

The Notitia Dignitatum

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THE *NOTITIA DIGNITATUM*

The extant *Notitia Dignitatum* comprises two separate *Notitiae*, one labelled *in partibus Orientis*, the other *in partibus Occidentis*¹. They clearly derive from the two lists which the *Notitia* itself notes as existing in the bureau of each *primicerius notariorum*; in the east it is called *Omnis dignitatum et amministrationum notitia tam ciuiliū quam militarium*, in the west *Notitia omnium dignitatum et amministrationum tam militarium quam ciuiliū* — the small differences in wording warns against imposing mindless symmetry on the two lists². The only other ancient reference to these *notitiae* comes in Claudian's description, in a poem written 396/404 A.D. (probably c. 399), of the competence of the anonymous western *primicerius notariorum*, who was Celerina's father³. Since Claudian was himself a *notarius* and since his words *tractat numeros* repeat the very words used of the duties of the eastern *primicerius* in the *Notitia* (or. 18, 4), he is clearly writing from knowledge of an actual *Notitia*. It is not the western list of the extant *Notitia*, which no longer includes these words.

The extant *Notitia* is not, however, the simple combining of contemporary eastern and western lists, for the two lists date

¹ NOT. dign. or. 1, 1; occ. 1, 1; all references to the NOT. dign. are to the edition of O. SEECK, *Notitia Dignitatum* (Berlin 1876).

² NOT. dign. or. 18, 4; occ. 16, 5.

³ *Epithalamium dictum Palladio u.c. tribuno et notario et Celerinae* (*Carm. min.* 25) 82-91.

from different times, with the western list at a later stage in the evolution of the separate *notitiae*. The extant, composite *Notitia* is thus a new product for a new purpose. It first appears in fifteenth century copies of a manuscript in the *Codex Spirensis*, but was almost certainly known at the Carolingian court of Charlemagne⁴. The text has come into prominence in modern times, in the somewhat tendentious form recreated by Otto Seeck, as a proof text whose stratified deposits have been dug over to reveal details of administrative and resource history, a quarrying often undertaken without due regard to its precise nature and history and to its limitations as a document of record.

This paper first seeks to establish the nature and a little of the history of the lists that underlie the extant *Notitia*. It then considers the *Notitia* as an artifact of its political culture, encoding in its lists the creation and the dissolution of authority in the late Roman Empire. The original lists represent in their structure the reformulation of the oikoumene in bureaucratic terms, a major facet of the restructuring of authority in the Roman world after the disintegration of public authority in the third century. But the western list in particular represents the dissolution of this authority in the early fifth century. The composite list represents, among other things, a denial, at least ideologically, of that dissolution and an attempt to reclaim the past. Its resurrection in Carolingian times may represent a claim to the restoration of the authority of a unified Roman empire at the court of Charlemagne.

The two lists of the *Notitia* have common characteristics which allow us to define a basic form of what we might call the *Notitia* archetype. Each has first a consolidated list of *dignitates*, and then more extensive, separate entries (commonly called chapters) for most of these *dignitates*. The initial list may

⁴ M.D. REEVE, "Notitia Dignitatum", in *Texts and Transmission*, ed. by L.D. REYNOLDS (Oxford 1983), 253-257; an excellent review of the manuscript tradition.

correspond to the *dignitates*, the chapters to the *administrationes*, in the full title of the *Notitiae*.

The initial list seems to be a list of *dignitates* with independent jurisdictions. It is not a list of all *dignitates*, despite its title. It does not include subordinate *dignitates* of equivalent high status to those listed (such as the *secundicerius primiceriorum*), nor titular *dignitates* nor *uacantes* (i.e. officials without specific portfolios). Although *dignitates* are listed in status order, actual status is not indicated and the fact that several officials are of equal status is not determinable from this list; thus precise status is not a characteristic of it. What it gives is a selection of *dignitates* who form the skeletal elements of the administrative structure. This list is often called in modern times the "index". It does not, however, always reflect the order or the material in the rest of the document (which should not be altered to fit it, as Seeck tended to do in his edition). This initial list may always have had a separate purpose and history from that of the following chapters.

These chapters each have a similar structure, with each entry containing material divided into one or more of the following sections. First there is an illustration, with a caption reading *insignia* of the *dignitas* down to the *comes rerum priuatarum* (or. 14, 1; occ. 12, 1) and a caption simply naming the *dignitas* thereafter, in both East and West. This should indicate that the captions existed already before the *comites domesticorum*, the only *uiri illustres* without the caption *insignia*, had attained that superior status⁵. Other considerations, given later, also indicate that the illustrations were an integral part of the original lists. The illustrations include objects lying on a table (probably appointment documents), specific insignia of particular *dignitates*, and items representing the administrative functions or the military units under the jurisdiction of these *dignitates*. The

⁵ NOT. dign. or. 15, 1 & 5; occ. 13, 1 & 5; the date of their raised status is unknown, but since they are not linked with the other *comites consistoriani* in 372 (COD. Theod. 6, 9, 1), it was probably later than that date.

second section, headed *sub dispositione*, gives the status of the *dignitas* and lists functions of the office and/or officials or military units under his authority. The third section gives his *officium*. In the East, but not in the West, there is also a statement about the rights of each *dignitas* to *euectiones* (postal warrants). What these chapters give, in both visual and textual form, is the skeleton of the administration under each *dignitas*.

These being the elements of the *Notitia* archetype, what was its purpose? The key lies in the text of Claudian, according to whom the *primicerius* was responsible for appointment documents, *cunctorum tabulas adsignat honorum*⁶. Though this is an exaggeration, similar to the claim of the *Notitia* itself to list all *dignitates*, the *primicerius* does seem to have provided appointment documents to all those listed on the *laterculum maius*. Indeed, since the insignial illustration of the chapter on the *primicerius* (or. 18, 2: occ. 16, 3) depicts and labels the *laterculum maius*, but not the *Notitia*, the two must be closely related. It is likely that the initial list (the "index") is the *laterculum maius*, or rather, since many military officials recorded on this register in the chapters are not included in the "index", a truncated version of it made for the final edition. The chapters are something more than the *laterculum maius*, since they include military officials registered on the *laterculum minus*. Bury saw these chapters as models of the appointment documents which the *primicerius* drew up for each of the *dignitates* on the *laterculum maius* and whose model covers are illustrated in the cupboards in the extant *Notitia* placed between eastern and western *notitiae* (or. 45)⁷. This remains far the best explanation and certain abbreviated or model entries support it. The form of the information on postal warrants for all *dignitates* except the praetorian prefect of the east (the first listed *dignitas*) is only

⁶ *Epithalamium dictum Palladio et Celerinae* 85.

⁷ J.B. BURY, "The *Notitia Dignitatum*", in *JRS* 10 (1920), 131-133; G. CLEMENTE, *La "Notitia Dignitatum"* (Cagliari 1968), 366.

intelligible by reference back to his entry⁸. In the case of civil governors, there is only a specific entry for one governor of each type, concluding with the statement that all other governors of that type have an *officium* on the pattern of his⁹. The original text of these model chapters may have been, at least partly, in the shorthand, (*notae*) used by the *notarii*. If the *siglum* at NOT. dign. occ. 36, 8 is the shorthand *nota* for *supra*, it may be a relic of *notae* which were expanded in the final edition. The enigmatic *sigla* on several scrolls may also be *notae*¹⁰.

Thus the *Notitia* archetype consisted of the *laterculum maius* and model chapters of appointment documents for those registered on it. The material contained on this appointment document defined the place of the *dignitas* in the governing system. It reiterated to each new *dignitas*, and visually enhanced, his status and his jurisdiction. It delineated for each *dignitas* the linkages between his jurisdiction and that of other *dignitates*, especially in the central administration. It also gave him an alternative source of information to that provided by local bureaucratic memory, the bane of any centralising governmental system.

These chapters were primarily directed to the *dignitates*, but the *Notitia* as a whole had another, different role in the bureau of the *primicerius*. His lists provided information on the distribution of resources, especially military resources, in the empire. Claudian alludes to this role for his western *primicerius*, who not only distributed appointment documents, but also recorded the *cuneos* (military units in general rather than in its technical sense of cavalry units) distributed around the frontiers of the western empire, and, in sum, confined into one place the scattered resources of the empire: *constringit in unum sparsas*

⁸ For example, *proconsul Achaiae* 7 (NOT. dign. or. 21, 15) is only intelligible by reference to *praefectura praefecti euectiones annuales non habet, sed ipse emittit* (NOT. dign. or. 2, 2).

⁹ NOT. dign. or. 43, 14; 44, 15; occ. 43, 14; 44, 15; 45, 15.

¹⁰ É. CHATELAIN, *Introduction à la lecture des notes tironiennes* (Paris 1900), 44; W. SCHMITZ, *Commentarii Notarum Tironianarum* (Leipzig 1893).

*imperii vires*¹¹. Both *notitiae* in the extant *Notitia Dignitatum*, but especially the western one, are readily able to serve such a pseudo-administrative, but really ideological, purpose. The information was not particularly useful for the administrative use of these resources. It was not like the *breuiarium* left by Augustus, which recorded the number of soldiers on active service everywhere and the amount of money in the treasuries¹². Nor was it like the *breues* supposedly read by Alexander Severus in his bedchamber, which likewise recorded numerical and other service details of soldiers¹³. For information of this type one went to the relevant bureau. The *Notitia* was, however, one place, perhaps the only one now, where an overview of resources could be found. In a failing empire it would sustain a self image of the greatness of that empire.

Such being the nature of the *Notitia* archetype, it was less a manual than a representation of the structure and the ideology of the new bureaucratic order. This was as much part of the reconstruction of authority, and as alien to the classical Graeco-Roman world, as the emergence of holiness in the lexicon of late Roman power. Neither bureaucracy nor holiness was a new phenomenon in the fourth century A.D., but to call the *Notitia* "that most Roman of documents", as does one of the most sensitive scholars of late Roman political life, is to miss a qualitative change in the label "Roman"¹⁴. Government, we are often told, was the particular art of the Roman. *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*. So Vergil (*Aen.* 6, 851-2), but the Roman art of government was to take a very different form in the fourth century.

The creation of a political culture based on a structured and demarcated bureaucratic system, such as is epitomised in this list of dignitaries and their administrations, was a massive conceptual

¹¹ *Epithalamium dictum Palladio et Celerinae* 86-91.

¹² Suet. *Aug.* 101, 4.

¹³ Hist. Aug. *Alex.* 21, 6.

¹⁴ J. MATTHEWS, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989), 467.

reordering of Roman government. The centre had lost control of the parts of its empire and been unable to project its authority over a fragmenting world. Public historians, from antiquity onwards, have found their scapegoat in the military, but the military role now, as in the late Republic, developed in the space left vacant by the failure of the political system and contributed more to the solution than to the problem. The real problem lay in the final dissolution of the *polis* based Roman political system, particularly of those bonds which had evolved within that living political organism to link the far-flung parts of a disparate empire to the centre — the public withdrawal of the imperial aristocracy and the lesser aristocracy of the cities and all that was involved in civic fugitivism; the weakening of romanisation and other centripetal forces; above all the loss of Rome as a cultural, political and administrative centre.

The essence of the old world order is well captured in the Roman oration of Aelius Aristides¹⁵. Its running musical metaphor pictures the world as an orchestra playing in harmony under its conductor-emperor. The old idea of the harmony of a mixed constitution has been extended to show each player from the emperor to the poor (governors, aristocrats, soldiers, rich and poor, and, above all, the beneficiaries of a widely spreading Roman citizenship) knowing and freely accepting his role in the playing of a perfect symphony. It was a world governed neither by force nor by external structures, but by consent and intrinsic adherence to the governing ethos and traditions of Rome. The centerpiece of this artistic masterpiece, physically and ideologically, was the city of Rome. Like all panegyrics, this one reflects an ideal and a programme, and does not recognise the signs of disintegration in the mid second century Roman empire so apparent to modern observers, but it is a topical, not a generic, ideal. The symphony, however, was an unfinished one and before it was finished the orchestra fell apart.

¹⁵ ARISTID. *or.* 26 (*On Rome*), especially 29 & 66.

In seeking to put the Roman world together again and to reduce it to order, Diocletian and his colleagues and successors no longer had available to them the invisible social and political forces which had bound together the earlier world by consent and they chose not to restore Rome to its earlier political and administrative place. Their solution was to take up the parts into which the empire had broken and glue them together with strongly articulated structures and an ethos of compulsion, both of which were integral to the military life that had been the moulding experience of the lives of these emperors. In the world of Aelius Aristides it was only the soldier who was in any way compelled: "Every day the soldier lives in discipline and no one ever leaves the post assigned to him, but as in some permanent chorus he knows and keeps his position and the subordinate does not on that account envy him who has a higher rank, but he himself rules with precision those whose superior he is"¹⁶. In the new empire government service was conceived as *militia*: all were to be imbued with this ethos of military service to tie the structure together.

Let me give you a parable. The story goes that the so-called Mathematical Bridge at Queens College Cambridge was put together by Isaac Newton with no visible signs of the invisible forces which held it together, only the consent and harmony, as it were, of its mathematical principles. One night some barbarians dismantled it, but they could not put it together again and had to resort to nails. The nails with which Diocletian put together the Roman empire, not only dismantled but also broken into further fragments by internal and external barbarians in the third century, were a bureaucratic structure which sought to fix the fragments of the system to one another and to the centre, and a stream of laws and status protocols which sought to fix the appropriate place of each piece in the structure, from the emperor in his palace to the *colonus* or the *laetus* on his farm.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87; as translated, J.H. OLIVER, *The Ruling Power*, TAPhS N.S. 43, 4 (1953), 904.

The *Notitia* represents this new mode of constructing power, a new way to create, encode and maintain a hierarchy of dominance and deference. It represents, above all else, a new structure for a new body politic. The emperor, the puppet master who pulled the strings, is a largely unseen, but occasionally visible, presence above and outside the structure. To place him within it, even at its head, would be to limit his powers by defining them.

The structure, now more complex, was more important than its constantly changing details. It was composed of a multiplicity of units, both at its co-ordinating head and in its provincial limbs; many more than before the time of Diocletian, as Lactantius (*mort. pers.* 7) lamented, from the viewpoint of those who paid for it, and each was much smaller in its jurisdiction. New regional units (dioceses) were formed to create purely institutional links between the centre and the periphery in civil, military and financial government and to marginalise such non-institutional links as remained. Despite frequent changes in the boundaries of civil and military provinces, of dioceses and of prefectures, in response to both central and local political pressures, the basic administrative structure remained the same, a sign of stability and control.

The *Notitia* also encodes the authority asserted by the centre over the structure in the appointment not only of the major *dignitates*, but also, in many cases, of the *principes officii* in their bureaux. Though many heads of local bureaux still rose to the post through their local *officia*, more came from various central bureaux (those of praetorian prefects, masters of the infantry and cavalry, master of the offices); the origin of the *principes* in central bureaux is, significantly, ignored¹⁷. The history of these processes and the precise origin of any *princeps* was the resolution of conflict between different elements in the

¹⁷ A.H.M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602* (Oxford 1964), I 128-9, 406; III 168 n. 36; W.G. SINNIGEN, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture during the later Roman Empire*, Papers and Monographs of the Amer. Acad. in Rome 17 (Rome 1957), 14f.

bureaucracy, each seeking to assert its own control and patronage over such appointments. This dispersal of power at the centre, like the collegial consulship of earlier times, and the creation of conflicting jurisdictions among several *dignitates* within the *Notitia*, were mechanisms of control by the political system and its puppet master.

The *Notitia*, again paralleled by the laws¹⁸, also encodes the authority asserted by the centre over travel in the empire. Power is again dispersed at the centre and formulated as a set of rules. Only the praetorian prefects and the *magister officiorum* (apart from the unseen emperor), have the right to issue postal warrants on their own recognisance. The financial counts have the right to as many as they need, but cannot themselves issue them. Others (military masters, proconsuls, vicars, military *comites* and *duces*) are given a specified number. Central officials without direct subordinates elsewhere and civil governors are given none by right, though the latter had been given three by right in the time of Julian¹⁹. The attempt, both in the *Notitia* and in the laws, to regulate the use of the public post was fruitless, but the attempt to assert central authority through institutions and rules itself has significance. The failure to record this information in the western *notitia* represents a serious failing in the strategies used to construct power; the fact that the rules continued to exist merely highlights the failure.

The *Notitia* also defines in its lists the place of each official in the structure. At the top were the higher officials, the place of each established by his rank, by his carefully graded insignia²⁰ and by his jurisdiction. The place of the officials in the *officium* is fixed by their order. The place of the *principes officii* is delineated by noting the position and rank from which they had progressed and, in some cases, though only in the eastern *notitia*, the length of their service (two years in the

¹⁸ V. COD.Theod. 8, 5 (many titles).

¹⁹ COD.Theod. 8, 5, 12.

²⁰ R. GRIGG, "Portrait-bearing Codicils in the Illustrations of the *Notitia Dignitatum*?", in *JRS* 69 (1979), 118-124.

post) and their honorific retirement as *protectores*²¹. At the lowest level, the prohibition on *cohortalini* transferring to another form of public service without imperial authority stakes out limits to their movement in the structure²².

Overall, the *Notitia* represents in essence the new, institutional political culture of the late Roman empire. It may even refer to the ethos of *militia*, which was meant to underpin that culture. The word *militia/militat* occurs occasionally to indicate service, but there may be a grander allusion to it in the virtues depicted in the cupboards holding appointment documents and presumably symbolising the spirit pervading the administration²³. One cupboard is framed by five medallions, with *Diuina Prouidentia* pictured at the centre top, flanked by winged victories, and with busts of *Virtus*, *Scientia Rei Militaris*, *Felicitas* and *Auctoritas* at the corners. This particular collocation of virtues had long been associated with the military aspects of leadership. Cicero had found them in Pompey in judging him the best military leader for Rome²⁴. Three of them reappear (*Virtus* was replaced by *Liberalitas*) in the secondary virtues which Ammianus Marcellinus (25, 4, 1) found in the emperor Julian, alongside the cardinal virtues. A second cupboard, showing *Diuina Electio*, flanked by winged victories, with the four seasons pictured in the corner medallions, represents the eternity of the structure. This chapter with the cupboards is most likely a creation of the final edition and not of an earlier *notitia*, but it may well represent the ethos sustaining the earlier bureaucratic structure.

This is a discourse of power. Like the laws. Or the panegyrics. And like them it was a dreamworld. In the everyday world, things were different, but dreams have a reality and a significance of their own. The dreamworld of the *Notitia Dignitatum* takes its place, in the construction of order and

²¹ E.g. NOT. dign. or. 35, 27 (for the fullest form).

²² NOT. dign. or. 43, 3; 44, 14; occ. 43, 13; 44, 14; 45, 14.

²³ NOT. dign. or. 45.

²⁴ CIC. *Manil.* 28.

authority, alongside other late antique artifacts which seek to impose meaning on a larger no longer controllable whole. There are the chronicles and epitomes, which select and create a usable past. There are the compilations and codifications of imperial law, beginning with Gregorius and Hermogenianus at the end of the third century, which select and create a usable law. There are the maps, such as the prototype of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, which select and create a usable space. There are the *Notitia* analogues in the other *notitiae* and *latercula*, which select and create a usable structure. Several of the latter appear, together with the *Notitia Dignitatum*, in the *Codex Spirensis*. Not serendipitously. All served to create a sense of order, stability and permanence in an ever changing and fragmenting world.

There is one thing missing from the world of the *Notitia*, which at first sight seems surprising. There is virtually no sign, either in its illustrations or in its text, of Christianity, a significant feature of other aspects of late Roman public life. The message is clear. *Militia Caesaris* remained in essence distinct from *militia Christi*. Even if the latter had now been folded into government and borrowed much of the secular administrative structure, State and Church, ever wary of each other, remained separate arms of government. Christianity did not contribute its symbols or its rhetoric to the Roman bureaucracy, even at a superficial level. The political culture was more religiously neutral at its core than is sometimes allowed. That made it easier for non-Christians to continue to provide the human flesh for the secular administrative skeleton, as they did in large numbers throughout the lifetime of the *Notitia*.

So far the *Notitia* archetype has been shown as a representation of the construction of authority in the late Roman Empire, but the evolving history of its lists shows just as well the dissolution of that authority. Discrepancies between inter-related lists and simple clerical errors can be found in any bureaucracy, without indicating more than the poor quality of sedulous clerks, but here they are so overwhelming, especially in the western lists, as to represent the loss even at the top level

of the will to control and retain the structure itself. Simple departures from the overall schema point in the same direction; for example, the failure to group western military officials under regional subheadings, such as those which structure the eastern "index"²⁵; the failure in the West to record the information controlling postal warrants; the failure in the West to record the division into a *maius* and a *minus laterculum*. The most telling examples, however, of the loss of care, and even of will, are the failure to preserve integrated illustrations and to preserve proper model chapters.

The illustrations had been a vital and integral part of the original lists. When one sets iconographic material from the late Roman empire alongside the second set of illustrations in the Munich manuscript, made from a tracing of the illustrations in the *Codex Spirensis* and agreed to be the closest copy of them, it is clear that these illustrations derived from the late fourth or early fifth century and were not medieval additions²⁶.

Further, they were not the invention of the illustrator of the final edition, although his hand is probably to be seen in certain stylistic features spread over the whole document. For one thing, differences of detail between eastern and western illustrations seem to preserve the memory of different originals in eastern and western lists²⁷. For another, the complex patterns of codicillar diptychs, similar in both East and West and reflecting a meticulous gradation in the status of their *dignitates*, could not be patterns imposed by a late illustrator²⁸. Nor would an editorial illustrator have come easily to the present arrangement in the two provinces of Syria and Armenia, which dispose their units in two columns, reflecting a separation into

²⁵ Compare NOT. dign. or. 1, 38-56 with occ. 1, 37-49.

²⁶ J.J.G. ALEXANDER, "The illustrated manuscripts of the Notitia Dignitatum", in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. by R. GOODBURN & P. BARTHOLOMEW (Oxford 1976), 11-50; P. BERGER, *The Insignia of the Notitia Dignitatum* (Garland 1981).

²⁷ P. BERGER, *op.cit.* (n. 26), 142ff.

²⁸ R. GRIGG, *art.cit.* (n. 20), 118-124.

the civil divisions within these military commands²⁹. Indeed, if the columns reflect an origin in a papyrus roll, which often used such columnar divisions for illustrations, that may point to a local prototype.

Furthermore, some patterns in the omission of illustrations, even where the explanation of the pattern eludes us, cannot be random or due to omissions in the transmission process or, in all cases, choices by a late illustrator. For instance the fact that there are no illustrations for any of the four chapters relating to the *dignitates* of the *sacrum cubiculum*, i.e. four entries spread over different parts of both *Notitiae*, must be deliberate choice, though this choice could have been made as late as the final edition³⁰. The illustration of shields and of forts associated with military units also provide non-random patterns. The shields representing military units in all five entries for the eastern *magistri militum* ignore all the first-listed cavalry units³¹. The forts representing military units in the eastern provincial armies were clearly meant to reflect those units on the *laterculum maius* and to omit those on the *laterculum minus*; those in the Danubian armies from Scythia to Pannonia I were meant to reflect only the first-listed cavalry units and omit all the rest³². This contrasts with the other western military commands which generally list all sites, except the Wall sites in Britain. Whatever the explanation for these patterns, it would seem the illustrator was choosing which military units to illustrate with some specific purpose in mind; that rules out the scenario of an illustrator mechanically representing all the units listed in a pre-existing text.

The spread of this pattern over the Danubian ducates, spanning both eastern and western lists, suggests that the illustrations already existed before the division of 395 which for the last time separated the eastern ducates from the western ones.

²⁹ NOT. dign. or. 33 & 38.

³⁰ NOT. dign. or. 10; 16; occ. 8; 14.

³¹ NOT. dign. or. 5-9.

³² There are only six exceptions, in seventeen military commands, to this pattern: NOT. dign. or. 36, 10; 39, 2; 41, 10; occ. 32, 20; 33, 44-45.

These illustrations should have been created or remodelled at a time when this whole area was within the area of one *primicerius* or one military jurisdiction. History does not readily divulge such a time, but it should date to the period of frequent and unclear changes to the administrative arrangements in the area broadly described as Illyricum in the tumultuous period 379-395 A.D.

The illustrations were also realistic and symbolic, not merely decorative, representations of the objects which they depicted. The actual insignial objects are paralleled in late Roman iconography³³. Some of the shields, too, are paralleled by shields represented in other late Roman media. The shield for *Cornuti*, similar in both or. 6, 9 and occ. 5, 14, is similar to a shield on the Arch of Constantine, which has long been seen as that of *Cornuti* (although the Arch shield may belong to one of the other Celtic/Germanic *auxilia* with similar horn-shaped emblems in the *Notitia* lists — to find similar shields for these associated *auxilia* is not surprising)³⁴. The shield for *Moesiaci* in occ. 7, 7, especially in the second Munich set of illustrations, is similar to the shield depicted on a sepulchral monument at Aquileia of a soldier serving in this unit³⁵.

Grigg, on the other hand, argues that the shield emblems were essentially the inventions of a late illustrator without official models³⁶. He finds some emblems, such as the eagle for *Herculiani* in both *Notitiae* (or. 5, 4; occ. 5, 3), inappropriate and thus not actual emblems, but the eagle emblem for this unit and for its paired unit, *Iouiani* (or. 5, 3; occ. 5, 2), may allude to the imperial renaming of these units under Diocletian or even be the emblem of the original units. Grigg's wider

³³ P. BERGER, *op.cit.* (n. 26), XIX, 32, 169, 186ff. *et alibi*.

³⁴ R. GRIGG, *art.cit.* (n. 20), 109; A. ALFÖLDI, "Ein spätrömisches Schildzeichen keltischer oder germanischer Herkunft", in *Germania* 19 (1935), 324-328.

³⁵ M.P. SPEIDEL, "The army at Aquileia, the Moesiaci legion, and the shield emblems in the *Notitia Dignitatum*", in *Saalburg-Jahrbuch* 45 (1990), 69-72.

³⁶ R. GRIGG, "Inconsistency and lassitude. The shield emblems of the *Notitia Dignitatum*", in *JRS* 73 (1983), 132-142.

argument is that the very repetitive and impoverished forms of the later shields in both *Notitiae*, but particularly in the west, is due to the flagging invention of a late illustrator. Perhaps, however, the impoverishment and lassitude, which is incontrovertable, was that of those who created the shield emblems for Roman units in Theodosian and post-Theodosian times; for the names of the units show the same impoverishment and repetitiveness as the emblems. Where the illustrator did not know the emblem, he had another option — to leave the shield unillustrated. In two cases he took that option (or. 6, 24-25). Lassitude there certainly was, but it was the hallmark of late Roman administration, not of a particular illustrator.

It is part of that same lassitude that the shields of central army units, especially those later in the lists, no longer always correspond to the units represented in the attached labels, but that is not because the shields are invented, but because there was no care to coordinate the *dispositio* lists and the shield illustrations. Perhaps the lists were updated, but the illustrations were not. One can occasionally see that the shields and their proper units are just slightly out of kilter; such is the case with the *Mattiaci seniores* and *iuniores* and the *Ascarii seniores* and *iuniores* (occ. 5, 20-23 with 5, 164-167). This is the generally held view³⁷.

The labels, whenever they were attached, were a perfunctory exercise. Some can only be based on an uncomprehending and uninterested use of the text. It is a tired but explicable error to label the site for the *Equites Scutarii Illyriciani Motha* as *Animotha* (or. 37, 3 & 14). It is an uninterested error to label the site for *Cuneus Equitum Constantianorum Lussonio nunc In[t]ercisa* as *Nuncin[t]ercisa* (occ. 33, 5 & 26). It is a mindless error to label the site for *Praefectus Militum Maurorum Osismiacorum Osismis* as *Corumosismis* (occ. 37, 6 & 17).

By the time the labels were attached the *Notitia* was already out of control. That is also the message of some alien and even fantastic intrusions on the basic form of the *Notitia*. None of

³⁷ M.J. SPEIDEL, *art.cit.* (n. 35), 72, with n. 29.

these geographical or faunal representations, mostly in non-central military chapters has any cartographic or administrative value. Rivers are often depicted — the Nile (in both Egypt and Thebais), the Jordan, the Tigris, the Euphrates (in Mesopotamia, but not in Osrhoene), the Danube (but only in one of the nine Danubian military provinces); the Rhine is never depicted. There are other topographical and built features (Pyramids in Egypt, Mons Taurus and the Sea in Isauria, the Alps in Italy, all items in the British chapters within a schematic island). Sometimes exotic animals are added (a bear in Egypt, whose forts also have standards rising from them, the rear of a quadruped entering the mountains and an antlered animal in Isauria, two quadrupeds in Palestine, birds and snakes in Arabia). One of the forts under the *dux Phoenicis* has a bearded head protruding from it. This is in stark contrast with the severe, ordered world view of the structured lists.

But in its final stages the western *Notitia* had lost not only its focus, but even its role as a model document. The chapter (occ. 7) for the *magister equitum per Gallias* was buried within a distribution list by region of field army units. Since only part of this list is under his direct jurisdiction and since the entry has no illustration, it could not serve as a model for the older type of appointment document. As well, for two of the *comites* noted in this distribution list there is no separate chapter to serve as a model for such a document³⁸. Further, the model entry for *consulares* is inadequate as a model. It states that the *princeps officii* comes from the bureau of the praetorian prefect of Italy (occ. 43, 6); that is correct for the *consulares* in his prefecture, though not for the *consulares* in the Gallic prefecture. The conclusion is ineluctable. Appointment documents at this time no longer included the basic information in the *Notitia*, which encoded the delicate control of the late Roman bureaucracy. The lists have become obsolete for this purpose and, as a

³⁸ NOT. dign. occ. 7, 40 (*comes Illyrici*) and 118 (*comes Hispaniarum*): neither *comes* is noted elsewhere.

consequence, anachronistic when used for their other, ideological purpose.

One element of the dissolution of late Roman authority had long been implicit. Separate *notitiae* and parallel structures, in an authority and a political culture driven by its administrative structure and needs, carried within themselves the seeds of the eventual dissolution of the overall structure. The very existence of multiple *notitiae* and multiple bureaucracies, like their multiple emperors and multiple Rome-substitutes, linked only at the top by a largely fictive college of emperors, each with legal jurisdiction over the whole structure, but with administrative jurisdiction over only one part of it, was a dissiparous feature of authority. Only when the *notitiae* were together could there exist the sense, let alone the actuality, of a unified imperial administrative authority. It may be that there was an annual, or at least a regular, exchange of *notitiae*, but there is no evidence of it. It would have been an otiose practice.

The two *notitiae* in the extant *Notitia Dignitatum* cannot represent such an exchange nor an actual administrative unity, since the two lists are of different dates and thus, viewed as a composite artifact, cannot be working documents in any direct administrative sense. The purpose for bringing them together was a different one. The eastern list represents in its basic deposit, like the site of Pompeii, a fleeting moment frozen in time, as long as we remember that, as at Pompeii, such a moment is free neither of obsolescence nor of later disturbance. The moment is defined by arrangements which appear to be temporary. Three of the military *magistri* staff their *officia* with soldiers seconded from the military units rather than having an established *officium*, as is the normal situation of the other two *magistri*³⁹. The province of Macedonia Salutaris has been divided, part being attached to Epirus Nova in the diocese of Macedonia, part being attached to Praevalitana in the diocese of Dacia (and, for all that we know, part alienated to the

³⁹ Compare NOT. dign. or. 5, 67; 8, 54 and 9, 49 with 6, 70 and 7, 59.

settlement of Alaric's Goths)⁴⁰. Neither arrangement can have stood for long. The date is later than the creation of provinces named from Arcadius and Honorius and the concurrent establishment of *correctores* in the East, a post first attested there in 393, but not yet properly incorporated into the *notitia* listings⁴¹. The only thing that seems to postdate the death of Theodosius, the *tabularium dominarum Augustarum* under the *castrensis*, cannot be a reality at any time⁴². This entry is best seen as an interpolation — and a clue to the environment of the final edition. Recent consensus is surely right to date the eastern list to a moment in the period 394/396; a more precise date is unnecessary here⁴³.

The western list represents no such single moment, but a series of moments, which are chronologically inconsistent, but many are later than the date of the eastern list. No one has been able to restore any satisfactory administrative coherence to the western list as a whole⁴⁴. It is perhaps best seen as an artificial creation from lists which had become progressively obsolete in a messy archive, as they lost their original purpose. One attractive hypothesis is that the list was taken over by the *magister peditum*, who certainly had a particular interest in the two chapters which depart from the basic structure of the eastern list (occ. 7 and 42)⁴⁵. It is not without problems, however. The military lists show no more careful and consistent record keeping than the civil ones, even though some seem to be of later

⁴⁰ NOT. dign. or. 3, 13 & 19; the province is undivided in or. 1, 125.

⁴¹ COD. Theod. 1, 7, 2; A.H.M. JONES, *op.cit.* (n. 17), III 347.

⁴² NOT. dign. or. 17, 8; A.H.M. JONES, *op.cit.* (n. 17), III 349-350.

⁴³ A.H.M. JONES, *op.cit.* (n. 17), III 347-51; D. HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (Düsseldorf 1969-70), I 25-53; J.C. MANN, "The Notitia Dignitatum – dating and survival", in *Britannia* 22 (1991), 215-219.

⁴⁴ V. J.C. MANN, *art.cit.* (n. 43) for as good a schema as one can offer, but still without solving all the *crucis* of assuming a continuing administrative use.

⁴⁵ J.C. MANN, "What was the Notitia Dignitatum for?", in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. by R. GOODBURN & P. BARTHOLOMEW (Oxford 1976), 3-9; W. SEIBT, "Wurde die *notitia dignitatum* 408 von Stilicho in Auftrag gegeben?", in *MIOEG* 90 (1982), 339-346; response from Mann, *ibid.* (n. 43).

date. The military command system in the West was different from that in the East, and this might explain both the insertion of the distribution list (occ. 7) and the addition of the *prae-positurae* under the *magister peditum* (occ. 42). Nor is it clear why the *magister* lay his eggs in the nest of the *primicerius*, rather than using his own bureau, where one hopes that the information on his military resources was of more practical value than the lists in the western *Notitia*. It is more economical and perhaps better to see the western *notitia* becoming obsolete in the bureau of the *primicerius*, as it came to be of less and less practical use to him.

For when the two lists were brought together in the extant *Notitia*, it was not as working copies of separate lists, but in line with their ideological purpose. The date can hardly be earlier than its latest datable element, which is a military unit named *Placidi Valentiniani Felices* (occ. 7, 36), surely an allusion to the emperor Placidus Valentinianus (Augustus 425-455 A.D.) — other dating criteria which use our lacunose knowledge of the non-linear history of particular posts are unsafe havens. There are other reasons to link the edition with the court of the emperor's mother, Galla Placidia. The mistaken interpolation in the entry of the eastern *castrensis* noted earlier might be linked to her interest. She also had a strong trace in the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, which included three houses of Galla, and this text was one of a group of illustrated texts with which the *Notitia Dignitatum* was associated in the *Codex Spirensis*, perhaps already in late antiquity. A brief excursus on the transmission of these texts is instructive⁴⁶.

These illustrated texts, together with a group of unillustrated texts, form the *Codex Spirensis*, which existed in the Library of the Cathedral of Speyer until it was dispersed shortly after 1550. Although the unillustrated texts also exist in many other traditions, all extant manuscripts and printed editions of the

⁴⁶ V. M.D. REEVE, *art.cit.* (n. 4); R. IRELAND (ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis* (Oxford 1979), II 39-78.

Notitia and all but one of the other illustrated texts filter through this single manuscript, either directly or indirectly. There seems to be a very flat line of transmission. One can detect an insular exemplar for the *Spirensis*, which it had in common with the one manuscript of the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (paleographically dated c. 940 A.D.), which does not derive from the *Spirensis*. But there need have been no other manuscript of these illustrated texts between antiquity and the insular copy. The illustrations support such a short history. Those in the second set of illustrations in the Munich manuscript, done from a tracing of the Speyer manuscript and best reflecting it, seem to reflect faithfully characteristics of fifth century illustrations⁴⁷.

Further, the probable way in which the *Spirensis* was assembled suggests that the illustrated texts were already together. Whoever compiled this *Codex*, with the *Cosmographicus* of Aethicus Hister at the head of a set of texts on topographical or geographical matters (each widely circulating in the Middle Ages) had geographical and technical considerations in mind. The illustrated texts were presumably added primarily to further similar interests, but some of this disparate group of illustrated texts were irrelevant to such interests. The inclusion of such texts, marginal to the purpose of the collection, suggests that they already formed a collection. It was such an odd group that later copyists and editors often dropped the *De gradibus cognationum* and Gelenius' *editio princeps* only included the *Altercatio Hadriani Augusti et Epicteti Philosophi*, "lest anything be excluded".

To establish that these illustrated texts, i.e. the above four with the *Notitia Urbis Romae* and the *De Rebus Bellicis*, were part of a collection in the time of the Carolingian exemplar of the *Spirensis* and probably already in the fifth century may be to raise more questions than answers, but it does give further weight to locating the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the time and

⁴⁷ P. BERGER, *op.cit.* (n. 26); R. GRIGG, "Illustrations and text in the lost *Codex Spirensis*", in *Latomus* 46 (1987), 204-210.

circle of Galla Placidia. One suggestion, assuming that the lists had come into and through the hands of the western *magistri peditum*, is that the edition was commissioned by or for Galla Placidia from documents passed on to her by her husband Constantius who had been *magister peditum* before becoming Augustus⁴⁸. The alternative is to locate the source and the stimulus in the bureau of the *primicerius* himself, the more likely location of both lists. The patron should probably remain nameless, but there is a name to conjure with. The *primicerius* Theodosius read an imperial speech to the senate offering the partial remission of the *aurum oblativum* in 426 on behalf of the new emperor (and his mother)⁴⁹. He has long been identified with the Theodosius who was praetorian prefect of Italy in 430. Cameron argued that he was Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, whose works preserving/creating aspects of the Roman past he cogently redated from the end of the fourth century to the environment of the 430s⁵⁰. Could Macrobius be the patron responsible for providing us this enigmatic text? He had access to the *notitiae* and may well have had an interest in the diverse range of texts in the whole collection.

The composite *Notitia Dignitatum* was certainly like the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius in one way; it created a world that never existed via materials and people who did exist. Both are ideological productions and both select materials that marginalise Christianity. The virtues depicted in the medallions surrounding the cupboards, if they date to the final edition, may derive from the Ciceronian learning of Macrobius. The *Notitia* underscores the unity of the whole empire and the relatively symmetrical nature of the two administrations. It also maximises the geographical extent and the resources of an empire which was weaker in both. It was another dreamworld, but of a different type to that of the individual *Notitiae*.

⁴⁸ See the references at n. 45.

⁴⁹ COD. Theod. 6, 2, 25.

⁵⁰ Alan CAMERON, "The date and identity of Macrobius", in *JRS* 56 (1966), 25-38.

This composite *Notitia* may have served a further ideological role in its afterlife in the Carolingian world⁵¹. One of the illustrated texts, the *Altercatio*, was known to Alcuin by 793/796. The suggestion has been made that illustrations from other texts in the collection lie behind the forms of the three silver tables alluded to in the will of Charlemagne: one of Constantinople, one of Rome, one of the whole world (Einhard, *Vita Caroli* 33). This has fueled the hypothesis that the resurrection of this set of texts and their transmission to the north was associated with the grandiose imperial aspirations of the court of Charlemagne, either stimulating or abetting them. The new Roman emperor crowned at Rome on Christmas Day 800 A.D. could find in the *Notitia* a template for a revived Roman empire of greater extent and unified jurisdiction. The absence of a proper emperor in the East (Irene being a woman) was the opportunity, the proposed marriage of Charlemagne to Irene the means⁵². It was yet another dream, a fleeting moment in the revival of Roman imperial concepts. The *Notitia* group of texts soon receded into a less exalted world, to be buried, added to a group of geographical texts, and almost lost in the Library of Speyer, until it returned to frustrate those who take an alluring but too often false friend for something other than what it is.

⁵¹ J.C. MANN, *art.cit.* (n. 43), 219 suggests a more administrative, less ideological, afterlife.

⁵² THEOPHANES, *Chron.* I p. 475, 27-30 De Boor.

Major Works on the Notitia Dignitatum

1. Texts and editions

Eduard BÖCKING, *Notitia dignitatum et administrationum omnium tam ciuiliū quam militarium in partibus Orientis et Occidentis* (Bonn 1839-1853).

Otto SEECK, *Notitia dignitatum* (Berlin 1876; reprint Frankfurt/Main 1962).

Sigismund GELENIUS, *Notitia utraque cum Orientis tum Occidentis* (Basel 1552).

2. Nature, date and history

J.J.G. ALEXANDER, "The illustrated manuscripts of the Notitia Dignitatum", in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. by R. GOODBURN & P. BARTHOLOMEW (Oxford 1976), 11-50.

P. BERGER, *The Insignia of the Notitia Dignitatum* (Garland 1981).

A.W. BYVANCK, "Antike Buchmalerei", in *Mnemosyne*, S.III 8 (1940), 177-198.

J.B. BURY, "The Notitia Dignitatum", in *JRS* 10 (1920), 131-154.

G. CLEMENTE, *La "Notitia Dignitatum"* (Cagliari 1968).

R. GOODBURN & P. BARTHOLOMEW (eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum* (Oxford 1976).

R. GRIGG, "Portrait-bearing codicils in the illustrations of the Notitia Dignitatum", in *JRS* 69 (1979), 107-124.

R. GRIGG, "Inconsistency and lassitude. The shield emblems of the Notitia Dignitatum", in *JRS* 73 (1983), 132-142.

R. GRIGG, "Illustrations and text in the lost Codex Spirensis", in *Latomus* 46 (1987), 204-210.

D. HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf 1969-70).

R. IRELAND, *De Rebus Bellicis* (Oxford 1979), II 39-78.

A.H.M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602* (Oxford 1964), III, appendix II: "The Notitia Dignitatum".

F. LOT, "La Notitia Dignitatum utriusque Imperii, ses tares, sa date de composition, sa valeur", in *REA* 38 (1936), 285-338.

I.G. MAIER, "The Giessen, Parma and Piacenza codices of the Notitia Dignitatum with some related Texts", in *Latomus* 27 (1968), 96-141.

- I.G. MAIER, "The Barberinus and Munich Codices of the *Notitia Dignitatum omnium*", in *Latomus* 28 (1969), 960-1035.
- J.C. MANN, "What was the *Notitia Dignitatum* for?", in *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. by R. GOODBURN & P. BARTHOLOMEW (Oxford 1976), 1-9.
- J.C. MANN, "The *Notitia Dignitatum* – dating and survival", in *Britannia* 22 (1991), 215-219.
- E. POLASCHEK, "*Notitia Dignitatum*", in *RE* XVII 1 (1936), 1077-1116.
- M.D. REEVE, "*Notitia Dignitatum*", in *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L.D. REYNOLDS (Oxford 1983), 253-257.
- O. SEECK, "Zur Kritik der *Notitia Dignitatum*", in *Hermes* 9 (1875), 217-242.
- W. SEIBT, "Wurde die *Notitia Dignitatum* 408 von Stilicho in Auftrag gegeben?", in *MIOEG* 90 (1982), 339-46.
- J.H. WARD, "The *Notitia Dignitatum*", in *Latomus* 33 (1974), 397-434.
- K. WEITZMANN, "Book Illustration of the Fourth Century: Tradition and Innovation", in ID., *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago 1971).

3. Administrative, military and historical source

- A. BOAK, *The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires* (New York 1919).
- A. CHASTAGNOL, *La préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris 1960).
- M. CLAUSS, *Der Magister Officiorum in der Spätantike* (München 1980).
- R. DELMAIRE, *Largesses sacrées et res privata. L'«aerarium» impérial et son administration du IV^e au VI^e siècle*, Coll. de l'E.F.R. 121 (Paris 1989).
- E. DEMOUGEOT, "La *Notitia Dignitatum* et l'histoire de l'Empire d'Occident au début du V^e siècle", in *Latomus* 34 (1975), 1079-1134.
- J. HARRIES, "The Roman imperial Quaestor from Constantine to Theodosius II", in *JRS* 78 (1988), 148-172.
- D. HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf 1969-70).
- A.H.M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1964).
- D. VAN BERCHEM, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* (Paris 1952).

DISCUSSION

Cl. Nicolet: Je remercie vivement Peter Brennan d'un exposé riche, complet et nouveau. En particulier, d'avoir cherché à dégager sous le terme de "culture politique", les intentions profondes, bien évidemment implicites, d'un "texte" de ce genre. Même si, pour une fois, il semble quand même assuré que nous soyons en présence d'un vrai "document administratif" à l'usage du primicier des notaires, il reflète à coup sûr des intentions qui — outre qu'elles permettent d'en dater un éventuel "premier modèle" — ont un sens politique, et même idéologique. Nous avons aussi entendu des propositions suggestives sur le rapport des illustrations au texte.

Fr. Paschoud: J'approuve entièrement ce qui a été dit sur la signification idéologique de la *Notitia dignitatum*. De même que c'est au moment où le monde romain commence à crouler que renaît un vif attachement patriotique pour *Roma aeterna*, ainsi c'est au moment où le grand corps de l'Empire fonctionne de plus en plus mal et se défait qu'on éprouve le besoin de constituer et de conserver un document de luxe, puisque muni d'illustrations, qui explique les rouages d'un appareil qui correspond à la réalité administrative non pas telle qu'elle existe de fait, mais telle qu'on souhaiterait idéalement qu'elle existât.

A. Chastagnol: Beaucoup de fonctionnaires sont encore païens, surtout dans le premier quart du V^e siècle en Occident, notamment la majorité des préfets de la ville de Rome jusqu'à la mort d'Honorius. La *Notitia* émane du bureau du primicier des notaires d'Occident.

Cl. Nicolet: Puisqu'on aborde le sujet, une question innocente: sommes-nous renseignés sur les premiers textes législatifs qui aient interdit les *dignitates* aux chrétiens?

P. Brennan: I do not know the date of such legislation or indeed if there was such legislation (rather than social regulation).

Fr. Paschoud: Je ne m'étonne pas pour ma part de l'impact pratiquement inexistant du christianisme triomphant sur la *Notitia dignitatum*. Le fonctionnement de la hiérarchie administrative échappe à la révolution qu'apporte dans beaucoup de domaines la nouvelle religion, car il s'agit d'un domaine pratique, technique, où les problèmes restent les mêmes, quelle que soit l'ambiance idéologique, et dont le fonctionnement n'est en rien influencé par les choix religieux de ceux qui y participent. Du reste, comme André Chastagnol l'a rappelé, malgré une législation qui tend à écarter les païens du service public, ceux-ci s'y maintiennent durablement au début du 5^e s., l'État romain n'étant pas en mesure de se passer des services compétents de tous les tenants des anciens cultes. Paradoxalement, c'est en sens inverse que se produit d'un certain point de vue une influence de l'esprit qui anime la *Notitia dignitatum* sur le monde chrétien. En effet, on constate que, dès Constantin, l'Église prend des formes hiérarchiques et administratives qui, à bien des égards, sont calquées sur celles de l'appareil de la *militia* impériale. Jusqu'en plein 20^e siècle, jusqu'au Concile de Vatican II en tout cas, l'Église romaine a perpétué des formes d'organisation qui rappellent étrangement le monde de l'Antiquité tardive reflété dans la *Notitia dignitatum*.

P. Brennan: The virtually non-existent impact of Christianity in the *Notitia* is significant to me precisely because the administrative structure was an integral part of the political culture and that political culture included an increasingly prominent place for Christian representation, both in symbols and in

personnel. François Paschoud is quite right to note that the Christian Church derived its administrative structure and ethos, or much of it, from the secular administration, but in such a process there is often a symbiotic relationship and a transfer of ideas and practices between both institutions.

Fr. Paschoud: A mon sentiment, les illustrations ont une fonction en même temps pratique et symbolique. Les hauts fonctionnaires devaient être reconnus et distingués par certaines caractéristiques qui transparaissent plus ou moins dans les illustrations sous la forme altérée qu'elles ont prises à la fin du Moyen Âge. A ce propos, il me frappe que, sauf erreur de ma part, aucune de ces vignettes ne représente le *cingulum*, insigne distinctif de beaucoup de hauts serviteurs de l'État.

P. Brennan: To my mind, too, the illustrations were, at least originally, both realistic and symbolic, serving the two purposes of the *Notitia*. Why was the *cingulum* not included? It is an excellent question and I have no proper answer. Perhaps the selection of objects illustrated and those associated with the official duties of the *dignitas* rather than with the person of the *dignitas* himself.

A. Chastagnol: Le *missorium* de Madrid est un plat d'argent qui montre précisément l'empereur Théodose, en 388, laissant tomber les codicilles qui contiennent le décret de nomination d'un fonctionnaire, courbé à ses pieds: cf. A. Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris 1960), 192.

P. Brennan: André Chastagnol's view that the objects on the book tables of *uiri illustres* are imperial portraits and not codicillar diptychs was strongly argued in his classic book on the urban prefecture. The traditional view has been restated with further arguments by R. Grigg in *JRS* 69 (1979), 107-124. I am convinced that all the objects on booktables are appointment documents.

Cl. Nicolet: Pour revenir aux illustrations: je crois me rappeler qu'on a soutenu que les images que nous avons pour chaque fonction (au moins les plus importantes) et qui regroupent, si je ne me trompe, la représentation d'*insignia*, parfois symbolisés (des *codices*, etc.), mais parfois bien réels (un char); que ces images, donc, représentaient une image réelle, celle que le primicier des notaires devait faire dessiner ou inciser sur le document même qu'il était chargé de préparer pour chaque nouveau titulaire, ce que nous appellerons le "brevet", quel que soit le nom technique, *codicillus* peut-être? Que doit-on penser de cette théorie?

En d'autres termes (et c'est important pour notre propos): nos vignettes proviennent-elles d'un "modèle illustré" déjà élaboré dans l'administration, pour servir par exemple de couverture aux codicilles (?), ou éventuellement au *liber mandatorum* des dignitaires (A. Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine*, 200)? Auquel cas il serait bien évident que, dès l'origine du plus ancien "modèle", l'illustration aurait été indispensable au texte, et qu'il n'y aurait pas eu de tradition indépendante. Quoique, bien sûr, même dans le cas d'illustrations logiquement liées à un texte, il puisse y avoir rupture de la "tradition" de ces illustrations, comme le prouve un exemple célèbre de la vignette du *mss. Palatinus* 1564, 88 r des *agrimensores* représentant Minturnes, qui ne peut pas provenir des renseignements du texte qu'elle veut illustrer, mais d'une erreur d'interprétation d'un texte de Pline (*nat.* 3, 39; cf. F. Castagnoli, in *Mem. Accad. Lincei*, Ser. VII, t. 4, 1944, 103).

P. Brennan: I envisage that the *primicerius notariorum* had available to him the "model" entry which existed of each *dignitas* or type of *dignitas* (i.e. essentially the extant entries), which he gave to a *scriniarius* to execute actual *codicilli* for each new holder of the posts. The physical relationship between illustration and text in this model can only be guessed. In the *Codex Spirensis*, although most illustrations were full page, many had both illustration and text on the same page (especially for the

western *Notitia*). It seems likely to me that the illustrations were once all full page and separate from the text, but that the text was later sometimes added to the bottom of the illustrations, especially where the text was brief, in the process of updating the "model". It may also be that the illustration and the text were copied by different persons, for there were illustrations in the *scrinia*. How demarcated were their duties?

A. Chastagnol: A mon avis, pour dater la *Notitia dignitatum*, il y a d'abord un *terminus post quem* général servant de base à l'ensemble du document; le partage définitif de l'Illyricum entre l'Orient et l'Occident, qui a accusé la séparation entre les empires d'Occident (Honorius) et d'Orient (Arcadius): préfectures du prétoire, cadres militaires. La *Notitia* de l'Orient a été rédigée plus ou moins après cette date, celle de l'Occident plus tardivement, mais le primicier des notaires dispose alors du document unifié et donc unique et valable à ses yeux pour ce moment. Nous sommes après la chute de Gildon en 398, après le transfert à Arles de la préfecture des Gaules (en 407 à mon avis), vers 425-430 environ à cause de la mention des troupes de *Placidi Valentiniani felices* (du nom de Valentinien III). Ce qui compte pour fixer une date, c'est un fait daté enregistré par le document, et non pas l'absence d'un fait qui a pu être omis ou ignoré. Ainsi, si on prend l'exemple de l'administration militaire en Afrique, l'omission du *comes Tripolitanae, u.c. et spect.*, attesté seulement en 407-408, ne peut aller contre les faits positifs relevés, même si l'oubli est déjà ancien à ce moment. Sur ce *comes* de Tripolitaine, cf. *Codex Theodosianus* 11, 36, 33 en 406; *IRT* 480, entre 408 et 423.

P. Brennan: Dating, either of the strands in the *Notitia* or of the whole, is fraught with hazards, especially when we seek to relate details, or the omission of details, in the *Notitia* with known historical details. For in the area of administrative arrangements and military distribution there is constant change but not in a linear pattern. The change is often the return of an

earlier practice. The *comes Tripolitanae* illustrates the problem. The texts on both *comites* noted by A. Chastagnol seem at first sight to represent a departure from the *Notitia* in giving this military commander the title of *Comes*, but both texts also call him *dux*, as in the *Notitia*. *Comes* refers to his rank in the *comitiua primi ordinis* and is here a personal title, not a post. In general I agree with Chastagnol's *terminus post quem* dates. The division of Illyricum into two prefectures is absolutely central. But might it not already have been set out in plan before Theodosius' expedition to reclaim the western part of the empire?

Fr. Paschoud: Parmi les éléments de datation qu'a rappelés André Chastagnol, le plus important me semble être la division de l'Empire en quatre préfetures, deux en Orient et deux en Occident, marque la plus évidente de l'après-395. On peut expliquer de multiples manières la coexistence, dans la *Notitia*, d'éléments chronologiquement disparates. Outre le facteur résultant de la lenteur de la transmission des données, évoqué notamment par A. Chastagnol, je crois qu'il faut aussi tenir compte de la paresse et de la négligence propres aux agents de beaucoup de grandes administrations, qui pèsent lourdement sur le fonctionnement de l'Empire tardif, comme d'innombrables témoignages littéraires et documentaires nous le font voir.

Cl. Nicolet: L'occasion de passer de la notion de "culture politique" à celle de "culture technique" nous est offerte par ces étranges *notae* qui figurent en certains endroits et dont il a été question. Que savons-nous du recrutement et éventuellement de la formation des *notarii*?

P. Brennan: In answer to Claude Nicolet's question on the *notarii*, it must be said that much is obscure about their history, especially on the use of shorthand clerks in the public service (see H.C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores*, Amsterdam 1985). Indeed, why and when the issuing of appointment documents came into the hands of the *primicerius notariorum* is

unknown, but it may have been associated with the creation of a new model of appointment documents. The extant *Notitia* may retain some signs that at least parts of the "model" were in shorthand. In occ. 36, 8, the Munich and Vienne manuscripts retain a *siglum* which may well be the Tironian *nota* for *supra*. Elsewhere, letters on scrolls, especially in the western *Notitia* and more often in the better second set of Munich illustrations, usually taken to be Greek letters, may reflect original Latin shorthand *notae*. Perhaps misunderstood, perhaps by an illustrator who was not expert in the writing or reading of the *notae* of the *notarii*.

Cl. Nicolet: Ma dernière question a trait à la célèbre description, poétique et emphatique, des fonctions du *a rationibus*, père de Claudius Etruscus, chez Stace, *silu.* 3, 3, 85-105. Le texte ne ressemble-t-il pas étrangement à celui de Claudien normalement évoqué à propos de la *Notitia*?

P. Brennan: On the comparison between the texts in Statius and Claudian, there are of course great similarities. Certainly Statius may have had a "job description" in front of him, but since that "job description" is not extant (unlike the case with Claudian and the *Notitia*) we cannot know whether it existed. But, even if it did, how would Statius have got access to it (unlike Claudian who was in the bureau) and would he have needed it?