



Latin letter of recommendation for travelling officers (ChLA XLV 1320; c. 399 CE) (© Austrian National Library, Department of Papyri)

LECTURE AS PART OF THE SPRING SCHOOL ON GREEK AND ARABIC PAPYRI

# THE ADORATION OF THE IMPERIAL PURPLE

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A number of literary and legal texts from late antiquity mention a privilege that was reserved for high officials and officers of the Later Roman Empire: the *adoratio purpurae*, a ceremony connected with an audience with the emperor. Some papyrus documents also mention the adoration of the imperial purple, adding to our knowledge of this privilege, which was intended to cement the loyal bond between the high functionaries of the state and the emperor.

The lecture examines the importance of these papyrus documents for our knowledge of the *adoratio purpurae*. In particular, ChLA XLV 1320 (Thebaid?, c. 399 CE), a rare original document from a Roman military chancery, will be discussed. A tribune of a military unit garrisoned in Egypt addresses a succinctly formulated instruction in Latin to various administrators of the state storage facilities: four soldiers in the rank of imperial bodyguards (*protectores*) who are passing through are to receive the food they are entitled to, since they are on their way from the Thebaid to Constantinople to worship imperial purple.

**Join Zoom-Meeting**

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