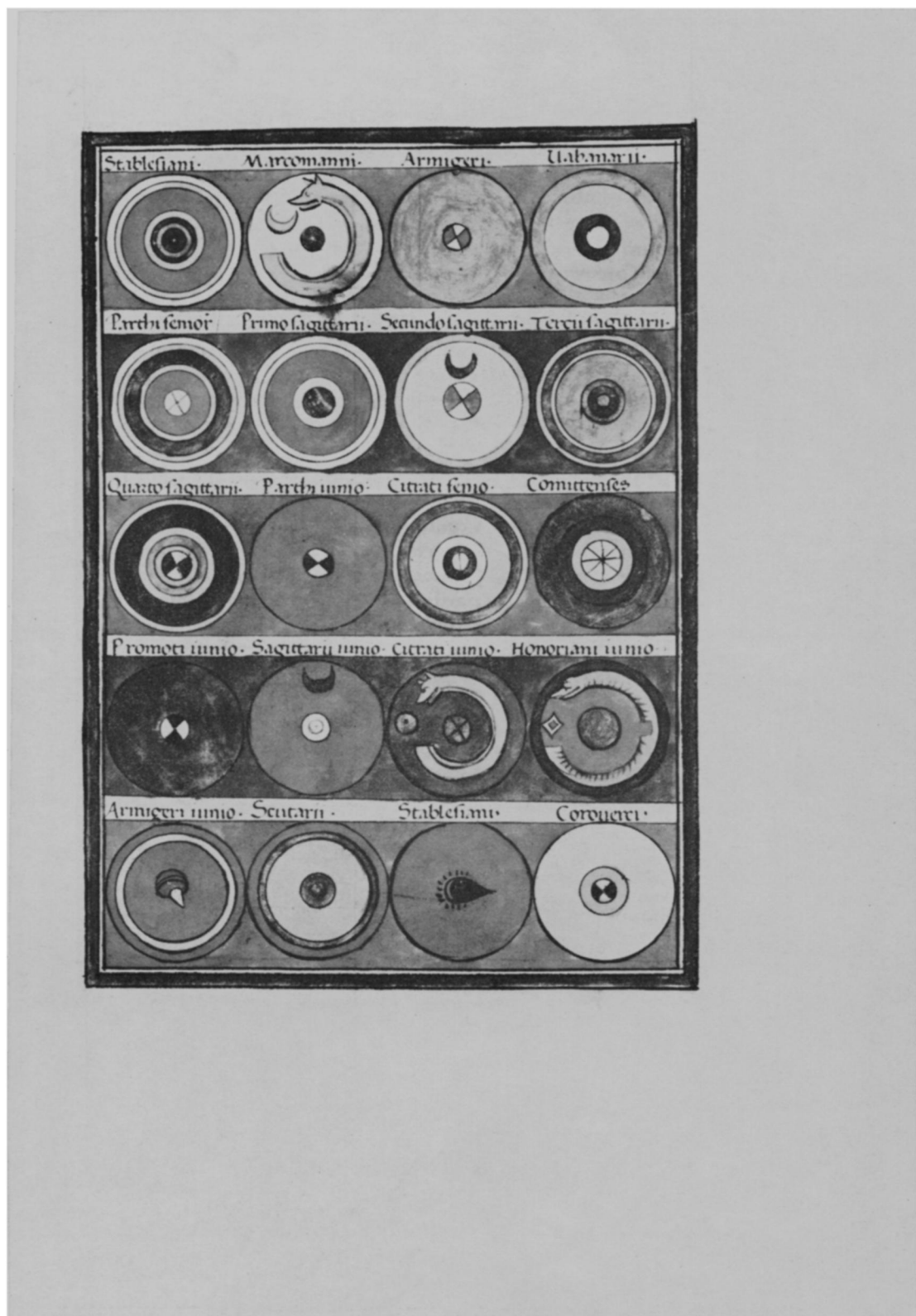
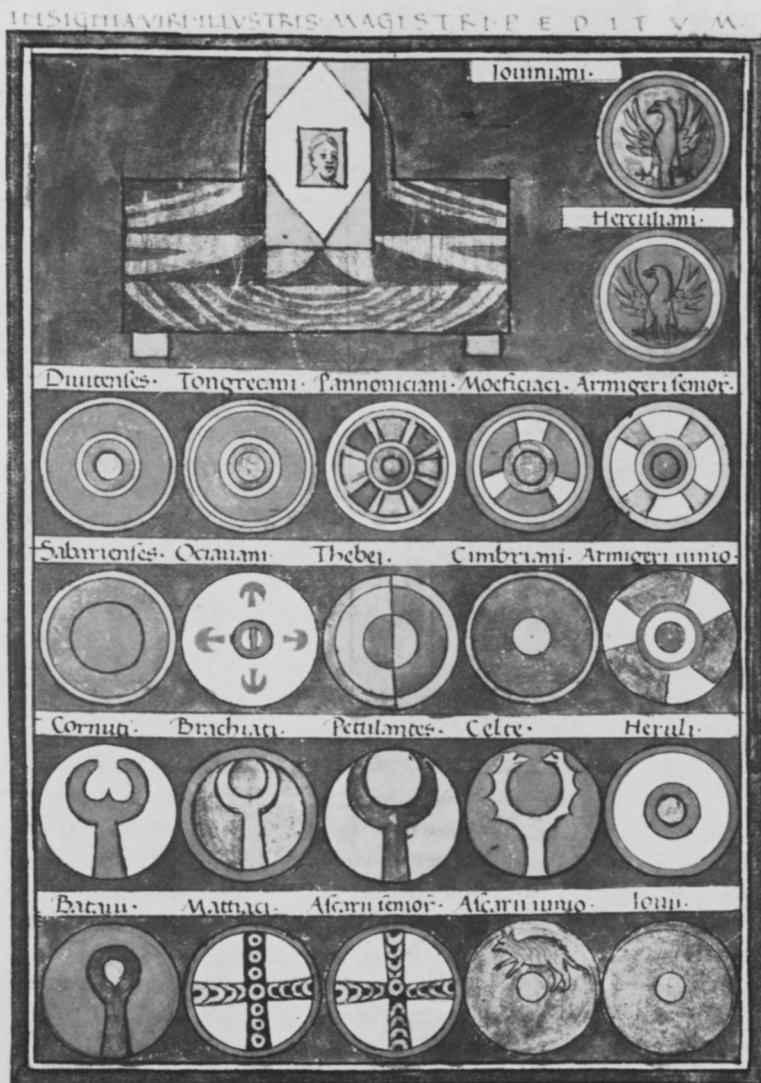


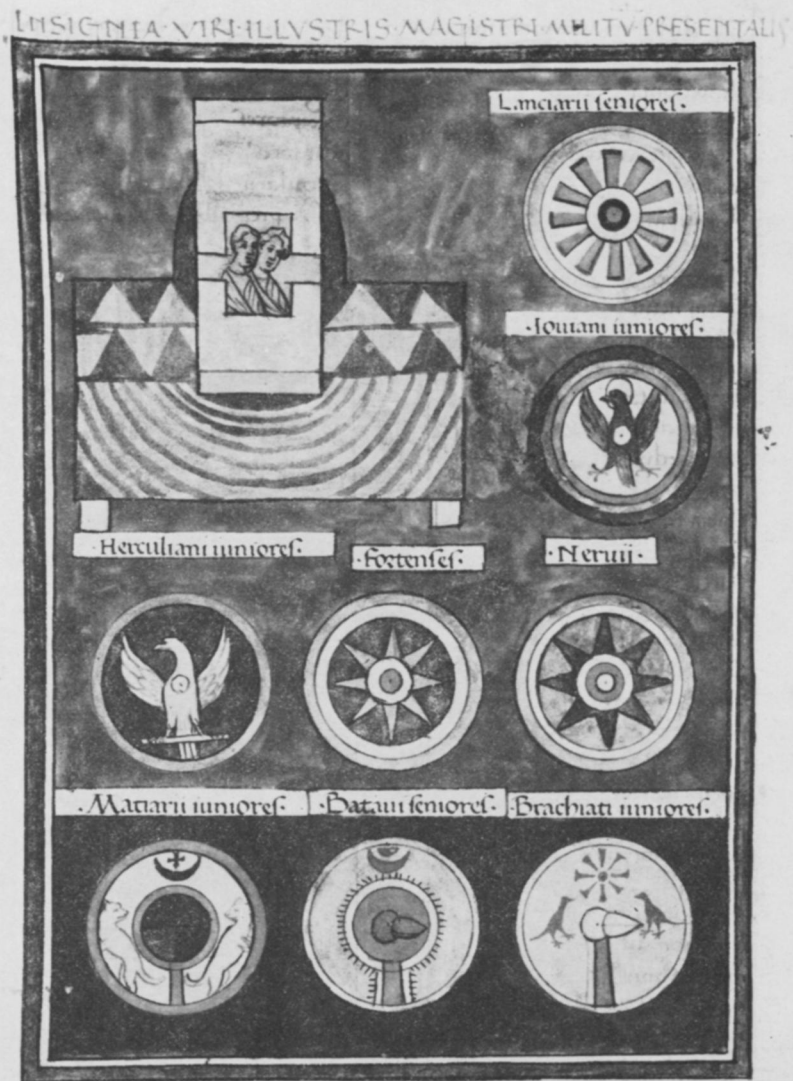
SHIELD EMBLEMS, *NOT. OR. V*, SECOND PAGE. OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARY, MS CANON. MISC. 378, FOL. 95R.



SHIELD EMBLEMS, *NOT. OCC.* VI, SECOND PAGE. PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, MS LAT. 9661, FOL. 115R.





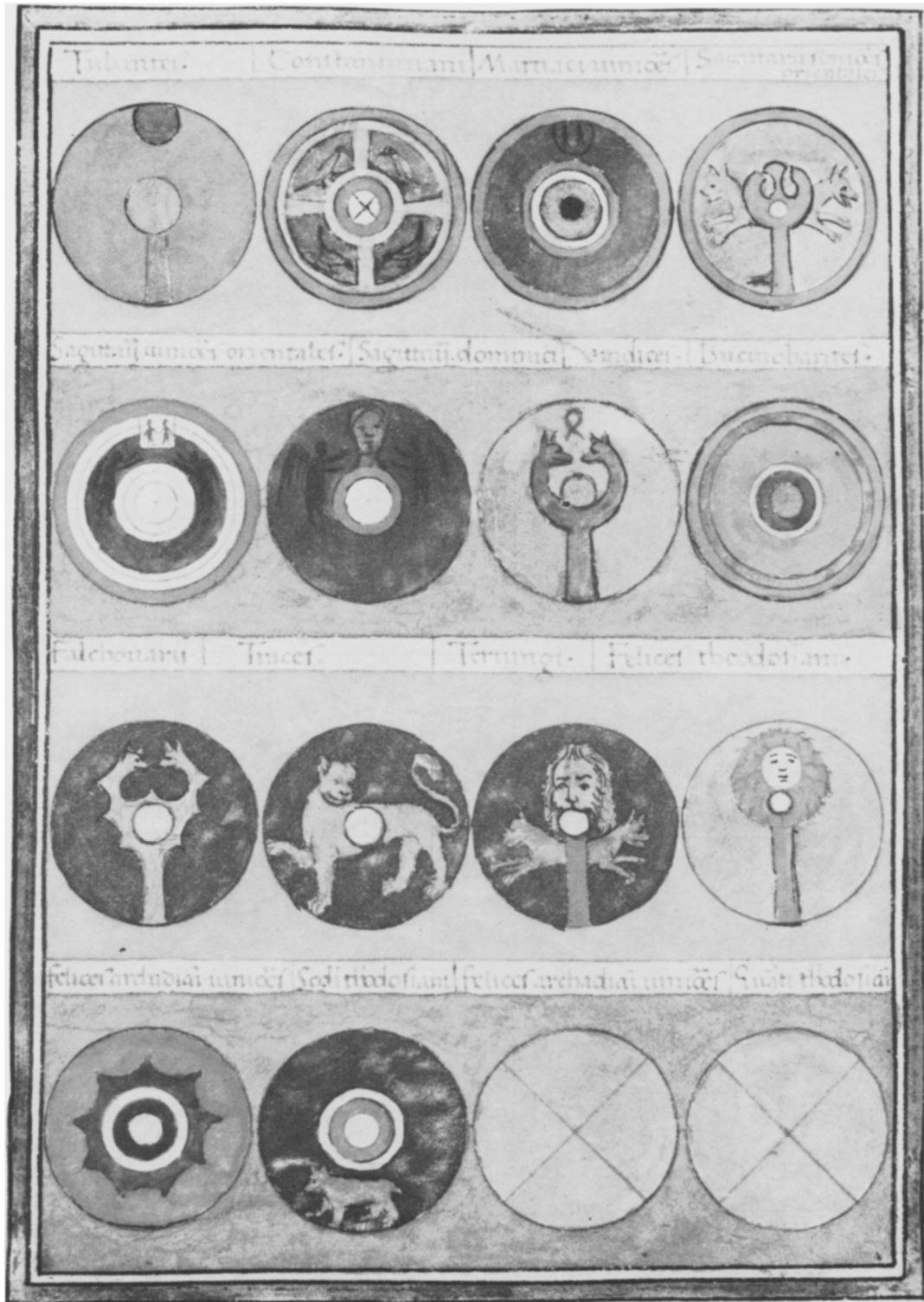


SHIELD EMBLEMS, *NOT. OR. V*, FIRST PAGE. PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, MS LAT. 9661, FOL. 74V.

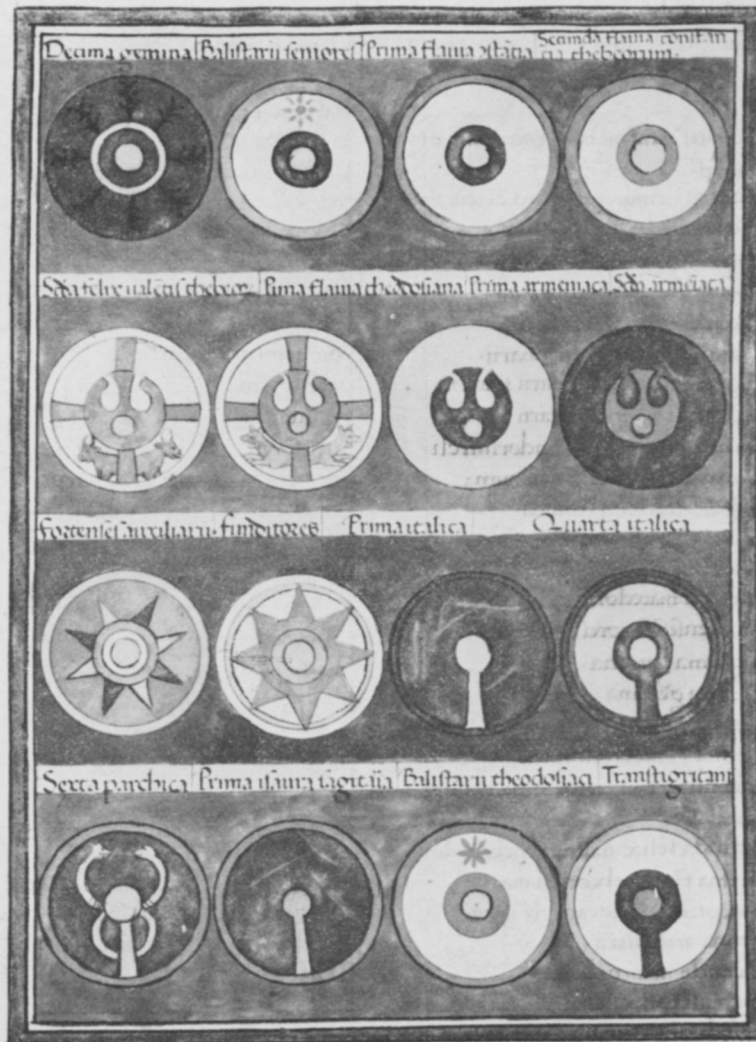




SHIELD EMBLEMS. NOT. OR. VI, FIRST PAGE. PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, MS LAT. 9661, FOL. 76R.



SHIELD EMBLEMS, *NOT. OR.* VI, SECOND PAGE. OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARY, MS CANON. MISC. 378, FOL. 96V.



SHIELD EMBLEMS, *NOT. OR. VII*, SECOND PAGE. PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, MS LAT. 9661, FOL. 78R.



# INCONSISTENCY AND LASSITUDE: THE SHIELD EMBLEMS OF THE *NOTITIA DIGNITATUM*

By ROBERT GRIGG

Plates III–X

It has usually been held that the shield emblems in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Not. Dig.*) were based upon an official pictorial register or pattern book, containing the unit emblems of the late Roman army.<sup>1</sup> Thought to have been based upon an official source, as the text was, the shield emblems of the *Not. Dig.* are imagined to have been accurate in the original manuscript.<sup>2</sup> It was only later, according to this view, that errors crept in during the transmission of the text and illustrations, so that the emblems now appear to be somewhat debased. For example, it is held that some of them no longer accompany the titles for which they were apparently intended.<sup>3</sup>

Shifts in the relationship between the emblems and titles have long been noted. But there are other, more fundamental, inconsistencies that have escaped the attention of scholars. These previously led me to raise doubts about the truth of the conventional view above and to entertain the possibility 'that the artist's sources were so impoverished that he was reduced to relying upon his own powers of invention'.<sup>4</sup> I should now like to explain in greater detail my reasons for rejecting the conventional view and advancing the alternative explanation that the shield emblems of the *Not. Dig.* were largely *ad hoc* fabrications. The consequences for our understanding of the *Not. Dig.* and of the art of the later Roman Empire are obviously considerable.<sup>5</sup>

## I

The accuracy of the shield emblems in the *Not. Dig.* cannot be tested by means of direct comparison. At first this may not appear to be an obvious truth. It is well-known that some Roman shields and shield fragments from earlier periods have survived.<sup>6</sup> The excavations of Dura-Europos have of course provided the best-preserved examples.<sup>7</sup> One of those shields, a rectangular *scutum*, was decorated with a painted image of a lion. This image has been interpreted as a legionary shield emblem—or, more precisely, a legionary

<sup>1</sup> P. Berger, *The Insignia of the Notitia Dignitatum* (1981), 44–57.

<sup>2</sup> With some authors this is merely implicit: e.g., J. B. Bury, *JRS* x (1920), 132, and A. W. Byvanck, *Mnemosyne* Ser. 3, VIII (1940), 195. It is an implicit premise in Seeck's discussion of the shield emblems: see O. Seeck, *Hermes* IX (1875), 232 f., and id., *Notitia Dignitatum* (1876), xx f., as well as D. Hoffmann, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (1969) I, 7 f., 14, 163, who claims that the shield emblems have been debased, yet bases important conclusions upon them. Berger, *Insignia*, 44–57, has expressly affirmed this belief and set forth a series of arguments designed to confirm it. I shall examine those arguments at the appropriate places below. Berger, *Insignia*, 161a, 168, also speculates that the register containing the model emblems may have been an 'illustrated scroll'.

Authors researching other topics have used the shield emblems in ways that presuppose their accuracy: see nn. 14, 15, and 17 below, as well as T. Mommsen, *CIL* III, no. 6194, and R. Delbrueck, *Probleme der Lipsanotek in Brescia* (1952), 79 f.

<sup>3</sup> Seeck, *Hermes* IX (1875), 232 f.; id., *Notitia*, xx f.; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 14, 163.

<sup>4</sup> *JRS* LXIX (1979), 111.

<sup>5</sup> Aside from the particular issues discussed here, there are two broad questions concerning later Roman art on which the results of my study bear. One is the kind and degree of evidential value that images in late Roman art characteristically possess. This question is often raised in connection with attempts

to reconstruct the appearance of buildings or monuments on the basis of late Roman images. See, e.g., N. Duval, *Cahiers Archéologiques* xv (1965), 247–54. The other question is the extent to which late Roman painters made use of copy or pattern books. For the few fragmentary examples that survive, see R. Scheller, *Survey of Medieval Model Books* (1963), 5 f., 45 f., and E. Kitzinger, *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art* (1975), 109 f., 119.

<sup>6</sup> Though clearly a desideratum, no corpus of Roman shields or shield bosses exists. I have had to rely on scattered publications that are much too numerous to list exhaustively here. Some of the most important of these are A. Gansser-Burckhardt, *Das Leder und seine Verarbeitung im römischen Legionslager Vindonissa* (1942), 74; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans* (1964), 209; E. Hübner, *Archaeologisch-epigraphische Mittheilungen aus Oesterreich-Ungarn* II (1878), 105–19; and H. Klumbach, *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* xxv (1960), 125 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately there is no comprehensive publication for the shields discovered at Dura-Europos. See F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos* (1922–1923) (1926), 261–3, 323–37; id., *Syria* VI (1925), 1–15; *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Preliminary Reports* (hereafter *Reports*), *First Season, Spring 1928*, ed. P. Baur and M. Rostovtzeff (1929), 16–18; *Reports, Second Season, 1928–1929*, ed. P. Baur and M. Rostovtzeff (1931), 75, pl. xxvi; *Reports, Seventh and Eighth Seasons, 1933–1934*, ed. M. Rostovtzeff, F. Brown, and C. Welles (1939), 326–69.

badge used as a shield emblem.<sup>8</sup> Since our knowledge of legionary badges is fairly complete,<sup>9</sup> it would be convenient if legionary badges were systematically used as shield emblems. But the evidence can hardly support such an inference. It is not simply that the evidence is sparse. What is worse, it is inconsistent. According to the detailed representations of the Roman army on the Column of Trajan, the overwhelming majority of the legionary and praetorian *scuta* were decorated with variants of the thunderbolt-and-lightning pattern and, significantly, none with legionary badges.<sup>10</sup>

Even if the apparent inconsistencies of this evidence could be resolved, there are several reasons why it is doubtful that any of it would be relevant to a test of the accuracy of the shield emblems represented in the *Not. Dig.* First, wherever the units listed in the late-Roman field army can be identified with the legions of the early Empire, the shield emblems represented in the *Not. Dig.* fail to show the badges of those legions.<sup>11</sup> Second, in respect to shape, the shields in the *Not. Dig.* clearly differ: they are uniformly circular. This consistent use of the circle may have been motivated by expediency since the circle would be easier to draw than the ellipse; therefore it should not be regarded as inconsistent with the possibility that the shields of the late-Roman army were elliptical, not circular. But they certainly could not have shared the rectangular shape of the legionary and praetorian *scuta* of the first and second centuries A.D.<sup>12</sup> Third, the thunderbolt-and-lightning pattern, which appears to have been associated with the legionary *scutum*, nowhere appears in the emblems of the *Not. Dig.*, at least not in any readily identifiable form. Evidently, then, the shields of the late-Roman field army bore little resemblance to the shields of the legions under the early Empire.

These doubts concerning the relevance of our knowledge of Roman shields under the early and middle Empire are disappointing. Within later Roman art, when comparisons would be more meaningful, no monuments comparable in exactitude to the Column of

<sup>8</sup> *Reports, Sixth Season, 1932-1933*, ed. M. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins, and C. Welles (1936), 456-66, pls. xxv, xxvi.

<sup>9</sup> Thanks to a variety of sources, not least of which are the legionary coins minted under Gallienus, Victorinus and Carausius. For the legionary series on the coins of these emperors, see C. Oman, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 4th Series, xviii (1918), 80-96; id., *Numismatic Chronicle*, 5th Series, iv (1924), 53-68; and P. Webb, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* v, pt. 1, 34, 92-7; v, pt. 2, 384 f., 388 f., and 468-70. More generally, see A. von Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur römischen Religion* (1909), 3 ff., C. Renel, *Cultes militaires de Rome: Les enseignes* (1903), 73 ff., and E. Ritterling, *RE* xii, 1371-6.

<sup>10</sup> A good bibliography for all aspects of the Column of Trajan is found in L. Rossi, *Trajan's Column and the Dacian Wars*, trans. rev. J. M. C. Toynbee (1971), 231-3. One may now add to it F. Florescu, *Die Trajanssäule*, 1: *Grundfrage und Tafeln* (1969), and W. Gauer, *Untersuchungen zur Trajanssäule*, 1: *Darstellungsprogramm und künstlerischer Entwurf* (Monumenta Artis Romanae, 13) (1977). I base my statement about the absence of legionary badges from the legionary *scuta* both on Rossi's discussion (*Column*, 108 ff.) and my own examination of the plates in K. Lehmann Hartleben, *Die Trajanssäule* (1926).

<sup>11</sup> The titles and stations of some of the units in the *Comitatus* and *Pseudocomitatus* in the *Not. Dig.* have helped to link them to former legions whose badges are known. For this, see Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1, 188, 227 ff. Sources concerning these badges are given above in n. 9 and in H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions*, 2nd ed. (1958), 106, 116, n. 2, 262 f., 269 f. Below I list the ten units in the *Not. Dig.* falling into this category, giving (a) the title in the *Not. Dig.*, (b) legionary title, (c) emblem in the *Not. Dig.*, and (d) legionary badge:

(1) (a) *Primani*, (b) *Leg. I Italica*, (c) knotted rope (?), *Not. Or.* vi, 5, (d) boar or hippocamp.

(2) (a) *Quinta Macedonica*, (b) *Leg. V Macedonica*,

(c) radial thunderbolts (?), *Not. Or.* vii, 4, (d) eagle.

(3) (a) *Decima Gemina*, (b) *Leg. X Gemina*, (c) radial thunderbolts (?), *Not. Or.* vii, 7, (d) bull.

(4) (a) *Tertiodecimani*, (b) *Leg. XIII Gemina*, (c) rampant quadruped, *Not. Or.* viii, 6, (d) lion.

(5) (a) *Quartodecimani*, (b) *Leg. XIV Gemina*, (c) eagle, *Not. Or.* viii, 7, (d) capricorn.

(6) (a) *Secundani*, (b) *Leg. II Adiutrix*, (c) essentially blank, *Not. Or.* ix, 13, (d) Pegasus.

(7) (a) *Minervia*, (b) *Leg. I Minerva*, (c) essentially blank, *Not. Or.* ix, 15, (d) Minerva or ram.

(8) (a) *Octaviani*, (b) *Leg. VIII Augusta*, (c) four radially arranged *peltae*, *Not. Occ.* v, 10, (d) bull.

(9) (a) *Secundani Italiciani*, (b) *Leg. II Italica*, (c) wheel cross, *Not. Occ.* v, 86, (d) she-wolf and twins.

(10) (a) *Tertiani*, (b) *Leg. III Italica*, (c) blank, *Not. Occ.* v, 88, (d) stork.

Among these ten comparisons, there is only one instance of a possible correspondence: the shield emblem of the *Tertiodecimani* (no. 4) shows a rampant quadruped, which conceivably was derived from the lion of *Leg. XIII Gemina*.

Ignoring this evidence, Berger, *Insignia*, 44 f., assumes without argument that the shield emblems and legionary badges were identical. Thus she believes that one can confirm the accuracy of the shield emblems in the *Not. Dig.* by comparing them with the legionary badges used under the early and middle Empire. Although aware of the failure of one of the shield emblems to match the appropriate legionary badge (*Insignia*, 228, n. 54), Berger (*Insignia*, 48) claims to have found a confirming instance in the tombstone of Valerius Thimumpus. Berger's argument is borrowed from Mommsen (see n. 2 above), but she has overlooked Hoffmann's critical assessment of it—*Bewegungsheer* II, 88, n. 189 ('fraglich').

<sup>12</sup> P. Couissin, *Les Armes romaines* (1926), 393 f., and the editors of *Reports, Seventh and Eighth Seasons*, 330, argue that the rectangular *scutum* was gradually abandoned in the course of the second century A.D.

Trajan have survived—if they ever existed—nor do we have a body of evidence concerning anything like the traditional legionary badges under the early and middle Empire. The loss of the columns of Theodosius and Arcadius is especially unfortunate, since they were contemporary with the creation of the *Not. Dig.*<sup>13</sup> Soldiers and their shields were of course represented in later Roman art, but the decorations of the shields were not necessarily intended as the distinctive emblems of particular military units. With few exceptions, they appear to present generalized patterns that may have been used as emblems but were not necessarily intended as such.

As always, there are exceptions. Kinch and Alföldi have claimed that the decorated shields in the reliefs on the triumphal Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki represent the emblems of units that participated in Galerius' campaign against the Persians in 297–8.<sup>14</sup> Alföldi also claimed to see in a shield carved on the pedestal of the Arch of Constantine in Rome the emblem of a unit named the *Cornuti*, which, he argues, must have distinguished itself in Constantine's campaign against Maxentius.<sup>15</sup>

The plausibility and significance of these claims vary. Hoffmann and Laubscher both argue that the claims made in regard to the Arch of Galerius cannot be sustained.<sup>16</sup> Alföldi's identification of the *Cornuti* emblem on the Arch of Constantine, on the other hand, has been well received.<sup>17</sup> But since the identification was in large part based upon an emblem in the *Not. Dig.* (Pl. VIII, last shield), which Alföldi assumed to be accurate, there is a risk of circularity in claiming that the identification confirms the accuracy of the emblems in the *Not. Dig.*<sup>18</sup> Even if independent evidence came to light proving the identification to be correct, a single instance of a match with the shield emblems of the *Not. Dig.* would hardly be sufficient to support the broad generalization that the shields as a whole were accurate (even if debased in their present form) and therefore likely to have been based upon an official source. I do not base this conclusion solely upon the consideration that a single instance normally is insufficient to support a generalization but also on the consideration that some of the emblems may be accurate or give the appearance of being accurate for reasons other than dependence on an official register.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For these two columns, see J. Kollwitz, *Öst-römische Plastik der theodosianischen Zeit* (1941), 3 ff.; G. Giglioli, *La colonna di Arcadio a Costantinopoli* (1952); G. Becatti, *La colonna coelide istoriata* (1960), 83 ff.

<sup>14</sup> In the reliefs decorating the arch, which was erected c. 300, some of the shields carried by Roman soldiers bear images either of Hercules; a rampant lion, rendered in profile; or an eagle holding a thunderbolt in its talons. K. F. Kinch, *L'arc de triomphe de Salonique* (1890), 16 f., 19 f., thought that the eagle and the lion referred to *Legio V Macedonica* and *Legio XIII Gemina* respectively; he also thought that some of the shields referred to the *Iovii* and *Herculii*, units probably created during the Tetrarchy; as he noted, in the *Not. Or.* v, 3, 4, and *Not. Occ.* v, 2, 3, their shields are decorated with eagles. Kinch evidently regarded the shield emblems as reliable evidence, notwithstanding the fact that one might have expected the emblem of the *Herculii* to be either Hercules or one of his well-known attributes. Alföldi, *Germania* xix (1935), 324, n. 6, modifies Kinch's suggestion by regarding the eagle as the emblem of the *Iovii* and the image of Hercules as the emblem of the *Herculii*. The lion he connects with a Germanic unit bearing the name *Leones*; this unit, formed under Caracalla, Alföldi supposes was not merely a contingent of Germanic bodyguards, but a regular military unit that likely survived into the fourth century (*ibid.*, 324 f.).

<sup>15</sup> *Germania* xix (1935), 324 ff., and *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xiii (1959), 171 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* II, 63, n. 431, 82, n. 63, and H. P. Laubscher, *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki* (1975), 16 f., 47 f.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., H. P. L'Orange and A. von Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (1939), 63 ff.; E. Polaschek, *RE* xviii, 1109; M. Ross, *Dum-*

*barton Oaks Papers* xiii (1959), 181; R. MacMullen, *Art Bulletin* xlvi (1964), 442; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 133 ff.; and Berger, *Insignia*, 45 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Alföldi, *Germania* xix (1935), 326. See *Not. Or.* vi, 9, and *Not. Occ.* v, 14, for the emblem of the *Cornuti*—and possibly *Not. Occ.* v, 25, if one accepts the view (see Seeck, *Notitia*, xxiv) that this was the shield originally intended for the preceding *titulus*. Interestingly, the *Cornuti Seniores*, *Cornuti Iuniores* emblems in *Not. Occ.* vi, 6, 7, are completely different from these. And none of the *Cornuti* shields featuring the peltate form also features a Victory, as is seen on the shield on the pedestal of the Arch of Constantine. That any of these peltate forms were intended to have goats' heads as terminals is doubtful, although a fur pattern is evident in *Not. Or.* vi, 9. *Not. Occ.* v, 15, lacks zoomorphic terminals altogether.

Anxious to defend the proposition that the shield emblems are accurate, Berger, *Insignia*, 45 f., identifies the Victory accompanying *Not. Occ.* v, 24, as the correct emblem of the *Cornuti* also. Berger has evidently overlooked Seeck's suggestion (*Notitia*, xxiv) that the emblem originally intended for the *Cornuti* now accompanies *Not. Occ.* v, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Grigg, *JRS* lxix (1979), 111 f. E.g., many of the titles, by virtue of their reference to things after which the units were named, suggest images that the artist would likely have conceived as appropriate. Those units with the titles *Ioviani* (or *Iovii*), *Herculiani*, *Martii*, *Victores*, *Leones*, *Cornuti*, *Lanciarum*, *Balistarum*, *Minervii*, *Sagittarum*, *Armigerum*, and *Scutarum* might all have been given plausible looking emblems solely on the basis of the underlying reference of the title (as distinct from the use of these terms to refer to military units). For this reason, it is a mistake to assume, as does Berger, *Insignia*, 48 f., that a plausible match between a unit's title and its shield emblem authenticates the accuracy of the emblem.

## II

Although a direct test of the accuracy of the shield emblems is not possible given the present evidence, there are other ways of assessing their credibility. These involve attention to circumstantial evidence within the illustrations, some of it useful in framing tests for internal consistency and some of it useful in tracing an increasing lassitude on the part of the artist (or artists) responsible for illustrating the shield emblems.

Probably no artist could have accurately represented all of the shield emblems in the *Not. Dig.* without an official pattern book or pictorial guide. There are simply too many of them—265 shield emblems in all. Just as clearly, any artist who tried to give the appearance of accuracy by undertaking to invent over 250 unique emblems would quickly be reduced to repetition and stereotyped variation. On the other hand, if the artist used an official register of the shield emblems, the results would surely have been different. The emblems not only would have exhibited greater variety, they would have been varied in ways which one could probably never predict *a priori*.

Whatever the degree of variety one would expect to find in the shield emblems of the late-Roman field army, one thing is clear: the level of variety should at least remain relatively constant. In point of fact, the variety within the shield emblems represented within the *Not. Dig.* does not remain constant, even when one makes allowance for a reasonable amount of variation. As I suggested in my previous paper,<sup>20</sup> there is evidence of an increasing loss of variety in the shield emblems of the *Not. Occ.*, chapters v and vi. But the extent of this loss, which corresponds to the order of reading, is much more progressive and dramatic than I had realized. It can even be perceived in the eastern chapters. Its progressive nature suggests what is perhaps best dubbed the 'curve of artistic lassitude'. Shields that are blank, save perhaps for an indication of the umbo, or shields that are decorated merely with concentric circles multiply beyond all expectation in the progression from the first to the last of the chapters of the *magistri militum*. This can be illustrated by means of a comparison.<sup>21</sup> In a page from the first of these chapters (Pl. III), there is only one emblem that is based solely upon a pattern of concentric circles.<sup>22</sup> In a comparable page from the last of these chapters (Pl. IV), that type is used fourteen times.<sup>23</sup> As striking as this comparison is, the true extent of the change is not really appreciated without a tabulation, showing the percentage of these types in each chapter (Table 1).<sup>24</sup>

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF ESSENTIALLY BLANK SHIELDS

Chapter	Blank and Concentric Circle	Other	Total
<i>Notitia Orientis</i>			
v . . . .	1 (4%)	23 (96%)	24
vi . . . .	1 (5%)	21 (95%)	22
vii . . . .	2 (10%)	19 (90%)	21
viii . . . .	2 (10%)	19 (90%)	21
ix . . . .	5 (33%)	10 (67%)	15
<i>Notitia Occidentis</i>			
v . . . .	40 (33%)	83 (67%)	123
vi . . . .	21 (54%)	18 (46%)	39

<sup>20</sup> *JRS* LXIX (1979), 111.

<sup>21</sup> The comparison is between the second page of *Not. Or. v* and the second page of *Not. Occ. vi*.

<sup>22</sup> *Not. Or. v*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Not. Occ. vi*, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40.

<sup>24</sup> I list here the essentially blank shields by chapter, giving the ratio of their number to the total number of shields in the chapter: *Not. Or. v*, 17 (1/24); *Not. Or. vi*, 17 (1/22) (shields vi, 24, 25, cannot be classi-

fied; shield vi, 12, which is blank in Seeck's edition, is blank in neither the Oxford nor the Paris MS of the *Not. Dig.*); *Not. Or. vii*, 9, 10 (2/21); *Not. Or. viii*, 12, 20 (2/21); *Not. Or. ix*, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16 (5/15); *Not. Occ. v*, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 18, 23, 26, 44, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 62, 66, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 99, 101, 104, 105, 106, 108, 111, 115, 119, 120, 123 (41/123); *Not. Occ. vi*, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40 (21/39).

Table 1 shows the percentage rising from 4 per cent in the first military chapter (*Not. Or.* v) to 54 per cent in the last (*Not. Occ.* vi). This change cannot be explained as the result merely of chance. Nor can it be explained as the result of dependence upon an official register of the shield emblems, since it involves a striking form of internal inconsistency, not to mention the impossibility of reconciling it with the presumed purpose of the emblems, namely, the provision of distinctive designs that would facilitate recognition in the confusion of battle. However, it is easy to explain if one imagines, as I earlier suggested, that the artist had to rely largely upon his own powers of invention, powers which diminished in the course of illustrating the manuscript.

Evidently the artist exercised greater care in securing variety in the earlier military chapters than in the later ones. True as this may be, the greater variety of the earlier chapters was purchased at the cost of plausibility. As I suggested in my earlier study, many of the emblems of the earlier chapters seem awkwardly confected,<sup>25</sup> even though most of the individual motifs involved in these confections were common enough at the time. There is of course an element of subjectivity involved in judgments of implausibility and awkwardness. Perhaps, then, the implausibility of these emblems is less persuasive as evidence against their accuracy than their distribution in the military chapters. They tend to be clustered in the earlier chapters;<sup>26</sup> and this has important bearing on an assessment of the accuracy of the shield emblems in two distinct ways. First of all, the clustering or biased distribution amounts to another form of inconsistency, one which we have no reason to believe ever existed in the emblems of the Roman army or in an official register of those emblems. Second, this pattern provides additional evidence confirming the hypothesis that the artist's interests and energies were progressively sapped. This hypothesis explains why there are fewer and less varied juxtapositions of this sort in the two western chapters that are decorated with shield emblems (*Not. Occ.* v and vi). Evidently by the time he came to them, the artist had given up the struggle for variety and increasingly opted for such non-descript types as the blank shield or the shield with concentric circles.

The impression of lassitude is also reinforced by the tolerance shown in the western chapters for runs of identical emblems. On the first page of the *Not. Occ.* v, there are two significant runs: three shields adjacent to one another that feature variations of the 'wheel cross', and four shields that show a 'shaft' crowned with variations of the crescent form (Pl. V).<sup>27</sup> On the second page, we find a total of eight emblems based on a combination of the 'shaft' and frontal mask or head, three of which are adjacent to one another (Pl. VI).<sup>28</sup>

### III

There are other ways of putting the credibility of the shield emblems to the test.

The first—and I think easily the most decisive—is based on the expectation that if the emblem of a unit appears in two different locations within the *Not. Dig.*, the two emblems will be consistent with one another. This expectation is useful by virtue of the fact that the eastern and western lists were drawn up at different times.<sup>29</sup> As a result, some units that

<sup>25</sup> *JRS* LXIX (1979), III, fig. 2.

<sup>26</sup> If I have applied my standard uniformly, then the following distribution of awkward emblems is significant: *Not. Or.* v, 7, 12, 20, vi, 2, 11, 13, 20, 21, vii, 11, 12, viii, 5, 11, 21, ix, 14; *Not. Occ.* v, 27, 28, 32, 34, 37, 41, 42, 43, 63, vi, 13, 15. The disparity in proportions that emerges when one takes the number of shields in each chapter into consideration is so great as to rule out coincidence as a cause at a very high level of confidence (employing the Chi-square distribution, it is over the 99 per cent level).

<sup>27</sup> *Not. Occ.* v, 6, 7, 8, for the wheel cross; *Not. Occ.* v, 14, 15, 16, 17, for the shaft and crescent.

<sup>28</sup> *Not. Occ.* v, 27, 28, 32, 34, 37, 41, 42, 43.

<sup>29</sup> There is wide agreement that the two halves of the *Not. Dig.* were composed at different times. The estimated dates given by A. H. M. Jones, *The Later*

*Roman Empire 284-602* (1964) II, 1417, are fairly standard: 'the Eastern section was revised... at a date not long after 395...'; on p. 1423 he writes, 'the military lists [in the western section] have then been revised after a fashion down to 420, perhaps to the end of Honorius's reign. The date is unlikely to be much later, since the units named after Valentinian III are so few'. Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* I, 52 f., provides a *terminus ante quem* of May 394 for the eastern military lists, *Not. Or.* v, vi, vii, viii, and xi; *Not. Or.* ix, however, he dates from before 410. The western lists, according to Hoffmann (*Bewegungsheer* I, 22) must stem from the reign of Honorius (395-423) and were composed directly after his death. J. Ward, *Latomus* xxx (1974), 434, gives the date of c. 394 for the eastern half and c. 430 for the western half.



were transferred in the interim from the East to the West appear in both lists.<sup>30</sup> Since some of these units are represented by a shield emblem in both the eastern and western chapters,<sup>31</sup> it is possible to test the internal consistency of the shield emblems in a most direct fashion. The surprising fact is that, even when allowance is made for possible shifting and slurring of the emblems, they are inconsistent in at least eight of the ten instances that afford a test, possibly nine out of ten, depending upon the standard by which one judges consistency (Table 2). In either case, the manifest inconsistency of the emblems is so overwhelming as to destroy the thesis that the shield emblems were based upon an official pattern book. The most one could attempt to do to save the thesis would be to restrict its scope to either the eastern or the western list. Since they are inconsistent with one another, they cannot both be accurate.

TABLE 2. UNITS OF THE FIELD ARMY THAT APPEAR IN BOTH THE EASTERN AND WESTERN LISTS AND ARE REPRESENTED BY A SHIELD EMBLEM

Unit Title	Location		Agreement of Emblems
	<i>Not. Or.</i>	<i>Not. Occ.</i>	
<i>Cornuti iuniores</i> . . . .	vi, 9	v, 24	Yes (shift required)
<i>Bracchiati iuniores</i> . . . .	v, 9	Missing	
<i>Batavi seniores</i> . . . .	v, 8	v, 19	Possibly
<i>Mattiaci seniores</i> . . . .	v, 12	v, 20	No
<i>Mattiaci iuniores</i> . . . .	vi, 12	v, 61	No
<i>Victores iuniores</i> . . . .	v, 22	v, 37	No
<i>Ascarii seniores</i> . . . .	ix, 3	v, 21	No
<i>Ascarii iuniores</i> . . . .	ix, 4	v, 22	No
<i>Menapii seniores</i> . . . .	viii, 3	v, 57	No
<i>Tubantes seniores</i> . . . .	vi, 10	v, 28	No
<i>Salii seniores</i> . . . .	v, 10	v, 29	No

Source: D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (1969) 1, 26, for the identification of the units that appear in both the eastern and western lists.

Another test is suggested by the apparent practice of co-ordinating the shield emblems of closely related units.<sup>32</sup> There were at least three significant ways in which military units of the Roman army could have been related. Units could be related tactically by regularly fighting alongside one another, or genetically (for example, as happened when one unit was formed around a detachment drawn from another unit), or nominally by having closely related titles.<sup>33</sup> Some units of course may well have been related in all three fashions, but it at least appears likely that many of the units bearing related titles were given those titles specifically to signal genetic relationships.<sup>34</sup> These titles may incorporate terms of

<sup>30</sup> Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1, 26 (for a list of those units), 28, 526.

<sup>31</sup> Not all of the units in Hoffmann's list are represented by an emblem.

<sup>32</sup> According to Berger, *Insignia*, 56 f., 'another argument for the authenticity of the shield devices likewise derives from cross-checking the internal evidence [the reader should understand that Berger is here appealing to the criterion of internal consistency]: various divisions of the same military unit display similar elements on their shields even if those devices are found on different pages or in different parts of the *Notitia*'. Berger cites only the correspondence between the *Primi Theodosiani* (*Or.* v, 23) and the *Secundi Theodosiani* (*Or.* vi, 23) to support her conclusion.

<sup>33</sup> See Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1, 11 f., who distinguishes between units that are tactically related

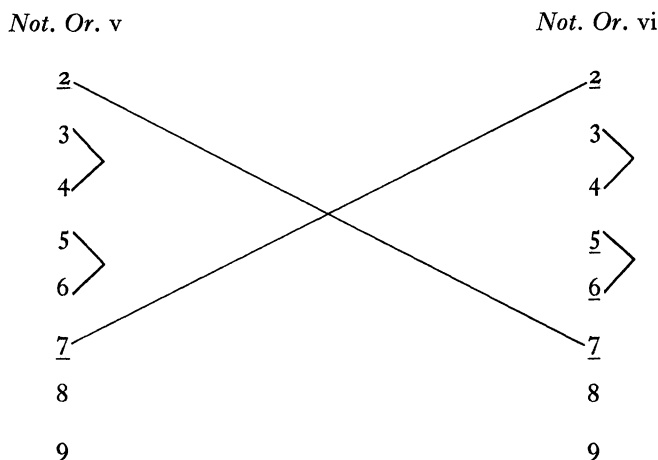
and those related by means of similar titles that are combined with terms of distinction, such as *seniores* and *iuniores*. For units bearing these particular terms of distinction, see R. Tomlin, *American Journal of Philology* XLIII (1972), 253-78. Tomlin, loc. cit., surveys the varied sources of regimental titles in the Roman army. Hoffmann and Tomlin both deal with the creation of new units by the process of division and detachment from older units. On this also see Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 680 ff. General discussions of the naming of Roman legions are found in Parker, *Legions*, 261, and G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D.*, 2nd ed. (1979), 109.

<sup>34</sup> Hoffmann and Tomlin in n. 33 above explain the designation *seniores-iuniores* as evidence, in normal circumstances, of a genetic relationship between the units bearing these titles.

distinction such as 'elders' and 'juniors' or 'first' and 'second'.<sup>35</sup> Whether there would be reasons for or against having tactically related units share the same emblem, I cannot say, but units that were genetically related and that bore titles like these might well have shared emblems. Indeed, most authorities have assumed that they did.<sup>36</sup> A cursory glance at the shield emblems of the *Not. Dig.* might seem to confirm their assumption, for in the first three military chapters the artist acts as if it were the practice of the late-Roman army to co-ordinate the emblems of units bearing related titles.

There are, however, at least three problems in supposing that the *Not. Dig.* accurately copies such a systematic practice. (1) The first is the artist's inconsistent execution of the principle. In the last two military chapters of the *Not. Or.*, the artist abandons the principle.<sup>37</sup> Even so, basing my count on the data in the Appendix, it becomes clear that his overall rate in the eastern chapters is significantly higher than his overall rate in the western chapters. Whereas in the eastern chapters, 64 per cent of the units related by title have co-ordinated emblems (27 out of 42), only 18 per cent do in the western chapters (12 out of 66). This disproportion can be shown to be statistically significant, which means that it was most unlikely to have been the result merely of chance.

(2) Second, some units with unrelated titles have deliberately co-ordinated emblems. This unexplained co-ordination is most striking in the two praesental armies of the eastern chapters (*Not. Or.* v and vi, the first two military chapters in the *Not. Dig.*). The easiest way to appreciate this point is to see the co-ordination between the shield emblems in schematic form, beginning with the first page of both chapters (Pls. VII and VIII):



The units bearing co-ordinated emblems are joined by lines; those units that also have related titles are underscored. It is evident that the emblems associated with *tituli* 3 to 6 are grouped into two pairs of identical shield emblems, adjacent to one another, implying a special relationship between the paired units. Put in another way, the emblems associated with *tituli* 3 and 4 constitute one group, those associated with *tituli* 5 and 6 constitute another. Altogether, then, there are four pairs of units. Strangely, though, in only one of the four pairs of units (*Not. Or.* vi, 5, 6, the *Primani* and *Undecimani*) are the titles of the units even remotely related. There is yet another way in which the emblems on the first pages of the two praesental armies are related. The emblem of the first unit of each chapter echoes the emblem of the sixth unit of the other chapter. Thus *Not. Or.* v, 2 matches *Not.*

<sup>35</sup> e.g., *Prima Armeniaca-Secunda Armeniaca* (*Not. Or.* vii, 13, 14) and *Lanciani Seniores-Lanciani Iuniores* (*Not. Or.* v, 2, ix, 16).

<sup>36</sup> Seeck, *Notitia*, xx; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1, 14, 163. Both Seeck and Hoffmann propose to use the present distribution of the shield emblems as evidence that in some places they have been shifted out of their proper sequences. They also use them to

infer links between several units, for which see especially Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* II, 1, n. 34, 2, n. 67.

<sup>37</sup> I count a total of ten nominally related units in *Not. Or.* viii and ix, not one of which has its emblem co-ordinated with its nominally related sister unit: *Not. Or.* viii, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15; *Not. Or.* ix, 3, 4, 16.

*Or.* vi, 7, while *Not. Or.* v, 7 matches *Not. Or.* vi, 2. The co-ordination of these two pairs of units, however, is matched by the co-ordination of their titles.

On the second page of both praesental armies we find the following arrangement (Pls. III and IX):

<i>Not. Or.</i> v	<i>Not. Or.</i> vi
10	10*
11	11*
12	12
13	13
14	14*
15	15*
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	
25	

(The asterisks here signal that a shift of one place is apparently required to align the shield emblem with its originally intended unit.) The unexplained parallelism on this page in both chapters begins with *titulus* 16 and ends with *titulus* 22 (Pls. III and IX, beginning with the third emblem in the second row from the top and ending after the first emblem in the last row). Altogether there are six pairs of units that bear co-ordinated emblems, even though their titles are totally unrelated.

Hoffmann was unwilling to dismiss this co-ordination as meaningless. To him it was evidence that the paired units were related to one another in a tactical manner at some earlier date.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, Hoffmann failed to take the logically prior step of validating the shield emblems as credible evidence. Even with his impressive command of the evidence, he was apparently unable to find independent evidence to corroborate the existence of the relationships that he feels are implied by the shield emblems. I would suggest, then, that to the extent that Hoffmann's thesis rests on the shield emblems, it is open to doubt.

There is at least one instance in which Hoffmann's explanation can be subjected to the test of independent evidence. The last units of the first page in both armies, the *Bracchiati* and the *Cornuti*, were units that were known to have acted as tactical sister units.<sup>39</sup> If Hoffmann's supposition were correct, one would rightly expect these two units to have co-ordinated emblems. In fact they lack them. This counter-example may not support a sweeping rejection of Hoffmann's explanation, but it does justify doubts about his use of

<sup>38</sup> Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* 1, 13 f.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

the co-ordinated shield emblems of the other units as evidence supporting the inference that the units were tactical sister units at an earlier date. I find it easier to believe that the unexplained co-ordination of emblems was fictional and perhaps motivated by a desire to create a visual analogy for the very real parallelism between the two praesental armies. This I find to be more consistent with the other evidence that bears on the credibility of the shield emblems.

Another type of unexplained co-ordination between the shield emblems is found on the second page of *Not. Or.* vii (Pl. X, *Magister Militum per Orientem*): <sup>40</sup>



Here the over-co-ordination exists within one chapter rather than between two different chapters. The artist apparently noted the organization implicit in the titles of three pairs of units that were placed adjacent to one another (*Not. Or.* vii, 9-10, 13-14, 17-18) and decided to extend that relationship to the two pairs of units that were sandwiched between them (*Not. Or.* vii, 11-12, 15-16).

(3) Third, as I pointed out above, the co-ordination of the emblems of related units declines from the first to the last of the military chapters. But in all of these chapters there is a consistent and telling bias. Those units that were related to one another by title have a much greater probability of having their emblems co-ordinated if they are adjacent to one another, rather than dispersed throughout the manuscript (Table 3 and Appendix). This bias cannot be explained by appealing to an official pattern book. It can apparently best be explained by presuming that the artist's concern for the co-ordination of the emblems of related units was more easily defeated when time and energy were required to satisfy it. It was easier to notice the co-ordination of titles when the units that were related by title were placed beside one another than when they were widely separated.

As it turns out, one of the striking differences between the eastern and western lists is the comparative disorganization of the nominally related units in the latter. By referring to the Appendix, we find that 26 out of the 44 nominally related units in the *Not. Or.* (59 per cent) were adjacent to one another, whereas in the *Not. Occ.* the count is only 23 out of 64 (36 per cent). This difference in organization is fairly marked and it surely helps to explain one of the disparities noted above, namely, the larger proportion of co-ordinated emblems among nominally related units in the *Not. Or.* than in the *Not. Occ.*

#### IV

On the basis of the striking and deeply embedded inconsistencies in the shield emblems, I conclude that they cannot have been based upon an accurate record of the shield emblems of the late-Roman army. The emblems, instead, seem to have been largely *ad hoc* creations, as is strongly implied by the progressive stereotyping and tolerance for runs of nearly

<sup>40</sup> Here and in the Appendix, I do not classify *tituli* 8 and 21, *Balistarum Seniores* and *Balistarum Theodosiaci*, as nominally related units. The unit

properly related to the *Balistarum Seniores* is the *Balistarum Iuniores*, *Not. Or.* viii, 15.

TABLE 3. EVIDENCE OF A BIAS AGAINST THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE EMBLEMS OF NOMINALLY RELATED UNITS THAT WERE NOT ADJACENT

	Adjacent	Not Adjacent
<i>Notitia Orientis</i>		
Co-ordinated . . . . .	18 (69%)	9 (56%)
Unco-ordinated . . . . .	8 (31%)	7 (44%)
Totals . . . . .	26 (100%)	16 (100%)
<i>Notitia Occidentis</i>		
Co-ordinated . . . . .	8 (35%)	6 (15%)
Unco-ordinated . . . . .	15 (65%)	35 (85%)
Totals . . . . .	23 (100%)	41 (100%)

Source: data presented in the Appendix.

identical emblems that is seen in the chapters of the *magistri militum*. A few of the emblems may have been accurate, assuming that the emblems of some units were widely known. Some may reflect plausible guesses based on the reference implicit in the titles of some of the units, but many are essentially blank or featureless, especially in the two western chapters, *Not. Occ.* v and vi. But even in the eastern chapters of the *magistri militum*, where the emblems are more varied, the variety seems to have been the result of implausible and often fantastic combinations. The shield emblems in the *Not. Dig.* therefore cannot be regarded as credible evidence of the shield emblems of the late-Roman army, even though they have been used as such by Seeck, Delbrueck, Alföldi, and Hoffmann. These scholars seem to have reasoned that because the text of the *Not. Dig.* was based on official sources, the same must be true of the accompanying illustrations of the shield emblems. This implicit argument from analogy simply does not hold.

All of this is puzzling if one assumes that the shield emblems were included to provide a practical tool for distinguishing the emblem of one unit from that of another. Quite clearly, the emblems did not meet that standard of utility, nor surely were they intended to. Their function must have been of an altogether different sort. I would suggest that they were included in order to convey something like an impression of administrative comprehensiveness, commensurate with the scope of the text. That it was largely a fiction merely underscores the extent to which the original manuscript fell short of being an official document, both in the sense of its possibly being a register drawn up for administrative use and in the sense of its having been based upon official sources. The conclusion I have reached here about the shield emblems of course cannot be uncritically extended to all of the illustrations in the *Not. Dig.*, but it certainly does challenge the assumption that the illustrations were based upon an official pattern book or pictorial guide, for in the one place where the need for such a guide was most critical, there is evidence—overwhelming in my opinion—that it was not used by the artist of the *Not. Dig.*

*University of California, Davis*



## NOMINALLY RELATED UNITS AND THE CO-ORDINATION OF THEIR EMBLEMS

Adjacent	Not Adjacent
<i>Notitia Orientis</i>	
[v, 13-v, 14] [v, 23-v, 24] ————— [vi, 5-vi, 6] [vi, 13-vi, 14*] [vii, 6-vii, 7] [vii, 9-vii, 10] ————— [vii, 11-vii, 12] [vii, 13-vii, 14] [vii, 17-viii, 18] viii, 4-viii, 5 viii, 6-viii, 7 viii, 8-viii, 9 ix, 3-ix, 4	[v, 2-vi, 7]-ix, 16 [v, 7-vi, 2] [v, 11-vi, 11*] [v, 12-vi, 12*] v, 21-vii, 3 [vi, 23]-(vi, 25) vi, 22-vii, 2-(vi, 24) vii, 8-viii, 15
<i>Notitia Occidentis</i>	
[v, 21-v, 22*] [v, 26-v, 27] v, 31-v, 32 [v, 49-v, 50] v, 52-v, 53 [v, 54-v, 55] v, 73-v, 74 v, 100-v, 101-v, 102 (?) vi, 6-vi, 7 vi, 26-vi, 27-vi, 28-vi, 29	[v, 8-v, 13] [v, 14-v, 24*] v, 19-v, 38-v, 58 v, 23-v, 36-v, 64 [v, 33-v, 41*] v, 42-vi, 10 v, 45-vi, 34 v, 48-v, 51 v, 76-v, 106 v, 77-v, 91 v, 79-v, 93-v, 123 v, 121-vi, 19 vi, 2-vi, 32 vi, 5-vi, 9 vi, 17-vi, 36 vi, 21-vi, 39 vi, 23-vi, 37 vi, 25-vi, 30 vi, 31-vi, 35

Note: nominally related units are grouped together and joined by dashes. When these units have co-ordinated emblems, they are enclosed within brackets. The line joining *Not. Or.* v, 23, 24, and *Not. Or.* vi, 23, signals that these units are both nominally related and related by means of emblems. The asterisks indicate that a shift of one place is apparently required to align the shield emblem with its originally intended unit. Two units in the eastern chapters, *Not. Or.* vi, 24, 25, are not represented by an emblem, even though their *tituli* are inscribed among the shield emblems. That fact is signalled here by placing them in parentheses.