

THE PROSOPOGRAPHY OF ROMAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: FASTI PROVINCILIARUM

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This subject goes back a long way. It is enough to recall a few names: the great Borghesi first and foremost; or two French pioneers, W.H. Waddington, whose *Fastes des provinces asiatiques de l'Empire romain* (Paris) appeared in 1872, and A. Clément Pallu de Lessert, the second volume of whose *Fastes des provinces africaines... sous la domination romaine* came out just over a century ago: *Bas-empire* (Paris, 1901). One could mention a good many other nineteenth century studies. Note for example, the predecessors cited by A. Grenier, in the Préface to his unfinished *Fastes de la Narbonnaise*, which were eventually revised and completed by H.-G. Pflaum¹, or J. Klein, *Die Verwaltungsbeamten von Sizilien und Sardinien* (Bonn, 1878) — this work was intended to be part I.1 of *Die Verwaltungsbeamten der Provinzen des römischen Reichs bis auf Diokletian*. Complete coverage was indeed attempted by W. Liebenam, *Forschungen zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des Römischen Kaiserreichs I. Die Legaten in den römischen Provinzen von Augustus bis Diokletian* (Leipzig, 1888): not very satisfactorily. As an exemplary study of a single province one can cite J. Jung, *Fasten der Provinz Dacien* (Innsbruck, 1894), in the meantime twice replaced, but which one can still consult with profit here and there.

This is not the occasion to give an extended history of the subject: but something needs to be said about its development, before turning to the question of what such work can or should attempt to achieve. First, the more recent history. One may mention the brief review of prosopographical studies for the year 1945-1970 by one of the great masters, Hans-Georg Pflaum². Ten years later there

appeared a most remarkable work, based on over twenty years of preliminary studies: the *Laterculi Praesidum Volumen I* (Göteborg 1984) by the Swedish scholar B.E. Thomasson — otherwise known as Benedictus Thomae — whom one may well describe as a one man research institute. The twentieth century, indeed, saw a vast expansion. For a very full bibliography covering provincial *Fasti* and related matters one may cite especially E. Dąbrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus* (Bonn 1998).

Like so much else in the study of Roman history, systematic study of imperial prosopography goes back to Theodor Mommsen. Modern study would be impossible without *CIL* and the whole series of other epigraphic publications, both corpora other monographs and articles, notably those in *ZPE*. They can speak for themselves in this context; and eminent heirs to Mommsen and Boeck and Cagnat are present to speak for them. Something else needs stating: improved attention to literary sources has also had a role to play. I mention only the intensive examination of the *Historia Augusta*, initiated by the then very young Hermann Dessau in 1889³, which has, not least, eliminated a good many fictitious persons and governorships from most if not quite all modern provincial *Fasti*. The scientific study of the persons concerned was placed on a new basis by the appearance of the three volume *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, in 1897, in which the lion's share

* The Vindolanda Trust.

1. See PFLAUM, H.-G., *Les fastes de la province de Narbonnaise*, Paris 1978, ix.

2. PFLAUM, H.-G., "Le progrès de recherches prosopographiques concernant l'époque du Haut-Empire durant le dernier quart de siècle (1945-1970)", *ANRW* II.1, 1974, 113-135.

3. DESSAU, H., "Über Zeit und Persönlichkeit der S.H.A.", *Hermes* 24, 1889, 337-392; followed up, as a response to criticism, by "Über die S.H.A.", *ibid.* 27, 1892, 561-605.

of editing was taken, it is no coincidence, by Dessau. Meanwhile, in 1893 the new version of Paulys *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* had begun to appear, under the aegis of Georg Wissowa.

Many of the early entries on persons in the *RE* were composed by the two senior editors of *PIR*, Elimar Klebs and Paul von Rohden. Before long two young scholars were recruited for the period of the principate, Edmund Groag and Arthur Stein. They were to be the leading figures in the prosopography of the principate for more than four decades, and it was proper that they were entrusted with the second edition of *PIR*, launched in 1933. This great enterprise, in spite of the difficulties created by contemporary events from that year onwards until 1989, has continued, for a long time very slowly but kept alive and since the early 1990s markedly revived, ever since. *PIR*² reached the letter R in 1999, and S should soon be ready.

*PIR*² is something of a bible for all concerned with this subject. The intention was always to complete it, by way of indices, with *Fasti* of office-holders. It was also hoped to launch a follow up, on the later empire; for *PIR* ends with Diocletian. During the years in which the progress of *PIR* was delayed John Morris began compiling his own *Fasti*, which he circulated fairly widely. Much more important, in 1965 Morris was able to collect from East Berlin the notes made by Mommsen, Otto Seeck and others for the intended successor to *PIR*. This led to the appearance, in Cambridge rather than in Berlin, of *PLRE*, the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, volume I, covering the period A.D. 260-395, thus overlapping *PIR*'s last twenty-five years. *PLRE* I, edited by A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale and J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971), was quite harshly criticised by a number of reviewers (not least for "pre-Dessau" credulity about fictitious persons in the *Historia Augusta*). Jones had died before Volume I appeared; and Morris did not long survive it. Volume II, covering A.D. 395-527, appeared in 1980, with Martindale as sole editor; and he was able to complete the vast enterprise in 1992 with volume III, A.D. 527-640. Needless to say: a great many scholars from many countries contributed. And it should be added, each of the three volumes has *Fasti*, by way of index.

*PIR*² has not yet achieved completion, or an index. For the time being, Thomasson's splendid *Laterculi Praesidum*, with his supplements, especially that of 1990, stands pretty much alone as a

comprehensive listing, with sources, of the provincial governors from Augustus to Diocletian. But here it must be stressed that prosopographical studies of Roman provincial government can never be treated in isolation. Not just *PLRE* — at least *PLRE* I — must be considered as well. An even more remarkable one man enterprise, T.R.S. Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, first published in 1952, laid a firm foundation for further work, revised by its author in 1960 and 1986: a good many Julio-Claudian governors had ancestors who can be found in *MRR*. Besides which, it is obvious, the prosopography of provincial governors cannot be understood without taking account of other office-holders, senatorial and equestrian, and indeed those of lower rank: city prefects, consuls, curators of the aqueducts and of public buildings and works, treasury prefects, legionary legates, *iuridici* and road curators in Italy; members of the great priestly colleges; prefects of the Guard, the *vigiles*, the *annona*; procurators and *primipilares* — the complete list, let alone the bibliographical details, of categories already covered would fill many pages, and it would be invidious to single out even a few names at this point. Furthermore, the compilation of the senatorial Albums for the principate, by S.J. De Laet, P. Lambrechts and G. Barbieri, all naturally out of date in many details, paved the way for further advances⁴.

A great landmark was the Colloquio, *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio*, organised at Rome by S. Panciera in 1981, published soon afterwards. Apart from the contributions in the stately two volumes, *Tituli* 4-5 (Roma, 1982 [1984]), this meeting provided the impetus for much fruitful further work. Even more recent and still very much up to date — and revised from time to time in articles by its author — the *Prosopographie des femmes de l'ordre sénatorial (Ier-IIe siècles)* by M.-Th. Raepsaet-Charlier (Louvain, 1987) broke new ground and is an essential tool of research. Studies of the representation of particular regions or provinces in the senatorial order, a major theme of the Rome Colloquio, also deserve stressing: I single out here A. Caballos Rufino on *Los senadores hispanorromanos* (Ecija, 1990). Another Colloquium, organised by W. Eck at Cologne in 1991 in honour of L. Petersen, who

4. DE LAET, S.J., *De Samenstelling van den romeinschen senaat gedurende de eerste eeuw van het principat (28 vóór – 68 na Chr.)*, Antwerpen 1941; LAMBRECHTS, P., *La composition du sénat romain de l'accession au trône d'Hadrien à la mort de Commode (117-192)*, Antwerpen 1936; BARBIERI, G., *L'albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino*, Roma 1952.

had done so much to keep *PIR*² in business during its most difficult decades, deserves mention too⁵; and, methodologically of immense importance for prosopographers, O. Salomies' study of *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature* (Helsinki, 1992). Let me just emphasise: prosopography of provincial governors is not a task to be undertaken lightly: *cuncta inter se conexa*, as Tacitus said in a different context (*Ann.* 1, 9, 5).

Pflaum's great work on the procurators was the fruit of more than ten years labour, in difficult circumstances. It took over another decade until it was all published: the first part in 1950; the thèse complémentaire, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain*, came out in 1960 and 1961. It was soon criticised as being too schematic in its approach. All the same, as his critics regularly acknowledged, their own work would have been impossible without his labours. Pflaum himself sternly judged prosopographical studies with too narrow a basis, advising against *Fasti* of a single province as the topic for a doctoral dissertation. Better for beginners, he thought, to take a short period and cover the whole empire⁶. This had been done, for example, by W. Hüttl, with his *Antoninus Pius* (Prague, II, 1932, I, 1936): long since obsolete, to be sure, but a valuable compilation in its day. This approach has been fruitful with four later studies: by W. Eck for the period from Vespasian to Hadrian (1970; revised in two long articles in 1982 and 1983); by G. Alföldy for Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (1977); by K. Dietz on the year 238 (1980); and by P.M.M. Leunissen for Commodus to Severus Alexander (1989). All four are still fundamental⁷. But for most of this period, AD 70-238, new information has continued to crop up,

in particular from a source hardly to be expected before the 1980s: the discovery of ever more military diplomas through metal detectors. The flood of new evidence about suffect consuls and governors which these have provided means that the establishment of provincial *Fasti* is becoming ever more refined: we are in a state of flux. That it has nonetheless been possible, for those not privileged to have early access to unpublished diplomata, to take account of many new finds, is due mainly to the dedication and skill of Margaret Roxan, whose three volumes of *Roman Military Diplomas* (London, 1978, 1985 and 1994), *RMD*, will, it is hoped, soon be followed by a fourth⁸.

To return to the immediate theme: Arthur Stein's own first monograph in this category was devoted to Thrace: *Römische Reichsbeamte der Provinz Thracia* (Sarajevo, 1920). He followed this up with *Die Legaten von Moesien* (Budapest 1940) and *Die Reichsbeamten von Dazien* (Budapest, 1944); and finally with *Die Präfekten von Ägypten in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bern, 1950). All three were published in series edited by Andreas Alföldy, let it be recalled: Austro-Hungarian solidarity after the old empire had disappeared. Groag only produced two such monographs, both dealing with the same province, one for the principate, the second for the late empire: *Die römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia bis auf Diokletian* (Wien, 1939), and *Die Reichsbeamten von Achaia in spätrömischer Zeit* (Budapest, 1946). These excellent works still deserve to be consulted. But it is a question, to what extent are they a model for future work in this field? In one particular, it is to be noted that Stein kept to the period "until Diocletian". This is certainly sensible in many respects. It is the basis for Thomasson's *Laterculi* and was adopted for the Spanish provinces by G. Alföldy (*Fasti Hispanienses*, Wiesbaden, 1969). He, however, included all office-holders of senatorial rank, not just governors and legionary legates, up to the reign of Diocletian. I took this excellent volume as a model for my treatment of Britain (*The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Oxford, 1981), beginning with Claudius, of course, not Augustus. But I felt it desirable and possible to add the equestrian procurators and prefects of the fleet and even the relatively small number of office-holders known for the years from Diocletian until the end of

5. ECK, W. (ed.), *Prosopographie und Sozialgeschichte. Studien zur Methodik und Erkenntnismöglichkeit der kaiserzeitlichen Prosopographie. Kolloquium Köln 24.-26. November 1991*, Köln, Wien, Weimar 1993.

6. See his review of MEYERS, W., *L'administration de la province romaine de Belgique*, Brugge 1964, in *Gnomon* 37, 1965, 388-396 (and earlier criticisms in *Historia* 3, 1955, 119; *REL* 34, 1956, 394 and 37, 1957, 376).

7. ECK, W., *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian. Prosopographische Untersuchungen mit Einschluss der Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der Statthalter*, München 1970; ECK, W., "Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der senatorischen Statthalter von 69/70 bis 138/139", *Chiron* 12, 1982, 281-362; 13, 1983, 147-237; ALFÖLDY, G., *Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninen. Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Führungsschicht*, Bonn 1977; DIETZ, K., *Senatus contra principem. Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Opposition gegen Kaiser Maximinus Thrax*, München 1980; LEUNISSEN, P.M.M., *Konsuln und Konsulare in der Zeit von Commodus bis Severus Alexander (180-235 n. Chr.)*. *Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Elite im römischen Kaiserreich*, Amsterdam 1989.

8. See now ROXAN, M.; HOLDER, P., *Roman Military Diplomas III*, (London 2003). Sadly, Margaret died on 26 June 2003. Her illness had prevented her from completing this work herself, but it was ably carried through, with her blessing, by Paul Holder.

Roman rule in the fifth century, in order to cover the entire Roman government of the island. This approach has something to be said for it when provinces (in the case of Britain eventually four or five provinces) in the Roman system more or less coincide with modern national boundaries; but not, no doubt, when one is confronted, as in the areas east of Italy, by those divided into a great many different modern states and, in any case, with a late Roman history that lasted for hundreds of years after Diocletian.

Here one must put the question: what remains to be done? The answer has to be, of course, in one sense, that one has to keep improving and refining what is there already. Thomasson, who began in 1960 with his *Statthalter der römischen Provinzen Nordafrikas* (Lund), a dissertation, indeed, the work of a beginner, but an unusually perceptive one, himself produced an imposing new version three and a half decades later: *Fasti Africani* (Stockholm, 1996). As he says in his preface, even Pallu de Lessert's pioneering volumes on these provinces still retain their value a century on, especially for those persons known only from literary sources. But nearly forty years of new epigraphic discoveries after Thomasson's dissertation was completed made his revision necessary. After just over twenty years since producing *The Fasti of Roman Britain* (Oxford, 1981), I came to the same conclusion: not that all that many new names can be added (just one new, Hadrianic legate, delivered by a diploma "probably" discovered in the Balkans, and a few other new officials). But for so many of those already included in 1981 there is new information on their careers. To give one example: in 1981 an elaborate theory seemed necessary to explain the evidence for a governor under Commodus, Ulpius Marcellus, namely (to omit details) the suggestion of a second governor of this name, in 211-212⁹. Not many people, it is true, believed in Marcellus junior. Now he can be banished into oblivion, like another example, the third Neratius Priscus, the phantom supposed governor of Pannonia Inferior under Hadrian¹⁰: in the case of Ulpius Marcellus thanks to the evidence of diplomas, one published (RMD III 184), at least two more in the pipeline (all found in the Balkans, it seems; see now RMD III 293-4 and there are more awaiting publication). The Com-

modan governor was definitely already in Britain, it now emerges, at least two years, probably more, before the death of Marcus Aurelius. Hence, either the "general" (στρατηγός) killed by the invading barbarians, against whom Commodus "sent" Marcellus (Cassius Dio 72, 8, 1ff.), was not a governor; or Marcellus (which would be more or less unique) served twice in the same province. Aside from this, as stated, more details on the career and origins of many other men who served in Britain have come to light. A new work seems desirable and will, it is hoped, be useful, not just to students of Roman Britain, most of whom are not very interested in epigraphy or prosopography or narrative history anyway, but in archaeology. Rather, provincial *Fasti* have something to tell us about the ruling élite of the empire and how they were put to work in ruling the vast world-state.

One may also consider which particular provinces still need attention. Asia springs to mind: a volume analogous to Thomasson's on Africa would be welcome, even though caution is needed, since new proconsuls continue to turn up in that epigraphically fertile part of the empire, thick and fast, even without the assistance of military diplomas. Some unpublished proconsuls, particularly for the third century, are lurking in the wings. And there is another matter: how much should *Fasti* try to cover? There is something to be said for treating a block of provinces, as done by B. Rémy for Anatolia¹¹. But should one list all officials, or just senators? Procuratorial provinces were not always identical with those of the governor. Should one list full details on the *officia* of the governors; and all the army units and their commanders? It is instructive to see what J. Jung wrote in the introduction to his Dacian *Fasti* in 1894, "Ueber die Provincialverwaltung und den Reichsbeamtenstand in der Kaiserzeit überhaupt". (One may quickly note in parenthesis that there are problems with the concept "Reichsbeamten" and with "Verwaltung". Better perhaps, in German, to use the term "Amtsträger" for the first and to avoid the second altogether.) Jung decided to include everyone: *legati Augusti pro praetore*; procurators of all kinds; legionary legates; military tribunes; prefects of *alae*

9. BIRLEY, A.R., *The Fasti of Roman Britain*, Oxford 1981, 140 ff., 164 ff.

10. Cf. VIDMAN, L., in *PIR*² N 60, on L. Neratius Priscus (*cos. suff. 97*): "neque de tertio quodam senatore eiusdem nominis cogitandum est, qui Pannoniae iam divisae praeses fuerit".

11. RÉMY, B., *Les fastes sénatoriaux des provinces romaines d'Anatolie au Haut-Empire (31 avant J.-C. – 284 après J.-C.)*. Pont-Bithynie, Galatie, Cappadoce, Lycie-Pamphylie et Cilicie, Paris 1988, preceded by *L'évolution administrative de l'Anatolie aux trois premiers siècles de notre ère*, Lyon 1986, and followed by *Les carrières sénatoriales dans les provinces romaines d'Anatolie au Haut-Empire (31 avant J.-C. – 284 après J.-C.)*. Pont-Bithynie, Galatie, Cappadoce, Lycie-Pamphylie et Cilicie, Istanbul, Paris 1989.

and cohorts; and centurions. Besides this, he added sections on: units raised in Dacia; auxiliary units garrisoned there; the "Dislocation der Truppen"; the road network; the goldmining district; the local government system; and finally "Die Organisation der Verwaltung". All in less than two hundred pages. Dacia, of course, had a very short history. But fifty years later A. Stein needed well over 100 pages just for the governors, procurators and legionary legates who served in Dacia. Another fifty years and I. Piso devoted over 300 pages to the senatorial office-holders alone, in a volume which should serve as a model for future work. As he stresses, it was necessary to discuss the entire career, where known, not just the service in Dacia; one hopes that his *Fasti provinciae Daciae* I (Bonn, 1993) will soon be followed by the promised second volume on the procurators. One need hardly add that, as Piso points out, H. Devijver's immense *Prosopographia Militiarum Equestrium* (Leuven, 1976-1993) has made it superfluous to include the prefects and military tribunes. Many of Jung's other categories are likewise best treated elsewhere.

Pflaum's late work, the *Fasti* of Narbonensis which he took over from Grenier and eventually published long after Grenier's death, not long before his own, must also be regarded as rather inflated: proconsuls are not very amply attested (he could only produce 25 out of a postulated 300 or more), even less so legates and quaestors, but every other person with connections to the province is also treated, including all those, even *militēs caligati*, for whom origin in the province is attested or can be postulated. All this in over 300 pages, followed by over 200 more of Indices on the comprehensive scale which was Pflaum's trademark. And again and again, within the main body of the work, one finds another speciality of Pflaum: comparative lists (those who had the privilege of sitting at his feet recall the oft repeated command: "faire la liste!"). Desirable, in an ideal world. But such lavish treatment for every province must no doubt be foregone. Also rather excessive, it may be added here, was the vast tome on the proconsuls of Africa and Asia between Tiberius and Nero, with the sub-title *Eine Untersuchung zum Verhältnis Princeps und Senat*, published after long delays by U. Vogel-Weidemann in 1982: 718 pages¹².

Stein wrote in 1944 as follows (*Die Reichsbeamten von Dazien* 108): "Nicht uninteressant ist

12. *Die Statthalter von Africa und Asia in den Jahren 14-68 n. Chr.*, Bonn 1982.

es, die Reihe der Statthalter, Legionslegaten und Procuratoren zu durchmustern, um zu sehen, was wir über ihre Herkunft aussagen können. Man sieht ja immer mehr und betont es, wie wichtig für die Erkenntnis diese Art soziale Struktur-forschung werden kann, die man als Zentralproblem in der Erforschung der römischen Kaiserzeit betrachten möchte". Not all may agree on the importance of this question, and the determination of *origo* is fraught with difficulties. Many prefer to be sceptical over the use of indirect evidence, particularly onomastic. Nomenclature alone is generally not enough, but, not least with the help of the Finnish school, Kajanto, Solin, Salomies in particular¹³, the attempt is worth making. Some would call it guesswork. But, to use a favourite expression of Ronald Syme, to whom these studies owe so much, even if he refrained from *Fasti* in monograph form (but several provinces were handled by him, for certain periods, in articles or lengthy reviews), let us call it "rational conjecture". As one who has always found it satisfying "to give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name", I would plead for the attempt to be made, if one has a name, to discuss what can be said about its bearer's possible local habitation, his *origo*¹⁴.

In conclusion one may register in rapid succession a list of aspects which *Fasti* may usefully discuss, in addition to the basic task of establishing the identity and term of office of governors and other high officials. It is worth discussing, in some cases simply summarising, either in separate sections or in a concluding chapter, matters such as the following:

- the origins and careers of the persons concerned; a discussion of the length of tenure and of the "rank" or "status" of the province and of any change in this, temporary or permanent, including its division(s);
- the distribution of the epigraphic and other documentary evidence: from the province and from elsewhere, markedly different in the various provinces;
- the titulature of governors and others in literary, epigraphic and other sources (and discussion, where relevant, not just of the appearance of terms like *consularis* and *praeses*, but of

13. In particular KAJANTO, I., *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965; SOLIN, H.; SALOMIES, O., *Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum latinorum*, Mainz 1988.

14. In spite of the sarcastic comments by CLAUSS, M., reviewing BIRLEY, o.c. (note 8), *Historische Zeitschrift* 235, 1982, 391, I still think it worth trying to discover *origines*.

peculiarities such as the title δικαιοδότης for the legates of Lycia or στρατηγός for those of Cilicia);

— the nature of their activity, military and civil; evidence for their principal residence (provincial “capitals”, discussed illuminatingly and in great detail by R. Haensch, *Capita provinciarum*, Köln, 1997) and for their movements within the province;

— evidence for the garrison and for the governor’s staff; something on choice of subordinates, in cases where the governors may be supposed or known to have had some influence in their selection;

— reasons, known or conjectured, for the choice of governors and a discussion of any apparent or supposed “specialisation”; evidence for connections of particular families with particular provinces;

— relations with the provincials, including any evidence for governors having influence in gaining citizenship; evidence for governors and other officials becoming patrons of the province or of individual communities within it; special commissioners and *censitores*.

The above categories are certainly far from comprehensive. One should take note of a forthcoming work, which, while avowedly not prosopographical, will be consulted with profit by anyone compiling provincial *Fasti*, particularly of eastern provinces: E. Meyer-Zwiffelhofer, Πολιτικῶς ὄρχειν. *Zum Regierungsstil der senatorischen Statthalter in den kaiserzeitlichen griechischen Provinzen* (Stuttgart, 2002)¹⁵.

For *Fasti* of the late empire, the task is rather different from that of the period up to Diocletian, not least because there were so many more provinces¹⁶. But for this very reason, in certain cases, principally where there is literary evidence, such as the extensive writings of Libanius or Synesius, much more is known about relations between governors and governed than in the principate. Indeed, in the late empire, literary evidence far outweighs epigraphic in quantity. Further, partly because the status of the governor was relatively junior and his origin often humble, whereas the provincials had acquired new and outspoken defenders of their interests (including bishops), not seldom of higher social standing than the *praesides*, a rather different kind of relationship emerged between governors and governed¹⁷. This change did not apply everywhere, of course. For a native of the empire’s remotest province it is salutary to read the lines of the Gallic poet Rutilius Namatianus in praise of his friend Victorinus. Rutilius stayed with him in Italy on his return to Gaul in AD 417. Victorinus, whose home was at Toulouse, was a refugee. This excellent man had once been *vicarius Britanniarum*: “Ocean and Thule knew his virtues, as do the fields ploughed by the wild Britons”. He would always be remembered on the island; although Britain was on the outermost edge of the empire, as governor Victorinus had behaved as if it were at its centre. It is, the poet concludes, so much more creditable to have striven to please people, whom it would not have been discreditable to have displeased¹⁸. One reason why the Britons had decided to go for independence, perhaps: Victorinus was perhaps, like the supposedly incomparable Julius Agricola long before, an exception.

15. The author kindly made his typescript available to me in advance of publication.

16. Here one must draw attention to *Antiquité Tardive* 6, 1998, of which the first 231 pages are devoted to “Les gouverneurs de province dans l’antiquité tardive”.

17. A forthcoming work by Daniele Sloopjes promises interesting observations on this theme.

18. RUT. NAMAT., *De reditu suo* 1, 491 ff.