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Egyptian Units and the reliability of the *Notitia dignitatum, pars Oriens*

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Abstract: This study argues for the reliability of the Egyptian military lists in the *pars Oriens* of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and opposes the views of some scholars, who see the *Not.Dig.* as a purely ideological composition unrelated to historical reality and without value as an historical source. Deniers of the *Not.Dig.*'s reliability generally ignore the documentary evidence. For Egypt, papyrological documentation verifies the *Not.Dig.*'s accuracy—a circumstance not so readily available for other parts of the Roman Empire—and, complemented by archaeological evidence, provides a strong argument for the completeness and reliability of at least the Egyptian sections. Thus the probability of the *Not.Dig.*'s accuracy for other sections of the *pars Oriens* is also corroborated.

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Egyptian Units and the reliability of the *Notitia Dignitatum, pars Oriens**

This study argues for the reliability of the Egyptian military lists in the *pars Oriens* of the *Notitia Dignitatum* and opposes the views of some scholars, who see the *Not.Dig.* as a purely ideological composition unrelated to historical reality and without value as an historical source. Deniers of the *Not.Dig.*'s reliability generally ignore the documentary evidence. For Egypt, papyrological documentation verifies the *Not.Dig.*'s accuracy—a circumstance not so readily available for other parts of the Roman Empire—and, complemented by archaeological evidence, provides a strong argument for the completeness and reliability of at least the Egyptian sections. Thus the probability of the *Not.Dig.*'s accuracy for other sections of the *pars Oriens* is also corroborated.

The *Notitia Dignitatum*, a Late Roman, illustrated list describing the administrative hierarchy of the civil and military branches of both the East and the West Roman Empires, has been esteemed since the nineteenth century as a basic source for Late Antique bureaucracy. Recently, however, the *Not.Dig.*'s reliability has been questioned and in some circles it is no longer accepted as a reliable source.¹ Three issues have emerged: the date of compilation and the possibility of several redactions, the document's purpose, and its reliability. This paper will address the contention of its reliability.

Most scholars take the extant *Not.Dig.* as a practical handbook of the Late Roman bureaucracy and suppose that the document preserved in the *Codex Spirensis* must have

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¹ For the *status quaestionis* and older literature, see Kulikowski 2000: 358–61; Scharf 2005: 1–5; Palme 2013b: 4813–7.

Papyri and ostraca are cited after the 'Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets', <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>, June 2011. Place and date of papyri and ostraca follow the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis HGV (<http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~gv0/>, April 2008), if not declared otherwise.

The abbreviation *BL* refers to the *Berichtigungsliste der Griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten, Vol. I–XII* (1913–1922 to 2009).

belonged to a high official, given its elaborate presentation and decoration.² Others challenge this view, rejecting the *Notitia*'s practical use and its accuracy.³ If the compilers' intention was an ideological glorification of the empire or a (unrealistic) textbook for a young emperor, then the *Notitia*'s credibility cannot be taken seriously. But even if the *Notitia* were an ideological document, this does not necessarily mean that the information is not credible.⁴ Indeed, if the *pars Oriens* does originate from a specific moment, then it could convey a factual state of affairs rather than something entirely fictional—and Michael Kulikowski is inclined to see the *pars Oriens* as exactly that: a list giving a fair picture of administrative and military dispositions in the Eastern Empire. He nevertheless states that whether the *Notitia* served an ideological purpose in the East or reflected reality (especially in the *pars Oriens*) cannot be determined.⁵ Most scholars agree that the *pars Oriens*, a largely coherent document, contrasts with the *pars Occidens*' repeated updates and redactions. The *pars Oriens* thus seems much more reliable.⁶

Testing the factual accuracy of at least the *pars Oriens* has never been done through a proper comparison of the military lists for a specific area or province with other sources for the same region. Egypt with its lavish papyrological documentation offers the optimal test case, as many parts of the Eastern Empire lack sufficient sources to verify army units. After establishing the date of the Egyptian sections of the *pars Oriens*, we will explore the argument for the *Not.Dig.*'s completeness and its credibility. As long known, the *pars Oriens* shows no military units post-dating Theodosius I (or the early years of his sons), and contrary to the *pars Occidens*, it concerns one point in time, not different chronological layers like the

² Demougeot 1975: esp. 1081; Mann 1976: 5; Scharf 2005: 1–3, esp. n. 3 for literature. For the *Codex Spirensis* see Clemente 2010: 117–8.

³ Purpura 1992: 469–84 (gift of Theodosius II to young Valentinian III); Scharf (2005: 315) argues, however, that this setting does not work for Purpura's proposed date of the *Not.Dig.*'s composition. Brennan 1996: 164 (ideological 'dream-world'); Kulikowski (2000: 359) follows the ideological approach, but detects some problems; Scharf (2005: 3 n. 3) catalogues the bibliography on the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a purely ideological 'dream-world'; Clemente (2010: 120; 130) states that the *Notitia* clearly is no working document a military commander might use daily, but does not necessarily see the *Notitia* drafted for a special occasion only.

⁴ Kulikowski 2000: 360.

⁵ Kulikowski 2000: 360–73.

⁶ Jones 1964: III 347–58; Ward 1974: 399; 408. Ward (1974: 410–1; 415) notices some minor optical delusions in the *Notitia*'s *pars Oriens*, which he attributes to the 'presentation copy', sent to the west and never intended for use; thus some images at the beginnings of chapters feature insignificant obscurities. Zuckerman 1998: 144; Kulikowski 2000: 373; Scharf 2005: 3–4.

western part, in which updates for a few decades occur.⁷ The latest units in the *pars Oriens* (this article's focus) are named after Theodosius I and his sons Honorius and Arcadius; thus a date shortly before or after the death of Theodosius I in 395 is (since Arnold H.M. Jones) the *communis opinio*, which Dietrich Hoffmann followed in the last major study of the *Notitia*.⁸ Recently, Kulikowski argued for approximately the same date, 394; Theodosius I would have brought the *pars Oriens* with him on his campaign against Eugenius: thus a *terminus post quem* of 386, since at some time after February 386 the Egyptian province Arcadia, present in the *Notitia*, was constituted, and a *terminus ante quem* of May 394, the start of the campaign against Eugenius.⁹ But the *Notitia* clearly reflects an empire divided only after Theodosius' death in January 395; and Bernhard Palme has now dated the constitution of the province of Arcadia to not long before the year 398.¹⁰ Thus Kulikowski's *terminus post quem* must be shifted to a much later date and actually later than his *terminus ante quem*. More importantly, the new dating of the province Arcadia fits perfectly with the arguments of Constantin Zuckerman and Tassilo Schmitt, the first not taken into account by Kulikowski and the second appearing a year after Kulikowski's discussion. Zuckerman puts the *pars Oriens* in 399 or perhaps 401 or even slightly later, as the promotion of the *praefectus Augustalis* to the rank of *vir spectabilis* in 398–399 indicates; the *Not.Dig.* already lists this official as *vir spectabilis*. Zuckerman favours 401 as the date of transfer to the west, the year of the reconciliation of the emperors Honorius and Arcadius.¹¹ Schmitt favours 405, when it seems that the *dux Libyarum* was created and the provinces of Libya were separated from Egypt, a status the *Not.Dig.* reflects.¹² At present the Egyptian documentary evidence cannot further pinpoint the *Notitia*'s date, but for this paper's purpose it is not necessary to decide between Zuckerman's and Schmitt's dates, since the time span 398–405 is not great, and irrelevant to an argument on reliability. A rough dating c.400 (e.g., 398–405) suffices.¹³

⁷ For the incoherent western lists: Jones 1964: III 347–80; Kulikowski 2000: 358–61; Scharf 2005: 1–5; Palme 2013b: 4814–7. *Contra*, Purpura (1992: 469–84) and Brennan (1996: 148–68), who see no realistic point of time reflected.

⁸ Jones 1964: III 347–9; Hoffmann 1969–70: esp. II 347–80.

⁹ Kulikowski 2000: 368–72.

¹⁰ Palme 2013a: 622–4.

¹¹ Zuckerman 1998: 137–47, challenging Clemente's date of 401–409 for the *pars Oriens*: Clemente (1968: 179–82; holding on to the date in 2010: 125) cites laws effective only in the Western Empire to argue for the date of the *Notitia's pars Oriens*. For dates provided in older scholarly literature, see Purpura (1992: 469–84), who opts for 406–408.

¹² Schmitt 2001: 607–21.

¹³ Zuckerman's date for the *Not.Dig.* has received general acceptance: see, e.g., Scharf 2005: 3–4; Millar 2006: 5–6; 45; Pottier 2006: 233; Wheeler 2012: 621 n. 1.

To assess the credibility of the *pars Oriens*, we can compare the units listed under the commands of the *comes limitis Aegypti* and the *dux Thebaidis* with the army units known from the papyri. If the papyri of c.400 show Egyptian units not in the *Notitia*, then the *Notitia* is not complete. Moreover, if some army units appear at the ‘wrong place’ (i.e., the papyri locate them at a different base than that in the *Notitia*), then the reliability of the Egyptian military lists and the whole *pars Oriens* of the *Not.Dig.* can be challenged. On the contrary, if the military organisation c.400 documented in the papyri is correctly reported in the *Not.Dig.*, at least the lists for Egypt provide the actual state of affairs (not an ideological fiction) and thus a strong argument for the accuracy of probably the whole *pars Oriens*.

Nevertheless, three points must be kept in mind when comparing the Egyptian military lists to the papyri. First, the two military lists for Egypt explicitly mention only the units under the command of the *comes limitis Aegypti* and the *dux Thebaidis*.¹⁴ Units of (*pseudo*)*comitatenses* or *palatini* do not appear in the Egyptian lists, since they are listed in the *Not.Dig.* under the command of one of the *magistri militum*.¹⁵ Such units could be temporarily stationed in Egypt when not on campaign and only in 492 did Anastasius put them under the authority of local commanders.¹⁶ If, therefore, a unit appears in the papyri and is not listed under the *comes limitis Aegypti* or the *dux Thebaidis*, the *Not.Dig.* is not necessarily incorrect. That unit could belong to the command of a *magister militum*.¹⁷ The chance of finding a (*pseudo*)*comitatensis* or palatine unit in the papyri is actually not very high, since those units would probably be stationed on the Mediterranean coast to facilitate movement in time of need, and the humidity in the Nile Delta (including Alexandria) does not favour conservation of papyri. One such case might be the *numerus Transstigritanorum*, a *legio pseudocomitatensis* listed in the *Notitia* under the command of the *magister militum per*

¹⁴ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 13 (*sub dispositione viri spectabilis comitis rei militaris per Aegyptum*); XXXI, 22 (*sub dispositione viri spectabilis ducis Thebaidos*).

¹⁵ *Magister militum praesentalis Orientis I: Not.Dig. Or.* V; *magister militum praesentalis Orientis II: Not.Dig. Or.* VI; *magister militum per Orientem: Not.Dig. Or.* VII; *magister militum per Thracias: Not.Dig. Or.* VIII; *magister militum per Illyricum: Not.Dig. Or.* IX.

¹⁶ *CJ XII* 35,18 (Anastasius to John, *magister militum praesentalis*, 492). Zuckerman 1991: 538, and 2004a: esp. 162; Carrié 1993: esp. 128–9; 134; 149, and 1998: 117.

¹⁷ Units can be identified by their names, very accurately recorded in the *Not.Dig.* as well as in the papyri. If the name of the unit is missing (e.g., due to fragmentary condition of the papyrus), the ranks of the soldiers may give at least a certain indication to the classification of a unit; a *biarchus*, a *centenarius* or a *primicerius*, for example, prove a unit’s classification as *vexillatio* (Palme 2004a: 322.)

Oriente.¹⁸ It made its first papyrological appearance in 406, but Palme argues convincingly for a very recent deployment to Egypt.¹⁹

Second, soldiers, and even units, travelling through Egypt may appear in the papyri without permanent postings there, and thus are not listed as Egyptian units. Although Late Roman military campaigns are rare in Egypt—the best known is Diocletian’s in 298²⁰—travelling officers are frequently found in the papyri. Two *mansio*-accounts (fourth century) attest the passage of officers and soldiers.²¹ These texts list the travellers’ names, ranks or titles, their destination, their entourage, and the number of animals that frequented the *mansio* of Takona in the Oxyrhynchites for a few months. One of the travelling parties came from Chalcedon, another one from Antioch. Most of the travelling parties belonged to the Roman army and included an entourage: *comites* (not necessarily used in a technical military sense), *tribuni*, *palatini*, *praepositi*, and *scutarii*. Examples of itinerant soldiers and officers not so clearly marked as such also appear in the papyri.²²

Third, detachments and small outposts, a well-known aspect of the disposition of troops in Egypt during both the Principate and Late Antiquity,²³ do not fit the concerns of the *Not.Dig.*, which lists the garrisons and headquarters of whole units, even if units were divided into smaller parts at some point.²⁴ The evidence for small outposts often does not name the

¹⁸ *Not.Dig. Or.* VII, 85.

¹⁹ Palme 2002: 87–9.

²⁰ Diocletian’s expedition against the usurpers Lucius Domitius Domitianus and Aurelius Achilles in Alexandria and the military deployment in the south afterwards are reflected in the Panop.Beatty documents (*P.Panop.Beatty* 1 [Panopolis, 298] and 2 [Panopolis, 300]). For the expedition and its cause, see esp. Kuhoff 2001: 184–98.

²¹ *P.Oxy.* LX 4087 (Oxyrhynchos, 4th c.) and LX 4088 (Oxyrhynchos, 347–350?). For the *mansio*-accounts see further Palme 1998: 299–301, and 2004b: 112; Adams 2001: 138–66; Mitthof 2001: 505–8.

²² E.g., *CPR* VIII 45 (Hermoupolites?, 4th c.): a receipt for chaff for a *praefectus legionis*, who must have travelled through the Hermoupolite as an individual, since too few legionaries were stationed in Hermoupolis to require a *praefectus legionis* as a commander (Mitthof 2001: 116).

²³ Especially well known is the dense distribution of outposts and detachments as garrisons in the Eastern Desert during the Principate, see Maxfield 2000: 407–42, with further literature at 436–42. For Late Antiquity see esp. Mitthof 2008: 254–6; Kaiser 2012: 109–11.

²⁴ Alston 1995: 147; Wheeler 2012: 629. The *Not.Dig.*’s lists for Egypt show detached units of the legio II Traiana, legio III Diocletiana, equites Mauri scutarii, and equites sagittarii indigenae. The legio II Traiana was stationed at Parembolē (Nicopolis near Alexandria: *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 19) and Apollonopolis Magna (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 34). For the equation Parembolē–Nicopolis see Van Berchem 1952: 62; Price 1976: 145–7; Worp 1991: 291–5, esp. 294. The legio III Diocletiana was posted at Andropolis (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 18), Ombos (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 31), Praesentia (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 33) and Thebes (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 38). The equites Mauri scutarii lay at Hermoupolis Magna (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 23) and Lycopolis (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 24). And the equites sagittarii indigenae were

unit, to which they belonged. Indeed, the scattered postings of small groups of soldiers from unknown units cannot be used to doubt the *Not.Dig.*'s credibility. These points will be treated in detail later.

With these preliminary caveats in mind, the first point to be argued is whether the Egyptian military lists are complete. The crucial question is whether any military unit mentioned in the papyri does not appear in the *Notitia*'s Egyptian registers; do papyri report any units present in Egypt c.400, not in the *Not.Dig.* and not under the command of a *magister militum*. The answer is negative: there are no such units c.400. If papyri do indeed attest units stationed in Egypt and not listed in the *Notitia*, such units do not appear anywhere near the date of the compilation of the *pars Oriens* c.400. Rather, they were in Egypt either long before the time of the *Notitia*, or they arrived in Egypt just after the composition of the *pars Oriens*, the closest example being the Transtigritani mentioned above. They cannot, therefore, support an argument against the *Notitia*'s accuracy. A list of such units dating to the period before the *Notitia*'s compilation includes: the Salarati Peregrini,²⁵ equites Marcomanni,²⁶ ala I Thracum,²⁷ legiones IV Flavia Sarmata, VII Claudia and XI Claudia,²⁸ equites Dalmatae,²⁹ ala nova Maximina,³⁰ legiones III Gallica et I Illyricorum,³¹ vexillatio Parthusagittariorum³² and legio VI Ferrata.³³ The units dating after the years c.400 are those

stationed in Tentyra (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 25), Koptos (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 26), Diospolis Parva (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 27), Latopolis (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 28) and Maximianopolis (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 29). Since Thebes is known to both the *Not.Dig.* and the contemporary papyri as 'Thebes', Diospolis has to be expanded to Diospolis Parva (Kaiser 2012: 606).

²⁵ Latest attestation: *P.Oxy.* XLI 2951 = *Ch.L.A.* XLVII 1415 with *BL IX*, 198 (Oxyrhynchos, 267).

²⁶ Latest attestation: *BGU XI* 2074 R (Hermoupolites, 286–287); for the date see Mitthof 2001: n. 60, 383–6, with *BL XII*, 23–4.

²⁷ Latest attestation: *CIL III Supp.* 2 13578 (Sile, 288).

²⁸ Latest attestation: *P.Oxy.* I 43 R = *P.Lond.* III 748 descr. (Oxyrhynchos, 295); for the date see Mitthof 2001: 390.

²⁹ Latest attestation: *P.Oxy.* XII 1513 with *BL IX*, 186 (Oxyrhynchites, 3rd–4th cc.).

³⁰ Latest attestation: *SB XXII* 15480 (Abu Sha'ar, 4th c.).

³¹ Latest attestation: *SEG XXXIV* 1598 = *SB I* 4223 with *BL XII*, 178 (Syene?, 323). Admittedly it is also possible that, if the inscription was carried off from Koptos to Syene, the unit would have been stationed at Koptos (Scharf 1997: esp. 346 n. 15; Palme 2002: 96 n. 27; *SEG XXXIV* 1598).

³² Latest attestation: *P.Abinn.* 1 = *P.Lond.* II 447 R descr. = *Ch.L.A.* III 202 = *C.Pap.Lat.* 265 = *C.Epist.Lat I* 226 (Philadelphia?, Arsinoites, 340–342).

³³ Latest attestation: *PSI IX* 1077 (Lycopolites?, 354/355). The legio VI Ferrata, attested at a date closest to the *pars Oriens*' redaction, does not appear in the *Notitia*. What happened to the legion is not clear. See further Rea at *P.Oxy.* LXIII 4359; Kennedy and Falahat 2008: 160; cf. *AE* 2008.1569.

of the Transtigritani,³⁴ felices Theodosiaci Isauri,³⁵ Leontoclibanarii,³⁶ Daci,³⁷ Sextodalmati,³⁸ Pharanitae,³⁹ Bis Electi Iustiniani,⁴⁰ Numidae Iustiniani,⁴¹ Scythae Iustiniani,⁴² and Salonitae.⁴³ Since the units are all too early or slightly too late for the *Not.Dig.* (at least from the papyrological *status quo*), it does not matter, if these units were (*pseudo*)*comitatenses* or *palatini*, which therefore would not be included in the Egyptian lists under local commanders.⁴⁴

Thus so far, no papyri and inscriptions from the time of the *pars Oriens*' redaction show units that are not listed in the *Notitia*'s two Egyptian lists. This does not necessarily imply that the Egyptian military lists are complete, but it indicates that the two registers cannot be proved faulty: papyri and inscriptions confirm the *Not.Dig.*'s information. No errors can be detected.

The second point, the *Not.Dig.*'s reliability, is more complicated. A crucial question is whether the units mentioned in the papyri really were stationed where the *Notitia* places them. Further, what percentages of the units in the two Egyptian lists actually appear in the papyri? We begin with the second question, fully aware that the percentages can only serve as rough guidelines, since new papyri might (and will) change them.



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³⁴ Earliest attestation: *SB* XIV 11574 (Oxyrhynchos?, 406).

³⁵ Kyr. Scyth., *Vita S. Sabae* I 87,6–16 (444); for the date see Palme 2004c: 157–73. The felices Theodosiaci Isauri is a rare case of a unit under a *magister militum* found in the papyri (*Not.Dig. Or.* V, 66).

³⁶ Earliest attestation: *P.Würzb.* 17 (Arsinoiton Polis, 454).

³⁷ Earliest attestation: Joh. Ruf. *Plerophoriae* XXVII 1–2 (referring to years 474–475); *P.Vindob. G* 30121 (Heracleopolis?, end 5th c./early 6th c.; see Mitthof 2001: 561 n. 194 A; Kaiser in prep.).

³⁸ Earliest attestation: *P.Vindob. G* 30121 (Heracleopolis?, end 5th c./early 6th c.; see Mitthof 2001: 561 n. 194 A; Kaiser in prep.).

³⁹ Earliest attestation: *P.Oxy.* LXVIII 4700 (Oxyrhynchos, 504).

⁴⁰ Earliest attestation: *SB* XX 14494 = *P.Freer* 3 + 4 (Aphrodites Kome, 533/534–542/543 or 546–548); for the dates see Gasco 1989: 284; Zuckerman 2004b: 54–6.

⁴¹ Earliest attestation: *BGU* XII 2197 with *BL* X, 24 (Hermoupolis, later than 537–538); *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67141 (Aphrodites Kome, c.537–551 or before 547/548); for dates see Mitthof 2008: 249 n. 7; Fournet 2008: 318.

⁴² Earliest attestation: *SB* XX 14494 = *P.Freer* 3 + 4 (Aphrodites Kome, 533/534–542/543 or 546–548); for dates see Gasco 1989: 284; Zuckerman 2004b: 54–6.

⁴³ Earliest attestation: *PSI* III 247 (Oxyrhynchos, 6th c.).

⁴⁴ The *Notitia* classifies the Transtigritani as *legio pseudocomitatensis* under the *magister militum per Orientem*, the felices Theodosiaci Isauri as *auxilium palatinum* under the *magister militum praesentalis Orientis I*, the Daci as *legio palatina* and the Sextodalmati as *vexillatio comitatensis*, both under the command of the *magister militum praesentalis Orientis II* (*Not.Dig. Or.* VII, 85; V, 66; VI, 3 = 43; 37).

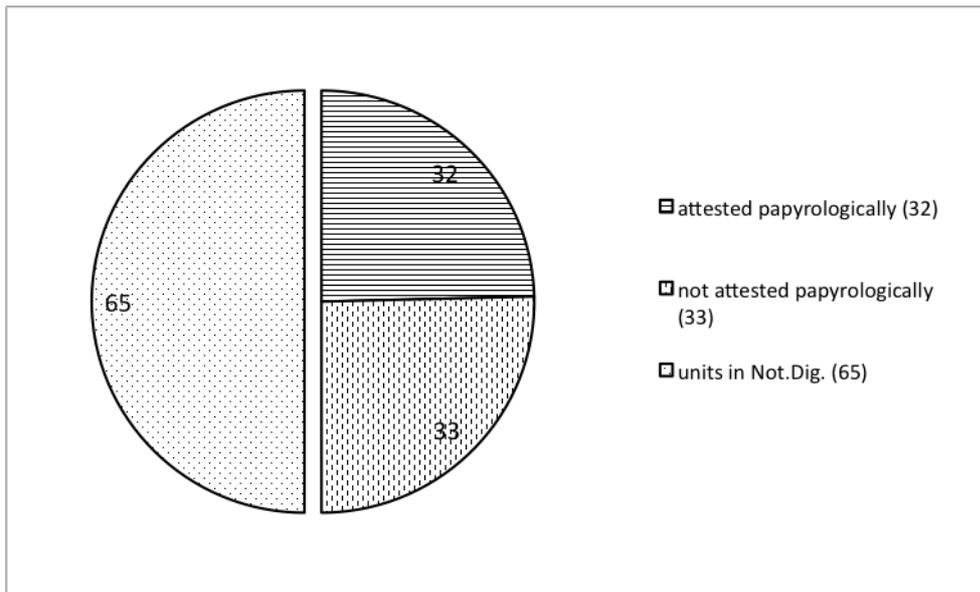


Chart 1: Military units in *Not.Dig. Or. XVIII* and *XXXI*.

The *Not.Dig.* lists sixty-five units under the *comes limitis Aegypti* and the *dux Thebaidis*. For our purposes, units named twice or even thrice (i.e., having more than one posting) are counted as single units (that is only once).⁴⁵ The papyri attest thirty-two of these sixty-five units, 49.23% (see chart 1), although at this point we have not yet distinguished units attested in the papyri by name and station from units known only by station or name. The 49.23% (less than half) may not initially seem impressive, but the papyrological documentation is geographically very selective. Not every region in Egypt is likely to preserve papyri, and key areas like the Delta and Alexandria are (as mentioned) hardly documented at all. Given the factor of selective preservation, the percentages should not be taken as an absolute value, but rather as a general indication. Nevertheless, we will subsequently use the percentages in order to give concrete numbers rather than vague approximations.

⁴⁵ For units stationed at multiple sites in the *Notitia*, see above n. 24.

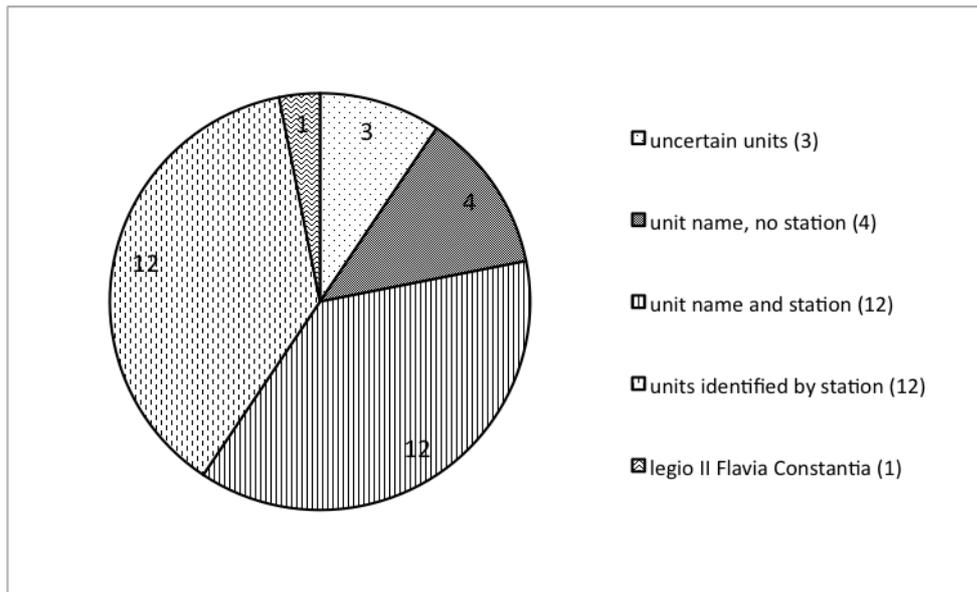


Chart 2: Military units attested in *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, XXXI and papyri.

The thirty-two papyrologically attested units (see chart 2) must now be addressed. Three units cannot be identified with certainty and their stations are not named: one papyrus mentions *Alamanni* and *Palmyreni* without further clarification of their identity or function,⁴⁶ although they are possibly related to the cohorts IX Alamannorum and the ala VIII Palmyrenorum.⁴⁷ Another papyrus mentions *Franci*.⁴⁸ They might belong to either the ala I Francorum or the cohorts VII Francorum.⁴⁹ Since it is highly unlikely that the *Franci* belonged to both units, one of them (the ala or the cohorts) is not mentioned in the papyri.

Four units named in the papyri lack a station: cohorts I Apamenorum,⁵⁰ ala Arcadiana,⁵¹ ala I Augusta Pannoniorum,⁵² and ala II Hispanorum.⁵³ The ala Arcadiana also lacks a station in the *Notitia*, where the ala is listed as *nuper constituta* under the *comes limitis Aegypti*.⁵⁴ Since the papyrus mentioning the ala (actually the φαμίλια Ἀρκαδιανῶν) also refers to the legio V Macedonica (φαμίλια πέμπτης Μακεδονικῆς) at Memphis under the *comes*

⁴⁶ *O.Mich.* I 662 (Karanis, 3rd–4th cc.).

⁴⁷ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 63 (Burgus Severi); 49 (Phoinikon).

⁴⁸ *SB* XXIV 16188 (Hermoupolis, second half 6th c.).

⁴⁹ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 51 (Contra Apollonopolis); 67 (Diospolis Parva); Bagnall and Palme 1996: 6–7.

⁵⁰ *P.Panop.Beatty* 1 (Panopolis, 298).

⁵¹ *P.Strasb.* VIII 717 with *BL* IX, 330 (unknown, 5th c.).

⁵² The latest papyrus mentioning the ala I Augusta Pannoniorum dates to the second half of the third century: *P.Oxy.* XLI 2951 = *Ch.L.A.* XLVII 1415 (Oxyrhynchus, 267).

⁵³ *P.Oxy.* I 43 R = *P.Lond.* III 748 descr. (Oxyrhynchus, 295); for the date see Mitthof 2001: 390.

⁵⁴ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 21.

limits Aegypti, it is likely that the ala still stood somewhere in northern Egypt, where the *Not.Dig.* lists it, but little papyrological evidence is preserved.⁵⁵

Twelve units attested by name and station in the papyri (the only twelve for which papyri give both types of information) are located exactly where they should be according to the *Not.Dig.*: the legio V Macedonica at Memphis,⁵⁶ ala V Praelectorum at Dionysias,⁵⁷ ala III Assyriorum at Psobthis,⁵⁸ equites Mauri scutarii (both Hermoupolis Magna and Lycopolis are attested),⁵⁹ ala II Herculia Dromedariorum at Toeto-Psinabla,⁶⁰ ala I Hiberorum at Thmou,⁶¹ cohorts XI Chamavorum at Peamu,⁶² legio III Diocletiana at Andropolis, Ombos, Praesentia, and Thebes (the station Thebes is attested),⁶³ legio II Traiana at Parembolē (Nicopolis) and

⁵⁵ Legio V Macedonica at Memphis: *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 14.

⁵⁶ *Ch.L.A.* XIX 684 ll. 1–16 (= *P.Strasb.* VII 617 with *BL* XII, 51; Arsinoites, 303–304) proves its presence in Memphis, whereas *P.Gen.* I² 70 (= *W.Chr.* 380 with *BL* VIII, 135; Philadelphia, Arsinoites, 372) only mentions the *legio V Macedonica*; *SB* XXII 15801 (Arsinoites, 419) attests the legion at Memphis, but *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67005 with *BL* XI, 52 Antinoopolis?, 567–568; for the date see Fournet 2008: 313) shows (a part of) the legion at Antaiopolis.

⁵⁷ Military presence in Dionysias is first attested at the beginning of the fourth century: *O.Fay.* 21 (Euhemeria, Arsinoites, 306); the ala V Praelectorum as the unit under the *praefectus* Flavius Abinnaeus figures in papyri from the 340s to the 350s (*P.Abinn.* 1 = *P.Lond.* II 447 R. desc. = *Ch.L.A.* III 202 = *C.Pap.Lat.* 265 = *C.Epist.Lat.* I 226 [Philadelphia?, Arsinoites, 340–342]; *P.Abinn.* 55 = *P.Lond.* II 412, p. 279 [Berenikis Aigialou, Arsinoites, 351]); the last papyrus showing military presence at Dionysias dates 362 (*SB* XXII 15286 = *P.Flor.* I 30, Arsinoites, 362). The *Notitia* therefore is its latest attestation at Dionysias.

⁵⁸ *SB* XX 14300 = *PSI* IV 300 with *BL* X, 227 (Oxyrhynchites, 324); *P.Oxy.* XVI 1883 (Oxyrhynchos, 504) still proves its presence at Psobthis. The *Notitia* actually gives an ala II Assyriorum in Psobthis and does not know a III Assyriorum in Egypt at all. This was already recognised as a simple scribal error, stemming from a version of the *Notitia*, in which the Roman numerals were not written as words, see Rea, *P.Oxy.* LV 3793 n. 1. 9; Zuckerman 1994: esp. 199–200; Daris: 2004: esp. 238; 245.

⁵⁹ Hermoupolis Magna: *P.Charite* 6 (Hermoupolis, 347–348); *SB* XVI 12488 = *P.Lond.* III 998 desc., p. LI + 999, p. 270 (Hermoupolites, 538); by 538 the Mauri were no longer at Hermoupolis, but are specified as having been stationed in Hermoupolis earlier: Φλαυίω Σιλβανῶ Φοιβάμμωνος ἀπὸ στρατιωτῶν τοῦ πρότερον ἐν Ἐρμου πόλει ἀριθμοῦ τῶν Μαύρων (ll. 4–5).

Lycopolis: *P.Oxy.* LXXII 4893 (Oxyrhynchites?, 375); *SB* XXVI 16532 (Lycopolis, 535) is the latest attestation for the Mauri in Lycopolis.

⁶⁰ *P.Panop.Beatty* 1 (Panopolis, 298); 2 (Panopolis, 300).

⁶¹ *P.Panop.Beatty* 1 (Panopolis, 298); 2 (Panopolis, 300); *P.Oxy.* XLI 2953 = *Ch.L.A.* XLVII 1417 (Oxyrhynchos, 293–305).

⁶² *P.Panop.Beatty* 2 (Panopolis, 300).

⁶³ *SB* XXIV 16333 (Hermoupolis, 338); *P.Brook.* 10 = *SB* VI 9566 (Thebes, 6th c.) mentions the *numerus* in Thebes (ἀριθμὸς Θηβῶν), whereas the earlier *SB* XVIII 13321 (Thebes, 5th–6th cc.) refers to the legion in Thebes (λεγεῶν Θηβῶν).

Apollonopolis Magna (placement at Apollonopolis Magna is proved),⁶⁴ ala I Abasgorum at Hibis,⁶⁵ and ala I Quadorum at Trimithis.⁶⁶ The *Notitia* cites garrisons of the equites sagittarii indigenae at Tentyra, Koptos, Diospolis Parva, Latopolis and Maximianopolis.⁶⁷ The one explicit papyrological reference to the equites sagittarii indigenae has it at Potekoptos, commonly believed to be identical with Koptos.⁶⁸ Of thirty-two units, twelve or 37.5%, have their papyrological attestations coincide with their location in the *Not.Dig.* Essentially all units papyrologically attested with both name and station are located at exactly where the *Not.Dig.* indicates. There is not a single case of discrepancy. Further analysis of those twelve units, counting all multiple stations of a single unit in the *Notitia* as one (and not every unit, no matter how many stations the *Notitia* lists), yields twelve garrison places out of forty-two stations or, a total of 28.57%⁶⁹—a higher percentage than it might initially seem, given the factor of the selective papyrological survival. Indeed these twelve units attested by both name and station are unique—the only ones with both name and location.

As all twelve units mentioned by name and station in the papyri coincide with data from the *Not.Dig.* it becomes likely that the twelve units mentioned in the papyri only by station (but not by name), are also to be identified with the units the *Notitia* records for the relevant station. In the fourth century (and even more so in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries), units tend to be cited by the name of their posting locale and not their official unit name.⁷⁰ Three of these units cited by place names are characterised as legions. In these cases

⁶⁴ A papyrus reference to Parembole in the Nile Delta is quite unlikely due to the climatic conditions. Apollonopolis Magna: *P.Panop.Beatty* 2 (Panopolis, 300); papyri and ostraca from the fourth century attest a legion at Apollonopolis, most likely the II Traiana: *SB* XX 14812 (Munesis, Oasis Maior, 4th c.).

⁶⁵ *SB* XVIII 13852 (Hibis, Oasis Maior, 309) mentions the ala in the Hibites nome; *O.Waqfa* 30 (Ain Waqfa, Oasis Maior, second half 4th c.).

⁶⁶ *CPR* VII 21 with *BL* VIII, 109 = *Ch.L.A.* XLV 1335 (unknown, 300–305/306).

⁶⁷ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 25–29; *P.Panop.Beatty* 2 (Panopolis, 300). A cavalry *vexillatio* in Latopolis may also be identified with the equites sagittarii indigenae, resulting in an even better percentage: *P.Jena* II 4 (Hermoupolis or Antinoopolis?, 396). For this *vexillatio* and the equation see Ast at *P.Jena* II 4.

⁶⁸ *P.Panop.Beatty* 2 is hitherto the only papyrus mentioning Potekoptos. Skeat (*P.Panop.Beatty*: 145 n. 162), identifies Potekoptos with the former Koptos and derives the name from ἡ ποτὲ Κόπτος: Koptos, center of a revolt suppressed in the late third century and destroyed, would have been referred to as Potekoptos, only to become known as Koptos again later. Skeat's explanation is generally accepted: see Van Berchem 1971: esp. 126; Bowman 1978: esp. 27 n. 13; Rea, *P.Oxy.* XXXIII 2673 at n. 1. 9; Leadbetter 2013: 84.

⁶⁹ For the units in the *Not.Dig.* at more than one station, see above n. 24.

⁷⁰ To list just a few examples of different units known by both official names and their stations: Legio III Diocletiana/Thebes: *SB* XVIII 13321,1–2 (Thebes, 5th–6th cc.): κεντυρ(ίον) | λεγ(εῶνος) Θεβῶν; *P.Brook.* 10,14 = *SB* VI 9566 (Thebes, 6th c.): κεντυρ(ίον) ἀριθμοῦ Θεβ(ῶν); legio V Macedonica/Memphis: *SB* XXII 15801,6 (Arsinoites, 419): [Φλ(αοῦ)ῖο]

it is extremely likely that they are to be identified with the legions the *Notitia* mentions for these locales: the legio I Maximiana stationed in Philae,⁷¹ the milites miliarenses in Syene (listed amongst the legions in the *Not.Dig.*),⁷² and the legio II Valentiniana in Hermonthis.⁷³ The other nine units identified by their stations are: ala I Herculia (Scenae extra Geras),⁷⁴ ala III Arabum (Terenuthis),⁷⁵ legio XIII Gemina (Babylon),⁷⁶ ala VII Sarmatarum (Scenae Mandrae),⁷⁷ cohorts IV Numidarum (Narmuthis, in which *castrum* a papyrus mentioning the *tribunus* of the *castrum* Narmuthis was found, which backs up the identification),⁷⁸ ala I

Δημητρίου ...] λεγεῶνος Μέμφεως; *P.Leid.Inst.* 67,9; 13; 26; 30 (unknown, 5th c.): Μεμφ(ίταις); *SB XIV* 11854,4; 5; 6 (Oxyrhynchites?, end of 5th–6th cc.): Μεμφ(ίτην); equites Mauri scutarii/Hermoupolis: *P.Lond.* III 992,4–5 (p. 253) = *M.Chr.* 365 = *Sel.Pap.* I 61 = *FIRA* III 182 (Hermoupolis, 507): Φλ(άυιοι) Σιλβανός καὶ Σαραπίων στρατιῶται ἀριθμοῦ | Ἑρμοῦ πόλεως; *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67329, col. I,12; 17 = *C.h.L.A.* XLI 1194 = *C.Pap.Lat.* Annexe 18 (Antaiopolites, 524): καὶ Λεοντίου ἀδελφο(ῦ) στρατιω[τ]ῶν Ἑρμο(υ)πόλ(εως); equites Mauri scutarii/Lycopolis: *SB XXVI* 16532,3 (Lycopolis, 535): Φλ(άυιος) Οὐαλεντίνος Ἰωάννου στρατιώτης ἀριθμοῦ Λύκων; *Pharanitae/Bau*: *P.Lond.* V 1735,23 with *BL VII*, 92 (Syene?, first half 6th c.): Φλ(άυιος[?]) Βίκτωρ Ἰωάννο(υ) στρατιώτης ἀριθμ(οῦ) Βαῦ; legio II Traiana/Apollonopolis Magna: *SB XX* 14812,3–5 (Munesis, Oasis Magna, 4th c.): στρα- | τιώτης λεγιῶνος | Ἀπόλλωνος Ἄνο.

⁷¹ To give but one example: Φλ(άυιος) Μαρτύριος Οὐίκτηρος στρατιώτης λεγεῶνος Φιλῶν (*P.Münch.* I 16,44 = *FIRA* III 107 with *BL VIII*, 227, Syene, late 5th c.); *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 37. Although the papyri mentioning the legion date from the late fifth century onwards (the time the Paternouthis-archive covers), evidence for the Roman army in Philae dates much earlier. The legion in Philae is first mentioned in *P.Münch.* I 16 = *FIRA* III 107 with *BL VIII*, 227 (Syene, end of 5th c.). The Roman fort was actually not on the small island of Isis but on the east bank of the Nile, where a footpath coming from Syene and skirting the First Cataract ended or started respectively. (Speidel 1992: esp. 246; 270). For the likely equation see Jones 1964: II 654–5; Keenan 1990: esp. 141–2.

⁷² To give but one example: Οὐίκτηρος στρατιώτης λεγεῶνος Σρήνης (*P.Münch.* I 15 + *P.Lond.* V 1855,23 with *BL I*, 311; VI, 90, Syene, 493); *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 35. Once again it is the Paternouthis-archive which gives the data for the legion in Syene, see above n. 71.

⁷³ Εὐδόξιος στρατιώτης λεγεῶνος Ἑρμώνθεως (*SB XX* 14799,3, Munesis, Oasis Maior, 4th c.); *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 39. The latest papyrus mentioning probably this unit in Hermonthis dates to the sixth century: *BGU II* 673 with *BL I*, 60; VII, 14 (Hermonthis, 525).

⁷⁴ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 29; *P.Oxy.* L 3580 (Oxyrhynchos, 4th c.).

⁷⁵ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 24; *P.Köln* V 232 with *BL IX*, 114 (Terenuthis, 330 or 337?).

⁷⁶ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 15; *Ch.L.A.* XLIII 1244 R = *SPP XIV*, p. 3 = *Rom.Mil.Rec.* 11 bis = *C.Pap.Lat* 322 (unknown, end of 3rd c.); *P.Oxy.* LVI 3874 (Oxyrhynchos, 345–346?).

⁷⁷ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 26; *P.Lund.* VI 10 = *SB VI* 9359 (Arsinoiton Polis or Scenae Mandrae, 400).

⁷⁸ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 46; *P.Sakaon* 9 = *P.Thead.* 48 (Theadelphia, Arsinoites, 314–315). Mitthof (2001: 445–6 n. 110) opts for the military context of this papyrus; the document's editor (Jouguet, *P.Thead.* 38, introd. 204–5) left open both the military and the civilian context (military *praepositus* or *praepositus pagi*); *P.Sakaon* 62 = *P.Thead.* 4 (Theadelphia, Arsinoites, 328). Pintaudi 2010: 340.

Tingitana (Thmoinepsi),⁷⁹ ala Apriana (Hipponon),⁸⁰ ala I Valeria dromedariorum (Prektis)⁸¹ and cohors I felix Theodosiana (Elephantine).⁸²

A final question: is there even a single unit that papyri demonstrate located elsewhere than the site in the *Notitia*? Yes, papyri and inscriptions show some exceptions (see chart 2), although these instances do not necessarily challenge the *Notitia*'s credibility. The *Notitia* lists the legio II Flavia Constantia at Cusae and an inscription from the legionary fortress at Thebes also mentions that legion.⁸³ This inscription, however, dated 293, belongs to the turbulent years of the Egyptian military expeditions of first, Galerius, then Diocletian.⁸⁴ To no surprise, units in Egypt during that time changed their stations some time later, when the province was again peaceful. The legio II Flavia Constantia must have changed its location between 293 and around 400. In fact we have already established that the end of the third century and even the first half of the fourth century are not relevant to information recorded in the *Notitia*. Such must also apply to the legio II Flavia Constantia, of course.

Two other units possibly seem at the wrong place, but only at first glance. The *Notitia* stations the legio V Macedonica in Memphis, as papyri confirm.⁸⁵ But papyri also show detachments of the legio V Macedonica operating in the Thebaid.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Memphis



⁸¹ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 57; *P.Strasb.* IV 197 with *BL* V, 137; VII, 415 (Hermoupolites?, 4th c.).

⁸² *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 64. Once again, it is the Patermouthis-archive that relates the data on the unit in Elephantine and accounts for the late dates; see above n. 71. *P.Münch.* I 2 = *W.Chr.* 470 with *BL* I, 310; XI, 138 (Elephantine, 578); *P.Lond.* V 1737 (Syene, 613). The *Notitia* puts the cohors *apud Elephantinem*, which does not contradict that the unit was stationed on the island, just as the Patermouthis-archive attests for the unit stationed there in the sixth and seventh centuries. The *Notitia*'s placement of units at both Syene and Contra Syene (XXXI, 35; 65) speaks for the location of the cohort on Elephantine itself, between the two other units. For the reading 'Contra Syene': Böcking 1849: 340, nn. 94–95; Brennan 1989: 200; Speidel 1992: 246 n. 17; Worp 1994: 467.

⁸³ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 32; Le camp romain de Louqsor n. 50 (Thebes, 293?), in El-Saghir et al. 1986. Speidel and Pavkovic 1992: 397–9.

⁸⁴ Galerius' expedition: 293–294; Diocletian's expedition: 297–298; see esp. Kuhoff 2001: 143–4; 184–98. Leadbetter 2013: 83–6.

⁸⁵ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 14; for papyri see above nn. 56 and 70.

⁸⁶ *Ch.L.A.* XLV 1320 = *SPP* XIV, p. 4 = *C.Pap.Lat.* 267 = *C.Epist.Lat.* I 234 with *BL* XII, 52 (Thebaid?, c.399); *BGU* III 899 with *BL* I, 20 (Philadelphia, Arsinoites, 4th c.); *P.Mert.* I 43 V (Oxyrhynchos?, 5th c.); *SB* XIV 11854 (Oxyrhynchites?, 5th–6th cc.). The Coptic martyrdom of Panine and Paneu mentions as *Macedonarius* a soldier named Philemon in Panopolis (which lies in the Thebaid as well): ΦΙΛΗΜΩΝ ΔΕ ΠΜΑΤΟΙ ΝΕ ΟΥΡΜΜΑΓΕΔΩΝΑΡΙΟΣ ΝΕ ΖΗ ΠΤΩΩ ΩΜΙΝ (Orlandi 1987: 114 l. 22). In the context of the V Macedonica's fourth-century presence in the Thebaid, this *Macedonarius* is most likely not a misunderstanding for

remained the V Macedonica's base until at least the fifth century.⁸⁷ A second seemingly problematic unit is the legio I Maximiana—at Philae in the *Notitia* (XXXI, 37.) In the 370s and 390s the legion (or its detachments) are known at Oxyrhynchos.⁸⁸ Oxyrhynchos does not have a permanent garrison in the *Notitia*, a fact underlined by the papyri: the first half of the fourth century saw detachments of the Mauri scutarii at Oxyrhynchos, whereas the legio I Maximiana operated there in the second half of the fourth century.⁸⁹ The two units might even have relieved one another. Consequently, an error cannot be demonstrated: deployment of the legio I Maximiana parallels that of the legio V Macedonica, based at Memphis, but known to have detachments in the Thebaid. The same seems to have been the case with the legio I Maximiana, only vice versa.⁹⁰

The last but equally important evidence for the credibility of the military lists in the *Notitia* is that most units, mentioned in the *Notitia* but not attested in the papyri, were stationed in regions where no papyri have survived. It would clearly be too much of a coincidence if only those papyri supporting the *Notitia Dignitatum* survived, while those papyri proving the *Notitia* wrong all belonged to units stationed in regions without papyri.

legionarius, but a colloquial identification of the soldier Philemon's unit, the legio V Macedonica. Papyri attest the soldiers of the V Macedonica as *Macedones* (*P.Cair.Masp.* I 67002 with *BL* I, 100; XI, 52; XII, 44 [Antinoopolis?, 567]; *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67005 with *BL* XI, 52 [Antinoopolis?, 567–568]; for the date see Fournet 2008: 313). I wish to thank Nikolaos Gonis for bringing this *Macedonarius* to my attention.

⁸⁷ It is most likely, however, that Memphis was one of the locations of the legio V Macedonica for much longer, at least until the 560s, when the legio is last mentioned in Egypt. *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67005 with *BL* XI, 52 (Antinoopolis?, 567–568); for the date see Fournet 2008: 313. That papyri no longer explicitly mention the legion in Memphis does not prove its departure from of that location.

⁸⁸ *P.Col.* VII 183 = *SB* VI 9603 b (Karani, 372); *P.Oxy.* LXXII 4900 (Oxyrhynchites?, 393).

⁸⁹ Mauri scutarii in Oxyrhynchos: *P.Oxy.* LX 4084 (Oxyrhynchos, 339); LXVII 4628 (Oxyrhynchites, 4th c.). A parallel case is the military presence at Arsinoiton Polis in the Fayum. Like Oxyrhynchos, Arsinoiton Polis has no garrison in the *Not.Dig.* Nevertheless, in the 320s soldiers were stationed near or in Arsinoiton Polis: *P.Sakaon* 20 = *P.Flor.* I 60 (Theadelphia, Arsinoites, 319); 21 with *BL* V, 148 = *P.Thead.* 31 (Theadelphia, Arsinoites, 319–320). The year 359 witnessed a vexillatio equitum catafractariorum at Arsinoiton Polis: *BGU* I 316 = *M.Chr.* 271 = *FIRA* III 135 (Ascalon, Phoenicia, 359). These *catafractarii* do not seem to be the unit stationed at Arsinoiton Polis forty years before. The papyrus explicitly states that the *catafractarii* were newly transferred to Egypt, most likely from Palestine: Βιταλιανός βίαρχος οὐδεξελλ[ατίωνος] ἰππέων καταφρακταρίων ἰδρυμένων τὰ νῦν ἐν [τῇ Ἀρσι]νοειτῶν πόλει τῆς Αἰγύπτου ... (ll. 5–7). These *equites catafractarii* might just as well have been *comitatenses* and therefore here only for a short time (Price 1976: 144; Daris 2004: 248; Zuckerman 2004b: 151; 154).

⁹⁰ Gonis (*P.Oxy.* LXXII 4900 n. l. 5) plausibly argues for the possibility that it was not the whole legion that was moved up to Oxyrhynchos. See also above n. 71.

Archaeology is the last and still missing aspect of this study. Of the significant number of Late Antique military constructions in Egypt, most do not yield data (papyri, inscriptions, ostraca) about their garrisons, but they do confirm the picture that emerges from papyrological analysis. Camps at Thebes (Luxor),⁹¹ Babylon (Old Cairo),⁹² Narmuthis⁹³ and Dionysias (western Fayum),⁹⁴ for example, attest together with the papyrological evidence a military presence identical to that in the *Notitia*. The Late Roman military camps at Pelusium⁹⁵ and Taposiris Magna⁹⁶ support—without papyrological confirmation—the *Notitia*'s reliability on the presence of garrisons. The military buildings in Hieraconpolis and Sile even reveal the names of the units building the camps: the *Notitia* still mentions the cohorts I Lusitanorum at Hieraconpolis;⁹⁷ the fort in Sile, on the other hand, was constructed by an ala I Thracum and not the ala I Aegyptiorum, which the *Notitia* places there.⁹⁸ But the Sile inscription, dated 288, cannot be taken as proof against the *Notitia*'s credibility, as argued above. Most probably, the ala I Aegyptiorum replaced the ala I Thracum at some point during the early decades of the fourth century and well before the *Notitia*'s compilation. Smaller structures like the camp at Magdolum on the fringes of the eastern Delta are not mentioned in the *Notitia*, as we suppose for numerous small military outposts.⁹⁹ The *Notitia* names only the major bases.

In sum, all these different threads of evidence clearly suggest that the two Egyptian military lists in the *Notitia* report correct data on the location of garrisons and the specific units in Egypt c.400.

Since, as here argued, the Egyptian lists of the *Not.Dig.* are reliable, the question of the *Notitia*'s credibility for other sectors of the Eastern Roman Empire arises. Admittedly, other eastern regions, like most of the Roman Empire, lack Egypt's extensive papyrological

⁹¹ El-Saghir et al. 1986; Speidel and Pavkovic 1992; Bagnall and Rathbone 2004: 192; Le Bohec 2006: 103, 170.

⁹² Sheehan 1996: 95–7; Grossmann 2003: 128.

⁹³ Pintaudi 2010: 339–42.

⁹⁴ Schwartz 1951: 90–7; Carrié 1974: 819–50.

⁹⁵ Abd el-Maksoud et al. 1994: 95–103.

⁹⁶ Grossmann 2005: 11–27; for the equation of the *Notitia*'s 'Tacasiria' (*Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 39) with Taposiris Magna see Kaiser 2013: 295–309.

⁹⁷ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXXI, 58; *CIL* III 22 = III Supp.1 6626 = *ILS* 217 (Hieraconpolis, 288).

⁹⁸ *Not.Dig. Or.* XXVIII, 27; *CIL* III Supp. 2 13578 (Sile, 288). For a summary of Late Roman military architecture in Egypt see Mackensen and Franke 2010: 81–94.

⁹⁹ Valbelle and Carrez-Maratray 2000: esp. 25–45.

documentation. Nevertheless, it is possible to check the reliability of certain sections of other military lists in the *Notitia*, as some scholars have done recently. Everett L. Wheeler assessed recent views of the Roman deployment in Colchis and Maurice Sartre studied the Roman defence system of southern Syria in the Hauran.¹⁰⁰ For Roman deployment in Colchis, archaeology and literary sources form the basis of argument. Not all postings of the *Notitia* can be identified and connected with historical references or archaeological data. Direct Roman control into the mid-third century never extended far from the coast with indirect rule through client-kings for the interior. Late Roman coastal garrisons represented a revival of interest in Colchis after an extended hiatus. But Wheeler opts for the likely trustworthiness of the *Not.Dig.* and elaborates on Zuckerman's earlier study of permanent units in the eastern Pontic region under the administration of the *dux Armeniae* in the *Notitia*.¹⁰¹ For Syria epigraphical evidence can be combined with archaeological remains and the *Not.Dig.*'s lists. Despite some concordances Sartre does not see the *Notitia* as a complete list of all military establishments in Syria—something not to be expected from a document listing only the major bases of permanent units of a *dux* or *comes*, and not temporary postings of the mobile *pseudocomitatenses*, *comitatenses* or *palatini*. *Burgi* and small outposts (garrisoned permanently or not) would not appear either, as already argued. Such small military stations, although known through archaeology and epigraphy and absent from the *Notitia*, cannot be a valid argument against the reliability of the *Notitia*'s entries for Syria.¹⁰²

Some incidental evidence for the situation elsewhere may support this general contention. Schmitt extensively discusses the military dispositions in Libya from literary sources. But the *Notitia*'s account of the *dux Libyorum*'s command is lost, so for Libya a direct comparison between the literary evidence and the *Notitia* is impossible.¹⁰³ Following the Mediterranean coastline further west to Africa would take this discussion beyond the *pars Oriens* and the scope of this paper. But even if the *pars Occidens* of the *Notitia* is commonly taken as less reliable than the *pars Oriens*, at least some information (e.g., parts of Africa) in the *Notitia*'s *pars Occidens* is accurate.¹⁰⁴ Thus even the *Notitia*'s *pars Occidens* as

¹⁰⁰ Wheeler 2012: esp. 635–49; Sartre 2007: 263–73.

¹⁰¹ Zuckerman 1991: 527–40. But Wheeler (forthcoming) also points out the problem some 'heirlooms' in the *Not.Dig.* might pose, e.g., a fort far east on the Tigris in c.401, after Jovian's treaty in 363.

¹⁰² Parker (1986: 135–48) likewise offers a very positive picture of the correspondence between epigraphy, archaeology, and the *Not.Dig.* on the Arabian frontier, including the Hauran.

¹⁰³ *Dux Libyorum: Not.Dig. Or. XXX*; Schmitt 2001: esp. 583; 620.

¹⁰⁴ For Africa Le Bohec (2007: 431–41) is less positive regarding the *Not.Dig.*'s value, even if some archaeological finds agree with the *Notitia*'s information. Scharf (2005: 186–94)

exclusively an ideological ‘dream-world’ becomes less tenable, although ideological compositions can use real facts to make a work at least seem more realistic than it really is.¹⁰⁵

What the papyrological documentation combined with literary evidence, epigraphy, and archaeology argues for, is the absolute trustworthiness of the Egyptian military lists in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The *Notitia* could not be proved incorrect, not even in one single case. The evidence and results from other parts of the Late Roman Empire do not contradict the contention that the Egyptian lists are reliable. Indeed, they argue for the credibility of the whole *pars Oriens*, even if we allow for some anomalies concerning the very peaceful province of Egypt, where the deployment proved by the *Notitia* seems to have remained in place for some hundred years, at least in its basic outlines. It might, and actually will, have been different in areas more affected by warfare and other disturbances than Egypt, but nevertheless the information given by the *Notitia* as a whole is correct – if only for a short time span, whose length depends on the region of the empire concerned.

In contrast to the ideological ‘dream-world’ propagated by some scholars, a study on the reliability of the Egyptian military lists can build on documentary evidence and suggest very strongly that the *Notitia Dignitatum*, especially its *pars Oriens*, is not an untrustworthy utopia, but an authentic record of the Late Roman army deployment c.400.

compared tile stamps found at Mainz with units in the *Not.Dig.* under the *dux Mogontiacensis*, a command seen as a late alteration in the *pars Occidens*: of the eleven units under the *dux Mogontiacensis*, six are confirmed by tile stamps and two units (Cornacenses and Portisienses) known from tile stamps are absent in the *Notitia* (187). Unknown is whether the units of the *dux Mogontiacensis* still manufactured tiles when the *pars Occidens* was composed. Possibly all these tiles belong to an earlier phase of the site, only some units manufactured tiles (either outside the *ducatus*, or at places yet undiscovered), or they simply did not always stamp their tiles (188–94). For the problems the usually undated, not perishable and often stockpiled tiles may pose cf. Wheeler 2000: 286–8.

¹⁰⁵ Kulikowski 2000: 360. Clemente (2010: 125; 129; 132) states that even the western lists were not antiquated in the fifth century, though the situation in the Western Roman Empire was changing quite fast and the *Notitia* not the instrument to register all those changes.

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