

# Studies

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## ANCIENT HISTORY

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### CIL VIII 18065 AND THE RANKING OF CENTURIONS

**Abstract:** Centurions in legions were advancing through ranks, which were indicated by the cohort and the maniple they were serving in. But how did they exactly move through these ranks? How were the *primi ordines* fitting into the ranking system? How did a centurion advance to the rank of *primus pilus*? All these questions seem to be clear, but have not yet been considered in an exact manner. Alfred von Domaszewski and Brian Dobson have already made first attempts to show the advancing through the ranks of the centurions. There were very good approaches, but there have arisen new findings, that enhance these considerations.

Cohort and maniple still are important to reach the top levels of centurionship. But there is also the *centuria*, which is not unimportant, especially in relation to the *prior* and *posterior* rankings. It is these facts, that make us an exact statement about the *primi ordines* and the advancement to *primus pilus*.

**Keywords:** Roman military history, Centurion, Primus Pilus, Primi Ordines, Latin Epigraphy

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#### INTRODUCTION

One of the significant inscriptions for legions and their centurions in imperial times is a dedication board of *legio III Augusta* of the year 162 A.D. As setters of the inscription, all centurions of the mentioned legion named themselves on the stone. As common in that time span they called themselves: *primi ordines et centuriones et evocatus*. The names are listed in five columns of two cohorts each. Cohorts I to III are mentioned directly by lettering *coh* and the particular number. Their numbers alone simply indicate all other cohorts.

The interesting fact about the inscription is the breakdown of the cohorts and the numbers of centurions in each. While there are 64 names of officers throughout, the first cohort contained seven, as did cohorts eight and ten. Cohort six contained eight centurions, while cohort nine only had five. All others had six centurions each. Letters or indications supply some of the names. The first two names of cohort I are appointed as P P, which only can stand for *primus pilus*<sup>1</sup>. So there were two men of this rank in the legion at one time. B. Dobson proved, that these men were not a simple *primus pilus* and a *primus pilus iterum*.<sup>2</sup> He also verified, that Satrius Crescens, the first of the two *primi pilus*, was in this rank for the very first time, so there cannot be a *primus pilus iterum* being listed as second.<sup>3</sup> The belief of E. Sander, that there are listed a disarming *primus pilus* and an advanced one cannot be refused, as there is a centurion in cohort four, M. Antoninus Clemens, who is

<sup>1</sup> The possibility to name the two PPs as *pilus prior* and *pilus posterior* is to abandon, because *prior* is always abbreviated as PR, while *posterior* is written POST.

<sup>2</sup> DOBSON 1978, p. 64 and p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> DOBSON 1978, p. 261 – 262; see also: Le Bohec 1989, p. 160 and p. 168 onward.

indicated as MIS, which surely stands for *missus*, an already disarmed centurion. His sticking out *praenomen* shows, that he was demobilised during the erection of the inscription. In military concerns the *praenomen* is listed very few.

This can also be proved on other inscriptions. The first name is used again in civil life. But if this man really is an evidence for the two *primi pilus*, is not plausible, but there are other legions, which have two soldiers of this appointment in their ranks. Maybe, there were always two of them in a legion, a possibility which cannot be proved, but which also cannot be declined.

## THE INSCRIPTION

[Upper column]

*Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) M(arco) Aurelio/Antonino Aug(usto) divi An/tonini fil(io) divi Hadriani nep(oti)/divi Traiani Part(hici) pronep(oti) divi/Nervae abnep(oti) trib(unicia) pot(estatae) XVI co(n)s(uli) III/primi ordines et centurions/et evocatus <<[[leg(ionis) III]]>> Aug(ustae) dedic(ante)/D(ecimo) Fonteio Frontiniano leg(ato) Aug(usti) p(ro) p(raetore) co(n) s(uli) des(ignato)*

To the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of the divined Antoninus, grandson of the divined Hadrian, great grandson of the divined Trajan Parthicus, great great grandson of the divined Nerva, provided with the power of tribune-ship for the sixteenth time, consul for the third time. The *primi ordines* and centurions and the *evocatus* dedicate it to Decimus Fonteius Frontinianus, imperial legate with praetor-ship, designated consul.

[Column a]

*coh(ors) I*

*Satrius Crescesns p(rimus) p(ilus)*

*Gigennius<sup>4</sup> Valens p(rimus) p(ilus)*

*Aurelius Geminus*

*Iunius Verus*

*Veranius Candidus*

*Cupronius Secundus*

*Aninius Priscus*

*coh(ors) II*

*Aurelius Gentilis*

*Annius Corus*

*Clodius Crescens*

*Ceionius Rufus*

*Antonius (...)cius*

*Patius Firmus*

[Column b]

*coh(ors) III*

*Sulpicius Olympilinus*

*Iulius Provincialis*

*Aelius Lepidinus*

*Vinnius Mascel(us)*

*Atidius Auster*

*Antonius Moderatus*

IIII

<sup>4</sup> Gigennius Valens is listed as Gigenmans Valens in Clauss-Slaby's epigraphic database. The writing seems as if there is a ligature of A and N. But this cannot be correct. All A are written without slashes. It is more to believe, that there was a mistake by the engraver, who has written three N and then has tried to make an I and a V out of the last, to get GIGENNNNS to GIGENNIIVS. The name Gigennius is also much more certain than Gigenmans.

*Publius Horatianus*

*Varius Valentinus*

*M(arcus) Antonius Clemens mis(sus)*

*Calusius Iumianus*

*Petilius Paulus*

*Aelius Magio*

[Column c]

*Aelius V Isidorus<sup>5</sup>*

*Valerius Titianus*

*Claudius Bassus*

*Claudius Promptus*

*Tertius Magi(...)*

*Probinus Candidus*

VI

*Vitellius Aedil(is)<sup>6</sup>*

*Terentius Saturninus*

*Mamius Probus*

*Plocticius Felix*

*Licinius Emeritus*

*Petellius Faustus*

*Menonius Varro*

*Aelius Li(...)bus*

[Column d]

VII

*Naeivus Castus*

*Aelius Inauarius*

*Iulius Iulianus*

*Maecius Probus*

*Aeterilius Furennianus*

*Iulius Acceptus*

VIII

*Aelius Menecratianus*

*Flavius Iuvenalis*

*Thoranius Potitus*

*Buccius Montanus*

*Antonius Nereus*

*Pupius Clemens*

*Antonius Valens*

[Column e]

VIII

*Iulius Urbanus*

*Domitius Fuscus*

*Domitius Niger*

*Ulpus Emeritus*

*Minicius Censor*

X

*Iulius Africanus*

*Iulius Saturninus*

*Aeterius Rufinus*

*Aelius Amandus*

*Cordius Asclepiodorus*

*Faltonius Ianuarius*

*Libellus Primitivos evocatus*

<sup>5</sup> Aelius Isidorus is written around the cohort's number.

<sup>6</sup> Vitellius Aedilis is only written as Vitellius Aedil. There is no evidence for the ending of the name. I have used Aedilis, but it also could have been known as Aedilus.

## CHANGING OF COMMANDS

Cohort V indicates that there were adjustments and changes in command. The first centurion, Aelius Isidorus, is listed around the number of the mentioned cohort. Of course, it can be possible, that the names of cohort V were listed compressed, because cohort VI, which was standing in the same column under cohort V, contained eight centurions. But this is no real prove because the available space for writing, would have been calculated before the names were carved in stone. So Aelius Isidorus could have been advanced in rank.

## THE CENTURION'S RANK

There is a common believe about the ranking of centurions in legions. The first grade is drawn from the cohort the centurion is serving. I will call these grades a rank. In the cohort itself there also is an echelon indicating the position of the centurion. I will call this level. There are six levels in a cohort ranging from bottom to top *hastatus posterior*, *princeps posterior*, *pilus posterior*, *hastatus prior*, *princeps prior* and *pilus prior*. The indications show the old manner of maniples tactics, although the *manipulus* was no longer in use since the days of Marius' army reforms. As the youngest warriors once provided the *hastati*, the centurions in that ranks were in the lowest grading. The centurions of the *principes* came next and the *centurions* of the *triarii* ranked at the highest grade, because the *triarii* were made of the finest, experienced and senior most men. They were called *pilus* because the *triarii* were not deployed in maniples but in a single, phalanx like battle order and therefore were grouped in a *pilus*, a pile.

## THE ADVANCEMENT

But how did the centurions advance through the ranks and levels? Alfred von Domaszewski used a single inscription, a peculiarity, to indicate the centurion's way through the ranks.<sup>7</sup>

### CIL VI 3584:

*Ti(berio) Claudio Ti(beri) f(ilio) [G]al(eria) Vitali ex equ[i]te R(omano) ordinem accepit in leg(ione) V [Mac(edonica)] successione promotus [ex] leg(ione) V Ma[c(edonica)] in leg(ionem) [I]tal(ica) donis d(onato) torquib(us) armill(is) phaler(is) corona va[l(ari)] bello Dacico successione promot(us) ex leg(ione) I Ital(ica) in leg(ionem) I Miner(viam) [it]er(um) donis d(onato) torquib(us) armil[l(is)] phaler(is) corona va[l(ari)] bello Dacico successione promot(us) ex leg(ione) I Miner(via) in leg(ionem) XX Vict(ricem) item promotus in leg(ionem) ead(em) item successione promotus ex leg(ione) XX Vict(ricem) in leg(ionem) IX [Hi]sp(anicam) succ(essione) promot(us) ex leg(ione) IX [Hi]sp(anica) in leg(ionem) VII Cl(audiam) P(iam) F(idelem) item successit in leg(ione) ead(em)*

<sup>7</sup> DOMASZEWSKI 1981, 90 onward.

mil(itavit) (centurio) in II pr(inceps) post(erior) annis XI vixit annis XLI

For Tiberius Claudius Vitalis, son of Tiberius eligible to vote in the district Galeria. A resigned Roman knight he was accepted in the officer's ranks in the fifth legion Macedonica. He was promoted out of the fifth legion Macedonica to the first legion Italica and was distinguished with torques, bracelets, medals and the mural crown for his commitment in the Dacian war. He was promoted from first legion Italica to first legion Minervia where he again was distinguished with torques, bracelets, medals and the mural crown for his engagement in the Dacian war. He was promoted from first legion Minervia to twentieth legion Victrix and was also advancing in rank in the same legion. He was promoted from the twentieth legion Victrix to the ninth legion Hispanica and was promoted from ninth legion Hispanica to the seventh legion Claudia, the loyal and faithful. He advanced in the ranks in the same legion. He served as centurion until reaching the rank of *princeps posterior* in the second cohort for eleven years. He lived forty-one years.

According to Domaszewski there are three ways of promotion in the centurion's ranks.

First: *successione promotus*.

Second: *promotus*.

Third: *successio*.

*Successione promotus* meant the ascension in the same rank to the next cohort. Said in words for example from *decimus hastatus posterior* to *nonus hastatus posterior*. Rising in rank in this manner was not only an increase to the next cohort, it also was connected to a changing of legions.

*Promotus* was a promotion in the same rank into a higher-ranking cohort of the same legion. In this particular manner, other ranks could have been overleaped. In words: a possible promotion from *septimus hastatus posterior legionis I Italicae* to *quartus hastatus posterior legionis I Italicae*.

*Successio* was a promotion to a higher level in the same cohort. For example, from *hastati* to *principes*. In this case there also could have been a changing of the legions.

But there are some problems concerning other inscriptions of the same subject. In CIL VIII 2877 the centurion served in six different legions and was at least *VIII hastatus posterior* only. The simple possibility in this case is, that there was a one-time *successione promotus* from *decimus hastatus posterior* to *nonus hastatus posterior* in any of the legions. In all other legions he simply was used in the same position as afore. So centurions could have been changing legions without increasing in rank or level.

The centurion's goal was to reach the grade of *primus pilus*, the highest position possible in a legion. He could reach this destination through many different ways. Per *successione promotus* he stayed at the level of *hastatus posterior* until he reached the grade of *primus hastatus posterior*. From there he advanced in the levels to *primus pilus*. By a *promotus* he improved his position by overleaping some ranks. With a *successio* he tried to increase in level, to get a better initial position in the *primi ordines*.

According to B. Dobson an increasing in level also had consequences to the *primi ordines*, the centurions of the first

cohort.<sup>8</sup> As they are listed in different manner, from bottom to top: *hastatus posterior*, *princeps posterior*, *hastatus*, *princeps* and *primus pilus* the rising in level allowed to overleap a position within the *primi ordines*. For example: Reaching the level of *princeps posterior* in a cohort allowed the man to be promoted to *primus princeps posterior* directly skipping the rank *primus hastatus posterior*.

But of course epigraphy makes problems again. In AE 1988, 1044 there is a very special promotion listed.

AE 1988, 1044

D(is) M(anibus)/P(ublio) Turranio/P(ubli) f(ilio) Papir(ia) Be(lluno) Severo/(centurioni) leg(ionis) XV Apol(linaris)/VI h(astato) pr(iori) et leg(ionis)/IIII Fl(aviae) V pr(incipi) pos(teriori)/vix(it) an(nos) XLI/ex heredum/cur(ante) Turranio/Epaphrodeito{s}/lib(erto) eius

To the gods of the deceased. For Publius Turranius Severus, the son of Publius, eligible in the district Papiria, a native of Belluno. He served as centurion in the fifteenth legion Apollinaris acting as *sextus hastatus prior* and in the fourth legion Flavia acting as *quintus princeps posterior*. He lived 41 years. By inheritance the freedman Turranius Epaphrodeitos was responsible for the grave.

In AE 1988, 1044 there are two ranks and two levels mentioned. According to the ranks cohort V is of course higher graded than cohort VI. But what is about the levels? In the meaning of B. Dobson the advancement in rank here would be a demotion of level. As Publius Turranius Severus was already *sextus hastatus prior* it was possible to be graded as *hastatus* reaching the *primi ordines*, overleaping both *hastatus posterior* and *princeps posterior*. The upgrading in level from *hastati* to *principes* in this case caused a downgrading in level, because reaching the *primi ordines* as *princeps posterior* meant, that Severus reached the first cohort in the lower grade of *primus princeps posterior*.

But here also can be a simple solution. As there are only two legions mentioned, it is difficult to say, which one Turranius Severus was first in. Maybe he was in *legio IIII Flavia* for some years reaching the rank of *V princeps posterior*. So he already had been advancing through the ranks and levels. But there must be a third grading, let's call it the upper level. He increased from *posteriores* to *priores*. In this case, he was at a very high position reaching the *primi ordines*, because he would overleap two grades. But reaching the *priores* meant to make some concession. He had to step back in both, rank and level. Now he has to start the promotion at a lower position, but with the perspective of a higher grade in the *primi ordines*.

Livy gives a republican evidence for this procedure. In a speech of Spurnius Lingustinus, a long term soldier, centurion and reiterate *primus pilus*, the man tells about his military career. He was selected as centurion in the grade of *tenth hastatus*. Remember there is no real rank and level grading now, because the situation is set in republican times, when there were no cohorts. He was promoted to *primus hastatus prior* and advanced further to *primus princeps prior* and finally to *primus pilus*, a rank he was selected for several

years.<sup>9</sup>

## THE COHORT AND THE CENTURIONS

In the inscription of CIL VIII 18065 the centurions are divided into *primi ordines* and *centuriones*. The ranks of the first cohort stand out. But why? We must undergo the cohort a closer look.

Looking at the formation of cohorts, there seems to be a simple picture of grouping a formation like this. As a cohort consisted of six centuries or three maniples and there were ten maniples of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* each, there could have been a grouping of one of these maniples to each cohort. The centurion's ranks and levels also indicate this. But in the early days of a cohort, there seemed to be a different cohort organization.

Livy writes about the battle of Zama,<sup>10</sup> where Scipio Africanus grouped his legions in cohorts. He indicated that the battle order was given in old manners. *Hastati* in front followed by *principes* and *triarii* as combat reserve. It is mentioned that, the cohorts should form gaps between their maniples to lure the battle elephants into these traps. Combining all indications, the cohorts of Scipio Africanus were made of *hastati*, *principes* or *triarii* only.<sup>11</sup> Even Caesar mentions cohorts made of *triarii* only.<sup>12</sup> But when a cohort was grouped into three maniples, there would have been three cohorts of *hastati* and also three of *principes* and *triarii* each.

But one maniple of each battle order would be left. As these were the first maniples, they were grouped to the first cohort. So only the first cohort was made of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*. The centurions, as they were leading the first files of their orders, were called *primi ordines*. Therefore, the pronunciation has not changed even to the date of the erection of CIL VIII 18065. The centurions were always called *primi ordines et centuriones et evocati*. Only the centurions of the first cohort got an own pronunciation. All others were simply called centurions.

In times of empire, there was some kind of changing in ranking systems. Now in each cohort the terms *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* were used. As seen afore, it was necessary to change the system to get an easier view on possible *primi ordines*. As Livy mentioned Spurnius Lingustinus was promoted from the tenth maniple to the first at once.<sup>13</sup> It would mean, that there were 54 potential *primi ordines* in every legion. To make promotion easier and particularly

<sup>9</sup> This source is a proof, that even in republican times, the *primus pilus* was no annual rank at all. The *primus pilus* could have been in his rank for several years like all other centurions.

<sup>10</sup> Liv. 30, 32, 11.

<sup>11</sup> The different manner of armoury and supply of the three original lines makes it further understandable, why there were groupings of the same battle line in one cohort.

<sup>12</sup> Caes. Bell. Civ. 3, 88. Of course it is possible, that Caesar mentions cohorts made of *veterani* or *evocati*, who indicated themselves as *triarii*. But the source does not indicate such special forces.

<sup>13</sup> It is to say, that in this case the *decimus hastatus posterior* was promoted to *primus hastatus posterior* of which the person advanced to *primus pilus*. The mentioned source does not indicate, if there were *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* in each cohort. There could have been a combination of both mentioned systems. The cohorts were made up of *hastati*, *principes* or *triarii* only, but their centurions were indicated by all three battle lines. The *primi ordines* still were called like this, because the first cohort still contained a maniple of each single battle line.

<sup>8</sup> DOBSON 1978.



clearly arranged, there had to be a ranking system for centurions. Of course it was still possible to promote a *decimus hastatus posterior* to *primus pilus* at once, but this was only an exception. A centurion had to advance through the ranks to become a *primi ordinis* and finally a *primus pilus*. So that's why the maniple order was also introduced in all other legionary cohorts.

Now there were three grades, in which a centurion could advance. The rank, which meant advancing through the ten cohorts. The lower level, in which the centurion advanced in the already abandoned maniples. And the upper level, which was similar to the lower level, only used in the grades of *priores*.

The centurion's seniority therefore depended on the cohort he was serving in, the maniple, if he was a *hastatus*, a *principes* or a *triarius*, and the century, if he was in *posterior* or *prior* level.

Although looking complicated, this system gave the command the certainty, that the centurion serving as *secundus principes prior* was aware of becoming *principes* in the *primi ordines*. In former times, the *secundus principes prior* would have been standing at the same level as the *decimus hastatus posterior*, which now was impossible.

### THE PROMOTION TO PRIMUS PILUS

*Successio*, *promotus* and *successione promotus* were the typical advancements.

But there occurs a significant problem concerning the highest-ranking centurion, the *primus pilus*. As of the analyses concerning *successio*, *promotus* and *successione promotus* all centurions began their duty as centurion in the tenth cohort as *hastatus posterior*. From this position the centurion advanced in grades and levels always ambitioned to reach the rank of *primus pilus*. But which rank was able to reach the position of the highest-ranking centurion of the legion? As of promotion standards there were at least two ranks, which were up to the *primus pilus*. The *principes primae cohortis* and the *pilus prior cohortis*. But which one was superior? Or was there superiority at all?

### VEGETIUS AND THE PRINCEPS

In his *Epitoma rei militaris* Vegetius mentions, that the *primus pilus* was promoted from the *principes primae cohortis*.<sup>14</sup> This would correlate to Livy and his mentioned Spurnius Lingustinus, who was promoted from the *hastati* in the tenth cohort to the first and then went on to the *principes* and to the *primus pilus*.

The problem not only is, that Livy mentions a republican tour of duty, but also Vegetius himself. In a later Chapter of the second book of the *Epitoma rei militaris* he states, that every *optio* and every *centurio* had to advance through the levels in a cohort and then went on in grade to the next cohort, where he started at the lowest position again. In fine the centurion started as *decimus hastatus posterior* and went on to *decimus pilus prior*. From there he went to the ninth cohort starting as *nonus hastatus posterior* and advancing to *nonus pilus prior*. The next rank was *octus hastatus posterior* and so on. Chronological impossible. A soldier enlisted at the age of 20 and was able to reach the

<sup>14</sup> Veg., *Epitoma rei militaris* 2, 8, 1.

rank of *centurio*. As of D. J. Breeze it required 13 to 15 years of service to be promoted to the rank of centurion.<sup>15</sup> In the meaning of Vegetius it would have taken a new centurion at least 59 more years to reach the rank of *primus pilus*, staying only one year in every particular position.

Another problem concerning Vegetius is, that he contradicted himself in the former mentioned chapter. He said, that the *primus pilus* was promoted from the rank of *principes primae cohortis*. But his ranking of the *primi ordines* from top to bottom was: *primus pilus*, *primus hastatus*, *principes primae cohortis*, *secundus hastatus* and *triarius prior*.<sup>16</sup> So it would have been impossible to be promoted from *principes primae cohortis* to *primus pilus* at once. There had to be a promotion to *primus hastatus* first.

Well the second of Vegetius' problems would not be a big one, as he simply mixed ranks and seniority. As of epigraphic sources it is sure that the *primi ordines* ranked from top to bottom: *primus pilus*, *principes*, *hastatus*, *principes posterior* and *hastatus posterior*.<sup>17</sup> So *principes* was the rank next to *primus pilus* and therefore was the rank out of which the new *primus pilus* was chosen.

### PILUS PRIOR AND PILUS POSTERIOR

It is almost certain, that the nomenclature of *hastati*, *principes* and *pili* in cohort two to ten was used as an indication of the rank reached. Normally only the last reached position was specified on inscriptions. An interesting fact is, that there were many *hastati* and *principes* called, but nearly no *pili*. And if they are, they can be dated to the end of the second century onward. Mostly in Severian times.<sup>18</sup>

Was there only one *pilus*? Could the centurions only reach positions within *principes* and *hastati*? If there was only one *pilus*, why was he called *primus pilus* then? It is almost sure, there were *pili priores* and *pili posteriores* in every legionary cohort. But why are they so meagre known?

Perhaps there were easier ways to reach the rank of *primus pilus*. The advancement in the level of *hastati* was easier for sure. All three ways of promotion, *successio*, *promotus* and *successione promotus* were still possible. As the men in this level advanced not only in grade but also to the next level, the reachable positions were gone far. In every higher level, the advancement grew narrower. Reaching the rank of *pilus posterior*, there were only two promotions possible. The *promotus* and the *successione promotus*. Perhaps there was a third to the upper level, where the centurion stepped back to the *principes priores*.

There was one significant problem of the *promotus* of *pili posteriores*. They never could have reached the first cohort, because there was no *primus pilus posterior*.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps that's why there are so less known. The *pili posteriores* had to step back to the *principes priores*. Through these ranks, they could reach the position of *principes primae cohortis* or *pilus prior* of any other cohort. From both positions the advancement to *primus pilus* was possible. But which one was chosen?

<sup>15</sup> BREZE/DOBSON 1993, 11-59.

<sup>16</sup> Veg., *Epitoma rei militaris* 2, 8, 1 - 7.

<sup>17</sup> Watch for example: CIL VIII 18072.

<sup>18</sup> AE 1993, 1575; AE 1993, 1582; AE 1993, 1585; CIL III 6611; CIL V 7004; D 2361.

<sup>19</sup> The only mentioned I *pilus posterior* is known in AE 1993, 1588. The inscription dates in the period of Alexander Severus.

## PRINCEPS PRIMAE COHORTIS AND PILUS PRIOR

The *pilus prior* not only was a *pilani*. He also was a cohort commander. Every cohort was commanded by the highest-ranking centurion in its ranks, which was the *pilus prior*. Promotions were rare in this grade and level, because the man was needed as a commander.

It seems to be easier to seek promotion to *primus pilus* as *princeps primae cohortis*. But concerning to all achievements the *pilus prior* still had two ways of promotion. *Successione promotus* and *promotus* still were able. The *princeps primae cohortis* only had *successio* to be promoted to *primus pilus*.

There must have been an equal chance.

### The Primus Pilus

Looking at CIL VIII 18065 there are two *primi pilus* mentioned. A. v. Domaszewski was sure, that there always were two in a legion.<sup>20</sup> One of which was the commander of the first century in the first cohort. The other one was a staff officer.

I agree with Domaszewski that there were two *primi pilus* in every legion, but I think they were equal in rank and function. As the first cohort had no *pilus posterior* it has to have another centurion filling his position. As the *primus pilus* could have been reached from the position of *princeps primae cohortis* and *pilus prior*, there was always one advanced from *princeps primae cohortis* and one advanced from the *pili priores*.

But in CIL VIII 18072 there is only one *primus pilus* mentioned. How does this correlate?

Well of course at sometimes there could have been only one *primus pilus*, because the second not yet was promoted. But CIL VIII 18072 is a special case. The inscription mentions two *tabularii principis*. The first group erected the memorial, the second one restored it. In both cases the *tabularium* is made of five *optiones* and two *adiutores*. The *optiones* are mentioned by century. They came from the *primus pilus*, the *princeps*, the *hastatus*, the *princeps posterior* and the *hastatus posterior*. But is this a real proof? Remember that in CIL VIII 18065 the first cohort had seven centurions including two *primi pilus*. Both inscriptions, CIL VIII 18065 and CIL VIII 18072, mention the same legion, *legio III Augusta*. Remember also that Vegetius mentions ten centuries in the first cohort.<sup>21</sup> Concerning to these differing numbers there always would have been differing numbers of *tabularii* as well.

I think the *tabularium principis* was made of five *optiones* because there were at least five at any time. Watch cohort nine in CIL VIII 18065. There were only five names mentioned. A full cohort could consist of five to ten centuries. Six were only standard. A modern times battalion also is made of two to seven companies and counts 300 to 1,200 men.<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSION

<sup>20</sup> DOMASZEWSKI 1981, 112-115.

<sup>21</sup> Veg., *Epitoma rei militaris* 2, 8, 6.

<sup>22</sup> An infantry battalion of the British army consists of a headquarters company, a support company and three rifle companies.

The promotion standards of the Roman army were fitted to the rank of *primus pilus*. The only problem occurring was the *pilus posterior*, which was not used in the first cohort. This was no real problem at all, because to reach the *pilus prior* a *pilus posterior* had to step back in grade and level to *princeps prior*. From this position he could advance to *princeps primae cohortis* or to *pilus prior*. From both ranks he was able to advance to *primus pilus* and because the promotion standards for both were identical, there were two identical ranks called *primus pilus*.

Not always there were two of these on duty in a legion, but epigraphic sources show, that there often times were two *primi pilus* in a legion.

We have to look upon the *primus pilus* with other eyes nowadays. It is not the single high-ranking centurion, which is in position for only one year. The *primus pilus* is a centurion's rank like any other and therefore could be granted to more men in a legion. Remember that in modern day armies the rank of captain is still used as the primary rank for a company commander. But a captain could fill much more positions in a military unit. He can be a staff officer, an adjutant, a logistics or administrations officer, an engineer and even a medic. Rank and pay grade are not bound to a special function.

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