



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 17, 2002

2002

HOPLIXHABELEN



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H O L Z H A U S E N

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R. MALCOLM ERRINGTON

A Note on the Augustal Prefect of Egypt

The evidence concerning the creation of the Augustal Prefecture and the Egyptian diocese is complex and apparently contradictory, and has led to the establishment of two incompatible dates in standard works of reference¹. A third variation will be noted below². It seems possible to resolve some of the contradictions and save more of the phenomena than present solutions do by adopting a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the sources, and attending to more recent finds while paying particular attention to the characteristics of each kind of evidence.

The first explicit mention of the *Praefectus Augustalis* is in the prescript of a law addressed to Palladius on 14th May 382³; the last mention of a *Praefectus Aegypti*, one Iulianus, dates from 17th March 380⁴. The diocese of Egypt is first explicitly mentioned in a canon of the Council of Constantinople in July 381, therefore in the administrative (indiction) year beginning on 1st September 380⁵. Since the likelihood is great that the formal creation of the Augustal Prefecture as a standing office went hand in hand with the creation of the diocese — this is nowhere explicitly attested, but it is a reasonable and almost universal assumption — both will have to be dated to 380, and official responsibility for the taxation will have been transferred at the change of the indiction year on 1st September 380. Since general agreement seems to exist that the point of the change was to increase the efficiency of the local administration by removing Egypt from the distant supervision of the *Comes Orientis* in Antioch, the period of crisis related to Theodosius' Gothic war and the initial establishment of his administration in Constantinople seems an entirely suitable time for his introduction of this administrative reform and the new office of Augustal Prefect;

¹ *PLRE* s.v. Tatianus 5, following A. H. M. Jones, *The date of the 'Apologia contra Arianos' of Athanasius*, *JThS* N.S. 5 (1954) 224–227 (ca. 367–370); J. Lallemand, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte de l'avènement de Dioclétien à la création du diocèse* (284–382). Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques. Mémoires, Tome LVII. Fascicule 2. Bruxelles 1964, 55f. (381/382).

² L. de Salvo, *Ancora sull'istituzione della dioecesis Aegypti*, *RSA* 9 (1979) 69–79 (370/1).

³ *CTh* 8. 5. 37.

⁴ *CTh* 12. 1. 80 + 15. 1. 20.

⁵ *Conc. Const. canon II (Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta)*, Centro di documentazione. Istituto per le scienze religiose. Bologna 1962. Lallemand (as n. 1), 57, first drew attention to this text, saying that it refers „probablement“ to secular, not ecclesiastical dioceses. This is, however, quite certain, for not only are the official names of the administrative dioceses used, but the canon continues with rules concerning the certainly secular provinces and for those churches explicitly outside the imperial administrative structure (ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς ἔθνεσιν).

thereby Theodosius turned back in some respects the division of Egypt implemented by Diocletian, for whom internal security seems to have weighed larger in Egypt than administrative efficiency⁶. The title *Augustalis* will reflect both the break with the recent past and the particular importance which the Augustus attached to Egypt at this juncture.

Some literary evidence, however, collides with this clear conclusion to be drawn from the documents and gives cause for contemplation. It has been taken so seriously as to be preferred over the clear evidence of the laws in order to date the introduction of the diocese (and the title *Praefectus Augustalis*) into the later 360s, and therefore to assume mistakes in the transmission of the two fragments of a law issued directly to the *Praefectus Aegypti* during these years⁷. The key piece of evidence is a statement in the chronicle known as the *Barbarus Scaligeri* (also called the *Fragmenta Barbari*), that Tatianus, who received a law addressed to him as *Praefectus Aegypti* on 10th May 367⁸ had entered office on 27th January as first *Augustalis: eo anno introivit Tatianus in Alexandria primus Augustalius VI kl. Februarias*⁹. This passage is one of a series of Alexandrian insertions into the original Greek chronicle, added before the „barbarous“ translation into Latin was made, several of which are plainly wrong, or at least entered in the wrong place¹⁰. There is, however, no reason to doubt the essential accuracy of the date of Tatianus' entry into office, since it is compatible with the law of 10th May.

Jones seized upon this statement of the *Barbarus Scaligeri* to argue against Opitz for retaining the reading of the manuscripts of the passage in Athanasius' reference in Athanasius' *Apologia contra Arianos* where he refers to one Rufus, who at the time of writing was a lower official (a *speculator*) in an office called (uniquely) Ἀγουσταλιανή¹¹. The date of the *Apologia contra Arianos* is not independently transmitted, but since Athanasius was no longer alive in 380, when the laws suggest the office of the Augustal Prefect was created, Jones urged the association of this unique expression with the passage from the Chronicle and then argued for the creation of the office of Augustalis during the period of office of Tatianus. He rejected, however, the apparently clear implication of the sentence, that Tatianus entered the city as the first *Praefectus Augustalis* in order to avoid having to alter additionally the prescript of *CTh* 12.18.1

⁶ The separation of civilian and military functions was of course not changed by Theodosius, with the *Comes Limitis Aegypti* (*Not. Dign. Or.* 28), the *Dux Libyarum* (*Not. Dign. Or.* 30), and the *Dux Thebaidos* (*Not. Dign. Or.* 31) remaining responsible for security.

⁷ Jones (as n. 1), followed by *PLRE* s.v. Tatianus 5; T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993, Appendix 2, 194.

⁸ *CTh* 12. 18. 1.

⁹ *Chron. Min.* 1, 295.

¹⁰ See Mommsen's introductory comment at *Chron. Min.* 1, 272.

¹¹ Athan. *Apologia Secunda* (Opitz) 83, 4, 162.

ὁ μὲν γὰρ γράψας αὐτὰ ῥοῦφός ἐστιν ὁ νῦν ἐν τῇ Ἀγουσταλιανῇ (Opitz: Ἀγουσταμνικῇ) σπεκουλάτωρ καὶ δύναται μαρτυρῆσαι. Opitz changed the text because he was of the correct opinion that the Augustal Prefecture was not introduced until after Athanasius' death in 373. The text could, however, merely suggest that the office of the prefect was already known locally by the augustal name or represent later editorial or scribal modernising.

of 10th May 367, in which Tatianus is merely called *Praefectus Aegypti*, and suggested that he had received his new title sometime later than this date, but before 2nd May 373, the date of Athanasius' death. He then needed to explain away only the two legal fragments surviving from the law issued to Iulianus in 380 as a mistake in the transmission of the prescripts¹².

There are, however, substantial additional problems associated with this reconstruction, for it creates a career for Tatianus which is incompatible with the very precise indications he himself gave on a inscription set up in his home city Sidyma in Lycia to celebrate his consulship in 391. Subsequent to his period of administration in Egypt he was *Consularis Syriae* — again, governor of a single, if important, province with higher status than the province of Egypt — and then *Comes Orientis*, the highest-status *vicarius* in the Eastern Prefecture at that time; this was followed by a period in the central imperial administration as *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum* and then finally under Theodosius he became Praetorian Prefect of the East; his career was crowned in 391 by the consulship while he was still Praetorian Prefect, and gave him reason to set his proud inscription. The whole career is recorded in ascending order of importance, without avoidance of technical terms beginning with the various periods as assessor in bureaux, which are also arranged in ascending order of importance, from *praeses* (ἡγεμών) to *praefectus* (ἑπαρχος)¹³. Jones was, of course, aware of the difficulty for his thesis caused by this document, and in order to save the career — critical, as he saw, for his reconstruction — suggested that Tatianus was at the same time both *consularis Syriae* and *Comes Orientis*¹⁴. But this will not do, and it is difficult to believe that the great historian really found his own solution to this particular problem convincing, for he resorts to a quite uncharacteristic flight of fancy in order to avoid at all costs having to assume a demotion for Tatianus: „Tatian may have been promised the prefecture of Egypt to be followed by the *consularitas* of Syria. When the prefecture was raised in status to the *Augustalitas*, which rated much higher than a *consularitas*, the *comitiva Orientis*, which ranked higher still, was

¹² *CTh* 12. 1. 80 + 15. 1. 20; Jones (as n. 1), 225, 227.

¹³ *ILS* 8844; Kalinka, *TAM* II, 1 186f., with facsimile.

[T]ατιανὸς μετὰ δικανικὴν [τοις] ἄρχουσιν συνκαθεσθεῖς
ἡγεμόνι βικαρίῳ ἀνθυπά[τρω] δυσὶν τ' ἐπάρχοις
ἀρχὴν Θηβαίων λάχεν εἰ[τ'] Αἰγύπτου πάσης
κεῖθεν ὑπατικὸς Συρίας ἢ δ' ὅ[πλ.]αρχος ἐώας
θησαυρῶν τε θείων κόμ[η]ς εἰτ' ἑπαρχος μέγας φάνη·
τὰντα δ' ἔτι πράττων ἔτ[ε]σι τριάκοντα καὶ τρισὶν
δέξατ' αἰεῖδιον ὑπάτων [λάχος] εἵνεκα πάντων.

The most recent text is in R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, vol. 4, München, Leipzig 2002, no. 17/08/03. Editors have always printed the text (as here) as if it were some kind of verse, perhaps just terrible hexameters. Merkelbach and Stauber print ἔ[πειτ'] in „verse“ 3 because Merkelbach once thought the verses were „Sotadean“ (*Das Epigramm aus Sidyma auf Tatianus*, *ZPE* 30 [1978] 173f.), but the new commentary in Merkelbach-Stauber suggests he has abandoned this view, but has retained the emendation. It makes no difference to the meaning.

¹⁴ *ib.* This solution found its way into *PLRE* s.v. Tatianus 5.

thrown in“¹⁵. This is a large step to take merely in order to save a phrase of the notoriously unreliable *Barbarus Scaligeri* and a single disputed word in Athanasius.

The ascending order of posts must surely be maintained in the reconstruction of Tatianus' career, and the conclusion to be drawn must be that the formal status of both posts which Tatianus held in Egypt ranked below that of the *Consularis Syriae*: as the *Notitia Dignitatum* noted, even later *Aegyptus autem consularitatem non habet*¹⁶. There is nevertheless something odd about Tatianus' second post in Egypt: the prosopography of the Prefects of Egypt marks him out as the only known *praeses Thebaidos* who went on to be Prefect of Egypt at this time¹⁷; he was also in post as Prefect for an unusually long time, more than three years in all¹⁸; and he himself uses unusually untechnical language in his inscription to describe his prefecture, that he was governor „of all Egypt“ (Αἰγύπτου πάσης), which a normal *Praefectus Aegypti* at this time was not. This phrase, however, in view of the technical administrative language used elsewhere, must certainly exclude his having been *Praefectus Augustalis*, who did of course govern „all of Egypt“ as defined at the time he held office, but for whom the description would have been entirely otiose. Since the text shows no reluctance to use technical terms, if Tatianus had really been the very first Augustal Prefect he would surely have said so explicitly, since even at the time of his consulate this early distinction would have been an especial honour well worth recording, and not just described it as another (even unusual) ἀρχή. Nevertheless Jones concludes that „Tatian ruled all Egypt, that is the diocese, not merely the province“, and he is most recently followed by Merkelbach and Stauber in their misleadingly interpretative translation of the text.

The adjective is, however, otiose if it should apply merely to the province Aegyptus: no Prefect of Egypt governed less than the whole of the province Aegyptus. Tatianus' second Egyptian post was therefore abnormal, and „Egypt“ here must mean something extraordinary, larger than the province, but neither can it have been the later diocese, nor can it have conferred on Tatianus such high formal status that he could not be promoted to *consularis Syriae* after holding it. The statement of the *Barbarus Scaligeri* that Tatianus was the first to enter the city as Augustalis (which he was clearly not) might, however, have its ultimate origin in an exceptional office and explain how the later author of the Alexandrian interpolation might have reached the notion that Tatianus was indeed something like the later Augustalis. The solution must therefore lie in assuming that Tatianus' inscription uses the words „the whole of Egypt“ in a special sense for an administrative area which was larger than the usual province Aegyptus but which excluded the Thebais — since two governors of the Thebais are known for the period of Tatianus' three-and-a-half year governorship of „all Egypt“¹⁹ — and perhaps also the two Libyan provinces. Certainty is clearly impossible, but a construction which would make good sense in the context would be

¹⁵ *ib.* (as n. 1), 226f.

¹⁶ *Not. Dign. Or.* I, 78.

¹⁷ So Lallemand (as n. 1), 64.

¹⁸ See n. 20 below.

¹⁹ Fl. Heraclius and Fl. Antonius Domitianus (Lallemand, 252 nos. 9 [PLRE 1, s.v. Heraclius 9], 10 [PLRE 1 s.v. Domitianus 5]), add now P.Heid. IV 308, 3, 369f.

the administrative re-uniting of the two lower Egyptian provinces Aegyptus and Augustamnica (or the parts of them most relevant for the grain supply) under one prefect. Were this the case, Tatianus in his private inscription could indeed speak not entirely accurately, but not entirely wrongly either, of his office as having been „all Egypt“; a later Alexandrian who knew of this extension of responsibility and its later inclusion of Libya and the Thebais in the fully fledged diocese under the Augustal Prefecture might well have interpreted it as a preliminary stage in the history of the Augustal Prefecture, and have assumed that the new title was introduced at the same time. A law issued to the Praetorian Prefect Modestus in 371 shows that within the Praetorian Prefecture of the East a distinction in the way of thinking was then already being made, at least for some purposes, between the rest of Oriens under the *comes Orientis* and Egypt. This indeed suggests that some rudimentary form of the later diocese — but not the diocese itself — may already have been functioning²⁰. That this idea might be the true solution is suggested by recent research on the administration of Egypt in the Fourth Century, which has shown that the Heptanomia, which included Oxyrhynchus, was administratively part of the province of Augustamnica from the time Augustamnica was split off from Aegyptus in 341²¹. But Tatianus is recorded at Oxyrhynchus on October 6th 370²² and is explicitly called

²⁰ *CTh* 13. 5. 14: „... intra Orientales provincias naviculariorum corpus impleri iubemus, ea videlicet statutorum ratione servata, ut per eminentiam tuam numerus naviculariorum designetur tam intra Orientem quam intra Aegyptiacas partes ...“. De Salvo (as n. 2), 73 follows Gothofredus *ad loc.* in interpreting *partes* as „diocese“, and argues that this proves the Egyptian diocese existed by 11th February 371. He is followed by Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (as n. 7), 194. But the argument is not cogent. *Partes* can indeed, as Gothofredus’s examples show, be a circumlocution for „diocese“, but it is in no way a technical term for one, as he claims („significato tecnico“). The phrase is regularly used as simple *variatio*, but especially in places where the particular emphasis is on the geographical aspect, whatever the administrative structure: so e.g. *CTh* 5. 6. 3 line 9 *a partibus Thraciae vel Illyrici*, cf. 10. 10. 25, 15. 1. 49 (also Illyricum); 6. 29. 12, referring to *Dalmatiae litora omnesque insulas ex memoratis partibus*; 16. 2. 15, line 14 *de Italiae partibus*; 16. 5. 48, 16. 8. 20 *in (or de) occidentalibus partibus*. Conclusive for Egypt is *Sirm.* 3, line 12, issued in 384, shortly after the creation of the diocese, where the writer, when using what must have become a traditional phrase, feels compelled to explain that he now means by it precisely the (new) diocese: *in suis tamen partibus, id est per Aegypti dioecesim*.

De Salvo also cites *CTh* 12. 1. 63 — *hos igitur atque huiusmodi intra Aegyptum deprehensos per comitem Orientis erui e latebris consulta praeceptione mandavimus ...* — for a terminus post quem of 1st January 370 (again followed by Barnes, *ib.*). This law is, however, as transmitted quite inconclusive, since it is directed to Modestus as PPO and dated to 1st January of an imperial consulate of Valentinian and Valens, but is transmitted without an iteration numeral. As both Mommsen, *ad loc.*, and Seeck, *Regesten*, *ad ann.* 370, point out, there is no good reason for choosing between 370 and 373 (the existential uncertainty is in the last resort ignored by de Salvo and Barnes). The text must therefore be left out of consideration for the question involved, since it does not decide the case and would make sense at either date.

²¹ See the excellent survey summarising the evidence by B. Palme, *Praesides und correctores der Augustamnica*, *AnTard* 6 (1998) 123–135.

²² P.Oxy. 2110.

ἐπαρχος Αἰγύπτου in an undated papyrus belonging to his years of office there²³. Moreover Ammianus Marcellinus visited Egypt before the creation of the diocese, but at a time when the Heptanomia belonged to Aegyptus, and this status quo is described by him in his excursus on Egypt²⁴. On the other hand a papyrus published since the work of Lallemand shows that by January 373 the *praeses* of Augustamnica was once again the official responsible for the Heptanomia²⁵. Other minor adjustments to the provincial boundaries within the area of the delta which belong to the same period and were described by Ammianus were, however maintained beyond the restoration of the Heptanomia to Augustamnica²⁶.

Reasons for wishing to increase the administrative efficiency of Egypt, especially in connection with the delivery of the grain tax, can be easily found precisely in 367, for that was the year when Valens began his great offensive against the Goths on the Danube, and the necessary supplies for the army would hardly be forthcoming from Thrace alone, where he made his base. It is also worth observing that Tatianus' unusually lengthy period of office extended for the whole length of the Gothic War²⁷, and when the war was over and Valens moved his headquarters to Antioch in 370 none other than Tatianus was summoned to Antioch to become *consularis Syriae* and *Comes Orientis* in turn, both of which posts were based on the current imperial headquarters in Antioch, before he was promoted to the post of *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum* in the central administration. Critical stages of Tatianus' career were therefore closely bound up with Valens, indeed the rapid series of his high appointments after his Egyptian office suggests a particular favour at the court, which under the circumstances can only be explained by proven above average organisational ability and achievement. It is impossible to fit into this series of posts a second prefecture of Egypt for Tatianus around 374, where the *Barbarus Scaligeri* places him for a second four-year session as Augustalis in one of the most chaotic parts of this chronicle, from 374 to 378²⁸. His pseudo-information has usually been rejected, and rightly so²⁹.

It has unfortunately been resurrected by Bernhard Palme, taking up the impossible reconstruction of Claude Vandersleyen, which places the second prefecture, as the *Barbarus* would have it, in the middle of his period of office as *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*; he rightly rejects, however, the equally impossible indication of the

²³ P.Oxy. 1101.

²⁴ Amm. Marc. 22. 16, cf. Palme (as n. 21), 131.

²⁵ P.Oxy. 3308, 7 of 17th January 373 (Fl. Eumathius as ἡγεμών, not ἐπαρχος).

²⁶ Athribis, which belonged to Aegyptus together with Oxyrhynchus and Memphis when Ammianus visited (22. 16. 6), was still governed by the Prefect of Egypt (explicitly so named on an official inscription, ἐπαρχος τῆς Αἰγύπτου) at the time of the decennialia of Valentinian and Valens (and Gratian) in 373/4: SB 10, 10697 (Aelius Palladius).

²⁷ Actually rather longer: his entry into Alexandria was on 27th January (*Chron. Min.* 1, 297) and a law was addressed to him on 10th May (*CTh* 12. 18. 1); he was still in office on 6th October 370 (P.Oxy. 2110). Valens' war was over in February 370: R. M. Errington, *Themistius and his Emperors*, Chiron 30 (2000) 902ff.

²⁸ *Chron. Min.* 1, 296.

²⁹ E. g. by PLRE s.v. Tatianus 5; Lallemand (as n. 1), 247.

Barbarus that Tatianus was still, or again, Prefect of Egypt in 378³⁰. There are major objections to this. The second prefecture is not mentioned in the career inscription, nor would it fit in anyway, neither as a real career post nor as something to be proud of at that stage of a rapidly advancing career. Palme insists that it cannot have been a demotion for Tatian, but what else can it have been, when he reverted from a position of responsibility for the whole of the imperial finances to that of a simple provincial governor? Moreover the *Barbarus Scaligeri* is extraordinarily unreliable at this juncture, giving all prefects after Tatian in 367 the title Augustalis (which Palme also rejects) and keeping Tatian in Egypt again for an impossible four years. The text as it stands, despite Vandersleyen's heroic attempts to save it, provides a quite inadequate foundation for speculation, and offers no reliable basis for selective acceptance. Palme sees a problem in Tatian's long period of some six years as *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*, which is indeed unusual. But Tatianus was an exceptional man — he had after all been in Egypt for exceptionally long, nearly four years, during Valens' first Gothic War — and in the seventies the times were more than ever out of joint. He clearly enjoyed the confidence of Valens, and happened to be in office as *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum* in 376 when the Gothic crisis broke out in Thrace; he remained in post as the situation continued to deteriorate during and after the campaign of Adrianople and in the uncertainties caused by the the delayed appointment of Theodosius, who even after his imperial promotion in January 379 did not arrive in Constantinople until November 380. Tatianus as finance minister during this disastrous period constituted therefore a rare bulwark of stability in a period of major imperial crisis, and his unusually extended period of office at this time need cause us no anxiety. He was clearly a competent manager in a crisis, and it will have been no great surprise when, in the renewed imperial crisis caused by Magnus Maximus' invasion of Italy and Theodosius' decision to march to the West in 388, that Tatianus was appointed *Praefectus Praetorio Orientis* as successor to the recently deceased Spaniard Maternus Cynegius, and once again remained in office unusually long, until after the crisis had been resolved in 391 — in which year he enjoyed the peak of his career, the consulship.

Why precisely Tatianus was chosen for the temporarily extended post in Egypt in 367 is, of course, unknown. His own career-listing, however, suggests he had had a wide-ranging experience in a junior capacity at all levels of the administration since 357 when his career began, thirty-three years before his consulship³¹, before his first independent post as *praeses Thebaidos*. Among his other posts he had been assessor to two Prefects, presumably both Praetorian (though it is perhaps conceivable that one of his two posts had been with the recently created *Praefectus Urbi* in Constantinople, in which case he will have collected experience in setting up a new form of administration there). At the time of Tatianus' appointment to Egypt in 367 Valens had only had two Praetorian Prefects, both of them, as it happens, Westerners, Saturninius Secundus Salutius and (very briefly in 365) Nebridius, whereby Secundus

³⁰ Palme (as n. 21), 132; C. Vandersleyen, *Chronologie des préfets d'Égypte de 284 à 395*, Collection Latomus 55, Bruxelles 1962, 147–150.

³¹ So the last lines of the inscription *ILS* 8844.

had served continuously under Julian and Jovian as well³². It is therefore highly probable that Tatianus had served under Secundus as assessor; it was certainly Secundus, who took over again after Nebridius was captured by Procopius, and thus will have been primarily responsible for the emergency reorganisation of Egypt on the eve of the Gothic War. It would not surprise if it were he who appointed his old assessor to this important but tricky new post. The post was not intended to last, so its incumbent retained the formal status of the current Prefect of Egypt, despite exercising increased emergency responsibility in areas taken over ad hoc from Augustamnica. Success in the emergency will doubtless have attracted favourable imperial attention.

If this reconstruction is correct — the personal connection of Tatianus and Secundus is of course merely informed speculation — we must see the new organisation of the administration in Egypt as a series of partial experimental changes, only the last of which resulted in the creation of the formal diocese and the introduction of the new permanent title *Praefectus Augustalis* for its governor. The sequence of changes began under Valens, when in the planning for the Gothic war the old Praetorian Prefect Salutius Secundus united in the province of Aegyptus the Heptanomia and other important parts of neighbouring Augustamnica under the newly appointed Prefect of the province of Egypt, Tatianus. Tatianus served exceptionally long, for nearly four years, and his special imperial (augustal!) instructions to govern the united provinces perhaps gave later Egyptians the notion that he was the first formal *Praefectus Augustalis*, which is reflected in the *Barbarus Scaligeri*. If the text of Athanasius' reference to the speculator Rufus is correct, the office of the Prefect may already have been known as the Αὐγουσταλιανή (τάξις) at the time of Tatianus, though a later editor or scribe might perhaps merely have inserted the by then current technical term in Athanasius's text. The *Barbarus Scaligeri's* beginning the series of Augustal Prefects with Tatianus might be best explained if we imagine the interpolator living not in Alexandria but in the Heptanomia or perhaps better, one of the delta towns (Thmuis and Athribis come into question above all) which became part of the extended province of Aegyptus at the time of Tatianus' governorship and seem to have remained so. The date of their attachment to Aegyptus would have been known locally and might well have been seen later anachronistically as an administrative preparation for the diocese. During the years of Tatianus' emergency government Egypt was visited by the *ex-protector domesticus* Ammianus Marcellinus, who included in his later historical work a description of the administrative structure of Egypt as he found it at the time. We have therefore also dated Ammianus's visit to Egypt.

After the Gothic war the Heptanomia was restored to Augustamnica, but the changes made in the delta remained. The administration of Egypt certainly became important again in the deep imperial crisis in Theodosius' early years, when another Westerner as Praetorian Prefect, Flavius Neoterius, took the final step of formally placing the two Libyan provinces and the Thebais under the control of a diocesan

³² *PLRE* s.v. Secundus 3; Nebridius 1. Nebridius was in office merely for a few weeks or months immediately preceding the revolt of Procopius in summer 365.

officer based in Alexandria in the rank of *vicarius* and title *Praefectus Augustalis*, second only in rank among the diocesan governors of the East to the *Comes Orientis* in Antioch, and reflecting the importance Egypt had played in the years of crisis.

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