Under the Principate young senators were only admitted to the senate after they had held the office of quaestor at the age of twenty-five. To be more precise, it was 24, since Hadrian decreed that young men could vie for the quaestorship in the year in which they turned 25.\[^1\] Although there was the possibility that they could hold preliminary offices before their twenty-fifth birthday, some scholars question the seriousness of these occupations. A remark by Tacitus concerning his father-in-law Agricola has led many scholars to uphold this opinion. Tacitus explains that Agricola behaved in a way totally different from that of other young men of his age in the same position, because he took his task as a military tribune seriously.\[^2\] We must of course make allowance for the fact that Tacitus had every desire to convey a fine image of his father-in-law. In any case, his biography was a political work, written against the autocracy of Domitian. In spite of dedication and qualities, Agricola was spurned by this emperor. Even under bad emperors it is possible for good men to achieve distinction.\[^3\] But does Tacitus' remark on Agricola's military tribunate necessarily imply that this particular office was not valued highly or that it did not portend greater things to come?

In other literary sources military tribunates are welcomed as a first step in a successful career. According to Epictetus a tribuneship was something of real value for a young nobleman: 'He has been thought worthy of a tribuneship, and everyone who meets him embraces him, kissing his eyes, another his neck, and his slaves his hands. He comes home, he finds lamps lit, he goes up the Capitoline hill and offers sacrifices'.\[^4\] A poem by Statius focuses on the sixteen year-old Crispinus, son of the ex-governor of Britain and Asia M. Vettius Bolanus, who has been awarded a tribuneship.\[^5\] Of course, his family was one of prestige\[^6\] and that helped to start a career: 'no child of equestrian blood or but newly granted the robe of knighthood and the humble stripe did you as a newcomer knock at the august abode and hallowed chamber of the Latian Senate, but preceded by a long array of your own kinsmen'. Renown is in store for Crispinus as well: 'Caesar unbars for you the mighty threshold of renown (\textit{ingens reserat tibi limen honorum Caesar}) and entrusts the sword of Ausonia to your keeping'.

\[^1\] Hadrian (117-138) was an emporer of the Antonine dynasty.

\[^2\] Tacitus (1st century AD), a Roman historian, is best known for his work 'The Histories'.

\[^3\] Domitian (81-96 AD) was an emperor of the Flavian dynasty.

\[^4\] Epictetus (c. 50-135 AD), a Greek Stoic philosopher, is known for his work 'Discourses'.

\[^5\] Statius (c. 40-95 AD) was a Roman poet.

\[^6\] The term 'equestrian' refers to the class of Roman nobility, the equites, who held significant political and military roles.

\[^7\] The line from the poem by Statius is in Latin: '\textit{ingens reserat tibi limen honorum Caesar}'.

\[^8\] Ausonia refers to the region of modern Italy.

133
In the following pages I shall discuss examples of young military commanders and priests from the Republic and the Principate. Although the offices under discussion may have undergone changes in development and contents in the transition from the Republic to the Principate, this article focuses on the importance of some preliminary offices in the training of the future senator. Any change in contents or tasks did not affect the social value or the general function of preliminary offices. Every appointment at an early age does reflect an enhancement in social status of the young man (and his family). As Epictetus illustrates: being chosen is still better than not being chosen. According to this point of departure the social value attached to the holding of office before entering the senate did not change between the Republic and the Principate.

Although during the Late Republic the military importance of the tribuneship had been reduced and their commanding role had been taken over by the more experienced legati, under emergency circumstances young men could still command armies — whatever their official function. A passage in Tacitus’ Annals on young Lucius Apronius Caesianus can illustrate that. He was the son of the governor of Africa, who had been sent from Pannonia to quell the rising of the Numidian tribes led by the renowned Tacfarinas. The latter was a shrewd fighter, well familiar with Roman tactics and strategy, since he had fought in the auxiliary forces. In this career, he resembles a somewhat later challenger of Roman forces, Julius Civilis, the leader of the Batavian tribe. From auxiliary to revolutionary was a well-known pattern. In the year AD 20, when Tacfarinas attempted to conquer the fort of Thala, he met with no success. A little later, when Tacfarinas was still not far away from the coast, he was taken by surprise by a small force led by L. Apronius Caesianus. The latter was delegated to march against Tacfarinas by his father the governor: ‘Apronius Caesianus marching at his father’s order with the cavalry and auxiliary cohorts reinforced by the most mobile of the legionaries, fought a successful engagement and chased the Numidians into the desert’ (Tac. Ann. 3 21).

In the temple of Venus on Mount Eryx an inscription also mentions L. Apronius Caesianus as the victor over the Gaetuli.

[L. Apronius L.f. Caesian]us VII vir [epulonu]m
......Vene]ri Erucinae [d.] d.
[a patre hic missus Lybiae procon]sule bella
[prospera dum pugnat, cecidit Maurus]ius hostis
felicem gladium [tibi qui patrisque dicavit]
Apronius effigiem [natus bellii duce] duxque
hic idem fuit; hic [justo certamine vi]ctor
praetextae positae [causa pariterque resumpta]
septemvir puer han[c genitor quem rite r]o[ga]r[at]at

134
Caesar quam dedera[t, vestem, tibi, sancta reli[qu[ui[t]
divorum ....
mutua ....
filius Aproni maior quam nomine factis]
Gaetulas gentes quod dedit ipse fugae
effigiem cari genitoris, diva, locavit]
Aeneadum alma paren[s, praemia ista, tibi]
armaque quae gessit: scuto [per volnera fracto]
qua pater virtus ens[is ab hoste rubet]
caedibus attritus, consummatque [hasta tropaeum]
qua cecidit [f]os[s]u[s] barbar[us ora fessus]
quon nihil est utrique magis venerabile signum:
hoc tibi sacrarunt filius atque pater
Caesar's effigiem posuit [par cura duorum]
certavit pietas, su[mma in utroque fuit]
[curante] L. Apronio [L.l.] .......

Apparently, according to this text, the emperor Tiberius had rewarded
him with a priesthood: he became _septemvir epulonum_. In the inscription
we also come across a reference to his age: he is called _septemvir puer_.
In fact, he was still so young, that one could say that he had changed
one _toga praetexta_ (that of childhood) for the other (that of _septemvir
epulonum_). He dedicated the latter to Venus: ‘praetextae posita[e causa
pariterque resumptae, septemvir puer han[c genitor quam rite ro[g]ar]at
Caesar quam dedera[t, vestem, tibi, sancta, reli[qu[ui[t’]. Although heavily
lacunose, Mommsen, Buechler and Dessau all seem to agree on the validity
of the restorations in this passage. The translation of the central passage
(ll. 5–10) would run as follows:

He dedicated the sword of good luck to you and an image of his father
Apronius; he was born of a leader in war and was a leader himself.
He was the victor in a just battle. Because of the _praetexta_ which he
deposited and took up again at the same time, the boy _septemvir_ left
this garment for which his father had duly asked and which Caesar
granted to him, to you, holy one.

I take it to mean that Caesianus first laid down his children’s _toga_ and im-
mediately afterwards (‘pariterque’ seems sound; ‘posita[e and ‘resumptae’
cannot possibly refer to the same _toga_ that of _septemvir_. Two conclusions
can be drawn from this. He was a very young military commander and he
obtained a very prestigious priesthood at an early age. Does that make
him an exception? In the remainder I shall argue that he was not, in both
capacities.
As to his position in the war against Tacfarinas, it remains unclear whether he held an official function, and, if so, which one. Some scholars have assumed that he was a *legatus* to his father, but in his commentary in *CIL* Mommsen ruled that out. Since Caesianus had held no official function prior to this one, he argued that the young man must have been a *tribunus militum* or a *comes et contubernalis* to his father. Others have assumed that he was a proquaestorian *leg. propr.*. Whatever his position may have been, his case was certainly not exceptional. Some examples from as early as the Republican period may illustrate this:

P. Cornelius Scipio was a *tribunus militum* at Cannae, when he was nineteen years old. He himself took the initiative when the Romans found themselves in an awkward situation and the consul was in danger: ‘Is pavor perculit Romanos auxitque pavorem volnus consulis periculumque intercursu tum primum pubescentis filii propulsatum’. T. Quinctius Flamininus, born in 228, was *tribunus militum* under M. Claudius Marcellus in 208. At the age of twenty-three he became *propraetor extra ordinem* to command the garrison at Tarentum, although he had held no curule office. M. Aemilius Lepidus (born around 230 and consul in 187) fought a battle at the age of fifteen; for this prowess a statue was erected on the Capitoline hill: ‘Aemilius Lepidus when he was still a boy killed an enemy when he was lined up in battle, and he served the people ... of him a remembrance can be seen on the Capitol: a statue (representing him) with *bulla* and clad in the *praetexta*, placed on this spot at the orders of the senate’. A coin indicates that he was fifteen years old at the time. P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus was at Pydna, although only seventeen years old. C. Fannius, born in 166 and consul in 122, served under Scipio Africanus Minor at Cartage in 147; in 146 he was in Greece, where Metellus sent him to the meeting of the Achaean League to prevent the outbreak of war. Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, the famous reformer, was born in 163; he served at Cartage in 146. Q. Sertorius, probably born in 123, served his first military command under Q. Servilius Caepio in 105 at the age of seventeen.

As a sort of parallel for these young commanders, we can point to two inscriptions recording men who became centurions in their late teens and several equestrian officers in their late teens and early twenties. Father and son being active in the same province may come as a surprise, but once again we must emphasize that this had happened frequently during the Republic. ? Aebutius was sent by his father T. Aebutius, *praetor* in Sardinia in 178, to Rome to report on conditions on the island to the senate: ‘Eodem tempore et in Sardinia magnum tumultum esse litteris T. Aebuti praetoris cognitum est, quas filius eius ad senatum attulerat’. Perhaps he was with his father in some official capacity (*legatus* or *tribunus militum*). Q. Marcius Philippus served under his father in Macedonia; he
was a legatus in 169: 'Interim consuli sententia stetit eo saltu ducere, ubi propter Ottolobum dux regis castra habebat. Praemitti tamen quattuor milia armatorum loca opportuna praeoccupanda placuit, quibus praepositi sunt M. Claudius, Q. Marcius, consulis filius'.

C. Norbanus is mentioned in a Greek inscription from Rhegium. In it he is given thanks by the people. In all possibility, the text must be dated somewhere between 90 and 87, when his father was governor of Sicily. Unfortunately, the text does not mention the reason for the erection. As to Norbanus' age, since his father became consul in 83, the latter must have been born around 135–130. Young Norbanus then was born somewhere between 110 and 105, and so must have been in his late teens or early twenties at the moment of the erection. In 83 he became III vir monetalis, still in his twenties. The two young Cicerones (son and nephew) accompanied the rhetor to his province of Cilicia, when they were both in their teens. 24 Quintus took the men's toga at Laodicea on the Lycos and Marcus just after his return from Cilicia. 25 C. Laecanius Bassus, ex-vigintivir, died in Brundisium at the age of eighteen. It has been conjectured by Syme that he died while on his way to Asia, where his father had been appointed governor.

On the basis of further examples from the imperial period, we may accept service under the command of kinsmen as an established practice. 27 We know from Pliny the Younger that the governor of a province was to a certain extent free to choose his members of staff. 28 When his son was of the right age (close to or immediately after reaching adulthood), he could accompany him in an official position or just as a comes. However, this was done with a specific purpose in mind. Sons were taken along to learn the trade of a senator.

Priesthoods should not be considered as a resting-place in the leeway of the scene of competitive politics. They were an integral part of a senatorial career, in the Republic as well as in the imperial period. In the 180's BC when competition for office was very heated, the priesthoods were eagerly competed for. 29 In the first century BC competition increased significantly, when priests had to be elected. The lex Domitia (104 BC) specified that new members of the priestly college were to be elected by the minor pars populi, that is seventeen tribes drawn by lot. As a result of this law, the man who initiated it, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (cos. 96), got himself elected both as pontifex and pontifex maximus. 30 C. Iulius Caesar became pontifex maximus in 63 against Q. Lutatius Calculus and P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus. Whether cooptation or election was the rule, young men entered the priesthoods from the third century BC until well into the imperial period. Q. Fabius Maximus had been an augur between 265 and his death in 203: 'Eodem anno Q. Fabius Maximus moritur, exactae aetatis, si quidem verum est, augurem duos et sexaginta annosuisse, quod quidem auctores sunt'. 31 If he died in his late seventies or early eighties, he must have en-
tered the priesthood at a very early age. L. Quinctius Flamininus was one year older than his brother Titus, so that he must have been born in 229. He was appointed as *augur* in the year 213 at the early age of sixteen. Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, born about 220, although not to be confused with the homonymous father of the Gracchi, was made an *augur* in 204: ‘augur Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, admodum adulscens, quod tum perrarum in mandandis sacerdotiis erat’. C. Livius Salinator, near *aequalis* of the elder Cato, who was born in 234, was *pontifex* between 211 and 170. M. Aemilius Lepidus was appointed *Xvir sacris faciundis* in 211, while he was in his late teens. M. Cornelius Cethegus, born around 250 (*praet. 211, cos. 204*), had been a *flamen* until the year 223, when he had to abdicate for the unsatisfactory performance of duties. Possibly he entered the priesthood in his late teens or early twenties. Cn. Cornelius Scipio Hispalus (*praet. 179, cos. 176*) died in the year 176. Since he probably had been *praetor* and *consul suo anno*, he must have been born somewhere around 218. He was *pontifex* between 199 and his year of death. Q. Fulvius Nobilior was appointed *tresvir epulonum* in 180 while still wearing the *toga praetexta*. A. Postumius Albinus was born around 195/4. In 173 he was elected *Xvir sacris faciundis* as successor to L. Cornelius Lentulus. Appius (?) Claudius Pulcher (*praet. 149, cos. 143*), born ca. 187, must have been appointed *Salius* before 167. C. Iulius Caesar, born either in 102 or 100, was appointed *flamen Dialis* somewhere between 87 and 82. M. Valerius Messala Rufus (*cos. 53*) is said to have been *augur* for 55 years, although the reference is in a late account.

As stated above, Caesianus’ reward for his feats was a very prestigious priesthood. That it was the priesthood of *septemvir epulonum* that befell him is somewhat odd, since this normally was not awarded to young debutants, at least not in the Julio-Claudian period on which Scheid wrote a study. The 27 other *septemviri epulonum* whom we happen to know for this period were already of praetorian or consular rank, or just before the praetorship, when they entered the priesthood.

Other priesthoods seem to have been more accessible to young men under the first ruling house of the Principate. *Salius*, *augsres* and *fratres Arvales* especially could be very young, since admittance was subject to heredity and cooptation. In general, *novi homines* entered late in their careers, whereas entrance before the vigintivirate was restricted, for instance in the case of the *pontifices*, to patricians and members of the *domus principis*. In fact, for a limited number of young men of senatorial stock a priesthood provided a welcome opportunity to be active in politics in a very prestigious position; there was a narrow connection linking priesthood and magistracies: ‘les prêtres se recrutent parmi les magistrats ou (…) les prêtres sont destinés à un brillant avenir politique’. Scheid argues that from the 200 priests coopted under Augustus and from the 220 coopted under his suc-
cessor Tiberius, 25% or even 33% consisted of young senators who had not yet held the quaestorship.\textsuperscript{52} The normal path of the average priest went through the position of \textit{triumvir monetalis} or that of \textit{decemvir stlitibus indicandis} and the quaestorship of Augustus: ‘dès les premiers pas dans la vie publique, le futur prêtre entrait donc dans l’un de ces collèges de magistrats qui sont réputés pour avoir été des pépinières de grands destins’.\textsuperscript{53} Some examples from the Principate can be given: during the reign of Tiberius a number of young men who did not yet wear the \textit{toga virilis} were coopted to the college of the \textit{fratres Arvales} in lieu of their deceased fathers.\textsuperscript{54} On most occasions the emperor had great influence on appointments. Hadrian appointed Marcus Aurelius to the college of the \textit{Salii} at the age of eight.\textsuperscript{55} Epigraphic evidence for young senatorial priests attests a L. Nonius Quintilianus who died at the age of twenty-four and had been an \textit{augur} and \textit{Salius Palatinus}.\textsuperscript{56} M. Iunius Silanus had been a \textit{Xvir} and a \textit{Salius Collinus}; he died at the age of twenty years and nine months.\textsuperscript{57} Another \textit{Salius Collinus} is called \textit{clarissimus iuvenis}.\textsuperscript{58}

That the awarding of a priesthood at an early age and a brilliant career were linked can be glimpsed from the later career of our Caesianus. He became \textit{consul ordinarius} in AD 39 with Gaius Caesar as his \textit{collega} (Dio 59.13.2). He possibly reached the apogee of his career as governor of Africa, just like his father before him. As to his age while holding the military command in Africa, nothing can be proved beyond doubt. The usual age for donning the \textit{toga virilis} was between fourteen and eighteen. If we take it that he was born around AD 4, that would make him a \textit{consul} at the age of thirty-five, which is not unlikely in the early Principate. Although his family does not seem to have belonged to the patrician class, given the fact that he was an \textit{amicus} of Tiberius (although that is not beyond doubt) and that his father had been a \textit{triumvir monetalis}, Apronius Caesianus can at least be shown to have been in a privileged position.\textsuperscript{59} The fact that Tiberius offered him a priesthood instead of honouring him with a candidacy for the quaestorship may also indicate the fact that he was under twenty.

That senators were active in military affairs and in priesthoods before the quaestorship points to the fact that in spite of the strict adherence to the \textit{lex Villia annalis} of 180 BC regulating the \textit{cursus honorum}, young men were not neglected and were actually trained from the age of sixteen onwards for the position of a senator. The \textit{cursus honorum}, as it was established in the later part of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, was the result of the machinations of a gerontocracy, reserving the most important offices of state for men advanced in age. In the ancient world at large, old age always went before youth. But the Romans never forgot that their sons were destined to succeed them.
NOTES

1. *Dig. 50 4 8*, Ulpius, Lib. XI ad edictum: ‘annus autem vicenimus quistus coeptus pro pleno habetur’.
2. *Tac. Agr. 5*: ‘nee Agricola licenter, more iuvenum qui militiam in lasciviam vertunt, neque seguitur ad voluptates et commeatus titulum tribunatus at inscitiam retulit’.
3. *Tac. Agr. 42*: ‘sciant quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros esse (...)
4. Epictetus, *Diss. 1.19*. 17–25; cf. 1.10.3; 4.4.2 and 3.7.30 ff.
9. The *toga praetexta* was usually donned between the age of fourteen and eighteen. During the Principate there was a tendency for this age to drop, see B. Baldwin, ‘Young and old in imperial Rome’, in: St. Bertman (ed.) *The Conflict of Generations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Amsterdam 1976, 222.
11. Liv. 21.46.7.
21. Liv. 41.6.5.
22. Liv. 44.3.2.


34. Scullard (note 15 above) 285.

35. Liv. 29. 38. 7.


37. Broughton (note 32 above) 1. 282; 393 and Szemler (note 30 above) 109.

38. Sumner (note 16 above) 47/8.

39. Szemler (note 30 above) 96/7.


41. Liv. 40. 42. 7; cf. Szemler (note 30 above) 173, note 4 for the problem of identification. This, of course, does not affect the conclusion that a teenager had been appointed to a priesthood, perhaps 15 or 16 years old.

42. Cf. Sumner (note 16 above) 14.

43. Cf. Sumner 48; cf. 42.

44. Sumner 17; cf. Broughton (note 32 above) 1. 436.

45. Broughton 2. 574; cf. Suet. *Jul.* 1. 2; Vell. 2. 43. 1.


48. Scheid (note 47 above) 642.


50. Scheid (note 47 above) 641.

51. Scheid (note 47 above) 629.


53. Scheid (note 47 above) 645.


55. *SHA*, *Marc.* 4. 2.


58. *CIL* 10. 6322; for other *Salii Collimini* see *CIL* 6. 31753; 10. 3724.

59. For Apronius Caesianus’ father’s career see U. Vogel-Weidemann (note 10) 74 ff.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

For further information go to: http://www.casa-kvsu.org.za/acta_classica.htm