As the Roman empire expanded so did the need for non-Roman military manpower increase. Unlike the Carthaginians, the Romans did not resort to the use of mercenaries on a large scale. Instead they developed their long-standing tradition of relying on the support of allies (socii). In military contexts the socii came to fill the role of auxilia. But the old respect given to allies did not entirely disappear: in a sense the auxiliary always remained an ally. And on occasion some were thought to have made almost as useful a contribution as the legionaries and might be given Roman citizenship. The Roman penchant for documentation intervened: a bronze tablet of 88 B.C. survives recording a grant of citizenship to some Spanish cavalrymen 'virtutis causa' (ILLS 8888). Little is known about what Augustus did to formalize the position of auxiliaries. From Claudius onward the emperors issued formal decrees (constitutiones) granting Roman citizenship to long-serving auxiliaries and the right to contract a marriage recognized in Roman law with a peregrine (conubium). The enfranchised auxiliary was given an extract of the constitutio engraved on bronze. These bronze documents are called military diplomas.

The book of Pferdehirt, Director of the Roman Section of the R.-G. Museum in Mainz, starts at this point. It is an analysis of the constitutiones and related documents, together with select legal texts, in an attempt to show upward social mobility and Romanization in the army. It is divided into six parts: I. The Granting of Legal Privileges to Soldiers and the Preconditions for This (with Excursus I on Citizenship Privileges for Legionary Veterans); II. The Different Legal Statuses of the Inhabitants of the Empire and the Effect of this on the Constitutiones; III. The Soldiers’ Dependents in the Constitutiones; IV. The Legal Position of the Soldiers’ Families both Before and After the Grant; V. The Reasons for Constitutiones being Issued for Roman Citizens after A.D. 212; VI. The Constitutiones as Instruments of an Imperial Policy of Romanization. Excursus II deals with Certificates of Discharge (missio).

The work is illustrated by many excellent tables and figures. There are eight separate maps (mainly of findspots of the diplomas) and two charts (one of the auxiliary regiments in pre-106 diplomas and the other of the findspots of post-170 non-auxiliary diplomas). There is frequent cross-referencing in the text, but no Index or Bibliography. (There are a few misprints, mainly in the Latin and the Greek, but none is likely to cause discomfort.)

Many diplomas, papyri and legal texts are printed in full. The diplomas are printed with the same length of line as the original and in a variety of types, capitals for the actual letters on the diplomas, minuscule letters for expansions, italic for supplements and bold for phrases P. wishes to underline. She (p. 3) states that this was preferable to using the normal epigraphical conventions. But surely impressions of how the diplomas were actually set out could have been shown by the inclusion of some photographs: the variety of type in P.’s presentation is tiring to read. For readers (and even libraries) outside the euro-zone the price of the book is high. The diplomas are readily accessible in CIL XVI and RMD and the legal texts in various corpora. Quotation could have been restricted to the specific passages under discussion, convenient as it is to have so much of the evidence within the volume. That said, the book is beautifully printed and easy to use.
The points raised are discussed in exhaustive detail: an enormous amount of effort has gone into the work. It is completely up-to-date: even unpublished diplomas in the Museum of Mainz are quoted.

In Part I the legal privileges granted to auxiliaries are considered first, then those for sailors in the fleets, and the troops stationed in Rome. The constitutions of the Year of the Four Emperors are considered separately. The differences in the wording of pre-30 auxiliary diplomas are carefully analysed. As P. (15) points out, both their chronological and geographical coverage are uneven. From this she concludes that not all auxiliaries received citizenship in that period (18; 25) and suggests that constitutions may only have been issued for special celebrations such as the Neroneia or the dies imperii of Vespasian.

Strangely she does not refer to the theory of S. Dušanić (in: ‘Heer und Intergrationspolitik ...’, edd. W. Eck et al. [1986], 190ff. and elsewhere) that diplomas were only issued for special (military) events. In fact, the diplomas do not refer to special occasions surely some such explanation as that of ‘nur tutis causas’ from the decree of 88 B.C. cited above would have featured. The evidence of the inscriptions supports that of the diplomas that the grants were made on a regular basis: cf. the four Ti. Julii in the Coh. Montanorum Prima in Noricum (CIL III 4844; 4846f.; 11554).

In part II P. analyses the legal status of soldiers before their enfranchisement on the basis of their names and their places of origin (pp. 145ff.). The discussion is confined to names on diplomas, but those on inscriptions should also have been included to complete the picture. P. makes the extremely unlikely proposal that auxiliaries with Roman names but without a tribus were Junian Latins. But Batavians like C. Petilius Vindex (CIL XVI 164, p. 161) and Ulpius Fronto (RMD 86, p. 163) as well as the two Ulpii from Britain (CIL XVI 160; 163, p. 163) were hardly the sons of freedmen. (For an apparent freedman in the Ala Capitoniana cf. AE 1912, 187 [cf. AE 1967, 425], but this is an isolated case.) Trajan seems to have been generous in awarding citizenship in Lower Germany: cf. the M. Ulpii witnesses on a legal fragment from Nijmegen (AE 2000, 1015). It is not clear whether the legal categories in Gaius, some of which belong more to the Republican than to the Imperial period (discussed at length at 129ff.), apply to areas of recruitment in remote provinces. Similarly, Latini colonarii. The only time the term Latinus may appear in an auxiliary context is in the enigmatic abbreviation C.L. in the titulature of the Coh. II Tungrorum. But this seems to be a special case: cf. the forthcoming discussion by D. B. Saddington in Britannia 25 2004, 243ff. As far as Latin colonies are concerned, rather than depend solely on Gaius, it would have been profitable to concentrate on the possibly special situation in the Gallic colonies such as Trier (H. Wolf’s discussion is cited on 145, but his later work and that of others like M.-Th. Raepsaet-Charlier needs engagement).

In Part III & IV the consequences for his family of the acquisition of Roman citizenship by an auxiliary is considered. P. (178ff.; cf. 18; 243) makes recourse to ‘römische Privatrecht’ (1) the key issue. But returning veterans were involved in other legal situations as
well, especially if they owned property (cf. the farm ‘villa’ of Cruptorix in the Frisian area [Tac. Ann. IV 73]). A changing situation seems to lie behind the inscription (B. Lörincz et al., Klio 79 1997, 186) from Solva in Pannonia set up by an auxiliary Asper (the name is Latin, if Latinized). He was not serving in a regiment of local recruits, but in one only recently arrived in the area, the Ala Hisp. I Auriana. His father, still a peregrine, was the chieftain of his tribe. But in his title, ‘principi ciuitatis Azaliorum’, ‘princeps’ (a local term) is deleted. Lörincz suggested that this was because it was to be altered from ‘princeps’ to ‘praefectus’, the usual ‘Roman’ term. The legal and social relations at the time must have been complicated. And J.F. Gardner, in: ‘Administration, Prosopography ... in the Rom. Empire’, Workshop ... Leiden 2000 (2001) 215ff., has shown that even in the more sophisticated world of Latin municipia local law survived.

According to its title the book is intended to illustrate ‘upward social mobility in the imperial period’ (for which, cf. G. Alföldy in: ‘Army and Power ...’, edd. A. Chaniotis et al. [2002] 123ff.); cf. the reference to ‘Romanization in the frontier areas’ in the Introduction (2). But only the last brief part really addresses this issue. (It may even be asked whether there was a ‘kaiserliche Romanisierungspolitik’ [241] and whether the constitutiones were an expression of it.) It is true that civic status, the aspect adumbrated by P., was a cornerstone of Romanization. But there is much else to consider. The auxiliary absorbed Roman discipline, acquired some knowledge of Latin, possibly even a rudimentary literacy, and spent much of his life in a Roman-type military community. Such factors need to be adduced from the inscriptional and literary evidence as well as the legal (cf. D. B. Saddington, The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces ... [1982] 187ff.).

P.’s book is addressed to the specialist. But the problems raised in it need to be treated within a broader framework than that of the increasingly formalized pronouncements by the emperors on citizenship for soldiers. Perhaps these will be discussed in a future volume. However, her analysis of the documents discussed is meticulous in its painstaking detail and will be of great use to scholars in the field. Let us hope that P. will soon publish the new diplomas in the Museum at Mainz.

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