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SOME COMMENTS ON THE STATUS OF IMPERIAL FREEDMEN  
(The Case of Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus)

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SOME COMMENTS ON THE STATUS OF IMPERIAL FREEDMEN<sup>1</sup>  
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1. Introduction

One of the most interesting inscriptions for analyzing the role played by imperial freedmen in the Roman administration was found in Ephesus about two decades ago. It goes as follows (JÖAI 49,1968/71 B, 19ff. = AE 1972,574 = Inschr.Eph. 852 = SEG XXX 1980, 1308):

*Ti. Claudio Aug. lib. / Classico / divi T. a cubiculo et proc./ castrensi, divi Nervae / proc. a voluptatibus, / Imp. Nervae Traiani Caesaris / Aug. Germanici Dacici proc. / a voluptatibus et ad ludum maltutinum et proc. Alexandriae, / C. Julius Photinus Celer adiutor / in procuratione Alexandriae / ob merita eius.*

[Ἡ β]ουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἐτείμησαν / Τι. Κλ(αύδιον) Σεβαστοῦ ἀπελεύθερον /  
Κλασσικόν, Θεοῦ Τ[ί]του ἐπὶ τοῦ / κοιτῶνος καὶ ἐπίτροπον κας-/τρένσιον,  
Θεοῦ Νέρουα ἐπίτρο-/[πον] ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπολαύσεων, Αὐ-/[τοκ]ράτορος  
[Ν]έρουα Τραιανοῦ / Κα[ί]αρο[c] Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ / [Δ]ακικοῦ  
ἐπίτροπον ἐπὶ τῶν / [ἀπο]λαύσεων καὶ λούδου μα-/[του]τίνου καὶ ἐπίτροπον  
κα-/θ[ο]λικ[ὸν] ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, / [Γ.] Ἰούλιος Φωτεινός Κέλερ βοη-/θός  
αὐτοῦ γενόμενος ἐν Ἀλεξαν-/δρείᾳ τὸν ἴδιον εὐεργέτην.

This inscription has been dealt with on many occasions,<sup>2</sup> but the interpretation given by the majority of scholars is not very satisfactory. That is to say that, even though Ti. Claudius Classicus in both the Latin and Greek version of his career is said to be an imperial freedman, students of his career have mostly concluded that he had in fact been promoted from that status level and had been made a member of the equestrian order while holding the post of *proc. voluptatum* under Nerva. Indeed, although nothing to that effect is said explicitly in the inscription, according to the current version, we must nonetheless assume it is so from what we (think we) know of how the imperial administration was organized: the post of *proc. castrensis*, held under Titus, has been thought to be higher ranking than that of

<sup>1</sup> For encouragement and healthy criticism I wish to thank Ms. E.M.Steinby, and Professors W.Eck, F.Millar, and H.Solin. My thanks are due also to Mr. N.Kokkinos for useful information. For the views expressed, I am solely responsible.

<sup>2</sup> See the extensive comment in AE 1972,574 (by H.-G.Pflaum and M.LeGlay), repeated and expanded in the posthumous work by H.-G.Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres ... Supplément*, Paris 1982,24ff. no.70; W.Eck in RE S XIV 1974, 100 Nr.107b; P.R.C.Weaver, "Two Freedman Careers", *Antichthon* 14,1980,143-56 spec. 150ff.; G.Boulvert, "La carrière de Tiberius Claudius Classicus (AE 1972,574)", *ZPE* 43,1981,31-41; H.Pleket and R.Stroud in SEG XXX, 1308 who relate the view presented by Weaver; M.S.Bassignano, *Epigraphica* 48,1986,259f. (review of Pflaum, Supplément). For opinions contrary to the common view see n.4 below.

*proc. voluptatum*, and scholars have excluded the possibility of a demotion on principal grounds. If Ti. Claudius Classicus had remained, officially, of freedman status, this would cause numerous problems for the current view on the role played by equestrians and freedmen in the administration and the working of the same.<sup>3</sup>

The conflict arising from the immediate testimony of the inscription and the interpretation made thereof warrants some further examination. It is to be hoped that the present study will provide a better understanding not only of this individual case, but also of some general aspects of the imperial administration. The purpose will be to direct inquiries in a direction until now pointed to mainly by Werner Eck, who has expressed a slight disagreement with the current view on some occasions.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The Greek epithet "kratistos" given to a procurator

An important place in the current argument is given to a Greek papyrus from Egypt, dated AD 103, in which a person known only by the cognomen *Klassikos* (actually spelt "Klastikos") is given the epithet "kratistos".<sup>5</sup> It is thought that the term is the Greek equivalent of the Latin *vir egregius*, which was the epithet given to equestrians.

There seems to be no good case for denying that this "Klassikos" is identical with our *Classicus* who was *proc. Alexandriae* under Trajan according to the inscription. The cognomen *Classicus* is not a very common one (Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965 mentions 15 known cases found in the CIL volumes<sup>6</sup>). But to determine what the function of *Classicus* was in Egypt, and in what capacity he held his post, is quite another question.

The papyrus of AD 103 gives the passage "Ὁ κράτιστος ἐπίτροπος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Κλαστικῶς (sic) ..." <sup>7</sup> As for the epithet "kratistos" it is by no means clear that it should be taken as an official honourific title ("Rangtitel"). On the contrary, in Latin terminology the

<sup>3</sup> This view is best argued by Pflaum, Weaver, and Boulvert in n.2 above.

<sup>4</sup> In RE S XIV 100 Eck does not touch upon the question of status, but expresses doubt as to the alleged promotion to equestrian status in *Historia* 25,1976,381 n.3 and in *Gnomon* 57,1985,253 (rev. of Pflaum, *Supplément*). Furthermore, G.Burton regards *Classicus* as an imperial freedman in *JRS* 67,1977,163f. (review of Boulvert). This is now stated also by S.Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens*, Rome 1988,652 n.247.

<sup>5</sup> H.I.Bell, *Notes from Papyri in the British Museum*, APF VI, 1913,102f. = Bilabel, SB IV 7378. A second papyrus from AD 104 obviously refers to the same man, as it reads "-]του ἐπίτροπου Κλαστικοῦ..." (*Pap.London III*, p.125, col.I, l.16).

<sup>6</sup> Actually we know another imperial procurator who bears the cognomen *Classicus*. In Pflaum, CP 164f. this person was combined with our *Classicus*, but since then a new inscription has been found in Mauretania Caesariensis which identifies him as P. Aelius *Classicus* (AE 1969/70,727 cf. Pflaum, *Supplément* 26f.). One might even be tempted to connect him with the *Classicus* in the papyri (the epithet *sanctissima* found in the other inscription where he is mentioned hardly makes a dating to the early II century impossible), since P. Aelius *Classicus* is generally considered to be an equestrian. But this hypothesis cannot be explored further, since in any case we know that Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. *Classicus* was in Egypt, and his case must be explained.

<sup>7</sup> See n.5.

corresponding *vir egregius* as an official title for equestrians is introduced only under Marcus (a fact pointed out by W.Eck in connection with our *Classicus*<sup>8</sup>), as the investigations by Hirschfeld and Pflaum show.<sup>9</sup> However, we do find the epithet *egregius* used in a non-official meaning, and not as a *terminus technicus*, in both literary and epigraphical contexts beginning in the late Republic. The situation is analogous for the epithet *clarissimus*, which became the official title for senators only after the middle of the second century AD. Moreover, *egregius* was not used exclusively for imperial officials.<sup>10</sup>

There is particularly one case which might be of interest for our purpose, an Aurelius Aug(ustorum) lib. Alexander who is called *v(ir) e(gregius) praep. sacr. cogn.* in a dedication by the decurions of Minturnae (AE 1935,20; probably third century). He is of course supposed to be a former imperial freedman who has been given equestrian rank,<sup>11</sup> but strictly speaking this is not stated anywhere in the inscription. The inscription is rather late, from a time when the title *egregius*, when used as a *Rangtitel*, was not given to very prominent officials; it would therefore seem that the possibility exists that Alexander was in fact just an imperial freedman.<sup>12</sup>

The practice in the Greek world is both similar and different. It is similar in that the corresponding Greek "kratistos" was also used quite commonly in a non-technical sense for a long time before it eventually became a title used mainly for equestrians (e.g. Joseph. AJ 20,12). But the practice is also different in some respects, a feature shown clearly in a paper by Arthur Stein which should be given more attention.<sup>13</sup> "Kratistos" is used quite commonly much earlier in Egypt, primarily for the *praef.Aeg.* (found earliest in AD 60-61), but sometimes also for other equestrian officials early in the second century, starting with the *Epistrategos* during Trajan.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Evidently in a private communication, see Boulvert 36 n.38.

<sup>9</sup> Fundamental here is O.Hirschfeld, "Die *Rangtitel* der römischen Kaiserzeit", *Sitzungsber. d. kön. preuss. Ak. d. Wiss. Berlin* 1901,579-610, espec. 584-89 (= *Kleine Schriften* 1913,652ff.). Also H.-G.Pflaum, "Titulature et rang social sous le Haut-Empire" in *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité*, Paris 1970,177 for *egregius*, "kratistos". Briefly F.Millar, *JRS* 73,1983,90f. Everyone agrees that the *Rangtitel vir egregius* does not appear before Marcus. No comment is given on the official "Aelius" who is called *v.e.* in a papyrus from Egypt under the emperor Pius (BGU III, 891,13; cf. Pflaum, *Supplément* 137); the case will be dealt with below.

<sup>10</sup> Hirschfeld 584f.; cf. *Sen.de clem.* 2,1,2 *Burrus praefectus tuus, vir egregius*. See also the rich evidence in *ThLL* s.v. "egregius".

<sup>11</sup> Weaver, *Familia Caesaris*, Cambridge 1972,265 n.4.283; cf. Pflaum, *CP* 1024.

<sup>12</sup> This is again an interpretation which looks only to the primary evidence, and does not deal with the vexing question of what a *proc. sacrarum cognitionum* was at any particular time, and of what status one should expect him to be; cf. the discussion by H.-G.Pflaum, "La carrière de l'affranchi impérial Saturninus", *REL* 47 bis, 1969,306-09.

<sup>13</sup> A.Stein, "Griechische *Rangtitel* der römischen Kaiserzeit", *Wiener Studien* 34,1912,160-70 espec. 162f.; also Hirschfeld 586f. to some extent.

<sup>14</sup> Stein 164-69; p.169 gives a summary.

Above all we can point to recent research on the procurators of the "ousiakos logos" in Egypt. It now seems certain that many, if not all, known cases before the second half of the II century were imperial freedmen, and that they appear with the epithet "kratistos".<sup>15</sup>

### 3. The Roman administration of Egypt and the function of Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus

We turn now to a discussion of the post of *proc. Alexandriae* that Ti. Claudius Classicus held in Egypt, in order to see whether a parallel can be made between his case and cases where "kratistos" is not used as an equestrian Rangtitel.

Unfortunately the structure of the Roman administration in Egypt and in Alexandria is far from being clarified, not only as to the interrelations between equestrians and freedmen, but also to the functions themselves. The financial administration of Egypt has been called "an area plagued by the utmost doubt and uncertainty".<sup>16</sup> Generally speaking, three departments which all dealt with financial matters existed side by side (and a fourth was the administration of temple lands led by the *archiereus*, which will not be mentioned further).

The "dioikesis" has been equated with the *fiscus*; it was led by the *dioecetes* who was subordinated to the *praefectus Aegypti*, and it collected taxes from fiscal land and private properties. The "idios logos" under its special procurator (the Idiologus) was a "special account" for sporadic and irregular sources of revenue. Thirdly, there was the "ousiakos logos", led by the *proc. usiacus*, which according to G.M.Parassoglou was a department corresponding to the *ratio patrimonii* elsewhere in the Empire.<sup>17</sup>

But there were many other officials besides these as well, and it is not easy to indicate who belongs where, the more so as the picture kept changing. Pflaum's (posthumous) *Supplément* brings some corrections to the overall scheme laid out in his *Carrières*, but the whole picture has to be put together using both works; and even then we get only the equestrian officials, which is important to remember.<sup>18</sup> The list given here follows the order in Pflaum's work, and is intended only to give a general idea of the situation, with a note on the period when particular officials are known.<sup>19</sup> Without aiming at completeness, it should

<sup>15</sup> See the detailed treatment of the *proc. usiacus* below.

<sup>16</sup> A. Bowman, *JRS* 66, 1976, 163.

<sup>17</sup> The recent volume ANRW II.10.1, 1988 contains several surveys which deal with the administration of Egypt; especially relevant here are O. Montevecchi, "L'amministrazione dell'Egitto sotto i Giulio-Claudi", 412-71 even if it only deals with the I century. The otherwise important paper by P.A. Brunt, "The Administration of Roman Egypt", *JRS* 65, 1975, 124-47 concentrates on the *praef. Aeg.* For the *dioecetes* see D. Hagedorn, "Zum Amt des 'dioiketês' im römischen Aegypten", *Yale Class. Studies* 28, 1985, for the *proc. usiacus* and generally for the administration of land owned by the state and the Emperor see G.M. Parassoglou, *Imperial Estates in Roman Egypt*, Amsterdam 1978 (*Amer. Stud. in Papyrology* 18). A brief but clear summary of the financial administration is given by A.K. Bowman in "Papyri and Roman Imperial History 1960-75", *JRS* 66, 1976, 163-65.

<sup>18</sup> See G. Boulvert, *Esclaves et affranchis sous le Haut-Empire*, Napoli 1970, 224-27 for some of the evidence for freedmen and slaves. The overall picture given is not very clear.

<sup>19</sup> (For references see *Carrières* III, 1083ff. and *Supplément* 133ff.):  
*adiutor praef. Aeg.* (Carr., I item AD 84/85)

be added that several recent studies have improved on this table, while a comprehensive survey still remains a desideratum.<sup>20</sup>

For the employment of our man there have been many suggestions. Before the Ephesian inscription was known, Pflaum thought that the *Classicus* mentioned in the letter of the *praef. Aeg.* had been procurator of the "idios logos".<sup>21</sup> Weaver, in dealing extensively with our man and with a certain Paeon Aug. lib. who also was *proc. Alexandriae* (D 1569, I or II cent.), thinks that *proc. Alexandriae*, *proc. ad dioecesis Alexandriae* and *dioecetes Alexandriae* are synonyms.<sup>22</sup>

Basically, four entries in Pflaum's tables, and four types of officials, are interesting for defining the role of Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. *Classicus*, namely the *dioecetes Aeg.*, the group collectively labelled "proc. in Aegypto" (who for the most part were *procuratores usiaci*, as

- archistrator (praef.) Aeg.* (Suppl., 4 items, 22 BC - late II cent.)
- corrector Aeg.* (Suppl., 4 items late III)
- dioecetes Aeg.* (Suppl., 28 items AD 141-278)
- vice dioecetae* (Carr., 1 item, late III)
- proc. episcopos in Aeg.* (Carr., 4 items III cent.)
- idiologus* (Suppl., 32 items and 2 (?). 12/13 AD - ca. 250)
- procurator in Aegypto* (Suppl., 15 items AD 81/84 - late III)
- proc. XX her. per Aeg.* (Carr., 2 items, AD 160 and 237)
- rationalis Aeg.* (Carr., 2 items ca. AD 202 and 246)
- adiutor rationalis Aeg.* (Carr., 3 items III cent.)
- proc. aed. sacr. et loc. sacr. Alex. et in tota Aeg.* (Carr., 1 item ca. AD 50)
- archiereus Alex. or Aeg.* (Carr., 10 items + 2 (?) AD 44 - late III)
- proc. vices agens archierei* (Carr., 3 items late II-III)
- antarchiereus* (Suppl., 2 items AD 160/64)
- proc. ad dioecesis Alex.* (Carr., 4 items AD 63 - late II/early III), but this entry seems to be replaced in the Suppl. by the *proc. Alex.*, or rather broken up among other entries.
- proc. fisci Alex.* (Carr., 1 item AD 102/14)
- advocatus fisci Alex. et totius Aeg.* etc. (Carr., 1 item III cent.)
- iridicus Alex. et Aeg.* (Suppl., ca 40 items (some uncertain) Tiberius - late III)
- proc. Alex.* (Suppl., 3 items between AD 79/80 and ca. 220) see below.
- adiutor in proc. Alex.* (Suppl., 1 item, C. Julius Photinus Celer)
- proc. ludi fam. glad. Caes. Alex. ad Aeg.* (Carr., 1 item AD 81/96)
- proc. ad Mercurium Alex.* (Carr. + Suppl., 5 items AD 50-201)
- (proc.) supra Museum (Alex.)* (Carr., 2 items ca. AD 50 and 125)
- (proc.) a Museo Alex.* (Carr., 2 items late III)
- proc. Neaspoleos et Mausolei* (Suppl., 10 items AD 77 - (?))
- proc. Alex. Pelusi P[-]* (Carr., 1 item ca. AD 244)
- praef. classis Alex.* (Carr., 7 items AD 86-175)
- epistrategus Pelusio* (Carr., 6 items AD 41-189)
- epistrategus Heptanomiae* (Carr. + Suppl., 52 items Trajan - late III)
- epistrategus Thebaidis* (Carr. + Suppl., 28 items. BC - late III)

<sup>20</sup> See the works listed in n.17. The reading of further recent research shows that several entries in the scheme of the preceding note are incorrect, e.g. such as *rationalis Aeg.* - the earliest case is from AD 244, see now P.J.Parsons, JRS 57,1967,134-41; *proc. XX hered. per Aeg.* - one is Idiologus, the other probably does not belong, cf. W.Eck, Gnomon 57,1985,255.

<sup>21</sup> Pflaum, CP 165.

<sup>22</sup> Weaver, Antichthon 1980,149f. with n.29.

we shall see), the *proc. ad dioecesis Alex.*, and the *proc. Alexandriae*. There now seems to exist agreement as to the equivalence of the titles *dioecetes Aeg.* and *proc. ad dioecesis Alex.*<sup>23</sup> Therefore in actual fact only three offices need to be considered here, those of *dioecetes*, *proc. usiacus*, and *proc. Alexandriae*.

From the list above (n.19) it can be seen that the post of *dioecetes* is not known to have been held by an equestrian before AD 141 (and therefore in any case Weaver's equation of our Classicus *proc. Alexandriae* in AD 103/04 with the *dioecetes* is suspect). However, a certain Valerius Eudaemon was *proc. ad dioecesis Alexandriae* at the beginning of Hadrian's reign, and if it is correct to equate this post with the *dioecetes*, then an equestrian *dioecetes* existed as early as ca. AD 120.<sup>24</sup> But this date is still definitively too late for Ti. Claudius Classicus. Of course, nothing can be more deceptive than to build one's argument *e silentio*, but in this case we actually have positive evidence as well: if Classicus' title is synonymous with *dioecetes*, then for our argument we can point to at least one freedman who held that post, namely the Claudius Heraclides who is mentioned in P.Fouad 21 of AD 63 as a member of the *consilium* of the *praef. Aeg.* He carries the title of "dioiketés" and as he is mentioned at the end of the list of officials, even after some military tribunes, he very probably was an imperial freedman.<sup>25</sup>

What seems to be a correct observation is that the term "Alexandriae" does not mean that the authority of an official is confined to that city; on the contrary, a comparison of the Egyptian titles in general shows that "Alexandriae" seems to be a synonym for "in Aegypto". When an official was acting only in Alexandria, e.g. responsible for a part of the city, he would indicate it (*proc. ad Mercurium* etc.).<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. Pflaum's group of "procuratores in Aegypto"

Pflaum's 16 "Egyptian procurators" range from early under Domitian to late into the third century. It is evident that the heading does not pretend that these men actually carried such a title, but is used for technical reasons. A closer look should now be taken at these officials, since they might be relevant for determining the function and status of our *proc. Alexandriae*.

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<sup>23</sup> Hagedorn (n.17 above), 167-210, espec. 191-96, cf. Weaver, *Antichthon* 1980,150 n.29. But the opinion of Pflaum was originally, in Carrières, that *proc. ad dioecesis Alex.* and *dioecetes* were different functions, as can be seen in the scheme above and *passim*. Weaver (following Pflaum) would also like to equate the *proc. Alexandriae* with the *dioecetes*, see *Antichthon* 1980,149f. with n.29, but Hagedorn 192f. n.76 has convincingly refuted this view.

<sup>24</sup> Hagedorn 191-94.

<sup>25</sup> Hagedorn 187-91 for this case and other mentions of "dioiketés" from the I century. But he thinks the competence of this presumed freedman *dioecetes* was much more limited than was the case for the *dioecetes* in the II century; he would e.g. have lacked the right to carry on correspondence with officials in the "chora". This could explain our document above where the *praef. Aeg.* instructs *strategoï* to follow the wishes of "Klassikos". For Claudius Heraclides see also O.Montevecchi, "L'amministrazione dell'Egitto sotto i Giulio-Claudi", ANRW II. 10.1,1988,436, who thinks he probably was a *dioecetes*.

<sup>26</sup> See Montevecchi 427-36 for titles labelled *Alexandriae* and *in Aegypto*, and E.Huzar, "Alexandria ad Aegyptum in the Julio-Claudian Age", ANRW II.10,1, 1988, e.g. 651 for local officials.



An interesting fact is that five of them appear in the list of *proc. usiaci* drawn up by Parassoglou, which altogether comprises eleven persons known by name.<sup>27</sup> Parassoglou also states that five others in the group of "proc. in Aegypto" definitively were not *proc. usiaci* (while not committing himself in some cases).<sup>28</sup>

The procurators listed by Pflaum are (presumably) considered to be equestrians. An inspection of the names of those five expressly considered as *proc. usiaci* by Parassoglou, and the four he did not commit himself on, produces a curious result. For the seven individuals whose family name is known, all but one carry the nomen of the reigning emperor or of his immediate predecessor.<sup>29</sup> Only in one case, that of Corellius Galba (not dealt with by Parassoglou), can we exclude a connection to the *familia Caesaris*. Nowhere else among higher Egyptian administrators do we find a similar correspondence between nomina gentilicia and the ruling houses.<sup>30</sup>

Two explanations for the names present themselves; either in quite a few cases the procurators must have received citizen's rights from the ruler or his predecessor, or they belong to the *familia Caesaris*. But it is difficult to argue why precisely this group of officials would consist to such an extent of recently enfranchised *peregrini*, and therefore we are faced with the possibility that at least some of them were imperial freedmen. This solution is indeed advocated by G.M.Parassoglou, both in his general study of the Emperor's possessions in Egypt, and when dealing with individual officials. Some procurators actually give their status outright as *Aug. libertus*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See Pflaum, Suppl. 137 compared with Parassoglou 89f. These five persons are P. Aelius Eclectus (identical with the "Aelius" in BGU II, 891), Irenaeus, Aelius Socraticus, Ulpius Heraclides, and Aurelius Terpsilaos.

<sup>28</sup> Parassoglou 88f. for Ti. Claudius Blastus (81/84), Claudius Calvinus (ca. 182), Aurelius Plutogenes (188, mentioned on p.84), Publius Cerealis (before 198), Aurelius Felix (200-01). One entry, "Ser. Sulpicius Serenus", listed by Pflaum in AD 130 is actually spurious. As the evidence in Pflaum, CP 243ff. shows, the procurator is called only "Serenus". He is equated with the prefect of a cohort and military tribune Ser. Sulpicius Serenus, who was active in Egypt ca. 122/23. This entry must now be altogether excluded, since R.O.Fink was convincingly shown that the procurator Serenus (in P.Lond. 482) is actually a soldier of the *ala Veterana Gallica* (Roman Military Records on Papyrus, Ann Arbor 1971,333f. no.80). See also Hagedorn 191 n.71.

<sup>29</sup> For the list see Pflaum, Suppl., 137. The following names could to be connected to a ruler: Ulpius Celer first half II cent.; Aelius 135/36; P. Aelius Eclectus 142.144.146 (*adiutor* Aelius Heraclitus); Aelius Socraticus 153 (*adiutor* Aelius Eutyches); Aurelius Felix 200-01; Aurelius Terpsilaos 217; even Antonius Philoxenus 240 and 255/271 (the nomen of the Gordiani). Possibly even Ulpius Heraclides 174/75. Nothing else is known of any of these officials which could help us to determine their status.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Pflaum, CP 1090 and Suppl. 141 for the list of Epistrategi Heptanomiaae, one of the lowest equestrian offices in Egypt, starting under Trajan: Camurius, Claudius, Julius, Claudius, Julius, Gellius, Antonius, Julius, Minicius, Herennius, Valerius, Trebius, Statilius, Vedius, Flavius, Lucceius etc.

<sup>31</sup> Parassoglou, Imperial Estates 89f. and idem., "Lurius, Aelius and Aelius. A Note on SB 10527", ZPE 11,1973,22f. for the case of Aelius Socraticus. The freedmen he has adduced, and which probably would not be accepted in this place by those who think that equestrian and freedmen officials should be kept apart, are CIL X 6000, XIV 2504 = D 1491, III 53 = D 8759g. Boulvert, EAI 224-27 actually thinks the "ousiakos logos" generally was led by imperial freedmen, but he also thinks that they were subordinated to the Idiologus, which no longer seems correct (Parassoglou, Imperial Estates 86f.). On this see also J.R.Rea, The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XLII, London 1975,5f.

Another very interesting result can be found in Parassoglou's work. In the papyri, which give most of his *proc. usiaci*, their title is mostly accompanied by the Greek epithet "kratistos", the first being P. Aelius Eclectus dated AD 142 (the same person is called v(ir) *e(gregius)* in BGU III, 891,15). Here we have a positive answer to the above question, whether imperial freedmen procurators in Egypt could be called "kratistos" or not!<sup>32</sup>

To conclude: we can be reasonably sure that many of Pflaum's "proc. in Aegypto" in fact were *proc. usiaci* responsible for imperial domains. We also know that both imperial freedmen and, later, equestrians held this post, and we can therefore certainly expect a freedman to be found holding this post at the beginning of the second century.<sup>33</sup>

#### 5. Other *procuratores Alexandriae*

Finally we have the officials who call themselves *proc. Alexandriae* (without further specification). Apart from our Classicus, there is an anonymous ex-military tribune (therefore equestrian) who was *proc. divi Titi Alexandriae* (D 1399 = CIL II 4136 = Alföldy, RIT 159), and one Serg(ius) Paulinianus v. e. *proc. Aug. n. provinciae Galatiae item Alexandriae* (AE 1937,87 from Ancyra), whom Pflaum dates to the early III century.<sup>34</sup>

But we can also point to an imperial freedman, Paean Aug. lib., whose career is given by CIL XIV 2932 = D 1569: *proc. castrens.*, *proc. hereditat.*, *proc. voluptat.*, *proc. Alexandr.* We need not deal in detail with the career nor with its dating (questions which have caused considerable trouble for scholars who adopt the current scheme of equestrian and freedmen procuratorial careers<sup>35</sup>), since it is enough to point to his existence and stress that he must belong to the period from Domitian to Pius.

It all adds up to the notion that we can assume the existence of freedman procurators with three different titles in Egypt around AD 100: the *proc. usiacus*, the *dioecetes*, and the *proc. Alexandriae*. We cannot say with certainty whether some of the titles are synonyms, but this is not even necessary for the present enquiry, where the prime objective is to investigate whether Ti. Claudius Classicus can in fact be considered a freedman procurator. This possibility without doubt exists. One could even say that a different solution seems unlikely, since neither a *dioecetes* nor a *proc. usiacus* of equestrian rank can be found before, at the

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<sup>32</sup> See the rich evidence in Parassoglou, *Imperial Estates* 89. He already argued that freedmen could be called "kratistos" in ZPE 11,1973,22f. The use of "kratistos" for these officials is also commented upon by Rea (see preceding note).

<sup>33</sup> For the moment it is not necessary to discuss whether a) all freedmen precede the equestrians; b) freedmen and equestrians appear without chronological pattern; or c) if they appear without such a pattern, the freedmen must always be regarded as subordinated to an equestrian. But this is a question which might be worth investigating in the future.

<sup>34</sup> Pflaum, CP 701-03 no.262bis.

<sup>35</sup> Discussed by e.g. Weaver, *Antichthon* 14,1980,144-50; Boulvert, ZPE 43,1981,36f.; Pflaum, *Suppl.* 25.

earliest, around AD 120; and the evidence for a regular equestrian *proc. Alexandriae* is not too convincing.<sup>36</sup>

#### 6. What does the epithet "katholikos" used for Classicus mean?

Some minor arguments for the equestrian status of Classicus are based on the formulas used for his administrative posts. For example, the fact has been pointed to that the titles in his inscription are directly linked to the emperor by the mention of his name, e.g. *divi Nervae proc. a voluptatibus*. It is thought that this feature was characteristic for equestrians (perhaps not even permitted for freedmen?).<sup>37</sup> The argument resembles the old controversy about whether freedmen could be called *proc. Aug.* or simply *proc.*, while *proc. Aug.* (a title which mentions the Emperor!) was finer and reserved for equestrians. But it should have been clear long since that the reason why freedmen use mostly the plain "procurator" is that their relationship to the ruler is indicated in their name, e.g. Paeon Aug. lib. It is unnecessary to write "Aug. lib. proc. Aug."<sup>38</sup> In our case the explanation must be similar. Moreover, it is easy to point to cases where freedmen have repeated their imperial patron's name in their title; cf. D 1507: (the anonymous father of an imperial freedman) [-] *Hadriani, disp. divi Marci prov. Cilic.*; D 1540: *Crescens Alypianus Imp. Caesaris Nervae Traiani Aug. Germ. Dacici disp. fisci fr.*; D 1529: *T. Aurelius Egatheus Imp. Antonini Aug. lib. a codicillis* and even another case from Ephesus itself with a *Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Σεβαστοῦ ἀπελεύθερος Κλήμενς ἐπίτροπος Αὐτοκράτορος Δομιτιανοῦ Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ* (Inscr.Eph. III 853).

Secondly, in the Greek version of Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus' title, the epithet "epitropos katholikos en Aleksandreia" is used for his Egyptian post. In the AE 1972 it was argued that "katholikos" must mean that Classicus had held a post equivalent to that of *rationalis*, i.e. an official concerned with the imperial *rationes*. This interpretation has been adopted by most scholars.<sup>39</sup> But quite clearly the argument is highly anachronistic. It is true that "katholikos" in an Egyptian context is used for the *rationalis Aegypti*, but such an official is not found earlier than the middle of the III century (In Pflaum's lists the first

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<sup>36</sup> In this study I will not discuss the large question of equestrian and freedman procurators holding the same title, but supposedly with the equestrian in charge, the so-called system of "dual procuratorship", "Pseudokollegialität" or "collegialité inégale". This theory makes it possible to explain away many difficulties by assuming that whenever equestrians and freedmen seem to appear at the same time, they are unequal colleagues. Therefore, so goes the primary argument of Weaver and Boulvert, Classicus can well be equestrian even if Paeon Aug. lib. is certainly not. Another way of solving this puzzle (which one encounters often enough) would be to assume that equestrians and freedmen indiscriminately could sometimes be found holding the same position. This heretical theory (cf. F.Millar, JRS 53,1963,196) has very little support today, but it might be worth investigating closer. The question of status will be touched upon below.

<sup>37</sup> Weaver, *Antichthon* 1980,154; Boulvert, *ZPE* 43,1981,37.

<sup>38</sup> Surprisingly enough the discussion still goes on, even if one would think it had been settled by e.g. F.Millar, JRS 53,1963,196, and see also H.Chantraine, "Zur Nomenklatur und Funktionsangabe kaiserlicher Freigelassener", *Historia* 24,1975,613-16.

<sup>39</sup> See AE 1972,574; Pflaum, *Suppl.* 25; Weaver, *Antichthon* 14,1980,154.

occurrence has been dated ca. AD 200, which would make parallels to a situation 100 years earlier of little worth), and only from Diocletian onwards is he a regular feature in Egypt.<sup>40</sup> It is a complete puzzle what an imperial *rationalis* would be as early as in AD 103.<sup>41</sup> Instead, the obvious interpretation is to take the Greek term literally, "katholikos" = "general, universal things" (which possibly even means precisely that he acted outside of Alexandria, as has been suggested above).<sup>42</sup> It should not surprise us to meet such an imprecise title; it is easy to point to other titles of imperial administrators which clearly are non-formalized, almost "homemade", and clearly just descriptive (cf. Pflaum, CP 1018ff., e.g. D 1430 *fisci advocatus codicillarius stationis hereditatium et cohaerentium*).

### 7. No freeborn *adiutor* to an imperial freedman?

We now come to the last argument for the view that Ti. Claudius Classicus must have been an equestrian.

It is firmly stated that a freeborn Roman could not act as an *adiutor* to an imperial freedman, cf. AE 1972,574: "ce qui, eu égard aux us et coutumes romains, paraît impensable", Boulvert: "l'administration romaine est trop marquée par l'esclavagisme pour admettre une autre solution".<sup>43</sup>

First of all the legal status of C. Julius Photinus Celer must be considered. He does not carry any filiation, therefore we have no proof that he is an *ingenuus*. It has been ruled out that he could be an imperial freedman. This judgement is most probably correct, even if theoretically we could be dealing with a freedman of Julia, the daughter of Titus and at one time spouse of Domitian; it would seem that her *liberti* were Julii and not Flavii.<sup>44</sup> However, there is perhaps a greater chance that Julius Photinus could be a non-imperial freedman, perhaps freed by some high official in Egypt, which could explain how he is found assisting

<sup>40</sup> P.J.Parsons, "Philippus Arabs and Egypt", JRS 57,1967,134-41, supported by A.K.Bowman, "Papyri and Roman Imperial History 1960-75", JRS 67,1977,165.

<sup>41</sup> It is supposed that the title *rationalis* came to supersede that of a *rationibus* for officials in charge of this particular financial sector in Rome. The earliest epigraphical sources are several fistulae from Ostia from the middle of the second century onwards (CIL XV 7740-42. 7744-47 etc.). For references see Liebenam in RE IA, 1,1914,262f. s.v. "rationalis" and the clear presentation of the material by Rostovzew in DE III 133-35. A very early mention of "rationalis" seems to occur in the title of Tertiolus *Aug. lib. proxim(us) rational(ium)*, who is father of a T. Flavius (CIL X 6092 = D 1500).

<sup>42</sup> The index to *Inscr.v.Eph.* registers the word "katholikos" in three other cases, all belonging to the end of the II century. In Nr.26 it clearly means "general" (Νεικομήδης ὁ καθολικὸς ἔκδικος ὁ συνεδριός ἡμῶν) while in Nr.627 and 3056 it is used in the title of the equestrian M. Aurelius Mindius Mattidianus Pollio. Here as well it might very possibly mean "general", even if Pflaum, CP 529f. argues to the contrary. But among other things he is forced to assume the same error of a lapicide in both texts in order to give the word the meaning "rationalis".

<sup>43</sup> Boulvert, ZPE 43,1981,37, also Weaver, *Antichthon* 14,1980,154. But Eck, *Gnomon* 57,1985,253 questions whether a freeborn citizen really cannot assist anyone but an equestrian official.

<sup>44</sup> See the one or two examples given by H.Chantraine, "Freigelassene und Sklaven kaiserlicher Frauen", *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte* (Festschr. Vittinghoff, Hrsg. W.Eck, H.Galsterer, H.Wolff), Köln-Wien 1980,393 and n.92 (CIL VI 18038, perhaps XV 1473). Normally the lady is automatically assumed to have been a Flavia.

a procurator. There are e.g. several Julii who hold the post of *praef.Aeg.* during the latter part of the I century, although none of them carry the praenomen Gaius.<sup>45</sup> But on the other hand, it might speak against an Egyptian origin that our inscription was set up in Ephesus, and that our C. Julius Celer Photinus is known from another, later, Ephesian inscription (Inscr.Eph. 690) where his wife Hordeonia Paullina and son C. Julius Pontianus are mentioned. It would be of great help, if we could explain why the honourific inscription for Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus was set up in Ephesus.

One should remember that the administrative posts labelled "adiutor" were often ad hoc creations (and therefore not regular imperial functions), secured for their holders through recommendations by their superiors.<sup>46</sup> Freeborn officials who call themselves *adiutor* can easily be found,<sup>47</sup> but so far no imperial freedman have been found among their superiors.

However, it would seem that one case has been overlooked, namely T. Mucius Clemens who appears as β[οεθός] Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου [υ Φήλικος] ἐπιτρόπου Σε[βαστοῦ Ἰουδαίας] (AE 1967,525 = AE 1986,693 from Bir el-Malik in Israel). This is the first appointment of Clemens, who later pursues the career of an officer. He is therefore a Roman citizen. As to his superior, whom he assisted as "boethos" (*adiutor*), Nikos Kokkinos argues in a recent study that he must be Ti. Claudius Felix, procurator of Judaea. Earlier research has been mistaken in assuming that Felix, the brother of the freedman M. Antonius Pallas, carried the same family name. Instead he had been freed by the son of Antonia minor, the emperor Claudius himself.<sup>48</sup> Another question regards the status of the Judaeian procurator Felix. It is sometimes held that he had been given equestrian status, but this is denied by several authorities.<sup>49</sup> Therefore this case seems to constitute a clear parallel to the one treated here.

Actually it would seem that our inscription itself provides decisive proof that Photinus' superior, Classicus, had not attained equestrian status, but was an imperial freedman. In an unbiased reading of the text it can be seen that this is precisely what the inscription states. No word or term indicates that his superior was anything else than an imperial freedman. Even if Classicus for some reason had not prompted having the *ius aureorum anulorum* or the gift of

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<sup>45</sup> We find Ti. Julius Alexander in AD 66-70 and L. Julius Ursus later on; cf. the papers by P.Bureth and G.Bastianini in ANRW II.10,1, 1988.

<sup>46</sup> See the cases listed by De Ruggiero, Diz.Epi I, 1895,79.86. Some recent findings are given by H.-G.Pflaum, "La carrière de l'affranchi impérial Saturninus", REL 47 bis, 1969,304f.

<sup>47</sup> Some examples also show how the special relationship to their superiors is reflected in their titles: C. Clodius Nigrinus ... *adiutor C. Clodi C. f. Serg. Prisci proc. Aug.* (AE 1940,170; Claudius/Nero) or T. Pompeius T. f. Albinus ... *adiutor T. Decidi Domitiani proc. Caes. Aug.* (AE 1935,5; Nero).

<sup>48</sup> I am most grateful to Mr. Kokkinos of St. Hugh's College for showing me the proofs of his paper "A Fresh Look at the *gentilicium* of Felix Procurator of Judaea" to be published in Latomus 1990, which led me to the inscription of T. Mucius Clemens. For references to the abundant discussion regarding the inscription, see Kokkinos. Important here is that unanimity exists as to the restoration of the post of "b[oethos]".

<sup>49</sup> E.g. F.Millar, Historia 13,1964,182 and recently by S.Demougin, L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens, Rome 1988,652.

the *equus publicus* registered (but we know that Epaphroditus, the freedman of Nero who received *dona militaria* indeed gave his honours a large space, and so did Antonius Pallas, to Pliny's distaste<sup>50</sup>), one would think that Photinus Celer on his own initiative would have liked to point out that he had been aiding not an imperial freedman but an equestrian, if that had been the case.

Surely, we cannot assume that the inscription was dressed in the firm belief that everyone would be familiar with the structure of the imperial administration and what changes it had possibly gone through recently.<sup>51</sup> We cannot assume that the mere mentioning of the post of *proc. voluptatibus* and *proc. Alexandriae* would have been enough to characterize our man as an equestrian (furthermore, as far as we know, the natural assumption during the early II century would have been to regard holders of these posts as imperial freedmen).<sup>52</sup>

#### 8. Questions of status: promotions of imperial freedmen and their position in society

After having dealt with the direct evidence from our inscription, we shall devote some attention to more general questions. It has been assumed that Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus had been raised to equestrian status. This presupposes the gift by the Emperor of the *ius aureorum anulorum* (which was an indication of fictive free birth by *restitutio natalium*). The action must, according to the current theory, be dated to the reign of Nerva, since otherwise there would be no way of making sense of Classicus' career (within the present framework of equestrian and freedmen procuratorships).<sup>53</sup>

However, we know of very few cases where an imperial freedman was thus promoted (or where an *Aug. lib.* received honours which were proper for the two highest orders). The known cases belong mainly to the first century: the freedman Narcissus was given *ornamenta quaestoria* in AD 48 and Antonius Pallas, freedman of Antonia, was given *ornamenta praetoria* in AD 52. Under Galba, his freedman Icelus was given equestrian status, as was Asiaticus under Vitellius, and the same is told of two freedmen under

<sup>50</sup> Plin.ep. 7,29. For Epaphroditus see n.55 below.

<sup>51</sup> At this point it does not seem necessary to touch upon the interesting but vexing questions of who actually was supposed to read an honorary inscription, where texts of this type normally were set up, etc. In our case we must assume that a maximum of correctness was the objective.

<sup>52</sup> Actually Pflaum, Suppl. 26 seems to argue to the contrary, since it is assumed that the titles *Divi Nervae proc.* and *Imp. Nervae Traiani ... proc.* would be enough to show that the official was of equestrian status. But this is most doubtful for two reasons; for one thing the first office is given as *Divi T. a cubiculo*, surely a freedman post, secondly, see note 47 above. The question remains, why not point out the *equus publicus* or something similar, if he had received it? The parallel made to the (sometimes) omissions of mentioning of promotions from equestrian to senatorial rank is not pertinent, since "everybody knew" that when a post of, say *proc. provinciae* was followed by a quaestorship or a praetorship a transition had taken place. A status transition was hardly evident when the post of *proc. castrensis* was followed by the *proc. a voluptatibus*.

<sup>53</sup> *Restitutio natalium* and the *equus publicus* were given by Nerva according to the commentary in AE 1972,574 and in Pflaum, Suppl. 26. Sceptical as to the *restitutio nat.* are Eck, *Gnomon* 57,1985,253 and Bassignano, *Epigraphica* 48,1986,259f. The assumption is outrightly refuted by S.Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens*, Rome 1988,652 n.247.

Vespasian.<sup>54</sup> It now also seems sure that Epaphroditus, freedman of Nero, was awarded *dona militaria*,<sup>55</sup> which also was exceptional, and belongs in the same category of actions in so far as we can assume that the offence given to senators and equestrians was of a similar scale, if not greater.

The evidence for the II century or later is very thin. With the exception of the reign of Commodus, when M. Aurelius Cleander and Saoterus were promoted, the literary sources do not tell of similar advancements of influential imperial freedmen.<sup>56</sup> An epigraphic case seems to be constituted by one "L. Aurelius Nicomedes", who is supposed to have been promoted from freedman to equestrian status by L. Verus (the inscription is rather fragmentary and difficult to interpret<sup>57</sup>).

Altogether, we have very few parallels for the promotion of an imperial freedman to equestrian status after the heyday of the *Augusti liberti* in the I century. This is of course a circumstantial argument, but it merits at least mentioning alongside the direct analysis of our inscription.

The question of status in the Roman world was touched upon above also in the case of the (presumed) freeborn Roman Julius Celer Photinus assisting an imperial freedman. This has been regarded as impossible by many scholars. I think that this notion might stem from too rigid a picture of the Roman society. It could be worthwhile to look at the interactions between freeborn citizens, of equestrian or lower status, with freedmen, notably imperial ones. Here only a brief outline of some features can be given.

To begin with, it is common knowledge that at the lower levels of society, free birth or freedman status must have been of relatively small importance, since we know of such a number of marriages which crossed this status barrier.<sup>58</sup> A little higher up we find many fields where freedmen and *ingenui* act together socially; e.g. the *Augustales*<sup>59</sup> and many

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<sup>54</sup> Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 283 for the evidence. In her recent very thorough study of the *ordo equester*, Ségolène Demougin (cf. n.53) p.651f. refutes some of the cases Weaver regards as promotions to equestrian status. See also F.Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, 69-83 for the role played by imperial freedmen.

<sup>55</sup> W.Eck, "Nero's Freigelassener Epaphroditus und die Aufdeckung der pisonischen Verschwörung", *Historia* 25,1976,381-84; an interpretation of D 9505.

<sup>56</sup> Millar, ERW 81f.; Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 283. Saoterus was even made *clarissimus vir*.

<sup>57</sup> Pflaum, CP 393ff. no.163; Millar, ERW 81; Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 283.

<sup>58</sup> On marriages between freeborn and freedmen or slaves see e.g. P.R.C.Weaver in *Studies in Ancient Society* (Ed. M.Finley), Oxford 1974,126f. (originally in P&P 37,1967). Weaver stresses that even if normal slaves and freedmen rarely married a freeborn partner, members of the *familia Caesaris* did so very often. Too large to be dealt with here is the question of the epitaphs and what the status indication or the omission thereof tells us about how people felt about their free birth or servile origin. A fact is that a majority of the epitaphs from Rome mentioning people bearing *tria nomina* are without filiation or indication of the *patronus*. It is wellknown that in these cases one must not a priori assume that we are dealing only with freedmen trying to disguise themselves as freeborn by leaving out their patron.

<sup>59</sup> See the works by R.Duthoy in *L'Ant.Class.* 39,1970,88-105; *Epigraphica* 36,1974,134-54; *Epigr.Studien* 11,1976,143-214 and *ANRW II.16,2*, 1978,1254-1309.

professional and other *collegia*.<sup>60</sup> How important was the question of free birth really to the common Roman, when confronted with other factors such as wealth and influence? Are we supposed to believe that meetings of Augustales regularly split along the line of free birth versus freedman status?

Certainly the special influence which devolved on imperial freedmen under some emperors of the I century was much resented by the upper classes, even if they had to accept the situation. As Fergus Millar writes "The poems of Martial and Statius show us the freedmen of the Flavian house in quite a different light. If our only evidence for the regime of Domitian were the poems written during it, we should see the imperial court as a benign centre of patronage, literary as well as official, ..." <sup>61</sup> which in fact it was not. But freedmen, imperial and otherwise, are honoured even after the I century, as can be seen from dedications set up by municipal councils and other organs, presumably predominantly composed of free citizens.<sup>62</sup> Were the people thus honoured really respected or not (more or less than senators and equites who received similar honours)? There is of course no way of knowing.

In any case, it would also seem that closer relationships sometimes existed between members of the *uterque ordo* and the imperial freedmen. A study of the Guard Prefect under Hadrian, Q. Marcius Turbo, points to his sons quite likely having been adopted by an imperial freedman or a descendant of one. The freedman *a rationibus* under Vespasian, the anonymous "father of Claudius Etruscus", succeeded in marrying a senatorial lady,<sup>63</sup> while indeed Vespasian's spouse Flavia Domitilla, mother of Titus and Domitian, originally lacked Roman citizenship and might have been a slave.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> For the role of freedmen in the towns, see P.Garnsey, "Descendants of Freedmen in Local Politics: some Criteria", *The Ancient Historian and His Material* (Essays C.Stevens), Farnborough 1975, 167-80. As for minor officials in Rome, e.g. in the administration of the *Aerarium Saturni*, among the *scribae librarii quaestorii* we find at least 9 freedmen and one imperial freedman among the 57 known cases; and among the 14 known *viatores quaestorii* four are freedmen and one an imperial freedman (lists in K.Wachtel, *Freigelassene und Sklaven in der staatlichen Finanzverwaltung der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Berlin 1966, 111-17). For these groups and others there is now the large survey by N.Purcell, "The *Apparitores*: a Study in Social Mobility", *PBSR* 51, 1983, 125-73: The *apparitores* had to be free, but not necessarily freeborn (p.127), and actually most of those we know were freedmen (p.137).

<sup>61</sup> Millar, ERW 79.

<sup>62</sup> R.Duthoy, "Le profil social des patrons municipaux en Italie sous le Haut-Empire", *Anc.Soc.* 15-17, 1984-86, 121-54 lists the known municipal patrons in Italy; among some 500 items three are imperial freedmen (CIL XIV 2407. D 1534.1909); many are classified as "bourgeoisie municipale" or of uncertain status - possibly among them freedmen could also be found. We also have individual dedications set up by freeborn citizens in honour of (imperial) freedmen; cf. CIL XIV 2104 = D 1475. *T. Aurelio Aug. lib. Aphrodisio proc. Aug. a rationibus. SPQL(anuvinus) dedic(ante) Q. Varinio Q.f. Maec. Laeviano aed.*

<sup>63</sup> For the sons of Marcius Turbo see R.Syme, *Roman Papers II*, Oxford 1979, 555 (= JRS 1962, 96); for the *a rationibus* cf. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* 284ff.

<sup>64</sup> W.Ritter, *Historia* 21, 1972, 759-61, followed by many, see M.-Th.Raepsaet-Charlier, *Prosopographie des femmes de l'ordre sénatorial...*, Louvain 1987, 319 n.367.



### 9. Conclusions

We can finally return to the Ephesian inscription. First of all, a detailed analysis of the text itself provides a clear conclusion: it can be shown that Ti. Claudius Aug. lib. Classicus indeed was of freedman status when he acted as procurator of Alexandria (and probably of the whole of Egypt), whatever his actual tasks were. Neither the term "kratistos" nor "katholikos" make him an equestrian; such a view is based on anacronistic arguments. Furthermore, C. Julius Photinus Celer who was either freeborn or of freedman status, nominates himself *adiutor* of Classicus, and indeed we have no reason to doubt this statement.

Secondly, general considerations make it difficult to see why a freeborn citizen - presumably socially moving upward - could not have acted as an assistant to an imperial freedman procurator. Perhaps the thing we should ponder is not why he had degraded himself to assume such a position, but how he had managed to secure the appointment. Imperial freedmen must have had a headstart on any other group when it came to getting appointments in the entourages of their peers.