps aged in his early 40s) might choose to command a vexillation for a campaign, it is important to remember that many of his junior officers, i.e. the senatorial tribune and perhaps many of the equestrian tribunes, were aged somewhere between 18 and 24, and that at this age they were not always responsible individuals.⁵² By contrast, the camp prefect was probably aged in his 40s or older and possessed a great deal of experience,⁵³ and in many instances was likely to have been the better choice, despite any humble origins. Moreover, when a legion was called upon to supply two or even three separate war-vexillations at more or less the same time,⁵⁴ it is only logical that the third-in-command of the legion must at least have been considered for the command of one of these detachments, provided he could be spared from his usual responsibilities. It is now clear, therefore, that all of the legionary officers above the *primuspilus*, i.e. the *tribuni angusticlavii*, the *praefectus castrorum* and the *tribunus laticlavius* were utilised by legionary legates as the commanders of war-vexillations from early on in the first century.⁵⁵

In conclusion, there is no longer any reason to view ‘Turranius Priscus’ and ‘Priscus’ as separate persons, simply because of the use of the term στρατάρχης. The evidence from Philo and others shows that this word was not used as the technical equivalent for any particular rank in the Roman army, but rather as a more general word for ‘commander’ or ‘leader’. It is therefore attested both for an officer in charge of two legions (i.e. A. Avilius Flaccus) as well as for one in charge of only a portion of a legion (i.e. Turranius Priscus). Although our extant sources provide only a limited number of examples of non-senatorial officers in command of legionary vexillations on campaign, there is enough evidence to suggest that camp prefects could be assigned as the commanders of war-vexillations if the situation justified it, and indeed the extensive wars and campaigns of the first century may even have necessitated their employment.

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⁵² See Tac. *Agric.* 5.1, where Agricola, upon reaching the rank of a *tribunus laticlavius*, apparently stood out in the post because he took the position seriously, unlike other young officers who saw it as a chance for fun and self-indulgence.

⁵³ See Vegetius, *Epit. Rei Milit.* 2.10: ‘*is* (i.e. the *praefectus castrorum*) *post longam probatamque militiam peritissimus omnium, legebatur . . .*’.

⁵⁴ During April 69, *legio XXII Primigenia* was widely dispersed over four different locations through the provision of vexillations, i.e. a vexillation of the legion appears to have still been in Rome after being recalled from Nero’s proposed eastern expedition (*CIL XI* 1196; Tac. *Hist.* 1.6 and 31; Suet. *Galba* 20); another vexillation from the legion had been dispatched with Caecina in January (Tac. *Hist.* 1.61); the eagle of the legion then accompanied Vitellius when he left Cologne between late March and early April (Tac. *Hist.* 2.57 and 100); and yet there was still a further vexillation from the legion left at Mainz after Vitellius’s departure (Tac. *Hist.* 4.24). See also, *legiones V Macedonica*, X *Fretensis*, XII *Fulminata* and XV *Apollinaris* (and possibly IV *Scythica*) which each provided a vexillation for Mucianus’ march west in mid-August 69 (Joseph. *BJ* 3.65; 5.41–43), and then later provided additional vexillations when Vespasian despatched Viridius Geminus to suppress a revolt in Pontus c. November–December 69 (Tac. *Hist.* 3.47f.).

⁵⁵ B. Dobson has informed me via correspondence that he does not believe that *primipili* ever commanded war-vexillations, and that such commands were only assigned to *primipilares* and more senior officers.