

Herausgegeben von:

Thomas Corsten  
Fritz Mitthof  
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# TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte  
Papyrologie und Epigraphik

HOLZHAUSEN  
DER VERLAG

Band 25, 2010



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ALEXANDER PUK

Some Thoughts on the Procuratorship  
*Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni\**

Tafel 12–13

On the 18th of May in the year 247 or 248 AD<sup>1</sup>, several corporations of *navicularii*<sup>2</sup> erected a statue for the equestrian official Lucius Mussius Aemilianus, alongside an honorific inscription laying out in detail his *cursus honorum*<sup>3</sup>. He had reached the post of a harbour procurator at Ostia from where this inscription probably comes<sup>4</sup>:

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\* This article is based on my Master's dissertation at the Classics Faculty of Oxford in 2008. I should like to thank my supervisor Prof. Alan Bowman and Dr. Francisca Feraudi-Gruénais from the Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg for encouragement and discussion, and Benedict Beckeld for his generous help in reviewing this text.

<sup>1</sup> The dating must fall in a year when both Philipps held a consulship, hence either 247 or 248 AD.

<sup>2</sup> On the several associations of sailors and shipowners which seem to have existed at every main port of the Roman Empire see J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Sur l'inscription des naviculaires d'Arles à Beyrouth*, Syria 70 (1993) 69–80, esp. 73–74; G. W. Houston, *The Administration of Italian Seaports during the First Three Centuries of the Roman Empire*, in: J. H. D'Arms, E. C. Kopff (edd.), *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome. Studies in Archaeology and History*, Rome 1980, 157–171, esp. 164–165; R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, Oxford 1960, 312–313; G. Becatti (ed.), *Mosaici e pavimenti marmorei* (Scavi di Ostia 4), Roma 1961, 65–78. On the legal relationship between the *navicularii* and the *praefectura annonae* see E. Höbenreich, *Annona. Juristische Aspekte der stadtrömischen Lebensmittelversorgung im Prinzipat*, Graz 1997, 83–88, 97–115. They were most likely responsible only for providing transports of the *annona*, yet the exact nature of the *quinque corpora* still remains uncertain (see J. Andreau, *Navicularius*, DNP 8 [2000] 764; L. de Salvo, *Economia privata e pubblici servizi nell'impero romano. I corpora naviculariorum*, Messina 1992, 252, 386–387).

<sup>3</sup> CIL XIV 170 = CIL VI 1624 = ILS 1433. Several suggestions for explaining the corrupted text on the side of the block (l. 17–18) have been made and for that part of the inscription I shall rely on the version presented in H. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, Lund 1952, 402–403 no. B–338.

<sup>4</sup> The inscription was found in the 16th century in a vineyard of Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi at Rome, but similar to other inscriptions from that location this stone also seems to originate in Ostia (see CIL VI 1640 introd.). However, the stone now seems to have disappeared and the editors of CIL VI 1624 apparently relied on the images drawn by S. W. Pighius and P. Ligorio during the 16th century (see Taf. 12 and 13). The first drawing by Ligorio has now been republished by Silvia Orlandi in P. Ligorio, *Libri delle iscrizioni latine e greche* (a cura di Silvia Orlandi), Roma 2008, 144. A second drawing by Pighius on fol. 159r of the Berlin Codex Pighianus (Ms. lat. fol. 61) can be accessed through the online database of the project “Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance” under [www.census.de](http://www.census.de) (CensusID 252145).



- (front) *Aegippi* | *L(ucio) Mussio Aemiliano* | *Laurenti Lavinatium* | *IIII milit(iarum) v(iro) e(gregio) praef(ecto) vehicul(orum)* | *trium prov(inci)arum Gall(iae) Lugdunens(is) | Narbonens(is) et Aquitanic(ae)* | *ad SS (sestertium) LX (sexaginta milia) proc(uratori) Alex(andriae) Pelusi P̄raet(oni)* | *ad SS (sestertium) C (centum milia) proc(uratori) portus utriusq(ue) ad S̄S (sestertium) [CC (ducenta milia)?]* | *viro innocentissimo* | *codicarii navicularii et | quinq(ue) corp(orum) navigantes ob | insignem eius erga se | benivolentiam ac singularem abstinentiam* ||
- (lateral) *dedic(ata) XV Kal(endas) Iun(ias) | dd(ominis) nn(ostris) [[Philippis]] | Augg(ustis) co(n)s(ulibus) | curant(ibus) Nun(nidio?) Hermogen[e] | <N>un(nidi) l(iberto) <et> Paulino Coz[mo].*

According to this now lost inscription, the equestrian, honoured with the citizenship of Lavinium<sup>5</sup>, first entered public service by fulfilling the *quattuor militiae*. Thereafter he held a sexagenarian procuratorship as *praefectus vehiculorum* of the *tres Galliae*, was promoted to the post of centenarian procurator at Egypt and then held the — most likely ducenarian — office of a *procurator portus utriusque* at Ostia. At first glance, this inscription appears to offer standard information, in particular regarding the status of different procuratorial posts and their inclusion in the equestrian career paths. The person of Lucius Mussius Aemilianus does indeed appear in Pflaum's standard work on equestrian officials<sup>6</sup>. However, the centenarian post in Egypt in this *cursus honorum* does not provide as certain information as one may hope for.

First of all the inscription is regrettably damaged in the line in question (l. 7) and according to all editions so far only the letter *P*, designating a third part of the procuratorial circumscription after Alexandria and Pelusium, seems to be securely preserved. However, a first drawing by Ligorio (Fig. 1, Taf. 12) suggests the reading *PROC(urator) ALEX(andriae) PELVSI P. . . ET*, while a second drawing by Pighius (Fig. 2, Taf. 13) proposes a restoration of line 7 as *PROC(urator) ALEX(andriae) PELVSI P PRAET*<sup>7</sup>. Both humanist scholars, who saw the original stone, therefore agree in the clear reading of the first letter *P* and the last two letters *ET* which on both images apparently exceeded the incised margin of the statue base. Ligorio's picture even implies that *E* might have been written in oblique ligature with the preceding *A*. The drawing by Pighius furthermore suggests that in line 8 the declaration of the last salary class was also still legible as *AD SS* and that only the exact amount is missing

<sup>5</sup> On the privilege of being *Laurens Lavinas* or *sacerdos Laurentium Lavinatium* see A. Rosenberg, *Zu den altlateinischen Priestertümern*, *Hermes* 50 (1915) 416–426, esp. 416–419.

<sup>6</sup> H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain*, Paris 1960–1961, 925–927 no. 349. His dating of Aemilianus' governorship in Egypt, however, is incorrect (see n. 57).

<sup>7</sup> See CIL VI 1624 comm. and Orelli no. 3178; for access to the drawings by Ligorio and Pighius see n. 4.



for which Pflaum suggested a ducenarian salary<sup>8</sup>. An omission of the last letters in line 7 and of these four letters in line 8 as presented in previous editions does therefore not reflect what was still visible on the stone and my edition of the inscription as given above has been adjusted accordingly. Hence, only three letters of the office in line 7 remain questionable, but scholars have tended to replace or restore all letters of the third designation after *PELVSI*.

Earlier suggestions thus considered this office to be a military responsibility and therefore emended *p[otamophylaciae]* or *[phylac(iae)]* as attested for police duties along the Nile, but a centenarian procuratorship for such local officials does not appear very likely<sup>9</sup>. Another suggestion has been to restore *P[hari]*<sup>10</sup>, yet one might wonder why a particular part of the city is mentioned alongside the whole city of Alexandria<sup>11</sup> and how such an area of responsibility would be separate from that of the ἐπίτροπος Φάρου (see below). Both these readings are also ruled out by the reading of the last two letters *ET* on which the two Renaissance drawings agree. Rather, the most convincing supplement “Paraetonium” was first offered by Pflaum who related this office to the three main harbours along the Mediterranean coast of Egypt<sup>12</sup>. In antiquity, Paraetonium and Pelusium were already considered to be the eastern and western boundaries of Egypt<sup>13</sup>, and although the city of Paraetonium hardly appears in papyrological documents, its prominence can nevertheless be established through literary sources<sup>14</sup>. In fact, the second reading by Pighius *PELVSI PPRAET* could easily be emended to *PELVSI P<A>RAET*<sup>15</sup>. This third word must

<sup>8</sup> After a sexagenarian and centenarian procuratorship, one should expect the next salary level, i. e. a ducenarian office, and H.-G. Pflaum, *Carrières* (above n. 6) 927 therefore argued for the restoration [*CC*]. However, both drawings do not provide any evidence on further letters in line 8 and thus the ducenarian rank of the *procurator portus utriusque* at Ostia during the 3rd century remains questionable (cf. n. 45).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. CIL II 1970; A. von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, Bonn 1908, 258; Thylander, *Inscriptions d'Ostie* (above n. 3) 403 comm.; O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian*, Berlin <sup>2</sup>1905, 366, though he questions his own solution. On *potamophylakes* see C. Homoth-Kuhs, *Phylakes und Phylakon-Steuer im griechisch-römischen Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des antiken Sicherheitswesens*, München 2005, 94.

<sup>10</sup> Dessau in ILS 1433; editors of CIL VI 1624; cf. Thylander, *Inscriptions d'Ostie* (above n. 3) 403. Hirschfeld, *Verwaltungsbeamten* (above n. 9) 366 already rejected this option, but one can find it nonetheless in certain databases.

<sup>11</sup> Likewise already Hirschfeld, *Verwaltungsbeamten* (above n. 9) 366.

<sup>12</sup> H.-G. Pflaum, *Carrières* (above n. 6) 925–26. This restoration is also supported by the editor of P.Oxy. XLIII 3118 in his commentary.

<sup>13</sup> Flor. epit. 4.11; Oros. hist. 6.19.13.

<sup>14</sup> Strab. 17.1.14; Flor. epit. 4.11; Lucan. 3.295. It also seems to have been an administrative centre, cf. P.Oxy. XI 1221.

<sup>15</sup> Admittedly, all original readers supplemented letters with a vertical stroke after the *P* (see CIL VI 1624 comm.: *PL; PI; EPI; PR*), though it has never been mentioned that traces of a second letter were visible apart from Pighius' drawing. A reading of the letters *PV* by Borghesi in the year 1824 remains obscure and is not confirmed by any other editor (B. Borghesi, *Oeuvres complètes VI* [Lettres I], Paris 1868, 255). H.-G. Pflaum, *Carrières* (above n. 6) 925 eventually suggested the restoration *P[ar(aetoni)]*.

have been abbreviated and I shall therefore adapt the restoration of *Paraet(oni)* as the most likely supplementation although this solution still remains difficult since an identical office is not attested elsewhere in epigraphical or papyrological sources. The geographical area of Aemilianus' authority, however, seems to be well delineated and along with the present *cursus* may allow us to discuss his responsibilities, which I should like to outline in this article<sup>16</sup>.

The title mentions the three largest Mediterranean seaports on the northern coast of Egypt, with Pelusium<sup>17</sup> situated in the east and Paraetonium<sup>18</sup> lying to the west of Alexandria near the border with Cyrene. The responsibility of this office must therefore have been related to the supervision of all Egyptian harbours on the Mediterranean Sea. What could have been the nature of the actual duties associated with the office? A first suggestion would be a responsibility similar to that of the freedman *procurator Phari*, namely the control of outgoing ships and travellers and the issue of permissions authorising a departure<sup>19</sup>. Since the only known official, Lucius Mussius Aemilianus, had equestrian rank when holding office in Egypt (ca. 240–245 AD), the *procurator Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* could well have been the equestrian head of freedmen sub-procurators who were stationed one at each main harbour. But this hypothesis seems to be contradicted by the almost contemporary evidence of the *procurator Phari*: One source clearly shows his direct communication with the prefect<sup>20</sup> and another document implies the same official channel<sup>21</sup>. Would the prefect have communicated with a sub-officer and thus pre-empted the supposedly higher office of an equestrian head procurator? It appears rather that the *procurator Phari* did not have any direct superior official other than the prefect and was responsible solely for the authorisation of departures leaving from the Alexandrian harbour.

<sup>16</sup> Thus trying to offer plausible answers to Wilcken's "ungeklärte Frage" about the nature of this procuratorial office (U. Wilcken, *Der ägyptische Konvent*, APF 4 [1907] 366–422, esp. 402).

<sup>17</sup> Pelusium was of great strategic importance and accommodated a military unit (CIL III 13578). Because of its harbour and location next to Palestine it also witnessed intense trade activity by both land and sea (cf. H. Kees, *Pelusion*, RE 19, 1 [1937] 410–413; D. Sperber, *Objects of Trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman Times*, JESHO 19 [1976] 113–147; P. van Minnen, *Lentils from Pelusium. A Note on Vergil's Georgics I 228*, Mnemosyne 44 [1991] 166–170). In administrative terms it was a conventus city and even seat of an epistrategos (cf. P.Oxy. IV 709; XLVII 3362; D. Thomas, *The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. II The Roman epistrategos*, Opladen 1982, 26–27; J.-Y. Carrez-Maratray, *Péluse et l'angle oriental du delta égyptien aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine*, Cairo 1999, 420–421). Products coming from Pelusium are still attested during late antiquity (van Minnen, *Lentils* [above] 167) when the city was also a metropolis of the province of Augustamnica (P.Mich. XVIII 795).

<sup>18</sup> Despite the scarce evidence on papyrus, Paraetonium seems to have been an important port and fortress until late antiquity (Prok. aed. 6.2) and archaeological remains can still be found (see H. Kees, *Paraitonion*, RE 18, 3 [1949] 1183).

<sup>19</sup> See P.Oxy. X 1271 introd.; G. Purpura, "Passaporti" *Romani*, Aegyptus 82 (2002) 131–155; A. Puk, *The Procuratorship of the Alexandrian Pharos*, ZPE 175 (upcoming).

<sup>20</sup> P.Oxy. XLIII 3118 (ca. 237 AD).

<sup>21</sup> P.Oxy. X 1271 = ChLA IV 26 (246 AD).

In his recent work on Pelusion, Jean-Yves Carrez-Maratray also suggested<sup>22</sup> that the *procurator Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* could have held an office similar to the *epistrategus Pelusii*<sup>23</sup> with a responsibility covering two other ports. Given, however, our detailed knowledge of the epistrategos, this hypothesis appears most unlikely and will not be further discussed<sup>24</sup>.

The responsibility of the *procurator Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* needs to be sought in a different area, and the first hypothesis might be an authority involving imports and exports<sup>25</sup>. Another characteristic of harbour cities, in antiquity as well as in modern times, is naturally their status as border towns, and through the ports they were one of the main places for goods arriving in Egypt as well as for transferring products from the east which were shipped to Italy through Alexandria and Pelusium<sup>26</sup>. Hence, the responsibility of the *procurator Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* may have been the supervision of customs (*vectigalia/portoria*) and he presumably oversaw all customs offices for the Mediterranean trade at the three main harbours of Paraetonium, Alexandria and Pelusium<sup>27</sup>. In fact, there is to my knowledge no other Egyptian procuratorial official attested in our sources who could also be a candidate for overseeing customs matters — except for the *Arabarch* who was responsible for transit through the Eastern desert (see below)<sup>28</sup>. Egypt had high customs dues on

<sup>22</sup> Carrez-Maratray, *Péluse* (above n. 17) 422.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. CIL XII 671 (ca. 90 AD); AE 1992, 662 = ILS 9506 = AE 1915, 58 (before 135 AD).

<sup>24</sup> An eastern epistrategia of Pelusium seems to have been established at the turn of the second century, cf. Thomas, *Epistrategos* (above n. 17) 26, 36–37. This twofold division would contradict the larger area of responsibility suggested by Carrez-Maratray. Furthermore, a title for an epistrategos that would also include Alexandria as his area of responsibility appears highly unlikely since Alexandria always had a separate administration (see idem 110–111). In addition, all epistrategoi in Latin inscriptions bear the designation *epistrategus* (idem 40) and its absence in the present *cursus* would be very odd.

<sup>25</sup> All three cities seem to have possessed privileges concerning import taxes. See P. J. Sijpesteijn, *Custom Duties in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Zutphen 1987, 4; BGU V 1210 § 57.

<sup>26</sup> Both Pelusium and Alexandria are mentioned in several papyri as ports of import and export; cf. Sijpesteijn, *Custom Duties* (above n. 25); BGU V 1210 § 69; E. Leider, *Der Handel von Alexandria*, Hamburg 1934, 25. Van Minnen, *Lentils* (above n. 17) 169 even suggests that some products were named after Pelusium because it was the main Egyptian transit port and hence in the eyes of outsiders the place of provenance. For Paraetonium as a port see Strab. 17.1.14 (798).

<sup>27</sup> A similar system appears to have existed in the province of Africa where each of all five major harbour cities also had separate customs offices apparently headed by freedman procurators who oversaw collectors; cf. S. J. De Laet, *Portorium. Étude sur l'organisation douanière chez les romains, surtout à l'époque du haut-empire*, Brugge 1949, 255–257. Apart from levying fees on products coming from the Levant, Pelusium was also the main gateway for the trade by land with Palestine and Syria; cf. Kees, *Pelusion* (above n. 17) 410–411; Sperber, *Objects of Trade* (above n. 17). Alexandrian customs stations may have been situated at Iulio-polis or Nikopolis, cf. A. Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit. Studien zum praefectus Aegypti*, Stuttgart 2009, 367.

<sup>28</sup> De Laet, *Portorium* (above n. 27) 311 presupposes such a customs office. Strab. 17.1.16 (800) at least refers to a τελώνιον at Schedia outside Alexandria which is probably one of many customs offices (see. Bell. Alex. 13). Purpura (above n. 19) 142 assumes such a responsibility for the *procurator Phari*.

imports which are well attested for the Red Sea trade going to Alexandria in the form of the τετάρτη<sup>29</sup>, and these fees may not have been very different on incoming goods at the northern coast<sup>30</sup>. Scholars seem inclined to believe that the import of goods to Egypt was limited to wine and luxury goods from India<sup>31</sup>, but an older very thorough study by Erich Leider actually shows that a considerable variety of products whose provenance ranged from Spain to Asia Minor were delivered to Alexandria, be it for domestic consumption or for further export to India<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, luxury imports were probably charged at a higher rate than other products.

Apart from charges on incoming goods, merchants are also said to have paid a fee for exporting goods from Alexandria. This would suggest further customs dues which above all affected the trade between India and Italy, thus continuing the Ptolemaic system of import and export customs<sup>33</sup>. It appears plausible that such crucial business may have been put under the supervision of a centenarian procuratorship overseeing three ports and their customs stations<sup>34</sup>. Seals from the Antonine period found in the Rhône near Lyon, for example, bear the name of Alexandria and have been connected by scholars to customs issues, indicating the payment of customs taxes<sup>35</sup>. One might therefore ask whether such seals originating from the harbour of Alexandria had to be issued by an official authority. Following Theodor Mommsen and due to a lack of evidence, it has often been argued that all *portoria* in Egypt continued to be leased out

<sup>29</sup> A charge of 25% on imports from the Red Sea had to be paid on arrival at Alexandria. Cf. SB XVIII 13167; G. Thür, *Hypotheken-Urkunde eines Seedarlehens für eine Reise nach Muziris und Apographe für die Tetarte in Alexandria (zu P. Vindob. G 40.822)*, *Tyche* 2 (1987) 229–245; D. Rathbone, *The 'Muziris' Papyrus (SB XVIII 13167). Financing Roman Trade with India*, in: M. al Abbadi, M. Abd-el-Ghani (edd.), *Alexandrian Studies II in Honour of Mostafa el Abbadi* (Bull.Soc.Arch.Alex. 46), Alexandria 2000, 39–50.

<sup>30</sup> P.Cair.Zen. II 59012, for example, though dating from the Ptolemaic period, attests various customs rates for goods arriving at Pelusium (50, 33½, 25, 20 %). Cf. Jördens, *Verwaltung* (above n. 27) 357–358.

<sup>31</sup> H. Harrauer, P. J. Sijpesteijn, *Ein neues Dokument zu Roms Indienhandel. P. Vindob. G. 40822*, *AAWW* 122 (1985) 124–155, esp. 125 with further references; G. K. Young, *The Customs-Officer at the Nabataean Port of Leuke Kome (Periplus Maris Erythraei 19)*, *ZPE* 119 (1997) 266–268, esp. 268.

<sup>32</sup> Leider, *Handel* (above n. 26) 26–28, 30–32, 66; also S. E. Sidebotham, *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa 30 B.C. – A.D. 217*, Leiden 1986, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Strab. 17.1.13 (798): τὰ τέλη διπλάσια συνάγεται, τὰ μὲν εἰσαγωγικά, τὰ δὲ ἐξαγωγικά. Cf. Jördens, *Verwaltung* (above n. 27) 367–368; Sijpesteijn, *Custom Duties* (above n. 25) 1–2. The assumption of S. L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*, Princeton 1938, 257 about reduced customs duties at Alexandria therefore seems mistaken. A very famous parallel for the Roman period is of course the export and import customs regulations for the harbours of Asia Minor from 62 AD (SEG 39, 1180 l. 7: νόμος τέλους Ἀσίας εἰσαγωγῆς καὶ ἐξαγωγῆς κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν). In addition there were exports of Mediterranean products over Pelusium to the Arabian peninsula, cf. Sidebotham, *Economic Policy* (above n. 32) 15–20.

<sup>34</sup> Considering the high number of various customs duties, Jördens, *Verwaltung* (above n. 27) 368 assumes a central administration of customs affairs at Alexandria and also highlights the importance of Pelusium as customs office.

<sup>35</sup> M. Rostovtsew, M. Prou, *Catalogue des plombs de l'antiquité du moyen age et des temps modernes conservés au Département des Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris 1900, 29–30.

while other taxes were put under the direct supervision and collection of the state<sup>36</sup>. Evidence from Egyptian customs houses and the Red Sea region, however, shows officials and the procuratorial *Arabarch*<sup>37</sup> as well as customs contractors involved in the collection of *vectigalia*<sup>38</sup>. The recent study by Andrea Jördens on the prefect's administration also suggests that by the second century customs duties ceased to be farmed out to private contractors and were instead put under procuratorial supervision<sup>39</sup>. In his study on customs administration, De Laet likewise came to the conclusion that in other parts of the empire further procuratorships were established during the second century and that equestrian officials became responsible for the supervision of large customs districts<sup>40</sup>. His observation could thus confirm the picture with respect to Alexandria, Pelusium and Paraetonium, cities which did not represent provinces but nevertheless dealt with an enormous trade activity.

Another interpretation, I should like to suggest, perhaps more likely than a responsibility relating to customs affairs, may be offered by a procuratorship *portus utriusque* found at Ostia during the second and third century, probably established under Hadrian or even Trajan who had arranged for the construction of a second harbour basin at Ostia<sup>41</sup>. Such a procuratorship is not attested for any other Italian port<sup>42</sup>,

<sup>36</sup> Cf. U. Wilcken, L. Mitteis, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde I* (1 Grundzüge), Leipzig-Berlin 1912, 212–213; Wallace, *Taxation* (above n. 33) 287; De Laet, *Portorium* (above n. 27) 425; Purpura (above n. 19) 142.

<sup>37</sup> Sijpesteijn, *Custom Duties* (above n. 25) 92–95; SB VI 9210: ἐπιτηρηταί; SB XX 15012: ὀψώνιον φύλακος. Trade fees for goods coming from the Red Sea and going to the Nile Valley, the ἀποστόλιον ἀραβαρχίας (OGIS II 674), were apparently under the supervision of an *Arabarch* whose status as a procurator and seat at Pelusium seem to be confirmed by a recently discovered inscription from the reign of Hadrian (AE 1999, 418). These customs or transport fees may have been paid in order to gain passage. (On the office see F. Burkhalter Arce, *Les fermiers de l'arabarchie. Notables et hommes d'affaires à Alexandrie*, in: J. Leclant [ed.], *Alexandrie. Une Mégapole Cosmopolite. Actes du 9ème Colloque de la Villa Kérylos à Beaulieu-sur-Mer les 2 et 3 octobre 1998*, Paris 1999, 41–54; on the inscription see P. Sabbatini Tumolesi, *Un inedito dazio doganale. L'alabarchia Pelusi*, MEFRA 105 [1993] 55–61; on the pass see Sidebotham, *Economic Policy* [above n. 32] 81, 85, 102). Jördens, *Verwaltung* (above n. 27) 361–363 even assumes a responsibility of the *Arabarch* for all customs fees at the eastern and southern border, including the Red Sea harbours. Such a high procuratorial office could correspond to our procuratorship responsible for the northern customs offices.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Plin. nat. 6.84; D. Meredith, *Annius Plocamus. Two Inscriptions from the Berenice Road*, JRS 43 (1953) 38–40; Sidebotham, *Economic Policy* (above n. 32) 104.

<sup>39</sup> Jördens, *Verwaltung* (above n. 27) 369–370. *Arabarchs* from the first century already pursued procuratorial equestrian careers (see Burkhalter Arce, *Fermiers de l'arabarchie* [above n. 37] 52–53), which might point to a procuratorial status of this customs office even before the time of Hadrian.

<sup>40</sup> De Laet, *Portorium* (above n. 27) 241, 276, 406–407, 416.

<sup>41</sup> For evidence on such procurators and their sub-officers see Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 159–162, 171; H. Pavis d'Escurac, *La préfecture de l'annone. Service administratif impérial d'Auguste à Constantin*, Rome 1976, 120–122; G. Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis impériaux sous le haut-empire romain. Rôle politique et administratif*, Napoli 1970, 269; P. Eich, *Zur Metamorphose des politischen Systems in der römischen Kaiserzeit. Die Entstehung einer "personalen Bürokratie" im langen dritten Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2005, 195–197.

which may imply that similarly to the busiest Egyptian ports only Ostia and perhaps Puteoli<sup>43</sup> were important enough to require supervision by a special procurator, since these ports also played a crucial role in the *annona* transport to Rome. A special area of responsibility for the harbour at Ostia first appears under Trajan with the equestrian office of a *procurator annonae et in portu*<sup>44</sup>. It is unclear, however, whether one responsibility was subsequently entrusted to both a freedman *procurator portus utriusque* and a homonymous equestrian official, or whether the *procurator portus utriusque* was promoted from freedman status to equestrian rank in the first half of the third century<sup>45</sup>. The inscription of Aemilianus attests that when the procuratorship at Ostia was of high equestrian rank, the procuratorship of *Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* — virtually a *procurator trium portuum* — was likewise of equestrian rank. This status may in fact reflect a general policy from the second century onwards to prefer equestrian officials in broader procuratorial positions<sup>46</sup>, and in Egypt according to

<sup>42</sup> Considering the rich epigraphical evidence from other Italian ports such as Aquileia, this fact is indeed remarkable and Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 164–166 concluded that other ports might have been left in the hands of the local administration.

<sup>43</sup> A procuratorship at Puteoli before the 4th century has not yet been attested. However, several sub-officers imply at least an existence of a head procurator, cf. Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 162–163.

<sup>44</sup> AE 1939, 81. This should be seen in connection with Ostia's increased importance for the whole Mediterranean trade through the construction of a second harbour, cf. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (above n. 2) 58–62.

<sup>45</sup> De Salvo, *Economia privata* (above n. 2) 50 does not touch upon this problem and seems to suggest a direct succession from the equestrian procuratorship *annonae et in portu* under Trajan to two equestrian procuratorships (*annonae et portus utriusque*) from Hadrian onwards, although the present inscription for Mussius Aemilianus is the first evidence for an equestrian *procurator portus utriusque*. — Pavis d'Escurac, *Préfecture* (above n. 41) 121–122 seems to assume a simultaneous pair of freedman and equestrian procurators at Ostia but without secure evidence. — Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 159, 171 argues for a change from freedman to equestrian status in the 3rd century. His assumption, however, is based only on two other freedman harbour procurators (CIL VI 1020; CIL XIV 125) before Mussius Aemilianus and on the link of one of them to lead pipe inscriptions (see n. 48) that may provide information on further freedman procurators from the 2nd century, yet not explicitly bearing the title *p(ortus?) u(triusque?)*. It is therefore unclear whether these freedman officials and our present equestrian procurator held an identical office, since a sudden change (between 224 and 247 AD) from a freedman procuratorship to an equestrian ducenarian office seems rather implausible.

<sup>46</sup> See Cf. Boulyvert, *Esclaves et affranchis* (above n. 41) 134; P. A. Brunt, *Princeps and Equites*, JRS 73 (1983) 42–75, esp. 45–46; W. Eck, *Die Verwaltung des römischen Reiches in der hohen Kaiserzeit. Ausgewählte und erweiterte Beiträge I*, Basel 1995, 16–18; idem, *Ausgewählte und erweiterte Beiträge II*, Basel 1998, 90. In the case of Egypt another example would be the equestrian procuratorship πρὸς ταῖς ἐπισκέψεσιν which seems to have been established during the stay of Septimius Severus at Alexandria and was abolished under Philippus Arabs (compare list in G. M. Parássoglou, *Return of Uninundated Land*, CE 62 [1987] 205–218, esp. 210–212). The *procurator usiacus* apparently also changed from freedman to equestrian status under Marcus Aurelius, see F. Beutler, *Wer war ein procurator usiacus? Die Verwaltung des Patrimoniums in Ägypten in der ersten Hälfte des 2. Jahrhunderts*, CCG 18 (2007) 67–82, esp. 77–79.



their scope of responsibility<sup>47</sup>. The next office of Aemilianus' career was the equestrian procuratorship at Ostia, and this should not be considered as a mere coincidence but as a change from one harbour office to another with similar responsibilities. It has been argued that the *procurator portus utriusque* was responsible for the general supervision and maintenance of both ports, an argument based on a single inscription of an earlier freedman *procurator portus utriusque* who seems to be mentioned also on lead pipes<sup>48</sup>. Subordinate staff would then have consisted of several freedmen officials<sup>49</sup>. Similar activities are plausible for the Egyptian procuratorship, yet the scarce evidence from Ostia does not exclude a possible responsibility for customs duties as well.

Whatever the exact nature of these two offices may have been, the overall evidence points to a common policy of strengthening the equestrian administration at two crucial points of the public corn supply beginning with the rule of Trajan and Hadrian. The equestrian *procurator Neaspoleos*<sup>50</sup>, who was concerned with the public corn delivery to and storage at the Neapolis quarter of Alexandria<sup>51</sup>, is not securely attested before the reign of Trajan. His apparent counterpart, the equestrian *procurator annonae Ostiae*, oversaw the transport and measuring of grain after its arrival at the Italian ports and was probably responsible to the *praefectus annonae*<sup>52</sup>. This office was established and put in charge of a second freedman procurator from Hadrian

<sup>47</sup> Egyptian procurators with a single responsibility or for geographically limited areas such as the *procurator anabolici*, *procurator charterae*, *procurator Phari* or ἐπίτροπος προσόδων Ἀλεξανδρείας were freedmen, whereas the equestrian *procurator ad Mercurium*, the *procurator Neaspoleos* or the ἐπίτροπος πρὸς ταῖς ἐπισκέψεσιν held offices involving several taxes and provincial-wide processes — not to mention higher equestrian procurators such as the *iuridicus*, the *dioiketes* or the *idios logos*.

<sup>48</sup> CIL XIV 125 and CIL XIV 5309, 22. Cf. Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 161 assumes: “only three activities: laying of pipes [...] granting of a spot for the erection of a statue [...] some activity in connection with the riverboats”; Pavis d’Escurac, *Préfecture* (above n. 41) 121–122: a general “direction du port” working in “le tâche de la capitainerie”; Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis* (above n. 41) 269: “gérer le port et en entretenir les aménagements”, “lien avec les ouvrages publics”; Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (above n. 2) 300: “the effective maintenance of harbour installations and to control the shipping”.

<sup>49</sup> A possible list of sub-officers at Ostia is given in Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 157, 159–161.

<sup>50</sup> First references to this office come from the beginning of the second century (P.Lond. III 904 from AD 104 and P.Hib. II 215 dating from 70–130) and it is mentioned last in 248 AD (BGU I 8 = W.Chr. 170). Granaries at the Neapolis quarter in Alexandria are attested in the 80s AD (Ch.L.A. I 7 = Ch.L.A. XLVIII 7; SB VI 9087), but because of the significance of Egyptian corn it is possible that Augustus had already created such a procuratorship (Suet. Aug. 18.2). At least he was to establish the general *praefectura annonae* (G. Rickman, *The corn supply of ancient Rome*, Oxford 1980, 61–64) and in Egypt the office of φορολόγοι (L. Capponi, *Augustan Egypt. The Creation of a Roman Province*, New York, London 2005, 129–130).

<sup>51</sup> About the location and its storages see A. Ausfeld, *Neapolis und Brucheion in Alexandria*, *Philologus* 63 (1904) 481–497; Cass. Dio 42.38.2; Plut. Caesar 49.3; Flor. epit. 2.13.59; see also W.Chr. p. 508.

<sup>52</sup> Pavis d’Escurac, *Préfecture* (above n. 41) 147; Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 158, 160; Eich, *Metamorphose* (above n. 41) 195–197.



onwards<sup>53</sup> and perhaps promoted from sexagenarian to ducenarian rank at the turn of the third century<sup>54</sup>. After the construction of the second harbour at Ostia, the procuratorship *portus utriusque* was entrusted with further duties concerning the two harbours and made its first appearance under Hadrian<sup>55</sup> and thus, as stated above, may be regarded as a counterpart of the *procurator Alexandriae Pelusi Paraetoni* who perhaps was established either around the same time or later.

The evidence from other ports of the Roman Empire thus seems to confirm a picture of special harbour procuratorships. The responsibility for all harbours on the northern Egyptian coast<sup>56</sup>, be it in administrative or customs affairs, sets our procurator directly below the level of the highest provincial officials. This fact may explain why the only officeholder we know went on to pursue an extraordinary career when ten years later, after his position at Ostia, Aemilianus finally became vice prefect and prefect of Egypt<sup>57</sup>.

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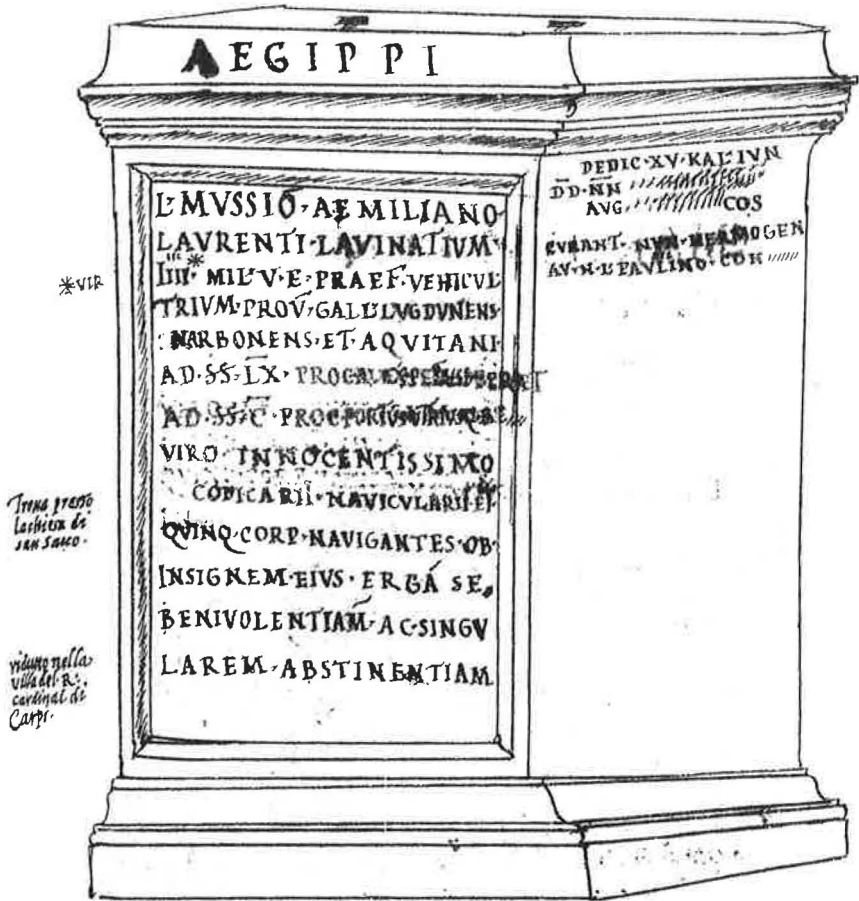
<sup>53</sup> The equestrian procuratorship *annonae Ostiae/Ostiensis* was established under Trajan and most likely had its predecessor in the freedman *procurator portus Ostiensis* (since Claudius), whose responsibilities were later divided between the harbour administration and supervision of grain supply (cf. AE 1939, 81; de Salvo, *Economia privata* [above n. 2] 50; Houston, *Administration* [above n. 2] 158–159). From Hadrian until the mid-third century there is evidence both for a freedman *procurator annonae Ostiensis* and for an equestrian *procurator annonae Ostiae* (cf. Pavis d'Escurac, *Préfecture* [above n. 41] 106–111; Houston, *Administration* [above n. 2] 159–160).

<sup>54</sup> For the promotion see Pflaum, *Carrières* (above n. 6) 1031; the relevant inscription from 258/259 AD is published erroneously in AE 1934, 161. According to the original publication (NSA 9 [1933] 505 no. 226) the final lines should read (l. 12): *v(iro) e(gregrio) proc(uratori) Aug(usti) CC I [a]nn(onae) et [...]*. A certain relation to the former sexagenarian office at Ostia, however, is therefore not secure and only based on the provenance of this inscription from Rome!

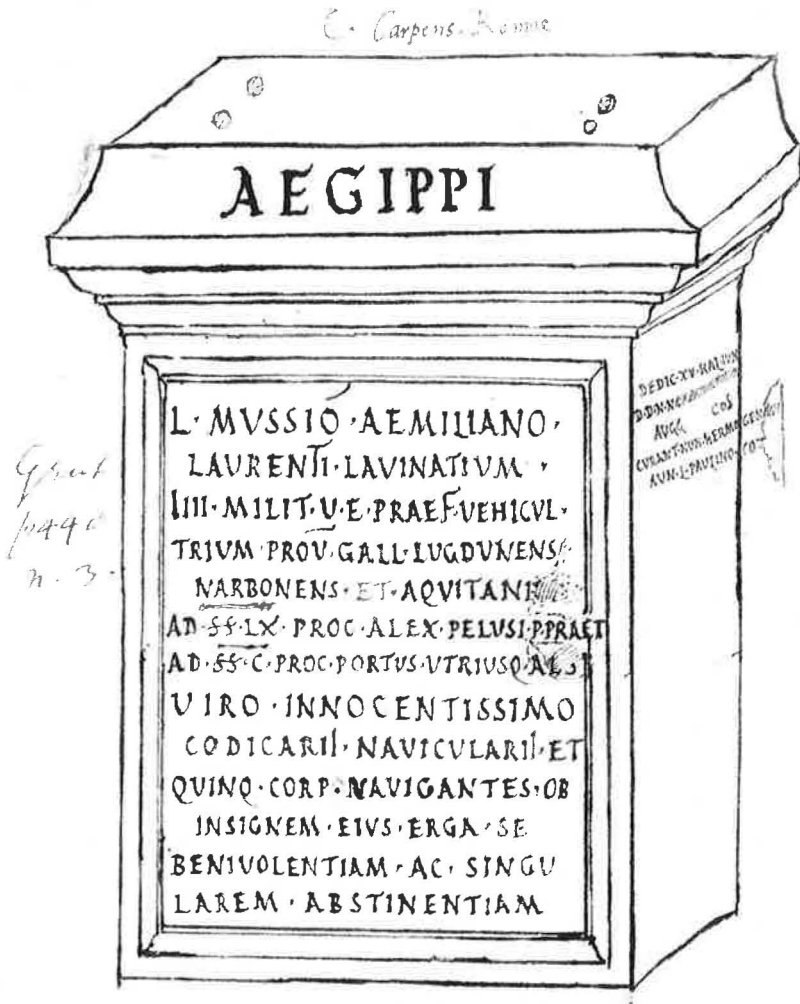
<sup>55</sup> Houston, *Administration* (above n. 2) 159 with good reason assumes a definitive administrative arrangement under Hadrian; likewise de Salvo, *Economia privata* (above n. 2) 50.

<sup>56</sup> This geographical location also accounts for the lack of evidence since hardly any papyri or ostraka are preserved which would shed further light on administrative procedures (Cf. Wallace, *Taxation* [above n. 33] 257; De Laet, *Portorium* [above n. 27] 311; Sijpesteijn, *Custom Duties* [above n. 25] 17). A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano IV* (ed. S. Daris), Milano 1986, 51–52 for instance offers only two entries for the once important harbour of Paraetonium.

<sup>57</sup> G. Bastianini, *Il prefetto d'Egitto (30 a.C.–297 d.C.). Addenda (1973–1985)*, ANRW II.10.1 (1988) 503–517, esp. 514. But Aemilianus would eventually be involved in the eastern usurpation of general Macrianus in 260 AD and was sent by his successor Theodotos to Rome for execution (Pflaum, *Carrières* [above n. 6] 927).



zu A. Puk, S. 90, Fig. 1: Libro XXXIV delle antichità di Roma di Pyrrho Ligori nel qual si tratta delle inscriptions di statue, tanto di dei come de heroi et altri huomini illustri, con altre cose diverse secondo l'occasione de le dedicationi fatte da diverse condizioni d'huomini, p. 161 — Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. XIII B.7, f. 77r (by courtesy of De Luca Editori/Roma)



zu A. Puk, S. 90, Fig. 2: Codex Pighianus, 159r — Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin –  
 Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SBB-PK), Ms. lat. fol. 61, f. 159r