

# **An Analysis of the Late Roman Army in the Western section of the Notitia Dignitatum**

**Stephen Pearce RHUL 2021**

## Declaration of Authorship

I Stephen Pearce hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:  Date: 31/8/2021

---

## Abstract

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is a crucial if controversial source for the administrative and military structures of the Later Roman Empire. My thesis looks at the military information within the *Notitia* and then compares this with contemporary accounts to create a new interpretation of the strength of western Roman forces in the early fifth century. The reason for this research is twofold; the limited amount of modern scholarship on the military implications of the *Notitia*, and on-going debates concerning the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

While the *Notitia's* significance as a source is widely recognised, there has been little research on the army units listed within it since Hoffman (1973), while estimates for the strength of the Roman army based on the *Notitia's* information have varied wildly from 400,000 men or less to more than 600,000. Such varying estimates have important implications, for an accurate assessment of the military potential of the Late Roman army is essential for understanding how the Western Empire fell.

It is my intention to conduct a detailed study of our available contemporary accounts of the Late Roman army in action and then compare this to an analysis of the individual units that make up the various western field armies recorded in the *Notitia*. It will then be possible to demonstrate that not all of the regional armies as they appear in the *Notitia* existed at the same time. While the units and commands listed in the *Notitia* did all exist at one time or another, they did not all exist simultaneously. The *Notitia Dignitatum* cannot therefore be used to provide a simple basis for calculating the Western Roman Empire's total available manpower, which in turn helps to explain the empire's inability to resist the waves of Germanic invasion.

---

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my thanks to the many people who have assisted and supported me during the process of writing this thesis. This journey began many years ago when I had an in-depth discussion with Prof Justin Champion, who was at the time playing in the same cricket team as I was. He inspired me to start my university career at the age of 45 and I have not looked back since.

Most importantly I would like to thank my supervisor Dr David Gwynn who has guided and supported me through this process. I would also like to thank Dr Hannes Kleineke who has made time to assist me with the many translations that I needed. Thanks should also be given to my advisors, Prof Jonathan Harris and Dr Hannah Platts, whose input and feedback in my annual reviews was much appreciated. A further thanks goes to Royal Holloway for covering my PhD tuition fees and a travel grant for a field trip to Hadrian's Wall.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank my partner Jayne Beauchamp and my parents, Edwin and Joan Pearce for their help, patience and support during this long process.

---

## Contents:

<b>1. Introduction</b>	p. 1
1.1 What is the Notitia Dignitatum?	p. 1
1.2 Who used the <i>Notitia Dignitatum</i> ?	p. 5
1.3 Modern views on the <i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>	p. 11
1.4 Other sources and their problems when analysing the Notitia Dignitatum	p. 17
1.5 What is my approach	p. 19
1.6 A question of numbers?	p. 21
1.7 What I hope to prove	p. 26
1.8 Introduction to the regional army chapters	p. 30
<b>2. <i>Comes Hispaniarum</i></b>	p. 32
2.1 Introduction	p. 32
2.2 Sources	p. 33
2.3 Background	p. 35
2.4 The units of the <i>Comes Hispaniarum</i>	p. 45
2.5 Dating the entry for the <i>Comes Hispaniarum</i>	p. 59
<b>3. <i>Comes Tingitaniae</i></b>	p. 62
3.1 Introduction	p. 62
3.2 Background	p. 64
3.3 Units under the <i>Comes Tingitaniae</i>	p. 66
3.4 Dating the army of the <i>Comes Tingitaniae</i>	p. 70
<b>4. <i>Comes Africae</i></b>	p. 71
4.1 Introduction	p. 71
4.2 Background	p. 71

---

4.3 The units of the <i>Comes Africae</i>	p. 83
4.4 Conclusion	p. 98
<b>5. <i>Comes Britanniae</i></b>	p. 102
5.1 Introduction	p. 102
5.2 Background	p. 104
5.3 Units under the <i>Comes Britanniae</i>	p. 109
5.4 Dating the <i>Comes Britanniae</i> entry	p. 119
<b>6. The Gallic field army</b>	p. 122
6.1 Introduction	p. 122
6.2 Background	p. 123
6.2.1 Background to the Office of the <i>Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum</i>	p. 123
6.2.2 Background to the units in Gaul in the fourth century	p. 127
6.2.3 Background conclusion	p. 131
6.3 The units of the Gallic field army	p. 132
6.3.1 The Vexillationes	p. 132
6.3.2 <i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	p. 137
6.3.3 <i>Legiones Comitatus</i>	p. 148
6.3.4 <i>Legiones Pseudocomitatenses</i>	p. 155
6.4 Dating the Gallic field army in the <i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>	p. 162
<b>7. The field army of the <i>Magister Peditum in Praesentalis</i> in Italy</b>	p. 168
7.1 Introduction	p. 168
7.2.1 Background	p. 169
7.2.2 The Battle of Frigidus 394	p. 170
7.2.3 Post Frigidus	p. 174

---

7.2.4 The campaign in Greece in 397	p. 176
7.2.5 Prelude to, and battle of Pollentia and Verona 398-401	p. 178
7.2.6 The Battle of Faesulae 406	p. 182
7.2.7 The fall of Stilicho and the sack of Rome	p. 186
7.2.8 Summary of the Background	p. 189
7.3 The units of the Italian field army	p. 190
7.3.1 The <i>Vexillationes</i>	p. 192
7.3.2 <i>Legiones Palatina</i>	p. 199
7.3.3 <i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	p. 204
7.3.4 <i>Legiones Comitatusenses</i> and <i>Pseudocomitatenses</i>	p. 216
7.4 Dating the army of Italy in the <i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>	p. 223
<b>8. <i>Comes Illyrici</i></b>	p. 227
8.1 Background	p. 227
8.1.1 Background on the <i>Comes Illyrici</i>	p. 231
8.2 Units under the <i>Comes Illyrici</i>	p. 238
8.3 <i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	p. 239
8.5 Dating the army of the <i>Comes Illyrici</i>	p. 251
<b>9. Conclusion</b>	p. 255
Appendix i	p. 262
Appendix ii	p. 266
Bibliography	p. 274

---

**Abbreviations:**

Amm.	Ammianus Marcellinus – <i>Res Gestae</i>
CTh	<i>Theodosian Codex</i>
DIR	<i>De Imperatoribus Romanis</i>
EDH	Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg
JC.	<i>Justinian Codex</i>
J.Nov.	<i>Justinian Novels</i>
Not. Occ.	Notitia Dignitatum Occidentis
Not. Or.	Notitia Dignitatum Orientis
NTh	<i>Theodosian Novels</i>
PLRE	The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire
RIB	Roman Inscriptions in Britain

---



## 1. Introduction.

The *Notitia Dignitatum* has always been a fascinating and alluring document. I was first introduced to it in 1981, with the publication of Phil Barker's *Armies and Enemies of Imperial Rome*, in which he outlined the order of battle of the late Roman army based on the *Notitia Dignitatum*, including the shield patterns.<sup>1</sup> At that time my main area of research was from a military point of view with no interest in understanding the wider context. It always struck me as amazing how such an important document had survived the chaos of the early fifth century and the fall of the west, as in modern terms, such a document would have been one of the first things into the shredder as the barbarians were at the gates. Since then I have come to realise that you cannot take any sources at face value, and perhaps the *Notitia Dignitatum* is not all it seems to be, but my early interest in the document is one of the prime reasons for undertaking this research.

Before outlining what my approach and methodology will be, it will be necessary to give a brief overview of what the *Notitia Dignitatum* is, how modern scholarship has approached the subject and review some of the other primary sources that I shall be using. While it is not my intention to analyse the whole document, but to concentrate on the military information, it will be useful to have an overview of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, how it has been presented and an understanding of some of its anomalies.

### 1.1 What is the *Notitia Dignitatum*?

The document as we have it today gives us a listing of the senior military and civil offices of the late Roman Empire at the start of the fifth century. It is also fully illustrated, showing the insignia of the various offices it records along with the shield designs of many of the army units listed. However, it is not one complete document, but rather two complimentary works which have been combined and preserved along with other Late Roman texts. The first part covers the eastern Empire and is titled *Notitia Dignitatum omnium tam civilium quam militarium partibus Orientis*, which means the list of dignitaries both civil and military in the east. The second western section has the same title, except that *Orientis* has been substituted by *Occidentis*. It appears to be primarily concerned with the order of seniority of

---

<sup>1</sup> Barker (1981), pp.21-26 & 87-107.

the different officials and army units it displays. There is no preface, introduction or dedication, so we are not told its purpose. The only clue we have within the text, is under the heading of the office of the *Primicerius Notariorum*, the head of one of the civil service departments, which tells us that it existed as a part of his bureau.<sup>2</sup>

The surviving copies of the document which we have today come from the now lost Codex Spirensis, which is believed to have been a copy of the original late Roman version. It was obtained for Charlemagne by Alcuin, Abbot of Fulda, while he was at Ravenna. The earliest surviving copy of this was made by Cardinal Orsini in 1427, which unfortunately ended up being dismembered and framed in a house in Norfolk. Only five pages now remain and are held in Cambridge, though copies of these were made in 1829 by Sandys which are now in Norwich Castle museum. During the council of Basle in 1436, Donato, Bishop of Padua and Plizolpasso, Archbishop of Milan, had both acquired copies made from the original Codex Spirensis. The Donato copy is now in Oxford (hereafter referred to as O), while Plizolpasso's is in Paris (referred to as P). Both of these copies were illustrated by the French illustrator Pernot Lamy. In 1484 a fourth copy, but of a lower quality, was made and is now held at Frankfurt (referred as F) and two further copies were made from this which now reside at Vienna and Trento.<sup>3</sup>

In 1550 the Count Palatine, Otto Heinrich, received a copy of the complete set of texts, which are now held at Munich (referred to as M). He was, however, unhappy with the illustration which had been done in a contemporary style, so had another set of these illustrations copied again and attached them to the end of his first set. It would appear that by 1556, he had obtained the original Codex Spirensis for himself as it appears in a catalogue of his books.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately this has not survived, and was dismembered and used for book bindings in 1602-3. Fragments of these bindings were discovered in 1906 at Augsburg, but regrettably none of the illustrations survived.<sup>5</sup>

What we have is a 15<sup>th</sup> century version of a Carolingian copy of what might have been the Roman original. On initial inspection the Paris and Oxford editions are very similar, which is

---

<sup>2</sup> Brennan (1995), p. 147; Not. Occ. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> Reeve (1983), pp. 253-7.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander (1976), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Reeve (1983), p. 255. Maier (1969), pp. 960-1053.

to be expected, if they were completed by the same illustrator. There are small variances between them and the Munich edition, and in a couple of isolated examples, some textual differences which I shall cover later as they arise.

It should also be noted that though both halves of the *Notitia Dignitatum* follow a similar structure, they are not identical. The first, eastern section, appears to be a summary and the army units are listed under their various commanders, with only the main field army infantry units being illustrated. Jones noted that there is nothing within this section to date it after 395, when *Illyricum* was taken over by the eastern Empire.<sup>6</sup> The western half differs mainly in having a double entry for all the field army units. Like in the eastern document, they are listed under each commander, but before this there is a complete listing for all of the field army infantry units under the *Magister Peditum*, and likewise, all the cavalry units are listed under the *Magister Equitum*, and are also illustrated.<sup>7</sup> There are some discrepancies between these two lists and those of the army commanders. These lists show units in a different order of seniority and there are a couple of omissions from one list to another, which may be explained by textual errors. Jones believed that what this is actually showing us is the updating of the document in the west, as the *Distributio*, the individual army listings, was being amended. He dated the most recent unit within it to 425, which was the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Iuniores*, which Jones believed were named after Valentinian III. Jones suggested that this process of updating information in the *Distributio* made it the more accurate of the two listings.<sup>8</sup> This is further supported by the fact that *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Iuniores* are only listed under the *Magister Peditum* in charge of the army of Italy and have not been added to the listing for the *Magister Equitum*.<sup>9</sup>

What we have is thus a third generation copy of a composite document, drawn from different dates, and then combined in the Codex Spirensis and lavishly illustrated. It is assumed that these copies of the *Notitia Dignitatum* are based on the original western Roman version, because of the greater depth of western information, the attempts made to

---

<sup>6</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 347.

<sup>7</sup> Not. Occ. v, vi.

<sup>8</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, pp. 352-3.

<sup>9</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

update them and the fact that it survived in the west as the Codex Spirensis.<sup>10</sup> This line of reasoning provides the principal rationale for the present study's focus on the western field armies.

While we do not know when the *Orientis* and *Occidentis* sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum* were combined, or when they were included in the Codex Spirensis along with other texts, there is one peculiar detail that needs to be noted. If our remaining copies are indeed surviving examples of the western original, as Jones believed, why does the eastern section appear first? If the eastern section is a summary of the situation in 395, it would have been of little value for the western authorities who were still updating their half in 425. There would be no logical reason for the eastern section to be placed ahead of the working copy. One possibility would be that this occurred when the *Orientis* and *Occidentis* sections were combined into the Codex Spirensis and as a result, the complete *Notitia Dignitatum* as we have it, never existed as one document. It is interesting to note the other texts that were combined into the Codex Spirensis:

*De Rebus Bellicis*

*Altercatio Hadriani Augusti et Epicteti philosophi*

*Notitia Urbis Romae*

*Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*

*De Gradibus Cognationum*

*Notitia Dignitatum*

Within the codex, the *Notitia Urbis Romae* appears before those concerned with Constantinople, which is different to the order of *Orientis* and *Occidentis* within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This might suggest that the order in which the *Notitia Dignitatum* has been put together was an error and we should view the two halves as separate documents. The contrary view, put forward by Kulikowski, is that it is one complete document drawn up c.392-394, in which only the western section has been updated.<sup>11</sup> While not central to the objectives of this thesis, this discussion highlights the differing views on the *Notitia*

---

<sup>10</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, 347-51.

<sup>11</sup> Kulikowski (2000), pp. 358-77.

*Dignitatum*, not only on dating, but as will be discussed later, on the very purpose of the document.

## 1.2 Who used the *Notitia Dignitatum*?

It will be necessary to now look at the possible use of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and those responsible for it. In his earlier analysis, Bury concluded that the *Primicerius Notariorum* was responsible for the issuing of codicils of office.<sup>12</sup> Whenever the emperor made an appointment, the *Chartularii* of the *Sacrum Cubiculum* prepared a brief and forwarded it to the *Primicerius Notariorum*. In his bureau, the codicil of installation was prepared, showing the title of the office being appointed along with the various army units and staff under the control of that appointment, and included an illustrated copy of the office insignia.



Figure 1: Office of *Magister Officiorum*, Not. Occ. ix (P).

The above example of the *Magister Officiorum* shows us the insignia at the top, followed by the control of the *Fabricae*, arms factories, which are listed on the following page and illustrated on the cover sheet with various items of military equipment. Illustrated are the

<sup>12</sup> Bury (1920), p. 132.

guard units, the *Scolae*, which are under his command, first their shield patterns, and then the unit titles. There is an error on this page, with seven shields being illustrated, but only six units being listed. Such errors are common place throughout the document.<sup>13</sup> It is from the pages within the *Notitia Dignitatum* that the codicils were produced, and may well have been exact copies of them. A law in the *Theodosian Codex* which refers to people obtaining Imperial patents, and which describes them as having ‘the outer imprint and the inner writing’, which might suggest some form of seal, possibly based on the insignia of office, along with written text.<sup>14</sup>

This view of Bury that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was an official document was followed by Jones, and forms the basis of many later interpretations.<sup>15</sup> However, as already noted, the document itself does not tell us its purpose and there is no reference to the document in any other contemporary sources. If we look at another contemporary source, the Theodosian law code, we do find examples of promotion in status of various officials. One law issued by Honorius and Theodosius II concerns the promotion of the *Quaestor*, the *Magister Officiorum* and the *Comes Largesse*. They were promoted in precedence of honour over the *Proconsul*. Rather than being addressed to the *Primicerius Notariorum*, as we would expect if he had been responsible for updating official records, it is instead issued to the Prefect of the City of Rome.<sup>16</sup> While there are several laws that refer to the imperial secretaries, including ones referring to the *De Primicerio et Notario*, they are mainly concerned with his status rather than responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> There are no direct references to the *Notitia Dignitatum* in any other sources, which is strange if this was an on-going working document.

It would seem that Bury based his reconstruction on a passing reference in a poem by Claudian as proof of the duties of the post of the *Primicerius*.<sup>18</sup> In his *Epithalamium of Pallidus and Celerina*, Claudian talks about her father:

Celerina’s father has won every title a warrior may. Step by step he has reached

---

<sup>13</sup> Bury (1920), pp.131-54 for full discussion of these errors.

<sup>14</sup> CTh 6.22.1 (324).

<sup>15</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, pp. 347-51.

<sup>16</sup> CTh 6.8.1 (422).

<sup>17</sup> CTh 6.10.1-4 (380, 381, 425).

<sup>18</sup> Bury (1920), p. 133.

the highest rank, that of commander-in-chief, it is he who dispenses titles and honours, settling garrisons of the provinces, unites the scattered forces of the provinces, and checks the positions of its troops. He decides the defence of Sarmatia and the legions that force the wild Getae or keep the Saxon and the Scots in subjection. He knows how many cohorts fringe the shore of the Ocean, how great an army maintains peace along the banks of the Rhine.<sup>19</sup>

This passage is very interesting not because of what it says, but rather what it does not tell us. The reference to Celerina's father as commander-in-chief has been translated from the phrase *Princeps Militaria*, which is not a rank used in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and unlikely to refer to the *Primicerius Notarium*, who as a civilian official would not have the *Militaria* part to his title or duties. It is quite possible that Bury's view is similar to Platnauer's 1922 translation of Claudian, where he footnotes the 17<sup>th</sup> century edition of the Theodosian Codex by Godefroy, which claimed that section vi states the duties of the *Primicerius*.<sup>20</sup> However, as discussed, there are no laws within this section which detail the duties and responsibilities of the *Primicerius* in relation to the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It would appear that Godefroy's footnote has become the entrenched view which has persisted for over 300 years and there is nothing within the Theodosian Codex to support this belief.

That being said, we should not necessarily take Claudian at face value, for as a court panegyrist he is not the most reliable historical source. As Bury noted himself, Claudian is an unlikely source of accurate information, pointing out that we are unlikely to find any historical truths from a poet whose leading idea was to exaggerate on behalf of Stilicho.<sup>21</sup> Heather also noted that Claudian used the full range of panegyric techniques, readily altering accounts to suit his purpose.<sup>22</sup> However, it should be noted that Claudian himself held a post in the imperial civil service, which is confirmed on an inscription on a statue that was dedicated to him in Trajan's Forum, which stated he was a *Tribunus et Notarius*.<sup>23</sup> The

---

<sup>19</sup> Claudian, *Epithalamium of Pallidus and Celerina*, 82-93.

<sup>20</sup> Platnauer (1922), vol. ii, p. 205, fn. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Bury (1889), vol. i, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Heather (1991), p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> Cameron (1970), p. 1.

encyclopaedic dictionary of Roman law defines this post as the deputy of the *Primicerius Notarium*, so presumably Claudian would have been well acquainted with his senior's role and duties.<sup>24</sup> In the introduction to the above poem, Claudian makes reference to Pallidus, the groom, who was his friend at court, and equal in rank to himself, so possibly also a *Notarius*. He then mentions Celerina's father, who he calls a general, in particular a *Dux*, who he claims was his senior.<sup>25</sup> Even in this short passage he has used two different references to Celerina's father, *Princeps Militaria* and *Dux*. While it would be easy to say he has changed the titles because it suits the style of the poem, he was fully aware of the order of precedence of these titles, being a part of the system. However, *Princeps* can be used as a general term, to refer to an outstanding personage in civil or military service, and by the fourth century *Militia* had come to mean employment in civil or military service. While more commonly used as *Militia Cohortalis* when used in connection to the civil service, it was sometimes rendered as just *Militia*.<sup>26</sup> This might well suggest the high level of sophistication in Claudian's work, blending two terms in common use, which has been interpreted differently by later historians and translators. The most likely explanation is an attempt to enhance the reputation of the father-in-law, who as a *Dux*, would have been responsible for border defences within one province, and may have possibly been transferred from one province to another, hence the references to Sarmatians, Getae, Saxons and Scots. There is no mention of the many Germanic tribes along the Rhine or Moors in Africa. Therefore, rather than being the *Primicerius Notariorum*, he is a *Dux*, and the passage does not support the belief that has built up that the office of the *Primicerius* was in control of troop dispositions.

In the first section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* there is a complete list of every office, and that of the border *Duces* ranks 20<sup>th</sup>, so a fairly low status.<sup>27</sup> All this would suggest that rather than confirming the role of the *Primicerius Notariorum*, Claudian is using clever phrases to enhance the reputation of the unnamed father. There is a later law, from the period of Ostrogothic rule in Italy, which is fragmentary and as such unclear, but does mention the '*Comitivia Princeps Militum*' in a section on officials at court.<sup>28</sup> While not contemporary, this

---

<sup>24</sup> Berger (1953), pp. 599, 649.

<sup>25</sup> Claudian, *Epithalamium of Pallidus and Celerina*, 1-5.

<sup>26</sup> Berger (1953), pp. 583, 650.

<sup>27</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>28</sup> Cassiodorus, vi. 24.



does at least suggest a link to the earlier practices. There is another law from the same source that confirms the *Primicerius* was to come under the control of the *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*, so combining the function of honours and largesse. Therefore we should conclude the role of *Primicerius* and the *Princeps Militiae* are separate functions.<sup>29</sup> The generalisation of the terms used and earlier translations are weak foundations on which to build an argument that the role described by Claudian is that of the *Primicerius Notariorum*.

We need to consider the actual role performed by the *Primicerius Notariorum*, if it was not as expansive as Bury has suggested. While there is a reference in the Justinianic Code which mentions one of his duties of keeping the register, it does not provide any further information.<sup>30</sup> In his first edition of the translation of that Code, Blume stated that the *Primicerius* was responsible for the register referred to as the *Laterculum Maius*, which he claimed included the names of the occupants of the offices, both civil and military, which also included forms for the appointment and instructions of their duties. This is considered to be a 'higher register' which is believed to be the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>31</sup> Blume also made reference to Godefroy's version of the Theodosian Codex, as supporting this.<sup>32</sup> The fact that the *Primicerius* was responsible for the issuing of the codicils of office, is supported by a law of 535, which outlines the fees he was to be paid by the recipient.<sup>33</sup> However, all other references to his position cover civil, rather than military responsibilities.

We also have the post of the *Quaestor*, who was responsible for another register which has parallels to the *Laterculum Maius*. There are several reference to the *Laterculum Minus*, which may have been similar to the *Laterculum Maius* and was a 'lesser register', which covered commissions for the *Comitatenses* and *Limitanei*, who were border troops.<sup>34</sup> Nominally under the supervision of the *Quaestor*, we have evidence of it at one time coming under the control of the *Magister Peditum*, in the west, as a law of 415 informs us of its return to the *Quaestor's* control.<sup>35</sup> In the eastern listings for the border *Duces* commands, many of them list the auxiliary cohorts being drawn from the *Laterculum Minus*, and this is

---

<sup>29</sup> Cassiodorus, vi. 7.

<sup>30</sup> JC.1.30.1 (424).

<sup>31</sup> Mann (1976), p. 1; Kelly (2004), p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> Blume, fn to law JC.12.7.1 (380).

<sup>33</sup> J.Nov. 25.1, 27.1 (535).

<sup>34</sup> Mann (1976), p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> CTh 1.8.1 (415).

not shown in the western sections.<sup>36</sup> Mann noted that in the west, the offices of *Comites* and *Duces* are listed in the *Distributio* as under the command of the *Magister Peditum*.<sup>37</sup> This situation is not shown in the east, so presumably occurred after 395. He also pointed out that one of Stilicho's slaves was caught forging letters of commission, so presumably, Stilicho had gained control of the *Laterculum Minus*, and this is what the law of 415 was correcting.<sup>38</sup> What is interesting is not the potential similarity between the *Laterculum Maius* and *Minus*, but rather who controlled them. The *Quaestor* is senior to the *Primicerius Notariorum* within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but controls the seemingly less important register.<sup>39</sup> Nor are there any laws concerning other parties trying to take control of the *Laterculum Maius*, unless we follow Mann's line of reasoning, that the *Notitia Dignitatum*, or at least the *Laterculum Maius* had been under the control of Stilicho, and this situation had not been corrected in the west.



Figure 2: Office of the *Primicerius Notariorum* and *Quaestor*, Not. Occ. x, xvi (P).

<sup>36</sup> Not. Or. xxxi, xxxii, xxxii, xxxvii, xxxix.

<sup>37</sup> Mann (1976), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Mann (1976), p. 3 on Paulinus, *Vita S. Ambrosii*, 43.

<sup>39</sup> For *Quaestor* see Not. Occ. x, for *Primicerius* see Not. Occ. xvi.

We can clearly see in the above illustration that the *Laterculum Maius* is shown but the *Laterculum Minus* is not, and neither is referred to in the details that followed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* text.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the office of the *Primicerius* was involved with appointments to the various posts, and that he kept the records of these, but he had no authority over these appointments. Once the western *Magister Militum* had managed to subordinate the various other military officials under his control, there seemed no need to retain the control of issuing the codicils of office, if he had ever gained control of this. Hence there are no laws returning the control back to him, and as the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows him controlling the register. But the situation concerning the *Quaestor* is different because of the number of commissions he was responsible for, 127 infantry units and 42 cavalry units in the mobile field armies, as well as the border *Limitanei*, collecting the fees for these commissions must have been a very lucrative trade.

### **1.3 Modern views on the *Notitia Dignitatum*.**

Before we can start to unpick the information held within the *Notitia Dignitatum* it will be necessary to understand how scholars have analysed and used the document. As it is an invaluable and unique source of information on the late Roman Empire, both civil and military, such an understanding is vital. It is widely quoted by modern historians as one of our few military sources on the late fourth and earlier fifth centuries. There have been several works which have looked at the document and tried to analyse and interpret it such as Böcking (1839), Seeck (1876) and Faleiro (2005). All of these works contain the main text in Latin with amendments to try to correct errors within it. None of these works tried to analyse or interpret it in a way to discover its real purpose. There is an English translation, though highly abridged, by Fairley (1899) who considers it to be working document on the lines of the Statesmen's year book.<sup>40</sup> Hoffmann (1973) provided an in-depth look at the military information across the whole empire. Another study, which looked at the various discrepancies within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as already mentioned, was undertaken by Bury (1920) and more recently by Jones (1964), which have all added to our understanding and dating of the document. Jones decided to construct a theoretical total for the late Roman

---

<sup>40</sup> Fairley (1899), p. 2.

army, which I shall discuss later. All of these works have been based on the assumption that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was indeed some sort of official working document. While it may be lavishly decorated with illustrations, as perhaps some sort of Imperial gift, it has always been thought to have been based on official sources, such as registers. As already noted, its survival was partly due to the illustrations, as seen with Otto Heinrich's commission to obtain a copy for himself.

Following on from Jones' analysis, Heather used the information to show the heavy losses in the west. He noted that in 395 in the east, there were 157 units listed, and by 425 there were 181 in the west. He assumed that both sides were roughly equal in 395, at approximately 160 units each, then the *Notitia Dignitatum* is very revealing about the impact of warfare over the twenty five year period. While the total number of western units had increased, it would appear that 76 units had been destroyed over this period (47.5%). The field army in Gaul was most affected, with only 21 units out of the 58 listed, pre-dating 395. The other 37 units were raised by Honorius, and this represents 64% of the total. Added to this, a further 62 units across all of the western armies had been upgraded from border *Limitanei*, and designated as *Pseudocomitatenses* in the *Comitatenses* field armies.<sup>41</sup> Whether all of these changes actually occurred is a contentious point; Jones noted many of the upgraded *Limitanei* units were still recorded in the border areas as well as in the field armies.<sup>42</sup> However, the use of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to show how troop losses were made good, only works if we accept that the information is correct and covers one point in time. This is easier to do with the eastern section, frozen in time at 395, which would seem to show the *Praesentalis* army rebuilt after the defeat at Adrianople in 378. It is rather less straightforward when looking at the western half, which had ongoing revisions up to 425. By making several assumptions; it is a working document, is correct at a specific date in time and contains accurate information, it can be used for a variety of purposes and is a great source of data.

While Goldsworthy and Heather both note that the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows the damage caused to the Roman army in the early fifth century and how many of these losses were made good by promoting border troops, this also calls into question the quality and morale

---

<sup>41</sup> Heather (2005), pp. 247-8.

<sup>42</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 356.

of this new rebuilt army.<sup>43</sup> While both of them highlight the various internal problems that the Empire suffered from, they look at the external threats which brought about the collapse of the West. In particular, Heather notes the changing structure of the Germanic peoples beyond the frontier and the impact of the Huns. However, it is when they look at the military information contained within the *Notitia Dignitatum* that we see a different set of analysis. Goldsworthy suggests four possible ways to view this information, firstly, to take it at face value and believe all the units recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* existed. Secondly, they existed but were all understrength though still capable of military duty. Third, they only represents cadres awaiting reinforcements and activation, and finally many only existed on paper for the purpose of issuing of commissions, which he points out was a lucrative business. He makes a final comparison to Hitler in his Bunker in 1945, with lists of corps and divisions deployed on his maps, where only regiments and companies actually existed.<sup>44</sup>

Heather, who follows Jones' analysis, looks at how the *Notitia Dignitatum* information compares with the external threat posed by the Germanic migrations. While acknowledging the problems with our sources in calculating numbers, believes we can create a good indication of the scale of these forces. He suggests a total figure of between 110-125,000 fighting men for the main Germanic forces, making no allowance for the small groups that we have no information on. At face value, even a conservative estimate of the Empire's force would represent 300,000 men, which should have been able to deal with this problem.<sup>45</sup> However, it is his further analysis of the *Notitia Dignitatum* that is interesting. He argues that the main western field armies in Gaul, Italy and Illyria represent 181 units – a force of 90,000 men in 420. At the onset of the crisis, this might have been as low as 160 units or 80,000 men, so it was outnumbered and only enjoying a localised advantage due to Germanic disunity. To further complicate the position for the Western Roman Empire, he notes that the Roman economy in 400 was operating at maximum capacity, so unlikely to be able to increase the size of the Roman army.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), pp. 259, 288; Heather (2005), pp. 434, 447.

<sup>44</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), pp. 288-90.

<sup>45</sup> Heather (2005), pp. 445-6.

<sup>46</sup> Heather (2005), p. 447.

There are two main points that can be drawn from this analysis, firstly the problem of concentrating enough forces to deal with any one group of invaders, as seen with Stilicho's gathering of only 30 units to oppose Radagaisus, which highlights the problems of concentrating troops to meet such an attack.<sup>47</sup> The second is the point about the economy, for if it was at full stretch in 400, how does that explain the expansion of units raised during Honorius' reign, which Heather notes in his own estimates on the Roman army rising from 160 units to 181 by 420?

The answers to both of these questions are interconnected. As I will argue throughout this thesis, there is no one date for all the entries in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, so we do not have a 'snapshot' view of the western field armies. Therefore the *Notitia Dignitatum* is not a working military document used for the purpose of controlling the state's military forces.<sup>48</sup> Any analysis that is based on the assumption that it was, is starting from a flawed basis. Ideas of a shallow defence on the border, giving way to deeper defences based on field armies, as put forward by Luttwak and based on the evidence in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, do not hold, as the problem with Radagaisus shows.<sup>49</sup> It tries to give a military significance to the structures shown in a non-military document.<sup>50</sup> The deployment of the regional field armies are not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, so the notion that they were able to respond to invasions is hard to justify. On top of this, the logistical problems of keeping such large forces concentrated in any one location would be immense, so we would expect some dispersal of these troops.<sup>51</sup> This in turn leads on to the numbers of troops involved, and if the various sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum* do not record the situation at any one point in time, then we should not expect all of these forces existed together. In this situation, the 30 units gathered to oppose Radagaisus might not illustrate the problem of force dispersal, but the lack of manpower. The increase in units discussed by Heather, as he noted, was in part made up by Constantius promoting border troops to field army status.<sup>52</sup> However, there are 14 units named after Honorius and the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* named after Valentinian III, recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which would point to an expansion of the western

---

<sup>47</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), p. 295.

<sup>48</sup> Lee (2007), p. 164 argues that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is an administrative document.

<sup>49</sup> Luttwak (1976), pp. 206-18.

<sup>50</sup> Luttwak (2009), pp.421-422 in defence of his original idea on Strategy.

<sup>51</sup> Elton (1996), p. 209 notes that regional field armies were tied to the local Praetorian Prefecture for supplies.

<sup>52</sup> Heather (2005), p. 434.

Roman army between the years 394-420. Since we have the temporary loss of parts of Gaul and Illyria as well as Alaric's wanderings in Italy, it is hard to see how the west could afford to raise new units, unless earlier units recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* no longer existed, so we return to Goldsworthy's assessment noted above.

The view that the *Notitia Dignitatum* can still be used to calculate the size of the army remains a common point in modern commentaries. While acknowledging the problems with the source, Elton believes a figure of 500,000 soldiers was possible. The discussion centres on unit sizes, with different interpretations on these from Jones, Duncan-Jones and Coello, but not on the accuracy of the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself, and will be looked at in the section on numbers.<sup>53</sup>

However, this view of the *Notitia Dignitatum* being able to meet those criteria was only seriously questioned in the 1980s, apart from the lone dissenting voice of Birley (1939) who first suggested that it might not be all that it seemed to be.<sup>54</sup> This alternative view has been championed by several more recent scholars who argue against the *Notitia Dignitatum* being an official working document. In a *JRS* article, Grigg put forward an analysis which he argued proved that the many illustrations of the army shield patterns were in fact creations of the artist who drew them, and as such it cannot be an official document.<sup>55</sup> While also looking at the military information within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and how this has been used to calculate troop numbers, MacMullen stated 'let he who will draw history from that dream book the *Notitia Dignitatum*.'<sup>56</sup> More recently, Brennan has suggested that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is a product of political ideology, an attempt to show unity and strength in an Empire which was lacking in both. It is thus an image of power, emanating from an administrative centre; like law codes and panegyrics, they are all a dream world. He also noted the theoretical nature of the other texts which were preserved along with the *Notitia Dignitatum*, especially the *De Rebus Bellicis*.<sup>57</sup> This takes the form of a letter to the emperor, on ways to improve the army, and unlike Vegetius' antiquarian look at the past, the anonymous author presents many fanciful gimmicks, much like an armchair general.<sup>58</sup> The

---

<sup>53</sup> Elton (2007), pp. 284-5.

<sup>54</sup> Birley (1939), pp. 69-71.

<sup>55</sup> Grigg (1983), p. 141.

<sup>56</sup> MacMullen (1988), p. 183.

<sup>57</sup> Brennan (1995), p. 157.

<sup>58</sup> Vegetius, 3.1. *De Rebus Bellicis*, vii, ix, xii, xiii.

inclusion of the *Notitia Dignitatum* within the texts of the Codex Spirensis would then add weight to the idea that these are a collection of theoretical works, all highly illustrated, which has contributed to their survival and also possibly why these works had been combined into a single volume.

Another line of argument has been put forward by Tomlin, which states that the *Notitia Dignitatum* contains out of date information.<sup>59</sup> He noted that Ammianus reports several units being present at the siege of Amida in 359, such as the *Legio V Parthica* and *Legio X Fortenses*, and being destroyed in fighting.<sup>60</sup> Along with these he records *Legio I Flavia* and *Legio I Parthica* being captured at Singara, and *Legio II Flavia*, *Legio II Parthica* and *Legio II Armenia* lost at the fall of Bezabde in 360.<sup>61</sup> Several of these units are still recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>62</sup> There is a similar situation with Ammianus' description of the Battle of Adrianople in 378, where he tells us that Valens took refuge with the *Lanciararii* and *Mattiararii*, both senior *Legiones Palatinae*. These troops were surrounded and cut down with the emperor. He goes on to tell us that the *Batavi*, *Auxilia Palatina*, who were in reserve at the battle, left the emperor to his fate.<sup>63</sup> Not only do we find all three of these units in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but they are listed under the *Praesentalis* army, as they had been in 378.<sup>64</sup>

It is, however, quite conceivable that some of these units would have been recruited back to full strength after their destruction, especially the elite *Palatina* units, but it is strange to see them occupy the same positions in the order of seniority. They certainly would not have contained the veteran troops that we would expect them to have due to their status. In the case of the *Batavi*, who appear to have fled the field at Adrianople, they have not been demoted in the order of seniority. Jones noted that some units appear to be in the wrong position in the listings if based on seniority, either by the date they were raised, or by promotion in status such as units being upgraded to elite *Palatinae* or being promoted to the field army *Comitatenses*. This he believed explained why some units were in the wrong

---

<sup>59</sup> Tomlin (2008), p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> Amm. 18.9.3.

<sup>61</sup> Amm. 20.6.8, 20.7.1.

<sup>62</sup> Not. Occ. I and II *Parthica* in *Dux Mesopotamia*, II *Armenia*, I and II *Flavia* under *Magister Militum per Orientem*.

<sup>63</sup> Amm. 31.13.8-9.

<sup>64</sup> Not. Or. v.



positions in the *Distributio*, and by extension of this view, we could have demotions as well.<sup>65</sup> It should also be noted, the actual units that Ammianus mentioned as being at Amida when he was there, the *Legio V Parthia* and *X Fortenses*, are not shown within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>66</sup>

This ongoing revision of the *Notitia Dignitatum* has led scholars to question the methodology of earlier historians, by reasoning that as it is not an official document, as Kulikowski suggests, then using it to reconstruct the Roman army is 'wrongheaded'.<sup>67</sup> This line of argument opens up the possibility that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is actually recording different time periods, but based on official records, so it is not the sum of its parts. This will form a key part of my research, which I shall outline later.

#### **1.4 Other sources and their problems when analysing the *Notitia Dignitatum*.**

As I have already mentioned, there are no sources that directly refer to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, so we need to look at other works for additional evidence. The first of these is Ammianus Marcellinus, whose *Res Gestae* covers events up to the battle of Adrianople in 378. While he was a soldier, and therefore it would be reasonable to expect him to have a level of accuracy in military matters, this is not always evident. Rohrbacher suggests that despite Ammianus' claim 'as a former soldier', his writing on military matters owes more to rhetorical tradition than to a specialist knowledge.<sup>68</sup> His work ends just before the earliest estimates we have for the creation of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but does shed light on some of the army units and commands which are later shown in it. He is also not free of personal bias, despite his claim to the contrary. His defence of his friend and mentor Ursicinus, and the praise he heaps upon Julian while continually undermining Constantius II are all examples of this.<sup>69</sup> There is also an element of moralising within his work, but this is in keeping with traditional historiography.<sup>70</sup> This would all suggest that he is not the most useful of sources, but as will be seen when using other primary historians and chroniclers, it is what they say and not necessarily how it is said that matters for this thesis. As he lists

---

<sup>65</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352; Amm. 29.5.20.

<sup>66</sup> Not. Or. xxxiv lists *Legio Decimae Fretensis* at *Ailae* under *Dux Palestine*, but this cannot be proven to be the same as the *Fortenses*.

<sup>67</sup> Kulikowski (2008), p. 359.

<sup>68</sup> Rohrbacher (2002), p. 24.

<sup>69</sup> Ammianus, on Ursicinus 18.5.4, 20.2.2, on Julian 16.1.1-5, 17.11.1, on Constantius 16.1.1-5, 21.16.8-18.

<sup>70</sup> Rohrbacher (2002), p. 27.

some units and their movements on different campaigns, so we can build a history of them and use this to analyse their final positions within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This is also true of different offices he mentions, and we begin to see things in a more fluid situation than the rigid structure laid down in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

As already mentioned, our next main source is the *Theodosian Codex*, a collection of laws starting from 311 onwards, that was commissioned by Theodosius II and issued in 429, with subsequent revisions up to 438. Like the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself, it requires care when using it. Averil Cameron suggests that the two documents are prescriptive, not descriptive, so they show us a picture of what should be and not the reality.<sup>71</sup> However, what is interesting is the fact that we have more information on the law codes. Unlike the *Notitia Dignitatum*, we have a recorded dedication, the *Gesta Senatus*, given by the *Quaestor* Faustus in his address to the senate about the issuing of the new codex.<sup>72</sup> We also have later volumes such as the Justinianic Code, which at least shows us an on-going process of use, as laws are updated or reaffirmed. This process of repeating or reiterating of laws, does not necessarily show us of their failings or lack of reality, but can be interpreted as a response from certain groups within the empire. As laws are the results of the interests of various influential groups, any repeats can be seen as confirmation by other parties.<sup>73</sup> This on-going process with the law codes is interesting because we do not have the same process with the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

They do contain some useful information to help us understand certain aspects of how things were done within the bureaucracy, which in turn sheds light on the *Notitia Dignitatum*. There are two areas of particular interest within the laws that need to be noted; the reference to military reports and the control of the *Laterculum Minus*. A law from 412 ordering the construction of patrol boats for the Danube makes reference to receiving back reports confirming this and their dispositions.<sup>74</sup> Another example in the Justinianic Code cites a law of Anastasius forbidding the movement of troops without imperial permission, but if as a matter of urgency this had to be done, then a report was required detailing numbers of men, units and the reason why, so that as the law states 'after such

---

<sup>71</sup> Cameron, Av (1993), pp. 26-7.

<sup>72</sup> Matthews (2010), p. 20.

<sup>73</sup> Harries (2010), p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> CTh 7.17.1 (412).

information the proper arrangements may be ordered by our authority.<sup>75</sup> While hardly a mass of detailed information, this does at least show that updated military records were required by the imperial civil service, and that these may well have provided the information used within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

We also have a number of other chroniclers and historians who are writing about events during this period, either as contemporary or referring back to the later fourth and fifth centuries. Few of these are directly engaging with military matters, and those that are, as already mentioned, Vegetius and the unknown author of the *De Rebus Bellicis*, are from the educated elite, rather than the army. Their works can be viewed more as historical reflections on the way things were in previous times, or hypothetical suggestions which are sometimes quite hard to believe. However, within their works, there are occasional references to contemporary military practices, units and commands. These help us build upon and clarify some of the details within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. There are also the various Christian writers starting with Lactantius, and including such people as Sozomen, Orosius and Hydatius, to name but a few. While they all have a degree of bias in their writing, from either apologist or providential points of view, they still can shed light on details that are not of primary importance to their work, such as military information. Then we have the panegyrist Claudian, whom I have already discussed, and several bureaucratic sources, such as, Zosimus, Procopius and Agathias. They are no less biased in their views, but their works do contain small items of interest. It is my intention to review these sources more fully as I introduce them during this work, and their value is often in what they say, and not necessarily how they say it. It is sometimes a case of combining several small reference from many of these sources in order to support a single strand of argument. It is in this way we can build a picture of actions and movements of units and armies which will form the basis of my argument.

### **1.5 What is my approach?**

While the evidence for the *Notitia Dignitatum* being an on-going official document may well appear to be slight, this does not necessarily mean that all the information it contains is incorrect. It is my intention to conduct an in depth analysis of the western field armies and

---

<sup>75</sup> JC 1.29.4 (c.491-518).

try to establish the dates for each entry. The reason for this approach is twofold; firstly, that to my knowledge no one has conducted such a review, and secondly, the western half of the document shows signs of being updated, which might imply some sort of ongoing revision. These two factors can be expanded to show what I hope is a new and important addition to our current understanding of the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

By concentrating on the individual field armies, or *Comitatenses*, rather than every aspect of the document, it will be possible to conduct a unit by unit review of all the forces listed and draw additional information from other primary sources in an attempt to create a range of dates for the possible activities for these armies. This will then make possible the dating of the different entries, which I intend to demonstrate are drawn from different dates and at no point did the whole of the military forces shown within the *Notitia Dignitatum* exist at the same time. The reason for concentrating on the military information is partly due to my own interest and also because of the need to limit the amount of material to work on. Similar studies have been done on other specific aspects of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, such as concentrating on administrative structures, and such analysis on a narrow focus can still unlock valuable information which adds to our understanding of the document.<sup>76</sup>

The reason for limiting it to the western field armies is based on two points; firstly, the number of units listed and secondly, the static nature of the eastern section. With 127 infantry units listed under the western *Magister Peditum* and 42 under the *Magister Equitum*, there would not be enough space to cover them all, especially if the eastern units were included.<sup>77</sup> The other reason is based on the view put forward by Jones, that what we have is a surviving copy of a western version of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and that it records the eastern information frozen in time from 394-5. Since this view is widely supported in modern scholarship, and the western section appears to have had some amendments and updating, this would be the best opportunity for this research.<sup>78</sup> The limitations of what can be covered during this thesis, and the static nature of the eastern records make it appropriate to conduct my review on the western armies.

---

<sup>76</sup> On administration see O'Hara (Unpublished PhD: 2013) and on eastern military see Kaiser (2014).

<sup>77</sup> Not. Occ. v, vi.

<sup>78</sup> Jones (1964), p. 347.

While conducting this research it is also my intention to try to explain why the order in which the individual armies are listed within the *Notitia Dignitatum* seem to change. The first section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists the *Magistri Peditum* and *Equitum*, then six *Comites res Militaris: Italiae, Africae, Tingitaniae, Argentoratensis, Brittanniarum and Litoris Saxonici per Britannias*. However in section vii, the *Comes Illyrici* and *Hispaniarum* have been added, and those of *Italiae* and *Argentoratensis* have been removed. These last two reappear as sections xxiv and xxvii respectively, but have nothing listed under them.<sup>79</sup> This would suggest, that like many of the units themselves, the *Notitia Dignitatum* is recording the ongoing creation, deletion and movement of field armies over a period of time. It should be possible to establish dates of active campaigning for these armies from our sources, and support this with individual dating of the units within them.

### 1.6 A question of numbers?

With the extension of this argument, I will be arguing that the late Roman army was in fact much smaller than the *Notitia Dignitatum* might suggest. While the units within the *Notitia Dignitatum* may well all have existed at some point, they were not all in use at any one point in time. This is important because it adds understanding to how weak the Western Roman Empire was during the early fifth century.

It will therefore be useful to make a few observations concerning numbers of troops and units. If we start with the view that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is a working document, or at the very least based on the most up-to-date records available to the compilers, then it should be possible to use it as a basis for calculating troop numbers. This was attempted by Jones, who came up with a figure of 600,000 men. This he believed to be comparable to the sixth century source of Agathias who gave a figure of 645,000 men.<sup>80</sup> Building on Jones' estimate, Treadgold suggested that instead of using a standard unit of 500 men for each of the fleets recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as Jones had, we could substitute the figures given by John Lydus. In his work *De Mensibus*, Lydus claimed that Diocletian had increased the army to 389,704 men with a further 45,562 men in the navy.<sup>81</sup> We are not informed where these figures came from, and while at face value they do appear to be very precise, as if based on

---

<sup>79</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

<sup>80</sup> Agathias, *Histories*, 5.13.7.

<sup>81</sup> Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 1.27.

some sort of official record, this cannot be proven. By ignoring Lydus' figure for the army and using Jones' reconstruction, but replacing the figures for the navy with Lydus' 45,562, Treadgold was able to reach the total stated by Agathias of 645,000 men.<sup>82</sup> Treadgold then further supported this finding by looking at the army of *Illyricum* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which on Jones' calculation was 17,500 men, which he compared to Procopius who recorded the same army in the sixth century being 15,000 men. This he argued, was so similar as to not be accidental, and must support Jones' calculations, and by extension, prove the *Notitia Dignitatum* to be an accurate record.<sup>83</sup>

Before re-examining this hypothesis, we need to look at some of the evidence cited and try to unpick the information that has been used.

Agathias' figure is taken from a passage where he is talking of deeds by earlier emperors, and it is being used to criticise the current poor state of the army, which he claims had been reduced to only 150,000 men. This must be seen in light of the supposed running down of the army during Justinian's reign and as an attempt to explain the failure of the army in face of the Hunnic invasion of 559.<sup>84</sup> Agathias does not tell us when these earlier days were or where he got his information from. While he was at Constantinople writing his history, he was not employed at court as a writer, or held any official post, and was in fact a lawyer, so he was unlikely to have access to official documents. In his preface to the *Histories*, he does mention an anonymous *Notarius* who encouraged him to write them.<sup>85</sup> Now whether this person had access to official documents, such as the *Laterculum Maius* is not known, but there is no mention of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a source of information, and if such special document was still in use, it seems strange that it was not used or mentioned.

This point can be developed further if we consider the information provided by John Lydus. He was a member of the civil service for forty years, of which the majority were spent in the office of the Praetorian Prefect. While never rising to high rank, he was a member of the educated elite and later gained a professorship at the university at Constantinople.<sup>86</sup> Two of his works which are of interest to us here are *De Mensibus*, which covered the numbers

---

<sup>82</sup> Treadgold (1995), p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> Procopius, *Wars*, 7.29.3.

<sup>84</sup> Cameron, Av (1970), p. 125.

<sup>85</sup> Cameron, Av (1970), pp. 4-6.

<sup>86</sup> Lydus, *De Magistratibus*, 3.29.

quoted above, and *De Magistratibus*, which gives us a detailed look at the workings of the later Roman civil service. Written c.552, Kelly noted that Lydus' work was a polemical history of his own decline and that of the institutions of the Roman state. While he enjoyed the favour of the emperor Justinian, Lydus' works are not an official account of the actions of the offices he describes. He presents us with an amalgam of antiquarianism, administrative minutiae, personal reminiscences and regrets, which make him a difficult source to use.<sup>87</sup> By combining the figures from both Agathias and Lydus, it is possible to arrive at a figure which supports the *Notitia Dignitatum* providing a workable estimate for the size of the army, but only if we select the information we want, rather than taking them separately. This line of argument is far from convincing, as our sources lack detailed evidence to support the numbers they are quoting.

Prior to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, we have the recorded instance of Septimius Severus increasing the size of the army to 33 legions with three new ones raised in 196.<sup>88</sup> There was also an increase in the Praetorian Guard as well as a number of new auxiliary cohorts.<sup>89</sup> The first thing that needs to be considered in the comparison of these units with the later ones in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, is the increase in unit numbers. There are 74 *Legiones* listed in the various western field armies in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>90</sup> Despite the claims of Lactantius, the Christian author who used his work *De Mortibus Persecutorum* to attack the pagan emperors before Constantine, he claimed that Diocletian had been 'dividing the world into four parts and multiplying the armies, since each of the four emperors strove to have a far larger number of troops than previous emperors had had when they were governing the state alone.' While Lactantius is using this to show how much of a burden the army was on the state, quadrupling the army would have created a total in excess of 645,000 men.<sup>91</sup> Even if we accepted this, it would still only give us a total of 132 legions in the whole empire. A brief overview of the infantry forces listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows us the following units:

---

<sup>87</sup> Kelly (2004), pp. 11-16.

<sup>88</sup> Dio 55.24.4, see Smith (1972), p. 486, fn. 28.

<sup>89</sup> Coello (1996), p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> *Magister Peditum* listings in Not. Occ. v records 62 *Legiones*, but there are a further 12 *Pseudocomitatenses* added in the *Distributio* in Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>91</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 1.7.1-5.

<b>Location:</b>	<b>Legions</b>	<b>Auxilia Palatina</b>
Eastern Praesentalis	13	35
Eastern Field Armies	53	8
Eastern Border Armies	52	0
Western Field Armies	74	65
Western Border Armies	26	1
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 1: Break-down of the units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

As we do not have reliable figures for the number of cavalry and auxiliary infantry units in the Severan army, I have not included these in this analysis of legionary troops. I have included the *Auxilia Palatina*, who were a regular part of the field armies and were employed as front line combat units like the legions.

This increase in the number of units has been explained by the decreasing size of the traditional legion from 5,000 men down to approximately 1,000 men, and it is assumed that the *Auxilia Palatina* are a similar size to other auxiliary units at about 500 men each. With the exception of some of the older established border legions which are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as occupying multiple forts, these were the figures used by Jones to calculate his army total.<sup>92</sup>

This process of splitting units into smaller ones is shown by pairs of units with the same name, but having *Seniores* or *Iuniores* added to their titles.<sup>93</sup> For example we have the *Ioviani Seniores* listed as the most senior *Legio* in the west and its twin, *Ioviani Iuniores*, second most senior *Legio* in the east. These along with the *Herculiani Seniores* and *Iuniores* who are next in the listings are mentioned by Vegetius who records them being named after Diocletian's and Maximian's patron deities. He notes that they had been 5,000 strong, but it is reasonable to see the split into *Seniores* and *Iuniores*, while stationed in *Illyricum*, where

<sup>92</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, pp. 679-83; Coello (1996), pp. 59-64.

<sup>93</sup> Tomlin (1972), pp. 253-78.



border legions bearing the same name are still recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, showing the process of breaking down the old legions into more flexible smaller units.<sup>94</sup>

However, even this process of breaking down the old legions does not account for what still represents a considerable increase from the Severan period of 33 legions of 5,000 men each giving us a paper total of 165,500 men. If we refer back to figure 3, this would give us in the *Notitia Dignitatum* 218,000 men in the *Legiones* along with 54,500 men in the *Auxilia Palatina*, a paper total of 272,500 men. By including the border auxiliary cohorts, cavalry and specialist units, we arrive at Jones' 600,000 men.

Therefore, if we accept that the information within the *Notitia Dignitatum* is correct and that the estimates for unit sizes are also true, then we are presented with an army of an overwhelming size. This, however, seems to be at odds with the army's inability to deal with the internal and external threats that it faced. MacMullen noted the limited effectiveness of the Roman forces in the Balkans, which, if we accept the information in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, should have numbered 200,000 men. Despite this large total, Valens was only able to put approximately 20,000 men in the field at Adrianople.<sup>95</sup> MacMullen also noted that the whole might of the east seemed unable to resist the raids of a few thousand Isaurian hill tribesmen.<sup>96</sup> This continued military weakness led Goldsworthy to suggest that the smaller-size units listed in the Roman army must have been seriously eroded by constant warfare. This would have had the effect of reducing their combat strength so much that they were barely functioning units, existing only as cadres awaiting recruits. This is also supported by evidence within the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself. There are 50 pairs of twinned *Seniores* and *Iuniores* units listed, but as Tomlin noted, there are many examples of single units with either a *Seniores* or *Iuniores* title. He believed that this was because the twin unit had been destroyed and not reformed afterwards.<sup>97</sup> We return to Goldsworthy's suggestion that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is showing us corps and divisions, where only regiments and platoons existed during the fall of the west.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Vegetius. 1.17; Not. Occ.v, xxii; Not. Or. v.

<sup>95</sup> MacMullen (1988), p. 185.

<sup>96</sup> MacMullen (1988), p. 183; Amm. 14.2.15.

<sup>97</sup> Tomlin (1972), p. 258.

<sup>98</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), pp. 289-90.

The very heart of the problem is not one of textual errors or theoretical totals of troop numbers, but lies with the units themselves. By looking at the problem from the 'sum of its parts' rather than the total, I aim to show that many of these units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* were not in active service at the same time, and that there are examples of them in different guises, in different places and different times.

### **1.7 What I hope to prove.**

By providing a detailed breakdown of each army and the units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, I will be able to provide a date range for when these armies were active. This will then give the necessary information to be able to explain the irregular order that these armies have been listed in, because of the different dates that they were in the field. This leads on to new discussion on numbers of troops and the purpose of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Having shown that each army is from different dates, even if some of these dates overlap each other, it should be possible to redefine the limits of the western Roman military capacity.

By way of an example, which is covered in more detail in the next chapter, I have looked at the listing for the field army in Spain. In several other contemporary sources we have a reference to a unit in Spain named the *Honoriaci*. They figure prominently in all the accounts of the barbarian invasion of the Peninsula in 409, but are not listed under the *Comes Hispaniarum* or anywhere else in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. By following the differing chain of events recorded in the various chronicles, and reviewing many different modern interpretations of these and the actions of the *Honoriaci*, it has been possible to reconstruct the identity and movements of several units listed elsewhere in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Applying a similar process to the units that are listed in the Spanish field army, has allowed me to argue for a new date for the army's existence. Rather than 418, after Wallia's reconquest and withdrawal from Spain, as suggested by some, it has been possible to redate this.<sup>99</sup> I have been able to demonstrate that the army was in fact broken up in 411 after the suppression of Gerontius' revolt. This then explains why there is no cover sheet for the *Comes Hispaniarum* within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It was an ad-hoc formation, and not a permanent one, which was out of date when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was being amended,

---

<sup>99</sup> Kulikowski (2004), pp. 157, fn. 26, 172.

but the information was retained, or more likely, inserted at a later date. Why this was done is uncertain, but by accepting the later date of 418, it is possible to see it as contemporary to the latest amendments of the document, therefore adding to the belief the *Notitia Dignitatum* is showing events at a given point around 420. By arguing for the earlier date I have demonstrated the weakness in that argument and laid the foundation for establishing different dates for the armies it records.

It is my intention to continue this process with the other armies and establish a range of dates. By demonstrating that the Roman army of the *Notitia Dignitatum* was not as large as it purports to be, it will be possible to add weight to the revisionist view that it was not an official working document, but rather the creation of some political or theoretical agenda. That is not to say that it cannot be used for military information, but that those boundaries have been further defined, thus limiting its use.

Before doing so, it will be useful to explore the possible reasons for the creation of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in further detail. As previously noted the two halves of the document share similarities but are not identical. This then argues against them being drawn up from a standard template and therefore the information recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was never a part of any on-going process of recording information. The information that is recorded would have been rendered out of date immediately with the ever changing situation at the end of the fourth century and can only have represented an ideal situation for both civil and military information. This not to say that this information is rendered useless, as it was drawn from various other records, probably from different dates, and was combined into the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Lists of offices and army units must have existed for the purpose of issuing commands and the combining of these lists has been done for a special reason as exemplified by the lavish illustrations produced within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This presentation of any ideal structure and strength of the Roman Empire had to be for some political purpose intended for an Imperial audience. It is impossible to say who actually created the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but Brennan has suggested that what it is doing is showing us a construction of power. It displays the authority of the central bureaucracy over the dispersal of power which actually existed.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Brennan (1995), pp.155-57.

The intended audience for the *Notitia* would seem to be twofold, firstly the imperial court and secondly to the various officers both civil and military. Seeing as the *Notitia Dignitatum* is not only unique, we have no other examples of the document, and because of its lavish illustrations, it must be viewed as presentation to the Emperor and his court. By presenting an ordered and structured view of the empire, it highlights unity between the east and west and control of the Emperor over the various parts of the state's machinery. As for the second audience, the various officials within the system, it reminds them of their place within it and the control that the central authority had over them. While this was undoubtedly very limited, it was an attempt to reinforce this idea and can be viewed as either a check to power of such individuals such as Stilicho, or more likely, an attempt to regain control in the aftermath of his fall. We must be aware that it failed in this assertion, but never-the-less was an attempt to reinforce the central authority.

Before comparing the information within the *Notitia Dignitatum* it will be useful to briefly discuss some of the details within the document before we look at each army in detail. These are the illustrated shield patterns which are listed under the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum*, followed by listing of the units under these two officers, and then *Distributio* which gives the location of the various units in the field armies. Discrepancies between these three piece of information will form the basis of my analysis in the following chapters but I wish to make a few general observations concerning the shield illustrations.

While Grigg argued that the shield illustrations were the construction of the artist who drew them and as such they cannot have been based on any official source, this may not be as obvious as he makes out.<sup>101</sup> The comparison of the shield patterns is based on the eastern half compared to the western half and Grigg argues as you go through the *Notitia Dignitatum*, there are more examples of repetitive patterns. It should also be pointed out that there are omissions in the western section with some units listed under the *Magister Peditum* or in the *Distributio* that do not have a shield pattern. For an alternative explanation to this see my discussion on Griggs analysis in appendix ii, which argues for the reliability of the shield patterns. By countering Grigg's methodology we have no reason not to use the shield patterns within the *Notitia Dignitatum* as the units recorded all existed at

---

<sup>101</sup> Grigg (1983), pp. 132-42.

one time and there is a continuity of shield images used. They therefore become a useful source of information.

Accepting this position for the purpose of this thesis does need some qualification.

Reference will be made throughout my analysis of units which had previously existed which do not appear within the *Notitia Dignitatum* and others that are recorded but now appear to have ceased to exist from evidence from our written sources. For example, under the *Magister Peditum* listings there are listed and illustration of their shields for *Divitenses Seniores*, *Tungrecani Seniores* and *Moesiaci Seniores*, but no listing for any of the *Iuniores* counterparts. These were senior units which had existed well before the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the *Iuniores* units must have been destroyed before this date and were not included. Then we have units such as *Ioviani Seniores* and *Herculiani Seniores* who are shown within the *Notitia Dignitatum* even though the last reference to them in action is against Gildo in 398 and like the rest of the army of Italy, seemed to have disappeared by 410 prior to the sack of Rome. The fact that they have been retained in the *Notitia Dignitatum* does not undermine this as source, as the units have existed in the recent past and the intention may have been to rebuild these units at a later date, but as the *Notitia* is showing us an image of power, it was necessary to retain them. As altering the shield illustrations would have been a time consuming process, these famous units are retained even if they had been destroyed or reduced to such an extent as to be almost non-existent.

All of this is relevant when we consider the importance of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a source in the context of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The two decades leading up to 425 saw the loss of imperial control in Britain, areas of occupation in Gaul and Spain and soon after, the Vandal conquest of North Africa. Explaining these events has been a main attraction for many historians, producing many different theories why the fall happened. The *Notitia Dignitatum* is our only source that provides details on the Roman army, which must be considered a vital element in this story. By understanding the army listings in the *Notitia Dignitatum* it is possible to shed further light on this well-trodden area of research.

## 1.8 Introduction to the regional army chapters

It is my intention to review the various armies that are listed within the western section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to see if it is possible to establish the date for each entry. This is because it seems unlikely that all these forces existed at the same time, and instead what the *Notitia Dignitatum* is recording appears to be a patchwork of military information from different dates. If I am correct in this assumption then it will go against the main stream view of the document. As already discussed, current scholarly opinion is that the two halves, *Occidens* and *Oriens*, come from different dates and were then combined in the west as a single text. The western section then shows signs of being updated to 425 after they were combined, while the eastern section remains frozen at about 395.<sup>102</sup> The alternative view put forward by Kulikowski is that both halves were written together, prior to Theodosius I's campaign against Eugenius, sometime between the years 386-394, and then the western section was maintained thereafter.<sup>103</sup> Either way, the western section is considered to be a complete record, as it has been updated. By establishing different dates for each of the entries of the western field armies, it will be possible to demonstrate that the *Notitia Dignitatum* does not show us a 'snapshot' of the empire at any one date, but several localised ones, and as such we must be more careful with any assumptions we make on the total military capability of the Roman Empire based on its information.

To enable me to do so, I shall look at each field army in turn and try to establish a range of possible dates for their existence by referring to external accounts of their recorded field operations and campaigns. Then look in detail at the various units which make up each army in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and see if there are any duplications of the units recorded, which might indicate if any of these units have been recently transferred, and if so, this might give us the possibility of dating them. Then by examining unit names and place associations, it might be possible to shed further light. It will be then possible to establish different dates for each army. While reviewing these armies, it may not always be possible to establish a firm date, but the weight of circumstantial evidence will hopefully open the possibility for this re-interpretation.

---

<sup>102</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 347.

<sup>103</sup> Kulikowski (2000), p. 360.

Before comparing the information within the *Notitia Dignitatum* it will be useful to briefly discuss some of the details within the document before we look at each army in detail. These are the illustrated shield patterns which are listed under the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum*, followed by listing of the units under these two officers, and then *Distributio* which gives the location of the various units in the field armies. Discrepancies between these three piece of information will form the basis of my analysis in the following chapters but I wish to make a few general observations concerning the shield illustrations.

While Grigg argued that the shield illustrations were the construction of the artist who drew them and as such they cannot have been based on any official source, this may not be as obvious as he makes out.<sup>104</sup> The comparison of the shield patterns is based on the eastern half compared to the western half and Grigg argues as you go through the *Notitia Dignitatum*, there are more examples of repetitive patterns. It should also be pointed out that there are omissions in the western section with some units listed under the *Magister Peditum* or in the *Distributio* that do not have a shield pattern. For an alternative explanation to this see my discussion on Griggs analysis in appendix ii, which argues for the reliability of the shield patterns. By countering Grigg's methodology we have no reason not to use the shield patterns within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and they become a useful source of information.

---

<sup>104</sup> Grigg (1983), pp. 132-42.

## 2. Comes Hispaniarum

### 2.1 Introduction

There are several problems with the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the entry for the *Comes Hispaniarum*, which make it an interesting point to start with when reviewing the Western Empire's armies. The first point that needs to be made concerns the entry for the *Comes Hispaniarum* within the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself. This army is not listed in the index section for the Western half of the Empire, which would be unusual for a longstanding permanent force.<sup>105</sup> The first reference we have for it is in section VII, the *Distributio*, which also includes the *Comites Tingitaniae, Africae* and *Britanniae* and others. There is no illustrated badge of office which would normally be expected at the start of each dedicated chapter, and as the chapter heading and illustration are missing, this led Jones to see it as a relatively new creation along with the command of the *Magister Equitum Galliarum*, which is likewise not illustrated. He suggested that this was because both the *Magister Equitum Galliarum* and the *Comes Hispaniarum* had been revived after Constantius' recovery of Gaul in 411.<sup>106</sup> If this line of reasoning is correct, then we should date the *Comes Hispaniarum* from this date onwards. The Spanish chronicler Hydatius first mentions a *Comes Hispaniarum*, Asterius, in 420, which would add weight to Jones' argument.<sup>107</sup>

The next issue that needs to be looked at is the units listed under the *Distributio* for the *Comes Hispaniarum*. There are no cavalry units included, which apart from the *Comes Illyrici*, is unusual for a mobile field army. There is also a discrepancy between the various copies of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the units recorded. The Munich edition, which Otto Seeck used for his main work, included the *Legio Comitatuses Septimani Seniores*, but these are omitted from the Paris edition.<sup>108</sup> Finally we have the units themselves, which appear to be an unusual mix of eleven *Auxilia Palatina*, and five (or four in 'P') *Legiones Comitatuses*, none of which can be dated as recent creations there is a lack of any fifth-century Imperial names used in the unit titles. Unlike the armies of the *Comes Illyrici* and *Magister Equitum Galliarum*, the Spanish listings do not include any *Pseudocomitatuses*,

---

<sup>105</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>106</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

<sup>107</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 66; PLRE (1980), Asterius 4, p. 171.

<sup>108</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 138, also in Böcking (1839), vol. ii, p. 37.



which had been drafted into those formations as a temporary measure to make up numbers. Therefore, if the Spanish army was also a new command, we would assume that it too would have had such troop types, especially as it is quite a small command, but it does not. It will be necessary to try to unpick these different issues and see if we can come up with a date for the listing of the *Comes Hispaniarum*.

## 2.2 Sources

Before looking at the army of the *Comes Hispaniarum* we need to consider the sources we can use to help understand the situation in Spain during the period of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and the background to these events. For this we have two contemporary church historians, Hydatius and Orosius, and both need to be placed in context. We then have the *Epistula Honorii*, which appears to be a letter sent by Honorius to troops in Spain. All these texts are problematic and will be looked at in turn.

The *Chronicle* of Hydatius provides us with the most useful information which is because he was writing on events in Spain during this period. Born c.400 in *Civitas Lemica*, he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy land aged 6-7 where he met Jerome and Hydatius' *Chronicle* is an extension of Jerome's own work. He became bishop of *Aquae Flaviae* in Portugal at the young age of 28, where he remained, so his writing was mainly centred on his home area of *Gallaecia*, which had been overrun and occupied by the Vandals in 411.<sup>109</sup> His writing should be considered in a very local context and not necessarily as representing Spain as a whole. However, his key reason for writing was because he believed in the forthcoming apocalypse, which was supposed to happen 450 years after Christ's Ascension. His *Chronicle* is therefore, in his opinion, an eyewitness account of the last years of the Roman Empire with the invading barbarians cast as the agents of the Antichrist.<sup>110</sup> All this might well argue completely against his usefulness as a source, but because of the local nature of his chronicle it is often those parts of his narrative that do not directly impact on his purpose for writing, which often contain small details of use not recorded elsewhere. As Kulikowski suggests, it is possible to use what he says, but not necessarily how he says it.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 38.

<sup>110</sup> Burgess (1993), pp. 9-10.

<sup>111</sup> Kulikowski (2004), p. 154.

Orosius was also a contemporary to events in Spain, was born there c.385 and appears to have fled from there during the barbarian invasions by going on a pilgrimage, meeting Augustine in North Africa, then on to Egypt and then Palestine where he also met Jerome in 415. He later returned to be with Augustine in Africa when in 418 he began his *History against the Pagans* at his behest/request. Unlike Hydatius, Orosius was a Christian apologist, by which we mean speaking in defence of Christianity, from the Greek *apologia*: to speak in return, to defend oneself. He believed that man had inherited original sin and history up to Christ was seen as providential.<sup>112</sup> However, it can be argued that he was a more sophisticated historian than has often been believed, as his writing is rooted in the traditions of late antique rhetoric.<sup>113</sup> Unlike Hydatius, he sees the problems of the fifth century but narrates them in a more promising light. He acknowledges defeats but sees things improving as his writing is influenced by an optimism present at the time and driven by his apologetic intentions.<sup>114</sup>

We then have the *Epistula Honorii*, which is a letter from Honorius to troops in Spain. This text is problematic because it does not have any fixed date. It was issued from Rome, where Kulikowski noted that Honorius was a rare visitor, and as the letter mentions that Spain is suffering from '*infestatione barbarorum*', it cannot be earlier than 409. This leaves us with 411, 414 and 416 as the other alternative dates, of which 411 seems unlikely, as Honorius had lost control of Spain during Constantine's revolt.<sup>115</sup> Written to army units in Spain, the letter being offered an '*augmentum dignitatis*' for either service in Spain or as a reward for work already done. Unfortunately it does not identify any units accurately. A pair of joined, but unnamed, *Seniores* and *Iuniores* are mentioned along with an unidentified unit of *Britannici* and one of *Speculatores*. While Kulikowski argues that the title of the letter gives us its context, and that this seems to be wrong, the only thing we can take for certain is the fact there were some field army units in Spain during Honorius' reign. However it does say within the text '*Comites Magistri utriusque militiae*' from which we can infer the operation of the *Comes Hispaniarum* along with a *Magister Militum*. While Jones decided to include units from the *Notitia Dignitatum* as part of his emendation of the letter, there is no basis

---

<sup>112</sup> Raymond (1936), pp. 11-12.

<sup>113</sup> Van Nuffelen (2012), p. 93.

<sup>114</sup> Van Nuffelen (2012), p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> Kulikowski (1998), p. 250.

for this as Kulikowski argues.<sup>116</sup> This only adds to the problems of the text as an imperial letter would not give partial names for the units involved, implying there has been some corruption in the letter when it was later copied into the *Rotense* manuscript, where it has been preserved.

### 2.3 Background

By way of context, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of events as they happened in Spain, up to the supposed date of the western half of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a range of 394-420. The outline of the provincial structure shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum* dates from the reforms of Diocletian (284-305). While I do not intend to go into an in-depth analysis of these reforms, it is necessary to note that these new dioceses were designed to have a frontier zone which housed troops that defended the hinterland, which in turn supported the frontier zones by way of tax, agriculture and industrial products.<sup>117</sup> This was not a static defence as in the early empire, but rather a layered one. With frontier strongholds, supported by mobile forces and backed by field armies, it has been argued that in modern terms it is similar to a mobile defence in depth.<sup>118</sup> The former province of Spain had been made from four administrative regions: *Tarraconensis*, *Gallaecia*, *Lusitania* and *Baetica*. The new diocese established by Diocletian split the large area of *Tarraconensis* into two, creating the region of *Carthaginensis*, and added two further regions outside the peninsula, *Tingitania* in North Africa and the Balearic Islands of the Western Mediterranean.

As Spain had been a relatively peaceful and well protected province, far from the Rhine frontier, it has been argued that it had been demilitarised, with no standing army and only a few garrison units, such as the *Legio VII Gemina* stationed in Leon, which can be traced back to 68. These *Limitanei* garrisons are assumed to represent the old deployment of troops prior to Diocletian's reforms, but maintained by him.<sup>119</sup> Older literature on these deployments by Grosse (1947) and Palo (1958) tried to explain them in light of an internal frontier zone or *Limes*, established by Diocletian as protection for the new dioceses from uncivilised tribesmen from the Cantabrian north or internal peasant rebellions. These views

---

<sup>116</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 36; Kulikowski (1998), p. 251.

<sup>117</sup> Kulikowski (2004), p. 74; Whittaker (1994), p. 101.

<sup>118</sup> Luttwak (1976), pp. 130-90. For a counter-argument see Whittaker (1994), pp. 202-9.

<sup>119</sup> Kulikowski (2004), pp. 79, 80, fn. 74; Not. Occ. xlii.

were disputed by Spanish historians such as Arce (1980) and successfully disproved by Fuentes Dominguez.<sup>120</sup> It seems more reasonable to view Spain as the hinterland to its own border zone, that of *Tingitania*, which is separated from the rest of the African provinces by the mountain ranges of the Rif and Middle Atlas, leaving only a narrow coastal strip whose settlements are connected by sea routes. So *Tingitania* is easier to reach from Spain, with the new capital at Merida in *Lusitania*, which is central to the whole dioceses rather than being seen as tucked away in one corner of the peninsula.<sup>121</sup> With this line of reasoning, the Spanish dioceses should have been safely protected by the mobile army deployed in *Tingitania* and would not have required a separate one in the peninsula. This would then argue against the *Comes Hispaniarum* command being an old established formation and add weight to the view of Jones that it was a recent creation.

If we start with the dates of military action in Spain, we have the revolt of Constantine III in 407 with the Spanish authorities recognising his authority.<sup>122</sup> This incident is not mentioned by Hydatius, but is recorded by Orosius, Olympiodorus, Sozomen and in the later account of Zosimus. However, these accounts are somewhat confusing and only by combining what they all say can we build a clear picture. Orosius tells us that the Spanish authorities recognised Constantine's authority when he landed in Gaul in 407. In 408, he sent his son Constans to Spain, where according to Olympiodorus, he appointed his own officials and occupied the province. Zosimus also agrees that Constans was sent to secure Spain, and gives the reason that Constantine was fearful that Honorius' relatives there, Didymus and Verinianus, might muster an army from the soldiers in the province.<sup>123</sup> It is Sozomen who comes the closest to saying that Constans made himself master of the province and then set up his own officials, which might imply that the local authorities did not readily accept the new regime. Sozomen then adds that after securing Spain Constans ordered the arrest of Honorius' relatives, and only then did they combine their forces comprised of peasants and slaves to resist him.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> For the full argument see Fuentes Dominguez (1989).

<sup>121</sup> Kulikowski (2004), p. 75.

<sup>122</sup> PLRE (1980), Constantius 21, p. 316.

<sup>123</sup> PLRE (1980), Constans 1, p. 310; Didymus 1, p. 358; Verinianus, p. 1155.

<sup>124</sup> Orosius, 7.40.5; Olympiodorus, 13.2; Zosimus, 6.4.2; Sozomen, 9.11.

These two relatives, Didymus and Verinianus, did indeed rebel and raised forces to oppose Constans. The details of this revolt are unclear, and as can be seen above, our sources do not give us a complete picture. It will be necessary to try to piece together the evidence because this is the first potential reference to Roman troops in Spain. Kulikowski believes that as the local authorities had recognised Constantine's authority, whatever forces were in Spain would not have sided with the local rebels, who can be seen as raising forces from their own dependants, and refutes the argument that as no Spanish forces are mentioned, they did not exist.<sup>125</sup> The only mention of Didymus and Verinianus having any troops is by Zosimus, who was writing at a later date and from Constantinople, so is not a contemporary source. It is possible that he was aware of the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself, and its entry for Spain, which could be why he included local troops loyal to the Theodosian dynasty. However, Freeman, who gives a very detailed analysis of these events, suggests that in the early engagements Didymus and Verinianus may have had support from the local garrison, the *Legio VII Gemina*, and that this might account for their initial success.<sup>126</sup> This line of reasoning has been continued by Arce, who suggests that the local *Limitanei* stationed at Veleia, the *Cohort Primae Gallicae*, might have deteriorated into farmers and that these were the local Spanish forces that traditionally defended the Pyrenees passes, who are mentioned by Orosius.<sup>127</sup> This can be further supported by looking at various law codes, both prohibiting soldiers farming and confirming the existence of border militias.<sup>128</sup> If we cannot prove the presence of regular troops supporting the rebels in any contemporary accounts, it will be necessary to try to find an alternative explanation.

If we discount the possibility of any local forces aiding Didymus and Verinianus, and accept Orosius that the Spanish authorities sided with Constantine, then we would expect any local forces to have been available to assist Constans in defeating the brothers. However, it would seem that the Honorian rebels were successful in an encounter in Lusitania, according to Olympiodorus and Sozomen, and only then reinforcements were sent to Constans, along with a new *Magister Militum*, Gerontius, were these able to defeat the brothers.<sup>129</sup> Orosius differs in his account saying the brothers were killed while trying to

---

<sup>125</sup> Kulikowski (2004), p. 157. Arce (1999), pp. 461-8.

<sup>126</sup> Freeman (1886), pp. 71-9.

<sup>127</sup> Arce (2009), p. 101; Orosius 7.40.

<sup>128</sup> CTh 7.14.1 (398), has direct reference to Spain, and NTh 4.1, on border militia.

<sup>129</sup> Olympiodorus, 13.2; Sozomen, 9.12; PLRE (1980), Gerontius 5, p. 508.

defend the Pyrenean Alps, which is interesting because our other sources all agree that in the aftermath of the fighting, Constans set up his own forces to guard these passes, something the Spanish had always done for themselves.

It seems unlikely that the forces listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for Spain were there at the time of Constans fighting with Honorius' relatives. This is because the army in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is shown as 15,000 men, at least on paper, and it is hard to see the rebels being able to resist this force successfully with an army of recently recruited locals. A potential clue is given by Olympiodorus who claims that the rebels killed many of the soldiers who had been sent to arrest them. This would imply that the scale of this supposed battle was quite small and it is easy to imagine a group of soldiers being driven off by a gang of farm workers. It is reasonable to make the following deductions from this collection of circumstantial evidence. Firstly, that there were no mobile army units deployed in Spain prior to Constans' arrival, and whatever local *Limitanei* troops were there did not take part in the fighting. Secondly, to secure the province troops were sent to Spain and a *Magister Militum* was set up to control these forces. Finally, because of the suspect loyalty of the locals, Constans established garrisons on the passes into Spain, no doubt to protect his lines of communication.

After having settled matters in Spain Constans returned to Arles to be with his father, but must have left units in Spain, and presumably more than the border guards already mentioned, as Gerontius who was left in charge there, felt strong enough to rebel against Constantine. It is interesting to speculate, but hard to prove, that the *Epistula Honorii* may record this. If this was the case, it would be similar to Honorius' letter to Britain, telling the locals to fend for themselves.<sup>130</sup> Zosimus also records that Honorius rewarded his troops with money sent by Heraclianus.<sup>131</sup> Could this be the reward offered in the *Epistula Honorii*, for rebelling against Constantine, and can we not view the letter to Britain in the same light? However, Gerontius' rebellion failed, and we are told that he was killed by his Spanish soldiers.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> Zosimus, 6.10.2.

<sup>131</sup> Ridley (1984), p. 130, fn. 51, refers to CT.11.28.5 (410), as proof of this payment, but this law only mentions tax exemptions in Africa. PLRE (1980), Heraclianus 3, pp. 539-40.

<sup>132</sup> Olympiodorus, 17.2.

There are several interesting points that can be gleaned from this sequence of events. Firstly, the Spanish rebels, Didymus and Verinianus had been able to raise an army, and were indeed successful in the first engagement. Secondly, Constantine had been in a position to provide further troops which allowed Gerontius to complete the victory over the rebels, so we must presume Gerontius had a reasonable force. This might suggest that the quality of the rebel forces was good, or the regular troops under Constans were poor. This might be inferred from the actions of one of the units mentioned, the *Honoriaci*, who are recorded by Sozomen as looting and abandoning their post, which would seem likely if they were poor quality troops, and as such it seems possible that the rebels might have been able to defeat such poorly disciplined troops. There are no known *Fabricae* arms factories in Spain, so whatever equipment the soldiers had must have come from local sources or the *Limitanei* stationed there. Hydatius mentions that the wealth of the cities was plundered by tax-collectors and consumed by soldiers in 410, the year after the barbarian migration into Spain, which must be considered as part of Gerontius' preparations for his revolt against Constantine.<sup>133</sup>

We have a reference to troops and a *Comes* in Spain in 408, before the barbarian invasion. Orosius does not give us any details of this army, but mentions the one unit noted above, the *Honoriaci*, which are also recorded by Sozomen. It is interesting to note that Orosius states that these *Honoriaci* were 'barbarians who had one time been received as allies and drawn into military service.' He goes on to say that as a reward for their services they were allowed to plunder the area of *Pallantia* and afterwards they replaced the peasant guards who had until then successfully guarded the mountain passes into Spain.<sup>134</sup> Finally they abandoned their guard duties, having gained a taste for plunder and not only opened the way for barbarians to cross from Gaul to Spain, but then joined with them.

There has been some debate on the identity of this unit and as they are the only troops mentioned in Spain in our sources other than in the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself, they are worthy of some further investigation. In his narrative of these events, Gibbon said that the troops raised by Constantine III to combat the 'rustic army of the Theodosians' were barbarian auxiliaries distinguished with the title of *Honoriaci*. They comprised of nine units

---

<sup>133</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 40.

<sup>134</sup> Orosius, 7.40.7; Sozomen, 9.11.4.

of *Auxilia Palatina*, two of Scots or *Atecotti*, two of Moors, two of *Marcomanni*, the *Victores*, the *Ascarii* and the *Gallicani*. Gibbon believed this force numbered less than 5,000 men, but was sufficient to overcome Honorius' relatives.<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately he gives no indication of how he arrived at this conclusion and references an early edition of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to prove these units existed in the register. This 1651 version by Philippe Labbe, does indeed include all these units in the western section of the *Magister Peditum*, but does not go into any further discussion on them or their possible role in Spain.<sup>136</sup> However, what is interesting is the idea that the *Honoriaci* is a general term for units rather than the title of one specific one. As they are the only troops mentioned in our sources, and they play an important part in the sequence of events, it is quite conceivable there was more than just one 500 man strong unit.<sup>137</sup> This is something I shall return to shortly, but first need to complete the overview of the historiography of these troops.

The next work on this is in the analysis of the sources carried out by Freeman. He considered that the *Honoriaci* may have been Bretons, but did not discuss any troop numbers. Bury, in his narrative, relied heavily on Freeman's work and therefore makes no reference to them directly and this approach is continued by Jones. However, an earlier discussion about them by Stevens points out that the name *Honoriaci* is based on Honorius, but with a Celtic suffix, and suggested they were not part of the *Comitatenses*, but upgraded to field services as *Pseudocomitatenses*. He goes on to say that after Gerontius' defeat, this unit was renamed and sent to Africa as the *Constantiaci*.<sup>138</sup> He believed this group of barbarians became a part of the regular army and the link with the later *Constantiaci* is based on the Celtic suffix at the end of the unit's name. While Orosius does state that after Gerontius' defeat, his troops were shipped to Africa, and then recalled to Italy, he does not mention any units by name.<sup>139</sup>

While discussing the origin of the name *Honoriaci*, it is interesting to note that in Gibbon's earlier account of the nine units of *Auxilia Palatina* who he believed formed them, all of which are listed under the *Magister Peditum*. They are all named with the title *Honoriani*,

---

<sup>135</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 56.

<sup>136</sup> *Notitia Dignitatum Imperii Romani*, ed. Labbe (1651), p. xxxviii.

<sup>137</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 682.

<sup>138</sup> Stevens (1957), p. 327, fn. 82.

<sup>139</sup> Orosius, 7.42.5.



which Gibbon believed was the basis of the name *Honoriaci* and this might have reminded them of their loyalty to the legitimate emperor if it had not be for inducements offered by Constantine. The idea that they are all *Honoriaci* has come about because they all shared the same *Honoriani* title.<sup>140</sup> The full titles are *Honoriani Atecotti Seniores* and *Iuniores*, the *Honoriani Mauri Seniores* and *Iuniores*, the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* and *Iuniores*, the *Honoriani Victores Iuniores*, *Honoriani Ascarii Seniores* and the *Honoriani Gallicani*.<sup>141</sup> What is interesting to note is these are the only western *Auxilia Palatina* units to have the title *Honoriani* in their titles, and the last three appear as 58<sup>th</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> out of a total of 65 units list under the *Magister Peditum*. This would presumably date them towards the later date range of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which would be in the 420s, well after the events in Spain. While it is interesting to speculate that the *Honoriani* units are the *Honoriaci*, this cannot be proven in any other sources.

Alternatively, Stevens suggested that the unit was originally raised by Stilicho in 396 and taken over by Constantine III when he arrived in Gaul, which could account for the name. As an active unit for more than a decade, however, it is hard to reconcile this with Orosius' view that they were barbarians recently drawn into service, and Stevens' hypothesis has several other weak points that need to be explored. Firstly the name, *Honoriaci*, as it seems unlikely that a usurper would want to raise troops bearing the Emperor's name. Secondly, the point about them being renamed *Constantiaci* is far from certain. Matthews points out that the unit called *Constantiaci* under the *Comes Africae* was a longstanding unit recorded by Ammianus.<sup>142</sup> However, this is not supported by the textual evidence, as Ammianus does not mention the *Constantiaci*. What is interesting is the listing in both the *Comes Tingitaniae* and *Comes Africae* of a unit called *Constantiniani*, which might account for the confusion.<sup>143</sup> Ammianus records two interesting points in an earlier passage, that as punishment for siding with the rebel Firmus a cohort of archers were downgraded to the lowest class of service; and a detachment of the *Constantinian* infantry were sent to *Tingitania*.<sup>144</sup> This would suggest the likely outcome for a unit that had been in service with Gerontius, as

---

<sup>140</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 56.

<sup>141</sup> Not. Occ. v.

<sup>142</sup> Matthews (1975), p. 310, fn. 4 cites Ammianus, 29.5.30 as supporting evidence, but 29.5.20 would seem correct.

<sup>143</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>144</sup> Amm. 24.5.20.

Stevens suggested, and account for the low positioning of the *Constantiaci* in the *Pseudocomitatenses*. The *Constantiniani* unit can be equated to the listing for the *Secundae Flaviae Constantinianae*, who are simply labelled *Constantiniani* next to their shield design and listed as such in the field armies. They and the *Constantiaci* are not one and the same unit, and as such Ammianus does not supply evidence to support Matthews' argument. If we accept the *Constantiniani* in both listings are one and the same, then the *Notitia Dignitatum* is showing us a unit in transit, so at two different dates. By accepting Jones' idea that the *Legiones* were now smaller than the earlier 5,000 strong units and probably only 1,000 men strong, and allowing for reductions for field services, it seems very unlikely that a detachment from such a unit would leave a functional parent unit.<sup>145</sup> Therefore, despite Ammianus' claim, he is describing the transfer of this unit.

While he does not mention if the original *Honoriaci* were barbarians or regulars, Kulikowski believes that despite Orosius' claim, their title makes them a part of the regular army.<sup>146</sup> It is interesting to note that in the *Magister Peditum* listings there is another unit named *Constantiaci*, which is not attached to any commands. It appears as a *Pseudocomitatenses* fourth from the end and after the *Prima Flavia Gallicana Constantia*, which are presumably also named after Constantius III. Their low rating within the list might represent the fact that as a unit raised by a usurper, they were renamed and given a lowly status.<sup>147</sup> It is also possible if they had been recently transferred from Africa, as Orosius states, they had not yet been reassigned to a new command. As he gives us no time frame, we can only assume this to be a recent event and perhaps soon after Constantius' campaign against Gerontius, so 411 or soon after. The only other point that is worth noting is the unit's shield design:



Figure 3: The *Constantiaci*: Showing the twin headed zoomorphic motif (O).

<sup>145</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 681.

<sup>146</sup> Kulikowski (2004), p. 363, fn. 30.

<sup>147</sup> Not. Occ. v.

This shows what appears to be a set of horns which look like a reduced version of the twin headed zoomorphic designs which are common in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, especially with the Germanic named units of the *Auxilia Palatina*, such as the *Cornuti Seniores* shown above. The *Constantiaci* listing as a *Pseudocomitatenses* would make it the only one of these to carry such a shield design, and it is tempting to speculate that if there was any link to the earlier *Honoriaci*, they were a recently raised *Auxilia Palatina* unit, so presumably to Orosius, still viewed as barbarian, and were either allowed to, or could not be stopped from looting. They were later incorporated into the army, re-named and demoted to the status of *Pseudocomitatenses*.

Another possible explanation has been put forward by Burns who suggests it is possible that the *Honoriaci* can be linked to the cavalry unit *Taifalia*, shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum* listing for Britain.<sup>148</sup> He believes that they were *foedus recepti*, and as such raised through an official act of *recepto*, and therefore part of the regular army.<sup>149</sup> The tentative link is made through their full title of *Equites Honoriani Taifalia Iuniores* and Burns suggests that the terms *Honoriaci* and *Honoriani* are interchangeable within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. However, they are not and the only unit in the *Occident* listings ending with the suffix *-aci*, is the *Constantiaci*. But before dismissing this idea, it is worth noting that the *Taifalia* do have a link with both Britain and Africa.

As noted above, under the listings for the *Magister Equitum*, are the *Equites Honoriani Taifalia Iuniores*, who are listed ahead of the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*. There is a listing for *Equites Taifalia* under the *Comes Britanniae*, and *Equites Honoriani Seniores* under both the *Comes Britanniae* and the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*.<sup>150</sup> Since the *Equites Taifalia* are not listed under the *Magister Equitum*, there has either been an error in that list, or the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* and the *Equites Taifalia* have been combined into one unit.<sup>151</sup> It seems unlikely that this unit can be mistaken for the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* because they are listed ahead of their supposed twin *Seniores* unit and are listed under the *Comes Africae*. This may have been further confused if the unit came over to Gaul with Constantine III, was dispatched to Spain under Constans, and later after the revolt, moved on to Africa. This

---

<sup>148</sup> Not. Occ. v.

<sup>149</sup> Burns (1994), p. 254, fn. 23.

<sup>150</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>151</sup> Holder (1982), p. 127.

could account for the triple entry and only one shield design. The link with the *Comes Britanniae* has been recently strengthened by research into the etymology of the village Tealby, which can be traced back through old English to *Taflas*, as a form of *Taifalia*. Positioned between Caistor and Horncastle, sites controlled by the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, and covering the approach to Lincoln, Tealby would be an ideal site for a cavalry unit of the mobile field army, which were billeted in urban sites rather than forts. The finding of Roman cavalry stirrups at the site would seem to support this, and the *Taifalia* have given their name to the town.<sup>152</sup>

What can we draw from this information? If the *Honoriaci* are indeed considered barbarians, then the association with the *Taifalia* is a good one. The unit's presence in Spain can be seen as a part of Constantine's army brought over from Britain and dispatched to Spain under Constans. It should also be noted that there are settlements in Gaul who are named *Taifalia*, who are recorded by Gregory of Tours.<sup>153</sup> While it is possible that a new unit was raised by Constantine from these settlers, it would be reasonable to believe that the cadre of the *Equites Taifalia* was used to form any new unit around, so we can keep the British connection. They are also recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in *Gallia* as *Praefectus Sarmatarum et Taifalorum Gentilium* at *Pictavis*.<sup>154</sup> The fact that this unit is under a *Praefectus*, and is not listed as *Equites* or *Ala*, would suggest they are an infantry unit of the *Limitanei*, which would tie in with the argument that the *Honoriaci* were not in the *Comitatenses*, but upgraded as a *Pseudocomitatenses*. If we accept that Orosius has used the term *Honoriaci* to represent barbarians, rather than a particular unit, it is possible to identify two units, the *Taifalia* and the *Constantiaci*, as they will become, being a part of the army sent to Spain by Constantine and recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This then shows us these units prior to Constantine's revolt in 408 and after the event in 411.

Moving forward, in 420 Hydatius records the first mention of the *Comes Hispaniarum*, Asterius, who is conducting a blockade of the Sueves, so must have had an army.<sup>155</sup> Kulikowski has put forward the argument that rather than conducting a successful campaign against the Sueves, Asterius was engaged in defeating the usurper Maximus. This was in fact

---

<sup>152</sup> Green (2011), pp. 5-10.

<sup>153</sup> Gregory of Tours, IV.12, see Dalton (1927) on *Taifalia*, vol. i, p. 172.

<sup>154</sup> Not. Occ. xlii.

<sup>155</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 66.

a continuation of the revolt of Gerontius, who had proclaimed Maximus Emperor and installed him at Tarraco in 409. After the defeat and death of Gerontius, Maximus appears to have taken sanctuary with the barbarians in Spain.<sup>156</sup> Kulikowski reconstructs the sequence of events to show Asterius' real purpose in Spain was dealing with a second revolt, and his subsequent promotion to *Patricius* was the reward for his success.<sup>157</sup> We should view this as a special operation, rather than the army being a permanent establishment in Spain. This would also be true of the next recorded activity shortly afterwards in 422, when we have the *Magister Militum* Castinus campaigning in Spain against the Vandals with Gothic auxiliaries. According to Hydatius, this ended in defeat because he recklessly gave battle and was betrayed by his auxiliaries.<sup>158</sup> This defeat seems to have left Spain bereft of soldiers as the chronicler goes on to record in 430 that the Sueves under their King Hermeric, rampaged through Galicia. They only suffered losses to the local people who remained in possession of secure forts.<sup>159</sup> The complete lack of any mention of soldiers would suggest that whatever forces had been sent to Spain under Asterius and Castinus had either been withdrawn or destroyed and military sites were being used as a safe refuge for the local population. This lack of any military presence is further reinforced when Hydatius himself goes on an embassy to the *Dux utriusque Militiae* Aetius, rather than the *Comes Hispaniarum*, whose post presumably no longer existed.

## 2.4 The units of the *Comes Hispaniarum*

We have a range of possible dates from 408 to 422 when a *Comes* was active in Spain with some military units. If we now turn our attention to the units which are listed under the *Comes Hispaniarum* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and try to establish if any link can be made with our other sources or if the listing within the *Notitia Dignitatum* can shed any light on establishing a date. The following units are listed under the *Comes Hispaniarum* and show their position under the *Magister Peditum*:<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Orosius, 7.42.5.

<sup>157</sup> See Kulikowski (2000), pp. 123-39.

<sup>158</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 70. PLRE (1980), Castinus 2, p. 269.

<sup>159</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 81.

<sup>160</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<i>Ascarii Seniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	8 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ascarii Iuniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	9 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sagittarii Nervi (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	12 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Exculcatores Iuniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	17 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Tubantes (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	18 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Felices Seniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	21 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Invicti Seniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	24 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Victores Iuniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	27 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Invicti Iuniores Britones (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	48 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Brisigavi Seniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	43 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Salii Iuniores Gallicani (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	53 <sup>rd</sup> Listed as <i>Salii Gallicani</i>
<i>Fortenses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Propugnatores Seniores (Legio Comitatus)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Septimani Seniores (Legio Comitatus)</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> Not recorded in the (P) edition
<i>Vesontes (Legio Comitatus)</i>	8 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Undecimani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	11 <sup>th</sup>

Apart from the point already noted that there are no cavalry units listed under the *Comes*, this force had a ratio of 2:1 *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones*. This seems to fit in the range for the major field armies outlined in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and shown in the following table:

Unit Type:	Magister Peditum	Magister Equitum	Praesentalis I	Praesentalis II	Comes Hispaniarum
<b>Legio Palatina</b>	8	1	6	6	0
<b>Auxilia Palatina</b>	21	17	18	17	10
<b>Legio Comitatus</b>	5	9	0	0	5
<b>Pseudocomitatus</b>	1	20	0	1	0

Table 2: Showing the break-down of main field armies.

There are several interesting points that emerge from this chart. Firstly, if we consider the *Magister Peditum*, in command of the army of Italy and the two eastern *Praesentalis* armies, they have a range from approximately 2:1 *Auxilia* units to *Legiones*, rising to 3:1, and if we

accept Jones estimates on unit sizes, then we have at least as many, if not more in the east, men in the *Auxilia* compared to the *Legiones*. Secondly, these armies also contain the majority of the elite *Legiones Palatinae*, and only have two *Pseudocomitatenses*. By contrast the *Magister Equitum* in Gaul commands a large proportion of *Pseudocomitatenses*, but still has 17 *Auxilia* alongside 10 *Legiones*. If we now look at some of the regional field armies, we get a different picture:

	Magister Militum per Orientum	Magister Militum per Thracias	Magister Militum per Illyricum	Comes Illyrici
<b>Legio Palatina</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Auxilia Palatina</b>	2	0	6	12
<b>Legio Comitatuses</b>	9	21	8	5
<b>Pseudocomitatenses</b>	11	0	9	5

Table 3: Showing the break-down of some regional armies.

Here we see a decrease in the number of *Auxilia Palatina* units, except in the army of the *Comes Illyrici*, which like the *Comes Hispaniarum*, has a similar proportion of 2:1, but with an added number of *Pseudocomitatenses* units. If we accept the view that the *Magister Equitum* in Gaul and the *Comes Illyrici* are recently created commands recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which could be supported by the increase of *Pseudocomitatenses* units recently transferred into these armies, we would expect the same to be true in Spain. However, the *Comes Hispaniarum* does not have any *Pseudocomitatenses*, and its makeup looks more like the main commands of the *Magister Militum* and the *Praesentalis*.

Jones suggested the Spanish army was also a recent creation and explained its lack of cavalry with the possibility that it relied on barbarian *Foederatii*.<sup>161</sup> There could, however, be another explanation. Ueda-Sarson suggests that the next entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* after Spain is the army of the *Comes Africae*, and in this command there is an excessive amount of cavalry units listed, and that some of these might have been under the *Comes Hispaniarum* but recorded under the *Comes Africae*. There is a total of 19 cavalry units under the *Comes Africae* and only two *Auxilia Palatina* and ten *Legiones Comitatuses*, and if we look at the largest field army recorded, that under the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* for

<sup>161</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354 on Gaul, pp. 354-6 on Spain and Illyricum.

a comparison, it only has 12 cavalry to 48 infantry units.<sup>162</sup> While an interesting theory, we do not have any evidence to support this apart from the fact the *Notitia Dignitatum* contains several examples of textual errors.<sup>163</sup> However, I would suggest that there are at least two possible units from the *Comes Africae* that have a link with Spain, the *Equites Cetrati Seniores* and *Iuniores*. Their title might be linked to the ancient Spanish word *Caetra*, which was used to describe light troops using a small round shield.<sup>164</sup> The only other unit listed with this name is the *Equites Mauri Cetrati*, also under the *Comes Africae*, which would appear to be based on local Moorish light cavalry.<sup>165</sup> The limited use of the title *Cetrati* within the unit listings and the fact that the *Mauri* appear in their local area, might lend some weight for the previous two units being at least Spanish in origin, if not part of the *Comes Hispaniarum* command. It should also be noted that Jones believed the *Equites Cetrati Seniores* and *Iuniores* were listed some twenty places lower in the *Distributio* than they should be, which he argued showed an instance of degrading a unit's seniority.<sup>166</sup> This would certainly make sense if they were part of a usurper's army, taken over, demoted and dispatched to Africa. Their listing under the *Comes Africae* could be seen in the light of Orosius' comments concerning the movement of units from Spain to Africa. It should also be noted that the first *Legio Comitatusensis* in Spain and the last one listed in Africa is the *Fortenses*.

This line of reasoning may support the idea that the *Comes Hispaniarum* at onetime command a few cavalry units, it does not explain why they have not been included in the list in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Rather than there being an error in the *Comes Hispaniarum* listing, there is an alternative explanation. What we are looking at is not a mobile field army, but a force that has been put together for a one-off campaign, with units drawn from other commands. It is not a permanent force, so it does not have a formal cover sheet and badge of office, and could date to any time from the reign of Constans to that of Castinus. This would be similar to such forces as those that were sent to Britain in 360 and 367, or those sent to Africa to deal with Gildo in 398. All of these forces contain a high proportion of *Auxilia Palatina* supported by some *Legiones* and will be discussed in more detail in the

---

<sup>162</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/ComesHispenias.html>

<sup>163</sup> See Bury (1920), pp. 133-4.

<sup>164</sup> Head (1982), pp.36, 149.

<sup>165</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>166</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.



chapters on Britain and Italy. The only difference being the Spanish force under the *Comes Hispaniarum* are much larger.

It will be necessary to consider the units within the list of the *Comes Hispaniarum* in greater detail to see if we can gain any further information. If we start with the *Auxilia Palatina*, the first two units are the *Ascarii Seniores* and *Iuniores* and they appear as numbers nine and ten in the listings of the *Magister Peditum*. While they are of unknown origin, they are between the *Cornuti Seniores* and *Iuniores* under the *Magister Peditum*, who are some of the original units created by Constantine (306-337), along with other older established units. They are the second pair of twinned units listed together, which might imply they were raised at the time when the split between *Seniores* or *Iuniores* was introduced, and this would suggest they were raised in or shortly after 364.<sup>167</sup> Either way, they were established units that were in existence prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Though as already noted, but unsupported, Gibbon included both of the *Ascarii* in his reconstruction of the *Honoriaci*, probably because they are again listed in the *Comes Hispaniarum*.<sup>168</sup> It should be noted that there is a listing for the *Ascarii Seniores* and *Iuniores* in the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as well, and they appear as the first two *Auxilia Palatina* units under the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*.<sup>169</sup> As the eastern units have completely different shield designs, they are unlikely to be the same as the western units. It must be pointed out that there are some shield patterns missing from the *Magister Peditum* listings (see appendix ii for discussion on *Auxilia Palatina* and shields).

If we consider for a moment the seniority of the *Ascarii*, their position in the Spanish army is interesting. The majority of the senior *Auxilia Palatina* units are concentrated in the army of Italy, under the direct command of the *Magister Peditum*. In the next most senior army, which was that of the *Magister Equitum* in Gaul the most senior *Auxilia Palatina* unit is the *Mattiaci Iuniores* who appear eighth in the listings. The *Mattiaci Seniores* who appear seventh in the listing, and make these the first pair of twinned units, are not deployed together with their *Iuniores* like the *Ascarii*, as the *Mattiaci Seniores* are listed in the army of Italy. While it seems likely that a senior unit may have been detached from the army of Italy

---

<sup>167</sup> Amm. 26.5.3; Tomlin (1972), p. 261; Elton (1996), p. 95 notes 356 as a possible date.

<sup>168</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 56.

<sup>169</sup> Not. Occ. viii.

to bolster the army in Gaul, it seems strange to find such a senior pair of units in the army of Spain, especially if we are to accept this was a permanent standing force. The other regional armies under various *Comites* do contain a few senior units, but not twinned paired ones. The *Celtae Iuniores* are under the *Comes Africae*, these are twelfth in the listings but are the only *Auxilia Palatina* in his command. Under the *Comes Illyrici* the *Iovii Iuniores* are the first unit listed in that command and appear as the eleventh most senior unit, the next unit under the *Comes Illyrici* are the *Sequani Iuniores* who are only 35<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Peditum*. The *Comes Britanniae* commands a single *Auxilia Palatina* unit the *Victores Iuniores Britanici* who are listed as 48<sup>th</sup>, and as we shall see later, are possibly linked to the *Victores* in the Spanish army. Lastly, the *Comes Tingitaniae* commands the twinned pair of *Mauri Tonantes Seniores* and *Iuniores* who are the last two units listed.<sup>170</sup> The pair of the *Ascarii* in Spain looks at odds with the other regional armies because of their seniority and being a joined *Seniores-Iuniores* pairing. This would seem reasonable to have a high quality pair of units for a special force assembled for a particular campaign.

The next three units in the *Comes Hispaniarum* listing appear after the *Cornuti Iuniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listings, but before the first Honorian named units, which may indicate they were raised before 395. The *Sagittarii Nervii* might have been raised in Gaul by the *Dux Armorici et Nervici*, which might suggest a link in name and place. Next is the *Exculcatores Iuniores*, which is one of the three shields that is not illustrated, and finally in this group of three is the *Tubantes*. While they appear to be based on a tribal name, like so many of the earlier *Auxilia Palatina* units, we have no idea, like the others of this group, when they were raised. It should be noted that there is also a listing for the *Tubantes* in the east in the *Praesentalis II* army.<sup>171</sup> Here they are listed just below the *Cornuti* and above the *Constantiniani*, and if there is any link with the western unit, it would suggest that these are also old established unit.

In the following group of three *Auxilia Palatina*, one appears just before the *Gratianenses Seniores*, while the other two fall between them and the *Gratianenses Iuniores*, under the *Magister Peditum*, so must presumably date from the range of 367-383, most likely after 375 when Gratian was senior Western Emperor. Of these three, the *Felices Seniores*, along

---

<sup>170</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>171</sup> Not. Or. v.

with its twin *Iuniores*, is the first use of the *Felices* cognomen. While this is quite a common part of a unit's name, appearing twenty times within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, all other such units have additional names in their titles, such as *Felices Iuniores Gallicani*. Of the other two units, the *Invicti Seniores* could be linked to Constantine I, and his association with the cult of *Sol Invictus* before his conversion to Christianity. This would put the unit out of position, however, as its listing among Gratian's units would imply, so it is more likely to be a reference to victory.<sup>172</sup> This theme is repeated again in the *Victores Iuniores*, who may be linked to the *Victores* in the *Praesentalis I* army. Jones noted that there was a duplication with them and the *Victores Iuniores Britannici*, under the *Comes Britanniae*.<sup>173</sup> The *Victores Iuniores Britannici* are not listed in the *Distributio* and as such do not have a shield pattern for comparison, but the possibility of them coming over with Constantine III, being dispatched to Spain and then taken over as an on-going concern remains a likely scenario. This chain of events could explain the change of name, so rather than a duplication as Jones believed, it shows us the movement of a single unit across different commands. The *Victores Iuniores* were included in Gibbon's reconstruction of the *Honoriaci*. Alternatively, the *Victores Iuniores* could be linked to the *Exculcatores Iuniores Britannici*, who are not attached to any command, but listed under the *Magister Peditum*. Either way, both views would reinforce the idea that as the *Victores Iuniores* are linked to listings under both the *Comes Hispaniarum* and the *Comes Britanniae*, and this shows a unit in transit between these commands.

However, it is the last group of three, the *Invicti Iuniores Britannici*, *Brisigavi Seniores* and *Salii Gallicani*, that is the most revealing. The *Britannici* are just after, and the *Brisigavi* in the middle of the first group of six units named *Honoriani* under the *Magister Peditum*. Named after Honorius, co-Emperor in 393 at the age of seven, and then sole Emperor in the west from 395, this group is followed by three further Honorian units under the *Magister Peditum*, which might imply that the initial ones were raised early in his reign. If we follow Jones' line of reasoning concerning the *Victores*, it is possible to suggest that the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* and the *Invicti Iuniores Britannici*, are one and the same unit because of the similarity in their names. If this is the case, then we have another example of

---

<sup>172</sup> Stephenson (2009), p. 216 on the link with the name and Constantine.

<sup>173</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 361.

the *Notitia Dignitatum* recording a unit in transit, which highlights the different dates for each of the *Comites* lists. The last unit, *Salii Gallicani* appears after the *Felices Valentinianenses* under the *Magister Peditum*, which is in between the first and second group of Honorian units. While quite low in the order of precedence (49th out of 65), it is an anomaly. It is far too low in the list to be attributed to Valentinian I (364-375), and 19 places lower than the previous Valentinian entry, so it would seem to have been raised under Valentinian II (375-392), sole emperor from 388. If the image in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is correct, as we have seen there are some omission and others appear out of position, then the shield is interesting:<sup>174</sup>



Figure 4: *Felices Valentinianenses*. (O).



Figure 5: The image of a figure holding a rod and a globe is reminiscent of coins from the reign of Valentinian II. <https://www.cointalk.com/threads/ancient-valentinian-ii-siliqua.234072/>

This would suggest that the unit was raised between 388 and 392, leaving us with 392 as the latest possible date for any of the *Auxilia Palatina* units in the army of Spain. If we accept this then the first group of Honorian units listed under the *Magister Peditum* must have been raised at the beginning of his reign, and the second group might well represent a

<sup>174</sup> See appendix ii for further discussion.

second wave of recruiting to coincide with a later problem such as the crossing of the Rhine, the revolt of Constantine or reinforcements for Constantius' re-conquest. It should also be noted that three of these later units who appear after the first Honorian group are mentioned by Claudian, forming a part of Stilicho's army used to defeat Gildo in 398.<sup>175</sup> The *Nervi*, *Felices* and *Invicti* are all named, though the full titles are not given. Their appearance in the main field army of the *Magister Peditum*, along with the two most senior units of the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani* is interesting. Being core units of what we might assume is the army of Italy, it is interesting to see these three detached and operating in Spain, although because Claudian does not give them their full titles, the *Felices* could refer to either *Seniores* or *Iuniores*, the latter is recorded in Italy. This detaching of forces is interesting in light of the events of 405 and the defeat of Radagaisus' invasion.

If we now look at the five *Legiones Comitatus* under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, we have the *Fortenses*, *Propugnatores Seniores*, *Septimani Seniores*, *Vesontes* and *Undecimani*. All of these are quite senior in the *Magister Peditum* lists, ranging from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> and as such, none of them are new formations. As has already been mentioned, the *Septimani Seniores* do not appear in the Paris copy, but what is interesting is the listing among the *Limitanei* in Spain of the *Septimani Gemina*.<sup>176</sup> This entry appears in the editions of the *Notitia Dignitatum* by Böcking, Seeck and Faleiro. These would seem to be descended from *Legio VII Gemina Felix*, which was stationed in modern Leon in Spain. Before we accept the idea that the omission of the *Septimani Seniores* is a clerical error within the Paris edition, it should be noted that the *Septimani Iuniores* appear in the next army list for the *Comes Tingitaniae*. Both *Hispania* and *Tingitania* fall under the diocese of *Hispaniae*.<sup>177</sup> This link between the two armies is interesting in light of Orosius' comment about the units of the *Comes Hispaniarum* being transferred to Africa. The link can also be seen in the listing for the *Fortenses*, as already noted, there is another unit of the same name listed under the *Comes Africae*.<sup>178</sup> While there are two entries in the *Magister Peditum* list for *Fortenses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup>, they do not share the same shield patterns.

---

<sup>175</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, I, 415-423.

<sup>176</sup> Not. Occ. xlii; Böcking (1839), p. 119; Seeck (1876), p. 216; Faleiro (2005), p. 481.

<sup>177</sup> Not. Occ. vi, vii.

<sup>178</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



Figure 6: Both entries for the *Fortenses* (O).

However, there is a similarity of the brown background and a white circle to suggest a possible link between the two. It is assumed that the first unit listed, 2<sup>nd</sup> in order of seniority and shown on the left hand side, is the unit in Spain, as it comes before the other *Legiones Comitatusenses*, and that the other unit is listed last in the *Comes Africae*. However, if the Spanish entry for the *Fortenses* had been part of Gerontius' revolt, they could have been transferred and added to the end of the troops in Africa and their shield repeated at the end of the *Magister Peditum's* list, creating a duplication along with a small colour variation in the Illustration.

The next unit is the *Propugnatores Seniores*, while the *Propugnatores Iuniores* are listed under the *Comes Illyrici*, there is also another unit that needs to be considered under *Magister Militum per Illyricum*, a unit named *Minervii*.<sup>179</sup> As Ueda-Sarson noted, the *Propugnatores* and *Minervii* units have identical shields, which is unusual for the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as when duplications between units occurs it is normally by name rather than shield design.<sup>180</sup> There is also the twinned pair of *Legio Palatina Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores* who are listed under the *Comes Africae*. These two have similar shield designs, which are completely different to the *Propugnatores Seniores*, but their presence in Africa is interesting, as is their listing in that army.

<sup>179</sup> Not. Occ. vii; Not. Or. viii.

<sup>180</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDminervii.html>



Figure 7: *Propugnatores Seniores*, *Minervii* and *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores* (O).

The *Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores* appear after an *Auxilia Palatina* unit, so we assume they have been promoted from *Comitatenses*, though they do appear in their correct place, i.e. among the *Legiones Palatinae*, in the *Magister Peditum* listings. The only exception to this rule is the *Legio Palatina Cimbriani*, which is also in Africa, is listed below the two *Armigeri* units, but appears ahead of the *Iuniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listing. In the African listing there is a *Legio Comitatensis* that separates the *Armigeri Iuniores* and the *Cimbriani*, the *Secundani Italicani*. I will return to the confused order of the *Comes Africae* listings later, but I have brought it up here to highlight the possibility of proving the different dates of the listings within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It would appear that the main *Magister Peditum* section was drawn up after that of the *Comes Africae*, and the later was not amended. As for the *Propugnatores Seniores*, while there is a tenuous link with the *Comes Africae*, it is possible to see them being transferred to Africa as Orosius stated and being sent on to *Illyricum* and renamed the *Minervii*, much in the same way as the *Honoriaci* might have become the *Constantiaci*.

The next unit is the *Septimani Seniores*, which I have already discussed above. While the shield patterns for these and the *Septimani Iuniores* are not closely related, nor are they similar to any of those other unit bearing the title *Septimani*.



Figure 8: Showing the *Septimani Seniores*, *Septimani Iuniores* and *Septimani* (O).

As already noted, the Paris edition does not list the *Septimani Seniores* under the *Comes Hispaniarum*. There is a separate listing assigned to the *Magister Peditum* of provincial units under his command. These represent all those non-field army units which are not under the

direct command of a border *Dux*. While they are not illustrated, so we cannot make any visual comparisons, there is an entry under Galicia Spain for the *Septimani Gemina*.<sup>181</sup> It should also be noted that there is another entry for the *Septimani Gemina* under the *Magister Militum per Orientem* and another simply named *Septimani* under *Magister Equitum intra Gallias*. The title *Septimani* refers to the old 7<sup>th</sup> legion, but this could be either *Legio VII Claudia* or *Legio VII Gemina Felix*. While it is possible to suggest, as Luke Ueda-Sarson does, that these units all derive from the *Septimani Gemina* in Spain, there is a problem with this.<sup>182</sup> As he notes, the next unit in the order of listing in the *Magister Militum per Orientem*, is the *Decima Gemina*, which would appear to be a detachment of *Legio X Gemina* and they appear as third and fourth in the listings implying they are a brigaded pair. This is further strengthened by the fact they have similar shield design which are nothing like the previous *Septimani* ones.



Figure 9: Showing *Septimani Gemina* and *Decima Gemina* (O).

Under the *Dux Moesiae Primae* there is the *Legio VII Claudia*, which has been entered under two locations at Viminaco and Cuppis, both listed as under a *Praefectus* so presumably two *Legio* sized detachments, while under the *Dux Moesiae Secundae* there is a listing for the *Legio XI Claudia*.<sup>183</sup> If we accept the view that the *Septimani Seniores* and *Iuniores* along with the eastern *Septimani Gemina*, all derive from the *Legio* in Spain, then this also has three detachments.<sup>184</sup> The problem is that there is also the unit simply called *Septimani*, a *Pseudocomitatenses* unit under the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*. While this could have been drawn from either parent unit, and we have examples of four or five detachments, it is relatively uncommon in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and especially in the western section.<sup>185</sup> The situation is made more complicated by the fact that except for the Bodleian copy (O), the

<sup>181</sup> Not. Occ. xlii.

<sup>182</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDseptimaGemina.html>

<sup>183</sup> Not. Or. xli.

<sup>184</sup> Not. Or. vii, xl; Not. Occ. xlii.

<sup>185</sup> Not. Or. xxxix, xl, xlii, xlii.



three *Septimani* units are not assigned as *Seniores* or *Iuniores* against their picture titles, but only in the following lists. If we accept the link between the *Septimani Gemina* and *Decima Gemina* as a brigaded pair of *Legiones*, formed at the same time and hence the similar shield patterns, their posting to the east may be because they were raised from a parent *Legio* in the Danube region. There are examples of similar pairings and shield designs, such as the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani Seniores* in Italy, who also have links to border *Legiones*.<sup>186</sup> This would leave us with the three *Septimani* units being drawn from the Spanish *Septimani Gemina*. If we now consider the *Septimani Seniores* omission from the Paris edition we have three possibilities. Firstly, it is just a clerical error and should be ignored. Secondly, it should be the *Septimani Gemina* as a *Pseudocomitatenses*, which would make sense if the *Comes Hispaniarum* was a recent creation like the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*. Or, what the Paris copy is showing us is the on-going process of units being destroyed, and the *Septimani Seniores* were originally under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, and after a period of combat were destroyed but not removed from the listing.

There is one other possible explanation, put forward by Nischer, which needs to be considered. The *Septimani Iuniores* are listed in the Italian field army, but are listed ahead of the *Regii*, who are actually listed above the *Septimani Iuniores* in the *Distributio*. Nischer believed that the Italian listing was incorrect, and it should have been the *Septimani Seniores*, who would rank above the *Regii*, and as such the Spanish unit should be the *Iuniores* instead.<sup>187</sup> While this explains the possible duplication, it does not answer why the *Septimani Iuniores* are listed under both the *Comites Hispaniarum* and *Tingitaniae*. What is interesting is the fact that a duplication has occurred and it is reasonable to suggest that either the *Septimani Seniores* were temporarily detached to assist in the fighting in Spain, or likewise, the *Septimani Iuniores* were sent over from *Tingitania* to also assist. Either way the listings could be showing us the transit of a unit over time, with the official records not being kept up to date or amended as this was a temporary arrangement.

The last two *Legiones* are the *Vesontes* and the *Undecimani* and unfortunately can add little to our understanding. The *Vesontes* do have a similar shield pattern to the *Octavani*, a descendant of the old *Legio VIII Augusta*, and at some point they may have been brigaded

---

<sup>186</sup> Not. Occ. vii; Not. Or. xxxix.

<sup>187</sup> Nischer (1923), p. 20, fn. 6.

together, or the *Octavani* were the parent body. Either way this does not shed any further light on dating the *Comes Hispaniarum* command.<sup>188</sup> That leaves the *Undecimani*, presumably linked to the old *Legio XI Claudia*. There is also an entry for them in the east under the *Magister Militum Praesentalis II*, where they are a *Legio Palatina*. Neither is designated as *Seniores* or *Iuniores* and they do not share the same shield design.<sup>189</sup> There is a listing under the *Dux Moesiae Secundae* which has the *Praefectus Legionis XI* at *Durostorum* (i.e. Silistra) and a further two entries for the *Praefectus Legionis Undecimae Claudia* cohortis quintae pedaturae at *Transmariscae* (i.e. Tutrakan). However, these two cohorts are shown as *Superioris* and *Inferioris*, which we must assume conforms to *Seniores* and *Iuniores* classification.<sup>190</sup> This seems very unusual identification, as cohorts are normally only entered as *Auxiliaries*, and *Legiones* are never shown as *Seniores* and *Iuniores* among the border *Limitanei*. It may be possible to suggest that the old *Legio* reference should have been replaced by the newer type such as *Seniores* and *Iuniores*, but has been left in place at its old station. While not directly relevant to this discussion on Spain, this does highlight inconsistencies in the way information has been recorded within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Returning to the *Undecimani* in Spain, what is interesting to note is the similarity of the shield pattern with that of the *Septimani* in Gaul, and indeed with shield patterns in general amongst the *Pseudocomitatenses*.



Figure 10: Showing the *Undecimani*, *Septimani* and the Eastern *Undecimani* and *Primani* (O).

Since the eastern *Undecimani* have the identical pattern as the preceding unit, the *Primani*, it is reasonable to presume that they are a brigaded pair, and that the Spanish unit was raised at a later date from the parent body of *Moesiae Secundae* as a *Pseudocomitatensis* and sent to Spain. In this scenario, it is possible to see three potential such units under the

<sup>188</sup> [uedasarson.com.HDvesontes.html](http://uedasarson.com.HDvesontes.html) (link)

<sup>189</sup> Not. Or. vi.

<sup>190</sup> Not. Or. xl.

*Comes Hispaniarum*, the *Honoriaci*, *Septimani* and *Undecimani*, which would make the army look more like that of *Illyricum* and *Gaul*, made up with recently promoted border *Limitanei*.

## **2.5 Dating the entry for the *Comes Hispaniarum*.**

If we accept the latest date for the final composition of the western *Notitia Dignitatum* as 425, as Jones suggested, then the entry for the *Comes Hispaniarum* presents us with a problem. While there was a *Comes* in operation in Spain, this was not a permanent command, and it had disappeared by 430. This would account for the fact that there is no badge of office within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as a temporary formation would not require one. In his analysis of Spain, Hoffmann also supported a later date, giving the range of 416-422 for the Spanish entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, supporting the idea that the entry reflects the on-going campaigns against the Vandals by Asterius or Castinus.<sup>191</sup> However, if this entry was recording these campaigns then the command would surely have included cavalry units like the other field armies, so we need to find another reason to account for this lack of cavalry.

An earlier date has been suggested by Arce, who suggests post 401, and most likely a response to the crisis of Constantine III's reign. Arce places the army's creation between the dates 407-411. While he gives a very detailed analysis of the structure and purpose of the Spanish *Limitanei* as a part of the maritime defence, he argues the size of the mobile army was sufficient for the purpose of supporting these defences and responding to the threat posed by Constantine.<sup>192</sup> Like Hoffman, Arce does not offer any explanation to the unusual composition of the army, so presumably supports Jones' view the cavalry portion was made up by *Foederatii*.<sup>193</sup>

Because the Spanish authorities appear to have sided with Constantine in 407, we have no direct evidence of troops within Spain opposing Constantine, and as such, this does not argue against them being there. However, as Kulikowski points out, the civil war and barbarian occupation would have certainly destroyed whatever force had been stationed there. While it is possible that what has been recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is from 395 up to 407, the relative peace in the province would argue against the need for permanent army in

---

<sup>191</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 95.

<sup>192</sup> Arce (2009), pp. 95, 108.

<sup>193</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 356.

Spain. Kulikowski believes that after the revolt of Constantine III the importance of the diocese increased and the command of the *Comes Hispaniarum* was established after Wallia's reconquest and withdrawal from Spain in 418. This is then similar to the views of Hoffmann and Jones' later date for the *Notitia Dignitatum Occidentis*.<sup>194</sup>

However, it seems more likely that what is being recorded under the *Comes Hispaniarum* is the situation after 411 and the suppression of Gerontius' rebellion. The units shown were in the process of being transferred to Africa and Italy, while the *Epistula Honorii* could well be recording the inducement or reward of this army rebelling against Gerontius. The *Honoriaci*, the only unit identified in our primary sources, can be linked to Constantine's revolt and units in Spain, and can be seen in transit in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as an unassigned unit in the listings. We also have the link between this unit and the *Taifalia*, which shows us another unit in transit, from Britain with Constantine III, through to Spain and then onto Africa. While not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in Spain, the final position of the *Taifalia* in Africa can only be explained in light of Orosius' comments. The fact that the Army of the *Comes Hispaniarum* only has infantry units can be further explained if we accept that the various documents that form the *Notitia Dignitatum* do come from different dates and that of *Magister Equitum* has been updated in 411 or soon after, whereas the *Magister Peditum* listing was not. This can be supported by Jones' observation that the *Equites Constaniani Felices* appear in the *Magister Equitum* listings below some Honorian units, so are presumably named after Constantius in 421.<sup>195</sup> It should be noted that the last entry in the *Vexillationes Palatinae* are the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses*, which may have been raised by Valentinian III, or in his name.<sup>196</sup> There are no such entries under the *Magister Peditum*, so presumably this listing had not yet been updated. This updating must be viewed in the same light as the composition of the *Comes Africae* command, which appears to have been completed before the *Magistri* listings, which would imply the existence of different dates within the western section.

We then have the double entry of the *Legio Fortensis* which would also add weight to the above two views. It would show the unit in transit from Spain to Africa and the fact that the

---

<sup>194</sup> Kulikowski (2004), pp. 157, fn. 26, 172.

<sup>195</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

<sup>196</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

*Magister Peditum* list has not yet been updated. The similarity in the two designs for the *Fortenses* would suggest that these are one and the same unit. We also have the possible alternative identification of the *Victores Iuniores* with the *Victores Iuniores Britannici*, which may also show the history of a unit in transit. Then there is the omission of the *Septimani Seniores* from the Paris edition, which could be another indication of the failure to update the main *Magistri* listings.

Finally, we have the make-up of the army itself, the ratio of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones*, which looks like a campaign army rather than the hastily formed provincial forces seen in Gaul or *Illyricum*. While I have suggested that there is the possibility of including *Pseudocomitatenses* within this formation, this does not prevent us from dating it to the time of Gerontius' revolt. Indeed, if he was planning on rebelling against Constantine, then recruiting local *Limitanei* would be logical. To this we must add the complete lack of any mention in our sources outside the *Notitia Dignitatum* of an army in Spain being a permanent fixture. Spanish forces are stated in reference to particular campaigns, and had the later campaign of Asterius been intended to re-establish Imperial control of Spain and maintain a permanent army, why was Castinus campaigning with allies rather than Roman troops, two years later? This can probably be answered by the fact that the continual fighting severely reduced the effectiveness of these units and those that did survive were probably destroyed in Castinus' campaign. The fact that they are still recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is an example of it containing out of date information, undermining the notion that it is a working document.

Some of these issues, when taken individually, could simply represent small textual errors, but taken together they offer an alternative explanation. The entry for the *Comes Hispaniarum* and his field army records the situation in 411 or just after.

### 3. *Comes Tingitaniae*

#### 3.1 Introduction

Having already touched upon the command of the *Comes Tingitaniae* in our discussion on the *Comes Hispaniarum*, we need to look in more detail at the forces listed in this border province of Spain. Unlike for Spain, we do not have any contemporary sources that refer to the province or the army directly. Both Hydatius and Orosius discuss events in Africa and the Vandals' crossing to *Tingitania*, but contain no information on the army stationed there. There is some limited discussion in Ammianus Marcellinus, but we lack any local historical source. The *Comes Tingitaniae* has his own cover page with the badge of office, unlike the *Comes Hispaniarum*. He also has direct control of the border *Limitanei* as there is no border *Dux*, no doubt because of the small size of the province.<sup>197</sup>



Figure 11: Cover Sheet for the *Comes Tingitaniae* (O). Not. Occ. xxvi.

It should be noted that under this entry for the *Comes Tingitaniae*, only the *Limitanei* forces are listed. The *Comitatenses* forces are actually listed in the *Distributio* as the last item, under the *Comes Tingitaniae*.<sup>198</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Not. Occ. xxvi.

<sup>198</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

Before looking at the individual units in detail, it will first be necessary to look at how the information has been structured within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. At the beginning of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the index of the *Comes rei Militaris*, *Tingitania* is listed third after *Italia* and *Africa*.<sup>199</sup> However, in the *Distributio* for the *Magister Peditum*, the *Comes Tingitaniae* is listed fifth after the *Comes Hispaniarum*. This is perhaps more to do with the *Comes Hispaniarum* being in the wrong position, as it has been argued that command of the *Comes Hispaniarum* was a new creation. However, the situation is made more difficult to interpret by the *Distributio* of the *Magister Equitum*, where the *Comes Tingitaniae* is listed last. This would appear to be at odds with the *Comes Tingitaniae*'s position under the *Magister Peditum*, which prompted Mann to suggest that this looks like it has been added as an afterthought.<sup>200</sup> He also observed that all three of the cavalry units listed under the *Comes Tingitaniae* have the word *Comitatenses* in their unit titles, which is unusual as this does not appear in any cavalry units in other commands. This could, however, be an example of the restructuring of the province's defences. As we have already discovered under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, that the *Magister Equitum* listings have been more recently updated than the *Magister Peditum*, then these three units might well have been recently promoted from local *Limitanei* status to field army service, hence the inclusion of *Comitatenses* in their unit titles. This would suggest a recent change and if we take into account the fact that the *Comes Tingitaniae* also controls the local *Limitanei*, then his position may have been recently promoted from a border *Dux*. Yet this would require the cover page for the *Comes Tingitaniae* and its position within the *Notitia Dignitatum* have also been updated, which seems less likely due to the time it would take to do this.

There are a few limited references to the field army of the *Comes Tingitaniae* in our sources. An epitaph for Memorius, found at Arles, mentions his career, including being *Comes Maurentaniae* and *Tingitaniae* in 370.<sup>201</sup> Ammianus makes reference to troops being posted to the province in 373.<sup>202</sup> After this, there are no further references to the army in the province. Hydatius mentions that the Vandals raided *Tingitania* prior to their crossing, which has been interpreted to mean that they had established a foothold five years before, that is

---

<sup>199</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>200</sup> Mann (1976), p. 8.

<sup>201</sup> Drew-Bear (1997), p. 274; PLRE (1971), Memorius 2, p. 595.

<sup>202</sup> Amm. 29.5.20.

in c.425.<sup>203</sup> This has been further supported by looking at the wording of Hydatius' statement, as he uses the term '*invadunt*', which can be taken as 'occupying' as well as 'invading'. As Kulikowski points out, contact between *Tingitania* and *Africa* was maintained by shipping rather than overland contact, so the Vandal crossing can be seen as using bases in *Tingitania* to continue their journey into the heart of the African province.<sup>204</sup> There is no mention of any resistance to their crossing in 429, but our sources tell us that they were invited over by Boniface. Both Jordanes and Procopius relate this, but there is no evidence to support it, and since the Vandals ended up besieging Boniface in the city of Hippo, it would seem unlikely.<sup>205</sup> Our sources portray Boniface as a rebel, and the court of Placidia at Ravenna acted as if he was. In 427 a military expedition was sent to Africa under the command of three generals, but this was defeated by Boniface, with the assistance of his Gothic *Foederatii*. A second force was sent under the command of Sigisvult, also a Goth, which succeeded in capturing Carthage in 428.<sup>206</sup> However, the threat of the Vandal invasion seems to have triggered an attempt to come to terms with Boniface, and negotiations were undertaken by an emissary from Ravenna, by the name of Darius.<sup>207</sup> Two things are interesting from this sequence of events. Firstly the Roman authorities were actively trying to oppose the Vandal crossing, and as such the army of the *Comes Tingitaniae* would have been of vital importance in stopping them, yet all we have is silence in our sources. The second point is the importance placed on Boniface's *Foederatii* in defeating the first attack upon him, and not on the forces of the *Comes Africae*, which are quite considerable in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>208</sup>

### 3.2 Background

It should be noted that prior to Diocletian's reforms, *Tingitania* was joined to *Mauretania*, which then came under the control of the *Dux et praeses provinciae Mauritaniae et Caesariensis*. A *Diplomata* issued in the reign of Hadrian suggests a permanent garrison for *Tingitania* and *Mauretania* of 14 or 15 units. There is also epigraphic evidence for the existence of two further units, *Ala II Syrorum* at Sala in 144 and *Cohors I Celtiberorum*. This

<sup>203</sup> Merills and Mills (2010), p. 54; Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 80.

<sup>204</sup> Kulikowski (2000), p. 178. Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 80.

<sup>205</sup> Jordanes, 167; Procopius, III.3.

<sup>206</sup> PLRE (1980), Sigisvult, p. 1010.

<sup>207</sup> Traina (2009), pp. 85-6; PLRE (1980), Darius 2, p. 347.

<sup>208</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



would have put some 9,000 men in the province.<sup>209</sup> The following *Limitanei* are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for *Tingitania*:

*Praefectus Alae Herculeae* at *Tamuco*

*Tribunus Cohortis Secundae Hispanorum* at *Duga*

*Tribunus Cohortis Primae Herculeae* at *Aulucos*

*Tribunus Cohortis Primae Itryaeorum* at *Bariensi*

Unknown unit at *Sala*

*Tribunus Cohortis Pacatianensis* at *Pacatiniana*

*Tribunus Cohortis Tertiae Hastorum* at *Tabernas*

*Tribunus Cohortis Friglensis* at *Friglas*<sup>210</sup>

Of these units, two cannot be accounted for from the original list, the unknown unit at *Sala*, which could conceivably still be *Ala II Syrorum* or the *Cohors II Syrorum* also recorded there in the second century.<sup>211</sup> To this can be added the *Cohors Pacatianenses* at *Pacatiana* which looks like a locally raised unit. The rest of the units listed appear to have disappeared, as those units listed under *Mauretaniae et Caesariensis* are *Praepositus limitis* and not as *Ala* or *Cohors* this is also true for the *Limitanei* listings under the *Comes Africae* and *Dux provinciae Tripolitanae, praepositus limitis*. These missing units cannot be dated later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the total force listed would at the most have equated to 4,000 men, so a reduction of more than half.<sup>212</sup> This can be balanced by the inclusion of the field army, which would bring the province back up the strength it had in the second century.

The fact that the *Limitanei* under the *Comes* still retain the earlier classification is interesting when we consider the classification of the three cavalry units under the *Comes* command. They are all classified as *Comitatenses* in their titles, which might imply they been upgraded

---

<sup>209</sup> Roxon (1973), p. 843.

<sup>210</sup> Not. Occ. Xxxvi.

<sup>211</sup> Roxon (1973), p. 852 (Table 1).

<sup>212</sup> Roxon (1973), p. 852 (Table 1): *Ala Gemelliana, Cohort IV Gallorum, Cohort Parthorum, Cohort I Austurum, Cohort IV Tungrorum, Ala Hamiorum I Syrorum*.

from earlier garrison. Of those not accounted for are three *Alae*, the *Gemelliana*, *II Syrorum* and *I Hamiorum*.

### 3.3 Units under the *Comes Tingitaniae*

When looking at the army of the *Comes Tingitaniae* the first thing to note is the size of this force, at only seven units it is the smallest in the *Notitia* listings, with only 3,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry. This is partially due to the nature of the threat and local geography. Small groups of semi-nomadic herdsman in the land between the mountains and the desert only represented a minor threat to the province. It has been suggested that the majority of the province had been abandoned by Diocletian, apart from a small area around *Tingis*, but this is far from certain.<sup>213</sup>

The main field army of the *Comes Tingitaniae* is listed in the *Magister Peditum* and the *Magister Equitum* listings and shown in the *Distributio*, and is made up of the following units, also showing the positions within those listings:<sup>214</sup>

<i>Mauri Tonantes Seniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	64 <sup>th</sup> under <i>Auxilia Palatina</i>
<i>Mauri Tonantes Iuniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	65 <sup>th</sup> under <i>Auxilia Palatina</i>
<i>Constantiniani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> under <i>Legiones Comitatus</i>
<i>Septimani Iuniores (Legio Comitatus)</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> under <i>Legiones Comitatus</i>
<i>Equites Scutarii Seniores (Vexillationes)</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> under <i>Vexillationes Comitatus</i>
<i>Equites Sagittarii Seniores (Vexillationes)</i>	32 <sup>nd</sup> under <i>Vexillationes Comitatus</i>
<i>Equites Cardueni (Vexillationes)</i>	31 <sup>st</sup> under <i>Vexillationes Comitatus</i>

The twinned pair of *Auxilia Palatina*, *Mauri Tonantes Seniores* and *Iuniores* are the last two units listed in the *Magister Peditum* listings for the *Auxilia Palatina*. This would date them to the latter part of Honorius' reign. As already discussed, there seems to be two separate groups of Honorian named *Auxilia Palatina*, and these are the last units from the second

<sup>213</sup> Kulikowski (2004), pp. 79-80; Whittaker (1994), p. 151.

<sup>214</sup> Not. Occ. v, vi.

group. This would seem to suggest that the most senior units in this command were recruited in the aftermath of the revolt of Constantine III, and just prior to the Vandal crossing in 429. Their name, *Mauri*, would also suggest that they have been locally recruited from the *Mauri* tribesmen, unless we consider the possibility that the name *Mauri*, which is usually associated with light cavalry, has been adopted as a term for light infantry in this instance. If there is any connection with Gibbon's earlier claim that there were two units of Moors within the *Honoriaci*, it seems likely to have been these earlier units, rather than those listed under the *Comes Tingitaniae*, though as the temptation would be to see them as being linked, there is nothing to support this.

As already discussed under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, the *Constantiniani* have been duplicated in the *Comes Tingitaniae* and the *Comes Africae* listings. While the illustrated shield design under the *Magister Peditum* lists this unit as *Constantiniaci*, the entry in the *Distributio* names them as *Constantiniana* and the full listings under the *Magister Peditum* they are named the *Secunda Flavia Constantiniana*.<sup>215</sup> These were presumably raised by either Constantine I or Constantius II, so pre-dating the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but their position towards the end of the list of *Legiones Comitatuses* would seem to be wrong for such an established unit. Ammianus describes an instance in 373 during the revolt of Firmus when a detachment from a unit of Constantinian infantry under the *Comes Africae* were sent to *Tingitaniae* along with some cavalry horse archers. Since we do indeed have a listing for this unit in both *Tingitaniae* and *Africae*, this would argue for them both being the *Secunda Flavia Constantiniana*, with the parent body probably becoming the *Prima Flavia Constantiniana*. Unfortunately Ammianus does not give us the unit titles and there is no listing for a *Legio* named *Prima Flavia Constantiniana*.<sup>216</sup> The most logical answer would be that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is again showing us a unit in transit, and the records have not been updated.

We have a similar possibility with the next unit, the *Septimani Iuniores*, as already discussed under the *Comes Hispaniarum*. However, this would argue against a common time frame, as the *Mauri Tonantes* would appear to have been raised in the 420s, whereas the *Constantiniani* were transferred in the 370s and the *Septimani* sometime during the fighting

---

<sup>215</sup> Faleiro (2005), p. 354, fn. 14 follows Scharf (1997) in suggesting that these are all the same unit.

<sup>216</sup> Amm. 29.5.20.

in Spain between 409-411. This can be supported by the fact that they are listed in 19<sup>th</sup> position under the *Magister Peditum*, but appear below the *Constantiniani* who are listed 30<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Peditum*. As the *Septimani Iuniores* are more senior we would expect them to precede the *Constantiniani* under the *Comes Tingitaniae* as they do under the *Magister Peditum*, and the fact that they do not would argue that they were indeed a later transfer to the *Comes'* army.

If we look at the three cavalry units in this command we get a similar and equally confusing picture. There is no listing elsewhere for the *Equites Scutarii Seniores Comitatusenses*. Instead, under the *Magister Equitum* we have the simply named *Equites Scutarii*. There is a unit titled *Equites Scutarii Seniores*, these are under the *Comes Africae*.<sup>217</sup> There is no listing in the *Distributio* for the *Equites Scutarii*, although there is another *Equites Scutarii*, listed in the east in the *Praesentalis II* army.<sup>218</sup> If the *Equites Scutarii* in the west are the same as the *Scutarii Seniores Comitatusenses* in *Tingitaniae*, then we might wonder what such a senior unit, listed 10<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Equitum* listings for *Comitatusenses* units, is doing in faraway Morocco? The most likely explanation is that the *Equites Scutarii Seniores Comitatusenses* were a recent creation like the other two cavalry units under the *Comes Tingitaniae* and not linked to the *Equites Scutarii*. The fact that they are not listed under the *Magister Equitum* may suggest a very late date for the unit, or that it had ceased to exist in the time gap between the drafting of the *Distributio* and the updating of the *Magistri listings*. There is no way to prove this line of reasoning and of course it leaves the *Equites Scutarii* listed under the *Magister Equitum* unassigned to any field command, so the possibility remains they are one and the same unit.

The next unit is the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* who appear second from last on the *Magister Equitum* listing and do not have an illustrated shield design. This is strange, as the last unit listed under the *Comes Tingitaniae* is the *Equites Cardueni*, who appear above the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* in the *Magister Equitum* listings and so are presumably senior to them despite being listed last. However, the name *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* would suggest quite a senior unit because of the *Seniores* part of their unit title. As a comparison the simply named *Equites Scutarii* appear 10<sup>th</sup> in the order of seniority, while the majority of cavalry

---

<sup>217</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>218</sup> Not. Or. vi.

units which include the *Seniores* title are listed as *Vexillationes Palatinae*.<sup>219</sup> Their low position suggests the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* were recently raised, similar to the *Mauri Tonantes*, or less likely, they have been recently transferred and on this occasion deleted from their original placement and somehow placed towards the end of the *Magister Equitum* listings. There is also a unit named *Equites Sagittarii Iuniores* listed under the *Comes Africae*, and it is also higher up in the *Magister Equitum* listings than its *Seniores* twin. It is interesting to note that when Ammianus was discussing the revolt of Firmus, the horse archers he mentioned had been demoted because they had sided with the usurper, and we may speculate that this was the fate of the *Equites Scutarii Seniores*. However, Ammianus tells us that they were horsemen attached to the fourth *cohort* of archers. They seem unlikely to be the same as the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores*, so probably a local *Limitanei* unit. What this does suggest is that they can from the forth unit of horse archers, or a mounted detachment from an old *Auxilia Equitata cohort*, then raised to *Comitatenses* status and placed under the *Comes Tingitaniae* with the name, *Equites Sagittarii Seniores Comitatenses*. This would offer a satisfactory reason for their low status.<sup>220</sup>

The last unit listed under the *Comes Tingitaniae* are listed in the *Distributio* as the *Equites Cardueni Comitatenses*. There is no listing for them under the *Magister Equitum*, although in that list above the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* are the *Equites Sagittarii Cordueni*. While of similar name, the *Cardueni* and *Cordueni* are not identical.<sup>221</sup> It would seem that they are the same unit, but the change from being called *Sagittarii Cordueni* to *Cardueni Comitatenses* may suggest another explanation. If the *Equites Sagittarii Cordueni* had been assigned to the *Comes Tingitaniae*, but had been recently destroyed, then it is possible that the *Equites Cardueni Comitatenses* were a very recent replacement. They may have been created out of the remains of the old unit, so they have a similar name, and were probably raised from local *Limitanei* so lacked the skills to be a *Sagittarii*, archer unit. This would explain the change in name and suggest that they were a late creation.

---

<sup>219</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>220</sup> Amm. 29.5.20. See Keppie (1984), p. 189, on *Cohortes Equitatae*.

<sup>221</sup> Not. Occ. vi, vii.

### 3.4 Dating the army of the *Comes Tingitaniae*

The most obvious answer to the silence in our sources describing the Vandal conquest is that the army in Tingitania had ceased to be an operating force by 429. The most likely date for its demise would be during the invasion of Spain in 409. If we remember Orosius' comments on how Gerontius' troops were sent to Africa, in or shortly after 411, as a Spaniard, he would have been aware that Tingitania was a part of the Spanish Diocese, so his use of *Africa* in this instance probably does not mean Tingitania. If this not the case and Orosius did in fact refer to troops being re-deployed in Tingitania, then the two *Mauri Auxilia Palatina* units were recruited locally, along with the *Constantiaci* and *Septimani* before being posted to *Africa*. However, this would mean that the *Mauri* units were raised at an earlier date, possibly 411. This would then link to establishment of the *Comes Tingitaniae* with my suggested date for the listing of the *Comes Hispaniarum*.

An alternative explanation would be that the *Mauri Auxilia Palatina* units, appearing as the last two under the *Magister Peditum* this would date them towards the later estimates for the *Notitia Dignitatum*, sometime in the mid 420's. This could be linked with Constantius III recover of Gaul and Spain in 420, and the listing for the *Comes Tingitaniae* could show the army at this date. Added to this the unusual naming of the cavalry units might also imply a similar date, prior to the Vandal crossing. The fact that we have no sources mentioning the forces of *Comes Tingitaniae* opposing, or cooperating with the Vandals would argue against the force still being in existence at this later date.

What the list for The *Comes Tingitaniae* appears to be is a composite of two dates. A force created in 411, and with additions in 420. However, since several units have been moved to the *Comes Africae*, the list of the *Comes Tingitaniae* probably never existed as it is shown the *Notitia Dignitatum*. While the *Constantiaci* and *Septimani Iuniores* were part of the force established in 411, they have been moved to Africa but not deleted from the command of the *Comes Tingitaniae* and were replaced by the two *Mauri* units in 420.

## 4. *Comes Africae*

### 4.1 Introduction

The next chapter will look at the army of the *Comes Africae* as this follows on from the discussion of the *Comes Hispaniarum* and *Comes Tingitaniae*. The first thing that has to be noted is the unusual make up of this army, which has three *Legiones Palatinae*, one *Auxilia Palatina*, eight *Legiones Comitatus* and 19 *Vexillationes Comitatus*.<sup>222</sup> This structure is completely different to those previously outlined in two respects; firstly the proportion of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones* is not the usual 2:1 ratio as seen in previous field armies, and secondly, the high proportion of cavalry. One possible explanation could be the nature of the African provinces themselves, with a 1,000 mile long frontier there would be a need for more mobile forces to patrol the borders with static garrisons in selected strong points. This does not, however, fully explain the situation.<sup>223</sup> To resolve this problem, it will be necessary to understand the history of the Roman army in Africa prior to the compilation of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as well as the events of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. To be able to do so we have the same contemporary sources as before, namely Orosius, Hydatius and Claudian, along with additional details from the later sixth century historian Procopius. We are also well supplied by more modern investigations undertaken by French historians, drawing on a wide range of epigraphical and archaeological studies from the 1950s onwards.

### 4.2 Background

In 197, the garrison of *Numidia* consisted of the *Legio III Augusta* supported by various auxiliary units. In 201 Septimius Severus reorganised the region creating the provinces of *Africa*, *Numidia* and *Mauritania Caesariensis*, but there was no recorded increase in the size of the army.<sup>224</sup> In fact, apart from a short period when the *III Augusta* was removed after the fall of Maximus Thrax, troop deployment seems to have remained stable from the Flavian in the first century onwards, with a few later additions like the Palmyran archers who were added in the third century.<sup>225</sup> Such continuity would suggest a very stable area in terms of the risk of any military action from the neighbouring tribes. Even with the

---

<sup>222</sup> Not. Occ. viii.

<sup>223</sup> Daniels (1987), p. 252.

<sup>224</sup> Daniels (1987), pp. 252-4.

<sup>225</sup> Daniels (1987), pp. 256-7.

disbanding of *Legio III Augusta* by Gordian I, because of their support for Maximus Thrax, no additional troops were sent to Africa to compensate for its removal, and it was not until 253 that Valerian restored the *Legio III Augusta* to its former posts in Africa.<sup>226</sup> Such limited forces, and notably infantry based, would suggest there were few problems with the semi-nomadic tribes of the sub-Sahara. By the fourth century this had changed again and Diocletian reorganised the province, and the *Comes Africae* was now responsible for the protection of the provinces of *Africa*, *Mauritania Caesariensis*, *Mauritania Sitifensis*, *Numidia* and *Tripolitana*.<sup>227</sup>

Using archaeological evidence Yann Le Bohec has identified the following units stationed in Africa prior to Diocletian's reforms, though it cannot be proven that they all served at the same time:<sup>228</sup>

*Legio: III Augusta*

Urban Cohorts: *I and XIII Urbana*

*Alae: I Flavia Numidica, I Pannoniorum and Siliana.*

Cohorts: *I Flavia Afrorum, II Flavia Equitata, I Chalcidenorum Equitata, VI Commagenorum Equitata, VIII Fida, I Flavia Equitata, II Hamiorum, II Hispanorum, VII Lusitanorum Equitata, II Maurorum, I Syrorum Sagittariorum, II Gemella Thracum.*

*Numera: Hemesenorum, Palmyrenorum Sagittariorum*

It is worth making a few observations concerning these units, as the proportion of cavalry in the earlier garrison will make an interesting comparison to the later field army, as well as the overall sizes of the forces involved. The standard early Imperial Roman cavalry *Ala* was a *Quingenaria* which had 16 *Turmae* of 30, giving a total of 480 men. There was also the larger *Ala Milliaria*, which had 24 *Turmae*, but as none of those listed above have this title, we can assume they were the more common *Quingenaria*. The three *Alae* listed would give us, assuming they were at full strength, 1,440 cavalry. To this must be added the five infantry *Cohortes Equitatae*, which was a standard size infantry unit with the addition of four Cavalry

---

<sup>226</sup> Daniels (1987), p. 257.

<sup>227</sup> Not. Occ. vii, xxiii, xxix, xxx.

<sup>228</sup> La Bohec (2007), p. 225.



*Turmae* (if *Quingenaria*) or eight (if *Milliaria*). Again, as none of these units are identified as *Milliaria*, we will assume they had the standard attachment of four *Turmae*, which is 120 cavalry and a total of 600 from all five.<sup>229</sup> This would give us a figure of 2,040 cavalry in total, which is well below the figure later recorded for the *Comes Africae*, with 19 *Vexillationes*, a figure as high as 9,500 cavalry.<sup>230</sup>

If we assume that the *Legio III Augusta* and all its *Cohorts* were at full strength, this would give us a paper total of 5,120 men. To this we can add the two urban *Cohortes* and the 12 Auxiliary *Cohortes*, so 14 units of 480 men, a total of 6,720 men.<sup>231</sup> If we accept that early imperial Auxiliaries were a part of the regular army, even if on border garrison duties, unlike the later *Limitanei* units listed under the various *Duces* commands, we still have a marked disparity with the later army of the *Comes Africae*. With 11 *Legiones* (of the new smaller size of only a 1,000 men) and one *Auxilia Palatina*, we have on paper a total of 11,500 infantry. The overall total from the early empire of 8,760, compared to the latter figure of 21,000, show a dramatic increase in the size and make-up of the army.<sup>232</sup> While this shows a massive increase in numbers for *Africa*, Cagnat suggested that when you include the border troops for *Mauritania* and *Tripolitana* into the earlier garrison, the overall troop numbers in the *Notitia Dignitatum* were not that much larger.<sup>233</sup>

While it is reasonable to believe that the creation of the post of the *Comes Africae* was a result of either Diocletian's or Constantine's reforms, we have no evidence to support this. In the early years of Diocletian's reign, the army units in *Africa* were under the control of the *Praeses*, who was supervised by the *Vicarius*. In 258 we have an experienced soldier named Octavianus acting as *Dux per Africam Numidiam Mauretaniamque*, to restore order in *Africa*.<sup>234</sup> This expanded role changed during the fourth century to be replaced by the *Comes Africae*, and though we cannot be certain of the date of the first *Comes Africae*, Mattingly suggests that it could have been during the 330s.<sup>235</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> Barker (1981), pp. 10-11.

<sup>230</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>231</sup> Barker (1981), p. 9.

<sup>232</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>233</sup> Cagnat (1913), p. 731; Warmington (1954), p. 14. And see Mattingly (1995), p. 87 for discussion of *Tripolitana*.

<sup>234</sup> Daniels (1987), p. 260.

<sup>235</sup> Mattingly (1995), p. 172.

It will be necessary to look at events prior to this date, to be able to track the on-going troubles in the provinces of Africa, which led to the creation of the post of the *Comes Africae* and the expansion of the troops stationed there. The first indication of trouble is recorded by during the reign of Diocletian, when Africa was being attacked by the *Quinguegentiana*, and that Maximian began a campaign in 297 to subdue them. This is recorded in the *Panegyrici Latini*, and later in further detail by Orosius<sup>236</sup> Which particular tribe Orosius is referring to is uncertain, but there are indications of more problems in *Mauritania* with ongoing reinforcements to the provincial garrison which might suggest that it was more than just local skirmishing.<sup>237</sup> The whole question of the purpose of the Roman garrison and its interaction with these tribes is one of recent debate, as is the notion of 'Romanization' in this region or the increased local effects on the garrison.<sup>238</sup> More importantly, it took an Emperor with a *Praesentalis* to restore order in Africa, something the local garrison could not achieve. This is our first recorded instance of a field army operating in Africa, and it is not until 373, with the revolts of Firmus and then Gildo, that we have any further problems in the province.

Firmus was a native tribal chieftain, who revolted in 372 and was defeated by the *Magister Equitum* Theodosius in 373, as is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus.<sup>239</sup> In his description of this campaign, Ammianus makes reference to several of the units that are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the *Comes Africae*. Apart from a generic reference to Theodosius reviewing some *Legiones* at Pancharia before the campaign, so there are presumably more than just the *Legio III Augusta*; Ammianus mentions the first and second *Legiones* being stationed at Caesarea after the initial fighting.<sup>240</sup> These could be equated to the *Primani* and *Secundani* listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>241</sup> Then we have the incident mentioned in the previous chapter concerning the horsemen from the fourth *cohort* of archers, who were demoted to the lowest class of service for going over to the rebel Firmus. These too, can be identified under the *Comes Africae* as the *Equites Quarto Sagittarii*, who along with part of

---

<sup>236</sup> *Panegyrici Latini*, 7.8.2, 8.5.2, 9.21.2; Orosius, vii.25.

<sup>237</sup> Mattingly and Hitchner (1995), p. 175.

<sup>238</sup> See Mattingly (2000), pp. 39-60.

<sup>239</sup> Amm. 29.5; PLRE (1971), Firmus 3, p. 340.

<sup>240</sup> Amm. 29.5.17.

<sup>241</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

the Constantian infantry, were dispatched to *Tingitania*.<sup>242</sup> These must represent fourth century reinforcements, as there are no obvious equivalents from Le Bohec's list of troops for the early imperial period. It is hard to be certain from Ammianus' narrative which unit he is referring to, as he goes on to mention the punishment of a unit called *Constantiniani*, which seems to be different to the above unit.<sup>243</sup> It is possible that he is referring to both the *Constantiniani* and the *Constantiaci*, both *Legiones Comitatus* under the *Comes Africae*.<sup>244</sup> Hoffman believes that both these units were raised by Constantius II, and that it is indeed possible that Ammianus could be referring to either or both.<sup>245</sup> This is probably based on an earlier reference by Ammianus that has two of Constantius' legions deserting to Julian in 361.<sup>246</sup> Whether they are the same units or not is debatable, but if they were, then they were transferred sometime after this incident.

While Ammianus does not give us any further unit names, there is a precise number of 3,500 men with Theodosius at a battle near Adda in 373, where he was supported by a column of auxiliaries, which included some Romans.<sup>247</sup> While this figure is hard to reconcile with the whole strength under the *Comes Africae* in the *Notitia*, if we make allowance for those units which had previously rebelled and had been dispatched along with units on garrison duty such as the *Primani* and *Secundani* mentioned above, it is not unrealistic to see Theodosius campaigning with only a part of his strength. One final point Ammianus makes is that Theodosius set out at the beginning of his campaign from Arles in Gaul, with only a small body of court troops.<sup>248</sup> This is interesting for two reasons; firstly, he was expected to take control of the existing forces in Africa, and secondly, it might be possible to link the court troops with the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*. These are something of a curiosity, being the only unit listed in any field army with the title of *Scholae*, and not listed with the other western *Scholae* under the *Magister Officiorum*, unless they are somehow linked to the *Scholae Scutariorum Secundae*.<sup>249</sup> This does not seem likely as all of the *Scholae Scutariorum* units under the *Magister Officiorum* use the references *Prima*,

---

<sup>242</sup> Amm. 29.5.20; Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>243</sup> Amm. 29.5.22.

<sup>244</sup> Not. Occ. v, vii.

<sup>245</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 193.

<sup>246</sup> Amm. 21.11.2.

<sup>247</sup> Amm. 29.5.29.

<sup>248</sup> Amm. 29.5.4.

<sup>249</sup> Not. Occ. viii.

*Secundae* and *Tertia*. There is no listing for the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae* under the *Magister Equitum*, however there is an *Equites Scutarii*, which is not given a *Seniores* or *Iuniores* title.<sup>250</sup> I will expand on this point later in the chapter when there will be an in-depth look at the various units that make up the *Comes Africae* command.

The next episode including the *Comes Africae* is the revolt of Gildo, who had been appointed *Comes Africae* in the aftermath of the defeat of his brother Firmus.<sup>251</sup> Our main source for this is Claudian, who wrote *De Bello Gildonico* as an account of the revolt, with additional details being supplied by Orosius. Unfortunately, neither author gives us any direct information on the make-up of the army of Africa, which appears to have remained under Gildo's command. Claudian does mention seven units which form the expeditionary force sent to deal with the rebellion, and while this information will be chiefly of value in a later chapter on the army of Italy, it does have some relevance here. He mentions *Cohortes* from the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani*, two of the most senior western *Legiones*, and the *Legio* named after Augustus. He also lists *Cohortes*, presumably *Auxilia Palatina*, the *Nervian*, *Felix*, those named Unconquered (*Invicti*) and the 'brave regiment of the Lion' to whose name their shields bear witness.<sup>252</sup> Orosius adds that the leader of this force, Mascezel, Gildo's other brother, had only 5,000 men, but does not provide any unit names.

A couple of observations are needed before continuing. Firstly, Claudian's apparent use of different unit titles has caused some confusion. He has *Cohors*, *Legio* and *Manipulus*, used, as noted by Gibbon, indifferently in his narrative.<sup>253</sup> Platnauer, in his translation of Claudian has used the term 'regiment' for the supposed Lion-shielded unit, which has no equivalent word in the original text. He goes on to identify the Legion as the *Legio III Augusta*, and the other units as *Numeri*, which he defines as a post-Diocletianic army unit.<sup>254</sup> This criticism of Claudian's careless use of terms is perhaps in this instance, unjust. Before naming the units, Claudian states that 'Stilicho made ready for war the most famous regiments (*Manipulos*) in the army, selecting therefrom special companies of picked men.'<sup>255</sup> It would therefore be possible to suggest a single *cohors* was detached from the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani* along with

---

<sup>250</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>251</sup> PLRE (1971), Gildo, pp. 395-6 gives him the title of *Comes et Magister utriusque per Africam*.

<sup>252</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-23.

<sup>253</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 18, fn. 44.

<sup>254</sup> Platnauer (1926), p. 128, fn. 2. See appendix i on *Numeri*.

<sup>255</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-17.

the whole of the *Legio III Augusta*, and the subsequent units of *Auxilia Palatina* would all have been single *Cohortes* anyway. Since the last unit, the Lions, are a continuation of the list, the use of the term regiment by this translator would appear to have been an error. We do not have a clear unit structure for the Late Roman army, but it has been noted that there are several references to the term *Manipuli* which appears to be linked with a unit named *Ordo*, and that the *Ordines* may refer to the smallest tactical units within a Legion.<sup>256</sup> It is possible that the use of these terms by Claudian is correct, and if so this would give us a force of about 4,000 men. Or, if we believe that Claudian has made an error and the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani* were complete *Legiones*, then the total would rise to 5,000 men, the figure quoted by Orosius.<sup>257</sup> What is strange is that there are no cavalry units listed in the force at all, which would be unusual for any field army, but would be in-keeping with the earlier garrison, which was mainly infantry-based.

Returning to the revolt of Gildo, who appears to have recruited local tribesmen to augment the *Comitatenses* under his control, his force is described by Orosius as being 70,000 men strong.<sup>258</sup> This, however, collapsed very quickly after a meeting between Gildo and Mascezel in which one of the rebel Roman standard bearers had his hand cut off and dropped the standard, which was taken by all of Gildo's other Roman units as a sign to surrender, causing them all to lower their respective standards. With this, the Moorish tribesmen retired and the revolt ended.<sup>259</sup> In the aftermath, Stilicho appointed his brother-in-law Bathanarius as *Comes Africae*, who was replaced in 409, after Stilicho's fall, by Heraclian.<sup>260</sup>

In 413 Heraclian also led a revolt, which is recorded by both Hydatius and Orosius, but unfortunately they do not provide much evidence. Heather suggests that the real reason behind the revolt was not a usurpation. Since Heraclian had been a loyal supporter of Honorius, and had been made consul in 413 for his services in removing Stilicho, his real motive was to remove Constantius' influence at court.<sup>261</sup> Orosius tell us that Heraclian used 3,700 ships to transport his army to Italy, and Hydatius says he was defeated by the *Comes*

---

<sup>256</sup> Barker (1981), p. 14.

<sup>257</sup> Orosius, 7.36.

<sup>258</sup> Orosius, 7.36.

<sup>259</sup> Orosius, 7.36.

<sup>260</sup> Warmington (1954), p. 12; Sozomen 9.8; PLRE (1980), Bathanarius, p. 221; Heraclianus 3, pp. 539-540.

<sup>261</sup> Heather (2005), p.256.

Marinus at Ulticulum in Italy, where there were 50,000 soldiers killed.<sup>262</sup> Heraclian then fled to Carthage, where he was either killed by his own soldiers or by assassins sent by Honorius.<sup>263</sup> The figure of 3,700 ships appears to be a rather large number when we compare it to Belisarius' later expedition to reconquer North Africa. His army is recorded as being 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry with an additional 1,000 Huns and Eruli. This whole force was transported by 500 ships.<sup>264</sup> As we have already discussed, the *Notitia Dignitatum* records that the *Comes Africae* commanded 21,000 men in total, which even allowing for the increased number of cavalry within it, does not account for the need for the extra 3,200 ships. Before dismissing Orosius' figure as an exaggeration, it should be noted that Procopius does state that Belisarius' 500 ships were of a specific size, with a capacity of between 50,000 and 3,000 *Medimni*, a measure of one and a half bushels, and these cargo ships required 30,000 sailors and were supported by 92 *Dromones*, warships which were manned by a further 2,000 rowers. It is interesting to note that the *Notitia Dignitatum* does not record any fleets (*Classis*) being stationed in Africa, and if we were to assume that the larger transports recorded by Procopius were drawn from Eastern *Classis*, then Heraclian would have needed to press into service small merchant shipping to transport his army. This could account for the increased number of ships if the whole of the African *Comitatenses* was sent to Italy.<sup>265</sup> It is interesting to note, that in his account of these events, Gibbon makes reference to the account in the *Chronicle* of Marcellinus, who quotes a figure of 700 ships to transport only 3,000 men.<sup>266</sup> Bury noted this, but pointed out that of the three manuscript copies of Marcellinus, two give the figure of 3,700 ships only, which is repeated in the most up to date edition produced by Croke.<sup>267</sup> While Marcellinus has relied on Orosius as his main source and we should therefore see the splitting of 700 ships and 3,000 men as a corruption of the original text, it does show a possible alternative. If the force sent to put down Firmus' revolt was only 5,000 men, then the operational size of the army of Africa could have been of a similar size, and if so, sending 3,000 men on an expedition to Italy, would also seem a believable figure especially given the ease with which it was

---

<sup>262</sup> PLRE (1980), Marinus 1, p.724. Wijnendaele (2017), p.150. Suggests he may have been the *Comes Domesticorum* in charge of the Imperial bodyguard. Not.Occ. xiii.

<sup>263</sup> Orosius, 7.42.12; Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 48.

<sup>264</sup> Procopius, *Wars*, 3.11.37.

<sup>265</sup> Not.Occ. xl.

<sup>266</sup> Gibbon (1854) vol.vi p. 146, fn. 146.

<sup>267</sup> Bury (1958), vol. i, p. 196, fn.1; Marcellinus. xv.

defeated. While 700 ships would still seem a large number when compared with Belisarius' expedition it is more realistic than 3,700.

Another possibility has been put forward by Wijnendaele, who has suggested that since Heraclian had withheld the grain supply from Africa in an attempt to disrupt Constantius' agreement with the Goths, he sailed to Italy with his army and the grain supply. This then might account for the inflated number of ships in our sources.<sup>268</sup> However, we are still left with the problem of 50,000 men killed at Ulticulum, which is more men than the combined armies of Africa and Italy, and as such should be discounted as inaccurate. This leaves us with two possibilities. First, if the whole *Comitatenses* of 21,000 men were transported to Italy and defeated, this would only leave a few *Limitanei* forces to defend the provinces of North Africa. This would then imply the destruction of the forces of the *Comes Africae*, which would no longer be an army-in-being. Or secondly, if a smaller portion was sent, then logically some forces would still be operational in Africa. To try to answer this, we now need to look at the next period of recorded activity.

The next relevant *Comes Africae* is Boniface, who appears to have been in the post either in 422 or 423.<sup>269</sup> We are told by Prosper of Aquitaine, that Boniface was supposed to have cooperated with Castinus in his campaign in Spain in 422, but due to a disagreement between the two men, Boniface abandoned the expedition and went to Africa.<sup>270</sup> While he has been given the image of a successful military leader, the only example we have, as Bury noted, is his defence of Marseilles in 413 against the Goths.<sup>271</sup> It was presumably from Marseilles, rather than *Africa*, that Boniface had originally set out with forces to assist Castinus, and not with the army of *Africa*, as suggest by Heather.<sup>272</sup> This view can be further supported by looking at the two chronicles that record this episode. Prosper of Aquitaine tells us of Boniface's military skill, no-doubt in reference to his actions in and around Marseilles, and of his quarrel with Castinus and finally his departing Italy from Rome to *Africa*.<sup>273</sup> Hydatius, who was based in Spain, makes no reference to Boniface's involvement in the campaign, but he does provide details of Castinus' defeat. All Hydatius does say about

---

<sup>268</sup> Wijnendaele (2016), p. 147.

<sup>269</sup> Bury (1958), vol. i, p. 223; Warmington (1954), p. 13; PLRE (1980), Bonifatius 3, pp. 237-40.

<sup>270</sup> Prosper, 1277.

<sup>271</sup> Bury (1958), vol. i, pp. 196, 245, fn. 3.

<sup>272</sup> Heather (2005), p. 265.

<sup>273</sup> Prosper, 1277.

Boniface is that he left the Palace and invaded *Africa*.<sup>274</sup> This unfortunately does not shed any light on the forces available to the new *Comes Africae*. Prosper continues his account by telling us that Boniface's fame and power were growing in Africa, a point previously noted by Olympiodorus, saying he had frequent victories against barbarians, sometimes attacking with many men, sometimes only with a few, and even in single combat. Prosper adds that Boniface used every means to free Africa from the many barbarians and tribes.<sup>275</sup>

It is possible to make two observations on the narrative of Boniface so far: that *Africa* was experiencing problems with the local Moorish tribesmen, and the small scale nature of the warfare from Olympiodorus' comments noted above. If the majority, or at least the most effective parts of the African *Comitatenses* had been removed or destroyed in Heraclian's revolt, then the usually peaceful arrangements with the Moors could well have broken down. This could well have led to raids and small scale skirmishes, of the type that Boniface is being congratulated on. All of this would support the idea that there was no longer a large and operational field army in *Africa* in 422. Unfortunately our sources do not provide any details on the Moorish problem. Traditional views, such as Gibbon and Bury, merely note Boniface's reputation and restoration of *Africa* without providing evidence.<sup>276</sup>

The final act in this African drama was the revolt of Boniface and the invasion of the Vandals in 429.<sup>277</sup> While this falls outside of the date range for the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it does have a few possible pieces of information, although, like for the earlier Moorish incursions, there are very few detailed sources. The traditional view, based on Procopius' account, is that Aetius engaged in court intrigues to make Boniface appear as a traitor, who, in response to a re-call to Rome, did indeed rebel, and in an attempt to find allies to his cause approached the Vandals who then crossed over from Spain.<sup>278</sup> While the details are somewhat hard to follow, mainly because our contemporary sources do not mention these points, there are some interesting observations. Hydatius records the Vandals crossing to *Mauritania*, but makes no reference to Boniface or any alleged rebellion by him.<sup>279</sup> Victor of Vita describes the crossing in some detail, including a total of 80,000 people being involved. He does not

---

<sup>274</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 69-70.

<sup>275</sup> Prosper, 1293; Olympiodorus, 40.

<sup>276</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 175; Bury (1958), p. 245. In fn. 2 Bury does note the lack of any evidence.

<sup>277</sup> For further details see Wijnendaele (2016), 'Warlordism', pp. 196-203.

<sup>278</sup> Procopius, *Wars*, 3.3.20; Heather (2005), p. 268; Merrills and Miles (2010), pp. 49-55.

<sup>279</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 80.



mention any resistance from the *Comes Tingitaniae*, or any arrangements made with Boniface.<sup>280</sup> We are then told by Prosper that three generals were sent to make war on Boniface because of his growing power in Africa and his refusal to go to Italy. While this would suggest some sort of revolt and military action, as the generals are said to have besieged Boniface, this all collapsed quickly after one of them, an untitled person of the name Saneox, betrayed his two companions to Boniface and then was himself convicted of treachery and killed by him.<sup>281</sup> Whether or not we believe that this expedition was successfully defeated by Boniface, as Gibbon suggests, at the head of some loose disorderly Africans over the regular forces of the west, the scale of the operation may well have been quite small, especially if we consider that none of the three general held any official military title or command.<sup>282</sup> Another army was sent under a Gothic commander named Sigisvult in 428, just prior to the Vandal crossing. Prosper tells us he had the rank of *Comes*, which Bury believed meant he was a replacement for Boniface as *Comes Africae*, rather than simply the commander of this new expedition.<sup>283</sup> It would appear that this force consisted of Gothic *Foederatii*, or at least they are the only troops mentioned by Possidius.<sup>284</sup> There then appears to be reconciliation between Boniface and the Empress Placidia, brought about by a go-between and acquaintance of Augustine of Hippo, an official by the name of Darius, in the face of the Vandal invasion.<sup>285</sup>

It is interesting to note in a letter from Augustine to Boniface, complaining how Boniface had let the situation get so badly out of hand. In it he says that when Boniface was a Tribune, he had kept back all the barbarian tribes with his small band of brave confederates, but now he was *Comes*, with a large army, Africa was suffering.<sup>286</sup> This then, would be the closest thing we have to evidence that the African *Comitatenses* were still in existence at the time of the Vandal crossing. While it is implied that Boniface did engage the Vandals in open battle we have no evidence to prove it. All we are told is that he took refuge in Hippo Regis with some Gothic *Foederatii*.<sup>287</sup> This supposed defeat as Gibbon describes it, was inflicted on

---

<sup>280</sup> Victor, 1.2.

<sup>281</sup> Prosper, 1293; PLRE (1980), Sanoeces, p. 976.

<sup>282</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol.iv, xxxiii, p.177. PLRE (1980), Sigisvultus, p.1010.

<sup>283</sup> Bury (1958), vol. i, p. 245.

<sup>284</sup> Possidius, *Life of Saint Augustine*, 28.

<sup>285</sup> Augustine, *Letters* 229, 230.

<sup>286</sup> Augustine, *Letter* 220.

<sup>287</sup> Possidius, 28.

the band of veterans who marched under Boniface's standard and his hastily raised levies of provincial troops who were defeated with considerable loss.<sup>288</sup> Heather develops this theme further by arguing that of the thirty-one units under Boniface's command, only four were top-grade field army units, possibly only 2,000 men, the rest had been promoted to field army status from local border troops.<sup>289</sup> Therefore, both Gibbon and Heather believe that a battle did take place and its outcome was not in doubt; poor quality recently promoted *Comitatenses* units were no match for the battle hardened Vandals. However, it is more likely, that this force was based on the Gothic *Foederatii*, who are mentioned by Possidius as being with Boniface in the siege after his presumed defeat near Hippo Regis. As there are no named Gothic units under the *Comes Africa*, and the *Notitia Dignitatum* does not list any *Foederatii* units, these might well have been part of Sigisvultus' command.

The last reference we have to an army in Africa is in 431, when western and eastern reinforcements were sent to the province under the command of the eastern *Magister Militum* Aspar.<sup>290</sup> The reason for the eastern involvement in Africa can be seen as one of demonstrating imperial unity. As Theodosius II had been instrumental in placing the young Valentinian III as Emperor of the West, such continued support in the face of the Vandal invasion was vital.<sup>291</sup> Unfortunately we have no details on the units committed to this campaign by either the western or eastern armies, only that they were combined with the remaining troops of Boniface. However, the combined army was defeated by the Vandals and Boniface was recalled to Italy.<sup>292</sup> Of what followed, we have very little information, but it would appear that Aspar continued operating alone in Africa, and was successful enough to negotiate a treaty with Geiseric in 435, which safeguarded the provinces *Proconsularis* and *Byzacena*.<sup>293</sup> This would suggest that Aspar retained control of sizable army including eastern and western forces, implied by being made Consul in the west in 434, which allowed him to force the settlement, though we have no records of any military success.<sup>294</sup> It is quite possible that the army of the *Comes Africae* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* reflects the situation

---

<sup>288</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 181.

<sup>289</sup> Heather (2005), p. 271.

<sup>290</sup> PLRE (1980), Aspar, p. 166. See Wijnendaele (2016), pp. 198-203.

<sup>291</sup> McEvoy (2013), pp. 230-1, 254-5.

<sup>292</sup> Bury (1958), vol. i, p. 248; Procopius, *Wars*, 3.3.34-6.

<sup>293</sup> Heather (2005), pp. 285-6.

<sup>294</sup> McEvoy (2013), p. 255.

in the 430's with eastern reinforcements, which will be further investigated when looking at the individual units.

### 4.3 The units of the *Comes Africae*

#### i. Infantry

We now need to look at the individual units which made up this command to see if they can add any further information. Starting with the infantry units drawn from the *Magister Peditum* listings and their position in that list, and shown in the order they are recorded under the *Comes Africae*:

<i>Celtae Iuniores (Auxilia Palatina)</i>	48 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores (Legio Palatina)</i>	7 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Armigeri Propugnatores Iuniores (Legio Palatina)</i>	12 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Secundani Italiciani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	12 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Cimbriani (Legio Palatina)</i>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Primani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	26 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Secundani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	27 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Tertiani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Constantiniani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Constantiaci (Legio Comitatus)</i>	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Tertio Augustani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Fortenses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 32 <sup>nd</sup>

The *Celtae Iuniores* are something of an oddity, being the only *Auxilia Palatina* unit listed in this army. As we have already discussed, there was usually a 2:1 ratio of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones* in field armies, and the *Auxilia Palatina* often appear as brigaded pairs rather than single units. Ammianus records the *Celtae* along with the *Petulantes* as part of Julian's army in 360. He also mentions the same two units being dispatched on a special mission under a *Comes* named Libino, so adding further proof that they operated as a linked brigaded

pair.<sup>295</sup> Ammianus again mentions the same pair at Antioch in 363, where he condemns them for their excessive behaviour at the various banquets.<sup>296</sup>

While the *Celtae* are one of the oldest *Auxilia Palatina* units, dating back to Constantine I, they were split into *Seniores* and *Iuniores* at a later date. The *Celtae Seniores* and *Petulantes Seniores* appear as 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in the order of seniority in the *Magister Peditum* listings and are shown together in the main field army of Italy under his command.<sup>297</sup> This then adds to the unusual listing in Africa, as the *Petulantes Iuniores*, who we would expect to be brigaded with the *Celtae Iuniores*, are in fact in the east under the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*.<sup>298</sup> If the *Petulantes Iuniores* were also an eastern unit, then it is possible that they were detached from their twin unit and sent as reinforcements to Africa, which we have noted above, would most likely have been under Aspar in 431. If this is correct, then it would be one possible dating point for the *Comes Africae* listing outside the normal date range for the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It must, however, be noted that the *Celtae Iuniores* are also listed under the *Magister Peditum* in the west, while there is no corresponding entry for a western *Petulantes Iuniores*.

The next two units are the *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores*, which are listed 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings for *Legiones Palatinae*. The fact that they are listed after the *Celtae* under the *Comes Africae* would suggest that they were recently upgraded to *Palatina* status, except they appear in their correct position in the *Magister Peditum* listings for *Legiones Palatinae*, (along with their accompanying illustrations) which precedes all the *Auxilia Palatina* listings.<sup>299</sup> This leads us to the possibility that the two lists were drawn-up at different dates, and the *Comes Africae* list postdates that of the *Magister Peditum*. There is also another possibility that needs to be considered. If the *Celtae* were indeed later eastern reinforcements, then they could have been inserted at the top of an existing listing for the *Comes Africae*, and this would account for their unusual position.

This does not, however, explain why the *Armigeri Propugnatores Iuniores* are in the wrong position under the *Comes Africae*. They are listed after the *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores*

---

<sup>295</sup> PLRE (1971), Libino, p. 58.

<sup>296</sup> Amm. 20.4.2, 21.3.2, 22.12.6.

<sup>297</sup> Not. Occ. v, vii.

<sup>298</sup> Not. Or. viii.

<sup>299</sup> Not. Occ. v, vii; Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352.

but ahead of the *Cimbriani*, who are listed one position higher than them, in 11<sup>th</sup>, for *Legiones Palatina* under the *Magister Peditum*. Confusing the situation further are the *Secundani Italici*, a *Legio Comitatus*, which has been placed in-between the *Armigeri* and the *Cimbriani* under the *Comes Africae*. Added to this is the unusual situation that the last seven units listed here are also the last seven in the *Magister Peditum* list and appear in almost the same order, the *Constantiniani* and *Constantiaci* being reversed. Given the confusing order that the first half of the *Comes Africae* list is in, this continuous run looks not only out of place here, but is not found in any other of the listings in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The *Primani*, *Secundani* and *Tertiani* can all be identified as *Flavia* in the *Magister Peditum* listings, which Ueda-Sarson suggests means that they are all drawn from the same parent unit.<sup>300</sup> If so this would account for their consensual listing, but not for the next four units. Of these the *Constantiniani* and *Constantiaci* have been discussed under the *Comes Tingitaniae* and the *Fortenses* under the *Comes Hispaniarum*. It should be noted, that as well as the double entry for the *Fortenses* previously mentioned, there are two additional units by this name in Africa: The *Limitis Fortensis* under the *Dux Mauritaniae*, and the *Milites Fortenses* under the *Dux Tripolitanae*.<sup>301</sup> Hoffman believed that the African *Legio Fortenses* was a detachment from *Legio Secunda Traiana Fortis* in Egypt, which is listed under the *Comes Aegypti* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>302</sup> If this was the case, then it is hard to see how two further detachments could have been drawn from this one parent body. It seems possible that the *Limitis Fortensis* unit may well have had an association with the *Secunda Traiana*, and when *Mauritania* was lost they were reabsorbed into the parent body. The fact that the listing under *Tripolitana* is *Milites*, rather than *Limitis*, would suggest a unit smaller than a *Legio*, but higher status than *Limitanei*.<sup>303</sup> Mattingly does, however, point out we have no evidence apart from the *Notitia* itself, for any deployment in *Tripolitana*.<sup>304</sup> As all these units are unlikely to have existed at the same time, I would suggest that the details under the *Dux Mauritaniae* are from a date prior to the Vandal invasion, and that the detachment from the *Secunda Traiana* which formed the *Legio Fortenses* was also prior to the invasion, and this would explain its listing as last under the *Magister Peditum*, and finally

<sup>300</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDprimaFlaviaPacis.html>

<sup>301</sup> Not. Occ. xxix, xxx.

<sup>302</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 192; Not. Or. xxv.

<sup>303</sup> Barker (1981), p. 17.

<sup>304</sup> Mattingly (1995), pp. 189-90.

the *Milites Fortenses* are the remnants of the *Legio Fortenses* after 431. The province survived the Vandal capture of Carthage in 439, and was administered by the east until it was ceded to the Vandals in 455.<sup>305</sup>

This then leaves the *Tertia Augustana*, which is most likely a descendant from the original legionary garrison of the *Legio III Augusta*. It is quite possible that in 253 when this *Legio* was re-established in Africa it was larger than the 1200 strong *Comitatenses Legiones* in use in the fourth century, and as one of the old legions it might have been broken into small units to form, for example the *Fortenses* as well as the *Tertia Augustana*, but we have no evidence to confirm this.

What can be made of this strange mix of units? One of the first things to comment on is the unusual make-up of the infantry contingent in the army, not only as already noted, the single *Auxilia Palatina* unit, but also the ratio of *Legiones Palatina* to *Legiones Comitatus*. The following chart gives a breakdown of the various western and some examples of eastern field armies:

Army/Type:	<i>Legio Palatina</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	<i>Pseudocomitatus</i>	<i>Palatina</i> %
Italy	8	5	2	53%
Gaul	1	9	10	5%
Illyricum	0	5	5	0%
Spain	0	5	0	0%
Africa	3	8	0	27%
<i>Praesentalis</i> I	6	0	0	100%
<i>Praesentalis</i> II	6	0	1	86%
Orient	0	9	10	0%

Table 4: Proportion of *Palatinae Legiones*.

The main point that can be taken from this chart is the exceptionally high proportion of elite *Legiones* in the army of *Africa*. While all the eastern and two thirds of the western elite legions are concentrated under the *Magister Militum* and *Praesentalis* commands, their

<sup>305</sup> Mattingly (1995), p. 173.

inclusion in Africa does seem rather odd. Even allowing for the argument that the three units, *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores*, *Iuniores* and *Cimbriani* had only recently been promoted to *Palatina* status, why was this done to units in *Africa*, especially if we consider the historical background and the repeated rebellions in that region?

The most obvious reason would be when the region was under threat from the Vandals, and better quality reinforcements were sent to the province. These would have been desperately needed if we accept that the *Comitatenses* of the *Comes Africae* had been seriously weakened by Heraclian's attack on Italy. These troops may not have been originally drawn from the western army but could have been sent from the east, with the *Magister Militum* Aspar. It should be noted that there are no units with the title *Armigeri* in the eastern listings, whereas there is a *Propugnatores Seniores* under the *Comes Hispaniarum* and a *Propugnatores Iuniores* under the *Comes Illyrici*.<sup>306</sup> Likewise, in the west there also exists a unit called *Armigeri Defensores Seniores*, who we could reasonably assume had at one time an *Iuniores* twin. Ueda-Sarson suggests that the remnants of the *Iuniores* unit may well have ended up under the command of the *Praefectus Militum Armigerorum*, a *Limitanei* unit listed under the *Dux Mogontiacensis*.<sup>307</sup> Also, the cognomen *Defensores* and *Propugnatores* both have a similar meaning of 'defenders' or 'champions'. In this case, it seems strange that in the western army there would be six similarly named units, and none in the east. It seems more likely that at least one pair are from the east, and the *Armigeri Propugnatores* would seem to fit the bill. This would also help explain why they are listed together under the *Comes Africae*, as a brigaded pair dispatched to Africa they would be listed together, and then possibly promoted. While not identical, their shield patterns are at least similar:

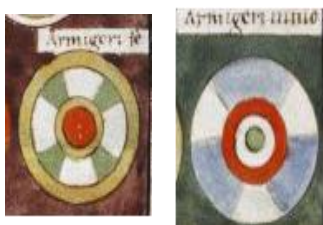


Figure 12: *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores* (P).

<sup>306</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>307</sup> Not. Occ. xxxix. <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDarmigeriDefensoresSeniores.html>.

If this chain of thought is correct, then this would explain why they and the single *Auxilia Palatina* unit, the *Celtae Iuniores*, have been placed ahead of the presumably already existing western units.

Procopius provides the only information on Aspar's expedition, including Boniface's reconciliation with Placidia and his defeat by the Vandals. While Procopius does not mention any details on the army, he does mention that Boniface had Roman troops in Libya, so presumably the remnants of the army of the *Comes Africae*, and these were joined by a numerous army that had come from Rome and Constantinople under the general Aspar. This new combined force was defeated, and apparently afterwards both generals made haste to flee, Aspar homeward and Boniface back to Placidia.<sup>308</sup> The problem with this account is that it conflicts with Possidius who told us that Aspar was still active in Africa in 435, when he succeeded in negotiating a treaty with Geiseric. While it is true that Boniface did return to Italy, he was promoted to *Magister Militum*, which is surprising if the campaign in Africa had been the failure that Procopius describes. It is reasonable to suggest that Aspar had continued his campaigns with what was left of the army of Africa and was successful enough to have forced a settlement.

The only other information on the eastern reinforcements is in Evagrius' account of the future emperor Marcian and his early military career. Evagrius was a late sixth century theologian and among his works was an ecclesiastical history. In this we are told that Marcian was the son of a Thracian soldier and enlisted in the army at Philippopolis in the Balkans. Secondly, and following directly on from his recruitment, he is with Aspar in the campaign against the Vandals, where he was captured along with many others after their defeat in 431.<sup>309</sup>

From this it is possible to construct an argument for the strange order of the infantry units listed under the *Comes Africae*. If the *Celtae Iuniores* were from the east, and their twin *Petulantes Iuniores* are recorded in the army in *Illyricum* and Marcian was enrolled into a Balkan unit, then it is possible that other eastern reinforcements were also sent from that region as well. The listing for the *Secundani Italici* could represent the contingent from

---

<sup>308</sup> Procopius, *Wars*, 3.3.22.

<sup>309</sup> Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.36-38; PLRE (1980), Marcianus 8, pp. 714-15.



Italy, and this unit along with the eastern forces have been placed ahead of the existing legionary forces in Africa. This would then explain why the first four units appear in the order that they do under the *Comes Africae*. The first unit of the original list, i.e. before the reinforcements were sent, would be the *Cimbriani*. These appear to have had a long association with *Africa* to judge from a fourth century inscription at Setif in Algeria.<sup>310</sup> This would have left them as the most senior unit as well as the only *Palatina Legio* in the original army of *Africa*. This would then be the same situation as the *Lanciarri Sabarienses*, in the army of Gaul, with both units seemingly out of position within their army groups, and only single *Legio Palatina* while the majority of these troops are under the *Magister Peditum*.<sup>311</sup> With the *Constantiniani*, *Constantiaci*, *Tertio Augustani*, and *Fortenses* all having earlier links with Africa, this only leaves the *Primani*, *Secundani* and *Tertiani*. If these were drawn from the same unit as suggested above, then these could represent reinforcements prior to the Vandal crossing.

The whole force could therefore date to 431. While this does present a good explanation for why the listings are in their particular order, the main argument against it would be the date and the lack of duplication of the *Celtae Iuniores* and the two *Armigeri* units in the supposedly earlier eastern version. 431 falls outside of the current estimated date range of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but only by a few years. If the *Comes Africae* is showing the situation at this date, then we would expect the eastern section, of circa 395, to have these eastern units mentioned above, recorded in them, and it does not. As a possible counter to this objection, it is possible, excluding the *Celtae*, that the *Armigeri* units could have been raised after 395 in the east, dispatched to the west and included in the *Magister Peditum* listings.

## ii. Cavalry

If we now turn our attention to the cavalry units under the *Comes Africae* we are confronted with the issue which I have already mentioned, which is the large quantity of *Vexillationes Comitatus*. If we look at the following breakdown this becomes immediately obvious:

---

<sup>310</sup> EDH. HD001905.

<sup>311</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

Army/Troop	<i>Legiones</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	<i>Vexillationes Palatina</i>	<i>Vexillationes Comitatenses</i>	% of Cavalry
Italy	15	21	6	1	12%
Gaul	20	15	4	8	18%
Spain	5	10	0	0	0%
<i>Illyricum (West)</i>	10	12	0	0	0%
<i>Tingitania</i>	2	2	0	3	30%
Britain	2	1	0	6	55%
<i>Africa</i>	11	1	0	19	45%
<i>Praesentalis I</i>	6	18	5	7	29%
<i>Praesentalis II</i>	7	17	6	6	28%
Orient	20	2	0	10	19%
Thrace	21	0	3	4	14%
<i>Illyricum (East)</i>	18	6	0	2	4%

Table 5: Breakdown of Cavalry to Infantry in Field Armies.

For the purpose of this chart I have used Jones' estimates of 1,000 men per *Legio* and 500 men for all other units.

Because of the small size of the field armies under the *Comes Britanniae* and the *Comes Tingitaniae*, each less than 6,000 men, they cannot be considered as representative of standard field army structure. If we discount their results from the above chart, the *Comes Africae* had under his control a higher percentage and number of cavalry units than in any other field army, including the two eastern *Praesentales* and the army of the *Magister Peditum* in Italy, the three senior armies. Similarly, if we compare these figures to the earlier garrison in Africa of 8,760 men, with a possible 2040 cavalry, this represents only 23% cavalry in that garrison, half the figure for the later army of the *Comes Africae*. There must have been a reason for this dramatic increase in cavalry, and this is undoubtedly in response to a pressing emergency of the time.

If we now look at the individual units that make up the cavalry listed under the *Comes Africae*, it is possible to make a few observations:

Order they appear under <i>Comes Africae</i> :	Position under <i>Magister Equitum</i> :
<i>Equites Stablesiani Italiciani</i>	29th
<i>Equites Scutarii Seniores</i>	10th
<i>Equites Stablesiani Seniores</i>	11th
<i>Equites Marcomanni</i>	12th
<i>Equites Armigeri Seniores</i>	13th
<i>Equites Clibanarii</i>	14th
<i>Equites Parthi Sagittarii Seniores</i>	15th
<i>Equites Cetrati Seniores</i>	21st
<i>Equites Primo Sagittarii</i>	16th
<i>Equites Secundo Sagittarii</i>	17th
<i>Equites Tertio Sagittarii</i>	18th
<i>Equites Quarto Sagittarii</i>	19th
<i>Equites Parthi Sagittarii Iuniores</i>	20th
<i>Equites Cetrati Iuniores</i>	25th
<i>Equites Promoti Iuniores</i>	23rd
<i>Equites Scutarii Iuniores Comitatus</i>	Not Listed
<i>Equites Honoriani Iuniores</i>	26th
<i>Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae</i>	Not Listed
<i>Equites Armigeri Iuniores</i>	27th

The first point that I would make, which follows on from the line of argument in the infantry section, is the number of units here which have potential eastern connections. The *Equites Clibanarii*, who under the *Magister Equitum* listings are 14<sup>th</sup> and titled *Equites Sagittarii Clibanarii*, are the only *Clibanarii* unit in the whole of the western army. These are a heavily armoured cavalry also equipped with a bow, as the title would suggest, and it is unusual to see them posted to Africa and not to one of the more senior armies.<sup>312</sup> By comparison, there are seven field army *Clibanarii* units and one Guard *Scholae Clibanarii* in the east, which would imply that the *Equites Clibanarii* here also originated in the east as well. In the eastern listings there are *Primi*, *Secundi* and *Quarti Clibanarii Parthi*, but no *Tertii*, so it is entirely feasible that the western *Equites Clibanarii* are the missing eastern *Tertii Parthi*. As

---

<sup>312</sup> Baker (1981), p. 77. On the *Clibanarii* and their similarity to Sassanid Persian troop types.

none of the eastern cavalry shield patterns are recorded, we cannot make a visual comparison.<sup>313</sup>

This eastern relationship can also be proposed for *Equites Parthi Sagittarii Seniores* and the *Equites Parthi Sagittarii Iuniores*. While there are several other *Sagittarii* units listed under the *Magister Equitum*, none of these are recorded as named *Parthi*. While there are several eastern units which do include the *Parthi* name, all bar one are *Clibanarii* units and the only other is the *Equites Primi Sagittarii*.<sup>314</sup> The only two western units with similar names to the *Parthi Sagittarii* units are the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* and *Sagittarii Iuniores*, while there is also a listing for the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* and *Sagittarii Iuniores* in the eastern listings. Of the western units, the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* have been equated with the similar sounding unit, *Equites Sagittarii Seniores Comitatusenses*, as discussed under the *Comes Tingitaniae*. There is also an *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* listed under the *Magister Militum per Thracias*.<sup>315</sup> While it is entirely possible that these units do indeed have identical names, in all other cases of similar sounding named units there is an addition to their unit name to help distinguish between them, such as *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* and the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*. It is possible that the eastern *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* were transferred to the west and gained the *Parthi* title to separate them from the western *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* and that this shows a unit in transit, which has not been deleted from its old position, in this case in the eastern listings.

To counter this, unlike in the infantry section, none of these cavalry units are listed out of place in listings for the *Comes Africae* and they are also in the correct sequence when compared to the *Magister Equitum* listings. Of the two that are out of order, the *Equites Stablesiani Italici* are particularly interesting. Listed a lowly 29<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Equitum*, they appear first in the list under the *Comes Africae*, which may indicate they were inserted at the top of the list for the *Comes Africae* when they were sent over from Italy as reinforcements. That they were raised in Italy is supported by the name, and their position after the last Honorian unit under the *Magister Equitum* may also imply they were a recently raised unit, perhaps for the purpose of being sent to *Africa*. Ueda-Sarson suggested

---

<sup>313</sup> Not. Or. vi, vii: *Praesentalis* and *Magister Militum per Orientem*.

<sup>314</sup> Not. Or. vii.

<sup>315</sup> Not. Or. viii; Not. Occ. vii. <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDequitesSagittariiSeniores.html>

another reason for this unit being listed first is that it could have belonged to the *Comes Hispaniarum*, and as this command precedes that of the *Comes Africae*, it is an error in the records.<sup>316</sup> It does, however, seem more realistic to see the list for the *Comes Africae* being drawn up at a later date than those of *Magister Peditum* and *Equitum*, which if correct, would help explain some of these anomalies.

As already discussed in a previous chapter, there is another possible link with units coming from another command. The *Equites Cetrati Seniores* and *Iuniores* may have originated in Spain, as their name implies, and could have been at onetime part of the *Comes Hispaniarum*, then we would expect them to be listed alongside the *Equites Stablesiani Italiciani* at the start of the *Comes Africae*, if there was indeed some sort of textual error. As this is not the case, I am inclined to see them as a recently raised units that has been dispatched to *Africa*.

The next unit is the *Equites Stablesiani Seniores* who appear third under the *Comes Africae*. These do not appear in the *Magister Equitum* listings, but are most likely to be the *Equites Stablesiani Africani*. While discussing some of the eastern units titled *Stablesiani*, Rance pointed out that both the *Equites Stablesiani Italiciani* and *Equites Stablesiani Africani* have several pieces of epigraphical evidence for their position in Italy and *Africa*, but as these inscriptions do not name the unit apart from simply calling it *Stablesiani*, it is far from certain they do not refer to a now lost unit. That said, the most likely explanation is that the African inscription belongs to the *Stablesiani Africani*, and as this predates the *Notitia Dignitatum*, then the *Stablesiani Africani* are a well-established part of the garrison there.<sup>317</sup> If we do not accept this obvious line of reasoning, there is another possibility connected with the eastern units named *Stablesiani*. Under the *Magister Militum per Orientem*, there are the *Equites Secundani Stablesiani* and *Tertii Stablesiani*, but no listing anywhere for the expected *Primi*.<sup>318</sup> It is possible that the *Stablesiani Seniores* listed under the *Comes Africae*, are the missing eastern *Equites Primi Stablesiani* and the listing for *Stablesiani Africani* relates to an earlier unit which is recorded in the inscriptions from the fourth century, which

---

<sup>316</sup> <http://lukeuedasaron.com/NDequitesStablesianitaliciani.html>.

<sup>317</sup> Rance (2012), pp. 347-8.

<sup>318</sup> Not. Or. vi.

is now lost, but not deleted. This might then suggest another link to an eastern unit being brought to Africa under Aspar.

We have a similar problem of an unidentified unit with the *Equites Scutarii Seniores*, listed second under the *Comes Africae* the unit that is between the two *Stablesiani* units. There is no listing under the *Magister Equitum* listings for the *Equites Scutarii Seniores* only the *Equites Scutarii*, who are listed tenth under the *Vexillationes Comitatus*. While it might seem obvious that they are one and the same unit, the situation is made uncertain by the listing of the *Equites Scutarii Seniores Comitatus* under the *Comes Tingitaniae* and the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Comitatus*, also under the *Comes Africae*, neither of which are listed under the *Magister Equitum*. To this must be added the penultimate cavalry unit under the *Comes Africae*, the unusually named *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*.<sup>319</sup> We then have four units titled *Scutarii*, under the *Comes Africae* and *Comes Tingitaniae*, but only one listed under the *Magister Equitum*. As discussed in the previous chapter, on the *Comes Tingitaniae*, the *Comes Africae* listing for *Equites Scutarii Seniores* possibly shows a unit being transferred between commands, but not deleted from its original list. It is entirely possible, accepting the theory that the *Comes Africae* listing records the force assembled in 431, that the remnants of the earlier army of the *Comes Tingitaniae* and especially the *Equites Scutarii Seniores Comitatus*, were reabsorbed into the army of the *Comes Africae* by 431.

The *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Comitatus* have been identified by Ueda-Sarson as the *Equites Sagittarii Iuniores* in the *Magister Equitum* listings. He suggests that as the *Sagittarii Iuniores* are not assigned to any field command, and their position in the listings is immediately behind the *Equites Promoti Iuniores*, and they also follow these under the *Comes Africae*, they must be the incorrectly labelled *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Comitatus*.<sup>320</sup> Alternatively, there is a unit listed under the *Magister Militum per Thracias* in the east also called *Equites Sagittarii Iuniores*, which might suggest a western unit being transferred to the east, deleted from the relevant field army, but not from the *Magister Equitum* listings. It is listed in *Thracia*, just below its twin, the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores*,

---

<sup>319</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>320</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDequitesSagittariiIuniores.html>.

who do not have an equivalent in the western listings.<sup>321</sup> It is of course possibly that the unassigned *Equites Scutarii* under the *Magister Equitum* were split to form both the *Equites Scutarii Seniores* and *Equites Scutarii Iuniores*, and as they both appear under the *Comes Africae*, this could have been done locally.

This then leaves the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*, who are the only unit with the epithet '*Scholae*' in their title which is not under the command of a *Magister Officiorum*. Under the eastern *Magister Officiorum*, there are seven units listed, but only six shields illustrated, of which the only two *Scutarii* units are titled *Sagittariorum* and *Clibanariorum*, neither of which is a close fit for *Scutarii Iuniores*.<sup>322</sup> Under the western *Magister Officiorum*, there are five units listed, but seven shields illustrated. Of these there is a *Prima*, *Secunda* and a *Tertia Scutariorum* listed.<sup>323</sup> Therefore we have a total of 12 *Scholae* units listed and 13 illustrations, as well as the unaccounted for *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*, so it is tempting to speculate that these were at one time a part of these listings of the *Magister Officiorum*, but have ended up in Africa.



Figure 13: *Magister Officiorum* East (P) and West (O).

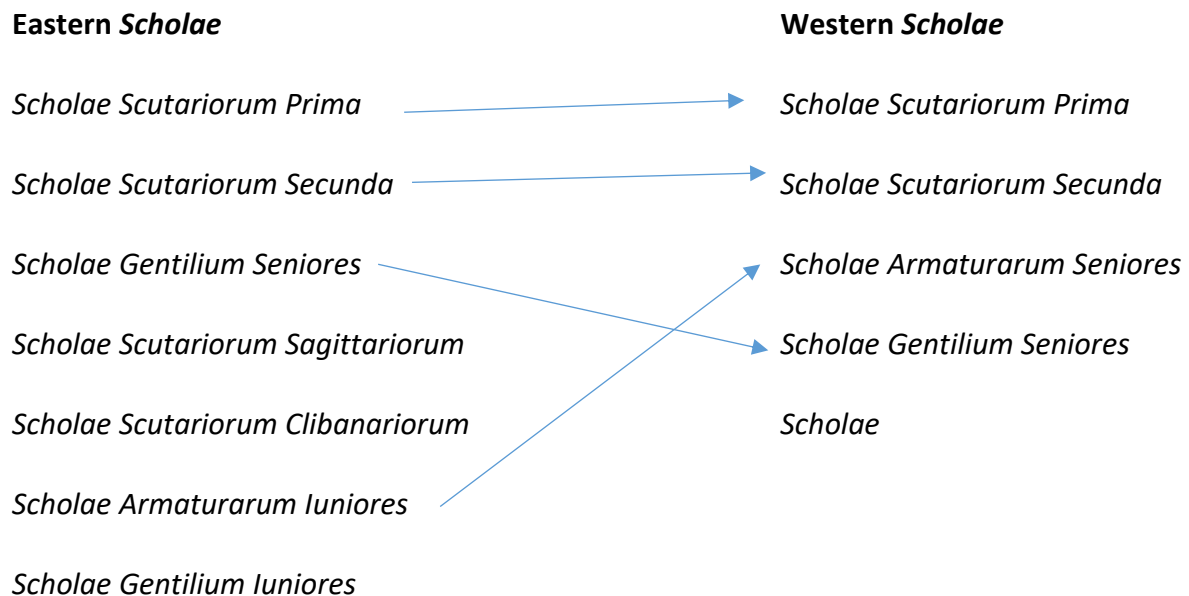
When looking at the *Magister Officiorum* illustrations, the first thing that should be noted is that the shield patterns are not named, so identification of individual units is not possible. As Ueda-Sarson points out, that as the *Magister Officiorum* also commanded the *Fabricae*, the extra shield designs could represent these rather than specific units. He does, however,

<sup>321</sup> Not. Or. vii.

<sup>322</sup> Not. Or. x.

<sup>323</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

also point out that there are 8 *Fabricae* listed in the east as well as the seven *Scholae* units, and it is hard to reconcile these with the six shield illustrations shown.<sup>324</sup> What is interesting is the fact that the first four shield patterns in each illustration have strong similarities and may correspond to the units with similar titles:



While they are not in the exact same order, the link between the unit names and similar patterns may help identify these units. The *Scutariorum Sagittariorum* and *Clibanariorum*, as discussed earlier, are troop types that mainly appear in the east, and as such have no direct counterparts in the western *Scholae*. This is supported by a law in the Theodosian Code referring to the *Clibanariorum* in Constantinople.<sup>325</sup> In a discussion on the creation and development of the *Scholae*, Barlow and Brennan create an interesting case for why the *Scutariorum* have been numbered sequentially and why the *Gentilium* and *Armaturarum* have been identified as *Seniores* and *Iuniores*.<sup>326</sup> They argue that the *Scutariorum Prima* and *Secunda* were in existence in both the east and west along with the *Gentilium* and *Armaturarum* units during the period 353-64. After this date the *Armaturarum Iuniores* and *Gentilium Iuniores* were created, and this is why they have the standard *Seniores/Iuniores* classification. The *Scutariorum Tertia* were also raised at the same time but retained the *Tertia* title rather than *Seniores/Iuniores*. Barlow and Brennan go on to suggest that as the text of the *Notitia Dignitatum* was easier to update than the illustrations, we should take it

<sup>324</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/MagisterOfficiorumE.html>.

<sup>325</sup> CTh 14.17.9 (389) mentions *Scutarii*, but which ones is uncertain, and the *Clibanariorum Scutariorum*.

<sup>326</sup> Barlow and Brennan (2001), pp. 237-54.



that there were indeed seven *Scholae* units originally in the west, and the *Armaturarum Iuniores* and *Gentilium Iuniores* belong there.<sup>327</sup> At no point during their discussion on the *Scholae* do they mention the missing possible thirteenth unit, the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*, but their proposal might shed some light on that unit and its place under the *Comes Africae*. If this unit was also raised at a later date from the *Scholae Secundae* in the East, and then dispatched to a regional field army, this could account for the inclusion of both *Iuniores* and *Equites* in their title, and for why they are not listed under the *Magister Equitum*. This line of reasoning could see them as eastern reinforcements, but their inclusion in the *Comes Africae* listing second from last is still hard to explain.

It is also worth looking at another possibility put forward by Ueda-Sarson, who suggests that the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae* should be equated to the *Secundi Scutarii Iuniores* who are listed 28<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Equitum* listings. As these are not listed in any other command, they could be one and the same.<sup>328</sup> The problem with this suggestion is they are listed below the *Equites Armigeri Iuniores* in the *Magister Equitum* listings, but placed before them under the *Comes Africae*, meaning that one of the two listings is incorrect. We must also note the similarity between one of the shields under the *Magister Officiorum* in the east and the shield listed for *Secundi Scutarii Iuniores*:



Figure 14: *Magister Officiorum* and the *Secundi Scutarii Iuniores* (P).

They share the same common design and colour scheme, but in a slightly different order. If it is the case that they are one and the same, this would help resolve the *Scholae* problem of having 12 units and 13 shields, without adding the problem of creating an extra shield pattern.

<sup>327</sup> Barlow and Brennan (2001), p. 241.

<sup>328</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDsecundilunioresScholaeScutarii.html>

The last thing to consider is if the *Secundi Scutarii Iuniores* are the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundae*, they and *Armigeri Iuniores* are both listed after the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* in both the *Magister Equitum* and *Comes Africae* listings. Since the *Honoriani Iuniores* are listed 26<sup>th</sup> in the *Vexillationes Comitatus* as opposed to their twin the *Honoriani Seniores* who are 7<sup>th</sup>, we can assume the *Iuniores* were raised much later during Honorius' reign and that the two following units were raised after 423.<sup>329</sup>

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The main problem that confronts us with dating the army of the *Comes Africae* is the unusual order and composition of the units listed under his command. If we accept the view that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is one whole, and that the western half has been updated, then we are presented with a very powerful army in Africa prior to the Vandal invasion. The size and make-up of this army is different to the earlier provincial garrison, which despite Cagnat's claim, has nearly doubled. If we try to explain the anomalies in the listings as possible textual errors, we are faced with the problem of identifying where these units should be. Finally, why were so many troops stationed in Africa and how did Roman Africa fall to the Vandals?

If the units listed were under his command, the *Comes Boniface* would have had some 21,000 field army troops plus additional border *Limitanei* at his disposal to face the Vandals, who from their total of 80,000 people, may well have only had between 15-20,000 armed men. To Heather the answer is one of quality. Of the troops at Boniface's disposal, only four units were top grade field army units, i.e. *Palatina* status, a force of perhaps only 2,000 men. This was never sufficient to stop the battle-hardened invaders who proved to be a far more effective fighting force than the local Moorish tribes that until then Boniface had been able to counter.<sup>330</sup> This line of reasoning suggests that the only troops that matter are those of *Palatina* status, and that any other troops were of no value to the fighting forces. While the title *Palatina* may have originally represented the elite fighting forces of the empire, a quick scan of the *Magister Peditum* listings shows the large number of *Auxilia Palatina* raised in Honorius' reign. Of the 65 units listed, 9 are named *Honoriani* while there are 17

---

<sup>329</sup> Not. Occ. vi. There is a listing under the Gallic Field army for *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* and *Equites Armigeri Seniores* which will be discussed in more detail in the *Comes Britanniae* chapter.

<sup>330</sup> Heather (2005), p. 271.

others which are listed after the first Honorian unit, so can presumably be dated from the same time or afterwards. Therefore 26 units are relatively new formations and unlikely to have been battle hardened units. It is simply that the name *Palatina* refers to their role rather than a true indication of quality. Coupled with this we have several *Legiones Comitatus* that have long established service in *Africa*, the *Constantiaci*, the *Constantiniani* and the *Tertia Augustana*. We have no reason to believe that these were inferior fighting units, and another of the established units, the *Cimbriani*, had recently been promoted.

I would suggest instead that the entry for the *Comes Africae* is a composite of different forces at different dates, and that it is possible to see this evolution of the army. At some point prior to 413, and after the suppression of Gerontius' revolt in Spain, the army probably consisted of the following *Legiones*:

*Cimbriani*

*Primani*

*Secundani*

*Tertiani*

*Constantiniani*

*Constantiaci*

*Tertia Augustana*

All of the above units can be confirmed as being in Africa either by epigraphical evidence in the case of the *Cimbriani* and *Tertia Augustana*, or by mention by Ammianus Marcellinus as being there in 373 along with the *Equites Quarti Sagittarii*. It is probable that many of these forces were seriously depleted, or even destroyed, in the fighting during Heraclian's revolt in 413, especially if we accept Hydatius' high estimate for the casualties.<sup>331</sup> This would make sense of Orosius' comments on how elements of Gerontius' forces were dispatched to Africa, presumably in 413 or soon after to replace some of these losses.<sup>332</sup> It is quite probable that the following elements were then added to what remained of the African army:

---

<sup>331</sup> Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 80.

<sup>332</sup> Orosius, 7.42.5.

## *Legio Fortenses*

### *Equites Cetrati Seniores and Iuniores*

While the *Cetrati Seniores* have been inserted in a higher position within the army of the *Comes Africae* as opposed to their placing under the *Magister Equitum*, which cannot be satisfactorily explained, their twin *Iuniores* have been placed after the *Quarti Sagittarii*, which would fit with them being later reinforcements. This ties in with the *Fortenses* appearing last in the infantry listing. Of the later cavalry units, the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* and the *Equites Armigeri Iuniores*, who follow after the *Cetrati Iuniores* in the *Magister Equitum* listings, would have been raised during Honorius' reign and could have been posted to Africa after 413, as they appear below the *Cetrati Iuniores*.

If we now consider the cavalry units listed at the beginning of the *Comes Africae* listings, from the *Equites Scutarii Seniores* through to the *Equites Parthi Sagittarii Seniores*, they are listed sequentially from tenth to fifteenth in the *Magister Equitum* listings and also appear in the same order in Africa. Hoffman suggested that these units were either already in place or moved to Africa quite early, and were then split into *Seniores* and *Iuniores* units at some point before the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drawn up.<sup>333</sup> While he does not offer any suggested date for this, it must have been prior to 373 and the mention of the *Equites Quarti Sagittarii*. He also notes that the *Equites Stablesiani Italiciani* were a later deployment, but there is no explanation for them being placed at the head of the list, rather than the end, where we would expect to find them, below the *Equites Armigeri Iuniores*. Likewise, he mentions the *Equites Scutarii Secundi Iuniores*, as being hard to pin down, but does not discuss their additional *Scholae* title, or the unusual inclusion of the West's only *Clibanarii* unit within this group.<sup>334</sup>

If we look at the start of the infantry listings, it is possible to see that units have been placed at the beginning and these represent later reinforcements. The *Celtae Iuniores* have a strong link to the East, less so for the two *Armigeri Propugnatores*, though not necessarily an improbable link. As senior units they have been placed ahead of the *Secundani Italiciani* and all four could represent the combined East-West forces commanded by Aspar. This group

---

<sup>333</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 198.

<sup>334</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 199.

has been placed ahead of the most senior *Legio* of the existing army of the *Comes Africae*, the *Cimbriani*, and this would explain the strange order in which the units are recorded. As they represent an ad-hoc force commanded by a *Magister Militum*, it seems reasonable to have them listed before the existing forces of the *Comes Africae*. This line of reasoning can also account for why the *Equites Stablesiani Italiciani* are also placed at the head of the cavalry listings. While it is possible to speculate about the potential eastern heritage of the *Equites Clibanarii* and the unusual inclusion of the *Equites Scutarii Iuniores Scholae Secundi*, nothing concrete can be ascertained.

This line of reasoning seems the most logical in explaining the order in which the various elements of the *Comes Africae* listing have come together. It records a three phase development, with the initial army being reinforced after Heraclian's revolt in 413 and again in 431 to face the Vandal conquest. It is quite possible that between 429 and 431 many of the existing units had endured continual combat and sustained heavy losses, reducing their effectiveness, and thus requiring the need for reinforcements. While these units still appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, they may well have ceased to exist, which can help explain why Boniface was unable to halt the Vandal invasion. There continued listing highlights the idea that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was not a working military document. That said, it would appear that at least one unit, the *Fortenses*, survived this period and continued in a reduced capacity under the *Dux Tripolitanae*. It may be possible to date that border *Dux* to the period after 435, when Aspar had negotiated a peace treaty with the Vandals. As for the whole listing for the *Comes Africae* in its existing form, it seems most likely to date to 431. The large size and quality of its units coupled with the large cavalry contingent seem to fit the requirements of a special *Comitatenses* force sent to try to re-claim Africa, rather than a standard garrison.

## 5. Comes Britanniae

### 5.1 Introduction

If we now review the entry for Britain in the *Notitia Dignitatum* we have three issues which confront us. These are the supposed date of the document being set at 420, ten years after Britain was apparently abandoned by the Romans; the strange mixture of units that form the army; and a lack of any contemporary British historical account. The first thing to note is that while the *Comes Britanniae* does have a cover sheet, unlike the *Comes Hispaniarum*, it does not show towns under his command, unlike for example the *Comites Tingitaniae* and *Africae*. All the image shows is one large town called *Britannia*, and in this way it is similar to the pages for the *Comes Italiae* and the *Comes Argentoratensis*. It should be noted that neither of these two latter posts had any troops under their command and Jones believed these represented old commands which had been superseded.<sup>335</sup>



Figure: 15: The *Comes Britanniae* (O) and the *Comes Italiae* and *Argentoratensis* (P).

The army which is listed under the *Comes Britanniae*'s command consists of one *Auxilia Palatina*, two *Legiones Comitatus* and six units of *Equites*. Like the *Comes Africae* command, this gives the British entry a very heavy cavalry bias, and going on Jones' unit estimates we get 3,000 cavalry to 2,500 infantry.<sup>336</sup> This is half as many cavalry as are listed for the Gallic field army, the largest formation within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>337</sup> This is

<sup>335</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

<sup>336</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 682.

<sup>337</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

particularly interesting as we have seen that the *Comes Hispaniarum* had no cavalry under his command, and neither does the *Comes Illyrici*.<sup>338</sup> Since both of these are lacking cover sheets and are presumably new creations, then this might suggest that the *Comes Britanniae* was an established post.

The first thing we need to do is to try to establish when the command was created, and any possible dates when, like in Spain, a field army may have been operating in Britain. It must be noted that like another British command, the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, the *Comes Britanniae*, is only mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>339</sup> The other British command, the *Dux Britanniarum* is mentioned by Ammianus.<sup>340</sup> In the index section for *Comites Rei Militaris*, this post is listed in fifth place, after the *Tractus Argentoratensis* and above the *Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, but appears after them both in the *Distributio*.<sup>341</sup> This might imply that either the *Comes Britanniae* post was established when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was first drafted, hence the inclusion of the cover sheet, or that it had existed, was then removed, and at a later point re-inserted. This would then account for the commands troops being listed after those of the *Comes Litoris Saxonici*.

It should also be noted that none of the units listed under the *Comes Britanniae* can be easily identified within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and they appear to be duplications. This leads to three interesting possibilities. Firstly, the list may show those units which were used to re-establish Imperial authority over Britain in the aftermath of Constantius III's recovery of Gaul. Secondly, the listing may show the army that Constantine III brought over to Gaul, and the units were subsequently dispersed throughout the other commands after his defeat in 411.<sup>342</sup> The third possibility is that the confused manner in which the units under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici* and the *Dux Britanniarum* have been recorded, shows the on-going process of reoccupying the province during the period 418-419.<sup>343</sup> If we accept either of the first two views then these undermine the value of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as one complete source of information, and reinforce the idea that the information is drawn from different periods. The problem with the third view is that while it gives a clear argument for how the

---

<sup>338</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>339</sup> Not. Occ. xxv, xxvi.

<sup>340</sup> Amm. 27.8.1.

<sup>341</sup> Not. Occ. i, vi.

<sup>342</sup> Barker (1981), p. 23.

<sup>343</sup> Ward (1973), pp. 254-63.

British entries appear in the format they do, there is no discussion of the duplication of units under the *Comes Britanniae*, as this view only looks at the border commands of the *Comes Litoris Saxonici* and the *Dux Britanniarum*.

It should be noted that Jones also favoured the idea that *Comes Britanniae* was a later creation, while there had been a post of the *Comes Britanniae* previously, it was not permanent, and that it was probably re-established after Constantius III recovery of Gaul in 413.<sup>344</sup> There are, however, two problems with this view. The existence of the cover page, which is missing for the supposedly recently created commands of the *Comes Hispaniarum* and *Comes Illyrici*, would suggest the *Comes Britanniae* was an established post. In addition, we must also note that it is also listed in the index along with the apparently dormant commands of the *Comes Italiae* and *Comes Argentoratensis*. These two points would suggest that the command had in fact existed prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and remained active throughout the time scale c.394-420. That being said, it does not mean the command was not amended over this period. As we shall see when looking at the units themselves, there is a strong case for some of them being raised from local British *Limitanei* to bolster the army in the late fourth or early fifth century. To some extent this view has been based on Bury's earlier work which argued that the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows the situation in Britain in 428.<sup>345</sup> To try to unpick this issue it will be necessary to review the history of the field army in Britain and then look at the units in detail.

## 5.2 Background

Under Septimius Severus Britain was split into two provinces, *Britannia Superior* and *Inferior*. These were further subdivided under Diocletian into four: *Britannia I*, *Maxima Caesariensis*, *Flavia Caesariensis* and *Britannia II*. In the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the *Praefectus Praetorio Galliarum*, there is a fifth province recorded in Britain called *Valentia*.<sup>346</sup> There are two border commands recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for Britain, the *Dux Britanniarum*, whose command covers the north of Britain along Hadrian's Wall, and the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, whose command spans from The Wash to Porchester on the south coast. These two commands are unusual because unlike other

---

<sup>344</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p.354.

<sup>345</sup> Bury (1920), pp. 150-4.

<sup>346</sup> Not. Occ. iii.



border commands that are established in only one province at a time, these commands both span two provinces. The *Dux Britanniarum* covers both *Valentia* and *Britannia II* in the north, while the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* covers *Maxima Caesariensis* and *Flavia Caesariensis* in the south and east. While these border commands are not the main focus of this chapter, it is still necessary to consider them as there are connections between the troops listed in their commands and the units under the *Comes Britanniae*.

We have several references to temporary field army commands operating in Britain from the fourth century onwards. In 360 Julian dispatched the *Magister Equitum* Lupicinus to Britain to deal with invasions by the Picts and Scots.<sup>347</sup> His force consisted of the *Heruli* and *Batavi*, both senior *Auxilia Palatina* units, and two *Numeri* of *Moesianci*.<sup>348</sup> This campaign could not have been particularly long, as both of the *Auxilia Palatina* units are recorded as being with Julian in the winter of 360, when they were part of the reinforcements requested by Constantius II.<sup>349</sup> In 367 the *Dux Britanniarum* was ambushed and the *Comes Maritimi Tractus* was also killed, so Valentinian I dispatched *Comes* Theodosius to restore order. Interestingly, the units involved were the *Heruli*, *Batavi*, *Iovii* and *Victores*. The first two had already been involved in the previous expedition, while the *Notitia Dignitatum* records the only *Auxilia Palatina* stationed in Britain as the *Victores Iuniores Britannici*.<sup>350</sup> Whether these are one and the same as the *Victores* mentioned above, is hard to prove, and is made more difficult because we do not know which *Victores* Ammianus is referring too.

While the *Heruli* and *Batavi Seniores* are listed together, and form a brigaded pair, the *Victores Seniores*, are next to the *Iovii Seniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listings, and could be another brigaded pair. Since they and the *Heruli* and *Batavi* are also in the same command under the *Magister Peditum* in Italy, it would seem reasonable that an expeditionary force dispatched by the Emperor would be drawn from his *Praesentalis*. It should also be noted that there is a *Legio Palatina* in the same command, the *Moesiaci Seniores*, who may have provided the detachments of *Numeri* mentioned by Ammianus. There may have been a *Moesiaci Iuniores* at this date, so it is possible that a detachment could have been drawn from both units. It is unusual that Ammianus listed them after the

---

<sup>347</sup> PLRE (1971), Lupicinus 6, pp. 520-1.

<sup>348</sup> Amm. 20.1.3.

<sup>349</sup> Amm. 20.4.2.

<sup>350</sup> Amm.27.8.1-3, 27.8.7; Not. Occ. vii.

*Auxilia Palatina* units as *Legio Palatina* they should have come before them in the order of precedence. This does raise questions over Ammianus' use of unit terms.<sup>351</sup>

In 383 Magnus Maximus was proclaimed *Augustus* by the army in Britain and invaded Gaul. While this episode was recorded in several sources, none of them provide any details on Maximus' rank or his army. Sozomen does state that he raised a large army of Britons, Gauls, Celts and other nations to attack Italy in 387.<sup>352</sup> Ultimately, his attempt failed and Maximus was defeated twice by the forces of Theodosius I and executed.<sup>353</sup> While it cannot be proven, it has been assumed he could have been the *Comes Britanniarum*, which would make sense as any usurper would need the control of a *Comitatenses* to mount a rebellion, rather than just scattered *Limitanei* forces.<sup>354</sup> This then could be the first instance of British units being taken to Gaul, and possibly being retained there. If this was the case, then it would help explain the next episode, where troops are required to be sent back to Britain.

This event is recorded by Claudian in his poem on Stilicho's second consulship where he mentions aid being given to Britain against the Scots and Hibernians.<sup>355</sup> While there are no details given on the forces sent to aid the British in 389, it has been suggested that it was between this date and 395 that Stilicho established the post and army of the *Comes Britanniae*.<sup>356</sup> It is interesting to note that Claudian mentions in his poem on the Gothic wars, how Stilicho withdrew the *Legio* that had been left to guard Britain from the Scots and Picts.<sup>357</sup> Whether this *Legio* was part of the existing garrison or evidence of the new *Comitatenses* in Britain is uncertain. What seems certain is that the forces in Britain post Magnus Maximus were insufficient to deal with the problem in 389, and again, the relief force would seem to have been quite small, as it had been in 360 and 367.

---

<sup>351</sup> In 360 Ammianus uses the term *Numeri*, but in 367 he mentions Theodosius raising *Legiones* and Cohorts for his forces, which did not contain any Legionary forces. It would appear that the use of *Numeri* is for a detachment from a *Legio*, rather than a formal internal division. Also see Barker (1981), pp. 13-15; Jones (1964), vol. ii, pp. 664-5.

<sup>352</sup> Orosius, 7.34; Sozomen, 7.13-14.

<sup>353</sup> Omissi (2018), pp. 263-290.

<sup>354</sup> PLRE (1971), Maximus 39, p. 588.

<sup>355</sup> Claudian, *De Consulatu Stilichonis*, 247-55.

<sup>356</sup> Holder (1982), p.100 & Jones (1996), p.166.

<sup>357</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gothico*, 415-420.

After the restoration of order in Britain, we hear nothing further until 407, when we have a series of three usurpers, Marcus, Gratian and then Constantine III.<sup>358</sup> While the first two were short lived, Constantine was more successful and took the British army to Gaul and Spain. We have no details concerning the rank or status of Marcus or Gratian, but Constantine is called a common soldier by Orosius, and a man of considerable means by Procopius.<sup>359</sup> It is hard to reconcile these two accounts, or to accept the idea that a common soldier could rise to such prominence on the basis of his name alone. It is also hard to believe that he was able to undertake such a venture without the support of a field army, and as with Maximus, we must assume the presence in Britain of more than *Limitanei* forces. While Constantine's campaign was ultimately defeated, as discussed under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, it would suggest the presence of *Comitatenses* in Britain and the further weakening of those forces when he took his troops to the continent.

There was a curious incident in 410, when Zosimus records a letter sent by Honorius to the cities of Britain telling them to take care of their own defence.<sup>360</sup> This is a difficult text to interpret, especially in the light of Zosimus' use of the word Britain. Most modern historians follow Thompson in believing the letter was intended for the British, though there has been a recent alternative interpretation by Wood who argues for the letter being addressed to the province of *Raetia* instead.<sup>361</sup> If we accept the idea the letter was aimed at Britain, then as Stevens suggests, it might be viewed in the same light as the *Epistula Honorii*, discussed under the *Comes Hispaniarum*, and seen as undermining Constantine III's rule in Britain.<sup>362</sup> If that was the case, this might imply that Constantine's control over the province was weak and that he had stripped all available manpower for his invasion of Gaul and Spain.

Moving forward, and building on Bury's argument that the *Notitia Dignitatum* records the situation in Britain after Constantius III's reorganisation of the west, Ward put forward an alternative dating for the army of the *Comes Britanniae*.<sup>363</sup> By examining the order in which the defences of the *Comes Litoris Saxonici* and the *Dux Britanniam* have been recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, Ward argues this shows the various phases of reoccupation of the

---

<sup>358</sup> Stevens (1957), pp 316-335.

<sup>359</sup> Orosius, 7.40.4; Procopius, *Wars*, 1.2.31; PLRE (1980), Constantius 21, p. 316.

<sup>360</sup> Zosimus, 6.10.2.

<sup>361</sup> Thompson (1982), pp. 445-62; Wood (2012), pp. 818-26.

<sup>362</sup> Stevens (1957), p. 335.

<sup>363</sup> Bury (1920), pp. 148-54.

province after the defeat of Constantine III. This also helps explain why there are no western defences recorded, as they had not been completed by the time the entry for the *Notitia* was updated, because the small *Comitatenses* had run out of manpower to finish the job. Ward dates this last phase of reoccupation to 418-419, just prior to the estimated terminus date of the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>364</sup>

To support his argument, Ward referenced the later British histories of Gildas and Bede (who used Gildas as his main source). Bede states that the usurper Constantine stripped Britain of all its armed men as well as the flower of its youth, who never returned. After Constantine's defeat, there was then an appeal to Rome for military support with the promise of again becoming faithful subjects. Both Gildas and Bede record that a *Legio* was dispatched and order restored, but the *Legio* was withdrawn soon after.<sup>365</sup> According to Ward this represents the initial phase of reoccupation as noted above, and soon afterwards a second appeal to Rome was made and additional forces were dispatched. This second force is only referred to by Bede as a *Legio*, however, Gildas states that this force was formed of both cavalry and infantry.<sup>366</sup> This appears to be the last military activity by the western Empire in Britain as these forces were also withdrawn, leaving the locals to defend themselves, though it appears they showed the Britons how to make arms.<sup>367</sup> A further appeal to Aetius went unheeded as he was dealing with Attila. While there are no precise dates for these interventions, Ward assumed they occurred during the period after Constantius' recovery of Gaul in 411-420, and before Aetius' rise to power in 425.<sup>368</sup> The main problem is the reliability of our two sources. Gildas was writing in the sixth century, Bede in the eighth century. Both make references to the building of a wall in Scotland, and Bede adds the building of lookout towers along the Ocean to the south during this period. Since these features were already in place, it casts some doubt on their accuracy.

This lack of reliable dating evidence from Gildas and Bede does open up their accounts for an alternative explanation. Salway suggests that the British sources are not describing the situation post Constantine III, but the first Pictish war in 389 and the troops mentioned are

---

<sup>364</sup> Ward (1973), pp. 254-65.

<sup>365</sup> Bede, 1.12; Gildas, 14.1, 15.1.

<sup>366</sup> Gildas, 17.2.

<sup>367</sup> Bede, 1.12.

<sup>368</sup> PLRE (1980), Aetius 7, pp. 21-9.

in fact those sent by Theodosius I. These were then withdrawn in 402, after a reorganisation of the Saxon shore defences by Stilicho. These troops had become a semi-permanent force in Britain and the listing in the *Notitia Dignitatum* could come from the period 389-402, before the troops were then temporarily withdrawn. Salway notes that the *Comitatenses* of the *Comes Britanniae* looks like a task force.<sup>369</sup> Yet, although our sources only mention previous expeditions being formed of only infantry units, the presence of a large number of cavalry would suggest the forces under the *Comes Britanniae* were a field army, rather than another expedition.

While this argument fits in with the general chronology of events as described by Claudian and Gildas, we should be able to find some links between possible units used in 389 and the *Notitia Dignitatum* listings. In the next section I shall look at the units in more detail, but for now will note that all of the units under the *Comes Britanniae* can be identified as being stationed elsewhere in other sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This could either show where they were drawn from other commands to form this expedition, or alternatively, they were those used by Constantine III and scattered on the continent after his defeat. Salway, Like Ward, does not attempt any analysis of the units listed, so it is hard to prove his theory.

A final point to note is that in 429 when Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, visited Britain there was a victory over the Pict and Saxon invaders. As Jones noted, there is no reason to believe Britain was not still a part of the western empire at this date, and the forces of the *Comes Britanniae* could be those established after Constantius' recovery of Gaul.<sup>370</sup> In fact we might expect any such victory to imply the presence of organised troops in Britain.<sup>371</sup>

### 5.3 Units under the *Comes Britanniae*

The majority of the units listed in the *Distributio* as being under the command of the *Comes Britanniae* are not listed under either the *Magister Peditum* or *Magister Equitum*, which makes identifying them very difficult. I have included the alternative unit names that can be linked to the units listed under the *Comes Britanniae* and their alternative postings with the *Notitia Dignitatum*:

---

<sup>369</sup> Salway (1981), pp. 419-23.

<sup>370</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 191; vol. iii, p. 354.

<sup>371</sup> Gillett (2003), pp. 126-7 on Germanus; PLRE, Germanus 1, vol. 2.

*Auxilia Palatina:*

*Victores Iuniores Britannici* = *Victores Iuniores* (In Spain)

*Legiones Comitatus:*

*Primani Iuniores* = *Prima Flavia Pacis* (In Africa)

*Secundani Iuniores* = *Secunda Britannica*<sup>372</sup> (In Gaul)

*Vexillationes Comitatus:*

*Equites Catafractarii* = (Only listed under the *Dux Britanniarum*)

*Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* = Not listed

*Equites Honoriani Seniores* = *Equites Honoriani Seniores* (In Gaul)

*Equites Stablesiani* = (Only listed under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici*)

*Equites Syri* = Not listed

*Equites Taifali* = Not listed

There is no listing under the *Magister Peditum* for a unit called *Victores Iuniores Britannici* and Seeck believed that they were in fact the *Victores Iuniores*, which as we have noted above, are listed in Spain. Ueda-Sarson suggests the alternative that they might be the *Exculcatores Iuniores Britannici*, which are listed under the command of the *Magister Peditum*, but not attached to any of the armies listed in the *Distributio*.<sup>373</sup> It should, however, be noted that there is also a unit listed under the *Magister Equitum in Gallias*, which is not listed under the *Magister Peditum*, simply named *Britones*. There is one more *Auxilia Palatina* unit with a similar name, *Invicti Iuniores Britannici*, who are listed in Spain just after the *Victores Iuniores*.<sup>374</sup>

It is unusual to have a single *Auxilia Palatina* unit on its own and not operating as a brigaded pair under the *Comes Britanniae*. It is of course quite possible, as discussed under the *Comes*

---

<sup>372</sup> Not. Occ. vii. Böcking (1839), p. 36 and Seeck (1876), p. 126 believe the *Secundani Iuniores* to be the *Secunda Britannica*.

<sup>373</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 123 and <http://lukeuedasarson.com/ComesBritanniarum.html>.

<sup>374</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

*Hispaniarum*, that the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* are the *Victores Iuniores* and are brigaded with the *Invicti Iuniores Britannici* in Spain. Whereas the latter has been deleted from their position in Britain, the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* have not, possibly with the result of losing their 'British' name after being recorded in Spain. An alternative explanation put forward by Holder suggests that the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* were raised by Stilicho in 399/400. The *Iuniores* and *Britannici* parts of the name form a link with the existing *Victores Seniores* and being stationed in Britain. As they do not appear in the *Magister Peditum* listings, Holder believes they had ceased to exist when that list was drawn up.<sup>375</sup>

Before moving on, it is important to note that in the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* command there is a unit named *Numeri Exploratorum* based in Portum Adurni (Porchester),<sup>376</sup> while under the *Dux Britanniarum* there is another unit named *Numeri Exploratorum* based at *Lavatres* (near Greta Bridge).<sup>377</sup> Now it is quite possible as Ueda-Sarson suggested that the identity of the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* could be linked to the *Exculcatores Iuniores Britannici*. We also have two units listed in Britain with the title *Exploratorum*, and the *Victores Iuniores* could have been raised from one of these *Limitanei* units and drafted into the field army. To counter this line of reasoning, Holder suggests that the *Numeri Exploratorum* can be identified with the simply named *Exploratorum*, a *Pseudocomitatenses* in the Gallic field army.<sup>378</sup> There has been some debate over what exactly is meant by the term *Numerus*, but there is reason to suppose that it designates a smaller subunit within a larger formation, such as a *Legio* or *Cohors*, so it is used in this context for a unit of a smaller strength than a *Cohors*.<sup>379</sup> Accepting this definition would then challenge the idea that a smaller *Limitanei Numeri* unit could have supplied the troops for a larger *Auxilia Palatina* unit. Maybe by combining both *Numeri* units it might have been possible to form the *Exculcatores Iuniores Britannici*, but then they would need to be deleted from the *Notitia Dignitatum* listings.

---

<sup>375</sup> Holder (1982), p. 130.

<sup>376</sup> Not. Occ. xxv.

<sup>377</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii.

<sup>378</sup> Holder (1982), p. 125.

<sup>379</sup> Barker (1981), p. 13. See appendix I for this analysis.

I would argue that the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* are indeed the *Victores Iuniores* and they ended up in Spain along with the *Invicti Iuniores Britannici*, but the *Victores Iuniores* lost their *Britannici* title as part of Constantine III's expansion there. They have not been deleted from the *Comes Britanniae* and show a unit in transit. This would date this entry to 407 or shortly after.

The *Primani Iuniores* are even more of a mystery, as there is no listing under the *Magister Peditum* for these or a *Primani Seniores*. There is a unit simply titled *Primani* under the *Comes Africae*, but, as discussed in the last chapter, these can be equated to the *Prima Flavia Pacis*.<sup>380</sup> There are two units in the Gallic command, both *Pseudocomitatenses*, with the title of *Prima*. One of these is the *Prima Flavia Gallicana* which are listed under the *Magister Peditum*. The second unit is the *Prima Flavia*, which is not listed, but Seeck identified them as the *Prima Flavia Metis* who are listed in Gaul.<sup>381</sup> It has been suggested by Nischer that under the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, *Legio I Flavia Victrix* was raised and stationed in Britain and later moved to the continent.<sup>382</sup> If this is correct the *Primani Iuniores* may have come from a detachment left behind in Britain. While this may explain the origin of the *Legio's* name, it does not help with dating its appearance in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. If the unit did originate in Britain from the *Legio I Flavia Victrix*, and it was taken to Gaul by Constantine III, the remnants may well have been absorbed into any of the Gallic *Prima Flavia* units or even the *Prima Flavia Pacis* in Africa. This would account for the fact that the unit is not listed under the *Magister Peditum* and the possible dispersal across Gaul and Africa can be supported by Orosius.<sup>383</sup> An alternative explanation put forward by Holder is that the *Primani Iuniores* were raised from the *Legio I Adiutrix* but had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was updated.<sup>384</sup> One final point is that there is a *Legio* recorded by Ammianus at the battle of Strasbourg in 357 which he calls *Primani*, and these may well have been the parent body for at later unit such as the *Primani Iuniores* in Britain.<sup>385</sup>

---

<sup>380</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>381</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 127.

<sup>382</sup> Nischer (1923), pp. 8, fn.2, 21, fn. 7.

<sup>383</sup> Orosius, 7.42.5.

<sup>384</sup> Holder (1982), p. 129.

<sup>385</sup> Amm. 16.12.49.



The last infantry unit listed under the *Comes Britanniae* are the *Secundani Iuniores* and again there is no listing elsewhere for this unit. Of the *Comitatenses* units with *Secundani* or *Secunda* in their title there are the *Secundani Italiciani* who are listed under the *Comes Africae*, the *Secunda Britannica* listed under the *Magister Equitum* Gallic command, the *Secunda Flavia Virtutis* also under the *Comes Africae*, the *Secunda Flavia Constantiniana* linked with the *Comes Tingitaniae* and the *Comes Africae* and finally, the *Secunda Iulia Alpina* under the *Comes Illyrici*. Of these units, the most likely match is the *Secunda Britannica* as it carries the 'Britain' name in its title. This would fit in with the argument that this unit was part of Constantine III's army that he brought to Gaul and remained there after his defeat.

An alternative view put forward by Ueda-Sarson is the possible link to the *Limitanei* unit, *Legio Secundae Augustae* based at *Rutupis* (Richborough in Kent) as part of the command of the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*. He argues that the *Secundani Iuniores* were drawn from the *Secundae Augustae* and placed in the *Comitatenses* of the *Comes Britanniae*.<sup>386</sup> This *Legio* had a long association with Britain, being a part of the original invasion force and then a continued presence in the province especially in the west at *Silurum* (Caerleon). The last dated evidence for its presence there is from an inscription dedicated to the Emperor Valerian (255-260).<sup>387</sup> The fort at *Rutupis* was rebuilt in approximately 285, so it is believable that a detachment of the *Legio* formed the garrison, as the site is smaller than at *Silurum*.<sup>388</sup> It is worth pointing out that there are no corresponding *Secundani Seniores* in any of the listings, but there is a *Legio Palatina* named *Britones Seniores* under the eastern command of the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*.<sup>389</sup> There is no evidence to link them with the *Secundani Seniores* or indeed the *Secunda Britannica* apart from the 'Britain' naming. If they are linked, then it would seem unusual not to have the *Seniores/Iuniores* titles, rather than *Seniores* and *Secundani*. It seems more probable that there was at one point a *Secundani Seniores* who like the *Secundani Iuniores* were raised from detachment of the *Legio Secunda Augusta*.

---

<sup>386</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDsecundaBritannica.html> follows Holder (1982), p. 129.

<sup>387</sup> RIB:334.

<sup>388</sup> Johnson (1970), p. 248.

<sup>389</sup> Not. Or. viii.

Another explanation for the *Secundani Iuniores* is proved by Holder who suggests that like the *Primani Iuniores* were raised from the *Legio I Adiutrix*, so the *Secundani Iuniores* were originally raised from *Legio II Adiutrix* as a *Pseudocomitatenses* when the post of the *Comes Britanniae* was created. The fact that they are not listed under the *Magister Peditum* is because they had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was revised.<sup>390</sup> If this is correct, this would suggest that the listing for Britain within the *Notitia Dignitatum* is out of date, recording earlier information for 400/402 when Stilicho created the command.

If we now look at the cavalry units we find an even more confusing situation than that of the infantry. The first unit are the *Equites Catafractarii* who are not listed under the *Magister Equitum*. In fact, no *Catafractarii* are listed at all in the west, while there are four such units in the East. There is one single *Clibanarii* unit under the *Magister Equitum*, but this is assigned to the *Comes Africae*. While there is a difference between the two types of armoured cavalry, it is worth considering them together as they were both heavily armoured, unlike the standard Roman cavalry units.<sup>391</sup> Ammianus uses the terms as synonyms, describing *Catafractarii* in Constantius II's parade in Rome as the ones called *Clibanarii*. He also refers to *Catafractarii* at the battle of Strasburg, but implies that only the riders were armoured.<sup>392</sup> Either way, the presence of heavily armoured cavalry was worthy of note on both of these occasions. It is, however, surprising to find that the only two such *Comitatenses* units recorded in the western *Notitia* were based in such distant commands, especially if we consider an entry amongst the border *Limitanei* of the *Dux Britanniarum* for the *Equites Catafractarii* at *Morbio*, which is possibly Piercebridge or Greta Bridge in County Durham.<sup>393</sup> These are the only *Catafractarii* units listed amongst the *Limitanei* and again, they are found in the distant province of Britain. The presence of both units in Britain suggests the possibility that the *Equites Catafractarii* were raised from the *Limitanei* unit, and as such shows us the army of the *Comes Britanniae* had been built from local units rather than being drawn from units in Gaul and elsewhere. If we accept this idea it does not, however, help in dating this unit. The *Equites Catafractarii* could have been raised at any

---

<sup>390</sup> Holder (1982), p. 129.

<sup>391</sup> *Catafractarii* should be considered fully armoured men and horses, while *Clibanarii* are armoured men on partially armoured horses. It is unlikely that *Catafractarii* had shields, but *Clibanarii* appear to have had them.

<sup>392</sup> Amm. 16.10.8, 16.12.38.

<sup>393</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii.

date between Magnus Maximus' revolt and Constantine III's preparations to invade Gaul, or possibly later to rebuild the local *Comitatenses* after his defeat.

The reason why *Catafractarii* are in Britain is harder to explain, but may have a link with a group of settled Sarmatians at Ribchester. While Hoffman noted a link between Sarmatians and *Catafractarii*, he believed that the *Equites Catafractarii* were linked to those used by Julian in 357, and became part of the mobile army at some point under Stilicho.<sup>394</sup> If the link between Sarmatians and *Catafractarii* is accepted, then the men from Ribchester could have provided the recruits for both the *Equites Catafractarii* and the *Equites Catafractarii* at Morbio. If this is true, it would also help explain why such an unusual unit was stationed in Britain, being locally recruited from settled Sarmatians, and not in one of the larger continental armies. However, Holder does not see any links between the *Equites Catafractarii* and either of the *Equites Catafractarii* at Morbio or the *Numerus Sarmatorum*.<sup>395</sup> He believes that the *Equites Catafractarii* had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was updated.<sup>396</sup>

The next unit listed under the *Comes Britanniae* is the *Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* which like the *Equites Catafractarii* above are not listed under the *Magister Equitum* listings. They may have had their origins under the *Dux Britanniarum*. An inscription from Burgh-on-Sea dated 253-255 records the *Numerus Maurorum Aureliarum Valeriani Gallienique*.<sup>397</sup> While the unit is titled a *Numerus* (appendix i), there is no reason to believe that this title is limited to infantry units. It is undoubtedly one and the same unit which is recorded at the same site in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the *Dux Britanniarum* as the *Numerus Maurorum Aureliarum*.<sup>398</sup> The inclusion of the *Mauri* within their title would add weight to the idea that they were indeed a cavalry unit, as the *Mauri* name appears twice under the *Magister Equitum* listings for the *Equites Mauri Alites* and *Equites Mauri Feroces*.<sup>399</sup> The problem with this link is the change of title, the word *Scutarii* could well refer to the large shield carried by a heavy troop type, which is what Hoffman suggests, and this would go against the use of *Mauri* as a description, which would suggest light cavalry probably armed with smaller

---

<sup>394</sup> Hoffman (1973), pp. 265, 352.

<sup>395</sup> Not. Occ. xl.

<sup>396</sup> Holder (1982), p. 124, 127, 130.

<sup>397</sup> RIB: 2042

<sup>398</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii.

<sup>399</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

shields. As with the *Equites Catafractarii*, he suggests that the *Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* were transferred from the *Dux Britanniarum* command to the mobile army by Stilicho.<sup>400</sup> As a counter to this, there are several types of light cavalry in use in the Roman army, one of which is called *Scutarii*. Though these are a separate group from the *Mauri* type of cavalry, they are both light cavalry.<sup>401</sup> In his edition of the *Notitia Dignitatum* Faleiro follows Holder's assessment that the *Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* had ceased to exist by the time the *Notitia* had been drafted, and it is unlikely that the *Numerus Maurorum Aurelianorum* had been upgraded to field army status.<sup>402</sup> The most likely conclusion we can draw from this discussion is that the *Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* were recruited locally in Britain and had been destroyed by the time the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This could have been at any point from Magnus Maximus to Constantine III.

The next unit in the listings is the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*, which is the only cavalry unit listed under the *Comes Britanniae* which is also shown under the *Magister Equitum*.<sup>403</sup> They are also listed under the *Magister Equitum*'s Gallic army with the exact same title. They are listed 7<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Equitum* listings for *Equites Comitatusenses*, and as a relatively senior unit which was raised in 395 or soon after, its inclusion in both armies must be an error. As there is an *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* listed under the *Comes Africae*, it does not seem likely that the duplication is down to one of the units being mistaken for the *Iuniores* unit. Instead, the duplication could well show a unit in transit from one command to the other, and if we accept the unit was named after the emperor Honorius, it was raised sometime after 395. Whether it was transferred to Britain by Stilicho or transferred from Britain to Gaul at some later date is hard to prove. The only thing we can say for certain is it was not raised from any local British *Limitanei* units. All the other cavalry units listed under the *Comes Britanniae* do not have the title *Seniores*, and may have links to local *Limitanei*. The *Equites Honoriani Seniores* are distinct, and were raised from the beginning as a field army unit.<sup>404</sup>

---

<sup>400</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 171.

<sup>401</sup> Barker (1981), p. 75.

<sup>402</sup> Faleiro (2005), p. 552, fn. 22; Holder (1982), p. 128.

<sup>403</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>404</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 352.

One last point worth considering here is that the shield pattern of the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* is very similar to that of the next unit listed under the *Magister Equitum* listings, the *Equites Mauri Ferores*.



Figure 16: *Equites Honoriani Seniores* and *Equites Mauri Ferores* (P).

The similarity is striking enough to suggest a link between the two units, which if there is any possibility it could be, as mentioned under the *Equites Scutarii Aureliaci* a possible link with the *Numerus Maurorum Aureliatorum*. If the *Honoriani Seniores* were also another *Mauri* unit, which the similarity of the shield patterns suggests, then there exists the possibility of a British connection. The only problem with this line of reasoning is the fact that two differently named units would have been raised from the same *Limitanei Numeri* which seems unlikely.<sup>405</sup>

Following on we have the *Equites Stablesiani* and these could be related to the two units already discussed under the *Comes Africae*. While the *Equites Stablesiani Africani* appear to have been long established under that command, the *Equites Stablesiani Italiciani* appear to have been a recently raised unit judging by their position in the *Magister Equitum* listing as 29<sup>th</sup> out of 32 units.<sup>406</sup> It is conceivable that the British *Equites Stablesiani* were taken to the continent by Constantine III and after the collapse of his regime the unit was retitled as *Italiciani* and sent on to *Africae* as a later reinforcement. There is another possibility, which like the *Equites Catafractarii*, also has its roots in Britain. The *Equites Stablesiani Gariannonorum* listed under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* at *Gariannonor* (possibly Burgh Castle or Caistor), would seem a possible origin for the *Equites Stablesiani*.<sup>407</sup> It is of course possible, though impossible to prove, that a field army unit was drawn from the garrison of *Gariannonor* by Constantine III for his expedition and never returned, and a subsequent unit was again raised from the *Limitanei* to provide cavalry for

<sup>405</sup> Holder (1982), p. 130.

<sup>406</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>407</sup> Not. Occ. xxv.

the newly recreated army in Britain. It is also possible, as Hoffman has suggested that the *Equites Stablesiani* were promoted from *Limitanei* status by Stilicho before Constantine's revolt.<sup>408</sup> Holder noted that the *Equites Stablesiani Gariannonorum* were also raised to field army status, but they are unlikely to be the basis of on the *Equites Stablesiani* who he believed had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was updated.<sup>409</sup> If we accept the idea that the *Equites Stablesiani* were raised by Stilicho and had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was written, they were probably destroyed during Constantine III's revolt.

The penultimate unit is the *Equites Syri* who like the majority of the cavalry units listed under the command of the *Comes Britanniae* are not listed under the *Magister Equitum*. Hoffman quite reasonably suggested that they had been raised in Syria from a *Numeri* unit.<sup>410</sup> Ueda-Sarson points out that a now lost altar inscription from Kirkby Thore (Barboniaco in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the *Dux Britanniarum*) may hold a possible clue.<sup>411</sup> The inscription refers to 'NMSS', which could be expanded into **Numerus Militum Syrorum Saggitorum**, which if correct would establish a cadre of troops for the *Equites Syri* to be drawn from (though he does point out that this inscription could well be interpreted differently). Holder does not follow this line of argument, he believes the *Numerus Militum Syrorum Saggitorum* are most likely an infantry unit.<sup>412</sup> While this is probably correct, it does not necessarily prevent a cavalry unit being raised from an infantry unit. If we accept this possibility, then the *Equites Syri* would then predate the listing for the *Dux Britanniarum* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as this records the *Numeri Defensorum* being stationed at Barboniaco.<sup>413</sup> The only other possible link, which seems less likely, is the *Numerus Barcariorum Tigrisiensium* stationed at Arbeia.<sup>414</sup> It is therefore hard to come to any firm conclusions on dating this unit based on the evidence except the outside possibility that it came into existence prior to the drafting of the British sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the *Distributio*, but had been deleted by the time the *Magister Equitum's* list was drawn

---

<sup>408</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 171.

<sup>409</sup> Holder (1982), pp.128, 130.

<sup>410</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 265.

<sup>411</sup> RIB: 764.

<sup>412</sup> Holder (1982), p. 128.

<sup>413</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii.

<sup>414</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii. The name of Tigris would suggest a link to Syria but the *Barcariorum* and associated with boatman, making any link to the *Equites Syri* unlikely.

up. This would then argue against Hoffman's view that the *Equites Catafractarii, Aureliaci, Stablesiani* and *Syri* were transferred from the border commands under Stilicho as the *Equites Syri* would have been in existence before this as they are no longer recorded at Barboniaco.

The final unit under the *Comes Britanniae* are the *Equites Taifali* who have been discussed in detail above in the chapter on the *Comes Hispaniarum*. Under the *Magister Equitum* there is a listing for the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*, but no corresponding unit in the *Distributio*. There are *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* under the *Comes Africae* and again under the command of the *Magister Equitum Galliarum*, while the *Equites Taifali* are listed under the *Comes Britanniae*. Since all these units are unlikely to be different ones, I argued that the *Taifali* came over to the continent from Britain with Constantine III and after his defeat were sent on to *Africa* where they became the *Honoriani Iuniores*. This is based on the link with the name *Taifali* and the old English name for Tealby which was *Taflas*, a form of the name *Taifali*. The site of Tealby is relevant, as Roman cavalry stirrups have been discovered there and as its position is between Caistor and Horncastle, so it would be an ideal billet for a mobile field army unit covering the approach to Lincoln.

There is another possibility that needs to be considered, which is linked to the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*. Since there is a listing for the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*, it is possible there had been a unit named the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Seniores*. This is what Holder argues and believes the unit was raised in 395 and sent to Britain by Stilicho in 402, but had ceased to exist when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was updated.<sup>415</sup> The only problem with this explanation is the fact that the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* and the *Equites Taifali* are separated in the listings of the *Comes Britanniae* by the *Equites Stablesiani* and *Syri*, suggesting that they were two separate units rather than one.

#### **5.4 Dating the *Comes Britanniae* entry**

While there had always been a sizeable garrison in Britain, as many as 50,000 men in the mid second century, the *Notitia Dignitatum* only records 33,500 men in total, assuming the units were at full strength. Evidence from sites such as Housestead show a replacement of barrack blocks with more family chalet accommodation, which would suggest a fall in the

---

<sup>415</sup> Holder (1982), p. 127.

garrison from 500 to as few as 100 men. Following this line of argument it has been suggested that in reality the total forces in Britain could have fallen to as low as 12,000 men.<sup>416</sup> This size of garrison would make sense of the relatively small forces sent to Britain in 360 and 367 in response to local problems and the need to establish a permanent, although small *Comitatenses* in the province.

As to dating the *Comes Britanniae* entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the cover sheet being out of position in the *Notitia Dignitatum* would suggest a later amendment. As discussed earlier, we have no evidence for the existence of the command outside the *Notitia* itself. While Ammianus refers to both the *Dux Britanniarum* and the *Comes Maritimi Tractus* in 367, he does not mention the *Comes Britanniae* or *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, suggesting they must be later creations. Such a reorganisation is most likely to have occurred under Stilicho, and since Claudian, Gildas and Bede all refer to continual troop withdrawals followed by new relief forces, it would seem likely that the army of the *Comes Britanniae* was withdrawn during these movements, while the command of the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* became a permanent fixture. This would then account for the reverse order in which these two commands appear within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and why the *Comes Britanniae* cover sheet has no towns marked on it, as it was an itinerant command which was activated when needed, perhaps like those of the *Comes Italiae* and *Argentoratensis*.

Of the units listed under the command of the *Comes Britanniae*, the main problem is that of identifying them within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Jones believed that this was in part because the units were raised or drawn from those within the Gallic command and the entry should be dated to 418.<sup>417</sup> However, as we have seen there are several links between the units under the *Comes Britanniae* and local units under the command of both the *Dux Britanniarum* and the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*. It seems unlikely that these units were raised in Britain, sent to Gaul and then returned at some later date. The most likely explanation is that the weakened army of the *Comes Britanniae* was reinforced by Constantine III when he was preparing to revolt by raising *Limitanei* units to *Comitatenses* status. In the aftermath of his defeat many of these units were dispersed into other commands, as we have seen under the *Comes Hispaniarum* and *Comes Africae*. This said, it

---

<sup>416</sup> Blagg and King (1982), pp. 163-6.

<sup>417</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.



is hard to reconcile that explanation with the two border commands whose entries still record most of the *Limitanei* units used to create this proposed field army, and, indeed, the unusual deployment within these commands as observed by Ward. The only possible answer to this problem is that the two border commands appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum* after their reorganisation by Stilicho and their entries were not updated after Constantine's revolt. They can be dated to the period 389-395, while the *Comes Britanniae* represents the army in 407.

## 6. The Gallic field army.

### 6.1 Introduction.

Unlike the smaller regional armies under the command of various *Comites* discussed in the preceding chapters, the Gallic field army was different. Its first appearance in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is in the index, where we have an entry for the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*, which is listed one place below the *Magister Equitum Praesentalis*.<sup>418</sup> The army is listed in chapter VII, which is the *Distributio* of both infantry and cavalry units. The entry under the infantry reads '*Intra Gallias cum viro illustri Magistro Equitum Galliarum*', while the heading for the cavalry is slightly different, '*Intra Gallias cum viro illustri Comiti et Magistro Equitum Galliarum*'.<sup>419</sup> Another factor to consider is the size of this army. With 12 cavalry and 48 infantry units listed, it is the largest of all the western field armies in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. While such a force was under the command of one of the *Magistri Militum*, it is unusual that it is the junior *Magister Equitum* rather than the senior *Magister Peditum*. Equally unusual is the army's positioning within the *Distributio*. The infantry section is listed third, after the entries for the *Magister Peditum* in Italy, and that of the *Comes Illyrici*, which is surprising since *Illyricum* was a relatively minor command. This unusual order is made more difficult to understand when compared to the index at the beginning of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which lists the *Magister Peditum Praesentalis*, *Magister Equitum Praesentalis*, then the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* while under the later list of the *Comites rei Militaris*, the *Comes Illyrici* is not listed at all. This situation seems to have been corrected later in the *Distributio* where the cavalry are listed, with the Gallic entry coming straight after that of Italy and then followed by the various *Comites rei Militaris*, though it must be noted that the *Comes Illyrici* has no cavalry forces under his command. It will be necessary to try to unpick this mixture of titles and relative positions within the *Notitia Dignitatum* by looking at the background and operations of any field armies in Gaul before going on to look at the individual units in detail, in an attempt to date the entry.

---

<sup>418</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>419</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

## 6.2 Background

### 6.2.1 Background to the Office of the *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum*.

Before looking into the background of the units that had been active in the Gallic army prior to the lists in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it will be necessary to look at the various officers that held command over these troops. To do so we must look back to the creation of the new *Comitatenses* along with the posts of *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum*, which are attributed to Constantine. While we do not have the name of any of the holders of these offices under Constantine himself, several are recorded serving his sons. A law of 325 highlights the superior status of the newly formed *Comitatenses* over the border troops.<sup>420</sup> The basis for this new force can be found in the reign of Diocletian, but Constantine expanded the relatively small force with troops drawn from existing units and the raising of new units, the *Auxilia Palatina*. These feature prominently in the lists of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which records 12 *Legiones Palatinae*, 65 *Auxilia Palatina*, 32 *Legiones Comitatus* and 18 *Legiones Pseudocomitatus*.<sup>421</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that the roles of *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* were created to assist the Emperor in controlling the new expanded *Comitatenses*, and after Constantine's death, that each of his sons also employed a *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* of their own. There are several references to those officials being used to control separate commands and we also see the creation of the new offices of the *Comites rei Militaris*, lesser posts used for independent commands, which Jones suggests were used to control detachments from the *Comitatenses*, sometimes quite sizable, at other times only a couple of units.<sup>422</sup> This fracturing of the *Comitatenses* into smaller and smaller pieces is what is recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as we have it.

As noted above, the entry for Gaul is not just for the *Magister Equitum* but for the *Magister Equitum Galliarum*, which we could render as the *Magister Equitum* of Gallic horse, a separate position to that of the *Magister Equitum* as noted in the index in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>423</sup> Ammianus refers to both Julian and Constantius as having their own

---

<sup>420</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 97; CTh. 7.20.4 stating tax exemption for field army troops.

<sup>421</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>422</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 124.

<sup>423</sup> Not. Occ. i, vi.

*Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum*, but it is not until the reign of Jovian in 363 that he first mentions a commander of cavalry in Gaul, who is Jovinus.<sup>424</sup> While the title used by Ammianus is *Armorum Magister per Gallias*, this has been translated as ‘commander of cavalry in Gaul’ by Rolfe and ‘commander-in-chief in Gaul’ by Hamilton.<sup>425</sup> The similarity with the officer in charge in Gaul in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is very striking.<sup>426</sup>

It should be noted that Ammianus also records several other officials in control of troops who are not a *Magister* or a *Comes*. At the battle of Strasbourg in 357, there is a *Dux* Severus who commands the left wing of the army, and he is recorded again in 358, now as *Magister Equitum*, being dispatched by Julian to operate independently against the Salii.<sup>427</sup> In 359, the Praetorian Prefect ‘*Galliarum*’ Florentus is recorded bringing supplies and troops to Julian.<sup>428</sup> Then in 360, Julian dispatches Lupicinus to Britain to deal with the Picts, taking with him several units from the *Comitatenses*. While Lupicinus’ title is normally rendered as *Magister Equitum*, Ammianus refers to him as *Magister Armorum* as well as *Magister Equitum*.<sup>429</sup> Whether the title *Magister Armorum* is a separate post not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* or just a generic phrase used by Ammianus for all senior officers is uncertain. The translator Rolfe, when discussing Lupicinus’ replacement Gomoarius, simply takes it to mean commander-in-chief.<sup>430</sup> It is of course entirely possible that there were two different titles, hence Ammianus using the term *Magister Armorum* at different times, though this does confuse the hierarchy of command. We then have Valentinian I in 367, sending Severus the *Comes Domesticorum* to deal with problems in Britain, before replacing him with *Comes* Theodosius. In 377, Gratian also dispatched his *Comes Domesticorum*, Richomer, with troops to assist Valens.<sup>431</sup>

There are two interesting points that we can draw from this series of commissions. Firstly, that there existed prior to the drafting of the *Notitia*, several offices not recorded in it.

---

<sup>424</sup> Amm. 25.8.11; PLRE (1971), Jovinus 6, pp. 462-3. Jovinus appears to have been *Magister Equitum* in 362 under Julian.

<sup>425</sup> Rolfe (1940), p. 543; Hamilton (1986), p. 306.

<sup>426</sup> Boeft, Drijvers, Hengst and Teitler (2005), p. 268 believe Ammianus is not always precise in his use of titles and may mean *Magister Equitum*.

<sup>427</sup> Amm. 16.12.27, 17.8.4; PLRE (1971), Severus 8, p. 832.

<sup>428</sup> PLRE (1971), Florentus 3, p. 366.

<sup>429</sup> PLRE (1971), Lupicinus 6, p. 520, where Lupicinus is called *Magister Equitum*; Amm.20.1.2.

<sup>430</sup> Amm. 20.9.5; PLRE (1980), p. 397 Gomoarius, is also called *Magister Equitum*.

<sup>431</sup> Amm. 27.8.3, 31.7.3; PLRE (1971), Richomer, pp. 765-6.

Secondly the possible link between the *Magister Equitum Galliarum* and the *Armorum Magister per Gallias*. If we take the first point this could show a confused state of command prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, with any official being likely to command troops as the situation demanded. We can then see the outline in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as an ideal structure, which does not show the confused state of command and ad-hoc postings which probably still in reality occurred.<sup>432</sup> The second point I believe is quite revealing in the fact both of the named offices are linked geographically to Gaul. Therefore, the Master of Gallic horse and Master of arms in Gaul are both regional titles and if we link these to the other office title in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum*, then this latter title might show a localised promotion in Gaul. Being a senior military command, at least in size, the Gallic field army may at onetime have had a *Comes* and *Magister Armorum* whose roles were combined to create a *Magister Equitum* for just Gaul under Severus in 357.<sup>433</sup> This would explain why the office of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* appears in the index of the *Notitia Dignitatum* just after that of the *Magister Equitum in Praesentalis*, a different and more senior position, who has his own cover sheet in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>434</sup> As we have seen above, there was a separate field army operating in Gaul under Julian in the mid-fourth century, and Ammianus tells us it was a different force from the army in Italy. He says that Julian's 13,000 men in 357 was a command separate from the 25,000 men brought from Italy by the *Magister Peditum* Barbatio.<sup>435</sup>

The last recorded holder of the office of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* was Chariobaudes in 408, and Jones believed that as he withdrew to Italy during Constantine III's rebellion and died soon after, the post was then abolished.<sup>436</sup> There is no further reference in other sources to this office until the reign of Valentinian III. Yet the office does appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and we must also explain why the office does not have a title page or insignia. While Jones argued the reason for the similar exclusion of a title page and insignia for the *Comes Hispaniarum* and *Comes Illyrici* was because they were recent creations, the same does not hold for the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*, which was an existing post and

---

<sup>432</sup> O'Hara (Unpublished PhD: 2013)

<sup>433</sup> Amm. 17.2.1

<sup>434</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>435</sup> Amm. 16.11.2.-16.12.2; PLRE (1971), Barbatio, pp. 146-7.

<sup>436</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354; Zosimus. 5.45.

appears in the index, unlike the *Comes Hispaniarum* and *Comes Illyrici*. The recovery of Gaul from 411 onwards under Constantius III as *Magister Militum*, presumably involved the main *Praesentalis* field army, which can be identified as the forces listed under the *Magister Peditum* in the western *Notitia Dignitatum*. These force are recorded as being stationed in Italy.<sup>437</sup> However, as will be discussed later, the units of the Gallic field army are not ones of high status as you would expect to be in a *Praesentalis* but look more like units scrapped together as a holding force.

One final point before looking at the army in detail concerns a battle at Arles between Constantius III and Edobich, one of Constantine III's generals. We are told that at this engagement in 411, Constantius controlled the infantry and his subordinate Ulfilas commanded the cavalry.<sup>438</sup> It is reasonable to argue that Ulfilas could have been either *Magister Equitum Praesentalis* or *Magister Equitum per Gallias*, as Jones does.<sup>439</sup> There is also the possibility that Ulfilas might have been the *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum*, the title noted in the introduction as the commander of the cavalry in the Gallic field army. What exactly the difference is between the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* and the *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum* was is hard to explain as they seem to mean the same thing, a commander in charge of cavalry in Gaul. That said, after the fall of Stilicho, we do not find any generals of Germanic origin in high command, and since Ulfilas was a Goth, it would be unusual to have him as *Magister Equitum Praesentalis*. It is more likely he held the more junior post of *Magister Equitum per Gallias*, or the possible lesser post of *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum*, and if so there would only have been a three year gap between him and Chariobaudes in 408. If this is correct, then there is no obvious reason for why this post does not have its own cover page in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, unless Ulfilas was just in command of the cavalry on the day, and not the holder of this office at all. What this highlights is the problem with using the offices recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* to identify individuals in our written sources who are not directly involved in imperial administration. As discussed above, numerous officials with different titles, some of which do not appear within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, are given military commands as the situation demanded, which is especially true during a civil war. This would argue against the *Notitia Dignitatum* being an

---

<sup>437</sup> PLRE (1980), Constantius 17, p. 322; Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>438</sup> PLRE (1980), Ulfilas, p. 1181; Olympiodorus, Frag 16-17; Sozomen. 9.13.1-15.

<sup>439</sup> Jones (1964), vol. I, p. 177.

accurate representation of the military authority and perhaps explains why some things are omitted, such as the cover sheet for the *Comes et Magister Equitum Galliarum*.

It seems reasonable to assume that the post of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* existed while *Comitatenses* units operated in Gaul, and that this was a separate command to that of the *Magister Equitum Praesentalis*. This can be supported not only from the evidence above, but by references within the *Notitia Dignitatum* as well. In chapter VII under the heading of the *Officium viri illustris Magistri Equitum per Gallias*, the office of *Princeps* was to be drawn in alternate years from the staff of the *Magister Peditum* and the *Magister Equitum*.<sup>440</sup>

While this arrangement is not unusual, as it also appears for the staff of several *Comites*, it does prove the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* was a separate command to that of the *Magister Equitum* as he would have appointed his own staff. This arrangement is unusual as it does not appear in any other regional *Comitatenses* nor in the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, where the field armies are controlled by either a *Magister Praesentalis* or *Magister Militum*.

### 6.2.2 Background to the units in Gaul in the fourth century.

Before looking at the individual units within the *Comitatenses* in detail, there are a few observations about the operations of the Gallic field army that need to be considered. First we must now address the structure of the Gallic field army in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which records the following types of units in the command:

<i>Vexillationes Palatinae</i>	<i>Vexillationes Comitatenses</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	<i>Legiones Comitatenses</i>	<i>Legiones Pseudocomitatenses</i>
4	8	17	10	21

Table 6: Breakdown of the Gallic field army.

As can be seen above, the single largest element of the army comprises the *Pseudocomitatenses*, which were border *Limitanei* temporarily drafted in for field service. The proportion of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones* is lower than usual ratio discussed in chapter two, and while there are four elite *Palatina* cavalry *Vexillationes*, there are no *Legiones Palatinae*.<sup>441</sup> This might suggest that the army was assembled post 411 to hold Gaul, and it

<sup>440</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>441</sup> See chapter ii, Table 2, p. 43.

is quite possible that some elements that were with Chariobaudes in 408 are still present within it. The post of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* may have then continued through to 411 but without any known holders of the office until the restoration of Gaul.<sup>442</sup>

We can trace the deployment of an army in Gaul and Ammianus records an incident in 355 where Silvanus was commanding troops there.<sup>443</sup> This Silvanus is called an infantry commander *Pedestris Militiae*, which the translator Rolfe has interpreted it to mean commander of infantry in Gaul.<sup>444</sup> While this is indeed possible, we might consider Silvanus the *Magister Peditum* as there are no references to anyone else holding the post of *Pedestris Militiae*, while there is mention of Arbito the *Magister Equitum*, also operating independently from the Emperor Constantius II. Indeed, Ammianus later suggests that Silvanus aimed for a higher position than *Magister Peditum*, and won over his army to rise to imperial eminence.<sup>445</sup> It would seem likely that he was indeed the *Magister Peditum* and in command of Gallic *Comitatenses*. This revolt was quickly dealt with and Ammianus makes reference to two units who were bribed to turn against Silvanus, the *Brachiati* and *Cornuti*. These two units appear again under Julian at Strasbourg in 357, so would appear to have been a permanent part of the Gallic army in the mid-fourth century. There is a later reference in 356, when Julian was in command, to Silvanus having commanded 8,000 reserve troops, but it is far from certain if this was all of his forces or a recent formation of *Limitanei*.<sup>446</sup>

At the battle of Strasbourg in 357, Julian is recorded as having 13,000 men under his command, but Ammianus only records the names of a few of the units present. The *Brachiati* and *Cornuti* are again mentioned, along with the *Batavi* and *Regii*, a *Legio Primana* and an unnamed *Catafractarii* unit.<sup>447</sup> Of these, the *Brachiati*, *Cornuti*, *Batavi* and *Regii* are all recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the command of the *Magister Peditum* in the main *Praesentalis*.<sup>448</sup> There is no *Legio* simply called *Primana*, though Rolfe suggests that

---

<sup>442</sup> Olympiodorus, Frag 14 claims that when Constantine III landed on the continent he won over the armies of Gaul and Spain, but gives no details on what these forces were.

<sup>443</sup> PLRE (1971), Silvanus 2, pp. 840-5.

<sup>444</sup> Amm. 15.5-5.1.

<sup>445</sup> Amm. 15.5.17.

<sup>446</sup> Amm. 16.2.4.

<sup>447</sup> Amm. 16.12.2, 16.12.37, 16.12.42, 16.12.49.

<sup>448</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



this title might refer to a part of the household troops, probably a select legion forming a reserve corps.<sup>449</sup> This line of reasoning does not seem to be correct as the main elite Household troops are either referred to as *Schola* or *Domestici* within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>450</sup> While there is a *Schola Scutariorum Prima* recorded in chapter VIII, this is an elite cavalry unit and not a *Legio* which Ammianus clearly states. There are two possible explanations, that a *Legio Primana* had existed in 357 and had been destroyed by the date of the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, or it could refer to one of the many units recorded that have *Prima* as a part of their title.

If we explore the second idea, which suggests the *Legio Primana* has changed its name, there are three possibilities worthy of consideration; the *Prima Alpina*, a *Pseudocomitatenses* in the army of Italy, the *Prima Flavia Gallicana Constantia* and *Prima Flavia Metis*, which are also *Pseudocomitatenses* and recorded in the Gallic field army.<sup>451</sup> I consider these to be strong possibilities because of their links to the other units Ammianus refers to. If the *Comitatenses* that Julian commanded was indeed the main western *Praesentalis*, then the units shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under that command would include the *Brachiati*, *Cornuti* and *Batavi*, all elite *Auxilia Palatina*, along with the *Regii*. It would not seem out of place to have the *Prima Alpina* there as well as part of the field army in Italy. Alternatively, the *Prima Flavia Gallicana Constantia* and *Prima Flavia Metis* could be some of the reserve troops recorded under Silvanus and retained in Gaul. It should also be noted they both have a geographic link to Gaul in their unit titles, *Gallicana* and *Metis*.

The discussion above shows that Julian did indeed command the *Praesentalis*, and this argument can be further supported by the fact that prior to the battle of Strasbourg the *Magister Peditum*, Barbatio, had campaigned in Gaul with Julian commanding a separate army of 25,000 men from Italy.<sup>452</sup> Barbatio's troops did not remain for use by Julian, and while it is entirely possible that Ammianus has emphasized the size of Barbatio's forces and his relative ineffectiveness to enhance Julian's reputation and victory at Strasbourg with the

---

<sup>449</sup> Rolfe (1971), *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. i, p. 291, fn. 1.

<sup>450</sup> Not. Occ. viii, xii.

<sup>451</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>452</sup> PLRE (1971), Barbatio, pp. 146-7.

smaller army of 13,000 men.<sup>453</sup> What it does clearly say is that there were two separate field armies, one in Gaul and the other from Italy.

Afterwards, while Julian was campaigning in the east, some forces must have stayed in Gaul to cover the frontier, and it is these forces that Jovian reappointed Jovinus (who had previously held the post under Julian) to command as *Magister Equitum per Gallias*.<sup>454</sup> There are no references to this office or a separate Gallic command under Valentinian I, though he did retain the services of Jovinus and Dagalaifus, and Dagalaifus had previously been promoted by Jovian to *Magister Equitum*.<sup>455</sup> However, since Valentinian campaigned in person along the Rhine frontier, it is reasonable to believe this was with the main *Praesentalis*. This can be supported by details recorded by Ammianus on the actions taken by Valentinian when he dispatched *Comes* Theodosius to deal with problems in Britain. Of the troops dispatched with Theodosius in 368, the only ones named are the *Batavi*, *Heruli*, *Iovii* and *Victores*.<sup>456</sup> It is interesting to note that in 360, Julian had also dispatched a small force to Britain, and this had also included the *Batavi* and *Heruli*, along with two *Numeri* of *Moesiaci*.<sup>457</sup> All of these units are listed in the *Praesentalis* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>458</sup> A further instance in 370 has another force dispatched by Valentinian I against a Saxon incursion somewhere in the west, under the command of Severus the *Magister Peditum*. While the forces involved are not detailed, in the description of the fighting some *Catafractarii* are mentioned.<sup>459</sup> This would link in with the *Catafractarii* under Julian's command at Strasbourg.

What all this seems to imply is that there was both a regional *Comitatenses* in Gaul and a *Praesentalis* in operation in the west for most of the time prior to the *Notitia Dignitatum*. When the *Praesentalis* was being used in Gaul, the army of Italy was the *Comitatenses*, either under the *Magister Peditum*, or possibly under the dormant command listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the *Comes Italiae*.<sup>460</sup> Jones believed that as this command was

---

<sup>453</sup> Amm. 16.11.2.

<sup>454</sup> Amm. 25.8.11; PLRE (1971), Jovinus 6, pp. 462-3.

<sup>455</sup> Amm. 26.5.2; PLRE (1971), Dagalaifus, p. 239 on the *Magister Equitum* in 363.

<sup>456</sup> Amm. 27.8.7.

<sup>457</sup> Amm. 20.1.2.

<sup>458</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>459</sup> Amm. 28.5.1-6; PLRE (1971), Severus 10, p. 833.

<sup>460</sup> Not. Occ. xxvii.

responsible for defending the Alpine passes, then it dated from a period prior to the formation of the army of the *Comes Illyrici* which would have secured the northern approaches to Italy.<sup>461</sup> It would be unusual for such a potentially small border command to be commanded by a *Comes* rather than a *Dux*. What is interesting is that while this post has no forces listed under its command within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it does have a cover sheet.<sup>462</sup> It is also possible that before being promoted *Magister Militum* in *Dalmatia*, Generidus was the *Comes Italiae* in 408.<sup>463</sup> This will be covered in more detail in the next chapter on the army in Italy, but again, highlights the inconsistencies within the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

### 6.2.3 Background conclusion.

The post of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* appears to have been in use consistently throughout the fourth century, especially when the main *Praesentalis* was not operating in Gaul. However, the structure and units that formed the army under his command must have changed on a regular basis. Therefore the post and army were only a semi-permanent formation and this may account for the lack of a cover page.

As a final observation when reviewing the background to the Gallic field army, it is worth considering the situation at the time the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drawn up. If we accept Jones' analysis that the western listings for the military units are likely to be from 420 or soon afterwards, then it is possible that they show the situation post Constantius III's recovery of Gaul.<sup>464</sup> The forces he used to achieve this must have included the main *Praesentalis* units, and after his death in 421, the main *Praesentalis* returned to Italy under the *Magister Peditum* and the Gallic field army, would have been recreated out of whatever was available and under the command of the lesser position of the *Magister Equitum per Gallias*. Unlike the previous chapters, the army under the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* would appear to be almost the same date as the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

---

<sup>461</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

<sup>462</sup> Not. Occ. xxvii.

<sup>463</sup> PLRE (1980), Generidus, p. 500.

<sup>464</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

### 6.3 The units of the Gallic field army.

Before looking at the units which make up the Gallic field army in detail it will be necessary to give an overview of the army's structure as shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. As noted, it is one of the largest forces in the western section, but has a very unusual mix of units. These are broken down as follows:

4 *Vexillationes Palatinae*

8 *Vexillationes Comitatus*

17 *Auxilia Palatina*

10 *Legiones Comitatus*<sup>465</sup>

21 *Legiones Pseudocomitatus*

Using Jones' estimates, this would give us a field army of 45,500 men, with the largest element being made up of *Pseudocomitatus*. This is obviously a far larger force than those referred to by Ammianus. Even if we discount the *Pseudocomitatus* as being formerly stationed in the border provinces as *Limitanei*, the army still numbers 24,500 men, almost twice the total Julian had at Strasbourg. Because of the number of units that need to be looked at, I will assess each section in turn to see if any of these can provide clues for the dating of the field army to support the discussion in the background section which proposed a date of 411 or 420.

#### 6.3.1 The Vexillationes

Starting with the cavalry units we have the following twelve listed in the Gallic field army along with their position under the *Magister Equitum*:

<i>Equites Batavi Seniores (Vexillationes Palatinae)</i>	4th
<i>Equites Cornuti Seniores (Vexillationes Palatinae)</i>	5th
<i>Equites Batavi Iuniores (Vexillationes Palatinae)</i>	8th
<i>Equites Brachiati Iuniores (Vexillationes Palatinae)</i>	Not listed
<i>Equites Honoriani Seniores (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	7th
<i>Equites Honoriani Iuniores (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	26th
<i>Equites Armigeri Seniores (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	13th

---

<sup>465</sup> The *Lanciarri Sabarienses* have been included here and their *Palatina* status will be discussed later.

<i>Equites Octavo Dalmatae (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	3rd
<i>Equites Dalmatae Passerentienses (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	4th
<i>Equites Prima Gallia (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	2nd
<i>Equites Mauri Alites (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	5th
<i>Equites Constantiaci Feroces (Vexillationes Comitatus)</i>	9th

Under the *Magister Equitum*, the first four units here are from the *Vexillationes Palatinae* list, the balance from the *Vexillationes Comitatus*.<sup>466</sup> There are three observations that I would like to make before looking at each unit in turn. First, the fact that the *Equites Brachiatii Iuniores* are not listed, second, the confused order that the *Comitatus* units have been listed in. Finally, there is also a duplication, the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* are also listed under *Magister Peditum* in the *Praesentalis*. This last point is made more confusing because there is no listing at all for the *Equites Cornuti Iuniores*, who are recorded under the *Magister Equitum* but not assigned to any command.

The first unit listed in the Gallic field army is the *Equites Batavi Seniores* while their twin, the *Equites Batavi Iuniores* who are listed third, are both established *Vexillationes Palatinae*. There is an inscription at Concordia which mentions the *Equites Batavi Seniores* which Hoffman believed showed this unit as one of the many gathered together to face Theodosius I in 394.<sup>467</sup> He goes on to suggest that they were posted to Gaul prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. If this correct, and we have no other evidence of *Equites Batavi Seniores* or *Iuniores* in any other command, than this deployment to Gaul could have happened at any date after 374.

The second unit are the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* which as noted above having been duplicated. This is made more confusing by the fact that the *Equites Cornuti Iuniores* who are listed under the command of the *Magister Equitum*, are not assigned to any field army. Whether this is a clerical error and one or other of the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* should be the missing *Iuniores*, is quite possible. There is, however, another possibility, that what we are seeing is another example of a unit in transit. If the main *Praesentalis* had been used in the re-conquest of Gaul from 411 onwards and the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* were originally

---

<sup>466</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>467</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 103.

part of that command, and the unit was then retained in Gaul, this could account for the double entry. This of course raises the question what happened to the *Iuniores* unit, which could have been destroyed and not removed from the *Magister Equitum* listings, but this again leaves us with a clerical error as an explanation. If we again accept Jones' view that the *Distributio* shows a more updated situation, then it is indeed possible that the *Equites Cornuti Iuniores* have been lost or destroyed and the duplication has occurred with the merging of the *Praesentalis* and *Comitatenses* in Gaul and their subsequent separation.<sup>468</sup>

The last of the *Vexillationes Palatinae*, the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* present a similar problem. As they are not listed under the *Magister Equitum* listings but appear in the *Distributio* under the Gallic field army, this too could be a clerical error.<sup>469</sup> Again, following Jones' view that we should see the *Distributio* as the most updated record, this would imply they were raised after the *Magister Equitum* list was recorded. This, however, seems unlikely for a long established unit which in all probability had existed along with its twin *Equites Brachiati Seniores* since Constantine's day. An inscription at Concordia records the *Equites Brachiati Seniores*, and if we follow Hoffman's view that this represented the western army prior to Frigidus, this would support the idea that it had been part of the *Praesentalis* stationed there.<sup>470</sup> While the inscription does not mention the *Iuniores*, it seems reasonable to assume both units operated together as the *Brachiati* along with the two *Batavi* units are all old established formations predating the *Notitia Dignitatum* and they were all at one time part of the *Praesentalis* and at some point after 394 were transferred to Gaul.

This does not explain why the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* are missing from the list of the *Magister Equitum*, but it must be pointed out that there are several problems with this list when compared to the *Distributio*. Under the *Magister Equitum* listings it states that there are ten *Vexillationes Palatinae*, but only lists nine units and nine corresponding shield patterns.<sup>471</sup> In his edition, Seeck included the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* to bring the total up to ten. In this, he differed from Böcking who proposed splitting the last unit listed, the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* into two (the *Equites Constantes* and the

---

<sup>468</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, pp. 352-3.

<sup>469</sup> Not. Occ. vi, vii.

<sup>470</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp. 28-9.

<sup>471</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

*Equites Valentinianenses Seniores*) to bring the total of *Vexillationes Palatinae* up to ten.<sup>472</sup> There are, however, 41 units listed in total under the *Magister Equitum*, but 47 *Vexillationes* units in the *Distributio*. As noted previously, Jones believed the *Distributio* to be the more accurate of the two lists, making it hard to accept that old established units, such as *Equites Brachiati Iuniores*, have been omitted from the *Magister Equitum* list. If all six of the discrepancies had been related to relatively new units then this would make more sense. It would also seem unlikely that the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* had been destroyed and later reformed, as so much old information is recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, they too would have probably been included. It seems more likely that the missing tenth *Vexillationes Palatinae* is indeed the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores*, as suggested by Seeck. This then opens the possibility that they were at one time in the *Praesentalis* and when they were transferred to the Gallic *Comitatenses* they were downgraded, for some unknown reason, from *Palatina* status, but had not yet been included into the *Vexillationes Comitatusenses*.

When reviewing these *Vexillationes Palatina* units in the Gallic command the only information we can use is the fact they had all been part of the *Praesentalis* and then transferred to the new Gallic command. We have no evidence to suggest that they had been part of the Gallic field army at any date prior to the campaigns of Constantius III campaigns in Gaul starting in 411. If I am correct in explaining the duplication of the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* and the non-listing of the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores*, these two would support the argument that the changes to the units in the Gallic field army would have been in 411 or soon after.

If we now look at the *Vexillationes Comitatusenses*, which follow on after the *Vexillationes Palatinae*, we need to consider the unusual order in which the units are listed in the *Distributio* as opposed to the *Magister Equitum* listings. The most obvious unit which is out of place is the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores*, listed 26<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Equitum*, but 6<sup>th</sup> in the Gallic *Comitatusenses*.<sup>473</sup> As discussed in the chapter on the *Comes Africae*, there is another *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* listed towards the end of that command, which would seem to be more in keeping with the position of 26<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Equitum*. Why this unit and its twin the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*, who are 7<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Equitum* list, are

<sup>472</sup> Böcking (1839), p. 31 shows this unit split. Seeck (1876), p. 130.

<sup>473</sup> Not. Occ. vi, vii.

separated by so many places is unknown. Nor is the reason why the *Honoriani Seniores* are listed 1<sup>st</sup> amongst the *Vexillationes Comitatus* in the Gallic listings, while appearing 7<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Equitum*.

There is an alternative view that the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores*, in the Gallic field army, should in fact be the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores* who are listed 6<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Equitum* list.<sup>474</sup> There is no mention of this unit in any commands except for the *Equites Taifali* under the *Comes Britanniae*.<sup>475</sup> As argued in the previous chapter, this unit could have come to the continent with Constantine III and been absorbed into the Gallic *Comitatus* after his defeat, and lost the *Taifali* part of its title in the process of being recorded in its new posting. If this was the case the *Equites Honoriani (Taifali) Iuniores* should have been placed above the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*, as the original *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores* appear higher than them in the listings. If this is indeed what happened, it would also imply that the Gallic *Comitatus* was formed soon after Constantine's defeat in 411. To confuse matters further, there is another listing for the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* under the command of the *Comes Britanniae*. Rather than being a duplication, it is possible the reason the *Seniores* appear at the top of the list for *Vexillationes Comitatus* in the Gallic field army could be that they were the first unit to be taken over after Constantine's defeat and placed in a new order in which the *Seniores* took precedence over the *Iuniores*. This would then account for why the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* are placed before the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*, who are now just referred to as the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores*, in the Gallic field army. If this line of reasoning is correct, then it would again support a date immediately after the defeat of Constantine III.

Of the rest of the cavalry units listed: *Armigeri Seniores*, *Octavo Dalmatae*, *Dalmatae Passerentienses*, *Prima Gallia*, *Mauri Alites* and *Constantiaci Feroces*, only the *Armigeri Seniores* and *Prima Gallia* are out of position. In Böcking's edition, it is interesting to note that he mixed the order of the *Dalmatae Passerentienses*, *Mauri Alites* and *Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*, and in his list for the Gallic field army, the *Prima Gallia* have been changed into *Primi Gallicani*.<sup>476</sup>

---

<sup>474</sup> <http://lukeuedasaron.com/NDequitesHonorianiTaifaliIuniores.html>

<sup>475</sup> Not. Occ. xxvi.

<sup>476</sup> Böcking (1839), pp. 29-31, 39.



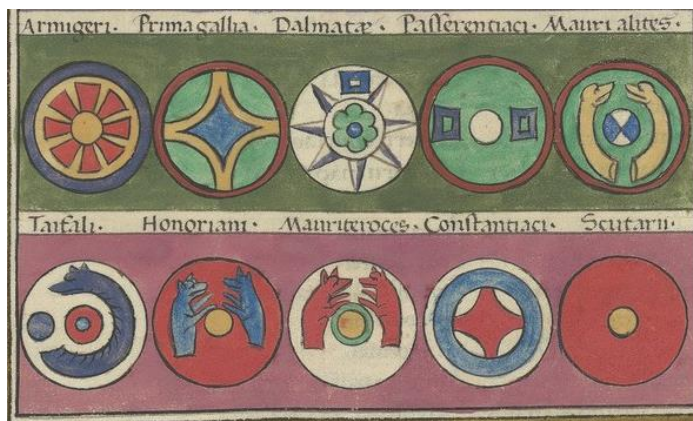


Figure 17: Order of the units under the *Magister Equitum* (P).

The *Equites Prima Gallia* appear to be a fairly senior unit by their position in the *Magister Equitum* listing, coming before any of the Honorian named units, implying they were raised before his reign. Their position in the Gallic *Comitatenses* might suggest that they were added to the formation at a later date, and so, along with the *Equites Mauri Alites* and *Constantiaci Feroes* follow on in sequence at the end of the list. Jones suggested that the *Constantiaci* could have been named after Constantius III, co-emperor in 421, and this is why they appear last.<sup>477</sup>

It would seem that the only links that we can draw between the *Vexillationes Comitatus* and the date of the Gallic field army in the *Notitia Dignitatum* are the possible association with British units and the *Equites Constantiaci Feroes* which Jones suggested were named at Constantius III. The potential British units of the *Equites Honoriani Seniores* and *Iuniores* most likely came to Gaul prior to 411 and Constantine III's defeat. While Jones dated the *Equites Constantiaci Feroes* to be 421, there is nothing to suggest they were not raised earlier, and renamed in Constantius' honour.

### 6.3.2 *Auxilia Palatina*

The following seventeen *Auxilia Palatina* units are assigned to the Gallic field army which is the second largest concentration of such units, the *Magister Peditum Praesentalis* being the largest with nineteen units. They are shown below in the order they appear under the *Distributio* for the *Vir Illustris Magister Equitum Galliarum*, and next to each is their relative position under the *Magister Peditum* listings:

<sup>477</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 356.

<i>Mattiaci Iuniores</i>	7 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Leones Seniores</i>	13 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Brachiati Iuniores</i>	38 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Salii Seniores</i>	19 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Gratianenses</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Bructeri</i>	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ampsivarii</i>	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Valentinianenses</i>	32 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Batavi</i>	49 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Batavi Iuniores</i>	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Britones</i>	48 <sup>th</sup> or 50 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Atecotti Honoriani Seniores</i>	39 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sagittarii Nervi Gallicani</i>	54 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Iovii Iuniores Gallicani</i>	55 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Mattiaci Iuniores Gallicani</i>	52 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Atecotti Iuniores Gallicani</i>	61 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Ascarii Honoriani Seniores</i>	59 <sup>th</sup>

It must be noted that this list of seventeen units is not consistent in the various modern editions of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Böcking included all of these units, while Seeck chose only fifteen units, missing out the *Batavi* and *Britones*, because neither of these units appear under the *Magister Peditum* listing with such simple titles. This was presumably followed by Fairley, who does not list the units by name but states there were only fifteen, and it is those two units again that are omitted from Barker's later list.<sup>478</sup> The situation is further confused by the fact that though the various copies of the *Notitia Dignitatum* claim to have 65 *Auxilia Palatina* units under the command of the *Magister Peditum*, only 62 are listed in (P) and 63 in (M).<sup>479</sup> On the illustrations which precede the list, only 62 shields are illustrated which further complicates identifying the missing units. Regardless of this, both the *Batavi* and *Britones* do appear as separate entries for the Gallic army in the *Distributio*. If we accept

---

<sup>478</sup> Böcking (1839), p. 35; Seeck (1876), p. 136; Fairley (1899), p. 26; Barker (1981), p. 22.

<sup>479</sup> See appendix ii for further discussion.

that the *Distributio* is a more up-to-date list, as Jones suggested, and that the Gallic army was one of the most recent creations, this could account for the difference.

The reason for excluding the *Batavi* is presumably that there is already a listing for the *Batavi Seniores* and *Batavi Iuniores* under the *Magister Peditum*, making a simply named *Batavi* unit look like an error. The *Batavi Seniores* are listed under the command of the *Magister Peditum* in the Italian *Praesentalis*, while the *Batavi Iuniores*, as noted above, are listed in the Gallic field army. A possible reason for the inclusion of the simply named *Batavi* has been suggested by Ueda-Sarson, who follows Holder and argues that the *Batavi* here are in fact the *Batavi Iuniores* and the next two listings should be combined to read *Batavi Iuniores Britannici*. Holder suggests that the *Batavi Iuniores Britannici* were raised in Britain by Stilicho in 399-400, and went to the continent with Constantine III in 407.<sup>480</sup> Their name *Britannici* therefore relates to their place of origin and the *Iuniores* part is because of the pre-existing unit, the *Batavi Seniores*. This link between the *Batavi* as listed and the *Batavi Iuniores Britannici* can be supported by looking at the two units either side of them under the *Magister Peditum* listings:



Figure 18: Showing the *Britannici*, *Batavi Iuniores* and *Exculcatores* (P).

The *Batavi Iuniores* are positioned between the *Invicti Iuniores Britannici* and the *Exculcatores Iuniores Britannici*, and it is not therefore unreasonable to believe that they too are a *Britones* unit. However, in the list which follows the illustrations, no mention is made of the *Batavi Iuniores* at all:

---

<sup>480</sup> Holder (1982), p. 128.

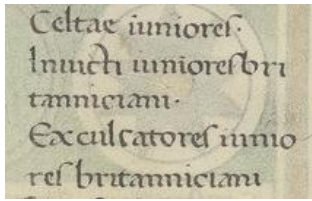


Figure 19: *Magister Peditum* Listings for *Invicti Iuniores Britannici* and *Excelsiores Iuniores Britannici* (P).

The discrepancies between the illustrations and the listings of the *Magister Peditum* along with the *Distributio* for the *Auxilia Palatina* will be discussed in appendix ii, but is highlighted here to show the potential problems with using one piece of information over another contradictory one within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, when the two pieces contradict each other.

If we return to Ueda-Sarson's suggestion, this would then also account for the listing of the other problematical unit, the *Britones*.<sup>481</sup> If we look at the entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the Gallic field army we see the following differences between (P) and (M):

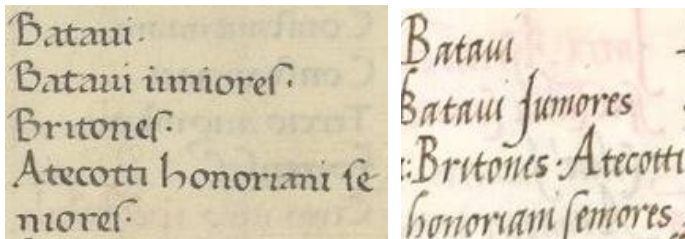


Figure 20: The Listing for the *Batavi Iuniores* in the *Distributio* (P) and (M).

While the (P) manuscript on the left looks quite straight forward and clearly differentiates between the various units, the (M) manuscript appears to have (:) between *Britones* and *Atecotti*, with the A being formed from the bottom part of the (:), which has been used here and elsewhere in the manuscript to represent a break in the text.<sup>482</sup> The word *Britones* may therefore complete the previous entry as *Batavi Iuniores Britones*, giving a total of 16 *Auxilia Palatina* units rather than 17.

The inclusion of a *Britones* unit within the Gallic field army would also make sense if the army was formed soon after Constantius III's recovery of Gaul and the defeat of Constantine

<sup>481</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDbataviluniores.html>

<sup>482</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

III. A British unit could have been assimilated into the new command and its position in the *Distributio* list, above the four new Gallic units, would support this. These four units - *Sagittarii Nervii Gallicani*, *Iovii Iuniores Gallicani*, *Mattiaci Iuniores Gallicani* and *Atecotti Iuniores Gallicani* - would have been raised sometime during Honorius' reign, as they appear in-between two Honorian named units. The fact that three of them have the *Iuniores* title, just like the possible *Batavi Iuniores Britones*, may also be relevant if we consider that none of these units have a *Seniores* partner. Since the original *Iovii Iuniores* (under *Comes Illyrici*), *Mattiaci Iuniores* (Gallic field army), and *Batavi Iuniores* (Gallic field army) all seem to exist, then the *Britones/Gallicani* units could have been raised from a cadre of the existing ones for the new field army. Hoffman argued that apart from the *Atecotti*, none of the units titled *Gallicani* could have been raised from local Gallic recruits, so the title *Gallicani* does not indicate the ethnicity of the troops, but is presumably a regional reference to where they were stationed.<sup>483</sup> The main basis of his argument is that Gallic citizens would have been recruited into the *Legiones*, rather than the *Auxilia Palatina*. This is of course contrary to Vegetius' claim that many now preferred service in the auxiliaries, as discipline and service were not as strict as in the *Legiones*. Ammianus had a similar view of the *Auxilia* disdaining the rigours of physical work.<sup>484</sup> Whether or not these units were raised from the provinces of Gaul, it is certain that the four *Gallicani* units are grouped together in the Gallic field army because they were a recent creation for that army, hence the title *Gallicani*, and they had not yet been dispatched elsewhere, and so date sometime close to the drafting of the list.

It is now necessary to discuss the order in which the Gallic *Auxilia Palatina* have been listed. If we remove the *Batavi* and *Britones* in the light of the previous discussion, along with the four *Gallicani* units, we have the following order:

<i>Mattiaci Iuniores</i>	7 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Leones Seniores</i>	14 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Brachiatii Iuniores</i>	38 <sup>th</sup> (out of position)
<i>Salii Seniores</i>	20 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Gratianenses</i>	24 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Bructeri</i>	30 <sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>483</sup> Hoffman (1973), pp. 145-55.

<sup>484</sup> Vegetius, 2.3; Amm. 18.2.6.

<i>Ampsivarii</i>	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Valentinianenses</i>	33 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Batavi Iuniores</i>	29 <sup>th</sup> (out of position)
<i>Atecotti Honoriani Seniores</i>	39 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ascarii Honoriani Seniores</i>	59 <sup>th</sup>

This then only leaves us with two units that appear to be out of position, the *Brachiati Iuniores* and the *Batavi Iuniores*. There is an inscription for a unit titled *Brachiati* at Concordia which Hoffman suggests probably refers to the *Seniores* unit raised in 394 or 395.<sup>485</sup> These are listed under the *Praesentalis* in Italy, but as Hoffman noted, both *Brachiati* units were probably raised from Gothic soldiers in the east and sent to the west, presumably together, so were at one time a brigaded pair in the *Praesentalis*. In the eastern *Praesentalis* there is a unit listed second in the *Auxilia Palatina* also called *Brachiati Iuniores*, there is no corresponding eastern *Seniores* unit.<sup>486</sup> The shield patterns for the two illustrated *Brachiati* units are shown below, and do not appear to have any similarity:



Figure 21: *Brachiati Iuniores* (east) and *Brachiati Seniores* (west) (O).

The first possibility is that there were only ever these two units and that an eastern *Seniores* and western *Iuniores* never existed. This would make the listing in the Gallic field army an error, and as we do not have an illustration for the western *Iuniores* under the *Magister Peditum*, this would make sense. Both Böcking and Seeck followed the *Distributio* which lists the *Brachiati Iuniores*, while the entry under the *Magister Peditum* only lists *Brachiati*. However, there are only 62 illustrated shield designs for *Auxilia Palatina* units under the *Magister Peditum*, but it lists 65, of which only 62 are accounted for in the *Distributio*.<sup>487</sup> This difference between the *Distributio* and the *Magister Peditum* listing makes it hard to determine which one is more accurate, though Jones believed it was the *Distributio*. If we

<sup>485</sup> Hoffman (1963), p. 37.

<sup>486</sup> Not. Or. iv.

<sup>487</sup> See appendix ii for discussion of missing shield patterns.

accept the *Distributio* is correct in this instance (this has been followed by Böcking and Seeck), then we are left with why the *Brachiati Iuniores* are listed third. This level of seniority is interesting when we compare it to its possible twin unit the *Brachiati Seniores*, who are listed as the second most senior unit of all the western *Auxilia Palatina*. The top four units are the *Cornuti*, *Brachiati*, *Petulantes* and *Celtae*, all designated as *Seniores*, and the *Cornuti* and *Brachiati* form a brigaded pair as do the *Petulantes* and *Celtae*. Apart from the *Brachiati*, the only other of these four to have a *Iuniores* unit is the *Celtae Iuniores* who are in the lowly position of 46<sup>th</sup>, which is similar to the supposed *Brachiati Iuniores* of the Gallic command at 38<sup>th</sup>. Since the *Brachiati Iuniores* appear just before a list of *Honoriani* units in the *Magister Peditum* listings and the *Celtae Iuniores* just after those units, it is reasonable to argue they were both later creations than their *Seniores* partners. The most likely date for the need for new units would be either to fight against Constantine III or for the rebuilding of the army after his defeat.

A final possible explanation for identifying the *Brachiati* is that they were based on the *Brachiati Seniores* of the *Praesentalis*. They had been used in the campaign against Constantine III and some portion of the unit were retained in the Gallic field army afterwards. It may have been the intention to rebuild the Gallic unit back to full strength and name it the *Brachiati Iuniores*, while the *Brachiati Seniores* were retained in the *Praesentalis*. This process was not completed by the time of drafting the *Notitia Dignitatum*, this could explain why there is a simply named *Brachiati* under the *Magister Peditum* which had ceased to exist when the *Distributio* was drafted, which now includes the newly formed *Brachiati Iuniores*. This would be another example of the *Notitia Dignitatum* recording a unit in transit from one command to another, and would suggest a date of 411 or shortly after. Whichever interpretation is used, the issue of the reliability of *Distributio* as compared to the illustrations and the *Magister Peditum* lists is discussed further in the appendix ii.

On the balance of probability, I would argue that the *Celtae* and *Brachiati Seniores* were both used in the campaigns against Constantine III and the subsequent re-establishing of control in Gaul. Then the new *Iuniores* units were recruited up to full strength from a cadre of the original units while in Gaul and then the *Celtae Seniores*, *Brachiati Seniores* and *Celtae Iuniores* returned to the *Italian Praesentalis*. This possible scenario would still indicate a date of post 411 and the relative low position of the *Celtae Iuniores* and *Brachiati Iuniores*

within the *Magister Peditum* listings would also support this, although the higher place of the *Brachiati Iuniores* under the Gallic entry remains unclear.

If we now look at the remaining unit, the *Batavi Iuniores*, it is interesting to note that the entry for the twin *Seniores* unit was created by Seeck. He took the entry for the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listings and split it into two separate units, the *Batavi Seniores* and *Mattiaci Seniores*.<sup>488</sup> Not only are the shield illustrations shown separately, but the *Batavi Seniores* and *Mattiaci Seniores* are listed as two units in the *Distributio*, thus supporting Seeck's decision to split the name as it appears in the *Magister Peditum* listings.

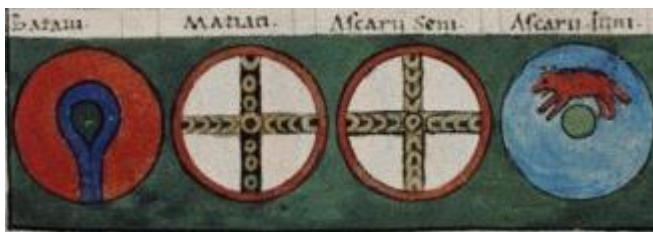


Figure 22: *Batavi*, *Mattiaci* and *Ascarii Seniores* and *Ascarii Iuniores* (O).

However, Ueda-Sarson suggests that as the shields for the *Mattiaci* and *Ascarii Seniores* are so similar, these should in fact be the *Ascarii Seniores* and *Iuniores*, and that the *Batavi* probably were the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* and the illustrations have been labelled in error.<sup>489</sup> The situation is far from clear and can be seen reflected in the command of the *Magister Peditum Praesentalis* in Italy. There is listed both a *Batavi Seniores* and *Mattiaci Seniores*, which would support Seeck's reason for splitting the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* and that the error has occurred on the illustration above.<sup>490</sup>

<sup>488</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 122.

<sup>489</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDmattiaciSeniores.html>

<sup>490</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



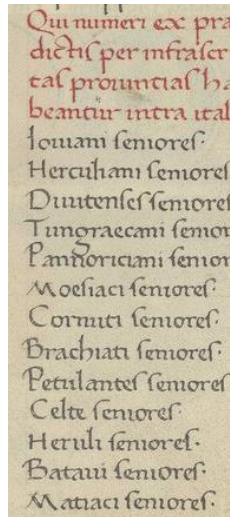
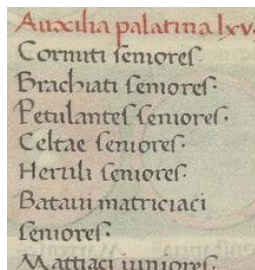


Figure 23: List of *Auxilia Palatina* under the *Magister Peditum* and the *Distributio* under the *Praesentalis* (P).

It can clearly be seen that the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* are listed as such in the text that accompanies the illustration (on the left above), which would imply that the error is more likely to be in the *Distributio* (shown on the right). There is of course the possibility that all three units existed at one time so the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores*, *Batavi Seniores* and *Mattiaci Seniores* should all be included, and as the illustrations only have limited space above them for the names, the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* have been abbreviated to just *Batavi*. However, it must be pointed out that neither Seeck nor Ueda-Sarson have considered the *Mattiaci Iuniores* who are listed immediately after the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* under the *Magister Peditum* as shown above. If we accept that the text and illustrations under the *Magister Peditum* agree with each other, then illustrations would show the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores*, then the *Mattiaci Iuniores* followed by the *Ascarii Seniores*.

The next group of units that need to be looked at are the *Gratianenses*, *Bructeri*, *Ampsivarii* and *Valentinianenses* who appear between the *Brachiati Iuniores* and the *Batavi Iuniores* in the Gallic army. In his section on the western *Auxilia Palatina*, Hoffmann suggested that units that do not have the *Seniores/Iuniores* titles, but are mixed in-between those that do, probably represent units raised by Valentinian I probably from German recruits.<sup>491</sup> If this is correct then the *Gratianenses*, *Bructeri*, *Ampsivarii* and *Valentinianenses* would date from 364 to 375. It is reasonable to presume the *Gratianenses* were named after Valentinian's

<sup>491</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 156.

son Gratian, co-emperor from 367, and the *Valentinianenses* after his second son who was born in 371. There is, however, a problem in that the *Magister Peditum* listing shows *Gratianenses Seniores* and *Iuniores* along with a *Valentinianenses Iuniores*.<sup>492</sup> The *Gratianenses Iuniores* are listed under the *Magister Peditum* in Italy, but there is no listing in any command for the *Gratianenses Seniores* or the *Valentinianenses Iuniores*, while there are two units simply named *Valentinianenses*, one here in the Gallic field army and another under the *Comes Illyrici*.<sup>493</sup> It is tempting to assume that the *Gratianenses* of the Gallic command is the missing *Seniores* unit, but this does not help identify which of the two *Valentinianenses* units is the *Iuniores* listed under the *Magister Peditum*. If Hoffman is correct in his dating of these units to Valentinian I and that some were raised from Germans, such as the *Bructeri* and *Ampsivarii* which are both German tribal names, it might be possible that the two more ‘Roman-sounding’ units, the *Gratianenses* and *Valentinianenses* were later split into *Seniores* and *Iuniores*. This idea might be supported by looking at the order the units are listed in under the *Magister Peditum*. The *Gratianenses Seniores* are listed 24<sup>th</sup>, followed by *Bructeri* in 30<sup>th</sup> place, the *Ampsivarii* in 31<sup>st</sup>, then the *Gratianenses* in 32<sup>nd</sup> and finally the *Valentinianenses Iuniores* 33<sup>rd</sup>. This would show the rapid expansion of units with the extra *Iuniores* being added soon after the creation of the original *Valentinianenses* and *Gratianenses*, with the most likely explanation for why the *Valentinianenses Seniores* are missing is because they were destroyed before the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drafted.

This then leaves four units from the original Gallic army list that we have not yet discussed. The *Mattiaci Iuniores* are an older established unit and appear first in the listings. Their twin, the *Mattiaci Seniores*, are listed under the *Magister Peditum* in the main *Praesentalis*. There is an inscription at Concordia relating to the *Mattiaci Iuniores*, so they were at one time presumably a brigaded pair with the *Mattiaci Seniores* in the Italian *Praesentalis*, and were split from them when the Gallic field army was created.<sup>494</sup> This would support the idea that the Gallic army as it appears in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was created around 411.

---

<sup>492</sup> Not. Occ. v.

<sup>493</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>494</sup> Hoffman (1963), p. 45.

The next unit, the *Leones Seniores*, is listed second in the Gallic field army. Their twin unit, the *Leones Iuniores* are also listed under the *Magister Peditum* in the main *Praesentalis*, and the *Seniores* appear to have been split off, like the *Mattiaci Iuniores*, with the creation of the Gallic field army. Claudian mentions that the *Leones* formed a part of the army assembled to attack Gildo in 398, along with such units as the *Herculiani* and the *Ioviani*, the two most senior units of the *Praesentalis*, so the *Leones* must have also been drawn from that command.<sup>495</sup>

The final two units both appear to be slightly out of place in the listing, the *Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* and the *Ascarii Honoriani Seniores*. The name *Atecotti* is a tribal one from the region of Britain beyond Hadrian's Wall. Their inclusion here, with the additional title of *Honoriani*, may indicate they were raised in Britain by either Stilicho or Constantine III, and taken over after Constantine's defeat, when they might have acquired the *Honoriani* to remind them of their new loyalties to the Emperor. They are the first of the *Auxilia Palatina* in the *Magister Peditum* listings to be named with an Honorian title, which would suggest they were one of the early creations in Honorius' reign, well before the units named *Gallicani*. While this would suggest at date in or after 394, there is nothing to say they could not have been raised or re-named in 411, as until then the imperial authorities had not had the opportunity to take control of Gaul and raise troops to replace those lost in the Rhine crossing and subsequent civil war. It should be noted that their twin, the *Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores*, is recorded in the Italian *Praesentalis*.

The last *Auxilia Palatina* unit in the Gallic field army are the *Ascarii Honoriani Seniores* who also appear towards the end of the *Magister Peditum* listings list of *Auxilia Palatina* units. These would appear to be descended from the older established *Ascarii units*. There is a reference to an *Ascarii* unit under Julian, and the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists both *Ascarii Seniores* and *Iuniores* in both the eastern and western armies.<sup>496</sup> While there is no corresponding *Ascarii Honoriani Iuniores*, the *Ascarii Honoriani Seniores* are mixed between various *Gallicani* units under the *Magister Peditum* listings, and as such must be considered a new unit raised for the Gallic field army.

---

<sup>495</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico*, 420-4.

<sup>496</sup> Amm. 27.2.9.; Not. Or. viii (*Magister Militum per Illyricum*); Not. Occ. vii (*Comes Hispaniae*).

From the evidence of the *Auxilia Palatina* units in the Gallic field army it is possible to see a pattern of rebuilding. Several of the units appear to have a British connection, which would date their inclusion in the army after Constantine III's defeat in 411. We then have several new units that appear to have been raised locally and titled *Gallicani*, along with two *Honoriani* units. This rebuilding process could have begun under Stilicho in 395-6, but the grouping of these troops in the Gallic army would suggest a date between 411 and 420, after imperial control of Gaul had been regained, for the army shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

### 6.3.3 *Legiones Comitatus*

We can now look at the various *Legiones* that form the Gallic field army starting with the *Comitatus*, showing the order they appear in the Gallic field army and their position in the *Magister Peditum* listings:

<i>Armigeri Defensores Seniores (Legio Comitatus)</i>	4 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	16 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lanciarrii Sabarienses (Legio Palatina)</i>	8 <sup>th</sup> in <i>Legiones Palatina</i>
<i>Menapii Seniores (Legio Comitatus)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Secundani Britones (Legio Comitatus)</i>	18 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ursarienses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	21 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Praesidienses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	20 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Geminiacenses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Cortoriacenses (Legio Comitatus)</i>	22 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Honoriani Felices Gallicani (Legio Comitatus)</i>	24 <sup>th</sup>

From the above list we have a very mixed group of units which do not appear to follow in sequence and seem to have a *Legio Palatina* mixed amongst them. The *Armigeri Defensores Seniores* are the first unit listed in this section, so presumably the first unit assigned to the command. There is evidence for an *Armigeri* unit from an inscription from Concordia which mentions a *Numero Armigerorum*.<sup>497</sup> This does not, however, tell us which *Armigeri* unit is being referred to, as there are two other units bearing this title: the *Armigeri Propugnatores Seniores* and *Iuniores* who are both under the *Comes Africae*. The proximity of Italy to Gaul

---

<sup>497</sup> Hoffman (1963), pp. 33-4.

might suggest that a detachment of *Numeri* was dispatched to the Gallic field army and brought up to full strength, but because of this unit's high ranking amongst the *Legiones Comitatuses*, this was probably not a recent event, and this would also account for it being listed first here. Alternatively, it should be noted that there is a *Praefectus Militum Armigerorum* at *Mogontiacum* under the *Dux Moguntiacensis*, from which the unit could have been raised. This would be in keeping with the many units recently raised to meet the crisis of the Rhine crossing and subsequent revolt by Constantine III. While it is tempting to pursue this line of reasoning, such a unit would probably have been classified as *Pseudocomitatuses* rather than the high ranking *Comitatuses* unit that is recorded. It is more likely to have been detached from the *Praesentalis* for the campaigns in Gaul, and remained there, as we have seen with several other units in this command.

The *Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani* are listed next in the Gallic command, despite appearing 16<sup>th</sup> under the *Magister Peditum* listings. It is tempting to speculate that as the unit has the 'Honorian' title, it was raised by Honorius sometime after 395 and as the title also includes the term *Gallicani*, that it might have been raised from local Gallic *Limitanei*. There are, however, no obvious Gallic *Limitanei* candidates with the title *Lanciarrii*, which is a title used for elite forces under the Tetrarchy, from which the unit could have been raised. That said, it should be noted that there are two *Pseudocomitatuses* units, the *Lanciarrii Lauriacenses* and *Lanciarrii Comagenenses*, under the command of the *Comes Illyrici*, who have gained the title *Lanciarrii*.<sup>498</sup> While they can be identified by their place names *Lauriacum* and *Comagenis*, both Balkan towns, their promotion to the army as *Pseudocomitatuses* in *Illyricum* has nothing to do with elite force, and the title of *Lanciarrii* is derived from the late Roman spear.<sup>499</sup> While the *Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani* are not an elite unit, they are listed in 16<sup>th</sup> position under the *Magister Peditum*, it is still ranked above several *Legiones* which have *Flavia* in their titles such as the *Prima Flavia Pacis*, possibly dating back to Constantine I, and thus were an established unit. It is possible that they are a detachment from the old *Legio III Gallicani*, which pre-dates the *Notitia Dignitatum*. They are recorded in the east under the *Dux Foenicis*, and appear to have been stationed there since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, which makes it unlikely that the *Lanciarrii Gallicani Honoriani* would have come from a

---

<sup>498</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>499</sup> Barker (1981), p. 70.

detachment from them.<sup>500</sup> It is therefore reasonable to suggest that they are listed in second place because they were one of the earliest units assigned to the new Gallic command and it could have been then that they acquired both the *Honoriani* and *Gallicani* titles.

The next unit, *Lanciarri Sabarienses*, present more problems. Jones argued that while they are listed in the *Distributio* as a *Legio Comitatusenses*, they are included as *Legio Palatina* under the *Magister Peditum*, and as such must have been recently promoted to that status from the *Comitatusenses*.<sup>501</sup>

There is, however, a problem if we compare the Paris and Munich editions of the entry for the Gallic army there is a difference:

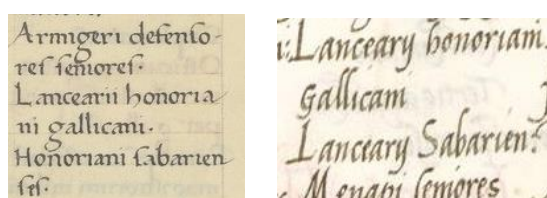


Figure 24: *Legiones Comitatusenses* under *Intra Gallias cum viro Illustri Magistro Equitum Galliarum* on the left (P) and (M) on the right.

In the Paris edition the unit has been entered as the *Honoriani Sabarienses* and not the *Lanciarri Sabarienses* in the Munich edition, which was followed by both Böcking and Seeck. There is no other listing for the *Honoriani Sabarienses* or shield pattern for them, and it is tempting to suggest this is just another example of a textual error within the Paris manuscript of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It is conceivable that the unit was indeed upgraded to *Palatina* status and in doing so changed its title from *Honoriani* to *Sabarienses*, and is only recorded in the Gallic listing as *Comitatusenses*, while its shield pattern has been removed from the list of *Comitatusenses* and added to that of the *Legiones Palatinae*, simply as *Sabarienses*, which must have been a time consuming process.

This does, however, present a problem with Jones' view that the *Distributio* is a more up-to-date list than that of the *Magister Peditum*. The fact that the *Lanciarri Sabarienses* have been updated in the *Magister Peditum* list would mean this was amended after the

<sup>500</sup> Not. Or. xxxi.

<sup>501</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352.

*Distributio*. The alternative sequence of events would be that they were transferred to the Gallic field army and lost their *Palatina* status in the process, possibly gaining the *Honoriani* title at the same time. Either way, there is nothing to suggest that these events did not occur at the time the new field army was created.

The next unit, the *Menapii Seniores*, is listed as *Menapes Seniores* in (O), (P) and (M) but rendered as *Menapii* by both Böcking and Seeck.<sup>502</sup> It is listed first in the order of precedence for the *Legiones Comitatus* under the *Magister Peditum*, but appears fourth in the Gallic army. Hoffman suggested that they were part of an original Tetrarchic *Comitatus* pairing of the *Menapii-Nervii*.<sup>503</sup> The *Nervii* had at some point been transferred to the *Praesentalis* in the east and upgraded to *Palatina* status, the *Menapii* remained in Gaul as *Comitatus*.<sup>504</sup> This would account for their position in the *Magister Peditum* listings, but not their position within the Gallic field army. While it is understandable that they are listed behind the *Lanciarri Sabarienses*, if that unit had been promoted to *Palatina* status, it is not so obvious why they are behind the *Armigeri Defensores Seniores* and the *Lanciarri Honoriani Gallicani*. Whether this is because the *Menapii* were a later addition to the field army is hard to prove. An alternative explanation could be made if we consider unit promotions. If the preceding *Lanciarri Sabarienses* had recently been promoted to *Palatina*, then the *Menapii Seniores* could also have been promoted to the senior *Comitatus*, possibly in both cases as a reward for combat against the usurper Constantine III. While this could account for the order that they appear in the Gallic field army, it would again suggest that the *Magister Peditum* records have been updated in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, with both units appearing in the correct positions, while the *Distributio* for the Gallic army has not been corrected. It should be noted that under the *Dux Mogontiacensis* there is a listing for *Praefectus Militum Menapiorum* at Tabernis, though it is unlikely this is where the *Menapii Seniores* were drawn from seeing their *Comitatus* status.<sup>505</sup> The only thing we can state with any certainty is that the *Menapii Seniores* were an established senior *Comitatus* *Legio* which at one point has been drafted into the Gallic field army.

---

<sup>502</sup> Böcking (1853), chapter v, p. 26; Seeck (1876), p. 126.

<sup>503</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 181.

<sup>504</sup> Not. Or. iv.

<sup>505</sup> <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDmenapiiSeniores.html>. He suggests that this unit could have been the remains of the *Menapii Iuniores*.

Following on we have the *Secundani Britones*, who are again problematical. Not only are they listed under different titles within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, they also appear to be in two separate commands with different names. In the illustrated section of shield patterns under the *Magister Peditum* we have the following entry:



Figure 25: The *Britannici* (P).

The text under the *Magister Peditum* then gives the full title, in the correct position for the *Britannici*, as the *Legio Secunda Brittannica sive Secundani*.<sup>506</sup> In his edition Seeck split this title into the *Secundani Britones* and the *Secundani Iuniores*, who are listed under the *Comes Britanniae*, but are not illustrated or shown anywhere else in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>507</sup>

While there is a discrepancy in the number of *Auxilia Palatina* illustrated and then listed, the same does not apply to the *Legiones Comitatusenses*, so by adding a unit Seeck has created an imbalance. Presumably he did this to account for the entry under the *Comes Britanniae*, but as discussed under that chapter, there is a strong case to be made that the above text is correct in referring to a single unit and what we see in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is the record of a unit moving over time. In part this problem has been created by the unusual unit name, as they are the only unit in the *Comitatusenses* that has *Legio* in their title, and the strange *sive Secundani* at the end. If we take this literally, the second British legion or the Seconds, this could mean the unit was known as the Legion II Britain OR the Seconds. This would tie in with the idea the unit was at one time the *Secunda Brittannica* and changed to the *Secundani Iuniores*, which would reinforce the argument that what we see in the *Notitia* is a unit in transition across different commands at different times. If this line of argument is correct, it might show the situation after the fall of Constantine III, with the *Secundani Brittannica* drafted into the Gallic field army, while the *Secundani Iuniores* have yet to be

<sup>506</sup> Not. Occ. v.

<sup>507</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 126; Not. Occ. vii.



deleted from the *Comes Britanniae*, as information from Britain had not yet received or imperial authority had not yet been re-established.

The next five *Legiones* under the Gallic command are not in strict numerical sequence in the *Magister Peditum* roster, but they do all appear together as a bloc. It is worth noting that the *Praesidienses* listed under the *Magister Peditum* are entered under the *Distributio* as the *Praesidiantes*, which are presumably one and the same. Of this group, the *Praesidienses* should appear before the *Ursarienses*, and the *Cortoriacenses* and before the *Geminiacenses*. Each unit only has a single name, with no *Seniores* or *Iuniores* attached to their titles, presumably predating this change, or were standalone units. Hoffmann suggested that the *Cortoriacenses* and *Geminiacenses* were at one time *Pseudocomitatenses* drawn from border *Legiones*, and then made full *Comitatenses*.<sup>508</sup> Of the 32 *Legiones Comitatus*, 10 have a single name title, which suggests that they might have all been raised as one-off units, possibly from border formations.

The *Praesidienses* and *Ursarienses* both share a similar shield pattern as shown below:

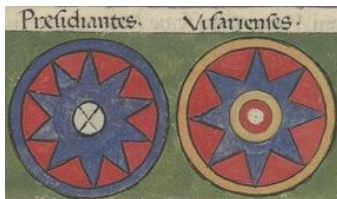


Figure 26: *Praesidienses* and *Ursarienses* (P).

The similarity in the shield patterns could suggest that they are a brigaded pair, and this could also account for the slight change in order, as it might not be significant which one of the pair was listed first. This would, however, suggest some form of common heritage between the two, which is not apparent. Jones suggested that the *Praesidienses* were raised from the *Auxilia Praesidentia*, a border *Limitanei* unit listed under the *Dux Pannoniae Secunda*, while the *Ursarienses* probably come from the *Praefectus Militum Ursariensium* under the *Dux Raetiae*.<sup>509</sup> If this is correct, then we would expect to see both units as *Pseudocomitatenses* rather than full *Comitatenses Legiones*, especially as their small parent units are still listed in the border garrisons. There are other alternative sources as well, the

<sup>508</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 184.

<sup>509</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 365; Not. Occ. xxxi, xxxv.

*Auxilia Ursariensia* under the *Dux Valeriae* for instance, but these and the *Auxilia Praesidentia* seem to be unlikely candidates as none of them are of legionary status and auxiliary cohorts are approximately half the size of legionary units.<sup>510</sup> A more likely option is perhaps the *Praefectus Militum Ursariensium* at *Rotomagus* under the *Dux Tractus Armorici*, which has the virtue being within Gaul, and so more likely to be drawn into the Gallic army.<sup>511</sup> However, we still have the issue that a unit drawn from such a source should be a *Pseudocomitatenses* unit rather than a full *Comitatensis Legio*. It may well be that the unit had been first raised to *Pseudocomitatenses* then to *Comitatenses* prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and a new *Limitanei* unit was raised to replace it at Rotomago.

This then leaves us with the *Honoriani Felices Gallicani* who appear last in the Gallic list of *Comitatenses Legiones*. As their name suggests, they were raised by Honorius, and as they appear 24<sup>th</sup> out of 32 units listed under the *Magister Peditum*, they were probably raised at a later date in his reign. This would also suggest that the units listed above them, *Praesidienses*, *Ursarienses*, *Cortoriacenses* and *Geminiacenses*, were also raised during his reign as they appear below the *Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani*. The title *Gallicani* would suggest that the *Honoriani Felices Gallicani* were raised in Gaul, but there are no obvious candidates within the western half of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to suggest the unit's origin. There may well be a link between this unit and the *Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani* as well as the *Lanciarrii Sabarienses* who were discussed earlier, who had been rendered as *Honoriani Sabarienses* in the Paris edition.

There is nothing conclusive in the review of the *Legiones Comitatenses* in the Gallic field army to establish a firm date, though there are a few possibilities. The inclusion of the *Secundae Britones* suggest a connection with Britain and the most likely date would be after the defeat of Constantine III in 411. The four single named units of the *Praesidienses*, *Ursarienses*, *Cortoriacenses* and *Geminiacenses* who follow the *Secundae Britones* all follow after the *Lanciarrii Honoriani Gallicani* and can be dated from 395 onwards. The *Honoriani Felices Gallicani* at the end of this group might suggest at a later date. The inclusion of two units with *Gallicani* in their titles, like some of the *Auxilia Palatina* units already discussed,

---

<sup>510</sup> Not. Occ. xxxii. See Barker (1981), p. 11 on Auxiliary cohorts.

<sup>511</sup> Not. Occ. xxxvi.

means they were probably raised in Gaul sometime after Constantius III's campaign to restored imperial control in Gaul. This could be from 411 up to 420

#### 6.3.4 *Legiones Pseudocomitatenses*

If we now look at the last section under the Gallic command which covers the *Pseudocomitatenses*, we have the following units listed along with their position in the listings for the *Magister Peditum*:

<i>Prima Flavia Gallicani (Prima Flavia Gallicana Constantia)</i>	8 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Martenses</i>	9 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Abrincateni</i>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Defensores Seniores</i>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Mauri Osismiaci</i>	12 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Prima Flavia (Prima Flavia Metis)</i>	13 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Superventores Iuniores</i>	14 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Balistarii</i>	not listed
<i>Defensores Iuniores</i>	not listed
<i>Garronenses</i>	not listed
<i>Andereniciani</i>	not listed
<i>Acincenses</i>	not listed
<i>Cornacenus (Corniacenses)</i>	16 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Septimani Iuniores (Septimani)</i>	17 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Cursarienses Iuniores</i>	not listed
<i>Musmagenses</i>	not listed
<i>Romanenses</i>	18 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Insidiatores</i>	not listed
<i>Truncensimani</i>	not listed
<i>Abulci</i>	not listed
<i>Exploratores</i>	not listed

As can be seen from the above list, of the twenty-one units shown only ten are recorded under the *Magister Peditum* listings and four of these are listed there with slightly different unit titles as shown by the names in brackets. Under the *Magister Peditum* there is a total of

eighteen *Pseudocomitatenses* listed, of which the first seven units are split between the *Magister Peditum Praesentalis* and the *Comes Illyrici*, along with two that do not appear to be assigned to any command. Of the last eleven units, all are listed in the Gallic field army except the *Constantiaci*, who were discussed in the chapters on Spain and Africa above.<sup>512</sup> While the relevant Gallic units follow sequentially, they are broken up by groups of units which are not listed at all under the *Magister Peditum*, although nearly all of these units can be found in various local *Duces* border commands as *Limitanei* (See tables 1 and 2 below). This creates a problem. If the unlisted units had been recently transferred to the Gallic army as *Pseudocomitatenses*, after the drafting of the *Magister Peditum* roster, why have they been inserted into the Gallic roster between units that were already listed rather than being included in one bloc at the end?

Alternatively, they are not *Pseudocomitatenses* but some other unspecified unit type not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This hypothesis can be developed further by looking at their entries under the border commands. For example the *Andereniciani* can be equated to the *Praefectus Militum Anderetianorum* at *Vico Iulio* under the *Dux Moguntiacensis*.<sup>513</sup> The inclusion of a *Praefectus* as the commander would imply legionary status, as opposed to a *Tribunus*, who commanded auxiliary troops. *Militum*, broadly meaning soldier, is again linked to legionary troops and is not used in conjunction with *Cohors*, the usual term associated with auxiliary troops. There are some examples in the entries for the *Dux Pannoniae Secundae*, *Dux Valeriae*, *Dux Pannoniae Primae* and *Dux Raetiae* of the term *Praefectus Legionis* being used, but in these examples it is for multiple forts being covered by one *Legio*, which as Jones argued, showed these were older border legions of larger size than the new *Comitatenses Legiones*.<sup>514</sup> In this instance the *Praefectus Militum Anderetianorum* would suggest that it was a small unit. If this was the case, those that were listed under the *Magister Peditum* listings may well have been brought up to field army strength (on paper at least) by the time the list was recorded, and the unlisted ones were in the *Comitatenses*, but understrength, so not listed as *Pseudocomitatenses*. These were presumably recorded in the *Laterculum Minus* under the *Quaestor*.<sup>515</sup>

---

<sup>512</sup> Not. Occ. vi, vii.

<sup>513</sup> Not. Occ. xxxix.

<sup>514</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 681.

<sup>515</sup> Not. Occ. ix.

Three of the units not listed under the *Magister Peditum* are particularly worthy of mention, the *Balistarii*, *Defensores Iuniores* and *Cursarienses Iuniores*. These three units look like they are of *Legio* status so should be considered as *Pseudocomitatenses*, if recently promoted to the Gallic *Comitatenses*.<sup>516</sup> In the case of the *Balistarii*, this is because artillery had always been a part of the *Legiones*, while the *Defensores* and the *Cursarienses* both have the title *Iuniores*.

Taking the *Balistarii* first, the new smaller *Legiones* no longer had their own artillery contingent, and it appears these had been grouped together to form specialist units which retained *Legio* status.<sup>517</sup> They still operated with the *Comitatenses* and Ammianus records that in 356 they formed part of Julian's bodyguard while on campaign against the Alamanni.<sup>518</sup> Hoffmann suggested that as part of the *Comitatenses*, the *Balistarii* could have formed a brigade pair along with the *Propugnatores*, assuming these to be some form of assault troops who would go in after the artillery had made a breach in fortifications.<sup>519</sup> By the time of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, however, no *Balistarii* units are recorded in the western *Comitatenses*, though there are three in the east, the *Balistarii Seniores* under the *Magister Militum per Orientem* and the *Balistarii Dafnenses* and *Balistarii Iuniores* under the *Magister Militum per Thracias*, and all three are listed under the eastern *Legiones Comitatus* sections.<sup>520</sup> There is also an extra *Pseudocomitatenses* unit, the *Balistarii Theodosiaci*, under the *Magister Militum per Orientem*. It is reasonable to assume that this *Pseudocomitatenses* unit could have been formed by removing artillery from town defences, while the other three were formed from the field artillery removed from the *Legiones*. This then makes the Gallic listing for the *Balistarii* unusual, especially as it is not included under the *Magister Peditum* as *Pseudocomitatenses*, as we might expect. There is a listing under the *Dux Moguntiaccensis*, the *Praefectus Militum Balistariorum Bobodrica*, and the Gallic unit of *Balistarii* may have been drawn from them.<sup>521</sup> While *Bobodrica* is a known Roman fortification on the Rhine, so the presence of artillery there is not particularly unusual, the

<sup>516</sup> Elton (1996), p. 101. Suggests that as there are so few *Seniores-Iuniores* units listed in the *Limitanei*, these were probably downgraded *Comitatenses* units. It is therefore surprising to see these units being promoted back to field army status.

<sup>517</sup> Barker (1981), p. 15.

<sup>518</sup> Amm. 16.2.2.

<sup>519</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 182.

<sup>520</sup> Not. Or. vi, vii.

<sup>521</sup> Not. Occ. xxxix.

fact the *Milites Balistarii* are listed under the command of a *Praefectus*, the rank of a *Legio* commander, is more striking. Two possibilities arise; first, that as the unit is not titled *Praefectus Legionis* but *Milites* instead, it is of smaller size than a full *Legio* and as such has not been entered onto the *Magister Peditum* listings, or secondly, as the *Dux Mogontiacensis* staff appear to have been drawn from those of the *Magister Peditum Praesentalis*, another list existed that included such units.

Next the *Defensores Iuniores* have two possible places of origin, either the *Praefectus Militum Defensorum* at *Confluentibus* under the *Dux Mogontiacensis*, or the *Praefectus Numeri Defensorum* at Breboniacum under the *Dux Britanniae*.<sup>522</sup> Since they have the title of *Defensores Iuniores*, this would imply they are a *Legio* rather than being raised from a *Limitanei* unit, and may be linked to the *Defensores Seniores* who are also in the Gallic field army. Holder believed the *Numeri Defensorum* were a detachment from the *Defensores Iuniores*, brought over to Britain by *Comes* Theodosius in 367.<sup>523</sup> However, they are not mentioned as one of the units under his command by Ammianus.<sup>524</sup> It seems unlikely that the *Defensores Seniores* and *Iuniores* were raised from the British *Numeri* (see appendix i on the *Numerus* as a smaller than *Legio* unit size). This same line of reasoning would make it unlikely that they were raised from the *Militum Defensorum* in the *Dux Mogontiacensis*, so presumably either one was raised from each of the above units or that the *Defensores Seniores* were units of *Comitatenses* status which have been downgraded. As the *Defensores Iuniores* are not listed under the *Magister Peditum* listings I would suggest that they were raised from the British *Numeri Defensorum* and either brought over from Britain by Constantine III or drafted into the army as an emergency measure by Constantius III. They were probably never a full strength *Legio*, so have not been included in the roster as such, while their *Seniores* counterpart were raised to full *Legio* status from the *Limitanei* unit of *Militum Defensorum* under the *Dux Mogontiacensis*.

If we now consider the *Cursarienses Iuniores*, we have a slightly different problem. They again have the *Legio* title *Iuniores* but are not listed under the *Magister Peditum*, and nor do they appear in any *Dux* command. Jones proposed that the unit title was an error for

---

<sup>522</sup> Not. Occ. xxxix, xxxviii.

<sup>523</sup> Holder (1982), p. 131.

<sup>524</sup> Amm. 27.8.6.

*Ursarienses*, and linked them to the *Praefectus Militum Ursariensium* at Rotomagum under the *Dux Tractus Armorici*.<sup>525</sup> Ueda-Sarson accepted the textual connection but suggests another possibility, the *Praefectus Militum Ursariensium* at Guntiaie under the *Dux Raetiae*.<sup>526</sup> It is hard to know which of these is the correct option. While many of the other units from the *Dux Tractus Armorici* have been included in the Gallic field army, which would seem to support Jones' view, the disordered way they have been included in the listings causes a problem. There are nine *Praefectus Militum* units under the *Dux Tractus Armorici*, of which the *Ursariensii* are 7<sup>th</sup>, while the *Cursarienses Iuniores* are the fifteenth listed in the Gallic *Pseudocomitatenses*. The *Garronenses* who are listed after the *Ursariensii* in 8<sup>th</sup> place under the *Dux Tractus Armorici*, appear 10<sup>th</sup> in the Gallic *Pseudocomitatenses* units. The *Dux Raetiae* does not contribute any other units to the Gallic field army, nor does that command border Gaul.

All of this is of course dependent on our accepting the connection from *Cursarienses* to *Ursarienses* in the first place. In his analysis of these units, Hoffmann equated the *Cursarienses* as being the one and same unit as the *Ursarienses*, despite the fact the *Ursarienses* are listed as a *Legio Comitatensis* as previously discussed.<sup>527</sup> The other point to consider is why create the *Cursarienses Iuniores* and not the *Cursarienses Seniores* as well? It is possible that there is a link between the *Ursarienses* and the *Cursarienses Iuniores*. As the *Ursarienses* have *Comitatenses* status they are unlikely to have been recently raised from any of the border *Limitanei*, and if there is a linguistic link between them and the *Cursarienses*, then the *Cursarienses Iuniores* may have been raised from them but not yet brought up to full strength and so not included under the *Magister Peditum*. This would suggest that the *Cursarienses Iuniores*, along with many of the other units listed in and amongst the *Pseudocomitatenses* units in the Gallic command, can be dated to a time after the *Magister Peditum* list was made.

One unit which is listed under the *Magister Peditum* is the *Superventores Iuniores* who have two possible origins, either the *Praefectus Militum Superventorum* at Mannatias under the *Dux Tractus Armorici* or the *Praefectus Numeri Supervenientium Petueriensis* at

---

<sup>525</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, pp. 365-6.

<sup>526</sup> Not. Occ. xxxiv.

<sup>527</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 184.

Derventione under the *Dux Britanniarum*.<sup>528</sup> Hoffman believed that the *Superventores Iuniores* must be equated with the unit of the *Armoricani* command, but acknowledges the possibility that they both had their roots in the British unit.<sup>529</sup> Ammianus records a unit of *Superventores* at Amida in 359, but what is interesting is the translation of the name.<sup>530</sup> The Rolfe translation footnotes that the *Notitia Imperii* states they were light armed horsemen, while the Hamilton translation just calls them skirmishers.<sup>531</sup> Neither of these descriptions would seem to fit with a Legionary unit, the most likely explanation is the *Superventores Iuniores* were drawn from the troops under the *Dux Armoricani*. What this does also show is the link between British *Limitanei* and troops in the Gallic field army as it is quite possible a unit was raised by Constantine III, part of it being posted to the *Dux Armoricani* before being drafted into a new field army.

Given that many of the *Pseudocomitatenses* units in the Gallic field army listing are drawn from the border regions of the Rhine or from inside Gaul, as further detailed in the table below, this would suggest that they were drafted into the army sometime after 407 and that the listing most probably shows the situation in 411. These would then have been the forces used by Constantius or his defeat of Constantine III and the start of the recovery of Gaul, and the duplication of units from the various *Dux* commands was either a failure to delete them from their original listings or the more likely reason that these weak understrength units were intended to return to their former positions once Imperial authority had been established.

Table 7: *Pseudocomitatenses* units not listed under *Magister Peditum* and possible origins.

Unit Name:	Unit Type:	Command:
<i>Balistarii</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Moguntiacensis</i>
<i>Defensores Seniores</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum or Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Dux Moguntiacensis Dux Britanniarum</i>
<i>Garronenses</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Tractus Armoricani</i>
<i>Andereniciani</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Moguntiacensis</i>

<sup>528</sup> Not Occ.xxxvi & xxxvii. Holder (1982), p.132.

<sup>529</sup> Hoffman (1973), p. 185.

<sup>530</sup> Amm. 18.9.3.

<sup>531</sup> Rolfe (1972), p. 464, fn. 4; Hamilton (1986), p. 160.



<i>Acincenses</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Moguntiacensis</i>
<i>Cursarienses Iuniores</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Musmagenses</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Could be from Mosomagus</i> <i>Dux Belgicae Secundae</i>
<i>Insidiatores</i>	<i>Auxilia Insidiatorum</i>	<i>Dux Valeriae</i>
<i>Truncensimani</i>	<i>Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Comes Litoris Saxonici</i>
<i>Abulci</i>	<i>Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Comes Litoris Saxonici</i>
<i>Exploratores</i>	<i>Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Comes Litoris Saxonici</i>

Table 8: *Pseudocomitatenses* units listed under the *Magister Peditum* and possible origins.

<i>Prima Flavia Gallicana</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Armorican</i>
<i>Martenses</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Tractus Armorican</i> or <i>Dux Moguntiacensis</i>
<i>Abrincateni</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Tractus Armorican</i>
<i>Defensores Iuniores</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i> or <i>Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Dux Moguntiacensis</i> or <i>Dux Britanniarum</i>
<i>Mauri Osismiaci</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i>	<i>Dux Tractus Armorican</i>
<i>Prima Flavia</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Could be from Metis</i> <i>Dux Belgicae Secundae</i>
<i>Superventores Iuniores</i>	<i>Praefectus Militum</i> or <i>Praefectus Numeri</i>	<i>Dux Tractus Armorican</i> or <i>Dux Britanniarum</i>
<i>Corniacenses</i>	<i>Equites Dalmatae</i>	<i>Dux Pannoniae Secunda</i>
<i>Septimani</i>	Possible detachment from <i>VII Legio</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Romanenses</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Unknown</i>

The only unit that cannot be explained by the above tables is the last one, the *Romanenses*. While they do appear under the *Magister Peditum* and in the *Distributio*, they are otherwise unknown. They are the last unit listed under the *Magister Peditum*, so presumably the most recently upgraded to *Pseudocomitatenses* status. Of the eighteen *Pseudocomitatenses*

under the *Magister Peditum*, only three are not assigned to any *Comitatenses* or border *Dux*, and the last ten that are assigned all appear in the Gallic field army. It is surprising therefore that we cannot trace the *Romanenses*, as we can with the other nine, to any of the *Limitanei* units in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The name *Romanenses* is unlikely to refer to Rome itself, nor is it likely to be some sort of abbreviation of the *Civium Romanorum*, a title awarded to non-Roman soldiers granted citizenship in the early empire. If it was, we would be able to find some trace of the unit within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which we cannot. A possible explanation for their origin does exist if we consider the extreme manpower shortages experienced by the western Empire, in the small local garrison units. Chapter XL of the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists all those units, and fleets, that do not fall under a *Comes* or *Dux*, and are retained under the control of the *Magister Militum Praesentalis*. Within the listing for Italy there is an entry at Ravenna for the *Praefectus Militum Iuniorum Italicorum*, and it is possible to see this unit being upgraded to *Pseudocomitatenses* and renamed 'Roman' because of its Italian connection. Their title of *Militum* would suggest troops of a Legionary status making them more suitable candidates than the many *Praefectus Sarmatarum Gentilium* also recorded in Italy.

With so many *Pseudocomitatenses Legiones*, and possibly small units as well, forming such a large part of the Gallic field army, we need to consider why? These units would appear to have recently been drafted into the Gallic army, which as was argued earlier was not always a permanent formation. This must have been done in response to a crisis, most likely the crossing of the Rhine in 406, followed by the revolt of Constantine III. With twenty one units from so many border *Limitanei*, the Gallic army in the *Notitia* shows a response to that crisis. The fact that the last group of *Pseudocomitatenses* listed under the *Magister Peditum* are all in the Gallic field army would support the idea that these were new creations at the time the *Magister Peditum* lists were drawn up, and the inclusion of what are potentially non-legionary units as well would argue for an emergency.

#### **6.4 Dating the Gallic field army in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.**

The first thing that needs to be considered in a review of the Gallic field army is its original formation. *Comitatenses* units must have been present in Gaul throughout the fourth century, but whenever there was a single Emperor (Constantine I, Constantius II and Julian) the command structure appears to have remained quite simple. The Emperor commanded

the main *Praesentalis*, while the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* commanded various regional forces, including those posted to Gaul. As the number of regional commands increased, so did the need for additional commanders, and we see a specialist post created for Gaul. The catalyst for change appears to be Julian's eastern expedition in 363, for which he seems to have taken most of his officials and most of the units under his command. While Ammianus does not mention the *Magister Peditum* or *Magister Equitum* being present, Anatolius the *Magister Officiorum* and Jovian the *Comes Domesticorum* are mentioned as being with him, while Sebastianus, a *Comes*, was in charge of a force operating in support of the invasion of Persia.<sup>532</sup> With all these high ranking officers present and the secondary force accounted for, it seems likely the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* were probably also present with Julian. After his death we have the re-appointment by Jovian as *Magister Equitum per Gallias* of Jovinus, who had been posted to *Illyricum* as *Magister Equitum per Illyricum*.<sup>533</sup> It is unclear if Julian had left anyone in charge in Gaul. The Gallic post seems to have been active from 363 to 408, possibly all the way through to 411 and Constantius III's recovery of Gaul.

In that case, the office of *Magister Equitum per Gallias* should have a cover sheet in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and its omission cannot be satisfactorily explained by it being a newly re-created command. If we consider the inclusion of coversheets for the apparently dormant commands of the *Comes Italiae* and *Comes Argentoratensis*, which are recorded as first and fourth respectively in the Index of the *Comites rei Militaris* but appear last in the actual section in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the omission of the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* is extremely noticeable as it was an active command.<sup>534</sup> The most likely explanation lies in the way the *Notitia Dignitatum* was put together. If we believe that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was an up to date working inventory of military commands and codicils of office, then the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* should have been included. Alternatively, if the *Notitia Dignitatum* was assembled from information drawn from different dates for other reasons, then the *Magister Equitum per Gallias'* absence would be more believable. This would then

---

<sup>532</sup> Amm. 23.3.5, 25.3.14, 25.5.4; PLRE (1971), Sebastianus 2, pp. 812-3.

<sup>533</sup> Amm. 22.3.1.

<sup>534</sup> Not. Occ. i, *Comes Italiae*, xxvii, *Comes Argentoratensis*, xxviii.

add further support to my view that the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a whole was not drawn up from documents prepared at any one date.

If we now consider the dates that we have for the *Magister Equitum per Gallias* being an active command within the timeframe of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, then the two most certain dates are 408, under the last named holder of the office, Chariobaudes, and 411 after Constantius III's recovery of Gaul with the possibility that the office was held by Ulfilas. The date for the Gallic field army in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is therefore either prior or post Constantine III's revolt. While it would have been of great use to the imperial authorities to have had an inventory of those troops who were loyal to Honorius up to 408, the chaos and infighting of that period would have made record keeping almost impossible. This makes 411 the more probable date, after some degree of imperial authority had been re-imposed in Gaul.

The composition of the Gallic field army as listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* also supports a date of 411. If the *Notitia Dignitatum* had been recording the Gallic army prior to the Rhine crossing by the Vandals, Alani and others in 406/407, then we would expect to see a different formation. It would have been similar in structure to the other regional commands under the various *Comites* that we have already looked at, and would have been significantly smaller than the army we analysed in this chapter. When Julian campaigned in Gaul in 357, his forces are recorded as only 13,000 men strong, which is less than the two eastern *Praesentalis* armies of 21,000 men.<sup>535</sup> However, the *Notitia Dignitatum* records the Gallic field army, on paper, as numbering 45,500 men. The make-up of the army also adds to this line of reasoning. While the limited number of *Palatina* units is in itself not unusual in a regional army, the high proportion of *Pseudocomitatenses* is exceptional. With twenty one such units in the Gallic field army, this is the highest concentration in any of the western field armies. To this must be added the many *Auxilia Palatina* units which appear from the listing to have been raised later in Honorius' reign. All these elements would support the idea of the army being recorded c.411, to make good the losses from 406 onwards.

Looking at some of the units themselves in further detail, we can find two points which could also argue in favour of a date of 411. Firstly, there are those units that at one time

---

<sup>535</sup> Not. Or. iv, v.

were in the *Praesentalis* and now appear in the Gallic field army. Secondly, there are those units which have a connection with Britain but have ended up in Gaul.

If we consider the first point, we have the examples of the *Equites Cornuti Seniores*, along with the *Auxilia Palatina* units of the *Mattiaci*, *Brachiati*, *Batavi* and *Leones* who have *Seniores* and *Iuniores* units spread between the *Praesentalis* and the Gallic command. Not only do these units suggest a link between the *Praesentalis* and the Gallic field army, but the *Auxilia Palatina* units all appear before the various *Honoriani* and *Gallicani* named units in the field army listing, and so were presumably the original members of the recently reconstructed Gallic field army. The subsequent *Honoriani* and *Gallicani* units were raised at a later date in Honorius' reign and added to the Gallic forces. While the various *Legiones* listed do not appear to have an obvious link with the *Praesentalis*, their unusual order of listing does suggest a recent promotion in status and precedence for some units, such as the *Lanciarum Sabarienses* and *Lanciarum Honoriani Gallicani*.

If we now consider those units that have a link with Britain, we have several examples. We have the *Equites Honoriani Seniores*, and their links with the *Equites Honoriani Iuniores* and the *Equites Honoriani Taifali Iuniores*. Among the *Auxilia Palatina* we have the *Britones* and the two *Atecotti Honoriani* units, as well as the *Legio Comitatus* the *Britones Secundani*. The most obvious answer to how these units became part of the Gallic field army is that they were brought over by Constantine III, and taken over after his defeat in 411.

If we exclude the *Pseudocomitatenses* momentarily from our considerations, we have 39 units recorded in the Gallic field army. We have five units with links to the *Praesentalis*, six which can be associated with Britain, and six recently created units. These last are the five *Auxilia Palatina* from the *Sagittarii Nervi Gallicani* down to the *Ascarii Honoriani Seniores* at the end of that list and the *Legio Comitatus Honoriani Felices Gallicani*. To this we can add two *Legiones Comitatus* discussed above that appear to have had some promotion, the *Lanciarum Sabarienses* upgraded to *Palatina* status and the *Lanciarum Honoriani Gallicani* promoted in the order of precedence. We can say with reasonable certainty that 19 out of the 39 units appear to have been recently detached from other forces, promoted or recruited to form the Gallic field army in or soon after 411.

This picture is further reinforced if we include the *Pseudocomitatenses*. Of the 21 units recorded in the Gallic field army only three cannot be adequately identified, the other 18 are drawn from the commands of the *Dux Moguntiacensis*, *Dux Armorican*, *Dux Britanniarum*, *Dux Belgicae Secundae*, *Dux Valeriae* and the *Comes Litoris Saxonici*. While all these commands are local to Gaul, the question is when were these units drafted into the field army? It is possible to argue that as these border forces, especially those of the *Dux Moguntiacensis* and *Dux Belgicae Secundae*, were along the Rhine border and had failed to check the Germanic incursions in 406-407, then most of these formations were destroyed during this period. The *Notitia Dignitatum* does record a *Dux Germaniae Primae*, who does not have any troops or a cover sheet, which would suggest that this command had been destroyed but the record was retained because at the time of drafting the document it may well have been the intention to rebuild this force.<sup>536</sup> There is not, however, any entry for the provinces of *Germania Secunda* or *Belgica Prima*, which we might expect, if only as blank pages similar to that for the *Dux Germaniae Primae*. The other striking point appears if we compare the *Dux Moguntiacensis* to the border commands along the Danube, the *Dux Raetiae*, *Dux Pannoniae et Norici*, *Dux Pannoniae Secundae* and the *Dux Valeriae*.<sup>537</sup> All these formations contain a mixture of cavalry units, *Cunes Equitum* or *Equites*, along with infantry formations of *Auxilia* and *Legiones*, and a few *Praefectus Militum* units. By comparison, the *Dux Moguntiacensis* has only ten *Praefectus Militum* units listed, of which up to six have possibly been drafted into the Gallic field army (see tables above). Therefore the *Notitia Dignitatum* is recording the *Dux Moguntiacensis* listing at a date after the normal *Limitanei* units have been removed or destroyed, as otherwise we would expect this command to have had a similar composition to those along the Danube. This date could be after Constantine III had gained some control in Gaul (and Zosimus states that he did re-establish the borders), or under Constantius III after 411.<sup>538</sup> The rather limited forces deployed under the *Dux Moguntiacensis* are much depleted and not of full legionary status, so second class *Limitanei*.

One final point that needs to be considered is that many of the *Pseudocomitatenses* units in the Gallic list do not appear on the *Magister Peditum* list and likewise do not have any shield

---

<sup>536</sup> Not. Occ. xxxvii.

<sup>537</sup> Not. Occ. xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv.

<sup>538</sup> Zosimus, 6.3.3.

illustrations. If these units had been late additions to the Gallic army, then there might not have been time to update the *Magister Peditum* list. It has been noted in the introduction that the *Quaestor* had been in charge of the *Laterculum Minus* which covered the border *Limitanei*. This register had fallen briefly under the command of the *Magister Peditum*, and was not returned to the *Quaestor* until 415.<sup>539</sup> It can be argued that the ten Gallic *Pseudocomitatenses* which are listed under the *Magister Peditum* were transferred to the Gallic field army sometime between the years 411-414, and those that were not recorded were added 415 or just after and the *Magistri* listings had yet to be updated.

A.H.M. Jones believed that the Gallic field army had been abolished in 408 and was recreated in 420 after Constantius III had completed the recovery of Gaul.<sup>540</sup> I have argued that the army could have been in existence after 408 and was certainly operating from 411 onwards. It may well have continued to evolve during this time period and may indeed not have reached its final development until 415, but the process started immediately after the fall of Constantine III in 411, and this is what the Gallic listing in the *Notitia Dignitatum* reveals.

---

<sup>539</sup> CTh.1.8.1.

<sup>540</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

## 7. The field army of the *Magister Peditum in Praesentalis* in Italy.

### 7.1 Introduction.

The index of the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists the post of *Magister Peditum in Praesenti* as the fourth highest official in the Western Empire and the first military officer.<sup>541</sup> The post has its own cover sheet which is titled *Insigna Viri Illustris Magistri Peditum* and lists all the field army units in the Western Empire which fell under his command.<sup>542</sup> In the *Distributio* the entry for the field army in Italy does not mention any commanding officer, which is unusual as every other army is listed being commanded by various officers. The start of the *Distributio*, in the section on Italy, states that the following list of provincial deployments are the units *Intra Italiam*.<sup>543</sup> Since there is no direct reference to the *Magister Peditum* being in command of the units in Italy, and as the office of the *Magister Peditum* and the control of the *Praesentalis* army in Italy are undoubtedly one and the same within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, I shall use the general term 'Italian field army'.

This Italian field army chapter follows on from and is linked with the chapter on the Gallic field army as well as having connections with all the preceding chapters. As previously discussed, the physical location of the *Praesentalis* army may well have changed as the situation demanded. We looked in the chapter on the Gallic field army at how Julian campaigned in Gaul in the 350s with units that are recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as being in *Praesentalis* army in Italy at the end of the fourth and possibly early fifth century. It has also been noted how various small expeditions seem too have been drawn from this *Praesentalis* army such as the forces which Julian and Valentinian I sent to Britain for example.

For the purpose of this chapter the main focus will be the events from 394 to 411, as this period had the most impact on the Italian field army. The main sources available for this period include the contemporary writings of Claudian and Orosius and the later works of Zosimus and Jordanes. Along with these, we have the inscriptions from the Concordia cemetery which have been cited in previous chapters and will now be examined in detail.

---

<sup>541</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>542</sup> Not. Occ. v.

<sup>543</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



As I have already discussed the background to the office of *Magister Peditum* in the Gallic chapter, I will now look at the operations of the army of Italy in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, before looking at the units of the Italian field army in more depth.

### 7.2.1 Background

Apart from the earlier actions described by Ammianus which were discussed in the chapter on Gaul, we have several incidents from the 390s and early 400s which concern the actions of the Italian field army. These start with the battle of Frigidus in 394, where the main Eastern and Western *Praesentalis* armies clashed in a civil war. The impact of this engagement must have been quite severe on the Western *Praesentalis*, as Stilicho, who assumed joint command in the aftermath, retained control of both armies to bolster the defences of the West.<sup>544</sup> In 395 the eastern *Praesentalis* returned to Constantinople, which can only have weakened the western *Praesentalis*. In 396 Stilicho was recruiting along the Rhine in an attempt to rebuild the army, and in 397 there was a failed attempt by Stilicho to defeat Alaric in Greece.<sup>545</sup> Then in 402, there were two engagements against Alaric in Italy, at Pollentia and Verona, which, despite Claudian's claims, were not great victories.

Radagaisus' invasion of Italy in 406 and his defeat by Stilicho at Faesulae marks the end of the major engagements for which we have any detailed records. There was then the revolt of Constantine III and the fall of Stilicho, followed by a period of inaction by the Italian field army as Alaric sacked Rome and wandered about the Italian countryside at will. Finally, between 411 and 420, Constantius III restored Imperial control over most of Gaul and forced the Goths to come to terms. It will be necessary to pick through all of these events, as well as the periods of inactivity, and try to sort out the often conflicting accounts of our sources, to build an evolving picture of the Italian field army.

Before looking at these key engagements it will be helpful to summarise the make-up of the Italian field army as given in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. There are 44 units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for this army:<sup>546</sup>

---

<sup>544</sup> Claudian, *Rufinus II*, 5-6.

<sup>545</sup> Claudian, *Fourth Consulship of Honorius*, 460.

<sup>546</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<i>Vexillationes Palatina</i>	<i>Vexillationes Comitatenses</i>	<i>Legiones Palatina</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	<i>Legiones Comitatenses</i>	<i>Legiones Pseudocomitatenses</i>
5	2	8	21	6	2

Based on Jones' estimates of unit strengths, this would give us a paper total of 31,000 men, making it the second largest western formation. From the make-up of the army it is apparent that most of the elite western *Palatina* units have been grouped in this formation. It contains eight of the ten *Legiones Palatinae* and twenty-one of the sixty-five *Auxilia Palatina*. Along with these, it also contains five of the ten *Vexillationes Palatinae*. While the Gallic field army is larger, the Italian field army contains much better quality units, as would be expected in the *Praesentalis* army.

The reason why this is relevant before looking at the various actions that the Italian field army was engaged in, is the losses incurred. While we do not have any battle returns for casualties, or indeed anything like a full order of battle, we can see a steady attrition weakening the Italian field army over the period 394-406. This continual warfare must have reduced the numbers and quality of the army to such a point that it could no longer have looked like the force recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This is a key element in dating this entry.

### 7.2.2 The Battle of Frigidus 394

In the civil war between the eastern forces of Emperor Theodosius I and the western usurper Eugenius, the main engagement was at Frigidus, near the Julian Alps. We have several accounts available, including those of Rufinus, Eunapius, Orosius, Sozomen and Zosimus. While Rufinus was a native of the area where the battle took place, coming from Aquileia, and contemporary to the events, he was in the east at the time, returning to Italy in 397. As a church historian, his account emphasises the importance of Theodosius' piety and assistance from God. He does, however, give us an outline of events. Eugenius, along with his Frankish *Magister Militum* Arbogast, had drawn up their army on the far side of the Alpine passes, having hidden ambushes near the entrance.<sup>547</sup> There was an initial assault by Theodosius' barbarian auxiliaries who were routed, but the troops in ambush seem to have

---

<sup>547</sup> PLRE (1971), Arbogastes, pp. 95-7.

deserted and joined Theodosius' army. Theodosius then purportedly prayed to God for assistance and a great wind blew up, so strong that it turned the missiles of the enemy back on themselves and a second assault led by Bacurius was successful in making a break through and capturing Eugenius.<sup>548</sup> While Rufinus' account lacks any real detail, it is interesting to look at Orosius' account to add some more depth. Orosius claims that Abrogast used the united strength of the Franks and Gauls to oppose Theodosius. Whether this means Frankish auxiliaries, is not clear, but 'the Gauls' could refer to troops drawn from the Gallic field army. Orosius follows Rufinus in saying that Abrogast and Eugenius drew up their army on the plains, having set ambushes along the Alpine passes, and though they were inferior in numbers, they were confident of victory because of these tactics. Orosius also mentions how *Comes Arbito*, who was in charge of the ambush troops, came over to Theodosius' side. There is then the great wind which blew in the enemies' faces, and after a rout of some of Arbogast's army, the rest surrendered. While Orosius' account does not differ greatly from that of Rufinus, we are told that Theodosius had the larger army which included Gothic troops, of whom 10,000 died.<sup>549</sup> Sozomen relates the same story, emphasising the prayer and the wind in the enemies' faces, but does add that an unspecified advance guard of Theodosius' had a desperate struggle with Arbogast's troops. He concludes by saying that many troops perished.<sup>550</sup>

The account of the contemporary Greek pagan sophist and historian Eunapius is somewhat brief on the battle of Frigidus and does not mention any of the freak weather conditions which characterised the church historians' accounts. He relates that during the battle there was an eclipse, rather than a great wind, and that there was great loss of life on both sides. The next day Theodosius launched a surprise attack while the enemy were sleeping and slaughtered many of them.<sup>551</sup>

Our final account comes from the later pagan historian Zosimus, who follows Eunapius in claiming that there was an eclipse during the battle, during which there was great slaughter. He adds that Theodosius appointed Timasius and Stilicho as *Magistri Militum* and that his

---

<sup>548</sup> Rufinus 11.32.

<sup>549</sup> Orosius, 7.35.12-19; Jordanes, XXVIII. Jordanes has a total Gothic force of 20,000 men with Theodosius.

<sup>550</sup> Sozomen, 7.24.

<sup>551</sup> Eunapius, Fragment 60; PLRE (1971), Eunapius 2, p. 296.

barbarian auxiliaries were commanded by Gainas, Saul and Bacurius.<sup>552</sup> The first assault was led by Gainas, presumably with the Gothic allies, and the greater part of these fell in battle, including Bacurius. That evening Eugenius was pleased with how the day had gone and allowed his men to eat and rest. Theodosius then made a full-scale attack catching the enemy at rest and killing many. Eugenius was killed and the rest of his army went over to Theodosius.<sup>553</sup>

While all these accounts are similar, they lack key details. Most obvious is the lack of reference to the army of Italy or *Praesentalis* in the western forces. There is little modern scholarship that looks at the battle in any detail, undoubtedly because of the lack of information in our sources. Only Gibbon back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century made a few observations, while more recently Hughes proposed a detailed outline of the battle in his biography of Stilicho. Eunapius suggests that Theodosius not only raised barbarian allies, but his *Magistri Militum* Stilicho and Timasius rebuilt the eastern *Praesentalis*, a view which was accepted by Gibbon.<sup>554</sup> There is no similar reference to the western forces of Eugenius and Arbogast, just that they had the united strength of the Gauls and Germans.<sup>555</sup> Gibbon followed this, without defining what was meant by these terms, attributing to the Gauls a tendency for superstition. This supposed national characteristic was rooted in Roman belief of Gallic behaviour dating back to Caesar's time, so Gibbon was able to go on to claim that after the violent storm broke out they yielded without shame to the pious Theodosius.<sup>556</sup> There is, however, no reason to assume that the main western field army was not present at the battle and the reference to Gauls and Germans could also refer to the Roman forces within those provinces as well as barbarian allies. The defeat of Theodosius' advance guard of Gothic auxiliaries seems to have been dealt with quite effectively by the western troops and is used as an example by Barker to show the military effectiveness of the late Roman legionaries.<sup>557</sup>

---

<sup>552</sup> PLRE (1971), Timasius, p. 914; Gainas, p. 379; Saul, p. 809; Bacurius, p. 144.

<sup>553</sup> For an analysis of the tactic at Frigidus see Hughes (2010), pp. 24-7.

<sup>554</sup> Eunapius, Fragment 60; Gibbon, vol. iii, p. 400; Claudian, *De Consulatu Stilichonis* l. 153-160.

Claudian only mentions the foreign auxiliaries which he places under Stilicho, nothing on the eastern *Praesentalis*.

<sup>555</sup> Orosius, 7.35.13.

<sup>556</sup> Gibbon, vol. iii, p. 402.

<sup>557</sup> Barker (1981), p. 44.

It is also interesting to speculate whether the troops set in ambush along the Alpine passes could have been those units that were at one time under the *Comes Italiae* and that the *Comes Arbito*, mentioned by Orosius, who joined Theodosius was in fact the *Comes Italiae*.<sup>558</sup> The presence of *Pseudocomitatenses Legiones Prima Iulia* and *Tertia Iulia* in the Italian field army, as recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, may suggest how these border forces from the *Comes Italiae* had been drawn into the field army.<sup>559</sup>

The hardest detail to confirm, and key for dating the *Notitia Dignitatum* entry for Italy, is how much damage the western forces suffered at the battle of Frigidus. Rufinus makes no reference to casualties on either side, while Orosius mentions the 10,000 Gothic casualties and goes on to say that after a small part of the enemy (western army) had been routed, the rest surrendered.<sup>560</sup> These two accounts would suggest that those killed, apart from the Goths, were relatively few. Our other sources paint a different picture. Sozomen says that when Theodosius' second attack broke the enemy line, many perished. Eunapius states that during the eclipse there was a great loss of life on both sides, which would make sense in a *mêlée* in the dark. He goes on to say regarding the second attack, when Theodosius' force caught the enemy sleeping, that they slaughtered many. Zosimus also says the same thing but adds that after the death of Eugenius, the balance of his army went over to Theodosius. This last point is quite interesting, as in a civil war you would expect quarter to be given to Roman troops, perhaps less so to hired barbarians. This might imply that the majority of Eugenius' army was indeed made up of regular Roman forces.

What can be concluded from this? Our Christian sources emphasize the piety of Theodosius as the key element in his victory, while Eunapius and Zosimus, along with Sozomen suggest heavy fighting and casualties for the western forces. Hughes suggests that the defeat at Frigidus which followed on from the one inflicted on the western usurper Magnus Maximus in 388 would have left the western army in a worse state than the eastern army after Adrianople.<sup>561</sup> This may be supported by the events which happened in the aftermath which

---

<sup>558</sup> PLRE (1971), Arbito 1, p. 94.

<sup>559</sup> Orosius, 7.13.16; Not. Occ. xxvii for *Comes Italiae*; Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>560</sup> Orosius, 7.35.19.

<sup>561</sup> Hughes (2010), p. 26.

saw Stilicho becoming the *Magister Militum* of the west after Theodosius' death in 395 and retaining control over elements of the eastern army.<sup>562</sup>

### 7.2.3 Post Frigidus

It can be argued that in the period just after the battle of Frigidus the retaining of elements of the eastern field army in the west is a sign of the extensive damage caused to the western *Praesentalis* at the battle. There is, however, an alternative explanation for these events. This can be explained as part of the political battle between Stilicho and Rufinus, with control of the army being the main bargaining chip.<sup>563</sup> It is not my intention to examine Stilicho's claim of having been granted stewardship of the young emperors Honorius and Arcadius by Theodosius on his deathbed, but at the relationship between Stilicho and Rufinus in the aftermath of Theodosius' death.<sup>564</sup>

Our main problem is the lack of any reliable evidence for the interaction between these two men, as we are largely dependent on Stilicho's panegyrist Claudian. That said, it is often possible to look at the things that he uses in his praise of his patron and what he uses to attack Rufinus with and compare these two events that he merely passes over.<sup>565</sup>

One issue that is relevant to the state of the army post Frigidus is the question of the morale of the western troops. To this we can add the possible resentment felt within the joint army. In Cameron's assessment of Claudian, he argues that there would have been a big problem with the morale of the combined army with resentment felt by the western troops and their victorious eastern comrades, a point that Cameron believes Claudian brushes over.<sup>566</sup>

Claudian, however, labours the point that they were one united army, claiming that all grudges were laid aside, that the vanquished felt no hate, the victors felt no pride and all were as one with their great leader.<sup>567</sup> He even goes on to tell us that when the armies were separated the soldiers groaned deeply and bedewed their helmets with tears, crying out that they are betrayed.<sup>568</sup> Maybe Claudian is over-compensating, but he certainly addresses

---

<sup>562</sup> Claudian, *Rufinus II*, 5-6.

<sup>563</sup> PLRE (1971), Rufinus 18, pp. 778-81.

<sup>564</sup> Hughes (2010), pp. 30-2 for a summary of the debate.

<sup>565</sup> Cameron (1970), pp. 63-92 on how Claudian treats Rufinus.

<sup>566</sup> Cameron (1990), pp. 164-5.

<sup>567</sup> Claudian, *Rufinus II*, 115-18.

<sup>568</sup> Claudian, *Rufinus II*, 257-63

the issue of the joint east-west army's morale. Whether we wish to believe this or not is another matter, for the final act of the drama was the murder of Rufinus by the eastern soldiers on their return to Constantinople. In the presence of the emperor Arcadius, they surrounded Rufinus and struck him down. The claim that since they had twice fought wars against tyrants, they would not become slaves of Rufinus, was then added to by the supposed claim of one soldier 'It is the hand of Stilicho which smites thee', as he cut him down.<sup>569</sup> If we look beyond Claudian's dramatic prose, it would seem to suggest an anger felt by the soldiers at being robbed of their chance of victory over the Goths and the hatred felt towards Rufinus for preventing this. Another interpretation is that Stilicho had failed to defeat the Goths, and that terms had been agreed with them. If east *Illyricum* was no longer under the control of the eastern Empire, then the army was recalled to deal with more pressing matters in the east. It also makes sense if we consider the fact that making a treaty with the Goths is a continuation of Theodosius' own policy and it should be no surprise to see Stilicho and Rufinus, as members of Theodosius' inner circle, following the same strategy. This, however, undermined Stilicho's political claim to joint control of the young emperors and so he arranged for some disgruntled soldiers to assassinate Rufinus on their return. Claudian cleverly spins these events to enhance Stilicho's reputation and tarnish Rufinus as well as giving Stilicho a plausible excuse for not being directly involved in the assassination as the soldiers take it upon themselves to defend his honour.<sup>570</sup> If we consider the problems that Theodosius had faced in the aftermath of Adrianople in trying to defeat the Goths and then deferring to a negotiated settlement, it is not unreasonable to assume that the weakened state of the joint east-west *Praesentalis* was likewise unlikely to force a settlement so a treaty was arranged. After which the eastern army returned home. While it cannot be proven, this would all suggest that the control of the army was a political issue rather than necessarily demonstrating the weakness of western forces in the aftermath of Frigidus.

Perhaps the most interesting indication of the state of the Italian field army comes from the period just prior to Stilicho's campaign in Greece. Claudian tells us that Stilicho toured the borders of the western empire forcing the Germans along the Rhine to submit to him, not

---

<sup>569</sup> Claudian, *Rufinus II*, 385-405.

<sup>570</sup> Cameron (1970), pp. 90-1.

through warfare, but by his mere presence alone, and bringing peace to Gaul.<sup>571</sup> While this is portrayed as a great personal victory for Stilicho, in reality he was probably only continuing a policy of negotiating treaties with the various tribes along the border. There is the possibility that apart from meeting various tribal leaders Stilicho was also on a recruitment drive to rebuild the western army. Claudian gives us some interesting bits of information when describing how Stilicho set about recruiting troops from Gaul. “He wonders where sprung this untutored army with all its young recruits and whence had Gaul won back its strength that Alpine blows twice shattered.”<sup>572</sup> The army needed to be brought back up to strength as a result of having suffered two shattering blows, which Platnauer believed to be the wars against Eugenius and the Goths, though they could quite conceivably have included Theodosius’ campaign against Magnus Maximus.<sup>573</sup> That Stilicho’s recruitment drive was aimed at bringing the *Praesentalis* back to a fighting condition, rather than strengthening local forces, is implied by Claudian when he tells us the envoys from Gaul thanked Stilicho for their safety, even though no *Legiones* guarded their borders.<sup>574</sup> This then is the first real evidence we have for the western *Praesentalis* after the battle of Frigidus. It is interesting to note that Hughes believes that this was a military campaign conducted by Stilicho with the intention of not only recruiting from defeated Germans, but also as a way of gaining combat experience and rebuilding the army’s morale.<sup>575</sup> If this was the case, we would expect Claudian to have made more of Stilicho’s military prowess rather than the image of him forcing his foes into submission through fear. Claudian is also keen to emphasise how Stilicho’s recruits are Gallic Romans, though we would expect a certain number of native Germans to be included. Either way, it needed a year of heavy recruiting to bring the army of Italy back up to some sort of fighting condition, because it was not until the following year in 397 that Stilicho attempted to defeat the Goths.

#### **7.2.4 The campaign in Greece in 397**

Having prepared the army of Italy, Stilicho crossed the Adriatic in 397 and landed in Greece at Corinth, which had already been sacked by Alaric, who was now roaming in the

---

<sup>571</sup> Claudian, *Fourth Consulship of Honorius*, 445-60.

<sup>572</sup> Claudian, *De Consulatu Stilichonis* I, pp. 315-320.

<sup>573</sup> Platnauer, Claudian I. p. 387. fn. 2.

<sup>574</sup> Claudian, *De Consulatu Stilichonis* II, p. 186.

<sup>575</sup> Hughes (2010), pp. 93-4.



Peloponnese. This campaign is hard to follow, as our sources offer different explanations, though the result was similar to 395, as Alaric was not defeated and managed to escape north to Epirus. This point is noted by Orosius who complained how often Alaric was trapped and defeated, but allowed to escape.<sup>576</sup> We may take issue with Orosius' claim of Alaric being defeated, but he did escape destruction. The reason for Stilicho's failure to defeat Alaric is explained in two different ways. Claudian says that Stilicho was on the verge of victory after inflicting heavy losses on the Goths in early skirmishes, when he was ordered to leave Greece by Arcadius before he could complete the job (the same explanation as the one in 395). Zosimus, however, suggests that after blockading Alaric at Mount Pholoe where he could have starved him into submission, Stilicho gave himself over to luxury and allowed his men to plunder, which allowed Alaric to escape.<sup>577</sup> It is interesting to note that in 395 and 397 Stilicho appears to have obeyed Arcadius' commands of returning the eastern *Praesentalis* and leaving Greece. This does raise the question of why Stilicho had attacked Alaric in Greece without the permission of Arcadius. This may well indicate that it was Stilicho's failure to defeat Alaric and his retreat to Epirus which would be in the direction of the western controlled west *Illyricum*. This would then make Alaric a western problem, and easier to deal with from Italy, so Stilicho had overstayed his welcome in the east.

It is not necessary for us to analyse in detail the differences between these two accounts, the end result is the same, Stilicho failed to defeat Alaric. Likewise, we do not need to try to deduce his motives for campaigning in Greece, which was part of the eastern empire. What we need to draw out from these accounts is the state of the main western field army, the army of Italy. If we follow Hughes' earlier argument that the recruits raised in 396 were mainly Germanic, and therefore likely to be *Foederatii* serving under their own tribal leaders rather than in regular Roman units, this could explain the breakdown of control which according to Zosimus led to the troops plundering and allowed Alaric to escape.<sup>578</sup> This would lead us to believe that the army with which Stilicho campaigned was nothing like the one recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. As noted earlier, that *Notitia* army was (on paper strength only) approximately 30,000 men strong. If it had been recruited back up to strength from Roman recruits, as Claudian would have us believe, then it would have been strong

---

<sup>576</sup> Orosius, 7.37.2.

<sup>577</sup> Zosimus, 5.7.1-2.

<sup>578</sup> Hughes (2010), pp. 98-9.

enough to confront Alaric without the need for masses of *Foederatii*. If we accept Hughes' line of reasoning, that Stilicho's army in Greece was only made up of a small section of the *Praesentalis* and a large proportion of *Foederatii*, then it would not have resembled the listing in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Should we just dismiss Claudian's claim that Stilicho's army was recruited from Roman soldiers? This of course could just be a literary device Claudian's audience would have been aware of the importance of Germanic troops to the Roman army, but was it more palatable not to mention this and imply that Stilicho's army was indeed Roman? It is interesting to note that Claudian does not mention any units involved in the Greek campaign. In his poem on the defeat of Gildo, who revolted in 397 shortly after Stilicho's Greek campaign ended, several units are mentioned including units in the *Praesentalis*, as discussed in the chapter of the *Comes Hispaniarum*.<sup>579</sup> If Stilicho had campaigned in Greece with the *Praesentalis*, we would have expected him to have used the similar units, and they were important enough to be mentioned by Claudian in the war against Gildo, so why not against Alaric? One possibility could be that the campaign in Greece was not in fact carried out by the *Praesentalis*, and Stilicho's army comprised of those local units listed in the *Notitia* under the *Comes Illyrici*, reinforced by some field army units and recruited *Foederatii*. As will be discussed in the next chapter on *Illyricum*, however, many of the units listed under that *Comes* appear to be dated to 420, so would not have existed there in 397, though some local *Limitanei* units must have existed prior to that date.<sup>580</sup> On the balance of probability, however, it seems likely that Stilicho would have used the *Praesentalis*, or at least a part of it, and made up the rest of his expedition from less reliable units which could explain any loss of control and ill-discipline which left him unable to defeat Alaric in Greece. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this campaign about the size and quality of the army of Italy.

### **7.2.5 Prelude to, and battle of Pollentia and Verona 398-401**

Whilst various actions were being conducted in Africa and Britain (as covered in the chapters on the *Comes Africae* and *Comes Britanniarum*) the *Praesentalis* was relatively

---

<sup>579</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-23.

<sup>580</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

quiet during the period 398-401. Claudian has told us that in 396 Stilicho recruited for the army, and it seems reasonable to assume that this continued during 398 and beyond. It is possible that the structural reforms which we see in the *Notitia Dignitatum* also occurred during this period.

Prior to the Pollentia campaign, Stilicho was forced to cross the Alps in the winter of 400 or early 401 to deal with an attack into *Rhaetia* by some Alan tribesmen. While Claudian does discuss this, there is little detail on the army.<sup>581</sup> If this attack occurred before the troops sent to Africa to oppose Gildo had not returned, then the strength of the army of Italy must have been severely weakened. This weakness in numbers is referred to by Claudian when he states that Rome could punish this attack with a handful of her forces. This claim, however, is put into perspective when Claudian tells us that to check the threats of war, 'Stilicho won over new allies in such numbers as to best suit the situation, neither a burden to Italy or a terror to its lords'.<sup>582</sup> While this last statement probably refers to the senatorial dislike of using Germanic allies, what we can draw from Claudian is that the army of Italy in 398-400 was unable to meet the Alan invasion on its own. Considering how few units had been dispatched to Africa (Claudian mentions only seven units), it is suggested that Stilicho was forced to recruit allies. The *Notitia Dignitatum* records 37 infantry units in the army of Italy. The temporary loss of seven should not have caused too much of a problem unless the army was nowhere near this strength.

Whilst Stilicho was campaigning to the north against the Alans, Alaric crossed the Alps from the east into Italy. This invasion undoubtedly caused great panic to such an extent that as the Goths advanced on the imperial capital of Milan, Honorius prepared to flee. It has been suggested that an emergency law was passed allowing slaves to be recruited into the army, but this law appears to have been dated to a later invasion of 406 rather than 402.<sup>583</sup> What did happen was a summoning of troops to join the army of Italy, with Claudian telling us they were drawn from those who had defended *Rhaetia*, a *Legio* from Britain, and all the *Legiones* (none of whom are named) withdrawn from the Rhine border.<sup>584</sup> It is doubtful that these reinforcements could have arrived quickly enough, with the exception of the *Rhaetian*

---

<sup>581</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gothico*, 320-5.

<sup>582</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gothico*, 383, 400-4.

<sup>583</sup> CTh. 7.13.16; Hughes (2010), p. 138.

<sup>584</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gothico*, 412-25.

*Limitanei*, in time for the battle of Pollentia in April 402, but the need to summon them is a clear indication that the army Stilicho commanded was not up to strength. Nor is there any indication of any troops being left in Italy while Stilicho campaigned against the Alans. This can be seen from the apparent ease with which Alaric crossed the Alps, which would also imply the command of the *Comes Italiae* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was indeed inactive at this time, and any garrisons in the area had probably been swept up into Stilicho's army for the campaign against the Alans.

Unfortunately we have very few details about the battle of Pollentia itself, relying on Claudian and Orosius, and a few brief references from other authors. This is also made more difficult as Claudian and Orosius have contrary views on the outcome of the battle and on Stilicho himself. All Claudian tells us is that there was an attack on the Goths made by some Alan cavalry, but this was thrown into confusion after the death of the Alan leader. The situation was saved when Stilicho brought up an unnamed *Legio* to support them.<sup>585</sup> After this brief description, Claudian tells us that the Goths were defeated, their camp captured and their plunder and captives were once again in Roman hands. This is supported by Prudentius, who states that the Goths were wiped out at the battle and their bones covered the fields around Pollentia.<sup>586</sup> Orosius by contrast complained that Alaric had again been allowed to escape, but worst of all was the shameful act of fighting on a holy day of Easter, which he curiously blames on the pagan general Saul rather than on Stilicho.<sup>587</sup> Many modern historians consider the battle a draw, with Alaric being able to retreat with his army intact.<sup>588</sup> It is not my intention to analyse who won the battle in detail here, but an attempt to judge how the course of the battle unfolded, which may shed light on the army of Italy.

Apart from Claudian's reference to an unnamed *Legio* being present and some Alan *Foederatii*, nothing else is known of the specific forces involved. In his analysis of Claudian, Cameron believes that there are two points we can draw from his account. Firstly, there was a suspicion over the loyalty of the Alans, and secondly, they did let Stilicho down. From this Cameron notes that Stilicho could not rely on his troops, as we have seen earlier in Greece, and while Claudian turns the possible rout of the Alans into a virtue for Stilicho, by saving

---

<sup>585</sup> Claudian, *De Bello Gothico*, 580-98.

<sup>586</sup> Prudentius, A reply to the address of Symmachus, 715-20.

<sup>587</sup> Orosius, 7.37.2.

<sup>588</sup> Heather (1991), p. 209; Kulikowski (2007), p. 170.

the situation, the poet cannot find anything more positive to say.<sup>589</sup> This lack of reliability may indicate the quality of the army as a whole, rather than just the Alan *Foederatii*. The Italian army as listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* has the six most senior *Legiones Palatinae* and twenty one *Auxilia Palatina*, which if present would have formed the main strike force for the army.<sup>590</sup> The lack of any evidence does not necessarily prove they were not present, but if they were they were not trusted with the main assault and so presumably they were shadows of their former selves. This can be further supported by the call made prior to the battle to draw reinforcements from Britain, Gaul and *Rhaetia*.

The later Gothic historian Jordanes tells a different story, that Stilicho broke Honorius' promise of safe conduct to the peaceful Goths and attacked them at Pollentia. After an initial panic the Goths rallied and routed the Roman army, almost exterminating it.<sup>591</sup> When describing the Gothic entry into Italy, Jordanes adds that Italy seemed bare of defenders and the Goths did not meet any resistance.<sup>592</sup> Jordanes' account is based on the later works of Cassiodorus, and not contemporary or unbiased towards the Goths, so his description of the destruction of the Roman army must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, his reference to Italy being undefended does tie in with the idea that Stilicho had taken all available troops with him in his campaign against the Alans in 401.

In the summer of 402, and presumably after Stilicho had received the reinforcements he had sent for, he attacked Alaric again at Verona. Our main source is again Claudian, however, he offers us even less information than at Pollentia. Most of the time Claudian is proclaiming Stilicho's triumph in driving Alaric out of Italy, similar to his theme on Pollentia of Stilicho saving Rome, rather than claiming an outright military victory. We are told how Stilicho used his *Foederatii*, without concern for their losses, to attack the Goths.<sup>593</sup> This had a twofold bonus of weakening the savage tribes of the Danube, both enemies and allies, in a sentiment echoed by Orosius' view of the Gothic dead in the employ of Theodosius at Frigidus.<sup>594</sup> Claudian goes on to say that Alaric would have been captured if the rashness of

---

<sup>589</sup> Cameron (1970), p. 181.

<sup>590</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>591</sup> Jordanes. xxx.

<sup>592</sup> Jordanes. xxix.

<sup>593</sup> Claudian, *Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, 220-4.

<sup>594</sup> Orosius, 7.35.19.

an unnamed allied Alan chief had not upset Stilicho's plans.<sup>595</sup> This is interesting not only because it is a similar story to what happened at Pollentia, but because it again highlights Stilicho's lack of control over his army. There is a passing reference to Roman troops, which implies that when they became wearied in fighting, it was then that Stilicho used his *Foederatii*.<sup>596</sup> While this may be true, it could also represent a policy of trying to preserve Roman troops by limiting their exposure to combat and instead rely on expendable allies, although such a policy would not have helped the recently recruited Roman forces to gain combat experience.

The recurring lack of any detailed information on Stilicho's army makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding the state of the Italian field army after the confrontations with Alaric in 402. If the Italian entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* had been drafted at that time, then we would expect to find references to the British, Gallic and Rhaetian units within it, but as we will see they are not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the listings for the Italian field army.

It must be noted that while Claudian is not necessarily interested in detailed descriptions, he did give a list of units dispatched from the army of Italy to confront Gildo. He does not mention any of these units at Pollentia or Verona, and though their omission is not proof that they were not present, the lack of any units being named may suggest the list for the Italian field army in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was not accurate for 402.

### **7.2.6 The Battle of Faesulae 406**

The next major engagement for the Italian army was at the battle of Faesulae in 406 when Radagaisus led an invasion of Italy across the Alps via the Brenner Pass.<sup>597</sup> We do not have Claudian as a source, so we are left with only two major accounts, those of Orosius and the later historian Zosimus, together with passing references in other sources. Yet again, it is hard to reconcile the different accounts of the battle, which has opened up the possibility of different interpretations by modern historians.

---

<sup>595</sup> Claudian, *Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, 226-7.

<sup>596</sup> Claudian, *Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, 218.

<sup>597</sup> PLRE (1980), Radagaisus, p. 934.

Orosius claims that Radagaisus invaded Italy with 200,000 men, and in his account of the battle he never mentions Stilicho, but claims victory was due to Sarus (a Goth) and Uldin (a Hun) starving Radagaisus' force into submission, and as such it was a bloodless victory.<sup>598</sup> He goes on to mention the capture and execution of Radagaisus and that there were so many Gothic prisoners, the price of slaves fell.<sup>599</sup> With even less detail than Orosius, Augustine noted that Radagaisus was brought low by the will of God, and that on a single day without one Roman casualty, 100,000 men of his army were laid low.<sup>600</sup>

Zosimus tells us that Radagaisus invaded Italy with an army of 400,000 Gauls and Germans. He says that Stilicho gathered together the whole army, some thirty *Numeri*, at Ticinum, and along with many auxiliaries, Alans and Huns as possible, crossed the Danube and launched a surprise attack on the barbarians. He defeated them so completely that hardly any survived except a few he took on as auxiliaries of his own.<sup>601</sup>

There are two further brief references in our sources. One is in the Gallic Chronicle of 452, which tells us that Radagaisus was a Gothic King who split his force into three parts during his invasion of Italy. This allowed Stilicho to wheel round his Hunnic auxiliaries and destroy a third part of the enemy force in a notable victory.<sup>602</sup> The second piece of evidence is supplied by Olympiodorus who states that Radagaisus' followers were called *Optimates*, and that Stilicho took 12,000 of them into his army after the battle.<sup>603</sup>

A certain caution must be used when trying to reconcile these conflicting accounts. Zosimus gives us the most detailed information, but his account is confusing. As he was not a contemporary to these events and drawing his information from the works of Eunapius and Olympiodorus, it is not first hand. It also contains omissions, as he fails to mention the Rhine crossing of 406. As Heather noted, his description of Radagaisus' force containing Gauls and Germans, such as the multiracial group which did cross the Rhine, may mean he has mixed the two events into one.<sup>604</sup> Then we have the problem that Zosimus tells us that the battle took place over the Danube rather than in Italy. These two points must lead us to question

---

<sup>598</sup> PLRE (1980), Sarus, p. 978; Uldin, p. 1180.

<sup>599</sup> Orosius, 7.35.4, 7.35.12, 7.35.15-16.

<sup>600</sup> St. Augustine, *City of God*, 5.23.

<sup>601</sup> Zosimus, 5.26.3-6.

<sup>602</sup> Gallic Chronical, 452.52.

<sup>603</sup> Olympiodorus, Frag. 9.

<sup>604</sup> Heather (2005), p. 194.

the reliability of his account, although he is the only source that offers us any information on the size of the Roman army, which he claims was thirty *Numeri* strong.

Our sources give different figures for the size of Radagaisus' army, from 400,000 down to 200,000, with the possibility of them suffering 100,000 casualties. It has been suggested that rather than a total figure of just fighting men, this 'army' should be viewed as including women, children and slaves, and so represents a mass tribal migration.<sup>605</sup> Our sources may also have inflated these figures, but the sheer scale does give an indication of the fear and panic caused by the invasion. It was at this time that a law was passed, in May 406, offering freedom and two pieces of gold to slaves who would enlist in the army.<sup>606</sup> We then have the reference by Zosimus to Stilicho collecting the whole army, drawing troops from Gaul to him in Italy. This point is interesting as it echoes Stilicho's earlier actions prior to Pollentia, although none of our sources mention those troops being returned to their posts after Verona. If we assume that the 30 *Numeri* mentioned by Zosimus was indeed the whole western *Comitatenses* and not merely the troops in Italy or able to get to Italy in time for the campaign, then the western army was in a very poor state of repair.

Estimates of the size of Stilicho's army have varied enormously over time, and of course depend on how Zosimus defines what *Numeri* were. Writing in Greek, and copying from other sources he used the term *Arithmous*, which has been rendered as its Latin equivalent *Numeri*. What exactly Zosimus, or his source, meant by the term is hard to say. Gibbon took the term to mean a *Legio* and so suggested a figure of between 30-40,000 men plus allies.<sup>607</sup> More modern historians have followed Jones' estimates of a *Numerus* being a general term for a unit of soldiers no more than 500 men strong, and so have come up with figures between 10-20,000 men.<sup>608</sup> (See appendix i for my discussion on *Numeri*).

If we consider Zosimus' statement closely, including the Greek he uses, he states:

The cities despaired and even Rome panicked in the face of this extreme danger, but Stilicho, taking the whole army *apán stratópedon* (απάν στρατόπεδον) stationed at Ticinum

---

<sup>605</sup> Wijnendaele (2016), p. 271; Heather (2005), p. 198. This migration is often attributed to Hunnic movements, see Wijnendaele for a contrary view.

<sup>606</sup> CTh. 7.13.16.

<sup>607</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 46.

<sup>608</sup> Wijnendaele (2016), p. 270, fn. 20 for a summary of these figures.



in Liguria, which totalled thirty *Numeri* (*Triakonta arithmous*), and as many auxiliaries (*summachikon*) as he could get from the Alans and the Huns, crossed the Danube with his whole army without waiting for the enemy's attack and, falling on the barbarians without warning, utterly destroyed their whole force<sup>609</sup>

There is no mention of forces drawn from other provinces, and the 'whole army' could mean the army of Italy, the *Praesentalis*, which was stationed in Liguria. If we look at the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it lists thirty seven infantry units in the army of Italy, a figure not dissimilar to Zosimus' thirty *Numeri*.<sup>610</sup> This of course depends on how reliable we believe Zosimus' account is, and given the issues with his accuracy as stated earlier, we must have some doubt. It may be possible to redeem him slightly if we consider the battle for a moment and combine the various accounts. Having split his army into three parts (*Gallic Chronicle*), Radagaisus with the main body was surrounded and starved into submission by Stilicho (Orosius). The two other bodies then retired from Italy and it is they that were pursued over the Danube and defeated, by the Huns (Zosimus), who would have been ideal for such an action. By combining the three accounts we can create a feasible outline of the battle.<sup>611</sup>

What can we conclude from the battle of Faesulae, when considering the army of Italy? It would appear that though confused, Zosimus' account may well contain accurate information about the battle, and that thirty *Numeri* does collate with the *Notitia Dignitatum*. That these units are called *Numeri* rather than *Legiones* suggests that they were not at full strength and the law of 406 would certainly reinforce the need for rapid recruitment. There is no reason why the units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* should not have still existed, if greatly depleted. If we consider the conservative nature of the Roman state and the bureaucratic nature of those organising the army, the retention of existing army units, however small, and the issuing of commands for money, then we would expect them to retain these formations.

---

<sup>609</sup> Zosimus, 5.26.3-6.

<sup>610</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>611</sup> For a different explanation of what happened to these other sections of Radagaisus' army see Wijnendaele (2016), pp. 272-5.

If we accept the link between Zosimus' account of thirty *Numeri* at Faesulae and the army of Italy in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, then the only point of difference would be one of quality. While the recruitment drive attempted to bring the units up to numerical strength, the quality must have declined. The senior western *Palatina* units were so in name only, though I doubt this affected the price paid for a commission in one of these units.

### 7.2.7 The fall of Stilicho and the sack of Rome

It is not my intention to have a detailed look at Stilicho's fall after the army of Italy mutinied at Pavia in 408.<sup>612</sup> Our main source for these events is Zosimus, who does provide some information on the army in the aftermath. While Stilicho gathered the army at Pavia in preparation for dealing with the twin problems of the Rhine crossing and the revolt of Constantine III, news arrived of the death of Arcadius in Constantinople. Leaving aside the wisdom of his planned trip to the east to oversee the installation of Theodosius II, we are told that Stilicho gathered a force of four *Legiones* to escort him.<sup>613</sup> The fact that he was prepared to take such forces away from the army of Italy at a time of crisis would imply that he felt there was sufficient strength left behind to deal with the problems. After Stilicho's execution at Ravenna on the 22 August 408, Zosimus records several interesting points regarding Honorius' dealings with Alaric. We are told that Alaric wanted peace, and that Honorius did not make war or assemble all of his legions.<sup>614</sup> This seems an odd statement as we already know that the army had been gathered together at Pavia. It is also interesting to note the use of the term *Legio* rather than *Numeri*. This has been used both Ridley in his Zosimus translation, and by Blockley in his translation of Olympiodorus. The actual Greek phrase is again *Arithmous*, though on his occasion it has been qualified by the term *Stratopedon*. This might imply a different meaning to the phrase, so army unit might mean a *Legio*, though this far from certain. If this was the case it might imply that there was a difference between the two phrases and that after Faesulae it had been possible to recruit some of the units up to something near full strength, hence the change of terminology.

Zosimus keeps to the same term of *Arithmous* when he describes how Honorius sent five *Legiones* from Dalmatia to Rome, a force totalling 6,000 men. Although he claims they were

---

<sup>612</sup> See Heather (2005), pp. 218-23; Hughes (2010), pp. 202-9.

<sup>613</sup> Sozomen, 9.4; Olympiodorus, 5.2.

<sup>614</sup> Zosimus, 5.36.2.

the finest soldiers in the army and under the command of a *Comes* named Valens, unfortunately this rather small relief force is wiped out with only 100 men surviving.<sup>615</sup> This might imply they were the *Palatinae Legiones* of the *Praesentalis*, and that the army of Italy at one point had moved from Pavia to Dalmatia, (which seems odd if Honorius was still concerned about Constantine III). The *Notitia Dignitatum* does not record any troops stationed in Dalmatia and as Athaulf marched from Pannonia to join Alaric in 409, Zosimus tells us that Honorius did not have a large force to oppose him and ordered all available infantry and cavalry units from various cities to confront Athaulf.<sup>616</sup> There is also a mention of 300 Huns inflicting casualties on Athaulf's forces, killing 1,100 men.<sup>617</sup> The possible positioning of the army of Italy to Dalmatia may have been an attempt to block Alaric. If so, it failed.

It would appear from the above references that elements of the army were stationed in various cities in Italy and the move by Honorius to send further forces to Rome was a continuation of this defensive policy. Two further pieces of evidence need to be considered. Firstly, according to Zosimus, Honorius appointed Generidus *Magister Militum* in Dalmatia, going to the extent of repealing a law that prevented non Romans from holding the post, as Generidus was of barbarian descent.<sup>618</sup> Second, we are then told how Generidus trained the troops and treated them well.<sup>619</sup> The post of *Magister Militum* would not have been used for a provincial force, suggesting it was indeed the army of Italy in Dalmatia. While Zosimus uses the title *Magister Militum*, which was more common in the east than the western *Magister Peditum*, it is obviously referring to a senior military post. Generidus may well have been the *Comes Italiae* or *Comes Illyrici*.<sup>620</sup> Then we have the statement that Generidus remained in Dalmatia training his troops, which would suggest the weakness of the army after the six *Legiones* had been detached and destroyed on route to Rome.

The next point which supports the idea of the weakness of what remained of the army of Italy is the arrival of six *Cohortes* of troops from Constantinople, sent to support Honorius at Ravenna. Two sources mention this event, but with utterly different details. Sozomen does

---

<sup>615</sup> Zosimus, 5.45.1; PLRE (1980), Valens 2, p. 1137.

<sup>616</sup> PLRE (1980), Athaulf, pp. 176-8.

<sup>617</sup> Zosimus, 5.46.6.

<sup>618</sup> CTh.16.5.42.

<sup>619</sup> Zosimus, 5.46.2, 5.46.4, 5.46.45.

<sup>620</sup> PLRE (1980), Generidus, pp. 500-1.

not mention the types of units they were, only giving the figure of 4,000 men, but states they were western reinforcements and not from the eastern empire.<sup>621</sup> Zosimus, however, states they were sent from Constantinople, saying they were supposed to have arrived before the death of Stilicho, and that Honorius used them to man the city's defences as he did not trust his own troops. It must be pointed out that while Ridley translated the unit name as cohort, the Greek text uses the term *Tagmata*.<sup>622</sup>

Before discussing the importance of this piece of evidence we must first consider the use of the term *Tagmata* in Zosimus. *Tagmata* is a Greek term used in Byzantine military manuals rather than a Latin Roman word. It is defined by Dennis in his translation of *Maurice's Strategikon* as a sub-unit of a *Moira* which was 300 men strong.<sup>623</sup> The term is not used in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, not even in the eastern section, so Zosimus' use of it must be briefly considered. Greek writers had used the term to describe Roman formations prior to the fourth century AD, such as Polybius describing the Republican Roman sub-units, the *Manipla* and Cassius Dio when describing a *Legio*. *Tagma* is also linked to the later Roman term of *Ordino*, a sub-unit within *Legio* and *Auxilia Palatina*.<sup>624</sup> It can be argued that Zosimus is less concerned with using accurate Latin terms and more interested in displaying his *Paideia*, so uses the term to show off his knowledge. The other possibility is that as he is believed to be writing in the late fifth or early sixth century, he is merely using the more current terminology of the eastern Roman army, as shown in the *Strategikon*.<sup>625</sup> If this was the case, it would also account for his use of the term *Magister Militum*, which was in use in the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>626</sup> The problem with this interpretation is that the Byzantine *Tagma* is approximately 300 men, and Zosimus states that the six *Tagmata* totalled 4,000 men, making each *Tagma* over 800 men strong. I would suggest that they were under strength *Legiones* and that Zosimus has used contemporary terminology as seen in the *Strategikon*, a late sixth century or possibly early seventh century source.<sup>627</sup> This

---

<sup>621</sup> Sozomen, 9.8.

<sup>622</sup> Zosimus, 6.8.2.

<sup>623</sup> *Strategikon*, 1.3. See Dennis' Glossary, p. 173.

<sup>624</sup> Sophocles (1914), p. 1067.

<sup>625</sup> Ridley (1982), Introduction, p. xii.

<sup>626</sup> Not. Or. v, vi, vii, viii.

<sup>627</sup> Dennis (1984), Introduction, p. xvi.

seems to be the most plausible reason for Zosimus to use the term *Tagmata*, however, it does not explain why he did not use it previously in his work.

The key point is that both Sozomen and Zosimus state these reinforcements totalled 4,000 men. The fact they were needed to man the defences of Ravenna is an indication of the lack of troops in the army of Italy. To this we can add the 6,000 men that had been lost under Valens, and Generidus' training of troops in *Dalmatia* in an attempt to rebuild the army of Italy. Given the lack of faith Honorius showed in the troops in Ravenna prior to the arrival of the reinforcements from Constantinople, it would appear that the army of Italy had ceased to be a functioning force by 410.

Two final observations need to be mentioned concerning the lack of troops in the Italian field army in 410. Prior to the dispatch of Valens from *Dalmatia* with six *Legiones*, the local citizens were armed and drilled for the defence of the city of Rome. This act was dismissed by Alaric who is reported to have said that thicker grass is easier to mow.<sup>628</sup> If this story is correct, then Alaric did not consider some hastily equipped militia to have any significant military value.<sup>629</sup> There was no permanent garrison in Rome and Valens' troops were dispatched to provide one. After their defeat, there were no more troops available to send, or Honorius was unwilling to risk the few that remained. Finally, the last point is an error of omission. The *Notitia Dignitatum* records in Italy twenty-one groups of *Praefectus Sarmatarum Gentilium*, none of whom appear to have played any part in the actions of 410. The lack of any reference to these forces must argue against them being active at this time.<sup>630</sup>

### 7.2.8 Summary of the Background

Before going on to look at the individual units in the next section it is worth reviewing what information we can gather from the preceding discussion. The list for the army of Italy in the *Notitia Dignitatum* could be from three possible dates. The first would be sometime prior to 394, before the battle of Frigidus and the ongoing period of warfare which slowly eroded it. The second possibility is prior to 400, where we have references to some of the senior units

---

<sup>628</sup> Zosimus, 5.40.1-3.

<sup>629</sup> Not. Occ. viii lists six *Fabricae* in Italy, all in the north, so the arms supplied to the militia could not have been of current military issue.

<sup>630</sup> Not. Occ. xl.

providing detachments for the campaign against Gildo. The fact that the units are mentioned and the army was strong enough to provide these forces can be used to argue that the army of Italy was still as strong then as the one listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. There is, however, the counter argument that we have no way of knowing which units, if any, had not been sent to Africa and therefore it is difficult to estimate the overall strength left in Italy. The third and final option is at the time of the campaign against Radagaisus in 406. This depends on how you interpret Zosimus' claim about the thirty *Numeri* being the whole army or the whole army of Italy. If we consider the forces used in the campaigns in Gaul by Constantius from 411, there must have been a sizable Roman force available, but this must be balanced with the almost total lack of units available to combat Alaric in 410.

### **7.3 The units of the Italian field army.**

#### **The Concordia Cemetery.**

Before I look in detail at the various units which are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the army of Italy, it will be necessary to consider another piece of contemporary evidence to help support our textual sources, the inscriptions from Concordia. The site is noted in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as one of the Italian *Fabricae*, a military factory and arsenal, listed under the control of the *Magister Officiorum* and called *Cocordiensis Sagittaria*.<sup>631</sup> The site was discovered in 1873 by Perulli and Bartolini who also found a cemetery which contained nearly two hundred sarcophagi cut in the shape of Petrarch's coffin, similar to those at Arqua and Padua. The site was wrecked by Attila in 452, so was presumably still an important base of arms production and supply at that date. It was later buried by an inundation of the river Tagliamento which raised the ground level by five feet.<sup>632</sup> There are a total of thirty six inscriptions which refer to twenty two different military units named on the sarcophagi, some of which are recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Out of the total number, twenty have the *Seniores/Iuniores* reference added to the title inscription which helps identify the units more precisely.<sup>633</sup> Unfortunately only three of their inscriptions are dated, one to the consulship of Honorius and Arcadius (either 394, 396 or 402), and the

---

<sup>631</sup> Not. Occ. viii.

<sup>632</sup> Lanciani (1895), p. 323.

<sup>633</sup> Tomlin (1972), p. 258.

other two are dated to 409/10 and 426/7. The cemetery has not been preserved in-situ and no record exists of its original layout.<sup>634</sup>

In his analysis of the site, Hoffmann believed that between nine and twelve of the inscriptions related to units in the eastern army brought over by Theodosius I in 394. A further ten inscriptions he identified as being units gathered together prior to this date to fight against Theodosius. These ten western units are:

*Palatinae Vexillationes Comitum Sagittarii Seniores*

*Palatinae Vexillationes Brachiatum Seniores*

*Palatinae Vexillationes Batavi Seniores*

*Comitatenses Vexillationes Equites Catafractarii (Seniores)*

*Comitatenses Vexillationes Octavo Dalmatae*

*Legio Armigeri*

*Auxilia Palatina Eruli Seniores*

*Auxilia Palatina Leones Seniores*

*Auxilia Palatina Sagittarii Nervii*

*Auxilia Palatina Brucri*

Hoffmann goes on to argue that of these the *Vexillationes Batavi Seniores*, *Vexillationes Octavo Dalmatae*, *Leones Seniores* and *Brucri* were later sent to Gaul before the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The *Sagittarii Nervii* were likewise dispatched to Spain. The identification of the *Legio Armigeri* is not clear and Hoffmann suggested they could be either the *Armigeri Defensores Seniores*, listed in Gaul, or one of the two *Armigeri Propugnatores* formations in Africa. Of the remaining two units, the *Comites Sagittarii Seniores* and *Vexillationes Catafractarii*, Hoffmann noted nothing further could be deduced as neither are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>635</sup>

It must be noted that Tomlin does not agree with Hoffman's idea that inscriptions at Concordia represent events for 394. While it cannot be denied that the site was used during that year, it also had been a well-established site prior to then and records an on-

---

<sup>634</sup> Tomlin (1972), p. 269.

<sup>635</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 109. For full details see Hoffmann (1963), pp. 23-57.

going process of activity and military use well into the fifth century. It is of course a source for recording units within the army of Italy, though at different time periods.<sup>636</sup>

### 7.3.1 The *Vexillationes*.

Looking at the *Vexillationes* recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the entry for the army of Italy, the following seven units are shown along with their order of seniority under the *Magister Equitum* listings and their status:<sup>637</sup>

<i>Comites Seniores</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Palatina</i>
<i>Equites Promoti Seniores</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>Palatina</i>
<i>Equites Brachiati Seniores</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Palatina</i>
<i>Equites Cornuti Seniores</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> <i>Palatina</i>
<i>Comites Alani</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> <i>Palatina</i>
<i>Equites Mauri Feroces</i>	8 <sup>th</sup> <i>Comitatenses</i>
<i>Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores</i>	9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> <i>Palatina</i>

The first thing that should be noted is the inclusion of the *Comitatenses* unit *Equites Mauri Feroces* in between the *Palatina* units which run consecutively. The next issue is an apparent error in the *Magister Equitum* register, which is shown below and claims to have ten *Vexillationes Palatinae*, but only lists nine:

---

<sup>636</sup> Tomlin (1972), pp. 269-72.

<sup>637</sup> Not. Occ. vii.



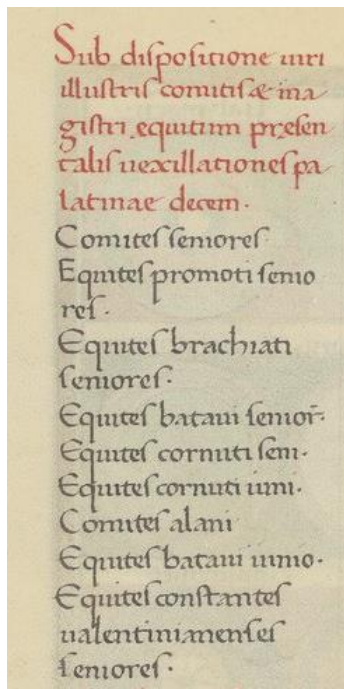


Figure 27: *Magister Equitum* list of *Vexillationes Palatinae* (P).

To compensate for the apparently missing unit, Böcking split the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* into two units, the *Equites Constantes* and the *Valentinianenses Seniores*.<sup>638</sup> He then added these two units to the Italian field army, despite the *Distributio* claiming they are a single unit:

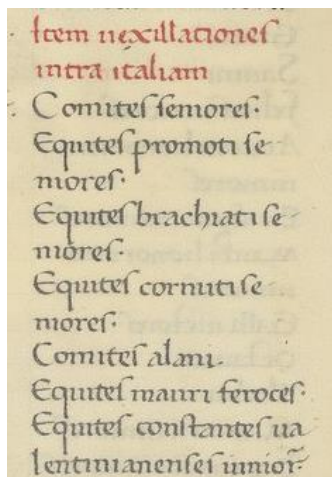


Figure 28: *Distributio* entry for Italy. *Not. Occ. vii* (P).

It should be noted that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* are listed as *Seniores* under the *Magister Equitum*, but as *iuniores* under the army of Italy. In his edition, Seeck decided

<sup>638</sup> Böcking (1839), p. 31.

to include the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* as the missing tenth *Vexillationes Palatina* under the *Magister Equitum* and retained *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores*. While he noted the *Iuniores* in his footnotes, he made no comment on the anomaly.<sup>639</sup> The *Equites Batavi Iuniores* were discussed in some detail in the previous chapter and argued against being the tenth *Vexillationes Palatina*. Somewhat surprisingly, in Jones' analysis, he made no attempt to find the missing tenth unit or discuss the problem. He accepted that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* were one unit, but made no attempt to define if it was the *Seniores* or *Iuniores* unit. For Jones, the name and placement were the most important issue, which he used to suggest that this was a recently created unit, as it appears after a *Vexillationes Comitatus* in the army of Italy, and that this was key for dating the entry. The unit could have been named after Valentinian III, so 425, or the name could suggest a link to Constantius III and his son, born in 419.<sup>640</sup>

It is probably correct to consider the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* as one unit, as splitting it into two creates the problem of a missing shield pattern. Discounting the inclusion of the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores*, who likewise do not have a shield illustrated in the *Vexillationes Palatinae*, we are left with two possibilities. Firstly, the *Magister Equitum* listing that claims ten *Vexillationes Palatinae* is wrong and can be considered a textual error. Secondly, that there were at onetime both an *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* and *Iuniores*, and one unit had been destroyed or removed before the illustrations were completed and the header on the page was not reduced to read nine. If we accept Jones' view that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* were indeed a new unit created in the range 419-425, then we could use this to date the alterations made in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the entry for the army of Italy to the same period.

The problem with that line of reasoning is that we have no way of confirming that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* were named after Valentinian III or Constantius III. If they were, it is hard to see how such a new unit was immediately given *Palatina* status. The *Constantes* part of the name could well relate to Constantine's family. There is an *Equites Constantiani Ferores* in the Gallic field army, and the *Secunda Flavia Constantiniana* under the *Comes Tingitaniae* and *Comes Africae*, so the use of derivatives of the Constantinian

---

<sup>639</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 130.

<sup>640</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

name are not unusual in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It could of course be a variant of *Constans*, for steady or firm, a possible nickname for a good unit, which is why it has been recently promoted to *Palatina* status if it was indeed older than 419.

The position of the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* in the army of Italy, below the *Equites Mauri Feroces*, does not necessarily prove that it was created at a later date. It could indicate a later promotion to *Palatina* status, or more likely, that the unit had been transferred into the army of Italy after the list had been written and so was added at the end.

If we consider some of the other cavalry units in the army of Italy, the first one, which is also the first in the order of precedence in the *Magister Equitum* listing, is the *Comites Seniores*. There is an inscription at Concordia commemorating a member of the *Equites Comites Seniores Sagittariorum*.<sup>641</sup> However, it seems unlikely that these and the *Comites Seniores* are one and the same unit, while the inscriptions are heavily abbreviated the term *Sagit* (which has been expanded to read *Sagittariorum*) there is no reason to add this to *Comites Seniores* title. There is a *Comites Sagittarii Iuniores* listed in the eastern *Praesentalis* along with another unit simply called *Comites Seniores*.<sup>642</sup> There are no *Comites Sagittarii* listings at all in the western army, though there are eight *Vexillationes Comitatus* that have the name *Sagittarii* included in their titles.<sup>643</sup> It seems likely that the *Comites Seniores* and the *Equites Comites Seniores Sagittariorum* at Concordia are two separate units, and that the *Equites Comites Seniores Sagittariorum* were an eastern unit along with the *Comites Sagittarii Iuniores* in the eastern *Praesentalis*. The grave at Concordia can be dated to 394-395 from the battle of Frigidus or just after, when Stilicho retained control of parts of the eastern forces. Other than this there is no other evidence to help us date the Italian *Comites Seniores*, and as a high status unit, their position at the head of the list in Italy is not unusual.

The next unit is the *Equites Promoti Seniores*, listed in second place below the *Comites Seniores* in both the *Magister Equitum* listing and the army of Italy in the *Distributio*. This is a long established unit, its formation dating back to the third century when *Promoti* cavalry

---

<sup>641</sup> Hoffman (1963), pp. 27-8.

<sup>642</sup> Not. Or. v.

<sup>643</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

were part of the *Legiones*, later being separated to form the *Vexillationes Palatinae*.<sup>644</sup> They are in the correct position in both listing, and offer no other clues to dating.

The third unit in both the *Magister Equitum* and army of Italy listings is the *Equites Brachiati Seniores*, which is again a long established unit dating back to Constantine I.<sup>645</sup> There are two inscriptions at Concordia which mention *Brachiati*. The first states *Equites Brachiati Seniores*, though the words are in a different order, the second says *Equites Brachiati*, so could refer to either *Seniores* or *Iuniores*.<sup>646</sup> This does at least prove that the *Brachiati* were at onetime part of the Italian field army as the inscriptions would support the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but provides no further dating information. Again, it is a long established unit and there is nothing unusual in the position it holds in both listings.

The fourth unit in the army of Italy and the fifth in the *Magister Equitum* listing is the *Equites Cornuti Seniores*. They are also listed in the Gallic army as well, but there is no listing anywhere for the *Equites Cornuti Iuniores*, so it would appear that one or other of the *Seniores* listings is an error and should read *Iuniores*. This is what Seeck believed, and suggested the entry in Gaul should be the *Iuniores*, leaving the *Equites Cornuti Seniores* in the army of Italy.<sup>647</sup> Alternatively, as discussed in the chapter on the army of Gaul, it is possible that the duplication has occurred because the unit was transferred from one command to the other and not deleted from its original position.

The fifth unit in the army of Italy is the *Comites Alani*, who are listed seventh under the *Magister Equitum*. There is nothing to note about this unit except that it was probably originally raised from Alans, and there are examples of settled Sarmatians, who the Alans are associated with, in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>648</sup> It is unlikely that this unit has anything to do with the various Alan *Foederatii* mentioned at the battles of Pollentia and Verona, for as an elite *Palatina* unit, they would have been reliable troops, not like the rash behaviour alleged to those Alan allies.

---

<sup>644</sup> Barker (1981), p. 13.

<sup>645</sup> Barker (1981), p. 13.

<sup>646</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp. 28-9.

<sup>647</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 140.

<sup>648</sup> Not. Occ. xl.

The next unit is the seemingly out of position *Equites Mauri Feroces*, who are listed sixth in the army of Italy and eighth in the *Comitatenses* section under the *Magister Equitum*. Like the title *Alani* above, the *Mauri* here probably refers to the unit being originally recruited from non-Romans, in this case Moorish tribes in North Africa. The name *Mauri* may also have come to represent a style of unit, at least in the cavalry, for skirmishing javelin armed troops.<sup>649</sup> However, there is also recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* one other *Comitatenses* *Vexillationes*, four *Auxilia Palatina*, one *Legio Comitatensis* and a *Pseudocomitatenses* that all have the name *Mauri*, which would imply that the term *Mauri* refers to the areas the units were recruited from rather than the tactical use of the troops.<sup>650</sup> The position of the *Equites Mauri Feroces* above the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores*, as discussed above, could indicate the latter were recently promoted to *Palatina* status, or transferred to the army of Italy after the *Equites Mauri Feroces*. It seems more probable that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* were transferred at a later date, as updating the illustrations in the *Magister Equitum* listings would have taken a lot more work, and they appear in the correct place in those illustrations. Adding them to the end of the written section of the *Distributio* would have been easy to do.



Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores in 9<sup>th</sup> place above Equites Mauri Feroces

<sup>649</sup> Barker (1981), p. 75.

<sup>650</sup> Not. Occ. vii. *Equites Mauri Alites* in Gaul, *Mauri Tonantes Seniores* and *Iuniores* in Tingitania, *Mauri Honoriani Seniores* in Illyricum, *Mauri Honoriani Iuniores* in Italy, *Mauri Osismiacci* in Gaul and *Mauri Cetrati* in Illyricum.

Figure 29: *Magister Equitum* cover sheet *Not. Occ. vi* (P).

Before considering what we can draw from the Italian *Vexillationes* it is worth looking at the other cavalry units that are recorded at Concordia but are not listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as being in the army of Italy:<sup>651</sup>

<i>Schola Armaturarum Seniorum</i>	Listed under the <i>Magister Officiorum</i>
<i>Equites Batavi Seniores</i>	Listed in the Gallic field army
<i>Equites Catafractarii Seniores</i>	No listing
<i>Equites Octo Dalmatae</i>	Listed in the Gallic field army

While it is not surprising to see an elite *Schola* guard unit with the *Praesentalis*, the other three need a little explanation. As discussed in the chapter on the Gallic field army, the *Equites Batavi Seniores* were probably at one time a permanent fixture in the Italian field army and their unusual position in the Gallic field army can be explained as a later reinforcement to that army. This line of reasoning can be extended to the *Equites Octo Dalmatae*, who were presumably originally raised in Dalmatia, transferred to Italy, and then on to the Gallic field army.

The *Equites Catafractarii Seniores* are more problematic. There are no *Catafractarii* units listed under the *Magister Equitum*, though in the *Distributio* there is an *Equites Catafractarii Iuniores* listed under the *Comes Britanniarum*.<sup>652</sup> There is also a listing for a simply named *Equites Catafractarii* in the eastern *Praesentalis*.<sup>653</sup> We know from Ammianus' description of the battle of Strasburg in 357 that there was a *Catafractarii* unit in Julian's *Praesentalis*, but by the time that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drafted they were no longer a part of the *Praesentalis*.<sup>654</sup> This then could suggest two dates for a unit of *Catafractarii* at Concordia. Firstly, at some point prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum* when such a western unit still existed, or secondly, after the battle of Frigidus in 394. The second date is based on the assumption that the *Catafractarii* unit at Concordia was the one from the eastern *Praesentalis* and remained under Stilicho's command in the aftermath of the battle. It seems more likely that as the inscription explicitly states *Equites Catafractarii Seniores*, this

<sup>651</sup> Hoffmann (1973), p. 109.

<sup>652</sup> *Not. Occ. vii*.

<sup>653</sup> *Not. Or. v*.

<sup>654</sup> *Amm. 16.12.38*.

would refer to a western unit, the twin to the *Equites Catafractarii Iuniores* in Britain, rather than to the eastern unit, and so would date sometime prior to 394. It is reasonable to suggest that the unit was no longer in existence before Frigidus, as if it had been destroyed at that battle we would expect more burial inscriptions for them at Concordia. All we can say is that sometime between Strasbourg in 357 and prior to Frigidus in 394, the unit ceased to be active and that is why it is no longer recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

From the cavalry evidence above we have a possible date ranges for the entry of the army of Italy from 394-425, with two points of interest, 419-425 suggested by Jones and 394-5 put forward by Hoffmann. Jones' argument rests on identifying the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* as a new unit formed at that later date and its position at the end of the *Magister Equitum* listing therefore fixes that date as the last time the list was amended. If we accept the idea that the list was kept up to date then this might well be true. However, there is nothing to suggest that this was the case, or what had happened to units already recorded in the *Distributio* from an earlier date. All we can say is that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* were added to an existing list around 419. While Hoffmann does not directly argue the date of the Italian field army as 394, his analysis of Concordia suggests this as the most likely (though debated) date for the relevant inscriptions there. The similarity to the listings within the *Notitia Dignitatum* do help link them to the army of Italy. As there are relatively few graves at Concordia, they cannot represent casualties from the battle, but rather evidence that the site was used by some of these units at that time. From this small sample of units in the *Distributio* it would seem most likely that the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows the army of Italy prior to the battle of Frigidus in 394 and the collecting together of eastern and western forces in northern Italy at that time can be seen at Concordia. The inclusion of the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses* shows a later addition to a list that has not been amended to take into account the losses incurred at Frigidus with the possible destruction of many of these units.

### **7.3.2 Legiones Palatina**

The following *Legiones Palatinae* are assigned to the army of Italy and their positions under the *Magister Peditum* are shown:

<i>Ioviani Seniores</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Herculiani Seniores</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Divitenses Seniores</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Tungrecai Seniores</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Pannonici Seniores</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Moesiaci Seniores</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Octavani</i>	9 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Thebaei</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>

The first point that needs to be observed is the slight difference between this army and the two *Praesentalis* armies in the east.<sup>655</sup> The two eastern formations contain six *Legiones Palatinae* and the first six units of the Italian field army show the first six *Legiones Palatinae* in the *Magister Peditum* listings. This would suggest that this was the original structure of the army. As discussed later when looking at the *Octavani* and *Thebaei*, these units appear to have been recently promoted to *Palatina* status and attached to the army at a later date. One possible date for this would have been just prior to the battle of Frigidus with a build-up of western forces to oppose Theodosius. Another possibility would be in the rebuilding of the army during the period 402-6.

If we now look at the individual units, the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani Seniores* are the two most senior western *Legiones* and date back to the Tetrarchy. Vegetius tells us that there were in *Illyricum* two 6,000 men strong legions that were called *Mattiobarbuli* after their skill with this lead-weighted throwing dart. When Diocletian and Maximian came to power, they renamed them as *Legio Ioviani* and *Herculiani* in recognition of their valour and preferred them to all other *Legiones*.<sup>656</sup> They are not mentioned by Ammianus as being with Julian at Strasburg in 357, which probably means they were either in the army of Italy with the *Magister Peditum* Barbatio, or possibly in the other *Praesentalis* army with Constantius II. Ammianus does refer to tribunes of both these *Legiones* being involved in hearing trials against supporters of Constantius after his death, which would suggest that Julian trusted

---

<sup>655</sup> Not. Or. iv, v.

<sup>656</sup> Vegetius. 1.17.



them and had confidence in their loyalty.<sup>657</sup> They had presumably joined him on his march east to confront Constantius. Ammianus goes on to mention both units together in Julian's eastern campaign against the Sassanid Persians where they are recorded fighting off an elephant and *Catafractarii* attack.<sup>658</sup> Claudian mentions both of them forming a part of the expedition force sent to confront Gildo in Africa (398), being trusted this time by Stilicho to take on a difficult operation.<sup>659</sup> Our final reference is from Concordia with a grave inscription for a member of the *Ioviani*, though it does not say if they are *Seniores* or *Iuniores* (the *Ioviani Iuniores* being the second most senior *Legio* in the eastern *Praesentalis* army).<sup>660</sup> All we can say for certain is that a unit of *Ioviani* was at onetime at Concordia, and the balance of probability suggests that it was the western unit.

The *Divitenses Seniores* and *Tungrecani Seniores* are also an established pair which were brigaded together like the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani*. Ammianus makes three references to units with similar names. The first is in the east in 365 under the command of Valens, so presumably they formed part of the eastern *Praesentalis* army. The names used by Ammianus are the *Divitenses* and the *Tungrecani Iuniores* and this is one of the few occasions that he uses the title *Iuniores*, which makes it strange that he did not attach any title to the *Divitenses* and only the *Tungrecani*.<sup>661</sup> No units with these exact names appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum* listings for the eastern *Praesentalis* army, though there is a *Divitenses Gallicani* listed under the *Magister Militum per Thracias*.<sup>662</sup> Ammianus then records the *Divitenses* acting on their own, having changed allegiance from Valens to the usurper Procopius.<sup>663</sup> There is no *Seniores/Iuniores* attachment to the *Divitenses* again in this second reference. The final reference made by Ammianus is in the west also in 365, where he records the *Divitenses* and *Tungrecani* operating together under the command of Charietto, *Comes* of both Germanies, against some Alamanni.<sup>664</sup> Tomlin believed that the

---

<sup>657</sup> Amm. 22.3.2.

<sup>658</sup> Amm.25.6.2

<sup>659</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-423.

<sup>660</sup> Hoffmann (1963), p.33. Not.Or. IV.

<sup>661</sup> Amm. 26.6.12.

<sup>662</sup> Not.Or. IV. V. & VII.

<sup>663</sup> Amm. 26.7.14.

<sup>664</sup> Amm. 27.1.2.

*Divitenses* were descended from the *Legio II Italica* 'of the *Divitenses*' from Marcus Aurelius and the *Tungrecani* from the garrison of *Civitas Tungrorum*.<sup>665</sup>

The next pair of *Legiones* are the *Pannoniciani Seniores* and the *Moesiaci Seniores* whose formation again dates back to the Tetrarchy. Hoffmann believed these to be a brigaded pair of *Legiones* like the ones above, basing this on a statement by Ammianus.<sup>666</sup> This has been called into question by Wood who argues that Ammianus only refers to a *Legio* named *Pannoniciani* and another called *Moesiaci*, neither of which has a *Seniores* added to their title so they cannot be clearly identified. Wood also points out that the pair acted independently of each other in an engagement in 374 where Ammianus reports that if they had acted together they would have been victorious but the Sarmatians first attacked the *Moesiaci* and killed many, then broke the line of the *Pannoniciani* and would have annihilated them if they had not made a speedy flight.<sup>667</sup> Wood's argument is based on the idea that when Ammianus mentions other *Palatinae Legiones*, he includes the full title as they appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but this is not always true. He cites the example discussed above for the *Divitenses* and the *Tungrecani Iuniores*, but as we have seen, this only refers to *Tungrecani Iuniores* and gives no designation for the *Divitenses*.<sup>668</sup> It must be noted that Ammianus often omits the *Seniores/Iuniores* part of a unit's title, as he does when discussing the expedition to Britain in 367 under *Comes* Theodosius. Here Ammianus lists four units by name, the *Batavi*, *Heruli*, *Iovii* and *Victores*.<sup>669</sup> All of these *Auxilia Palatina* units can be identified in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the Italian field army, and all of them are titled *Seniores*, which Ammianus has omitted.<sup>670</sup>

Returning to the point that the *Pannoniciani* and *Moesiaci* appear to have not operated well together in their defeat in 374, it must be pointed out that Theodosius the Younger is mentioned as the general in charge as the *Dux Moesia*, a command that is recorded in the *Oriens* section in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>671</sup> We would hardly expect Ammianus to blame the current ruling emperor for the disaster, so it is easier to blame the mistake on the units

---

<sup>665</sup> Tomlin (2008), p. 155.

<sup>666</sup> Hoffmann (1969), p. 433.

<sup>667</sup> Amm. 29.6.13-14; Wood DIR, Theodosius I, fn. 8.

<sup>668</sup> Amm. 26.6.12.

<sup>669</sup> Amm. 27.8.7.

<sup>670</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>671</sup> Amm. 29.6.15.

themselves. While they do appear to have been a brigaded pair, it must be acknowledged that when necessary they did operate individually. An expedition sent to Britain by Julian in 360 had two *Numeri of Moesiaci* included in the force.<sup>672</sup>

The final pair of *Legiones Palatinae* in the Italian army, the *Octavani* and *Thebaei*, are somewhat unusual. While they are listed as ninth and tenth under the *Magister Peditum* as *Palatina*, in the *Distributio* for the army of Italy they are listed after the *Auxilia Palatina* and at the head of the list of *Legiones Comitatusenses*. This led Jones to suggest that they were possibly recent promotions from the *Comitatusenses* to *Palatina*. This, however, would argue against his suggestion that the *Distributio* is more up to date than the *Magister Peditum* listings. As they are both recorded correctly along with their shield patterns under the *Magister Peditum*, this would suggest that in this instance, the *Distributio* has not been updated. Aware of the contradiction, Jones further suggested that both lists were drawn up at the same time, and the *Distributio* did show signs of being updated. This is because the two lists were kept for different reasons. That of the *Magistri* showing seniority of units and the *Distributio* showing strengths of army units based on returns for commanders.<sup>673</sup>

Our analysis of the individual *Legiones Palatinae* does not appear to have provided any conclusive dating evidence for the army of Italy. The most interesting aspect is the two recently promoted units. The *Notitia Dignitatum* records twelve *Legiones Palatinae* in the east and twelve in the west, of the eastern units, there are six apiece in the two eastern *Praesentalis*. It would appear that originally there were six in the Italian field army, which are still recorded there as the first six units. But there is no reference to the other original six western units, only their replacements. The key question is why these units have not been re-built and shown in the listings? It is interesting to note that among the eastern *Legiones Palatinae* in the *Praesentalis*, Ammianus mentions both the *Lanciararii* and *Mattiararii* at Adrianople in 378, with whom Valens made his last stand.<sup>674</sup> Both units must have suffered greatly in the battle, possibly being destroyed, yet have been re-built and appear in the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as senior *Legiones*. If we accept the eastern *Praesentalis* as a model for the two main western field armies of Italy and Gaul, then we

---

<sup>672</sup> Amm. 20.1.3.

<sup>673</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352.

<sup>674</sup> Amm. 31.13.8.

would expect to find the other six original *Legiones Palatinae* being stationed in Gaul prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The most likely reason why the original ‘missing’ western *Legiones* have not been re-built, merely replaced, might be that they sided with the western usurper Magnus Maximus and fought at the battle of Save in 388. It is interesting to note that four out of the first six *Legiones Palatinae* listed in the army of Italy, the *Divitenses*, *Tungrecani*, *Pannoniciani* and *Moesiaci* are all designated as *Seniores* and there is no listing for any western *Iuniores* equivalents. These may well have been four of the missing original *Legiones Palatinae* who were destroyed or disbanded after 388, so this occurred prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and before their replacements had been upgraded to *Palatina* status. The most likely dates for this would have been either prior to the battle of Frigidus in 394 or in the aftermath when Stilicho re-built the army. This is reflected in the listing for the Italian field army with the *Octavani* and *Thebaei* added to the *Magister Peditum* listings for *Legiones Palatinae* despite them being shown in the *Distributio* after the *Auxilia Palatina*.<sup>675</sup>

### 7.3.3 *Auxilia Palatina*

The following *Auxilia Palatina* units are listed in the *Distributio* for the army of Italy along with their position under the *Magister Peditum*:

<i>Cornuti Seniores</i>	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Brachiati Seniores</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Petulantes Seniores</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Celtae Seniores</i>	4 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Heruli Seniores</i>	5 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Batavi Seniores</i>	6 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Mattiaci Seniores</i>	Not Listed. <i>Mattiaci Iuniores</i> are listed 7 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Iovii Seniores</i>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Victores Seniores</i>	Not Listed. <i>Victores Iuniores</i> are listed 27 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Cornuti Iuniores</i>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Leones Iuniores</i>	14 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Exculcatores Seniores</i>	15 <sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>675</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

<i>Grati</i>	21 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Sabini</i>	38 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Felices Iuniores</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores</i>	43 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Brisigavi Iuniores</i>	48 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Mauri Honoriani Iuniores</i>	50 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Galli Victores</i>	57 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Gratianenses Iuniores</i>	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Marcomanni</i>	Not Listed. Could be <i>Honoriani Marcomanni</i> see below.

This gives us a total of twenty-one units, the largest single grouping of the *Auxilia Palatina* units in the whole *Notitia Dignitatum*. The two eastern *Praesentalis* armies have eighteen and seventeen respectively, while the Gallic field army also has seventeen.<sup>676</sup>

The formation of the *Auxilia Palatina* dates back to the Tetrarchic period and they appear to have formed a major part of the western *Comitatenses* under Maximian and Constantius Chlorus, and then expanded under Constantine.<sup>677</sup>

If we look at the first two units, the *Cornuti Seniores* and *Brachiati Seniores*, these often appear as a brigaded pair. Ammianus records them as being part of the army controlled by Silvanus, who is often referred to as *Magister Peditum*, though Ammianus uses the title *Pedestris Militae*, in 355. The *Cornuti Seniores* and *Brachiati Seniores* in this instance are described as being easily swayed with a bribe to help deal with Silvanus' revolt. While obviously senior units, ranked first and second in the *Magister Peditum* listings, this episode must call into question their reliability. The *Cornuti* are mentioned again in 357 being sent on special operations across the Rhine and being with the *Brachiati* in the front line of the battle of Strasbourg.<sup>678</sup> The final mention by Ammianus is in 377 in Thrace, where the *Cornuti* along with other unnamed troops were attacked by Goths, but these may well have been the eastern *Cornuti* assigned to the eastern *Praesentalis* army.<sup>679</sup>

---

<sup>676</sup> Not. Or. iv, v; Not. Occ. vii.

<sup>677</sup> Speidel (1996), pp. 163-70 on formation, and pp. 167-8 on *Cornuti*.

<sup>678</sup> Amm. 16.11.9, 16.12.42.

<sup>679</sup> Amm. 31.8.9; Not. Or. v.

There is an inscription at Concordia which mentions the *Brachiati*, but it is not certain if this refers to the *Seniores* or *Iuniores*. As discussed in the chapter on the Gallic army, the unit there simply titled *Brachiati* could be the *Brachiati Iuniores* or the *Brachiati Salii*.<sup>680</sup> While it is quite possible that the inscription at Concordia does indeed relate to the *Brachiati Seniores* of the Italian field army because of Concordia's location in northern Italy, this does not preclude it from referring to the unit in the Gallic field army, which at one time may also have been in the Italian field army.

The next pair of units, the *Petulantes Seniores* and the *Celtae Seniores*, are also long established as well as being a brigaded pair. Ammianus made six references to both units and always as being together. There are three references to them in 360, one being for the reinforcements requested by Constantius after the fall of Amida and two further times when Julian is acclaimed Emperor.<sup>681</sup> In 361 they were routed in one of these raids, and in 378 they successfully defeated another raid on their own, but appear to have suffered heavy losses.<sup>682</sup> However, Ammianus' most scathing comment relates to Antioch in 362 where he complains of the conduct of troops gorging themselves on sacrificial meat and drink and having to be carried back to their quarters. Most conspicuous amongst these troops were the *Petulantes Seniores* and *Celtae Seniores*, whose indiscipline passed all bounds.<sup>683</sup> Ammianus' displeasure with this pair must be because of their supposedly elite status, a status borne out because of Constantius' request to have them transferred to his command after the fall of Amida. This elite status can be questioned in the light of their poor behaviour in Antioch and their support in proclaiming Julian emperor. They were presumably present at Strasbourg in 357, but are not mentioned.

The *Heruli Seniores* and *Batavi Seniores* form another well-established brigaded pair. Ammianus makes four references to this pair and an additional one to just the *Batavi*. To this we can add seven inscriptions for the *Batavi Seniores* along with three for the *Heruli Seniores* and one plain *Heruli* at Concordia. Both units along with elements of the *Moesiaci Seniores* were taken to Britain by Lupicinus as a special task force in 360. In his description, Ammianus noted that the *Heruli Seniores* and *Batavi Seniores* were light armed auxiliaries,

---

<sup>680</sup> Hoffmann (1963), p. 33.

<sup>681</sup> Amm. 20.4.2., 20.4.20, 20.5.9.

<sup>682</sup> Amm. 21.3.2, 31.10.4.

<sup>683</sup> Amm. 22.12.6.

which indicates the adaptable nature of *Auxilia Palatina* units.<sup>684</sup> They are mentioned along with the *Petulantes Seniores* and *Celtae Seniores* as reinforcements requested by Constantius later in 360.<sup>685</sup> In 365 they formed part of a force commanded by Charietto, *Comes* of *Germaniae Primae* and *Secundae*, sent to deal with a raid by Alamanic tribes into Gaul. During this engagement Charietto was killed and the *Heruli Seniores* and *Batavi Seniores* lost their standards, though they managed to recapture them after a hard struggle.<sup>686</sup> The last joint reference to both units is in 367 when they formed part of another expeditionary force to Britain. They were joined by the *Iovii* and *Victores*, also *Auxilia Palatina*, under the command of *Comes* Theodosius.<sup>687</sup> The only other reference in Ammianus is to the *Batavi Seniores* alone, at the battle of Strasburg in 357. In this battle the *Cornuti Seniores* and *Brachiati Seniores* resisted the initial charge of the Alamanni and the *Batavi* and *Regii* came to their aid.<sup>688</sup> This does not necessarily mean that on this occasion the *Batavi Seniores* were not brigaded with the *Heruli Seniores*, who might reasonably have been involved in fighting in the front line, but that the *Batavi* were able to be moved to where the fighting was most intense, which is the impression that Ammianus gives us. As noted above there are also seven inscriptions for the *Batavi Seniores*, three for the *Heruli Seniores* and one simply named *Heruli* at Concordia.<sup>689</sup> These represent the largest group of inscriptions from Concordia as the majority only name one-off units. This would imply that these two units had a long association with the army of Italy. Since Ammianus records them operating in the *Praesentalis* army in Gaul, and presumably being detached from this for special duties (such as to Britain or Germany), the high concentration of inscriptions at Concordia must argue that after 367 they were deployed in Italy where the *Notitia Dignitatum* records them.

Following on in the army of Italy we have the *Mattiaci Seniores*, who are a little more problematical. Under the *Magister Peditum* Listings there is an entry for the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* which is listed just above the *Mattiaci Iuniores* who are in seventh place in that list. Unfortunately the illustrations in the *Magister Peditum*'s list only show the following:

---

<sup>684</sup> Amm. 20.1.3.

<sup>685</sup> Amm. 20.4.2.

<sup>686</sup> Amm. 27.1.6.

<sup>687</sup> Amm. 27.8.7.

<sup>688</sup> Amm. 16.12.45.

<sup>689</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp. 38-44.



Figure 30: The *Batavi* and *Mattiaci* (P).

In his edition, Böcking did not list the *Mattiaci Seniores* in the *Magister Peditum* list, though he did reduce the entry for the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* to just read '*Batavi Seniores*'. However, he did include the *Mattiaci Seniores* in the *Distributio* for the army of Italy.<sup>690</sup> Otto Seeck also removed the *Magister Peditum* entry for the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* and inserted a new entry, for the *Mattiaci Seniores*, between the *Batavi Seniores* and the *Mattiaci Iuniores*.<sup>691</sup> As can be seen in the figure above, the shields of the *Mattiaci* and the following *Ascarii Seniores* are very similar, and the *Ascarii Seniores* could have been mislabelled and should be the *Mattiaci Iuniores*. It should again be noted, that even though the *Magister Peditum*'s list states there are 65 units of *Auxilia Palatina*, only 63 are listed and there are only 62 shield illustrations, which suggests that such errors may have occurred.

We also have inscriptions from Concordia. There are two which relate to the *Mattiaci Seniores* and another two which mention the *Mattiaci Iuniores*, proving that both units existed.<sup>692</sup> This said, it must be pointed out that these two units also appear in the eastern *Praesentalis* armies. It is quite possible, as Hoffmann suggests though disputed by Tomlin, that these inscriptions could relate to the eastern units which formed part of Theodosius' army in 394 at the battle of Frigidus.<sup>693</sup>

The next two units in the Italian list of *Auxilia Palatina*, the *Iovii Seniores* and *Victores Seniores*, also appear to be a brigade pair. Ammianus records them coming to the aid of the *Ioviani Seniores* and *Herculiani Seniores* while they were engaged in fighting Persian elephants in 363. However, in this instance Ammianus refers to them as *Legiones* rather than as *Auxilia Palatina*.<sup>694</sup> They are recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as *Auxilia Palatina*

<sup>690</sup> Böcking (1839); Not.Occ. p.24 & p.33.

<sup>691</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 122

<sup>692</sup> Hoffman (1963), pp. 44-5.

<sup>693</sup> Not. Or. iv, v. See Tomlin (1996), pp. 253-78.

<sup>694</sup> Amm. 25.6.3.



and most modern scholars consider this to have been an error by Ammianus, as he did not always distinguish between *Legio*, *Auxilia* and *Comitatenses*.<sup>695</sup> This can be highlighted when he makes his second reference to the *Iovii* and *Victores* in 365, when they assault an enemy camp. In the Loeb translation by Rolfe they are again called *Legiones*, though the actual term used by Ammianus is '*agmina duo*', which might just mean two groups.<sup>696</sup> Ammianus has one final reference, where the *Iovii* and *Victores* join the *Batavi* and *Heruli* for an expedition to Britain in 367, which would suggest that they were indeed *Auxilia Palatina*, just like the *Batavi* and *Heruli* discussed above.

It should also be noted that while the *Iovii Seniores* appear under the *Magister Peditum's* listing, the *Victores Seniores* are missing, and only appear in the *Distributio* for the army of Italy. Böcking and Seeck offer no explanation for this anomaly, and while Jones does note it, he also does not comment on it. This omission by Jones is unusual, because he argues that the *Distributio* is more reliable than the *Magistri* listings.<sup>697</sup> Since the *Victores Seniores* existed prior to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, as noted in Ammianus above, their inclusion in the *Distributio* looks like an error. We would expect to find an older unit recorded in the *Magistri* listing, but missing from the *Distributio*, if that unit had been deleted at a later date. As there is no shield illustration or listing for them under the *Magister Peditum* we would assume they had been deleted prior to the drafting of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. As the shield illustrations must have taken time to produce, it is unlikely that these would be amended at a later date. The *Victores Seniores* appear between the *Iovii Seniores* and *Cornuti Seniores* in the army of Italy, there is no corresponding gap in the shield illustrations, though it is conceivable that the *Victores Seniores* are one of the missing shield designs, this would not explain why they are not listed under the *Magister Peditum*.

Next are the *Cornuti Iuniores*, who do not appear to be twinned with any other unit. If they had been, we would probably expect them to be paired with the *Brachiati Iuniores*, like their *Seniores* counterparts. However, the *Brachiati Iuniores* are listed in the Gallic field army and also appear much lower in the order of precedence in the *Magister Peditum* listings, some 28 places lower and are not illustrated in the *Magistri* listing. From the available evidence,

---

<sup>695</sup> Boeft, Drijvers, Hengst and Teitler (2005), p. 201.

<sup>696</sup> Amm. 26.7.13; Boeft, Drijvers, Hengst and Teitler (2006), p. 205.

<sup>697</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352.

the *Cornuti Iuniores* therefore appear to be a stand-alone unit. While there is later evidence of an eastern unit called the *Cornuti Iuniores* in an inscription at Constantinople, we have no other details concerning the western unit.<sup>698</sup>

The *Leones Iuniores* appear next in the listings in the Italian field army. They do not appear to form part of a brigaded pair, but were probably at one time grouped with the *Leones Seniores* who appear one place above them in the *Magister Peditum* listings. This is hinted at by two of the inscriptions at Concordia which mentions the *Leones Seniores*, who were therefore at one time operating with the army of Italy.<sup>699</sup> Claudian makes reference to a unit called *Leones* amongst the troops sent by Stilicho to combat Gildo in 398.<sup>700</sup> It should be noted that Claudian does not state if they were the *Leones Seniores* or *Iuniores*, either of which would have been available. In his assessment Gibbon referred to these units as being Gallic veterans who had recently fought for Eugenius against Theodosius at Frigidus.<sup>701</sup> He does not, unfortunately, go on to explain why he believed they were Gallic veterans. If the inscriptions at Concordia do relate to the *Leones Seniores*, and could be dated to the immediate aftermath of Frigidus, then the *Notitia Dignitatum* could then show the *Leones Seniores* returned to their usual posting in the Gallic field army.

Following on from the *Leones Iuniores* in both the *Magister Peditum* listing and the army of Italy are the *Exculcatores Seniores*. This unit along with the following three in the *Magister Peditum* listings, including the *Exculcatores Iuniores*, are not illustrated. This might indicate that they were raised after the drawings had been commissioned, but as they all appear to be quite senior units due to their relatively high positions, this seems unlikely. The *Exculcatores Seniores* may once have been brigaded with the *Exculcatores Iuniores*, who have since been dispatched to Spain in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The name *Exculcatores* is linked with light troops which according to Vegetius are used to rush out from the main battle line.<sup>702</sup>

The next two units are the *Grati* and *Sabini*, who follow each other in the army of Italy, but are separated by some distance in the *Magister Peditum* listings, being 21<sup>st</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup>. It is

---

<sup>698</sup> EDH. AE1907.

<sup>699</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp. 46-7.

<sup>700</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 423.

<sup>701</sup> Gibbon (1854), vol. iv, p. 18.

<sup>702</sup> Vegetius, 2.15. See Rance (2014) for the etymology of the name.

quite possible that the *Grati* are named after the Emperor Gratian (367-383), or the title could be based on the Latin term for grateful or favoured. Since there is a unit titled *Gratianenses Seniores* three places below them on the *Magister Peditum* listing and the *Gratianenses Iuniores* eleven places lower, it would seem unlikely that the *Grati* are named after Gratian. The *Grati* and *Sabini* appear unusual among the lists of *Auxilia Palatina* in not having any *Seniores/Iuniores* title added to their names, so were presumably raised as one-off units after the split occurred. The *Sabini* are listed in the army of Italy as *Savini*, but as there is no corresponding entry in the *Magistri* listings, it is assumed this refers to the *Sabini*.<sup>703</sup>

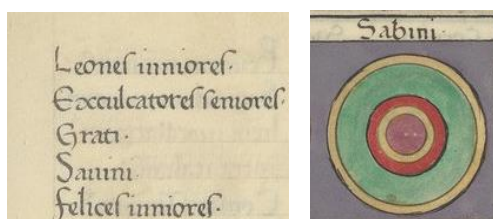


Figure 31: The *Savini* in the *Distributio* and *Sabini* in the *Magistri* listing (P).

The *Felices Iuniores* follow the *Sabini* in the army of Italy, although and as noted above, the *Sabini* are much lower in the *Magistri* listings, 38<sup>th</sup> by contrast with the *Felices Iuniores* who are 23<sup>rd</sup>. This may indicate that all those units that follow on from the *Sabini* represent later additions to the army of Italy after the *Distributio* was first drafted. In the *Magister Peditum* listings the *Grati* are followed by the *Felices Seniores* (who are under the *Comes Hispaniarum*) and then the *Felices Iuniores*. As discussed in the chapter on Spain, if the units there were drawn together as a one-off temporary field army in 410, then the position of the *Sabini* in the army of Italy might be dated to then, if they were added to the Italian army as a replacement for the missing *Felices Seniores*. The *Felices Iuniores* appear above the *Gratianenses Seniores*, so presumably were added before them, sometime before 367.

The *Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores* appear next in the army of Italy and 43<sup>rd</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings. They are below their twin, the *Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* (who are in the Gallic field army) by three places in the *Magistri listings*, separated by the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* and *Iuniores*. This group of four *Auxilia Palatina* units are the first ones in the listings to include the title *Honoriani* and are presumably named after the

<sup>703</sup> Böcking (1839); Not. Occ. p. 33.

Emperor Honorius. These can reasonably be dated to the earlier part of Honorius' reign, which could have been as early as 395, being raised to help fill the ranks of the depleted western army after the battle of Frigidus. It should also be noted that both *Atecotti* and *Marcomanni* relate to tribal names from beyond the empire, which might also support the idea they were raised after Frigidus, hence the need to draw recruits from outside.<sup>704</sup> This could be linked to the recruitment drive by Stilicho from 396 onwards.

The fact that the *Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* have been separated from the *Iuniores* would suggest that the *Magister Peditum* listing has been drawn up after 395 and most likely to have been at some point either during Stilicho's tour of the west, or Constantius' reconquest of Gaul in 411. Claudian commented on Stilicho's new army in his panegyric of 398, and we would expect that these units were involved with the fighting with the *Praesentalis* against Alaric in Greece and Italy (397-398 and 401-402).<sup>705</sup> Therefore the removal of the *Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* to Gaul probably have occurred at or soon after 411.

The next unit listed in the army of Italy is the *Brisigavi Iuniores*, who along with their twin, the *Brisigavi Seniores*, are placed below the *Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores* and just above another pair of 'Honorian' units, the *Mauri Honoriani Seniores* and *Iuniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listings. It should be noted that the *Brisigavi Iuniores* are not listed in the (P) copy of the *Magister Peditum* listings:

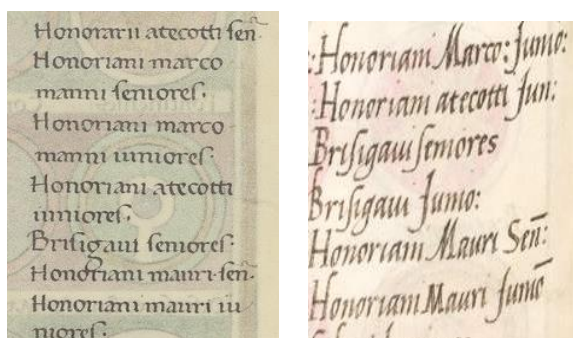


Figure 32: *Magister Peditum* listing showing (P) on the left without *Brisigavi Iuniores* and (M) on the right which includes them.

<sup>704</sup> Amm. 27.8.5. Records the *Atecotti* along with Picts raiding Roman Britain in 368.

<sup>705</sup> Claudian, *Fourth Consulship of Honorius*, 460.

This is further complicated by the fact that they do appear in the accompanying illustrations at the start of the *Magister Peditum* listing in (P) and (M).

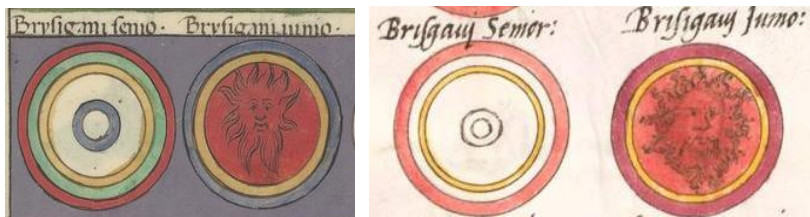


Figure 33: The *Brisigavi Seniores* and the *Brisigavi Iuniores* in (P) and (M).

Both Böcking and Seeck included the *Brisigavi Iuniores* in their versions of the *Magister Peditum* listing, and the presence of the shield illustration would support this inclusion, suggesting that there was a textual error in the Paris edition.<sup>706</sup> This can be further supported by the fact that this unit has have been included in the *Distributio* under the Italian field army.

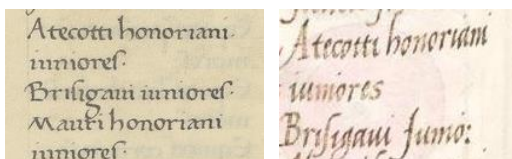


Figure 34: Showing the *Brisigavi Iuniores* in the *Distributio* in (P) and (M).

Since both manuscripts (M) and (O) include the *Brisigavi Iuniores*, the omission in (P) looks like a clerical error. If this was not the case, and the *Brisigavi Iuniores* had been deleted, then removing the shield illustration would have been problematical, but this does not account for their inclusion in the *Distributio*.

The next Italian unit listed is the *Honoriani Mauri Iuniores* who along with their twin unit, the *Honoriani Mauri Seniores*, follow on immediately from the *Brisigavi Iuniores* in the *Magister Peditum* listings. Whether these were raised at the same time as the four previous *Honoriani* units (*Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* and *Iuniores* and the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* and *Iuniores*) is hard to determine as they are separated by the simply named *Brisigavi Seniores* and *Iuniores*. It would, however, be reasonable to assume this group of units were raised together and for some reason the *Brisigavi* have not received the *Honoriani* title. As noted previously the *Mauri* part of the unit title denotes a possible North

<sup>706</sup> Böcking (1839), p.25; Seeck (1876), p. 124.

African origin, and possibly that it refers to the role of light troops, though it would seem unlikely to be given to an infantry unit.<sup>707</sup>

The next unit in the army of Italy is the *Galli Victores* who are 57<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings, and as such are 11 places lower in that list than the preceding *Honoriani Mauri Iuniores*. In the *Magistri* lists they appear just above another group of *Honoriani* units, which were presumably raised at a later date than those discussed above. There are several units within the *Notitia Dignitatum* which contain the title *Victores*, a term for victorious, and these include:

The *Victores, Auxilia Palatina* unit in the eastern *Praesentalis*

The *Honoriani Victores Iuniores, Auxilia Palatina* under the *Comes Illyrici*

The *Victores Iuniores, Auxilia Palatina* under the *Comes Hispaniarum*

The *Victores Seniores, Auxilia Palatina* in the Italian Field army

The *Victores Iuniores Britannici* under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam*<sup>708</sup>

The *Galli Victores* are not identified as *Seniores* or *Iuniores*, so are presumably a stand-alone unit rather than one of the usual pairings, unless they are related to one of the various other *Galli* units which are deployed in the Gallic field army. If this is the case, then they are an unusual example of a unit being transferred from Gaul to Italy. As has been argued in the chapter on the Gallic field army, these *Galli* units were raised sometime after Constantius' recovery of Gaul, so 411 onwards.

The last three possible *Auxilia Palatina* units do not appear at the end of the list of other *Auxilia Palatina* in the army of Italy, they are mixed together with *Legiones Comitatus* and *Pseudocomitatus* at the end of the *Distributio*. The first of these are the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices*, then the *Gratianenses Iuniores* and finally the *Marcomanni*. The *Placidi Valentinianici Felices*, which Jones believed were named after Valentinian III and dated them to 420.<sup>709</sup> They are not listed under the *Magister Peditum*, nor do they have a shield illustration, which would support the idea they were raised after the drafting of the *Magister Peditum* listings. Their name looks similar to other *Auxilia Palatina* so are

---

<sup>707</sup> Barker (1981), p. 75.

<sup>708</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>709</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

presumably also one. There is an unassigned *Auxilia Palatina* unit in the *Magister Peditum* listings called the *Felices Iuniores Gallicani*, and it is possible that the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* are linked to them, possibly the *Felices Iuniores Gallicani* were renamed in honour of Valentinian III.

Following on from the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* in the *Distributio* are the *Gratianenses Iuniores*. Not only are they out of position within the army of Italy listings, they are also listed below units who are much lower in the order of precedence. While they are 31<sup>st</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings, yet below the *Galli Victores* who are 57<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings. The situation is made more confusing in that they do not appear immediately behind the *Galli Victores*, but as noted above, are placed after nine *Legiones* units that follow on from the *Auxilia Palatina* units. If we accept that the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* are dated to 420, this would suggest that the *Gratianenses Iuniores* were a later addition to the army of Italy, and added to the bottom of the list.<sup>710</sup> If Jones is correct, then we can date this transfer to post 420, after the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* were raised. It should be noted that the *Gratianenses Seniores* are in the Gallic field army, and if the *Gratianenses Seniores* and *Iuniores* had operated as a brigaded pair, then this is the second possible example of a unit being transferred from Gaul to Italy.

The last, presumed, *Auxilia Palatina* unit in the army of Italy is the *Marcomanni*. There is, however, a problem with this unit as there is no listing for a unit simply titled *Marcomanni*. In the *Magister Peditum* lists there are two similar named units, the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* and the *Honoriani Marcomanni Iuniores*, who appear in-between the *Atecotti Honoriani Seniores* and *Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores*. If the simply named *Marcomanni* are one of these units, then they are out of position in the army of Italy, as the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* and *Iuniores* are 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings but the *Marcomanni* appear last in the army of Italy. It should be noted that there is no listing in the *Distributio* anywhere for either of the *Honoriani Marcomanni* units, which might support the idea that the simply named *Marcomanni* is in fact one of these, but there is still no way telling if it is the *Seniores* or *Iuniores* unit. If the listing of the *Marcomanni* is not referring to one of the *Honoriani Marcomanni Auxilia Palatina* units, then it is possible it could refer to a

---

<sup>710</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

*Pseudocomitatenses* unit, which would make more sense being at the end of the listings for the Italian field army, where such units are recorded. There are no *Limitanei* units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* which are titled *Marcomanni*, but the possibility remains that the two *Honoriani Marcomanni* units may have become so badly weakened by combat losses that they were scrapped and the surviving members were amalgamated into a new *Pseudocomitatenses* unit. This would account for the fact that neither of these units are listed in the *Distributio*, as they had ceased to be effective combat units, and why the new *Marcomanni* unit appears at the end of the Italian field army, as a recent replacement.

While this line of reasoning cannot be supported with any hard evidence, the alternative that the *Marcomanni* are one of the *Honoriani Marcomanni Seniores* or *Iuniores* also has problems. As both of these appear among the first group of *Honoriani* units, so probably raised early in Honorius' reign, we would expect them to be in the *Distributio*. As neither are, explaining that one of them are the simply named *Marcomanni* does not explain what happened to the other.

If we use the example of the eastern *Praesentalis* as a model, we would expect eighteen *Auxilia Palatina* units to be in the army of Italy. Of the first eighteen units listed, only the *Sabini* appear slightly out of position in comparison to *Magister Peditum* Listings. There are two *Honoriani* units at 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, which were presumably raised by Honorius and so presumably post-date Frigidus. The last three units, *Galli Victores*, *Gratianenses Iuniores* and *Marcomanni* would represent later reinforcements added to the bottom of the listings. If this was the case, then what we are seeing is the army of Italy not only just prior to the battle of Frigidus, but also being reinforced during the period 396-402 and a final set of reinforcements in the 420s. All these later reinforcements were added to the end of the list with no attempt to update or modify the original listing.

#### **7.3.4 Legiones Comitatuses and Pseudocomitatenses**

The following units are listed in the order that they appear in the *Distributio* for the army of Italy. I have not included the *Auxilia Palatina* units which appear towards the end of this list as they have been covered in the section above, and have shown the following units with their relative positions under the *Magister Peditum* listing:



<i>Octavani</i>	9 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Thebaei</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Palatina</i>
<i>Mattiarui Iuniores</i>	9 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Comitatus</i>
<i>Septimani Iuniores</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Comitatus</i>
<i>Regii</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Comitatus</i>
<i>Germanici</i>	13 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Comitatus</i>
<i>Prima Iulia</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Legio Pseudocomitatus</i>
<i>Tertia Iulia</i>	25 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Comitatus</i>
<i>Pontinenses</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> <i>Legio Pseudocomitatus</i>

As can be seen from this list that the units have been mixed up from all three types of *Legiones*. It should also be noted that the units do not run in any particular order, and while the *Octavani* and *Thebaei* have been discussed in the section on the *Legiones Palatinae*, their listing ahead of the *Mattiarui Iuniores* would suggest that they were more senior to them in the *Comitatenses* listings before their promotion.

If we look at the *Mattiarui Iuniores*, there seems to be a possible anomaly with this unit. In the illustrations which accompany the *Magister Peditum* listings, there is an unusual occurrence on the line that the *Mattiarui Iuniores* are shown on:



Figure 35: *Magister Peditum* page showing the *Mattiarrii Iuniores*, bottom line second from the right (P).

Apart from the cover page, which has four rows of five shields after the insignia of office next to a single shield, all the other pages under the *Magister Peditum* depict rows of four shields. The only exception is the row shown above which includes the *Mattiarrii Iuniores*. In the Oxford copy (O) the bottom row of the same corresponding page has the faint outline of four larger shields, which have been reduced to include the five shields also shown in (P). It is impossible to tell from (O) which shield pattern has been added to the original set of four, and all five units are listed in the accompanying text. However, the same page in the Munich (M) only has four shields on the last row, and it is the *Mattiarrii Iuniores* who are missing.

While it is possible that these variations in the different manuscripts are down to copying errors, it is also just as likely that the original layout had been deliberately altered, and if this

is correct, then it could indicate a late amendment or addition to the *Magistri* listings. A possible reason for this could be that the *Mattiarrii Iuniores* have been transferred from the east. As there is no western *Mattiarrii Seniores*, while there are both a *Mattiarrii Seniores* and *Iuniores* recorded in the eastern *Praesentalis*, it could be that the western unit is the eastern *Mattiarrii Iuniores* transferred to the west.<sup>711</sup> The most likely date for this would have been when the 4,000 reinforcements were sent from Constantinople to Ravenna in 410.

There are, however, a few problems with this line of reasoning. Firstly the shield patterns for the *Mattiarrii Iuniores* in the west and east are different:



**Western**

**Eastern**

Figure 36: Showing eastern and western versions of the *Mattiarrii Iuniores* (P).

The second problem is one of status, as the eastern *Mattiarrii Iuniores* are a senior *Legio Palatina*, while the western version is the ninth *Legio Comitatus* in the *Magister Peditum* listings. Ammianus mentions the eastern *Mattiarrii*, though he does not say if they are the *Seniores* or *Iuniores*, being brigaded with the *Lanciarrii*, the senior eastern unit, in 361 under Constantius. The same pairing are again mentioned at the battle of Adrianople in 378 when Valens joined them in their last stand.<sup>712</sup> This would all suggest that the *Mattiarrii* were indeed a senior unit in the eastern *Praesentalis* at least until 378. It is of course possible that the *Mattiarrii* and *Lanciarrii* were both destroyed at Adrianople, and that they were re-raised at a later date. This could account for both the change in status and shield design of the *Mattiarrii*.

A further complication here is the date of the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Jones believed that this was drafted not later than 395, and suggested it was transmitted to the west in either 395 or 408.<sup>713</sup> If this is correct, then the *Mattiarrii Iuniores* would appear to have been reformed by this date and regained their *Palatina* status. If this was the case,

<sup>711</sup> Not. Or. iv, v.

<sup>712</sup> Amm. 21.13.16, 28.13.8.

<sup>713</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p.351.

then the eastern section could contain out of date information and it is possible that the *Praesentalis* armies that it records are in fact from 378. Therefore it is possible the ‘new’ *Mattiarii Iuniores* could have been brought over by Theodosius I and retained in the western army in 395, hence they were accorded a lower status and were inserted into the *Magister Peditum* listings. This could then date this entry to 395 or just after.

The next *Legio* in the Italian listings is the *Septimani Iuniores*, who appear to be out of position, being listed under the *Magister Peditum* list below the *Regii* and *Germaniciani*, but appear above them in the army of Italy. There are two other listings for the *Septimani Iuniores*, one under the *Comes Tingitaniae* and the other under the *Magister Equitum* in the Gallic field army. To this we can add the *Septimani Seniores* under the *Comes Hispaniarum* as well as a *Limitanei* unit also in Spain called the *Septimani Geminae*.<sup>714</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, there appears to have been a duplication of the *Septimani Iuniores*. It was suggested by Nischer that the entry in the Italian field army was an error and should be the *Septimani Seniores*, who are listed above the *Regii* in 5<sup>th</sup> place in the *Magister Peditum* listing.<sup>715</sup> It should be noted that in the Paris (P) edition of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the *Septimani Seniores* are not listed in Spain, adding some support to Nischer’s argument. However, if this is correct, it does not explain why the *Septimani Seniores* are listed in Italy after the *Mattiarii Iuniores*, who are 9<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings but listed above the *Septimani* entry in the Italian field army.

It seems entirely possible that both the *Septimani Seniores* and *Iuniores* were in the Italian field army and transferred together to Spain in 411, as argued in the chapter on the *Comes Hispaniarum*. The *Septimani Iuniores* could then have moved on to *Tingitania* and presumably back to Italy after the crossing by the Vandals in 429. The position of the *Septimani Iuniores* in the army of Italy is hard to explain. It is possible, though hard to prove, that they were transferred to the army of Italy before the *Regii* and *Germaniciani*, so are listed before them.

Linking in with the discussion above, the *Regii* are next in the list of the army of Italy. There is some debate over the origin of this unit name, but the *Regii* are recorded by Ammianus

---

<sup>714</sup> Not. Occ. vii, xl.

<sup>715</sup> Nischer (1923), p. 20, fn. 6.

being at the battle of Strasbourg in 357, and we have a further reference from an inscription at Concordia. Speidel refutes Mommsen's earlier translation of the Concordia inscription, which he believed to be for a regiment of Jews from Emesa. The inscription at Concordia reads: *NUM REG EMES IUDERU*, which has been expanded by Mommsen to read "num(ero) Regi(or)um) Emes(enorum) Iud(a)e(o)ru(m)." Instead, Speidel argued that the *Regii* were an *Auxilia Palatina* unit which could be traced back to Constantius Chlorus, whose leader proclaimed Constantine Emperor.<sup>716</sup> Hoffmann's analysis of the Concordia inscriptions supported the idea of Mommsen, and he argued that the unit in the inscription was in fact the *Auxilia Palatina* unit the *Regii* that appears in the eastern *Praesentalis* and was presumably raised from Jews. A law of 418 precluded Jews from being recruited, and so Hoffmann argues this dates the inscription to before this date and that later copyists of the *Notitia Dignitatum* removed this Jewish part of the unit title because of this law. This idea that the *Regii* are an *Auxilia Palatina* unit is further reinforced when linked to Ammianus' reference to the *Regii* at Strasbourg, where they appear to form a brigaded pair along with the *Batavi*, one of the senior *Auxilia Palatina* units.<sup>717</sup> This does, however, present a problem as there is no *Auxilia Palatina* unit named *Regii* in the western section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. There is the *Legio Comitatusensis* unit in the army of Italy, and then the eastern *Auxilia Palatina* unit in the *Praesentalis* also named *Regii* as noted above.<sup>718</sup> It is of course possible that the *Auxilia Palatina* unit called the *Regii* had been destroyed by the time of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and that the Concordia inscription refers to the *Legio Comitatusensis*. Although, as Hoffman suggests, the inscription could refer to the eastern unit brought over by Theodosius in 394. It seems most likely that the simplest explanation is that the Concordia inscription shows us that the *Regii* were stationed in the army of Italy and that it was the *Legio Comitatusensis* unit as shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This would give us a date range from 394-427.

The *Germaniciani* follow on from the *Regii* in the army of Italy and are listed below them under the *Magister Peditum* listings where they appear as the *Germaniciani Iuniores*.<sup>719</sup> There is no corresponding *Germaniciani Seniores* in the west, but there is in the east under

---

<sup>716</sup> Speidel (1996), pp. 163-7, Quoting *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 41.3.

<sup>717</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp. 49-52; Amm. 16.12.45.

<sup>718</sup> Not. Or. v.

<sup>719</sup> Not. Occ. v, vii.

the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*.<sup>720</sup> The name *Germaniciani* would suggest that the *Legio* was either raised in Germany or was stationed in Germany for a long period. A final possibility is it was descended from a previous *Legio* which also had the title *Germaniciani*. As the entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for *Germania Prima* does not list any units, it is impossible to see if this unit was raised from any *Limitanei* units that had been stationed there.<sup>721</sup>

The next two units will be considered together, as they are very similar but appear to be in the wrong order. The *Prima Iulia* is listed first. It is rendered as *Prima Alpina* in the *Magister Peditum* listing, and is the first unit listed in the *Pseudocomitatenses*.<sup>722</sup> The *Tertia Iulia* which follows them, is called *Tertia Iulia Alpina* in the *Magister Peditum* listings and is 25<sup>th</sup> in the *Comitatenses*, but is only called *Tertia Iulia* in the *Distributio*. It would appear that both of them, and another unit, the *Secunda Iulia* which is stationed in *Illyricum*, were originally linked to the Julian Alps which fell under the control of the *Comes Italiae* at one time.<sup>723</sup> As there are no units listed under the *Comes Italiae*, we can assume that both the *Prima* and *Tertia Iulia* were transferred to the army of Italy from that command. While it is difficult to give a date for this, it would appear that sometime after this transfer the *Tertia Iulia* was promoted to full *Comitatenses* status, but its place in the Italian listing was not corrected in the *Distributio*. This would suggest on this occasion, that the *Magister Peditum* listing is more up to date than the *Distributio*, unless the *Tertia Iulia* was transferred after the *Prima Iulia* and just added to the bottom of the list.

The next unit, the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices*, must have been added to the Italian list after the *Tertia Iulia*. As they are not in the *Magister Peditum* listings and only appear in the *Distributio*, this must have been after the *Magistri* lists were drafted and as such they are one of the last units raised. Jones believed that the unit was raised by Valentinian III and dated it to 420, which would then give us an approximate date for the last updating of the *Distributio*, while the *Magistri* listings must be prior to this date. He also suggested that the unit was an *Auxilia Palatina* unit, rather than a *Legio*.<sup>724</sup>

---

<sup>720</sup> Not. Or. viii.

<sup>721</sup> Not. Occ. xxxvii.

<sup>722</sup> Böcking (1839), p. 34; Seeck (1876), p. 125. Both equate *Prima Iulia* with *Prima Alpina*.

<sup>723</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 99. Suggests they could be named after Constantine's sons.

<sup>724</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353.

Within the *Magister Peditum* listings for the western infantry there are four *Auxilia Palatina* units which include the name *Felices*, they are: *Felices Seniores*, *Felices Iuniores*, *Felices Valentinianenses* and *Felices Iuniores Gallicani*. There is a single *Legio Comitatusensis*, the *Honoriani Felices Gallicani*, while no *Pseudocomitatenses* have this title. Although this is not conclusive, it would seem more likely that the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* are an *Auxilia Palatina* unit in light of the more common use of *Felices* amongst these units as well as the use of the Valentinian name in the *Felices Valentinianenses*. This would make their position after the *Legiones Comitatusenses* and in between the *Pseudocomitatenses* in the army of Italy as further evidence for one of the last amendment made for the *Distributio*.

The final Italian unit listed is the *Pontinensis*, a *Legio Pseudocomitatensis* which is listed seventh in the *Magister Peditum* listings for these units. What is interesting here is that after the first *Pseudocomitatensis*, the *Prima Iulia* as discussed above, the next three under the *Magister Peditum* are recorded under the *Comes Illyrici* (*Secunda Iulia Alpina* 2<sup>nd</sup>, *Lanciarii Lauriacenses* 3<sup>rd</sup> and *Lanciarii Comagenenses* 4<sup>th</sup>), and the two preceding the *Pontinenses* (*Taurunenses* in 5<sup>th</sup> and *Antianenses* in 6<sup>th</sup>) have not been allocated to any army in the *Distributio*. Since the *Pontinenses* follow a group of units assigned to the *Comes Illyrici* this could link the date of the final unit to be transferred to the army of Italy happened after the creation the *Comes Illyrici*.

With the possible exception of the *Mattiarum Iuniores*, there is nothing in this list of *Comitatenses* units to suggest a set date for the army of Italy. We may be able to confirm the last date that a unit was added to the list, 420 for the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices*, but this does not help date the earlier entries.

#### **7.4 Dating the army of Italy in the *Notitia Dignitatum***

We have a problem reconciling the actions of the army of Italy with the details recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. If we accept the idea that the western *Notitia Dignitatum* is one continuous and contemporary account of the Roman army at a set period, then we can date the army of Italy by the last units raised. If we accept Jones' arguments that the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* are dated to 425 and the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* from 420, then the *Notitia Dignitatum* appears to show the Italian army sometime in the mid-420s. Yet this seems at odds with our historical records which tell a different story. The

last explicit reference any of the units recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as being in the *Praesentalis* relates to the units dispatched by Stilicho to deal with Gildo in Africa, recorded by Claudian and dated to 397. After this date, Claudian does not mention any Roman army unit by name, and indeed most of his references from this point onwards seem to concentrate on the actions of allied *Foederatii*. This lack of any named Roman units is not necessarily evidence that they did not exist, however, just that they played a less important part in the actions described, which might indicate a decline in the number and quality of these units along with a policy of preserving Roman units by an increased reliance on barbarian troops instead.

The most telling evidence for the army of Italy not being as it is depicted in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the period 396-402 is that Stilicho was unable to defeat the Goths in Greece or Italy, despite Claudian's claims to the contrary. This line of argument is further supported by Stilicho's summoning of units from Gaul and Britain to reinforce the army. In the context of his great success over Radagaisus in 406, Zosimus tells us that Stilicho gathered together 30 units and allies to confront the invasion. If we follow my interpretation of the use of the term *Numeri* by Zosimus as representing less than full sized units, and that these units were drawn from across Italy, then it is possible that many of the units recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* still survived, although in a weakened state. The alternative explanation would be that these 30 units were drawn from across the whole of the western *Comitatenses* which has dual significance. Firstly it suggests how difficult it was to concentrate the mobile armies in one place. Secondly, that there were not enough units in Italy at the time to form the army without drawing reinforcements from further afield. As Goldsworthy notes, the *Notitia Dignitatum* records a total of 169 infantry and cavalry units in the western *Comitatenses* mobile armies, of which 45 are in Italy and a further 60 in Gaul. The army must have been in a poor state, if it could only draw 30 below strength units together.<sup>725</sup> This would suggest that the army of Italy in 406 was a long way from resembling the list in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

This argument can be still further supported by pointing to the army's inability to stop Alaric in 410, with the small forces mentioned in the relief force sent to Rome and the importance

---

<sup>725</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), p. 295. Figures differ from those in the Böcking edition which are shown above.



of the few thousand troops sent from the east. It is possible to argue from the textual evidence that the army of Italy as depicted in the *Notitia Dignitatum* included both units prior to the battle of Frigidus and new reinforcements just after, as Stilicho went to great lengths to try to re-build the main western *Praesentalis* in the aftermath. However, it never had all of units shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The poor performance of the army between 396-402 culminating in its inability to stop Alaric in 410 would argue for the strength in the *Notitia Dignitatum* being already out of date. From this position it is hard to see how in the ten years that followed 410 it was rebuilt to its former glory.

When considering the information from the units themselves, there are two areas of interest which need to be considered. The recently promoted *Legiones Palatinae*, the *Octavani* and the *Thebaei*, appear to be an attempt to reinforce the army of Italy at an early date, so could well predate the battle of Frigidus. I do not believe that the list for the army of Italy in the *Notitia Dignitatum* represents the army at this battle, as we would expect to see various units drawn from Gaul and Germany, but it does show an attempt to strengthen the army. The first six *Legiones Palatinae* and fifteen *Auxilia Palatina* probably do represent the army some point prior to 394 as this looks a lot like the eastern *Praesentalis*. The second point follows on from this. If we accept my view that the basis of the list is from the 390s, then we have to account for the recent increase in the Honorian named *Auxilia Palatina* units. The *Atecotti Honoriani Iuniores* and the *Mauri Honoriani Iuniores* would date from Honorius' reign between 395-423. These units appear with the first group of Honorian units, so were probably raised early in the reign shortly after Frigidus and may well be some of the units recruited by Stilicho while touring the Rhine frontier. The *Auxilia Palatina* units that follow on from these, up to the most recent, *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores* and *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* are all later additions to the original list from the 390s which has been added to in 396-402 and again in the 420s, and shown as one complete list in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

The only logical conclusion is that the list for the army of Italy within the *Notitia Dignitatum* as it stands is not one contemporary account, but an on-going list of additions starting from the 390s up to the 420s. There are at least three layers in the listings the original one prior to Frigidus, those units added in the aftermath and the final units towards the end of Honorius' reign and later. However, while units have been added to the list, there has been

no attempt to remove or delete units that no longer existed, so we get the false impression that the army of Italy was always as strong as the *Notitia Dignitatum* records. The reason why the lists in the *Notitia Dignitatum* have not been maintained properly will be discussed in the final chapter.

One final observation needs to be made concerning the shield illustrations. Like the unit list in the *Distributio*, no attempt has been made to remove units from the illustrations. This is probably due to time and effort involved in re-drafting the *Notitia Dignitatum* and further reinforces the idea that it was not a working military document. We have discussed the fact that the army of Italy was virtually non-existent by 410, yet the *Legiones Palatinae* of the *Ioviani*, *Herculiani*, *Divitenses*, *Tungrecani*, *Pannonici* and *Moesiaci* all remain in their pride-of-place at the head of the *Magister Peditum* shield illustrations. These units all appear to have ceased to be functioning military units by this date and even though it could be argued it was the intention of army to re-build them at a later date, such as those units in the eastern *Praesentalis* after Adrianople, this does not appear to have happened. This does not in any way undermine the value of the illustrations, as the units had existed when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drafted, but it supports the idea that it was not a working document and supports the belief that there was apolitical motive in its creation.

## 8. *Comes Illyrici*

### 8.1 Background

The *Comes Illyrici* command is the last of the western field armies that needs to be examined and in many ways it is the most problematic. The main reason for this is because in the *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis* there is a listing for the *Magister Militum per Illyricum* as well as the *Occidens* entry for the *Comes Illyrici*<sup>726</sup>. This highlights the confused status of *Illyricum* in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, as the region passed from western to eastern control and back again. These problems stem from the defeat of the eastern Emperor Valens at the battle of Adrianople in 378, when he was killed with the loss of two thirds of his army.<sup>727</sup> In the immediate aftermath Gratian, the western Emperor, was forced to deal with an invasion by the Alamanni in the west and appointed Theodosius, son of one of his father's generals also called Theodosius, to command in the east. Theodosius the younger, who would go on to be the eastern Emperor, had previously held the command of *Dux Moesiae Primae*.<sup>728</sup>

We have an example in 381 when the western generals of Gratian, Bauto and Arbogast, successfully drove the Goths away from the western frontier and back into Thrace.<sup>729</sup> This Kulikowski argues, shows the lack of support from the west for Theodosius' new regime.<sup>730</sup> It also shows that the west was still prepared to act in defence of *Illyricum*, and therefore still maintained control of the area.

When discussing the western *Comes Illyrici*, Jones suggested that like Gaul and Spain, the *Comes Illyrici* was a recent command created in 420. He noted that there would have been previous *Illyricum* commands but after 378 they fell out of use in the west and had been removed. This, he explained, would account for the reason why there is no coversheet or entry in the index, so this would date the last amendment of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to 420.<sup>731</sup>

---

<sup>726</sup> Not. Or. viii.

<sup>727</sup> Amm. 31.13.14.

<sup>728</sup> PLRE (1971), Theodosius 4, p. 904.

<sup>729</sup> Zos. 4.33.1-2.

<sup>730</sup> Kulikowski (2007), pp. 151-2.

<sup>731</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354.

The problem with *Illyricum* is twofold; firstly the issue of control and secondly one of defining what we mean by *Illyricum* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. To be able to answer both of these questions we need to look at the creation of the post of Praetorian Prefect. These appear as assistant officers under Diocletian and then increased in number towards the end of Constantine's reign where they begin to be used to control specific geographical areas. By 337 we have a Praetorian Prefect of *Dalmatia*, Valerius Maximus, but not one for *Illyricum*.<sup>732</sup> At the same time we have Pacatianus who was Praetorian Prefect of *Italia*, originally under Constantine, then under Constans, and may well have included the *Dioecesis* of *Illyricum* under his control.<sup>733</sup> The following table (9) shows the various recorded *Praetorian Prefects of Illyricum* from 364:

Name:	Date:	Praetorian Prefect:
<b>Probus</b> <sup>734</sup> PLRE (1971), Probus 5, pp.736-737.	364	<i>Illyricum</i>
	368-375	<i>Illyricum, Italia and Africa</i>
	383-387	<i>Illyricum, Italia and Africa</i>
<b>Olybrius</b> PLRE (1971), Olybrius 3, pp.640-641.	378-379	<i>Illyricum</i>
<b>Eutropius</b> PLRE (1971), Eutropius 2, p.317.	380-382	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)
<b>Hypatius</b> PLRE (1971), Hypatius 4, pp.448-449.	382-383	<i>Italia and Illyricum</i>
<b>Praetextatus</b> PLRE (1971), Praetextatus 1, pp.722-723.	384	<i>Illyricum, Italia and Africa</i>
<b>Eutychianus</b> PLRE (1971), Eutychianus 5, pp.319-320.	396-397	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)
<b>Anatolius</b> PLRE (1980), Anatolius 1, p.83.	397-399	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)
<b>Herculius</b> PLRE (1980), Herculius 2, p.545.	408-410	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)
<b>Leontius</b> PLRE (1980), Leontius 5, p.668.	412-413	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)

<sup>732</sup> Barnes (1982), pp. 135-8; PLRE (1971), Maximus 49, pp. 590-1.

<sup>733</sup> Barnes (2011), p. 163; PLRE (1971), Pacatianus 2, p. 656.

<sup>734</sup> CTh. 1.29.1. Appears to have temporarily replaced Mamertinus in Illyricum only.

Palladius PLRE (1980), Palladius 19, pp.822-823.	416-421	<i>Illyricum, Italia and Africa</i>
Gessius PLRE (1980), Gessius 2, p.510.	421-424	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)
Isidorus PLRE (1980), Isidorus 9, p.631.	424	<i>Illyricum</i> (East appointment)

If we consider the first issue, the simplified view is that Gratian appointed Theodosius and gave him control over Illyricum to deal with the Goths.<sup>735</sup> This is followed by Goldsworthy, who notes the support Theodosius must have received from eastern officials, and suggests that Gratian and Theodosius cooperated in their efforts to deal with the Goths.<sup>736</sup> However, closer scrutiny of the events suggested a different possibility. It has been suggested that the transfer of power to Theodosius was not as smooth as once believed. Kulikowski argues that as our contemporary sources are quiet about the appointment, and in the light of the lack of support offered by Gratian, it was something of a seizure of power by Theodosius and the other eastern generals. This was followed by Gratian reluctantly accepting Theodosius as Augustus.<sup>737</sup> If this was the case, then direct control over Illyricum would clearly present an issue, and remained so for several decades.<sup>738</sup>

Until 379, *Illyricum* had been under the control of the *Praefectus of Italia* and Gratian created a *Praefectus* for the Balkans in 379 under Olybrius in the aftermath of Adrianople.<sup>739</sup> This seems to have been a short posting, as in 380 we have Eutropius as Praetorian *Praefectus of Illyricum*, which is now under the control of the eastern empire.<sup>740</sup> Kulikowski argues that Theodosius had control of *Illyricum* in the aftermath of Adrianople, but the diocese was transferred back to the west in 381 and the eastern Prefecture of Illyricum was disbanded.<sup>741</sup> Heather suggests that it was the defeat of Theodosius' newly re-built army in 380 which forced him to hand back control of the war against the Goths to Gratian.<sup>742</sup> It

---

<sup>735</sup> Hughes (2010), p. 12.

<sup>736</sup> Goldsworthy (2009), p. 259.

<sup>737</sup> Kulikowski (2007), pp. 149-50.

<sup>738</sup> Omissi (2018), pp. 255-61.

<sup>739</sup> PLRE (1971), Olybrius 3, pp. 640-3. Suggests his appointment to Illyricum by Gratian in 379.

<sup>740</sup> CJ.1.54.4; CTh.6.10.1; PLRE (1971), Eutropius 2, p. 317. As Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum in 380.

<sup>741</sup> CTh.13.1.11; CTh.11.13.1.

<sup>742</sup> Heather (2008), p. 171.

should be noted that this supposed transfer back to the west coincided with the campaign of Bauto and Arbogast in 381, and may be viewed as Gratian maintaining control of *Illyricum* by force, since Bauto and Arbogast, successfully drove the Goths away from the western frontier and back into Thrace.<sup>743</sup> This Kulikowski argues shows the lack of support from the west for Theodosius' new regime.<sup>744</sup> It also shows that the west was still prepared to act in defence of *Illyricum*, and therefore still maintained control of the area. We might conclude that Theodosius never had any official control in *Illyricum* despite his short term appointment of Eutropius.

However, the situation changed in 387 when Maximus invaded Italy and Theodosius responded by taking control of all the Balkan Dioeceses by law, while Probus was still the western *Praefectus* claiming control of *Illyricum*.<sup>745</sup> Kulikowski goes on to say that in 393 we also had an eastern *Praefectus* of *Illyricum*, and that this represented the ongoing power struggle for control of the Balkans between the east and west. While inconclusive as evidence, Kulikowski notes that in the build up to the battle of Frigidus, Theodosius minted coins at Sirmium in the Balkans. This he argues shows the east is still in control of the whole of *Illyricum*.<sup>746</sup>

If we consider the second issue, what was *Illyricum*, in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, we need to consider the post of Praetorian Prefect. There are two factors we can take from the earlier table. First, the west appears to maintain political control of *Illyricum* up to 387, when Theodosius intervenes against Maximus, a part from the brief appointment of Eutropius as discussed above. Second, the importance of *Illyricum* as a separate entity seems to change, sometimes as a stand-alone Prefecture, sometimes combined with *Italia* and *Africa*.

If we need compare the entries for the Praetorian *Praefectus* in both the eastern and western sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, there we find the following divisions in *Illyricum*. The eastern Praetorian Prefect *per Illyricum* controls the Diocese of *Macedonia* and *Dacia*.<sup>747</sup> Listed under the western Praetorian Prefect *per Italiam* there are the Diocese of *Italia*, *Illyricum* and *Africa*. Under western *Illyricum* the following provinces are listed; *Pannonia*

---

<sup>743</sup> Zosimus, 4.33.1-2.

<sup>744</sup> Kulikowski (2007), pp. 151-2.

<sup>745</sup> CTh.8.4.17; CTh.9.40.13.

<sup>746</sup> Kulikowski (2000), pp. 364-7.

<sup>747</sup> Not. Or. ii.

*Secunda, Savia, Dalmatia, Pannonia Prima, Noricum Mediterranei and Noricum Ripensis.*<sup>748</sup>

This division of the Balkans in the *Notitia Dignitatum* would suggest a date when the west had control only over the Diocese of Illyricum, which Kulikowski argues shows the situation in 395.<sup>749</sup> The old Prefecture of Illyricum had consisted of the Diocese of *Macedonia, Dacia* and *Pannonia*, while the Diocese of Illyricum was under the Prefecture of Italy.<sup>750</sup> As noted above, this was re-established by Gratian, and again the Diocese of Illyricum was back under the Prefect of Italy. It was the eastern part of the old Prefecture of Illyricum, the province of *Macedonia* and *Dacia* which came under the control of Theodosius in 379.<sup>751</sup> It would appear that the old Diocese of Pannonia had now been incorporated into the western *Dioeceses* of Illyricum.

It is therefore difficult to define exactly what is meant by the term *Illyricum* over the fourth and fifth centuries. Initially the whole of the Balkans would have come under the control of a Praetorian Prefect, but by 395 it was split in two as shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. However, the periods when *Illyricum* was under the joint control of a Praetorian Prefect who controlled *Italia* and *Africa* as well, might only have included the areas as defined in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This we might think of as the western provinces of *Illyricum* and not necessarily including *Dacia* and *Macedonia*.

### **8.1.1 Background on the *Comes Illyrici*.**

In 364 when Valentinian and Valens divided the empire between them, Valens was assigned the *Comes Equitius*, to control the army in *Illyricum*. Then in 365 Valentinian promoted Equitius to the rank of *Magister* and he remained in control of the army of *Illyricum*.<sup>752</sup> This promotion to *Magister* was made by Valentinian and a law which was issued by both Emperors gives him the full title of *Comes et Magister Militum per Illyricum* was issued from Heraclea, so presumably originated from Valens court.<sup>753</sup> It appears that Equitius held this post from 365-375.<sup>754</sup> It must also be noted that in 368 Probus, the Praetorian Prefect of *Illyricum* mentioned above, became the Praetorian Prefect of *Italia, Illyricum et Africa*, a

---

<sup>748</sup> Not. Occ. ii.

<sup>749</sup> Kulikowski (2000), p. 368.

<sup>750</sup> Amm. 21.12.24.

<sup>751</sup> Heather (2005), p. 187.

<sup>752</sup> Amm. 25.5.3; 26.5.11.

<sup>753</sup> CTh.8.1.8.

<sup>754</sup> PLRE (1971), Equitius 2, p. 282.

post he held until 375. We therefore have a contradictory set of information if we assume Equitius was commander of forces under Valens in *Illyricum* while the Praetorian Prefect for *Illyricum* was under Valentinian.

What is interesting from these two references is that Equitius is of *Magister* rank, whether *Equitum* or *Armorum*, as mentioned by Ammianus, and not the *Comes* listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for *Illyricum*.<sup>755</sup> However, what is missing in Ammianus' account of the build up to Adrianople, is the lack of reference to any western army in *Illyricum*, which would have been readily available to support eastern forces. Ammianus noted that the reinforcements sent to Equitius in 373, two western *Legiones*, was sufficient to deal with the Quadi attack, so the forces under Equitius control prior to this invasion must have been very small if only two *Legiones* were needed.<sup>756</sup> After 375 we have no further references to any *Magister* or *Comes* leading troops in *Illyricum* prior to Adrianople. It seems reasonable to suggest, given the small size of the forces involved, that the command of the *Comes Illyrici* was temporally abandoned in 375. All this highlights the confused situation in *Illyricum* prior to the problems caused by the Goths after Adrianople. It would appear that the western Emperor Valentinian promoted and reinforced the *Comes Illyrici* and that the *Dioecesis* of *Illyricum* was under a western appointment under Probus, but that Equitius was under the control of the eastern Emperor Valens.

There are other forces mentioned by Ammianus operating in the Balkans prior to Adrianople. There is the *Magister Militum per Thracias*, Lupicinus, who is defeated by the Goths at Salices in 377.<sup>757</sup> The western emperor Gratian then dispatched troops to aid the local forces in the Balkans. Ammianus tells us that the western general Frigidus was on his way with Pannonian and Transalpine reinforcements, and additional troops were being sent under Richomer, *Comes Domesticorum*, drawn from Gaul.<sup>758</sup> This advance force of Frigidus had been operating in Thrace, but fell back to *Illyricum* where it achieved a victory over some of the Goths.<sup>759</sup> The fact that we have western forces sent from *Pannonia* operating in the eastern empire in Thrace, and no mention of the army of *Illyricum* or the *Comes Illyrici*,

---

<sup>755</sup> Amm. 29.6.4.

<sup>756</sup> Amm. 29.6.12.

<sup>757</sup> Amm. 31.7.5; PLRE (1971), Lupicinus 3, pp. 519-20.

<sup>758</sup> Amm. 31.7.3-4; PLRE (1971), Frigeridus, p. 373 is titled *Comes Rei Militaris*, not *Comes Illyrici*.

<sup>759</sup> Amm. 31.9.1-4.



this would reinforce the idea that the army of the *Comes Illyrici* was not an operational force prior to Adrianople.<sup>760</sup> This also highlights the very fluid nature of control of the region with Gratian intervening in the east.

If we now look at the army of *Comes Illyrici* as it is recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it appears that it was indeed a latter addition to the document. It should be noted that in the index of the *Occidens* section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* there is no listing for the *Comes Illyrici* under the six *Comites Rei Militaris*, and there is no cover sheet showing any towns under the *Comes'* command or any *Comitatenses* and *Limitanei* units.<sup>761</sup> In fact the *Comes Illyrici* is only recorded in the *Distributio*, where the command appears second after the army of Italy and ahead of the Gallic field army. What is shown in the *Distributio* is a command made up of 22 units comprising of:

12 *Auxilia Palatina*

5 *Legiones Comitatenses*

5 *Legiones Pseudocomitatenses*

This would equate to a force of some 16,000 men which includes a high proportion of *Auxilia Palatina*, the highest concentration of such troops outside the armies of Italy and Gaul. In fact, the proportion of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Legiones* is higher under the *Comes Illyrici* than it is under the *Magister Peditum* in Italy and the *Magister Equitum* in Gaul, the two main field armies. This would suggest that the army in *Illyricum*, like that of the *Comes Hispaniarum*, is a campaign field army and not necessarily a permanent formation.<sup>762</sup>

Another similarity to the *Comes Hispaniarum*, there are no cavalry units under the *Comes Illyrici*.<sup>763</sup> To highlight this it is worth comparing this force with the one listed in the eastern section which is under the command of the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*:

---

<sup>760</sup> PLRE (1971), vol. i, Frigerdus, p. 373. Frigerdus is called a *Comes rei Militaris* operating in Thrace and Illyria but not *Comes Illyrici*.

<sup>761</sup> Not. Occ. i.

<sup>762</sup> See chapters on Spain, Gaul and Italy.

<sup>763</sup> Not. Occ. vii.

## 2 *Vexillationes Comitatusenses*<sup>764</sup>

### 1 *Legio Palatina*

### 6 *Auxilia Palatina*

### 8 *Legiones Comitatusenses*

### 9 *Legiones Pseudocomitatusenses*

This represents a force of approximately 22,000 men, which includes a large number of *Pseudocomitatusenses*, but again there is very little cavalry attached to this force. Jones suggested that this eastern army was raised at a date soon after Adrianople, as the force looks like one hastily put together and this would explain the large number of *Pseudocomitatusenses* and the lack of cavalry.<sup>765</sup> However, it probably did not exist in 397 when Alaric was made *Magister Militum per Illyricum* by Eutropius for the Eastern Roman Empire.<sup>766</sup>

Though not listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, Jones made reference to a *Comes Dalmatiae* who was in action shortly after Stilicho's death. This command appears to have included *Noricum*, *Rhaetia* and the Alpine passes. This command, Jones claimed, was short-lived, in part being replaced by the *Comes Italiae*, and the post of the *Comes Dalmatiae* was abandoned.<sup>767</sup> However, as the *Comes Italiae* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* has no units under his command, as discussed in the chapter on the army of Italy, it is reasonable to assume that those units that had been under the *Comes Dalmatiae* were transferred to the *Comes Italiae*, and then onto the *Comes Illyrici* after the position of the *Comes Italiae* became redundant. It should also be noted that we had reference to units in *Dalmatiae* under the command of *Valens* as discussed in the chapter on the army of Italy in 409, so it would seem that the *Comes Dalmatiae* may have been re-introduced.<sup>768</sup> This can be further supported by the reference to Generidus who held a military command in *Dalmatiae* after Valens in

---

<sup>764</sup> One of these units, the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores*, is also recorded under the *Magister Militum per Thracias*, while in the west there is an unassigned unit under the *Magister Equitum* also named *Equites Sagittarii Seniores*. While it is unlikely, the western unit could be linked to the one under the *Magister Militum per Thracias*. Not. Or. viii, ix; Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>765</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 355.

<sup>766</sup> Burrell (2004), pp. 251-6 for discussion of Illyricum in 397.

<sup>767</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 192. See Zosimus.5.46.2; PLRE (1971), Equitius 2, p. 282.

<sup>768</sup> PLRE (1980), vol. ii, Valens 2, p. 1137.

409.<sup>769</sup> With Alaric now campaigning in Italy, the title *Comes Illyrici* would be filled by a western Roman in their ongoing struggle for control of the region. It is therefore possible that at least in part, the forces listed under the *Comes Illyrici* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* could represent these forces in 409.<sup>770</sup> Though the loss of 6,000 men under Valens in the same year would argue that the units under the *Comes Illyrici* had not been amended and still shown as active units.<sup>771</sup> This highlights the fluidity of the field commands and any sense of permanency created by the *Notitia Dignitatum* should be viewed with caution. It would also show not only the temporary nature of these commands, but in the case of the *Comes Illyrici*, that they could be activated or decommissioned as needs demanded. In this case we could view the command of the *Comes Illyrici* as a temporary field army created for specific purpose, much like the one under the *Comes Hispaniarum*. This could account for the lack of a coversheet in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

If we return to Jones' suggestion that the post of the *Comes Illyrici* was a recent creation in the 420s, there seems to be some incompatibility. His argument is that the entries for both the western *Comes Illyrici* and the eastern *Magister Militum per Illyricum* are hastily created forces, although for different reasons. If this was true then we would expect both forces to have a similar make-up, which they do not. While the eastern army does have a large number of *Pseudocomitatenses*, as we would expect, the western army of the *Comes Illyrici* has fewer of these units and a large number of elite *Auxilia Palatina*, twice the number of the eastern force. If we compare the number of *Auxilia Palatina* to *Comitatenses* and *Pseudocomitatenses* in other western field armies we get the following:

Army:	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	<i>Legiones Comitatenses</i>	<i>Legiones Pseudocomitatenses</i>
In Gaul	17	10* <sup>772</sup>	21
In Italy	21	6	2
In Illyricum	6	5	5

<sup>769</sup> PLRE (1980), vol. ii, Generidus, p. 500. As *Comes Italiae* in 408 and *Comes Illyrici* in 409.

<sup>770</sup> Jones (1964), vol. i, p. 192, fn. 43 notes this as a conjectural reconstruction.

<sup>771</sup> Zosimus, 5.45.1.

<sup>772</sup> 10\* Includes the single *Legio Palatina* promoted from the *Comitatenses* in the Gallic army.

As can be seen above the *Comes Illyrici* commanded an unusually high proportion of elite *Auxilia Palatina* which would suggest that this is more likely a field army rather than a hastily put together holding force.

An alternative explanation is that the *Comes Illyrici* controlled a special operations force rather than a permanent army. There are several examples of such expeditionary forces such as the ones dispatched by Julian in 360 and Valentinian in 368 to Britain, and another sent by Stilicho to Africa in 398. A feature of these special-forces is they have a large number of *Auxilia Palatina*, sometimes with an equal amount of *Legiones*, but no cavalry is ever mentioned. Ammianus records in 360 that the *Auxilia Palatina* units *Heruli* and *Batavi* along with two *Numeri* of the *Legio Moesiaci* were dispatched to Britain and in 368 the following *Auxilia Palatina* were sent; *Batavi*, *Heruli*, *Iovii* and *Victores*.<sup>773</sup> Claudian records the following forces being dispatched to deal with Gildo in Africa: two cohorts of the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani*, the *Legio Augustus* and the *Auxilia Palatina* units: *Nervi*, *Felix*, *Invicti* and *Leones*.<sup>774</sup> While these forces are much smaller than the *Comes Illyrici*'s command, they have a high proportion of *Auxilia Palatina* and a similar proportion of *Legiones*. The *Comes Illyrici*'s command also included some *Pseudocomitatenses*, which as we will see when we review these units, seem to have been locally recruited in *Illyricum* at a later date.

If the army of the *Comes Illyrici* was a campaign army, rather than a permanent force, then it might show the planned seizing of control of eastern *Illyricum* by Stilicho in 407.

Theodosius I may have been granted control over *Illyricum* by Gratian in the aftermath of Adrianople, but certainly controlled it after Frigidus, and it seems possible that Stilicho aimed to bring it back into the Western Empire.<sup>775</sup> He arranged for Honorius to appoint Alaric as the *Comes Illyrici* and planned to bring over an expeditionary force from Italy to join him.<sup>776</sup> Our sources do not directly mention Alaric's title, and the PLRE only suggests it was the *Comes Illyrici*, but the possibility exists that the list for the *Comes Illyrici* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* could in fact be the expeditionary force that was supposed to link up with Alaric's own men. This then could account for the lack of any cavalry units within the army, as these would have been supplied by the Goths. The expedition did not go ahead,

---

<sup>773</sup> Amm. 20.1.3, 27.8.7.

<sup>774</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-23.

<sup>775</sup> PLRE (1971), Theodosius 4, p. 904; Sozomen.7.2.1. On Stilicho's motives see Cameron (1970), p. 59.

<sup>776</sup> PLRE (1980), Alaric 1, p. 46. And see Soz.8.25.3, 9.4.2.

but Burns suggests that the army of the *Comes Illyrici* in the *Notitia* could represent this build-up of forces for the campaign.

Burns also believed that this army shows signs of recent redeployment in *Illyricum* which could have begun in 402.<sup>777</sup> While this is possibly, we would expect such forces to have been transferred into the main *Praesentalis* to deal with Radagaisus in 406, and redeployed after his defeat. One final point of interest is in 408, when Stilicho planned to travel to the east he assembled a force of four *Legiones* to escort him.<sup>778</sup> While we have no details of the units involved, there is yet again no reference to any cavalry units, and a force of four *Legiones* is quite close to the five *Legiones* under the *Comes Illyrici*. Since command in the Balkans changed on a regular basis, under the *Comes Dalmatiae, Italiae* and *Illyrici*, it seems that what we are seeing in the *Notitia Dignitatum* is a 'one-off' force which has been recorded, rather than a permanent one.

An alternative view is constructed by Heather who argues that in 406 Stilicho demanded the return of eastern *Illyricum* to the western empire, and wanted control over both *Dacia* and *Macedonia*. The main motivation for this was, he argues, to win back recruiting grounds in the Balkans and to settle Alaric in eastern *Illyricum*, where Stilicho would legally control the Goths. Heather goes on to say that the army of *Illyricum* was constructed by Constantius III because it contains many *Pseudocomitatenses*. These had been drawn into the army after the losses which occurred in 406.<sup>779</sup>

Therefore we have a possible range of dates for the army of the *Comes Illyrici* as recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. It seem unlikely to be prior to 375 when the post seems to have been de-commissioned prior to Adrianople. We have the campaign of 381 of Bauto and Arbogast, but neither of these were the *Comes Illyrici*, Bauto was a *Magister* while Arbogast is titled *Comes Rei Militaris*.<sup>780</sup> There appears to be no evidence for the post during the period 381-387, though the possibility exists as the Praetorian *Praefectus* of *Illyricum* was in existence during this time. The lack of any evidence of activity in 395 or 402, coupled with the Gothic occupation of the region would argue against this time span. Then we have 408

---

<sup>777</sup> Burns (1994), p. 192.

<sup>778</sup> Sozomen, 9.4; Olympiodorus, 5.2.

<sup>779</sup> Heather (2005), pp. 219-20, 411.

<sup>780</sup> PLRE (1971), Bauto, p. 159. Bauto is called *Magister Militum* by Zosimus, 4.33.1. Arbogast, p. 95.

with Stilicho's attempt to reclaim the province, 409 when Valens campaigned against Alaric, followed by Generidus who was operating in the region and managed to secure the *Dioecesis* of *Dalmatia* for the west. Finally, sometime after Constantius' recovery from 411 up to the 420's. If we accept the later date range, then the possibility of 408 and Stilicho's planned trip to the east must be considered as a reason for forming the army in *Illyricum*.

## 8.2 Units under the *Comes Illyrici*.

We can now look at the individual units in more detail to see if we can add some clarity for the dating of the entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. We have the following units listed under the *Comes Illyrici*, also showing their relative positions in the *Magister Peditum* listings:

<i>Sagittarii Tungri</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	16th
<i>Iovii Iuniores</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	26th
<i>Sequani</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	34th
<i>Raeti</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	33rd
<i>Sagittarii Venatores</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	35th
<i>Latini</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	36th
<i>Valentinianenses Felices</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	51st
<i>Honoriani Victores</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	58th
<i>Seguntienses</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	56th
<i>Tungri</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	62nd
<i>Mauri Honoriani Seniores</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	45th
<i>Mattiarum Honoriani Gallicani</i>	<i>Auxilia Palatina</i>	63rd
<i>Tertiani</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	14th
<i>Tertia Herculeia</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	15th
<i>Pacatianenses</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	7th
<i>Mauri Cetrati</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	10th
<i>Propugnatores Iuniores</i>	<i>Legio Comitatus</i>	17th
<i>Lanciarum Lauriacenses</i>	<i>Pseudocomitatenses</i>	3rd
<i>Lanciarum Comagenenses</i>	<i>Pseudocomitatenses</i>	4th
<i>Secunda Iulia</i>	<i>Pseudocomitatenses</i>	2nd
<i>Valentinianenses</i>	Unknown	Not listed

The first thing to note is that the *Auxilia Palatina* largely run sequentially, though the *Sequani* and *Raeti* are inverted, and so are the *Seguntienses* and the *Honoriani Victores*. The only unit that is clearly out of place is the *Mauri Honoriani Seniores* who appear second from last but are ranked much higher in seniority. The *Legiones Comitatusenses*, are more mixed up, with the *Pacatianenses* and *Mauri Cetrati* both in a lower position than expected. The *Pseudocomitatenses* are also mixed, but the first three at least represent a block units in the right number range. The last two units appear to be unknown, but it is reasonable to presume that as they appear last they are new *Pseudocomitatenses* units which had not yet been added to the *Magister Peditum* listings. This would suggest that the *Comes Illyrici* entry in the *Distributio* post-dates the *Magistri* listings. The most obvious other issue with this list, as with that of the *Comes Hispaniarum*, is the lack of any cavalry units being attached to what appears to be a field army.

To try to unpick some of these issues we will look at each unit in turn.

### 8.3 *Auxilia Palatina*

The first unit listed is the *Sagittarii Tungri*, one of only four *Sagittarii* units listed under the *Magister Peditum*. The name *Tungri* comes from Germanic tribes who settled in Belgium, though not mentioned by Julius Caesar, they are recorded by Tacitus.<sup>781</sup> This would also be the derivation of the simply named *Tungri* who appear nine places below the *Sagittarii Tungri* in the Illyrian army. While the *Notitia Dignitatum* has an entry for the *Dux Belgicae Secundae*, there is only a single unit of *Equites* and one *Militum* unit listed under his command, neither of which has the name *Tungri*. If the *Tungri* and *Sagittarii Tungri* both originated from *Belgicae*, they had probably been recruited and moved before the province was overrun during the Rhine crossing. While this is indeed possible for the *Sagittarii Tungri* who appear in a higher position in the *Magister Peditum* listings, and before any Honorian units, the same cannot be said for the *Tungri*. These are fourth from last in the *Magister Peditum* listings, just one place above the last named Honorian unit, the *Honoriani Gallicani*.

---

<sup>781</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 2.

There is the possibility that either or both units have their roots in Britain. Under the *Dux Britanniarum* there is a unit listed for the defence of the Wall at *Borcovicio* (Housestead) called *Cohors Prima Tungrorum*.<sup>782</sup> The unit's presence there appears to have been a permanent feature from 160 onwards, and archaeological evidence shows a decreased garrison at the fort at the end of the fourth and early fifth century. The unit was originally designated as *Milliaria*, meaning it was one of the 1,000 men strong *Auxilia* units of the early Empire. Such a unit would have been able to form a later *Auxilia Palatina* unit, which might explain the reduction in the fort's garrison at Housestead.<sup>783</sup> There is also another possible British connection. Under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* there is a unit called *Militum Tungrecanorum* at *Dubris* (Dover) which is geographically very close to the potential recruiting grounds of the *Tungri*.<sup>784</sup> However, this link seems unlikely as the *Militum Tungrecanorum* have been linked with the *Tungrecani Iuniores* by Holder. He argues that because they supported the usurper Procopius in 365, they were downgraded to *Limitanei* and posted to Britain in 367.<sup>785</sup> While it would be strange to see them back in the *Comitatenses*, it remains a possibility that the usurper Constantine III may have raised troops from them, and the general shortage of manpower meant they were retained after his defeat. Another possible connection exists with the *Praefectus Laetorum Tungros*, recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* being stationed in *Germania Secunda*.<sup>786</sup> A final possibility is noted by Holder who points out that there is evidence for the unit called *Cohors II Tungrorum Milliaria* being stationed at *Camboglanna* (Castlesteads) on Hadrian's Wall from the third century onwards.<sup>787</sup>

If the British connection is correct, it shows that both units may have come to Gaul with Constantine III and after his defeat were posted to the newly formed army of the *Comes Illyrici* by Constantius III. This line of reasoning would explain the unit called *Tungri* with its low position in the *Magister Peditum* listings, and dispatching troops from a former usurper to faraway *Illyricum* would also make sense. This is even less likely to be the case for the *Sagittarii Tungri* as an established unit they could have been drawn from anywhere within

<sup>782</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii; Holder (1982), p. 122.

<sup>783</sup> Crow (2012), pp. 12, 36-40; Fields (2003), p. 42.

<sup>784</sup> Not. Occ. xxv.

<sup>785</sup> Amm. 26.6.12; Holder (1982), p. 131.

<sup>786</sup> Not. Occ. xl.

<sup>787</sup> Holder (1982), p. 123.



the empire and even though they may have a British connection, there is nothing to say that they or the *Tungri* were in Britain prior to being posted to *Illyricum*.

The next unit in the Illyrian army is the *Iovii Iuniores* who appear 26<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings, which is 16 places below their twin unit, the *Iovii Seniores*. Ammianus mentions the *Iovii* twice, each time brigaded with the *Victores*, but does not specify if they are *Seniores* or *Iuniores*.<sup>788</sup> While it can be assumed that Ammianus refers to the *Seniores* and that the *Iovii Iuniores* were created at a much later date, hence the lower position in the *Magister Peditum* listings, this cannot be proven. Listed in 27<sup>th</sup> place, immediately after the *Iovii Iuniores*, are the *Victores Iuniores*, so it remains a possibility that Ammianus is referring to the *Iuniores* pair. While there is no listing under the *Magister Peditum* for the *Victores Seniores*, they are recorded in the *Distributio*, in the army of Italy, next to the *Iovii Seniores*, so Ammianus could have been referring to either pairing. If Ammianus was referring to the *Iovii* and *Victores Iuniores*, then by the time of the *Notitia Dignitatum* this brigaded pair had been separated as the *Victories Iuniores* are under the *Comes Hispaniarum*. There is an inscription at *Concordia* which mentions the *Iovii Iuniores*, so we could argue that they were at one time in the army of Italy along with the *Iovii Seniores*, and were subsequently posted to the command of the *Comes Illyrici* at a date after 395.<sup>789</sup>

The next Illyrian unit listed, the *Sequani*, are 34<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* listings, which is one place below the next unit under the *Comes Illyrici*, the *Raeti*. These two units are listed above all the Honorian units in the *Magister Peditum* listing, but below the two *Gratianenses* units who were presumably raised by Gratian during his reign 367-383. The most likely date for creation of the *Sequani* and *Raeti* being post Adrianople, and probably before Frigidus, to rebuild the armies overall strength and the West's presence in Illyricum, so it is no surprise to see them under the *Comes Illyrici*. However, this would suggest a date of 395 onwards, a time when the east controlled Illyricum and there appears not to have been an active western command there. It could be that the *Sequani* and *Raeti* temporarily fell under the command of the east during the troubled times post Adrianople, remained in *Illyricum*, and were still there when the west regained control of the area. The unit's name would suggest they were raised in the province of *Sequanici*, which is in the *Notitia*

---

<sup>788</sup> Amm. 26.7.13, 27.8.7.

<sup>789</sup> Hoffman (1963), p. 46.

*Dignitatum* as being under the command of the *Dux Provinciae Sequanici*. The only unit in this command is the *Milites Latavienses Olinone*, which does not contain the name *Sequanici*, so is unlikely to have been the parent unit.<sup>790</sup> It is probable that the *Sequanici* were removed from their province and the *Milites* unit was raised as a local *Limitanei*.

Moving on to the *Raeti*, who as mentioned appear below the *Sequanici* under the *Comes Illyrici* but above them under the *Magister Peditum*, are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* they are listed as *Reti* (P), which has been equated to *Raeti* by Böcking and Seeck, the same as the province. There is an officer called *Tribunis Gentis per Raetias* listed under the *Dux Raetiae*, but no other units within his command that have the title *Raeti*.<sup>791</sup> There is no direct evidence that the unit originated from this province, and they may have got its name from being stationed there before being moved to *Illyricum*. One possible date for this has been put forward by Burns, who suggests they were upgraded by Stilicho from local *Limitanei* to face Alaric in 402.<sup>792</sup>

Following on from the *Raeti* we have the *Sagittarii Venatores* who were the second *Sagittarii* unit under the *Comes Illyrici*. There were in fact only four *Auxilia Palatina Sagittarii* units in the west, two in *Illyricum* and one each in Spain and Gaul. By comparison, there are three in each of the two eastern *Praesentalis* armies, with an additional *Pseudocomitatenses Sagittarii* in the second *Praesentalis*, and one other *Auxilia Palatina Sagittarii* which is under the eastern *Magister Militum per Illyricum*.<sup>793</sup> These were highly specialised units, as seen in their concentration in the eastern *Praesentalis*, and one would be surprised to find such units under the *Comes Illyrici* if this was a hastily formed command in 420. The name *Sagittarii* would suggest they were a specialist archer unit, while *Venatores* refers to hunters. While this does not help us identify where and when the unit was raised, it is possible that they were formed from skilled archers from all over the western empire, further reinforcing the idea they are an elite unit. This line of reasoning would suggest that the command of the *Comes Illyrici* was a campaign field army rather than a hastily formed defence force.

---

<sup>790</sup> Not. Occ. xxxv.

<sup>791</sup> Not. Occ. xxxiv.

<sup>792</sup> Burns (1993), p. 192.

<sup>793</sup> Not. Or. iv, v, viii.

The next Illyrian unit is the *Latini*, which along with the three preceding units forms a block of four consecutive units in a row in the *Magister Peditum* listings, numbers 33-36. This is quite unusual outside the main Italian field army. The position of these four units under the *Magister Peditum* is interesting because they appear below the *Gratianenses Iuniores* and the *Valentinianenses Iuniores*, but above the first block of Honorian units which starts with the *Honoriani Atecotti Seniores*. If we assume that the *Gratianenses Iuniores* were raised by Gratian (367-383) and the *Valentinianenses Iuniores* were raised under his brother Valentinian II (375-393), then this group of four units: the *Sequani*, *Raeti*, *Sagittarii Venatores* and *Latini* were probably raised together at the same time at some point between 375 and 395. It is likely that all four units were raised in the chaos post Adrianople, listed together under the *Magister Peditum*, and then stationed together in Illyricum. It could be that what we are seeing is the formation of the field army of the *Comes Illyrici*, and this has been then added to at later dates.

This possibility can be extended further when we consider the next unit, the *Valentinianenses Felices* who appear below the *Latini* under the *Comes Illyrici*, but are ranked 51<sup>st</sup> under the *Magister Peditum* which is fifteen places lower than the *Latini*. While the unit title could also relate to Valentinian II, it appears after a group of Honorian units, though not all of them, and so could have been raised by Valentinian III (419-455). However, there are further Honorian units listed after the *Valentinianenses Felices* in the *Magister Peditum* listings, the *Honoriani Victores Iuniores*, the *Honoriani Ascarii Seniores* and the *Honoriani Gallicani*, which would argue that the *Valentinianenses Felices* were also raised during Honorius' reign. This would seem unlikely as any new unit would have carried an Honorian name, so the unit would appear to be out of position, too high to be raised by Valentinian III and too low to be Valentinian II.<sup>794</sup>

Following on under the *Comes Illyrici* we have the *Honoriani Victores*. They are listed under the *Magister Peditum* as the *Honoriani Victores Iuniores*, who are not assigned to any field commands, and so it is reasonable to assume that they are one and the same. There is no corresponding *Honoriani Victores Seniores* and we might speculate that at some point

---

<sup>794</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 353 argues that they were raised by Valentinian II, but were downgraded by 20 places in the *Magister Peditum* listings. The same logic could apply to them being raised by Valentinian III and upgraded in the listings.

before the drafting of the *Magister Peditum* list there had been a *Honoriani Victores Seniores* and *Iuniores*, but the *Seniores* unit had been destroyed and in the *Distributio* the *Honoriani Victores* in *Illyricum* lost their *Iuniores* title. This is another example that might suggest that the *Distributio* for *Illyricum* is more recent than the *Magistri* lists. Being listed as 58<sup>th</sup> in the *Magister Peditum* list for *Auxilia Palatina*, they appear 12 positions behind other Honorian units, which might suggest they were raised later during Honorius' reign, perhaps just prior to 423.

The *Seguntienses* are listed below the *Honoriani Victores* under the *Comes Illyrici*, but are listed in 56<sup>th</sup> position under the *Magister Peditum*, whereas the *Honoriani Victores* are 58<sup>th</sup>. They would appear to have originated from the fort at *Segontium* (Caernarvon) and there is an inscription referring to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort *Sunicorum* being stationed there early in the third century.<sup>795</sup> The fort and unit are not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, nor are any of the installations or units for western Britain, so there is no further reference to the *Sunicorum*. They may well have been withdrawn from Britain, along with the *Tungri* discussed above, and as the pair appear together under the *Comes Illyrici*, they may have formed a brigaded pair of units. There are two possible dates for the transfer of the units from Britain to mainland Europe: 402 when Stilicho withdrew troops to face Alaric, or as part of Constantine III's army which was defeated in 411 and then posted to *Illyricum*.<sup>796</sup>

Before the *Tungri*, the penultimate unit of *Auxilia Palatina* under the *Comes Illyrici* is the *Mauri Honoriani Seniores*, who are listed in 45<sup>th</sup> position under the *Magister Peditum* but appear behind several units which are ranked below them in the *Magister Peditum* listing. They appear in the first group of Honorian units, so were presumably raised early during Honorius' reign. The unit's low position under the *Comes Illyrici* might be explained as a later addition to the list (after the transfer of the possible British units discussed above). As previously discussed the *Mauri* part of the name probably relates to them being raised in Africa from Moorish tribesmen.<sup>797</sup> It is quite possible that the term *Mauri* no longer referred to the troop's ethnicity.

---

<sup>795</sup> RIB.430.

<sup>796</sup> Burns (1994), p. 192; Holder (1982), p. 129. Both support 402 as the date for their removal from Britain.

<sup>797</sup> Barker (1981), p. 75.

The last of the *Auxilia Palatina* listed under the *Comes Illyrici* is the *Mattiarii Honoriani Gallicani*. In his edition, Böcking split this unit into two, a simply named *Mattiarii* and the *Honoriani Gallicani*.<sup>798</sup> They are listed as the *Honoriani Gallicani* in the shield illustrations of the *Magister Peditum*, but are shown in the Paris manuscript as *Mattiarii Honoriani Gallicani*.

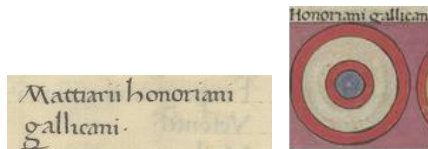


Figure 37: The *Mattiarii Honoriani Gallicani* in the *Distributio* and shield illustration (P).

It is not clear why Böcking made this change, unless he was attempting to make up the number of *Auxilia Palatina* units to the full 65 which is stated under the *Magister Peditum*. In Seeck's edition, he did not split the unit's name in two and left it as the *Mattiarii Honoriani Gallicani* which is followed by Faleiro.<sup>799</sup> There are differences between the various manuscripts in how they list the *Auxilia Palatina*, as there are 62 in (P) and 63 in (M), both Böcking and Seeck produced a list of 65 units. It should be noted that there are not 65 illustrated shield designs under the *Magister Peditum*, so it is hard to say for certain which part of the document is correct. The *Mattiarii Honoriani Gallicani* are listed in 63<sup>rd</sup> position in Böcking's edition of the *Magister Peditum* listings and are the last Honorian named unit, so could presumably have been raised during the latter part of his reign. Their position at the end of the list of *Auxilia Palatina* under the *Comes Illyrici* is therefore no surprise and would suggest that they were added to the army probably in the 420s, possibly along with the *Mauri Honoriani Seniores*.

#### 8.4 *Legiones Comitatus* and *Pseudocomitatus*

There are no *Legiones Palatinae* under the *Comes Illyrici*, most of these elite units in the west are in Italy under the *Magister Peditum*. Of the five *Legiones Comitatus* listed under the *Comes Illyrici*, they appear in a very confused order of: 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, according to their corresponding positions under the *Magister Peditum*.

<sup>798</sup> Böcking (1839), Not. Occ. p. 34.

<sup>799</sup> Not. Occ. vii; Seeck (1876), p. 125; Faleiro (2005), p. 350, fn. 6.

If we look at the first *Legio Comitatusensis* which is listed we have the *Tertiani*, which is recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as *Legio Tertiani sive Tertia Italica*. It should be noted that in the Paris edition the unit is named *Terciani* instead of *Tertiani*, while for some reason in Seeck's edition the *Legio* and *Tertiani sive* part of the name has been bracketed for deletion, and the unit is simply named as *Tertia Italica*.<sup>800</sup> These are probably a detachment from the *Legio Tertiae Italica*, which is still recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* under the *Dux Raetiae* as controlling five different bases.<sup>801</sup> The only point of interest in the full title, *Legio Tertiani sive Tertia Italica*, which is similar to one other example in Gaul, the *Legio Secunda Brittannica Sueve sive Secundani*. Neither unit has the simple title with *Seniores* nor *Iuniores* attached. This may indicate a possible link to an older naming system which could be read as the third detachment of the third *Legio Italica*. Jones argued that some of these older border legions were still based on the older style with ten cohorts. These had been reduced in size by having *Vexillationes* drawn from them, reducing them down to approximately 3,000 strong.<sup>802</sup> This would seem correct in this case, with five border forts manned by the *Legio*, and a field *Legio Comitatusensis*. Finding this unit under the *Comes Illyrici* is not surprising, as the *Dux Raetiae* is guarding part of the Danube frontier. It does not, however, offer any clues as to when the unit was drawn into this command. While they appear 14<sup>th</sup> in the *Legiones Comitatusenses* under the *Magister Peditum* and just ahead of the *Tertia Herculea*, who likewise appear below them under the *Comes Illyrici*, two of the subsequent *Legiones* under the *Comes Illyrici* are senior to them in the *Magister Peditum* listings. This might imply that the *Tertiani* and the *Tertia Herculea* were the first two *Legiones* to be attached to this command.

The *Tertia Herculea*, follows on from the *Tertiani* in both the army of the *Comes Illyrici*, and under the *Magister Peditum* listings, which might imply that they are a brigaded pair. There are many units within the *Notitia Dignitatum* who bear the name *Herculea* or a derivative of this name. Under the *Magister Peditum* we have the *Legio Palatina Herculiani Seniores*, and in the eastern *Praesentalis* we have the *Herculiani Iuniores*. But the only other field army unit is the *Tertia Herculea*, and there are no corresponding *Prima* or *Secunda Herculea*.<sup>803</sup>

---

<sup>800</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 125.

<sup>801</sup> Not. Occ. xxxiv.

<sup>802</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 681.

<sup>803</sup> Not. Occ. v; Not. Or. iv.

Among the border *Limitanei Legiones* there is the *Legio Secundae Herculianae* under the *Dux Scythiae* in the east and the *Legio Sextae Herculeae* under the *Dux Pannoniae* in the west.<sup>804</sup> It is tempting to suggest that the *Legio Tertia Herculea* was drawn from one of these two *Limitanei* units and may have been one of many detachments upgraded to *Comitatenses* status. This would tie in with Vegetius who claimed there were two *Legiones* in *Illyria* who were renamed by Diocletian as the *Herculiani* and *Ioviani*.<sup>805</sup> From these two detachments formed the *Herculiani Seniores* and *Ioviani Seniores* and were promoted into the western *Praesentalis*, the remainder of the *Legiones* stayed on the border, and at a later date a further detachment was made into a *Comitatenses Legio*, the *Tertia Herculea*.

The next *Legio Comitatensis* are the simply named *Pacatianenses* who appear above the *Tertiani sive Tertia Italica* and the *Tertia Herculea* under the *Magister Peditum* listings, and are ranked seventh overall. The name *Pacatianenses* is unusual as it has no *Seniores* or *Iuniores* attached. That the name is derived from the word *Pacis* would seem unlikely, but there is in Spain a unit called the *Secundae Flaviae Pacatianae Paetaonio*, which may have a link to the *Pacatianenses*.<sup>806</sup> Even less likely is they may have a link to the third century usurper Pacatianus who controlled one of the Danube *Legiones*. While the name and location fit well with a unit in *Illyricum*, I know of no other instance of a unit retaining the name of a usurper, so this is unlikely to be the reason for the unit's name, nothing else is known.<sup>807</sup>

The penultimate *Legio Comitatenses* is the *Mauri Cetrati* who appear after the *Pacatianenses* in both the army of *Illyricum* and the *Magister Peditum* listings, but in the *Illyricum* lists are likewise out of position behind the *Tertiani* and the *Tertia Herculea*. As previously discussed, the name *Mauri* is associated with Moorish tribes and may have indicated where the unit was first raised. While there were several *Mauri* cavalry units as well as another unit that contains the title *Cetrati*, the *Equites Cetrati Seniores*, along with several *Auxilia Palatina* units, it is unusual however, to find a *Legio* named *Mauri*. Since the unit is a *Comitatenses* rather than a newly upgraded *Pseudocomitatenses* this would suggest, as does its position in the *Magister Peditum* listings that it has been in existence for

---

<sup>804</sup> Not. Or. xxxvi; Not. Occ. xxxi.

<sup>805</sup> Vegetius, 1.17.

<sup>806</sup> Not. Occ. xl.

<sup>807</sup> Zosimus. 1.21.2.

some time. The only point that can be made is that the *Mauri Cetrati* as well as the *Pacatianenses* are both out of position behind the *Tertia Herculea*. Whereas the *Tertia Herculea* have a link to the *Illyricum* area, these do not. It would seem, as in other instances within the *Notitia Dignitatum* and under the Comes *Illyrici*, that the *Pacatianenses* and *Mauri Cetrati* were added to the command of the Comes *Illyrici* at a later date and therefore added to the end of the list.

The last of the *Legiones Comitatus* are the *Propugnatores Iuniores* who appear in the correct sequence coming after the *Mauri Cetrati* under both the *Magister Peditum* and the Comes *Illyrici*. The *Propugnatores Seniores* appear under the Comes *Hispaniarum*, whose army appears to have been a temporary command rather than a permanent one. It might be that the *Propugnatores Iuniores* were sent on a similar mission under the Comes *Illyrici*. These two *Propugnatores* units do not appear together in the *Magister Peditum* listings, so there is no reason to believe that they operated together. The name *Propugnatores* means defenders or champions and does not hold any clues to the unit's origins, while its position under the Comes *Illyrici* after the *Mauri Cetrati* is consistent with it being a later addition to the Comes forces, possibly at the same time as the *Pacatianenses* and the *Mauri Cetrati*.

The order of the *Legiones Comitatus* section of the Comes *Illyrici* when viewed with the historical accounts would suggest a date range of 402-409. The *Tertiani* and the *Tertia Herculea* were the first units added to the command from locally upgraded *Limitanei* forces to full *Comitatus*. Further troops were added by 407 with Stilicho's planned seizure of *Illyricum* and were probably in place by 408 for his expected trip to the east. They were then the main part of Valens' army in 409 when attempted to attack Alaric, during which campaign they were destroyed. These later additions were included at the bottom of the list of *Legiones Comitatus* and his accounts for the unusual order they appear in.

The *Legiones Comitatus* are followed in the Comes *Illyrici* by five *Legiones Pseudocomitatus*, three of which are also listed under the *Magister Peditum* while the final two are not. The first and second are the *Lanciarri Lauriacenses* and *Lanciarri Comagenenses*. Both of these units appear to have come from towns listed under the *Dux Pannoniae Primae*, at *Lauriacum* and *Comagenis*. The name *Lanciarri* is linked to a late Roman spear, but may also represent status, as the most senior *Legio* in the eastern army was the



*Lanciarrii Seniores*.<sup>808</sup> It is therefore unusual to see two *Limitanei* units bearing this name. What is also strange is that while the unit recorded in the *Notitia* at *Lauriaco* is legionary, the *Legio Secunda*, the one at *Comagenis* was the *Equites Promoti*.<sup>809</sup> In his edition Seeck identified the *Legio Secunda* as being the *Secundae Italicae* who are also stationed at two other towns under the *Dux Pannoniae Primae*.<sup>810</sup> While that *Legio* could certainly have provided the basis for the *Pseudocomitatenses Legio Lanciarrii Lauriacenses*, the *Equites Promoti* would not have been large enough to provide troops for a new *Legio*. It is possible that the *Lanciarrii Comaginenses* were drawn from the nearby *Legio Decimae* stationed at *Vindomarae*, also within the control of the *Dux Pannoniae*. This *Legio* was identified by Seeck as the *Decima Gemina* which had been stationed in *Pannonia* for many years.<sup>811</sup> If this was correct, however, then we would expect that the *Lanciarrii Comaginenses* as well as the *Lanciarrii Lauriacenses* would have something in their titles to link them to their parent units, which they do not.

Heather suggests that these two units were raised sometime between the years 395 - 420 and show the army of *Illyricum* in 420, and that both units were later withdrawn by Constantius III in response to the losses in the western army in 406.<sup>812</sup> However, it is possible that as neither of these units have any obvious link to their supposed parent units, they could have been raised at after 420 and merely recruited from the towns mentioned in their names. If this was the case then their position in the *Illyricum* field army at the front of the *Pseudocomitatenses* might suggest that all of the *Pseudocomitatenses* units are late additions to the army of *Illyricum*.

The next unit *Pseudocomitatenses* is the *Secunda Iulia* who may also have had a geographical link to the army of *Illyricum*. They were identified by Seeck as the *Secunda Iulia Alpina* listed under the *Magister Peditum*.<sup>813</sup> They are one of three similarly named units along with the *Prima Alpina* and the *Tertia Iulia Alpina* who are both in the Italian field army. All three units appear to have once been part of the now vacant command of the *Comes Italia*, and may have been previously under the *Comes Dalmatiae*. The *Secunda Iulia* are

---

<sup>808</sup> Not. Or. v.

<sup>809</sup> Not. Occ. xxxiv.

<sup>810</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 198.

<sup>811</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 197.

<sup>812</sup> Heather (2005), p. 411 and fn. 48.

<sup>813</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 126; Not. Occ. v.

listed ahead of the *Lanciarii Lauriacenses* and *Comaginenses* under the *Magister Peditum*, but are below them under the *Comes Illyrici*. As the two other *Alpina* units are in the Italian field army it seems reasonable to suggest that the *Secunda Iulia* were also in that army and were transferred to the *Comes Illyrici* at a later date, after the formation of the *Lanciarii Lauriacenses* and *Comaginenses*, and added after them.

If this was the case, then the last two *Pseudocomitatenses* units, the *Valentinianenses* and *Catarienses* must have been raised even later and added to the end of the list. Since neither of these units are listed under the *Magister Peditum*, this would support the idea that they are new units. Of the 18 *Pseudocomitatenses* units recorded under the *Magister Peditum*, nine have single word names such as the *Valentinianenses* and *Catarienses*. These units all appear to be named after locations, such as the *Pontinenses*, or emperors, such as the *Constantiaci*. The lack of any *Seniores* or *Iuniores* in the names or other titles such as *Defensores* or *Armigeri*, coupled with the lack of any numbering to show a link to older established units, might suggest that these recently raised units did not originate from any existing legionary source.

In the case of the *Valentinianenses* it would seem certain that they were named after one of the three Valentinian Emperors. Their lowly position at the end of the *Comes Illyrici* listing and the fact they do not appear under the *Magister Militum* would suggest that they were named after Valentinian III (425-455), right at the very end date for the *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>814</sup>

The last unit listed under the *Comes Illyrici* is the *Catarienses* which as noted above is not listed under the *Magister Peditum*. Seeck and Jones both identified this unit with the *Numerus Cattharensium* based in *Germania Prima*.<sup>815</sup> However, *Germania Prima* appears to have been abandoned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, so any troop movement from there to *Illyricum* must have happened before the province was overrun in 406-407, which should

---

<sup>814</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 135. Suggested that the *Valentinianenses* could be the *Valentinianenses Iuniores*, who are also linked with the *Valentinianenses* list in Gaul, this is also followed by Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 361. Ueda-Sarson suggests that the *Valentinianenses* could be the unassigned *Augustei* from the *Magister Peditum* list, though this seems less likely ([lukeuedasarson.com/NDvalentinianensisSeniores.html](http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDvalentinianensisSeniores.html)). Since any explanation that tries to identify the *Valentinianenses* amongst units already listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* would have to apply to the *Catarienses* as well (and it does not), the *Valentinianenses* must have been named after Valentinian III.

<sup>815</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 135; Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 365.

have provided ample time to include the new *Pseudocomitatenses* unit into the *Magister Peditum* listings. Also the inscription used in the identification is dated 225 and is for a *Numerus* unit.<sup>816</sup> Since this was a smaller unit than a *Legio* and dated over 100 years prior to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it seems unlikely that the *Numerus Cattharensium* is the *Catarienses* placed at the end of the *Comes Illyrici's* command. It seems more reasonable that, like the *Valentinianenses*, this was a recently raised unit.<sup>817</sup>

It is possible that the *Valentinianenses* and *Catarienses* were not yet included under the *Magister Peditum* because they were not field army units, but recently raised border troops. The issuing of these commands was under the control of the *Quaestor*, as discussed in the first chapter, and though the border troops are listed under the various *Duces* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, if these were new units which had not yet been allocated to a province, they may only have been included at the end of the *Comes Illyrici* entry. This too would suggest a late date if the information had not caught up with the *Primicerius Notariorum*, responsible for the *Laterculum Minus*.<sup>818</sup>

## 8.5 Dating the army of the *Comes Illyrici*

We have a range of possible dates for when the army of the *Comes Illyrici* in the *Notitia* was operating. These are located either prior to the battle of Adrianople in 378, which seems unlikely, or the period 381-387, also 402-409, and finally at some point after 409 which could extend up to the 420s.

If we start with the *Auxilia Palatina* units, the first two listed are the *Sagittarii Tungri* and *Iovii Iuniores*, which would appear to date prior to 378 and may well have been a part of the previous commands of the *Comes Italiae* or *Comes Dalmatiae*. The next group of four units all run sequentially under the *Magister Peditum* listings, which would suggest that they were posted to the army of *Illyricum* at the same time. These are the *Sequani*, *Raeti*, *Sagittarii Venatores* and the *Latini* and appear to have been raised at some point between the years 375 – 393, most probably after Adrianople, which coincides with the second

---

<sup>816</sup> EDH. HD036586.

<sup>817</sup> [lukeuedasarson.com/NDvalentinianensisSeniores.html](http://lukeuedasarson.com/NDvalentinianensisSeniores.html). Suggests that they could be linked to the *Cohortis Caratenses*, however, Faleiro (2005), p.567 argues that *Caratenses* is a corruption of *Scarabantensis* which is supported by the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Classical Sites under the entry for *Scarabantia*, so it seems unlikely to be the basis for the *Catarienses*.

<sup>818</sup> Not. Occ. xv.

possible date for the army of *Illyricum* of 381 -387. They were added to the first two units and formed the original army. To these can probably also be added the *Valentinianenses Felices*, who are something of an oddity. They were probably raised by Valentinian II and then demoted in the order of seniority, but also can probably be dated with the other *Auxilia Palatina* from the 380s. The last five Illyrian units of *Auxilia Palatina* all appear towards the end of the *Magister Peditum* listings and include several Honorian named units. The inclusion of the *Seguntienses* within this group, and their association with Britain would give us a possible date of 411 after the defeat of Constantine III. This would seem reasonable when we consider the lower position of the other units under the *Magister Peditum*, and so these units were added from 411 onwards.

It is possible to find a similar pattern amongst the *Legiones Comitatus*, though harder to offer any set dates. The first two units listed under the *Comes Illyrici*, the *Tertiani* and *Tertia Herculea*, both originated from local border *Legiones*, and due to their status as *Comitatus*, would have been raised prior to the *Notitia Dignitatum*. They may well have previously been part of the forces of the *Comes Dalmatiae* and *Comes Italiae* forces and as such represent the initial forces of the *Comes Illyrici*, along with the first group of *Auxilia Palatina*. These were then augmented with the *Pacatianenses*, *Mauri Cetrati* and *Propugnatores Iuniores* being added at a later date, hence their order in the *Comes Illyrici* command.

The final group of five *Pseudocomitatus*, likewise, suggest a later date for the army of the *Comes Illyrici*. Only the *Secunda Iulia* may have existed earlier, possibly under the *Comes Italiae*, but as these are *Pseudocomitatus*, they had only recently been promoted to the mobile army. There is nothing to suggest that they, or the other *Pseudocomitatus* under the *Comes Illyrici*, were in existence prior to 408, and as the last two units, *Valentinianenses* and *Catarienses*, are not even listed under the *Magister Peditum*, and so could date to the 420's.

If we discount the idea that the listing in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the *Comes Illyrici* shows the army in the 380s because of the number of Honorian units, it seems that what we have is a two stage development of an army. It is possible that units started being deployed in *Illyricum* from 402, but the army was fully formed by 409. Those units which can be dated to this period are:

*Sagittarii Tungri*

*Iovii Iuniores*

*Sequani*

*Raeti*

*Sagittarii Venatores*

*Latini*

*Valentinianenses Felices*

*Tertiani*

*Tertia Herculea*

*Pacatianenses*

*Mauri Cetrati*

*Propugnatores Iuniores*

The last three units were added after the initial formation of the army, but were a part of it by 409. The following units were raised to form the re-built army under Generidus from 409 onwards:

*Honoriani Victores*

*Seguntienses*

*Tungri*

*Mauri Honoriani Seniores*

*Mattiarum Honoriani Gallicani*

*Lanciarum Lauriacenses*

*Lanciarum Comagenenses*

*Secunda Iulia*

*Valentinianenses*

*Catarienses*

I believe the *Notitia Dignitatum* has recorded the two stage development of the army under the *Comes Illyrici*. The likeliest date for the first section would be 409. The chance of any units in *Illyricum* surviving the troubled times in the aftermath of Adrianople would seem

unlikely. Any such units would have been transferred or destroyed in this period. Therefore, the first half of the list would be a field army put together for a campaign to re-assert the West's control over *Illyricum* by Stilicho, commanded first by Valens and then Generidus. This can be supported by the reference to Stilicho using four *Legiones* for his planned trip to Constantinople and the five *Legiones* lost by Valens in his attempt to stop Alaric. As this was a campaign army, rather than a permanent force, there was no coversheet or mention of it in the Index of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This can be further supported by the structure of the original army, with seven *Auxilia Palatina* and five *Legiones Comitatusenses*, resembles other field army commands as discussed in this thesis. The forces led by Valens were destroyed, but not removed from the listings, and the later troops added to the command can be dated from 409 up to the 420s. Here again we have another example of units being retained in both the *Magister Peditum* shield illustrations and the *Distributio* even though they had been destroyed.

These later forces are made up of newly raised *Auxilia Palatina* units dated from the end of Honorius' reign and recently promoted *Pseudocomitatenses* to replace the lost *Legiones*. This later army looks more like the hastily gathered force as seen under the Eastern *Magister Militum per Illyricum*, but this is concealed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* because the entry for the *Comes Illyrici* still includes units from the original force that no longer existed.

## 9. Conclusion

I have demonstrated that the evidence for the various field armies in the *Notitia Dignitatum Occidentis* can be dated to several different time periods. Many of the entries have also been edited over time to record on-going reinforcements, but rarely reveal any deletions despite the losses which our textual sources would suggest had happened to the units. To briefly summarise the preceding chapter conclusions, we see the following proposed dates:

Army of the *Comes Hispaniarum*: 411

Army of the *Comes Tingitaniae*: 409

Army of the *Comes Africae*: Initial list prior to 413, then updated down to 431

Army of the *Comes Britanniarum*: 407

Gallic army of the *Magister Equitum Galliarum*: 411-415

Italian army of the *Magister Peditum*: Initial list 390s then updated until the 420s

Army of the *Comes Illyrici*: Initial list of 408/9, then updated in the 420s

As can be seen it has not been possible to ascertain a single date in the fifth century when all these armies existed together, so the *Notitia Dignitatum* is not offering us a 'snapshot' of the western Roman army. This leads us back to the key questions raised in the introduction: one was 'a question of numbers'. The implications of this are important in assessing the western Empire's ability to resist the steady flow of Germanic invasions in the fifth century. The other question, was 'what was the *Notitia Dignitatum* for?' which follows on from 'a question of numbers', if it was not an accurate portrayal of the Roman forces in the early fifth century. Within this we also have to consider such issues as the relationship within the *Notitia Dignitatum* between the *Magistri* listings and the *Distributio*, and how we should use the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a source of military information.

Before answering these questions we must consider again the methodology that I have used during this thesis. This has been based upon a comparison between what our textual sources have to say on military operations and the evidence for dating within the military information in the *Notitia Dignitatum* itself. An example of this can be seen in the discussion on the army of Italy. Our sources give us the impression that the army had been reduced to

such a poor state by the time of Radagaisus' invasion of 406 that Stilicho was only able to put together a weak force to oppose him, while Alaric's sack of Rome was barely opposed at all. Yet the list in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the army of Italy still shows a powerful force, so the two pieces of information are not compatible.<sup>819</sup>

In this example it was possible to identify that the list for the army of Italy in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was made up from different time periods, an initial list drafted in the early 390s and then added to in several different phases up to an end date in the 420s. The key finding was that not all the units within the army of Italy could have coexisted at the terminus date, so the list as recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* was never one whole army. This then has a direct impact on the two major research questions on numbers and the use of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, because why keep out of date information in a supposedly working document?

### **A question of numbers?**

The implications of my research impact on how we can use the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the military information that it contains. One of the ways it has been used previously, as discussed in the introduction, was to be able to assess the losses suffered by the Western Roman Empire in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Heather noted that the eastern section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which is dated to 395, contains 157 field army units.<sup>820</sup> For the west at a date in the 420s, it records 181 field army units, but of these 97 can be dated from 395, and only 84 units survived from before that date.<sup>821</sup> The new units can be identified as those that are named after Honorius and any that follow on from these units in the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* listings. If we accept Heather's suggestion that in 395 the western army was a similar size to the eastern army, a figure of approximately 160 field army units, then 76 of these units had been destroyed by 420. This attrition is most notable in the Gallic field army, as out of its 58 units only 21 appear to predate 395, the other 37 units were raised during Honorius' reign.<sup>822</sup> This analysis of the Gallic field army is perfectly acceptable if we consider that it faced the Germanic crossing of the Rhine in 406,

---

<sup>819</sup> Chapter 7, p. 167.

<sup>820</sup> Heather (2005), p. 247.

<sup>821</sup> Böcking (1839), pp. 33-40 records 189 units in total.

<sup>822</sup> Böcking (1839), pp. 35-9 records 60 units in the Gallic field army. Faleiro (2005), pp. 351-5 has 59 units.



then under Constantine III continued fighting the invaders down to the Pyrenees and was caught fighting against Constantius III and his counter-attack in 411.

The second point that Heather makes when assessing these losses concerns the quality of the replacements. The *Notitia Dignitatum* shows us that of the 97 new units added to the western army by 420, 62 were old frontier garrison units upgraded to the field army. These are identified in the *Magistri* listings as 14 *Legiones Comitatuses*, 28 *Pseudocomitatuses* and 20 *Vexillationes Comitatuses*. Of these promoted *Limitanei* units, 21 were in the Gallic field army. Therefore the losses in the western army had been made good not by recruiting new first class troops but by reclassifying old low grade formations.<sup>823</sup>

Another way that the *Notitia Dignitatum* lists have been used is to try to calculate the total military manpower available in the fifth century Roman Empire, as by Jones and more recently Treadgold. By applying a standard unit size to the entries listed in both the eastern and western sections of the *Notitia*, an estimated figure of 645,000 men has been reached, which tallies with the sixth century source from Agathias.<sup>824</sup>

Such approaches are perfectly valid if we accept the view that the *Notitia Dignitatum* is an accurate military document at a set date. As I have shown in the previous chapters, however, the various regional field armies did not exist at one specific date. A second problem is the belief that the *Notitia* lists have been maintained and updated. Although we have seen various units being added to the lists, our textual evidence suggests that many units should also have been deleted. While the *Notitia Dignitatum* does show several missing units, when there is a unit named with *Seniores*, but no corresponding *Iuniores* listed in any army, these would account for only a small amount of the losses.

If we return to Heather's analysis of the Gallic field army, he assumes that there was a field army in Gaul at the beginning of the fifth century and that it was of a similar size to the one recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. These two points are by no means certain. The textual accounts of the sequence of events would say otherwise. First came the drawing together of the western field army for Frigidus in 394 and the losses incurred. The recruitment drive by Stilicho and the withdrawal of forces from Gaul to enable him to confront Alaric at Pollentia

---

<sup>823</sup> Heather (2005), pp. 247-8.

<sup>824</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 354 calculated a figure of 600,000. Treadgold (1995), p. 45 calculated a figure that matched Agathias'.

and Verona in 402, and again in 406 to face Radagaisus at Faesulae, must likewise be taken into account. Whatever limited forces that were in Gaul in the winter of 406/7 were insufficient to make any impact against the various tribes crossing the Rhine, suggesting there was no organised *Comitatenses* in Gaul. A similar argument can be applied to the forces listed under the *Comes Britanniae*, *Comes Hispaniarum* and the *Comes Tingitaniae* whose commands had all ceased to exist well before 420.

The theory that we are able to calculate the losses and therefore the quality of the western army is equally problematical. We cannot accept the assumption that just because units are listed within the *Notitia Dignitatum* that they all still existed. The last recorded instance of units being named in our wider primary sources is in 397 with the expeditionary force sent to confront Gildo, described by Claudian.<sup>825</sup> While the lack of any named units after this date does not prove they did not exist, their omission in the accounts of Pollentia, Verona and Faesulae along with the small forces available to oppose Alaric in 410 would argue that many of the *Legiones Palatinae* and *Auxilia Palatina* units in the army of Italy were no longer effective fighting forces by the early fifth century, if they did indeed still exist at all. These losses can only be estimated, but we have several examples of units that seem to have ceased to exist but are still recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The first six *Legiones Palatinae* in the army of Italy and the five *Legiones Comitatenses* under the *Comes Illyrici* would all appear to have been destroyed or reduced to such a weakened state as to be discounted as fighting units by 410. I do not believe that they were retained in the *Notitia Dignitatum* because it was the intention to re-build them at a later date, merely they were not removed because of the effort involved in doing so and the purpose of the *Notitia* was not to record accurate military information.

This then makes trying to calculate the size of the late Roman army from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, especially in the west, almost impossible. We have small pieces of information which give an insight into regional forces at different dates. Some of these regional armies often take the form of special one-off operational forces put together for a specific campaign, such as those of the *Comes Hispanias* or *Comes Illyricum*. However, we cannot always be certain of the date of these army lists became active and several others such as

---

<sup>825</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 415-23.

those for the *Comes Africae*, *Magister Peditum in Italy* and the *Magister Equitum in Gaul*, show different date layers within each list. This prevents us with any certainty in having a single operating date when all of the units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* were active at the same time.

### **What was the Notitia Dignitatum for?**

Another key issue when looking at the military information within the *Notitia Dignitatum* is the relationship between the shield illustrations, the *Magistri* lists and the *Distributio*. If the *Notitia Dignitatum* was a working document then we would expect these three blocks to each record the same information, which they do not. It is of course possible that they were at one date the same, but regular updating of the document has led to errors. The hardest part to amend would have been the Illustrations because of the time and effort involved in re-drafting these pages. If we accept that the illustrations were correct when originally drafted, a view disputed by Grigg, then it is quite likely that they would remain unaltered.<sup>826</sup> However, the *Magistri* listings that follow the shield illustrations should have been easier to update and we would also expect them to match the information in the *Distributio*. Jones argued that the *Distributio* had been updated and as such was the most accurate of the three pieces of evidence for the military information within the *Notitia Dignitatum*. He believed the *Magistri* listings, while contemporary to the *Distributio*, were kept to show unit seniority, while the *Distributio* showed strength of army groups based on returns from army commanders.<sup>827</sup>

To try to understand these issues with the shield illustrations, *Magistri* listings and *Distributio* it will be helpful to review briefly the *Orientis* section of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which is considered to have been compiled c395.<sup>828</sup> As discussed in the introduction, there is no eastern *Distributio* and each field commander has a separate cover sheet which illustrates the relevant infantry shields, but not the cavalry, and then gives a list of all the units under that command. It is possible that the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a whole (east and west) was originally drawn up at the same time and that the western half has been

---

<sup>826</sup> Grigg (1983), pp. 132-42.

<sup>827</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii, p. 352.

<sup>828</sup> Jones (1964), vol.iii, p.351. Brennan (1995), pp.164-165.

updated.<sup>829</sup> If this was the case then we would expect the western shield illustrations to have been included under the various army commanders, and that the cavalry shields to be included in the eastern section. The importance of seniority of the units in west, as shown by the *Magistri* listings, is not reflected in east, and the rank of the field army commanders is different. In the east all the major armies are command by a *Magister Militum*, whereas in the west we have the *Magister Peditum*, *Magister Equitum* and various *Comites*. Seeing as the two parts of the document are so different they were not drawn up from any official template and are in fact recording information for different purposes.

It would seem that the western section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* is recording the overall importance of the *Magister Peditum* and the *Distributio* is possibly confirming his regional control. The fact that the various *Comites'* regional armies are drawn from different dates would make the *Distributio* less of an accurate statement on military strength, but one of reinforcing the power of *Magister Peditum*. This power comes from controlling all of the infantry units which were under his command and used in creating the various field armies and the *Distributio* records this in a way that was not needed in the east. It cannot be recording accurate military information from one specific date, as if it were we would expect it to include more detailed information such as troop numbers. Likewise, it cannot be solely for the purpose of issuing commissions for field army commanders or unit commanders, as we would expect names of the holders to be present. We are therefore left with the theory put forward by Brennan that the purpose of the *Notitia Dignitatum* is one for a political ideology. An image of unity between east and west and a show of strength. It shows an ideal world and underlines the power of the centre, the Imperial court, over the various offices, both civil and military, who were under that control.

### **Dating the Notitia Dignitatum**

This is a difficult question to answer as we have several pieces of information which have been drawn together to create the document. The earliest date for the shield illustration under the *Magister Peditum* would be in the 390s as it includes units which are still recorded in our sources as operating against Gildo in 398, which appear to have been destroyed by 410 and the sack of Rome. It contains many Honorian units which could have

---

<sup>829</sup> Kulikowski (2000), pp.358-377.

been raised throughout the emperor's life, though it would have been possible to add new units to the illustrations at the end, though much harder to remove them. We have examples in both the Gallic field army and the Illyrian army of *Pseudocomitatenses* units which are not illustrated, and I have argued a date range of 409-411 and later for these formations, so this would give us an end date for the illustrations. The *Distributio*, which is easier to maintain, shows signs of being added to with the example of not only the *Pseudocomitatenses* units noted above but units such as the *Placidi Valentinianici Felices* which as noted, Jones believed to have been raised in the 420s after Valentinian III who was Augustus 425-455. This would give us an ended date for the *Distributio* and the possible date that the various elements were combined to form the *Notitia Dignitatum* as we have it. This is the view of Brennan who suggests the *Primicerius Notariorum* Macrobius as a possible candidate in 426 for doing this.<sup>830</sup>

### **What can we use the military information for?**

What the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows us is the on-going development of the late Roman western field armies. It shows us a near complete record of the units which existed at one-time and the structure of various campaign armies drawn together for limited offensives. This gives us an insight into the different priorities the western authorities had and what forces were available to conduct them.

It is too detailed to be dismissed as mere fantasy or an artificial construct for purely political reasons. It is also too inaccurate to be a working document, and even if it started out as one originally, the shifting military situation in the early fifth century made it obsolete the moment it was drafted. What we have is a picture of where and when the the dwindling western Roman forces were committed.

---

<sup>830</sup> Brennan (1995), p.168.

## Appendix i: Discussion of the *Numeri*.

The term *Numeri* predates the *Notitia Dignitatum*, first appearing in the 1<sup>st</sup> century in the form of hired barbarians fighting under their own leaders. Nothing is known of the internal organisation, and the term is used for both infantry and cavalry units. There appears to have been about 10 *Numeri* by the mid-second century, and 40 are known of in the third century.<sup>831</sup>

Modern scholarship has tended to view the term *Numeri* as a non-specific unit designation. Jones believed it had a wide catch-all use which is also argued by Southern.<sup>832</sup> While discussing the *Notitia Dignitatum*, Elton notes that we poorly informed in our other sources of the structure of various units, with generic terms such as *Numerus*, *Arithmos* or *Tagma* were common.<sup>833</sup> This reminds us of the indiscriminate use of terminology by Claudian noted in the introduction. However, Claudian was not a historian, nor was he commenting on the *Notitia Dignitatum*, so accuracy in military terminology was his main priority. However, as many modern scholars believe the *Notitia Dignitatum* is an official document, and if we accept this view, then there would be no reason to use the term *Numerus* unless it was a standard unit.

There are three points to consider with my suggestion that a *Numerus* is a smaller-than-*Cohort* sized unit. First, while the term *Numeri* is often used in our sources, we have no firm evidence for the size of the unit. We have Ammianus whose use of the term would seem to imply either a subdivision or detachment from a *Legio*, as with the units sent by Julian in 360.<sup>834</sup> There is one strange reference later that year when Ammianus notes troops being withdrawn from Julian, and uses the phrase ‘three hundred picked from each of the other *Numeri*.’<sup>835</sup> This does not necessarily prove that a *Numerus* was larger than a *Cohort*, which in the reign of Septimius Severus had been increased to 550 men.<sup>836</sup> Nor does it imply a *Numerus* was anything other than a sub-unit of a *Legio* as earlier in the same passage Ammianus lists complete units of *Auxilia Palatina* which were also to be sent. By

---

<sup>831</sup> Rankov (2007), p. 55.

<sup>832</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p. 610; Southern (1989), p. 131.

<sup>833</sup> Elton (2007), p. 278.

<sup>834</sup> Amm. 20.1.3.

<sup>835</sup> Amm. 20.4.2; Omissi (2018), pp. 196-200.

<sup>836</sup> Barker (1981), p. 12.

comparison, Claudian never uses the term *Numeri* when describing units, but a bewildering amount of names which are often drawn from classical literature. In one brief passage he uses *Maniplos*, *Cohort* and *Legio* while describing the expedition to confront Gildo.<sup>837</sup>

The second point is the use of the Greek version of *Numerus* which is *Arithmos*. Another source, Zosimus, refers to an army raised by Stilicho in 406 for the battle of Faesulae which totalled thirty *Arithmoi* but has been translated as *Numeri*.<sup>838</sup> In the case of Zosimus, he seems to use it as a standard military unit, which of course it might have been in the early sixth century when he was writing, so projecting this back on the past does not help clarify to situation.<sup>839</sup> This contrasts with a later reference by Zosimus to reinforcements being sent from Constantinople. He states that six *Tagmata* were sent, which was a total of 4,000 men.<sup>840</sup> When a *Tagma* is recorded in the sixth century *Strategikon*, it is defined as a unit of 300 men, which would suggest that six *Tagmata* would only represent 1,800 men instead of the 4,000 men Zosimus states. Dennis states that a *Tagma* is the same size as a *Bandon* and three of these form a *Moirai*, which is between 1,000-2,000 men strong.<sup>841</sup> It would seem that a *Bandon* was a minimum of 300 men and could be larger, so if the similarity between it and a *Tagma* is true, then the units recorded by Zosimus were of the larger size, the equivalent of two *Meros* totalling 4,000 men. Therefore a *Tagma* could be a minimum of 300 men up to 600 men, meaning that it could be smaller and larger than a late Roman *Cohort*. The fact that Zosimus does not use the term *Tagma* in his earlier description of Stilicho's army must have some significance. It is therefore possible to suggest that in this instance, *Numerus* could represent a unit of up to 300 men.

This line of reasoning is followed by Barker who notes, as does Dennis, that *Numerus* is referred to in Greek as *Arithmos*, similar to a *Tagma* and a body of 300 men.<sup>842</sup> While the *Strategikon* is a 6<sup>th</sup> century source and later than Zosimus, this might reinforce the idea that *Arithmos* was a common term in use in his day, and so it is not unusual to see him use it. Barker goes on to suggest that if the link between the *Numerus* and *Arithmos* is correct, that it could have been made up of four *Centuriae*, which were 80 men strong during the first

---

<sup>837</sup> Claudian, *Bellum Gildonicum*, 414-423.

<sup>838</sup> Zosimus. 5.26.4; Coello (1996), p. 29. fn.69.

<sup>839</sup> Ridley (1982), p. xii.

<sup>840</sup> Zosimus. 6.8.2.

<sup>841</sup> Dennis (1984), pp. 171-173.

<sup>842</sup> Dennis (1984), p.171.

century. He notes that by the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century *Numeri* are associated with border forts of much less the *Cohort* size.<sup>843</sup>

The majority of the inscriptions at Concordia include the term *Numeri* with one notable exception, the *Auxilarii Milites Latovici*.<sup>844</sup> As these are a *Limitanei* or *Pseudocomitatenses* unit, and not part of the regular *Comitatenses*, this would suggest that *Numeri* is some sort of unit term for the regular army. There are no references to *Legio* or *Cohort*, which we know are standard unit terms. It seems reasonable to conclude that *Numeri* are a standard sub-units within field army units.

The term appears almost entirely in the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the list for Britain, with only one such unit outside Britain, the *Numeri Barbaricariorum* under the *Dux Rhaetiae*.<sup>845</sup> Under the *Dux Britanniarum* there are 11 *Numeri* while under the *Comes Litoris Saxonici per Britanniam* there are four more.<sup>846</sup> Jones noted its almost exclusive use in Britain and suggested by the fourth century that *Numerus* was a common term that covered all types of units.<sup>847</sup> If this was true, then we should expect to find it being used more regularly within the *Notitia Dignitatum*, rather than just in Britain. However, as noted by Tomlin, there is nothing in the listings for Hadrian's Wall under the *Dux Britanniarum* that dates this section any later than the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century and as such it is recording out of date material.<sup>848</sup>

The third point is one of physical evidence. There is some earlier evidence for *Numeri* being subdivided into Centuries, which is based on inscriptions dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This, however, contrasts with the findings at Haselbach in Germany, the only fort garrisoned by a *Numerus* to be fully excavated so far, which had barracks for only 140 men.<sup>849</sup> This would suggest that at least in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, there was no fixed unit size for a *Numerus* and that the term could cover a wide range of unrelated troops, which Southern believes could have included legionaries, auxiliaries and irregulars. Therefore the size of the unit would depend on their location and duties rather than a set figure.<sup>850</sup> It seems most likely that the

---

<sup>843</sup> Barker (1981), pp. 11, 13; Dennis (1984), p.171.

<sup>844</sup> Hoffmann (1963), pp.23-57. *Latovici* p.52.

<sup>845</sup> Not. Occ. xxxiv. See Coello (1996), p.16.

<sup>846</sup> Not. Occ. xxxviii & xxv. See Holder (1982), pp.124-127.

<sup>847</sup> Jones (1964), vol. ii, p.610.

<sup>848</sup> Tomlin (2008), p.156.

<sup>849</sup> Southern (1989), pp.100-3.

<sup>850</sup> Southern (1989), p.131. Le Bohec (1994), p. 31.



term would probably be used for smaller-than-*Cohort* sized formations, as the term *Cohort* was already in common use, *Numerus* is a catch all term for smaller formations, either temporary or permanent ones.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the term *Numeri* started as a general term in the early Empire but by the sixth century it was a fixed unit of 300 men. At what point it became this is hard to determine with accuracy, but the period of the late fourth and early fifth century, the date of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, would seem to be correct. The use of the term in our sources and on inscriptions would support this.

## Appendix ii

### Problems with the Magistri listings, the Distributio and shield illustrations in the Notitia Dignitatum

It will be necessary to look at the different editions of the *Notitia Dignitatum* to be able to see which units and shield patterns have been recorded. It must be pointed out that due to space restrictions on the shield illustrations, many of the names of the units have been abbreviated. These need to be compared with the full listings of the units that follows after the illustrations under the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum*. To further complicate matters, some of the unit names are then recorded differently in the *Distributio* which is in the next chapter of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Starting with Böcking's edition we have the following units recorded:<sup>851</sup>

12 *Legiones Palatinae*

65 *Auxilia Palatina*

32 *Legiones Comitatus*

18 *Legiones Pseudocomitatus*

10 *Vexillationes Palatinae*

32 *Vexillationes Comitatus*

All 12 *Legiones Palatinae* are recorded in the order shown under the *Magister Peditum* and their shield illustrations follow in the same order as well. While this does not seem to be unusual, it must be pointed out that six of these units are recorded in the *Distributio* after the *Auxilia Palatina* and therefore seem out of position. This, Jones believed, showed that they had been recently promoted to *Palatina* status after the drafting of the *Distributio*.<sup>852</sup> There is therefore a date difference between the illustrations and associated list of units under the *Magister Peditum* and the *Distributio*.

The section on the *Auxilia Palatina* is far more complicated. While the *Magister Peditum* listings refer to 65 units, only 61 shield patterns are recorded. Of the 61 units that are illustrated five units: *Augusti*, *Valentinianenses Iuniores*, *Marcomanni Seniores*, *Marcomanni Iuniores* and *Felices Iuniores* are not assigned to any field army command. The *Distributio* records a further five *Auxilia Palatina* units which have no shield illustrations, these are the

---

<sup>851</sup> Böcking (1853), vol. ii. pp. 17-40.

<sup>852</sup> Jones (1964), vol. iii. p. 354.

*Mattiaci Iuniores, Exculcatores Seniores, Sagittarii Tungri, Exculcatores Iuniores* and the *Brachiati Iuniores*. The *Distributio* also records two units simply named *Valentinianenses* units, one in Gaul and the other in Illyria. While the one in Gaul is listed amongst the *Auxilia Palatina* units, the Illyrian one is listed amongst the *Pseudocomitatenses* units. There is one omission, the *Placidi Valentinianenses Felices*, which does not appear anywhere under the *Magister Peditum* and only in the *Distributio*, though is presumed to be *Auxilia Palatina*.<sup>853</sup>

There are 32 *Legiones Comitatus* with shields illustrated and listed under the *Magister Peditum*. All of these are assigned to field commands in the *Distributio* except for the *Flaviae Victricis Constantinae id est Constantici* (simply named *Constantici* on the relevant shield illustration), which is assumed to be the *Constantiaci* in Africa. There are two duplications in the *Distributio*, the *Constantiniani* and *Septimani Iuniores*. Both units are recorded under the *Comes Tingitaniae*, the *Constantiniani* are also listed in Africa and the *Septimani Iuniores* are in Italy.

Under the *Pseudocomitatenses* section there are 18 shield patterns illustrated and units listed under the *Magister Peditum*. Of these, three are unassigned to any field army in the *Distributio*, these are the *Taurunenses, Antiannenses* and *Constantiaci*. There are an additional 10 *Pseudocomitatenses* units listed in Gaul and two in Illyria which are in the *Distributio* but not recorded under the *Magister Peditum*.

Under the *Magister Equitum* the listing states there are 10 *Vexillationes Palatinae*, but only nine shields are illustrated. This led Böcking to split the last listed unit, the *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Seniores*, into two units, the *Equites Constantes* and the *Valentinianenses Seniores*, to bring the total up to 10. He added both units to the entry for Italy in the *Distributio*, despite the fact the *Distributio* actual says *Equites Constantes Valentinianenses Iuniores*, who are not listed anywhere under the *Magister Equitum*.

There are 32 *Vexillationes Comitatus* listed under the *Magister Equitum*, but only 30 shields illustrated. The last two units listed, the *Equites Sagittarii Seniores* and *Cuneus Equitum Promotorum*, are the ones not shown. Of the 32 units listed, four of them are not assigned to any field command. The *Equites Armigeri*, who are listed first under the *Magister Equitum*, are one of these, but the *Equites Armigeri Seniores* are recorded as being

---

<sup>853</sup> See chapter 7.3.3.

in both Gaul and Africa, so one of these might represent the *Equites Armigeri*. The *Equites Scutarii* are also unassigned, though there are listings in the *Distributio* for the *Equites Scutarii Seniores* in Africa and the *Equites Scutarii Seniores Comitatus* in *Tingitaniae*. The third unit that is unassigned is the *Sagittarii Iuniores*, however there is a listing in Africa for the *Equites Sagittarii Iuniores Comitatus*, so these may be one and the same. The last unit listed, but unassigned which is also not illustrated, is the *Cuneus Equitum Promotorum*. This is the only unit listed under the *Magister Equitum* which includes the title *Cuneus*. This term appears for units in various border commands as for *Pannoniae Secundae*, *Valeriae*, *Pannoniae Primae* and *Brittanniae*, but does not appear elsewhere.<sup>854</sup> Under *Pannoniae Secundae* there is a listing for the *Cuneus Equitum Promotorum Cuccis*, with *Cuccis* being one of the forts under the control of the *Dux*. It is possible that these are the same unit and that it had recently been transferred from *Pannoniae* to the command of the *Magister Equitum*. If so, this would suggest the *Magister Equitum*'s unit listings, though not the illustrations, are more up to date than the *Distributio* where the unit has not been assigned.

Seeck's edition is very similar to that of Böcking, and he also increased the number of *Auxilia Palatina* units to 65, though he did this in a slightly different way. Seeck split the *Batavi Mattiaci Seniores* into two, creating the *Batavi Seniores* and *Mattiaci Seniores*, and removed the simply named *Batavi*, who were listed in 49<sup>th</sup> position under the *Magister Peditum* by Böcking. There are no difference between Seeck and Böcking for the other infantry units.

Under the *Magister Equitum* listings, Seeck introduced the *Equites Brachiati Iuniores* and re-combined the *Equites Constantes* and *Valentinianenses Seniores* into one unit as they appear in the *Distributio*. The *Vexillationes Comitatus* follow the same pattern as for Böcking.

Otto Seeck's edition has become the standard version used. When it comes to unit identification in the western section, it is followed exactly by Faleiro (2005).

If we now compare these modern editions to the Paris copy of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, we note the following points.<sup>855</sup> The illustrations and listings under the *Magister Peditum* as well as the *Distributio* for the *Legiones Palatinae* are consistent for all editions, there is a

<sup>854</sup> Not. Occ. xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii & xxxviii.

<sup>855</sup> <https://gallica.bnf.fr>

discrepancy in the *Auxilia Palatina*. In the Paris manuscript under the *Magister Peditum* list it states at the beginning there are 65 units, but it only lists 62 and illustrates 61, as noted above. Two units, the *Exculcatores Seniores* and *Iuniores*, are listed but not illustrated, while three units, the *Brisigavi Iuniores*, *Batavi Iuniores* and *Atecotti Iuniores*, are illustrated but not listed under the *Magister Peditum*. All five units are included in the *Distributio*. It should be noted that in the Paris manuscript, the *Distributio* lists 64 units of *Auxilia Palatina* and also has two further units, the *Marcomanni* and the *Placidi Valentinianenses Felices*, who are considered to also be *Auxilia Palatina* units.

The *Legiones Comitatus* and *Pseudocomitatus* sections have no other anomalies to the modern editions, and we have the same problem in the *Magister Equitum* section as noted in the Böcking and Seeck editions, that there are 10 *Vexillationes Palatinae* mentioned at the start of the listings but only 9 shields illustrated and 9 units listed.

The interesting question which is raised by this review of the Paris manuscript and the following editions is which part, if any, of the *Notitia Dignitatum* is correct? The Illustrations under the *Magister Peditum* and *Magister Equitum* must have been the most time consuming and difficult section to amend. The unit listing that follows these illustrations shows different information, so is probably not contemporary with the illustrations, and these listings in turn differ from the units listed in the *Distributio*.

The situation is made more complicated when we consider the entry for Britain in the *Distributio*. None of the units listed under this command can be identified under the names given in either of the two *Magistri* lists, and they were identified under slightly different names in other commands by Böcking and Seeck. An example is the *Victores Iuniores Britannici* the only *Auxilia Palatina* unit in Britain, was identified by Seeck as the *Victores Iuniores* in Spain.<sup>856</sup> If we were to exclude this unit from the *Distributio* as a duplication, this would reduce it to 63 units. It would further argue that at least the British section of the *Distributio* is unreliable.

Therefore there is a difference between all three pieces of evidence, but Böcking and Seeck both chose to accept the statement the *Magister Peditum* commanded 65 *Auxilia Palatina* to be correct, and amended the list and the *Distributio* accordingly. This attempt to

---

<sup>856</sup> Seeck (1876), p. 123.

reconcile the lists of the *Magister Peditum* and the *Distributio* fails to consider the possibility that the information is taken from different dates.

If we now consider the shield illustrations themselves, we find a lack of any Christian imagery recorded on them. While the *Notitia Dignitatum* is not a religious text, it is the product of an Imperial Christian state. It would therefore not be unusual to find some Christian iconography on the shield designs, especially those raised during Honorius' reign. This apparent lack may be linked to the idea that the shield patterns themselves are not drawn from any official source. This argument was put forward by Gregg, who noted that as you go through the illustrations in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the variety of shield designs becomes more repetitive and stereotyped. If the illustrations had been based on some official source, then any repetition would have remained consistent throughout the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which it does not. Starting with the eastern section, which Gregg notes only has 4% repetition, this rises to 54% in the last western section, for the *Magister Equitum*.<sup>857</sup> He concludes that the assumption that the lists in the *Notitia Dignitatum* were based on official sources, so the shield designs must have been as well, does not hold in view of the evidence.<sup>858</sup>

As an alternative example of shield variations in the *Notitia Dignitatum* the following two entries offer an alternative to Grigg's analysis.



The above shield patterns are all taken from (P) and show the units under the *Comes Illyricum*. The first unit under his command, *Sagittarii Tungri*, are part of a group of three

<sup>857</sup> Not. Occ. vi.

<sup>858</sup> Gregg (1983), pp. 132-42.

units which are listed under the *Magister Peditum* but not illustrate. The last two units of this command, the *Valentinianenses* and the *Catarienses* are also missing. These two units appear to have been recent promotions to this command and as such their shield patterns had not yet been recorded under the *Magister Peditum*.

As one of the later western field armies which also includes a number of new units created during Honorius' reign, we would expect to see a high degree of repetition of shield designs if we follow Grigg's line of argument.

If we analyse these patterns we have eight simple circular patterns and one unique circular pattern with a small coloured fan blade in the centre. There are three animal patterns, including two eagles and a single figure of a man. Along with these there are two star shapes, one cross, one head on a spoke, one fan blade and finally an unusual image of two crossed snakes. Out of the nineteen images shown, eight are of a simple circular design, which would support Grigg's argument.

If we now compare this to the first army recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, that of the *Magister Militum Praesentalis*, we have the following twenty-four shields illustrated (P):



We still have ten circular patterns, though these are more elaborate in design, having extra figures to all but one. This is perhaps to be expected with units in the established elite field

army as opposed to the recently created regional army in Illyricum. There are also three animal designs, two eagles and one lion, along with two star designs which mirrors the units in Illyricum. There is also a single figure, shown above as winged victory, along with a head on a spoke which also includes animals. The only fan blade design is again more elaborate than the one in Illyricum, then there are four patterns which are not shown in Illyricum. This is best summed up below:

Shield type	Comes Illyricum	Magister Militum
Circular	8	10
Animal	3	3
Star	2	2
Figures	1	1
Fan Blade	1	1
Cross	1	0
Umbro	0	2
Head on spoke	1	1
Unique	2	4

Therefore, the level of repetitive images that forms the basis of Grigg's argument can be challenged on the basis of what examples we chose to use. It is quite striking how such standard images as listed above are repeated in both armies, as this would suggest a common theme in the issuing shield designs within these two examples. It should be pointed out that the simplest examples of plain shield patterns appear in the second eastern *Praesentalis* and can be seen in this example (P):





The last two units, *Secundi Theodosiani* and *Quart Theodosiani* both have identical and simple plain shield designs. Seeing as these are both relatively new formations probably raised in the 390's very little effort has been used to give them any distinctive shield patterns.

It must be noted that the two halves of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the *Orientis et Occidentis*, do not have the same structure. The *Orientis* section does not have separate *Magistri* listings, and none of the cavalry units have any shield illustrations. This is problematic when trying to make a direct comparison. However, the different structure of the two halves of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, does argue for a lack of commonalty within the document, which is unusual if we accept it was an official working document.

When considering the information concerning the field armies within the western *Notitia Dignitatum* we have several pieces of information which are not necessarily contemporary to each other. The shield illustrations do not entirely match the units in the *Magistri* listings, and while the *Magistri* listings and the *Distributio* are features unique to the *Occidentis* section they do not entirely agree with each other. It seems likely that all three pieces of information have been drawn from different places and not from the same dates.

## Bibliography:

### Primary Sources:

- Agathias, *The Histories*, trans. by Joseph D. Frendo (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1975)
- Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, Loeb ed. In 3 vols. trans. by John C. Rolfe (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1940)
- Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, trans by Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin Books, 1986)
- Anonymi Auctoris libellous de rebus bellicis*, A Treatise by an unknown author on military matters, ed. Robert Ireland (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1979)
- Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God against Pagans*, trans. by, Eva Mathews, Sandford Williams, McAllen Green (London: Heineman, 1957-72)
- Augustine of Hippo, *Select Letters*, trans. by James Houston Baxter (London: Heineman, 1965)
- Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the British People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)
- Cassiodorus, *A condensed translation of the Variae Epistolae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator*, trans. by Thomas Hodgkin (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1886)
- Claudian, 'The Second Book against Rufinus', In *Claudian I*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926)
- Claudian, 'Bellum Gildonicum', in *Claudian I*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926)
- Claudian, 'On the Fourth Consulship of Honorius', In *Claudian I*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926)
- Claudian, 'On Stilicho's Consulship', In *Claudian I*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926)
- Claudian, 'On the Sixth Consulship of Honorius', In *Claudian II*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1922)
- Claudian, 'Epithalamium of Pallidus and Celerina', in *Claudian II*, trans. by M. Platnauer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1922)
- Dio, Cassius, *The Roman History*, Loeb ed. in 11 vols. trans. by Earnest Cary (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1914-27)
- Epigraphische Datenbank Heildelberg <https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/home> (last accessed 30/08/2021)
- Eunapius, trans. by R.C. Blockley in, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. II (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)
- Evagrius, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, trans. by Michael Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000)

Gallic Chronical 452, in 'A New Critical Edition' by Richard Burgess in *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul*, Edited by Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Alershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001)

Gildas, *The Ruin of the British and other Documents*, ed. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore & co. Ltd, 1978)

Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. by O.M. Dalton, in 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927)

Honorius, 'The Epistula Honorii', trans. by Michael Kulikowski in, *The Epistula Honorii, Again*, *Zietschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 122 (1998), 247-252

Hydatius, 'Chronicon', trans. by R.W. Burgess in, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

Ioannes Lydus, *De Mensibus*, ed. Richard Wuensch (Leipzig: Leipzig University, 1898)

Ioannes Lydus, *On Powers, or, The Magistracies of the Roman State*, trans. by Anastasius C. Bandy (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983)

Jordanes, *Getica*, trans. by Charles Christopher Mierow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915)

*The Justinian Codex*, trans. by Fred. H. Blume, <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/> (Last accessed 29/08/2021)

*The Justinian Novels*, trans. by Fred. H. Blume, <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/> (Last accessed 29/08/2021)

Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, trans. by J. L. Creed (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984)

Marcellinus, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus*, trans. by Brian Croke (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1995)

*Notitia Dignitatum Imperii Romani*, Ed. Philippe Labbe (Paris: Typograpia Regia, 1651)

*Notitia Dignitatum et Administration Omnium Tam Civiliam Quam Militarum in Partibus Orientis et Occidentis*, in 2 vols, Ed. by Eduardus Böcking (Bonn: 1839)

*Notitia Dignitatum Accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi Provinciarm*, Ed. by Otto Seeck (Berlin: 1876)

*Notitia Dignitatum or Register of Dignitaries*, trans. by William Fairley (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 1899)

*Notitia Dignitatum*, Nueva Edición Crítica Y Comentario Histórico, Ed. By Neira Faleiro (Bibliotheca Graeca et Latina Posterios: Nueva Roma 25, Madrid 2005)

*Notitia Dignitatum*, <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NotitiaPatterns.html> (Last accessed 29/08/2021)

*Notitia Dignitatum*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark> (Last accessed 29/08/2021)

Olympiodorus, trans. by R.C. Blockley in, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. II (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)

Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, trans. by A.T. Fear (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010)

*Panegyrici Latini*, trans. by C.E.V. Nixon & Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

Paulinus of Milan, '*Vita Sancti Ambrosii*', in *The Western Fathers*, ed. & trans. by F.R. Hoare (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954)

Possidius, *Vita S Augustine*, trans. by Herbert T. Weiskutten (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1919)

Procopius, *History of the Wars*, in 3 vols (Teddington: Echo Library, 2007)

Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon*, trans. by Theodor Mommsen (Berlin: Wiedman 1892)

Prudentius, *A reply to the address of Symmachus, Book II*, trans. by H.J. Thomson (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1961)

Roman Inscriptions in Britain, <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/rib> (last accessed 29/08/2021)

Rufinus, '*Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia*, trans. by Philip R. Amidan (Oxford: OUP, 1997)

Sozomen, '*The Ecclesiastic History*', trans. by Henry Wace and Philip Schaff in, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol.II (Oxford: Parker and Company, 1841)

Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. by J.B Rives (Oxford: OUP, 2016)

*The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, trans.by Clyde Pharr (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1952)

Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, trans. by N.P. Milner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993)

Victor of Vita, *History of the Vandal Persecution*, trans. by John Moorhead (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992)

Zosime, *Histoire Nouvelle*, trans. by Francois Paschoud (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989)

Zosimus, *New History*, trans. by Ronald T. Ridley (Canberra: Sidney University, 1984)

## **Secondary Sources:**

Arce, Javier, '*La Epistula de Honorio a las tropas de Pompaelo: comunicaciones, ejército y moneda en Hispania (siglos IV-V d.C)*', in *Centeneno, García-Bellido, and Mora* (1999), 461-68.

Arce, Javier, *El último siglo de la España romana 284-409* (Madrid: Alianza, 2009)

Alexander, J.J.G., '*The Illustrated Manuscript of the Notitia Dignitatum*' in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignatatum*, B.A.R. Series 15 (1976), pp. 11-50

Barker, Phil, *Armies and Enemies of Imperial Rome* (Worthing: Wargames Research Group, 1980)

Barlow, Jonathon & Brennan, Peter, '*Tribuni Scholarum Palatinarum c. AD 353-64: Ammianus Marcellinus and the Notitia Dignitatum*' in *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol.51, No.1 (2001), 237-254

Barnes, Timothy D., *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1982)

- Barnes, Timothy D., *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (New Jersey, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)
- Berchem, Denis van, 'On some chapters of the Notitia Dignitatum relating to the defence of Gaul and Britain' in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol.76, No.2 (1955), 138-147
- Berger, Adolf, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953)
- Birley, E., 'The Nature of the Notitia Dignitatum', in *Roman Army Papers, Cumberland & Westmorland Transactions*, vol. xxxix (1939), 69-71
- Blagg, T.F.C, and King, A.C, 'Military and Civilian in Roman Britain: Cultural relationship in a frontier Province', *BAR, British Series* 136 (1984)
- Boeft, J. Den, Drijvers, D. Den, Hengst, D. Den, & Teitler, H.C. *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV* (Leiden: Brill, 2005)
- Boeft, J. Den, Drijvers, D. Den, Hengst, D. Den, & Teitler, H.C. *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXVI* (Leiden: Brill, 2006)
- Bohec Le, Yan, *The Imperial Roman Army*, trans. by Raphael Bate (London: Routledge, 1994)
- Bohec Le, Yan, 'The social and Political role of the Roman army of Africa', in *L'Armée Romaine en Afrique et en Gaule* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007)
- Bülow, Gerda, Von, 'The Fort of Iatrus in Moesia Secunda: Observations on the Late Roman Defensive System on the Lower Danube (Fourth-Sixth centuries AD)', in *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond*, ed. by A.G. Poulter, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 141 (OUP, 2007), 459-475
- Burns, Thomas S., *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, CA 375-425 A.D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994)
- Burrell, Emma, 'A Re-Examination of why Stilicho abandoned his pursuit of Alaric in 397', in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (2004), 25-256
- Bury, J.B., *The later Roman Empire: From the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian*, vol.1 & 2 (New York: Dover Publications, 1889)
- Bury, J.B., 'The Notitia Dignitatum', in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol.10 (1920), 131-154.
- Brennan, Peter, 'The Notitia Dignitatum', in *Les Littératures Techniques dans L'Antiquité Romaine* (Geneve: Foundation Hardt, 1995), 147-178
- Brennan, Peter, 'Units in the Notitia Dignitatum', in *Wiley Online Library*, (2015) 1-5.  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com> (Last accessed 30/08/2021)
- Cagnat, René, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique et l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique sous les Empereurs* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale Ernest Leroux, 1913)
- Cameron, Alan, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1970)
- Cameron, Avril, *Agathias* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970)
- Cameron, Avril, *The Later Roman Empire* (London: Fontana Press, 1993)

- Campbell, Duncan, B., *Roman Legionary Fortresses 27BC – AD378* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006)
- Cleary, Esmonde, A.S., *The Ending of Roman Britain* (Maryland: Barnes & Noble Books, 1990)
- Coello, Terence, *Unit Sizes in the Late Roman Army* (Oxford: BAR international Series 645, 1996)
- Collingwood, R.G, and Myres, J.N.L., *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936)
- Christie, Neil, 'From Danube to the Po: the Defence of Pannonia and Italy in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AD', in *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond*, ed. by A.G. Poulter, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 141 (OUP, 2007), 547-573
- Crow, James, *Housesteads Roman Fort* (London: Colourhouse, 2012)
- Daniels, Charles, 'The Frontiers: Africa', in *The Roman World Vol.1*, ed. by John Wacher (London: Routledge, 1990)
- Drew-Bear, Thomas, 'A Fourth-Century Latin Soldier's Epitaph at Nakolea', in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 81 (1977), 257-274
- Elton, Hugh, *Warfare in the Roman Europe AD 350-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
- Elton, Hugh, 'Military Forces', in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare Volume II* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 270-309
- Ferrill, Arther, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1986)
- Fields, Nic, *Hadrian's Wall AD 122-410* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003)
- Fuentes Domínguez, Ángel, *La necrópolis tardorromana de Albalate de las Noguera (Cuenca) y el problema de las denominadas 'necrópolis del Duero'* Cuenca (1989)
- Freeman, Edward, A, 'The Tyrants of Britain, Gaul, and Spain AD 406-411', in *The English Historical Review*, vol.1 (1886), 53-85
- Gibbon, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol.1 (London: Penguin Books, 1995)
- Gillett, Andrew, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411-533* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003)
- Goldsworthy, Adrian, *The Fall of the West: The Death of a Superpower* (London: Phoenix, 2009)
- Green, Thomas, 'Tealby, the Taifali, and the end of Roman Lincolnshire' in *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, vol. 46 (2011), 5-10
- Grigg, Robert, 'Portrait-Bearing Codicils in the Illustrations of the Notitia Dignitatum?' in *Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 69 (1979), 107-124
- Grigg, Robert, 'Inconsistency and Lassitude: The Shield Emblems of the Notitia Dignitatum', in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol.73 (1983), 132-142
- Halsall, Guy, *Barbarian Migration and the Roman West 376-568* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007)
- Harries, Jill, 'Church and State in the Notitia Galliarum', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 68 (1978) 26-43

- Harries, Jill & Wood, Ian, *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the imperial law of late antiquity*, second edition (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2010)
- Hassall, M.W.C., 'Britain in the Notitia', in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, B.A.R Series 15 (1976) pp. 103-114
- Heather, Peter, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)
- Heather, Peter, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (London: Pan Books, 2005)
- Heather, Peter, 'Goths in the Roman Balkans', in *The Transition to Late Antiquity: On the Danube and Beyond*, Proceedings of the British Academy 141 (2008) pp.163-188
- Head, Duncan, *Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 BC to 146 BC* (Worthing: Wargames Research Group, 1982)
- Hoffmann, Dietrich, 'Die Spättrömischen Soldatengrabschriften von Concordia', in *Zeitschrift Museum Helveticum*, vol. 20 (1963) 23-57
- Hoffmann, Dietrich, *Das Spättrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (Dusseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag, 1973)
- Holder, P.A., *The Roman Army in Britain* (London: B.T. Batesford Ltd, 1982)
- Hughes, Ian, *Stilicho: The Vandal who saved Rome* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2010)
- Johnson, J.S., 'The Date of Construction of the Saxon Shore Fort at Richborough', in *Britannia*, vol.1 (1970), 240-248
- Jones, A.H.M., *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964)
- Jones, A.H.M., Martindale, J.R., Morris, J., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971 and 1980)
- Jones, Michael. E, *The End of Roman Britain* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996)
- Kaiser, Anna Maria, 'Egyptian Units and the reliability of the *Notitia Dignitatum, pars Oriens*', in *Imperium and Officium Working Papers* (2014)
- Kelly, Christopher, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (London: The Belknap Press, 2004)
- Keppie, Lawrence, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (London: Routledge, 1984)
- Kulikowski, Michael, 'The *Epistula Honorii*, Again', in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 122 (1998), 247-252
- Kulikowski, Michael, 'The Notitia Dignitatum as a Historical Source', in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (2000), 358-377
- Kulikowski, Michael, 'The Career of the "Comes Hispaniarum" Asterius', in *Phoenix*, vol. 54 (2000), 123-141
- Kulikowski, Michael, 'Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain', in *Britannia*, vol. 31 (2000), 325-345
- Kulikowski, Michael, *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004)

- Kulikowski, Michael, *Rome's Gothic Wars* (Cambridge, CUP, 2007)
- Lanciani, Rodolfo, *Pagan and Christian Rome* (London: MacMillan and Company, 1895)
- Lee, A.D. *War in late Antiquity: A Social History* (Oxford: Blackwell publishing, 2007)
- Luttwak, Edward N, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976)
- Luttwak, Edward N, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2009)
- Macdowall, Simon, *Adrianople 378: The Goths crush Rome's Legions* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001)
- MacMullen, Ramsey, 'How Big was the Roman Imperial Army?', in *Klio*, Band 62 (1980), 451-460
- MacMullen, Ramsey, 'The Roman Emperors' Army Costs', in *Latomus*, vol. 43 (1980), 571-580
- MacMullen, Ramsey, *The Corruption and the Decline of Rome* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1988)
- Maier, Ingo, G, 'The Barberinus and Munich Codices of the "Notitia Dignitatum omnium"', in *Latomus*, vol. 28 (1969), 960-1053
- Mann, J.C., 'What was the Notitia for?', in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, B.A.R Series 15 (1976), 1-10
- Matthews, John, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Courts AD 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)
- Matthews, John, 'The making of the Text', in *Theodosian Code: Studies in imperial law of the late antiquity*, second edition, ed. by Jill Harries & Ian Wood (London: Bristol Classical Texts, 2010)
- Mattingly, David J, *Tripolitania* (London: B.T. Batesford Ltd, 1995)
- Mattingly, David J, and Hitchner, Bruce R, 'Roman Africa: An Archaeological Review', in *JRS*, vol. 85 (1995), 165-213
- Mattingly, David J. 'War and Peace in Roman North Africa', in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, Ed. by Ferguson & Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000), pp.39-60.
- McEvoy, Meaghan A., *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD 367-455* (Oxford: OUP, 2013)
- Merrills, Andy and Mills, Richard, *The Vandals* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
- Nischer, E.C, 'The army reforms of Diocletian and Constantine and their modifications up to the time of the Notitia Dignitatum', in *JRS*. Vol. 13 (1923), 1-55
- O'Hara, Ruth, 'An Assessment of the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a Historical Source for the Late Roman Bureaucracy' (Unpublished PhD: Nui Maynooth, 2013)
- Omissi, Adrautos, *Emperors and Usurpers in the Late Roman Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2018)
- Rance, Philip, 'The Third Equites Stablesiani at Cyrrhus', in *Chiron* 42, (2012), 347-360



- Rankov, Boris, 'Military Forces', in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare Volume II* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 30-75
- Raymond, Irving, W, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936)
- Reeve, M.D., 'The Notitia Dignitatum' in *Texts and transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L.D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 253- 257
- Rees, Roger, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004)
- Rohrbacher, David, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002)
- Roxon, M., 'The Auxilia of Mauretania Tingitana' in *Latomus* 32 (1973), 828-855
- Salway, Peter, *Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)
- Seeck, Otto, 'Die Zeit des Vegetius', in *Hermes* 11 (1876), 6`-83
- Smith, R. E., 'The Army reforms of Septimus Severus', in *Historia* 21 (1972), 481-500
- Sophocles, E.A., *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods: From BC 146 to AD 1100* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914)
- Southern, P., 'The Numeri of the Imperial Roman Army', in *Britannia* 20 (1989) 81-140
- Southern, Pat and Dixon, Karen R., *The Later Roman Army* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1996)
- Speidel, Michael. P., 'Raising new units for the Late Roman army: "Auxilia Palatina." In *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol.50 (1996), 163-170
- Stephenson, Paul, *Constantine: Unconquered Emperor, Christian Victor* (London: Quercus, 2009)
- Stevens, C. E., 'Marcus, Gratian, Constantine.' In *Athenaeum* NS, vol. 35 (1957), 316-347
- Tomlin, Roger, 'Seniores-Iuniores in the Late-Roman Field Army', in *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 93 (1972), 253-278
- Tomlin, R.S.O., 'Notitia Dignitatum omnium tam civilium quam militarium', in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, B.A.R. Series 15 (1976), 189-210
- Tomlin, Roger, 'A.M.H. Jones and the Army of the Fourth Century', in *A.M.H. Jones and the Later Roman Empire*, ed. by David M. Gwynn (Lieden: Brill, 2008)
- Thompson, E.A, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)
- Thompson, E.A., 'The End of Roman Spain', in *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. xx (1976), vol. xxi (1977), vol. xxiii (1978) & vol. xxiv (1979)
- Thompson, E.A., 'Zosimus 6.10.2 and the Letters of Honorius' in *Classic Quarterly*, vol.32 No.2 (1982), 445-462
- Traina, Giusto, *428AD An Ordinary Year at the End of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)
- Treadgold, Warren, *Byzantium and its Army 284-1081* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995)
- Ueda-Sarson, Luke, <http://lukeuedasarson.com/NotitiaPatterns.html> (Last accessed 29/08/2021)

- Van Nuffelen, Peter, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford: OUP, 2012)
- Ward, John, "The British sections of the 'Notitia Dignitatum'": An alternative interpretation, in *Britannia*, vol.4 (1973), 253-263
- Ward, John, 'The Notitia Dignitatum', in *Latomus* vol.33 (1974), 397-434
- Warmington, B.H., *The North African Provinces from Diocletian to the Vandal Conquest* (Cambridge: CUP, 1954)
- Whittaker, C.R., *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994)
- Whitby, Michael, 'The Late Roman Army', in *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond*, ed. by A.G. Poulter, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 141 (OUP, 2007), 135-162
- Wijnendaele, Jeroen W.P., 'Stilicho, Radagaisus, and the so-called "Battle of Faesulae" (406 CE)', in *Journal of Late Antiquity*, vol. 9, No:1 (spring 2016)
- Wijnendaele, Jeroen W.P., 'Warlordism and the disintegration of the Western Roman Army', in *Circum Mare: Themes in ancient warfare*, ed. by Jeremy Armstrong (Lieden: Brill, 2016), 185-203
- Wijnendaele, Jeroen W.P., 'The Manufacture of Heraclianus' Usurpation (413 CE), in *Phoenix*, vol. 71, No:1/2 (Spring-Summer 2017)
- Wood, David, 'On the Alleged Letters of Honorius to the Cities of Britain in 410', in *Latomus* vol.71 (2012), 818-826
- Wood, David, 'Theodosius I 379-395 AD', in *De Imperatoribus Romanis*, <http://roman-emperors.sites.luc.edu/theo1.htm> (Last accessed 20/08/2021)