CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Julian, Arbogastes, and the signa of the Ioviani and Herculiani
Authors	Woods, David
Publication date	1995-12-01
Original Citation	Woods D. (1995) 'Julian, Arbogastes, and the signa of the Ioviani and Herculiani', Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies, 6, pp. 61-68.
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	http://www.jrmes.org.uk/contents.htm
Rights	© 1995, David Woods.
Download date	2026-09-08 03:48:31
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/3028

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Julian, Arbogastes, and the *signa* of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani*

David Woods

The *Passio Sanctorum Bonosi et Maximiliani* purports to describe the trial and execution of two military martyrs at Antioch in Syria during the reign of Julian the Apostate (361–3), on 20 September 362 to be precise.[1] It is of particular interest to students of the late Roman army because, among other things, it specifically names the units to which Bonosus and Maximilianus allegedly belonged, the *Ioviani Seniores* and the *Herculiani Seniores*, to which I will refer henceforth simply as the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani*.[2] Unfortunately, however, the complex nature of the text may deceive those less familiar with the norms and motifs of late antique hagiography, and lead them to make unwarranted assumptions, favorable or unfavorable, concerning the value of various statements within the same. Thus, it is the purpose of the present note to draw attention to, and clarify the value of, those statements which pertain to the use of military standards in the late Roman period.

I have explained in detail elsewhere why we should credit this text with any value at all.[3] Surprising as it may seem, this passion provides the background to a mysterious incident which is only recorded otherwise in the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, and then only in passing. In brief, the *signifer* of the *Ioviani* deserted to the Persians shortly after the accession of the emperor Jovian on 27 June 363, and did so because he had quarrelled with Jovian while the latter was a private citizen still.[4] Unfortunately, Ammianus does not care to enlighten us as to the exact nature of this quarrel, and for this we must turn to the passion of Bonosus and Maximilianus. To summarize, it alleges that at the time of their execution Bonosus and Maximilianus were the standard-bearers of the *Herculiani* (and the *Ioviani*), and that the reason for their execution was their refusal to remove the chi-rho sign from their standard, the *labarum*. Thus, in so far as Jovian was a Christian, and was the son also of Varronianus, the former *comes Iovianorum et Herculianorum*, it is a not unreasonable assumption that he would have been strongly opposed to the execution of these two standard-bearers.[5] Indeed, Varronianus seems to have served with the *Ioviani* in one capacity or other from as early as 331, when he named the newborn Jovian after the unit in which he was then serving, until the spring of 362, when he finally retired as *comes Iovianorum et Herculianorum*, so it is clear that both father and son would have had strong friendships with many of the members of these units. Thus, it is my argument that the *signifer* of the *Ioviani* deserted to the Persians shortly after 27 June 363 in anticipation of an attempt by Jovian to exact revenge upon him for the death of the previous *signifer*, Bonosus, in whose trial and execution he had doubtless participated, if he had not been the cause of the whole controversy in the first place.

It can be seen, therefore, that the revelation by the passion that Bonosus and Maximilianus were the standard-bearers of their units seems proven by the unexpected manner in which this explains the desertion of the anonymous *signifer* of the *Ioviani* to the Persians as recorded only by Ammianus. However, much of the rest of the passion is either fictitious, or of dubious worth. As already stated, I have argued elsewhere that the author combined a number of independent sources, primarily a contemporary account of the trial of Bonosus and Maximilianus, now lost, together with various ecclesiastical histories, to produce the passion as it now survives, but that, whatever his original intentions, he so misunderstood these sources that his end product was seriously flawed. For example, he mistakenly identified the Julian who presided at the trial of Bonosus and Maximilianus as the *comes Orientis* Julian, the maternal uncle of the emperor Julian, although he was really the *comes Iovianorum et Herculianorum* of the same name, and a far less distinguished figure.[6] However, once we recognise how the author conflated his sources in this manner, our task, the sifting of the information with which he presents us, becomes that much easier.

Let us turn at this point to the immediate subject of this note, the statements in the passion concerning the military standards. The passion begins very abruptly, as follows:

Julianus Comes dixit ad Bonosum et Maximilianum: Dominus Imperator noster iussit, ut signum quod habetis in labaro, mutare debeatis. Bonosus et Maximilianus dixerunt: Nos signum quod habemus, mutare nullo modo possumus. Julianus Comes dixit: Dominus Imperator iussit ut deos colatis, quos ipse, et ego colimus. Bonosus dixit: Nos deos colere non possumus qui ab hominibus facti sunt.

The *comes* Julian said to Bonosus and Maximilianus: Our lord emperor has ordered that you must change the sign which you have on the *labarum*. Bonosus and Maximilianus replied: We cannot in any way change the sign which we have. The *comes* Julian said: The lord emperor has ordered you to worship the gods which he and I worship. Bonosus said: We cannot worship gods which have been made by men.

This gives the impression that the reason for the execution of Bonosus and Maximilianus was their refusal to remove a *signum*, by which was presumably meant the chi-rho sign, from their *labarum*, and that this somehow entailed idolatry. Two problems immediately present themselves at this point. Firstly, the passion seems to understand that the two martyrs shared the one standard between them, a single *labarum* bearing one *signum*. This remains the case throughout the passion as will be evident also from the next passage which I will cite. However, our knowledge of the manner in which the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* always operated as a pair, together with the manner in which the passion itself refers to these martyrs as *Iovianus* and *Hercolianus*, suggests that one was the *signifer* of the *Ioviani Seniores* and the other was the *signifer* of the *Herculiani Seniores*.[7] Thus, they should have had two standards between them, one each. This point merely serves to highlight how poorly the hagiographer understood his source for the trial of these martyrs, and how careless he was in adapting the same to create his passion.

Much more problematical still is his use of the term *labarum* to denote the standard which the martyrs were supposed to have used. The *labarum* was the special imperial standard which was entrusted to the care of an elite section within the imperial guard, the *praepositi labarum*.[8] There is no evidence whatsoever that it would have been used in the manner that the passion suggests, by the *signiferi* of two palatine legions. The hagiographer has erred once more, and it is not difficult to explain his mistake. In his first oration against Julian, bishop Gregory of Nazianzus had referred to the removal of the chi-rho sign from the *labarum* by Julian, and this measure gained wider circulation still because of its mention by the historian Socrates.[9] Our hagiographer simply conflated separate descriptions by two different sources of two distinct incidents which happened to bear some slight superficial resemblance to one another, that is an account of the execution of two *signiferi* and an account of the removal of the chi-rho from the *labarum*, and the result was two *signiferi* executed for refusing to remove the chi-rho from their *labarum*.

But why were Bonosus and Maximilianus really executed, if not for their refusal to remove the chi-rho from the *labarum*, and how did this entail idolatry? Fortunately, the answer to this question has been preserved amidst the nonsense concerning the *labarum*, as the following passage quickly reveals:

Julianus dixit: Aptentur Bonosus et Maximilianus ad equuleum. Cumque aptati fuissent, Julianus dixit: Siste illos. Cumque sisterentur, Julianus dixit: Videtis vos saevis applicari tormentis. Implete nunc iussionem sacram, et nolite universos contubernales vestros vestra prava exhortatione avertere; sed, sicut decet, facite quae iussa sunt, et mutate signum quod habetis de labaro vestro, et accipite signum deorum immortalium. Bonosus et Maximilianus dixerunt: Non facimus quae iubes fieri contra Deum. Nos Deum vivum, invisibilem, et immortalem habemus, in quo speramus.

Julian said: Let Bonosus and Maximilianus be readied for the torture-horse. When they had been readied, Julian said: Stand them up. When they were standing, Julian said: You see that you are heading for terrible torture. Carry out the imperial command now, and do not corrupt all your fellow soldiers by your rebellious urging; but, as is fitting, do what has been ordered, and remove the sign which you have from your *labarum*, and accept instead the sign of the immortal gods. Bonosus and Maximilianus replied: We are not doing what you order against the

will of God. We have a living, invisible and immortal God, in whom we hope.

Thus, the real reason for the execution of Bonosus and Maximilianus was their refusal to accept the *signum deorum*, or rather the *signa deorum*. And who were these gods? None other, surely, than Jupiter and Hercules, after whom the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* had been respectively named.[10] The emperor Julian, it would seem, was simply attempting to turn the clock back and undo all the changes which Constantine I and his sons had made in their efforts to Christianize the army. For the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* were a Diocletianic creation, in their titles at least, and it is difficult to believe that their insignia had not originally proclaimed their close association with these gods by means of images of the same.[11] However, as palatine legions they came under much closer imperial observation than would have many frontier units, and it is clear from the testimony of bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, for example, that Constantine I had been particularly concerned to Christianize those mobile forces who accompanied his court.[12] This had doubtlessly entailed the removal at some point of all idolatrous images from insignia everywhere, including the standards. Indeed, Eusebius seems to hint at exactly such action on the part of Constantine, although he also conflates it with an account of the use of the *labarum* (*Vita Constantini* 4.21):

Ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ὅπλων τὸ τοῦ σωτηρίου σύμβολον κατασημαίνεσθαι ἐποίει, τοῦ τε ἐνόπλου στρατοῦ προπομπεύειν χρυσῶν μὲν ἀγαλμάτων, ὁποῖα πρότερον αὐτοῖς ἔθος ἦν, τὸ μηθὲν μόνον δὲ τὸ σωτήριον τρόπαιον.

And not only so, but he also caused the sign of the salutary trophy to be impressed on the very shields of his soldiers; and commanded that his embattled forces should be preceded in their march, not by golden images, as heretofore, but only by the standard of the cross.[13]

It is my argument, therefore, that the real reason for the execution of Bonosus and Maximilianus was their refusal to accept new, or rather restored standards which bore images of the gods Jupiter and Hercules. This would have been an entirely characteristic trick on the part of the emperor Julian, or his officers, who could then accuse them of insubordination or mutiny. Thus, their punishment of these men was motivated, they could claim, not by religious considerations, but as a matter of military discipline.

Julian repeated a similar trick later when he handed out a donative to his troops during the New Year festivities of January 363.[14] Every soldier was forced to burn some incense before a portrait of the emperor before he received his donative, but, in so far as Julian had himself depicted in the company of the gods, including Jupiter, it was possible to interpret such action as a sacrifice to these gods rather than as a traditional mark of respect to the emperor. When some Christian officers protested at the manner in which they had been tricked, and tried to return the donative, they were punished with exile. This, at least, is the Christian record of this event as preserved by the ecclesiastical historians.[15] However, the pagan orator Libanius gives the impression that Julian was entirely successful in his efforts to seduce the soldiers to paganism in this way.[16]

The importance of the passion in this matter is that it proves that the nature of the military standards, and changes to the same, was a matter of controversy during the religious conflict of the fourth century. More importantly, perhaps, it provides an important clue as to the correct interpretation of two passages which describe the defeat of the usurper Eugenius by Theodosius I at the battle of Frigidus on 6 September 394. The first passage occurs in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, in a book which he seems to have composed *c.*413/15 (*De Civitate Dei* 5.26):

Victor autem, sicut crediderat et praedixerat, Iovis simulacra, quae adversus eum fuerant nescio quibus ritibus velut consecrata et in Alpibus constituta, deposuit, eorumque fulmina, quod aurea fuissent, iocantibus (quod illa laetitia permittebat) cursoribus et ab eis fulminari velle dicentibus hilariter benigneque donavit.

After Victory had confirmed his confidence and his prediction, he [Theodosius] cast down the images of Jupiter which had been supposedly consecrated against him by some kind of ceremonies and set up in the Alps. Those statues held golden thunderbolts; and when the emperor's couriers felt able, in the joy of victory, to turn those weapons into a joke, saying that they would like to be struck by thunderbolts of that kind, he [Theodosius] was delighted and kindly gave them to the jesters as a present.[17]

This describes the destruction of statues of Jupiter by Theodosius in the immediate aftermath of his defeat of Eugenius. But what was the significance of these *simulacra Iovis*? One recent commentator hazards a guess that they were 'innocent landmarks surviving from an earlier age.'[18] Considered in isolation, this interpretation of the above passage may just about be possible. It is true that the Christianization of the Alpine region had made far slower progress than one would otherwise have anticipated, as evidenced a little later in 397, for example, by the martyrdom of three Christian missionaries at Anaunia.[19] However, the rich adornment of these statues and the rites of consecration suggest that they were anything but innocent, and that they had a very real significance to the forces of Eugenius. Unfortunately, it is a mistake to interpret this passage in isolation, but one should compare it rather with the description of the same battle in the ecclesiastical history of Theodoret (*HE* 5.24):

Τῶν δὲ στρατηγῶν ὀλίγους εἶναι τοὺς συμπαρατattομένους φησάντων, καὶ ἀνακωχήν τινα δοῦναι τῷ πολέμῳ συμβουλευσάντων, ὥστε τοῦ ἦρος ἀρχομένου στρατιὰν συναγεῖραι, καὶ τῷ πλήθει περιγενέσθαι τῶν δυσμενῶν, οὐκ ἐδέξατο τὴν εἰσήγησιν ὁ πιστότατος βασιλεύς. Οὐ γὰρ ἔφη χρῆναι τοσαύτην μὲν ἀσθένειαν τοῦ σωτηρίου κατηγορῆσαι σταυροῦ, τοσαύτην δὲ προσμαρτυρῆσαι δύναμιν τῇ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους εἰκόνι· ταύτης μὲν γὰρ ὁ σταυρὸς ἡγεῖται τῆς στρατιᾶς, τῆς δὲ τῶν ἀντιπάλων ἐκείνη.

When his generals represented that the forces on their side were few and recommended him to allow some pause in the campaign, so as to muster an army at the beginning of spring and out-number the enemy, the most faithful emperor [Theodosius] refused to listen to their advice. "For it is wrong," said he, "to charge the cross of salvation with such infirmity, for it is the cross which leads our troops, and attribute such power to the image of Hercules which is at the head of the forces of our foe."[20]

There follows, naturally, a description of the battle itself, after which Theodoret returns once more to the image of Hercules and the punishment of Eugenius:

Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τῶν τε εἰς Βαλεντινιανὸν πλημμεληθέντων ἀνέμνησε, καὶ τῆς παρανόμου τυραννίδος, καὶ τῶν κατὰ τῆς ἐννόμου βασιλείας πολέμων· ἐκωμῴδησέ τε καὶ τὴν Ἡρακλέους εἰκόνα, καὶ τὸ μάταιον δι' ἐκείνην γενόμενον θάρσος. Καὶ τότε δικαίαν καὶ ἔννομον ἐξήνεγκε τῆς κατ' αὐτοῦ τιμωρίας τὴν ψῆφον.

The emperor [Theodosius] reminded him [Eugenius] of the wrongs he had done Valentinianus, of his usurped authority, and of the wars which he had waged against the rightful emperor. He ridiculed also the figure of Hercules and the foolish confidence it had inspired and at last pronounced the sentence of right and lawful punishment.

I concur here with the noted scholar who ended his comparison of the above passages with the conclusion, 'la conjecture la plus économique consiste donc à penser que, sur ce point, Augustin et Théodoret exploitent, chacun à sa manière, une même source écrite, aujourd'hui perdue.'[21] Thus, although Theodoret wrote his history quite some time after the composition of the *De Civitate Dei*, probably during the period 441–9, and at Constantinople rather than in the West, there is no reason why we should afford it any less authority in this matter.[22] Indeed, many scholars have traditionally accepted both accounts of the battle of Frigidus as of equal worth, and have simply conflated their elements, accepting quite literally nearly all that they say. Hence their uncritical accounts of multiple statues of Jupiter in the Alps while images of Hercules were paraded before the army of Eugenius.[23] It has even been claimed that Eugenius, or his chief supporters, adopted Jupiter and Hercules as their divine protectors in a deliberate attempt to evoke the memory of the Diocletianic Tetrarchy.[24] Fortunately, there is now more recognition that the pagan nature of Eugenius' regime was greatly overstated, and that the so-called pagan revival of the period 392–4 represented the frantic endeavours of a few private individuals in the absence of concerted Christian resistance rather than the deliberate policy of the new regime.[25]

So how do we interpret the above passages? It seems clear, I think, that Augustine has exaggerated the number of statues of Jupiter, both for rhetorical effect and to mislead us as to the true nature of Eugenius' regime. I suggest that he and Theodoret have both distorted their original source in an effort to represent

the battle of Frigidus as a clash of gods, and a matter of spiritual intervention, rather than the bloody battle it actually was.[26] However, they both distorted their common source in different ways. While Augustine fixed on a reference to a statue of Jupiter, and exaggerated the number of such statues, Theodoret fixed on a reference to an image of Hercules, and exaggerated the importance of that one image. He clearly refers to a standard bearing the image of Hercules, and I suggest that this was the standard of one particular regiment rather than of the whole army. Likewise, the original *simulacrum Iovis* of Augustine's account was probably a military standard rather than a free-standing statue. In brief, Augustine and Theodoret have produced their own highly colorful renderings of a source which originally described the destruction of a pair of ordinary military standards, one bearing the image of Jupiter, the other bearing the image of Hercules. And to whom did those standards belong, if not the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* once more?

But where were the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* at this period in time? According to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, this pair of units fell to the control of the *comes Italiae*, and in so far as the composition, or revision, of the relevant part of the *Notitia* has been dated to the 420s, then it seems probable that they were situated in Italy by the 420s.[27] The poet Claudian sheds some further light on this matter in his *De Bello Gildonico* where he seems to allude to their participation in the expedition against Gildo, the rebel *comes Africae*, during the period 397–8.[28] More fortunate still is the preservation by Gregory of Tours in his history of the Franks of a fragment of the lost history of Sulpicius Alexander which includes a reference to the *Ioviani*.[29] They had suffered severe losses in 388 during a punitive expedition against the Franks across the Rhine, and were among the remains of the Rhine army over which Arbogastes took control in the autumn of 388. Thus, we are relatively well informed concerning the whereabouts of this pair of units from *c.*388 to *c.*420, when their central location seems to have shifted from Germany to Italy.

The importance of this to the present matter is that it was Arbogastes who had placed Eugenius on the throne at Lyons in August 392 following his role, whatever exactly that had been, in the death of the Valentinian II the previous May.[30] Arbogastes was the military power behind the throne, and the real commander of the forces at Frigidus. Hence there can be little doubt but that the *Ioviani Seniores* and *Herculiani Seniores* should be included among those forces which he removed from the Rhine frontier for his confrontation with Theodosius' army in September 394. Most importantly of all, Arbogastes was a pagan, and even if his remark that he would turn the cathedral at Milan into a stable for his horses was 'less a declaration of war against an intransigent church than a joke at the expense of an impotent one,' it seems clear that he would not have objected if elements within his forces had wanted to restore the standards of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* to their pre-Constantinian form.[31]

It is my argument, therefore, that the descriptions by Augustine and Theodoret of the use by the forces of Eugenius of statues of Jupiter and an image of Hercules are distorted references to the standards of just two units, the *Ioviani Seniores* and the *Herculiani Seniores*. These standards had simply been restored to what was assumed to be their original form in exactly the same manner as had happened during the reign of Julian in 362. Unfortunately, though, the capture and destruction of these standards following the battle at the Frigidus provided Christian polemicists with a perfect propaganda opportunity which Augustine and Theodoret proved themselves unable to resist.

Some brief remarks are necessary here also concerning a neglected hagiographical source, the anonymous *Life of Constantine* (*BHG* 365), which preserves the following description of Constantine's army as it marched to confront Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312:

> *Πεντήκοντα δὲ ἦσαν τῶν κατὰ τὴν στρατείαν ἀλκιμωτάτων οἷς προσετέτακτο κατὰ διαδοχὴν αὐτὸ φέρειν ἐπὶ τῆς παρατάξεως, καὶ ἦν μέγιστον δεῖγμα πίστεως ἐν ἐπικρατείᾳ τοσαύτῃ πολυθείας καὶ τῆς περὶ τοὺς δαίμονας τῶν πολλῶν θεραπείας, τινῶν μὲν ταγμάτων καὶ αὐτοῖς ὄντων τοῖς δαίμοσιν ἐπωνύμων, ὅνπερ τρόπον οἱ Ἰοβιανοὶ καὶ Ἑρκουλιανοὶ καλούμενοι, ὡς καθ' Ἕλλήνων φωνὴν εἰπεῖν, Διάσιοι καὶ Ἡράκλειοι (Ἰόβης μὲν γὰρ παρ' Ἰταλοῖς ὁ Ζεύς, Ἑρκούλιος δὲ ὁ Ἡρακλῆς), πάντων γε μὴν ἐπὶ τῶν σημείων, ἃ Ῥωμαῖοι καλεῖν εἰώθασι σίγνα, ἄλλων ἄλλα εἴδωλα φερόντων, αὐτὸς τύπῳ σταυροῦ καὶ συμβόλῳ παθήματος ἀπήρειδε τὰς ἐλπίδας τῆς νίκης.*[32]

There were fifty of the bravest men throughout the army who were ordered to carry this [the *labarum*] in turns at the head of the column, and it

> was a very great sign of faith in such a great victory over polytheism and over the mob's worship service of the gods. For although some units were even named after the gods themselves, in the manner that the *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani* were so-entitled, or to call them according to their Greek titles, the *Diasii* and the *Heraclei* (for Zeus is called Jove by the Italians, and Heracles Hercules), and all these carried on their standards, which the Romans call *signa*, all carried different idols, he [Constantine] himself fixed his hopes of victory in the sign of the cross, the symbol of the passion.

It is commonly accepted that the anonymous author of the *Life of Constantine* (*BHG* 365) used the ecclesiastical history of Philostorgius as his main source, which work was probably published shortly after 425.[33] It is clear that the titles *Diasii* and *Heraclei* were the invention of this mediaeval author, keen to display his knowledge, but it was the very presence of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* in his source in the first place which tempted him to elaborate in this way. Philostorgius used a number of different sources, both pagan and Christian, including the *Histories* of Eunapius of Sardis, and in so far as his description of the presence in Constantine's army of the *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani* did not originate in any surviving Christian source, then it is tempting to assume that he drew upon a pagan source in this matter.[34] The fact that a contrast is implied between the *signa* of the *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani*, as they were thought to have existed before Constantine's complete Christianization of his army, and the Christian *labarum*, is itself of relevance here. It provides further proof, if any were necessary, that the nature of the *signa* of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* was a matter of controversy still while Philostorgius wrote. More significantly, perhaps, the possibility remains that Philostorgius' emphasis on the position of the *labarum* at the head of Constantine's army, and, most importantly, the ready acquiescence of all other standard-bearers to this state of affairs, represents his reply to a pagan argument. Did some pagan tradition seek to explain Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge as the result of the presence on his side of the *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani*, and their *signa*, rather than his use of the *labarum*? If so, then the importance which Eugenius, or some of his officers at least, are alleged to have attached to these same *signa* at the Frigidus in 394, becomes much more credible. They were simply acting in accordance with that tradition which attributed Constantine's success of 312, in the exact same region even, to his possession of these *signa*.

A final point is necessary concerning the relevance of the present note to the controversy surrounding the nature of the late Roman shield-emblems as preserved among the illustrations of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. On the subject of the shield-emblems of the *Herculiani Seniores* and the *Herculiani Iuniores* in particular, a recent critic has claimed that 'since one would normally expect these two units to be represented by Hercules, it would appear *prima facie* that their emblems in the *Not. Dig.* are in error.'[35] Unfortunately, though, this argument ignores the date of composition of the *Notitia* in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, when the triumph of Christianity was complete. A Christian ruler could not tolerate the use of the images of false gods to represent the forces under his command. As I have tried to show in this note, the use of the image of Hercules as the symbol of the *Herculiani* was a matter of genuine controversy, and any attempt to restore this use of the image of Hercules met with fierce Christian resistance. Thus, the *Notitia* depicts an eagle as the symbol of the *Herculiani*, both *Seniores* and *Iuniores*, the exact same eagle which represents their companion units, the *Ioviani*. For although the eagle had traditionally been viewed as the symbol of Jupiter, it had lost much of its religious significance, and had become a symbol simply of Roman military valour.[36] This being said, it is easy to understand why the illustrations of the *Notitia* have been criticised in this manner, as the apparent absence of overtly Christian insignia among the shield-emblems inclines one to underestimate the full social and religious context of this document. However, as I have tried to explain elsewhere, this absence of Christian insignia is also more apparent than real.[37]

NOTES

1. The text occurs in T. Ruinart, *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera*, 5th ed. Ratisbon 1859, 609–12; also in the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum, Aug.* t.IV, 430–2. Unfortunately, a modern edition is lacking. The translations of the relevant passages are my own.
2. Strictly speaking, the *Herculiani Seniores* only are mentioned as such, and only in the title to the passion, as follows: *Passio sanctorum Bonosi et Maximiliani militum de numero Herculianorum Seniorum sub Juliano Imperatore et Juliano Comite eius sub die XII Kalendas Octobris*. However, the references within the body of the text to an *Iovianus* and a *Hercolianus*, i.e. to a member of the *Ioviani* and a member of the *Herculiani*, reveal that this passion relates to two units, both the *Herculiani*

Seniores and its companion unit, the *Ioviani Seniores*. It had been thought previously that the division of the late Roman army into pairs of units entitled either Seniores or Iuniores only took place in 364. It was for this reason that HOFFMANN, 1969, 318–19, dismissed this passion as worthless for the purpose of military history. However, as DREW-BEAR, 1977, 273, n.69, pointed out, the new inscription which he published invalidates such argumentation.

3. See WOODS, 1995, for a much more detailed explanation of all that follows.
4. Amm. 25.5.8: *His ita caeco quodam iudicio fortunae peractis, Iovianorum signifer quos Varronianus rexerat dudum, cum novo dissidens principe, etiam tum privato, ut patris eius obtrectator molestus, periculum ex inimico metuens iam communia supergresso, discessit ad Persas ac data dicendi copia quae sciret, docet Saporem iam propinquantem, exstincto quem verebatur, turbine concitato calonum, ad umbram imperii Iovianum adhuc protectorem adscitum, inertem quendam et mollem.*
5. On the evidence for the career of Varronianus, see *PLRE*, 946, in the interpretation of which I differ.
6. On the *comes Orientis* Julian, see *PLRE*, 470–1; on the *comes Iovianorum et Herculianorm* Julian (although not specifically recognised as such), see *PLRE*, 471.
7. The *Ioviani Seniores* and *Herculiani Seniores* occur as a pair in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Oc.* 5.145–6, and the operation of *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* together is indicated as follows: Amm. 22.3.2, 25.6.2; Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico* 418–20; Vegetius, *Epit. Milit.* 1.17; Zosimus, *HN* 2.4.2, 3.30.2. The passion refers twice to a *Iovianus* and a *Herculianus*, as follows: *Tunc Julianus Comes dixit ad Iovianum et Herculianum: Mutate signum quod habetis in labaro, et accipite signum deorum; et quid defenditis signum Christianorum. Ad haec Jovianus et Herculianus dixerunt: Nos Christiani sumus ...* . It is not at all clear that the author understood that the terms *Iovianus* and *Herculianus* denoted membership of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* respectively. I suspect, in fact, that he understood *Iovianus* and *Herculianus* as the real names of a further pair of military martyrs, companions of Bonosus and Maximilianus, and that his use of these terms represents another bit of ill-digested testimony from the lost source for the trial of these martyrs.
8. See FRANK, 1969, 142–5.
9. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 4.66; Soz. *HE* 5.17.
10. Soz. *HE* 6.6.
11. For an account of the creation of the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* by renaming some existing units, see Vegetius, *Epit. Milit.* 1.17. It is of immediate interest that some of the shields carried by Roman soldiers on the Arch of Galerius at Thessaloniki bear images of Hercules, while others depict a rampant lion or an eagle holding a thunderbolt in its talons. See GRIGG, 1983, 134, for a fuller bibliography on this matter.
12. Eus. *Vita Constantini* 4.18–21.
13. From the translation by E. Richardson in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Second Series)* 1.
14. See GLEASON, 1986, although this account is not to be trusted in its details concerning either the deaths of Bonosus and Maximilianus or the treatment which the future emperors Valens and Valentinian I received at this time.
15. Soz. *HE* 5.17; Theod. *HE* 3.12–13. These officers were lucky that they had protested publicly about their treatment. This protected them from the death penalty because Julian did not want to present his Christian enemies with any more martyrs. Unfortunately for Bonosus and Maximilianus, though, they did not catch the public eye, so the death penalty was much more feasible in their case.
16. Lib. *Or.* 18.167–8.
17. From the translation by H. Bettenson in the Penguin Classics series.
18. See McLYNN, 352, n.209.
19. See LIZZI, 1990.
20. This, and the next passage, from the translation by B. Jackson in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Second Series)* 3.
21. See COURCELLE, 1969, 123.
22. See CHESNUT, 1981.
23. See BLOCH, 1963, 201.
24. See COURCELLE, 1969, 123; THELAMON, 1981, 317.
25. See O'DONNELL, 1979; McLYNN, 1995, 350–3.
26. Unfortunately, their obvious intentions in this matter have diverted military historians from a consideration of the details of their statements concerning the images of Jupiter and Hercules. Hence, the disappointing dismissal of their evidence by BURNS, 1994, 105.
27. *Not. Dig., Oc.* 7.3-4; MANN, 1991, 218.
28. Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico* 418–20: *Herculeam suus Alcides Ioviamque cohortem/ rex ducit superum, premitur nec signifer ullo/ pondere: festinant adeo vexilla moveri.* In so far as the remains of Theodosius' expeditionary force against Eugenius had returned to Constantinople by November 395, and there was little exchange of forces between the two halves of the empire thereafter, it seems a safe assumption that the units to which Claudian here refers were those still stationed in Italy by the 420s, that is those units entitled *Seniores* rather than *Iuniores*. On the complicated military history of this period, see BURNS, 1994, esp. 148–223.
29. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2.9.
30. Ruf. *HE* 11.31; Soc. *HE* 5.25; Soz. *HE* 7.22; Zos. *HN* 4.54.
31. See McLYNN, 1995, 352.
32. From the edition by BIDEZ, 1935, 425.
33. On the various lives of Constantine, see LIEU and MONTSERRAT, 1996, 97–106; on Philostorgius, see NOBBS, 1990.
34. The account of the fifty chosen guards of the *labarum*, i.e. the *praepositi labarum*, seems to come from Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 2.8–9. Eusebius also contrasts the power of the *labarum* to that of the pagan military standards, but to the standards used by Constantine's enemy, rather than to those already in use by Constantine himself, and of Licinius rather than Maxentius, *Vita Constantini* 2.16.

35. See GRIGG, 1979, 112, n.30.
36. See CHRISTIE, 1991, 17, fig. 11, for a military standard consisting of a cross surmounted by an eagle as depicted on a seventh-century shield plaque of Longobard origin, which peculiar conjunction of symbols illustrates particularly well how the eagle had lost its original religious significance.
37. See WOODS, forthcoming, where I argue that the chi-rho shield can be found among the insignia of the *magister officiorum* in both East and West (*Or.* 11.2; *Oc.* 9.2), as the shield of the *schola scutariorum prima* in each case.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIDEZ, J. 1935: 'Fragments nouveaux de Philostorge sur la vie de Constantin', *Byzantion* **10**, 403–37

BLOCH, H. 1963: 'The pagan revival in the West at the end of the fourth century', in A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, Oxford, 193–218

BURNS, T.S. 1994: *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians ca. 375-425 A.D.*, Indianapolis

CHESNUT, G.F. 1981. 'The Date of Composition of Theodoret's Church History', *Vigiliae Christianae* **35**, 245–52

CHRISTIE, N. 1991: 'Longobard Weaponry and Warfare, AD 1–800', *JRMES* **2**, 1–26

COURCELLE, P. 1969: 'Jugements de Rufin et de Saint Augustin sur les empereurs du IVe siècle et la défaite suprême du paganism', *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* **71**, 100–30

DREW-BEAR, T. 1977: 'A Fourth-century Latin Soldier's Epitaph at Nakolea', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* **81**, 257–74

FRANK, R.I. 1969: *Scholae Palatinae: The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire* (Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome **23**), Rome

GLEASON, M.W. 1986: 'Festive Satire: Julian's *Misopogon* and the New Year at Antioch', *Journal of Roman Studies* **76**, 106–19

GRIGG, R. 1979: 'Portrait-bearing Codicils in the Illustrations of the *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Journal of Roman Studies* **69**, 107–24

GRIGG, R. 1983: 'Inconsistency and Lassitude: The Shield-Emblems of the *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Journal of Roman Studies* **73**, 132–41

HOFFMANN, D. 1969: *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum I* (2 vols.) (Epigraphische Studien **7**), Düsseldorf

LIEU, S.N.C and MONTSERRAT, D. (eds.) 1996: *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views: A Source History*, London

LIZZI, R. 1990: 'Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy', *Journal of Roman Studies* **80**, 156–73

MANN, J.C. 1991: 'The *Notitia Dignitatum* – Dating and Survival', *Britannia* **22**, 215–19

McLYNN, N.B. 1994: *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage **22**), Berkeley

NOBBS, A.E. 1990: 'Philostorgius' View of the Past', in G. Clarke, B. Croke, A.E. Nobbs, and R. Mortley (eds.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, Rushcutters Bay, 251–64

O'DONNELL, J.J. 1979: 'The Demise of Paganism', *Traditio* **35**, 43–88

THELAMON, F. 1981. *Païens et Chrétiens au IVe Siècle: L'Apport de l''Histoire Ecclésiastique' de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Etudes Augustiniennes), Paris

WOODS, D. 1995: 'Ammianus Marcellinus and the Deaths of Bonosus and Maximilianus', *Hagiographica* **2**, 1–30

WOODS, D. forthcoming: 'Eusebius, *VC* 4.21, and the *Notitia Dignitatum*', in E. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Oxford, 21–26 August 1995*, Louvain